

1. Agenda

Documents:

[2022.01.12\\_MPC\\_AGENDA.PDF](#)

2. Meeting Materials

Documents:

[2020\\_DRAFT\\_MASTER\\_PLAN-HISTORICJ\\_CULTURAL\\_0\\_COMMUNITY\\_RESOURCES\\_EDIT\\_V8-FOR\\_MPC REVIEW.PDF](#)  
[2020\\_DRAFT\\_MASTER\\_PLAN-LAND\\_USE\\_ZONING\\_10.17.21.PDF](#)  
[2020\\_DRAFT\\_MASTER\\_PLAN\\_VISIONJ\\_GOALS\\_0\\_PLANNING\\_PROCESS\\_-EDIT\\_V7\\_FOR\\_MPC REVIEW.PDF](#)

May be watched or may participate in the meeting remotely with the meeting link at:  
<https://www.southboroughtown.com/remotemeetings>.

*Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on June 16, 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote participation. No in person attendance by members of the public will be permitted.*

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**DISCUSS CHAPTER REVIEW HOMEWORK FROM LAST MEETING**

- Economic Development
- Land Use and Zoning
- Vision
- Community, Historic and Cultural

**HOMEWORK FOR NEXT MEETING**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Other Business Properly Before the Board**

- Approval of Minutes 12.08.21
- Set date for Next Meeting

**ADJOURN**

Meme Luttrell, Chair

1

## 2 Historic, Cultural & Community 3 Resources

4

5 *“Develop an enhanced sense of community”*

6

7 **Introduction**

8 Southborough residents continue to value historic and cultural resources but the outreach during the  
9 development of this master plan, identified a more important issue – the need to encourage and nurture a  
10 “sense of community”.

11 This chapter includes two sections – Historic Resources and Cultural & Community Resources, each with  
12 an outline of accomplishments since 2008, an assessment of current conditions/resources with associated  
13 organizations and a summary of goals and recommendations. Note that the Natural Resources section of  
14 the 2020 master plan can be found in Chapter 5 - Open Space, Natural Resources & Recreation.

15 **Vision Open House & Survey Responses**

16 The statements and questions presented in the open house and survey focused on the preservation of  
17 historic assets and creating a location where the Town’s residents can gather, socialize and participate in  
18 community events and activities and. The importance of an active, vibrant Downtown area was the  
19 second most popular topic of feedback in the survey, although respondents had differing perspectives as  
20 to whether a rejuvenated downtown will act as a natural community gathering place or if a dedicated  
21 community center is required.

22 **Historic Resources**

23 The protection and management of the Southborough’s historic resources continues to be an important  
24 activity, helping to ensure that the unique character of the Town is maintained. The Visioning Open  
25 House and Survey for the 2020 master plan highlighted the importance of community education and  
26 engagement in heightening awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Southborough’s historical  
27 resources. This additional focus is reflected in the goals and recommendations of this section of the  
28 master plan.

29 **Summary of Accomplishments Since 2008**

30 **Community Preservation** funds have been used to support several historical projects since 2008, notably  
31 archiving the Town’s historical collection, implementing climate control in the museum, and preserving a

36 civil war flag. Funds have also been applied towards the National Historic District application process,  
37 repairs to the Old Burial Ground and the 2016 adoption of a preservation restriction on 84 Main Street.

38  
39 The **Demolition Delay Bylaw** was adopted at the April 2015 town meeting and aims to protect and  
40 preserve significant buildings and structures within the Town with distinctive features of the  
41 architectural or historical interest. The focus is on encouraging owners to seek out alternative options to  
42 preserve, rehabilitate or restore such buildings rather than to demolish them, with an action plan to the  
43 Historical Commission.

44  
45 The **Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings Bylaw** was adopted by Town Meeting in 2017 to incentivize  
46 the preservation of historic buildings by allowing these buildings to be adapted for a purpose other than  
47 that for which they were originally constructed.

48  
49 The **Historic Homes Sign** program was introduced in 2014 to enhance the appearance of older homes  
50 and promote community awareness of our local history. Just under 50 signs have been installed.

51  
52 Two historical properties were noted in the 2008 report.

- 53 • The **South Union Street School** building has been on the National Register of Historic Places  
54 since 2011. The Town currently owns the building and is considering a Request for Proposal to  
55 sell the property to a private developer. At this time, there is no Historic Preservation Restriction  
56 on the building. A sub-committee has been created to evaluate the opportunity to create  
57 affordable housing in the building.
- 58  
59 • **Peter's High School** was saved from demolition in 2009 and houses the old fire station and police  
60 Station. When these were replaced by the Public Safety Building, these properties were sold to St.  
61 Mark's School. Future plans for the property are not yet known.

## 62 63 **Active Organizations**

### 64 **Southborough Historical Commission**

65 This commission is appointed by the Select Board and is charged with preserving and protecting historic  
66 assets in Southborough including responsibility for conducting research, undertaking surveys and  
67 making recommendations on property certification. The commission's website provides links to other  
68 organizations involved in this area e.g. Massachusetts Historical Society, Preservation Massachusetts and  
69 PreservationDirectory.com

### 70 71 **Southborough Historic Society**

72 This private organization has a broad membership and elected board with the remit to educate, study,  
73 collect and preserve historical records and antiquities for the Town as well as to preserve items of current  
74 events that may have historical interest in the future. The society hosts events and raises funds.

75  
76 Both groups continue to be active in identifying and seeking to preserve historic resources throughout the  
77 Town.

## 78 79 **Summary of Current Conditions**

80 The MAssachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) enables users to search the  
81 Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) database for information on historic properties and areas in  
82 the Commonwealth. As of April 2021, there are 849 entries for Southborough properties.  
83 Of these, 397 have a completed MHC Inventory Form, 31 are on the State Register of Historic Places and 7  
84 have a completed National Register Nomination Form. A major focus for is to complete the application  
85 and approval process for the **National Historic Register District** that will include properties along  
86 Latisquama, Main Street, Middle Road, and Cordaville Road.

87  
88 The Circulation & Transportation chapter of this master plan includes two recommendations relating to  
89 the review and ongoing protection/preservation of **Scenic Byways** without compromising safety. Whilst  
90 these byways are historical resources, it was deemed appropriate to incorporate the recommendations  
91 into the broader context of vehicular movement  infrastructure.

## 92 93 **Objective, Goals and Recommendations**

<b>Objective:</b> Develop an enhanced sense of community	
#	<b>Goal</b>
HC-1.0	Protect and preserve all historical assets of the Town of Southborough
#	<b>Recommendations</b>
HC-1.1	Complete the process to establish a National Register District in the downtown area
HC-1.2	Incorporate heightened awareness and appreciation of Southborough's historic resources within the town's Tricentennial Celebrations
HC-1.3	Educate our residents about the history of Southborough through innovative programming and events in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society.
HC-1.4	Expand school outreach, in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society, to increase our children's awareness of the importance of an educated and informed citizenry.
HC-1.5	Create a cultural corridor along Main Street, linking various significant sites through an interactive walking tour Contribute, along with associated Town boards and committees, to create a cultural corridor along Main Street, linking various significant sites through an interactive walking tour
HC-1.6	Work, in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society, to preserve, catalog and digitize our historical archives for the benefit of all.
HC-1.7	Encourage the use of our Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings Bylaw to preserve and renew historically significant structures for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.

## 95 96 97 **Community & Cultural Resources**

98 Enhancing the sense of community within Southborough has been identified as one of the top priorities  
99 for the 2020 master plan. Discussions at the Master Plan Committee (MPC) meetings and during  
100 outreach events, identified three areas of focus:

101 • Investment in the "Downtown Initiative" with the objective of providing "a walkable and well-  
102 connected small town "Main Street" with locally owned small businesses and appropriately  
103 scaled residential properties.

104 • Continuing to support the community services and cultural programs available to residents

105 • Creating a strategic plan for the development of a community gathering space, including the  
106 assessment evaluation of requirements and evaluation of funding options.

108 The Downtown Initiative is included in Chapter 4 – Economic Development – this chapter covers the  
109 other two topics.

110

## 111 **Summary of Accomplishments Since 2008**

112 The **Southborough Players** group has been disbanded but the **Southborough Cultural Arts Council**  
113 (SCAC) continues to be an active group within the community, administering ~\$5,000 annual grant  
114 monies from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Examples of grants from 2019 include Art on the Trail,  
115 Library's Vision Board Spirit Collage, Interboro Community Band winter concert, Southborough  
116 Recreation 7th Annual Summer Concert Series and the Pilgrim Church annual Messiah presentation.

117

118 A number of improvements have been made to the **Public Library** building and services in the last  
119 decade. A new Teen Room was opened in 2019, expanding space and services to young adults in the local  
120 community. In 2020, the "Idea Lab" within the Teen Room was unveiled, made possible with a \$15,000  
121 grant from the Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA). The lab includes a 3-D printer, a Dremel laser  
122 cutter, a button maker, and additional create-assistive technologies geared for younger library patrons. In  
123 2021, the Library Façade Restoration Project was completed, preserving the exterior section of the  
124 building originally constructed in 1911. This project was supported and funded by the Southborough  
125 Community Preservation Committee using Community Preservation Act funds.

126

## 127 **Active Organizations**

128 The Town has a broad range of organizations, both privately and publicly funded, that support the  
129 community and shape its culture.

