



PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT TECHNICAL PAPER

OVERVIEW

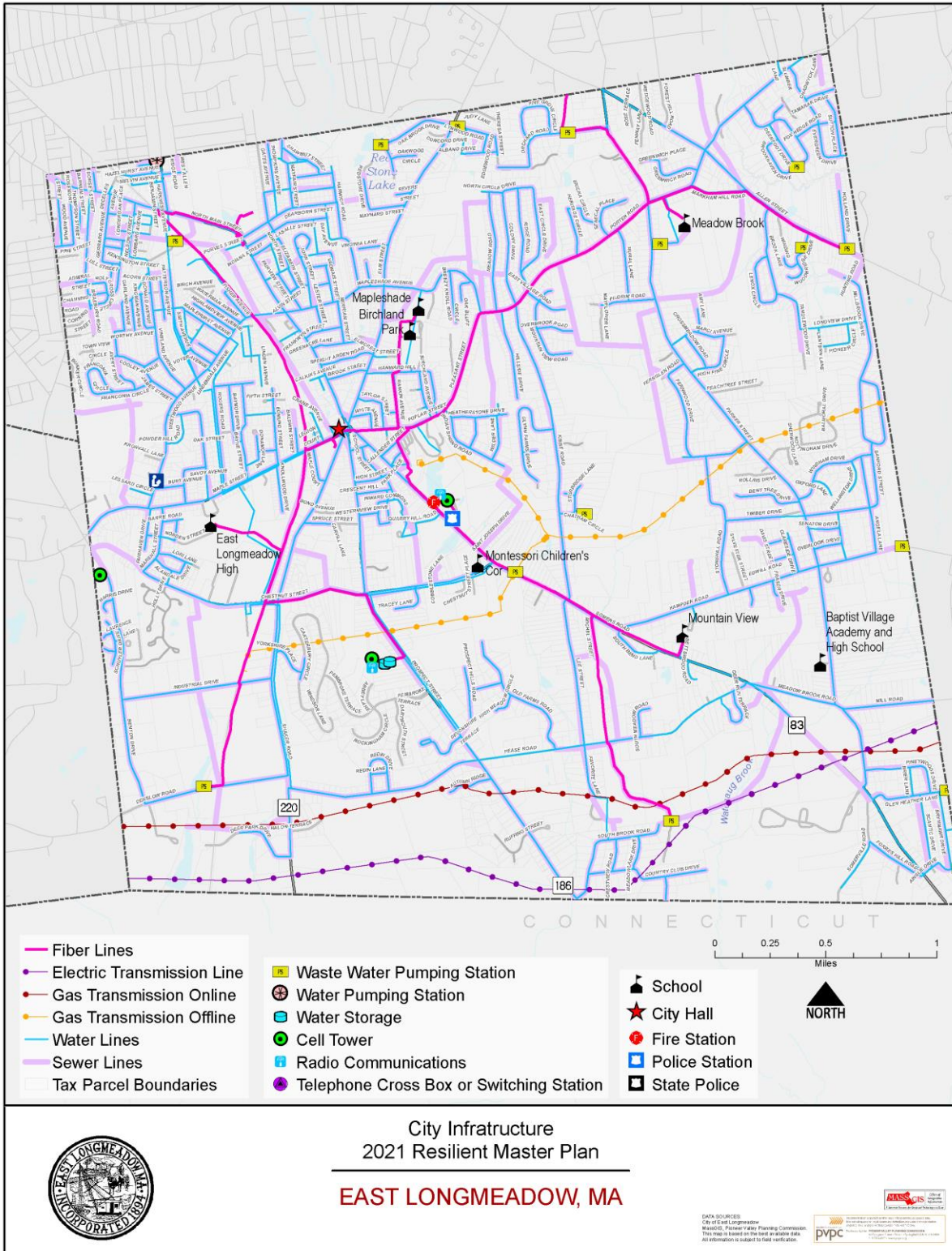
The Public Services and Facilities element of a master plan helps guide decisions and develop a plan relevant to public buildings, utilities and infrastructure in order to meet future needs for the community. Police, fire and public works, along with the infrastructure that is necessary for these services, are vital for the town to function properly. Likewise, local decisions about how and what public services and facilities are funded and built will be critical in determining the direction the town takes in future development and continued governance.

