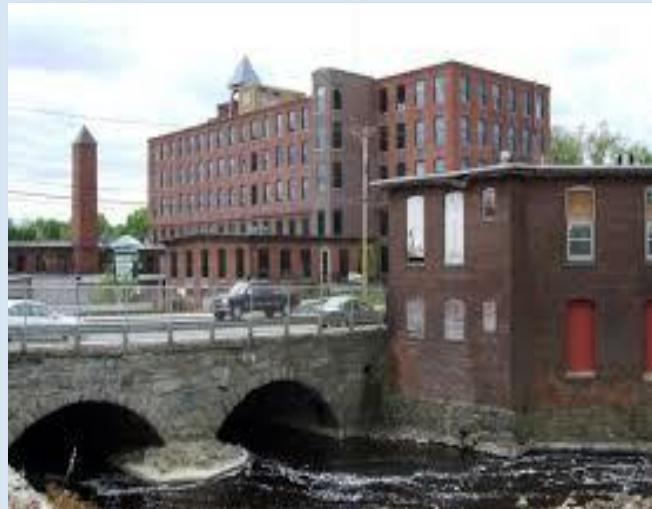


# DRACUT MASTER PLAN

Shaping the Future



Prepared for the Dracut Master Plan Committee  
By Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

Adopted by the Dracut Planning Board on May 27, 2020

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MASTER PLAN

### **Zoning:**

Update and revise the Town's Zoning Bylaw to provide clarity and consistency, update uses, and add appropriate design standards, guidelines and performance standards, including updated standards for landscaping, lighting and signage. Conduct a comprehensive review of the Town's Zoning Bylaw and development regulations every five years.

### **Economic Development:**

Establish an Economic Development positions to: (1) revitalize and support the activities of the Economic Development Committee; (2) work with the Town Manager and the Community Development Director; and (3) develop a marketing program to reach out to local businesses and develop an education and outreach program to attract new businesses to the community.

### **Transportation:**

Develop a plan to address the unaccepted streets in Dracut, so that the Town receives additional Chapter 90 funds to facilitate a pavement management program to ensure that roadway maintenance and repairs are undertaken as cost-effectively as possible.

### **Housing:**

Utilize state and local funds and other "tools", such as Chapter 40R, Inclusionary Zoning and "friendly" Chapter 40B developments, to increase the supply of affordable housing.

### **Open Space and Recreation:**

Develop a comprehensive resource protection strategy to protect the Town's investment and use limited resources as effectively as possible. The Town should develop a maintenance and management plan for its existing conservation and recreation facilities that addresses allowed uses and activities, trail maintenance, equipment needs and maintenance, stewardship, and habitat management.

### **Facilities and Services:**

Develop a long-term plan for increasing school spending as a means to enhance property values, increase property tax revenues, and improve quality of life.

Establish a centralized facilities maintenance department that is responsible for all town properties and for the development and implementation of a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan.

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# INTRODUCTION

A Master Plan is a comprehensive planning document that establishes long-term policy recommendations for a community's physical development, and outlines implementation strategies that address land use issues, transportation, community facilities and services, the local economy, and the environment. Chapter 41, Section 81D of the Massachusetts General Laws states:

*"A planning board established in any city or town under section eighty-one shall make a master plan of such city or town or such part or parts thereof as said board may deem advisable and from time to time may extend or perfect such plan. Such plan shall be a statement, through text, maps, illustrations or other forms of communication that is designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality. The comprehensive plan shall be internally consistent in its policies, forecasts and standards."*

In general, communities use the Master Planning process to understand and manage future growth and development. While the Master Plan is one of the main policy tools utilized by the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, and other local decision-makers, it is important to note that it does not replace other important policy documents, such as the *Housing Production Plan* or the *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. The Master Plan should complement these documents and other planning initiatives undertaken previously and in the future.

Dracut is not the same today as it was a century ago, and fifty years from now the Town will not be the same as it is today. Without the changes made by past generations, there would not be historic homes, barns or stone walls that characterize the rural landscape that remains in some parts of Dracut today. The relationship between history and the local economy is well represented by the remaining mills, while more modern structures constructed as part of the town's newer economy can be found along the town's main arterials, such as Routes 110 and 113. Elements of the past and the present have been woven together to create the Dracut of today.

The goal of this Master Plan is to shape the future of the town in a way that does not detract from its quality of life and character. Effective planning facilitates the transformation of knowledge into action, and is accomplished by understanding the outcomes desired by the community. Toward this end, an extensive public participation process was utilized to help formulate recommendations that reflect the needs and desires of the community. However,

in recognizing that the town will change and evolve over time, the Master Plan should be viewed as a flexible and ever-evolving document.

## THE MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Master Plan Committee was established in 2017, and the Committee held its first meeting in July of that year. The following members served on the Master Plan Committee, representing various town boards and committees, as well as residents at large.

**Table 1.1: Master Plan Committee Members**

Committee Member Name	Represents
Phillipe Thibault (Chair)	Capital Planning Committee
George Dristiliaris (Vice Chair)	Resident at large
Louise Tremblay (Clerk)	Historical Commission
Michael Cahill	Department of Public Works
John Crowley	Zoning Board of Appeals
Kenneth Cunha	Resident at large
Doug Dooley	Planning Board
Tami Dristiliaris	Board of Selectmen
Robert Flynn	Resident at large
Jesse Forcier	Housing Authority
Theodore Kosiavelon	Resident at large
George Malonis	Recreation Committee
Mark Pease	Planning Board
David Sutherland	Open Space Committee
Allison Volpe	School Committee

The Committee met for over two years to develop the Plan, with assistance from the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG). Extensive opportunities were provided for public input and feedback from a broad array of stakeholders and interested parties living in the community. As shown in Table 2, four public input sessions were held, drawing the participation of numerous stakeholders from across the community. Materials and summaries from the input sessions can be found in Appendix A.

**Table 1.2: Public Input Sessions**

Input Session	Date
Visioning Session 1: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis	October 5, 2017
Visioning Session 2: Land Use, Economic Development, and Housing	January 11, 2018
Visioning Session 3: Open Space, Recreation, Natural and Cultural Resources	April 26, 2018
Visioning Session 4: Transportation, Facilities and Services	February 26, 2019

In addition to the public input sessions, the Master Plan Committee invited stakeholders to provide input during at its monthly meetings. Stakeholders were encouraged to submit written comments or speak during any meeting of the Committee. The documents produced during the planning process were available for public review and comment on the Town's website.

The Master Plan Committee developed and distributed a written survey to every Dracut household, with 1,030 surveys completed by residents. Another written survey was distributed to high school seniors that produced similar results to the town-wide survey. The results of the teen survey can be found in Appendix B. The results of the town-wide survey are briefly summarized below, while a more detailed analysis can be found in Appendix C.

### **Characteristics of survey respondents**

- 72% of respondents have lived in Dracut for 10 or more years.
- 72% of respondents have children 18 years old or under.
- 30% of respondents have a household member aged 65 years or older.
- 52% of respondents chose to live in Dracut because of its community character/rural setting.
- 48% chose to live in town because of family ties, while 44% live in Dracut due to the cost of housing.

### **Schools**

- Maintaining, improving or restoring the quality of the schools was rated the top issue facing the town over the next ten years.

### **Housing**

- 60% of respondents rated the diversity of housing options in Dracut as excellent or good, and housing affordability was rated at the same percentage.
- Most of those who responded to Question 4 indicated that additional senior housing options are needed for Dracut residents.

### **Economic Development**

- 33% of the survey respondents rated access to employment as excellent or good, while 47% rated access to employment as fair or poor.
- 53% of respondents rated the availability and access to goods and services as excellent or good, while 40% rated the availability and access as fair or poor.

## **Land Use**

- Growth, development and overdevelopment ranked as number 4 among the top issues facing the town over the next ten years, while the lack of business or industrial development was ranked as number 5, open space and preservation ranked as number 8, and agricultural preservation ranked as number 13 .
- 78% of survey respondents favored creating design guidelines for new development.
- 79% of respondents favored protection of additional agricultural lands.
- 80% of respondents favored more intense economic development in strategic locations.
- 88% of respondents favored creating additional opportunities for small-scale/neighborhood style business establishments

## **Transportation**

- Over half (53%) of the survey respondents rated road maintenance as either excellent or good, while 47% rated it as fair or poor.
- 43% of respondents rated traffic flow in town center as excellent or good, while 54% indicated that it is fair or poor; 54% indicated that traffic flow in other areas of town is either excellent or good, while 45% indicated it is fair or poor
- Over 74% of respondents rated speed enforcement as excellent or good.
- Most respondents (70%) felt that pedestrian accommodations are excellent or good.
- 75% of respondents favored increasing available accommodations for non-motorized transportation, while 88% of respondents favor adding sidewalks or trails.
- Respondents generally indicated that bicycle facilities are lacking, while only 16% felt that they are excellent or good.

## **Open Space and Recreation**

- 63% of respondents rated the number of recreational facilities and opportunities as excellent or good.
- Approximately 53% of respondents indicated that the number and type of recreational facilities and programs is excellent or good.
- 63% of respondents felt that the amount of protected open space is excellent or good.

## **Natural and Cultural Resources**

- 10% of respondents rated the protection of wetlands and water resources as excellent, 44.54 % rated it as good, 16.5% as fair, 4.34% as poor, while 24.57% were unable to respond.
- 50% of respondents rated the protection of wildlife habitat is excellent or good, while 23% indicated it is fair or poor.
- 51% of respondents rated historic preservation as excellent or good, while 23% indicated it is fair or poor.
- 57% of respondents rated agricultural preservation as excellent or good, while 18% rated it as fair or poor. 87% of respondents favor protecting additional agricultural lands.
- 50% of respondents rated the town's forestry initiatives as excellent or good, while 22% rated the initiatives as fair or poor.
- 45% of respondents rated cultural/community events as excellent or good, while another 41% indicated that they are fair or poor.

## **Facilities and Services**

- 72% of survey respondents indicated that Town Hall services are either excellent or good.
- 87% of respondents rated the library as either excellent or good.
- 74% of respondents indicated that public safety services as either excellent or good.
- Respondents were split on the quality of the town's website, with 50% indicating that it is excellent or good and 42% indicating it is fair or poor.
- 53% of respondents rated roadway maintenance as excellent or good, while 46% rated it as fair or poor.
- 60% of survey respondents indicated that the town's trash collection and recycling services are excellent or good, while 14% felt they are fair or poor.
- Nearly 65% of respondents indicated that municipal sewer service is excellent or good, while 19% indicated that it is fair or poor.
- 63% of the respondents indicated that water service is excellent or good, while 21% indicated that it is fair or poor.
- When asked to rate the top three critical issues facing Dracut over the next ten years, the number one response was the quality of the schools and school funding, and the number two response was the lack of police and fire personnel or lack of funding for public safety. The third most critical issue identified was overdevelopment of the town.

## ORGANIZATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE MASTER PLAN

This section provides a summary of the organizational layout of the updated Master Plan document and includes the Vision Statement and Goals adopted by the Master Plan Committee.

### CONTENTS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The updated Master Plan for the Town of Dracut is organized into nine primary components. The introductory section provides an overview of the master plan process, and includes a discussion of the Vision Statement and Goals. Section II focuses on Land Use and Zoning. In addition to a synopsis of land use development patterns in Dracut, it offers a discussion of the Town's existing Zoning Bylaw and the types of uses permitted under these regulations. The Land Use and Zoning chapter includes a presentation of the issues and opportunities inherent to land use planning and zoning, as well as a set of recommendations for the future that allows the town to grow without sacrificing the natural, historical, and cultural integrity of the community.

Section III relies heavily on demographic and industry data to assess the current state of Economic Development in Dracut. The chapter begins with a brief economic statistical profile of the community, followed by a discussion of existing economic and business conditions in Town. Community assets and liabilities are presented, followed by an infrastructure analysis. An important element of this chapter is the discussion about striking a balance between economic development and quality of life-a central theme throughout this Plan. The chapter concludes with an issues and opportunities discussion, coupled with a list of economic development recommendations.

Section IV examines Transportation Planning issues in Dracut. It includes a description of the existing transportation network within the community, including commuting patterns within the town, traffic volumes, crash statistics and the current state of the town's overall transportation infrastructure for all transportation modes (automobile, bicycle and pedestrian). As with other sections of the Master Plan, issues and opportunities related to transportation are presented and discussed, and a comprehensive list of recommendations is provided.

Section V assesses Housing issues in the community. It begins with an overview of existing conditions in terms of the housing stock and housing market. Topics covered within this section include housing development and sales trends; housing needs, as determined by demographic data available for the community; affordable housing efforts in Dracut; and issues, opportunities, and recommendations for sustainable housing production in the community to meet the needs of residents.

Section VI examines planning issues related to Open Space and Recreation. Topics covered in this chapter include existing conditions, local capacity, open space and recreation planning efforts, and identified community needs. The chapter also includes an analysis of issues and opportunities, as well as a set of recommendations.

Section VII focuses on the Natural and Cultural Resources within Dracut. It includes a discussion of existing environmental, historical and cultural assets, and an analysis of the issues and opportunities inherent to natural, historical and cultural protection and preservation in the community. Finally, a set of recommendations aimed at preserving these important resources is presented.

Section VIII of the plan examines Municipal Facilities and Services. An overview of existing town-owned facilities is provided, as well as a description of town services. Issues and opportunities for improving the efficiency and quality of service delivery is discussed and a set of recommendations is outlined.

The final section of the Master Plan includes the Implementation Plan, which consists of a matrix describing each recommendation contained within the document, identifying the specific entities responsible for implementation, and the recommended implementation time frame.

## THE MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT

Over the course of the master plan development process, the Master Plan Committee worked to develop the town's Vision for the future, which is presented below. The Vision Statement and Goals were formulated based on the public input provided through the visioning sessions and written survey. The Master Plan was developed with an eye toward guiding the community in a fashion that will ultimately achieve this vision:

*The Town is viewed as a safe and pleasant place to live, visit and work. There are diverse and affordable housing opportunities for people of all incomes levels, abilities, lifestyles and age groups. The Town's educational system is known for its high standard of excellence, providing students with the skills needed to become economically productive, contribute to society, and enhance individual well-being.*

*The Town Center has been enhanced, contains a mix of business, governmental and residential uses, and is the civic and social heart of the community. The re-use of the mill structures and other historic buildings is evidence of the community's commitment to preserving and celebrating its historic past.*

*The Town of Dracut welcomes and supports responsible business development that broadens the community's tax base and provides employment opportunities for its residents. We encourage and support businesses through open communication with town government and a streamlined permitting process. In addition, the Town has been able to retain many of its farms and agricultural enterprises.*

*The Town's infrastructure is adequate to meet its needs well into the future. Sewer and water service is available throughout town and the capacity of the systems is sufficient to handle current and future demand. The Town's transportation system is safe and efficient, incorporating the needs of all residents through roadway improvements, enhanced transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities designed to accommodate the needs of all residents, regardless of their abilities. The Town's parks, open space and recreation areas enhance quality of life, and protect wildlife and environmental resources.*

*Town government is responsive to the needs of the community and the level of civic engagement is high. There is strong and open communication between town officials and residents. The services provided by the Town, such as public safety, inspectional services, and public health, meet the needs of its residents.*

## PRINCIPAL GOALS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The principal goals of the Master Plan were initially formulated based on input received during the public visioning process, and were later refined after careful consideration of additional public input, including the results of the written survey.

### **Land Use**

- Assess present zoning district designations across town.
- Update and modernize the Town's development regulations and policies.
- Promote land use practices and policies that preserve the town's agricultural heritage.
- Focus on creating a more traditional Town Center that serves as the civic and cultural heart of the community.
- Maintain development policies that encourage a diverse economic base, provide housing opportunities for all residents, and protect local neighborhoods.
- Enhance the visual appearance of the community through better design guidance.

### **Economic Development**

- Re-establish the Economic Development Committee.
- Provide a streamlined permitting process.

- Establish an active marketing program.
- Utilize training resources at UMass Lowell, Middlesex Community College and the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board.
- Address infrastructure issues.
- Utilize the State's Economic Development toolbox.

### **Transportation**

- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in future transportation improvement projects, whenever possible.
- Address the transportation needs of all residents, including seniors and those with disabilities.
- Ensure that the town's transportation system is as safe as possible.
- Make the transit system easier to use, evaluate the existing route configurations, and widely disseminate information on available transit services.
- Address traffic flow issues around the Lakeview Avenue school complex.

### **Housing**

- Create market-rate housing and affordable housing opportunities that meet the needs of the community.
- Expand partnerships with non-profit and for-profit developers that address the demand for senior, veteran, low- and moderate-income, and "starter home" housing.
- Reactivate the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership and the Dracut First Housing Corporation to develop local capacity.
- Implement the Housing Production Plan and maintain Dracut's Housing Choice designation.
- Establish a mechanism to monitor and maintain existing affordable units and access existing resources related to first-time homebuyer and foreclosure assistance programs.
- Utilize state and local funds and other "tools" such as Chapter 40R, Inclusionary Zoning and "friendly" 40B developments to increase the supply of affordable housing.

### **Open Space and Recreation**

- Protect Dracut's public and private water supplies.
- Continue to acquire open space, as opportunities arise and resources allow.
- Connect Dracut's open space and recreation lands to enhance wildlife corridors improve habitat areas and create additional recreation opportunities.

- Provide for long-term sustainability of open space protection and recreation opportunities by identifying funding resources to meet needs.
- Increase access to Dracut's Open Space and Recreation lands and programs for people of all demographic groups.
- Promote a cooperative and regional approach to open space and recreation planning.

### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

- Increase public awareness and appreciation of Dracut's historic resources.
- Preserve, maintain, and continue to document Dracut's agricultural lands, buildings and landmarks.
- Preserve the town's historic artifacts, records, documents, buildings, landmarks and structures.
- Continue to institute policies and practices that protect and enhance water resources, wildlife habitat, and forests.

### **Facilities and Services**

- Address needed capital improvements for elementary schools.
- Continue to strengthen public safety through capital improvements and staffing.
- Continue to implement accessibility improvements for town-owned facilities.
- Address identified improvements for management and operation of the Kenwood Water District
- Evaluate options for generating additional revenue to support town services, including education, and to address infrastructure and facility needs.
- Develop a community-building and engagement program to educate residents on town issues, improve communication between residents and town government, and build trust among community members and local government decision-makers.

The recommendations that comprise the Implementation Plan support the above goals and are drawn from extensive data analysis, community input, and careful assessment of the Town's future needs. Future planned growth and development will require close integration of many elements of the Master Plan, particularly in the areas of housing, economic development, land use, transportation, and agricultural preservation and land protection. Master planning is an ongoing process in which a community continually evaluates and responds to new circumstances and challenges. Therefore, it is important to regularly measure progress toward the implementation of the plan, and to revise the document, if appropriate, subject to the approval of the Planning Board.

# LAND USE AND ZONING

## INTRODUCTION

The Land Use and Zoning chapter of the Master Plan examines past development trends and current land use patterns within the community. Land use refers to the physical arrangement of a community's residential, commercial, industrial and institutional development, along with its transportation network, infrastructure and vacant land. Examining spatial development patterns, rates of change, and trends can provide insight into how the town evolved under varying social, economic and environmental conditions. Understanding land use change within a community is a key aspect of the overall Master Plan, and forms the basis for discussion regarding the future direction of the Town.

Many individuals confuse land use with zoning. In the 1900s, local governments began to utilize zoning as a means for regulating the amount and location of development. Zoning is a tool that local officials may utilize to balance private property rights with the public interest in providing for orderly growth and change. In order to understand how zoning may aid in the accomplishment of community goals, this section of the Master Plan begins with a land use analysis, which considers five aspects of Dracut's land use pattern:

- What are the features of Dracut's land use pattern?
- How did this pattern come about?
- What aspects of the town's land use pattern are essential to the character of the town?
- Is the existing land use pattern consistent with community goals?
- What opportunities exist to guide future development in a fashion consistent with the goals of the Master Plan or other established community goals?

## LAND USE GOALS

- Assess present zoning district designations across town.
- Update and modernize the Town's development regulations and policies.
- Promote land use practices and policies that preserve the Town's agricultural heritage.
- Focus on creating a more traditional Town Center that serves as the civic and cultural heart of the community.
- Maintain development policies that encourage a diverse economic base, provide housing opportunities for all residents, and protect local neighborhoods.
- Enhance the visual appearance of the community through better design guidance.

## BACKGROUND

A community's physical progression can be traced through its land use history. The Town of Dracut has a well-documented history, typical of many communities found throughout New England. Native Americans were the first inhabitants of the community and subsisted by hunting, cultivating crops, and fishing along the Merrimack River and Beaver Brook. Dracut was once part of Chelmsford and was granted separation and officially incorporated as a town on February 26, 1701. Parts of the community were part of the Wamesit Praying Town, one of the preserves set aside by the colonists for Christianized Indians.

Dracut's early economy relied on fishing, lumbering and milling. There has been a mill on Beaver Brook in the Navy Yard since 1763. In the 19th century the mills were used for paper making and cotton textile manufacturing. Dracut took part in the early industrial development and trade along the Merrimack River, and served with Lowell as a center of the region's economy. The Merrimack Mills at Collingsville were the first in America to manufacture cloth - 60 years before Lowell began building its mills. After the mid-1800s, Dracut lost much of its manufacturing base. Some of the neighborhoods along the Merrimack River that were most closely tied to the mills in Lowell were eventually annexed by Lowell. Throughout this time, agriculture remained an important economic activity in the town.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Town's economy was revived for several decades as Lake Mascuppic became a popular resort destination with events and activities centered on Lakeview Park. Later in the 1900s, regional highway improvements served to disperse the region's workforce, and reinforced the development of Dracut as primarily a bedroom community for employment centers located in Lowell, Nashua, New Hampshire, and in towns along the interstate routes north of Boston. Dracut continues to have a modest economic base, which includes commercial development, industrial activities, health care and small businesses. While Routes 38 and 113 run through the Center of town, the lack of direct highway access has limited non-residential development and often has been perceived as a barrier to economic development. Yet, Dracut is only two miles from Interstate 93.

The western half of the Town is suburban in character, while the eastern half is more rural. Although development in this area has been increasing, a significant amount of land remains in agriculture and open space, contributing to the rural and agrarian character. Much of this undeveloped land is not protected however, and could be converted to residential, commercial or industrial uses. Like the Town as a whole, the majority of East Dracut is zoned Residential 1 (R-1), with a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet. Given the preponderance of large lot 40,000-square foot residential zoning, the Town's remaining

rural character may gradually disappear without efforts to protect open space, modify land use policy, and implement design guidelines to ensure that future development projects are consistent with the Town's goals and aspirations.

## POPULATION TRENDS

As illustrated in Table 2.1 below, Dracut's population grew from 8,666 in 1950 to 13,674 by 1960, a growth rate of 57.79%. During the 1960s, the Town's population increased to 18,214, a growth rate of 33.2%. Although these growth rates seem high, other communities in the Northern Middlesex region, such as Billerica, also saw their populations more than double during the 1950-1970 time period. In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, population growth slowed to 16.66%, 20.45% and 11.6% respectively, and slowed again to 3.13% between 2000 and 2010, just slightly greater than the Greater Lowell regional growth rate of 2.02%. Over the six decades extending from 1960 to 2010, Dracut's population increased by 115.42%, an average of 23.08% per decade. In contrast, the regional population grew by 69.4% during the same time period, from 169,403 to 286,901, an average of 13.88% per decade. With a total area of 21.36 square miles, Dracut's population density was approximately 1,379 persons per square mile in 2010.

**Table 2.1: Dracut Population Trends - 1950-2010**

Year	Population	% Change
1950	8,666	-
1960	13,674	57.79
1970	18,214	33.20
1980	21,249	16.66
1990	25,594	20.45
2000	28,562	11.60
2010	29,457	3.13

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

Population projections prepared by MassDOT for the Town of Dracut are outlined in Table 2.2 on the following page and reflect a slightly higher future growth rate for the Town compared to the region as a whole. Between 2010 and 2020, Dracut is expected to experience a growth rate of 1.8%. The growth rate is anticipated to increase to 2% in the 2020s and 4.8% in the 2030s, reaching a total projected population of 32,042 in 2040. The projections estimate that Dracut's population will comprise 10.4% of the region's total population by 2040, approximately the same as the current proportion.

**Table 2.2: Actual and Projected Population: 2010-2040**

Year	Dracut Population	Dracut Growth Rate	Greater Lowell Region	Regional Growth Rate	Dracut as a Percentage of Region
2010	29,457	3.1%	286,901	2.0%	10.3%
2020	29,976	1.8%	291,101	1.5%	10.3%
2030	30,571	2.0%	295,370	1.5%	10.4%
2040	32,042	4.8%	306,913	3.9%	10.4%

Sources: 2010 U.S. Census Bureau; Projections developed by MassDOT in consultation with NMCOG

## LAND USE TRENDS

Land use in Dracut has largely followed the historic patterns laid out prior to zoning, though new residential development is consuming agricultural lands and open space in some areas of town. Dracut residents often refer to areas of town by their traditional village designations: Collinsville, Dracut Center, East Dracut, Kenwood, and the Navy Yard. These historic neighborhoods that define the town can still be recognized, although in some cases their distinctions are fading with recent land use changes. The historically denser areas of western and southern Dracut have become more residential and suburban as the population has expanded, while eastern Dracut has retained more rural character, even though several of the Town's larger industrial and commercial sites are located along Route 113.

Table 2.3 on the following page summarizes the changes in land use from 1971 to 2016. This data was compiled by the University of Massachusetts Amherst through aerial photo interpretation and by NMCOG GIS through interpretation of recent aerial photography. The 2016 land use data is graphically displayed on Map 1 on page 17. This information reflects the amount of land covered by a specific use based on physical attributes and is not parcel specific.

The Town of Dracut contains approximately 13,713 acres, of which 13,280 acres are land and 433 acres are bodies of water. In 2016, developed land comprised 6,457 acres, or 47% of the town's total area. Residential development accounted for approximately 86.6% of all developed land, a vast majority being single-family dwellings. Overall, there has been a nearly 92% increase in developed land since 1971, and an 11% increase since 1999. Much of this development has come at the expense of agricultural land, which has decreased approximately 47.5% since 1971 and now accounts for 9.3% of the total land area.

**Table 2.3: Land Use Development Patterns in Dracut: 1971 to 2016 (in acres)**

Land Use	1971	1985	1999	2008	2016	Percent Change 1971 - 2016	Percent of Total 2016
Commercial	135.64	188.20	260.39	262.01	279.06	105.74	2.03
Industrial	313.31	400.04	461.45	446.56	436.34	39.27	3.18
Residential	2,819.48	3,904.69	4,864.27	5,390.06	5,591.89	98.33	40.78
Government and Institutional	102.12	210.80	214.03	125.80	149.98	46.86	1.09
<b>Developed</b>	<b>3,370.55</b>	<b>4,703.73</b>	<b>5,800.14</b>	<b>6,224.43</b>	<b>6,457.28</b>	<b>91.58</b>	<b>47.09</b>
Agricultural	2,433.51	2,141.63	1,614.53	1,402.23	1,277.44	-47.51	9.32
Other Undeveloped	7,865.75	6,824.45	6,255.15	6,086.68	5,978.61	-23.99	43.60
<b>Undeveloped</b>	<b>10,299.26</b>	<b>8,966.08</b>	<b>7,869.68</b>	<b>7,488.90</b>	<b>7,256.06</b>	<b>-29.55</b>	<b>52.91</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,669.82</b>	<b>13,669.82</b>	<b>13,669.82</b>	<b>13,713.34</b>	<b>13,713.34</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: University of Massachusetts, MacConnell Land Use Data--2008 and 2016 land use data was updated from 1999 MacConnell land use data, using 2008 and 2016 aerial imagery

## LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS OF EXISTING PARCELS

Land use coverage information provided through the University of Massachusetts' MacConnell data differs significantly from parcel-based land use statistics derived from Tax Assessor records. Land use coverage maps include features such as open water, forest and agriculture without respect to parcel boundaries, whereas Tax Assessor parcel maps represent land in recorded plans used to determine the appraised value of property. Furthermore, while Tax Assessor parcel maps may record parcels as mixed-use, such as primarily agricultural with residential as a secondary use, determining the proportion of land uses from parcel descriptions is inexact. Given the different characteristics of these two data sources, it is not possible to directly compare one with the other. However, both sources provide useful insights into the Town's development patterns and identify similar trends. Table 2.4 below summarizes parcel-based land use statistics from the Tax Assessor's database as of July 2017. These land uses are also graphically displayed on Map 2.2 on page 18.

**Table 2.4: Current Use of Parcels in Dracut (2017)**

Land Use	Total Acres	% of Land Area	No. of Parcels
Residential - Single Family Dwellings	6,067	48.2	7,794
Residential - Two Family Dwellings	323	2.6	322
Residential - Multi-Family Dwellings	481	3.8	248
Residential - Accessory Land	229	1.8	45
Commercial	508	4.0	234
Industrial - Manufacturing and R&D	142	1.1	31

**Table 2.4 (cont'd): Current Use of Parcels in Dracut (2017)**

Land Use	Total Acres	% of Land Area	No. of Parcels
Industrial - Mining/Quarry	168	1.3	5
Public utilities	89	0.7	18
Agricultural	326	2.6	11
Conservation/Open Space: State, Municipal & Private	618	4.9	10
Recreational	112	0.9	7
Institutional	66	0.5	20
Municipal and State Land (excluding conservation)	904	7.2	293
Vacant	2,282	18.2	1,033
Water	259	2.1	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,574</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10,082</b>

*Source: Dracut Assessor's Parcel Data and Land Use Codes, July 2017*

## RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

As illustrated in Table 2.4 above, 56.5% of the Town's land is classified as residential by the Assessor's parcel data. Single-family residences, by far the largest residential use, account for 48.2% of the total acreage in Dracut and 85.5% of Dracut's residential acreage. Two-family dwellings account for 2.6% of Dracut's land area, and multi-family dwellings account for 3.8%.

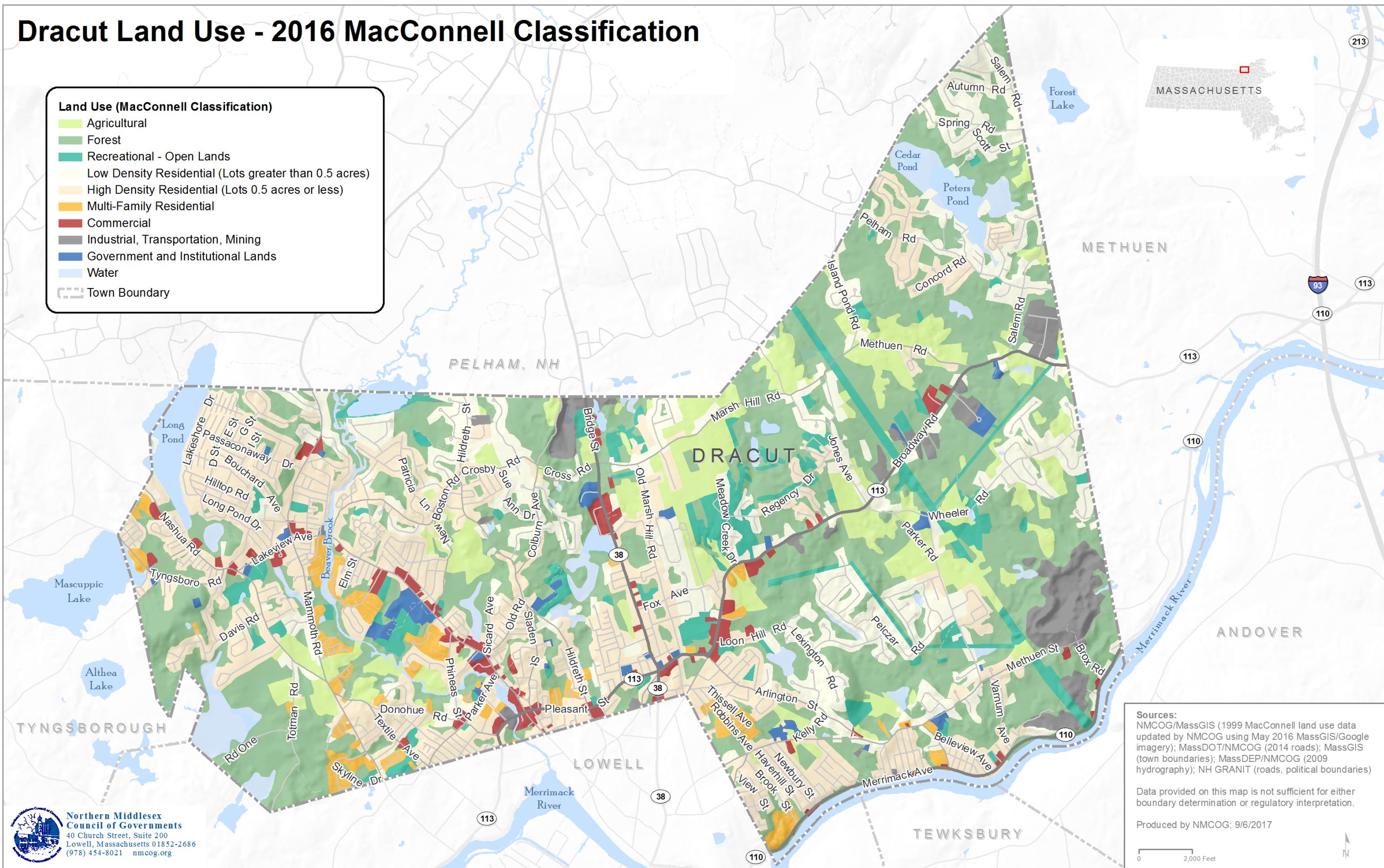
## COMMERCIAL LAND USES

According to the Assessor's parcel data, commercial land uses account for 4% of the total land in Dracut. There are 234 separate parcels classified as commercial, comprising a total of 508 acres. Although most commercial land uses are located in central and western Dracut, several commercial establishments are located along Route 113 in eastern Dracut, and in the southeast as well.

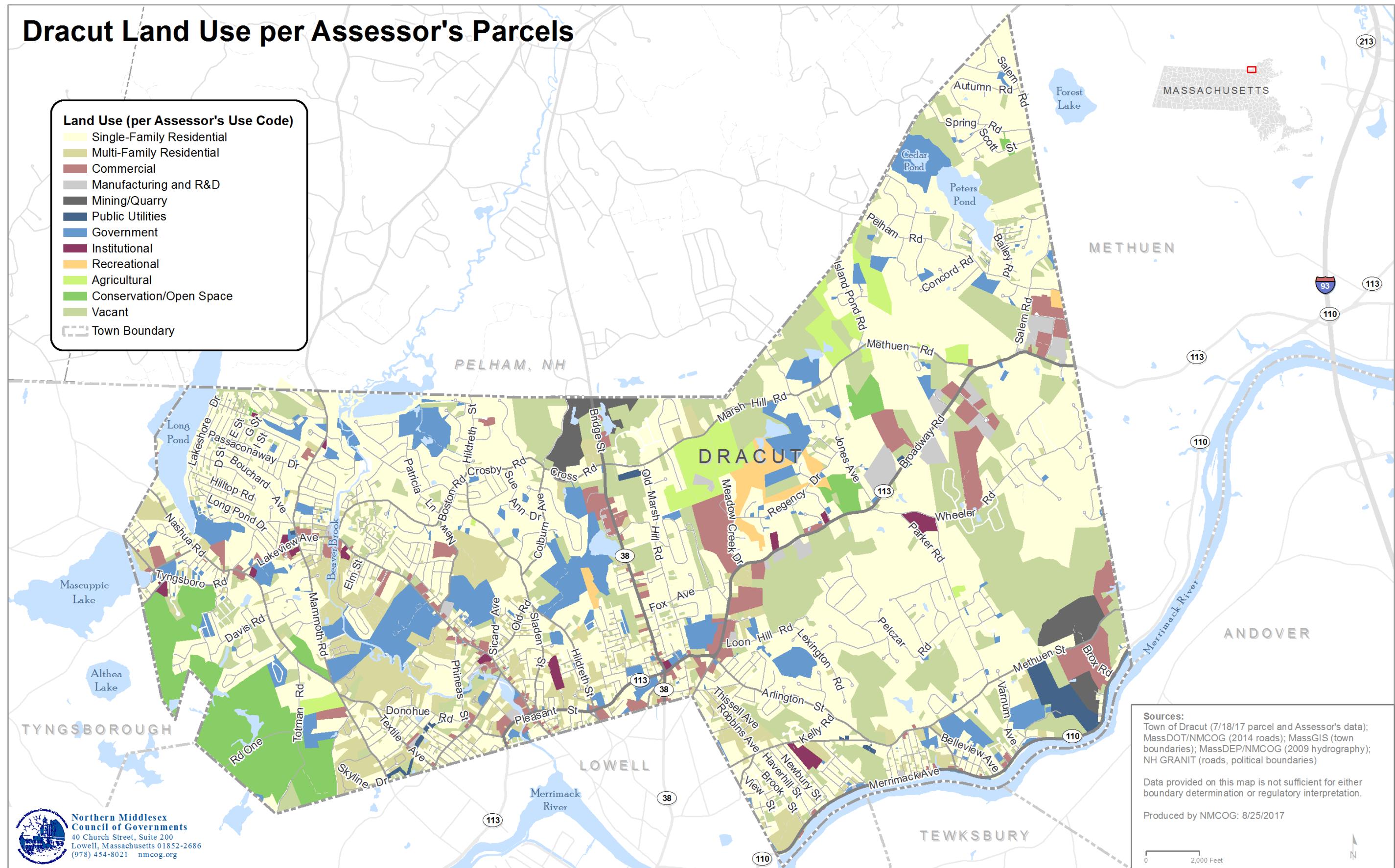
## INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Industrial uses account for 400 acres, or 3.2% of the land area in the town. Industrial land is located primarily in eastern Dracut and is a mix of manufacturing, industrial warehousing, utilities, mining and quarrying. There are five parcels identified as mining or quarry operations by the Assessor's office, mainly sand or gravel extraction. Despite eastern Dracut's rural character, several of the town's larger industrial sites are located along Route 113 in eastern Dracut, as well as at two sizeable mining operations in southeastern Dracut.

# Dracut Land Use - 2016 MacConnell Classification



Map 2.2: Land Use per Assessor's Parcels



## PUBLIC UTILITIES

Less than one percent (89 acres) of Dracut's land area is classified as public utility by the Assessor's office. These parcels primarily include electrical transmission line right-of-way, as well as natural gas infrastructure and a telephone exchange station.

## AGRICULTURAL LANDS

In 2017, Dracut had eleven (11) parcels totaling 326 acres that were classified as agricultural by the Assessor. These parcels accounted for 2.6% of the total acreage in the Assessor's database. Several of the parcels are taxed under the Chapter 61 and 61A programs, however, these programs do not provide permanent protection from future development.

## CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE

Ten parcels owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Town of Dracut, the Dracut Land Trust, and other private organizations are identified by the Assessor's database as conserved open space. Combined, the parcels account for 4.9%, or 618 acres, of the town's land. The majority of this land (over 500 acres) is the Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

## RECREATIONAL LANDS

Recreational lands consist of golf and other recreational properties participating in Massachusetts' Chapter 61B program, including four parcels of golf course and associated lands, totaling 95 acres, as well as three parcels of other recreational land totaling 17 acres. Together, the 112 acres account for 0.9% of Dracut's land area.

## INSTITUTIONAL USES

Churches, non-profits and tax-exempt charitable organizations own a combined 20 parcels, accounting for 66 acres or .5% of Dracut's land. This includes function halls and community centers owned by organizations such as the American Legion and the Dracut Grange.

## MUNICIPAL AND STATE LAND EXCLUDING CONSERVATION

The Town, State, City of Lowell, and other government entities, including the Dracut Water Supply District, own a combined 293 parcels totaling 904 acres, or 7.2% of the total land area. This acreage is in addition to the state and municipally-owned land classified as conservation land and open space, as discussed above.

## VACANT LAND

The Town Assessor's database classifies 1,033 parcels as undeveloped or vacant. Combined, these undeveloped parcels total 2,282 acres, or 18.2% of Dracut's total land area. This land includes 826 acres categorized as developable residential land and 229 acres of developable industrial land. In addition, 394 acres were classified as potentially developable, while 751 acres were classified as undevelopable. The remaining 82 acres include 18 acres of vacant land owned by the Dracut Housing Authority and 64 acres of developable commercial land.

## ZONING OVERVIEW

Dracut regulates development through zoning, subdivision control, Board of Health regulations, and wetlands regulations. Given its role in guiding the development of vacant land and reuse of developed land, zoning is the most important of these regulatory tools. The Town's first zoning bylaw and zoning map were adopted by Town Meeting in February 1946, and over seventy-five amendments to the bylaw have been approved by the Attorney General since the 1980s. The Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen serve as the special permit granting authorities within the town's Zoning Bylaw, and the Building Inspector is responsible for enforcement of the bylaw.

As shown in Table 2.5 below, Dracut's zoning framework includes nine (9) conventional use districts. A tenth conventional district, Industrial 2 (I-2), is described in the Zoning Bylaw text but is not included on the Zoning Map. In addition to the conventional use districts, Dracut also has five (5) zoning overlay districts. The districts are shown on the Zoning Maps found on pages 34 and 35. Depending on the purpose of a zoning overlay district, it may encourage or limit certain uses within the overlay district boundary. For example, the Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay encourages development that is in keeping with the historic character of the area, while the Wetland and Water Conservancy District is intended to protect the town's water resources and wetlands.

**Table 2.5: Current Zoning Districts and Allowed Uses**

Land Use Category	Zoning District	Allowed Uses
<b>Residential</b>	<i>Residential 1 (R-1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single-family dwellings with no more than one dwelling unit per lot</li><li>• Cemeteries</li><li>• By Special Permit: use of land, buildings or structures for providing education; lodges or clubs used by a non-commercial organization; day care facilities; in-law suites; and residential golf course planned developments</li></ul>
	<i>Residential 2 (R-2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any use permitted in the R-1 district by-right or by Special Permit</li></ul>

**Table 2.5 (cont'd): Current Zoning Districts and Allowed Uses**

Land Use Category	Zoning District	Allowed Uses
Business and Commercial Business and Commercial	Residential 3 (R-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family dwellings with no more than one dwelling unit per lot</li> <li>Cemeteries</li> <li>By Special Permit: two-family dwellings with no more than one residential structure per lot; multi-family dwellings; use of land, buildings or structures for providing education; nursing homes; lodges or clubs used by a non-commercial organization; funeral home; and day care facilities</li> </ul>
	Business 1 (B-1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-family dwellings with no more than one dwelling unit per lot</li> <li>Retail stores less than 5,000 GSF</li> <li>By Special Permit: two-family dwellings with no more than one residential structure per lot; multi-family dwellings; use of land, buildings or structures for providing education; nursing homes; hospitals; professional offices; financial services; restaurants other than fast-food; mixed-use buildings for business uses and for not more than two dwelling units; lodges or clubs used by a non-commercial organization; personal services facilities; artist studios; gas stations; day care facilities; and in-law suites</li> </ul>
	Business 2 (B-2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of land, buildings or structures for providing education</li> <li>Nursing homes</li> <li>Post offices</li> <li>Retail stores less than 5,000 GSF</li> <li>Professional offices</li> <li>Financial services facilities</li> <li>Personal services facilities</li> <li>Artist studios</li> <li>By Special Permit: hospitals; restaurants other than fast-food; lodges or clubs used by a non-commercial organization; funeral homes; general services facilities; day care facilities; and in-law suites</li> </ul>
	Business 3 (B-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any use permitted in the B-2 district</li> <li>Nursing homes</li> <li>Restaurants other than fast-food</li> <li>Hotels, inns and motels</li> <li>Lodges or clubs used by a non-commercial organization</li> <li>Funeral homes</li> <li>Veterinary care facilities</li> <li>General services facilities</li> <li>Building trades shop</li> <li>By Special Permit: assisted living facility; retail stores larger than 5,000 GSF; fast-food restaurants; mixed-use buildings for business uses and for not more than two dwelling units; redemption centers; indoor or outdoor commercial recreation facilities; lounge or pub; private commercial and trade schools; indoor amusement facilities including theaters and arcades; outdoor amusement facilities including amusement parks, stadiums and race tracks; gas stations; car washes; auto repair shops; vehicle sales facilities; vehicle equipment sales; commercial parking facilities; day care facilities; body art studios; mini-warehouses; lumber yards; and in-law suites</li> </ul>

**Table 2.5 (cont'd): Current Zoning Districts and Allowed Uses**

Land Use Category	Zoning District	Allowed Uses
<b>Business and Commercial (continued)</b>	<i>Business 4 (B-4)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any use permitted in the B-3 district not requiring a Special Permit</li> <li>Fast-food restaurants</li> <li>Mixed-use buildings for business uses and for not more than two dwelling units</li> <li>Vehicle equipment sales</li> <li>Indoor shooting ranges</li> <li>Private commercial and trade schools</li> <li>By Special Permit: retail stores larger than 5,000 GSF; redemption centers; commercial kennels; indoor or outdoor commercial recreation facilities; lounges or pubs; indoor amusement facilities including theaters and arcades; outdoor amusement facilities including amusement parks, stadiums and race tracks; gas stations; car washes; auto repair shops; vehicle sales facilities; commercial parking facilities; body art studios; mini-warehouses; lumber yards; heating fuel sales and service facilities; and in-law suites</li> </ul>
	<i>Business 5 (B-5)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of land, buildings or structures for providing education</li> <li>Nursing homes</li> <li>Post offices</li> <li>Retail stores less than 5,000 GSF</li> <li>Professional office</li> <li>Financial services facilities</li> <li>Restaurants other than fast-food</li> <li>Hotels, motels and inns</li> <li>Lodges or clubs used by a non-commercial organization</li> <li>Funeral homes</li> <li>Veterinary care facilities</li> <li>Personal services facilities</li> <li>General services facilities</li> <li>Artist studios</li> <li>Building trades shops</li> <li>By Special Permit: adult entertainment establishments; retail stores larger than 5,000 GSF; fast-food restaurants; mixed-use buildings for business uses and for not more than two dwelling units; indoor or outdoor commercial recreation facilities; lounges or pubs; private commercial and trade schools; indoor amusement facilities including theaters and arcades; outdoor amusement facilities including amusement parks, stadiums and race tracks; gas stations; car washes; auto repair shops; vehicle sales facilities; vehicle equipment sales facilities; commercial parking facilities; day care facilities; body art establishments; mini-warehouses; lumber yards; and in-law suites</li> </ul>

**Table 2.5 (cont'd): Current Zoning Districts and Allowed Uses**

Land Use Category	Zoning District	Allowed Uses
Industrial	<i>Industrial 1 (I-1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodges or clubs used by a non-commercial organization</li> <li>• General services facilities</li> <li>• Artist studios</li> <li>• Building trades shops</li> <li>• Auto repair shops</li> <li>• Light manufacturing</li> <li>• By Special Permit: removal of earth products; public or private utility facilities; correctional facilities; post offices; retail stores less than 5,000 GSF; restaurants; fast-food restaurants; hotels, inns and motels; redemption centers; commercial kennels; personal services facilities; indoor or outdoor commercial recreation facilities; private commercial and trade schools; gas stations; vehicle equipment sales facilities; commercial breeding facility for any type of animal; outdoor rifle range; registered dispensaries for cultivation and sale of medical marijuana; research and office parks; warehouses; mini-warehouses; construction yards; lumber yards; heating fuel sales and service facilities; heavy vehicle sales; waste transfer facilities; wireless telecommunications facilities; biological research facilities; in-law suites; and parking and on-site repair of student transit vehicles including buses and special needs equipped vehicles</li> </ul>
	<i>Industrial 2 (I-2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodges or clubs used by a non-commercial organization</li> <li>• Auto repair shops</li> <li>• Commercial broadcast facilities including satellite "up link" facilities</li> <li>• Warehouses</li> <li>• Light manufacturing</li> <li>• By Special Permit: removal of earth products; public or private utility facilities; correctional facilities; redemption centers; commercial kennels; gas stations; outdoor rifle ranges, research and office parks; mini-warehouses; construction yards; lumber yards; heating fuel sales and service facilities; heavy manufacturing; heavy vehicle sales facilities; heavy vehicle repair facilities; water treatment and recovery facilities; waste transfer facilities; slaughter houses; wireless telecommunications facilities; salvage materials yards and non-municipal dumps; biological research facilities; in-law suites; and parking and on-site repair of student transit vehicles including buses and special needs equipped vehicles.</li> </ul>

*Source: Town of Dracut Zoning Bylaw, June 2016*

Table 2.6 depicts the acreage for each zoning district within Dracut. Approximately 87% of the Town is zoned for residential use, with over 73% of the Town zoned specifically for single-family residences in the Residential 1 and Residential 2 districts where two- family and multi-family residences are not permitted. Business zoning districts cover 5.7% of the town's land area, while the Industrial zoning district covers 6.9% of the land area.

**Table 2.6: Zoning District Acreages**

Zoning District	Acres	Percentage
Residential 1 (R-1)	9,244.26	67.9
Residential 2 (R-2)	718.28	5.3
Residential 3 (R-3)	1,934.17	14.2
Business 1 (B-1)	113.30	0.8
Business 2 (B-2)	0	0
Business 3 (B-3)	496.37	3.6
Business 4 (B-4)	161.39	1.2
Business 5 (B-5)	9.89	0.1
Industrial 1 (I-1)	942.05	6.9
Industrial 2 (I-2)	0.00	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,619.71</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Northern Middlesex Council of Governments GIS analysis

## RESIDENTIAL ZONING

Residential zoning accounts for 87.3% of the land area in Dracut. As a result, the Town's residential zoning regulations shape the development and land use of a majority of Dracut. The Residential 1 (R-1) and Residential 2 (R-2) districts permit identical uses by-right and by Special Permit. The distinction between the two districts is in their dimensional requirements, with the minimum lot size in R-1 being 40,000 square feet while the minimum lot size in R-2 is 80,000 square feet. Together, R-1 and R-2 districts account for 73.2% of land in Dracut. Districts R-1 and R-2 permit single family dwelling by right, but do not permit two-family or multi-family units. In-law suites are allowed in both districts by Special Permit from the Planning Board.

Residential 3 (R-3), which accounts for 496 acres or 3.6% of the land area in Dracut, is the only conventional zoning district to allow multi-family dwellings (the Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay District and the Mill Conversion Overlay District both allow multi-family dwellings by Special Permit). R-3 allows single-family dwellings by right, as well as two-family and multi-family dwellings by Special Permit from the Planning Board. The minimum lot size in R-3 is 40,000 square feet.

Single-family and two-family residential uses are also allowed in some Business districts. Single-family dwellings are permitted by right in Business 1 (B-1), and two-family dwellings are permitted by Special Permit from the Planning Board. The minimum lot size is 22,000 square feet, and in-law suites are allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board.

In addition to traditional single family and two-family dwellings, mixed-use buildings with business uses combined with up to two dwelling units are allowed by-right in the Business 4 (B-4) district and by Special Permit in the Business 1 (B-1), Business 3 (B-3) and Business 5 (B-5) districts.

The Mill Conversion Overlay District (MCOD) and Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay District (DCNOD) both allow for residential uses, in addition to any residential uses allowed by the underlying zoning districts. Within the MCOD, the Planning Board may grant a Special Permit for the conversion of existing mill buildings and structures to multifamily dwellings, assisted living facilities, single-family dwellings, and some nonresidential uses. The DCNOD allows the Planning Board to grant Special Permits for mixed-use developments with residential uses that would otherwise be prohibited by the underlying zoning.

In addition to traditional housing, nursing homes are allowed in R-3 and B-1 by Special Permit from the Planning Board, and are permitted by right in B-2, B-3, B-4, B-5, Industrial 1 (I-1) and Industrial 2 (I-2). However, assisted living facilities are currently only allowed in Dracut by Special Permit from the Planning Board in B-3.

## OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to encourage open space, preserve historical resources, protect water supplies, and promote efficient provision of municipal services, Dracut's Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) allows for the issuance of a Special Permit for flexible site design with reduced lots sizes and dimensional requirements. To be eligible, parcels must have a minimum of five acres in the R1 district or ten acres in the R2 district. The total number of building lots in an OSRD must be no more than the number of lots that would be allowed under a conventional development plan. If located in the R1 district, the minimum lot size allowed is 20,000 square feet, while lots must be at least 30,000 square feet in the R2 district. The development must also provide an area of common land not less than the total area by which the building lots were reduced below that required for a conventional subdivision.

In 2017, the Town revised this section of the Zoning Bylaw to require that common land within each development be conveyed to one of the following entities:

- a. To the town for the sole purpose of passive or active recreational open space, agricultural land or other open space purpose, should the town be willing to accept and manage the property. The property is to be kept in an open and natural state, and made subject to a conservation restriction prepared in accordance with the

provisions of Section 31 and 33, inclusive, of Chapter 184 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;

- b. To the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as part of a state forest, park, or wildlife management area;
- c. To a non-profit corporation, the principal purpose of which is the conservation of open space, and made subject to a conservation restriction prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 31 and 33, inclusive, of Chapter 184 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
- d. To a corporation or trust owned or to be owned by the owners of lots or residential units within the plot, and made subject to a conservation restriction prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 31 and 33, inclusive, of Chapter 184 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; or
- e. To a private owner for agricultural, horticultural, forestry or any other purpose and made subject to a conservation restriction prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 31 and 33, inclusive, of Chapter 184 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

If the common land and other facilities are held in common, are conveyed to home owners association, or if the development is a cooperative, with owners holding shares in the cooperative association, the owner/developer must include language in the deeds of owners of individual lots beneficial rights of the common land and a conservation restriction must be granted to the Town or an appropriate entity (described above). The restriction must be enforceable by the Conservation Commission. The developer is responsible for maintenance of the common land until such time as the homeowners association is able to assume responsibility. In order to ensure that homeowner's association properly maintains the common land, the developer must create a Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions requiring mandatory membership in the homeowners association, and containing provisions for maintenance and tax assessment. The Declaration must be filed with the Registry of Deeds and the Town Clerk.

#### IN-LAW DWELLING UNIT

In an effort to allow families to care for their elderly relatives, the Town allows in-law dwelling units, which are designed to provide a non-rental housing alternative for immediate family members or care givers. Only one in-law suite is allowed per property. These dwellings must share a wall with the primary structure, must only contain one bedroom, and may not exceed 20% of the existing space or 700 square feet. A separate meter is prohibited for in-law dwellings. The current Zoning Bylaw is unclear on what districts allow in-law dwelling units. In-law dwelling units are listed under "Accessory Uses Permitted in any Zoning District" in Section 2.11.50, but in-law suites are listed as

prohibited in the R-3 district in the Table of Permitted Uses. The Bylaw makes no distinction between in-law dwelling units versus in-law suites.

## RESIDENTIAL GOLF COURSE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

In November 1991, Dracut's Residential Golf Course Planned Development (RGCPD) bylaw was added allowing for the issuance of a Special Permit for development of single-family homes in conjunction with a golf course. The single-family detached residences must have a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet. Eligible parcels must be at least 175 acres and be located in the R-1 and R-2 districts. The project must contain an eighteen-hole golf course with a minimum length of 6,000 yards. There are a number of incidental uses that can be included, such as a club house, restaurant, function hall, driving range, tennis courts, a pro shop, swimming facility and other ancillary buildings. All land dedicated to the golf course must be deed restricted to use as a golf course, or to conservation uses if the golf course ceases to operate for a period of two years.

Table 2.7 below summarizes the residential uses that are permitted within each zoning district. Table 2.8 shows the dimensional and density requirements for districts where traditional residential development is allowed. The Mill Conversion Overlay District (MCOD) allows residential development by Special Permit but does not have standard dimensional and density requirements. Instead, the MCOD requires a 100' buffer area where the property abuts residentially zoned or occupied properties.

**Table 2.7: Permitted Residential Uses by Zoning District**

Residential Use	Zoning District								Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay District	Mill Conversion Overlay District
	Resident -ial 1 (R-1)	Resident -ial 2 (R-2)	Resident -ial 3 (R-3)	Business 1 (B-1)	Business 3 (B-3)	Business 4 (B-4)	Business 5 (B-5)			
Single-Family Dwelling	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N*	PB	
Two-Family Dwelling	N	N	PB	PB	N	N	N	PB	PB	
Multi-Family Dwelling	N	N	PB	N	N	N	N	PB	PB	
Assisted Living Facilities	N	N	N	N	PB	N	N	PB	PB	
Mixed Business and Dwelling	N	N	N	PB	PB	P	PB	PB	PB	
Boarding House	N	N	PB	N	N	N	N	N*	N*	
Artist Lofts	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	PB	N*	

\*Use is not specifically allowed by the overlay district but allowed in the underlying zoning district.

*Source: Town of Dracut Zoning Bylaw, June 2016*

**Table 2.8: Dimensional and Density Requirements for Districts Allowing Residential Dwellings**

	Zoning District				
	Residential 1 (R-1)	Residential 2 (R-2)	Residential 3 (R-3)	Business 1 (B-1)	Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay District
Minimum Lot Area (sf)	40,000	80,000	40,000	22,000	22,000
Minimum Lot Frontage (ft)	175	200	150	125	75
Minimum Lot Width (ft)	30	50	50	20	-
Minimum Front Yard (ft)	30	30	30	30	0
Minimum Side Yard (ft)	15	15	15	20	0/10*
Minimum Rear Yard (ft)	35	35	35	15	15
Maximum Building Height (ft)	36	36	36	36	45
Maximum Height (stories)	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3

\*On each lot, there must be one side yard of at least 10 feet in width. Side yard must be at least 15 feet when abutting a residential district.

*Source: Town of Dracut Zoning Bylaw, June 2016*

## BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL ZONING

There are five business and two industrial zoning districts in the Town's Zoning Bylaw: Business 1 (B-1), Business 2 (B-2), Business 3 (B-3), Business 4 (B-4), Business 5 (B-5), Industrial 1 (I-1) and Industrial 2 (I-2). The districts are shown on the Zoning Map found on page 34. Although the I-2 district is discussed and described in the Zoning Bylaw, it does not have boundaries delineated in the Zoning Bylaw and is not shown on the current Zoning Map.

### BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

Business Districts exist throughout town, mainly along major transportation routes, including Route 113 (Broadway Road), Route 110 (Merrimack Avenue), Route 38 (Bridge Street), Lakeview Avenue and around Long Pond. Each Business District has different dimensional requirements and permitted uses. The Industrial 1 District exists throughout the town, mainly in East Dracut along Broadway Road (Route 113) and Salem Road. There is also some land adjoining the Beaver Brook Mills and Navy Yard Mills zoned Industrial 1. Table 2.9 on the following page outlines the dimensional requirements for business and industrially zoned districts within Dracut, while Table 2.10 outlines the uses allowed by right within each district.

**Table 2.9: Dimensional and Density Requirements for Business and Industrial Districts**

	Zoning District						
	Business 1 (B-1)	Business 2 (B-2)	Business 3 (B-3)	Business 4 (B-4)	Business 5 (B-5)	Industrial 1 (I-1)	Industrial 2 (I-2)
Minimum Lot Area (sf)	22,000	22,000	30,000	40,000	30,000	90,000	90,000
Minimum Lot Frontage (ft)	125	125	150	200	150	225	225
Minimum Lot Width (ft)	20	20	20	50	20	50	50
Minimum Front Yard (ft)	30	30	50	100	50	100	100
Minimum Side Yard (ft)	20	20	30	15	15	15	40
Minimum Rear Yard (ft)	15	15	20	40	20	40	40
Maximum Building Height (ft)	36	36	40	45	40	65	65
Maximum Building Height (stories)	2.5	2.5	3	3.5	3	5	5

Source: Town of Dracut Zoning Bylaw, June 2016

**Table 2.10: Permitted uses within Business and Industrial Districts**

Permitted uses within Business and Industrial Districts	
<b>Business 1</b>	
Agriculture	Municipal
Conservation	Religious
Recreation	Post Office
Single Family Dwelling	Retail Store <5,000 G.S.F.
<b>Business 2</b>	
Agriculture	Nursing Home
Conservation	Post Office
Recreation	Retail Store <5,000 G.S.F.
Municipal	Professional Office
Educational	Financial Service
Religious	
<b>Business 3</b>	
Agriculture	Financial Service
Conservation	Restaurant
Recreation	Hotel, Inn or Motel
Municipal	Lodge or Club
Educational	Funeral Home
Religious	Veterinary Care
Nursing Home	Personal Services
Post Office	General Services
Retail Store <5,000 G.S.F.	Studio
Professional Office	Building Trade Shop

<b>Permitted uses within Business and Industrial Districts</b>	
<b>Business 4</b>	
Agriculture	Restaurant - Fast Food
Conservation	Hotel, Inn or Motel
Recreation	Lodge or Club
Municipal	Funeral Home
Educational	Veterinary Care
Religious	Personal Services
Nursing Home	General Services
Post Office	Studio
Retail Store <5,000 G.S.F.	Building Trade Shop
Professional Office	Funeral Home
Financial Service	Commercial and Trade School
Restaurant	Vehicle Equipment Sales
<b>Business 5</b>	
Agriculture	Financial Service
Conservation	Restaurant
Recreation	Hotel, Inn or Motel
Municipal	Lodge or Club
Educational	Funeral Home
Religious	Veterinary Care
Nursing Home	Personal Services
Post Office	General Services
Retail Store <5,000 G.S.F.	Studio
Professional Office	Building Trade Shop
<b>Industrial 1</b>	
Agriculture	Lodge or Club
Conservation	General Services
Recreation	Studio
Municipal	Building Trade Shop
Religious	Motor Vehicle Repair or Body Shop
Cemeteries	
<b>Industrial 2</b>	
Agriculture	Lodge or Club
Conservation	Motor Vehicle Repair or Body Shop
Recreation	Commercial Broadcast Facility
Municipal	Warehouse
Religious	Light Manufacturing

Uses allowed by special permit (with or without site plan review) from the Planning Board or Board of Selectman are shown in Table 2.11 on the following page.

**Table 2.11: Uses Allowed by Special Permit within Business and Industrial Districts**

<b>Uses Allowed by Special Permit within Business and Industrial Districts</b>	
<b>Business 1</b>	
Two Family Dwelling	Lodge or Club
Educational	Personal Services
Nursing Home	Studio
Hospitals	Motor Vehicle Service Station
Professional Office	Day Care Facility
Financial Service	Containerized Temp. Storage
Restaurant	In-Law Suites
Combined Business or Dwelling	
<b>Business 2</b>	
Hospitals	General Services
Restaurant	Day Care Facility
Lodge or Club	Containerized Temp. Storage
Funeral Home	In-Law Suites
<b>Business 3</b>	
Hospitals	Vehicle Equipment Sales
Retail Store >5,000 G.S.F.	Parking Facility
Restaurant - Fast Food	Zoo
Combined Business or Dwelling	Commercial Broadcast Facility
Commercial Recreation	Aircraft - Heliport
Lounge or Pub	Day Care Facility
Commercial and Trade School	Body Art Establishment
Amusement Facility Indoor	Mini-Warehouse
Amusement Facility Outdoor	Lumber Yard
Motor Vehicle Service Station	Heavy Vehicle Sales
Car Wash	Containerized Temp. Storage
Motor Vehicle Repair or Body Shop	Fairs, Carnivals, Etc
Light Vehicle Sales	In-Law Suites
<b>Business 4</b>	
Hospitals	Parking Facility
Retail Store >5,000 G.S.F.	Zoo
Redemption Center <5,000 G.S.F.	Commercial Broadcast Facility
Redemption Center >5,000 G.S.F.	Aircraft - Heliport
Commercial Kennel	Body Art Establishment
Commercial Recreation	Mini-Warehouse
Lounge or Pub	Lumber Yard
Amusement Facility Indoor	Heating Fuel Sales/Service
Amusement Facility Outdoor	Heavy Vehicle Sales
Motor Vehicle Service Station	Containerized Temp. Storage
Car Wash	Fairs, Carnivals, etc.
Motor Vehicle Repair or Body Shop	In-Law Suites
Light Vehicle Sales	

<b>Business 5</b>	
Hospitals	Vehicle Equipment Sales
Retail Store >5,000 G.S.F.	Parking Facility
Restaurant - Fast Food	Zoo
Combined Business or Dwelling	Commercial Broadcast Facility
Redemption Center <5,000 G.S.F.	Aircraft - Heliport
Redemption Center >5,000 G.S.F.	Day Care Facility
Commercial Recreation	Body Art Establishment
Lounge or Pub	Mini-Warehouse
Commercial and Trade School	Lumber Yard
Amusement Facility Indoor	Heavy Vehicle Sales
Amusement Facility Outdoor	Containerized Temp. Storage
Motor Vehicle Service Station	Adult Entertainment Establishments
Car Wash	Fairs, Carnivals, lite. (HG) (#7)
Motor Vehicle Repair or Body Shop	In-Law Suites (# 8)
Light Vehicle Sales	
<b>Industrial 1</b>	
Earth Removal	Commercial Broadcast Facility
Public or Private Utility Facilities	Airport - Fixed Wing
Correctional Facilities	Aircraft - Heliport
Post Office	Rifle Range (outdoor)
Retail Store <5,000 G.S.F.	Research/Office Park
Restaurant	Warehouse
Restaurant - Fast Food	Mini-Warehouse
Hotel, Inn or Motel	Construction Yard
Redemption Center <5,000 G.S.F.	Lumber Yard
Redemption Center >5,000 G.S.F.	Heating Fuel Sales/Service
Commercial Kennel	Heavy Vehicle Sales
Personal Services	Waste Transfer Facility
Commercial Recreation	Telecommunications Facility
Commercial and Trade School	Containerized Temp. Storage
Motor Vehicle Service Station	Biological Research
Vehicle Equipment Sales	Fairs, Carnivals, lite. (HG) (#7)
Commercial Breeding Facility	In-Law Suites (# 8)
Zoo	Student Transit Vehicle Parking
<b>Industrial 2</b>	
Earth Removal	Heavy Manufacturing
Public or Private Utility Facilities	Heavy Vehicle Sales
Correctional Facilities	Heavy Vehicle Repair
Commercial Kennel	Waste Treatment
Motor Vehicle Service Station	Waste Recovery
Airport - Fixed Wing	Waste Transfer Facility
Aircraft - Heliport	Slaughter House & Similar
Rifle Range (outdoor)	Telecommunications Facility
Research/Office Park	Storage

Mini-Warehouse	Containerized Temp. Storage
Construction Yard	Biological Research
Lumber Yard	Fairs, Carnivals, lite. (HG) (#7)
Heating Fuel Sales/Service	In-Law Suites (# 8)
	Student Transit Vehicle Parking

## MULTIPLE PRINCIPAL STRUCTURES IN THE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

In November 2006, the Town added a provision to the Zoning Bylaw to allow for more than one principal structure on lots in the Business and Industrial districts. Under this provision, more than one principal structure may be erected on a lot with the following conditions:

- The lot area is 60,000 square feet or more.
- All principal buildings on the lot are served by access ways suitable for fire, police and emergency vehicles.
- Special Permits are required for any principal building having 10,000 square feet of gross floor area.
- All of the principal buildings on the same lot are accessible via pedestrian walkways connected to the required parking for the principal building.

## ADDITIONAL STRUCTURES FOR BUSINESS USE IN THE BUSINESS 4 (B-4) DISTRICT

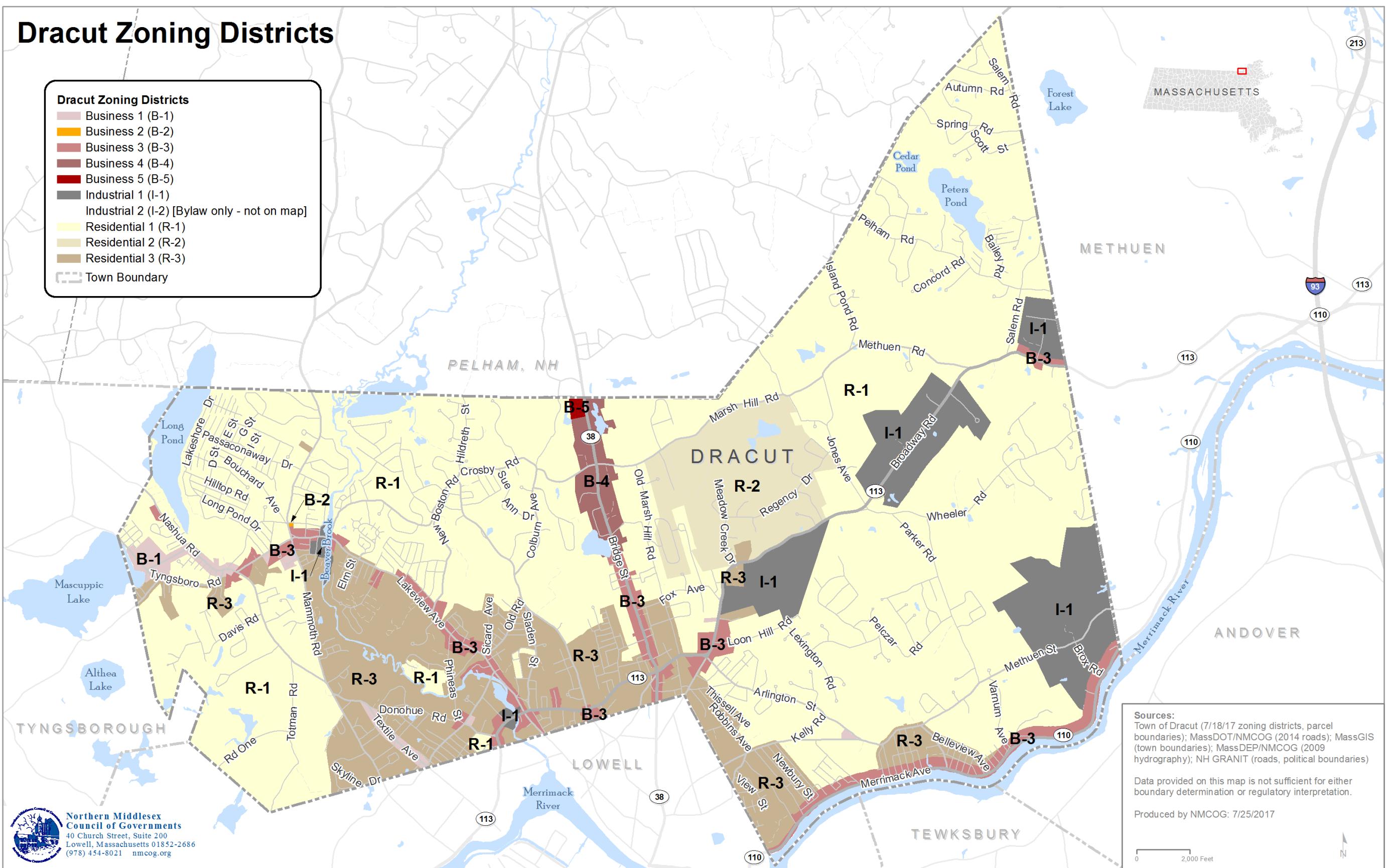
In addition to the allowance for multiple principal structures described above, in November 2006 Dracut added a provision to its Zoning Bylaw to allow multiple structures to be built for business uses on lots in the B-4 district. Within the district, the development of additional structures dedicated for business may be permitted if the following additional criteria are met:

- The area of the lot on which the structure is to be located is at least 20,000 square feet.
- The lot was defined by a deed or plan recorded prior to January 1, 1985.
- The lot complied with the minimum area and frontage requirements in effect at the time the boundaries of the lot were defined.
- There is public water and sewer available for the lot.
- The setback and yard requirements are as follows:

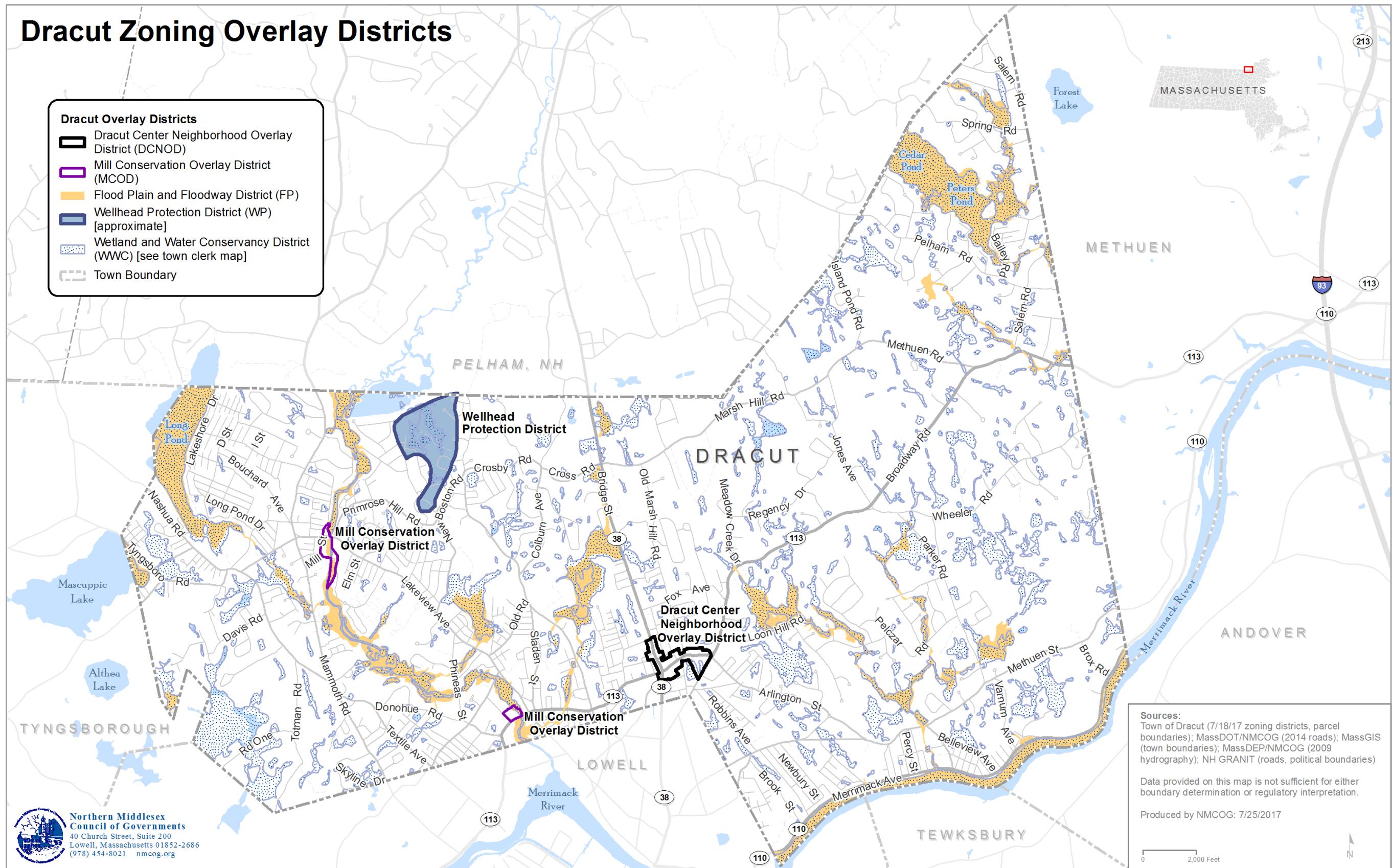
Minimum lot frontage	125 linear feet
Minimum lot width	50 linear feet
Minimum front yard	30 linear feet
Minimum side yard	15 linear feet
Minimum rear yard	15 linear feet
Maximum building height	45 linear feet.

### Map 2.3: Dracut Zoning Districts

# Dracut Zoning Districts



Map 2.4: Dracut Zoning Overlay Districts



## OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Dracut has five (5) overlay districts: the Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay, the Mill Conversion Overlay District, the Flood Plain and Floodway District, the Wellhead Protection District, and the Wetland and Water Conservancy District. The districts are shown on the Overlay District Zoning Map found on the previous page.

### DRACUT CENTER NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLAY DISTRICT

The DCNOD bylaw is intended to encourage development that enhances the current mix of uses within the Dracut Center area, protects historic resources, helps create a sense of place, and promotes future affordable housing and economic development opportunities. The purposes of the DCNOD are to:

- Encourage a mix of business, residential, cultural, educational and civic uses;
- Promote compact development that is pedestrian-oriented and preserves the historic value and character of the area;
- Minimize impacts on public services and maximize the efficient use of public infrastructure;
- Increase the town's tax base by creating a thriving small business environment, attracting new investment and promoting economic development;
- Encourage the development of affordable housing that meets the State's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) requirements; and
- Encourage the reuse of existing underutilized or vacant properties.

Within the DCNOD, all regulations of the underlying district remain in effect, except where these regulations supersede such underlying requirements or provide an alternative to such requirements. The underlying zoning is either Business 3 or Residential 3.

The following uses shown in Table 2.12 are allowed in the DCNOD, subject to the requirements outlined in the DCNOD regulations:

**Table 2.12: DCNOD Uses**

Residential Uses (as a component of a mixed-use development)	Government, Institutional & Public Service Uses	Business Uses	Mixed-use development
Multi-family	Municipal	Retail store, not exceeding 5,000 square feet	A single building with the ground floor used primarily for retail, commercial, service or office and the upper floors(s) used for residential use.
Two-family	Educational	Professional offices, not exceeding 7,500 square feet	
Artist lofts/studio	Religious	Financial services/bank	
Assisted living facilities	Public or Private Utility Facilities	Restaurant, fast food, general or limited service, not exceeding	

Residential Uses (as a component of a mixed-use development)	Government, Institutional & Public Service Uses	Business Uses	Mixed-use development
		4,000 square feet of public seating area	
Affordable housing	Post Office	Hotel or Inn	
	Recreation	Bed and Breakfast Lodge or Club Personal Services General Services Artist or Craftsman Studio Lounge or Pub Amusement facility indoor Parking facility Day Care facility Performance theater Museum Art Gallery	

Any other use not listed in the above table is considered prohibited. Applications submitted under the DCNOD bylaw also need to meet the criteria outlined in the Dracut Center Neighborhood Design Guidelines, as well as the requirements shown in Table 2.13.

**Table 2.13: DCNOD Dimensional Requirements**

Minimum Lot Area:	22,000 square feet
Minimum Frontage:	75 feet
Minimum Front Yard Setback	0 feet/10 feet*
Minimum Side Yard Setback:	0 feet
Minimum Side Yard Setback when abutting a residential district:	15 feet
Minimum Rear Setback:	15 feet
Maximum Building Height:	3 stories or 45 feet
Minimum land area per lot per dwelling unit:	10,000 square feet

*\*On each lot, there shall be one side yard of at least 10 feet in width*

When the reuse of an existing building is proposed for affordable dwelling units the Planning Board may allow less square footage (down to a square footage of 3,000 square foot per unit) if such modifications will result in an improved design. The Planning Board may waive the requirement for mixed use if the project meets the overall requirements of the bylaw.

## MILL CONVERSION OVERLAY DISTRICT

In order to allow for the conversion and reuse of Dracut's historic mills and to promote diversified housing opportunities and commercial, retail or office uses, Dracut added the Mill Conversion Overlay District (MCOD) to its Zoning Bylaws in October 2000. Within the MCOD, the Planning Board may grant a Special Permit for the conversion of existing mill buildings and structures to multifamily dwellings, assisted living facilities, single-family dwellings, and/or nonresidential uses. MCOD projects are subject to site plan approval. The District includes the following parcels:

- 1951 Lakeview Avenue
- 1949 Lakeview Avenue
- 1935 Lakeview Avenue
- 16 Mill Street
- 76 Pleasant Street

In addition to allowing for the development of single family and multifamily dwelling units, the MCOD promotes the creation of affordable housing through its Special Permit requirements. As a condition of any Special Permit for a Mill Conversion Project, a minimum of fifteen (15%) of the total number of dwelling units shall be restricted for a period of at least thirty (30) years in the following manner: 5% of the units shall be affordable to persons or families qualifying as low income; 5% of the units shall be affordable to persons or families qualifying as moderate income; and 5% of the units shall be affordable to persons or families qualifying as median income. The applicant is encouraged to seek inclusion of the affordable units on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The Planning Board may require the applicant to use the Dracut Housing Authority or another appropriate entity to pursue SHI designation.

## FLOOD PLAIN AND FLOODWAY DISTRICT

In order to protect persons and property against flood hazards, maintain the flood plain's flood storage capacity, and provide long-term control over the extent of land subject to flood inundation, Dracut established the Flood Plain and Floodway District (FP). This overlay district includes all special flood hazard areas within the Town of Dracut designated as Zone A, AE, AH, and A99 on the Middlesex County Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and further defined by the Middlesex County Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report dated June 4, 2010. The FIRM and FIS report are incorporated into the Bylaw by reference. Uses permitted in the underlying zoning district are allowed provided that they comply with the provisions of the FP overlay district, sections of the State Building Code that address flood hazard areas, DEP Wetlands Protection Regulations, and DEP Title V.

## WELLHEAD PROTECTION DISTRICT

In order to preserve and protect existing and potential sources of drinking water supplies, in June 2002 the Town of Dracut adopted the Wellhead Protection District (WP). The boundaries of this overlay district include two zones: Zone I encompasses a 400-foot protective radius around public water system wells, while Zone II encompasses a half-mile radius around public water system wells.

Uses prohibited in the underlying zoning district are not permitted in the WP district. Additional uses prohibited in the district include landfills and open dumps; automobile junkyards; facilities that generate, treat, store, or dispose of hazardous waste; petroleum and oil bulk stations; discharge to the ground of non-sanitary wastewater; and stockpiling and disposal of snow and ice containing deicing chemicals brought in from outside the district.

Uses allowed in the overlay district include maintenance, repair and expansion of existing structures; farming and forestry; residential development; and construction, maintenance, and enlargement of drinking water supply related facilities. Uses and activities that require a Special Permit from the Planning Board include enlargement or alteration of existing uses that do not conform to the WP district; activities that involve the handling of toxic or hazardous materials in quantities greater than those associated with normal household use; any use that will render impervious more than 15 percent or 2,500 square feet of any lot, whichever is greater; earth removal; and storage of liquid hazardous materials, sludge, septage, deicing chemicals, or animal manure.

## WETLAND AND WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT (WWC)

The Town of Dracut adopted the Wetland and Water Conservancy District (WWC) in order to protect the Town's wetlands, water bodies and adjoining lands, mitigate flood hazards, and promote the usefulness of wetlands for recreation and habitat. Areas included in the WWC district are subject to the rules and regulations governing land uses in the underlying district and the requirements of the WWC section.

Uses prohibited in the underlying zoning district are not be permitted in the WWC district. Additional uses prohibited in the district include construction or enlargement of any new building or impervious surface; dumping, filling, earth transfer or removal except under specific circumstances; sewage or septage disposal systems, refuse dumping, sanitary landfills or "other sources of potential pollution"; storage of petroleum products, chemicals, manure, salt fertilizer, toxic or hazardous substances or other leachable material; and driveways, streets, curbs, utilities or sidewalks except where access is needed to service portions of an otherwise inaccessible lot.

Uses allowed in the overlay district include agriculture; forestry; construction and maintenance of underground and overhead public utilities; maintenance and improvement of existing public roadways; maintenance of beaches and boat launching ramps; maintenance and improvement (excluding enlargement) of existing structures; construction and maintenance of footbridges, piers, boathouses, duck blinds, and similar structures provided that they are constructed on pilings or posts; and uses permitted in the underlying district provided that the land is found not to be definable as wetland pursuant to the relevant Bylaw section and State definition.

## REGULATIONS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Renewable and non-renewable public and private utility facilities, equipment and structures for generating electricity for commercial purposes are allowed by Special Permit from the Board of Selectmen in the Industrial 1 and Industrial 2 districts. In addition, wind energy systems are allowed as a principal use by Special Permit in any district, while solar energy systems are allowed as accessory uses in the Residential districts and as accessory uses to dwellings in all districts, as described below.

### WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS

Wind energy turbines or wind machines designed to serve a principal use on a lot may be authorized in any district by Special Permit from the Planning Board provided that the wind machine is set back from all lot lines at least the distance equal to the height of the tower. The Planning Board may allow the wind machine to exceed the maximum height limitations established by this Bylaw provided that the required setback is met.

### SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

Solar energy systems are permitted as accessory uses in Dracut's Residential districts and as accessories to dwellings in all non-Residential districts. However, the Bylaw does not reference solar energy systems as accessory uses for commercial or industrial districts. Through the SolSmart program, the Town made dramatic improvements to its solar permitting systems during the fall of 2017 by implementing an on-line permit application and management system.

## DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Dracut has adopted development standards or requirements that govern site design, parking and loading, environmental standards, landscaping, and signage. The site plan review process and development standards are outlined in the following narrative.

## SITE PLAN REVIEW

Section 1.16.30 of the Zoning Bylaw was adopted in January 2018 and establishes a site plan review process for the following activities and uses:

- Construction of any new community facility, commercial, industrial or business building; or any additions or alterations in excess of twenty-five hundred (2,500) square feet or thirty (30) percent (%) of the existing gross floor area, whichever is less, which has been constructed within the consecutive two-year period;
- Any change or intensification of use which increases the parking requirement by ten (10) spaces and/or triggers the requirement of a new loading zone;
- Grading, clearing, or other non-residential land development activity except for the following: work incidental to agricultural activities; clearing necessary for percolation and other site tests; or work in conjunction with an earth removal permit; and
- Any activity or use that is indicated elsewhere in the Zoning Bylaw as requiring site plan review.

The site plan review process allows the Planning Board to review the following:

- Traffic circulation and access;
- Pedestrian safety and access;
- Off-street parking and loading which is in compliance with the applicable requirements of the Protective Zoning Bylaw;
- Emergency vehicle access;
- Storm water drainage, based upon a professional engineering report, utilizing on-site absorption, and low impact development integrated stormwater management practices wherever practical;
- Water supply and sewage disposal adequate to support the intended use(s);
- Screening, including the use of natural land features, plantings, and erosion control;
- Protection and preservation of existing natural features and vistas;
- Signage and exterior lighting;
- Visual impact of parking, storage or other outdoor service areas;
- Consistency with character and scale of surrounding buildings; and
- Energy, water and resource efficient design, through appropriate building orientation, landscaping and use of resource efficient materials and energy- and water-efficient systems.

The Planning Board may engage the services of a technical consultant(s) to review any site plan when it believes professional review is necessary, in accordance with MGL, Chapter

44, Section 53G. The site plan review process establishes landscaping and lighting standards that are more rigorous than otherwise outlined within the Zoning Bylaw.

## SIGNAGE

Section 3.11 of the Zoning Bylaw addresses sign requirements within specific zoning districts. The size and type of signage allowed is based on the zoning district and if the signage is accessory or non-accessory as defined by the Bylaw. Signs may be illuminated by: 1) a steady stationary light of reasonable intensity shielded and directed solely at the sign; 2) by an internal light of reasonable intensity; or 3) by neon or gas-filled tubes. No sign may be illuminated between 12 midnight and 6 a.m., except in the case of accessory signs on the premises of a business that is open.

## PARKING AND LOADING

Dracut's Zoning Bylaw sets minimum parking and loading standards for various land uses. For single-family, two-family and multi-family dwellings, two off-street spaces are required for each dwelling unit. Additional spaces may be required for home occupations. Parking requirements for permitted commercial and industrial uses are detailed in the Bylaw, generally based on the size, number of employees or occupancy of the specific use. No off-street parking areas other than those serving single- or two-family residential dwellings may be located within 15 feet of a street right-of-way, and landscaping is required for parking lots with 20 or more spaces, and for lots where two rows of parking spaces containing a total of ten or more spaces face each other.

Common parking areas may be permitted for the purpose of servicing two or more principal uses on the same or separate lots, provided that: (1) the parking is within 500 feet of the premises and has excess capacity during all or part of the day; (2) a contract or suitable legal instrument detailing the shared parking is filed with the permit application; (3) reduction in area required for parking shall be reserved in landscaped open space; and (4) the property owners are responsible for parking if the joint parking arrangement ends. Many of the parking requirements contained in the zoning bylaw need to be updated and there are no specific requirements for some allowed uses contained within the bylaw.

