



Boxborough Economic Development Study

Economic Development Scenarios



Town of
BOXBOROUGH
Massachusetts

University of
Massachusetts
Amherst

LA&RP Landscape Architecture
& Regional Planning

Agenda

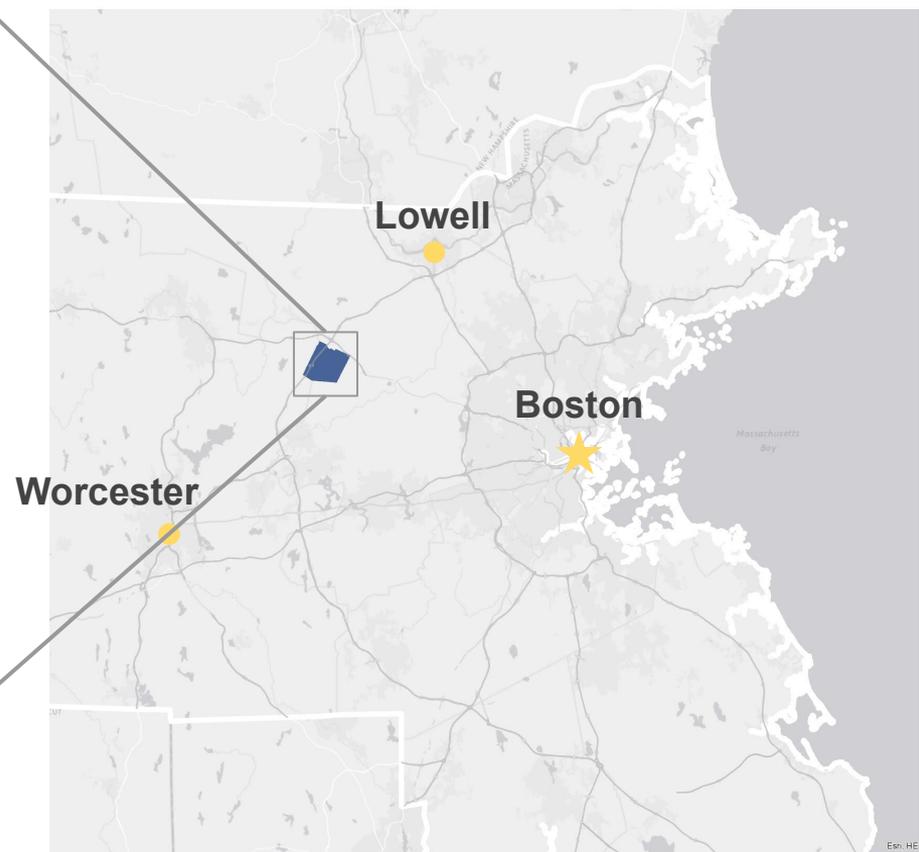
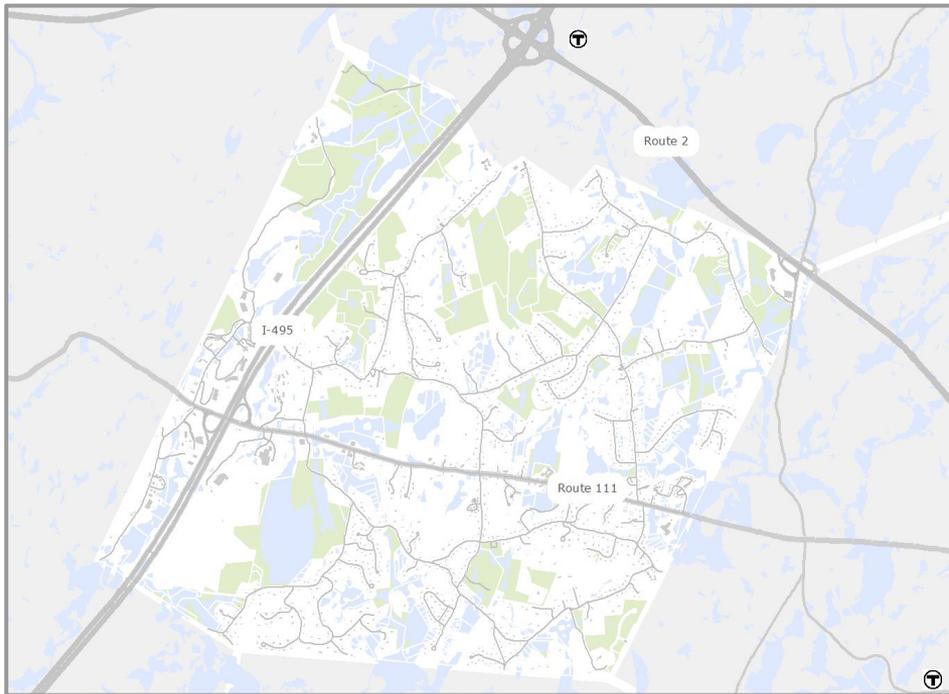
Introduction

Scenarios

1. Baseline & Current Course
2. Rural/Agricultural Heritage
3. Village Style
4. Comprehensive Approach

Conclusion

Boxborough, MA



BASEMAP LEGEND

 Wetland

 Protected open space



Timeline

Contract Begins With Town Of Boxborough
Sept 3

“Trash Talk” at Boxborough Transfer Station & 2019 ED Survey Opens
Oct 5

Oct 22
Boxborough Business Breakfast

Nov 23
Merrie Christmas Fair & Scenario Survey Opens

Dec 18
Submit Technical Memo

Sept 2019:
Preliminary Steps

Sept–Oct:
Data Collection & Analysis of Existing Conditions

Oct–Dec:
Development & Analysis of Scenarios

Jan 2020:
PHASE II Begins

Sept 6
Studio Site Visit

2019 ED Survey Closes & Analysis Begins
Oct 20

Presentation at Boxborough Town Hall
Oct 24

Special Town Meeting & Vote
Dec 10

PHASE I

Why Phase I?

Conduct analysis to:

- Understand opportunities and constraints to a balanced and thoughtful approach to economic development in Boxborough
- Assess, prioritize, and support appropriate 2030 Master Plan actions
- Capture and evaluate resident sentiment toward economic development through public participation and outreach

Goal: Introduce preliminary scenarios for town visioning process

Goal: Provide information to support approval of Phase II Warrant Article

Project Scope

*“Students will produce an **economic development existing conditions report** [that] will supplement and complement the work already begun through the Vision 2030 process but **focus specifically on economic development conditions and needs that were not adequately addressed.**”*

Why Phase II?

Need to establish a comprehensive community vision for thoughtful economic development through:

- Community charrette to explore and discuss future scenarios
- Continuing education and consensus building
- Regional market research of priority scenarios

Existing Conditions Takeaways



Survey highlights resident enthusiasm for **small-scale commercial amenities, revitalization of existing properties** rather than new development, and village-style commercial development.



