

2021

Dedham Town Green



Dedham Square Planning Committee,
Economic Development, and Planning & Zoning
Town of Dedham
12/6/2021

DEDHAM TOWN GREEN: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dedham Square Planning Committee (DSPC) is pleased to provide this report to the Select Board and the Dedham community. The work in this report represents extensive research, detailed financial and real estate analysis, and two years of Committee meetings, focus groups, and community events. The Executive Summary provides a high-level overview; detailed background information and rationale appear in the body of the report itself. Wherever possible, hyperlinks will take the reader to a detailed explanation of the topic.

The Opportunity of a Lifetime

On or about October 2022, the Dedham Police Department is scheduled to move from 600 High Street to a new Public Safety Building at 26 Bryant Street. 600 High Street sits at the main intersection of Dedham Square in the Central Business Zoning District. It is within a short walk to civic resources such as Dedham's Town Hall & Senior Center and Public Library; cultural assets such as the Dedham Historical Society and Museum; Norfolk County resources such as the Registry of Deeds and Superior Court; more than 150 small businesses, and hundreds of residential homes and apartments. More than a thousand people are employed in the immediate area and thousands more come to the district each week to visit shops, restaurants, recreational facilities, professional and personal service establishments, and conduct business at Town and County buildings.

Upon the departure of the Police Department, Dedham is provided with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a half-acre Town Green (about the size of Needham's) in the center of Town, and at the heart of its local economy. Unlike surrounding communities, Dedham's downtown area evolved over centuries without a central public green space. In most New England towns, a central public green space provides a hub for civic and economic activity. Public green spaces strengthen community ties by providing gathering space and increasing personal connections. They also create tremendous economic benefits, supporting the local businesses that are an important engine of a thriving economy. Dedham now has the good fortune to create a vibrant public space that will foster community interaction and promote economic development. The Town Green is a public improvement project which will benefit residents and visitors for generations to come.

Summary of Findings

Financial analysis revealed that selling 600 High Street would offer fewer benefits than keeping it. The most likely private development scenario would be a mixed-use building with retail on the ground floor below three stories of apartments. The building is in significant disrepair and contains asbestos; analysis showed selling the property would likely raise no more than \$750,000 and the expected yearly property tax income would be \$70,000 at most. The low financial benefit to the Town, combined with the intangible cost of losing Town control of a key downtown corner, led the DSPC to strongly recommend keeping ownership of the land.

The DSPC examined three alternatives for keeping the parcel: repurposing the buildings for community or commercial use; demolishing the buildings to create a surface parking lot; and demolishing the buildings to create a Town Green. Analysis showed that creating a Town Green will reap many more benefits than the other options by every metric – economic, community, and environmental. Keeping the

buildings would mean costly renovations, and there was not a clear civic use for the buildings. A parking lot at this location would increase traffic congestion and confusion at a busy intersection that is already perceived as unsafe and unpleasant.

On the other hand, creating a Town Green would create long-term economic benefits by raising nearby commercial property values (and tax revenue) as well as increasing foot traffic in support of local small businesses, including restaurants that generate meals-tax revenue for the Robin Reyes Fund. In addition, a Dedham Town Green establishes a civic gathering space for all of Dedham and a green respite from the pavement and concrete of a built-up area. Public input at meetings about this space was overwhelmingly in favor of creating more green space in the downtown area. This is consistent with survey results from many recent planning efforts including the 2020 Mixed Use Study and the 2017 Parks and Recreation and Open Space plan. After a public meeting with 170+ members of the community, the DSPC voted in March of 2021 to pursue a Town Green.

The DSPC then engaged an urban designer to help analyze site conditions and the feasibility of public green space to understand cost implications. The Committee and designer, with guidance from staff, held an extensive engagement process in the spring and summer of 2021 with ten community meetings, in-person and virtual. The resulting design concept is ADA accessible and includes flexible space for community activities, an interactive water feature, a community "front porch," public art, significant pedestrian safety improvements, and linkages to the existing open space network. Careful consideration was given to the wide range of potential users to ensure that the park would be enjoyed by all Dedham residents.



The project’s combination of economic and environmental benefits make it well suited for outside funding, particularly given current priorities around Covid-19 economic recovery, infrastructure improvement, and climate change preparedness. The estimated cost of this project to the average Dedham household would be about \$9/year. This reflects anticipated federal, state, and private funding of \$2 million and an estimated net Town investment of \$2.3 million. The total cost to demolish the existing police station and build the Town Green, as pictured above, is \$4.3 million. For a breakdown of costs and a description of potential funding sources, please see [Cost Estimates & Funding Sources](#).

Given the parcel’s location in Dedham Square, any change of use would raise questions about traffic and parking. A Town Green would not generate additional traffic or parking demand, particularly compared to an active police station or other potential redevelopment scenarios. The report contains a full project overview, explanation of the process, and findings.

Dedham can create a vibrant Dedham Town Green that will encourage economic activity, add green space, and provide a gathering place for residents of all ages for an opportunity for an approximate investment of \$2.3M by the Town.

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Project Overview

History of 600 High Street

Dedham Square is a traditional New England town center that developed around a train station, which once offered service to Boston and Providence. Among the buildings in Dedham Square was Memorial Hall, built-in 1868, located at 600 High Street. The land on which Memorial Hall stood was donated to the Town by residents who understood the benefit of using that land to support the community for civic needs. Memorial Hall was dedicated as a lasting monument to the bravery of the forty-seven “sons of Dedham” who perished in the Rebellion, or Civil War as it is known today. It was made of Dedham granite, quarried just down the road in what is now Westwood. The monumental structure included town offices, a large community auditorium, shops on the first floor, and memorial marble tablets now displayed in the Ames Building.

In 1962, Memorial Hall was demolished to make way for the next phase of civic use at 600 High Street: to house the Town’s Police Station. The building is a two-story, colonial design with a shingled, pitched roof. The building appears to be in decent condition from the exterior, however, shortcomings of the station have been cataloged for decades, beginning with a report commissioned by the Select Board in 1987. Additional studies cataloged a range of issues: security problems, operational challenges, and environmental contamination.

Ten years ago, with the assistance of a \$1.3 million state grant, the Town invested more than \$6 million to revitalize the downtown, improve public safety, and encourage real estate investment. Those improvements spurred the creation of several new buildings with residential apartments over ground-floor storefronts, raised surrounding commercial property values, and attracted an influx of businesses. Dedham Square is perceived as a vibrant asset that attracts families to settle in the Town.

In 2019, Town Meeting voted to fund a combined Public Safety Building at 26 Bryant Street, freeing up the property for the next phase of civic use. The Police Department is scheduled to move to its new location in October 2022, leaving a 14,700 sq. ft. site open for redevelopment.

Dedham Square Planning Committee

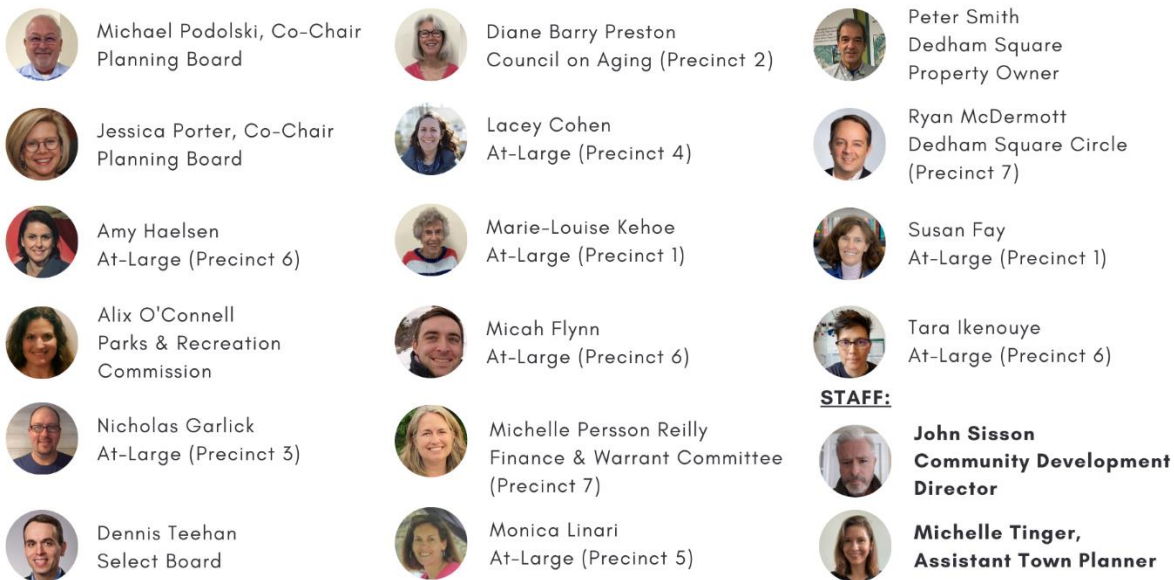
In 2017 Town Meeting allocated \$50,000 to create an economic strategic plan and design guidelines for the Town’s largest central business district, Dedham Square. The Planning Board created the Dedham Square Planning Committee (DSPC) to oversee the studies, and the first phase was completed in 2018 with the publication of the [Dedham Square Design Guidelines](#), with technical assistance provided by Gamble & Associates at a cost of \$30,000 of that original allocation.

When the Dedham Square Planning Committee turned to the work of creating an Economic Strategic Plan, Town Meeting had just approved the construction of a combined Public Safety Building on Bryant Street. Recognizing that the departure of the Police Department from its current home at 600 High Street



could substantially alter the business district, the Select Board asked the DSPC to expand its scope and study the potential reuse of the Police Station parcel as well as the Keystone Parking Lot at High Street & Eastern Avenue.

The Select Board and Planning Board agreed that any decision about the future of 600 High Street would affect the entire Town and that Committee makeup should include representation from across Dedham. In 2019, the Planning Board dissolved the original Committee and reconfigured it, accordingly, posting notices widely to encourage broad representation. Ultimately the Planning Board appointed 20+ members representing every precinct in Town as well as representatives of the Planning Board, Select Board, Finance & Warrant Committee, Council on Aging, and Parks & Recreation Commission. A few Committee members have since moved out of Dedham or resigned due to other commitments. The Planning Board has monitored membership to ensure that every precinct continues to have a representative. The Committee was supported by planning and economic development staff, with significant contributions by the Town Engineer.



The Committee performed an in-depth analysis of the 600 High Street and the Keystone lot parcels to deliver recommendations to the Select Board, Planning Board, and Town Meeting as to potential future uses. The focus of this report is the parcel located at 600 High Street. In early 2021, the DSPC decided to prioritize consideration of that parcel given the short timetable before the building would be vacant in 2022. The DSPC has also done extensive analysis of potential uses for the Keystone Lot, most including some combination of public parking and private development. The Committee will continue that analysis in 2022.

