

## 1. Agenda

Documents:

[2022.03.09\\_MPC\\_AGENDA.PDF](#)

## 2. Meeting Materials

Documents:

[2020\\_DRAFT\\_MASTER\\_PLAN-LAND\\_USE\\_ZONING\\_V4.2-FOR\\_MPC-MARCH\\_9TH.DOCX.PDF](#)

[2020\\_MASTER\\_PLAN-IMPLEMENTATION\\_PLAN\\_V9\\_MARCH\\_9TH\\_2022-BY\\_CHAPTER.DOCX.PDF](#)

[2020\\_DRAFT\\_MASTER\\_PLAN-ECONOMIC\\_DEVELOPMENT\\_EDIT\\_V4.4-FOR\\_MPC-MARCH\\_9TH.DOCX.PDF](#)

**Town of Southborough, MA**  
**Meeting of the Master Plan Committee**  
**March 9, 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**

- Land Use and Zoning
- Economic Development
- Other final edits

**PICTURE CONTEST**

**QR CODES FOR FINAL DRAFT AT TOWN MEETING**

**HOMEWORK FOR NEXT MEETING**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Other Business Properly Before the Board**

- Approval of Minutes 2.16.22
- Set date for Next Meeting

**ADJOURN**

Meme Luttrell, Chair

# 2

## Land Use & Zoning

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

### Introduction

Land use within a community is the pattern of residential, commercial, industrial and public development, interspersed with open space, such as forests and natural features, undeveloped land, agriculture and parks and recreational areas. Land use changes over time, reflecting local economic conditions and community regulations, preferences and decisions.

Land use forms the basis for master planning. Determining how and where growth and development should occur enables Southborough to manage investment in municipal facilities and services and protect its open space and natural resources. The Town can manage land use and development patterns through zoning and subdivision regulations and the Town can protect open space lands through direct acquisition and the acquisition or acceptance of conservation restrictions/easements.

This chapter outlines accomplishments since 2008, identifies organizations involved in the management of land use and zoning, provides a summary of current conditions/resources and highlights issues, concerns and opportunities. Many of the goals and recommendation within the master plan impact land use or are dependent on changes in zoning. The Master Plan Committee (MPC) agreed that this chapter will provide a summary of these recommendations but that implementation planning will be based on the recommendations within individual chapters

### Vision Open House & Vision Survey Responses

#### Connectivity

The overwhelming opinion of both the participants at the Vision Open House and survey respondents was that making Southborough more traversable is imperative. The vital importance of sidewalks and bike lanes throughout town, trail connectivity and the connection of the north and south sections of town were the subject of many of the comments from residents. An overwhelming majority (77%) of survey respondents felt that enhancing connectivity within Southborough and to surrounding communities via sidewalks, trails and pedestrian crossings was either important or extremely important. These results are consistent with the strong support shown for open space, environmental and recreational issues - 70% of survey respondents felt these issues were moderately to extremely important

#### Housing Diversity

Diversifying housing by allowing mixed-use development also received many comments. However, the survey results seemed to contradict the comments. Only 21% of survey respondents felt that increasing the diversity of housing types was either important or extremely important whereas multiple comments supported allowing mixed-use development and more affordability. The MPC believes this inconsistency likely reflects differing interpretations of the terms “diversification” and “affordability”, particularly since the community survey completed for the 2020 Housing Production Plan offered strong support for the mixed use and affordable housing.

#### Commercial Diversity

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

### Climate Change Resiliency

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

## Summary of Changes & Accomplishments Since 2008

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

Goal #	Goal Description	Goal Status
LU-3	Conduct thorough review of zoning bylaw	To implement this goal a Zoning Advisory Committee (ZAC) was established in 2008. A thorough review of the zoning code was conducted.
LU-4	Specifically allow for mixed use projects in Business Village and Business Highway districts	The Fall 2021 Special Town Meeting approved the creation of a zoning bylaw for the Downtown District, allowing mixed use and additional by-right uses
LU-5	Establish design guidelines or use form-based codes to encourage better building layout and streetscape design	These guidelines have been developed and approved as part of the Downtown Initiative project.
LU-8	Consider zoning incentives to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment of existing properties (i.e., density bonuses for preservation of buildings, streetscape improvements or public amenities, etc.)	In 2017 the Town adopted an Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings bylaw to encourage investment in historic buildings by providing economic incentives to preserve historic buildings
ED-4	Consider elimination of the power to grant use variances once a comprehensive revision of the zoning bylaw is complete	The ability to grant use variances was eliminated by Special Town Meeting in 2016

## Active Organizations

### Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC)

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

### Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

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

### MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC)

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

## **Summary of Current Conditions**

### **About Southborough**

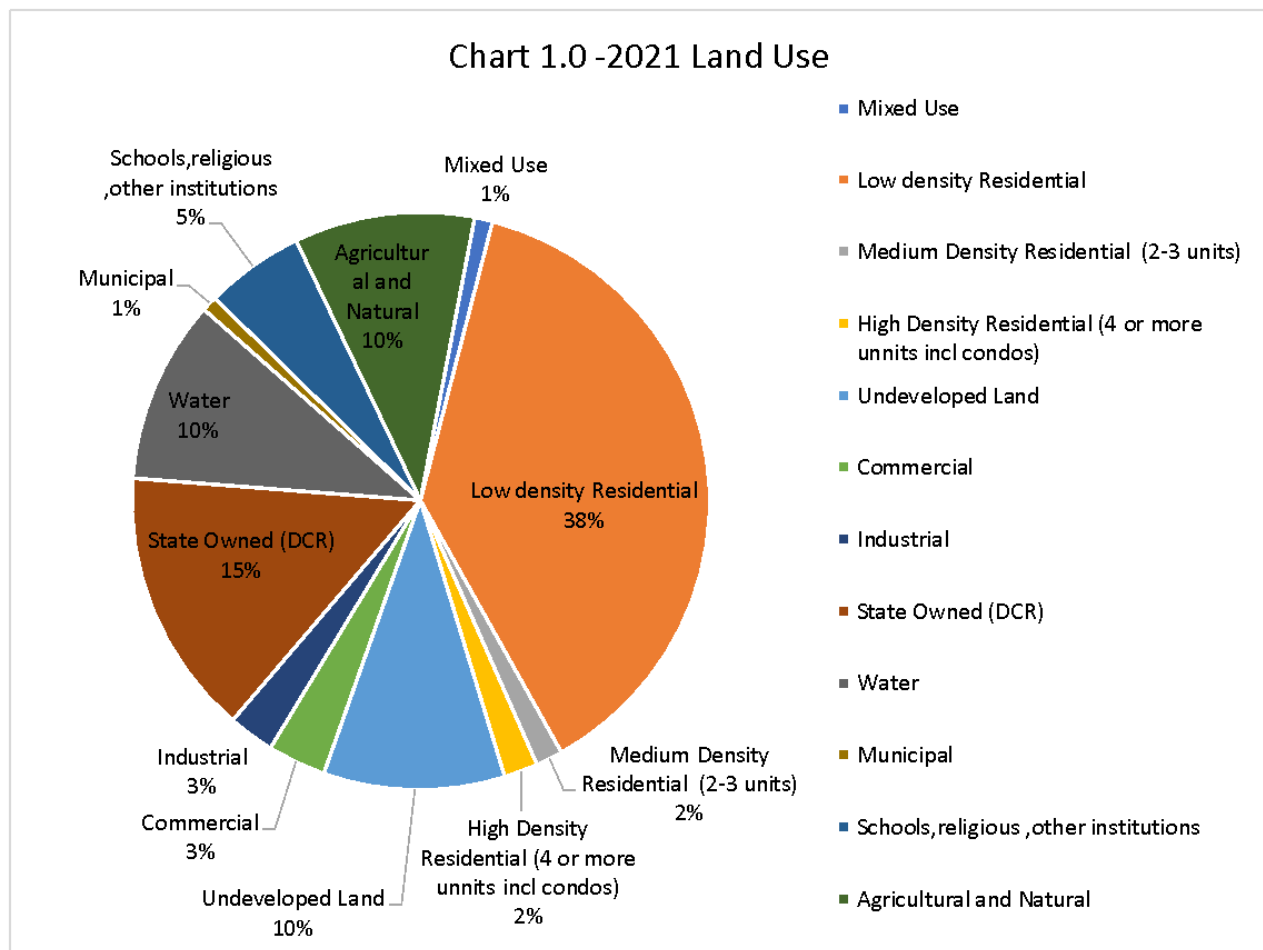
The 2008 master plan included detailed descriptions of the following:

- Southborough's location in the MetroWest region of Massachusetts
- The Town's history as a farming community with a predominantly rural character
- The Town's commercial and residential development history as it has been affected by the Sudbury River, the Boston to Worcester railroad and the proximity to major highways..
- Historical land use patterns, including changes during the later decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Changes in zoning policy and provisions during the 1980's and 1990's

The Master Plan Committee (MPC) has chosen not to replicate this information from the 2008 master plan in the 2020 document– readers can refer to the 2008 master plan, as required.

