

1. Agenda

Documents:

[2022.02.16_MPC_AGENDA.PDF](#)

2. Meeting Materials

Documents:

[4._2020_DRAFT_MASTER_PLAN-ECONOMIC_DEVELOPMENT_EDIT_V4.2_FOR_MPC_REVIEW.PDF](#)
[8._2020_DRAFT_MASTER_PLAN-PUBLIC_SERVICES_RESILIENCY_SCHOOLS_-_EDIT_V5-FOR_MPC_REVIEW.PDF](#)
[3._2020_DRAFT_MASTER_PLAN-HOUSING_-_EDIT_TOMM_V3.PDF](#)

Town of Southborough, MA
Meeting of the Master Plan Committee
February 16, 2022 7:00 P.M.
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

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

- Housing
- Public Service and Schools
- Implementation

ADDITIONAL REVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHAPTER

PULLING MASTER PLAN TOGETHER

HOMEWORK FOR NEXT MEETING

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Other Business Properly Before the Board

- Approval of Minutes 1.12.22
- Set date for Next Meeting

ADJOURN

Meme Luttrell, Chair

Economic Development

“Improve the diversity of commercial activity within the town”

Introduction

Economic development in Southborough’s four historic villages (Cordaville, Southville, Fayville, and Downtown) and the Route 9 corridor which divides the northern and southern sections of the Town, were discussed in two separate chapters in the 2008 Master Plan. The 2020 Master Plan consolidates these topics into this chapter.

The specific emphasis is on economic and mixed-use development in Downtown Village and along Route 9 with the overall aim to plan for an economically strong, diverse, and self-sustaining business ecosystem in Southborough. This will increase commercial tax revenue and help balance the burden of residential property taxes. This chapter will address infrastructure, zoning, access, and connectivity, which have been identified as critical components to achieving the identified goals.

Vision Open House & Vision Survey Responses

The statements and questions presented in the open house and survey focused on increasing the vitality of Southborough’s villages, planning for public/community space and utilizing commercial space for tax revenue, with the latter topic viewed as particularly important by respondents. Note that a separate “Downtown Village Survey” was undertaken in mid-2017. This is covered below.

Most respondents that provided qualitative comments, viewed increased diversity in commercial development favorably, particularly bringing more small shops and restaurants as opposed to larger chains into the Downtown Village and the three other village areas.

Summary of Changes & Accomplishments Since 2008

A pivotal recommendation in the 2008 Master Plan was to “reestablish an Economic & Industrial Development Commission in order to build Southborough’s capacity to carry out economic development and broaden the tax base”. The Economic Development Committee (“EDC”) was established in 2013; its remit is described in the Active Organizations section below.

Southborough’s Villages

The 2008 Master Plan was the first town-wide plan for Southborough which specifically identified the historic villages as areas for targeted improvements in zoning, land use and commercial enhancement. Progress in the last decade has been mixed, with the focus being the EDC’s targeted effort to revitalize the Downtown Village as more fully detailed below (the “Downtown Initiative”).

2008 Goal #	Goal Description	Goal Status
V-1	Promote growth and development within the Downtown to encourage a mixed-use environment.	The Downtown District bylaw (discussed below) provides a platform for future growth by allowing for certain by-right uses and mixed-use development
V-2	Reinvigorate Southborough's villages by creating small, resident-driven businesses.	Several businesses have opened in the villages during the last decade, for example: Theracopia in Fayville, the Downtown Exchange in the Downtown, and others.

The 2008 Master Plan recommended mixed-use development i.e., allowing commercial and residential space in the same building, particularly for the Downtown Village, a concept which has been discussed at the Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee (SHOPC) and the Town Meeting as early as 2006. Since 2017, the EDC has been working on revitalizing the Downtown Village, with specific emphasis on infrastructure, updating zoning to permit mixed use, encouraging desired uses with targeted "by-right" zoning, improving connectivity and beautification while preserving the historic small-scale feel of the Town. In recent years, this has become a highly collaborative initiative and the Summary of Current Conditions section below describes the efforts so far and outlines a plan for ensuring that the result of the actions taken by the EDC, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and other committees results in the desired look, feel, and function of the Downtown.

Route #9 Corridor

The 2008 Master Plan noted that Southborough's Route 9 orientation and proximity to I-495 and I-90 offers important economic advantages but some of these advantages are offset by the lack of sewer service which limits opportunity for commercial development. This remains an important area of focus.

2008 Goal #	Goal Description	Goal Status
ED-1	Expand commercial development where it is most appropriate, along Route 9, at an appropriate scale.	Vacancy rates fluctuated due to the pandemic, but the EDC has worked with brokers and property owners to keep space filled and re-purpose underutilized space.
ED-2	Create opportunities for business growth	EDC established a local business directory to encourage and promote use of local goods and services
ED-3	Review/change the permitting process to try to streamline the process.	The EDC created a development permitting guidebook for use by developers and Town Boards in 2017/2018. Changes to the Downtown Zoning bylaw eliminate certain barriers by eliminating the need for use permits for certain by-right uses.
ED-4	Balance the financial benefit to the Town from development and open space.	

Active Organizations

Both local government and regional organizations support the Town in policy development, funding and the planning/implementation of economic development projects.

Economic Development Committee (EDC)

The mission of the EDC is to assist in stabilizing residential taxes through the growth of the Town's commercial and industrial tax base while preserving the character and charm of Southborough. The EDC investigates current economic conditions, creates and executes economic development initiatives and coordinates activities to enhance or expand economic development.

Planning Board

The Board reviews and approves applications for permits as required by the Town's bylaws, reviews and approves subdivisions and developments, and conducts site plan reviews. Where appropriate, the Planning Board proposes and amends zoning bylaws for Town Meeting approval.

Board of Selectmen (BOS)

The BOS has the power to prepare the town meeting warrant or agenda, to make appointments to town boards and offices and to employ professional administrative staff and town counsel. It also has authority to grant licenses and permits. In addition to these legal responsibilities, the BOS policy and strategic direction, coordinates the activities of other boards, hears appeals and resolves problems that have not been settled at lower levels. The Board works through its professional Town Administrator who oversees the day-to-day operation of the Town under the Board's direction.

Building Department

The Department is responsible for assuring compliance with the Massachusetts State Building Code and the Southborough's zoning regulations, regulating buildings, structures and the property uses in the Town. All new construction, alterations, additions and changes of use are reviewed by the Department.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

The five member ZBA is appointed by the BOS with responsibility for the administration of appeals relating to the MGL 40A, the State Zoning Act and Section 174 of the Southborough Code, the Town's zoning regulations. It is authorized to grant variances, special permits and appeals of decisions involving the zoning regulations of the Town.

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

The MAPC is the regional planning agency for the 101 cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston with the mission to promote smart growth and regional collaboration. The Council's regional plan, MetroFuture, considers topics such as municipal management, sustainable land use, protection of natural resources, efficient and affordable transportation, diversification of housing stock, public safety, economic development, and clean energy.

MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC)

This group facilitates inter-local collaborative policy development, planning and problem solving to enhance the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the MetroWest region. The MWRC remit includes land use, municipal governance, transportation, mitigation of development impacts, and coordination of municipal services.

New England City & Town Areas (NECTA)

NECTA are economic statistical areas defined by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for purposes of determining eligibility and need for federal financial assistance. Southborough is in the Boston-Quincy-Cambridge NECTA, the Framingham NECTA Division and the Boston-Worcester Combined NECTA. Southborough is also part of the Metro-West Cohesive Commercial Statistical Area (CCSA), the Metro South/West Workforce Area and the I-495/Arc of Innovation region.

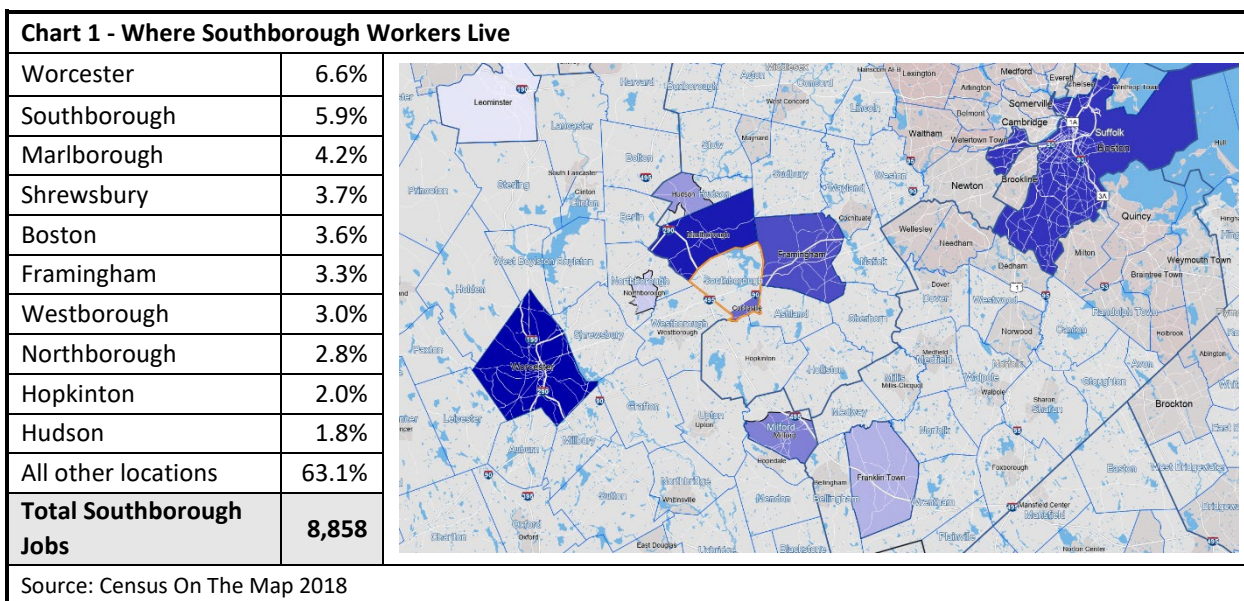
Summary of Current Conditions

Economic Constraints & Opportunities

The 2008 Master Plan provided a comprehensive assessment of the factors affecting the economic landscape of Southborough. The narrative painted a somewhat gloomy picture suggesting that the Town “will continue to evolve in the same manner as it has over the past two decades: a predominantly residential, expensive town with very few opportunities to work and play locally”.