The study was budgeted at \$50,000 and was funded by the remaining \$20,000 of the 2017 appropriation from Town Meeting and additional funds from the Economic Development budget. The Town engaged a consulting team consisting of Gamble Associates, an urban design and planning firm, and Abramson & Associates, which provided financial analysis and strategic planning services. Working with the Committee and gathering input from the community, Gamble Associates evaluated potential redevelopment scenarios for each site, and Abramson & Associates performed a financial analysis of each scenario.

In March of 2021, after extensive research, financial analysis, and a community meeting with 170+ people in attendance, the DSPC voted to pursue converting the parcel into a Dedham Town Green. Since then, the DSPC has led an extensive process of community engagement to understand how a Town Green could be designed to best meet the needs of the community. The goals of this conceptual design phase were to figure out what features were important to Dedham residents, merchants, and stakeholders; conduct a site analysis to understand what could be built; create a conceptual design; develop a detailed cost estimate for the project with visuals; and estimate what the desired features would cost.

Over the course of several meetings with the public and the Committee, urban designer Don Giard developed a strong understanding of community members' visions for a dynamic public green space. Through in-person and online interactive workshops, the public could "vote" on park elements such as seating styles, water features, and lawn size, as well as weigh in on how they imagined themselves using the space.

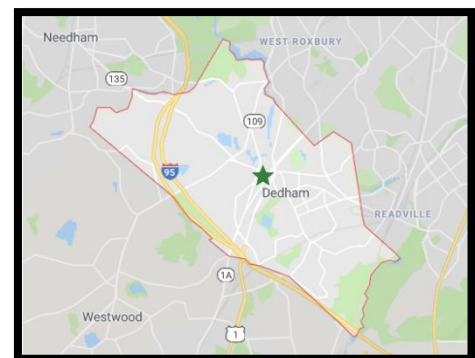
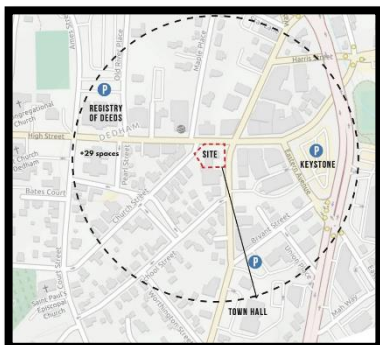
Several common goals emerged across audiences from different neighborhoods and age groups. The overwhelming theme was flexibility: the community desires a space that is welcoming for all ages, designed with the flexibility to accommodate many different uses and is flexible enough to be used year-round, despite New England weather patterns. Mr. Giard developed a design concept for this nearly half-acre parcel that embraces those priorities, improves public safety, and adds significant green space and tree coverage to an area dominated by asphalt and concrete. Detailed explanations of the park design and features can be found in the [Conceptual Design Phase](#) section. More details about the community input can be found in the [Community Engagement](#) section and in [Appendix A: Findings: Conceptual Design](#).

Site Conditions

Zoning & Economic Conditions

600 High Street is located in the heart of Dedham's Central Business Zoning District at the intersection of Washington Street and High Street. In addition to offering the greatest concentration of local businesses, Dedham Square is located at the geographic center of the Town.

This site is within a short walk of many civic assets: Town Hall, the Senior Center, the public library's main branch, the Dedham Historical Society & Museum, the historic Norfolk County Superior Court building, the Registry of Deeds, the County Commissioner's Office, and the U.S. Post Office. Additional attractions include the Dedham Community House, the Community Theatre, and four churches. In terms of economic activity, Dedham's downtown is home to more than 150 businesses, including the headquarters of Norfolk & Dedham



Group, professional and medical offices, retail stores, personal service establishments, and some 22 restaurants and cafes. These establishments employ more than 1,000 workers, from morning until night, on weekdays, and through the weekend. The site is also situated at the edge of Franklin Square, a walkable neighborhood with dozens of single-family residences and apartments in historic structures. In addition, seven nearby mixed-use buildings provide 178 apartments for residents who spend money and pay residential property taxes. All of these residential dwellings and civic, cultural, commercial, and religious establishments are within a 5-minute walk of the site and draw thousands of people to the town center each week for business, shopping, banking, dining, recreation, movies, professional services, and business at Town and County buildings.

This dense confluence of residential, civic, commercial, and religious uses creates a vibrant center of activity and collaboration between different establishments. The spending of residents, employees, and visitors supports private enterprises, thereby helping to pay commercial property taxes and generate meals-tax funds that are earmarked for the Town capital building projects like new schools. The local restaurant scene and other healthy business operations provide employment opportunities and attract new visitors to the town center.

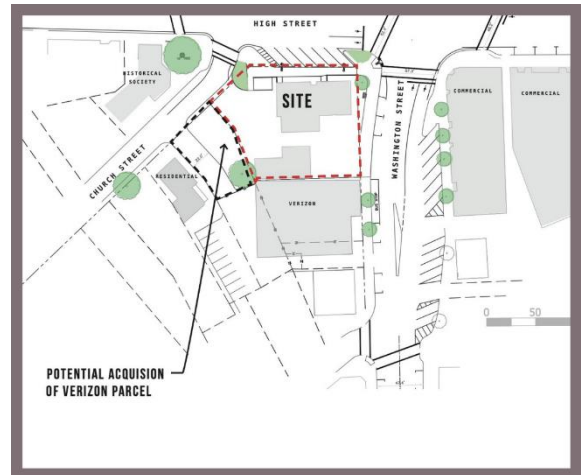


Size & Scale

The Dedham Town Green would be made up of the existing Police Station parcel, part of the Verizon property, and additional space created as an indirect benefit of public safety improvements. The total size would be 24,180 square feet, comparable to Needham Common.

The Police Station currently sits on a parcel of 14,700 square feet. It is bound by Church Street to the West, High Street to the North, Washington Street to the East, and a parcel owned by Verizon to the South.

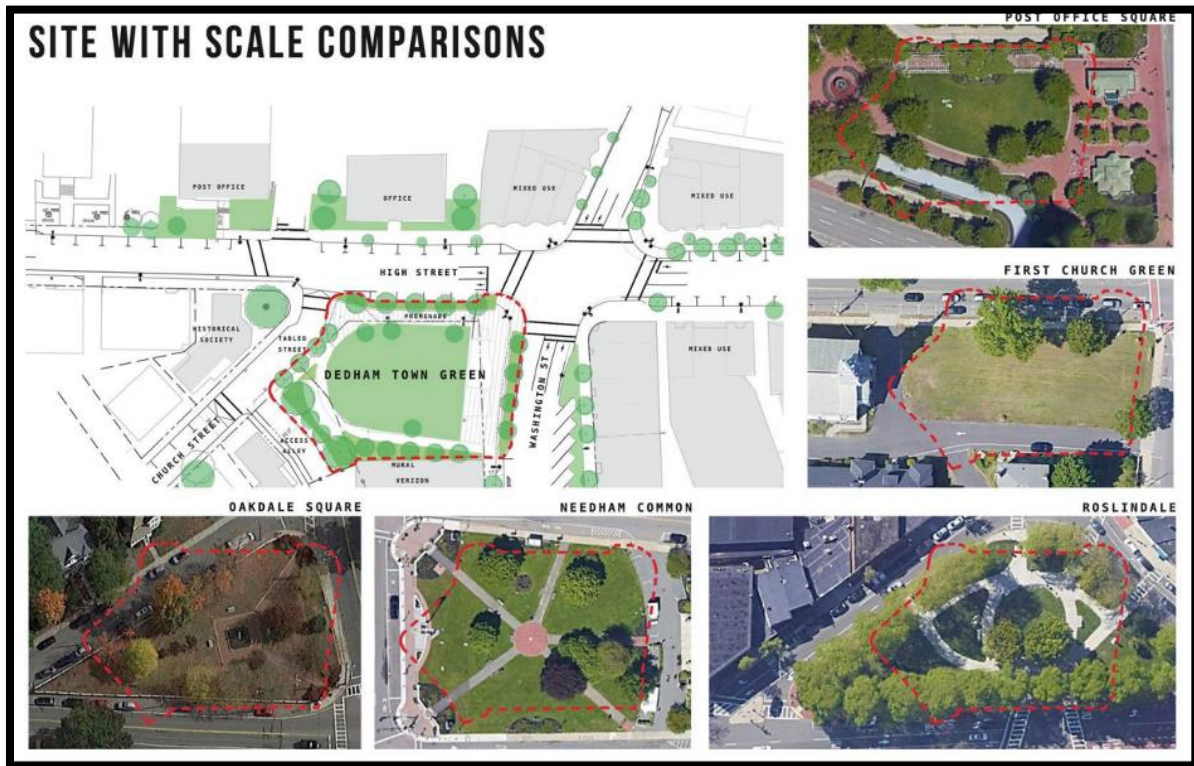
As a part of due diligence for this analysis, the DSPC wanted to understand Verizon’s long-term plans for their building on Washington Street at the Southern Edge of the Town Green. While Verizon expects to inhabit the building for the coming decade(s), Town Manager Leon Goodwin has been in negotiations with Verizon about the Town acquiring a portion of the alley at little or no cost. The Town would maintain an easement on part of the property with a driveway to accommodate Verizon vehicles as well as access for immediate residential and commercial neighbors. This acquisition would add 4,350 square feet to the total area for a Town Green. Verizon has also agreed that the Town can use the exterior of the building for a mural, which was a frequent request at community meetings.



Site analysis revealed a significant need and opportunity for public safety improvements around the site. This would help address a common complaint heard at public meetings about the risks to pedestrians at the intersection and the collisions that have occurred there. By extending the curbs at corners, decreasing the widths of vehicle lanes and crosswalks, and adding a tabled speed bump at the Church Street intersection, the intersection could be safer for foot traffic without reducing the capacity of the intersection. No vehicle lanes would be eliminated. These public safety improvements would add 5,260 square feet to the area available for a Town Green.

With the public safety improvements being proposed and the addition of land currently owned by Verizon, the total square footage available for the town Green would be 24,180 square feet, making the site slightly larger than half an acre.

