

# Town of Southborough

# 2008

# MASTER PLAN



SUBMITTED TO:

Town of Southborough  
17 Common Street  
Southborough, MA 01772

DATE:

August 2008

SUBMITTED BY:

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH:

Community Opportunities Group, Inc.



Town of Southborough  
2008  
**MASTER PLAN**

# Acknowledgements

The Town of Southborough would like to thank the following individuals who played a significant role in preparing this Plan. They contributed in many ways, attended countless meetings, and put in numerous hours of volunteer time to make this Plan a reality.

## *Southborough Master Plan Steering Committee*

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- ▶ Steve Davis, Corridor 9 Chamber of Commerce
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*Community Opportunities Group, Inc.*

- ▶ Judi Barrett

Finally, the committee wishes to thank all Southborough residents and interested parties that participated in our public forums and provided valuable comments and insight throughout the planning process. The ideas voiced at meetings and in written form helped guide the committee in preparing this document and helped to ensure that the Master Plan truly represents the goals of the Town of Southborough.

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*“Preserving our past; protecting our future.”*



# 1. Vision and Goals Statements

*Scenes from the two public forums held during the planning process.*



**"Preserving our past; protecting our future."**

## **Southborough's Vision**

Southborough is a community that takes great pride in its physical beauty, extraordinary views, distinct rural character, rich historic legacy, vast natural resources, and citizenry devoted to giving back. Southborough residents enjoy an unequaled quality of life – people appreciate the small town atmosphere with its sense of community and strong civic involvement. Residents value the excellent school system. Southborough also places significant importance in its village centers and neighborhoods.

The vision of this Master Plan is to preserve Southborough's classic rural New England character and charm while enhancing the village centers and neighborhoods. While residents recognize that change is inevitable, it is important that Southborough safeguard its unique identity. This Master Plan is the Town's chance to prepare for this change, to put forth the best plan for where change is most appropriate to occur, and suggest what it should look like so that it meets the needs of the community. The Town should build upon the past by reinforcing a sense of belonging to a community with such an exceptional heritage. Southborough needs to ensure that fragile open spaces and water resources are adequately protected. The Town appreciates its active citizenry and seeks to strengthen and increase the number of residents

*Chestnut Hill Farm.*

Photo courtesy of  
Southborough Planning  
Board.

who give their time to better the community. The Town also wants to create opportunities for future generations of Southborough residents to live, work and play here, as current residents have done.

## **Goals Statements**

The following goals statements are meant to serve as a policy guide for the development of the Master Plan. They are the result of comments made at the January 29, 2007 Community Visioning Meeting, interviews conducted with key stakeholders early in the planning process, and input from members of the Master Plan Steering Committee. These goals statements represent overarching policy positions, while the specific recommendations or strategies are found at the end of each chapter and are summarized in Chapter 10 – the implementation program. Some may overlap because they could fall into more than one category and efforts were made to combine comments that are duplicative. The goals statements are sorted by plan elements and are not listed in any particular order.



*Public input played a central role in formation of the Master Plan's Goals.*

### Land Use and Zoning

#### LU-1

Update and modernize the zoning bylaw and other land use regulations.

#### LU-2

Provide appropriate buffers or transitions between incompatible uses.

#### LU-3

Encourage more flexible development in appropriate places through such means as shared septic systems, cluster subdivisions, open space residential development, and by right zoning.

#### LU-4

Encourage architectural quality in non-residential development.

#### LU-5

Support a Town permitting process that is fair and efficient and follows the goals of the Master Plan.

#### LU-6

Promote growth that is environmentally sustainable and capable of withstanding economic downturns.

#### LU-7

Establish stewardship and preservation of the unique identity of Southborough's neighborhoods and villages and strengthen linkages between areas.

#### LU-8

Continue to engage neighboring towns about the development that occurs along the municipal borders.

### Housing

#### H-1

Ensure that future generations of Southborough citizens and people who work in Southborough are able to remain as residents of the Town.

#### H-2

Encourage a more diverse population.

#### H-3

Expand the housing choice in Southborough for families.

#### H-4

Encourage small lot zoning in villages and other appropriate areas in Town.

#### H-5

Encourage multi-family housing in appropriate locations and at an appropriate scale.

#### H-6

Maintain Southborough's attractive and aesthetically diverse housing stock and continue to promote quality in future development.

## **Economic Development**

### *ED-1*

Expand commercial development where it is most appropriate, along Route 9 and in the villages, at an appropriate scale.

### *ED-2*

Create opportunities for business to start and prosper in Southborough.

#### *ED-2.1*

Create a mix of jobs.

#### *ED-2.2*

Work with existing businesses to keep them in Southborough.

#### *ED-2.3*

Evaluate zoning to allow effective mix of uses.

#### *ED-2.4*

Encourage innovative and sustainable jobs, such as home-based businesses and telecommuting.

### *ED-3*

Review/change the permitting process to try to eliminate unreasonable bottlenecks.

### *ED-4*

Balance the financial benefit to the Town from development and open space.

## **Open Space and Recreation**

### *OS-1*

Continue to identify and preserve Southborough's open space and recreation resources.

### *OS-1.1*

Be prepared to purchase open space when it becomes available.

### *OS-1.2*

Better educate public about open space and natural resources conservation.

### *OS-1.3*

Capitalize on small vacant and underutilized parcels in Town to create pocket parks and other open spaces.

*Southborough  
citizens ponder the  
future of their Town.*



**OS-1.4**

Encourage natural resource preservation in development projects.

**OS-2**

Expand access opportunities to Southborough's open spaces.

**OS-2.1**

Encourage public use of water resources and conserved open space.

**OS-3**

Increase walking and bicycle paths, boardwalks, and trails to create a trail network and connect open space and recreational resources.

**OS-4**

Maintain and enhance existing open space and passive recreational facilities.

**Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources****NCR-1**

Enhance protection of valued open space and natural resources, particularly the Sudbury Reservoir and the SuAsCo watershed.

*At each public forum tables of 6 - 8 were formed to obtain input.*

**NCR-1.1**

Encourage more public access to water resources in Southborough

**NCR-2**

Successfully implement the Lower Impact Development Bylaw to promote "green" practices and ensure proper management of stormwater.

**NCR-3**

Increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of historic and archeological resources and resource preservation into the planning process.

**NCR-4**

Encourage architectural quality and the preservation of community character.

**NCR-5**

Establish guidelines for preserving and enhancing existing architectural and historic character and its context, as identified by the Cultural Resources Survey (2000).

**NCR-6**

Establish guidelines that encourage new development to conform to the architectural and historic character and context of Southborough's existing buildings.

**NCR-7**

Create and enhance cultural opportunities and activities in Southborough

**Transportation, Transit, and Circulation****T-1**

Create a long-term conscientious vision for traffic mitigation while managing traffic and land uses to avoid congestion.



*T-1.1*

Expand relationships with adjacent Towns to manage traffic and environmental impacts on a regional and state scale.

*T-1.2*

Consider traffic calming measures, where applicable.

*T-1.3*

Work cooperatively with MA Highway Department on Route 9 improvements.

*T-1.4*

Minimize the impact of new development with creative transportation strategies.

*T-2*

Increase public transportation and other non-automobile transportation options on a local, regional and state-wide basis.

*T-2.1*

Create more sidewalks and bicycle-safe routes.

*T-3*

Consider improvements to roads in Town.

**Municipal Facilities and Services**

*MF-1*

Establish new or improved/upgraded facilities for public safety.

*MF-2*

Establish a new community center for use by residents of all ages.

*MF-3*

Increase sewage disposal options in Town and at municipal facilities.

*MF-4*

Enhance communication with residents and among Town boards, commissions and staff.

*MF-5*

Enhance facilities for Town staff and departments.

*MF-6*

Create a process for identifying and disposing of surplus Town-owned property.

*MF-7*

Provide recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.

*MF-8*

Maintain and enhance existing open space and recreational facilities.

**Southborough's Villages<sup>1</sup>**

*V-1*

Promote growth and development within the Downtown to encourage a mixed-use environment.

*V-2*

Reinvigorate Southborough's villages by creating small, resident-driven businesses.

*V-2.1*

Provide the types of goods and services that Southborough residents now have to obtain in adjacent communities.

<sup>1</sup> Note that specific goals and objectives for each village center will be addressed in Chapter 9 of the plan.



## 2. Land Use and Zoning



**Land use forms the basis for master planning and determines, to a large extent, a Town's need to provide public facilities and infrastructure, transportation networks and services, and protection of environmental resources.**

### Introduction

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

Land use forms the basis for master planning and determines, to a large extent, a Town's need to provide public facilities and infrastructure, transportation networks and services, and protection of environmental resources. As communities plan for their future, determining how and where growth and development should occur will provide the basis for planning where investments for municipal services will be needed, as well as determining what controls will be necessary to protect areas of the Town

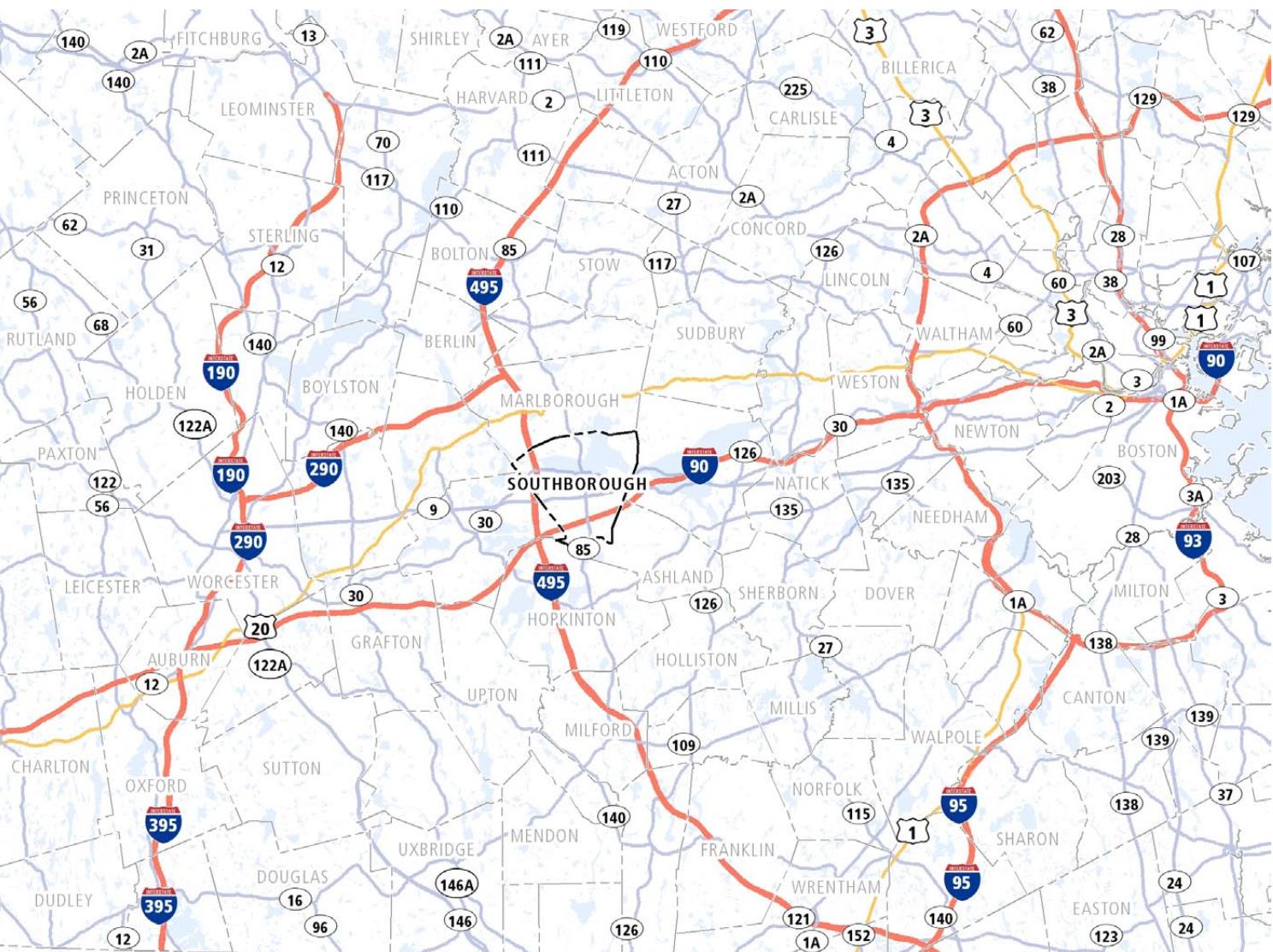
*The Sudbury Reservoir serves as a gateway into Southborough.*

from unwanted development. Communities have the ability to control land use and development patterns through a variety of mechanisms, including zoning and subdivision regulations, provision of public utilities and infrastructure, and protection of open space lands through direct acquisition and the acquisition or acceptance of conservation restrictions/easements.

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

### About Southborough

Southborough is located in the MetroWest area of Massachusetts. This area is loosely defined as the collection of towns that lie west of Boston



*Southborough is located 25 miles west of Boston and is convenient to many major roads.*

and east of Worcester, and strictly defined by the MetroWest Economic Research Center ('MERC') as the nine towns included in their statistical area.<sup>1</sup> These towns are: Sudbury, Wayland, Natick, Sherborn, Holliston, Hopkinton, Ashland, Framingham, and Southborough. Southborough is conveniently located between the two largest cities in the Commonwealth,

Worcester and Boston. It is convenient to both points east/west and north/south due to its close proximity to Interstate 90, Route 9, and Interstate 495.

Southborough is located 25 miles west of Boston and 15 miles east of Worcester, in eastern Worcester County.<sup>2</sup> Surrounding

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

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

communities include Westborough, Northborough, Marlborough, Framingham, Hopkinton and Ashland. Incorporated in 1727, the Town was originally known as “Stony Brook” and was the southern portion of Marlborough.

Historically a farming community, Southborough has long prided itself for its high quality of life and its rural character. The Town has struggled to maintain its agricultural heritage with the onset of industrialization, through the more recent commercial development boom along Interstate 495, followed by rapid residential growth. The past two decades in Southborough have seen increased efforts to preserve what is left of the agricultural and rural character, one of the factors with which Town residents define themselves. Recent examples include the purchase of a Conservation Restriction (CR) on Chestnut Hill Farm and the 2005 Breakneck Hill Conservation Land Master Plan.

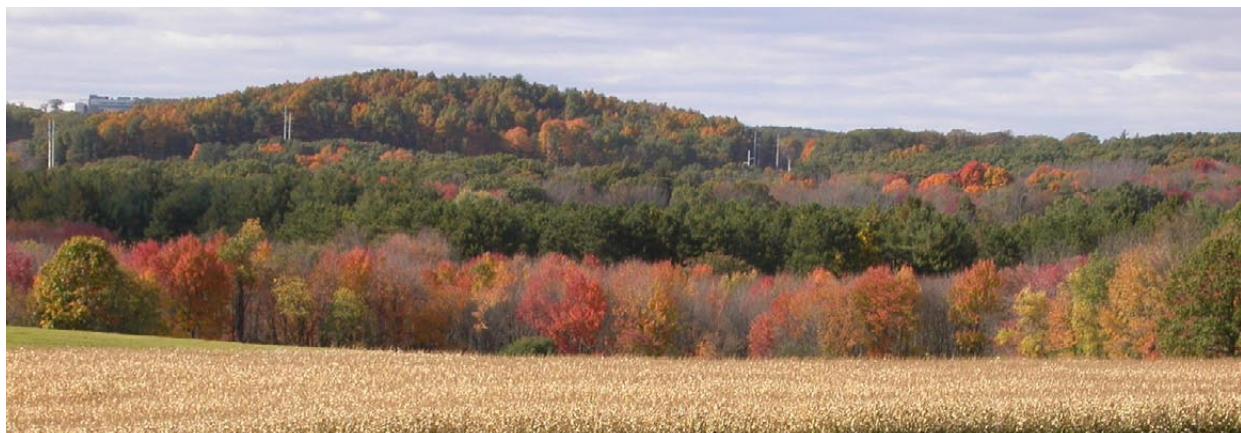
In the nineteenth century, two forces impacted the development of Southborough: the river and the railroad. Due to its location along the Sudbury River, Southborough became the most densely populated Town on the eastern border of Worcester County. The Boston & Worcester

Railroad arrived in Southborough in 1834, and the Southville Depot was built in 1836. The combination of the water power from the Sudbury River and the railroad prompted the development of new industrial villages in southern Southborough, and throughout the region. Factory villages, allowing families to move to these remote locations for access to the mill jobs, sprouted up along New England’s rivers. Southborough’s southern villages, Cordaville and Southville, still contain mill housing that represent the Town’s brush with industrialization. Over time, these mill villages converted to the suburban residential community that exists today. These, and Southborough’s other villages, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9 of this Plan.

A significant aspect of Southborough’s land use history is the damming of the Sudbury River to create the reservoir that would increase the City of Boston’s water supply. The construction of the Fayville Dam in 1898 put an end to Southborough’s burgeoning manufacturing sector by eliminating the water power that had been fueling the growth of the cotton and woolen mills, boot and shoe factories, and factories for other products. The project

*Purchasing a Conservation Restriction for Chestnut Hill Farm (pictured) exemplifies Southborough’s desire to preserve its rural aesthetic.*

Photo courtesy of Southborough Planning Board



required the taking of nearly 2,000 acres of Southborough land and permanently changed the character of the Town's four villages. The reservoir contributed to preserving the pastoral quality of Southborough by refocusing the economy on the farms and pastures. While a considerable land use impact, the reservoir helped postpone the suburbanization of Southborough.<sup>3</sup>

### Historic Land Use Patterns

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

*Construction of the Fayville Dam inhibited industry in Southborough.*



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

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

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

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

Of the 1,900 housing units in Southborough in 1979, only 4 percent (80 units) were multi-family housing; in 1955 Southborough passed a bylaw prohibiting the construction of multi-

**Table 2-1a**  
**Land Use: 1971, 1985, 1999**

Land Use	1971		1985		1999	
	Size (acres)	Percent of Total	Size (acres)	Percent of Total	Size (acres)	Percent of Total
Agriculture	1,129	11.3%	986	9.9%	653	6.6%
Open Undeveloped Land	144	1.4%	195	2.0%	186	1.9%
Commercial	110	1.1%	160	1.6%	192	1.9%
Industrial/Transportation/ Mining	374	3.8%	381	3.8%	457	4.6%
Higher Density Residential †	6	0.1%	9	0.1%	17	0.2%
Medium Density Residential	1,093	11.0%	1,120	11.2%	1,386	13.9%
Low Density Residential	659	6.6%	838	8.4%	1,516	15.2%
Urban Open/Institutional/ Recreation	338	3.4%	363	3.6%	375	3.8%
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	5,158	51.8%	4,955	49.7%	4,226	42.4%
Water	950	9.5%	953	9.6%	953	9.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,961</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,961</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>9,961</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: MassGIS

Note: † Note that Mass GIS defines high density as any multi-family housing and single-family with lot sizes from 5,000 – 15,000 sq. ft.; medium density is between 15,000 and 40,000 sq. ft. lot sizes, and low density represents lot sizes larger than one acre.

family apartment buildings. 1985 data show a 12 percent increase in land devoted to residential use (approximately 200 acres), largely replacing undisturbed or agricultural land in Southborough.

In 1986, the Town Meeting adopted a number of new zoning provisions and established an Open Space Preservation Commission. The Planning Board adopted new subdivision regulations. The Town Master Plan was updated

in 1987. In 1990 the Town Meeting voted to adopt an Open Space Policy requesting Town boards to protect the Town's traditional landscapes and mix of uses. A 1991 survey conducted of Southborough residents showed that residents place high value on preserving the rural character of the Town and protecting its natural resources.

See Figure 2-1 that illustrates Southborough's land use in 1985.

**Table 2-1b**  
**Land Use Change: 1971, 1985, 1999**

Land Use	Percent Change		
	(1971-1985)	(1985-1999)	(1971-1999) †
Agriculture	-12.7%	-33.8%	-42.2%
Open Undeveloped Land	35.4%	-4.5%	29.3%
Commercial	46.1%	19.9%	75.2%
Industrial/Transportation/ Mining	2.0%	19.8%	22.2%
Higher Density Residential	50.2%	84.0%	176.2%
Medium Density Residential	2.5%	23.8%	26.8%
Low Density Residential	27.1%	80.9%	130.0%
Urban Open/Institutional/ Recreation	7.4%	3.2%	10.8%
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	-3.9%	-14.7%	-18.1%
Water	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%

Source: MassGIS

Note: † The third column, 'Percent Change (1971-1999),' is not the sum of the first two columns. To ensure accuracy, each percentage provided above is an independent calculation based on raw data.

### Current Land Use

Southborough covers approximately 15.4 square miles (9,844 acres).<sup>4</sup> The Town's development patterns are reflective of its historical roots as an agricultural and rural residential community, as depicted on the Inventory of Existing Land Uses map, in Figure 2-1, in the corresponding Table 2-1a and in Chart 2-1. Chart 2-1 shows the

more current year 2006 land use data reported by the Town Assessor.

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

In 2006, over 40 percent of Southborough's land use was residential; this is a dramatic increase from the 1971 (17.7 percent) and 1985 data (19.7 percent) (see also Table 2-1a). Of this residential land, 93 percent is single family homes. Commercial and industrial land uses in Southborough, which represent 10 percent of total land use in Town, increased marginally (approximately 2 percent each).

Finally, one notices that 15 percent of the Town's land is owned by non-profit organizations such as the housing authority, churches and private schools. While these uses contribute to the unique character and quality of life in Southborough, this ownership pattern certainly affects the Town's tax base. Nearly 30 percent of

<sup>4</sup> The total land area provided here as well as in Tables 2-1, 2-2, Chart 2-1, and Table 5-2 range from 9,844 to 10,035 (or 15.4 to 15.6 square miles). This discrepancy is a result of various calculations and reporting inconsistencies that may occur when the MassGIS, Town GIS, or Town Assessor's data was prepared. For example, the Town Clerk shows that the Town is 13.79 square miles. This discrepancy has no significant impact on the general discussion of land use provided here.

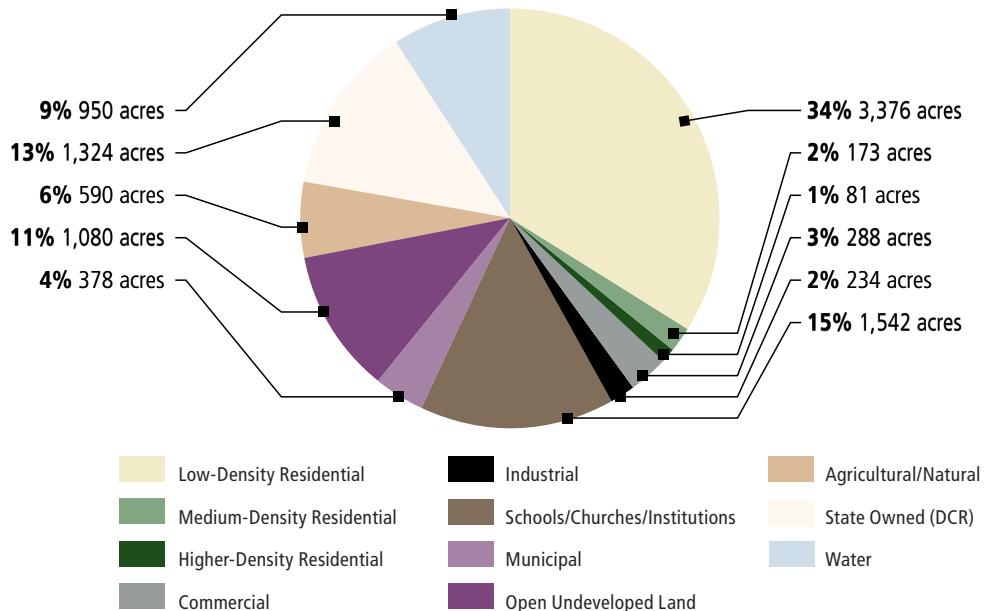
the land is owned by the Town or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As discussed above, land owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is considered “reimbursable;” DCR pays a PILOT fee for 99 percent of the land that is Commonwealth owned; approximately one acre is not owned by DCR.

## Local Development Regulations

This section of the Master Plan considers the important role played by zoning in guiding future land use decisions. It analyzes the zoning bylaw from a variety of perspectives and includes recommendations for changes and amendments that revise the bylaw so that it

achieves the Goals and Objectives of the Master Plan. Additionally, updates are recommended to reflect changes in state land use law, case law, and remove internal inconsistencies. Some of the recommendations are simply aimed at improving the manner in which the bylaw is presented so that it becomes more “user friendly”.

**Chart 2-1**  
**Current Land Use**

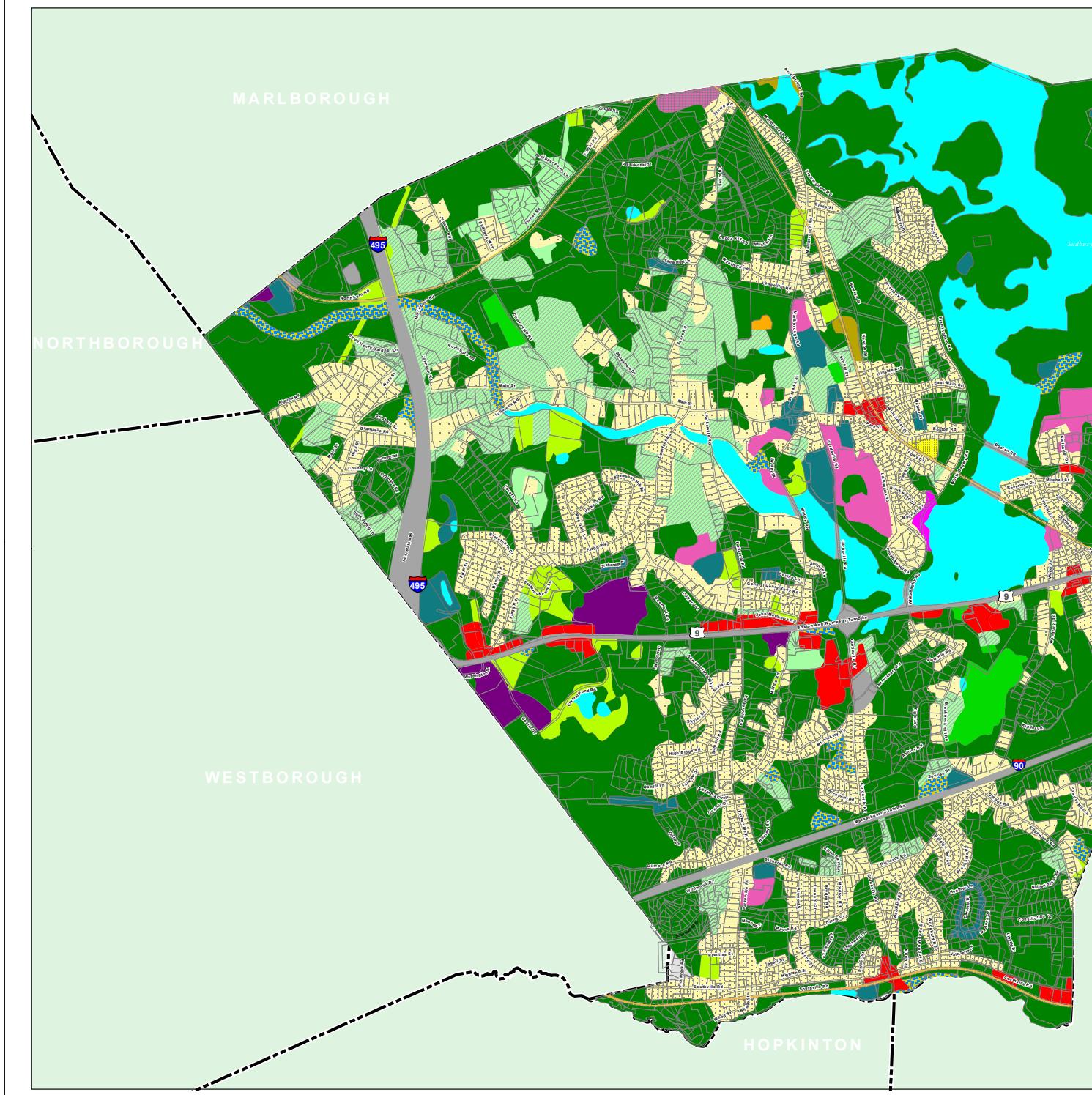


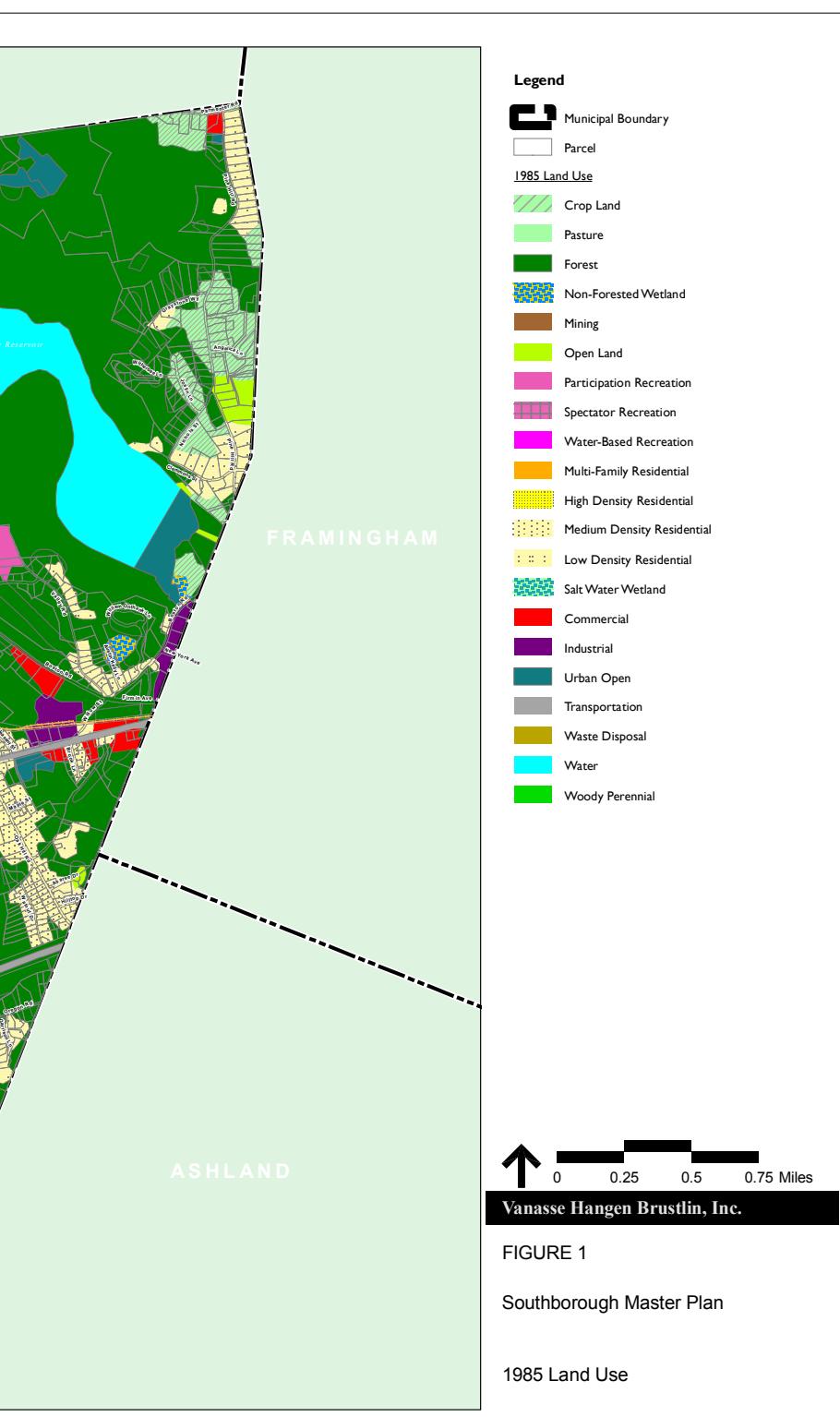
Source: Town of Southborough Assessor, 2006

Notes: Low Density Residential = 1 units (single family)  
Medium Density Residential = 2-3 units  
Higher Density Residential = 4 or more units, including condominiums

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

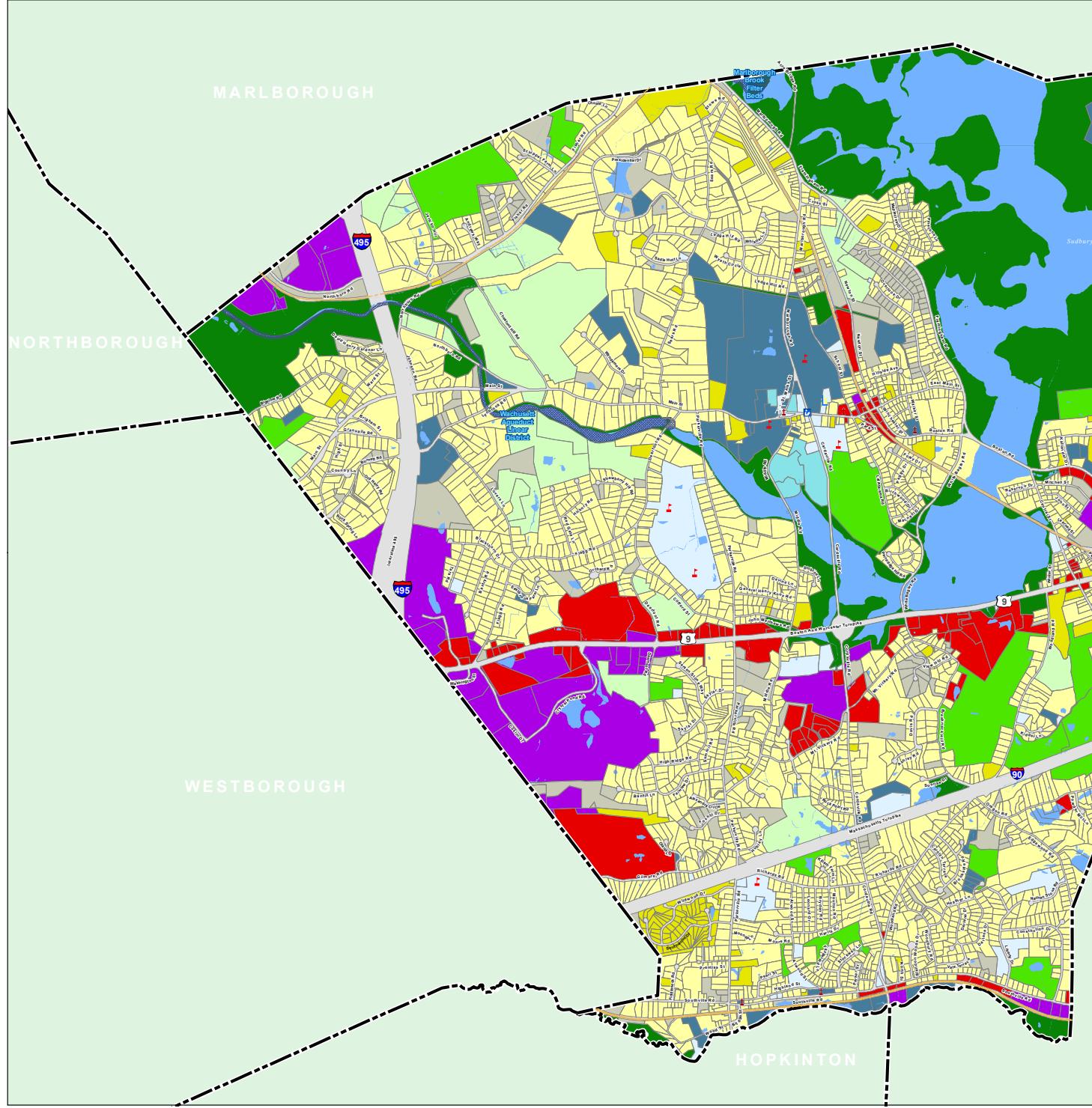
File source: \\mawald\\d\\09972.00\\GIS\\project\\Southborough Tabloid 1985LandUse.mxd

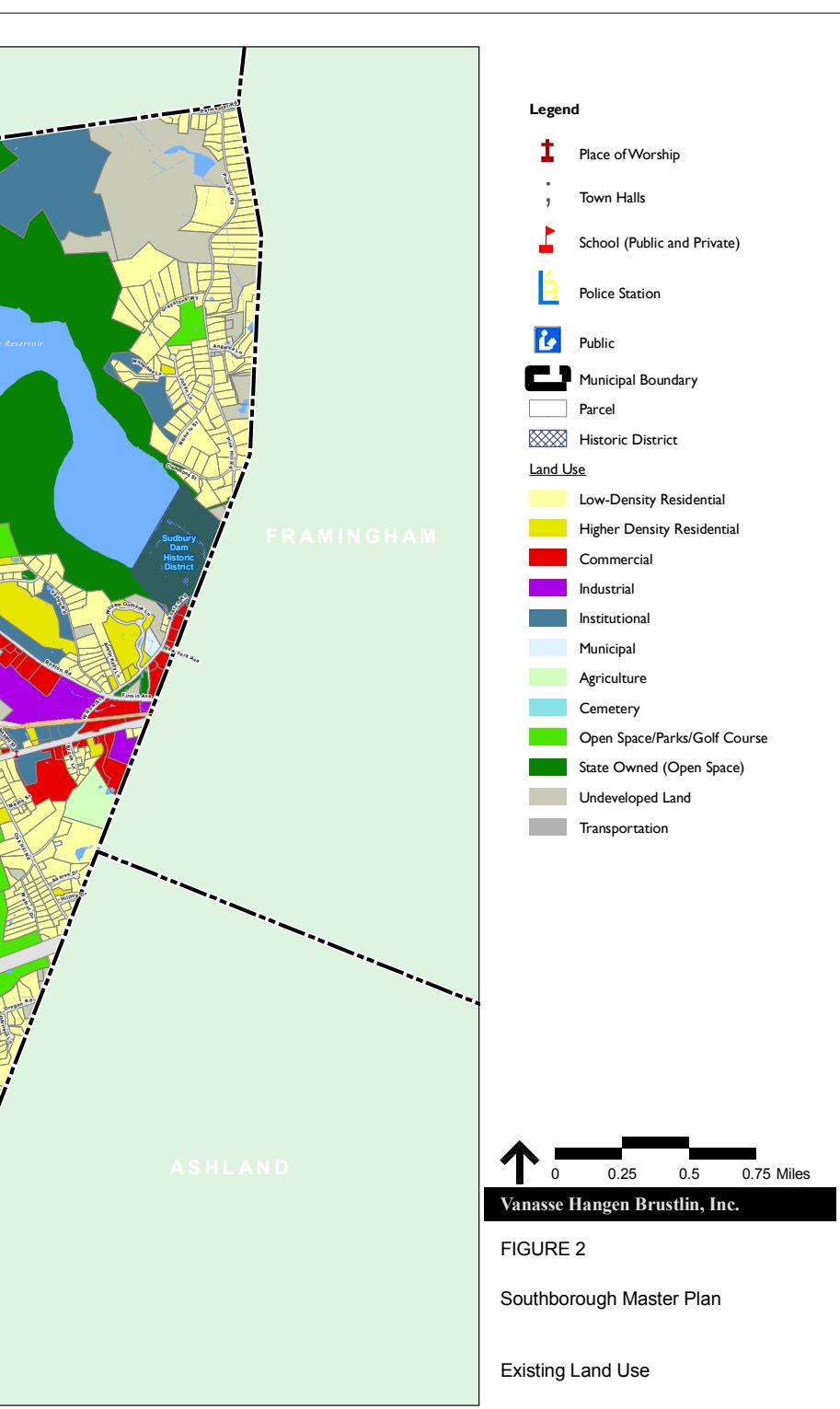




**Figure 1**  
**1985 Land Use**

File source: \\mawald\l\09972.00\GIS\project\Southborough\_Tabloid\_Transportation.mxd





**Figure 2**  
**Existing Land Use**

## What is Zoning?

Modern zoning began in the early 1900's in response to the location of potentially incompatible and noxious land uses next to commercial and residential areas. The zoning bylaw has evolved over the years as a means to limit the types of land uses that could locate in a particular area of the municipality, resulting in a separation of uses. Ideally, the Master Plan is the blueprint for the Town and the zoning bylaw is the regulation that implements the plan. Typically, a zoning bylaw regulates land use by:

- ▶ Specifying and distinguishing different land use types;
- ▶ Creating development standards for the size and shape of lots and the buildings erected on those lots;
- ▶ Addressing lots, buildings and uses that pre-dated the adoption of the zoning bylaw (non-conformities);
- ▶ Establishing criteria for the evaluation of permit applications for new buildings;
- ▶ Establishing procedures for permitting uses not specifically allowed by right;
- ▶ Defining terms that have specific meanings under the bylaw; and,
- ▶ Creating a map that displays the geographic extent of each zoning district.

### Overview of the Southborough Zoning Districts

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

#### Conservation District (C)

Parkland and open space is the predominant use

in these districts which can be found around the Sudbury Reservoir and Wachusett Aqueduct along with other pockets across the Town.

#### Residence A District (RA)

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

#### Residence B District (RB)

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

#### Business Village District (BV)

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

#### Highway Business District (BH)

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

#### Industrial Park District (IP)

This district allows for newspaper, office, wholesale distribution, and research and development uses up to 50,000 square feet. The two largest parcels are located on either side of

Rt. 9 near the Westborough border (the EMC Campus is located on one of these parcels).

#### *Industrial District (ID)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Table 2-2**  
**Land Use by Zoning District**

	No. of Acres	Percent of Total
Conservation District	2,481	25.0%
Residence District A	4,259	42.9%
Residence District B	2,114	21.3%
Business Village District	44	0.4%
Highway Business District	131	1.3%
Industrial District	193	1.9%
Industrial Park District	580	5.8%
Research, Science and Professional District	135	1.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,935</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Town of Southborough GIS data, 2007

#### **Zoning Regulations**

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

The zoning bylaw includes some land use tools that are important to ensure sound development practices such as site plan approval. Minor site plan review for small projects up to 2,000 square feet of new or expanded floor area (or change of use), or between 5 and 20 new

parking spaces is conducted by a Site Plan Review Committee chaired by the Town Planner. Larger projects are considered to be major projects and are subject to site plan review by the Planning Board. Additional plan review is required in the Village Business District, where major site plan approval is the special permit from the Planning Board. The criteria include some design guidelines. This will be discussed in greater detail in the Villages element of this Plan (see Chapter 7).

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*One of the most important recommendations to come out of a master plan is the need to ensure that the zoning bylaw is subsequently updated so that the bylaw is consistent with the master plan.*

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

Southborough also recently adopted a Lower Impact Development bylaw aimed at minimizing the impacts of stormwater runoff and reducing nonpoint source pollution.

#### **General Zoning Recommendations**

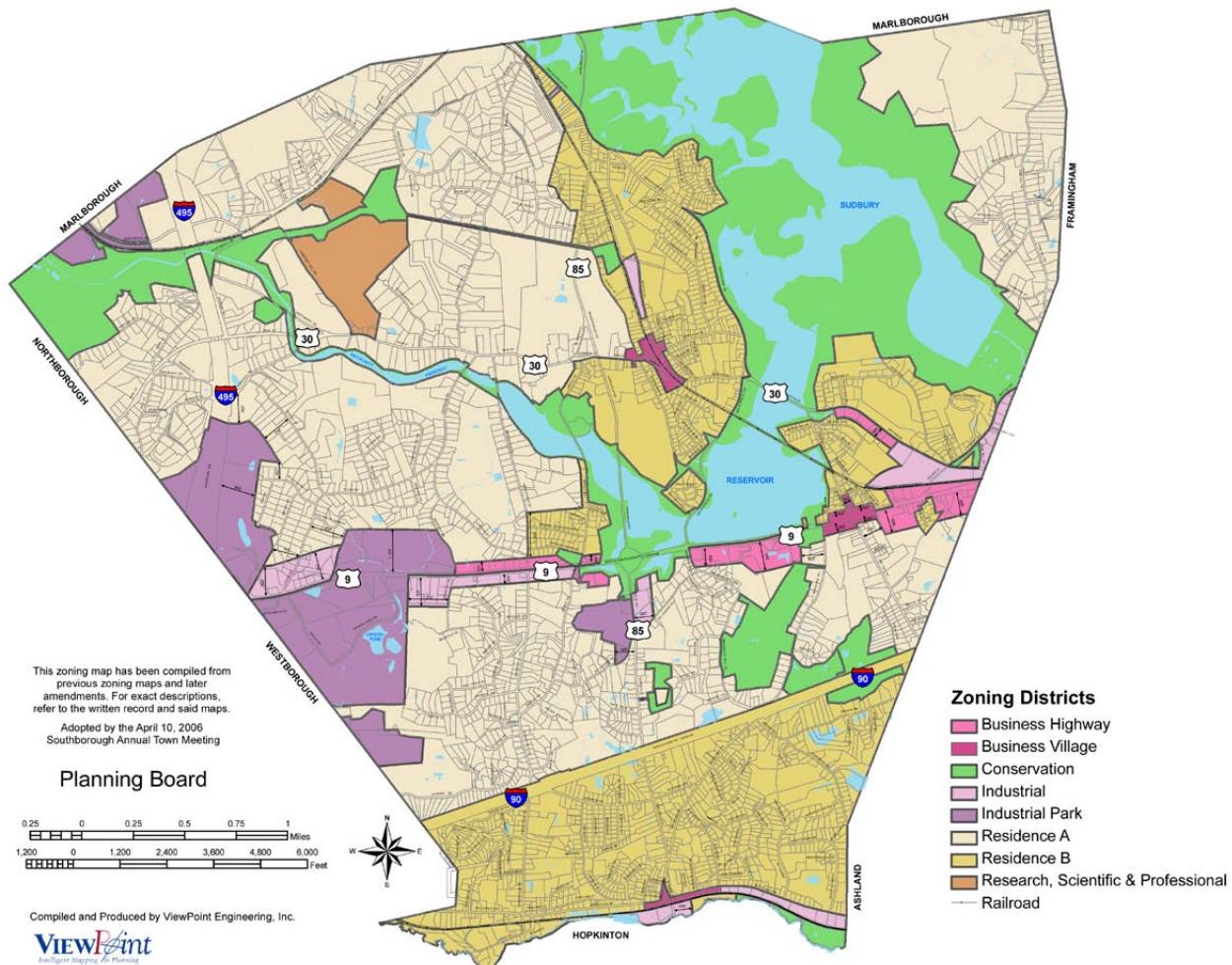
One of the most important recommendations to come out of a master plan is the need to ensure that the zoning bylaw is subsequently updated

so that the bylaw is consistent with the master plan. The zoning code is perhaps the most important implementation tool available to a municipality. The following are some general recommendations regarding the zoning bylaw – more substantive ones will be addressed in the relevant elements of the master plan that follow.

There are essentially two options as to how the bylaw is revised. The bylaw can be revised in a piecemeal manner to address specific proposed amendments. In the alternative, the bylaw can be totally rewritten, which may be necessary where the bylaw is so out-of-date that it is easier to take the more drastic approach, even if an individual section or two remains unchanged.

1. The definitions need to be updated. A number of new terms need to be added to reflect current land uses, the desires and vision of the Town as reflected in the Master Planning process, and to minimize confusion. Furthermore, definitions are currently found in several sections throughout the bylaw that should be consolidated into one section.
2. From a format point of view, the bylaw will be much easier to read if a table of uses was created to substitute for the existing narrative listing of uses allowed by right or special permit for each district. This can be confused further by the inclusion of the dimensional regulations in the same section. These should be separated into distinct sections for uses and dimensions, and the dimensional table currently found as an appendix should be included in the bylaw itself.
3. New uses will need to be added to the bylaw and some older ones may be deleted if they are found to be no longer relevant.

**Figure 3**  
**Southborough Zoning Map**



4. Illustrations should be included to depict some of the terms in the definitions as well as the dimensional standards, landscaping and parking requirements, etc. This could take the structure of a form-based code that is more prescriptive rather than restrictive.
5. The parking regulations, which also should be put into a tabular format, need updating and should reflect the uses listed in the table of uses.
6. Special permits are currently issued by both the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ideally, it is administratively easier if only one entity was the special permit granting authority. Since Planning Boards typically address issues relating to the permitting of development proposals, it may be more appropriate for special permits to be reviewed and issued by the Planning Board.

7. The BV district(s) needs to be revised (and maybe redrawn) to better establish and implement the goals of this planning process. At a minimum, mixed uses should be allowed within the new district(s). The zoning requirements in the BV need to be aligned with the goals of the Town for the villages, as borne out in Chapter 9 on the Villages. This recommendation is discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 (Economic Development) and 9 (Villages).
8. The SP district should either be eliminated or redrawn given the recent conservation restriction on a large portion of that district.
9. Sustainable development should be a requirement. All projects including municipal and residential need to follow sustainable guidelines.
10. To complement and strengthen proposed changes in the zoning bylaw, the subdivision regulations must also be modernized and brought into compliance with the goals of the Master Plan.

### Build-Out Analysis

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

#### Residential Development

The parcel-based analysis has two components: maximum build-out based on vacant parcels; and maximum build-out of underdeveloped parcels. For the analysis of vacant parcels, the Assessors' office generated a database of vacant parcels with the following fields: map/lot; owner; zoning district; and size in acres. The database was sorted by zoning district, and split into two databases: residential and commercial/industrial. For the residential database, each vacant parcel was evaluated for maximum building potential based on size, shape, soil conditions for septic systems, and regulatory factors such as the presence of wetlands.

Judgments regarding the extent of wetlands and its effect on buildable area were made on the basis of staff knowledge of the wetlands within the Town. Judgments regarding the suitability of soils to accommodate septic systems were made on the basis of Board of Health staff knowledge. Where there was some question as to buildability, the lot was considered buildable.

Further, as part of this analysis, St. Mark's Golf Course was considered buildable. Therefore, the final build-out may slightly overestimate, rather than underestimate, the total new dwellings that can be built. Lots less than one-half the minimum lot size in the zoning district were considered to be unbuildable, based upon current zoning. For lots more than half, but less than the minimum lot size, it was assumed that a variance from the Board of Appeals would allow a dwelling to be constructed.<sup>5</sup> For larger parcels, it was assumed that the land would be subdivided, either through the Approval Not Required (ANR) process or through the full

<sup>5</sup> This assumption is included only for the purposes of conservatively estimating future build-out and is not meant to imply that the Board of Appeals has a policy of issuing such variances.

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

Zoning District	# Vacant Parcels	Dwelling Units (Vacant Parcels)	Dwelling Units (Infill)	Total
RA Single Family	88	295	163	458
RB Single Family	103	180	185	315
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>773</b>

Source: Southborough Planning Department

subdivision process. For the latter, empirical yields per acre based on prior Southborough subdivisions were applied. These empirical yields are driven by both soil conditions and by the marketability of larger-lot homes. As shown in Table 2-3, 475 single-family lots could be developed on the 191 vacant parcels within the Town; approximately one-third of these are in subdivisions of eight lots or more.

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

In summary, 773 new single-family lots can be created in a full build-out scenario under current zoning without taking into consideration allowable expansions for accessory apartments. Based on the average number of building permits issued over the previous five years (36) it is estimated that the full build-out

of residential land will occur by 2030, with a total population of approximately 10,941 (based on 2.9 persons per household).

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

Another issue at hand is that of M.G.L. Chapter 40B and its allowance for increased density in order to create state mandated affordable housing.<sup>6</sup> Town staff researched this issue without finding any clear methodology to determine the build-out potential of 40B. It does not appear that there is a way to accurately account for this mandate, as the densities and sites chosen will vary. However, according to the Town's Affordable Housing Strategy, in order to meet the goal of creating 0.75 of one percent of its required affordable housing stock each year, Southborough must permit approximately 23 units of affordable housing each year. This in itself is a misleading number, as the number of units required is derived from the total number of housing units in town and grows as the total housing stock grows. In any event, based on historical permitting numbers the goal of 23 housing units per year can only be achieved via

<sup>6</sup> Southborough is subject to Chapter 40B filings based on our current Subsidized Housing Inventory percentage of 3.6% out of a required 10%.

multi family housing developments.

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

A maximum build-out scenario of 773 new dwelling units, plus a factor of 10 percent to account for all future 40B development (269 additional affordable units<sup>7</sup>) totals 1,042 new dwelling units.<sup>8</sup>

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

Chapter 3 of this plan (as well as the 2004 Affordable Housing Strategic Plan) addresses housing issues in more detail and includes recommendations on a more proactive approach toward the production of affordable housing that is not the result of the developer-driven 40B process.

<sup>7</sup> When factoring in the current need for affordable housing. The 269 housing units are derived from the current need for affordable housing (192) plus the 10% of the anticipated 40B production (77).

<sup>8</sup> This number does not account for the increased density allowed to offset affordable units. It accounts only for the affordable units.

### Commercial/Industrial Development

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

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

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

Zoning District	# Vacant Parcels	Buildable Acres
BV Business Village	6 †	1.0
BH Business Highway	3	19.2
I Industrial	13	191.3
IP Industrial Park	11	216.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>3.2 Million SF</b>

Source: Southborough Planning Department

Note: † These lots are undersized

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

### Build-Out Conclusion

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

From a residential standpoint, there are several large tracts of land that play heavily in this analysis, including St. Mark's School properties and the Rousseau property. All have been included in the build-out analysis, but together they total over 100 units of housing. While the Rousseau property is slated for a residential development in the near future, it does not appear that St. Mark's School lands will be developed into residential uses. It is critical for the Town to determine its goals for future development in order to plan effectively for these and other properties.

<sup>9</sup> R. W. Holmes Realty – February 2008. The low vacancy rate is, in part, attributable to an average rent that is lower in Southborough than in the Framingham/Natick area or along Rt. 128.

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

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

## Projects in the Pipeline

### Residential Projects

#### *Parmenter Meadows*

Parmenter Meadows is a seven-lot conventional subdivision proposed to be located on a new cul de sac off Parmenter Road. The project received definitive subdivision approval and is currently before the Conservation Commission.

#### *Trammell Crow Comprehensive Permit*

This project was to be located on a portion of the Flatley-owned property off Route 9 and Park Central Drive. Concept plans showed 288 rental units (12 buildings of 24 units each), a wastewater treatment plant, and open space, among other site features. The project entrance

was to be sited on Route 9 westbound from Park Central Drive. This project had been proposed and received site eligibility, but the application was withdrawn in February 2008.

#### *Avalon 40B*

Still in the conceptual phase, the proponent for this project made preliminary presentations to the Selectmen and SHOPC in June 2007. Site eligibility was received in October 2007. The proposal is for a 200-unit rental community located on the 18-acre Flatley Company-owned property on the eastbound side of Route 9 near Crystal Pond Road. The proposed site plan includes a wastewater treatment plant, parking garage, and other site amenities.

#### *Woodland Meadows Comprehensive Permit*

Located on approximately 6 acres between Woodland Road and Route 9, this project proposes 40 condominium units located in one four-story building, with the main entrance off Woodland Road. The applicant received its project eligibility from the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in October 2007. The applicant has filed the comprehensive permit application and the public hearing is ongoing.

### Commercial/Industrial Projects

#### *EMC Property*

Pursuant to regulatory requirements for projects of significant impact, the project proponent has filed a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), and a Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Report (SFEIR) with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The Secretary’s (of the EEA) Certificate has been issued. The

project is currently before the Planning Board as a Definitive Subdivision Plan and before the Conservation Commission for a Notice of Intent (NOI) in both Southborough and Westborough.

This project consists of the construction of 2,183,000 square feet (SF) of new and renovated research and development (R&D) and office space on two connected parcels totaling 445 acres in Southborough and Westborough. The project would be developed over several phases:

Route 9/Crystal Pond Road intersection. In addition, the proponent has obtained an easement to construct a new roadway connecting the two site parcels to facilitate traffic circulation. The FEIR developed a Split-Level alternative for elevating the eastbound segment of Route 9 in the vicinity of Crystal Pond Road for the traffic mitigation for Alternative 5, the Flyover. The proponent may be required to develop another alternative by MassHighway, which may be named at a later date. In the FEIR, the onsite roadways have been slightly altered with the elimination of the realigned,

Phase	Program	Expected Completion †
Phase A	743,000 sf of R&D/office space	2007
Phase B-1	400,000 sf of R&D/office space	2010
Phase B-2	300,000 sf of R&D/office space	2013
Phase C	740,000 sf of R&D/office space	2016

Note: † These estimated completion dates come from the original application filed in 2006. This information has not yet been updated.

The project also includes a total of 8,568 parking spaces and is expected to generate approximately 15,491 new vehicle trips per day, based on ITE Trip Generation data. The preferred alternative will be comprised of 65 percent R&D space and 35 percent office space. The site layout includes a common driveway that accesses both the north and south parcels. The preferred alternative also includes large areas of open space, and a conservation restriction on approximately 76 acres of the site.

To mitigate the traffic impacts of the project, the site plan included roadway configuration/intersection improvements, traffic signal timing modifications, and a grade separation at the

boulevard type, Coslin Drive.

#### **MetroWest Regional Transit Authority**

In June 2006 the legislators of the 495/MetroWest delegation successfully secured the statutory reforms necessary to allow most previously prohibited communities to start new Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) or join existing RTAs. The result of the passage of these reforms has been the Town of Framingham's formation of a new Regional Transit Authority in MetroWest in December 2006, which the Towns of Ashland and Westborough joined in January 2007. Other communities are now exploring their newly available transit options due to these changes.

At the same time that these statutory changes were being made, long-standing supporters of the need for improved regional access to transit services joined together as the 495/MetroWest Alliance for Transit Services. This group has taken on the mission of informing communities and interested parties throughout the 495/MetroWest region about all of the new transit options available.

Current growth trends in the MetroWest, coupled with an ineffective and outdated public transportation system, are impacting the region's ability to promote economic development and in some cases impeding it. With the new flexibility afforded by the change in the statute, communities such as Southborough can now begin to look at creative ways to provide increased transit options to address their needs and the needs of the region as a whole.

An RTA offers communities a way to have one coordinated, cohesive transportation system that can provide increased levels of service and improved marketing opportunities. With each community in an RTA represented on the RTA Board, a collaborative approach to regional transportation planning and provision of services can be undertaken. In the Spring of 2008, Southborough voted to join the MetroWest RTA, which will have a significant positive impact on Southborough's interest in encouraging the growth of small, local businesses and supporting the ability of people who live in Southborough to work in Southborough or elsewhere in the MetroWest region that was previously inaccessible without an automobile.

# Land Use and Zoning Goals

## LU-1

Update and modernize the zoning bylaw and other land use regulations.

## LU-2

Provide appropriate buffers or transitions between incompatible uses.

## LU-3

Encourage more flexible development in appropriate places through such means as shared septic systems, cluster subdivisions, open space residential development, and by right zoning.

## LU-4

Encourage architectural quality in non-residential development.

## LU-5

Support a Town permitting process that is fair and efficient and follows the goals of the Master Plan.

## LU-6

Promote growth that is environmentally sustainable and capable of withstanding economic downturns.

## LU-7

Establish stewardship and preservation of the unique identity of Southborough's neighborhoods and villages and strengthen linkages between areas.

## LU-8

Continue to engage neighboring towns about the development that occurs along the municipal borders.

# Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

## Data Collection

- ▷ LU-1: Revise and update demographic and land use data after 2010 Census.
- ▷ LU-2: Develop database to reflect current land use trends to improve and update GIS information.

## Zoning

- ▶ Goal 1: Update and modernize the zoning bylaw and other land use regulations.
- ▶ Goal 2: Provide appropriate buffers or transitions between incompatible uses.
- ▶ Goal 3: Encourage more flexible development in appropriate places through such means as shared septic systems, cluster subdivisions, open space residential development, and by right zoning.
- ▶ Goal 4: Encourage architectural quality in non-residential development.
- ▶ Goal 5: Support a Town permitting process that is fair, efficient, and follows the goals of the Master Plan.
- ▷ LU-3: Conduct thorough review of zoning bylaw:
  - Formatting
  - Update definitions
  - Conformance with master plan
  - Legal consistency
  - Update use regulations
  - Smart growth techniques
- ▷ LU-4: Specifically allow for mixed-use projects in Business Village and Business Highway districts.
- ▷ LU-5: Establish design guidelines or use form-based codes to encourage better building layout and streetscape design.
- ▷ LU-6: Overhaul and update the town's off-street parking requirements in zoning, and consider establishing maxi-

mum (in addition to the existing minimum) parking space requirements.

- ▷ H-7: Expand affordable housing provisions in zoning (inclusionary zoning) to include Multi-family Housing for the Elderly bylaw and mixed-use development if adopted. Consider providing incentives to make it more attractive to developers.
- ▷ H-8: Revise zoning to expand housing choices by allowing multi-family dwellings, mixed-use development, duplexes, etc. in a variety of zoning districts.
- ▷ H-9: Allow duplexes by special permit.
- ▷ H-10: Revise zoning to allow accessory apartments through site plan review by the Planning Board.
- ▶ Goal 6: Promote growth that is environmentally sustainable and capable of withstanding economic downturns.
- ▷ OSR-5: Revise zoning bylaw to expand effective cluster development opportunities by amending Major Residential Development to create an Open Space Residential Development bylaw.
- ▷ LU-7: Review subdivision rules and regulations to make consistent with zoning changes and LID bylaw.
- ▷ 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.).
- ▷ LU-9: Consider adopting a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) bylaw to encourage the preservation of valued open space in rural portions of Southborough and transfer those development rights to a village center that may be appropriate for more dense development (i.e. Downtown).
- ▷ LU-10: Consider changing the zoning for lands already protected as open space so that they are rezoned for the Conservation District.

- ▷ LU-11: Revise zoning to amend Major Residential Development to an Open Space Residential Development that provides for clustered housing development.
- ▷ ED-3: Evaluate opportunities to modify the Highway Business District boundaries in order to provide more depth and foster orderly commercial development along Route 9.
- ▷ ED-4: Reduce the potential for land use conflicts and preserve commercially zoned land for business uses by:
  - prohibiting single-family dwellings in the Highway Business District and the Industrial District
  - considering elimination of the power to grant use variances once a comprehensive revision of the zoning bylaw is complete and it is determined they are no longer relevant.
- ▷ ED-8: Overhaul and update existing use regulations in the business and industrial districts to eliminate use conflicts, foster multi-use development, and encourage clusters of compatible businesses.
- ▷ NCHR-5: Adopt policies to encourage green development practices and LEED certifiable technologies by the Town and private developers (i.e. review site plan review for environmental/energy efficiency criteria).
- ▷ NCHR-18: Adopt zoning regulations to address development impacts on scenic vistas.
- ▷ NCHR-19: Consider a scenic overlay district which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views.
- ▶ Goal 7: Establish stewardship and preservation of the unique identity of Southborough's neighborhoods and villages and strengthen linkages between areas.
- ▷ V-1: Consider increasing the size threshold for uses requiring a special permit in the Village Business District

and establishing minimum design and impact standards that permitted uses must meet in order to obtain site plan approval from the Planning Board.

