

1. Agenda

Documents:

[2022.06.01\\_MPC\\_AGENDA.PDF](#)

2. Meeting Materials

Documents:

[2021\\_MASTER\\_PLAN REVIEWED\\_JUN\\_01\\_22.PDF](#)

**Meeting of the Master Plan Committee**

**June 1, 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 ANY FINAL EDITS**

**INCLUSION OF PICTURES IN THE MASTER PLAN**

**PREPARATION FOR PRESENTATION TO PLANNING BOARD AND SELECT BOARD NEXT STEPS**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Other Business Properly Before the Board**

- Approval of Minutes 4.27.22, 5.11.22 and 6.1.22

**ADJOURN**

Meme Luttrell, Chair

# TOWN OF SOUTHBOROUGH

## 2021 MASTER PLAN

For Public Review and Comment

May 4, 2022



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# VISION, GOALS AND PLANNING PROCESS

“A blueprint for policy development and planning”

## Introduction

The 2021 Master Plan project was sponsored by the Town of Southborough Planning Board in compliance with Part I-Title VII-Chapter 41-Section 81D of the Massachusetts General Laws. This Master Plan provides the basis for future decision making in the Town, helping to guide Southborough’s growth and change, preserving its natural and cultural resources, and maintaining its public facilities and services.

The MPC initially expected to complete the updated Master Plan by the end of 2020 but the coronavirus pandemic constrained the committee’s ability to meet in person and slowed the pace of development. In addition, the committee agreed to wait to be able to incorporate data from the 2020 Federal census rather than publish the plan and then need to make post-publication updates to include these important data. As a result of this adjusted schedule, several of the initial recommendations have already been completed and/or implemented - these have been highlighted in the appropriate chapters of the plan.

This chapter outlines the process, models and tools used to develop the Master Plan report, describes the 2030 vision for Southborough, and documents the objectives and goals that support the delivery of that vision. Chapter 9 defines implementation approach agreed by Southborough’s Master Plan Committee (MPC) and details the recommendations associated with each goal. Documents referred to below can be found at the [Master Plan Committee](#) (MPC) website.

**Commented [JW1]:** Order of paragraphs 2 and 3 reversed – per Tim Litt

## 2008 Master Plan

The 2008 Master Plan was developed between 2006 and 2008, in collaboration with an external consultant. The final 2008 report, saved by chapter in the [Southborough Planning Board](#) website due to its size, is a comprehensive assessment of the Town and its vision for change as it existed almost 15 years ago.

## Summary of 2008 Master Plan

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

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

TABLE 1-1 2008 MASTER PLAN - GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Analysis of Implementation of 2008 Master Plan

The MPC undertook a detailed analysis of implementation status of the 2008 Master Plan recommendations in April 2019, to establish a baseline for the 2021 report. A further review was completed in October 2020. The results are shown in summary form in **Table 1-2**.

Chapter	Complete	Closed	2021 Plan	Total
Land Use and Zoning	1	8	2	11
Housing	-	1	10	11
Economic Development	4	3	4	11
Open Space and Recreation	1	3	12	16
Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources	4	6	9	19
Transportation, Transit and Circulation	-	3	8	11
Municipal Facilities and Services	5	9	9	23
Southborough's Villages	-	1	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>107</b>
<i>% of Total</i>		14%	32%	54%

TABLE 1-2 2008 MASTER PLAN - STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Of the 107 original recommendations, 49 are either Complete or designated as Closed i.e., the proposed change is no longer relevant or desirable, an alternative delivery approach has been identified or the activity is now deemed "business as usual". Progress has been made in 31 of the remaining 58 recommendations and the MPC determined that these are still relevant and should be included in the 2021 Master Plan.

Progress against the 2008 goals and key accomplishments since 2008, including changes not directly related to the original goals is summarized in each chapter of the 2021 report. The individual chapters also reference other Town Plans developed in the last decade, providing links to the detailed reports as appropriate.

**Commented [JW2]:** Minor wordsmithing – per Tim Litt

## 2021 Master Plan

### Master Plan Committee

In early 2019, the Planning Board established a Steering Committee of stakeholders from across the community, to review and update the 2008 Master Plan. The [charge of duties](#), membership and term dates for this committee can be found at the MPC website.

Grant funding was available to engage with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to support the development of a Vision document, the pre-cursor to the Master Plan update. The MAPC's original charge included organizing a community immersion day, facilitation of a vision forum/open house, research into existing Town plans, and the preparation of a brief written report. The MAPC also supported the delivery and analysis of a Vision Survey. The [Visioning Report](#) by the MAPC is available for review at the MPC website.

**Commented [JW3]:** Changed charter to charge of duties per Tim Litt

Appendix A of this chapter includes MPC/MAPC members and others who have contributed to the preparation of this report.

The development of a fully updated Master Plan was expected to require the engagement of external consultants, with additional funding not approved at the start of the project. In Spring 2020, the MPC determined that sufficient research, analysis and documentation had been completed or was underway to enable the committee to develop a comprehensive Master Plan without external support. It was recognized that this reliance on volunteer committee members would require an extended delivery timeline but would result in significantly lower cost for the Town, and more importantly, significantly closer involvement of Town board/committee/staff members, creating enhanced "ownership" of the recommendations and commitment for implementation support.

### Development Approach

In parallel with the creation of the Visioning Report, the MPC developed the scope and timeline for the full 2021 Master Plan. It was agreed that the updated plan would be expanded to include all public facilities/services, the schools and a resiliency plan as well as a more robust implementation model and communication and tracking mechanisms. It was also determined that it was not necessary to replicate the detailed descriptions of Town assets/resources and federal/state regulations/policies from the 2008 report - readers can refer to the previous report, as required. Also, the data, tables and charts in the 2021 report have been specifically selected to inform goals/recommendations or highlight issues.

### Master Plan Structure

The nine elements of a Master Plan are defined by Massachusetts statutes and are reflected in the Chapter structure of this report. However, to support the committee's desire to create a more holistic report, in effect a "community business plan", discussion, debate and deliberation was organized around 11 key themes. While this structure meets the statutory requirements for a Master Plan, it goes beyond these minimum requirements to provide a more comprehensive and useful basis for ongoing planning and management. The mapping of chapters and themes is shown in **Table 1-3**.

2008 Chapter	Development Theme	2021 Chapter
Land Use and Zoning	Discussed under each theme	Land Use and Zoning
Housing	Diversity of housing	Housing
Economic Development	Diversity of commercial development	Economic Development
Open Space and Recreation	Protection of open space, environmental-green initiatives	Open Space, Natural Resources and Recreation
Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources	Enhanced sense of community, protection of historical assets	Historic, Cultural and Community Resources
Transportation, Transit and Circulation	Improved accessibility and connectivity	Circulation and Transportation
Municipal Facilities and Services	Robust public services and resiliency; expanded funding mechanisms; population/build out targets; continued strengthening of schools	Public Services, Resiliency and Schools
Southborough's Villages	Included in Economic Development	N/A

TABLE 1-3 MASTER PLAN CHAPTERS VS DEVELOPMENT CHAPTERS

A planning model, known as the “Vision-Objectives-Goals-Recommendations-Measures” (VOGRM) was defined to help frame the ideas, issues and opportunities associated with these themes and to create a robust set of objectives, goals and recommendations.

### Community Engagement and Outreach

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

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

The **Vision Survey**, circulated in Spring 2020, framed 30 questions across the 5 topics used in the open house, with an additional question asking, “What have we missed?”. The survey questions were designed to evaluate the relative importance of Master Plan goals/recommendations, and the quantitative results of the survey have been used to guide implementation priorities. Respondents were also able to provide “free form” feedback for each topic areas, which was analyzed by the MPC, with highlights of these comments included in each chapter of the report. The survey response was substantial, with 291 participants providing input from a significant cross section of Town residents.

The open house materials and community feedback are summarized in the MAPC Visioning Report. The online [Vision Survey Questionnaire](#) and [Vision Survey Report](#) are also available for review at the MPC website.

Both the open house and survey feedback helped the MPC validate and refine the objectives, goals and recommendations that are incorporated in this report. The objectives that generated the highest number of responses were Recreation and Accessibility/Connectivity with a Community Pool and the Downtown Initiative having the most individual comments, including many comments from the “What have we missed” section. Each chapter within the Master Plan report includes a summary of the feedback from these two sources of community engagement.

### Vision for Southborough in 2030

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

- A vibrant downtown and thriving villages with small-scale businesses/restaurants, connected by walkable sidewalks and trails
- Diverse and affordable housing options for residents at all phases of life
- Open space that is valued, protected and accessible to all
- Extensive recreation and cultural facilities/programs available for residents of all ages, centered around one or more community gathering spaces
- Modern public facilities/services and a robust administrative and technology infrastructure
- Resiliency against climate change, ~~environmental and public health threats~~
- Schools that provide a platform for community-wide education programs and social interactions.

**Commented [JW4]:** Heading revised – per Tim Litt

**Commented [JW5]:** Revised to removed pandemics – per Tim Litt

## Objectives, Goals and Recommendations

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

**Table 1-4** summarizes the scope of the 2021 Master Plan with the objectives and goal statements, by Chapter, detailed below. The Implementation Plan in Chapter 9 includes tables of all Objectives, Goals and Recommendations and indicates the board(s), commission(s) or department(s) responsible for delivery.

Chapter	Objectives	Goals	Recommendations
Land Use and Zoning	1	4	14
Housing	1	4	13
Economic Development	1	3	25
Open Space, Natural Resources and Recreation	3	13	66
Historic, Cultural and Community Resources	1	3	18
Circulation& Transportation	1	3	19
Public Services, Resiliency and Schools	2	9	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>200</b>

TABLE 1-4 SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES, GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Commented [JW6]:** Table updated to reflect addition of recommendation OS-1.6 approved at May 11<sup>th</sup> MPC meeting. Table to be updated with changes to O-G-R count following June 1<sup>st</sup> MPC meeting

## Land Use and Zoning

OBJECTIVE: ALIGN PLANNING AND ZONING REGULATIONS WITH THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MASTER PLAN	
#	GOALS
LU-1.0	Enhance connectivity within the Town to improve travel for all modes of transportation (vehicular, public, pedestrian, bicycle) to better connect people and places
LU-2.0	Create strategies to offer more diversity in housing, encouraging alternatives to large single-family houses that would allow young professionals/families to reside in Southborough and seniors to stay in town
LU-3.0	Strengthen the sustainability of local businesses, commercial districts and villages by attracting businesses to come to Southborough and stay
LU-4.0	Establish strategies for energy conservation, carbon footprint reduction and climate change resiliency

## Housing

OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF HOUSING WITHIN THE TOWN	
#	GOALS
H-1.0	Enhance local capacity to advocate for, plan, develop and manage affordable housing
H-2.0	Identify sites for creation of diverse housing through new development, redevelopment, or preservation
H-3.0	Update zoning to create opportunities for development of affordable housing and to encourage diverse housing options
H-4.0	Assist Southborough residents to obtain or maintain housing that they can afford

## Economic Development

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE TOWN</b>	
#	<b>GOALS</b>
ED-1.0	Enhance the Downtown District to provide a vibrant hub that is attractive to both businesses and residents
ED-2.0	Have an economically strong, diverse, and self-sustaining business community i.e., an economic engine along the Route 9 corridor
ED-3.0	Encourage the sense of community within Southborough's Villages by supporting the expansion of local businesses through better infrastructure and access

## Open Space, Natural Resources and Recreation

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROTECT AND MAINTAIN OPEN SPACE WITHIN SOUTHBOROUGH</b>	
#	<b>GOALS</b>
OS-1.0	Develop a collaborative policy/approach for the strategic acquisition/protection of properties
OS-2.0	Expand connectivity of and access to existing open space without compromising public safety, wildlife activity or causing adverse environmental impact
OS-3.0	Manage open space resources in collaboration with stakeholders and the community

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEFINE, DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT "GREEN" INITIATIVES THAT SUSTAIN OUR ENVIRONMENT</b>	
#	<b>GOALS</b>
NR-1.0	Ensure that the Town's wetland protection and stormwater by-laws reflect federal/state regulations and the projected impacts of climate change as well as planning for droughts
NR-2.0	Increase the volume and type of recycling by commercial and residential consumers
NR-3.0	Reduce the consumption of non-renewable natural resources by public and private users
NR-4.0	Prioritize and reduce the existence and impact of invasive species and other in nuisance species on public and private properties
NR-5.0	Expand the use of native plants and prioritize awareness and installation of pollination systems across the community

<b>OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>	
<b>#</b>	<b>GOALS</b>
R-1.0	Improve and maintain quality and safety of all recreational facilities
R-2.0	Continue to provide high quality recreation programs and activities that meet the needs of residents of diverse ages to build a stronger community
R-3.0	Seek opportunities to expand recreational facilities
R-4.0	Maintain strong partnerships with committees and organizations throughout the Town
R-5.0	Maintain strong fiscal controls over recreation expenditure

### Circulation and Transportation

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE TOWN</b>	
<b>#</b>	<b>GOALS</b>
CT-1.0	Develop the infrastructure necessary to support vehicular movement while improving safety, reducing pollution and preserving scenic vistas within the Town
CT-2.0	Develop a plan to improve the safety, accessibility and convenience of transportation/transit services for residents, businesses and commuters of all ages and abilities
CT-3.0	Develop approach/plan to connect all parts of the Town with pedestrian/cycle access to improve ease of commuting, recreation and social interaction

### Historic, Cultural and Community Resources

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP AN ENHANCED SENSE OF COMMUNITY</b>	
<b>#</b>	<b>GOALS</b>
HC-1.0	Protect and preserve all historical assets of the Town
HC-2.0	Improve the level of collaboration and engagement between the Town's government and the community at large
HC-3.0	Establish a Community Center Committee with responsibility for developing a strategic plan for the development of community gathering spaces

**Commented [JW7]:** Updated to include separate committee – avoids having to add new recommendation. Review in Chapter 7

## Public Services, Resiliency and Schools

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO THE TOWN</b>	
#	<b>GOALS</b>
PS-1.0	Deliver a wide range of public services to Southborough's residents
PS-2.0	Plan for and manage population and development growth in a way that appropriately balances the commercial, residential and financial impact associated with this growth
PS-3.0	Plan for and manage a balanced approach to the Town's sources of revenue and the cost impact associated with a growing demand for public services
PS-4.0	Ensure all residents have access to all town resources, including physical resources (e.g., buildings and recreation areas) and intellectual resources (e.g., information, social/educational programs and services)
RY-1.0	Identify hazards that affect the ability of the town to respond effectively and efficiently to natural disasters and climate change and develop appropriate mitigation plans
RY-2.0	Ensure the appropriate infrastructure and public services are in place to provide timely emergency response

<b>OBJECTIVE: CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN OUR SCHOOLS</b>	
#	<b>GOALS</b>
S-1.0	Ensure the highest possible standard of student development and well-being
S-2.0	Provide high quality facilities, professional faculty and a challenging, creative curriculum
S-3.0	Explore opportunities for improved coordination and collaboration with other education providers and the community at large

## Appendix A – Acknowledgements

The Town of Southborough's 2021 Master Plan was developed through the collaborative efforts of the following:

### Southborough Master Plan Committee\*

Meme Luttrell (Planning Board-Chair), Judith Watson (Conservation Commission-Co-Chair), Kathleen Bartolini (Economic Development Committee), Lisa Braccio (Select Board), David Candela (Recreation Commission), Roger Challen (School Committee), Julie Connelly (Economic Development Committee), Andrew Dennington (Zoning Board of Appeals), Rebecca Deans-Rowe (Historical Commission), Deborah DeMuria (Zoning Board of Appeals), Gina Glazomitsky (Member At Large), Karen Hanlon-Shimkus (Member At Large), Marguerite Landry (Youth and Family Services), Kristin LaVault (Recreation Commission), Joyce Macknauskas (Council on Aging), Thomas Marcoulier (Housing Opportunity Committee), Keturah Martin (School Committee), Kathryn McKee (Southborough Trails Committee), Andrew Mills (Planning Board), Karina Quinn (Town Planner), Bonnie Phaneuf (Board of Selectmen), Matthew Probst (Municipal Technology Committee), William Sines (ADA Committee), Karen Cvitkovich (Open Space Preservation Commission), Sam Stivers (Select Board), Richard Wallace (Library Board of Trustees), William Warren (Municipal Technology Committee)

\* COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AS OF TENURE ON THE MPC

### Town of Southborough

Mark Purple (Town Administrator), Tim Davis (Recreation Director), Karina Quinn (Town Planner), Melissa Danza (Conservation Agent), Sarah Hoecker and Colleen Stansfield (Principal Planning Assistants), Kate Battles (Recording Secretary)

### MAPC Staff and Consulting Support

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

# 2

## LAND USE AND 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 and 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 section, 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. Seventy-five percent (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 Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

The primary goal of the Land Use and Zoning section in the 2008 Master Plan 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 through 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.

2008 GOAL #	GOAL DESCRIPTION	GOAL STATUS
LU-3	Conduct thorough review of zoning bylaw	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

The Town is supported in land use and zoning policy development, planning and implementation by several regional organizations.

**Commented [JW8]:** Introductory sentence added – per Tim Litt

### 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 of 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 to which Southborough belongs. 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

For further information, readers can refer to the 2008 Master Plan.

### Current Land Use

Southborough covers approximately 15.7 square miles (9,844 acres). **Figure 2-1** shows land use by category for 2021.

**Commented [JW9]:** Chart labels to be updated – per Debbie D

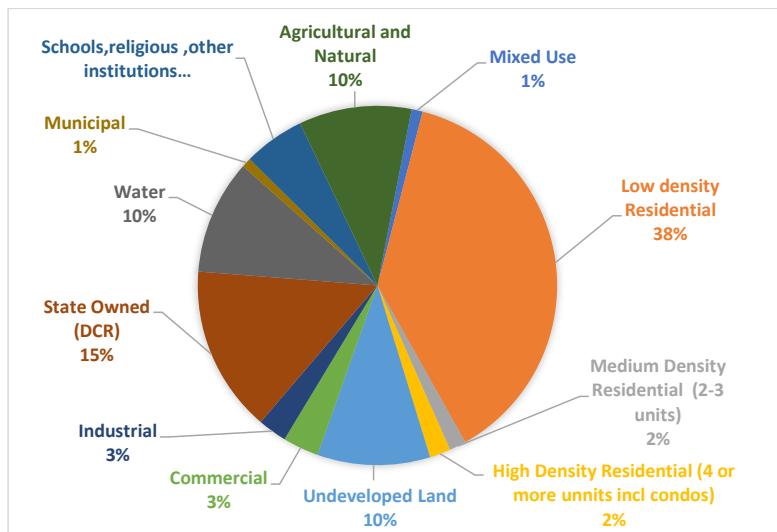


FIGURE 2-1 2021 LAND USE

The main points to note are:

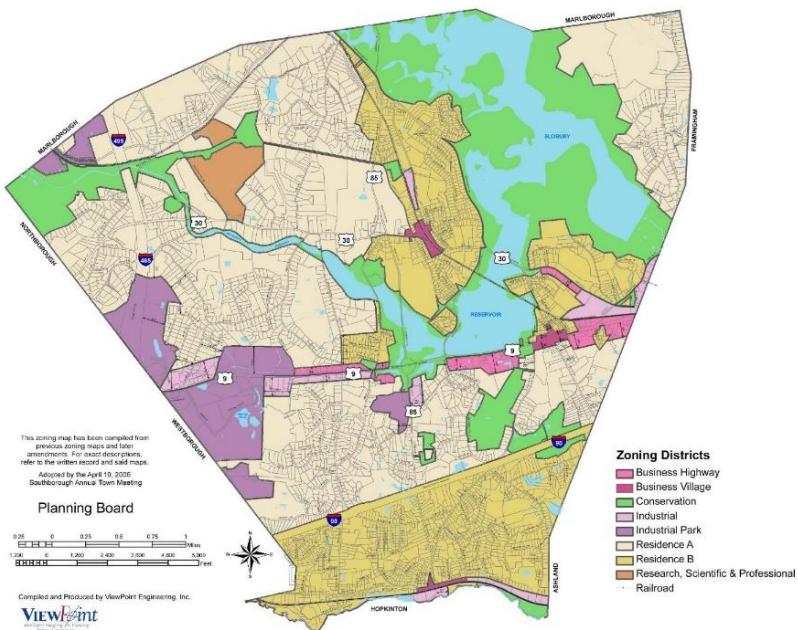
- 43% of the Town's land is residential, an increase from 37% from 2006.

- 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.
  - 10% of this open space area is water, mostly the Sudbury Reservoir
  - 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% (239 acres) in 2006 to 9% (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.

**Commented [JW10]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*This is strange. Certainly, houses have been built, and the assessor has reported new growth. Perhaps an explanation?*

## Southborough Zoning Districts and Regulations

The Southborough Zoning Map in **Figure 2-2** 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. GIS and zoning maps will be updated in the future. In 2021 the Town added a new district, the Downtown District making nine zoning districts and three overlay districts.



## Zoning Districts

The acreage for each of the following districts is shown in **Table 2-3** on the next page.

### 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 ~0.6 acre (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 use 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)

In addition to 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.

District	Acres	% of Total
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	0%
Total	9,728	100%

Source: Town of Southborough GIS data 2021

TABLE 2-3 ACREAGE BY ZONING DISTRICT

## 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

**Commented [JW11]:** Comment/question from Tim Litt

*Does it exist? If not mapped, how would anyone know where it is? Same for CR following*

- 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 to 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 by-laws were adopted to encourage the use of solar energy
- Three new General By-laws are expected to be before the voters at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting
  - 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
  - A Street Tree Bylaw intended to offer further protection to Public Shade Trees
  - 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 cannot be predicted how many more units can be built in Southborough. **Table 2-4** below show the vacant land by zoning district and type as of 2021.

Type of Vacant Land	Acres
Accessory w/imp (i.e., garage)	31
Developable land	288
Potentially developable land	130
Undevelopable land	77
<b>Total Residential Vacant Land</b>	<b>526</b>
Developable land	88
Potentially developable land	6
Undevelopable land	4
<b>Total Commercial Vacant Land</b>	<b>98</b>
Developable land	148
Potentially developable land	156
Undevelopable land	26
<b>Total Industrial Vacant Land</b>	<b>310</b>

TABLE 2-4 SUMMARY OF VACANT LAND

## 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. 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 multi-family 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 multi-family 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 multi-family 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 coronavirus 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 employees no longer commute daily and instead utilize shared spaces closer to home, Southborough and other bedroom communities could benefit. This topic will continue to be reviewed as the Master Plan is implemented.

**Commented [JW12]:** Updated to incorporate feedback from Tim Litt

#### 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:** A six-lot conventional subdivision proposed to be located on a new cul-de-sac off Mt Vickery Road. The project 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. In March of 2022 the Superior Court revoked the Comprehensive Permit. The future of this project is not yet known
- **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, Route 9- Upscale storage facility
- **U-Haul Storage facility:** 0 Firmin Ave (Pleasant St Connector) a parcel in both Southborough and Framingham.

**Commented [JW13]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Specify status - I think at least two are complete.

## Objectives, Goals and 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 notes the reference number of these Land Use and Zoning recommendations alongside the related recommendations from each chapter.

- **Enhance connectivity within town**  
*Circulation and Transportation (3), Economic Development (4), Open Space, Natural Resources and Recreation (3), Historic, Cultural and Community Resources (1)*
- **Develop strategies to offer more diversity in housing**  
*Housing (4), Economic Development (2)*
- **Strengthen sustainability of local businesses, commercial districts and villages**  
*Economic Development (1)*
- **Establish strategies for energy conservation, carbon footprint reduction and climate change resiliency**  
*Open Space, Natural Resources and Recreation (4), Circulation and Transportation (1)*

<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 the 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 multi-family 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 multi-family 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	Explore the opportunity to 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 attracting businesses to come to Southborough and stay
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
LU-3.1	Explore the opportunity to revise the zoning code to allow for four storey 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

# 3

## HOUSING

“Improve the diversity of housing within the town”

### Introduction

Housing is the most prevalent land use in Southborough with 44% of the Town’s land area utilized for some type of residential dwelling. Thirty-five (35%) of the Town’s land area consists of moderate to large single-family homes. While the current housing stock (supply) serves the needs of most Southborough residents, market changes have created challenges for many residents including seniors, returning college students, and entry level professionals serving the town such as police officers and teachers. The most critical housing goal for Southborough is to increase the diversity and affordability of housing types found within the community.

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

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

### Vision Open House and Vision Survey Responses

The statements and questions presented in the open house and survey focused on increasing the diversity of housing types, expanding affordable housing, reaching MGL Chapter 40B safe harbor status and increasing the availability of Americans With Disabilities (ADA) compliant housing. There were an unexpectedly high number of respondents who felt that the first two topics were not important – this contrasted with responses in the HPP survey.

There were two distinct groups of responses within the qualitative comments. The first viewed increased diversity as positive, with specific requests for more housing options for seniors/young people and less restrictive zoning. The second group of responders were against further housing development

**Commented [JW14]:** Comments/question from Tim Litt  
Not just those serving the town. And not just entry level. Grade 7 max is ~\$100K, which exclusive of property tax and insurance might qualify for a \$550K house.  
only 12 positions in the SAP are grade 7+.  
The average single family assessed value as of last Nov was \$690K.  
The HPP says the minimum income to afford an entry level house is \$120K.

Shouldn't there be a goal that (most?) town employees can afford to live in town?

with 55+ communities and large apartment blocks specifically called out. Affordable housing as defined under the MGL Chapter 40B statute was also perceived in different ways. The MPC believes these divergent comments are the result of differing perceptions and interpretations of terms such as diversity and affordability.

## Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

The following 2008 Housing goals have been either achieved or incorporated into the 2021 Master Plan.

2008 GOAL #	GOAL DESCRIPTION	GOAL STATUS
H-1	Ensure that future generations of Southborough citizens and people who work in Southborough are able to remain as residents of the Town	Southborough continues to work towards this goal but some progress has been made since 2008. Two over 55 projects were permitted and the zoning bylaw was updated to allow mixed-use development
H-3	Expand the housing choice in Southborough for families	Zoning changes since 2008 have allowed for more flexibility in the types of housing than can be permitted in Town
H-4	Encourage small lot zoning in villages and other appropriate areas in Town	The minimum lot size in the newly adopted Downtown zoning district is 50% smaller than was previously required
H-5	Encourage multi-family housing in appropriate locations and at an appropriate scale	Multi-family housing had only been allowed if it were either age restricted or within a Major Residential Development. The new Downtown zoning district permits multi-family housing without those requirements
H-6	Maintain Southborough's attractive and aesthetically diverse housing stock and continue to promote quality in future development	The demolition delay and adaptive reuse of historic buildings bylaw aim to preserve the Town's historic buildings. The adoption of design guidelines promotes quality future development

## Approved Housing Subdivisions

**Table 3-1** shows the ten new housing developments approved since the last Master Plan, the majority comprising single family homes.

Project	Location	Date Approved	# of Units
Sameron Village	Boston Road	January 31, 2018	2 duplexes (4 units) 2 single family homes
Chestnut Meadow	Chestnut Hill Road	November 21, 2017	12 Single family lots
Ila Bella Estates	Lorenzo Drive	June 22, 2015	11 Single family lots
Stone Brook Village	Stonebrook Court	October 13, 2013	2 single family lots, 15 unit over 55+ condo development
Estates at Deerfoot	Kenley Lane	March 18, 2013	7 single family lots
Heritage Crossing Subdivision	Thayer Lane	February 28, 2013	6 single family lots
NBR Subdivision	Northborough Road	March 9, 2015	2 single family lots
Brewer Estates	Boston Road	March 26, 2012	3 duplexes (4 units) 3 single family homes
Lincoln Lane Subdivision	Lincoln Lane	October 20, 2009	2 single family lots
Reservoir View Estates	White Bagley Road	June 2, 2009	5 single family lots
<i>Source:</i>			

TABLE 3-1 NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 2008

## Individual Affordable Housing Stock

There has also been an increase in the number of affordable housing units with 127 units (compared to 110 in 2008) identified as affordable.

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

*Note: MA State Department of Development Services (DDS) and Department of Mental Health (DMH) also oversee 11 affordable units throughout Southborough in undisclosed locations.*

TABLE 3-2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS SINCE 2008

## Active Organizations

Several local government organizations support the Town in policy development, funding and the planning/implementation of housing projects.

**Commented [JW15]:** Introductory sentence added – per Tim Litt

### Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee (AHTF)

The Southborough Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), established at the April 2005 Town Meeting continues to play a pivotal role in the creation and preservation of affordable housing in Southborough, benefitting low- and moderate-income households. Its work is enabled through Chapter 491 of the Acts of 2004, MGL Chapter 44, §55C, allowing communities to collect funds for housing, segregate them out of the general budget into an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and to use these funds without going back to town meeting for approval. It also allows trust funds to own and manage real estate, not just receive, and disburse funds.

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee (AHTFC), also established at the 2005 Annual Town Meeting, consists of seven trustees with the following powers:

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

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

### Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee (SHOPC)

The Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee (SHOPC) was founded in 1986, to study and respond to affordable housing issues in Southborough. At the 2004 Annual Town Meeting, SHOPC's responsibilities were expanded, and it became a permanent committee, completing a Housing Production Plan in 2005 to identify and respond to the future needs of Southborough's housing market. Its primary focus was to provide a diverse stock of housing and range of affordability levels in a creative, consistent, and innovative manner while maintaining a framework that balanced development and preservation of open space. The current Housing Production Plan for Southborough was approved by the MA State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in April 2020.

## Southborough Housing Authority

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

## Planning Board

The Planning Board consists of five members, elected for five-year staggered terms. The Board reviews and approves applications for permits as required by the Town's by-laws, reviews and approves subdivisions and developments, and conducts site plan reviews. From time to time the Planning Board proposes and amends zoning by-laws for Town Meeting approval.

## Summary of Current Conditions

The 2020 HPP provides a broad range of data and commentary on population and household trends and patterns. This has been updated, where possible using data from the 2020 census. There is also considerable detail on other conditions, resources and opportunities in the HPP. The key themes from the HPP are summarized below.

### Local and Regional Context

As of 2019, Southborough's total population was just over 10,000, with over 3,400 households. Southborough's population climbed by double digit growth rates over the past few decades but has markedly slowed since 2010. **See Table 3-3.** Over the past decade, a decline in household size, along with an increase in the number of households, indicates development of more housing units for fewer people.

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

	2000	2010	2019
Population	8,781	9,767	10,121
% Change		11%	4%
Households	2,952	3,332	3,542
% Change		13%	6%
Average Household Size	2.97	2.89	2.82

Source: US Census 2000 and 2010; ACS 2015-2019

TABLE 3-3 POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD GROWTH

**Figure 3-4** shows a steady growth in Southborough's population since 2000 after the sharper increase between 1990 and 2000. A similar, steady growth is projected over the next two decades. Since 1990, the number of adults aged 50-64 and 65+ has increased each decade. The population of younger adults and children has fluctuated over the years. In particular, the share of young adults (age 20-34) diminished significantly between 1990 and 2010 but seems to have grown since then. The number of school-aged children increased through 2010 but has since declined and is expected to fall.

Assuming these trends continue into the future, the projected increase in population is likely to come from older residents, typically living in smaller households.

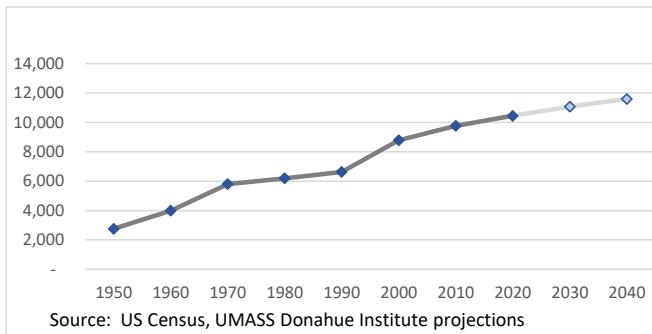


FIGURE 3-4 HISTORIC & PROJECTED POPULATION

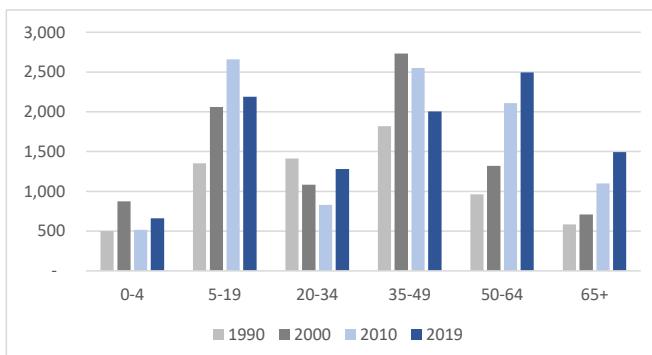


FIGURE 3-5 HISTORIC POPULATION BY AGE

**Table 3-6** indicates that Southborough residents are predominantly white and non-Hispanic, with the largest racial minority group being Asian. The population was too small to report on the proportion of residents who were born outside the United States and/or speak another language besides English at home. Southborough has relatively low social diversity compared Worcester County or Massachusetts and a higher level of educational attainment than Worcester County or the state.

	Southborough	Worcester County	Massachusetts
<b>Race/Ethnicity (2020 US Census)</b>			
Not Hispanic, White	75.0%	70.9%	67.6%
Asian	14.5%	5.4%	7.2%

Black	1.0%	5.1%	6.5%
Other race or two or more races	5.4%	5.6%	6.1%
Hispanic (any race)	3.6%	13.0%	12.6%
<b>Immigration/Language (ACS 2015-2019)</b>			
Born in US	98.8%	96.4%	97.1%
Foreign born	1.2%	3.6%	2.9%
Limited English-Speaking	4.6%	7.9%	9.2%
<b>Educational Attainment (ACS 2015-2019)</b>			
High School Graduate or Higher	96.2%	91.9%	91.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	66.5%	37.0%	45.0%
Source			

TABLE 3-6 SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

**Table 3-7** indicates the characteristics of Southborough households are consistent with population trends. In comparison with Worcester County and the state, Southborough has a higher average household size, and higher proportion of family households. Southborough also has a relatively high proportion of households with children under age 18, while the proportion of households with seniors is below average for the area, but still high overall. A smaller share of Southborough households are “non-families”, defined as individuals living alone and unrelated people living together. About 20% of Southborough households are individuals living alone and of these, more than half are seniors (over the age of 65). The number of households comprising families with children has declined since 2010, corresponding to a decrease in average household size, increase in nonfamily (empty nesters) households and people living alone. At the same time, the proportion of households with seniors over the age of 60 also increased from 32% in 2010 to 35% in 2017.

	Average Household Size	Families	Nonfamily Households	Individuals Living Alone	With Children under 18	With Seniors over 60
<b>Southborough (2017)</b>	2.82	77%	23%	20%	41%	38%
<b>Worcester County</b>	2.56	65%	35%	28%	31%	39%
<b>Massachusetts</b>	2.52	63%	37%	29%	29%	40%
<b>Southborough (2010)</b>	2.98	80%	20%	16%	48%	32%

Source: ACS 2015-2019, ACS 2006-2010

TABLE 3-7 HOUSEHOLD CHANGES BY TYPE

As these trends are projected to continue, the implications of growth in smaller and older households are that the most significant demand on the housing stock will be for smaller, lower-cost, housing units physically designed to maximize the ability to age in place. These types of housing are notably in short supply in Southborough.

## Housing Supply and Current Constraints

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

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

Source: Town of Southborough Assessor's Database, FY2019

TABLE 3-8 RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES BY LAND USE

## Southborough Work-In-Town Housing

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

required to obtain market rate housing in Southborough. Only a minority of people who work in Southborough can afford to live in Southborough.

### **Impact of Zoning Bylaw**

Following the publication of the 2008 Master Plan, a thorough review of the Town's zoning by-laws was undertaken. Minor changes were enacted but there remain several that constrain the development of affordable housing within the Town notably:

The lack of scaling of uses in Southborough's zoning to allow for smaller projects, favors new single-family homes, making redevelopment, infill development, or small-scale multi-family development less feasible. Current zoning also precludes residential development in commercial areas due to unbuildable regulations and prohibits mixed-use buildings. In addition, there are caps on accessory apartments and senior housing that limit the Town's ability to meet a broader range of housing needs.

Current zoning offers some flexibility for developments with more than eight units (and those with fewer than 8 units by special permit), but there are development thresholds such as the requirements for private entrances, no more than four units in a building, and necessity that at least one third of the overall development contain single-family homes that limit the development of multi-family housing.

Outsized minimum lot size, frontage, and setback requirements preclude most innovative forms of residential neighborhood design.

### **Impact of Downtown District Zoning Bylaw**

More recent attempts to update zoning regulations have targeted specific zoning districts. The November 2021 Special Town Meeting approved the creation of a new "Downtown District" that will allow for:

- Mixed-used development (commercial and residential in same building) with up to 3 dwelling units as allowed by right and by Special Permit if more than 4 dwelling units
- Multi-family housing up to 10 dwelling units by Special Permit. This is the only area within the Town where multi-family housing is allowed without age restriction (over 55) or outside of a major residential development
- More than 4 dwelling units in either a mixed-use or multi-family housing triggers 12.5% affordability requirement.

*Chapter 4 – Economic Development includes more detail on the Downtown District and the related opportunities for commercial and residential development.*

### **Other Regulations Impacting Housing Development**

There are two Massachusetts state regulations that impact housing planning and development:

MGL Chapter 40B allows developers to override local zoning regulations to build affordable housing in communities where less than 10% of their housing stock is affordable.

The 2021 "Housing Choice" law requires towns hosting MBTA commuter rail or rapid transit stations to revise zoning laws to allow denser development within 0.5 miles of the MBTA stations.

*These topics are covered in Chapter 2 – Land Use and Zoning.*

## Objective, Goals and Recommendations

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF HOUSING WITHIN THE TOWN</b>	
#	<b>GOAL</b>
H-1.0	Enhance local capacity to advocate for, plan, develop and manage affordable housing
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
H-1.1	Strengthen and expand partnerships within the town and state to develop housing
H-1.2	Secure and coordinate use of funding for affordable housing from the state and other grants, CPA funds etc.
H-1.3	Develop a 5-year strategic plan for the expenditure of AHT funds; research additional state and federal grants
H-1.4	Identify opportunities to improve housing diversity around mass transit hubs, including within a half mile of Southborough's MBTA station in expected compliance with the 2021 Housing Choice Act

#	<b>GOAL</b>
H-2.0	Identify sites for creation of diverse housing through new development, redevelopment, or preservation
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
H-2.1	Locate potential sites to create diverse housing including townhouses, apartments, and small-scale homes
H-2.2	Engage potential developers who would be interested in the creation of different types of affordable and market rate housing
H-2.3	Inventory the number of units that are deemed moderately affordable (80% to 110% AMI)

#	<b>GOAL</b>
H-3.0	Update zoning to create opportunities for development of affordable housing and to encourage diverse housing options
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
H-3.1	Promote mixed-use buildings to offer housing where appropriate
H-3.2	Remove barriers for the provision of multi-family housing
H-3.3	Remove zoning barriers for accessory apartments and duplexes

#	<b>GOAL</b>
H-4.0	Assist Southborough residents to obtain or maintain housing that they can afford
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
H-4.1	Expand the utilization of senior tax deferral and work-off programs
H-4.2	Support first-time homebuyers through a down payment assistance program
H-4.3	Achieve, at a minimum, 10% affordable housing

# 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 2021 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 a 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 and 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 chains establishments, into the Downtown Village and the three other village areas.

### Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

A pivotal recommendation in the 2008 Master Plan was to “reestablish an Economic and Industrial Development Commission in order to build Southborough’s capacity to carryout 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 adding to a growing number of small businesses in the Villages and contributing to the 2.4% increase in commercial tax rate between 2007 and 2021

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

**Commented [JW16]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*My impression is that overall they increased - as evidenced by the shift in taxes. If correct, don't soft-pedal.*

## 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 (PB)

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

## Select Board (SB)

The SB serves as the executive branch of the Town and sets policy and strategic direction, coordinates the activities of other boards, hears appeals on some matters and resolves problems that have not been settled. They also make appointments to town offices and some of the town boards and have authority to grant licenses and permits. Additionally, they prepare the Town Meeting Warrant and agenda, and employ professional administrative staff and town counsel. In addition to these legal responsibilities, the SB employs a professional Town Administrator who oversees the day-to-day operation of the Town under the SB 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 SB 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 and 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 and Opportunities

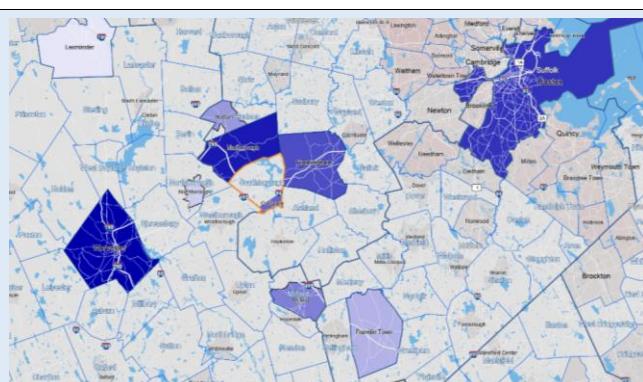
The 2008 Master Plan provided a comprehensive assessment of the factors affecting the economic landscape of Southborough. The narrative painted a somewhat gloomy picture suggesting that the Town “will continue to evolve in the same manner as it has over the past two decades: a predominantly residential, 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. Since 2008, there have been several non-residential development projects completed in the business and industrial districts, including renovation and expansion of existing businesses. However, the data below suggest 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.

**Figure 4-1** indicates that in 2018, just under 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.

Worcester	6.6%
Southborough	5.9%
Marlborough	4.2%
Shrewsbury	3.7%
Boston	3.6%
Framingham	3.3%
Westborough	3.0%
Northborough	2.8%
Hopkinton	2.0%
Hudson	1.8%
All other locations	63.1%
<b>Total Southborough Jobs</b>	<b>8,858</b>

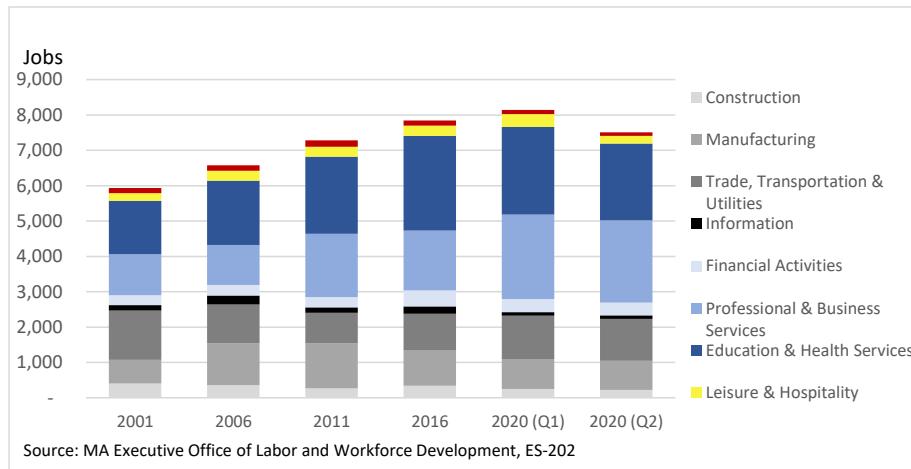
*Source: Census On The Map 2018*



**FIGURE 4-1 WHERE SOUTHBOROUGH WORKERS LIVE**

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 474 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.

**Figure 4-2** 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.



**FIGURE 4-2 CHANGES IN SOUTHBOROUGH EMPLOYMENT BASE**

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. As part of this process, the Town also acquired the St. Mark's golf course, formerly a semi-private course. Under the new name, Southborough Golf Club is a 9-hole municipal golf course opened to the public.

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. The EDC subsequently engaged the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to study the status of the Downtown, assess impediments, and make recommendations. The [ULI Report](#) 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 Select Board 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-residential development of the Town center. As such, the EDC commissioned and received a grant-funded, [Wastewater Feasibility Assessment](#) by Weston and 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 the final section of this chapter.

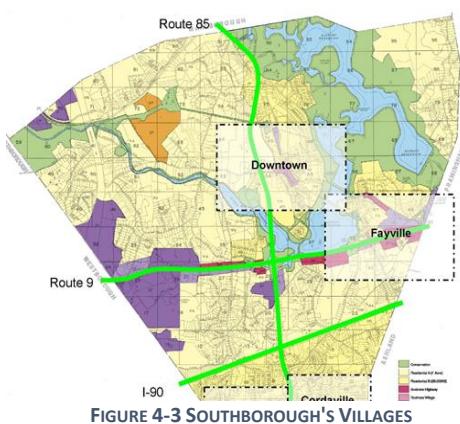


FIGURE 4-3 SOUTHBOROUGH'S VILLAGES

### Southborough's Other Villages

Cordaville, Southville and Fayville, shown in **Figure 4-3** 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. Refer to the 2008 Master Plan for these data.

The objectives identified for these three Villages in 2008 were addressed by the goals and recommendations in other chapters within the 2021 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. This may result in businesses reconfiguring their space requirements for shared office space in close proximity to where employees live, 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 6 - 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 and 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 4-4.

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

**Commented [JW17]:** Comment per Tim Litt  
But the pandemic has caused a significant shift back toward residential. This, and its impact should be noted.

TABLE 4-4 COMPOSITION OF PROPERTY TAX LEVY

However, **Table 4-5** 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

**TABLE 4-5 RESIDENTIAL TAXES, METROWEST AREA**

Introducing new commercial businesses in the Downtown District, Route 9, and in other areas will provide much needed goods and services and 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: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE TOWN</b>	
#	<b>GOAL</b>
ED-1.0	Enhance the Downtown to provide a vibrant hub that is attractive to both businesses and residents
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
ED-1.1	Define and document changes to the zoning and use regulations for the Downtown District Update GIS and zoning maps
ED-1.2	Seek consensus for the changes to zoning regulations across the appropriate town boards/commissions and gain approval from Town Meeting
ED-1.3	Agree upon design guidelines to ensure the appropriate quality of materials, lighting, and other components that the Planning Board can use to ensure the agreed upon look and feel of the Downtown District is upheld
ED-1.4	Develop a marketing and communication package to explain the changes to zoning regulations and the new design guidelines to residents and potential developers

ED-1.5	Identify potential Downtown District redevelopment sites and take a leadership role in building relationships and working with current owners and potential developers on the purchase, leasing or conversion into approved mixed-use projects consistent with the Downtown. This would include the National Grid parcel 54-40
ED-1.6	Evaluate the options and develop plans for creating a “community green space” within the Downtown
ED-1.7	Take the findings from the Wastewater Management Feasibility Study and find ways to solve for wastewater issues, including development of localized wastewater treatment plants, leveraging current technology where feasible. Monitor technological developments to enable more effective, large scale wastewater treatment in the future. Seek out grant funding opportunities to support wastewater management
ED-1.8	Gain approval from CSX Transportation 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-1.10	Encourage preservation and, where appropriate, re-purposing of historical buildings and ensure that the Department of Public Works (DPW) plans for the Downtown align with beautification and historic priorities
ED-1.11	Work with Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee (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 the Fayville, Cordaville and Southville Village Districts
ED-2.3	Increase parking in the Fayville Village District (e.g., by reconfiguring playground parking)
ED-2.4	Connect the commuter rail station to office and commercial areas in Town via improved sidewalks, shuttle bus services, and cycle lanes
ED-2.5	Develop approach/plan to enhance retail convenience around the commuter rail station in accordance with expected MBTA Communities development

#	GOAL
ED-3.0	Develop 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 the Town's commercial marketing position by better distinguishing Southborough from surrounding towns (Westborough, Framingham, Northborough, Marlborough, Ashland, Hopkinton)
ED-3.4	Stay connected and actively participate in the Route 9, I90, I495 state highway projects
ED-3.5	Continue to look for ways to leverage the Route 9 corridor for increased Capital Improvements Program (CIP) tax revenue e.g., creating a District Improvement Financing (DIF) district
ED-3.6	Continue to develop/improve the sidewalk network along the Route 9 corridor
ED-3.7	Explore the opportunity to revise zoning regulations for Route 9 to allow for mixed-use development and taller buildings to improve vacancy of underutilized space (especially office space as needs change) and provide amenities to offices and residents. Collaborate with the Planning Board (PB) in evaluating the impact on economic growth
ED-3.8	Establish a quarterly meeting or "roundtable" forum between local/regional business leaders, the Economic Development Committee (EDC) and the Planning Board (PB) 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 DIF and other programs

**Commented [JW18]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*There's more to it than this. Office space doesn't generate much personal property tax revenue, compared with, e.g. lab space, manufacturing, etc. Especially if the shared space/bring your device model of working takes off. Shouldn't part of the goal be to prefer high-yield uses over plain office space?*

**Commented [JW19]:** Added phrase to clarify this recommendation relates to Route 9

# 5

## OPEN SPACE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND RECREATION

“Protect and maintain open space, sustain our environment, and expand recreation opportunities”

### Introduction

Southborough has always had a strong commitment to open space and to providing varied recreational options for residents of all ages. The coronavirus pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to the town. During the pandemic, the true resilience of Southborough’s citizens was evident. With the challenges of social distancing, travel restrictions and isolating at home, the utilization of Southborough’s open space significantly increased and the value of high-quality recreational facilities/services was recognized across the community. The importance of nurturing and sustaining our environment, our open spaces and our recreational facilities has never been more important.

Open space and recreational resources are crucial elements of community’s quality of life and attractiveness for residents. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts recognizes this importance and encourages each community in the state to have a current Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), which is to be updated every five years. When an OSRP is completed and approved by the Division of Conservation Services (DCS), the community is eligible for grant programs administered by DCS to fund open space acquisition or enhancements to recreational facilities.

Southborough completed its most recent [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) in 2019. This plan represents a collaboration between the Open Space Preservation Commission, the Recreation Commission and other Town organizations and includes 6 major goal statements and 29 objectives. This chapter of the Master Plan is not intended to replace the OSRP, but it will highlight key action areas that the Master Plan Committee (MPC) and the broader community deem to be the most critical.

This chapter covers the protection of Southborough’s natural resources, open space, and recreation resources in three sections – each section includes an outline of accomplishments since 2008, a summary of current conditions/resources with associated organizations and a summary of goals and recommendations. Note that in the 2008 Master Plan, Natural Resources were considered alongside Historic and Cultural Resources – this topic is included in this chapter, to better reflect and align with the scope of the OSRP.

## Vision Open House and Vision Survey Responses

The statements and questions presented in the open house and survey focused on the connectivity and management of open space, the control of invasive species and use of native plants, stormwater management and the scope of recreational facilities and programs.