The structure of Boxborough's **tax base is vulnerable** because of the current commercial business environment and lack of land use diversity, putting **increasing pressure on the residential tax base**.



Current zoning is not compatible with master plan vision for village style development, office park revitalization, and preserving rural heritage. **New incentives and zoning tools** could broaden options for desired commercial amenities.



Natural and utility constraints limit new development options, but **underutilized infrastructure and small-scale interventions provide opportunities** to develop the kinds of amenities Boxborough residents want.

Indicators

		EXPLANATION	MEASUREMENT
TRAFFIC		Limiting traffic impacts maintains rural character and preserves resident quality of life	Increase in estimated number of vehicle trips from baseline
CONNECTIVITY		Walkability, recreational opportunities promotes equity and social cohesion	Index of distance of networks, destinations linked, and number of trail connections
NEW CONSTRUCTION		Limiting new footprints preserves rural heritage and promotes sustainable reuse	Index of commercial/industrial SF compared to baseline and SF per capita
MUNICIPAL WATER		Access to drinking water constraints limit economic development options	Degree of investment measured by linear distance of new water pipe
FISCAL HEALTH		Commercial vacancy and lack of taxbase diversity increases vulnerability	Index of revenue from new properties, increase in property value, and diversity of tax base



Baseline & Current Course

Preserve, Cultivate, React

This scenario explores the future of Boxborough if the Town does nothing new to foster the vitality of its economic climate.

Baseline & Current Course: *Preserve, Cultivate, React*



Business Conditions

- High office park vacancy rates
- Stagnant commercial property values
- Impact on tax base
- Lack of water hinders local business development



Existing Assets

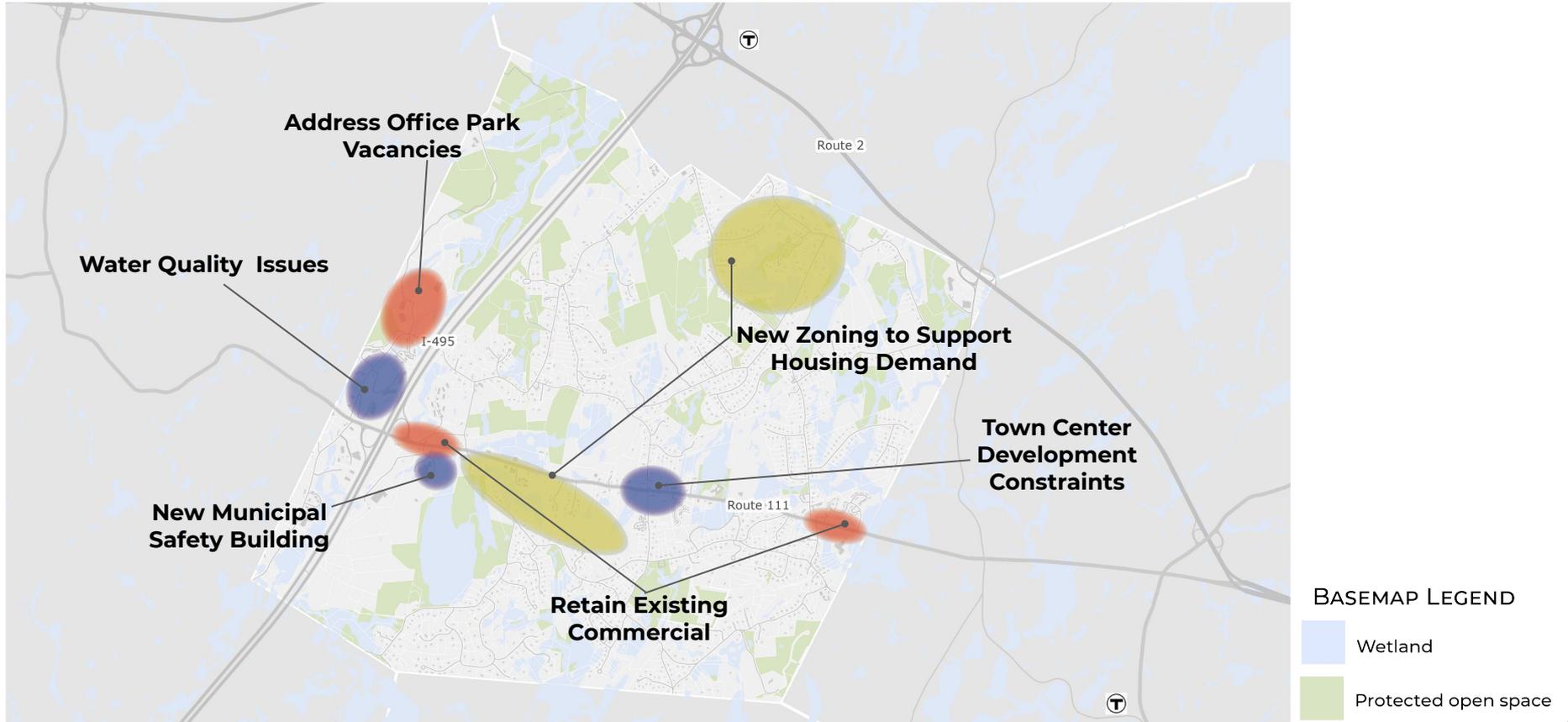
- High property values and demand for housing
- Country suburb character and quality of life
- Support economic development without substantial development
- Program and improve open space and historic sites



Municipal Services

- Fund capital projects and high-quality municipal services
- Adjust tax rate as needed to sustain municipal services with changing revenue streams
- Adjust zoning for high housing demand to support tax base

