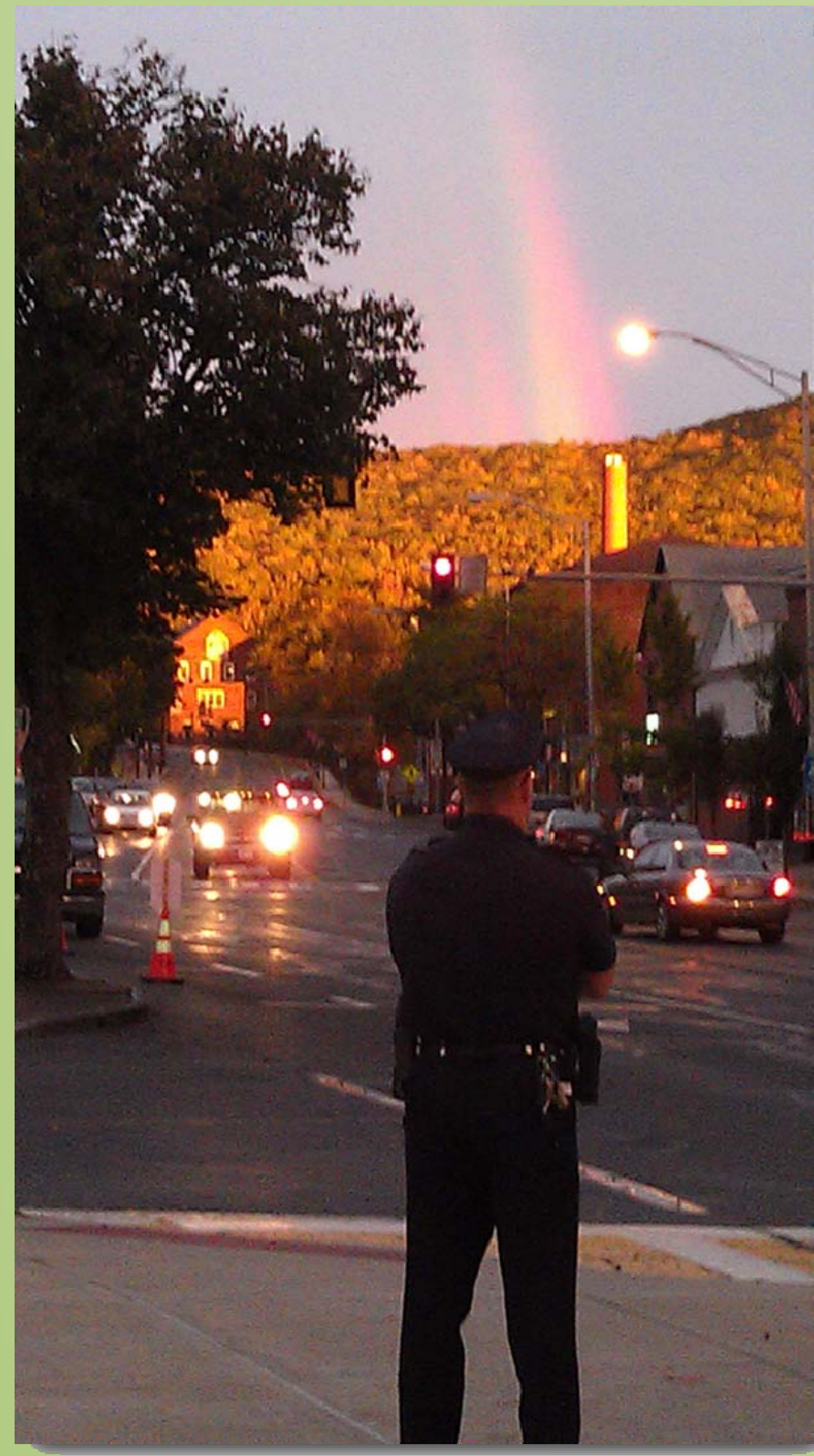
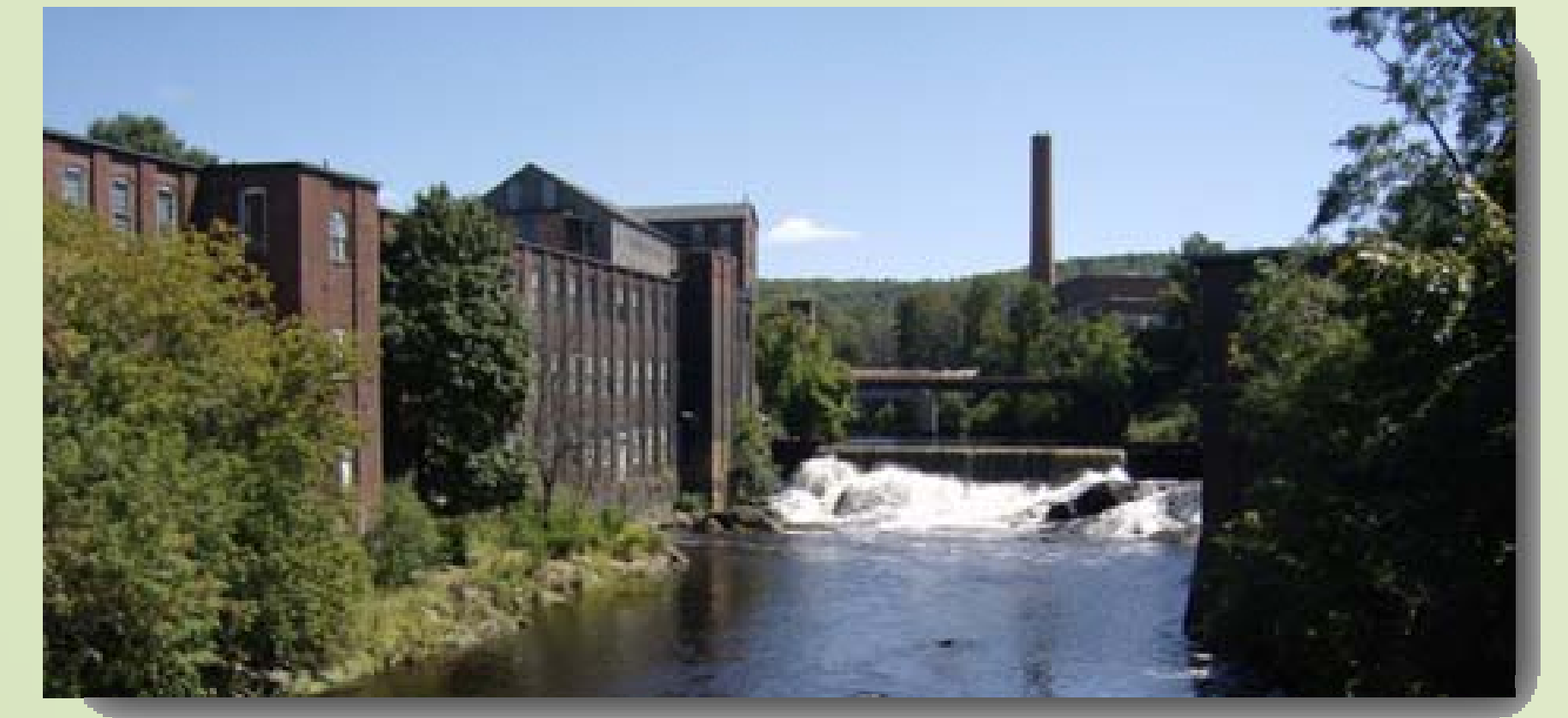


What is a Master Plan, and Why is it Important?

