A FINANCIAL PLAN · BOSTON · OCTOBER 2026



A Plan for the Next Decade

A house, three children, and a lifetime of saving — sequenced so that each one gets its turn.

THE QUESTION, PLAINLY

Three good goals, one pool of money, and the discipline of putting them in order.

You are twenty-nine, newly married, and earning well. Within five years you want to own a home in the Boston suburbs. You want three children. And you want to retire one day without worry. Each of these is reachable. The art is not choosing among them — it is *sequencing* them, so the time-sensitive dollars are spent while the window is open, and the flexible ones bend when life gets expensive.

This document is that sequence. It reads from the situation you are in today, through the decisions ahead — which town, how much down, when the children arrive, how the budget changes the day you buy — to a concrete list of what to do now and over the runway. It addresses you directly and carries no names, so it can be read in full for exactly what it is: a plan.

VERIFIED a figure read on the owner's own page this engagement.

RANGE an honest range where a single clean source resists; never false precision. Figures move — re-verify before you act.

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A note on reading: where this plan gives a range, the range is the answer — hold both figures, and re-check the live number before you commit. Where it gives a single figure, that figure was read at the source this October. Markets, rates, and limits all move.

SECTION I

The situation read

I

You are in an unusually strong position, and the strength is specific. Three facts carry the entire plan: a savings rate far above the norm, a rare window with no mortgage and no childcare, and a tension between house, children, and retirement that is real but solvable.

~$350k
Household gross income ($200k + ~$150k)

17–27%
Savings rate after taxes and rent — vs a ~5% median

$0
Debt service — no student, car, or card balances

WHO YOU ARE, IN NUMBERS

Age (both)	29
Years to retirement at 65	~36
Monthly surplus after spending	$5k–$8k
Investable cash flow / year	$60k–$96k
Savings, invested & retirement	$350k–$600k
Location	Boston, MA

WHAT THE PROFILE MEANS

The savings rate is the engine. A $60k–$96k annual surplus means all three goals are fundable *in sequence* rather than in competition — if the dollars are pointed deliberately.

You have a clean-runway window. No mortgage, no childcare, no debt. Every goal cheaper to fund before those arrive should be front-loaded now. The window closes the day you buy and the day the first child arrives.

The tension, named out loud

House, three children, and retirement genuinely compete for the same dollars — and the Boston-suburb price point makes the house goal expensive. It is real, and it is solvable. The next page names the single decision that moves the plan more than any other.

Overleaf →

THE MOST CONSEQUENTIAL DECISION

More than $750,000 separates the two towns you are choosing between — a gap that changes the down payment by hundreds of thousands and the monthly cost of ownership by over $4,000.

House, three children, and retirement genuinely compete for the same dollars, and the Boston-suburb price point makes the house goal expensive. That is the tension — and it is solvable, because the three goals do not have to be funded all at once.

The plan's whole method is sequencing: fund retirement's irreplaceable years *now*, build the down payment *now*, and let the purchase reset the cash-flow picture into a second, tighter phase where childcare and the mortgage dominate.

The working estimate you came in with — roughly $1.1M to $1.5M — was low for Needham and high for Dedham. The verified market is below.