In addition to parking, buildings over a set size that require the delivery or shipment of materials must have bays and suitable maneuvering space for off-street loading of vehicles. Service establishments and retail stores with a gross floor area between 5,000 and 8,000 square feet require one berth, and additional berths are required at the rate of one berth per 8,000 square feet or nearest multiple thereof. Common berths may be permitted for service establishments and retail stores when they are connected by a common wall. For each office building with gross area of 4,000 square feet or more, at least one berth must be

provided. For manufacturing, industrial, warehousing and similar uses with up to 8,000 square feet of gross floor area, at least one berth must be provided. For larger floor areas, additional berths must be provided as required by the Building Inspector.

## PUBLIC INPUT

The first Master Plan Visioning Session was held at Harmony Hall on October 5, 2017. During the session, public input was generated through the use of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis exercise. The following responses relative to land use were received:

- **Strengths**

- Agricultural heritage
- Suburban Town
- Natural open space
- Large lots are affordable
- Small town feel
- Use of historic properties

- **Weaknesses**

- Inadequate funding
- Lack of a downtown
- Hodge-podge development
- Lack of new businesses
- Quality of facades and landscaping in new developments
- No curb appeal
- Too many signs
- Clutter from utility lines and signs
- Presence of brownfields and quarries
- Outdated zoning bylaw
- Lack of identity
- Not enough tax revenue

- **Opportunities**

- Add sidewalks in downtown
- Develop a downtown with commercial business and downtown identity
- Develop a design for downtown
- More service businesses
- Encourage development along the Merrimack River
- Adaptive reuse of the quarries

- **Threats**

- Resistance to progress
- Loss of character
- Gas pipeline
- Too many residential developments
- Doing nothing

On January 11, 2018, a second Visioning Session was held to gather input on land use, housing and economic development. A series of questions were posed to participants and their response relative to land use are summarized below:

- The existing zoning slows development. Some residents want zoning to stop change, but Dracut should use zoning to manage or control change to improve the town. The town doesn't effectively use open space regulations to reduce impacts on natural resources. The open space regulations should be improved to better protect natural resources and to reduce cluster development. There is a need to reduce lot sizes and road widths.
- The current 30' roadway width requirement for subdivisions is too wide and should be reduced for smaller developments. Update to subdivision regulations will address this issue.
- Zoning should be modified to require a buffer zone between natural gas pipelines and development. The existing pipeline is among the highest pressure lines in New England and a rupture could cause serious damage to neighboring development. Residences, fire departments, schools and several other land uses should be outside of the buffer zone. Other land uses like recreation fields might be appropriate within the buffer zone.
- Due to land use conflicts, new development on Loon Hill Road, including three medical facilities and a police station, makes selling existing residential homes difficult, because it is no longer a residential area.
- It's difficult to reuse or change the use of grandfathered commercial properties that are no longer viable. For example, a closed ice cream stand on Lakeview Avenue is difficult to reuse as another business. Other properties that are located in commercial areas like Lakeview Avenue need to be addressed as well.
- Need to re-examine what uses are allowed in each zone to eliminate conflicting uses. Most of the business uses are included in the B-3 district.
- Open space development in the 1980s was designed to reduce the cost of home construction and preserve land, but it didn't work. Some homes that were constructed are far too large for the lots they are on. There's a need for a Floor Area

Ratio (FAR) to control development density. The original zoning districts had no boundaries that were mappable. It's time for a major rewrite of the zoning bylaw.

- Subdivision bylaws - Where does the required money or land set aside as mitigation go? Given the confusion, maybe the bylaw should be changed. Subdivision laws gave the Planning Board the option of setting aside land for open space for three years. Chapter 41 has a provision to set aside land for recreation with a 3-year reversion clause.
- Could the Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay District be redeveloped as a mixed-use area or some other creative zone to take advantage of existing assets? Assembly Square is a good example.
- The area of town near UMass Lowell could be developed with housing for professors and graduate students that is higher-end than standard student housing. Specialty shops could also be developed.
- Develop neighborhood stores and cafes near the higher-end housing in East Dracut.
- The Navy Yard District could capitalize on its location near UML with a mixed-use area and residential development above ground floor commercial uses. This area includes the Lowell line to Lakeview Avenue, Pleasant Street to the fire station. The current mill yard zoning doesn't allow recreational uses like bowling and movie theaters in the Navy Yard. It should be changed to allow those types of uses. Look at Navy Yard Study developed through a Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) grant.
- Planning regulations should include more considerations for people with disabilities, including development of more single-story homes.
- Stronger design guidelines are needed, including façade design review on main thoroughfares and additional landscaping requirements for commercial uses. Existing façades and landscaping should also be improved at main commercial areas.
- Commercial signage should be dimmed at night, possibly including a maximum allowable brightness or a requirement that lighting be shut down after a certain time each night (such as at midnight). Streetlights should focus light towards the ground rather than illuminating the night sky.
- Small business shouldn't be burdened by too many regulations. Walkable commercial areas should be encouraged and façade requirements would be appropriate in some of those areas, but façade regulations aren't appropriate for most small businesses around town.
- Remove old, dilapidated signs and keep industrial areas together instead of spreading them out.
- There's a randomness to zoning in Dracut and non-conforming buildings and signs have been allowed to stay.

- There is a lack of multi-family units in town.
- Lakeview Avenue would be a good location for new housing.
- Many of Dracut's existing houses are in poor condition and are located on small lots. In many cases the lots should be consolidated so that new multi-family homes could be built on the new larger lots.

The Master Plan Committee distributed a written and online survey to residents as a means of gathering additional input. The land use related input generated from the survey is summarized as follows:

- Overdevelopment/too much growth ranked as #4 on the list of the top twenty issues facing the Town over the next ten years, while the lack of business or industrial development ranked as #5, open space preservation ranked as #8, and agricultural preservation ranked as #13;
- 77.93% of respondents favor creating design guidelines for new development;
- 79.52% of respondents favor protecting additional agricultural lands;
- 79.84% favor encouraging more intense economic development in strategic locations; and
- 87.69% favor creating additional opportunities for small-scale/neighborhood style business establishments.

The Master Plan Committee also distributed a written and online survey to young residents completing their senior year at Dracut High School, as a means of gathering additional input from youth. The land use related input generated from the youth survey is summarized as follows:

- 73.53% favor encouraging more intense economic development in strategic locations;
- 90.63% favor creating additional opportunities for small-scale/neighborhood style business establishments;
- 69.70% of respondents favored creating design guidelines for new development; and
- 87.50% of respondents favor protecting additional agricultural lands.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The existing Zoning Bylaw has been updated seventy-five times over the past three decades. Most of these updates were undertaken in a piecemeal fashion. As a result, the current bylaw lacks clarity and consistency, and many of the standards, definitions, and procedural requirements are in dire need of updating and revision. The Town's Zoning Bylaw Review Committee was reactivated six years ago and the Committee made some incremental improvements to the bylaw over the last several years. A comprehensive update of the bylaw should be undertaken. Going forward, the Zoning Bylaw Review

Committee should examine the bylaw every five years, and make recommendations to the Planning Board relative to any needed revisions.

Currently, there are 419 split-zone parcels within Dracut. Many of these parcels lie within the Town's business districts, such as along Bridge Street (33 parcels), Methuen Street (23), Lakeview Avenue (16) and Broadway Road (15). Administratively, this represents a burden for the Town and for property owners, given that rezoning through Town Meeting may be needed in order to develop or redevelop a property. Such was the case for the recent development of the Genesis Rehab facility, which necessitated a Special Town Meeting. The Town should work to resolve the split-zoned parcels as part of the future overhaul of the Zoning Bylaw.

Input received during the public process indicated that some residents and local officials feel that the current zoning is not always consistent with existing neighborhood character, especially in the areas around the lakes and ponds, and in the mill neighborhoods. The Town should consider revising the zoning in these areas to allow for smaller lot sizes that reflect the existing character of these neighborhoods. Such a change would significantly reduce the number of non-conforming lots in these sections of town.

The Town could improve the visual quality of commercial and industrial development through the adoption of design guidelines. The intent of design guidelines is to provide direction and suggestions regarding design elements such as landscaping, signage, lighting, access and parking lot design, and façade treatments. The design guidelines would provide a means for improving visual cohesion in the retail and commercial areas, and would assist in enhancing traffic flow. Design guidelines allow the Planning Board to consider factors beyond the engineering and site design requirements that are currently outlined in the Zoning Bylaw. If desired, the guidelines could be limited to projects over a certain size threshold, for example 7,500 square feet or more. The intent of the guidelines is not to limit a proponent's creativity or ability to maximize the use of the site. If well-constructed, design guidelines encourage innovative and unique design solutions, while avoiding visual chaos and functional inefficiencies of design decisions that are made independent of the context in which the project is located.

Given the proximity of the Navy Yard business area to the UMass Lowell North Campus, there is a significant opportunity to leverage the untapped market that exist north of the town line, given the number of students and faculty located nearby. Enhancing the walkability of the area and creating a more unified appearance for the gateway into Dracut and the Navy Yard business district could be accomplished through better design guidance. *The Dracut Navy Yard Business District Study* prepared by FinePoint Associates in 2017 recommended that the Town look for grant opportunities, in order to develop an identity

and sense of place for the district through improved signage, banners, better gateway treatments, and branding.<sup>1</sup> The study also noted that the parking regulations for this area need to be revised to be more consistent with present day development practices and transportation trends. It also recommended that the zoning be revised to accommodate mixed-use development that allows retail use on the first floor and residential units above. Currently, the Town's zoning bylaw only allows for two residential units per parcel.

The public input process has clearly indicated that residents feel there is a need to improve the Town Center, in order to create a distinct identity and recognize its role as the civic heart of the community. While there is a clustering of municipal uses near the intersection of Arlington and Bridge Streets, the Town Center lacks cohesion and there are several underutilized properties. Adding to the lack of continuity in this area of town, is the retail strip development that has occurred further north along Broadway Road, just outside of the designated Town Center. The strip development along Broadway is highly automobile oriented and has the potential to undermine the goals laid out in the DCNOD bylaw. During the public process, some residents stated that they view Broadway Road as the Town Center given the level of commercial activity. In order to improve both the Town Center area and conditions along Broadway Road, greater attention needs to be paid to improving walkability and pedestrian connectivity, through better pedestrian facilities (e.g. sidewalks, walkways, and crosswalks), and the inclusion of pedestrian enhancements, such as pedestrian scale lighting, benches and street trees.

It is evident from the Visioning Sessions and written survey that Dracut residents cherish the town's agricultural heritage. Dracut has taken some steps to protect its agricultural landscape and enterprises through the adoption of a right-to-farm bylaw, and through the use of CPA funds to purchase agricultural lands. In addition, the Town recently amended the Open Space and Residential Development bylaw to allow non-profits and the State, as well as the Town, to hold and manage open space parcels, including agricultural lands. This will allow for stronger partnerships between the State, land trusts, and the Town. The Zoning Bylaw should be modified to better articulate the Town's support of agricultural enterprises, by including such uses as food processing and packaging, shared commercial kitchen facilities that allow for value-added food production, and farmers' co-ops. Dracut should collaborate with neighboring communities to better understand the regional needs of the agricultural community, and to identify opportunities to support farmers that extend beyond the borders of the town.

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<sup>1</sup> Dracut Navy Yard Business District, Analysis of Economic and Market Conditions, FinePoint Associates, November 2017.

There is little reference within the Town's existing plans, policies or development regulations relative to the cultural and artistic uses and enterprises within Dracut. For example, the Zoning Bylaw does not include museums, artist work/live space or performing arts facilities as allowed uses in any district, except for the Dracut Center Overlay Neighborhood District. The Town should consider the needs of the cultural and artistic community in future revisions to the Zoning Bylaw. The inclusion of artisan/artist galleries, museums, and studio space is important to the cultural economy and quality of life in Dracut.

To promote affordable housing in a way that provides additional units while having local regulatory control, the Town should consider adopting an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw, as recommended in the Town's approved Housing Production Plan. The bylaw should apply to multi-family development projects and to single-family subdivisions over a certain size threshold. Dracut could seek assistance in developing the bylaw from Mass Housing Partnership, which makes consultant services and other resources available to municipalities for measures that promote affordable housing.

Dracut's Zoning Bylaw allows in-law dwelling units, which are designed to provide a non-rental housing alternative for immediate family members or care givers. The current Bylaw is unclear whether in-law units are allowed in all residential districts. In-law dwelling units are listed under "Accessory Uses Permitted in any Zoning District" in Section 2.11.50, but in-law suites are prohibited in the R-3 District, according to the Table of Permitted uses. The Bylaw makes no distinction between in-law dwelling units versus in-law suites. This section of the Zoning Bylaw should be rewritten to improve clarity, and the Town should consider allowing additional flexibility in terms of the application of the in-law/Accessory bylaw. For example, allowing for accessory dwelling units with fewer constraints (for example, not requiring that the accessory unit be occupied by the homeowner's relative) would help to ensure a productive future for many large, older homes, and would provide additional housing options for older adults and young, entry-level workers. Accessory dwelling units generally fit the neighborhoods in which they are located and are unobtrusive. NMCOG has received a Planning Assistance Grant from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and is working with the Town to examine by-right zoning options for accessory dwelling units.

The Mill Conversion Overlay District presently requires a thirty-year deed restriction for affordable units, and the applicant is "encouraged" to seek inclusion of the affordable units on the State's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The Planning Board may require the applicant to use the Dracut Housing Authority or another appropriate entity to pursue SHI designation. In order to allow the Town to make progress in attaining the 10% affordability goal set by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD),

the deed restriction for affordable units should be in perpetuity and all affordable units should be eligible for SHI inclusion.

The Town should consider adopting a Low Impact Development (LID) bylaw. Low impact development (LID) is an approach to environmentally friendly land development that includes landscaping and design techniques that maintain the natural, pre-developed ability of a site to manage rainfall. LID protects the natural ability of the site to capture precipitation and recharge it to the local water table. This is often accomplished by utilizing the following tools:

- Planning during design: preserve the site's natural features such as wetlands, native vegetation, flood plains, woodland and soils to greatest extent possible;
- Landscaping: plant native vegetation in buffer strips and rain gardens (small planted depressions that can trap and filter runoff);
- Prevention: use vegetated areas to slow runoff, maximizing infiltration and reducing contact with paved surfaces; and
- Reducing impervious surfaces wherever possible through alternative street design, such as the use of narrower roadways and use of shared parking areas and driveways.

Presently, LID is not addressed in the town's Subdivision Regulations. The site plan review process that was added to the zoning bylaw in January 2018 requires the use of LID techniques, where practical, for those projects requiring site plan review. The adoption of a LID bylaw would provide more detailed standards and guidance for managing stormwater for all development projects. The use of such stormwater management techniques would assist the Town in its compliance with EPA's new MS4 permit requirements that recently went into effect.

Dracut's Zoning Bylaw should be modified to better accommodate renewable energy. The written survey showed that over 90% of those responding favored adopting energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives. The Town recently received a Gold designation through the USDOE's SolSmart program by implementing the following measures:

- Creating an online permitting checklist, increasing transparency for community members and solar installers;
- Reviewing local zoning requirements and identifying restrictions that intentionally or unintentionally prohibit solar PV development;
- Allowing solar by-right accessory use in all zones (so solar installations don't require special permits or hearings);

- Cross-training both inspection and permitting staff on solar PV; and
- Providing a streamlined permitting pathway for small PV systems.

More can be done to promote renewable energy. NMCOG has received funding from the State through the Planning Assistance Grant program to help Dracut make additional modifications to its Zoning Bylaw which result in reasonable standards that facilitate the development of solar energy systems for both ground-mounted and rooftop installations. The State's model zoning bylaw forms the foundation for this work. In addition, NMCOG is worked with Dracut to achieve Green Community designation through a grant from the Department of Energy Resources (DOER).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Update and revise the Town's Zoning Bylaw to provide clarity and consistency, update uses, and add appropriate design standards, guidelines and performance standards, including updated standards for landscaping, lighting and signage. Conduct a comprehensive review of the town's Zoning Bylaw and development regulations every five years.
- Resolve the split-zoned parcels, particularly those located within the town's business districts.
- Consider revising the zoning requirements in the neighborhoods around the town's lakes, ponds and mill areas, to allow for smaller lot sizes that are consistent with the neighborhoods' existing character.
- Create design guidelines directed at improving the visual quality of commercial and industrial development. The guidelines will provide direction and suggestions for the development community relative to landscaping, signage, lighting, access and parking lot design, and façade treatments for projects of a certain size.
- Implement improvements in the Navy Yard business area that enhance walkability and create a more attractive and unified appearance, particularly for the gateway into Dracut. This work includes implementing the recommendations outlined in the Navy Business District study that call for improved signage, banners, and branding, as well as zoning revisions to allow for mixed-use development and to address outdated parking requirements.
- Continue to work on establishing a more traditional Town Center with a distinct identity, and improve the walkability of the Town Center and adjacent neighborhoods through enhanced pedestrian connections.
- Modify the Zoning Bylaw to better articulate the Town's support of agricultural enterprises by including food processing and packaging, shared community commercial kitchen facilities, and farmer's co-ops as allowed uses.

- Collaborate with neighboring communities to better understand the regional needs of the agricultural community, and identify opportunities to support agriculture that extend beyond the boundaries of the town.
- Consider the adoption of an inclusionary zoning bylaw, as recommended in the Town's Housing Production Plan, for multi-family projects and single-family subdivisions over a certain size threshold.
- Modify the Zoning Bylaw to give consideration to the town's cultural and artistic enterprises by including museums, artist work/live space, studios, galleries and performing arts facilities as allowed uses in appropriate districts.
- Revise the in-law/accessory dwelling unit bylaw to provide additional clarity. Consider allowing accessory dwelling units by-right, or at a minimum, allowing for accessory units with fewer constraints, in order to provide additional housing options for older adults and young, entry-level workers.
- Revise the Mill Conversion Overlay District bylaw to require that the deed restriction for affordable units be in perpetuity and to mandate that all affordable units be included on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).
- Consider adopting a Low Impact Development (LID) bylaw for managing stormwater on site and assisting the Town in meeting the requirements of the new EPA MS4 permit.
- Modify the Zoning Bylaw to encourage renewable energy initiatives with the assistance of NMCOG.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development section of the Master Plan focuses on those elements that energize a community in terms of generating financial support for the municipal services that local government provides its citizens. Economic development largely defines a community in terms of its overall health, economy and business activities. Therefore, it includes a number of factors – housing, transportation, job creation, business development, land conservation and land use. An effective economic development strategy provides a balance between economic growth and quality of life in a community. In general, it is the quality of life within a community that attracts residents, shoppers and visitors. If there is an overemphasis upon economic growth, the quality of life within a community will suffer. Economic Development is more than a community's economic base – it reflects the overall process needed to attract private investment and provide jobs for community residents, generates property tax revenues that support local services, creates new contracting opportunities for local businesses, and connects the local community with the regional, state and national economy.

The Economic Development section of the Master Plan builds upon the *Dracut Economic Development Strategy* prepared by the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) in collaboration with the Dracut Economic Development Committee in July 2016. The *Dracut Economic Development Strategy* built upon previous economic development initiatives, such as the *Economic Development Strategy: Dracut, Massachusetts* prepared by RKG Associates, Inc. in January 1996, the Socio-Economic Development section of the 1999 *Dracut Master Plan* developed by John Brown Associates, Inc., and the *Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT)* report completed by Professor Barry Bluestone and the Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy at Northeastern University in November 2014. As a stand-alone document, the *Dracut Economic Development Strategy*

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Re-establish the Economic Development Committee
- Provide a streamlined permitting process
- Establish an active marketing program
- Utilize training resources at UMass Lowell, Middlesex Community College and the Greater Lowell MassHire Workforce Development Board
- Address infrastructure issues
- Utilize the State's economic Development tool box

contained the following sections: demographic analysis, characteristics of the local economy, community assets and liabilities, access and infrastructure analysis, commercial and industrial activity, issues and opportunities and recommendations. Within the Dracut Master Plan, the Land Use and Zoning chapter addresses the demographic and zoning issues, while the Housing chapter largely addresses housing issues, including household income, and water and sewer infrastructure. The Economic Development Chapter focuses on the Characteristics of the Local Economy, the Economic and Business Conditions, Community Assets and Liabilities, Access and Infrastructure, and summarizes community input.

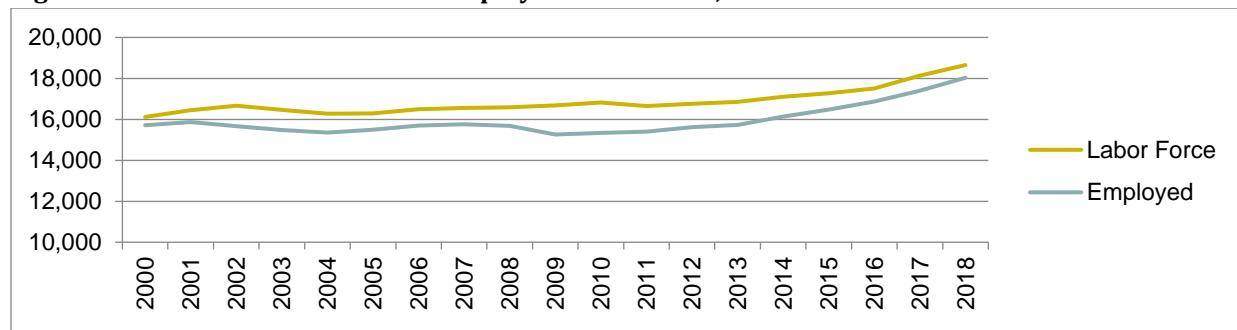
## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY

In determining where to locate businesses, private investors focus principally on the quality of the workforce in the community and region. This section focuses on the local labor market from several different perspectives – employment levels and unemployment, income, educational attainment, the current employment sectors for Dracut residents and commuting patterns. For the most part, the local workforce is well educated, works principally in the service sector and commutes outside Dracut for employment.

### EMPLOYMENT LEVELS AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The labor force is described as those individuals that have a job or are seeking a job, are at least 16 years old and not serving in the military or institutionalized. According to data available from the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), Dracut had an estimated labor force of 18,917 people in July 2018. This number represents the highest level of Dracut residents actively participating in the labor force since 2000. Similarly, the employment numbers reached a peak at 18,222 workers in July 2018. As shown in Figure 3.1, labor force and employment numbers have fluctuated over the last eighteen years, largely due to the impacts of the “dot.com” recession of the early 2000s and the national recession of 2007-2008.

**Figure 3.1: Dracut Labor Force and Employment Numbers, 2000-2018**

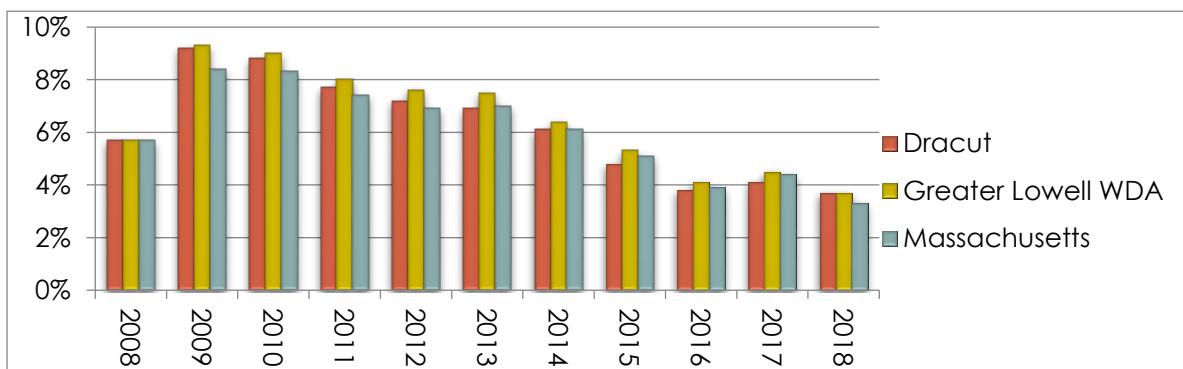


Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Force and Unemployment Data

Prior to the national recession in 2007, the lowest employment levels occurred between July 2003 and July 2004. The national recession had the greatest impact on the local labor force and employment numbers than any other economic downturn since the Depression.

The unemployment rates for Dracut from July 2008 to July 2018 are presented below in Figure 3.2. From a historical perspective, unemployment rates in Dracut averaged less than 4% at the beginning of 2000. By 2002 unemployment levels began to increase, in part due to the layoffs in the information technology and computer manufacturing fields associated with the “dot.com” recession. Unemployment rates then dropped again during the middle of the decade. With the beginning of the national recession in 2007, unemployment in Dracut began to rise from 4.9% in July 2007 to a peak of 9.3% in July 2009, when 1,579 local workers were unemployed. Since 2009, unemployment rates have steadily declined to the July 2018 rate of 3.7%, below the early 2000 unemployment levels.

**Figure 3.2: Unemployment Rates: July 2008- July 2018**



*Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development LURR Reports*

The unemployment rate in Dracut has consistently been lower than the regional Workforce Development Area (WDA) rate, yet generally equal to or more than the state unemployment rate. In July 2018 the WDA unemployment rate was 3.7%, while the state unemployment rate was 3.3%. The national unemployment rate was 3.9%. Given that the majority of Dracut residents work in the region, layoffs in the region negatively impact Dracut’s unemployment rate.

## EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

The UMass Donahue Institute developed employment projections for the NMCOG region and the Town of Dracut in 2018 for MassDOT. These employment projections reflect the number of jobs at Dracut businesses and are an estimate of the future number of jobs within each community. The UMass Donahue Institute applied a “top-down” approach that utilizes employment projections for the state, as a whole, and then assigns shares of these figures to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) regions and the individual

communities within those regions. Based upon this approach, the employment projections at the state level are much more accurate than those for the region or individual communities. Nevertheless, there is merit in understanding the projected employment numbers that have been calculated for Dracut and the Greater Lowell region. Outlined in Table 3.1 are the local and regional employment projections from 2020 to 2040:

**Table 3.1: Local and Regional Employment Projections: 2010-2040**

Community	2010	2020	2030	2040	% Change 2010-2040
Billerica	25,070	26,190	25,983	25,975	3.6
Chelmsford	19,603	24,005	23,813	23,806	2.14
Dracut	5,334	6,005	5,958	5,956	11.7
Dunstable	321	300	298	298	-7.2
Lowell	38,411	37,005	36,708	36,699	-4.5
Pepperell	2,050	1,600	1,588	1,587	-22.7
Tewksbury	14,570	16,00	15,872	15,867	8.9
Tyngsborough	4,212	4,800	4,762	4,760	13.0
Westford	9,759	12,515	12,416	12,411	27.2
Greater Lowell region	119,332	128,420	127,398	127,359	6.7

*Source: MassDET 2010 and projections developed by the UMass Donahue Institute for MassDOT in 2018*

These projections show an employment increase of 11.7% for Dracut between 2010 and 2040. This employment growth rate exceeds that for the Greater Lowell region at 6.7%, as well as five other communities in the region. By 2040, local employment in Dracut businesses is expected to reach 5,956 jobs. While there are some limitations with the projections developed by the UMass Donahue Institute, these projections are the only ones available for economic development planning purposes.

## INCOME

Income levels in Dracut are generally reflected in the median household income, median family income and per capita income. The median household income figures can be found in the Housing Chapter of the Master Plan. These income statistics can be used to gauge the health of the local economy, assess the overall standard of living and compare these figures with those at the regional, state and national levels.

### MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME

Median family income is calculated based on the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household who are related. Median family income is often greater than median household income because a household can consist of single individuals, whereas family income always consists of two or more individuals. During the

past sixteen years, median family income increased in Dracut, the Greater Lowell region, Massachusetts and the nation, as shown below in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: Median Family Income for Selected Geographies (1999 and 2012-2016)**

Geographic Area	1999	2012-2016	% Increase	% Increase Adjusted for Inflation
<b>Dracut</b>	<b>\$65,633</b>	<b>\$94,548</b>	44.1	2.9
Greater Lowell region	\$66,600	\$97,813	46.9	4.9
Massachusetts	\$61,664	\$90,180	46.2	4.5
United States	\$50,046	\$67,871	35.6	-3.1

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 U.S. Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

Dracut's median family income increased from \$65,633 in 1999 to \$94,548 in 2012-2016—an increase of 44.1%. Median family incomes also increased by 46.9% in the Greater Lowell region, 46.2% in Massachusetts and 35.6% in the United States. Dracut's median family income in 2012-2016 was 28.2% higher than the nation's median family income and 4.6% higher than the Commonwealth's. However, Dracut's median family income was 3.3% lower than that for the Greater Lowell region. When adjusted for inflation, Dracut experienced a positive growth of 2.9% in median family income. The Greater Lowell region and Massachusetts also had positive growth in median family income, increasing by 4.9% and 4.5% respectively. The nation experienced a negative growth of 3.1% in median household income between 1999 and 2012-2016 when adjusted for inflation.

## PER CAPITA INCOME

Between 1999 and 2012-2016, Dracut's per capita income increased from \$23,750 to \$35,512 for an increase of 49.5%. The increase in Dracut's per capita income outpaced the increase in the Greater Lowell region (47.7%), Massachusetts (46.7%) and the United States (38.2%), as shown in Table 3.3. However, the per capital income in Dracut in 2012-2016 was still 1.5% below the per capita income in the Greater Lowell region and 6.7% less than the Massachusetts per capita income. Yet, the Dracut per capita income in 2012-2016 was 16% higher than the national per capita income.

**Table 3.3: Per Capita Income for Selected Geographies (1999 and 2012-2016)**

Geographic Area	1999	2012-2016	% Increase 1999-2012-2016	% Increase Adjusted for Inflation
<b>Dracut</b>	<b>\$23,750</b>	<b>\$35,512</b>	49.5	6.8
Greater Lowell region	\$24,403	\$36,042	47.7	5.5
Massachusetts	\$25,952	\$38,069	46.7	4.8
United States	\$21,587	\$29,829	38.2	-1.3

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 U.S. Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

When adjusted for inflation, Dracut experienced a positive per capita income growth of 6.8%, while the Greater Lowell region and Massachusetts respectively had a 5.5% and 4.8% growth in per capita income. The national per capita income decreased by 1.3% when adjusted for inflation.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

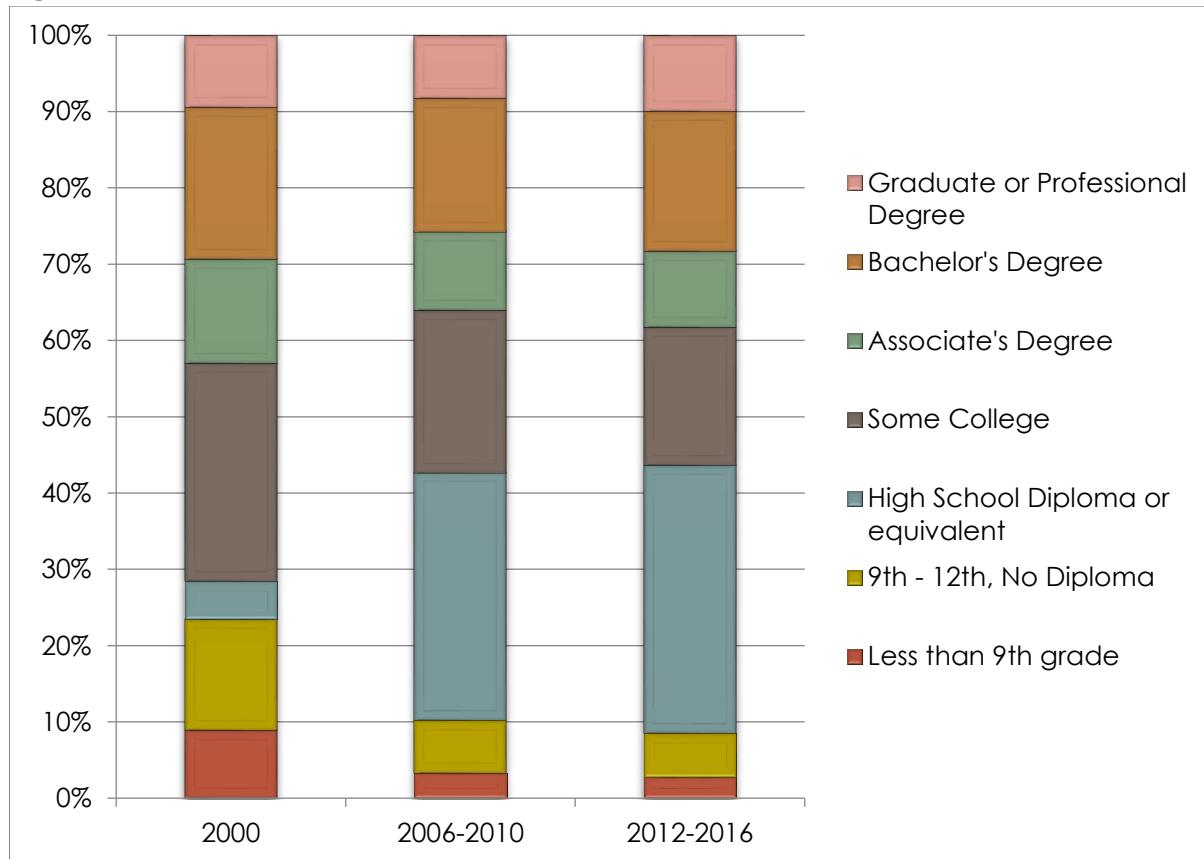
Local communities cannot develop a skilled workforce without public investment in universities, community colleges, and the K-12 education system. The level of education attainment and the quality of education are therefore key indicators of Dracut's quality of life, workforce preparedness and economic potential.

Figure 3 on the following page compares educational attainment among Dracut residents 25 years and older in 2000, 2006-2010 and 2012-2016. In 2000, approximately 16.1% (3,093) of adults living in Dracut had not earned a high school diploma or its equivalent. In 2006-2010, that rate dropped to 10.2% (2,049) and dropped even more to 8.6% in 2012-2016 (1,834). Adults who earned a high school diploma or equivalent accounted for 34.7% of the adult population in 2000, 32.5% in 2006-2010 and 35.1% in 2012-2016.

Since 2000, educational attainment in Dracut has shifted with more than a majority of adults (56.4%) in 2012-2016 having completed at least some college. In 2000, Associate's Degree holders comprised 9.4% (1,805) of adults, while those with Bachelor's and Advanced Degrees accounted for 20.1% (3,860). In 2006-2010, approximately 10.3% (2,060) of all adults over the age of 25 had earned an Associate's Degree, and most notably, more than one quarter (25.7%) of the adult population had earned a Bachelor's Degree or better. In 2012-2016, 2,126 adults (9.9%) over the age of 25 earned an Associate's Degree. Adults in Dracut with Bachelor's and Advanced Degrees accounted for 28.3% (6,072) of the total adult population.

In essence, the improvements in educational attainment are likely to influence the types of positions Dracut residents are employed in which is to say, higher skilled, more intensive training, and better paying jobs.

**Figure 3.3: Educational Attainment in Dracut: 2000, 2006-2010 and 2012-2016**



Source: 2000 U.S. Census, 2006-2010 and 2012-2016 American Community Survey

As of 2012-2016, 91.4% of Dracut's adult population had a high school diploma or better, which is slightly higher than the Greater Lowell region at 90.1%. However, the percentage of Dracut adults who possess a Bachelor's degree or higher (28.3%) is still lower than the region (36.2%). Table 3.4 on the next page compares the years of school completed for adults in Dracut and the Greater Lowell region.

Dracut's levels of educational attainment exceeded the national and state rates in terms of residents with a high school diploma or better. In Massachusetts, 90.1% of residents had at least a high school diploma or better, according to the 2012-2016 ACS data. This is also above the U.S. average of 87.3%. In terms of holding a Bachelor's degree or higher, Dracut residents fall well below the state average of 41.2% and just short of the national average of 30.9%.

**Table 3.4: Years of School Completed - Dracut and the Greater Lowell Region (2012-2016 )**

Education Attained	Dracut		Greater Lowell Region	
	2012-2016	Percent	2012-2016	Percent
Less than 9th grade	595	2.8	10,575	4.5
9th - 12th, No Diploma	1,239	5.8	12,604	5.4
High School Diploma or equivalent	7,512	35.1	67,102	28.8
Some College	3,887	18.1	39,760	17.1
Associate's Degree	2,126	9.9	18,306	7.9
Bachelor's Degree	3,940	18.4	50,503	21.7
Graduate or Professional Degree	2,132	9.9	33,781	14.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,431</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>232,631</b>	<b>99.9</b>

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey

## K-12 EDUCATION PERFORMANCE

Educational performance data for the K-12 system for Dracut and the region is provided below. Table 3.5 below presents the results of the 2018 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) testing that is conducted in elementary school and high school. Students who take the test are categorized as advanced and proficient, needing improvement, or warned and failing. The percentage of students that were categorized as proficient or higher is shown below. Dracut students generally outperformed Lowell and Tewksbury students in English and Math, as well as Lowell students in Science.

**Table 3.5: 2018 MCAS Scores for Dracut and Greater Lowell**

School District	2018 MCAS % Proficient or Higher		
	English Language Arts	Math	Science
Billerica	94	88	90
Chelmsford	97	91	85
<b>Dracut</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>71</b>
Groton - Dunstable	97	97	94
Lowell	82	66	59
Pepperell (part of North Middlesex Regional School District)	96	82	85
Tewksbury	92	77	76
Tyngsborough	98	90	92
Westford	98	96	95

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education

## EMPLOYMENT SECTORS FOR DRACUT RESIDENTS

Dracut residents work in virtually every industry, from manufacturing and construction to public administration and restaurants. Table 3.6 on the following page shows the primary

employment industries for Dracut residents in 2000 and 2012-2016. This table reflects the changing employment opportunities for Dracut residents since the onset of the national recession and the rebounding economy following the last recession. For instance, the number of manufacturing establishments have decreased from 2,897 in 2000 to 2,439 in 2012-2016 or by 15.8%. On the other hand, the number of Education, Healthcare and Social Service industry establishments increased from 2,967 in 2000 to 4,515 in 2012-2016, or by 52.2%. Other industries that experienced significant growth were Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services (68.1%), Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities (25.1%), Other services, except Public Administration (21.3%) and Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administrative and Waste Services (6.5%).

Manufacturing, which employed 2,897 Dracut residents in 2000, only employed 531 residents in 2018, despite being the fourth largest employment sector. Decreases in employment were also seen in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting and Mining (-64.7%), Information (-29.6%), Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (-10.4%) and Wholesale Trade (-48.7%) industries.

**Table 3.6: Primary Employment Industries for Dracut Residents in 2000 and 2012-2016**

Industry	2000	2012-2016	Percent Change 2000 - 2012/2016
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	68	24	-64.7
Construction	1,106	1,185	7.1
Manufacturing	2,897	2,439	-15.8
Wholesale Trade	581	298	-48.7
Retail Trade	1,624	1,692	4.2
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	641	802	25.1
Information	612	538	-29.6
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (including leasing)	989	886	-10.4
Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administrative and Waste Services	1,606	1,711	6.5
Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Service	2,967	4,515	52.2
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	837	1,407	68.1
Other services, except Public Administration	597	724	21.3
Public Administration	759	519	-31.6

*Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

## JOURNEY TO WORK AND COMMUTING PATTERNS

In addition to understanding the industries in which Dracut residents are employed, it is important to know how many residents work in the county and state. Table 3.7 below shows where Dracut residents worked in 2012-2016. According to the 2012-2016 ACS data, 79.6% of Dracut residents worked in Middlesex County, while 20.4% of Dracut

residents commuted to work elsewhere in Massachusetts. Approximately 8.3% of Dracut residents commuted to jobs outside of Massachusetts, principally in New Hampshire and Maine.

**Table 3.7: Place of Employment for Dracut Residents in 2012-2016**

Place of Employment	Number of Workers	Percent
Massachusetts	15,280	91.7
<i>Middlesex County</i>	12,160	79.6
<i>Outside of Middlesex County</i>	3,120	20.4
Outside of Massachusetts	1,390	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,670</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

In 2012-2016, 92.6% of Dracut workers, aged 16 and older, commuted to work by car, either alone or, less frequently, in carpools. Approximately 2.1% of workers took public transit to work, 1.2% walked to work and 2.7% worked from home, as outlined in Table 3.8 below. For all workers, regardless of mode of transportation, approximately 30.3% had a commute time of less than 20 minutes; another 44.9% of residents had commutes between 20 and 44 minutes, and 24.8% of workers commuted for longer than 45 minutes.

**Table 3.8: Mode of Transportation to Work in 2012-2016**

Mode	Number	Percent
Car, truck or van – drove alone	14,123	84.7
Car, truck or van – carpooled	1,318	7.9
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	345	2.1
Walked	203	1.2
Other means	226	1.4
Worked at home	455	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,670</b>	<b>100.0</b>

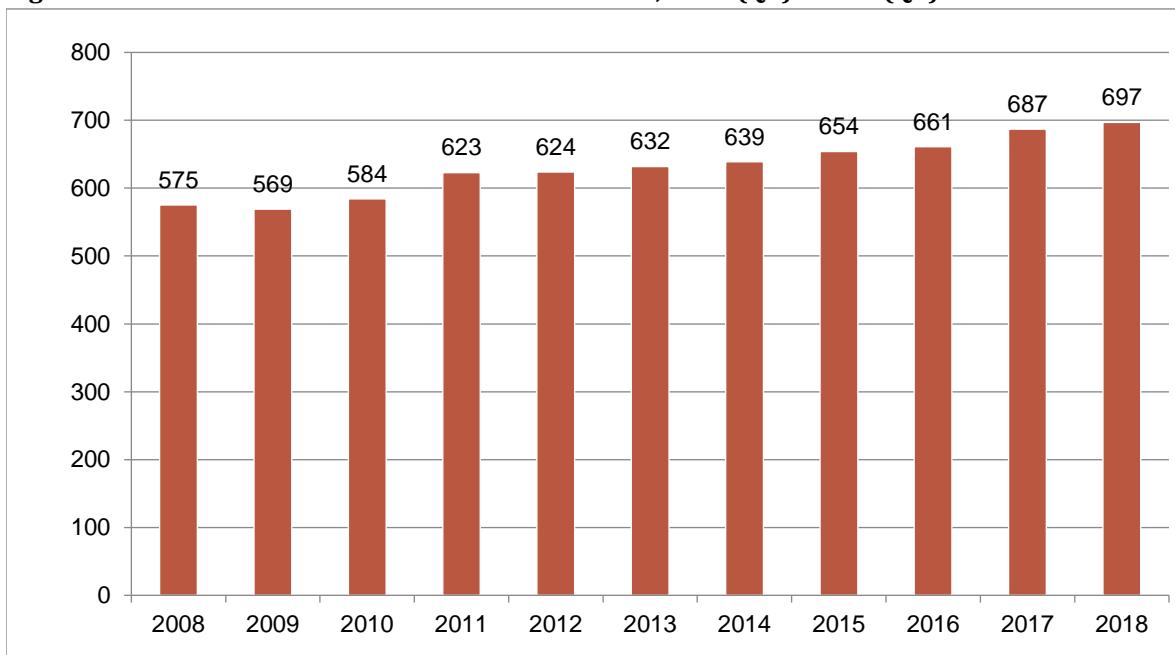
*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

## ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS CONDITIONS IN DRACUT

### BUSINESS PATTERNS

The growth and decline of business establishments operating in town over the past eleven years reflect the local economy. Figure 3.4 on the following page illustrates the changes in the total number of establishments between the third quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2018. Except for a small decline between 2008 and 2009, the number of establishments in Dracut has increased steadily from 575 establishments in 2008 to 697 establishments in 2018.

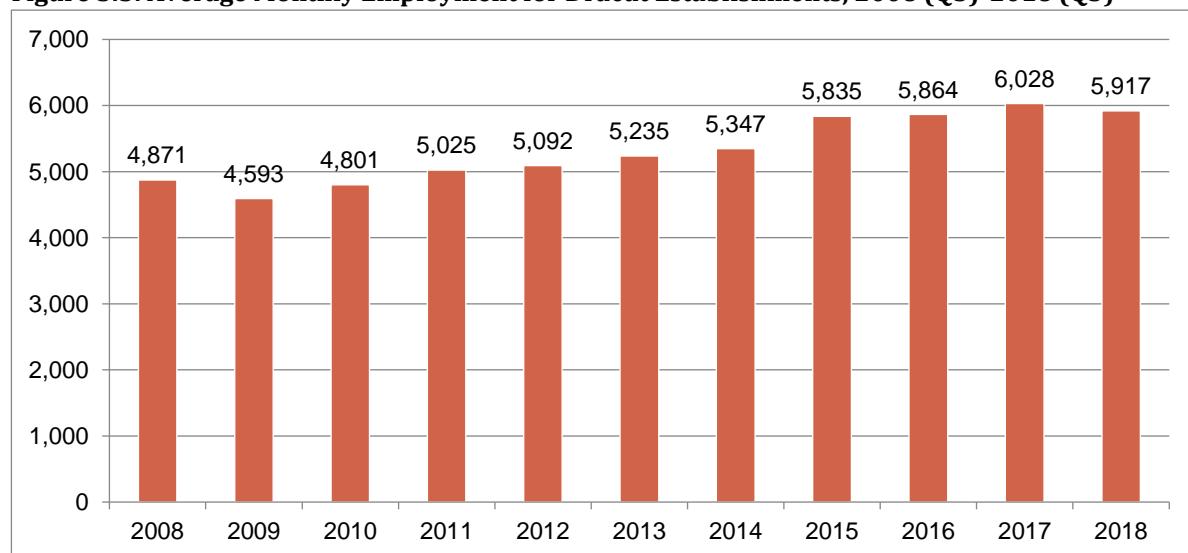
**Figure 3.4: Total Number of Establishments in Dracut, 2008 (Q3) - 2018 (Q3)**



*Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ES-202 Reports*

The average monthly employment for Dracut businesses between 2008 (Q3) and 2018 (Q3), as shown in Figure 3.5, reflects the impact of the local economy. Similar to the number of establishments, there was a slight decline in monthly employment between 2008 and 2009. The monthly employment for Dracut businesses steadily increased from 4,593 employees in 2009 to 6,028 employees in 2017. The monthly employment levels decreased from 2017 to 2018.

**Figure 3.5: Average Monthly Employment for Dracut Establishments, 2008 (Q3)-2018 (Q3)**



*Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ES-202 Reports*

Another indicator of local economic vitality is the average weekly wages paid to workers, which provides an indication of the quality of the jobs in town. Figure 3.6 on the next page reflects the changes in average weekly wages (across all industries) paid to workers employed in Dracut for the third quarter of each year between 2008 and 2018. Average weekly wages in Dracut have steadily increased from \$734 in 2008 to \$905 in 2018. While average weekly wages in Dracut have grown by 23.3% since 2018, these average weekly wages have consistently fallen well below the state and regional average weekly wages. In the third quarter of 2008, the average weekly wage in the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Area (GLWDA) was \$1,073, while the state's average weekly wage was \$1,025. In the third quarter of 2018, the average weekly wage in the region was \$1,290 and the average weekly wage in the state was \$1,305. Therefore, the average weekly wages in the region increased by 20.2%, while the state's average weekly wage increased by 27.3%. The average weekly wages have also been impacted by inflation. Based upon the rate of inflation between 2008 and 2018, one dollar (\$1.00) in 2008 had the same buying power as \$0.82 in 2018. According to the *Greater Lowell CEDS Update for 2010-2013*, Dracut had the second lowest average weekly wages in the Greater Lowell region.

**Figure 3.6: Average Weekly Wages for Dracut Workers, 2008 (Q3) - 2018 (Q3)**



Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ES-202 Reports

## INDUSTRY COMPOSITION

The composition of industries in Dracut is diverse, ranging from construction and manufacturing firms to social service agencies and restaurants. There are fewer manufacturing establishments and employees in 2018 than there were twenty years ago. When the *1996 Economic Development Strategy* was completed, nearly 30% of the jobs in town were manufacturing jobs. This figure has been reduced dramatically, while employment in the service sector has risen significantly.

The composition of industries operating in Dracut has become more diversified, as reflected in Table 3.9. While the service-providing domain establishments were nearly three times greater than those in the goods-producing domain in 2014, they have increased to three and a half times in 2018. Between the third quarter of 2014 and the third quarter of 2018, the total number of establishments in Dracut increased from 639 to 697 or by 9.4%. The overall growth has been in the Service-Providing Domain, which increased from 477 establishments in 2014 to 543 establishments in 2018, or by 13.8%.

**Table 3.9: Changes in Local Industry Composition: 2014 (Q3) - 2018 (Q3)**

Industry Type	Number of Establishments		Percent Change 2014-2018
	2014 (Q3)	2018 (Q3)	
<b>Goods-Producing Domain</b>	162	154	-4.9
<b>Construction</b>	138	132	-4.3
<b>Manufacturing</b>	21	20	-4.8
<i>Durable Goods Manufacturing</i>	15	11	-26.7
<i>Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing</i>	6	9	50.0
<b>Service-Providing Domain</b>	477	543	13.8
<b>Trade, Transportation and Utilities</b>	91	99	8.8
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	24	18	-25.0
<i>Retail Trade</i>	49	58	18.4
<i>Transportation and Warehousing</i>	18	23	27.8
<b>Information</b>	9	0	NA
<b>Financial Activities</b>	38	37	-2.6
<i>Finance and Insurance</i>	20	19	-5.0
<i>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</i>	18	18	0.0
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	69	80	15.9
<i>Professional and Technical Services</i>	41	43	4.9
<i>Administrative and Support Services</i>	28	37	32.1
<b>Education and Health Services</b>	141	179	27.0
<i>Health Care and Social Assistance</i>	127	167	31.5
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	61	66	8.2
<i>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</i>	10	9	-10.0
<i>Accommodation and Food Services</i>	51	57	11.8
<b>Other Services</b>	61	70	14.8
<b>Total All Industries</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>9.1</b>

Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ES-202 Reports

In terms of the goods-producing domain, the number of establishments decreased from 162 in 2014 to 154 in 2018, or by 4.9%. Manufacturing establishments decreased by 4.8%, which was comprised of durable goods manufacturing establishments decreasing by 26.7% and nondurable goods manufacturing establishments increasing by 50%, between the third quarter of 2014 and 2018. Construction establishments decreased by 4.3% from 138 establishments in 2014 to 132 establishments in 2018.

The most significant growth in the Service-Providing Domain was in the Education and Health Services industry, which grew by 27% between 2014 and 2018. Within that particular industry, Health Care and Social Assistance establishments increased from 127 establishments in 2014 to 167 establishments in 2018, or by 31.5%. The Information industry establishments decreased from nine firms in 2014 to zero firms in 2018, while establishments within the financial industry decreased by one firm. These trends are consistent with larger issues related to the emergence of a service-oriented economy in the 21st century, a trend which has been impacting the region, state, and nation as a whole for the past twenty years.

## LOCATION QUOTIENTS

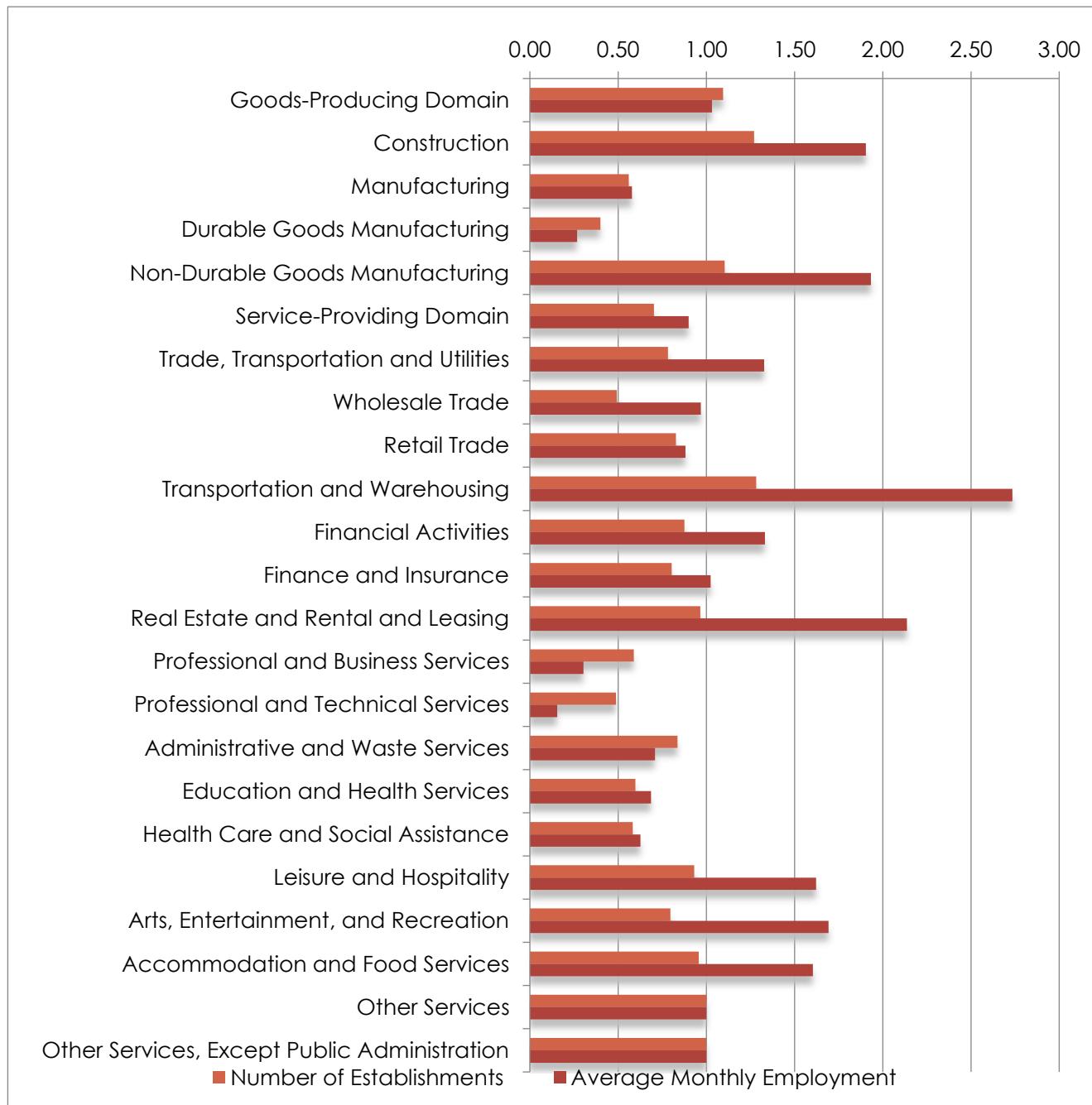
Location quotients (LQ) are a useful tool for assessing the various industry clusters located in a particular region. Location quotient analyses help us better understand the strengths of a local economy by assessing which industries are concentrated within it, relative to the region or state as a whole. Location quotients-- which are essentially a ratio of the concentration of a particular industry in one area (in this case, Dracut) to the concentration of the same industry in a larger geographic area (Greater Lowell Workforce Development Area) are understood to be significant when they are greater than 1.0.

Using the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Area as a basis of comparison, location quotients were developed with third quarter 2018 data for each of the industries with a presence in Dracut. Quotients were calculated for both the total number of establishments and average monthly employment among each industry sector. Figure 3.7 on the next page shows the current location quotients for each of the primary industry sectors operating in town, according to both the total number of establishments and average monthly employment.

According to third quarter 2018 figures, the goods-producing sector with the highest location quotient in terms of number of establishments was Construction. With 132 construction businesses located in Dracut, and 782 workers employed in construction, this represents 13.4% of the regional construction establishments and 11.6% of construction employment. While this sector represents a small segment of the local and area economies,

its concentration in Dracut affords the town location quotients of 1.66 for total number of establishments, and 2.05 for average monthly employment. The concentration of construction firms enables Dracut's goods-producing industries to have a 1.43 LQ for the number of establishments and a 1.11 LQ for average monthly employment

**Figure 3.7: Local-Regional Location Quotient by Industry in 2018 (Q3)**



Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ES-202 Reports (2018 Q3)

There are other types of industries concentrated in Dracut relative to the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Area. Within the goods-producing domain, non-durable goods manufacturing was also concentrated in Dracut compared to the region with LQs of 1.45 for establishments and LQ of 2.08 for average monthly employment. Dracut has high concentrations of many construction sectors with the best performing sector being the Utility System Construction sector with a LQ of 3.78 in number of establishments and 9.61 in average monthly employment. Other sectors with relatively high concentrations of the region's average monthly employment include Heavy and Civil Engineering (5.17), Other Specialty Trade Contractors (2.41), Nonresidential Building Construction (2.29), Construction of buildings (2.17), and Residential Building Construction (2.11). Dracut's Manufacturing Industry is tied in with the construction sector. The manufacturing of Architectural and Structural Metals is highly concentrated in Dracut with an LQ in number of establishments of 2.96 and average monthly employment of 9.31

Table 3.10 below provides the location quotients for each of the goods-producing industries in Dracut during the third quarter of 2018.

**Table 3.10: Economic Statistics for Goods-Producing Industries in 2018 (Q3)**

Industry	Number of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment (AME)	Average Weekly Wages	Location Quotient - Number of Establishments	Location Quotient - Avg. Monthly Employment
<b>Construction</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>\$1,298</b>	<b>1.66</b>	<b>2.05</b>
Construction of buildings	30	84	\$1,169	1.73	2.17
Residential building construction	25	53	\$891	1.63	2.11
Nonresidential building construction	5	31	\$1,645	2.47	2.29
Heavy and civil engineering construction	8	214	\$1,752	2.51	5.17
Utility system construction	5	174	\$1,889	3.78	9.61
Highway, street, and bridge construction	3	40	\$1,158	2.41	1.86
Specialty trade contractors	94	485	\$1,118	1.60	1.61
Building foundation and exterior contractors	10	33	\$843	1.17	0.80
Building equipment contractors	44	275	\$1,072	1.61	1.61
Building finishing contractors	13	56	\$864	1.07	1.46
Other specialty trade contractors	27	121	\$1,413	2.50	2.41
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>\$1,334</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.62</b>
Durable Goods Manufacturing	11	199	\$1,069	0.52	0.29
Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	9	332	\$1,494	1.45	2.08
Fabricated metal product manufacturing	6	144	\$1,095	0.96	2.15
Architectural and structural metals mfg.	3	122	\$1,180	2.96	9.31
<b>Total Goods-Producing Domain</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>1384</b>	<b>\$1,265</b>	<b>1.43</b>	<b>1.11</b>

*Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ES-202 Reports (2018 Q3)*

Dracut also has high concentrations of establishments and average monthly employment in Service-Providing industries. In particular, the Financial Activities and Leisure and Hospitality industries have location quotients greater than 1.0 in both number of establishments and average monthly employment. The Trade, Transportation and Utilities and Education and Health Services industries had location quotients greater than 1.0 in average monthly employment. The Other Services industries have a location quotient greater than 1.0 in the number of establishments. Table 3.11 illustrates the most significant Service-Providing industries in Dracut, as compared to the workforce development area.

In terms of total establishments, the following industry subsectors had location quotients greater than 2.0: Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages) (4.67), Machinery & Equipment Rental & Leasing (4.28), General Freight Trucking (2.85), Household Goods Repair and Maintenance (2.75), Rental and Leasing Services (2.41), and Truck Transportation (2.22).

The average monthly employment LQs for service-providing industries were generally as high and, in some specialty sectors, significantly higher. However, this may be reflective of a limited supply of such establishments across the workforce investment area and hence lower employment levels generally. Those service-providing industry sub-sectors with LQs in average monthly employment greater than 2.0 were as follows: Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages) (8.42), General Freight Trucking (7.62), Machinery and Equipment Rental & Leasing (6.21), Truck Transportation (4.81), Rental and Leasing Services (3.88), Residential Mental Health Facilities (3.62), Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods (3.24), Household Goods Repair and Maintenance (2.76), Lumber and Supply Merchant Wholesalers (2.65), Child Day Care Services (2.45), Other Personal Services (2.44), Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (2.30), Amusements, Gambling and Recreation (2.16), Other Amusement and Recreation Industries (2.14), Auto Parts, Accessories and Tire Stores (2.03), and Health and Personal Care Stores (2.02).

**Table 3.11: Economic Statistics for Service-Providing Industries in 2018 (Q3)**

Industry	Number of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment (AME)	Average Weekly Wages	Location Quotient - Number of Establishments	Location Quotient - Avg. Monthly Employment
<b>Trade, Transportation and Utilities</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>\$829</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>1.43</b>
Wholesale Trade	18	207	\$1,199	0.64	1.04
Merchant wholesalers, durable goods	9	78	\$1,086	0.50	0.57
Lumber and const. supply merchant wholesalers	4	51	\$1,108	1.84	2.65
Merchant wholesalers, nondurable goods	3	120	\$1,212	0.86	3.24

**Table 3.11 (cont'd): Economic Statistics for Service-Providing Industries in 2018 (Q3)**

Industry	Number of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment (AME)	Average Weekly Wages	Location Quotient - Number of Establishments	Location Quotient - Avg. Monthly Employment
Electronic markets and agents and brokers	6	9	\$1,995	0.93	0.36
Retail Trade	58	462	\$572	1.08	0.95
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	6	48	\$525	0.88	0.83
Auto parts, accessories, and tire stores	5	46	\$522	1.37	2.03
Building material and garden supply stores	4	29	\$559	1.20	0.88
Food and beverage stores	17	187	\$482	1.30	1.01
Grocery stores	12	160	\$505	1.53	0.94
Beer, wine, and liquor stores	3	14	\$280	0.80	1.41
Health and personal care stores	7	85	\$757	1.20	2.02
Gasoline stations	5	25	\$412	0.77	1.09
Miscellaneous store retailers	4	4	\$253	0.72	0.17
Other miscellaneous store retailers	3	4	\$253	1.20	0.45
Non-store retailers	4	10	\$1,067	1.66	0.48
Transportation and Warehousing	23	641	\$894	1.68	2.95
Truck transportation	14	280	\$1,318	2.22	4.81
General freight trucking	10	276	\$1,319	2.85	7.62
Specialized freight trucking	4	3	\$1,696	1.43	0.14
<b>Financial Activities</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>\$1,066</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>1.44</b>
Finance and Insurance	19	130	\$872	1.05	1.10
Credit intermediation and related activities	10	105	\$820	1.10	1.20
Depository credit intermediation	9	105	\$820	1.27	1.53
Insurance agencies and brokerages	8	21	\$1,151	1.33	0.90
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	18	104	\$1,307	1.26	2.30
Real estate	12	32	\$1,195	1.03	1.22
Lessors of real estate	4	14	\$755	1.32	1.54
Offices of real estate agents and brokers	3	10	\$1,562	0.94	1.59
Activities related to real estate	5	8	\$1,508	0.93	0.73
Rental and leasing services	6	72	\$1,357	2.41	3.88
Machinery and equipment rental and leasing	3	45	\$1,381	4.28	6.21
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>\$960</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.33</b>
Professional and technical services	43	108	\$1,152	0.64	0.17
Legal services	12	27	\$925	1.23	1.25
Accounting and bookkeeping services	13	24	\$909	1.61	0.90
Management and tech. consulting services	5	7	\$4,705	0.51	0.07
Administrative and support services	37	230	\$870	1.16	0.81

**Table 3.11 (cont'd): Economic Statistics for Service-Providing Industries in 2018 (Q3)**

Industry	Number of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment (AME)	Average Weekly Wages	Location Quotient - Number of Establishments	Location Quotient - Avg. Monthly Employment
Services to buildings and dwellings	33	116	\$598	1.70	1.19
<b>Education and Health Services</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>\$802</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.74</b>
Other schools and instruction	8	37	\$288	1.61	1.65
Health Care and Social Assistance	167	636	\$635	0.76	0.68
Ambulatory health care services	21	198	\$834	0.74	0.63
Offices of physicians	4	27	\$1,022	0.54	0.34
Offices of dentists	8	76	\$994	0.87	1.56
Offices of other health practitioners	6	29	\$893	0.92	0.86
Nursing and residential care facilities	13	142	\$665	1.50	0.77
Residential mental health facilities	12	131	\$672	1.95	3.62
Social assistance	133	296	\$487	0.73	1.23
Individual and family services	123	156	\$478	0.71	0.93
Child day care services	9	138	\$486	1.52	2.45
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>1026</b>	<b>\$349</b>	<b>1.22</b>	<b>1.75</b>
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9	211	\$419	1.04	1.82
Amusements, gambling, and recreation	8	209	\$416	1.25	2.16
Other amusement and recreation industries	7	205	\$404	1.12	2.14
Accommodation and Food Services	57	815	\$331	1.25	1.73
Food services and drinking places	56	814	\$331	1.28	1.86
Drinking places, alcoholic beverages	8	54	\$247	4.67	8.42
Restaurants and other eating places	47	721	\$331	1.25	1.81
<b>Other Services</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>\$599</b>	<b>1.31</b>	<b>1.08</b>
Other Services, Except Public Admin.	70	190	\$599	1.31	1.08
Repair and maintenance	32	68	\$789	1.72	0.98
Automotive repair and maintenance	28	63	\$802	1.94	1.50
Household goods repair and maintenance	3	5	\$528	2.75	2.76
Personal and laundry services	31	107	\$460	1.49	1.64
Personal care services	23	76	\$443	1.61	1.95
Other personal services	4	16	\$417	1.84	2.44
Private households	5	6	\$403	0.68	1.59
<b>Total Service-Providing Domain</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>4533</b>	<b>\$795</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>0.97</b>

Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ES-202 Reports (2018 Q3)

## WAGES

Table 3.12 on the next page reflects the total wages and average weekly wages earned for all industries in Dracut during the third quarters of 2014 and 2018. In sum, the total wages paid by Dracut employers across all industries increased by \$5,597,519 (8.7%) from \$64,007,107 in 2014 (Q3) to \$69,604,626 in 2018 (Q3). Similarly, the average weekly wage increased by 12.1% from \$807 in 2014 to \$905 in 2018.

Both the goods-producing domain and the service-providing domain saw increases in aggregate annual and average weekly wages between 2014 and 2018. The goods-producing domain saw its total wages increase by 14.2%, while the total wages for the service-providing domain increased by 6.3%. Similarly, the average weekly wages for the goods-producing domain increased by 11%, while those for the service-providing domain increased by 11.5%.

**Table 3.12: Total Wages and Average Weekly Wages by Industry: 2014 (Q3) and 2018 (Q3)**

Industry	Total Wages (Q3)		Percent Change 2014-18	Average Weekly Wages (Q3)		Percent Change 2014-2018
	2014 (Q3)	2018 (Q3)		2014	2018	
<b>Goods-Producing Domain</b>	\$19,930,318	\$22,767,295	14.2	\$1,140	\$1,265	11.0
<b>Construction</b>	\$11,899,350	\$13,198,812	10.9	\$1,180	\$1,298	10.0
<b>Manufacturing</b>	\$7,723,833	\$9,211,411	19.3	\$1,205	\$1,334	10.7
DUR- Durable Goods Manufacturing	\$2,485,531	\$2,765,390	11.3	\$971	\$1,069	10.1
NONDUR - Non Durable Goods Manufacturing	\$5,238,302	\$6,446,021	23.1	\$1,361	\$1,494	9.8
<b>Service-Providing Domain</b>	\$44,076,789	\$46,837,332	6.3	\$713	\$795	11.5
<b>Trade, Transportation and Utilities</b>	\$11,998,474	\$14,109,768	17.6	\$775	\$829	7.0
Wholesale Trade	\$3,613,406	\$3,225,849	-10.7	\$1,149	\$1,199	4.4
Retail Trade	\$2,810,575	\$3,436,074	22.3	\$525	\$572	9.0
Transportation and Warehousing	\$5,574,492	7,447,845	33.6	\$799	\$894	11.9
<b>Information</b>	\$3,205,259	0	NA	\$1,560	0	NA
<b>Financial Activities</b>	\$2,969,437	\$3,241,468	9.2	\$1,043	\$1,066	2.2
Finance and Insurance	\$1,445,569	\$1,473,938	2.0	\$975	\$872	-10.6
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$1,523,868	\$1,767,530	16.0	\$1,116	\$1,307	17.1
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	\$3,721,319	\$4,217,314	13.3	\$793	\$960	21.1
Professional and Technical Services	\$1,896,185	\$1,617,132	14.7	\$960	\$1,152	20.0
Administrative and Support Services	\$1,825,134	\$2,600,182	42.5	\$672	\$870	29.5
<b>Education and Health Services</b>	\$13,957,501	\$11,078,261	-20.6	\$694	\$802	15.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$8,659,968	5,246,844	-39.4	\$584	\$635	8.7
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	\$3,893,215	\$4,692,961	20.5	\$322	\$349	8.4
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$776,497	\$1,148,927	48.0	\$362	\$419	15.7
Accommodation and Food Services	\$3,116,718	\$3,504,034	12.4	\$313	\$331	5.8
<b>Other Services</b>	\$1,200,142	\$1,479,394	23.3	\$504	\$599	18.8
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	<b>\$64,007,107</b>	<b>\$69,604,626</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>\$807</b>	<b>\$905</b>	<b>12.1</b>

Source: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ES-202 Reports (2014 Q3 and 2018 Q3)

Although the goods-producing domain in Dracut has declined over the last twenty years, the construction and manufacturing industries continued to maintain the highest wages for their workers. The total wages in the construction industry increased by 10.9% between 2014 and 2018, while the manufacturing industry experienced a 19.3% increase in total

wages for the same time period. Average weekly wages also increased in the construction (10%) and manufacturing (10.7%) industries between 2014(Q3) and 2018 (Q3). In 2018, the average weekly wage in the construction industry was \$1,298, while the average weekly wages for the manufacturing industry was even higher at \$1,334, with the average weekly wages for the non-durable manufacturing sector at \$1,494.

Within the service-providing domain, the Trade, Transportation and Utilities and the Education and Health Services industries had the highest total wages at \$14.1 million and \$11.1 million respectively in 2018. Total wages in the Trade, Transportation and Utilities industries increased by 17.6%, while total wages in the Education and Health Services industries actually decreased by 20.6% between 2014 and 2018. Their average weekly wages were moderate compared to the other service-providing domain industries at \$829 and \$802 respectively in 2018. The highest average weekly wages in the service-providing domain were in the Financial Activities (\$1,066) and Professional and Business Services (\$960) in 2018 (Q3).

## MUNICIPAL TAXATION AND SPENDING

Dracut has a single-rate, uniform tax policy, which many companies may consider to be an advantage to locating in town. In Fiscal Year 2019, Dracut had the lowest commercial and industrial property tax rate in the region (\$13.75). The low tax rate would appear to make the town an attractive location for businesses and industries looking to locate in the Greater Lowell area. The tax rates for the communities in the Greater Lowell region, as well as Dracut's neighbors to the east, Methuen and Andover, are compared in Table 3.13 below.

**Table 3.13: Fiscal Year 2019 Tax Rates by Class for the Greater Lowell Region**

Community	Residential	Open Space	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property
Andover	\$15.27	\$15.27	\$27.51	\$27.51	\$27.51
Billerica	\$13.48	\$0.00	\$31.41	\$31.41	\$31.41
Chelmsford	\$16.35	\$0.00	\$22.21	\$22.21	\$22.06
<b>Dracut</b>	<b>\$13.75</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$13.75</b>	<b>\$13.75</b>	<b>\$13.75</b>
Dunstable	\$17.06	\$0.00	\$17.06	\$17.06	\$17.06
Lowell	\$14.04	\$0.00	\$28.59	\$28.59	\$28.59
Methuen	\$14.19	\$0.00	\$28.22	\$28.22	\$28.22
Pepperell	\$16.59	\$0.00	\$16.59	\$16.59	\$16.59

**Table 3.13 (cont'd): Fiscal Year 2019 Tax Rates by Class for the Greater Lowell Region**

Community	Residential	Open Space	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property
Tewksbury	\$15.84	\$0.00	\$27.63	\$27.63	\$27.63
Tyngsborough	\$16.93	\$0.00	\$16.93	\$16.93	\$16.93
Westford	\$16.56	\$0.00	\$16.56	\$16.56	\$16.56

*Rate per \$1,000 valuation.*

*Source: Mass. Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, 2019*

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services, \$50,122,349 in property taxes was levied during Fiscal Year 2019. Approximately 90.8% of these taxes were generated through residential properties, which had a total assessed value of more than \$3.3 billion. Commercial properties yielded more than \$2.5 million in taxes, while industrial properties were levied at \$718,713, as illustrated in Table 3.14 below. In FY 2019, the Town generated an additional \$1,375,636 in revenue from personal property taxes.

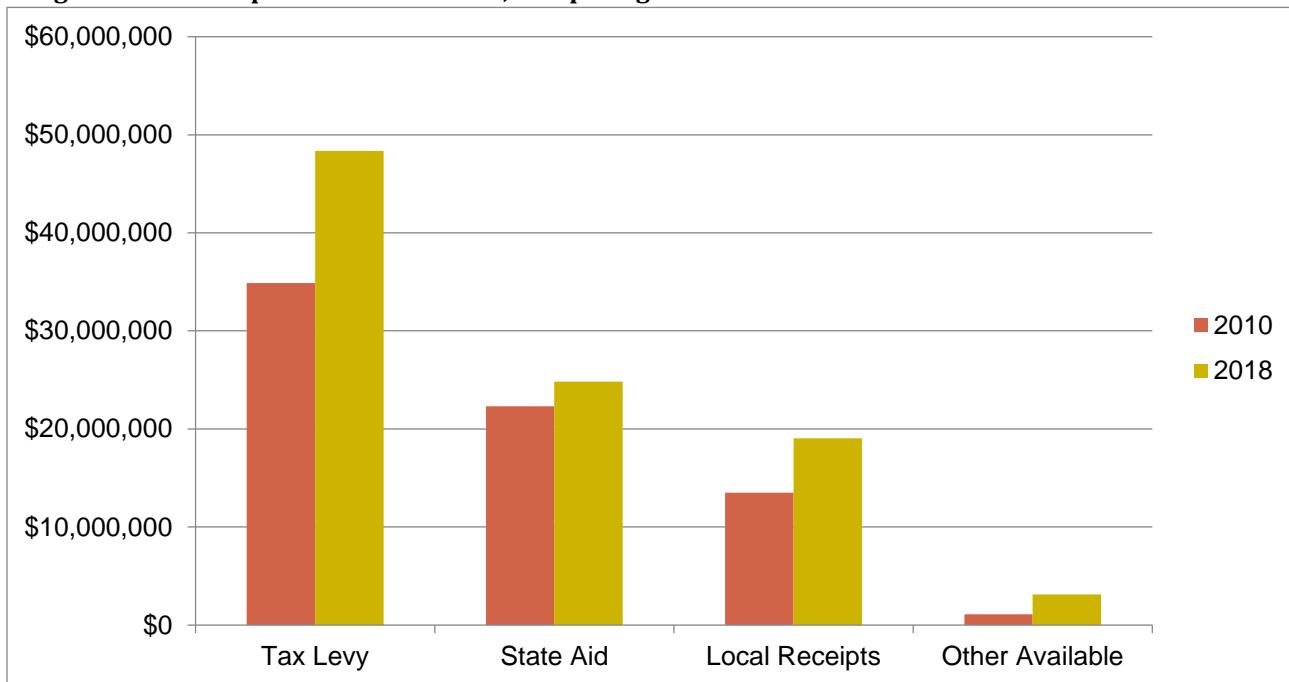
**Table 3.14: Fiscal Year 2019 Tax Classification**

Tax Classification	Assessed Values	Tax Levy	Tax Rate
Residential	\$3,310,539,041	\$45,519,912	\$13.75
Commercial	182,406,389	\$2,508,088	\$13.75
Industrial	52,270,020	\$718,713	\$13.75
Personal Property	99,973,547	\$1,375,636	\$13.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,645,188,997</b>	<b>\$50,122,349</b>	

*Source: MA Department of Revenue Division of Local Services At a Glance Report, April 2019*

Like every municipality in the Commonwealth that depends on state and federal funds to support local initiatives, Dracut's annual operating budgets were impacted by the national recession. Figure 3.8 on the following page illustrates the breakdown of municipal revenue sources for Fiscal Years 2010 and 2018. In FY 2010, slightly more than half of the Town's budget (50.7%) came from levied taxes, while 26% of the budget came from state sources. Another 20% of the Town's budget came from local receipts, while 3.3% of the budget came from "other" sources.

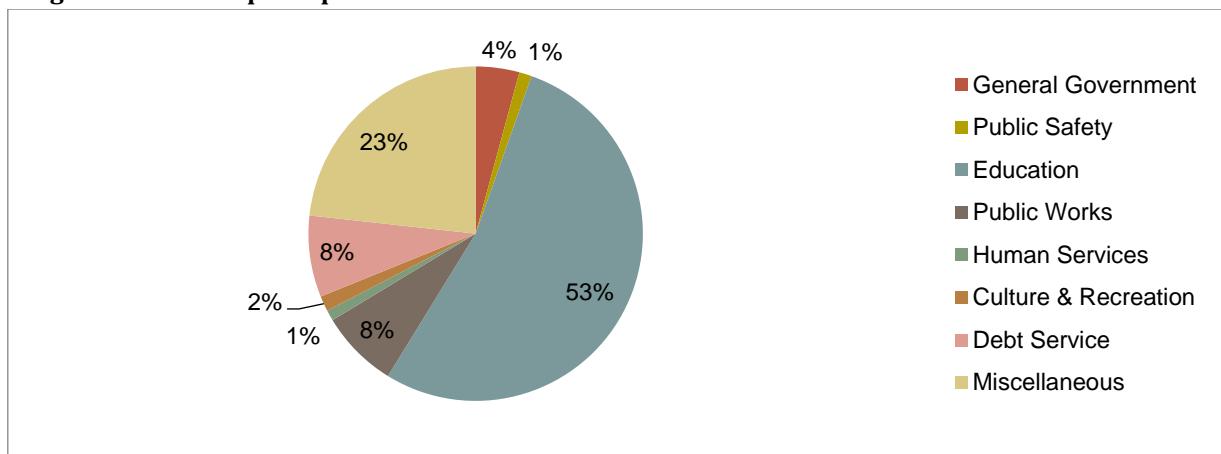
**Figure 3.8: Municipal Revenue Sources, Comparing FY 2010 & FY 2018**



*Source: MA Department of Revenue Division of Local Services. At a Glance Report*

Municipal revenue from levied taxes increased by \$ 10,006,108 between FY 2010 and FY 2018 while State Aid increased by \$ 2,364,127. Local receipts and “other” sources of revenue increased by \$ 7,320,082 and \$ 852,472 respectively. In total, Dracut’s municipal revenue sources increased by \$ 20,542,789 between FY 2010 and FY 2018. Figure 3.9 below shows municipal spending in Dracut for FY 2018. Education comprised 53% of total expenditures, while public safety and public works projects comprised nearly a quarter of the entire budget.

**Figure 3.9: Municipal Expenditures FY 2018**



*Source: Town of Dracut*

## COMMUNITY ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

In assessing the economic development potential of a community, it is important to determine what the assets and liabilities of a community are through the perspective of the community's residents and the business community. The Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) worked with the Town of Dracut and the Dracut Economic Development Committee to host two Economic Development Visioning Sessions and to sponsor the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) with Northeastern University. These forums provided an opportunity for residents, business owners and economic development stakeholders to weigh in on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats related to economic development in Dracut.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) SESSIONS

As noted previously, NMCOG hosted two Economic Development Visioning sessions as a means to generate input as to the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the community. These SWOT sessions- one for the public and one for the business community- were held at Harmony Hall during the month of October 2013. The purpose of the Visioning Sessions was to provide an overview of the project, summarize previous economic development strategies developed for Dracut, outline the timeline for completion of the project, describe the document, and receive public input through the use of a SWOT Analysis exercise. The results of the SWOT exercise were used to provide the "grassroots" input for developing the Dracut Economic Development Strategy.

The Public Visioning Session held on October 24, 2013 attracted eight (8) participants. NMCOG staff led the SWOT Analysis exercise recorded participants thoughts, opinions and ideas on large sheets of paper. After the discussion, participants were given an opportunity to indicate their priorities by placing colored dots next to each idea. For this exercise, red dots (4 points) indicated their first priority, green dots (3 points) indicated their second priority, blue dots (2 points) indicated their third priority and yellow dots (1 point) indicated their fourth priority. Based upon the point total for each idea, the top priorities in each category for the Public Visioning Session were as follows:

### **Strengths**

- Water and Sewer Infrastructure
- Affordable Housing
- Opportunities for growth and redevelopment
- Cultural Amenities (e.g. UMass Lowell and Middlesex Community College)
- Locally grown produce and farming
- Between two major airports
- Community Pride
- High quality medical care

- State Forest plus opportunities for recreation
- Proximity to Boston (half hour)
- Disposable income

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of defined priorities
- Poor roads
- Sales tax – border community
- Lack of access to a major highway
- Lack of trust in government
- Lack of time to get involved/go to meetings
- Lack of school resources
- Need to educate people on how to be a member of town meeting (e.g. a class)
- Lack of East/West road

### **Opportunities**

- Vacant industrial buildings – redevelopment
- Brox site and land along Merrimack River
- Re-invest in Brownfield sites
- Farms as tourist attractions
- Dracut has major natural gas lines, and moving toward natural gas is energy of the future. This could attract industries.
- Wind and solar sites (there are some in Lowell – what about Dracut?)
- UMass Lowell proximity – expand opportunities for innovation
- Locally grown foods – people from other towns come for local farms. Farms can be promoted/advertised outside of Dracut
- Opportunity for oil pipeline from Dracut to ocean
- Hydroelectric opportunities in Dracut
- Waterfall along road – tourist attraction

### **Threats**

- Lack of school funding
- Zero growth
- Charter schools drain from public schools
- Lack of funding for proper police and fire staffing
- Lack of young families coming to town because of the schools
- Opiate addiction

A Business Visioning Session, co-sponsored by the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce, was held on October 30, 2013 and attracted eight (8) participants. This session provided an opportunity for businesses to share their opinions on what the Town of Dracut could do to help their businesses grow. For this session, NMCOG staff followed the same procedures for the SWOT Analysis exercise and the participants had an opportunity to prioritize the

ideas identified through the placement of the colored dots on the large sheets. Although this session was principally for the business community, many of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats identified were similar to the Public Visioning Session discussed above. Based upon the point totals, the top priorities in each category for the Business Visioning Session were as follows:

### **Strengths**

- Tax rate for businesses
- Proximity to local universities
- Close to airports
- Newer municipal buildings and school buildings
- Access to cities – Boston, Lowell
- Proximity of hospital
- Availability of town staff
- Dracut Access TV
- Financial Resources
- Access to healthcare facilities
- Dracut Old Home Day

### **Weaknesses**

- School system funding
- Business community not proactive
- New Hampshire border (competition)
- No Dracut Common or Town Center
- Bylaws may work against businesses
- Negative Media
- “Not in my backyard” attitude about building and development
- Lack of business awareness of local events
- Economic Development Committee is not well known to the business community

### **Opportunities**

- Creation of Town Center
- Promote Dracut’s positive qualities and community resources
- Chamber of Commerce
- Harness local spending to benefit school system and/or community
- Marketing the community
- Market school through showcasing student success – build school pride
- Town and Chamber working together to promote businesses (e.g. promote buying locally)

- Satellite location for healthcare facility
- School system – promote to increase funding
- Bring youth back to the community (possible in Dracut because of affordable housing)

## **Threats**

- New Hampshire competition
- Positive images/attributes of surrounding communities may draw people/resources from Dracut
- Developments' effect on quality of life
- Perception of unemployment
- Perception of poor community
- Change in town management
- Per capita income may create negative perceptions of poor community

## **EDSAT STUDY**

On June 12, 2014 the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager/Town Planner, and NMCOG Assistant Director met with Professor Barry Bluestone and his staff from the Dukakis Center of Northeastern University to discuss the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) project. As a result of this discussion, the Town of Dracut established a contract with Northeastern University, through the use of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds administered by NMCOG, to participate in the EDSAT project. The Dukakis Center identified two crucial factors in economic development: (1) the municipality's capability in responding to ever changing market forces and (2) the ability of local government to collaboratively work with regional agencies, business leaders and academic institutions to solve municipal weaknesses and market the town's strengths.

EDSAT identifies the “deal-breakers” and “deal-makers” through a collaboration of public and private officials, and by analyzing responses to a 200-question plus questionnaire regarding factors that either impede or encourage private investment in a community. This questionnaire was developed with input from the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) and CoreNet Global, which represent site and location experts familiar with the qualities that private companies search for in a community. EDSAT includes sections on Access to Customers/Markets, Concentration of Businesses and Services (Agglomeration), Cost of Land (Implicit/Explicit), Labor, Municipal Process, Quality of Life (Community), Quality of Life (Site Amenities), Business Incentives, Tax Rates and Access to Information.

The Town of Dracut hosted two meetings at Town Hall on October 30, 2014 and December 11, 2014 to hear presentations from Professor Barry Bluestone on EDSAT. The initial session focused on responses to the questionnaire submitted by Dracut staff and focused on building consensus among the private, public and non-profit sectors on the appropriate responses to the questionnaire. Revised responses were then submitted into the Self-Assessment Tool and provided the basis upon which the EDSAT report was developed. Professor Barry Bluestone provided the report results at the second session and responded to questions raised by the attendees. Both the final report and the presentation are available at the Town Manager's Office.

Based upon the EDSAT report, the Town of Dracut had several strengths and potential “deal-makers” that the Town should build upon and promote to prospective businesses and developers. Among the *Very Important* Location Factors were the following:

- **Traffic:** Dracut handles traffic well from a business perspective. Although commuter congestion is average, “reverse commutes” flow well, and developers are not required to provide traffic mitigation beyond their immediate site areas.
- **Lower Electric Costs:** Dracut’s commercial and industrial electricity costs are slightly lower than state and national electricity prices, an advantage that could be furthered by enhancing the town’s telecommunications infrastructure. The EDSAT report identified the following strengths under the *Important* Location Factors:
- **Public Transit:** Dracut has a higher percentage of general office space within a quarter mile of public transit than the Comparison Group Municipalities (CGM).
- **Physical Attractiveness:** The town is diligent in its enforcement and monitoring of municipal codes and regulations, and in maintaining public property.
- **Marketing Follow-up:** Dracut is more proactive than the CGM in formally reviewing local firms’ satisfaction with the town’s business environment, and in intervening when news of firm dissatisfaction surfaces.
- **Land (space):** Although Dracut has only an average amount of commercial/industrial space, a much bigger proportion of it is large, or at least five acres.
- **Housing:** The Dracut home-ownership rate is greater than average, and the price of a single-family home is lower. Apartment rents, however, are higher than average, as is the vacancy rate for rental housing.
- **Local Schools:** The percentage of English- and Mathematics-proficient students in Dracut exceeds that of the CGM. That is all the more impressive given that a larger percentage of K-12 students’ lunches are subsidized. On balance, the schools appear to be sound.

The EDSAT report then identified the following strengths under the *Less Important Location Factors*:

- **Proximity to Universities and Research:** Although there are no post-secondary schools in Dracut, the town is within ten miles of three institutions of higher learning: UMass Lowell, Rivier College and Middlesex Community College.
- **Permitting Ombudsman in the Local Process:** The Town Manager plays a significant role in overseeing the permitting process and ensuring its efficiency.

