



**Town of Longmeadow  
3-Year Strategic Plan  
2007-2010**

Town Forum  
March 8, 2007



# Mission

## To preserve:

- Safe and open community
- Residential and historical character
- Beautiful parks and open spaces
- Commitment to academic excellence
- Outstanding town services

-- Longmeadow Long Range Plan, 2004

# Priorities 2007-2010

- I. Protection of Assets and Resources
- II. Land Use Regulation
- III. Fiscal Stability

# Assets: Buildings

- Longmeadow has about \$1,000,000,000 in the insured value of town buildings and grounds
- Years of deferred maintenance have caused most buildings to have serious repair and renovation needs.

# Problems

- Handicap accessibility
- Mechanical problems with heating, lighting and electricity
- Leaking and rotting windows and doors
- Peeling paint, rotting wood

# Buildings most in need

- Town Yard
- Community House
- Glenbrook Middle School
- Williams Middle School
- High School
- Greenwood Senior Center
- Town Hall

# Example: Community House



# Community House Exterior

- Peeling paint
- Broken bricks & mortar
- Rotting woodwork
- Slates off roof



# Progress on Protecting Buildings

- An RFP has been issued for a survey by an independent architectural/engineering firm to determine comparative needs of town buildings
- A Facilities Improvement Committee has been formed to develop a plan for meeting those needs.
- Initial applications for state funding for the middle schools and high school are being prepared.
- Maintenance of all buildings has been consolidated under the DPW as required in the Charter.
- A detailed maintenance plan has been developed and included in the 2008 budget.
- Additional resources have been directed to maintenance.

## Next Steps: 2008-2010

- Set priorities for building repair, renovation, or replacement
- Negotiate reimbursement from the state for schools
- Determine willingness of town to invest in buildings
- Improve regular maintenance to prevent further deterioration and protect those buildings now in good condition.

## Asset: Open Space

- The Town is the largest landowner of open space in Longmeadow with 23.1% of all land in town in agricultural or open space.

-- Longmeadow Long Range Plan, 2004

# Open Space Needs

- Parks
- Terraces
- The Green
- Traffic Islands
- Playing fields
- Building grounds
- The Meadows
- Mowing
- Raking
- Pruning
- Planting
- Tree removal and replacement
- Frequent and timely maintenance of playing fields for both safety and performance of players

## Progress on Protecting Open Space

- Consolidation of grounds maintenance under DPW as required by the Charter
- Increased efficiency and professionalism of staff
- Grounds worker specifically for Russell Field and the football field in the 2008 budget
- A citizen Tree Committee formed to advise on our “urban forest” and to seek grants for improvements
- Continued beautification of building grounds and traffic islands by Gardeners on the Green

## Next Steps: 2008-2010

- Irrigation systems for playing fields
- Fences to limit access to playing fields
- Additional grounds workers

# Asset: Infrastructure

- Water distribution
- Sewers
- Storm Drains
- Roads
- Sidewalks

# Problems

- Broken water mains
- Sewer back-ups and line breaks
- Broken and overflowing storm drains
- Floods and washouts
- No water tower maintenance
- No plan for ongoing replacement and repair

# Progress

- Wheelmeadow Brook Sewer project to replace sewer pipe now in the brook from Laurel Street to the river along with some water pipe and storm drains
- RFP's out for infrastructure studies of water, sewer and storm drain systems
- Water and sewer rate study being done by independent firm
- Water Tower cleaned

## Next Steps

- Finish Wheelmeadow Brook Sewer Project in fall of 2007
- Plan a system of repair and replacement for infrastructure components.
- Set water and sewer rates to support a well-functioning water and sewer system.
- Seek grants and low interest loans where possible.

## Resource: The Environment

- Longmeadow is situated in an environmentally sensitive area along the Connecticut River
- Numerous streams criss-cross the town and end in the river
- Large flood plain and conservation area along the river

## Department of Environmental Protection Suit

- Longmeadow was sued by the DEP for numerous environmental violations mostly occurring in the Meadows
- Settled in 2005 with a fine of \$100,000 paid and another \$150,000 suspended provided the town complied with conditions until 2010.