Both open space and recreational services are highly valued by the community, although the specific needs and requests vary widely based on individual usage and preference. The recommendations in this chapter have been developed to reflect this feedback. Over 50% of the comments related to the Recreation section of the survey requested a Community Pool. This request has been evaluated and voted on by the Recreation Commission who have agreed, unanimously, not to include a pool in the plan. The main factors determining this position are:

- There are higher priorities of facility needs such as an all-encompassing recreation center with gymnasium space and turf facilities to meet higher demand and needs
- If a pool was to be built, significant budget considerations would also be needed, with Town budget support around maintenance costs, staffing (full time and part time), and land acquisition
- The recommendations proposed in this Chapter already require multi-million dollar investments over the next 10 years. Given the given current economic conditions, the Commission decided to focus on projects that are deemed to be more feasible
- Given the amount of privately owned pools in Town as well as the population that vacates the Town during the summer, the need for a public pool may not be of interest to many.

## Open Space

### Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

As available land becomes scarcer and prices increase, the Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) continues to seek innovative ways to fulfill the charge of the Commission. Preserving open space within Southborough is accomplished not only by purchasing land or permanently protecting land through legal instruments such as conservation restrictions but also by community education and outreach. The table below indicates the status of the 2008 Open Space goals. Other achievements in recent years are explained below. The Natural Resources section also highlights the excellent progress made with the Native Pollinators and Native Plants initiative.

2008 GOAL #	GOAL DESCRIPTION	GOAL STATUS
OS-1	Continue to identify and preserve Southborough's open space and recreation resources	Despite rapidly disappearing undeveloped land over 200 acres of land has been protected as open space since 2008
OS-2	Expand access opportunities to Southborough's open spaces	Through varied programming and events sponsored by the OSPC, the Southborough Stewardship Committee and the Southborough Trails Committee the Town's open spaces are being introduced to people of varying interests and ages
OS-3	Increase walking and bicycle paths, boardwalks, and trails to create a trail network and connect open space and recreational resources	The creation of the Southborough Trails Committee in 2013 had greatly increased the quality and quantity of the Trails in Town. The 2022 Town Meeting approved the groups' conversion to a permanent committee
OS-4	Maintain and enhance existing open space and passive recreational facilities	The Town's trail network has been improved and increased. Native gardens and ground nesting bird habitats on open space parcels have enhanced their beauty and environmental benefit

**Commented [JW20]:** Updated as per Tim Litt

## Golf Course

The OSPC developed a plan to allow the public safety building to be built on a portion of the golf course property that was acquired in 2018, with the overwhelming approval by Town Meeting, and permanently protect the remainder of the golf course. The Town owns what is now the Southborough Golf Course and the Conservation Restriction is jointly held by the Conservation Commission and the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT).

## Purchase of the Halloran Property

The OSPC and the Conservation Commission, with the support of the Community Preservation Committee, received the approval of the 2018 Town Meeting to purchase 30.67 acres of land at 0 Rockpoint Road (the Halloran Property) for open space. The Halloran Property is under the care and control of the Conservation Commission and the conservation restriction is held by SVT.

## Active Organizations

Southborough has several organizations active in the preservation of open space, both internally within the town and at the regional level.

### Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC)

The Commission, appointed by the Select Board, was formed to facilitate the protection and preservation of open space and natural resources in the Town. Their work includes protecting and promoting open space in Southborough, the Native Plants and Pollinator Initiative and education/outreach to promote our open space.

### Southborough Stewardship Committee (SSC)

The mission of the Committee is to support the Conservation Commission by providing conservation-based stewardship of the Breakneck Hill Conservation Land, balancing multiple conservation and passive recreational uses.

The Committee locates problem areas that may be hazardous to either people or the environment and develops action plans to resolve these issues—for example, the removal of an invasive plant species.

### Southborough Trails Committee (STC)

The STC, formed in 2013, develops, enhances, maintains, and monitors trails in Southborough. Working closely with municipal and state entities and surrounding towns, they explore ways to interconnect existing trail systems and open spaces to create healthy recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy Southborough's open spaces and conservation lands. Community involvement and support is encouraged by overseeing trail projects, participating in local events and educating residents about the importance of balancing the passive recreation activities while adhering to the permitted use policies that are designed to protect the local watersheds and reservoirs. The 2022 Town Meeting approved the group's conversion to a permanent committee

Commented [JW21]: Amended as per Tim Litt

### Southborough Open Land Foundation (SOLF)

The SOLF, a private non-profit land trust, was founded in 1988 to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources in the Town. Its goal is to maintain and improve the quality of life for the benefit of present and future generations of Southborough's residents and visitors. Since its founding, SOLF has preserved 16 properties, totaling 191.6 acres, as open space in Southborough.

### Trustees of the Reservations (TOR)

The TOR is a non-profit land conservation and historic preservation organization dedicated to preserving natural and historical places in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition to land stewardship, the organization is also active in conservation partnerships, community supported agriculture (CSA), environmental and conservation education, community preservation and development, and green building.

### Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT)

The SVT is a member-supported, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that works in a 36-community region between Boston and Worcester, Massachusetts. Its mission is to protect natural areas and farmland for wildlife and people in and around the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers. SVT is accredited by the National Land Trust Accreditation Commission and leverages a volunteer Board of Directors, 13 staff members (full and part time), 2 TerraCorps-AmeriCorps members, and over 200 volunteers.

### MetroWest Conservation Alliance (MCA)

The MCA also works in the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord River watershed region and is a partnership of municipalities, state agencies, land trusts, and other non-profit organizations, working collaboratively on land management (stewardship) and land protection to achieve regional conservation success. The MCA promotes sustainable forestry and agriculture, biodiversity protection, and local economies and recognizes the need to integrate people with the environment through education, extension, and outreach in order to achieve MCA conservation goals.

## Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

The DCR manages state parks and oversees more than 450,000 acres of forests, parks, greenways, historic sites and landscapes, and water bodies throughout Massachusetts. It protects, promotes, and enhances these natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

## Summary of Current Conditions

Southborough covers 15.7 square miles with 5.4 square miles defined as protected open space. These resources, shown in **Figure 5-1** are owned by the Town, DCR and not for profit organizations and include 1.5 square miles of water.

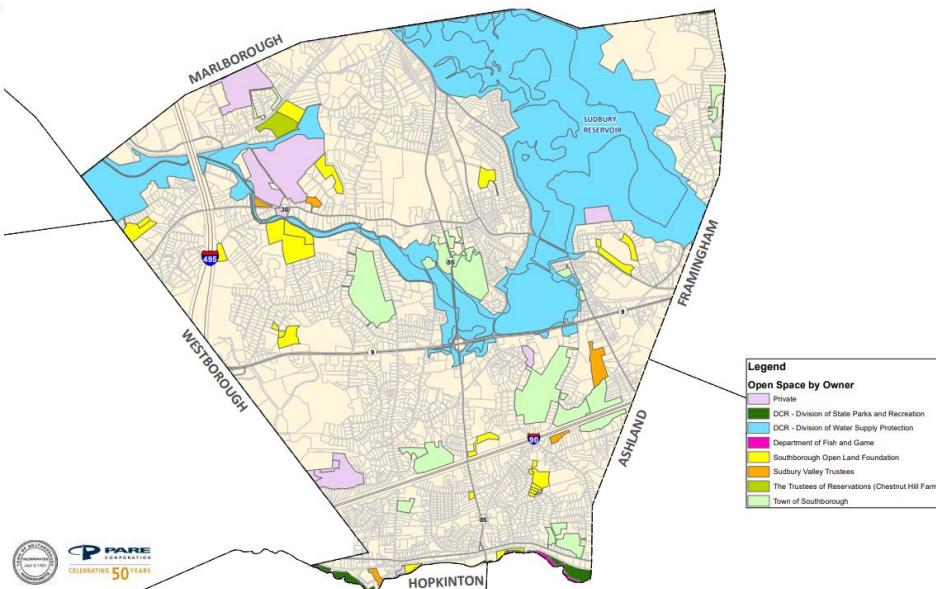


FIGURE 5-1 SOUTHBOROUGH'S OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

The following terms are used in relation to the Town's open space:

- **Protected Open Space** is that portion of the lot area that is not covered by any structure and not used for drives, parking, storage and display. Wetlands, ponds, and man-made detention areas are not considered open space for the purpose of calculating requirements of the town bylaw. This form of open space is permanently protected by recorded deed
- **Vacant Land** is land that is not permanently protected, is in an undeveloped state and is not being used or occupied for any purpose
- **Chapter 61, 61A and 61B** refer to a Massachusetts program designed to preserve and enhance forest, agriculture and recreational land (respectively). These lands are not considered permanently protected
- **Passive Recreation** refers to things such as walking, picnicking, relaxing on a park bench, hiking, bird watching, etc.
- **Active Recreation** includes field sports, running, golf, frisbee, and similar activities.

## Analysis of Open Space

The main areas of conservation and passive recreation open space within the Town are unchanged since 2008 and include Breakneck Hill Conservation Area, Southborough Town Forest, Turenne Wildlife Habitat and Chestnut Hill Farm. Similarly, the Town's active recreation areas - the Golf Course (formerly owned by St. Mark's School, and acquired by the Town in 2018), 911 Fields and school facility fields have not expanded (or declined) in the last decade with two small, maintained parks at the Town Common and Cordaville Triangle. A detailed inventory of recreational open space can be found in Table 5-5 in the Recreation section of this chapter.

**Table 5-2** highlights open space that is not permanently protected by a conservation or deed restriction.

Type of Ownership	Acres in 2019	% Subtotal	Acres +/- since 2008
Chapter 61 (forest)	31	1.29%	(29)
Chapter 61A (agriculture)	98	4.09%	(367)
Chapter 61B (recreation)	0	0	0
DCR-Owned (water and land)	2,275	94.62%	338
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,404</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>(58)</b>
Town Area Total	9,961		
<i>Source: 2019 OSPR Plan/Town Assessors records</i>			

TABLE 5-2 NON-PERMANENT PROTECTED OPEN SPACE IN SOUTHBOROUGH

**Table 5-3** indicates there have been 26 parcels, totaling 332 acres of open space acquired since 2008. Between 2008 and 2021, an estimated 200 acres of open space were lost to development, a net gain of 132 acres.

Map/Parcel	Owner	Acres	Location (Name)	Date of Acquisition
13-0000-033-0	Town	7.53	Middle Road (Hubley Lane)	1/18/2009
20-0000-054-0	Town	4.416	Vickery Hill Lane	11/9/2009
34-0000-016-0	Town	7.243	Orchard Road	12/21/2009
52-0000-009-0	TOR	0.99	Main Street	4/30/2010
72-0000-008-0	Trustees	23.57	Chestnut Hill Rd Off	4/30/2010
51-0000-018-0	Town	1.807	Main Street	5/14/2012
04-0000-028-0	Town	3.803	Southville Road	5/15/2012
04-0000-050-0	Town	1.53	Vale Terrace	5/15/2012
51-0000-012-0	SOLF	41.28	Main Street Off (Beals Preserve)	11/27/2012
51-0000-013-0	SOLF	13.13	Main Street (Beals Preserve)	11/27/2012
51-0000-015-0	SOLF	0.39	Main Street (Access to Beals)	11/27/2012
72-0000-019-0	Town	7.657	Barn Lane	6/27/2014
69-0000-021-0	PHMT	16.14	Pine Hill Road	3/18/2016
79-0000-004-0	PHMT	10.45	Nichols Street	3/18/2016
51-0000-014-0	SOLF	3.7	Main Street (Beals Preserve)	12/29/2017
51-0000-043-0	Trustees	38.66	Chestnut Hill Road	12/29/2017
51-0000-008-0	Trustees	0.3785	Chestnut Hill Road	12/29/2017
14-0000-042-0	Preservation Trust	7.57	Killam Farm Lane	8/14/2018
13-0000-018-0	Town ConCom	30.665	Rock Point Road	8/16/2018
50-0000-049-0	SOLF	5.54	Lynbrook Road	10/25/2018
09-0000-016-0	Town	1.97	Kimberly Lane	4/12/2019
09-0000-034-0	Town	1.34	Kimberly Lane	4/12/2019
09-0000-127-0	Town	0.608	Kimberly Lane	4/12/2019
06-0000-003-0	EMC	39	Orland Lane/Gilmore Road. CR: SVT	7/21/2010
	EMC	7	Orland Lane/Gilmore Road. Deed restriction	3/10/2011
45-0000-002-0	Town	55.7	Cordaville Road (Golf Course). CR: ConComm-SVT	5/29/2018

*Source: Town of Southborough Assessor Database 2021, 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan  
 TOR: Trustees of the Reservations. SOLF: Southborough Open Land Foundation; PHMT: Pine Hill Meadow Trust; EMC: EMC Corporation; SVT: Sudbury Valley Trustees; CR: Conservation Restriction*

TABLE 5-3 OPEN SPACE ACQUIRED SINCE 2008

## Protection and Management of Open Space

Southborough has historically worked to protect its open space through conservation restrictions, land acquisition, and zoning initiatives. There are three important levers to support this effort:

- **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** funds can be used for the purchase and protection of key open space resources. To date, this approach has been used for several purchases including the Golf Course and Halloran property
- The **Major Residential Development** section of the zoning bylaw (§ 174-13.2) and the **flexible zoning option for smaller projects** within the Major Residential Development section of the zoning bylaw (§ 174-13.2) encourages the preservation of contiguous and usable open space in the subdivisions of land and to protect unique environmental features of the landscape. This tool has been used in several developments in the last decade (e.g., Northborough Road, Brewer Estate, Heritage Crossing, Ila Bella Estates and Sameron Village)
- **Communication and education** of the community is essential in ensuring that the Town's open space is valued and cared for.

The planning, purchase and effective management of open space remains an important priority for the Town which is reflected in the 2021 Master Plan Open Space goals and recommendations.

## Accessibility and Connectivity of Open Space

The creation of the Southborough Trails Committee in 2013 provided the opportunity to give focus and resources to making the Town's open space more accessible. The Committee is responsible for maintaining the Town's trails, including the Sudbury Reservoir Trail (part of the Boroughs Loop and Aqueduct trail network), a section of the Bay Circuit Trail, the Watkins Woods (adjacent to Templeman Woods owned by SOLF) and the 911 Loop Trail. The Southborough Stewardship Committee is responsible for the trails in the Town Forest and Breakneck Hill. Other trails in Southborough are maintained by external organizations, notably the Turenne Wildlife Habitat (SVT), Beals Preserve (SOLF) and Chestnut Hill Farm (The Trustees).

The Southborough Trails Committee sponsors projects and initiatives to ensure the accessibility and usability of the trails system, including guided walks, parking, trail map kiosks, trail and historical markers, trail stairs/boardwalks, footbridges and monofilament fishing line recycling receptacles. Many of these projects are resourced by local scout troops and other volunteer groups.

Progress is being made in connecting Southborough's local trails to regional trail networks, expanding community access to areas of outstanding natural beauty, and providing more opportunities for passive recreation. This includes the Bay Circuit/Boroughs Loop connector near the Sudbury Dam historic district which opened in 2020. The Peninsula Trail project was launched before 2017 with the goal of closing the "gap" in the Boroughs Loop and Aqueduct trails.

There is also a need to provide better connectivity between areas of open space in different parts of the town, providing easy and safe access to both wildlife and residents. This includes the development of wildlife corridors and linking neighborhood sidewalks to the trail systems.

The creation of the Southborough Public Accessibility Committee in 2021 brings further attention to this important topic.

**Commented [JW22]:** Added at request of Tim Litt

## Objective, Goals and Recommendations

The MPC and the broader community believe that the effective protection and management of open space is essential for the ongoing health and welfare of Southborough's residents. This is reflected in the goals and recommendations outlined below.

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROTECT AND MAINTAIN OPEN SPACE WITHIN SOUTHBOROUGH</b>	
#	<b>GOAL</b>
OS-1.0	Develop a collaborative policy/approach for the strategic acquisition/protection of properties
#	<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
OS-1.2	Educate the community regarding why it is important to acquire high priority properties and the importance of conserving open space/natural resources
OS-1.3	Deliver a map of open space, including both existing designated lands and potential spaces to be acquired
OS-1.4	Identify key stakeholders who will provide input as to the strategic acquisition for open space
OS-1.5	Identify all town-owned open space parcels and, as necessary, transfer such parcels to the care and control of the Conservation Commission
OS-1.6	Establish a land acquisition plan. Identify parcels and funding sources and implement where feasible

**Commented [JW23]:** New recommendation added at request of OSPC. Approved at May 11<sup>th</sup> MPC meeting

#	<b>GOAL</b>
OS-2.0	Expand connectivity of and access to existing open space via the trail system without compromising public safety, wildlife activity or causing adverse environmental impact
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
OS-2.1	Develop a plan/strategy, in collaboration with all stakeholders, including land holders, Conservation Commission (CC), Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC), Southborough Trails Committee (STC) to link individual open space areas, via the trail system, incorporating restrictions due to wildlife needs, e.g., access corridors
OS-2.2	Build and maintain trails and parking areas; examples would include a paved walking track around Mooney Field, a walking trail around the golf course during appropriate times. Investigate dog walking and running needs
OS-2.3	Continue to establish connections to regional trails, e.g., the Boroughs Loop, the Aqueduct Trail and the Boston-Worcester Airline trail (BWALT)
OS-2.4	Increase awareness about passive recreation opportunities on Town trails through guided hikes/walks, educational programming, special events, partnerships etc.

**Commented [JW24]:** Proposed update from Tim Litt

OS-2.5	Establish ADA compliant or more accessible trails and parking, where appropriate
OS-2.6	Engage and educate the community on the benefits of open space for passive recreation and the importance of protecting the biodiversity of our natural resources, through nature walks, garden tours etc.
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
OS-2.8	Assess and add signage to educate trail users about the permitted use policies on trails including dog walking restrictions, in partnership with other entities who have jurisdiction over specific trails

#	GOAL
OS-3.0	Manage open space resources in collaboration with stakeholders and the community
#	RECOMMENDATIONS
OS-3.1	Designate major open space resources to a use, e.g., conservation or recreation, which will then define the primary stakeholders
OS-3.2	Involve the community, both residents and businesses, in the management of open space and the maintenance of trails
OS-3.3	Explore options for the disposal of dog waste on open space, e.g., providing bags or composting bins
OS-3.4	Educate the community about the appropriate land uses and guidelines, e.g., the impact of dog waste on trails and the dangers that balloons present to animals on open space parcels
OS-3.5	Clean up the dump at Breakneck Hill
OS-3.6	Regularly assess and take action to prevent encroachment on open space lands, e.g., by dumping brush and grass clippings

**Commented [JW25]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*While important in the short term, is this really a significant vision 2030/MP goal?*

**Commented [JW26R25]:** Response from JW  
*The goals and recommendations in this chapter were defined over two years ago and have since undergone considerable review and debate - some recommendations could be considered as more minor but all will contribute to the overall objective.*

## Natural Resources

### Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

The effective protection and management of the Town's open space enables wildlife, both fauna and flora, to thrive. The Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) has been particularly active in this area. The table below indicates the status of the 2008 Natural Resources goals.

2008 GOAL #	GOAL DESCRIPTION	GOAL STATUS
NCR-1	Enhance protection of valued open space and natural resources, particularly the Sudbury Reservoir and the SuAsCo watershed	To increase the level of protection on many town-owned properties they were transferred to the care and control of the Conservation Commission
NCR-2	Successfully implement the Lower Impact Development Bylaw to promote "green" practices and ensure proper management of stormwater	The Lower Impact Development was adopted in 2006. There is an ever-increasing focus on incorporating "green" infrastructure into development projects
NCR-3	Increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of historic and archeological resources and preservation resource identification into the planning process	The Native Plant and Native Pollinator initiative has greatly increased awareness and understanding of how vital both are to the health of our environment

### Native Plant - Native Pollinators Initiative

Established in 2017, this initiative promotes education of the environmental importance of Native Plants. Native plants are beautiful, are a vital food source for native pollinators, cost effective, require less water and are more adaptive to the New England environment. The OSPC collaborated with the Planning Board to promote the use of native plants to be used in landscape plans for projects under site plan review. Educational programs such as a Winter Sow event and Seed Exchange generated broad participation demonstrating the Town's support of the initiative.

### Native Plant Gardens of Southborough

The Native Plant Gardens of Southborough is a network of volunteers involved in outreach and education on the importance of using native plants to preserve biodiversity and maintain healthy ecosystems. They host an information booth at Heritage Day and are the main resource of volunteers for native plant projects of the OSPC.

### Beecology Research Garden

The OSPC, in collaboration with the Southborough Stewardship Committee and under the direction of Dr. Robert Gegear (who is an Assistant Professor of Biology at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and whose research focuses on the neuroecology and conservation of plant-pollinator interactions, with particular focus on bumblebees' pollination systems) created a 4,500sq ft. Beecology Research Garden at the Breakneck Hill conservation area. Dr. Gegear and others gifted the majority of plants specifically

chosen to help at-risk species of pollinators, with a focus on *Bombus fervidus* and *Bombus vagans* bumblebees, which are in trouble statewide and nationally.

## Active Organizations

Responsibility for the protection of natural resources in the Town rests primarily with the Conservation Commission, but local and regional groups are also active.

### Conservation Commission (CC)

The CC is the local authority responsible for the protection of Southborough's natural resources and the enforcement of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town's Wetlands and Stormwater By-laws. The Commission advises other municipal officials, residents and businesses on conservation issues and manages the Town's conservation properties (including the oversight of conservation restrictions) and the Community Garden. The Southborough Stewardship Committee, which oversees the management and maintenance of the Breakneck Hill Conservation Land and the Town Forest, reports to the Conservation Commission.

### Open Space Preservation Commission

Refer to the OSPC summary in the Open Space section of this chapter.

### SuAsCo Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area

There are 36 towns within the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord (SuAsCo) River Watershed that covers approximately 377 square miles and includes a variety of upland habitats, wetland habitats, historic sites, scenic sites and recreational areas. The SuAsCo Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) is a partnership of organizations that manage and control invasive species within the geography of the watershed.

The towns, the state and federal government agencies, and the environmental organizations that hold land in the watershed all share an interest in the work of the CISMA.

### Native Pollinator Task Force

The Native Pollinator Task Force (NPTF) is a working group of the MetroWest Conservation Alliance, with the mission to conserve native pollination systems by providing the specific habitat requirements and reducing threats for at-risk pollinators in the 36 communities of the MetroWest Conservation Alliance (MCA).

## Summary of Current Conditions

The natural landscape of Southborough is largely unchanged since 2008 with the Sudbury Reservoir and related DCR watershed area continuing to form almost 25% of the Town's acreage.

## Protection and Management of Natural Resources

### Water Resources

The Sudbury Reservoir is owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and managed by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Since this is a major backup water supply for Boston, access is restricted to keep the water clean and undisturbed which in turn allows wildlife to live with minimal interference. This is reflected in **Table 5-4**. There has been ongoing interest from residents to have expanded access to this property for passive and active recreational purposes. Historically, the

DCR/MWRA policy on access has been more restrictive. In recent years, these agencies have been more flexible with these access rights as reflected in the table below, and the town will continue to explore these opportunities.

Allowed Activities	Prohibited Activities
Shoreline fishing (in season, with no water contact) Hiking, Walking, Snowshoeing, nature study, bird watching (in designated areas) Cross country skiing (in designated areas only) Picnicking (use of fire, cooking activity, and alcohol are prohibited however) Geocaching (with permission from DCR Interpretive Services) Hunting and trapping	Water Contact (e.g., swimming) Boating (motorized and non-motorized) Off-Road Vehicles Horseback Riding Dogs and other pets Camping Biking

*Source: DCR Sudbury and Foss Reservoirs Watershed 2010 Public Access Plan Update*

TABLE 5-4 PUBLIC ACCESS RESTRICTIONS AT SUDBURY RESERVOIR

Wetlands cover another significant portion of the Town's landscape. A topic of concern for residents and businesses is the management of surface water runoff, particularly during storms.

This was discussed during the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness workshop in 2020 and during the development of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Conservation Commission is taking the lead in the review and update of the Town by-laws relating to wetland protection and stormwater management.

### Climate Change and Sustainability

Southborough has made good progress in climate action and preparedness with the development of the Town's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (2020) and Local Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (2021). These initiatives are covered in more detail in Chapter 8.

In 2021, Massachusetts enacted a law titled "An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy" aimed at significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The law requires the state to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% below 1990 levels by 2030 with "net zero emissions" by 2050.

The MPC recognizes the severe adverse impacts that man-made greenhouse gas emissions are expected to have on climate change over the next 10 years and has made recommendations throughout the Master Plan to address this issue, notably on topics such as recycling, renewable energy, electric vehicle charging, improved public transportation, and a plan to connect all parts of town with pedestrian, cycle and trail access.

The Master Plan also recommends the formation of a Sustainability Committee with responsibility for ensuring issues and opportunities are proactively managed, including the development of a Climate Action Plan to reinforce and support the work that has already begun by other departments and committees.

## Non-Renewable Resources

The 2016 Annual Town Meeting took action to have Southborough certified as a Green Community by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. This made Southborough eligible for clean energy grants designed to help communities lower energy consumption, reduce carbon emissions, and shrink operating costs associated with municipal buildings. Since certification, Southborough has received a total of \$392,865 in grants with four projects completed in 2018, three in the public schools and one at the Library. The Facilities Department promotes and leads these projects; recent initiatives include the purchase of hybrid vehicles and the installation of electric charging stations for the Police Department.

The Master Plan Committee (MPC) recognizes the importance of energy conservation and carbon footprint reduction with a number of recommendations related to the expansion of recycling and switching from fossil fuels included in this Chapter.