There have been few non-residential development projects completed since 2008. Southborough in 2020 continues to feature large-lot single-family homes and low density, small- to mid-size offices on Route #9. However, the data below suggests there is still the need and opportunity to drive economic growth within the Town:

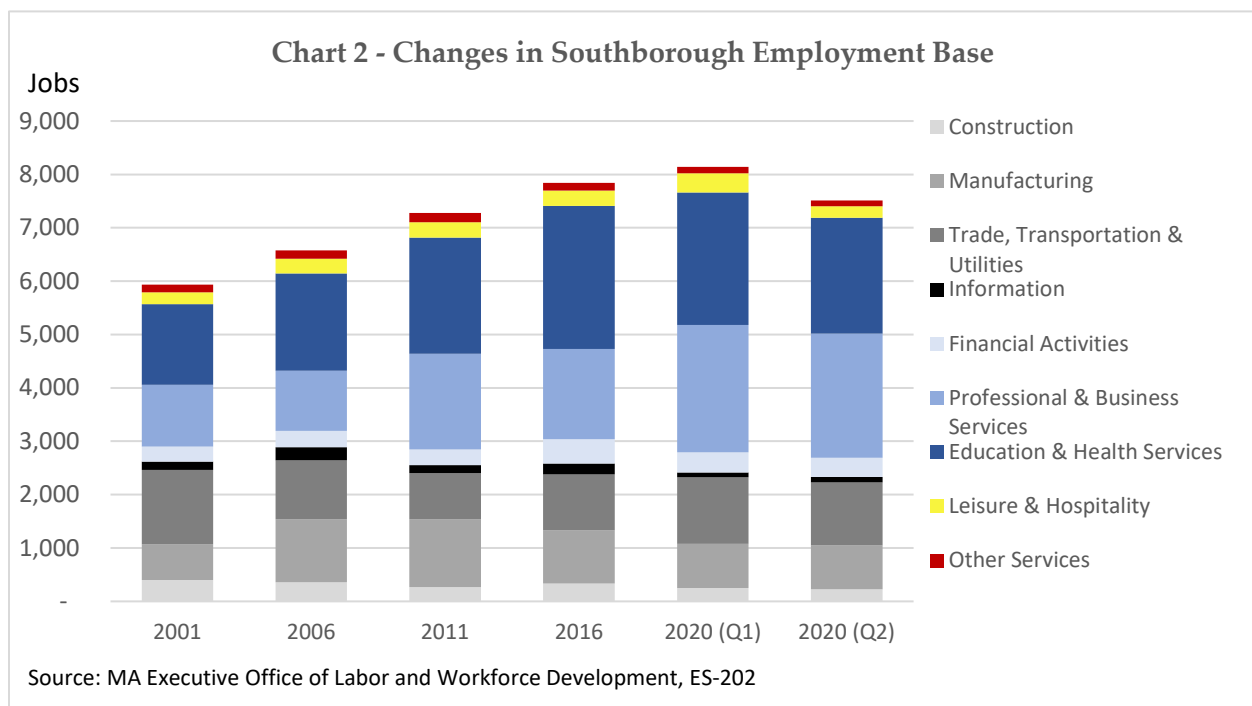
- Southborough has continued to evolve from a small, semi-rural community to a suburb of the Boston metro area, facilitated by convenient access to the region’s highways and public transportation system. Chart 1 indicates that in 2018, just under six percent (6%) of Southborough’s 8,858 workers lived in the Town. Workers travel from across the state with some higher concentrations around I-495, I-90 and I-190.
 - It is likely that residents that commute to other locations for work will purchase goods and services outside the Town



- Southborough’s employment base shows an increasing trend, growing from about 6,000 jobs in 2001 to almost 9,000 in 2018. In 2019, Southborough had xxx employer establishments although the registered business list included more than 474 businesses suggesting there is a strong

component of “at home” employment. Additionally, the pandemic related increase in working from home, for residents employed outside of the Town may continue in the future.

- Southborough needs retail and services for people who work in Town as well as its residents
- Chart 2 illustrates the high proportion of employment in professional/business services and education/health services. Industries that typically prosper in affluent communities, such as retail, food services, arts and entertainment, and recreation are underrepresented in Southborough’s economy.
 - There are few opportunities for people to gather, socialize, engage in leisure activities or purchase basic necessities locally.



- The 2008 Master Plan noted three main barriers to the growth of non-residential development activity in the Town - zoning policy, notably the restrictions on multi-use buildings, inadequate sewer facilities, and constrained access to the villages (rigid parking regulations and lack of sidewalks).
 - Addressing these constraints continues to be a key theme of this updated Master Plan.

The Downtown Initiative

Southborough’s Downtown Village, located almost in the exact geographic center of Southborough on Main Street, has been the centerpiece of an effort spearheaded by the Department of Public Works, which began in 2017 to improve roads and traffic flow, particularly at the intersection of Route 85 and Main Street (Route 30). Additional recent changes to the Downtown include the relocation of the Town’s Public Safety facilities from Main Street to Route 85 (Cordaville Road) just past the Woodward School;

this project was part of a land swap deal, with land owned by St. Mark's School (formerly the school's golf course) exchanged for the former fire and police station land, which currently remains un-renovated.

The road improvement effort was the catalyst for other proposals for revitalizing the Downtown Village, spearheaded by the EDC. In 2017, the EDC conducted a town-wide survey (the "EDC Survey") to understand the vision and desire of the Town's residents with regard to the Downtown Village. This survey revealed that residents were strongly in favor of small scale, non-chain development, including coffee shops, pubs, restaurants, and small-scale retail, along with accessibility, walkability, and beautification efforts. The detailed results of the EDC Survey can be found at the EDC website [\[create hyperlink\]](#). The EDC subsequently engaged the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to study the status of the Downtown, assess impediments, and make recommendations. The ULI report [\[create hyperlink\]](#) concluded that the two main barriers to improvements to Downtown Village were an overly restrictive and outdated zoning bylaw, and a lack of wastewater infrastructure.

New Downtown Zoning District

The EDC has worked collaboratively with zoning and planning consultants, the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board in coming to agreement on a revised zoning bylaw for a new "Downtown District". The revised Downtown District Bylaw was approved via a Warrant Article, at the November 2021 Town Meeting, with more than 70% of attendees voting in favor of its passage. The Bylaw allows mixed use and certain other by-right uses to encourage the types of businesses and amenities that support a healthy and vibrant Downtown Village. Mixed use properties (e.g., ground floor commercial space with office or residential on higher floors) have a number of advantages:

- Align with environmental, housing, and economic priorities at all levels of government, including Southborough's own stated positions on diversifying housing stock.
- Are more economically feasible for prospective project proponents, especially during times when the cost of construction is high.
- Provide more diversified housing stock for residents of varying life stage and economic means.

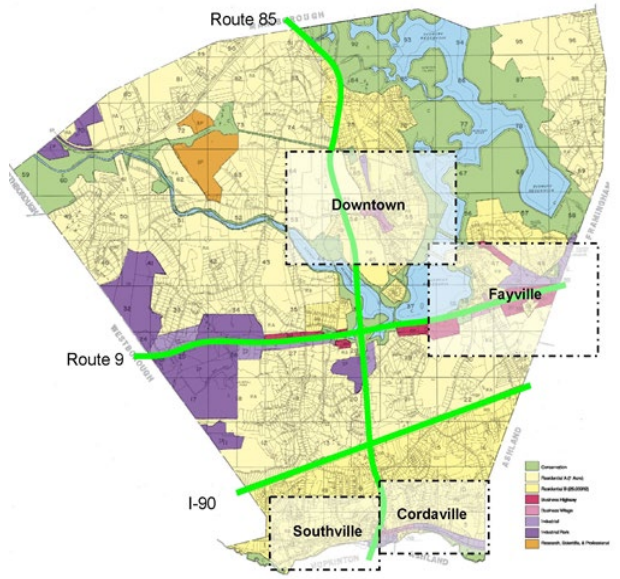
The EDC has also commissioned and received a grant-funded, feasibility study [\[create hyperlink\]](#) by Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. as a first step to finding ways to achieve a modern, efficient wastewater management system. Additional work is required to determine whether a wastewater system is feasible in the Downtown District, determine and appropriate location, and obtain funding.

While the approval of the Downtown District Bylaw is a significant step in delivering Downtown Initiative vision, there is still considerable work to be done as reflected in the goal and recommendation in in the final section of this chapter.

Southborough's Other Villages

Cordaville, Southville and Fayville remain important community hubs in the each of the geographical neighborhoods of the Town.

The 2008 Villages chapter provided information on the history, boundaries, current land usage, community concerns and development opportunities for each of the four areas. The MPC determined that this data should not be replicated in the 2020 Master Plan – it can be found on the MPC Shared Folder [\[create hyperlink\]](#).



Analysis has indicated that the 30 individual objectives identified for these three Villages in 2008 are all addressed by the goals and recommendations in other chapters within the 2020 Master Plan.

The key themes are:

- Evaluate town owned properties for reuse/repurposing
- Improve connectivity within and between the Villages
- Expand retail services, where viable, particularly around the Train Station

These opportunities are reflected in the second Economic Development goal and associated recommendations.

Route 9 Corridor

Route 9 is an integral part of the community, making Southborough accessible to major thoroughfares which connect residents and business to other parts of Massachusetts and beyond. This high traffic area is the preferred focus of industry and commerce because it is most removed from residential areas of Southborough.

The 2008 master plan recommended the preservation of the Town's limited acreage of commercially zoned land for business use. However, the global pandemic which began in 2020 and has spanned two years, has changed the landscape of traditional office-based work, with many employers allowing for remote work. Industry experts expect that many workplaces will continue to allow remote or hybrid working schedules after the pandemic subsides, which may result in businesses leaving the Town or downsizing their space requirements.

There may be opportunities to re-purpose unused or underused commercial property along Route 9 for mixed use development i.e., office, retail and residential. Putting commerce, housing, and office space together provides benefits for businesses and residents alike and lowers the environmental and economic impacts of having no options other than vehicular travel. It could also help meet the Town's housing diversity and affordable housing goals. However, this opportunity would require changes to zoning and therefore requires detailed investigation and analysis.

Infrastructure issues continue to be a significant barrier to further economic development on Route 9. A further wastewater management feasibility study is required to address the lack of public sewer and the improvements to traffic flow, congestion and the improved pedestrian access (e.g. north-south crossover on Route 9) discussed In Chapter 7 (Circulation and Transportation) will also make the Town more attractive to businesses.

The EDC's ongoing sponsorship and support of these initiatives as well as their participation in regional economic development organizations in the MetroWest area and facilitation of collaborative discussions with local and regional business leaders will be an important enabler for Route 9 growth and development.

The opportunities above are included in the Economic Development recommendations outlined below.

Tax Revenue & Funding

Southborough has a predominantly residential and open space land use pattern, which comprised 80.3% of the 2021 tax levy. Meanwhile, commercial and industrial properties generated 19.7% of the 2021 tax levy, an increase from 17.3% in 2007.

City/Town	Population (2019 est.)	FY21 Tax Levy	Residential Open Space	Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property (CIP)	Residential Tax Levy per Capita
Ashland	17,739	\$50,022,033	90.8%	9.2%	\$2,560
Berlin	3,220	\$12,489,563	65.4%	34.6%	\$2,538
Framingham	73,123	\$195,618,399	63.0%	37.0%	\$1,686
Holliston	14,939	\$51,063,020	86.9%	13.1%	\$2,971
Hopedale	5,966	\$15,929,669	81.8%	18.3%	\$2,183
Hopkinton	18,269	\$76,889,411	84.2%	15.8%	\$3,545
Hudson	19,960	\$57,441,901	75.1%	24.9%	\$2,161
Marlborough	39,825	\$111,504,473	55.6%	44.4%	\$1,556
Mendon	6,183	\$17,947,018	88.6%	11.4%	\$2,571
Milford	29,105	\$72,037,895	67.7%	32.3%	\$1,675
Natick	36,229	\$126,123,699	79.5%	20.5%	\$2,768
Northborough	15,101	\$54,247,746	73.0%	27.0%	\$2,624
Southborough	10,169	\$44,609,884	80.3%	19.7%	\$3,523
Upton	8,012	\$21,855,417	94.4%	5.6%	\$2,574
Westborough	19,189	\$81,001,006	69.1%	30.9%	\$2,915
Source: MA Department of Revenue Division of Local Services, 2021					

However, Table 2 below indicates that Southborough residents also pay high property taxes with an average tax bill over \$10,000, the highest in MetroWest, an increase of almost \$3,000 from 2007. This is partly due to Southborough having the highest average single-family home values in the proximate region. Southborough's residential tax rate of 16.21 in 2021 is on par or slightly lower than neighboring towns such as Westborough, Northborough, and Hopkinton.