130

131 The **Southborough Youth and Family Services** department provides support to the youth, families, and  
132 individuals and develops programming to foster a caring community. There are four areas of service:

- 133 • Support services e.g. mental health & other counselling
- 134 • Prevention services e.g. stress management, mentoring
- 135 • Needs based e.g. fuel assistance and emergency funding
- 136 • Community involvement e.g. panel presentation, co-sponsor of summer concert series.

137 The department also provide referrals and links to external partners

138

139 The **Senior Center** offers a broad range of weekly activities from educational programs (history, art,  
140 music, legal and medical issues) to bus trips, luncheons, and holiday activities. Services include  
141 programs, training, support for Caregivers, those with dementia/Alzheimer's as well as health insurance  
142 support with trained SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders) volunteers. Outreach includes  
143 services for seniors who wish to live independently and safely in their own homes, Dial A Ride service  
144 via MWRTA, Meals on Wheels (via 3rd party). A dedicated website with news, links and events calendar  
145 is also provided.

146

147 The **Southborough Library** is dedicated to lifelong learning and interests, providing a range of services,  
148 programs, historical collections, and technology to the local community. Founded in 1852, the library has  
149 a 6-member elected Board of Library Trustees and is supported by the Friends of the Southborough  
150 Library. A five-year strategic plan was developed in 2019 and includes goals and objectives aimed at  
151 improving the library facility, expanding usage/programs and developing partnerships with other  
152 community groups. [\[create link\]](#)

153  
154  
155

## 156 **Summary of Current Conditions**

157 The priority of the **Southborough Cultural Arts Council** (SCAC) SCAC is to “serve the largest possible  
158 number of people in the community with a diversity of age groups and artistic disciplines, including the  
159 arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences”. The Council maintains the Arts Center as well as providing  
160 programs, events, exhibitions, and classes.

161

162 **Heritage Day**, held each Fall, continues to be a highlight of the cultural calendar, providing an  
163 opportunity for the community to join together to celebrate its common past. A range of other events for  
164 all ages are organized and sponsored within the Town, for example, Easter Egg Hunt, Art on the Trails,  
165 Summer Concert Series and Summer Night, Heritage Day, Thanksgiving Gobble Wobble and Santa Day

166

167 Southborough has seven churches, a community food pantry, children and youth groups such  
168 kindergartens, scouts, sports teams, a gardener’s group as well branches of service/charitable  
169 organizations such the Rotary Club.

170

171 A local “blogger” manages and maintains the “MySouthborough.com” site. Established in 2008 it  
172 provides broad range of news articles and features on all aspects of life within the Town

173

174 Southborough has a range of organizations, events and activities to support the cultural life of the  
175 community. However, feedback collected during the Vision Open House and Survey highlighted two  
176 opportunities for improving community interaction and engagement.

177

178 The first is the creation of a **community gathering space**. A number of alternatives have been suggested  
179 to meet this need, e.g., expansion of the library, re-purposing of existing buildings e.g. Woodward School  
180 but the MPC believes that this topic merits the development of a strategic plan including a detailed  
181 requirement analysis, evaluation of options and funding needs and a comprehensive implementation  
182 plan. This is reflected in the goal/recommendation below.

183

184 The second opportunity is to improve the **collaboration and communication** between the Town’s  
185 government and the community at large. The goal/recommendations below propose several ways this  
186 could be achieved without adding significant workload for the Town’s salaried and volunteer staff.

187

## 188 **Objective, Goals and Recommendations**

189

<b>Objective:</b> Develop an enhanced sense of community	
<b>#</b>	<b>Goal</b>
HC-2.0	Develop a strategic plan for the development of community gathering space
<b>#</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
HC-2.1	Define and document the requirements for a community gathering space, with input from stakeholders across the community
HC-2.2	Evaluate the opportunity to leverage existing space/properties within the town to meet the community gathering space requirements e.g. Woodward School, expanded Southborough Library

<b>#</b>	<b>Goal</b>
HC-2.0	Develop a strategic plan for the development of community gathering space
<b>#</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
HC-2.1	Define and document the requirements for a community gathering space, with input from stakeholders across the community
HC-2.2	Evaluate the opportunity to leverage existing space/properties within the town to meet the community gathering space requirements e.g. Woodward School, expanded Southborough Library

HC-2.3	Develop financial/funding and implementation plans for each community gathering space option and solicit feedback from the town
HC-2.4	Gain approval at town meeting for the proposed community gathering space

190

#	<b>Goal</b>
HC-3.0	Improve the level of collaboration and engagement between the town's government and the community at large
#	<b>Recommendations</b>
HC-3.1	Explore the options for enhancing communication with residents, schools, local businesses and community groups including determining the resourcing/funding required and how best to apply current and emerging technologies
HC-3.2	Provide a welcome letter/information packet for new residents/businesses
HC-3.3	Hold bi-annual 'All Boards' meetings to provide a more structured process by which boards and commissions can communicate with the Board of Selectman
HC-3.4	Develop volunteer recruitment, support and recognition programs to encourage residents to serve on Town boards & commissions

191

192

# Land Use & Zoning

*“Respecting the past, preparing for the future”*

## Introduction

Land use within a community is the pattern of residential, commercial, industrial and public development, interspersed with what is generally considered as open space, such as forests and natural features, undeveloped land, agriculture and parks and recreational areas. The evolution of land use within a community is the product of local economic conditions and community preferences; growth and development are based on such factors as access to jobs, employment, and the availability of affordable land for new housing or commercial development. Community preferences, expressed as land use plans and regulations, dictate the form, location, and sometimes the pace, of new development.

Land use forms the basis for master planning and determines, to a large extent, a Town's need to provide public facilities and infrastructure, transportation networks and services, and protection of environmental resources. As communities plan for their future, determining how and where growth and development should occur will provide the basis for planning where investments for municipal services will be needed, as well as determining what controls will be necessary to protect areas of the Town from unwanted development. Communities have the ability to control land use and development patterns through a variety of mechanisms, including zoning and subdivision regulations, provision of public utilities and infrastructure, and protection of open space lands through direct acquisition and the acquisition or acceptance of conservation restrictions/easements.

The following sections provide an overview of the current land use patterns in Southborough. The discussion includes a breakdown of the percentages of land devoted to different types of development based upon MassGIS data, the Town's data, zoning patterns and initiatives in past years to manage growth and development, an overview of recent land use trends based upon the Town's initiatives, and a listing of current land development activities that will impact development trends and land use activities in the future.

• *Text below in italics reflects items awaiting update/confirmation*

## Vision Forum & Survey Responses

### Connectivity-

- The overwhelming opinion of both the participants at the Visioning Forum and survey respondents was that making Southborough more traversable is imperative. The vital importance of sidewalks and bike lanes throughout town, trail connectivity and the connection of the north and south sections of town was the subject of many of the comments received at the forum and the open comment section of the survey. Additionally, 77% of survey respondents felt that enhancing connectivity within Southborough and to surrounding communities via sidewalks, trails and pedestrian crossings was either important or extremely important. These results are in conjunction with the strong support shown for

open space, environmental and recreational issues, 70% of survey respondents felt these issues were moderately to extremely important

#### Housing Diversity-

- Diversifying housing by allowing mixed-use development was another topic that received a large number of comments. However, the survey results seemed to contradict the comments, although only 21% of survey respondents felt that increasing the diversity of housing types was either important or extremely important many of the comments received either from the open comment section of the survey or the Visioning Forum recommended allowing mixed-use development and more affordability.

#### Commercial Diversity-

- Although the forum attendees didn't seem to show great interest in the Commercial Diversity station, this section of the survey received the greatest number of open-ended comments. Many touched on the comments received in other sections, i.e., sidewalks, bike paths, there was strong support for encouraging commercial development to diversify the tax base, particular emphasis on small independent businesses in the villages. Additionally, 75% of survey respondents felt that utilizing commercial or industrial space to generate tax revenue was either moderately or extremely important.

#### Climate Change Resiliency-

- A vast majority, 80%, of survey respondents felt that reducing water pollution, controlling invasive species and increasing energy efficiency was either important, moderately important or extremely important. The open-ended comments throughout the survey reflected the importance of this topic i.e., encourage residential solar use, invest in green infrastructure.

## **Summary of Changes & Accomplishments Since 2008**

The primary goal of the 2008 Master Plan in the Land Use and Zoning area was to rewrite the Town's Zoning Code and have the new code adopted by Town Meeting. A Zoning Advisory Committee (ZAC) was created in 2008 to accomplish this goal. The ZAC met from 2008 thru 2012, completed a through review of the zoning bylaw and created a comprehensive rewrite of the zoning bylaw but the draft zoning bylaw was never presented to Town Meeting for adoption. Although the new zoning bylaw wasn't ultimately adopted the work of the ZAC provides invaluable reference when making more targeted changes to the zoning bylaw. The following 2008 Land Use and Zoning goals have been either achieved or implementation is in process.