- ▷ V-2: To provide more foot traffic and encourage appropriate scale and design in the Business Village District:
  - Allow mixed-use buildings as of right in the Business Village District, subject to minimum design and impact standards, and site plan approval by the Planning Board (Cordaville, Downtown, and Fayville).
  - Use zoning to encourage appropriate transit-oriented development around MBTA station
  - Allow small multi-family dwellings in the Business Village District, i.e., without limiting the use to a Major Residential Development.
- ▷ V-3: Establish guidelines for specific villages to include architectural, lighting, and streetscape design standards that enhance local character.
- ▷ V-4: Review and revise boundaries of the Business Village District.

#### Project Review

- ▶ Goal 8: Continue to engage neighboring towns about the development that occurs along the municipal borders.
- ▷ T-1: Seek reasonable and clear mitigation commitments from development projects on town-owned roadways, tying appropriate increases in transportation demand to an appropriate amount of improvement funding.
  - Understand better the impact of development projects in Southborough and surrounding communities' development plans
    - Along with typical project review, establish tiers of development, assigning an appropriate level of scrutiny for the review of the transportation components and require an analysis of potential mitigation measures to address identified impacts

## Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

- Participate heavily in the MetroWest Growth Management Committee to weigh in on area Master Plans, development agendas, etc.





# 3. Housing

*A sampling of  
Southborough's housing  
stock.*

Photos courtesy of  
Southborough Planning  
Board.



**At forty-one percent of the Town's land area, housing is the most prevalent land use in Southborough; its cost and availability are critical components in the range of elements that together define the character of the community.**

## Introduction

At forty-one percent of the Town's land area, housing is the most prevalent land use in Southborough; its cost and availability are critical components in the range of elements that together define the character of the community. While the housing stock (supply) today serves the needs of most of its citizens, market changes have made it difficult for certain segments of the community to afford housing costs. The housing goal is to provide choices for people and return to the diverse housing types historically found in Southborough. Therefore, diversity in housing type and price is a significant aspect of this Plan.

To inform the discussion of housing availability, the first sections in this chapter provide a brief summary of population and household changes that are occurring in Southborough. Following the demographic analysis is a description of the inventory of housing choices—from small apartments to large estates—and how market forces are affecting the mix. Southborough completed its Affordable Housing Strategic Plan in September 2004 and significant components of that plan have been included—and updated—in this chapter.

*A typical single  
family residence in  
Southborough.*

Photo courtesy of  
Southborough Planning  
Board.

## Population and Demographic Profile

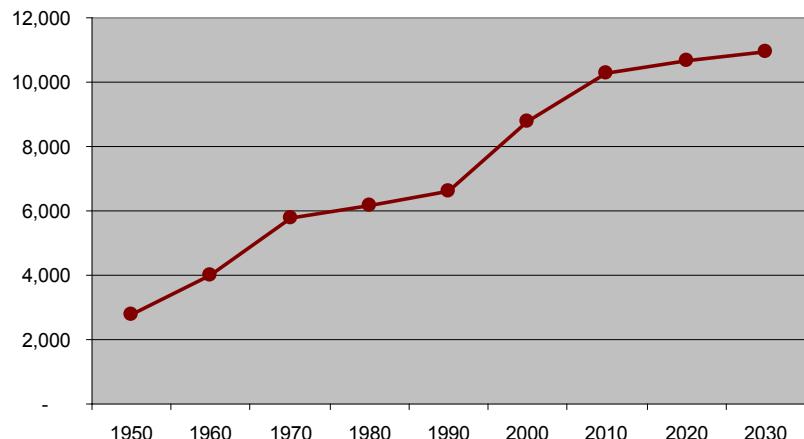
As shown in Chart 3-1, Southborough's population has grown dramatically since 1990 (32 percent increase) and is expected to continue to grow at a rapid rate through 2010 (17 percent). However, in the first five years of the current decade, the Town has observed a more moderate growth rate than expected, at approximately 9 percent. Southborough's most recent census reported a population of 9,580.<sup>1</sup> Population projections by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) anticipate Southborough's growth rate to continue to be moderate through the year 2030 (3 and 4 percent per decade).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Southborough Town Census, 2006. Estimates for the 2007 population are slightly lower at 9,469 (Claritas).

<sup>2</sup> As discussed at the end of the chapter, Southborough has approximately 300 to 400 housing units in various stages of the development process, from proposed to under construction. Depending on the build out schedule of these projects and the number of bedrooms in each unit, Southborough could reach the MAPC 2010 projected population sooner than 2010. However, it is possible to predict how long it will take for these units to be built.

**Chart 3-1****Population over Time**

Source: US Census 1990 and 2000; Metropolitan Area Planning Council (projections)



## What is the MAPC?

The MAPC is a regional planning agency representing 101 cities and Towns in the metropolitan Boston area. Among other tasks, MAPC:

- ▶ Addresses issues of regional importance;
- ▶ Has oversight responsibility for the region's federally funded transportation program;
- ▶ Collaborates in the development of comprehensive plans and recommendations; and
- ▶ Provides technical assistance and advocacy.

With a total land mass of nearly 13.9 square miles, Southborough's current population density is 689 people per square mile.<sup>3</sup> In 1990, the population density was almost 500 people per square mile.

Southborough's population growth reflects the expansion of housing from the eastern portion of the state into suburban and rural locations

first beyond Route 128 and ultimately continuing across Interstate 495. The primary reasons that people chose Southborough as their residence, which may have attributed to its population growth in the 1990s are:

- ▶ the quality of the public schools;
- ▶ Southborough is a picturesque community;
- ▶ the Town's commuting location (about 25 miles to Boston and 15 to Worcester);
- ▶ the quality of life; and
- ▶ the open space.<sup>4</sup>

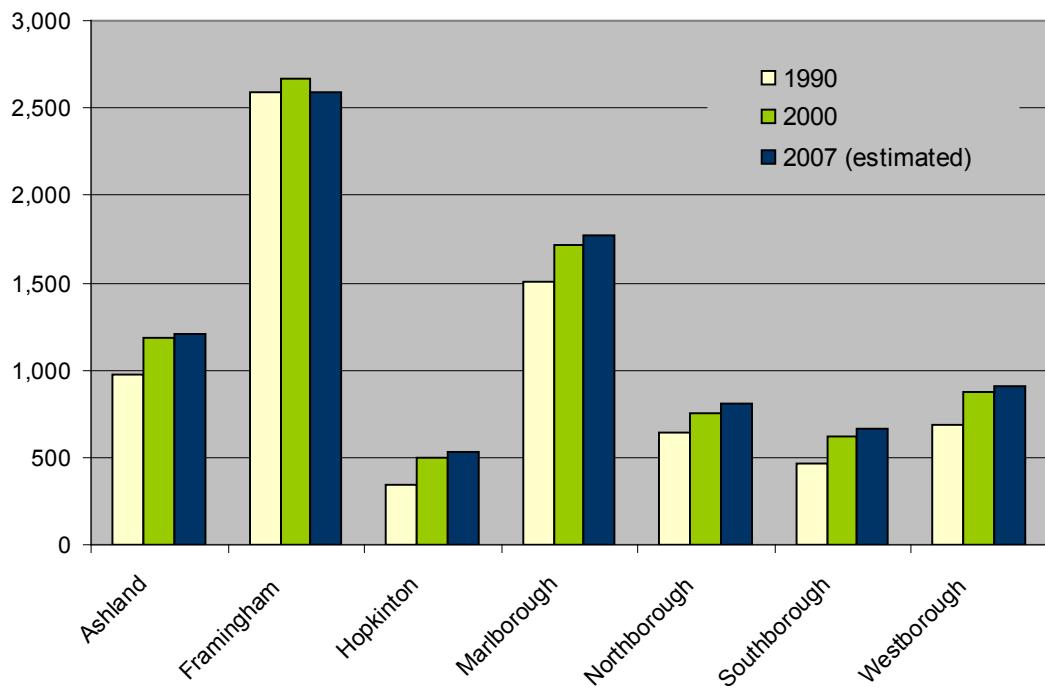
Furthermore, Southborough had fairly large amounts of vacant land in the late 1990s when the market rebounded. Like other neighboring communities, the value of Southborough's land increased considerably after 1995. As a result, the Town lost Chapter 61 and Chapter 61A land (forest and agricultural land, respectively) to residential development because the land value was perceived by the owners to be far greater than the tax relief provided under legal agreements over these land uses. This is a

<sup>3</sup> This is a measure of land mass only; the 13.9 square miles (8,922 acres) does not include the Sudbury Reservoir. The total area of Southborough, including the reservoir is 15.4 square miles (9,843 acres).

<sup>4</sup> From the survey conducted for the Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2006.

**Chart 3-2**  
**Population Density**  
**Comparisons by Region**

Source: US Census 1990 and 2000;  
Claritas 2007 (estimated)



**Table 3-1**  
**Population Comparisons by Region**

Region	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007
Southborough	5,798 (-)	6,193 (6.8%)	6,628 (7.0%)	8,781 (32.5%)	9,469 (7.8%)
Neighbors †	128,659 (-)	136,196 (5.9%)	144,121 (5.8%)	163,195 (13.2%)	165,290 (1.3%)
Worcester County	637,037 (-)	646,352 (1.5%)	709,705 (9.8%)	750,963 (5.8%)	n/a ‡
Massachusetts	5,689,000 (-)	5,737,000 (0.8%)	6,016,425 (4.9%)	6,349,097 (5.5%)	6,437,1933 (1.4%)*

Source: 1970 and 1980 data obtained from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Agency and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council; US Census 1990 and 2000; 2007 estimates obtained from Claritas.  
Notes: † Neighbors include the cities or Towns of: Ashland, Framingham, Hopkinton, Marlborough, Northborough and Westborough.

‡ The County Government system in Massachusetts was discontinued in July 1998 and therefore no data is available at this level.

\*Massachusetts population data is from 2006.

statewide trend; Massachusetts lost 40 acres per day to development between 1985 and 1999.<sup>5</sup> Nearly nine out of ten of the acres lost were used for residential development, primarily low-density, large lot construction. The majority of the acres lost are forest.

Southborough's 32 percent population growth in the 1990's outpaced the state (5.5 percent), the county (5.8 percent), and the average 13.2 percent growth in the neighboring towns. However, it should be noted that of its neighbors, only Hopkinton grew more rapidly than Southborough in the 1990's (45 percent).

5 This and the next two sentences are from "Losing Ground: At What Cost?" produced by MassAudubon, November 2003.

Southborough has the smallest population among its neighbors. At 689 persons per square mile, Southborough also has the second lowest population density among its neighbors, with only Hopkinton having fewer persons per square mile (535 persons per square mile). Chart 3-2 shows that, excluding Framingham, population density has increased in Southborough's immediate region at similar rates.

Children were the fastest growing age cohort during the 1990's in Southborough. The under five years of age population has increased by 76 percent and the five to seventeen year olds by 64 percent. The last of the Under 5 year cohort have just entered the schools and it is clear that the system has seen the effect of this dramatic increase in school aged children. On the other hand, once finished with high school, young adult residents seem to be leaving Southborough (as shown in Chart 3-3). This decrease of the young adult population has been common in small communities. Reasons for the outflow of these age cohorts can be attributed to a lack of rental options or a lack of affordable, small units appropriate for single professionals or young couples.

The 35 to 54 age cohort also showed a nearly 50 percent increase in population between the years 1990 and 2000. Estimates indicate that this cohort will now decrease slightly (1.1 percent) through 2007. Although still representing a smaller proportion of the population than the 35 to 54 cohort, the group that continues to grow is those over 55 years of age. As experienced elsewhere in Massachusetts and the rest of the nation, the population is aging and cities and Towns are searching for ways to accommodate their elderly and retiring populations within the community.

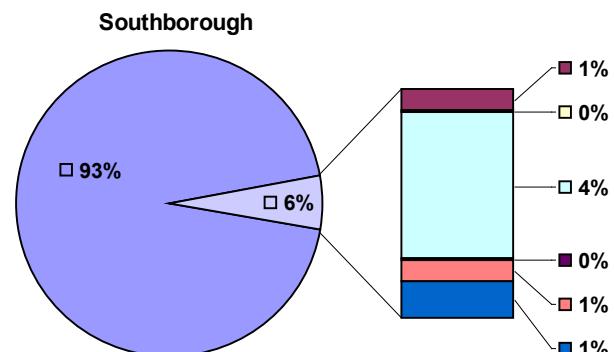
## What is a cohort?

A cohort is a group of subjects—most often humans from a given population—defined by experiencing an event (typically birth) in a particular time span. Here, it describes the set of subjects born within a certain time period.

The population of Southborough is evenly distributed between male (49 percent) and female (51 percent). Southborough's population is relatively homogeneous, with approximately 95 percent of the population identifying as White or Caucasian, 4 percent identifying as Asian, and less than one percent identifying as Black. This is a higher percentage of Caucasian population compared to Southborough's neighbors (87%) and Massachusetts as a whole (85%), as shown in Chart 3-4.

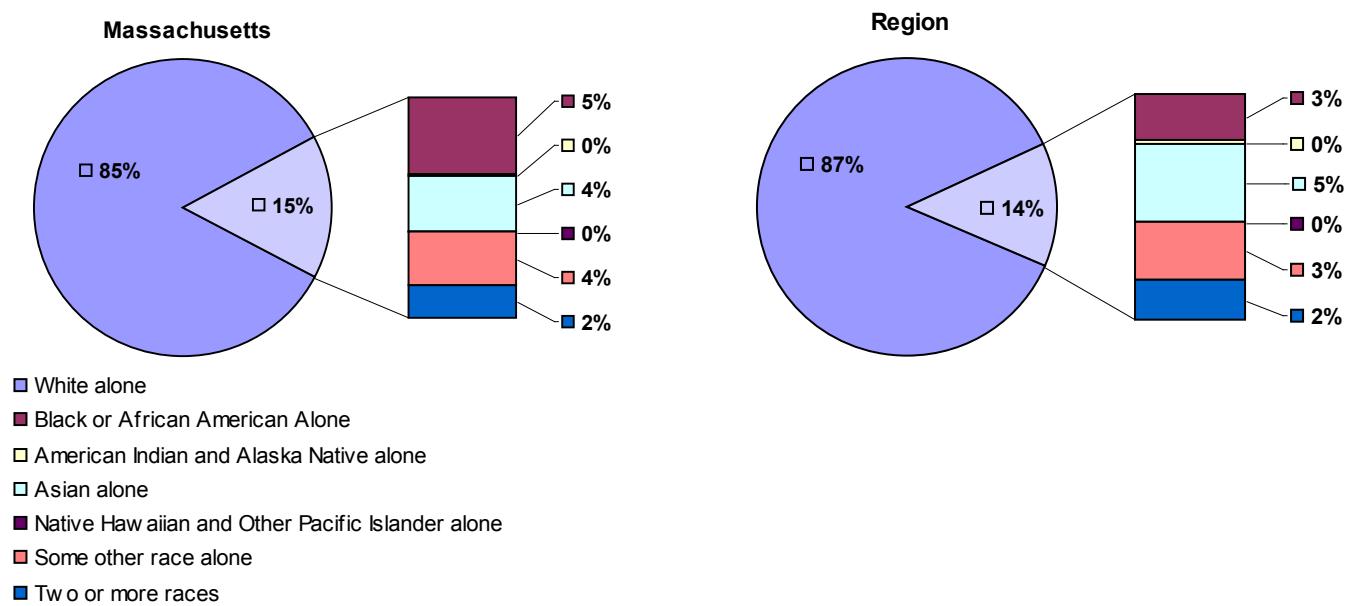
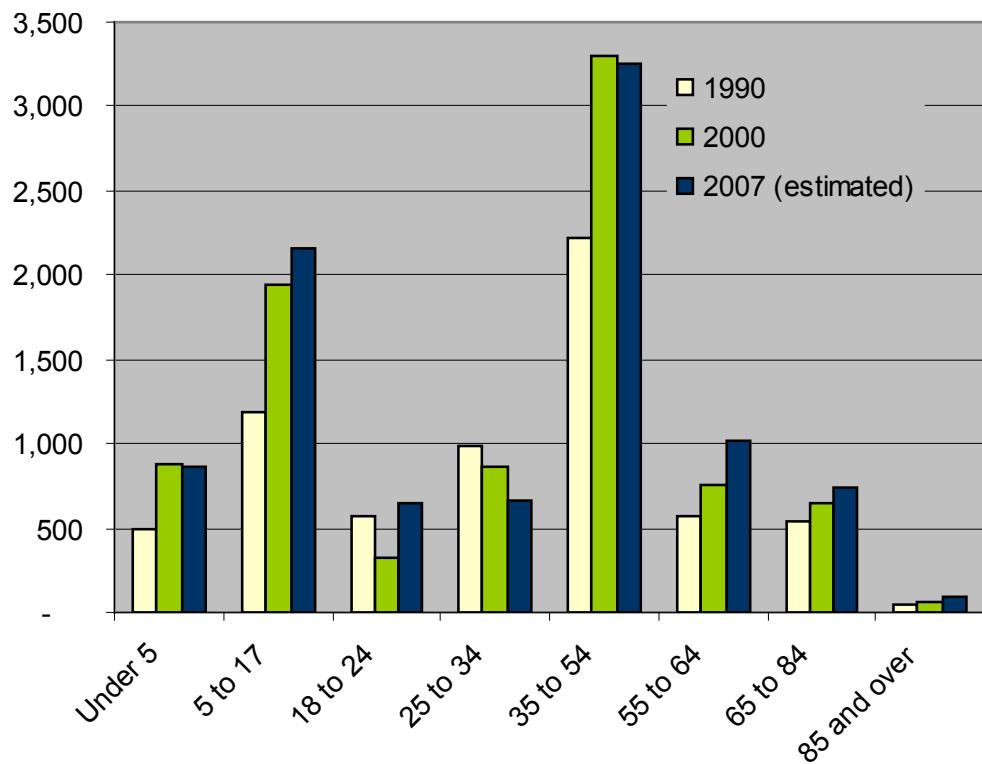
**Chart 3-4**  
**Population Comparison by Race**

Source: 2000 US Census



**Chart 3-3**  
**Distribution of Population  
by Age**

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000; Claritas  
2007 (estimated)



## Household Definitions

Two types of householders are distinguished in the U.S. Census. A **family householder** is a householder living with one or more people related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption (see more on family below). The householder and all people in the household related to him are family members. A **non-family householder** is a householder living alone or with non-relatives only.

The Census Bureau classifies all people not living in households as living in **group quarters**. There are two types of group quarters: institutional (for example, correctional facilities, nursing homes, and mental hospitals) and non-institutional (for example, college dormitories, military barracks, group homes, missions, and shelters).

Source: Glossary at American FactFinder, [factfind.census.gov](http://factfind.census.gov).

### Households

According to the 2000 US Census, Southborough had 2,952 households (occupied housing units), an increase of 641, or almost 30 percent from 1990, as shown in Table 3-2. The number of households increased at a comparable rate to the population increase (32 percent), which indicates that there is little change in the household size in Southborough in the past decade. However, Southborough's census data indicates that the Town is actually increasing in household size, although only slightly, which is in contrast to the national trend of declining household size. In 1990, the persons per household figure was approximately 2.91 and by 2000, it had increased slightly to 2.97 persons per household. This increase in household size is primarily because Southborough has a larger percentage of family households than the national average, which is dictated by availabil-

ity of a housing stock in Southborough that is well suited for families. In fact, Southborough is second only to Hopkinton (3.33 persons per family) in average family size (3.30) according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

The large percentage of family households speaks to the prevalence of a housing stock in Southborough suitable to families—larger single family homes. As shown in Table 3-2, the number of family households has increased through 2007 by 6 percent and households with children under 18 by 20 percent. Of the nonfamily households nearly 80 percent are single-person households. Of those single-person households, nearly 40 percent are older than 65 years of age. Only 28 people live in group quarters in Southborough; this is less than one percent of the 2000 population.

Southborough's household growth in the past decade is the highest increase among its neighboring communities except for Hopkinton, as shown in Table 3-3. The communities immediately surrounding Southborough—Ashland, Framingham, Marlborough, Northborough, and Westborough—encountered less household growth in the past decade than Southborough, although the increase in Framingham was significantly less (4.1 percent) than the rest.

### Housing Conditions

Household growth is the primary driver of housing demand in a community. In 2000, a total of 2,997 housing units were counted in Southborough (see Table 3-4). Nearly 99 percent of the housing stock is occupied, leaving only 45 vacant units (1.5 percent). Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units

**Table 3-2**  
**Household Changes by Type**

	1990	2000	% change 1990 -2000	2007	% change 2000-2007
Total Households	2,281	2,952	29.4%	3,126	5.9%
Family Households	1,850	2,427	31.2%	2,576	6.1%
Married couple family	1,646	2,181	32.5%	2,314	6.1%
Households with <18	852	1,284	50.7%	1,544	20.2%
Householder >64	242	456	88.4%	N/A	N/A
Nonfamily households	431	525	27.0%	550	4.8%
One-person households	342	412	20.5%	419	1.7%
Over 65	148	161	8.8%	N/A	N/A

Source: US Census 1990 and 2000; Claritas 2007 (estimates)

**Table 3-3**  
**Regional Household Growth**

Year	Southborough	Ashland	Framingham	Hopkinton	Marlborough	Northborough	Westborough
1990	2,281	4,607	25,113	3,159	12,152	4,058	5,392
2000	2,952	5,720	26,153	4,444	14,501	4,906	6,534
% Change	(29.4%)	(24.2%)	(4.1%)	(40.7%)	(19.3%)	(20.9%)	(21.2%)

Source: US Census 1990 and 2000

**Table 3-4**  
**Change in Housing Units (1990-2000)**

Housing Units	1990	2000	# Change	% Change
Occupied ("Households")	2,281	2,952	671	29.4%
Vacant	80	45	(35)	-43.8%
TOTAL	2,361	2,997	636	26.9%

Source: US Census 1990 and 2000

increased by 27 percent. The vacancy rate in Southborough declined from 3.4 percent to 1.5 percent, (see Table 3-5) which exhibits a growing demand for housing in Southborough. Southborough's low vacancy rate indicates that the Town is generally meeting most local demand and that there is (as of 2000) a continued demand for housing in Southborough.

As shown in Chart 3-5, 88 percent of Southborough's 2000 occupied housing stock is owner-occupied (2,599 units). The remaining 12 percent (353 units) is renter-occupied. Although the ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied has changed slightly from 1990 (84 percent owner-occupied and 16 percent renter-occupied), the actual number of renter-occupied units (353 units) has decreased by four units since 1990. This low percentage of rental housing supports the earlier assertion that Southborough is not providing a range of housing options, such as rental units.

Census data from 2000 shows that approximately one-quarter of all of Southborough's homes were built since 1990 (see Chart 3-6), although that percentage increases when one adds the new homes built since 2000. The bulk of the houses were built in the 40 years from 1950 through 1990. About 16 percent date back to earlier than 1939. Thus, Southborough's housing stock is relatively young when compared to other communities in Massachusetts.

According to the 2000 census data, Southborough had a total of 2,997 housing units, 90.7 percent of which were considered as detached, single units. Another 2.9 percent were attached, single units, either townhouses or condominiums. The rest of the Town's housing stock was

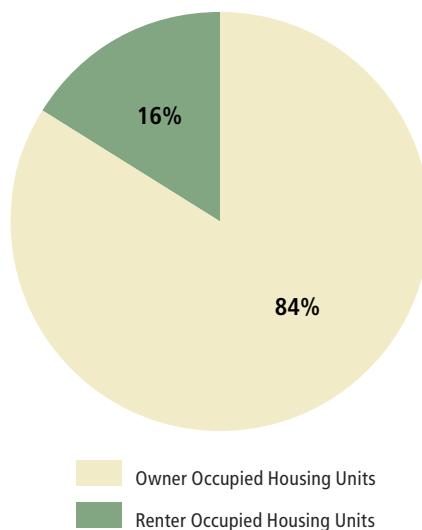
**Table 3-5**  
**Housing Vacancy**

	1990	2000
Vacant Units	80	45
Total Housing Units	2,361	2,997
VACANCY RATE	3.4%	1.5%

Source: US Census 1990 and 2000

**Chart 3-5**  
**Housing Ownership**

Source: US Census 2000, SF3



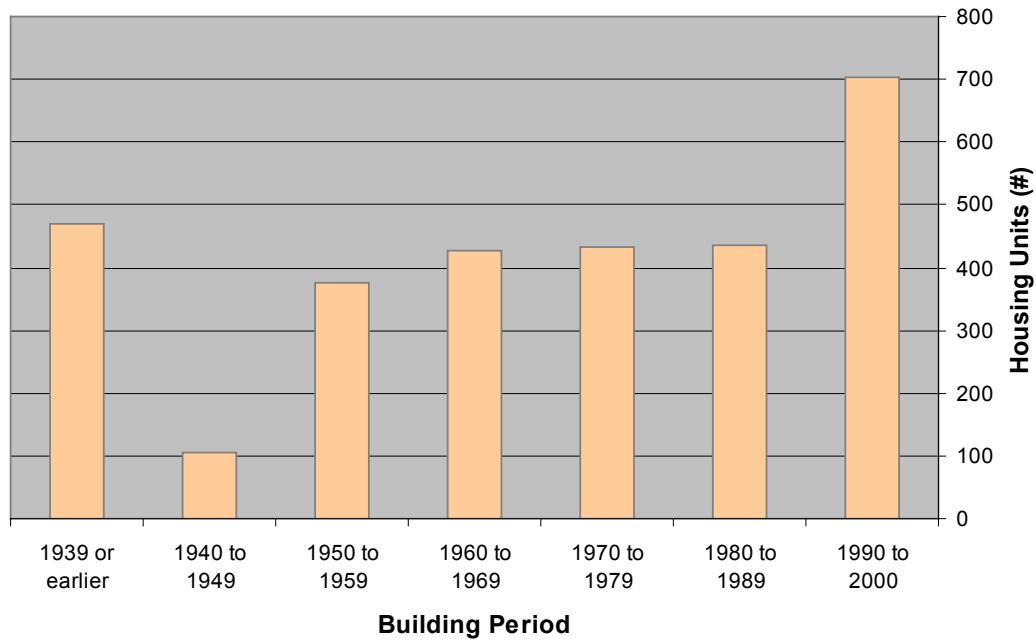
in buildings containing multiple units ranging from duplexes to mid-sized complexes with less than 10 units, as shown in Chart 3-7.

#### Housing Market

Below is recent data relating to the housing market, some of which has been updated since the 2004 Affordable Housing Plan.

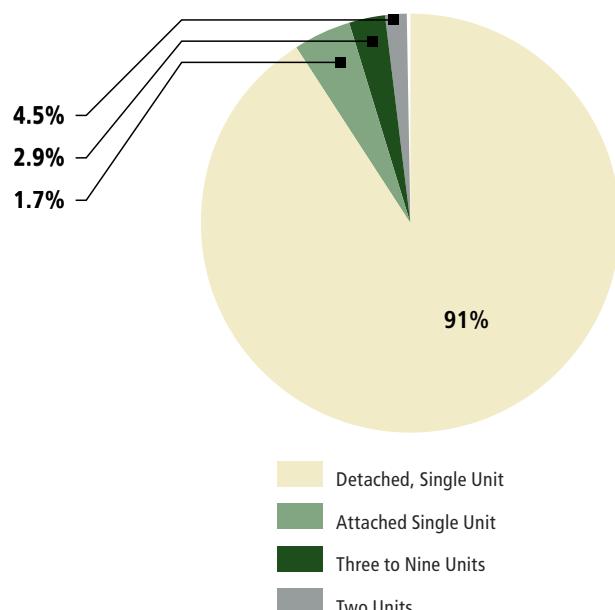
**Chart 3-6**  
**Age of Housing Stock**

Source: US Census 2000, SF3



**Chart 3-7**  
**Housing by Units in Structure**

Source: US Census 2000, SF3



## Household Definitions

**Single unit, detached** is a 1 unit structure detached from any other house; (with open space on all four sides).

**Single unit, attached** is a 1 unit structure that has one or more walls extending from ground to roof separating it from adjoining structures.

**2 or more units** are units in structures containing 2 or more housing units, further categorized in the U.S. Census as units in structures with 2, 3 or 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 19, 20 to 49, and 50 or more units.

Source: Census Data Information at [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov)

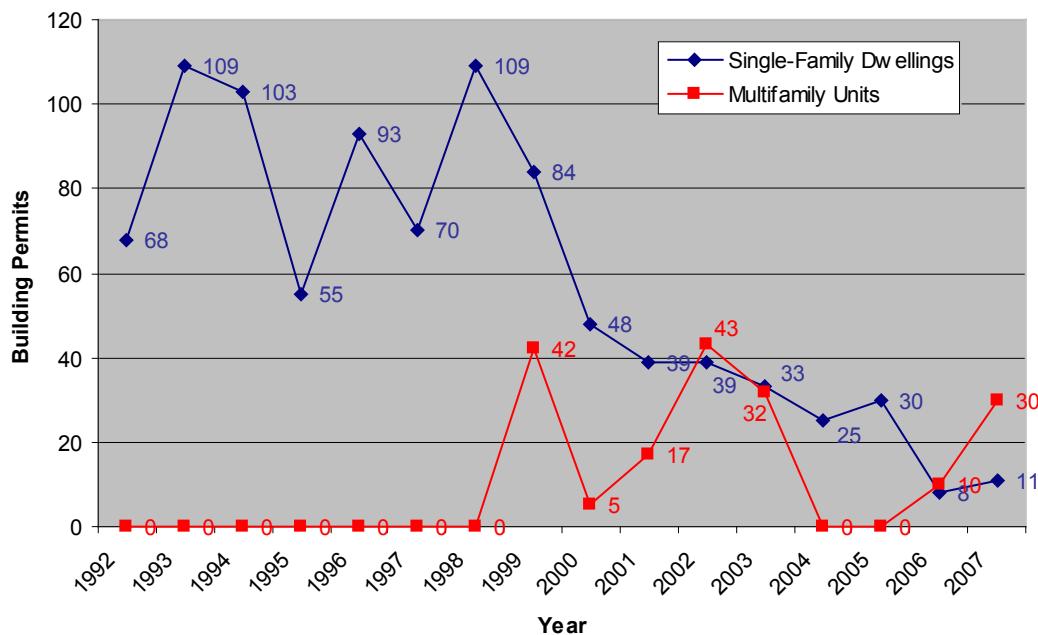
When looking at Chart 3-8, one can plainly see that the 1990s were boom years for housing construction in Southborough. In the current decade, the new housing starts have slowed down to an average of 36 single family building permits per year. Conversely, on average 92 housing permits were pulled annually for single family homes between 1992 and 1999. In the last few years, single family housing construc-

housing growth is expected to be higher.

The vast majority of the new housing in Southborough has been for single family homes, a trend that is consistent with earlier development patterns. Multi-family development has been less consistent since re-emerging in Southborough in 2000, ranging from 0 to 43 building permits pulled.

**Chart 3-8**  
**New Housing Starts**  
**1992-2007 †**

Source: Town of Southborough  
Note: † 2007 includes actual building permits pulled through June 21, 2007; data from July through December is estimated based on past trends and projects in the pipeline.



tion has dropped considerably. In part, this drop in new housing construction is due to the phasing of projects in the pipeline; while no firm projections exist at this time, some show that new housing starts are expected to increase again in the next year, but not to the levels of the early part of the decade. Furthermore, housing growth is not expected to reach the level of the 1990s. This decrease in single family housing starts is also attributable to the slowing housing market statewide. Multi-unit

The only multi-family housing being produced since 1999 has been for projects designed to house residents over 55 years of age.<sup>6</sup> This trend is worth noting because the 2004 Plan identifies the need for a greater diversity of housing stock in Southborough. Although there has been an increase in multi-family housing, it has only filled a niche that benefits a single demographic

<sup>6</sup> The prevalence of multi-family housing produced and restricted to 55 years of age and over is largely attributable to the Housing for Older Persons Act which was amended by Congress in 1995. Impacts of this amendment were seen broadly in the late 1990s.

*This multi-family development in Southborough is exclusive to residents over 55 years of age.*

*Since 1999 all multi-family developments in Southborough have been for the over 55 crowd.*



group. As shown earlier in Chart 3-3, this single demographic group (55+) has increased in population by 27 percent since 1990. This can be attributed to existing residents aging in place as well as new residents moving into Southborough to take advantage of the new housing options in Town.

While it's true that Southborough experienced a large increase in households over 55 years of age, the Town also far exceeded the state and the nation as a whole for growth among the 35 to 54 year old cohort (i.e. families with children). As stated before, this growth is largely predicated by the provision of over 90 percent of the Town's housing stock as single family homes. At the same time, the demographic of 18 to 34 year olds has decreased by a total of 23 percent. This can be attributed to young adults having difficulty finding housing that is affordable to rent or purchase. This decline in population is the area of greatest concern because it can be inferred that Southborough is not providing valid housing options to allow these younger residents to remain in Southborough.

Like the decline in new housing construction discussed above, Chart 3-9 also shows the decline in housing sales in Southborough in the last two years. Up until 2007, this decline in sales was matched with an increase in median sales price. However, that sales price has begun to decline in 2007.

Southborough is experiencing the same housing stabilization as most of the Commonwealth, with a significant decline in sales price of single family homes so far in 2007 (\$425, 000 median sales price). As illustrated in Chart 3-10 and Table 3-6 and 3-7, housing prices in Southborough are generally high and have increased

## Household Definitions

Housing starts are the number of new dwellings begun in a geographic area during a particular period. Used as an economic indicator, they are measured by the number of building permits pulled.

Source: Census Data Information at [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov)

**Table 3-6**  
**2003 - 2006 Home Sales**

Price Range	Number Sold
Under \$299,999	24
\$300,000 - \$399,999	119
\$400,000 - \$499,999	155
\$500,000 - \$699,999	111
\$700,000 - \$899,999	106
\$900,000 and up	75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>590</b>

AVERAGE SALES PRICE \$624,152

AVERAGE LIST PRICE \$651,928

AVERAGE TIME ON MKT. 65 days

Source: Town of Southborough

**Table 3-7**  
**Median Sales Price: 2006**

Town	Single-Family	Condominium
Hopkinton	\$604,000	\$303,750
Southborough	\$570,000	\$593,500
Westborough	\$510,000	\$207,000
Ashland	\$402,750	\$308,000
Northborough	\$367,500	\$245,000
Framingham	\$365,000	\$204,000
Marlborough	\$334,000	\$70,000

Source: The Warren Group

substantially from a median sales price of \$204,000 in 1995 to \$557,500 in 2006.

2003 through 2006 were the peak years for

## Household Definitions

Median Sales Price is the selling price of a home that falls in the middle between the most expensive and least expensive home sale price in the area. It is different than assessed property value.

Median sales price is an indicator of property value and demand for homes in an area. This is a standard indicator used nationwide to understand property value, the willingness and ability to pay, and demand for homes in an area.

Average—as opposed to median—is the result obtained by dividing the sum total of a set or group of numbers by the total number in that group. This is not as commonly used because high numbers in a set or very low numbers in the set skew the average number and may distort the picture

Source: First American Real Estate Solutions accessed at [http://www.ubalt.edu/bnia/indicators/Expl\\_Housing\\_MedianSales\\_VS3.html](http://www.ubalt.edu/bnia/indicators/Expl_Housing_MedianSales_VS3.html) on June 22, 2007.

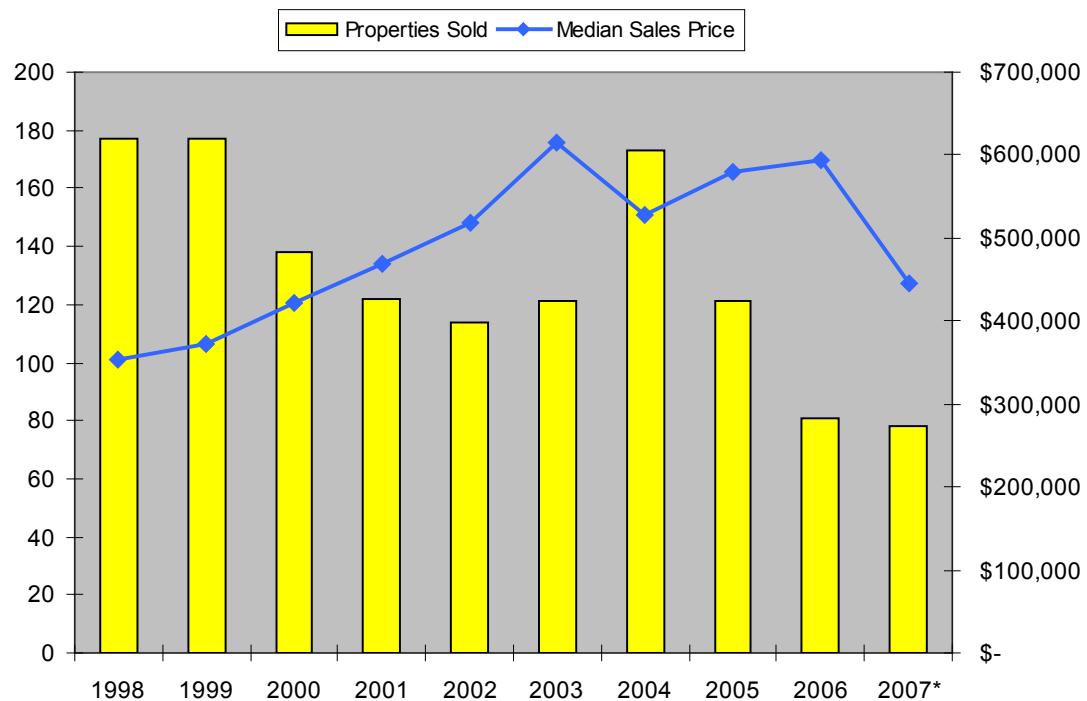
housing prices in Southborough, maxing out at \$655,000 in 2005. Only 4 percent of the homes sold between 2003 and 2006 were priced less than \$300,000 (see Table 3-6).

Compared to its neighbors, Southborough has the second highest median sales price in 2006 (see Table 3-7). While condominium sales in Hopkinton appear far less expensive one must consider the total sales; 40 condominiums were sold in Hopkinton in 2006 (two of which are mixed-income townhouses), compared to two in Southborough.

Southborough currently has an inventory of 110

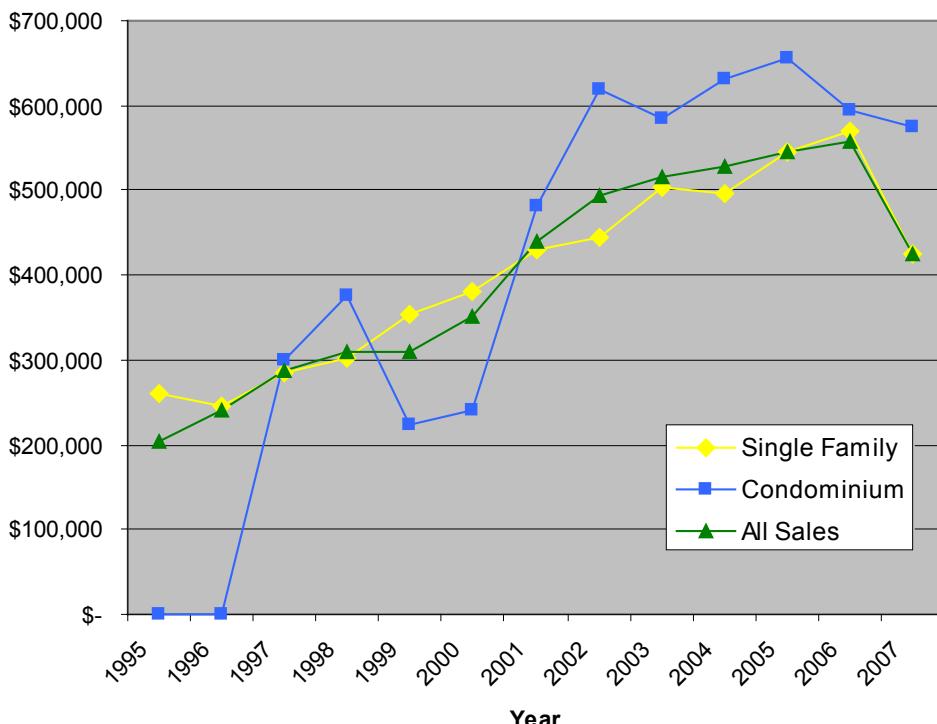
**Chart 3-9**  
**Median Sales Price v.  
 Home Sales (Single  
 Family)**

Source: Municipal Listing Service  
 Note: \* 2007 includes actual building permits pulled through June 21, 2007; data from July through December is estimated based on past trends and projects in the pipeline.



**Chart 3-10**  
**Median Sales Price †**

Source: The Warren Group  
 Note: † 2007 data includes through May 2007.



affordable housing units, or 3.7 percent of its total 2000 housing inventory, that qualify under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Chapter 40B regulations. To meet the 40B 10 percent goal, Southborough needs to increase its qualified affordable housing stock by an additional 269 units as described in the build-out analysis provided in Section 2, Land Use and Zoning.

### **Residential Projects in the Pipeline**

There are several projects planned or underway in Southborough which possess housing components, including rental units and affordable housing. The following are brief summaries of each project:

#### *Parmenter Meadows*

Parmenter Meadows is a seven-lot conventional subdivision proposed to be located on a new cul de sac off Parmenter Road. The project received definitive subdivision approval and is currently before the Conservation Commission.

#### *Trammell Crow Comprehensive Permit*

The Trammell Crow Company submitted an application to MassHousing for project eligibility for a 200-unit chapter 40B rental development, which it received. However in February 2008 the application was withdrawn. This project was located on a portion of the Flatley Company-owned property off Route 9 and Park Central Drive. The proposed site plan included a wastewater treatment plant and open space, among other site features.

#### *Woodland Meadows Comprehensive Permit*

Located on approximately six acres between Woodland Road and Route 9, this project proposes 40 condominium units located in one

four-story building, with the main entrance off Woodland Road. The applicant received project eligibility from the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in October 2007. The comprehensive permit application was filed and the hearing is ongoing.

#### *Rossi Estates*

An 11-unit flexible subdivision, the proposal for Rossi Estates has received a special permit but has not yet filed for definitive subdivision approval. Two of the units will be affordable. This subdivision is located off Mt. Vickery Road.

#### *Meeting House Farm*

Under construction, this Comprehensive Permit project contains 29 ownership housing units. Eight of the units will be affordable. This development is located on Middle Road behind the Red Barn Coffee site.

#### *Avalon 40B*

Still in the conceptual phase, the proponent for this project made preliminary presentations to the Selectmen and SHOPC in June 2007. Site eligibility was received in October 2007. The proposal is for a 200-unit rental community located on the 18-acre Flatley Company-owned property on the eastbound side of Route 9 near Crystal Pond Road. The proposed site plan includes a wastewater treatment plant, parking garage, and other site amenities.

## Affordable Housing

The current affordable housing plan for Southborough was prepared in 2004 by Southborough's Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee (SHOPC) and was approved as a planned production plan by DHCD. With a current membership of eight, this committee was founded in 1986 as an ad hoc entity specifically to study and respond to affordable housing issues in Southborough.

Since the inception of SHOPC two decades ago, Southborough has seen tremendous population growth; as a corollary to this growth, housing costs have increased substantially. The population of Southborough in 1990 was 6,628, and by 2006 that number had grown by 44 percent to 9,580. In that same timeframe, the median sale price of housing in Southborough increased 232 percent from \$171,500 in 1990 to \$570,000 in 2006 (see Chart 3-10). Consequently, at the 2004 Annual Town Meeting SHOPC's responsibilities were expanded and the Committee was established as a permanent committee.

With this new designation, SHOPC recognized an urgent need to complete an affordable housing plan. The intent of the plan was to identify and respond to the future needs of Southborough's housing market. Its primary focus was to provide a diverse stock of housing and range of affordability levels in a creative, consistent, and innovative manner while maintaining a framework that balanced development and preservation of open space. The following section summarizes the essence of the affordable housing plan that was prepared by SHOPC.

## What is Planned Production?

Planned Production is a regulation (760 CMR 31.07(1)(i)) under Chapter 40B that encourages communities to take a proactive approach to affordable housing development.

If a municipality has an affordable housing plan approved by DHCD and is granted certification of compliance with the plan, a decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) relative to a comprehensive permit application will be deemed "consistent with local needs" under MGL Chapter 40B. "Consistent with local needs" means the ZBA's decision will be upheld by the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). This is commonly referred to as a temporary "reprieve" from 40B.

### Southborough's Affordable Housing Philosophy

The ability of our future generations to be able to find suitable housing choices is dependent on successful housing planning. Southborough recognizes this fact in its elevation of SHOPC from an ad hoc committee to that of a permanent committee. The Town understands the housing market in Southborough as one that threatens to hinder the diversity and community of the Town. This was a commonly raised concern during the initial interviews conducted by the planning team with Town officials and residents.

Residents of many income levels are being priced out of the housing market. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found the median family income in Eastern Worcester HUD Metro FMR Area (which includes Southborough) was \$91,600 for

the fiscal year of 2006.<sup>7</sup> For comparison purposes, the statewide median family income was approximately half of Southborough's median family income in 1999 dollars.<sup>8</sup> The problem lies in the fact that it is not only those residents that fall below 80 percent of the median family income—the benchmark for state subsidized housing—that lack affordable options. In Southborough, prices are so high that households of moderate means (those making between 81 percent to 120 percent of the median family income) cannot afford to buy homes here. Southborough's Affordable Housing Strategic Plan (the Housing Plan) uses this as a criterion for its Strategic Action Plan. The Housing Plan's goal is to provide housing for those who are being priced out regardless of where they stand with respect to the median family income levels.

The Housing Plan points out several constraints in Southborough's current zoning bylaw that discourages the production of affordable housing. For example, multi family and higher density living is currently only allowed for seniors. The Town's current bylaw only allows single family homes to be built by-right on 25,000 ft<sup>2</sup> or one acre lots.<sup>9</sup> The housing market in Southborough has boomed since the 1990s. With that increase everything affiliated with the housing market also escalated in price: land, property taxes, etc. Many families cannot afford to purchase such a large parcel and build

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.huduser.org/Datasets/LI/LI06/ma\\_fy2006.pdf](http://www.huduser.org/Datasets/LI/LI06/ma_fy2006.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, the Town's median family income has decreased since 2000. Southborough's 1999 median family income was \$119,454 in Southborough and Massachusetts' was \$61,664.

<sup>9</sup> The Major Residential Development (MRD) bylaw does allow a 2/3 reduction in lot area for projects that include 8 or more lots or units within 8 years and on contiguous property and under common ownership, among other requirements.

## Income Limits

### Very Low-Income

(Earning 60% or less of AMI)

### Low-Income

(Earning 80% or less of AMI)

### Moderate-Income

(Earning between 81% and 120% of AMI)

a home on it. Thus, the Housing Plan included recommendations regarding the need to revisit certain provisions of the zoning code as a significant, but not the sole step towards the creation of more diverse housing opportunities in Southborough.

At the 2006 Annual Town Meeting, SHOPC gave a presentation on making changes to the Business Village Districts to encourage mixed-use development as a way of revitalizing the villages, but also to allow for more housing options for Southborough. Smaller, multi-family units designed to complement the village character would be an asset to the Town. The presentation was met with enthusiasm and support (more discussion on this specific item can be found in the Land Use and Villages elements, see Chapters 2 and 9).

### Southborough Affordable Housing Trust Fund

At the April 2005 Annual Town Meeting, Town Meeting unanimously approved the creation of the Southborough Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF), whose purpose is the creation and preservation of affordable housing in the Town of Southborough for the benefit of low

and moderate income households. The ability to create such an entity is enabled through Chapter 491 of the Acts of 2004, MGL Chapter 44, §55C. The law gives all communities the local option to create municipal affordable housing trust funds. Previously, cities could create trusts through their own resolution, but towns had to get approval from the legislature through what is known as a home rule petition.

In addition, the law sets forth clear guidelines as to what trusts can do. It allows communities to collect funds for housing, segregate them out of the general budget into an affordable housing trust fund, and 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 law's impetus came from the state legislature's joint Housing and Urban Development Committee, which noticed more interest by cities and towns to create either affordable housing trust funds, or other local organizations that perform similar activities. The provisions of this trust fund are as follows:

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

- ▶ to accept and receive property by gift, grant, devise, or transfer;

- ▶ to purchase and retain real or personal property;
- ▶ to sell, lease, exchange, transfer or convey any personal, mixed, or real property;
- ▶ to execute, acknowledge and deliver deeds, assignments, transfers, pledges, leases, covenants, contracts, promissory notes, releases and other instruments;
- ▶ to manage or improve real property, and to abandon any property which the board determined not to be worth retaining; and
- ▶ to hold all or part of the trust property un-invested for such purposes and for such time as the board may deem appropriate.<sup>10</sup>

Funds paid into the trusts are the property of the Trust and need no additional spending approvals. Funds may be received from fees, private contributions, Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds and payments associated with zoning bylaws. Communities that have passed CPA may benefit most from this law because it gives them a more streamlined way to spend its CPA dollars on housing. This gives Southborough the flexibility to act quickly to secure property for the purpose of affordable housing. To date, 82 Massachusetts communities have this kind of housing trust, Cambridge being a notable example, and the structure has worked very well to create housing opportunities in a wide variety of ways.

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<sup>10</sup> At the April 2005 Annual Town Meeting, Town Meeting unanimously approved Articles 3, 4 and 5 in the Special Town Meeting to create the Trust. The official Roles and Responsibilities have been summarized to include only those actions relative to this document.

The AHTF had notable success in 2006, having funded and completed two projects:

- ▶ Construction of 26 Gilmore Road, a permanently affordable single-family home.
- ▶ Approval of funds for the Southborough Housing Authority to purchase the home at 1 Cordaville Road to create a permanently affordable rental unit.

To date, the AHTF has expended \$348,550 to create two permanently affordable housing units. In 2007 Town Meeting approved funding the trust fund with \$155,000 and subsequently approved \$90,000 in 2008; the additional CPA funds will give the committee the flexibility to act upon projects without waiting for the results of an Annual Town Meeting.

#### *Case Study – 26 Gilmore Road*

In 2000, a condition of approval for a special permit for an 18-lot subdivision for Brendon Homes, Inc. included a requirement to contribute \$100,000 to the Town's Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) and to participate in the construction of a home on a Town-owned parcel of land. In 2004, the Town acquired this parcel of land through a tax title process and the Town Meeting approved the use of the property for affordable housing. In 2006, the AHTF received CPA funding totaling \$99,976 towards the construction of this home. Finally, after

26 Gilmore Rd (left)  
1 Cordaville Rd (right)



several meetings between the AHTF, the developer, and residential neighbors to the property, in August 2006, the AHTF and Brendon Homes, Inc. endorsed a Construction Agreement that stipulated conditions and approved the plans and specs for an affordable single-family home on the parcel. In February 2007, following a lottery, the home was sold to an income-eligible family and it was included through the state's Local Initiative Program on the Town's subsidized housing inventory.

The Town has demonstrated its commitment to creating affordable housing via Town initiatives by pursuing this property, enacting Inclusionary Zoning within its subdivision procedures, creating an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and pursuing CPA funds for these projects. The Trust Fund, along with the Southborough Housing Opportunity Partnership Committee, worked with neighborhood residents, as well as the developer, to ensure a complementary design and a true community project.

#### *Case Study – 1 Cordaville Road*

At the January 2006 Special Town Meeting, this property was authorized for purchase by the Town. It is a three-bedroom, single-family home located at the corner of Routes 30 and 85 in downtown and is within walking distance to the Town House, public library, senior center, Woodward Elementary School, and downtown



services. The Town purchased the property at below-market value in an effort to retain an ideally-located property and modest home for permanent affordable housing.

The Southborough Housing Authority submitted a grant request to the Southborough Affordable Housing Trust Fund in July 2006, seeking funds to purchase the home from the Town, thereby creating a permanently affordable rental family home. The Trust Fund approved a grant request of \$155,000 to purchase the home. The Board of Selectmen approved a request to purchase the home; the documents were finalized and recorded in December 2006.

The Town sees this project as particularly positive because, once again, many parties participated in its success: Town Meeting, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Southborough Housing Authority, and the Board of Selectmen. This is another example of a community housing project that achieved its stated goals in a cooperative manner. The Housing Authority was able to quickly place a family in the home, thus providing a housing opportunity not previously available.

### **2004 Affordable Housing Plan Recommendations**

Southborough's Affordable Housing Plan from 2004 states, "Land values are simply too high to create affordable housing within the parameters of the current zoning code." As a result, recommendations are made that address the Town's zoning bylaw in order to allow for a realistic future of affordability. However, non-regulatory methods are required as well. The availability of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding provides Southborough with additional tools that can be utilized to achieve

the goals of this plan.

Not to be confused with the recommendations of this Master Plan, the 2004 Affordable Housing Plan includes the following set of recommendations:

#### *Short Term*

- ▶ Allow duplexes by special permit
- ▶ Encourage and allow mixed-use in BV district
- ▶ Revise the Multifamily Housing for the Elderly bylaw
- ▶ Town action on tax title properties for properties that could be used to provide housing
- ▶ Encourage rental projects in 40B proposals
- ▶ Encourage affordability in existing units

#### *Short-Mid Term*

- ▶ Effectively use CPA and local affordable housing funds to create affordable housing

#### *Mid-Term*

- ▶ Revise the zoning bylaw to allow new or renovated multi-family housing by special permit to require affordability
- ▶ Encourage in-fill development and development on non-confirmed lots to promote more clustered development

#### *Long-Term*

- ▶ Encourage commercial projects to include a housing element
- ▶ Re-use of commercial buildings for housing
- ▶ Housing rehabilitation program using local affordable housing funds
- ▶ Use restrictions

# Housing Goals

## H-1

Ensure that future generations of Southborough citizens and people who work in Southborough are able to remain as residents of the Town.

## H-2

Encourage a more diverse population.

## H-3

Expand the housing choice in Southborough for families.

## H-4

Encourage small lot zoning in villages and other appropriate areas in Town.

## H-5

Encourage multi-family housing in appropriate locations and at an appropriate scale.

## H-6

Maintain Southborough's attractive and aesthetically diverse housing stock and continue to promote quality in future development.

# Housing Recommendations

- ▶ Goal 1: Ensure that future generations of Southborough citizens and people who work in Southborough are able to remain as residents of the Town.
- ▶ Goal 2: Encourage a more diverse population.
  - ▷ H-1: Develop a master plan for use of CPA funds.
  - ▷ H-2: Continue to use CPA funds for variety of affordable housing strategies:
    - rehabilitation of existing housing stock (loan program)
    - develop creative financing mechanisms to assist income eligible households
    - purchase existing multi-family homes for rental housing administered by SHA
    - buy-down existing housing stock
    - construct septic systems for non-profit affordable housing development
    - provide matching funds for partnerships with non-profits
    - provide housing for disabled and elderly residents.
- ▶ Goal 3: Expand the housing choice in Southborough for families.
- ▶ Goal 4: Encourage small lot zoning in villages and other appropriate areas in Town.
  - ▷ H-3: Encourage development on in-fill and non-conforming parcels.
  - ▷ H-4: Encourage re-use of commercial buildings for loft apartments and/or live-work space.
  - ▷ H-5: Inventory Town-owned and tax title property to identify potential parcels for use as affordable housing sites to be developed/rehabilitated by Town or by private developers.
  - ▷ H-6: Encourage a greater diversity of housing options (apartments in 40B projects; accessory apartments, deed restrictions in existing dwellings, etc.).
  - ▷ H-7: Expand affordable housing provisions in zoning (inclusionary zoning) to include Multi-family Housing for the Elderly bylaw and mixed-use development if adopted. Consider providing incentives to make it more attractive to developers.
  - ▶ Goal 5: Encourage multi-family housing in appropriate locations and at an appropriate scale.
  - ▶ Goal 6: Maintain Southborough's attractive and aesthetically diverse housing stock and continue to promote quality in future development.
  - ▷ H-8: Revise zoning to expand housing choices by allowing multi-family dwellings, mixed-use development, duplexes, etc. in a variety of zoning districts.
  - ▷ H-9: Allow duplexes by special permit.
  - ▷ H-10: Revise zoning to allow accessory apartments through site plan review by the Planning Board.
  - ▷ LU-11: Revise zoning to amend Major Residential Development to an Open Space Residential Development that provides for clustered housing development.
  - ▷ NCHR-4: Adopt policies to encourage green development practices and LEED certifiable technologies by the Town and private developers (i.e. review site plan review for environmental/energy efficiency criteria).

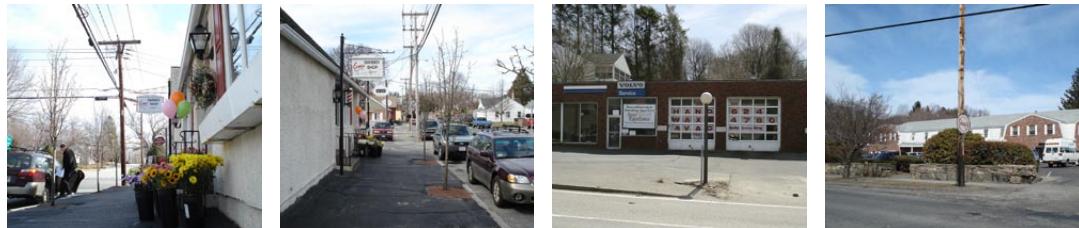


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# 4. Economic Development



**A community's economy is shaped by the uses of land within its borders, the sources of income and asset wealth of its population, and the size, structure and composition of the larger regional economy.**

## Introduction

A community's economy is shaped by the uses of land within its borders, the sources of income and asset wealth of its population, and the size, structure and composition of the larger regional economy. Much like watersheds, economic areas do not follow the political boundaries of cities and towns. Instead, the geography of cohesive economic areas – or areas connected by population, employment, labor and trade characteristics – usually corresponds to regional land use patterns, utilities, and transportation systems that determine the movement of goods and people. Waterways often signal connections between smaller economic areas, for access to water historically enabled the creation of industrial settlements that evolved into cities and rural economic centers with the advent of rail service. Many of the villages that give distinctive form to New England towns today were born as industrial enclaves along rivers and brooks, and this can be seen in Southborough.

*Southborough Junction at Historic Cordaville.*

Photo courtesy of Southborough Planning Board.

Regional conditions influence the economic opportunities available to a community's population, but local policies also affect the health of a region's economy. Since municipali-

ties depend on property taxes for operating revenue, the size and make-up of a community's employment base often serves as a surrogate for the structure of its tax base. There is an undeniable relationship between the number and types of industries located within a community's borders and the amount of revenue available to finance local government services. As a result, communities often think of "economic development" as zoning for commercial and industrial uses, yet building a local economy involves more than zoning. Other tools of the trade – infrastructure that converts vacant land into construction-ready sites and recruiting businesses through marketing and financial incentives – can support a community's zoning decisions. Viewed in their entirety, these strategies reinforce the tendency of local governments to fuse economic development with tax base enhancement.

However, other local government policies affect operating revenue and service costs as well as the composition of the regional labor pool, such as housing policies. Further, land use regulations that impede the evolution of a community's economy can make it more difficult for residents to work and obtain goods and services locally.

Practices that perpetuate the separation of living and working eventually transfer local consumer demands (and traffic) to other communities nearby, forcing some towns to absorb a disproportionate share of regional needs for employment, shopping, health care and other services.

In addition, a host of non-taxable land uses prime the economy of cities and towns, regions and the state as a whole: public and private schools, colleges and universities, public open space and outdoor recreation facilities, government offices and services, and major charitable institutions, such as hospitals. Southborough's private schools provide an excellent example of land uses that clearly contribute to the local economy, yet they generate no property tax revenue and also place some demands on municipal services. For small towns like Southborough, a key planning challenge involves recognizing that a diverse economy is as central to sustainable development as the orderly physical evolution of cities, towns, and the regions that connect them.

### Regional Context

Southborough straddles the boundaries of several economic areas delineated by government agencies and regional organizations. The Town's placement within overlapping statistical areas reflects its location at the eastern edge of Worcester County, its proximity to the convergence of three major highways, and its high household wealth. In turn, these factors contribute to a noteworthy feature of Southborough's economy: while its own residents generally work in cities and towns to the east, many of the workers employed by Southborough businesses commute from the north and west.

Since jobs closer to Boston tend to pay higher wages than jobs located elsewhere in Massachusetts, it makes sense that so many Southborough residents work in the city or the major employment centers along Route 128. Their competitiveness for high-wage, high-skill employment bespeaks the education and experience that Southborough's labor force brings to the Eastern Massachusetts economy.

### Labor Force

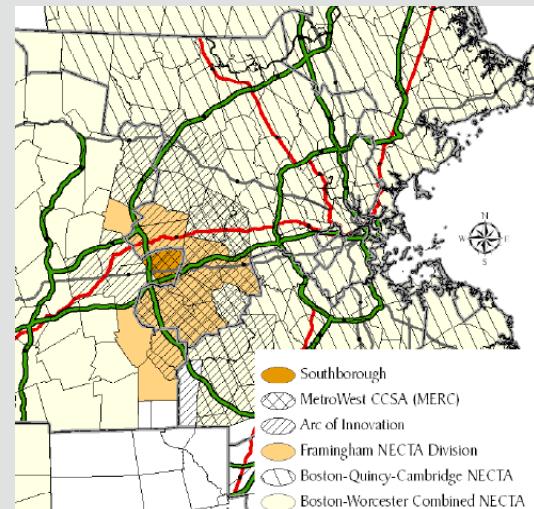
In any geographic unit, the labor force consists of civilian residents 16 years of age and over, employed or looking for work. A labor force participation rate represents the ratio of civilian persons in the labor force to all civilian residents 16 and over. Communities with high labor force participation rates tend to be growing suburbs with large percentages of younger households, married-couple families and families with dependent children, i.e., householders in an age group that makes up a majority of the working-age population, and household types that often have more than one employed adult. With some exceptions, higher labor force participation rates tend to correlate with higher levels of household wealth.

Southborough generally conforms to this pattern. According to Census 2000, Southborough's labor force of 4,369 people represented 70.8 percent of the total population 16 and over as of April 2000. Several nearby towns had slightly higher labor force participation rates, but compared with the state's cities and older, maturely developed suburbs, Southborough had a significantly larger percentage of people in the labor force. Further, it had one of the highest decennial growth rates in Massachusetts, for Southborough's 1990-2000 rate of population

## Where is Southborough, Economically Speaking?

Southborough is in the Boston-Quincy-Cambridge New England City and Town Area (NECTA), the Framingham NECTA Division and the Boston-Worcester Combined NECTA – economic statistical areas defined by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for purposes of determining eligibility and need for federal financial assistance.