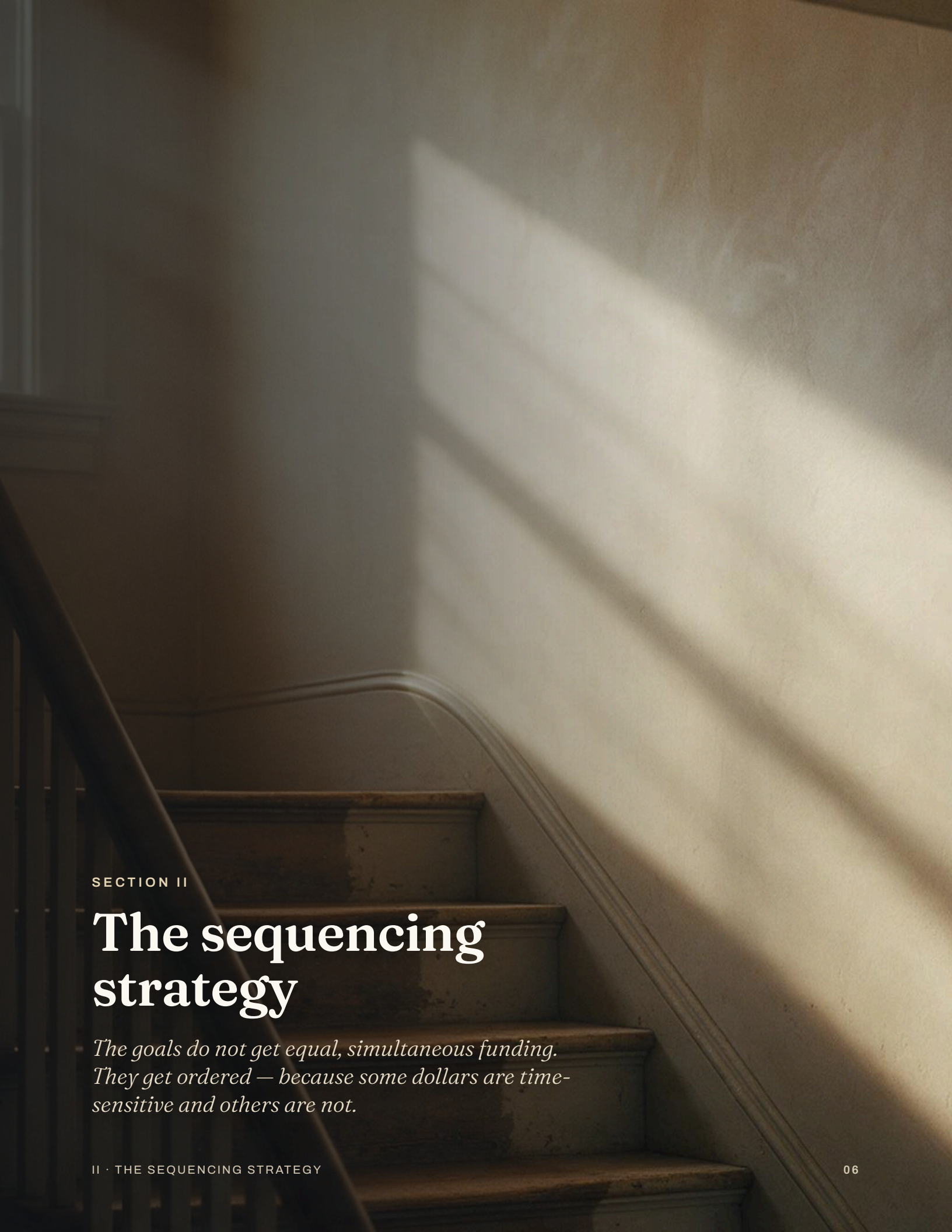
THE VERIFIED GAP VERIFIED

~$760k
Dedham single-family

$1.5–1.7M
Needham single-family

Sources: Redfin, Zillow ZHVI, Realtor.com, read October 2026. Full basis in Section III.

3. **The tension is real but solvable.** The art of this plan is sequencing, not sacrifice. Order the goals, fund the time-sensitive ones first, and let the flexible ones — the taxable brokerage, the 529 ramp — bend in the tightest years and restore later. That is the entire difference between a budget that breaks and one that holds.



SECTION II

The sequencing strategy

The goals do not get equal, simultaneous funding. They get ordered — because some dollars are time-sensitive and others are not.

SECTION II · THE PRIORITY WATERFALL

Where each marginal dollar goes, in order

Fill each tier before moving to the next. The surplus is large enough to reach deep into the list — and tier 6, the down payment, runs in parallel rather than waiting at the bottom, because it is time-sensitive too.

1

Emergency reserve — funded first

Six months of core expenses in cash, held separate from the down payment. The floor, not the luxury, for a household about to add dependents and a mortgage.

2

Capture every dollar of 401(k) match

An immediate, guaranteed return no investment can beat. Both of you contribute at least enough to get the full match. Confirm each employer's formula.

3

Max both 401(k)s — the time-sensitive move

$24,500 each in 2026 → $49,000 of pre-tax space. The room does not roll over; a year unused is gone forever. Filling it defers roughly $18,000/year in tax. Verified limit.

