



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT TECHNICAL PAPER

INVENTORY AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Employment and Wages

East Longmeadow’s economic development history mirrors that of the Pioneer Valley region, as can be seen in the chart below that shows Manufacturing a close second to Health Care and Social Assistance entities, comprising the largest economic sector in East Longmeadow and throughout the Pioneer Valley region.

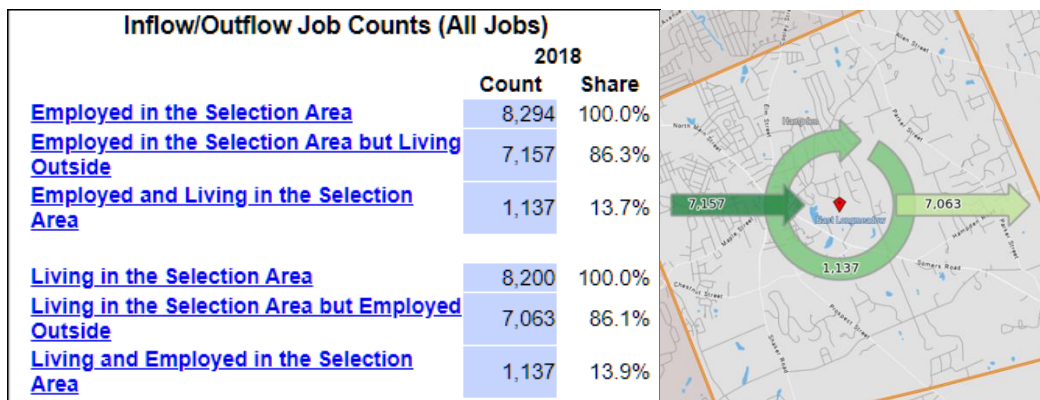
NAICS	Description	No. of Establishments	Total Wages	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Total, All Industries		647	\$408,676,293	8,423	\$933
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	147	\$74,976,123	1,929	\$747
31-33	Manufacturing	37	\$127,797,216	1,885	\$1,304
44-45	Retail Trade	59	\$21,778,005	744	\$563
61	Educational Services	18	\$34,942,985	703	\$956
72	Accommodation and Food Services	28	\$11,846,420	574	\$397
54	Professional and Technical Services	58	\$23,082,340	394	\$1,127
81	Other Services, Except Public Administration	56	\$11,196,076	347	\$620
23	Construction	55	\$17,387,042	319	\$1,048
42	Wholesale Trade	34	\$29,571,642	296	\$1,921
52	Finance and Insurance	39	\$16,716,520	244	\$1,318
56	Administrative and Waste Services	41	\$8,646,059	241	\$690
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	14	\$3,746,188	222	\$325
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	9	\$10,169,345	184	\$1,063
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	27	\$5,092,640	122	\$803
51	Information	8	\$3,194,318	63	\$975

The town’s largest manufacturing employers have a long history in the region. Cartamundi is an international brand in game and toy manufacturing based in Belgium, but the company’s East Longmeadow site dates back to when the Milton Bradley Company, founded in 1860 in Springfield, relocated to the town. Milton Bradley was the inventor of many popular games and brought the well-known game of Candy Land to market, after a schoolteacher created it for children quarantined with polio in the 1940s. Milton Bradley moved to East Longmeadow in 1965, where it became a division of Hasbro Games in 1984; and in 1998 Hasbro also acquired Monopoly-maker Parker Brothers. Cartamundi bought the facility in 2015 and is now producing an even wider range of cards and games there, offering additional leasing space to other companies on its campus. Lenox was founded in 1915 as the American Saw and Manufacturing Company to produce hacksaw blades (also originally in Springfield) and has evolved to become part of the Stanley Black & Decker family of products.

Largest Employers in East Longmeadow

Company name	Address	Number of employees	NAICS Code	NAICS Category
Cartamundi	Shaker Rd	900-1,000	3399	Doll, Toy and Game Manufacturing
Lenox	Chestnut St	640-650	3322	Saw Blade and Hand Tool Manufacturing
Con-Test Analytical Lab	Spruce St	100-249	5413	Environmental & Industrial Hygiene Analytic Services
East Longmeadow Skilled Nursing	Maple St	100-249	6231	Skilled Nursing Care Facilities
Meadow Brook School	Parker St	100-249	6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Springfield Division	Benton Dr	100-249	5418	Advertising and Related Services
US Post Office	Industrial Dr	100-249	4911	Postal Service
Maybury Material Handling	Denslow Rd	80+	4238	Industrial Machinery and Equipment Merchant Wholesalers
Big Y	N Main St	50-99	4451	Grocery Stores
Birchland Park Middle School	Hanward Hill	50-99	6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools
Capuano Care	Benton Dr # 201	50-99	6216	Home Health Care Services
Carr Property Management Inc	Deer Park Dr	50-99	5312	Offices of Real Estate Agents and Brokers
Excel Dryer	Chestnut St	11-49	3352	Nationally known brand of electric hand dryers

