

Peer Communities

What are we Trying to Solve?

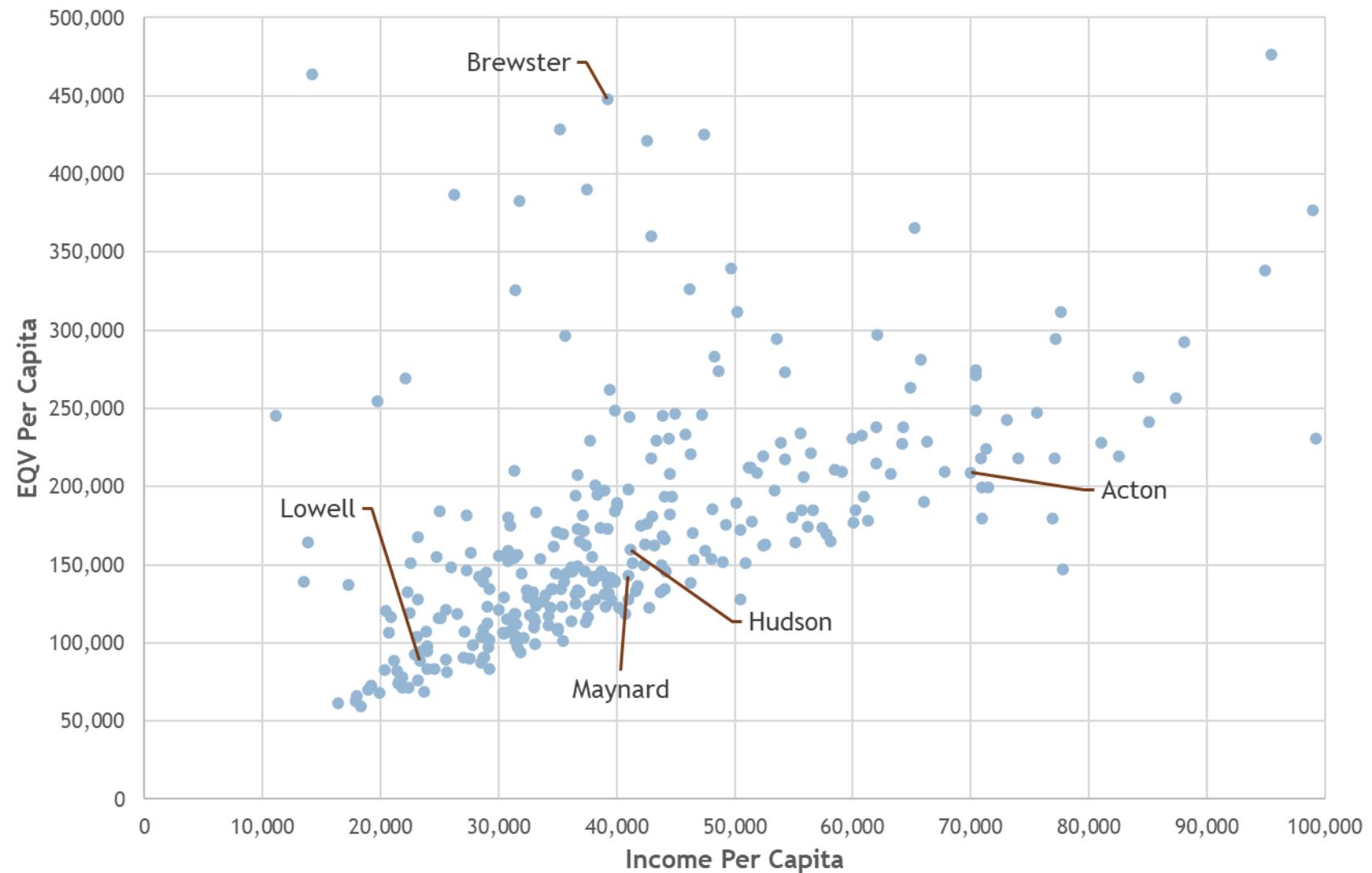
- This started when I tried to put some numbers behind the big questions we ask ourselves.
 - Why are our taxes high?
 - How high are they?
 - Where is our money going?
 - Are we spending it wisely?
 - How much should it cost to run each Department?
 - Do we need an override?
 - Are we getting our fair share of state aid?
- Each of these questions were better answered by looking at similar communities, rather than absolute numbers
- Picking towns that are similar to Maynard can help us:
 - Answer questions like the ones above
 - Give people an accurate picture of how their town is doing
 - Separate out town trends from state trends
 - Advocate for ourselves at the State level

Historic Trends vs Peer Communities

- We focus on trends: budgets are always compared to the previous years
- Trends are imperfect when towns are asked to do more (increasing regulations for water quality, higher standards for schools, newer equipment/duties for police/fire)
- We do currently look at peer communities, but usually as a gut check

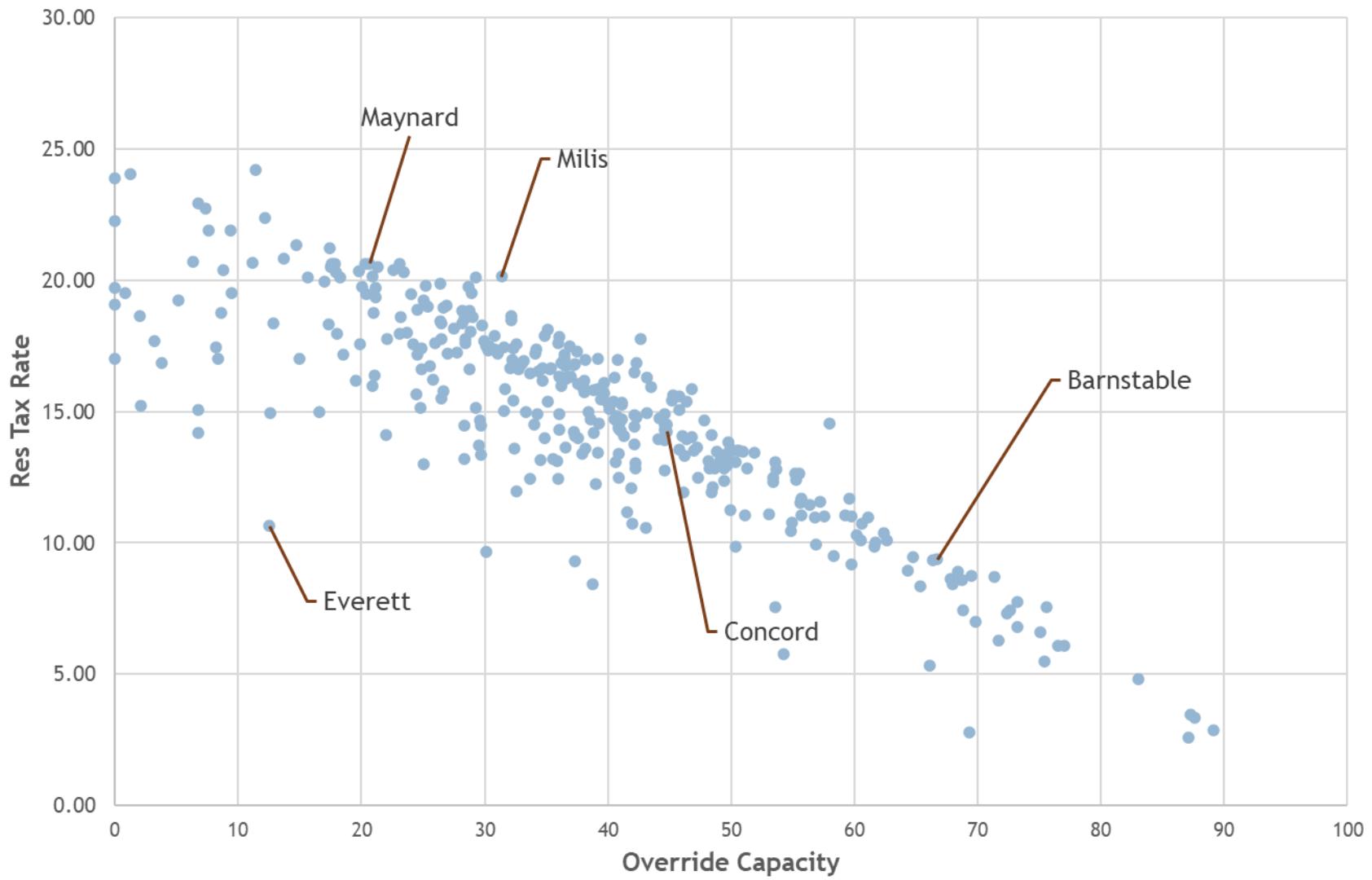
Maynard within Massachusetts

- Each dot is a MA town or city
- All 351 communities plotted
- Maynard property values are in line with incomes