In addition, Southborough is part of the Metro-West Cohesive Commercial Statistical Area (CCSA), the Metro South/West Worforce Area, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Metro-West Growth Management Committee, and the I-495/Arc of Innovation region.



growth, 32.5 percent, ranked 15 out of 351 cities and towns. Families constitute 82.2 percent of all households in Southborough—the largest percentage of families in the MetroWest area—and nearly 60 percent of the Town's married-couple families are two-worker households.<sup>1</sup> All of these qualities contribute to Southborough's very high median household income, which ranks 9th in the Commonwealth. Current estimates of the size of Southborough's labor force range from 4,800 to 4,900 people.<sup>2</sup>

1 U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Tables P1, P15, P31; Summary File 3, Tables P43, P48; and 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 1, Table P01; American FactFinder at <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>.

2 Source of labor force estimates: Claritas, Inc., and Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Note: Labor force data reported by the Bureau of the Census rarely match data reported by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) or the state. In the decennial census, the labor force count represents a single point in time (a reference week prior to April 1, 2000), whereas BLS and the state report average monthly and annual statistics. For comparison, the state's annual labor force estimate for Southborough in 2000 was 4,554, or 4.2% more people than the number reported in Census 2000. Claritas updates Census data through the use of a proprietary model, so its labor force estimates will differ from federal and state counts as well.

### Educational Attainment, Occupations and Earnings

The economic advantages enjoyed by a highly educated population can be seen in the employment, occupational and wage characteristics of Southborough's labor force. In fact, Southborough tops the MetroWest area for its percentage of adults with college, advanced or professional degrees: 63.1 percent. More than 83 percent of the Town's employed labor force consists of "white collar" workers, including 60 percent with management, financial or professional service occupations that typically require high levels of education and specialized training. Statistics such as these help to explain the high wages earned by Southborough residents with full-time, year-round employment.

Southborough does have a conspicuous "gender gap" in earnings, with male earnings exceeding female earnings by a ratio of 1.60. This is largely because male residents of Southborough earn far more per year than male residents of nearby communities. However, Southborough women

City/Town	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	College, Graduate, Professional Degrees †	Median Earnings: Males ‡	Median Earnings: Females ‡
Ashland	8,676	77.0%	45.6%	51,869	38,226
Framingham	37,059	68.5%	42.3%	46,122	35,941
Holliston	7,311	72.8%	50.8%	61,363	40,174
Hopkinton	6,724	72.7%	57.7%	71,207	42,360
Hudson	10,380	72.8%	28.4%	45,504	35,207
Marlborough	21,050	73.4%	35.6%	49,133	32,457
Natick	18,309	71.8%	52.5%	51,964	41,060
Berlin	1,265	69.2%	36.4%	50,711	32,330
Hopedale	3,126	68.2%	28.0%	47,380	31,144
Mendon	2,922	75.4%	35.9%	55,230	36,174
Milford	14,462	69.5%	26.7%	42,173	30,989
Northborough	7,657	74.4%	51.0%	65,437	41,042
Southborough	4,369	70.8%	63.1%	80,961	50,537
Upton	2,878	69.7%	44.9%	66,734	39,224
Westborough	8,974	67.0%	53.2%	66,157	40,030
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>155,162</b>	<b>71.1%</b>	<b>42.8%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Sources: Census 2000, Summary File 3 Tables P37, P43, PCT47, and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes: † Percentages apply to the population 25 and over.

‡ Median earnings unavailable for MetroWest as a whole.

also earn more per year than women throughout the MetroWest area, as shown in Table 4-1.

#### Labor Force by Industry and Class of Worker

The regional employment base largely determines the job choices available to a community's labor force. Southborough residents have some

of the widest possible choices in the Boston area due to their educational levels and convenient access to the region's highways and public transportation system. Given the occupations of most Southborough residents, it is not surprising to find that so many of them work for industries engaged in professional, scientific and

**Table 4-2**  
**Metrowest Class of Worker Comparisons**

City/Town	Civilian Employed Labor Force	Private For-Profit Workers †	Private Non-Profit Workers	Self-Employed Individuals	Public-Sector Workers ‡	Other
Ashland	8,305	68.9%	10.8%	8.1%	12.3%	0.0%
Framingham	35,727	73.0%	8.9%	7.0%	10.9%	0.2%
Holliston	7,101	67.0%	10.9%	8.2%	13.6%	0.3%
Hopkinton	6,625	75.2%	6.3%	7.9%	10.6%	0.1%
Hudson	10,048	79.9%	6.5%	4.9%	8.7%	0.0%
Marlborough	20,321	78.4%	6.0%	6.5%	9.0%	0.1%
Natick	17,851	69.5%	11.9%	7.0%	11.5%	0.2%
Berlin	1,252	73.4%	4.1%	8.8%	13.4%	0.3%
Hopedale	3,046	71.5%	8.9%	8.1%	11.6%	0.0%
Mendon	2,888	73.6%	6.0%	8.8%	11.6%	0.0%
Milford	13,924	77.5%	7.4%	4.5%	10.4%	0.2%
Northborough	7,517	76.4%	7.4%	7.1%	8.8%	0.3%
Southborough	4,291	74.6%	9.2%	7.8%	8.3%	0.1%
Upton	2,783	74.0%	7.1%	7.2%	11.7%	0.0%
Westborough	8,671	73.6%	7.7%	6.9%	11.7%	0.1%

Sources: Census 2000, Summary File 3 Table P51; Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes: † Includes owners of incorporated businesses.

‡ Federal, state and local government workers.

management services, education and health services, and to a lesser extent, manufacturing. Further, a comparatively large percentage of Southborough's labor force includes the owners of for-profit companies that employ other people.

Southborough falls in the middle of the MetroWest area for percentage of self-employed

individuals and on the upper end for percentage of people employed by non-profit institutions. In contrast, it falls below the regional average (11 percent) for the proportion of its labor force with public-sector jobs (8.3 percent). The number of Southborough residents working in local government – whether in Southborough or another city or town – is particularly small relative to the size of its labor force (5 percent).

### Labor Force by Place of Work

The suburban context of Southborough and most MetroWest towns is made obvious by the strikingly small percentage of people who live and work in the same community. While Framingham, Marlborough and Milford have a sufficiently large, diverse base of industries to employ 30 percent or more of their labor force locally, the same cannot be said for small communities like Southborough, Hopedale and Upton, where less than 16 percent of the labor force works in Town.<sup>3</sup> In Southborough's case, about 30 percent of its employed labor force works for establishments in Boston, Framingham or Marlborough, and 18 percent in Worcester and other communities along Route 9. The rest commute to a range of destinations along and between I-495 and Route 128 (4-1), while a handful of Southborough residents work out of state. Of the 638 people working locally (15.1 percent), some 25 percent reportedly work at home.<sup>4</sup>

Since 1990, MetroWest's working population has increased by more than 7,500 people, yet the region-wide average of locally employed workers has declined from 29 percent to 26 percent. For Southborough, the change has been somewhat more pronounced: just over 20 percent of its employed labor force worked locally in 1990, and only 15.1 percent in 2000. The absolute change is very small – a decrease of 36 workers – yet the total over-16 working population rose by 662 people in the same period. In addition, the number of Southborough residents commuting to Boston nearly

<sup>3</sup> Census 2000, Summary File 3, Tables P29, P30.

<sup>4</sup> Census 2000, "MCD/County to MCD/County Worker Flow Files: Place of Residence," Special Tabulation Series, <[www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html](http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html)>.

doubled during the 1990s. More Southborough people commute to Boston than to any other non-local destination, but in 1990, Framingham ranked as the top non-local place of work for Southborough residents.<sup>5</sup> These changes have many implications for the Town, not the least of which is Southborough's evolution from a small, semi-rural community to a suburb firmly situated within the orbit of the Boston metro area.

In light of the broad geographic distribution of jobs held by Southborough residents, it is not surprising that 87 percent of the Town's labor force commutes alone by car. The post-2000 arrival of commuter rail service in Southborough may not have eased the journey to work for most residents simply because so many people work in places not served by public transportation. That Southborough residents spend so much of their time out of town partially explains another feature of the local economy: the overwhelming majority of consumer expenditures by Southborough households occur in non-local retail establishments. However, it is important to recognize that Southborough still needs retail and services for people who work in Town as well as its residents.

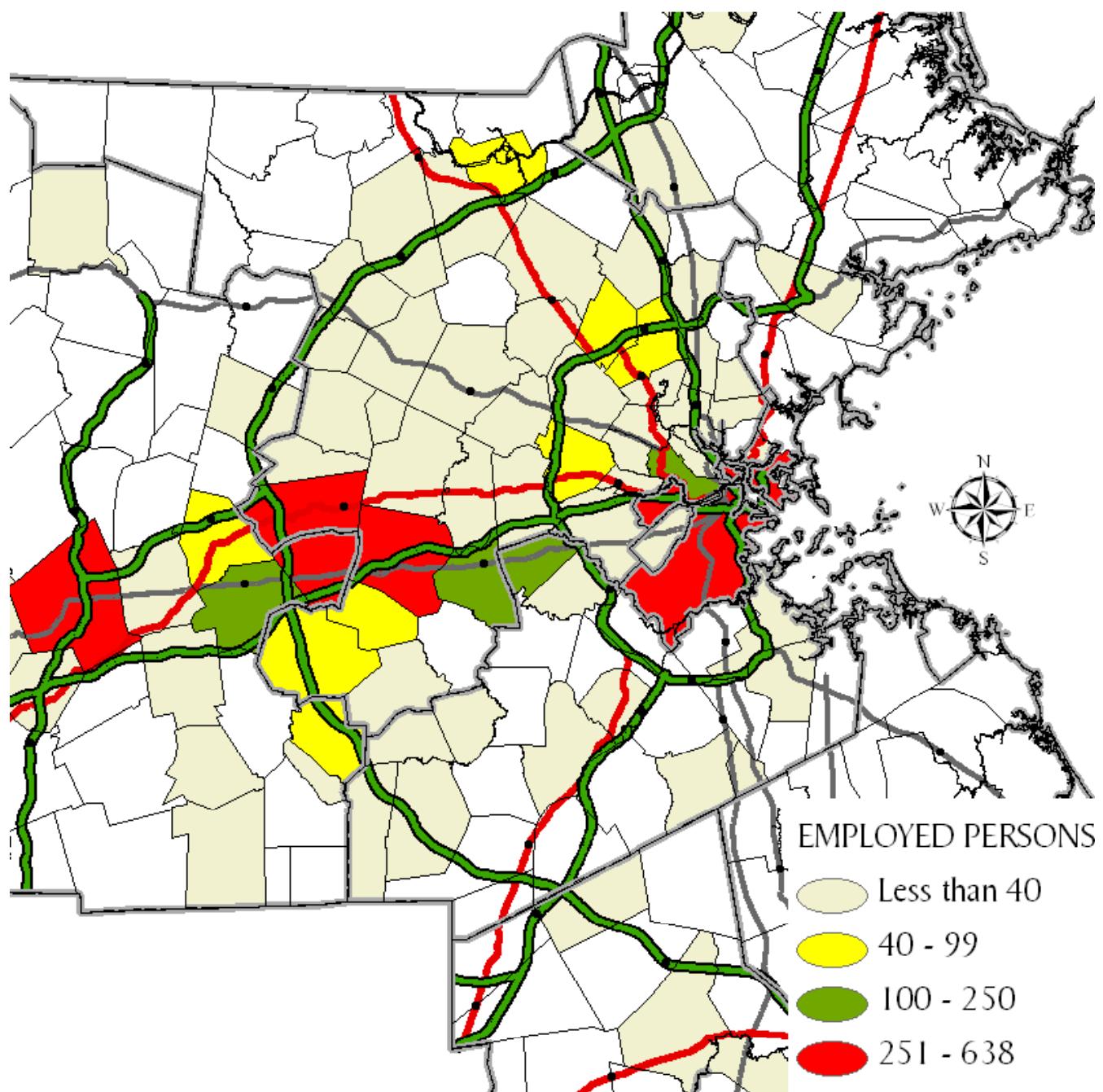
### At-Home Employment

Planners and policy analysts generally agree that federal census statistics underestimate the size of the "work-at-home" population, and this appears to be true in Southborough. The absence of a systematic survey makes it impossible to adjust for census under-counts, but the

<sup>5</sup> MCD/County to MCD/County Worker Flow Files," and 1990 Census, "County to County Worker Flow Files" [including minor civil division (MCD) residence and workplace counts for the New England states]; 1990 Census, Summary File 3, Table P048.

Chart 4-1

Where Southborough Residents Work



roster of businesses registered with the Southborough Town Clerk provides anecdotal evidence that more than 163 residents have some type of home occupation. Other estimates for 2007 place the work-at-home population in Southborough at 180 people.<sup>6</sup>

Though fairly invisible, residents earning income through at-home employment represent an important part of the economy because they are more likely to purchase services and convenience goods from local businesses. Moreover, traditional economic development, land use, infrastructure and capital planning practices often overlook the unique needs of home-based workers due to the emphasis placed on facilitating business growth in business-zoned areas. Unlike stores, offices or manufacturing plants, home-based businesses rarely generate additional property tax revenue: both for zoning and appraisal purposes, they fall into the category of accessory residential uses.

While state and federal sources indicate that Southborough has about 380 employer establishments – entities with payroll employees – the registered business list includes more than 500 businesses. Well over one third are located in residential areas. They include artists, graphic designers, business, finance and technology consultants, architects and engineers, tutors, home day care and personal service providers, kennels and construction trade workers.<sup>7</sup> It is also noteworthy that between 1990 and 2000, the work-at-home percentage of locally employed people in Southborough increased from

<sup>6</sup> Claritas, Inc., "Demographic Snapshot Report, Southborough, Massachusetts" Site Reports Series.

<sup>7</sup> Southborough Planning Department, Registered Business List [undated], supplied 2 April 2007.

## Who Works from Home?

The work-at-home population includes professionals and others with home occupations, home-based businesses or "cottage" industries, and "telecommuters," or payroll employees working at home all or part of the work week.

19 percent to 25 percent.<sup>8</sup> Southborough seems to be following trends tracked and reported by the Bureau of the Census ever since 1997, when non-employer establishment data began to appear as part of the quintennial Economic Census.<sup>9</sup>

Neither the Town's own registered business list nor federal self-employment data capture the presence of telecommuters: wage and salary employees working from home instead of commuting to an office each day. Telecommuting has become increasingly popular for professionals and others whose work can be conducted through internet, email and fax communications. The occupations of many Southborough residents suggest that the Town probably has more telecommuters than can be documented with available sources of data.

### *Unemployment*

Unemployment rates shed light on the condition of the economy over time. During periods

<sup>8</sup> Census 2000, Summary File 3, Table P30; 1990 Census, Summary File 3, Table P049.

<sup>9</sup> See Bureau of the Census, Economic Planning and Coordination Division, "Nonemployer Statistics," <[www.census.gov/epcd/nonemployer/index.html](http://www.census.gov/epcd/nonemployer/index.html)>, Nonemployer Statistics for Worcester County, 2003-2005, Annual Economic Surveys, American FactFinder; and Nonemployer Statistics for Worcester County, Economic Census, 1997, 2002, also via American FactFinder. The Economic Census excludes Southborough because its population is less than 10,000, but regional trends can be tracked for Worcester County and the Boston metro area.

**Table 4-3**  
**MetroWest Local and At-Home Employment**

City/Town	Census 2000			Census 1990		
	Workers 16+ Years †	% Local Employed	% Home Employed	Workers 16+ Years*	% Local Employed	% Home Employed
Ashland	8,244	15.5%	4.0%	7,058	16.3%	3.3%
Framingham	34,917	32.7%	3.4%	36,071	36.2%	2.1%
Holliston	6,942	18.6%	4.8%	7,044	17.1%	3.4%
Hopkinton	6,549	20.3%	5.1%	4,866	18.8%	4.5%
Hudson	9,889	26.1%	2.6%	9,602	30.1%	1.8%
Marlborough	19,839	31.4%	2.6%	17,754	34.6%	1.4%
Natick	17,660	22.8%	2.9%	17,476	26.4%	2.3%
Berlin	1,240	19.0%	3.2%	1,282	15.9%	6.0%
Hopedale	2,993	12.0%	3.4%	2,722	14.5%	2.4%
Mendon	2,818	16.4%	3.5%	2,090	13.3%	2.1%
Milford	13,724	29.9%	1.9%	12,764	33.7%	2.4%
Northborough	7,425	18.3%	4.0%	6,633	18.3%	3.5%
Southborough	4,225	15.1%	3.9%	3,563	20.2%	3.6%
Upton	2,725	14.2%	6.0%	2,470	15.0%	4.0%
Westborough	8,553	27.9%	4.7%	7,732	29.5%	2.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>147,743</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>139,127</b>	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

Sources: Census 2000, Summary File 3, Tables P29, P30; 1990 Census, Summary File 3, Tables P048, P049; Community Opportunities Group, Inc

Notes: † "Workers 16+ Years" differs from "Civilian Employed Labor Force" due to census definitions and sampling methodology.

of economic recovery and expansion, job growth and job diversification lead to decreasing unemployment rates. In contrast, rising unemployment rates and a decline in housing starts signal a slowing of the economy, and often the beginning of a recession. Along with other economic data, unemployment rates serve as

indicators of the well-being of a community's population.

Southborough's labor force has fared much better than the statewide labor force or that of MetroWest as a whole, but the MetroWest region also has a history of lower unemployment

## Employment Definitions

An **establishment** is a place for production or delivery of goods and services. Although many people think of “establishments” as “businesses,” the term also includes non-profit and public organizations.

**Employment** measures the total number of people working full- or part-time as payroll employees of an establishment. Due to the methods and sources of data that government agencies use to collect and report jobs, “employment” excludes self-employed individuals and others not working for establishments covered by state unemployment laws.

**Industry** refers to “concerns primarily engaged in the same kind of economic activity...regardless of types of ownership...” U.S. Small Business Administration.

The **North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)** categorizes industries into 20 primary groupings. To some degree, most of the primary groupings are represented in Southborough’s employment base

rates than the larger Boston metro area or the state. In Southborough, the unemployment rate usually runs well below the average for every geographic comparison area, with a low of 2.1 percent in 2000 and a high of 4.9 percent in 2003-2004.<sup>10</sup> The educational and occupational status of Southborough residents tends to buffer the Town from deep or long-term levels of unemployment. For example, during the recession that began in the late 1980s, Southborough’s unemployment rate peaked at 5.9 percent in 1991, yet unemployment statewide exceeded 9 percent the same year.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, “Annual Labor Force and Unemployment Data, Not Seasonally Adjusted” Economic Data, 2000-2006, <[www.detma.org](http://www.detma.org)>.

<sup>11</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, “Labor Force and Unemployment,” Municipal Data Bank, <[www.dls.state.ma.us/mdb.htm](http://www.dls.state.ma.us/mdb.htm)>.

## Employment and Wages

The indelible impact of Routes 9, I-90 and I-495 can be seen on Southborough’s land and in the composition of its employment base. While labor force statistics reflect Southborough residents who have jobs or are looking for work, employment base statistics reflect people who work in Southborough, regardless of where they live. State agencies track monthly employment data by number of establishments by industry, ownership type and payroll, and they report annual averages for municipalities, counties, economic statistical areas, labor market areas and regional “catchment” areas for workforce training and unemployment assistance. For suburbs crossed by more than one economic statistical area boundary, a wide variety of data can be used to make comparisons and draw inferences about the structure, diversity and health of the local economy.

Southborough’s employment base has grown from about 6,000 jobs in 2001 to an estimated 6,600 to 6,700 jobs in 2006. Today, the Town has approximately 385 employer establishments representing most of the primary industries that make up the national economy. Its employment gain differs somewhat from trends throughout the MetroWest area, which experienced significant job growth from the mid-1990s through 2001, job losses in several industries after 2001, and a modest overall increase since 2004.

Unlike conditions in many suburbs, Southborough’s employment base exceeds the size of its labor force. Today, the ratio of local employment to persons in the labor force is approximately 1.40. Southborough’s larger than (>) 1.00 jobs to labor force ratio places it in a class

Chart 4-2  
Unemployment Trends 2000 - 2006

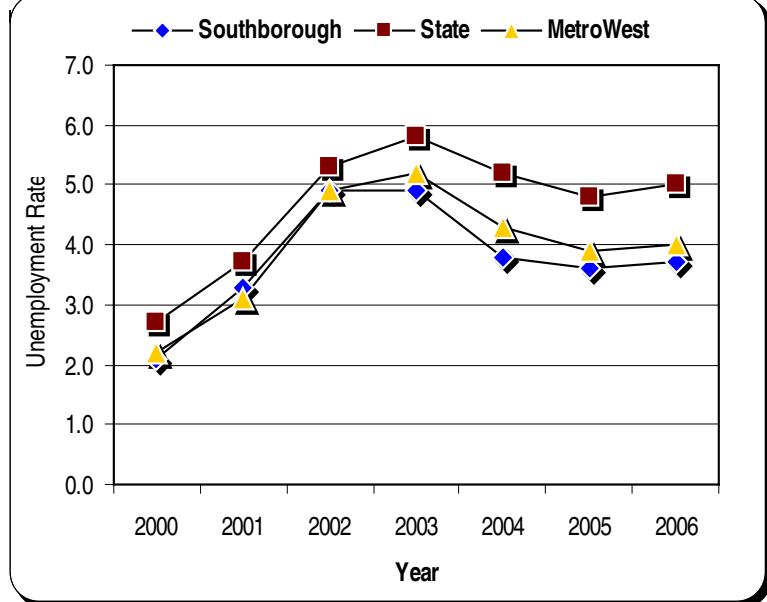
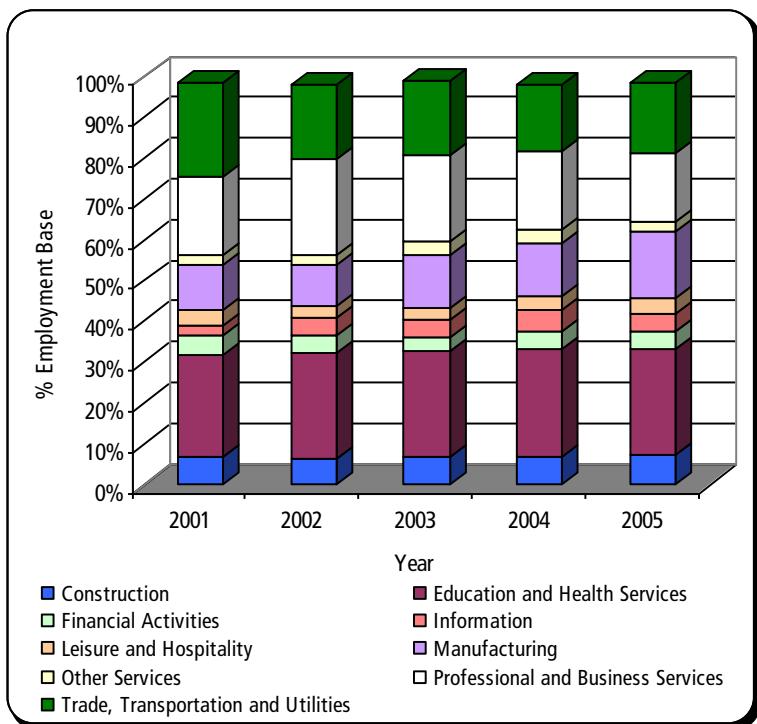


Chart 4-3  
Employment Base Reallocation, Southborough,  
2001-2006



## Employment Definitions

A location quotient expresses the relationship between an industry's share of local employment and its share of employment in a larger comparison area.

A location quotient of 0.95 to 1.05 means that an industry's percentage of total local employment is very similar to that of the comparison area.

of communities that serve regional employment needs, similar to Framingham, Marlborough, Milford, Hopkinton and Natick. However, Southborough and Hopkinton have much smaller percentages of locally employed residents than the state average (31 percent), which makes them economically distinct from the larger, more urbanized employment centers serving the MetroWest area.<sup>12</sup>

On its own, the size of a community's employment base says very little about the local economy. The number and types of industries that provide employment, together with the wages they pay, tell a more important story about the contribution of the economy to a community's quality of life. In fact, Southborough's overall job growth masks important changes that occurred within its employment base between 2001 and 2006. The changes are not entirely consistent with the pattern of job loss and job gains seen elsewhere in the MetroWest area.

In the past five years, Southborough lost close to 900 jobs in construction, wholesale trade, finance and insurance, the information industry,

and some sectors of the professional and business services industry. The average local wage in most of these industries exceeded the average wage in the MetroWest area. The information and finance and insurance industries ultimately produced net employment growth due to the creation of 310 new jobs. However, the 424 new jobs created in construction, wholesale trade and professional and business services were not enough to offset the reduction of 752 jobs in the same industries.<sup>13</sup>

Most of the other industries that contributed to Southborough's net job growth pay relatively modest wages: education, human services, retail, hospitality and entertainment, and an industry sub-sector known as management of companies and enterprises. Only two industries – education and management of companies and enterprises – experienced no job loss or "job destruction" since 2001.

Over time, job losses and gains gradually restructure a local or regional economy. Historic trends in statewide employment make this easy to understand because as the Commonwealth has lost manufacturing jobs, it also has gained service-providing jobs, e.g., education, health care, information services, and professional services. In Southborough, the most stable source of employment – largely unaffected by swings in the regional economy – is education. This reflects employment in the Town's public schools and its private educational establishments: the Fay School, St. Mark's, the New England Center for Autism, and Harvard University's New England Regional Primate Research Center. As illustrated in Chart 4-3, education consistently supplied 25-26 percent

12 Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, ES-202, Economic Data Programs, <[www.detma.org](http://www.detma.org)>, and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

13 Ibid. and Claritas, Inc.

**Table 4-4**  
**MetroWest Employment Change**

	2001 (Annual)		2006 (Annual)	
City/Town	Employment	Average Weekly Wage	Employment	Average Weekly Wage
Ashland	4,565	\$661	4,906	\$751
Framingham	699	\$611	500	\$619
Holliston	45,749	\$990	44,759	\$1,229
Hopkinton	5,247	\$881	5,042	\$995
Hudson	1,687	\$746	1,627	\$892
Marlborough	8,731	\$1,445	9,668	\$1,326
Natick	10,702	\$1,062	9,884	\$1,077
Berlin	30,368	\$1,059	29,091	\$1,341
Hopedale	1,355	\$571	1,257	\$589
Mendon	14,653	\$870	15,101	\$1,056
Milford	23,872	\$910	23,579	\$1,051
Northborough	6,606	\$803	6,757	\$916
Southborough	6,018	\$1,063	6,678	\$1,207
Upton	1,031	\$725	1,052	\$852
Westborough	24,549	\$1,005	25,107	\$1,208
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>185,832</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>185,008</b>	<b>-</b>

Sources: Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, ES-202.

of Southborough's entire employment base from 2001-2006, despite fluctuations in all other components of the local economy. That education employment has been so stable in Southborough attests to the hazards of defining economic development as tax base expansion, for educational uses are tax-exempt.

#### Location Quotients

The composition of a community's employment base is influenced by the regional economy, transportation access, local zoning policies, and land characteristics. It also may be influenced by unique local or sub-regional conditions, such as the orchards in several Central Massachusetts towns, waterfront recreation along the coast, or the prevalence of eco-tourism, cultural attrac-

tions and outdoor recreation in Berkshire County. The confluence of regional economic forces and unique local assets makes some communities a magnet for particular kinds of economic activity. The emphasis on a specific industry or sub-sector thereof can be seen in an employment base analysis known as location quotients.

Southborough and the MetroWest area as a whole share some employment base characteristics, but only to a point. Location quotients provide a framework for illustrating employment by industry similarities and differences in two or more geographic comparison areas. For example, manufacturing accounts for a relatively large share of Southborough's employment just as it does in the MetroWest area. In contrast, manufacturing supplies less than 10 percent of all employment throughout the Boston-Cambridge metro area. Since the proportion of manufacturing jobs in Southborough and the MetroWest area is virtually the same, the location quotient for manufacturing in Southborough, compared to the immediate region, is 0.97. If the comparison geography shifts to the Boston metro area, however, Southborough's location quotient for manufacturing rises to 1.86. The high location quotient means that relative to most of Eastern Massachusetts, Southborough has a considerable number of manufacturing jobs. Further, the location quotients analysis shows that Southborough's large percentage of education jobs is a regional anomaly, one that could rise to the level of over-dependence on a single industry if employment in any other sector declined to a noticeable degree.

Southborough's employment base is interesting both for its strengths and its weaknesses. The

types of industries that residents usually rely upon for basic goods and services are conspicuously under-represented in Southborough. The location quotients for retail trade, health care, arts and entertainment, recreation, and food services are so low that they seem to indicate a Town with few opportunities for people to gather, socialize, engage in leisure activities or purchase basic necessities locally. Aside from the loss of retail sales from consumer spending by Southborough's own residents, the Town is also losing consumer expenditures ordinarily made by employees before, during and after the workday. Since Southborough is a small, fairly low-density Town, its retail base will most likely remain weak unless the retail mix diversifies enough to capture resident and employee trade, i.e., comparison and convenience goods, and a wider range of food service establishments.

### Workers by Place of Residence

The 6,800± people who work in Southborough travel from points scattered throughout the state, as shown in Chart 4-4, but most employees of local establishments either live in Southborough or commute from a cluster of communities along or between I-495, I-90 (Massachusetts Turnpike) and I-190. Local residents comprise less than 9 percent of the total number of people working for an establishment in Southborough, and nearly half travel from Framingham, Worcester, Marlborough, Westborough, Shrewsbury, Northborough, Hudson, Milford, Grafton, Hopkinton, Boston or Northbridge – each accounting for 100 or more employees.<sup>14</sup>

Although many of the same communities

<sup>14</sup> Census 2000, "MCD/County to MCD/County Worker Flow Files: Workplace," Special Tabulation Series.

generated about 40 percent of Southborough's workforce in 1990, Town residents made up 16

percent of the total, and the number of people working locally each day was just 70 percent of

**Table 4-5**  
**Location Quotients: Employment in Southborough**

Industry Class	Southborough Compared To:			
	MetroWest	Boston NECTA	Worcester County	State
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mining	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Construction	1.34	1.54	1.38	1.46
Manufacturing	0.97	1.86	1.25	1.71
Utilities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wholesale Trade	1.58	2.20	2.41	2.21
Retail Trade	0.21	0.27	0.23	0.25
Transportation and Warehousing	1.45	0.65	0.69	0.67
Information	0.88	1.13	2.27	1.32
Finance and Insurance	1.46	0.55	0.81	0.63
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.20	0.78	1.25	0.84
Professional and Technical Services	1.07	1.04	2.08	1.25
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1.12	2.43	3.02	2.79
Administrative and Waste Services	0.57	0.57	0.61	0.60
Educational Services	3.05	2.19	1.79	2.10
Health Care and Social Assistance	0.56	0.41	0.38	0.40
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0.38	0.26	0.25	0.24
Accommodation and Food Services	0.55	0.49	0.48	0.46
Other	0.76	0.61	0.58	0.56

Sources: ES-202, Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes: Location quotient of .90 to 1.10 is effectively 1.00.

Location quotient <.80 identifies an industry substantially under-represented in the local economy, e.g., retail trade, health care, arts and entertainment, and accommodation and food services.

Location quotient >1.20 identifies an industry with a disproportionately large percentage of local employment, e.g., wholesale trade, educational services.

the size of today's total employment.<sup>15</sup> These changes in journey-to-work statistics reinforce the degree to which Southborough's employment base has grown in concert with region-wide development trends.

Southborough establishments draw workers from a much wider area than the geography of employment destinations for the Town's own residents. Most of the communities sending 40-99 workers to Southborough every day have little or no access to public transportation, and the same applies to other major employment centers in the MetroWest area. Metro-West communities clearly meet employment needs far beyond their own boundaries, and they also provide an asset that many large employers yearn for: land accessible to the region's highway system. Given Southborough's location and prestige, it is no surprise that Town officials have seen interest in office and industrial development opportunities along and near Route 9. Growth in the size of Southborough's employment base could serve as a major economic engine in addition to serving as a revenue engine for the tax base.

### Southborough's Tax Base

Despite Southborough's predominantly residential and open space land use pattern, its tax base is noteworthy for the percentage of revenue generated by non-residential development. Since the late-1990s when the market for commercial land had finally recovered from the recession (1989-1991), non-residential development has contributed an average of 35 percent of Southborough's total "new growth" revenue under Proposition 2 ½ each year, i.e., tax

revenue from development not included in the previous year's tax base.<sup>16</sup> Unlike urban communities nearby, Southborough has a uniform tax rate. As a result, the division of tax revenue in Southborough mirrors the proportion of total assessed valuation composed of residential, commercial and industrial uses.

From a revenue perspective, Southborough undeniably benefits from the large amount of commercial office space found along Route 9 and to a lesser extent, on Southville Road and Newton Street. The average value of non-residential parcels in Southborough is nearly three times that of the average value of all parcels, and except for public safety and public works services, the commercial and industrial development that exists in Southborough today does not appear to place major demands on municipal services.<sup>17</sup>

As if to underscore the cost of service demands associated with a high rate of residential and nonresidential growth, however, Southborough residents also pay high property taxes. Southborough's residential tax levy per capita and average single-family tax bill rank at the top of MetroWest-area communities.

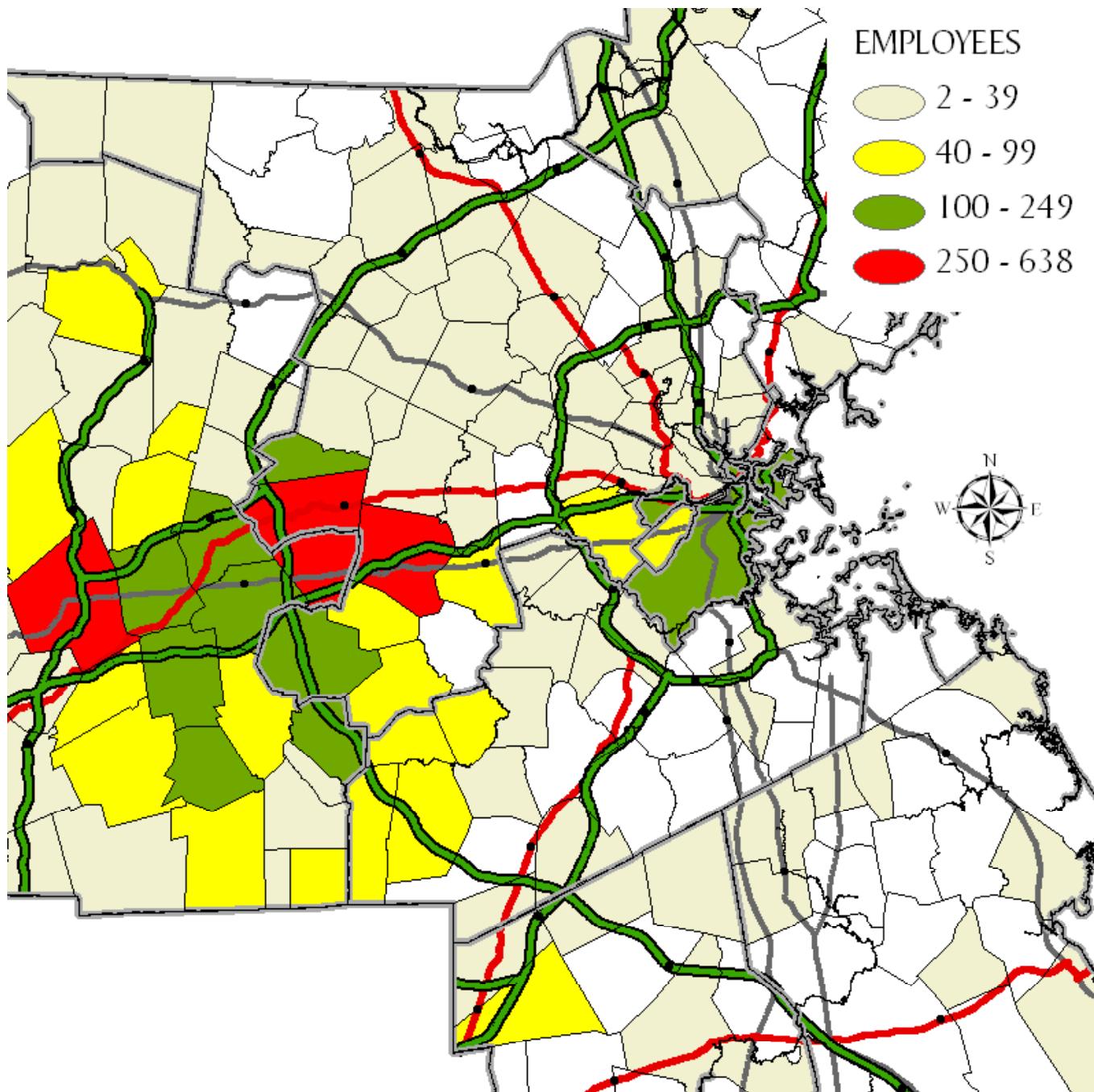
### Housing and Household Wealth

The common tendency to fuse "economic development" with commercial and industrial land uses sometimes makes housing an overlooked ingredient of building a local or regional economic base. In fact, housing has a major

<sup>16</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, "New Growth Tax Revenue," Municipal Data Bank.

<sup>17</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, "Assessed Valuation by Class," Municipal Data Bank; and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Chart 4-4  
Origin of Workers in Southborough



**Table 4-6**  
**Composition of Property Tax Levy, MetroWest Area**

City/Town	Population (2006 Est.)	FY07 Tax Levy	Residential, Open Space	Commercial, Industrial, Personal Property	Residential Tax Levy Per Capita
Ashland	15,678	\$30,229,151	91.8%	8.2%	\$1,770
Berlin	2,719	\$6,395,849	76.7%	23.3%	\$1,804
Framingham	64,762	\$135,707,758	59.4%	40.6%	\$1,245
Holliston	13,896	\$29,356,767	90.5%	9.5%	\$1,913
Hopedale	6,226	\$8,876,409	84.8%	15.2%	\$1,209
Hopkinton	14,172	\$39,524,694	85.0%	15.0%	\$2,370
Hudson	19,447	\$30,066,630	70.1%	29.9%	\$1,084
Marlborough	38,062	\$79,018,938	54.4%	45.6%	\$1,130
Mendon	5,767	\$8,726,789	92.1%	7.9%	\$1,394
Milford	27,523	\$43,936,972	70.0%	30.0%	\$1,117
Natick	31,886	\$62,839,514	79.8%	20.2%	\$1,572
Northborough	14,681	\$30,739,726	80.4%	19.6%	\$1,681
Southborough	9,551	\$28,445,791	82.7%	17.3%	\$2,462
Upton	6,484	\$11,525,544	95.1%	4.9%	\$1,691
Westborough	18,634	\$50,807,384	59.5%	40.5%	\$1,622
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>289,488</b>	<b>\$596,197,916</b>	<b>71.6%</b>	<b>28.4%</b>	<b>\$1,462</b>

Sources: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, "Tax Levy by Use Class," "2000 Actual and 2000-2006 Population Estimates," Municipal Data Bank; and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes: Framingham, Hopedale, Hudson and Marlborough shift some of their residential tax burden to nonresidential taxpayers through the use of split tax rates.

impact on the size, composition and vitality of the economy:

- Housing development policies affect the size and diversity of the labor market, the cost of living in an area and the choices that businesses make to locate in a given community or region. Since residential land use

regulations largely determine the density of housing development in each town, communities influence the make-up of their populations as well as their business mix by the choices they make to control housing growth.

- Housing market indicators – including developments in the pipeline, residential

**Table 4-7**  
**Residential Taxes, MetroWest Area**

City/Town	Residential Tax Levy Per Capita	Average Single-Family Home Value	Tax Rate	Average Single-Family Tax Bill	State Rank
Ashland	\$1,770	\$411,091	\$12.60	\$5,180	55
Berlin	\$1,804	\$443,902	\$10.96	\$4,865	66
Framingham	\$1,245	\$385,176	\$11.85	\$4,564	77
Holliston	\$1,913	\$435,173	\$13.35	\$5,810	43
Hopedale	\$1,209	\$359,951	\$10.82	\$3,895	120
Hopkinton	\$2,370	\$550,265	\$12.83	\$7,060	23
Hudson	\$1,084	\$378,844	\$9.52	\$3,607	146
Marlborough	\$1,130	†	†	†	†
Mendon	\$1,394	\$424,856	\$9.51	\$4,040	107
Milford	\$1,117	\$344,592	\$10.90	\$3,756	133
Natick	\$1,572	\$493,410	\$9.58	\$4,727	71
Northborough	\$1,681	\$432,226	\$12.39	\$5,355	50
Southborough	\$2,462	\$579,431	\$12.58	\$7,289	21
Upton	\$1,691	\$415,243	\$10.89	\$4,522	80
Westborough	\$1,622	\$453,701	\$13.66	\$6,198	35

Sources: Department of Revenue, "Average Single-Family Tax Bills," Municipal Data Bank; Claritas, Inc., Demographic Snapshot Report 2007, Site Report Series; and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes: † Marlborough is one of approximately 15 communities for which DOR does not report annual single-family tax bill data.

building permits, housing starts and completions, absorption periods and sale prices – foreshadow expansions and contractions of the economy at all geographic levels. Weak housing market conditions go hand-in-hand with rising unemployment levels, foreclosure rates and tax delinquencies, and an absolute decline in consumer spending.

- Even though commercial and industrial property values exceed the value of homes,

housing values provide more stability and predictability. Housing values change very little during a recession, and they recover more rapidly following a recession (Chart 4-5).

- Housing is a catalyst for growth in public-sector employment and contracts. Over time, new housing development places enough demand on municipal and school services that local governments hire more employees

and build new or expanded facilities to serve a growing population.

- Home values correlate with household wealth. Except for vacation and seasonal resort towns, household wealth shapes the consumer spending power that supports local and regional retail.

Southborough is located at the periphery of the state's most affluent area: from Boston's west suburbs along Route 128 to I-495. The Town's very high household wealth, housing values and household characteristics lend to its prestige. The sheer volume of new-home construction in Southborough from 1980-2000 makes it easy to understand the Town's shift in state household income rank, from 32 (out of 351 cities and towns) in 1980 to 9 by 2000. As new families purchased homes in Southborough, they gradually caused the Town's median income to rise, such that by Census 2000, Southborough had become one of the state's top-10 wealthiest communities.

Similar changes in household wealth can be seen throughout the I-495 corridor, where a majority of the state's new homes have been constructed since the early 1980s. Within the MetroWest area, state income ranks consistently progressed upward with each decennial census in Southborough, Hopkinton, Upton and Marlborough. For Southborough and Hopkinton in particular, high rates of housing and population growth have led not only to rising levels of household wealth, but also regionally high rates of tax bill growth. Over the past 10 years (FY 1998-2007), average single-family tax bills in both communi-

ties rose by 105-107 percent.<sup>18</sup>

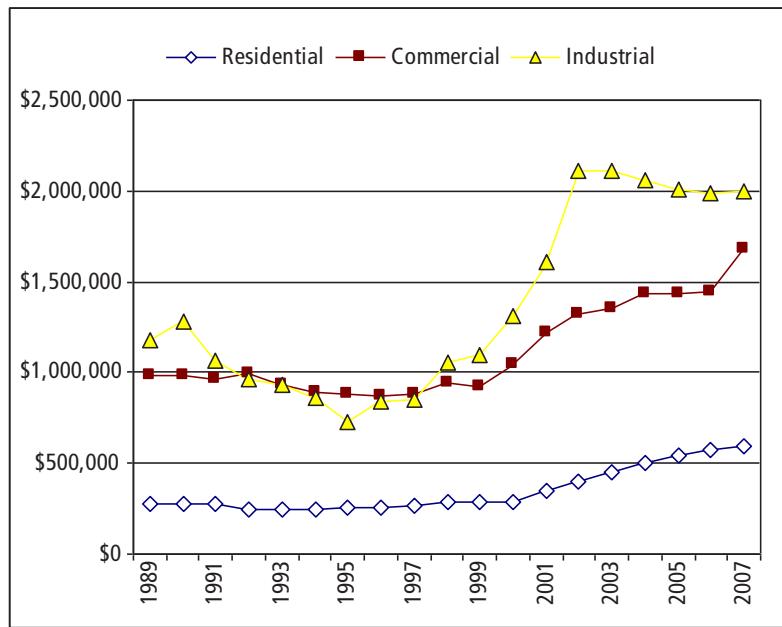
Despite the Town's significant increase single-family tax bills, property taxes consume a somewhat smaller percentage of household income in Southborough than in many neighboring communities. Southborough falls just below the regional average for average taxes as a percentage of household income and just above the average for residential tax levy as a percentage of per capita income. While some of the Town's homeowners probably find it difficult to afford Southborough's taxes, the tax burden overall is generally in line with that of the larger Boston metro area – relative to household incomes.

## Goods and Services in the Community

Ironically, Southborough's household wealth has not lured much interest in retail development. Industries that typically prosper in affluent communities, such as retail, food services, arts and entertainment, and recreation are conspicuously underrepresented in Southborough's economy. Southborough offers so few outlets for consumer spending that in most cases, it qualifies as a retail "export" Town, i.e., a community that transmits most of its retail spending power to non-local retail establishments. Although the total volume of retail sales per year suggests that Southborough is losing about 25 percent of its own consumer spending demand to other areas, overall statistics conceal some significant distortions in the Town's retail base. Notably, auto sales generate 60 percent of

<sup>18</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, "Median Household and Family Income," 1979-1999, and "Average Single-Family Tax Bill," Municipal Data Bank, and Community Opportunities Group, Inc. In 2006 constant dollars, the increase in tax bills was 62-64%.

**Chart 4-6**  
**Average Residential, Commercial and Industrial**  
**Property Values, 1989-2007: Southborough**



all retail sales in Southborough and far surpass the demand generated by residents. In auto sales and leasing, Southborough functions as an “import” retailer, with annual sales that exceed local demand by 217 percent. As for ordinary goods and services such as food, clothing and furnishings, the Town captures less than 20 percent of expenditures made by its own households.<sup>19</sup>

In public meetings for this master plan, residents said they want a more balanced tax base to offset growth in residential tax bills, and jobs for local residents—ideally along Route 9. At the same time, they yearn for “neighborhood-friendly” businesses such as restaurants, bakeries and specialty retail in the villages, and they are concerned about the scale and appearance of buildings and the traffic associated with

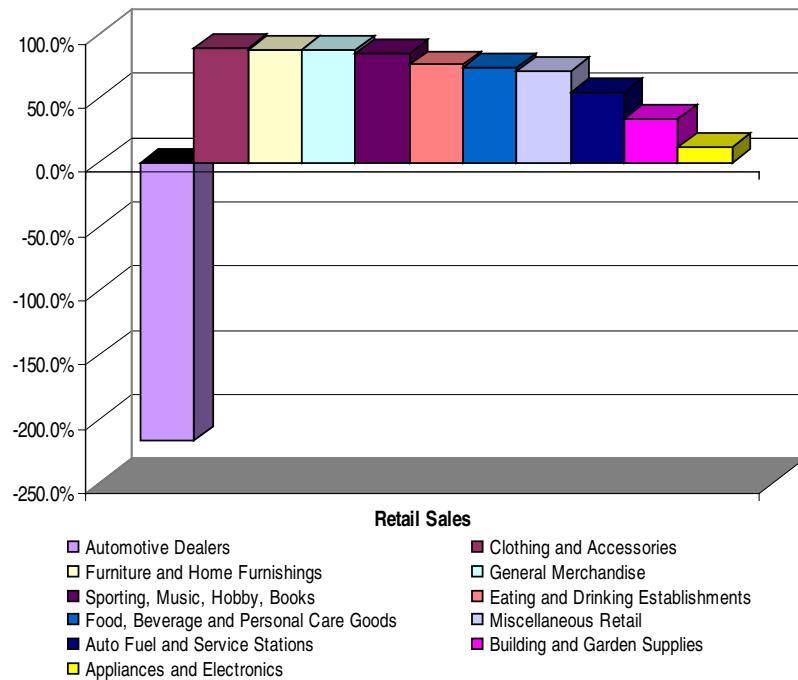
new development of any kind. Residents also want to preserve Southborough’s “small-town feel” and the charm of their Town center, yet Southborough does not have a coherent, realistic plan for achieving these goals. Many aspects of the Town’s vision statement imply a conflicted sense about growth and change, perhaps because Southborough has already changed in ways that residents dislike. However, it is unrealistic to plan for a future that freezes the present or attempts to mimic Southborough’s past. Further, directing Southborough’s own residential traffic to other towns for basic goods and services runs contrary to the Town’s interest in sustainable development.

Providing more opportunities for residents to shop, dine and socialize locally will be a major challenge in Southborough because of physical, infrastructure, economic and political barriers:

19 Claritas, Inc., Retail Sales Report, Southborough retail establishments; leakage estimates reflect household income distribution in Southborough, refined for regional expenditure adjustments from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES), by Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Chart 4-7

Estimated Retail Sales Leakage: Southborough



- ▶ The absence of sewer service limits the marketable opportunities for commercial or mixed-use development in Southborough. The kinds of uses currently found along Route 9, such as office space and auto dealerships, are fairly typical of conditions in non-sewered commercial zones. Shared or district-level wastewater disposal facilities could help to increase the desirability of Route 9 for a broader mix of uses. However, the Town would need to play an active role in developing or coordinating wastewater disposal solutions on an area-wide basis, and the zoning boundaries along Route 9 may need to be revisited.
- ▶ Southborough does not have the critical population mass or the requisite population nodes to support local retail. Ironically, changing the climate for local retail may require a modest infusion of regional or national retail in order to build a large

enough customer base to alter the existing geography of consumer spending in Southborough's area. "Regional or national retail" does not mean "big box," but it does mean some stores ranging from 10,000-15,000 square feet (SF) of floor area—considerably larger than the 2,000 SF allowed by right in Southborough's village districts, yet well below the 50,000 SF allowed by right on Route 9.

- ▶ Many residents work outside of Town and make routine purchases during commute trips. This is true for all communities, but it is a particularly difficult obstacle to overcome in small towns like Southborough. Prospective retailers and restaurant owners never choose a business location on the assumption that they will capture 100 percent of local spending. Instead, they consider factors such as access, surrounding uses, local sales leakage and leakage within a reasonable radius of a

**Table 4-8**  
**Comparative Tax Burden, MetroWest Area**

City/Town	Per Capita Income	Households (2007 Estimate)	Median Household Income	Levy Per Capita (%) Per Capita Income	Tax Bill Pct. Household Income
Ashland	\$38,287	6,161	\$82,378	4.6%	6.3%
Berlin	\$36,983	1,027	\$85,143	4.9%	5.7%
Framingham	\$31,611	25,639	\$61,214	3.9%	7.5%
Holliston	\$40,551	4,877	\$94,629	4.7%	6.1%
Hopedale	\$32,146	2,427	\$73,512	3.8%	5.3%
Hopkinton	\$51,316	4,680	\$117,216	4.6%	6.0%
Hudson	\$32,977	7,612	\$69,473	3.3%	5.2%
Marlborough	\$33,230	15,069	\$66,519	3.4%	N/A
Mendon	\$34,031	2,001	\$82,660	4.1%	4.9%
Milford	\$28,880	11,051	\$60,287	3.9%	6.2%
Natick	\$43,280	12,953	\$82,681	3.6%	5.7%
Northborough	\$38,287	6,161	\$82,378	4.4%	6.5%
Southborough	\$57,483	3,126	\$130,802	4.3%	5.6%
Upton	\$46,358	2,264	\$105,435	3.6%	4.3%
Westborough	\$43,638	6,685	\$92,363	3.7%	6.7%

Sources: Claritas, Inc., Demographic Snapshot Report 2007, Site Report Series; Department of Revenue, "Tax Levy by Class of Use" and "Average Single-Family Tax Bill," and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

site, local and regional household wealth, regional competition, and the probability of capturing a percentage of the existing surplus (if any) in an area. Sometimes business location choices are based entirely on personal considerations, too.

- If all of Southborough's goods and services leakage were captured locally, the Town could support approximately 260,000 SF of retail and restaurant space, largely because it has

many high-income households and a large number of people working locally each day. However, the Town's political culture and its widely dispersed population on weekdays make 260,000 SF an implausible expectation. Table 4-9 provides another way of considering Southborough's retail capacity, including a reasonable share of resident spending and a higher capture rate for restaurant and convenience retail spending

**Table 4-9**  
**Potential Retail Opportunities in Southborough**

Retail Class*	Potentially Supportable Retail Space (SF)			
	Existing Leakage (Surplus)	Local Consumer Spending @ 100% Capture	Local Consumer Spending @10-50% Capture†	Local Spending Plus Attainable Share of Workforce Spending
Auto Dealerships	-216.7%	-	-	-
Clothing and Accessories	88.5%	28,000	6,000	6,000
Furniture, Furnishings & Accessories	87.3%	16,000	4,000	4,000
General Merchandise	87.2%	57,000	14,000	22,000
Sporting, Music, Hobby, Books	84.4%	10,000	4,000	9,000
Eating and Drinking Establishments	75.9%	39,000	14,000	26,000
Food, Beverage, Personal Care Goods‡	73.9%	63,000	47,000	60,000
Miscellaneous Retail	71.2%	17,000	5,000	5,000
Auto Fuel and Service Stations	54.2%	19,000	10,000	10,000
Building and Garden Supplies	33.6%	17,000	9,000	9,000
Appliances and Electronics	11.5%	1,000	1,000	1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>267,000</b>	<b>114,000</b>	<b>152,000</b>

Sources: Community Opportunities Group, Inc. Estimated consumer spending based on BLS Consumer Expenditures Survey, Boston metro area, adjusted for Southborough household income distribution; retail SF estimates based on applicable industry averages in Urban Land Institute Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers 2006 and Small Retail Projects (2007).

Notes: Numbers may not total due to rounding.

\* Table 4-9 does not cover all categories of retail. It is limited to traditional consumer spending on goods and services.

Space estimates are in addition to existing space by category of retail.

† Range of 10-50 percent varies by type of retail.

‡ Food refers to food purchased for eating at home. Food away from home reported under Eating and Drinking Establishments.

by employees of local companies. Still, there may not be enough combined spending power to support some types of retail, especially retail that depends on clustering, proximity to a range of comparison goods stores, and foot traffic.

- Southborough is difficult to traverse because Route 9 crosses the full width of the Town, leaving few ways to cross from north to

south. Goods and services establishments will prefer settings along or easily accessible from Route 9, or the commuter rail station, in order to attract the largest possible pool of patrons. This increases the possibility that as retail uses evolve in Southborough, they may be oriented more toward non-local than local customers.

**Table 4-10**  
**Projects Recently Permitted or Under Review in Southborough**

Project	Location	Type	Size ( SF)
28 Newton Street (Southborough Medical Phase II)	28 Newton Street	Office	40,000
Southborough Junction	106 Southville Road	Office-Retail Mix	10,600
Southborough Place	132 + 136 Turnpike Road	Office	100,000-200,000
Capital Group Properties	134 Turnpike Road	Office	20,000-50,000
155 Boston Road Car Wash	155 Boston Road	Car Wash	<10,000
Crosspoint Development (Genzyme)	15 Pleasant Street Connector	Office	52,106
134 Turnpike Road	134 Turnpike Road	Office	20,000-50,000
Southville Road Business Park	40 Southville Road	Office, Light Industrial, Warehouse	7,980
Marilyn Green & Co. Realtors	75 Turnpike Road	Office	<10,000
Walgreen	Rt. 9 and Oak Hill Road	Retail	10,000-20,000
EMC Southborough/Westborough Campus	I-495	R&D, Office	2,183,000
Genzyme Parking Garage	49 New York Avenue	Parking Garage	300+ spaces

Sources: MetroWest Growth Management Committee Development Database, <[www.metrowestgrowth.org/](http://www.metrowestgrowth.org/)>; current as of March 2008.

### Development Pipeline

Southborough seems to be a magnet for office developments, including single-user facilities. Its Route 9 orientation and proximity to I-495 and I-90 offer important economic advantages, yet Southborough's lack of sewer service and to a lesser extent its zoning requirements work together to encourage fairly low-intensity business development.

Table 4-10 shows that except for a large, multi-phase research and development/office project that is currently in litigation (EMC Corporation), most of Southborough's recent nonresidential proposals involve plans for small to moderate office space. These types of developments provide public benefits to the Town, notably high-paying jobs and tax revenue. They also address at least two goals of

the new master plan: to expand commercial development where it is most appropriate, and to balance the financial benefit to the Town from development and open space. Still, only two of the projects involve sites in a Village Business District, where residents say they want more activity. It will be challenging for Southborough to attract interest in village development without a coordinated approach to wastewater facilities, transportation and zoning.

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*Zoning without standards places the value of major real estate investments at risk by offering no shield against a badly designed project next door. In contrast, zoning with unreasonable, ambiguous or inconsistent standards increases the possibility of poor project planning and conflicts during the permitting process.*

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### **Economic Development and Land Use**

Land use regulations do not determine the strength of a local economy. However, they can influence business location decisions, they indirectly affect the size and composition of an employment base, and they directly affect the quality and value of development in commercial and industrial areas. For example, placing difficult-to-develop land in an industrial district or poorly situated land in a commercial district often leads to unintended consequences – from no development at all to Chapter 40B comprehensive permits or frequent petitions for use variances. In addition, allowing single-family dwellings in a commercial district can eventually deplete the amount of commercially zoned land and increase the number of abutters speaking against a business project at a special permit or site plan approval hearing. Further, many

communities have zoned all of their industrial areas for research and development in an effort to lure high-end uses. Absent designated areas for compatible industries, however, industrial districts can evolve chaotically and become unattractive to the high-end uses communities hoped to attract.

Commercial property owners, developers and investors look to a community's zoning ordinance for clarity about the permissible uses of land. They want fair, predictable zoning requirements and permitting decisions that are both timely and just. Contrary to popular lore, most developers want more than an absolute right to build whatever they wish; if one project sails through the permitting process without meaningful review, the probability is that others will follow. Zoning without standards places the value of major real estate investments at risk by offering no shield against a badly designed project next door. In contrast, zoning with unreasonable, ambiguous or inconsistent standards increases the possibility of poor project planning and conflicts during the permitting process.

### **Regulatory Environment**

Southborough's zoning is not very enticing to prospective businesses, particularly small businesses. While the zoning bylaw contains some clarity about the types of businesses that would be appropriate in a Highway Business or Village Business District, other allowed uses could actually discourage appropriate development, especially in a village zone, e.g., a contractor's yard, a job printing or publishing company (outdated use terminology), or auto sales.

In addition, Southborough requires a significant

amount of off-street parking for retail and restaurant uses. The Town's parking standards would appeal to big-box retailers and national chain stores, and a parking lot built to Southborough's specifications would be ample for peak (pre-Christmas) shopping days. Although the size threshold for as-of-right development in the Village Business District implies a preference for small developments, the number of parking spaces required for a small store could be difficult to accommodate on a small or irregular lot. In the Highway Business District, where the maximum floor area ratio is 0.60, the same parking standards would effectively require a mid-size grocery store or specialty supermarket to be built at a floor area ratio (FAR) of about 0.30, considering the amount of land required to support the store and its associated parking. Many commercial developers would say that 0.30 is within range for a marketable property; many planners would say it represents excessive land consumption, which often stems from off-street parking.

Like countless suburbs, Southborough has embraced a zoning scheme that grants considerable voice and authority to abutters. In a Village Business District, nearly all uses exceeding 2,000 SF require a special permit. There may be valid reasons for subjecting even modestly sized projects to a special permit, but in exchange for more local control, the special permit exposes the applicant to a potentially lengthy permitting process and a higher risk of appeal. Ironically, one could build a larger single-family home in the Village Business District, assuming an adequate wastewater disposal system, with only a building permit. Despite its title, "Village Business" does more to encourage single-family residential uses than business uses, and by limiting multi-family housing to units in a

Major Development, the district effectively discourages small multi-family dwellings (with less than eight units). The exception is housing for the elderly.

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*Like countless suburbs, Southborough has embraced a zoning scheme that grants considerable voice and authority to abutters. In a Village Business District, nearly all uses exceeding 2,000 SF require a special permit.*

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In many states but only a handful of Massachusetts communities, site plan approval is a technical review process carried out by professional staff or conducted by a board in a routine public meeting. When site plan approval rises to the level of advertised public hearings and abutter notifications, it runs the risk of departing from technical review. The result is a permitting arena that places both applicants and Town boards in a negotiating process with neighbors. It also encourages debate about the suitability of a proposed use, even a use permitted by right. Southborough does have a minor (administrative) site plan review process for small projects in most zoning districts, but the threshold for major site plan review all but assures that most developments will not be permitted without extensive public involvement.

In the Highway Business District and the industrial zones, Southborough limits non-special permit major site plan approval decisions to an effective period of one year, with a one-year renewal option at the applicant's request. Since major projects typically require more than a year for applicants to obtain all of the required permits and approvals, the basis for

a one-year site plan decision is unclear, especially since the renewal clause guarantees an extension – as long as the applicant submits a written request.

Southborough's ambivalence about development seems particularly obvious in the zoning bylaw's industrial regulations. For example, "scientific research and development" is allowed by right in the Industrial Park (IP) District, subject to a floor area maximum of 50,000 SF, and by special permit in the Research, Scientific and Professional (SP) District, but in both districts the use appears to be linked to an unusual density standard of three employees per acre. In contrast, the same use is allowed by special permit in the Industrial District (ID) – Southborough's most loosely defined industrial zone – without the same employment-based density requirement. Moreover, the Industrial District allows such a wide range of uses by right that it all but prescribes uncontrolled use conflicts.

### Where is Southborough Going?

Neither Southborough nor the MetroWest area as a whole is immune to conditions that have weakened the nation's economy. The rate of new growth has generally declined in Southborough, housing sales and sale prices are down somewhat since the same period one year ago, and the most sought-after approval that Southborough officials may see in the coming months involves a decision over the proposed Chapter 40B rental project. In many communities along I-495, the present lull in new residential construction seems to have had no impact on new retail development. In contrast, the most recent retail project in Southborough – a Walgreen pharmacy at the intersection of Route 9 and Oak Hill Road – represents a small change in retail

activity here yet it, too, was controversial.

Master plans should not be blindsided by the real estate market. A slow market creates breathing room to plan, but it does not mean that the challenges of new growth have gone away. In fact, when the market recovered from the recession of the early 1990s, Southborough attracted precisely what it was poised to attract, given its zoning, lack of sewer facilities, and constrained access to its villages: large-lot single-family home development on one hand, and low-density, small- to mid-size office developments on Route 9 on the other hand. Even if Southborough adopts different zoning strategies, however, the combination of Route 9, the Route 9/I-495 interchange, and the absence of sewer service will act as powerful determinants of Southborough's physical and economic future. The simple answer to "where is Southborough going?" is that without fundamental policy changes – from zoning to capital improvements – Southborough 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.

