

Town of Millbury

Comprehensive Master Plan 2019

MILLBURY



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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

Simply put, a master plan is a tool that a community uses to create a vision for its future. Massachusetts General Law (MGL), Chapter 41, Section 81D, states that a master plan is “designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality.” To be officially recognized as such, a master plan must include:

- 1) Goals and Policies. This statement identifies future growth and development in a community. This is developed through an interactive public process, to determine community values, goals and to identify patterns of development that will be consistent with these goals.
- 2) Land Use. This section identifies present land use and designates the proposed distribution, location and inter-relationship of public and private land uses.
- 3) Housing. This section identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives including programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing.
- 4) Economic Development. This section discusses policies and strategies for the expansion or stabilization of the local economic base and the promotion of employment opportunities.
- 5) Natural and Cultural Resources. This section provides an inventory of the significant natural, cultural and historic resource areas of the municipality, and presents policies and strategies for the protection and management of such areas.
- 6) Open Space and Recreation. This section provides an inventory of recreational resources and open space areas, and discusses policies and strategies for the management and protection of such resources and areas.
- 7) Services and Facilities. This section identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.
- 8) Transportation. This section discusses transportation, traffic circulation, and alternative modes of travel. It provides an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation system improvements.
- 9) Implementation Matrix. This section defines and schedules the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in each element of the master plan.

Per MGL, a master plan must be approved through a majority vote by a municipality’s Planning Board. Once approved, a master plan not only provides a framework for strategic action, it also helps a municipality receive grant funding through various State programs.

“Millbury is a desirable place to live. An historic mill town and rural community, its past is still quite evident in its buildings, villages, and open spaces... A stable community, Millbury is a place where a substantial number of home owners have lived for a long time. According to interviews with a cross section of residents, most people like their town and want to manage growth in order to preserve its ‘small town’ character and rural landscapes.”

~ Millbury Master Plan, 1998

Millbury’s last master plan was approved in 1998. Millbury’s landscape has changed a great deal over the last twenty years. State improvements to the Route 146 transportation corridor led to the construction of a large and successful lifestyle retail development known as the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley. The Felter’s Mill has been redeveloped into a unique small business collective. The preservation of open space as part of large planned residential developments is a requirement of the Town’s Open Space Community bylaw. And yet, as much as progress has been made, there is still room for more.

This master plan was developed based on the input received from a volunteer committee, town officials, and the community. And while this document is different than its 1997 predecessor, an overarching theme remains – Residents would like Millbury to retain its small-town character, while also achieving a revitalized downtown, increased multi-modal transportation options, better housing opportunities for all, and additional economic growth.



INTRODUCTION

It is important for a Master Plan to be supported by a transparent, well-informed development process comprised of professional technical analysis and effective citizen engagement. By providing information to encourage thoughtful deliberation, residents can visualize and articulate a desired future. Through this process, the Millbury community assists in the development of policies and strategies to achieve the goals outlined for each master plan element. The elements are then woven together and integrated into a holistic plan reflecting the shared values of the community.

The public's input helps to develop a vision and set of goals, and provides the foundation for policy changes and other recommendations. Involving residents in the crafting of a municipality's master plan ensures the plan's relevance and increases stakeholder support as Millbury seeks to implement the plan's recommendations.

Role of Master Plan Committee

The Master Plan Committee was comprised of residents and representatives of select Town departments, boards, and commissions. The Committee met approximately once a month throughout the process. Committee meetings were televised on Millbury's Cable TV Public Access channel. The Committee assisted with outreach and creating awareness of the opportunities for residents to participate in the community engagement process. They also provided support at the forums and reviewed drafted sections of the master plan, providing feedback and acting as a sounding board for the Consultant team and Town officials.

Community Engagement Plan

A Community Engagement Plan was developed. It listed stakeholders and ways of reaching them so that multiple opportunities to provide input were made available throughout the planning process thereby resulting in robust, inclusive and meaningful participation. The community engagement consisted of two phases.