The Dukakis Center highlighted the factors most highly correlated with an increase in establishments for fifty Massachusetts municipalities between 2001 and 2011. According to their data, the most important factors were Economic Development Marketing, Timeliness of Approvals, Parking, Public Transit, Cross Marketing, Low Traffic Congestion, Fast Track Permitting and Site Availability. When reviewing Dracut's strengths, the two areas that are most prominent are Public Transit and Low Traffic Congestion. Within the Conclusions section, the EDSAT report outlines the "Things to Think About" as follows:

- **Housing** – Need to find ways of encouraging the production of appropriate multi-unit housing for aging Baby Boomers.
- **Millennials** – Need to find ways of encouraging the production of appropriate housing for young workers and their small families.
- **Economic Development** – Dracut has good things going for it:
  - Higher percentage of available office space near public transit
  - Strong marketing follow-up process
  - Local officials have a good dialogue with the citizensBut Dracut could be better positioned to attract business investment and jobs by:
  - Streamline all Permitting Review Processes
  - Identify Target Industries
  - Improve your Marketing Efforts and Website Presence

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Town of Dracut has moved its economic development agenda forward since the *Dracut Economic Development Strategy* was developed in 1996 and the *Dracut Master Plan* was completed in 1999. The establishment of the Economic Development Committee by the Board of Selectmen has provided more focus on the economic development needs of the community. The Town's participation in the State's Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) has resulted in several Tax Incentive Financing (TIF) agreements, which has brought more jobs and tax revenues to the community. The willingness of the Board of

Selectmen and Town Manager to reach out to the business community has the potential to facilitate expansion of existing businesses and attract new businesses. Notwithstanding positive efforts that have taken place over the last twenty years, there are new opportunities available to the community that would balance economic growth and the quality of life that Dracut residents have appreciated for many years.

In the *Dracut Economic Development Strategy*, five goals were established, which focused on expanding the commercial/retail base, generating job opportunities, creating a local business organization, pursuing workforce development funds and supporting regional efforts for business collaboration. In order to achieve those goals, ten strategy objectives and associated recommendations under three broad action categories were outlined. Those three broad action categories focused on building long-term organizational capacity, planning for long-range infrastructure improvements and regional initiatives and making zoning more flexible and the permitting process more understandable.

Within the previous *Dracut Master Plan*, twelve economic development goals were established as a result of a community survey, neighborhood meetings, public forums and other community input. While several of the goals seemed to be adopted directly from the *Dracut Economic Development Strategy*, the other goals focused on similar areas, such as building long-term economic development capacity, attracting environmentally acceptable businesses and industries, reusing the older mill properties in the Navy Yard and Collinsville neighborhoods, dealing with vehicular and pedestrian traffic issues in commercial areas, and maintaining high design and maintenance standards in commercial areas. The previous *Dracut Master Plan* also included economic development recommendations that focused on the location of economic activities, the Town Center, types of uses, mill structures, and organizational capacity. These recommendations also incorporated recommendations from the *Dracut Economic Development Strategy* that addressed business advocacy, marketing and development activities.

For the purposes of the *Economic Development Strategy*, the Goals and Strategies were developed based upon the SWOT input that was provided in the Public and Business Visioning Sessions and the EDSAT forums. In general, the Goals and Strategies built upon the Strengths and Opportunities, while also addressing the Weaknesses and Threats identified. Outlined below are the nine economic development Goals and associated strategies.

## **1. Streamline the Permitting Process and Assist Local Businesses with other permits.**

- a. Ensure that industrial and commercial permits are issued within 120 days once a complete application package has been submitted.

- b. Develop a permitting guide that outlines the permitting process and can be accessible through the web site
- c. Designate a Permitting Ombudsman that can assist local businesses through the local, state and federal permitting processes.

**2. Build the Organizational Capacity to support an active Economic Development program.**

- a. Provide staff support to the Economic Development Committee, which will oversee the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy and collaborate with the business community.
- b. Provide the necessary training for Town staff and the Committee members in assuming these roles.
- c. Work in conjunction with other regional economic development organizations, such as the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, and the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce.

**3. Develop an Economic Development marketing program that includes a prominent place on the Town's web site.**

- a. Reach out to local businesses to determine what their needs are and how the Town of Dracut can assist them.
- b. Follow up with those businesses that leave the community to determine whether there was anything the Town could have done to keep them in town.
- c. Develop an education and outreach program to attract new businesses to the community.
- d. Identify properties available for development on the Town's web site and make this list available to the regional economic development organizations.

**4. Identify the target industries that would fit within the community.**

- a. Review the economic data regarding cluster industries within the region and determine whether those industries would fit within Dracut.
- b. Work with UMass Lowell to determine whether research and development space could be developed in Dracut and provide space for spin-off incubator businesses.
- c. Develop an industrial action policy that can be modified based upon the changing regional economy.

**5. Focus on the development and redevelopment of commercial and industrial properties to create local employment opportunities and tax revenues.**

- a. Develop a list of available commercial and industrial properties.

- b. Work with the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, MassDevelopment and other state agencies to identify potential businesses for these properties.
  - c. Reuse former mill space and brownfield properties to create new economic development opportunities.
- 6. **Work with local and regional business organizations to promote collaboration with the local business community.**
  - a. Partner with the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce to host programs in Dracut that address the needs of the local business community.
  - b. Reach out to other business organizations, including various trade organizations, to identify the needs of businesses in relocating to Dracut.
  - c. Work with the Mass Hire Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board (GLWDB) to address the employment needs of the local business community.
- 7. **Identify federal, state, and other funding resources to address the community's economic development needs.**
  - a. Continue to utilize the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP), Chapter 43D and the MassWorks program to support commercial and industrial development.
  - b. Work with expanding local businesses to identify funding resources to address their needs.
  - c. Identify future opportunities for expanding telecommunications infrastructure to meet future needs, and continue to work toward bringing Verizon high speed internet service to town.
- 8. **Utilize the Workforce Development system to address the training needs of Dracut businesses.**
  - a. Work with the Mass Hire Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board (GLWDB) to identify training programs for local businesses that can enhance the skills of their workforce.
  - b. Utilize the resources of the local school system, the GLWDB, Middlesex Community College and UMass Lowell to address the skill training needs of Dracut businesses.
  - c. Work in conjunction with Middlesex Community College and UMass Lowell to develop special training programs for particular industry clusters.

## 9. Develop Additional Housing Options for local businesses

- a. Build upon the housing program established through Dracut's Housing Production Plan to address unmet housing needs identified by local businesses.
- b. Develop appropriate housing for young workers and their small families, as well as multi-unit housing for older workers.
- c. Address the housing needs of business executives, where appropriate, as well as the needs of the workforce.

## ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS

Physical infrastructure is a critical component of an area's development capacity and long-term attractiveness to businesses. By identifying the "gaps" in the current infrastructure system, a community can establish priorities to expand the infrastructure system to be more responsive to the needs of the public and private industry. The existing sewer and water supply infrastructure is examined in the Housing section, while the transportation infrastructure is discussed in the Transportation chapter. This section will examine the existing utilities infrastructure.

### UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Dracut is well served in terms of utilities and telecommunications. Gas and electricity are provided by National Grid, while Comcast provides cable and internet services to residents and business owners in town. The Town also participates in the Commonwealth's Community Electricity Aggregation program currently through Public Power, LLC. Residents or businesses that participate in this program pay 10.43 cents per kilowatt hour, as compared to the current National Grid charge of 10.87 cents per kilowatt hour. This rate will be in effect until January 2021 and affects the supply of electricity, not the distribution. Outlined below is background information on the Municipal Aggregation program in Dracut.

### MUNICIPAL AGGREGATION

At the June 2015 Town Meeting, Article 25 authorized the Town Manager, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, to research, develop and participate in a contract to aggregate the electricity load of Dracut residents and businesses, including individual or joint action with other municipalities. After significant research, the Town entered into a municipal aggregation program for the bulk purchasing of electricity with twenty-two other cities and towns in Massachusetts. The principal goal for entering into this utility aggregation is to save residents and businesses money on their electric bills.

The first agreement established was a two-year contract with Conn Edison Solutions. Conn Edison's rate was .0943 per kilowatt hour. The program had an opt-out provision, particularly for those who had already contracted with third party electrical suppliers. The current contract is with Public Power, LLC, whose rate is .1043 per kilowatt hour. This is a three-year contract extending from January 2018 to January 2021. While there is an opt out provision as well, the current rates of local utilities and third party suppliers are significantly higher than the current contract rate. Approximately 94% of the Town of Dracut is enrolled in this program.

The Town's municipal aggregation program will continue to operate after the Public Power contract ends in January 2021. A third contract will be bid by the municipal aggregation sometime in 2020 in order to offer continued utility savings to its member communities. This third contract will continue to save money for residents and businesses on their electric bills.

Outlined over the next three pages are the current National Grid Rates for those businesses that don't participate in the Municipal Aggregation program. Table 3.15 depicts the pricing scheme for energy delivery services. These service rates are for small commercial and industrial customers with average usage less than 10,000 kWh per month or 200 kW of demand.

**Table 3.15: National Grid Rates for General Delivery Service 2018**

	<b>Rate</b>
Customer Charge	\$5.50/month
Distribution Charge First 2,000 kWh*	6.581¢/kWh
Transmission Charge	3.164¢/kWh
Transition Charge	0.103¢/kWh
Energy Efficiency Charge	1.805¢/kWh
Renewables Charge	0.050¢/kWh
Distribution Solar Charge	0.146¢/kWh

\* Includes: Basic Service Adjustment Factor (0.12¢), Residential Assistance Adjustment Factor 0.557¢, Storm Recovery Adjustment Factor 0.039¢, Storm Fund Replenishment Adjustment Factor 0.231¢, Pension/PBOP Adjustment Factor 0.256¢, Revenue Decoupling Mechanism Factor 0.002¢, Net CapEx Factor 0.202¢ Attorney General Consultant Expenses Factor 0.002¢ and Solar Cost Adjustment Factor 0.011¢.

*Source: National Grid, 2016*

Table 3.16 on the following page illustrates the Demand Service rates designed for commercial and industrial customers with average use exceeding 10,000 kWh per month and demand not exceeding 200 kW.

**Table 3.16: National Grid Rates for Demand Service 2018**

	Rate
Customer Charge	\$25.00/month
Distribution Demand Charge	\$8.50/kW
Distribution Energy Charge*	1.719¢/kWh
Transmission Charge	2.333¢/kWh
Transition Energy Charge	0.061¢/kWh
Energy Efficiency Charge	0.957¢/kWh
Renewables Charge	0.050¢/kWh

\* Includes: Basic Service Adjustment Factor (0.12¢), Residential Assistance Adjustment Factor 0.557¢, Storm Recovery Adjustment Factor 0.039¢, Storm Fund Replenishment Adjustment Factor 0.231¢, Pension/PBOP Adjustment Factor 0.256¢, Revenue Decoupling Mechanism Factor 0.002¢, Net CapEx Factor 0.202¢, Attorney General Consultant Expenses Factor 0.002¢ and Solar Cost Adjustment Factor 0.011¢.

*Source: National Grid, 2018*

For large commercial and industrial customers with demand greater than 200 kW, energy services are charged on the basis of time-of use. The fee structure for time-of-use service is illustrated in Table 3.17 below. Fees differ depending on whether energy is consumed during peak or non-peak times. Peak hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily on Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Off-Peak hours are from 9:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. daily Monday through Friday, and all day on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

**Table 3.17: Time of Use Fee Structure (2018)**

	Rate
Customer Charge	\$200.00/month
Distribution Charge Peak Hours*	14.508¢/kWh
Distribution Charge Off-Peak Hours*	4.553¢/kWh
Transmission Charge	1.873¢/kWh
Transition Energy Charge	0.097¢/kWh
Energy Efficiency Charge	1.805¢/kWh
Renewables Charge	0.050¢/kWh
Distribution Solar Charge	0.197¢/kWh

\* Includes: Basic Service Adjustment Factor (0.12¢), Residential Assistance Adjustment Factor 0.557¢, Storm Recovery Adjustment Factor 0.039¢, Storm Fund Replenishment Adjustment Factor 0.231¢, Pension/PBOP Adjustment Factor 0.256¢, Revenue Decoupling Mechanism Factor 0.002¢, Net CapEx Factor 0.202¢, Attorney General Consultant Expenses Factor 0.002¢ and Solar Cost Adjustment Factor 0.011¢.

*Source: National Grid, 2018*

## COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY

This section examines commercial and industrial zoning and permit trends in order to gauge the level of economic development activity occurring in Dracut. Following the permit analysis, a summary of some of the economic development incentives that the town promotes is provided.

### ZONING

As discussed in the Land Use and Zoning chapter, there are five (5) business zones and two (2) industrial zones in Dracut. In addition, there are some overlay zones that impact the commercial and industrial activity in the community. These overlay zones include the Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay District (DCNOD) and the Mill Conservation Overlay District (MCOD). As outlined in Table 1.4 of the Land Use and Zoning chapter, commercial land uses cover 224 parcels and 508 acres of land, which represents 4% of the total land area. Industrial land uses related to manufacturing and R & D comprise 31 parcels on 142 acres of land, or 1.1% of the total land area. Industrial land uses related to mining/quarry activities comprise 5 parcels on 168 acres of land, or 1.3% of the total land area.

### COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

The level of commercial and industrial activity and interest in a town can be partially measured by examining commercial and industrial permit trends. Between 2013 and 2018, the Dracut Building Department issued 50 commercial building permits (valued at \$47,650,382) and no industrial permits, as outlined in Table 3.18 below. The estimated value of these permits was only \$4 million lower than the period from 2004-2015. Among the significant projects permitted during this period were The Arbors (21 Broadway Road), Circle Health (9 Loon Hill Road), the Dracut Place Assisted Living (1827 Bridge Street), and Genesis (55 Loon Hill Road). These commercial developments provide more housing options for senior residents, as well as additional health care options for the community.

**Table 3.18: Commercial and Industrial Permits Issued in Dracut 2013-2018**

Year	Commercial		Industrial	
	Permits	Valuation	Permits	Valuation
2013	19	\$1,210,000	0	\$0
2014	13	\$810,000	0	\$0
2015	10	\$718,000	0	\$0
2016	1	\$11,430,000	0	\$0
2017	4	\$13,821,456	0	\$0
2018	3	\$19,660,926	0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>\$47,650,382</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

*Source: Town of Dracut Building Department*

## DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES, TAX INCENTIVES AND EXPEDITED PERMITTING

The Town of Dracut participates in the Commonwealth's *Economic Development Incentive Program* (EDIP), a three-way partnership between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a municipality located within an Economic Target Area (ETA), and a growing company. The EDIP is a tax incentive program designed to foster job creation and stimulate business growth throughout the Commonwealth. Participating companies may receive state and local tax incentives in exchange for job creation, manufacturing job retention and private investment commitments.

The process for this incentive program is as follows: first, a company and the respective municipality agree to a tax exemption schedule on future real property taxes reputed to the added value. The company then obtains state approval for a 5% investment tax credit. This credit takes the form of a state income tax reduction. Thirdly, the company commits to a job growth and private investment schedule.

These incentive programs typically continue for five to twenty years. The EDIP program offers several advantages to growing companies, including reducing the financial burden required to grow a company and providing a flexible framework which can accommodate variable tax exemption structures and agreement durations. In January 2010, the state issued new regulations for the EDIP program, which permit manufacturers to apply directly to the state.

## BUSINESS LICENSING AND PERMITTING ASSISTANCE

In 2010, the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments undertook an assessment of the Town of Dracut's permitting process. The following recommendations were made to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the land use permitting process. These recommendations, in part, would assist businesses that are considering locating in Dracut, with obtaining necessary planning and building information.

1. A single point-of-contact should be designated and made known to all.
2. Each department should develop a written handout that outlines the department's jurisdiction, requirements, application checklist and other relevant matters
3. Permit tracking software should be researched.
4. A standard "cover sheet" should be developed and attached to all approvals outlining "what happens next".
5. There should be a standard condition added to all approvals that indicates that the final plans, approved by all boards and commissions, must be consistent.
6. All abutter notification and legal notice requirements and procedures should be reviewed.

7. A general handout should be developed that can be provided to any potential applicant outlining how to proceed through the permitting process.
8. The town must make sure its website is maintained and up-to-date. Incorrect information can be fatal to the permit approval process.
9. Consideration should be given to establishing pre- and post-application submission meetings.
10. The Town should consider utilizing a standardized bonding instrument agreed upon by all departments, boards and commissions.
11. Dracut staff should review the Permitting Guide, which can be used as a template, and have all department requirements and the permitting process combined into one document, creating a comprehensive permitting guide.
12. The Town should investigate the feasibility of holding joint meetings when Planning Board, Conservation Commission, ZBA and/or Board of Health approvals are necessary.
13. The permit granting boards and commissions should delegate approval authority, in as many areas as possible, to professional staff if possible, (e.g. the Conservation Agent) while retaining the right to review and appeal staff decisions.
14. Concurrent permit applications should be encouraged whenever possible, bearing in mind any statutory requirements, such as those found in the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, MGL c.131 §40.
15. All departments involved in the permitting process should standardize their hours of operation.
16. Each department head and/or advisor to a permitting board and commission should have clear standards of responsibilities.

The Town should review the "Municipal Self-Assessment Checklist" that has been produced by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) in order to determine which areas outlined in the Best Practices Model need to be addressed. The Town has followed up on these recommendations and the Dracut Economic Development Committee has begun to review additional steps that the Town can take to streamline the permitting process and expedite the approval process. The development of a Permitting Handbook that can be on the web site is one initiative that is being considered.

#### BALANCE BETWEEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

"Quality of life" is a term used to describe various, sometimes intangible factors that make a community attractive to live in. A quality-of-life strategy assumes government or some type of public/private partnership is able to have a significant influence on these factors and improve them over time. In theory new businesses will be attracted to communities with the most appropriate combination of factors, and existing businesses will expand for

the same reason. People also use quality of life indicators to measure neighborhood and community desirability.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are several areas and sites in Dracut that offer potential for future economic development. These areas are also ideal locations for where economic revitalization efforts should be targeted. In particular, as was identified in the SWOT session, the Town Center represents a key opportunity for the Town, as do Dracut's historic mill districts. A number of other specific sites have been previously identified by the Economic Development Committee. These sites represent land that is either currently underutilized and/or designated as Brownfield sites that require cleanup. The following section summarizes the characteristics of these areas and sites.

### DRACUT TOWN CENTER

As outlined in the Land Use and Zoning chapter, the Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay District (DCNOD) bylaw is intended to encourage development that enhances the current mix of uses within the Dracut Center area, protects historic resources, helps create a sense of place, and promotes future economic development opportunities. The purposes of the DCNOD are to:

- Encourage a mix of business, residential, cultural, educational and civic uses;
- Promote compact development that is pedestrian-oriented and preserves the historic value and character of the area;
- Minimize impacts on public services and maximize the efficient use of public infrastructure;
- Increase the town's tax base by creating a thriving small business environment, attracting new investment and promoting economic development;
- Encourage the reuse of existing underutilized or vacant properties; and
- Encourage the development of affordable housing that meets the State's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) requirements.

This bylaw needs to be promoted more with the business community to encourage the type of investment envisioned when the bylaw was approved by Town Meeting. To date there has not been much activity related to the bylaw. Perhaps with more public investment in the Town Center, there will be increased private investment as well.

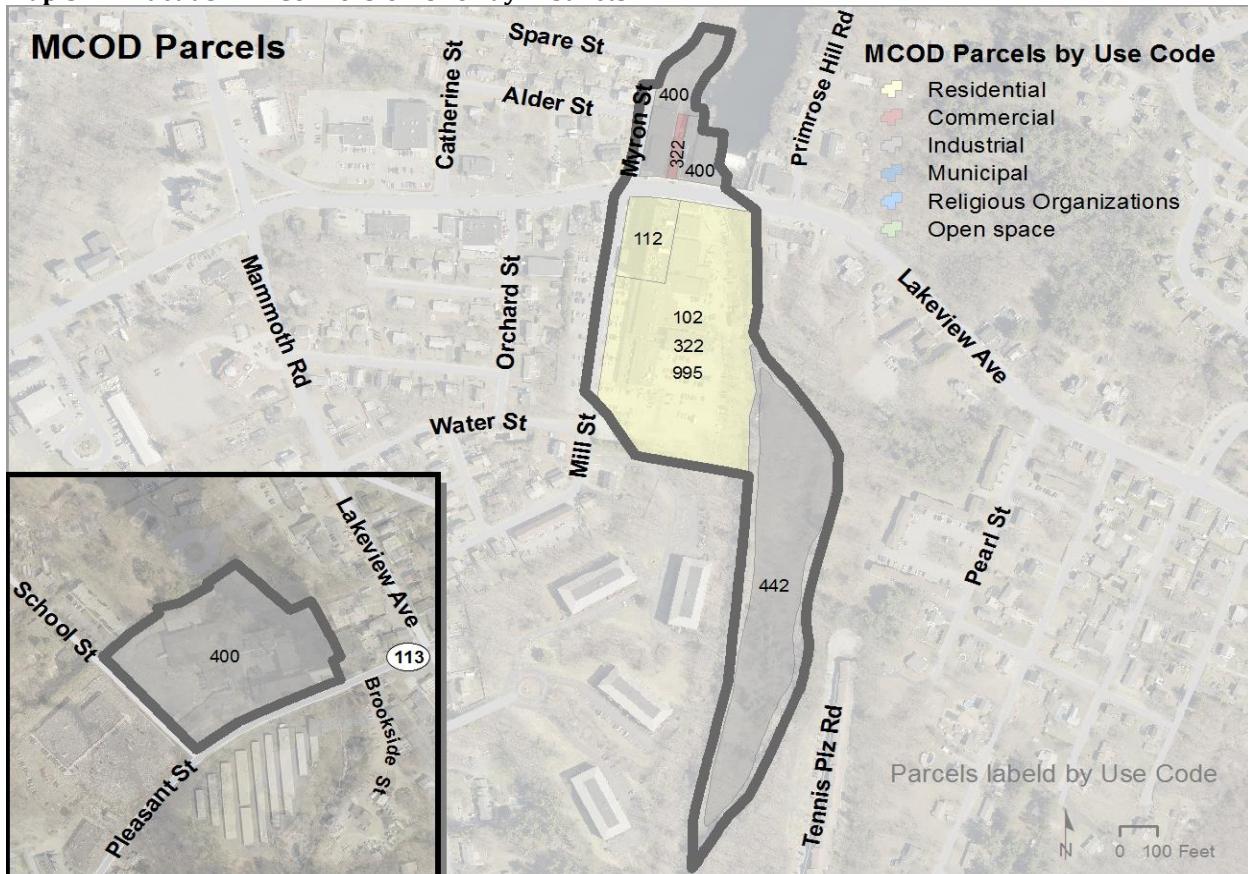
### THE MILL CONVERSION OVERLAY DISTRICT

Dracut's historic mills are concentrated along Beaver Brook. The Navy Yard Mill is located at the intersection of Lakeview Avenue and Pleasant Street, while the Beaver Brook Mills

(formerly known as the Collinsville Mills) are located further upstream between Lakeview Avenue and Mill Street. The Mill Conversion Overlay District (MCOD) as per the Dracut Zoning Map and by-law corresponds with these two locations. The intent of this overlay is to encourage the preservation, reuse and renovation of the town's historic mill properties.

The 1999 *Dracut Master Plan* advocated for the reuse of the historic mill buildings at Collinsville and the Navy Yard Mill. Uses to be encouraged included a mixture of multi-family residences to meet specific needs (such as elderly housing) and limited commercial uses. Other potential alternatives suggested in the Master Plan included office use or "incubator" space for smaller industrial businesses and some incidental convenience retail and service uses could also be allowed. As a result of these earlier planning efforts, the MCOD was added to the Zoning Bylaw in October 2000. The extent to which development and reuse has occurred in these areas has been variable, with the Navy Yard Mill suffering from site contamination issues and low occupancy rates. In contrast, Beaver Brook Mills has enjoyed significantly higher occupancy rates.

**Map 3.1: Dracut's Mill Conversion Overlay Districts**



Source: Town of Dracut Planning Department

## FORMER NAVY YARD MILLS

The former Navy Yard Mill site is located at 76-100 Pleasant Street. Originally a cotton mill and then a woolen mill powered by the waters of Beaver Brook, the 3.8-acre former Navy Yard Mill Site comprises ten interconnected buildings, which were constructed between 1860 and 1952. Most of the site consists of paved surfaces, with a small wooded section along the northwestern boundary adjoining Beaver Brook. The buildings have been renovated into commercial spaces, and some are currently occupied by commercial clients. From 1971 to 2000, United Circuits manufactured printed-circuit boards on the property. In October 2008, at the request of the Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection (MADEP), EPA investigated contamination in several buildings at the former Navy Yard Mill site. In December 2008, EPA collected soil, groundwater, soil gas, indoor air and asbestos samples. Follow-up sampling was conducted in January 2011, April 2011 and July 2011. Results confirmed unacceptably high levels of vapors of PCE, TCE and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in buildings, soil and groundwater. United Circuits is believed to be the source of high subsurface concentrations of the chlorinated solvents, trichloroethylene (TCE) and tetrachloroethylene (PCE).

EPA undertook work to clean up the site, including relocating two tenants, installing new heating and air units in two buildings, and demolishing one building. This work was finished in April 2013 and final indoor air samples were collected on June 24, 2013. In April 2014, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) published a Health Consultation report on the Navy Yard Mills Site. The conclusions were based on data from January 2007 through April 2012 and showed for all buildings the average levels of TCE and PCE were above those that may harm public health. Air levels of PCE and TCE within the buildings have fluctuated in the past and will likely continue to fluctuate. The buildings should not be occupied until remediation efforts demonstrate a constant and consistent reduction of contaminant levels below those of health concern. Given these concerns, it is not recommended that this site be considered economic development until remediation is complete.

In 2017 the Town of Dracut worked with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), under the Downtown Initiative program, to hire FinePoint Associates to complete the Dracut Navy Yard Business District study. FinePoint Associates provided an analysis to the economic and market conditions related to the ninety-one (91) commercial units in the Dracut Navy Yard Business District. There were fifteen recommendations developed for this area:

- Consider creation of a working group(s) to focus on the District, including business owners, property owners and interested residents to help address issues, as creating identity/branding, business recruitment, promotion, etc.

- Explore opportunities for grant or private funding to be used to help develop an identity and sense of place for the District (e.g. name for the District, signage, gateway treatment, branding).
- Improve the intersection of Lakeview Avenue and Pleasant Street (better traffic control, aesthetic improvement, signage for increased awareness of businesses, reinforce the area as a “place” not “just pass-thru”).
- Encourage mixed-income residential development. Revise zoning to allow for financially feasible mixed-use development with housing in upper floors. Review parking requirements, and reduce existing parking space requirements, as appropriate, to encourage residential development.
- Improve walkability of the District (e.g. sidewalks, crosswalks).
- Review existing sign bylaw (with business participation). Make businesses aware of effective allowable sign options.
- Explore opportunities for state funding (e.g. MassDevelopment, MassWorks) to promote further utilization of the Navy Yard mill complex. This might include studies to evaluate the potential for accommodating a variety of uses (restaurants, recreation, bowling & pub, brew pub, etc.) by reviewing regulatory, physical, environmental, and market conditions, as well as addressing specific issues related to the dam.
- Work with the Dracut Cultural Council to encourage programming of cultural events and attractions at the new park and other sites within the District to increase vitality and foot traffic.
- Encourage activities that will help attract new businesses to the area (especially coffee shop, restaurants, recreation/entertainment, food, health care). Examples include: Create business recruitment fact sheet or brochure, create business recruitment committee, add business recruitment page to Town website, petition for additional liquor licenses and promote availability of liquor licenses, and reinforce/expand Town business ombudsman designation and responsibilities.
- Contact technical assistance entities (such as Small Business Development Center) to determine if they can help local enterprises with promotion (in particular, to help businesses create strategies to attract the UMass Lowell market segment).
- Explore options for allowing/facilitating outdoor dining to increase vitality.
- Continue outreach to existing businesses in the District.
- Encourage property owners to fill vacancies.
- Review public safety concerns and adequacy of policing (e.g. break-ins, suspected drug activity in NY Liquor Plaza parking lot).
- Explore resources available through the regional planning agency and elsewhere for assistance with economic development.

## BROWNFIELD SITES<sup>2</sup>

Along with the Navy Yard Mills, there are a number of other “brownfield” sites that could be considered for development purposes. The complete listing of “brownfield” sites in Dracut is available at the Massachusetts DEP web site. More than 100 “brownfield” parcels are listed for Dracut and the status of each project is identified. It would be helpful for the community to map these sites and identify those with development potential to add to the Town’s site inventory. These properties could then be listed on the Town’s web site. Brownfields redevelopment enables remediation of contaminated sites, and adds additional developable land to a community’s inventory. Brownfields redevelopment can help Dracut revitalize its neighborhoods, create jobs and investment, and better use existing infrastructure.

## MARIJUANA INDUSTRY IN DRACUT

With the passage of the 2016 ballot provision known as “Question 4”, Chapter 334 of the Acts of 2016, as amended in part by Chapter 351, was approved and became Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 94G. MGL Chapter 94G governs the adult recreational use of marijuana within the Commonwealth and established the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC). MGL Chapter 94G was amended later by Chapter 55 of the Acts of 2017. Through input provided by the Cannabis Advisory Board, various stakeholders and the public, regulations for the CCC were established. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts now has a comprehensive program and regulations for recreational cannabis use within the state.

MGL Chapter 94 G allows cities and towns within the Commonwealth to determine whether cannabis/marijuana facilities should be located in their communities. Dracut municipal officials carefully considered the potential impacts of marijuana establishments in the community and, as a result, proposed several bylaws at the June 2018 Annual Town Meeting. Town Meeting voters approved a general bylaw (Chapter 28), a zoning bylaw and a taxation article at the Town Meeting to allow recreational marijuana establishments in Dracut.

Any recreational marijuana establishment use (growing, testing, processing or distributing) within Dracut requires a host agreement between the Town and applicant, a state license, and compliance with state laws and the Dracut general and zoning bylaws. The Board of Selectmen, which serves as the permit granting authority for the local general and zoning bylaws, carefully reviewed several applications for marijuana use in the

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<sup>2</sup> The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines brownfields as commercial or industrial sites that are abandoned or under-utilized and have some degree of environmental contamination, whether real or perceived

Industrial-1 zoning districts and are allowed to grant up to four special permits and licenses per use category. The Town stands to gain 3% of the gross sales for each growing, processing and distribution establishment facility for a five-year period.

The recreational cannabis/marijuana industry stands to contribute greatly to the Dracut Municipal Budget over the next five years. Additionally, the host agreements include education programming and other financial benefits related to the operation of a cannabis operation in the community. The five year sunset period is presently being examined to determine if an extension is reasonable in order to continue the potential benefits for the community. To date, two facilities have been approved at 76 Pleasant Street (distribution) and 145-155 Broadway Road (grow, processing and distribution). One project at 103 Pleasant Street (grow, processing and distribution) is currently in the queue to be approved. At least 4-5 other sites are being discussed, including a site for a testing facility.

## POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES

The Town identified four potential development sites for private investors in the *Economic Development Strategy* – Atlantic Corey Crane, the Exxon Terminal, 1905 Lakeview Avenue and P.J. Keatings Materials Corporation. The Corey Crane and P.J. Keatings properties are still status quo, while 1905 Lakeview Avenue has been developed as a donut shop and another retail establishment, while the Exxon Terminal site has potential for other development opportunities.

The Town of Dracut worked closely with Elm Development Services, LLC to support the development of a 78-apartment, 78,000-square foot assisted living residence and 24,800-square foot medical building at 21 Broadway Road and 15 and 35 Loon Road. The Town worked with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development to designate this area as a Priority Development Site under the Chapter 43D program, secure infrastructure funds under the MassWorks program and approve a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreement under the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) to move forward with the project. As a result of these efforts, 88 full-time and 117 part-time jobs were created and 58 full-time jobs were retained.

Along with these identified sites, there are many underutilized plazas and retail complexes in Dracut, particularly on Route 113, which given the right market conditions, could be retrofitted. These sites are located both within the TCOD and outside of it. Redevelopment and retrofitting these premises could include utilizing “liner” buildings, such as small stores, artist spaces, along the main street frontages. As discussed above, strengthening the town center would also have a role in improving public health and generating economic development opportunities.

Outlined in Table 3.19 below are thirty-one (31) potential commercial and industrial development sites that have been principally identified by Dracut town staff:

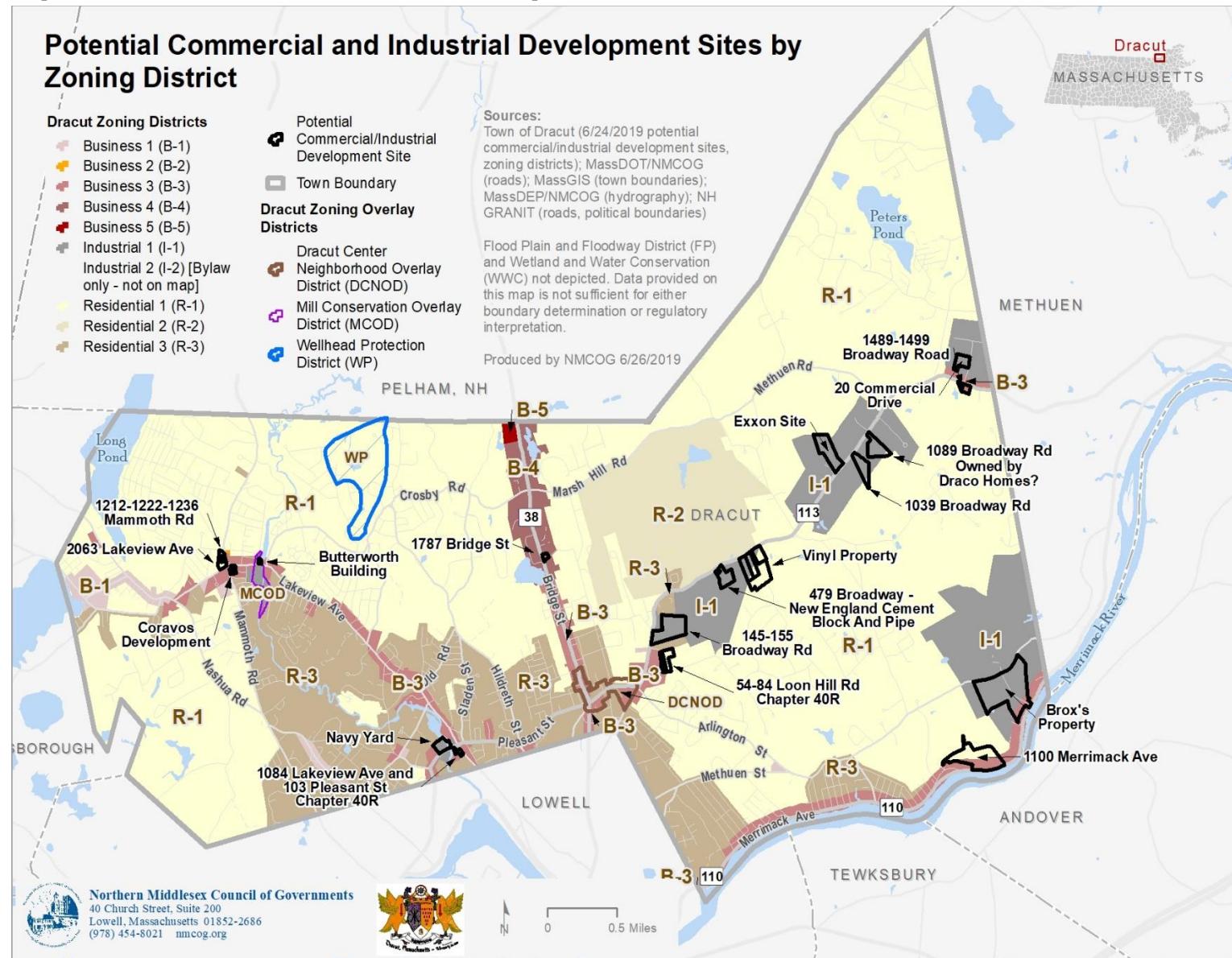
**Table 3.19: Potential Commercial and Industrial Development Sites**

Parcel Address	Site Name	Map-Block-Lot	Acres	Current Land Use	Zoning District
1787 Bridge Street	1787 Bridge Street	29-0-10	1.12	Single family	B4
144-155 Broadway Road	144-155 Broadway Road	51-0-211	21.20	Office	I1
479 Broadway Road	New England Cement Block and Pipe	37-0-69	6.93	Factory	I1
551, 561, 585 and 625 Broadway Road	Vinyl Property	38-0-1 38-72-5 37-72-3 37-72-4	4.92 12.46 5.00 5.00	Single family Ind. Pot. Dev. Land Pot. Dev. Land Pot. Dev. Land	R1 I1 I1 I1
970 Broadway Road	Exxon Site	21-0-14	14.92	Developable Land	I1
1039 Broadway Road	1039 Broadway Road	21-0-30	8.53	Single family	I1
1089 Broadway Road	Draco homes	21-18-2	10.00	Developable Land	I1
1489-1499 Broadway Road	1489-1499 Broadway Road	8-14-3.2 8-14-3.1	0.93 1.84	Developable Land Developable Land	B3 B3
20 Commercial Drive	20 Commercial Drive	8-19-25	5.80	Warehouse	I
2020-2024 Lakeview, 1175 Mammoth, and 26 Barry Lane	Coravos Development	25-0-225 25-0-224 32-0-46 32-0-47	0.31 0.51 0.39 0.39	Office building Developable Land Developable Land Undevelop. Land	B3 B3 B3 B3
1084 Lakeview and 103 Pleasant	1084 Lakeview and 103 Pleasant (40R)	62-0-92 62-0-90	0.76 0.50	Auto Sales Factory	B3 B3
1935 Lakeview Avenue	Butterworth Building	25-0-196	0.38	Factory	I1
2063 Lakeview Avenue	Collinsville School	25-0-61	1.83	Education	R1
54, 60, and 68 Loon Hill Road	54, 60, and 68 Loon Hill Road (40R)	51-0-74 51-0-75 51-0-76	1.28 1.00 4.17	Single family Single family Two family	R1 R1 R1
1212, 1222, and 1236 Mammoth Road	1212, 1222, and 1236 Mammoth Road (40R)	25-0-62 25-0-63 25-0-64	0.66 0.37 0.93	Tel X Station Apt. 4-8 Single family/in law	R1 R1 R1
1100 Merrimack Avenue	Schiripo property	69-0-9	22.35	Pot. Dev. Land	B3
1471 Methuen Street	Brox property	55-0-35	32.08	Office	I1
76 Pleasant Street	Navy Yard	62-0-20	2.08	Warehouse	I1

*Source: Town of Dracut Community Development Department*

Map 3.2 on the next page shows the potential Commercial and Industrial Development Sites by zoning district.

### Map 3.2: Potential Commercial and Industrial Development Sites in Dracut



## PUBLIC INPUT

At the Dracut Master Plan Visioning Session II meeting on January 11, 2018, participants were asked to provide responses to a number of questions related to Land Use and Zoning, Economic Development and Housing. Respondents were able to address each area equally in their responses. Outlined below are the responses to the Economic Development questions:

**What specific locations would be suitable for future development and/or redevelopment? Would any changes need to be made to the zoning bylaws to manage the redevelopment of the parcels?**

- Could the Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay District be redeveloped as a mixed-use area or some other creative zone to take advantage of existing assets? Assembly Square is a good example.
- The area of town near UMass Lowell could be developed with housing for professors and graduate students that is higher-end than standard student housing. Specialty shops could also be developed.
- Develop neighborhood stores and cafes near the higher-end housing in East Dracut.
- The Navy Yard District could capitalize on its location near UML with a mixed-use area and residential development above ground commercial uses. This area includes the Lowell line to Lakeview Avenue, Pleasant Street to the fire station. The current mill yard zoning doesn't allow recreational uses like bowling and movie theatres in the Navy Yard. It should be changed to allow those types of uses. Look at the Navy Yard Study developed through a Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) grant.
- Planning regulations should include more considerations for people with disabilities, including the development of more single-story homes.
- Develop more neighborhood dog parks.

**What improvements/enhancements do you think are needed in the Town Center, the Navy Yard and Collingsville?**

- People don't know where the Town Center is or if there even is one. Neighborhood areas are not clearly defined. There was a short history lesson on neighborhood development in Dracut and neighborhood boundaries.
- A majority of schools are located along or near Lakeview because that is where the sewer system was located.

- There should be more walking and bike trails. A long distance bike path would be useful for commuting. A walking path is planned for Beaver Brook farm and a multi-use path is in the early stages of planning along the Merrimack River.

There were additional comments at the session related to economic development as follows:

- A food processing and distribution center or network using local agricultural goods would create jobs and support local farms. The network would go beyond farmers' markets, farm-to-table and grocery distribution to include adding value through food processing. The network could be modeled on a similar program in southeastern Massachusetts. A study to determine feasibility could be a start.
- A farm-to-table restaurant should be established utilizing all the agricultural resources in the community.
- Nonconforming older buildings should be reused instead of demolished in order to retain local character. Work with town boards and update regulations to allow reuse of these buildings. Small businesses can work together to reduce costs of reusing old buildings.
- Attract marijuana businesses to town. Voters have already rejected a moratorium on recreational marijuana establishments.
- An incubator building or shared workspace facility could help small businesses to access equipment, technology, advice, and space that they could not afford on their own.
- Technology startups and other small businesses can thrive in affordable small office spaces. Dracut should work to attract technology, healthcare and women-owned businesses and support the creation or renovation of suitable office space.

The results of the written survey for the Master Plan indicated that Dracut residents felt there was a need for more economic development opportunities in the community, as indicated below:

**Question 3: Why do you choose to live in Dracut? - Proximity to employment (287 responses or 27.95%)**

**Question 4: Please indicate whether you would rate the following services, facilities, and characteristics, as they relate to Dracut, as excellent, good, fair or poor.**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unable to Score/ Unfamiliar	Total
<b>Access to employment</b>	3.29% (26)	30.25% (239)	31.65% (250)	15.82% (125)	18.99% (150)	790
<b>Availability and access to goods and services</b>	9.88% (79)	43.63% (349)	31.13% (249)	8.88% (71)	6.50% (52)	800

**Question 5: In your opinion, list three of the most critical issues facing Dracut over the next ten years.**

- Lack of business or industrial development/tax base – 137 responses
- Access to employment/jobs – 25 responses

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Dracut has an opportunity to expand its economic base through a “balanced growth” economic development program that encourages private investment and provides jobs for community residents. With the development of the *Dracut Economic Development Strategy* in July 2016, the Town, principally through its Economic Development Committee, was prepared to market itself as pro-business and, therefore, encourage increased private investment. A marketing brochure was developed and the Town Manager actively visited small businesses in the community to identify how the community could be helpful. This effort built upon the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) developed by Professor Barry Bluestone from the Dukakis Center at Northeastern University in December 2014. The EDSAT study outlined several strengths and potential deal-makers, as well as several weaknesses or potential deal-breakers that Dracut had relative to other communities that participated in the EDSAT program. By building upon the identified strengths and addressing the identified weaknesses, Dracut has an opportunity to compete effectively with other communities in attracting private investment.

In order to retain a focus on the identified economic development goals and strategies, it will be important to re-establish the Economic Development Committee to work with Town staff to address the various opportunities for economic growth. The establishment of a true public-private partnership will help build upon the successes that have already occurred. Although many Dracut businesses are members of the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce, there needs to be a business association as well. Staff support for the Economic Development Committee has been largely provided by the Town Manager and

the Community Development Director. Consideration should be given to establishing an Economic Development position similar to what Billerica and Chelmsford have done. This position would support the activities of the Economic Development Committee and work closely with the Town Manager and Community Development Director to implement the proposed economic development strategy outlined in previous documents and in the updated Master Plan.

The principal message from the EDSAT Study was that private site and location experts search for communities that have an effective and efficient permitting process that enables businesses to receive a positive or negative response as soon as possible. In Dracut the Community Development Director serves as the Permitting Ombudsman and works to ensure that businesses can move through the permitting process as smoothly as possible. In general, industrial and commercial permits are issued within 120 days once a complete application package has been submitted. However, there needs to be a Permitting Guide on the Town web site that identifies the various departments, boards and committees involved in the overall permitting process and that outlines the components that constitute a complete application package. Providing this information to the applicant ahead of time will reduce the amount of time necessary before the various boards and committees.

The Economic Development Committee needs to build upon its Economic Development marketing program and reach out to local businesses to determine their needs and identify how the Town can assist them. There should be an education and outreach program to attract new businesses to the community. The Economic Development Committee should also work closely with regional, state and federal economic development partners, such as the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, MassDevelopment, the Economic Development Administration and the Small Business Administration. Drawing on the identified potential commercial and industrial development sites, the Town can reach out to businesses and encourage them to relocate to Dracut. This list of available properties should be posted on the Town's web site, as well as on the web sites of various regional economic development partners.

Given Dracut's proximity to UMass Lowell, the Town should work closely with the University to identify whether research and development space could be made available to spin-off incubator businesses. There are also training opportunities in the STEM area that could tie together Dracut businesses, the Dracut school system and the University to create employment opportunities for Dracut students. A formal relationship with Middlesex Community College should also be established that would open up educational opportunities for Dracut students interested in an Associate's Degree or post high school credit courses. The Mass Hire Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board offers

additional training and employment opportunities for Dracut residents, as well as training packages for Dracut businesses. In addition the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce has worked with the Town in the past to host local training sessions for Dracut small businesses.

The Town of Dracut is faced with several infrastructure opportunities that could result in increased private investment. The potential development of fiber optic lines within the gas and electrical rights of way in Dracut represents a real opportunity. These fiber optic lines can connect to Canada and other cities in New England, such as Chelsea. There should be an opportunity for more competition in the cable internet service area, as most communities have more than one service provider. Dracut's participation in the Commonwealth's Community Electricity Aggregation Program has helped reduce energy costs for residents and businesses and will help make the community competitive for new businesses. Several major intersections in Dracut need to be addressed to improve traffic flow, update signalization, address sidewalks, and street lighting to make these areas more attractive to private investment.

Apart from focusing on the potential commercial and industrial development sites, there needs to be a sharpened focus on the Town Center and other neighborhood centers. By more fully utilizing the Dracut Center Neighborhood Overlay District (DCNOD), the Town will be able to encourage development that enhances the current mix of uses, protects historic resources, help create a "sense of place" and promotes additional economic development opportunities. The Town needs to encourage mixed-use development in this area in order for the overlay district to be successful. Similarly, the Mill Conversion Overlay District (MCOD) is designed to encourage the preservation, reuse and renovation of the Navy Mill Yard and the Beaver Brook Mills. The Dracut Navy Yard Business District study completed by FinePoint Associates under the Downtown Initiative Program offers many recommendations for revitalizing the Navy Yard neighborhood in a way that encourages the growth of small businesses and entertainment opportunities, such as a bowling alley and brew pub. The Town is also reviewing opportunities under the Chapter 40R program to encourage mixed-use development in three or four locations that would provide more commercial and residential space.

In order to address many of these issues and opportunities, the Town needs to make effective use of the economic tool box available at the State. The Town has effectively utilized the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) through the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) by establishing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreements with new businesses, as well as designating sites under the Chapter 43D program. The Town has received infrastructure funds under the MassWorks program and recently became eligible for infrastructure funds under the Housing Choice Capital Grant

program. The Town also received \$1 million in MassDOT funds to develop sidewalks at the school complex site. The Town has been actively involved in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) through the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO). These resources and others provided at the state level will be needed to supplement the limited resources available through the annual Town budget.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Re-establish the Economic Development Committee to work with the Town Manager and Community Development Director.
- Work with the business community to establish a local business association.
- Establish an Economic Development position to support the activities of the Economic Development Committee and work with the Town Manager and Community Development Director.
- Develop an online Permitting Guide to assist applicants in working through the Town's permitting process.
- Develop a marketing program to reach out to local businesses and develop an education and outreach program to attract new businesses to the community.
- Work closely with regional, state and federal economic development partners, such as the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, MassDevelopment, the Economic Development Administration and the Small Business Administration.
- Post available commercial and industrial properties on the Town's web site, as well as the web sites of the economic development partners.
- Work closely with UMass Lowell in identifying spin-off incubator business opportunities, as well as training opportunities in the STEM area.
- Establish a formal relationship with Middlesex Community College to open up educational opportunities for Dracut students.
- Work with the Mass Hire Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board to identify training opportunities for Dracut residents and businesses.
- Collaborate with the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce to host local training sessions for Dracut small businesses.
- Investigate the potential development of fiber optic lines within the gas and electrical rights of way and connect with Canada and New England.
- Identify more than one cable service provider to encourage more competition and higher capacity.
- Address several major intersections to improve traffic flow, update signalization and address sidewalks and street lighting to make the areas more attractive to private investors.

- Encourage mixed-use development in the Town Center and reuse opportunities at the Navy Mill Yard and the Beaver Brook Mills.
- Review opportunities under the Chapter 40R program to encourage mixed-use development in three or four locations.
- Make effective use of the State's economic development tool box: the EDIP program under MOBD, the Chapter 43D program, MassWorks, Housing Choice Capital Grants, and MassDOT funds to name a few.

# TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

## INTRODUCTION

A multi-modal transportation system is essential to a community's vitality by providing access to housing, employment centers, local services, retail establishments and recreational amenities. A transportation system must safely and efficiently accommodate all users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit riders. Dracut's streets, sidewalks, trails and regional transit services exert a significant influence on the health, well-being, and quality of life of its residents. The purpose of the Master Plan is not only to strengthen the town economically, but also to preserve its community character and quality of life.

The Transportation and Circulation section provides an overview of Dracut's existing transportation system, presents an assessment of safety and operational issues, and outlines recommendations for addressing identified needs and deficiencies. An assessment of existing conditions was prepared through background research, field reconnaissance, and input provided by town staff. Some of the information used in this analysis is derived from the *Regional Transportation Plan*<sup>3</sup> (RTP) and the *Transportation Improvement Program*<sup>4</sup> (TIP) prepared by the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG).

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Town of Dracut is located in northern Massachusetts east of Tyngsborough and west of Methuen. The Town borders Pelham, New Hampshire to the north and Lowell to the south. While Dracut is not directly served by a limited

## TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION GOALS

- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in future transportation improvement projects, whenever possible.
- Address the transportation needs of all residents, including seniors and those with disabilities.
- Ensure that the town's transportation system is as safe as possible.
- Make the transit system easier to use, evaluate the existing route configurations, and widely disseminate information on available transit services.
- Address traffic flow issues around the Lakeview Avenue school complex.

<sup>3</sup> Northern Middlesex Regional Transportation Plan, 2016-2040, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, July 2015

<sup>4</sup> FY 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, August 2016

access highway, it is reasonably proximate to I-93 via Routes 110 and 113. Route 38 connects Dracut to the City of Lowell and Pelham, New Hampshire.

State numbered routes and local roadways are the basis of the town's transportation infrastructure and are vital to its economic growth and prosperity. Roadways are classified according to their function and purpose, in a hierarchy based on mobility and access, outlined in guidelines established by the Federal Highway Administration<sup>5</sup> (FHWA). Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of traffic service that they are intended to provide. There are three general highway functional classifications: arterial, collector, and local roads. In Massachusetts, arterials can be further classified into interstates, principal arterials and minor arterials, based on the mobility and access provided by the roadway. Table 4.1 below summarizes the number of centerline miles by main functional class for Dracut's roadway network.

**Table 4.1: Roadway Centerline Miles by Functional Classification**

Functional Class	Total Centerline Miles				
	Interstate	Arterial	Collector	Local	Total
	0	20.13	18.40	120.62	159.15

*Source: MassDOT Roadway Inventory, 2017*

Map 4.1 graphically displays the town's roadway network by functional classification.

## ARTERIALS

Arterials provide the highest level of service, at the greatest speed, for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control. Arterials are a major conduit for travel and commerce, and help link economic regions and urban centers. There are approximately 20 miles of arterial roadway, comprising 12.5% of the centerline miles in Dracut. The characteristics of the town's arterial roadways are outlined below:

- Route 38 (Bridge Street) – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) classifies Route 38 as an urban principal arterial, as it is the major north-south route connecting Dracut with Lowell and New Hampshire. The roadway is generally one lane in each direction, with turning lanes at Route 113. The roadway width varies from 26 to 30 feet, depending on location.
- Route 110 (Merrimack Avenue) – Classified as an urban principal arterial, Route 110/Merrimack Avenue runs along the northern edge of the Merrimack River,

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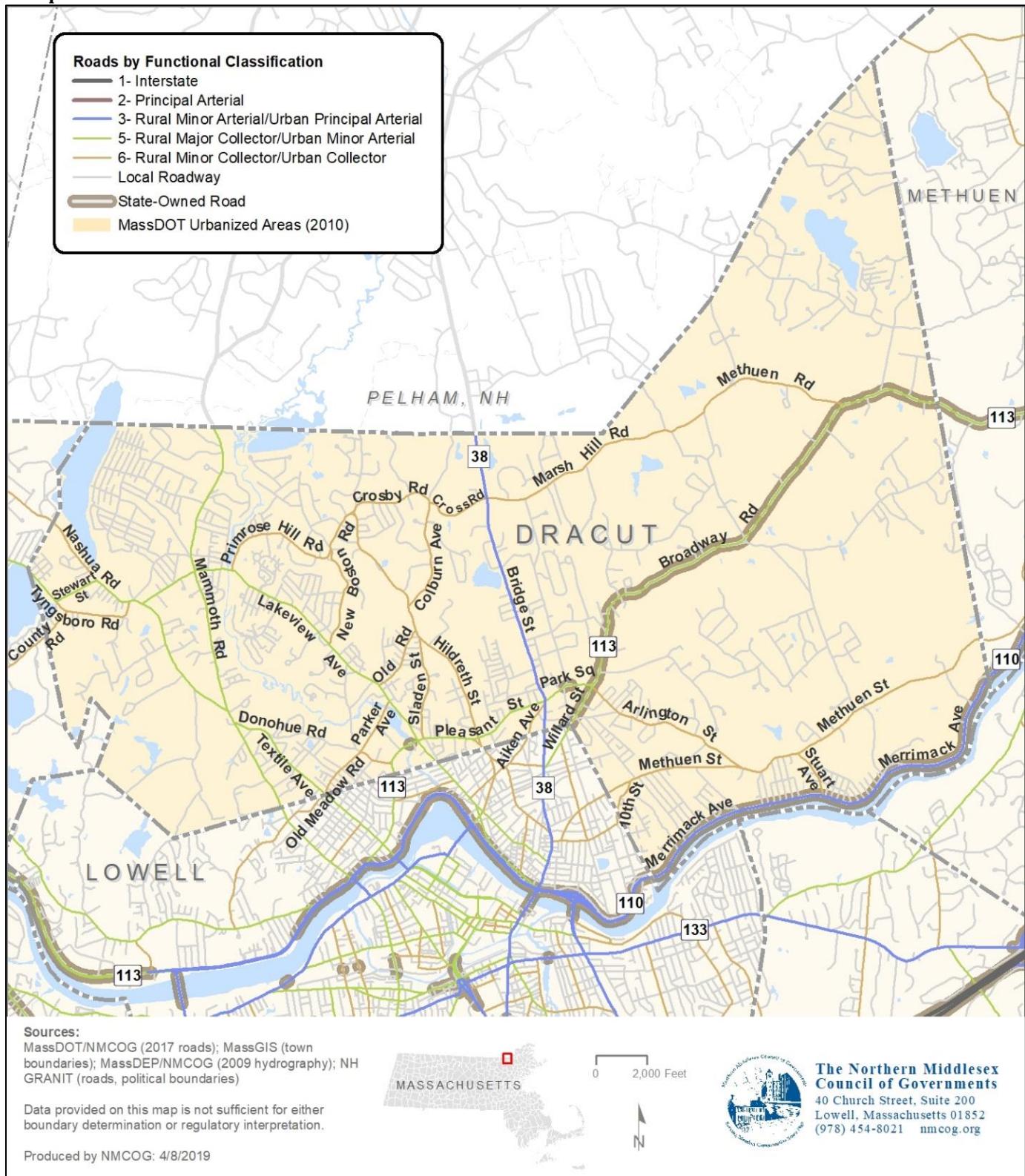
<sup>5</sup> [Highway Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria and Procedures](#), Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 2013 Edition.

connecting Dracut to Lowell and Methuen. This roadway serves as a major commuter route and provides access to I-93 in Methuen. Merrimack Avenue is generally one lane in each direction, with 7-10 foot shoulders and a four-foot sidewalk on the north side of the road. Because the roadway previously consisted of four travel lanes and was subsequently reduced to two lanes, the pavement width exceeds 40 feet and there are large shoulder areas.

- Route 113 (Pleasant Street and Broadway Road) – Route 113 is classified as an urban minor arterial and runs through Dracut in a general northeast/southwest direction. Route 113 connects Dracut with Lowell and Methuen, and provides access to I-93 in Methuen and Route 3 in Tyngsborough.
- Lakeview Avenue – Lakeview Avenue is classified as an urban minor arterial, and runs in a general northwest/southeast direction between Lowell and Nashua Road in northwest Dracut. The two-lane roadway expands near Dracut High School to include a two-way center turn lane between Goodhue Avenue and Tennis Plaza Road.
- Mammoth Road – Mammoth Road is classified as an urban minor arterial running in a north/south direction connecting Dracut to Lowell and Pelham, New Hampshire. The roadway consists of one travel lane in each direction, and sidewalks are present along the east side from the Lowell line to Lakeview Avenue. Land uses along the road are primarily residential.
- Nashua Road – Nashua Road is classified as an urban minor arterial between Mammoth Road and Stewart Street. At this point, the road becomes a collector road until it connects with Long Pond Road in Tyngsborough. The roadway consists of one travel lane in each direction and runs generally in a northwest/southeast direction. Land uses along the roadway are a mix of residential and commercial. Sidewalks are present on an intermittent basis only.
- Textile Avenue – Classified as a minor arterial, Textile Avenue connects Dracut to University Avenue in Lowell near the UMass Lowell campus. The roadway consists of one travel lane in each direction, running in a north/south direction. There are no sidewalks or other pedestrian accommodations along the roadway. Land uses are primarily residential.

Table 4.2 on page 110 summarizes the characteristics of the town's arterial roadways.

## Map 4.1: Functional Classification



**Table 4.2: Summary of Arterial Roadways in the Town of Dracut**

Roadway	Class	Ownership	Speed Limit (mph)	Roadway Width (ft)	Shoulder Width (ft)	Sidewalk
Route 113	Principal Arterial	MassDOT	30-40	26-38	0-4	Partial
Route 38	Principal Arterial	MassDOT	30-40	30	2	South of Lafayette St.
Route 110	Principal Arterial	MassDOT	45	40	4-10	Yes (Poor Condition)
Lakeview Avenue	Minor Arterial	Town	25-35	32-48	0-6	Yes
Mammoth Road	Minor Arterial	Town	35-40	30-32	2-4	Between Lakeview Ave. and Nashua Rd.
Nashua Road	Minor Arterial	Town	30	30	2-4	Between Lakeview Ave. and Mammoth Rd.

Source: MassDOT Roadway Inventory, 2017

## COLLECTORS

Collector roads are generally shorter than arterials and serve to gather trips from local roads and distribute them to arterials. In designated urban areas such as Dracut, there is no distinction between major and minor collector roads. The collector roads are listed in Table 4.3, and comprise 11% of all centerline miles in Dracut.

**Table 4.3: Functionally Classified Collector Roads in Dracut**

Dracut Collector Road Inventory	
Hildreth Street	Marsh Hill Road
Primrose Hill Road	Methuen Road
Nashua Road	Arlington Street
Tyngsborough Road	Methuen Street
New Boston Road	Sladen Street
Crosby Road	Old Road
Cross Road	Old Meadow Road
Parker Avenue	

Source: MassDOT Road Inventory, 2017

## LOCAL ROADWAYS

Local roads consist of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors, and provide access to land with little or no through movement. There are 122 miles of local roadway within the Town of Dracut, accounting for 76% of the town's roadway mileage.

## UNACCEPTED ROADS

The Town has just over 15 miles of unaccepted streets, also known as private ways. Private ways are often unaccepted because they do not meet local standards for roadway construction. The current policy is to provide snow plowing, trash pickup and minimum essential maintenance to allow access for public safety operations. The Town does not receive funding through the Chapter 90 program to maintain these roadways.

## JURISDICTION

Ownership of roadways is key to identifying the responsible parties for maintaining and improving Dracut's transportation network. MassDOT owns 4.5% of the roadway mileage in Dracut, including Broadway Road (Route 113), Willard Street and Merrimack Avenue (Route 110). Of the 159.15 centerline miles of roadway in Dracut, 86% are accepted roads eligible to receive Chapter 90 funding assistance for maintenance. Table 4.4 below summarizes the ownership status of roadways in Dracut.

**Table 4.4: Roadway Centerline Miles**

Jurisdiction	MassDOT-owned	Town-owned (Accepted)	Town-owned (Unaccepted)	Total
	7.31	136.41	15.43	159.15

*Source: Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Office of Transportation Planning Road Inventory Year End Report (March 2018)*

## ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

Efficient utilization of limited transportation resources requires adequate maintenance and preservation of the existing transportation system. Timely and appropriate maintenance is vital given that construction costs rise annually and government agencies find themselves fiercely competing for funding. In addition, overused, poorly maintained, inadequately lit, and badly signed and striped roads pose a safety hazard. A sound and thoughtful maintenance program leads to the long-term sustainability of roadway infrastructure, and is comprised of the following activities:

- Winter maintenance
- Preservation (resurfacing and crack filling)
- Pavement markings, signs, safety barriers, etc.
- Pavement rehabilitation (restructuring without upgrading nominal load capacity)
- Pavement upgrading (increasing load capacity, environmental features, and low cost measures)
- Structural maintenance (bridges, tunnels, etc.)
- Peripheral maintenance (embankments, drainage, shoulders, etc.)

The Town's highway department is responsible for the maintenance of all public roads, including snow and ice removal. The department subcontracts roadwork on an as-needed basis. Paved roadways represent one of the largest capital investments in the highway budget. Maintaining the paved surface of a large roadway system involves complex decision-making on how and when to apply surface treatments to best keep the system performing and operating within the funding constraints facing the community. In 2018, NMCOG staff evaluated the 26.28 federal aid eligible centerline miles of roadway within Dracut as part of its regional pavement management program. The analysis showed that 20% of the federal-aid roadways were in excellent condition, 28% were in good condition, 32% were in fair condition, and the remaining 20% were in poor condition, as shown on Map 4.3 on the following page.

Allocating adequate resources for preventive maintenance, such as crack sealing, can increase the life-cycle for certain roadways, while deferring maintenance can lead to a need for full depth reconstruction, which is far more costly. Pavement preservation and rehabilitation type projects are initiated by local communities or MassDOT, and can be funded with federal aid if located on eligible roads. Roadway reconstruction and maintenance projects follow the same procedures for project initiation and approval as other projects programmed on the TIP.

State funding through the Chapter 90 program can also be utilized for roadway improvement projects. The Chapter 90 Program is funded through the State Transportation Bond Bill and administered by MassDOT. The funds are apportioned by formula based on local accepted roadway mileage, employment and population. The FY 2019 Chapter 90 allocation calculation for the Dracut is detailed in Table 4.5 below.

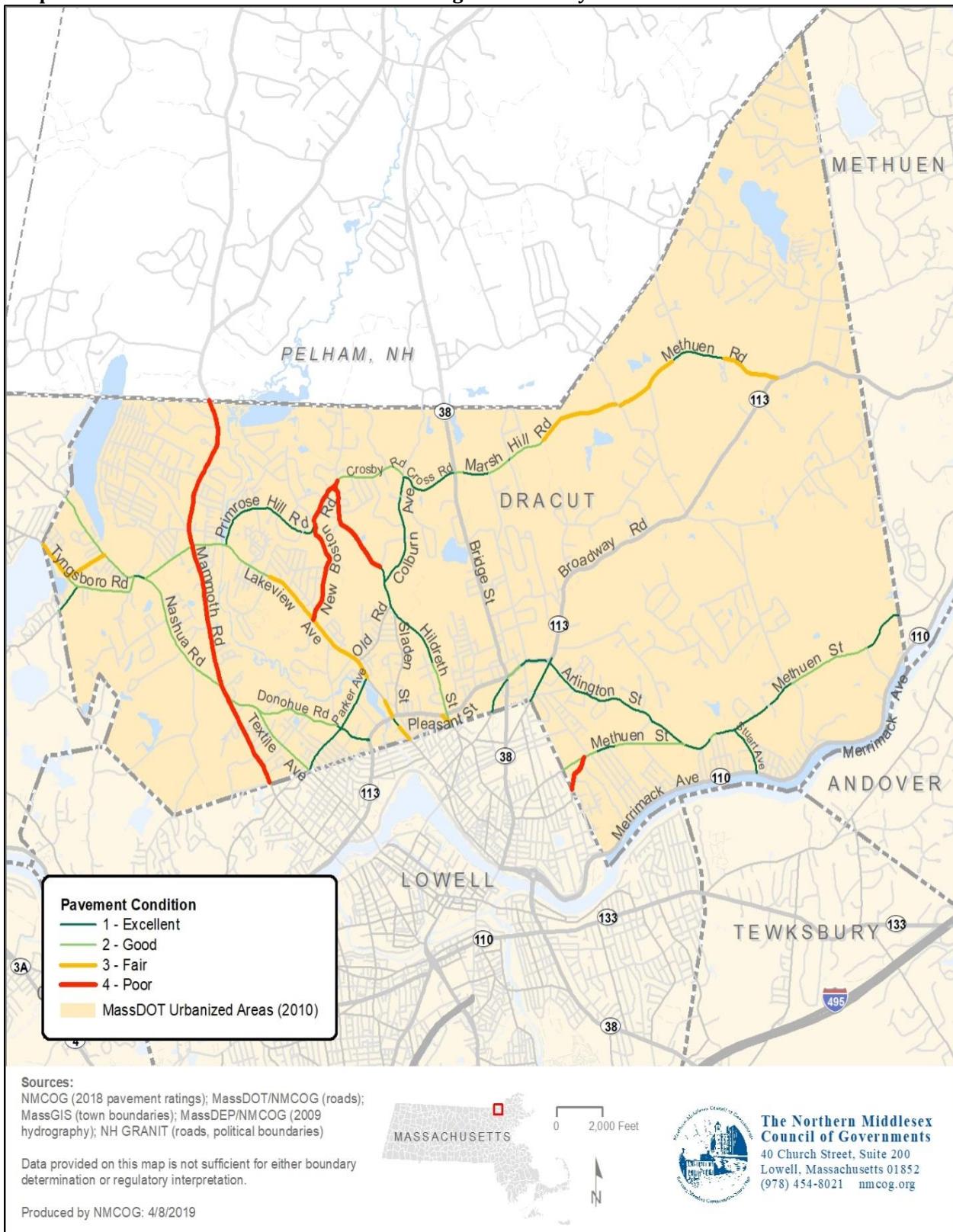
**Table 4.5: Dracut Chapter 90 Apportionment, FY 2019**

MassDOT District	2017 Roadway Miles	2010 Population	2010 Employment	FY 2019 Apportionment
4	136.41	29,457	5,893	\$794,267

*Source: MassDOT*

Chapter 90 funds must be allocated to roadway projects, such as resurfacing and related work, and other incidental work, such as preliminary engineering, State Aid/Consultant Design Agreements, right-of-way acquisition, shoulders, side road approaches, landscaping and tree planting, roadside drainage, structures (including bridges), sidewalks, traffic control, service facilities, and street lighting (excluding operating costs).

**Map 4.2: Pavement Condition of Federal-aid Eligible Roadways**



## BRIDGES

MassDOT uses standards developed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) to rate all bridges



Photo 1: Parker Avenue Bridge over Beaver Brook

Photo Courtesy Google Maps

in Massachusetts based on their condition. In Dracut, there are four crossings of Beaver Brook currently monitored and rated by MassDOT. These include two bridges located on State Route 113 (Pleasant Street), as well as bridges on Lakeview Avenue, Phineas Street and Parker Avenue. MassDOT inspects and rates each bridge on a bi-annual basis. The rating scale runs from 0 to 100, with 100 being the best condition possible. Bridges that score low on the scale are classified as structurally deficient.

A structurally deficient condition indicates a deterioration of significant bridge elements, which may require a restriction in the load capacity of the bridge. It does not necessarily mean that the bridge is unsafe, but indicates that repairs should be made before the condition deteriorates further. There are no structurally deficient bridges in Dracut. Table 4.6 provides information on the condition of bridges within Dracut.

**Table 4.6: Bridge Structural Condition**

Location	Ownership	Functional Class	Year built/rebuilt	MassDOT Inspection Structural Rating <sup>1</sup>	Structural Deficiency
Route 113 East over Beaver Brook	State highway	Urban Minor Arterial	1855/1921	79.3	No
Route 113 West over Beaver Brook	State highway	Urban Minor Arterial	1855/1921	79.3	No
Lakeview Avenue over Beaver Brook	Town	Urban Minor Arterial	1850/1900	79.3	No
Phineas Street over Beaver Brook	Town	Urban Local	1995	75.1	No
Parker Avenue over Beaver Brook	Town	Urban Collector	1956	47.8	No

<sup>1</sup>MassDOT Structural Ratings updated December 2018

## COMMUTING PROFILE

A community's commuting profile is generally influenced by its location within the region, land use patterns and availability of transportation infrastructure and services. Though Dracut does not contain regional limited access highway, it is conveniently located near I-93 to the east connecting the town to the Boston metropolitan area and New Hampshire. Table 4.7 below provides an overview of the travel modes used by Dracut residents to access employment. American Community Survey (ACS) journey to work data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau shows a continued reliance on the single-occupancy vehicle for commuting, with over 85% of Dracut residents driving alone to work. Just over 7% of Dracut residents carpool, while 3.3% worked from home and 1.8% used public transportation.

**Table 4.7: Mode Choice for Dracut Commuters**

Mode Choice	2006-2010 ACS		2013-2017 ACS		Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total:	15,928	100.0	16,614	100.0	4.3
Drove alone	14,176	89.0	14,220	85.6	0.3
Carpooled	1,099	6.9	1,190	7.2	8.3
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	239	1.5	303	1.8	26.8
Bicycle	143	0.9	25	0.2	-82.6
Walked	32	0.2	195	1.2	513.2
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	48	0.3	129	0.8	170.4
Worked at home	191	1.2	552	3.3	188.9

*Source: 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey*

According to 2013-2017 ACS data, 16,062 Dracut residents commuted to work on a daily basis, an increase of 2.1% from 2006-2010 ACS data, which is likely the result of an improving economy. Ninety-one percent (91%) of Dracut's commuters work in Massachusetts, with 71.8% working within Middlesex County. Less than nine percent (9%) of commuters (1,402) work outside of the State, as shown in Table 4.8 below.

**Table 4.8: Workers by Place of Work - State and County Level**

Mode Choice	2006-2010 ACS		2013-2017 ACS		Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Workers	15,828	100.0	16,614	100.0	5.0
Worked in Massachusetts	14,252	90.0	15,212	91.6	6.7
Worked in Middlesex County	11,313	71.5	11,927	71.8	5.4
Worked outside Middlesex County	2,939	18.6	3,285	19.8	11.8
Worked outside of Massachusetts	1,576	10.0	1,402	8.4	0.0

*Source: 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey*

Over 70% of Dracut residents commute more than 20 minutes, with the average commute lasting 30-34 minutes, as shown in Table 4.9 below. This is an increase of over 2 minutes from travel times reported in the 2006-2010 ACS. Figure 4.1 graphically displays the travel times to work for Dracut residents.

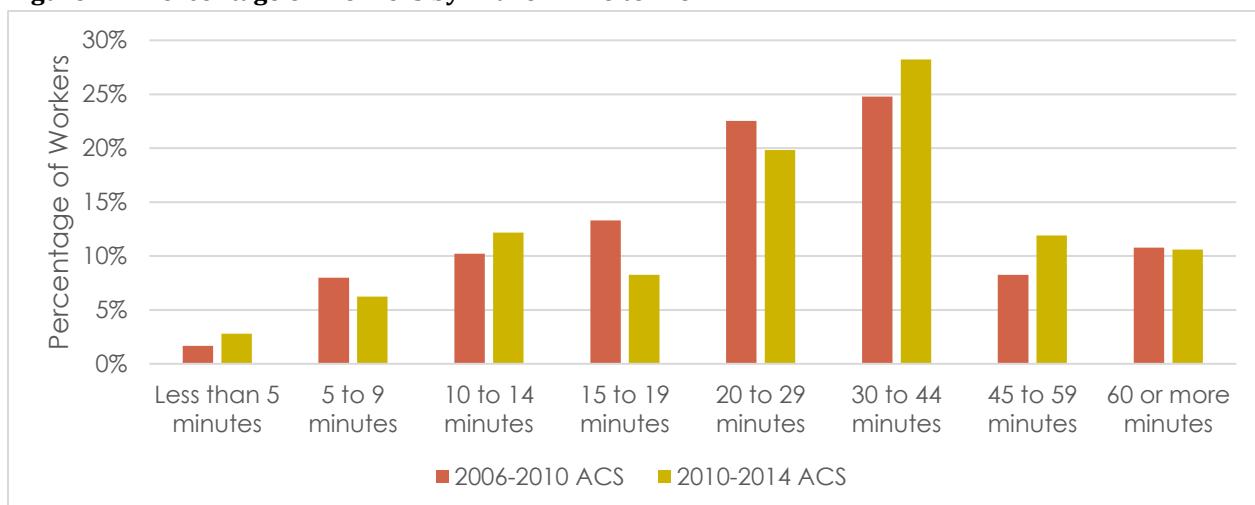
**Table 4.9: Travel Time to Work for Dracut Residents**

Mode Choice	2006-2010 ACS		2013-2017 ACS		Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total:	15732	100.0	16,062	100.0	2.1
Less than 5 minutes	261	1.7	372	2.3	42.5
5 to 9 minutes	1264	8.0	1249	7.8	-1.2
10 to 14 minutes	1613	10.3	1737	10.8	7.7
15 to 19 minutes	2104	13.4	1443	9.0	0.0
20 to 24 minutes	2636	16.8	1987	12.4	0.0
25 to 29 minutes	928	5.9	1296	8.1	39.7
30 to 34 minutes	2448	15.6	2618	16.3	6.9
35 to 39 minutes	571	218.8	700	4.4	22.6
40 to 44 minutes	899	71.1	891	5.5	-0.9
45 to 59 minutes	1306	81.0	1853	11.5	41.9
60 to 89 minutes	1213	57.7	1481	9.2	22.1
90 or more minutes	489	18.6	435	2.7	-11.0

Source: 2006-2010 and 2013-2017 ACS.

Figure 4.1 below graphically displays the travel times to work for Dracut residents.

**Figure 4.1: Percentage of Workers by Travel Time to Work**



## TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Traffic volumes are monitored through NMCOG's traffic counting program, MassDOT's counting program, and from traffic impact studies prepared for development projects. Generally, the traffic count season runs from April through October. Recorded traffic volumes taken between 2008 and 2018 show that the traffic growth within Dracut has increased by approximately 0.38% annually. Map 4.3 shows the location of traffic counts and the average daily traffic volumes on Dracut roadways. Table 4.11 provides a summary of traffic volumes, traffic growth rates and truck percentages at count locations. The growth rates are calculated for locations with at least three years of available volume data, and are shown in Table 4.11 on an annualized basis.

## TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

The Dracut Police Department provides crash records to the Registry of Motor Vehicles on an ongoing basis. MassDOT and NMCOG maintain a database of all crash data reported to the RMV. Table 4.10 provides a summary of the total number of crashes that have occurred in Dracut between 2014 and 2016, and reflects the most recent data available. Of the 1,157 crashes reported in Dracut during that time period, 722 (62%) involved property damage only, 346 (30%) involved non-fatal injuries, three involved fatal injuries, and the remainder were unknown or unreported. One of the fatal accidents occurred in January 2014 when two vehicles collided at the intersection of Lakeview Avenue and Pearl Street. One of the two vehicles also collided with a tree. Another fatal accident occurred in July 2015 when a pickup truck crashed into a utility pole on Bridge Street. The third fatal accident occurred in October 2016 when two vehicles collided at the intersection of Bridge and Pleasant Streets.

**Table 4.10: Dracut Crash Summary (2014-2016)**

Year	Total Crashes	Property Damage Only Crashes	Injury Crashes (Total People Injured)	Fatal Crashes
2014	384	244	123	1
2015	420	273	108	1
2016	353	205	115	1

*Source: MassDOT Crash Data Record System*

### Map 4.3: Traffic Volumes on Dracut Roadways

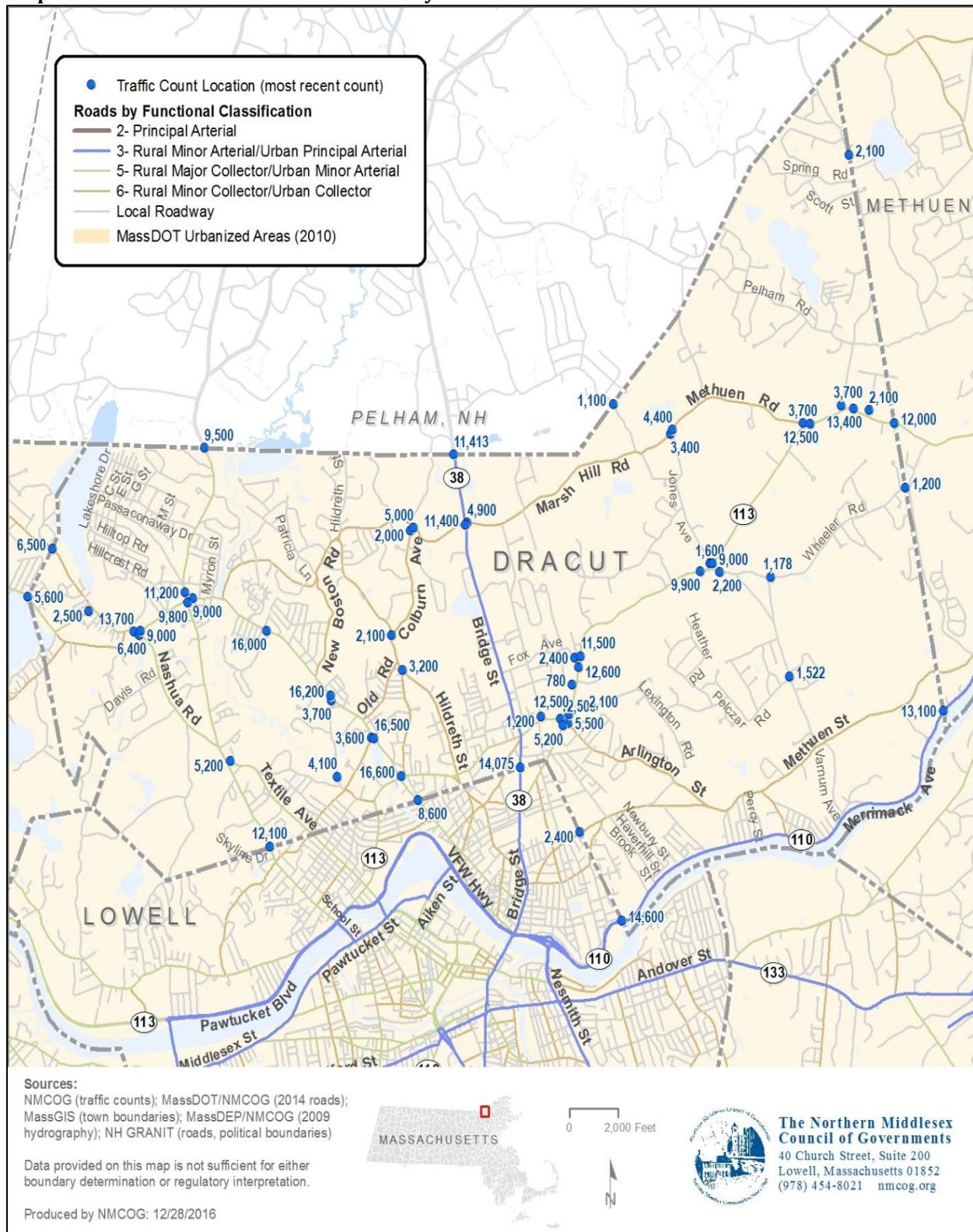


Table 4.11: Average Daily Traffic Volumes in Dracut

Location	Average Daily Traffic											Annual Growth Rate	% Trucks
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
Arlington St E of Rte 113	5,400			4,700				5,500				0.13	4.1
Colburn Ave E of Hildreth St	2,200			2,100									
Colburn Rd S of Cross Rd						2,000							
Commercial Dr N of Rte 113 (Broadway Rd)								2,100					31.9
Cross Rd E of Colburn Rd						5,000							
Donahue Rd E of Mammoth Rd	5,000			5,200									
E. Richardson Rd south of Marsh Hill Rd											944		
Fox Ave N of Rte 113 (Broadway Rd)								2,400					1.8
Hildreth St S of Sladen St	3,300			3,200									
Jones Ave N of Rte 113 (Broadway)			1,600				1,600						2.4
Lakeview Ave E of Nashua Rd						9,000					8,900		3.8
Lakeview Ave N of Phineas St				16,200									7
Lakeview Ave S of Parker Ave			16,500										
Lakeview Ave W of Mammoth Rd		8,700			9,000								
Lakeview Ave W of Tennis Plaza Rd							16,000						9.6
Loon Hill Rd E of Rte 113 (Broadway Rd)								2,100					1.2
Mammoth Rd @ NH State Line		9,700			8,900				9,500			-0.29	3.3
Mammoth Rd N of Lakeview Ave	12,600			12,500			11,200		11,100			-1.32	3.5
Mammoth Rd S of Lakeview Ave			10,200			9,800							
Marsh Hill Rd south of Richardson Rd										5,220			

Table 4.11: Average Daily Traffic Volumes in Dracut

Location	Average Daily Traffic											Annual Growth Rate	% Trucks
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
Marsh Hill Rd E of Rte 38 (Bridge St)			4,400						4,900		6,032	4.64	2.4
Marsh Hill Rd W of Jones Ave		3,300			3,400						5,322	7.66	
Methuen Rd E of Jones Ave							4,400						2.5
Methuen Rd W of Rte 113								3,700					2
Montaup Ave N of Rte 113 (Arlington St/Broadway)		1,300			1,200								
Nashua Rd N of Lakeview Ave						13,700							
Nashua Rd S of Lakeview Ave						6,400							
Parker Ave S of Lakeview Ave	3,100			3,600									
Phineas St N of Hampson St							4,100						2.4
Phineas St S of Lakeview Ave		2,800			3,700								
Richardson Rd @ NH State Line		940						1,100			1,300	4.26	2.3
Rte 38 (Bridge St) @ NH State Line	12,300	11,100	11,400	12,667	11,619	11,413						-1.44	
Rte 38 (Bridge St) S of Marsh Hill Rd			11,600						11,400				4.1
Rte 110 (Merrimack Ave) @ Methuen Town Line		12,700			13,100								
Rte 113 (Broadway Rd) @ Methuen Town Line			10,700					12,000					11.8
Rte 113 (Broadway Rd) N of Arlington St								12,500					4.6
Rte 113 (Broadway Rd) N of Jones Ave					8,300			9,000					4.6
Rte 113 (Broadway Rd) S of Jones Ave								9,900					3.7
Rte 113 (Pleasant St) E of Lakeview Ave			16,600										
Rte 113 (Broadway Rd) E of Fox Ave								11,500					4.6

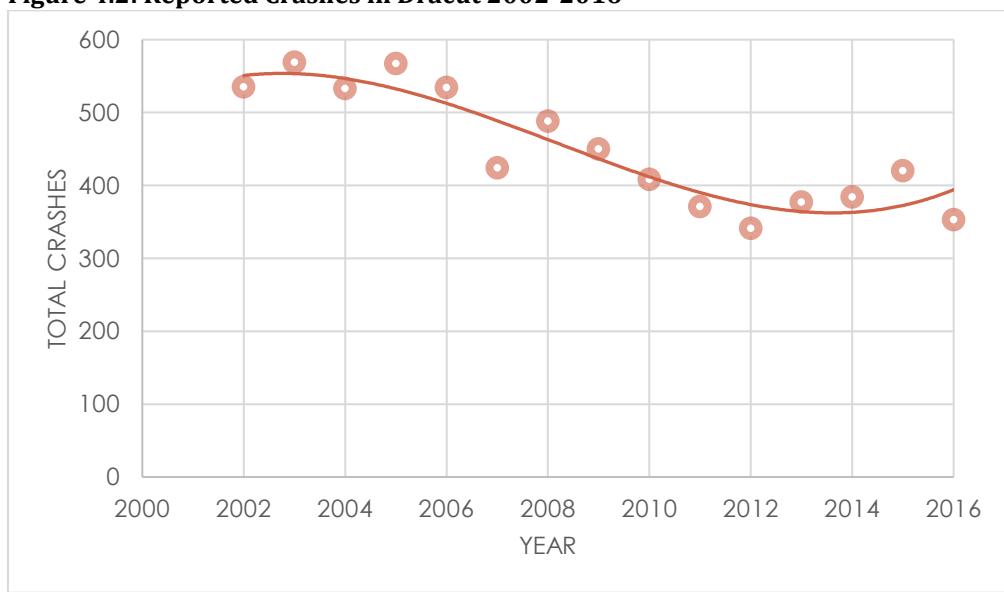
Table 4.11: Average Daily Traffic Volumes in Dracut

Location	Average Daily Traffic											Annual Growth Rate	% Trucks
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
Rte 113 (Arlington St) W of Broadway Rd								12,500					6.8
Rte 113 (Broadway Rd) N of Methuen Rd								12,500					5.6
Rte 113 (Broadway Rd) W of Fox Ave									12,600				5.4
Salem Road @ Methuen Town Line							2,100						3.7
Salem Rd N of Rte 113 (Broadway Rd)								3,700					2.1
Stewart St W of Nashua Rd	3,300			2,400					2,500			-3.03	3.1
Wheeler Rd E of Broadway Rd								2,200					3.6
Wheeler Rd @ Methuen Town Line								1,200					3.8
Willard St S of Rte 113 (Arlington St)								5,200					2.7
Veterans Memorial Park									780				3.7

Figure 4.2 shows reported Dracut crash data trends between 2002<sup>6</sup> and 2016. This data shows a consistent decrease, from a high of 569 crashes in 2003 to a low of 341 in 2012. The latest data available

shows a slight increase from the 2012 low, but the totals remain well below crashes reported in the early 2000s.

**Figure 4.2: Reported Crashes in Dracut 2002-2016**



NMCOG staff analyzes crash data for key intersections in Dracut each year to identify locations with potential safety concerns. Three years of data are examined in order to minimize annual variations that can be created by construction, road closures, or various factors at or near each location. The equivalent property damage only (EPDO) method is used to compare locations in town. In this method, each crash reported is assigned a numeric value based on the severity of the crash. Property damage only crashes are assigned one (1) point, injury crashes are assigned five (5) points, and fatal crashes are assigned ten (10) points. The points assigned for each crash are then added to determine the intersection's EPDO value. Table 4.12 on the following page summarizes crash data for key intersections for years 2014-2016.

High crash locations identified within Dracut include the intersections of Pleasant Street at Lakeview Avenue, and Mammoth Road at Lakeview Avenue. These high crash intersections are eligible for Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding to assist with the construction of safety related improvements.

<sup>6</sup> 2002 was the first year Massachusetts began using the current crash data reporting system, requiring local police to send reports to the RMV. Prior to 2002, the RMV used an Accident Records System for reporting purposes.