2008 Land Use Goals	
LU-3 Conduct thorough review of zoning bylaw	<i>To implement this goal a Zoning Advisory Committee was established in 2008. A thorough review of the zoning code was conducted.</i>
LU-4 Specifically allow for mixed use projects in Business Village and Business Highway districts	The Town is currently working on a bylaw to allow mixed use and other expanded uses in Business Village District located in the Downtown
LU-5 Establish design guidelines or use form-based codes to encourage better building layout and streetscape design	The Town is currently working on design guidelines to accompany the proposed bylaw for Business Village District located in the Downtown
LU-8 Consider zoning incentives to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment of existing properties (i.e., density bonuses for preservation of buildings, streetscape improvements or public amenities, etc.)	In 2017 the Town adopted an Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings bylaw to encourage investment in historic buildings by providing economic incentives to preserve historic buildings
ED-4 Consider elimination of the power to grant use variances once a comprehensive revision of the zoning bylaw is complete	The ability to grant use variances was eliminated by Special Town Meeting in 2016

## Active Organizations

### Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC)

A collaboration of citizens, nonprofits and government agencies dedicated to providing essential and advanced training to citizens involved in municipal planning and land use.

### MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)

MetroWest Regional Transit Authority was formed in 2006 by the state legislature to help serve the public transportation needs of the 32-town corridor known as the I-495/MetroWest corridor. A Regional Transit Authority (RTA) offers communities a way to have one coordinated, cohesive transportation system that can provide increased levels of service and improved marketing opportunities. With each community in an RTA represented on the RTA Board, a collaborative approach to regional transportation planning and provision of services can be undertaken. In the Spring of 2008, Southborough voted to join the MWRTA. The MWRTA currently consists of 15 member communities.

### Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

MAPC is a regional planning agency serving the people who live in the 101 cities and towns Metropolitan Boston. MAPC's mission is to promote smart growth and regional collaboration. Each municipality within MAPC's region belongs to one of eight subregions.

### MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC)

The MAPC subregion that Southborough belongs to. MWRC is led by a MAPC staff person and is made up of a planning board and Board of Selectman representative from each of the member municipalities and regional and community stakeholders who together to develop an annual work plan and priorities.

## Summary of Current Conditions, Resources & Projects

## About Southborough

Southborough is located in the MetroWest area of Massachusetts. This area is loosely defined as the collection of towns that lie west of Boston and East of Worcester, and strictly defined by the MetroWest Economic Research Center ('MERC') as the nine towns included in their statistical area.<sup>1</sup> These towns are: Sudbury, Wayland, Natick, Sherborn, Holliston, Hopkinton, Ashland, Framingham, and Southborough. Southborough is conveniently located between the two largest cities in the Commonwealth, Worcester and Boston. It is convenient to both points east/west and north/south due to its close proximity to Interstate 90, Route 9, and Interstate 495.

Southborough is located 25 miles west of Boston and 15 miles east of Worcester, in eastern Worcester County. Surrounding communities include Westborough, Northborough, Marlborough, Framingham, Hopkinton and Ashland. Incorporated in 1727, the Town was originally known as "Stony Brook" and was the southern portion of Marlborough.

Historically a farming community, Southborough has long prided itself for its high quality of life and its rural character. The Town has struggled to maintain its agricultural heritage with the onset of industrialization, through the more recent commercial development boom along Interstate 495, followed by rapid residential growth. The past two decades in Southborough have seen increased efforts to preserve what is left of the Town's rural character, one of the factors with which town residents define themselves. Recent examples include the purchase of a Conservation Restrictions (CR) on what was known as the St. Mark's Golf Course and the Halloran Property

In the nineteenth century, two forces impacted the development of Southborough: the river and the railroad. Due to its location along the Sudbury River, Southborough became the most densely populated town on the eastern border of Worcester County.<sup>2</sup> The Boston & Worcester Railroad arrived in Southborough in 1834, and the Southville Depot was built in 1836. The combination of the water power from the Sudbury River and the railroad prompted the development of new industrial villages in southern Southborough, and throughout the region. Factory villages, allowing families to move to these remote locations for access to the mill jobs, sprouted up along New England's rivers. Southborough's southern villages, Cordaville and Southville, still contain mill housing that represent the Town's brush with the industrialization. Over time, these mill villages converted to the suburban residential community that exists today.

A significant aspect of Southborough's land use history is the damming of the Sudbury River to create the reservoir that would increase the City of Boston's water supply. The construction of the Fayville Dam in 1898 put an end to Southborough's burgeoning manufacturing sector by eliminating the water power that had been fueling the growth of the cotton and woolen mills, boot and shoe factories, and factories for other products. The project required the taking of nearly 2,000 acres of Southborough land and permanently changed the character of the town's four villages. The reservoir contributed to preserving the pastoral quality of Southborough by refocusing the economy on the farms and pastures. While a considerable land use impact, the reservoir helped postpone the suburbanization of Southborough.<sup>3</sup>

## Historic Land Use Patterns

Southborough is located in the midst of the rapidly expanding suburban area between Boston and Worcester; as a result, the Town has seen significant population growth in the past two decades. Southborough is easily accessed by major highways; Route 9 bisects the Town, and the Massachusetts Turnpike and Rt. 495 enhance connections to Southborough. The Town is thus considered a potentially attractive community for the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.merc-online.org/regions/metrowest.php>

<sup>2</sup> Donohue, Barbara (Timelines Inc.), *Typically New England Cordaville: Southborough's Nineteenth-Century Mill Village*, March 2004: Page 10.

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph can be attributed to "About Southborough" as provided on the Town's website and the history written by Richard E. Noble, author of *Fences of Stone*.

location of commercial and industrial firms. Southborough is perhaps a more appealing town for people who commute to Boston and other nearby employment centers due to its proximity to major routes and the addition of commuter rail. A large increase in regional jobs in the past few decades has stimulated the rapid growth of residential development in the region and in Southborough in particular. In addition, the quality of schools in Southborough is a major attractor for families.

**Table 2-1a Land Use: 1971, 1985, 1999 – to be updated. Amend data in text**

**Table 2-1b Land Use Changes: 1971, 1985, 1999 – to be updated  
edit**

As shown above in Table 2-1a, well over 60 percent of Southborough's land was agricultural, undisturbed vegetation or natural land, or open undeveloped land in 1971; this total decreased to 61 percent by 1985 and to 51 percent by 1999. The most significant land use changes since 1971, as shown in column three of Table 2-1b, have been in Higher Density Residential (+176.2%), Low Density Residential (+130%), Commercial (+75.2%), and Agriculture (-42.2%).

Nearly 40 percent of the town's land (3,610 acres) was not taxable because it was owned by the Metropolitan District Commission (now the Department of Conservation and Recreation), churches and schools, town-owned, tax title property or roads.<sup>4</sup> However, land owned by the MDC is currently reimbursed through Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) or other means. Of the area owned by DCR, approximately 950 acres consists of water in the Sudbury Reservoir.

Of the 1,900 housing units in Southborough in 1979, only 4 percent (80 units) were multi-family housing; in 1955 Southborough passed a bylaw prohibiting the construction of multi-family apartment buildings. 1985 data show a 12 percent increase in land devoted to residential use (approximately 200 acres), largely replacing undisturbed or agricultural land in Southborough.

In 1986, the Town Meeting adopted a number of new zoning provisions and established an Open Space Preservation Commission. The Planning Board adopted new subdivision regulations. The Town Master Plan was updated in 1987. In 1990 the Town Meeting voted to adopt an Open Space Policy requesting town boards to protect the Town's traditional landscapes and mix of uses. A 1991 survey conducted of Southborough residents showed that residents place high value on preserving the rural character of the town and protecting its natural resources.

**See Figure 1 that illustrates Southborough's land use in 1985.** Where is this? Zoning Map from 1985 showing land use in 2008 Master Plan didn't transfer when converted to word

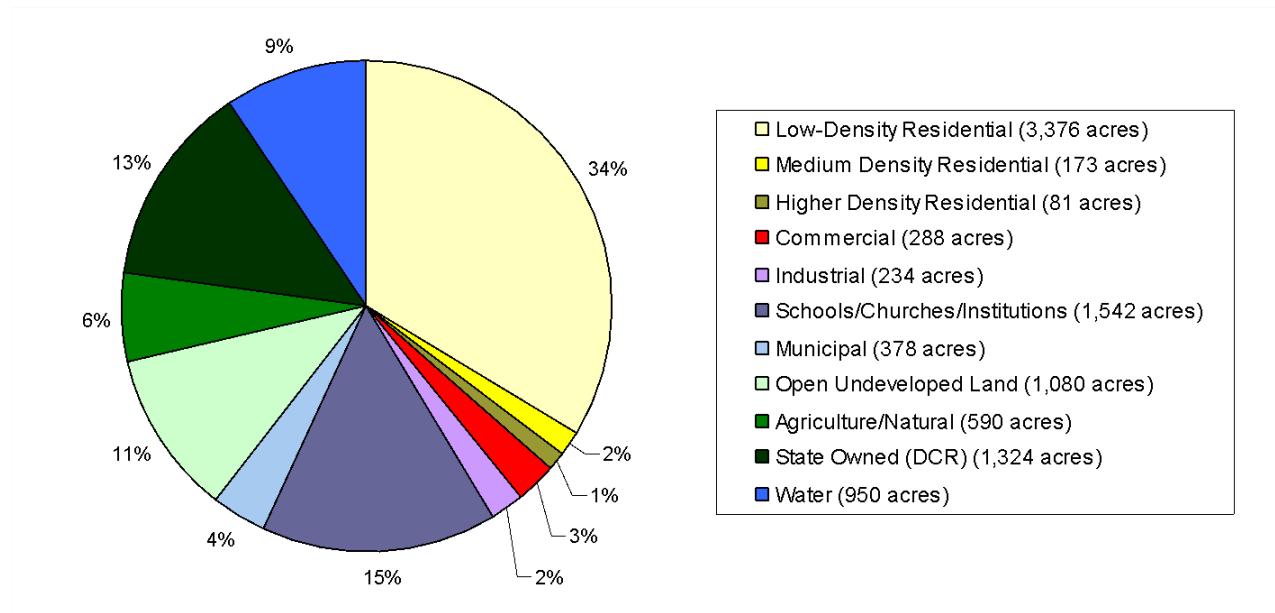
<sup>4</sup>

*Southborough Factbook 1979* prepared by the Southborough Citizens' Planning Committee

## Current Land Use – needs updating if updated data is available

Southborough covers approximately 15.4 square miles (9,844 acres).<sup>5</sup> The Town's development patterns are reflective of its historical roots as an agricultural and rural residential community, as depicted on the Inventory of Existing Land Uses map, in Figure 2, in the corresponding Table 2-1a and in Chart 2-1 below. Chart 2-1 shows the more current year 2020 land use data reported by the Town Assessor.