## Plant and Pollination Resources

Good progress is being made in the removal of invasive species and the expansion of native plants that support native pollinators. The Breakneck Hill Beecology Garden continues to thrive and a new Pollination Preservation Garden has been opened at the Beals Preserve. A native plant garden has also been established at the Library. Four research projects have been started since 2021. The ongoing education of the community and the development of policy/guidelines for use by the Town, developers and residents is an important future focus.

## Protection, Management and Preservation of Community Trees

Southborough has historically worked to protect its community trees through its prestigious designation as a Tree City, designation of scenic roadways, and a new section of the town code specifically for trees. There are three important elements to support this effort:

- **Tree City USA:** This distinction was awarded by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters. It recognizes the delegation of responsibility for public trees to a tree board and/or department, establishing a tree care ordinance, documenting a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita and holding an Arbor Day observance and proclamation. Tree City funds are used for the planting, care, and removal of town trees
- **Designation of Scenic Roadways:** In 1978 all non-numbered roads in Southborough were designated scenic roads and are therefore protected against the destruction of stone walls or the removal of public shade trees under MGL Chapter 40 s 15C. This protection ensures that the Town's shade trees are valued, cared for and provide public enjoyment. The 2022 Annual Town Meeting will be asked to designate as scenic all roads created since 1978]
- **Tree Chapter of Town Code (§ 153, Trees):** Massachusetts General Law, Chapter outlines procedures for planting and removing community trees. A new chapter of the Town Code (Section 153, Trees) was established in 2019, consistent with scenic road designations (MGL Chapter 40 s 15C) to sustain environmental health, enhance economic wellbeing and quality of life for the citizens of Southborough.

**Commented [JW27]:** Comment per Tim Litt  
*Er, this failed. 'A future town meeting'*

The planting, care and effective management of community trees remains an important priority for the Town which is reflected in the 2021 Master Plan Natural Resources and Land Use goals and recommendations

## Objective, Goals and Recommendations

The MPC has developed a broad range of goals and recommendations designed to protect natural resources and provide a more sustainable environment within Southborough.

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEFINE, DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT “GREEN” INITIATIVES THAT SUSTAIN OUR ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>
NR-1.0	Ensure the town’s wetland protection and stormwater by-laws reflect federal/state regulations and the projected impacts of climate change as well as planning for droughts
<b>#</b> <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
NR-1.1	Review all levels of regulation and the latest research for wetland protection and stormwater management permitting and ensure that town by-laws are up to date and compliant
NR-1.2	Document criteria and metrics around stormwater management, including snow removal/storage, for now and in the future
NR-1.3	Amend/upgrade local regulations to better meet community needs and educate the community on regulations, impact and rationale
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
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
NR-1.6	Review flood risk areas and identify stream crossings for upgrades and rehabilitation to help mitigate the risk of flooding
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
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
NR-1.9	Create a Tree Canopy Protection bylaw, defining limitations on lot clearing to protect against excessive erosion, the risk of flooding and to prevent heat synchs

**Commented [JW28]:** Looking at options to reword to avoid the use of MSA – per Tim Litt

#	GOAL
NR-2.0	Enhance Southborough's efforts in making sustainability a core aspect of Town and community activities
#	RECOMMENDATIONS
NR-2.1	Establish a Sustainability Committee with responsibility for ensuring that sustainability issues and opportunities in Southborough are proactively managed, including applying for grant funding by collaborating with Town departments and committees
NR-2.2	Develop a 5-year Climate Action Plan for Southborough
NR-2.3	Strengthen and expand partnerships within the town and state to develop climate change solutions
NR-2.4	Recommend, develop and monitor programs designed to enhance long-term sustainability and resilience in response to environmental, resource and energy challenges

#	GOAL
NR-3.0	Reduce the consumption of non-renewable natural resources by public and private users
#	RECOMMENDATIONS
NR-3.1	Monitor recycling best practices to identify profitable recycling materials and determine if it is cost-effective to collect these within the town
NR-3.2	Identify a way to recycle compostable material
NR-3.3	Create and/or review and update recycling metrics with targets and annual reports, including establishing if volume or weight is a more appropriate measure
NR-3.4	Evaluate the options to reduce the level of single-use plastics, e.g., plastic bags and straws within 10 years
NR-3.5	Educate the community on the rationale for recycling; examples would include trash pick-up/recycling methods, regularly updating signage at the transfer station, initiating clothing/book recycling options
NR-3.6	Offer rain barrels, compost and recycling bins throughout the Town (cost plus administration fee); develop rain collection systems on town owned property
NR-3.7	Reduce the use of oil-based energy at Southborough's town owned facilities, by 25% within 10 years
NR-3.8	Install electric car charging stations around the Town, where appropriate

**Commented [JW29]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Why 25%? Why 10 yrs? Same for 3.4

**Commented [JW30R29]:** Response from JW  
This target was determined by the Town's Facilities Manager who has responsibility for implementation. It reflects what has already been achieved and what can realistically be delivered in the next decade  
The timeframe of 10 years reflects the expected "life" of this plan - an update will be targeted for 2030

#	<b>GOAL</b>
NR-4.0	Prioritize and reduce the existence and impact of invasive species and other nuisance species on public and private properties
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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
NR-4.2	Create an ongoing assessment of priority invasive species and a strategic plan for eradication of these species
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
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)

#	<b>GOAL</b>
NR-5.0	Expand the use of native plants and prioritize awareness and installation of pollination systems across the community
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
NR-5.1	Work with town departments to create and manage plans for all town-owned properties to be landscaped with native plants vs non-native or cultivar plants
NR-5.2	Pursue a town bylaw requiring the use of native plants and prohibiting chemical treatments of lawns and insect spraying. Collaborate with Board of Health (BOS) on impacts from chemicals in pesticides
NR-5.3	Develop a policy and associated guidelines/conditions outlining the recommended native planting schemes. Collaborate with the Planning Board (PB) and Conservation Commission (CC) to have these formally adopted and incorporated into reviews of site plans and permit applications
NR-5.4	Pursue and maintain town certification as a Wildlife Habitat Community through the National Wildlife Federation

## Recreation

### Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

The 2008 Master Plan highlighted two areas of concern – the lack of a formal maintenance program or Capital Improvement Plan for recreational facilities and a lack of community awareness of these facilities and associated programs. Both of these issues have been addressed since the publication of the 2008 Master Plan. The table below indicates the status of the 2008 Recreation goals.

2008 GOAL #	GOAL DESCRIPTION	GOAL STATUS
MF-7	Provide recreational opportunities for residents of all ages	Recreational opportunities are provided for toddlers through adults
MF-8	Maintain and enhance existing open space and recreational facilities	To institute a capital improvement plan and maintenance plan a Recreational Facilities Study was completed. The recommendations from that study are being followed

The Recreation Department continues to improve upon many facilities and programs in response to generous funding and support from Town Meeting. The Southborough Department of Public Works plays a critical role in supporting these efforts. A comprehensive Recreation Department website provides a wide range of information for all activities and programs.

Since 2008, a Recreational Facilities Study was undertaken and the following capital projects have been completed:

- Choate Field lights installation
- Fayville playground renovation
- Resurfacing of Richardson Tennis Courts

Other, more recent accomplishments, include improvements to Depietri Field (regrading, resurfacing and installation of drainage/irrigation systems), replacement of equipment and surfaces at the Town House Playground and installation of a basketball court at the Fayville Playground, Mooney Baseball Field Lighting and the upgrade of the Richardson Tennis Courts at Neary School.

## Active Organizations

Southborough has several organizations supporting the Recreation Department including:

### Friends of Southborough Recreation (FOSR)

The FOSR is a 501(c)3 nonprofit committed to ensuring all residents of Southborough can come together in a healthy and positive environment by participating in quality recreation programs. The organization collaborates with business and community leaders to raise funds and sponsors events such as the Summer Concert Series.

### Southborough Extended Day Program

This program provides childcare for Southborough families before and after school hours and during the February/April vacation weeks, teacher conference days etc. Programs are designed to be educational and socially enriching.

### Southborough Trails Committee

See the description of the Southborough Trails Committee activities in the Open Space section of this chapter.

### Summary of Current Conditions and Resources

The Recreation Department is responsible for providing accessible, affordable, quality recreational opportunities for the Town's residents and surrounding communities. The Recreation Department collaborates on a regular basis with a wide range of local organizations, including the Southborough/Northborough Public Schools, St. Mark's School, the Fay School, Southborough Youth Soccer, Little League and Men's Softball League as well as the Southborough/Northborough Girls Softball and Girls and Boys Lacrosse teams.

### Recreational Facilities

The Department is responsible for most of the facilities listed in **Table 5-5:**

Name	Location	Acres	Map/ Parcel	Current Uses/ Facilities	Management Agency
<b>Public</b>					
911 Memorial Field	Acre Bridge Road	5± (Part of DCR parcel)	58- 002A	Turf field	Recreation Commission/DPW
Kallander Field	Kallander Drive	2.63	56-012	Grass Field/Soccer	Recreation Commission
Liberty Estates Field	Liberty Road	4.46	05-050	Grass Field	Recreation Commission/DPW/ (Conservation Commission)
Dipietri Field / Lunblad Grassfield, Richardson Tennis Courts, Neary Elementary School, Trottier Middle School	Parkerville Road	80.73*	43-018	Baseball, track, soccer, tennis, playground, soccer, basketball, softball, track, gym	Recreation Commission/DPW School Committee
Fayville Park	Central Street	2.37	38-45A	Playground equipment	Recreation Commission
Triangle Park	Cordaville Road	0.74	04-001	Paths, benches	Recreation Commission
Town Common	Common and Main Street	0.74	54-006	Monuments, benches	Recreation Commission

South Union Building and Playground	Highland Street	3	03-003	Playground	Recreation Commission
George Mooney Park	Parkerville Road	7.03	07-023	Baseball, softball, Grass Field/Soccer	Recreation Commission/DPW
Southborough Golf Club	Cordaville Road	55.7	45-002	9-hole golf course	New England Golf Corporation
Finn Elementary	Richards Road	11.15*	07-021	Softball, tennis, gym, playground, skate park	School Committee
Woodward Memorial	Cordaville Road	11.65*	54-092	Volleyball, gym, basketball, soccer, playground, softball	School Committee
<b>Private</b> * Includes entire campus					
Fay School	Main Street	56.58*	Numerous	Gym, 2 pools, 11 fields, baseball, basketball, fitness center, cross-country track, tennis	Board of Trustees
St. Mark's School	Marlborough Road	207.33*	Numerous	Gym, ice rink, baseball, soccer, football, tennis	Board of Trustees
Source: Town of Southborough - 2019 OSRP, Recreation Department, Assessor's Database 2021					

TABLE 5-5 RECREATION FACILITIES WITHIN SOUTHBOROUGH

### Recreational Programming

The Recreation Department manages the planning and implementation of year-round programming and special events that include:

- **Recreation After School Programs (RAP)** - typically 150+ after school offerings spread across the school year at each Southborough Public School
- **Alternative youth sports and programming** - including cross country, track and field, tennis, pickleball, skateboarding, soccer, field hockey, skiing, snowboarding, E-Sports
- **Summer Day Camps and programming** - full day, multi-week licensed summer camp programming, counselor in training programming, off-site field trip weeks, sports camps

- **Special Events** including Southborough Summer Nights, Summer Concert Series, Outdoor Summer Movie Nights, Heritage Day, Gobble Wobble Thanksgiving 5K.

### Objective, Goals and Recommendations

The main focus for the Recreation Department is to build upon the improvements made in the last decade, maintaining and enhancing both facilities and programs and collaborating with both Town and external partners. The two major initiatives include a new Facilities Study and the development of a multi-use Community Center.

<b>OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>	
#	<b>GOAL</b>
R-1.0	Improve and maintain quality and safety of all recreational facilities
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
R-1.1	Initiate a Facilities Study to replace the 2017 study since many of the recommendations have been or will be met in the coming years; understand the impact of potential new developments
R-1.2	Make continued improvements to the golf course as outlined in the improvement plan provided in the Golf Course Committees report
R-1.3	Implement a field rotation plan 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

#	<b>GOAL</b>
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
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
R-2.1	Continue to explore recreational opportunities and business continuity planning for times where social distancing is required
R-2.2	Develop a nature-based passive recreation program, e.g., gardening, bird watching, butterflies

#	<b>GOAL</b>
R-3.0	Seek opportunities to expand recreational facilities
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
R-3.1	Work with the Planning Board (PB) and Economic Development Committee (EDC) to ensure new residential or commercial development includes funds for recreation facilities and/or open space
R-3.2	Strive for multi-use trail and sidewalk systems to satisfy the community's walking and biking needs

R-3.3	Explore possible locations for a dog park because the community lacks free space where dogs can run unleashed
R-3.4	Install turf at the Choate Fields located at Woodward School to expand the time and availability of field use to the Town's community, and to generate revenue from other youth and adult organizations
R-3.5	Build a multi-use Community Center intended for all interest groups/ages including Recreation and Senior Center use. The location and facility would ideally be a centrally located shared space with meeting and training rooms, a walking track and large multi-sport court, with easy access to other key community locations
R-3.6	Expand the availability of meeting and training rooms for use by programs and other community-based groups

**Commented [JW31]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Overlaps with OS-2.2, I think.

**Commented [JW32R31]:** OS-2.2

Build and maintain trails and parking areas; examples would include a paved walking track around Mooney Field, a walking trail around the golf course during appropriate times. Investigate dog walking and running needs

**Commented [JW33]:** Proposal from Tim Litt to remove this phrase – viewed as unnecessary – not amended pending feedback on above point

#	GOAL
R-4.0	Maintain strong partnerships with committees and organizations throughout the town
#	RECOMMENDATIONS
R-4.1	Secure a seat on the Southborough Public Accessibility Committee to stay informed of changing regulations and to keep facilities in compliance while striving to achieve the highest standards
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 remains
R-4.3	Partner with the Select Board (SB), Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) and Southborough Trails Committee (STC) on the evaluation of potential property acquisitions for multi-use purposes

**Commented [JW34]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
This would require a bylaw change.

The Rec director frequently attends SPAC, and participates in related issues. What problem would this solve? He could, at most, be an ex-officio member...

I don't believe SPAC has been approached on whether permanent representation is a good idea.

**Commented [JW35]:** Minor wordsmithing – previously Seek representation

#	GOAL
R-5.0	Maintain strong fiscal controls over recreation expenditure
#	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
R-5.2	Continue to contribute facility user fees to the General Fund to support facility maintenance and support
R-5.3	Maintain contributions and support to the Southborough Trails Committee

# 6

## CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION

“Improve accessibility and connectivity across the town”

### Introduction

Southborough has continued to experience population growth since the 2008, encouraged by the Town’s location near major transportation routes. As predicted in the 2008 Master Plan, the Town’s proximity to the state’s major cities and the expansion of the technology and professional service sectors within the MetroWest region has resulted in continued pressure on Southborough’s transportation system. Community feedback from the Vision Forum and Survey confirms that this is a priority area for planning and action.

This chapter outlines accomplishments since 2008, identifies organizations involved in the development of policy and planning, provides a summary of current conditions/resources and highlights issues, concerns and opportunities. Goals and recommendations are proposed to improve Southborough’s accessibility and connectivity.

### Vision Open House and Vision Survey Responses

The statements and questions presented in the open house and survey focused on addressing traffic flows and easing Route 9 congestion, expanding the use of public transit and enhancing connectivity throughout the Town. The latter connectivity issue was felt to be particularly important.

This was the second most popular topic based on the number of qualitative comments from survey respondents, with strong feedback focused on the importance of connecting the north-south sections of the town and the need for sidewalks/bicycle routes.

### Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

The table below indicates the status of the 2008 Master Plan goals. Despite a general lack of progress in addressing key circulation and transportation recommendations from the 2008 Master Plan, the following two key initiatives have been accomplished since the 2008 Master Plan was completed.

2008 GOAL #	GOAL DESCRIPTION	GOAL STATUS
T-1	Create a long-term conscientious vision for traffic mitigation while managing traffic and land uses to avoid congestion	The intersection at Route 9, Central St/Oak St which achieved a top 10 rating in the 2004 "Transportation Nightmares" project was reconfigured and turning lanes added which has reduced congestion
T-2	Increase public transportation and other non-automobile transportation options on a local, regional and state-wide basis	The reconstruction of Main Street added sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Options are being investigated for "last mile" transportation from the MBTA station to local businesses
T-3	Consider improvements to roads in Town	A major road improvement project was undertaken and completed with the reconstruction on Main Street

### Southborough's Main Street Project

The most significant transportation program to impact Southborough in the decade since the 2008 Master Plan was developed is the Reconstruction of Main Street (Route 30) from Sears Road to Park Street. This was a \$7.28 million State Transportation Improvement Program project, initiated in 2018 and funded in part by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The project included the replacement of the road base, the installation and repair of drainage with appropriate repaving, the addition of sidewalks from Parkerville Road to Sears Road and on Route 85 between the Woodward School and the Library, the installation of granite curbing on existing sidewalks, the creation of a buffer between the travel lanes and sidewalks for safer bicycle travel and the upgrade of intersection crossings and crosswalks to ensure ADA compliance. Additional improvements included the repair of historic artifacts at the Town Common, replacement of trees and the creation of the Woodward School safety zone with traffic restriction controls. Documents describing this project, including plans, renderings, and cost analysis, can be found on the Town's [DPW website](#) along with information on other highway projects.

The Central Transportation Planning Staff 2007 report "Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement in Town Centers" recommended the construction and repair of sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks and bicycle racks. A number of these proposals were implemented during the Main Street project.

### Route 9 Corridor Analysis and Smart Growth Plan

In 2010, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) studied the potential for commercial, industrial and office growth along the Route 9 Corridor between Route 128 and I-495, analyzing the implications of that potential growth on mobility and evaluating alternatives to mitigate the impacts of the potential growth. The Route 9 Corridor Analysis (published in June 2010) concluded that if the region was to continue to be built-out to the maximum extent allowed by current zoning regulations, the resulting

traffic could eventually exceed the remaining capacity on Route 9, leading to gridlock, excessive congestion and adversely impacting businesses.

In Fall 2011, the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC) and the MAPC collaborated with the communities of Southborough, Framingham, Natick, and Wellesley on a Route 9 MetroWest Smart Growth Plan (published in Fall 2013), building on the recommendations outlined in the Route 9 Corridor Analysis. The principal goal of the Smart Growth Plan was to identify alternative land use changes at specific locations that increase housing and job growth but did so in a way that reduced the number of single occupant vehicle trips. The plan focused on alternative designs and land uses for three Smart Growth Opportunity Areas (SGOA), and provided the associated computer visualizations, traffic analysis, design guidelines, and zoning recommendations. It considered the potential for compact, mixed-use (housing, office, and commercial) developments that are pedestrian, transit, and bicycle friendly.

The Fayville Village in Southborough was one of the three SGOA's, and the Smart Growth Plan proposed a more village-like feel. Building placement would be closer to Route 9 and parking was proposed to be sited behind the buildings. The proposed new growth was a relatively even mix of office, retail and residential. Specifically, land uses included an estimated mix of 44,650 square feet of office and 34,000 square feet of retail space. Some elements of this plan were implemented, e.g., Woodland Meadows (a 16-unit condominium community) and the Walgreens store both at the southwest corner of the Route 9/Oak Hill Road intersection.

## Active Organizations

Both regional and local government organizations support the Town in policy development, funding and the planning/implementation of transportation projects as well as ongoing operation of transit facilities.

### Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs)

The ten MPO's and three regional planning authorities within Massachusetts each develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), reflecting the needs of the regional transportation system. These are consolidated into The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) which lists priority transportation investments (highway, bridge, intermodal, and transit) for the next five fiscal years. Once the Main Street reconstruction program is completed in 2021, there are no current near-term STIP programs that will impact Southborough.

### Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

The MAPC represents 101 cities and towns in the metropolitan Boston area and as a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), has oversight responsibility for the region's federally funded transportation program. A key project that impacted Southborough was the 2014 Route 9 (Smart Growth Plan and Corridor Study).

### MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC)

The MWRC 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 goals include transportation as well as land use, municipal governance, mitigation of development impacts, and coordination of municipal services.

## 495/MetroWest Partnership

The 495/MetroWest Suburban Edge Community Commission was established by the Legislature in 2015 to examine the development challenges facing suburban edge communities in the 495/MetroWest region and determine how the Commonwealth's programs and initiatives can address their needs. The Commission was supported by the 495/MetroWest Partnership, a regional public-private nonprofit, established to serve the needs of thirty-five communities in the region and the Public Policy Center (PPC) at UMass Dartmouth. The February 2018 report, "Serving a SuperNexus for the Commonwealth's Economy", provides a synopsis of the development challenges considered by the Commission, documents regional constraints to growth, and identifies key findings to address these issues.

**Commented [JW36]:** Discuss providing hyperlink to this report at June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting – we have previously agreed to avoid having external hyperlinks as they are notoriously hard to maintain and frustrating for readers if they fail.

## MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA)

The MWRTA is one of 15 regional public transit authorities in Massachusetts and provides bus and paratransit service to eleven communities in the Boston MetroWest. Its mission is to "build a public transportation system to deliver convenient and dependable service that enhances mobility, environmental quality and economic vitality in the region". Funding for the MWRTA comes partially from the state and local governments of the communities it operates within. The Town has a local representative on this authority.

## Department of Public Works (DPW)

The Town DPW is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Town's infrastructure. This includes the Town's roadways, water system, transfer station, cemeteries, recreation fields, playgrounds, public grounds (including Southborough Schools), and the Town's vehicles (including the DPW, Police, Facilities, Recreation and Building Department) and administrative Fire Department vehicles).

## Public Works Planning Board (PWPB)

The PWPB provides strategic advice to the Select Board on planning, managing and finance of the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Town.

**Commented [JW37]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Notably inactive*

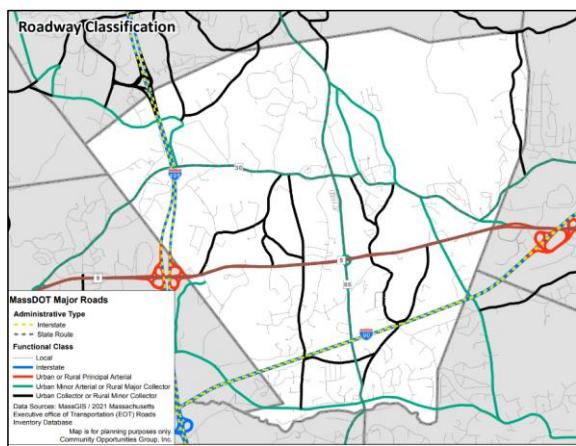
**Commented [JW38R37]:** Response from JW  
*This is a statement of the charge of the PWPB. This is an operational matter for the Select Board to address*

## Summary of Current Conditions

Southborough has retained a low-density rural/suburban character and is accessible because of its proximity to Route 9, the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90), and Interstate 495 (I-495) as well as the MBTA commuter rail. While advantageous to those living in the Town, this transport network access brings the disadvantage of enabling traffic from bordering communities to use local roadways to access the highways.

## Roadway Classification, Jurisdiction and Usage

The key components of the roadway network in Southborough are highlighted in the map in **Figure 6-1**.



**FIGURE 6-1 SOUTHBOROUGH'S ROADWAY CLASSIFICATION**

Responsibility for the roadway system is unchanged since 2008, with the majority governed by the Town; MassDOT has jurisdiction for Route 9 and sections of Route 30 and Route 85 and I-495.

**Table 6-2** shows the growth in traffic on selected roadways in the Town. The annualized growth rate is distorted by the impact of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic but traffic volumes on Route 9 and Route 30 have clearly increased in the last decade. Anecdotal evidence suggests traffic volumes are returning to normal in Spring, 2021.

	2010	2015	2019	2020	
Breakneck Hill Road, south of Route 9	2,800	2,700	2,800	2,600	0.0%
Flagg Road, north of Route 9	1,000	1,200	1,100	900	1.0%
Pine Hill Road at Framingham Town Line	2,900	2,700	2,600	1,900	-1.0%
White Bagley Road, north of Route 9	2,400	2,300	2,300	1,900	-0.4%
Route 9, west of Woodland Road	44,500	52,900	54,714	45,100	2.3%
Route 30, west of Valley Road	14,800	16,200	16,400	13,500	1.1%
Woodland Road, south of Route 9	5,700	4,000	3,756	3,000	-3.4%

Source: MassDOT Traffic Count Data

**TABLE 6-2 TRAFFIC GROWTH ON SELECT ROADWAYS IN SOUTHBOROUGH**

**Commented [JW39]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*How/why were these selected? Why not 85? What are the percentages? if 2010 - 2020, perhaps a column omitting 2020 to show the pandemic effect and provide a more accurate picture of "normal"*

Census data in **Table 6-3** suggests this growth is the result of “journey-to work” trips as well as new residential and commercial developments in neighboring communities.