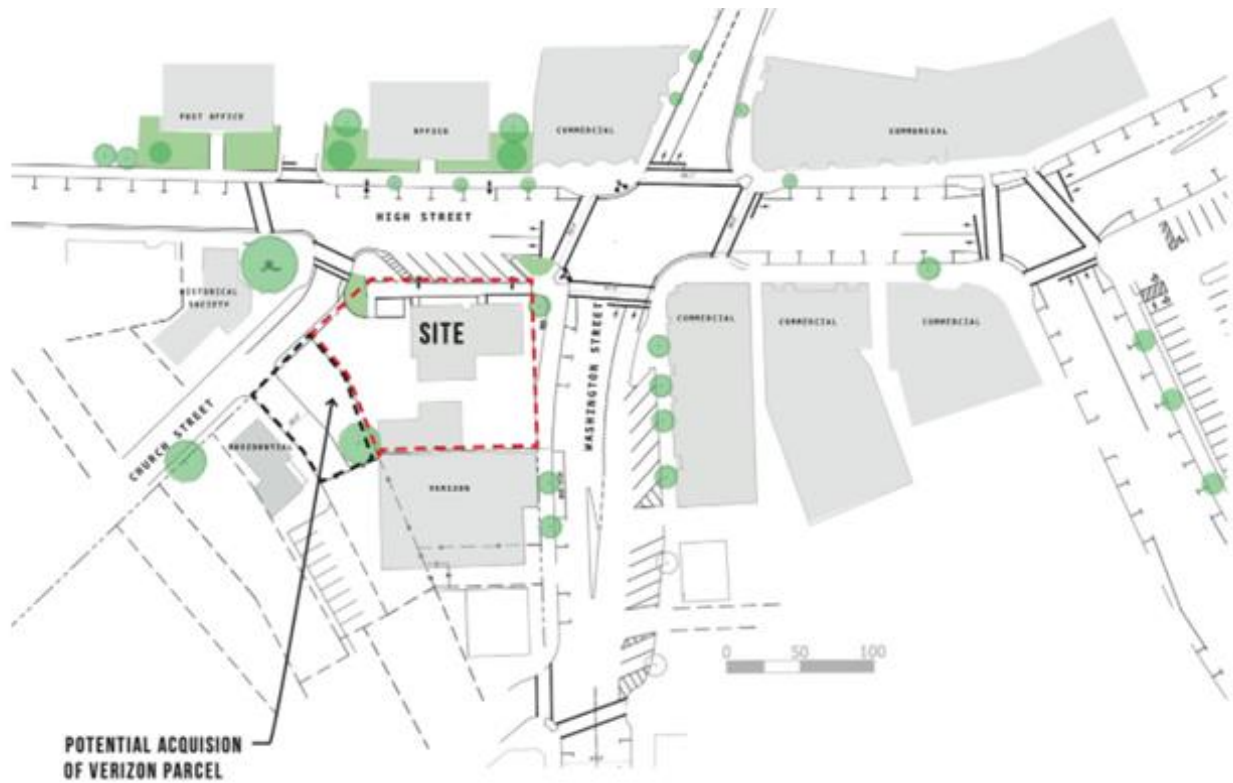
The size of the proposed Dedham Town Green is comparable to parks in other towns and within Dedham. The figure below shows examples from Boston’s Post Office Square, Dedham’s First Church Green and Oakdale Square, Needham Common, and Roslindale Square with the size of the proposed Town Green overlaid in red.



Physical & Environmental Conditions

Dedham’s center is highly developed, with very little green space or shade trees. Most of the area is covered in impermeable surface, including asphalt, concrete, and buildings. These surfaces do not allow water to pass through them and absorb and hold onto heat. This creates significant environmental challenges, particularly around stormwater management, air quality, and “heat island” impacts. Buildings, roads, and other infrastructure absorb and re-emit the sun’s heat more than natural landscapes do. Locations where pavement, buildings, and parking lots are highly concentrated and greenery is limited become “islands” of higher temperatures relative to outlying areas. These pockets of heat are referred to as “heat islands.” Temperatures in heat islands are generally 1-7 degrees higher than surrounding areas, according to the EPA, which increases air conditioning costs for surrounding businesses and town buildings and stresses the grid on hot days.

Dedham places in the top quartile of Massachusetts communities for average temperatures over the past 30 years, as seen in the [UMass I-CARES Urban Heat Island Dataviewer](#). Replacing asphalt and buildings with trees and plants is key to reducing heat island effects. Given Dedham’s heat island status in general and the amount of asphalt surrounding 600 High Street in particular, creating a Dedham Town Green in this space would be not only a civic and economic project, but it would also bring significant, positive public health and environmental impacts. The project would also qualify for additional grant funds given state and federal climate and sustainability goals.



Existing Conditions: The image above depicts the limited amount of plantings and trees in the blocks surrounding 600 High Street.



Impermeable surfaces in Dedham Square (omits some vegetation)

Traffic Conditions

Traffic congestion in Dedham Square was the most consistent concern raised at community meetings and focus groups. This is not surprising: given the way Providence Highway bisects the Town, Dedham Square is a main cut-through and High Street is used more often to get THROUGH the downtown area than TO the area. The congestion, particularly at rush hours, combined with wide crosswalks, creates a stressful and dangerous experience for pedestrians.

Congestion caused by Dedham Square being an important crossroads, cut through traffic from other towns, businesses in Dedham Square attracting customers, mixed use buildings attracting more residents to Town, and a vibrant night life all contribute to traffic issues in Dedham Square. Any use at the Town Green site will add one more challenge to the already complex traffic situation in the Square.

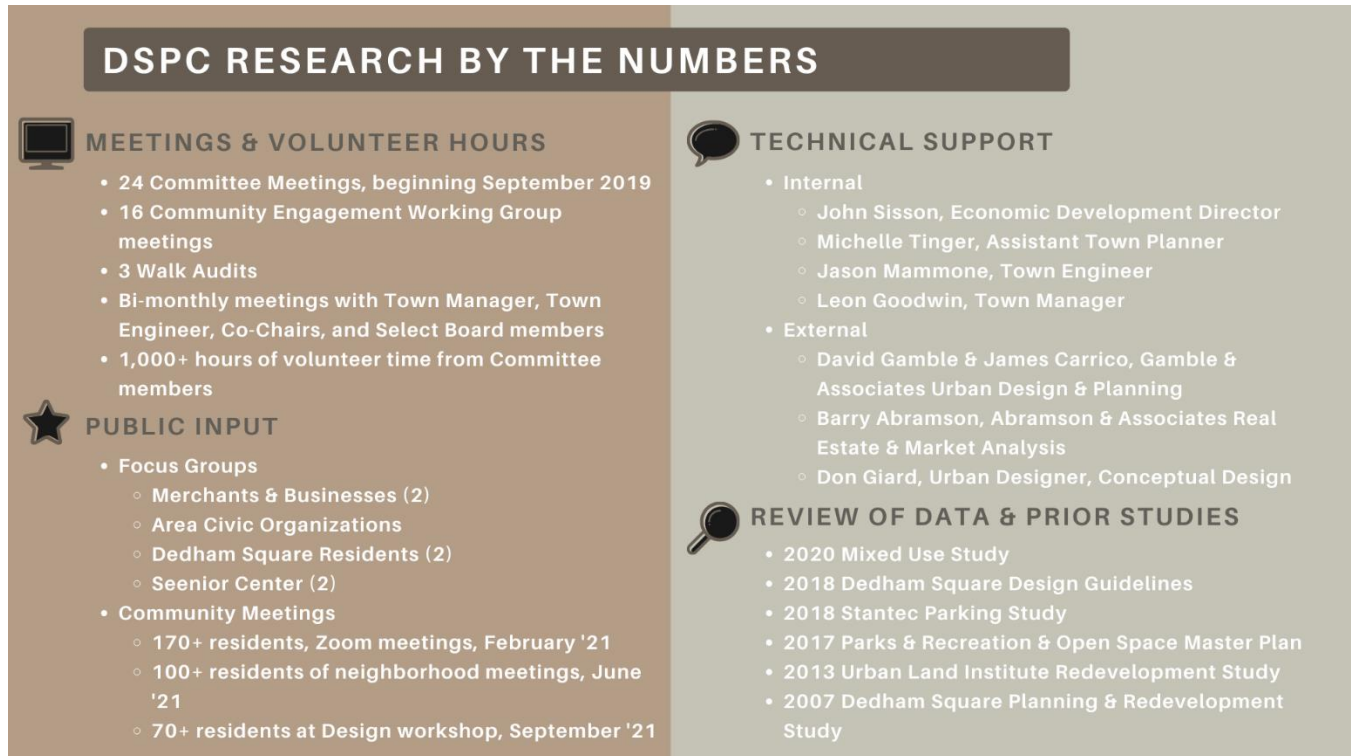
The most important traffic issue will be to consider and evaluate solutions that enhance the economic vitality of current and future uses in Dedham Square, that enhance Dedham Square's attractiveness as a safe and thriving pedestrian area while providing for the efficient movement of motor vehicles to and through the Square. Given that traffic congestion issues are linked to so many other factors in the Square, the committee thought it best to add the Town Green to the uses in the Square that need attention.



At the same time, the Dedham Town Green project does offer an opportunity to help increase public safety by adding more protections for pedestrians. It also presents opportunities to make traffic flow more efficient without affecting the level of service. The Town could use the project to spur other projects including wayfinding, adding a dynamic traffic light optimization system, and engaging in a traffic study of the area to understand how to redirect cut through traffic from other towns.

Analysis and Investigation

The Dedham Square Planning Committee engaged in extensive research, with technical assistance from planners, real estate finance analysts, and urban designers. This report represents the work of over a thousand hours of volunteer time by committee members representing every precinct in Dedham, as well as significant support from Town staff across multiple departments.



Architectural & Economic Impacts Analysis

The goal of this examination was to provide the Select Board and Town Meeting with recommendations about potential future uses for these properties. The study was budgeted at \$50,000 and was funded by \$20,000 of the original appropriation from Town Meeting as well as \$30,000 of Economic Development funds. The consulting team that was hired was Gamble Associates and Abramson & Associates. Gamble Associates is an urban design and planning firm based in Cambridge, Massachusetts that focuses on community redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization, and helped Dedham create the Dedham Square Design Guidelines in 2018. Abramson & Associates is a real estate advisory firm that specializes in real estate market and financial evaluations, with a specialty in public-private partnerships.

The objective of this analysis was to develop a strategic plan and property analysis for two municipally owned parcels that are instrumental to downtown's development, the Police Station lot at 600 High Street and the Keystone Lot at the corner of High Street and Eastern Avenue. The consulting team evaluated possible development scenarios for both of the sites to understand how each could be used and what the market would be for different uses (such as office, retail, or housing). The analysis included financial *pro formas* to understand relative costs and potential income from each scenario, both short- and long-term. Abramson & Associates' full technical report can be found on the town website at <https://www.dedham-ma.gov/home/showdocument?id=15560&t=637600536450134778>.

The DSPC worked with the consulting team to generate ideas on potential transformations of the sites in the coming decades; evaluate the viability of each scenario; and weigh the long-term economic, fiscal, and civic benefits of each site stated above. After evaluation, the Committee decided some scenarios, such as creating a parking lot at 600 High Street or selling the property, would provide significantly fewer financial, civic, and environmental benefits than other development options. The consulting team presented the findings regarding both sites at a forum with local merchants in December 2020 and at a combined meeting of the Select Board and Planning Board in January 2021.