The Town's ability to provide adequate facilities depends on effective capital planning and a commitment to implementation by the town, asset management policies, and the revenues for the town to use to support those operations and maintenance requirements. East Longmeadow receives little funding from non-local sources and relies on its residents and businesses for financial support, in addition to grants that the town would need to administer.

Some Key Findings:

- Generally, residents are satisfied with the level of public services they receive from the town.
- The Town takes advantage of state programs that exist to help fund building and infrastructure improvements in East Longmeadow, like the *Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness* program which helps towns plan for and implement resiliency projects that respond to climate change risks and the federal Hazard Mitigation program that makes the Town eligible for federal disaster recovery funds. This plan suggests the town work to achieve *Green Communities* designation that will help fund energy efficiency upgrades to municipal buildings, taking better advantage of cost savings as DPW and facility managers have already identified areas for improvement and greater efficiency.
- East Longmeadow has an aging population that is overwhelmingly interested in aging in place. Public services and facilities will need to be expanded and adjusted to meet the needs of this demographic.
- Federal requirements, such as the new MS4 stormwater permit, will continue to require ongoing effort by the Town to remain in compliance.

Map 1 Infrastructure Map



INVENTORY AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

INFRASTRUCTURE

Public Water

East Longmeadow receives its public water from the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC), where it is treated before distribution. The drinking water supply originates from a surface water supply, Cobble Mountain Reservoir, located in Blandford, Massachusetts. An additional surface water supply that feeds into Cobble Mountain Reservoir, contributes to the system's combined water supply capacity of 25 billion gallons.

The reservoir water flows to the West Parish Filters Treatment Plant, in Westfield, Massachusetts, filtering through slow and rapid sand filtration, treated to inhibit corrosion of home plumbing, adjusted for pH, and disinfected before it flows to the underground storage tanks in Agawam. Clean drinking water is supplied, at an annual average rate of 35 million gallons per day to Springfield, Agawam, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, and Ludlow, through 617 miles of underground piping network of large transmission mains and small sized distribution mains.

In East Longmeadow, there are four connections to the Springfield water supply system: Elm Street, Harkness Avenue, North Main Street, and Dwight Road.

Wastewater

The Sewer Division of the East Longmeadow Department of Public Works is responsible for the safe and efficient transmission of the raw sewage from its underground pipe network to the treatment plant located at Springfield's Bondi's Island. Sewage flows in pipes either by gravity or through forced pressure created by a network of pump stations throughout town. The Sewer Division oversees maintenance of more than 114 miles of pipe and the upkeep of seventeen pump stations.

Dams

There are several dams that are relics of the agricultural activity in town, including two on Freshwater Brook, north and south of Denslow Road; one in Jawbuck Brook in the Deer Park Industrial Park; and two on the Bluebird Estates property. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Office of Dam Safety is the agency responsible for regulating dams in the state. To be regulated, these dams are in excess of 6 feet in height and have more than 15 acre feet of storage capacity. The dam regulations enacted in 2005 transferred significant responsibilities for dams from the state to dam owners, including the responsibility to conduct dam inspections.

East Longmeadow has five dams located in town. Although, the 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan identified that the Blue Bird Acres Pond dam is no longer a dam. According to the Office of Dam Safety, the dams included:



Dam Name	Owner	Hazard Potential
Blue Bird Acres Pond Dam	No Record for Privately Owned Non-Jurisdictional Dam	N/A
Heritage Park Pond Dam	Town of East Longmeadow	N/A
Wetstone Pond #1 Dam	JSTW Limited Partnership	Low
Wetstone Pond #2 Dam	No Record for Privately Owned Non-Jurisdictional Dam	N/A
Wetstone Tobacco Co. #3	Town of East Longmeadow	Low

The failure of a low hazard dam would not cause any personal injury and is not anticipated to affect a significant amount of the land area in East Longmeadow.

Telecommunications/IT

The availability of broadband technology plays a major role in advancing development, as the saying goes, “Be Wired or Be Fired”. Companies are less likely to move to a community that does not have dependable broadband service. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, broadband and high-speed internet connections were necessary for residents who needed to work from home and for students who were schooled from home.