Table 2- Residential Taxes, MetroWest Area						
City/Town	Residential Tax Levy per Capita	Average Single Family Home Value	Residential Tax Rate	Average Single Family Tax Bill	State Rank	Commercial Tax Rate
Ashland	\$2,560	\$491,780	15.93	7,834	61	15.93
Berlin	\$2,538	\$443,693	15.58	6,913	86	25.95
Framingham	\$1,686	\$467,264	14.05	6,565	95	30.09
Holliston	\$2,971	\$499,456	17.85	8,915	43	17.85
Hopedale	\$2,183	\$375,139	17.87	6,704	101	28.80
Hopkinton	\$3,545		17.08			17.07
Hudson	\$2,161	\$405,820	16.59	6,733	96	33.16
Marlborough	\$1,556	\$404,682	13.80	5,585	156	24.47
Mendon	\$2,571	\$446,059	16.79	7,489	74	16.79
Milford	\$1,675	\$348,728	15.98	5,573	155	29.69
Natick	\$2,768	\$639,149	13.61	8,699	47	13.61
Northborough	\$2,624	\$461,432	17.12	7,900	55	17.12
Southborough	\$3,523	\$660,656	16.21	10,709	25	16.21
Upton	\$2,574	\$457,574	16.60	7,596	64	16.60
Westborough	\$2,915	\$539,519	18.54	10,003	30	18.54
Source: MA Department of Revenue Division of Local Services, 2021						

Introducing new commercial businesses in the Downtown District, Route 9, and in other areas will provide much needed goods and services and also generate tax revenue. Other tools available to encourage economic development without increasing residential property taxes include:

- Tax increment financing ('TIF') is a commonly used tool that encourages development of targeted lots, identified by the Town, by offering tax abatements on the improvements constructed on these lots which still allow for increased revenue for the Town. For example:
 - If a vacant lot is assessed at \$500,000 in value and remains undeveloped for many years, the tax revenue for that lot will continue to be based on the assessed value of vacant lot. If a building was erected and the property value increased to \$1,500,000, then the Town would benefit from that increase in value by added tax revenue.
 - A TIF would allow an abatement on tax on the *improvements* (i.e., the \$1M) for a period of time, and the Town would continue to collect taxes on the \$500,000 until that time period lapsed, after which, the Town would collect taxes on the building.

If the site had remained vacant for this time, then the Town is not losing revenue, and after the time period lapses, the tax gains will be realized. In the meantime, the Town is benefitting from having a previously undeveloped lot developed, introducing additional commercial activity on a site designated for such purpose.

- Funding is also available from state and federal grants to support sustainable and targeted development. Many boards and committees have been successful at obtaining grant money

for specific purposes, including the EDC's use of grant money for zoning consultants and a waste-water management study.

- The Town should consider streamlining the grant writing process and designating or hiring an employee or consultant to research and apply for grants that further the Town's development goals.

Objective, Goals and Recommendations

The current state of economic development within Southborough highlights a range of issues and opportunities for improvement. The main areas of focus, reflected in three key goals and associated recommendations below, are:

- Leverage the new Downtown District Bylaw to progress the vision for an active, vibrant center of the Town.
- Enhance infrastructure to support non-residential properties/businesses e.g., wastewater management, road and sidewalk improvements.
- Develop marketing and communication materials to better promote the Town.
- Pursue alternative funding sources to grow tax revenue.

Objective: Improve the diversity of commercial activity within the Town	
#	Goal
ED-1.0	Enhance the Downtown to provide a vibrant hub that is attractive to both businesses and residents
#	Recommendations
ED-1.1	Define and document changes to the zoning and use regulations for the Downtown District (Complete)
ED-1.2	Seek consensus for the changes to zoning regulations across the appropriate town boards/commission and gain approval from Town Meeting (Complete)
ED-1.3	Agree upon design guidelines, to be promulgated and implemented by the Planning Board to ensure the appropriate quality of materials, lighting, and other components that determine the look and feel of the Downtown District can be appropriately reviewed and upheld. (Complete)
ED-1.4	Develop a marketing and communication package to explain the changes to zoning regulations and the new design guidelines to residents and potential developers
ED-1.5	Identify potential Downtown District redevelopment sites and take a leadership role in building relationships and working with current owners and potential developers on the purchase, leasing or conversion into approved mixed-use projects consistent with the Downtown. This would include the National Grid parcel 54-40
ED-1.6	Evaluate the options for creating a "community green space" within the Downtown
ED-1.7	Take the findings from the wastewater management feasibility study and find ways to solve for wastewater issues, including development of localized wastewater treatment plants, leveraging current technology where feasible. Monitor technological developments to enable more effective, large scale wastewater treatment in the future. Seek out grant funding opportunities to support wastewater management.
ED-1.8	Gain approval from CSX to allow the Town to replace the pipes under the tracks on Main Street in order to resolve the stormwater issues in the Downtown area
ED-1.9	Study and improve connectivity and access to Downtown for pedestrians (sidewalks and trails) and cyclists, working with the Trails Committee as appropriate. Seek funding opportunities for bike racks, outdoor seating and park areas.
ED-1.10	Encourage preservation, and, where appropriate, re-purposing of historical buildings and ensure that DPW plans for the Downtown align with beautification and historic priorities.
ED-1.11	Work with SHOPC to determine whether mixed use development within the Downtown can support affordable housing needs and goals.

#	Goal
ED-2.0	Encourage the sense of community within Southborough's Villages by supporting the expansion of local businesses through better infrastructure and access
#	Recommendations
ED-2.1	Develop a comprehensive listing of Town owned properties and evaluate/prioritize their use/potential based on agreed criteria
ED-2.2	Define, plan and implement improvements to the sidewalk network for Fayville, Cordaville and Southville
ED-2.3	Increase parking in the Fayville Village District (e.g., by reconfiguring playground parking)
ED-2.4	Connect rail station to office and commercial areas in Town via improved sidewalks, shuttle bus services, cycle lanes.
ED-2.5	Develop approach/plan to enhance retail convenience around train station

#	Goal
ED-3.0	Have an economically strong, diverse, and self-sustaining business community i.e. an economic engine along the Route #9 corridor.
#	Recommendations
ED-3.1	Increase use-intensity for currently underutilized property parcels
ED-3.2	Increase commercial tax revenue by reducing office space vacancies and encouraging development on targeted, high-potential sites (such EMC/Dell)
ED-3.3	Improve commercial marketing position by better distinguishing Southborough from surrounding towns (Westborough, Framingham, Northborough, Marlborough, Ashland, Hopkinton)
ED-3.4	Stay connected and actively participate in the Route 9, I90, I495 state highway projects
ED-3.5	Continue to look for ways to leverage the Route 9 corridor for increased Capital Improvements Program (CIP) tax revenue e.g., changing zoning to allow taller buildings or creating a Tax Increment Funding (TIF) district.
ED-3.6	Continue to develop/improve the sidewalk network
ED-3.7	Explore the opportunity to revise zoning regulations for Route 9 to allow for mixed use development to improve vacancy of underutilized space (especially office space as needs change) and provide amenities to offices and residents. Collaborate with the Planning Board in evaluating the impact on economic growth
ED-3.8	Establish a quarterly meeting or "roundtable" forum between local/regional business leaders, the EDC and the Planning Board to discuss infrastructure and business issues, including last-mile transportation to encourage the use of public transit and reduce congestion and environmental impacts.
ED-3.9	Evaluate options for resourcing the grant research and application process particularly for large scale projects which would be difficult or expensive for the Town to support on its own, including wastewater, connectivity, and targeted development through TIF and other programs.

Public Services, Resiliency & Schools

“Provide effective, efficient and resilient public facilities and services to the town and strengthen our schools”

Summary Points

- add schools “programmatic” and “community integration” information, based on schools strategic plans (expand “schools” concept beyond “physical assets”)
- expand Library material, based on more comprehensive view from Library strategic plan
- expand Rec infrastructure (per Open Space/Rec strategic plan) beyond physical facilities to include programming/etc.
- emphasize capital planning value through Capital Planning Committee role
- need to include ADA/accessibility considerations
- need language linking new goals/strategies to body of report — more than “filler”

Introduction

The municipal facilities, infrastructure and services (together, the “Infrastructure”) element of a master plan can guide decisions about the expenditure of public funds on this Infrastructure, as a local government may choose to do in order to meet public needs and expectations. This Infrastructure makes it possible for municipal employees and volunteers to provide services for the public good. The adequacy of such Infrastructure for the functions they serve is influenced by several factors, including:

- The form, size and organization of the community’s local government.
- The community’s land use pattern.
- The expectations of the community’s population.
- The effectiveness of the community’s budgeting and capital planning process.
- The community’s commitment to effective implementation; and, most important.
- The funds available to support these components.

As an affluent suburb (for 2021, MA DOR data shows that Southborough’s per-capita income places it in the top 15 communities in the State), Southborough (the “Town”) receives relatively little funding from non-local sources and relies largely on its own residents and businesses for financial support. Although Southborough has basic, core Infrastructure, much of this Infrastructure is relatively old, some is obsolete, and much is hard-pressed to accommodate the personnel, equipment, technology and records storage functions that the Town’s government organizations need to run efficiently. The major exception to this is the new Public Safety Building, which opened in 2019. In terms of the services and functional elements of

the Infrastructure, Southborough has some historically under-staffed departments and functions, due in part to the Town's commitment to funding for excellent schools. This has created funding pressure relative to municipal government Infrastructure needs.

Like residents of other affluent towns, Southborough voters have traditionally supported their public schools and worked hard to ensure that their children receive an excellent education. Good schools benefit a community's families and help to preserve high property values for everyone, so investing in public schools is very important. In addition, many people come into contact with school buildings—parents and children, but also residents participating in town meetings or other community activities that take place inside school facilities. In contrast, relatively few people venture inside most other public buildings (with a few exceptions such as the Library). Residents may go to the Town House or go to the transfer station or go online to pay a tax bill, purchase a dog license, or obtain a copy of a birth certificate, but except for the most motivated and/or active citizens who routinely attend meetings of Town boards, a relatively small percentage of Southborough's population takes a close look at the Town's Infrastructure . This makes it hard to build a constituency for high-quality Infrastructure and often causes both ordinary maintenance and capital improvements to be deferred for many years—this could be described as a “it seems to work so why invest in it” attitude. The response to this attitude is that this Infrastructure is critical for effective use of town resources and for the delivery of quality public services that Town residents increasingly expect.

When communities make investment decisions on a year-to-year basis, without direction from a broadly accepted long-range plan, they are at greater risk of placing short-term needs and popular causes ahead of improvements to Infrastructure. Although Southborough has a capital budget, the process for developing it has only recently been enhanced and begun to be more closely integrated with the Town's overall financial planning framework through the strong contributions of the Capital Planning Committee. This is a significant step forward for the Town's planning and budgeting process, as this enhanced capital planning approach considers a combined view of major capital needs for both the schools and the municipal functions. Southborough's next major municipal facility needs include such potential project areas as a community center and a review of school facility needs. Other projects that some might describe as infrastructure, such as recreation facilities, new open space areas, enhanced sidewalk network, bike path and trail networks are addressed in other sections of this Master Plan. Although the recent funding of the new Public Safety Building has left very little room to absorb additional debt service in the near-term, the capital planning process is focused on the next projects as additional debt capacity becomes available.

One important pending funding opportunity is the evolving Federal stimulus legislation. The details for these programs are still evolving, but it is likely that the Town will have access to significant funding for infrastructure and other purposes. This may support investment in some major projects that otherwise would not be possible, and the Town is active in remaining informed about these programs and in pursuing available funding for key projects.

This chapter covers Southborough's public services & facilities, resiliency and schools in 3 sections - each section includes an outline of accomplishments since 2008, a summary of current conditions/resources with associated organizations and a summary of goals and recommendations.

Vision Open House & Vision Survey Responses

The statements and questions presented in the open house and survey focused on the increasing the vitality of Southborough's villages, planning for public/community, utilizing commercial space for tax revenue and enhancing community resiliency.

Feedback on the villages and community space are included in Chapter 4-Economic Development. and connectivity. Over 75% of survey respondents viewed leveraging commercial space to increase revenue was important or very important. Improving resiliency was viewed as important or very important.