Baseline & Current Course: *Preserve, Cultivate, React*



Baseline & Current Course: *Preserve, Cultivate, React*

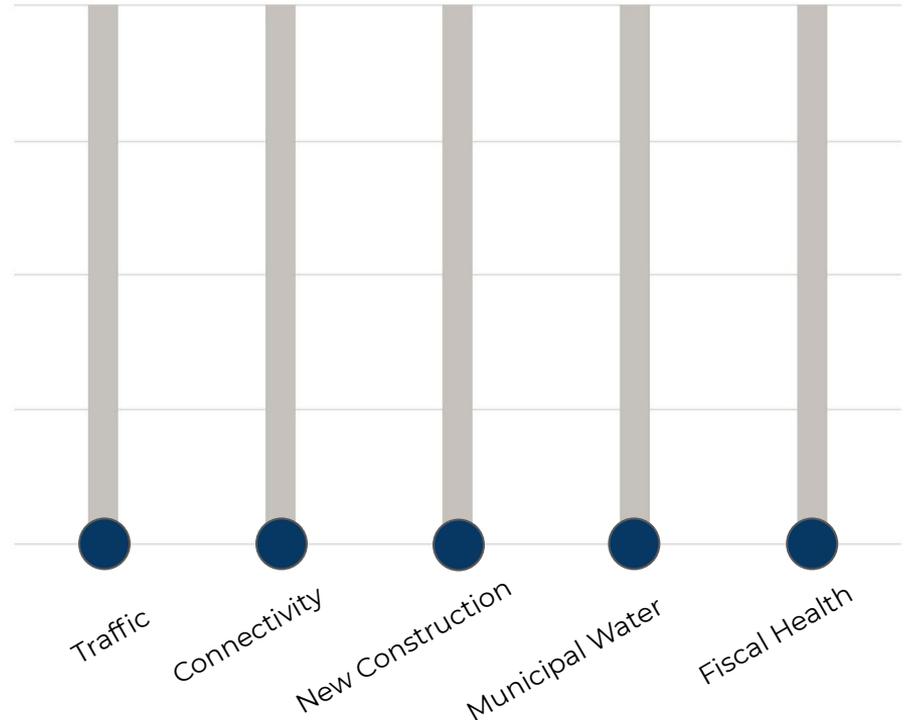
BOXBOROUGH TODAY



Baseline & Current Course: *Preserve, Cultivate, React*

Indicators

- Lack of new development will limit increases to **traffic**
- **Connectivity** infrastructure is an agreeable quality of life addition with existing proposals
- **New construction** will be driven by market, not policy change
- No proposed **municipal water**
- Rising home values sustain **fiscal health**, but are negated by loss of commercial tax base



Baseline & Current Course: *Preserve, Cultivate, React*

Implementation

Short Term

- Attract businesses to fill vacancies and support existing businesses
- Develop a strategy for leveraging existing assets

Medium Term

- Investigate the development of new municipal facilities

Long Term

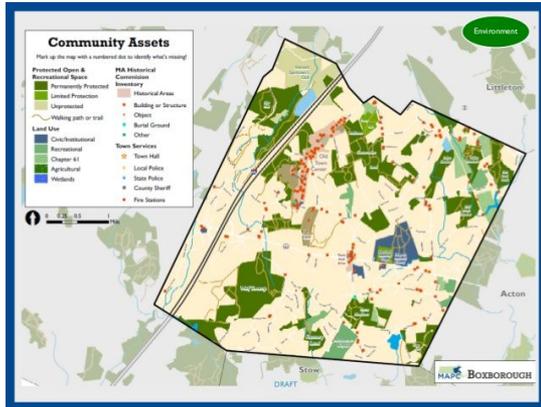
- Assess future growth and how to accommodate housing demand and costs

Constraints

- No comprehensive strategy to cultivate and support businesses
- No municipal water limits economic development options
- Limited funding streams for new facilities and infrastructure

Baseline & Current Course: *Preserve, Cultivate, React*

BOXBOROUGH IN FUTURE



Rural / Agricultural Heritage

Protect, Revitalize, Connect

COMMUNITY

GARDEN

EST. 1976

978-263-3285

This scenario focuses on quality-of-life amenities, building community identity and recognition, and economic development at varying scales.

Rural / Agricultural Heritage: *Protect, Revitalize, Connect*



HERITAGE

- Develop unique recreation and nature-based business destinations
- Promote historic reuse and tourism
- Encourage family farms and orchards with on-farm sales and events



CONNECT

- Create regionally attractive network linking recreation and economic destinations
- Provide options for mobility impaired
- Link trails to destinations



REVITALIZE

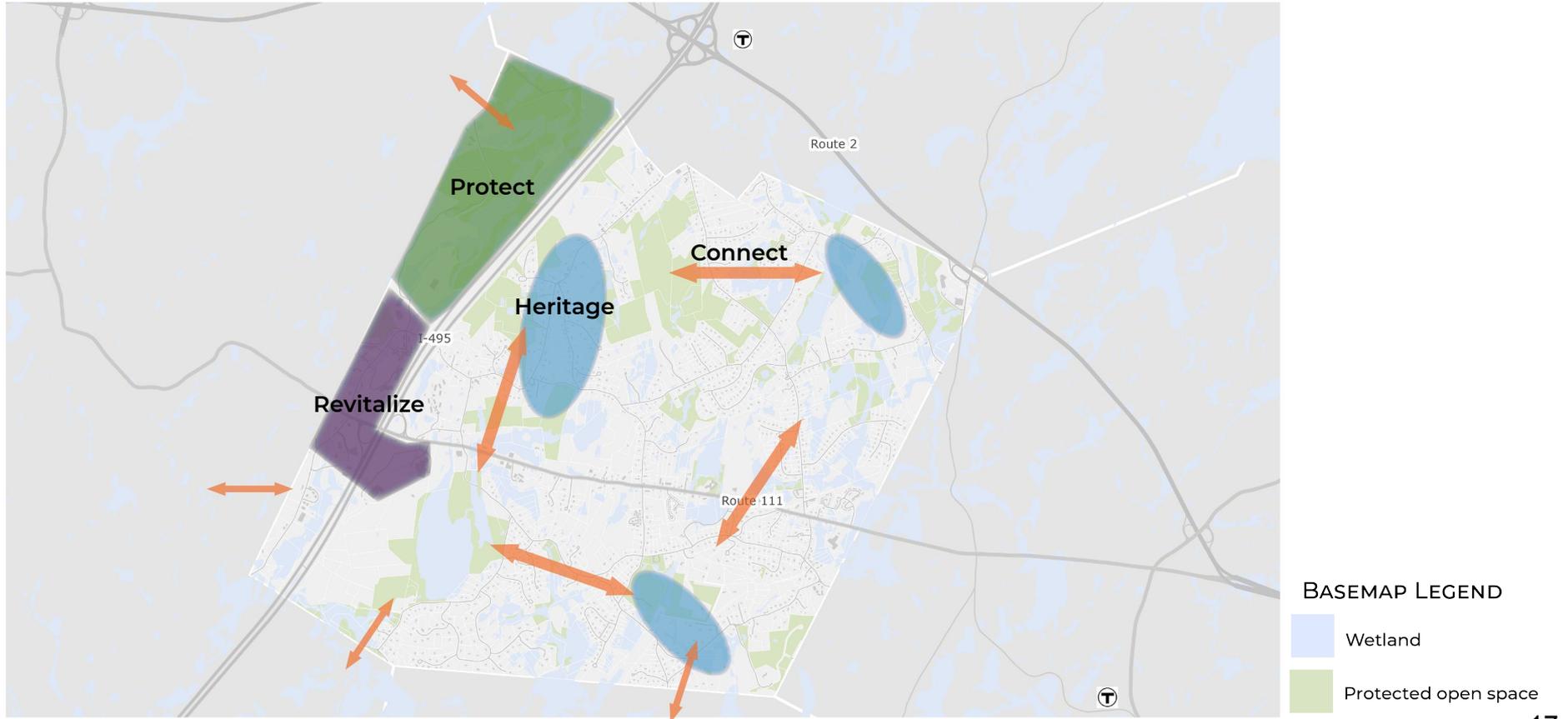
- Diversify economy by serving regional and local agricultural services
- Consider commercial kitchen for entrepreneurs
- Increase occupancy through revised regulations