**Table 4.12: Crash Summary at Key intersections in the Town of Dracut (2014-2016)**

Intersection	Intersection Control	Total Crashes	Property Damage Only Crashes	Injury Crashes	Fatal Crashes	EPDO
Route 113 (Pleasant St) at Lakeview Ave	Traffic Signal	31	26	5	0	51
Lakeview Ave at Mammoth Rd	Traffic Signal	22	13	9	0	58
Mammoth Rd at Nashua Rd	Traffic Signal	14	7	7	0	42
Lakeview Ave at New Boston Rd	Stop	15	8	7	0	43
Mammoth Rd at Varnum Rd/ Burdette St	Stop	13	11	2	0	21
Route 113 (Pleasant St) at Hildreth St	Traffic Signal	23	20	3	0	35
Nashua Rd at Lakeview Ave	Stop	16	14	2	0	24
Route 38 (Bridge St) at Route 113 (Arlington St)	Traffic Signal	25	18	6	1	58
Route 38 (Bridge St) at Marsh Hill Rd/ Cross Rd	Traffic Signal	9	6	3	0	21
Lakeview Ave at Parker Ave	Stop	7	6	1	0	11
Lakeview Ave at Mill St/Myron St	Stop	6	4	2	0	14
Lakeview Ave at Old Rd	Stop	8	5	3	0	20

*Source: MassDOT Database with NMCOG Crash Analysis*

Although three years of crash data is used to analyze safety trends for motor vehicle crashes, longer term data is often needed to determine trends in pedestrian and bicycle crashes. A five-year review (2012-2016) of crashes involving vehicles and pedestrians or bicyclists has been undertaken, in order to identify locations where bicycle and pedestrian safety may be an issue. Of the 1,873 reported crashes in Dracut between 2012 and 2016, fifteen (15) involved bicyclists (0.8%) and twenty-two (22) involved pedestrians (1.2%), as shown in Table 4.13 on the following page.

About two out of three (66.7%) reported bicycle-involved crashes resulted in injuries between 2012 and 2016. Most incidents occurred at intersections (73.3%) where more interactions between vehicles and bicyclists exist. Crash reporting showed that nine (9) of the eleven (11) incidents occurred at unsignalized locations (81.8%). Signalized intersections generally allow for a more orderly movement of traffic for both vehicles and bicycles.

Pedestrian-involved crashes are similar to bicycle-related incidents in that injuries often occur when the non-motorized users interact with a moving motorized vehicle. Of the twenty-two (22) crashes involving vehicles and pedestrians, seventeen (17) involved injuries (77.3%). About a third (36.4%) of all pedestrian crashes during this time period occurred at intersections, and intersection pedestrian crashes usually took place at unsignalized intersections (62.5%).

**Table 4.13: Dracut Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Summary, 2012-2016**

	Crashes	Percentage
<b>Total Crashes in Dracut</b>	1,873	
<b>Crashes involving bicycles</b>	15	(0.8% of all crashes)
Injury crashes	10	66.7
Crashes at intersections	11	73.3
Crashes at signalized intersections	2	13.3
Crashes at unsignalized intersections	9	81.8
<b>Crashes involving pedestrians</b>	22	(1.2% of all crashes)
Injury crashes	17	77.3
Crashes at intersections	8	36.4
Crashes at signalized intersections	3	37.5
Crashes at unsignalized intersections	5	62.5
<b>Crashes involving other non-motorists</b>	11	(0.6% of all crashes)
Injury crashes	2	18.2
Crashes at intersections	0	0
Crashes at signalized intersections	0	0
Crashes at unsignalized intersections	0	0

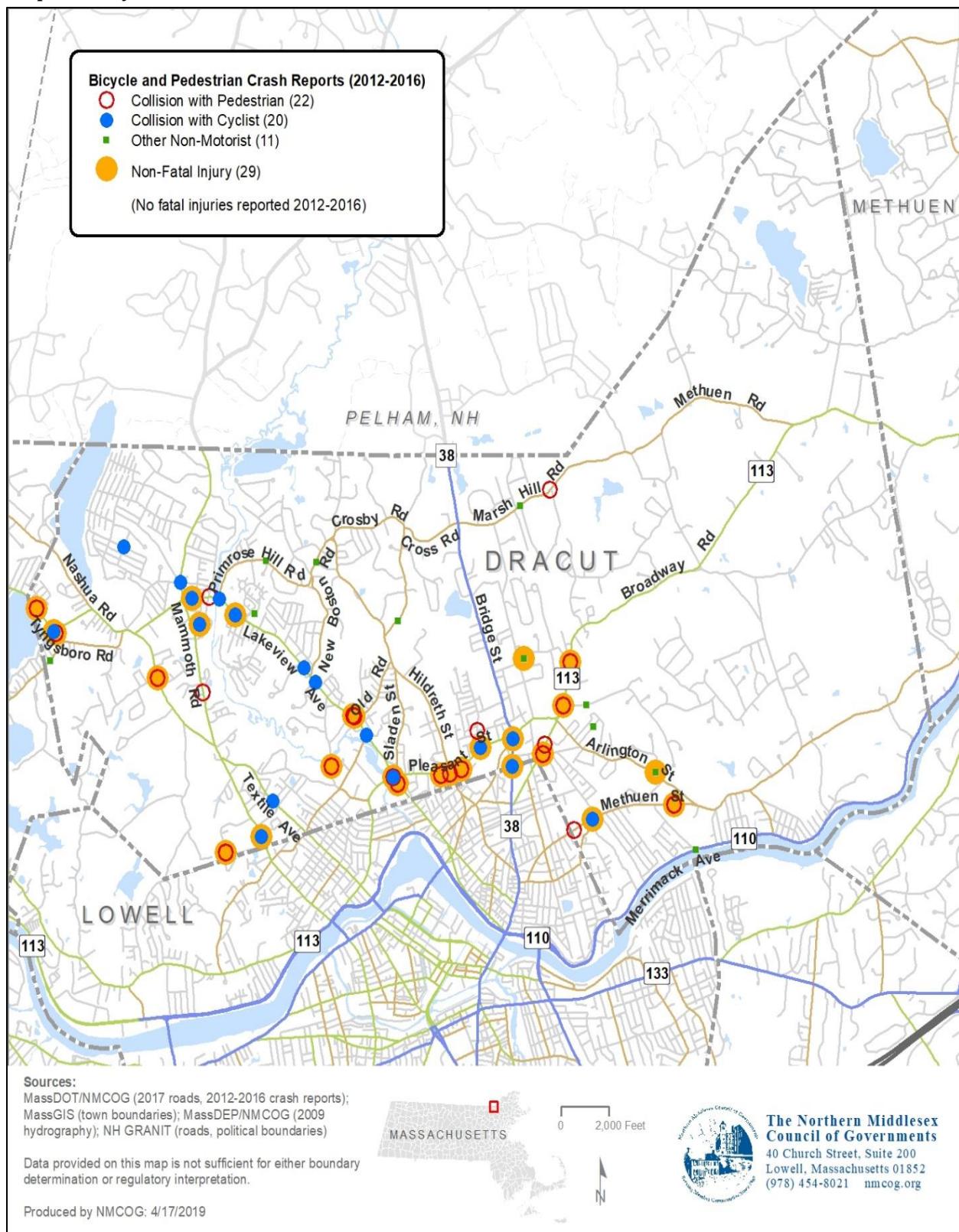
Source: MassDOT database with NMCOG analysis

In addition to crashes involving cyclists and pedestrians, there were also eleven (11) reported crashes involving other types of non-motorists, such as persons in wheelchairs. These include reported incidents that are hard to categorize as a pedestrian- or bicyclist-involved crash. Only two of the eleven involved non-fatal injuries, and there were no fatal injuries reported in this category. None of these other non-motorist crashes occurred at intersections. Map 4.4 shows the locations of all crashes reported to involve vehicles and pedestrians or bicyclists from 2012-2016. The map shows distinct areas along the arterial roadways, particularly along Lakeview Avenue and Pleasant Street/Route 113, where there are accident clusters. A hotspot on Tyngsboro Road shows that there is a conflict area around Mascuppic Lake, where the recreational area draws pedestrians and bicyclists.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Dracut lies within the Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) service area. The LRTA is one of sixteen regional transit authorities across the Commonwealth dedicated to the mission of increasing the use of mass transit on a regional basis. In addition to Dracut, the LRTA service area includes Acton, Billerica, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Dunstable, Groton, Lowell, Maynard, Pepperell, Tewksbury, Townsend, Tyngsborough and Westford. The LRTA provides both fixed route bus service and paratransit service. Dracut is also included in the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) assessment area, as the Town is contiguous to the community of Lowell, which is served by MBTA commuter rail service.

Map 4.4: Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes 2012-2016



## COMMUTER RAIL

The MBTA operates commuter rail between the Gallagher Intermodal Transportation Center in Lowell and North Station in Boston. The service consists of twenty-two daily inbound trains operating between 5:35 A.M and 12:10 A.M. Headways are 30 minutes during the peak travel periods, and approximately hourly during other times of the day. In addition to Lowell, the train stops at North Billerica, Wilmington, Anderson, Mishawum, Winchester, Wedgemere and Medford. Weekend and holiday commuter rail service consists of eight daily round trips between Lowell and Boston.

Commuter rail daily ridership from Lowell increased from 655 inbound passengers in March 1975 to 1,522 inbound passengers in March 2018. Passenger ridership fluctuated over the years, reaching a high of 1,777 inbound passengers in February 2002, and a low of 476 inbound passengers in June 1986, due to a rail strike. Similarly, the daily rail ridership from the North Billerica Station increased from 185 inbound passengers in March 1975 to 911 in March 2018. Passenger ridership from the North Billerica station reached a high of 1,256 inbound passengers in December 2006, with a low of 184 inbound passengers in March 1976. The most recent commuter rail ridership statistics indicate steady growth in the weekend boarding numbers, with 2,007 Saturday passenger boardings and 1,383 Sunday passenger boardings in Lowell, as well as 154 weekend passenger boardings at the North Billerica Station.

## FIXED ROUTE BUS SERVICE

The LRTA operates eighteen fixed bus routes in five communities within its service area (Lowell, Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut and Westford), as well as in five communities beyond the service area (Andover, Bedford, Burlington, Littleton and Wilmington). All of the LRTA bus routes originate at the Gallagher Intermodal Transportation Center in Lowell, providing a direct link to the MBTA commuter rail station. Bus service is available Monday through Friday from approximately 6:00 A.M. to 8:30 P.M., and on Saturdays from 7:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. There is a Saturday service level operated on the following five holidays: Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Patriot's Day, Columbus Day and Veterans' Day; and no bus service available on Sundays and other holidays.

The full price fare for a ride on a fixed route bus is \$1.25 in-town and \$1.85 between two or more communities. For those over the age of 60 or for individuals with a disability, the fare is 60 cents and 90 cents respectively. A transfer fare of 25 cents is charged for in-town connections at the Gallagher Transportation Center, while 50 cents is charged for transfers between communities. Table 4.14 outlines the characteristics of the three bus routes that operate within Dracut, while Map 4.5 shows the fixed routes and the boundaries of the ADA service area.

**Table 4.14: LRTA Fixed Route Service within Dracut**

Route Number	Route Name	Daily Trips		Average Daily Ridership	
		Weekday	Saturdays	Weekday	Saturdays
<b>01</b>	Christian Hill	29	NA	150	NA
<b>08</b>	Centralville	37	NA	220	NA
<b>10</b>	Dracut/Tyngsborough	27	20	170	80
<b>08-01 Combo</b>	Centralville/Christian Hill	NA	20	NA	90

*Source: Lowell Regional Transit Authority, National Transit Database reporting*

## DRACUT FIXED ROUTE BUS SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS

Fixed route bus service available within Dracut is described in detail below:

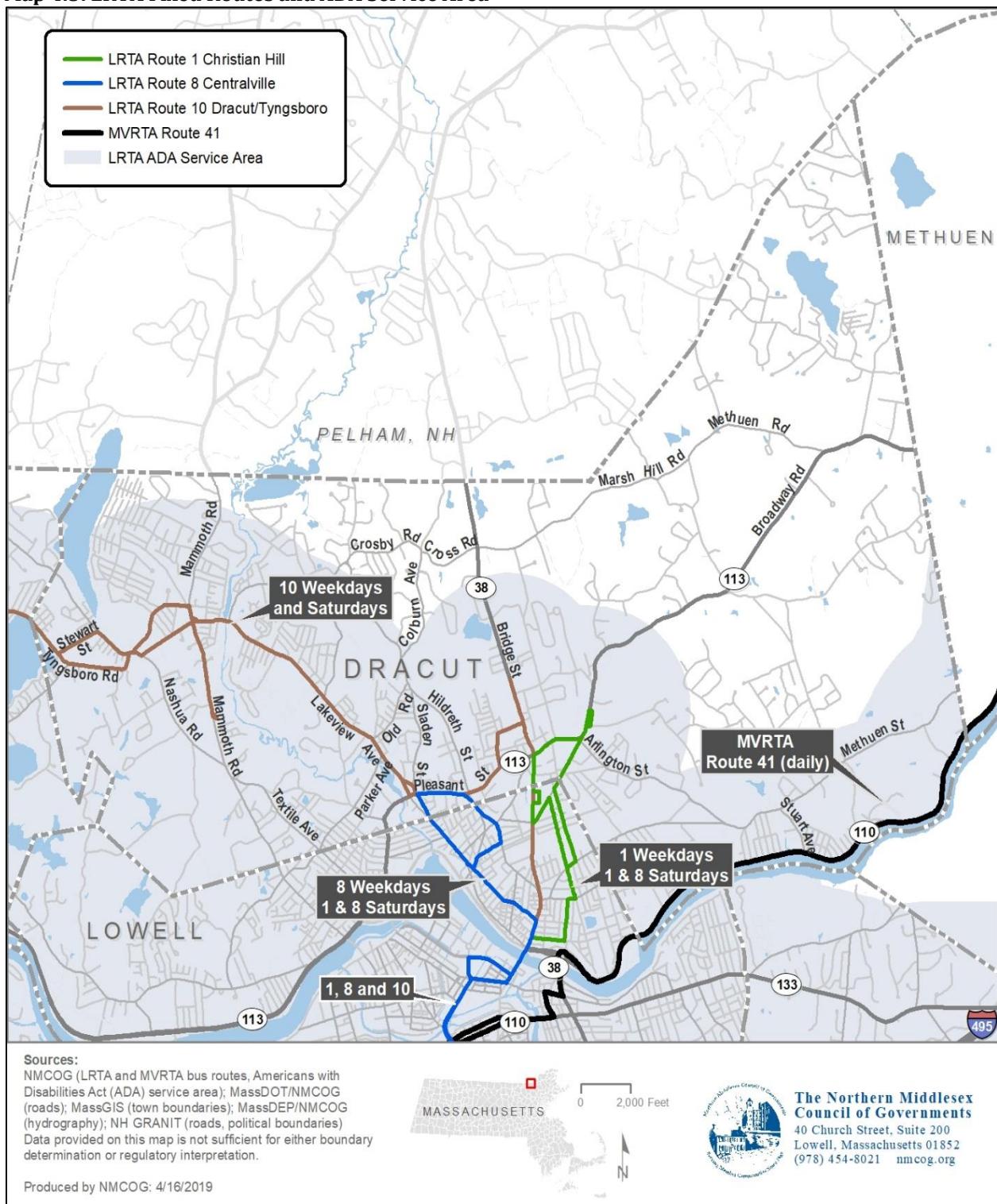
**The #01, Christian Hill Bus** outbound bus enters Dracut from Route 38 (Bridge Street) and turns right Route 113 (Arlington Street). Turning left and remaining on Route 113 (Broadway Road), the bus turns into Village Square Plaza, the terminus of the bus route. The inbound bus begins the route exiting Village Square Plaza turning right onto Loon Hill Road, then left onto Broadway Road. The bus route continues straight onto Willard Street exiting Dracut into Lowell.

**The #08 Centerville Bus** enters Dracut on the outbound route from Lowell along Lakeview Avenue, turning right onto Sladen Street. At the end of Sladen Street, the bus turns right onto Route 113 (Pleasant Street). Turning right onto Hovey Street, the route merges onto Hildreth Street. The Lowell city line is the terminus of the route.

**The #10 Dracut / Tyngsborough Weekday Bus** outbound route enters Dracut from Route 38 (Bridge Street) and turns left onto Greenmont Avenue, turns left again and continues to the Route 113 (Pleasant Street) intersection. The route then turns left onto Route 113 (Pleasant Street), right onto Sladen Street and right onto Lakeview Avenue. The bus continues along Lakeview Avenue for approximately 2 miles before turning right onto Mammoth Road. The route turns right onto Varnum Road, right onto Nashua Road, and then right onto Stewart Street. The bus turns right onto Tyngsboro Road, continuing where it enters Tyngsborough for approximately 3 miles and terminating at the stateline on Frost Road.

The inbound route enters Dracut on Tyngsboro Road. The route turns right onto Nashua Road and left onto Lakeview Avenue, where it rejoins the outbound route at Mammoth Road.

**Map 4.5: LRTA Fixed Routes and ADA Service Area**



**The #10 Dracut/Tyngsborough Saturday Bus** follows the same route as the weekday bus route with the exception of Village Square Marketplace. On Saturdays and holidays, the outbound bus replicates the #01 Christian Hill route, turning right from Route 38 (Bridge Street) onto Route 113 (Arlington Street), turning left and remaining on Route 113 (Broadway Road), and then turns into Village Square Plaza. The route exits Village Square Plaza, turning right onto Loon Hill Road, left onto Broadway and right onto Route 113 (Arlington Street). It then turns right onto Route 38 (Bridge Street) and rejoins the weekday route. The inbound route follows the same route prior to entering Lowell.

**The Saturday #08/01 Centerville Christian Hill Loop Bus** replicates the #08 outbound route, entering Dracut from Lowell along Lakeview Avenue, and turning right onto Sladen Street. At the end of Sladen Street, the bus turns right onto Route 113 (Pleasant Street). Turning right onto Hovey Street, the route merges onto Hildreth Street. The combined route does not return to Dracut to access the Village Square Plaza.

#### PARATRANSIT SERVICE

The LRTA operates paratransit service through two distinct programs, all under the title "Road Runner". The primary service is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary service, as mandated by Federal law, while the second demand response service is operated by each community's COA with funds provided by the LRTA. Additionally, the Road Runner program offers transportation to the Bedford VA Clinic and Boston area hospitals every Wednesday. The fare for Road Runner services is \$2.00 each way in-town, and \$3.00 each way between communities. The fare for the Wednesday hospital bus is \$12.50 round trip to the Bedford VA Clinic, and \$25.00 round trip for the Boston hospitals.

In Dracut, the Road Runner ADA paratransit service consists of one or more (depending upon the daily demand) wheelchair lift-equipped minibuses, operating throughout the LRTA fixed route ADA service area, Monday through Friday, from 6:00 A.M to 6:00 P.M. (7:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. on Saturdays). Trips can be scheduled one day in advance by calling the Road Runner office in Lowell. These trips are reserved for disabled passengers who are not able to access a fixed route bus. In general, the ADA complementary service area is defined as a three-quarter mile radius surrounding existing LRTA fixed routes. The ADA service area is smaller on Saturdays, when one fixed route bus does not operate. In Fiscal Year 2018, Dracut residents generated over 2,600 ADA passenger trips.

The Road Runner Council on Aging service consists of one wheelchair-lift-equipped minibus operating within the Town, and between Dracut and surrounding communities. The Council on Aging utilizes two additional wheelchair-lift-equipped minibuses and one

accessible minivan for medical transportation, both locally and regionally. The services are provided from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, and require a two-day (48-hour) advanced booking. The LRTA owns the minivans, leases them to the Town, and provides funds for vehicle operation. Residents schedule trips by calling the Dracut Senior Center. Senior Center staff schedule, dispatch and drive the minibus. The Road Runner COA van reported 8,857 passenger trips in Fiscal Year 2018.

## OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES

The LRTA, in coordination with the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA), is utilizing the MVRTA #41 Lawrence bus for local service along Route 110 between the Methuen town line and the Hunt's Falls Bridge during weekdays and Saturdays. The Lawrence bus will stop at Lenzi's for pickup or drop off, extending the range of public transit within the Town of Dracut. This cooperative agreement expands the ADA service area within Dracut.

The LRTA was awarded a state grant for a Sunday service pilot program. The service will began on June 23, 2019 on ten bus routes, including the #10 Dracut/Tyngsborough route. At the end of the pilot program, the LRTA, along with its State and Federal partners, will review the success of the program and will decide to either continue or cancel the Sunday service.

## PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES

Bicycling and walking have become key factors for measuring a community's quality of life. Communities that promote walking and other forms of non-motorized transportation can reap significant social, environmental and health benefits. Safe, convenient and comfortable trails, sidewalks and walkways provide opportunities for exercise, help people meet and socialize, and provide mobility options for children and others who do not drive. With the option to walk or bike available to residents, shoppers and workers, the number of motorized vehicles on the roadways can be reduced, which helps to decrease traffic congestion, air pollution and the need for large parking areas.

## NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION AND HEALTHY AGING

Being able to get around using the means of transportation one desires is a fundamental aspect of healthy aging. Transportation links older adults to essential goods and services and to social interaction with family and friends, and provides an element of independence that is important to physical and emotional well-being. For the older adults who are not

licensed to drive (12% of people 65-69 and 52% of those age 85 and over<sup>7</sup>), walking or public transportation may be the only transportation options available. Older drivers average six trips per week outside their homes, while non-drivers average only two trips.<sup>8</sup> This reduction may have a significant impact on social connections and lead to depression and other mental health issues.

Walking and/or wheelchair use for daily activities is a valuable means for getting recommended daily exercise. Walking has numerous health benefits, such as:

- Improving blood pressure;
- Reducing the risk of heart disease;
- Alleviating depression; and
- Significantly reducing the risk of Alzheimer's.

However, walking is more dangerous for older adults than for younger residents. Older adults are more likely to be hit by automobiles, and are more likely to die as a result of such accidents. People age 70 and over comprise less than 10% of the nation's population but account for 18% of pedestrian deaths.<sup>9</sup> Overall, the elderly may be fifteen times more likely to be injured or killed as pedestrians than as drivers.<sup>10</sup> In addition, injuries from falls are a leading cause of death in older adults. Streets, curbs and sidewalks that have uneven surfaces, cracks, grade changes and tripping hazards can present a significant health risk for a community's senior population.

## COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR IMPROVING NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

Enhancing transportation requires community design improvements to help everyone, including older adults, stay active and healthy in a safe manner. The following measures are typically utilized to address bicycle and pedestrian needs within a community:

- Evaluate local needs for pedestrian, bicycle and trail access and mobility;
- Create a plan for upgrading existing facilities, establishing future networks, and obtaining needed funding;
- Develop and maintain pedestrian and bicycle facilities using state and federal grant funds, and local Community Preservation funds;

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<sup>7</sup> Federal Highway Administration, Distribution of Licensed Drivers by Sex and Age, Table DL-20; <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformationstatistics>

<sup>8</sup> Livable Community Indicators for Sustainable Aging in Place, MetLife Mature Market Institute, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Sandra Rosenbloom, *The Mobility Needs of Older Americans: Implications for Transportation Reauthorization*, The Brookings Institution.

<sup>10</sup> Deborah Howe, *Aging as the Foundation for Livable Communities*, Routledge, 2012.

- Enact local bylaws and subdivision regulations that enhance compact development and encourage the provision of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations; and
- Consider pedestrian and bicycle needs within the site plan and subdivision review processes.

## SIDEWALKS

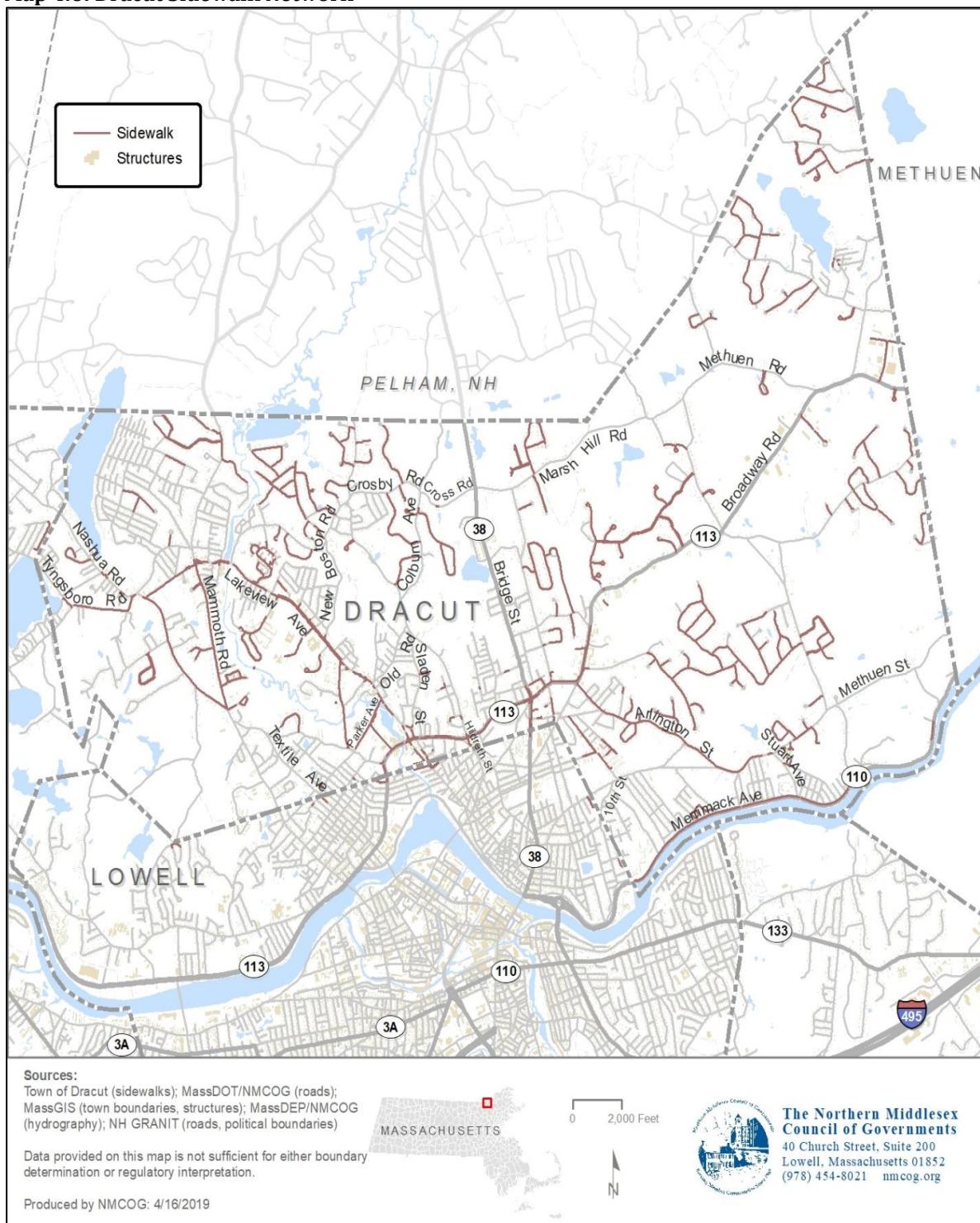
Map 4.6 shows the existing sidewalk network in Dracut as of November 2016. When considering improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities it is important to take into consideration all users, including those with physical impairments. Sidewalks should be wide enough to safely accommodate wheelchairs, and wheelchair ramps at crosswalks should meet ADA standards. When upgrading pedestrian-actuated signals at crosswalks, consideration should be given to those with visual impairments by providing an audible indicator. ADA sidewalk construction guidance requires that a sidewalk have a minimum clear width of four feet, provided it is designed with additional considerations. MassDOT ADA Section 504 Transition Plan defines the additional considerations as:

- Four-foot minimum walk width excluding the curb width; and
- Passing areas are required in any case where a five-foot minimum sidewalk width is not provided.

In order to meet ADA requirements, care must be taken when designing sidewalks that also have physical barriers built into them, such as utility poles, fire hydrants and traffic signal bases. An unobstructed three-foot path of travel that excludes the curb must be maintained past any sidewalk obstructions. Adequate width and lack of obstructions are not the only requirements that need to be met. Factors such as wheelchair accessible ramps, slope of the sidewalk and the type of construction material used factor into the design.

Sidewalk construction is expensive and funding sources are very limited. Without a dedicated funding source, even the best-crafted plan cannot be implemented. The most likely funding source for sidewalk construction is local revenue that provides a predictable capital outlay through the town budget. However, given the Town's budgetary situation, this may not be possible. A more practical approach to funding sidewalk improvements in Dracut may be the establishment of a sidewalk improvement account negotiated as part of the approval process for private development and redevelopment projects.

**Map 4.6: Dracut Sidewalk Network**



## BICYCLE FACILITIES AND PATHS

Currently, Dracut does not have any designated on-road bicycle facilities, but signs encouraging motorists to share the roads with bicyclists are located along major roadways such as Route 113 (Broadway Road). Closed circuit trails, multi-use paths and walkways can be found in many of Dracut's parks and open space areas. These trails do not connect to a larger network and do not promote multimodal transportation throughout the community due to their isolation, nonetheless they are important amenities that promote exercise and a sense of community.

The lack of a connected sidewalk and trail system is one of the most notable deficiencies in Dracut's transportation network. Future planning initiatives should focus on closing the gaps in the network, with priority given to linking the town center and neighborhoods with the schools, business districts, and open space and recreation areas. Toward this end, the town should develop a comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that stresses connectivity, safety, and meeting the needs of all users.

## COMPLETE STREETS

MassDOT requires that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations be included in all federal and state funded projects. The Town should consider implementing a similar policy through the state's Complete Streets Program. A Complete Street is one that provides safe and accessible options for all travel modes – walking, biking, transit, and motorized vehicles – for people of all ages and abilities.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Complete Streets Funding Program was created by legislative authorization through the 2014 Transportation Bond Bill, with the intent of rewarding municipalities that demonstrate a commitment to embedding Complete Streets in policies and practices. The benefits for municipalities that participate include:

- Up to \$50,000 in funding for technical assistance to analyze community needs and develop a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan; and
- Up to \$400,000 in funding for construction of Complete Streets infrastructure projects.

To be eligible for technical assistance, a municipality must attend training and approve a Complete Streets Policy in the manner prescribed. In order to be eligible for project funding, the municipality must complete a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, which is a targeted investment strategy. The Town of Dracut has participated in the required training and the Board of Selectmen approved the Town's Complete Streets Policy in March 2019.

Town staff is currently working on the Prioritization Plan, which will be brought to the Board of Selectmen for a vote. Once the Prioritization Plan is adopted by the Town, and approved by MassDOT, the Town will be eligible to apply for capital funds.

## PUBLIC INPUT

The first Master Plan Visioning Session was held at Harmony Hall on October 5, 2017. During the session, public input was generated through the use of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis exercise. While Dracut does not have direct access to the interstate highway system, participants felt that access to State Routes 110, 113, and 38 is a strength for the community. The following transportation-related weaknesses were identified during the session:

- Lack of sidewalks/walkability and pedestrian safety concerns;
- Traffic ;
- Lack of accessibility for those with disabilities; and
- Inadequate traffic enforcement in the neighborhoods.

Opportunities to improve transportation infrastructure and service within Dracut were outlined by participants and included the following:

- Add sidewalks in downtown;
- Create a bike path that will ultimately connect to the Lowell commuter rail station;
- Improve public transportation; and
- More widely distribute information on public transit.

Participants stated that health issues related to the lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and accommodations represent a threat for Dracut residents, along with a lack of safety considerations, and the construction of additional natural gas pipelines.

On February 26, 2019, the fourth Visioning Session of the Master Plan process was held to gather input on transportation, facilities and services. Community Development Director Betsy provided an overview of the transportation projects that are in the planning, design or construction phases. A series of questions were posed to participants and their responses relative to transportation. Participant responses are summarized below:

- Over the next ten years, the Town should plan to address the following transportation needs:

- Bicycle infrastructure, including signage and pavement markings on major roads;
- Sidewalk improvements along major routes, including those that close gaps in the existing network;
- Install sidewalks on both sides of the busier roads in locations that currently only have a sidewalk on one side;
- Address traffic congestion on Lakeview Avenue, and address bottlenecks at the school complex, particularly at drop-off and pick-up times;
- Improve walkability around the school complex on Lakeview Avenue;
- Participate in the Complete Streets Program to address bicycle and pedestrian needs;
- Create a trail or paved path near Tennis Plaza Road; and
- Address school-related traffic congestion through the Safe Routes to Schools program.

- The following locations are most in need of safety improvements:
  - Broadway Road/Methuen Road intersection near the Brox Farm stand;
  - Hildreth Street/Old Road intersection near the DPW garage;
  - Fox Avenue/Bridge Street intersection near the Dunkin' Donuts access to Broadway;
  - Dinley Street/Lakeview Avenue intersection; and
  - The area around the Senior Housing where sidewalks are lacking.
- In responding to the question of whether there are adequate transportation options for seniors and those with disabilities, participants indicated that there is a need to better disseminate information on available transit services. Although there is a link to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority's website on the Town's website, the information needs to be more prominently displayed.
- In discussing whether the LRTA transit routes and schedules meet the needs of the community, participants noted that transfers are not easy as they must be made at the Gallagher Transportation Center. Participants suggested implementing changes to the system that would allow transfers to be made within Dracut. It was also suggested that the Town would benefit from a circulator style transit service that provides service within Dracut only.
- When asked to identify specific locations where the Town should prioritize pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, participants offered the following:
  - Walking trails throughout town would be beneficial;

- Create links to existing and new bike trails, especially the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail;
- Expand or build multi-use trails for bicyclists, pedestrians and winter users, like snowshoers and cross-country skiers;
- Address illegal ATV use, especially those driving on the road-better enforcement is needed; and
- Develop a regional trail plan.

- A number of general comments relative to transportation were offered, including the following:
  - The Town needs to accept forty streets that are currently unaccepted in order to receive additional Chapter 90 funds, but these streets need to be brought up to town standards first;
  - Access to Dracut from Lowell is particularly difficult due to the limited number of river crossings – the Rourke Bridge replacement project is needed;
  - Bicycle racks should be provided at all schools and at town buildings, such as the Library and Town Hall; and
  - The river crossings and other bridges need to be multi-modal.

The Master Plan Committee distributed a written and online survey to residents as a means of gathering additional input. The transportation-related input generated from the survey is summarized as follows:

- Over half (52.78%) of the respondents rated road maintenance in Dracut as either excellent (5.93%) or good (46.85%), while 37.33% rated it as fair and 9.39% indicated it is poor.
- Most respondents indicated that traffic flow in the Town Center is good (40%) or fair (39.36%), while 13.95% rated it as poor, while only 3.58% stated that it is excellent. Traffic flow in other areas of town fared slightly better, with 47.35% indicating it is good, 35.02% felt it is fair, while 9.49% stated it is poor. Approximately 7% of the residents felt that traffic flow in other areas of town is excellent.
- Overall, respondents felt that the speed enforcement is good (50.99%) or fair (23.45%), while 11.54% felt it is poor and 7.69% rated it as excellent.
- Pedestrian accommodations, such as sidewalks and pathways, were rated as good (36.21%) or fair (33.87%) by the majority of respondents. Nearly a quarter (22.54%) of those responding rated these facilities as poor, while just 5.54% indicated that they are excellent.

- Nearly a third of the respondents (30%) were unable to rate the bicycle facilities and accommodations in Dracut, while nearly another third (28.64%) indicated that they are poor. Only 1.98% stated that they are excellent, while 14.69% indicated that they are good.
- Most respondents (70.02%) were unable to rate transportation for seniors and those with disabilities. Only 3.73% indicated that these services are excellent, while 13.93% stated that they are good, 7.46% rated them as fair and 4.85% stated they are poor.
- When asked to identify the three most critical issues facing Dracut over the next ten years, the following transportation-related responses were provided by fifteen or more individuals:
  - Traffic congestion/traffic flow (89 responses);
  - Lack of sidewalks, crosswalks and other pedestrian accommodations (35 responses); and
  - Roadway maintenance/improvements (26 responses).
- Nearly 75% (74.54%) of the respondents indicated that the Town should invest in increasing the available accommodations for non-motorized transportation (pedestrians and bicycles), while 88.63% indicated that the Town should focus on adding sidewalks and trails.

The Master Plan Committee also distributed a written and online survey to young residents completing their senior year at Dracut High School, as a means of gathering additional input from youth. The transportation-related input generated from the youth survey is summarized as follows:

- 86% of the respondent indicated that traffic flow in the Town Center is good (41.18%) or fair (47.06%), while 91% indicated traffic flow in other areas of town is good (55.88%) or fair (35.29%). Nearly 68% (67.65%) indicated that speed enforcement is good.
- In rating pedestrian accommodations, such as pathways and sidewalks, 23.53% indicated that they are excellent, 35.29% stated they are good, and 23.53% felt that they are fair.
- Bicycle facilities and accommodations fared more poorly than pedestrian facilities, with 11.76% of the respondents rating them as good, 32.35% as fair, and 29.41% as poor.
- 67.64% of the respondents rated transportation for youth as good (35.29%) or fair (32.35%), while 11.76% stated that it is poor.

- Half of the respondents were unable to rate transportation for those with disabilities, while 23.53% indicated it is good, 14.71 stated it is fair, and 8.82% felt it is poor.
- Just over 85% of the respondents indicated that the Town should prioritize adding sidewalks and trails, while nearly 82% favored increasing available accommodations for non-motorized transportation (pedestrians and bicycles).

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Perhaps the most notable transportation deficiency identified through the Master Plan process is the lack of a connected system for pedestrian and bicycle transportation. Future planning initiatives should focus on closing the gap in the network. The town's roadway system currently has limited sidewalks and no dedicated bicycle accommodations. During the Master Plan process, the lack of sidewalks near the Senior Housing was noted as a significant deficiency. Residents also stated that there is a need to improve walkability at the school complex located on Lakeview Avenue, and at the Campbell and Greenmont schools. The Town is designing a trail that will connect the school complex with Beaver Brook Farm, and is planning to work with the schools to fund sidewalk improvements through the *Safe Routes to Schools* program.

The survey process demonstrated that there is strong support for increasing non-motorized transportation options for residents. Additional transportation linkages, through the establishment of bicycle lanes and paths, sidewalks, and trail connections, should be pursued in the future, as resources permit. Implementing such projects will require a multi-faceted funding approach that includes State grants, private developer contributions, Chapter 90 and municipal funds. Participating in MassDOT's *Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets* programs will also move the Town forward in this regard.

Through its work to date on the *Complete Streets Plan*, the Town has identified the following Complete Streets projects for future implementation:

- Lakeview Avenue between Primrose Hill Road and Mammoth Road (estimated cost \$2 million);
- Pleasant Street from the Lowell line to Lakeview Avenue (estimated cost \$3 million); and
- Marsh Hill Road (estimated cost (\$2.5 million).

Future sidewalk improvements are also planned for Broadway Road, Parker Avenue and Methuen Street (estimated cost \$3 million), and along Pleasant Street (estimated cost \$2 million).

Through the Master Plan process, there were other locations identified where sidewalks are desired, including Bridge Street, Arlington Street and Broadway Road, particularly in the Town Center area where gaps in the sidewalk network should be addressed in order to provide a link with Loon Hill Road. Several residents suggested the development of off-road trails, such as the Beaver Brook trail along an existing sewer easement, a trail near Tennis Plaza Road, and the Merrimack River Trail, which has been under study for many years. There is also a need to create an up-to-date trail map that can be accessed through the Town's website.

Bicycle and pedestrian safety cannot be entirely addressed by improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Educational initiatives for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists are also essential. Paying attention to the needs of children is especially important, since bicycling and walking are their only means of independent transportation and children lack the experience of an adult. Public safety officials and the School Department should collaborate on a safety education program for school-age children.

The Planning Board is in the process of revising and updating the Subdivision Regulations so that they are in keeping with the planning and design goals of the community. The most recent draft requires developers to minimize traffic congestion during and after construction, and to provide pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation amenities and linkages, based on the classification category described within the regulation. The regulations also set new design standards for design speed, stopping distance, sight distance, and roadway width (for both right-of-way layout and paved surface). The Planning Board may require the installation of traffic-calming measures. These revisions will ensure that bicycle and pedestrian facilities and amenities are addressed in the design of future subdivisions.

Overall, the parking requirements outlined within the Town's Zoning Bylaw need to be updated and expanded, to reflect more current standards for various types of land uses. In addition, the dimensional requirements for parking space design are no longer consistent with present day standards. The Town should consider allowing on-street parking in the Navy Yard and Collinsville areas, given their urban character and commercial development patterns. The requirement for off-street parking now in place stifles business expansion and development in these neighborhoods.

The Town is currently designing improvements for the intersection of Nashua Road and Lakeview Avenue. This project is programmed for funding in FY 2022 on the region's *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*, at a cost of \$5.2 million. Intersection improvements are also planned at the intersection of Lakeview Avenue and Mammoth Road. This work will consist of geometric improvements and upgraded signal hardware,

and is estimated to cost \$2.8 million. Other needed intersection projects identified by the Town include:

- Pleasant Street, Bridge Street and Aiken Avenue (estimated cost \$1.9 million);
- Pleasant Street and Hildreth Street (estimated cost \$1.5 million);
- Pleasant Street and Lakeview Avenue (estimated cost \$2.8 million);
- Mammoth Road at Pine Valley Road and at Passaconway Drive ( two locations with a total estimated cost of \$1.4 million);
- Salem Road at Route 113 (estimated cost \$779,160);
- Primrose Hill and New Boston Road ( estimated cost \$985,000);
- Commercial Drive and Broadway Road; and
- Hildreth Street and Old Road (estimated cost \$ 1.1 million).

Other transportation issues were identified through the Master Plan process, including the need to address traffic and safety issues at the following locations:

- Intersection of Broadway Road and Methuen Road;
- Intersection of Fox Avenue and Bridge Street;
- Intersection of Parker Avenue and Lakeview Avenue;
- Intersection of Nashua Road and Mammoth Road;
- Intersection of Dinley Street and Lakeview Avenue; and
- Peak hour traffic conditions along Marsh Hill Road and Route 113, due to commuters accessing I-93.

Many of the above projects are eligible for federal and state construction funding through the TIP process, however, the Town is responsible for the cost of design, right-of-way acquisition, and environmental permitting. Any improvements to the intersections of Pleasant Street at Lakeview Avenue, and Mammoth Road at Lakeview Avenue are also eligible for federal Highway Safety Improvement Program funds, as both locations experience a high crash rate.

Dracut has a formal process for street acceptance, which is described in Chapter 8 of the Town of Dracut Bylaws and in the subdivision regulations. All accepted streets must meet certain requirements spelled out in the Town's Construction Standards Manual. In the case of an existing street, a layout plan must be accepted by the Board of Selectmen, in order for the street to be accepted. The developer prepares a layout plan for a new subdivision. The layout plan must then be filed with the Town Clerk and Town Meeting must vote to accept the street, as outlined in MGL Chapter 82, Section 23.

An unaccepted street is defined as one for which there is no record of acceptance by the Town. In Dracut, there are approximately forty (40) streets that are currently unaccepted.

While the Town provides some level of maintenance for unaccepted streets in order to ensure public safety, such as plowing, it does not receive Chapter 90 funds for these roadways. The Master Plan Committee suggests that the Town consider developing a plan to bring these roadways up to a standard where they can eventually be accepted by Town Meeting. This effort will require working with abutters, and in some cases, developers, over a period of several years.

Pavement condition analysis performed by NMCOG showed that 20% of the Town's federal-aid eligible roadways are in poor condition. The Town should consider implementing a pavement management program to ensure that the most cost-effective treatments are applied to the roadway network. The purpose of a pavement management program is to keep the roadway system in the best possible condition with the most efficient use of available funds. The aim is to manage pavement condition with preventative or rehabilitation measures rather than wait until a road is in need of reconstruction at a significantly higher cost.

There is a need to better disseminate information on available public transportation services, including those for seniors and the disabled population. Possible strategies include inserts with town-wide mailings, such as property tax or water and sewer bills, flyers for distribution at Town Hall, the Senior Center, the Library, and at community events such as Old Home Day or Town Meeting. Public transportation information could also be more prominently displayed on the Town's website.

The Town should open discussions with the LRTA as to whether the transfer process could be made more rider-friendly by allowing transfers within Dracut, rather than requiring riders to travel to Gallagher Transportation Center. The possibility of establishing a Dracut Circulator bus to accommodate travel within town should also be studied.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a plan to expand the Town's sidewalk network and pedestrian facilities, in order to close gaps and improve safety and connectivity. Particular attention should be paid to the Lakeview Avenue school complex, the Campbell and Greenmont schools, and the area around the Senior Housing. Priority should also be given to establishing a pedestrian connection between the Town Center and Loon Hill Road.
- Identify opportunities to design and construct off-road multi-use trails, such as the trail connecting the school complex with Beaver Brook Farm, Dracut's section of the Merrimack River Trail, and trails located on conservation properties.
- Update the Town-wide Trail Map and make it available on the Town's website.
- Establish a sidewalk fund through developer contributions.

- Participate in MassDOT's *Safe Routes to Schools* and *Complete Streets Programs*.
- Work with the School Department and public safety officials to implement a bicycle and pedestrian safety education program for school-age children.
- Revise and update the parking requirements within the Zoning Bylaw to reflect current day standards.
- Complete updates to the Subdivision Regulations to better address transportation issues, including pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and updated standards for roadway design.
- Consider allowing on-street parking in certain areas of town where there is concentrated development, such as the Navy Yard and Collingsville, in order to reflect the urban character of the area and allow for future business expansion and development.
- Address roadway and safety improvements at various locations throughout town, such as those described previously in the Issues and Opportunities section of this chapter.
- Address traffic congestion and circulation issues at the schools during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Develop a plan to address the unaccepted streets in Dracut, so that the Town receives additional Chapter 90 funds.
- Develop a pavement management program to ensure that roadway maintenance and repairs are undertaken as cost-effectively as possible.
- Better disseminate information on available public transportation services, including those for the elderly and disabled populations.
- Work with the LRTA and NMCOG to study the possibility of establishing a Dracut Circulator Bus route, to provide public transportation service for those traveling within Town.
- Open discussions with the LRTA on improving the transfer policy to allow transfers within Dracut, rather than requiring riders to travel to Gallagher Transportation Center.

# HOUSING

## INTRODUCTION

The Housing chapter of the Master Plan focuses on the available and potential housing stock in the community, as well as the human side of housing, in terms of the Dracut residents benefiting from the diverse housing stock. The Town of Dracut enjoys a diverse, affordable housing stock that meets the needs of company executives and workers, working families and retired couples. The housing market continues to play a major role in the community's economy and ability to support the expanding need for municipal services. The Town's future will depend upon how it addresses the changing housing needs of its residents and balances the need for additional housing with the quality of life that attracts people to Dracut.

This Housing chapter builds upon the work completed in the *1999 Dracut Master Plan* and the *2020-2024 Dracut Housing Production Plan*. The conditions in the housing market and the economy have certainly changed since the completion of the previous master plan. Yet, the Town of Dracut continues to be defined by its residential neighborhoods: Collinsville, the Navy Yard, Dracut Center, Kenwood, and East Dracut. The Housing chapter focuses on the entire housing market in Dracut, not just affordable housing. The opportunities for housing development in Dracut are fairly extensive and only somewhat limited by the sewer and water infrastructure. This chapter will focus on the numerous housing opportunities available, while maintaining Dracut's quality of life and heritage.

The chapter is divided into seven subsections: Existing Conditions, Housing Development and Sales Trends, Housing Needs, Affordable Housing Efforts, Public Input, Issues and Opportunities and Recommendations. The Existing Conditions section summarizes the Housing

## HOUSING GOALS

- Create market-rate and affordable housing opportunities that meet the needs of the community.
- Expand partnerships with non-profit and for profit developers that address the demand for senior, veteran, low- and moderate-income, and "starter home" housing.
- Reactivate the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership and the Dracut First Housing Corporation to develop local capacity.
- Implement the Housing Production Plan and maintain Dracut's Housing Choice designation.
- Establish a mechanism to monitor and maintain existing affordable units and access existing resources related to first-time homebuyer and foreclosure assistance programs.
- Utilize state and local funds and other "tools", such as Chapter 40R, Inclusionary Zoning and "friendly" 40B developments, to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Inventory, Housing Age and Development Type, the Size and Condition of Housing Units, Occupancy, Tenure and Vacancy Rates, and Housing Turnover. The next section focuses upon New Residential Development, Number of Sales, Median Sales Price, Zoning, Comprehensive Permits and Infrastructure Limitations Impacting Housing. The Housing Needs section provides a Demographic Profile, which complements the information in the Land Use and Zoning and Economic Development sections, Housing Affordability and Foreclosures component. The Public Input section summarizes the information provided through Visioning Session II and the survey results. The Issues and Opportunities section identifies critical housing issues facing Dracut and outlines opportunities to address those issues. The Recommendations section summarizes the overall housing recommendations.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section provides an overview to the existing conditions of the local housing stock over time, including changes in the total number of units, historical development patterns, the size and condition of the local housing stock, and housing tenure/turnover trends.

### HOUSING INVENTORY

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 10,643 housing units in Dracut, of which 69.8% were single-family homes. The overall percentage of single-family houses actually increased to 72.5% in 2012-2016, as outlined in Table 5.1 below. According to the data, two-family homes actually decreased by 34.1% between 2000 and 2012-2016 and those housing structures with 5-19 units actually stayed about the same. The total number of housing units increased by 5.6% between 2000 and 2012-2016.

**Table 5.1: Housing Units by Type: 2000 and 2012-2016**

Number of Units per Structure	2000		2012-2016		Percent Change 2000-2012/2016
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Single-Family	7,434	69.8	8,147	72.5	9.6
2 units	725	6.8	478	4.3	-34.1
3-4 units	370	3.5	406	3.6	9.7
5-19 units	1,278	12.0	1,290	11.5	0.9
20 or more units	836	7.9	915	8.1	9.4
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>10,643</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>11,236</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5.6</b>

*Source: 2000 U.S. Census; 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

### HOUSING AGE AND DEVELOPMENT TYPE

By examining the historical data within the Assessor's Office, one can examine the residential properties by land use. According to the Assessor's database, there were 10,329 residential parcels as of June 1, 2018. These residential properties were broken out by

land use in Table 5.2 below which shows that 75.8% of the parcels are designated as single-family:

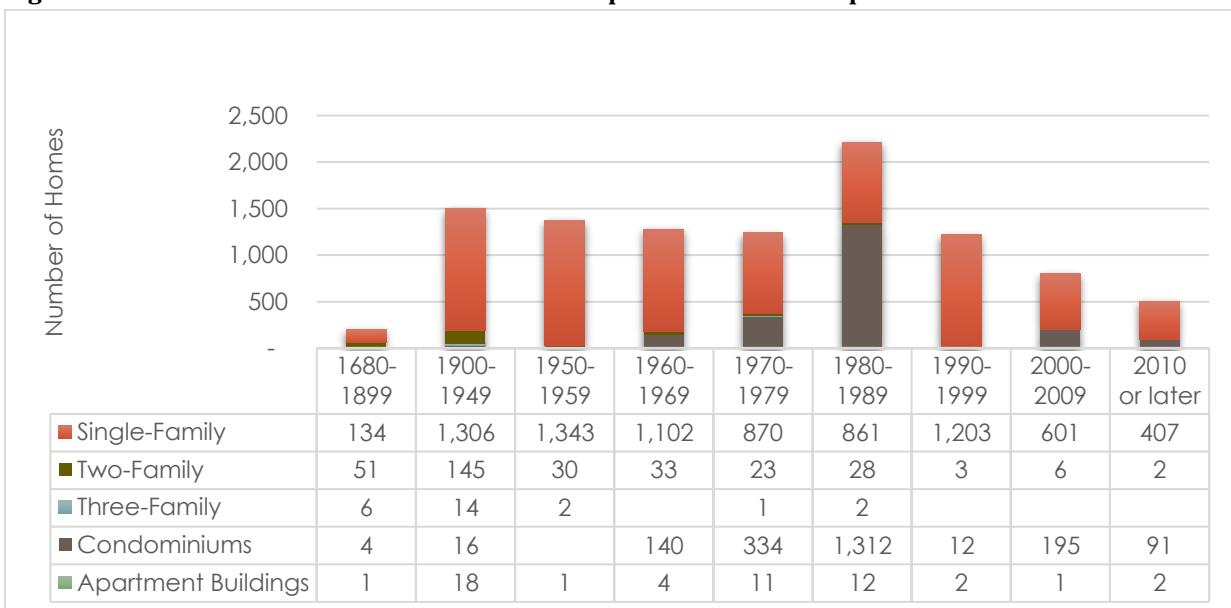
**Table 5.2: Residential Properties by Land Use**

	Number of Parcels	Percent of Total Parcels	Total Acreage	Average Acreage
Single-Family	7,827	75.8	6,011	0.8
Two-Family	321	3.1	324	1.0
Three-Family	25	0.2	16	0.6
Condominiums	2,104	20.4	0	0.0
Apartment Buildings	52	0.5	143	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,329</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,494</b>	<b>0.6</b>

Source: Dracut Assessor's Fiscal Year 2018 property assessment database (June 1, 2018 extract)

Figure 5.1 below shows the residential properties according to the type of housing structure (determined by land use code) and the period during which the housing was built. This data reveals that 3,071 residential structures were developed prior to 1960 with single-family houses comprising 90.6% of total residential structures. During the most recent six decades, the increase in the number of residential units was more than twice what occurred between 1680 and 1960. Housing growth between 1960 and 2000 represented 57.8% of the total increase.

**Figure 5.1: Year Structure was Built for all Developed Residential Properties**



Source: Dracut Assessor's Fiscal Year 2018 property assessment database (June 1, 2018 extract)

## SIZE AND CONDITIONS OF HOUSING UNITS

Using the Assessor's database, one is able to break out the characteristics of single-family, two-family, condominium and apartment buildings in Dracut. The diverse nature of Dracut's housing market are outlined in this data and described in the following narrative.

### SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING UNITS

Historic single-family homes built before 1970 have lower total assessed values than single-family homes built after 1970. Part of this may be due to the smaller living areas in older homes, although those single-family homes built between 1680 and 1899 had larger living areas. It should be noted that weighted averages are used for the land value, building value and total value in Table 5.3. The largest single-family homes have been built since 2010 with an average living area of 2,603 square feet. The number of rooms within the single-family homes has remained consistent, as has the number of stories per structure.

**Table 5.3: Characteristics of Single-Family Homes by Age of Housing Unit**

Period	Properties	Land Value	Building Value	Total Value	Lot Area (acres)	Living Area (sq. feet)	Stories	Rooms
1680-1899	134	\$127,649	\$168,199	\$295,848	2.3	1,862	2	7
1900-1949	1,306	\$123,542	\$135,105	\$258,648	0.8	1,478	2	6
1950-1959	1,343	\$123,716	\$142,662	\$266,378	0.4	1,431	1	6
1960-1969	1,102	\$128,313	\$156,722	\$285,036	0.5	1,411	1	6
1970-1979	870	\$141,367	\$194,282	\$335,649	0.9	1,694	1	7
1980-1989	861	\$149,016	\$229,637	\$378,654	1.0	2,046	2	7
1990-1999	1,203	\$129,958	\$203,595	\$333,553	0.7	1,825	2	6
2000-2009	601	\$150,743	\$308,173	\$458,916	1.1	2,532	2	8
2010 or later	407	\$152,123	\$347,272	\$499,395	0.8	2,603	2	7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7,827</b>	<b>\$133,659</b>	<b>\$191,837</b>	<b>\$325,496</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1,746</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>

*Source: Dracut Assessor's Fiscal Year 2018 property assessment database (June 1, 2018 extract)*

### TWO-FAMILY HOUSING UNITS

Table 5.4 on the next page provides similar information on two-family homes in Dracut. There were 321 two-family homes identified and compared. More than sixty-one (61%) percent of these two-family homes were built before 1950. These structures may have originally been built as single-family homes and then converted to two-family homes, although the data shows the property's land use code as of June 1, 2018. The total value for two-family homes has continued to increase since 1900, with a small drop in value in the 1990s. It should be noted that weighted averages are used for the land value, building value and total value in Table 5.4. The living area for two-family homes has significantly increased since 2000. Yet, the number of two-family homes built since 1990 has significantly dropped off.

**Table 5.4: Characteristics of Two-Family Homes by Age of Housing Unit**

Period	Properties	Land Value	Building Value	Total Value	Lot Area (acres)	Living Area (sq. feet)	Stories	Rooms
1680-1899	51	\$127,910	\$191,702	\$319,612	2.1	2,555	2	10
1900-1949	145	\$121,320	\$171,859	\$293,179	1.0	2,222	2	9
1950-1959	30	\$123,653	\$181,130	\$304,783	0.5	2,068	1	9
1960-1969	33	\$123,542	\$185,133	\$308,676	0.5	1,980	1	9
1970-1979	23	\$129,278	\$208,770	\$338,048	0.5	2,304	2	10
1980-1989	28	\$149,743	\$248,579	\$398,321	0.6	2,139	2	9
1990-1999	3	\$137,967	\$198,267	\$336,233	1.1	1,975	2	9
2000-2009	6	\$135,233	\$288,783	\$424,017	1.4	3,095	2	11
2010 or later	2	\$148,600	\$364,500	\$513,100	1.9	2,903	2	10
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>\$126,449</b>	<b>\$190,212</b>	<b>\$316,660</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2,253</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: Dracut Assessor's Fiscal Year 2018 property assessment database (June 1, 2018 extract)

### THREE-FAMILY HOUSING UNITS

Table 5.5 provides similar information on three-family homes in Dracut. There were 25 three-family homes identified and compared. Eighty (80%) percent of these were built before 1950. Although these structures may have originally been built for one or two families, this data shows the land use code as of June 1, 2018. The total value for three-family homes decreased from 1680-1899 to 1950-1959, then increased to \$418,900 for those built in 1970-1979, then slightly decreased in 1980-1989. It should be noted that weighted averages are used for the land value, building value and total value in Table 5.5. The living area for three-family homes actually decreased from 1680-1899 to 1980-1989 and no three-family homes have been built since 1989.

**Table 5.5: Characteristics of Three-Family Homes by Age of Housing Unit**

Period	Properties	Land Value	Building Value	Total Value	Lot Area (acres)	Living Area (sq. feet)	Stories	Rooms
1680-1899	6	\$124,633	\$224,767	\$349,400	0.4	3,101	2	13
1900-1949	14	\$125,107	\$187,400	\$312,507	0.8	2,717	2	12
1950-1959	2	\$108,250	\$178,850	\$287,100	0.2	1,652	2	11
1970-1979	1	\$142,100	\$276,800	\$418,900	0.8	2,886	2	12
1980-1989	2	\$129,650	\$268,000	\$397,650	0.5	2,664	2	15
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>\$124,688</b>	<b>\$205,708</b>	<b>\$330,396</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>2,726</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: Dracut Assessor's Fiscal Year 2018 property assessment database (June 1, 2018 extract)

### CONDOMINIUMS

There were 2,104 condominiums identified within the Assessor's database. Most of the condominium units built prior to 1980 were converted from single-family, two-family or apartment building units. In fact, some of the older condominiums "built" prior to 1900

have a higher average value than those condominiums built between 1900 and 2000. The total living area has steadily increased from 1980 until today, yet the total number of condominiums has declined since 2010. It should be noted that weighted averages are used for the land value, building value and total value below in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: Characteristics of Condominiums by Age of Housing Unit**

Period	Properties	Building Value	Total Value	Living Area (sq. feet)	Stories	Rooms
1680-1899	4	\$194,100	\$194,100	1,087	2	5
1900-1949	16	\$108,475	\$108,475	918	1	4
1960-1969	140	\$ 86,288	\$86,288	763	1	4
1970-1979	334	\$110,577	\$110,577	879	1	4
1980-1989	1,312	\$169,648	\$169,648	1,124	1	4
1990-1999	12	\$194,000	\$194,000	1,237	2	4
2000-2009	195	\$268,597	\$268,597	1,469	2	5
2010 or later	91	\$337,071	\$337,071	1,784	2	5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,104</b>	<b>\$ 170,856</b>	<b>\$170,856</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>

*Source: Dracut Assessor's Fiscal Year 2018 property assessment database (June 1, 2018 extract)*

## APARTMENT BUILDINGS

There were fifty-two (52) apartment buildings identified in the Dracut Assessor's database. The bulk of the apartment buildings were built between 1900 and 1949, and in the 1970s and 1980s. The largest and most expensive apartment building was built between 2000 and 2009. The weighted averages are used for the land value, building value and total value below in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7: Characteristics of Apartment Buildings by Age of Housing Unit**

Period	Properties	Land Value	Building Value	Total Value	Lot Area (acres)	Stories
1680-1899	1	\$160,000	\$432,600	\$592,600	1.2	3
1900-1949	18	\$152,350	\$401,539	\$553,889	0.4	2
1950-1959	1	\$133,600	\$223,000	\$356,600	0.6	2
1960-1969	4	\$321,150	\$1,057,250	\$1,378,400	1.5	2
1970-1979	11	\$681,600	\$2,186,155	\$2,867,755	4.2	2
1980-1989	12	\$679,067	\$2,133,500	\$2,812,567	5.3	2
1990-1999	2	\$205,450	\$577,850	\$783,300	1.0	2
2000-2009	1	\$1,728,000	\$6,020,900	\$7,748,900	8.0	2
2010 or later	2	\$972,000	\$6,040,550	\$7,012,550	4.1	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>\$462,496</b>	<b>\$1,558,071</b>	<b>\$2,020,567</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2</b>

*Source: Dracut Assessor's Fiscal Year 2018 property assessment database (June 1, 2018 extract)*

## OCCUPANCY, TENURE AND VACANCY RATES

This section analyzes trends in housing occupancy, ownership and rental tenure, vacancy rates, and housing turnover. Dracut has historically had an owner-occupied housing stock given the predominance of single-family homes. As outlined in Table 5.8 below, owner-occupied housing units actually decreased from 8,689 households in 2010 to 8,501 households in 2012-2016, or by -2.2%. Renter-occupied units increased from 2,267 households in 2010 to 2,487 households in 2012-2016, or by 9.7%. Overall, occupied housing units increased by 0.3%, while the vacancy rate declined from 3.5% to 2.4% reflecting an improving economy.

**Table 5.8: Housing Tenure (2010 and 2012-2016)**

Tenure Status	2010		2012-2016		Percent Change 2010 to 2012/2016
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Owner-occupied	8,689	79.3	8,501	77.4	-2.2
Renter-occupied	2,267	20.7	2,487	22.6	9.7
Occupied Housing Units	10,956	100.0	10,988	100.0	0.3
Vacant Units	395	3.5	267	2.4	-32.4
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>11,351</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>11,255</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-0.8</b>

*Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

When one compares the owner occupancy levels in Dracut with the Greater Lowell region, there are significant differences. As shown in Table 5.9, the owner occupancy rate in the Greater Lowell region in 2012-2016 was 69.5% as compared to the Dracut owner occupancy rate of 77.4%. Similarly, while Dracut had a rental occupancy rate of 22.6% in 2012-2016, the Greater Lowell region's rental occupancy rate was slightly higher at 30.5%. The vacancy rates were also significantly different with the Greater Lowell region at 4.5% and Dracut at 2.4% in 2012-2016. The housing market in Dracut is much tighter than in the region as a whole.

**Table 5.9: Housing Tenure in the Greater Lowell region (2012-2016)**

Tenure Status	2012 - 2016	
	Number of Units	Percent of Total
Owner-occupied	84,228	69.5
Renter-occupied	36,881	30.5
Vacant	5,441	4.5
<b>Total Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>121,109</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

## HOUSING TURNOVER

Table 5.10 compares the year that Dracut households moved into their current homes with households in Dunstable, Pepperell and Tyngsborough. The data shows that Dracut

(9.45%) households have been in their current homes longer than Pepperell (8.48%) or Tyngsborough (6.21%), but shorter than Dunstable (10.54%). More than 95% (95.9%) of households in Dracut have been in their present homes since before 2015.

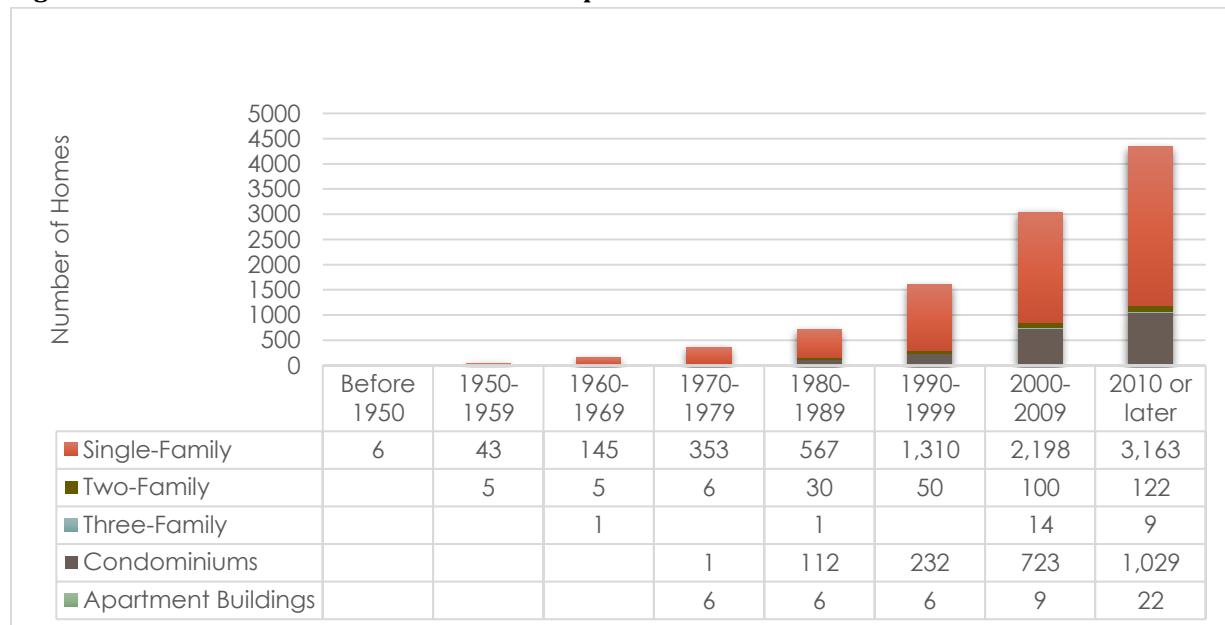
**Table 5.10: Year Household Moved into Present Home-Dracut and Neighboring Communities**

	Dracut		Dunstable		Pepperell		Tyngsborough	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total population in occupied housing units	30,919	100.00	3,310	100.00	12,020	99.99	12,117	100.00
2015 or later	1,280	4.14	63	1.90	265	2.20	224	1.85
2010 - 2014	6,707	21.69	267	8.07	2,265	18.84	2,620	21.62
2000 - 2009	11,071	35.81	1,279	38.64	4,033	33.55	4,293	35.43
1990 - 1999	5,843	18.90	889	26.86	3,296	27.42	3,026	24.97
1980 - 1989	3,096	10.01	463	13.99	1,142	9.50	1,202	9.92
1979 or earlier	2,922	9.45	349	10.54	1,019	8.48	752	6.21

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Figure 5.2 shows the last year of sale for residential properties in Dracut. Based upon the Assessor's database, the data shows the majority of the last residential sales (71.9%) have occurred in the last eighteen (18) years. Single-family homes represented 72.6% of total sales between 2000 and June 1, 2018 followed by condominiums at 23.7%. That means that there has been a large turnover of properties during that timeframe even though 9.45% of Dracut households have been in their current homes since 1979 or earlier.

**Figure 5.2: Last Year of Sale for Residential Properties**



Source: Dracut Assessor's Fiscal Year 2018 property assessment database (June 1, 2018 extract)

## HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND SALES TRENDS

This section examines trends in housing development in Dracut, as well as the trends in the sale of existing housing stock. Residential permits issued in Dracut from 2012 to 2018 are outlined which show the predominance of single-family homes, as well as the estimated construction cost for permits issued since 2012. The total number of housing sales in Dracut are provided, as well as the median sales prices in Dracut and the Greater Lowell region.

### NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Table 5.11 below and Figure 5.3 on the following page show that there were 426 residential permits issued for 534 units of housing between 2012 and 2018. The number of permits issued remained steady over the past seven years. The permit information was provided by the Building Department.

**Table 5.11: Residential Permits Issued and Units Approved in Dracut: 2012-2018**

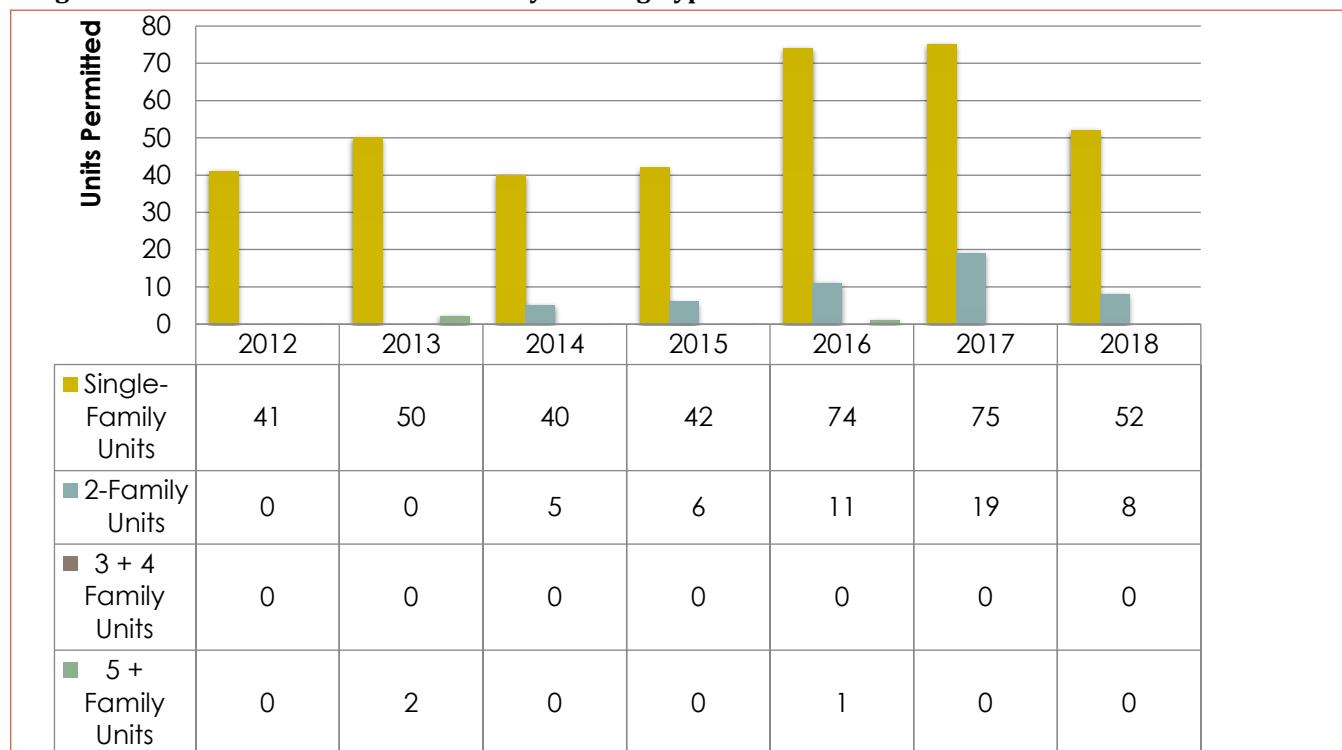
Year	Total Building Permits	Total Units Approved	Estimated Construction Cost	Average Est. Construction Cost Per Unit
2012	41	41	\$9,225,000	\$225,000
2013	52	98	\$20,370,000	\$207,857
2014	45	50	\$10,900,000	\$218,000
2015	48	54	\$10,641,050	\$197,056
2016	86	100	\$27,906,775	\$279,068
2017	94	123	\$26,850,966	\$218,301
2018	60	68	\$17,751,000	\$261,044
<b>Total</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>\$123,644,791</b>	<b>\$231,545</b>

*Source: Dracut Building Department (2012-2018)*

### NUMBER OF HOME SALES

Table 5.12 and Figure 5.4 show the number of residential sales in Dracut between 2012 and 2018, comprised of 2,038 single-family, 1,002 condominiums and 3,689 total sales. Single-family home sales comprised 55.2% of total residential sales, while condominiums only comprised 27.2% between 2012 and 2018. Single-family home sales increased by 45.6% between 2012 and 2016 and then decreased by 18.6% between 2016 and 2017. In 2018, single-family homes increased by 13.9%. Condominium sales showed a 52.2% increase between 2012 and 2016 and a 22.1% increase between 2016 and 2018.

**Figure 5.3: Residential Units Permitted by Housing Type: 2012-2018**



Source: Dracut Building Department (2012-2018)

**Table 5.12: Residential Sales in Dracut (2012-2018)**

Period	Single-Family	Condominium	Other	Total
2012	248	113	65	426
2013	258	97	77	432
2014	262	92	92	446
2015	280	130	82	492
2016	361	172	123	656
2017	294	188	110	592
2018	335	210	100	645
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,038</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>3,689</b>

Source: The Warren Group, 2019

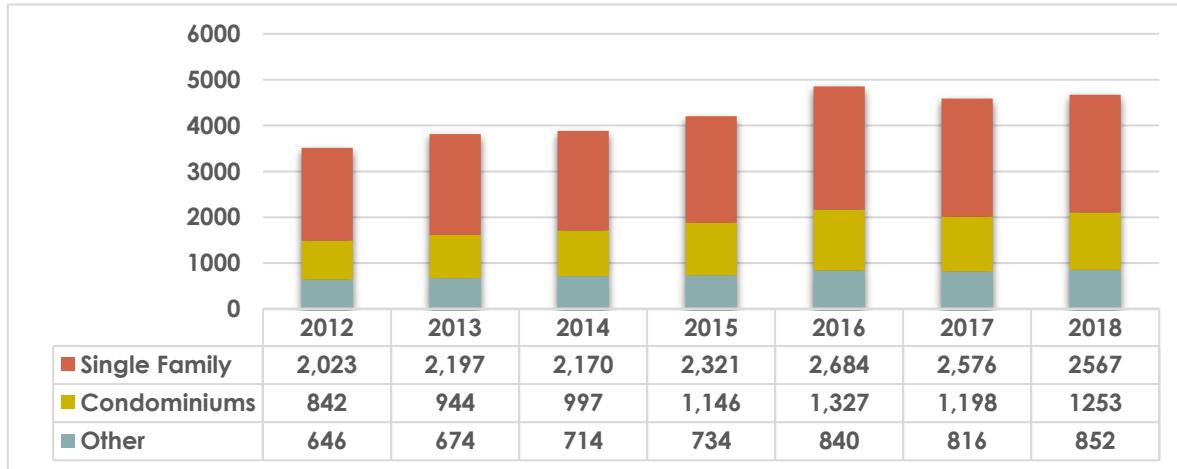
**Figure 5.4: Residential Sales in Dracut (2012-2018)**



*Source: The Warren Group*

Outlined in Figure 5.5 are the total residential sales in the Greater Lowell region between 2012 and 2018. Housing sales in the region reflect the same pattern as Dracut, increasing from 2012 to 2016, slightly decreasing in 2017 and then increasing slightly in 2018. Similar to Dracut, single-family home sales comprised 56% of total residential sales, while condominiums only comprised 26.1% of total home sales between 2012 and 2018. Single-family home sales increased by 32.7% between 2012 and 2016 and then decreased by 4.4% between 2016 and 2018. Condominium sales showed a 57.6% increase between 2012 and 2016 and a 5.6% decrease between 2016 and 2018. There are questions about whether the housing market has cooled off since 2016.

**Figure 5.5: Home Sales in the Greater Lowell Region (2012-2018)**



*Source: The Warren Group, 2019*

## MEDIAN SALES PRICES

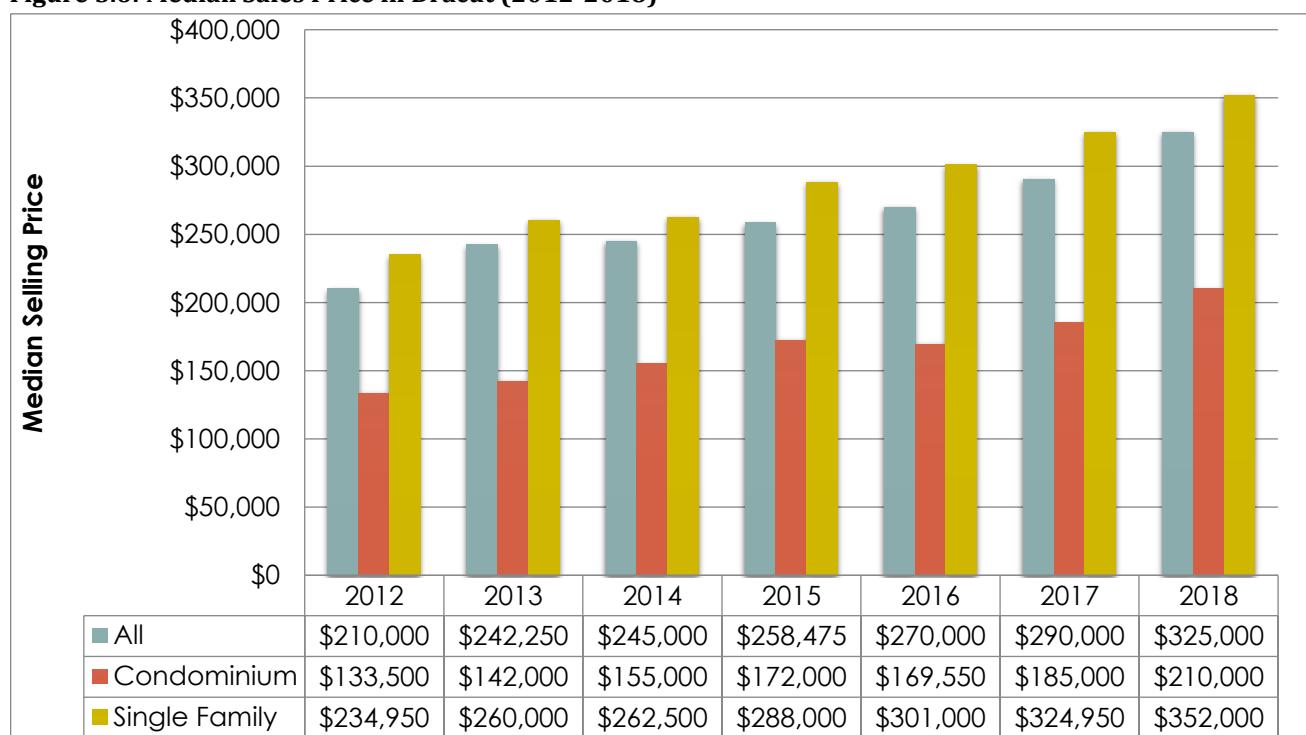
Table 5.13 and Figure 5.6 show the change in median sales prices for single-family homes, condominiums and all housing units between 2012 and 2018, based upon data from the Warren Group. The median sales price for single-family homes in Dracut increased from \$234,950 in 2012 to \$352,000 in 2018. Similarly, condominium median sales prices increased from \$133,500 in 2012 to \$210,000 in 2018. Total median sales prices for all housing units increased from \$210,000 in 2012 to \$325,000 in 2018. These median sales prices reflect the affordable nature of the Dracut housing market, as compared to the rest of the Greater Lowell region.

**Table 5.13: Median Sales Prices in Dracut (2012-2018)**

Year	Single-Family	Condominium	All
2012	\$234,950	\$133,500	\$210,000
2013	\$260,000	\$142,000	\$242,250
2014	\$262,500	\$155,000	\$245,000
2015	\$288,000	\$172,000	\$258,475
2016	\$301,000	\$169,550	\$270,000
2017	\$324,950	\$185,000	\$290,000
2018	\$352,000	\$210,000	\$325,000

*Source: The Warren Group, 2019*

**Figure 5.6: Median Sales Price in Dracut (2012-2018)**



*Source: The Warren Group, 2019*

The median sales prices for the Greater Lowell region between 2012 and 2018 are shown below in Table 5.14 and in Figure 5.7.

**Table 5.14: Median Sales Prices in the Greater Lowell Region (2011-2017)**

Year	Single-Family	Condominium	All
2012	\$283,554	\$180,649	\$251,700
2013	\$315,337	\$202,291	\$280,780
2014	\$262,500	\$155,000	\$245,000
2015	\$288,000	\$172,000	\$258,475
2016	\$301,000	\$169,550	\$270,000
2017	\$324,950	\$185,000	\$290,000
2018	\$399,506	\$243,122	\$359,576

*Source: The Warren Group, 2019*

**Figure 5.7: Median Sales Prices in the Greater Lowell Region (2012-2018)**



*Source: The Warren Group, 2019*

An analysis of the median sales prices in the Greater Lowell region by community between 2015 and 2018, as outlined in Table 5.15 below shows that, with the exception of the City of Lowell, Dracut's median home sales prices are the lowest in the region.

**Table 5.15: Median Sales Prices in Dracut and the Greater Lowell Region (2015-2018)**

Community	2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos
Billerica	\$358,000	\$259,000	\$385,000	\$270,000	\$418,000	\$220,950	\$429,000	\$237,450
Chelmsford	\$373,000	\$226,500	\$385,000	\$236,000	\$410,500	\$257,000	\$432,000	\$280,000
<b>Dracut</b>	\$286,500	\$172,000	\$301,000	\$169,550	\$324,950	\$185,000	\$352,000	\$210,000
Dunstable	\$474,000	\$0	\$449,900	\$0	\$439,950	\$0	\$525,000	\$0

**Table 5.15(cont'd): Median Sales Prices in Dracut and the Greater Lowell Region (2015-2018)**

Community	2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos
Lowell	\$241,750	\$160,000	\$252,400	\$160,000	\$267,650	\$180,039	\$295,000	\$186,000
Pepperell	\$310,000	\$189,000	\$320,000	\$191,000	\$335,900	\$241,500	\$343,700	\$248,750
Tewksbury	\$365,000	\$270,000	\$382,000	\$290,000	\$404,900	\$307,750	\$429,900	\$327,000
Tyngsborough	\$360,000	\$192,822	\$379,900	\$197,450	\$385,000	\$232,000	\$425,000	\$220,000
Westford	\$482,500	\$295,000	\$489,000	\$363,250	\$532,000	\$361,500	\$575,000	\$385,000
<b>Region</b>	<b>\$340,550</b>	<b>\$214,182</b>	<b>\$328,756</b>	<b>\$222,886</b>	<b>\$374,699</b>	<b>\$229,282</b>	<b>\$399,506</b>	<b>\$243,122</b>

Source: *The Warren Group, 2019*

## COMPREHENSIVE PERMITS

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Permit Law (Chapter 774 of the Acts of 1969 or Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws) was enacted in 1969 to “increase the supply and improve the regional distribution of low-or moderate-income housing by allowing a limited override of local requirements and regulations which are consistent with local and regional affordable housing needs”.

Affordability thresholds are calculated annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These thresholds, which are based on a combination of household income and the total number of individuals living in a given household, are calculated on a regional basis. In the case of Dracut, affordability thresholds are based on household incomes in the Lowell Metro Fair Market Rent (FMR) Area. Table 5.16 below represents the adjusted household income limits to determine eligibility for affordable housing in the Greater Lowell region effective October 1, 2018:

**Table 5.16: Adjusted Income Limits by Household Size, Lowell Metro FMR Area, FY 2018**

Income Limit Area	Area Median Income	FY 2018 Income Limit Category	Household Size							
			1-Person	2-Person	3-Person	4-Person	5-Person	6-Person	7-Person	8-Person
Lowell, MA HUD Metro FMR Area	\$105,400	30%-Extremely Low	\$22,150	\$25,300	\$28,450	\$31,600	\$34,150	\$36,700	\$39,200	\$41,750
		50% - Very Low	\$36,900	\$42,200	\$47,450	\$52,700	\$56,950	\$61,150	\$65,350	\$69,600
		80% - Low	\$50,350	\$57,550	\$64,750	\$71,900	\$77,700	\$83,450	\$89,200	\$94,950

Source: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2016/2016summary.odn> Dracut is included in the Lowell Metropolitan Fair Market Rent (FMR) region

The Commonwealth established a 10% affordable housing goal for every community across the State. Table 5.17 on the next page shows the change in the total number of affordable housing units for Dracut and the other communities in the Greater Lowell region between

April 2012 and September 2018. Dracut had 585 affordable housing units as of September 2018 and needs 546 additional affordable housing units to exceed 10%. When the 2020 U.S. Census is released, there will be a higher Year Round Housing Unit figure for every community, which will increase the number of affordable housing units needed to attain the 10% goal.

**Table 5.17: Subsidized Housing Inventories in the Greater Lowell Region: April 2012–September 2018**

Community	Year Round Housing Units- 2010	Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) Units			Percent SHI Units	
		April 2012	September 2018	% Change	April 2012	September 2018
Billerica	14,442	1,186	1,458	22.93	8.21	10.10
Chelmsford	13,741	966	1,323	36.96	9.20	9.63
<b>Dracut</b>	<b>11,318</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>-1.68</b>	<b>5.17</b>	<b>5.06</b>
Dunstable	1,085	0	0	NA	0.00	0.00
Lowell	41,308	5,212	5,180	-0.61	12.61	12.54
Pepperell	4,335	122	130	6.56	2.81	3.00
Tewksbury	10,803	1,011	1,048	3.66	9.66	9.70
Tyngsborough	4,166	283	465	64.31	6.79	11.16
Westford	7,671	337	1,055	213.06	4.39	13.75
<b>Region</b>	<b>108,869</b>	<b>9,712</b>	<b>11,244</b>	<b>15.77</b>	<b>8.92</b>	<b>10.33</b>

*Source: Massachusetts DHCD, Chapter 40B SHI, April 3, 2012 and September 23, 2018*

The specific affordable housing properties in Dracut as of September 23, 2018 are listed in Table 5.18 below:

**Table 5.18: Dracut Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of September 2018**

Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Affordability Expires	Built with a Comp Permit?	Subsidizing Agency
Cluster Gardens Apartments	Phineas Street	Rental	44	Perpetuity	No	HUD
n/a	971 Mammoth Road	Rental	80	Perpetuity	No	DHCD
n/a	901 Mammoth Road	Rental	53	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
n/a	Perron Lane	Rental	8	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
n/a	scattered sites	Rental	6	Perpetuity	No	DHCD
n/a	Tanglewood Drive/Myron Street/Hampson Street	Rental	6	Perpetuity	No	DHCD
n/a	Perron Lane	Rental	24	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
Primrose Hill I	none given	Ownership	25	2030	Yes	DHCD
Primrose Hill II	1787 Lakeview Avenue	Ownership	16	2030	Yes	DHCD
Wimbledon Crossing	Wimbledon Crossing	Ownership	17	2035	Yes	DHCD
DDS Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	55	N/A	No	DDS

**Table 5.18 (cont'd): Dracut Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of September 2018**

Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Affordability Expires	Built with a Comp Permit?	Subsidizing Agency
Riverside Landing	Washington Avenue (off Brigham)	Ownership	11	Perpetuity	Yes	FHLBB
Robbins Nest	Robbins Avenue	Rental	96	Perpetuity	Yes	FHLBB
Park Place	Redgate Road (off Nashua Road)	Ownership	8	Perpetuity	Yes	FHLBB
Forest Glen	Gumpus Road	Ownership	8	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
Long Pond Estates	615 Nashua Road	Ownership	7	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
Grassfields Commons	474 Mammoth Road	Ownership	48	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
Mascuppic Village	780 Nashua Road	Ownership	9	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
Allard's Grove	760 Nashua Road	Rental	60	Perpetuity	Yes	HUD
Princeton Reserve	439 Merrill Lane	Rental	4	Perpetuity	No	DHCD
<b>Total</b>			<b>585</b>			

*Source: Department of Housing and Community Development CH 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of September 23, 2018*

## INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITATIONS

This section provides information on the existing sewer and water and infrastructure and identifies the gaps in the infrastructure that present barriers to new residential development. This information was compiled with the assistance of the Dracut Town Engineer. The infrastructure in Dracut is fairly complete and, in those areas where infrastructure is limited, the Town has requested the assistance of private developers in constructing additional infrastructure.