Based on input from the Select Board and Planning Board, the Committee decided to focus on one property at a time and zeroed in on the 600 High Street parcel. In February 2021, the DSPC hosted a large community meeting to share the results of the study. Given Covid-19 safety precautions, this meeting was held via zoom with over 170 people in attendance. After hearing overwhelming support from the public to create a town Green, the Committee voted unanimously in March to recommend that the Town retain ownership of the site, demolish the existing buildings, and create a park on this key parcel in Dedham's town center.

Conceptual Design Phase

To understand what it would cost the town to transform 600 High Street into a Town Green, the DSPC engaged in an intensive process to understand how the space could be programmed and what elements would fit. After hearing a wide range of suggestions from residents about desired park features, this was an important exercise to "pressure test" what elements were viable and what they would cost. The Town engaged urban designer Don Giard to work with the Committee on-site analysis, community visioning, understanding what was feasible, creating landscape design concepts, and generating a cost estimate. This work was budgeted at \$25,000. With the Town Manager's approval and following State procurement procedures, the conceptual design and cost estimate work was funded through the professional services budget of the Engineering Department.

Over the Spring and Summer of 2021, the Committee hosted a series of workshops to help create a community vision for this space. Many of these were in person, including two held with the Senior Center and others for the broader community held at the Endicott Estate, Mother Brook Arts & Community Center, and Town Hall. Specialized workshops were offered for local businesses, a Girl Scouts Troop, and nearby residents, respectively. The DSPC also offered an interactive Zoom workshop which was well attended. A full account of community engagement on this project can be found in the [Community Engagement Summary](#). At these workshops, community members expressed ideas about park elements, reacted to images of different styles and features, and gave important input about how they would use a town green. Staff, Committee members, and Giard documented residents' preferences through the course of these public engagements.

Design goals expressed by the community included:

- Creating a balance of hardscape (masonry) and softer, landscaped areas.
- Ensuring flexibility of the space to accommodate different functions: games, events, exhibits, gatherings, and concerts.
- Creating a buffer between the busy streets and the park area.
- Incorporating plants and trees to add shade and seasonal interest while reducing the impervious surface area.

- Including different types of seating areas for people to gather, sit, eat, play, or relax.
- Creating different interior spaces that can engage people of all ages.
- Making improvements to pedestrian safety and reducing traffic noise and speeds in the area.
- Using sustainable designs to incorporate features such as a rain garden, solar collection, native plantings, etc.

In response to this feedback, and based on extensive site analysis, Designer Giard developed three possible scenarios for the DSPC and the public to react to, pictured below.

CONCEPT A
THE COMMUNITY PORCH



CONCEPT B
THE CRESCENT



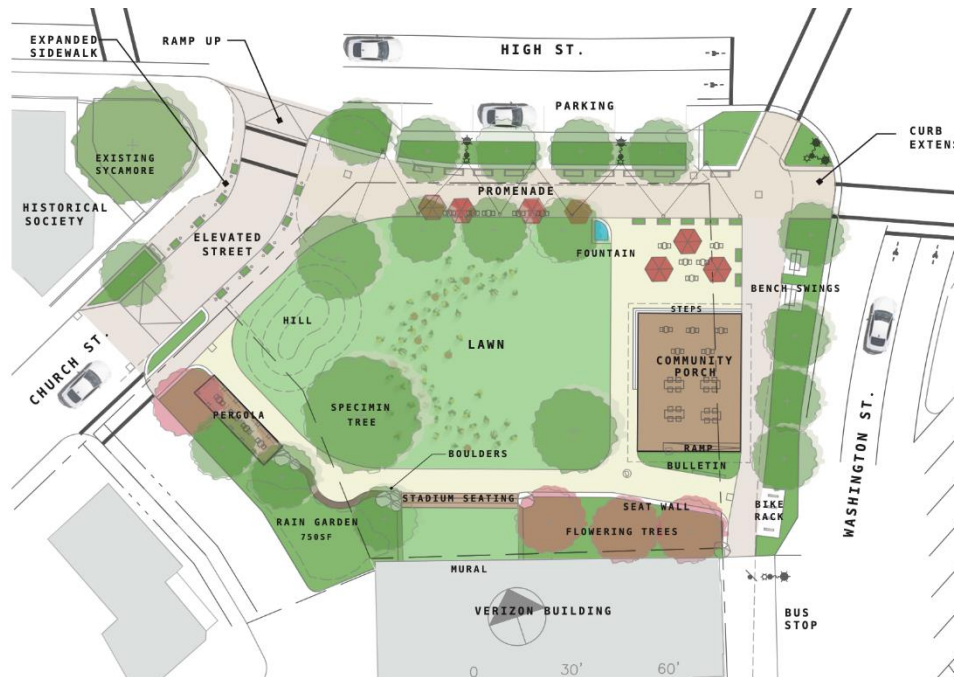
CONCEPT C
THE SQUARE



All three “Town Green” concepts included some of the same design elements:

- Substantial lawn and plaza areas;
- Different types of outdoor seating, including some with tables;
- Public pavilion and/or flexible stage area;
- Water feature;
- Raised surface level of Church Street to improve pedestrian safety and discourage cut-throughs;
- Reduced vehicular lane widths and curb bump-outs;
- Parallel parking replacing angled parking on High Street; and
- Elements such as historical displays, ornamental lighting, bike racks, and a drinking fountain.

In September of 2021, the DSPC presented these three concepts to the Community at a virtual public forum called *Hey Dedham. What's next for 600 High Street?* At the forum, DSPC members facilitated breakout sessions to get input on the merits and drawbacks of each of the designs. Giard incorporated this community feedback into a final conceptual design that combined the most popular features of the three drafts previously presented.



The DSPC decided to use this revised concept as the basis for creating a cost estimate. That approach ensured the estimate would test out the cost of each of the main elements, with the goal of giving the Select Board a full set of information to make decisions about features and budget. Mr. Giard engaged a professional architectural construction cost estimator, Estimatica Cost Estimating, to generate a detailed cost estimate. The cost estimate is comprehensive and inclusive, including design and construction contingencies, escalation, appropriate public construction wage rates, and full design details on critical components like the pavilion, hardscape, benches, and lighting. More information on the cost estimate can be found in the [Cost Estimates & Funding Sources](#) section, the full cost estimate is in [Appendix C: Town Green Cost Estimate](#).

Community Engagement

The historical context in which the DSPC has operated is worth noting. Covid-19 safety protocols changed meeting patterns during the scope of the project. Despite the restrictions and conditions, the Committee led an intensive public engagement process to best inform design options, obtain desired park elements, and determine potential costs for development. This process started with a virtual community meeting in February 2021, *Help Reimagine Our Downtown*, by Gamble & Associates. Later in the year, during the Summer of 2021, the Committee held several public meetings, in-person and virtual, prior to Mr. Giard developing any design concepts and found that virtual public events resulted in robust attendance.

- June
 - Co-hosted 2 meetings with the Dedham Senior Center
 - Public meetings at:
 - Town Hall
 - Endicott Estate

- Mother Brook Arts and Community Center
 - Via Zoom
 - Co-hosted a meeting at the Dedham Historical Society & Museum for residential neighbors
 - Workshop with downtown businesses at Town Hall
 - Workshop with a local Girl Scout Troop
- September
 - *Hey, Dedham. What's Next for 600 High Street?*

The purpose of holding meetings throughout various locations in Town and via Zoom was to ensure the use of multiple methods that would allow the Committee to reach a large number of diverse residents and stakeholders of Dedham. On top of these community meetings, the Committee continued to meet on a monthly basis, and even bi-weekly for those that were involved in the Outreach Working Group.

At in-person and virtual workshops, members of the public could “vote” by placing stickers on the types of features that appealed to them. This exercise helped Mr. Giard and the DSPP rank the relative importance of different features, prioritizing some and eliminating others. Some elements, like a community porch, were extremely popular and included in the conceptual design. Other elements, such as public restrooms and a small cafe, received mixed reviews and were taken off the list of features to include.

Outreach efforts to ensure public participation included:

- flyers posted throughout the area, including at the Post office and Libraries
- postcard mailouts to abutters surrounding 600 High Street
- Dedham Times advertisements
- news articles in the Dedham Times, Dedham Patch, and Town website
- Dedham TV broadcasting
- social media posts on Town’s Facebook Page, Instagram, and Twitter pages
- 1-1 visits to local shops
- hand-delivered invitations to a meeting for residential neighbors
- email blasts to nearly 900 unique email addresses from the Planning & Zoning Department email list
- special invites to precinct officers asking them to forward meeting invitations to town meeting members
- engaging banners at the site itself with interactive components





*Result of the community engagement efforts combined.

With substantial feedback from the community, Mr. Giard was able to create 3 design concepts that offered approaches that would address the Committee’s design goals. In addition, each concept proposed solutions to address traffic in the area by raising the surface level of Church Street. These three design concepts were then taken to the community during a virtual event in September 2021, *Hey Dedham. What’s Next for 600 High Street?*, where the Committee solicited comments and concerns from the community.

Findings

Based on the work described in the Analysis and Investigation section, the DSPC came to the following conclusions.

Highest and Best Use for 600 High Street: Town Green

600 High Street: Analysis of Options

	Sell Parcel for Private Development	Keep Parcel for Surface Parking	Keep Parcel & Buildings	Keep Parcel, Build Town Square
ECONOMIC BENEFITS	LOW	LOW/MEDIUM	LOW	HIGH
COMMUNITY BENEFITS	LOW	LOW	LOW/MEDIUM	HIGH
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS	LOW	LOW	LOW	HIGH

In analyzing potential use/reuse options for 600 High Street the DSPC considered several factors:

- Financial Benefit to the Town;
- Economic Impact on Small Businesses;
- Community Benefit;
- Environmental & Open Space Impact;
- Balancing Traffic Circulation, Congestion, and Public Safety; and
- Parking Management & Supply.

Based on this analysis, the DSPC ultimately made a unanimous recommendation that the Town pursue developing the site into a Dedham Town Green. A summary of the reasoning and analysis is below.

Recommendation: Keep Parcel, Create a Dedham Town Green. The suggestion to create a park in Dedham’s downtown area was made early and often by members of the community, but it wasn’t until a complete financial analysis was done that the DSPC determined this option would have the most benefits for the town. Numerous studies have shown the social, environmental, economic, and health benefits parks bring to a town and its people. Downtown parks and open spaces improve people’s physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make Towns more attractive places to live and work.

Economic Benefits. Having a vibrant public space alongside shops, restaurants, and businesses contributes to a local economy in many ways. One of the themes repeated frequently during public meetings was the appreciation for the outdoor dining program during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was linked to support for a Town Green – residents expressed that outdoor dining had increased the frequency with which they visited local restaurants and predicted that this would grow even more if they also had the opportunity to get take-out and eat at the Town Green.