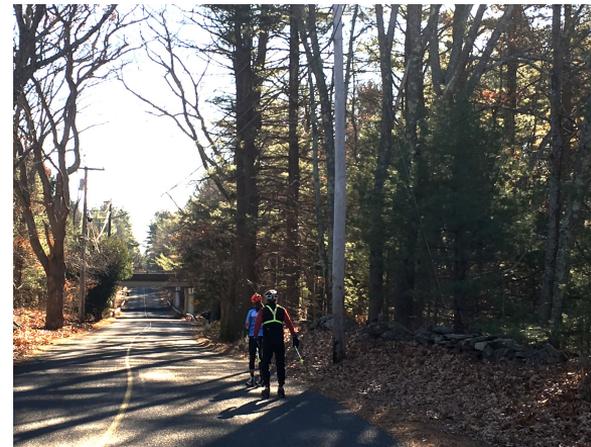
PROTECT

- Protect undeveloped northwest corner for conservation and recreation
- Protect key aquifers
- Align with “High Ridge Initiative”

Rural / Agricultural Heritage: *Protect, Revitalize, Connect*



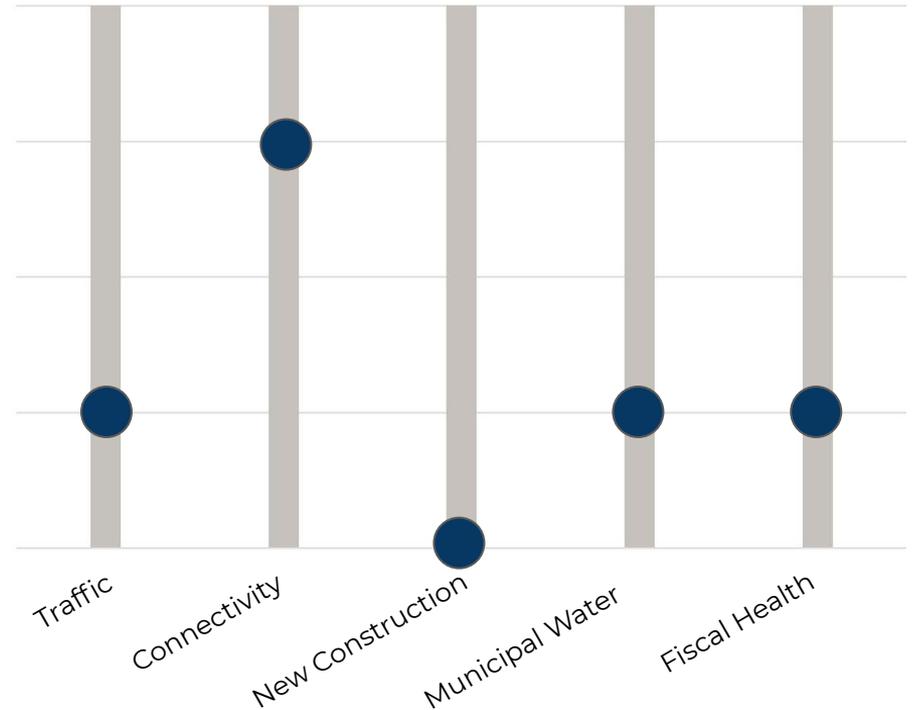
Rural / Agricultural Heritage: *Protect, Revitalize, Connect*



Rural / Agricultural Heritage: *Protect, Revitalize, Connect*

Indicators

- **Traffic** Increased weekend trips, optional industrial growth generates truck traffic
- **Connectivity** Expanded regional trail network linking to destinations
- **New construction** Accessory uses, reuse emphasized
- **Municipal Water** Optional for robust industry investment
- **Fiscal Health** Increased taxbase diversity, increased participation in regional economy



Rural / Agricultural Heritage: *Protect, Revitalize, Connect*

Implementation

Short Term

- Municipal water study
- Zoning changes for accessory uses in A/R
- Zoning changes for lot requirements in Office park

Medium Term

- Agriculture economic study
- Increase conservation and trail maintenance funds
- Implement design guides
- Engage in regional agriculture and conservation networks

Long Term

- Develop community spaces
- Establish Parks & Recreation Department

Constraints

- Uncertain market support for large-scale agricultural processing/storage
- Water availability for agricultural processing
- Limited availability of contiguous farm land

Rural / Agricultural Heritage: *Protect, Revitalize, Connect*

BOXBOROUGH IN FUTURE



HERITAGE



Rural Destinations



Historical Tourism



CONNECT



Variety of users



Welcoming Trailhead



REVITALIZE



Diverse Operations



Local Entrepreneurship



PROTECT



Scenic Beauty



Educational Resources

Village Style

Community, Connection, Culture

This scenario focuses on balancing commercial growth & cultural preservation through Village Style development in two locations.

Village Style: *Community, Connection, Culture*



Village Green | *Village Style Dev. Overlay District*

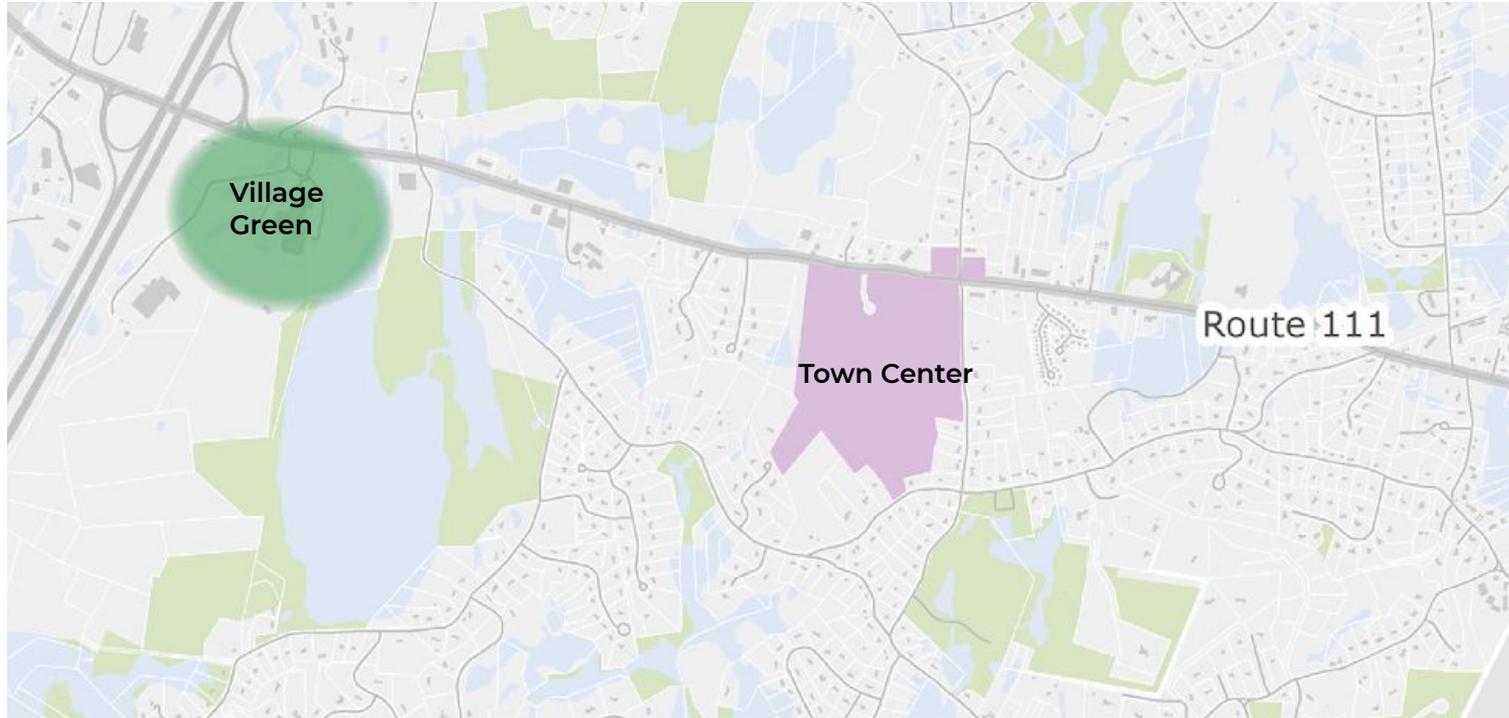
- Future land use for Adams Place characterized as “Village Center with small-scale retail and dining” in Vision 2030 Master Plan
- Adequate space for measured development with minimal physical constraints
- New businesses can attract a balanced customer base of local residents, office park employees, and regional commuters
- Fulfillment of Town desire for small scale dining amenities