# Progress

- Asbestos abatement
- Delineation of wetlands
- Development of Environmental Management System (EMS) providing regular testing, monitoring and training
- Removal of underground storage tanks
- Initial assessment of dump sites
- Wheelmeadow Brook Sewer Project
- Other specifics at [longmeadow.org](http://longmeadow.org) on the Select Board page

## Next Steps

- Finish Wheelmeadow Brook Sewer Project
- Make educational materials about our environmental management system available to other towns
- Remediate dump sites as required by the DEP\*

\*New town yard facility cannot be planned until remediation has been completed.

## II. Land Use Regulation

- Longmeadow is nearly totally built out.
- However, developers have become more creative, planning to build where houses have never been imagined and to go to court if necessary.
- Issues facing our land-use boards\* are complicated, innovative, and based on evolving law.

\*Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals,  
Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission

# Example: Demolition and subdivision at end of Chandler Avenue



# Example: Demolition and subdivision at 5 Laurel Street



# Example: Demolition and subdivision at 154 Williams Street behind Falmouth Road



# Example: Demolition and subdivision at 1657 Longmeadow Street



# Progress

- Hired a municipal law firm with specialists in land-use
- Conducted training of land-use boards for holding hearings, documenting decisions, and conflict of interest
- Developed new subdivision regulations with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Created a Community Planning Department with regular meetings of land-use boards to share information. The Town Manager serves as interim Chair as per the Town Charter.

# Next Steps

- Review and revise Zoning Bylaws with assistance of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Improve application and documentation procedures
- Hire an Assistant Director of Planning to
  - Chair Community Planning Department
  - Provide technical assistance to boards and to citizens wishing to renovate
  - Write grants for special projects
  - Help Planning Board implement Long Range Plan

# III. Fiscal Stability: Challenges

- Limitations of Prop 2 ½
  - Annual increase of revenues from property taxes may not exceed 2 ½% + new growth
- Uncertainty and low amount of state aid
- Unfunded state mandates, such as Special Education, and environmental compliance costs
- Uncontrollable costs, such as health insurance and energy
- Emergencies, such as the washout on Captain Road
- Capital needs

# Progress 1

- Creation of mechanisms for unforeseen needs:
  - Finance Committee reserve fund (\$100,000 annually)
  - Operational Stabilization fund (~\$1,500,000)
  - Capital Stabilization fund (2% of budget, ~\$800,00 annually)
  - Water and Sewer retained earnings (~\$1,000,000)

# Progress 2

- Increase Revenue

- Conducted annual fee reviews and updates
- Sold obsolete and unused assets, such as tax foreclosed land, equipment and supplies
- Identified and pursued money owed to the town

# Progress 3

- Decrease Costs
  - Outsourced services such as mailing of tax bills for substantial savings
  - Hired Purchasing Agent to seek out lowest cost for all services and supplies (saved \$82,000 in 2006)
  - Reconfigured trash service to reduce disposal costs and raise income from recycling (net of \$123,000 in the first 6 months of the program)

## Next Steps

- Complete comprehensive assessment of facility and infrastructure needs.
- Develop program of planned replacement of capital assets, infrastructure, roofs, boilers, cars, trucks, etc.
- Develop 3-5 year financial plans
- Consider an initial override

# About Overrides

- Operational overrides
  - Increases the tax base permanently; appropriate for rising costs that are unlikely to decrease in future
- Debt exclusion overrides
  - Increases taxes for the term of the debt; appropriate for large capital needs
- Capital exclusion overrides
  - One-time capital override for specific projects too small to be bonded