A Window to Ware's Future

The 2016 Master Plan

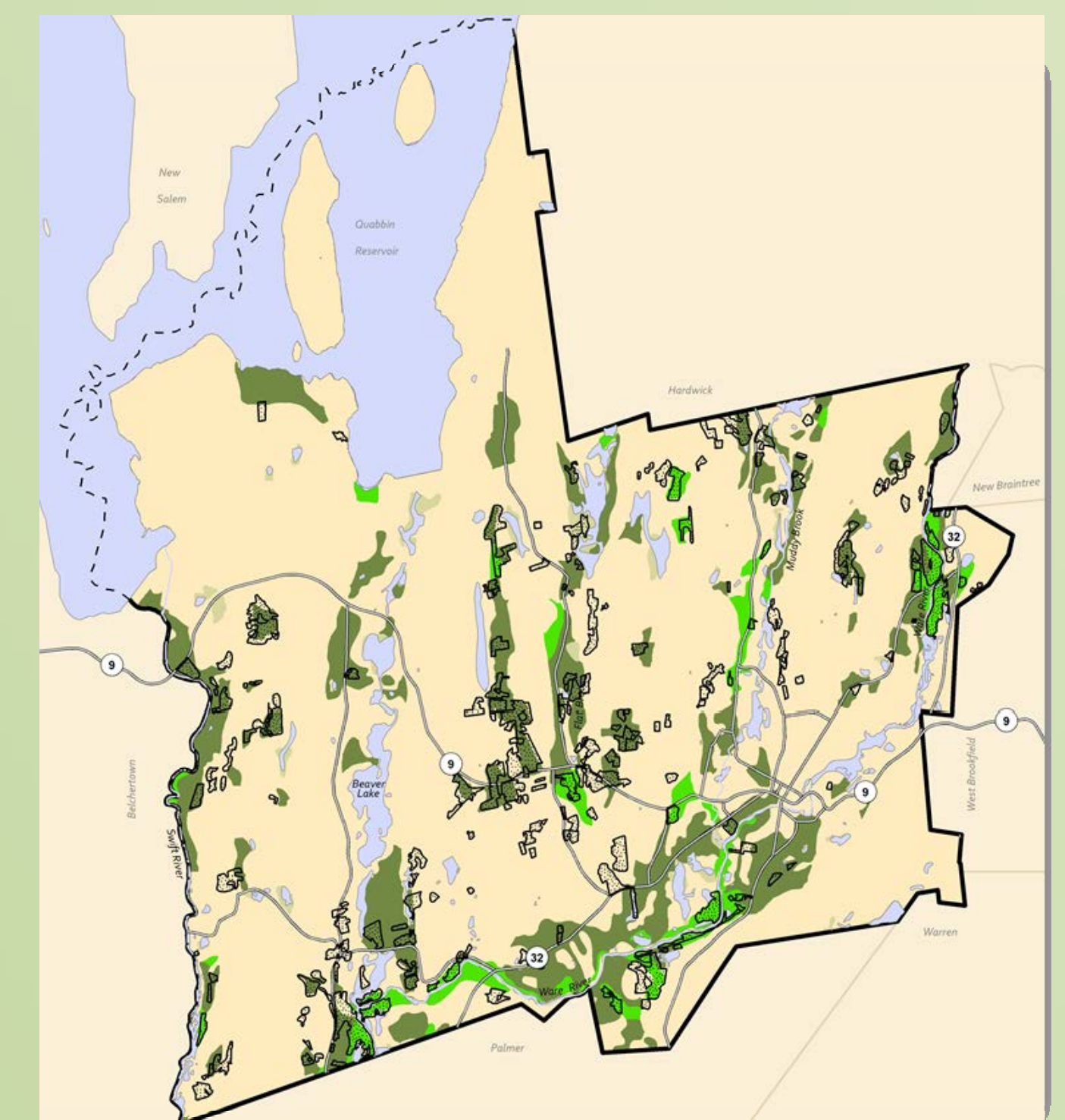
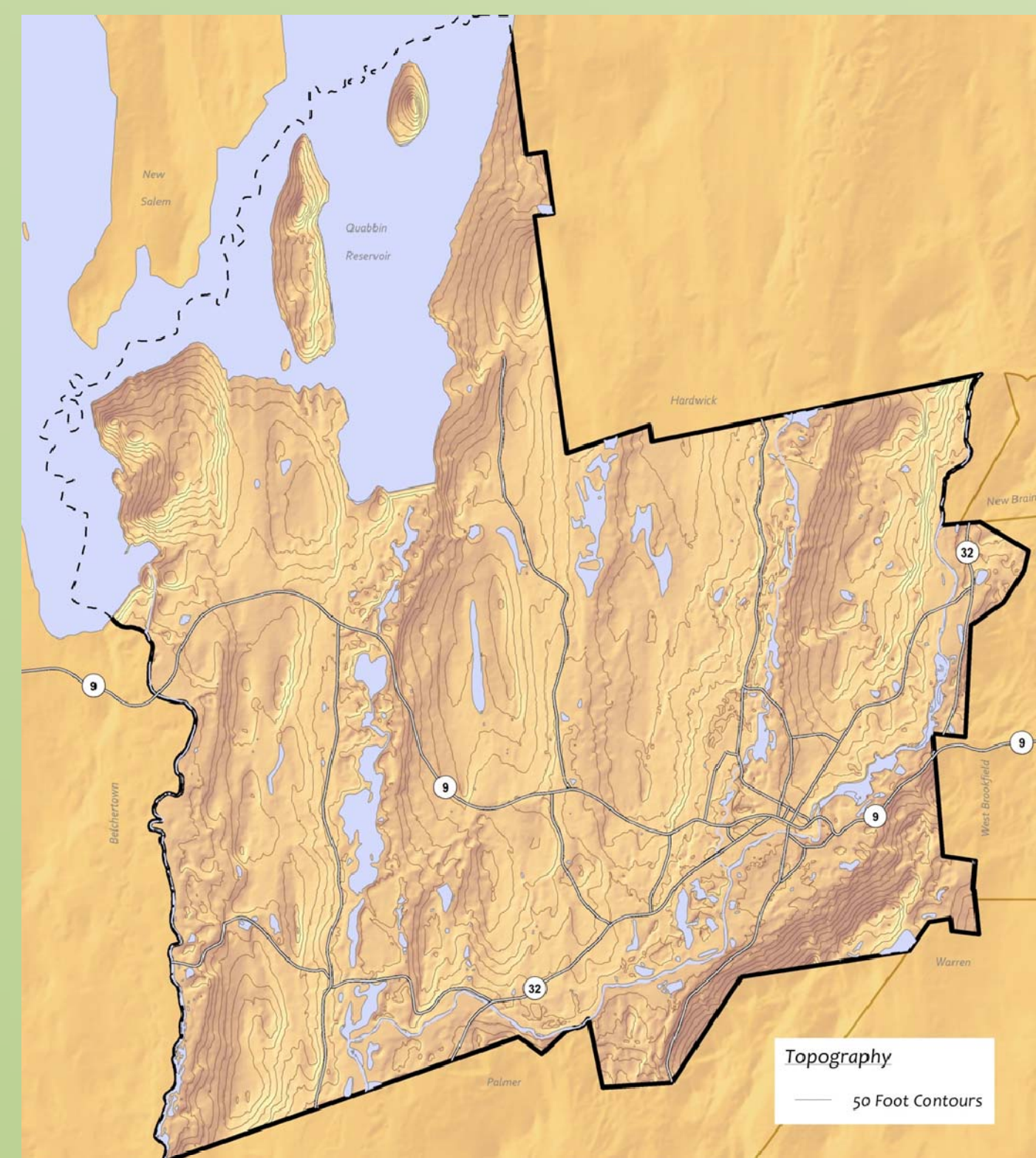
A Master Plan is a long-range plan that establishes a basis for informed decision-making by providing a guide for the physical form, growth, and development of a community.



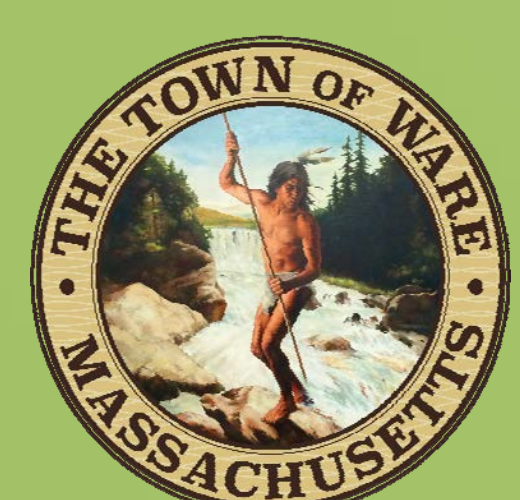
The Master Plan looks at the past as well as the present, and includes analysis and recommendations for a town's economy, housing, transportation, community facilities, infrastructure, natural resources, and land use. It also defines strategies towards achieving the goals established in the master plan – the short, medium, and long-term actions.



The information in a master plan is based on public input, surveys, previous planning initiatives, a town's regional setting, and its existing development, physical characteristics, and social and economic conditions.



Developing a new Master Plan for the town allows Ware to identify all of its needs and assets, and gives us a chance to reevaluate our place and role in the region. The Plan creates a comprehensive vision for the town's future and allows us to have a firmer grasp on the spectrum of issues, challenges, and opportunities that the community faces as we work toward a better future for ourselves and for generations yet to come.



A History of Implementation

Of the 228 separate recommendations made in the previous strategic and master plans (1987, 2002, and 2004), 59 have been successfully completed, attempted, or the town determined they were unrealistic or otherwise undesired. This poster highlights some of the 53 that have been successfully implemented over the years.



