

Section 3: COMMUNITY SETTING

A. Regional Context

The Blackstone River Valley: Grafton is located in the northern end of the Blackstone River. From pre-Columbian times until the post-World War II decline of its mills, Grafton's history and land development were influenced by its location at the confluence of the Quinsigamond and Blackstone Rivers. Native Nipmuc Indians considered it a place of great Manitou, or spiritual power, because of its many waterways, along which they developed overland trails that later became regional transportation routes.

Hilltop Farms: The hills of central Massachusetts, often too steep for easy development, are, in many cases, mantled with soils that make prime pasturelands. The rich loams found in the river valley are well suited for crops. Even before the Blackstone's waterpower was harnessed for industry, success with farming and animal husbandry fostered a rural economy in Grafton, which remained significant in the region as late as 1940. The Town was long known for its dairy production and was famous for its fruit orchards. Although Grafton and Worcester County have lost farmland to urbanization over the last three decades, the Town still retains much of its rural character.

The Blackstone River: The 438-foot drop in run of the Blackstone River produced the power that launched the Industrial Revolution in America. As in other towns and cities within the Blackstone River Valley, the industrial enterprises growing up along the river and its tributaries influenced Grafton's land use and settlement patterns until well into the twentieth century.

The Canal and the Railroads: The Blackstone Canal and, shortly after, the railways linked Grafton to Worcester, Providence, and Boston, providing access to much larger markets and allowing the Town to flourish as an independent commercial center, a status it held until the post-war period.

Proximity to Worcester: After the war, Grafton's proximity to Worcester influenced North Grafton's development as a suburban location for Worcester's metal industry, bringing a concomitant burst of residential growth, typified by one-half acre lot subdivisions, in that section of Town. The industrial expansion bolstered the Town's economy at a time when its basis in the textile industry was becoming obsolete, allowing Grafton to thrive in a way not typical of more southerly towns in the Blackstone Valley.

Proximity to the Interstate Highway System: Grafton's proximity to the Massachusetts Turnpike has helped it attract regional commercial activity; however, many townspeople view Grafton as a bedroom community. The subsequent development of Interstate 495 further increased residential development pressures in Grafton. Since 1970, the Town has experienced a substantial increase in its housing stock, much of it occurring in the previously open and rural midsection. Between 1980 and 2000, the entire Blackstone Valley saw substantial growth in its population, rising from 72,414 residents in 1980 to 95,674 residents in 2000 – an increase of 32.1%. Today, Grafton still remains under considerable development pressure.

Changes in Highway Infrastructure and Future Regional Growth: Since the 1999 update, development pressures have increased due in large part to the opening of the Route 146 Connector to the Massachusetts Turnpike, the construction of an MBTA Commuter Rail Station with daily trains into Boston, and an improved local and regional economy. There is no indication at this time that this pressure will decrease in the immediate future.

B. History of the Community

History of Settlement

Grafton, with its lush meadows, good farmlands, and abundant waterways, has been historically a site of settlement. Originally called Hassanamesit, it became the third of Reverend John Elliot's "praying Indian" towns and served as a center for missionary activities in Central Massachusetts until the outbreak of King Philip's War. As the remnant Indians' fortunes continued to dwindle in the war's aftermath, white settlers purchased half of the land from the Hassanamisco band of the Nipmuc tribe and incorporated Grafton as a Town on April 18, 1735. Only a three-acre tract, the Hassanamisco Reservation on Brigham Hill Road, remains in Indian ownership.

Early colonists farmed, but with increasing use of the Blackstone River's water power for manufacturing the Town developed as an industrial center, numbering a cotton mill, grist mill, wheelwright shop, blacksmith shop, and linen mill among its early enterprises. Ethan Allen began the manufacturing of firearms, pocket cutlery, and the "pepperbox" revolver in 1832. Grafton was the site of the first shoe factory in the United States. The Forbush-Brown J.D. Nelson and Son shoe factory located in North Grafton in the 1840s in what was known as the Hancock Building just off the Grafton Common. Employing as many as 200 people at the height of its operation, the operation was taken over by Forbush-Anderson after the death of Charles Nelson. Willard Clocks was another notable manufacturing operation to locate in Grafton and its site is still preserved as the Willard Clock Museum.