**Chart 2-1 Current Land Use – to be updated – chart not updated with this detail**



Source: Town of Southborough Assessor, 2006

Notes:

Medium Density Residential

Higher Density Residential

DCR owns 2,245.6 acres in Southborough; 921.4 acres are water and 1,324.2 acres are land.

Low Density Residential = 1 units (single family)

= 2-3 units

= 4 or more units, including condominiums

Currently, nearly 30 percent of Southborough's land is agricultural, natural land or Commonwealth-owned protected parks or water supply areas. One-third of this area is water. Although the town has historically been considered an agricultural community, currently only 6 percent of the land is classified as agricultural. However, the low-density housing stock—some of which are farm houses, the land owned by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and other vestiges of the town's agricultural past such as stone walls and scenic roads, contribute to the pastoral feel of Southborough. An additional 11 percent of land is open and undeveloped, as reported by the Town Assessor; this undeveloped land is located in all zoning districts and contains a variety of conditions that may restrict its ability to be developed. 22 percent (239 acres) of this land is considered undevelopable.

In 2020 , over 40 percent of Southborough's land use was residential; this is a dramatic increase from the 1971 (17.7 percent) and 1985 data (19.7 percent) (see also Table 2-1a). Of this residential land, 80 percent is

<sup>5</sup> The total land area provided here as well as in Tables 2-1, 2-2, Chart 2-1, and Table 5-2 range from 9,844 to 10,035 (or 15.4 to 15.6 square miles). This discrepancy is a result of various calculations and reporting inconsistencies that may occur when the MassGIS, Town GIS, or Town Assessor's data was prepared. For example, the Town Clerk shows that the Town is 13.79 square miles. This discrepancy has no significant impact on the general discussion of land use provided here.

single family homes a 13% decrease from 2006. Commercial and industrial land uses in Southborough, which represent 10 percent of total land use in Town, increased marginally (approximately 2 percent each).

Finally, one notices that ? percent of the Town's land is owned by non-profit organizations such as the housing authority, churches and private schools. *[ML: up from 15% in 2006 – check]* While these uses contribute to the unique character and quality of life in Southborough, this ownership pattern certainly affects the Town's tax base. Nearly 30 percent of the land is owned by the Town or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As discussed above, land owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is considered "reimbursable;" DCR pays a PILOT fee for 99 percent of the land that is Commonwealth owned; approximately one acre is not owned by DCR.

### **Overview of the Southborough Zoning Districts**

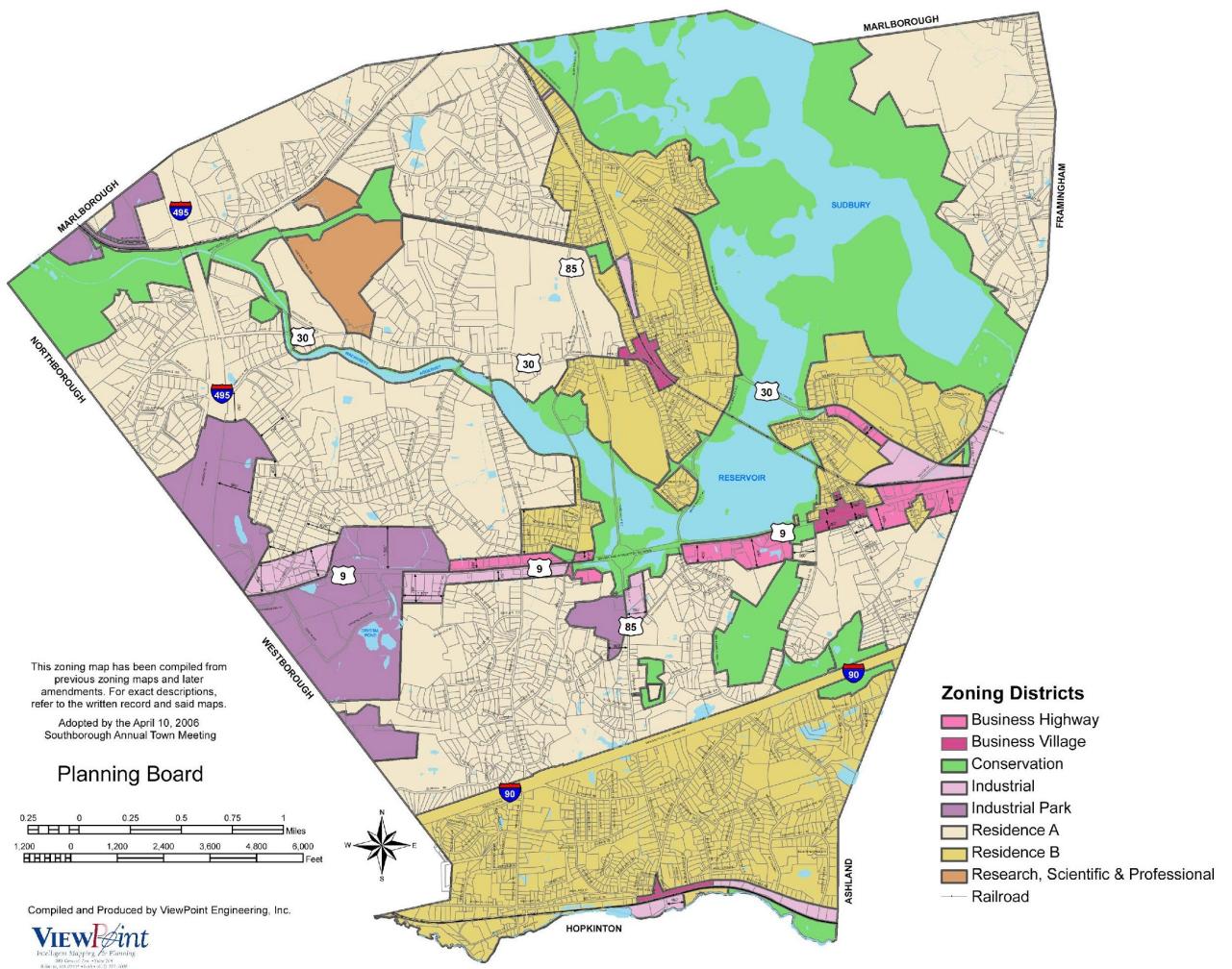
The Southborough Zoning Bylaw (Chapter 174 of the Code of the Town of Southborough) has not been comprehensively revised since its first adoption in 1955. However, numerous sections have been added or revised on a section-by-section basis over the years. The zoning bylaw establishes eight districts and three overlay districts. Please see Figure 3, Southborough Zoning Map.

*Figure 1 – 1985 Land use – not in text – find and review*

*Figure 2 - Existing Land Use - find and review*

These are the zoning maps were dropped off when converted to word

Figure 3 - Southborough Zoning Map – update?



### **Conservation District (C)**

Parkland and open space are the predominant use in these districts which can be found around the Sudbury Reservoir and Wachusett Aqueduct along with other pockets across the Town.

### **Residence A District (RA)**

This is primarily a district that allows detached single-family dwellings and related accessory uses, as well as institutional uses, on one acre lots. This district occupies the most land in Southborough.

### **Residence B District (RB)**

This is similar to the RA District, but more densely developed given that the minimum lot size is 25,000 square feet rather than an acre, as in RA.

### **Business Village District (BV)**

This district allows both residential and retail uses in a neighborhood setting. Multi-family dwellings are allowed by special permit. It is designed to reflect historical development patterns that include residential, commercial, governmental and religious uses that serve the surrounding neighborhoods of downtown Southborough, Fayville, and Southville/Cordaville.

### **Highway Business District (BH)**

This is a district that allows residential and commercial development, but is found along Rt. 9 and a portion of Rt. 30. More intensive (up to 50,000 square feet) retail and office development is permitted along with automotive related uses.

### **Industrial Park District (IP)**

This district allows for newspaper, office, wholesale distribution, and research and development uses up to 50,000 square feet. The two largest parcels are located on either side of Rt. 9 near the Westborough border (the EMC Campus is located on one of these parcels).

### **Industrial District (ID)**

Generally, this is a standard industrial district that allows retail, offices, automotive uses, medical laboratories, and hotels, up to 50,000 square feet. Research facilities, wholesale businesses and some light manufacturing are allowed with a special permit. There are several small ID districts located along Rt. 9 and Southville Road.