Source: HAP Housing

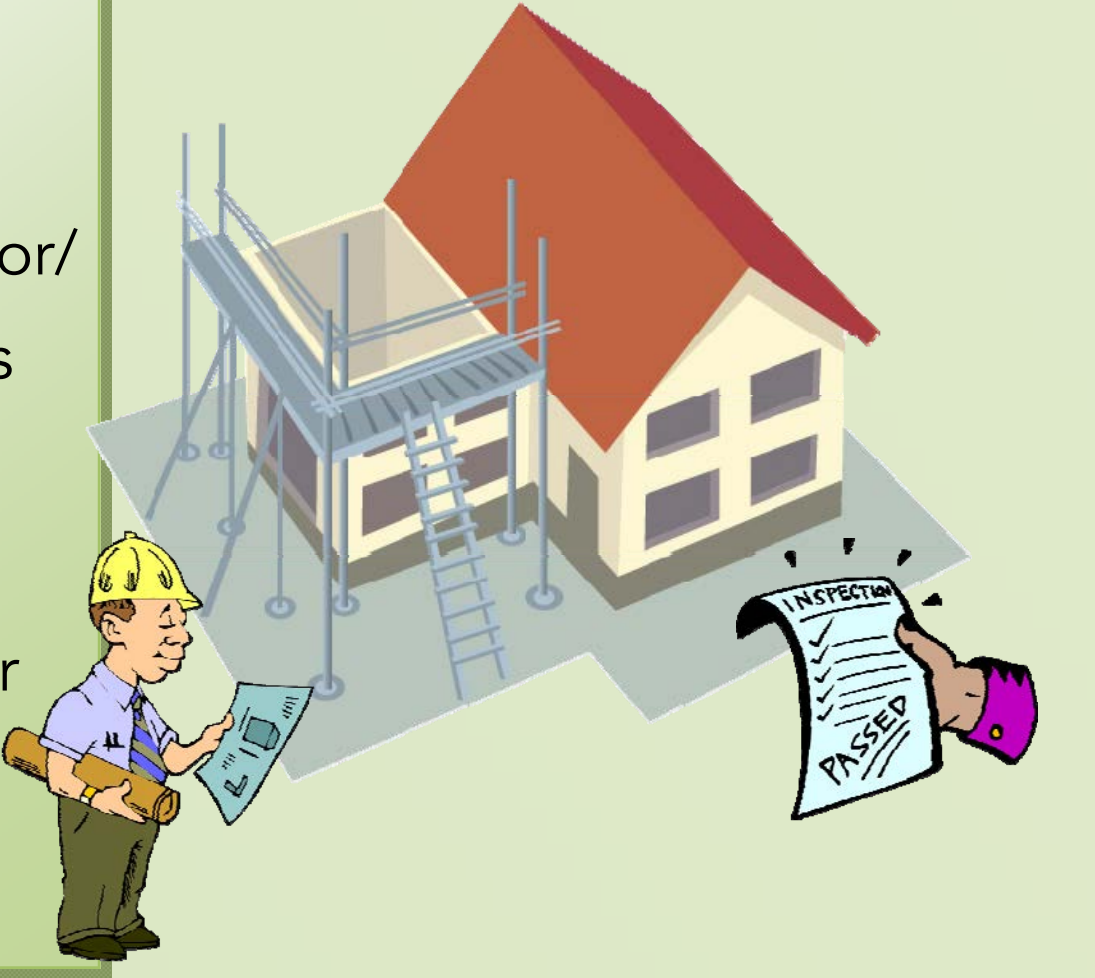


1987 Recommendation to increase elderly housing.

The lack of safe, affordable housing for Ware's elderly residents has been recognized for many years. In 2007, HAP Housing renovated the historic 1893 Church Street School into 29 units which are now highly sought after by area residents.

1987 Recommendation to hire a full time Building Inspector.

Ware established a full time Building Inspector/ Zoning Enforcement Officer in 1990. This has helped to ensure that buildings are safe and that our zoning, which represents Ware's desired development pattern, is followed, for the purpose of protecting everyone's health, safety, and general welfare.



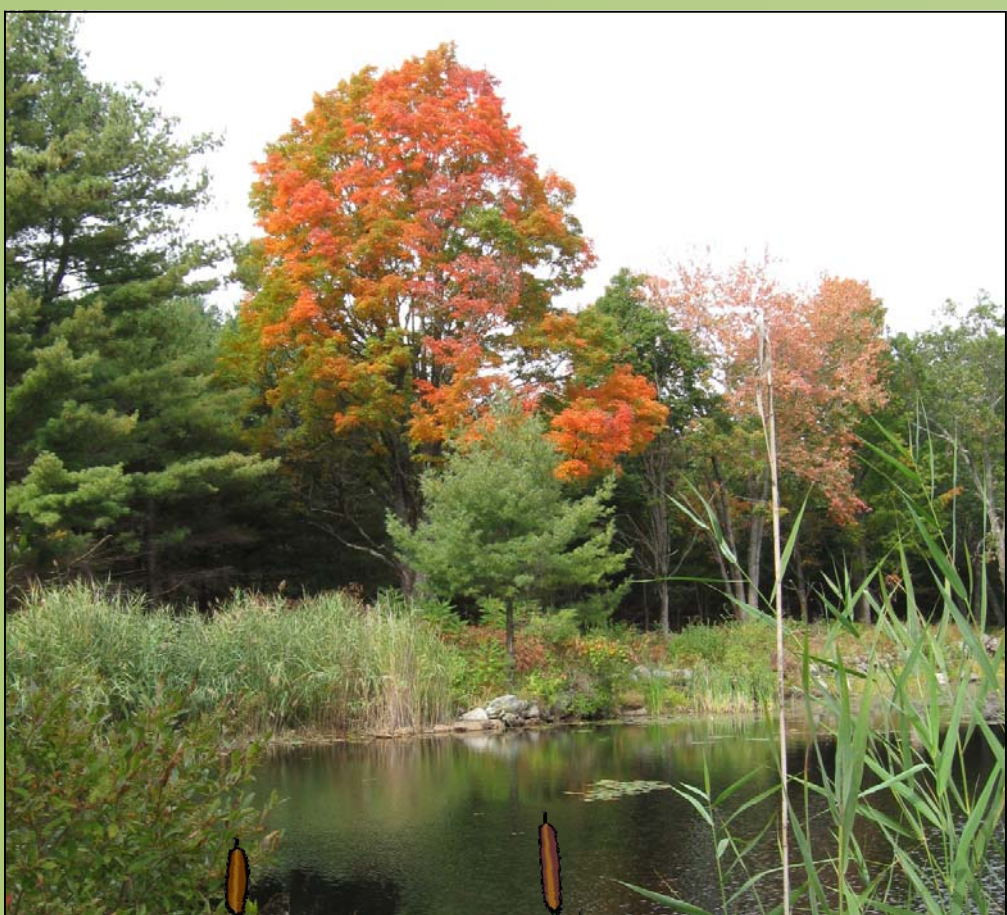
1987 Recommendation to create a DPW.

Ware's Department of Public Works strives to provide the town with safe roads throughout the year, deliver safe potable water to residents, provide sewer service, and provide water for fire suppression through the network of hydrants within the water service area.



1987 and 2002 Recommendations to continue working to create the Ware River Valley Greenways Trail.

For many years, people in Ware have dreamed about and planned for a rail trail; the Ware River Valley Greenway Trail. In 2015 a major hurdle was overcome with the installation of two bridges on the southern section of the trail. Stone dust was applied where needed, and the trail is now open for use between Robbins Road and the Gibb's Crossing shopping center (1.8 miles).



1987 Recommendation to reestablish the Conservation Commission and to identify wetland violations and enforce the regulations.

In addition to reestablishing the Conservation Commission, the Town has employed a conservation agent since 2007.



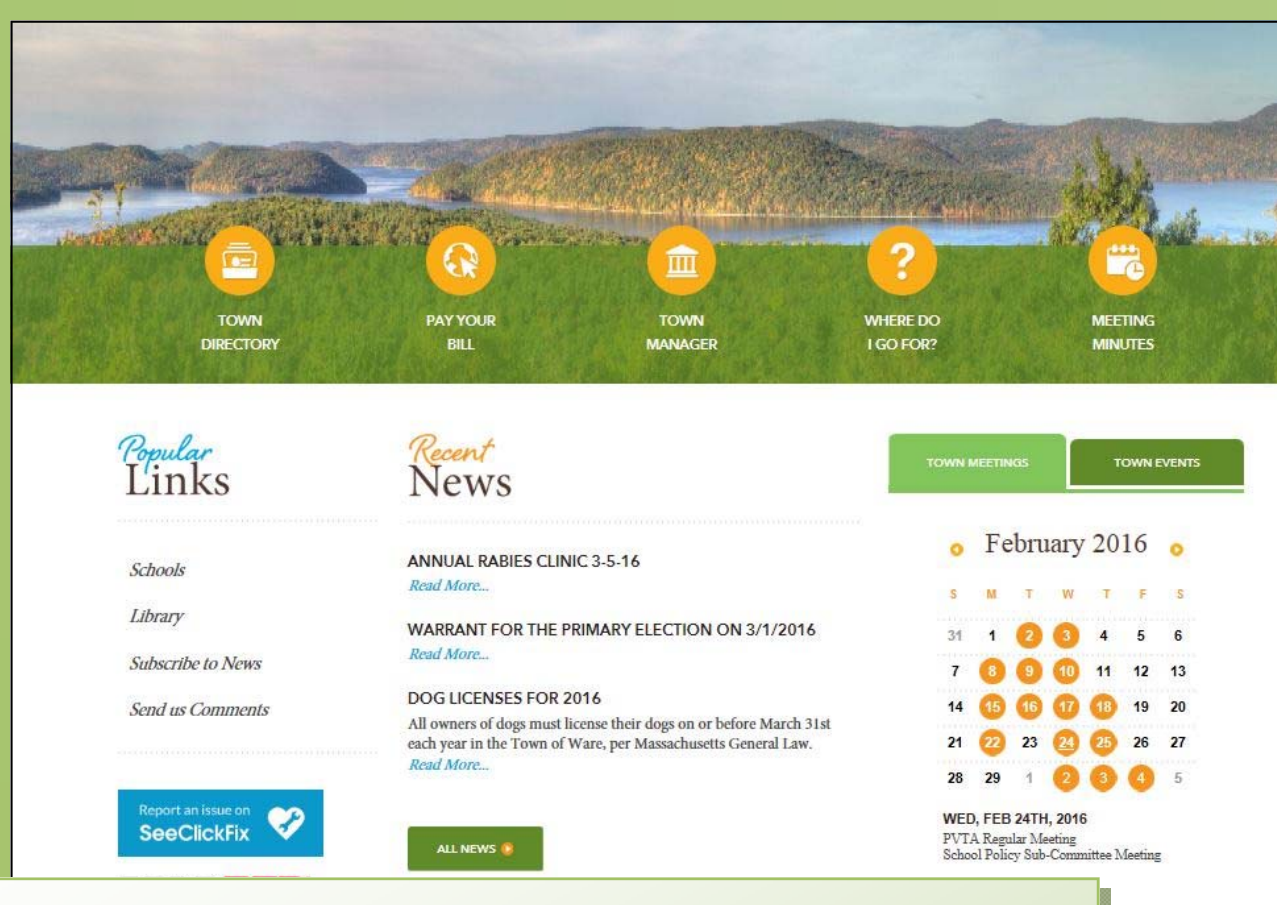
1987 Recommendation to prepare an updated study on traffic lights and pedestrian crosswalks in the downtown.