Although East Longmeadow is home to a number of major employers, most East Longmeadow residents do not work in town. Of 8,200 employed residents, only 14% work in town. Conversely, over 7,000 workers commute into East Longmeadow each day. The closest relationship is with the city of Springfield; about 27% of residents work there, and 24% of local employees live there.



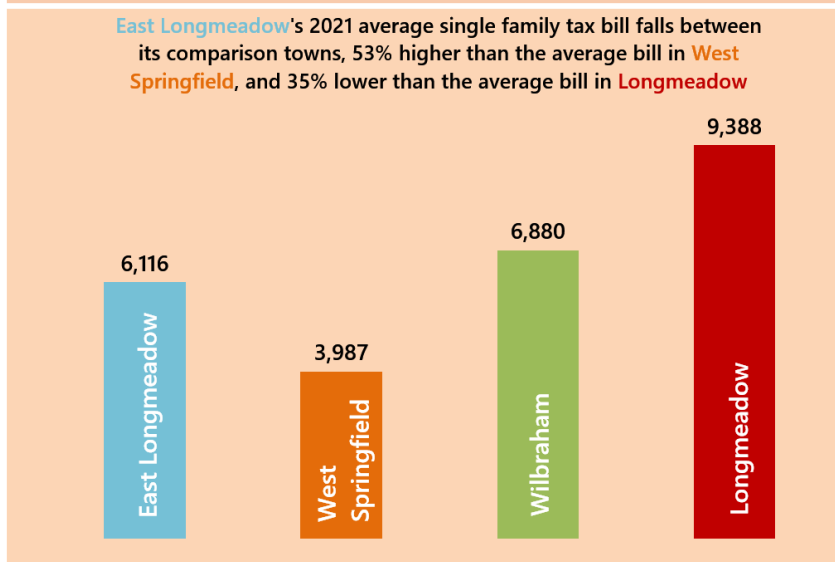
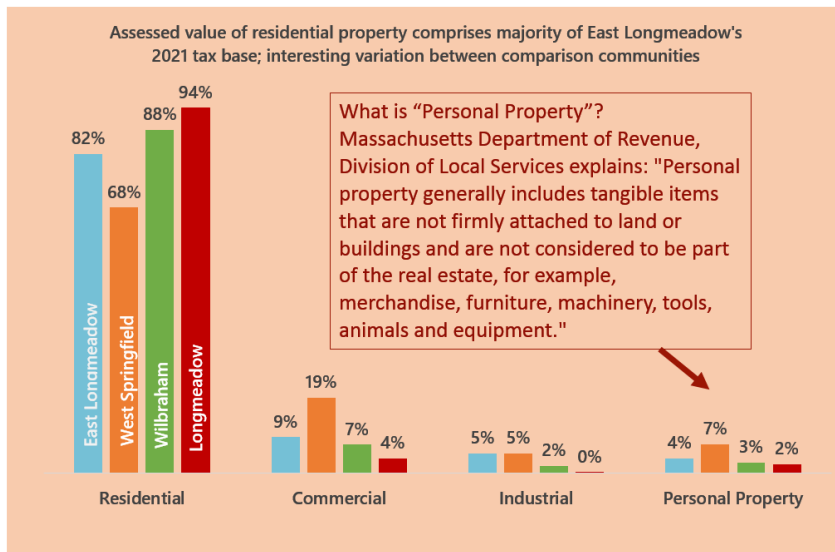
East Longmeadow residents travel to work in a wide number of locations, with around one quarter (26.9%) of residents commuting to Springfield, and nearly 60% to various locations in the Pioneer Valley, northern Connecticut, and even further afield.