# Overrides in Longmeadow

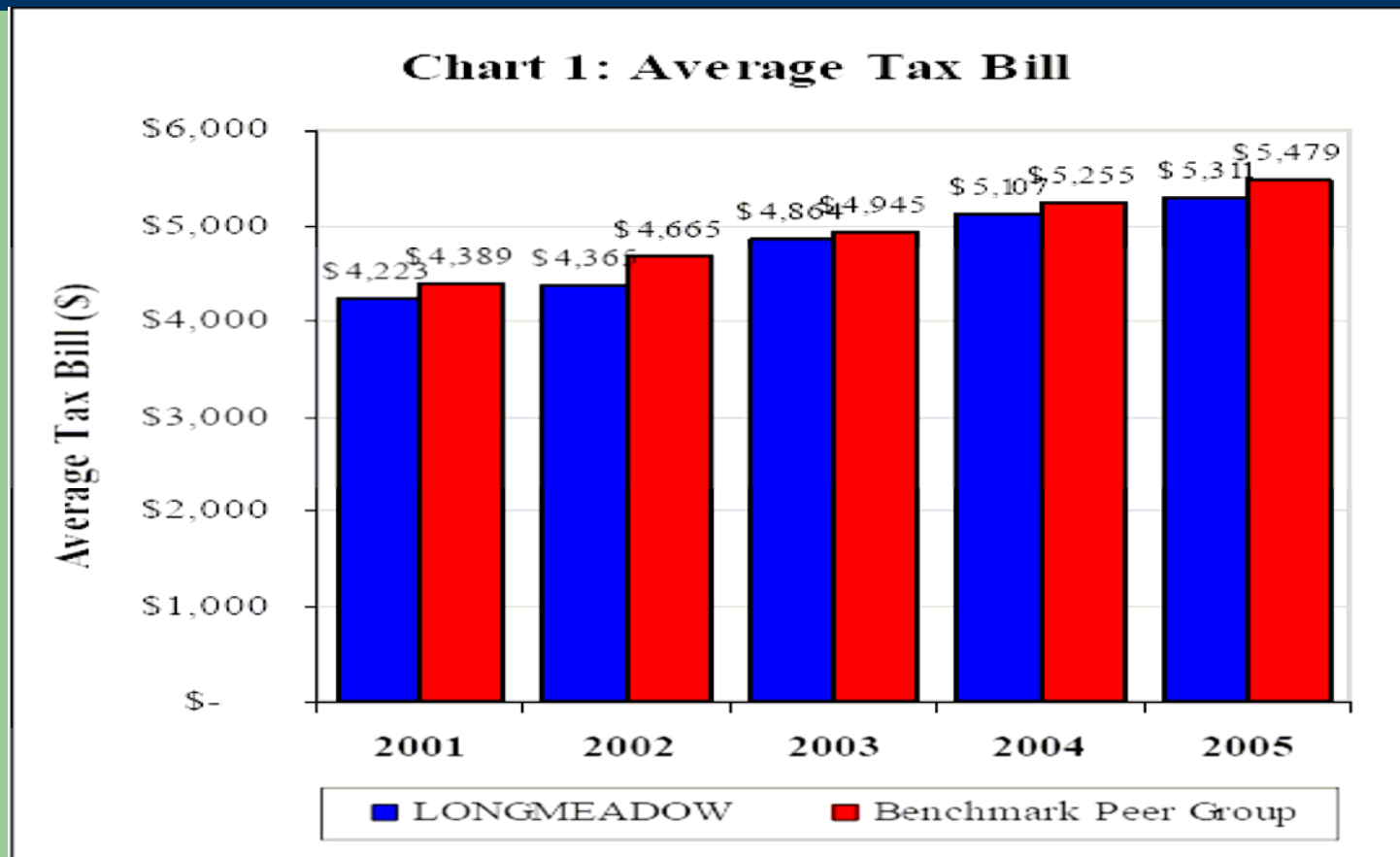
- Operational overrides
  - Passed FY 87, FY 91, FY 03
  - Failed FY 84, FY 03, FY 05
- Debt exclusion overrides
  - Passed FY 87(2), FY 90, FY 94, FY 00, FY 02.  
FY 03
- Capital overrides
  - Passed FY 94