Indirect Economic Benefits: Downtown parks support small businesses

- Downtown parks increase the amount of time spent by existing visitors to the area, making them more likely to linger and visit multiple businesses.
- Parks attract new visitors to a shopping district.
- Commercial areas with parks are more attractive for businesses, and landlords report fewer retail vacancies.
- Thriving local businesses translates to more support for local youth sports leagues, community groups, and non-profits, which see the bulk of support from local businesses.
- Events such as markets, concerts, and other gatherings held at the Green would attract additional visitors, and also provide opportunities for local businesses in other neighborhoods to participate.

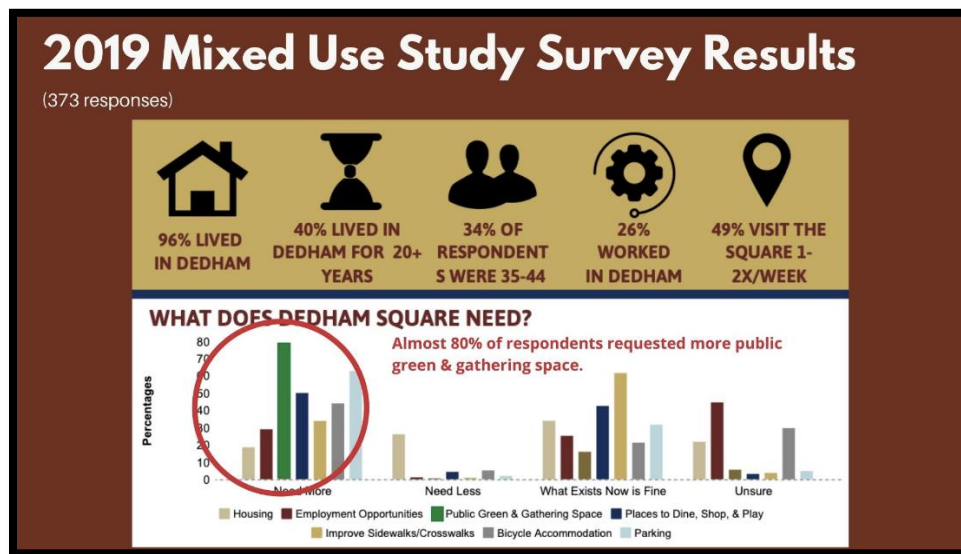
Direct Financial Benefits: When local businesses do well, Town revenue increases

- Parks in commercial areas raise nearby commercial property values, resulting in increased commercial property tax income for the Town.
- Parks help drive traffic to surrounding businesses. Any increase in restaurant traffic goes directly to the Robin Reyes fund for Capital Improvements. In 2019, pre-pandemic, meals taxes contributed over \$1 million to the Robin Reyes Fund. While that contribution drew from restaurants across town, there are 22 restaurants and cafes in Dedham Square providing a significant financial contribution to the Town.
- The Wall Street Journal estimated in 2018 that 68 % of every dollar spent in a local business stays in that local community.

Community Benefits. *Parks provide welcoming places for passive recreation alone or while spending time with family and friends.*

- A beautiful Town Green would create a central gathering place for people of all ages, from all neighborhoods in Dedham.
- Parks serve to bring people together, creating new connections and strengthening community cohesion. A 2017 study showed well designed and maintained parks even increase civic trust.
- A central Town Green could provide active civic programming, including concerts, markets, and other events. Surrounding communities with downtown public spaces found even more use during the Covid-19 pandemic when people were looking for ways to connect socially outdoors.
- Downtown parks increase walkability and offer opportunities for passive recreation, both of which improve public health and quality of life.
- Construction offers a potential for collaboration with Blue Hills Regional Technical School. The DSPC has been in touch with an Instructor of Construction Technology about the potential for students to help build wooden structures, such as a pergola, on site. Other collaborations are likely also possible.
- Given the history and location of the site, the Town Green would be well suited for historical displays to help increase awareness and pride in Dedham's History.
- Dedham's Town Green could provide amenities such as Wi-Fi, charging stations and drinking fountains to add convenience for families and other visitors.
- A Town Green could provide space for outdoor programs held by the Dedham Public Library and Dedham Historical Society and Museum.

- Of all the possible development scenarios, a Town Green would provide the best impact on traffic circulation at the intersection of High and Washington streets. Given the existing congestion, any development that includes cars entering and exiting that site would directly impact traffic congestion. Traffic observations as part of the DSPC site analysis revealed that the existing angled parking adds delays and in/out police traffic adds to the volume of cars traveling through the intersection, particularly during shift changes.
- Survey results from recent planning studies such as the 2020 Mixed Use Study and the 2017 Parks and Recreation and Open Space Master Plan have pointed to the community desire for an increase in green space overall and in the Dedham Square area. Almost 80% of the 373 respondents in the 2020 Mixed-Use study requested more public green and gathering space in Dedham Square. A 2021 survey by the Cultural Council found 63% of respondents cited parks and recreation as important for the preservation and improvement of arts and culture in Dedham. 51% of respondents to that survey requested expanded options for performance spaces.



Environmental Benefits. A Town Green would add much needed green space and trees to a highly paved area and reduce the impervious surface of this half-acre site by 74%.

- Downtown parks help absorb stormwater, reducing stress on sewers and wastewater systems.
- The conceptual design includes 22 trees, native plantings, and a rain garden. The stormwater at the Town Green will be captured and treated on-site.
- Community members have suggested creating displays explaining the importance of native plantings and protecting pollinators to create an educational component at the park.
- By replacing the current impervious surface (buildings, driveways, parking spaces) with significant lawn, plantings, and trees, a Town Green will improve air quality, sequester carbon, lower temperatures, add shade, and help combat the heat island effect.
- Solar panels on top of the “community porch” would likely generate enough electricity to power park lights a substantial amount of the time.
- The project includes several elements to provide shade, including a pergola, community porch, shade trees and umbrellas. Misting stations could be added at the structures or drinking fountains to help provide cooling on hot days.

- Bike parking would be available on site with the potential for e-bike charging, with power generated by the solar panels on site.
- Given all these environmental benefits, the Town Green project will qualify for an additional \$250,000 of funding through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Grant program.

Reuse Options That Were Researched and Are Not Being Recommended:

Selling Parcel for Private Development

Abramson & Associates' analysis showed the most likely development scenario would be a mixed-use project with three stories of residential units over first-floor retail. The site could accommodate a 24,000 square foot building with 14-18 units and 20 parking spaces for tenants behind the building.

- The building is in significant disrepair and contains asbestos. In addition, the existing building layout and characteristics, such as a raised first floor, make it undesirable for use as retail space, office, or residential. The building would almost certainly be demolished by any private developer.
- Abramson & Associates' financial analysis indicated a supportable land price in the low \$600,000s, or approximately \$35,000/per expected residential unit. This takes into account requirements of inclusionary zoning and an expectation that demolition and remediation of the site would likely add \$175,000 to \$250,000 to standard demolition costs.
- Abramson's report allowed that the sales price could be higher if a developer made optimistic assumptions about potential rental income and or building costs, in which case the sales price might be around \$750,000.
- Town Manager Leon Goodwin arranged for a full real estate appraisal of the property in the Spring of 2021, which was performed by Allan Foster of The Foster Company Real Estate Appraising. That appraisal valued 600 High Street at \$770,000. However, Foster reported that the appraisal did not take environmental remediation costs into account. After the appraisal was completed, the building was confirmed to have asbestos and other contamination, which would increase the costs of redevelopment and almost certainly impact the property value.
- Based on this analysis the DSPC estimates selling the property could raise between \$650,000 - \$750,000 for the Town.
- Real estate taxes for a mixed-use project with rental units as described would bring an estimated \$60,000 to \$70,000 to the Town annually.
- At DSPC monthly committee meetings and public events, residents expressed concern about the proliferation of mixed-use buildings in Dedham's town center. Concerns were raised about creating a "canyon effect," increasing traffic and parking constraints, and eroding the historic nature of Dedham's town center.

After weighing the relatively small financial benefits against the intangible costs of losing control of key downtown property, particularly in light of the lessons from the Ames Schoolhouse sale and eventual repurchase and renovation, the DSPC decided not to endorse selling the property.

Surface Parking Lot. The Dedham Square Planning Committee's study time has coincided with the construction of the Public Safety Building on Bryant Street. This is important context for this report because the construction project has created a temporary parking shortage in Dedham's Town Center.

Several Town Hall spaces are being used for staging and a section of the Keystone Lot has been cordoned off for Town employees. In addition, a number of public spaces throughout the area are being used by builders and contractors. This temporary shortage has influenced the conversation around parking relative to a Town Green and as a result, this report includes more information on parking than the Committee would have originally anticipated.

The option of demolishing the building to create a town-owned, surface parking lot was dismissed fairly early in the committee's work. This was unexpected; several DSPC members had begun the process thinking that might be the best development option. However, it quickly became apparent that the negative impacts of a surface parking lot would outweigh any positive impacts, given the location of the parcel and current parking capacity. Through research and consultation with planning experts, the following limitations became clear:

A Parking Lot Would Exacerbate Existing Traffic & Safety Concerns:

- A surface parking lot at the main intersection of the district would aggravate existing traffic congestion and safety issues.
 - The proximity of the parcel to the High St/Washington St intersection would create specific challenges.
 - A parking lot at that location would add to the volume of vehicles at that intersection.
 - Traffic entering and exiting a parking lot so close to the intersection would negatively impact the level of service of the intersection itself.
 - Traffic counts of existing conditions demonstrated that even the small number of spaces currently being used for police vehicles contribute to traffic congestion at the High St. /Washington St. Intersection.
 - Location of the parcel at a location with high pedestrian use would add an additional risk for pedestrian safety and erode, rather than improve, walkability.

Parking Capacity and Management is Already Being Addressed:

- Parking capacity in the Dedham Square business district has been studied as recently as 2018, finding that there is existing capacity to meet parking needs.
- The Select Board has taken several active steps to improve Parking Management:
 - Installing “smart” meters
 - Establishing clear time limits for on-street parking
 - Regulating overnight parking in the Keystone Lot
 - Staffing a parking enforcement officer
- The new Public Safety Building will include underground parking for police officers' personal vehicles, which will free up about 7 on-street spaces in Dedham Square currently being used by Police officers on a daily basis.
- The new Public Safety Building will add an additional 29 spaces to the public parking inventory once it is completed, and an additional 10 spaces marked specifically for visitors to the Police and Fire Departments. Between the PSB public spaces and the public spaces at Town Hall, once construction is completed there should be an average of 65 public spaces on

the Town campus for daytime public parking, including for those attending Senior Center programs. In the evenings there are likely to be around 100 public spaces available for those attending meetings or visiting the downtown area. These numbers do not include the additional 5 on-street parking spaces which have just been created on Washington Street in front of Town Hall.

- The Town is in discussions with Norfolk County to formalize parking arrangements that would allow use of the County lot for Town employees, contractors, merchants and/or the public.