Where Southborough Residents Work		Where Southborough Workers Live	
Boston	12.6%	Worcester	6.6%
Framingham	8.0%	Southborough	5.9%
Marlborough	5.7%	Marlborough	4.2%
Worcester	5.3%	Shrewsbury	3.7%
Waltham	3.2%	Boston	3.6%
Newton	2.6%	Framingham	3.3%
Cambridge	2.2%	Westborough	3.0%
Wellesley	1.5%	Northborough	2.8%
Milford	1.1%	Hopkinton	2.0%
Needham	0.9%	Hudson	1.8%
All other locations	56.7%	All other locations	63.1%
<b>Total Residents in the Workforce</b>	<b>5,240</b>	Total Southborough Jobs	<b>8,858</b>

Source:

TABLE 6-3 JOURNEY TO WORK DATA

Mode share data from the 2020 census in **Table 6-4**, reinforces this hypothesis because the majority of this travel is by car. It is unclear whether the 2020-2021 trend towards working from home will continue. Anecdotal evidence suggests that traffic volumes are returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Mode	Southborough %	Worcester County %
Single-Occupant Automobile	76.7%	79.8%
Multiple-Occupant Automobile	5.5%	7.9%
Public Transportation	5.4%	2.0%
Walk	1.6%	2.9%
Work at Home	10.2%	5.7%
Other Means of Transportation	0.5%	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: ACS 2014-2019

TABLE 6-4 MEANS OF COMMUTING TO WORK

Population expansion within the Town and development in neighboring towns continues to increase traffic volumes (for both automobiles and trucks), traffic speed, and congestion on Southborough’s roadways. Southborough’s major roadways and associated intersections are most frequently used during peak (morning and evening) commuter hours, with the Route 9 corridor, Route 85 near the Town Center and Route 30 from Parkerville Road to Willow Street experiencing significant volume and congestion. Despite the goals and recommendations defined in the 2008 Master Plan and the completion of the Main Street reconstruction project (from Sears Road to Park Street), these issues continue to be a significant concern for residents, so the Master Plan Committee has focused its attention on this critical area.

**Commented [JW40]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*What growth? Summing the percentages in table 6.2, I get a total DECREASE of 0.4%*  
*If pre-pandemic growth, say so and 6-2 needs the column. And explain why only these routes.*  
*This looks like data was selected to make a predetermined point.*

**Commented [JW41R40]:** Need to revisit both source and conclusions

**Commented [JW42]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Notably, Southborough itself is not significant*

**Commented [JW43R42]:** Revisit as per above response

**Commented [JW44]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Speed and congestion BOTH increased?*  
*Presumably not same time/place. Source? Can this be teased apart? E.g. where/when is the issue speed, and where/when is it congestion?*

The Town has worked to mitigate the impact of traffic congestion and safety risk via such approaches as increased traffic enforcement and use of radar-equipped speed measurement signs.

The 2021 Annual Town Meeting approved the use of State-permitted speed control laws, allowing the Select Board to implement a 25mph speed limit in thickly settled areas and a 20mph speed limit in MassDOT-approved “safety zones”.

Notwithstanding these initiatives, traffic safety will continue to be a strong concern for residents. The Town is undertaking a comprehensive traffic study, to identify better approaches for managing the flow of traffic through (and within) the Town. Consideration will be given to such steps as modifying speed limits, creating more one-way streets, implementing truck exclusions, etc..

## Public & Private Transportation

Options for public transportation are currently more limited than the similar options available in 2008. The MBTA commuter rail line between Boston and Worcester, continues to service Southborough but there has been no change in parking, park-and-ride or other facilities. The MWRTA bus route #7 connects Southborough to Framingham and Marlborough but the Local Connection on demand service from the Worcester Regional Transit Authority and the Boston Scientific commuter shuttle no longer operate. Note that private ride services such as Uber and Lyft do cover Southborough. However, these public options are not sufficient to provide a viable alternative to the use of private cars.

## Bicycles, Sidewalks, and Trails

An important aspect of enhancing accessibility within the Town is the development and improvement of bicycle and pedestrian routes. The [2015 Southborough Sidewalk Construction Recommendation Committee Report](#) defined a range of criteria and a ranking matrix for use in determining the relative priority of sidewalk projects. Some upgrades were made in 2018-2020 as part of the Main Street project but no other projects have been authorized and this remains an important opportunity. The MPC recommends establishing a dedicated Town committee to plan, coordinate and monitor progress in this area.

*Discussion of the Town’s Trail System is included in the Open Space and Recreation chapter of this plan.*

## Complete Streets Policy and Plan

The 2008 Master Plan report introduced the concept of a Complete Streets policy, providing guidance on the design, improvement and operation of streets to provide safe access for all users - pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

In September 2020, the Select Board endorsed the Complete Streets concept, issuing a formal statement outlining Southborough’s policy including the vision and purpose, the core commitment to including the principles of complete streets within capital projects, the best management practices and an implementation approach.

The purpose of the Town’s Policy is “to accommodate all users by continuing to develop a transportation network that meets the needs of residents, business and visitors who utilize a variety of transportation modes”.

**Commented [JW45]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Where did this come from? Is it supported by accident data, or just an amorphous worry?*

**Commented [JW46]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Confused. The paragraph is a mixture of public and private. Perhaps delete “public”. Or clarify - is the issue service availability, hours of operation, cost?*

**Commented [JW47R46]:** We need to decide if a lack of public transportation is a problem that needs to be addressed with a recommendation

**Commented [JW48]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*As a pedestrian, and a motorist who has to avoid pedestrians and bicycles: is there any safety data? I’ve stopped walking breakneck hill and frequently see unsafe interactions between cyclists and autos.*

**Commented [JW49]:** Hyperlink added – per Tim Litt

**Commented [JW50]:** Request to add hyperlink from Tim Litt

**Commented [JW51R50]:** Need to find where the policy statement/press release is on the Town internet

The policy is intended to incorporate Complete Streets principles within the planning, design, operation, and maintenance of the Town's roadways, providing the best possible combination of service, mobility, convenience, health and safety.

The Superintendent of the Department of Public Works has led the development of a comprehensive [Complete Streets – Project Prioritization Plan](#), listing 60 projects. This plan, along with the policy document, qualifies Southborough to receive technical assistance and construction funding for transportation projects from the State. The plan was submitted and approved in 2021 and the first grant, for projects 1 and 2 (Newton Street and Downtown railroad crossing) was confirmed in December 2021.

Only one grant of \$400k can be active at any one time; the 2022 request will be for projects 4, 5, 6 (Cordaville Road improvements).

### Shared Streets and Spaces Program

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) Shared Streets and Spaces grant program enables communities to make rapid changes to streets, sidewalks, and public spaces to improve social distancing and outdoor recreation assets in order to keep communities safe and thriving. In September 2020, Southborough received a grant of \$24,500 to be used to convert existing parking lots into safe outdoor seating areas, place picnic tables in green spaces, and purchase large tents and outdoor heaters for use by local restaurants. In addition, the grant allows the purchase of planters and bicycle racks.

The Town received an additional award of \$290,000.00 to support construction of a restructured intersection at Marlboro Road (Route 85) and St. Mark's Street, including new sidewalks, improved stormwater system, a new plaza / gathering area adjacent to the Public Library, paths around the "Old Burial Ground" (with future plans for a "Southborough History Walk")—all to create an educational gathering area for Town residents and students. The project will expand the sidewalk network from the Main Street (Route 30) Reconstruction project and create new off-road paths to improve pedestrian connectivity and gathering spaces within the Downtown area.

## Objective, Goals and Recommendations

The current state of the Town's transportation network highlights a range of issues and opportunities for improvement. The MPC has identified five key areas of focus to support the objective of improving accessibility and connectivity within the town:

- Managing the impact of the growth of traffic using our local roads
- Connecting the north and south sides of the town
- Providing more opportunities for use of public i.e., shared transport facilities
- Making the Town more environmentally friendly with bicycle and pedestrian access.

These are reflected in the following goals and recommendations.

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE TOWN</b>	
#	<b>GOAL</b>
CT-1.0	Develop the infrastructure necessary to support vehicular movement while improving safety, reducing pollution and preserving scenic vistas within the Town
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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
CT-1.2	Define the options for encouraging/incenting 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
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)
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
CT-1.5	Develop a comprehensive program to incent the use of electric vehicles, e.g., 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
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
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

#	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
#	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
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
CT-2.3	Explore the opportunity to provide additional/sufficient commuter rail station parking capacity such as expanding into adjacent lots or adding an upper deck to the existing parking area. Develop approach/plan to provide funding and develop these solutions
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
CT-2.5	Develop approach/plan to connect to selected regional transit services

#	GOAL
CT-3.0	Develop approach/plan to connect all parts of the Town with pedestrian/cycle access to improve ease of commuting, recreation and social interaction
#	RECOMMENDATIONS
CT-3.1	Establish a Pedestrian and Bicycling Committee to be responsible for developing and implementing the Master Plan recommendations relating to public walkways and cycle paths. The committee should leverage Southborough's “complete streets design” status
CT-3.2	Define trail/sidewalk “spine” structure to provide pedestrian/cyclist access to all parts of the 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
CT-3.3	Develop plan for constructing sidewalks in selected individual neighborhoods and for repairing/upgrading existing sidewalks
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
CT-3.5	Develop plan for constructing pedestrian walkways across five causeways (Boston Road, White Bagley Road, Cordaville Road (2), Middle Road)
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.

**Commented [JW52]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Ensure universal access to public buildings and facilities - pedestrian, bicycle.*

**Commented [JW53R52]:** Note that Goals PS-4.0 addresses this topic  
*With ADA/SPAC, I've been fighting for the inexcusably omitted non-vehicle access to the public safety building (and golf course) since its opening. The lack of progress belies the Town's stated concerns for pedestrians, cyclists, youth.*

# 7

## HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

“Develop an enhanced sense of community”

### Introduction

Southborough residents have always valued the Town’s historic and cultural resources, and the outreach during the development of this Master Plan identified a related, and even more important issue – the need to encourage and nurture a “sense of community”.

This chapter includes two sections – Historic Resources and Cultural and Community Resources. Each section contains an outline of accomplishments since 2008, including an assessment of current conditions/resources with associated organizations and a summary of goals and recommendations. Note that an important component of community resources, the Town’s natural resources, is not included in this chapter because it deserves particular focus, which it is given in Chapter 5 - Open Space, Natural Resources and Recreation.

### Vision Open House and Vision Survey Responses

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

### Historic Resources

The protection and management of the Southborough’s historic resources continues to be an important activity, helping to ensure that the unique character of the Town is maintained. The Vision Open House and Survey for the 2021 Master Plan highlighted the importance of community education and engagement in heightening awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Southborough’s historical resources. This additional focus is reflected in the goals and recommendations of this section of the Master Plan.

## Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

The table below indicates the status of the 2008 Master Plan goals that focused primarily on the Town's historic resources.

2008 GOAL #	GOAL DESCRIPTION	GOAL STATUS
NCR-4	Encourage architectural quality and the preservation of community character	Zoning by-laws and design guidelines adopted since 2008 encourage the preservation of historic buildings and architectural quality
NCR-5	Establish guidelines for preserving and enhancing existing architectural and historic character and its context, as identified by the Cultural Resources Survey (2000)	Annual Town meeting in 2016 approved the expenditure of CPA funds to place a preservation restriction on the historic Barnett-Garfield property at 84 Main Street  Main Street has been accepted for inclusion in the National Historic Register of Historic Districts
NCR-6	Establish guidelines that encourage new development to conform to the architectural and historic character and context of Southborough's existing buildings	Design guidelines were drafted along with the new Downtown zoning district
NCR-7	Create and enhance cultural opportunities and activities in Southborough	The Town is looking forward to its Tricentennial and has formed a Tricentennial Committee to plan the celebration

**Commented [JW54]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
These are on-offs justified individually. Were "guidelines" established, or does this continue to be ad-hoc? Reference guidelines, or their lack continues to be an issue.

**Commented [JW55]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Is this all? We have an active cultural arts council, library, and council on aging. All with programs created since 2008 that seem to fit...

Other accomplishments of note summarized below:

**Community Preservation Funds:** Funds have been used to support several historical projects since 2008, notably archiving the Town's historical collection, implementing climate control in the Town's History Museum, and preserving a civil war flag. Funds have also been applied toward the National Historic District application process, repairs to the Old Burial Ground and the 2016 adoption of a preservation restriction on the 84 Main Street property.

**Demolition Delay Bylaw:** This bylaw was adopted at the April, 2015 town meeting. This bylaw aims to protect and preserve significant buildings and structures within the Town with distinctive features of architectural or historical interest. The focus is to encourage property owners to seek alternatives to demolition, by preserving, rehabilitating or restoring such buildings, through collaboration with the Historical Commission.

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

**Historic Homes Sign Program:** This program was introduced in 2014 to enhance the appearance of older homes and promote community awareness of our local history. Approximately 50 signs of these signs have been installed to date, with more added each year.

Two historical properties were noted in the 2008 report.

- The South Union School building has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 2011. The Town currently owns the building and is considering options for alternate uses of the property, which could include sale to a private developer or conversion to affordable housing
- Peters High School Annex was saved from demolition in 2009. It housed the old police station. When the police and fire facilities were replaced by the Public Safety Building in 2019, these properties were sold to St. Mark's School. Future plans for the property are not yet known.

## Active Organizations

There are two main organizations that work with local government and regional grouped to ensure the protection of the Town's historic assets.

### Historical Commission

This Historical Commission has an unusually broad charter, based on State law, giving it independent authority to do things that other Town boards and committees cannot do independently (such as hold hearings, sign agreements/contracts, accept gifts, and appoint staff). The Commission's members are appointed by the Select Board and are charged with preserving and protecting historic assets in Southborough—including responsibility for conducting research, undertaking surveys and making recommendations on property certification. The Commission's website provides links to other organizations involved in this area (e.g., Massachusetts Historical Commission, Preservation Massachusetts National Register of Historic Places, and PreservationDirectory.com)

### Southborough Historical Society

This private organization has a broad membership and is managed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership. The Society's goals include collecting, preserving and studying the historical records and antiquities of the Town, as well as preserving items of current events that may have historical interest in the future, and utilizing these resources to educate residents about the Town's history. The Society hosts educational events and raises funds to support its mission.

**Commented [JW56]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Relationship to Town; Town support. Leases space from the town.  
Didn't a CPC article entrust a flag to the society?

Both the Commission and the Society continue to be active in identifying and pursuing opportunities to preserve historic resources throughout the Town.

## Summary of Current Conditions

The Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) enables users to search the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) database for information on historic properties and areas in the Commonwealth. As of April, 2021, there are 849 entries for Southborough properties.

Of these, 397 have a completed MHC Inventory Form, 31 are on the State Register of Historic Places and 7 have a completed National Register Nomination Form. A major focus of the Commission over the past decade has been to complete the application and approval process for a **National Historic Register District** that includes properties along Latisquama Road, Main Street, Middle Road, and Cordaville Road

(designated as the “Downtown District”). This application has recently been approved, to create Southborough’s first National Register Historic District.

The map in **Figure 7-1** shows the Town's Historic Resources

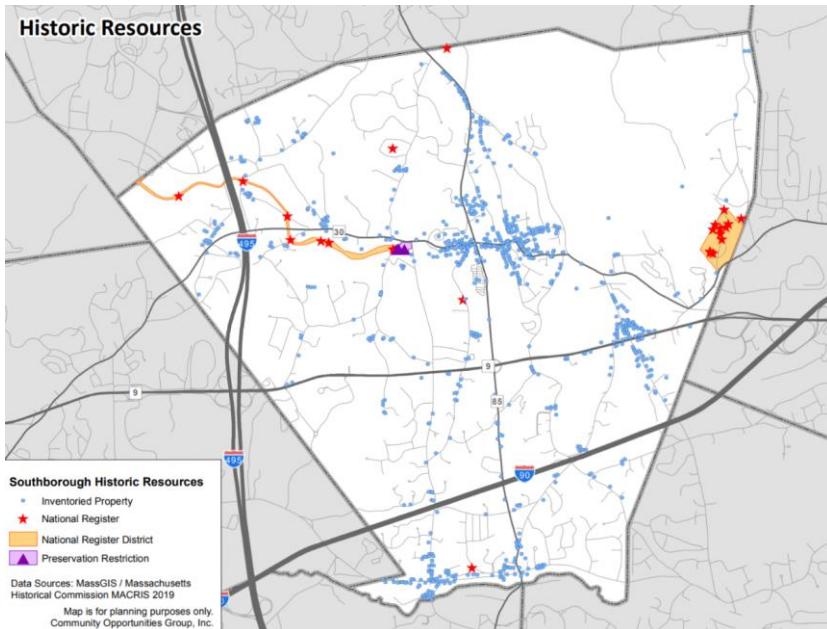


FIGURE 7-1 SOUTHBOROUGH'S HISTORIC RESOURCES

## Objective, Goals and Recommendations

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP AN ENHANCED SENSE OF COMMUNITY</b>	
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>
HC-1.0	Protect and preserve all historical assets of the Town of Southborough
<b>#</b> <b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
HC-1.1	Complete the process to establish a National Register District in the Downtown area
HC-1.2	Incorporate heightened awareness and appreciation of Southborough's historic resources within the Town's Tricentennial Celebrations in 2027
HC-1.3	Educate residents about the history of Southborough through innovative programming and events in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society
HC-1.4	Expand school outreach, in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society, to increase children's awareness of Southborough history

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-1.6	Work to support the Southborough Historical Society to preserve, catalog, and digitize historical archives for the benefit of all
HC-1.7	Encourage the use of the Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings Bylaw to preserve and renew historically significant structures for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century

## Community and Cultural Resources

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

- Investment in the “Downtown Initiative” with the objective of providing “a walkable and well-connected small town “Main Street” with locally owned small businesses and appropriately scaled residential properties
- Continuing to support the community services and cultural programs available to residents
- Creating a strategic plan for the development of community gathering spaces, including the assessment/evaluation of requirements and evaluation of funding options.

The Downtown Initiative is included in Chapter 4 - Economic Development. This chapter covers the second two topics.

## Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

The Southborough Players group has disbanded but the Southborough Cultural Arts Council (SCAC) continues to be an active group within the community, administering annual grant monies from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Examples of grants from 2019 include Art on the Trails, Library’s Vision Board Spirit Collage, Interboro Community Band winter concert, Southborough Recreation 7th Annual Summer Concert Series and the Pilgrim Church annual Messiah presentation.

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

## Active Organizations

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

## Southborough Youth and Family Services

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

- Support services e.g., mental health and other counselling
- Prevention services (e.g., stress management, mentoring)
- Needs-based support (e.g., fuel assistance and emergency funding)
- Community involvement (e.g., panel presentation, co-sponsorship of summer concert series).

The department also provides referrals for support services and links to external partners. Expansion of this referral function over the past few years has been an important aspect of the YFS strategic plan. By identifying and partnering with third party support programs (funded by resources outside of the Town), the YFS staff has greatly expanded the number of residents that can be supported from the relatively small YFS annual budget.

## Council on Aging

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

**Commented [JW57]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
But there has been some recent growth. And a plan to increase staff.  
Also, isn't this properly the Youth Commission, which runs the YFS department? Or at least credit the commission...

**Commented [JW58R57]:** This paragraph is taken from the Town website – need to decide how best to update

**Commented [JW59]:** Clarified that the COA is the active organization and the Senior Center is the building – per Tim Litt

## Southborough Library

The Southborough Library is dedicated to lifelong learning and interests, providing a range of services, programs, historical collections, and technology to the local community. Founded in 1852, the library has a 6-member elected Board of Library Trustees and is supported by the Friends of the Southborough Library. A [5 Year Strategic Plan](#) was developed in 2019 and includes goals and objectives aimed at improving the library facility, expanding usage/programs and developing partnerships with other community groups.

## Summary of Current Conditions

There is a range of cultural groups and activities within the Town including:

- The Southborough Cultural Arts Council (SCAC) with a goal to "serve the largest possible number of people in the community with a diversity of age groups and artistic disciplines, including the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences". The Council maintains the Arts Center as well as providing programs, events, exhibitions, and classes.
- Heritage Day, held each Fall, continues to be a highlight of the cultural calendar, providing an opportunity for the community to join together to celebrate its common past. A range of other events for all ages are organized and sponsored within the Town, for example, Easter Egg Hunt, Art on the Trails, Summer Concert Series and Summer Nights, Heritage Day, Thanksgiving Gobble Wobble, and Santa Day.

- Southborough has seven churches, a community food pantry, children and youth groups such as Kindergroup (a town wide playgroup), scouts, sports teams, a gardener's group as well branches of service/charitable organizations such as the Rotary Club.
- A number of local news sources cover Southborough including the Community Advocate and MetroWest Daily News. A local "blogger" manages and maintains the "MySouthborough.com" site. Established in 2008 this blog provides a broad range of articles and features on all aspects of life within the Town.

## Future Opportunities

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

The first is the creation of community gathering spaces. The Capital Planning Committee has already studied this topic with a preliminary space needs assessment. A number of alternatives have been suggested to meet this need (e.g., expansion of the library, re-purposing of existing buildings such as the Woodward School) but the MPC believes that this topic merits the development of a specific strategic plan including a detailed requirements analysis, evaluation of options and funding needs and a comprehensive implementation plan. This is reflected in the goal/recommendations below, including the creation of a separate Community Center Committee.

The second opportunity is to improve the collaboration and communication between the Town's government and the community at large. The goal/recommendations below propose several ways this could be achieved without adding significant workload for the Town's salaried and volunteer staff. The experience during the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted some important lessons and opportunities about connecting the public to Town government, as follows:

- Upcoming Board and Committee meetings are listed on Southborough's Home page at <https://www.southboroughtown.com>, often with links to the meeting agendas and materials, as available. Agendas are made available at least 48 hours before a public meeting
- Southborough Government meetings can be accessed online. Virtual Zoom meetings were used extensively during the coronavirus pandemic, where in-person meetings in front of the public were not possible. This has provided access for residents to connect with Town leaders online, particularly for people with disabilities, those who are house-bound, or those who have busy lives. An opportunity exists to maintain this increased access to Town government into the future
- Historically, many Town meetings were recorded on Southborough Access Media (SAM). During the coronavirus pandemic, meetings were held online via Zoom and recorded live to YouTube. This "electronic access" improves accessibility and provides a more usable permanent record of issues, discussion and decisions that affect Southborough
- Also, since 2008 Master Plan, Southborough has made a major investment in increasing transparency and fostering participation by the public with town government - specifically by making digital/electronic meeting materials available prior to each meeting. This communication promotes a community where members of the public can develop an informed opinion and speak up during the public comment period in meetings.

**Commented [JW60]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*This is not a traditional news source. It is a useful resource run with enthusiasm, but it's not run by a journalist or to journalistic standards. OTOH, it also hosts and amplifies vitriolic attacks on town volunteers and employees, almost always by anonymous commentators. I'm not sure that it's a good idea for the MPC to endorse it. We also lost the community-run Southborough Villager - since the 2008 plan? It provide much better coverage than the CA/MWDN, which largely treat Southborough as an afterthought.*

**Commented [JW61R60]:** I don't believe we are endorsing My Southborough - we are stating that it exists  
*Let's review how to update*

**Commented [JW62]:** Updated to reflect feedback from Jason Malinowski. See also update to goal HC-2.0

**Commented [JW63R62]:** Jason references the Neary School project - how can we incorporate this?

**Commented [JW64]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*This is a best practice - but not universal. Some groups are quite good. Others try but fail. And some actively resist for various reasons.*

*HC3.5 covers this - but this section shouldn't imply that it's already in place.*

The primary emphasis for this electronic access has been for the Select Board and permitting boards (such as the Board of Health, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Conservation Commission), but an important related benefit has been greatly expanded public access to many boards that most of the public had never even been aware of. The MPC recommends all Town boards and committees (including ad hoc) should consider adoption of at least portions of this expanded electronic access for the public going forward.

## Objective, Goals and Recommendations

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP AN ENHANCED SENSE OF COMMUNITY</b>	
#	<b>GOAL</b>
HC-2.0	Establish a Community Center Committee with responsibility for developing a strategic plan for the development of community gathering spaces
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
HC-2.1	Define and document the requirements for community gathering spaces, with input from residents and stakeholders across the community
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
HC-2.3	Develop financial funding and implementation plans for each community gathering space option and solicit feedback from the Town
HC-2.4	Gain approval at Town Meeting for the proposed community gathering spaces

**Commented [JW65]:** Updated to include separate committee – avoids having to add new recommendation

#	<b>GOAL</b>
HC-3.0	Improve the level of collaboration and engagement between the Town's government and the community at large
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
HC-3.1	Explore the options for enhancing communication with residents, schools, local businesses, and community groups, including determining the resourcing/funding required and how best to apply current and emerging technologies
HC-3.2	Provide a welcome letter/information packet for new residents/businesses
HC-3.3	Hold bi-annual "All Boards" meetings to provide a more structured process by which boards and commissions can communicate with the Select Board (SB)
HC-3.4	Develop volunteer recruitment, support, and recognition programs to encourage residents to serve on Town boards and commissions
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
HC-3.6	Encourage boards to share, read and review all relevant meeting minutes from other boards regarding issues properly before them, e.g., the three permitting boards – Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), Planning Board (PB), Conservation Commission(CC)
HC-3.7	Continue to use the virtual Zoom meeting facilities established during the coronavirus pandemic, including when conflicts between meeting times occur, as allowed by Massachusetts General Law (MGL)

**Commented [JW66]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Every 2 years? There are about 60 boards/committees/commissions (etc). This is not likely to be a "structured process". If each one sent two people, it would be the size of a Town Meeting quorum! Independently elected boards don't report to the SB. Periodic updates on some smaller scale would seem to be more feasible/practical.*

**Commented [JW67]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Is this not happening? Really? It seems to say that boards aren't doing due diligence...*

HC-3.8	Coordinate with the Town Clerk and Town Moderator to investigate the potential for in-person electronic voting at Town Meetings
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# PUBLIC SERVICES, RESILIENCY AND SCHOOLS

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

## Introduction

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

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

MA Department of Revenue (DOR) data for 2021 shows that Southborough’s per-capita income places it in the top 15 communities in the State, which makes the Town an affluent suburb.

