

TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD
2026 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

I. Introduction

This Community Development Strategy (CDS) identifies West Brookfield’s community development goals and objectives over the short term and medium term, includes a funding plan for addressing them using various potential sources including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and provides a prioritized list of short-to-medium-term implementation actions. Development of this CDS was led by an ad hoc working group of local officials and staff with input from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. Goals were developed initially based on existing public planning efforts including the West Brookfield Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (2021), Master Plan (2017), and Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017). Opportunities for additional community input were provided through dissemination of the draft CDS to town staff, posting online and on social media, and discussion at a public forum held at the West Brookfield Senior Center on February 19, 2026.

II. Goals & Objectives (in no particular order)

1. Community Facilities, Infrastructure and Services

- a. Explore, develop and implement capital improvement priorities through the use of a capital improvement plan (CIP); conduct studies on town facilities and services to inform capital planning
- b. Assess and upgrade or replace town buildings as needed
- c. Apply for funding for Depot Area Neighborhood Infrastructure Planning Study to identify current conditions and create a phased implementation plan for physical improvements including water, drainage, sewer, road and sidewalk infrastructure
 - i. Implement program of replacing deficient, older water mains and other water system assets to meet environmental and fire flow guidelines
 - ii. Improve drainage and stormwater infrastructure to enhance functionality and to mitigate potential flooding

2. Transportation

- a. Create a safe and walkable community, one that encourages foot traffic
 - i. Explore the installation or improvement of sidewalks where appropriate to increase accessibility to local destinations and safety
 - ii. Improve the sidewalk system to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and increase pedestrian safety and access (esp. in the downtown area, where many residents walk to and from local businesses and recreation areas)
 - iii. Rehabilitate/repair sidewalks in the residential neighborhoods adjacent to downtown
- b. Encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic by designing facilities and systems that safely accommodate such traffic
 - i. Improve and/or enable bicycle infrastructure throughout town
- c. Replace and maintain roadway surfaces according to the future Infrastructure Study using methods and mechanisms that will reduce speeding, promote safety, and allow for ease of maintenance

3. Housing

- a. Provide affordable housing opportunities for longtime residents, first-time homebuyers and senior citizens
- b. Redevelop first by rehabilitating existing structures and underutilized properties.

4. Economic Development

- a. Develop the infrastructure necessary to encourage new economic development within the downtown area
 - b. Encourage the reuse of existing structures and vacant properties for the purpose of new economic development
 - c. Provide incentives for commercial and residential development
5. Access for Disabled Residents
- a. Apply for funds to create an updated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan
 - b. Implement the priorities identified in the completed ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan; pursue resources and address areas of noncompliance in town services, employment, facilities and infrastructure (also see Transportation above)
6. Natural Hazard & Climate Resilience
- a. Improve deficient stormwater drainage infrastructure to meet current and long-term needs (also see Community Facilities, Infrastructure and Services above)
 - b. Enhance tree trimming efforts to mitigate risks to electric utilities and homes from severe storms
7. Historic & Cultural Resources
- a. Preserve historic properties through acquisition and/or rehabilitation (esp. those in West Brookfield Center and the Wickabog Valley Historic District)
 - b. Update zoning or other bylaws to include historic preservation aspects
8. Open Space & Recreation
- a) Rehabilitate and improve existing aging and deteriorated town parks, playing fields, trails and other recreational areas
 - b) Improve accessibility for disabled persons at parks and recreational areas
 - c) Preserve open space in scenic landscapes for habitat and water quality protection
9. Land Use & Development
- a. Rezone where needed for suitable economic development where the necessary infrastructure exists to service such development
 - b. Create a vibrant and attractive town center

III. Funding Plan

Goal	Potential Funds & Resources	Lead Entities
1	Local; CDBG; other state/fed grants and loans	Board of Selectmen; Financial Committee; facility- and utility-specific departments
2	Local; CDBG; Chapter 90; CMMPO (TIP); other state/fed grants and loans	Board of Selectmen; Highway Department
3	Local; CDBG; other state/fed grants and loans; external partners	Board of Selectmen; Planning Board
4	Local; CDBG; Mass. EOHEd and EDA grants; QVCDC; other state/fed grants and loans	Board of Selectmen; Planning Board
5	Local; CDBG; MOD grants; other state/fed grants and loans	Board of Selectmen; ADA Coordinator
6	Local; CDBG; FEMA and EOEEA grants; other state/fed grants and loans	Highway Department; Water Department; Emergency Mgmt.
7	Local; CDBG; MOD grants; other state/fed grants and loans	Historical Commission; Cultural Council
8	Local; CDBG; other state/fed grants and loans	Conservation Comm.; Recreation Committee
9	Local; CDBG; other state/fed grants and loans	Planning Board

IV. Priority Actions

The following actions have been prioritized based on community and public input.

Prioritized for the short term (appx. FY 2026 – 2027):

- Goals 1/2/4/5/6/7/8: Apply for funding for the Depot Area Infrastructure Planning Study; begin to implement the recommendations of the study (once completed) through design and/or construction of projects, starting on the highest priority street.
- Goals 1/2/3/5: Begin infrastructure physical improvements program in West Brookfield Center, beginning on Front Street.
- Goals 1/5: Apply for funding for an ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan; create plan with focused implementation to enhance accessibility throughout town

Prioritized for the medium term (appx. FY 2028 – 2030):

- Goals 1/2/4/5/6: Continue to rehabilitate/upgrade/replace public works and transportation infrastructure in accordance with the completed Infrastructure Planning Study, or other facilities/properties plans
- Goals 1/5: Focus initial implementation of the completed ADA Plan on building access issues prioritized in the plan and pedestrian network in and around the downtown area