4

Max HSAs if on an HDHP

2026 family limit $8,750. The only triple-tax-advantaged account in the code — and you are about to have the medical bills three children bring. Conditional on HDHP enrollment.

5

Backdoor Roth IRA, both of you

At ~$350k you are above the Roth phase-out, so the backdoor route gives $7,500 each — $15,000/year of Roth space. Clear pre-tax IRA balances first (pro-rata rule).

6

The down-payment fund — the parallel priority

Also time-sensitive, so it does not wait at the bottom. Run it *alongside* tiers 1–5, from the surplus that remains, held conservatively because it is needed in ≤5 years.

7

Taxable brokerage — the overflow & wealth engine

Everything left once the down-payment target is on track. The account that carries wealth beyond the retirement limits and funds goals before 59½.

Why this order survives the house

It fills the irreplaceable retirement space now, while the runway is clean — so in Phase 2, when the mortgage and childcare compress the budget, retirement is already on a strong trajectory and can coast on growth even if new contributions dip. **Retirement is front-loaded precisely so it can bend, not break, when life gets expensive.**

SECTION III

The home, and the town fork



Needham against Dedham is the single most consequential decision in this plan. More than three-quarters of a million dollars — and roughly $4,000 a month — turn on it.

SECTION III · THE FORK, STATED PLAINLY

Two towns, two very different lives of ownership

Both towns sit in Norfolk County and both have strong, free public schools — much of why you are buying there. Financially, they are not close. The plan does not tell you which to choose; it makes the trade-off vivid so you choose with open eyes.

Dedham

VERIFIED PRICE

~$760k

Redfin median, 3 mo. ending Aug 2026 · $480/sqft

Down payment (20%)	$152,000
Loan amount	$608,000
Financing	Conforming
Cash at closing RANGE	$167–182k
P&I @ 7.28%	~$4,160/mo
Property tax RANGE	$779–845/mo
Insurance RANGE	$150–250/mo

TOTAL MONTHLY PITI

~$5,100–5,250

Needham

VERIFIED PRICE

$1.5–1.7M

Zillow / Redfin / Realtor.com · model uses $1.6M

Down payment (20%)	$320,000
Loan amount	$1,280,000
Financing	Jumbo
Cash at closing RANGE	$352–384k
P&I @ 7.28%	~$8,750/mo
Property tax	~$1,444/mo
Insurance RANGE	$250–400/mo

TOTAL MONTHLY PITI

~$10,450–10,600

All monthly figures illustrative at the October 2026 30-year rate of 7.28% (Freddie Mac PMMS, verified); a 3–5 year horizon means the rate you lock will differ — re-verify then. Needham property tax $10.83/$1,000 (town page, verified); Dedham $12.30/$1,000, one source $13.35 (MA DLS, range).

$962,550

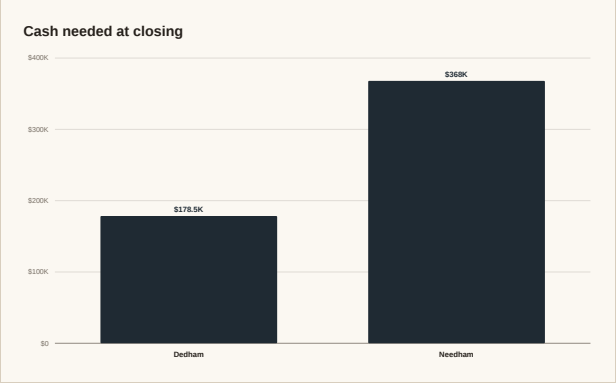
2026 conforming limit
Norfolk County, 1-unit VERIFIED

The limit draws the line between the two towns' financing. Dedham's ~$608k loan sits comfortably below it — standard, cheapest conforming financing. Needham's ~$1.28M loan sits far above it, into **jumbo territory**: to bring a $1.6M purchase down to the conforming limit you would need roughly $637k down, about 40%. Plan Needham for jumbo underwriting standards.