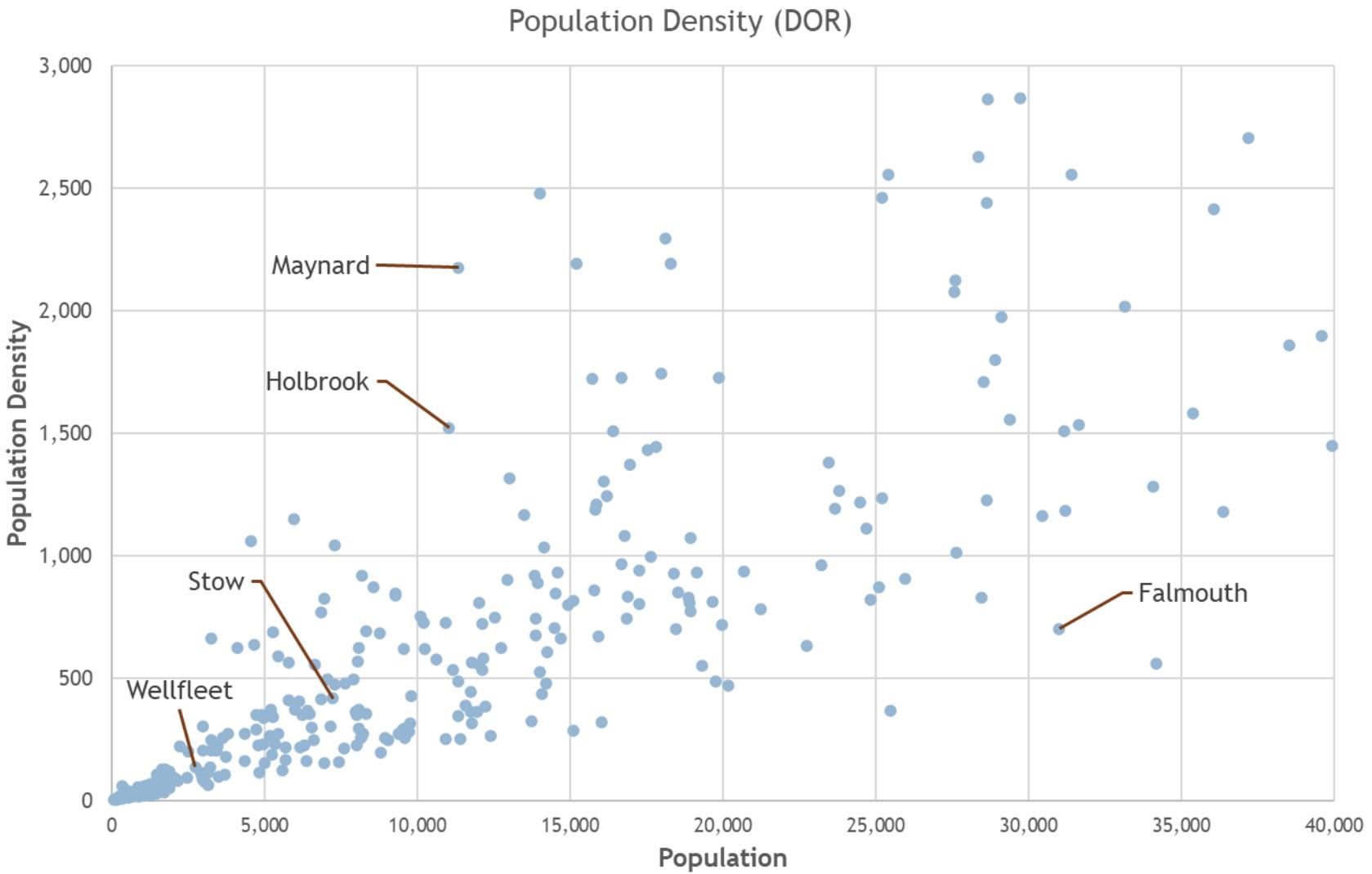
Maynard within Massachusetts

- Maynard taxes are high relative to the state
- We have some capacity for an override



Maynard within Massachusetts

- Maynard is very dense given its population



Factor Analysis

1. Choose factors/collect data
2. Normalize each data set
3. Weight factors
4. Calculate similarity score between Maynard and each town

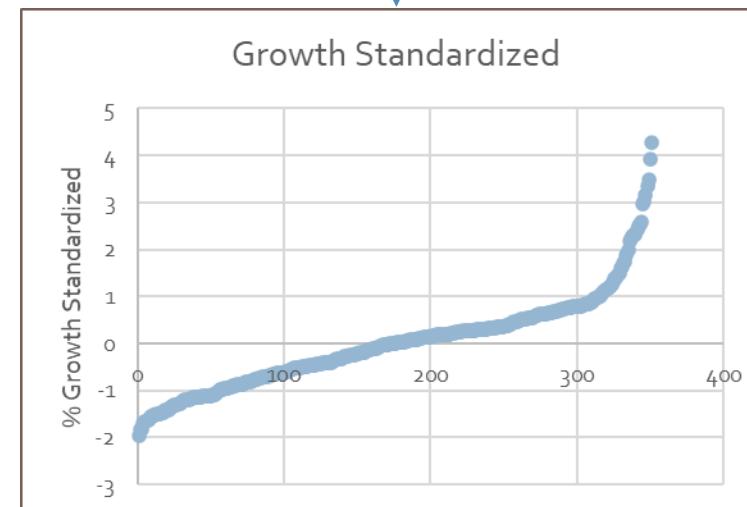
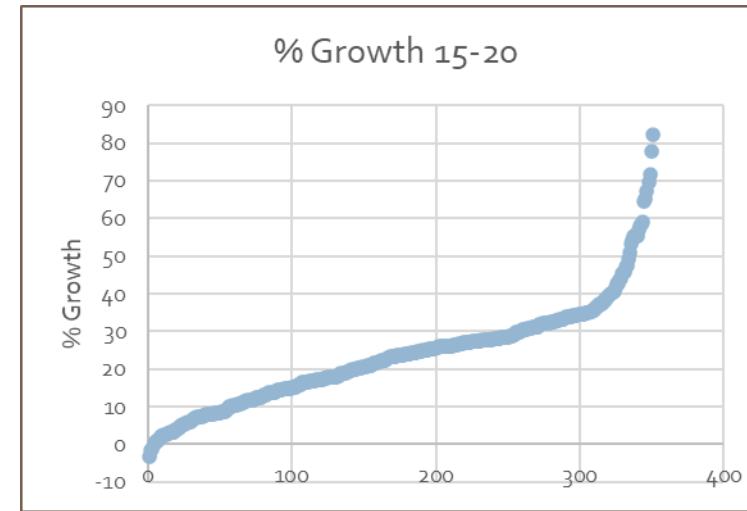
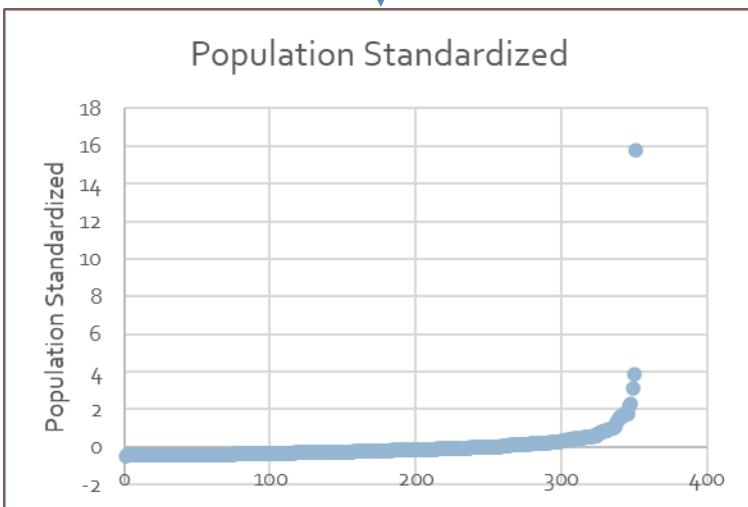
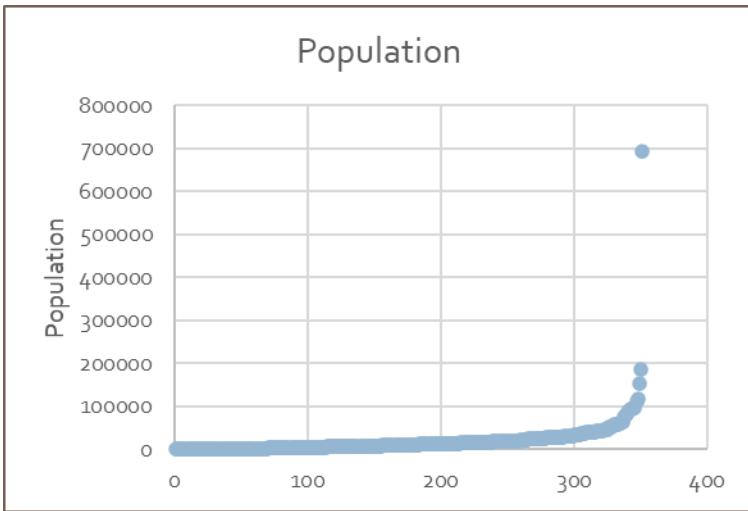
Factor Analysis