### SEWER CAPACITY

The municipal sewer system services about 95% of Dracut's population. Existing sewered areas include most of Dracut. The remainder of the town is supported by on-site septic systems, primarily located in the vicinity of Jones Avenue, Methuen Road, Island Pond Road and the northern portion of Marsh Hill Road. Discharge from the sewer system is sent to the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility (LRWWU) and Greater Lawrence Sanitary District (GLSD).

Dracut owns approximately 11% of the LRWWU facility, or 3.6 million gallons per day of capacity. Of the 3.6 million gallons per day, Dracut must provide Tyngsborough with 1.0 million gallons per day, based on an inter-municipal agreement (IMA). Currently, Dracut is utilizing about 1.4 million gallons per day of its allocation.

The Dracut sewer expansion program has been a model for long-term, sustainable infrastructure development. Over the past forty years, 32 major sewer construction contracts have been completed, providing sewer service to more than 8,700 residences and businesses in Dracut. These projects have closely followed a phased sewer construction program carefully developed as part of a Wastewater Facilities Plan completed in 1982 and a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) completed in 2001 and updated in 2007.

The Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP), which received final MEPA approval in May 2007, was to sewer most of the Town over approximately twenty years, which has been realized. Currently, the Dracut Sewer Department has completed inspection of approximately 40% of its sewer mains, utilizing closed circuit television video (CCTV) to identify potential Inflow and Infiltration (I&I). The removal of I&I will help the Town to stay within its Inter-municipal agreement with the City of Lowell.

Most recently, the Town of Dracut, the City of Methuen and the GLSD have made sewer service to eastern Dracut possible. Previous to recent contracts #26, #26A and #27, all Dracut wastewater flow was conveyed to the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility (LRWWU) for treatment and disposal. However, given capacity restrictions at the Lowell facility and the availability of reserve capacity at the GLSD facility, Dracut worked closely with Methuen and GLSD to develop inter-municipal agreements (IMAs) that allow for the conveyance of wastewater from eastern Dracut to Methuen and ultimately to the GLSD facility for treatment and disposal. This collaboration benefits all parties and makes the best use of public assets by matching the need for wastewater treatment with available treatment capacity.

Additionally, the shifting of east Dracut flow to the GLSD facility will allow Dracut to complete additional projects in central Dracut – projects that will send more flow to the Lowell facility – without exceeding flow limits established by the IMA between Dracut and Lowell.

Since 2014 Dracut completed Contracts #31 and #32, which addressed portions of eastern and central Dracut. As a result, Dracut now has full access to sewer service, thereby fulfilling a long-term commitment to the residents and businesses of Dracut.

## WATER SUPPLY

Dracut is served by the Dracut Water Supply and Kenwood Water Districts. The majority of town receives water through the Dracut Water Supply District, with the eastern portion of

the town receiving water through the Kenwood Water Department. The remainder of the town is supplied by private wells.

## DRACUT WATER SUPPLY DISTRICT

The Dracut Water Supply District (the District) serves approximately 23,600 people through its distribution system in Dracut and a portion of Tyngsborough. Through this system, service is provided to the neighborhoods of Dracut Center, the Navy Yard, and Collinsville. The District's main well fields are located off Hildreth Street in Dracut and off Frost Road in the Town of Tyngsborough. The District also purchases water from the City of Lowell.

The water distribution system includes more than 100 miles of water main ranging in size from 1- to 24-inches in diameter. The District sells water to the Tyngsborough Water District through the Birchmont Booster Pump Station to serve approximately 112 customer accounts in the Birchmont pressure zone. The District is in the process of purchasing the Birchmont pump station and distribution system from Tyngsborough.

The water supply comes from five wells located in the Tyngsborough Well Field, located along the Merrimack River in Tyngsborough, and two wells in the New Boston Well Field, located in Dracut. The District supplements the well supplies with water purchased through an interconnection with the Lowell Regional Water Utility (LRWU) at the Pleasant Street Pump Station. A second interconnection with the Kenwood Water Department is currently under construction, which would allow the District to obtain water from Methuen.

The District maintains three storage facilities: (1) a 3,000,000 gallon stand up concrete tank located on Marsh Hill, (2) an 800,000 gallon cement tank located on Thortleberry Hill, and (3) a 2,500,000 gallon steel water tower located on Passaconaway Drive. The District supplies approximately 9,000 households, including about 1,000 residents in Tyngsborough.

The water in the distribution system is a mix of groundwater from the two well fields and surface water from Lowell Regional Water Utility. According to the Dracut Water System Master Plan, the District's well supplies, pumping stations, and storage tanks have been well maintained and are generally in very good condition. The current focus of the District is on improvements to the water supplies. Upgrades are currently on-going to improve the capacity and reliability of the well supplies and the pumping facilities.

## KENWOOD WATER DISTRICT

The Kenwood Water District was established in 1966 by Chapter 329 of the Acts of the Massachusetts Legislature. The Kenwood Water District is totally separate from the Dracut Water Supply District (DWSD), except that the Kenwood District is under the jurisdiction of the Town Manager, acting as Superintendent. Small Water Systems Services, L.L.C has been contracted as the licensed operator to operate and maintain the system. The system is a distribution system only; it does not have its own water source, nor does it treat water.

The Kenwood Water District purchases water from the Lowell and Methuen Water Departments and supplies it to customers located in the eastern portion of Dracut. Both Lowell and Methuen's source of water is the Merrimack River, a surface water source which originates in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Customers in the eastern and northern portions of the Kenwood Water District receive their water from the Methuen Water Department, while the remaining customers receive their water from the Lowell System.

The Kenwood Water District's system is composed of water mains, service lines, pumping stations, metering states, gates and values. The District's system contains approximately 35 miles of main ranging in size from 6 inch to 12 inch. There are 1,980 accounts in the Kenwood District, which continues to expand with development ongoing in that section of Town. Dracut's current average demand is approximately 1.5 million gallons of water per day. The Kenwood Water District continues to upgrade its metering systems, along with ongoing improvements to the system to ensure sufficient water distribution to customers.

## HOUSING NEEDS

This section provides an overview of the housing needs of Dracut residents. The discussion includes a section on the age distribution of Dracut residents in 2010 and 2012-2016 and the projected age distribution of Dracut residents in 2020, 2030 and 2040. This information is important in determining the types of housing needed in Dracut over the next twenty years. In addition to the existing and projected age cohorts, there is a discussion on household types and characteristics, median household income and poverty level guidelines, the disabled population and population living in poverty, the housing burden in the ownership and rental markets, and foreclosures in Dracut.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The actual and projected population for Dracut, as well as population trends, are discussed in the Land Use and Zoning section of this document. However, in order to determine the types and characteristics of the housing stock in the future, it is important to analyze the

age cohorts within Dracut's projected population. As a first step, the age distribution of Dracut residents in 2010 and 2012-2016 is outlined in Table 5.19:

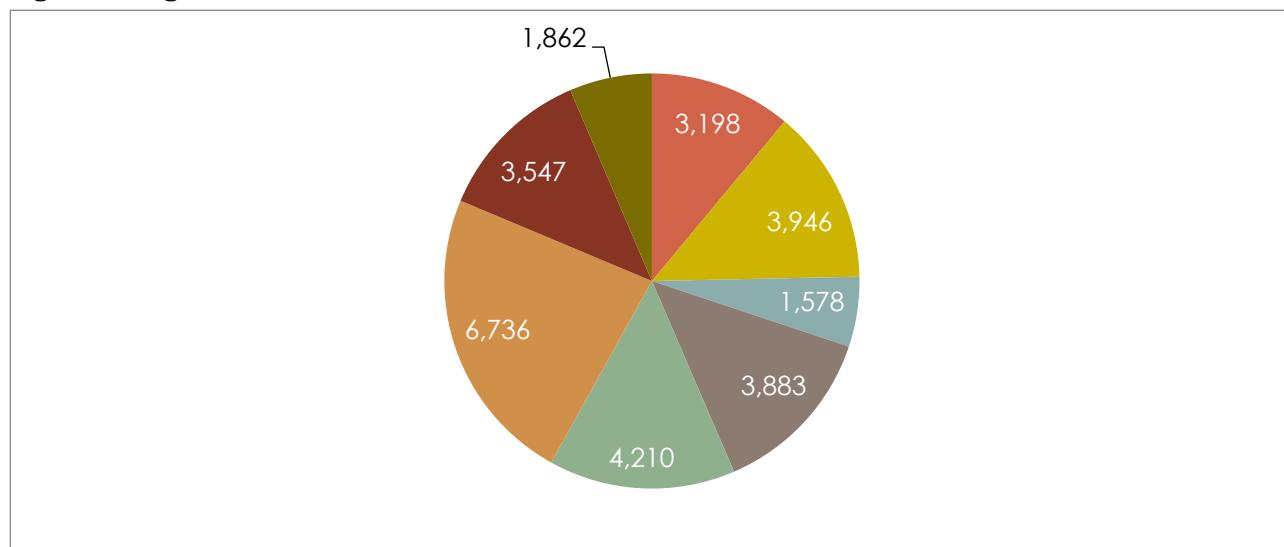
**Table 5.19: Age Distribution of Dracut Residents, 2010 and 2012-2016**

	2010		2012-2016		Percent change 2010-2012/2016
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
0-9 years	3,198	11.0	3,913	12.6	22.4
10-19 years	3,946	13.6	3,666	11.8	-7.1
20-24 years	1,578	5.4	1,930	6.2	22.3
25-34 years	3,883	13.4	4,479	14.5	15.3
35-44 years	4,210	14.5	4,145	13.4	-1.5
45-59 years	6,736	23.3	6,594	21.3	-2.1
60-74 years	3,547	12.2	4,526	14.6	27.6
75+ years	1,862	6.4	1,687	5.5	-9.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,960</b>	<b>99.8</b>	<b>30,940</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>6.8</b>

*Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

Between 2010 and 2012-2016, the overall population increased by 6.8%. However, the percentage change within each age cohort differed significantly. The greatest increase was in the 60-74 age cohort at 27.6%, while the largest decrease was in the 75+ age cohort at -9.4%. These figures would seem to indicate that couples are staying in their houses for a longer period of time and that there is limited housing available for residents in the 75+ age cohort. The increase in the 0-9 (22.4%), 20-24 (22.3%) and 25-34 (15.3%) age cohorts would seem to reflect a need for starter homes and condominiums in the future. The age distribution of Dracut residents in 2010 is shown in Figure 5.8 below.

**Figure 5.8: Age Distribution of Dracut Residents in 2010**



*Source: 2010 U.S Census*

As outlined in the Land Use and Zoning section, MassDOT, in consultation with NMCOG, prepared population projection figures for 2020, 2030 and 2040. The population projections are outlined in Table 5.20. These population projections showed that Dracut's would population by 1.8% by 2020, 2% by 2030 and 4.8% by 2040. The projected population in 2040 would be 32,042, which represented a 6.89% increase.

Based upon these projections, the 75+ (81.03%) and 60-74 (16.87%) age cohorts show the greatest increase in projected population by age group. These increases reflect the aging of the Dracut population and highlight the need for more elderly housing in the future. With the 8.03% increase in the 0-9 age cohort, there still may be a need for more starter homes and condominiums, even though the 25-39 age cohort is only projected to increase by 3.6%.

**Table 5.20: Projected Age Distribution of Dracut Residents (2020-2040)**

Age Groups	2020		2030		2040		Percent Change 2020 - 2040
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
0-9 years	3,699	12.34	3,834	12.54	3,996	12.47	8.03
10-19 years	3,465	11.56	3,338	10.92	3,486	10.88	0.61
20-24 years	1,850	6.17	1,694	5.54	1,750	5.46	-5.41
25-39 years	5,932	19.79	6,056	19.81	6,155	19.21	3.76
40-59 years	8,177	27.28	7,548	24.69	7,584	23.67	-7.25
60-74 years	5,198	17.34	5,643	18.46	6,075	18.96	16.87
75+ years	1,655	5.52	2,458	8.04	2,996	9.35	81.03
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>29,976</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>30,571</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>32,042</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>6.89</b>

*Source: Projections developed by MassDOT in consultation with NMCOG*

## RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The total number of disabled residents in Dracut according to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, was 3,481 residents, which represented 11.3% of the total population. As shown in Table 5.21 on the following page, nearly half of the disabled residents (49.6%) were between 18 and 64 years old. The types of disabilities ranged from a vision difficulty and self-care difficulty at 20.3%, to a hearing difficulty (32.2%), to an independent living difficulty (37.8%), to a cognitive difficulty (43.8%), to an ambulatory difficulty (47.5%). As noted, residents may report more than one disability.

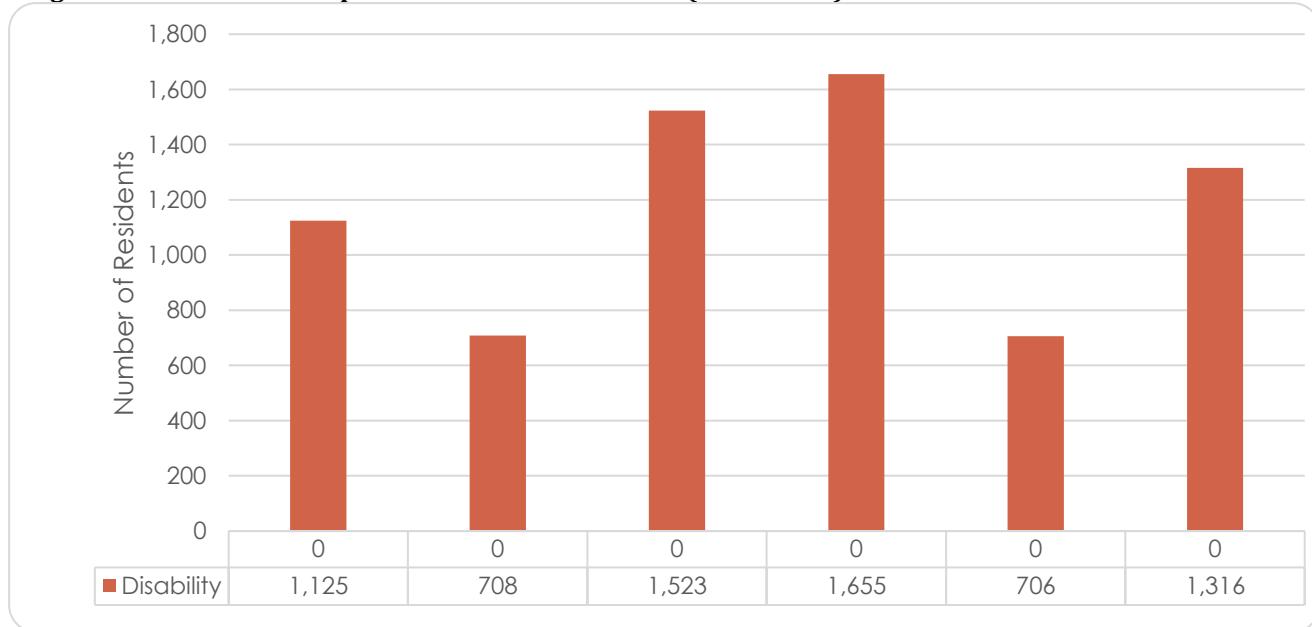
**Table 5.21: Characteristics of the Disabled Community in Dracut: 2012-2016**

Age Group and Disability Status	Total Number	Percent of Residents with Disabilities
Under 5 years old	0	0.0
5-17 years old	373	10.7
18-64 years old	1,727	49.6
65+ years old	1,381	39.7
<b>Total Number of Disabled Residents</b>	<b>3,481</b>	<b>100.0</b>
With a hearing difficulty (all ages)	1,125	32.3
With a vision difficulty (all ages)	708	20.3
With a cognitive difficulty (all ages)	1,523	43.8
With an ambulatory difficulty (all ages)	1,655	47.5
With a self-care difficulty (all ages)	706	20.3
With an independent living difficulty (all ages)	1,316	37.8

*Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Residents may report more than one disability*

Disabled residents often have unique housing needs, both in terms of the physical design and accessibility of the homes and their cost relative to a fixed or limited income. For this reason, the Housing Section of the Master Plan and the Housing Production Plan should be sensitive to the specific needs of the disabled community and incorporate their issues into the goals and strategies for future housing production.

**Figure 5.9: Disabilities Reported for Dracut Residents (2012-2016)**



*Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

## HOUSEHOLD AND HOUSEHOLD TYPES

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit (e.g. house, apartment, single room). A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, or foster children who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit, is also counted as a household. The count of households excludes group quarters.

Household growth rates in both Dracut and the Greater Lowell region have experienced a slow-down since the turn of the century. Household growth in Dracut is expected to decrease from 15.9% between 1990 and 2000 to 6.1% between 2030 and 2040, as outlined in Table 5.22. This is similar to the regional household growth rates, which are expected to decrease from 10.2% between 1990 and 2000 to 6.8% between 2030 and 2040. Between 2020 and 2040, Dracut is expected to steadily comprise 10.5% of the region's total households.

**Table 5.22: Total Number of Households (2000-2040)**

Year	Dracut		Greater Lowell Region		Households as a Percent of the Region
	Households	Percent Change	Households	Percent Change	
2000	10,451	15.9	99,342	10.2	10.5
2010	10,956	4.8	104,022	4.7	10.5
2020	11,872	8.4	113,223	8.8	10.5
2030	12,632	6.4	119,635	5.7	10.6
2040	13,399	6.1	127,795	6.8	10.5

*Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census. Projections developed by Mass DOT in consultation with NMCOG. Growth rates apply to the periods: 1990-2000, 2000-2010, 2010-2020, 2020-2030, and 2030-2040.*

Households are divided into two categories: family and nonfamily. In a family household, those who occupy a housing unit are related by birth, marriage or adoption, whereas in a nonfamily household, those who occupy a housing unit are not related (e.g. roommates). As outlined in Table 5.23 below, family households comprise about 74% of all households in Dracut.

**Table 5.23: Household Types (2000, 2010 and 2012-2016)**

Household Type	2000		2010		2012-2016	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Family households	7,736	74.0	7,864	71.8	8,149	74.2
Nonfamily households	2,715	26.0	3,092	28.2	2,839	25.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,451</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10,956</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10,988</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census. 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

The U.S. Census also provides a summary of the head of household age distribution in Dracut's households. In 2000, the majority of head of households in both family and non-family households were between the ages of 35 and 64. Sixty-five percent (65.2%) of head of households in family households and 46% of head of households in nonfamily households were in this age category as shown in Table 5.24. From 2000 to 2010 the number of family and nonfamily households in two older cohorts (35-64 and 65+) increased, while the number of family and nonfamily households in youngest age cohort (34 and younger) decreased. However, between 2010 and 2012-2016, the trends changed with younger family households (34 years and under) increasing from 13.7% to 16.4% and 35-64 year old family households decreasing from 69.6% to 65.8% during the same time period. The trends stayed the same with nonfamily households 35 years and under (17.4% to 13.3%) and 65 years and older (31.9% to 36.5%).

**Table 5.24: Head of Household Age Distribution (2000, 2010 and 2012-2016)**

Household Type	2000		2010		2012-2016	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Family households</b>						
34 Years and Under	1,503	19.4	1,081	13.7	1,335	16.4
35-64 Years Old	5,042	65.2	5,476	69.6	5,364	65.8
65 Years and Older	1,191	15.4	1,307	16.6	1,450	17.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,736</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7,864</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>8,149</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Nonfamily households</b>						
34 Years and Under	591	21.8	538	17.4	378	13.3
35-64 Years Old	1,250	46.0	1,569	50.7	1,424	50.2
65 Years and Older	874	32.2	985	31.9	1,037	36.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,715</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,092</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,839</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Due to rounding, totals may not add to 100%.*

*Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census. 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, Dracut's households tend to be smaller. As outlined in Table 5.25 on the following page, family households typically contain two, three or four people and only 14.8% of family households contain five or more people. Similarly, nonfamily households most often contain one or two people. Only 3.3% of nonfamily households containing three or more people, and there are only forty-three non-family households in Dracut with five or more people in the household.

**Table 5.25: Household Size (2012-2016)**

Household Type	Household Size (Number of Persons)							Total (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+	
<b>Family Households</b>								
Number in each category	0	3,080	2,380	1,484	707	301	197	8,149 (74.2)
% in each category	0.0	37.8	29.2	18.2	8.7	3.7	2.4	100.0
<b>Nonfamily Households</b>								
Number in each category	2,229	517	50	0	16	27	0	2,839 (25.8)
% in each category	78.5	18.2	1.8	0.0	0.6	1.0	0.0	100.0
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>2,446</b>	<b>3,597</b>	<b>2,430</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>10,988 (100.0)</b>

*Due to rounding, the totals may not add up to 100%*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Dracut's family households are becoming increasingly diverse. Married couples with children under 18 years comprised 31.3% of family households in 2010, whereas married couples without children and non-married householders comprised about 68.7% of all households in 2010 – an increase of 7% since 2000. Nonfamily households have seen the percentage of people living alone decrease from 80.5% in 2000 to 53.5% in 2010. This trend may indicate an increase in the number of Dracut residents who choose to live with roommates, which may be due to economic necessity.

**Table 5.26: Household Characteristics: 2000, 2010 and 2012-2016**

Household Type	2000		2010		2012-2016	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Family Households</b>	<b>7,736</b>	<b>74.0</b>	<b>7,864</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>8,149</b>	<b>74.2</b>
Married - couple family	6,094	78.8	6,066	77.6	6,182	75.9
With related children under 18 years	3,749	61.5	2,641	43.5	3,527	57.1
With no related children under 18 years	2,345	38.5	3,425	56.5	2,655	42.9
Male householder – no spouse	434	5.6	486	6.2	615	7.5
Female householder – no spouse	1,208	15.6	1,312	16.7	1,352	16.6
<b>Nonfamily households</b>	<b>2,715</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>3,092</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>2,839</b>	<b>25.8</b>
Householder living alone	2,185	80.5	2,446	79.1	2,231	78.6
Householders 65 and older living alone	834	38.2	931	38.1	934	32.9
Householder living with others	530	19.5	646	20.9	608	21.4
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>10,451</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10,956</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10,988</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey

## INCOME

This section examines the median household income in Dracut and compares it with the median household income for the Greater Lowell region, Massachusetts and the United States. The Dracut household data is also broken out by income category and compared between 2010 and 2012-2016. Finally, the characteristics of the Dracut population living in poverty is summarized for 2012-2016. By reviewing this data, one can estimate the percentage of Dracut residents who may be in poverty or living on a restricted income.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, median household income is calculated based on the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household. The median household income for Dracut increased from \$57,676 in 1999 to \$86,716 in 2012-2016. Dracut experienced a higher growth in median household income (50.4%) than Massachusetts (40.5%), the Greater Lowell region (35.6%) and the United States (31.9%), as outlined in Table 5.27. When adjusted for inflation, the median household income in Dracut increased by 4.4%, while the median household income for the United States (-8.4%), Greater Lowell region (-5.8%) and Massachusetts (-2.4%) decreased.

**Table 5.27: Median Household Income for Selected Geographies**

Geographic Area	1999	2012-2016	% Change 1999- 2012-2016	% Change Inflation Adjusted
Dracut	57,676	86,716	50.4	4.4
Greater Lowell Region	58,472	79,284	35.6	-5.8
Massachusetts	50,502	70,954	40.5	-2.4
United States	41,944	55,322	31.9	-8.4

*Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

In analyzing the median household income in Dracut, it is useful to determine how the income is distributed across households. The number of households in the \$100,000+ income categories significantly increased between 1999 and 2012-2016, as shown in Table 5.28 on the following page. Similarly, the number of households in the other income categories decreased during the same time period. With the median household income increasing from \$57,676 in 1999 to \$86,716 in 2012-2016, there was a shift upward in the median household income levels for Dracut households.

**Table 5.28: Income Distribution for Dracut Households in 1999 and 2012-2016**

Household Income	1999		2012-2016		Percent Change 1999 - 2012-2016
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Less than \$10,000	459	4.4	217	2.0	-52.7
\$10,000 - \$14,999	423	4.0	369	3.4	-12.8
\$15,000 - \$24,999	773	7.4	695	6.3	-10.1
\$25,000 - \$34,999	937	9.0	770	7.0	-17.8
\$35,000 - \$49,999	1,657	15.9	1,022	9.3	-38.3
\$50,000 - \$74,999	2,889	27.6	1,858	16.9	-35.7
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1,593	15.2	1,409	12.8	-11.6
\$100,000 - \$149,999	1,272	12.2	2,506	22.8	97.0
\$150,000 - \$199,999	308	2.9	1,265	11.5	310.7
\$200,000 or more	139	1.3	877	8.0	530.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,450</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>10,988</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5.1</b>

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2012-2016 American Community Survey

Every year, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Census Bureau establish Federal Poverty Guidelines. These income thresholds vary by family size and composition to determine who is living in poverty (Table 5.29). If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered to be living in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The official poverty definition uses income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps).

Based upon the 2012-2016 American Community Survey data, 5.7% of Dracut's population, or 1,759 individuals, are living in poverty. Table 5.30 on the following page compares the poverty data by age and sex illustrating how poverty impacts every age group and requires a comprehensive effort at the federal, state and local levels to address the problem through various housing initiatives.

**Table 5.29: Federal Poverty Guidelines (2018)**

Number of Persons in Family	Poverty Guideline
1	\$12,140
2	\$16,460
3	\$20,780
4	\$25,100
5	\$29,420
6	\$33,740
7	\$38,060
8	\$42,380
For each additional person	\$4,320

Source: Department of Health and Human Services  
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm>

**Table 5.30: Characteristics of the Population Living in Poverty in 2012-2016**

	Number Below Poverty Level	Percent of those in poverty
<b>A g e</b>		
Under 18 Years	497	28.3
18 to 64 Years	1,034	58.8
65 Years and Older	228	13.0
<b>S e x</b>		
Male	885	50.3
Female	874	49.7
<b>Total Individuals Living in Poverty</b>	<b>1,759</b>	<b>5.7</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>30,877</b>	

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Public officials generally agree on a definition of affordable housing as that which costs no more than 30% of a household's total annual income. Households that spend between 30% and 50% of their annual incomes on housing and related costs (including basic utilities and fuels) are said to be moderately burdened, while those spending more than half of their incomes are considered to be severely burdened. This section analyzes the housing costs for homeowners and renters in Dracut in terms of their housing burden.

## HOUSING BURDEN FOR HOMEOWNERS

Analyzing monthly housing costs for homeowners as a percentage of household income can identify the housing burdens for Dracut residents. Homeowners with a mortgage (31.3%) and those without a mortgage (21.3%) were considered at least moderately burdened as shown in Table 5.31 below. In total, 2,448 households, or 28.8%, were moderately burdened by their housing costs.

**Table 5.31: Monthly Housing Costs as a Percent of Homeowner Household Income (2012-2016)**

Characteristics	Households in Dracut	No Burden (< 20%)		Possibly Burdened (20%-29%)		Moderately Burdened (30% or more)	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Households with a mortgage	6,358	2,731	43.0	1,636	25.7	1,991	31.3
Households without a mortgage	2,143	1,458	68.0	228	10.6	457	21.3

*This does not include households with zero or negative income.*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey

## RENTAL MARKET

Renters are also burdened by monthly payments. According to data in the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, 990 rental households in Dracut, or 38.8%, have a rent

payment that creates a moderate burden because it is 30% or more of their income. Table 5.32 below summarizes the gross rent as a percentage of household income.

**Table 5.32: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (2012-2016)**

Rent as a Percent of Income	Number of Rental Households	Percent of Rental Households
Less than 15%	406	15.9
15% to 19.9%	504	19.7
20% to 24.9%	243	9.5
25% to 29.9%	299	11.7
30% to 34.9%	322	12.6
35% or more	668	26.2
Not computed	110	4.3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,552</b>	<b>99.9</b>

*Due to rounding, the totals may not add up to 100%.*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are primarily used to determine payment standard amounts for the Housing Choice Voucher program, initial renewal rents for some expiring project-based Section 8 contracts, initial rents for housing assistance payment (HAP), contracts in the Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy program (Mod Rehab), and to serve as a rent ceiling in the HOME rental assistance program.<sup>11</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually establishes FMRs for 530 metropolitan areas and 2,045 nonmetropolitan county FMR areas by October 1st. Dracut falls within the Lowell MA HUD Metro FMR Area. The 2019 FMR for a single bedroom apartment in the Lowell MA HUD Metro FMR area was \$ 1,179 per month as shown in Table 5.33.

**Table 5.33: Fair Market Rent for Lowell, MA HUD Metro FMR Area (2018)**

	Efficiency	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom
Fair Market Rent	\$ 1,026	\$ 1,179	\$ 1,514	\$ 1,897	\$ 2,047

*Source: FY 2019 Lowell, MA HUD Metro FMR Area, HUD Fair Market Rent Documentation System, effective October 1, 2018*

According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, Dracut had a median gross rent of \$1,236. As shown in Table 5.34 on the following page, this median gross rent is higher than Chelmsford, Lowell, Pepperell and Tyngsborough, but lower than Billerica, Dunstable, Tewksbury and Westford.

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<sup>11</sup> HOME is the largest Federal block grant to State and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households. States and localities use HOME grant to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership or provide direct rental assistance to low-income people.

**Table 5.34: Median Gross Rent**

Community	Median Gross Rent
Billerica	\$ 1,288
Chelmsford	\$ 1,196
Dracut	\$ 1,236
Dunstable	\$ 1,375
Lowell	\$ 1,041
Pepperell	\$ 1,177
Tewksbury	\$ 1,567
Tyngsborough	\$ 1,018
Westford	\$ 1,727

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey

## FORECLOSURES

Based on data provided by the Warren Group, the foreclosure petitions in Dracut from 2011 to 2017 are outlined in Table 5.35. In 2012 there were 104 total foreclosures in Dracut, which represented 21.8% of the total foreclosures between 2011 and 2017. Nearly three times as many single-family foreclosures (306) occurred during this period of time compared to the condominium foreclosures (113). The foreclosure trend over the past seven years shows significant increases in 2012, 2015 and 2016, and then returns to lower a level in 2017.

**Table 5.35: Foreclosure Petitions in Dracut**

Year	Number of Single-Family Foreclosures	Number of Condominium Foreclosures	Other Foreclosures	Total Foreclosures
2011	36	19	8	63
2012	63	28	13	104
2013	26	10	6	42
2014	32	11	6	49
2015	55	17	19	91
2016	56	20	4	80
2017	38	8	3	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>478</b>

Source: The Warren Group, 2018

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING EFFORTS IN DRACUT

The Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership Committee worked diligently in 2013 to develop the *Town of Dracut Affordable Housing Production Plan* in conjunction with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments. The *2014-2018 Dracut Affordable Housing Production Plan (AHPP)* was submitted to DHCD on May 7, 2014 and was approved on June 11, 2014. That document identified fifteen (15) privately-owned sites and six (6) publically-owned sites as potential housing sites that could generate 125-150 affordable

housing units over the next five years. The affordable housing production timelines showed that, based on Dracut's average housing growth (6.65%) between 2000 and 2010, an additional 375 housing units could potentially be added to the Town's housing stock between 2014 and 2018, to reach 11,951 housing units. This would represent an average growth of 75 housing units per year. It was determined that in order to achieve the 10% goal, 25 of these 75 housing units would need to be affordable. Based upon these calculations, it was estimated that Dracut could achieve its 10% goal by 2018.

As of February 2019, Dracut had 585 affordable units or 5.17% on its Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Based upon the DHCD requirements, Dracut needs 547 additional affordable units to meet its 10% goal. The *Dracut Housing Production Plan for 2020-2024* was developed to addresses how the additional affordable units will be created in order to move closer to achieving Dracut's 10% goal. Under the new proposed scenario, 69 affordable units currently in the "pipeline" will be in place by 2022. According to the proposed construction schedules, Dracut could reach 6.7% by 2024 under the "average growth scenario", 7.8% by 2024 under the "0.5% growth scenario" and 9.8% under the "1.0% growth scenario". It is important to note that based upon the 2020 U.S. Census, Dracut will have a new target goal based upon the number of year-round housing units at that time.

To meet the State's requirements for developing a Housing Production Plan, the Town identified private and public parcels with the potential for future affordable housing development. Eight (8) privately-owned and three (3) publicly-owned sites were identified through this process. It is anticipated that between 229 and 260 new housing units could be developed on these eleven sites.

Within the *Housing Production Plan for 2020-2024*, Affordable Housing Goals and Strategies were outlined that received the support of the Dracut Board of Selectmen and Planning Board. The following Goals and Strategies are incorporated within the Housing chapter of the Master Plan to reflect the community support for affordable housing:

## **Housing Goals**

1. Provide a wide range of housing options so as to meet the housing needs of a diverse population, especially those below 80% of the area median income. Address the needs of first-time home buyers.
2. Create diverse rental units, in terms of types of units (duplexes vs. multi-family) and number of bedrooms (three or more), for Dracut residents.

3. Support the creation of workforce<sup>12</sup> housing units and broaden the range of potential home-buyers and tenants.
4. Develop rental and ownership options for senior citizens, disabled residents and veterans that allow them to live independently.
5. Maintain existing housing stock in good condition.
6. Encourage new housing development consistent with community character and identified needs.
7. Preserve and strengthen the town's residential neighborhoods, while maintaining the rural character of portions of the community.
8. Update the zoning bylaws, development review processes and permitting policies so they are clear and consistent.
9. Ensure that affordable housing development in Dracut adheres to the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles.
10. Coordinate the permitting work of Town boards and departments and the Dracut Housing Authority in order to achieve consistency in the interpretation and administration of affordable housing requirements.
11. Utilize the DHCD-approved Housing Production Plan as a management tool to develop new housing opportunities in meeting the Town's annual housing production goals.

## **Housing Strategies**

1. Be proactive in monitoring and maintaining existing affordable housing units.
2. Develop more affordable rental housing (less than 30% of annual income) with the increased availability of 3- and 4-bedroom units.
3. Document the specific needs of Dracut veterans and construct affordable veterans housing units that meet those needs. Work with organizations like the [Veterans Northeast Outreach Center](#) and the local Veteran's agent to obtain input on the specific housing needs of veterans in Dracut.
4. Consider Chapter 61, 61A and 61B properties for potential acquisition for both affordable housing uses and open space/agricultural uses in the future.
5. Work with State agencies and other stakeholders to develop group homes to provide supported, supervised living arrangements for citizens with mental and physical disorders.
6. Utilize the established Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership Committee to implement the DHCD-approved Housing Production Plan.
7. Establish a landlord partnership to monitor affordable housing stock.

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<sup>12</sup> Workforce housing is a term commonly used to describe "housing for the occupations needed in every community, including teachers, nurses, police officers, fire fighters and many other critical workers." This is typically defined as 80-120% AMI. *Source:* Center for Housing Policy, 2011 - <http://www.housingpolicy.org/>

8. Partner with Non-Profit/Philanthropic Groups to invest in housing units for those most in need.
9. Utilize the Dracut First Housing Partnership as the development arm of the Affordable Housing Partnership Committee to initiate new affordable housing development projects.

## **Policies, Programs and Services**

1. Evaluate and revise existing development regulations and guidelines for fairness and efficiency through the development of an Affordable Housing Permitting Guide to assist applicants in navigating the review process.
2. Utilize the Zoning Review Committee to review zoning changes that will provide for more affordable housing opportunities, such as special permits for multi-family and open space residential subdivision incentive, accessory apartments, assisted living facilities, retirement communities, etc. Work with the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Zoning Board of Appeals, Town Meeting and other town committees and boards to implement these zoning changes.
3. Develop an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw to encourage development of new housing that is affordable to low and moderate-income households. Model Inclusionary Housing Bylaws can be found at:  
[http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart growth toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf)
4. Continue to use Community Preservation Funds to support affordable housing development with a focus on the following programs and services:
  - Community education regarding affordable housing programs;
  - First-time home buyer's assistance program;
  - Rental assistance;
  - Renovation and sale of properties as affordable unit(s) from town tax lien properties acquired;
  - Purchase of property for use as an affordable housing development;
  - Provide betterment to donated buildings and/or land for use of affordable housing;
  - Partnership with private developers and public agencies for affordable housing initiatives that address the housing needs of the community.
5. Support legislative and/or regulatory reforms at the state level that recognize the efforts of communities like Dracut to proactively provide "workforce housing" to serve households at 80-120% of the area median income (AMI), in addition to current efforts supporting households earning below 80% of the AMI.
6. Adopt local selection preferences which will include existing Dracut residents and municipal employees. Developers of rental and homeownership units constructed without state or federal subsidies that count as "affordable units" for purposes of

Dracut's affordable housing inventory under Chapter 40B are permitted to adopt local selection preferences for up to 70% of the affordable units, if the preferences are consistent with local housing needs.

## **Education**

1. Provide affordable housing training and educational opportunities to local Board and Committee members and staff, including the Affordable Housing Partnership Committee. These training opportunities could include updates on current policies to support affordable housing (i.e., the Comprehensive Permit Guidelines) and any revisions to state law or regional opportunities. This will allow boards and committees to provide guidance to the development community so as to improve the quality of proposals and result in a more expedited permitting process. The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) could provide this training to the Town at no cost.
2. Increase public awareness of and support for affordable housing through increased outreach and public education.

## **Funding**

1. Pursue the purchase of units and provide a subsidized buy-down on the purchase price to qualified first-time homebuyers.
2. Develop local partnerships with private and non-profit developers to utilize the State's Local Initiative Program (LIP) as a means to develop "friendly 40B" development projects.
3. Research federal and state grant opportunities for the enhancement of affordable housing including: HUD's Housing for the Elderly (Section 202) Program, [Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation](#) (CEDAC) and [Neighborworks Capital](#) (NWC)

## **Regional Coordination**

1. Participate in a NMCOG-sponsored Regional Housing Committee to create a Regional Housing Plan for the Greater Lowell region.
2. Work with non-profit entities, such as the [Common Ground Development Corporation \(CGDC\)](#), a subsidiary of Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI), the Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA), and Habitat for Humanity to develop and manage affordable housing projects.
3. Collaborate with other communities to promote First-Time Homebuyer Program opportunities in the region and State to make existing homes more affordable. The Town can work with connecting households to resources available from CTI and CBA.

4. Research and promote Foreclosure Assistance Programs through the State's Emergency Homeowners Loan Program (EHL) or Community Teamwork, Inc. to help homeowners avoid foreclosures and maintain strong residential neighborhoods.

## PUBLIC INPUT

At the Dracut Master Plan Visioning Session II held on January 11, 2018, participants were asked to provide responses to a number of questions related to Land Use and Zoning, Economic Development and Housing. Respondents were able to address each area equally in their responses. Outlined below are the responses to the Housing questions:

**How is the private housing market functioning in Dracut? Are there opportunities for home ownership and rental housing? Has the increase in mortgage interest impacted housing sales? Have foreclosures increased at all?**

- Residential housing development has been increasing in the past 3-4 years. Work has resumed on several unfinished subdivisions that had been dormant during the recession in 2007. About 50-60 new single-family homes have been completed each year for the past few years. Most development has been in East Dracut.
- Finding full size lots for single-family homes is becoming difficult.
- Partly built developments where work has stopped detract from the area's character. Regulations are needed to address these.

**Are there an adequate number of multi-family or senior housing units in town? If not, where should they be located? What incentives should be provided, if any? Chapter 40R?**

- Land has been set aside for the Dracut Housing Authority to develop senior housing, but work has not started. Although an RFP was issued within the last year, the Dracut Housing Authority didn't move ahead on the submitted proposals. More affordable senior housing is still needed.
- There is a lack of multi-family units in town.
- What can be done to address vacant land with approved dormant subdivisions where undesirable trash and equipment has accumulated?
- Multi-family homes have been turned into condos that young families have been buying.
- Need to look at future housing demand and the age, size and other household demographics anticipated to reside in Dracut.
- Lakeview Avenue would be a good location for new housing.

- Many of Dracut's existing houses are in poor condition and are located on small lots. In many cases the lots should be consolidated so that new multifamily homes could be built on the new larger lots.
- Dracut has fewer school aged children than neighboring communities but has more families with children aged 0-4. It looks like new families are moving to Dracut to buy starter homes and then moving away when the children reach school age.
- The Council on Aging Director sees a need for smaller, affordable units, particularly for seniors with fixed-incomes. There is currently a long wait for senior housing. An estimate of 300 seniors on the waiting list was provided.
- How many houses for sale in Dracut are affordable?
- Dracut's schools have room for more students.
- More affordable family housing / starter homes should be created.

The results of the written survey for the Master Plan indicated that Dracut residents felt there was a need for more housing opportunities in the community, as indicated below:

**Question 3: Why do you choose to live in Dracut? - Cost of Housing (455 responses or 44.3%)**

**Question 4: Please indicate whether you would rate the following services, facilities, and characteristics, as they relate to Dracut, as excellent, good, fair or poor.**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unable to Score/ Unfamiliar	Total
Diversity of housing types	9.93% (80)	50.50% (407)	23.08% (186)	4.09% (33)	12.41% (100)	806
Housing affordability	9.18% (74)	49.01% (395)	27.92% (225)	7.69% (62)	6.20% (50)	806
Available housing options for seniors	8.53% (69)	15.70% (127)	16.69% (135)	12.24% (99)	46.85% (379)	809
Available housing options for young families	6.81% (55)	36.76% (297)	28.22% (228)	10.64% (86)	17.57% (142)	808

**Question 5: In your opinion, list three of the most critical issues facing Dracut over the next ten years.**

- Overdevelopment/too much growth/overpopulation – 141 responses
- Affordable senior housing/senior housing – 42 responses
- Housing affordability/lack of affordable housing – 40 responses

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Dracut should take advantage of the opportunities available to the community in diversifying the overall housing stock. Housing prices in Dracut are quite favorable, as compared to its neighbors in the Greater Lowell region. Opportunities for market-rate housing seem to be expanding, while the availability of assisted living facilities at Broadway Road and 1837 Bridge Street provide a new dimension for the community. The Town has also moved to address the housing needs of specific groups, particularly veterans, through the development of the Town Hall Annex into eight units of housing by the Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA). Yet, the Town has not addressed its overall need for affordable housing as outlined in the *Dracut Housing Production Plan for 2020-2024*. As has been shown in many communities, the diversity of housing options within a community increases private investment and economic development in the community.

In January 2014, the Town had been credited with 719 subsidized housing units or 6.4% of the housing stock. As of September 2018, the Town was credited by DHCD with 585 subsidized housing units or 5.06% of the housing stock. Several reasons have been identified for the decline in the number of subsidized housing units, including the comparable low cost of market-rate housing in the community. However, there still needs to be a concerted effort to utilize the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership, the Dracut First Housing Partnership and other non-profits, such as CBA and the Common Ground Development Corporation, Inc. (the non-profit development arm of Community Teamwork, Inc.), to generate more affordable units that address the housing needs of the elderly, young families and veterans. The recently updated Housing Production Plan (HPP) provides the necessary strategy to move Dracut closer to its 10% affordable housing goal. Achieving this goal will become more difficult given with the release of the 2020 U.S. Census data, as the town will have a higher year-round housing unit figure, thereby increasing the number of subsidized units that will be needed.

Two years ago, the Commonwealth announced its Housing Choice Initiative program administered by DHCD. This program represents a partnership between the State and local communities to encourage the production of more market-rate and affordable housing units to support a growing economy and provide new housing choices. The Housing Choice Initiative provides incentives, such as Housing Choice Capital Grants and priority access to capital funding programs at the state level, including MassWorks, Complete Streets, MassDOT capital projects and LAND and PARC grants. Designation of Housing Choice communities is similar to the Green Communities Act, whereby communities meet specific requirements and are designated by DHCD. Communities must have permitted either 5% (or 500 units) or 3% (300 units plus four of nine Best Practices) of its year-round housing units over a five-year period to be designated. Last year, Dracut received its designation as

a Housing Choice community, would enabling the Town to qualify for capital grants that could help address its overall infrastructure. This designation is valid for two years, after which the Town will need to reapply.

There are additional tools available to the Town, such as Chapter 40R, Inclusionary Zoning and “friendly” Chapter 40B developments, to increase the number of market-rate and affordable units in Dracut. Preliminary work has been conducted to examine five or six sites that might be conducive for Chapter 40R designation. Other communities, such as Reading, have used Chapter 40R designation to enhance mixed-use development projects adjacent to its commuter rail station adding market-rate housing within walking distance of the train station. The Navy Yard is one area that could be addressed through Chapter 40R and offer similar benefits.

Inclusionary zoning has provided communities with an opportunity to keep up with its affordable housing units by building upon market-rate development projects. “Friendly” Chapter 40B developments provide an opportunity for developers to work with the Board of Selectmen on housing development that creates affordable units, while respecting the neighborhood character. The Town should develop design guidelines for affordable housing that provide guidance to private developers as to what is acceptable from the perspective of scale, density and design elements. There may also be a need to change the current tax title disposition process so that appropriate parcels could be developed as affordable housing by the Dracut First Housing Partnership or Habitat for Humanity.

The Town should consider creating a Housing Trust to serve as the financial arm of the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership and work with developers to produce neighborhood friendly projects. Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds could be used initially to establish the Housing Trust, while funds from developers in lieu of affordable housing units could be utilized to increase available funds in the future. The Town of Westford actively uses its Affordable Housing Committee and Affordable Housing Trust to work with private and non-profit developers to create market-rate and affordable housing units. Stony Brook I and II are affordable housing projects developed by Common Ground Development Corporation, Inc. and the Westford Housing Authority that received active support from the Affordable Housing Committee and Affordable Housing Trust. Without this support, the projects would not have had the necessary subsidies to move forward. The Dracut Housing Authority should be encouraged to work with the Affordable Housing Trust once it is formed to determine how each entity’s resources could be maximized.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reactivate the Dracut Housing Affordable Partnership and work with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments to implement the *2020-2024 Dracut Housing Production Plan* (HPP).
- Use the DHCD-approved Housing Production Plan (HPP) as a management tool and develop new affordable housing opportunities to meet the Town's annual housing production goals.
- Establish a mechanism to monitor and maintain existing affordable housing units.
- Utilize the Dracut First Housing Corporation and non-profit developers, such as the Coalition for a Better Acre, Common Ground Development Corporation, Inc., and Habitat for Humanity, to develop local affordable housing development capacity.
- Maintain designation as a Housing Choice Community through continued housing production and apply for Housing Choice Capital and Technical Assistance Grants.
- Utilize state and local funds and other "tools", such as Chapter 40R, Inclusionary Zoning and "friendly" Chapter 40B developments, to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Develop design guidelines for affordable housing that provide guidance to nonprofit and for profit developers.
- Change the current tax title disposition process so that appropriate properties may be developed as affordable housing.
- Develop an Affordable Housing Trust to partner with the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership and work with developers to produce neighborhood-friendly projects.
- Finance the Affordable Housing Trust initially through Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and then use developer funds in lieu of affordable housing units to increase available funding for future affordable housing developments.
- Encourage the Dracut Housing Authority to work closely with the newly created Affordable Housing Trust to determine how each entity's resources could be maximized in creating affordable housing units.
- Access existing resources related to first-time homebuyer and foreclosure assistance programs.

# OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Open space is essential to the quality of life within Dracut and should be viewed as the “green infrastructure” that supports and links the built and natural environments.

Open space consists of a network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands and forests, parks, conservation lands, and working farms. It provides ecological, social, economic, and health benefits that can be described as follows:<sup>13</sup>

- **Ecological benefits:** Open space provides natural water filtration, drinking water protection, flood and erosion control, wildlife habitat, migration stopovers, and biodiversity. Biodiversity includes genetics, species, ecosystems and ecological processes.
- **Social benefits:** Open space contributes to residents' quality of life by providing opportunities for recreational, civic, social and educational interactions. It contributes to community identity and sense of place, by connecting residents to their natural and cultural heritage, and by linking neighborhoods to the larger community.
- **Economic benefits:** Open space is important for attracting and maintaining businesses in a community and a region. Proximity to open space often increases land values, and recreation and leisure activities can make significant economic contributions. In addition, natural processes such as water filtration are much less expensive than engineered alternatives such as water treatment plants.
- **Health benefits:** Access to parks, greenways and trails creates recreational opportunities and encourages a physically active lifestyle. Open space helps to ensure clean and safe water supplies and food production resources. It also mitigates air, water, and noise pollution, and the impacts of climate change.

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS

- Protect Dracut's public and private water supplies.
- Continue to acquire open space, as opportunities arise and resources allow.
- Connect Dracut's open space and recreation lands to enhance wildlife corridors, improve habitat areas and to create additional recreation opportunities.
- Provide for long-term sustainability of open space protection and recreation opportunities by identifying funding resources to meet needs.
- Increase access to Dracut's Open Space and Recreation lands and programs for people of all demographic groups.
- Promote a cooperative and regional approach to open space and recreation planning.

<sup>13</sup> American Planning Association, “Seven Principles of Green Infrastructure”.

Dracut's green infrastructure should be managed and enhanced on an ongoing basis in order to support natural systems, protect groundwater, minimize flooding, build community, and increase the well-being of residents. This section of the Master Plan provides an overview of the Town's lands of conservation and recreation interest, and articulates the needs of the community, based on input received during the public input and plan development processes.

## HISTORY OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLANNING IN DRACUT

Since completion of the 1996 Dracut Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), Dracut residents have become increasingly concerned about development pressures on the agricultural and semi-rural character of East Dracut. As a result, residents voted to accept and implement the Community Preservation Act. In addition, a local land trust was formed.

The OSRP was updated in 2002, and again in 2009 by the Community Preservation Committee, comprised of representatives of town boards and interested citizens, with technical assistance from the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG). For the 2009 Update, public input was solicited through a Visioning Session conducted on April 15, 2008, a general public meeting on October 7, 2008 to present the draft document, and a written survey distributed as part of the Recreation Department annual mailing and was also made available to citizens at both the Town Hall and the Town Library. Informational items were posted on the Town's website, and media coverage was provided via local cable television.

The 2002 Plan Update established six primary goals:

- Environmentally healthy water and wetland resources;
- Preservation of key open space, habitat, cultural and historic resources in all parts of town and rural character in East Dracut;
- Improved public awareness of open space;
- Efficient management, maintenance, and enhancement of open space and recreational areas;
- Trails and greenways to link open space and provide access; and
- Access to open space and recreation for all members of the community

The 2009 Plan Update followed the Massachusetts Department of Conservation Services (DCS) guidelines and format. The document inventoried open space and recreational

resources, assessed community needs, established goals and objectives and outlined a five year action plan. The 2009 Plan Update focused on five goals:

- Preserve the viability and vitality of the Town's agricultural enterprises;
- Make all recreational activities accessible to all members of the community;
- Increase the quality and quantity of recreation space and facilities;
- Development of land management and facilities and maintenance plans; and
- Environmentally healthy water and wetlands resources.

The development of the 2009 OSRP was undertaken as a community project by volunteers, with the aforementioned technical assistance from NMCOG. Representatives from several town departments provided their expertise, and input was also gathered through a written survey. The 2009 update stressed the importance of preserving open space, natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities. Toward this end, the Town continues its efforts to preserve the remaining natural areas that were so common in earlier days. Protecting farmland has been the focus of many land protection projects within Dracut, and will continue into the future.

Dracut has achieved many accomplishments since the 2009 Plan Update, including:

- Purchase of additional open space;
- Creation of a Dracut Open Space Guide;
- Adoption of a Right to Farm Bylaw in 2013;
- Creation of the Beaver Brook Farm Committee and purchase of the 24-acre Beaver Brook Farm in 2015;
- Approval in June 2019 of \$4.4 million in Community Preservation Act funds to rehabilitate playing fields and a splash pad at Veteran's Park, to install two synthetic turf fields, and renovate and resurface the resilient track at the Dracut Public Schools Daoulos Complex; and
- Designation as a Green Community in April 2019.

Dracut has continued to protect open space by working with State and non-profit partners, as well as with landowners. In addition, the Town worked with NMCOG to update the inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest in 2018, but additional work is needed to finalize this inventory. Since the 2009 Plan was produced, an additional thirteen (13) parcels totaling almost 158.26 acres have been protected, bringing the Town's total acreage of protected open space to over 1,165 acres.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

For purposes of the Master Plan, open space is defined as land that, for the most part, is free of structures. It is unclear exactly how much land has been preserved since the 2009 OSRP update, because a large number of parcels were not included in that inventory. These include public cemeteries, some public parks, school properties, Chapter 61 properties, undeveloped tax title properties, and other undeveloped and partially developed, town-owned land. Table 6.1 below, shows a total of approximately 2,092.85 acres within Dracut that are classified as open space, of which 1,165.67 acres are considered to be permanently protected. Permanently protected lands include state lands and municipal properties subject to Article 97, a conservation restriction or other deed restriction, as well as private properties subject to a conservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or a deed restriction. Unprotected lands of conservation and recreation interest include those that are held for open space, historic, or recreation purposes, but which are not permanently protected. Publicly-owned cemeteries, parcels that are held by the Dracut Water Supply District, and parcels under a Chapter 61, 61A or 61B agreement are considered to have limited protection.

**Table 6.1: 2019 Open Space Acreage by Ownership/Category**

Ownership/Category	Acreage
Commonwealth of Massachusetts*	551.27
Town of Dracut	24.36
Dracut Land Trust*	68.80
Dunstable Rural Land Trust*	19.77
Private with Conservation Restrictions*	215.67
Agricultural Preservation Restrictions*	285.80
Town of Dracut Water Supply District**	115.65
Parcels with Chapter 61, Chapter 61A and/or Chapter 61B**	143.64
Cemetery (Dracut, public)**	6.65
Town-owned land – Protection status to be determined	543.26
Town-owned land – Assumed Tax title	22.00
Town Owned Playing Fields and School Property (unknown protection status)***	36.32
Town Recreation land – Protection status to be determined	59.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,092.85</b>

\* Permanently protected

\*\* Limited Protection

\*\*\*Includes parcels with school buildings.

*Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory updated as of October 2018*

As part of the Master Plan process, the Town's inventory of lands of conservation and recreation interest was updated through an analysis of the Assessor's database, through updating of the 2009 OSRP inventory, and using input from Town staff and officials. The open space and recreation parcels are shown on Map 6.1 on the following page.

### PERMANENTLY PROTECTED OPEN SPACE

As previously described, permanently protected lands include state lands and municipal properties subject to Article 97, a conservation restriction or other deed restriction, as well as private properties subject to a conservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction or deed restriction. Protected open space provides a number of important benefits to the community, including water supply protection, flood prevention, reducing the impacts of climate change, preservation of natural resources and wildlife habitat, creation of recreational opportunities, and retention of rural character.

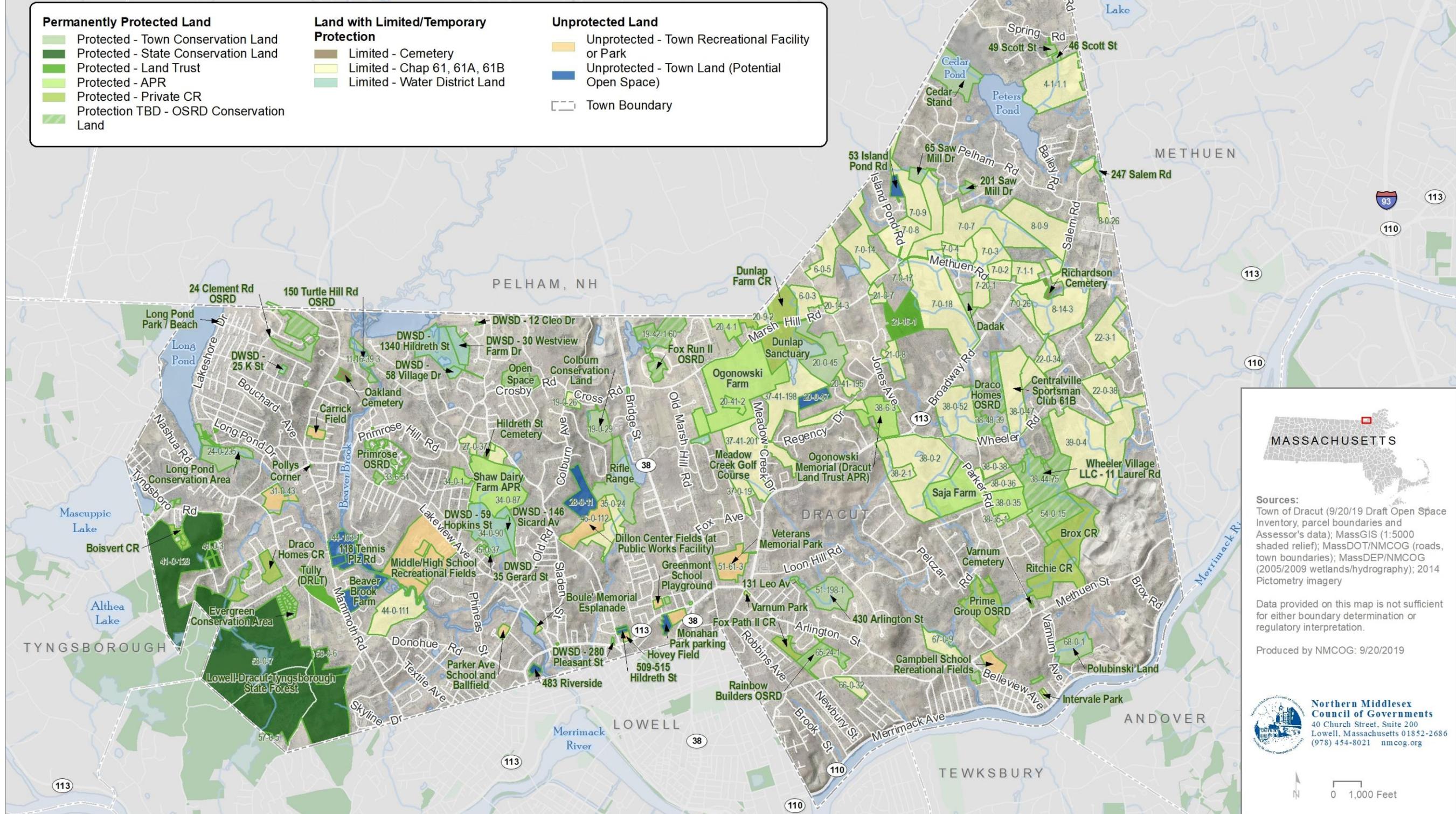
### TOWN-OWNED LANDS

The Town of Dracut holds 24.36 acres comprised of thirty-seven (37) parcels, as shown in Table 6.2 below. These parcels have been acquired through various means including by gift/donation, acquisition using Town budget appropriations, state grants, private funding, and by tax title. As these properties are not held by the Conservation Commission, they are not necessarily protected under Article 97 of the state constitution. Article 97 provides that land held for conservation and natural resource purposes may not be transferred, disposed of, or used for other municipal or private purposes without a majority vote of the Board of Selectmen, a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting, a two-thirds roll call vote of both Houses of the State Legislature, and the Governor's signature.

Nine (9) of the town-owned parcels have been identified as own Conservation Land and are believed to have been acquired via tax title. The protection of these 11.63 acres is assumed to be permanent, but should be confirmed based on the stated purpose expressed during the disposition process and the current use of the properties. In *Smith v. Westfield*, 478 Mass. 49 (2017), the Supreme Judicial Court considered whether Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution applied to a parcel of land originally acquired by the city through a tax taking. The Court held that the property was subject to Article 97 because the city, through its actions, clearly expressed its intent to protect the property permanently. This decision expands the Court's previous decision in *Mahajan v. Department of Environmental Protection*, 464 Mass 604, 615 (2013), and allows municipalities more opportunity to permanently protect land for Article 97 purposes.

## **Map 6.1: Dracut Open Space and Recreation Lands**

Dracut Open Space and Recreation Lands



**Table 6.2: Town-Owned Open Space Land**

Map-Block-Lot	Site Name	Location	Acreage
<b>44-0-146</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	62 Evergreen Road	0.37
<b>44-0-60</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	15 Evergreen Road	0.43
<b>44-0-61</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	21 Evergreen Road	0.41
<b>44-0-62</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	31 Evergreen Road	0.34
<b>44-0-63</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	41 Evergreen Road	0.35
<b>44-0-64</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	51 Evergreen Road	0.34
<b>44-0-65</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	61 Evergreen Road	0.34
<b>44-0-66</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	71 Evergreen Road	0.34
<b>44-0-146</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	62 Evergreen Road	0.37
<b>44-0-67</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	81 Evergreen Road	0.84
<b>44-0-68</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	91 Evergreen Road	0.69
<b>44-0-69</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	97 Evergreen Road	0.51
<b>44-0-70</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	101 Evergreen Road	0.34
<b>44-147-1</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	72 Evergreen Road	0.36
<b>44-148-1</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	82 Evergreen Road	0.41
<b>44-0-71</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	105 Evergreen Road	0.34
<b>44-00-72</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	109 Evergreen Road	0.64
<b>44-0-149</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	92 Evergreen Road	0.37
<b>44-0-6</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	42 Evergreen Road	0.51
<b>44-0-73</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	113 Evergreen Road	0.35
<b>44-0-74</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	117 Evergreen Road	0.34
<b>44-0-75</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	121 Evergreen Road	0.35
<b>44-0-59</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	24 Evergreen Road	0.38
<b>44-0-77</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	129 Evergreen Road	0.40
<b>44-0-76</b>	Evergreen Road Parcels	125 Evergreen Road	0.37
<b>Total Evergreen Road</b>			<b>10.51</b>
<b>2-0-61</b>	Scott Street Parcel	46 Scott Street	1.71
<b>24-0-19</b>	Long Drive Parcel	96 Long Drive	0.12
<b>44-0-7</b>	Forest Park Road Parcel	Off Forest Park Road	0.39
<b>3-22-1</b>	Town Land - Open Space	201 Saw Mill Drive	3.39
<b>24-0-17</b>	Town Land - Open Space	102 Long Drive	0.11
<b>16-0-68</b>	Town Land - Open Space	1459 Mammoth Road	0.26
<b>24-0-41</b>	Town Land - Open Space	119 Long Drive	0.11
<b>24-0-21</b>	Town Land - Open Space	86 Long Drive	0.29
<b>30-0-42</b>	Town Land - Open Space	21 Arch Street	0.07
<b>44-0-79</b>	Town Land - Open Space	42 Forest Park Road	0.38
<b>24-0-20</b>	Town Land - Open Space	92 Long Drive	0.12
<b>3-0-28</b>	Town Land - Open Space	65 Saw Mill Drive	6.90
<b>Total Other</b>			<b>13.85</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>24.36</b>

Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018

The Dracut Water Supply District manages 115.65 acres, and the Treasurer's Office has custody of 22 acres of properties taken in Tax Title. Other Town-owned lands that are unlikely to be developed in the future include the cemeteries (6.65 acres), parks and recreation areas (approximately 59.66 acres), and the Town-owned playing fields and school properties (36.32 acres). By far, most town-owned land is in the custody of the Board of Selectmen, comprising over 500 acres that are not protected.

## STATE LANDS

As shown in Table 6.3, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns nine (9) parcels of open space in Dracut, comprising 551.27 acres. These lands, part of the 1,140- acre Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest, are permanently protected, and controlled by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The mostly forested property includes ponds, vernal pools, and wetlands areas. The property includes six miles of trails for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling. Hunting is permitted in season.

**Table 6.3: State-Owned Open Space in Dracut**

Map-Block-Lot	Site Name	Location	Acreage
30-0-61	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest	280 Tyngsboro Road	0.08
41-0-3	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest	20 Highland Avenue	1.69
41-0-2	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest	25 Highland Avenue	1.27
41-0-20	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest	42 Highland Avenue	1.54
41-0-19	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest	45 Highland Avenue	1.82
58-0-6	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest	55 Gumpus Road	20.68
57-0-5	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest	Totman Road	1.19
41-0-128	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest	Tyngsboro Road	138.59
58-0-7	Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest	75 Gumpus Road	384.41
<b>Total</b>			<b>551.27</b>

*Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018*

## CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS (CR)

A Conservation Restriction is a voluntary and legally binding document through which a land owner agrees to limit the use of his or her property for the purpose of protecting the conservation value of the land. The land owner receives an immediate tax deduction, and the grantee, usually a non-profit or municipal entity, receives legal assurance that the land will not be developed. There are 17 privately-owned parcels that are partly or entirely subject to CRs, as outlined in Table 6.4. Collectively, these parcels total 215.67 acres.

**Table 6.4: Conservation Restrictions on Private Land in Dracut**

Map-Block-Lot	Site Name	Location	Acreage
40-7-7	62 Lakeview Terrace	62 Lakeview Terrace	1.06
40-10-6	72 Lakeview Terrace	72 Lakeview Terrace	0.98
40-5-4	81 Lakeview Terrace	81 Lakeview Terrace	0.93
40-9-5	82 Lakeview Terrace	82 Lakeview Terrace	1.11
20-0-43	473 Marsh Hill Road	473 Marsh Hill Road	50.51
40-5-2	61 Lakeview Terrace	61 Lakeview Terrace	0.69
55-6-1.1	1304 Methuen Street	1304 Methuen Street	49.18
39-0-3	1471 Methuen Street	1471 Methuen Street	44.35
41-106-15	66 Heritage Road	66 Heritage Road	2.13
20-9-1	Marsh Hill Road	Marsh Hill Road	4.50
20-9-3	430 Marsh Hill Road	430 Marsh Hill Road	26.00
40-5-1	51 Lakeview Terrace	51 Lakeview Terrace	0.92
41-106-31	56 Davis Road	56 Davis Road	8.99
51-172-15	31 Carle Drive	31 Carle Drive	3.21
41-106-30	60 Davis Road	60 Davis Road	11.93
65-0-172	11 Carle Drive	11 Carle Drive	8.07
40-9-5	82 Lakeview Terrace	82 Lakeview Terrace	1.11
		<b>Total</b>	<b>215.67</b>

Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018

## LAND TRUST PARCELS

As shown in Table 6.5 below, the Dracut Land Trust, Incorporated (DLTI) owns two (2) parcels in Dracut totaling 68.80 acres. The mission of the DLTI is to “protect and preserve our remaining open space and farmland by helping property owners establish conservation restrictions for their properties”. The larger of the two DLTI properties is the Smith-Healy Farm, acquired in 2001. One-third of this parcel is used for the production of vegetables and flowers by farmers with the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project; the rest is wooded, with a power line right-of-way running through it. The second DLTI property is the Ogonowski Memorial Field, named for local land preservation activist, John Ogonowski. Mr. Ogonowski helped to form the DLTI and worked to protect this parcel, which was slated for a roadway and housing, as a part of the Meadow Creek Residential Golf Course Development in 1998. Mr. Ogonowski, an American Airlines pilot, sadly perished in the events of September 11, 2001.

The Dunstable Rural Land Trust (DRLT) owns one (1) parcel totaling 19.77 acres within Dracut. This parcel, an agricultural field, abuts Beaver Brook Farm. According to the Dunstable Rural Land Trust, this parcel is “one of the most treasured vistas in all of Dracut”. It was part of the estate of George B. Richardson, and was originally part of a much larger

farm owned by Justus Richardson, which extended from Nashua Road, across Beaver Brook, to Lakeview Avenue.

**Table 6.5: Dracut Lands Held by Land Trusts**

Map-Block-Lot	Site Name	Location	Owner	Acreage
21-16-1	Smith-Healy Farm	30 Wildlife Way	Dracut Land Trust	35.00
38-6-3	The Ogonowski Memorial Field	680 Broadway Road	Dracut Land Trust	33.80
<b>Total Dracut Land Trust</b>			<b>68.80</b>	
44-0-42	George B. Richardson Hay Field	51 Nashua Road	Dunstable Rural Land Trust	19.77
<b>Total Dunstable Rural Land Trust</b>			<b>19.77</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>88.57</b>	

*Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018*

## AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION RESTRICTIONS

High real estate values have increased pressure to develop what remains of agricultural lands in Dracut and in neighboring communities. These lands are generally clear of forest and have topography well suited to a variety of uses. Furthermore, while communities have a right of first refusal under existing Chapter 61 programs, they frequently lack the funds to purchase large tracts of valuable open space. Often the result is that farmlands are converted into residential subdivisions at the expense of open space, local agricultural production and community character.

As discussed in the Land Use chapter, agricultural land, which has decreased approximately 47.5% since 1971, now accounts for only 9.3% of the town's total land area. The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program is designed to protect productive agricultural lands by establishing permanent deed restrictions, thereby protecting them from any use that might diminish the area's agricultural potential. These deed restrictions are purchased with state funds that can be matched by municipal and federal funding.

In Massachusetts, the APR Program is a voluntary program intended to offer a non-development alternative to farmers and other owners of "prime" and "state important" agricultural land who are faced with a decision regarding future use and disposition of their farms. Towards this end, the program offers to pay farmland owners the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of their farmland, in exchange for a permanent deed restriction that precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability. As shown in Table 6.6 on the following page, 285.80 acres of land within Dracut have been protected through the APR program.

**Table 6.6: Agricultural Preservation Restrictions in Dracut**

Map-Block-Lot	Site Name	Location	Acreage
20-41-1	Ogonowski Farm	315 Marsh Hill Road	118.73
34-0-1, 34-0-87, 20-4-1	Shaw Farm and Dairy (3 parcels)	204 and 211 New Boston Road and 342 Marsh Hill Road	82.67
38-0-3	Saja Farm	403 Parker Road	56
38-0-35	Farmer Dave's	305 Parker Road	28.40
		<b>Total</b>	<b>285.80</b>

Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018

## UNPROTECTED LANDS, LANDS WITH LIMITED PROTECTION, AND LANDS WITH UNKNOWN PROTECTION

Unprotected and limited protection lands include public lands held as open space, cemeteries, schools, parks, or recreation land without permanent protection, as well as private parcels with limited or no restrictions on development. Limited protection open space includes land covered by revocable restrictions or a change in use. A farm that is under a Chapter 61A agreement is an example of temporarily protected open space. Similarly, school athletic fields or other open space on school grounds could be converted to another use. As noted above, there are multiple town-owned properties with unknown protection.

## SCHOOL LANDS AND PLAYING FIELDS

There are six (6) parcels, totaling 36.32 acres of school property and playing fields that are not permanently protected, as shown in Table 6.7, including land with school buildings and other structures. The largest parcels are the Dracut High School/Middle School/Englesby Elementary School Complex property with 70.20 acres, of which 17.18 are considered "open space". A portion of the Public Works property on Hildreth Street includes a soccer field and two baseball fields. Additional playing fields located within Town parks are included in Table 6.10.

**Table 6.7: School Lands and Playing Fields in Dracut**

Map-Block-Lot	Site Name	Location	Acreage
48-76-2	77 Parker Avenue	Parker Avenue School	3.35
67-0-104	1021 Methuen Street	Campbell School	11.00
44-0-122	1624 Lakeview Avenue	Dracut High School/Middle School/Englesby Elementary	17.18
50-0-125	88 Spring Park Avenue	Greenmont School	2.21
25-0-61	2063 Lakeview Avenue	Collinsville School	1.83
68-0-48	Intervale Park/Field	30 Intervale Avenue	0.75
		<b>Total</b>	<b>36.32</b>

Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018

## WATER SUPPLY LANDS

Town-owned land managed by the Dracut Water Supply District is protected from development as long as the associated water supply is in use. It is important to note, however, that development of facilities related to water treatment, distribution and maintenance are allowed on these parcels, and should a drinking water source be decommissioned, the land could be sold and developed. There are fourteen (14) parcels managed by the Water Division, as shown in Table 6.8 on the following page. These properties are protected by the requirements of Article 97 for as long as the properties are associated with the Town's drinking water supply.

**Table 6.8: Water Supply Lands in Dracut**

Map-Block-Lot	Location	Acreage
18-108-1	58 Village Drive	3.41
45-0-64	146 Sicard Avenue	9.98
13-5-9	12 Cleo Drive	0.59
18-0-1	1340 Hildreth Street	38.45
18-5-9	30 Westview Farm Drive	15.45
16-0-10	35 Passaconaway Drive	0.39
45-0-21	54 Hopkins Street	0.19
29-0-50	32 Proprietors Road	3.29
34-0-90	59 Hopkins Street	40.06
45-0-22	47 Hopkins Street	0.23
45-0-37	54 Hopkins Street	1.21
45-0-38	35 Gerard Street	0.54
63-0-7	280 Pleasant Street	0.49
<b>Total</b>		<b>115.65</b>

## CEMETERIES

There are six (6) cemeteries in Dracut totaling 6.65 acre, as shown in Table 9 below. These burial grounds include Bailey Cemetery, Richardson Cemetery, Varnum Cemetery, New Boston Cemetery, Oakland Cemetery, and Oak Grove Cemeteries. Dracut also maintains two cemeteries in Lowell, MA (Hildreth Cemetery and Hamblett Cemetery). Burial grounds and cemeteries are important public spaces that link us with our past. Dracut's cemeteries contain gravestones, monuments, memorials and tombs that commemorate the lives of many generations of residents, including founding members of the community, soldiers from the Revolutionary War and Civil War, veterans from other wars and conflicts, settlers, farmers and immigrants who helped build the community and the nation. As open space becomes developed in the future, these places will remain as a haven for quiet and reflection.

### 6.9: Dracut Cemeteries

Map-Block-Lot	Cemetery	Location	Acreage
27-0-105-1	New Boston Cemetery	Matty's Way	0.77
8-0-13	Richardson Cemetery	1343 Broadway Road	1.55
8-0-27	Bailey Cemetery	1339 Broadway Road	0.62
16-0-67	Oak Grove Cemetery	1463 Mammoth Road	0.82
16-0-66	Oakland Cemetery	1475 Mammoth Road	2.17
54-0-18	Varnum Cemetery	71 Parker Road	0.72
<b>Total</b>			<b>6.65</b>

Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018

### OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LANDS WITH UNPROTECTED OR UNKNOWN STATUS

As shown in Table 6.10 below, there are two hundred and nine (209) Town-owned, privately owned properties, and properties owned by the City of Lowell (totaling 707.23 acres), that are either unprotected or for which the protection status is unknown at this time. Of this land, the Town owns 580.03 acres, while an additional 123.78 acres are privately held.

**Table 6.10: Other Public and Private Lands with Unprotected or Unknown Status**

Map-Block-Lot	Address	Owner	Acreage
19-0-29	102 Cross Road (Dracut Conservation Land/Historical Area)	Town Of Dracut	19.01
20-0-47	384 Proprietors Road	Town Of Dracut	10.00
4-0-11	247 Salem Road	Town Of Dracut	4.00
2-19-9	12 Hidden Road	Town Of Dracut	1.45
2-24-2.6	32 Harley Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.15
2-0-37	56 Spring Road	Town Of Dracut	3.34
2-22-1	17 Harley Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.64
3-0-1	661 Pelham Road	Town Of Dracut	35.00
2-24-2	18 Harley Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.40
3-54-8	13 Sophia Drive	Town Of Dracut	1.06
2-24-3	12 Natures Wqy	Town Of Dracut	0.34
5-0-49	61 Aline Street	Town Of Dracut	0.24
5-0-20	26 Gilbert Street	Town Of Dracut	0.17
4-0-59	242 Pelham Road	Town Of Dracut	8.66
30-0-68	20 Swan Street	Town Of Dracut	0.79
30-0-67	203 Tyngsboro Road	Town Of Dracut	0.95
30-0-65	60 Stewart Street	Town Of Dracut	6.00
5-0-10	52 Jane Street	Town Of Dracut	0.04
21-10-7.3	9 Cider Lane	Town Of Dracut	0.24
25-0-144	23 Edward Street	Town Of Dracut	0.13
24-0-16	106 Long Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.10
26-9-1	111 Hearthstone Ln	Town Of Dracut	0.84
5-0-11	53 Jane Street	Town Of Dracut	0.32

Map-Block-Lot	Address	Owner	Acreage
24-16-2	114 Long Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.18
24-16-1	110 Long Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.10
37-41-204	2 Meadow Creek Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.98
28-8-8.5	15 Woodberry Way	Town Of Dracut	0.36
72-0-108	537 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.01
72-0-107	531 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.04
5-0-143	15 Sylvia Street	Town Of Dracut	0.08
7-0-56	53 Island Pond Road	Town Of Dracut	6.22
27-47-1	15 Matty's Way	Town Of Dracut	0.55
30-0-94	31 Beacon Street	Town Of Dracut	0.23
68-0-1	103 Varnum Avenue	Town Of Dracut	23.35
25-0-145	25 Howe Street	Town Of Dracut	0.10
37-41-188	8 Cedar Creek Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.25
50-0-8	515 Hildreth Street	Town Of Dracut	0.99
49-0-73	61 Hillside Road	Town Of Dracut	0.32
8-0-28	1337 Broadway Road	Town Of Dracut	0.16
8-15-4.4	6 Bartlett Court	Town Of Dracut	0.21
8-15-5.1	1529 Broadway Road	Town Of Dracut	0.10
13-1-2	12 Brianna Way	Town Of Dracut	1.47
20-0-45	545 Marsh Hill Road	Town Of Dracut	44.64
10-0-4	212 Lakeshore Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.27
10-0-23	50 Third Street	Town Of Dracut	0.07
7-25-4	24 Methuen Road	Town Of Dracut	0.03
10-0-63	202 Lakeshore Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.56
20-59-6	292 Jones Avenue	Town Of Dracut	3.25
20-59-15	Rear Jones Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.71
11-1-51	33 Clement Road	Town Of Dracut	0.82
10-0-173	3 Eighth Street	Town Of Dracut	0.05
10-0-174	1 Eighth Street	Town Of Dracut	0.07
20-59-17	East Richardson Road	Town Of Dracut	0.10
11-1-48	1500 Mammoth Road	Town Of Dracut	1.67
11-16-39.3	150 Turtle Hill Road	Town Of Dracut	12.20
17-8-26	77 Kings Field Road	Town Of Dracut	2.39
15-0-30	101 B Street	Town Of Dracut	0.34
25-0-223	2032 Lakeview Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.13
52-0-229	28 Cheever Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.19
52-0-44	30 Griggs Street	Town Of Dracut	0.22
72-0-109	541 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.04
72-0-110	549 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.18
73-0-63	675 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	2.26
20-41-196	14 Brentwood Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.26
73-0-68	793 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.06
68-0-54	109 Bellevue Avenue	Town Of Dracut	6.13
41-0-1	2 McFarlin Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.41
21-10-7.5	8 Cider Lane	Town Of Dracut	0.11

Map-Block-Lot	Address	Owner	Acreage
25-243-5	8 Daybreak Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.98
37-52-2.8	20 Burns Hill Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.17
28-1-14	20 Apple Blossom Drive	Town Of Dracut	1.51
37-41-189	21 Regency Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.42
37-52-2.7	60 Burns Hill Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.35
24-0-232	8 Shore Drive	Town Of Dracut	2.20
37-41-191	3 Schiripo Way	Town Of Dracut	0.93
27-1-30	109 Sue Ann Drive	Town Of Dracut	2.30
24-0-52	41 Hillside Terrace	Town Of Dracut	0.20
37-41-202	14 Regency Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.98
24-0-51	33 Hillside Terrace	Town Of Dracut	0.17
37-41-190	35 Regency Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.52
24-13-1	136 Long Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.11
24-13-3	128 Long Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.11
39-7-5	341 Wheeler Street	Town Of Dracut	1.12
25-0-132	33 Timothy Street	Town Of Dracut	0.10
25-0-134	41 Timothy Street	Town Of Dracut	0.06
24-35-5	13 Hillside Terrace	Town Of Dracut	0.11
24-0-15	120 Long Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.11
24-0-233	4 Shore Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.29
29-0-2	Chuck Drive	Town Of Dracut	54.14
25-0-136	24 Edward Street	Town Of Dracut	0.13
37-41-197	10 Regency Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.47
26-0-63	10 Blossom Lane	Town Of Dracut	0.26
24-21-1	84 Long Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.11
24-0-234	2 Shore Drive	Town Of Dracut	1.74
25-0-193	5 Myron Street	Town Of Dracut	0.11
24-0-235	Lond Drive Rear	Town Of Dracut	22.00
31-0-43	2166 Lakeview Avenue	Town Of Dracut	14.93
30-0-66	219 Tyngsboro Road	Town Of Dracut	0.54
30-65-7	59 Wood Street	Town Of Dracut	0.34
28-1-42	36 Cherrywood Drive	Town Of Dracut	1.74
30-0-70	26 Hazel Street	Town Of Dracut	0.50
28-0-11	101 Colburn Avenue	Town Of Dracut	25.05
31-0-66	39 Park Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.44
31-0-95	42 Glen Avenue	Town Of Dracut	1.26
30-0-74	28 Albion Street	Town Of Dracut	0.55
31-0-72	33 Park Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.15
31-0-99	1 Fels Street	Town Of Dracut	0.43
44-229-6.25	118 Tennis Plaza Road	Town Of Dracut	7.47
32-25-4	1024 Mammoth Road	Town Of Dracut	0.86
30-0-102	57 Willowdale Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.05
47-0-86	72 Ontario Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.55
47-0-96	73 Ontario Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.50
44-103-1	951 Mammoth Road	Town Of Dracut	15.00

Map-Block-Lot	Address	Owner	Acreage
54-11-1.9	10 Presidential Circle	Town Of Dracut	1.06
44-103-4	Lafond Ln Rear	Town Of Dracut	6.63
41-0-106	72 Davis Road	Town Of Dracut	0.46
51-0-77	110 Loon Hill Road	Town Of Dracut	5.01
44-103-2	951 Mammoth Road	Town Of Dracut	3.67
47-0-87	54 Ontario Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.55
47-0-2	51 Wisteria Road	Town Of Dracut	3.80
44-0-124	Lakeview Avenue	Town Of Dracut	8.56
45-0-120	1410 Lakeview Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.12
47-0-3	21 Wisteria Road	Town Of Dracut	1.30
44-0-106	761 Mammoth Road (Beaver Brook Farm)	Town Of Dracut	23.64
47-0-98	53 Ontario Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.51
46-115-1.6	10 Dylan Drive	Town Of Dracut	5.00
45-0-59	1355 Lakeview Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.04
51-198-1	430 Arlington Street	Town Of Dracut	32.38
41-106-13	60 Heritage Road	Town Of Dracut	0.62
52-0-2	26 Champlain Street	Town Of Dracut	0.36
52-0-174	42 Mailloux Terrace	Town Of Dracut	0.22
24-13-3	128 Long Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.11
69-0-11	170 Jackson Street	Town Of Dracut	1.04
52-0-3	10 Champlain Street	Town Of Dracut	0.22
52-0-4	50 Arlington Street	Town Of Dracut	0.23
48-0-116	54 Cass Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.08
48-0-65	25 Parker Avenue	Town Of Dracut	6.75
68-23-3	9 Katies Way	Town Of Dracut	0.30
50-0-9	509 Hildreth Street	Town Of Dracut	1.27
7-11-2.5	48 Trinity Way	Town Of Dracut	0.39
68-0-74	901 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	1.48
50-0-175	467 Pleasant Street	Town Of Dracut	3.91
5-0-106	11 Sylvia Street	Town Of Dracut	0.08
48-0-63	172 Phineas Street	Town Of Dracut	0.46
47-0-95	99 Ontario Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.86
67-0-105	1051 Methuen Street	Town Of Dracut	3.17
67-0-83	41 Kensington Street	Town Of Dracut	2.26
67-0-77	945 Methuen Street	Town Of Dracut	4.03
59-95-4	86 Homefield Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.14
64-0-14	350 Methuen Street	Town Of Dracut	2.72
67-0-99	21 Kenmore Street	Town Of Dracut	0.35
67-0-22	94 Kilby Street	Town Of Dracut	0.09
67-0-108	16 Kearsarge Street	Town Of Dracut	0.34
68-0-48	30 Intervale Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.75
71-0-21	326 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	1.06
67-0-94	125 Leavitt Street	Town Of Dracut	0.13
68-0-49	31 Congress Street	Town Of Dracut	0.75

Map-Block-Lot	Address	Owner	Acreage
69-0-13	1093 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	1.16
69-0-15	1145 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	3.29
71-23-85	290 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.77
72-0-97	465 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.12
72-0-98	471 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.06
72-0-104	511 Merrimack Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.06
71-23-83	40 Roosevelt Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.38
47-0-97	65 Ontario Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.08
70-17-1	71 View Street	Town Of Dracut	0.23
31-0-57	32 Glen Avenue	Town Of Dracut	0.29
8-6-7	6 Rocky Road	Town Of Dracut	0.66
54-15-59	3 Cart Path Road	Town Of Dracut	0.42
15-11-1	88 A Street	Town Of Dracut	0.17
26-0-66	37 Hearthstone Lane	Town Of Dracut	0.23
54-15-54		Town Of Dracut	0.85
18-0-38	1267 Hildreth Street	Town Of Dracut	2.43
19-32-1	1920 Bridge Street	Town Of Dracut	0.59
11-1-49	24 Clement Road	Town Of Dracut	10.30
22-37-25	24 Wilshire Circle	Town Of Dracut	0.92
23-0-11	34 Redgate Road	Town Of Dracut	2.47
54-15-53	94 Cart Path Road	Town Of Dracut	0.87
7-0-19	200 Methuen Road	Town Of Dracut	6.90
55-6-13	13 Farm Gate Road	Town Of Dracut	1.00
49-0-36	1196 Lakeview Avenue	Town Of Dracut	1.00
62-52-1	130 Pleasant Street	Town Of Dracut	0.19
37-41-193	55 Regency Drive	Town Of Dracut	0.70
20-41-194		Town Of Dracut	1.12
20-14-2	650 Marsh Hill Road	Town Of Dracut	1.00
5-0-136	32 Elliot Street	Town Of Dracut	0.33
51-0-90	131 Leo Avenue	Town Of Dracut	1.63
51-0-37	85 Ansonia Street	Town Of Dracut	0.94
62-0-97	45 Book Street	Town Of Dracut	1.50
7-19-22	95 Dadak Drive	Town Of Dracut	1.36
21-16-1.11	11 Smith Farm Way	Town Of Dracut	1.03
62-0-80	483 Riverside Street	Town Of Dracut	2.48
		Town Of Dracut Land - DPW Lot	
46-0-112	833 Hildreth Street	Includes Dillion Center Fields	36.77
20-59-16	0 East Richardson Road	Town Of Dracut	0.04
<b>Town-Owned</b>			<b>580.03</b>
38-0-47	308 Wheeler Road	Centerville Sportmen's Club	50.63
70-0-40	25 Fox Street	Lowell Municipal Land	0.76
63-0-70		Lowell Municipal Land - Ball Park	1.29
32-61-1	1145 Mammoth Road	Lyle Collman, III	0.29
37-41-201	20 Meadow Creek Drive	Four Oaks Real Estate Holdings, LLC	61.85

Map-Block-Lot	Address	Owner	Acreage
4-12-4		Carrie Garau	1.74
10-0-59	21 Richardson Avenue	Lechanteclerc Inc -Snowshoe Club	0.67
10-0-61	15 Eighth Street	Lechanteclerc Inc	0.38
4-12-3		P. Catalano Constuction, LLC	1.30
4-12-1		P. Catalano Constuction, LLC	2.12
34-87-1	1050 Hildreth Street	John P. Plourde	1.34
24-0-18	98 Long Drive	Robert M. Pratt	0.11
4-12-2		Michael T Williams	1.30
<b>Private</b>			<b>123.78</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>703.81</b>

Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018

## CHAPTER 61, 61A AND 61B PROPERTIES

Under Chapters 61, 61A and 61B of the Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.), a land owner who has ten (10) contiguous acres being actively used as forest (Chapter 61), or five (5) contiguous acres in active agriculture (Chapter 61A), or five (5) contiguous acres of open space/recreational land (Chapter 61B), is entitled to certain local tax abatements. These abatements are given in exchange for the property owner retaining the land in its current use as agriculture, forest, recreation or open space. The landowner needs to exclude their residence, other structures, and any land used in connection with those buildings. The structures and excluded land continue to be taxed at the full assessment. Should the current landowner decide to sell or develop property covered under these programs, the Town of Dracut will have an opportunity to exercise its right-of-first-refusal, or may alternatively elect to assign this right to a non-profit conservation organization or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Table 6.11 lists the parcels classified under Chapters 61, 61A and 61B at this time.