	Count	Share
All County Subdivisions	8,200	100.0%
Springfield city (Hampden, MA)	2,206	26.9%
East Longmeadow town (Hampden, MA)	1,137	13.9%
Enfield town (Hartford, CT)	321	3.9%
Chicopee city (Hampden, MA)	296	3.6%
West Springfield Town city (Hampden, MA)	285	3.5%
Longmeadow town (Hampden, MA)	272	3.3%
Holyoke city (Hampden, MA)	254	3.1%
Agawam Town city (Hampden, MA)	231	2.8%
Wilbraham town (Hampden, MA)	169	2.1%
Westfield city (Hampden, MA)	168	2.0%
Boston city (Suffolk, MA)	150	1.8%
Northampton city (Hampshire, MA)	144	1.8%
Windsor town (Hartford, CT)	140	1.7%
Worcester city (Worcester, MA)	135	1.6%
Ludlow town (Hampden, MA)	122	1.5%
Hartford town (Hartford, CT)	94	1.1%
Amherst town (Hampshire, MA)	90	1.1%
Hampden town (Hampden, MA)	78	1.0%
East Windsor town (Hartford, CT)	50	0.6%
Palmer Town city (Hampden, MA)	45	0.5%
South Hadley town (Hampshire, MA)	44	0.5%
Suffield town (Hartford, CT)	39	0.5%
Somers town (Tolland, CT)	35	0.4%
Manchester town (Hartford, CT)	34	0.4%
Windsor Locks town (Hartford, CT)	33	0.4%
All Other Locations	1,628	19.9%

Tax Structure

The majority of East Longmeadow’s tax base is comprised of residential property taxes, with only about 14% coming from commercial and industrial taxes. The average single-family tax bill is comparable to other suburban towns in the region, and has been growing steadily for the past several decades. Commercial and industrial tax rates in town are the same as residential, making them relatively low for the region. This has undoubtedly been a draw for the light industrial uses in town and continues to be so for a new wave of medical office buildings.





Major Economic Sectors

General Business Environment and Trends

The town is located in the Connecticut River Valley adjacent to the riverfront town of Longmeadow, of which it was once officially part. Along the river also run Interstate 91 and a major passenger and freight rail line. A branch connecting East Hartford and Springfield once ran through East Longmeadow, but this line was abandoned with its track removed in the 1980s. However, the town retains easy access to the interstate highway and major urban centers of the Northeast.

In East Longmeadow, approximately 420 acres are in industrial use, with about another 360 in commercial or "mixed use with primarily commercial," and about 280 acres in agriculture. The industrial uses originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and are oriented along the former railroad line upon which they depended. Since that time, a formal industrial park zone, the Industrial Garden Park, has been established that encompasses a large area west of Rt. 220 (Shaker



Road) in the southwestern quadrant of town. Other industrial zones are still located along the former rail line, near the center of town. Commercial businesses are generally located in a linear fashion along North Main Street (State Route 83) and Shaker Road (State Route 220), as well as in the vicinity of the Town Center at the rotary. Agricultural lands are primarily located in the eastern part of town, particularly in the southeast.

The town has a wide variety of commercial uses, providing goods and services primarily in small, locally-owned shops and businesses. Services available to residents include medical and healthcare providers, law firms, accounting firms, and personal services such as tailoring, bicycle repair, and catering. In recent years, there has been some growth in small retail shops and restaurants, demonstrating that East Longmeadow is a fertile ground for entrepreneurs; there is adequate space available; and there is a sufficient market for a growing number of goods and services. The shops have ranged from specialty foods to clothing boutiques. Home occupations are allowed, as long as there are no clients or customers onsite, in addition to other regulations as identified in the Town's Zoning Bylaw. Trade occupations were once allowed to operate out of homes, but this is no longer allowed except for some that have been grandfathered in. As a result a small number of repair shops, carpentry, plumbing and heating operations, are operated as home businesses.

Industrial Economy

Lenox, Cartamundi, and Maybury Material Handling are three of the major companies that anchor successful industrial development in the southern section of town, bordering the state of Connecticut. The Westmass Area Development Corporation has established and continues to operate several industrial park properties in this area, including Deer Park, which has several dozen businesses. The Industrial Garden Park zone is nearly fully built out, partly because as new industrial development slowed down, landowners began building office condominiums on several of the remaining vacant parcels. The industrial areas in the northern parts of town are also built out, and any new uses would have to redevelop existing sites. There are also several vacant former industrial buildings which may be considered for redevelopment as other types of uses.