1. Choose factors/collect data

- Good factors are relevant to municipal governance, and are available for all 351 towns from a reliable data source (DOR)
- Data from all 351 Massachusetts Towns and Cities
- 8 factors:
 - Population
 - Income Per Capita
 - Override Capacity
 - Assessed Value Growth Over Last 5 years
 - Population Density
 - EQV (Total Assessed Property Value) Per Capita
 - % CIP
 - Relative Income (Difference between a town's income and that of any neighbor within a 10-mile range)

Factor Analysis

2. Normalize data



Factor Analysis

3. Factor Weighting

Factor	Population	Income Per Capita	EQV	Override Capacity	% Growth 15-20	Population Density	CIP %	Relative Income
Maynard	11336	40982	142908	20.67	30.74769	2176	9.3957	-48735.5
Weight	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1



Factor	Population	Income Per Capita	EQV	Override Capacity	% Growth 15-20	Population Density	CIP %	Relative Income
Maynard	11336	40982	142908	20.67	30.74769	2176	9.3957	-48735.5
Weight	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	1

- This is subjective (as were earlier decisions), we want to explain the reasoning for a given weighting
- Different weightings may be appropriate for different comparisons (i.e. spending on roads vs education)

Factor Analysis

4. Calculate similarity score between Maynard and each other town

Weighted sum of least squares:

Municipality	Pop Rank	Income per	EQV	Override	% Growth	Pop Density	%CIP Rank	Relative Income	SUM
Marlborough	1.321061	0.013745	0.020847	0.632074	0.360028	0.011429	8.760943	1.211801	12.33192734
Marshfield	0.354076	0.266857	0.107094	2.76233	1.228141	0.236434	0.076116	4.590218	9.621267596
Mashpee	0.013843	0.006333	1.735681	6.22094	0.730427	0.360976	0.008812	4.868816	13.94582995
Mattapoisett	0.040283	1.092279	0.532207	2.581244	2.642732	0.479406	0.128282	15.10695	22.60338604
Maynard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medfield	0.004336	8.355101	0.172042	0.773626	2.16392	0.23905	0.270875	13.62489	25.60383664
Medford	3.500725	0.009008	0.126641	4.992147	8.166759	3.529478	0.022495	2.395691	22.7429436
Medway	0.007596	0.53257	0.039841	0.308827	0.439478	0.149179	3.422534	5.408221	10.30824553
Melrose	0.460193	0.588342	0.139024	3.998286	4.352736	2.131261	0.366535	5.895564	17.93194024

Results

Hudson, Millis, Ashland and Holbrook are the four towns most similar to Maynard using the factors and weightings presented

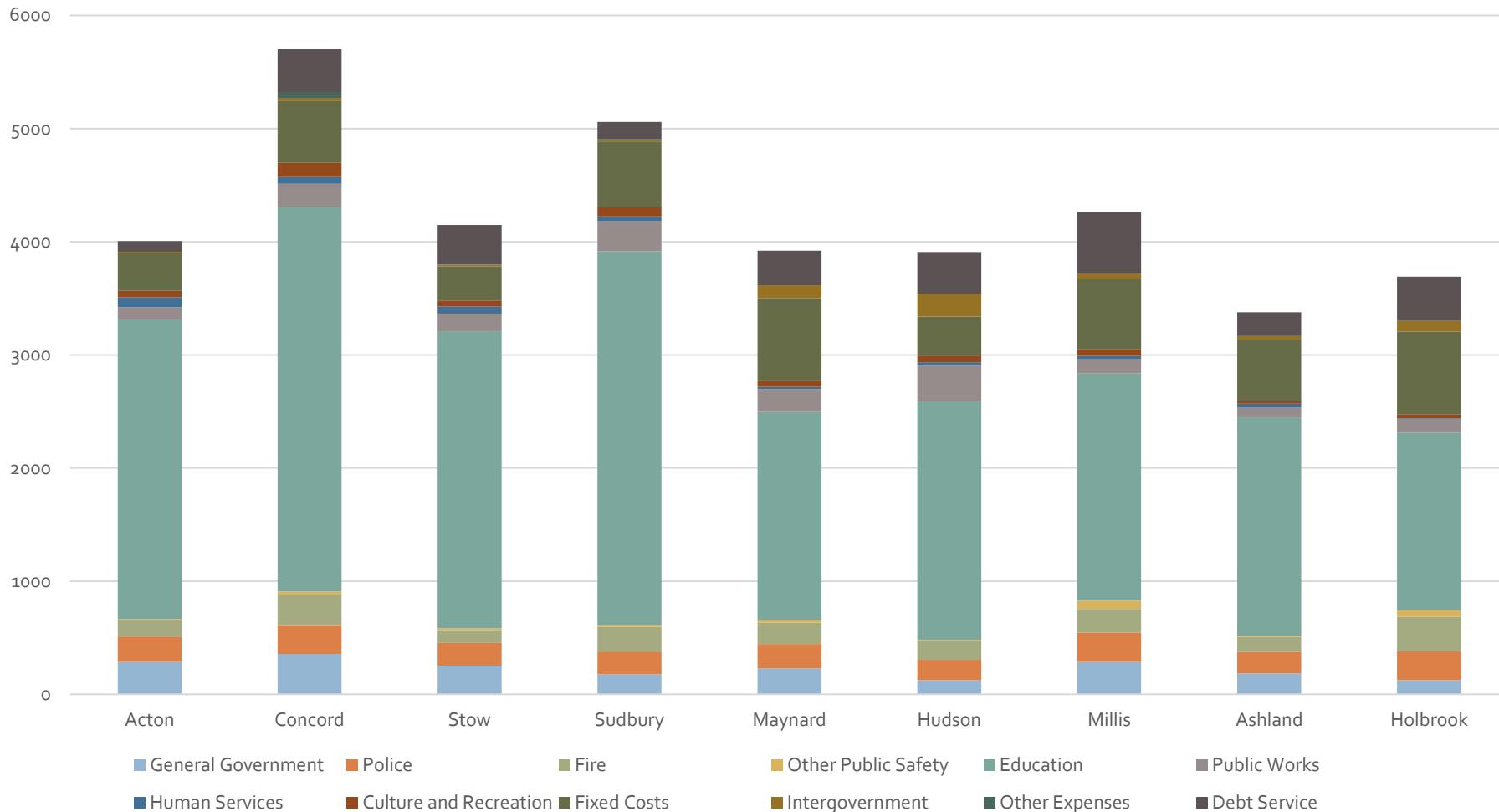
Other towns we look at include Clinton (15/350), and Littleton (43/350)

Our Neighbors are 64 (Acton), 106 (Stow), 313 (Sudbury) 332 (Concord)