Many of the mills thrived during the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth, but few were able to make a comeback once stricken by the Great Depression. By 1960, there were only 17 manufacturing firms in the Town, compared to 72 in 1922. Even with such reduced numbers, the remaining companies accounted for 80 percent of local jobs. Manufacturing, now mostly in machine tools and castings, still provides more of Grafton's jobs (36.4 percent as of 1997) than any other sector of the economy, but the great majority of these come from a single firm, Wyman-Gordon, in North Grafton. Grafton today is a suburban community with almost one-third of its resident labor force working in the city of Worcester and close to 40 percent commuting east to the I-495 area or to Boston.

Land Use Patterns: The distinct stages of Grafton's history, described below, had an impact on the Town's land use patterns, which are evident in the Town's landscape.

Native American Settlement: The Nipmuc Indians developed trails along the Quinsigamond and Blackstone Rivers, and along the Miscoe Brook, which drains into the West River. Portions of the trails developed into the two regional stagecoach routes that crisscrossed in Grafton. The Boston-to-Hartford Post Road incorporated the old "Connecticut Trail", generally known as the

"Thomas Hooker Trail", which ran over Keith Hill, across the Blackstone and into Sutton. This was the path along which the renegade Puritan preacher Thomas Hooker led his dissenting flock out of Massachusetts into Connecticut. The Worcester to Providence Road, included Worcester and Oak and South Streets, and Old Upton Road and Leland Street as it ran through Grafton into Upton. Other Indian routes included one starting below Flint Pond, running along what is now Creeper Hill Road and Westborough Road, which became an east-west road to Worcester, and the long distance Nipmuc Trail, which traversed Grafton into Worcester via Brigham Hill.

Colonial Settlement: Land bought by the Massachusetts General Court from the Indians was apportioned to each English settler-farmer in 40-acre lots. These lots, some of whose stone wall boundaries yet exist, formed the basis for the dispersed pattern of settlement seen amidst the hills. In following years, the Center, where the stagecoach routes crossed, became the focal point of Town. Rapid residential growth took place along the Town's radial routes, such as Brigham Hill, Estabrook, Fay Mountain, and Soap Hill Roads, all of which were developed as upland connectors.

The Mill Era: Clustered Settlements Amidst Open Space: Mills that took advantage of the Town's waterways appeared along river and stream banks. The advent of canal and rail transportation through Town insured that the mills would prosper and spurred development along transport routes. Notable mill villages developed in North Grafton (New England Village) and South Grafton (Farnumsville, Fisherville and Saundersville) in addition to the settlement in Grafton's center. The farm economy also benefited from the railroads and Grafton became famous for its fruit orchards. There was little loss of farmland to residential growth throughout the 19th century. As late as 1960, 80 percent of the Town was undeveloped land, with agricultural activity occurring on 3,447 acres, or 23.6 percent of the total land area. Grafton was also home to an airport in the late 1920s and 1930s. The Grafton Airport was located in North Grafton near what is known as Airport Road. South Grafton was the site and headquarters of Tupperware Inc. before they relocated out of Massachusetts.

Post-War Suburbanization: As Grafton's mill-based economic fortunes declined after the war, it increasingly became a bedroom suburb dependent on Worcester's economy. From 1950 to 1960, during the height of the baby boom, the Town's population grew by 37 percent, the largest increase over a decade in the last 50 years. In spite of the high birth rate, in-migration from the city of Worcester accounted for 62 percent of the increase. Much of the residential growth occurred in North Grafton, on lots zoned for 10,000 to 20,000 square feet. The commercial growth supporting the new population occurred as strip development along Route 122 leading from Millbury into Grafton. South Grafton did not grow at the same rate, which kept the old 19th century mill village-based spatial pattern of its landscape intact and visible.

Modern Day Suburbanization: The most recent spurt of growth occurred in response to the development of Interstate 495. Long distance commuters engaged in professional, managerial, technical, and sales positions comprise an increasing percentage of the resident labor force. In 1980, the mean travel time to work for Grafton's labor force was 20.3 minutes. By 2000, with the new MBTA station in place, the mean travel time to work had increased to 28.2 minutes.

Use of land for recreation expanded significantly in the 1950s when a group of South Grafton men established the Town's first Little League program. At the time, there were only three suitable locations to play: Fisherville Park, Norcross Park and Nelson Park. Grafton's recreational resources and facilities have continued to develop as the Town's population continues to grow.