## Current Land Use

Southborough covers approximately 15.4 square miles (9,844 acres). Chart 1.0 below shows land use by category for 2021.



Source: Town of Southborough Assessor's data 2021

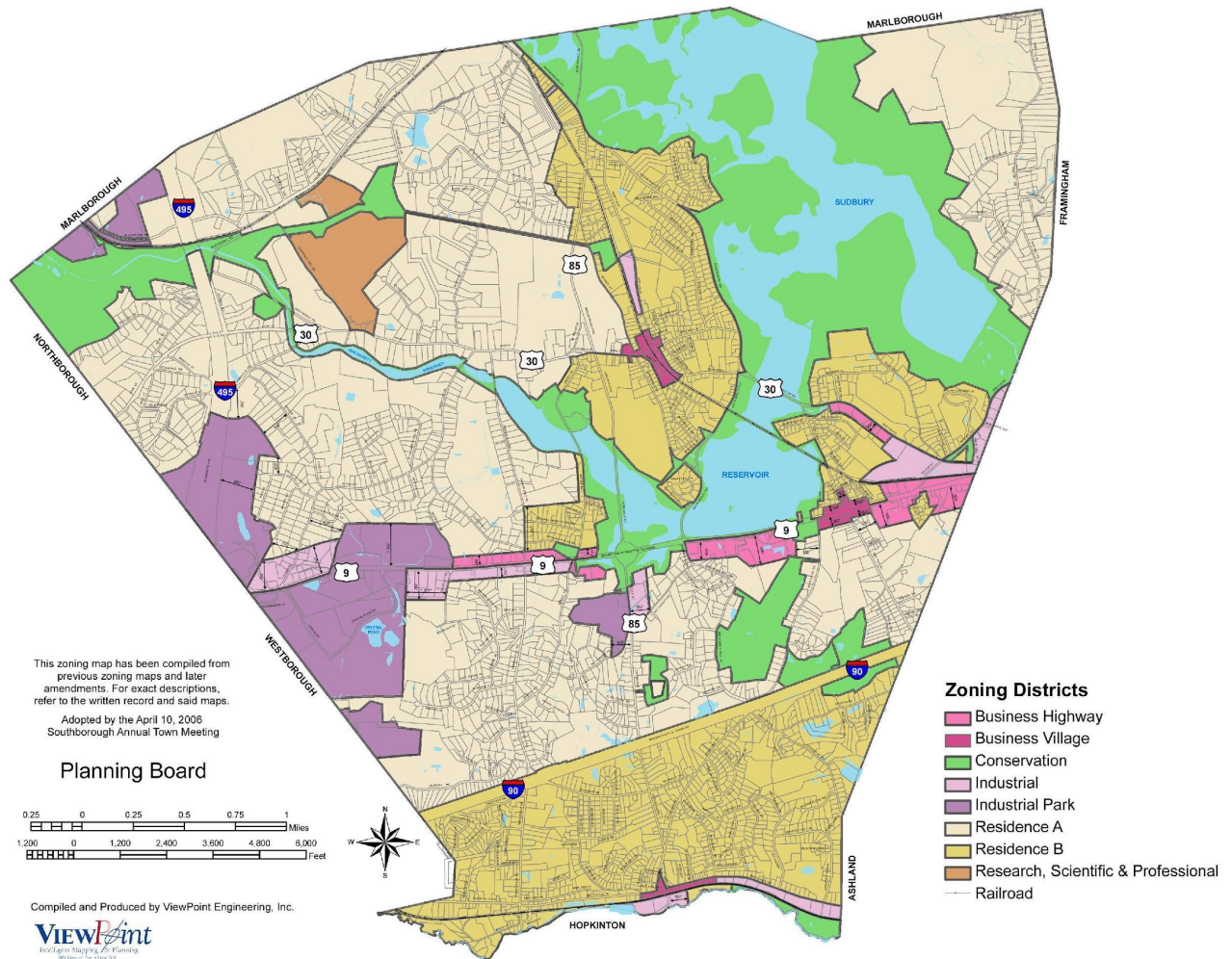
The main points to note are:

- 43% of the Town's land is residential, an increase in 37% from 2006.
- Open space accounts for 35% of the Town's land, a combination of agricultural, natural land or Commonwealth-owned protected parks or water supply areas. This has increased 5% since 2006.
  - o 10% of this open space area is water, mostly the Sudbury Reservoir
  - o 15% is owned by the State's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), with much of this land surrounding the reservoir.
- 10% (934 acres) of land is undeveloped, which is the same as in 2006. Located across all zoning districts, this land contains a variety of conditions that may restrict its ability to be developed. Curiously there was a considerable decrease in undevelopable land from 22 percent (239 acres) in 2006 to 9 percent (87 acres) in 2021.
- Commercial and industrial uses account for 6% of total land use, the same as in 2006.
- 6% of the Town's land is for public and institutional uses, which includes municipal and private schools, religious and other institutions. There has been a great deal of discussion over the years on how to mitigate properties removed from the tax base in this land use category.

## Southborough Zoning Districts & Regulations

The Southborough Zoning Map in Figure 1 reflects the Southborough Zoning Bylaw (Chapter 174 of the Code of the Town of Southborough). An important change was made at the Fall 2021 Special Town Meeting, with the approval of the Downtown District but is not yet reflected in the zoning map.

**Figure 1 - Southborough Zoning Map**



In 2021 the Town added a new district, the Downtown District making nine zoning districts and three overlay districts. The acreage for each district is shown in Table 1.0

## **Zoning Districts**

- **Residence A District (RA)**  
This is primarily a district that allows detached single-family dwellings and related accessory uses, as well as institutional uses, on one acre lots. This district occupies the most land in Southborough.
- **Residence B District (RB)**  
This is a more densely developed residential district with a minimum lot size of 25,000 square feet.
- **Conservation District (C)**  
Parkland and open space are the predominant uses in this district, found around the Sudbury Reservoir and Wachusett Aqueduct along with other pockets across the Town.
- **Industrial Park District (IP)**  
This district allows for newspaper, office, wholesale distribution, and research and development uses up to 50,000 square feet. The two largest parcels are located on either side of Route 9 near the Westborough border and include the Dell/EMC Campus (now largely vacant).
- **Industrial District (ID)**  
This district allows retail, offices, automotive uses, medical laboratories, and hotels, up to 50,000 square feet. Research facilities, wholesale businesses and some light manufacturing are allowed with a special permit. There are several small ID areas located along Route 9 and Southville Road.
- **Research, Scientific and Professional District (SP)**  
Aside from residential uses, which are allowed by right, this district requires a special permit for multi-family housing for the elderly, major residential development, and research and development facilities. This district is located along Chestnut Hill Road, and most of this land reserved through a conservation restriction and therefore cannot be developed.
- **Business Village District (BV)**  
This district allows both residential and retail uses in a neighborhood setting. Multi-family dwellings are allowed by special permit. It is designed to reflect historical development patterns that include residential, commercial, governmental and religious uses that serve the surrounding neighborhoods of downtown Southborough, Fayville, and Southville/Cordaville.
- **Downtown District (DD)**  
In 2021 the Downtown portion of the Business Village (BV) District was separated from the BV and the Downtown District (DD) was created. The DD allows mixed use and several other uses by-right.
- **Highway Business District (BH)**  
This is a district that allows residential and commercial development, but is found along Rt. 9 and a portion of Rt. 30. More intensive (up to 50,000 square feet) retail and office development is permitted along with automotive-related uses.