Municipality	Pop Rank	Income per	EQV	Override	% Growth	Pop Density	%CIP Rank	Relative Income	SUM
Maynard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hudson	0.120294	9.65E-05	0.006129	0.212967	0.150861	0.029996	0.4358	1.378065	2.334208523
Millis	0.015146	0.073625	0.017216	0.372774	0.74637	0.323772	0.014848	2.131991	3.69574124
Ashland	0.069261	0.475051	0.031783	0.989888	0.130751	0.07867	0.000531	2.201748	3.977683026
Holbrook	0.000152	0.17175	0.002687	0.109357	0.066695	0.062797	0.379602	3.274746	4.067787294
Barre	0.054839	0.481226	0.060707	0.33408	0.261579	0.617013	0.20653	2.435802	4.451776146
Pepperell	0.001001	0.00935	0.009035	1.003573	0.0246	0.394888	0.200735	3.037468	4.680650475
Warren	0.06183	1.051394	0.082168	0.014523	0.031062	0.579089	1.037525	1.882238	4.739829403
Hopedale	0.047964	0.025175	0.000185	0.056723	0.233619	0.154253	0.143113	4.142192	4.803224553

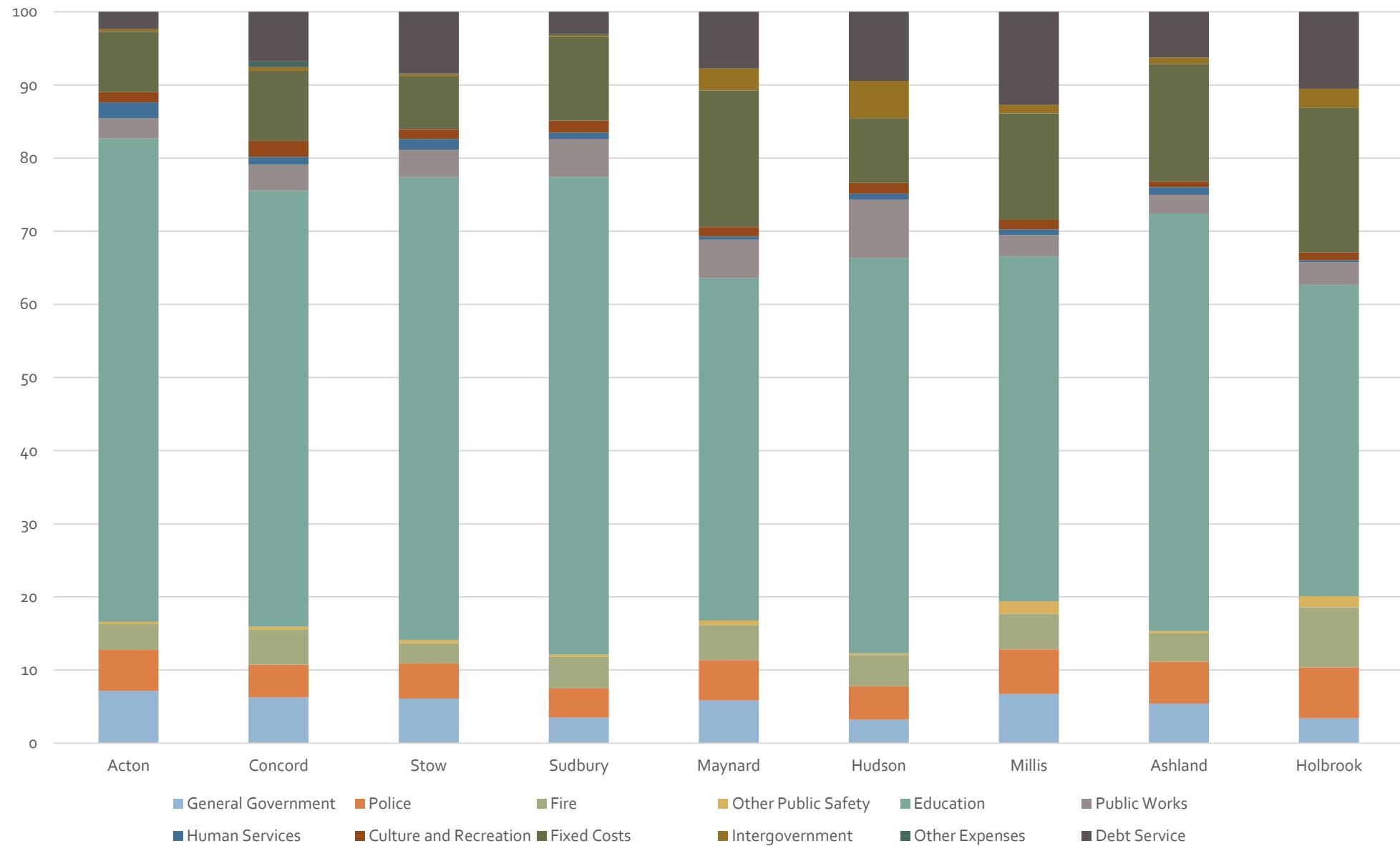
Spending

Per Capita GF Spending by Dept