Health Care Sector

As indicated in the previous section, according to the U.S. Department of Labor there are nearly 150 health care and social assistance establishments in East Longmeadow. The largest of these is the East Longmeadow Skilled Nursing Center, which expanded in 2017 with construction of a new facility at the Longmeadow border. This was part of a major new development completed in 2020, with a new Baystate Health medical office building on the Longmeadow side of the site and significant intersection improvements at the intersection of Maple Street and Dwight, serving traffic coming in and out of East Longmeadow. The Benton Professional Park on Benton Drive is another new health care campus, with two of three planned buildings completed and occupied. Bay Path University's new Philip H. Ryan Health Science Center on Denslow Road hosts several applied health science programs as well as other programs of study.



General Commercial and Retail Areas

1) East Longmeadow Town Center and Rotary

The East Longmeadow rotary is an intersection of seven streets that functions somewhat like a rotary but allows cross-traffic via lane markings and several stop signs. MassDOT data indicates that there have been an average of 60 crashes per year for the most recent three years of data, with seven (7) injuries per year. There are also a number of local business access driveways located very close to the rotary, creating an additional safety hazard. These are primarily auto-related businesses such as gas stations and repair shops, and there is virtually no pedestrian activity. The Town Hall also fronts on the rotary, but vehicular access is only possible in the rear of the building.

Built as a planned “town center” development the Center Square development is located adjacent to the rotary and anchored by the ca. 1882 Town Hall. It includes the 2004 Town Library (which replaces an older building), the Healthtrax Fitness and Wellness facility, and a number of retail stores, restaurants, and personal services. There is abundant parking, but minimal landscaping, sidewalks, or crosswalks. One small retail site has experienced frequent turnover in the past two decades, while most have been fairly stable.

2) Route 83 (North Main Street) Commercial Corridor

Heritage Park Plaza and the Big Y plaza anchor this section of commercial uses in the town’s northwest corner. Other than the two plazas, the corridor is primarily small commercial uses and is heavily traveled. Since the development of the shopping centers, the Town has put in place zoning bylaws that limit maximum square footage, in order to prevent further “big box” development. Along these lines, the Town has also prohibited drive-through services (except for banks).

3) Shaker Road

Another commercial corridor exists along Shaker Road (Route 220), beginning at the rotary and extending to south of Industrial Drive as far as the Cartamundi campus. This area is primarily small to medium-sized businesses, which include auto repair businesses, various services and a large meat market, serving the local community. There are also a few larger employers. A center turning lane in the road helps to keep traffic flowing, but also presents a safety hazard when not used properly.

Agricultural Economy

East Longmeadow was once primarily a farming community, and retains excellent soils. About eight farms are currently operating in town, mostly growing fruits and vegetables. The farms sell direct-to-consumer in some cases, at year-round stores or seasonal shops and farmstands, as well as to local supermarkets and other wholesale buyers. The largest is Meadowbrook Farm on Route 83 with 68 acres. The Apple Place is a destination site with an ice cream shop, farm store, garden with sculptures, seasonal apple-picking and more. Additionally, pre-COVID, the Apple Place had acoustic live music for its patrons.



Vacant Commercial Property

Several undeveloped and/or vacant commercial parcels remain in East Longmeadow. These properties are in commercially or industrially zoned areas, and some need environmental reclamation. One prime example is the former Carlin Combustion Technology site, just adjacent to the Redstone Rail-Trail on Maple Street. Although it is located within an industrial district based on former rail access, the site is located in the heart of the Town Center.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Town Center

A community's town center can be an economic driver, with shops and services available to residents, workers and visitors as they conduct their daily business and utilize town buildings and services. In East Longmeadow, the town center is somewhat amorphous, as there is no traditional "Main Street," and the civic and various commercial areas are separated by the rotary and its spokes. However, functionally, it is a diverse town center with many services and amenities, including the town hall and library, the Center Square development, Leahy Park and its ballfields and picnic area, the historic train depot, and the bike path entrance and parking area. Recently, the depot has been refurbished to its historic nature and provides an opportunity for visitors to buy ice cream.

In surveys and focus groups, residents and business owners said that the lack of "walkability" in the town center was a concern. They also felt that the current rotary was a weakness or even a threat. The rotary as it is currently laid out does not provide easy access to local businesses and may deter some drivers. Although many East Longmeadow residents are used to the configuration and comfortable navigating it, it remains a dangerous intersection and is not conducive to business access.

As far as pedestrian access, the crossing at Maple Street has recently been improved to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to the rail trail. But access to and between retail areas is more difficult; even in Center Square, there are no safe and clear pedestrian routes between the various complexes of buildings.

Pedestrian and landscaping improvements to the town center would greatly enhance its attractiveness and the flow of customers to local businesses.