**Table 6.11: Chapter 61, 61A and 61B Parcels**

Map-Block-Lot	Parcel location	Owner	Acreage
<b>Chapter 61</b>			
7-0-14	Antoinette Brox Nominee Trust	461 Methuen Road	41.04
<b>Total Chapter 61</b>			<b>41.04</b>
<b>Ch. 61A</b>			
7-0-26	Peter Brox	1211 Broadway Road	10.00
7-1-1	Kalil Brox	1276 Broadway Road	12.00
8-14-3	John F. Brox	1363 Broadway Road	28.08
8-0-10	Robert A. Brox	1374 Broadway Road	5.00
38-2-1	Theresa D. Ogonowski, Trustee	713 Broadway Road	14.00
19-0-26	Raymond Paradis	331 Colburn Avenue	5.00
44-0-111	David R.Charbonneau	343 Donohue Road	42.00
37-0-19	John B. Cutrumbes	238 Fox Avenue	12.00

Map-Block-Lot	Parcel location	Owner	Acreage
27-0-105	Cmk Ventures, LLC	1137 Hildreth Street	6.02
27-105-1	Cmk Ventures, LLC	1148 Hildreth Street	0.92
7-0-13	Francis J. Kerepka	6 Island Pond Road	13.11
7-0-9	Francis J. Kerepka Jr	37 Island Pond Road Rear	37.00
21-0-8	Mark R. Corey	215 Jones Avenue	17.34
21-0-7	Isabella R. Greene	405 Jones Avenue	6.60
20-9-2	Helen L. Dunlap	430 Marsh Hill Road	6.30
20-14-3	Linda M. Dawson & David A. Dawson, Trustees	600 Marsh Hill Road	5.00
7-0-3	George M. Richardson Trustee	119 Methuen Road	35.00
7-20-1	George M. Richardson Trustee	120 Methuen Road	15.08
7-4-1	Eleanor R. Monroe	179 Methuen Road	9.81
7-4-3	Gilbert Richardson	191 Methuen Road	6.72
7-0-4	Russell D. Bedell & Mary R. Bedell, Trustees	205 Methuen Road	15.50
7-0-18	Albert S. Ogonowski, Trustee	260 Methuen Road	101.00
7-0-6	Albert S. Ogonowski, Trustee	267 Methuen Road	5.00
7-0-7	Janet P. Richardson & Gilbert C. Richardson, Trustees	333 Methuen Road	34.89
7-0-17	Francis J. Kerepka	370 Methuen Road	22.00
7-0-8	Francis J. Kerepka	379 Methuen Road	18.00
7-0-2	Francis J. Kerepka	93 Methuen Road	53.00
66-0-32	Q.E.I., Inc.	583 Methuen Street	8.00
67-0-9	Wasylak Farm, LLC	946 Methuen Street	19.00
27-0-37	Irene Adamczyk	315 New Boston Road	8.00
38-0-51	Caroline B. Zuk, Trustee	100 Old Parker Road	1.60
38-0-38	John W. Niemaszyk	106 Old Parker Road	7.00
38-35-1	David W. Dumaresq	285 Parker Road	3.52
6-0-3	Cathy Richardson	316 Richardson Road	18.97
6-0-5	Deborah Moylan	371 Richardson Road	22.72
8-0-9	Kalil Brox	200 Salem Road	60.00
4-0-6	John Snapausky	290 Salem Road	6.41
4-1-1.1	James R. Cieslik	600 Salem Road	75.00
38-0-52	Edward J. Zanni	110 Wheeler Road	51.00
22-0-35	Carl Monte, Jr.	470 Wheeler Road	17.00
39-0-4	Dana V. Taplin	489 Wheeler Road	95.45
22-0-34	Donald A. Couture	524 Wheeler Road	16.28
22-0-38	Sandra J. Walor, Trustee	615 Wheeler Road	27.80
22-3-1	Barbara A. Leczynski	666 Wheeler Road	47.00
<b>Total Chapter 61A</b>			<b>1,021.12</b>
<b>Ch. 61B</b>			
38-0-2	Theresa D. Ogonowski, Trustee	713 Broadway Road	87.00
35-0-24	Daniel E. Perlack, Trustee	Hildreth St Rear	9.03
37-41-199	Four Oaks Real Estate Holdings, LLC	41 Meadow Creek Drive	12.13

Map-Block-Lot	Parcel location	Owner	Acreage
37-41-198	Four Oaks Real Estate Holdings, LLC	91 Meadow Creek Drive	68.52
38-0-36	Maria A. Stuart	438 Parker Road	11.00
37-41-192	Four Oaks Real Estate Holdings, LLC	51 Regency Drive	5.13
20-41-195	Four Oaks Real Estate Holdings, LLC	60 Regency Drive	8.96
46-118-32	Daniel E. Perlack, Trustee	63 Tremwood Road	14.50
8-0-26	Methuen Rod & Gun Club	368 Tyler Street	8.00
37-41-201	Four Oaks Real Estate Holdings, LLC	1/5 Clubhouse Lane	61.15
38-0-47	Centerville Sportmen's Club	308 Wheeler Road	49.63
46-0-105	Daniel E. Perlack, Trustee	36 Moore Avenue	0.31
<b>Total Chapter 61B</b>			<b>335.36</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,397.52</b>

Source: Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018

Dracut currently has 1,397.52 acres of private land enrolled in the Chapter 61, 61A and 61B tax abatement programs. A total of 1,021.12 acres of this land is in agricultural use and is enrolled in the Chapter 61A program. Forty-one acres is in active forestry use and enrolled in the Chapter 61 program, and 335.36 acres is recreational land enrolled in the Chapter 61B program.

A landowner who has his property classified under Chapter 61, 61A or 61B, must notify the Chief Elected Official (Board of Selectmen Chairman), the Board of Assessors, the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, and the State Forester, when all or a portion of the land is being sold or converted to a disqualifying use. Unfortunately, towns in high growth areas have found that when a strong housing market drives up the value of land, farm and forest landowners have little incentive to make permanent fixed investments that might increase the productivity of traditional rural land uses but add no market value for potential future development. For this reason, Chapter 61 and Chapter 61A land is particularly vulnerable to development. DCR has a very informative publication on the Chapter 61 programs that can be accessed online at:

<http://masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.net/files/Ch-61-Web.pdf>

## RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Of the 759 respondents to the Community Survey undertaken for the Master Plan Update, 88.5% of residents stated that they favored expanding recreation programs for residents. The 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan included five main goals, of which two related to recreation:

- Make all recreational activities accessible to all members of the community; and
- Increase quality and quantity of recreation space and facilities.

Most of Dracut's outdoor recreation areas are owned and maintained by the Town, the State, and local land trusts. Dracut's municipal conservation properties are open for passive recreation for the enjoyment of all, and there are many opportunities within Dracut for hiking, bicycling, and other trail-related activities, as well as swimming, fishing, and boating.

## RECREATION PATHS AND TRAILS

Dracut has access to an extensive network of trails for pedestrians and mountain bikers in the Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest. Users need to be aware that hunting is permitted in season below. Additional trails, as listed in the "Dracut Open Space Guide", include:

### LONG POND TRAIL

Along the southeast shore of Long Pond is an approximately 30-acre parcel of woodlands and wetlands. The site includes several hundred feet of lakeshore with many informal trails bisecting the parcel and wetlands on the southern portion of the property. There are many opportunities for bird watching at this spot. The parcel may be accessed by canoe from the lake, or at the conservation parcel on Long Drive.

### DUNLAP SANCTUARY TRAIL

This sanctuary covers 85 acres and is located on Marsh Hill Road. The trail is a relatively easy one-mile hike over a couple of small hills. It passes beside a beaver dam and loops along the shore of the 10-acre Big Pond. There are several benches along the trail on which to rest and enjoy nature. This trail was created by local boy scouts as an Eagle Scout project in 1996 and is called Marjorie's Way in memory of the previous landowner, Marjorie Dunlap. Residents are able to enjoy this property courtesy of the Dunlap family who donated the development rights for the parcel to the Town. Parking is available on Marsh Hill Road.

### EAST RICHARDSON PRESERVE TRAILS

The East Richardson Preserve is the first piece of property purchased by the Town for the sole purpose of preservation and hiking trails. There are two trails, including the Founders' Way Trail, with benches constructed by boy scouts as Eagle Scout projects. The Preserve is made up of hilly, forested terrain, with some small streams. Parking is at the south end of East Richardson Road.

## NICKEL MINE CONSERVATION TRAIL

This 23-plus acre property borders Brox Sand and Gravel, Varnum Avenue, and Jackson Street. It consists of open woodlands and wetlands along the Nickel Mine Brook, which bisects the property. Within the adjacent woods, there is a small one-acre parcel with two historic foundations. Access is via a trail from Varnum Avenue with limited roadside parking.

## DRACUT LAND TRUST TRAIL

This 31-acre parcel is owned by the Dracut Land Trust. The hiking trail is seven-tenths of a mile long. It runs by two vernal pools and an old stone wall sheep pen. There are several benches to sit and enjoy the view of the hay fields of Ogonowski Memorial Preservation Farmland. Parking is located on Broadway Road, an eighth of a mile west of Jones Avenue.

## PROPRIETORS' WAY

Proprietors' Way trail follows the route of an historic road through Dracut and is publicly accessible from Meadow Creek Drive. The westerly trail is on the left between 101 and 103 Meadow Creek Drive. Follow the path between these two houses. This section of the trail continues a short distance between two stone walls. These walls are the only remaining part of the original Proprietors' Way. The easterly trail is on the right between 98 and 100 Meadow Creek Drive. Follow the path between these two houses to a golf cart path, turn left and follow the trail signs through the golf course. The trail proceeds easterly up a hill where it crosses a fairway, and then becomes Founders' Way Trail in the East Richardson Preserve. Parking is at the Four Oaks Golf Course.

Dracut maintains a network of sidewalks. The Town's effort to incorporate "Complete Streets" into future planning projects will improve connectivity between neighborhoods, recreational facilities and conservation properties.

## BOATING AND FISHING

Excellent boating and fishing can be found in Dracut, including on the Merrimack River, and on Mascuppic Lake, Long Pond, Peter's Pond, and Cedar Pond, as well as Beaver Brook. There is currently one State boat launch in Dracut on Mascuppic Lake, as well as a canoe/kayak launch on Long Pond at the end of Passaconaway Road. There is also an informal boat launch on the Merrimack River on Merrimack Avenue between Brox Road and Jackson Avenue. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife advises humans not to eat fish from the Merrimack River due to elevated mercury levels.

## HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Hunting is allowed in portions of the Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest. Some Town lands are open for hunting. There are two hunting/fishing clubs in Dracut: the Centralville Sportsmen's Club, and the Methuen Rod and Gun Club, both of which offer indoor and outdoor shooting ranges. The Centralville Sportsmen's Club also has stocked ponds for their annual fishing derby.

## YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMS

There are a number of youth sports programs available for Dracut residents, including youth baseball, softball, soccer, football, and basketball, as listed below:

- Baseball - Co-ed - Spring and Fall
- Boys and Girls Basketball - Summer and Winter
- Volleyball - Spring and Fall
- Skiing and Snowboarding
- NFL Flag Football - Fall
- Summer Fun Run
- Girls Softball - Spring
- Swimming - Summer
- Wrestling - Winter
- Pee Wee Basketball - Spring and Fall
- Boys and Girls Travel Basketball - Summer and Winter

The Recreation Commission also offers "Trips and Tours", where residents from Dracut and other communities are provided with opportunities to enjoy bus tours to various destinations.

## RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

### PARKER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The library offers recreation opportunities for children of all ages. From infants to teens, there are activities for all interests and abilities. Programs include:

- Bambinos program – a baby friendly story time with songs, rhymes and play to entertain while beginning to teach language skills;
- Storytime for Twos (stories, songs and rhymes for language growth and development);
- Preschool Time (story and pre-reading program for 3-5 year olds);
- Book clubs for various ages;

- Lego club;
- Science and craft programs;
- Summer reading program;
- Window Painting – (teens and “tweens” decorate the windows of the library); and
- Drop in Art Activities once a month on Saturdays

## DRACUT SENIOR CENTER

The Dracut Senior Center offers a number of exercise and fitness opportunities for adults, including Zumba, Bone Builders, Energetics, Tai chi, and line dancing.

## PLAYING FIELDS

The Recreation Commission manages a number of the Town fields, including those located at the schools. Table 6.12 below lists the fields and the types of facilities and equipment located on each site. Additional playing fields are listed above in Table 6.7.

**Table 6.12: Recreation Properties**

Map-Block-Lot	Property Name	Address	Acres	Features
50-0-133	Pleasant Street Park	488 Pleasant Street	0.99 (of a 3 acre lot)	Located behind the Pleasant Street Fire Station and abutting Spring park Avenue, Pleasant a Street Park is a passive recreation area.
51-61-3	Veteran's Memorial Park	Montauk Avenue / 80 Broadway	25.08	Monahan consists of three softball fields and a skateboard park. There are restrooms available.
52-0-93	Varnum Park	165 Arlington Street	0.75	Varnum Park is a small passive recreation area with shaded/grassy area with picnic tables.
30-0-60 30-0-102	Lake Mascuppic Beach and Boat Ramp	272 Tyngsboro Road And 57 Willowdale Avenue	1.04 total	This area, owned by the Conservation Commission, is a public beach with a State-owned boat ramp. There is limited parking.
31-0-43	Dillon-McAnespie Park	2166-2169 Lakeview Avenue	14.93	Dillon-McAnespie Park, managed by the Recreation Department, consists of basketball courts, baseball diamond, tennis court, walking paths, multi-use field and playground area. Restrooms are available.
50-0-12	Hovey Field	329-330 Pleasant Street	2.14	Hovey, managed by the Recreation Department, consists of one baseball field, restrooms and a snack shack.
50-0-176	Michael J. Monahan Memorial Park	499 Pleasant Street	5.63	Managed by the Recreation Department, Monahan consists of three softball fields and a skateboard park. There are restrooms available.

Map-Block-Lot	Property Name	Address	Acres	Features
46-0-112	Dillon Center Fields (at Public Works Facility)	833 Hildreth Street	3.57 (of a 36.77 acre lot)	Managed by the Recreation Department. This complex of play fields and park at the capped landfill site adjacent to the DPW complex includes two baseball fields (Chalifoux and Pierce Memorial Fields), one soccer field (Edwards Field), and a paved parking lot. The baseball fields are located atop portions of the landfill.
10-0-63	Long Pond Park/ Beach	202 Lakeshore Drive	0.56	This recreational area is leased by the Town to, and managed by, the Long Pond Park Improvement Association (LPPIA). It includes a beach, boat ramp, horseshoe pit, playground equipment, picnic area, and port-a-potties. Individuals and families may use these facilities by joining the LPPIA for an annual fee. Because no parking is available, this park and beach serves the immediate neighborhood, but is not used on a town-wide basis.
<b>Total</b>		<b>59.66</b>		

*Source: 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan, 1999 Dracut Master Plan, Dracut Open Space Inventory as of October 2018*

Other parks include: Costello Square, Hovey Square and Drapeau Square. Small parklettes include Gunther Park, Sladen, Dinley, Hamblett Avenue, Turner Square, Park Square, Daigle Square, New Boston Road, and Willard/Cheever.

## LOCAL CAPACITY

Dracut has several organizations working to preserve open space and enhance recreation within the community. The various Town departments, boards and organizations work together to ensure that these resources are protected for future generations. Joint leadership is important in that each of the parties listed below has a role to play and represents different interests.

- The Dracut Conservation enforces the Massachusetts' Wetlands Protection Act. Working with land owners, the Commission ensures that Dracut's natural resources are protected and that construction and environmental alterations are accomplished in compliance with state laws. The Commission also works with and advises other Town bodies, including the Planning Board, Board of Health, and the Building Inspector's Office on natural resources issues. The Commission has one staff person who administers the permitting process and oversees day-to-day activities.

- The Planning Board is responsible for implementing the Town's Zoning Bylaw and working with developers to ensure that important conservation land and natural resources are protected during the development process. The Board has one staff person who administers the permitting process and oversees day-to-day activities.
- The Recreation Program is overseen by an eight-member board, supported by two staff persons in the Recreation Department. Dracut's Recreation Department oversees the scheduling and use of the Veteran's Park Spray and Play, Football, Soccer, and Baseball Field; Dillon McAnespie Basketball Courts, Baseball Field, and Multi-purpose Field; Monahan Softball Fields; Carrick Baseball Fields; Hovey Baseball Field; Intervale Baseball Field; Parker Avenue Field; and the DPW Field.
- The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) reviews and approves CPA funding applications for projects that preserve open space, create recreational opportunities, preserve historical sites and buildings, and assist with affordable housing production. The CPC presents its recommendations to Town Meeting for approval. The recommended appropriations of CPA funds must be voted and approved by a simple majority vote of Town Meeting. Town Meeting actions are limited to the following:
  - Approving the recommendations of the CPC;
  - Rejecting the recommendations of the CPC;
  - Reducing the funding amounts recommended by the CPC; and
  - Reserving the amount recommended by the CPC to an applicable reserve account, rather than approving the recommended project(s).

Borrowing for CPA purposes is allowed by a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting.

- The nine-member Open Space Committee's Mission Statement indicates that they are "committed encouraging and facilitating the preservation and appreciation of Dracut's natural, farm, and recreational lands. By working with municipal and state organizations we integrate local conservation and environmental goals with state and regional initiatives." They also actively manage open space through stewardship activities including trail-building, trail maintenance, and signage.
- The Dracut Land Trust and Dunstable Rural Land Trust are two non-profit land trusts, focused on land preservation in Dracut and surrounding towns. The trusts work with local landowners in an effort to determine appropriate ways to preserve the Town's remaining undeveloped properties and open areas.

## PUBLIC INPUT

In 2018, a written survey was conducted as part of the Master Plan Update. The survey was widely distributed and over 800 responses were received. Approximately 52% of the respondents indicated that they choose to live in Dracut because of the community's character and rural setting. Comments such as "We love the open spaces and farming communities", were common. Over half (63.6%) of the respondents indicated that the number of recreation facilities and programs is excellent or good, while 23.7% rated it as fair, and only 6.1% indicated that it is poor. Similarly, 52.99% of the respondents indicated that the mix and type of recreational facilities and programs is excellent or good, 27.8% indicated that it is fair, while 9.1% stated that it is poor. Over 63% of the respondents felt that the amount of open space protected is excellent or good, and only 4.5% that it is poor. In listing the three most critical issues facing Dracut over the next ten years, respondents ranked overdevelopment/population growth second only to concerns about the schools.

A separate written survey of youth was also conducted, with 34 respondents. The youth of Dracut were somewhat less enthusiastic about recreational opportunities in town. Less than half (41.2%) of the respondents indicated that the number of recreation facilities and programs is excellent or good, while 38.2% rated it as fair, and 14.7% indicated that it is poor. Similarly, 35.3% of the respondents indicated that the mix and type of recreational facilities and programs is excellent or good, 47.1% indicated that it is fair, while 11.8% stated that it is poor. Only 44.1% of the youth respondents felt that the amount of open space protected is excellent or good, 35.3% felt it was fair, and only 5.9% that it is poor.

A visioning session on Open Space, Recreation and Cultural and Natural Resources was held on April 26, 2018. During the session residents were asked to identify the town's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats relative to Open Space and Recreation. The following responses were received:

### ***Strengths:***

- Public support for open space from town/public
- Beaver Brook area
- People from urban areas will come to Dracut for open space opportunities, which could benefit local businesses
- Farmland/local produce and goods
- Strong youth recreation programs
- Wooded lands/open space provide buffer from urban heat island
- CPA funds to purchase open space
- Conscious effort to link open space parcels
- New parks have been added

***Weaknesses:***

- Town fields are in terrible shape – need better fields for youth sports – fields aren't available until May.
- CPA funds are always under attack - Need to educate the public on the CPA funding rules
- Need more volunteers and community involvement
- Limited parking at the State Forest in Dracut
- Lack of detailed information on the town website
- Open space areas in Dracut need additional and safer parking – lack of information on available parking
- Need website with all trails mapped out and updated trail maps
- Town should encourage community activities and projects to build a sense of community
- Lacks tax revenues from wealthier neighborhoods to offset the non- taxable open space parcels
- Lack of public access to local bodies of water
- Increasing residential tax rates create opposition to open space purchase/preservation initiatives
- Lack of links between open space areas and updated trail information
- Open space parcels are disjointed

***Opportunities***

- Community Center
- Ecotourism
- Safe pathways/walkways/sidewalks – restore sidewalk fund
- Dracut's branding opportunities are wide open
- Develop multi-use parcel like Great Brook in Carlisle
- Advertise volunteer work on local projects for high school students
- Dracut Land Trust needs volunteers
- Require zoning for development to include a walkway through the property
- Town boards should direct developers to keep a portion of development as open space
- Promote walking to school
- Provide/encourage volunteers for Old Home Day
- Dog park
- Receive state assistance from DCR in managing and promoting Dracut open space sites

- Attract people to town by promoting unique local areas/places/goods
- Festivals

### ***Threats***

- Overdevelopment/building
- Big commercial companies/developments
- Community inertia - lack of volunteers
- Lack of funding
- Lack of long-range planning
- Future pipelines
- Spring travel teams facing terrible conditions at home fields
- Lack of planning/lay out of parks pushes people away
- Quarry expansion
- Once more open space is created, more funding is needed

## **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The Dracut Open Space and Recreation Plan has been updated over the years to guide policy and decision-making in a way that protects natural resource areas and recreation assets. The Town has regularly pursued opportunities to acquire and protect properties throughout town. During the public input process for the Master Plan, it was evident that residents remain interested in protecting the town's remaining rural and agricultural landscapes, environmental resources, historic resources, wildlife, forests and other habitat areas. Continued development pressures have increased public awareness as to the importance of preserving these areas in the future.

While residents cite open space and rural landscapes as being among the town's greatest assets, it is unlikely that the Town will have all of the funds needed to purchase every parcel that its residents will want to save. To address this issue, the Town should develop a comprehensive resource protection strategy to ensure that limited resources are utilized to meet the most critical open space needs. The Dracut Open Space and Recreation Plan expired in 2016. The Town should focus on preparing an update in order to maintain its eligibility for certain state grant programs, such as LAND and PARC grants offered through the Division of Conservation Services.

The primary threat to Dracut's remaining rural areas is the incremental loss of open space land to development. Unfortunately, a strong real estate market drives up the value of land. Farm and forest landowners have little incentive to make permanent fixed investments that might increase profitability, but add no market value for potential future development. For this reason, Chapter 61A parcels are particularly vulnerable to development. As shown

in the Master Plan survey, residents feel strongly that agricultural land and landscapes should be protected. Many areas of prime farmland lack even the temporary protection of Chapter 61A. As noted in the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter, the Town needs to be prepared to act quickly when a parcel of Chapter 61A land becomes available.

While Dracut has acquired a substantial number of parcels intended for open space preservation, hardly any of these properties are permanently protected. These parcels have been acquired through various means, including by donation, town budget appropriations, state grants, private funding, and by tax title. In most communities, conservation land is placed under the care and custody of the Conservation Commission, which means it is protected under Article 97 of the State Constitution. Currently, the Dracut Conservation Commission does not hold or manage any property. Article 97 provides that land held for conservation and natural resource purposes may not be transferred, disposed of, or used for other municipal or private purposes without all of the following occurring: a majority vote of the Board of Selectmen, a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting, a two-thirds roll call vote of both houses of the state legislature, and the governor's signature. Dracut should transfer key conservation parcels from the Board of Selectmen to the care and custody of the Conservation Commission, in order to provide the level of protection available under Article 97. On a longer term basis, the Town should establish criteria for determining which town board or commission is given care and custody of lands that are acquired in fee, through donation, or by tax title foreclosure.

The Town has acquired and improved several open space parcels using Community Preservation Act funding, however these parcels are not yet permanently protected. While CPA funds may be spent on the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space, and for the rehabilitation or restoration of any open space that has been acquired or created using CPA funds, it is important to note that a permanent deed restriction is required for all real property interests acquired under CPA. This restriction must be filed as a separate instrument, such as a Conservation Restriction (CR) or an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR). The Town should address this issue as soon as possible in order to bring the community into compliance with the Community Preservation Act regulations.

To protect the Town's investment and use its resources as efficiently as possible, the Town should develop a maintenance and management plan for its conservation and recreation facilities. The plan should address allowed uses and activities, trail maintenance, equipment needs and maintenance, stewardship and habitat management. Given that today's youth will become the stewards of tomorrow, it will be important to engage them in this process. In many cases, they are also the primary users of many of these facilities.

The Town has not actively engaged the development community as partners in the protection of open space, beyond what is required in the subdivision regulations. Furthermore, the Town has not been diligent about enforcing the provisions within the Open Space Residential Design bylaw that require the protection of dedicated open space. Of the nine projects approved under the bylaw, land was protected in only one case. The Town could strengthen its oversight of the OSRD projects by withholding occupancy permits until the appropriate conservation restriction is recorded.

The need to create an integrated trail system has been discussed at the public Visioning Sessions. As development occurs, some of the opportunities for future linkages may be lost. To ensure that such linkages remain a possibility, the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and the Recreation Commission should formulate a strategy for establishing a town-wide network. The local permitting boards should then work with proponents of future development projects on preserving the easements/rights-of-way needed for these connections.

The lack of available parking at the Dracut-Lowell-Tyngsborough State Forest and at several of the town's conservation and recreation properties has been identified as a significant deficiency. This issue should be further studied and evaluated to determine the most cost effective solution for each individual location. The parking issues at town properties should be addressed over time as resources become available. The Town will need to work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to resolve the parking issues at the State Forest.

While much has been done to promote the conservation and recreation areas and programs, including the publication of an open space guide, use of the Town's website, multiple tours on Dracut Access TV and YouTube, and the use of social media, the Master Plan Committee feels more could be done to encourage greater use of these programs and facilities. The inclusion of information in the Senior Center newsletter, the posting of flyers and notices at the Library, Town Hall and the Senior Center, and the distribution of information through the schools are possible ways to further disseminate information. Future town publications should also incorporate information on recreation and conservation facilities, programs and events that are available or planned in Dracut.

Many of the Town's open space areas and recreation facilities are not accessible to those with disabilities. The Town should develop a transition plan to ensure that these properties and facilities are brought into compliance in the future. The Town has received funding to prepare a transition plan through the Massachusetts Office on Disability's Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Improvement Grant Program. In receiving its

Housing Choice designation from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Town made a commitment to complete the transition plan.

In an era of global warming, open space protection will be key to implementing climate mitigation and adaptation measures, while also achieving other environmental, social, and economic benefits by:

- Mitigating the urban heat island effect;
- Conserving habitat and facilitating habitat connectivity;
- Managing surface water and riverine flood risk (e.g., increasing permeable surface area, allowing for groundwater recharge, reducing rate and volume of runoff);
- Enhancing water quality by filtering and removing sediment and pollutants; and
- Sequestering and storing carbon in vegetation and soils (e.g., protecting and restoring forests and wetlands, increasing the carbon content of soils).

Dracut has received a grant provided by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) to prepare a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan. The MVP process is the first step in planning for climate resiliency through the future implementation of priority projects. Once the Plan is complete, the Town will be certified as an MVP community and become eligible for MVP Action Grant funding. Dracut should apply for these funds during the grant cycle that follows the approval of the MVP Plan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to acquire key parcels for the protection of natural resources, wildlife, agricultural lands, water supply, and historic resources, and to meet recreation needs.
- Actively pursue Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR) and Conservation Restrictions (CR) for acquired farmland, forested land, riparian corridors, and water supply areas.
- Establish links between local and regional trails to create an interconnected network, and work with proponents of future development projects on preserving the easements/rights-of-way needed for the trail network.
- Develop a comprehensive resource protection strategy to ensure that limited resources are utilized to meet the most critical open space needs.
- To protect the Town's investment and use limited resources as efficiently as possible, the Town should develop a maintenance and management plan for its existing conservation and recreation facilities that addresses allowed uses and activities, trail maintenance, equipment needs and maintenance, stewardship, and habitat management.

- Update the Dracut Open Space and Recreation Plan in order to maintain the Town's eligibility for certain state grant programs, such as PARC and LAND grants.
- To address climate change and resiliency, participate in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) designation process, prepare an MVP plan, and apply for state action grant funding to implement the recommendations contained within the MVP plan.
- Key conservation parcels should be transferred from the Board of Selectmen to the care and custody of the Conservation Commission, in order to provide the level of protection available under Article 97.
- Establish criteria for determining which town board or commission is given care and custody of lands acquired in fee, through donation, or by tax title foreclosure.
- To bring the community into compliance with the Community Preservation Act regulations, the Town should place permanent restrictions on all open space parcels acquired with CPA funds as soon as possible. Such restrictions must be filed as separate instruments, such as a Conservation Restriction (CR) or an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR).
- More actively engage the development community as partners in the protection of open space, beyond what is required in the subdivision regulations. Enforce those provisions within the Open Space Residential Design bylaw that require the protection of dedicated open space, and strengthen oversight of OSRD projects by withholding occupancy permits until the appropriate conservation restriction is recorded.
- Develop an ADA transition plan for the Town's conservation and recreation facilities and apply for funding from the Massachusetts Office on Disability to implement needed accessibility improvements. CPA funds could also be used for ADA compliance work.
- More widely promote the Town's conservation and recreation facilities, programs and events through the inclusion of information in the Senior Center newsletter, by posting flyers and notices at the Library, Town Hall and the Senior Center, and via the distribution of information through the schools.
- Study and evaluate parking issues at town-owned conservation and recreation areas, to determine the most cost effective solution for each individual location and address the issues over time, as resources become available. Work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to resolve the parking issues at the State Forest.

# NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

## INTRODUCTION

Dracut residents value the town's agricultural landscapes, open spaces, natural resources and historic buildings. Each of these attributes contributes to the town's character and links residents to the community's heritage. Some of Dracut's natural and cultural resources are permanently protected, but many are not. Finding a means to protect the resources that remain intact will be one of the Town's greatest challenges.

As outlined in this chapter, natural resources include land, surface water, streams, wetlands, aquifers, wildlife habitat, open space and riparian corridors, and other ecologically sensitive areas. Cultural resources include historic buildings and their settings, outbuildings, such as sheds and barns, archaeological remnants and features, and archaeologically sensitive areas. Landscape features such as stonewalls and foundations, burial grounds and cemeteries, agrarian fields, trails and paths are also an important part of the town's history, contribute to its inventory of cultural resources, and are key public assets.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### WATER RESOURCES

The benefits of clean water cannot be overstated. Adequate supplies of clean water are vital to the survival and propagation of fish and other aquatic life, as well as to wildlife and humans. The cost to society of not maintaining or restoring water quality, in terms of public health, economic impact, and other factors, is incalculable. Dracut has an extensive hydrological system that includes groundwater, ponds, lakes, rivers, brooks, aquifers, and wetlands, as shown on Map 7.1. The Merrimack River forms much of Dracut's southern border. The riverbank is relatively steep in this area and the floodplain is quite narrow. The entire town is located within the Merrimack River watershed, meaning that all precipitation that falls on Dracut eventually drains into the Merrimack River. There

### Natural and Cultural Resource Goals

- Increase public awareness and appreciation of Dracut's historic resources.
- Preserve, maintain, and continue to document Dracut's agricultural lands, buildings and landmarks.
- Preserve the Town's historic artifacts, records, documents, buildings, landmarks and structures.
- Continue to institute policies and practices that protect and enhance water resources, wildlife habitat, and forests.

are three watershed sub-basins within Dracut. The Fish Brook sub-basin covers the eastern section of town, while the Limit Brook sub-basin encompasses the very western portion. The Lower Beaver Brook sub-basin lies in between the Fish Brook and Lower Beaver Brook sub-basins.

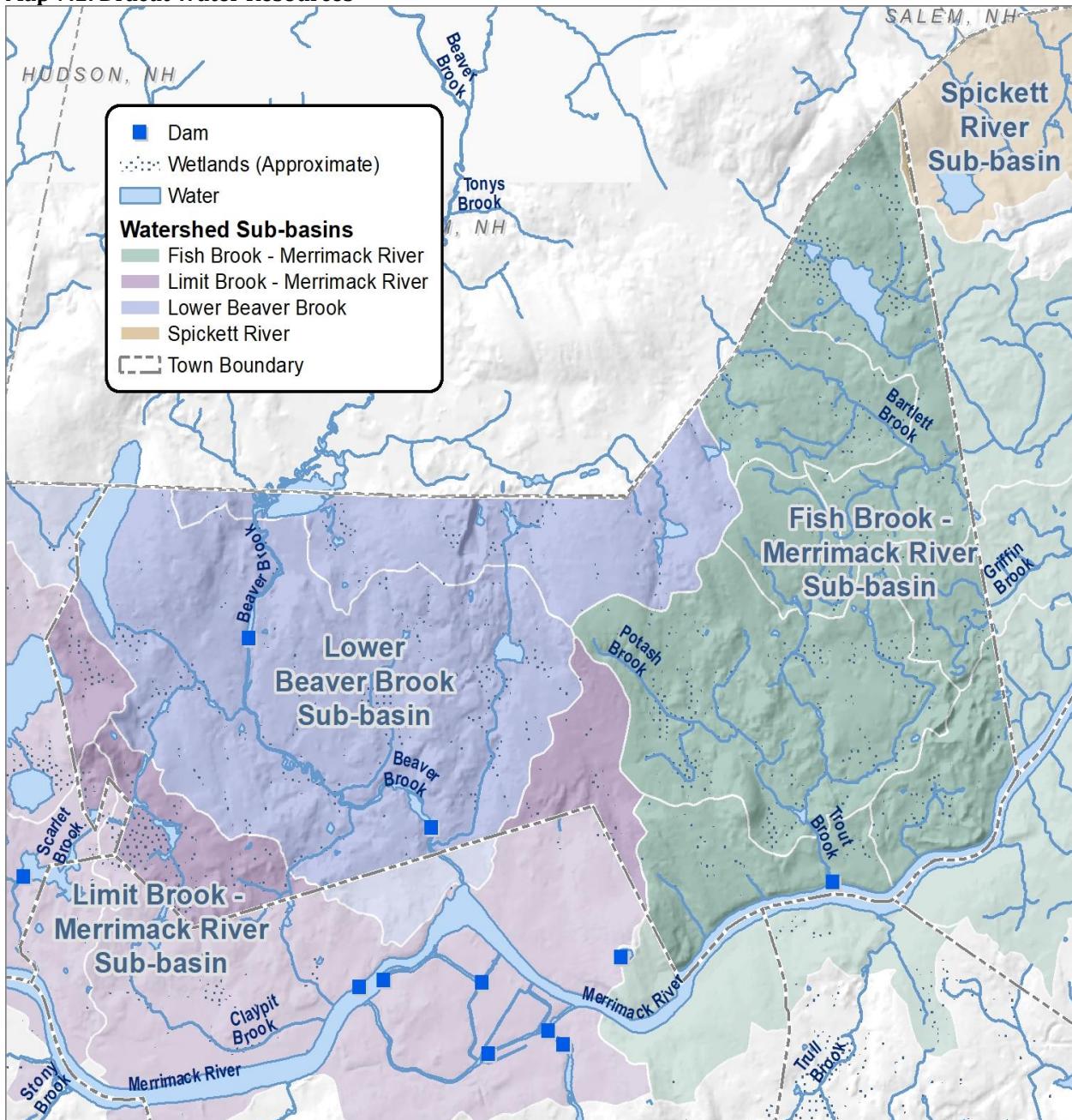
## RIVERS AND STREAMS

The Merrimack River Watershed encompasses 5,010 square miles in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, making it the fourth largest watershed in New England. The Merrimack River is formed by the confluence of the Pemigewasset and Winnipesaukee Rivers and flows 115 miles to the Atlantic Ocean. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP) classifies the portion of the river within Dracut as a Class B water system, meaning that it is suitable as a drinking water source with adequate treatment, and is designated as a habitat for fish, other aquatic life and wildlife, and for primary and secondary contact recreation. Water quality issues within this area of the river are largely caused by combined sewer overflows (CSOs) up river, various nonpoint sources, and small industrial discharges. These sources of pollution lead to increased levels of bacteria and nutrients (primarily phosphorus).

MADEP is working toward finalizing a bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirement for the Merrimack River. The TMDL process establishes the maximum allowable loading of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet the water quality standards established for protecting public health and maintaining the designated beneficial uses of the water body. One of the remaining primary threats to water quality in the Merrimack River is untreated stormwater runoff. Rain water and melting snow carry pollutants, such as nitrogen, phosphorus, bacteria, heavy metals, oil, grease and sediment into nearby waterways. These pollutants originate in lawns and agricultural fields, roadways, parking lots, from uncollected pet waste, and from construction project erosion.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 and its amendments require that states classify waterbodies according to the degree of threat or impairment for designated uses. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP) produced the *Massachusetts Year 2016 Integrated List of Waters* in June 2017, listing the condition of waters under Sections 305(b), 303(d), and 314 of the Clean Water Act. The list identifies several bodies of water in Dracut as impaired for one or more uses, requiring the establishment of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) to set the maximum allowable pollution from point, non-point and natural sources.

**Map 7.1: Dracut Water Resources**



Sources:

NMCOG (dams); MassDEP/NMCOG (2009 hydrography, wetlands); MassGIS/USGS (USGS NHD Flowline basin names); MassDOT/NMCOG (town boundaries, shaded relief); NH GRANIT (roads, political boundaries)

Data provided on this map is not sufficient for either boundary determination or regulatory interpretation.

Produced by NMCOG: 11/13/2018



0 2,000 Feet



**The Northern Middlesex  
Council of Governments**  
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Table 7.1 below lists the impaired waters in Dracut and describes the types of impairment impacting the water quality in each water body.

**Table 7.1: Impaired Water Bodies**

Water body	Impacted Area	DEP Assessment Category	Impairment(s)
Bartlett Brook	From New Hampshire/Dracut line to Mill Pond in Methuen	Category 5-requires a TMDL	Escherichia coli
Beaver Brook	From New Hampshire/Dracut line to Merrimack River	Category 5-requires a TMDL	-debris, floatables, trash -physical substrate habitat alterations -aquatic macroinvertebrate bioassessments -Escherichia coli -taste and odor -turbidity
Lake Mascuppic	Entire water body	4C-impairment not caused by a pollutant	Non-native aquatic plants
Long Pond	Entire water body	Category 5-requires a TMDL	-Non-native aquatic plants -harmful algal bloom -mercury in fish tissue
Merrimack River	From Lowell Wastewater Utility outfall to the Essex Dam in Lawrence	Category 5-requires a TMDL	-Escherichia coli -PCB in fish tissue -phosphorus (total)
Peppermint Brook	From the headwaters east of Route 38 to the confluence with Beaver Brook	Category 5-requires a TMDL	-debris, floatables, trash -Escherichia coli
Richardson Brook	From the headwaters to the confluence with the Merrimack River	Category 5-requires a TMDL	Escherichia coli
Trout Brook	From the Dracut headwaters to Richardson Brook	Category 5-requires a TMDL	Escherichia coli

*Source: Massachusetts Year 2016 Integrated List of Waters, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, June 2017*

Natural buffers around water bodies form effective barriers against pollution that might otherwise enter the water from surface runoff or through groundwater discharge.

Vegetated buffers absorb nitrogen and phosphorus, neutralize organic and hydrocarbon chemicals, and detain sediment, including heavy metals that often adhere to sediment. The Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act is a tool that restricts development within 200 feet of any perennial river or stream, and the Conservation Commission should utilize this tool to the greatest extent possible to ensure that the town's waterways are protected. For ponds and intermittent streams that are not protected by the Rivers Protection Act, the Town could consider reviewing its development policies and practices relative to natural land

buffers. This is particularly important for seasonal drainage channels that fill with water during major storm events when pollutant and sediment loads are high. The protection of land around intermittent streams could be identified as a performance standard for residential and non-residential development.

## SURFACE WATER BODIES

The quality of surface waters is influenced by the natural ecology, hydrology and geomorphology of the land area they drain, and by the land use patterns resulting from human activities within their respective basins and watersheds. Lake Mascuppic, Long Pond, Peters Pond, and Cedar Pond are designated Great Ponds within Dracut. Lake Mascuppic also extends into Tyngsborough, while Long Pond extends into both Tyngsborough and Pelham, New Hampshire.

Curly-Leaf Pondweed (*Potamogeton*) and Bushy Pondweed (*Najas*) are present in Long Pond and are treated each summer. In the past, there have been cyanobacteria warnings issued for Long Pond. The pond is 163 acres in area, with a maximum depth of a little over twenty-five feet and an average depth of approximately ten feet. The pond has a developed shoreline that is used extensively for recreation - particularly for swimming, fishing, and boating.



**Long Pond at sunset**

Lake Mascuppic is a 215-acre, spring fed water body that is fairly shallow. A state boat ramp is located in Dracut, although the most of the shoreline is within Tyngsborough. Non-native Eurasian Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum Spicatum*) and Fanwort (*Cabomba Caroliniana*) are present. The lake is surrounded by former summer cottages that have been converted to year-round residences. Impacts from stormwater runoff, yard fertilizers, fecal matter from non-migratory water fowl, and fuel from motor boats and jet skis, have taken their toll on the lake's water quality.

Peters Pond is 77 acres in area, and is the most ecologically fragile pond in Dracut. It primarily serves as habitat for wildlife and fish, with limited recreation potential due to the surrounding terrain and limited access, although it is used in winter months by pond skaters and ice fishermen.



**Ice Fishing at Peters Pond**

Cedar Pond is located just north of Peters Pond and is surrounded by wetlands and a white cedar forest. The 12-acre pond provides very valuable wildlife habitat but is difficult for humans to access. The so-called Big Pond located on the Dunlap Sanctuary can be accessed through a public walking trail.

## WETLANDS

The importance of wetlands to public health and the natural environment is well known and protected by state and federal law. The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act gives the Commonwealth and the local Conservation Commission the authority to regulate activities affecting wetlands for the following specific purposes: protection of public and private water supply; protection of groundwater supply; flood control; prevention of storm damage and pollution; protection of land containing shellfish; protection of fisheries; and protection of wildlife habitat. The Town of Dracut contains approximately 1,575 acres of wetlands. Many of the town's wetland areas are associated with the Merrimack River and the perennial streams.

The Town of Dracut enacted a local wetlands bylaw in 1993, and the bylaw was last amended in 1995. The stated purpose of the bylaw is: "to protect the wetlands, related water resources, and adjoining land areas...by controlling activities deemed by the Conservation Commission to have a significant or cumulative effect upon resource area values, including but not limited to the following: public or private water supply, groundwater, flood control, erosion and sedimentation control, storm damage prevention,

water quality, water pollution control, fisheries, shellfish, wildlife habitat, rare species habitat, including plant species, agriculture, aquaculture, and recreation values, deemed important to the community..." Under the bylaw "no person shall fill, dredge, or build upon, degrade, discharge into or otherwise alter any resource area or buffer zone". Any altering, filling, dredging, grading of land within 100 feet of any Wetland (including lakes and ponds) or within 200 feet of a river will require a permit from the Conservation Commission.

Within the Zoning Bylaw, the Town has established a Wetlands and Water Conservancy District (Section 2.14.00) as an overlay that is applied to all wetlands in all zoning districts. The purpose of the Conservancy District is to: "promote the public welfare through the protection, preservation and use of the Town's wetlands, water bodies, water courses and their adjoining lands; to protect the safety of persons and property against the hazards of flooding and contamination of groundwater and surface water; to preserve and maintain water retention capability, ecological functions and the utility and purity of natural groundwater supplies; and to promote the usefulness of wetlands for recreation, their natural beauty and the protection and proliferation of natural flora and fauna". Under the bylaw, the following uses and activities are prohibited:

- construction of any new building, impervious surface or enlargement of an existing building or impervious surface;
- dumping, filling, earth transfer, removal or relocation;
- sewage or septic disposal systems, refuse dumping, sanitary landfills or other sources of potential pollution;
- the storage of petroleum products, chemicals, manure, salt, fertilizer, toxic or hazardous substances or other leachable material;
- driveways, streets, curbs, utilities, sidewalks and related facilities, except where access is needed to service portions of a lot otherwise inaccessible or impractical; and
- the draining, damming or relocating of any water feature except as part of an overall drainage basin plan or as a flood control or agriculture works authorized by a public agency.

## AQUIFER RECHARGE AREAS

Groundwater recharge is part of the hydrologic cycle in which aquifers are recharged by precipitation, surface water infiltration, or hydrologic exchange with other aquifers. Since the recharge of aquifers generally occurs through inflow from the surrounding drainage basin and nearby surface water bodies, the quality of surface water is critical to the quality of ground water, and therefore, to drinking water.

Most of Dracut is serviced by public drinking water provided through the town's water districts: the Dracut Water Supply District and the Kenwood Water Department. The Dracut Water Supply District pumps its water from two wells located within Dracut and from five wells located in the Town of Tyngsborough. The Kenwood Water Department is a municipal water distribution only system, using water purchased from the Lowell and Methuen Water Departments to supply many of the residents and businesses in the eastern portion of Dracut.

The Town of Dracut has a Wellhead Protection Bylaw that applies to all new construction, reconstruction or expansion of existing buildings and new or expanded uses. The purpose of the bylaw is to:

- "Promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community by ensuring an adequate quality and quantity of drinking water for the residents, institutions and businesses of the Town of Dracut;
- Preserve and protect existing and potential sources of drinking water supplies;
- Conserve the natural resources of the Town; and
- Prevent temporary and permanent contamination of the environment."

The Wellhead Protection District includes Zone I and Zone II. The Zone I area includes a 400-foot protective radius around a public water system well. Zone II is the area of an aquifer that contributes to a well under the most severe pumping and recharge conditions. The following uses are prohibited in these areas:

- Landfills and open dumps;
- Automobile graveyards and junkyards;
- Landfills receiving only wastewater and/or septage residuals;
- Facilities that generate, treat, store or dispose of hazardous waste, including vehicle maintenance facilities, dry cleaners, print and photo processing operations and many industrial uses;
- Petroleum, fuel oil, and heating oil bulk stations and terminals;
- Discharge to the ground of non-sanitary wastewater; and
- Stockpiling and disposal of snow and ice containing deicing chemicals brought in from outside the district.

Within the Wellhead Protection Bylaw, there is a list of activities that require a special permit, including the enlargement and alteration of existing uses that do not conform to the bylaw.

## FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

The Merrimack River forms much of the southern boundary of the town, and because its embankments are relatively steep, impacts on the town are minimal when the River is at flood stage. The principal cause of flooding along the Merrimack River is runoff from spring snowmelt. This melting is greatest during heavy spring rains, when the still frozen ground cannot absorb the runoff. The worst such storm was recorded in 1936, but flooding occurs yearly with varying severity. Hurricanes are also a source of flooding conditions, especially when accompanied by wet autumns when the soil is already saturated. Severe storms of this nature occurred in 1938, 1954, and 1958.

Within Dracut, there are 1,230 acres within the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) 1-percent annual chance flood zones A and AE. Areas prone to flooding and identified in the FIRM Maps include:

- Peter's Pond and Cedar Pond Shorelines;
- Bartlett Brook;
- Richardson Brook;
- Trout Brook;
- Double Brook;
- Shore of Lake Mascuppic; and
- Beaver Brook.

During the 2006 flood, the E. Butterworth Mill on Lakeview Avenue sustained significant flood damage, and water flooded the Lakeview Avenue Bridge when Beaver Brook topped its banks. The Town has identified sections of Peabody Avenue and Lakeview Avenue as areas of concern. Flooding on Tennis Plaza Road is also of particular concern for public safety, given that 303 condominiums and 69 single-family homes are accessed via this roadway. Flooding on Kelly Road has been severe enough to warrant evacuations in the past. According to local officials, other areas where flooding has historically been reported include the following:

- Tennis Plaza Road, Vinal and Cook Streets;
- Loon Hill Road;
- Peters and Cedar Pond shorelines;
- Lake Mascuppic shoreline;
- Cricket Lane;
- Bridge Street;
- Nottingham Road; and
- Dean Avenue.

The Town has also expressed concern over the lack of coordination between New Hampshire and Massachusetts officials relative to dam releases upstream on Beaver Brook. Such releases have caused flooding in Dracut in the past.

The Town has a Flood Plain and Floodway Overlay District bylaw in place that regulates land use in flood prone areas designated as A, A1-30, AE, AH, and A99 on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). In the interest of maintaining the flood storage capacity of floodplains and avoiding property damage, all new construction or earthmoving is prohibited in this district, except certain agricultural and conservation uses, repairs to pre-existing structures, and new structures that have been shown by an engineer not to be subject to flooding. The Conservation Commission has jurisdiction in all floodplains.

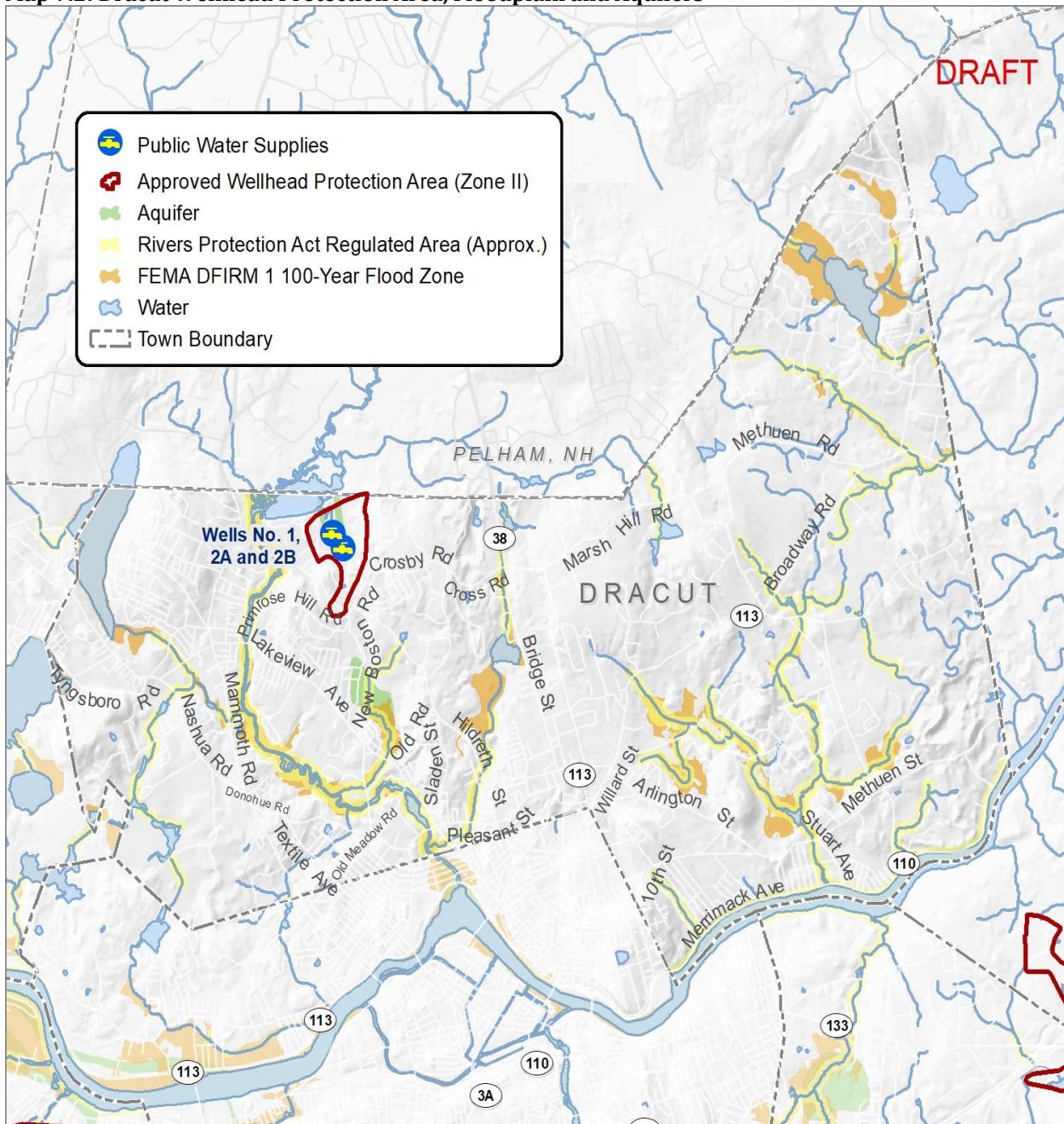
The Town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). There are two repetitive loss structures in Dracut, one residential and one non-residential. The Town has taken steps to monitor and ensure compliance with the program through the permitting process. Information is available to the public at the Building Department regarding flood plain building regulations, flood insurance and code requirements. All foundations are inspected, regardless of possible floodplain infringement, as part of the building permit process and they are checked for base flood elevation (BFE) compliance. The use of elevation certificates is required. The FIRM map is included in the Town's GIS mapping tool and is available online to assist builders, officials, residents and developers. There are four dams located within the Town of Dracut. Two of the dams are classified as a significant hazard, as shown in Table 7.2 below.

**Table 7.2: Hazard Classification of Dracut Dams**

Dam Name	Impoundment Name	Hazard Class	Downstream Population
Old Tub & Dye Printing Works Dam	NA	Non-jurisdictional	NA
Beaver Brook Dam / Collinsville Dam	Beaver Brook	Significant	500
Peters Pond Dam	Peters Pond	Non-jurisdictional	NA
Beaver Brook Dam	Beaver Brook	Significant	250

*Source: DCR Dam Inventory*

**Map 7.2: Dracut Wellhead Protection Area, Floodplain and Aquifers**



**Sources:**

MassDEP (2009 hydrography, Zone IIa, Aquifers); FEMA (DFIRM flood zones A, AE); MassGIS (aquifers, shaded relief); NMCOG (Rivers Protection Act areas); MassGIS/NMCOG (roads, town boundaries); NH GRANIT (roads, boundaries)

Data provided on this map is not sufficient for either boundary determination or regulatory interpretation.



0 2,000 Feet



**The Northern Middlesex Council of Governments**

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## GEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE

The surficial geology of Dracut is the result of glacial actions during the previous ice ages. The landscape reveals features of glacial deposition and erosion from the advance and retreat of past continental ice sheets. The direction of ice movement, as discerned from bedrock striations and drumlin orientations, was generally from northwest to southeast. The topography was shaped during the late Wisconsin glaciation, when the Laurentide Ice Sheet descended from Canada into New England about 25,000 years ago. The glacier shaped a variety of geologic features, including glacial erratics, fresh water springs, kettle holes, kame terraces, eskers, drumlins and glacial till. Most of these features are visible in the Kenwood section of Dracut. Loon Hill is a good example of a drumlin – a long ridge formed by glacial drift. Poplar Hill and Burns Hill are outstanding examples of drumloid hills - rounded, asymmetrical landforms composed of till and clay. Eskers, the buildup of sand and gravel left behind by streams flowing under glaciers, are found on the shores of Peters Pond.

The surface water bodies in Dracut are the result of glacial melt and scouring that carved out huge depressions leaving behind water-filled cavities. Other sand and gravel deposits left behind by flowing water, known as alluvium, can be found along the shores of the Merrimack River.

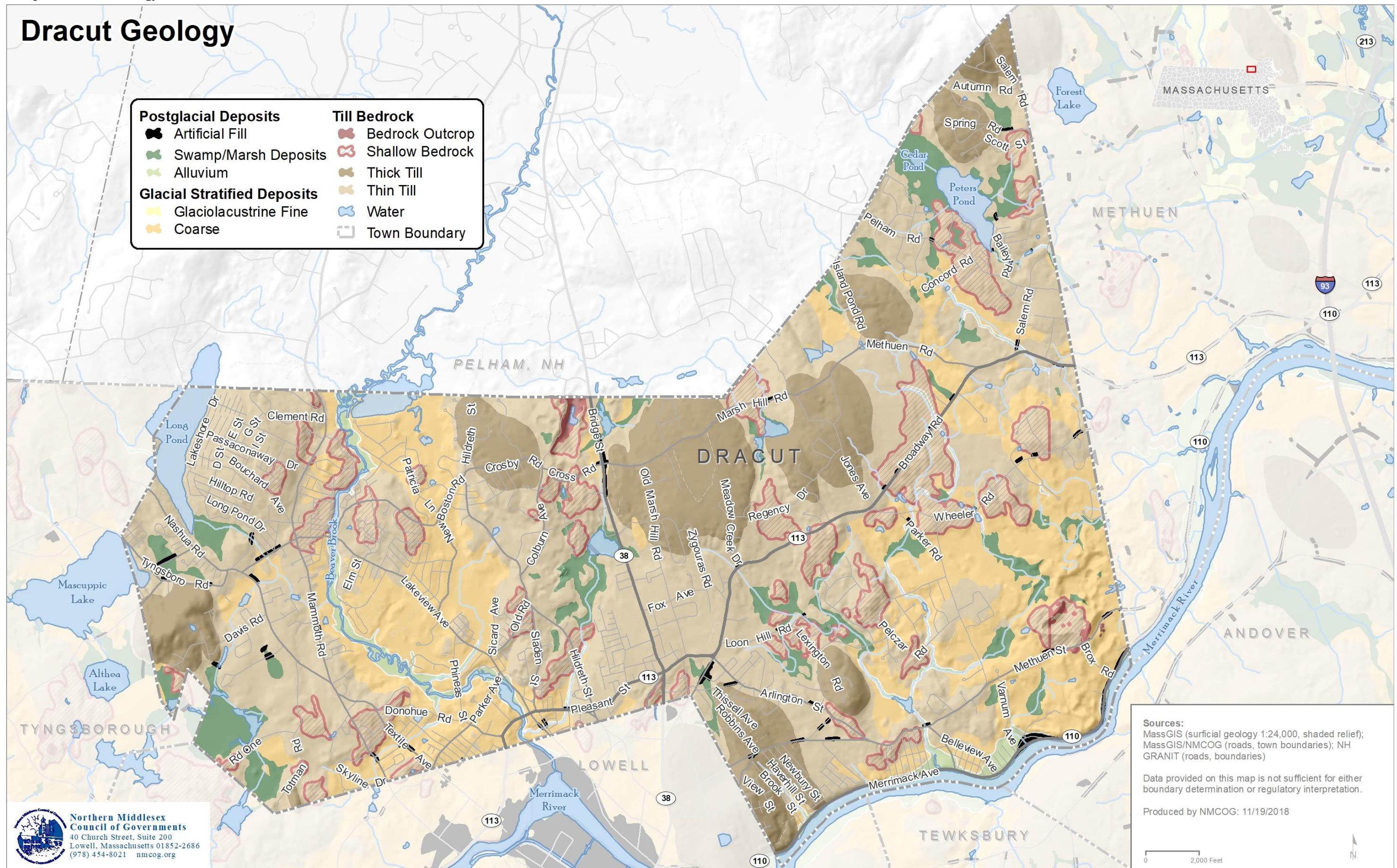
Dracut's landscape can be described as gently rolling, with elevation changes that rarely exceed 200 feet. The highest elevations are found in northeast Dracut at Poplar Hill (380 feet) and in the west at Whortleberry Hill (363 feet) and the Reservoir (322 feet). The open farm fields and meadows in the east, the forests of eastern and southeast Dracut, and the waterways scattered throughout town, add variety to the town's landscape. The Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest provides 528 acres of woodland and wetland habitat.

The well-drained Hollis soils are on hilltops and ridges. Stones and boulders cover up to 15 percent of the surface. The shallow Hollis soils have low potential productivity for both eastern white pine and northern red oak given the severe hazard of wind throw. The Hollis soil has severe limitations for dwellings and for road construction because of slope and because the bedrock is at a depth of less than 20 inches. This soil has severely limited suitability for septic tank absorption fields, due to slope, seepage, and shallowness. Installation of septic system distribution lines across the slope is necessary for the system's proper operation.

Gently sloping to steep, well drained Paxton soils are located on top slopes and side slopes of drumlins. Typically, the soils have a surface layer of dark yellowish brown, fine sandy

**Map 7.3: Dracut Geology**

# Dracut Geology



loam about 7 inches thick, with subsoil that is about 15 inches thick. It is friable, yellowish brown fine sandy loam in the upper part and friable, olive yellow sandy loam in the lower part. The substratum is about 43 inches thick with firm, light olive brown sandy loam in the upper part and very firm, grayish brown fine sandy loam in the lower part. This soil is well suited to cultivated crops, orchards, and pasture. Susceptibility to erosion is a management concern, however, farming on the contour, strip-cropping, and using cover crops, grasses, and legumes help to reduce runoff and control erosion.

Paxton soils have moderate limitations for dwelling construction, with wetness being the main limitation. Constructing basement floors above the seasonal high water table or installing footing drains can reduce damage caused by high ground water. Constructing roads on well-compacted, coarse-textured base material, and providing adequate side ditches and culverts, will help protect from damage caused by soil wetness and frost action. This soil type has severe limitations for septic tank absorption fields, due to the shallow depth to the saturated zone. Restricted permeability in the substratum prevents the soil from readily absorbing sewage effluent. The installation of a larger-than-average leach field helps to overcome this limitation.

Nearly level to strongly sloping, moderately well drained Woodbridge soils are found in drainage swales and on top slopes, upper side slopes, and toe slopes of drumlins. Typically, the soils have a surface layer of very dark brown, fine sandy loam about 2 inches thick. The subsoil is about 26 inches thick, and contains friable, yellowish brown fine sandy loam with distinct strong, brown and yellowish red masses of iron accumulation, and light brownish gray depletions in the lower part. The substratum is about 37 inches thick, and is firm, light olive brown fine sandy loam with prominent strong brown and yellowish red masses of iron accumulation and faint light brownish gray depletions. This soil is well suited to cultivated crops or pasture. The perched high water table may delay planting in spring or harvesting in fall. Drainage is necessary for optimum crop growth and the most efficient use of machinery.

Woodbridge soils have severe limitations for the construction of dwellings with basements, and moderate limitations for the construction of dwellings without basements. Constructing without basements or above the seasonal high water table and landscaping to drain surface water away from buildings will help to avoid interior damage caused by the seasonal high water table. Where basements extend to more than 2 feet below the surface, placing footing drains around foundations will help to remove excess subsurface water. Constructing roads on well-compacted, coarse-textured base material, and providing adequate side ditches and culverts, will help protect the roads from damage caused by soil wetness and frost action. Because of the seasonal high water table and restricted permeability in the substratum, this soil has severe limitations for septic tank absorption

fields. Installing a larger-than-average distribution system in a mound of more suitable fill material will help to overcome these limitations. This soil type is well suited for woodland wildlife habitat.

Nearly level to strongly sloping, excessively drained Windsor soils are found on glacial outwash plains, and the tops of terraces and deltas. Typically, the soils have a surface layer of dark brown, loamy sand about 8 inches thick. The subsoil is about 15 inches thick. It is comprised of loose, yellowish brown loamy sand in the upper part and loose, light olive brown sand in the lower part. The substratum is about 42 inches thick, with loose, light yellowish brown gravelly sand and sand. This soil association has only slight limitations for the construction of dwellings or local roads. It has severe limitations for septic tank absorption fields, as the soil readily absorbs, but is a poor filter of sewage effluent. This inadequate filtration capacity can result in the pollution of ground water. Low-density development and larger lot sizes can help reduce the impact on ground water. This soil is not well suited for woodland wildlife habitat.

Deep, strongly sloping, and moderately well drained Scituate soil is found on side slopes, toe slopes, and broad drainage swales of uplands. This soil type has severe limitations for dwellings with basements due to slope and soil wetness limitations. Constructing without basements or above the seasonal high water table, and designing landscaping to drain surface water away from buildings, will help avoid damage caused by the seasonal high water table. Designing buildings and lots to conform to the natural shape of the land will address the slope limitation, reduce the need for extensive land shaping, and minimize erosion. Slope, a seasonal high water table, and frost action are moderate limitations for roadway construction. Designing roads so that they run along the contours of the land will reduce runoff and erosion. Due to the seasonal high water table and restricted permeability, this soil has severely limited potential for septic tank absorption fields. The installation of a larger-than-average distribution system in a mound of more suitable fill material will help overcome these limitations. This soil type is highly suitable for woodland wildlife habitat.

Nearly level to steep, excessively drained Hinckley soils are found on glacial outwash plains and terraces. Typically, the soils have a surface layer of dark brown loamy sand about 7 inches thick. The subsoil is loose, yellowish brown very gravelly loamy sand about 10 inches thick. The substratum is loose, olive brown very gravelly sand about 48 inches thick. This soil has slight limitations for the construction of dwellings and of local roads. It has severe limitations for septic tank absorption fields, as it readily absorbs but is a poor filter of sewage effluent. The soil's inadequate filtering capability can result in pollution of ground water.

Mucky soils are hydric soils formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part. Hydric soils, along with hydrophytic vegetation and wetland hydrology, are used to define wetland boundaries. These soils are found along the waterways and wetlands across D. This soil is not suitable for development due to ponding water.

## PRIME FARMLAND

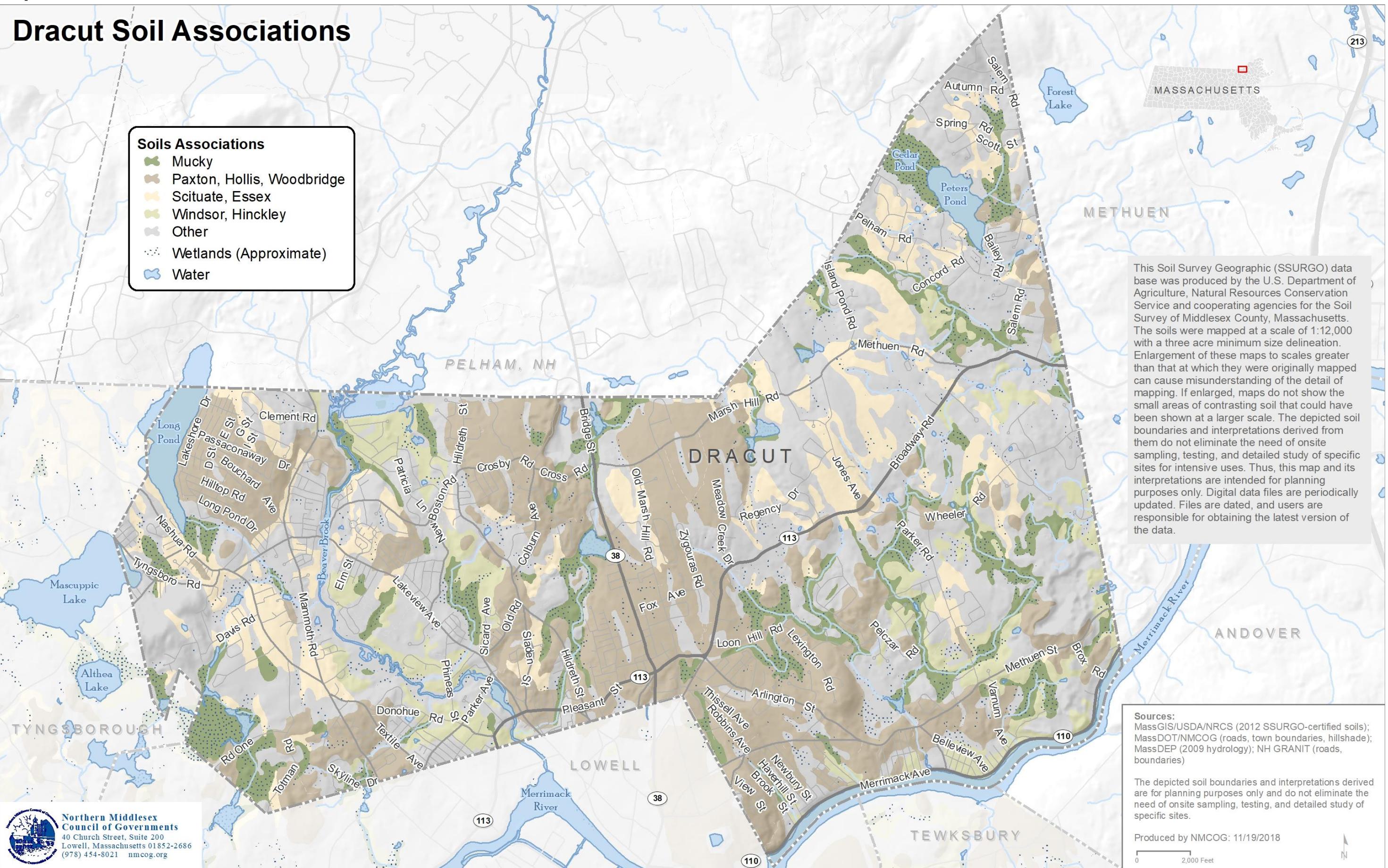
Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that "has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses."<sup>14</sup> It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. The soil qualities, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed to produce sustained high yields of crops economically, when proper management, including water management, and acceptable farming methods, are applied. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable supply of moisture from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. It is permeable to water and air. It is not excessively erodible or saturated with water for long periods, and either is not frequently flooded during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Slopes range mainly from 0 to 6 percent.

Farmland of Unique Importance are defined as "land other than prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance that might be used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops." In Massachusetts, this classification is confined to mucks, peats and coarse sand and usually suitable primarily for commercial cranberry production. Farmland of Statewide Importance refers to "land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops, as determined by the appropriate state agency or agencies."

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<sup>14</sup> [Soil Survey of Middlesex County](#), USDA, NRCS, and University of Massachusetts, 2005, p. 172

Map 7.4: Dracut Soil Associations



As shown on Map 7.5, Dracut is fortunate to have lands that are considered by USDA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to be categorized as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Farmland of Unique Importance. Land classified within these categories comprises over 6,560 acres, with nearly 3,836 acres considered to be prime farmland, 1,643 acres classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance, and 1,081 acres classified as Farmland of Unique Importance, as shown in Table 7.5 below. Map 7.6 shows the prime agricultural soils within Dracut.

**Table 7.3: Prime Farmland in Dracut**

Category	Acres
Prime Farmland	3,836
Farmland of Statewide Importance	1,643
Farmland of Unique Importance	1,081
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,560</b>

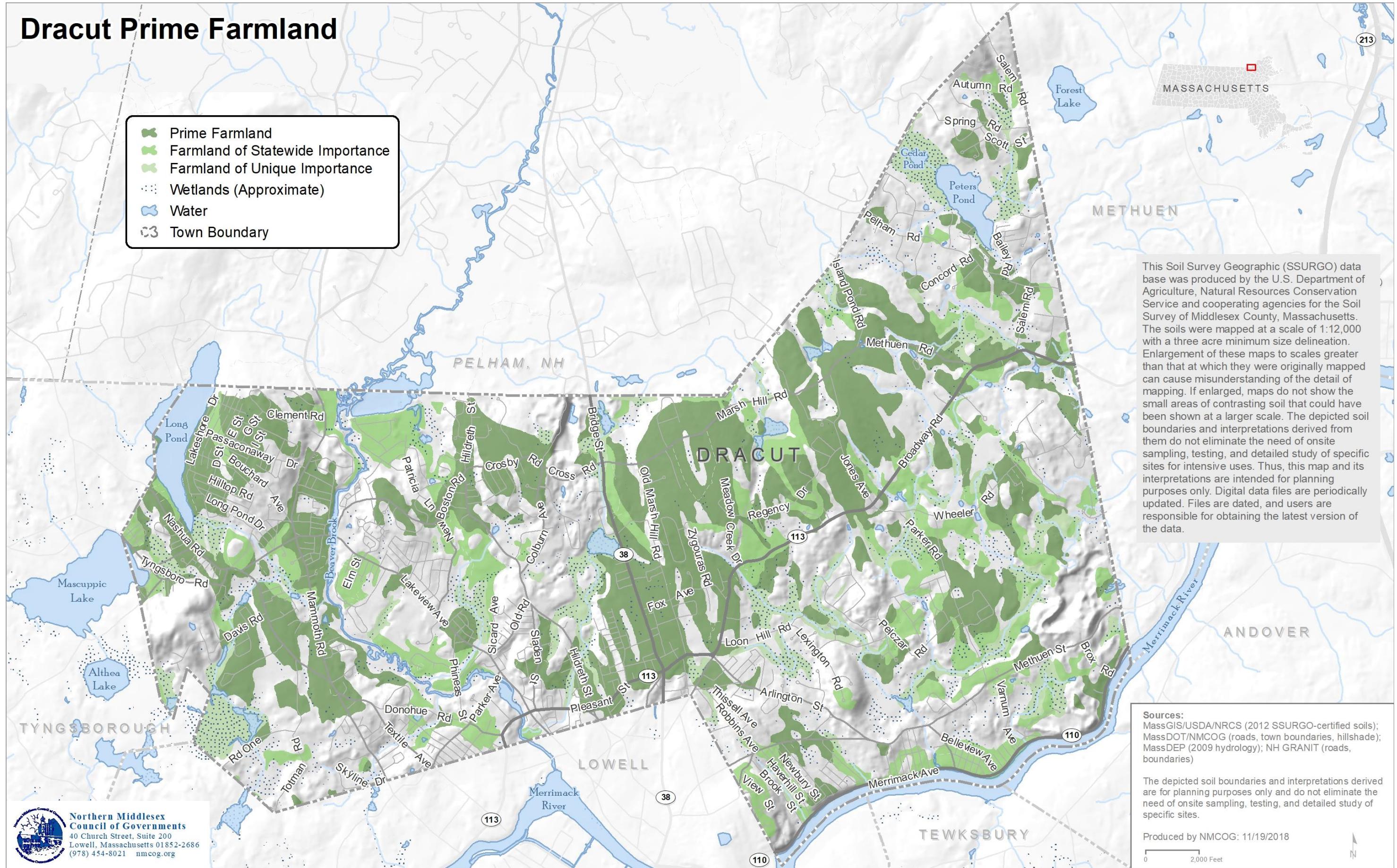
*Source: USDA and NRCS, 2012*



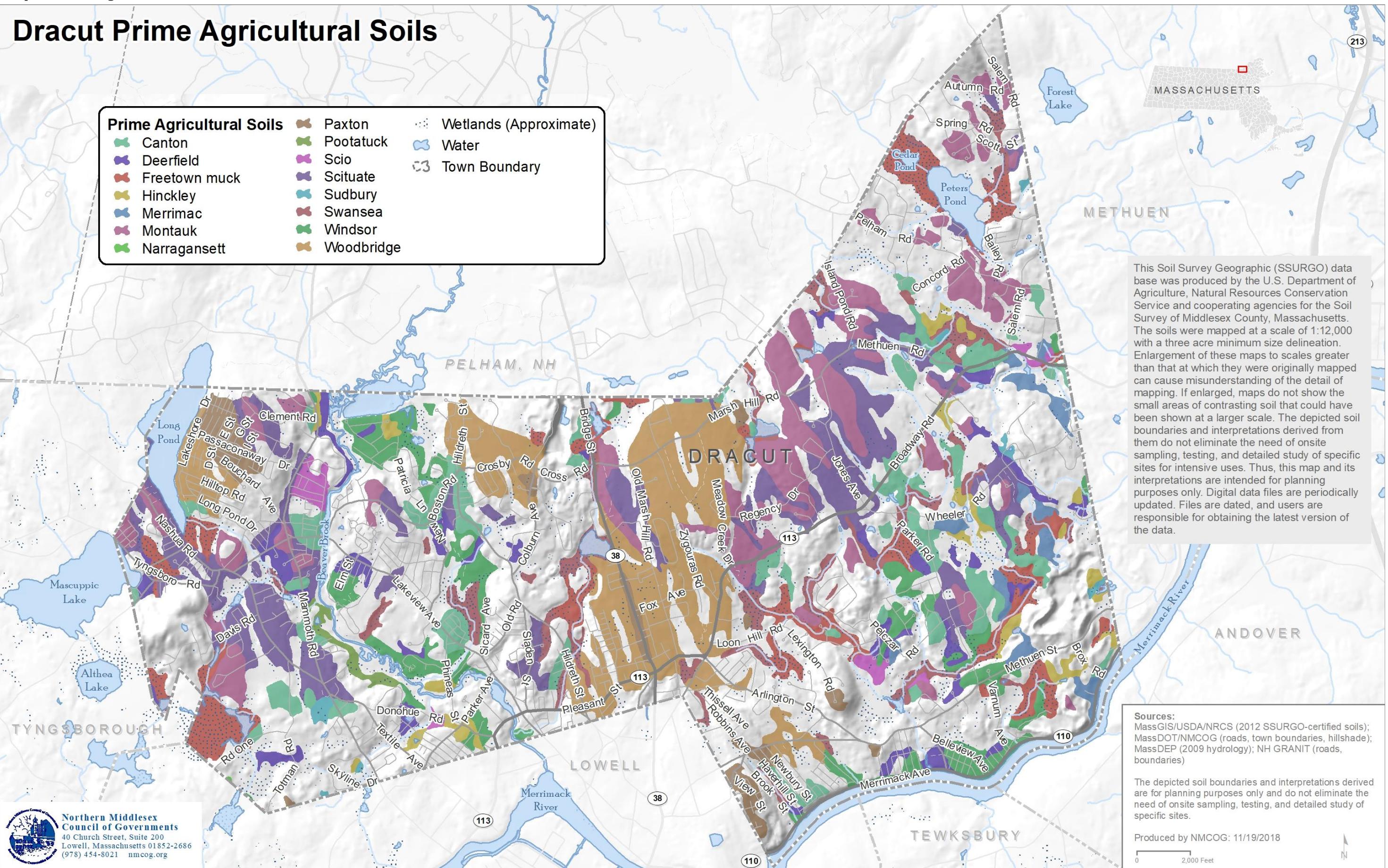
**Shaw Dairy Farm**

### Map 7.5: Prime Farmland in Dracut

## Dracut Prime Farmland



Map 7.6: Prime Agricultural Soils



## VEGETATION

Dracut lies within the Southern New England Coastal Plains and Hills Ecoregion, an area comprised of plains with a few low hills. Forests are mainly central hardwoods with some transition hardwoods and some elm-ash-red maple, and red and white pine. Most wetland areas are dominated by red maple, and many wetlands also have hemlock groves. The largest area of forested land in Dracut is the Lowell-Tyngsborough-Dracut State Forest, while other substantially forested areas are found around Peters Pond and Cedar Pond. Sassafras, ferns, wildflower, and assorted shrubs form the understory. The “urban forest” in Dracut is comprised of small patches of woodland and individual trees on residential and commercial lots. Grasses and cover crops populate fallow agricultural fields. The diversity of plant communities within the town provides food and habitat for wildlife. Table 7.4 below contains a list of common plant species found within the community.

**Table 7.4: Common Plant Species Found Within Dracut**

Common Plant Species Found Within Dracut	
Black Cherry ( <i>Prunus serotine</i> )	Lowbush blueberry ( <i>Vaccinium augustifolium</i> )
Sassafras ( <i>Sassafras albidum</i> )	Highbush blueberry ( <i>Vaccinium corybosum</i> )
Cedar, Atlantic white ( <i>chamaecyparis</i> )	Maple-leaf Viburnum ( <i>Viburnum acerifolium</i> )
Maple, Red ( <i>Acer rubrum</i> )	Barberry ( <i>Berberis thunbergii</i> )
Pine, White ( <i>Pinus Strobus</i> )	Canada Mayflower ( <i>Maianthemum canadense</i> )
Oak, Red ( <i>Quercus rubra</i> )	Fern Bracken ( <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> )
Oak, Black ( <i>Quercus velutina</i> )	Poison Sumac ( <i>Toxicodendron vernix</i> )
Oak, Scarlet ( <i>Quercus, coccinea</i> )	Indian-pipe ( <i>Monotropa uniflora</i> )
Oak, Chestnut ( <i>Quercus prinus</i> )	Skunk cabbage ( <i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i> )
Oak, White ( <i>Quercus alba</i> )	Flowering Dogwood ( <i>Cornus florida</i> )
Oak, Pin ( <i>Quercus, plustris</i> )	European Buckthorn ( <i>Rhamnus frangula</i> )
Oak, Swamp white ( <i>Quercus bicolor</i> )	Shadbush ( <i>Amelanchier arborea</i> )
Oak, Scrub ( <i>Quercus ilicifolia</i> )	Aspen ( <i>(Populus tremuloides)</i> )
Honeysuckle ( <i>Lonicera tatarica</i> )	Partridgeberry ( <i>Mitchella repens</i> )
Huckleberry, Black ( <i>Gaylussacia baccata</i> )	White Ash ( <i>Fraxinus Americana</i> )
Poison Ivy ( <i>Toxicodentron radicans</i> )	Green Ash ( <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> )
Arrowwood ( <i>Viburnum recognitum</i> )	Fern Royal ( <i>Osmunda regalis</i> )
Elderberry ( <i>Sambucus Canadensis</i> )	Big-toothed Aspen ( <i>Populus grandidentata</i> )
Pink lady slipper ( <i>Cypripedium acaule</i> )	Fern, Ostrich ( <i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i> )
Club mosses ( <i>Lycopodium spp</i> )	Fern, Christmas ( <i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i> )
Dogwood Silky ( <i>Cornus amomum</i> )	Fern, Sensitive ( <i>Onoclea sensibilis</i> )
Maple, Sugar ( <i>Acer saccharum</i> )	Fern, Cinnamon ( <i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i> )
Maple, Silver ( <i>Acer saccharinum</i> )	Chestnut ( <i>Castanea dentate</i> )
Birch, Grey ( <i>Betula populifolia</i> )	Hemlock ( <i>Tsuga canadensis</i> )
Birch, White ( <i>Betula papyrifera</i> )	Beech ( <i>Fagus grandifolia</i> )
Birch, River ( <i>Betula nigra</i> )	Hickory ( <i>carya ovata, C. tomentosa, C. labra, C. ovalis</i> )
Birch, Black ( <i>Betula lenta</i> )	Little Bluestem ( <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> )
Early Meadow Rue ( <i>Thalictrum dioicum</i> )	Mountain laurel ( <i>Kalmia latifolia</i> )

Common Plant Species Found Within Dracut	
Black Gum ( <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> )	Buttonbush ( <i>Capheanthus occidentalis</i> )
Cattail ( <i>Typha latifolia</i> )	Sweet pepper bush ( <i>Clethra alnifolia</i> )
Spicebush ( <i>Lindera benzoin</i> )	Black willow ( <i>Viburnum dentatum</i> var. <i>lucidum</i> )
Swamp azalea ( <i>Rhododendron viscosum</i> )	Cottonwood ( <i>Populus deltoids</i> )
Swamp candles ( <i>Lysimachia terrestris</i> )	Witch hazel ( <i>Hamamelis virginiana</i> )
Speckled alder ( <i>Alnus incana</i> sp. <i>Rugosa</i> )	Nannyberry ( <i>Viburnum lentago</i> )
Smooth alder ( <i>Alnus serrulata</i> )	American hazelnut ( <i>Corylus Americana</i> )
Winterberry ( <i>Ilex verticillata</i> )	Water parsnip ( <i>Sirum suave</i> )
False nettle ( <i>Boehmeria cylindrical</i> )	Wintergreen ( <i>Gaultheria procumbens</i> )
White wood aster ( <i>Aster divaricatus</i> )	Wild sarsaparilla ( <i>Aralia nudicaulis</i> )
Indian cucumber ( <i>Medeola virginiana</i> )	Marsh marigold ( <i>caltha palustris</i> )
Meadowsweet ( <i>Spirea alba</i> var. <i>latifolia</i> )	Perfoliate bellwort ( <i>Uvularia perfoliata</i> )
Maleberry ( <i>Lyonia ligustrina</i> )	False Solomon's seal ( <i>Maianthemum racemose</i> )
Star flower ( <i>Trientalis borealis</i> )	False foxglove ( <i>Aureolaria flava</i> , <i>A. pedicularia</i> , <i>A. virginica</i> )
Pennsylvania sedge ( <i>Carex pennsylvanica</i> )	Poverty grass ( <i>Danthonia spicata</i> )
Awned sedge ( <i>Carex crinita</i> )	Goldenrods ( <i>Solidago</i> and <i>Euthamia</i> spp)
Bugleweeds ( <i>Lycopus</i> spp)	Milk weeds ( <i>Asclepias</i> spp. And <i>A. tuberosa</i> )

Source: Updated from the Dracut Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2009

According to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), Dracut appears to have two endangered plant species: Purple Milkweed and Shore Sedge, as shown in Table 7.5 below. Both of these species have not been seen for over a century.

**Table 7.5: Endangered Plant Species in Dracut**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Designation	Date Last Observed
Purple Milkweed	<i>Asclepias purpurascens</i>	Endangered	1884
Shore Sedge	<i>Carex lenticularis</i>	Threatened	1882

Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

Invasive species are found in Dracut, such as multiflora rose, Norway maple, Russian Olive, Garlic Mustard and Oriental bittersweet. Some of these species can be found in hedgerows, along roadsides, in pastures, and in fallow fields. Purple loosestrife and Phragmites can be found in wetland areas.

## FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Dracut's woodlands, waterways, wetlands, pastures, and fields support a diverse population of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish and other wildlife. In addition to common species, there have been sightings of less common mammals, such as moose and black bear.

There are a number of habitat types within Dracut. Forest-streambed habitat supports white-tailed deer, fox, squirrels, snowshoe hare, cottontail rabbit, raccoon, beaver, otter, small rodents and carnivores. The woodland-field habitat is especially important to gamebirds and songbirds, and bobolinks still nest each year in the open fields, while snow buntings are still spotted during the winter months. Bald eagles are sighted along the Merrimack River with increasing frequency, having come back from the brink of extinction. Aquatic habitats support a diverse fish population that includes bass, perch, pickerel, bullheads, sunfish, pumpkinseed, American eel, golden shiners and trout. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife stocks some of Dracut's waterways.

The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has certified 195 vernal pools in Dracut. These pools, shown on Map 7.7, are critical habitat for amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. They typically hold water in the winter and spring due to rising groundwater and rainfall, remain wet through the spring and into the summer, and dry out completely by mid- to late summer. There are 73 potential vernal pools in Dracut that have yet to be certified by the NHESP.

The NHESP reports that Dracut is home to seven species listed as threatened (T) or of special concern (SC). This list, shown in Table 7.6, consists of one amphibian, three reptiles, and three insects. NHESP Program priority and estimated habitat areas are shown on Map 7.7.

**Table 7.6: Species Classified as Threatened or of Special Concern**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Type	Status	Date Last Observed
Blue-spotted Salamander	<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>	Amphibian	SC	2011
Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela duodecimguttata</i>	Beetle	SC	Historic
Cow Path Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela purpurea</i>	Beetle	SC	1891
Blanding's Turtle	<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Reptile	T	2012
Wood Turtle	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Reptile	SC	2009
Umber Shadowdragon	<i>Neurocordulia obsoleta</i>	Dragonfly/Damselfly	SC	2004
Eastern Box Turtle	<i>Terrapene carolina</i>	Reptile	SC	2013

*Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program*

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Like many communities with an industrial history, there have been unintended releases of environmental contaminants in Dracut. Since the late 1970s, there have been 109 reported releases of petroleum or hazardous materials. Most have been remediated and pose no danger to the community currently. There are three sites where DEP has imposed a use limitation, and three release cases that remain open presently.

There is one inactive landfill within Dracut located off Hildreth Street, as shown on Map 7.8. The landfill operated from 1945 to 1993 and was used for municipal solid waste.

## NON-POINT POLLUTION/STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Non-point source pollution impacts the environment through stormwater runoff entering surface water bodies and groundwater. Such sources of pollution include the following:

- Fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides from lawns and farmland;
- Oil, grease and toxic chemicals from transportation sources, roadways, fueling stations, and parking lot runoff;
- Sediment from improperly managed construction sites; and
- Pathogens and nutrients from livestock, pet waste, and failing septic systems.