Historical and Archeological Resources: A complete listing of Grafton's archeological resources and historical buildings and landscapes can be found in A Survey of Historic and Cultural Resources of the Town of Grafton, by Anne Forbes, on file with the Grafton Planning Board and Grafton Historical Commission and is included here by reference.



C. Population Characteristics

Between 1930 and 2000 Grafton saw its population more than double in size, as did many communities in the Blackstone Valley. The highest rate of growth took place between 1940 and 1960, leveling off somewhat between 1960 and 1980, and then went back to double digit increases for every decade since then. CMRPC recently prepared population projections for all of the 40 communities in its jurisdiction and estimate that Grafton's population will increase to approximately 18,000 residents by the year 2010 and 20,100 residents by the year 2020.

Table 1
Grafton Population Growth

<u>Year</u>	<u># of People</u>	<u>Numerical Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
1930	7,030	----	-----
1940	7,457	427	6.1%
1950	8,281	824	11.1%
1960	10,627	2,346	28.3%
1970	11,659	1,032	9.7%
1980	11,238	-421	-0.4%
1990	13,035	1,797	16.0%
2000	14,894	1,859	14.3%
2006*	16,866	1,972	13.2%
2010**	18,000	1,134	6.7%
2020**	20,100	2,100	11.7%

Sources: US Census Bureau; * = 2006 estimate provided by the Grafton Town Clerks Office. ** = Forecasts for 2010 and 2020 provided by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission – Transportation Department.

Grafton’s population growth has resulted in an increase in population density. Comprised of 14,528 acres of land (or 22.7 square miles), Grafton’s average of persons per square mile grew from 310 in 1930 to 656 by the year 2000. The only other Blackstone Valley communities with a higher number of persons per square miles are Northbridge (767), tiny Blackstone (807) and Millbury (812).

Table 2
Grafton Age Characteristics

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Population</u>
Under 5 Years of Age	1,086	7.3%
5 – 19	3,098	20.8%
20-44	5,714	38.4%
45-64	3,325	22.3%
65 Years of Age and Over	<u>1,671</u>	<u>11.2%</u>
Total:	14,894	100%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

Table 2 indicates that roughly 28% of Grafton’s population consists of school-aged children or soon to be school-aged children. This represents an increase from the 1990 Census when roughly 24% of the Town’s population consisted of school-aged or soon to be school-aged children. The 45-64 age group (or the soon to be seniors) saw a similar increase, rising from 18.1% of the Town’s total population in 1990 to 22.3% by 2000. The most significant decline since the 1990 Census has been in the 20-44 age group, which saw a decline from 41.2% in 1990 to 38.4% in 2000. Grafton’s senior population declined slightly from 1990 to 2000.

**Table 3
Grafton Housing Unit Growth**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Housing Units</u>	<u>Numerical Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
1960	2,605	----	----
1970	3,097	492	18.9%
1980	3,863	766	24.7%
1990	4,799	936	24.2%
2000	5,694	895	18.6%
2006*	6,723	1,029	18.1%

Sources: = US Census, except for 2006* = Grafton Assessor's Office.

A comparison of the previous two tables indicates that Grafton's housing stock has and continues to grow at a faster rate than its population. This is not surprising when one considers the national trend towards smaller household sizes. Couples are having fewer children today and many households are of the single parent variety. Grafton's US Census data confirms this trend. In 1960, the typical Grafton household contained 4.08 people. By 1980, the persons per household figure had declined to 2.91 and by 2000, to 2.62 persons per household.

Another factor contributing to smaller household sizes is "the graying of America", that is, our nation's elderly population is expanding. The Census data clearly demonstrates that this national trend is taking place in Grafton. In 1970, the median age of Grafton's population was 32.5 years of age. By 2000 the median age had increased to 35.9 years of age.

**Table 4
Households by Type**

<u>Type of Household</u>	<u>Number of Households</u>	<u>Percentage of Households</u>
Family Households:	3,952	69.4%
Non-Family Household	1,742	30.6%

Source: 2000 US Census.

Table 4 indicates that more than two thirds of Grafton households consist of married couple families, of which half of them have children under 18 living at home. This has implications for Town and its efforts to provide recreational facilities and programs for its citizens. Families with children often expect to find a diverse selection of recreational opportunities (both passive and active) in their communities, whether provided by the municipality, schools in the community or by private entities.