Public Services & Facilities

Summary of Accomplishments Since 2008

The 2008 Master Plan included over 200 recommendations. Although relatively few of these recommendations have been achieved since the 2008 plan was finalized, there have been several important "Public Services and Facilities" accomplishments during this period, including:

- The Town's acquisition of the St. Mark's Golf Course
- Construction of the Public Safety Building
- Enhancement and building out of key components of the Town's technology infrastructure
- Significant expansion of the Town's trail network
- Updating the Town's open space and recreation plan
- Updating the Town's Housing Production Plan
- Upgrading of Cordaville Hall Senior Center facility
- Disposition of Fayville Hall
- Significant improvements in the capital planning and budgeting processes
- "Accessibility" review of Town facilities and services, and creation of a plan to close gaps
- Upgraded playground facilities (Central Street, South Union and Town House)
- Upgrades and new lighting for recreation facilities
- Expansion of the area and capabilities of the 170 acre Chestnut Hill Farm conservation area
- Support for the renovation of the Garfield/Burnett house at 84 Main Street
- Main Street reconstruction project

Active Organizations

Southborough's municipal services are provided by the departments and individuals listed in **Table 1**. There are also multiple Boards and Committees within the Town, led and staffed by volunteers. The current listing can be found here [\[create hyperlink\]](#)

Table 1: Southborough's Municipal Services

Administration	Planning & Development	Community Services
Town Administrator	Building/Zoning	Public Library
Town Clerk	Conservation	Recreation Department
Moderator	Planning	Senior Center
School Department	Economic Development	Veterans' Agent
		Veterans' Grave Officer
		Youth & Family Services

Finance & Taxes	Public Safety & Health	Infrastructure
Assessors	Animal Control Officer	Facilities
Town Accountant	Board of Health	Public Works
Treasurer/Collector	Fire Department	Technology
	Police Department	
Source: Southborough Town website (February 2022)		

Summary of Current Conditions & Resources

Municipal Services and Infrastructure

The municipal services that Southborough provides are fairly typical of Massachusetts towns. Like most Boston MetroWest communities, Southborough does more for its population than it is required to do by law. For example, municipalities are not required to have a police department, yet nearly every town in the Commonwealth has one. Similarly, municipalities do not have to provide solid waste disposal services, youth services, recreation programs, a senior center or a public library, but Southborough, and the towns that provide these services, consider them an indispensable part of what it means to be a community. Southborough voters also support more funding for local public schools than is required by State regulations.

Technology

One increasingly important component of today's public Infrastructure is technology—for enabling Town employees to serve the public effectively and for enabling the public to use, and be informed about, public services. Technology had a very minor role in the 2008 Master Plan. Technology capabilities generally have made significant advancements in the past decade since the 2008 Master Plan was developed and the role of technology in Southborough's government has also advanced significantly during this time. The Town's internal technology staffing and technology capabilities have increased over the past decade, and the activities and positive impact of the volunteer Municipal Technology Committee (the "MTC") have also increased significantly as well.

Southborough's Technology Department is responsible for supporting the technology systems for all Town departments (except for the school technology systems). This includes 6 buildings, support for ~200 town employees, over 100 computers and the related technology infrastructure (including the communications and fiber infrastructure and a host of software applications). Current technology context includes:

- Most of the Town's technology infrastructure has been replaced in the past four years- with a small number of servers, printers and other technology components coming due for replacement in the near future.
- Most of the software systems are leveraged via a SaaS (software as a service) model (consistent with industry "best practices"), where a vendor is responsible for the provisioning of the infrastructure and software and the Town acts as consumers only.
- The Town maintains servers and infrastructure for systems where no SaaS equivalent exists or where privacy and/or security issues prevent moving the applications to the cloud.

The Town's Information Technology staff, supported by the MTC, has worked to deliver the needed support and to plan for future technology needs. The Town has supported these efforts by investing

additional resources for technology. The MTC has worked with the Town’s technology staff to create the Town’s first Technology Strategy, which establishes the following objectives:

- Improving citizen experience and engagement with Town technology
- Improving employee and school administrative experience with Town technology
- Achieving cost savings with technology through consolidation/efficiency
- Improving communications and processing infrastructure & connectivity
- Increasing citizen and employee privacy and cyber security

An important contribution of the MTC has been to create the structure for the first on-line Town-wide resident survey and to conduct the initial version of this survey (including a detailed analysis of the survey results). This survey tool will allow ongoing, broad-based, cost-effective collection of resident input on a wide range of Town issues—which had not been possible previously.

Public Accessibility

Another area of renewed focus for this Master Plan process is the consideration of public accessibility for municipal facilities and infrastructure. This includes the traditional issues of physical access (e.g., facility access via ramps, elevators, signage, etc.) as well as other forms of access (such as information access via enhanced technology).

The May 2021 Town Meeting recognized the importance of such access issues by establishing the **Southborough Public Accessibility Committee** (“SPAC”), The SPAC which replaces the American With Disabilities (ADA) Committee, is tasked with overseeing a coordinated approach to monitoring and increasing public accessibility and ensuring compliance with local, state and federal accessibility requirements.

The SPAC has worked with a process for reviewing and assessing all Town facilities and functions to identify any shortfalls in public accessibility and to develop a plan for addressing any such shortfalls. The continuation of this process and the addressing of the issues identified is a key recommendation for this current Master Plan.

Municipal Facilities

Southborough’s government operates from seven buildings, most located in the town’s historic population nodes: the town center and the villages of Cordaville and Southville. Below is a description of the municipal facilities summarized in **Table 2.**

Table 2: Southborough’s Municipal Facilities

Facility	Location	Functions	Acres	Year Built/ Renovated	GFA	Condition	Accessible
Town House	17 Common St.	Government Offices	2.0	1900/1978	8,872	Good	Yes
Library	25 Main St.	Library	1.7	1911/1989	5,262	Good	Yes
Police Station*	19 Main St.	Public Safety	2.3	1929/2007	9,484	Poor	No
Fire Station I*	21 Main St.	Headquarters	2.3	1927/2005	9,216	Poor	Yes
Fire Station II	2 Harrington St.	Substation		1953/2007	2,200	Fair	Yes
Arts Center	21 Highland St.	Recreation	3.0	1911	9,833	Good	Yes
Cordaville Hall	9 Cordaville Rd.	Senior Center	1.7	1914/1988	9,988	Fair	Yes
Fayville Hall	42 Central St.	Municipal	0.2	1912/2007	8,405	Fair	Yes

DPW Garage	147 Cordaville Rd.	Offices, Transfer Station	5.0	1969/2000	19,769	Good	Yes
Cemetery Building	Cordaville Rd.	Offices, Storage		1977	4,800	Fair	Yes

Facility	Heating Fuel	AC	Heating Costs	Electricity Costs	Parking Spaces	Employee s on Site†	Security System
Town House	Gas	HVAC	\$6,500	\$23,000	53	22	None
Library	Gas	HVAC	\$9,800	\$15,300	37	4	Yes
Police Station	Oil	HVAC, Window Units	\$11,300	\$8,500	53	16	None
Fire Station I	Oil	HVAC	\$7,700	\$11,800	53	8	Inadequate
Fire Station II	Oil	Window Units	\$4,100	\$900	4	2	None
Arts Center	Oil	Window Units	\$11,300	\$4,700	39	6	None
Cordaville Hall	Oil	Window Units	\$8,900	\$6,000	55	10	None
Fayville Hall	Gas	Window Units	\$3,400	\$1,000	3	4	None
DPW Garage	Oil	Central Air	\$1,200	\$9,900	39	10	Yes
Cemetery Building	Oil	Window Units	\$4,100	\$1,400	3	3	None

Sources: Southborough Planning Department, Southborough Facilities Plan (2005), Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

* Police Station and Fire Station located on the same site.

† “Employees” refers to the number of employees regularly working on the premises, not the total number of employees in a given department.

Town Hall

The Southborough Town House on Common Street, situated in an enclave of civic and institutional buildings, serves as Southborough’s principal government office building. Nine departments with a combined total of 22 employees are located at the Town House, including the Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Town Accountant, Town Treasurer/Collector, Assessor, and two of the town’s permitting agencies: the Planning Department and the Conservation Commission. Together, these departments handle Southborough’s core administration and finance responsibilities. Most of them also provide staff support to town boards and committees that meet at the Town House or available space in other public buildings.

The Town House has 19 offices and three meeting rooms, and a basement area used mainly for storage. There is an ongoing conservation effort (e.g., a window replacement project) to reduce energy or water consumption, and the town has instituted basic systems to encourage recycling. Southborough’s Municipal Facilities Needs Assessment [Survey \(2021\)](#) reports that all of the departments currently located at the Town House have significant space needs, ranging from larger or reconfigured offices to small conference rooms and records storage. The Town’s Capital Planning Committee continues to work on a long-term plan for facility’s needs.

The Flagg School, located on the same site as the Town House, provides limited museum space and some additional storage and office space for the Southborough Historical Society, which leases space in this building from the Town.

Southborough Public Library

The Southborough Public Library, constructed in 1911 occupies a prominent location at the corner of Route 30 and Route 85 in the town center. The library has 11 employees and is overseen by an elected board of library trustees. In addition to books and other materials in circulation and a reference collection, the library has a local history room with maps, photographs, books and various historical documents about the town. Over the past several years, the Library has initiated significant expansion of its electronic resources and its programming efforts—both of which have resulted in increased “reach and engagement” with the community.

The 1989 library expansion and renovations project included a complete upgrade of the building’s heating, air conditioning, and wiring systems. The library recently benefitted from a substantial renovation of the front façade and repair of the roof. The Library Trustees continue to discuss building renovations/expansion funded by the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program.

Public Safety Building

The Town’s most significant recent building project has been the construction of the new, approximately 35,000 Public Safety Building, which was opened in 2019. This building houses the Police Department and the Fire Department—both of which had previously been located in substantially smaller and far less functional spaces. The design and construction process for this new building was very successful, as the project was delivered on time and under budget. This facility now provides a state-of-the-art home for these two departments that provide critical Town services.

Arts Center

The Arts Center is located on a three-acre lot in Cordaville. Originally the South Union School, the Arts Center is a three-story brick block built in 1912 the Classical Revival style. It is currently occupied by the Southborough Arts Council, the Recreation Department, and the Youth and Family Services Department. The building has been renovated so that it is fully accessible to people with disabilities. The Town is considering repurposing this building, as part of the larger capital planning process.

Cordaville Hall

Southborough acquired Cordaville Hall from the Chapel of the Cross in 2004. The building consists of a large hall (formerly the sanctuary) and residential wing, with total usable floor area of about 7,500 sq. ft. Conveniently located at 9 Cordaville Road just south of the town center, Cordaville Hall serves as a senior center run by Town staff in cooperation with the Council on Aging, as a public meeting space for town boards and committees, and as Town offices for the Board of Health, the Facilities Department and the Building/Zoning staff.

Public Works Facility

The Southborough Public Works Department is responsible for highway, water, tree, cemetery and solid waste and recycling services. Its main facility, south of Route 9, was constructed in 1968, renovated in 1995 and improved most recently in 2000. The complex includes a two-story highway garage and a transfer station (for landfill waste and for recycling). The DPW employs twenty people and has limited space for offices, storage of vehicles, equipment and records, and parking. The condition of the Transfer Station requires ongoing maintenance work, but this maintenance work has been determined to be “manageable” over the coming years. The Town does own property adjacent to the existing DPW facility, which can allow for future expansion as may be needed.

Cemetery Building

The DPW cemetery division has a small one-story building at 11 Cordaville Road, adjacent to the cemetery near the town center. The building needs renovations, better space utilization and removal of architectural barriers. As for cemetery space, the Facilities Plan indicates that Southborough will need another twenty acres for burial plots in the next ten to twenty years.