## **Overlay Districts**

- **Wetland and Floodplain District (WFP)**  
This overlay district is designed to ensure that the land is not subject to flooding or otherwise unsuitable for development. A special permit is required with such a finding from the Planning Board, Board of Health and Conservation Commission. This district is not currently mapped.
- **Critical Resource District (CR)**



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

- **Wireless Communication Service District (WCS)**

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

<b>Table 1.0: Acreage by Zoning District</b>		
	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Residence A District	4,170	43%
Residence B District	2,069	21%
Conservation District	2,430	25%
Industrial Park District	567	6%
Industrial District	189	2%
Research, Science, and Professional District	132	1%
Highway Business District	128	1%
Business Village District*	32	0%
Downtown District*	11	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,728</b>	<b>100%</b>
Source: Town of Southborough GIS data 2021		

## Zoning Regulations

Both the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals act as the special permit granting authority for different types of uses. Land use tools defined within the zoning bylaw ensure sound development practices, notably:

- Minor site plan review for small projects up to 2,000 square feet of new or expanded floor area (or change of use), or between 5 and 19 parking spaces.
- Major projects (with metrics exceeding those above), are subject to a major site plan review hearing by the Planning Board.
- Additional plan review is required in the Village Business District, where major site plan approval is by special permit from the Planning Board. The criteria include some design guidelines.
- To encourage the preservation of historic structures, an Adaptive Reuse Bylaw was adopted to provide incentives for historic preservation.
- Detailed landscaping requirements for projects that require five or more new parking spaces or require site plan review.
- Major residential development projects are allowed by special permit and provide for greater flexibility as an alternative to traditional subdivision design. Open space preservation, more efficient infrastructure, and the creation of affordable housing are among the goals of this type of development pattern.
- The Lower Impact Development bylaw is designed encourage green infrastructure and to minimize the impacts of stormwater runoff and reduce nonpoint source pollution.
- An updated Illumination Bylaw was approved at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, with the goal of decreasing the harmful effects of light pollution on the environment and its inhabitants; solar bylaws were adopted to encourage the use of solar energy.
- Three new General Bylaws are expected to be before the voters at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting
  - o A Noise Bylaw (Ad-hoc) Committee was established in November 2021 with the goal of producing a bylaw that would stipulate quiet hours and therefore cut down on noise pollution..
  - o A Street Tree Bylaw intended to offer further protection to Public Shade Trees

- o A Scenic Road Bylaw designated additional roads within the Town as scenic roads which gives the trees and historic stonewalls on those roads additional protections.

## Build-Out Analysis

The 2008 master plan included a detailed, parcel based, analysis of the potential for future residential and commercial/industrial development within the Town. The build out methodology and results can be found in the 2008 report. An important conclusion from the 2008 analysis remains applicable—that there are relatively few (less than 200), remaining residential building lots available.

The MPC agreed that there was limited incremental benefit to providing an equivalent analysis because of the many variables in predicting buildout. State statutes including M.G.L. Chapter 40B and the new MBTA communities housing choice greatly increase the number of units that could be built on a vacant lot. Additionally, we are beginning to see an uptick in “oversize” lots being subdivided and additional units being built. Therefore, it would be difficult to predict how many more units can be built in Southborough. Table 2 below show the vacant land by zoning district and type as of 2021:

**Table 2 Summary of Vacant Land**

Vacant Land Category/Zoning District	Acres
accessory land w/ imp (i.e garage)	31
developable land - residential	288
potentially dev land -residential	130
undevelopable land -residential	77
<b>Total Vacant Residential land</b>	<b>526</b>
developable land- commercial	88
potentially dev land- commercial	6
undevelopable land- commercial	4
<b>Total Vacant Commercial Land</b>	<b>98</b>
developable land- industrial	148
potentially dev land- industrial	156
undevelopable land- industrial	6
<b>Total Vacant Industrial Land</b>	<b>310</b>

## Development Considerations

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

### Impact of M.G.L Chapter 40B on Development

MGL Chapter 40B is a state statute that allows developers to override local zoning regulations to build affordable housing in communities where less than 10% of their housing stock is affordable. Currently 8.6% of Southborough’s housing stock is affordable which is a substantial increase from the 3.6% affordable units reported in the previous Master Plan. Additionally, there are additional affordable units that have been permitted by the Town but the project is currently making its way through court. If the court upholds the Town’s approval of the project Southborough would hit the 10% threshold. Once a community reaches the

10% threshold they are considered in “Safe Harbor” and regain local control over development projects. Housing diversity goals as defined in the 2020 Housing Production Plan include:

- Amend Multi Residential District (MRD), relax 1/3 single family requirement, unit calculation, more flexibility to add multifamily housing
- Increase flexibility of Adaptive Reuse Bylaw if creating affordable units
- Amend Senior Housing Bylaw to require affordability and allow creation of lifestyle housing.

### **Housing Choice for MBTA Communities**

In 2021 Massachusetts enacted a new “Housing Choice” law requiring towns, (including Southborough), hosting MBTA commuter rail or rapid transit stations to revise their zoning laws to allow denser development within 0.5 miles of the MBTA stations. These communities are required in their zoning “to allow by right multifamily housing with minimum of 15 units per acre, in at least one district near the station”. This zoning change, which the Town will need to implement if it wants to remain eligible for some state grant funding, could create an opportunity to address several goals in this Master Plan. The statute allows for non-age restricted multifamily housing, mixed-use development and although affordability is not addressed in the statute it may be possible to require some affordable units in the district.

### **Downtown District Development Opportunities**

The new Downtown District was approved at a Special Town meeting in the Fall of 2021. The new district allows many uses by right, including mixed use and was intended to create an opportunity for new development in the downtown.

### **Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Commercial Vacancy Rates**

The beginning of pandemic emptied office buildings and suddenly found employees who had populated office buildings, working from home across the nation. Office buildings in Southborough shared the same fate. After two years, many employees are still working from home for some portion of the week. What future employment will look like is unclear. Will employees resume commuting? Or will the office of the future be more of a shared space closer to where each employee lives? If so could this be a win for Southborough and other bedroom communities if employees no longer commute and instead utilize shared space closer to home.

## **Projects in the Pipeline**

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

### **Residential Projects**

- **Ruby Estates**  
Ruby Estates is a six-lot conventional subdivision proposed to be located on a new cul-de-sac off Mt Vickery Road. The project is was approved in the spring of 2021.
- **Park Central**  
This project is proposed to be located on the former Flatley-owned property off of Route 9 and Park Central Drive. The Comprehensive Permit approved 180 rental units (2 four-story buildings), and the use variance approved 158 townhouse units, a wastewater treatment plant, and open space, among other site features. The project entrance is proposed to be sited on Flagg Road and Route 9 westbound from Park Central Drive. This project received a use variance in 2015 and a comprehensive permit in 2016, but the project is currently under litigation.
- **Chestnut Meadow**  
Approved in 2017, this 12-lot subdivision on 15.74 acres of land off of Chestnut Hill Road is currently

under construction.

- **Isla Bella Estates**

Approved in 2015 this 11-lot, 12-unit subdivision includes an affordable duplex off of Mt. Vickery Road. The subdivision road has been constructed and the housing construction has now commenced.

### **Commercial/Industrial Projects**

- 154-156 Northborough Road – Contractor Bays

- **All American Storage Facility**

110 Turnpike Road, Rte. 9- Upscale storage facility

- **U-Haul Storage facility**

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

## **Objectives, Goals & Recommendations**

The Master Plan Committee determined that Land Use and Zoning should organically evolve from predominant themes conveyed through the other chapters in this Master Plan. The key themes are defined below, along with related chapters and count of items. The critical recommendations are listed in the table below.

The Implementation Plan in Chapter 9 identifies these goals and recommendation with an asterisk for ease of cross referencing.

- **Enhance connectivity within town**

Circulation & Transportation (4), Economic Development (4), Open Space, Natural Resources & Recreation (5)

- **Develop strategies to offer more diversity in housing**

Housing (6), Economic Development (1), Historic, Cultural & Community Resources (1), Public Services & Resiliency (1)

- **Strengthen sustainability of local businesses, commercial districts and villages**

Economic Development (3), Cultural & Community Resources (1),

- **Establish strategies for energy conservation, carbon footprint reduction and climate change resiliency**

Economic Development (1) Open Space, Natural Resources & Recreation (6), Public Services & Resiliency (2), Circulation & Transportation (2)

<b>Objective: Align planning and zoning regulations with the vision and objectives of the master plan</b>	
#	<b>Goal</b>
LU-1.0	Enhance connectivity within town to improve travel for all modes of transportation (vehicular, public, pedestrian, bicycle) to better connect people and places
#	<b>Recommendations</b>
LU-1.1	Develop a plan to connect all parts of town with pedestrian/cycle/trail access
LU-1.2	Construct or repair a sidewalk network throughout town, create bike trails and lanes and connect sidewalks to trail network
LU-1.3	Create community gathering spaces: build a multi-use community center and create community green space
#	<b>Goal</b>
LU-2.0	Create strategies to offer more diversity in housing, encouraging alternatives to large single-family houses that would allow young professionals/families to reside in Southborough and seniors to stay in town
#	<b>Recommendations</b>