SECTION III · THE GAP, AT A GLANCE

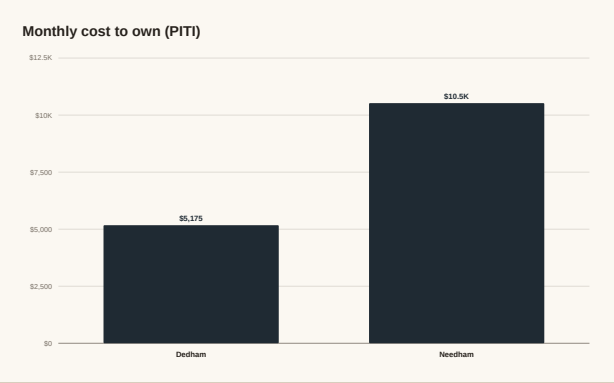
Needham costs roughly twice as much — to buy, and to own

THE CHEQUE AT CLOSING



Needham asks for roughly **$370,000** up front against Dedham's **~$175,000**. Because a $1.28M loan sits well above the $962,550 Norfolk County conforming limit, Needham almost certainly means **jumbo underwriting** — higher score, larger down, tighter debt-to-income.

THE MONTHLY COST TO OWN



Against a $5k–$8k monthly surplus, Needham's ~$10,500 PITI would consume the *entire* pre-purchase surplus and then some once childcare arrives. Dedham's ~$5,200 leaves real room to keep investing.

DEDHAM, ON TODAY'S NUMBERS

Affordable now, with room to spare. The down payment fits inside the surplus while you keep funding retirement — no sacrifice required.

NEEDHAM, ON TODAY'S NUMBERS

Comfortable only if income rises, you put down more than 20%, or your savings grow into it across the 3–5 year runway.

THE RATE IS THE BIGGEST SWING FACTOR — MONTHLY P&I AT TWO RATES

DEDHAM · $608K LOAN	P&I / MO
At 7.28% (today, verified)	~$4,160
At 6.28%	~$3,760

NEEDHAM · $1.28M LOAN	P&I / MO
At 7.28% (today, verified)	~$8,750
At 6.28%	~$7,900

A 3–5 year horizon means the rate you lock will differ from today's. Treat the mortgage rate as a live number and re-verify at the source before you commit — it moves the monthly cost more than any other single input.

SECTION IV

The down-payment plan

IV

Set the goal at 20% of the chosen price plus closing costs, held in safe, liquid assets. Twenty percent avoids mortgage insurance, keeps the Dedham loan conforming, and is the practical minimum for jumbo underwriting in Needham.

Dedham path ~$152k down + ~$28k closing — **~$180k**

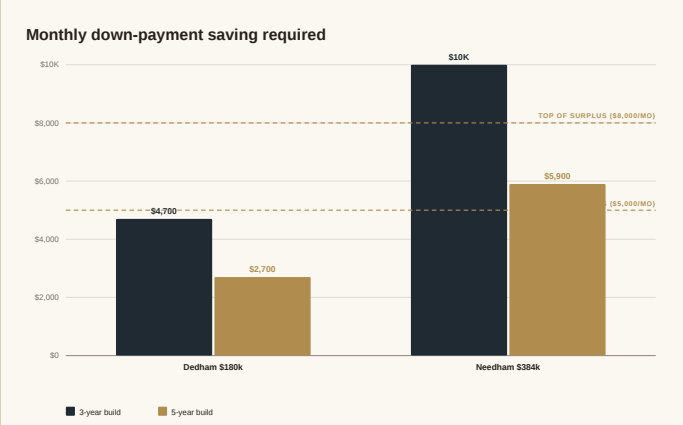
Needham path ~$320k down + ~$64k closing — **~$384k**

WHERE TO HOLD IT

Money needed in ≤5 years does *not* belong in the stock market — a 20–30% drawdown the year before you buy would be unrecoverable on that timeline.

High-yield savings, money-market funds, or a short-term Treasury / CD ladder maturing near the purchase date. **~4% assumed yield** RANGE — verify the current rate.

NEW MONTHLY SAVING NEEDED, AGAINST YOUR SURPLUS



Dedham is clearly achievable

$2,700–$4,700/mo fits inside the surplus with room for the tax-advantaged tiers — no sacrifice needed.

Needham turns on your liquidity

The 3-year figure exceeds the surplus; feasibility depends entirely on how much of your existing nest egg is already liquid and house-earmarked.