Southborough receives relatively little funding from non-local sources and relies largely on its own residents and businesses for financial support. Although Southborough has basic, core Infrastructure, much of this Infrastructure is relatively old, some is obsolete, and much is hard-pressed to accommodate the personnel, equipment, technology, and records storage functions that the Town’s government organizations need to run efficiently. The major exception to this is the new Public Safety Building, which opened in 2019. In terms of the services and functional elements of the Infrastructure, Southborough has some historically under-staffed departments and functions, due in part to the Town’s commitment to funding for excellent schools. This has created funding pressure relative to municipal government Infrastructure needs.

Like residents of other affluent towns, Southborough voters have traditionally supported their public schools and worked hard to ensure that their children receive an excellent education. Good schools benefit a community’s families and help to preserve high property values for everyone, so investing in public schools is very important. In addition, many people come into contact with school buildings—

**Commented [JW68]:** This remains a very detailed introduction – do we want to streamline?

**Commented [JW69]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Sure. But it's also the case that the local funding is the regressive property tax.*  
*Concern for overburdening the lower income and senior citizens, as well as the affluent's resistance to taxes and "big government" drives lower available funds than the per-capita income would suggest.*  
*The demographic shift toward seniors noted earlier exacerbates this, especially since seniors altruistically tend to support the schools.*

parents and children, but also residents participating in town meetings or other community activities that take place inside school facilities. In contrast, relatively few people venture inside most other public buildings (with a few exceptions such as the Library). Residents may go to the Town House or go to the transfer station or go online to pay a tax bill, purchase a dog license, or obtain a copy of a birth certificate, but except for the most motivated and/or active citizens who routinely attend meetings of Town boards, a relatively small percentage of Southborough's population takes a close look at the Town's Infrastructure. This makes it challenging to build a constituency for high-quality Infrastructure which often causes both ordinary maintenance and capital improvements to be deferred for many years. This could be described as a "it seems to work so why invest in it" attitude. The result of this dynamic is that this aging/fragile Infrastructure is critical for effective use of town resources and for the delivery of the quantity of and the quality of public services that Town residents increasingly expect.

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

One important pending funding opportunity is the evolving Federal stimulus legislation, arising from the coronavirus pandemic. The Town has already benefitted from several of these programs, and other similar programs are being considered by the Federal and State government. The details for some of these programs are still evolving, but it is likely that the Town will have access to significant funding for Infrastructure and other purposes. This may support investment in some major projects that otherwise would not be possible, and the Town is active in remaining informed about these programs and in pursuing available funding for key projects. However, this is short term opportunity, and is not expected to continue past 2024-2026. Other funding sources must be identified to fill the gaps to carry the town to 2030.

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

## Vision Open House and Vision Survey Responses

The Master Plan Committee (MPC) gathered public input from a variety of sources, including public comment at Master Plan Committee meetings, an Open House event and a Town-wide opinion survey. The statements and questions presented in the open house and survey focused on increasing the vitality

**Commented [JW70]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
The Municipal Technology Committee is responsible for a long-range (5 year rolling) strategic plan covering a broad range of technologies.

**Commented [JW71R70]:** Note added at this point – covered in separate section

**Commented [JW72]:** Updated per suggestion from Tim Litt

**Commented [JW73]:** Additional comment per Tim Litt

of Southborough's villages, planning for public/community spaces, utilizing commercial space for tax revenue, improving connectivity, and enhancing community resiliency.

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

## Public Services and Facilities

### Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

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

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

The status of the 2008 Master Plan goals is shown in the table below.

2008 GOAL #	GOAL DESCRIPTION	GOAL STATUS
MF-1	Establish new or improved/upgraded facilities for public safety	A new public safety building was completed in 2019
MF-2	Establish a new community center for use by residents of all ages	Although this goal has not been completed it is being investigated. The possibility of using Woodward School as a community center and rebuilding the Neary School is one idea being floated. Funding for a Neary feasibility study is before voters at the 2022 ATM

**Commented [JW74]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*Except that it's only accessible by car, leaving youth, pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-drivers unable to access it.*

MF-3	Increase sewage/septic options in Town and at municipal facilities	A sewage feasibility study was completed for the Downtown and one is in progress for Route 9
MF-4	Enhance communication with residents and among town boards, commissions and staff	Since 2008 the Town hired its first IT director and formed a Municipal Technology Committee, through whose effort's communication abilities have greatly increased and continue to improve
MF-5	Enhance facilities for town staff and departments	The Town recently conducted a space needs study to determine the most efficient and functional manner to address the space needs of Town government
MF-6	Create a process for identifying and disposing of surplus town-owned property	The Capital Planning Committee completed an inventory of town-owned property. One building has been disposed of and the repurposing of another is being explored

## Active Organizations

Southborough's municipal services are provided by the departments and individuals listed in **Table 8-1**.

There are also multiple [Boards and Committees](#) within the Town, led and staffed by volunteers.

Administration	Planning and Development	Community Services
Town Administrator	Building/Zoning	Public Library
Town Clerk	Conservation	Recreation Department
Moderator	Planning	Senior Center
School Department	Economic Development	Veterans' Agent
Personnel Board		Veterans' Grave Officer
Town Counsel		Youth and Family Services
Finance and Taxes	Public Safety and Health	Infrastructure
Assessors	Animal Control Officer	Facilities
Town Accountant	Board of Health	Public Works
Treasurer/Collector	Fire Department	Technology
	Police Department	

*Source: Southborough Town website (February 2022)*

TABLE 8-1 SOUTHBOROUGH'S MUNICIPAL SERVICES

**Commented [JW75]:** Comment from Tim Litt.  
*Inconsistent. Mish-mash of oversight, who delivers, and the service delivered.*  
*list orgs, not places? Recreation is the service; Department (under its commission) is what provides it.*  
*Board of Library Trustees, Council on Aging, Youth Commission. Similarly, Board of Health is the oversight, Health Department delivers, and Public Health is the service.*

**Commented [JW76R75]:** June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting to decide what we want to show here – this structure reflects what is on the Town website under the link for “Departments”

## Summary of Current Conditions

Southborough's public facilities and schools are shown in Figure 8-2 below.

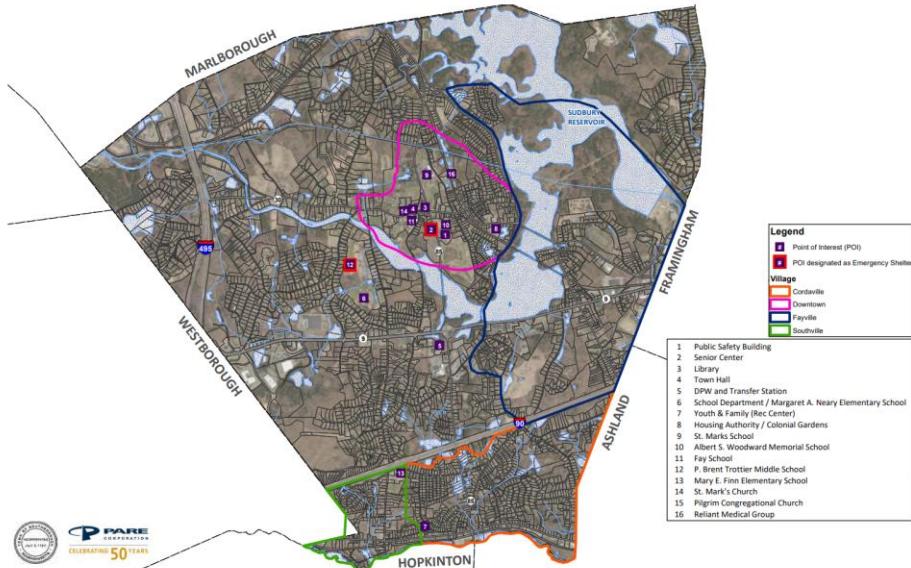


FIGURE 8-2 SOUTHBOROUGH'S PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND SCHOOLS

## Municipal Services and Infrastructure

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

### Public Health

The Town has made considerable progress with broadening its Public Health service beyond the traditional "environmental" services (i.e., septic system inspections) which was the primary focus at the time of the 2008 Master Plan. The Board of Health and the Health Department staff have led the Town's successful response to the coronavirus pandemic, through such activities as case reporting, contact tracing and vaccination clinics. The Board of Health has also expanded its service capabilities through grant funding and regionalization efforts to provide enhanced capabilities in such areas as food and

**Commented [JW77]:** Comment from Tim Litt

Legend barely legible. Markers invisible.

These maps need to be fold-out/pop-up, links to full-size, otherwise enhanced. Or omitted.

**Commented [JW78]:** Comment from Tim Litt

This is rather skewed. The town was a leader in tobacco control regulations. It has provided Flu vaccine clinics for years, and done mandatory case reporting and tracking of non-covid disease. It has been involved in tick/mosquito borne illness control (lyme, EEE, etc.). It has been involved in the breakneck hill dump issue for years, and is responsible for conditions at the transfer station (operated by DPW).

It is the case that due to chronic underinvestment, other health issues that is required to address have not been adequately addressed. Food and Housing inspections, which were done on a limited basis before the pandemic, were pushed aside by the pandemic response.

Planning for remedying a long list of deficiencies proceeded the pandemic, and included both adequate staffing for core services, and regionalization where appropriate. BOH commissioned and received a report from former resident and BOH member Louis Fazen. The BOH website has this report, and a document on foundational services.

The common belief that the pandemic's end will allow the BOH staffing to resume its previous, inadequate levels inhibits long-term funding, planning, and stability and should not be reinforced here. This needs to be revised to be more complete, balanced, accurate, and supportive of the BOH. I can't do it justice in a comment...nor should I be the author.

**Commented [JW79R78]:** BOH are reviewing the plan and will provide feedback on May 1st

housing inspections, as well as with enforcement in the areas of alcohol and tobacco regulations. The Town's public health service is well positioned to continue its evolution toward a more comprehensive support of an appropriately wide range of health services for Town residents.

## Technology

One increasingly important component of today's public Infrastructure is technology - for enabling Town employees to serve the public effectively and for enabling the public to use, and be informed about, public services. Technology had a very minor role in the 2008 Master Plan. Technology capabilities generally have made significant advancements in the past decade since the 2008 Master Plan was developed and the role of technology in Southborough's government has also advanced significantly during this time. The Town's internal technology staffing and technology capabilities have increased over the past decade, supported by the activities of the Municipal Technology Committee (MTC), formed in early 2018.

**Commented [JW80]:** Updated to reflect comments from Tim Litt

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

- Most of the Town's technology infrastructure has been replaced in the past four years- with a small number of servers, printers and other technology components coming due for replacement in the near future
- Most of the software systems are leveraged via a SaaS (software as a service) model (consistent with industry "best practices"), where a vendor is responsible for the provisioning of the infrastructure and software and the Town acts as consumers only
- The Town maintains servers and infrastructure for systems where no SaaS equivalent exists or where privacy and/or security issues prevent moving the applications to the cloud
- The Town's technology staff has supported the successful transition to remote work and remote meetings during the pandemic, which has allowed the Town government to operate effectively during this time and has created the structure to support continued remote operation as may be useful.

The Town's Information Technology staff, supported by the MTC, has worked to deliver the needed support and to plan for future technology needs. The Town has supported these efforts by investing additional resources for technology. The MTC has created the Town's first Technology Strategy, which establishes the following objectives:

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

**Commented [JW81]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*The town has had difficulty recruiting and retaining technology staff, resulting in an overloaded department of 1. This needs to be addressed to ensure that the town's increasing dependence on technology can be satisfied and that the employee(s) can have satisfying work-life balanced careers.*

**Commented [JW82R81]:** To be reviewed at June 1<sup>st</sup> MPC meeting – this feels more like an operational/management issue?

**Commented [JW83]:** Updated to clarify responsibility – per Tim Litt

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

### Public Accessibility

Another area of renewed focus for this Master Plan process is the consideration of public accessibility for municipal facilities and services. This includes the traditional issues of physical access (e.g., facility access via ramps, elevators, signage, etc., under the ADA and other legislation), information access via enhanced technology and access to facilities and programs for all members of the community.

**Commented [JW84]:** Updated to reflect feedback from Tim Litt

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

The SPAC initiated an [ADA Title II Self-Assessment](#) that reviewed and assessed all Town facilities and functions to identify any shortfalls in public accessibility and to develop a plan for addressing the identified shortfalls. The continuation of this process, its expansion to all forms of accessibility, public outreach, prevention, and addressing the identified issues is a key recommendation for this current Master Plan.

**Commented [JW85]:** Updated as per comment from Tim Litt

**Commented [JW86R85]:** Need to confirm this is the link to the correct document

**Commented [JW87R85]:** The original section on Individual Accessibility was in Chapter 6 and suggested that the self-assessment was completed before the SPAC was established? Need to confirm

### Municipal Facilities

Southborough's government operates from seven buildings, most located in the Town's historic population nodes: the town center and the villages of Cordaville and Southville. As of April 2022, there are 20 departments and 138 employees, including Police, Fire and DPW. Below is a description of the municipal facilities summarized in **Table 8-3**.

Facility	Location	Functions	Acres	Year Built/Renovated	GFA	Condition	Accessible
Town House	Common Street	Government Offices	2.0	1900/1978	8,872	Good	Some gaps
Library	Main Street	Library	1.7	1911/1989	5,262	Good	Some gaps
Public Safety (Police/Fire)*	Cordaville Road	Public Safety	5.0	2019	35,000	New	Some gaps
Arts Center	Highland Street	Recreation	3.0	1911	9,833	Good	Some gaps
Cordaville Hall	Cordaville Road	Senior Center	1.7	1914/1988	9,988	Fair	Some gaps
DPW Garage	Cordaville Road	Offices, Transfer Station	5.0	1969/2000	19,769	Good	Some gaps
Cemetery Building	Cordaville Road	Offices, Storage		1977	4,800	Fair	Some gaps

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

TABLE 8-3 SOUTHBOROUGH'S MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

**Commented [JW88]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Only by automobile. This is an example of the difference between technical ADA compliance and actual accessibility for all members of the community

**Commented [JW89R88]:** Amended from Yes to Some Gaps

## Town Hall

The Southborough Town House on Common Street, situated in an enclave of civic and institutional buildings, serves as Southborough's principal government office building. Nine departments are located at the Town House. Together, these departments handle Southborough's core administration and finance responsibilities. Most of them also provide staff support to town boards and committees that meet at the Town House or available space in other public buildings.

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

**Commented [JW90]:** Hyperlink to be added – need to know where the document is on the Town website

The Flagg School, a historic structure built in 1859 as one of the five original schoolhouses in Southborough is located on the same site as the Town House. Relocated from its original site at the intersection of Flagg and Deerfoot Roads, it was preserved and now provides limited museum space and some additional storage and office space for the Southborough Historical Society, which leases space in this building from the Town.

## Southborough Library

The Southborough Library, constructed in 1911 occupies a prominent location at the corner of Route 30 and Route 85 in the town center. The library has 6 full-time and 14 part-time staff members and is overseen by a 6-member elected Library Board of Trustees. In addition to books and other materials in circulation, the library has a small local history collection that includes historic books, town reports, local yearbooks, photographs, and various historical documents about the Town.

**Commented [JW91]:** Removed reference to Public Library as per Ryan Donovan

Over the past several years, the Library has initiated significant expansion of its electronic resources and its programming efforts—both of which have resulted in increased “reach and engagement” with the community.

**Commented [JW92]:** Minor wordsmithing from Ryan Donovan

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

**Commented [JW93]:** Minor wordsmithing from Ryan Donovan

## Public Safety Building

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

### Arts Center

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

### Cordaville Hall

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

### Public Works Facility

The Southborough Public Works Department is responsible for highway, water, tree, cemetery and solid waste and recycling services. Its main facility, south of Route 9, was constructed in 1968, renovated in 1995 and improved most recently in 2000. The complex includes a two-story highway garage and a transfer station (for landfill waste and for recycling). The DPW employs 15 people and has limited space for offices, storage of vehicles, equipment and records, and parking. The condition of the Transfer Station requires ongoing maintenance work, but this maintenance work has been determined to be "manageable" over the coming years. The Town owns property adjacent to the existing DPW facility, which can allow for future expansion as may be needed.

### Cemetery Building

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

### Public Water Supply

Although Southborough does not have a sewer system, public water service is available in 85% of the town. Water is provided to more than 3,000 residential, commercial and institutional customers. Residential uses, including residential institutions account for approximately 95% of all water service connections and 87% of total annual water consumption. Southborough's other noteworthy source of water demand, commercial development, represents about 4% of all service connections and 9% of total water consumption. The water department, part of the Department of Public Works (DPW), is primarily managed as a self-supported enterprise fund, with income from water rates. Large capital items are funded through the Town's capital process.

**Commented [JW94]:** Paragraph amended to incorporate feedback from Tim Litt

Southborough purchases water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and delivers it to residents and businesses through an 86-mile network of water mains owned and maintained by the town. Water is withdrawn from the MWRA's MetroWest Water Supply Tunnel at two locations in Southborough - a pumping station located off Northborough Road and a second located adjacent to the Hultman Aqueduct Shaft No. 3 in the northeastern part of town. In addition to water

mains, Southborough's water distribution system includes three storage facilities with a total of two million gallons of storage capacity, with 1.2 million gallons of usable capacity - the Fiddlers Green Reservoir in the northwest part of town, and the Clear Hill and Oak Hill Standpipes in the east part of town.

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

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

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

By an intermunicipal agreement, Southborough provides MWRA water to Ashland. Implementation of this agreement included some upgrades to Southborough's mains and pumps, which Ashland paid for.

The Town has evaluated options for increasing water storage capacity. Alternate storage sites have been ranked according to a set of criteria, such as elevation, proximity to a water supply, site access, ownership, and soil conditions. **Table 8-4** reports the highest-ranked sites identified in the evaluation process. Upgrading of the Town's water distribution system would be relatively costly but should be considered for longer-term capital investment. Town population growth has been slow enough over the past decade to make the need for additional water storage capacity less pressing than originally projected, but this issue remains open for consideration in the Town's capital planning.

Site/Facility Type	Map/Lot Number	Location	Site Ownership	Cost
Site 2/At Grade	Map 33, Lot 41	Tara Road	Town	\$1,237,500
Site 1/At Grade	Map 27, Lot 40	Fairview Road	Town	\$1,546,000
Site 18/At Grade	Map 24, Lot 3	Vicinity of I-495, N of Route 9	Capital Properties Group	\$1,673,800
Site 21/Existing	Map 49, Lot 9	James Carroll WTF	MWRA	\$1,910,000
Site 20/At Grade		I-495 Interchange, Westborough	State	\$1,925,000
Site 16C/At Grade	Map 11, Lot 2	Vicinity of I-495, S of Route 9	EMC Corporation	\$2,225,000

*Source: Pare Engineering, Tank Siting Analysis (January 2008), ES-iii.*

**TABLE 8-4 POTENTIAL WATER STORAGE FACILITIES**

## Wastewater and Stormwater

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

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

## Local Government

### Form of Government

Southborough has a hybrid form of local government; it has both professional staff and many volunteer committees (with approximately 200 residents as members). Planning for the Town’s present and future space needs must account for the kind of government the Town has chosen for itself.

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

### Municipal Finance

Southborough pays for community services with property taxes, state aid, other local revenues such as motor vehicle excise taxes, licensing and permit fees. The tax levy supplies 75% of each year’s total revenue. Southborough is in the upper quartile statewide for indicators of property wealth.

Since FY10, total expenditures in Southborough have increased by about 30% in current dollars and about 5% in 2021 constant dollars. The most noticeable increases have occurred in fixed costs such as employee health insurance and general liability insurance), general government expense and human services expense. Refer to **Table 8-5** Southborough’s Expenditures, FY10-FY21.

**Commented [JW95]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
The town has no judicial branch, and is served by the (Marlborough? Westborough? Worcester?) district courts.

**Commented [JW96R95]:** Update can be made but we need to confirm how Southborough is supported

**Commented [JW97]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
How does this connect to the “top 15 communities” in per-capita income referenced on P96?  
Is there a reference? What’s the point? That we can afford to do (what we do? more?)

	FY10	FY21	% change
Education	\$22,539,087	\$29,478,030	30.8%
Public Safety	\$3,631,596	\$4,876,195	34.3%
Fixed Costs	\$5,172,891	\$8,471,297	63.8%
Debt Service	\$4,452,928	\$3,384,553	-24.0%
General Government	\$2,153,781	\$3,344,777	55.3%
Public Works	\$2,402,248	\$2,582,920	7.5%
Human Services	\$500,616	\$740,309	47.9%
Culture and Recreation	\$523,838	\$675,552	29.0%
Intergovernmental	\$325,325	\$176,334	-45.8%
Other Expenditures	\$0	\$279,973	N/A
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$41,702,310</b>	<b>\$54,009,940</b>	<b>29.5%</b>

TABLE 8-5 SOUTHBOROUGH'S EXPENDITURES

Southborough's expenditures for public schools have continued to grow at a rate slightly greater than inflation over the past decade (but less rapidly than some other expenditure). It is obvious that residents care deeply about their public schools because the Town spends more on education than the minimum required under a state formula that determines each community's annual spending requirement.

The town's average single-family tax bill increased by approximately 46% between FY10 and FY22. Southborough is under continuing pressure to "catch up" with the demands of residential and nonresidential growth, and one byproduct of the stress placed on the operating budget is the shortage of funding for major capital improvements. Over this same period between FY10 and FY21 the Consumer Price Index increased by approximately 24%, so in real terms the increase in Town expenditures during this time was in the range of 5%-6%.

The Commonwealth's municipal finance system contributes to the friction from growth that exists in many communities today. In November 1980, a successful statewide referendum known as Proposition 2 ½ introduced a cap on annual growth in the property tax levy. Southborough is among the towns that have chosen to exceed the cap by following the statutory procedures for selected general overrides and debt exclusions, although these overrides have been approved very infrequently over the past decade.

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

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

Further, Southborough is one of 187 cities and towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which allows the town to impose a surcharge on property tax bills and earmark the revenue for activities associated with open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation. In 2020, Southborough received \$375,000 from CPA surcharge revenue and a match of \$105,000 from the State's CPA trust fund. The State's fixed pool of matching funds spread across the increasing number of municipalities sharing this fixed pool of funds, has resulted in a smaller match percentage for Southborough.

**Commented [JW98]:** Comment from Tim Litt

Having mentioned current and constant dollars above - what is this table in? Seems to be "current" - so given the following comments, should there be constant dollar columns?

**Commented [JW99]:** Comment from Tim Litt

That what? 2008? than anticipated?  
Perhaps compare match percentages in 2008 & 2020. Or dollars received?  
What's the point? That we get \$ from this? That the available money is declining and can't be counted on?

## Community Service Costs and Revenue in Context

Southborough is an expensive place to live. Its average single-family tax bill is currently \$11,234. Families spend even more than non-family households because a number of programs and services for children, both school and municipal, involve special user fees. These kinds of additional residential services costs, above and beyond property taxes, exist in virtually all communities today.

When Southborough officials evaluate their employee compensation schedules, licensing, permitting and user fees, and service costs, they often look to a group of comparison communities as a guide. Although some of these communities are larger than Southborough, they serve as the labor market area for municipal workers and as a region in which location-sensitive costs are likely to be similar. For reasons similar to Southborough's, most cities and towns have a "comparable community" list today. For example, benchmark studies have become increasingly common device for communities to judge the reasonableness of their expenditures for municipal and school services. Despite the uniformity and restrictiveness of municipal finance laws, it is difficult to compare Massachusetts cities and towns because communities have different forms of government and political cultures. They also differ by household and property wealth, growth rates and land use patterns. Despite the fact that it is impossible to find a perfect match for any town, a community comparison study can provide useful perspective on Southborough's comparative demographic and fiscal situations.

**Table 8-6** shows selected demographic data for Southborough and a group of 14 other "comparable communities".

City/Town	2000 Population	2010 Population	2020 Population	2000-2020 Annual %Growth	2010-2020 Annual %Growth	Land Area (sq. mi.)	2020 People/Sq. Mi.	Total Road Miles
Ashland	14,674	16,593	18,832	1.3%	1.3%	12.33	1,527	82.12
Grafton	14,894	17,765	19,664	1.4%	1.0%	22.81	862	103.85
Holliston	13,801	13,547	14,996	0.4%	1.0%	18.64	805	97.08
Hopkinton	13,346	14,925	18,758	1.7%	2.3%	26.26	714	125.68
Hudson	18,113	19,063	20,092	0.5%	0.5%	11.52	1,744	92.60
Marlborough	36,255	38,499	41,793	0.7%	0.8%	20.87	2,003	165.53
Medway	12,448	12,752	13,115	0.3%	0.3%	11.54	1,136	74.00
Northborough	14,013	14,155	15,741	0.6%	1.1%	18.48	852	93.92
Shrewsbury	31,640	35,608	38,325	1.0%	0.7%	20.73	1,849	182.29
<b>Southborough</b>	<b>8,681</b>	<b>9,767</b>	<b>10,450</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>14.02</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>85.77</b>
Sudbury	16,841	17,659	18,934	0.6%	0.7%	24.27	780	145.77
Wayland	13,100	12,994	13,943	0.3%	0.7%	15.05	926	96.53
Westborough	17,997	18,272	21,567	0.9%	1.7%	20.58	1,048	111.44
Weston	11,469	11,261	11,851	0.2%	0.5%	16.82	705	111.03
Westwood	14,117	14,618	16,266	0.7%	1.1%	10.88	1,495	89.16

TABLE 8-6 DEMOGRAPHIC - SOUTHBOROUGH VS SELECTED COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES

Observations from this data include:

- Unlike most of the comparable communities, Southborough's population growth rate has slowed during the most recent decade from the growth rate during the previous decade, partially due to the limited number of buildable residential parcels remaining in Southborough.
- Southborough's population density is lower than in most of the comparable communities, partially due to the **reservoir/watershed property** in the Town.