LU-2.1	Amend Multifamily Housing for the elderly section of the zoning bylaw and add an affordability requirement
LU-2.2	Allow duplexes by special permit
LU-2.3	Amend the zoning bylaw to allow mixed use buildings and multifamily housing in the Downtown District
LU-2.4	Amend the zoning bylaw to allow accessory apartments by right
LU-2.5	Create design guidelines for use by proponents submitting proposals for the Downtown District
LU-2.6	Amend the zoning bylaw to allow mixed use buildings on Route 9
#	<b>Goal</b>
LU-3.0	Strengthen the sustainability of local businesses, commercial districts and villages by attract businesses to come to Southborough and stay
#	<b>Recommendations</b>
LU-3.1	Amend the zoning code to allow for 4 story buildings on Route 9
#	<b>Goal</b>
LU-4.0	Establish strategies for energy conservation, carbon footprint reduction and climate change resiliency
#	<b>Recommendations</b>
LU-4.1	Review the Stormwater and Erosion Bylaw and determine if an update is advisable
LU-4.2	Amend the Site Plan Approval bylaw to require the installation of electric vehicle charging stations
LU-4.3	Create a Tree Canopy Protection bylaw
LU-4.4	Create and implement a native tree planting program

**Summary of Goals & Recommendations by Chapter & Objective**

Chapter	# Objectives	# Goals	# Recommendations
1. Vision, Goals & Planning Process	Includes summary of objectives & goals		
2. Land Use & Zoning	1	4	15
3. Housing	1	4	13
4. Economic Development	1	3	22
5. Open Space, Natural Resources & Recreation	3	13	61
6. Circulation & Transportation	1	3	19
7. Community, Historical & Cultural Resources	1	3	15
8. Public Services, Resiliency & Schools	2	9	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>186</b>

**Updates to Implementation Plan as of March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

- There are now two versions of the Implementation Plan within this document
  - By objective within chapter
  - By responsible group
- Additional columns have been added to complete the implementation data
  - Estimated timeframe/status (for those recommendations completed)
  - Potential funding source (Annual budget, ????)
  - These data will need to be completed during discussions with each responsible board/commission
- Text updates
  - Primary responsibility abbreviated with legend (required for Implementation chapter)
  - Reference added to show chapter version used – cross referenced for March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting

**Updates to Objectives, Goals & Recommendations**

- Amended Board of Selectmen to Select Board – individual chapter still to be updated
- Land Use & Zoning recommendations updated to reflect changes in individual chapters
- Update of recommendations from Economic Development chapter
- Removal of goal #PS-4.1 and four recommendations relating to individual accessibility and goal RY-1.0 relating to stormwater standards

## Legend for Implementation Plan

### Primary Responsibility

Board-Committee-Department	Abbreviation	Notes
Capital Planning Committee	CAPC	CPC used for Community Preservation Committee
Conservation Commission	CC	
DPW	DPW	
EDC	EDC	
Emergency Planning Committee	EPC	
HC	HC	
Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee	SHOPC	
Southborough Public Access Committee	SPAC	
Open Space Preservation Commission	OSPC	
Pedestrian & Bicycling Committee	PBC	To be established through the Master Plan
PB	PB	
Public Works PB	PWPB	
Recreation Commission	RC	
School Committee	SC	
Select Board	SB	Previously Board of Selectmen
Technology Committee	TEC	
Trails Committee	TAC	

### Estimated Timeframe

Timeframe	Abbreviation	Notes
Completed in 1-2 years	Short Term	The timeframe is measured from the date of approval of the Master Plan and does not necessarily reflect the duration of the project. For example, a project may only take 12 months to complete but the start could be delayed by 2 years due to budget constraints so would be regarded as a Medium Term project
Completed in 2-5 years	Medium Term	
Completed in 5-10 years	Long Term	

### Potential Funding Source

Funding Source	Abbreviation	Notes
Capital investment or operating expenses approved through the Southborough's annual budgeting process.	Town Funding	The source of funding will be determined during the planning phase of a project. The funding source included in the Implementation Plan is based on the known scope of the project when the Master Plan

Funding through Southborough's Community Preservation Act	CPA	was approved. It may change as the project progresses.
Private or Not For Profit funding from outside the Town	External Funding	
Federal or State grants, programs etc	Government	



## 2. Land Use & Zoning (Chapter 2 v4.2)

<b>Objective:</b> Align planning and zoning regulations with the vision and objectives of the master plan		<b>Resp</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
#	<b>Goal</b>			
LU-1.0	Enhance connectivity within town to improve travel for all modes of transportation (vehicular, public, pedestrian, bicycle) to better connect people and places	SB		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
LU-1.1	Develop a plan to connect all parts of town with pedestrian/cycle/trail access	PBC		
LU-1.2	Construct or repair a sidewalk network throughout town, create bike trails and lanes and connect sidewalks to trail network	PB		
LU-1.3	Create community gathering spaces: build a multi-use community center and create community green space	SB		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
LU-2.0	Create strategies to offer more diversity in housing, encouraging alternatives to large single-family houses that would allow young professionals/families to reside in Southborough and seniors to stay in town	PB		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
LU-2.1	Amend Multifamily Housing for the elderly section of the zoning bylaw and add an affordability requirement	PB		
LU-2.2	Allow duplexes by special permit	PB		
LU-2.3	Amend the zoning bylaw to allow mixed use buildings and multifamily housing in the Downtown District	PB		
LU-2.4	Amend the zoning bylaw to allow accessory apartments by right	PB		
LU-2.5	Create design guidelines for use by proponents submitting proposals for the Downtown District	PB		
LU-2.6		PB		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
LU-3.0	Strengthen the sustainability of local businesses, commercial districts and villages by attract businesses to come to Southborough and stay	PB		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
LU-3.1	Amend the zoning code to allow for 4 story buildings on Route 9	PB		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
LU-4.0	Establish strategies for energy conservation, carbon footprint reduction and climate change resiliency	SB		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
LU-4.1	Review the Stormwater and Erosion Bylaw and determine if an update is advisable	CC		
LU-4.2	Amend the Site Plan Approval bylaw to require the installation of electric vehicle charging stations	PB		
LU-4.3	Create a Tree Canopy Protection bylaw	CC		
LU-4.4	Create and implement a native tree planting program	OSPC		

## 3. Housing (Chapter 3 v6)

<b>Objective:</b> Improve the diversity of housing within the town		<b>Resp</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
#	<b>Goal</b>			
H-1.0	Enhance local capacity to advocate for, plan, develop and manage affordable housing	SHOPC		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			

H-1.1	Strengthen and expand partnerships within the town and state to develop housing	SHOPC		
H-1.2	Secure and coordinate use of funding for affordable housing from the state and other grants, CPA funds etc.	SHOPC		
H-1.3	Develop a 5-year strategic plan for the expenditure of Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) funds; research additional state and federal grants	SHOPC		
H-1.4	Identify opportunities to improve housing diversity around mass transit hubs	SHOPC		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
H-2.0	Identify sites for creation of diverse housing through new development, redevelopment, or preservation	<b>SHOPC</b>		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
H-2.1	Locate potential sites to create diverse housing including townhouses, apartments, and small-scale homes	SHOPC		
H-2.2	Engage potential developers who would be interested in the creation of different types of affordable and market rate housing	SHOPC		
H-2.3	Inventory the number of units that is deemed moderate affordable (80% to 110% AMI).	SHOPC		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
H-3.0	Update zoning to create opportunities for development of affordable housing and to encourage diverse housing options	<b>PB</b>		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
H-3.1 (LU-2.3)	Promote mixed-use buildings to offer housing where appropriate	SHOPC		
H-3.2 (LU-2.1)	Remove barriers for the provision of multifamily housing	PB		
H-3.3 (LU-2.2) (LU-2.4)	Remove zoning barriers for accessory apartments and duplexes	PB		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
H-4.0	Assist Southborough residents to obtain or maintain housing that they can afford	<b>SHOPC</b>		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
H-4.1	Expand the utilization of senior tax deferral and work-off programs	SHOPC		
H-4.2	Support first-time homebuyers through a down payment assistance program	SHOPC		
H-4.3	Achieve (at a minimum) 10% affordable housing to obtain 40B (Safe Haven Status)	SHOPC		

#### 4. Economic Development (Chapter 4 v4.4)

Objective: Improve the diversity of commercial activity within the Town		Resp	Estimated Timeframe	Potential Funding Source
#	Goal			
ED-1.0	Enhance the Downtown District to provide a vibrant hub that is attractive to both businesses and residents	EDC		
#	Recommendations			
ED-1.1	Define and document changes to the zoning and use regulations for the Downtown District (Complete)	EDC		
ED-1.2	Seek consensus for the changes to zoning regulations across the appropriate town boards/commission and gain approval from Town Meeting (Complete)	PB		
ED-1.3 (LU-2.5)	Agree upon design guidelines, to be promulgated and implemented by the PB 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)	PB		
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	EDC		
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 District. This would include the National Grid parcel 54-40	EDC		
ED-1.6 (LU-1.3)	Evaluate the options for creating a “community green space” within the Downtown District	EDC		
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	SB		
ED-1.8	Gain approval from CSX to allow the Town to replace the pipes under the tracks on Main Street to resolve the Stormwater issues in the Downtown area	SB		
ED-1.9 (LU-1.1)	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.	SB		
ED-1.10	Encourage preservation, and, where appropriate, re-purposing of historical buildings and ensure that DPW (DPW) plans for the Downtown District align with beautification and historic priorities	HC		
ED-1.11	Work with Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee (SHOPC) to determine whether mixed use development within the Downtown District can support affordable housing needs and goals.	EDC		