Economic Impact of a Parking Lot at 600 High Street:

The relationship between parking capacity and economic impact is often counterintuitive. While many people think you cannot have too much parking, research has shown the issue is far more complex, and that parking management and perception are as critical as capacity.

- Having an excess of parking can hurt the success of businesses as much as or more than having insufficient parking.
 - People are less likely to visit multiple businesses.
 - Economic districts seem less vibrant and walkable if there are many empty parking spots.
- The ideal location for parking areas is on the perimeter of a shopping district, not in the center. Parking on the perimeter causes less traffic congestion and circling, and also means shoppers are more likely to walk by multiple businesses creating the opportunity for “impulse purchases.”

Renovating and/or Repurposing the Building(s).

Gamble and Associates toured and evaluated the building and garage at 600 High Street from an architectural and engineering perspective and Abramson & Associates performed real estate and market analysis on the existing buildings. Both determined there were significant challenges to the existing buildings, and that renovation would be costly. Several committee members also toured the buildings and have followed years of the study showing the downsides of the buildings.

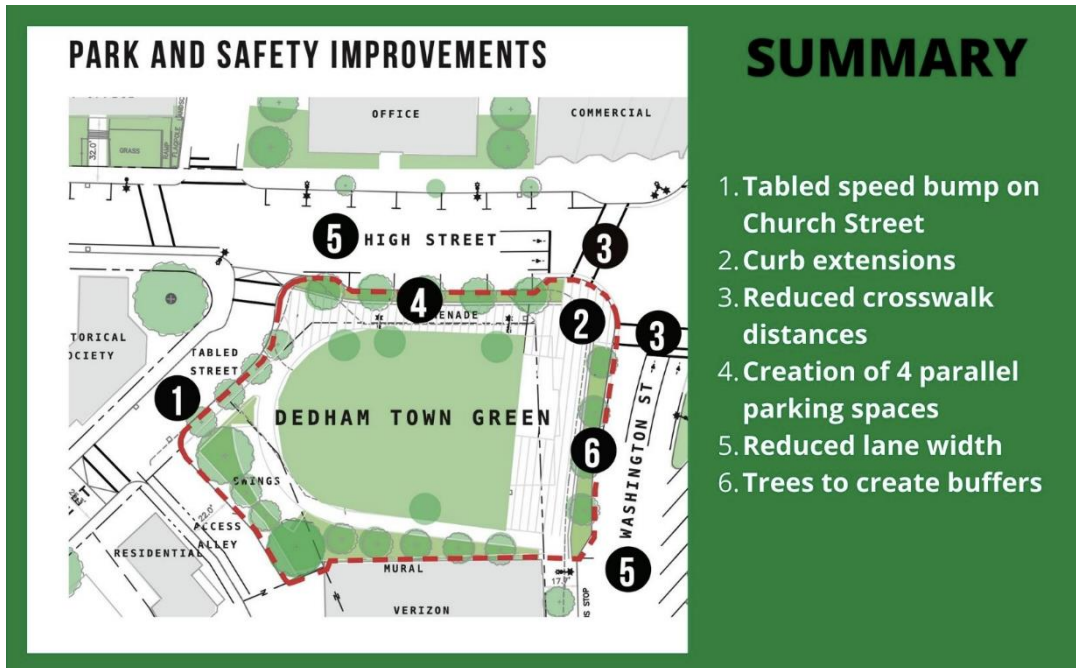
- The building is in significant disrepair and contains asbestos. In addition, the existing building layout and characteristics, such as a raised first floor, make it undesirable for use as retail space, office, or residential. The building would almost certainly be demolished by any private developer.
- Gamble and Abramson explored multiple scenarios, pictured below:
 - keeping main building and garage and adding a pocket park
 - keeping only the main building and adding a pocket park
 - keeping only the garage and adding park space



- Economic analysis showed the challenges of these scenarios outweighed any potential benefits. Challenges included:
 - The buildings are old, outdated, and in significant disrepair.
 - The existing footprint would not meet current demands and standards for office, retail or residential needs.
 - Renovations to make the building functional for retail or office would trigger environmental remediation.
 - Renovating building to extent necessary would be cost prohibitive. Given the Town’s recent experience renovating Town Hall, this was of big concern to the DSPC members.
 - If the main building were to be renovated – the likely scenario would be a restaurant, possibly with offices on 2nd floor.

Ultimately, the DSPC found keeping the buildings would be more of a liability than an asset for the town. Keeping or renovating the buildings for Civic use would be cost-prohibitive, given known environmental contamination as well as the additional tax on staff time to manage leases, vacancies, etc. Additionally, given Dedham’s recent investment in renovating the Ames Schoolhouse into a new Town Hall, there is not an identified need for office space for Town Departments.

Public Safety Improvements



In preparing the concept design, Mr. Giard looked for ways to increase the safety of the existing intersection at Washington and High Streets, working with the Town Engineer to ensure improvements would not reduce the current Level of Service (LOS) of the intersection. The above plan highlights specific streetscape changes proposed, which would improve pedestrian safety and increase the amount of usable park space by about 15%.

1) “Tabling” a portion of Church Street. This feature would elevate a ~15-foot length of Church Street bringing it to curb level, creating an extended speed bump near the intersection with High Street. This would achieve several goals.

- Signals drivers that they are entering a public area with pedestrians to raise awareness near the park and intersection
- Discourages drivers from using Church Street as a cut-through and contributing to congestion at the High & Washington Street intersection. Traffic counts of the area at rush hours showed a steady flow of cut-through traffic turning onto Church from Court Street and adding volume to the main intersection.
- Provides the opportunity to extend the Town Green area for occasional events. All or a portion of Church Street could be shut down to through traffic and the tabled portion of the street could be used for programming.

2 & 3) Curb extensions would help shorten crosswalks, a safety feature that is helpful for children and older residents alike.

4) The concept plan eliminates the angled police station parking and creates four new parallel parking spaces at the side. Parallel spaces provide less traffic confusion than angled spaces, particularly so near

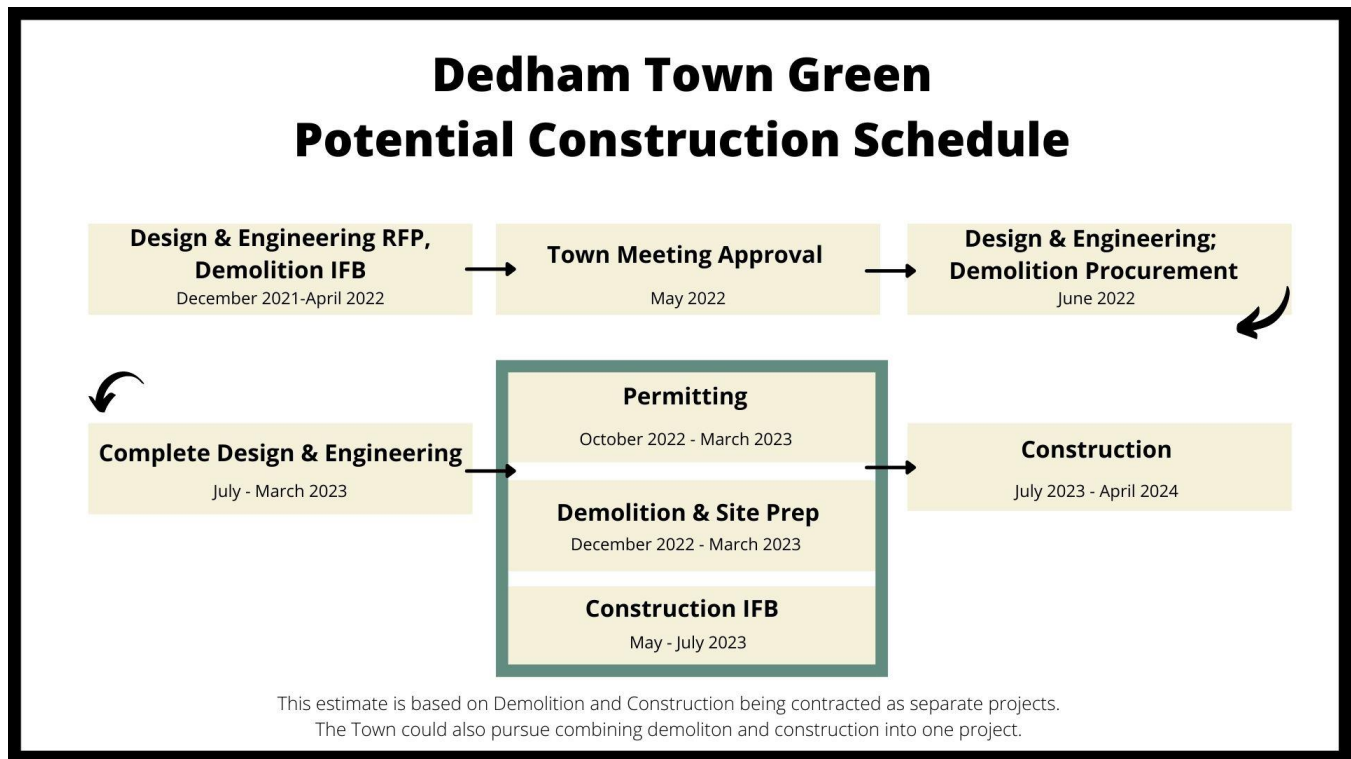
an intersection. They are also safer for cyclists, who are more likely to be hit by cars backing out of angled spaces.

5) By reducing the width of travel lanes on High and Washington Streets from 12 feet (standard for highways) to 11 feet Dedham can bring this area of High Street closer to the standards for downtown areas. During rush hours and congestion, the narrower lanes would not impact traffic speeds nor decrease the level of service for vehicles. Simply put: an 11 foot lane won't impact the time it takes a vehicle to get across town during rush hour. However, it will increase safety for people who need to cross the streets during those times. In addition, narrower lanes could help slow traffic when traffic is light, a condition that encourages speeding through the intersection, providing the greatest risk for collision with pedestrians and other vehicles. Reducing the lane widths will shorten crosswalk distances making it safer for pedestrians, particularly those who are older, using wheelchairs or strollers, or otherwise need more time for crossing.

6) The project would add a significant number of trees to help create a buffer between vehicles and people.

One of the major goals of the Town Green design was to increase public safety without compromising traffic capacity and emergency vehicle access. The proposed road layout changes and turning movements have been studied and reviewed by the Town Engineer, Fire Chief and Police Chief. These studies confirmed that emergency vehicles, including fire trucks, will have adequate space to perform turning movements with the proposed lane width reductions and curb extensions. Additionally, there are endless studies that prove that narrow lanes can slow down cars without reducing road capacity, a few of which are linked in the [References](#) section.