Town Center | *Town Center District*

- Encourage low-utility demand uses to accommodate water constraints
- Prioritize preservation & reuse of existing buildings
- Protect historic community assets
- Alterations to aesthetics and density will be limited
- Develop civic and cultural amenities that serve local residents

Village Style: *Community, Connection, Culture*



Village Style: *Community, Connection, Culture*

Village Green | *Village Style Dev. Overlay District*

Town Center | *Town Center District*

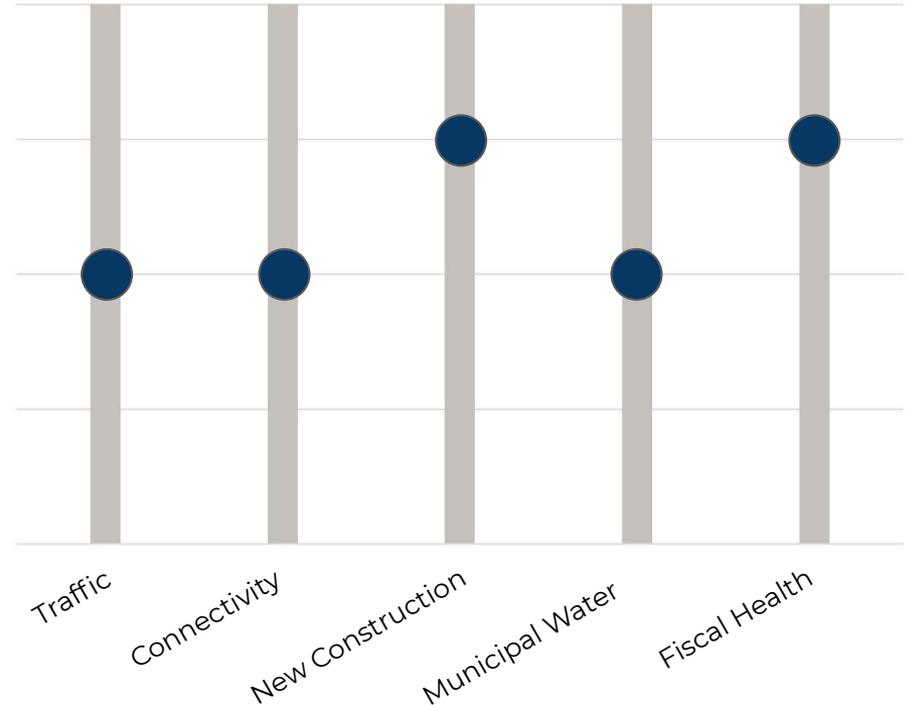


BOXBOROUGH TODAY

Village Style: *Community, Connection, Culture*

Indicators

- **Traffic** Possible increase, proximity of Village Green to 495 may limit regional traffic through town
- **Connectivity** Increased trail access, sidewalks, and shuttle between Town Center & Village Green
- **New construction** Village Green will require new development
- **Municipal Water** Village Green likely to require water & sewer investment
- **Fiscal Health** Increased tax base diversity



Village Style: *Community, Connection, Culture*

Implementation

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Short Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Inventory vacant/historic buildings in Town Center● Investigate existing utility capacity at Adams Place & partnership with Littleton |
| Medium Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Implement form-based code in “Town Center” and restrict high-utility demanding uses● Implement Village-Style overlay district at Adam’s Place |
| Long Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Move public safety complex to “Village Green” development● Develop a Community Cultural Building in Town Center |

Constraints

- Development restricted by utility capacity and available land
- Balancing regional and local connectivity
- Maintaining cultural history
- Limited bike and pedestrian accessibility

Village Style: *Community, Connection, Culture*

BOXBOROUGH IN FUTURE

NEW BOXBOROUGH VILLAGE GREEN



All renderings are for illustration purposes only. All plans are designed to be a representation of general orientation of the proposed projects and are not in any way designed to represent actual development or guarantee aspects of the projects or designs.

Village Green



Town Center

Comprehensive Approach

Diversify, Grow, Preserve

This scenario builds on the other scenarios and reimagines existing commercial districts to diversify Boxborough's economy, and attract and retain a 21st Century workforce.