Down payment vs. retirement

For the Dedham path, fund both — no trade-off is needed. For a tight-timeline Needham purchase, it can be rational to *temporarily* drop 401(k) contributions from the max to the match level for 2–3 years, then resume. That trades ~$18k/year of tax deferral per year not maxed. It is a real cost and should be a conscious choice, not a drift.



SECTION V

Three children

Plan the college fund patiently — and name the cost most plans miss, the one that dwarfs it for a decade.

SECTION V · THE COLLEGE ACCOUNTS

The 529, one account per child — and a target that does not crowd out everything else

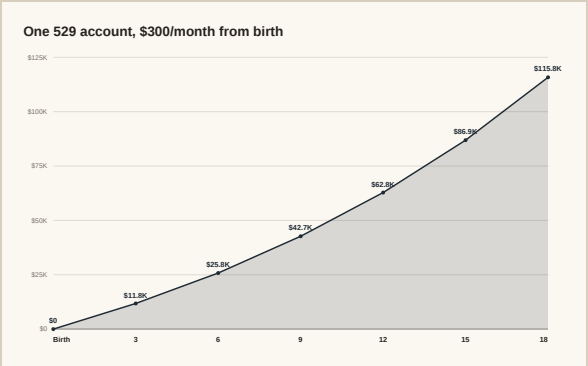
The account is the **MA U.Fund College Investing Plan** — the state's direct-sold 529, administered by MEFA with Fidelity. The MA deduction is up to **$2,000/year filing jointly**, which at the 5% rate saves $100/year — and it is a *household* cap, not per child. So the full state incentive is captured with $2,000/year total across all three accounts.

The real value is not the small deduction. It is **tax-free growth and tax-free qualified withdrawals**. Start early; time in the market is the whole game for a college fund.

THE HIERARCHY IS FIRM

Retirement is not loanable; college is. Your children can borrow, receive aid, choose a lower-cost path, or win scholarships. No one lends you money to retire. Fund retirement's tax-advantaged space first; fund 529s from what remains.

$300/MONTH PER CHILD, FROM BIRTH



At ~6% annual growth, $300/month reaches roughly **$110,000–$120,000 per child by age 18** — a meaningful share of a MA public university, not a full private-college pre-fund. Three children at full ramp is **~$900/month**.

Projection at 6%; the live model computes it from your inputs.

Open an account as each child arrives

One beneficiary per account; MA allows beneficiary changes among family members. Front-load the $2,000/year that captures the full state deduction across the accounts.

The 529 → Roth safety valve

Since 2024, up to $35,000 of leftover 529 funds (lifetime, per beneficiary, with conditions) can roll to the beneficiary's Roth IRA — a reason not to drastically under-fund. Verify current rules at rollover.

AIM FOR A SHARE, NOT THE WHOLE

Fully pre-funding three private-college educations is a $1M+ goal that would crowd out everything else. Aim instead to cover a meaningful share — roughly a MA public university per child — with the balance met from cash flow at the time, aid, and the child's own contribution.

EACH ACCOUNT, ITS OWN CHILD

One beneficiary per 529 account, up to a $500,000 balance per account. MA allows beneficiary changes among family members, so an over-funded account for one child can later serve another.

START EARLY — TIME IS THE GAME

The small state deduction is not the point; tax-free growth over eighteen years is. A dollar in at birth compounds far longer than a dollar in at ten — which is why opening each account as the child arrives matters more than the monthly amount.

SECTION V · THE COST MOST PLANS MISS

Childcare, not college, is the binding constraint of the next decade

GREATER BOSTON, PER CHILD, PER YEAR RANGE

$20–30k+

Infant center care — among the highest in the nation. Verify current with local providers.

This is the number most plans skip, and it matters more than college for the next decade. With three children, even staggered, you could face **$2,000–$5,000+/month** during the overlapping early years.

It is a Phase-2 line far larger than the 529 contributions — and it coincides exactly with the early-mortgage years, the budget's tightest moment.

WHY THE PLAN SURVIVES IT

Childcare is **temporary**. It falls off as each child enters public school — and both Needham and Dedham have strong, free public schools, much of why you are buying there. The budget loosens materially around the time the youngest starts kindergarten.

Retirement, front-loaded in Phase 1, keeps compounding even if contributions drop to the match level during the crunch. And income is likely to grow across your thirties, widening the gap back open.