Schedule:



Potential design, engineering, construction timeline

The Town Green conceptual design has been shared at the Town Planner’s monthly Design Review Team (DRT) at each meeting to get input from the Conservation Department, Building Department, Fire Department, Police Department, Engineering Department, Department of Public Works, Planning & Zoning Department, and Assessors Department. These reviews have been incredibly helpful for identifying permitting requirements, setting timelines, reviewing the conceptual design, and checking traffic and other public safety assumptions.

Mass Historical Commission

Any new construction projects or renovations to existing buildings that require funding, licenses, or permits from any state or federal government agencies must be reviewed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) for impacts to historic and archaeological properties. Given the possible inclusion of federal funds from the Land and Water Conservation program the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 Process. If the Town applies for the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, there would be a historical review process with the Mass Historical Commission. The Economic Development Director has already begun that process in order to ensure there would not be delays if the Town decides to go forward in developing the Town Green.

Cost Estimates & Funding Sources

Cost Summary	
Demolition	\$706,050
Design & Engineering	\$288,500
Construction	\$2,404,169
Contingency (15%)	\$403,900
Indirect Costs (insurance, GC, etc.)	\$486,788
Estimated Total Cost	\$4,289,408

Identified Funding Sources	
State and Federal Funding	\$1,700,000
Local Grants and Corporate Donations	\$100,000
Private Donations	\$200,000
Total External Funding	\$2,000,000

Estimated Net Investment by Town	\$2,289,408
Estimated Yearly Tax cost to Average Dedham Property Owner	\$9.17

The DSPC recommends seeking funds from the federal Land and Water Conservation Program, which is administered by the Commonwealth. Given the large number of environmental benefits this project offers and the fact that Dedham registers as a heat island community, the DSPC expects the project would qualify for funding at the maximum amount of \$1 million. This would be a reimbursement grant, approved prior to the Spring 2022 Town Meeting and reimbursed after construction. The funding amounts are calculated as a 50% reimbursement, meaning Dedham would qualify for \$1,000,000 in grant monies if Town Meeting approved a town contribution of at least \$2,000,000.

Additional sources of public funding could include Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, state contributions, and other grants. The project's combination of economic and environmental impacts makes it an attractive project for State and Federal funding.

The DSPC has begun research on private fundraising through local businesses, foundations, and individuals. Given the successful fundraising effort to install lights at the Dedham High School track and football field, the DSPC is confident at least \$200,000 could be raised to help with construction costs from private donations. Early research suggests an additional \$100,000 could be possible in corporate donations.

A detailed breakdown of construction costs can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Maintenance Costs

The Department of Public Works (DPW) currently provides daily trash pickup, maintains plantings, and provides snow removal in the Dedham Square business district. DPW anticipates being able to incorporate regular maintenance of a Town Green into their existing operational resources and budget. This is similar to how Needham maintains their Town Common – it does not require a separate budget line.

Possible Next Steps

The DSPC has spent almost two years studying project alternatives, working with design and economic consultants, and holding numerous civic engagement efforts. The DSPC is pleased to make the recommendation to the Select Board that they create a Dedham Town Green at 600 High Street. The goal of this report is to provide the Select Board, and ultimately Town Meeting members and the full Dedham community, with a comprehensive plan and vision for creating a Town Green. The DSPC takes pride in this work and believes it has accomplished what the Select Board asked it to do. As a part of that research, the DSPC has also identified potential next steps the Select Board could take in pursuing this goal.

The DSPC respects that any decisions about redeveloping 600 High Street will be made and led by the Select Board. Should the Select Board agree that a Dedham Town Green would be the best way for the Town to use this parcel, the DSPC offers some potential next steps for their consideration. These are proposed to ensure the timing of a redevelopment project would enable Dedham to qualify for and meet the deadlines of State grants. The timeline is also proposed to avoid having this civic asset in the town center sit vacantly.

- Direct a project manager to create a schedule for the project, including a permitting plan, and make sure all team members adhere to it.
- Prepare a Warrant Article for the Spring 2022 Town Meeting. This would include funding the project and might also include the purchase of the Verizon property and any other legal considerations to allow the Select Board to pursue building a Town Green.
- Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Design & Engineering to develop construction plans. An RFP could be prepared and distributed prior to Town Meeting to expedite the Town's ability to select a design and engineering team if Town Meeting votes in favor of the project.
- Develop Designer selection criteria and processes.
 - It may be in the interest of the Board to form a small working group to assist staff with the selection and engineering process. If the board decides to do this, the DSPC recommends that the group be considered a true working group and include people with professional expertise such as an architect and/or landscape architect.
- Apply for a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant. Workshop sessions for this grant are being held on Tuesday, November 30, 2021, at 11:00 am and Thursday, December 2, 2021, at 2:00 pm. To assure a response in time for Spring Town Meeting, the Grant application should be submitted by January 15, 2022.
- Invitation for Bid (IFB) for demolition and site preparation.
- Explore partnerships to help with construction such as with the Blue Hills Technical High School.
- Explore private fundraising options, including corporate, foundation, and individual donors.

- Establish a mechanism for private donations

In addition to the recommendations for the Town Green, the DSPC's community engagement and site analysis have revealed several other ideas which the Select Board may be interested in pursuing. The DSPC encourages the Board to consider and plan for future improvements in the Downtown area, including

- Narrowing vehicle lanes on Eastern Avenue and at additional portions of High Street may provide the opportunity to add trees and additional greening and have the potential to create outdoor dining space in some areas while retaining, rather than replacing, parallel parking spots.
- Work with the Commonwealth to get funding for a small planning and design project to examine the use of alleys and parking lots in the block bound by High, Washington, Eastern, and Bryant, to maximize parking, improve circulation, and explore placemaking opportunities.
- Jumpstart the Town's wayfinding project, including signage to make downtown parking easy to find and signage to help divert cut-through traffic to major arteries such as Providence Highway and I95.
- Invest in minor public realm improvements to direct and provide people with a lighted, safe connection between the Registry lot and the High St sidewalk.
- Identify ways to connect people with existing public parking spaces including those located at the upper and lower levels of Gonzalez field.
 - Research opportunities for businesses to offer valet parking using those public spaces.
 - Improve pedestrian connection to lower field parking lot through festive lighting under the Rt 1 overpass.

The Dedham Square Planning Committee has thoroughly enjoyed working on this project and is pleased to document its research in this report. If the Select Board would like assistance with aspects of the project going forward, such as help with private fundraising and/or reporting to Town Meeting, the DSPC members would be happy to support the effort in whatever way the Select Board deems useful.

References

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- Learn About Heat Islands, by the Environmental Protection Agency <https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/learn-about-heat-islands>
- MA Summer Heat Map (Current- 30 years average) <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=deac6f32f5384a43b1a8f433a5d9834a&extent=-73.9853,40.9912,-68.5608,43.2921>
- Petritsch, T. A. <https://www.pedbikeinfo.org/ARCHIVE/data/library/details.cfm?id=4348> and https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/lane_widths_on_safety_and_capacity_petritsch.pdf
- The Assembly Civic Engagement Survey <https://centerforactivedesign.org/assembly-civic-engagement-survey>

Appendix

Appendix A: Findings: Conceptual Design

The project included an inclusive and robust community-driven design process with public design workshops, neighborhood meetings, and coordination with Town departments, particularly the Engineering Department, to create a feasible design concept. It's important to stress that the designs presented in this report are conceptual: these are not construction drawings, and if the Select Board and Town Meeting determine to go ahead with this project, final construction could vary from these images depending on intentional changes or below ground conditions which could influence the placement of lighting, water lines, etc.

Design elements include flexible space for community activities, multiple forms of seating, an interactive water feature, a community "front porch," public art, pedestrian safety improvements, and linkages to the existing open space network. Careful consideration was given to the wide range of potential users to ensure that the park can be enjoyed by all Dedham residents, of all ages and abilities, and in all seasons. Public safety improvements are discussed in detail in the next section. Many of the recommended elements are described below. Photographs are included to give an idea of what these could look like but should be considered as conceptual rather than a proposed style.

Design Features of the Dedham Town Green

Designed for Flexibility

- The space has a balance of lawn and hardscape to allow for multiple types of use.
- The lawn and hardscape areas are designed to accommodate small and large events. A portion of Church Street could be closed down for public events, increasing the capacity of the space
- The design includes a variety of seating styles and arrangements, including many benches with built-in back support, seating conducive for solitary endeavors such as reading a book, and tables and chairs for eating or games with multiple people.
- Features have been included to make the space inclusive and friendly for people of all ages. For example, two or three rows of tiered seating against the Verizon wall would provide seating for eating, meeting up with friends, or watching an event, and while also providing an interesting element for children to explore. Likewise, a small hill at the western edge of the park could provide an area for kids to play without making the park itself feel like a children's playground, which would be less inviting to older members of the community.



A Community Front Porch for All of Dedham

- This would be an iconic landmark feature of Dedham’s Town Green, providing flexible use and designed to promote community.
- A pavilion would provide a shaded area that is protected from the elements.
 - For daily use, this could house chairs and tables and provide a protected space for eating, reading, playing games, and socializing.
 - For concerts and events, this could serve as a stage/performance space looking out onto the lawn. The base of the pavilion would be elevated approximately 18 inches to delineate it from the plaza and create visual appeal.
- The porch would be a hub for community activities, with the potential to include a community bulletin board, a Wi-Fi hot spot, and phone charging, all of which are features requested at community events.
- The roof of the pavilion could hold solar panels which would help power the lights, Wi-Fi, and other electrical needs in the park.



The concept design also includes:

- A pergola with vines on the west side, to provide a sense of enclosure while keeping the view of the historic building housing the Dedham Historical Society & Museum. Canvas shade panels could be added to provide shade and rain protection if this space were used for market stalls. This wooden structure could be built in partnership with Blue Hills Technical School students, providing a lasting element for students and the entire community to be proud of.
- An Interactive water feature would help mitigate some of the street noise and provide an interesting focal point.
 - The committee discussed multiple types of water features: a standard fountain with jets and a central sculptural object, similar to what is often seen in public parks, a plaza style fountain in which jets of water can be triggered to spray from the ground, and a simple fountain such as which is pictured below
 - A standard fountain style was generally considered to be inappropriate for this space, based on size and climate. Many committee members and members of the public were concerned about maintenance and how the fountain would look during winter months when it would be empty.