Currently, East Longmeadow has moderate broadband internet coverage with fifteen internet providers (of those, six companies offer residential service). Residents have raised issues with internet service and its reliability, and 83.4 percent of survey respondents reported it is “very or somewhat important” to improve internet access and speeds. Additional comments suggested that the town should explore adding internet/cable options as a general development goal. Existing fiber optic line has been identified from the former MassMutual project that installed a fiber optic line between their Springfield and Enfield headquarters.

In October of 2020 the Town Manager appointed a Broadband Committee to study and report on the available broadband options for business and residents. A guiding document, "Planning for the Future of Broadband in East Longmeadow" is available on the Broadband Committee's page of the Town website.

Working forward from that document, the committee began to conduct research and assemble data from other communities, cable providers, and published sources to consider appropriate criteria the town might use in defining its role with respect to the future of broadband services in town. As future technology arrives, the expected advance of 5G wireless service will create an even more competitive environment, in which a return to the taxpayers on investment in capital and operating costs of municipal internet service does not, even on relatively cursory analysis, make economic sense, at least for the present. One of the committee’s priorities has been to develop a framework for future analysis to explore the future of broadband in the community.



MUNICIPAL FACILITIES & SERVICES

Town Hall, 60 Center Square

The Town Hall is located at 60 Center Square in East Longmeadow, a two-story building consisting of two connected structures. The original two-story town hall building was constructed in 1882 with brownstone masonry. An addition was added to the original building in 1967, composed of steel. The Town Hall is not fully accessible and in compliance with 521 CMR Massachusetts Architectural Access Board Regulations. There is no elevator in the building.

Most of the town government, the town staff, some of its boards and commissions, are based at the Town Hall at 60 Center Square. Public meetings are usually held at the Council on Aging or the School Superintendent Conference Room. Some of the departments are listed below:

- Building Department
- Department of Public Works
- Tax Collector/Treasurer
- Town Clerk
- Town Council
- Town Assessor
- Health Department
- Planning and Community Development Department
- Town Manager

The hours of operations for each department and board vary. Some town services are available online through the Town's website. Residents and developers can access municipal information, download permit and application forms, and pay bills online.

The community survey indicates general satisfaction with the majority of town services.

Town Administration

The East Longmeadow Charter sets up the local government into the legislative branch and the executive branch. The legislative branch is led by an elected seven member Town Council. The Council is elected to meet, deliberate, act and vote in the exercise of the corporate business of the Town. The Council hires and evaluates the Town Manager. The Town Manager represents the executive branch who creates budgets and oversees day to day operations in town government.

Council on Aging (COA) and Senior Center, 328 N. Main Street

With an aging Baby Boomer population and people living longer than previous generations, the number of residents living over the age of 60 is increasing. In 2019, 22 percent of the total East Longmeadow population were age 65 years old or older, an increase of 19 percent from 2010. The Council on Aging, an essential town department, serves the senior residents and the rest of the community by organizing and hosting social and health-related activities and keeping seniors informed about available programs and resources. The Council on Aging operates its programming in a 100-year-old school, shared with the Recreation Department. The COA is supported by over 100 volunteers. Some of the activities that the Council of Aging supports include book clubs, field trips, exercise opportunities, social hours, meals, etc. The Council on Aging provides Senior Van



Service Monday through Friday between 9 AM – 3 PM with the *Tri Town Trolley*, a program to take seniors to various appointments, as well as shopping.

East Longmeadow Housing Authority, 81 Quarry Hill

The mission of the East Longmeadow Housing Authority is to provide decent, safe, affordable housing for the low-income elderly, veterans, disabled and families. The Authority offers priority to East Longmeadow residents and veterans. The Authority was established in 1959 and provides housing for over 219 low-income tenants, and runs four housing programs which include Elderly, Congregate, Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program and Family.

The Housing Authority oversees 188 elderly/handicapped units located at the Village Green, Inward Commons, Quarry Hill, and the McLaren House.

East Longmeadow Police Department, 160 Somers Road

The East Longmeadow Police Department is established by the citizens to provide the town with a high level of safety, security, and service. As an enforcement agency of local government, the police department has the responsibility for the preservation of public peace and for the effective delivery of a wide variety of police service.