### Village Business Development

If Southborough wants to reinvigorate its villages with a mix of uses, the Town will have to be realistic about the conditions that foster small-scale retail, restaurants, and office space that caters mainly to local professionals and businesses. Retail cannot succeed without customers, and attracting customers to village retail is difficult because unlike high-way oriented shopping centers, historic villages do not have large amounts of conveniently located parking. Even when zoning regulations do not force commercial developers to build large

parking lots, lenders resist financing suburban and small-town retail projects that have a low parking ratio.

Parking limitations can be overcome by evidence of adequate pedestrian traffic, as is often the case for urban retail. However, it is extremely difficult to show that pedestrian and bicycle traffic will be sufficient in small towns because the density of housing development is so low. Moreover, villages that retain some semblance of their earlier physical form may seem walkable, but often, the roadways serving these areas have changed quite a bit. Although these roadways served only local traffic not long ago, today they frequently function as collectors or rural arterials, carrying more vehicular traffic than they were designed to accommodate. For small retail and restaurant establishments to be developable and profitable in Southborough, the Town will have to consider what many residents may not want:

- ▶ Multi-family housing in and around the villages, without age restrictions;
- ▶ Mixed-use buildings with upper-story housing units and possibly some first-floor units, also without age restrictions; and a small requirement for the total amount of floor area devoted to business uses;
- ▶ Development of shared wastewater facilities, where feasible, to serve village land uses;
- ▶ Public parking or very flexible regulations for shared parking; and
- ▶ Well-maintained, continuous public sidewalks connecting the Town center and other villages with adjacent neighborhoods.

Without these conditions in place, a more

plausible outcome for Southborough is that small offices could thrive in the villages – uses that generally have limited needs for water or wastewater facilities and do not depend on a large volume of customer traffic. Corporate employers would not locate their offices in a village because of insurmountable traffic and parking constraints, but local professionals whose operations outgrow an at-home office need “move-up” opportunities. Since the market for local office space is usually driven by professionals and business owners who want to stay in the community, small office developments could work as part of a business development and retention strategy in Southborough. They should be encouraged by modestly increasing the Business Village District floor area cap as it applies to office buildings.

#### **Work-at-Home Opportunities**

In the future, home offices and at-home businesses will most likely play a larger role in Southborough’s economy. The Town’s demographic make-up, the kinds of occupations held by members of its labor force, improved communications technology, and the changing American workplace mean that more residents will be able choose to work at home. Further, an increasing number of women are opting for at-home employment in order to solve child care needs, but young children are not the only challenge facing families with two working parents. As the elderly population increases in the next two decades, grandparent care – already a factor in the lives of some 80 households in Southborough – will also increase.

The presence of a larger daytime population could make Southborough more conducive to some small retail or restaurant establishments if the existing regulatory, wastewater and public

facility constraints can be addressed. At the same time, more at-home business activity will trigger land use conflicts that are only minor and infrequent in Southborough today. Use conflicts can be lessened by limiting the types of businesses that qualify as home occupations under the zoning bylaw, yet the Town has to decide how “sustainable” it wants to be. Allowing invisible home occupations and telecommuter professionals while discouraging other kinds of businesses may please neighborhood residents at the expense of providing for a more diverse population.

Living and working in the same place was central to the physical development of villages throughout the northeast, yet the separation of home and work has become so fashionable in the United States that now, residents often balk at the sight of a trade contractor’s truck in the driveway of a single-family residence, the arrivals and departures of children at a family day care home, or the slow roll of a farm tractor down a main street. Southborough’s long-term sustainability will be determined, in part, by the values that residents bring to their roles as local officials or as voters at Town meeting. Mixed-use development –in vogue yet so difficult to achieve – is not limited to buildings with upper-story housing units and ground floor retail space. It also includes reducing barriers to employment and increasing the vitality of neighborhoods.

#### Route 9

Southborough is surrounded by two communities that have taken steps to capitalize on their access to Route 9: Framingham and Westborough. The absence of sewer service in Southborough, the shape of the Town’s commercial and industrial zoning districts, and the wetland types

and configurations found along portions of Route 9 all make Southborough’s section of the highway noticeably different from that of adjacent towns. For the most part, the existing nonresidential development on Route 9 in Southborough is fairly low in use intensity and limited in use mix, and not always as attractive as it could be. Southborough has some capacity to accommodate more intensive development on Route 9, but only with realistic wastewater disposal solutions and possibly changes to the boundaries of the existing zoning districts, particularly on the south side of Route 9. However, encouraging more commercial or industrial development will most likely accelerate the diversion of Route 9 traffic to Southborough’s local streets – notably south of Route 9 between Oak Hill Road and Cordaville Road.

It is not surprising that two different comprehensive permit developers have chosen industrially zoned sites accessible from Route 9, although only one is moving forward at this time. Although Southborough wants to preserve industrial land for industrial uses, the Town’s residential zoning regulations all but prohibit multi-family rental housing. Further, by zoning such a large area near the Route 9/I-495 interchange for industrial/office development, Southborough unwittingly created the conditions that tend to attract large-scale comprehensive permits. If both projects are constructed, Southborough may have to reassess its existing zoning policies. Housing so many new residents in a concentrated area on the west side of Town will create considerable growth in demands for goods and services. These new residents could increase Southborough’s competitiveness for new shopping opportunities or simply perpetuate a condition that already exists in Southborough today, i.e., the significant leakage of retail

spending to other communities.

Southborough has attributes that make it competitive for commercial and industrial growth, but only to a point. Its prestige, excellent schools, and access to Route 9 and I-495 mean that Southborough is poised to attract high-end industrial/office development. However, its lack of construction-ready land means Southborough will find it harder to attract businesses that would probably choose to locate here if the Town offered the “business-friendly” qualities available in neighboring towns, mainly sewer service. To compete for a larger share of regional job growth, Southborough may have to consider techniques such as:

- ▶ Pre-permitted sites;
- ▶ A publicly constructed and operated wastewater treatment facility serving portions of Route 9, possibly as a District Improvement Financing (DIF) effort;
- ▶ Intensive marketing to commercial and industrial developers and listing agents;
- ▶ Expedited permitting under Chapter 43D, in part to improve Southborough’s development permitting practices and also to clarify its intentions to prospective developers. Another advantage of Chapter 43D is that it would position Southborough to lure capital improvements and marketing support from the state;
- ▶ Changes to the existing use regulations in the Industrial Park District and Industrial District.

While Southborough should continue to promote industrial zones for industrial development, the Town may need to be open to a more

market-driven approach to the evolution of these areas. Some communities have adopted special regulations for planned commercial or mixed-use developments in industrial zones in order to increase the marketability of industrial land. These kinds of regulations allow uses that would otherwise be prohibited in exchange for public benefits, such as public parking, wastewater treatment facilities that serve on-site and some adjacent land uses, other infrastructure improvements, or the construction of needed public facilities, e.g., a fire substation.

# Economic Development Goals

## **ED-1**

Expand commercial development where it is most appropriate, along Route 9 and in the villages, at an appropriate scale.

## **ED-2**

Create opportunities for business to start and prosper in Southborough.

### **ED-2.1**

Create a mix of jobs.

### **ED-2.2**

Work with existing businesses to keep them in Southborough.

### **ED-2.3**

Evaluate zoning to allow effective mix of uses.

### **ED-2.4**

Encourage innovative and sustainable jobs, such as home-based businesses and telecommuting.

## **ED-3**

Review/change the permitting process to try to eliminate unreasonable bottlenecks.

## **ED-4**

Balance the financial benefit to the Town from development and open space.

# Economic Development Recommendations

- ▶ Goal 1: Expand commercial development where it is most appropriate, along Route 9 and in the villages, at an appropriate scale.
- ▶ ED-1: Explore opportunities for shared wastewater disposal or small package treatments plants to meet the needs of multiple commercial properties, and assure that local regulations do not impede shared systems.
- ▶ ED-2: Consider opportunities for local government to construct area or district wastewater disposal facilities and finance the design/construction costs through betterments or a District Improvement Financing (DIF) agreement.
- ▶ ED-3: Evaluate opportunities to modify the Highway Business District boundaries in order to provide more depth and foster orderly commercial development along Route 9.
- ▶ V-1: Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of a low size threshold for special permits in the Village Business District. Consider increasing the threshold while requiring permitted uses to conform to minimum design and impact standards, subject to site plan approval by the Planning Board.
- ▶ V-2: To provide more foot traffic and encourage appropriate scale and design in the Village Business District:
  - Allow mixed-use buildings as of right in the Village Business District, subject to minimum design and impact standards, and site plan approval by the Planning Board.
  - Allow small multi-family dwellings in the Village Business District, i.e., without limiting the use to a Major Residential Development.
- ▶ LU-6: Overhaul and update the town's off-street parking regulations, and consider establishing maximum parking space requirements.
- ▶ ED-4: Reduce the potential for land use conflicts and preserve commercially zoned land for business uses by:
  - prohibiting single-family dwellings in the Highway Business District, the Industrial District and the Research, Scientific and Professional District (if this zone continues to be part of Southborough's zoning bylaw) and
  - considering elimination of the power to grant use variances once a comprehensive revision of the zoning bylaw is complete and it is determined that they are no longer relevant.
- ▶ ED-5: Continue to participate in regional economic development organizations in the MetroWest area, and consider institutionalizing a quarterly meeting or "roundtable" forum between local and regional business leaders and the Planning Board.
- ▶ Goal 2: Create opportunities for businesses to start and prosper in Southborough.
  - Create a mix of jobs.
  - Work with existing businesses to keep them in Southborough.
  - Evaluate zoning to allow effective mix of uses.
  - Encourage innovative and sustainable jobs, such as home-based businesses and telecommuting.
- ▶ ED-6: Re-establish an Economic and Industrial Development Commission in order to build Southborough's capacity to carry out economic development. Include representatives of for-profit and non-profit employer establishments and self-employed individuals.
- ▶ ED-7: Establish a local business directory on the town's website, or create links to local business and non-profit organization websites.

## Economic Development Recommendations

- ▷ ED-8: Overhaul and update the existing use regulations in the business and industrial districts to eliminate use conflicts, foster multi-use development, and encourage clusters of compatible businesses.
- ▶ Goal 3: Review/change the permitting process to try to eliminate unreasonable bottlenecks.
- ▷ ED-9: Consult with a variety of stakeholders, including developers, engineers and attorneys with working knowledge of Southborough's zoning, to define and identify "bottlenecks" and explore possible solutions, including but not limited to expedited permitting.
- ▷ ED-10: Consider streamlining the permitting process for allowed uses in small- and mid size developments by assigning administrative site plan review authority to the Development Coordinating Group.
- ▷ ED-11: Prepare a development permitting guidebook for use by developers and town boards.
- ▷ V-1: Consider increasing the size threshold for uses requiring a special permit in the Village Business District and establishing minimum design and impact standards that permitted uses must meet in order to obtain site plan approval from the Planning Board.





# 5. Open Space and Recreation



**An important aspect in judging quality of life, open space and recreational resources are crucial to sustaining a community's appeal.**

## Introduction

An important aspect in judging quality of life, open space and recreational resources are crucial to sustaining a community's appeal. The Commonwealth 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 is currently in the final phases of updating its 1999 Open Space and Recreation Plan. The 2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan was prepared with assistance from the Conway School of Landscape Design and was conditionally approved by DCS in June of 2008. Implementation of the Plan will begin in 2009.

The 2008 OSRP involved a concerted and thorough public outreach component. This included the Open Space and Recreation Survey, which was designed by the Open Space and Recreation Committee and was a primary

*In addition to active recreation, e.g. the soccer match shown here, Southborough provides its residents numerous opportunities for passive recreation.*

source of Town input; a public forum to present the findings from the survey and get more input from the residents; meetings between the Conway students, Open Space and Recreation subcommittees, and other Town departments; and a second public forum to present the plan and field more suggestions. The key points from that document are summarized and updated in this element of the Town of Southborough Master Plan.

While open space resources, passive and active recreation are discussed in this chapter, natural resources, such as water and wildlife, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, Natural and Cultural Resources.

## Community Setting

As indicated in Chapter 3, Housing, of this Plan, Southborough is currently one of the fastest growing communities in the Commonwealth, in terms of population, and certainly along the Rt. 495 corridor. The rapid rate of population growth has raised concern among Southborough's current residents who seek to protect Southborough's remaining open space and preserve the rural aesthetic that characterizes Town. A growing population puts pressure on the lands identified for preservation, because these may also be developable properties.

## Open Space and Recreation Definitions

**Protected Open Space** is defined by the Town as 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 considered open space. All open space shall be permanently protected by recorded deed.

If not permanently protected, privately owned and undeveloped land shall be considered merely Vacant Land.

**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

It is important to identify key land parcels that should be protected as open space. Southborough's Open Space and Recreation Committee, Recreation Commission, Open Space Preservation Commission, and the Conway School of Landscape Design developed a guide to open space and recreation planning for 2008 – 2013. Because this was a recent study, much of the existing conditions remain as described in the 2008 OSRP. However, where new parcels have been permanently protected or vacant land has been lost to development, this chapter updates the 2008 OSRP.

While preservation and conservation is a significant priority for key parcels in Southborough, management and maintenance of that land is a great concern. The Town has limited budget to care for its protected open space,

recreational facilities, and parks and greens; in fact, in June 2006, the mowing budget for the Town was cut by \$15,000. Furthermore, the Town has no money to maintain the newest open space parcel, the Breakneck Hill Conservation. Therefore, Southborough must also carefully consider how it will maintain its current supply of open space and recreation parcels and the Town's ability to maintain future land acquisitions.

## Active Organizations

Southborough has a number of organizations active in the preservation of open space:

### *Open Space Preservation Commission*

The Open Space Preservation Commission (appointed by the Board of Selectmen) was formed recently to facilitate the protection and preservation of open space in the Town.

### *Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT)*

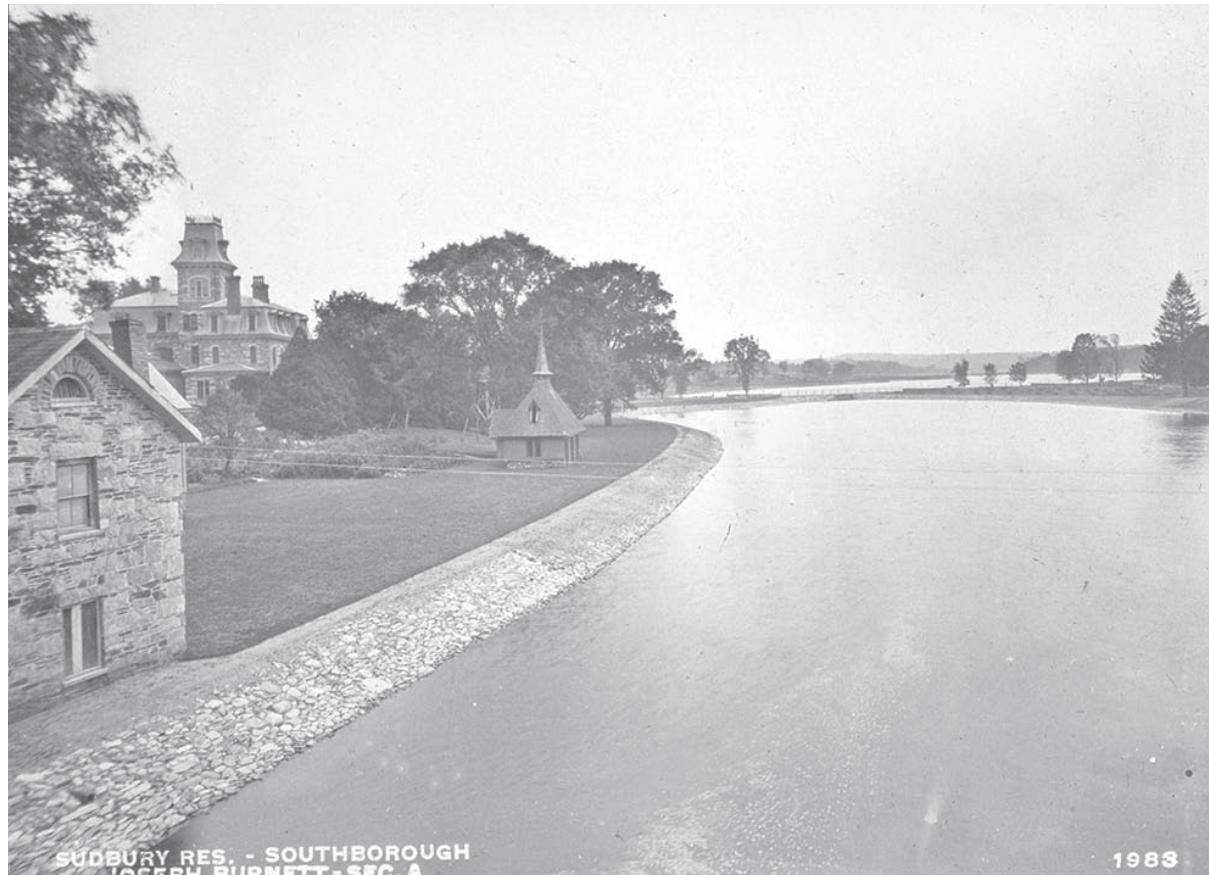


SUDSBURY  
VALLEY  
TRUSTEES

Sudbury Valley Trustees is a regional land trust, founded in 1953. For over 50 years, SVT has been dedicated to conserving land, wildlife habitat and ecological integrity of the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord River basin. Guided by a strategic plan and with the help of over 3,000 members, SVT carries out its mission to protect wildlife habitat and the ecological integrity of the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers Valley for the benefit of present and future generations. Working in close collaboration with landowners, businesses, local conservation

*Sudbury Reservoir circa 1900.*

Photo from the Library of Congress.



**SUDSBURY RES. - SOUTHBOROUGH  
JOSEPH BURNETT - SEC. A**

**1983**

commissions and government agencies, SVT pursues its land protection goals through land acquisitions and stewardship, advocacy, and education.

#### *Southborough Open Land Foundation (SOLF)*



The mission of the Southborough Open Land Foundation, Inc. (SOLF) is to preserve and protect the open spaces and rural character of the Town of Southborough. SOLF accepts donations of properties of all sizes, from less than one acre to its largest 20-acre parcel recently donated.

#### *Sudbury Watershed Monitoring and Protection (SWAMP)*

Formed by two local residents in 1998, SWAMP works with local and state agencies, land trusts, and other watershed groups to protect the Sudbury River and its watershed. Concentrating on a four-mile section of the river, members collect water quality samples including pH, dissolved oxygen, saturated oxygen, clarity, conductivity, temperature, and depth and flow. The group also monitors development and land sales that could negatively affect or enhance areas contributing to the protection of the river's water quality. SWAMP also sponsors the annual "River Fest," in late spring which includes canoe rides on the river.



*A perfect June day at Chestnut Hill Farm.*

Photo courtesy of Southborough Planning Board.

### Summary of Natural Resources

Hilltops, valleys, reservoirs, wetlands, red maple swamps, wooded drumlins, ponds, lakes streams, rivers, agricultural fields, and a plantation forest are all part of the natural features found within and near Southborough. The largest feature by far is a portion of the Sudbury Reservoir. Nearly 25 percent of Southborough's acreage is comprised of the reservoir and the surrounding land owned by the Commonwealth. The reservoir serves as an emergency on-line backup supply for Boston and is not currently used as a local water supply. However, because it is a potential source of drinking water, active recreational use on and around the reservoir is restricted. The reservoir and its surrounding land are discussed in more detail in the section on Natural Resources.

According to Mass Geographic Information Systems (MassGIS), there are no primary surface or ground water supplies in Southborough. However, there are some private wells that are not regulated by the Town. Nonetheless, groundwater recharge and water pollution prevention are important to the residents of Southborough. The Town distributes pretreated water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). The newly constructed John J. Carroll Water Treatment facility owned and operated by the MWRA became operational in 2005.

The Sudbury River flows east along the southern boundary of Southborough in a series of oxbows, separating Southborough from Hopkinton and Ashland.

There are many scenic open space and recreational opportunities surrounding Southborough including Hopkinton State Park, located less than a mile south of Town; Cedar Swamp, situated near the southwestern edge of Town in Westborough; Marlborough State Forest situated to the north; Ashland Town Forest to the east; and Richard Callahan State Park to the northeast in Marlborough. Passive recreation and conservation open space opportunities within the Town boundaries include the Town Forest, Breakneck Hill Conservation Area, Wilfred J. Turenne Wildlife Habitat, and Chestnut Hill Farm. Active recreation areas include the 911 Fields, as well as school facility fields (e.g. Neary, Trottier, etc.). Maintained parks in Southborough include the Town Common, Cordaville Triangle, and others. For a detailed list, see the inventory of open spaces in Table 4-2 and Section 7, Public Facilities.

In 2006, Chestnut Hill Farm became the largest and most recent major open space area in the Town. It was also an example of Town-wide cooperation; the purchase was funded through a combination of the Community Preservation Act, the Conservation Commission, the Open Space Preservation Commission, the Town of Southborough, funds raised by the Sudbury Valley Land Trust (SVT) and the Southborough Open Land Foundation (SOLF), and private donors, in addition to a Self-Help grant from the Division of Conservation Services (DCS). The land was voluntarily placed under a Conservation Restriction by the Beals family and is used for active agricultural activities such as cropland and for cattle raising, as well as providing trails and passive recreation for the public.

The Bay Circuit Trail, a long-distance trail system being developed by the non-profit Bay Circuit Alliance, runs through the northeastern edge of Southborough along the Sudbury Reservoir. Upon completion, the entire trail is planned to be a 120-mile arc between Route 128 and I-495, connecting the Parker River Wildlife Refuge in Newbury with Bay Farm in Duxbury and Kingston. Currently, portions of the Bay Circuit Trail in Southborough are unprotected and incomplete.

Table 5-1 identifies the amount of land held under Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B, which are managed for forestry, agricultural, or recreational purposes, respectively. Chapter 61 is a legislative act based by the Commonwealth which protects lands for the above-named uses by offering significant local tax benefits to property owners willing to make a long-term commitment to the land. In exchange for these benefits, the city or town in which the land is located is given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded the owner when the land is removed from classification and an option to purchase the property should the land be sold or used for another use. These lands are considered to be only temporarily protected – the landowner manages the land for those specific purposes and receives some tax benefit in exchange. However, the land can be converted to other uses, with the repayment of back taxes, and then may be developed and lost as open space.

Additionally, Table 5-1 notes the land owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). DCR owns 80 percent of the open space in Southborough (almost one-quarter of the entire area of the Town), because of its holdings at the Sudbury Reservoir. Of DCR's

**Table 5-1****Temporarily Protected Open Space in Southborough**

Type of Ownership	Acres	Percent of Subtotal	Percent of Total Land
Chapter 61 (forest)	60	2.1%	0.6%
Chapter 61A (agriculture)	436	15.4%	4.4%
Chapter 61B (recreation)	94	3.3%	0.9%
DCR-Owned (water and land)	2,246	79.2%	22.5%
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>2,836</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>
<b>Town TOTAL</b>	<b>9,961</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Southborough Town Assessor, 2006 and Joel Zimmerman, Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Notes: Chapter 61, 61A and 61B land above includes land classified as Mixed Use with the Town Assessor. These parcels are predominantly agriculture, forest or recreation, but may have a residence or some other use on a portion of the parcel. Therefore, the Open Space Total is greater than presented in the 2008 Open Space Plan, where these mixed uses were not considered.

holdings, 41 percent (921 acres) is water.<sup>1</sup> Aimilarly to the Chapter 61, 61A and 61B lands, the Town will have an opportunity to be involved if this land ever changes use or ownership. The DCR-owned land is governed by Article 97, which requires that prior to the land changing hand it must receive a two-thirds vote of the general court. In a conversation with Joel Zimmerman of DCR, it was noted that there is no current plan to change the use or ownership of the Sudbury Reservoir and land in Southborough. However, if that were to occur in the future, the Town would play a role in the new legislation and disposition process required under Article 97.

In addition to the temporarily protected land and water described in Table 5-1, the Town has approximately 1,080 acres of open and undeveloped vacant land.

<sup>1</sup> The exact acreage of DCR owned land, including water and land area, was confirmed by Mr. Joel Zimmerman, Regional Planner with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Water Supply Protection and Paul Cibelli, Southborough Town Assessor in June 2007 and is based on PILOT agreements paid to the Town.

**Regional Open Space Resources**

Table 5-2 compares Southborough's open space resources with the communities that surround it.

**Southborough's Protection Efforts**

Southborough has worked to protect its natural resources through conservation restrictions, land acquisition, and zoning initiatives. Perhaps most important, the Town has supported the purchase of key open space parcels. The recent adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) will allow the Town to allocate money for the purchase and protection of key open space resources. Decisions on how the CPA money is used will be directed by the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) in conjunction with other Town boards, commissions, and committees. The ultimate decision on how the money is allocated rests with the Town Meeting.

Money is being set aside for the future preserva-

tion and acquisition of priority open space parcels and to enhance recreational opportunities in Southborough. This generally includes identifying important wildlife habitat corridors, wetland resources, agricultural lands, trail networks and linkages, and scenic vistas. The CPC's goals for open space are similar to the stated goals and objectives in this Plan.

Additionally, the Town adopted a flexible zoning option within the Major Residential Development section of the zoning bylaw (§ 174-13.2) to encourage the preservation of contiguous and usable open space in the subdivision of land, and to protect unique environmental features of the landscape. Two plans are required for the submission of the special permit application – a conventional plan and a flexible plan. The intent is to approve the flexible plan assuming the goals of this option prove to create a subdivision that is more sensitive to environmental features. While this tool has been used,

it has not been as effective as hoped in preserving the quality of open space the Town wants to see. Please see Section 2, Land Use and Zoning, for additional discussion of this zoning initiative.

## Lands of Conservation Interest

### Key Parcels

The 2008 OSRP identified protected open space parcels, important unprotected parcels, and those parcels lost to development since the 1999 OSRP. The important unprotected parcels are the key element of that plan. These parcels represent an opportunity to preserve in perpetuity valuable open space parcels and to provide potential linkages within Southborough's open space network.

Preserving and protecting undeveloped land is necessary for conserving biodiversity, preserving the character of the landscape, and protecting

**Table 5-2**  
**Open Space in Southborough and Adjacent Communities**

Community	Total Land Area (mi <sup>2</sup> )	Percent of Open Space	Approximate Open Space (mi <sup>2</sup> )
Southborough	15.6 †	47.9%	7.5
Westborough	21.4	51.2%	11.0
Northborough	18.7	58.2%	10.9
Marlborough	22.0	43.9%	9.7
Framingham	26.5	35.0%	9.3
Ashland	12.9	55.7%	7.2
Hopkinton	27.9	59.9%	16.7

Source: MassGIS 1999 Land Use data, see [http://www.mass.gov/dep/service/my\\_comm/mycomm.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dep/service/my_comm/mycomm.htm)

Notes: Open Space on this table includes forested land and wetlands

† See footnote in Chapter 2

**Table 5-4**  
**Open Space Acquired Since 1999**

Subdivision Name	Street Name(s)	Open Space (acres)	Status
Admiral's Glen	Admiral's Lane, Charles Court, & Glen Court	0.6	Condominium Association
Angelica Estates	Angelica Lane	17.5	Angelica Brook LLC (deeded)
Barn Hollow (approved as Schipper Meadows)	Barn Lane & Nipmuc Lane	7.7	Easements
Bay Path Lane	Bay Path Lane	0.2	Town of Southborough
Brookside Road	Brookside Road (extension)	3.0	Easements; One parcel owned by SOLF
Carriage Hills Estates	Meadow Lane	1.0	Condominium Association
with above	Carriage Hill Circle	1.9	Condominium Association
with above	Carriage Lane	7.2	SOLF (deeded)
with above	Kallander Drive	8.0	Peter I Kallander
with above	Soccer Field	2.6	Town of Southborough (deeded)
Edgewood Estates	Wells Lane	0.9	Easements; one parcel not yet deeded
Evergreen Village	Austin Kelley Lane	0.4	Easements
Grasslands II	Orchard Road (extension)	7.2	Town of Southborough (to be deeded at road acceptance)
Killam Farm Estates	Killam Farm Lane	7.6	Town of Southborough
Lahaye Estates	no street name	0.3	Easements
Maple Street Ext	Maple Street	0.2	Easements
Parmenter Meadow	Metcalf Lane	1.4	Easements
with above		0.9	Parcels A, B & C (not deeded yet)
Pine Hill Estates aka The Meadows of Pine Hills	Joslin Lane, Witherbee Lane, Nichols Street & Pine Hill Road	26.6	Preservation Trust
Rossi Estates	Frank Rossi Lane	1.5	Easements

**Table 5-3**  
**Open Space Lost Due to Development Since 1999**

Property Name	Location	Area Lost (in Acres)	Status
Kallander Property	Meadow Lane	53.5	Carriage Hills - 62 units
Allen Farm	Deerfoot Road	24.8	4 units
Killam Property	Hubley Lane	31.2	8 units and 8 acres open space
Watkins Property	Richards Road	28.6	9 units
Southville Road Properties	Southville Road	unknown	Some development
Sudbury River Properties	Various	unknown	Some development
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	<b>±138</b>	-

Source: MassGIS 1999 Land Use data, see [http://www.mass.gov/dep/service/my\\_comm/mycomm.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dep/service/my_comm/mycomm.htm)

Notes: Open Space on this table includes forested land and wetlands

<sup>f</sup> See footnote in Chapter 2

**Table 5-4 cont'd**  
**Open Space Acquired Since 1999**

with above		20.1	in Parcel (no determination yet - in process of approval)
Schipper Farm Estates	Schipper Farm Lane	3.4	Easements
South Village Estates	Fiddleneck Lane	4.9	Easements
The Summit	Banfill Lane (extension)	2.5	Easements
Vickery Hill Estates	Vickery Hill Lane	5.0	Easements
Woodland Estates	Kidder Lane	0.8	Easements
with above		4.3	Town of Southborough
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	<b>137.6</b>	-

the drinking water supplies (Conserving Open Space, 2005). One way to protect open space is through land acquisition. Protected lands include land owned by certain state agencies that are preserved pursuant to Article 97; land under the jurisdiction of the Southborough

Conservation Commission or Water Department; and some privately owned land under a conservation restriction (also called conservation easement) approved by the state. The conservation restriction prevents development of the land for a specified time, usually in perpetuity.

However, not all Town-owned land is protected from development. For example, land under the jurisdiction of other Town departments can be sold or developed with very few restrictions.

Land enrolled in various tax abatement programs such as Chapter 61, 61A and 61B, which promote preservation of forest, agricultural and recreational land respectively by providing tax benefits to maintain and manage lands, are not permanently protected. All Chapter 61 parcels are considered important unprotected parcels.

All open space and recreational parcels, whether publicly or privately owned, including Chapter 61 parcels are specifically listed in the 2008 OSRP. This inventory includes detailed information as to the location, use, condition, access, and level of protection for each parcel.

Figure 4 depicts Southborough's open space resources. Key parcels of open space lost to development since 1999 are listed in Table 5-3. Table 5-4 identifies major open space acquisitions during the same time frame.

### Open Space Linkages

The state-owned conservation land along the Sudbury Reservoir provides an excellent natural corridor from the northeast corner to the northwest corner of the Town. The managed forests offer safe passage to larger regional habitats. This conservation land surrounding the reservoir extends west into Northborough, north into Marlborough and east into Framingham.

Chestnut Hill Farm, purchased by the Town in 2006, is an important open space and passive recreation area located north of Turnpike Road (Route 9) and adjacent to other open space parcels. Its potential connection with state-

owned conservation land offers a range of opportunities for wildlife as well as recreational uses.

A concern for Southborough is the limited open space south of Interstate 90. Several small patches of open space exist, but the only links between them are roads and sidewalks. The lack of natural corridors prevents safe passage for wildlife. Safe road crossings would be beneficial for people and wildlife tunnels would improve animal migration and movement. Linking open spaces to Town sidewalks would give the residents of Southborough easy and safe access to these places.

Recently developed parcels in Southborough affect more than 130 acres of land. Some of these recent developments were permitted under the flexible development zoning regulation, which permits additional units (usually residential houses) in order to provide affordable housing. The Town must be proactive in ensuring that the priority parcels and parcels offering open space linkage are identified so that when opportunities for acquisition arise, the Town can take action to protect them.

*Sudbury Reservoir  
serves as a habitat  
corridor for wildlife  
in northern  
Southborough.*

Photo from city-data.com.



## **Analysis of Resource Protection Needs**

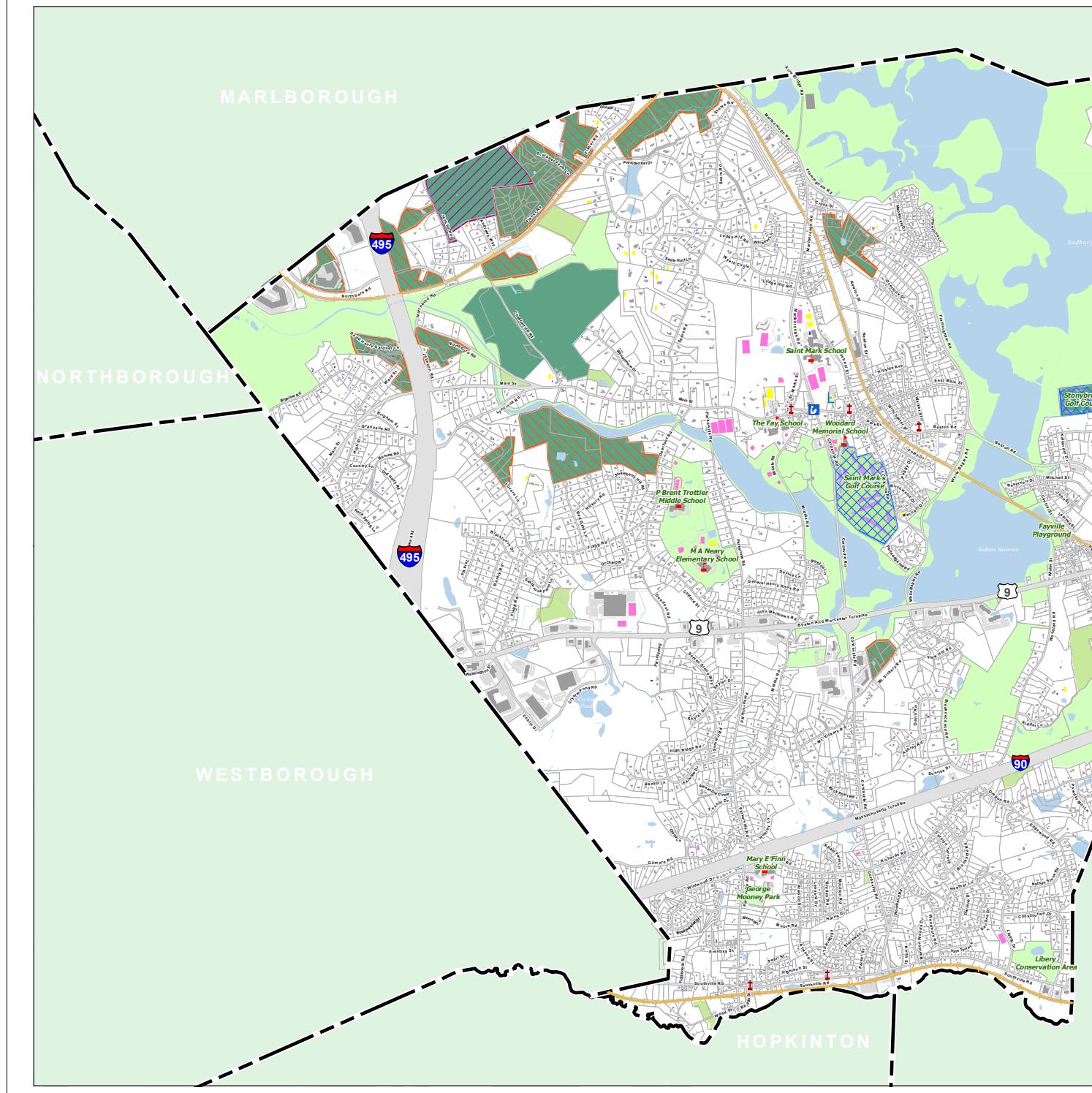
### **Water Resources**

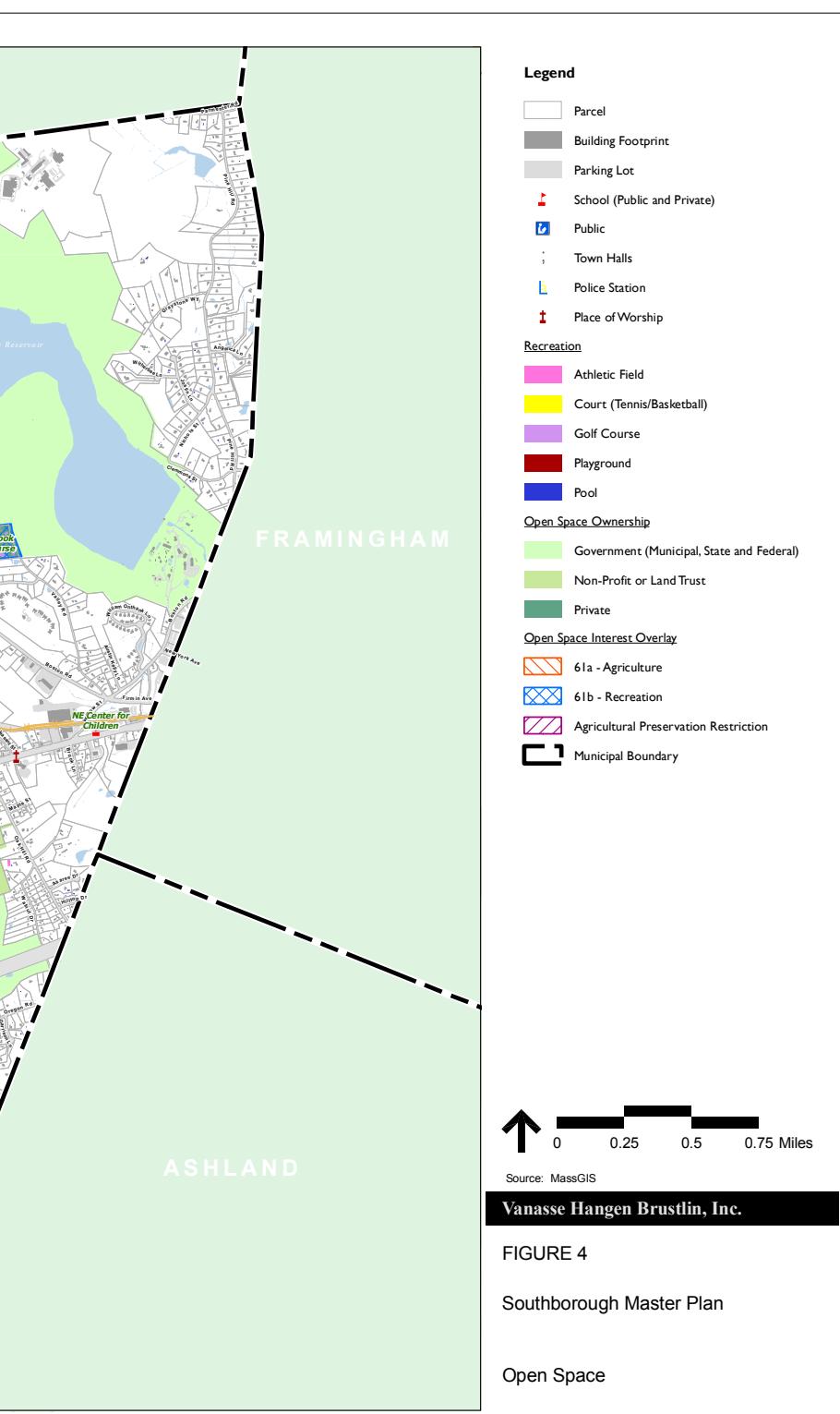
Southborough's largest single water and open space asset is the Sudbury Reservoir, which—land and water combined—occupies nearly 25 percent of the Town's acreage. The Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of Water Supply Protection (DCR, formerly the Metropolitan District Commission Division of Watershed Management (MDC/DWM)) owns the land and reservoir, and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is responsible for treatment and distribution of the drinking water. The reservoir serves Southborough as a wonderful but underutilized asset.

Since the reservoir is designated as a backup water supply for Boston, very few uses of the water are allowed, see Table 5-5. This helps keep the water clean and undisturbed which in turn allows wildlife to live with minimal interference. However, the residents have expressed their desire to have some expanded access to the water so that they can use the large natural resource for a wide variety of passive and active recreational options.

According to the 2002 Sudbury Reservoir Watershed System Public Access Plan Update (prepared by the MDC/DWM—now DCR), there are three emergency conditions that would trigger the use of the Sudbury System:

File source: \\mawald\l09972.00\GIS\project\Southborough\_Tabloid\_OpenSpace.mxd





**Figure 4**  
**Open Space Resources**

- ▶ Wachusett Reservoir is declared non-potable;
- ▶ There is an inability to convey water from the Wachusett Reservoir to the MWRA system (e.g. failure of the Hultman Aqueduct, Southborough Tunnel, or the City Tunnel); or
- ▶ A serious drought occurs.

The Sudbury Reservoir would be used as a primary source of water supply, as a pass through of Wachusett Reservoir water, or as a supplemental source to the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs. DCR has had discussions about disposing of Reservoirs Nos. 1 and 2 and the land surrounding them for recreational use, since they are unlikely to be used for water supply; however, the Sudbury Reservoir remains classified as a reserve drinking water supply and will not be disposed by DCR in the foreseeable future.

DCR has prepared public access plans and land management plans for their holdings; the DCR

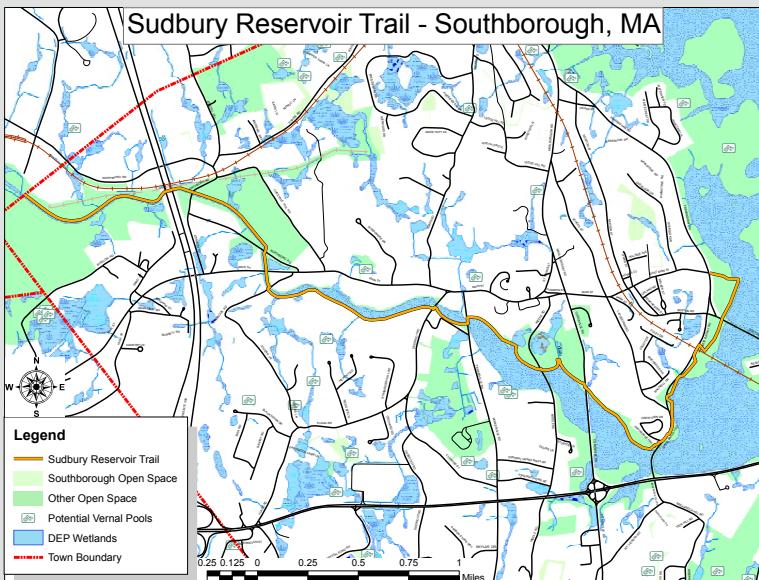
is currently working to combine these two documents into one watershed protection plan for the Sudbury Reservoir. In order to protect the quality of the potential water supply, DCR does not allow any water access or human contact with the Sudbury Reservoir. Areas for shoreline fishing and hiking were expanded in DCR's 2002 policy update. Furthermore, DCR committed to looking into the expansion of the Bay Circuit Trail toward the Sudbury Dam.

Another issue of concern that has been expressed at the public forums is surface water runoff. Farming in Southborough on a large scale is no longer prevalent, so runoff associated with agriculture is not of particular concern. However, fertilizers used for lawns and golf courses should be monitored. St. Marks and the Stonybrook golf courses are very near the Sudbury Reservoir. If they use high nitrate fertilizers and are overly irrigated, then runoff could potentially enter the reservoir or other waterways. Also, the major highways that run

**Table 5-5**  
**Public Access Restrictions at Sudbury Reservoir**

Allowed Activities	Prohibited Activities
Shoreline fishing (with no water contact)	Water Contact (e.g. swimming)
Canoe access to Sudbury River via Cedar Swamp only	Boating (motorized and non-motorized)
Hiking/Walking/Snowshoeing (in designated areas)	Off-Road Vehicles
Nature Study/Bird Watching (in designated areas)	Horseback Riding
Biking (in designated areas only)	Dogs and other Pets
Cross Country Skiing (in designated areas only and on a trial basis)	Camping
Picnicking (use of fire, cooking activity, and alcohol are prohibited however)	Hunting and Trapping (excluding certain times and areas)

## The Sudbury Reservoir Trail



through Southborough add to the impermeable surface area which tends to reduce the amount of water reaching the ground and being absorbed. In addition, surface water that is absorbed by the ground first comes into contact with chemicals such as road de-icing agents. There is concern that this results in contaminants entering local waterways. Another potential source of contamination is accidents along the causeway crossing the reservoir.

Although most Town residents obtain their drinking water from the Quabbin Reservoir (via MWRA), care should be taken by the Town regarding discharges into the groundwater supply since Southborough is part of three different watersheds and therefore contributes to a much larger drinking water system. The Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) has shown that the Sudbury Reservoir

is (or has) likely exceeding some critical water quality standards, including Dissolved Oxygen, Fecal Coliform, Solids, Turbidity, Oil and Grease, and Taste and Odor.<sup>2</sup>

### Priority Habitat

One of the benefits of maximizing open space is that it promotes wildlife habitat and food sources. It is very difficult to pinpoint the "best" areas for protection because different areas offer assets that benefit different species. According to the state of Massachusetts, there are three priority habitat areas in Southborough, two in the southern part of Southborough and another near the intersection of I-495 and Route 9. These riparian corridors and woodlands are being displaced because of development pressure.

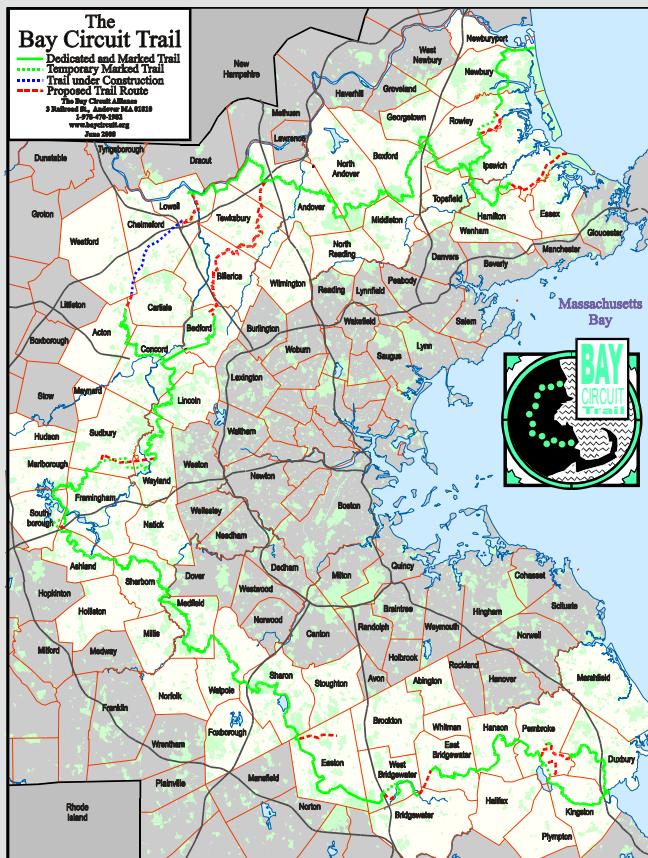
Vernal pools also provide critical habitats. In order to gain legal protection, they must be recognized through a certification process. There are four certified vernal pool located in Southborough and there are 61 potential vernal pools. Naturalist groups and conservationists can identify these areas and petition the state to have them certified. As Southborough becomes more heavily developed and reaches its maximum build-out, it becomes increasingly important to perform due diligence on potential development sites to ensure that vernal pools are not being compromised.

### Wildlife Corridors

With increased development, wildlife corridors become progressively more important. Ideally, corridors should be interconnected to create a network that allows wildlife to move between and throughout the landscape with minimal

2 <http://www.mwra.state.ma.us/04water/html/sudres.htm>.

## The Bay Circuit Trail



exposure to development. In a town that has been developed throughout, like Southborough, it is difficult to provide an intricate network of corridors. The major roads provide significant hindrance to land-based animals since it is difficult for them to safely cross. An examination of the larger context should look to the region outside of Southborough to see where patterns and corridors become apparent. For example, State forests surround Southborough. A large wetland marsh is to the west and rivers run through Southborough and on into other communities that are considered rare habitat

areas for species of concern. These are all excellent natural opportunities for wildlife corridors. Careful land use planning, educational awareness and stewardship are strong strategies that Southborough must rely on to protect these areas.

### Community Needs

#### *Bicycles and Pedestrians*

The Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) has completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement in Town Centers document, summarizing the key bicycle and pedestrian issues in six small town centers in the Boston region (one of which is Southborough). The study is described in more detail in Chapter 7 - Transportation, Transit, and Circulation. It recommended a number of improvements and noted that opportunities for bicycling in Southborough were limited due to the lack of bicycle trails.

The Bay Circuit Trail is a proposed 200 mile corridor for bicycle trails encompassing 50 cities and towns in an “outer emerald necklace” linking parks, open spaces and waterways from Plum Island to Kingston Bay. A portion of Southborough is included in this trail concept as seen on the Bay Circuit Trail map.

Narrow streets lined with stone walls enhance the Town’s rural character. However, recent rapid growth has resulted in more vehicular traffic. Southborough has an increased number of senior citizens and school-aged children who desire safe routes for walking or biking between neighborhoods schools, and for daily exercise. The safety of pedestrians is challenged by increased traffic and car usage. Town residents have regularly requested sidewalks for safe access along frequently traveled foot and bike routes.

In this process, sidewalks can be incorporated into plans for hiking and biking trails to connect open spaces. The CPTS report, as described in Chapter 7, makes a number of recommendations for new sidewalks and repairs to existing ones.

#### *Greenway Corridors and Passive Recreation*

Currently, limited patches of preserved open space exist throughout the Town. Citizens have expressed the desire for areas of protected open space to connect wildlife corridors and for recreational activities such as hiking and biking trails. Completion of the Sudbury Reservoir Trail creates a potential greenway corridor for the Town's people and wildlife. The Sudbury Reservoir Trail also has the potential for possible linkages and connections to neighborhoods and areas of preserved open space. A large number of the community survey responses indicate that citizens would like to pursue use of the Sudbury Reservoir as a place for passive recreation such as extended trail systems. It is necessary for the community to work with the DCR in order to pursue the possibility of opening the reservoir and surrounding land to more forms of passive recreation.

#### **Management Needs, Potential Change of Use**

A number of Southborough residents were unaware of the existence of many of their parks and recreation areas. The recreation department is working on ways to inform the public of the recreational facilities. Awareness may draw more visitors to already overcrowded locations; therefore higher density neighborhoods need more public spaces.

Southborough has formed a Breakneck Hill Stewardship Committee to maintain the

Breakneck Hill Conservation Area. The committee is in the process of locating problem areas that may be hazardous to either people or the environment. Action plans can be developed to resolve these issues. A good example of a stewardship plan that is being implemented is the removal of an invasive plant species (oriental bittersweet) from the grounds at the Breakneck Hill Conservation Area.

The Breakneck Hill Stewardship Committee's mission is to:

- ▶ Determine and allocate resources available for maintenance
- ▶ Develop a list of locations of invasive species within the Breakneck Hill Conservation Area
- ▶ Raise the public awareness of invasive species
- ▶ Try to involve the public with stewardship plans
- ▶ Create a plan to monitor Breakneck Hill Conservation Area for proper and timely maintenance

However, there is currently no money available for the required maintenance at Breakneck Hill. Maintenance and management of Town-owned lands has become a significant concern. If not maintained properly, the Town's open space loses its value to the residents and can become a liability to the Town.

Southborough is also looking at easements that may provide linkages to trail systems or natural corridors. An example is the railroad easement that runs through the center of Southborough. It may provide a unique opportunity for a trail if enough space could be designated on the easement and public safety could be ensured.

Table 5-6 Recreation Facilities						
Property Name	Location	Acreage	Owner	Protection	Public Access	Recreation Type
Liberty Estates Field	Liberty Road	4.5	Town	PL 88-578	Yes	Multi-purpose athletic field
Cordaville Triangle	Cordaville Road	0.3	Town	In perpetuity	Yes	Park
Rousseau Property	Parmenter Road	12.5	Private	None		Picnic, trails
Johnson Property	Chestnut Hill Road	15.0	Private	Chapter 61A (unprotected)		Ballfields, courts, picnic
Millea Property	Deerfoot Road	21.2	Private	Chapter 61A (unprotected)		Ballfields, picnic, trails
Beede Property	Nichols Street	10.0	Private	None		Ballfields, courts, picnic, trails
St. Mark's Golf Course	Marlboro Road	39.2	St. Mark's	None		Golf
Crystal Pond	Crystal Pond Road	142.0	EMC	None		Ballfields, courts, picnic, trails
Former Water Tower	Atwood Street	4.0	Town	None		Picnic area, courts, trails
Sturgeon Property	Atwood Street	3.0	Private	None		Picnic area, courts, trails
9-11 Memorial Field	Acre Bridge Road		DCR	None		Soccer, Lacrosse, Football
Choate Field at Woodward School104	Cordaville Road		Town	None	Yes	Soccer, outdoor basketball, softball, field hockey, sand volleyball, gymnasium
Harold E. Fay Memorial Field & Playground	Central Street		Town	None	Yes	Soccer, outdoor basketball, softball, school age playground, tot-lot, picnic
Finn School	Richards Road		Town	None	Yes	Soccer, baseball, playground, tennis, gymnasium
Kallander Field	Kallander Drive		Town	None	Yes	Multi-purpose athletic field
Neary School	Parkerville Road		Town	None	Yes	Tennis, soccer, softball, playground, walking, outdoor ice skating, outdoor basketball, lacrosse, small gymnasium
DePietri Field	Parkerville Road		Town	None	Yes	Soccer, lacrosse

**Table 5-6 cont'd**  
**Recreation Facilities**

Mooney Fields	Parkerville Road		Town	None	Yes	Baseball
Trottier Middle School	Parkerville Road		Town	None	Yes	Soccer, softball, track, field hockey, gymnasium
Sudbury Reservoir Trail	East Main Street to Parkerville Road		DCR	None	Yes	Walking
Sudbury Reservoir Trail Extension	From above at Parkerville Road into Northborough		DCR	None	Yes	Walking
Lundblad Field	Parkerville Road		Town	None	Yes	Multi-purpose athletic field

Source: 2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan, Town of Southborough

Notes: Protected Parcels Key - PL 88-578 Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965

### Parks, Recreation and Town-Owned Property

Parks and recreation areas are significant community assets; they provide usable open space and generally enhance the appearance of a town. This section expands upon the discussion of recreational resources discussed in Section 6, Open Space.

Since the 1999 Open Space and Recreation Plan there have been several newly constructed, renovated, or improved athletic fields to meet the needs and abilities of all citizens. The 2006 survey results indicated that the residents were unaware of the location of many of the facilities that currently exist in Town. A map for the public indicating the locations and recreational opportunities for each facility is needed. Because public access to the school facilities is prohibited during school hours, a centrally located adult-oriented athletic field or recreational facility is desired.

### Parks: Type, Location, Condition, Use

Table 5-6 outlines the parks and recreational resources in the Town of Southborough. The mix of public and privately-owned recreational facilities presents the Town with a number of opportunities and challenges, particularly as it tries to meet the growing demands of its youth and elderly populations. Not all of the properties are accessible to the public, which is especially true for the private facilities. However, even where the public may access privately-owned recreational facilities, such as some of the private schools, there are limitations due to the priority given to the students and faculty of those schools.

Neighborhood parks that provide facilities for all ages and abilities are needed in Southborough. These are especially important where the population is densely concentrated, where open space is limited, and where senior housing is located. Several residents also expressed the need to create a safe and centrally located place for teenagers to gather. Survey responses indicate



*Belties relaxing  
in Breakneck Hill  
Conservation Area.*

Photo courtesy of the Breakneck Hill Cow Fund.

that residents are happy with the condition of the existing recreation facilities, but many wish they were better informed of their locations.

#### **Facility Needs**

Based upon input from the Recreation Director and input from the public forums, the following are some of the facility needs for Southborough. These will be discussed in more detail in the OSRP, but are summarized here in no particular order of priority.

- ▶ Recreation Center to serve the recreational needs of teens and younger children
- ▶ Indoor or outdoor swimming pool
- ▶ Ice skating rink
- ▶ More playing fields for a variety of sports. Demand exceeds capacity and the lack of lights limits field use especially in the late fall, winter, and early spring.

- ▶ Gym space. Private school gyms are generally not available and public school gyms are limited by school hours and custodial schedules.

#### **Management Needs**

The Town's Facilities Department is in charge of maintaining the public recreation areas. Southborough residents were unaware of the existence of many of their parks and recreation areas. The Recreation Department is working on ways to inform the public of the recreational facilities. Awareness may draw more visitors to already overcrowded locations; therefore higher density neighborhoods need more public spaces.

The Town does not have a formal maintenance program or Capital Improvement Plan for recreational facilities. Both are currently under consideration, but maintenance at existing parks and playgrounds occurs on an as needed basis. The biggest maintenance needs generally have been to enhance drainage and repair dangerous fencing.

# Open Space and Recreation Goals

## OS-1

Continue to identify and preserve Southborough's open space and recreation resources.

### OS-1.1

Be prepared to purchase open space when it becomes available.

### OS-1.2

Better educate public about open space and natural resources conservation.

### OS-1.3

Capitalize on small vacant and underutilized parcels in Town to create pocket parks and other open spaces.

### OS-1.4

Encourage natural resource preservation in development projects.

## OS-2

Expand access opportunities to Southborough's open spaces.

### OS-2.1

Encourage public use of water resources and conserved open space.

## OS-3

Increase walking and bicycle paths, boardwalks, and trails to create a trail network and connect open space and recreational resources.

## OS-4

Maintain and enhance existing open space and passive recreational facilities.

### Goals & Objectives from the Draft OSRP

The Draft OSRP provided a set of goals that parallel the goals and objectives derived for the Master Plan update. If not already addressed, the statements in the Draft OSRP will be incorporated into the implementation plan of the Master Plan. The Draft OSRP goals are:

1. Create additional conservation areas and recreational facilities to serve the needs of Southborough residents while protecting limited natural resources.
2. Expand trail and sidewalk systems on conservation and Town-owned land for passive recreation and pedestrian use.
3. Create partnerships and agreements with private landowners for conservation and recreation lands.
4. Provide outreach and education programs.
5. Identify and preserve best use of land.
6. Involve residents in management of open spaces.
7. Prioritize and establish mechanisms for protecting critical parcels of land.

# Open Space and Recreation Recommendations

Recognizing that the Town is working to complete its OSRP, the following recommendations are based off the draft plan as augmented by the analysis of relevant needs described in this Master Plan. The Draft OSRP will contain substantially more detailed action items in the Five-Year Action Plan (see Section 9 of the OSRP) that pertain to specific facilities and resources. These recommendations are broader and generally more policy-oriented, but are also written on the basis of a longer planning horizon.

- ▶ Goal 1: Continue to identify and preserve Southborough's open space and recreation resources.
- ▷ Be prepared to purchase open space when it becomes available.
- ▷ Better educate public about open space and natural resources conservation.
- ▷ Capitalize on small vacant and underutilized parcels in Town to create pocket parks and other open spaces.
- ▷ Encourage natural resource preservation in development projects.
- ▷ OSR-1: Develop criteria to establish priorities for open space acquisition.
- ▷ OSR-2: Create process for addressing right of first refusal for Chapter 61 lands that become available.
- ▷ OSR-3: Develop a master plan for use of CPA funds.
- ▷ OSR-4: Work with land trusts and establish public-private partnerships to preserve farm land through purchase of conservation restrictions (CRs) or agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs).
- ▷ OSR-5: Revise zoning bylaw to expand effective cluster development opportunities by amending Major Residential Development to create an Open Space Residential Development bylaw.

- ▶ Goal 2: Expand access opportunities to Southborough's open spaces.
  - Encourage public use of water resources and conserved open space.
- ▷ OSR-6: Protect land contiguous with open space along the Bay Circuit Trail.
- ▷ OSR-7: Work with MWRA and DCR to expand access to open spaces and water resources in Southborough.
- ▷ OSR-8: Establish canoe launch and walking trails, and enhance natural buffer along the Sudbury River and Mill Pond.
- ▶ Goal 3: Increase walking and bicycle paths, boardwalks, and trails to create a trail network and connect open space and recreational resources.
- ▷ OSR-9: Establish walking trails and bicycle paths to create network that connects open space resources in Southborough with adjacent Towns and state land (i.e. Hopkinton State Park).
- ▶ Goal 4: Maintain and enhance existing open space and passive recreational facilities.
- ▷ OSR-10: Identify Town-wide needs for recreational facilities.
- ▷ OSR-11: Develop long-term comprehensive plan for improving the quality and maintaining the safety of all recreational facilities including Town parks, playgrounds and athletic fields.
- ▷ OSR-12: Develop Town-wide recreation center to provide year-round activities for all age groups.
- ▷ OSR-13: Provide and communicate high quality recreation programs and activities that meet the needs of all ages of residents and builds a stronger sense of community.

- ▷ OSR-14: Strengthen partnerships with committees and organizations throughout the Town.
- ▷ OSR-15: Operate Recreation like an enterprise to increase user loyalty and provide fiscally sound budgeting.



# 6. Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources



**The preservation of places of historic value, buildings of historical or architectural interest, farmlands and rural landscapes has consistently been considered an important attribute of living in Southborough.**

## Introduction

Natural, historic, and cultural resources are valued very highly by Southborough residents as expressed in public meetings throughout this planning process. The preservation of places of historic value, buildings of historical or architectural interest, and farmlands and rural landscapes has consistently been considered as an important attribute of living in Southborough.

## Natural Resources

Southborough has a wealth of natural resources available for the enjoyment of local residents and visitors alike. Open tracts of land offer glimpses of the Town's past as an agricultural community. The Sudbury Reservoir adds an attractive water feature to the Town of Southborough; aside from providing scenic views, the reservoir harbors wildlife and allows for limited, passive recreation.

Hilltops, valleys, wetlands, red maple swamps, wooded drumlins, ponds, streams, rivers, agricultural fields, and forest are all part of the natural features found within and near the boundaries of Southborough. The largest water feature in Southborough is a portion of the

*Residents of Southborough recognize the intrinsic value of scenes like this.*

man-made Sudbury Reservoir, which is an emergency water supply for the City of Boston. There are no primary surface or ground water supplies in Southborough; the Town's water supply comes from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. However, approximately 10% of the Town receives drinking water from private wells. The Sudbury River flows east along the southern boundary of Southborough in a series of oxbows, separating Southborough from Hopkinton and Ashland.