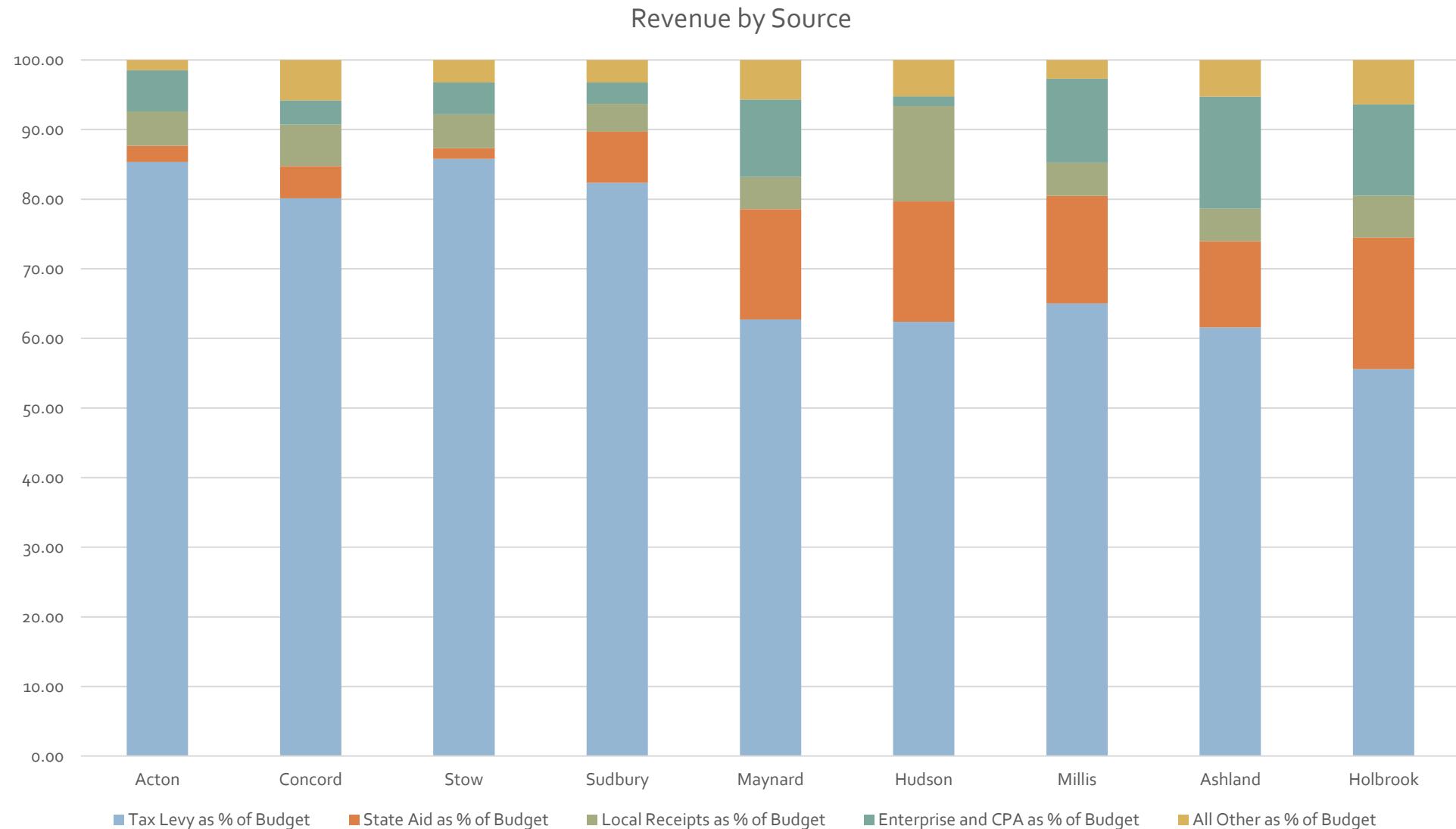


Spending

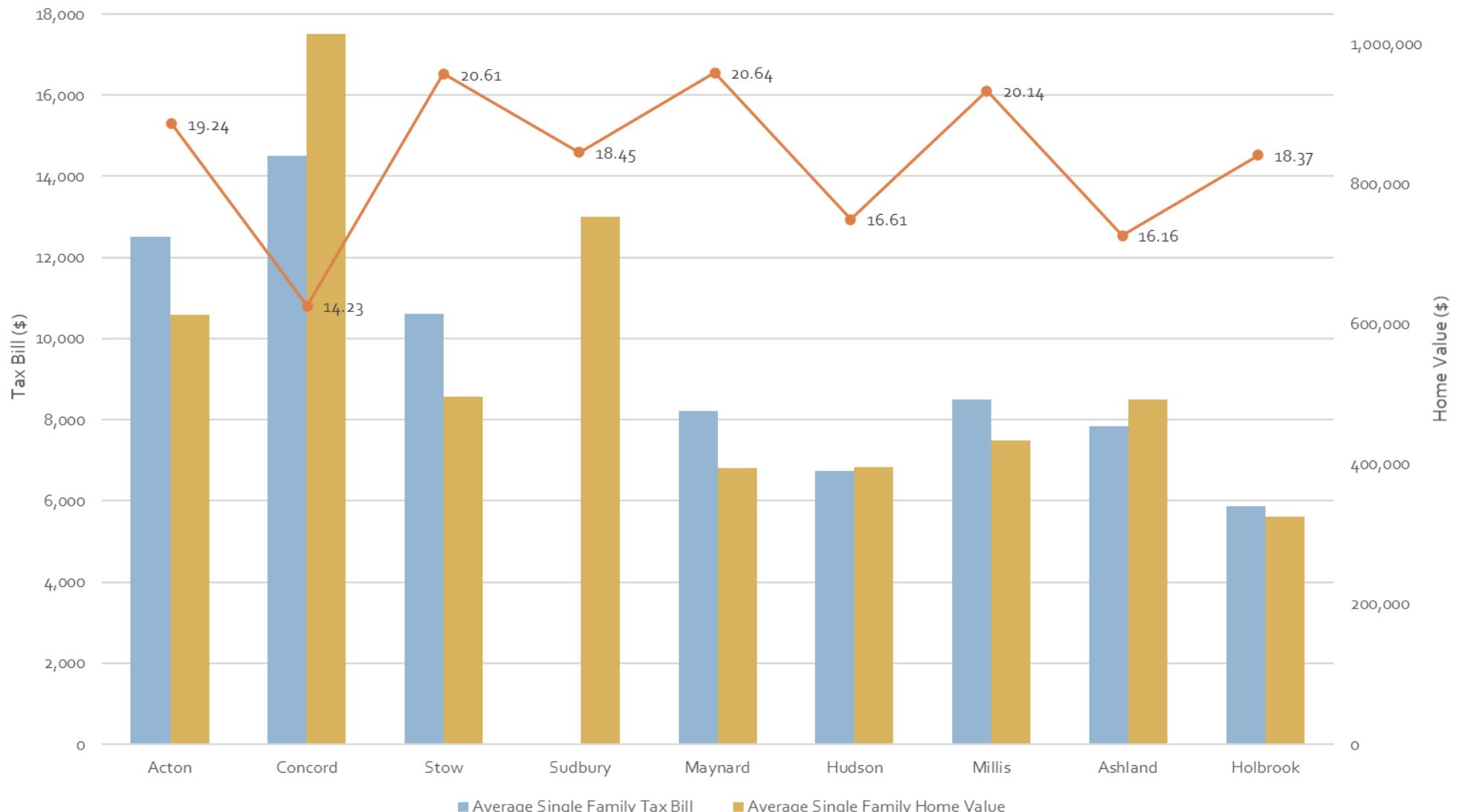
GF Spending by Dept



Revenue



Residential Tax Rates and Bills





Concluding Thoughts

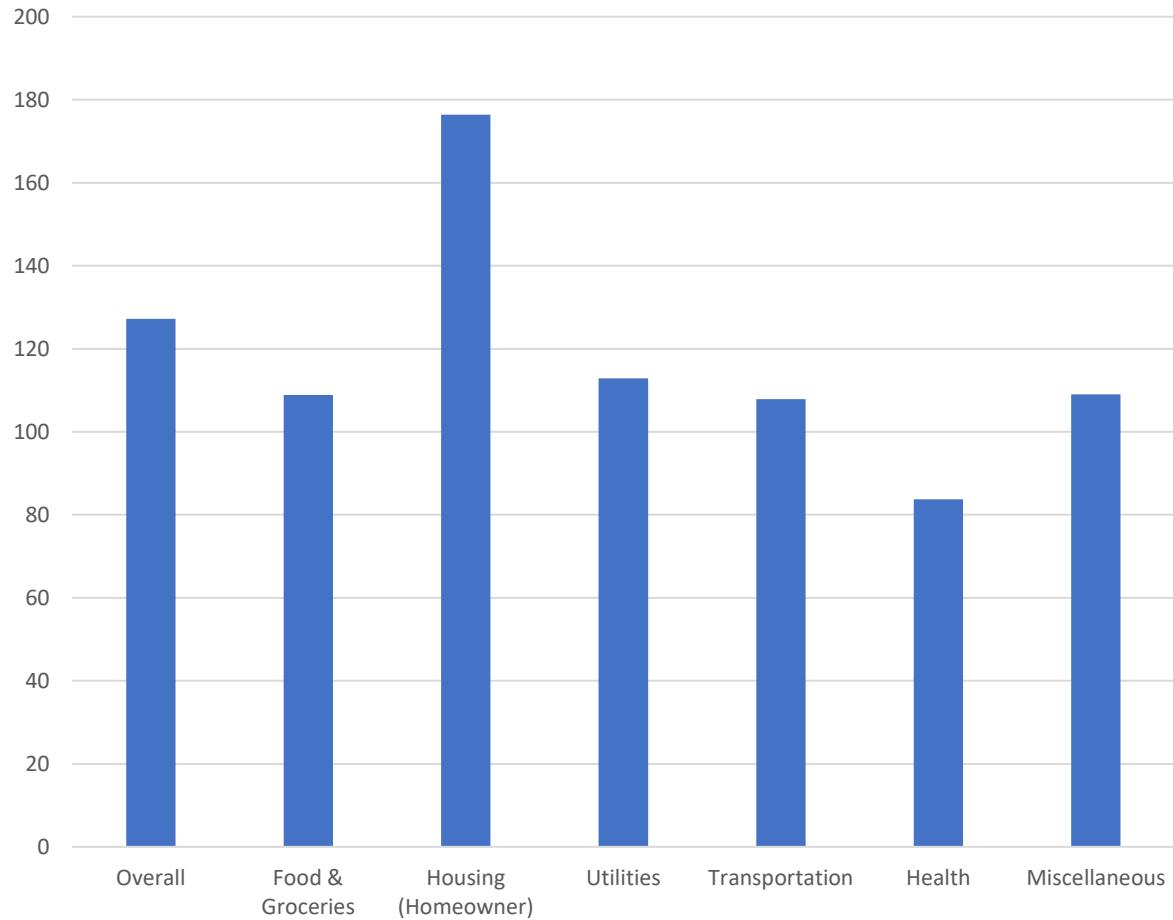
- This is a tool, not a result.
 - When we see a difference between Maynard and our peers our first reaction should not be to match our peers, but rather to ask “why does this difference exist?”
- Further Improvements?
- What Questions do we want to ask?
 - Why are our taxes high? (and how high are they, relative to comparable communities?)
 - Are we spending our money wisely?
 - If no, where are we misspending, and how do we address it?
 - If yes, how do we demonstrate that to the taxpayers?
 - Are we getting our fair share of state aid?
- We can use this to see if what we’re putting into a given department is in line with our peers, but other metrics are needed to determine if the level of service meets expectations