After numerous studies and a safety audit, the town began working in 2015 on a redesign of Main Street. This project is currently scheduled for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding in 2019 to replace the traffic lights, adjust the traffic patterns on Main Street, and reconstruct the sidewalks downtown.



1961 Recommendation to adopt zoning and 1987, 2002, and 2004 Recommendations to amend the zoning bylaw in numerous ways.

Ware adopted a very limited zoning bylaw in 1971, the first iteration of a "modern" zoning bylaw in 1980, and a truly comprehensive zoning bylaw in 1987. After dozens of amendments over the ensuing years, the town adopted a new zoning bylaw in 2012. Many of the recommendations made in the various master plans were addressed in this major rewrite.



2004 Recommendation to create a Town website.

In order to better serve residents, businesses, and visitors, Ware established a town website in 2005. Recently upgraded and redesigned, the website provides information on town departments, meetings, events, and news, and allows residents to pay bills online and report issues (such as potholes).



2002 Recommendation to upgrade the facilities in Grenville Park.

This park has been the pride and joy of Ware for over 100 years. Over time, the park has been upgraded and the facilities expanded to accommodate the needs of town residents. Most recently, the bandstand was renovated and ramps added to improve accessibility, the playground was upgraded, and in 2016 the roads throughout the park will be repaired.



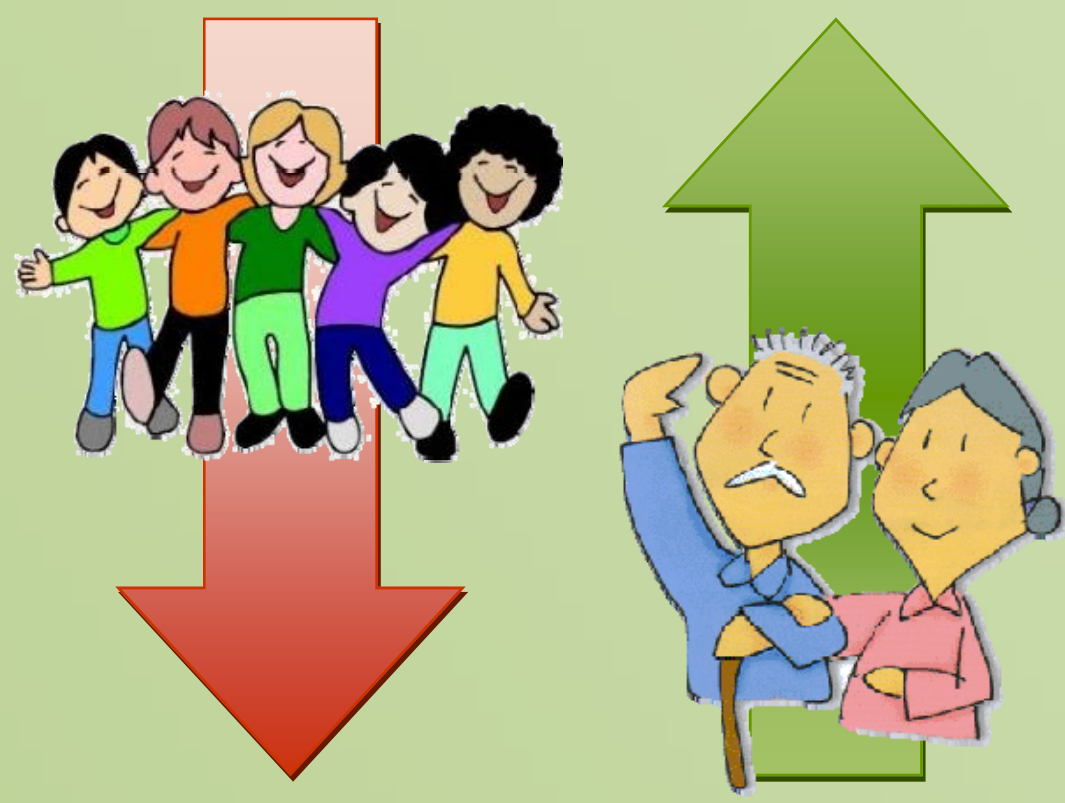
Master Plan Steering Committee
Town of Ware
126 Main Street
Ware, MA 01082
www.townofware.com
May 2016



A Snapshot of Ware

A Window to Ware's Future

The 2016 Master Plan

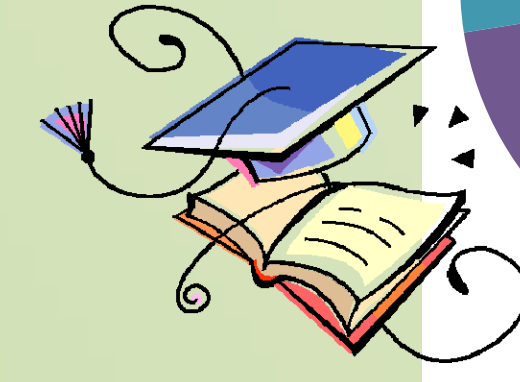


Like many small New England towns, population growth is most notable in the 45 and older age groups while the population of under 19 is declining.

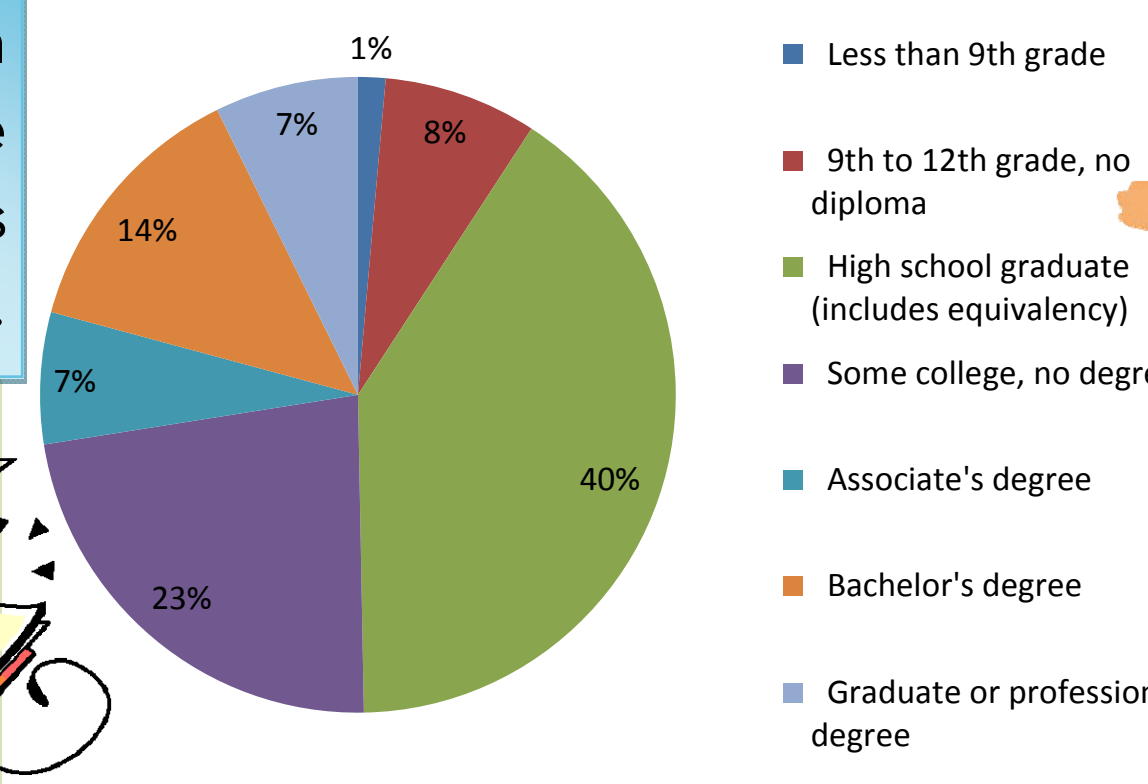


27% of our households include someone age 65 or older.