Table 5
Median Household Income Comparison

Grafton Median Household Income: \$66,396
State Median Household Income: \$50,502
Percent of State Average: 131.5%
Worcester County Median Household Income: \$47,874
Percent of Worcester County Average: 138.9%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

Grafton's median household income is significantly higher than the average for Worcester County and the State as a whole. This is an indicator of an affluent community that should be able to afford the cost of providing a diverse selection of recreational opportunities and open space amenities for its citizens, including the long-term maintenance of these resources.

Table 6
Per Capita Income Comparison

Grafton Per Capita Income: \$26,952
State Per Capita Income: \$25,952
Percent of State Average: 103.8%
Worcester County Per Capita Income: \$22,983
Percent of Worcester County Average: 117.3%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

Grafton's per capita income is slightly higher than the average for Worcester County and significantly higher than the State as a whole. A breakdown of Grafton's income categories is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7
Grafton Household Income Distribution

Grafton Income Distribution

Less than \$10,000:	48 households
\$10,000 - \$24,999:	381 households
\$25,000 - \$34,999:	284 households
\$35,000 - \$49,999:	527 households
\$50,000 - \$74,999:	943 households
\$75,000 - \$99,999:	772 households
\$100,000 - \$149,999:	653 households
\$150,000 and over:	337 households

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

The 2000 US Census data further indicate that the majority of housing units are owner-occupied, another indicator of prosperity for Grafton residents. Of the 5,694 occupied housing units existing in Grafton as of 2000, 72.3% were owner-occupied housing units while the remainder (27.7%) consisted of rental units.

Additional Demographics

Jobs in Grafton: According to the most recent statistics of the Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance, there were 363 business establishments in Grafton as of 2005, employing an average monthly total of 4,356 people. The service industry had the highest number of the jobs in Grafton (3,137) followed by manufacturing (835).

Employed Grafton Residents: The Division of Unemployment Assistance statistics further indicate that Grafton had a labor force of 8,928 workers as of 2005, with an unemployment rate of 4.2%, significantly lower than the State average of 5.4% and the Worcester County average of 5.7%. Grafton’s unemployment rate has fluctuated wildly during the past fifteen years, with a low of 2.5% in 2000 and a high of 10.1% in 1991.

D. Growth and Development Patterns

Patterns and Trends: The University of Massachusetts-Amherst has been tracking statewide land use data for the better part of the previous century. The University uses aerial photographs and interprets them (now using GIS) based on land use categories. Table 8 below outlines Grafton’s land use totals for the last three Statewide land use mapping efforts.

**Table 8
Grafton Land Use Changes Over the Years**

<u>1971</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1999</u>
2,186 developed acres	2,919 developed acres	3,667 developed acres
(2,048 residential)	(2,583 residential)	(3,291 residential)
(29 industrial)	(181 industrial)	(194 industrial)
(109 commercial)	(155 commercial)	(182 commercial)
(8,420 forestland)	(8,113 forestland)	(7,677 forestland)
(2,189 farmland)	(2,057 farmland)	(1,707 farmland)

Source: UMass-Amherst land use data for 1971, 1985 and 1999.

The amount of developed land in Grafton has increased by 67.7% between 1971 and 1999. In terms of sheer acreage, the residential sector has grown the most, adding 1,243 new acres of development between 1971 and 1999. Conversely, Grafton’s farmland has declined by roughly 22% and forestland by 8.8% during the same time period. With only 3,667 developed acres out of a total land area of 14,528 acres (or 25.2% of the total), Grafton is still very much a rural small town despite the increase in development documented above.

Infrastructure

Transportation Network

The public roads and highways are in good condition and meet the requirements of a modern roadway network. Immediate access to the interstate highway system is available via Exit 11 of the Massachusetts Turnpike in Millbury, just a few hundred feet from the Town line in North Grafton. A second interchange, connecting the Turnpike with Route 146 has recently opened, making the valley more accessible and, therefore, more attractive to commercial firms.

In addition to roadways, Grafton also is accessible by rail and bus service. MBTA commuter rail service was introduced to Grafton in 2000, with a station located at Route 30 and Pine Street. Intercity bus and rail service is available in adjacent Worcester at Union Station with connections to Amtrak and Peter Pan and Greyhound bus lines.

Other than the Massachusetts Turnpike, east-west travel is limited to local roadways, except for short sections of Routes 122A, 122, and 30. Route 122A enters the Saundersville section of Grafton at the Sutton town line and joins Route 122 in the Farnumsville section. Route 30 in North Grafton provides east-west travel to the major high tech employers in Westborough and along Interstate 495.