Cost of Living

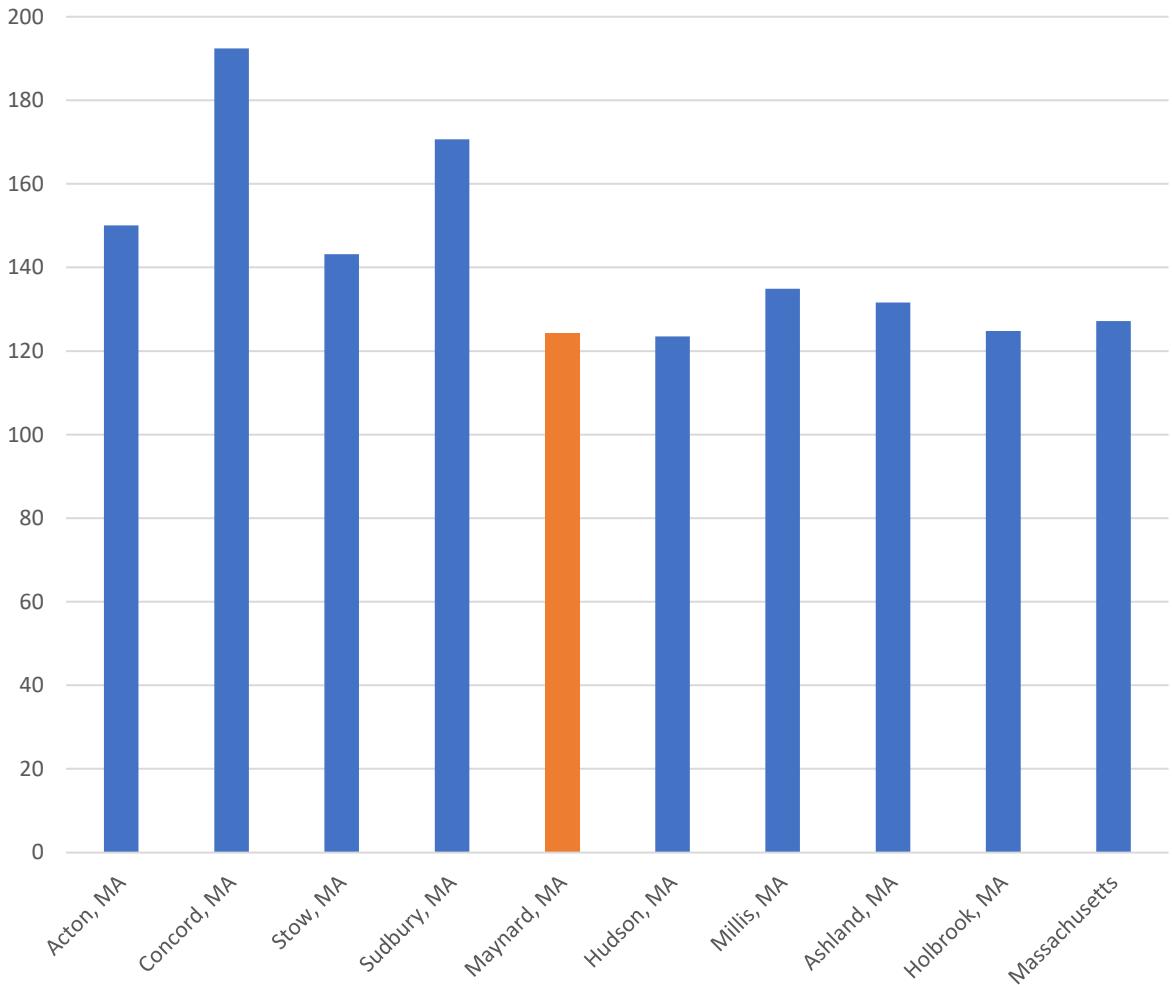
Cost of Living Indexes	Acton, MA	Concord, MA	Stow, MA	Sudbury, MA	Maynard, MA	Hudson, MA	Millis, MA	Ashland, MA	Holbrook, MA	Massachusetts
<u>Overall</u>	150.1	192.4	143.2	170.7	124.3	123.5	134.9	131.6	124.8	127.2
<u>Food & Groceries</u>	111.6	117.1	110.5	114.4	107.8	107.6	108.3	108.1	107.2	108.9
<u>Housing (Homeowner)</u>	248.7	388.8	217.4	314.1	166.4	163.8	177.9	172.2	142.6	176.4
<u>Utilities</u>	117.1	116	112.4	113.3	115	112.4	120.6	113.4	107.5	112.9
<u>Transportation</u>	106.1	102.3	101.8	103.6	98.6	99.1	127.2	108	135	107.9
<u>Health</u>	89	89	89	89	89	89	89.6	89	88.3	83.7
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	125.3	125.1	125	125.2	123.8	123.9	114.6	125.7	114.3	109
<u>Median Home Cost</u>	\$694,700	\$1,098,200	\$643,500	\$895,100	\$474,100	\$467,600	\$526,500	\$520,900	\$428,600	\$510,500