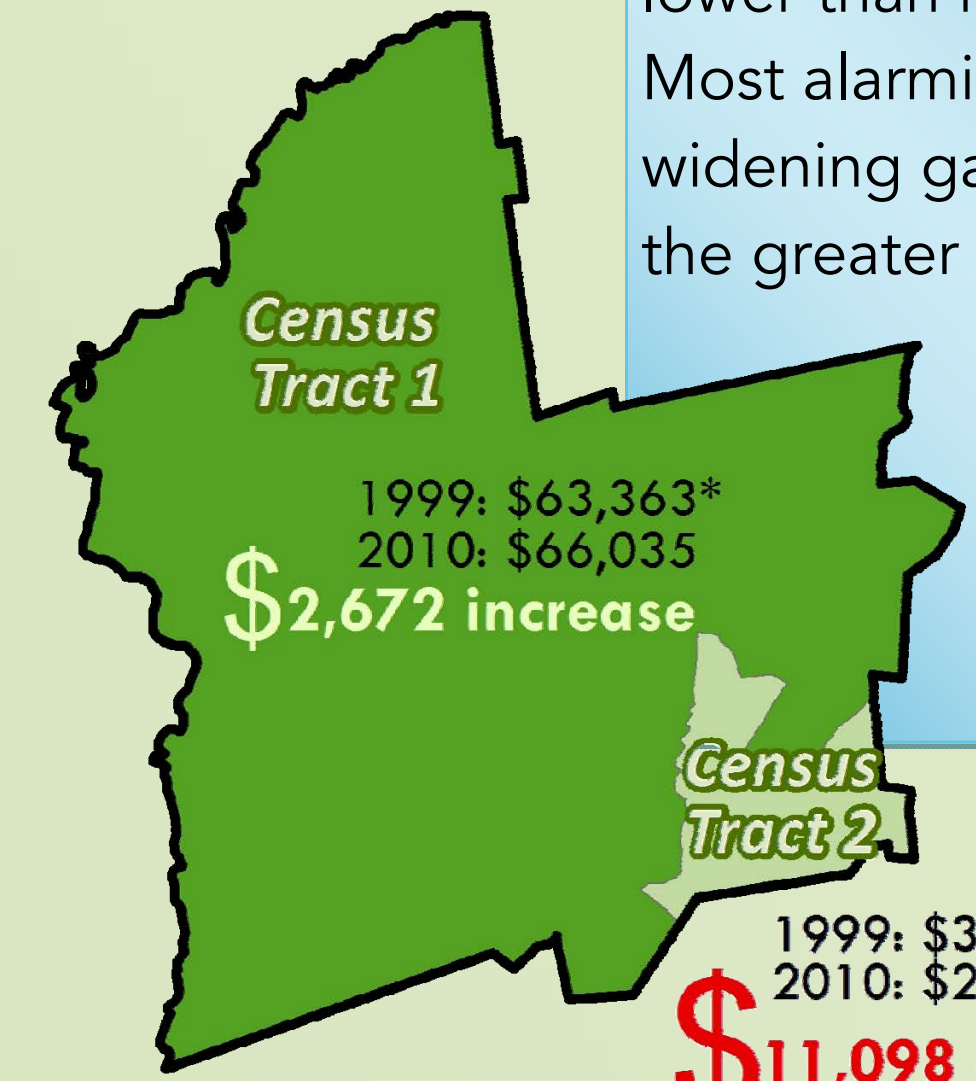
A bit more than one quarter of our population age 25+ has a college degree; nearly one half has a high school education.



Educational Attainment, Age 25+

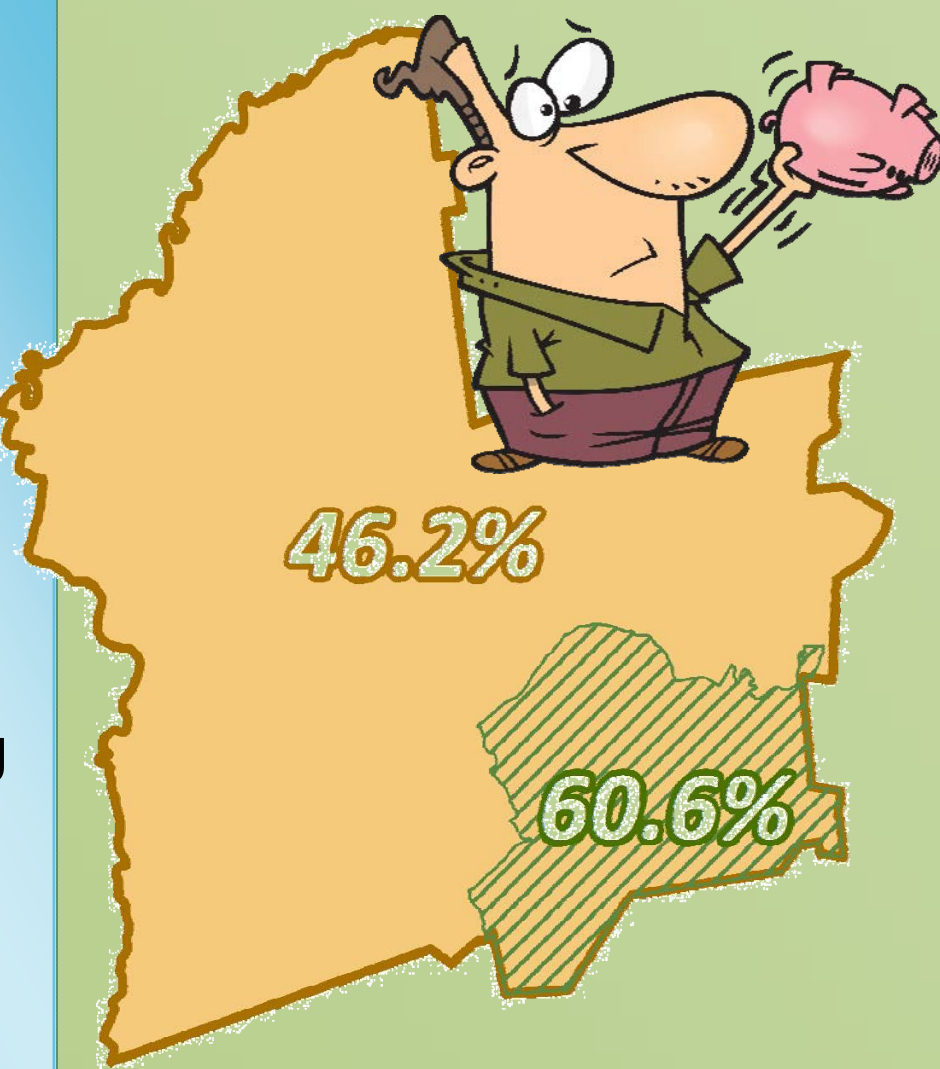


Our household income is lower than nearby towns. Most alarming is the widening gap between the greater downtown area and the rural areas of Ware; in 2010 that gap was \$38,031.

