

TOWN OF WAREHAM

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

This Community Development Strategy (CDS) reflects the Town's assessment of its community development needs. The CDS prioritizes these needs and identifies certain ones to be addressed in a timeframe of the next three to five years. In preparing the CDS, the Town reviewed demographic data, local and regional planning documents, and solicited input from Town residents and stakeholders. The CDS reflects Wareham's goals of improving the quality of life for its residents and protecting its unique assets and invaluable natural resources.

Target Area

Wareham's Community Development target area stretches from west of Wareham Village at its western boundary to part of Onset Village on the east. This area includes five block groups in their entirety, parts of two others, and a small portion of an eighth one. Although residents have consistently requested that it be enlarged or abolished completely, the target area will remain unchanged for the FY 2024 grant. It contains a high percentage of lower income persons, a generally older housing stock, and Wareham's two main villages, Wareham Center (Village) and Onset. A map of the target area is included in the CDBG Mini-Entitlement Application.

Community Needs Inventory

Traditionally, the Community and Economic Development Authority (CEDA) has been the town agency with lead responsibility for identifying and addressing the Town's community development needs, primarily through CDBG grants, but also through other resources. In 2006, CEDA distributed a *Community Needs* questionnaire to seventy-nine departments, committees, boards, and social service agencies that serve Wareham and the region. The inventory sought to identify community needs and potential projects. Though dated, this "inventory" remains an important source document because of 1) the breadth of its distribution and 2) the enduring relevance of many of the identified needs.

Planning Documents

Data, studies, plans and other documents contributing to this CDS are:

- Master Plan (in progress) and Comprehensive Community Plan (1998)*
- Regional Transportation Plan (2015)*
- Merchants Way Improvements [Concept] Plan (2015)*
- Housing Production Plan (2013)*
- Wareham Village Slums and Blight Inventory (2018)*
- Onset Village Slums and Blight Inventory (2020)*
- Playground and Open Space Assessment and Recreation Plan (2014)*
- Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board Strategic Plan (2016-2018)*
- Wareham Village Plan (2008)*
- Wareham Village Parking Study (2014)*
- Community Preservation Plan (2006)*
- Economic Development Strategy (2019)*
- Draft Urban Redevelopment Plan (2023)*

Public Participation

While the plans and studies cited above are important in providing an understanding of many of the influences that contribute to the needs of the community as a whole – or provide visions and strategies for improving the community – engaged residents also have had a critically important role. Wareham is fortunate to have a citizenry that is involved in nearly all aspects of community life, from volunteering for community organizations to being active in town government. Notably, this has been manifested in several public events held as part of the master planning process, and in providing periodic input in the Town's community development activities.

The Town will hold at least one public meeting to discuss its draft CDS and solicit input on updating the goals and priorities discussed in this document.

CDS Goals and Priorities

In considering the information gathered through the survey questionnaire, relevant plans, and input received from past public meetings, the following are the most important needs to be included in this CDS.

Category: Community and Economic Development (CED)

- CED-1: Support the physical and economic revitalization of Wareham and Onset Villages through a variety of initiatives and projects.
- CED-2: Reuse existing marginal/abandoned buildings, and vacant or underutilized lots.
- CED-3: Direct high quality commercial and industrial growth into areas with infrastructure.
- CED-4: Preserve the town's character through proper zoning and development policies.
- CED-5: Update zoning; clarify and improve zoning enforcement capabilities.
- CED-6: Provide job training and access to educational resources to improve residents' competitiveness in the job market.
- CED-7: Institute changes to make permitting processes more use-friendly.

Category: Housing (H)

- H-1: Encourage affordable, suitable housing options for the elderly, people with disabilities, single person households and single parent families.
- H-2: Preserve and improve conditions of existing housing.
- H-3: Assist low- and moderate-income families to purchase their first homes.

Category: Public Services (PS)

- PSS-1: Support and fund services for lower income and/or at-risk youth by
 - a. Providing tutoring and mentoring
 - b. Supporting the continuance of Teen Achievement Programs
 - c. Supporting a "Truancy Alternative Program" for middle/high school students
 - d. Supporting after-school, summer, and extracurricular programs, via need-based scholarships and direct funding of programs.
- PSS-2: Improve adult literacy, job training and skills through continuing and adult education.
- PSS-3: Reduce/prevent homelessness by increasing availability of job-readiness and living skills programs, emergency shelters, transitional and permanent housing, and short-term emergency financial assistance.

- PSS-4: Foster improved household social and financial security through programs and services such as fuel assistance, food pantries, financial literacy and reading/literacy programs.
- PSS-5: Provide adequate services for elders and disabled populations to enable them to participate in society as fully as possible.
- PSS-6: Support efforts to prevent, reduce or recover from domestic violence and abuse.

Category: **Transportation (T)**

- T-1: Reduce or eliminate transportation barriers to employment and essential services.
- T-2: Support options for multi-modal types of transportation.