#	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	EDC		
#	Recommendations			
ED-2.1	Develop a comprehensive listing of Town owned properties and evaluate/prioritize their use/potential based on agreed criteria	EDC		
ED-2.2	Define, plan and implement improvements to the sidewalk network for Fayville, Cordaville and Southville	PB		
ED-2.3	Increase parking in the Fayville Village District (e.g., by reconfiguring playground parking)	PB		
ED-2.4 (LU-1.1)	Connect the rail station to office and commercial areas in Town via improved sidewalks, shuttle bus services, cycle lanes.	PB		
ED-2.5		EDC		
#	Goal			
ED-3.0	Have an economically strong, diverse, and self-sustaining business community <i>i.e.</i> , an economic engine along the Route 9 corridor.	EDC		
#	Recommendations			
ED-3.1	Increase use-intensity for currently underutilized property parcels	PB		
ED-3.2	Increase commercial tax revenue by reducing office space vacancies and encouraging development on targeted, high-potential sites (such EMC/Dell)	EDC		
ED-3.3	Improve commercial marketing position by better distinguishing Southborough from surrounding towns (Westborough, Framingham, Northborough, Marlborough, Ashland, Hopkinton)	EDC		
ED-3.4	Stay connected and actively participate in the Route 9, I90, I495 state highway projects	EDC		
ED-3.5 (LU-3.1)		EDC		
ED-3.6 (LU-3.2)	Continue to develop/improve the sidewalk network	PB		
ED-3.7 (LU-2.6)		EDC		
ED-3.8	Establish a quarterly meeting or "roundtable" forum between local/regional business leaders, the EDC and the PB to discuss infrastructure and business issues, including last-mile transportation to encourage the use of public transit and reduce congestion and environmental impacts.	EDC		
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.	EDC		

## 5. Open Space, Natural Resources & Recreation (Chapter 8 v8)

<b>Objective:</b> Protect and maintain open space within Southborough		<b>Resp</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
#	<b>Goal</b>			
OS-1.0	Develop a collaborative policy/approach for the strategic acquisition /protection of properties	OSPC		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
OS-1.1	Identify criteria / define goals for strategic acquisition and protection of open space including recreational and other public use, to maintain diversity of land use within the community	OSPC		
OS-1.2	Educate the community regarding why it is important to acquire high priority properties and the importance of open space/natural resources conservation)	OSPC		
OS-1.3	Deliver a map of open space, including both existing designated lands and potential spaces to be acquired	OSPC		
OS-1.4	Identify key stakeholders who will input as to the strategic acquisition for open space.	OSPC		
OS-1.5	Identify all town owned open space parcels and to the care and control of the Conservation Commission	CC		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
OS-2.0	Expand connectivity of and access to existing open space without compromising public safety, wildlife activity or causing adverse environmental impact	TAC		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
O-S2.1	Develop a plan/strategy, in collaboration with all stakeholders e.g. land holders, conservation commission, Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC), Trails Committee etc. to link individual open space areas, considering potential restrictions due to wildlife needs e.g. access corridor	TAC		
OS-2.2	Build and maintain trails and parking; examples would include a paved walking track around Mooney Field, walking trail around golf course during appropriate times. Investigate dog walking needs.	TAC		
OS-2.3 (LU-1.1)	Continue to establish connections to regional trails, e.g., the Boroughs Loop and Aqueduct Trail and Boston-Worcester Airline trail (BWALT)	TAC		
OS-2.4	Increase awareness about passive recreation opportunities on trails and open space properties	TAC		
OS-2.5	Establish ADA compliant trails and parking, where appropriate	TAC		
OS-2.6	Engage and educate the community through guided hikes, nature walks, and programs	TAC		
OS-2.7	Establish off road biking on appropriate trails, while protecting the surrounding environment and abiding by Department of Conservation (DCR) permitted use regulations	TAC		
OS-2.8	Assess and add signage to indicate which trails are appropriate for dogs	TAC		

#	Goal			
OS-3.0	Manage open space resources in collaboration with stakeholders and the community	CC		
#	Recommendations			
OS-3.1	Designate major open space resources to a use, for example conservation or recreation, which will then define the primary stakeholders	CC		
OS-3.2	Involve the community (both residents and businesses) in the management of open space and the maintenance of trails	CC		
OS-3.3	Explore options for the disposal of dog waste on open space e.g., providing bags or composting bins	CC		
OS-3.4	Educate the community about the appropriate land uses and guidelines, e.g., the impact of dog waste on trails and dangers balloons to animals on open space.	CC		
OS-3.5	Clean up the dump at Breakneck Hill	CC		
OS-3.6	Regularly assess and take action to prevent encroachment on open space lands (e.g., by dumping brush and grass clippings etc.)	Check MD		
<b>Objective:</b> Define, develop and implement “green” initiatives that sustain our environment		<b>Resp</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
#	Goal			
NR-1.0	Ensure the town’s wetland protection and storm water by-laws reflect federal/state regulations and the projected impact of climate change as well as planning for droughts	CC		
#	Recommendations			
NR-1.1 (LU-4.1)	Review all levels of regulation and the latest research for wetland protection and stormwater management permitting and ensure town by-laws are up to date and compliant	CC		
NR-1.2	Document criteria and metrics around storm water management, including snow removal/storage, for now and the future	CC		
NR-1.3	Amend/upgrade local regulations to better meet community needs and educate community on regulations, impact and rationale	CC		
NR-1.4	Implement local regulation changes requiring updated rainfall standards to be used for the hydraulic design of stream crossings and other stormwater related infrastructure, so that climate change is adequately captured in the design conditions	CC		
NR-1.5	Work with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and Department of Conservation (DCR) to implement stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) along Route 9, particularly at the intersection with Route 85	CC		
NR-1.6	Review flood risk areas and identify stream crossings for upgrades and rehabilitation to help mitigate the risk of flooding	CC		
NR-1.7	Conduct an inventory of town owned facilities that are vulnerable to flooding and identify projects to mitigate flood damage by increasing stormwater storage capacity	CC		
NR-1.8	Pursue additional funding for the implementation of MS4 related tasks, including inventory of storm drains and detention basins, maintenance of stormwater infrastructure, and upgrades to increase storage capacity	CC		
NR-1.9 (LU-4.3)	Create a Tree Canopy Protection bylaw, defining limitations on lot clearance to protect against excessive erosion, the risk of flooding and to prevent heat synchs	CC		

#	Goal			
NR-2.0	Increase the volume and type of recycling by commercial and residential consumers	SB		
#	Recommendations			
NR-2.1	Re-establish the recycling committee	SB		
NR-2.2	Monitor recycling best practices to identify profitable recycling materials and determine if it is cost effective to collect these within the town.	DPW		
NR-2.3	Identify a way to recycle compostable material	DPW		
NR-2.4	Create and/or review and update recycling metrics with targets and annual report outs, including establishing if volume or weight is a more appropriate measure	SB		
NR-2.5	Evaluate the options to reduce the level of single-use plastics (e.g., plastic bags and straws within 10 years)	SB		
NR-2.6	Educate community on the rationale for recycling; examples would include trash pick-up/recycling methods, update signage at the transfer station regularly, clothing / book recycling options	SB		

#	Goal			
NR-3.0	Reduce the consumption of non-renewable natural resources by public and private users	SB		
#	Recommendations			
NR-3.1	Offer rain barrels, compost and recycling bins through the Town (cost plus administration fee); develop rain collection systems on town owned property	DPW		
NR-3.2	Reduce Southborough's town owned facilities use of coal/oil-based by 50% within 10 years	SB		
NR-3.3 (LU-4.2)	Install electric car charging stations around town	DPW		
#	Goal			
NR-4.0	Prioritize and reduce the existence and impact of invasive species and other nuisance species on public and private properties	OSPC		
#	Recommendations			
NR-4.1	Develop education programs that cover definition of terms e.g., native vs non-native, invasive vs non-invasive, local/regional plant and insect life, what to do if you find invasive species	OSPC		
NR-4.2	Create an ongoing assessment of priority invasive species and a strategic plan for eradication of these species.	OSPC		
NR-4.3	Develop a plan for the significant reduction/control of invasive species and nuisance species (e.g. poison ivy) across both town/private land, roadways and trails.	OSPC		
NR-4.4	Join the SuAsCo Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) to work with partner organizations to prevent the spread of invasive species across jurisdictional boundaries of the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord River watershed (SuAsCo)	OSPC		