The police station has been identified as a facility that can be improved as it is a “bunker-style” facility from the 1970s and needs upgrades. The Police and Fire Chiefs have suggested a new public safety complex that combines both the police and fire services.

East Longmeadow Fire Department, 150 Somers Road

The mission of the East Longmeadow Fire Department is to protect lives, environment, and property by providing a fire safe community through preparedness, a coordinated public education program, and inspection services for development.

The fire station at 150 Somers Road serves as the emergency operations center. The Fire Chief has suggested that the fire station is “tired” despite having recent roof and furnace upgrades. A public safety complex is being explored to house both police and fire operations.

East Longmeadow Public Library, 60 Center Square

Since its founding in 1896, the East Longmeadow Public Library has grown from its location in the previous Select Board’s Office in Town Hall to the two-story building it is in today. The current public library building opened in February 2004, adjacent to the historic Town Hall. An acoustic deficiency has been identified in the library where sounds converge in certain areas. The Historical Commission has a local history room, housed in the East Longmeadow Public Library.

The town library, led by the Library Director and the Board of Trustees, offers programming, books and media resources for the community. The East Longmeadow Public Library is a member of the Central and Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing (CW/MARS) network. Residents have access to 8.1 million items waiting to be enjoyed in the shared catalog. The library relies on funding from the town for its operation. During the pandemic, the library became even more important, especially in collaboration with the school system. Library services for school-aged



children are the most heavily utilized programming resource; however, the library has identified a gap for programming for teenagers and “tweens.” This past year the library expanded its services by providing curbside pick-up. Continuing its important role in the community, 2020 has been a year where over 1 million audio and e-books were checked out in the CW/MARS system that the library belongs to – the highest year ever for digital checkouts.

Transfer Station, 170 Somers Street

Bulky items and yard waste are accepted by the town at the Transfer Station at 170 Somers Street, behind the Police Station. The transfer station is open two days a week to residents with a valid transfer station sticker.

The DPW Director’s Office and the operations for the department are mostly run at Town Hall. The DPW’s list of responsibilities includes divisions: Utilities, Sewer, Water, Highway, Stormwater, and Building Facilities Management.

Areas of Concern

Some of the area’s concerns that the DPW would be responsible for is the storm sewer system, which can be overtaxed when a storm event hits. The town is subject to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s Municipal Small Storm Sewer System (MS4) regulations, regulating and managing stormwater runoff for pollution and erosion control. The town continues to explore and understand, in accordance with its Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings in 2019, the ability of the Town to integrate the use of Low Impact Development (LID) and green infrastructure (GI) techniques within town practices and bylaws that govern development.

The transportation infrastructure of which DPW continues to maintain includes undersized culverts and storm sewer systems that have contributed to local street flooding on Elm and North Main Streets. Some ideas of green infrastructure like rain gardens and permeable pavement can be installed to reduce the strength and volume of water entering the undersized culverts. These types of mitigating features that the DPW reviews are in their purview.

The community survey provoked free response comments stating that roads were important for the general development goals of the town and improving the roads and sidewalks of the town is very important. Road maintenance is addressed in the *Transportation* element of this Plan.

East Longmeadow Public Schools (ELPS)

East Longmeadow operates its own school system, governed by a 5-member elected School Committee. According to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, East Longmeadow has a total of 2,404 enrolled students across the five schools listed below in the 2020-2021 school year. Enrollment is expected to increase. .

- Birchland Park Middle School (Grades 6-8)
- East Longmeadow High School (Grades 9-12)
- Mapleshade Elementary School (Grades 3-5)
- Meadow Brook Elementary School (Grades PK-2)
- Mountain View Elementary School (Grades 3-5)



According to the 2019 Annual Report for the Town, ELPS students graduate at the rate of 98.5 percent in four years, completing their degree, and go onto higher education at 87 percent going to a two- or a four-year college. Other graduates go into other fields of endeavor building off their education in the ELPS schools with 3.2 percent joining the military and 2.3 moving into work apprenticeships or beginning to work in a job.

East Longmeadow Public Schools began accepting school choice students this year (2021). Fifteen students were added to ELPS enrollment, with 12 from Springfield. At least 9 ELPS students sought education outside the district, choosing TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School District, a virtual academy. Out of the surrounding communities, East Longmeadow sent four students to Longmeadow School District.