- The DSPC priced out the plaza jets and the interactive feature. While the plaza jets are less expensive, in the end, committee members felt the Town Green was not the best location for this type of feature given the proximity to busy streets and a concern that it would make the park too much of a child-focused splash pad.
 - It was clear, though, that there is a big demand from parents in the community for a splash pad park in Dedham, and the DSPC would happily collaborate with the Select Board and Parks and Recreation Department by sharing cost information and potential grant sources for a potential project.
 - Ultimately, the DSPC agreed if there were to be a water feature on the site, it should be relatively small, integrated with plantings, and be attractive even when not filled with water during winter months.
- Drinking fountain, with options for dog bowls and or misting stations, incorporated
 - Bike rack, with potential for electric bike charging
 - Rain garden with native plantings to collect stormwater
 - A Mural on the Verizon building facade
 - A mix of 22 trees, planted with sufficient underground room to establish strong roots and grow large over time.
 - Boulders and a grass mound/play hill for children
 - Raised stone seat walls, tiered seating, traditional benches, and tables and chairs
 - Light fixtures - town standard streetlights and catenary lights
 - Educational and historical signs explaining the history of the site, providing environmental education, offering wayfinding to civic attractions, and acknowledging the land's original inhabitants have all been suggested by members of the public
 - *Example of a land acknowledgement, from the American Visionary Art Museum, in Baltimore, MD*
 - Two “porch swings,” example pictured at right
 - New parallel parking on High Street (4 spaces)
 - Natural stone plaza in an area with most foot traffic, to provide durability
 - Decomposed granite ADA accessible paths to reduce impervious surface



STREET LEVEL EXPERIENCE



*These images provide a general sense of the street level experience a Town Green would create. They do not show an exact rendering of the final concept design.

Appendix B: Relevant Studies

Year	Report/Publication
2021	600 High Street Design Concepts & Cost Estimates (Don Giard, architect, and Estimatica Cost Estimating)
2021	Reimagine Dedham Square (Gamble Associates) Real Estate Development Evaluation for Dedham Square Property Analysis (Abramson & Associates, Inc.)
2020	Mixed-Use Study (Barrett, McMahon, & Brobrowski)
2018	Dedham Square Parking Study (Stantec)
2017	Dedham Square Design Guidelines (Gamble Associates)
2014	Dedham Square Improvement Project: Closeout Presentation (Town Engineer)
2013	Redevelopment Options for Dedham Square (Urban Land Institute) Town Hall and Police Station Re-Use Feasibility Study (HR&A Advisors)
2012	Analysis of Police Buildings' Suitability for Operations (Municipal Resources, Inc.)*
2009	Dedham Master Plan (Community Opportunities Group)
2008	Dedham Square Streetscape Improvements (GLA Landscape Architecture)*
2007	Dedham Square Planning and Redevelopment Study (The Cecil Group)*
1998	Dedham Square Area Plan (Larry Koff & Associates)*

* Hard copy available in Planning & Zoning Office.

Appendix C: Town Green Direct Construction Costs Estimate

Town Square Public Improvements					TOTAL
ITEM DESCRIPTION	LABOR TOTAL	MATERIAL TOTAL	EQUIPMENT TOTAL	MAT/LAB/EQUIP	
GENERAL CONDITIONS					
Project Manager	\$35,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$35,200.00	
Superintendent	\$96,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$96,000.00	
Project Accountant	\$5,760.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,760.00	
Temporary Office	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11,200.00	\$11,200.00	
Temporary Office Monthly Misc Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	
Temporary Office Monthly Utility Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	
Mob & Demob Temporary Office	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$400.00	
Temporary Office Water Hookup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	
Temporary Office Electrical Hookup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	
Temporary Job Water	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	
Temporary Job Electrical	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	
Temporary Toilets	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,930.00	\$6,930.00	
Dumpster (40 CY Capacity)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	
Job Site Truck Allowance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00	
Gas for Site Truck Allowance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,200.00	\$3,200.00	
Cell Phone Allowance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	
Daily Cleanup	\$19,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$19,200.00	
Final Cleanup	\$4,160.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,160.00	
Site Protection- Fencing	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,840.00	\$8,840.00	
CONEX Storage Container	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00	
Small Tools Allowance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	
Safety and COVID Allowance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	
Permits	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Testing and Inspections	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
As Built Drawings	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	
Traffic Control	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00	
Surveying	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00	
Police Details at Street Work	\$24,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$24,000.00	
10.5% of grand total		GENERAL CONDITIONS		\$377,390.00	
CONCRETE					
Concrete Flatwork at Park	\$7,500.00	\$7,968.75	\$375.00	\$15,843.75	
Concrete Misc Site	\$1,500.00	\$1,593.75	\$75.00	\$3,168.75	
Concrete Foundations	\$17,400.00	\$18,487.50	\$870.00	\$36,757.50	
Concrete Misc Site	\$3,000.00	\$3,187.50	\$150.00	\$6,337.50	
Concrete Misc Site	\$900.00	\$956.25	\$45.00	\$1,901.25	
Concrete Misc Site	\$11,700.00	\$12,431.25	\$585.00	\$24,716.25	
Light Pole Bases	\$7,000.00	\$13,148.44	\$4,625.00	\$24,773.44	
Subcontractor Markup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$28,374.61	
4.0% of grand total		CONCRETE		\$141,873.05	
METALS					
STRUCTURAL STEEL					
Porch Canopy Structure	\$59,850.00	\$128,594.38	\$15,960.00	\$204,404.38	
Ramp Railings	\$1,645.00	\$4,744.06	\$0.00	\$6,389.06	
Subcontractor Markup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$52,698.36	
7.4% of grand total		METALS		\$263,491.80	
ELECTRICAL					
Solar Panels at Porch	\$4,800.00	\$5,100.00	\$0.00	\$9,900.00	
Town Standard Light Poles- New	\$3,420.00	\$35,275.00	\$0.00	\$38,695.00	
10' Light Poles New	\$14,400.00	\$16,575.00	\$0.00	\$30,975.00	
Relocate Existing Town Lighting	\$12,825.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$12,825.00	
Tree uplighting	\$8,740.00	\$4,887.50	\$0.00	\$13,627.50	
Exterior WP outlets	\$1,520.00	\$828.75	\$0.00	\$2,348.75	
Wifi Hotspot	\$570.00	\$1,593.75	\$0.00	\$2,163.75	
Bistro Lighting Allowance	\$3,500.00	\$5,312.50	\$0.00	\$8,812.50	
Connection to Fountain Allowance	\$1,520.00	\$903.13	\$0.00	\$2,423.13	
Relocate Traffic Signal	\$1,710.00	\$531.25	\$0.00	\$2,241.25	
Site Electrical Runs	\$7,425.00	\$13,387.50	\$2,700.00	\$23,512.50	
Porch Lighting	\$2,850.00	\$3,028.13	\$0.00	\$5,878.13	
E Panel/CB/Lighting Timer	\$4,560.00	\$3,825.00	\$0.00	\$8,385.00	
Misc Conduit and Wire- Small	\$2,100.00	\$4,462.50	\$0.00	\$6,562.50	
Misc Conduit and Wire- Large	\$1,500.00	\$2,125.00	\$0.00	\$3,625.00	
Catenary Light Poles	\$6,270.00	\$7,012.50	\$0.00	\$13,282.50	
Catenary Lights	\$1,521.10	\$1,204.50	\$0.00	\$2,725.60	
Security Camera Allowance	\$3,040.00	\$2,762.50	\$0.00	\$5,802.50	
Subcontractor Markup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$58,135.68	
7.0% of grand total		ELECTRICAL		\$251,921.28	
EARTHWORK					
Mobilization	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	

Town Square Public Improvements	LABOR	MATERIAL	QUIPMEN	TOTAL
ITEM DESCRIPTION	LABOR TOTAL	MATERIAL TOTAL	EQUIPMENT TOTAL	MAT/LAB/EQUIP
GENERAL CONDITIONS				
Project Manager	\$35,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$35,200.00
Superintendent	\$96,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$96,000.00
Project Accountant	\$5,760.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,760.00
Temporary Office	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11,200.00	\$11,200.00
Temporary Office Monthly Misc Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
Temporary Office Monthly Utility Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
Mob & Demob Temporary Office	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$400.00
Temporary Office Water Hookup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Temporary Office Electrical Hookup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Temporary Job Water	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Temporary Job Electrical	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
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Final Cleanup	\$4,160.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,160.00
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CONEX Storage Container	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00
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Safety and COVID Allowance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00
Permits	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Testing and Inspections	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
As Built Drawings	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Traffic Control	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
Surveying	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
Police Details at Street Work	\$24,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$24,000.00
	10.5% of grand total	GENERAL CONDITIONS		\$377,390.00
CONCRETE				
Concrete Flatwork at Park	\$7,500.00	\$7,968.75	\$375.00	\$15,843.75
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Subcontractor Markup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$28,374.61
	4.0% of grand total	CONCRETE		\$141,873.05
METALS				
STRUCTURAL STEEL				
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Ramp Railings	\$1,645.00	\$4,744.06	\$0.00	\$6,389.06
Subcontractor Markup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$52,698.36
	7.4% of grand total	METALS		\$263,491.80
ELECTRICAL				
Solar Panels at Porch	\$4,800.00	\$5,100.00	\$0.00	\$9,900.00
Town Standard Light Poles- New	\$3,420.00	\$35,275.00	\$0.00	\$38,695.00
10' Light Poles New	\$14,400.00	\$16,575.00	\$0.00	\$30,975.00
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Security Camera Allowance	\$3,040.00	\$2,762.50	\$0.00	\$5,802.50
Subcontractor Markup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$58,135.68
	7.0% of grand total	ELECTRICAL		\$251,921.28
EARTHWORK				

Town Square Public Improvements		LABOR	MATERIAL	QUIPMEN	TOTAL
ITEM DESCRIPTION	LABOR TOTAL	MATERIAL TOTAL	EQUIPMENT TOTAL	MAT/LAB/EQUIP	
STORMWATER					
12" Drain Line	\$0.00	\$7,538.44	\$0.00	\$7,538.44	
Relocate Existing CB's	\$1,680.00	\$1,577.81	\$0.00	\$3,257.81	
New CB's/AD's	\$0.00	\$8,893.13	\$0.00	\$8,893.13	
Drain Line Tap	\$0.00	\$451.56	\$0.00	\$451.56	
Excavation and Backfill at Utility Lines	\$10,224.00	\$0.00	\$10,224.00	\$20,448.00	
Excavation and Backfill at Utility Structures	\$7,560.00	\$0.00	\$12,150.00	\$19,710.00	
Stone Bedding	\$0.00	\$4,350.94	\$0.00	\$4,350.94	
MISC UTILITY WORK					
Street Work Adder	\$13,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13,500.00	
Subcontractor Markup	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$29,269.06	
4.1% of grand total		SITE UTILITIES		\$146,345.31	
\$691,746.15		\$949,499.25	\$244,816.35	\$2,404,168.96	
DIRECT COSTS TOTAL				\$2,404,168.96	

Indirect Costs	Factor	
Tax	0.00%	\$0.00
Design Fees	12.00%	\$288,500.28
Contingency	15.00%	\$403,900.39
Escalation	3.00%	\$92,897.09
Insurance/Bonds	1.70%	\$40,870.87
GC Profit	12.00%	\$353,020.48

Indirect Costs Subtotal	\$1,179,189.10
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ESTIMATE GRAND TOTAL	\$3,583,358.06
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