### **Research, Scientific and Professional District (SP)**

Aside from residential uses, which are allowed by right, this district requires a special permit for multi-family housing for the elderly, major residential development, and research and development facilities. This district is located along Chestnut Hill Road although most of this land was recently preserved through a conservation restriction and therefore cannot be developed.

### **Wetland and Floodplain District (WFP)**

This is an overlay district designed to ensure that the land is not subject to flooding or otherwise unsuitable for development. A special permit is required with such a finding from the Planning Board, Board of Health and Conservation Commission. This district is not currently mapped.

### **Critical Resource District (CR)**

The purpose of this overlay district is to protect critical environmental resources by ensuring that alternatives are properly considered before the issuance of a special permit. This district is not currently mapped.

### Wireless Communication Service District (WCS)

This overlay district is located on all Town-owned or controlled land, as well as all land located in the BH, I, and IP districts. It regulates how wireless communication devices are installed.

**Table 2-2**

**Land Use by Zoning District**

	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Highway Business District	128	1%
Business Village District	43	0%
Conservation District	2,430	25%
Industrial District	189	2%
Industrial Park District	567	6%
Residence District A	4,170	43%
Residence District B	2,069	21%
Research, Science, and Professional District	132	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,728</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Town of Southborough GIS data 2021

### Zoning Regulations

Both the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals act as the special permit granting authority for different types of uses.

The zoning bylaw includes some land use tools that are important to ensure sound development practices such as site plan approval. Minor site plan review for small projects up to 2,000 square feet of new or expanded floor area (or change of use), or between 5 and 19 parking spaces. Larger projects are considered to be major projects and are subject to major site plan review hearing by the Planning Board. Additional plan review is required in the Village Business District, where major site plan approval is the special permit from the Planning Board. The criteria include some design guidelines.

To encourage the preservation of historic structure an Adaptive Reuse Bylaw was adopted to provide incentives for historic preservation.

The bylaw also has a detailed landscaping requirement for projects that require five or more new parking spaces or require site plan review. Major residential development projects are allowed by special permit and provide for greater flexibility as an alternative to traditional subdivision design. Open space preservation, more efficient infrastructure, and the creation of affordable housing are among the goals of this type of development pattern.

Southborough also adopted a Lower Impact Development bylaw aimed at minimizing the impacts of stormwater runoff and reducing nonpoint source pollution. Additionally, Southborough's Illumination Bylaw was updated to decrease the harmful effects on the environment and its inhabitants of light pollution and solar bylaws were adopted to encourage the use of solar energy.

### Build-Out Analysis

*ML: Is there an updated buildout analysis- Part of the current data contract chances are we won't get the detailed*

*buildout that was done in 2008 so this will probably be a much shorter chapter.*

To more accurately assess local growth potential, the Planning Department conducted a build-out analysis that was parcel-based rather than aerial-photo based (as was the technique favored by the Regional Planning Council when conducting the 1999 build-out analyses). This method is more fine-grained, and takes into consideration local knowledge about existing land use, ownership patterns, and soil conditions. Because approximately 85 percent of the land in the town is zoned for residential use, the following build-out analysis considers future residential development in considerable detail

## Residential Development

### *ML: Update section*

The parcel-based analysis has two components: maximum build-out based on vacant parcels; and maximum build-out of underdeveloped parcels. For the analysis of vacant parcels, the Assessors' office generated a database of vacant parcels with the following fields: map/lot; owner; zoning district; and size in acres. The database was sorted by zoning district, and split into two databases: residential and commercial/industrial. For the residential database, each vacant parcel was evaluated for maximum building potential based on size, shape, soil conditions for septic systems, and regulatory factors such as the presence of wetlands. Judgments regarding the extent of wetlands and its effect on buildable area were made on the basis of staff knowledge of the wetlands within the town. Judgments regarding the suitability of soils to accommodate septic systems were made on the basis of Board of Health staff knowledge. Where there was some question as to buildability, the lot was considered buildable.

Further, as part of this analysis, St. Mark's Golf Course was considered buildable. Therefore, the final build-out may slightly overestimate, rather than underestimate, the total new dwellings that can be built. Lots less than one-half the minimum lot size in the zoning district were considered to be unbuildable, based upon current zoning. For lots more than half, but less than the minimum lot size, it was assumed that a variance from the Board of Appeals would allow a dwelling to be constructed<sup>6</sup>. For larger parcels, it was assumed that the land would be subdivided, either through the Approval Not Required (ANR) process or through the full subdivision process. For the latter, empirical yields per acre based on prior Southborough subdivisions were applied. These empirical yields are driven by both soil conditions and by the marketability of larger-lot homes. As shown in Table 2-3, 475 single-family lots could be developed on the 191 vacant parcels within the Town; approximately one-third of these are in subdivisions of eight lots or more.

To determine the number of new dwellings that could be built on parcels where dwellings already exist (which is the most common form of small subdivision), all parcels that exceeded twice the required area were tabulated. Staff then examined each of the 497 parcels to determine the likelihood of a subdivision or ANR application. As shown in Table 2-3, 298 additional single-family lots can be developed through the re-subdivision of land in established areas.

***Table 2-3 Residential Build-out under Current Zoning - update***

In summary, 773 new single-family lots can be created in a full build-out scenario under current zoning without taking into consideration allowable expansions for accessory apartments. Based on the average number of building permits issued over the previous five years (36) it is estimated that the full build-out of residential land will occur by 2030, with a total population of approximately 10,941 (based on 2.9 persons per household).

## M.G.L. Chapter 40B and Its Effects on Development

Another issue at hand is that of M.G.L. Chapter 40B and its allowance for increased density in order to create state mandated affordable housing<sup>7</sup>. Town staff researched this issue without finding any clear methodology to determine the build-out potential of 40B. It does not appear that there is a way to accurately account for this mandate, as the densities and sites chosen will vary. However, according to the Town's Affordable

<sup>6</sup> This assumption is included only for the purposes of conservatively estimating future build-out and is not meant to imply that the Board of Appeals has a policy of issuing such variances.

<sup>7</sup> Southborough is subject to Chapter 40B filings based on our current Subsidized Housing Inventory percentage of 8.56% out of a required 10%.

Housing Strategy, in order to meet the goal of creating 0.75 of one percent of its required affordable housing stock each year, Southborough must permit approximately 23 units of affordable housing each year. **ML: are these figures still accurate?** This in itself is a misleading number, as the number of units required is derived from the total number of housing units in town and grows as the total housing stock grows. In any event, based on historical permitting numbers the goal of 23 housing units per year can only be achieved via multifamily housing developments.

A simple, yet reasonable approach to calculating the effect of Chapter 40B on the Town's future build-out is the following:

A maximum build-out scenario of 773 new dwelling units, plus a factor of 10 percent to account for all future 40B development (269 additional affordable units<sup>8</sup>) totals 1,042 new dwelling units.<sup>9</sup>

**ML: Needs updating.** With an average occupancy of 2.9 persons per household, total build-out is a population of 11,721. As with all potential new development, it is difficult to gauge a timeframe for final build-out with respects to Chapter 40B because it is impossible to predict how, and to what scale, these developments will be proposed. In fact, trying to average the increased number of permits skews the calculation. Therefore, a reasonable estimation is that the maximum residential build-out, including potential Chapter 40B development, will total 1,042 new dwelling units, with a total population of 11,721, and will occur in the next 20 to 30 years.

Chapter 3 of this plan (as well as the 2020 Housing Production Plan) addresses housing issues in more detail and includes recommendations on a more proactive approach toward the production of affordable housing that is not the result of the developer-driven 40B process.

<sup>8</sup> When factoring in the current need for affordable housing. The 294 housing units are derived from the current need for affordable housing (192) plus the 10% of the anticipated 40B production (77).

<sup>9</sup> This number does not account for the increased density allowed to offset affordable units. It accounts only for the affordable units.

## Commercial/Industrial Development

**ML: update figures, current development, reference to pandemic effect on vacancy rates.**

Given the wide range of development options in those zoning districts and an everchanging market environment, determining the potential for commercial and industrial lots is a more difficult task. While an assessment of the build-out potential of each vacant lot was conducted, taking into consideration the zoning restrictions such as setbacks and floor-area-ratio, as well as wetlands restrictions, the results are still only estimates. As shown in Table 2-4, this analysis shows that approximately 428 acres of commercial/industrial acreage is available. Within that calculation are the EMC and Flatley parcels, which together could total approximately 3 million square feet of additional commercial and industrial space based on current development proposals. Calculating the remaining parcels leaves approximately 50 acres of commercial/industrial area, the majority of which is located on Route 9. We can estimate approximately an additional 200,000 SF on all of the remaining parcels, for a total of 3.2 million square feet of new commercial/industrial space.

Determining the redevelopment or infill potential of commercial and industrial lots that are already developed is a more difficult task than determining infill potential for residential areas, because the statistical methods used for residential areas are not accurate for commercial and industrial areas. However, the following general observations may be made. Existing development in the Business Village (BV) district already approaches full build-out in most areas. It is not likely that there will be statistically significant redevelopment in these areas that will add to the total inventory of commercial or industrial square footage that affect the recommendations made later in this chapter.