THE TWO CHILD-COST LINES, SIDE BY SIDE

529, three children at full ramp	~$900/mo
Childcare, two young children RANGE	$4–6k/mo

The 529 is the flexible valve — it can be throttled in the tightest years and restored later. Childcare cannot. Plan the budget around the larger, temporary line.

THE ARC OF THE COST — HEAVY, OVERLAPPING, THEN GONE

Infancy → pre-school
THE PEAK

Full center care per child, stacked where the children's early years overlap. This coincides exactly with the early-mortgage years — the budget's tightest moment.

Kindergarten onward
THE RELIEF

Each child ages out of paid care into free public school. Needham and Dedham both have strong public schools — much of why you are buying there. The line falls off child by child.

The budget reopens
THE PAYOFF

As the youngest starts school, thousands a month come back. Restore 529 and taxable contributions, and let the retirement base — front-loaded in Phase 1 — keep compounding.

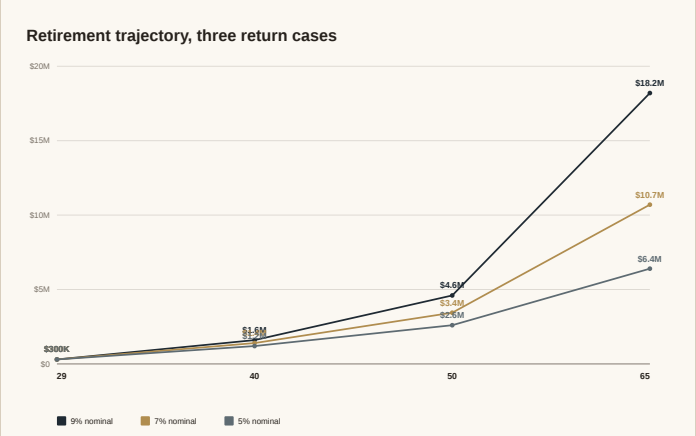
SECTION VI

The retirement trajectory

VI

You are twenty-nine with thirty-six years to a traditional retirement. A high savings rate, a long runway, and maxed tax-advantaged space put you on track for a very strong retirement — *if* the contributions happen in the front-loaded years.

ILLUSTRATIVE PROJECTION — THREE RETURN CASES



From ~$300k today with ~$49k/year of maxed 401(k) contributions. At 7% nominal, roughly **$10.7M by 65** — about $4.4M in today's dollars at ~2.5% inflation. Returns are not guaranteed; the live model offers the 5% / 7% / 9% cases and computes them from your inputs.

2026 TAX-ADVANTAGED CAPACITY

VERIFIED

Two 401(k)s ($24,500 each)	$49,000
Two backdoor Roth IRAs ($7,500 each)	$15,000
HSA, if on an HDHP	$8,750
Total capacity / year	**~$64–73k**

~$18k

Tax deferred each year by filling the $49k of 401(k) space (at a ~37% combined marginal rate).

The key judgment

Max the tax-advantaged space now, while there is no mortgage and no childcare. Dollars contributed at twenty-nine have thirty-six years to compound; dollars you fail to contribute now cannot be made up later, because the annual limits cap how much space exists. This is why the waterfall puts 401(k) maxing above taxable down-payment saving — with the one tight-timeline Needham exception.

THE BASE CASE, MILESTONE BY MILESTONE — 7% NOMINAL, ~$49K/YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

~$300k	~$1.4M	~$3.4M	~$10.7M
Today, at 29	By 40	By 50	By 65 · ~$4.4M in today's dollars

SECTION VII

Insurance & protection

VII

A young family about to take on a mortgage and dependents is the textbook case for protection. Its absence is the single largest unhedged risk in this plan — and every policy below is cheapest to buy now, while you are young and healthy.

01 Term life insurance

If either earner dies, the survivor must carry or pay off the mortgage, replace the income, and fund the children's upbringing. Buy **level term** (20- or 30-year), not whole life — cheap, and covering exactly the window dependents rely on you.

Higher earner ($200k) RANGE	$2.0–2.5M
Second earner ($150k) RANGE	$1.5–2.0M

$2M of 30-year term for a healthy 29-year-old often runs in the low $100s/month per person RANGE — verify with a quote. Lock it in before the first child.

