



Topsfield Downtown Revitalization Plan

Prepared for the Town of Topsfield
by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

December 16, 2019

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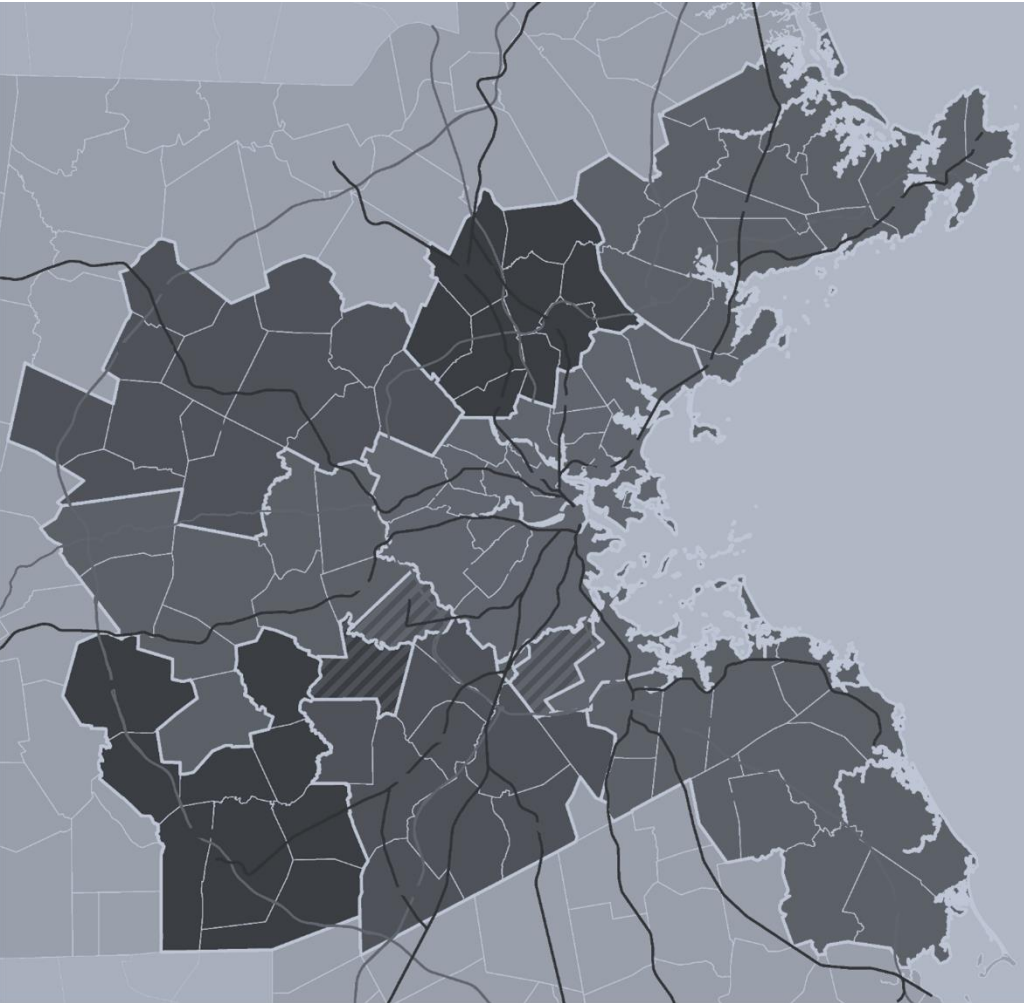
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About MAPC



MAPC is the Regional Planning Agency (RPA) serving the people who live and work in metropolitan Boston. Our mission is to promote smart growth and regional collaboration.

We are guided by *MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region*, our regional policy plan for a more sustainable and equitable future, which was adopted in 2008.

For more information about MAPC and *MetroFuture*, visit www.mapc.org/about-mapc and www.mapc.org/metrofuture.