# **MUNICIPAL BENCHMARKING, LLC**

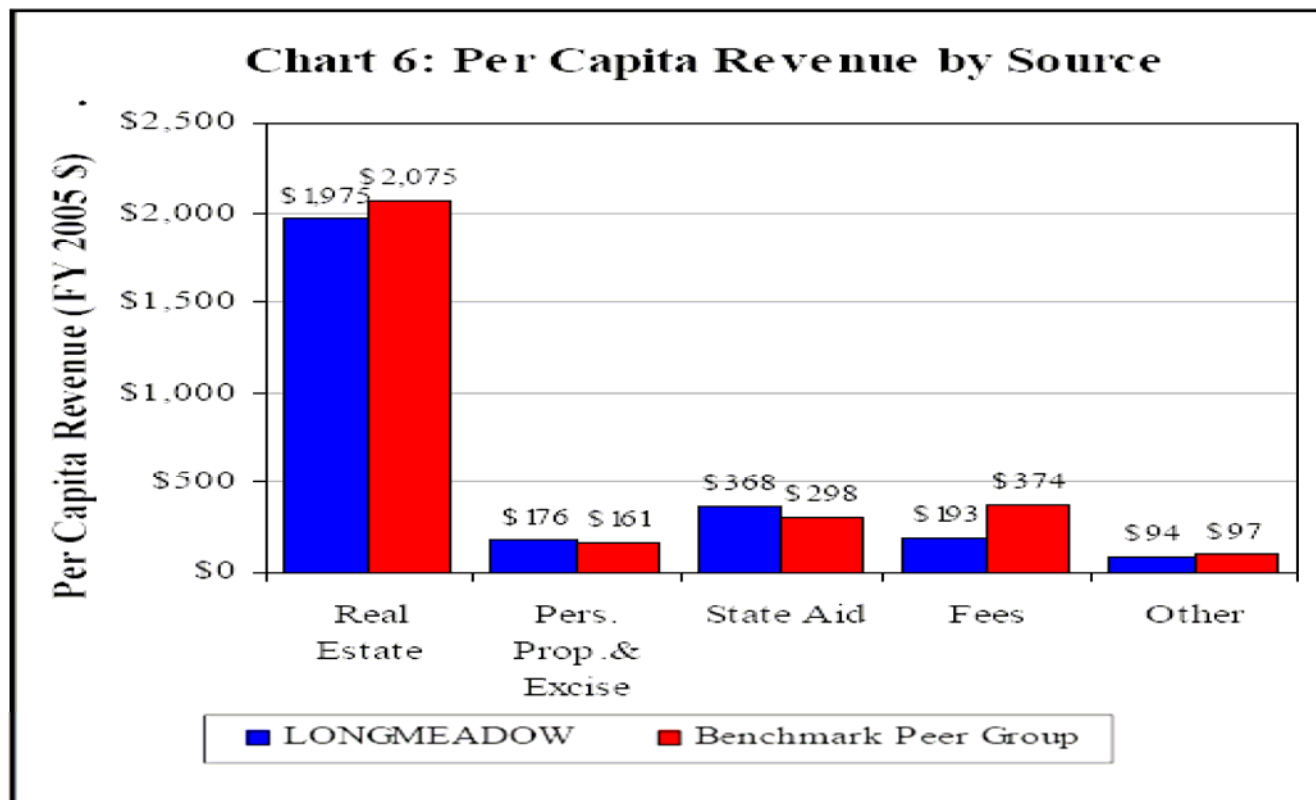
## ***CITIZEN'S REPORT: LONGMEADOW***

A general comparison of Longmeadow to 20 pre-selected peer communities (which include Duxbury, Wayland, Winchester, Milford, Weston, Bedford, among others - all eastern communities). Not a comprehensive benchmarking study but a starting point to assess our overall finances.