Public Water Supply

Although Southborough does not have a sewer system, public water service is available in 85% of town. The Southborough Public Works Department provides water to more than 3,000 residential, commercial and institutional customers. Residential uses account for approximately 96% of all water service connections and 80% of total annual water consumption. Southborough's other noteworthy source of water demand, commercial development, represents about three percent of all service connections and 15% percent of total water consumption

Southborough purchases water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority ("MWRA") and delivers it to residents and businesses through an 86-mile network of water mains owned and maintained by the town. Water is withdrawn from the MWRA's MetroWest Water Supply Tunnel at two locations in Southborough - a pumping station located off Northborough Road and a second located adjacent to the Hultman Aqueduct Shaft No. 3 in the northeastern part of town. In addition to water mains, Southborough's water distribution system includes three storage facilities with a total of two million gallons of storage capacity, with 1.2 million gallons of usable capacity - the Fiddlers Green Reservoir in the northwest part of town, and the Clear Hill and Oak Hill Stand Pipes in the east part of town.

Together, the pumping stations, water mains and storage facilities provide the essential infrastructure for domestic water service and fire flows (gallons per minute available for firefighting). According to previous engineering studies, Southborough's water distribution system has a number of problems.

These problems include:

- Gaps in the service areas for supplying firefighting water (most notably in the Pine Hill Road area.
- Insufficient usable storage to assure adequate fire flows, especially during peak-period demand.
- Inability to take any of the existing storage facilities offline for maintenance, because there is no reserve capacity elsewhere in the system.
- Existence of several areas with dead-end water mains, which reduces fire flows.
- Under-sized water mains in some parts of town that compromise the water system's ability to move water out of storage and into the distribution system.
- Insufficient capacity of the two pumping stations to meet Southborough's projected maximum-day demand.

The combination of these factors means that the water distribution system suffers from weak domestic pressure and poor fire flows in Southborough's higher-elevation neighborhoods and areas distant from the existing storage facilities. .

The Town has evaluated options for increasing water storage capacity. Alternate storage sites were ranked according to a set of criteria, such as elevation, proximity to a water supply, site access, ownership, and soil conditions. Table 3 reports the highest-ranked sites identified in the evaluation process. Upgrading of the Town's water distribution system would be relatively costly but should be considered for longer-term capital investment.

Table 3: Potential Water Storage Facility Sites				
Site/Facility Type	Map/Lot Number	Location	Site Ownership	Cost
Site 2/At Grade	Map 33, Lot 41	Tara Road	Town	\$1,237,500
Site 1/At Grade	Map 27, Lot 40	Fairview Road	Town	\$1,546,000
Site 18/At Grade	Map 24, Lot 3	Vicinity of I-495, N of Route 9	Flatley Company	\$1,673,800
Site 21/Existing	Map 49, Lot 9	James Carroll WTF	MWRA	\$1,910,000
Site 20/At Grade		I-495 Interchange, Westborough	State	\$1,925,000
Site 16C/At Grade	Map 11, Lot 2	Vicinity of I-495, S of Route 9	EMC Corporation	\$2,225,000
Source: Pare Engineering, Tank Siting Analysis (January 2008), ES-iii.				

Wastewater and Stormwater

Southborough has no public wastewater system. There are individual wastewater treatment facilities serving various local housing and commercial developments. There is ongoing conversation about the possibility of developing targeted public wastewater treatment capacity—particularly serving the Route 9 corridor to support increased business development (and tax revenue) in this area. Various Town entities, such as the Economic Development Committee, are continuing to work on this issue. Chapter 4- Economic Development, includes a recommendation on this topic

The Town is experiencing increased pressure to address stormwater management issues, as residents in some parts of the Town experience flooding during heavy rain events. The evolving EPA regulations for the NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) stormwater permitting program may require the Town to devote resources to an overall approach to this issue by implementing a longer-term town-wide stormwater management solution. This is another area for possible significant capital investment. This issue is also addressed in the “Resiliency” section of this document, below.

Local Government

Form of Government

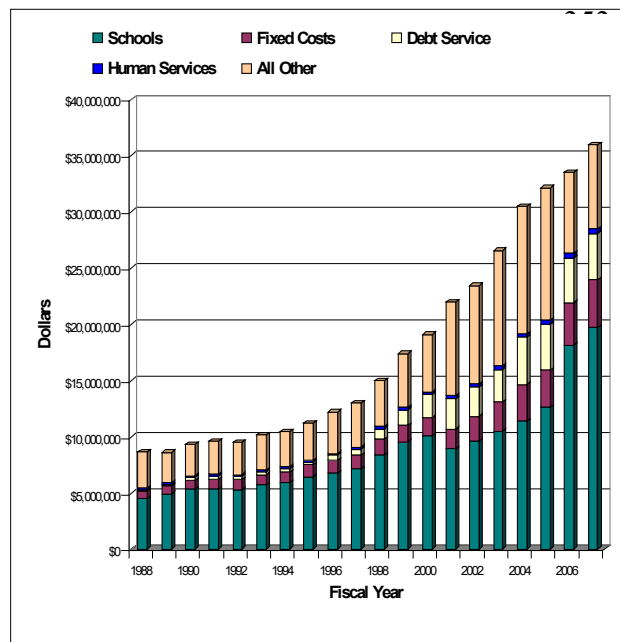
Southborough has a hybrid form of local government; it has both professional staff and many volunteer committees, and planning for its present and future space needs must account for the kind of government the town has chosen for itself.

Southborough's executive branch consists of a five-member Board of Selectmen, nine other elected boards and officers, and over forty appointed boards and committees that share responsibility for a wide range of programs and services. In turn, Southborough's legislative branch is an open town meeting: a body composed of registered voters who approve the town's annual operating budget, authorize capital projects and adopt local bylaws.

Municipal Finance

Southborough pays for community services with property taxes, state aid, other local revenues such as motor vehicle excise taxes or licensing and permit fees. The tax levy has historically supplied sixty-five to sixty-nine percent of each year's total revenue, and about eighty percent of general fund revenue. These statistics place Southborough in the upper quartile statewide for indicators of property wealth.

Since 2000, general fund expenditures in Southborough have increased by eighty-eight percent in current dollars and about fifty-eight percent in 2007 constant dollars. The most noticeable increases have occurred in education, human services, debt service, and fixed costs such as employee health insurance and general liability insurance (Chart 1: General Fund Expenditures, 1988-2007)



1.

Southborough's expenditures for public schools have accelerated more rapidly than non-school expenditures, *excluding* the school system's proportional share of fixed costs and debt service. It is obvious that residents care deeply about their public schools because the town spends quite a bit more on education than the minimum required under a state formula that determines each community's annual spending requirement.

The town's average single-family tax bill increased nearly eighty percent between 2000 and 2020. On balance, however, Southborough is under continuing pressure to "catch up" with the demands of residential and nonresidential growth, and one byproduct of the stress placed on the operating budget is the shortage of funding for major capital improvements.

The Commonwealth's municipal finance system contributes to the friction from growth that exists in many communities today. In November 1980, a successful referendum known as Proposition 2 ½ introduced a cap on annual growth in the property tax levy. Southborough is among the towns that have chosen to exceed the cap by following the statutory procedures for selected general overrides and debt exclusions, although these overrides have been approved less frequently over the past decade. This is partially why its tax bills have increased faster than the statewide average: Southborough voters have at times agreed to tax themselves above the limits set forth in the law.

Southborough has also taken advantage of several important sources of "user-based" revenues, including:

- Revolving/Enterprise funds (user funded; Water/Rec/Ambulance/Inspections/etc.)
- Marijuana fees
- Cable TV fees
- Meals tax

Further, Southborough is one of 127 cities and towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which allows the town to impose a surcharge on property tax bills and earmark the revenue for activities associated with open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation. Southborough currently receives about \$230,000 from CPA surcharge revenue and a match of \$229,000 from the State's CPA trust fund. The State's fixed pool of matching funds have resulted in a smaller match percentage for Southborough, as more towns have joined this program and shared these matching funds.

Community Service Costs and Revenue in Context

Southborough is a fairly expensive place to live. Its average single-family tax bill is currently \$7,231, and for the homeowner with an average-value dwelling unit, the CPA surcharge is approximately \$60. In addition to property taxes, most residents pay an average annual water bill of \$302 and a \$110 fee to dispose of solid waste at the transfer station. Families spend even more than non-family households because so many programs and services for children, both school and municipal, involve special user fees. These kinds of additional residential services costs, above and beyond property taxes, exist in virtually all communities today.

When Southborough officials evaluate their employee compensation schedules, licensing, permitting and user fees, and service costs, they often look to a group of comparison communities as a guide. Although the communities are larger than Southborough, they serve as the labor market area for municipal workers and as a region in which location-sensitive costs are likely to be similar. For reasons similar to Southborough's, most cities and towns have a "comparable community" list today. For example, benchmark studies have become increasingly common device for communities to judge the reasonableness of their expenditures for municipal and school services. Despite the uniformity and restrictiveness of municipal finance laws, it is difficult to compare Massachusetts cities and towns because communities have different forms of government and political cultures. They also differ by household and property wealth, growth rates and land use patterns. Since it is impossible to find a perfect match for any town, a reasonable comparison study should try to limit differences and acknowledge those which are unavoidable. Table 7-6 shows that on balance, Southborough falls roughly in the middle of its comparison group for most of the major metrics of municipal finance.

Objective, Goals and Recommendations

A review of current conditions coupled with an evaluation of future challenges has identified several key themes that underpin the goals and recommendations within this chapter, notably:

- The community's increasing expectations for public facilities/services and the increased need for investment in the Town's ageing infrastructure.
- The increasing cost of public services and continued pressure on revenue generation
- Slowing population growth, combined with aging population
- Increase in the importance of the role of the schools as integrator of community activities
- Increasing reliance on, and value from, use of technology
- Significant infrastructure funding opportunities from Federal stimulus programs

Objective: Provide effective, efficient and resilient facilities and services to the town	
#	Goal
PS-1.0	Be able to deliver a wide range of public services to Southborough's residents
#	Recommendations
PS-1.1	Continue to support a strong role for the Capital Planning Committee ("CapCom") in the Town's budgeting and planning process
PS-1.2	Through the CapCom, develop and gain approval for a long-term capital plan for the Town, with annual updates; include in this capital plan the projects identified by the Southborough Public Accessibility Committee to reduce/remove public accessibility shortcomings
PS-1.3	Through the CapCom, review the existing capital investment plan for each service, identify investment gaps due to either population growth or risk mitigation requirements and determine if existing capital plans are sufficient or if additional investment is required
PS-1.4	Through the CapCom, evaluate funding options for capital projects e.g., public (Town or State), private, shared (with other towns or private sector partner)
PS-1.5	Through collaboration between the CapCom and the various Town budgeting entities, develop detailed plans and budgets for capital projects, including phasing of development (based on population growth timeline and risk mitigation prioritization) and linkage to other plan objectives
PS-1.6	Through collaboration between the CapCom and the various Town budgeting entities, determine responsibilities for implementation of capital projects (e.g., the Town, 3rd Party providers)
PS-1.7	Implement the recommendations of the Town's Technology Strategy

#	Goal
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.
#	Recommendations
PS-2.1	Update existing growth models with current data as the basis for additional analysis of growth options and financial consequences
PS-2.2	Encourage demographic diversity of the town's population through support of diverse housing initiatives

436

#	Goal
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.
#	Recommendations
PS-3.1	Identify and evaluate ways to broaden the tax base by generating additional funds from non-Southborough residents.
PS-3.2	Identify opportunities for stimulating growth of commercial tax base, and implement as feasible.
PS-3.3	Look for additional funding sources for town services e.g. state/federal grants, public/private partnerships, philanthropic/not for profit investments and PILOT
PS-3.4	Research and analyze how other cities and towns to find ideas for new funding sources
PS-3.5	Identify additional "project-specific" funding opportunities (e.g., use current funding for normal operations and look for project sponsors to build and/or endow new items such as a community center or recreation facilities
PS-3.6	Evaluate options for more intensive commercial development along Route 9 (including such activities as selective rezoning, building wastewater treatment capacity, etc.)