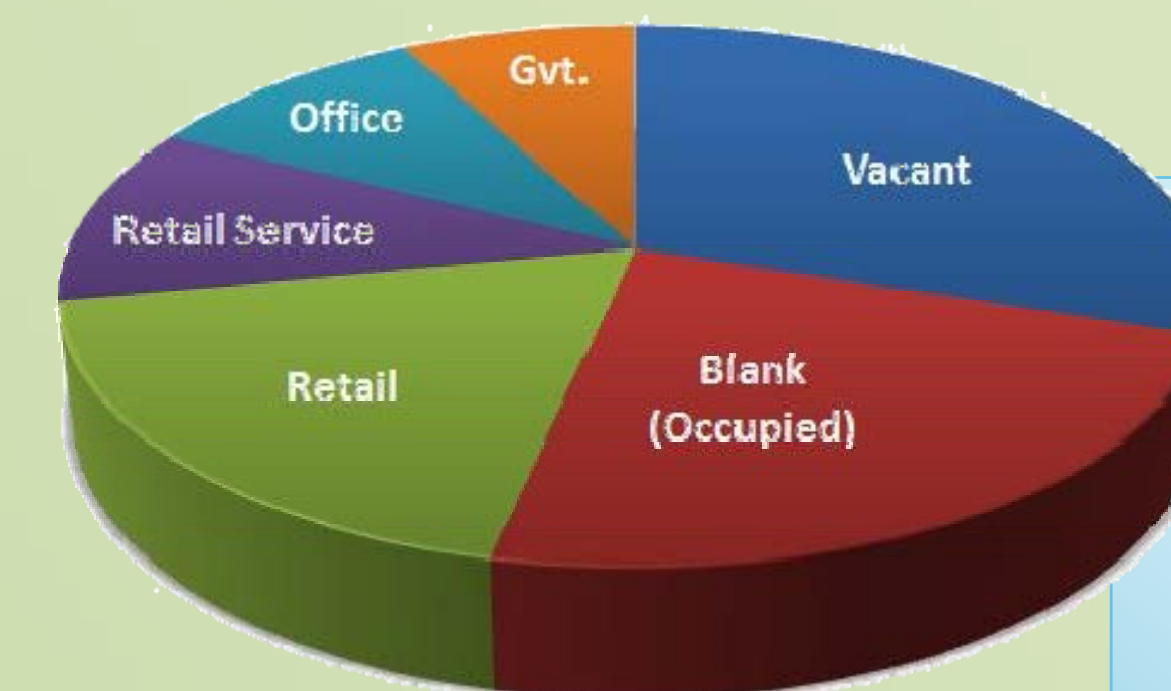


* Adjusted for inflation to 2010 dollars.
Sources: 1999: 2000 Census, Summary Tape File 3
2010: 2006-2010 ACS Selected Population Tables

In 2015, 46.2% of Ware's total population and 60.6% of the CDP population were low to moderate income, meaning they live in a household earning 80% or less of the area median income.



While our poverty rate is higher than the state average (13.7 % vs. 11.6%), our child poverty rate is 28.7%, a serious concern.



Main Street Storefronts

Ware's downtown continues to face challenges in attracting enough customers and activity to regain the vibrancy of yesteryear. The recent re-establishment of a business and civic association has helped, and several of their initiatives should continue the upward trend. However, the downtown still has many vacant spaces: 40% of the commercial buildings on Main Street have at least one vacant space. As the pie chart shows, over half the storefront space (measured in linear feet) on Main Street is either vacant or "blank", meaning it has no interest or activity for pedestrians.



Main Street Ware, 1939

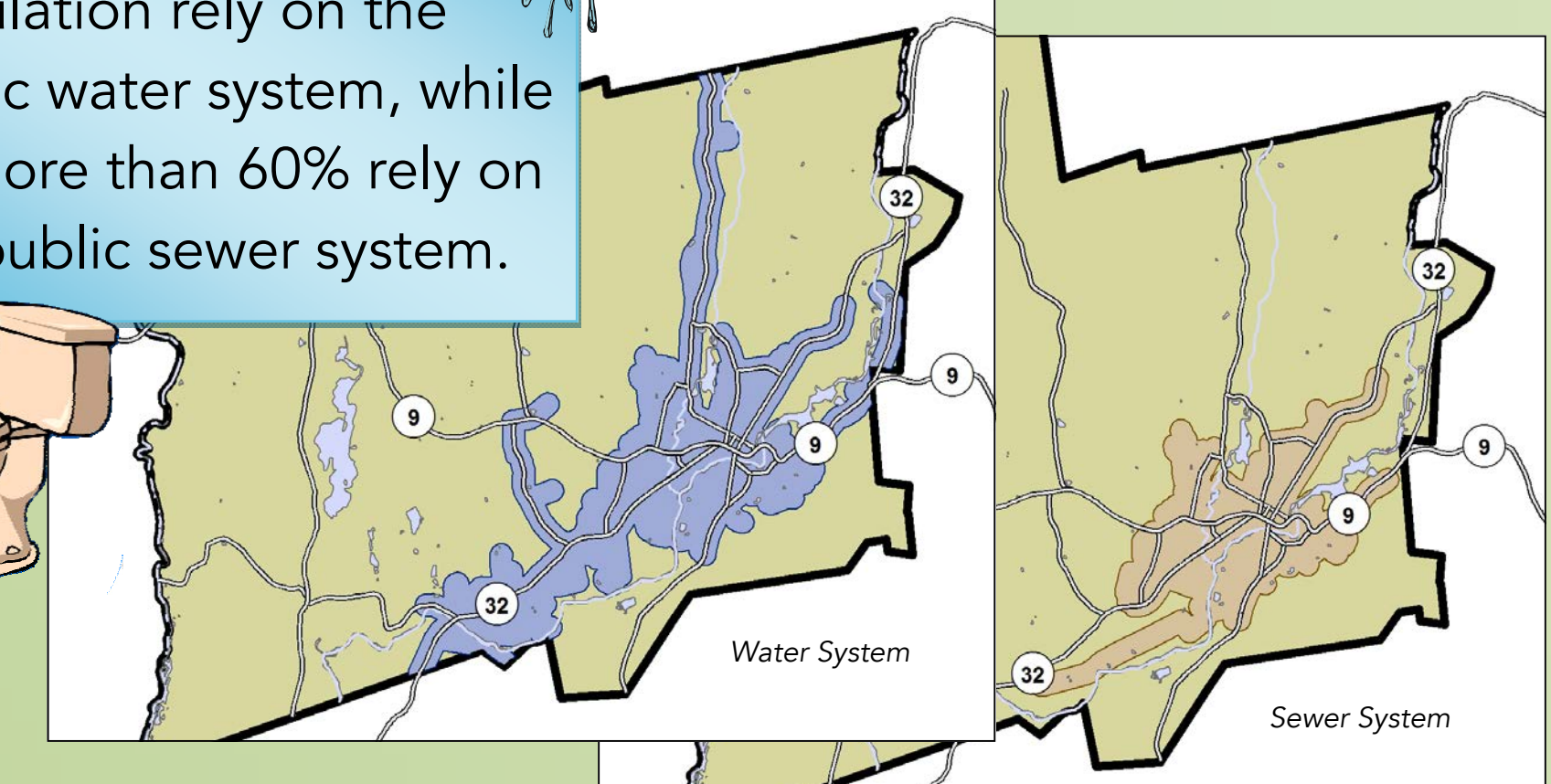
23% of the town is permanently preserved open space, and another 1% has a high potential for being permanently preserved. Ownership of these lands is state (Quabbin and two wildlife management areas), Town (parks, well fields, town forests), and private (conservation or agricultural restrictions).



Ware has a very diverse housing stock with a good mix of housing types, but most duplex and multi-family units were built before 1950 and need upgrading.



About 70% of Ware's population rely on the public water system, while no more than 60% rely on the public sewer system.



Nearly three quarters of the employment in Ware is in retail trade, services, and healthcare and social assistance.

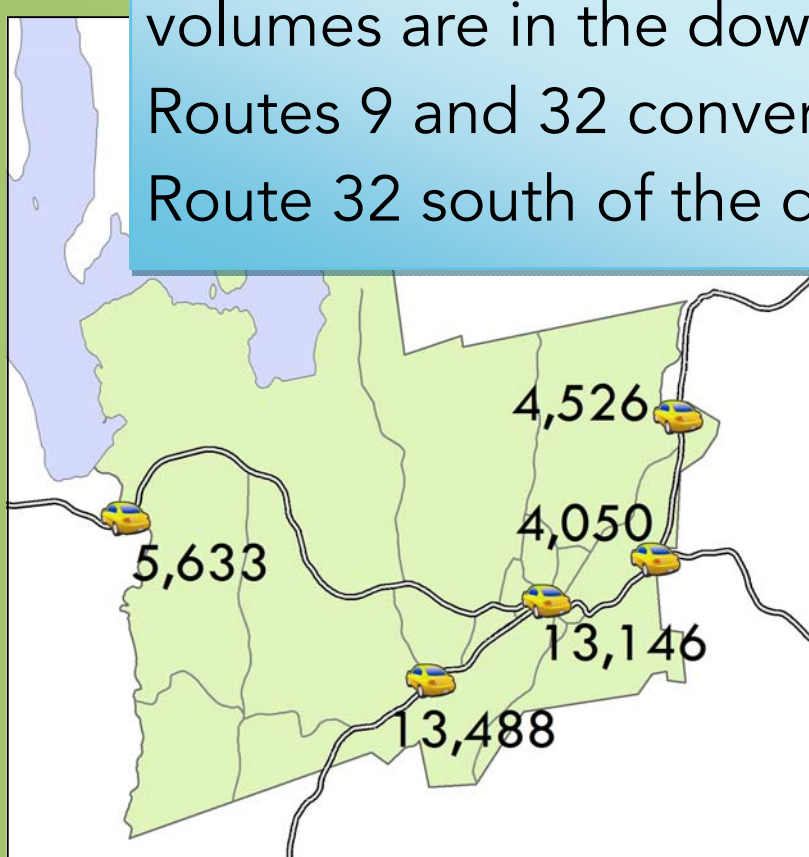
*Other includes Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate; Construction; Transportation, Communication, & Utilities; and Information.