RECAP OF PLANNING PROCESS



What Makes a Vibrant Downtown?



Business Mix

Restaurants & Retail



Customers

Housing & Office Users



Public Space

Flowers, Benches, and Trees




Civic Spaces

Religious, Community



Public Transit

Pedestrian, Bicycling, Cars,
Public Transit



What is the Downtown Revitalization Plan?

A Downtown Revitalization Plan is a **strategic framework** that guides the future **physical and economic development** of the downtown based on the **community's vision and goals**.

It is your plan, your vision and your goals.

The Downtown Revitalization Plan provides the Town with:

- A **vision** for its future
- **Goals and strategies** to capitalize on **opportunities**
- An **action plan** for shaping **positive change**

Plan Elements



The Downtown Revitalization Plan includes the following topic areas:

- Analysis of current **zoning & land use**
- **Visioning** to determine key goals and priorities for the downtown
- **Market analysis** including analysis of current business mix & potential market opportunities
- **Housing analysis** to determine market demand/need for housing in the downtown

The Plan also has an **Implementation Plan** to provide clear next steps for the Town.



Planning Process

The Downtown Revitalization Plan took 8 months to complete.

There were opportunities for community members to provide feedback throughout the process.

SPRING '19

Meeting with Board of Selectmen

Formation of the Working Group

SUMMER '19

Business/Property Owner/Developer Roundtable

Outreach

FALL '19

Community Visioning Session for the Downtown

Draft Plan Development

Working Group Feedback on Draft Plan

Final Plan Written

WINTER '20

Final Plan presented to Board of Selectmen



Working Group

The role of the Working Group is to provide **expertise, guidance, and support** to MAPC.

- The Working Group **reviewed and commented** on drafts of the plan.
- The Working Group **gathered input** from stakeholders to create a vision for the community and a specific action strategy to fulfill that vision.
- Once the Plan is done, the **Working Group may continue its work** by encouraging and assisting municipal staff, boards, committees, and the community with the implementation of Plan recommendations.



Working Group

Members

Lynne Bermudez

Tim Collins

Sarah Lodewick Guido

Nicole Manseau

Andrea O'Reilly

Alex Qirjazi

Josh Rownd

John Spencer

Brian Woodland

Steve Hall (alternate)