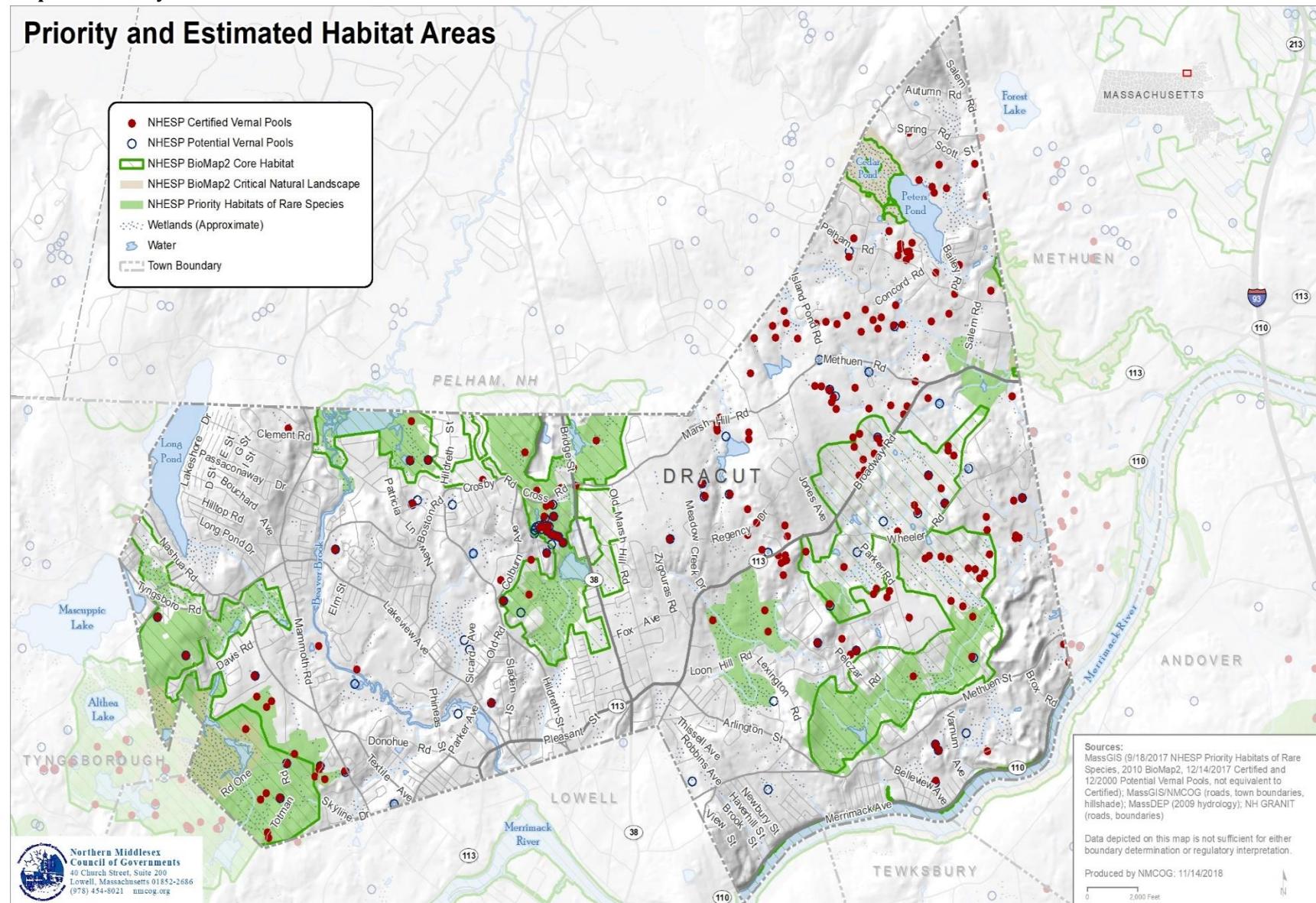
These sources of pollution are more difficult to control than point source pollution, and are best addressed through proper land management and agricultural practices, effective maintenance of motor vehicles, land use controls, and homeowner education.

In 2016, EPA and DEP issued a new MS4 Stormwater Permit for Massachusetts that went into effect on July 1, 2018. This permit requires the operators of a regulated small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), including Dracut, to obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit coverage. MS4s are considered point sources because they discharge stormwater into discrete conveyances, including roads with drainage systems and municipal streets. Under the permit, Dracut is required to develop and implement a storm water management program that includes six minimum control measures, and there are water quality testing, monitoring, mapping, maintenance and reporting requirements contained within the permit as well.

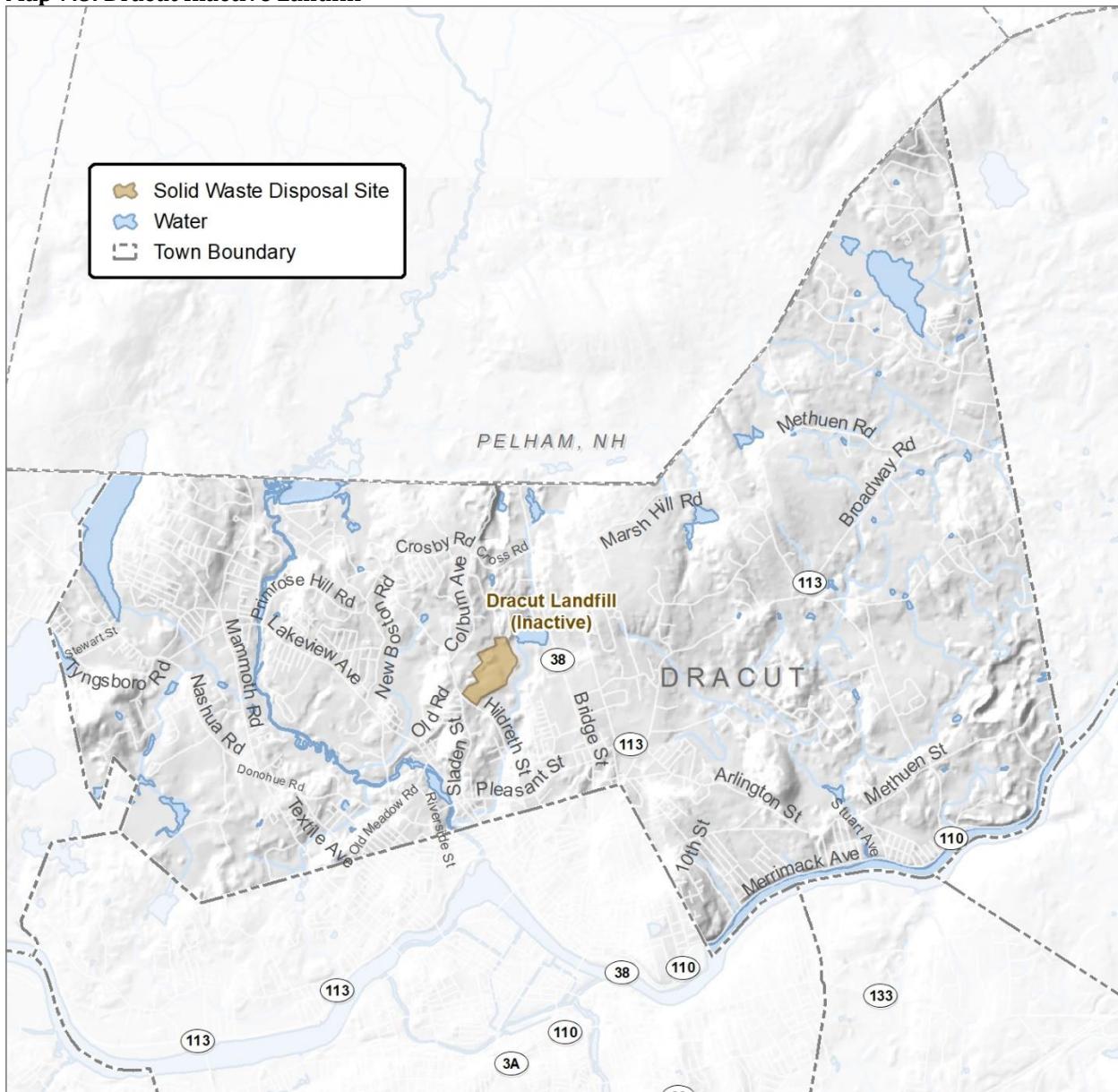
The six minimum control measures include the following:

- Public Education and Outreach;
- Public Involvement/Participation;
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination;
- Construction Site Runoff Control;
- Post-Construction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment; and
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations.

Map 7.7: Priority and Estimated Habitat Areas



### Map 7.8: Dracut Inactive Landfill

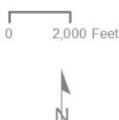


## Sources:

Sources:  
MassGIS (BWP solid waste disposal sites);  
MassDOT/NMCOG (roads, town boundaries); MassDEP  
(2009 hydrology); NH GRANIT (roads, boundaries)

Data depicted on this map is not sufficient for either boundary determination or regulatory interpretation.

Produced by NMCOG: 11/15/2018



## The Northern Middlesex

**THE NORTHEAST MIDDLESEX  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT**  
40 Church Street, Suite 200  
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852  
(978) 454-2621

As the operator of a regulated small MS4, Dracut must select best management practices (BMPs) and measurable goals for each minimum control measure, and design and implement a comprehensive program to reduce pollutants to the maximum extent practical (MEP). To assist in meeting the requirements of the new EPA permit, Dracut has established a stormwater enterprise fund and has developed a Stormwater and Erosion Control Bylaw. In addition, the Planning Board is in the process of revising the Town's Subdivision Regulations to allow for the use of low impact development (LID) techniques for managing stormwater.

Dracut is a member of the Northern Middlesex Stormwater Collaborative (NMSC), an organization of 13 communities that work collaboratively to address the requirements of the new MS4 permit. NMCOG staff serves as the administrative and technical staff for NMSC.

## CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Cultural resources are the places, structures and institutions that contribute to a community's unique identity and sense of place. From its historic homes to the barns and stone walls of local farms and its mills, Dracut is fortunate to retain vestiges of its past. Recognizing the role of cultural resources is vital to a community's character. Therefore, it is critical that the Town continue to inventory, document and preserve what remains.

A master plan is not meant to serve as a comprehensive preservation plan for the community. Instead, it is a planning tool to document the town's preservation efforts and define the importance of such efforts in the future of the town. The visioning sessions and the survey undertaken for this Master Plan clearly highlighted the fact that residents and town officials highly value the town's historic assets.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF DRACUT

The town of Dracut was once part of a larger region located north of the Merrimack River for a distance of seven miles along the river's frontage. The area included a large tract of land within New Hampshire. English colonists Samuel Varnum and Richard Shatswell received 1,100 acres of land within this area from John Evered, and Varnum is said to be the first to settle in what is now Dracut in 1664. Shatswell did not settle here and instead sold his land to Edward Coburn. The Varnum and Coburn names continue to have historical significance in Dracut.

The English colonists were not the first inhabitants of the region however. The Native Americans who occupied the area were the Pawtuckets, which included at least six sub-tribes. One of the sub-tribes was also called the Pawtuckets and they resided near the

Merrimack River. The falls, now named for the tribe, provided good fishing and the tribe's encampments have been documented just east of Long Pond. The center of the Pawtuckets tribe was located in a section of Dracut (and partly in Lowell) and was led by its chief, Passaconaway. It was here that the Reverend John Elliott began his missionary work in 1647 at the urging of the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Passaconaway and his son, Wannalancit, are said to have converted to Christianity in response, and consequently they became known as the "praying Indians". In 1662, the General Court of Massachusetts provided a large land grant to Passaconaway and his people.

The so-called King Philip's War, led by Native American Metacomet, raged from 1675 through 1678 across New England, including in Dracut. Metacomet convinced a number of tribes, other than the Pawtuckets, to band together against the European settlers in order to regain their territory. Two of Samuel Varnum's sons were killed in the conflict. In spite of this, homesteads in Dracut were rebuilt on land purchased from the Pawtuckets in 1701, and the population grew.

In 1701, Dracut separated from Chelmsford and was formally incorporated. The town was comprised of 22,334 acres occupied by wilderness and some basic dwellings and subsistence farms. (The 1744 map by surveyor James Ingalls shows four routes through town: one along the north bank of the Merrimack River, an east-west route in the southern area of town, and two north-south routes that correspond to what is today Mammoth Road and Hildreth Street.) In 1711, Town Meeting voted to establish a meeting house for worship, and the structure was completed in 1716.

In 1741, the boundary between the provinces of Massachusetts and New Hampshire were changed by an act of King George II. This change reduced the size of Dracut to 16,000 acres. The construction of a schoolhouse was authorized in 1752, and mills for fulling and dressing cloth and paper were in operation. A grist mill and sawmill were in operation on Beaver Brook at this time as well. The incorporation of Dunstable cut away more land in 1755, leaving Dracut with half of its original acreage.

Dracut's population in 1776 was 1,173, driven by refugees from the siege on Boston. During the Revolutionary War, 135 men went to fight for the colony's freedom. In 1780, Joseph B. Varnum served as a member of the State's Constitutional Convention. The major transportation improvements of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were the establishment of Mammoth Road in 1792, and the construction of the Middlesex Merrimack (Pawtucket) Bridge which opened in November of that same year. In 1794, the Centre Church (the Old Yellow Meeting House) was constructed, and remains today as one of the town's most prominent landmarks.



**Old Yellow Meeting House**

By 1800, Dracut's population had grown to 1,679. The opening of the Middlesex Canal in 1809 and the Middlesex Turnpike in 1811 spurred the growth of the Dracut mills. In 1826, the Central Bridge was constructed, replacing Bradley's Ferry.

The Industrial Revolution took hold in Dracut with the establishment of the Baldwin Woolen Company at the lower falls of Beaver Brook (100 Pleasant Street) in 1840. By 1858, the company was under new ownership, became Merrimack Woolen Company, and flourished until its buildings were destroyed by fire in 1864. The buildings were reconstructed and the company continued to operate for the next fifty years, spurring significant new development in the area along and adjacent to Pleasant Street. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the company was bought by M.T. Stevens Company and new buildings were added to the complex.

Nearby sawed lumber and ship's knees were stockpiled awaiting high water that would allow them to be floated down river to Newburyport. The appearance of the area was similar to a Navy Yard, therefore, the area became known by this name, as is the case today. Further north along Beaver Brook, a cotton mill was established in the "Frogtown" area of Dracut in 1844. In this mill, Martha Little Davidson is credited with winding the first spool of thread in the United States, and hence the thread industry was established in this country.

In 1879, Michael Collins purchased the mill and water rights along the northerly stretch of Beaver Brook, and converted it to a woolen mill. Subsequently, the mill buildings, canals and related structures were replaced, updated and expanded. Mill employees settled in the vicinity of the woolen mill in tenements and buildings financed by Collins, and this area became known “the Village” and evolved into the area that is now known as Collinsville. In 1899, the mill and its associated properties were sold to the American Woolen Company and its name was changed to “Beaver Brook Mills”.

During this time period, Lowell was also booming and would eventually surpass Dracut as the economic center of the region, helped by a series of annexations. In 1850, the population of Dracut reached 3,503, but after the Centralville section of Dracut was annexed by Lowell, the population dropped to 1,881 by 1860. By 1870, the population rebounded to 2,078, but Lowell annexed Pawtucketville in 1874, reducing Dracut’s population to 1,116.

An 1889 map of Dracut shown on the following page depicts the town’s final boundaries, showing the rural eastern section of the town and the concentrated development in Collinsville, the Navy Yard, and Dracut Center. This map also shows the route of the Lowell & Dracut Electric Street Railway that ran northwest from the Centralville section of Lowell, along Lakeview Avenue, southwesterly below Long Pond to the shore of Lake Mascuppic. In the late 1800s, the Lowell and Suburban Street Railway companies purchased land to establish a summer resort for Lowell’s factory workers. Hence, Lakeview Park was established in 1889 and expanded in 1890, and Dracut was transformed into a resort town, with summer cottages along Lake Mascuppic and events centered in Lakeview Park.

Along the Merrimack River, in the southeast section of Dracut, a large estate called Belle Grove occupied a large tract of land north of the Varnum Ferry crossing that became the site of picnic and campgrounds for Lowell workers. By the 1920s the Belle Grove Amusement Park was established between Mt. Pleasant and Jackson Streets. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dracut began its development as a suburb of Lowell. When the street car operations ceased in the 1920s, automobile oriented development began. Although development slowed during the Depression and residential construction nearly came to a standstill during World War II, post-war development occurred at a brisk pace.



**MAP 7.9: 1889 Map of Dracut, Courtesy of the Dracut Historical Society**

By the mid-1960s, the construction of highways such as I-93, I-495 and Route 3 provided access to employment centers outside of Dracut, reinforcing Dracut's development as a bedroom community. Today, Dracut is predominantly residential, with limited commercial, industrial and agricultural land uses. Its lack of direct access to the regional highway system is seen by many as a hindrance to future economic development.

## HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

Dracut has an impressive inventory of historic buildings, spanning three centuries with the oldest structures dating back to the 1700s. These historic structures include residences, religious and institutional structures, mills, barns and outbuildings. Most of the town's historic buildings are privately owned, but there are some that are owned by the Town and non-profit entities. Many post-war homes are not perceived as historic in contemporary opinion, yet they provide a sense of Dracut's development pattern through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Table 7.7 below provides a summary of the principal structures constructed by time period, as compiled by Larson Fisher Associates in 2012.

**Table 7.7: Principal Buildings Built 1965 or Earlier**

Construction Period	Number of Resources
Prior to 1770	9
1770-1839	23
1840-1869	31
1870-1899	354
1900-1944	1,175
1945-present	524*

\*Does not include residences in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century subdivisions; includes several late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century memorials and monuments.

*Source: Historic Preservation Plan and Town-wide Survey of Historic Resources, Larson Fisher Associates, November 2012, p. I-16.*

The town's architecture includes many styles that were popular in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Architectural styles include Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Classical Revival, Italianate, Modern, Queen Anne, Second Empire and Craftsman. Most of these buildings are well-preserved and maintained, and contribute to the visual character of the town and its neighborhoods. Several of the town's oldest homes reflect the characteristics of early farmhouses with large barns and outbuildings. Table 7.8 on the following page summarizes the architectural styles of the principal buildings inventoried across the community.

**Table 7.8: Architectural Style of Principal Buildings\***

Architectural Style	Number of Buildings
Colonial Revival (applies to Cape Cod, American Ranch, Ranch/Split Level, Bungalows, etc.)	1,175
Craftsman	154
Gothic Revival	92
Classic Revival	79
Modern	77
Federal	22
Queen Anne	20
Dutch Colonial Revival	17
Transitional (mix of styles/eclectic)	12
Greek Revival	9
Tudor Revival	8
Italianate	7
Utilitarian	6
Second Empire	4
Colonial	4
Ranch	3

\*288 buildings could not be categorized by style.

Source: *Historic Preservation Plan and Town-wide Survey of Historic Resources, Larson Fisher Associates, November 2012, p. I-16.*

The integrity of a building is an important factor when considering its significance for purposes of preservation. The 2012 Historic Preservation Plan prepared by Fisher Larson Associates indicates that a substantial number of structures are virtually in original condition or minimally altered (e.g., there are small additions, replacement windows, new siding, etc.), as shown in Table 7.9 below.

**Table 7.9: Integrity of Principal Buildings**

Integrity	Number of Structures	Integrity Class Totals
Intact	215	
Minimally Altered	1,096	1,311
Altered	325	
Significantly Altered	389	713

Source: *Historic Preservation Plan and Town-wide Survey of Historic Resources, Larson Fisher Associates, November 2012, p. I-17.*

## HISTORIC AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Agriculture forms an important aspect of the town's heritage and economy. Preservation of historic farmstead structures is complementary to the town's efforts to preserve farmland and its agricultural economy. Dracut has an impressive number of historic farmstead complexes containing connected farm buildings and barns. Dracut's Preservation Plan identified the following historic farmstead properties with connected farm buildings:

- Phineas Trull Farmstead (Ogonowski Farmstead), 713 Broadway Road;
- Brox Farm, 1276 Broadway;
- Peter Trull Farmstead, 540 Wheeler Road;
- I. Coburn Farmstead, 194 Crosby Road;
- William Osgood Farmstead, 746 Mammoth Road;
- Aaron Osgood Farmstead, 737 Mammoth Road;
- Richardson Farmstead, 600 Marsh Hill Road;
- T. Kinan Farmstead, 122 Old Parker Road; and
- Peabody Farmstead, 312 Marsh Hill Road.



**Richardson House and Barn**

In addition, the Preservation Plan recommended intensive field survey and documentary research for the following freestanding houses and barns:

- Varnum Farmstead (Beaver Brook Farm), 761 Mammoth Road;
- Russell Farmstead, 430 Marsh Hill Road;
- Richardson Farmstead, 316 Richardson Road;
- Fox Farmstead, 238 Fox Avenue;
- Fox Farmstead, 324 Broadway;
- Peabody Farmstead, 256 Marsh Hill Road;
- Donohue Farmstead, 343 Donohue Road;
- Edward Richardson Farmstead, 114 Broadway;
- 1374 Broadway Road property;

- 282 New Boston Road property;
- 583 Methuen Street property; and
- 437 Parker Road property.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES DESIGNATIONS

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect America's historic and archaeological resources. Currently, there are no National Register or local historic districts or places designated within Dracut. The Preservation Plan developed by Larson Fisher Associates recommended completing and updating intensive-level surveys of many properties for potential listing the State and National Registers of Historic Places, including sixty houses, the Old Meeting House (10 Arlington Street), Merrimack Woolen Mills complex (76 Pleasant Street), Dracut Center School (11 Spring Park Avenue), Kenwood School (920 Methuen Street), and St. Mary's of the Assumption Church (1868 Lakeview Avenue). In 2017, Dracut received a Survey and Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) through which it was able to submit survey forms for 147 buildings and structures, a first step in listing individual properties in the National Register and in establishing historic districts.

The Preservation Plan recommended that seven historic districts be established in Dracut, as described below:

- **Collinsville Mill Area**-Beaver Brook Mills and other industrial buildings, worker housing, and other properties directly associated with the mill operations;
- **Dracut Center** – Includes significant historic properties developed from 1880-1930, such as the Old Yellow Meeting House, Grange Hall, and Dracut Center School;
- **Mammoth-Nashua Roads Rural District**-Includes a cluster of farms with intact connected farm buildings;
- **Sladen-Pleasant-Swain Street Area** -Includes a residential district with strong historical connections to the Merrimack Mills, with many residential housing structures dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century;
- **Broadway and Parker Rural District**-Includes a cluster of farms that have survived with intact connected farm buildings;
- **Marsh Hill and Methuen Road Rural District**- Includes a cluster of farms that have survived with intact connected farm buildings; and

- **Parker Avenue-School Street Area**-Includes a residential district with strong connections to the Merrimack Mills, with structures dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The locations of these potential districts are shown on Map 7.10 on the following page.

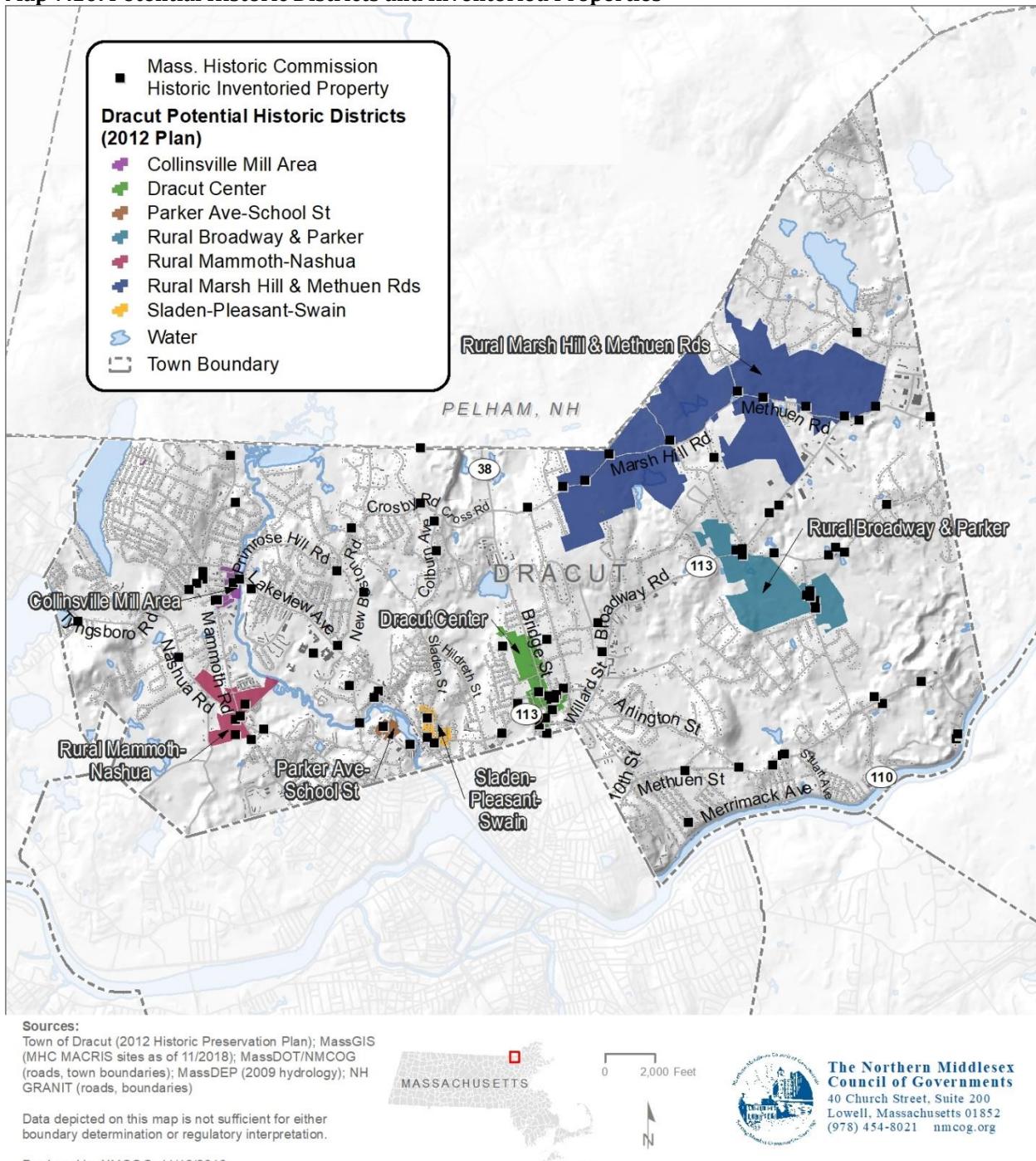
#### MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM

Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS) data are compiled from a variety of records and files maintained by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), including but not limited to, the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth, National Register of Historic Places nominations, State Register of Historic Places listings, and local historic district study reports. The historic resources are organized into the following categories: buildings, structures, objects and burial grounds. Map 7.10 shows the location of these resources relative to the historic districts proposed in the 2012 Preservation Plan.

#### BUILDINGS

There are 172 buildings listed in the MACRIS database for Dracut, fewer than the number identified in the Town's Preservation Plan that was completed in 2012. Table 7.10 identifies the property name, address, and year of construction for each building listed in MACRIS.

**Map 7.10: Potential Historic Districts and Inventoried Properties**



**Table 7.10: Historic Buildings Listed in MACRIS**

<b>Building Name</b>	<b>Street No.</b>	<b>Street Name</b>	<b>Year Built</b>
Coburn - Osgood, Solomon - Cutter House	710	Mammoth Rd	1700
Osgood, Atis - Cutter, Charles H. House	746	Mammoth Rd	1850
Varnum, Abraham - Richardson, Justus House	761	Mammoth Rd	1735
NA	6	Middle St	1880
NA	12	Middle St	1880
Collins, Michael Woolen Mill	101	Mill St	1884
Haggett, Thomas - Bradley, Joshua House	170	Sladen St	1809
Merrimack Woolen Mills	76	Pleasant St	1865
NA	878	Broadway Rd	1900
NA	915	Broadway Rd	1900
Stevens, Noah House	319	Jones Ave	1800
NA	1188	Merrimack Ave	1925
NA	1200	Merrimack Ave	1925
NA	1204	Merrimack Ave	1925
NA	1299	Methuen St	1925
NA	1300	Methuen St	1900
Coburn, George W. House	1412	Methuen St	1855
Barron, James Mitchell House	106	Old Parker Rd	1855
Kinnan, Thomas House	122	Old Parker Rd	1870
Gilman, Joseph House	100	Old Parker Rd	1850
Brielson House	438	Parker Rd	1892
Barren, James Mitchel - Leczynski, John House	437	Parker Rd	1850
Parker, Asa House	110	Wheeler Rd	1850
Foster House	286	Wheeler Rd	1913
Dracut District #10 School House	308	Wheeler Rd	1875
Christynia, Andrew House	319	Wheeler Rd	1909
Kenwood Elementary School	920	Methuen St	1900
Coburn, Jabesh House	1222	Mammoth Rd	1776
Hill, Isaac House	1602	Mammoth Rd	1829
Collinsville Elementary School	2063	Lakeview Ave	1891
Dracut Grange Hall #216	1367	Bridge St	1903
Dracut Centre Elementary School	11	Spring Park Ave	1898
Goodhue Elementary School	112	Sladen St	1906
Richardson, Samuel - Fox, Darius Steadman House	56	Fox Ave	1825
Peabody, Ephraim - Wilson, Clifton House	379	Methuen Rd	1835
Russell, Capt. Stephen - Nutting, Coffern House	363	Pleasant St	1755
Dracut District #7 School House	62	Arlington St	1883
Colburn, Selden House	227	Colburn Ave	1870
Yellow Meetinghouse	10	Arlington St	1794
Greenmont Avenue Elementary School	88	Spring Park Ave	1928
Collinsville Union Mission Church	2087	Lakeview Ave	1897
Parker, Moses Greeley Memorial Library	28	Arlington St	1922
Dracut District #7 School House	1250	Bridge St	1831
Coburn, Granville House	1327	Bridge St	1880

Building Name	Street No.	Street Name	Year Built
Coburn, Jesse House	1533	Lakeview Ave	1800
Coburn, Phineas House	1660	Lakeview Ave	1790
Saint Mary's of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church	1868	Lakeview Ave	1884
Wilson, James Harvey Blacksmith Shop	145	Pleasant St	1845
Mansur, William - Finucane, Fred D. House	1558	Broadway Rd	1750
Hubbard, John Gordon House	419	Aiken Ave	1865
Hubbard, John Gordon Carriage House	419	Aiken Ave	1865
Gilmore, John A. - Vinal, Nellie G. House	21	Amesbury St	1897
Dracut Meeting House Parsonage	22	Arlington St	1955
Richardson - Lachut, Stanley House	114	Broadway Rd	1850
Richardson, Edward E. - Lachut, Stanley Barn	114	Broadway Rd	1880
Parker, Bernice - Ogonowski, Stanislawa House	702	Broadway Rd	1875
Parker, Bernice - Ogonowski, Stanislawa Barn	702	Broadway Rd	1875
Broadway School - District 10 School	730	Broadway School	1906
Ellingwood - Richardson, Charles E. House	1374	Broadway Rd	1850
Richardson, Charles E. - Brox, John Barn	1374	Broadway Rd	1880
Colburn, Micah - Thompson, Charles W. Jr. House	330	Colburn Ave	1850
Coburn, Zachariah - Szat, John House	194	Crosby Rd	1840
Coburn, Zachariah - Szat, John Barn	184	Crosby Rd	1840
Fox, Milton- White, Seymour R. House	238	Fox Ave	1870
Flint, Dr. Omar Alpha Hospital	23	Kearsage Ave	1896
Flint, Dr. Omar Alpha Carriage House	23	Kearsage Ave	1896
Saint Mary's of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church Parsonage	1868	Lakeview Ave	1909
Collinsville Union Mission Church Parsonage	2097	Lakeview Ave	1956
Willett, Thomas Beckwith Farmstand	664	Mammoth Rd	1915
Connell, Thomas H. - Boland, Patrick House	737	Mammoth Rd	1880
Connell, Thomas H. - Boland, Patrick Barn	737	Mammoth Rd	1880
Fox, Eben Tappan House	114	Marsh Hill Rd	1893
Fox, Russell House	256	Marsh Hill Rd	1850
Fox, Russell Barn	256	Marsh Hill Rd	1850
Peabody, Nathaniel - Bryant, Alton B. Farm	312	Marsh Hill Rd	1840
Peabody, Nathaniel - Alton, Bryant B. Barn	312	Marsh Hill Rd	NA
Hall, Ephraim Jr. - Cuff, Bert A. House	430	Marsh Hill Rd	1775
Cuff, Bert A. - Dunlap, Dr. Albert A. Barn	430	Marsh Hill Rd	1880
Richardson, Rockwell G. - Yapp, Clifford E. House	600	Marsh Hill Rd	1870
Richardson, Rockwell G. - Yapp, Clifford E. Barn	600	Marsh Hill Rd	1870
Richardson, James House	119	Methuen Rd	1800
Richardson, James Barn	119	Methuen Rd	1820
Richardson, Melvin Dairy Barn	119	Methuen Rd	1900
Stevens, Benjamin - Ogonowski, Alexander House	267	Methuen Rd	1800
Stevens Benjamin- Ogonowski, Alexander Barn	267	Methuen Rd	1880
Liab, Lee - Wozniak, Joseph House	583	Methuen St	1850
Liab, Lee - Wozniak, Joseph Barn	583	Methuen St	1850
Saint Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church	891	Methuen St	1950

Building Name	Street No.	Street Name	Year Built
Quinn, Maurice - Briscoe, John House	274	Nashua Rd	1850
Quinn, Maurice - Briscoe, John Barn	274	Nashua Rd	1850
Hudzik, John House	282	New Boston Rd	1875
Hudzik, John Barn	282	New Boston Rd	1880
Hudzik, John Shed	282	New Boston Rd	NA
Coburn, Thaddeus House	438	New Boston Rd	1790
Kinnan, Thomas Barn	122	Old Parker Rd	1870
Parker Avenue School	77	Parker Ave	1924
Leczynski, John Barn	437	Parker Rd	1947
French, Loring House	225	Pelham Rd	1850
Conant, Joseph S. - Cutrumbes, John House	51	Phineas St	1865
Saint Mary Magdalen Roman Catholic Church	250	Tyngsboro Rd	1931
Golar, Archibald J. House	119	Vermont Ave	1903
Whittier, Oliver - Gulezian, Philip House	540	Wheeler Rd	1820
Whittier, Oliver - Gulezian, Philip Barn	540	Wheeler Rd	1820
Varnum, Abraham Corn Crib - Richardson, Justus Seed House	761	Mammoth Rd	1800
Richardson, Justus Stone Garage	761	Mammoth Rd	1880
Richardson, Justus Workshop Complex	112	Mammoth Rd	1880
Richardson, Justus Cutter Dairy Barn and Main Barn Ruins	761	Mammoth	1915
Richardson, Justus Cutter Squash House	761	Mammoth Rd	1924
Gilcrease, John - Kittredge, Joseph Farmhouse	1276	Boadway Rd	1820
Fox, Fred A. - Lachut, Jaboc Shed Complex	1276	Broadway Rd	1875
Fox, Fred A. - Lachut, Jacob Farmstand	1276	Broadway Rd	1925
Brox, George Barn	1276	Broadway Rd	1946
Brox, George C. Farmstand	1276	Broadway Rd	1986
Fox, John F. House	1363	Broadway Rd	1953
Brox, John F. Barn	1363	Broadway Rd	2000
Brox, George, Inc. Garage Facility	1276	Broadway Rd	2000
Brox, George C. Utility Shed 1	1276	Broadway Rd	2000
Brox, George C. Utility Shed 2	1276	Broadway Rd	2000
Richmond, Perez O. - Lannan, Patrick House	343	Donohue Rd	1840
Lannan, Patrick - Donohoe, Peter H. House	343	Donohue Rd	1880
Lannan, Patrick - Donohoe, Peter H. Barn	343	Richmond Rd	1880
Donohoe, Peter H. - Charbonneau, Adelard F. Shed	343	Donohue Rd	1920
Shaw, Mark Loran Sr. House	195	New Boston Rd	1908
Shaw, Mark Loran Jr. House	195	New Boston Rd	1916
Shaw Farm Barn	195	New Boston Rd	1930
Sherburn, David - Kindarewicz, Michael Farmhouse		Methuen St	1887
Sherburn, David - Kindarewicz, Michael English Barn		Methuen St	1825
Sherburn, David - Kindarewicz, Michael Workshop and Garage		Methuen St	1887
Sherburn, David - Kindarewicz, Michael Shed		Methuen St	1887
Wasylak Barn		Methuen St	1996
Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Church	30	Goodhue Ave	1938
Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Rectory	30	Goodhue Ave	1927
Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Garage	30	Goodhue Ave	1927

Building Name	Street No.	Street Name	Year Built
Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Parochial School	30	Goodhue Ave	1950
Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Convent	40	Goodhue Ave	1953
Trull, David - Fox, George R. - Ogonowski House	713	Broadway Rd	1800
Little House	713	Broadway Rd	1820
Trull, David - Fox, George R. - Ogonowski New England Barn	713	Broadway Rd	1820
Fox, George R. - Ogonowski Carriage House and Hen House	713	Broadway Rd	1885
Richardson - Lachut, Stanley Outbuilding	114	Broadway Rd	NA
Richardson - Lachut, Stanley Cow Barn	114	Broadway Rd	NA
Coburn, Zachariah Chicken Coop	194	Crosby Rd	NA
Fox Garage	256	Marsh Hill Rd	NA
Bryant, Alton B. Windmill	312	Marsh Hill Rd	1900
Richardson, Justus Cutter Silo	761	Mammoth Rd	1915
Shaw Farm Silo	195	New Boston Rd	1950
Brox, John F. House	1363	Broadway Rd	1953

Source: <http://mhc-macris.net>

These buildings include residences, barns, outbuildings, schools, municipal buildings, churches, a windmill, silos, chicken coops, and garages. The Coburn-Solomon Osgood-Cutter house, located at 710 Mammoth Road, is the oldest building and was constructed in 1700. Remarkably, there are six buildings in Dracut that date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## HISTORIC STRUCTURES

There is one structure within Dracut listed on the MACRIS. The Stone Arch Bridge over Beaver Brook was constructed in 1857 and was rehabilitated in 1921.

## HISTORIC OBJECTS

There are two historic objects listed in MACRIS: the Pine Tree Boundary Marker located on Black Oak Lane that was installed in 1887, and the General Casimer Pulaski Monument located on Arlington Street that was erected in 1909.

Casimir Pulaski was born in Wniary, Poland on March 4, 1748 to a noble family. He gained prominence in Europe for his role in defending liberty in Poland. Excited by America's struggle for independence, he joined the American Revolutionary War effort, arriving in Boston in July 1777. He was given a commission as Brigadier General and Chief of Cavalry and was present at Germantown, Pennsylvania, led his legion in a number of important battles, and was mortally wounded at Savannah, Georgia at the age of 31 years. Several other monuments are clearly historic and should be listed on MACRIS. At a

minimum, these include the Revolutionary War Monument (1904), Veterans of World War I Monument (1925), Monument to Men and Women Who Served in the Civil War and Spanish-American War (1929), and Veterans of All Wars Monument (1958).



**Pine Tree Boundary Marker (1887)**

## BURIAL GROUNDS AND CEMETERIES

The Oakland-Oak Grove Cemetery is the only historic burial ground in Dracut listed in MACRIS. The cemetery was established for burial purposes on August 21, 1833 by Pascal P. Coburn and deeded to William F. Osgood. On December 26, 1899, the heirs of the original owners formally incorporated the Oakland Cemetery Association. In 1902, the cemetery was divided into 72 lots. On March 16, 1965, it was turned over to the Town of Dracut by the Oakland Cemetery Association.

The cemetery is on land once owned by Joseph Hamblet, who lived in Collinsville before 1753. The south end was at one time the farm of Captain Peter Coburn of Revolutionary War fame. This site serves as the burial place of the earliest settlers of Collinsville, including the Coburns, Varnums, Hamblets, Clements, Parkers and Hills.



**Oakland Cemetery**

Although they are not currently listed on MACRIS, the Bailey Cemetery (1779), the New Boston Cemetery (1803), Varnum Cemetery (1821), and the Richardson Cemetery (1850) are clearly historic and should be listed in the future.

The Town of Dracut maintains two cemeteries that are located in the City of Lowell: the Hildreth Cemetery on Hildreth Street and the Hamblett Cemetery on Jordon Street. Hildreth Cemetery is relatively small and located in the Centralville neighborhood of Lowell. The cemetery's history dates back to the mid-18th century when Major Ephraim Hildreth designated it as a burial ground prior to his death in 1740. In 1913, the City of Lowell attempted to sell the cemetery after the Town of Dracut neglected to pay a tax on a new sidewalk on Hildreth Street. This would have resulted in the forced relocation of many of the remains but the case was resolved in court.

The Hamblett Cemetery is listed on MACRIS and the earliest death date recorded is 1728, while the latest is 1923. There are approximately sixty-five headstones within the cemetery, which is referred to as *GR4 Garrison House Burial Ground* in the "Vital Records of Dracut Massachusetts to the end of the year 1849".

#### PRESERVATION PLANNING IN DRACUT

Dracut is fortunate to have a number of municipal and private non-profit organizations dedicated to preserving historic resources. Town boards such as the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Historical Commission, Agricultural Commission, Community Preservation Committee, and Cemetery Department work to ensure that the character and resources of the community are protected. Non-profit entities such as the Dracut Land

Trust, the Dracut Historical Society, and the Grange also contribute resources and add support to these initiatives. Dracut has also been proactive through the acceptance of the Community Preservation Act, and the adoption of a Right to Farm Bylaw.

**The Dracut Historical Commission** was established in 1966 and consists of six members appointed by the Board of Selectmen and is charged with identifying and preserving the historical heritage and resources of the town. The Commission is also an information resource for property owners who are rehabilitating their structures.

**Dracut Historical Society** is a non-profit membership organization, open to those interested in learning about local history and sharing that history with others. The Society was created in 1930 by a group of residents who came together to study local history. The Society manages and operates a town history museum on Lakeview Avenue next to Harmony Hall.

**The Agricultural Commission** consists of seven members and three alternates appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The purpose of the Agricultural Commission is to preserve, protect, and help support, and promote the agricultural community in Dracut.

**The Dracut Land Trust** is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and preserving open space and farmland. Currently the Trust owns the Ogonowski Memorial Field (34 acres) and the Smith-Healy Farm (35 acres). In addition, the Trust holds the Conservation Restriction (CR) on the George B. Richardson Hay Field.

**The Community Preservation Committee** was established in 2001 and consists of the following nine members, according to the Committee's bylaw:

- One member from the Conservation Commission;
- One member from the Recreation Commission;
- One member from the Historical Commission;
- One member from the Planning Board;
- One member from the Housing Authority; and
- Four members appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

The Committee makes recommendations to Town Meeting on the expenditure of Community Preservation Act funds relative to historic preservation, affordable housing, recreation and open space.

## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) provides a source of funding for Open Space Preservation, Recreation, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing through a surcharge on the property tax. The Town keeps the money in a separate CPA account. Each category (Open Space/Recreation, Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing) must receive a minimum of 10% of the CPA funds available each year. The remaining 70% may be allocated for any one of the categories, as Town Meeting sees fit.

Dracut adopted the Community Preservation Act in May 2001 with a 2% surcharge. Since that time, Dracut has leveraged over \$16 million in CPA funding, which includes \$10.5 million in local surcharge plus \$4.5 million in Trust Fund distributions, as of 2017. The funds have allowed the Town to undertake the following projects:

- 112 Crosby Road land acquisition (21 acres of farmland)
- 467 Pleasant Street land acquisition to expand Monahan Park
- 509 Hildreth Street acquisition
- 515 Hildreth Street acquisition
- Beaver Brook Farm acquisition
- Repair of the Squash Barn at Beaver Brook Farm
- Canney Farm –Purchase of 2166 and 2178 Lakeview Avenue and design and development of recreation facilities
- Purchase of Community Preservation Project Identification Signs
- Design and lighting of recreation fields and parking at 40 Diana Lane
- Exterior rehabilitation of the Dracut Centre School/Town Hall Annex
- Dracut Centre School Affordable Housing
- Dracut High School Track bathroom and storage area construction
- Dracut town-wide historic survey
- Drainage Improvements at Veterans Memorial Park
- East Richardson Road land acquisition (45 acres)
- Greenmont Avenue property acquisition
- Harmony Hall rehabilitation
- Dracut High School Track renovation
- Dracut High School/Beaver Brook cross country running trail
- Historic town document preservation plan and cost estimate
- Historical survey
- Hovey Playground renovation
- Improvements to hiking trails and kayak/canoe launch
- Lecyinski property agricultural preservation restriction (APR)

- Long Pond weed control
- Monahan Park improvements
- Redesign of Carrick Park
- Construction of a pavilion at Veterans Memorial Park
- Renovation of the Campbell School Little League Field
- Resurfacing of the Campbell School Basketball courts
- Saja Farm Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Senior Housing Feasibility Study for the Richardson property and Town Hall Annex
- Senior Housing at Greenmont Avenue
- Yapp Farm Land Acquisition (27.7 acres) and subsequent improvements

### RIGHT TO FARM BYLAW

Dracut adopted a Right to Farm Bylaw in 2006. The bylaw protects farmers from nuisance complaints, encourages the pursuit of agriculture, and promotes agriculture-based economic opportunities and farmlands, by allowing agricultural uses and related activities to function in minimal conflict with abutters and town government. The bylaw established a grievance provision whereby complaints may be filed with the Town Manager, Board of Selectmen or Board of Health.



**Saja Farm**

### PUBLIC INPUT

The results of the written survey for the Master Plan indicated that half (52.2%) of those responding chose to live in Dracut due to its character and rural setting, with 63% of the respondents indicating that they would rate the amount of open space in town as excellent

or good. When asked to list the top three issues facing Dracut over the next ten years, the third most popular response was overdevelopment (141 responses). Approximately, half of the respondents ranked the protection of wetlands and water resources, the protection of wildlife, historic preservation, agricultural preservation and forestry in Dracut as excellent or good, with a quarter of the respondents noting that they were unfamiliar with these issues and unable to offer an opinion. Nearly 80% of survey respondents favored protecting additional agricultural lands, while 86.5% favored encouraging agri-tourism and/or supporting local agriculturally-related businesses. Respondent opinions regarding the adequacy of cultural and community events in town were divided, with 44% of respondents rating them as excellent or good, while 41% rated them as fair or poor.

The Master Plan Committee also distributed a written and online survey to young residents completing their senior year at Dracut High School, as a means of gathering additional input from youth. The input generated from the youth survey relative to Natural and Cultural Resources is summarized as follows:

- Over one-third (36%) of the respondents believe that their families moved to Dracut because of the community character and rural setting.
- 41.17% of the respondents indicated that the Town is doing an excellent (11.76%) or good (29.41%) job of protecting wetland and water resources, while 29.42% indicated it is doing a fair (14.71%) or poor (14.71%) job, and 29.41% were unable to answer the question.
- 32.35% of the respondents indicated that the Town is doing an excellent (11.76%) or good (20.59%) job of protecting wildlife habitat, while 35.29 % indicated it is doing a fair (23.53%) or poor (11.76%), and 32.35% were unable to answer the question.
- 38.23% of the respondents rated the Town's historic preservation initiatives as excellent (2.94%) or good (35.29%), while 29.18% rated historic preservation as fair (23.53%) or poor (5.88%).
- Half of the respondents rated agricultural preservation as excellent (17.65%) or good (32.35%), while 17.65 rated it as fair (14.71%) or poor (2.94%), and 32.35% were unable to answer the question.
- Nearly half (47.06%) of the respondents rated the Town's forestry initiatives as excellent (8.82%) or good (38.24%), while 29.41% rated forestry as fair (20.59%) or poor (8.82%), and 23.53% were unable to answer the question.
- Just over 42% of the respondents rated community and cultural events as excellent or good, while 30.30% indicated that they are fair, 12.12% felt that they are poor, and 15.15% were unable to answer the question.
- 87.50% of the respondents favor protecting additional agricultural lands.

The first Master Plan Visioning Session was held at Harmony Hall on October 5, 2017. During the session, public input was generated through the use of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis exercise. Participants identified the following as the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats related to Natural and Cultural Resources

**Strengths:**

- Agricultural heritage;
- Natural open space;
- Rich history;
- Local food;
- Cultural diversity; and
- Beauty of the community.

**Weaknesses:**

- Lack of community events and festivals;
- Presence of brownfields and quarries;
- Lack of identity; and
- Inadequate funding/revenue.

**Opportunities:**

- Farmer's market;
- Utilize Grange;
- Promote farms; and
- Adaptive reuse of quarries.

**Threats:**

- Loss of character;
- Lack of opportunities to socialize; and
- Overdevelopment.

On April 26, 2018, a Visioning Session on Natural and Cultural Resources was held at Harmony Hall where participants indicated that the greatest strengths lie in:

- Public support for open space preservation;
- The Beaver Brook area;
- The town's rural character as an attraction for urban residents, which could benefit businesses;
- Farmland and local produce and agricultural products; and
- CPA funds.

The top weaknesses identified by Visioning Session participants included the following:

- Lack of promotion of historic assets and events;
- Lack of public information in historic properties;
- No town historian;
- CPA funds are under attack;
- Lack of a community identity;
- The need for more volunteers; and
- Limited parking at the State Forest.

The top opportunities identified included:

- A community center;
- Ecotourism and farm-to-table restaurants;
- Development of multi-use parcels like Great Brook State Park;
- Promoting historic and natural areas in the schools;
- Market the town's Revolutionary and Industrial history;
- Beaver Brook Farm could be like Drumlin Farm;
- Eco-tourism/agri-tourism;
- Include town history, agricultural resources and ecological opportunities in the school curriculum;
- Work with DLT on land acquisitions and protection of historic structures; and
- Organizing a town history tour and an exhibit as part of Old Home Day.

The top threats identified included:

- Overdevelopment/too much building
- Lack of volunteers;
- Loss of historic homes to development;
- No demolition delay bylaw or other protective regulations, such as an historic district;
- Not enough revenue to support initiatives;
- Lack of long range planning; and
- Future pipelines.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the public outreach process, it was evident that Dracut residents value the town's remaining agricultural landscapes. A long-term strategy is needed to ensure that the Town does not face a future where these valued attributes disappear. Active farms provide local food and connect residents to the town's agrarian heritage. However, current

economic trends suggest that the conversion of farms to residential subdivisions is likely to continue. Supporting the economic viability of agricultural enterprises will be key to their future sustainability. Understanding the local and regional food systems is important, as farms are moving beyond wholesale growing, and increasing their need for storage, processing, transportation and marketing of products.

The Master Plan Committee has concluded that the Town should do more to promote the agricultural economy by encouraging: the preservation of agricultural lands through: APRs and Conservation Restrictions; farm-to-table restaurants; a “buy local” campaign; community supported agriculture (CSA); community gardens; and agri-tourism. The Agricultural Commission should work with local farm owners and the Department of Agricultural Resources to identify a funding source for undertaking a local agricultural plan that addresses agricultural preservation, and the growth of the local agricultural economy. Dracut could collaborate with other nearby communities on this effort, in order to identify opportunities that extend beyond town boundaries.

A plan is being prepared to prioritize lands classified under Chapters 61, 61A and 61B for possible future acquisition, so that the town is prepared to react quickly when these parcels become available for possible acquisition. In addition, the Town should continue to address those parcels that do not comply with the requirements set forth in Chapters 61, 61A and 61B on an ongoing basis.

The Master Plan Committee has considered the potential threats to the town’s historic resources, such as historic homes, mills, barns and the Grange Hall. Threats from future development and neglect must be addressed, in order to protect such irreplaceable resources from being lost. In Massachusetts, local Historical Commissions and Historic District Commissions are responsible for most historic preservation efforts. Historic Commissions are charged with updating and expanding their historic property survey, submitting nominations to the National Register for eligible properties, educating the public about historic resources, advocating for significant historic resources, and establishing and/or administering local bylaws that protect historic resources. Currently, there are no National Register or local historic districts within Dracut. The Master Plan Committee recommends that, at a minimum, the feasibility of establishing National Register districts be investigated in the seven areas identified in the Town’s 2012 Preservation Plan. However, the strongest form of protection is a local historic district created through a local bylaw. Local historic districts have three major purposes, as outlined in Chapter 40C of Massachusetts General Law:

- To preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth and its cities and towns;

- To maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places; and
- To encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district.

Dracut should consider the establishment of one or more local historic districts, as a means of protecting its most critical historic resources. The formal historic district process generally begins with a request from the Historical Commission to the Board of Selectmen for the appointment of a Historic District Study Committee. The Historic District Study Committee is responsible for studying the desirability of establishing a local historic district, developing a report on its findings and recommendations, and conducting a public hearing on the proposal, prior to consideration by Town Meeting.

Local historic districts do not prevent all change from occurring, nor do they prevent all demolition, new construction or development. Historic District Commissions are only allowed to review changes to exterior architectural features that are visible from the street, and the bylaw creating the district may exclude certain categories from review, such as paint color, storm windows and doors, and window air conditioning units.

The Community Preservation Act specifically calls for perpetual Preservation Restrictions, established under Chapter 184 of Mass General Laws, whenever CPA funds are used to purchase a real property interest. Therefore, when purchasing or buying an interest in an historic property, a Preservation Restriction is required. The Act is not specific as to whether a Preservation Restriction is required when CPA money is expended on an historic preservation project. Many towns have chosen to require a Preservation Restriction when any amount of CPA funds are awarded for rehabilitation or restoration of an historic property. This protects the Town's investment should the property change hands or become subject to additional development pressures. A Preservation Restriction is required whenever CPA funds are used to rehabilitate or restore historic properties, regardless of the property ownership.

A Preservation Restriction may be held by any governmental body or charitable corporation or trust capable of acquiring interests in land and whose purposes include historic preservation. Local Historical Commissions are empowered to hold preservation restrictions under the state's Historic District Act (M.G.L. Chapter 40C), but they cannot hold a preservation restriction on a town-owned property. Non-profit historical organizations, such as the Town's Historical Society, the Trustees of Reservations, and Historic New England, may also hold preservation restrictions.

Dracut's old barns and farmstead structures represent significant landmarks that document the Town's agrarian past and complement its efforts to preserve farmland. The Town should work to encourage the preservation of these structures by their owners. CPA

funds could be utilized for this purpose, in exchange for an executed preservation agreement with the property owner. The Master Plan Committee suggests that the expenditure of CPA funds be allowed for historic preservation and restoration projects on both public and private property, based on established qualifying criteria. Structures that are owned by a non-profit and eligible for listing on the State Register are also eligible for Massachusetts Preservation Project funds for stabilization and restoration projects.

The Town plans to submit detailed survey forms for the mills and surrounding mill housing. This work will help close the gap between what is now listed on the State's MACRIS inventory and the historic resources identified in the 2012 Preservation Plan. Survey work for the Town Hall Annex allowed the non-profit developer rehabilitating the property to apply for historic tax credits. As additional grant funds become available, the Town should continue its efforts to list qualifying properties on the National Register and on MACRIS. There are many historic assets, including buildings, monuments and cemeteries that are clearly eligible for inclusion. This work could be funded through grant funds or using CPA funds.

The Town should promote and market its historical and cultural resources. Such a program would require financial resources, but would generate income for businesses and foster a greater sense of appreciation and stewardship among town residents. To elevate awareness of the Town's rich historic fabric, plaques could be provided for display on historic properties. In addition, a "self-guided walking tour" of historic areas in Dracut could also be developed.

Compliance with EPA's MS4 permit for stormwater represents a sizable effort and expense for the community. Dracut should continue to work collaboratively with neighboring communities on implementation, thereby reducing some compliance costs. In addition, the Town should develop a long-term financing plan to assist with funding stormwater activities over the next several years.

The Planning Board is currently working on revisions to the Town's subdivision regulations that will strengthen environmental protection and address water quality issues. Such changes include a more rigorous sedimentation and erosion control plan, stormwater management requirements, and provisions for low impact development (LID). These revisions are consistent with the Stormwater and Erosion Control Bylaw approved in 2017, and will assist the Town in meeting its obligations under the MS4 permit. The Planning Board should move forward with the proposed revisions to the Subdivision Regulations. Similarly, the planned rewrite of the Zoning Bylaw will also need to address these issues.

Stormwater runoff, road salt and deicing chemicals, waterfowl, motorized boats and invasive weeds impact the water quality in Dracut's lakes and ponds. Long Pond is treated annually for Curly-Leaf Pondweed and Bushy Pondweed, and there have been cyanobacteria warnings in past years. Lake Mascuppic is impacted by Eurasian watermilfoil and Fanwort. The Town, through the Conservation Commission and the Board of Health, should educate homeowners and recreational users on strategies and best practices for improving the overall environmental health of these water bodies.

Dracut will continue to be impacted by climate change with warmer temperatures, more frequent rainfall, and severe storms. Understanding the Town's vulnerabilities and developing measures to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate will become increasing important. The Town has received grant funding under the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program. Under this program, the state awards communities with funding to complete vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented nature-based resiliency plans. Communities who complete the MVP Plan become certified as an MVP community and are eligible for MVP Action grant funding and other opportunities. Dracut is in the process of developing its Plan and should seek action grant funding once the Plan is approved by the State.

Invasive species are one of the greatest threats to the integrity of natural communities, and represent a direct threat to the survival of many indigenous species. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources recognizes sixty-nine (69) invasive species that are of particular concern in the Commonwealth. Dracut should establish a "Detection and Response" plan to address invasive plants, as this problem is likely to increase with a changing climate. For most species, eradication is possible only in the earliest stages of invasion. Therefore, it is important to educate homeowners and the agricultural community on the importance of using only native plantings, and on how to detect and report the presence of invasives.

Occurrences of listed invasive species and candidates for listing can be reported to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program or the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE) project. Invasive plant field forms are available from the web sites of both organizations. Such records are very important in mapping the presence, abundance and geographic spread of invasive species. The IPANE program has a well-organized volunteer network and it organizes group management outings. A staff person at the Native Plant Trust coordinates these activities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Historic Preservation and Promotion:**

- Study the feasibility of establishing National Register districts in the seven areas identified in the 2012 Preservation Plan.
- The Town should continue its efforts to list qualifying properties on the National Register and on MACRIS. There are many historic assets, including buildings, monuments and cemeteries that are clearly eligible for inclusion. This work could be funded through grants or by using CPA funds.
- Continue the intensive field survey and documentary research for several farmhouses and barns as the 2012 Preservation Plan recommends. The Town should continue to apply for state grant funding to undertake this work. The Historical Commission should encourage the preservation of barns and other agricultural structures by their owners.
- Consider the establishment of one or more local historic districts through the formation of a Historic District Study Committee.
- The Master Plan Committee suggests that CPA funds be made available for historic preservation and restoration projects on both public and private property, based on established qualifying criteria.
- Promote and market the Town's historical and cultural resources to foster a greater sense of appreciation and stewardship. As part of this effort, plaques could be provided for display on historic properties. In addition, a "self-guided walking tour" of historic areas should be developed.
- Work with the School Department to include modules on town history, local agriculture, and the natural resources of Dracut within the curriculum.

### **Environmental Protection:**

- Continue to work collaboratively with neighboring communities on implementation of the EPA MS4 Stormwater Permit, and develop a long-term financing plan to assist with funding stormwater activities.
- Encourage homeowners and recreational users of the town's lakes and ponds to continue the use of best practices directed at improving and maintaining water quality.
- Establish a "Detection and Response" plan to address invasive plant species. Educate homeowners and the agricultural community on the importance of using native plantings, and on how to detect and report the presence of invasive species.
- While there are 195 certified vernal pools in Dracut, another 73 have yet to be certified. The Town should work with interested residents and non-profits to

complete the certification process by providing guidance and training for volunteers, and by seeking consent from private property owners where needed.

- Through the State's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program grant, complete a vulnerability assessment, develop a resiliency plan, and apply for MVP Action Grant funding.
- Adopt revisions to the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Bylaw that strengthen environmental protection and protect water quality.

#### **Agricultural Preservation and Promotion:**

- Promote the agricultural economy by encouraging: the preservation of agricultural lands through APRs and Conservation Restrictions; farm-to-table restaurants; a "buy local" campaign; community supported agriculture (CSA); community gardens; and agri-tourism.
- Work with local farm owners and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) to identify funding for a local agricultural plan that addresses agricultural preservation and helps promote the stability and possible growth of the local agricultural economy.
- Develop a prioritization plan for lands classified under Chapters 61, 61A and 61B, so that the Town is prepared to act quickly when parcels become available for possible acquisition. In addition, the Town should continue to address parcels that do not comply with the requirements set forth in Chapters 61, 61A and 61B.

# FACILITIES AND SERVICES

## INTRODUCTION

In Massachusetts, municipalities are responsible for administering and delivering nearly all services. Municipal facilities and services are structured to respond to a community's priorities and desires, in terms of providing a suitable quality of life for its residents. Collectively, public buildings and facilities, land, infrastructure, personnel and financial resources make it possible for the Town's employees, boards, committees, and commissions to provide services for residents and businesses, and to conduct the day-to-day business of the Town.

The facilities and services chapter of the master plan focuses on the capacity of local government to finance and deliver services. A public facility is any town property that is utilized for a public purpose, such as town hall, the library or fire station. It also includes utilities, such as the public water infrastructure, parks, playgrounds, and cemeteries. Providing adequate facilities and services depends on the amount of revenue that is available to support local government operations. Dracut's FY 2019 general fund expenditures were about \$79,281,478, which included public safety, education, public works, debt service, and personnel costs, such as health insurance and pensions. Capital projects and enterprise fund related items are not included in these figures. The Town's FY 2019 revenues totaled \$94,987,615, as shown in Table 8.1 and in Figure 8.1 on the following page. Approximately 46% (\$36,343,356) of the Town's FY 2019 budget was dedicated to education expenses.

As costs continue to grow, state and federal mandates are put in place and inflation takes its toll, the Town will likely find it increasingly challenging to provide expected services and maintain the municipal infrastructure. While Dracut has many dedicated volunteers engaged in several aspects

## FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOALS

- Address needed capital improvements for elementary schools.
- Continue to strengthen public safety through capital improvements and staffing.
- Continue to implement accessibility improvements for town-owned facilities.
- Address identified improvements for management and operation of the Kenwood Water District.
- Evaluate options for generating additional revenue to support town services, including education, and to address infrastructure and facility needs.
- Develop a community building and engagement program to educate residents on town issues, improve communication between residents and town government, and build trust among community members and local government decision-makers.

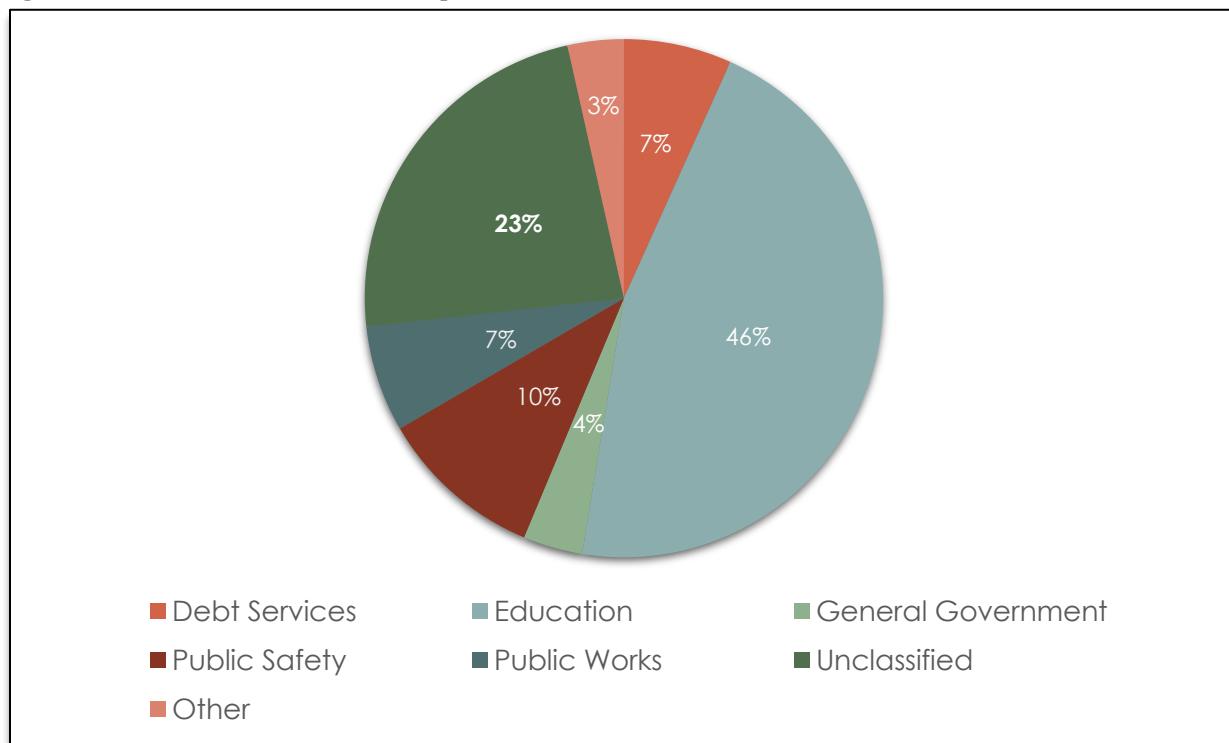
of the Town, there are nonetheless unmet needs, including personnel, equipment, infrastructure and property management, that will need to be addressed in the years ahead. The Town has implemented cost saving measures in recent years, including automated trash collection and recycling, the refinancing of debt, adoption of energy initiatives, and the regionalization of emergency dispatch services.

**Table 8.1: FY 2019 General Fund Expenditures for the Town of Dracut**

Budget Category	FY 2019 Expenditures
Debt Services	5,344,182
Education	36,343,356
General Government	2,944,233
Public Safety	8,185,054
Public Works	5,255,348
Unclassified	18,431,255
Other	2,778,050
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,281,478</b>

*Source: Massachusetts Division of Local Services, Municipal Databank, 2019*

**Figure 8.1: FY 2019 General Fund Expenditures**

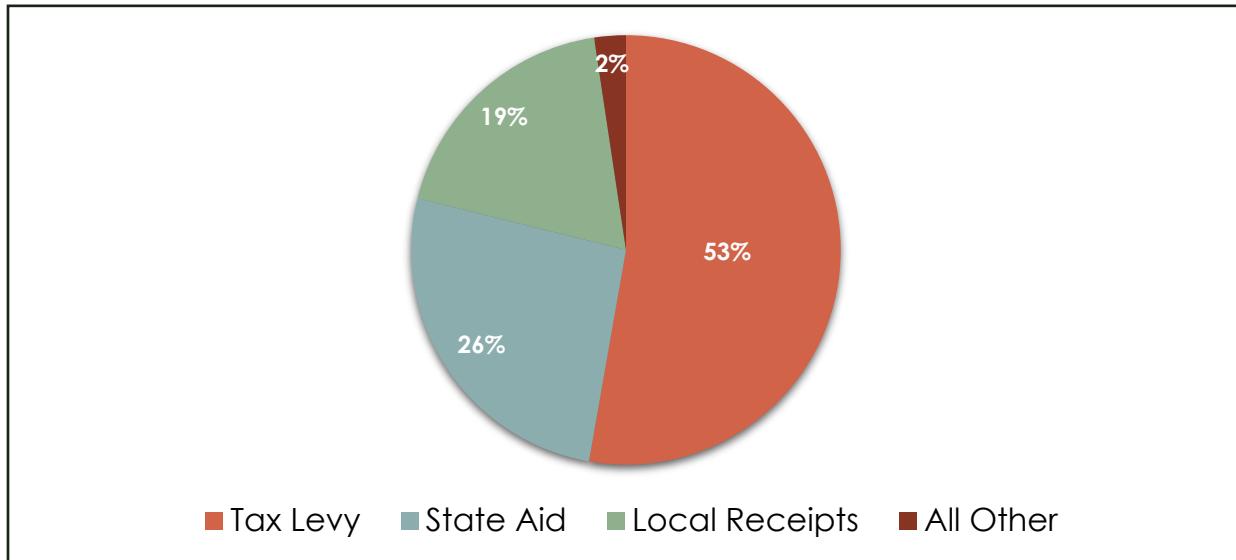


*Source: Massachusetts Division of Local Services, Municipal Databank, 2019*

**Table 8.2: FY 2019 Revenue by Source**

Revenue Class	Total Revenues	% of Total
Tax Levy	\$50,121,349	52.77
State Aid	\$24,796,068	26.10
Local Receipts	\$17,813,115	18.75
All Other	\$2,257,083	2.38
Total Receipts	\$94,987,615	100.00

Source: Massachusetts Division of Local Services

**Figure 8.2: FY 2019 Revenue by Source**

Source: Massachusetts Division of Local Services

Dracut received nearly \$25,000,000 State Aid in FY 2019, but still must rely heavily on local property taxes to meet its needs. As Table 8.3 below shows, residential properties provide the overwhelming majority of the tax levy needed to operate the Town, with only 6.4% of the tax levy provided through commercial and industrial property tax assessments.

**Table 8.3: FY 2019 Tax Classification, Assessed Values and Levy**

Tax Classification	Assessed Values	Tax Levy	Tax Rate
Residential	\$3,310,539	\$45,519,912	\$13.75
Open Space	0	0	0
Commercial	\$182,406,389	\$2,508,088	\$13.75
Industrial	\$52,270,020	\$718,713	\$13.75
Personal Property	\$99,973,547	\$1,374,636	\$13.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,645,188,997</b>	<b>\$50,121,349</b>	

Source: Division of Local Services, At a Glance Report, 2019

Dracut continues to focus on economic development as a means of increasing its non-residential tax base, and has maintained a unified tax rate. The Town's Standard and Poor's

bond rating is AA, and over the last few years the Town has had \$5 to \$6 million in certified free cash.

## GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE

Dracut operates under a home rule charter that was last revised in 2015. Dracut's legislative power is vested in open town meeting, while executive authority falls to its five-member Board of Selectmen and a Town Manager. The selectmen are elected for three-year terms and are responsible for setting town goals, establishing policy, managing the affairs of the town, appointing local officials, and ensuring that town government is responsive to community needs. The Board of Selectmen appoints the Town Manager, Town Counsel, Town Accountant, and members of the Historical Commission, Arts Council, Registrars of Voters and other election officers, Constables, and members of all appointed bodies for whom no other method of selection is outlined in the charter. The Board is also the licensing authority for the town.

The Town Manager must be a professionally qualified individual with five years of paid experience as a City or Town Manager, or as an Assistant City or Town Manager, or as a Chief Financial Officer of a city or town, or have other equivalent public or private sector experience. The Town Manager is the Chief Administrative Officer and is responsible for submitting an annual operating budget and proposed capital improvement program. He or she may appoint or remove the Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Fence Viewer, Industrial Redevelopment Authority, Finance Committee, Planning Board, Personnel Board, Recreation Commission, Redevelopment Authority, Street Lighting Committee, Zoning and Building Boards of Appeals, all department heads, all officers and all subordinates and employees for whom no other method of appointment is provided in the charter, except persons serving under other elected agencies and appointments made by representatives of the Commonwealth. The Town Manager's appointment of the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Highway Surveyor, Park Superintendent, Tree Warden and Animal Control Officer is subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen.

Dracut has many elected and appointed committees and individual office holders, such as the Town Moderator, all performing a public service. The Town Moderator is elected for a three-year term and presides over Town Meeting. He or she also appoints the members of the Finance Committee and the Committee on Rules and Regulations.

The School Committee consists of five members elected for three-year terms. The School Committee appoints the Superintendent of Schools and all other employees associated with the schools, and it administers and manages all public schools located within the Town.

## PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Dracut owns and manages several buildings and some accessory structures in various locations throughout town. The major facilities are discussed in the following narrative. In Dracut, a five-member Permanent Building Committee is responsible for estimating, designing, and constructing town building and renovation projects. The Committee works to determine whether the funds sought for a project match the scope and code and regulatory requirements of the project. The Committee remains fully involved in all phases of the design process, overseeing schematic, developmental, and construction document design. During the construction stage, the Committee works to effectively oversee the progress of work, address changes to the project, and review budget reconciliation, ultimately ensuring the desired project is delivered on time and within budget.

### TOWN HALL

The existing Town Hall building replaced an earlier structure constructed in 1883 as a two-room schoolhouse and later converted to a town hall in 1898. That building was expanded several times and from 1905 to 1926, the library occupied the second floor. Due to a multitude of deficiencies, officials concluded that it was not practical or cost effective to renovate that structure and it was demolished once the new town hall was completed. The newly constructed town hall building opened in September 2014 on the site of the previous town hall at 62 Arlington Street, in close proximity to other community-oriented facilities, such as the Parker Memorial Library and Veterans Park. The new structure is 22,000 square feet with clapboard siding and asphalt-shingle roofing. Construction of the two-story structure cost approximately \$7.5 million. Completion of the new building allowed the Town to comply with a consent agreement, reached after a 2005 federal court complaint for failing to provide adequate access for people with disabilities. In addition, the new building has allowed the Sewer Department and other municipal offices to relocate from the old Town Hall Annex, centralizing services for residents.



**Dracut Town Hall**

## TOWN HALL ANNEX/DRACUT CENTRE SCHOOL

Following the relocation of town staff to the new Town Hall, proposals for the reuse of the Town Hall Annex were sought. The Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA) was selected to convert the structure located at 11 Spring Park Avenue into eight affordable rental units for those earning no more than 80% of area median income (AMI). Preference will be given to veterans and area residents. The Town is providing CPA funding for the rehabilitation of the building's exterior to historic standards.

## PARKER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The Moses Greely Parker Memorial Library was founded to provide, organize, and preserve books, materials and information to increase the recreational and educational levels of the community. Since the renovation and expansion of the library in 2006, the 29,000-square foot building has become an ad hoc community center, providing a location for residents to gather, connect with technology, and attend programs. The library has two quiet study rooms and a large meeting room that is also used by outside groups.

The Library is governed by an elected five-member Board of Trustees. Library management, collection development, and provisions for library services to the public are delegated by the Board to the Library Director. The Director is appointed by the Board, is directly responsible to the Board, and is an employee of the Town of Dracut. The Library staff consists of eight full-time employees: the Library Director, Assistant Director/Senior Reference Librarian, Reference/Technology Librarian, Children's Librarian, Office Manager, Technical Services Librarian, and two Circulation Librarians. There are also thirteen part-time employees.

The legal requirements for state aid to libraries in Massachusetts provide the minimum standards for library service. (Code of Massachusetts Regulations 4.00: Free Public Library Service –Regulations.) The Parker Memorial Library has consistently met these standards. The Parker Memorial Library is a member of the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC), a 36-member network of public libraries which provides members with a shared database, catalog, and access to numerous periodical databases, indexes, and electronic reference resources. The Library is also part of the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), a state-funded library system which provides support services –including inter-library loan and delivery service, reference and database services, deposit collections, professional development, and advisory and technical consulting services.

The Library holds approximately 133,420 items, including books, print periodicals, audio CDs, DVDs, eBooks, downloadable audio holdings, downloadable video holdings, items in

electronic format, microform, and miscellaneous items (eBook readers, cake pans, telescopes, puppets, etc.).



**Parker Memorial Library**

## POLICE STATION

The Dracut Police station is located at 110 Loon Hill Road and was built in 2007. The 23,012 square foot facility is constructed of brick/masonry and houses the communications center as well as the Police Department. The building is equipped with smoke and fire detection systems, and a sprinkler system. The detention facility is designed for six male cells and two female cells, and also contains two rooms for juveniles. An indoor firing range is utilized for annual training and qualification. The Police Department Risk Assessment Study prepared by Municipal Resources Inc. in October 2015 outlined a number of maintenance recommendations to ensure that the facility remain in a state of good repair, including the repair of damaged walkways.

## FIRE STATIONS

The Dracut Fire Department serves the Town from three fire stations:

- Station 1 serves as the Headquarters and is located at 488 Pleasant Street. This station houses Engines 1,4 and 5, Forestry 1, Ladder 1, Rescue 1, Service 1, Car 1 (Chief) and Car 2 (Deputy Chief);
- Station 2 is located at 15 Jones Avenue and houses Engine 2, Forestry 2, Truck 4, and State Hazmat ORU 62; and
- Station 3 is located at 1990 Lakeview Avenue and houses Engine 3 and Forestry 3.

In 2002, the Town completed a Fire Station Master Plan which resulted in the three station locations outlined above, based on a 4-minute maximum response time. At that time,

Stations 1 and 2 were newly constructed. The Central Fire Station (Station 1) is 16,400 square feet and consists of five double deep, drive through bays. One side of the facility houses the department's administrative offices, including the fire chief's office, office for administrative staff, on-duty deputy chief's office and the training room, which also functions as the emergency operations center (EOC) for the town. The opposite side of the building houses the living quarters for on-duty personnel, and includes kitchen, dining and dayroom areas, individual bunk rooms, a fitness room, a utility/laundry room that can be used as a decontamination area, a bathroom/shower facility, and the EMS equipment storage area. The station is equipped with an emergency generator.

Station 2 was built in 2000 and is unique in that it is a two-story building that utilizes the basement level as a garage area to store apparatus, vehicles, and equipment. The building is equipped with an emergency generator. In addition to Engine 2, the department's two antique apparatus are stored there, along with department archives, and a Fire District 6 special operations response vehicle.

Station 3 is a two-bay station and occupies only 1,500 square feet. While the station was constructed in 1954, it is the busiest station in town. There is inadequate space for the apparatus and the building is in poor condition and has numerous safety code violations. Station 3, which services Collinsville, was originally constructed as a garage and later modified to serve as a manned station. The building no longer meets the needs of the Department.

The Town acquired land at 539 Nashua Road for the construction of a new station to replace Station 3. The purchase of the Nashua Road site was authorized through approval of Article 20 at the 2018 Annual Town Meeting. A total of \$6,500,000 in project funding was authorized through three Town Meeting appropriations and a Proposition 2 ½ Debt Exclusion. The parcel where the existing Collinsville Fire Station is located (1990 Lakeview Avenue) was declared surplus at the June 2018 Town Meeting.

In addition to the replacement of Station 3, improvements are currently needed at Stations 1 and 2. Station 1 is in need of a metal storage mezzanine to address new requirements that materials be stored at the station until such time as they are needed by the responders, rather than keeping them in the vehicle. Currently all hazardous material response supplies are stored on the apparatus floors in lockers. Through the Capital Plan, the Fire Department is proposing to construct an 8' by 30' mezzanine with bar grate floor and 38' line pipe railing and access stair rail. The mezzanine would be affixed to the interior block wall of the eastern side of the vehicle bay. The estimated cost for the project is \$26,000.



**Fire Department Headquarters**

The sprinkler system at Station 2 needs replacement to address leaking black iron pipes. A new sprinkler system would utilize galvanized pipe above the dayroom/kitchen, truck bays, and in the basement. It is estimated that the project would cost \$17,000. In addition, to the sprinkler system replacement, additional storage capacity is needed at Station 2 to accommodate the expansion of Emergency Management, Hazmat, and security operations. A 60' X 30' metal storage building has been proposed for the storage of Emergency Management, Board of Health, and Fire Department equipment that does not require heating, at an estimated cost of \$150,000.

## PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING

The Public Works Department is located at 833 Hildreth Street. Article 8 of the June 4, 2018 Annual Town Meeting authorized \$250,000 for the construction of a second floor above the administrative area of the building. The existing building is inadequate for present day operations. To address space needs, the Town also plans to retrofit the former fire station located at the intersection of Lakeview Avenue and Sladen Street as a Stormwater Center.

## SCHOOLS

The Dracut Public Schools, which in FY 20 serves 3,738 students from preschool (special education program), through post high school (ages 18-22 special education program.) Elementary school students (grades K-5) attend one of four elementary schools (Brookside Elementary School, Joseph A. Campbell Elementary School, Englesby Elementary School, Greenmont Avenue Elementary School) based on attendance zones established by district. Middle school students (grades 6-8) attend the Justus C. Richardson Middle School. High school students (grades 9-12) attend Dracut High School.

Children and adolescents with disabilities requiring specialized programming are served in programs located in district schools. The Dracut Public Schools is also of two regional special education collaboratives (CREST Collaborative and Valley Collaborative), which serve students requiring high need specialized programming that cannot be provided in a district program. The Superintendent of Schools serves on the Board of Directors at both the CREST and Valley Collaboratives.

High school aged students living in Dracut who wish for a vocational/technical high school experience may attend (through an application and lottery process) the Greater Lowell Regional Technical High School (GLTHS) (grades 9-12) located in Tyngsborough. In FY 20, 443 Dracut students are enrolled at GLTHS.

The public school enrollment numbers for the past seven years are shown below in Table 8.4 below and in Figure 8.3 on the following page. Table 8.5 shows the enrollment information for each school building in 2020. The Campbell School is the largest elementary school and has the largest geographic attendance zone in area of town where residential development has been concentrated. The school is nearing capacity and redistricting may be needed in the future. Given capacity constraints at the Greenmont School, Campbell students must be redistricted to the Englesby School, a 45-minute bus ride away. The geographic locations of the town's elementary schools makes redistricting difficult. For example, the Brookside Elementary School lies outside its attendance zone, meaning that no student resides within walking distance, therefore all students attending the school must be bused. All four elementary schools are in need of major repairs and improvements, such as window replacements and new roofs.

**Table 8.4: Student Enrollment for Dracut Public Schools**

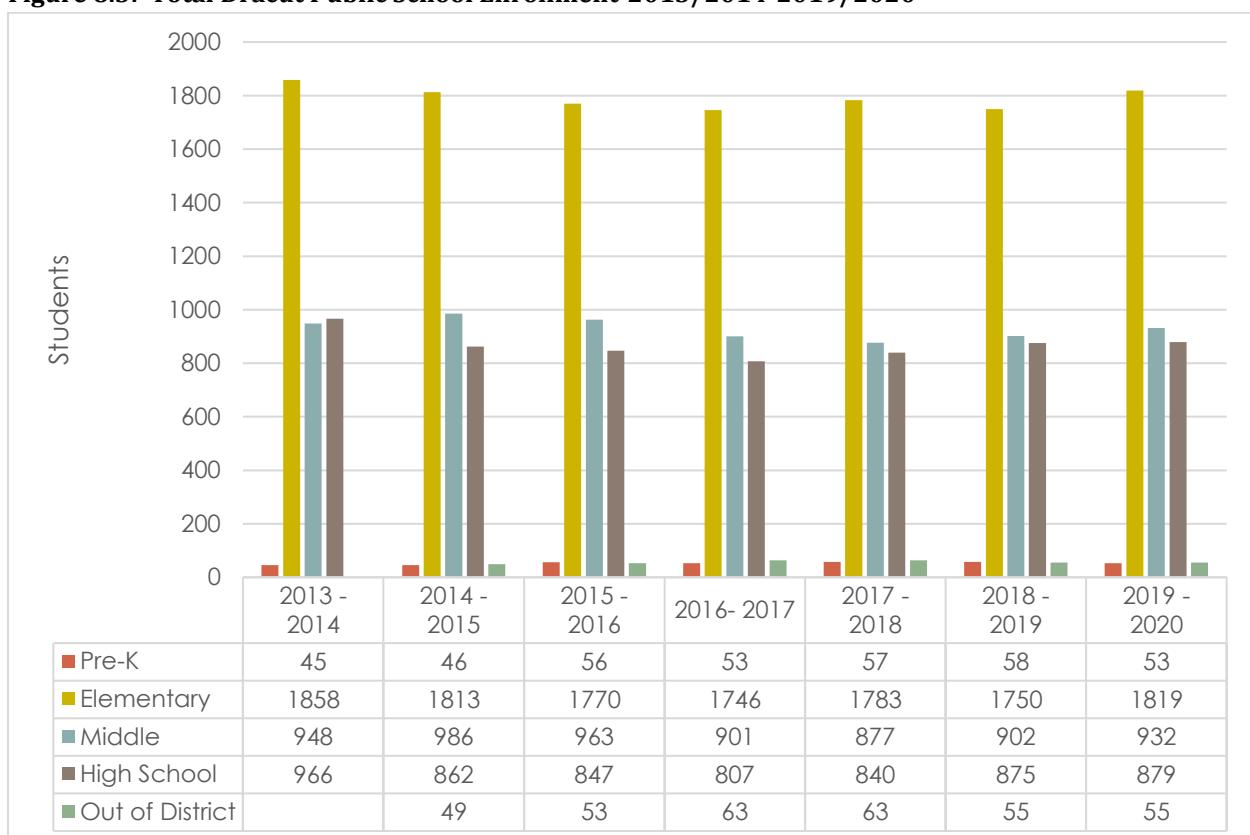
School Type	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020
Pre-Kindergarten	45	46	56	53	57	58	53
Elementary School (K-8)	1,858	1,813	1,770	1,746	1,783	1,750	1,819
Middle School (6-8)	948	986	963	901	877	902	932
High School (9-12)	966	862	847	807	840	875	879
Out of District Students		49	53	63	63	55	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,817</b>	<b>3,756</b>	<b>3,689</b>	<b>3,570</b>	<b>3,620</b>	<b>3,640</b>	<b>3,738</b>

*Source: Dracut School Superintendent's Office*

**Table 8.5: Enrollment in Dracut Public Schools, 2020**

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Brookside Elementary	Elementary	K-5	456
Campbell Elementary	Elementary	K-5	580
Englesby Elementary	Elementary	K-5	552
Greenmont Avenue School	Elementary	K-5	277
Richardson Middle School	Middle School	6-8	928
Dracut Senior High School	High School	9-12	877
<b>Total Enrollment</b>			<b>3,670</b>

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education

**Figure 8.3: Total Dracut Public School Enrollment-2013/2014-2019/2020**

Source: Dracut School Superintendent's Office

The Richardson Middle School opened in 2001, and in 2014 a renovation and expansion project was completed at the high school. The high school project cost \$59.8 million, with 62.5% of the funding provided by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The town portion of the funding was appropriated through a debt exclusion voted in 2012. The school district underwent major reorganization in 2015 when the high school renovation and expansion project was completed. The Lakeview Junior High School (grades 7-8) was reconfigured into the Richardson Middle School (grades 6-8). The former

Englesby Intermediate School (grades 5-6) was eliminated, with the school converted to an elementary school. The existing elementary schools (Brookside, Campbell, Greenmont) were reconfigured from grades K-4 to grades K-5 (along with the Englesby).

The Town has met or slightly exceeded its net school spending requirement since 2014. The District's per pupil spending in FY 2018 was \$12,327, 22% lower than similar districts, and Dracut is ranked #322 out of 326 districts in per pupil spending, according to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). It is expected that financial challenges relative to the education portion of the town budget will continue into the future.

The school district maintains a five-year capital plan which is updated annually and includes major maintenance projects such as roofs, security systems, mechanical systems, and technology. An application to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for roof replacements of the Brookside and Englesby Elementary Schools led to an award that will see both projects (subject to final Town Meeting approval in June 2020) completed during the summer of 2020.

During FY 2017-2019, with the support of an appropriation by Town Meeting, use of federal and state grant funding, and a grant award, the district technology infrastructure was upgraded. The district operates on a fiber optic framework, has wireless infrastructure in all buildings, and converted its communications to a voice over internet (VoIP) platform. In November 2018, a \$1 million debt exclusion was approved to enhance school security technology. Completion of the installation of the various systems is expected in early 2020.

## OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Town of Dracut owns other facilities that serve the public. These facilities include many parcels of open space and recreation areas, which are described in more detail in the Open Space and Recreation section of the Master Plan. The Town also owns public cemeteries, which are discussed in the Cultural and Natural Resources chapter beginning on page 257.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

While buildings and facilities provide physical space for delivering local governmental services, actual service delivery depends on town staff and volunteers. Such people include town employees, firefighters, police officers and election workers. In addition, many committees, boards and commissions rely on a dedicated group of elected and volunteer residents.

## ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

The Town Manager oversees and coordinates Dracut's day-to-day operations with the assistance of the town accountant, tax collector/treasurer, and assessor. Their work is supported and guided by several elected and appointed boards, including the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, the Capital Planning Committee, and Board of Assessors. Each of these entities has a specialized and statutory role in financial and administrative policy.