**Table 8-7** shows selected fiscal data for Southborough and a group of 14 other "comparable communities".

City/Town	2019 DOR Income Per Capita	FY22 Single Family Tax Bill	Avg Single Family Home Value	Avg Tax Bill % of Income	FY21 Total Debt Service	FY21 Debt % of Budget	Debt Service Per Capita	S&P Bond Rating
Ashland	\$53,140	\$8,277	\$521,202	15.1%	\$4,856,203	6.0%	\$258	AAA
Grafton	\$51,558	\$7,572	\$448,565	14.9%	\$6,160,773	8.2%	\$313	AA+
Holliston	\$86,398	\$9,089	\$522,952	14.9%	\$3,689,696	4.6%	\$246	AA+
Hopkinton	\$87,002	\$11,597	\$680,957	13.6%	\$11,331,833	11.0%	\$604	AAA
Hudson	\$41,482	\$6,968	\$439,328	16.9%	\$6,696,769	7.3%	\$333	AA
Marlborough	\$36,482	\$5,657	\$431,183	14.7%	\$14,922,006	7.7%	\$357	AAA
Medway	\$56,186	\$8,078	\$477,153	14.5%	\$5,844,160	8.5%	\$446	AAA
Northborough	\$64,510	\$8,195	\$496,961	11.1%	\$3,893,793	5.3%	\$247	
Shrewsbury	\$59,686	\$7,383	\$523,215	12.3%	\$13,472,333	9.2%	\$352	AAA
<b>Southborough</b>	<b>\$123,267</b>	<b>\$11,234</b>	<b>\$690,027</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>\$3,907,171</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>\$374</b>	<b>AAA</b>
Sudbury	\$120,466	\$14,395	\$797,506	12.0%	\$4,045,923	3.6%	\$214	AAA
Wayland	\$143,103	\$15,386	\$838,491	10.2%	\$0	0.0%	\$0	
Westborough	\$58,864	\$10,328	\$558,576	16.1%	\$14,083,730	11.3%	\$653	AAA
Weston	\$333,105	\$22,766	\$1,777,218	6.4%	\$12,037,052	11.1%	\$1,016	AAA
Westwood	\$123,062	\$12,438	\$838,710	10.5%	\$12,000,065	11.4%	\$738	AAA

**TABLE 8-7 FINANCIAL COMPARISONS - SOUTHBOROUGH VS SELECTED COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES**

Observations from this data include:

- Southborough's per capita income is higher than this figure for all but two of the comparable communities, and is in the **top 10% of cities and towns in MA**
- Southborough's average single family home value is in the top third of the comparable communities. This confirms that it is difficult to find "affordable housing" in Southborough
- Despite the relatively high cost of housing, Southborough's high income per capita figure means that the **average tax bill as a percent of income** is the second lowest among the comparable communities.

**Commented [JW100]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Wasn't 25% mentioned earlier?

**Commented [JW101R100]:** Land Use & Zoning shows 10% water – removed reference to "substantial"

**Commented [JW102]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Various metrics throughout the document - could use consistency.  
E.g. on p96, claim per-capital income is in top 15 communities.  
15/351 is 4%.

**Commented [JW103]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Which doesn't mean much if you're a senior on fixed income.  
Averages smooth over problems. This needs a more useful metric - perhaps segment? Or at least comment.

## Objective, Goals and Recommendations

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

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

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

**Commented [JW104]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Are these equally weighted? Or in priority order? Some other order? If consistent through the document, add a statement in the introduction. If not, state in each recommendations table...

#	<b>GOAL</b>
PS-2.0	Plan for and manage population and development growth in a way that appropriately balances the commercial, residential and financial impact associated with this growth
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
PS-2.1	Update existing growth models with current data as the basis for additional analysis of growth options and financial consequences
PS-2.2	Encourage demographic diversity of the Town's population through support of diverse housing initiatives

#	<b>GOAL</b>
PS-3.0	Plan for and manage a balanced approach to the Town's sources of revenue and the cost impact associated with a growing demand for public services
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
PS-3.1	Identify and evaluate ways to broaden the tax base by generating additional funds from non-Southborough residents
PS-3.2	Identify opportunities for stimulating growth of commercial tax base and implement as feasible
PS-3.3	Look for additional funding sources for town services, e.g., state/federal grants, public/private partnerships, philanthropic/not for profit investments and Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILOT payments)
PS-3.4	Research and analyze how other cities and towns identify ideas for new funding sources
PS-3.5	Identify additional "project-specific" funding opportunities, (e.g., use current funding for normal operations and look for project sponsors to build and/or endow new items such as a community center or recreation facilities
PS-3.6	Evaluate options for more intensive commercial development along Route 9, including such activities as selective re-zoning, building wastewater treatment capacity, etc.

#	GOAL
PS-4.0	Ensure all residents have access to all town resources, including physical resources (e.g., buildings and recreation areas) and intellectual resources (e.g., information, social/educational programs and services)
#	RECOMMENDATIONS
PS-4.1	Support the Southborough Public Accessibility Committee (SPAC) as they identify and receive complaints concerning accessibility issues
PS-4.2	Work with the SPAC and relevant Town departments to mitigate access deficiencies within Town facilities, functions and services as, these deficiencies have been identified through the 2021 Self Evaluation Study
PS-4.3	Work collaboratively with town departments, boards and commissions to review plans for new facilities, programs and projects to "build in" appropriate individual access

## Resiliency

### Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

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

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

In 2019, Southborough took the first step toward building societal, environmental, and infrastructure resilience within the community by participating in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, executed through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). An MVP Planning Grant was awarded to the Town from the EEA, funding the planning process required to earn designation as an “MVP Community”. A Community Resilience Building Workshop was held in March 2020, facilitated by the Pare Corporation and attended by 24 community stakeholders. The [MVP Summary of Findings](#) from this workshop was presented to the Town for public comment and subsequently integrated into the LHMP, creating a comprehensive planning document to guide the hazard mitigation and climate adaptation planning efforts within Southborough. The Town received designation as an MVP Community in October, 2020.

The 2021 update of the LHMP was prepared by the Pare Corporation, under the direction of the Town.

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

## Active Organizations

The following organizations supported MVP/LHMP activities:

### Southborough Emergency Planning Committee (SEPC)

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

### Pare Corporation

Southborough engaged with Pare to support the development of the MVP Summary of Findings and LHMP, leveraging their expertise in engineering, planning and environmental and wetland science.

**Commented [JW105]:** Updated to reflect comments from Tim Litt

### Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

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

## Summary of Current Conditions

Southborough's [Local Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan](#) covers two key topics:

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

The LHMP describes the predicted probability (frequency), impact (severity) and resulting vulnerability of the Town for eight natural hazards, evaluates the projected effect of climate change on these hazards and identifies critical infrastructure in the hazard area, as required to support disaster response/evacuation. The plan includes ten goals and a comprehensive summary of potential mitigation measures, some that can be actioned by the Town and others requiring regional collaboration.

### Objective, Goals and Recommendations

During the development of the 2021 Master Plan, the Master Plan Committee (MPC) identified two key resiliency related goals – hazard identification/mitigation planning and appropriate emergency response. Recommendations supporting these goals were discussed during the development of the LHMP. Where appropriate, these recommendations have been included in the chapter most closely aligned with topic under review. For example, stormwater management recommendations are included in the Natural Resources section of Chapter 5. The resiliency recommendations below are consistent with the mitigation measures within the LHMP.

OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO THE TOWN	
#	GOAL
RY-1.0	Identify hazards that affect the ability of the town to respond effectively and efficiently to natural disasters and climate change and develop appropriate mitigation plans
#	RECOMMENDATIONS
RY-1.1	Review/update/expand the existing Hazard Mitigation Plan(s)
RY-1.2	Develop a Hazardous Materials Transportation and Communication Plan
RY-1.3	Decrease tree damage sustained by ice/wind; leverage the Town's "Tree City" status with tree planting programs
RY-1.4	Decrease isolation of neighborhoods by updating by-laws to require multiple access points to new developments, to mitigate road closures caused by disasters
RY-1.5	Improve water supply for firefighting including identifying a cost-effective solution for Pine Hill Road
RY-1.6	Increase resiliency and redundancy of the utility networks, e.g., water, electrical, gas, communications
RY-1.7	Encourage development of "off-grid" local energy sources, e.g., solar
RY-1.8	Enhance technology/information systems resiliency
RY-1.9	Conduct a Water Supply Vulnerability Assessment to determine the health of wetlands, streams and water bodies; educate the public on the importance of protecting the water supply

**Commented [JW106]:** Minor wordsmithing per Tim Litt

**Commented [JW107]:** Minor wordsmithing per Tim Litt

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

## Public Schools

### Summary of Accomplishments and Changes Since 2008

Since the previous Master Plan, the Southborough Schools have continued to update their services to meet the Town's evolving educational needs. Significant accomplishments include:

- Creation of a design engineering course at the Trottier Middle School and expanding coding opportunities for all students, Kindergarten through grade eight
- Prioritizing and maintaining small class sizes and outstanding student-to-teacher ratios across all grade levels
- Expanding English language development programming across the District to ensure all students are supported in language development
- Creating specialized programming to support the needs of students with significant needs (e.g., Trottier Therapeutic Program)
- Expanding student access to fine arts and performing arts programming
- Increasing access to world languages, including the introduction of language in grade five
- Investing in technology to support teaching and learning, including:
  - The District is a one-to-one District and uses technology to expand the four walls of the classroom
  - The District has a state-of-the-art network, which includes wireless access across all schools
- Developing an ambitious and forward-looking strategic plan that drives innovation and that is student-centered
- Maintaining support from the citizens of Southborough for consistent investment in public education

**Commented [JW108]:** New bullet points added – the sub bullets may be too much detail

- Maintaining strong partnerships with the Town government and parent organizations that enhance students' educational experiences.

As a result of all of the above, The Public Schools of Southborough consistently perform in the top five percent of public-school districts in Massachusetts.

## Active Organizations

### Southborough School Committee

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

## Summary of Current Conditions

### Overview of Schools and Enrollments

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

School	Grade Configuration	# Teachers (FY21)	Enrollment (FY21)
Mary E. Finn School	Pre-K to Grade 1	28.8	335
Albert S. Woodward Memorial School	Grades 2-3	18	269
Margaret A. Neary School	Grades 4-5	21	260
P. Brent Trottier Middle School	Grades 6-8	38.7	383

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

TABLE 8-8 SOUTHBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES

Enrollments in prekindergarten through eighth grade increased significantly in Southborough, beginning in the late 1980s, when public school enrollments began to grow throughout Eastern Massachusetts. Southborough's most conspicuous increase occurred through the late 1990s, and this growth continued until the 2003-2004 school year. Pre-K-8 enrollments declined steadily in the decade after 2003 and then stabilized, with the latest enrollment projections suggesting flat enrollment in the range of 1,600-1,700 students over the next decade, depending on assumptions related to population growth rates.

## Enrollment Overview

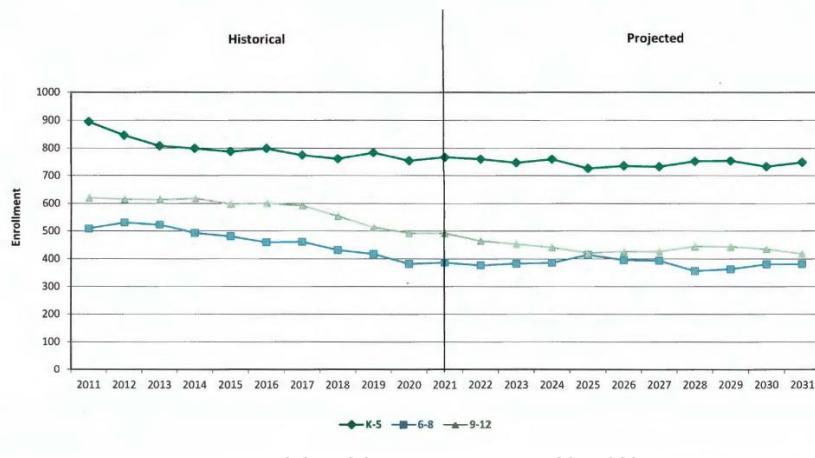


FIGURE 8-9 K-12 SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS, 2011-2031

With the enrollment projection, shown in **Figure 8-9**, and the need for significant repair to the Margaret Neary School, the School Committee, the School Administration and the Town have worked collaboratively to consider a variety of school facility options—including consolidating programs into three facilities instead of the current four facilities. A related issue is that the debt from several significant school building projects over the past 20 years is now close to being paid off, so this could provide borrowing capacity for additional school/facility projects. This facility planning activity is in the early stages at the time of the publication of this Master Plan, but some important changes could result from this process.

Together, Northborough and Southborough over the past decade have sent about 14,000 students to the Algonquin Regional High School, which is located in Northborough. The regional high school's enrollments have declined slowly in the most recent few years to the current number between 1,200 and 1,300, as the flow of eighth grade graduates moving to the high school has declined. The Algonquin student population is projected to stabilize in the range of 1,100 to 1,200 over the coming decade. Today, approximately 39% of Algonquin's students live in Southborough, and this percentage is projected to remain relatively stable over the next decade.

In addition to Algonquin Regional High School, Southborough's high school-aged children have the option of attending the Assabet Valley Vocational-Technical School in Marlborough or the Norfolk County Agricultural High School in Walpole. However, Southborough students make up a very small percentage of Assabet's and Norfolk's total enrollment.

Southborough also participates in the Assabet Valley Collaborative, based in Marlborough, which is a regional special education collaborative that serves thirteen communities clustered around I-495. The Assabet Valley Collaborative offers educational programs and services for children with severe special needs. Its governing board includes the school superintendents from all participating school districts.

Like other collaboratives in Massachusetts, Assabet Valley Collaborative relies on member school districts to provide space for regional special education programs, including its alternative middle school program located in Southborough.

For all school programs combined, the Southborough's annual budget expense totals approximately \$35M. This figure represents approximately two-thirds of the Town's total annual budget, with about 70% of the \$35M for support of the local Pre-K to 8 programs (and the remainder for support of the 9-12 programs).

### ***Southborough's Schools: Looking Forward***

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

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

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

## Objective, Goals and Recommendations

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

### **Vision 2026 - Summary of Goals and Strategies**

Empower learners – a common vision of high-quality instructional practices, consistently implemented with innovation in learning and teaching, with technology as a key enabler

Provide equity of opportunity – use of data and consistent systems to understand and implement the full range of learning needs, equitable access for programs and inclusive environments

Support healthy and balanced learners – implement systematic approach to social/emotional learning and health education

Support educator learning and leadership – increase faculty capacity to improve learning, develop school and professional learning plans

Maintain strong finance and operations processes – improve school security, discuss school facilities, increase facility efficiency and energy management, adopt new student information system, enhance student transportation system

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

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

**Commented [JW109]:** Minor wordsmithing per Tim Litt

#	<b>GOAL</b>
S-2.0	Provide high quality facilities, professional faculty and a challenging, creative curriculum
#	<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 the Town's capital planning
S-2.2	Execute the District's Strategic Plan using skilled management practices and best educational practices
S-2.3	Implement instructional practices that engage all students in developing and demonstrating their knowledge and skills through rigorous, innovative, and relevant learning experiences
S-2.4	Continue the District's focus on creating and delivering excellent special education programs
S-2.5	Demonstrate continual growth through professional collaboration

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

# IMPLEMENTATION

“Delivering and maintaining the approved Master Plan”

## Introduction

The 2021 Master Plan is not a conceptual document; it is intended to direct and guide the decisions and actions of Southborough’s local government as they plan and shape the future of the Town. Final approval of this document resides with the Planning Board, but the Master Plan Committee (MPC) recognized the importance of sharing its discussions and decisions throughout the planning process. Each MPC meeting has been open to the public, data and information has been made available via the Town website and members of the Master Plan Committee (MPC) have shared the objectives, goals and recommendations with their boards and committees who have, in turn, provided feedback on scope and wording.

One deficiency identified for the 2008 plan was a failure to follow-through - therefore considerable emphasis has been placed on developing a robust implementation process for the 2021 plan. In Spring 2022, a detailed Implementation Plan was created with each recommendation assigned to a specific board, committee or department with the Town. The MPC members collaborated with their sponsoring group to provide an estimated timeframe and potential funding source, considering several key guidelines:

- There can only be one group with primary responsibility for the delivery of each recommendation. Responsibility means ensuring the recommendation is acted upon, it does not necessarily mean doing the work or providing resources and/or budget monies. Other groups are expected to be involved in the research, planning and execution of the action plan for each recommendation
- The timeframe and funding source were the best estimate at the time the Master Plan was approved. It was recognized that many recommendations would require further research, planning etc., and these data could be updated in the future
- The timeframe for a recommendation cannot be ongoing since this does not allow for effective assessment of completion. However, some short-term recommendations have been marked with \* to indicate that the activity or change is likely to occur on a repeated basis and will require funding, accordingly
- More than one funding source may be required to complete a recommendation. If no incremental funding is required, the plan refers to Town since the work will be completed by a Town board or commission
- Several recommendations have already been completed. These have been included in the Master Plan, for completeness

- Each responsible group should expect to create one or more detailed project/action plans with the more granular timelines.

A detailed implementation matrix, by chapter, is included below, along with definitions for each timeframe and funding source. An alternative view of this data, by responsible group, will be on the Master Plan website.

## Master Plan Implementation Group

The Planning Board, as sponsor of this plan, agreed that a Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG) should be established. This sub-committee of the Planning Board will comprise five members from the original MPC committee to provide continuity. The MPIG will meet with each board and committee, every six months, and review progress on their assigned recommendations. An update, including issues and concerns raised during these bi-annual meetings, will be provided to the Planning Board each quarter.

The Master Plan itself will not be updated until the next formal review process, likely to start in 2030 (after the decennial census). However, the Implementation Plan is a “working document” and the MPIG will maintain information on the status of recommendations and changes to estimated timeframes and funding sources.

The MPIG will also provide templates to enable consistency of reporting, maintain the Master Plan website and manage community outreach on progress, including preparing six monthly reports and an annual update for Town Meeting.

## Implementation Plan

The matrix below is organized by chapter and reflects the information at the end of the preceding chapters. Note that the recommendations in the Land Use and Zoning chapter are also referenced in other chapters with consistent responsibilities, timeframes and funding sources.

### Implementation Plan Legend

#### Primary Responsibility

BOARD-COMMITTEE-DEPARTMENT	ABBREVIATION
Capital Planning Committee	CAPC
Conservation Commission	CC
Department of Public Works	DPW
Economic Development Committee	EDC
Emergency Planning Committee	EPC
Facilities Department	FAC
Golf Course Committee	GCC
Historical Commission	HC

**Commented [JW110]:** Will need to add in Community Center Committee (CCC) if changes to goal HC-3.0 are approved

Open Space Preservation Commission	OSPC
Pedestrian and Bicycling Committee ~	PBC
Planning Board	PB
Public Works Planning Board	PWPB
Recreation Commission	REC
School Committee	SC
Select Board	SB
Southborough Emergency Management Agency	SEMA
Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee	SHOPC
Southborough Public Access Committee	SPAC
Southborough Trails Committee	STC
Southborough Sustainability Committee	SSC ~
Technology Department	TD

~ TO BE CREATED THROUGH THE MASTER PLAN

#### Estimated Timeframe

TIMEFRAME FROM MASTER PLAN APPROVAL	ABBREVIATION
Completed in 1-2 years.	Short Term*
Completed in 2-5 years	Medium Term
Completed in 5-10 years	Long Term
* Activities and funding will be ongoing after initial project	

#### Potential Funding Source

FUNDING SOURCE	ABBREVIATION
Capital investment or operating expenses approved through the Town's annual budgeting process	Town
Funding through Southborough's Community Preservation Act	CPA
Private or Not For Profit funding from outside the Town	External
Funding through Federal or State grants and programs e.g., ARPA	Government

## Implementation Plan by Chapter

These recommendations are also included with the related recommendations in other chapters.

### Chapter 2 Land Use and Zoning

<b>OBJECTIVE: ALIGN PLANNING AND ZONING REGULATIONS WITH THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MASTER PLAN</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
LU-1.0	Enhance connectivity within the Town to improve travel for all modes of transportation (vehicular, public, pedestrian, bicycle) to better connect people and places	SB		
LU-1.1	Develop a plan to connect all parts of Town with pedestrian/cycle/trail access	PBC	Short Term	Town
LU-1.2	Construct or repair a sidewalk network throughout Town, create bike trails and lanes and connect sidewalks to trail network	SB	Short Term	Government
LU-1.3	Create community gathering spaces; build a multi-use community center and create community green space	SB	Long Term	Town
<b>#</b>	<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	SHOPC		
LU-2.1	Amend multi-family housing for the elderly section of the zoning bylaw and add an affordability requirement	PB	Short Term	Town
LU-2.2	Allow duplexes by special permit	PB	Short Term	Town
LU-2.3	Amend the zoning bylaw to allow mixed-use buildings and multi-family housing in the Downtown District	PB	Complete	
LU-2.4	Amend the zoning bylaw to allow accessory apartments by right	PB	Short Term	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: ALIGN PLANNING AND ZONING REGULATIONS WITH THE VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MASTER PLAN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
LU-2.5	Create design guidelines for use by proponents submitting proposals for the Downtown District	PB	Complete	
LU-2.6	Explore the opportunity to amend the zoning bylaw to allow mixed-use buildings on Route 9	PB	Short Term	Town, Government
#	<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	EDC		
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
LU-3.1	Explore the opportunity to revise the zoning code to allow for four storey buildings on Route 9	PB	Short Term	Town, Government
#	<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	Medium Term	Town
LU-4.2	Amend the Site Plan Approval bylaw to require the installation of electric vehicle charging stations	PB	Medium Term	Town
LU-4.3	Create a Tree Canopy Protection bylaw	PB	Short Term	Town
LU-4.4	Create and implement a native tree planting program	DPW	Short Term	Town

## Chapter 3 Housing

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF HOUSING WITHIN THE TOWN</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
H-1.0	Enhance local capacity to advocate for, plan, develop and manage affordable housing	SHOPC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
H-1.1	Strengthen and expand partnerships within the Town and state to develop housing	SHOPC	Short Term*	CPA
H-1.2	Secure and coordinate use of funding for affordable housing from the state and other grants, CPA funds etc.	SHOPC	Short Term*	Government
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	Short Term	CPA
H-1.4	Identify opportunities to improve housing diversity around mass transit hubs, including within a half mile of Southborough's MBTA station in expected compliance with the 2021 Housing Choice Act	SHOPC	Medium Term	CPA, Government
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
H-2.0	Identify sites for creation of diverse housing through new development, redevelopment, or preservation	SHOPC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
H-2.1	Locate potential sites to create diverse housing including townhouses, apartments, and small-scale homes	SHOPC	Medium Term	CPA
H-2.2	Engage potential developers who would be interested in the creation of different types of affordable and market rate housing	SHOPC	Short Term	CPA
H-2.3	Inventory the number of units that are deemed moderately affordable (80% to 110% AMI)	SHOPC	Short Term	CPA

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF HOUSING WITHIN THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
H-3.0	Update zoning to create opportunities for development of affordable housing and to encourage diverse housing options	PB		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
H-3.1 <i>LU-2.3</i>	Promote mixed-use buildings to offer housing where appropriate	SHOPC	Short Term	CPA
H-3.2 <i>LU-2.1</i>	Remove barriers for the provision of multi-family housing	PB	Short Term	Town
H-3.3 <i>LU-2.2</i> <i>LU-2.4</i>	Remove zoning barriers for accessory apartments and duplexes	PB	Short Term	Town
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
H-4.0	Assist Southborough residents to obtain or maintain housing that they can afford	SB		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
H-4.1	Expand the utilization of senior tax deferral and work-off programs	SB	Short Term	Town, External
H-4.2	Support first-time homebuyers through a down payment assistance program	SB	Short Term	External
H-4.3	Achieve, at a minimum, 10% affordable housing	SHOPC	Short Term*	External

## Chapter 4 Economic Development

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE TOWN</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
ED-1.0	Enhance the Downtown District to provide a vibrant hub that is attractive to both businesses and residents	EDC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
ED-1.1	Define and document changes to the zoning and use regulations for the Downtown District	EDC	Complete	
	Update GIS and zoning maps	PB	Short Term	Town, External
ED-1.2	Seek consensus for the changes to zoning regulations across the appropriate Town boards/commissions and gain approval from Town Meeting	PB	Complete	
ED-1.3 LU-2.5	Agree upon design guidelines to ensure the appropriate quality of materials, lighting, and other components that the Planning Board can use to ensure the agreed upon look and feel of the Downtown District is upheld	PB	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	EDC	Short Term	Town
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	Short Term	Town, External, Government
ED-1.6 LU-1.3	Evaluate the options and develop plans for creating a “community green space” within the Downtown District	EDC	Short Term	CPA, Government