As discussed in other chapters of this Plan, there are many scenic open space and recreational opportunities surrounding Southborough including Hopkinton State Park, located less than a mile south of Town; Cedar Swamp, situated near the southwestern edge of Town; Marlborough State Forest situated to the north; and Richard Callahan State Park to the east.

There are scenic resources in the built environment as well. Farmhouses punctuate the land. Stone walls line many of the narrow and winding residential streets.

The Bay Circuit Trail, a long-distance trail system being developed by the non-profit Bay

Circuit Alliance, runs through the northeastern edge of Southborough along the Sudbury Reservoir. Upon completion, the entire trail is planned to be a 120-mile arc between Route 128 and I-495, connecting the Parker River Wildlife Refuge in Newbury with Bay Farm in Duxbury and Kingston.

### Existing Conditions

The following section describes the current state of natural resources in Southborough, addressing water resources, vegetation, fish and wildlife, and scenic views.

#### Water Resources

Water resources comprise surface water, wetlands, floodplains, aquifers and stormwater.

#### Surface Water

Rivers, streams and wetlands serve many different functions; they serve as corridors and habitat for wildlife, link ecological communities, help transport nutrients and sediments, and contribute to the Town's scenic, recreational, and educational qualities. According to the 1999 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), the Town has forty-two ponds, streams and brooks, but no natural lakes.<sup>1</sup>

Southborough is situated within the Sudbury River watershed, a part of the larger SuAsCo watershed (for the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers). The Concord River is a major tributary of the Merrimack River, which originates in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and empties into the Atlantic Ocean in Newburyport, Massachusetts. According to the Lowell Land Trust website (2006), the

Concord River was named "Musketquid" or "grass-ground river" by Native Americans because of its broad flat floodplain and extensive wetlands

The SuAsCo watershed encompasses a large network of tributaries with a total drainage area of 377 square miles. Recognized for their outstanding ecological, historical, scenic, and recreational values, twenty-nine miles of the three rivers were designated by the Commonwealth as Wild and Scenic on April 9, 1999. The headwaters of the Sudbury River begin in the Commonwealth's first designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern—the Cedar Swamp in Westborough, MA. The Sudbury River also supports the Cedar Swamp, one of the largest wetlands in Central Massachusetts.

#### ► Sudbury River

The Sudbury River, located along the southern boundary of Southborough, is an important riparian corridor for wildlife and offers scenic and recreational opportunities. In a recent botanical survey from 2001, featherfoil, a state watch-listed plant species was discovered and recorded along the banks of the river. Special care should be taken to further study and protect the river's water and habitat qualities.

Two local residents formed the Sudbury Watershed Monitoring and Protection (SWAMP) group in 1998. The SWAMP group works with local and state agencies, land trusts, and other watershed groups to protect the Sudbury River and its adjacent watershed. Concentrating on a four-mile section of the river, members collect water quality samples including pH, dissolved oxygen, saturated oxygen, clarity, conductiv-

<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts considers lakes to be fresh water bodies in excess of ten acres. (310 CMR 10.04)

ity, temperature, and depth and flow. The group also monitors for development and land sales that could negatively affect or enhance the river.

► **Sudbury Reservoir**

The man-made Sudbury Reservoir, built in 1896, and its surrounding land is owned and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The reservoir (950 acres) and surrounding conservation-restricted land (1,337 acres) is primarily located in Southborough and covers nearly 25 percent of the Town's total area.<sup>2</sup> It has been designated as an Outstanding Resource Water pursuant to the 1995 Surface Water Quality Standards and is afforded extra protection under the Massachusetts Water Quality Standards (314 CMR 4.04). The reservoir is designated as the emergency back-up water supply for the City of Boston and more than forty other cities and Towns in the Greater Boston area.

The Sudbury Reservoir System watershed represents 8.8 percent of the SuAsCo drainage basin and is located in what DCR refers to as the North Basin. The Reservoir is considered an emergency water supply (if treated or boiled prior to public consumption); the resource was last used as an emergency supply in 1981 during repair work. As expressed in the 2005 Land Management Plan, DCR is greatly concerned about land use surrounding the water resources and its impact on water quality.

For this reason, only passive recreational activities are allowed, such as bank fishing,

<sup>2</sup> In total, the Reservoir's North Basin covers 1,467 acres and the South Basin covers 1,296 acres.

## Water Resources Definitions

A **watershed** is the land area that drains into a particular river system.

**Wetlands** are areas where water covers the soil, or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year. They include swamps, marshes, bogs and hydric (wet) soils. They perform 3 important functions:

- Water filtration
- Moderate changes in water supply
- Breeding ground for fish and wildlife as well as stopover for migratory waterfowl.

A **vernal pool** is a seasonal depressional wetland that may be wet only during certain times in the year. Eastern vernal pools are generally small, intermittent and not vegetated.

A **floodplain** contains land adjacent to a waterway that has at least a 1% chance of being covered by a flood in any one year (or 100% chance in 100 years). Also called the 100-year flood, this is the national standard upon which all flood management programs are based.

An **aquifer** is an underground reservoir that supplies public or private drinking water.

**Stormwater runoff** is water from storm events that does not seep into the ground but rather runs off the surface of the land and eventually into waterways. Impervious (incapable of being penetrated) surfaces increase the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff.

hiking, walking, nature study, bird watching, and snowshoeing. These are only allowed along designated areas of the Sudbury Reservoir Trails that runs along the western and eastern edges of the reservoir; the trails do not connect due to the No Access Zone that DCR has delineated at the southeastern corner of the reservoir.

The Sudbury Reservoir Trails and the watershed management lands surrounding the reservoir are served by three existing parking lots at the trailheads at Acre Bridge Road, Parmenter Road, and along Route 85. In the 2005 Sudbury Reservoir Land Management Plan prepared by DCR, four new parking areas were proposed further north on Parmenter Road, at the intersection of Route 85 and Framingham Road, further south on Framingham Road, and at the intersection of Framingham Road and Route 30.

#### *Wetlands*

Wetlands occur along the brooks, streams, and rivers of Southborough. They provide groundwater and aquifer recharge, help control seasonal flooding, prevent pollution by filtering contaminants that enter the system, and provide nesting, food, and habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Wetlands also add to the natural beauty of the landscape and are often a place people like to visit.

There are approximately 850 acres of wetlands in Southborough, including 61 potential vernal pools and four certified vernal pools (three of which are located within the Breakneck Hill Conservation land). Vernal pools create unique habitat for insects, amphibians, and birds, and are vitally important as breeding grounds for

amphibians. Wetlands and vernal pools also create opportunities for recreation such as bird watching or scenic photography.

The Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act (MGL c. 131 § 40) was originally enacted into law as the Hatch Act in 1972. The regulations can be found at 310 CMR 10.00. Amended by the 1996 Rivers Act, the goals and objectives of the Act are to preserve the quality of water, maintain quality and quantity of drinking water, provide recharge through infiltration of water into the ground, retain the natural flood storage capacity, sustain fisheries, and protect wildlife habitat.

Southborough adopted regulations in 2002 in order to further protect these important resources. These included a local 20 foot “no-touch” zone in which no activity can occur at all and a 100 foot buffer zone, where work may be approved if certain conditions are met to protect the resource areas. Limited uses on wetlands are regulated under Section 170 of the Town of Southborough Wetlands By-laws and implementing regulations.

#### *Flood Hazard Areas*

The floodplain holds water during times of increased flow, usually occurring in early spring when the snow is melting or during times of heavy concentrated rainfall. Any disturbance within the floodplain, such as filling, earth relocating, or development, can result in altering the water-holding capacity. Disruption of the holding capacity can cause flooding further beyond the boundary of the floodplain, resulting in possible damage to roads and buildings, and potentially redirecting the course of the rivers and streams. The 100-year floodplain is determined by the edge of the water

level of a flood that has a one percent chance of occurring each year. Within Article III of Southborough's zoning bylaws, the Wetland and Floodplain District requires a special building permit to protect against disruptions to floodplain areas. These restrictions help regulate negative impacts that a 100-year flood would cause. However, this zoning overlay district was never added to the zoning map. This district corresponds with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain and associated wetlands as regulated by the Conservation Commission. Sections of Route 9, Route 85, and I-90 are located within the floodplain area. Low impact recreation and agriculture are possible uses for these areas.

#### *Aquifers*

The Town does not have any water public supply wells that draw from aquifers. Currently the Town's water is supplied by the MWRA from the Quabbin Reservoir (approximately 75 miles to the west of Southborough); water being recharged in Southborough is far from the watershed where it originated. An aquifer's water storage capacity ranges from low to high yield. A high yield aquifer can supply greater than 300 gallons of water per minute, medium yields 100 to 300 gallons per minute, and low yielding aquifers can supply less than 50 gallons per minute. Glacial sand and gravel hold the aquifers in Southborough which are low yielding.

Aquifers generally have cleaner water than surface reservoirs because as water flows down through the soil, pollutants are filtered out. However, pollutants from roads, parking lots, farming operations, and lawn maintenance can seep into the aquifer recharge areas and contaminate them. It is important for residents to

keep in mind that their actions on the land may affect water on neighboring properties.

#### *Stormwater*

Federal law requires communities to manage stormwater runoff because it carries considerable quantities of nutrients and pollutants from farm fields, lawns, roads, and other sources into waterways. Southborough approved a Lower Impact Development Bylaw in September 2006 which will require developers to consider stormwater best management principles in future projects. These principles encourage the reduction of impermeable surfaces, mimicking the natural system as closely as possible, and relying less on engineered structures to achieve stormwater and erosion control. Examples include the use of native vegetation in buffer strips, open channels and rain gardens to trap and filter pollutants in stormwater runoff. This also helps to reduce stormwater runoff volume through discharge into the groundwater.

Federal law has placed a greater emphasis on stormwater management. Regardless of size, all municipalities must require applicants for construction sites greater than one acre to file a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan that meets local approval.

#### *Vegetation*

Thirty-seven percent of public and private land in Southborough is forested. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Southborough is included in the Northeastern Coastal Forest Ecoregion. This region comprises Southern New England coastal plains and hills. Forests are dominated by white and red oak with transition hardwoods such as elm, ash, and red maple, and conifers such as white and red pines.

The forest is complemented with an understory containing a variety of shrubs and groundcovers indigenous to New England.

According to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, there are no plant species that are endangered, threatened, or listed as species of concern in Southborough. The Sudbury River Botanical Inventory of 2001 discovered one plant species, featherfoil, listed on the Massachusetts watch-list.

#### *Fisheries and Wildlife*

Southborough's natural spaces are home to many species of wildlife. Some of the larger protected land, including Breakneck Hill Conservation land (Davco Orchard), the Town Forest, the Turenne Wildlife Habitat, Chestnut Hill Farm, and the conservation land surrounding the Sudbury Reservoir and Sudbury River, provide excellent habitat for several animal species, while also providing areas for recreation.

Vernal pools are excellent wildlife habitats. There are four (three at Breakneck Hill) certified vernal pools in Southborough and 61 potential vernal pools.<sup>3</sup> Certifying the potential pools can limit development since they are areas subject to protection under the Wetlands Protection Act, which will help save habitats for many small animal species, especially amphibians.

With the growing population of Southborough, open spaces are decreasing and wildlife habitats are becoming more fragmented. Although Southborough has preserved some large parcels of open space, links need to be made to allow wildlife movement between these open spaces. As the habitats decrease, there is a greater chance

<sup>3</sup> Vernal pools are certified by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

of losing species native to the area.

Not only are the natural areas decreasing, the road network divides Southborough, making wildlife movement even more difficult. Safe corridors linking lands across these major roadways would be beneficial to animals. In other locations, green overpasses or underpasses have been effectively integrated with the built environment to encourage wildlife movement. However, the cost of building such green connections is relatively high.

#### *Wildlife Corridors*

In January 2008, Massachusetts Audubon Society released a report entitled, Priority Sites for Wildlife Habitat Protection in Southborough, Massachusetts.<sup>4</sup> Recognizing that new development could pose threats to wildlife habitat, the report identifies landscape features and habitat areas that should be future conservation priorities. It considers areas in Southborough that have special natural conditions, location, landscape characteristics, and a reported presence of unique species.

A scoring system was developed that ultimately identified fourteen focus areas for protection of wildlife habitat, several of which cross Town lines to emphasize that regional connections are important. The report recommends that protection efforts focus on:

- ▶ Expanding and buffering large existing conservation areas within Town
- ▶ Protecting land that connects to large conservation blocks in adjacent towns

<sup>4</sup> Massachusetts Audubon Society, Ecological Extension Service, Priority Sites for Wildlife Habitat Protection in Southborough, Massachusetts, January 2008. Prepared for the Southborough Community Preservation Committee.

# Wildlife in Southborough

Please note, this is meant to be a representative list of wildlife in Southborough and is not all-inclusive.

## Fish



Trout



Bass



Pickerel



Carp

## Amphibians



Frogs



Toads



Salamanders

## Reptiles

not shown



Snapping Turtles



Wood Turtles



Spotted Turtles



Black Snakes

## Mammals



Bear



Deer



Rabbits



Woodchucks



Coyotes



Foxes



Red and Grey Squirrels



Raccoons



Skunks



Muskrats

## Birds



Sparrows



Juncos



Cardinals



Goldfinches



Scarlet Tanagers



Chickadees



Brown Cow Birds



Wild Turkeys



Pheasants



Blue Jays



Great Horned Owls



Blue Herons



Crows



Robins

- Maintaining buffers to large water bodies and wetland systems.<sup>5</sup>

*Scenic Resources and Unique Environments*  
 Stone walls from the early years of Southborough's development still line many of the Town's roadways. Huge old trees also line the roads, adding to the rural character of the Town. As the development of new neighborhoods and businesses increased, the stone walls and old trees were protected to help maintain the rural aesthetic and the Town's history. The 1978 Annual Town Meeting designated all Town roads, other than those excluded by state statute, as "scenic roads" under provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 15C. This designation gives the community the authority to regulate street trees, stone walls, and other construction proposals, allowing Southborough to maintain these historic roadways. Stone walls are always encouraged and sometimes required in new developments to preserve the same look throughout the Town, including re-using any existing stones within the development site.

The Sudbury Reservoir, designated as an Important Birding Areas (IBA), offers a scenic trail that winds through the conserved surrounding land. Snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and bird watching are popular along the reservoir. The Town has proposed a trail to connect with downtown Marlborough and the Assabet River Rail Trail and another trail to connect to the Bay Circuit Trail.



*Critters are abound in the Breakneck Hill Conservation Land.*

Photo courtesy of the Breakneck Hill Cow Fund.

Chestnut Hill Farm is the newest addition to Southborough's conservation land. Protected via a perpetual conservation restriction, the property is 109 acres of rolling hills, forest and meadow. Chestnut Hill Farm, known for its rolling pastures hugged by original stone walls and dense woodland backdrop, provides a welcome view into Southborough's agricultural past. In addition to being one of the last working farms in Southborough, the property also provides wildlife habitat for the eastern meadowlark and the bobolink (a particularly spectacular bird that migrates all the way to Argentina), among many others. The property represents the rural aesthetic that many people of Southborough cherish and it connects with other protected land totaling nearly 200 acres to create a large natural space for wildlife and recreation.

Turenne Wildlife Habitat, the Town Forest, and Breakneck Hill Conservation Area join to form a large protected place that provides trails and scenic views of Southborough. These three protected spaces are just south of the Sudbury Reservoir conservation land, creating a safe passage for wildlife. This area is the largest open space in the southern half of Southborough.

The famous Belted Galloway cattle, commonly referred to as the Oreo cows, graze in the pastures of Breakneck Hill among the former apple orchards. Invasive species have established themselves throughout the abandoned orchard. This area also serves as a large natural habitat amidst housing developments.

The Breakneck Hill Conservation Land Master Plan (Spring 2005) calls for removal of the invasives and replacement with grasslands that

<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Audubon Society, Ecological Extension Service, Priority Sites for Wildlife Habitat Protection in Southborough, Massachusetts, January 2008. Prepared for the Southborough Community Preservation Committee. p. 11



*Belted Galloway cattle in all their glory.*

Photo courtesy of the Breakneck Hill Cow Fund.

enhance wildlife habitat.<sup>6</sup> Three federal grants provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are funding the efforts in wetland restoration, wildlife habitat creation, and invasive plant species management.

#### *Environmental and Management Challenges*

According to the Town Open Space Preservation Commission, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has listed six sites in Southborough that require some form of hazardous waste cleanup. Five of the six are located on business properties and one is located on a school's property as a capped land fill, which is now a playing field. The Town has classified these sites as "non-priority" for open space and recreation.

Septic systems pose a threat to Southborough's groundwater quality. Older systems from before the 1960s were often too deeply buried and lie just inches above the water table. Replacing the systems on the older lots is very important to

avoid groundwater contamination. Recently the Southborough Board of Health secured an additional \$500,000 in funding to continue the Southborough Septic System Repair Loan program. As with the first two rounds, which financed the replacement of thirty-eight failing systems, the Town will only borrow what it needs to meet the demand from owners. The terms of the loan from the state allow the Town to lend the money to homeowners at a below market interest rate of 5 percent to reduce the financial strain on homeowners faced with expensive septic system upgrades.

Major roadways in Southborough are subject to congestion, especially during peak hours, contributing to the amount of toxins, including exhaust, oil, and antifreeze emitted by automobiles. These emissions are especially significant near the Sudbury Reservoir because in some areas there is no barrier between the reservoir and the road, aside from a small buffer of grass. Stormwater runoff carrying these pollutants drains straight into the reservoir. In addition, noise pollution is a growing problem for Southborough. Homes near the major roadways are subject to automobile noise because of the increasing population of the whole region.

Light pollution is also a concern for Southborough. As development increases, so does the number of light fixtures. The glow from Southborough and neighboring communities softens the shine from the stars, an interference that may have ramifications for the wildlife as well as the human population. Light pollution has not been proven to be hazardous to our health, but to people who enjoy the night sky, not being able to see the stars clearly is a disappointment. Recognizing these concerns, the Town adopted an Outdoor Illumination

Bylaw, whose purpose is to both encourage lighting that provides safety and security, but also reduce atmospheric light pollution.

According to the Shoreline Survey Report and Action Plan (October 1998, p. 17) conducted by the Sudbury Watershed Monitoring and Protection Group (SWAMP), creosote railroad ties have been dumped into the Sudbury River. Creosote is a chemical used to preserve wood; this chemical is hazardous to humans and very hazardous to wildlife. Removal of the railroad ties will be beneficial to the Sudbury River ecosystem.

### **Historic and Archaeological Resources**

The Town of Southborough has a rich legacy represented by its historic and archaeological resources, which include buildings, structures, objects, burial grounds, landscapes, and archaeological sites. These historic and archaeological resources are a valuable material record of the history of Southborough and significantly enhance the quality of life in the Town. They enhance the scenic qualities of the landscape, establish community character and identity, and in large part define what is unique about the Town of Southborough. The historic properties and sites that comprise the cultural landscape in Southborough are both finite and non-renewable. Once destroyed, they are lost forever. Therefore, this section of the Master Plan presents a plan to assist in the management of Southborough's rich and varied historic resources.

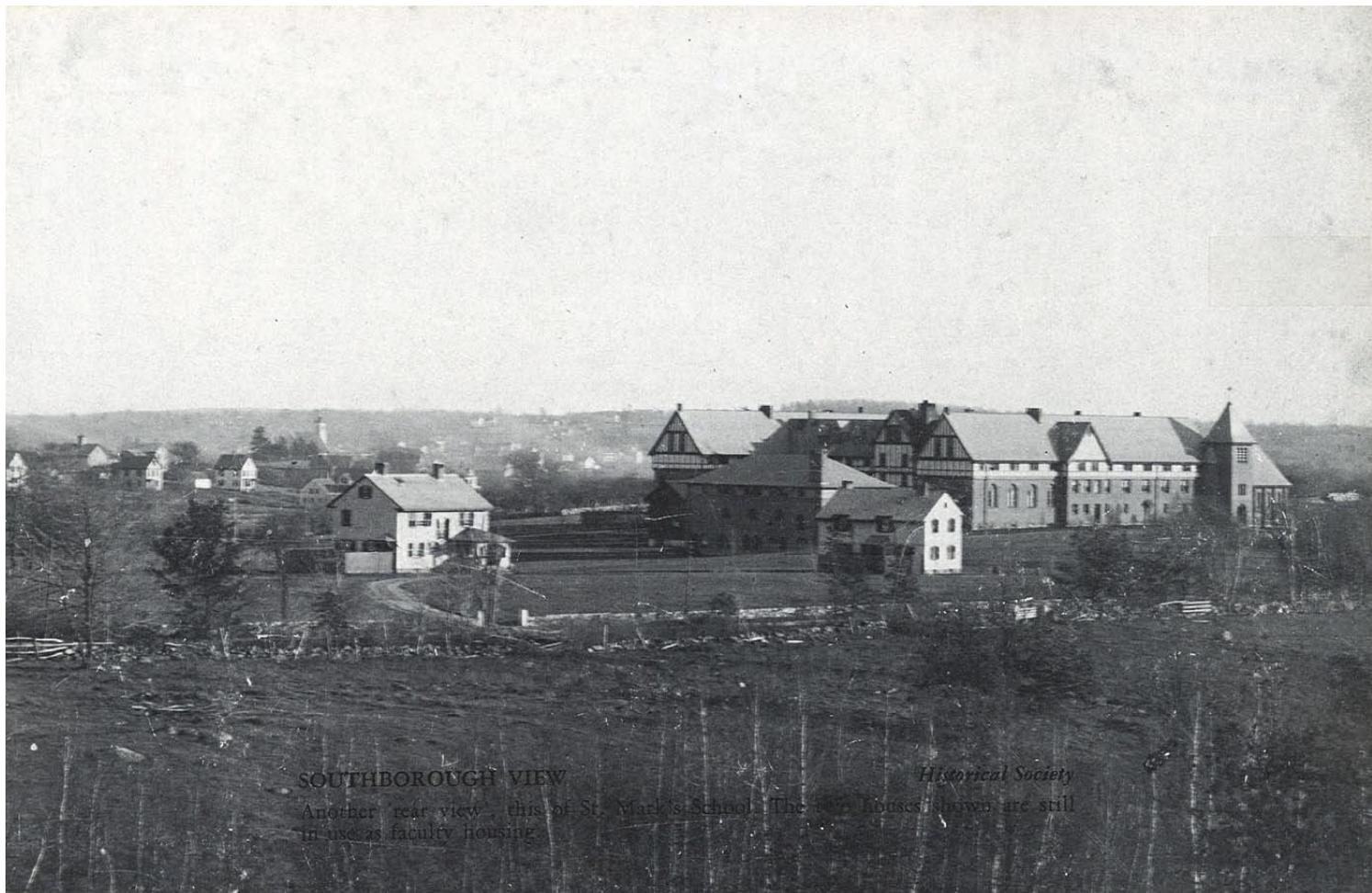
The Southborough Historical Commission and the Southborough Historic Society have been very active in identifying historic resources

throughout the Town and in the villages in particular. They have worked diligently to document the history and architectural significance of numerous resources and structures. The Society has a collection of photographs (including details about specific properties) and historical documents that illustrate the history of the Town, which has been presented in various forums.

The following section of the Master Plan contains four separate components associated with preservation of historic and archaeological resources in the Town of Southborough: (1) Identification and Evaluation of Historic and Archaeological Resources; (2) Preservation-Related Tools and Programs; (3) Historic Preservation Goals and Objectives; and (4) Recommendations. The first section provides a brief overview of the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth as well as the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and notes the properties and districts in Southborough that are included in both the State and National Registers. The second section describes tools and programs that could potentially be utilized by the Town for historic preservation purposes. The third section delineates more specific goals and objectives related to issues defined by the Town of Southborough, and the fourth section provides overall historic preservation recommendations.

#### **Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets**

The Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets (the Inventory) is a statewide list that contains information about all properties that have been documented on a MHC inventory



SOUTHBOROUGH VIEW

*Historical Society*

Another rear view, this of St. Mark's School. The two houses shown are still in use as faculty housing.

*A historic rear view of St. Mark's School, founded by a Southborough native.*

Photo courtesy of the Southborough Historical Society

form. In order to be included in the Inventory, a property must be documented on one of several types of MHC inventory forms, which is then entered into the MHC database. This searchable database, known as the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Inventory System (MACRIS), is now available online at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc>.

According to MACRIS, Southborough's Inventory documents nearly 800 properties ranging from the turn of the 18th century to the late-20th century. A volunteer survey was conducted in 1971 and documented over 250

resources with photographs, some building materials facts, and names shown on the 1870 and 1898 historic maps. Additional survey included mid-1980s documentation on resources associated with the Metropolitan Water Supply which resulted in a National Register nomination of those resources. A 1995 survey in conjunction with a regional system of resources near the Boston & Albany Railroad tracks resulted in the identification of properties in Cordaville and Southville, after which both areas were determined by the Massachusetts Historical Commission to be eligible for listing in the National Register. Most recently, in

1999-2000 a community-wide comprehensive survey (Southborough Historic Properties Survey) was conducted by preservation consultants Gretchen Schuler and Anne Forbes that resulted in the preparation of a total of 170 individual and area inventory forms.

### **Identification of Historic and Archaeological Resources**

The identification and documentation of historic and archaeological resources in the Town of Southborough is a fundamental research and preservation planning process designed to provide basic information on the current location, appearance, and condition of historic resources throughout the community. Evaluation of their significance and resultant recognition through their listing in the State Register of Historic Places and National Register of Historic Places is an important additional step. Properties that have been documented on state inventory forms are, after acceptance by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, included in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth (the Inventory). Properties that have been evaluated and are determined significant through an official review and approval process (local landmarks and districts, National Register-listed properties, properties with preservation restrictions) are listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Only properties that have been determined significant through a state and federal nomination and approval process are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

As noted in more detail below in the Preservation-Related Tools and Programs section, the National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that have been deter-

mined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The State Register of Historic Places was established in 1982 as a comprehensive listing of buildings, objects, structures, and sites that have received local, state or national designations in Massachusetts based on their historical or archaeological significance. All National Register-listed properties are automatically included in the State Register of Historic Places. The Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth includes all buildings, structures, sites, and objects that have been recorded on inventory forms in the Commonwealth, not all of which have received an official designation.

#### *State and National Registers of Historic Places*

The Southborough National Register program to date has been limited to the listing of resources associated with the Water Supply System of Metropolitan Boston Thematic National Register Nomination which includes three historic districts and two individual resources located in Southborough. The three districts that have resources in Southborough are the Sudbury Dam Historic District, the Wachusett Aqueduct Linear District, and the Weston Aqueduct Linear District, and the two individual resources associated with the Thematic National Register Nomination are the Marlborough Filter Beds and the Sudbury Reservoir Circular Dam. The only individual property National Register listing is the J.D.C. Bradley House at 60 Sears Road. In addition to being listed in the National Register, all of these resources are also listed in the State Register of Historic Places.

The Southborough Historic Properties Survey (completed in June 2000) also concluded that

81 individual properties (including buildings, structures, objects, and cemeteries) and 12 areas should be proposed for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. For a list of Southborough properties that are listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places, as well as those properties that are recorded in MHC's Inventory, see Appendix A.

While the Town of Southborough contains a number of prehistoric and historic period archaeological resources, no information on archaeological resources, especially their locations, can be disclosed in documents prepared for public review in order to protect the sites from possible looting or vandalism. For information regarding archaeological resources in the Town of Southborough, those interested should contact the State Archaeologist at the MHC.

**Preservation-Related Tools and Programs**  
This section of the Master Plan identifies a variety of planning tools and programs (both voluntary and regulatory) that are available for preservation planning purposes in the Town of Southborough. Many programs exist at the local, state, and federal levels that are available to assist in the preservation of Southborough's important historic resources. Three broad categories of preservation-related programs are described in this section including Local Planning / Protection of cultural resources; Federal and State Regulatory review, and Financial Programs and Incentives.

#### *Local Planning / Protection*

##### *National Register of Historic Places*

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the nation's official list of significant historic properties. Properties listed in the

## Historic District Definitions

National Register Districts establish a designation that recognizes the historical importance of an area. While it allows property owners the opportunity to take advantage of federal tax incentives for rehabilitation, it does not specifically dictate what can be done to any given property, building or structure within the district. Thus, owners are entitled to do what they would like without regulatory oversight. Since it provides recognition rather than protection, it is considered an honorary designation.

A Local Historic District (LHD) is established and administered by a community to protect the distinctive characteristics of important areas, and to encourage new structural designs that are compatible with the area's historic setting. Once a LHD is established, a Local Historic District Commission (LHDC) is appointed to review all applications for exterior changes to properties within the district. This design review process assures that changes to properties will not detract from the district's historic character. Review criteria are determined by each city and Town and vary for each local district.

NRHP include sites, buildings, structures, districts, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Contrary to popular perception, listing in the NRHP does not limit a property owner's right to alter, manage, or sell the property when using private funds. Instead, the designation acts as a key to access preservation programs and incentives at the federal, state and local level.



*Without the Scenic Road Bylaw, environments like this would be few and far between in Southborough.*

Some of the key benefits to NRHP listing include eligibility for federal and state rehabilitation tax credits, access to income tax deductions for the donation of historic preservation restrictions, and matching grant funds for preservation related projects. NRHP listing also requires consideration in federal, state, and some local planning projects.

NRHP properties must be at least fifty years old (unless they demonstrate exceptional significance) and must possess physical integrity by retaining enough of its original materials to exhibit its historic appearance during the period of its historic significance. The NRHP recognizes properties associated with famous figures and events, but also acknowledges places that are associated with the history of important themes and trends in American history and pre-history. NRHP listing is accomplished through a nomination process initiated by an individual, or a private or public entity. Property owners may object to the listing through a certified letter to the Southborough Historical Commission. If 51% of the property owners

within a district object to the listing through the certified letter objection process, the district will not be officially listed in the National Register. The number of properties owned by a single owner is immaterial; each property owner has one “vote”. The nomination addresses the significance and integrity of the resource through a thorough report documenting its appearance and history. The report is reviewed by the MHC staff, the Massachusetts Historical Commission’s state review board, and the National Park Service National Register office before final designation.

#### *National Register Districts*

Properties may be nominated to the National Register either individually or, if they are located within areas containing other significant properties, as districts. A National Register District may include any number of properties. The benefits and protections afforded by listing are the same as for individual properties. National Historic Districts provide recognition of an area rather than protection and differ from local ones (described below) in that a Local Historic District can be more effective in reviewing proposed architectural changes to historically significant buildings.

#### *Local Historic Districts*

Local Historic Districts (LHD) can protect the exterior appearance of historic properties and encourage new construction to be designed to complement the historic setting. The designation of a LHD imposes a review and approval process by a commission of appointed members for proposed exterior changes to properties. The primary strength of a LHD is that it can be tailored to specific community needs while providing greater protection for local resources. Design guidelines are developed to address the

significant defining characteristics of a particular area. Designation as a LHD is one of the most effective ways to protect the historic character of buildings, streetscapes, neighborhoods, and special landmarks from inappropriate alterations, new construction, and demolition. In addition to protecting historic resources, locally designated districts across the country consistently produce stable property values, increase commercial activity, and attract tourism dollars.

Currently, the Town of Southborough does not have any local historic districts. One of the recommendations presented in this Master Plan is that the Town of Southborough adopts a local bylaw that would establish a Historic District Commission to review proposed changes to exterior architectural features visible from a public way. Removing historic materials or altering a building's character-defining features are usually not permitted and repairing historic features rather than replacing them is usually encouraged. Any architectural changes or necessary replacements are expected to be compatible with the property's historic character and be approved through a certificate of appropriateness, a certificate of non-applicability, or a certificate of hardship with respect to such construction or alteration.

#### *Demolition Delay Bylaw*

The objective of a demolition delay bylaw, which has been instituted in many Massachusetts communities, is to encourage owners of historic buildings to seek and consider alternatives to demolition and encourage preservation or relocation of significant buildings. The adoption of a Demolition Delay Bylaw by the Town of Southborough would add an extra level of protection to historically significant buildings by requiring demolition permit applications to

be reviewed by the Historical Commission. Communities vary on the age and type of properties to be included in their Demolition Delay Bylaws, but communities typically require buildings that are at least 50 years old, and determined to exhibit architectural or historical significance to be reviewed before demolition is allowed.

A demolition delay bylaw proposal failed at the 2003 Annual Town Meeting.

#### *Scenic Road Bylaw*

Similar to Local Historic Districts, Southborough's Scenic Road Bylaw has the ability to protect the appearance of historic properties through the local review of repair, maintenance, reconstruction, or paving projects conducted to designated scenic roads. The Scenic Road Bylaw involves planning board review and approval for the removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way. In the Town of Southborough, all non-state numbered routes in existence since 1978 are designated as scenic roads. Thus, all stone walls and tree removal (i.e. including those on individual homeowners' property) along roadways in Town are subject to review and approval.

#### *Certified Local Government Program*

The federal Certified Local Government (CLG) program is designed to help recognize communities that value historic preservation as a community asset. The program is administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and establishes a set of basic requirements for local historic preservation programs, including the operation of a preservation commission or board and the maintenance of a survey of historic resources. In return, CLG status gives participating cities and towns exclusive access to

at least 10% of Massachusetts' annual Historic Preservation Fund.

The funds are awarded to CLGs through a competitive survey and planning grant program on a percentage matching fund basis and can be used for preservation plans, comprehensive surveys, and National Register nominations. In addition to grant funds, the Massachusetts Historical Commission offers technical assistance to participating municipalities.

#### *Community Preservation Act*

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a program instituted in 127 communities across Massachusetts since its inception in 2001. Used for projects that help develop or acquire open space, increase the number of affordable housing units, and support historic preservation efforts, the CPA is funded through a property tax surcharge of no more than three percent. If adopted, ten percent of the funds must go toward open space, ten percent toward affordable housing, and ten percent toward historic preservation. The remaining 70 percent can be divided as the city or town determines among these three categories. The CPA ensures that funds will always be available for preservation activities.

Properties receiving CPA funding for historic preservation projects must be listed in or eligible for the State Register of Historic Places, or deemed historic by the local historical commission. Funded projects can be owned publicly, privately, or by a non-profit organization, as long as they provide a significant public benefit.

Funds can be used for a variety of project types. Examples of projects that could benefit the Town of Southborough include the purchase of

preservation restrictions, preparation of NRHP nominations, or the installation of historic area signage. Southborough adopted the CPA 2003 at one percent.

In 2006 and 2007, Community Preservation funds supported the following historical projects:

- ▶ Southborough Historical Society Oral History Project
- ▶ Microfilming and preservation of historic and important documents at the Southborough Town Clerk's office
- ▶ Restoration of the Flagg School/Southborough Historical Society Museum
- ▶ Preservation of historic documents

#### *Preservation Restrictions*

A preservation restriction is a legal contract by which the property owner agrees the property will not be changed in a way that would compromise its historic and architectural integrity. Any proposed changes to the property are reviewed by the organization to which the preservation restriction is donated or sold. The preservation restriction runs in perpetuity with the land and is binding on both the owner who grants it as well as on all subsequent owners. A preservation restriction allows the owner of a historic property to retain title and use of a property and, at the same time, ensure its long-term preservation. The owner retains the major interest in the property and can sell or will it to whomever he or she wishes.

Preservation restrictions are specifically tailored to the individual building and the elements being sought to be preserved. Some agreements only protect a building's façade, while some

include stipulations to protect elements of the interior, significant architectural details, or significant landscapes. The terms of the agreement are negotiated between the qualified organization and the property owner. The owner of the property subject to a preservation restriction must secure approval before undertaking significant changes to the property, such as altering the building's historic elements or constructing an addition. The owner also agrees to repair and maintain the property to an agreed-upon level of maintenance.

Significant federal income tax benefits can result from the donation of a preservation restriction. If the property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the value of the development restrictions imposed by the preservation restriction is normally considered a charitable donation. Often a preservation restriction-holding organization will require a fee or endowment to provide adequate resources to monitor the preservation restriction in the future. According to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 184, Section 31-33, all historic preservation restrictions must be reviewed and approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. If the preservation restriction-holding organization is a private non-profit, the preservation restriction must also be reviewed and approved by the local municipality. Currently, there are no properties in Southborough that have preservation restrictions on them.

#### *Agricultural Preservation Restrictions*

Similar to Preservation Restrictions, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR) are a specific type of conservation restriction designed to help farmers realize equity without being forced to sell their land for development purposes. The

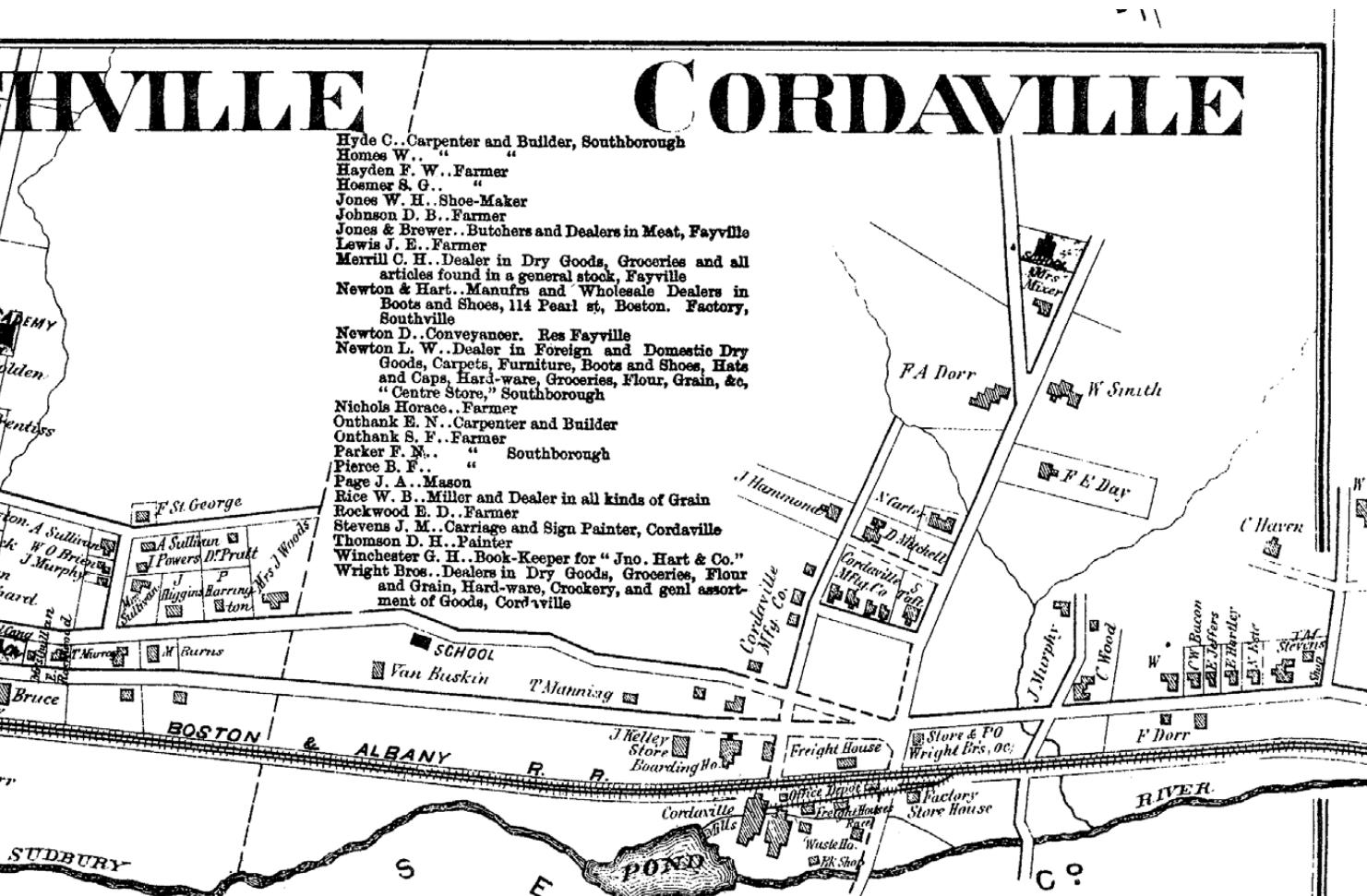
equity is often reinvested back into the protected farm by way of the purchase of more land, equipment, or building, and through the retirement of farm debt. Overall, the program is designed to protect productive agricultural lands by establishing permanent deed restrictions that would protect them from any use that might diminish the area's agricultural potential.

#### *Regulatory – Federal and State*

##### *Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act*

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA), was originally enacted to address the widespread loss of historic properties during federally-sponsored urban renewal initiatives and highway construction projects during the 1960s. The law requires that any project that receives federal funds or is required to obtain permits or licenses from a federal agency is required to be reviewed for its effects on historic properties. Section 106 review is required for properties that are both listed or determined eligible for the National Register. This determination is part of the review process if the property has not been previously assessed for its eligibility.

Typical examples of federal undertakings that do and can take place in the Town of Southborough are the requirements of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) permits for development projects and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) supported road improvement projects. If a property is determined eligible for the National Register or is already listed in the National Register, then the impact of the proposed project on the resource must be determined by the federal agency or its assignee and concurred upon by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. If the project is



*The former mill village of Cordaville has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.*

determined to have an adverse effect on the resource, the federal agency must consult with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) in order to determine mitigation options.

#### *M.G.L. Chapter 254*

Chapter 254 of the Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L., Chapter 9, Sec. 26-27C, as amended by Chapter 254 of the Acts of 1988), like Section 106 at the federal level, requires that any undertaking involving state funds or licenses be reviewed to determine whether the proposed project will have an adverse effect on a property

listed in the State Register of Historic Places. If it is determined that the project will have an adverse effect on a listed property, the state agency and/or the project proponent must consult with MHC to determine mitigation measures. Unlike Section 106, which considers NRHP listed and properties that have been determined eligible, Chapter 254 only considers properties or districts listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Chapter 254 could be relevant in the Town of Southborough if any area or individual property is listed in the State Register of Historic Places (this designation is automatic if the area or property was listed in

the NRHP) and any state funds or licenses are used for projects such as road improvements, public facilities, and residential or commercial development.

*Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)*  
The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) is a comprehensive review process that requires state agencies to account for the potential environmental impacts of projects involving state licenses, permits or financial support. This public process requires a thorough study of potential environmental impacts and the development of feasible mitigation options designed to avoid or minimize those impacts. Historic resources, both above and below ground, are included in the list of environmental factors that must be considered in the MEPA process.

If the project has a connection to state funds permits, or licenses, certain thresholds must be met in order to initiate MEPA review. For historic resources, the threshold is met if the project involves the demolition of any part of a structure listed in the State Register of Historic Places, or (as of 1998) the property is listed in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. A detailed project information statement, known as an Environmental Notification Form, must then be prepared to assess the impact of the project on the resource.

#### *Financial Programs and Incentives*

##### *Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit*

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit program encourages preservation of historic structures by allowing favorable tax treatments for rehabilitation through a 20% tax credit for the rehabilitation of an income-producing

NRHP-listed building. Since 1976, this investment incentive has proven to be one of the nation's most successful and cost-effective community development programs.

In order to be eligible for the credit, a building must be listed in the NRHP either individually or as a contributing structure in an historic district or must be within a certified local historic district. The proposed project must also be a substantial rehabilitation costing more than \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the property, whichever is greater. The building must be rehabilitated in a manner that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and is reviewed through a series of applications by the State Historic Preservation Office (MHC) and the National Park Service.

For the purposes of the tax credits, income-producing buildings include commercial, agricultural, retail, and rental properties, but do not include owner-occupied residences or most condominiums.

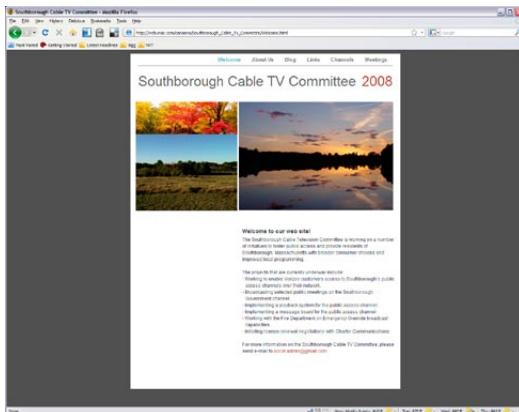
Federal tax credits have the potential to encourage economic development in areas such as the former mill village of Cordaville, which has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to the historic rehabilitation tax credits, a 10% Federal tax credit is also available to non-historic structures (buildings not listed in the NRHP) built before 1936. The requirements for the type of rehabilitation for these properties are not as stringent as those mandated for the historic tax credit.

##### *Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit*

The Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit allows up to 20% of the cost of the

*The Southborough Cable TV Committee maintains a website.*

[http://web.mac.com/cansano/Southborough\\_Cable\\_TV\\_Committee/Welcome.html](http://web.mac.com/cansano/Southborough_Cable_TV_Committee/Welcome.html)



qualified rehabilitation of an income-producing historic structure to be credited on state income taxes. Many owners and developers use the state credit in conjunction with the federal tax credit to reach up to a return of 40% of approved costs in tax credits. Unlike the federal incentive, the Massachusetts Historic Tax Credit program has an allocation cap of \$50 million per year, and credits are awarded via a competitive process. General requirements for eligibility are the same as for the federal historic tax credits.

#### *Survey and Planning Grants and Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)*

The Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) and Survey and Planning Grants, administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, provide 50% reimbursable matching grants for preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Grants can be used for feasibility studies, design assistance and plans, acquisition, and construction activities including stabilization, protection, rehabilitation, and restoration. Non-profit organizations and governmental agencies can apply for the grants, which typically range from \$5,000 to \$30,000 for pre-development projects, and \$7,500 to \$100,000 for development or acquisitions.

Acceptance of the grant requires that the recipients place and abide by a preservation restriction on the property that will protect its significant features in perpetuity. The Massachusetts Historical Commission should be approached regarding funding status for these programs.

## Cultural Resources and Activities

Cultural resources are not limited to historic sites and districts. They also include groups, events, and traditions—all of which help shape the community's sense of place. The following section outlines the breadth of community groups and activities that help define and nurture Southborough's character.

### Cultural Groups and Centers

#### *Southborough Cultural Arts Council*

The mission of the Southborough Cultural Arts Council (SCAC), a local division of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, is to promote excellence and access to education and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences in Southborough and surrounding communities. The SCAC undertakes the following activities:

- ▶ Award and administer Massachusetts Cultural Council grant monies;
- ▶ Support and maintain the Arts Center;
- ▶ Provide programs, events, exhibitions, and classes;
- ▶ Maintain a standard of excellence in the art community; and
- ▶ Promote and support local artists including providing studio space.

The Friends of the Art Center at Southborough are the committee that raises funds to support the Arts Center at Southborough.

#### *Southborough Cable TV Committee*

The mission of the Cable TV Committee is to (1) oversee the licensing of service providers in Southborough and (2) foster public access television by providing the means and capabilities. Of the six committee positions, two are currently vacant.

Charter has been operating as the sole Cable television provider in Southborough for ten years. Upon becoming Southborough's provider, Charter's contributions to the Town for Public, Educational and Government (PEG) access have accumulated to approximately \$200,000. Using these funds, the Committee has installed a system in the Hearing Room to film and broadcast the Selectman's meetings. Recently, the Committee signed a contract with Verizon, allowing it to compete with Charter for Southborough's cable television market.

Charter's contract contains a "level playing field" clause; therefore the Committee requested a similar payment/grant structure from Verizon, although they ultimately agreed to a slightly different structure.

As a result, the Committee anticipates a steady income of \$50,000 annually beginning in the next few years. Although this is not a substantial amount of money, it is typical for a small town. With this expectation, the Committee has created—and received approval for—a Cable TV Access Administrator. This part-time position will be responsible for training users of the equipment and managing the equipment and facilities. The Committee hopes to fill this position by September 2008.

Southborough has three public access channels through Charter. The educational channel is provided through the Algonquin Regional High School (in Northborough). The government channel is a message board. The Committee does not currently have the equipment to put content on the third channel, Channel 12. However, the Committee is acquiring playback equipment that will enable it to put content on Channel 12 and to have some mobile recording capabilities. Southborough does not have a recording studio.

The short-term goals of the Cable TV Committee are as follows:

1. Obtain and establish the playback system.
2. Connect Charter and Verizon (which currently has no PEG access) so that Verizon can also provide the public access channels.
3. Staff the position of Cable TV Access Administrator.

#### *Southborough Players*

The Southborough Players, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of live theater performance in the local community. Founded in 1969, the Players present shows throughout the year including children's theater, comedy or drama, popular Broadway, and 'cabaret' musical. Their goal is to bring quality theater to the community that reflects the highest artistic standards.

The Southborough Players typically draw resources from the local area, although they have also worked with performers and directors from throughout Central and Eastern Massachusetts, Southern New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

During the past 39 years, the Southborough Players have mounted more than seventy productions. Currently, their "home base" is the Trottier Middle School in Southborough, but they have also performed at St. Mark's School, Fay School, Assabet Valley Technical, Algonquin High, Mary Finn, and Woodward Elementary schools. Independently funded, the Southborough Players rely primarily on ticket sales and arts lottery grants for financial support. All proceeds go into future productions or educational scholarships.

In addition to performing shows, the Players are committed to arts education. They offer training in theater craft and donate scholarships to local residents who plan to pursue a college education in performing arts.

*Southborough Heritage Day is held annually on Columbus Day.*



#### **Cultural Activities**

##### *Southborough Heritage Day*

Held on Columbus Day each year, Heritage Day is a time set aside for the residents of Southborough to unite and celebrate their common past. The day is initiated by a parade; there are booths with information of Southborough Town Government, local businesses and organizations, food from local restaurants, shows, music, etc. located on the lawn of St. Mark's School. Other events that occur on this weekend include the traditional Southborough Road Race, which is held on the Sunday before Heritage Day. Recent additions to Heritage Day include a pumpkin carving contest and luncheon at the Community House.

# Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources Goals

## NCR-1

Enhance protection of valued open space and natural resources, particularly the Sudbury Reservoir and the SuAsCo watershed.

### NCR-1.1

Encourage more public access to water resources in Southborough

## NCR-7

Create and enhance cultural opportunities and activities in Southborough

## NCR-2

Successfully implement the Lower Impact Development By-law to promote “green” practices and ensure proper management of stormwater.

## NCR-3

Increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of historic and archeological resources and resource preservation into the planning process.

## NCR-4

Encourage architectural quality and the preservation of community character.

## NCR-5

Establish guidelines for preserving and enhancing existing architectural and historic character and its context, as identified by the Cultural Resources Survey (2000).

## NCR-6

Establish guidelines that encourage new development to conform to the architectural and historic character and context of Southborough’s existing buildings.

# Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources Recommendations

## Natural Resources Recommendations

- ▶ Goal 1: Enhance protection of valued open space and natural resources, particularly the Sudbury Reservoir and the SuAsCo watershed.
  - Encourage more public access to water resources in Southborough.
- ▶ NCHR-1: Identify, evaluate and map potential wildlife corridors, including regional and local connections to core habitat areas.
- ▶ NCHR-2: Identify, delineate and document wetland resources.
- ▶ NCHR-3: Continue to apply for certification of vernal pools.
- ▶ NCHR-4: Work with MWRA and DCR to maintain vegetation along the Sudbury Reservoir to preserve and enhance views from surrounding areas and trails.
- ▶ Goal 2: Successfully implement the Lower Impact Development Bylaw to promote “green” practices and ensure proper management of stormwater.
- ▶ NCHR-5: Adopt policies to encourage green development practices and LEED certifiable technologies by the Town and private developers (i.e. review site plan review for environmental/energy efficiency criteria).
- ▶ NCHR-6: Prepare local climate action plan for emission reduction, implementation, and monitoring.
- ▶ NCHR-7: Prepare and implement habitat protection plans for open space in ecologically sensitive areas.

## Historic and Cultural Resources Recommendations

This section of the Master Plan offers general recommendations relevant to preserving the character of the community that would be applicable to a wide range of Southborough’s historic and archaeological resources. Given the emphasis on Southborough’s historic heritage, these recommendations are described separately here. Future preservation activities for the Town need to focus on a combination of programs that

take into consideration identification, planning, and protection of these resources, as well as the development of financial programs and incentives. These recommendations were devised by determining which of the available programs described in the section above were applicable and appropriate for the Town of Southborough and discussing opportunities available under these programs for the community.

Southborough’s residents highly value the community’s strong sense of place, which is created by its varied natural features and land use patterns that result from its agricultural heritage. The Town has already taken measures to document and evaluate its most significant buildings and areas through the 2000 Historic Properties Survey. The Town should now create local preservation programs (such as the establishment of a local historic district commission and the creation of a demolition delay bylaw) to protect the historic resources that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most municipalities, Southborough is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten historic land-based uses and natural resources. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

Preservation planning is a three-step process: identification, evaluation, and protection. Three useful documents to consult before beginning to implement preservation strategies are:

1. Massachusetts Historical Commission, Survey Manual
2. Massachusetts Historical Commission, Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances
3. Department of Conservation and Recreation, Reading the Land

The applicable goals for this section are:

- ▶ Goal 3: Increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of historic and archeological resources and preservation resource identification into the planning process.
- ▶ Goal 4: Encourage architectural quality and the preservation of community character.
- ▶ Goal 5: Establish guidelines for preserving and enhancing existing architectural and historic character and its context, as identified by the Cultural Resources Survey (2000).
- ▶ Goal 6: Establish guidelines that encourage new development to conform to the architectural and historic character and context of Southborough's existing buildings.
- ▶ Goal 7: Create and enhance cultural opportunities and activities in Southborough.

The recommendations listed below are those that apply to a broad range of historic resources and are discussed in greater detail in the subsections that follow.

- ▶ NCHR-8: Develop a master plan for use of CPA funds.
- ▶ NCHR-9: Consider establishment of National Register neighborhood historic district in Southville, Cordaville, Fayville and DownTown.
- ▶ NCHR-10: Nominate individual properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
- ▶ NCHR-11: Reconsider demolition delay bylaw to preserve historic and architecturally significant buildings.
- ▶ NCHR-12: Heighten awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Southborough's historic and archaeological resources and their preservation.
- ▶ NCHR-13: Document additional farms that may not presently be included in Southborough's inventory of historic resources, using MHC survey forms.

- ▶ NCHR-14: Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Southborough including the character defining features to assist in review under the Scenic Roads Act.
- ▶ NCHR-15: Create local Scenic Roads Bylaw that add design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls, such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads.
- ▶ NCHR-16: Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions, which address scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety.
- ▶ NCHR-17: Encourage the use of historic tax credits by providing more information on federal and state rehabilitation tax credits to the general public.
- ▶ NCHR-18: Adopt zoning regulations to address development impacts on scenic vistas.
- ▶ NCHR-19: Consider a scenic overlay district which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views.

#### *Village and Rural Neighborhood Character*

As described above, thorough documentation on MHC inventory forms is an important first step in the preservation planning process, followed by National Register listing where appropriate. Several preservation planning strategies could be adopted by the Town of Southborough:

- Demolition Delay Bylaw provides a time period in which the Town can explore alternatives to demolition. Typical demolition delay bylaws provide a period of delay from 6 months to over a year. Such protection measures, which provide time for both developers and the Town to find alternatives to demolition, would require a majority vote of Town Meeting.

# Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources Recommendations

- Local Historic Districts, adopted through local initiative, recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by the designation. Local historic district designation and regulation is one of the strongest forms of protection for the preservation of historic resources.
- Establish Southborough Historic District Commission
- Nominate individual properties and historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Heighten awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Southborough's historic and archaeological resources and their preservation.
  1. Expand and develop illustrated individual brochures on historic, architectural, and archaeological resources of the Town of Southborough.
  2. Establish walking and/or driving tours of historic districts and notable historic areas within the Town of Southborough.
  3. Design and install outdoor interpretative signage.

## *Agricultural Landscapes*

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means retention of the associated farming activities, if possible, and its rural qualities, which is integral to the Town of Southborough's heritage. It is important to define the significant features of these agricultural landscapes so that the proper preservation program can be employed. As described in more detail in the Open Space Element of the Master Plan, in 2006 the Town of Southborough acquired the Chestnut Hill Farm for purposes of creating open space and preserving its significant historic features. The land was placed under a Conservation Restriction and is used for active agricultural activities such as cropland and used for cattle raising, as well as providing trails for passive recreation by the public. The following preservation tools can assist the Town of Southborough in preserving active farming properties such as the Chestnut Hill Farm,

even if only a few farms remain within the Town. Recommendations include:

- Document additional farms that may not currently be included in Southborough's inventory of historic resources, using MHC survey forms. The inventory form can help define the significant features of the property.
- Develop partnerships with conservation and land trust organizations such as the Sudbury Valley Land Trust, the Southborough Open Land Foundation, and The Trust for Public Land to raise funds to purchase development rights on farms or to assist farmers in the restoration of historic farm buildings for which the owner would be required to donate a conservation or preservation restriction.
- Develop public-private partnerships to preserve farm land through purchase of conservation restrictions (CRs) or agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs).

## *Scenic Roads*

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Southborough residents and were listed as a critical concern. Southborough has already adopted the Scenic Roads Bylaw, which requires review and approval for the removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way. Yet, in addition to roadway issues, much of what is valued about scenic roads – the stone walls, views across open fields – is not within the public right-of-way. The preservation and protection of scenic roads should be broadened to include adjacent areas and features so that the road's visual ambiance can be more comprehensively preserved. Recommendations include:

- Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Southborough including the character defining features to assist in review under the Scenic Roads Bylaw.

- Amend the Scenic Roads Bylaw by adding design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls, such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board.
- Consider a scenic overlay district which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views.
- Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions, which address scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety.

#### *Funding of Preservation Projects*

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies while incorporating specific historic preservation objectives into community revitalization and economic development efforts. The MHC and DCR have programs to assist communities in preservation-related issues including:

- Federal and State Historic Tax Credit Programs, administered by the National Park Service and the MHC.
- Survey and Planning Grants and Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) Grants, administered by the MHC, support survey, National Register, and preservation planning work.
- The Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF), administered by the MHC, funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.
- The Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program (HLPGP), administered by DCR, funds planning, education, and stewardship projects focused on historic landscapes, including cemeteries.

- Local Community Preservation Act funding.

Funding for state programs varies year to year. When planning any preservation planning programs, Town officials should contact relevant agencies to determine whether funding is available.

The Town of Southborough and other preservation advocacy groups (such as the Sudbury Valley Land Trust and the Southborough Open Land Foundation) should also encourage the use of historic tax credits by providing more information on federal and state rehabilitation tax credits to the general public. Appropriate Town staff should be aware of the tax credits and be able to direct citizens to the appropriate literature and agency officials, including links to more detailed information on the Town's website. This effort should be augmented by including a discussion and explanation of historic tax credits in any public education efforts about promoting preservation.



# 7. Transportation, Transit, and Circulation



**During the master planning process, Southborough residents repeatedly raised transportation-related issues and concerns. Traffic congestion is frequently seen as an important quality of life consideration, and residents fear that these problems are exacerbated by new growth.**

## Introduction

Southborough has experienced dramatic population growth in recent years, most notably since 1990. Primary reasons for Southborough's population growth in the 1990s include the Town's proximity to major transportation routes including Route 9, Interstate 90, Interstate 495 and the MBTA commuter rail; its proximity to Boston (25 miles) and Worcester (15 miles); and attractive nature of the region to draw substantial expansion of the technology and professional service sectors. Looking to the future, as population continues to rise and technology and service centers expand within the MetroWest region, the ever increasing number of vehicles on Southborough's transportation system will pose a challenge for the Town.

During the master planning process, Southborough residents repeatedly raised transportation-related issues and concerns. Traffic congestion is frequently seen as an important quality of life consideration, and residents fear that these problems are exacerbated by new growth. Mitigation of potential impacts and alternatives to automobile-based transportation systems

*For most residents of Southborough the automobile is their prime source of mobility.*

need to be evaluated as part of the planning process.

The Transportation, Transit, and Circulation Element of the Southborough Master Plan examines these issues as follows. First, a regional context is presented which describes how Southborough fits into that context and the influence of other communities and agencies on Southborough. Abutting community Master Plans are also briefly reviewed and discussed, as they relate to Southborough. Elements of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program are also discussed as they relate to Southborough.

Next, the components that comprise the transportation system are described. These components include roadway functional classification and jurisdiction; mode share; public transportation; bicycles, sidewalks, and trails; and park and ride lots. Key congested transportation facilities are described next.

Finally, a future conditions section follows, discussing forecasted growth trends in Southborough and in the area, and the impact

projected on transportation facilities. The section concludes with the strategies, goals, and objectives developed to address the future growth in Southborough and its impact on the transportation network.

## Regional Context

Southborough is located 25 miles west of Boston and 15 miles east of Worcester in eastern Worcester County. Southborough has retained a low-density rural/suburban character yet remains very accessible because of its proximity to Route 9, the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90), and Interstate 495 (I-495). However, this accessibility also creates a situation where a significant volume of commuter traffic relies on local arterial roadways, including Route 9, to travel between I-495 and I-90 and between the bordering communities.

## Other Municipalities' Master Plans

It is clear through both observation and study that motorists other than the residents of Southborough use the municipal roadways in Town. Employment centers in Southborough draw from many communities in the region. In addition, motorists from adjacent communities pass through Southborough en route to other destinations. As Southborough creates its Master Plan, it should be cognizant of the transportation planning and land use efforts of the adjacent communities and consider the impact, if any, on Southborough. In addition to the land use efforts detailed below, major private developments in various stages of planning/ permitting within Southborough and on the outskirts of the community that could potentially impact Southborough's transportation facilities are described under the Future Conditions section of this chapter. The follow-

ing provides a summary of the individual community's transportation and land use master plans for those towns surrounding Southborough:

### *Westborough*

While the majority of these land use and transportation plans do not directly impact Southborough, they are worth noting:

Several roadway infrastructure improvements are proposed as part of the latest Westborough Master Plan that would have an impact on roadways linking the town with Southborough. These improvements include ramp re-alignment at the intersections of Route 9 at Route 30 and Route 9 at Route 135. Further improvements have been recommended along East Main Street (Route 30) from Route 9 to downtown Westborough. The Town is also proposing to implement additional transit services to its employment centers, such as the peak hour shuttle that currently provides service from the Southborough MBTA Commuter Rail station.

Land use planning goals identified in the plan that could impact Southborough include: enhancing downtown Westborough by upgrading under utilized sites and encouraging mixed-use development; enhancing land uses along East Main Street to retain residential character, encourage redevelopment of under utilized properties, and increase pedestrian accommodations; creating a strategy for the re-use of public and institutional land; and development of the area near the MBTA commuter rail station to include a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential uses.

### *Hopkinton*

Hopkinton's transportation goals include the provision of all-day parking for car-pooling commuters. The Town is proposing to develop park & ride facilities at strategic locations, including near I-495 and near the intersection of Route 85 and Route 135. The availability (and potential impact) of these facilities to Southborough residents should be explored further.