Two major north-south highways are present in Grafton. Route 122 is the principal connection to Worcester and Route 140 provides access to U.S. Route 20 and State Route 9 in Shrewsbury. Portions of Routes 140 and 122 are state-administered highways, while Routes 30 and 122A and the Town maintains the rest of Routes 122 and 140.

Roadway Mileage in Grafton

The table below indicates the amount of mileage in Grafton for each category of roadway in Grafton:

Mass DPW (now EOT/MassHighway) Inventory of Mileage, 1991

Administration	Number of Miles
State	10.01
Town	84
Mass. Turnpike Authority	4.43
Unaccepted	2.57
Within Grafton State Hospital	2.90
Total Mileage	96.07

Blackstone River Bikeway

Another important transportation element that is currently in the planning/design stages is the Blackstone River Bikeway. The Bikeway will ultimately extend forty-eight miles from Worcester, MA to Providence, RI passing through Grafton. Currently, various sections of the Bikeway are open to the public in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. When completed, the

Bikeway will provide a mostly off-road non-motorized transportation corridor through the historic John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The Corridor Commission has been instrumental in the formation of the Bikeway, working with Federal, State, Regional and local agencies to create an important recreational and cultural link within the Blackstone River Valley. The Blackstone Valley Bikeway will serve as an alternative mode of transportation for commuters as well as the region's premiere multi-use recreational facility. This bi-state linear State Park along the Blackstone River will connect New England's second and third largest cities serving a population of more than 1 million. The bikeway will link many of the Valley's significant natural and historic features.

The 3 mile stretch of the bikeway in Grafton will pass through the historic mill village communities of Farnumsville, Fisherville and Saundersville, further described in Section 4 of this document (Scenic Resources).

Freight and Air Transport

The Grafton & Upton, Providence & Worcester and CSX railroads pass through Grafton, providing freight rail service. Flex-van and Piggyback service are also available with connections from Worcester.

Worcester Municipal Airport is the closest air terminal. The airport has paved runways 7000, 5498, and 3900 feet long. The Worcester Airport witnessed extensive growth in passenger service in the late 1980's and early 1990's. However, there have been ground access problems and competition from Providence's T.F. Green Airport and, as of May 2007, there are no commercial flights in operation to the Airport. Opponents to further expansion of Boston's Logan Airport have suggested channeling some of the air traffic into Worcester.

In 1998, Worcester Airport provided service to 76,000 passengers, a 78% decline from its peak of 340,000 passengers in 1989. In 1993, \$25 million was spent to improve the runway and build a new terminal. In 1996, \$8 million was spent for new equipment.

Municipal Water System

All property within the bounds of Grafton is served by the Grafton Water District (GWD) or the South Grafton Water District (SGWD), these utilities are both separate from the Town of Grafton government.

The GWD is the larger of the two districts, serving 3825 connections with water mains located in the northern and central sections of Grafton. Its wells have a combined safe yield capacity of 3.4 million gallons per day (MGD). The principal assets of the system are four wells located in the areas of Follette Street, Worcester Street and East Street. The Town leases the Follette Street Well area to the District, all of the other well sites are owned by the District. The District has a water treatment facility on East Street, which treats those two wells for the removal of iron and manganese. The District has two standpipes that store water for fire emergencies and create pressure for the system when the pumps are off. These two standpipes are located on Pigeon Hill and Brigham Hill. The District is presently cooperatively working with the Grafton School Department for the use of a well site located behind the High School on Providence Road. This

well will supply water for the future growth of the community. The Districts headquarters are located at 44 Millbury Street in Grafton.

The SGWD with 1,068 customers is the smaller of the two districts serving Grafton. All 798 connections are metered and the system is able to supply a safe-yield of 300,000 gallons per day.

The water district pumps its water from three state-approved wells (two at Ferry Street and one at Providence Road). Two standpipes are used to develop water pressure (Leland Hill and Keith Hill), and distribution is effected via water mains located within the public ways. The water quality is reported as suitable.

Municipal Sewer System

The Town sewer system serves 2,500 customers in 1999 compared to 1,800 customers in 1991. The collection system and treatment plants are divided into three separate systems: 1) interceptor sewers; 2) pump stations, and 3) treatment plant.