Comprehensive Approach: *Diversify, Grow, Preserve*



Rt. 111 Mixed-Use Corridor

- Link the Village Green and Town Center through infrastructure and design standards
- Promote a walkable neighborhood that delivers amenities to residents and workers
- Encourage appropriately scaled development that preserves character and open space



Mixed-Use Corporate Campus

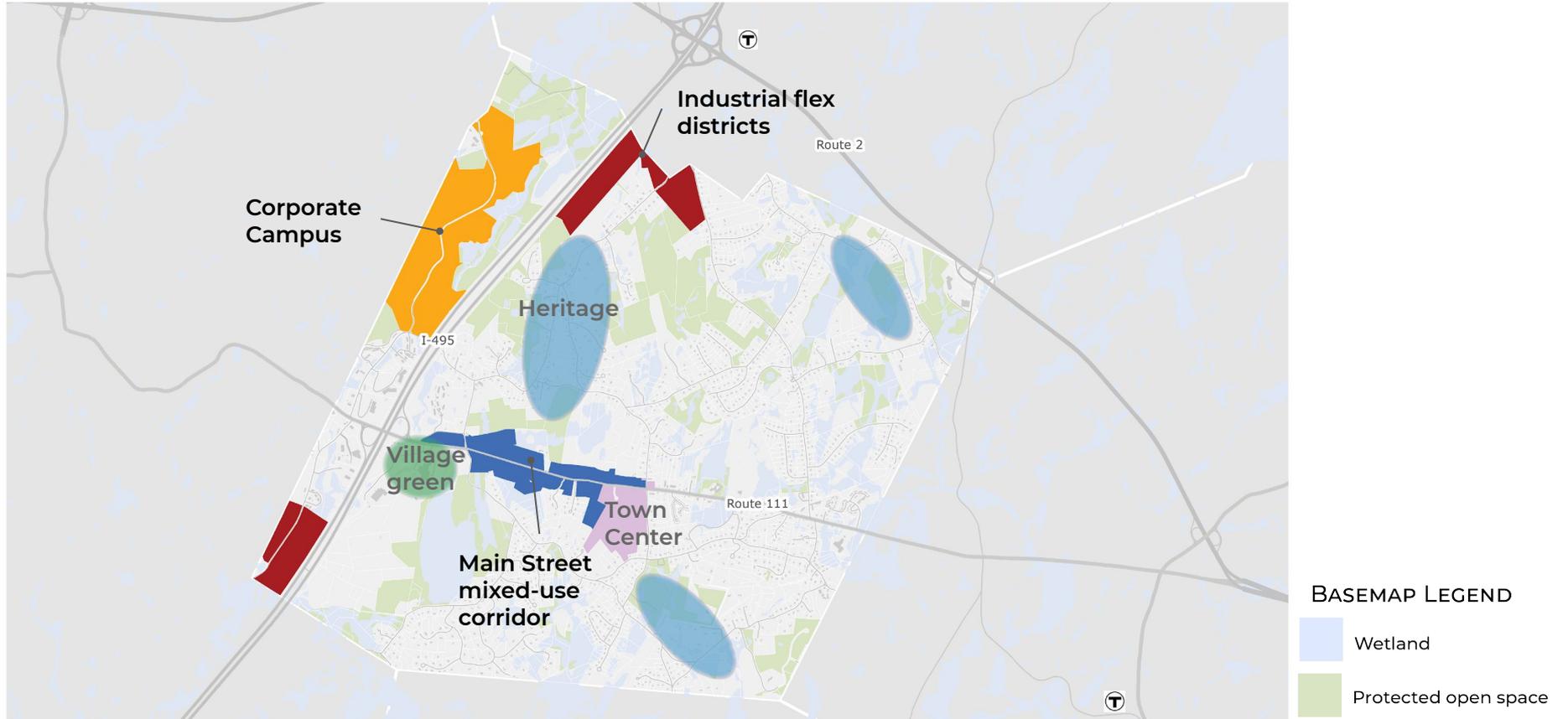
- Fill Cisco campus vacancies with diverse businesses
- Capitalize on developable land and underutilized water capacity
- Encourage upgraded and modern office spaces with amenities that will attract and retain a 21st century regional workforce



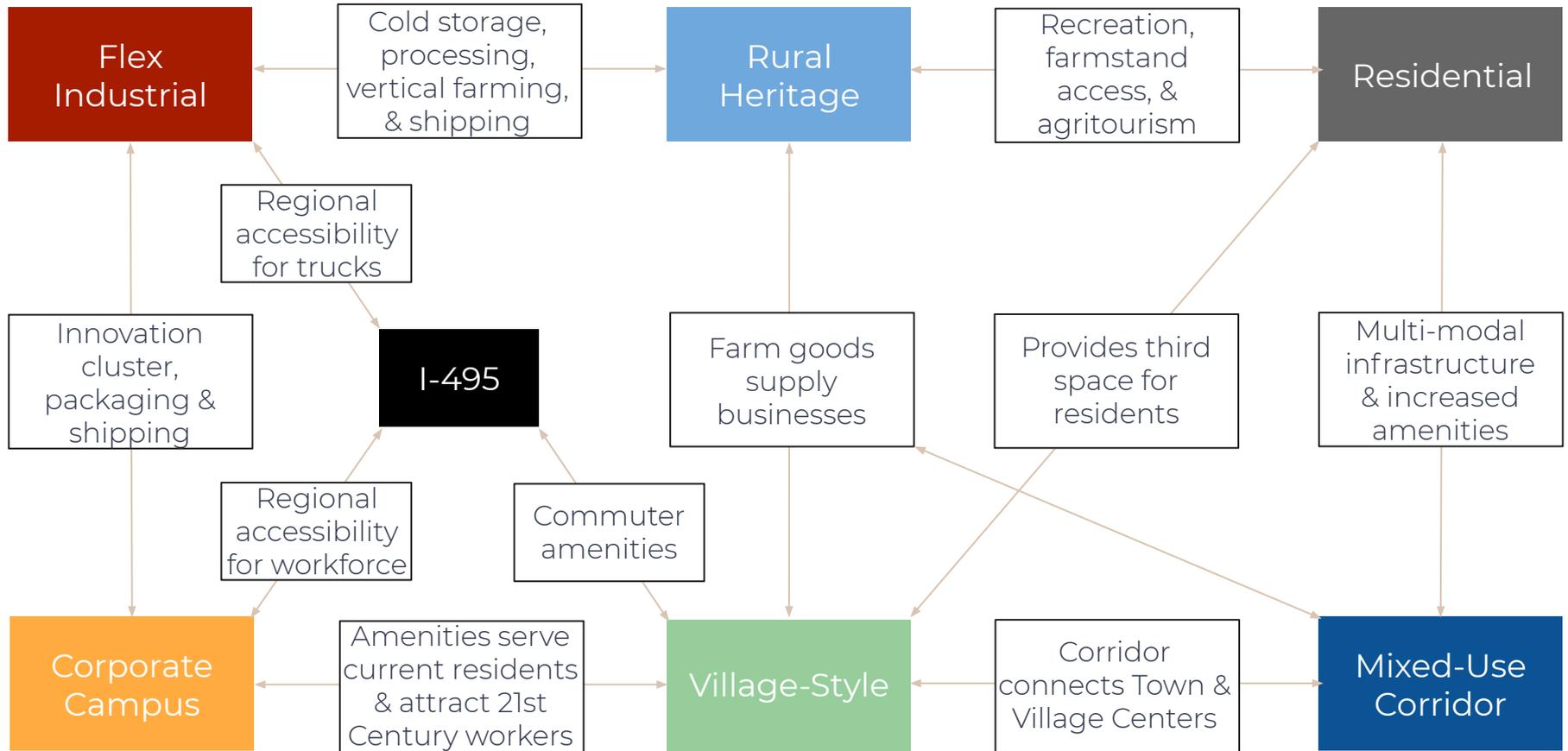
Industrial Flex Districts

- Update the zoning of industrial/commercial districts to be flexible enough to accommodate industries of the future
- Encourage uses that support the economic endeavors of other businesses (e.g. innovation labs, processing, cold storage, agribusiness, and distribution)