SOURCE: <https://www.bestplaces.net/cost-of-living/>

Massachusetts COL
100 = National Average

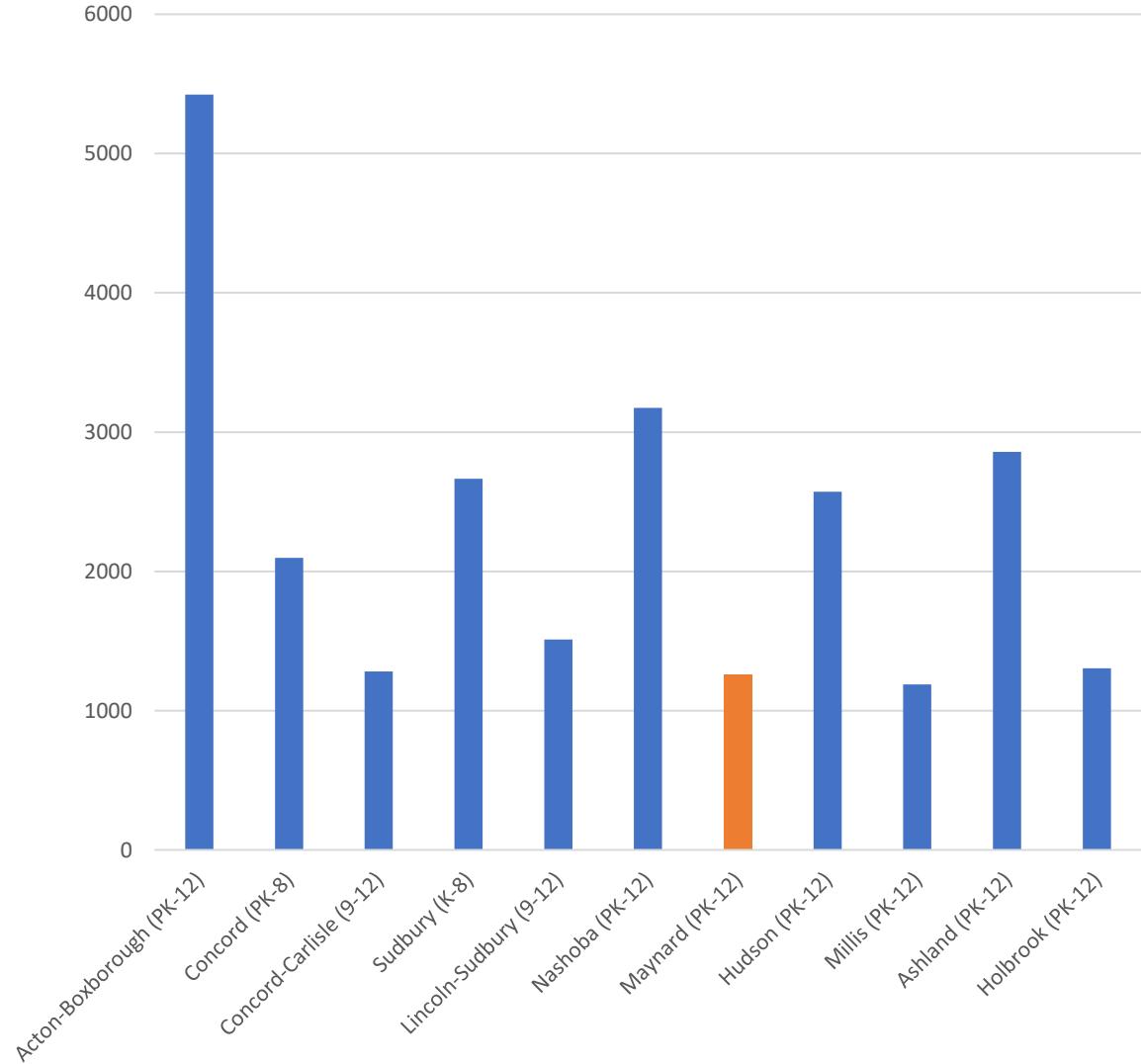


Overall Cost of Living Index
100 = National Average

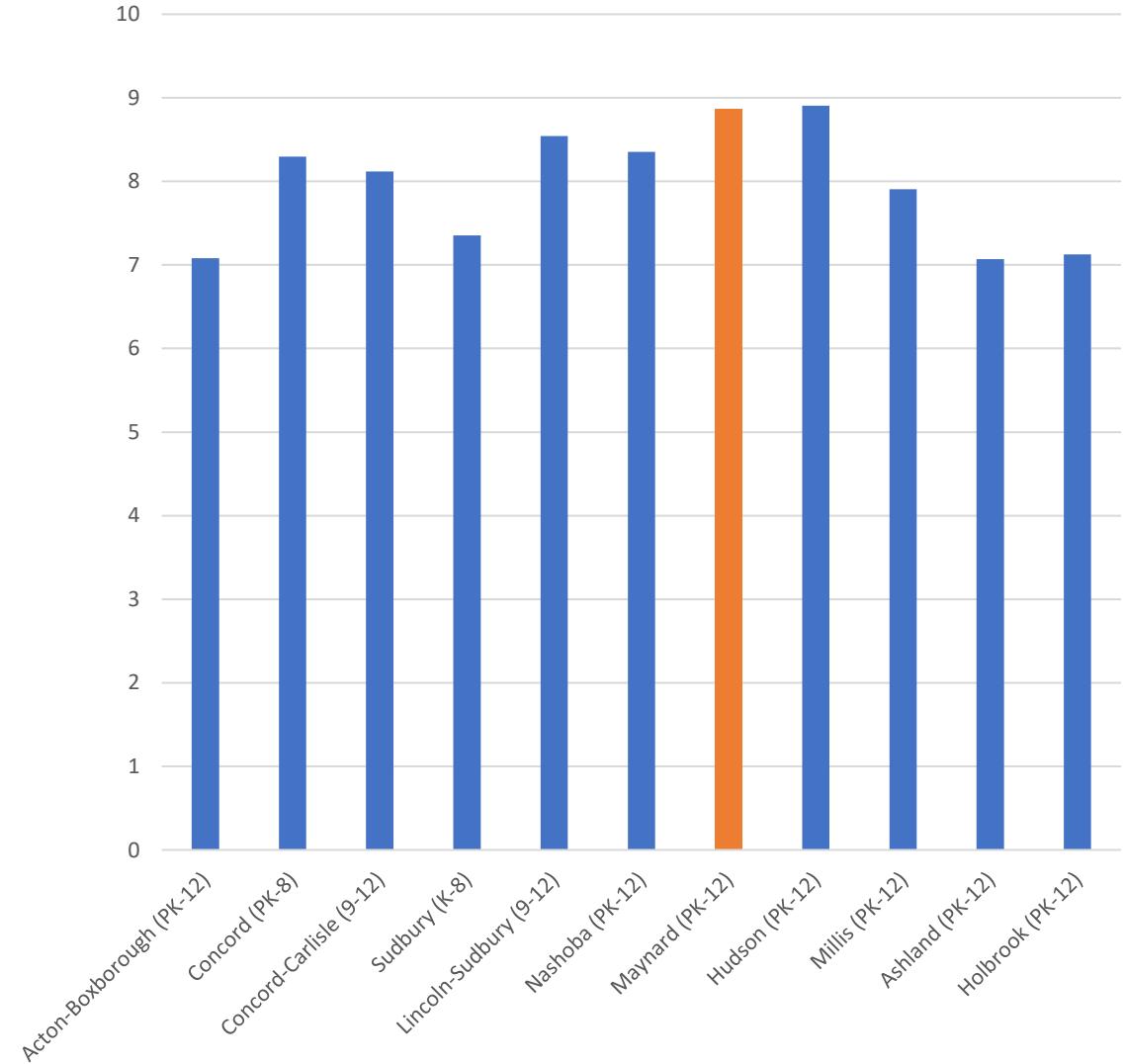


School Districts