437

#	Goal
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)
#	Recommendations
PS-4.1	Expand the charter of the Americans With Disabilities Act Committee (ADAC) to include responsibility for can identifying and receiving complaints) concerning compatibility issues.
PS-4.2	Undertake the State mandated ADA Self Evaluation Study to identify architectural deficiencies within existing facilities, determine the best possible resolution and agree the timeframe for implementation
PS-4.3	Work collaboratively with town departments, boards and commissions to review proposed facilities, programs and projects to identify opportunities to improve individual access.

438

439 Resiliency

440 Summary of Accomplishments Since 2008

441 Within the context of a master plan, resiliency can be described as the "ability of an urban area, including
 442 individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems to prepare for and adapt to change
 443 stemming from chronic stresses and acute shocks and bounce back to a functioning state following a
 444 disruption". [Source Ontario Professional Planners Institute"]

445

446 The 2000 Federal Disaster Mitigation Act requires that, from November 1st 2004, all municipalities
 447 wishing to be eligible to receive FEMA funding for hazard mitigation grants, must adopt a Local Hazard
 448 Mitigation Plan ("LHMP"). Southborough's original LHMP was prepared by the Metropolitan Area
 449 Planning Council ("MAPC") in 2008, under the direction of the Massachusetts Emergency Management
 450 Agency ("MEMA") and the Department of Conservation and Recreation ("DCR"). The plan was funded
 451 by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Grant Program.

452

453 In 2019, Southborough took the first step toward building societal, environmental, and infrastructure
 454 resilience within the community by participating in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness ("MVP")
 455 program, executed through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs ("EEA"). An MVP
 456 Planning Grant was awarded to the Town from the EEA, funding the planning process required to earn
 457 designation as an "MVP Community". A Community Resilience Building Workshop was held in March

2020, facilitated by the Pare Corporation and attended by 24 community stakeholders. The Summary of Findings from this workshop [\[create hyperlink\]](#) was presented to the Town for public comment and subsequently integrated into the LHMP, creating a comprehensive planning document to guide the hazard mitigation and climate adaptation planning efforts within Southborough. The Town received designation as an MVP Community in October, 2020.

The 2021 update of the LHMP was prepared by the Pare Corporation, under the direction of the Town. All costs associated with the LHMP update were funded through a matching (75/25) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) awarded to the Southborough Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) by FEMA. The 25% Southborough match was funded through an MVP project grant awarded to the Conservation Commission. The updated plan was approved by FEMA and adopted by the Board of Selectmen in June 2021.

Active Organizations

The following organizations supported MVP/LHMP activities:

Southborough Emergency Planning Committee (“SEPC”) is an aspect of the Southborough Emergency Management Agency (“SEMA”) charged with all-hazards emergency planning for the Town. The SEPC is also responsible for maintaining information on and developing emergency response plans for locally used/stored hazardous materials and those that travel through Town via road and rail.

Pare Corporation

Founded in 1970, this multidisciplinary firm of engineers, planners, environmental and wetland scientists, GIS specialists, and regulatory permitting specialists supported the development of the MVP Summary of Findings and the LHMP.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror. FEMA approved Southborough's LHMP in June 2021.

Summary of Current Conditions & Resources

Southborough's Local Hazard Mitigation & Climate Adaptation Plan [\[create hyperlink\]](#) covers two key topics:

- **Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning** - the process of determining how to reduce or eliminate the loss of life and property damage resulting from natural hazards such as floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes. The objective of hazard mitigation is to permanently reduce or alleviate the losses of life, injuries and property resulting from natural hazards through long-term strategies. These strategies include planning, policy changes, programs, projects, and other activities.
- **Climate Adaptation Planning** - the process of predicting and preparing for projected changes in the regional climate patterns. This process considers natural hazards that impact the community, and how they will increase in intensity and frequency due to climate change. Climate adaptation implements strategies that allow a community to adapt to these changes and increase resilience to the impacts of more severe natural hazards. Long-term strategies for climate adaptation are similar to those of hazard mitigation, with consideration of the projected changes.

The LHMP describes the predicted probability (frequency), impact (severity) and resulting vulnerability of the Town for eight natural hazards, evaluates the projected effect of climate change on these hazards and identifies critical infrastructure in the hazard area, required to support disaster response/evacuation. The plan includes ten goals and a comprehensive summary of potential mitigation measures, some that can be actioned by the Town and others requiring regional collaboration. Implementation of the plan is the responsibility of the MVP Core Team, under the leadership of the Emergency Management Director of Operations with involvement from local stakeholders, as required.

Objective, Goals and Recommendations

During the development of the 2020 Master Plan, the Master Plan Committee (MPC) identified two key resiliency related goals – hazard identification and mitigation planning and appropriate emergency response. The recommendations defined below are fully consistent with the mitigation measures within the LHMP and responsibility for prioritization and tracking implementation will be the responsibility of the MVP Core Team, to avoid duplication of effort.

#	Goal
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
#	Recommendations
RY-1.1	Review/update/expand the existing Hazard Mitigation Plan(s)
RY-1.2	Develop a Hazard Transportation and Communication Plan
RY-1.3	Decrease tree damage sustained by ice/wind; leverage the Town's "Tree City" status with tree planting programs
RY-1.4	Decrease isolation of neighborhoods by updating bylaws to require multiple access points to new developments, in the event of road closures
RY-1.5	Improve water supply for firefighting including identifying a cost-effective solution for Pine Hill Road
RY-1.6	Increase resiliency and redundancy of the utility networks (water, electrical, gas, communications)
RY-1.7	Encourage development of "off-grid" local energy sources (e.g. solar)
RY-1.8	Enhance technology/information systems resiliency
RY-1.9	Conduct a Water Supply Vulnerability Assessment to determine the health of wetlands, streams and water bodies; educate the public on the importance of protecting the water supply
RY-1.10	Assess the capability/capacity of the Town's stormwater systems in light of current climate change projections and the EPA's NPDES Phase 2 MS4 Stormwater Regulations, and develop stormwater system upgrade plans as necessary to provide for appropriate stormwater system capabilities

#	Goal
RY-2.0	Ensure the appropriate infrastructure and public services are in place to provide timely emergency response
#	Recommendations
RY-2.1	Investigate improvements to the causeways to help increase traffic capacity, improve hydraulic capacity and reduce flooding, and relocate utilities underground to protect from damage and outages. Specific attention to causeways where outages result in the isolation of specific areas in Town
RY-2.2	Conduct a facilities inventory and assessment to assess sheltering capacity and identify potential improvements to increase capacity.
RY-2.3	Prepare a continuity of services plan to maintain communications and essential services during outages or major hazard events
RY-2.4	Identify and engage vulnerable populations to improve access to essential emergency services during a major hazard event

Public Schools

Summary of Accomplishments Since 2008

Active Organizations

Southborough School Committee

The School Committee is responsible for selecting and terminating the District Superintendent, reviewing and approving budgets for public education in the district, and establishing educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the Board of Education..

Summary of Current Conditions & Resources

Overview of Schools and Enrollments

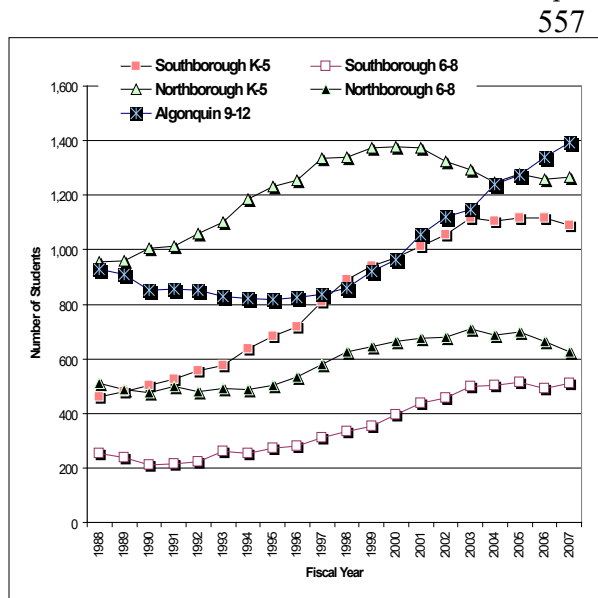
Southborough provides public education for its children through a shared administrative structure (supervisory union) and a regional school agreement with the Town of Northborough. The communities have separate K-8 school districts overseen by two separately elected school committees, and a regional academic high school (grades nine through twelve) overseen by a ten-member regional school committee. As shown in Table 4, each of Southborough's primary schools houses two grades. All children in the same grade attend the same school regardless of where they live because Southborough does not assign children to schools on the basis of geographic districts,

Table 4: Southborough Public School Facilities

School	Grade Configuration	# Teachers (FY07)	Enrollment (FY07)
Mary E. Finn School	Prekindergarten-1	27	389
Albert S. Woodward Memorial School	Grades 2-3	26	343
Margaret A. Neary School	Grades 4-5	26	357
P. Brent Trottier Middle School	Grades 6-8	43	509

Sources: Massachusetts Department of Education, School District Profile Series.

Enrollments in prekindergarten through eighth grade increased significantly in Southborough, beginning in the late 1980s, when public school enrollments began to grow throughout Eastern Massachusetts. Southborough's most conspicuous increase occurred through the late 1990s, and this growth continued until the 2003-2004 school year. Chart 2 shows that K-8 enrollments have declined steadily since 2003. The latest enrollment projections suggest flat to slightly increasing enrollment over the next decade, depending on assumptions related to fertility and in-migration.



With this enrollment projection, and the need for significant repair to the Margaret Neary School, the School Committee, the School Administration and the Town have worked collaboratively to consider a variety of school facility options—including consolidating programs into three facilities instead of the current four facilities. A related issue is that the debt from several significant school building projects over the past 20 years is now close to being paid off, so this could provide borrowing capacity for additional school/facility projects.

This facility planning activity is in the early stages at the time of the publication of this Master Plan, but some important changes could be produced from this process.

573

Together, Northborough and Southborough over the past decade have sent about 1,400 students to the Algonquin Regional High School, which is located in Northborough. The regional high school’s enrollments have started to decline in the most recent few years, as the flow of eighth grade graduates moving to the high school has declined and the Algonquin student population is expected to move toward about 1,200 over the coming decade. Today, approximately thirty-nine percent of Algonquin’s students live in Southborough. In addition to Algonquin Regional High School, Southborough’s high-school-age children have the option of attending the Assabet Valley Vocational-Technical School in Marlborough. However, Southborough students make up a very small percentage of Assabet’s total enrollment (about one percent).

Southborough also participates in the Assabet Valley Collaborative, based in Marlborough, which is a regional special education collaborative that serves thirteen communities clustered around I-495. The Assabet Valley Collaborative offers educational programs and services for children with severe special needs. Its governing board includes the school superintendents from all participating school districts. Like other collaboratives in Massachusetts, Assabet Valley Collaborative relies on member school districts to provide space for regional special education programs, including its alternative middle school program located in Southborough.

Southborough’s Schools: Looking Forward

Historically (and as in the previous Master Plan), Southborough’s schools have typically been viewed somewhat narrowly as “facilities” and as a K-12 education provider—but the schools provide much more than this as they continue to be a central part of the community. The schools not only deliver education services, but they also serve as an important social connection for residents. Over the coming decades, the schools could expand their role to reinforce and enhance a critical dimension that survey results show is highly valued by Town residents—a “sense of community”. The schools can support this by building on individual connections they currently provide, and by expanding or adding, support in the following directions:

- Closer integration/collaboration with other Town functions and institutions (such as Library, Recreation, Senior Center, private schools).
- Extended programs for younger children, beyond the current kindergarten and pre-k services. For example, services such as day-care (as Federal programs are now considering supporting).
- Life-long-learning offerings for adults.
- International programs, via expanded technology capabilities.
- Connections with external educational institutions (such as local, regional, national, international universities); and
- Serving as a central “clearinghouse” and/or “referral” source for residents who seek educational and social opportunities.