The Business Highway (BH) and Industrial/Industrial Park (I & IP) districts along Route 9 are primarily composed of large freestanding commercial buildings fronted by large parking lots, many of which are a more land intensive use such as office and research and development buildings, when compared to uses such as warehouse or light industrial. Given the cyclical market for office space (currently there is a nearly 14.4 percent vacancy<sup>10</sup> rate in MetroWest, although office project proposals are pending in Southborough), it is difficult to accurately predict future development over the next 10 to 15 years. What may be more likely is a shift to more retail-oriented development. Southborough's most recent projects on Route 9 include a high-end automobile dealership and retail building with a coffee shop, restaurants, and a day-spa, which could be an indicator of future commercial establishments. The lack of large-scale retail businesses in Southborough also may be a sign that the commercial base will shift from office space to retail.

**Table 2-4 - Commercial and Industrial Build -Out under Current Zoning**

## Build-Out Conclusion

**ML: Needs to be updated**

A build-out analysis is only an approximation of possible future growth in the community. Housing market conditions, the types of industries that desire to locate in this region, the growth and changes in consumer attitudes and spending patterns, and the stance of the community regarding growth and open space preservation all play an important role in shaping the ways in which Southborough will change.

From a residential standpoint, there are several large tracts of land that play heavily in this analysis, including St. Mark's School properties and the Rousseau property. All have been included in the build-out analysis, but together they total over 100 units of housing. While the Rousseau property is slated for a

<sup>10</sup> R. W. Holmes Realty – February 2008. The low vacancy rate is, in part, attributable to an average rent that is lower in Southborough than in the Framingham/Natick area or along Rt. 128.

residential development in the near future, it does not appear that St. Mark's School lands will be developed into residential uses. It is critical for the Town to determine its goals for future development in order to plan effectively for these and other properties.

From a commercial standpoint, there are a few large vacant parcels on Route 9 on which there is the potential for the majority of the commercial/industrial build-out. While the Flatley properties and the EMC project have been in design development and are in some portion of the permitting process, many questions still remain, such as the nature of Route 9, a divided highway, and its ability to function with over 3 million square feet of new development. These are issues facing Southborough as it continues to develop and grow over the next twenty-five years.

While the Town still has "room to grow", so to speak, this is the opportunity to make critical decisions in how Southborough frames its growth until reaching build-out. Southborough has a strong history of consistent regulation with respect to planning and development, upon which it can build in order to ensure that the next thirty years reflect the goals and the vision residents have for the Town.

## **Projects in the Pipeline**

### ***Recheck ML draft for edits***

The following is a summary of projects proposed or currently before town boards; these projects and their potential impacts on either housing supply or the commercial/industrial sector will be discussed in further detail in their respective chapters of this Plan (Housing and Economic Development).

### **Residential Projects**

#### **Ruby Estates**

Ruby Estates is a six-lot conventional subdivision proposed to be located on a new cul de sac off Mt Vickery. The project is currently before the Planning Board and Conservation Commission.

#### **Park Central**

This project was to be located on a the former Flatley-owned property off Route 9 and Park Central Drive. The Comprehensive permit approved 180 rental units (2 four story buildings), and the use variance approved 158 townhouse units a wastewater treatment plant, and open space, among other site features. The project entrance was to be sited on Flagg Road and Route 9 westbound from Park Central Drive. This project had been proposed and received site eligibility, received a use variance in 2015 and a comprehensive permit in 2016 but the project is currently under litigation

#### **Chestnut Meadow**

Approved in 2017 a 12-lot subdivision on 15.74 acres of land off of Chestnut Hill Road is currently under construction.

#### **Illa Bella Estates**

Approved in 2015 a 11-lot, 12 unit subdivision that includes an affordable duplex off of Mt Vickery Road. The subdivision road has been constructed the housing construction has not commenced.

## **Commercial/Industrial Projects**

### **154-156 Northborough Road – Contractor Bays**

**All American Storage Facility**

110 Turnpike Road, Rte. 9- Upscale storage facility

**U-Haul Storage facility**

0 Firmin Ave (Pleasant St Connector) a parcel in both Southborough and Framingham.

## Objectives, Goals & Recommendations

The Master Plan Committee determined that Land Use and Zoning should organically evolve from predominant themes conveyed through the other chapters in this Master Plan.

These are reflected in the following goals:

LU-1.0	Enhance connectivity within town
LU-2.0	Develop strategies to offer more diversity in housing
LU-3.0	Strengthen sustainability of local businesses, commercial districts and villages
LU-4.0	Develop strategies for energy conservation, carbon footprint reduction and climate change resiliency

Each goal has a number of recommendations from the other chapters to support its delivery; responsibilities, metrics and timelines are included in Section xx Implementation Planning.

## Recommendations Supporting Land Use and Zoning Goals

Housing	H
Economic Development	ED
Open Space, Environment and Recreation*	OSER
Circulation and Transportation	CT
Community, Historical and Cultural Resources	CHCR
Public Services and Resiliency	PSR
Schools	S

\* name of this chapter? Should each section be called out separately?  
Make sure names of all chapters consistent

### LU1.0: Enhance connectivity within town

CT-2.0: Develop a plan to improve the safety, accessibility and convenience of transportation/transit services for residents, businesses and commuters of all ages and abilities

CT-3.0: Develop approach/plan to connect all parts of town with pedestrian/cycle access to improve ease of commuting, recreation and social interaction.

CT-3.2: Develop trail/sidewalk “spine” structure for access to all parts of town and connection to surrounding pedestrian pathways

CT-3.3: Develop plan for constructing sidewalks and repairing existing sidewalks and connecting sidewalks to the trail network

ED-1.6: Continue to develop and improve sidewalk network

ED-2.4: Connect rail station to office and commercial areas in Town via improved sidewalks, shuttle bus services and bike lanes

OSER-2.0: Expand access to existing open space

OSER-2.3: Continue to establish connections to regional trails

OSER-2.7: establish off road bike on appropriate tails

OSER-3.2: Strive for multi-use trail and sidewalk systems to satisfy the community's walking and biking needs

OSER-3.5: Build a multi-use community center

CHCR-1.6: Evaluate options for creating a "community green space" within the Downtown Village Business District

CHCR-1.9: Study and improve connectivity and access to the downtown for pedestrians (sidewalks and trails) and cyclists

CHCR-2.5: Create a cultural corridor along Main Street linking various significant sites through an interactive walking tour.

CHCR-4: Develop a strategic plan for the development of a community gathering space

## **LU-2.0: Create Strategies to offer more diversity in housing**

H-2.0: Identify sites for creation of diverse housing through new development, redevelopment and preservation

H-2.1: Locate potential sites to create diverse housing including townhouses, apartments and small-scale homes

H-3.0: Update zoning to create opportunities for development of affordable housing and to encourage diverse housing options.

H-3.1: Promote mixed-use buildings to offer housing where appropriate

H-3.2: Remove zoning barriers for the provision of multifamily housing

H-3.3: Remove zoning barriers to allow accessory apartments.

CHCR-1.1: Define and document changes to the zoning and use regulations for the Downtown Village Business District

CHCR-2.7: Encourage the use of our Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings bylaw

PSR-2.2: Encourage demographic diversity of the town's population through support of diverse housing initiatives

### **LU-3.0: Strengthen sustainability of local businesses, commercial districts and villages**

ED-1.1: Increase use intensity for correctly underutilized properties

ED-1.5: Continue to look for ways to leverage Rt 9 corridor for increased Capital Improvements Program (CIP) tax revenue.

ED-2.0: Encourage sense of community within Southborough's villages by supporting the expansion of local business and better infrastructure and access.

CHCR-2.7: Encourage the use of our Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings bylaw

### **LU-4.0: Establish strategies for energy conservation, carbon footprint reduction and climate change resiliency**

ENV-1.0: Ensure the town's storm water by-laws reflect federal/state regulations and the projected impact of climate change

ENV-1.9: Create a Tree Canopy Protection bylaw, defining limitations on lot clearance to protect against excessive erosion and the risk of flooding

ENV-3.3: Install electric charging stations around town

OSER-4.0: Prioritize and reduce the existence and impact of invasive species and other nuisance species on public and private properties

OSER-5.0: Expand the use of native plants for pollinators across the community

OSER-5.2: Develop policy and associated guidelines/conditions outlining the recommended native planting schemes that can be adopted by the Planning Board and Conservation Commission

PSR-4.0: Identify hazards that affect the ability of the town to respond effectively and efficiently to natural disasters and climate change and develop appropriate mitigation plans

PSR-4.3: Decrease tree damage sustained by ice/wind; leverage the town's "Tree City" status with tree planting programs

CT-1.8: Review the current 18 scenic roads within town. Identify other roads that could be given this status with the specific focus on preserving and protecting scenic vistas and trees.