# Average Tax Bill

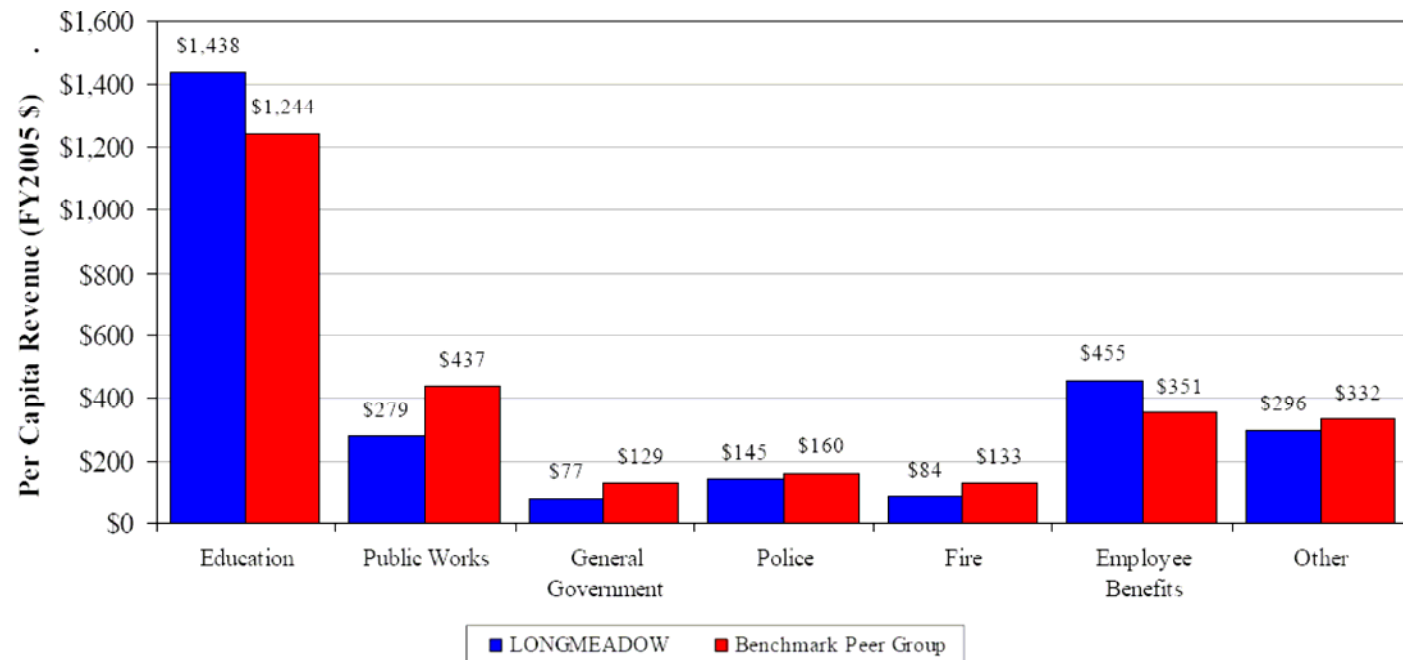


# Per Capita Revenue by Source

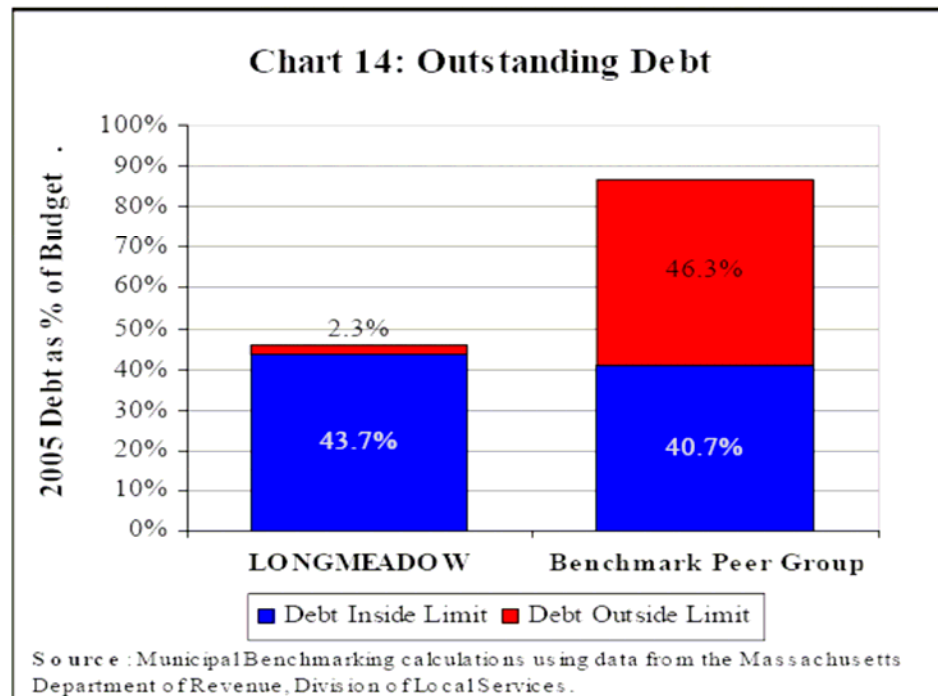


# Per Capita Spending by Use

Chart 10: Per Capita Expenditures by Use



# Outstanding Debt



# Conclusion

These 3 priorities will serve as guidelines when decisions have to be made about allocating or reallocating resources.

- I. Protection of Assets and Resources
- II. Land Use Regulation
- III. Fiscal Stability