#	Goal			
NR-5.0	Expand the use of native plants and prioritize awareness and installation of pollination systems across the community	OSPC		
#	Recommendations			
NR-5.1 (LU-4.4)	Work with town facilities and departments to create and manage plans for all town owned properties to be landscaped with native plants vs non-native or cultivars	OSPC		
NR-5.2	Pursue a town bylaw requiring the use of native plants and prohibiting chemicals treatments of lawns and insect spraying	OSPC		
NR-5.3	Develop a policy and associated guidelines/conditions outlining the recommended native planting schemes. Collaborate with the PB and Conservation Commission to have these formally adopted and incorporated into reviews of site plans and permit applications.	OSPC		
NR-5.4	Pursue and maintain town certification as a Wildlife Habitat Community through the National Wildlife Federation	OSPC		

Objective: Enhance Recreation Facilities & Services		Resp	Estimated Timeframe	Potential Funding Source
#	Goal			
R-1.0	Improve and maintain quality and safety of all recreational facilities	RC		
#	Recommendations			
R-1.1	Initiate a Facilities Study to replace the 2017 study because many of the recommendations have been or will be met in the coming years; understand the impact of potential new developments including Park Central	RC		
R-1.2	Make continued improvements to golf course as outlined in the improvement provided in the Golf Course Committees report	RC		
R-1.3	Implement a field rotation in line with recommended guidelines to rest fields every 4 -5 years to help maintain field integrity and extend usage prior to major repairs being required	RC		
#	Goal			
R-2.0	Continue to provide high quality recreation programs and activities that meet the needs of residents of diverse ages to build a stronger community	RC		
#	Recommendations			
R-2.1	Continue to explore recreational opportunities and business continuity planning for times where social distancing is required	RC		
R-2.2	Develop a nature based passive recreation program (gardening, bird watching, butterflies)	RC		
#	Goal			
R-3.0	Seek opportunities to expand recreational facilities	RC		
#	Recommendations			
R-3.1	Work with the Select Board (SB) and EDC (EDC) to ensure new residential or commercial development includes funds for recreation facilities and/or open space	RC		
R-3.2 (LU-1.1)	Strive for multi-use trail and sidewalk systems to satisfy the community's walking and biking needs	RC		
R-3.3	Explore possible locations for a dog park as the community lacks free space where dogs can run unleashed	RC		
R-3.4	Install turf at the Choate Fields located at Woodward School expanding the time and availability of field use to the town's community, and to generate revenue from other youth and adult organizations	RC		

R-3.5 (LU-1.3)	Build a multi-use Community Center intended for all interest groups/ages including Recreation and Senior Center use. The location and facility would ideally support a centrally located shared space with meeting and training rooms, a walking track and large multi-sport court, easy access to other key community locations.	RC		
R-3.6	Expand the availability of meeting and training rooms for use by programs and other community-based groups	RC		



#	Goal			
R-4.0	Maintain strong partnerships with committees and organizations throughout the town	RC		
#	Recommendations			
R-4.1	Seek a spot on the Southborough Public Access Committee to stay informed of changing regulations and seek to keep facilities in compliance while striving to achieve the highest standards	RC		
R-4.2	Maintain positive partnerships with the schools in the district who provide access to their facilities including theatres, classrooms and other facilities; in the event a new school is constructed ensure the access to the same facilities remain (e.g., theatre)	RC		
R-4.3	Partner with the Select Board, Open Space Preservation Commission and Trails Committee on the evaluation of potential property acquisitions for multi-use purposes	RC		
#	Goal			
R-5.0	Maintain strong fiscal controls over recreation expenditure	RC		
#	Recommendations			
R-5.1	Continue to fulfill the Recreation Department's responsibility to maintain the Revolving Fund for programming and the 911 fund to support ongoing maintenance and eventual replacement of the turf field	RC		
R-5.2	Continue to contribute facility user fees to the General Fund to support facility maintenance and support	RC		
R-5.3	Maintain contributions and support to the Trails Committee	RC		

## 6. Circulation & Transportation (Chapter 6 v10.1)

Objective: Improve accessibility & connectivity across the town		Resp	Estimated Timeframe	Potential Funding Source
#	Goal			
CT-1.0	Develop the infrastructure necessary to support vehicular movement whilst improving safety, reducing pollution and preserving scenic vistas within the Town	SB		
#	Recommendations			
CT-1.1	Identify additional vehicular movement infrastructure necessary over the next 10 years (e.g., relieving existing “choke points” such as causeways, Route 9 intersections with North/South streets). Develop approach/plan for funding and building the infrastructure changes	SB		
CT-1.2	Define the options for encouraging/inciting use of fewer vehicles and/or fewer miles driven per vehicle (e.g., support for carpooling, support for more mass transit use, improved local shuttle bus service, etc.) and develop plans to implement	SB		
CT-1.3	Develop approach/plan to deal with traffic moving through the town from surrounding towns and develop a plan to keep commuter/through traffic on designated streets (Route 9/Route 30/ Route 85/Southville) and out of residential neighborhoods (e.g., use of “flow control” devices)	SB		
CT-1.4	Define and develop a range of tools for addressing traffic control (e.g., “smart” traffic signals) and residential street speed control, including truck exclusion mechanism and plan; radar speed signs; stealth radar and targeted enforcement; pavement lining; speed bumps/dips	SB		
CT-1.5 (LU-4.2)	Develop a comprehensive program to incent the use of electric vehicles for example: constructing public charging stations, tax credits for drivers, by-law to require new commercial developments to include charging stations. Seek state/federal funding to support the program.	SB		
CT-1.6	Seek reasonable and clear mitigation commitments from development projects on Town-owned roadways, tying increases in transportation demand to an appropriate amount of improvement funding.	PB		
CT-1.7	Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions, which address scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety	PB		
#	Goal			
CT-2.0	Develop a plan to improve the safety, accessibility and convenience of transportation/transit services for residents, businesses and commuters of all ages and abilities	SB		
#	Recommendations			
CT-2.1	Work collaboratively with state and regional authorities to develop the local transit capability necessary to provide “in-town” transportation service and to provide leverage of external transit capability (e.g., MBTA) via “last mile” service	SB		
CT-2.2	Develop approach/plan to encourage the use of the commuter rail station e.g., electric bike rental at the station, shuttles to business parks	SB		
CT-2.3	Explore the opportunity to provide additional/sufficient commuter rail station parking capacity such as expanding into adjacent or adding an upper deck to the existing parking area. Develop approach/plan to provide funding and develop these solutions.	SB		
CT-2.4	Support and connect to evolving ride-sharing services including considering “commuter ride-share” software for employees of town businesses and for local residents	SB		
CT-2.5	Develop approach/plan to connect to selected regional transit services	SB		
#	Goal			
CT-3.0	Develop approach/plan to connect all parts of town with pedestrian/cycle access to improve ease of commuting, recreation and social interaction	SB		
#	Recommendations	SB		
CT-3.1	Establish a pedestrian and bicycling committee to be responsible for developing and implementing the master plan recommendations	SB		

	relating to public walkways and cycle paths. The committee should leverage Southborough's "complete streets design" status.			
CT-3.2 (LU-1.1)	Define trail/sidewalk "spine" structure to provide pedestrian/cyclist access to all parts of town, connecting Southborough's villages and neighborhoods to each other and to local/regional trails where possible. Develop plans to fund and develop this infrastructure.	PBC		
CT-3.3 (LU-1.2)	Develop plan for constructing sidewalks in selected individual neighborhoods and for repairing / upgrading existing sidewalks.	PBC		
CT-3.4	Develop plan for funding and constructing at least two Route 9 pedestrian bridges (e.g., Oak Hill and Parkerville, Flagg Road) to better connect the North and South sides of the Town	PBC		
CT-3.5 (LU-1.1)	Develop plan for constructing pedestrian walkways across five causeways (Boston Road; White Bagley Road; Cordaville Road (2); Middle Road)	PBC		
CT-3.6	Develop plan/approach for providing support infrastructure for pedestrian/cyclist access routes such as parking, drinking water, bike racks, bike rental stations, etc.	PBC		