Hopkinton has also developed land use planning goals that could impact Southborough, including enhancing the center of Hopkinton and redeveloping downtown buildings.

### *Ashland*

Ashland's Comprehensive Plan identifies the need to improve traffic flow and pedestrian accommodations along Route 126 and Route 135, major commuter routes within the Town. In addition to improving traffic flow on these routes, the Town also proposes to improve traffic control on other commuter feeder roadways not specifically identified in the plan. Improvements, while not specifically defined in the Ashland master plan, could potentially reduce congestion during the peak commuter hours along these commuter and feeder roadways and make drivers more likely to use routes within Southborough to access these roadways.

Land use planning goals that could impact Southborough identified in the plan include an increase in the number of age-restricted and affordable housing units in the Town; further development of downtown Ashland to promote pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development with potential connection to the MBTA commuter rail station; and the creation of an office district along Route 135 from Homer

Avenue to Summer Street. Those land uses that are near the Southborough municipal boundaries, if marketed and developed in a manner that maximized their value and desirability, could potentially increase traffic volumes on Southborough roadways and should be monitored closely by the Town as development proposals come forward.

### *Other Surrounding Towns*

Master Plans for the communities of Northborough, Marlborough, and Framingham are not current or were not readily available.<sup>1</sup> However, there are several potential large-scale developments which could influence the transportation character of many roadways both within and outside of Southborough which should be considered. They are discussed later in this chapter.

### **Metropolitan Area Planning Council's and MetroWest Growth Management Committee's Role**

Regional and sub-regional agencies play a role in the development and execution of a municipality's Master Plan. As overseers of a larger area, they help to coordinate activities, prevent conflicts, and ensure a smooth communication of strategies, goals, and objectives from one municipality to another. Below is a description of the regional planning agency and the sub-regional planning agency that pertain to Southborough. Both agencies play an active role in bringing forward local Southborough initiatives for funding requests (including transportation and transit funding needs) for local and regional projects to the Commonwealth.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2004 Northborough Community Development Plan did not include a transportation element.

*Metropolitan Area Planning Council*

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is a regional planning agency representing 101 cities and towns in the metropolitan Boston area. As one of 14 members of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), MAPC has oversight responsibility for the region's federally funded transportation program.<sup>2</sup>

Funding for Council activities—including funding for transportation improvements and upgrades—is derived from municipal, state, federal and private grants and contracts and a per-capita assessment on member communities approved annually by municipal representatives.

Council membership consists of community representatives, gubernatorial appointees, and city and state agencies who collaborate in the development of comprehensive plans and recommendations in areas of population and employment, transportation, economic development, regional growth and the environment. The Council also provides technical assistance and advocacy to its member communities. MAPC works with its 101 cities and towns through eight sub-regional organizations.

*MetroWest Growth Management Committee*

Southborough is a member of the MetroWest Growth Management Committee (the applicable sub-region of the MAPC). The West Growth Management Committee (MWGMC) facilitates inter-local collaborative planning and problem solving to enhance the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the region.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.mapc.org/about\\_mapc.html](http://www.mapc.org/about_mapc.html)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.mapc.org/metro\\_area/metrowest.html](http://www.mapc.org/metro_area/metrowest.html)

Among other things, the MWGMC produces a Community Exchange newsletter for MetroWest public officials; conducts Regional Impact Reviews; and organizes a monthly Planners Roundtable for professional planners and local planning policymakers.

**495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership (Arc of Innovation)**

The 'Arc of Innovation' is a public/private advocacy group representing 32 communities within the MetroWest area and includes 500,000 residents. These communities are located along Route 9 and I-495 from Route 1 to Route 2, and host the headquarters of numerous national corporations. The 495/MetroWest Partnership is a regional advocacy non-profit governed by municipal officials, regional employers, legislators, environmentalists, and educators that addresses the needs of the 495/MetroWest region. The partnership aims to enhance economic vitality and quality of life while sustaining natural resources.

One of the partnership's key initiatives over the past few years has been focusing on transportation issues facing many of the communities within the region. These range from advocating for enhanced and expanded public transportation for the region as well as providing commentary on both current and future transportation and economic development trends. Many of these issues were highlighted and discussed in the 2004 "Transportation Nightmares" project which focused on transportation issues and problems ("Nightmares") throughout the MetroWest region. This project received a significant amount of local and regional focus both among residents and in the press.

Within Southborough, there were several specific locations which were noted as being on the Top 10 List as well as several all-encompassing issues which affect Southborough and surrounding communities. They include:

- ▶ The ongoing congestion at the intersection of Oak Hill Road and Route 9.
- ▶ The future needs of the I-495/Route 9 interchange.
- ▶ The need for additional public transportation within the MetroWest communities.
- ▶ The need to reinvest the existing transportation infrastructure so that it does not become obsolete.

As of the writing of this chapter, the Partnership is in the process of updating the 2004 listing and will likely be publishing an update within the next 6-8 months. There does appear to be some activity on some of these issues which will undoubtedly be highlighted in this update.

#### *Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*

The Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination (TIP) is an intermodal program of transportation improvements produced annually by the MPO. The TIP serves as the implementation arm of the MPO's 25-year Regional Transportation Plan by incrementally programming funding for improvements over the next four-year period. It programs federal-aid funds for transit projects and state and federal aid funds for roadway projects. However, it is financially constrained; the MPO can only include projects for which funds are expected to be available.<sup>4</sup>

4 <http://goodstuf.ctps.org/bostonmpo/resources/tip/tip.htm>

The only project of note in the recent TIP is the ongoing maintenance and resurfacing of the breakdown lanes along I-495 through Southborough and beyond. Southborough is not noted in any other significant projects in the 2007 2010 TIP. However, MassHighway Department's Project Review Committee recently approved Southborough's Main Street project proposal (based on the Project Need Form and the Project Initiation Form that were previously submitted). This approval means that the Main Street project is now fully eligible to be listed on the State TIP by the Boston Region MPO. Additional steps will be needed to obtain funding for these improvements including the preparation of design documents, cost estimates, and other engineering efforts along with review of the plans with the community as a whole.

## **Transportation Network**

Mobility in and around Southborough is the central theme of the Transportation, Transit, and Circulation element of the Master Plan. The sections below discuss the components that comprise the transportation network in Southborough.

### **Functional Classification and Roadway Jurisdiction**

The functional classification of a roadway is an indicator of the type, volume, and speed of traffic it is intended to accommodate. The jurisdiction of a roadway indicates the governing body for that roadway, controlling the maintenances and other associated activities. Figure 5 illustrates the functional classification of the roadways in Southborough.

## What is Mode Share?

Mode refers to a particular means of transportation (e.g. transit, automobile, bicycle, and walking). **Mode share** is defined as the number (or percentage) of trips between a trip origin and trip destination that are made by each mode.

Individuals select a mode of transportation based on trip purpose, trip location, characteristics of the individual, and characteristics of the available mode.

Of note is that the majority of the roadway system is governed by the Town of Southborough with a few roadways (Route 9, sections of Route 30 and Route 85) which are under MassHighway jurisdiction.

### Journey-to-Work

An evaluation of journey-to-work census data for employed Southborough residents indicates where residents work and how they get there. According to US Census data, approximately 15 percent of Southborough residents were also employed in Southborough.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, approximately 11 percent of Southborough residents work in Boston. The majority of the remaining locations of employment of Southborough residents are neighboring towns and employment centers near I-495 and I-95. Table 7-1 illustrates this data.

An evaluation of journey-to-work census data for employees of businesses in Southborough was also conducted. This assessment quantifies the locations of residence of people who commute to Southborough for work. According

**Table 7-1**  
**2000 Census Journey-to-Work Data for Southborough Residents**

Location of Employment	Percent of Employed Southborough Residential Population
Southborough	15%
Boston	11%
Framingham	10%
Marlborough	7%
Worcester	6%
Westborough	5%
Cambridge	3%
Natick	3%
Wellesley	3%
Waltham	2%
Milford	2%
Burlington	2%
Lowell	1%
Northborough	1%
Woburn	1%
Hopkinton	1%
Ashland	1%
Other †	26%

Source: US Census, 2000, Census Transportation Planning Package, Part 2, 2003.

Notes: † Other Towns and cities not listed comprise less than one percent each of employment locations of Southborough residents.

<sup>5</sup> US Census, 2000, Census Transportation Planning Package, Part 2, 2003

to US Census data, approximately 10 percent of people who worked in Southborough also resided in Southborough in 2000.<sup>6</sup> Approximately 8 percent of people employed in Southborough resided in Framingham. The majority of the remaining locations of residence of Southborough employees are neighboring towns. Additionally, approximately two percent people employed in Southborough commuted from Boston. Table 7-2 illustrates this data.

#### *Mode Share*

An evaluation of mode shares in the region was conducted for Southborough and for a ‘one-municipality buffer’ around the Town. In general, mode share results for the Town and the region are similar. According to US Census data, approximately 92 percent of Southborough residents reported ‘car’ as their travel mode to work in 2000.<sup>7</sup> Of this 92 percent, approximately 86 percent were single-occupant vehicles and 6 percent were multiple-occupant vehicles. This automobile mode share is slightly higher than the regional automobile mode share reported by residents of neighboring communities. Approximately 90 percent of the regional residents reported ‘car’ as their mode of travel, with 81 percent traveling in single-occupant vehicles and 9 percent traveling in multiple-occupant vehicles. Approximately 5 percent of Southborough residents work from home, compared to 4 percent of regional residents. Transit and walking rounded out the survey results; approximately 3 percent of Southborough residents utilized these modes, compared to 5 percent of regional residents.

6 US Census, 2000, Census Transportation Planning Package, Part 2, 2003

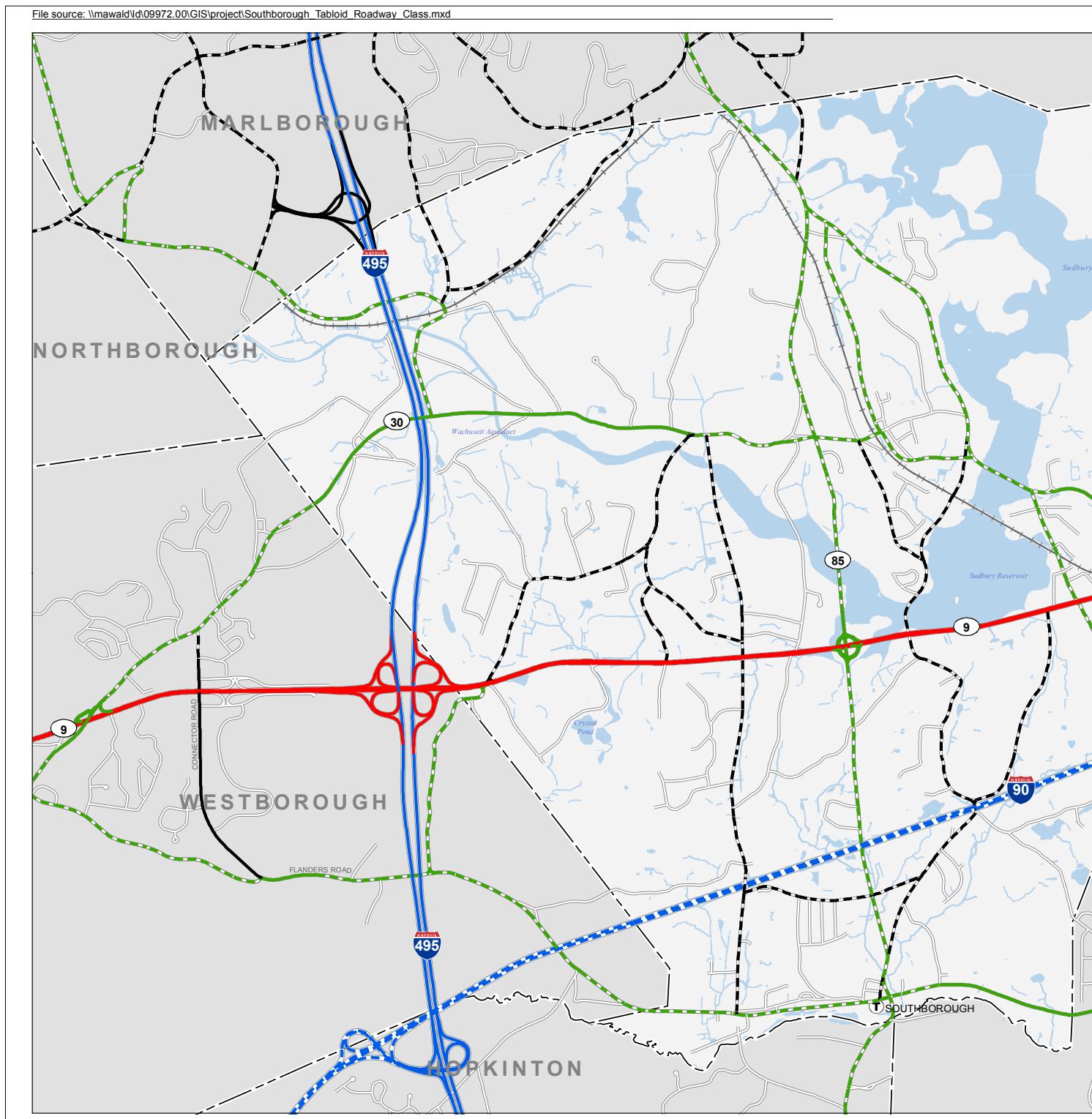
7 US Census, 2000, Census Transportation Planning Package, Part 3 – CT, MA, RI, May 2004

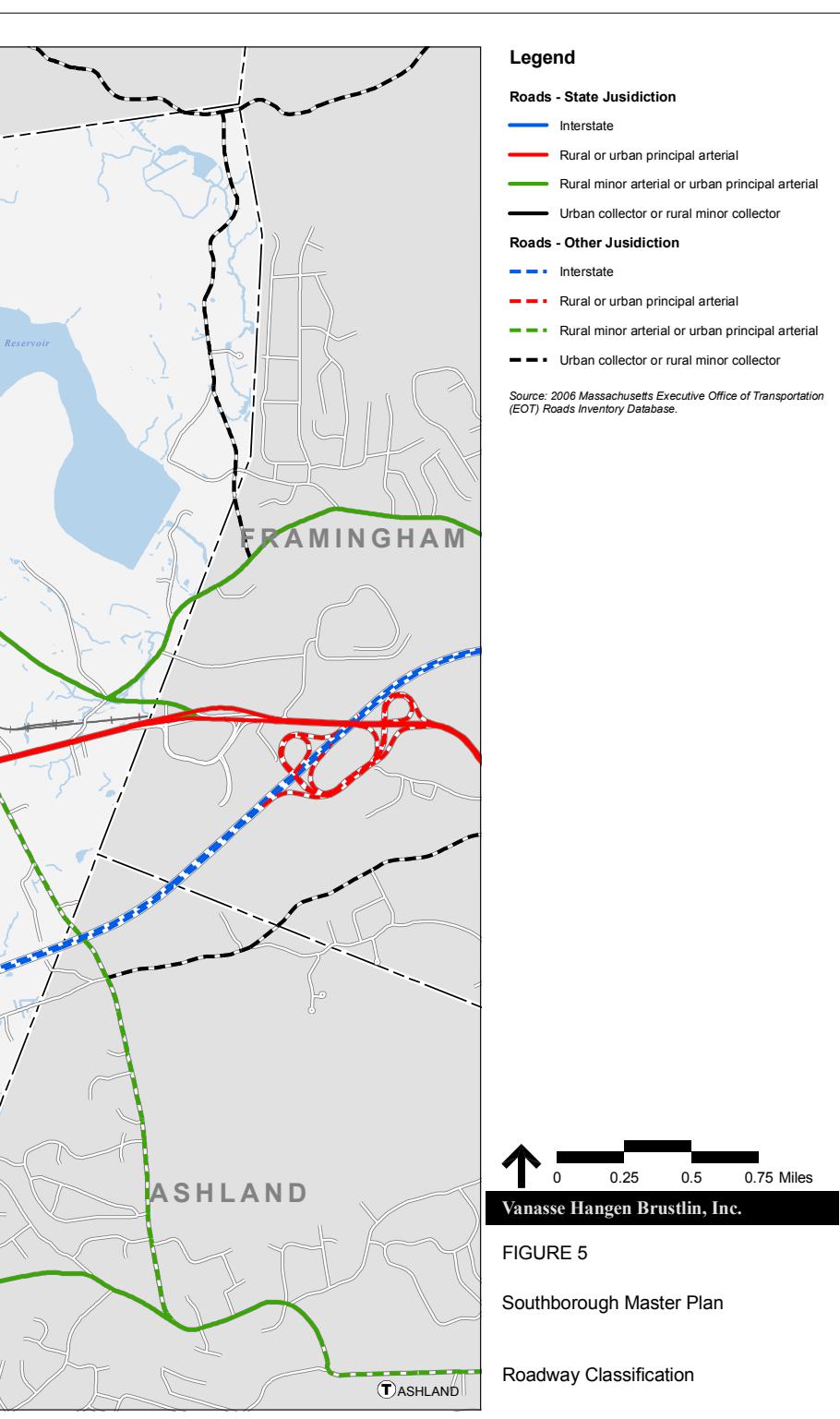
**Table 7-2**  
**2000 Census Journey-to-Work Data for Southborough Employees**

Location of Employment	Percent of Population Employed in Southborough
Southborough	10%
Framingham	8%
Worcester	7%
Marlborough	5%
Westborough	4%
Shrewsbury	3%
Northborough	3%
Hudson	3%
Milford	3%
Grafton	2%
Hopkinton	2%
Boston	2%
Northbridge	2%
Clinton	2%
Franklin	2%
Natick	1%
Ashland	1%
Uxbridge	1%
Holden	1%
Other †	38%

Source: US Census, 2000, Census Transportation Planning Package, Part 2, 2003.

Notes: † Other Towns and cities not listed comprise less than one percent each of residence locations of Southborough employees.





**Figure 5**  
Roadway Classification

It should be noted that the Southborough MBTA commuter rail station opened after the 2000 Census data was compiled. Therefore, this does not consider the influence of that station on commuting trends and is reflected in the lower percentage of transit trips by Southborough residents compared to other residents in the region. While no hard data exists, it seems reasonable to suggest that there has been a shift to a higher number of residents commuting via the rail option than is reported in Table 7-3 (which illustrates the 2000 data for Southborough and the region).

#### Vehicular Traffic Volumes

Historical traffic data provides an indication to the rate of traffic growth in and through Southborough.<sup>8</sup> Table 7-4 summarizes the growth on various roadways throughout Southborough (for which traffic volume data was available) over the past 8-10 years based on information provided by MassHighway.

Not surprisingly, there has been a significant amount of growth on the local roadway networks in the community while the major state routes (Route 9 and Route 30) have seen little or negative growth over this same time period. This could be an indication that the major roadways are reaching their capacity to carry vehicular traffic and that drivers are seeking alternative routes—on the local street system—in and around Southborough.

#### Public Transportation

There are three primary sources of public

transportation in Southborough, as described below:

#### *LIFT*

Since 1984, Framingham has administered the LIFT Public Transit System. The LIFT has provided service to residents, commuters, and visitors in the MetroWest area, connecting Framingham, Ashland, Holliston, Hopkinton, Milford, Marlborough, Southborough and Natick. In 2005, the LIFT provided over 180,000 rides.<sup>9</sup>

In Southborough, the LIFT 7 route runs along Route 9/Breakneck Hill Road/Route 30/Route 85 between Marlborough and Framingham. The LIFT service also connects to the MBTA Commuter Rail station in downtown Framingham. LIFT service in Southborough runs from 6:57 AM to 7:05 PM on weekdays, with approximate one-hour headways.

#### *MBTA Commuter Rail*

The Southborough station of the MBTA Commuter Rail opened in June 2002. The station is located in the southwest corner of the Route 85/Southville Road intersection, near the Town border with Hopkinton. The parking lot contains 364 parking spaces, of which 8 are handicapped-accessible.<sup>10</sup> Bicycle parking is not provided. Parking costs \$2.00 per space per day. Field observations confirm that the parking area for this station is frequently at or near capacity, which is indicative of the Commuter Rail's importance to Southborough's transit network. A schedule summary is provided in Table 7-5.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/default.asp?pgid=content/traffic01&sid=about>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.framinghamma.org/planning\\_dept/lift\\_main.htm](http://www.framinghamma.org/planning_dept/lift_main.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.mbta.com/schedules\\_and\\_maps/rail/lines/stations/?stopid=24151](http://www.mbta.com/schedules_and_maps/rail/lines/stations/?stopid=24151)

**Table 7-3**  
**Southborough and Regional Resident Mode Split**

Mode	Southborough Percent	Regional Percent
Single-Occupant Automobile	86%	81%
Multiple-Occupant Automobile	6%	9%
Bus	1%	1%
Rail	1%	2%
Walk	1%	2%
Work at Home	5%	4%
Other †	0%	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: US Census, 2000, Census Transportation Planning Package, Part 3 – CT, MA, RI, May 2004.

Notes: † Other modes of transportation not listed comprise less than one percent of trips by Southborough residents.

**Table 7-4**  
**Traffic Growth on Select Roadways in Southborough**

Route	Count Date		Average Annual Traffic Volume		Annualized Growth Rate (average % growth/year)
	First Year	Last Year	First Year	Last Year	
Break Neck Hill Road, south of Route 9	1996	2005	1,600	3,200	8.0%
Flagg Road, north of Route 9	1996	2005	890	1,400	5.2%
Pine Hill Road at Framingham Town Line	1996	2005	3,000	3,700	2.4%
White Bagley Road, north of Route 9	1996	2005	3,200	2,900	-1.1%
Route 9, west of Woodland Road	1998	2004	48,700	49,100	0.1%
Route 30, west of Valley Road	1997	2003	21,000	16,400	-4.0%
Woodland Road, south of Route 9	1997	2003	3,300	4,200	4.1%

Source: MassHighway traffic count data

The Southborough station has experienced fluctuating daily boarding volumes in the past several years. In February 2003, 2004, and 2005, the station experienced an average daily boarding of 541, 501, and 526 daily inbound boardings during a typical weekday.<sup>11</sup>

#### *The Local Connection*

The Local Connection (TLC) is a curb-to-curb, demand-response transit service that is operated by the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA). Until June 2008, TLC provided local transportation for residents of Marlborough and Southborough, as well as commuters, with direct service to and from their destinations within both communities. The TLC essentially complemented the LIFT 7 bus service and the MBTA commuter rail service. TLC is funded by the Boston Region MPO, the City of Marlborough, and until recently, the Town of Southborough. Statistics for the TLC show significant increases in the number of completed trips since service began. On average, approximately 218 trips per month were completed during the first six months of service (March-August 2005). During the most recent six months of service (December 2006 – May 2007), the service ran an average of approximately 1,258 trips per month. This represents near a six-fold increase in completed trips over the first six months of service and demonstrates the success of the service and the latent demand for these types of services in communities such as Southborough.

Southborough is a member of the MetroWest/495 Transportation Management Association (TMA) which serves the needs of commuters in the MetroWest area. The TMA aims to

relieve traffic congestion through demand management and trip reduction programs; expand employee commuting options; serve as an advocate for the private sector in local transportation planning and investment decisions; and represent the transportation needs of the business community at the state level.<sup>12</sup> The TMA currently runs several programs, including Ridematching for carpools and vanpools, the Guaranteed Ride Home Program, and on-site promotional events for its members' employees. Currently, the EMC Southborough Campus is the only employer in Southborough that is a member of the local TMA.

#### *MetroWest RTA*



Legislation enacted in 1999 and reformed in June 2006 permitted the formation of 14 different Regional Transit Authorities (RTA), independent of the MBTA. Communities that were not an existing member of an RTA could now join an existing or create a new authority. As a result of this new legislation, the Town of Framingham formed a new RTA in MetroWest in December 2006. The Town of Ashland and Town of Holliston joined this RTA in January and March 2007, respectively. Other communities in the region are currently exploring the options now available to them as a result of the MetroWest RTA. As of May 1, 2008, Framingham, Ashland, Holliston, Hopkinton, Natick, Sherborn, Sudbury, Weston, Marlborough, Southborough, and Wayland have joined the MetroWest RTA.

11 MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics ['The Blue Book'], Tenth Edition, Revised 2006

12 <http://www.masscommute.com/tmas/metrow/>

<b>Table 7-5</b> <b>MBTA Commuter Rail Schedule Summary</b>			
<b>From...</b>	<b>To...</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
Southborough	Boston	6:31 AM	8:05 PM
Boston	Southborough	7:34 AM	11:01 PM
Southborough	Worcester	7:34 AM	11:01 PM
Worcester	Southborough	6:06 AM	11:40 PM

Source: [http://www.mbta.com/uploadedFiles/Documents/Schedules\\_and\\_Maps/Commuter\\_Rail/worcester\\_web.pdf](http://www.mbta.com/uploadedFiles/Documents/Schedules_and_Maps/Commuter_Rail/worcester_web.pdf)

The new MetroWest RTA will provide its member communities with the opportunity to offer residents a valuable public transportation system that meets specific service needs of the region. Additionally, communities will be armed with improved methods of promoting public transportation opportunities. As part of its new range of services, the MetroWest RTA will absorb the LIFT bus service, the TLC, other local bus services, and taxi services available for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, thereby providing expanded mass transit service for Southborough residents.

The Town of Southborough voted overwhelmingly to join the MetroWest RTA in the Spring of 2008. As a result, the Town will have opportunities to increase its access to mass transit. The MetroWest RTA offers Southborough a way to have one coordinated, cohesive transportation system that can provide increased levels of service and improved marketing opportunities. With each community in an RTA represented on the RTA Board, a collaborative approach to regional transportation planning and provision of services can be undertaken. The communities of 495/MetroWest now have more resources available to them so they can develop a system of successful public

transportation services based on these criteria.

Services offered in Southborough via the MetroWest RTA include an expansion of its TLC/paratransit/ADA transit services. This door-to-door service, once only available within Marlborough and Southborough, will now be available to other zones of travel:

- ▶ Zone 1 (Central): Framingham & Natick
- ▶ Zone 2 (West): Marlborough & Southborough
- ▶ Zone 3 (South): Holliston, Hopkinton, Ashland & Sherborn
- ▶ Zone 4 (North): Sudbury, Wayland & Weston

This expanded TLC service will also allow transit users to travel to Boston, Wellesley, and Worcester for employment and medical appointments.

#### **Bicycles, Sidewalks, and Trails**

The Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) has completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement in Town Centers document, summarizing the key bicycle and pedestrian issues in six small town centers in the Boston



*The intersection of Main Street and Boston Road.* region (one of which is Southborough).<sup>13</sup> The study area includes:

- ▶ Main Street from Parkerville Road to Marlboro Road
- ▶ Main Street from Marlborough Road to Boston Road
- ▶ Marlborough Road from the Saint Mark's School West Campus entrance to Main Street
- ▶ Cordaville Road from Main Street to the Sudbury Reservoir Trail
- ▶ Common Street
- ▶ Saint Mark's Street
- ▶ Parkerville Road from Main Street to the Sudbury Reservoir Trail

The study generally concludes that the sidewalks in Southborough center are in need of repair. Two walking paths are available in Southborough (Woodward Memorial School to Main Street; Sudbury Reservoir Trail).

Crosswalks are present at some intersections in varying conditions (new, moderate, faded, or poor).

Most of the roadway edges have cracks and debris, potentially making for unsafe bicycling conditions. One five-space bicycle rack is provided in downtown Southborough. No bicycles were observed using it, suggesting improper location, low demand, or use of other facilities for securing bicycles.

The study recommends the construction of sidewalks at the following locations:

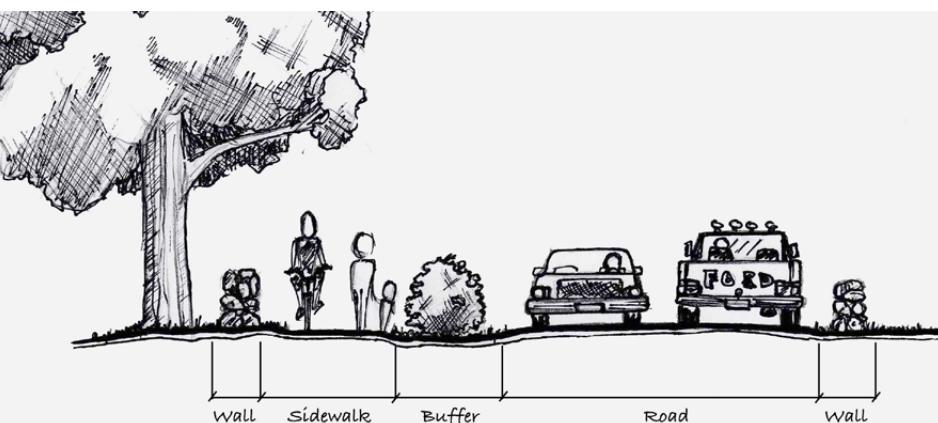
- ▶ along the east side of Marlborough Road from the Saint Mark's School West Campus driveway to Main Street
- ▶ along the west side of Cordaville Road from Southborough Cemetery to the Sudbury Reservoir Trail
- ▶ along the north side of School Road (the entrance to Woodward Memorial School)
- ▶ along Common Street from Pilgrim Congregational Episcopal Church to the Town hall

13 Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement in Town Centers, CPTS, May 2007



In addition, resurfacing several sections of sidewalk in disrepair is also recommended. Crosswalks at four locations (Southborough Cemetery driveway; police and fire station driveways; Town House driveway at Saint Mark's Street; and across Saint Mark's Street at Common Street) are recommended as well. The pedestrian signal at the intersection of Main Street and Marlborough/Cordaville Road is recommended. Finally, the installation of bicycle racks at several locations is recommended (Town House, Woodward Memorial School, access points to Sudbury Reservoir Trail).

*A typical section with buffered sidewalks.*

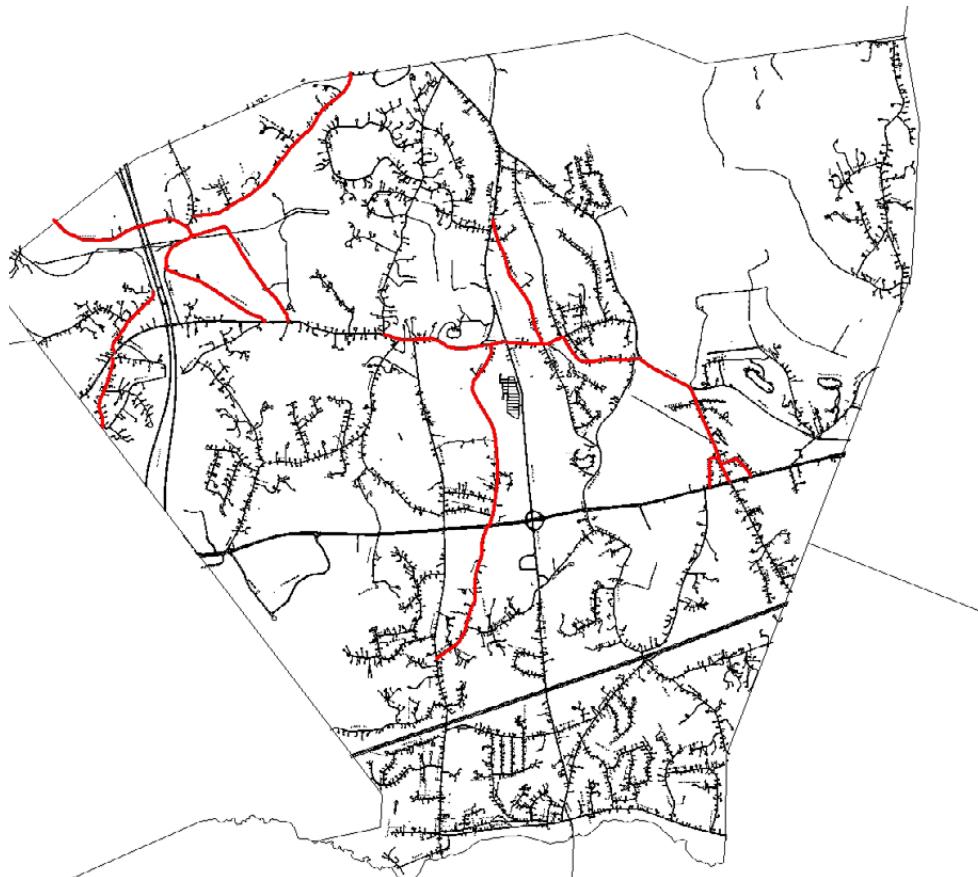


The Bay Circuit Trail, a long-distance trail system currently under development, runs through the northeastern edge of Southborough along the Sudbury Reservoir. A complete discussion of this trail is provided in Chapter 5, Open Space and Recreation, of this document.

#### *Complete Streets*

Taken a step further, the Town should consider adoption of a Complete Streets policy. Given the fact that bicycle and pedestrian safety and access has achieved a heightened level of significance in recent years, it is important to accommodate these modes within the overall context of our transportation system. Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street. Moreover, this provides public health benefits as well, which has received greater attention in the planning community.

Complete Streets improve mobility for mass transit and the individuals that rely on it to get around.



**Town of Southborough  
Existing Commercial Truck  
Exclusions  
as of**

**July 2, 2007**

**Legend**

**Existing Truck  
Exclusion**



2,500 1,250 0 2,500 Feet  
1 inch equals 2,500 feet

This map was created by the Southborough Department of Public Works. The information is provided as a reasonably accurate point of reference, but is not intended to represent authoritative location, and is not to be used for conveyances. The Town of Southborough shall not be held responsible for the accuracy or misuse of these data.

*Existing truck restrictions* Simply put, if one can easily access transit stops, in Southborough, they are more likely to use the system.

A good complete streets policy:

- ▶ Specifies that “all users” includes pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users, and motorists, of all ages and abilities.
- ▶ Aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network.
- ▶ Recognizes the need for flexibility: that all streets are different and user needs will be balanced.

- ▶ Applies to all projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way.
- ▶ Directs the use of the latest and best design standards.
- ▶ Includes raised median strips for pedestrians, better location for bus stops, traffic calming measures, and access for disabled travelers.
- ▶ Directs that complete streets solutions fit in with context of the community. Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.completestreets.org/policies.html> and <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/design.htm#d4>

## What are Peak Hours?

Peak hours are defined as the hours of the day when the highest volumes of vehicular, pedestrian, and/or bicycle are typically encountered on a roadway.

Typically, a roadway experiences its peak hours during the times of day when commuters are traveling to and from work/home in the morning and evening.

Thus, a Complete Streets policy links site plan design with the design of streets and streetscape improvements.

### **Parking Lots and Park & Ride Facilities**

Other methods to reduce single-occupant automobile use include the provision of parking lots to promote impromptu carpooling/vanpooling (“carpooling”) as well as park & ride lots for more formalized carpooling. The TMA supports carpooling and vanpooling by providing a Guaranteed Ride Home Program. This ensures that if any emergencies arise, the individual will be able to get a taxi or rental car at no personal cost.

In a previous CTPS study the key elements of locating a park & ride lot were determined.<sup>15</sup> It was concluded that the best-case scenario would be a parking lot within 0.25 mile of a highway (or another roadway with high traffic volumes); served by five to ten morning peak-period, weekday bus trips to Boston (or another major employment center); and not located in a community with commuter rail service. A parking lot can still be successful if the lot at the commuter rail station fills to capacity very early and extra capacity cannot be added.

A more thorough analysis would need to look at origin and destination data in more detail (e.g., if the majority of users are not going to Boston or the locations served on the commuter rail) to ascertain whether there are certain locations that might warrant a park & ride lot. Next steps include determining physical locations suitable for park & ride lots. Potential users of park & ride lots also would need to be aware of the locations of the lots and methods to identify/contact other potential users. Information on these services is available through the TMAs and through the statewide MassRides Program. The study concluded that I-495 interchanges 19, 20, and 21 in Milford and Hopkinton warrant further analysis for park & ride facilities. If park & ride lots are contemplated for other locations in the area that could potentially have shuttle bus service to the Southborough Commuter Rail station, this should be considered when evaluating the adequacy of the Southborough Commuter Rail station site driveway's operations. It should be noted that the nearest park & ride facility is just over the Framingham town line near I-90 Exit 12; this lot has been observed to be moderately used despite the fact that it can only be readily accessed from the eastbound direction of Route 9.

### **Identification of Congested Transportation Facilities**

As can be expected, the major transportation facilities in Southborough experience greater traffic volumes, particularly during commuter, school, and shopping peak periods as compared to the more local roadways. Accordingly, the intersections of these major roadways are often congested as drivers are commuting between their homes and employment/shopping opportunities during the peak hours.

15 I-495 Transit Study: Task Force Draft (CTPS) March 23, 2007

As a general observation, the Route 9 corridor is congested almost entirely along its corridor through Southborough during both the weekday morning and evening peak commuter hours. It is not uncommon for drivers to take up to 4-6 signal cycles to travel through some of the traffic signals along this corridor. Along with the congestion on Route 9, many of the side streets feeding into and away from the Route 9 corridor are seeing increased volume and congestion – particularly during the peak commuter hours. Additionally, Route 85 near the Town Center and Route 30 from Parkerville Road to Willow Street during the morning peak hour have been cited as areas of congestion.

As development takes place in and around Southborough—and traffic volumes increase—it is likely that many of these existing conditions will worsen without improvements to the Town's and state's infrastructure. Later in this chapter, specific recommendations, strategies, and goals are provided to address many of the existing and future transportation issues identified at both the outreach meetings and through observations.

#### Truck Traffic

Through the local outreach meetings conducted as part of the Master Plan efforts, a specific concern raised focused on the ability to control heavy vehicle (truck) traffic throughout Southborough. The Town has recently completed an extensive inventory of existing commercial truck exclusions and results indicate that the following roadways have restrictions in place:

- ▶ Central Street
- ▶ Boston Road

- ▶ Cherry Street
- ▶ Chestnut Hill Road
- ▶ Fisher Road
- ▶ High Street
- ▶ Main Street (from East Main St to Sears Rd)
- ▶ Middle Road
- ▶ Northborough Road
- ▶ Pleasant Street
- ▶ School Street
- ▶ Ward Road
- ▶ Winter Street

It should be noted that per M. G. L. c. 85 § 2, trucks cannot be banned from state highways.<sup>16</sup> Should a municipality wish to ban trucks from state highways and roadways, the governing board of the Town (in this case, the Board of Selectmen) must conduct an independent, professional traffic study to determine the amount and type of truck traffic and associated problems. MassHighway will then analyze the results. If a truck ban is indeed recommended, MassHighway will provide alternative truck routes. The Board of Selectmen and MassHighway then need to approve these specific regulations before they take effect. In summary, an individual or group cannot request the Board of Selectmen to implement a truck ban on any state highway or roadway.

#### Future Conditions

Once the existing conditions snapshot has been described, the next step in the planning process

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/85-2.htm>

is to identify growth trends in the area (see the Population and Demographic Profile in Chapter 3, Housing). These trends are often based on previous traffic volume patterns (as described in Table 7-4), past and forecasted population growth, and major development projects. Other future events are discussed as well.

### **Planned Major Private Developments**

Five major private developments are in various stages of planning/permitting within Southborough and on the outskirts of the community that have the potential to have a significant impact to traffic conditions on the Town's roadways. These projects are described below.

#### *Avalon Southborough*

A proposed 200-unit comprehensive permit development that is located on the eastbound side of Route 9 near Crystal Pond Road. Site eligibility was received in October 2007.

#### *EMC Southborough/Westborough Campus Expansion*

The project involves expansion of the existing EMC campus located in the southeast corner of the I-495/Route 9 interchange. Located on two parcels totaling 445 acres in Southborough and Westborough, the project consists of the construction of approximately 2.2 million square feet of new and renovated research and development and office space and 8,570 parking spaces. The expansion is projected to generate approximately 15,491 daily vehicle trips. At this time, the proponent is proposing traffic mitigation for project impacts that include roadway and intersection improvements, traffic signal timing modifications, and grade separation of the Route 9 at Crystal Pond Road intersection.

Further, the proponent has proposed a new roadway connecting the two site parcels.

#### *The 9/90 Center and the Framingham Technology Park (in Framingham)*

Located just over the Southborough border in Framingham, these two developments have additional development rights associated with them that could be built out over time. Given their proximity to the Town of Southborough, any additional development or expansion of the corporations within these centers will draw additional traffic through the Route 9 corridor as well as along Route 30 corridor and the many side streets that serve these roadways.

#### *Legacy Farms (in Hopkinton)*

Located off of Route 85 in Hopkinton, the Legacy Farms development (the redevelopment of the former Weston Nurseries) has the potential to add up to 940 new residential units and 450,000 square feet of commercial space adjacent to the Town of Southborough with regional access being provided along both Route 85 and Route 9 through Southborough. As this project advances, it will introduce new commuters along Southborough's main arterial corridors (Route 85 and Route 9) as well as the Southborough MBTA Commuter Rail station.

#### *Westborough Technology Park (in Westborough)*

Located at the Route 9/I-495 interchange in Westborough, there is approximately 1 million square feet of potential commercial space waiting to be developed – along with vacancies among many of the buildings that currently exist along the Computer Drive/Research Drive area. Located adjacent to the Town of Southborough to the West, this development could draw traffic along both Route 9 and local roadways feeding into the campus.

# Transportation, Transit, and Circulation Goals

## T-1

Create a long-term conscientious vision for traffic mitigation while managing traffic and land uses to avoid congestion.

### T-1.1

Expand relationships with adjacent Towns to manage traffic and environmental impacts on a regional and state scale.

### T-1.2

Consider traffic calming measures, where applicable.

### T-1.3

Work cooperatively with MA Highway Department on Route 9 improvements.

### T-1.4

Minimize the impact of new development with creative transportation strategies.

## T-2

Increase public transportation and other non-automobile transportation options on a local, regional and state-wide basis.

### T-2.1

Create more sidewalks and bicycle-safe routes.

## T-3

Consider improvements to roads in Town.

# Transportation, Transit, and Circulation Recommendations

To meet the needs of the growing Southborough population and related transportation demand, the Town should establish strategies toward addressing the future issues, problems, and opportunities. Below are many suggestions made during the Master Plan outreach meetings along with several additional items worth considering based upon the data collection and findings of the planning process.

- ▶ Goal 1: Create a long-term conscientious vision for traffic mitigation while managing traffic and land uses to avoid congestion.
  - Expand relationships with adjacent Towns to manage traffic and environmental impacts on a regional and state scale.
  - Consider traffic calming measures, where applicable.
  - Work cooperatively with MA Highway Department on Route 9 improvements.
  - Minimize the impact of new development with creative transportation strategies.
- ▶ T-1: Seek reasonable and clear mitigation commitments from development projects on Town-owned roadways, tying appropriate increases in transportation demand to an appropriate amount of improvement funding.
  - Understand better the impact of development projects in Southborough and surrounding communities' development plans
  - Along with typical project review, establish tiers of development, assigning an appropriate level of scrutiny for the review of the transportation components and require an analysis of potential mitigation measures to address identified impacts
  - Participate actively in the MetroWest Growth Management Committee to weigh in on area Master Plans, development agendas, etc.
- ▶ T-2: Continue advocacy for and participation in a MassHighway study of the Rt. 9 corridor.
- ▶ T-3: In order to improve the problem of the north-south divide created by Rt. 9, consider an at-grade intersection or flyover at Parkerville Road and Rt. 9.
- ▶ Goal 2: Increase public transportation and other non-automobile transportation options on a local, regional and statewide basis.

# Transportation, Transit, and Circulation Recommendations

- Create more sidewalks and bicycle-safe routes.
- ▷ T-4: Work with the MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority and continue involvement with the MBTA to actively work to expand public transportation services in Southborough and adjacent communities.
  - Enhance non-vehicular transportation opportunities
  - Expand the public transportation services in Southborough and the adjacent communities by helping to “shape the face” of the MetroWest RTA through active participation.
- ▷ T-5: Encourage the MBTA to provide more parking at or near commuter rail station and work with neighboring communities to identify potential park and ride lots and identify opportunities for transit-oriented development.
  - Accommodate demand for parking at Southborough Commuter Rail Station
  - Augment attractiveness of commuter parking at Southborough Commuter Rail station by providing more parking spaces at station. A review of peak period traffic operations at site drive access will help to ascertain demand and congestion at the parking lot.
  - Provide more parking options for commuters by considering more park and ride lots in Southborough. Moreover, the Town should collaborate with adjacent Towns to identify park and ride lots to lessen the burden on the Southborough Commuter Rail lot.
- ▷ T-6: Establish a sidewalk, pedestrian, and bicycling committee to facilitate better opportunities and improvements.
- ▷ T-7: Provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access by repairing and constructing new sidewalks; maintaining crosswalks; and providing bicycle lanes, paths, and parking (prepare sidewalk master plan and implement Central Transportation Planning Staff report).
- Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle environments
- Implement Central Transportation Planning Staff May 2007 report and fix existing sidewalk network and crosswalks. Enhance future network by adding sidewalks as recommended.
- Reach out to area workplaces and seek inclusion of or increase in shower and locker facilities to promote walking and bicycling to work
- Require landscape buffering between roadways and major economic development
- ▷ T-8: Establish and implement streetscape improvements for larger new development projects.
- ▷ T-9: Look for ways to increase street connectivity by creating through roadways instead of cul-de-sacs where feasible.
  - Provide multiple access points to new developments to prevent extensive, branched street networks
  - Permit emergency vehicle access; promote circulation and flow; promote ‘neighborhood’ concept to reduce short; circuitous trips
- ▷ T-10: Require large developments to implement transportation demand management strategies designed to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

- ▶ Goal 3: Consider improvements to roads in Town.
- ▶ T-11: Begin analysis and planning for addressing vehicular mobility, road conditions, and intersection improvements described below.
  - Maintain or enhance vehicular mobility in Town
  - Identify intersections and corridors that are generally unsafe, congested, or in poor condition and develop both short and long term actions to address these locations.
  - Identify locations that are in fair condition and prepare a Town-wide plan for preventing them from slipping into poor conditions or from deteriorating to a point beyond repair.
  - Conduct traffic observations/counts at key roadways within the community every two years to identify where demands are increasing/decreasing.
  - Solutions, such as traffic signal re-timing and lane re-designation will address issues in the near-term only. Mid- to long-term solutions will likely require significant design, funding, and right-of-way. The conceptual component of this should start prior to the locations worsening.
  - Look for ways to reduce the number of curb cuts as a way to promote better vehicular circulation.

### Specific Intersections

The following locations should be kept in mind as development continues and population grows in Southborough, thus causing traffic volumes to increase. Many of these locations were discussed at the local outreach meetings and warranted specific discussion in the Master Plan.

- ▶ Route 30 at Route 85 – High volumes, frequently patronized land uses, and tight intersection geometry often lead to congestion issues at this location. Due to the number of vehicles requiring large turning radii that use this intersection (including trucks), a review of stop line locations on all approaches is necessary. Intersection improvements at this location were discussed at a recent Town meeting. The Town has prepared design plans to upgrade this intersection and identified that it will require the acquisition of right-of-way for additional and widened lanes. Furthermore, the intersection will require the addition of new traffic signal equipment, the revision of pavement markings, and an upgrade to the pedestrian/bicycle environment. As noted previously, MassHighway Department's Project Review Committee recently approved Southborough's Main Street project proposal (based on the Project Need Form and the Project Initiation Form that were previously submitted) which included this intersection. This approval means that the Main Street project is now fully eligible to be listed on the State TIP by the Boston Region MPO. Additional steps will be needed to obtain funding for these improvements including the preparation of design documents, cost estimates, and other engineering efforts along with review of the plans with the community as a whole.
- ▶ Route 9 at Route 85 – This 'mini-clover leaf' interchange is one location to reverse direction along Route 9; as such, the intersection carries significant traffic volumes. With high speeds on Route 9 transitioning to a lower-speed facility (Route 85) through tight interchange radii, this location is often perceived as dangerous. Future considerations at this location should include the feasibility of

# Transportation, Transit, and Circulation Recommendations

revising the entire geometry of the intersection to better accommodate the volumes and speeds of existing and future traffic.

- ▶ Route 9 at Parkerville Road (N and S) – At a recent visioning session, it was suggested that improvements to the Route 9/Parkerville Road intersections be considered. The ability to connect the northern and southern portions of Southborough—which is acknowledged as being essentially divided by the Route 9 corridor—was important to the community. With the exception of the Route 85 overpass, there are no grade separated connections bringing the northern and southern sections of Southborough together. To address this, one such suggestion included creating an overpass that provided full north/south connectivity between Parkerville Road across Route 9, with no ramp connections to Route 9 itself. Another suggestion included constructing an at grade intersection. While there are both benefits and drawbacks associated with these proposals that would need to be studied in much greater detail, the essence of this proposal highlights the desire to make this connection. It should be noted that, unlike other potential north/south connection areas, the area surrounding this intersection does not have many abutters, aside from residents of Parkerville Road.
- ▶ Route 85 at Southville Road – This intersection generally operates well during the typical commuter peak periods. However, observations of the location should be conducted to monitor the current traffic volumes traveling through this location during the morning peak hour specifically. Moreover, with the potential construction of additional park & ride lots, additional traffic to the Southborough Commuter Rail station, and the future development-related traffic potentially occurring in Hopkinton – the Town should be cognizant of and plan for the amount of additional traffic that could use this intersection. In the short term, the Town may consider reviewing the signal timings at this location. Extension of the northbound phase would prevent potential vehicular

queuing that could extend past the access/egress to the Southborough Commuter Rail station parking lot.

- ▶ Route 9 at Oak Hill Road/Central Street – This signalized intersection on Route 9 connects Route 30 to easterly Southborough and Ashland. It is often perceived as one of the major Route 9 east/west mobility barriers due to peak period congestion. Future improvements could include review and revision of traffic signal timing, phasing, and vehicular detection.

## **Conclusion**

The Transportation, Transit, and Circulation Element presented an overview of Southborough as it relates to the region and discussed the influences of other municipalities and agencies on Southborough. Abutting community Master Plans were discussed and how they might potentially impact Southborough. Roadway jurisdiction, traffic volumes, and public transportation were reviewed. Following that pedestrian pathways and their condition were reviewed, as well as park & ride lots.

The snapshot of Southborough, a discussion of existing transportation deficiencies was presented. Future growth was reviewed and the potential impact it may have on transportation was briefly discussed.

The above components helped shape the strategies, goals, and objectives for the Transportation, Transit, and Circulation element of Southborough's Master Plan. The plan recommends that the Town focus on three main strategies: enhancing non-vehicular transportation opportunities; maintaining or enhancing vehicular mobility in Town; and controlling or regulating the amount of new traffic added to the Town roads. Specific goals and objectives to achieve this were presented.

Moving forward, Southborough should implement these strategies and periodically review the goals and objectives, ensuring that they match the overall Town's vision.



SOUTHBOROUGH  
1727  
TOWN HOUSE

# 8. Municipal Facilities and Services



**A Town's ability to provide adequate facilities depends on effective capital planning and a commitment to implementation, asset management policies, and the amount of revenue available for local government operations.**

## Introduction

The municipal facilities element of a master plan should guide decisions about the public buildings, utilities and infrastructure a local government will need in order to meet future needs. Community facilities make it possible for municipal employees and volunteers to provide services for the public good. The adequacy of municipal and school facilities for the functions they serve is largely determined by three factors:

- ▶ The form, size and organization of the community's local government;
- ▶ The community's land use pattern; and
- ▶ The expectations of the community's population.

A town's ability to provide adequate facilities depends on effective capital planning and a commitment to implementation, asset management policies, and the amount of revenue available for local government operations. As an affluent suburb, Southborough receives very little funding from non-local sources and relies almost entirely on its own residents and businesses for financial support. Although it has

*The Southborough Town House.*

Photo courtesy of Southborough Planning Board.

## What is a Municipal Facility?

A municipal facility is any municipal property that has been improved for public purposes, such as a Town hall, library, fire station or school.

It also includes municipal utilities such as water or sewer service, and parks, playgrounds and cemeteries.

basic core facilities for local services, Southborough's facilities are quite old, some are obsolete, and most are hard-pressed to accommodate the personnel, equipment, technology and records storage that government organizations need in order to run efficiently. Southborough also has under-staffed departments, notably public safety, yet it has been difficult for the Town to balance demands for excellent schools with its other municipal needs.

Southborough seems to be conflicted about its community service priorities. Like residents of other affluent towns, Southborough voters have traditionally supported their public schools and worked hard to assure that children receive an



*The present Town House was built in 1871 to replace an earlier building destroyed in a fire.*

Photo courtesy of the Southborough Historical Society

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, not only parents and children, but also any residents participating in Town meeting or other community activities that take place inside school facilities. In contrast, few people ever venture inside a police station and for the most part, the same can be said for fire stations. Residents may go to Town hall to pay a tax bill, purchase a dog license, or obtain a copy of a birth certificate, but except for the most motivated citizens who routinely attend night meetings of Town boards, a small percentage of a community's population spends much time in government office buildings. This fact of life for most towns makes it hard to build a constituency for high-quality municipal facilities and often causes both ordinary maintenance and capital improvements to be deferred for many years.

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 capital improvements. Although Southborough has a capital budget, the process for developing it does not appear to be integrated very well with the Town's overall financial planning framework. In addition, Southborough has commissioned facility studies, yet these studies were not conducted under the umbrella of a transparent, well-understood capital planning process. Today, Southborough has major municipal facility needs, a fragmented commitment to addressing them, and very little room to absorb additional debt service.

## Existing Conditions

### Municipal Services

The municipal services that Southborough provides are fairly typical of Massachusetts towns. Like most communities, Southborough does more for its population than it is required to do by law. To residents and businesses in just about every city or town, many local government services qualify as "essential" regardless of whether the state mandates them. 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 the towns that provide these services often consider them an indispensable part of what it means to be a community.

### Municipal Facilities

Southborough's government operates from ten buildings, most located in the Town's historic population nodes: the Town center and the villages of Cordaville, Southville and Fayville. Below is a description of the municipal facilities summarized in Table 8-2.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Town Hall*

The Southborough Town House on Common Street is situated in an enclave of civic and institutional buildings that define the center of Town. Built ca. 1870 in the Italianate style, the Town House serves as Southborough's principal government office building. Nine departments

<sup>1</sup> Community facility summaries are based on the following sources: Southborough Planning Department, Public Facility Inventories; The Cecil Group, Southborough Facilities Plan (2005); Southborough Municipal Facilities Committee, "Municipal Facilities Needs Assessment" (2004); Kaffee Kang Architects, Cordaville Hill Integrated Community Center (PowerPoint Presentation, undated); and FY 2007 property record cards from the Southborough Assessor's Office [online].

**Table 8-1**  
**Southborough's Municipal Services**

Administration & Finance	Public Safety	Public Works
Town Administrator	Police	Highway
Town Clerk	Fire/Emergency Medical	Water
Assessors	Animal Control	Cemetery
Town Accountant	Building Inspector	Tree Warden
Treasurer/Collector	Emergency Management	Transfer Station
Legal Services		Buildings & Grounds (Facilities)
Information Systems		
Personnel		
Land Use	Human Services	Culture & Recreation
Planning & Zoning	Public Health	Public Library
Conservation	Council on Aging	Recreation Department
Community Preservation	Family & Youth Services	Historical Commission
Affordable Housing	Veterans Agent	Celebrations
	Housing Authority †	

Source: Southborough FY07 Operating Budget, EEO Employment Report, Municipal Facilities Study Committee, Municipal Facilities Needs Assessment (2004).  
Notes: † The Housing Authority provides housing assistance services, but technically it is not a department of the Town.

with a combined total of 22 employees are located at the Town House, including the Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Town Accountant, Town Treasurer/Collector, Assessor, and the Town's permitting agencies: the Building Department, Planning Department, Conservation Commission and Board of Health. 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 nineteen offices and three meeting rooms, and a basement area used mainly for storage. There does not appear to be a conservation plan in place to reduce energy or water consumption, but the Town has instituted basic systems to encourage recycling. Southborough's Municipal Facilities Needs Assessment (2004) 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 combined space needs amount to approximately 3,000 sq. ft. Since the

Board of Health will be relocating to Cordaville Hall in 2008, Southborough expects to hire a space planner to evaluate options for reorganizing space in the Town House.

The Flagg School is located on the same site as the Town House. It is a small structure that provides limited museum space and some additional storage and office space for the Southborough Historical Society, which leases the building from the Town.

#### *Southborough Public Library*

The Southborough Public Library is a Colonial Revival style building constructed in 1911 and expanded in the late 1980s. It occupies a prominent location at the corner of Route 30 (Main Street) and Route 85 (Cordaville/ Marlborough Road) in the Town center. The library has eleven employees and an average of four on duty during normal business hours, and it is overseen by an elected board of library trustees. In addition to books and other materials in circulation and a reference collection, the library has a local history room with maps, photographs, books and various historical documents about the Town. Southborough's library is open six days per week during the year and on weekdays only during the summer.

The 1989 library expansion and renovations project included a complete upgrade of the building's heating, air conditioning, and wiring systems. The building's energy management system was most recently upgraded in 2006.

#### *Police Station*

The Southborough Police Station shares a 2.4± acre site with the Fire Department Headquarters on Main Street, just east of the intersection of Route 30 and Route 85. Originally designed for

use as a school, the building was renovated and converted to a police station in 1970-1971. The Police Department has thirty full- and part-time employees, including the chief, sergeants, patrol officers and dispatchers.

The Police Station is in poor condition. It has a number of structural, accessibility and safety problems, not the least of which are poor separation of booking space, prisoner cells and hallways and the absence of a functional fire suppression system. In 2007, Town meeting agreed to fund schematic design services for improvements to the Police Station, but the requisite Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion was disapproved at the Town election. There appears to be substantial agreement that Southborough needs an appropriate facility for the Police Department, but some disagreement about the best way to proceed. The Southborough Municipal Facilities Plan (2005) recommended a joint Public Safety Building to meet needs of the Police Department and Fire Department.

#### *Fire Station Headquarters*

Southborough has two fire stations, the Fire Department's Headquarters on Main Street and Station 2, located in Southville on Highland Street (see below). The Fire Department currently has twenty paid professional firefighters and twenty call firefighters providing fire protection, emergency medical and inspectional services. Built in 1977, the Headquarters building is staffed twenty-four hours a day. It is a two-story brick building with at-grade access to both floors and a three-bay garage that houses a majority of the Fire Department's equipment.

The Headquarters station is not adequate to meet the Fire Department's needs. It has significant space problems, both in terms of

**Table 8-2**  
**Southborough's Municipal Facilities**

Facility	Location	Functions	Acres	Year Built/ Renovated	GFA	Condition	Accessible
Town House	17 Common St.	Government Offices	2.0	1900/1978	8,872	Good	Yes
Library	25 Main St.	Library	1.7	1911/1989	5,262	Good	Yes
Police Station †	19 Main St.	Public Safety	2.3	1929/2007	9,484	Poor	No
Fire Station I †	21 Main St.	Headquarters	2.3	1927/2005	9,216	Poor	Yes
Fire Station II	2 Harrington St.	Substation		1953/2007	2,200	Fair	Yes
Arts Center	21 Highland St.	Recreation	3.0	1911	9,833	Good	Yes
Cordaville Hall	9 Cordaville Rd.	Senior Center	1.7	1914/1988	9,988	Fair	Yes
Fayville Hall	42 Central St.	Municipal	0.2	1912/2007	8,405	Fair	Yes
DPW Garage	147 Cordaville Rd.	Offices, Transfer Station	5.0	1969/2000	19,769	Good	Yes
Cemetery Building	Cordaville Rd.	Offices, Storage		1977	4,800	Fair	Yes
Facility	Heating Fuel	AC	Heating Costs	Electricity Costs	Parking Spaces	Employees on Site ‡	Security System
Town House	Gas	HVAC	\$6,500	\$23,000	53	22	None
Library	Gas	HVAC	\$9,800	\$15,300	37	4	Yes
Police Station	Oil	HVAC, Window Units		\$8,500	53	16	None
Fire Station I	Oil	HVAC	\$7,700	\$11,800	53	8	Inadequate
Fire Station II	Oil	Window Units	\$4,100	\$900	4	2	None
Arts Center	Oil	Window Units		\$4,700	39	6	None
Cordaville Hall	Oil	Window Units	\$8,900	\$6,000	55	10	None
Fayville Hall	Gas	Window Units	\$3,400	\$1,000	3	4	None
DPW Garage	Oil	Central Air	\$1,200	\$9,900	39	10	Yes
Cemetery Building	Oil	Window Units	\$4,100	\$1,400	3	3	None

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

Notes: † Police Station and Fire Station located on the same site.

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

space availability and configuration. Since it lacks garage space to store all of the department's equipment, some vehicles have to be kept outside. The oil burner is fairly new, but the air conditioning system works poorly and the wiring is more than thirty years old. There is no formal energy conservation plan for this building, but in the past few years, insulation was installed in the attic space, the main electrical system was updated, and some lighting improvements have been made.

#### *Fire Station 2*

The Town's other fire station, Station 2, is no longer used by the Fire Department except for limited equipment storage. The building is too small for modern fire suppression equipment and vehicles, and its location is not ideal for a fire substation serving the southern end of Town. Today, the Southborough Facilities Department uses Station 2 as a workshop and stores its equipment and supplies there. Southborough recently invested in new wiring and a new hot water heater for the building. Station 2 is a small, one-story facility with two bays, built in 1956 and renovated in 1983 and 2007.

#### *Arts Center*

The Arts Center is located on a three-acre lot at 21 Highland Street 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 Facilities Department, which is responsible for maintenance of municipal buildings and grounds. The building was renovated in 2004 so that it would be fully accessible to people with disabilities.

The Arts Center is frequently used for programs and activities, and occasionally used for public meetings. In addition to this building's recent renovations, the Town plans to upgrade the windows and doors, improve the heating system, and carry out other modernization work in 2008. Overall, the building is in good condition.

#### *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 doubles as a senior center run by the Council on Aging and public meeting space for Town boards and committees.

When Southborough purchased Cordaville Hall, the Town anticipated the possibility of demolishing and replacing a portion of the building and expanding it for use as a community center, including the Council on Aging, the Recreation Department and the Youth and Family Services Department. Toward these ends, Southborough retained an architect to analyze options for the property and recommend a preferred plan. However, the Town has not moved forward with the architect's proposal to construct a new 12,000 sq. ft. building on the site. The existing facility is in fair condition and it needs heating, air conditioning, and electrical system upgrades.

#### *Fayville Hall*

Fayville Village Hall was built in 1911 in the Colonial Revival style. It is currently used by the Town's Youth and Family Services Department and Cable Commission. The building's exten-

sive mold problems have been resolved and the building is currently undergoing additional cosmetic improvements. Although the Municipal Facilities Plan recommended demolishing Fayville Hall, Southborough has been reluctant to embrace this proposal. Many people in Southborough appreciate Fayville Hall because of its historical significance and setting within Fayville Village. In April 2006, Town meeting appropriated \$110,000 for modest repairs to the building. At the same Town meeting, voters agreed to demolish the adjacent Delarda house and create additional parking for users of Fayville Hall and the playground on the opposite side of the street. The Delarda house has been demolished, and the expected improvements that will include additional low-impact parking and landscaping will move forward in 2008.