The school district has prioritized replacement or renovation of the high school building as stated in a statement of interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority. A School Facilities Master Plan was completed in 2013. The Plan outlined work to repair or replace the existing building, built in 1960 and has outdated space for instruction.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Services for Current and Future Needs

Despite the challenges of town government and tight budgets, East Longmeadow is meeting local needs. New needs have emerged however, including the need for an intergenerational community center and for the previously mentioned Public Safety complex.

Building Maintenance and Accessibility

As a small town with finite resources, the continued maintenance and operations of public buildings can be a strain. Several of the town's properties are in need of substantial capital improvements. The Town Hall does not have an elevator and some other facilities including the high school, fire and police stations, recreation department and senior center, have been identified as facilities where improvements can be realized to improve bring service delivery.

Community Development Block Grants can be used to fund accessibility upgrades where identified, but may not be used for general building maintenance.

Maintaining the Master Plan

The East Longmeadow Resilient Master Plan, when adopted by the Planning Board, should be maintained over time. A master plan is designed as a blueprint and will evolve over time as recommendations are implemented and conditions change in the town. A Resilient Master Plan Implementation Committee should be formed to oversee implementation of the plan, engaging boards, committees, and town staff, and overseeing evaluation using the metrics identified in the plan. The town should celebrate implementation as the actions are achieved.

Climate Action Municipal Vulnerability and Hazard Mitigation Planning

According to the community survey, 42.6 percent of the respondents considered the production of more electricity from solar, wind, or hydro, an issue that needs immediate attention. As the Town



prioritizes energy efficiency, reducing emissions, and responding to the impacts of climate change, acting on the recommendation to become a certified Green Community would help achieve this goal as certification includes an immediate grant award to implement energy efficiency improvements in municipal buildings and can also be used to advance clean energy such as solar, wind and hydro-power. New development should support adaptation to anticipated climatic changes and should align with statewide and regional goals towards reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) define Hazard Mitigation as any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards such as flooding, storms, high winds, hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes, etc. Mitigation efforts undertaken by communities will help to minimize damages to buildings and infrastructure, such as water supplies, sewers, and utility transmission lines, as well as natural, cultural and historic resources.

Planning efforts make mitigation a proactive process. Pre-disaster planning emphasizes actions that can be taken before a natural disaster occurs. Future property damage and loss of life can be reduced or prevented by a mitigation program that addresses the unique geography, demography, economy, and land use of a community within the context of each of the specific potential natural hazards that may threaten a community. Preparing a Local Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan before a disaster occurs can save the community money and will facilitate post-disaster funding. Costly repairs or replacement of buildings and infrastructure, as well as the high cost of providing emergency services and rescue/recovery operations, can be avoided or significantly lessened if a community implements the mitigation measures detailed in the Plan. FEMA requires that a community adopt a pre-disaster mitigation plan as a condition for mitigation funding.

East Longmeadow developed a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) in 2016 with assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. This plan is due for an update in 2022 as FEMA requires that HMP plans be updated every five years.

Recognizing that climate change will continue to exacerbate the threats and hazards Massachusetts communities face, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) created the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant program. East Longmeadow's Resilient Master Plan is being funded through this program. This program provides funding for towns to plan for and implement climate-change resiliency projects. The town remains eligible to apply for additional action grants to fund resiliency projects.

Community Resilience

Community services and facilities play an important role in the Town's ability to respond to challenges and disasters.

- The siting of future town-owned facilities plays a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, especially if located in a walkable or easily accessible neighborhood where the visitors do not have to rely on a vehicle to get there.
- *Green Communities* designation would bring funding to continue East Longmeadow on the path of retrofitting facilities with energy efficient lighting, appliances, heating and cooling systems, etc to reduce power consumption.



- Community facilities can also be used to generate power. This includes solar canopies over parking lots, or solar installations on flat roofs, which the town continues to permit.
- The Town could incorporate healthy community policies around transportation, energy, and healthy eating as a way to set an example to residents and increase awareness.
- Inclusiveness, transparency, and encouraging involvement in town government helps to build trust and common bonds across residents.