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
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	Short Term	Town, Government
ED-1.8	Gain approval from CSX Transportation 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	SB	Short Term	Government
ED-1.9 <i>LU-1.1</i>	Study and improve connectivity and access to downtown for pedestrians (sidewalks and trails) and cyclists, working with the Southborough Trails Committee as appropriate. Seek funding opportunities for bike racks, outdoor seating and parking areas	PBC	Short Term	Town
ED-1.10	Encourage preservation and, where appropriate, re-purposing of historical buildings and ensure that the Department of Public Works (DPW) plans for the Downtown align with beautification and historic priorities	HC	Short Term*	Town
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	Short Term*	Town
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
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		

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
ED-2.1	Develop a comprehensive listing of Town owned, already developed, properties and evaluate/prioritize their use/potential based on agreed criteria	EDC	Short Term	Town
ED-2.2	Define, plan and implement improvements to the sidewalk network for the Fayville, Cordaville and Southville Village Districts	PB	Short Term	Government
ED-2.3	Increase parking in the Fayville Village District (e.g., by reconfiguring playground parking)	PB	Short Term	Town
ED-2.4 LU-1.1	Connect the commuter rail station to office and commercial areas in Town via improved sidewalks, shuttle bus services, and cycle lanes	PB	Short Term	Government
ED-2.5	Develop approach/plan to enhance retail convenience around commuter rail station	EDC	Short Term	Government
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
ED-3.0	Develop an economically strong, diverse, and self-sustaining business community i.e., an economic engine along the Route 9 corridor	EDC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
ED-3.1	Increase use-intensity for currently underutilized property parcels	PB	Medium Term	Town
ED-3.2	Increase commercial tax revenue by reducing office space vacancies and encouraging development on targeted, high-potential sites (such EMC/Dell)	EDC	Short Term	Town
ED-3.3	Improve the Town's commercial marketing position by better distinguishing Southborough from surrounding towns (Westborough, Framingham, Northborough, Marlborough, Ashland, Hopkinton)	EDC	Short Term	Town, Government
ED-3.4	Stay connected and actively participate in the Route 9, I90, I495 state highway projects	SB	Short Term*	Town

**Commented [JW111]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
*There's more to it than this. Office space doesn't generate much personal property tax revenue, compared with, e.g. lab space, manufacturing, etc. Especially if the shared space/bring your device model of working takes off. Shouldn't part of the goal be to prefer high-yield uses over plain office space?*

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
ED-3.5 <i>LU-3.1</i>	Continue to look for ways to leverage the Route 9 corridor for increased Capital Improvements Program (CIP) tax revenue e.g., changing zoning to allow taller buildings or creating a District Improvement Financing (DIF) district	EDC	Short Term	Government
ED-3.6 <i>LU1.2</i>	Continue to develop/improve the sidewalk network along the Route 9 corridor	PWPB	Short Term	Town, Government
ED-3.7 <i>LU-2.6</i>	Explore the opportunity to revise zoning regulations for Route 9 to allow for mixed-use development and taller buildings to improve vacancy of underutilized space (especially office space as needs change) and provide amenities to offices and residents. Collaborate with the Planning Board (PB) in evaluating the impact on economic growth	EDC	Short Term	Town
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	Short Term	Town, Government
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 DIF and other programs	EDC	Short Term	Town, Government

## Chapter 5 Open Space, Natural Resources and Recreation

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROTECT AND MAINTAIN OPEN SPACE WITHIN SOUTHBOROUGH</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
OS-1.0	Develop a collaborative policy/approach for the strategic acquisition/protection of properties	OSPC		
<b>#</b>	<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	Short Term	Town, CPA, External
OS-1.2	Educate the community regarding why it is important to acquire high priority properties and the importance of conserving open space/natural resources	OSPC	Short Term*	Town
OS-1.3	Deliver a map of open space, including both existing designated lands and potential spaces to be acquired	OSPC	Medium Term*	Town
OS-1.4	Identify key stakeholders who will provide input as to the strategic acquisition for open space	OSPC	Short Term	Town
OS-1.5	Identify all town-owned open space parcels and, as necessary, transfer such parcels to the care and control of the Conservation Commission	CC	Short Term	Town
OS-1.6	Establish a land acquisition plan. Identify parcels and funding sources and implement where feasible.	OSPC	Long Term	Town
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
OS-2.0	Expand connectivity of and access to existing open space via the trail system without compromising public safety, wildlife activity or causing adverse environmental impact	STC		

**Commented [JW112]:** New recommendation added at the request of the OSPC

#	RECOMMENDATIONS			
OS-2.1	Develop a plan/strategy, in collaboration with all stakeholders, including land holders, Conservation Commission (CC), Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC), Southborough Trails Committee (STC) to link individual open space areas via the trail system, incorporating restrictions due to wildlife needs, e.g., access corridors	STC	Medium /Long Term	Town, CPA, External

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROTECT AND MAINTAIN OPEN SPACE WITHIN SOUTHBOROUGH (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
OS-2.2	Build and maintain trails and parking; examples would include a paved walking track around Mooney Field, walking trail around the golf course during appropriate times. <b>Investigate dog walking and running needs</b>	STC	Long Term	Town, CPA, Government
OS-2.3 <i>LU-1.1</i>	Continue to establish connections to regional trails, e.g., the Boroughs Loop, the Aqueduct Trail and the Boston-Worcester Airline trail (BWALT)	STC	Medium Term	CPA, Government
OS-2.4	Increase awareness about passive recreation opportunities on Town trails, through guided hikes/walks, educational programming, special events, partnerships, etc.	STC	Short Term*	Town, External, Government
OS-2.5	Establish ADA compliant trails and parking, where appropriate	STC	Medium Term	Town, Government
OS-2.6	Engage and educate the community on the benefits of open space for passive recreation and the importance of protecting the biodiversity of our natural resources through nature walks, garden tours etc.	OSPC	Short Term*	Town
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	STC	Long Term	CPA, Government
OS-2.8	Assess and add signage to educate trail users about the permitted use policies on trails, including dog walking restrictions, in partnership with other entities who have jurisdiction over specific trails	STC	Short Term	Town, External
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
OS-3.0	Manage open space resources in collaboration with stakeholders and the community	CC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
OS-3.1	Designate major open space resources to a use, for example conservation or recreation, which will then define the primary stakeholders	CC	Short Term	Town

**Commented [JW113]:** Proposed update from Tim Litt

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROTECT AND MAINTAIN OPEN SPACE WITHIN SOUTHBOROUGH (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
OS-3.2	Involve the community (both residents and businesses) in the management of open space and the maintenance of trails	CC	Short Term	Town
OS-3.3	Explore options for the disposal of dog waste on open space e.g., providing bags or composting bins	CC	Short Term	Town
OS-3.4	Educate the community about the appropriate land uses and guidelines, e.g., the impact of dog waste on trails and the dangers that balloons present to animals on open space parcels	CC	Short Term	Town
OS-3.5	Clean up the dump at Breakneck Hill	CC	Short Term	Town
OS-3.6	Regularly assess and take action to prevent encroachment on open space lands, e.g., by dumping brush and grass clippings	CC	Short Term	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEFINE, DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT “GREEN” INITIATIVES THAT SUSTAIN OUR ENVIRONMENT</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
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		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
NR-1.1 <i>LU-4.1</i>	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	Short Term	Town
NR-1.2	Document criteria and metrics around storm water management, including snow removal/storage, for now and in the future	CC	Short Term	Town
NR-1.3	Amend/upgrade local regulations to better meet community needs and educate community on regulations, impact and rationale	CC	Short Term	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEFINE, DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT “GREEN” INITIATIVES THAT SUSTAIN OUR ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
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	Short Term	Town
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	Medium Term	External
NR-1.6	Review flood risk areas and identify stream crossings for upgrades and rehabilitation to help mitigate the risk of flooding	CC	Medium Term	Government
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	Short Term	Town
NR-1.8	Pursue additional funding for the implementation of <u>MS4 related tasks</u> , including inventory of storm drains and detention basins, maintenance of stormwater infrastructure, and upgrades to increase storage capacity	CC	Short Term	Government
NR-1.9 <i>LU-4.3</i>	Create a Tree Canopy Protection bylaw, defining limitations on lot clearance to protect against excessive erosion, the risk of flooding and to prevent heat syncs	PB	Short Term	Town
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
NR-2.0	Enhance Southborough’s efforts in making sustainability a core aspect of Town and community activities	SB		

**Commented [JW114]:** Looking at options to reword to avoid the use of MSA – per Tim Litt

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEFINE, DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT “GREEN” INITIATIVES THAT SUSTAIN OUR ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
NR-2.1	Establish a Sustainability Committee with responsibility for ensuring that sustainability issues and opportunities in Southborough are proactively managed, including applying for grant funding by collaborating with Town departments and committees	SB	Short Term	Town
NR-2.2	Develop a 5-year Climate Action Plan for Southborough	SSC	Short Term	Town
NR-2.3	Strengthen and expand partnerships within the Town and state to develop climate change solutions	SSC	Short Term	Town
NR-2.4	Recommend, develop and monitor programs designed to enhance long-term sustainability and resilience in response to environmental, resource and energy challenges	SSC	Medium Term	Town
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
NR-3.0	Reduce the consumption of non-renewable natural resources by public and private users	SB		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
NR-3.1	Monitor recycling best practices to identify profitable recycling materials and determine if it is cost effective to collect these within the Town	FAC	Short Term	Town
NR-3.2	Identify a way to recycle compostable material	FAC	Short Term	Town
NR-3.3	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	FAC	Short Term	Town
NR-3.4	Evaluate the options to reduce the level of single-use plastics (e.g., plastic bags and straws within 10 years)	FAC	Medium Term	Town
NR-3.5	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	SSC	Short Term	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEFINE, DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT “GREEN” INITIATIVES THAT SUSTAIN OUR ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
NR-3.6	Offer rain barrels, compost and recycling bins throughout the Town (cost plus administration fee); develop rain collection systems on Town owned property	FAC	Medium Term	Town, Government
NR-3.7	Reduce the use of oil-based energy at Southborough’s town owned facilities, by 25% within 10 years	FAC	Long Term	Town
NR-3.8 <i>LU-4.2</i>	Install electric car charging stations around Town	FAC	Short Term	Town, Government
<b># GOAL</b>				
NR-4.0	Prioritize and reduce the existence and impact of invasive species and other nuisance species on public and private properties	OSPC		
<b># RECOMMENDATIONS</b>				
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	Short Term*	Town
NR-4.2	Create an ongoing assessment of priority invasive species and a strategic plan for eradication of these species	OSPC	Medium Term*	Town
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	Medium Term*	Town
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	Complete	

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEFINE, DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT “GREEN” INITIATIVES THAT SUSTAIN OUR ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
NR-5.0	Expand the use of native plants and prioritize awareness and installation of pollination systems across the community	OSPC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
NR-5.1 <i>LU-4.4</i>	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	Short Term*	Town
NR-5.2	Pursue a Town bylaw requiring the use of native plants and prohibiting chemicals treatments of lawns and insect spraying. Collaborate with Board of Health on impacts from chemicals in pesticides	OSPC	Medium Term	Town
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	Short Term	Town
NR-5.4	Pursue and maintain Town certification as a Wildlife Habitat Community through the National Wildlife Federation	OSPC	Short Term*	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
R-1.0	Improve and maintain quality and safety of all recreational facilities	REC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
R-1.1	Initiate a Facilities Study to replace the 2017 study since many of the recommendations have been or will be met in the coming years; understand the impact of potential new developments	REC	Medium Term	Town

OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES (CONTINUED)		RESP.	ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
R-1.2	Make continued improvements to golf course as outlined in the improvement provided in the Golf Course Committees report	GCC	Short Term	Town
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	REC	Short Term	Town
#	<b>GOAL</b>			
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	REC		
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
R-2.1	Continue to explore recreational opportunities and business continuity planning for times where social distancing is required	REC	Short Term	Town
R-2.2	Develop a nature based passive recreation program (gardening, bird watching, butterflies)	OSPC	Short Term*	Town
#	<b>GOAL</b>			
R-3.0	Seek opportunities to expand recreational facilities	REC		
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
R-3.1	Work with the Planning Board (PB) and EDC (EDC) to ensure new residential or commercial development includes funds for recreation facilities and/or open space	REC	Short Term	Town
R-3.2 LU-1.1	Strive for multi-use trail and sidewalk systems to satisfy the community's walking and biking needs	REC	Medium Term	Town, CPA, Government
R-3.3	Explore possible locations for a dog park as the community lacks free space where dogs can run unleashed	REC	Medium Term	CPA
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	REC	Short Term	CPA

**Commented [JW115]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
Overlaps with OS-2.2, I think.

**Commented [JW116R115]:** OS-2.2  
Build and maintain trails and parking areas; examples would include a paved walking track around Mooney Field, a walking trail around the golf course during appropriate times. Investigate dog walking and running needs

**Commented [JW117]:** Proposal from Tim Litt to remove phrase – viewed as unnecessary

<b>OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
R-3.5 <i>LU-1.3</i>	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	SB	Long Term	Town, CPA, Government
R-3.6	Expand the availability of meeting and training rooms for use by programs and other community-based groups	SB	Long Term	Town
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
R-4.0	Maintain strong partnerships with committees and organizations throughout the Town	REC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
R-4.1	Secure a seat on the Southborough Public Accessibility Committee to stay informed of changing regulations and seek to keep facilities in compliance while striving to achieve the highest standards	REC	Short Term	Town
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	REC	Short Term	Town
R-4.3	Partner with the Select Board (SB), Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC) and Southborough Trails Committee (STC) on the evaluation of potential property acquisitions for multi-use purposes	REC	Short Term	Town

**Commented [JW118]:** Comment from Tim Litt  
 This would require a bylaw change.  
 The Rec director frequently attends SPAC, and participates in related issues. What problem would this solve? He could, at most, be an ex-officio member...  
 I don't believe SPAC has been approached on whether permanent representation is a good idea.

<b>OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
R-5.0	Maintain strong fiscal controls over recreation expenditure	REC		
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	REC	Short Term	CPA
R-5.2	Continue to contribute facility user fees to the General Fund to support facility maintenance and support	REC	Short Term	Town
R-5.3	Maintain contributions and support to the Southborough Trails Committee	REC	Short Term	Town

## Chapter 6 Circulation and Transportation

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE TOWN</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>				
CT-1.0	Develop the infrastructure necessary to support vehicular movement while improving safety, reducing pollution and preserving scenic vistas within the Town	SB		
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	Long Term	Government
CT-1.2	Define the options for encouraging/incenting 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	Medium Term	Town, Government
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	Medium Term	Town
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	Short Term	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
CT-1.5 <i>LU-4.2</i>	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	Short Term	Town, Government
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	Short Term*	Town
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	SB	Medium Term	Town
<b># GOAL</b>				
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		
<b># RECOMMENDATIONS</b>				
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	Short Term	Government
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	Medium Term	Government

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
CT-2.3	Explore the opportunity to provide additional/sufficient commuter rail station parking capacity such as expanding into adjacent lots or adding an upper deck to the existing parking area. Develop approach/plan to provide funding and develop these solutions	SB	Short Term	Government
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	Short Term	Town, Government
CT-2.5	Develop approach/plan to connect to selected regional transit services	SB	Short Term	Town, Government
<b># GOAL</b>				
CT-3.0	Develop approach/plan to connect all parts of the Town with pedestrian/cycle access to improve ease of commuting, recreation and social interaction	SB		
<b># RECOMMENDATIONS</b>				
CT-3.1	Establish a Pedestrian and Bicycling Committee to be responsible for developing and implementing the Master Plan recommendations relating to public walkways and cycle paths. The committee should leverage Southborough's “complete streets design” status	SB	Short Term	Town, Government
CT-3.2 <i>LU-1.1</i>	Define trail/sidewalk “spine” structure to provide pedestrian/cyclist access to all parts of the 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	Medium Term	Town, Government
CT-3.3 <i>LU-1.2</i>	Develop plan for constructing sidewalks in selected individual neighborhoods and for repairing/upgrading existing sidewalks	PWPB	Medium Term	Town, Government

<b>OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
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	SB	Long Term	Town, Government
CT-3.5 <i>LU-1.1</i>	Develop plan for constructing pedestrian walkways across five causeways (Boston Road; White Bagley Road; Cordaville Road (2); Middle Road)	SB	Long Term	Town, Government
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	Medium Term	Town

## Chapter 7 Historic, Cultural and Community Resources

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP AN ENHANCED SENSE OF COMMUNITY</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>				
HC-1.0	Protect and preserve all historical assets of the Town of Southborough	HC		
HC-1.1	Complete the process to establish a National Register District in the Downtown area	HC	Complete	
HC-1.2	Incorporate heightened awareness and appreciation of Southborough's historic resources within the Town's Tricentennial Celebrations in 2027	HC	Short Term*	Town
HC-1.3	Educate residents about the history of Southborough through innovative programming and events in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society	HC	Short Term*	Town
HC-1.4	Expand school outreach, in conjunction with the Southborough Historical Society, to increase children's awareness of Southborough History	HC	Short Term*	Town
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	Medium Term	External
HC-1.6	Work to support the Southborough Historical Society to preserve, catalog, and digitize historical archives for the benefit of all	HC	Short Term	Town
HC-1.7	Encourage the use of the Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings Bylaw to preserve and renew historically significant structures for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	HC	Short Term*	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP AN ENHANCED SENSE OF COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
HC-2.0 <i>LU-1.3</i>	Establish a Community Center Committee with responsibility for developing a strategic plan for the development of community gathering spaces	SB		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
HC-2.1	Define and document the requirements for community gathering spaces, with input from residents and stakeholders across the community	SB	Short Term	Town
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	Short Term	Town
HC-2.3	Develop financial funding and implementation plans for each community gathering space option and solicit feedback from the Town	SB	Medium Term	Town
HC-2.4	Gain approval at Town Meeting for the proposed community gathering spaces	SB	Medium Term	Town
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
HC-3.0	Improve the level of collaboration and engagement between the Town's government and the community at large	SB		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
HC-3.1	Explore the options for enhancing communication with residents, schools, local businesses and community groups including determining the resourcing/funding required and how best to apply current and emerging technologies	SB	Short Term	Town
HC-3.2	Provide a welcome letter/information packet for new residents/businesses	SB	Medium Term	Town
HC-3.3	Hold bi-annual "All Boards" meetings to provide a more structured process by which	SB	Short Term	Town

**Commented [JW119]:** Updated to include separate committee – avoids having to add new recommendation

**Commented [JW120R119]:** Responsibility for recommendations will need to be updated to CCC if changes to the goal are approved

	boards and commissions can communicate with the Select Board (SB)			
<b>OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP AN ENHANCED SENSE OF COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
HC-3.4	Develop volunteer recruitment, support and recognition programs to encourage residents to serve on Town boards and commissions	SB	Short Term	Town
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	Short Term	Town
HC-3.6	Encourage boards to share, read and review all relevant meeting minutes from other boards regarding issues properly before them, e.g., the three permitting boards - Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), Planning Board (PB), Conservation Commission(CC)	SB	Short Term	Town
HC-3.7	Continue to use the virtual Zoom meeting facilities established during the coronavirus pandemic, including when conflicts between meeting times occur, as allowed by Massachusetts General Law (MGL)	SB	Short Term	Town
HC-3.8	Coordinate with the Town Clerk and Town Moderator to investigate the potential for in-person electronic voting at Town Meetings	SB	Medium Term	Town

## Chapter 8 Public Services, Resiliency and Schools

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO THE TOWN</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
PS-1.0	Deliver a wide range of public services to Southborough's residents	SB		
PS-1.1	Continue to support a strong role for the Capital Planning Committee in the Town's budgeting and planning process	SB	Short Term	Town
PS-1.2	Through the Capital Planning Committee, 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	Short Term*	Town
PS-1.3	Through the Capital Planning Committee, 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	Short Term*	Town
PS-1.4	Through the Capital Planning Committee, evaluate funding options for capital projects e.g., public (Town or State), private, shared (with other towns or private sector partner)	CAPC	Short Term*	Town
PS-1.5	Through collaboration between the Capital Planning Committee 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	Short Term*	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
PS-1.6	Through collaboration between the Capital Planning Committee and the various Town budgeting entities, determine responsibilities for implementation of capital projects (e.g., the Town, 3rd Party providers)	CAPC	Short Term*	Town
PS-1.7	Implement the recommendations of the Town's Technology Strategy	TD	Short Term	Town
<b># GOAL</b>				
PS-2.0	Plan for and manage population and development growth in a way that appropriately balances the commercial, residential and financial impact associated with this growth	SB		
<b># RECOMMENDATIONS</b>				
PS-2.1	Update existing growth models with current data as the basis for additional analysis of growth options and financial consequences	PWPB	Short Term*	Town, Government
PS-2.2	Encourage demographic diversity of the Town's population through support of diverse housing initiatives	SHOPC	Short Term*	Town
<b># GOAL</b>				
PS-3.0	Plan for and manage a balanced approach to the Town's sources of revenue and the cost impact associated with a growing demand for public services	PWPB		
<b># RECOMMENDATIONS</b>				
PS-3.1	Identify and evaluate ways to broaden the tax base by generating additional funds from non-Southborough residents	PWPB	Short Term*	Town
PS-3.2	Identify opportunities for stimulating growth of commercial tax base and implement as feasible	PWPB	Short Term*	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
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 Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILOT payments)	PWPB	Short Term*	Town
PS-3.4	Research and analyze how other cities and towns identify ideas for new funding sources	PWPB	Short Term*	Town
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	Short Term*	Town
PS-3.6	Evaluate options for more intensive commercial development along Route 9, including such activities as selective re-zoning, building wastewater treatment capacity, etc	EDC	Medium Term	Town
#	<b>GOAL</b>			
PS-4.0	Ensure all residents have access to all town resources, including physical resources (e.g., buildings and recreation areas) and intellectual resources (e.g., information, social/educational programs and services)	SB		
#	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
PS-4.1	Support the Southborough Public Accessibility Committee (SPAC) as they identify and receive complaints concerning accessibility issues	SB	Short Term*	Town
PS-4.2	Work with the SPAC and relevant Town departments to mitigate access deficiencies within Town facilities, functions and services as, these deficiencies have been identified through the 2021 Self Evaluation Study	SB	Medium Term	Town, Government
PS-4.3	Work collaboratively with town departments, boards and commissions to review plans for new facilities, programs and projects to "build in" appropriate individual access	SB	Long Term	Town, Government

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<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		
#	RECOMMENDATIONS			
RY-1.1	Review/update/expand the existing Hazard Mitigation Plan(s)	SEMA	Complete	
RY-1.2	Develop a Hazardous Materials Transportation and Communication Plan	SEMA	Complete	
RY-1.3	Decrease tree damage sustained by ice/wind; leverage the Town's "Tree City" status with tree planting programs	EPC	Short Term*	Town, Government, Private
RY-1.4	Decrease isolation of neighborhoods by updating by-laws to require multiple access points to new developments, to mitigate road closures caused by disasters	PB	Short Term	Town
RY-1.5	Improve water supply for firefighting including identifying a cost-effective solution for Pine Hill Road	EPC	Medium Term	Town
RY-1.6	Increase resiliency and redundancy of the utility networks, e.g., water, electrical, gas, communications	EPC	Medium Term	Government
RY-1.7	Encourage development of "off-grid" local energy sources, e.g., solar	FAC	Short Term*	External
RY-1.8	Enhance technology/information systems resiliency	TD	Medium Term	Town, Government
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	Medium Term	Government

Commented [JW121]: Minor wordsmithing per Tim Litt

Commented [JW122]: Minor wordsmithing per Tim Litt

<b>OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO THE TOWN (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
RY-2.0	Ensure the appropriate infrastructure and public services are in place to provide timely emergency response	EPC		
<b>#</b>	<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	Medium Term	External, Government
RY-2.2	Conduct a facilities inventory to assess sheltering capacity and identify potential improvements to increase capacity	SEMA	Medium Term	Town
RY-2.3	Prepare a continuity of services plan to maintain communications and essential services during outages or major hazard events	SEMA	Short Term	Town
RY-2.4	Identify and engage vulnerable populations to improve access to essential emergency services during a major hazard event	SEMA	Short Term	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN OUR SCHOOLS</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
S-1.0	Ensure the highest possible, <del>financially responsible, standard of student development and well-being</del>	SC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
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	Short Term*	Town, Government

**Commented [JW123]:** Minor wordsmithing per Tim Litt

<b>OBJECTIVE: CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN OUR SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
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	Short Term*	Town, Government
S-1.3	Provide all students with access to challenging and culturally responsive learning experiences that meet their individual needs	SC	Short Term*	Town, Government
S-1.4	Prioritize social, emotional, and physical well-being of students	SC	Short Term*	Town, Government
<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 the Town's capital planning	SC	Short Term*	Town, Government
S-2.2	Execute the District's Strategic Plan using skilled management practices and best educational practices	SC	Short Term*	Town
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	Short Term*	Town, Government
S-2.4	Continue the District's focus on creating and delivering excellent special education programs	SC	Short Term*	Town, Government
S-2.5	Demonstrate continual growth through professional collaboration	SC	Short Term*	Town

<b>OBJECTIVE: CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN OUR SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)</b>		<b>RESP.</b>	<b>ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE</b>
<b>#</b>	<b>GOAL</b>			
S-3.0	Explore opportunities for improved coordination and collaboration with other education providers and the community at large	SC		
<b>#</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>			
S-3.1	Enhance relationships with all local education assets, including private schools and local technical schools	SC	Short Term*	Town, Government
S-3.2	Look for opportunities for coordination with other schools, colleges, universities, and businesses	SC	Medium Term	Town, Government
S-3.3	Consider options to incorporate daycare and adult continuing education programs	SC	Long Term	Town, Government
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	Short Term*	Town, Government
S-3.5	Collaborate with the Town to consider building an 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	Long Term	Town, Government