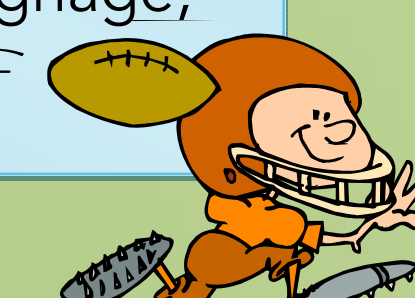
More than half of Ware's employed residents commute to another town to work, and 40% of these workers have a travel time greater than 30 minutes. 95% of Ware's workers use a private vehicle, a result of both our rural location and the lack of other options. Just over 3% use "other means", including bicycle and walking, to get to work, while less than 1/2% use public transit.



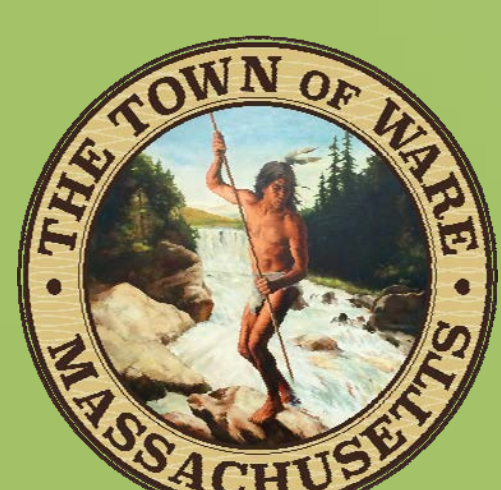
Traffic count data show little growth over the past 15 years. The highest volumes are in the downtown where Routes 9 and 32 converge and along Route 32 south of the downtown.



Primary recreational facilities include Grenville Park, Memorial Field, Kubinski Field, Reed Pool, Beauregard Playground, and the ball fields at the school campus. Old Pennybrook, the Church Street water tank field, the Ware River Greenway rail trail, the Pines, and Veterans Memorial Park supplement these. Passive recreational opportunities outside of the Quabbin Reservation are limited but could be improved with better signage, parking, and public outreach.



Additional data can be found in the Master Plan and in the Master Plan Appendix. Both are available at the Young Men's Library on Main Street in Ware, at the Town Hall, and online at townofware.com.



Master Plan Steering Committee
Town of Ware
126 Main Street
Ware, MA 01082
www.townofware.com
May 2016



Vision



"Vision" means the overall image in words that describes what the town wants to be and how it wants to look at some point in the future.

"Visioning" means the process by which a town, with the involvement of citizens, characterizes the future it wants, and plans how to achieve it.

"Vision Statement" means the formal expression of its vision that depicts in words and images what the town is striving to become and that serves as the starting point for the creation and implementation of the local master plan.

From the American Planning Association, Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook, 2002 edition.



A Window to Ware's Future

The 2016 Master Plan

Our Vision

Ware, Massachusetts is a vibrant and growing community where our citizens are proud of the town we call home. Our hometown is one where we meet at unique shops and businesses in our revitalized downtown, where a growing diverse economy is being cultivated, where we respect the land and enjoy unrivaled outdoor recreation opportunities, and where our government and its partners work together to provide efficient and up-to-date services for all of our citizens. We are committed to revitalize and improve our community.



Our Aspirations

We Are Ware



Growing a positive self-image by promoting what makes Ware a special place.

- Destination** Ware is a destination for commerce, culture, and recreation, while providing an excellent quality of life for its citizens.
- Scenic** Ware is nestled amongst scenic hills, the Quabbin Reservoir, and the flowing waters of the Ware River.
- Aspirations** We are a community with high aspirations, where our citizens create positive change.

Vibrant



The community focuses on creating a town where people gather for enjoyable and informative events.

- Culture** The community supports expanded educational opportunities that provide a broad cultural base including arts and music.
- Education** The community coordinates with various partners to increase career opportunities, e.g. opening a college satellite campus.
- Gatherings** Ware becomes more active with a variety of opportunities for healthier living and spaces for socializing.

Downtown



Focusing on reestablishing Main Street and the Millyard as the center of town.

- Pleasant** The Town coordinates with businesses to create a pleasant environment with a clean, attractive, and well-lit streetscape.
- Diverse** Downtown becomes more diverse through enhanced marketing and business recruitment by stakeholders.
- Walkable** Downtown is more pedestrian friendly, with improved crosswalks, a rail trail, and an attractive streetscape.

Adventure



The community takes advantage of its outdoor adventure opportunities by marketing its regional recreational assets.

- Greenway** The rail trail grows to connect Hardwick to Palmer; Ware and its downtown become the hub of an active trail network.
- Quabbin** Ware solidifies itself as the place where the Quabbin outdoor experience begins.
- Activity** Ware becomes the destination for outdoor recreation, with many activities and outdoor-based businesses.

Prosperity



Ware becomes more attractive for investment, whether it is the next large employer, independent businesses, or new residents.

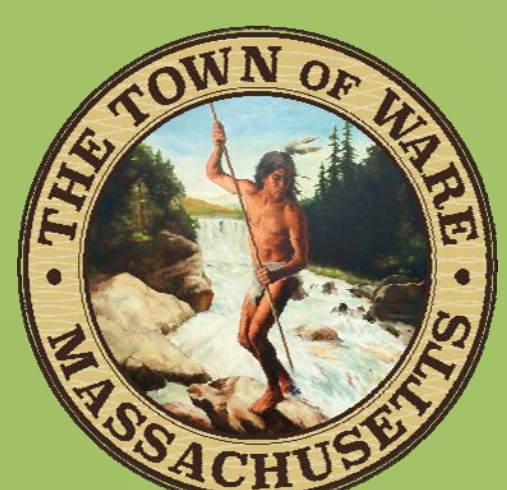
- Collaboration** The WB&CA becomes the conduit for property owners and the Town to work collaboratively to better utilize properties.
- Infrastructure** Infrastructure improvements are made to our sewer lines, transit, streets, and sidewalks, and natural gas is added.
- Investment** The Town proactively plans for new investment through guidelines, regulations, and readiness for grant funding.

Engaged



The citizens of Ware become more active and involved in the future of the community.

- Connected** Ware citizens increase engagement in civic functions, partnering with the Town government to improve our town.
- Awareness** People are aware of our improving local assets such as safe streets, active bikeways, and connection to the environment.
- Pride** Ware builds community pride through the active involvement of the people of Ware.



Master Plan Steering Committee
Town of Ware
126 Main Street
Ware, MA 01082
www.townofware.com
May 2016



We are Ware, Somewhere Worth Being.

Recommendations

A Window to Ware's Future

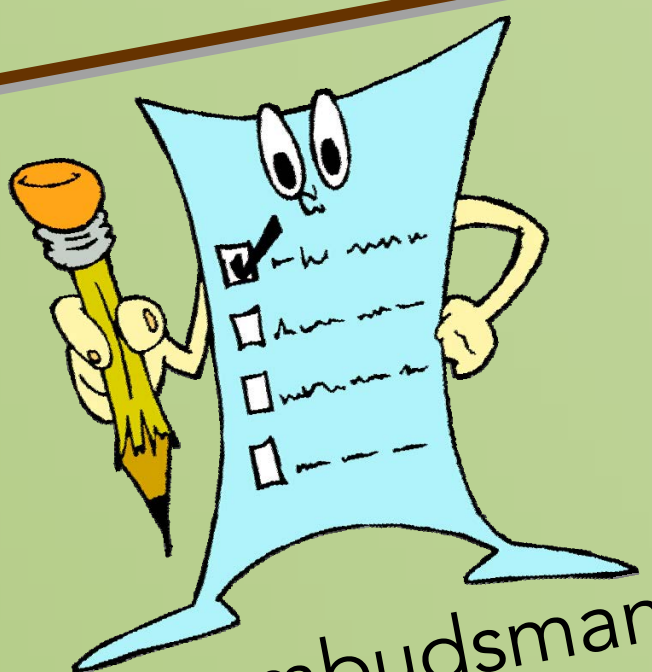
The 2016 Master Plan

A master plan is all about what a community can do to improve itself for its people both now and in the future. This poster lists the highest priority recommended actions that can move the town closer to achieving the community's vision and aspirations. Some of these will be easy and inexpensive to implement, while others will be difficult to accomplish for a variety of reasons. All of the recommendations listed in the Master Plan should be undertaken within the next fifteen years to help Ware achieve its vision for a prosperous, healthy, and friendly community for generations to come. It is up to everyone in Ware, not just town officials, to work toward this goal.



Amend the zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage a greater diversity in housing types (e.g. housing to better serve the needs of young professionals, young families, and older residents).

Amend the Flexible Residential Open Space Development zoning regulations to encourage more sustainable designs in new housing developments.



Create an ombudsman type position in town government to assist applicants in navigating the various permitting processes within local government.

Create and implement a tourism plan which identifies recreational, natural, cultural, and historic resources of the town and includes marketing materials and techniques to increase tourism.