Comprehensive Approach: *Diversify, Grow, Preserve*



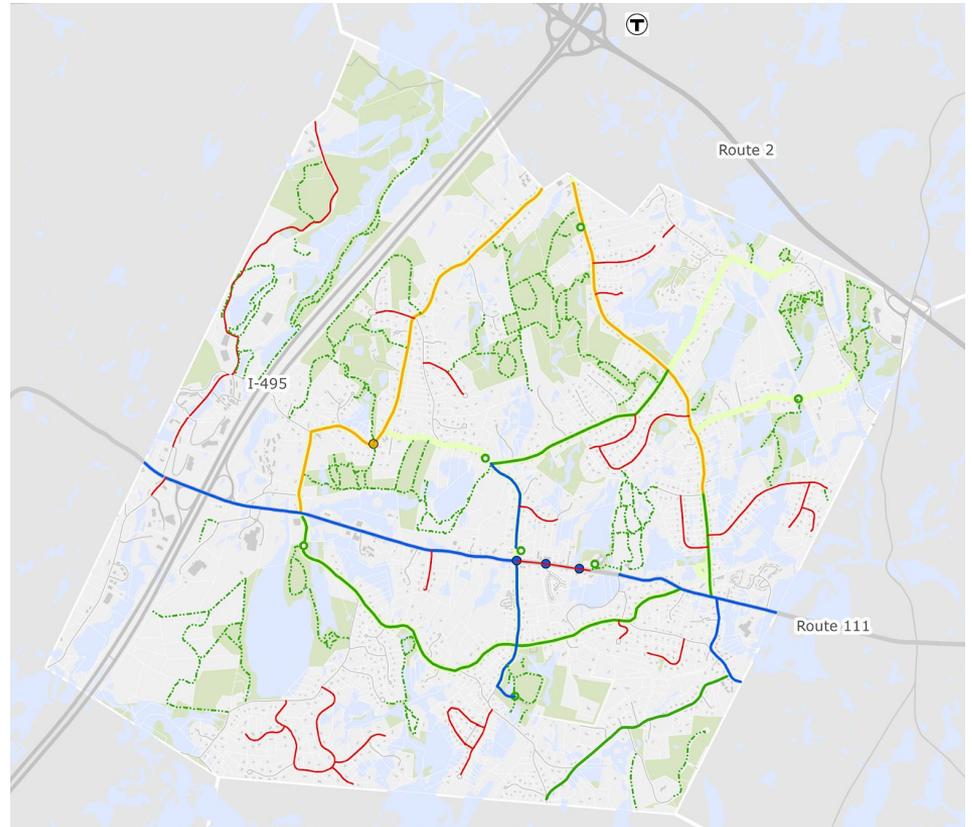
Comprehensive Approach: Synergies Between Districts



Comprehensive Approach: Connectivity & Complete Streets

BOXBOROUGH TODAY

- Existing Walking Trails
- Existing Sidewalks
- Proposed Sidewalks
- Proposed Bicycling Mobility Improvements
- Proposed Designated Bicycle Routes
- Proposed Safety Improvements
- Proposed Pedestrians Crossings
- Proposed Signage/Bicycle Racks
- Proposed Trail Crossing

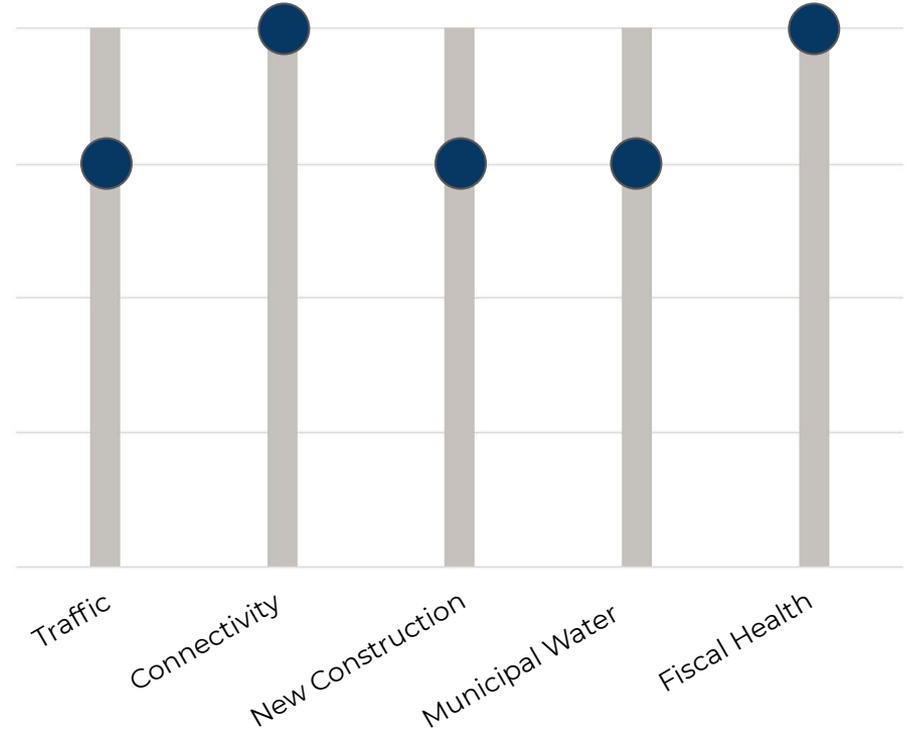


Complete Streets Map, MassDOT

Comprehensive Approach: *Diversify, Grow, Preserve*

Indicators

- **Traffic** will change similar to in Village Style and Rural / Agricultural changes
- Complete streets and greater regional **connectivity**
- **New construction** and revitalization of existing land-uses
- **Municipal water** to accommodate development
- Diverse tax base for **fiscal health**



Comprehensive Approach: *Diversify, Grow, Preserve*

Implementation

- Short Term
 - Decrease dimensional & parking requirements
 - Implement form-based code along Rt. 111
 - Apply mixed-use overlays in office park districts & Rt. 111 commercial corridor
 - Streamline permitting process
- Medium Term
 - Explore municipal water partnerships
 - Develop marketing strategy for campus
 - Consider rejoining Crosstown Connect
 - Allow desired uses from Master Plan by-right on Rt. 111 & Corporate Campus
 - Encourage uses that support emerging regional industries
- Long Term
 - Maintain balanced economic base, resilient to changing market forces

Constraints

- Water capacity limits feasibility of desirable uses along Rt. 111 (restaurant, cafe, etc.)
- Water capacity limits full buildout at Corporate Campus
- Town has limited control over MassDOT owned Rt. 111
- No town consensus on increased development
- Balancing new development and preservation of town character

Comprehensive Approach: *Diversify, Grow, Preserve*

BOXBOROUGH IN FUTURE



Rt. 111 Mixed-Use Corridor



Mixed-Use Corporate Campus



Industrial Flex Districts



Agenda

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Key Takeaways From Scenario Survey



Residents largely agree that the **current course is not working**, but there is **little agreement** on the scenario that most appropriately balances Boxborough's character, economic development, and individual visions.