KEY FINDINGS



Topsfield Demographics

Key Takeaways

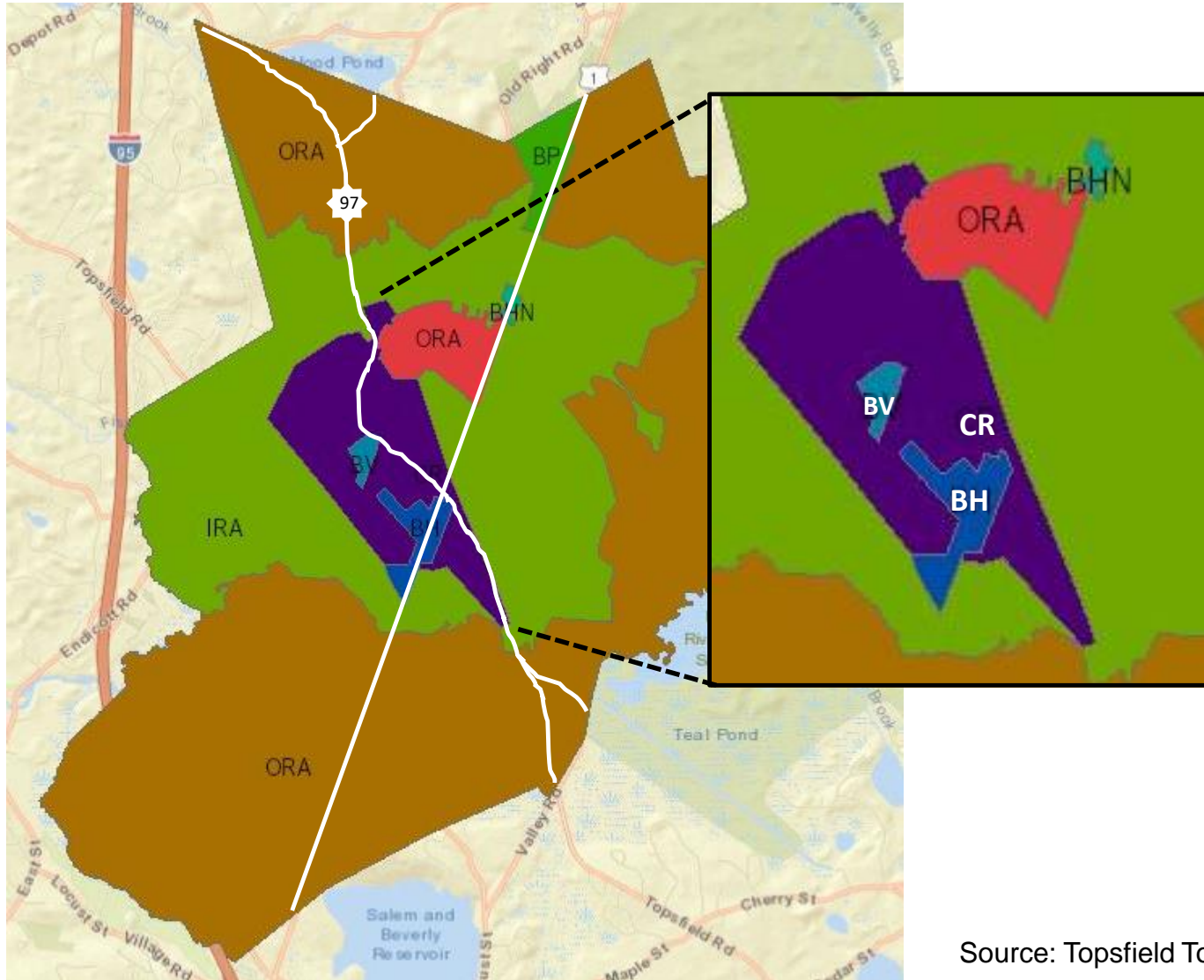
Topsfield residential profile has similarities and differences when compared to surrounding communities