The schools have begun this longer-term movement with their recent strategic planning process, to produce their “Vision 2026” [\[create hyperlink\]](#). This document outlines a series of important goals and strategies, including.

1 Empower Learners

- 1.1 *Cultivate a shared understanding and common vision of high-quality instructional practices that develop all students toward the profile of our ideal graduate.*
- 1.2 *Collaborate within and across schools to ensure consistent implementation of high-quality instructional practices.*
- 1.3 *Systematically promote innovation in learning and teaching.*
- 1.4 *Provide opportunities for students and educators to use technology to solve problems, learn and communicate.*

2 Provide Equity of Opportunity

- 2.1 *Develop and implement coherent systems for collecting and using student learning data to better understand the needs of individuals and groups of students.*
- 2.2 *Develop and implement consistent systems to identify and address students’ individual needs for the full range of learners.*
- 2.3 *Foster culturally responsive and inclusive communities and environments.*
- 2.4 *Ensure excellence in the continuum of educational programming for Student Support Services.*
- 2.5 *Ensure, quality, coherence and equitable access for courses and programs.*

3 Support Healthy and Balanced Learners

- 3.1 *Develop and implement a coherent and systematic approach to social and emotional learning (SEL) Pre-K-12.*
- 3.2 *Develop a comprehensive approach to health education Pre-K-12.*

4 Support Educator Learning and Leadership

- 4.1 *Increase District leaders’, school leaders’ and teachers’ capacity to improve teaching and learning.*
- 4.2 *Develop and implement aligned District and school improvement plans (SIP) including professional learning plans.*

5 Maintain Strong Finance and Operations Processes to Support Teaching and Learning

- 5.1 *In collaboration with municipal police and fire, continue to improve school security infrastructure and preparedness.*
- 5.2 *Engage school community in open dialogue about the qualities of school facilities that will support the next generation of Northborough and Southborough students.*

- 5.3 *Identify a systematic strategy to: Increase energy efficiency, decrease costs, increase reliability and security, improve facility management and optimization through data and analytics, and meet carbon footprint and sustainability goals.*
- 5.4 *Adopt a new student information system, Powerschool.*
- 5.5 *Enhance the student transportation system by improving efficiency and customer service.*

Vision 2026 - Summary of Goals & Strategies

- **Empower learners** – a common vision of high-quality instructional practices, consistently implemented with innovation in learning and teaching, with technology as a key enabler
- **Provide equity of opportunity** – use of data and consistent systems to understand and implement the full range of learning needs, equitable access for programs and inclusive environments
- **Support healthy & balanced learners** – implement systematic approach to social/emotional learning and health education
- **Support educator learning & leadership** – increase faculty capacity to improve learning, develop school and professional learning plans
- **Maintain strong finance & operations processes** – improve school security, discuss school facilities, increase facility efficiency and energy management, adopt new student information system, enhance student transportation system

Source: The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough – Vision 2026

Objective, Goals & Recommendations

The goals and recommendations below focus on two key themes – ensuring the highest quality of current school facilities/ programs and broadening the base and the role of the schools in reinforcing an enhanced “sense of community” in Southborough.

Objective: Continue to strengthen our schools	
#	Goal
S-1.0	Ensure the highest possible standard of student development and well being
#	Recommendations
S-1.1	Build from Southborough’s existing position of educational institution strengths to offer an increasingly strong and broad set of educational resources for Town students
S-1.2	Continue to operate education programs and services that set the Town’s schools apart from other local education systems and maintain a “best in class” reputation
S-1.3	Provide all students with access to challenging and culturally responsive learning experiences that meet their individual needs
S-1.4	Prioritize social, emotional, and physical well-being of students

#	Goal
S-2.0	Provide high quality facilities, professional faculty and a challenging, creative curriculum
#	Recommendations
S-2.1	Develop, support, and operate sustainable, functional, and well-maintained school buildings and facilities, including maintaining a sound capital plan consistent with Town's capital planning
S-2.2	Execute the District's Strategic Plan using skilled management practices and best educational practices
S-2.3	Implement instructional practices that engage all students in developing and demonstrating their knowledge and skills through rigorous, innovative, and relevant learning experiences
S-2.4	Continue the District's focus on creating and delivering excellent special education programs
S-2.5	Demonstrate continual growth through professional collaboration

662

#	Goal
S-3.0	Explore opportunities for improved coordination and collaboration with other local, regional, national and international education providers and the community at large
#	Recommendations
S-3.1	Enhance relationships with all local education assets, including private schools and local technical schools
S-3.2	Look for opportunities from coordination with other schools, colleges, universities, businesses
S-3.3	Consider options to incorporate daycare and adult continuing education programs
S-3.4	Investigate and apply for external program-specific grants or other funding sources to enable the establishment or expansion of specialized instructional areas
S-3.5	Collaborate with the Town to consider building and operating an integrated structure of life-long learning, social engagement, recreational activities, and other community activities to enhance the Town's "sense of community,"

663

3

Housing

“Improve the diversity of housing within the town”

Introduction

Housing is the most prevalent land use in Southborough with forty-four percent of the town’s land area utilized for some type of residential dwelling. Thirty-five percent of the town’s land area consists of moderate to large single-family homes. While the current housing stock (supply) serves the needs of most Southborough residents, market changes have created challenges for many residents including seniors, returning college students, and entry level professionals serving the town such as police officers and teachers. The most critical housing goal for Southborough is to increase the diversity and affordability of housing types found within the community.

Southborough completed its Housing Production Plan (HPP) in April 2020 and significant components of that plan have been included in this chapter. The full HPP can be found in the town website [\[create hyperlink\]](#). Southborough has a well-defined affordable housing philosophy, notably that the ability of our future generations to be able to find suitable housing choices is dependent on successful housing planning. Southborough recognizes this fact in its elevation of **Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee** (SHOPC) from an ad hoc committee to that of a permanent committee. The Town understands the housing market in Southborough as one that threatens to hinder the diversity and community of the Town.

This chapter outlines accomplishments since 2008, organizations involved in the development of policy and planning and a summary of current conditions/resources highlighting issues, concerns and opportunities. Goals and recommendations are proposed to improve the diversity and affordability of housing in Southborough.

Summary of Accomplishments Since 2008

Approved Housing Subdivisions:

Project	Location	Date Approved	# of Units
Sameron Village	28 Boston Rd.	January 31, 2018	2 duplexes (4 units) 2 single family homes
Chestnut Meadow	Chestnut Hill Road	November 21, 2017	12 Single family lots
Ila Bella Estates	Lorenzo Drive	June 22, 2015	11 Single family lots
Stone Brook Village	Gaffney Way	October 39, 2013	2 single family lots, 15 unit over 55+ condo development
Estates at Deerfoot	Kenley Lane		
Heritage Crossing Subdivision	Thayer Lane	February 28, 2013	6 single family lots
NBR Subdivision	119 Northboro Road	March 9, 2015	2 single family lots
Brewer Estates	Boston Road	March 26, 2012	3 duplexes (4 units) 3 single family homes
Lincoln Lane Subdivision	Lincoln Lane	October 20, 2009	2 single family lots
Reservoir View Estates	White Bagley Road	June 2, 2009	5 single family lots

Individual Affordably Housing Stock:

Project	Location	Type of Units	# of Units
N/A	3 North Street	Rental	8
Colonial Gardens	49 Boston Road	Rental	56
N/A	Boston Road	Rental	2
The Highlands	Stockwell & Fitzgerald Lane	Ownership	4
Meeting House Farm	Middle Road	Ownership	8
Gilmore Road	Gilmore Road	Ownership	1
1 Cordaville Road	1 Cordaville Road	Rental	1
Madison Place	1200 Madison Place	Rental	42
Parkerville Road	Parkerville Road	Ownership	1
Woodland Meadows	Oak Hill Road	Ownership	4

DDS and DMH also oversee 11 affordable units throughout Southborough in undisclosed locations.

Active Organizations

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee

In April 2005, Town Meeting unanimously approved the establishment of the Southborough Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) to create and preserve affordable housing in Southborough that benefits low- and moderate-income households. The ability to create such an entity is enabled through Chapter 491 of the Acts of 2004, MGL Chapter 44, §55C. The law allows communities to collect funds for housing, segregate them out of the general budget into an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and to use these funds without going back to town meeting for approval. It also allows trust funds to own and manage real estate, not just receive, and disburse funds.

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee (AHTFC), established by the vote under Article 4 of the Warrant for the 2005 Annual Town Meeting, consists of seven trustees, including all the members of the Board of Selectmen, with the remaining members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The powers of the Board include, but are not limited to, the following:

- accept and receive property by gift, grant, devise, or transfer.
- purchase and retain real or personal property.
- sell, lease, exchange, transfer or convey any personal, mixed, or real property.
- execute, acknowledge and deliver deeds, assignments, transfers, pledges, leases, covenants, contracts, promissory notes, releases and other instruments.
- manage or improve real property, and to abandon any property which the board determined not to be worth retaining; and
- hold all or part of the trust property un-invested for such purposes and for such time as the board may deem appropriate.

Funds paid into the Trust are the property of the Trust and need no additional spending approvals. Funds may be received from fees, private contributions, Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and payments associated with zoning bylaws. This gives Southborough the flexibility to act quickly to secure property for the purpose of affordable housing.

Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee

Since the inception of the Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee (SHOPC) two decades ago, Southborough has seen tremendous population growth resulting in a substantial increase in housing costs. This committee was founded in 1986 as an ad hoc entity specifically to study and respond to affordable housing issues in Southborough. At the 2004 Annual Town Meeting SHOPC's responsibilities were expanded and the Committee was established as a permanent committee. With this new designation, SHOPC completed a Housing Production Plan in 2005. The intent of the plan was to identify and respond to the future needs of Southborough's housing market.

Its primary focus was to provide a diverse stock of housing and range of affordability levels in a creative, consistent, and innovative manner while maintaining a framework that balanced development and preservation of open space. The current Housing Production Plan for Southborough was approved by DHCD in April 2020.

Southborough Housing Authority

The Southborough Housing Authority is a state-aided public housing agency, which has been providing housing for low-income elderly, persons with disabilities since 1976. It is the mission of the Southborough Housing Authority to be committed to working with community, state, federal and local officials to provide decent, safe and affordable housing for the people of Southborough.

Southborough Planning Board

The Planning Board consists of five members, elected for five-year staggered terms. The Board reviews and approves applications for permits as required by the Town's bylaws, reviews and approves

Summary of Current Context, Conditions & Resources

Local & Regional Context

As of 2019, Southborough's total population is just over 10,000, with over 3,400 households.

Southborough's population climbed by double digit growth rates over the past few decades but has markedly slowed since 2010. (See Table 1) Over the past decade, a decline in household size, along with an increase in the number of households, indicates development of more housing units for fewer people.

A need for smaller housing units typically correlated with a reduction in household sizes.

Table 1: Population and Household Growth

	2000	2010	2019
Population	8,781	9,767	10,121
% Change		11%	4%
Households	2,952	3,332	3,542
% Change		13%	6%
Average Household Size	2.97	2.89	2.82
Source: US Census 2000 and 2010; ACS 2015-2019			

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) offers two projection scenarios for Southborough, shown in Figure 1. The "Strong Region" (SR) projection makes assumptions about development-friendly regulatory changes throughout its region over the coming decade, while the "Status Quo" (SQ) projection assumes no regulatory changes. Differences between the Status Quo and Strong Region projections are minimal for Southborough, although the Strong Region scenario more closely reflects the actual rate of growth reflected in latest American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. A third projection provided by the University of Massachusetts Donohue Institute does not reflect the slow-down in growth since 2010. All three projections show growth resuming at a higher rate after 2020, implying a need for diversity of housing stock to serve the population.