Commercial Corridors

Vehicular and pedestrian access is also a concern on the major commercial corridors along North Main Street and Shaker Road. On Shaker Road, the center turning lane is misunderstood by many drivers, resulting in crashes. Along North Main Street, many businesses have multiple entry and exit points and/or parking lots with no curb or separation from the street. Numerous side streets adjacent to these businesses results in high volumes of traffic entering, exiting and turning at multiple intersections, creating a safety hazard. Although sidewalks exist in some places, they are not maintained and there are large gaps.



Residents have identified the lack of drive-through restaurants and pharmacies as both a positive and a negative, as the community has consistently disapproved the introduction of drive-throughs in town. It has also been a limitation for some businesses during the pandemic. This type of development could be accommodated if done very carefully and in limited locations. Excellent access, sufficient landscaping, and attractive buildings and signage could all make drive-through businesses feasible and appealing, as well as safe. These elements of landscaping and façade improvements would also be helpful for existing businesses along the commercial corridors.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Focus group participants talked about Issues for small businesses in working with town departments. For the most part, it is a positive experience, and in some cases much better than in other locales. However, concerns that came up included the amount of required paperwork, permitting fees, and overall communication. The Town should carefully assess the small business experience in working with local departments. One strategy to pursue would be a regular system of ongoing outreach to businesses, particularly small, locally-owned businesses, to see how they are doing. The town could also encourage businesses to create their own business association.

Agriculture

Residents named agricultural uses as a strength of the community and an opportunity, while the potential of losing farmland is considered a threat. Residents noted a lack of farmers' markets and winter venues, as well. Two farms were identified by name, Meadowbrook and The Apple Place, and both are draws for local shoppers and CSA members. Most of the farmland in East Longmeadow is held by only two owners, which makes the land particularly vulnerable to development. However, one land owner is very committed to farming and has already thought about succession planning. Farming in East Longmeadow will need significant support if it is to continue. The Town can help farmers find new ways to market their goods and preserve their land, and a Buy Local campaign that addresses all local goods but particularly farm products would be one option to pursue.

Future Development

The town's significant supply of developable land near a major metropolitan area and interstate highway has helped East Longmeadow become not only a bedroom community, but an employment center for larger businesses that require greater land areas and fairly close highway access. In the past, this has resulted in a significant manufacturing presence; however, manufacturing is no longer growing in the region, and there is currently a trend toward development of medical office buildings. These health care-related businesses provide a range of employment options and a strong tax base, as well as convenient medical services for residents. In fact, residents cited this trend as an opportunity in the community outreach sessions.

Another strong trend is toward home-based businesses, which will continue to grow in the next decade. The town may wish to consider allowing greater flexibility for home occupations in certain areas. Home occupations and home-based businesses allow for the formation of small businesses



that are still unable to support a traditional business overhead. Many entrepreneurs launch their startups “under the radar,” in their basements, garages, or even in their kitchens. When these businesses grow beyond this point and can support an increase in production, the startup moves into a traditional business space out of the home and may create jobs and/or contribute to the tax base. Entrepreneurship and home occupations are a key part of small business startups in the new economy and a means of fostering innovation.

Residents were also concerned about several vacant industrial buildings, specifically naming the Package Machinery and Carlin Combustion sites. The Carlin property has environmental contamination issues that need to be addressed, and without town ownership of the property, under current zoning regulations the property will likely remain vacant for some time. Some of the other industrially-zoned areas in the Town Center might be re-evaluated for mixed uses, including apartments, retail, and office. If this occurs, it would be highly desirable to require significant green space and landscaping, particularly if Leahy Field were to be redeveloped. The new Mixed Use Village District Bylaw will be an important tool to guide future development. It could be extremely useful as an overlay zone for the Town Center, as well as in other locations.

COVID-19 Vacancies and Closures

The pandemic has had an impact on local business over the past year (March 2020 to the present). The town has already taken steps to assist these businesses and will continue to find means to support them through the re-opening phase. Fortunately, East Longmeadow is participating in the Commonwealth’s new Local Rapid Recovery Planning process, intended to help municipalities develop strategic plans to help their businesses recover from the COVID-19 pandemic closures and restrictions. The specific area targeted under this program is the North Main Street business corridor, from Harkness Ave to the Springfield border. Over the course of 2021, five or more detailed, ready-to-go projects will be developed. It is hoped and anticipated that current state funding programs (such as Shared Streets, Mass. Downtown Initiative, and Underutilized Properties Program) as well as some new funding from the American Rescue Plan will be available for implementation.