Interceptor sewers are the main sewer lines that receive flows from lateral sewers and convey the flow directly to the pump station or treatment plant. They have been designed to carry peak flows (those which exceed the high flow for a 24 hour period) up to the year 2020, estimated on the basis of the total developed and developable acreage in their collection basins. The extension of the collection system is an on-going process by both the Town and developers. Contract No.9, which sewered a major portion of South Grafton, is now completed. Contract No. 10 has been designed and is being completed at this time. The industrial park being developed on the grounds of the old Grafton State Hospital and adjacent Tufts Veterinary School land is already served by the public sewer system.

The pump stations are presently operating at 15- 25 percent of the capacity during dry weather days and 30-50 percent during wet weather days (approximately 62 days per year). The only design problem appears that the flow velocity in the discharge pipe may exceed the acceptable limit during peak flows (defined as a flow that exceeds high flow for a 24 hour period). This is not an immediate problem and it will be addressed when the pump stations approach capacity.

The treatment plant has a design capacity of 1.6 million gallons per day (MGD) when all tanks are in use. This is based on a conservative overflow rate of 600 gallons per day/sq.ft. (600GPD/SF). When designing treatment plants, the overflow rates can range from 300 to 1300 GPD/SF. Operating data show that the plant can handle a higher flow than design capacity. The Grafton Waste Water Treatment Plant has treated 1.6 MGD for a period of several days using one-half of the tanks, but this may be too high a volume for the plant to handle on a constant basis. The plant can reportedly treat on a constant basis 2.4 MGD without violating any Discharge Permit conditions. The 1996 daily flow was 1.4 MGD, up from 1.0 MGD in 1991.

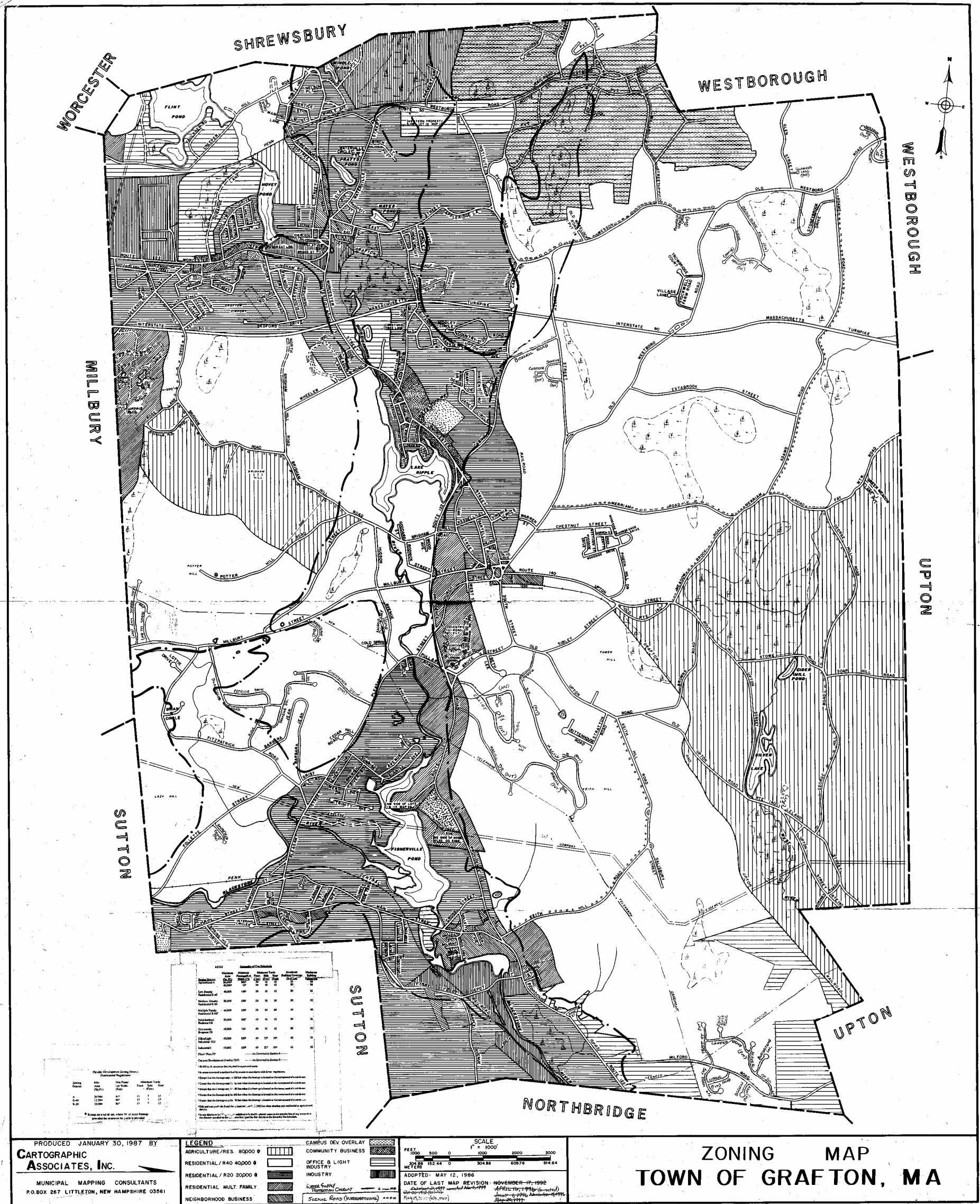
Long-Term Development Patterns: Grafton's zoning scheme allows for commercial and industrial development along its major State roads (Route 30, Route 122, Route 122A, and Route 140), while the remainder of the Town is zoned for low to medium density residential development. The minimum lot sizes for residential development range from 20,000 square feet