Residents have **ambiguous and conflicting views of Boxborough character**, community vision, and town-appropriate economic development.



Water, sewer, traffic, and environmental impact are identified as major concerns for all of the scenarios, excluding the baseline or current course scenario.



The **relationship between property taxes, municipal services, and long-term economic development** is not well understood and should be clarified to ensure informed decision making.

Ongoing Challenges . . .

- **Water and sewer utility capacity**
- **Lack of clarity about aquifer extent**
- **Available land**
- **Lack of consensus on town character and balanced economic growth**
- **Distrust of economic development**
- **Rapidly changing regional economy**

Ongoing Problem-Solving

Ongoing Work (Town)

- Water capacity research
- Proposed zoning audit
- Scenarios feedback (surveys)
- Education about Boxborough's zoning and municipal financing

Phase 2 Deliverables (UMass)

- Community visioning charrette
- Market feasibility analysis
- White paper to EDC



Business Breakfast October 22

Timeline

PHASE I

PHASE II



Building the Future Scenario

Preliminary scenarios constructed through analysis of:

- Existing conditions
- Peer comparisons
- Public participation
- External assessment Boxborough's opportunities & constraints

Scenarios should not be viewed as mutually exclusive but rather a menu of compatible options that may be combined to best serve the community's needs

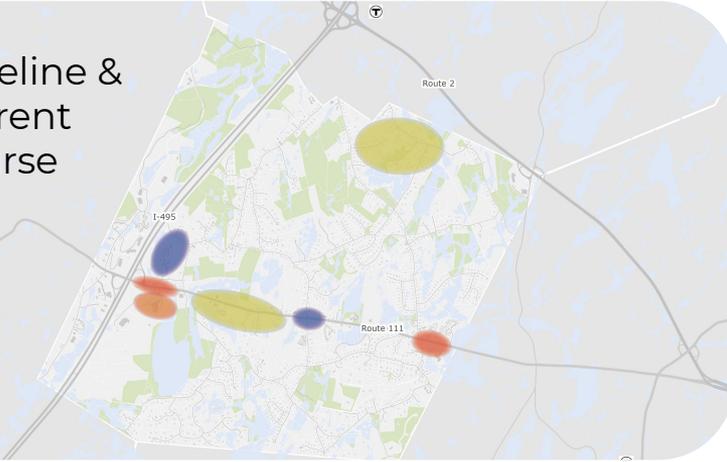


Combine the most viable and appealing attributes of Scenarios 1 - 4
...or develop new directions

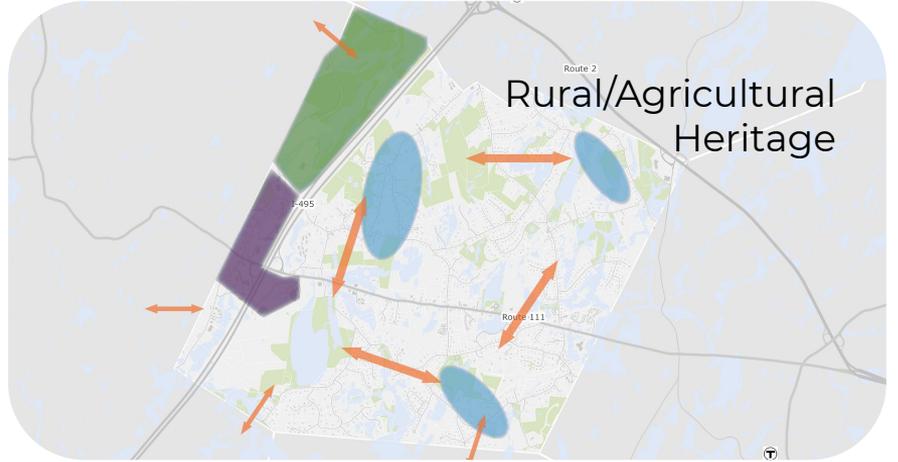
Assess feasibility of preferred scenarios based on:

- Growing community consensus
- Market research
- Utility/natural resource assessment

Baseline & Current Course



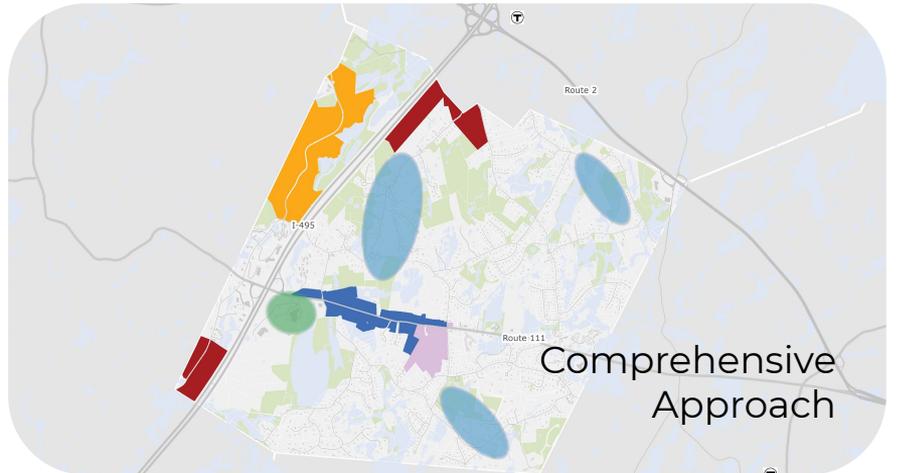
Rural/Agricultural Heritage



Village Style



Comprehensive Approach



Thank You!

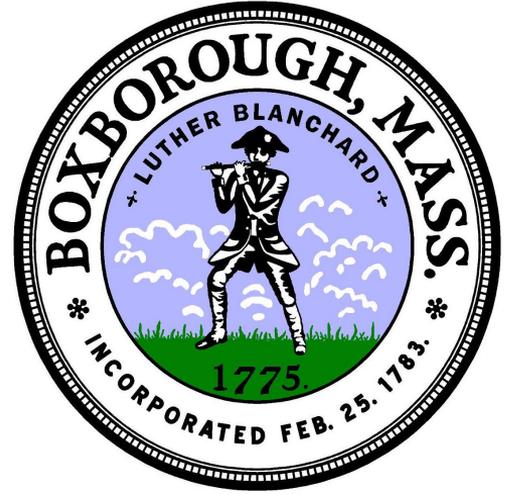
Special thanks to:

The Town of Boxborough

Boxborough Economic Development Committee

UMass Amherst LARP

Camille Barchers



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