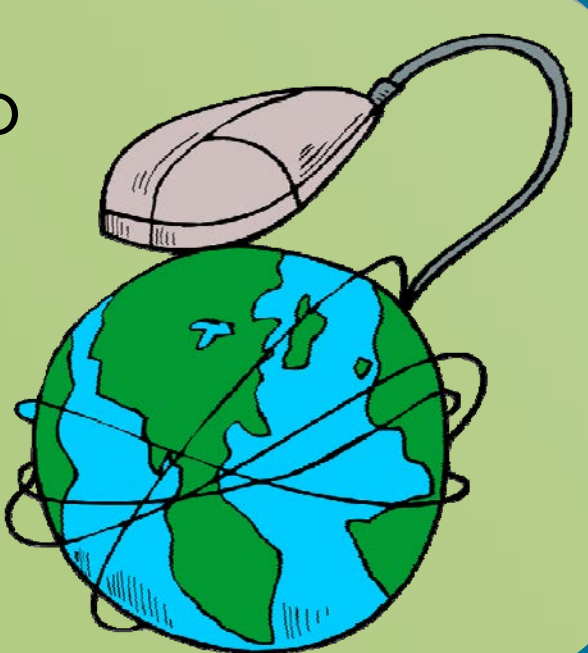


Improve the pedestrian experience with improved crosswalks, an attractive and functional streetscape, and the completion of the rail trail.

Complete the rail trail to connect Hardwick to Palmer, with Ware's downtown becoming the hub of an active trail network.



Work with service providers to increase access to broadband internet throughout the town and especially for industries and businesses.



Implement the recently designed wayfinding system to help people navigate to and within the downtown, including parking areas and various places of interest, and to learn about upcoming events and activities.

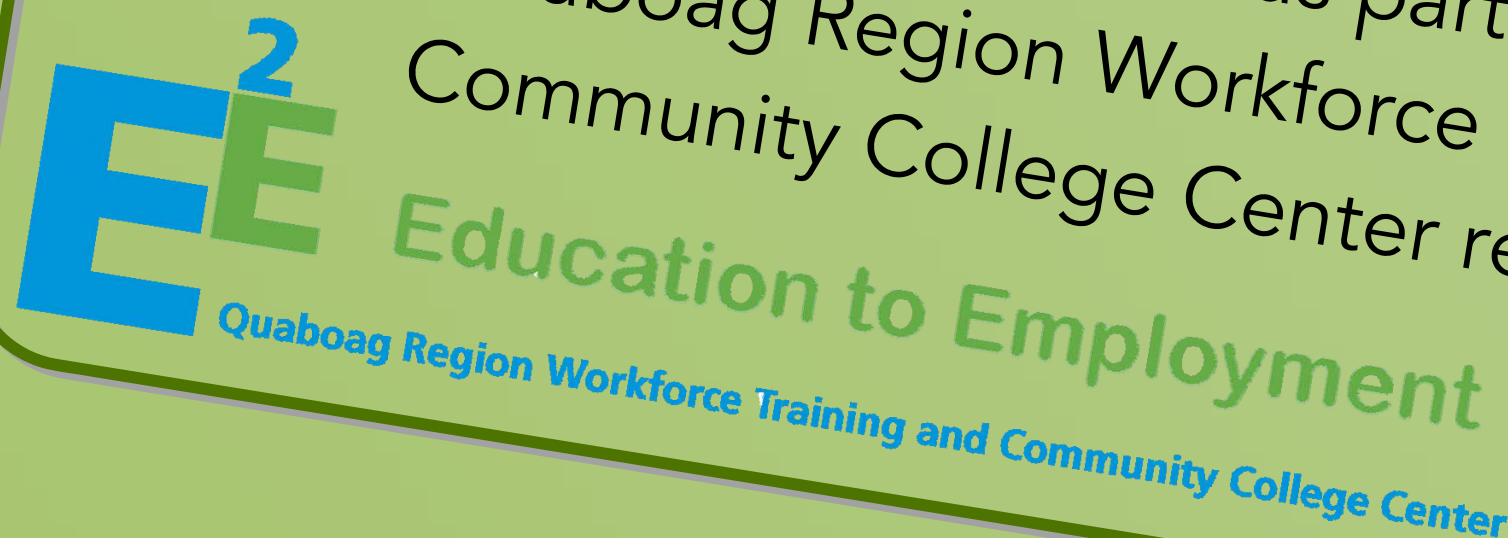


Market Ware as the primary location where visitors to the Quabbin should begin their outdoor experience.

Improve public outreach to ensure Ware residents are aware of our improving local assets such as safe streets, active bikeways, and a stronger connection to the natural environment.



Coordinate with various partners to ensure the new Quaboag Region Workforce Training and Community College Center remains in Ware.



Collaborate with the WB&CA and property owners to improve utilization of existing non-residential space.

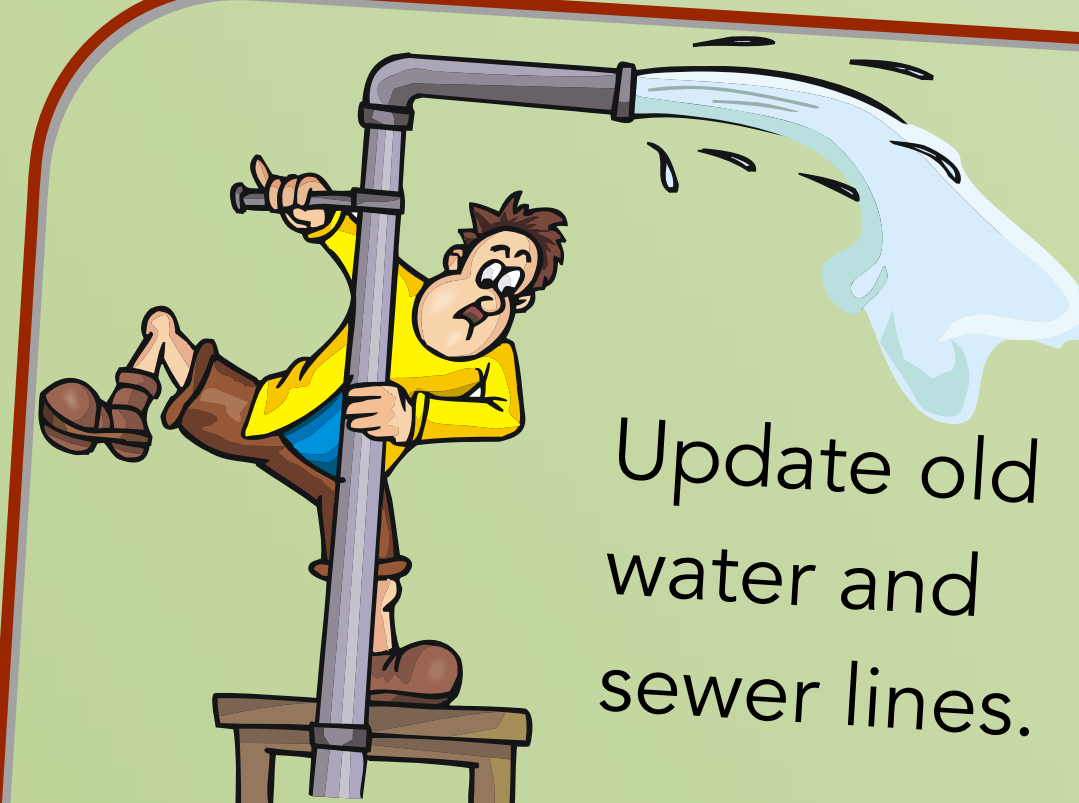


Support the Ware Business & Civic Association in its function as a formal economic development organization to advance downtown revitalization.



Coordinate with the WB&CA and downtown businesses to create a pleasant environment with a clean, attractive, and well lit streetscape.

Coordinate with the WB&CA and the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation (QV CDC) to enhance marketing and business recruitment to expand diversity.



Update old water and sewer lines.



Modernize the water treatment plant.

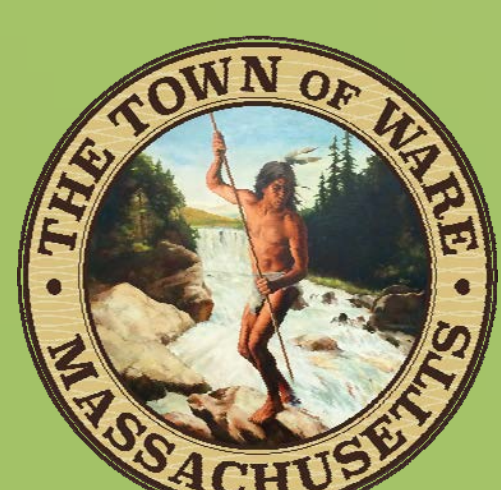
Upgrade the wastewater treatment plant to ensure compliance with environmental regulations.



Design and implement extensions to the water and sewer infrastructure to allow higher density development.

Expand access to the public sewage treatment system, especially in areas in close proximity to sewer trunk lines.

Repair or reconstruct streets and sidewalks.



Master Plan Steering Committee
Town of Ware
126 Main Street
Ware, MA 01082
www.townofware.com
May 2016