According to the Municipal Facilities Plan consultant, a cost estimate prepared in 2001 called for \$2.7 million to renovate the building and bring it fully up to code. However, the Town believes that its current renovation plan for Fayville Hall will result in a fully functioning building for its departments and for the Fayville Village community.

#### *Public Works Facility*

The Southborough Public Works Department is responsible for highway, water, tree, cemetery and solid waste and recycling services. Its main facility at 147 Cordaville Road, 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 transfer station. The DPW employs twenty people and does not have enough space for offices, storage of vehicles, equipment and records, or parking. The Municipal Facilities

Needs Assessment and Facilities Plan identified an urgent need for a 4,000 sq. ft. covered salt storage facility and about 4,500 sq. ft. of additional building space for offices and records storage. The salt storage shed was completed in early 2008.

The Facilities Plan characterized the condition of the Transfer Station as fair to poor, mainly due to the conditions outlined above and also because the facility has many maintenance needs that have been deferred.

#### *Cemetery Building*

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

#### **Public Schools**

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 8-3, each of Southborough's primary schools houses two grades. Since Southborough does not assign children to schools on the basis of geographic districts, all children in the same grade attend the same school regardless of where they live.

Enrollments in prekindergarten through eighth grade have increased significantly in Southborough since the late 1980s, when public school enrollments began to grow throughout Eastern Massachusetts. Southborough's most conspicuous increase occurred ten years ago, for the number of children in kindergarten through grade five rose by nearly twelve percent in 1997 and by another eleven percent in 1998. A pattern of comparatively high rates of enrollment growth persisted until the 2003-2004 school year, when primary grade enrollments dropped slightly. Chart 8-1 shows that K-8 enrollments have stabilized in Southborough since 2003. A similar pattern of stable elementary school enrollments and slight declines in the school-age population have occurred in many Massachusetts suburbs during the same period.

Together, Northborough and Southborough send about 1,400 students to the Algonquin Regional High School, which is located in Northborough. While the regional high school's enrollments continue to climb, the annual rate of enrollment growth has softened somewhat. It appears that some extraordinarily large classes entered the Northborough and Southborough schools in the mid- to late-1990s and progressed through each Town's middle school, reaching Algonquin between 2003 and 2004. Meanwhile, household growth in Southborough has generated an increasingly large share of the region's enrollments each year. Today, approximately thirty-seven percent of Algonquin's students live in Southborough.

In addition to Algonquin Regional High School, Southborough's high school-age children have the option of attending the Assabet Valley Vocational-Technical School in

Marlborough. However, Southborough students make up a very small percentage of Assabet's total enrollment (about one percent). Southborough also participates in a regional special education collaborative that serves thirteen communities clustered around I-495. The Assabet Valley Collaborative, based in Marlborough, 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 relies on member school districts to provide space for regional special education programs, including its alternative middle school program located in Southborough.

Southborough has made a significant investment in improving and expanding the capacity of its school facilities. Townspeople approved Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusions to modernize, expand or build new schools in 1996, 1998 and 2001, including a new middle school and a new elementary school, substantial renovations and an addition to the Mary E. Finn School, improvements to the regional high school, and phased improvements at the Margaret Neary School. With these projects, it is not surprising to find that a large share of Southborough's annual operating budget is devoted to the schools. More than ninety percent of Southborough's annual debt service payments (principal and interest) are attributable to local school construction projects and Southborough's proportional share of improvements at Algonquin. In FY 2007, total school spending accounted for nearly seventy percent of the operating budget.<sup>2</sup>

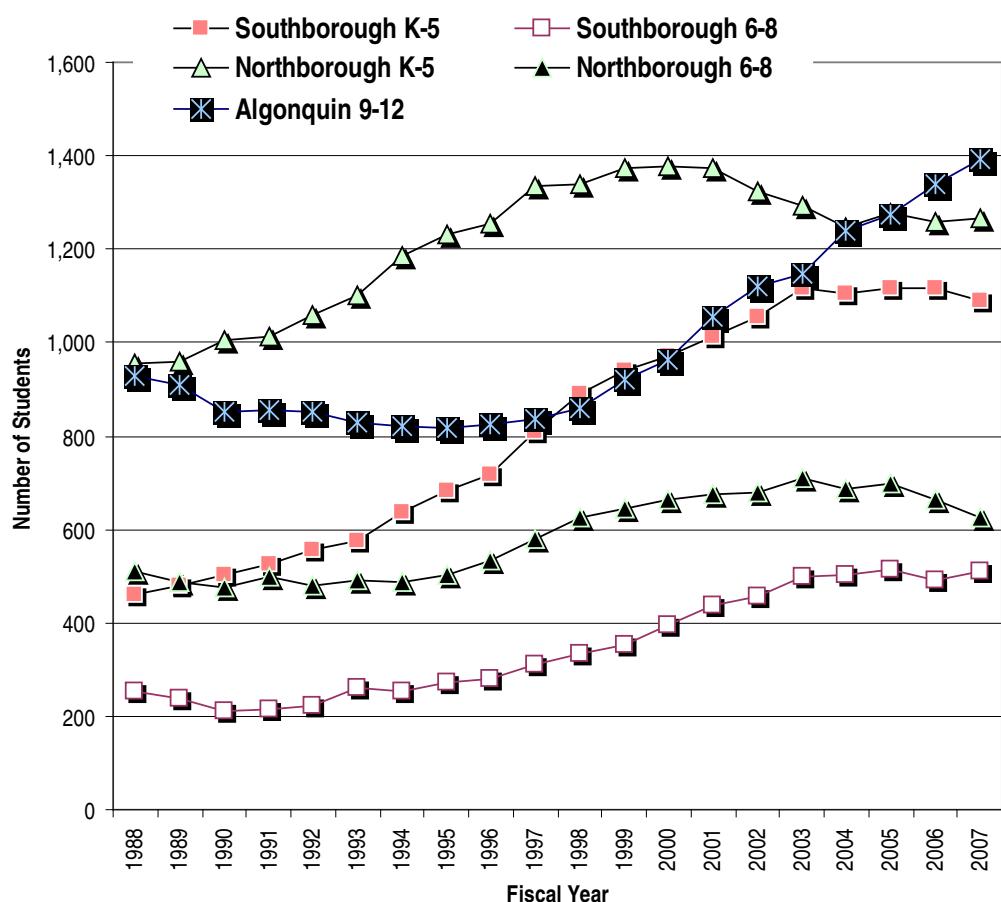
<sup>2</sup> Brian Ballantine, Treasurer-Collector, FY 2007 Operating Budget; by email to Vera Koliás, Town Planner, 2 February 2007.

**Table 8-3**  
**Southborough Public School Facilities**

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

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

**Chart 8-1**  
**K-12 School Enrollments, 1989-2007**



## Water Supply Challenges

Southborough has more than its share of main highways, railroads, large storage reservoirs and aqueducts crossing through the Town. It is difficult and costly to manage a complex water supply network like this.

Some of the problems include undersized pipes running under railroads, the Massachusetts Turnpike and Route 9, and crossing a water body and aqueduct. Because of their location, the pipes are costly to replace [and] it is difficult to obtain the permits required to install these new pipes. There are many dead ends in the system, and most of them are difficult to eliminate.

Source: Water Distribution System Study, 11.

### Public Water Supply

Although Southborough does not have a sewer system, public water service is available in eighty-five percent of Town.<sup>3</sup> The Southborough Public Works Department provides water to more than 3,000 residential, commercial and institutional customers. Residential uses account for approximately ninety-six percent of all water service connections and eighty percent of total annual water consumption. Southborough's other noteworthy source of water demand, commercial development, represents about three percent of all service connections and fifteen percent of total water consumption.<sup>4</sup>

Southborough purchases water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and delivers it to residents and businesses through an eighty-six mile network of water mains owned and maintained by the

<sup>3</sup> Town of Southborough, General Obligation Bond Prospectus, 16 November 2006, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Southborough Department of Public Works, Public Water Supply Annual Statistical Report (2006), 6.

Town. Water is withdrawn from the MWRA's new 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.

Although the two pumping stations combined can pump up to 2,000 gallons per minute (gpm), Southborough's contract with the MWRA provides for a maximum withdrawal rate of about 1,400 gpm, or two million gallons per day (gpd).<sup>5</sup>

In addition to water mains, Southborough's water distribution system includes three storage facilities with a total of two million gallons of storage capacity (but 1.2 million gallons of usable capacity): the Fiddlers Green Reservoir in the northwest part of Town, and the Clear Hill and Oak Hill Stand Pipes in the east part of Town. Storage facilities play a critical role in the overall performance of a water distribution system because they help to stabilize pressure, provide adequate water to extinguish fires, and supply backup water in the event of an emergency. Together, the pumping stations, water mains and storage facilities provide the essential infrastructure for domestic water service and fire flows (gallons per minute available for firefighting). According to a recent study prepared for the Public Works Department (H2O Engineering Associates, Water Distribution System Study Report, 2007), Southborough's water distribution system has a number of problems.

Southborough has experienced significant increases in water consumption since the early

<sup>5</sup> H2O Engineering Consultants, Inc., Water Distribution System Study Report (2007), 8-8. The 1,400 gpm maximum assumes both pumping stations operate continuously for 24 hours per day, i.e., a maximum allowed withdrawal of slightly more than 2 million gallons per day (gpd).

1990s. While increased water demand is a nearly inescapable outcome of new development, in Southborough the rate of growth in water consumption has exceeded the rate of household and population growth. In 1990, average water consumption in Southborough was about ninety-nine gallons per capita per day (gpcd), but by 2005, it had reached 120 gpcd. In 2006, it declined to 110 gpcd, mainly due to a cooler summer season.

Average-day demand is one of the commonly cited planning standards for water systems, but it has some limitations. It represents total annual consumption from all users divided by the total number of days in a year, without regard to seasonal fluctuations. Southborough's water system study reports that average-day demand more than doubled between 1988 and 2005, yet the Town's population increased by approximately forty-eight percent in the same period. The vast majority of growth in water consumption was attributable to residential users – or domestic demand – which makes sense given Southborough's predominantly residential land use pattern. However, the rate of growth in average-day demand reflects not only the prevalence of low-density housing development, but also the demographic characteristics of Southborough households and the amenities they expect. Landscaped yards served by irrigation systems, swimming pools, and a variety of water-intensive household appliances accelerate the rate of growth in water demand in towns like Southborough: affluent, family-oriented suburbs that fall into the category of “Nine-Bedroom Communities” – communities dominated by expensive single-family homes that generate an unusually large demand for water.

Since the Town's entire water system is metered, the types of water users served in Southborough and their proportional share of total consumption can be traced over time. Residential development clearly drives most of the water demand in Southborough (Chart 8-2), yet it is not the only factor that influences the amount of water purchased from the MWRA each year. Aside from its metered customers, Southborough – like all communities – loses some water within the distribution system. After estimating the amount of water used for unmetered municipal purposes, such as hydrant flushing, fire protection training, or street cleaning, Southborough has “unaccounted for” water ranging from seventeen to nineteen percent of all water withdrawn from its two pumping stations.<sup>6</sup> This exceeds the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) guidelines, which currently call for a maximum of fifteen percent of unaccounted- for water in public water systems.<sup>7</sup>

Average-day demand is important for tracking long-term changes in aggregate water use, but managers of public water supplies usually place more importance on a second planning standard: maximum-day demand. Unlike the average-day metric, maximum-day demand represents the largest volume of water pumped in any twenty-four hour period during the year, and it almost always occurs during the summer. A water supplier's inability to meet maximum-day demand can have major consequences for fire protection. Since 1990, maximum-day demand has ranged from 2.0 to 2.7 times

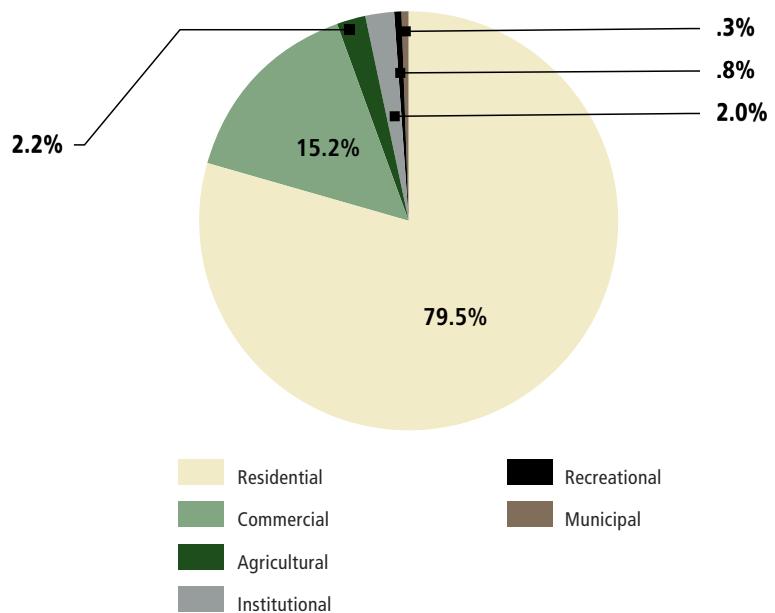
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<sup>6</sup> Public Water Supply Annual Statistical Reports, (2005, 2006) Section D, Water Management Act Annual Report.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Environmental Protection, Guidelines and Policies for Public Water Systems (2001), 232.

Chart 8-2

Sources of Water Demand in Southborough



average-day demand in Southborough. Future consumption projections indicate that maximum-day demand could reach 3.75 million gallons per day (gpd) by 2020, and average-day demand, 1.51 million gpd.

Southborough's water distribution system is hard-pressed to accommodate maximum-day conditions. First, the Town does not have enough usable storage to assure adequate fire flows, especially during peak-period demand. Moreover, Southborough cannot take any of the existing storage facilities offline for maintenance because there is no reserve capacity elsewhere in the system. Second, the Town has several areas with dead-end water mains, a condition that also reduces fire flows. Third, under-sized water mains in some parts of Town compromise the water system's ability to move water out of storage and into the distribution system. The combination of inadequate storage capacity and

dead-end and undersized water mains 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. In addition, the 2,000 gpm capacity of the two pumping stations is insufficient to meet Southborough's projected 2020 maximum-day demand.

The Town has devoted a considerable amount of work to evaluating options for increasing water storage capacity. In addition to the Water Distribution System Study (2007), Southborough obtained a "peer review," or second opinion, to verify that all possibilities had been explored. The peer review consultant provided a hydraulic modeling analysis and capital and operating cost estimates for twenty-five potential storage sites in Southborough. In most cases, the consultant modeled two or more construc-

**Table 8-4**  
**Potential Water Storage Facility Sites**

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

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

tion methods for each site, such as partial or complete burial of a storage tank, and identified additional improvements that would be required in order to make each facility as effective as possible. The sites were 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 peer review report. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is currently reviewing both of the Town's water storage tank studies.

#### Recreation Facilities

Southborough is a family-oriented Town, so it is not surprising to find that it has several parks, playgrounds and playing fields. The Southborough Recreation Department offers recreational, leisure and cultural programs on a year-round basis, mainly but not exclusively for school-age children. Table 8-5 lists the outdoor recreation facilities owned and managed by the Town.

Local youth sports organizations use many of the Town's outdoor recreation facilities and help with playing field maintenance. Most of the organizations collect registration fees that include a fee charged by the Town for use of public recreation facilities. In turn, Southborough offers a variety of indoor recreation programs at the Arts Center and in the schools, but the Recreation Department also organizes programs that use other facilities in Town, such as horseback riding lessons at a privately owned stable, and skating lessons at St. Mark's School.

#### Local Government

##### Form of Government

The organization and size of a local government has implications for the types of facilities a community needs and the amount of space required for various functions. For example, governments with a "streamlined" central administrative structure need office space,

Table 8-5 Town-Owned Recreation Facilities		
Name	Location	Facilities
Choate Field, Albert S. Woodward School	28 Cordaville Road	Soccer, Outdoor Basketball, Softball, Field Hockey, Sand Volleyball, Gymnasium
DiPietri Field	53 Parkerville Road	Soccer, Lacrosse
Harold E. Fay Memorial Field & Play-ground	42 Central Street	Soccer, Outdoor Basketball, Softball, School Age Playground, Tot-Lot, Picnic Pavilion
Kallander Field	Kallander Drive	Multi-Purpose Playing Field
Liberty Estates Field	Liberty Road	Multi-Purpose Playing Field
Lundblad Field	53 Parkerville Road	Multi-Purpose Playing Field
Margaret A. Neary School	53 Parkerville Road	Tennis, Soccer, Softball, Playground, Walking, Outdoor Ice Skating, Outdoor Basketball, Lacrosse, Small Gymnasium
Mary E. Finn School	Richards Road	Soccer, Baseball, Playground and Tennis, Gymnasium
911 Memorial Field †	Acre Bridge Road	Soccer, Lacrosse, Football
Mooney Fields	Parkerville Road	Baseball
P. Brent Trottier Middle School	Parkerville Road	Soccer, Softball, Track, Field Hockey, Gymnasium

Source: Southborough Recreation Department <[www.southboroughTown.com/recreation/fields.htm](http://www.southboroughTown.com/recreation/fields.htm)>.

Note: The Town of Southborough manages and maintains Memorial Field, but the facility is located on land owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

records storage, small conference rooms and a few public meeting halls, but decentralized, participatory governments with many boards and committees need a variety of meeting rooms with access to records, convenient parking, and access for people with disabilities. Today, the public often expects that meetings will be televised, too, which means that some meeting spaces need cable access.

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

For the most part, Southborough follows the tradition of decentralized government that exists in a majority of the Commonwealth's towns. Its executive branch consists of a three-member board of selectmen, nine other elected boards



*St. Mark's School circa 1900.*

Photo courtesy of the Southborough Historical Society

and officers, and forty-one appointed boards and committees that share responsibility for a wide range of programs and services.<sup>8</sup> In turn, Southborough's legislative branch is an open Town meeting: a body composed of registered voters who set the Town's annual operating budget, authorize capital projects and adopt local bylaws. Over time, Southborough has professionalized its government by hiring administration and finance personnel and staffing functions that used to be handled entirely by volunteers. In an effort to operate more efficiently, Southborough also consolidated its highway, water and other departments into a Department of Public Works.

Since 1966, the Commonwealth has operated as a "home rule" state, which means that municipalities have a constitutional right of self-government and authority to design their own form

of government – to a point. Long before 1966, however, the General Court approved local government organizational changes petitioned by cities and towns. Over time, Massachusetts has assembled an interesting collection of local governments. They range from the highly decentralized, all-volunteer governments found in very small towns to the City of Everett's unusual bicameral legislature – a Board of Alderman and Common Council – and mayor.

The "default" or standard powers and duties of municipal officials appear in the Commonwealth's general laws. Many of these provisions date to the early 1800s, and most communities in Massachusetts still operate under them to some degree, including Southborough.

<sup>8</sup> Town Governance Study Committee, *Final Report to the Town of Southborough* (April 2007), 7.

By law, Massachusetts towns are required to elect a board of selectmen, school committee, board of assessors, board of health, planning board, town clerk, tax collector, treasurer, auditors, highway surveyors, tree warden, constables, and town moderator, but nearly all of these positions can be converted to appointees of the selectmen by majority votes at town meeting and the annual town election (M.G.L. c.41, s. 1B).<sup>9</sup> Southborough has retained the state's historic preference for elected officials because the Town fills very few statutory offices by appointment.

Southborough recently evaluated its present form of government and studied other models of government in nearby communities. In its final report, the Town Governance Study Committee recommended that Southborough establish a charter commission and pursue a "home rule" charter. Cities and towns seeking to change their form of government have access to three procedures:

1. Adopt the provisions of "enabling" or local option statutes – a form of legislative home rule -- found variously in M.G.L. c.40N, c.41, or c.43C;
2. Establish a charter commission and adopt a home rule charter under the Home Rule Amendment (Article 89), ratified by voters in 1966, and M.G.L. c.43B, the Home Rule Procedures Act, enacted by the legislature in 1967; or

<sup>9</sup> Municipalities with a Town form of government must retain an elected board of selectmen and school committee, but all other officers mandated under M.G.L. c.41, s.1 can be appointed by following the procedures set forth in s. 1B. Planning boards and boards of health also may be converted from elected to appointed positions as well, and a board of selectmen can serve as the board of health, board of assessors or board of water commissioners. Communities may elect their moderator on the floor of Town meeting instead of by ballot at an annual Town election. Although rare, this practice still exists in a few Towns.

3. Petition the legislature for a "special act" charter, or a governmental organization change approved first by a town and thereafter by the state legislature.

In Massachusetts today, 83 cities and towns have home rule charters and 55 operate under special act charters.<sup>10</sup> Some of the existing special act charters pre-date the Home Rule Amendment, yet even after 1966, many communities continued to choose special act over home rule charters, in part for procedural reasons. In substance, there is little difference between them.

Short of a charter, communities also may use the special act process to make a single change in their government organization, such as creating a town manager position or consolidating several departments under a single department head. In fact, Southborough has relied on special acts of the legislature several times since the 1970s. For example, it combined the elected treasurer and tax collector functions in 1976 and made the new position an appointee of the Board of Selectmen (Chapter 483, Acts of 1976). In 1991, Southborough created a consolidated Department of Public Works (Chapter 447, Acts of 2001). Some organizational changes also can be accomplished by adopting the local option models in M.G.L. c.43C, which provide for a consolidated finance department, community development department and inspectional services department. However, the process for adopting them is fairly onerous and there is little flexibility to alter any of the models by local bylaw.

<sup>10</sup> Massachusetts Municipal Association, "Massachusetts Municipal Directory," 2006, and Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, "Massachusetts Communities Operating Under Home Rule Charters," January 2006, both updated by Community Opportunities Group, Inc., through January 2008.

## What is Proposition 2 1/2?

In 1975, five years before Proposition 2 1/2, Southborough's tax rate was \$31.70. Today, it is \$12.54. Why is the tax rate so much lower in 2008?

Until the late 1970s, Massachusetts communities did not assess taxes based on the full and fair cash market value of real estate. Assessment practices varied widely, often benefiting long-time homeowners at the expense of newcomers and placing a very large share of the tax burden on commercial properties.

In a landmark decision in 1974, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court held that cities and Towns must assess properties at fair cash value. The Court also ruled that the Department of Revenue had authority to supervise local assessment procedures. In 1979, the legislature enacted a law to implement the Court's decision in *Town of Sudbury v. Commissioner of Corporations and Taxation* (1974). By 1981, Southborough's tax rate had dropped to \$26.50, and reached its lowest level in 1989, \$9.00. Since 2000, the tax rate has ranged from \$12.00 to \$13.00 (rounded).

### Municipal Finance

Southborough pays for community services with property taxes, state aid, other local revenues such as motor vehicle excise taxes or licensing and permit fees, and available reserves. The same sources form the backbone of local government finance throughout the Commonwealth, yet communities differ by their degree of dependence on each source. As a rule, affluent communities rely primarily on property tax revenue because the state directs most of its aid programs to communities with the greatest financial need. In Southborough, the tax levy has historically supplied sixty-five to sixty-nine percent of each year's total revenue, and about eighty percent of general fund revenue.<sup>11</sup> These

<sup>11</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), "General Fund Revenue, 2000-2007, and "Revenues by Source," 1981-2007.

statistics place Southborough in the upper quartile statewide for indicators of property wealth.

The general fund is the largest and most important type of fund in government accounting practice. General fund revenue includes all revenue not restricted for a specific purpose, so the vast majority of a community's ordinary operating expenditures – from salaries to paper clips – are general fund expenditures. Since 2000, general fund expenditures in Southborough have increased by eighty-eight percent in current dollars and about fifty-eight percent in 2007 constant dollars. The most noticeable increases have occurred in education, human services, debt service, and fixed costs such as employee health insurance and general liability insurance (Chart 8-3).

Southborough's expenditures for public schools have accelerated more rapidly than non-school expenditures, excluding the school system's proportional share of fixed costs and debt service. It is obvious that residents care deeply about their public schools because the Town spends quite a bit more on education than the minimum required under a state formula that determines each community's annual spending requirement. Southborough has continued to receive increases in Chapter 70 aid each year even though many towns have not, yet over time, Chapter 70 aid has declined as a percentage of total school spending, both in Southborough and in the Northborough-Southborough Regional School District.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, in the past twenty years, debt service has increased

<sup>12</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, Chapter 70 Profile: Southborough Public Schools, 1998-2007. Since Chapter 70 aid for Algonquin Regional High School is paid directly to the regional school district, it is not revenue to the Towns.

from 1.5 percent to eleven percent of Southborough's total operating budget, mainly due to school construction bonds.

The fiscal consequences of a high rate of population growth are plainly evident in Southborough, for the Town's average single-family tax bill increased nearly eighty percent between 2000 and 2008. Still, not all of the growth in spending can be attributed directly to new housing development. For example, Southborough's expenditures for employee benefits and liability insurance increased significantly between Fiscal Years (FY) 2006 and 2007, yet the total number of eligible employees has barely changed. On balance, however, it is clear that Southborough is struggling to "catch up" with the demands of residential and nonresidential growth, and one byproduct of the stress placed on its operating budget is the shortage of funding for major capital improvements.

The Commonwealth's municipal finance system unwittingly contributes to the some of friction about growth that exists in many communities today. In November 1980, a successful referendum known as Proposition 2 ½ introduced a cap on annual growth in the property tax levy. Southborough is among the towns that have chosen to exceed the cap by following the statutory procedures for general overrides and debt exclusions. This is partially why its tax bills have increased faster than the statewide average: Southborough voters have agreed to tax themselves above the limits set forth in the law. Southborough is not alone in this regard. Proposition 2 ½ overrides and debt exclusions for new schools have been fairly common in high-growth suburbs.

A second feature of Proposition 2 ½ encourages tax base growth. In any given fiscal year, the tax levy can increase up to 2.5 percent over the previous year's levy plus taxes for new development and other property improvements not included in the previous year's base. When the legislature enacted procedures to implement Proposition 2 ½ in 1981 (M.G.L. c. 59, s. 21C), the "new growth" provision was added in order to recognize that as communities grow, the demands on local government services increase. Once the value of new growth is added to the tax base, the extra taxes become part of the base against which the levy limit is calculated in future years. On one hand, Southborough has benefited from this aspect of Proposition 2 ½ because "new growth" tax revenue has exceeded \$1 million three times since FY 2000 – largely due to nonresidential development. On the other hand, Southborough's new growth revenue has come with some costs. A large portion of the residential tax base growth stems from the creation of more than 500 housing units between 1999 and 2008.

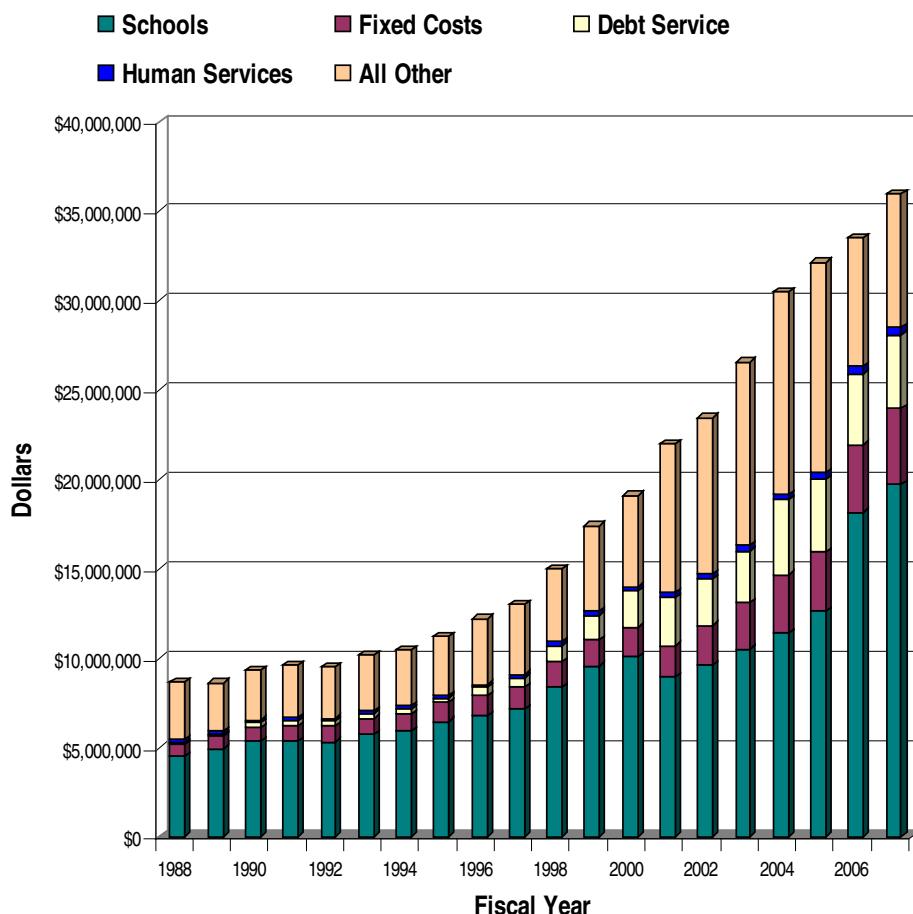
A potentially troublesome aspect of new growth revenue is that many communities have come to depend on it to boost their available resources. When the market softens and real estate investments decline, the amount of revenue that can be garnered from new growth also declines. As if to underscore the degree to which the Massachusetts real estate market has deteriorated in the past two years, the total assessed value of new residential growth in Southborough has dropped by more than half since FY 2006. In the absence of extra state aid or increases in other local revenues, communities have only a handful of options to address a decline in tax revenue growth: reduce the operating budget, override Proposition 2 ½,

postpone capital improvements, or use reserves to fill the gap. Local governments usually try to protect their reserves for emergencies and to maintain a strong bond rating. Statewide and in Southborough, however, free cash appropriations and stabilization fund transfers have become a way of life as communities try to ward off a condition that public policy analysts call a structural deficit.

Like other communities, Southborough has adopted some “fiscal survival” strategies to maintain local services and still comply with

Proposition 2 ½. Throughout the Commonwealth, local services that were paid for with tax revenue prior to 1980 gradually became subject to user fees. In 1980, it was not uncommon for services such as drinking water, solid waste disposal and recreation programs to be included in a community’s tax rate. By the end of the 1980s, however, most communities had resorted to user fees to offset the cost of some or all these services.

**Chart 8-3**  
**General Fund Expenditures,**  
**1988-2007**



As a result, the share of local (“own source”) revenue generated by non-tax sources has increased in the past twenty-five years, from a statewide average of fourteen percent just before the passage of Proposition 2 ½ to thirty percent in 2007.<sup>13</sup> The shift from tax to non-tax sources has been less pronounced in small towns like Southborough, in part because they do not have the range of municipal services and utilities provided by cities and the larger, maturely developed suburbs.

In addition to charging fees for services, communities began to segregate more revenue from the general fund by establishing special revenue, revolving or enterprise funds, which effectively earmark revenue for specific purposes. Special revenue funds and trust funds had always been used by local governments, in part because state and federal grants required them. However, the prevalence of revolving funds and enterprise funds in Massachusetts today is largely a post-Proposition 2 ½ phenomenon. In the early 1990s, the legislature created more options for local governments to establish departmental revolving funds and since then, they have proliferated. Southborough has a variety of mechanisms in place to account for special or “dedicated” revenue sources, such as revolving funds for building permit fees and recreation user fees, and other funds for ambulance fees or water charges. Further, Southborough is one of 127 cities and towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which allows the Town to impose a surcharge on property tax bills and earmark the revenue for activities associated with open space,

<sup>13</sup> Metropolitan Area Planning Council, State of the Region (1975), 74, and Department of Revenue, Municipal Budgeted Revenues by Source, Statewide Totals, 1981-2007, Municipal Data Bank. “Own-source” revenue includes the tax levy, local receipts and source such as free cash, i.e., excluding state aid.

affordable housing, and historic preservation. Southborough currently receives about \$230,000 from CPA surcharge revenue and a match of \$229,000 from the state’s CPA trust fund.<sup>14</sup>

### Community Service Costs and Revenue in Context

Southborough is a fairly expensive place to live. Its average single-family tax bill is currently \$7,231, and for the homeowner with an average-value dwelling unit, the CPA surcharge is approximately \$60.<sup>15</sup> In addition to property taxes, most residents pay an average annual water bill of \$302 and a \$110 fee to dispose of solid waste at the transfer station.<sup>16</sup> Families spend even more than non-family households because so many programs and services for children, both school and municipal, involve special user fees. These kinds of additional residential services costs, above and beyond property taxes, exist in virtually all communities today.

When Southborough officials evaluate their employee compensation schedules, licensing, permitting and user fees, and service costs, they often look to a group of comparison communities as a guide.

<sup>14</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, “Community Preservation Surcharge Report Comparison, 2002-2007,” and “FY 2008 Community Preservation Matching Funds,” Municipal Data Bank.

<sup>15</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, “Average Single-Family Tax Bill 2008.” CPA surcharge estimated at 1% of the property tax bill for an average-value single-family home, minus the first \$100,000 exemption.

<sup>16</sup> Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Advisory Board, Annual Water and Sewer Retail Rate Survey (2006), 29; and Town of Southborough, “Transfer Station Rules and Regulations,” at <[www.southboroughTown.com/dpw/transferstation.htm](http://www.southboroughTown.com/dpw/transferstation.htm)>.

Although the communities are larger than Southborough, they serve as the labor market area for municipal workers and as a region in which location-sensitive costs are likely to be similar. For reasons similar to Southborough's, most cities and towns have a "comparable community" list today. For example, benchmark studies have become increasingly common device for communities to judge the reasonableness of their expenditures for municipal and school services. Despite the uniformity and restrictiveness of municipal finance laws, it is difficult to compare Massachusetts cities and towns because communities have different forms of government and political cultures. They also differ by household and property wealth, growth rates and land use patterns. Since it is impossible to find a perfect match for any town, a reasonable comparison study should try to limit differences and acknowledge those which are unavoidable. Table 8-6 shows that on balance, Southborough falls roughly in the middle of its comparison group for most of the major metrics of municipal finance.

**Table 8-6**  
**Comparison Snapshot of Community Service Costs and Revenue (FY 2006)**

City or Town	Population (Estimate, 2006)	Population Growth Rate (2000-2006)	Total Land Area (Square Miles)	Centerline Road Miles	Per Capita Income (Estimate, 2006)	Average Single-Family Tax Bill (2006)
Ashland	15,678	6.0%	12.4	78.8	\$38,287	\$5,067
Grafton	17,405	16.1%	22.7	99.2	\$32,995	\$3,583
Holliston	13,896	0.4%	18.7	89.8	\$40,551	\$5,548
Hopkinton	14,172	5.4%	26.6	124.1	\$51,316	\$6,440
Marlborough	38,062	4.0%	12.1	165.2	\$33,230	N/A
Medway	12,817	2.6%	8.1	73.6	\$34,526	\$5,283
Northborough	14,681	4.5%	18.5	92.7	\$42,066	\$5,078
Shrewsbury	33,262	4.6%	20.7	178.1	\$39,249	\$3,536
<b>Southborough</b>	<b>9,551</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>73.9</b>	<b>\$57,483</b>	<b>\$6,884</b>
Sudbury	17,027	0.7%	24.4	137.5	\$62,775	\$8,956
Wayland	12,970	-1.2%	15.2	95.5	\$59,334	\$8,693
Westborough	18,634	3.1%	20.5	110.7	\$43,638	\$6,234
Weston	11,646	1.3%	17.0	113.1	\$80,002	\$12,865
Westwood	13,832	-2.1%	11.0	88.5	\$53,566	\$6,770

**Table 8-6 cont'd****Comparison Snapshot of Community Service Costs and Revenue (FY 2006)**

City or Town	Residential Tax Levy Per Capita (2006) †	Levy Per Capita % Per Capita Income	Expenditures Per Capita (2006) ‡	Reserves Per Capita *	Debt Service Per Capita	Actual Net School Spending Per Student **
Ashland	\$1,705	4.5%	\$2,596	\$93	\$376	\$9,082
Grafton	\$1,091	3.3%	\$1,858	\$303	\$146	\$8,299
Holliston	\$1,819	4.5%	\$3,058	\$79	\$387	\$8,899
Hopkinton	\$2,139	4.2%	\$3,552	\$222	\$471	\$9,604
Marlborough	\$1,058	3.2%	\$2,178	\$196	\$167	\$10,434
Medway	\$1,626	4.7%	\$2,706	-\$9	\$275	\$8,126
Northborough	\$1,568	3.7%	\$2,586	\$269	\$112	\$9,389
Shrewsbury	\$1,144	2.9%	\$2,414	\$68	\$453	\$7,901
<b>Southborough</b>	<b>\$2,326</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>\$3,510</b>	<b>\$346</b>	<b>\$417</b>	<b>\$9,592</b>
Sudbury	\$2,972	4.7%	\$3,982	\$178	\$325	\$9,364
Wayland	\$3,114	5.2%	\$3,893	\$99	\$283	\$11,157
Westborough	\$1,616	3.7%	\$3,449	\$176	\$569	\$10,317
Weston	\$4,009	5.0%	\$4,800	\$108	\$654	\$14,055
Westwood	\$2,351	4.4%	\$3,713	\$145	\$454	\$10,454

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Municipal Data Bank; Massachusetts Department of Education, Chapter 70 Profile; Claritas, Inc.; and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes: † "Residential tax levy" is the sum of residential and open space taxes.

‡ "Expenditures per capita" is limited to General Fund expenditures. This statistic needs to be interpreted cautiously because a general fund expenditure in one Town may be an enterprise fund expenditure in another Town, e.g., water, solid waste disposal, or recreation programs.

\* "Reserves per capita" includes free cash and the stabilization fund.

\*\* "Actual net school spending" is as defined by the Department of Education.

# Municipal Facilities and Services Goals

## MF-1

Establish new or improved/upgraded facilities for public safety.

## MF-2

Establish a new community center for use by residents of all ages.

## MF-3

Increase sewage/septic options in Town and at municipal facilities.

## MF-4

Enhance communication with residents and among Town boards, commissions and staff.

## MF-5

Enhance facilities for Town staff and departments.

## MF-6

Create a process for identifying and disposing of surplus Town-owned property.

## MF-7

Provide recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.

## MF-8

Maintain and enhance existing open space and recreational facilities.

# Municipal Facilities and Services Recommendations

- ▶ Goal 1: Establish new or improved/upgraded facilities for public safety.
- ▶ MF-1: Replace the Police Station with a modern, safe, adequately sized facility that can meet current and future needs.
- ▶ MF-2: Plan for and schedule improvements to the Fire Department's headquarters.
- ▶ MF-3: Identify suitable site, or explore regional opportunities, for a fire substation to serve the southern part of Southborough; plan for and schedule construction of a fire substation.

Southborough's Police Station and Fire Station are undersized and obsolete. In their present condition, both facilities compromise the safety and welfare of departmental employees, but the need for a new Police Station is particularly acute. In 2008, Town meeting agreed to fund Police Station conceptual design plans – the requisite first step toward understanding a community's options for a new public facility, choosing a preferred approach, and developing detailed plans and cost estimates.

Southborough should take its public safety facility needs as seriously as it has taken the need for excellent schools.

- ▶ Goal 2: Establish a new community center for use by residents of all ages.
- ▶ MF-4: Implement the Southborough Facilities Plan by planning for renovations and improvements to Cordaville Hall.
- ▶ MF-5: Continue to upgrade and improve Fayville Hall.
- ▶ Goal 3: Increase sewage/septic options in Town and at municipal facilities.

- ▶ MF-6: Explore opportunities for shared wastewater disposal or small package treatments plants, such as a wastewater treatment facility serving facilities in the center of Town, and assure that local regulations do not impede shared systems.
- ▶ MF-7: Consider opportunities for using District Improvement Financing (DIF) to leverage public facility investments from commercial or industrial development.
- ▶ Goal 4: Enhance communication with residents and among Town boards, commissions and staff.
- ▶ MF-8: Adopt a Town manager form of government, whether by establishing a charter commission or petitioning for a special act of the legislature ("special act charter").
- ▶ MF-9: Consider holding quarterly meetings or "all boards" meetings in order to have a predictable process for encouraging boards and commissions to communicate.
- ▶ MF-10: Provide support for website development and maintenance, and include technology in any program for enhancing communications within Town government.
- ▶ MF-11: Develop volunteer recruitment and volunteer recognition programs to encourage residents to serve on Town boards.
  - Create a "mentor" system with a small corps of veteran board or committee members who serve as points of contact for new appointees.
  - Design and distribute a "welcome packet" for interested volunteers, including basic information about Southborough's local government, finances, public service opportunities, and major issues affecting the Town.

# Municipal Facilities and Services Recommendations

- Provide high-quality training programs so that new officials can learn their roles and responsibilities and all officials can stay on top of major issues, changes in state law, and case law affecting the jurisdiction of the boards on which they serve.
- ▷ MF-12: Explore additional options for streamlining and modernizing Southborough's form of government, e.g., a consolidated finance department.
- ▶ Goal 5: Enhance facilities for Town staff and departments.
- ▷ MF-13: Establish a systematic process for developing, maintaining and implementing a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

Like most Towns in Massachusetts, Southborough has a capital budget and a basic capital plan, but the Town lacks a comprehensive, well-understood capital planning process. It also does not have a system for integrating the recommendations of various plans and studies (like the Southborough Facilities Plan) with other capital needs. In other states, particularly states that provide solid legal ground for impact fees, a detailed, carefully documented CIP is just as common as an annual operating budget. In addition, it is almost always carried out under the direction of the planning department because capital improvements should relate rationally to a community's master plan or comprehensive plan.

A CIP is typically a five-year financing plan for a series of agreed-upon capital projects. Projects anticipated to extend beyond the plan's five-year window should be memorialized in an appendix or future projects list, and revisited as the plan is updated each year. Developing a CIP is not difficult, but developing a long-range CIP that a community can actually implement requires all of the following:

- A complete, descriptive inventory of existing assets – real estate, equipment, vehicles, infrastructure, and other items defined as a capital project under local policy;
- An assessment of the lifespan of existing assets;
- Criteria for evaluating and ranking capital project requests;
- A Capital Planning Committee or an Asset Management Committee to organize and oversee the CIP, and to conduct a consensus process for ranking capital project requests, with staff support from the planning director;
- A roster of current and anticipated near-term capital funding requests from Town departments and the schools, including a description of each request, the time required to start, carry out and complete each request, and the estimated capital and operating costs associated with each request;
- An analysis of potential funding sources on a project-by-project basis, i.e., a determination of each project's eligibility for general fund, enterprise fund or CPA revenue, recreation fees, grants, developer contributions, bonds, proceeds from sale of existing assets, and so forth, and the approximate amounts that should be contributed from each source;
- Five-year financial goals for the Town;
- Debt evaluation standards;
- Local revenue projections, and a transparent methodology for preparing them;
- An analysis of the CIP's impacts on the tax rate, cash reserves, enterprise reserves, and bonding capacity; and
- A financing plan for all projects included within the CIP.

Both the capital projects evaluation process and preparation of the CIP should include citizen volunteers and staff – the former for policy direction and the latter for practical knowledge of departmental operations. Since Southborough does not have the “foundation” components of a long-range CIP today, the Town should consider hiring a consultant to assist with setting up the CIP inventory, a capital projects request system, rating and ranking criteria, and the initial five-year financing plan. Depending on the effort contributed by staff and volunteers, the cost to set up a CIP process with consulting support would most likely range between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

- ▶ Goal 6: Create a process for identifying and disposing of surplus Town-owned property.
- ▶ MF-14: Charge the Capital Budget Planning Committee (Capital Planning or Asset Management Committee) with responsibility for developing an asset management plan.
- ▶ MF-15: Establish criteria for making (a) surplus property determinations and (b) land use suitability decisions for properties that will be sold or leased.
- ▶ MF-16: Use the Town-owned property inventory developed for the CIP and the surplus property criteria referred to above, conduct a parcel-by-parcel assessment of a site’s suitability for municipal facilities or open space.
- ▶ MF-17: Rank or group properties by relative importance to the Town, and consult with Town boards and committees about properties that appear to be appropriate candidates for disposition.
- ▶ MF-18: For properties deemed appropriate for disposition based on an initial consultation process, conduct a public meeting to solicit comments and answer questions from residents.

- ▶ MF-19: Develop standard documents that can be used to dispose of surplus property, e.g., standard Request for Proposals (RFP) documents that comply with the Uniform Procurement Act, M.G.L. c.30B.
- ▶ MF-20: Secure Town meeting approval for property dispositions (when a Town meeting vote is required by law).
- ▶ Goal 7: Provide recreational opportunities for residents of all ages.
- ▶ Goal 8: Maintain and enhance existing open space and recreational facilities.
- ▶ MF-21: Maintain timely updates of the Southborough Open Space and Recreation Plan, and implement it.
- ▶ MF-22: Integrate recreation facility improvements within the Capital Improvements Plan.
- ▶ MF-23: Prepare and implement land management plans for publicly owned open space.



MAURO'S  
MARKET

MEATS  
GROCERIES  
BEER - WINE  
LIQUORS

# 9. Southborough's Villages



**Southborough's four historic villages are the backbone of the Town; however, no prior master plan has specifically addressed these special areas; namely Cordaville, Southville, Fayville, and Downtown.**

## Introduction

Southborough's four historic villages are the backbone of the town; however, no prior master plan has specifically addressed these special areas; namely Cordaville, Southville, Fayville, and Downtown. Recent work by the Town and MAPC has identified the villages as a key location for mixed use. Following on earlier initiatives, the Master Plan Steering Committee and the town thought that it was important to include a section of the Master Plan that specifically pays tribute to the value residents place in the villages. Thus, the plan addresses zoning and land use policies that encourage these villages to thrive in Southborough. In this chapter, the Master Plan pays particular attention to each village in order to address the unique characteristics and challenges. While the Business Village District and its Special Permit requirements have laid the groundwork for the town's acknowledgement of the villages, more challenges—and more solutions—exist for each village.

### Downtown

*Southborough is one of the four main villages in Town.*

### Background

In 2006, SHOPC developed a presentation illustrating the possibilities for mixing commercial and residential use in the villages. The

primary areas targeted for this mixed-use development included the Town Center, Cordaville and Fayville, as well as Route 30/Boston Road and segments of Route 9. Funded by a Priority Development Fund (PDF) grant, the presentation resulted in draft zoning language created with the assistance of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The mixed-use zoning was presented at town meeting and received strong positive feedback. This presentation was the precursor to the idea of discussing the villages in more detail during the Master Plan process.

Therefore, the topic of the second public meeting for the Master Plan—held on April 30, 2007—was the four villages in Southborough: Cordaville, Southville, Fayville and the Downtown (see Chart 9-1). During this meeting, the participants were first asked to suggest boundaries for each village. They were also asked to identify the goals—or a vision—for the four villages. Many of the goals expressed in this chapter arose from this public meeting.

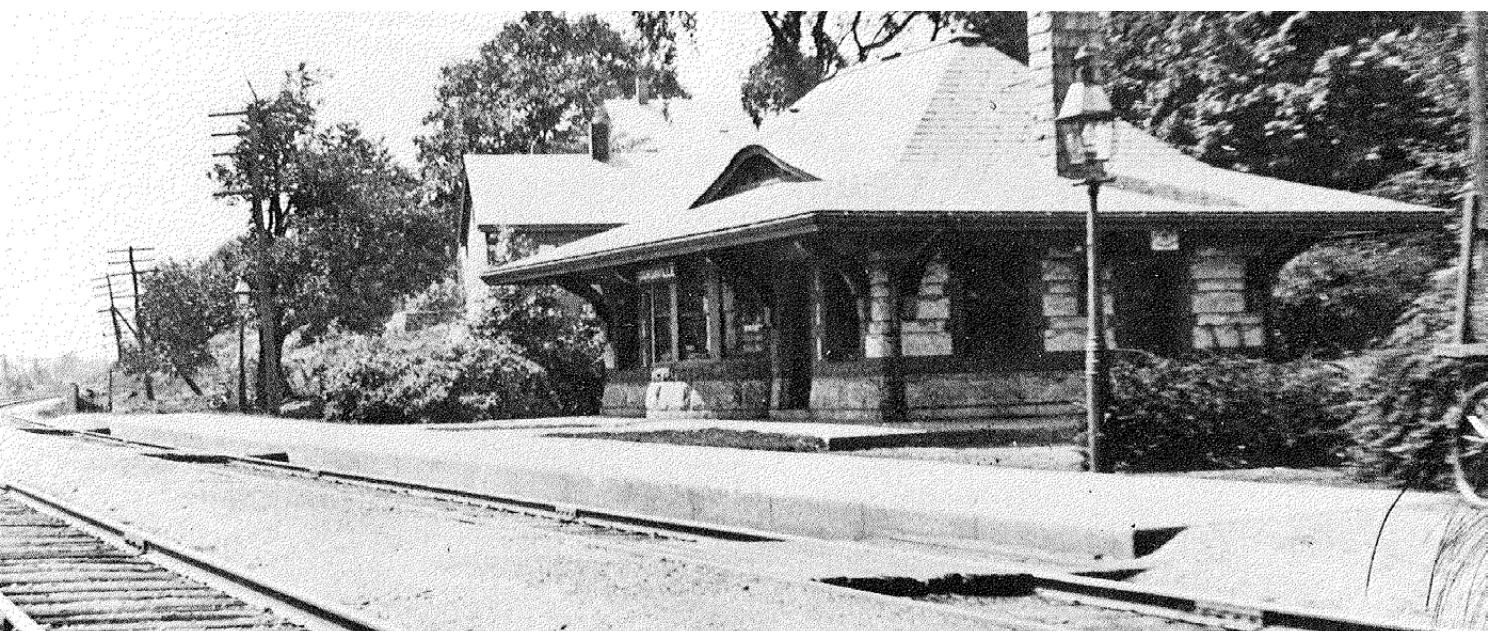
One issue that arose consistently was that of historic preservation in the villages. Historic resources are described in detail in Chapter 6 of

this plan, while specific references in the villages are found in this chapter.

In addition to the discussion of these four villages, residents were also afforded the opportunity to discuss other neighborhoods in town; residents who elected to participate in the latter discussion took a more general view of the town and reiterated some of the recommendations that arose from the first Master Plan public meeting held in January 2007.

*The "New" Cordaville station was dismantled, moved, and reconstructed in Dublin, New Hampshire in 1970.*

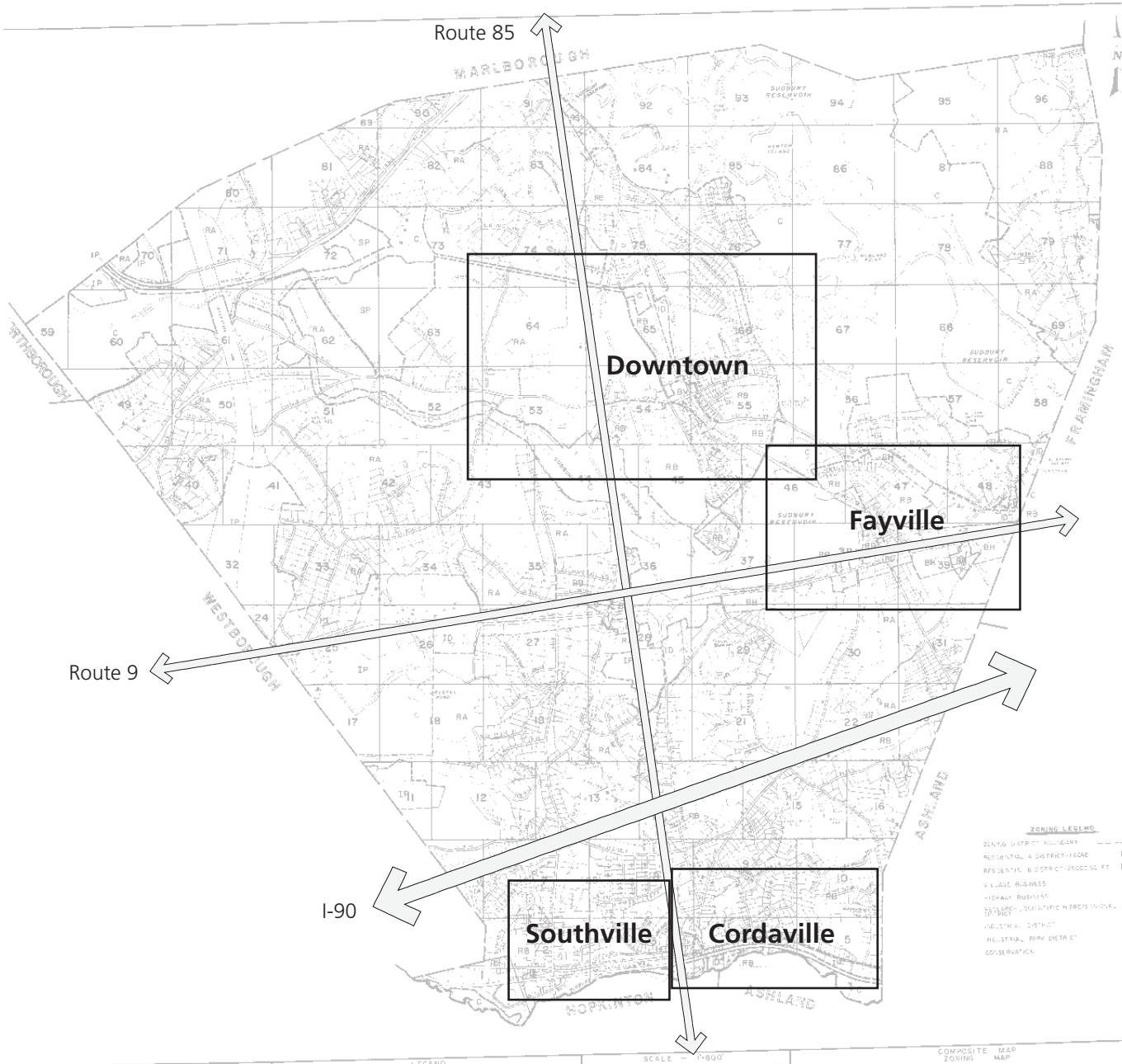
Photo courtesy of Southborough Historical Society



## Cordaville

Located in the southwest corner of town, Cordaville is a close-knit residential community. At its start a typical 19th century industrial mill village, Cordaville is now a truly suburban residential community. Much of the worker housing stock still exists, mixed in with other older homes and some newer construction. Workers residences are located on Parker and Cottage Streets and along Cordaville Road and Southville Road. However, the mills that once made this village did not survive the economic change. Elements of the mill complex are still visible, including the company store which functions as a variety store and the blacksmith shop which has been converted to a restaurant. Home to the town's MBTA Commuter Rail Station, which was opened in 2002, Cordaville has recently seen more activity and use due to the commuters. This area is becoming a more popular residential location for commuters to Boston.

## Chart 9-1 Town Map with Villages



As discussed in Chapter 6, a 1995 survey resulted in the determination by the Massachusetts Historical Commission that the Village of Cordaville is eligible for listing in the National Register due to its association with a “significant community centered on a major industrial enterprise.” The MHC classified the remaining housing stock as a collection of early and late industrial residential architecture. Most recently, in 1999-2000 a community-wide comprehensive survey was conducted that resulted in the preparation of a total of 170 individual and area inventory forms.

#### Boundary

As established at the public meeting, the general boundaries for the Cordaville Village Center are believed to be the Woodland Road and Route 85 split to the north, the Southborough/Ashland line to the east, the town boundary with Ashland and Hopkinton to the south, and Fitzgerald's General Store and Saint Matthews Church to the west (see Chart 9-2). The group also defined a broader boundary for a Cordaville neighborhood which extends to Interstate 90 (I-90 or MassPike) to the north.

*Typical Cordaville Millhouses.*

Photo(s) courtesy of Southborough Planning Board

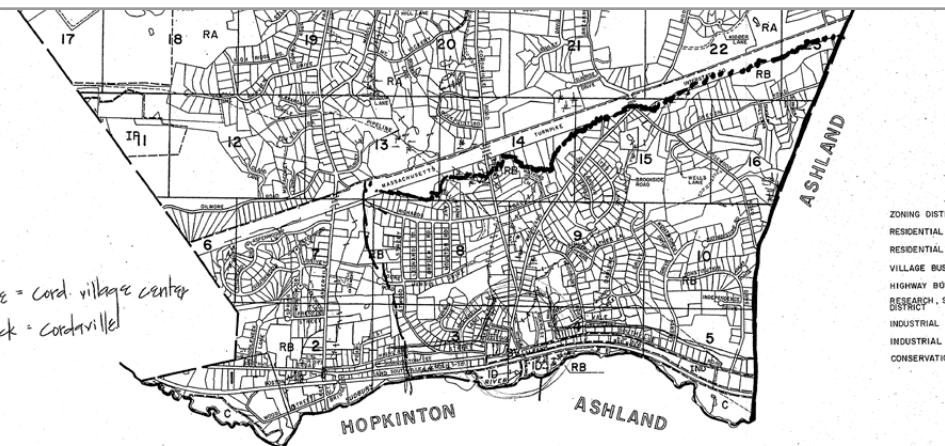


#### Analysis

According to residents attending the forum, the advantages of Cordaville Village are its access to Boston and employment via the commuter rail station, the Sudbury River and Mill Pond, Southborough Junction at Historic Cordaville (the new yellow building at the corner of Route 85 and Southville Road), the condition of the sidewalks and lighting, the neighborhood feeling, the small triangle park in the center of Cordaville Village between River Street, Route 85 and Southville Road, the historic nature of the homes, the stone walls lining the roads, and the diversity of social economics in the greater neighborhood.

Residents are concerned about the upkeep of Fitzgerald's General Store; they believe some maintenance and enhancement to the building and relief of traffic at the entrance driveway could benefit the entire area. Furthermore, some of the businesses located on Southville Road conflict with the residential nature of the village. Although these businesses are allowed within the zoning bylaw, residents believe a lack of distinction exists between the residential and

Chart 9-2  
Village Boundary: Cordaville



industrial uses resulting in aesthetic, traffic and noise concerns.

Participants also expressed concern over the lack of trees and other foliage, specifically in the Cordaville Village Center and as buffers around the MBTA tracks. They are interested in increasing the foliage cover in Cordaville and perhaps encouraging the MBTA to seek carbon offsets for the impacts associated with the train. Furthermore, the lights and noise of the commuter rail and station conflict with the residential uses of the village.

Finally signage and name confusion were deemed to be current weak points in Cordaville, where the area is identified under many different names (Southborough Junction, Cordaville, etc.).

### Objectives

- ▶ Preserve mill houses.
- ▶ Preserve historical character.
- ▶ Develop architectural design guidelines.
- ▶ Limit/curtail further increases in density/building size.
- ▶ Preserve wooded areas and plan for open space within the village.
- ▶ Preserve riparian corridor around river.
- ▶ Enforce environmental preservation.
- ▶ Provide access to historical areas (river, mill pond site).
- ▶ Provide opportunities for passive recreation, such as a canoe launch at Mill Pond and walking trails.
- ▶ Create an amphitheater/outdoor park.
- ▶ Provide better access (walkway/signage) to Hopkinton State Park.
- ▶ Maintain the proper (small) scale of development.
- ▶ Encourage varied roof heights and continued diversity of home designs.
- ▶ Ensure architectural compatibility.

## Southville

Southville is like Cordaville in many ways; but the two villages also have their distinct identity. Southville is located in southwest Southborough, west of Cordaville along Southville Road. It is also a 19th century mill village where boots, shoes, cotton and woolen goods and medical plasters were all produced. The building stock that exists today in Southville includes institutional buildings that serve both Southville and Cordaville (including two churches – St. Matthews and 1st Community – and the Old South Union School now used as a municipal art center/Recreation Department office<sup>1</sup>) and a diverse collection of housing stock associated with the former industrial heyday. Southville also has a small artisan community, including potters, painters, and photographers, as well as small home-based businesses such as a resident who sells organic soaps and lavender products.

As a result of CPA funding approved at the April 2008 Town Meeting, restoration architect David Hart A.I.A. will begin the first phase of the rehabilitation of the historic exterior of the Old South Union School. CPA funds are also being used to hire Boston preservation consultant



260 Parkerville Rd. in Southville.

Photo courtesy of Southborough Planning Board

<sup>1</sup> The building's status is currently in flux. The Facilities Manager has an office there. The Cultural Arts Center will use the upper story only. The Historical Commission is in the process of having the building put on the National Register of Historic Places.

Kathy Kelly Broomer to prepare a National Register Nomination for the School, to be submitted to Massachusetts Historical Commission for approval at the end of 2008.

In 2000, historic preservation consultants conducted an Historic Survey of Southville. This survey included an inventory of all the known homes and sites within Southville that contribute to the village's historic character. As a result of this survey, Southville has the potential to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, if a formal application is made.

Southville does not have a physical center to its village, consisting primarily of the linear street frontage along Southville Road from approximately Harrington Street to the town border with Westborough. Parkerville Road forms the spine of the district with Prentiss Street branching off it. Pearl Street runs off Highland Street, also forming part of the district. Wood Street is a very important part of Southville because William Wood had his factory nearby. All the houses in this area were identified as related to the mills, which were centered at the intersection of Southville, Highland and Parkerville Roads.

### Boundary

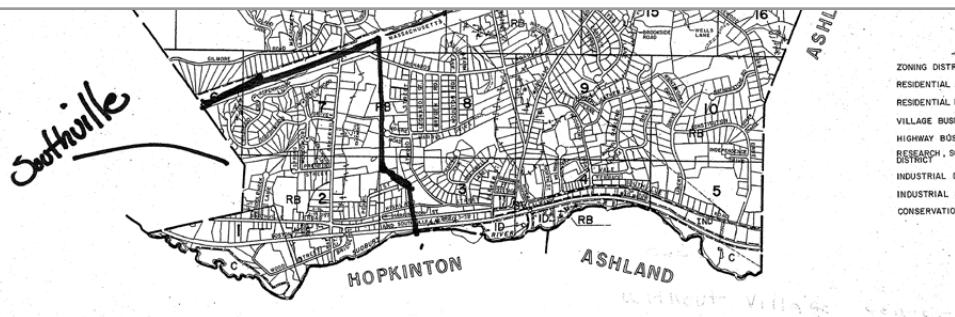
As established at the public meeting, the general boundaries for the Southville Village are considered to be I-90 to the north, rear lot lines east of Parkerville Road to the east, and the town boundary with Hopkinton to the south and Westborough to the west (see Chart 9-3).