CHCR-1.8: Gain approval from CSX to allow town to replace pipes under the Main Street tracks in order to resolve the downtown stormwater issues

## Land Use and Zoning Goals and Recommendations

### LU-1.0 Enhance connectivity within town

- LU-1.1: Develop a plan to connect all parts of town with pedestrian/cycle/trail access
- LU-1.2: Construct or repair a sidewalk network throughout town, create bike trails and lanes. LU-
- LU-1.3: Connect sidewalks to trail network
- LU-1.4: Create community gathering spaces: build a multi-use community center and create community green space

### LU-2.0: Create Strategies to offer more diversity in housing

- LU-2.1: Amend Multifamily Housing for the elderly section of the zoning bylaw and add an affordability requirement
- LU-2.2: Amend the zoning bylaw to allow accessory apartments by right
- LU-2.3: Allow duplexes by special permit
- LU-2.4: Amend the zoning bylaw to mixed use buildings and multifamily housing in the Downtown
- LU-2.5: Create design guidelines for use by proponents submitting proposals for the Downtown
- LU-2.6: Amend the zoning bylaw to allow mixed use buildings on Rte. 9

### LU-3.0: Strengthen sustainability of local businesses, commercial districts and villages

- LU-3.1: Amend the zoning bylaw to allow for 4 story buildings on Rte. 9
- LU-3.2: Amend zoning bylaw to allow small scale mixed use in the Village Business District Downtown

### LU-4.0: Establish strategies for energy conservation, carbon footprint reduction and climate change resiliency

- LU-4.1: Create a Tree Canopy Protection Bylaw
- LU-4.2: Review the Stormwater and Erosion Bylaw and determine if an update is advisable
- LU-4.3: Amend the Site Plan Approval bylaw to require the installation of electric charging stations
- LU-4.4: Create and implement a native tree planting program
- LU-4.5: Identify additional roads in town that should be given the scenic road status and have them approved by Town Meeting

# 1

## 1 2      **Vision, Goals & Planning Process** 3      *“A blueprint for policy development and planning”* 4 5

### 6      **Introduction**

7      The 2020 Master Plan project is sponsored by the Town of Southborough Planning Board in compliance  
8      with Part I-Title VII-Chapter 41-Section 81D of the Massachusetts General Law. A Master Plan provides a  
9      basis for future decision making in the Town, helping to guide Southborough’s growth and change,  
10     preserve its natural and cultural resources and maintain its public facilities and services.

11     This chapter outlines the process, models and tools used to develop the master plan report, describes the  
12     2030 vision for Southborough and documents the objectives and goals that support the delivery of that  
13     vision. Chapter 9 defines implementation approach agreed by Southborough’s Master Plan Committee  
14     (MPC) and details the recommendations associated with each goal. Documents referred to below can be  
15     found in MPC Shared Folder [\[create hyperlink\]](#)

16     The MPC initially targeted to complete the updated master plan by the end of 2020 but the Coronavirus  
17     pandemic constrained the committee’s ability to meet in person and slowed the pace of development. In  
18     addition, the committee agreed to wait and incorporate data from the 2020 census rather than publish the  
19     plan and then have to make further updates. As a result, several of the initial recommendations have  
20     already been completed and/implemented – this has been highlighted in the appropriate chapters of the  
21     plan.

### 22     **2008 Master Plan**

23     The 2008 Master Plan was developed between 2006 and 2008, in collaboration with an external  
24     consultant. The final report, saved by chapter in the MPC Shared Folder due to its size, is a  
25     comprehensive assessment of the Town and its vision for change.

### 26     **Summary of 2008 Master Plan**

27     The 2008 report includes 42 goals and 107 recommendations, organized into 8 chapter as shown in **Table**  
28     **1.** Responsibility for the implementation of these recommendations was assigned to one or more Town  
29     departments, boards and commissions.

**Table 1:** 2008 Master Plan - Goals & Recommendations

Chapter	Goal #	Rec #
Land Use & Zoning	8	11
Housing	6	11
Economic Development	4	11
Open Space & Recreation	4	16
Natural, Historic & Cultural Resources	7	19
Transportation, Transit, Circulation	3	11
Municipal Facilities	8	23
Southborough's Villages	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>107</b>

**Analysis of Implementation of 2008 Master Plan**

The MPC undertook a detailed analysis of implementation status of the 2008 master plan recommendations in April 2019, to establish a baseline for the 2020 report. A further review was completed in October 2020. The results are shown in summary form in **Table 2**. The detailed analysis of the recommendations, including commentary from MPC representatives can be found in the MPC Shared Folder [\[create hyperlink\]](#)

**Table 2:** 2008 Master Plan - Status of Recommendations

Chapter	Complete	Closed	2020 Plan	Total
Land Use & Zoning	1	8	2	11
Housing	-	1	10	11
Economic Development	4	3	4	11
Open Space & Recreation	1	3	12	16
Natural, Historic & Cultural Resources	4	6	9	19
Transportation, Transit, Circulation	-	3	8	11
Municipal Facilities & Services	5	9	9	23
Southborough's Villages	-	1	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>107</b>
	14%	32%	54%	

Of the 107 original recommendations, 49 are either Complete or designated as Closed i.e., the proposed change is no longer relevant or desirable, an alternative delivery approach has been identified or the activity is now deemed "business as usual". Progress has been made in 31 of the remaining 58 recommendations and the MPC has determined that these are still relevant and should be included in the 2020 master plan.

Each chapter of the 2020 report summarizes key accomplishments since 2008, including changes not directly related to the original goals. The individual chapters also reference other Town Plans developed in the last decade, providing links to the detailed reports as appropriate.

61 **2020 Master Plan**

62 **Master Plan Committee**

63 In early 2019, the Planning Board established a Steering Committee of stakeholders from across the  
64 community, to review and update the 2008 master plan. The charter for this committee covering its  
65 charge of duties, membership, terms and organization can be found in the MPC Shared Folder. [\[create  
66 hyperlink\]](#)

67  
68 Grant funding was available to engage with the **Metropolitan Area Planning Council** (MAPC) to  
69 support the development of a Vision document, the pre-cursor to the master plan update. The MAPC's  
70 original remit included organizing a community immersion day, facilitation of a vision forum/open  
71 house, research into existing Town plans plus the preparation of a brief written report. The MAPC also  
72 supported the delivery and analysis of a Vision Survey. The **Visioning Report** by the MAPC is available  
73 in the MPC Shared Folder [\[create hyperlink\]](#)

74  
75 **Appendix A** of this chapter includes MPC / MAPC members and others who have contributed to the  
76 preparation of this report. The development of a fully updated master plan was expected to require the  
77 engagement of external consultants, with additional funding not approved at the start of the project. In  
78 Spring 2020, the MPC determined that sufficient research, analysis and documentation had been  
79 undertaken to enable the committee to develop a comprehensive master plan without external support. It  
80 was recognized that this reliance on volunteer committee members would require an extended delivery  
81 timeline but would result in significant savings to the Town.

82  
83 **Development Approach**

84 In parallel with the creation of the Visioning Report, the MPC developed the scope and timeline for the  
85 full 2020 master plan. It was agreed that the updated plan should be expanded to include all public  
86 facilities/services, schools and a resiliency plan as well as a more robust implementation model,  
87 communication and tracking mechanisms. It was also determined that it was not necessary to replicate  
88 the detailed descriptions of Town assets/resources and federal/state regulations/policies from the 2008  
89 report – readers would be able to refer to the original report, as required. Also, the data, tables and charts  
90 in the 2020 report have been specifically selected to inform goals/recommendations or highlight issues.

91  
92 **Master Plan Structure**

93 The nine elements of a master plan are defined by Massachusetts legal statute and reflected in the  
94 Chapter structure of this report. However, to support the committee's desire to create a more holistic  
95 report, in effect a "community business plan", discussion, debate and deliberation was organized around  
96 11 key themes. The mapping of chapters and themes is shown in **Table 3**.

97  
98  
99  
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105  
106

**Table 3: 2020 Master Plan Chapters vs Development Themes**

2008 Chapter	Development Theme	2020 Chapter
Land Use & Zoning	Discussed under each theme	Land Use & Zoning
Housing	Diversity of housing	Housing
Economic Development	Diversity of commercial development	Economic Development
Open Space & Recreation	Protection of open space, environmental-green initiatives	Open Space, Natural Resources & Recreation
Natural, Historic & Cultural Resources	Enhanced sense of community, protection of historical assets	Historic, Cultural & Community Resources
Transportation, Transit & Circulation	Improved accessibility & connectivity	Circulation & Transportation
Municipal Facilities & Services	Robust public services & resiliency; expanded funding mechanisms; population/build out targets; continued strengthening of schools	Public Services, Resiliency & Schools
Southborough's Villages	Included in Economic Development	N/A

107

108 A unique model, known as the “**Vision-Objectives-Goals-Recommendations-Measures**’ (VOGRM) was  
109 defined to help frame the ideas, issues and opportunities associated with these themes into a robust set of  
110 objectives, goals and recommendations. The final VOGRM model can be found in the MPC Shared Folder  
111 [\[create hyperlink\]](#).

112

## 113 **Community Engagement & Outreach**

114 The MAPC describes Visioning for a master plan as “a process whereby a community evaluates its  
115 historic and present-day assets and imagines how it should evolve in order to leave a legacy for the next  
116 generation” The MPC took an iterative approach to vision generation, leveraging existing concepts within  
117 the 2008 master plan, conducting internal brainstorming sessions and gathering feedback from  
118 stakeholder boards and commissions. A final critical source was input from Southborough residents and  
119 other stakeholders who were encouraged to communicate their opinions and personal visions for  
120 Southborough via an in-person forum and electronic survey.

121

122 The **Vision Open House**, held in November 2019, was facilitated by the MAPC using presentations and  
123 interactive displays to provide an overview of the scope/purpose of a master plan, the importance of  
124 community participation in shaping the direction and development of the Southborough master plan  
125 vision and a snapshot of the Town (e.g., land use, demographics, housing stock etc.). The MPC’s initial  
126 objectives and key goal areas were also shared. Attendance at this event was limited, partly due to  
127 weather conditions, so the MAPC used the open house materials to create an on-line survey shared via  
128 the Town website.