There are few young professionals and the population is aging

Income differences between

- Family + non-family
- Owner + renter

Topsfield Zoning



BV: Business Village

CR: Central Residential District

BH: Business District Highway

Source: Topsfield Town Website



Topsfield Business Context

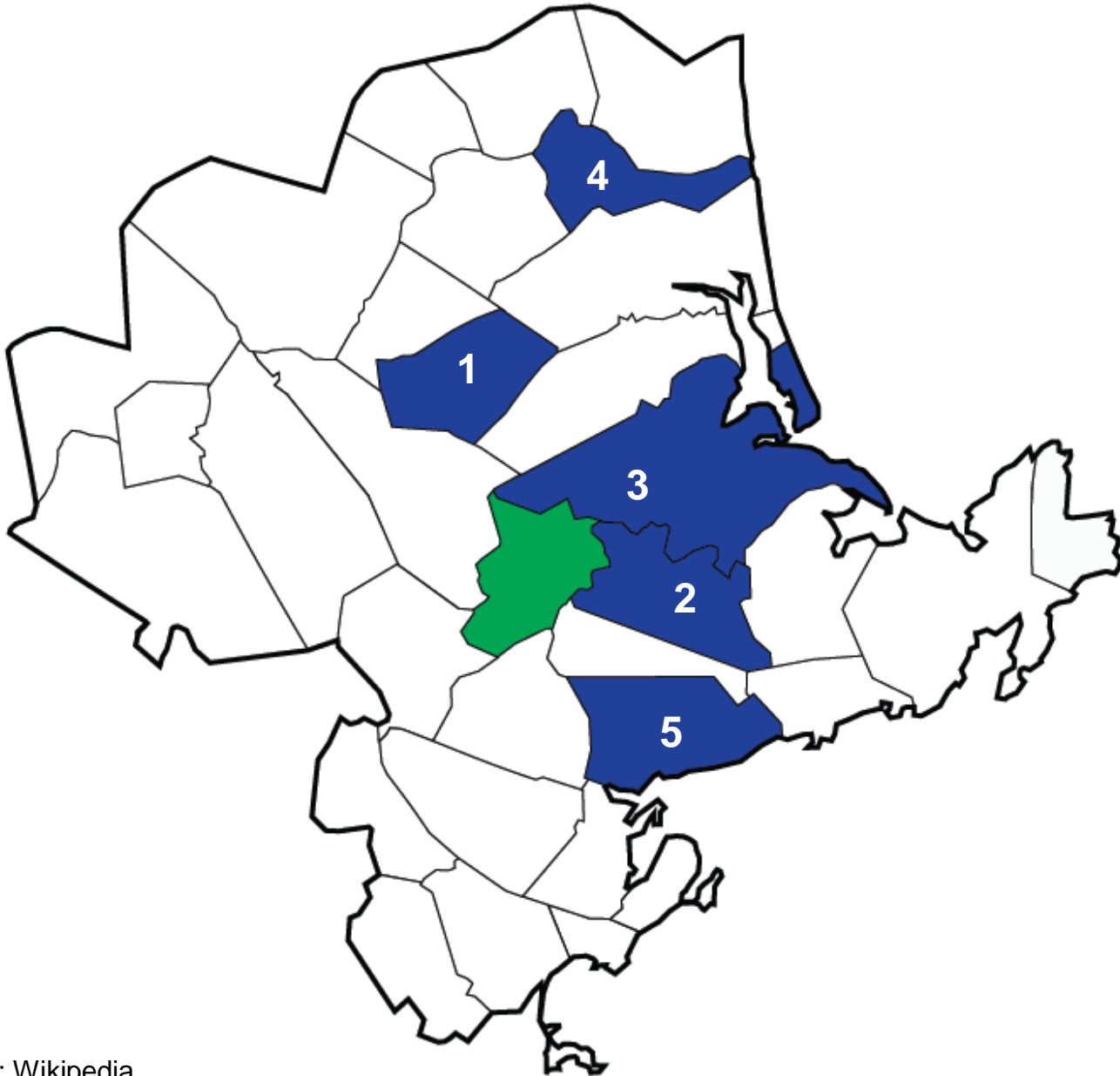


Key Takeaways

Business mix has strengths but opportunity to add businesses to meet demand/complement current offerings

Opportunity to capitalize on employee base

Disposable income of residential base in Topsfield & Boxford could be captured w improved offerings



Topsfield Business District Comparison

1. Georgetown
2. Hamilton
3. Ipswich
4. Newburyport
5. Beverly





Topsfield Downtown Comparison

Key Takeaways

Topsfield's business district encompasses a relatively small % of the town's land

Retail, Food & Accommodations in Topsfield represent a smaller % of businesses

Service Businesses represent a higher % of businesses in Topsfield



Topsfield Housing Context

Key Takeaways

- The large majority of housing is single-family
- The cost of for sale housing has reached all-time highs
- There are very few rental opportunities

Spaces that could benefit from improvements



Examples of well-maintained, attractive spaces



Some Observations and Interventions

- Underutilized Space ➡ Add plantings and seating to make potential meeting area
- Needs façade improvement ➡ Repaint façade
- Parking needs to be improved ➡ Use results from Parking Study to make changes



Downtown SWOT

Strengths

- Topsfield's strengths are found in the **natural and civic amenities** the town offers. Natural amenities include accessible open space and water in the area, and civic amenities include community spaces like Town Hall and festivals that are held in town.