Figure 1: Southborough Historic & Projected Population Growth

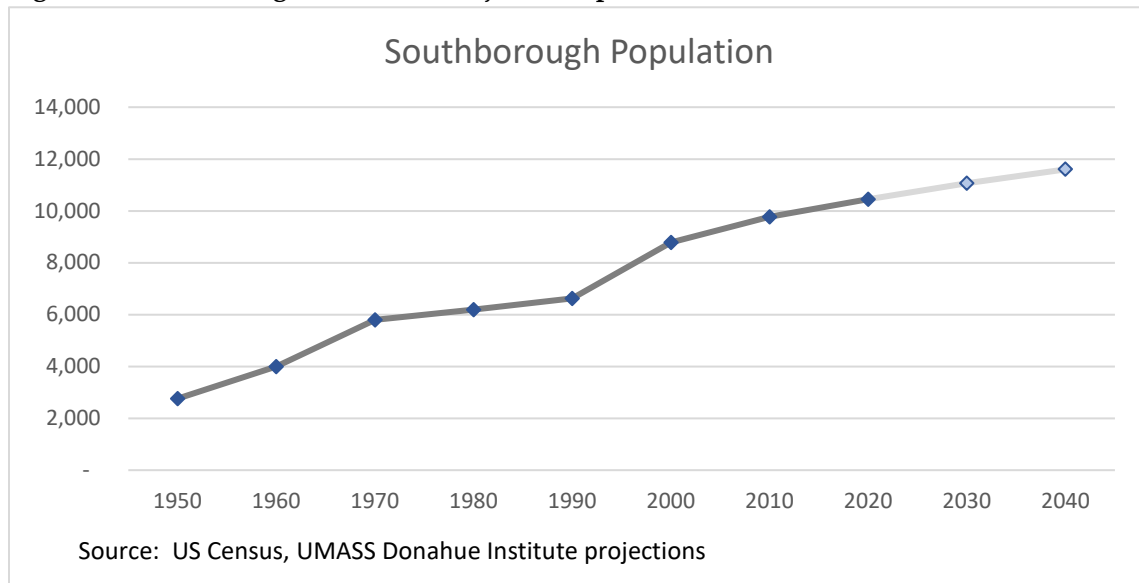


Figure 2 shows population trends and projections by age. Since 1990, the number of adults over age 50 has grown consistently and is expected to continue to climb. ACS data indicates over 38% of Southborough residents are over age 50, compared to 23% in 1990. Status Quo projection estimates expect 48% of the population will be over 50, and of those residents nearly 30% will be over the age of 65 by 2030. The population of younger adults and children has fluctuated over the years. In particular, the share of young adults (age 20-34) diminished significantly between 1990 and 2010 but seems to have grown since then. The number of school-aged children increased through 2010 but has since declined and is expected to continue to fall. ² Figures, data, and narrative found on page 7 of the 2020 HPP – amended for this document

Figure 2: Southborough Historic & Projected Population by Age Cohort

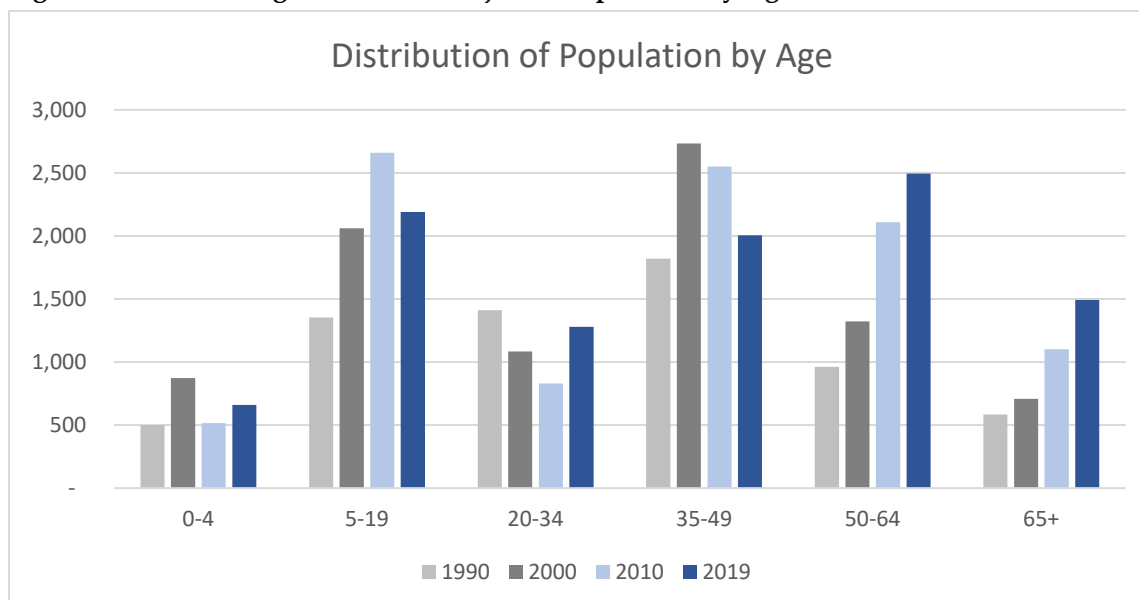


Table 2 indicates that Southborough residents are predominantly white and non-Hispanic, with the largest racial minority group being Asian. The population was too small to report on the proportion of residents who were born outside the United States and/or speak another language besides English at home. Southborough has relatively low social diversity compared Worcester County or Massachusetts as a whole. Southborough residents have a higher level of educational attainment than Worcester County or the state. The characteristics of Southborough households are consistent with population trends. In comparison with Worcester county and the state, Southborough has a higher average household size, and higher proportion of family households. Southborough also has a relatively high proportion of households with children under age 18, while the proportion of households with seniors is below average for the area, but still high overall. A smaller share of Southborough households are “non-families”, defined as individuals living alone and unrelated people living together. About 20% of Southborough households are individuals living alone. Of these, more than half are seniors (over the age of 65) living alone.

Table 2: Social Characteristics

	Southborough	Worcester County	MA
Race/Ethnicity (2020 US Census)			
Not Hispanic, White	75.0%	70.9%	67.6%
Asian	14.5%	5.4%	7.2%
Black	1.0%	5.1%	6.5%
Other race or two or more races	5.4%	5.6%	6.1%
Hispanic (any race)	3.6%	13.0%	12.6%
Immigration/Language (ACS 2015-2019)			
Born in US	98.8%	96.4%	97.1%
Foreign born	1.2%	3.6%	2.9%
Limited English-Speaking	4.6%	7.9%	9.2%
Educational Attainment (ACS 2015-2019)			
High School Graduate or Higher	96.2%	91.9%	91.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	66.5%	37.0%	45.0%

Table 3 indicates that families with children have declined since 2010, corresponding to a decrease in average household size, increase in nonfamily (empty nesters) households and people living alone. At the same time, the proportion of households with seniors over the age of 60 also increased from 32% in 2010 to 35% in 2017. As these trends are projected to continue, the implications of growth in smaller and older households are that the most significant demand on the housing stock will be for smaller, lower-cost, housing units physically designed to maximize the ability to age in place. These types of housing are notably in short supply in Southborough.

Table 3: Household Composition

	Average Household Size	Families	Nonfamily Households	Individuals Living Alone	With Children under 18	With Seniors over 60
Southborough (2017)	2.82	77%	23%	20%	41%	38%
Worcester County	2.56	65%	35%	28%	31%	39%
Massachusetts	2.52	63%	37%	29%	29%	40%
Southborough (2010)	2.98	80%	20%	16%	48%	32%
Source: ACS 2015-2019, ACS 2006-2010						

Table 4 Local Tax Assessor's data provides the most current profile of the housing supply. The Assessor's database identifies 3,707 residential units in Southborough, of which 77% are single-family houses, 8% are condominiums, and 14% are other forms of structures, including multifamily, duplexes and triplexes, etc. Although Southborough has a notable stock of historic residential properties dating as early as 1680, the majority of residential units were built in the late 20th century. One in three single-family homes in Southborough was built between 1980 and 1999, when the town experienced its largest surge in construction. Most of the Town's supply of condominiums are in developments constructed during the 1990's and early 2000's.

Table 4: Residential Properties by Land Use

Use/Year Built	Properties	Average Lot Size (Acres)	Average Value	Average Living Area (Square Feet)
Single-family	2,870	1.21	\$634,470	2,589
1680-1899	167	1.46	\$443,473	2,152
1900-1919	74	1.13	\$507,515	2,439
1920-1939	79	0.94	\$414,363	1,816
1940-1949	59	0.58	\$398,736	1,609
1950-1959	341	0.68	\$398,284	1,503
1960-1969	428	0.83	\$489,941	1,902
1970-1979	325	1.00	\$532,154	2,101
1980-1989	398	1.34	\$667,160	2,793
1990-1999	610	1.70	\$812,435	3,351
2000-2009	261	1.42	\$950,014	3,847
2010-2019	126	1.46	\$986,156	3,796
Condominiums	302		\$501,874	2,087
1900-1959	4		\$274,400	1,698
1990-1999	136		\$471,602	2,097
2000-2009	135		\$556,918	2,165
2010-2019	27		\$412,837	1,708

Southborough Work-In-Town Housing

In addition to the population who currently live in Southborough, the Town's housing needs are also driven by those who work in the town, and by local employers seeking to attract a quality workforce. As of 2018, there were 459 establishments employing 8,302 workers (year round average). This includes about 715 people employed by the public sector, such as by Southborough's schools, public safety, public works, and other government services. Average wages for most jobs located in Southborough are significantly lower than median household incomes. Nearly 40% of the Town's jobs, including retail, restaurants, and hospitality, as well as education and health care, pay an average wage below \$60,000 annually, which would be considered low income for most single-income households. Only 40% of jobs in Southborough are in industries where the average wage is above \$100,000, which is the income required to obtain market rate housing in Southborough. **Only a minority of people who work in Southborough can afford to live in Southborough.**

Objective, Goals and Recommendations

Objective: Improve the diversity of housing within the town	
#	Goal
1.0	Enhance local capacity to advocate for, plan, develop and manage affordable housing
#	Recommendations
1.1	Strengthen and expand partnerships within the town and state to develop housing
1.2	Secure and coordinate use of funding for affordable housing from the state and other grants, CPA funds etc.
1.3	Develop a 5-year strategic plan for the expenditure of AHT funds; research additional state and federal grants
1.4	Identify opportunities to improve housing diversity around mass transit hubs

#	Goal
2.0	Identify sites for creation of diverse housing through new development, redevelopment, or preservation
#	Recommendations
2.1	Locate potential sites to create diverse housing including townhouses, apartments, and small-scale homes
2.2	Engage potential developers who would be interested in the creation of different types of affordable and market rate housing
2.3	Inventory the number of units that is deemed moderate affordable (80% to 110% AMI).

#	Goal
3.0	Update zoning to create opportunities for development of affordable housing and to encourage diverse housing options
#	Recommendations
3.1	Promote mixed-use buildings to offer housing where appropriate
3.2	Remove barriers for the provision of multifamily housing
3.3	Remove zoning barriers for accessory apartments and duplexes

#	Goal
4.0	Assist Southborough residents to obtain or maintain housing that they can afford
#	Recommendations
4.1	Expand the utilization of senior tax deferral and work-off programs

4.2	Support first-time homebuyers through a down payment assistance program
4.3	Achieve (at a minimum) 10% affordable housing to obtain 40B (Safe Haven Status)