129

130 The **Vision Survey**, circulated in Spring 2020, framed 30 questions across the 5 topics used in the open  
131 house, with an additional question” what have we missed”. The survey questions were designed to  
132 evaluate the relative importance of master plan goals/recommendations and quantitative results have  
133 been used to determine implementation priorities. Respondents were also able to provide “free form”  
134 feedback for each topic areas, which was analyzed by the MPC, with highlights included in each chapter  
135 of the report.

136

137 The open house materials and community feedback are summarized in the MAPC Visioning Report .  
138 The online vision survey questionnaire and results can be found in the MPC Shared Folder [\[create](#)  
139 [hyperlink\]](#).  
140  
141 Both the open house and survey feedback helped the MPC validate and refine the objectives, goals and  
142 recommendations that are incorporated in this report. The objectives that generated the highest number  
143 of responses were Recreation and Accessibility & Connectivity with a Community Pool and the  
144 Downtown Initiative having the most individual comments, with many coming from the “what have we  
145 missed” section. Each chapter within the master plan report includes a summary of the feedback from  
146 these two sources of community engagement.  
147

## 148 **2030 Vision Statement**

149 In 2008, the vision of the Master Plan was to “preserve Southborough’s classic rural New England  
150 character and charm while enhancing the village centers and neighborhoods”. The vision for this master  
151 plan is **Southborough 2030 – A Great Place to Live**. This broader vision encompasses all aspects of the  
152 Town and the communities that call Southborough home – residents, businesses and schools. This vision  
153 vision will have been achieved when Southborough has:

154

- 155 • A vibrant downtown and thriving villages with small scale businesses / restaurants, connected by  
156 walkable sidewalks and trails.
- 157 • Diverse and affordable housing options for residents at all phases of the life cycle
- 158 • Open space that is valued, protected and accessible to all
- 159 • Extensive recreation and cultural facilities /programs catering for all ages, centered around a  
160 community gathering space
- 161 • Upgraded public facilities /services and a robust administrative and technology infrastructure
- 162 • Resiliency against climate change and pandemic
- 163 • Schools that provide a platform for community wide education programs

## 164 **Objectives, Goals and Recommendations**

165 Each chapter of the master plan includes one or more Objectives reflected in the “banner headline”  
166 immediately below the chapter title. Each objective is supported by several Goals and more detailed  
167 Recommendations i.e., the projects, activities and actions required to deliver the desired change. Each  
168 chapter also includes a detailed narrative that explains the rationale and reasoning behind these Goals &  
169 Recommendations.

170  
171 Table 4 summarizes the scope of the 2020 Master Plan with the objectives and goal statements detailed in  
172 **Figure 1**. The Implementation Plan (Chapter 9)) includes tables of all Objectives, Goals &  
173 Recommendations with the Board, Commissions and Department responsible for delivery.  
174  
175  
176  
177  
178  
179  
180  
181  
182

**Table 4:** 2020 Master Plan - Summary of Objectives, Goals & Recommendations

Chapter	Objectives	Goals	Recommendations
Land Use & Zoning	1	4	15
Housing	1	4	13
Economic Development	1	3	22
Open Space, Natural Resources & Recreation	3	13	61
Historic, Cultural & Community Resources	1	3	15
Circulation& Transportation	1	3	19
Public Services, Resiliency & Schools	2	9	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>187</b>

183

**Figure 1: 2020 Master Plan – Objectives & Goals**

184

**Land Use & Zoning**

<b>Objective:</b> Align planning and zoning regulations with the vision and objectives of the master plan	
#	Goals
LU-1.0	Enhance connectivity within town to improve travel for all modes of transportation (vehicular, public, pedestrian, bicycle) to better connect people and places
LU-2.0	Create strategies to offer more diversity in housing, encouraging alternatives to large single-family houses that would allow young professionals/families to reside in Southborough and seniors to stay in town
LU-3.0	Strengthen the sustainability of local businesses, commercial districts and villages by attract businesses to come to Southborough and stay
LU-4.0	Establish strategies for energy conservation, carbon footprint reduction and climate change resiliency

185

**Housing**

<b>Objective:</b> Improve the diversity of housing within the town	
#	Goals
H-1.0	Enhance local capacity to advocate for, plan, develop and manage affordable housing
H-2.0	Identify sites for creation of diverse housing through new development, redevelopment, or preservation
H-3.0	Update zoning to create opportunities for development of affordable housing and to encourage diverse housing options
H-4.0	Assist Southborough residents to obtain or maintain housing that they can afford

186

**Economic Development**

<b>Objective:</b> Improve the diversity of commercial activity within the town	
#	Goals
ED-1.0	Enhance the Downtown District to provide a vibrant hub that is attractive to both businesses and residents
ED-2.0	Have an economically strong, diverse, and self-sustaining business community i.e. an economic engine along the Route #9 corridor.
ED-3.0	Encourage the sense of community within Southborough's Villages by supporting the expansion of local businesses through better infrastructure and access

187

**Open Space, Natural Resources & Recreation**

<b>Objective:</b> Protect and maintain open space within Southborough	
#	Goals
OS-1.0	Develop a collaborative policy/approach for the strategic acquisition /protection of properties
OS-2.0	Expand connectivity of and access to existing open space without compromising public safety, wildlife activity or causing adverse environmental impact
OS-3.0	Manage open space resources in collaboration with stakeholders and the community

193

<b>Objective:</b> Define, develop and implement “green” initiatives that sustain our environment	
#	<b>Goals</b>
NR-1.0	Ensure that the town’s wetland protection and stormwater by-laws reflect federal/state regulations and the projected impacts of climate change as well as planning for droughts
NR-2.0	Increase the volume and type of recycling by commercial and residential consumers
NR-3.0	Reduce the consumption of non-renewable natural resources by public and private users
NR-4.0	Prioritize and reduce the existence and impact of invasive species and other in nuisance species on public and private properties
NR-5.0	Expand the use of native plants and prioritize awareness and installation of pollination systems across the community
<b>Objective:</b> Enhance Recreation Facilities & Services	
#	<b>Goals</b>
R-1.0	Improve and maintain quality and safety of all recreational facilities
R-2.0	Continue to provide high quality recreation programs and activities that meet the needs of residents of diverse ages to build a stronger community
R-3.0	Seek opportunities to expand recreational facilities
R-4.0	Maintain strong partnerships with committees and organizations throughout the town
R-5.0	Maintain strong fiscal controls over recreation expenditure

194

195

## Circulation & Transportation

<b>Objective:</b> Improve accessibility & connectivity across the town	
#	<b>Goals</b>
CT-1.0	Develop the infrastructure necessary to support vehicular movement whilst improving safety, reducing pollution and preserving scenic vistas within the Town
CT-2.0	Develop a plan to improve the safety, accessibility and convenience of transportation/transit services for residents, businesses and commuters of all ages and abilities
CT-3.0	Develop approach/plan to connect all parts of town with pedestrian/cycle access to improve ease of commuting, recreation and social interaction

196

197

## Historic, Cultural & Community Resources

<b>Objective:</b> Develop an enhanced sense of community	
#	<b>Goals</b>
HC-1.0	Protect and preserve all historical assets of the Town of Southborough
HC-2.0	Improve the level of collaboration and engagement between the town’s government and the community at large
HC-3.0	Develop a strategic plan for the development of community gathering space

198

199

## Public Services, Resiliency & Schools

<b>Objective:</b> Provide effective, efficient and resilient facilities and services to the town	
#	<b>Goals</b>
PS-1.0	Be able to deliver a wide range of public services to Southborough’s residents
PS-2.0	Plan for, and manage, population and development growth in a way that appropriately balances the commercial, residential and financial pressures associated with this growth.
PS-3.0	Plan for, and manage, a balanced approach to the Town’s sources of revenue and the cost pressures associated with a growing demand for public services.
PS-4.0	Ensure all residents have access to all town resources, including physical resources (e.g. buildings & recreation areas) and intellectual resources (e.g. information, social/educational programs & services)
RY-1.0	Identify hazards that affect the ability of the town to respond effectively and efficiently to natural disasters and climate change and develop appropriate mitigation plans
RY-2.0	Ensure the appropriate infrastructure and public services are in place to provide timely emergency response

200

<b>Objective:</b> Continue to strengthen our schools	
#	Goals
S-1.0	Ensure the highest possible standard of student development and well being
S-2.0	Provide high quality facilities, professional faculty and a challenging, creative curriculum
S-3.0	Explore opportunities for improved coordination and collaboration with other education providers and the community at large

201

202

203

204

205 **Appendix A – Acknowledgements**

206 The Town of Southborough's 2020 Master Plan was developed through the collaborative efforts of the  
207 following:

208

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215

216 **Town of Southborough**

217 Mark Purple (Town Administrator), Karina Quinn (Town Planner), Sarah Hoecker (Principal Planning  
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219

220 **MAPC Staff**

221 Ralph Willmer (Technical Assistance (TAP) Manager and Principal Planner), Joseph Sacchi (Regional  
222 Land Use Planner), Iolando Spinola (Community Engagement Specialist), Alex Koppelman (Regional  
223 Housing & Land Use Planner), Leah Robins (Senior Government Affairs Specialist)

224