Weaknesses

- Topsfield's weaknesses are largely centered on the **size of the business district, and limited Town resources** as well as procedural limitations (or the perception of) that have disallowed commercial development. There are also **limited locations for new businesses, such as restaurants**. The **Topsfield Village Shopping Center** is also a concern.

Threats

- Topsfield's threats focus on **competition from other districts** and **lack of commercial and residential incentives for businesses** to come to downtown.

Opportunities

- Topsfield's opportunities are focused on **physical revitalization of underused open spaces, investment in new types of businesses, revitalization of the Shopping Center** and **more community-building events**.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



Business Roundtables

- **General Themes**
 - Recommendations
 - **Improve Town signage** (downtown and from Rt. 1/97)
 - **Improve parking**
 - Improve management of street
 - Improve management of parking in lots (signage, potential use of DPW lot)
 - Share parking/municipal parking at mall
 - Some expressed interest in **housing downtown** (if parking were managed well)
 - **Improve look and feel**
 - Benches, signage



Business Roundtables

- **General Themes**
 - Recommendations
 - **Improve Town communications with and services for small businesses**
 - Communications between depts. to make process easier for businesses
 - Part-time planner
 - Change sign regulations
 - Encourage more **communication between business owners**
 - **Expand zoning of the business district**, but maintain character of district

WHAT DO YOU DO IN DOWNTOWN TOPSFIELD?



Open House Feedback

- **General Themes**
 - **Businesses:**
 - Want: Full-service restaurant, market
 - Don't want: more banks, chain stores, tobacco/liquor stores
 - **Housing:**
 - People feel that there should be more housing options in Topsfield.
 - Majority supportive of adding limited housing in Topsfield and in downtown
 - Majority supportive of 2-3 stories
 - **Parking:**
 - Majority find parking <5 mins from destination.
 - Interest in improved management options



Open House Feedback

- **General Themes**
 - **Public spaces:**
 - Interest in improvements to downtown's appearance
 - Interest in adding amenities—benches, dog park, etc.
 - **Additional community events**
 - Street festivals
 - Outdoor performances



THE PLAN



THE PLAN

Vision

A welcoming downtown village where
Topsfield residents and visitors of all ages
can live, work, gather, and shop.



THE PLAN

Goals

Attract new businesses to the district to respond to the needs of residents, residents from surrounding communities, and visitors to the area.

- Review current zoning, licensing and permitting processes and explore updates
- Improve district infrastructure
- Connect property owners with prospective business owners
- Evaluate financing incentives



THE PLAN

Goals

Increase the customer base in the district to support downtown businesses by adding housing and marketing the village to residents and visitors.

- Add housing in the Business Village District
- Expand marketing
- Improve parking and traffic management



THE PLAN

Goals

Enhance the look, feel, and safety of the district to maintain a vibrant and walkable downtown and create a sense of place where all can gather.

- Develop and implement a public space improvement plan with design guidelines and establish key locations for improvements such as:
 - Streetscape improvements
 - Façade and signage improvements
 - Lighting, landscaping, district decorations, and other improvements



THE PLAN

Goals

Increase community-building events in the district to create an energetic downtown with a strong sense of community.

- Host Town-sponsored community events for residents and visitors.
- Build volunteer capacity to build upon current events and create new events.



THE PLAN

Goals

Expand Town capabilities and resources to achieve these goals.

- Hire a part-time Town Planner
- Establish a Downtown Revitalization oversight group made up of Topsfield residents, business owners, and Town officials to ensure momentum continues.
- Work with the Topsfield Community Partnership to help support funding for projects in the downtown.
- Facilitate the creation of a Topsfield business group to assist with joint promotion and downtown revitalization efforts.



IMPLEMENTATION



NEXT STEPS

Implementation

Public Launch Process

- Public event to share plan

Downtown Revitalization Oversight Committee

- Implementation Matrix to guide work

THANK YOU!