(medium density) to 80,000 square feet (low density). A graphic depiction of Grafton's zoning scheme can be found on the accompanying Zoning Map.

In 1999 the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) initiated an effort to prepare a buildout analysis for each community in the State. A buildout analysis attempts to determine what the town would look like at full buildout, that is, if the town were completely developed under the standards of current zoning. Existing developed lands, protected lands and land with environmental constraints was taken out of the equation, and the remaining developable land was divided by the dimensional standards (minimum lot size, frontage, setbacks, etc.) as set forth in the Town's Zoning Bylaw.

ZONING MAP

Next page.



It should be noted that a buildout analysis does not attempt to determine *when* a community will reach full buildout; rather, it is simply an attempt to determine what a community would look like if its remaining vacant land were developed according to the town’s current zoning standards. The town could alter its buildout results by making changes to dimensional requirements for new lots (lot size, frontage) or by permanently protecting more land in town. Thus a buildout analysis is fluid and represents but a snapshot in time.

The regional planning commissions were contracted to perform buildout studies for each community in their respective regions. In Grafton’s case, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) completed a buildout analysis for the Town in July 2000. A summary of Grafton’s buildout analysis is presented below.

**Table 9
Build-Out Projections**

	Residential Districts	Commercial & Industrial Districts	Totals
Net Buildable Area (Acres)	4,496	----	4,496
Buildable Lots	5,483	----	5,483
Buildable Square Feet	----	5,116,640	5,116,640
Water Use (GPD)	2,412,389	383,748	2,796,137
New Students	2,498	----	2,498
New Population	14,380	----	14,380

Source: CMRPC buildout analysis for Grafton, Massachusetts,

The buildout analysis indicates that Grafton is more than two thirds fully built out based on the current standards of the Town’s Zoning Bylaw. With a total land area of 14,528 acres, of which 10,032 acres are either developed, permanently protected or can’t be built on because of environmental constraints, this leaves 4,496 acres of vacant developable land in Town (or 69% of the Town’s land area). Looking towards the future, Grafton will most likely retain its present land use pattern of suburban residential development with its major State roads supporting the majority of the Town’s commercial and industrial uses.

The amount of new commercial/industrial floor space that could be created under the above buildout scenario is misleading. Although Grafton *may* have enough vacant developable land to accommodate as much as 5,116,640 square feet of new commercial/industrial floor space, much of the land in Grafton’s commercial and industrial districts is inaccessible and not easily developed.

CMRPC worked with the Town’s Economic Development Committee in 2004 to take a closer look at the buildout numbers and evaluate the true development potential of Grafton’s commercial and industrial zoning districts. According to this analysis, the amount of new commercial floor space that could be created in Grafton’s commercial and industrial zoning districts has been revised downward to a total of 2,465,478 square feet (2,340,068 square feet in the industrial districts and 125,410 square feet in the commercial districts). Grafton’s residential

buildout numbers can also be revised downward as the Town has protected several large tracts of land since the buildout analysis was performed in 2000. The buildout analysis results should be considered as a snapshot in time that will change as the Town's landscape changes. Build-out reflects current zoning, but zoning can be changed to encourage a different kind of future for the town.