Category: **Infrastructure and Public Facilities (I/PF)**

- I/PF-1: Provide or maintain sewers in high density areas or locations with failing septic systems.
- I/PF-2: Leverage available funding to provide adequate infrastructure for economic development.
- I/PF-3: Improve or adequately maintain public ways.
- I/PF-4: Increase staffing level at Municipal Maintenance Department.
- I/PF-5: Provide an accessible and adequate Senior Center.
- I/PF-6: Develop and implement a municipal capital improvements plan that identifies needed improvements to municipal structures and potential funding sources.
- I/PF-7: Ensure access to all program and services for persons with disabilities.
- I/PF-8: Ensure adequate passive and active recreational facilities
- I/PF-9: Improve public access to waterways and water bodies.

Priority Projects

From the twenty-seven needs listed above, the following are the Town's highest priorities to act on.

High Priority #1	CED-3: Direct quality commercial and industrial growth into areas with infrastructure
Timetable/Sources	<i>Ongoing; TIFs, MassWorks, MassDevelopment, private, Wareham Redevelopment Authority (WRA).</i>
High Priority #2	CED-1: Revitalization of Wareham and Onset Villages
Timetable/Sources	<i>Ongoing, 2022 and forward: CDBG, MassWorks, CPA, SeaGrants, local, private, WRA</i>
High Priority #3	H-2: Preserve and improve conditions of existing housing
Timetable/Sources	<i>Ongoing, 2022 and forward; CDBG, DEP Title V, CPA, private, other public</i>
High Priority #4	H-1: Encourage affordable, suitable housing options for a variety of populations
Timetable/Sources	<i>Ongoing and Periodic; CDBG, other public, CPA, Affordable Housing Trust, WRA</i>
High Priority #5	All PSS Needs (PSS-1 through PSS-6) and T-1
Timetable/Sources	<i>Ongoing, 2022 and forward; CDBG, private and foundation giving, and public grants, WRA</i>
High Priority #6	CED-2: Reuse existing marginal/abandoned buildings, and vacant/underutilized lots.
Timetable/Sources	<i>Ongoing, 2022 and forward; CDBG, CPA, MassDevelopment, private, other public, WRA</i>
High Priority #7	I/PF-7: Ensure access to all program and services for persons with disabilities.
Timetable/Sources	<i>2022 and forward; CDBG, MOD, CPA, no cost policy changes</i>

Sustainable Development Principles

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts shall care for the built and natural environment by promoting sustainable development through integrated energy and environment, housing and economic development, transportation and other policies, programs, investments, and regulations. The Commonwealth will encourage the coordination and cooperation of all agencies, invest public funds wisely in smart growth and equitable development, give priority to investments that will deliver good jobs and good wages, transit access, housing, and open space, in accordance with the following sustainable development principles. Furthermore, the Commonwealth shall seek to advance these principles in partnership with regional and municipal governments, non-profit organizations, business, and other stakeholders.



1. Concentrate Development and Mix Uses

Support the revitalization of city and town centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that is compact, conserves land, protects historic resources, and integrates uses. Encourage remediation and reuse of existing sites, structures, and infrastructure rather than new construction in undeveloped areas. Create pedestrian friendly districts and neighborhoods that mix commercial, civic, cultural, educational, and recreational activities with open spaces and homes.

2. Advance Equity

Promote equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development. Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning and decision making to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice. Ensure that the interests of future generations are not compromised by today's decisions.



3. Make Efficient Decisions

Make regulatory and permitting processes for development clear, predictable, coordinated, and timely in accordance with smart growth and environmental stewardship.



4. Protect Land and Ecosystems

Protect and restore environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, agricultural lands, critical habitats, wetlands and water resources, and cultural and historic landscapes. Increase the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces and recreational opportunities.



5. Use Natural Resources Wisely

Construct and promote developments, buildings, and infrastructure that conserve natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, energy, water, and materials.



6. Expand Housing Opportunities

Support the construction and rehabilitation of homes to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels, and household types. Build homes near jobs, transit, and where services are available. Foster the development of housing, particularly multifamily and smaller single-family homes, in a way that is compatible with a community's character and vision and with providing new housing choices for people of all means.



7. Provide Transportation Choice

Maintain and expand transportation options that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel and improve air quality. Prioritize rail, bus, boat, rapid and surface transit, shared-vehicle and shared-ride services, bicycling, and walking. Invest strategically in existing and new passenger and freight transportation infrastructure that supports sound economic development consistent with smart growth objectives.



8. Increase Job and Business Opportunities

Attract businesses and jobs to locations near housing, infrastructure, and transportation options. Promote economic development in industry clusters. Expand access to education, training, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Support the growth of local businesses, including sustainable natural resource-based businesses, such as agriculture, forestry, clean energy technology, and fisheries.



9. Promote Clean Energy

Maximize energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities. Support energy conservation strategies, local clean power generation, distributed generation technologies, and innovative industries. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and consumption of fossil fuels.

10. Plan Regionally

Support the development and implementation of local and regional, state and interstate plans that have broad public support and are consistent with these principles. Foster development projects, land and water conservation, transportation and housing that have a regional or multi-community benefit. Consider the long-term costs and benefits to the Commonwealth.