The Town Accountant is appointed for a three-year term and must have at least three years of accounting experience. The Accountant is supervised by the Town Manager and is responsible for all accounting records relative to town offices and departments, and for preparing and submitting warrants to the Town Manager for the payment of bills by the Town Treasurer. He or she is responsible for the audit of all accounts and records. The Accounting Department is also responsible for record keeping of all financial transactions, payroll and ledgers. The Accounting Department ensures that the Town is in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles, Federal and State Laws, and Town Meeting authorizations.

The Treasurer is the cash manager for the town and serves as the Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director. The Treasurer is responsible for the deposit, investment and disbursement of town funds. He or she is authorized by Town Meeting to issue debt on behalf of the Town with the approval of the Board of Selectmen. When the Town issues long-term bonds, the Treasurer works with the town's financial advisor, bond counsel and other experts to prepare for the sale.

The Tax Collector is responsible for the collection of all taxes, liens and fees associated with real and personal property, as well as other funds owed to the town, such as fees for permits, licenses, utilities and services.

The Finance Committee consists of seven members appointed for a three-year term, with at least one member from each precinct and no more than 1/3 of the members may reside in any one precinct. The Finance Committee reviews and analyzes the overall budget, and forecasts the Town's financial position for the future fiscal year based on prior trends. They identify and recommend funding sources for proposed capital items, and review and make recommendations on warrant articles. All Town Meeting articles that call for the expenditure of funds must be referred to the Finance Committee for its consideration. Each year, the Finance Committee must review previous year expenditures and estimated budgetary requirements for the upcoming year and provide appropriation recommendations to Town Meeting.

The Committee on Rules and Regulations consists of seven to nine members appointed for a three-year term. The Committee is charged with oversight of the business of Town Meeting and must consider any proposed changes to the conduct of the Meeting. The Committee must review all warrant articles that would amend the charter or affect the bylaws of the Town. It is also responsible for reviewing the Bylaws of the Town every ten years.

Each year, the Capital Planning Committee develops a five-year capital plan and makes recommendations on which items should be funded in the upcoming fiscal year. Capital items are those which have a life span of five years or more, and that cost at least \$10,000.

The Board of Assessors is responsible for the valuation of real and personal property. The Assessor is responsible for maintaining assessments at full and fair cash value and for complying with the Commissioner of Revenue's property revaluation every three years.

Plans and special projects carried out by other town committees and boards have an impact on operating and spending decisions, such as projects proposed by the Community Preservation Commission (CPC). The CPC is comprised of representatives from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historic Commission, Affordable Housing Partnership, and Recreation Commission, plus four at-large members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The CPC oversee the expenditure of Community Preservation Act funds generated from a 2% surcharge on property tax assessments which are matched with state funds. The funds may be utilized for open space and recreation, affordable housing, and historic preservation initiatives. Since 2002, the CPA program in Dracut has generated \$11,422,323 in local surcharges with a state trust fund match of \$5,679,308, for total CPA revenues of \$17,101,631, as shown in Table 8.6 below.

**Table 8.6: Community Preservation Act Funds Generated (FY 2002- FY 2019)**

Fiscal Year	Local Surcharge	Trust Fund Distribution	Total Revenue
2002	\$ 449,547	0	\$ 449,547
2003	\$ 478,059	\$ 449,547	\$ 927,606
2004	\$ 502,489	\$ 478,059	\$ 980,548
2005	\$ 527,457	\$ 502,489	\$ 1,029,946
2006	\$ 564,011	\$ 527,457	\$ 1,091,468
2007	\$ 589,671	\$ 564,011	\$ 1,153,682
2008	\$ 620,335	\$ 589,671	\$ 1,210,006
2009	\$ 639,360	\$ 419,472	\$ 1,058,832
2010	\$ 652,740	\$ 222,592	\$ 875,332
2011	\$ 685,277	\$ 177,558	\$ 862,835
2012	\$ 705,887	\$ 182,551	\$ 888,438
2013	\$ 733,210	\$ 189,418	\$ 922,628

**Table 8.6: Community Preservation Act Funds Generated (FY 2002- FY 2019)**

Fiscal Year	Local Surcharge	Trust Fund Distribution	Total Revenue
2014	\$ 767,420	\$ 382,920	\$ 1,150,340
2015	\$ 827,573	\$ 241,469	\$ 1,069,042
2016	\$ 858,092	\$ 245,385	\$ 1,103,477
2017	\$ 891,326	\$ 176,568	\$ 1,067,894
2018	\$ 929,869	\$ 153,328	\$ 1,083,197
2019	0	\$ 176,813	\$ 176,813
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 11,422,323</b>	<b>\$ 5,679,308</b>	<b>\$ 17,101,631</b>

*Source: MA Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services - Community Preservation Surcharge Reports, 2019*

The matching funds from the State have decreased from 100% in 2002 to 19.01% in 2019, due to the increased number of participating communities and the stable state budget amount. The state's FY20 budget increases funding for the CPA Trust Fund. The recording fees at the Registries of Deeds provide revenue to the statewide CPA Trust Fund and this fee will increase from \$20 to \$50, and the fee for municipal lien certificates will increase from \$10 to \$25. In recent years, the recording fees have brought in approximately \$24 million annually and it is estimated that total will rise to \$60 million, after the new fees are fully implemented. While the FY20 budget was signed into law on July 31st, the Registries will not begin collecting the new fees until the end of the year. Below is a breakdown of the timeline over the next few years:

- **October 31, 2019:** The balance in the CPA Trust Fund as of this date will be distributed to all 175 CPA communities on November 15, 2019.
- **October 31, 2020:** CPA communities will receive a Trust Fund distribution comprised of 2 months of revenue at the old fee level (November & December 2019) and 10 months of revenue at the new fee level (January - October 2020).
- **October 31, 2021:** The first distribution to CPA communities that will include a full year of new revenue.

The Human Resources Department provides professional human resource services for town employee and retirees, which include the following:

- development and administration of all policies;
- employee recruitment;
- job classification and compensation;
- benefits administration;
- regulatory compliance;
- safety and risk management;
- employee training and development; and
- public and employee relations.

Under state law, the Dracut Town Clerk serves as the official keeper of records, and maintains the roster of registered voters, the jury list, and the annual census. The Town Clerk also records Town Meeting and election votes, organizes and oversees the election process, issues a variety of licenses and certificates, maintains and catalogues records of all town property, serves as the repository of meeting and public hearing minutes of boards and committees, and maintains the official record of decisions by the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and others. The Town Clerk also provides Justice of the Peace and Notary Public services.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### FIRE DEPARTMENT

The mission of the Dracut Fire Department is “to effectively and efficiently protect the lives and property of the town of Dracut against all emergencies, natural or manmade”. The Department focuses on fire suppression and prevention, public education and emergency medical services. The greatest number of calls for service are for emergency medical incidents. Most municipal fire departments have shifted from being fire service agencies that provide EMS to EMS agencies that provide fire protection services. In addition to responding to fire and emergency medical calls, the fire department is tasked with responding to other emergencies, such as vehicle crashes, building collapses, water and ice rescues, mass casualty incidents, weather related emergencies, and natural disasters.

The Fire Prevention program includes plan review and inspections with the Building Department for construction and renovation projects. In 2018, 1,948 inspections were conducted and 307 permits were issued by the Department of Fire Services. In addition, 922 certificates of compliance and 383 outdoor burning permits were approved. Overall the Fire Department responded to 3,937 calls for service in 2018, as detailed in Table 8.7.

**Table 8.7: 2018 Fire Department Response by Number of Incidents**

Incident Type	No. of incidents
Fire	52
Explosion	1
Rescue and EMS	2,359
Hazardous Conditions (no fire)	180
Service Call	461
Good Intent Call	171
Alarm activation	708
Severe weather and natural disaster	4
Special type	1

*Source: Dracut 2018 Annual Town Report*

The Dracut Fire Department participates in an active mutual aid response system for fire, hazardous materials, and EMS operations. The Department is a member of Massachusetts Mutual Aid Fire District 6, as well as Border Area Mutual Aid (BAMA), a group of 30 Massachusetts and New Hampshire Fire Departments. Fire District 6 coordinates the mutual aid response of Massachusetts fire departments in the Greater Lowell area. The following services are available through these organizations:

- Centralized communications control center for mutual aid activities;
- Operation of multi-channel radio system for dispatch and coordination of firefighting apparatus and emergency medical units;
- Mobile command and communications vehicle for complex operations;
- Ten alarm running card system for coordination and deployment of apparatus, personnel and other resources;
- Regional hazardous materials response team (funded by the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services);
- Mobile air supply unit for refilling self-contained breathing apparatus at incidents;
- Evacuation and rehabilitation buses;
- Fire safety house trailer for fire prevention and training purposes; and
- Critical incident debriefing team.

In July 2016, Municipal Resources Inc. completed the *Fire Services Risk Analysis* which reviewed the manner in which fire services are provided in town from a risk management and operational perspective. The report identified a fire risk for areas of town not served by public water and recommended that the town adopt a bylaw requiring the installation of a fire water supply cistern in any new development consisting of three or more homes in areas that are outside of the public water supply system. It also recommended that the Town and Fire Department partner with private property owners to install cisterns in areas outside of the hydrant district.

The Fire Department has forty full-time career personnel plus one civilian administrative assistant. The staffing structure includes the Fire Chief, two Deputy Fire Chiefs, four Captains, eight Lieutenants, and 25 firefighters. The 2016 *Fire Services Risk Analysis* found that the Dracut Fire Department needed to increase its staffing levels to improve operational effectiveness, efficiency and safety. The report recommended that all three district stations and their engines be staffed around the clock with a minimum of three personnel. The report also stated that through mutual aid agreements and other measures, a minimum of 16 personnel should be on the scene of any structure fire within eight minutes of dispatch.

The Town of Dracut contracts with a private ambulance service, at no financial cost to the town, to supply emergency medical transport services at the Basic Life Support (BLS) level. The ambulance company deploys at least one ambulance in town at all times unless they are transporting a patient. Their agreement with the Town requires that the Fire Department respond with the closest engine with firefighters that are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to provide initial patient evaluation and care. If a medical call requires Advanced Life Support (ALS) response it is provided by Lowell General Hospital paramedics. In addition to providing BLS transport services, ambulance personnel assist the Fire Department with EMS training and provide some EMS equipment, such as oxygen tanks and refills. The *2016 Fire Services Risk Analysis* report recommended that the Town explore the feasibility of having the Fire Department provide EMS transport instead of the current ambulance provider.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

The mission of the Dracut Police Department is to: continually enhance public safety and quality of life for the Town of Dracut; work in partnership with those living in, visiting and doing business in the community; the preservation of life; protection of property; prevention of criminal behavior; and the creation of a safe environment. In 2018, the Police Department responded to 24,913 incidents. The Dracut Police Department is administered by the Chief of Police and two Deputy Chiefs and employs 36 sworn full-time personnel.

The Detective Division's primary responsibility is major crime investigations. Major crimes may be classified as robberies, burglaries, assaults, financial crimes, computer crimes, and thefts. Other crimes that may require extensive investigative time or talents may be assigned to the Detective Division. The majority of cases originate in the Patrol Division, but may also develop from other sources, such as social services agencies, courts, prosecutors, and anonymous tips.

The Detective Division Lieutenant reviews all criminal events that originate in the Patrol Division. He then assigns those cases to the investigators based upon solvability factors. Cases are reviewed periodically to determine their progress and status. Cases may only be closed by the Detective Lieutenant during this process, or through the prosecution phase. The Dracut Police Patrol Unit is comprised of three Lieutenants, five Sergeants and nineteen Patrol Officers. The Patrol Unit is the backbone of the department and its primary goal is to maintain a highly trained, professional and well-educated force of police officers. After the Dispatch Center answers a call, the Patrol Officers handle the initial response for police service. The Patrol Unit will complete the initial report of both criminal and non-

criminal activity. Many criminal investigations are also conducted at the patrol level. The more serious criminal investigations are performed by the Criminal Bureau.

The Dracut Police Department is a member of the North Eastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC), a non-profit corporation and law enforcement council composed of a consortium of 60+ police and sheriff departments in Middlesex and Essex Counties. Member agencies operate pursuant to an interagency mutual aid and assistance agreement. NEMLEC is a professional organization focused on member needs and priorities, and governed by an elected Board. Member police chiefs actively participate in its operation serving in leadership roles on operational units and committees. NEMLEC manages all aspects of the organization through member meetings, open processes and a comprehensive intranet system.

NEMLEC units are composed of highly trained and skilled officers from member agencies under the command of a police chief. They are a primary source of assistance and support and are available to member police chiefs who activate them in accordance with written protocol. The available units include the following:

- Computer Crime Unit (CCU)
- Motorcycle Unit (MCU)
- Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT)
- Regional Communications (RC)
- Regional Response Team (RRT)
- School Threat Assessment/Response System (STARS)
- Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT).

#### NORTHERN MIDDLESEX REGIONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

The Northern Middlesex Regional Emergency Communications Center (NMRECC) District was approved by the Dracut and Tewksbury Boards of Selectmen and established on November 10, 2015 through the signing of a District Agreement. The NMRECC District is the first in Massachusetts established under Chapter 500 of the Acts of 2014. The NMRECC will provide improved quality emergency dispatch service, cost savings, access to updated technology and improved communications in Dracut and Tewksbury.

The NMRECC District facility is located adjacent to the Tewksbury DPW facility at 999 Whipple Road and will include approximately 6,340 square feet of work space. The dispatch area will host six dispatchers initially and will allow for two additional workstations through expansion. Construction on the facility has substantially progressed with the opening anticipated in June 2020. The facility has been designed with the capacity to accommodate two additional communities.

The NMRECC construction project and all equipment, technology and furnishings needed to outfit the facility have been funded through grants provided by the State 911 Department. In addition, the Town received an additional state grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the State 911 Department to fund the construction of a new communications tower. Regionalizing emergency dispatch is expected to save the Town of Dracut more than \$135,000 that can be reinvested in public safety, and it will provide dispatch staff with a state-of-the-art facility, continuous training, and increased opportunities for career advancement.

## ANIMAL CONTROL

The primary function of the Animal Control officer is to enforce the Dracut by-laws and the Massachusetts General Laws as they relate to animal issues. Other duties of Animal Control include:

- Barking complaints;
- Barn inspections;
- Bite investigations;
- Cruelty investigations;
- Licensing and vaccination enforcement;
- Picking up stray dogs; and
- Quarantines.

State law requires all animal control officers to receive formal training. They are often the first responders to dangerous and difficult animal incidents, including dog bites, wildlife conflicts, reports of suspected animal cruelty and the handling of exotic pet escapees. Training enables the officers to be more effective at protecting themselves, animals and the public.

In 2018, the Dracut Animal Control Office responded to 2,042 calls for service. There were 31 bites reported involving 22 dogs and 9 cats. Stray animals are kenneled at Wignall Animal Hospital and nearly all are claimed by their owners. In 2018, The Animal Control Office hosted its yearly Rabies Vaccine Clinic where 144 dogs and cats were vaccinated. It also inspected 44 barns and rescued several wild animals due to injury, including 11 hawks and 5 owls.

## BUILDING DEPARTMENT

People often view inspection officials as development permitting personnel, but inspectional services are primarily a public safety function. Building Department

responsibilities include the enforcement of State and local laws, by-laws and regulations. The Department issues permits for all types of construction, including all public and private buildings. They also issue permits for additions and alterations of buildings, for installations of pools, sheds, garages and other improvements to properties. The Inspector of Buildings is required to perform periodic inspections for businesses and buildings that must obtain a Certificate of Inspection. The Plumbing and Wiring Inspectors also work out of this department. During 2018, 1,204 permits were issued by the Building Department which generated approximately \$581,000 in revenue. In addition, 89 Certificates of Inspection were issued. The Plumbing and Gas Inspector issued 538 permits and conducted 638 inspections. The Wiring Inspector performed 1,119 inspections and issued 798 permits.

## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

Dracut is well served in terms of infrastructure, utilities and services. Map 8.1 shows the extent of water and sewer infrastructure, which include most of the community except for the relatively rural portions of East Dracut.

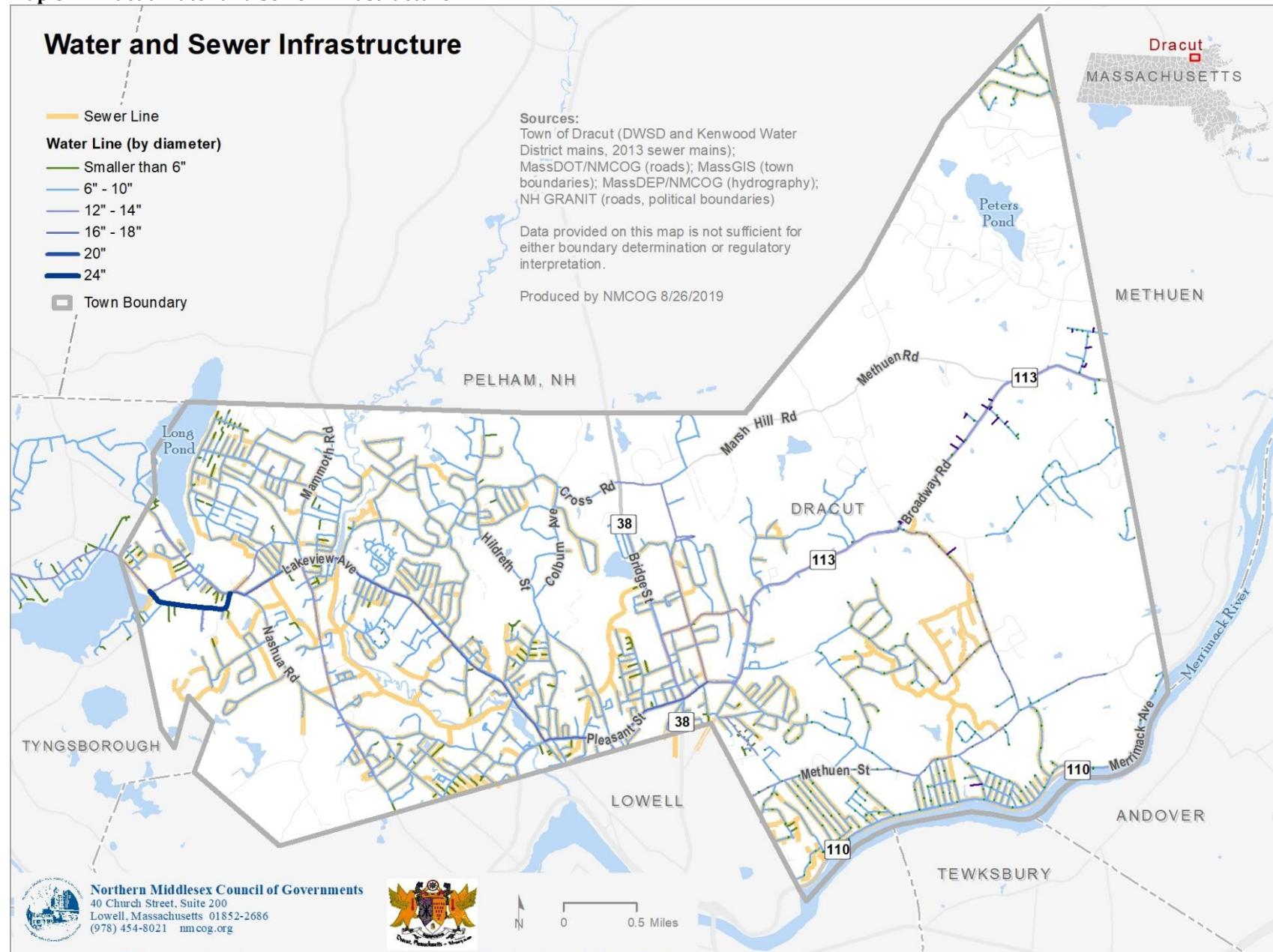
### SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

The municipal sewer system services about 95% of Dracut's population, and extend throughout most of the town. As of December 2018, there were 9,183 accounts connected to the sewer system. A small portion of the town is supported by on-site septic systems, primarily located in the vicinity of Jones Avenue, Methuen Road, Island Pond Road and the northern portion of Marsh Hill Road.

Discharge from the sewer system is sent to the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility (LRWWU) and Greater Lawrence Sanitary District (GLSD). Dracut owns approximately 11% of the Lowell facility, or 3.6 million gallons per day of capacity. Of the 3.6 million gallons per day of capacity, Dracut must provide the Town of Tyngsborough with 1.0 million gallons per day, based on an inter-municipal agreement (IMA). Currently, Dracut is utilizing about 1.4 million gallons per day of its allocation.

Over the past 40 years, 32 sewer construction contracts were completed. These projects followed a phased sewer construction program developed as part of a 1982 Wastewater Facilities Plan and a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) completed in 2001 and updated in 2007. The Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP), has been fully implemented.

Map 8.1: Dracut Water and Sewer Infrastructure



The Dracut Sewer Department has completed inspection of approximately 40% of its sewer mains utilizing closed circuit television video (CCTV), to identify potential Inflow and Infiltration (I&I). The removal of I&I will help the Town stay within the parameter of its Inter-municipal Agreement with the City of Lowell.

Since 2014, Dracut completed Contracts #31 and #32, which addressed portions of eastern and central Dracut. Most recently, the Town of Dracut, the City of Methuen and the GLSD have made sewer service to eastern Dracut possible. Prior to recent contracts #26, #26A and #27, all Dracut's wastewater flow was conveyed to the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility (LRWWU) for treatment and disposal. However, given capacity restrictions at the Lowell wastewater treatment facility and the availability of reserve capacity at the GLSD facility, Dracut worked closely with Methuen and GLSD to develop inter-municipal agreements (IMAs) that allow for the conveyance of wastewater from eastern Dracut to Methuen, and ultimately to the GLSD facility for treatment and disposal.

Additionally, the shifting of east Dracut flow to the GLSD facility will allow Dracut to complete additional projects in central Dracut, as added flow can be sent to the Lowell facility without exceeding limits established in the IMA between Dracut and Lowell.

In addition to sewer mains and laterals, the Sewer Department owns and maintains seventeen (17) pump stations at the following locations:

- 74 Autumn Road
- 2 Beaver Brook Road
- 136 Black Oak Lane
- 365 Broadway Road
- 1521 Broadway Road
- 8 Cherrywood Drive
- 30 Clough Drive
- 59 Coach Drive
- 70 Cricket Lane
- 16/17 Douglas Drive
- 40 Indian Hill Road
- 375 Pelham Road
- 1560 Mammoth Road
- 525 Merrimack Avenue
- 361A Salem Road
- 56 Scott Street
- 88 Wheeler Street.

There are nine (9) additional pump stations that are privately owned and operated. Presently, there are no formal policies or procedures regarding the operation and maintenance of these facilities, and the town has no immediate plans to assume ownership or responsibility for the pump stations located at the following addresses:

- 65 Stonebridge Drive
- 15 Royal Avenue
- 253 Broadway Road
- 1540 Lakeview Avenue (School Complex)
- 8 Cedar Creek Drive
- 38 Regency Drive
- 58 Regency Drive
- 3 Schiripo Way
- 37 Honeybee Road.

## WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Dracut is served by the Dracut Water Supply and Kenwood Water Districts. The majority of town receives water through the Dracut Water Supply District, with the eastern portion of the town receiving water through the Kenwood Water Department. The remainder of the town is supplied by private wells.

## DRACUT WATER SUPPLY DISTRICT

The Dracut Water Supply District (the District) serves approximately 23,600 people through its distribution system in Dracut and a portion of Tyngsborough. Through this system, service is provided to the neighborhoods of Dracut Center, the Navy Yard, and Collinsville. The District's main well fields are located off Hildreth Street in Dracut and off Frost Road in the Town of Tyngsborough. The District also purchases water from the City of Lowell.

The water distribution system includes more than 100 miles of water main ranging in size from 1- to 24-inches in diameter. The District sells water to the Tyngsborough Water District through the Birchmont Booster Pump Station to serve approximately 112 customer accounts in the Birchmont pressure zone. The District is in the process of purchasing the Birchmont pump station and distribution system from Tyngsborough.

The water is drawn from five wells located in the Tyngsborough Well Field, located along the Merrimack River, and from two wells in the New Boston Well Field, located in Dracut. The District supplements the well supplies with water purchased through an interconnection with the Lowell Regional Water Utility (LRWU) at the Pleasant Street

Pump Station. A second interconnection with the Kenwood Water Department is currently under construction, and will allow the District to obtain water from Methuen.

The District maintains three storage facilities: (1) a 3,000,000 gallon stand up concrete tank located on Marsh Hill, (2) an 800,000 gallon cement tank located on Thortleberry Hill, and (3) a 2,500,000 gallon steel water tower located on Passaconaway Drive. The District supplies approximately 9,000 households, including about 1,000 residents in Tyngsborough.

According to the Dracut Water System Master Plan, the District's well supplies, pumping stations, and storage tanks have been well maintained and are generally in very good condition. The current focus of the District is on improvements to the water supplies. Upgrades are currently on-going to improve the capacity and reliability of the well supplies and the pumping facilities.

#### KENWOOD WATER DISTRICT

The Kenwood Water District was established in 1966 by Chapter 329 of the Acts of the Massachusetts Legislature. The Kenwood Water District is a separate entity from the Dracut Water Supply District (DWSD), and the Kenwood District is under the jurisdiction of the Town Manager, acting as Superintendent. Small Water Systems Services, L.L.C has been contracted as the licensed operator to operate and maintain the system. The system is a distribution system only; it does not have its own water source, nor does it treat water.

The Kenwood Water District purchases water from the Lowell and Methuen Water Departments and supplies it to customers located in the eastern portion of Dracut. Both Lowell and Methuen's source of water is the Merrimack River. Customers in the eastern and northern portions of the Kenwood Water District receive their water from the Methuen Water Department, while the remaining customers receive their water from the Lowell system.

The Kenwood Water District's system is composed of water mains, service lines, pumping stations, metering states, gates and valves. The District's system contains approximately 35 miles of main ranging in size from 6 inch to 12 inch, 267 hydrants, 279 valves, 3 booster stations and 6 meter stations. There are 1,980 accounts in the Kenwood District, and the system continues to expand with ongoing development. The Kenwood Water District continues to upgrade its metering systems, and is making ongoing improvements to the system to ensure sufficient water distribution to customers based on recommendations

generated through a 2017 comprehensive evaluation of the system<sup>15</sup>, which included the following:

- Performance of an annual water audit;
- An ongoing leak detection program;
- Implementation of a hydrant maintenance program;
- Implementation of an annual valve exercising program;
- Installation of remote device equipment for sending out and receiving low pressure alarm signals at all booster stations;
- Adding sump pumps at two meter stations to address water intrusion and consider intrusion alarms at each booster station;
- Various physical improvements to certain meter and booster stations.

The estimated cost of implementing all of the recommendations contained in the 2017 evaluation is \$2.8 million, and implementation plan within the document suggests the work be carried out over a ten-year timeframe.

## STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Although most residents are unaware of the Town's stormwater system, the catch basins, outfalls, swales and pipes that handle falling rain and melting snow are part of the Town's infrastructure. Dracut's stormwater system includes 77 miles of pipes, 1,125 culverts, 3,800 catch basins, 150 detention ponds, 430 outfalls and 160 miles of public streets, as shown on Map 8.2.

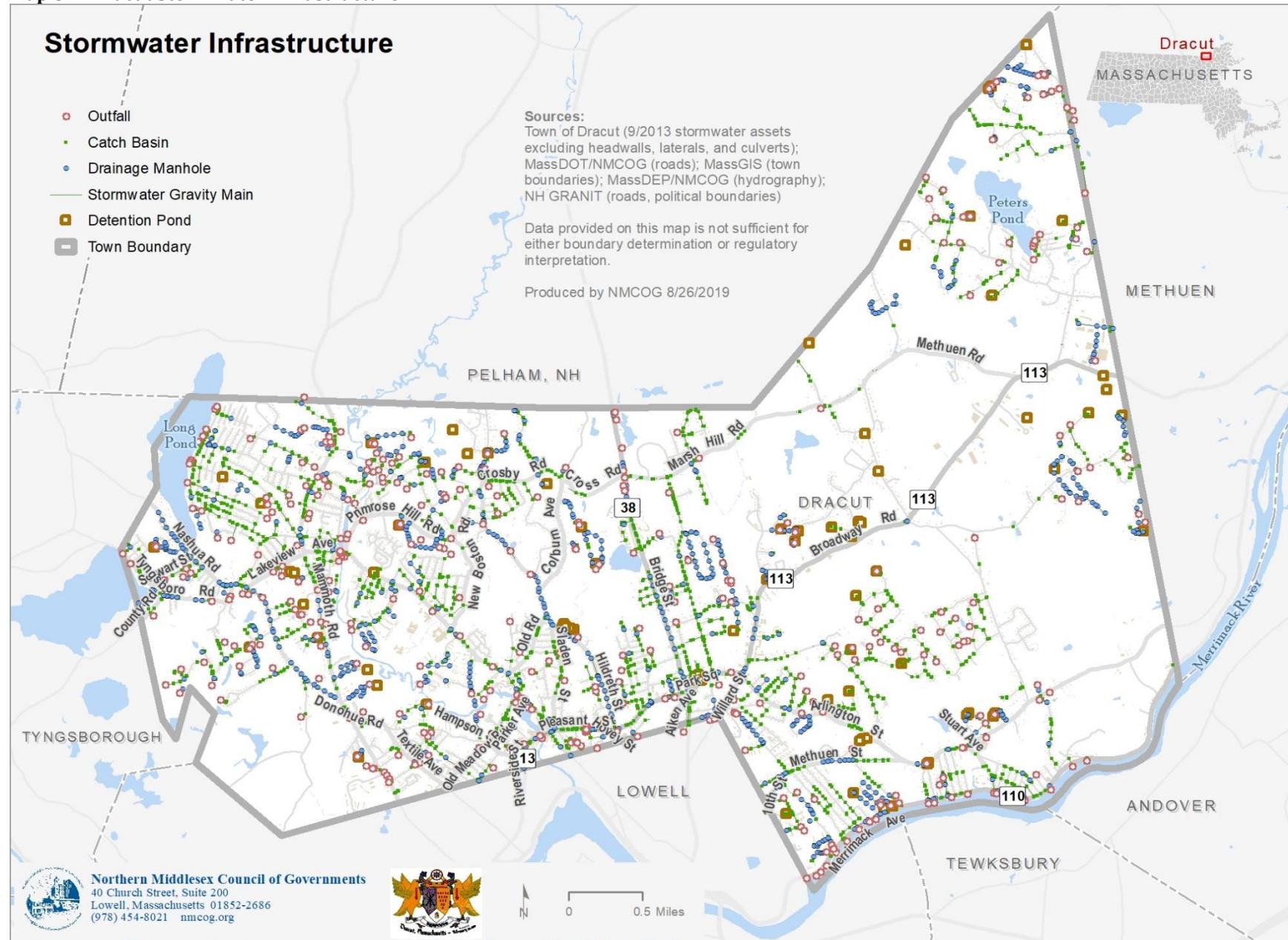
Like most communities in eastern Massachusetts, Dracut is subject to the requirements of United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA's) 2016 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit for Massachusetts, also known as the 2016 Massachusetts Small MS4 General Permit. Regulation under the MS4 Permit is required when the residential population in an area (including adjacent densely settled surrounding communities) exceeds 50,000 and is designated as an urbanized area, and if the urbanized area within a municipality has an overall population density that exceeds 1,000 people per square mile.

Under the MS4 permit, municipalities must develop, implement and enforce a stormwater management program that controls pollutants to the maximum extent practicable, protects water quality, and satisfies appropriate requirements of the federal Clean Water Act. The MS4 permit requires implementation of six minimum control measures, as described below:

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<sup>15</sup> Kenwood Water Evaluation, CDM Smith, May 2017.

Map 8.2: Dracut Stormwater Infrastructure



1. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations - This measure addresses runoff from municipal operations such as DPW yards, salt storage areas, vehicle maintenance yards, road construction, and includes what practices towns should undertake to operate the stormwater system effectively. Towns must:
  - Develop an operations and maintenance plan for their stormwater system.
  - Train employees on how to incorporate pollution prevention and good housekeeping practices into their activities (e.g., vehicle and building maintenance, salt piles, and catch basin cleaning).
2. Must have an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) Program - Illicit discharges are non-stormwater discharges to the storm drain system. Because illicit discharges typically contain bacteria and other pollutants, the MS4 Permit requires towns to develop and implement an IDDE program that includes:
  - A legally enforceable mechanism prohibiting illicit discharges.
  - A storm sewer map identifying the location of all storm drain outfalls.
  - A plan to detect and eliminate illicit discharges.
3. Construction Site Runoff Control - The federal Construction General Permit already requires owner/operators to file a Notice of Intent for construction activity disturbing more than one acre of land. Towns may wish to adopt stricter local rules. Minimum requirements include adoption of:
  - Legally enforceable mechanism to control erosion during construction.
  - Procedures for municipal site plan review of construction projects.
4. Post Construction Runoff Control - This measure requires ongoing stormwater management after construction is completed. Requirements include:
  - Adopt a legally enforceable mechanism to control stormwater after construction.
  - Establish procedures for long-term operation and maintenance of best management practices (BMPs).
5. Public Education and Outreach - Towns are encouraged to form partnerships to distribute educational materials to diverse local audiences within the community as

part of a formal public education program. Specific target audiences are outlined within the MS4 permit.

6. Public Participation and Involvement - EPA suggests that communities give the public the opportunity to play an active role in developing and implementing the MS4 program. Towns must comply with applicable public notice requirements and determine the program's implementation goals and strategies.

Compliance with the permit is expected to increase the Town's stormwater costs substantially, eventually reaching \$1.5 million annually by 2022. Non-compliance is not an option, as it brings the potential for federal regulatory action and fines. The most expensive items include investment in capital equipment, such street sweepers and a vacuum truck and associated staffing; additional stormwater sampling and testing; a robust catch basin cleaning program; additional street sweeping; and stringent monitoring for illegal discharging. Town Meeting has established an enterprise account for stormwater but the establishment of the fee structure is still under discussion. The Town has hired a full-time stormwater coordinator to oversee permit implementation and compliance. The Town is a member of the Northern Middlesex Stormwater Collaborative, which works to assist communities with compliance activities, such as public education, municipal staff training, mapping activities, and procurement.

## ENERGY SERVICES AND INITIATIVES

Dracut is a designated Green Community. The state funded Green Community Designation and Grant Program provides a road map, along with financial and technical support, to municipalities that pledge to cut municipal energy use by 20 percent over 5 years and that meet four other criteria established in the Green Communities Act:

- Allow for the as-of-right siting of renewable or alternative energy generating facilities, research and development facilities, or manufacturing facilities;
- Adopt an expedited application and permitting process of less than one year, for renewable energy facilities interested in locating in a designated renewable zone;
- Purchase fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use, whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable; and
- Minimize the life-cycle cost of all newly constructed homes and buildings by adopting Massachusetts' Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BFRS) Stretch Code (780 CMR 115-AA).

The benefits that Dracut will receive through this designation include the following:

- Cut municipal energy costs and strengthen the local economy;
- Access to grants for clean affordable and resilient energy projects;

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
- Promote energy-efficient building construction that drives the market for better built and lower cost homes;
- Foster renewable energy and clean energy technologies; and
- Become a clean energy leader and a better place to live, and work.

The Town has an agreement with Lodestar Energy, LLC to supply its municipal and school controlled buildings through a renewable solar power net metering project in Charlton, MA. It is estimated that the Town is saving approximately \$87,000 in annual electricity costs.

Dracut has received a gold-level designation through the SolSmart program, a national solar designation and technical assistance program for local governments. SolSmart is designed to distinguish local government leadership in solar processes, programs, and procedures, sending a market signal that designated communities are “open for solar business.” The program is intended to expand local solar markets through technical assistance from national solar experts based on best practices. SolSmart strives to cut red tape, drive greater solar deployment, and make it possible for homes and businesses to access affordable, renewable solar energy to meet their electricity needs.

While the electric distribution grid is owned and managed by National Grid, the Town of Dracut joined twenty-two other communities to launch a community electricity aggregation (CEA) program designed to provide residents and businesses with competitive choice, long-term price stability, and reduced electricity rates. Also known as municipal electricity aggregation, the program relies on bulk-purchasing methods that generate economies of scale, resulting in reduced electricity supply costs for participating National Grid account holders. The Town has renewed the program with Public Power, LLC, which will run through January 2021 at a rate of 10.430 cents/kWh. The Town has estimated that the program is saving residents an average of \$150 annually on their electric bills.

Dracut has acquired all of the streetlights in town from National Grid, through a grant program administered by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The streetlights were then converted to high efficiency LEDs. LEDs reduce energy use by 50-70% as compared to High Pressure Sodium (HPS) lights. Routine maintenance costs are also decreased by 50% or more. LEDs provide more even lighting than HPS lights resulting in fewer over-and under-lit areas. LEDs have a flat, full-cut-off lens that reflects less light into the atmosphere than the curved lenses of HPS lights, and many are certified by the Dark Sky Institute.

Natural gas service for Dracut residents and businesses is provided by National Grid. Dracut also serves as a major hub for natural gas distribution in the northeast and Canadian Maritimes. The Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline natural gas transmission pipeline extends from the Sable Offshore Energy Project (SOEI) gas plant in Goldboro, Nova Scotia, Canada to Dracut. The 30-inch main pipeline runs 810 miles through the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and through Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts where it connects with the North American natural gas grid in Dracut. It is operated by Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline Management Limited of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The pipeline went online in 2000.

In 2014, the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (TGP) proposed building a new 296-mile long gas pipeline called the Northeast Energy Direct Pipeline Project (NED). TGP is owned by Kinder Morgan, the third largest energy company in North America. The pipeline proposal included two discrete segments: (1) a 117-mile from Susquehanna County, PA through Broome, Delaware, and Schoharie Counties to Wright, NY; and (2) a 179-mile segment from Wright, NY east to Dracut. The pipeline would have been 30 or 36 inches in diameter, and required large compressor stations to pressurize the gas being transported. In Dracut, the pipeline would have connected with the Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline so that gas could be exported to Canada and shipped overseas by way of LNG export facilities in Nova Scotia. The project cost was estimated at \$3.3 billion, and the project was met with significant opposition by residents in Dracut and in other communities along the proposed route. On April 23, 2016, Kinder Morgan notified FERC that it was suspending work on the project, citing inadequate commitments from prospective customers.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telephone service for Dracut residents and businesses is available through Comcast and Verizon. Cable television and internet access is provided through Comcast. Through the Master Plan process, it became apparent that residents wish to have additional options in terms of selecting a cable television and internet provider.

## SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

The Town of Dracut provides curbside trash collection and single stream recycling for its residents through private contractors. In 2018, Dracut residents generated 9,779 tons of solid waste, and 2,877 tons of recyclables were collected. The Town's solid waste and recycling program is structured to comply with the waste ban imposed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. (MADEP). The following items are currently banned from the solid waste stream:

- Asphalt pavement, brick and concrete;
- Cathode ray tubes;

- Clean gypsum wallboard;
- Ferrous and non-ferrous metals;
- Glass and metal containers;
- Lead acid batteries;
- Leaves and yard waste;
- Recyclable paper, cardboard and paperboard;
- Single-resin narrow-necked plastic containers;
- Whole tires;
- White goods (large appliances); and
- Commercial food waste.

In Dracut, residents are allowed one wheeled trash container per week at no charge and then must purchase overflow bags for any additional solid waste generated. The DPW accepts yard waste and Christmas trees for composting. In 2018, the Town established a home composting bin program.

Like other communities, Dracut is working to address the contamination of single stream recycling bins with items such as plastic bags, clothing, and scrap metal. The inclusion of these items lowers the value of the recyclables, adding cost to the program. In 2018, the town has partnered with the MADEP for Recycle Smart, a statewide initiative seeking to eliminate contamination (especially plastic bags) from household recycling. The Town participated in the Recycling Dividends Program (RDP) which will provide payments to municipalities that have implemented specific programs and policies proven to maximize reuse, recycling and waste reduction. The program and policy criteria define the characteristics of a model municipal recycling program, essentially functioning as a "best practices" framework. Each RDP criterion has a value ranging from 1 to 4 points. Municipalities that earn at least 8 points (out of 26 available) are eligible for RDP payments.

The Town holds an annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day. Residents must pay a fee for this service based on the volume of hazardous waste collected. Typical items disposed of through this service include oil-based paints, fertilizers, insecticides, fuels, and pool chemicals. The Board of Health runs a no-charge mercury collection program throughout the year for items such as thermometers, thermostats, button batteries, and fluorescent bulbs.

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Board of Health and Historical Commission carry out community planning and development review in Dracut with the assistance and support of town staff.

The Planning Board is responsible for reviewing proposed subdivisions and site plans, and issuing some special permits. The Planning Board consists of five members appointed by the Town Manager, and two associate members appointed by the Board of Selectmen on the recommendation of the Planning Board. Planning Board members are appointed for a three-year term. While the duties and powers of the Planning Board are outlined in Chapters 40A and 40 of the Massachusetts General Laws, according to the town charter the Planning Board “shall make studies and prepare plans concerning the resources, possibilities and needs of the Town. The Planning Board shall have the power to regulate the sub-division of land within the town by the adoption of rules and regulations governing such development. The Planning Board shall annually report to the Town Manager giving information regarding the condition of the town and any plans or proposals known to it affecting the resources, possibilities and needs of the town.” In 2018, the Planning Board acted on 13 Special Permit applications and on 6 Approval Not Required (ANR) Plans or lot line relocations. The Planning Board has authority over the preparation of the master plan, and established a Master Plan Committee with representation from multiple boards.

The Zoning Board of Appeals serves as the special permit granting authority for some special permits and exercises statutory jurisdiction over variances and comprehensive permits. The Board consists of five members and two alternates appointed for a three-year term. The Zoning Board of Appeals is authorized under Chapters 40A and 40B of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as well as the Dracut Zoning Bylaw. In addition to special permits, the Board grants variances and comprehensive permits, and hears appeals on decisions of the Inspector of Buildings. Public hearings of the Board are held as the result of applications in the following areas:

- By a person aggrieved by the decision of the Inspector of Buildings (Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40A, Section 13);
- For a Comprehensive Permit pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 40B to construct affordable housing within the Town of Dracut;
- For a special permit under the Zoning Bylaw; and
- For a variance from the requirements of the Zoning Bylaw.

During 2018, the Board received 18 applications; none involved a comprehensive permit project.

The Conservation Commission administers the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, MGL c.131 § 40 and the Dracut Wetlands Protection Bylaw, and has responsibility for protecting natural resources. During 2018, the Commission issued 18 Notices of Intent, nine Determinations of Applicability, two abbreviated Notices of Resource Area Delineation, and 22 Certificates of Compliance.

The Community Development Department serves as staff to the Planning Board, Master Plan Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Historical Commission, Beaver Brook Farm Committee, and the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee. The Department also provides as-needed support to the Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Committee, Agricultural Commission, Open Space Committee, and Affordable Housing Partnership. The Community Development director serves as the permitting ombudsman, and coordinates development permitting and proposal reviews with various town departments and boards.

The Engineering Department provides technical and engineering services on matters related to municipal operations and land use, including assistance to town departments, boards and committees. The Department also hosts and maintains the town's GIS program.

The Public Works Department is located at 833 Hildreth Street and performs numerous functions to support the upkeep of the town's public grounds and public ways, including the following:

- Parks and athletic field maintenance;
- Paving;
- Public grounds and cemetery maintenance;
- Salting, sanding and snow plowing;
- Stormwater management, including street and sidewalk sweeping, and the inspection and cleaning of detention ponds and catch basins;
- Roadway construction and line painting; and
- Tree maintenance.

The Public Works Department also assists other departments, boards and committees on an as-needed basis.

The mission of the Dracut Board of Health is to protect public health through the enforcement of health codes and regulations, while promoting a healthy community. The Board adopts and modifies regulations to address various public health issues, such as the sale of tobacco and vaping products. Through the Health Department, the Board provides inspectional services directed at: food safety; safe and sanitary housing; bacterial testing of beaches, and public and semi-public swimming pools; tanning facilities; and nuisance complaint investigations. Although much of Dracut is sewered, the Health Department performed 14 Title V inspections in 2018, and permitted 8 septic systems. In 2018, Dracut residents filed 80 nuisance complaints with the Health Department.

The Health Department provides nursing services through a part-time nurse. Such services include vaccinations (the most popular being for influenza and pneumonia), blood pressure

clinics, home visits, and investigations of communicable disease reports. The Board of Health and Health Department have also become involved in local and regional efforts to increase awareness and provide education relative to the opioid crisis.

The Health Department runs a mercury drop off program, a sharps collection program, and an unused medication collection program (in conjunction with the Police Department). It works with the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Program on summer spraying and culvert cleaning.

The Dracut Historical Commission's work focuses on historic preservation, protection and development of the historical or archaeological assets of the Town. Under MGL Chapter 40, Section 8D, historical commissions research places of historic or archeological value, cooperate with the state archaeologist in conducting research, and may advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets which it deems necessary for its work. For the purpose of protecting and preserving historic resources, it may make recommendations to the selectmen and to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, that locations be certified as historical or archaeological landmarks. The Commission is required report to the state archaeologist the existence of any archaeological, paleontological or historical site or object discovered. In 2018, the Dracut Historical Commission conducted site reviews and approved ten building demolitions, submitted a grant application to the Massachusetts Historical Commission to conduct an in-depth historical assets property survey of two textile mills and their associated buildings, and worked with a developer on the replication of the Clement Homestead, located at the intersection of Mammoth Road and the Clement Drive.

The Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership Committee was established by the Board of Selectmen to oversee the development of the Housing Production Plan and to promote affordable housing opportunities. Upon completion of the draft Housing Production Plan (HPP), the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership Committee makes its recommendation to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen on whether the HPP should be adopted. Once the HPP is adopted by the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen, the document is submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for final approval. Once approved by DHCD, the HPP remains in effect for five years and serves as a "blueprint" for the community in developing affordable housing units to address the 10% affordable housing goal for the community.

The Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership Committee has an inherent role in implementing the HPP by promoting affordable housing projects that address the housing needs of the community, while meeting the community standards in Dracut. The Board of Selectmen and Town Manager, with the concurrence of the other Town Boards,

Committees, and Commissions, could delegate certain responsibilities and functions to the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership Committee as follows:

- Establish criteria to evaluate affordable housing proposals;
- Make recommendations on the pros and cons of particular housing proposals;
- Identify local, state, and federal housing resources to fund development projects;
- Locate available land suitable for development;
- Work with private and nonprofit affordable housing developers;
- Increase public awareness through forums and other public events; and
- Work in cooperation with the Town Boards.

## CULTURAL AND RECREATION

The Parker Memorial Library meets the intellectual, cultural and social needs of the community. In addition to its collection of books and other reading materials, the library offers 142 programs for adults that were attended by 2,517 individuals in 2018, 36 programs for teens that were attended by 234 individuals, and 255 programs for children that were attended by 5,194 young people. In 2018, 177,340 people visited the library and borrowed 155,484 items. Through the town's participation in the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium, Dracut residents borrowed 26,194 items from other libraries, and the Parker Memorial Library lent 28,070 items to residents in other communities.

The Cultural Council administers grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Arts Council to support and promote local arts. Each year, the Council plans programs in the arts, sciences and humanities for the benefit of town residents.

The Open Space Committee is comprised of nine members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Committee is advisory in nature and members also work to maintain several of the town's open space areas, including Long Pond, Cross Road and Rifle Range, Nickel Mine, East Richardson, Proprietors' Way, Yapp Farm and Dennis P. McNamara way. The Committee members and volunteers work on clearing, marking and cleaning trails, posting signs, procuring tools, and overseeing the responsible use of the properties. Most recently, the Committee received a National Trails Micro-Grant to obtain the materials needed to improve trails in the Richardson Preserve and to open new segments of the Proprietors' Way Trail. The Committee also host community events such as spring cleanups, a scavenger hunt, and kayaking at Lake Mascuppic. Trail maps and brochures have also been developed by the Committee and are available on the town website and at Town Hall. Additional information on recreation programs can be found in the Open Space and Recreation chapter of this document.

The Recreation Commission is a nine-member appointed body that works with the Recreation Department and volunteers to provide educational, sports and fitness activities and programming for residents. During 2018, 2,725 residents participated in ten programs, as shown in Table 8.8.

**Table 8.8: Number of Participants by Recreation Program**

Program	Number of Participants
Spring baseball	345
Fall baseball	99
Basketball	872
Skiing	165
Softball	175
Wrestling	57
Flag football	295
Volleyball	110
Summer Fun Run	207
Special events	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,725</b>

The following facilities are under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Commission:

- Veteran's Memorial Park
- Dillion-McAnespie Park
- Monahan Park
- Hovey Field
- Carrick Park
- Varnum Park
- Dillion Center Fields
- Lake Mascuppic Beach and Boat Ramp.

Additional information on recreation can be found in the Open Space and Recreation chapter of the Master Plan.

## HUMAN SERVICES

Human services refers to public health and social services provided to residents due to age, income, veteran's status, disability or other special needs. Municipal human service delivery generally focuses on programs for the elderly, public health services, veterans' assistance and tax relief for populations protected by state law.

In Dracut, the Council on Aging (COA) supplies or coordinates most of the services that directly benefit senior citizens. The COA staff relies on volunteers who work with paid staff. In FY 2018, the Senior Center staff and volunteers provided 3,638 instances of support

services to over 686 seniors and their families. Such services included information and referrals relative to housing, home care and adult day care, guidance on Social Security, insurance counseling, lending of medical equipment, grief support, home visits, wellness checks, tax preparation services, Meals on Wheels, and transportation services. In addition, the Senior Center offers a number of educational programs, fitness classes, entertainment, and social opportunities.

The Town offers senior property tax relief and an abatement program that allows interested taxpayers age 60 and older to contribute public service hours in exchange for a tax credit of up to \$600. The State also requires that cities and towns provide certain types of financial assistance to veterans, the blind, surviving spouses and the elderly. The types and amounts of assistance vary by program and are fully reimbursed by the State.

Each community must appoint a Veterans Agent to help veterans and their dependents with financial, medical or burial benefits. The State reimburses 75% of eligible expenditures through the cherry sheet. Dracut has a full-time Veterans Agent who has office hours at Town Hall on Monday through Friday. The Department of Veterans' Services oversees a state assistance program based on need, which provides financial, medical, and service benefits to veterans and their dependents. The Veterans Agent administers its main financial and medical assistance programs. The office also offers assistance and referrals in the areas of federal compensation and pensions, fuel, state and federal educational benefits, tax exemptions, annuities, home loans, counseling and job training.

## PUBLIC INPUT

Question 4 of the written Master Plan survey asked respondents to rate the quality of municipal services to provide input to the Five-Year CEDS document as being either excellent, good, fair, or poor. The results are summarized as follows:

- The majority of respondents (72.58%) indicated that the Town Hall services are either excellent (15.01%) or good (57.57%), while 18.36% indicated that they are fair and only 1.86% felt that they are poor.
- In rating the schools, few respondents indicated that schools are excellent (4.33%), 33.54% stated that they are good, 33.42% felt that they are fair, while 16.46% indicated that they are poor.
- Over half of the survey respondents (56.02%) were unfamiliar with elder services and unable to rate this item. Of those who were familiar, 74% rated elder services as excellent (17%) or good (57%), while 22% indicated that the services are fair, and only 4% felt they are poor.

- Dracut residents think quite highly of the library, with 36.74% rating it as excellent, 50.93% indicated it is good, while only 6% rated it as fair (5.48%) or poor (0.5%).
- Overall, respondents are pleased with the public safety services in Dracut, with 74.53% indicated that the services are excellent (22.74%) or good (51.79%), while 15.2% stated that are fair, and 4.45% felt they are poor.
- Nearly half of the respondents (45.97%), were unable to rate code enforcement. Of those who provided a score (435 respondents), 60.9% rated code enforcements as excellent (7.8%) or good (53.1%), while 29.88% indicated that it is fair and 9.4% felt it is poor.
- A significant portion of respondents were unfamiliar with Veterans Services (68.11%). Of those who were familiar, 64% rated the services as excellent (14%) or good (50%), while 29.5% indicated they are fair and 4% felt that they are poor.
- In rating the town's website, about half the respondents indicated that it is excellent (6.74%) or good (43.57%), while 32.71% stated it is fair and 9.49% felt it is poor.
- Just over half of the respondents (52.78%) felt that road maintenance is excellent (5.93%) or good (46.85%), while 37.33% indicated that it fair and 9.39% rated it as poor.
- The majority of respondents (60.67%) indicated that trash collection and recycling is excellent (17%) or good (43.67%), while 12.16% stated it is fair and 2.23% felt it is poor.
- Just over one-third (36.46%) of respondents were unable to rate animal control services. Of those who were familiar with the service, 76.9% indicated that the service is excellent (15.9%) or good (61%), while 19.6% stated it is fair and 3.3% felt it is poor.
- Over half of the respondents (63%) rated recreation as excellent (15.24%) or good (48%), while 20.69% indicated it is fair and 6.82% felt it is poor.
- Nearly 65% (64.77%) indicated that sewer service is excellent (10.63%) or good (54.14%), while 16.56% indicated it is fair and 2.84% felt it is poor.
- Over half the respondents (62.57%) indicated that water service is excellent (11.55%) or good (51.02%), while 14.34% stated it is fair and 6.52% felt it is poor.

When asked to identify the top three most critical issues facing Dracut over the next ten years (Question 5), the number one response was the schools and school funding (512 responses), while the number two response was the lack of police and fire personnel or funding for public safety (142 responses).

In responding to Question 6, respondents favored the Town prioritizing the following items related to facilities and services:

- Adopting energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives (90.84%)
- Adding sidewalks and trails (88.63%)
- Expanding public safety services and personnel (86.6%)
- Improving water infrastructure (78.17%)
- Improving sewer infrastructure (72.69%).

Respondents were asked to indicate where they would spend \$100 in town funds. The top response was to enhance the school budget (47.88%), while the second most popular response was to enhance public safety and emergency response (10.47%).

The Master Plan Committee distributed a written survey to Dracut High School seniors. In rating municipal services, the provided the following responses:

- 47% indicated that the Town Hall services are either excellent (5.88%) or good (41.18%), while 29.41% indicated that they are fair.
- In rating the schools, few respondents indicated that schools are either excellent (2.94%), 26.47% stated that they are good, 55.88% felt that they are fair, while 11.76% indicated that they are poor.
- Like their parents, teens also think highly of the library, with 30.3% rating it as excellent, 63.64% indicating it is good, while none of the teens rated it as fair or poor.
- Teen respondents are pleased with the public safety services in Dracut, with 73.53% indicating that the services are excellent (14.71%) or good (58.82%), while 14.71% stated that are fair.
- In rating the town's website, about half the teen respondents were unfamiliar with the site. Of those that were familiar, nearly all respondents rated it as good.
- 35.29% of teen respondents felt that road maintenance is excellent (5.88%) or good (29.41%), while 44.12% indicated that it fair and 20.59% rated it as poor.
- The majority of teen respondents (70.59%) indicated that trash collection and recycling is excellent (17.65%) or good (52.94%), while 11.76% stated it is fair and 8.82% felt it is poor.
- Just over one-third (34.11%) of teen respondents were unable to rate animal control services. Of those who were familiar with the service, 76.9% indicated that the service is excellent (19%) or good (52.3%), while 28.57% stated it is fair.
- Over half of the teen respondents (67.64%) rated recreation as excellent (5.88%) or good (61.76%), while 17.65% indicated it is fair and 11.76% felt it is poor.

In responding to Question 6, teen respondents favored the Town prioritizing the following items related to facilities and services:

- Adopting energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives (90.91%)
- Adding sidewalks and trails (85.29%)
- Expanding public safety services and personnel (69.70%)

Teen respondents were asked to indicate where they would spend \$100 in town funds. The top response was to enhance the school budget (41.18%), while the second most popular response was to create a new recreation area (11.76%).

The first Master Plan Visioning Session was held at Harmony Hall on October 5, 2017. During the session, public input was generated through the use of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis exercise. Participants identified the following as the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats related to Facilities and Services.

**Strengths:**

- Low property taxes
- Low crime rate
- Use of historic properties

**Weaknesses:**

- Quality of education;
- Lack of technology in schools;
- Lack of community events and festivals;
- Lack of identity;
- Lack of handicap accessible facilities;
- Lack of coordination with schools;
- Lack of traffic enforcement in neighborhoods;
- Lack of funding for fire department and services;
- Lack of technology use by town government; and
- Inadequate funding/revenue.

**Opportunities:**

- Trails and bike paths;
- Community Center or Visitor Center;
- Enhance town website; and
- Better public transportation.

**Threats:**

- Lack of opportunities to socialize;
- Gas pipelines;
- Lack of special education;
- Exodus of young families due to schools;

- Lack of community participation/voter apathy;
- Lack of safety precautions; and
- Dependence on state money.

A Visioning Session on Facilities and Services was held on February 26, 2019. The following input was received from residents:

- Additional pedestrian infrastructure is needed (sidewalks along Lakeview Avenue and other major roadways);
- Bike lanes are needed, as well as sharrows;
- A facilities person is needed for town hall, police and fire; the schools have their own facilities person;
- Hazardous waste collection should be done on a regional basis;
- Town should maintain all pump stations;
- Internet service needs to be improved;
- More information should be available on the town's website/school and town websites should be linked;
- More police and fire personnel are needed;
- Fix flashing school zone light/sign so it is only working during appropriate times;
- Ban single-use plastic bags;
- Take another look at composting and regional contracts for solid waste and recycling;
- Need bicycle parking at the high school and middle school, as well as at town buildings;
- Need a Community/Recreation Center, as well as an ice rink and pool;
- Running out of space at Town Hall;
- Add generators to all town buildings;
- Need supervision at recreation facilities;
- Upgrade DPW with a vehicle wash;
- Renovate Campbell School to accommodate new growth—it is now at capacity;
- All elementary schools need repairs;
- School administration building needs to rehabbed/restored; and
- Town needs a Facilities Department.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In every community, the demand for public services is driven by changes in household types, demographic and age shifts, household income, and the expectations of residents. Furthermore, state and federal mandates related to education, public safety, public health and environmental protection often impact decision-making, in terms of where financial resources must be or should be invested. When growth in demand and changes in need create cost increases without a corresponding increase in revenue, communities find it extremely challenging to finance improvements and maintain the quality of services that residents have come to expect. Like most communities in Massachusetts, Dracut relies on

property tax revenues to meet its budget needs, and has focused on economic development in order to increase its non-residential tax base.

While Dracut has met or exceeded its net school spending requirement since 2014, its per pupil spending is 22% lower than similar districts, and it ranked #322 out of 326 districts in the Commonwealth in terms of per pupil spending. It is expected that financial challenges relative to education will continue in the future. The School Department is establishing a Special Education Stabilization fund to address expected increases in demand for services. In addition, in its FY 2019 Capital Plan, the School Department outlined nearly \$11 million in building maintenance needs, such as roofs, windows, univentilator replacements, parking lot maintenance/replacement and circulator pump replacement.

Based on the public input received during the master plan process, it is clear that a significant percentage of town residents support increased investment in education. Many studies have shown that the quality of the school system has a direct bearing on property values, and that investments in education lead to increased property tax revenues.<sup>16</sup> Over the long term, developing a plan for increasing school spending would be in the best interest of the community from both a revenue and quality of life perspective.

Several capital improvements are also needed at various municipal buildings. The Public Works Department building is inadequate for present needs and there are plans to construct a second floor above the administrative area. Generators are needed at the Greenmont School, Eldridge School Administration Building, and Town Hall. A full-time facilities manager was recently hired and this individual could be responsible for overseeing a centralized maintenance department. Currently, maintenance is done by several different town employees and school department personnel, some of whom are not necessarily facilities experts.

The projected increase of older residents will impact the provision of public services. The Town will need to increase funding for senior services and will likely need to consider options for providing an improved facility for senior programs. There is limited room for expansion on the site of the existing Senior Center. At a minimum, the existing building is in need of a new roof and HVAC system. Transportation services provided by the Council on Aging will need to keep pace with growing demand, and accessibility improvements will be needed at various town-owned buildings and properties.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/what-is-the-connection-between-home-values-and-school-performance>

Through the Council on Aging, Dracut is working toward becoming a designated age- and dementia friendly community. An “age-friendly” community is one in which the needs and preferences of older adults are taken into account. Older adults are respected; their knowledge, skills, resources, and contributions are sought out; and older adults are integrated into the fabric of the community. An age-friendly community has the following assets:

- Safe and accessible public transportation options;
- Affordable, accessible, and safe housing;
- Pleasant and safe parks and outdoor spaces;
- Quality community and health services;
- Sufficient employment and volunteer opportunities; and
- Engaging social activities.

Dementia friendly communities are safe, informed, respectful, and engage all members of the community to meet the needs of the growing number of people living with dementia so that they remain part of community life. The Master Plan Committee supports these initiatives and encourages the continuation of this work.

Several studies of Dracut public safety services and facilities have been undertaken over the past five years. A number of recommendations were outlined in the Police Department Risk Assessment Study (2015) to ensure that the facility remains in a state of good repair. In addition, the Fire Department has identified a number of capital improvements needed at Stations 1 and 2, and the Town has appropriated funding and solicited bids for the construction of a new station to replace Station 3.

The 2016 Fire Services Risk Analysis identified a fire risk for areas of town not served by public water and recommended that the town adopt a bylaw requiring the installation of fire water supply cisterns for new developments of three or more homes located outside of the public water supply system. Furthermore, it recommended that the Fire Department partner with private property owners to install cisterns in areas outside of the hydrant district. The 2016 report outlined additional recommendations relative to the need to increase Fire Department staffing levels.

The 2016 Fire Services Risk Assessment report recommended that the Town explore the feasibility of having the Fire Department provide EMS transport rather than the current ambulance provider, as is done in many area communities such as Tewksbury, Pepperell and Westford. The Master Plan Committee supports further study of this option. Given that emergency dispatch services for Dracut and Tewksbury will soon be regionalized through the Northern Middlesex Regional Emergency Communications Center (NMRECC), future

studies should consider the possibility of operating an ambulance service that would serve both communities.

Dracut's sewer system includes nine (9) pump stations that are privately owned and operated. Presently, there are no formal policies or procedures regarding the operations and maintenance of these facilities, and the town has no immediate plans to assume ownership or responsibility for the pump stations. The Sewer Commission has historically declined requests to take over private pump stations, except in the case of Clough Drive and Autumn Road where DEP mandated the takeovers. If these stations are to remain under private ownership, policies and procedures should be in place to ensure that they are properly operated and maintained.

The Dracut Town Manager serves as the Superintendent of the Kenwood Water District, which distributes water to the eastern portion of Dracut. In 2017, a ten-year plan was developed based on a system-wide evaluation. The recommendations within the plan include an annual water audit, a leak detection program, maintenance improvements, technology improvements, physical improvements to two meter stations, and adding sump pumps at two meter stations. These improvements are needed in order to upgrade and operate the aging system and meet regulatory requirements. A 5% rate increase was recently put in effect to help fund the improvements and it is anticipated that it will be necessary to raise rates in order to sustain the system in the future.

Dracut has taken significant steps toward compliance with the new EPA MS4 permit requirements through the establishment of a stormwater enterprise fund and the hiring of a stormwater coordinator. Over the next few years, the cost of permit compliance is estimated to reach \$1.5 million annually. In order to have the needed revenues to continue compliance, the town will need to set the fee structure and begin collecting stormwater revenues. The Town has established a stormwater permitting authority to review and implement stormwater standard operating procedures.

Dracut is currently working to address contamination of its recycled materials in order to lower the cost of its recycling program. Public education on new recycling requirements that reflect the evolving market for recyclables will be needed on an ongoing basis in order to effectively manage the program costs. Dracut would also benefit from a more robust composting program that would remove organic items from the solid waste stream, thereby reducing trash collection costs and tipping fees. A food composting program should be studied for use by the schools and the Senior Center.

Dracut residents desire to have more options when selecting their cable television and internet provider and believe that competition would result in lower costs and higher

quality services. Dracut should follow in the steps of other communities in looking for companies that offer fair prices and high quality services. Proposals should be sought from companies that offer low-cost cable and internet services across the town, including for seniors, low-income residents and those with disabilities. Public access and local programming should also be considered as part of any proposal.

Dracut needs adequate cemetery space to meet future needs. All of the Town's cemeteries are full except for the Oakland Cemetery where 350 lots are unsold. The Town plans to expand the New Boston and Richardson cemeteries in the near future. Over the long-term Dracut will need to identify additional opportunities to increase the number of burial plots. Burial trends have shifted in recent years with cremation growing in popularity and with growing interest in green burials. All cemeteries require maintenance and financial resources in order to be kept in good repair. One problem facing a growing number of cemeteries as they reach capacity is the loss of revenue that typically comes with new burials.

Dracut should investigate opportunities to regionalize certain services through agreements with neighboring communities, in a manner consistent with the Dracut Public Schools, which is a member of two special education collaboratives (CREST and Valley). The district receives reduced tuition rates for students attending specialized programming at these collaboratives. The sharing of specialized DPW equipment and emergency services should also be considered.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a long-term plan for increasing school spending as a means to enhance property values, increase property tax revenues, and improve quality of life.
- Establish a centralized facilities maintenance department that is responsible for all town properties, including the schools.
- Plan for the projected increase in older residents in terms of the demand for senior services and programs, possible expansion or replacement of the Senior Center, the growing demand for transportation services, and the need for accessibility accommodations at town-owned properties.
- Complete the age- and dementia-friendly designation process through the Council on Aging.
- Continue to implement the recommendations outlined in the Police Department Risk Assessment Study (2015).
- Implement the capital improvements identified for Fire Stations 1 and 2.
- Implement the recommendations outlined in the Fire Services Risk Analysis (2016), including a feasibility study providing EMS transport through the town, rather than

a private provider, and investigate the possibility of regionalizing ambulance service in collaboration with the Town Tewksbury, building upon the partnership established through the NMRECC.

- Develop policies and procedures to ensure that privately owned and operated sewer pump stations are properly operated and maintained.
- Implement the improvements outlined in the 2017 ten-year plan for the Kenwood Water District.
- To ensure that the revenues needed to comply with EPA's MS4 permit, the Town should finalize the fee structure for the recently-created stormwater enterprise fund and begin collecting revenues for the program.
- As a means of reducing the town's solid waste collection and disposal costs, provide ongoing public education regarding the recycling program, implement a more robust composting program, and consider implementing a food composting program for the schools and the Senior Center.
- Seek proposals from additional companies that offer cable and internet services.
- Study future cemetery needs within Dracut, in order to determine how the future demand for burial plots will be met.
- Investigate opportunities to regionalize certain town services through agreements with neighboring towns, possibilities include the sharing of specialized DPW equipment or the delivery of emergency services.
- Review the Town Charter at least every ten years to determine whether updates or amendments are needed.

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# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The final section of the Master Plan contains a multiple-page table outlining the specific recommendations contained in the Master Plan. These recommendations are intended to advance the goals, policies and actions articulated throughout the document. For each specific recommendation, the stakeholders with responsibility for implementation are identified. Most often the responsibility rests with the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, DPW, Zoning Board of Appeals, Community Preservation Committee, Water Districts, Recreation Department, or the Historical Commission. It is important to note that many town departments, boards, committees and commissions will play a supportive role in implementing and advancing the recommendations. The Master Plan Committee recommends that the Town reestablish an Economic Development Committee to oversee the implementation of the recommendations that are related to growing the town's economy in a way that is appropriate for the community.

The following table also provides a suggested timeframe for the implementation of the various recommendations over the next decade. Five timeframes have been considered, based on the priority and urgency of the recommendation, the resources available, and the time required to advance the recommendation. The implementation of some recommendations may be immediate or ongoing/continual, while others may be implemented on a short-term (1-3 years), intermediate (4-6 years) or long-term basis (7 years or more), as indicated in the table.

To promote timely implementation of the recommendations, the Town should appoint a Master Plan Implementation Committee. It is suggested that the Committee membership include a representative of the following entities:

- Planning Board
- Board of Selectmen
- Conservation Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Affordable Housing Partnership Committee
- Community Preservation Committee
- Community Development Department
- Historical Commission
- DPW
- Town Manager
- Open Space Committee
- School Department
- The Water Districts

- The re-established Economic Development Committee
- Resident-at-large

The role of the Master Plan Implementation Committee is to serve as a facilitator and coordinator of the implementation process, to advocate for the implementation of the recommendations, and to report annually to Town Meeting regarding the Town's progress in implementing the recommendations. In addition, the Committee will assist the Planning Board with any amendments that may be needed to either the Master Plan document or the Implementation Table over time.

**Table 9.1: Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Make effective use of the State's economic development tool box: the EDIP program under MOBD, the Chapter 43D program, MassWorks, Housing Choice Capital Grants, and MassDOT funds to name a few.	Economic Development	Ongoing	Town Manager, Community Development, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen
Work closely with regional, state and federal economic development partners, such as the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, MassDevelopment, the Economic Development Administration and the Small Business Administration.	Economic Development	Ongoing	Town Manager, Economic Development Committee, and Community Development
Utilize the Dracut First Housing Corporation and non-profit developers, such as the Coalition for a Better Acre, Common Ground Development Corporation, Inc., and Habitat for Humanity, to develop local affordable housing development capacity.	Housing	Ongoing	Affordable Housing Partnership Committee
Maintain designation as a Housing Choice Community through continued housing production and apply for Housing Choice Capital and Technical Assistance Grants.	Housing	Ongoing	Affordable Housing Partnership Committee, Community Development,
Utilize state and local funds and other "tools", such as Chapter 40R, Inclusionary Zoning and "friendly" Chapter 40B developments, to increase the supply of affordable housing.	Housing	Ongoing	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Selectmen
Actively pursue Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR) and Conservation Restrictions (CR) for acquired farmland, forested land, riparian corridors, and water supply areas.	Open Space and Recreation	Continual	Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, Community Development
Establish links between local and regional trails to create an interconnected network, and work with proponents of future development projects on preserving the easements/rights-of-way needed for the trail network.	Open Space and Recreation	Ongoing	Planning Board, Community Development, Open Space Committee
Access existing resources related to first-time homebuyer and foreclosure assistance programs.	Housing	Ongoing	Affordable Housing Partnership Committee
Continue to acquire key parcels for the protection of natural resources, wildlife, agricultural lands, water supply, and historic resources, and to meet recreation needs.	Open Space and Recreation	Ongoing	Conservation Commission, Community Preservation Committee, Historical Commission, Open Space Committee

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

Recommendation	Applicable Master Plan Elements	Timeframe	Stakeholders
More actively engage the development community as partners in the protection of open space, beyond what is required in the subdivision regulations. Enforce those provisions within the Open Space Residential Design bylaw that require the protection of dedicated open space, and strengthen oversight of OSRD projects by withholding occupancy permits until the appropriate conservation restriction is recorded.	Open Space and Recreation	Ongoing	Planning Board, Community Development, Open Space Committee
More widely promote the Town's conservation and recreation facilities, programs and events through the inclusion of information in the Senior Center newsletter, by posting flyers and notices at the Library, Town Hall and the Senior Center, and via the distribution of information through the schools.	Open Space and Recreation	Ongoing	Council on Aging, School Department, Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission
Continue efforts to list qualifying properties on the National Register and on MACRIS. There are many historic assets that are clearly eligible for inclusion. This work could be funded through grants or by using CPA funds.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Ongoing	Historical Commission
Promote and market the Town's historical and cultural resources to foster a greater sense of appreciation and stewardship. As part of this effort, plaques could be provided for display on historic properties. In addition, a "self-guided walking tour" of historic assets should be developed.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Ongoing	Historical Commission
Encourage homeowners and recreational users of the town's lakes and ponds to continue the use of best practices directed at improving and maintaining water quality.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Ongoing	Board of Health, Stormwater Manager
Promote the agricultural economy by encouraging: the preservation of agricultural lands through APRs and Conservation Restrictions; farm-to-table restaurants; a "buy local" campaign; community supported agriculture (CSA); community gardens; and agri-tourism.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Ongoing	Agricultural Commission
Work with interested residents and non-profits to complete the certification process for identified vernal pools by providing guidance and training for volunteers, and by seeking consent from private property owners where needed.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Ongoing	Conservation Agent

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Plan for the projected increase in older residents in terms of the demand for senior services and programs, possible expansion or replacement of the Senior Center, the growing demand for transportation services, and the need for accessibility accommodations at town-owned properties.	Facilities and Services	Ongoing	Council on Aging, LRTA, ADA Coordinator, Facilities Manager
Continue to implement the recommendations outlined in the Police Department Risk Assessment Study (2015).	Facilities and Services	Ongoing	Police Department, Town Manager
Implement the recommendations outlined in the Fire Services Risk Analysis (2016), including a feasibility study providing EMS transport through the town, rather than a private provider, and investigate the possibility of regionalizing ambulance service in collaboration with the Town of Tewksbury, building upon the partnership established through the NMRECC.	Facilities and Services	Ongoing	Fire Department, Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Town of Tewksbury
Develop policies and procedures to ensure that privately owned and operated sewer pump stations are properly operated and maintained.	Facilities and Services	Ongoing	DPW
Update and revise the Town's Zoning Bylaw to provide clarity and consistency, update uses, and add appropriate design standards, guidelines and performance standards, including updated standards for landscaping, lighting and signage. Conduct a comprehensive review of the town's Zoning Bylaw and development regulations every five years.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals
Resolve the split-zoned parcels, particularly those located within the town's business districts.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board
Consider revising the zoning requirements in the neighborhoods around the town's lakes, ponds and mill areas, to allow for smaller lot sizes that are consistent with the neighborhoods' existing character.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board
Create design guidelines directed at improving the visual quality of commercial and industrial development. The guidelines will provide direction and suggestions for the development community relative to landscaping, signage, lighting, access and parking lot design, and façade treatments for projects of a certain size.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board and Community Development

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Modify the Zoning Bylaw to better articulate the Town's support of agricultural enterprises by including food processing and packaging, shared community commercial kitchen facilities, and farmer's co-ops as allowed uses.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board
Collaborate with neighboring communities to better understand the regional needs of the agricultural community, and identify opportunities to support agriculture that extend beyond the boundaries of the town.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Agricultural Commission
Consider the adoption of an inclusionary zoning bylaw, as recommended in the Town's Housing Production Plan, for multi-family projects and single-family subdivisions over a certain size threshold.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board, Community Development, and Affordable Housing Partnership Committee
Modify the Zoning Bylaw to give consideration to the town's cultural and artistic enterprises by including museums, artist work/live space, studios, galleries and performing arts facilities as allowed uses in appropriate districts.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board and Community Development
Revise the in-law/accessory dwelling unit bylaw to provide additional clarity. Consider allowing accessory dwelling units by-right, or at a minimum, allowing for accessory units with fewer constraints, in order to provide additional housing options for older adults and young, entry-level workers.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board, Community Development and Affordable Housing Partnership Committee
Revise the Mill Conversion Overlay District bylaw to require that the deed restriction for affordable units be in perpetuity and to mandate that all affordable units be included on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board, Community Development and Affordable Housing Partnership Committee
Consider adopting a Low Impact Development (LID) bylaw for managing stormwater on site and assisting the Town in meeting the requirements of the new EPA MS4 permit.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board, Stormwater Department, Conservation Commission, Community Development
Modify the Zoning Bylaw to encourage renewable energy initiatives with the assistance of NMCOG.	Land Use and Zoning	Short-term	Planning Board, Community Development, NMCOG
Re-establish the Economic Development Committee to work with the Town Manager and Community Development Director.	Economic Development	Short-term	Board of Selectmen

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Post available commercial and industrial properties on the Town's web site, as well as the web sites of the economic development partners.	Economic Development	Short-term	Community Development and Economic Development Committee
Work closely with UMass Lowell in identifying spin-off incubator business opportunities, as well as training opportunities in the STEM area.	Economic Development	Short-term	Town Manager, Community Development and Economic Development Committee
Establish formal relationship with Middlesex Community College to open up educational opportunities for Dracut students.	Economic Development	Short-term	School Department
Work with the Greater Lowell MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board to identify training opportunities for Dracut residents and businesses.	Economic Development	Short-term	Town Manager, Community Development and Economic Development Committee
Collaborate with the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce to host local training session for Dracut small businesses.	Economic Development	Short-term	Community Development and the Economic Development Committee
Review opportunities under the Chapter 40R program to encourage mixed-use development in three or four locations.	Economic Development	Short-term	Planning Board, Community Development, Economic Development Committee
Identify opportunities to design and construct off-road multi-use trails, such as the trail connecting the school complex with Beaver Brook Farm, Dracut's section of the Merrimack River Trail, and trails located on conservation properties.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	DPW, Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission
Update the Town-wide Trail Map and make it available on the Town's website.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	Conservation Commission, DPW
Participate in MassDOT's <i>Safe Routes to Schools</i> and <i>Complete Streets Programs</i> .	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	School Department, DPW
Work with the School Department and public safety officials to implement a bicycle and pedestrian safety education program for school-age children.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	School Department, Police Department
Revise and update the parking requirements within the Zoning Bylaw to reflect current day standards.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	Planning Board, Community Development
Consider allowing on-street parking in certain areas of town where there is concentrated development, such as the Navy Yard and Collinsville, in order to reflect the urban character of the area and allow for future business expansion and development.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	Board of Selectmen, Planning Board

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Address traffic congestion and circulation issues at the schools during drop-off and pick-up times.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	School Department, Police Department, DPW
Develop a pavement management program to ensure that roadway maintenance and repairs are undertaken as cost-effectively as possible.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	Town Engineer, DPW
Better disseminate information on available public transportation services, including those for the elderly and disabled populations.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	LRTA, Council on Aging, Town Website Manager
Work with the LRTA and NMCOG to study the possibility of establishing a Dracut Circulator Bus route, to provide public transportation service for those traveling within Town.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	LRTA, NMCOG, Town Manager, Board of Selectmen
Open discussions with the LRTA on improving the transfer policy to allow transfers within Dracut, rather than requiring riders to travel to Gallagher Transportation Center.	Transportation and Circulation	Short-term	LRTA and Town Manager
Reactivate the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership and work with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments to implement the 2020-2024 Housing Production Plan (HPP)	Housing	Short-term	Board of Selectmen
Establish a mechanism to monitor and maintain existing affordable housing units.	Housing	Short-term	Affordable Housing Partnership Committee
Develop design guidelines for affordable housing that provide guidance to nonprofit and for profit developers.	Housing	Short-term	Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Community Development
Change the current tax title disposition process so that appropriate properties may be developed as affordable housing.	Housing	Short-term	Board of Selectmen
Develop an Affordable Housing Trust to partner with the Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership and work with developers to produce neighborhood friendly projects.	Housing	Short-term	Board of Selectmen, Affordable Housing Partnership Committee
Develop a comprehensive resource protection strategy to ensure that limited resources are utilized to meet the most critical open space needs.	Open Space and Recreation	Short-term	Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee
Update the Dracut Open Space and Recreation Plan in order to maintain the Town's eligibility for certain state grant programs, such as PARC and LAND grants.	Open Space and Recreation	Short-term	Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission Recreation Commission, ADA Coordinator

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
To address climate change and resiliency, participate in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) designation process, prepare an MVP plan, and apply for state action grant funding to implement the recommendations contained within the MVP plan.	Open Space and Recreation	Short-term	Community Development, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Emergency Manager, DPW
Establish criteria for determining which town board or commission is given care and custody of lands acquired in fee, through donation, or by tax title foreclosure.	Open Space and Recreation	Short-term	Board of Selectmen, Tax Assessor, Conservation Commission
To bring the community into compliance with the Community Preservation Act regulations, the Town should place permanent restrictions on all open space parcels acquired with CPA funds as soon as possible. Such restrictions must be filed as separate instruments, such as a Conservation Restriction (CR) or an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR).	Open Space and Recreation	Short-term	Community Preservation Commission, Conservation Commission
Make CPA funds available for historic preservation and restoration projects on both public and private property, based on established qualifying criteria.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Short-term	Community Preservation Committee
Develop an ADA transition plan for the Town's conservation and recreation facilities and apply for funding from the Massachusetts Office on Disability to implement needed accessibility improvements. CPA funds could also be used for ADA compliance work.	Open Space and Recreation	Short-term	Community Development, ADA Coordinator, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee
Work with the School Department to include modules on town history, local agriculture, and the natural resources of Dracut within the curriculum.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Short-term	Historical Commission, School Department
Continue to work collaboratively with neighboring communities on implementation of the EPA MS4 Stormwater Permit, and develop a long-term financing plan to assist with funding stormwater activities.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Short-term	Stormwater Manager, Town Engineer, DPW, Town Manager, Board of Selectmen
Establish a "Detection and Response" plan to address invasive plant species. Educate homeowners and the agricultural community on the importance of using native plantings, and on how to detect and report the presence of invasives.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Short-term	Conservation Agent, Agricultural Commission
Through the State's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP) grant, complete a vulnerability assessment, develop a resiliency plan, and apply for MVP Action Grant funding.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Short-term	Community Development Director
Adopt revisions to the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Bylaw that strengthen environmental protection and protect water quality	Natural and Cultural Resources	Short-term	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Develop a long-term plan for increasing school spending as a means to enhance property values, increase property tax revenues, and improve quality of life.	Facilities and Services	Short-term	School Department, Board of Selectmen, Town Manager
Develop a prioritization plan for lands classified under Chapters 61, 61A and 61B, so that the Town is prepared to act quickly when parcels become available for possible acquisition. In addition, the Town should continue to address parcels that do not comply with the requirements set forth in Chapters 61, 61A and 61B.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Short-term	Community Development, Recreation Commission, Open Space Committee, Affordable Housing Partnership, Town Manager
Complete the age- and dementia-friendly designation process through the Council on Aging.	Facilities and Services	Short-term	Council on Aging
Implement the capital improvements identified for Fire Stations 1 and 2.	Facilities and Services	Short-term	Fire Department, Permanent Building Committee, Town Manager, Facilities Manager
To ensure that the revenues needed to comply with EPA's MS4 permit, the Town should finalize the fee structure for the recently-created stormwater enterprise fund and begin collecting revenues for the program.	Facilities and Services	Short-term	Board of Selectmen, Stormwater Department, Tax Collector
As a means of reducing the town's solid waste collection and disposal costs, provide ongoing public education regarding the recycling program, implement a more robust composting program, and consider implementing a food composting program for the schools and the Senior Center.	Facilities and Services	Short-term	Town Manager's office
Study future cemetery needs within Dracut and develop a plan to meet anticipated future demand.	Facilities and Services	Short-term	DPW, Cemetery Department
Implement improvements in the Navy Yard business area that enhance walkability and create a more attractive and unified appearance, particularly for the gateway into Dracut. This work includes implementing the recommendations outlined in the Navy Business District study that call for improved signage, banners, and branding, as well as zoning revisions to allow for mixed-use development and to address outdated parking requirements.	Land Use and Zoning	Intermediate	Planning Board and Community Development
Work with the business community to establish a local business association.	Economic Development	Intermediate	Economic Development Committee, Community Development

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Establish an Economic Development position to support the activities of the Economic Development Committee and work with the Town Manager and Community Development Director.	Economic Development	Intermediate	Board of Selectmen and Town Manager
Develop an online Permitting Guide to assist applicants in working through the Town's permitting process.	Economic Development	Intermediate	Community Development
Develop a marketing program to reach out to local businesses, and develop an education and outreach program to attract new businesses to the community.	Economic Development	Intermediate	Economic Development Committee and Community Development
Identify more than one cable service provider to encourage more competition and higher capacity.	Economic Development/ Facilities and Services	Intermediate	Cable Advisory Committee and Board of Selectmen
Address several major intersections to improve traffic flow, update signalization and address sidewalks and street lighting to make the areas more attractive to private investors.	Economic Development	Intermediate	Town Manager, DPW
Encourage mixed-use development in the Town Center and reuse opportunities at the Navy Mill Yard and the Beaver Brook Mills.	Economic Development	Intermediate	Town Manager, Planning Board, Community Development
Develop a plan to expand the Town's sidewalk network and pedestrian facilities, in order to close gaps and improve safety and connectivity. Particular attention should be paid to the Lakeview Avenue school complex, the Campbell and Greenmont schools, and the area around the Senior Housing. Priority should also be given to establishing a pedestrian connection between the Town Center and Loon Hill Road.	Transportation and Circulation	Intermediate	DPW, Community Development, School Department
Establish a sidewalk fund through developer contributions.	Transportation and Circulation	Intermediate	Planning Board
Complete updates to the Subdivision Regulations to better address transportation issues, including pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, and updated standards for roadway design.	Transportation and Circulation	Intermediate	Planning Board, Community Development
Develop a plan to address the unaccepted streets in Dracut, so that the Town receives additional Chapter 90 funds.	Transportation and Circulation	Intermediate	Town Engineer, Planning Board

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Finance the Affordable Housing Trust initially through Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and then use developer funds in lieu of affordable housing units to increase available funding for future affordable housing developments.	Housing	Intermediate	Community Preservation Committee, Affordable Housing Partnership Committee
Encourage Dracut Housing Authority to work closely with the newly created Affordable Housing Trust to determine how each entity's resources can be maximized in creating affordable housing units.	Housing	Intermediate	Affordable Housing Partnership Committee, Dracut Housing Authority
To protect the Town's investment and use limited resources as efficiently as possible, the Town should develop a maintenance and management plan for its existing conservation and recreation facilities that addresses allowed uses and activities, trail maintenance, equipment needs and maintenance, stewardship, and habitat management.	Open Space and Recreation	Intermediate	Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, Recreation Commission
Key conservation parcels should be transferred from the Board of Selectmen to the care and custody of the Conservation Commission, in order to provide the level of protection available under Article 97.	Open Space and Recreation	Intermediate	Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission
Study and evaluate parking issues at town-owned conservation and recreation areas to determine the most cost effective solution for each individual location, and address identified issues as resources become available. Work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to resolve the parking issues at the State Forest.	Open Space and Recreation	Intermediate	Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
Study the feasibility of establishing National Register District in the seven areas identified in the 2012 Preservation Plan	Natural and Cultural Resources	Intermediate	Historical Commission
Continue the intensive field survey and documentary research for several farmhouses and barns as the 2012 Preservation Plan recommends. The Town should continue to apply for state grant funding to undertake this work. The Historical Commission should encourage the preservation of barns and other agricultural structures by their owners.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Intermediate	Historical Commission
Establish a centralized facilities maintenance department that is responsible for all town properties.	Facilities and Services	Intermediate	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Facilities Manager, School Superintendent

**Table 9.1 (cont'd): Master Plan Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Applicable Master Plan Elements</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Work with local farm owners and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) to identify funding for a local agricultural plan that addresses agricultural preservation and helps promote the stability and possible growth of the local agricultural economy.	Natural and Cultural Resources	Intermediate	Agricultural Commission and Community Development
Implement the improvements outlined in the 2017 ten-year plan for the Kenwood Water District.	Facilities and Services	Intermediate	Kenwood Water District, Town Manager
Investigate opportunities to regionalize certain town services through agreements with neighboring towns, possibilities include school transportation, the sharing of specialized DPW equipment, or the delivery of emergency services.	Facilities and Services	Intermediate	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, School Department, DPW, Public safety
Continue to work on establishing a more traditional Town Center with a distinct identity, and improve the walkability of the Town Center and adjacent neighborhoods through enhanced pedestrian connections.	Land Use and Zoning	Long-term	Planning Board, Community Development and DPW
Investigate the potential development of fiber optic lines within the gas and electrical rights of way and connect with Canada and New England.	Economic Development	Long-term	Town Manager, Community Development and Economic Development Committee
Address roadway and safety improvements at various locations throughout town, such as those described previously in the Issues and Opportunities section of the transportation and circulation chapter.	Transportation and Circulation	Long-term	DPW
Consider the establishment of one or more local historic districts through the formation of a Historic District Study Committee	Natural and Cultural Resources	Long-term	Historical Commission, Board of Selectmen
Review the Town Charter at least every ten years to determine whether updates or amendments are needed.	Facilities and Services	Long-term	Board of Selectmen, Charter Review Committee