## 7. Historic, Cultural & Community Resources (Chapter 7 v9.2)

Objective: Develop an enhanced sense of community		Resp	Estimated Timeframe	Potential Funding Source
#	Goal			
HC-1.0	Protect and preserve all historical assets of the Town of Southborough	HC		
#	Recommendations			
HC-1.1	Complete the process to establish a National Register District in the <b>Downtown</b> area	HC		
HC-1.2	Incorporate heightened awareness and appreciation of Southborough's historic resources within the <b>Town's</b> Tricentennial Celebrations	HC		
HC-1.3	<b>Educate residents</b> about the history of Southborough through innovative programming and events in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society.	HC		
HC-1.4	Expand school outreach, in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society, to <b>increase</b> children's awareness of the importance of an educated and informed citizenry.	HC		
HC-1.5	Contribute, along with associated Town boards and committees, to create a cultural corridor along Main Street, linking various significant sites through an interactive walking tour	HC		
HC-1.6	Work, in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society, to preserve, catalog and <b>digitize</b> historical archives for the benefit of all.	HC		
HC-1.7	Encourage the use of <b>the</b> Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings Bylaw to preserve and renew historically significant structures for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.	HC		
#	Goal			
HC-2.0 (LU-1.3)	Develop a strategic plan for the development of community gathering spaces	SB		
#	Recommendations			
HC-2.1	Define and document the requirements for community gathering spaces, with input from residents and stakeholders across the community	SB		
HC-2.2	Evaluate the opportunity to leverage existing spaces/properties within the town to meet the community gathering space requirements e.g., Woodward School, expanded Southborough Library, redeveloped Downtown Village neighborhood	SB		
HC-2.3	Develop financial/funding and implementation plans for each community gathering space option and solicit feedback from the town	SB		
HC-2.4	Gain approval at town meeting for the proposed community gathering space	SB		

#	Goal			
HC-3.0	Improve the level of collaboration and engagement between the Town's government and the community at large	SB		
#	Recommendations			
HC-3.1	Explore the options for enhancing communication with residents, schools, local businesses and community groups including determining the resourcing/funding required and how best to apply current and emerging technologies	SB		
HC-3.2	Provide a welcome letter/information packet for new residents/businesses	SB		
HC-3.3	Hold bi-annual "All Boards" meetings to provide a more structured process by which boards and commissions can communicate with the Board of Selectman	SB		
HC-3.4	Develop volunteer recruitment, support and recognition programs to encourage residents to serve on Town boards & commissions	SB		
HC-3.5	Require all boards and committees to strive to publicly and digitally post relevant meeting information and materials (aka. "packet") prior to a meeting to foster increased opportunity for participation during public comment.	SB		
HC-3.6	Encourage Boards to share, read and review all relevant meeting minutes from other boards regarding issues properly before them, for example the three permitting boards (Zoning Board of Appeals, PB, Conservation Commission).	SB		
HC-3.7	Continue to use the virtual Zoom meeting facilities established during the Coronavirus pandemic, including when conflicts between meeting times occur.	SB		
HC-3.8	Coordinate with Town Clerk and Town Moderator to investigate the potential for Southborough to conduct joint virtual/in-person Town Meetings.	SB		

## Public Services, Resiliency & Schools (Chapter 8 v5.)

<b>Objective:</b> Provide effective, efficient and resilient facilities and services to the town		<b>Resp</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
#	Goal			
PS-1.0	Be able to deliver a wide range of public services to Southborough's residents	SB		
#	Recommendations			
PS-1.1	Continue to support a strong role for the Capital Planning Committee ("CapCom") in the Town's budgeting and planning process	SB		
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	CAPC		
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	CAPC		
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)	CAPC		
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	CAPC		
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)	CAPC		
PS-1.7	Implement the recommendations of the Town's Technology Strategy	TEC		
#	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.	PWPB		
#	Recommendations			
PS-2.1	Update existing growth models with current data as the basis for additional analysis of growth options and financial consequences	PWPB		
PS-2.2	Encourage demographic diversity of the town's population through support of diverse housing initiatives	PWPB		
#	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.	PWPB		
#	Recommendations			
PS-3.1	Identify and evaluate ways to broaden the tax base by generating additional funds from non-Southborough residents.	PWPB		
PS-3.2	Identify opportunities for stimulating growth of commercial tax base and implement as feasible.	PWPB		
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	PWPB		
PS-3.4	Research and analyze how other cities and towns to find ideas for new funding source	PWPB		
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	PWPB		
PS-3.6	Evaluate options for more intensive commercial development along Route 9 (including such activities as selective rezoning, building wastewater treatment capacity, etc.)	EDC		

#	<b>Goal</b>			
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	EPC		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
RY-1.1	Review/update/expand the existing Hazard Mitigation Plan(s). Complete	EPC		
RY-1.2	Develop a Hazard Transportation and Communication Plan	EPC		
RY-1.3*	Decrease tree damage sustained by ice/wind; leverage the Town's "Tree City" status with tree planting programs	EPC		
RY-1.4	Decrease isolation of neighborhoods by updating bylaws to require multiple access points to new developments, in the event of road closures	EPC		
RY-1.5	Improve water supply for firefighting including identifying a cost-effective solution for Pine Hill Road	EPC		
RY-1.6	Increase resiliency and redundancy of the utility networks (water, electrical, gas, communications)	EPC		
RY-1.7	Encourage development of "off-grid" local energy sources (e.g., solar)	EPC		
RY-1.8	Enhance technology/information systems resiliency	EPC		
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	EPC		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
RY-2.0	Ensure the appropriate infrastructure and public services are in place to provide timely emergency response	EPC		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
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	EPC		
RY-2.2	Conduct a facilities inventory and assessment to assess sheltering capacity and identify potential improvements to increase capacity	EPC		
RY-2.3	Prepare a continuity of services plan to maintain communications and essential services during outages or major hazard events	EPC		
RY-2.4	Identify and engage vulnerable populations to improve access to essential emergency services during a major hazard event	EPC		

<b>Objective:</b> Continue to strengthen our schools		<b>Resp</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>	<b>Potential Funding Source</b>
#	<b>Goal</b>			
S-1.0	Ensure the highest possible standard of student development and well being	SC		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>	SC		
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	SC		
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	SC		
S-1.3	Provide all students with access to challenging and culturally responsive learning experiences that meet their individual needs	SC		
S-1.4	Prioritize social, emotional, and physical well-being of students	SC		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
S-2.0	Provide high quality facilities, professional faculty and a challenging, creative curriculum	SC		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
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	SC		
S-2.2	Execute the District's Strategic Plan using skilled management practices and best educational practices	SC		
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	SC		
S-2.4	Continue the District's focus on creating and delivering excellent special education programs	SC		
S-2.5	Demonstrate continual growth through professional collaboration	SC		
#	<b>Goal</b>			
S-3.0	Explore opportunities for improved coordination and collaboration with other education providers and the community at large	SC		
#	<b>Recommendations</b>			
S-3.1	Enhance relationships with all local education assets, including private schools and local technical schools	SC		
S-3.2	Look for opportunities from coordination with other schools, colleges, universities, businesses	SC		
S-3.3	Consider options to incorporate daycare and adult continuing education programs	SC		
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	SC		
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,"	SC		



# 4

## Economic Development

*“Improve the diversity of commercial activity within the town”*

### Introduction

Economic development in Southborough’s four historic villages, including, 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 the 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 ease the burden of residential property taxes. This chapter will address infrastructure, zoning, access, and connectivity – all of 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 survey of the Downtown Village was undertaken in mid-2017. This is covered below.

Most respondents who provided qualitative comments, viewed increased diversity in commercial development favorably, particularly through bringing more small shops and restaurants as opposed to larger chain establishments, 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 charge 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 over the last decade

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 by 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. At the 2021 Special Town meeting, zoning changes for a new Downtown District were approved, allowing for the creation of mixed-use development in and near the Town center.

### 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 implemented at 2021 Special Town Meeting eliminated the need for use permits for certain by-right uses
ED-4	Balance the financial benefit to the Town from development and open space.	The Town has invested in open space since the last Master Plan—Chestnut Hill Farm property was protected in 2006 and donated to the Trustees of the Reservations in 2010; the former St. Mark's Golf Course was acquired by the Town in 2017 and the bulk of this property is protected from development and remains 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**

This elected 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.

### **Select Board (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 sets policy and strategic direction, coordinates the activities of other boards, hears appeals and resolves problems that have not been settled at lower levels. The BOS works through its professional Town Administrator who oversees the day-to-day operation of the Town under the BOS direction.

### **Building Department**

The Department is responsible for assuring compliance with the Massachusetts State Building Code, the Southborough's zoning regulations and Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals decisions, 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. The ZBA also has responsibility for hearing and adjudicating applications for Comprehensive Permits for housing development pursuant to MGL Chapter 40B. 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)**

The MWRC is a subregion of MAPC serving the Metro West region of greater Boston. The collaborative is made up of a Select Board member and Planning Board member from each of the towns in the subregion. The 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 scope includes policies relative to 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.