02 Disability insurance

You are far more likely to be disabled than to die in your working years, and your ability to earn ~$350k/year over thirty-six years is worth millions — protect it.

Check both employers' **group long-term disability** first; it typically covers ~60% of base, often taxable (so ~40% real). For high earners that rarely replaces enough — add a supplemental **individual own-occupation** policy for the higher earner; benefits you pay for yourself pay tax-free.

03 Umbrella liability

Once you own a $760k–$1.6M home and real assets, a **$1M–$2M personal umbrella** policy is inexpensive — roughly $200–$400/year RANGE — and protects the net worth you are building from a lawsuit. Add it around the time of purchase.

04 Estate basics

With children you need **wills, guardianship designations, healthcare proxies, and durable powers of attorney**. Guardianship is the urgent one — it names who raises your children if both parents are gone.

Federal estate tax is not a concern at your net worth, but **Massachusetts has its own estate tax at a ~$2M threshold** RANGE — revisit as your net worth grows past it, which it will.

$30–50k

6 months of core expenses RANGE

The emergency reserve — the self-insurance layer. Six months of core expenses (housing, food, utilities, insurance, minimum obligations — not discretionary spending) in cash, held separate from the down-payment fund. This is tier 1 of the waterfall, funded before investing beyond the match. Size it to your actual core monthly spend × 6.

SECTION VIII

The two-phase picture

One life, two seasons. The budget transforms the day you buy — and the whole point of sequencing is to be ready when it does.



SECTION VIII · HOW THE BUDGET TRANSFORMS

The clean runway, then the tight years — and why the plan holds through both

Phase 1 · Accumulation

Now → purchase, ~3–5 years. No mortgage, no childcare, no debt.

Monthly surplus	$5–8k
Max two 401(k)s	~$4,080/mo*
Backdoor Roth (both)	~$1,250/mo
HSA, if HDHP	~$730/mo
Down-payment fund	$2.7–5.9k/mo
Taxable brokerage	overflow

*From income pre-tax, not the surplus. The fund-everything phase: max retirement *and* build the Dedham down payment at once.

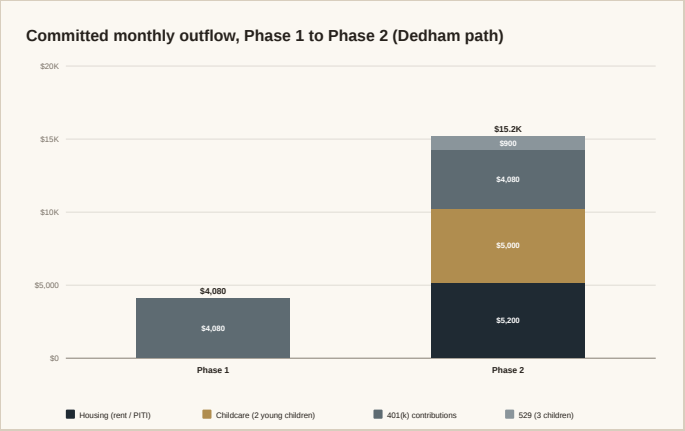
Phase 2 · Ownership + children

Post-purchase. Mortgage, tax, insurance, childcare arrive together.

Housing PITI (Dedham)	~$5,200/mo
Childcare, 2 young RANGE	$4–6k/mo
401(k), at least to match	~$4,080/mo
529s, three children	~$900/mo
These lines alone	**~$14–16k/mo**

Tight even for this high-income household — and tighter still on the Needham path, where PITI alone is ~$10,500.

COMMITTED MONTHLY OUTFLOW, PHASE 1 → PHASE 2 (DEDHAM PATH)



WHY PHASE 2 DOES NOT DERAIL THE PLAN

Retirement was front-loaded in Phase 1, so it coasts on growth even if contributions drop to the match.

Childcare is temporary — it falls off as each child reaches public school.

Income is likely to grow over the runway and through your thirties.

529 and taxable contributions are the flexible valves — throttle in the tightest years, restore later. The mortgage cannot flex; these can.