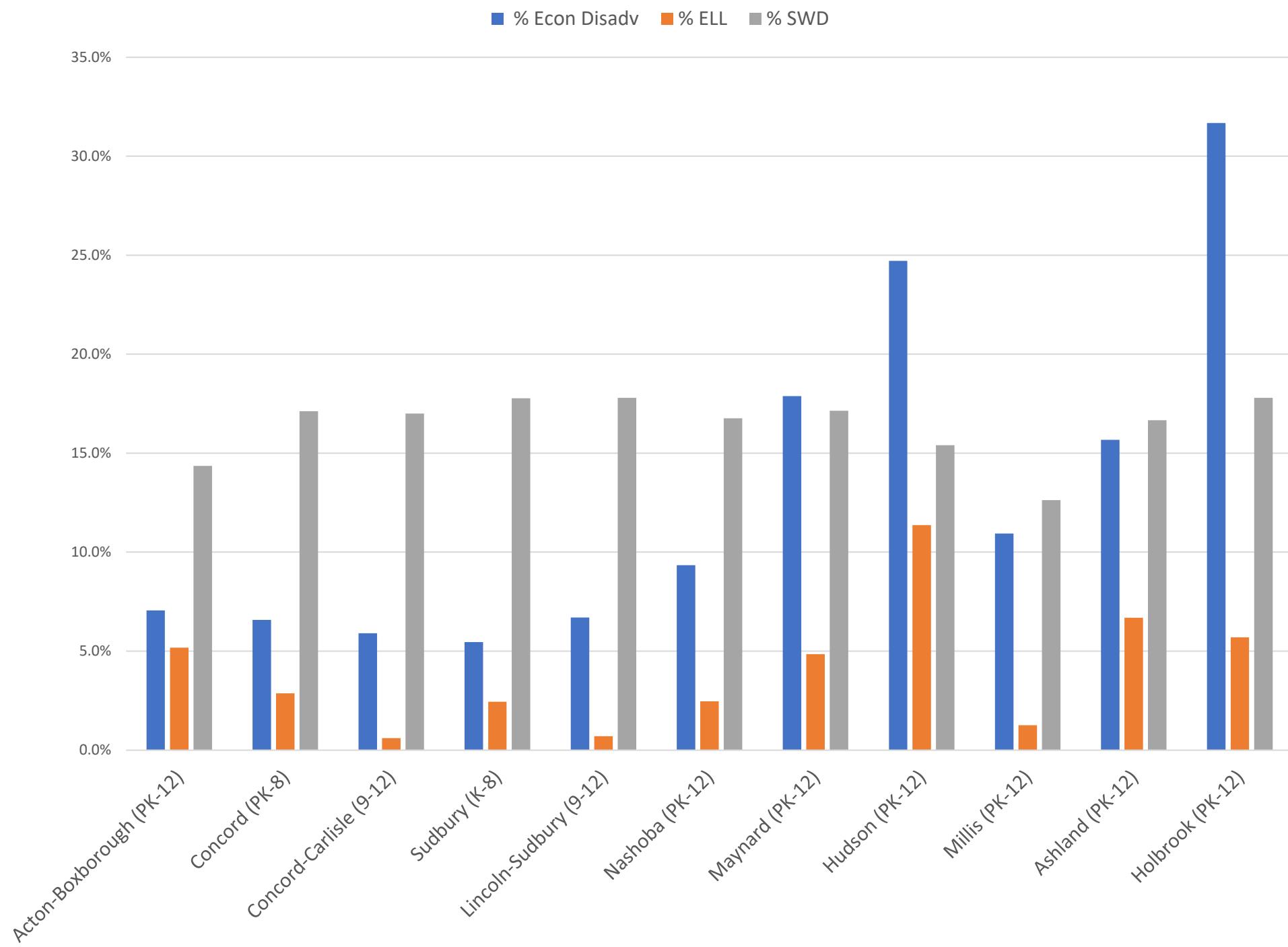
Students

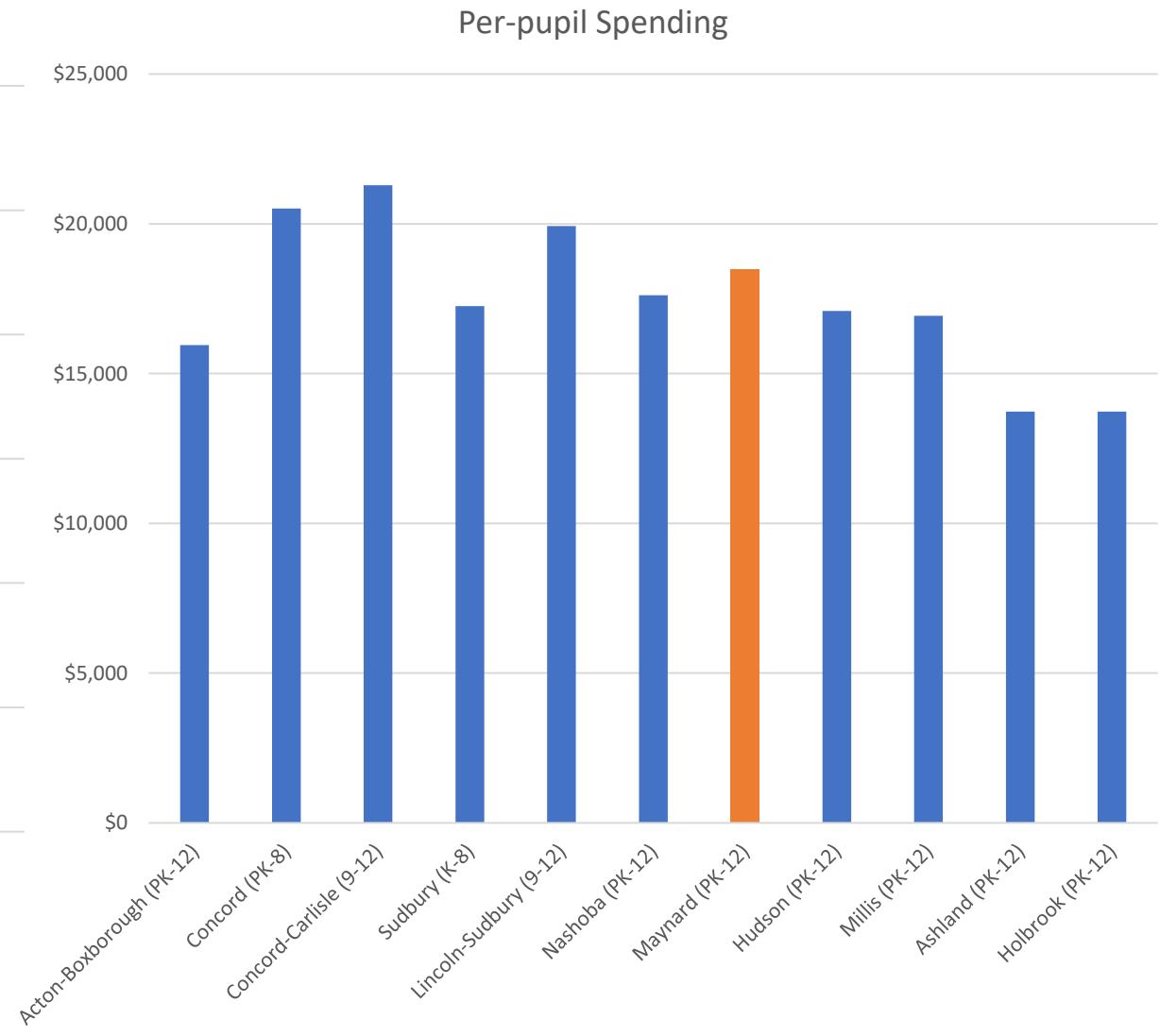
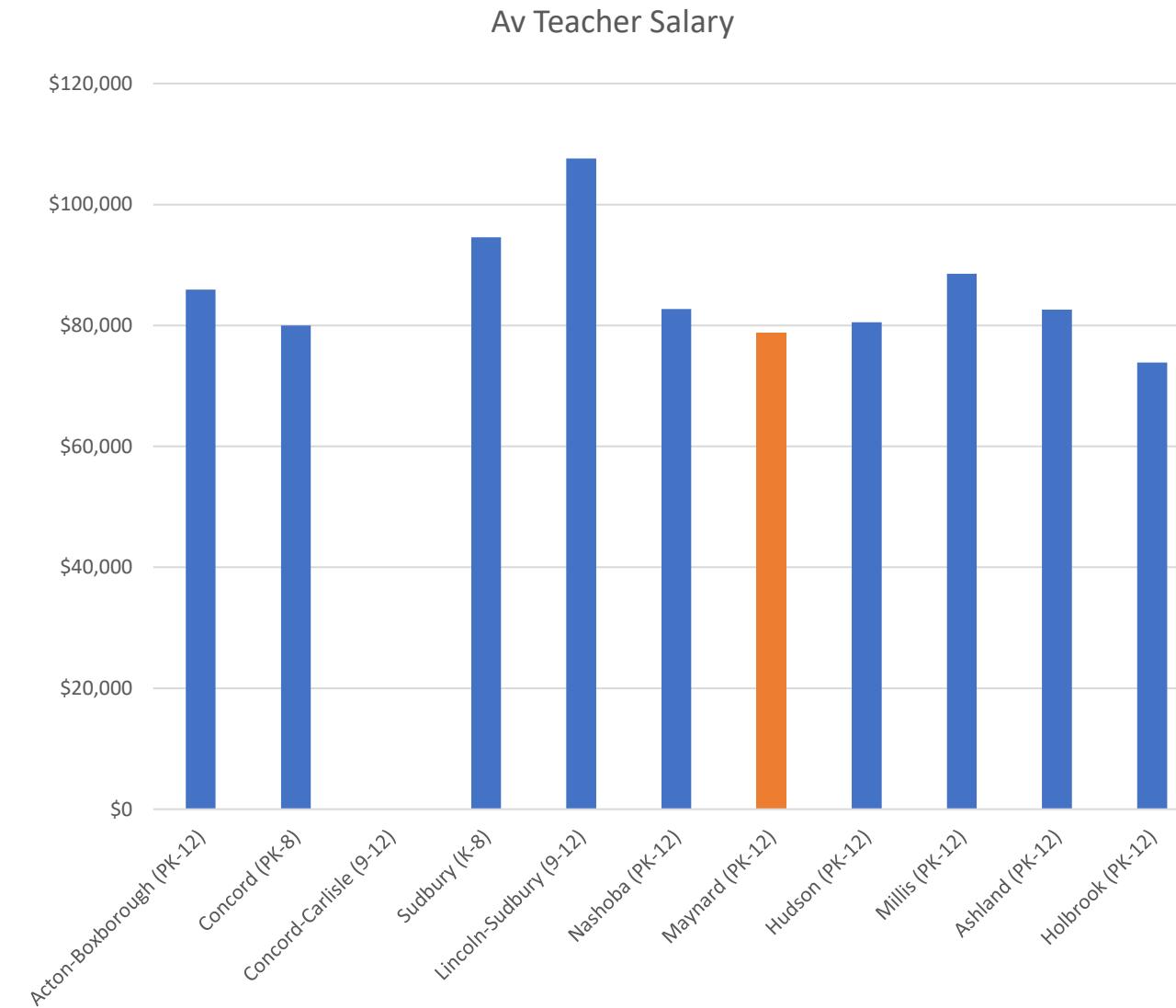


Teachers per 100 Students



Source: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/>





Per-pupil Spending