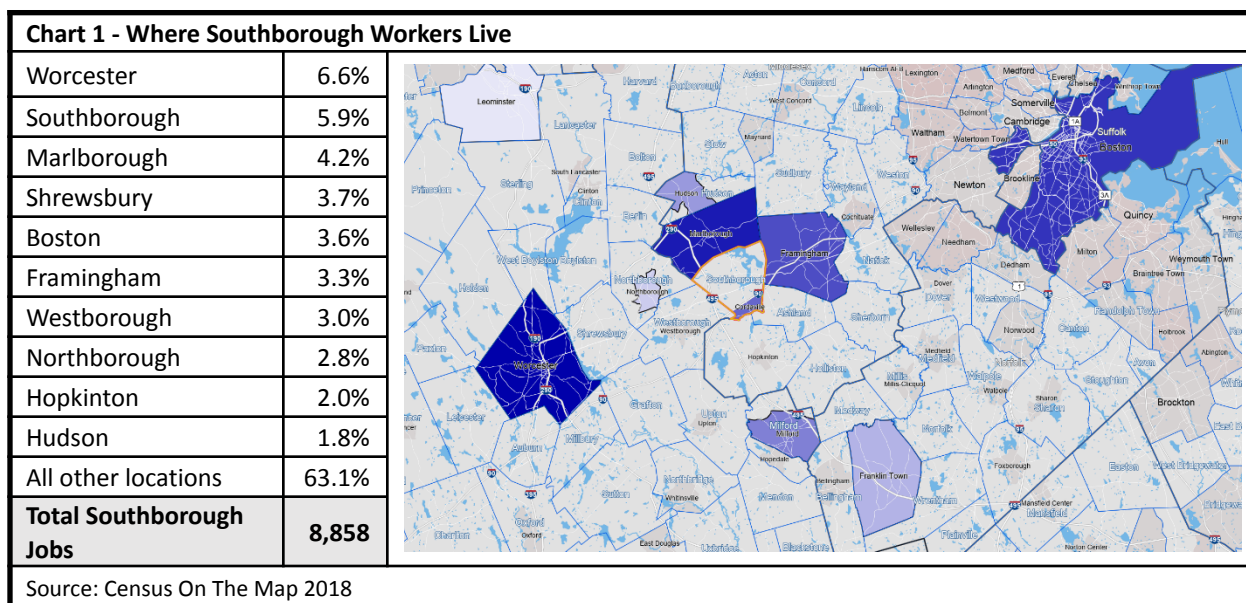
## Summary of Current Conditions

### 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”.

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.

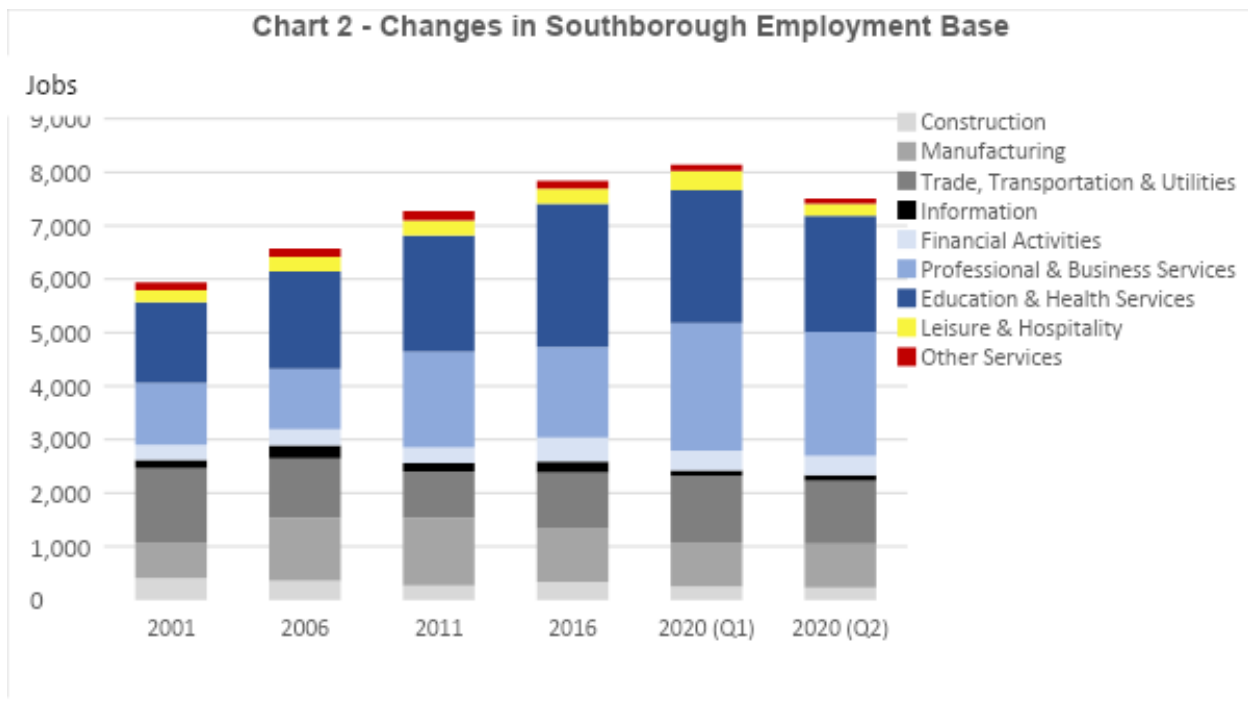
- Chart 1 indicates that in 2018, just under six percent (6%) of Southborough’s almost 9,000 workers lived in the Town. Workers travel from across the state with some higher concentrations around I-495, I-90 and I-190. It is likely that residents who commute to other locations for work will purchase 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. The pandemic related increase in working from home is

likely to continue in the future. This trend increases the demand for local retail and services for people who work in Town as well as for 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. This results in relatively 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 at the November 2021 Special 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 several 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.

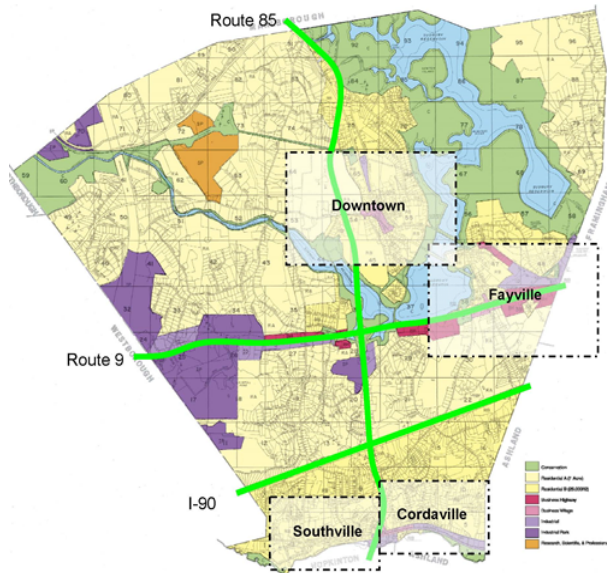
Previously, the Town had identified the development of sewer infrastructure as an impediment to the non- development of the Town center. As such, the EDC commissioned and received a grant-funded, feasibility study [\[create hyperlink\]](#) by Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. as a first step to finding 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 to obtain funding.

While the approval of the Downtown District Bylaw is a significant step in realizing the 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 [\[create hyperlink\]](#).



The objectives identified for these three Villages in 2008 were addressed by the goals and recommendations in other chapters within the 2020 Master Plan.

The key themes are:

- Evaluate town owned properties for reuse and 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 of its easy transportation access and because it is relatively separated 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 to date, 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 may result in businesses reconfiguring their space requirements or possibly leaving the Town.

There may be opportunities to re-purpose unused or underused commercial property along Route 9 for mixed use development e.g., 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 transportation 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 would require 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, pedestrian access across the causeway) 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. Refer to Table 1.

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
<b>Southborough</b>	<b>10,169</b>	<b>\$44,609,884</b>	<b>80.3%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>	<b>\$3,523</b>
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 relatively high property taxes with an average tax bill exceeding \$10,000, which is the highest in MetroWest, and is 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 per \$1,000 of assessed value in 2021 is on par with or slightly lower than neighboring towns such as Westborough, Northborough, and Hopkinton.

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
<b>Southborough</b>	<b>\$3,523</b>	<b>\$660,656</b>	<b>16.21</b>	<b>10,709</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16.21</b>
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 generate additional 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 the abatement time period lapses, 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 abatement 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 in obtaining grant money for specific purposes, including the EDC’s use of grant money for zoning consultants and a waste-water management study. There is an opportunity to streamline the grant writing process and designate or hire 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 realize 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.

<b>Objective:</b> 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 and develop plans the options for creating a “community green space” within the Downtown
ED-1.7	Solve existing wastewater issues from Wastewater management feasibility study, including through 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, and 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 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