THE DECISION THE TWO PHASES FORCE

Town choice is a Phase-2 affordability decision as much as a Phase-1 cash decision. Dedham's ~$5,200 PITI leaves room for childcare and continued investing on your income. Needham's ~$10,500, stacked on childcare, is comfortable only if income grows substantially or you buy with a large down payment. **The plan does not tell you which to choose — it makes the trade-off visible so you choose with open eyes.**



SECTION IX

What to do

The plan, reduced to moves — now, over the runway, and the day the keys are in hand.

SECTION IX · THE ACTION CHECKLIST

Three horizons, each with its own moves

Now 0–3 MONTHS

- ☐ Confirm each employer's **401(k) match formula**; contribute at least to the full match.
- ☐ Raise 401(k) contributions toward the **2026 max ($24,500 each)**, unless choosing the tight-timeline Needham tilt.
- ☐ Open and fund **HSAs** if on an HDHP ($8,750 family).
- ☐ Set up **backdoor Roth IRAs** ($7,500 each); clear any pre-tax IRA balances first (pro-rata rule).
- ☐ Fully fund the **6-month emergency reserve**, separate from the down payment.
- ☐ Get **term life quotes** — ~$2.0–2.5M (higher earner), ~$1.5–2.0M (second), 30-year level.
- ☐ Review both employers' **disability coverage**; shop a supplemental own-occ policy for the higher earner.
- ☐ **Decide the target town(s)** — this drives the down-payment target.

Runway 1–5 YEARS

- ☐ Open the **down-payment fund**; automate toward $180k (Dedham) / $384k (Needham), held in HYSA, T-bills, or a short CD ladder — never the stock market for ≤5-year money.
- ☐ **Max tax-advantaged space every year** the surplus allows. Space not used is lost.
- ☐ Open a **529 for each child** as they arrive; fund to capture the full $2,000/yr MA deduction and ramp toward the per-child target.
- ☐ Get **wills, guardianship, healthcare proxies, and POAs** drafted before or soon after the first child.
- ☐ **Re-verify** the mortgage rate, loan limits, home prices, and tax rates before you lock.
- ☐ Add a **$1M–$2M umbrella** policy at purchase.

After PHASE 2

- ☐ **Re-run the full cash-flow model** with the actual price, rate, and childcare before committing.
- ☐ **Protect retirement contributions** at least to the match through peak childcare; restore to max as childcare falls off.
- ☐ **Revisit life insurance** to cover the actual mortgage balance plus the children's upbringing and education.
- ☐ **Revisit the MA estate tax** as net worth crosses $2M.
- ☐ **Review the whole plan annually** — income, surplus, balances, and goals all move.

> The sequencing payoff: because Phase 1 did the irreplaceable work, Phase 2 can absorb the childcare crunch without derailing the long term. That is the entire reason to order the goals rather than fund them all at once.

ON THE NUMBERS

Sources, and the ranges held honestly

A search result is a lead; only the source's own page is a verification. Every load-bearing figure here was read on the owner's or an authoritative page this October. Two figures resist a single clean source and are carried as ranges, never as false precision.

READ THIS ENGAGEMENT — OCTOBER 2026

Needham prices	Zillow, Redfin, Realtor.com
Dedham prices	Redfin market page
30-yr fixed rate, 7.28%	Freddie Mac PMMS, 10/1
Conforming limit, $962,550	FHFA 2026, Norfolk Co.
MA income tax, 5% flat	Mass.gov
Needham tax, $10.83/$1,000	Town of Needham
U.Fund 529 & deduction	MEFA
2026 federal limits	IRS, Principal

THE RANGES, AND WHY

Dedham property tax	$12.30, one source $13.35
Childcare / child / yr	$20–30k+
Closing costs	2–4% of price
Homeowners insurance	$150–400/mo
Term life premium	low $100s/mo each
Down-payment yield	~4%
MA estate tax threshold	~$2M
MA 4% surtax threshold	~$1.108M

A range is not a hedge. It is the honest answer where the world does not publish a single clean number — and a reminder to confirm the live figure before you sign.

This plan is for information and planning. It is not individualized tax, legal, or investment advice; confirm specifics — employer plan terms, insurance quotes, tax treatment, and current market figures — with the relevant professional and at the source before acting. Projections are illustrative and depend on assumptions stated throughout; returns are not guaranteed. Prepared October 2026.