### Analysis

Participants in the public meeting enjoy three qualities about Southville Village; it is quiet, it is rural and there is no large-scale retail. Dislikes

Chart 9-3

Village Boundary: Southville



included the Arts Center, which is believed to be underutilized and in disrepair. Respondents expressed that the Arts Center could be reused as affordable housing, elderly housing or municipal offices. During the course of writing this Plan, the Town's Recreation Center began to use portions of the Arts Center, thus increasing its usability. Another dislike was the landscaping at the Finn School, including the chain link fences along Parkerville Road.

### Objectives

- ▶ Plan for multi-family housing options of moderate density (flexibility, on small isolated acreage).
- ▶ Provide a walking track around the Mary Finn School.
- ▶ Provide more sidewalks.
- ▶ Provide access to the Sudbury River, such as a canoe launch.
- ▶ Provide bicycle paths.
- ▶ Preserve historic resources including on an individual basis for housing. Preserve key buildings such as the South Union School building (Arts Center), and the former Train Depot (260 Parkerville Road).
- ▶ Develop a plan to address the possible traffic problems with the proposed EMC development.

## Fayville

Route 9 plays an integral role in defining the character of Fayville, because the road cuts through the middle of the village. Commercial uses in Fayville are a mixture of highway and neighborhood businesses. Fayville south of Route 9, along Oak Hill Road, is primarily residential. Key sites in this village include the former Volvo dealership and Fayville Hall and residents felt that Fayville Hall should be preserved while the Volvo dealership is an ideal site for future development.

Fayville grew around and is also defined by the reservoir. Many parts of Fayville enjoy views of the reservoir; however, as described in Chapter 5, Open Space and Recreation, access to the reservoir is limited.

Fayville became the home for a number of Italian immigrants during the twentieth century. The village even still has its own post office and zip code (01745), which really emphasizes its uniqueness and identity.

*The beginnings of Fayville.*

Photo courtesy of Southborough Historical Society

### Boundary

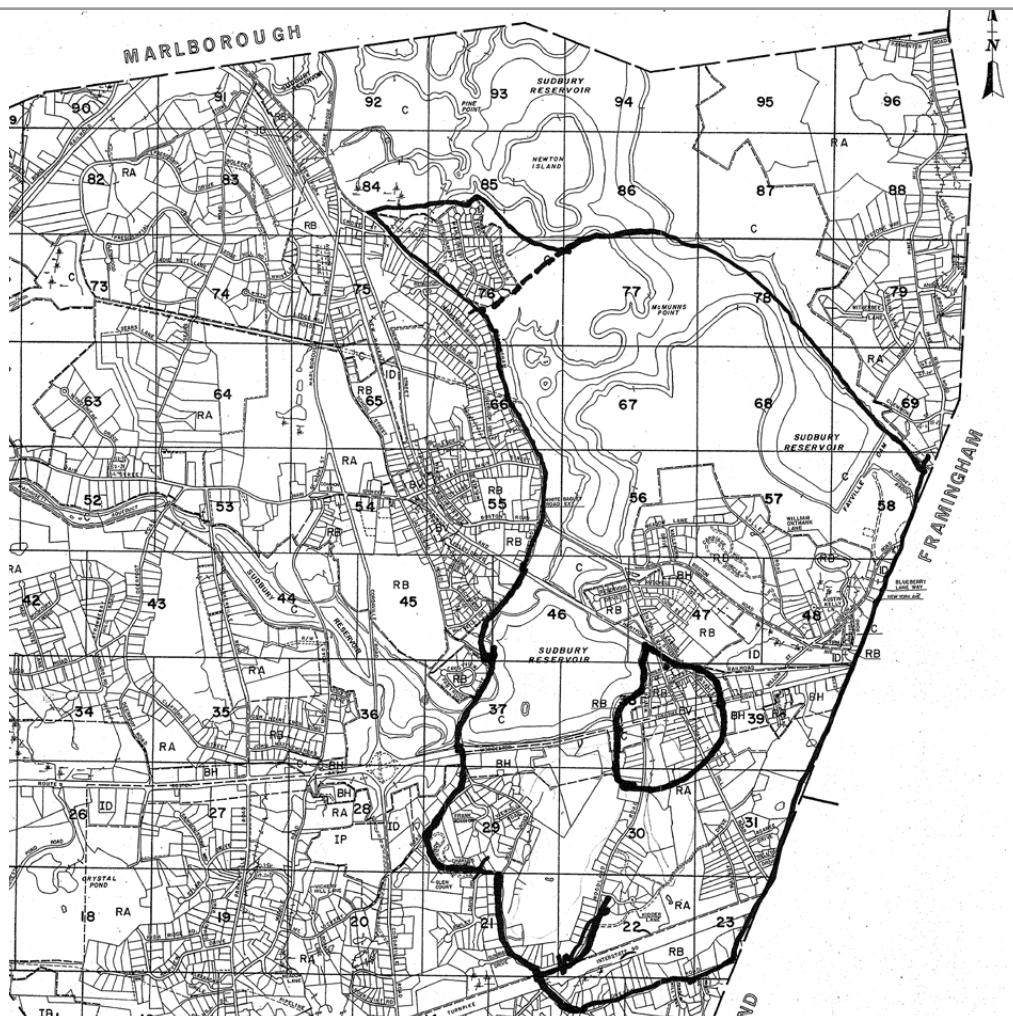
Fayville's boundaries were defined as a Fayville Village Center and a greater Fayville Neighborhood. Fayville Village Center starts to the north at the former New Haven/Hartford Rail line, including the eastern parcels of Pleasant Street to the east, approximately one-third mile south on Woodland Road and Oak Hill Road (including parcels in between, and west including the western parcels of Woodland Road and the border of the reservoir north of Route 9. The greater Fayville neighborhood includes all of the Sudbury Reservoir to the north, the town boundary with Framingham to the east, Oregon Road to the south (just south of I-90), and roughly Hill Road and White Bagley Road to the west (see Chart 9-4).

### Analysis

Strengths within the Fayville Village neighborhood include the proximity to natural resources for public access and views, such as the Town Forest, the Reservoir, the Turenne Wildlife Habitat, and Breakneck Hill Conservation area. In addition, Fay Field and local playgrounds



Chart 9-4  
Village Boundary: Fayville



hood. In particular, the participants wanted to see reuse and improvement of the old Volvo dealership site on Route 9, which is currently being redeveloped as a Walgreen's pharmacy. "More destinations" in general was echoed by many. In particular, participants expressed an interest in getting an anchor tenant to Fayville's Village Center. Restoration of the general store could be another alternative to provide somewhere for residents to go for their morning coffee, share the news, or to obtain other goods and services.

*Fay Memorial Field on a sunny, early spring day. (left)*

*The New England Center for Children, located in Fayville, is one of the best schools for autistic children in the country. (right)*



### Objectives

- ▶ Be a place for casual socializing and interaction (a place to "hang out") for all ages.
- ▶ Be a destination for local people by offering cultural, recreation and retail options that are appealing.
- ▶ Provide and improve sidewalks so that residents can walk to shops, restaurants, and other neighborhoods.
- ▶ Preserve older buildings (e.g. Fayville Hall) and historic village feel by implementing a demolition delay bylaw. Historic preservation was identified as very important in this village ("8 or 9 out of 10").
- ▶ Create a village feel with buildings reflecting the local vernacular for new construction or renovation by instituting architectural design guidelines.
- ▶ Increase size of business village area to make real estate opportunities more attractive and more functional for residents.
- ▶ Institute flexible mixed use zoning to facilitate and support new business such as retail and restaurants.
- ▶ Improve flow of traffic through Fayville lights (signalized intersection at Route 9 and Central Street/Oak Hill Road).



## Downtown

Southborough's fourth village is the Downtown (also known as Southborough Center or the Town Center). Located almost in the exact geographic center of Southborough, Main Street runs through this village. This is a typical rural town center, home to town offices and services, a church and cemetery, and a town green. In addition to these traditional features, the Downtown has an active but small retail base including restaurants, stores and professional services.

This is the physical center and the governmental Downtown, where the majority of municipal services are located. In addition to the Town House, the Senior Center, the Community House, the Police and Fire Departments and the Post Office are all located in the Downtown. In addition to the public Woodward Elementary School, the Fay School and St. Mark's School are all located in the Downtown; thus there is a significant level of student activity in this village.

Over the years, the number of businesses has grown from just a few to approximately two dozen. However, at the same time the rural character of the Downtown has suffered with this business growth. Key rural features such as the stone walls, decorative lighting and street trees have disappeared or decreased in favor of a more economically viable center. Participants in the Villages Visioning expressed interest in preserving the rural character as well as promoting this as a neighborhood business district.

In a 2001 Beals & Thomas report, a study of this area revealed how the historic streetscape had changed. Trees that used to line the streets had died or been removed and most of the

classic New England rural stone walls are gone. Both of these features help to create a pleasant pedestrian environment by framing the public sidewalks between the street and private yards. The Town is pursuing a reconstruction of Main Street that will restore features of this historic streetscape character and generally improve the downtown sidewalk network. Furthermore, Southborough is looking for funds to advance streetscape improvements including burying the utilities, installing historically accurate lighting and seating, and providing additional landscaping.

## Boundary

Two different groups addressed the Downtown, thus their idea of the boundary differed slightly. For one group the Business Village District included north up Marlborough Road to Ledge Hill Road, east to Framingham Road and the Reservoir, south encompassing Latisquama and Cordaville Roads until approximately Birchwood Drive, and the western boundary encompassing the Town House and the St. Mark's School recreation fields.

The second group described the Downtown as three districts within another. The smallest is the Commercial Core, which entails a short section of East Main Street from approximately School Street to Winchester and Newton Streets. The next area includes the Commercial Core; this downtown area extends from the Town House in the west, to the intersection of St. Mark's Street and Marlborough Road, across to Lyman Street as the western edge, and south of Main Street for approximately one-sixth mile. Finally the outer Downtown boundary—the Village—contains the two smaller districts and extends north of Ledge Hill Road, east to Overlook Drive and through to Framingham Road/the



Reservoir, south along White Bagley Road to just south of MacNeill Drive and finally west to encompass the intersection of Parkerville Road and Main Street. This outer district is similar to the first group, but slightly larger and includes more residential properties. See Chart 9-5 for graphic depictions of these districts.



### Analysis

Participants indicated that the Downtown has significant strengths upon which the residents see the future of this village. This traditional town center exemplifies the small town character of Southborough; it is simple and of a small scale. The mix of activities is appropriate for Southborough, including shops, restaurants, civic uses, schools and a library. Most uses are locally-owned, which is preferred. Pedestrian traffic is essential for the function of area and it has a fair level of pedestrian activity. Historic buildings, such as the Community House and those associated with the Fay and St. Mark's Schools, add distinction to the area. In addition to providing cover and aesthetic value, the trees on Main Street allude to the Town's agricultural history; however, additional upkeep is required. Finally, the Southborough House of Pizza is considered a fine example of preserving and reusing a noteworthy building, the former fire station. Participants hope to make this a model for the disposition of town-owned land and for redevelopment projects.



Aesthetically, Main Street could benefit from improvements. Vacant and underutilized lots are a disadvantage to the town center, because they suggest a lack of investment opportunities and disrupt the streetscape. Vacant lots are unpleasant for pedestrians. Utility poles, although essential for distributing power, are generally considered unsightly and clutter the landscape

*Main Street could benefit from improvements.  
(above)*



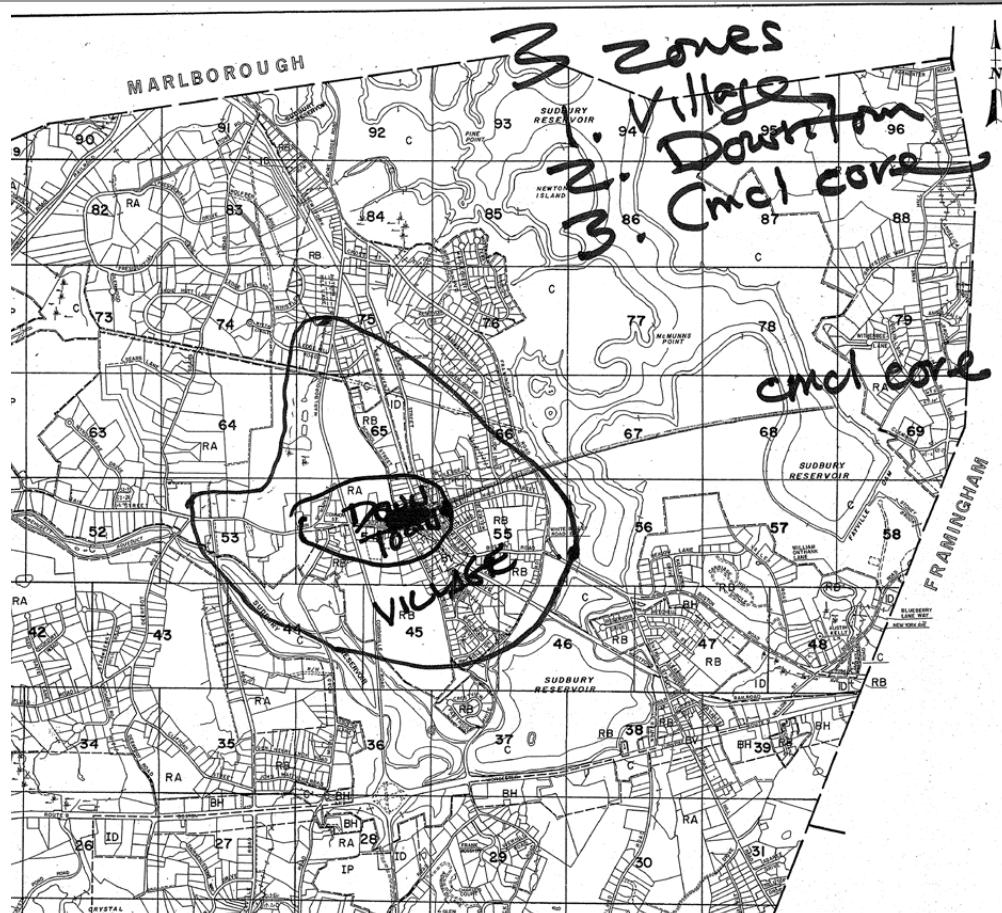
of the center of the village. Although parking is plentiful in this area (which is a positive) both on street and in private lots, the lots are not integrated or connected. Participants suggest that a better planned parking arrangement may be more efficient.

Similarly, the uses in the town center are not well connected, particularly the civic uses such as the schools, the library and the Community House. Although sidewalks exist in some parts of this village, they are not consistent and thus endanger the children who are traveling between the school, library, Community House and Downtown. In some situations the sidewalk is indistinguishable from front lawns. Better designed crosswalks will also aid in pedestrian access to the variety of uses in the Downtown. In addition to the poor sidewalks, Main Street is also in poor condition. While participants believe there are no traffic issues in the Downtown, (except for the intersection of Rts. 30 and 85) slowing traffic is encouraged to promote and enhance the village feel. The reconstruction of Main Street's sidewalk network—discussed above—will help resolve this concern by slowing traffic and providing a safer pedestrian environment.

### Objectives

- ▶ Prepare a long term plan for Main St. that addresses function, aesthetics, uses and safety.
- ▶ Use of vacant land on Newton Street could be for senior housing.
- ▶ Increase the allowable number of 55+ units throughout the town (maybe “special” case to allow increase number for the Newton Street site).
- ▶ Underground the utilities on Main Street.

Chart 9-5  
Village Boundary: Downtown



- ▶ Limit new parking allowed in downtown.
- ▶ Slow traffic speeds.
- ▶ Improve connectivity (walking, bicycling) between uses and between other neighborhoods.
- ▶ Make improvements to the streetscape, including repairs to stone walls, adding consistent and attractive lighting and maintaining sidewalks.
- ▶ Use a special sidewalk treatment in the commercial core (School Street to Boston Road).
- ▶ Preserve and protect the historic and

architectural character by instituting design review and demolition delay.

- ▶ Maintain height at 2 stories.
- ▶ Encourage preservation of historic houses.
- ▶ Keep municipal buildings on Main Street.
- ▶ Keep commercially zoned area small.
- ▶ Extend sidewalks on Route 85 to Woodward School and St. Mark's School.
- ▶ New sidewalks on Main Street with proper curbing and crosswalks.
- ▶ Fix railroad crossing on Main Street.

# Villages Goals

## V-1

Promote growth and development within the Downtown to encourage a mixed-use environment.

## V-2

Reinvigorate Southborough's villages by creating small, resident-driven businesses.

### V-2.1

Provide the types of goods and services that Southborough residents now have to obtain in adjacent communities.

# Villages Recommendations

- ▶ Goal 1: Promote growth and development within the Downtown to encourage a mixed-use environment.
- ▶ V-1: Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of a low size threshold for special permits in the Business Village District. Consider increasing the threshold while requiring permitted uses to conform to minimum design and impact standards, subject to site plan approval by the Planning Board (see Chapter 2 recommendations).
- ▶ V-2: To provide more foot traffic and encourage appropriate scale and design in the Business Village District (see Chapter 2 recommendations):
  - Allow mixed-use buildings as of right in the Business Village District, subject to minimum design and impact standards, and site plan approval by the Planning Board (Cordaville, Downtown and Fayville).
  - Use zoning to encourage appropriate transit-oriented development around MBTA station
  - Allow small multi-family dwellings in the Business Village District, i.e., without limiting the use to a Major Residential Development.
- ▶ V-3: Establish guidelines for specific villages to include architectural, lighting, and streetscape design standards that enhance local character (see Chapter 2 recommendations).
- ▶ V-4: Revise boundaries of the Business Village District (see Chapter 2 recommendations).
- ▶ V-5: Preserve and encourage activity at key village buildings such as Fayville Hall, South Union School building, and others.
- ▶ Goal 2: Reinvigorate Southborough's villages by creating small, resident-driven businesses.
- ▶ Provide the types of goods and services that Southborough residents now have to obtain in adjacent communities.
- ▶ ED-5: Continue to participate in regional economic development organizations in the MetroWest area, and consider institutionalizing a quarterly meeting or "roundtable" forum between local and regional business leaders and the Planning Board.
- ▶ ED-7: Establish a local business directory on the town's website, or create links to local business and non-profit organization websites.



# 10. Implementation



**This element is arguably the most important in the entire master plan. The implementation element is based on the goals and objectives of this Master Plan and the data that was collected and analyzed.**

## Introduction

This element is arguably the most important in the entire master plan. The implementation element is based on the goals and objectives of this Master Plan and the data that was collected and analyzed. To ensure the implementation on a year-to-year basis of these actions, the Town of Southborough should clearly identify some entity comprised of representatives from Town staff and existing boards and commissions and other key stakeholders that will be charged with ensuring that this plan is used and followed. This entity will be responsible not only for coordinating overall implementation of the plan, but would also work to ensure that public outreach and education is achieved.

Specifically, the best options are to either create a Board of Selectmen appointed Master Plan Implementation Committee, or that responsibility can be left to the Planning Board, which is already charged with official adoption of the Plan pursuant to M.G.L. c. 41 §81D. Regardless, in order to provide some “accountability” for plan implementation, this Committee or the Board should be required to present an annual report to the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting on plan implementation progress,

*A scene from the first Public Forum held during the master plan process.*

achievements, and barriers to successful implementation.

The implementation element is often the most difficult component of a Master Plan. Unlike the lofty goals and objectives of the previous sections, here is where the rubber meets the road, where the planning ideals are translated into concrete actions. The following recommendations can sometimes be difficult to commit to and be problematic to review over time. Items that have been accomplished fade from view, while the more intractable problems linger for years. Financial and political trends may change, advancing some items while leaving others untouched. For these reasons alone, many communities are hesitant to put in writing the full scope of their intentions.

The following implementation plan intends to deliver on the promise of the goals and objectives expressed throughout this process, with a program of tangible steps for the Town to take over the next ten years and beyond. There is a high level of activity on these issues, based upon the input received during the planning process.

These actions are targeted to address the physical as well as the organizational issues confronting the Town, as described and analyzed throughout this plan. The recommendations described below work to correct these “process” problems, while still maintaining a focus on the substantive issues of land use; housing; economic development; open space and recreation; natural, cultural and historic resources; transportation and circulation; municipal facilities; and Southborough’s villages.

In order to ensure follow-through on the recommendations of this plan, the Town should consider some mechanism for reporting on progress on a regular basis. Some communities require annual reports to Town Meeting. Another community has developed a follow-up evaluation form that specifically lists each action item and asks for responses. It is important to note that planning is a dynamic process and priorities can shift over time. A consistent review process allows for these issues to be acknowledged while keeping each specific recommendation on the table unless a situation dictates that it be reconsidered. A regular evaluation or follow-up procedure will at least indicate how a particular action item was ultimately addressed, or it calls out those that still need attention.

The table below summarizes the specific recommendations found at the end of each of the plan’s elements. However, they are organized by function (i.e. land use and zoning, data collection, municipal facilities, etc.). Thus, recommendations from several plan elements may actually be listed under land use and zoning. The department, board or commission responsible for implementing each recommendation is identified. Levels of priority are

assigned to assist in determining the timeframe in which each item is to be considered. Finally, if funding is required to achieve success, the potential sources for the funds are listed.

Please note that the recommendation numbers in the matrix below may not be in numerical order due to the way in which they have been functionally categorized.

# Implementation Plan

## Responsible Parties

- ▶ BOH – Board of Health
- ▶ BOS – Board of Selectmen
- ▶ C of C – Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Con. Comm. – Conservation Commission
- ▶ CPA – Community Preservation Act
- ▶ CPC – Community Preservation Committee
- ▶ DCR – Department of Conservation and Recreation
- ▶ DPW – Department of Public Works
- ▶ Hist. Comm. – Historical Commission
- ▶ MBTA – MA Bay Transportation Authority
- ▶ MHD – MA 2009 - Highway Department
- ▶ MWRA – MA Water Resources Authority
- ▶ OSPC – Open Space Preservation Commission
- ▶ PB – Planning Board
- ▶ Planning – Planning Department
- ▶ Rec. Comm. – Recreation Commission
- ▶ SHA – Southborough Housing Authority
- ▶ SHOPC – Southborough Housing Partnership Committee
- ▶ TIP – Transportation Improvement Plan

## Data Collection

Recommendation		Responsibility*	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
LU - 1	Revise and update demographic and land use data after 2010 Census	Planning	2011 - 2014	
LU - 2	Develop database to reflect current land use trends to improve and update GIS information	Planning	2011 - 2014	
H - 5	Inventory Town-owned and tax title property to identify potential parcels for use as affordable housing sites to be developed/rehabilitated by Town or by private developers	Planning; Treasurer; SHOPC; SHA;	2009 - 2010	
OSR - 12	Inventory Town-owned and tax title property to identify potential parcels for use for open space and recreational purposes	Planning; Treasurer; OSPC; Rec. Comm.	2009 - 2010	

\* The entity charged with the primary responsibility for implementation is shown in **bold**.

# Implementation Plan

Recommendation		Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
NCHR - 14	Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Southborough including the character defining features to assist in review under the Scenic Roads Act	<b>BOS;</b> OSPC; Hist. Comm.	2011 - 2014	
<b>Land Use and Zoning*</b>				
LU - 3	<p>Conduct thorough review of zoning bylaw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Formatting</li> <li>▶ Update definitions</li> <li>▶ Conformance with master plan</li> <li>▶ Legal consistency</li> <li>▶ Update use regulations</li> <li>▶ Smart growth techniques</li> </ul>	<b>PB</b>	2008	Town funding
LU - 4	Specifically allow for mixed-use projects in Business Village and Business Highway districts	<b>PB</b>	2008	Town funding
LU - 5	Establish design guidelines or use form-based codes to encourage better building layout and streetscape design	<b>PB</b>	2008	Town funding
LU - 6	Overhaul and update the Town's off-street parking requirements in zoning, and consider establishing maximum (in addition to the existing minimum) parking space requirements	<b>PB</b>	2008	Town funding
LU - 7	Review subdivision rules and regulations to make consistent with zoning changes and LID bylaw	<b>PB</b>	2008	Town funding
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.)	<b>PB</b>	2009 - 2010	Town funding

\* For Land Use and Zoning implementation, the Planning Board holds primary responsibility, but it is intended that a Steering Committee including representatives, selected boards, commissions, key stakeholders, and interested citizens will be established.

Recommendation		Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
LU - 9	Consider adopting a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) bylaw to encourage the preservation of valued open space in rural portions of Southborough and transfer those development rights to a village center that may be appropriate for more dense development (i.e. Downtown)	PB	2009 - 2010	Town funding
LU - 10	Consider changing the zoning for lands already protected as open space so that they are rezoned for the Conservation District	PB	2009 - 2010	Town funding
LU - 11	Revise zoning to amend Major Residential Development to an Open Space Residential Development that provides for clustered housing development	PB	2008	Town funding
H - 7	Expand affordable housing provisions in zoning (inclusionary zoning) to include Multi-family Housing for the Elderly bylaw and mixed-use development if adopted. Consider providing incentives to make it more attractive to developers	PB	2008	Town funding
H - 8	Revise zoning to expand housing choices by allowing multi-family dwellings, mixed-use development, duplexes, etc. in a variety of zoning districts	PB	2008	Town funding
H - 9	Allow duplexes by special permit	PB	2008	Town funding
H - 10	Revise zoning to allow accessory apartments through site plan review by the Planning Board	PB	2008	Town funding
ED - 3	Evaluate opportunities to modify the Highway Business District boundaries in order to provide more depth and foster orderly commercial development along Route 9	PB	2008	Town funding

# Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
ED - 4  Reduce the potential for land use conflicts and preserve commercially zoned land for business uses by:  ▶ prohibiting single-family dwellings in the Highway Business District and the Industrial District ▶ considering elimination of the power to grant use variances once a comprehensive revision of the zoning bylaw is complete and it is determined that they are no longer relevant	PB	2008 (first bullet) 2009 - 2010 (second bullet)	Town funding
ED - 8  Overhaul and update the existing use regulations in the business and industrial districts to reduce use conflicts, foster multi-use development, and encourage clusters of compatible businesses	PB	2008	
OSR - 5  Revise zoning bylaw to expand effective cluster development opportunities by amending Major Residential Development to create an Open Space Residential Development bylaw	PB	2008	Town funding
NCHR - 18  Adopt zoning regulations to address development impacts on scenic vistas	PB	2008	
NCHR - 19  Consider a scenic overlay district which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views	PB	2011 - 2014	
V - 1  Consider increasing the size threshold for uses requiring a special permit in the Business Village District and establishing minimum design and impact standards that permitted uses must meet in order to obtain site plan approval from the Planning Board	PB	2008	Town funding

Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
<p>To provide more foot traffic and encourage appropriate scale and design in the Business Village District:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Allow mixed-use buildings as of right in the Business Village District, subject to minimum design and impact standards, and site plan approval by the Planning Board (Cordaville, Downtown and Fayville).</li> <li>▶ Use zoning to encourage appropriate transit-oriented development around MBTA station</li> <li>▶ Allow small multi-family dwellings in the Business Village District, i.e., without limiting the use to a Major Residential Development.</li> </ul>	<b>PB</b>	2008	Town funding
V - 3 Establish guidelines for specific villages to include architectural, lighting, and streetscape design standards that enhance local character	<b>PB</b>	2009 - 2010	
V - 4 Review and revise boundaries of the Business Village District	<b>PB</b>	2008	Town funding

# Implementation Plan

Recommendation		Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
<b>Housing</b>				
H - 1	Develop a master plan for use of CPA funds	<b>CPC;</b> SHOPC; SHA	2008	CPA
H - 2	<p>Continue to use CPA funds for variety of affordable housing strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ rehabilitation of existing housing stock (loan program)</li> <li>▶ develop creative financing mechanisms to assist income eligible households</li> <li>▶ purchase existing multi-family homes for rental housing administered by SHA</li> <li>▶ buy-down existing housing stock</li> <li>▶ construct septic systems for non-profit affordable housing development</li> <li>▶ provide matching funds for partnerships with non-profits</li> <li>▶ provide housing for disabled and elderly residents</li> </ul>	<b>CPC;</b> SHOPC; SHA	Ongoing	CPA; HOME American Dream Downpayment Initiative; Affordable Housing Trust Fund
H - 3	Encourage development on in-fill and non-conforming parcels	<b>PB;</b> SHOPC; SHA	2008	Town funding
H - 4	Encourage re-use of commercial buildings for loft apartments and/or live-work space	<b>SHOPC;</b> SHA	2011 - 2014	
H - 6	Encourage a greater diversity of housing options (apartments in 40B projects; accessory apartments, deed restrictions in existing dwellings, etc.)	<b>SHOPC;</b> SHA	Ongoing	
H - 11	Allow shared septic systems to encourage alternatives to single-family homes.	<b>BOH</b>	Ongoing	

Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
<b>Economic Development</b>			
ED - 1	Explore opportunities for shared wastewater disposal or small package treatments plants to meet the needs of multiple commercial properties, and assure that local regulations do not impede shared systems	BOH; PB	2009 - 2010
ED - 2	Consider opportunities for local government to construct area or district wastewater disposal facilities and finance the design/construction costs through betterments or a District Improvement Financing (DIF) agreement	BOS; DPW	2011 - 2014
ED - 5	Continue to participate in regional economic development organizations in the MetroWest area, and consider institutionalizing a quarterly meeting or "roundtable" forum between local and regional business leaders and the Planning Board	PB; Corridor 9; MetroWest Growth Mgt. Comm.; Marlborough Regional C of C; Metrowest C of C; Arc of Innovation	Ongoing
ED - 6	Re-establish an Economic and Industrial Development Commission in order to build Southborough's capacity to carry out economic development and broaden the tax base. Include representatives of for-profit and non-profit employer establishments and self-employed individuals	BOS	2008
ED - 7	Establish a local business directory on the Town's website, or create links to local business and non-profit organization websites	BOS	2008
ED - 9	Consult with a variety of stakeholders, including developers, engineers and attorneys with working knowledge of Southborough's zoning, to define and identify bottlenecks, conflicts and redundancy	PB; BOS	2008 and ongoing
ED - 10	Consider streamlining the permitting process for allowed uses in small and mid-size developments by assigning administrative site plan review authority to the Development Coordinating Group	PB; BOS	2008 Town funding

# Implementation Plan

Recommendation		Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
ED - 11	Prepare a development permitting guidebook for use by developers and Town boards	PB	2011 - 2014	M.G.L. 43D
Open Space and Recreation				
OSR - 1	Develop criteria to establish priorities for open space acquisition	OSPC/Rec. Comm.; Con. Comm.	2009 - 2010	
OSR - 2	Create process for addressing right of first refusal for Chapter 61 lands that become available	BOS; OSPC; Rec. Comm.; PB; Con. Comm.	2008	
OSR - 3	Develop a master plan for use of CPA funds	CPC; OSPC	2008	CPA
OSR - 4	Work with land trusts and establish public-private partnerships to preserve farm land through purchase of conservation restrictions (CRs) or agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs)	OSPC; BOS	Ongoing	CPA; private funding; APR program; Self-Help
OSR - 6	Protect land contiguous with open space along the Bay Circuit Trail	OSPC/Rec. Comm.; CPC	2011 - 2014	CPA; Self-Help
OSR - 7	Work with MWRA and DCR to expand access to open spaces and water resources in Southborough	BOS; OSPC; Rec. Comm.; Con. Comm.	Ongoing	
OSR - 8	Establish canoe launch and walking trails, and enhance natural buffer along the Sudbury River and Mill Pond	OSPC/Rec. Comm.; Con. Comm.	2011 - 2014	CPA: Self- Help
OSR - 9	Establish walking trails and bicycle paths to create network that connects open space resources in Southborough with adjacent towns and state land (i.e. Hopkinton State Park)	OSPC/Rec. Comm.	2015 - 2018	CPA: Self- Help; Urban Self-Help
OSR - 13	Provide and communicate high quality recreation programs and activities that meet the needs of all ages of residents and builds a stronger sense of community	Rec. Comm.	Ongoing	
OSR - 14	Strengthen partnerships with committees and organizations throughout the Town	Rec. Comm.	Ongoing	

Recommendation		Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
OSR - 15	Operate Recreation like an enterprise to increase user loyalty and provide fiscally sound budgeting	Rec. Comm.	Ongoing	
<b>Natural Resources</b>				
NCHR - 1	Identify, evaluate and map potential wildlife corridors, including regional and local connections to core habitat areas	Con. Comm.; OSPC	Ongoing	CPA
NCHR - 2	Identify, delineate and document wetland resources	Con. Comm.; OSPC	2009 - 2010	
NCHR - 3	Continue to apply for certification of vernal pools	Con. Comm.	Ongoing	
NCHR - 4	Work with MWRA and DCR to maintain vegetation along the Sudbury Reservoir to preserve and enhance views from surrounding areas and trails	BOS; OSPC; Con. Comm.; Rec. Comm.	Ongoing	
NCHR - 5	Adopt policies to encourage green development practices and LEED* certifiable technologies by the Town and private developers (i.e. review site plan review for environmental/energy efficiency criteria)	BOS; PB	2009 - 2010	
NCHR - 6	Prepare local climate action plan for emission reduction, implementation, and monitoring	BOS; Town-wide	2009 - 2010	MA Climate Action Network (technical assistance)
NCHR - 7	Prepare and implement habitat protection plans for open space in ecologically sensitive areas	Con. Comm.; OSPC	2009 - 2010	
<b>Cultural and Historic Resources**</b>				
NCHR - 8	Develop a master plan for use of CPA funds	CPC; Hist. Comm.	2008	CPA

\* LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

\*\* See Chapter 6 for a detailed list of funding sources for historic preservation initiatives.

# Implementation Plan

Recommendation		Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
NCHR - 9	Consider establishment of National Register neighborhood historic district in Southville, Cordaville, Fayville and Downtown	<b>Hist. Comm.</b>	2009 – 2010	CPA
NCHR - 10	Nominate individual properties to the National Register of Historic Places	<b>Hist. Comm.</b>	Ongoing	CPA
NCHR - 11	Reconsider demolition delay bylaw to preserve historic and architecturally significant buildings	<b>Hist. Comm.</b>	2009 - 2010	CPA
NCHR - 12	Heighten awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Southborough's historic and archaeological resources and their preservation	<b>Hist. Comm.</b>	Ongoing	CPA
NCHR - 13	Document additional farms that may not presently be included in Southborough's inventory of historic resources, using MHC survey forms	<b>Hist. Comm.; OSPC</b>	Ongoing	CPA
NCHR - 15	Create local Scenic Roads Bylaw that add design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls, such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads	<b>PB;</b> Hist. Comm.	2009 - 2010	
NCHR - 16	Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions, which address scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety	<b>DPW;</b> Hist. Comm.	Ongoing	
NCHR - 17	Encourage the use of historic tax credits by providing more information on federal and state rehabilitation tax credits to the general public	<b>Hist. Comm.</b>	Ongoing	

## Transportation, Transit, and Circulation

T - 1	Seek reasonable and clear mitigation commitments from development projects on Town-owned roadways, tying appropriate increases in transportation demand to an appropriate amount of improvement funding	<b>PB</b>	Ongoing	
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Recommendation		Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
T - 2	Continue legislative advocacy for and encourage MassHighway participation in a study of the Rt. 9 corridor	<b>BOS;</b> PB	2008	
T - 3	In order to improve the problem of the north-south divide created by Rt. 9, consider an at-grade intersection or flyover at Parkerville Road and Rt. 9	<b>DPW;</b> BOS	2015 - 2018	
T - 4	Work with the MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority and continue involvement with the MBTA to actively work to expand public transportation services in Southborough and adjacent communities	<b>BOS;</b> Planning	2008	
T - 5	Encourage the MBTA to provide more parking at or near commuter rail station and work with neighboring communities to identify potential park and ride lots and identify opportunities for transit-oriented development	<b>BOS;</b> MBTA; Planning	2009 - 2010	MBTA; private investment
T - 6	Establish a sidewalk, pedestrian, and bicycling committee to facilitate better opportunities and improvements	<b>BOS;</b> Rec. Comm.	2008	
T - 7	Provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access by repairing and constructing new sidewalks; maintaining crosswalks; and providing bicycle lanes, paths, and parking (prepare sidewalk master plan and implement Central Transportation Planning Staff report)	<b>BOS;</b> Planning; DPW	2009 - 2010	
T - 8	Establish and implement streetscape improvements for larger new development projects	<b>PB</b>	2009 - 2010	
T - 9	Look for ways to increase street connectivity by creating through roadways instead of cul-de-sacs where feasible	<b>PB</b>	Ongoing	
T - 10	Require large developments to implement transportation demand management strategies designed to reduce vehicle miles traveled	<b>PB</b>	Ongoing	
T - 11	Begin analysis and planning for addressing vehicular mobility, road conditions, and intersection improvements	<b>DPW;</b> BOS	2015 - 2018	Ch. 90; TIP funds

# Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
<b>Municipal Facilities</b>			
OSR - 10 Identify Town-wide needs for recreational facilities	Rec. Comm.	2008	
OSR - 11 Develop long-term comprehensive plan for improving the quality and maintaining the safety of all recreational facilities including Town parks, playgrounds and athletic fields	Rec. Comm.	2009 - 2010	Urban Self-Help
OSR - 12 Develop Town-wide recreation center to provide year-round activities for all age groups	Rec. Comm.; BOS	2011 - 2014	Urban Self-Help
MF - 1 Replace the Police Station with a modern, safe, adequately sized facility that can meet current and future needs	BOS; Police	2009 - 2010	Town
MF - 2 Plan for and schedule improvements to the Fire Department's headquarters	BOS; Fire	2009 - 2010	Town
MF - 3 Identify suitable site, or explore regional opportunities, for a fire substation to serve the southern part of Southborough; plan for and schedule construction of a fire substation	BOS; Fire	2011 - 2014	Town
MF - 4 Implement the Southborough Facilities Plan by planning for renovations and improvements to Cordaville Hall	BOS	2011 - 2014	
MF - 5 Continue to upgrade and improve Fayville Hall	BOS	2011 - 2014	
MF - 6 Explore opportunities for shared wastewater disposal or small package treatments plants, such as a wastewater treatment facility serving facilities in the center of Town, and assure that local regulations do not impede shared systems	BOH; PB	Ongoing	Private
MF - 7 Consider opportunities for using District Improvement Financing (DIF) to leverage public facility investments from commercial or industrial development	BOS; PB	Ongoing	
MF - 8 Adopt a Town manager form of government, whether by establishing a charter commission or petitioning for a special act of the legislature ("special act charter").	BOS; Town Meeting; State Legislature	2011 - 2014	

Recommendation		Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
MF - 9	Consider holding quarterly meetings or "all boards" meetings in order to have a predictable process for encouraging boards and commissions to communicate	<b>BOS;</b> all boards and commissions	Ongoing	
MF - 10	Provide support for website development and maintenance, and include technology in any program for enhancing communications within Town government	<b>BOS</b>	Ongoing	
MF - 11	<p>Develop volunteer recruitment and volunteer recognition programs to encourage residents to serve on Town boards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Create a "mentor" system with a small corps of veteran board or committee members who serve as points of contact for new appointees.</li> <li>▶ Design and distribute a "welcome packet" for interested volunteers, including basic information about Southborough's local government, finances, public service opportunities, and major issues affecting the Town.</li> <li>▶ Provide high-quality training programs so that new officials can learn their roles and responsibilities and all officials can stay on top of major issues, changes in state law, and case law affecting the jurisdiction of the boards on which they serve.</li> </ul>	<b>BOS</b>	Ongoing	
MF - 12	Explore additional options for streamlining and modernizing Southborough's form of government, e.g., a consolidated finance department	<b>BOS</b>	2009 - 2010	
MF - 13	Establish a systematic process for developing, maintaining and implementing a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)	<b>BOS;</b> all Town departments	Ongoing	
MF - 14	Charge the Capital Budget Planning Committee (Capital Planning or Asset Management Committee) with responsibility for developing an asset management plan	<b>BOS</b>	Ongoing	
MF - 15	Establish criteria for making (a) surplus property determinations and (b) land use suitability decisions for properties that will be sold or leased	<b>BOS;</b> PB	Ongoing	

# Implementation Plan

Recommendation		Responsibility	Priority/Timing	Potential Funding Source
MF - 16	Use the Town-owned property inventory developed for the CIP and the surplus property criteria referred to above, conduct a parcel-by-parcel assessment of a site's suitability for municipal facilities or open space	<b>BOS;</b> PB; Con. Comm.	Ongoing	
MF - 17	Rank or group properties by relative importance to the Town, and consult with Town boards and committees about properties that appear to be appropriate candidates for disposition	<b>BOS;</b> PB; Con. Comm.	Ongoing	
MF - 18	For properties deemed appropriate for disposition based on an initial consultation process, conduct a public meeting to solicit comments and answer questions from residents	<b>BOS</b>	As needed	
MF - 19	Develop standard documents that can be used to dispose of surplus property, e.g., standard Request for Proposals (RFP) documents that comply with the Uniform Procurement Act, M.G.L. c. 30B	<b>BOS</b>	2009 - 2010	
MF - 20	Secure Town meeting approval for property dispositions (when a Town meeting vote is required by law)	<b>BOS</b>	As needed	
MF - 21	Maintain timely updates of the Southborough Open Space and Recreation Plan, and implement it	<b>OSPC;</b> Con. Comm.; Rec. Comm.	Ongoing	Self-Help; Urban Self-Help
MF - 22	Integrate recreation facility improvements within the Capital Improvements Plan	<b>Rec. Comm.;</b> OSPC	Ongoing	Urban Self-Help
MF - 23	Prepare and implement land management plans for publicly owned open space	<b>Con. Comm.;</b> OSPC; Rec. Comm.	2009 - 2010	

## Villages

V - 5	Preserve and encourage activity at key village buildings such as Fayville Hall, South Union School building, and others	<b>Hist. Comm.;</b> neighborhood groups	Ongoing	
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# Appendix A. Historic Properties Survey

**SOUTHBOROUGH MASSACHUSETTS**  
**HISTORIC PROPERTIES SURVEY**  
**FINAL REPORT**

**Anne McCarthy Forbes, Preservation Consultant**  
**Gretchen G. Schuler, Preservation Consultant**

**25 Martin Street**

**Acton, MA 01720**

**June 2000**

## **SOUTHBOROUGH HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY**

### **COMPLETION REPORT - JUNE 30, 2000**

#### **I. PROJECT SUMMARY**

Funded by the Town of Southborough and a matching Survey & Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), this project conducted a community-wide intensive survey of the town, which resulted in an expanded and updated inventory of Southborough's historic, architectural, and cultural resources. A volunteer survey had been conducted in 1971 documenting over 250 resources with photographs, some building materials facts, and names shown on the 1870 and 1898 historic maps. Additional survey work included the mid-1980s work on resources associated with the Metropolitan Water Supply which resulted in a National Register nomination of those resources, a 1995 survey in conjunction with a regional system of resources near the Boston & Albany Railroad tracks, including properties in Cordaville and Southville, of which parts of both areas were determined to be National Register eligible. In 1999 eight important properties were documented prior to the beginning of this project. The current Survey & Planning project has brought the documentation of most of the town's historic properties up to current MHC standards, has included many twentieth century properties, and has added information on structures, objects, burial grounds, and landscapes. A total of 170 forms were written or updated in this project, which is the equivalent of 230 individual inventory forms, due to the comprehensive approach of the area form.

#### **II. METHODOLOGY**

**Survey Objectives** The scope and procedures followed for the survey were tailored to the town's goals of extending documentation to all historic resources in Southborough that retain their architectural or historic significance; and included updating, correcting, and adding to the information of former survey efforts. MHC survey methodology was used. In addition to completing survey forms the project also involved the writing of a narrative history of Southborough, a list of individual properties and districts recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places after the NR criteria had been applied to all documented properties, the completion of an index showing properties that were documented in this project, a comprehensive bibliography and a base map locating all documented properties.

**Survey Procedures** In order to attain these goals within the prescribed budget, the use of the Area Form format was used to document geographically and historically related properties such as the villages of Cordaville, Fayville and Southville. Due to the budget constraints, it was not possible to replace all former inventory forms and add twentieth century properties that had not been previously documented with this combined approach. Some individual properties within the areas that retain a high degree of historical and/or architectural significance were documented in more detail on individual inventory forms.

**Criteria for Selecting Properties** It was not possible to document all of Southborough's pre-1960 resources according to current standards. Properties chosen for this survey project met the following criteria:

1. historic and/or architectural importance, including National Register eligibility;
2. endangerment by either demolition, neglect, or alteration;
3. lack or inaccuracy of prior documentation

In keeping with these criteria, properties that are listed on the National Register were not documented nor were the eight properties that had been documented in 1999. Furthermore only a sampling of mid-twentieth century resources, most of which illustrate representative examples of the building types constructed in Southborough during that era, were documented. No consideration of subdivisions of the early 1960s.

### **III. EXPLANATION OF PRODUCTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENT**

**Inventory Forms.** In all, 170 forms were completed during this 1999-2000 survey project: 133 Building (B), 2 Parks & Landscape (H), 4 Structure (F), 2 Object (C), 3 Burial Ground (E), and 26 Area (A) Forms. The projected number of forms was 230 in the scope of work. The scale of the area forms accounts for the difference in the numbers of forms. The former inventory list was used as a base.

The survey work followed the Massachusetts Historical Commission methodology which began with field work - photographing each property to be included in the project and recording notes on the architecture and context of properties. Historical research for each property and for the overall development patterns included review of the historical maps, directories, town reports, vital records, town histories, old photographs, newspaper microfilm, and other historical information available.

The use of historic maps was extended back to the 1795 and 1831 plans of Southborough on which there are no historic names, and the 1856 and 1857 Wallings maps, both of which are well labeled. The 1856 version has a series of sketches of important dwellings around the edges of the map and information was derived and confirmed from these sketches in a couple of instances. Copies of the 1856 Map are framed and hanging in the Southborough Historical Society and in the entrance lobby of the Southborough Department of Public Works. The 1971 and the 1995 survey efforts did not include information from the 1856 and 1857 maps, thus the first known historic name has been changed for pre-1856 properties that had been documented in the past. The use of this information has led to a revision of the names and dates on many of the properties included in the 1971 survey and the 1995 Area Forms for Cordaville and Southville.

For some properties, later historic maps also were used. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of 1912, 1915, 1925, and 1932/1945 updates clearly show footprints and functions of most commercial, industrial and institutional buildings as well as of their immediate residential neighbors. The 1937 WPA map proved useful for identifying working farmsteads (though without owner names) in the Depression era.

Completed survey forms (in duplicate) include at least one photograph, a sketch map, other pertinent information that identifies the property such as assessor's map number, building material, style, date, setting and statements of architectural description and historical information, and an abbreviated list of reference materials. Historical map information including the map name for a property is included in the bibliography/reference section of each form. National Register criteria was applied to each property and for those properties that are likely to be NR eligible, a statement of eligibility has been attached to the survey form.

This project was completed by Anne Forbes and Gretchen Schuler. Both names are used on each survey form, with the name of the person who completed the work on that property appearing first, thus each form is labeled "Forbes/Schuler" or "Schuler/Forbes" under "Recorded By".

Construction Dates and Building and Property Descriptions. The dates used reflect the completion date when known. There are a number of bracketed dates which indicate evidence that a property was not built by the first date and was in place by the second date. These usually represent fairly broad estimates. A date of "ca. 1800", for instance might mean that a building could have been constructed at least twenty years earlier or later. In some instances general dates are given in spite of the fact that local tradition may attribute a specific date. In those cases the surveyor recommends further interior investigation or other research to narrow the gap or substantiate a date. The use of dates recorded on old forms and in the Assessors Office was limited because of a large amount of known inaccuracies. Published Southborough Assessor's Reports, however, which exist from intermittent years beginning in 1860, provided a wealth of precise, accurate information. They helped to narrow bracketed dates for both a building's construction and a transfer of property ownership. They also provided clues to enlargements of buildings, the functions and dates of outbuildings, and to the shrinking and expanding of acreage. When available, published Assessor's Records were used to test traditional dates. On occasions when the two conflicted, the traditional construction date was revised based on the Assessor's information. Building permits are not available until the 1970s thus they were not reviewed.

The condition of each property was based on the preservation condition or integrity. Thus if the property has synthetic siding, the condition was assessed to be "fair" in spite of the property being in good repair. Likewise if a property has been substantially altered to remove defining features but was surveyed for historical significance the condition is recorded as "fair" rather than "good", which is the condition designation for most other properties.

Maps, MHC Identification Numbers, Assessor's Map and Parcel Information. Properties identified in this survey project have been plotted by MHC identification letter or number on a large base map provided by the Southborough Historical Commission. The numbering sequence, established in consultation with MHC staff, may be used to identify Southborough's historic resources in the State Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) system which is a computerized data base of historic properties. Former numbering has been retained, therefore new properties that have been documented in this project including significant outbuildings on properties that already had a number, have been given a number. This means that consecutive numbering is limited to areas where resources were not included in former survey work. In general new numbers were assigned to properties proceeding geographically northwest to southeast and ending in the northeast part of

Southborough and in the following order: new individual B-Forms, new Area Forms, additional resources on old individual B-Forms, and finally new resources in old Area Forms.

In accordance with MHC policy all burial grounds have been numbered in the 800s, and all structures, objects, sites, and landscapes in the 900s. At the end of this survey project, the identification numbers for burial grounds end at #803, for structures, objects, sites, and landscapes at #972, and for buildings at #751.

Each Area Form is identified by an alphabetical designation currently ranging from Area A through AF. This project identified 23 new areas (Area J through AF) and added information to Areas B, C, and D. Each resource discussed or included in the Data Sheet accompanying an Area Form has been given an individual identification number. The revisions for Areas B and C, Southville and Cordaville respectively, were added on Continuations Sheets and include data sheets showing all properties in area from the 1995 survey and for this effort. A new area form was prepared for Area D, Fayville, because the former form had only a sketch map with no addresses and no architectural or historical information. The former Area A, which covers much of the town center along Main Street, did not have an actual Area Form from a former survey project. No new Area Form was written for Area A during this project, as nearly all its properties were re-documented on individual forms or small Area Forms.

The town Assessor's map and parcel number for each property has been listed on the inventory forms and area data sheets. It is anticipated that the use of this data will help to coordinate preservation planning with other types of planning within Southborough. Furthermore the assessor's number is a specific identification that will not change as do road names and street addresses. There are some instances in which the addresses formerly recorded on MHC survey forms differ from those used today or listed in assessors records. One example is the name of Route 9 which has been recorded as Turnpike Road or Worcester Turnpike. Either is used generally, but officially Southborough Assessors use Turnpike Road. Survey forms indicate changes by adding "formerly known as" if there is a discrepancy or change in address nomenclature.

**Application of National Register Criteria.** The National Register criteria were applied to each property, and potential eligibility was noted on a form and explained on an accompanying **National Register Criteria Statement.** X areas, complexes, or groups of resources surveyed were found likely to be eligible for district listing, and xx resources were deemed individually eligible for the National Register. Some of those properties that are individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places may in fact also be eligible as part of a district. Most of the Areas for which NR Criteria statements have been written would be eligible only in reduced form. Where eligibility boundaries differ from the boundaries of the larger area, an explanation of the difference is given in the criteria statement. Some otherwise highly significant buildings were disqualified from individual NR eligibility because of architectural alterations that have diminished the integrity such as changes in form, siding, windows, and doors.

**Narrative History.** The narrative history of Southborough was developed as the survey work evolved and becomes a brief narrative history of the development of Southborough referencing the architectural examples that convey a sense of that development. It is organized according to the seven major

periods of the community's development with an emphasis on the extant resources. A discussion of the remaining architecture representative of each time period is included at the end of each section.

**Other Survey Products.** Three additional products include the Bibliography, the Property Index, and the List of National Register Nominations.

The Bibliography may prove useful to future researchers of historic properties. As noted above, each survey for has an abbreviated bibliography noting references relevant to the specific property. The full bibliography is included as a separate document.

The List of Inventory Forms or Property Index includes the forms for properties written or revised during the current project. The index first lists Area Forms alphabetically by the name of the Area and each Area is assigned a letter. Next the addresses of properties for which individual forms were completed are listed alphabetically by street name. Following this list of individual forms are the area lists in full showing all properties within the area for which there is an assigned number. Finally the index shows all properties that previously have been surveyed but that have been demolished. The demolition rate seems to be high with over twenty properties lost since the recordation in 1971.

The list of National Register Recommendations is prepared by the consultants and reflects their opinion only. There is no guarantee that a property on this list will be found eligible by the MHC or upon nomination to the Register. Before proceeding with any National Register work discussions with MHC staff should take place.

## **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

The entire town of Southborough has been examined for the presence, distribution, and significance of its historic, architectural, and cultural resources, although not all resources have been documented on inventory forms. Further study is recommended:

1. Further survey. Several twentieth century resources are worthy of documentation including:

Fayville individual property histories using all maps

Oak Hill Road Properties that are in Area Form D - #s35, 44, 59.

Twin Shell Stations: Turnpike Road - run by Walter Hutt from 1930s

Willow Street Railroad abutments

197 Middle Road - early 20<sup>th</sup> century Craftsman - stucco

20 Turnpike Road

Outbuilding on corner of Pine Hill Road and Waveney Road - part of Waveney Farm

Mid-twentieth century subdivision off Richards Road

2. Architects names. A search of other locations for architects of the many estates developed at the turn of the century should be done. Job records at Shepley Bulfinch, (formerly Shepley Rutan and Coolidge) yielded no information about any late nineteenth or early twentieth century designs in Southborough. Banker and Tradesman, the Fine Arts Files at the Boston

Public Library, and architectural journals may yield information about architect-designed houses in Southborough. Property owners also may have more information that was found in this project.

3. Archaeological survey. Little is known about Native American sites in Southborough, although there are many legends that have been passed down through oral tradition. No doubt many potential resources were damaged or eliminated in the late 1890s with the construction of the Metropolitan Water System. Nevertheless, a survey by a professional archaeologist is likely to produce information that will be valuable in planning for both protection of sensitive areas and the siting of future development.

4. Future updating of all inventory forms. All inventory forms, including those written during this project should be updated when additional or new information comes to light. The texts of some forms presently include recommendations for deed or genealogical research. Interior inspections of buildings also may yield information relative to a more precise date of construction and about the expansion of properties over time. MHC continuation sheets should be used to provide new or corrected information.

### **Survey Storage and Public Access**

The survey and inventory, as a public document, should be made readily available to the public. The Southborough Historical Commission maintains a file cabinet in the Historical Society resource room where it traditionally has stored its papers. A recommended procedure is to file each survey form with the original photographs in the Historical Society file drawers. A separate folder for each property allows for additional information including extra photographs to be added to the folder. Photo copies of each survey form should be made available at the Southborough Public Library and at least one municipal office such as the Town Clerk or Planning Board. These can be kept with reference material that is available to the public to review and to copy. A cover letter, the index, and the copies of the individual forms can be stored in three-ring binders. This practice, which already has been started by the Southborough Historical Commission, is a good one to continue.

It is recommended that the Southborough Historical Commission develop a procedure for adding new or corrected information to existing inventory forms. An appropriate methodology would be to attach MHC Continuation Sheets to the forms with a copy sent to the MHC as well. A requirement that additional material be submitted in writing, including the name and address of the contributor, date of submission and source of the information also is an appropriate guideline.

**Other Preservation Related Recommendations** The information that has been gathered as a result of this survey may be used as the basis for a variety of future preservation efforts, such as the establishment of MGL Chapter 40C Local Historic District and Local Landmarks, additional nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, and restoration or rehabilitation of significant buildings and historic landscapes. Since 1971 over 20 previously documented historic resources have been demolished. The SHC may want to consider the introduction of a demolition review by-law which could only take effect if passed by a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting. Any of these undertakings is likely to require further focused survey and inventory efforts and additional assistance may be obtained at the MHC. When the town adopts Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping

of the town it would be appropriate to map historic properties. The MHC can be of assistance by providing a disk with assessors numbers of properties included in the inventory. Another project that may be of benefit to the town would be to discuss with Assessors the possible update of the Construction dates listed in the Assessors Records which appear to be incorrect in the majority of cases.

This project was funded by the Town of Southborough and by a matching Survey & Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The work was carried out under the guidance of the Southborough Historical Commission and Local Project Coordinator Tom Nadeau. The leadership, guidance, and cooperation of Commission Chairman, Eleanor Hamel, and all Commission members, as well as the Southborough Historical Society have been extraordinarily helpful. The Southborough Historical Society opened their files for research and we are grateful for the time contributed by Eleanor Hamel, Don Leavitt, Tom Nadeau, David Falcone, Kay Allen, Jan Mattioli, Earl Watkins, John Boland, and many others, for their help and expertise.

Each attachment is prepared as a pull-out section that can be used independently by the town and by the Southborough Historical Commission. Each of the four attachments are stored on computer diskettes in Wordperfect 6.0 or Word 5.0 and as public documents may be reformatted for distribution or publication by the Commission, provided that both the authors and the MHC are cited as participants, and the source of funding noted in references to the project.

List of Inventory Forms / Survey Property Index This list includes properties for which forms have been written or revised during the current project. Properties and resources documented on earlier surveys, but not resurveyed this year, are listed on the MHC MACRIS list for Southborough. In the coming months Southborough's MACRIS list will be expanded and revised to include this year's survey information. At the end of the index is a list of properties that previously have been surveyed and now are demolished. The MACRIS index is an excellent tool for finding information on properties documented only on area forms.

National Register Recommendations This attachment lists all surveyed resources deemed eligible for the National Register by the consultants. These are recommendations only, and do not ensure eligibility. For a definitive determination of eligibility of any property a request for a formal evaluation should be made to the MHC by the Commission.

Narrative History of Southborough The comprehensive developmental history of Southborough uses information gained in the course of the research and field work for the Historic Resource Survey. It is recommended that the Southborough Historical Commission make copies of the history for use by educators, town staff, and the general public.

Master Survey Bibliography The survey bibliography also should be a useful tool for anyone desiring to learn more about Southborough's history and development. For a list of documents relevant to a particular property, one may refer to the reference on the individual inventory form.

## SOUTHBOROUGH NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAM

The Southborough National Register Program to date has been limited to the **Water Supply System of Metropolitan Boston Thematic Resource Area Nomination** in which there are parts of three districts and two individual resources, the Marlborough Filter Beds and the Sudbury Reservoir Circular Dam, that are located in Southborough. The three districts that have resources in Southborough are the Sudbury Dam Historic District, accounting for 9 resources including the Dam House at 260 Boston Road, the Wachusett Aqueduct Linear District also accounting for nine Southborough resources and the Weston Aqueduct Linear District accounting for only one resource in Southborough. The only individual property National Register listing is the **J.D. C. Bradley House**, 60 Sears Road.

Properties for which individual survey forms were prepared in this survey project that are recommended for National Register listing include the following list. The National Register Criteria Statement will indicate whether the property is eligible individually, as part of a district or both.

MHC #	Property Name	Address
74	William D. Clifford House	12 Clifford Street
30	Southborough Town House	Common Street
31	Southborough 2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting	Common Street
32	Flagg School	25 Common Street
940	Southborough Town Pound	Common Street
318	unkown	3 Cordaville Road
316	unknown	5 Cordaville Road
802	Rural Cemetery	Cordaville Road
68	Edward Burnett Stable	16 Deerfoot Road
21	George Burnett House	21 Deerfoot Road
70	Collins House	55 Flagg Road
197	John Mathias House	15 Gilmore Road
6	Baker & Wm. Brigham Ho.	26 Granuaile Road
164	South Union School	21 Highland Street
13	Jonas Fay House	25 Jericho Hill Rd.
14	Lovett Fay House	30 Jericho Hill Rd.
10	Johnson/Howe House	8 Lynbrook Road
9	Capt. Elisha Johnson House	10 Lynbrook Road
8	Isaac Johnson House	35 Lynbrook Road
7	John Johnson House	49 Lynbrook Road
54	Francis W. Walker House	6 Main Street
52	Marsh / Barnery House	8 Main Street
51	Flagg Buck House	10 Main Street
274	Young's Store	14 Main Street

<b>MHC #</b>	<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Address</b>
45	Moses Newton House	15 Main Street
50	Harriet Parker House	16 Main Street
44	Samuel Newton House	17 Main Street
49	Congregational Parsonage	18 Main Street
273	Congregational Parsonage	20 Main Street
43	Peter's High School Annex	19 Main Street
48	John Cotton House	24 Main Street
42	Southborough Public Library	25 Main Street
47	Winchester House	26 Main Street
946	Boundary Stone	Main Street
803	Burnett Memorial Cemetery	Main Street
46	Southborough Community House	28 Main Street
951	General Knox Marker	
271	Charles Fairbanks House	34 Main Street
270	William Clark House	36 Main Street
41	DeClinton Nichols House	40 Main Street
40	George Jennison House	42 Main Street
24	Charles F. Choate Jr. Ho.	43 Main Street
268	Appleton / Bigelow House	55 Main Street
23	William Reed House	59 Main Street
267	Kidder House	66 Main Street
935	Milestone	Main Street
18	W. A. Fay House	85 Main Street
19	Jedidiah Parker House	94 Main Street
300	Gardner Lodge and Stable	96 Main Street
299	John Burnett House	116 Main Street
297	Leland House	130 Main Street
801	Southborough Old Burial	
941	Southborough Town Common	Main & Common
78	Collins / Nichols House	2 Middle Road
79	James Holland House	4 Middle Road
304	unknown	6 Middle Road
306	unknown	8 Middle Road
307	unknown	10 Middle Road
80	William Muchmore House	12 Middle Road
219	Stowe/B. Chamberlain Ho.	14 Oregon Road
218	Lambert Wood House	42 Oregon Road
217	Abigail Wood House	45-47 Oregon Road
937	B&W Street Rail Abutments	Parkerville Road
126	Joseph Boyd House	246 Parkerville Road
338	Silas C. Simmonds House	19 Richards Road
214	Nathan Works House	21 Richards Road

<b>MHC #</b>	<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Address</b>
20	J. Montgomery Sears House	1 Sears Road
88	Sears Employees Cottage	4 Sears Road
166	St. Matthew's Church	105 Southville Road
109	P. Brown House	153 Southville Road
118	Thomas Boyd House	188 Southville Road
236	Dexter Fay House	77 Turnpike Road
346	Sboro Water Pump Station	112 Turnpike Road
221	J. Alden House/Hillside School	29 Woodland Road

Potential districts include some or all of the following area forms:

<b>MHC #</b>	<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Address</b>
M	Chestnut Hill Farm	Chestnut Hill Road
C	Cordaville (part only)	Cordaville, Southville, etc.
AD	Deerfoot Farm Cottages	Deerfoot Road
Z	East Southborough Center (part only)	East Main, etc.
S	Fay School (part only)	Main, Middle
D	Fayville (part only)	Central, Oak Hill, Turnpike Rds. etc.
X	Latisquama Road	Latisquama Road
T	St. Mark's Church	Main Street
U	St. Mark's School	Marlborough Road
B	Southville (part only)	Parkerville, Southville, etc.
L	Stony Brook Farm	Northborough Road
O	Wolfpen Farm	Sears Road