1.) PHASE I – DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION FOR MILLBURY'S FUTURE (2016)

Crafting a vision statement is a way of understanding and describing a desired future. The purpose of the first phase of the master planning process was to identify the shared values relative to Millbury's future development. These values were then formed into a vision statement and a set of goals. Input was solicited from residents and specific focus groups, as well as the Master Plan Steering Committee. The discussion during this phase of the process was focused on "What do we want?"

Process

In 2016, residents were invited to a town-wide public forum to voice their concerns and desires regarding Millbury's future. In addition, a visioning session was held with senior citizens at the Senior Center and another with Millbury high school honors students. Business owners in Millbury also received an online survey to complete. Lastly, a website (MySidewalk) was set up to collect comments.

Key Themes from the Community Conversations

- A desire to preserve the small town feeling while revitalizing the downtown. There was some nostalgia over the fact that the downtown used to be more vibrant and included a diner that was affordable and acted as a gathering place.
- An interest in improving transportation and circulation. Methods to achieve this included improving roads, constructing a more thorough sidewalk system, and completing the Blackstone River Bikeway.
- A wider range of housing would support people through various stages of the life cycle. Multi-family housing was especially desired in the downtown, as well as more choices for seniors to age in place and young families to live.
- An appreciation for Millbury's natural features and historic structures. Residents voiced a desire to preserve and protect natural and historic resources, as well as increase access to them.
- Additional services, programs, and opportunities for the increasing senior population, youth, and the disabled. Concerns voiced included providing affordable housing in an appropriate size and location, adequate school buildings and opportunities for recreation for youth, and additional opportunities for the disabled community.
- A desire for beautification and maintenance of public and private properties, especially in the downtown, but also throughout the Town.



A VISION FOR MILLBURY'S FUTURE

IMAGINE... Millbury's town center transformed into a beautiful and bustling downtown filled with restaurants, shops and a family diner. Capitalizing on its compact layout, the center has a cohesive sense of place, a park for gathering, sidewalks and adequate parking. An improved downtown where residents go to run errands, meet each other and participate in Town and business organized events such as block parties, concerts on the Common and others.

IMAGINE... a Millbury that is not only easy to get to due to its excellent highway access, but is also easy and safe to get around because the road network is improved and a sidewalk system is constructed and the bike path is completed so that walking and biking are safe alternative modes of transportation as well as enjoyed for recreation. This will provide opportunities to improve the wellness and fitness of Millbury residents.

IMAGINE... A Millbury with an increased tax base and more job opportunities as a result of retaining existing businesses and attracting new ones by providing incentives for them to come to Millbury's downtown and/or to an industrial and/or office park.

IMAGINE... a Millbury that supports residents of all ages and throughout the life cycle. A Millbury that recognizes the special needs of its younger residents and is concerned about providing services, programs, and opportunities for the increasing senior citizens.

IMAGINE... a Millbury that provides a wide range of housing to accommodate people at different stages in the lifecycle as well as with a wide range of income levels. Multi-family housing in the downtown as well as elsewhere provides options for young couples and elderly wanting to age in place by downsizing.

IMAGINE... a Millbury with its beautiful parks, lakes and ponds, farms and other open spaces and natural features protected and maintained for residents to enjoy either while passing by or actively because the Town's natural resources are made accessible to its residents and visitors alike.

IMAGINE... a Millbury that protects and preserves its historic buildings thus protecting the Town's character and promoting an understanding of its unique history. Also, new development is in keeping with Millbury's character.

IMAGINE... a Millbury where both public and private properties are well maintained, where landlords are held accountable for the upkeep of their property and the Town's facilities are upgraded. Increased tree planting and other landscaping helps beautify the downtown and other areas.

IMAGINE... a Millbury where residents delight in all these improvements while continuing to enjoy the small town feeling they so appreciate. The improved downtown, increased access to recreation and natural resources will provide even greater opportunities to experience the close-knit community that is Millbury.

Goals

The following preliminary goals were developed to provide a way to move forward on shared values.

1. Revitalize the Downtown so that it has a cohesive sense of place, is vibrant and provides residents with places to go and spaces to gather.
2. Improve transportation so that it is safe and easy for residents of all ages to get around town.
3. Support residents of all ages by meeting the needs specific to various demographics including Millbury's senior citizens and youth.
4. Provide a range of housing options to accommodate people at different stages in the life cycle and with a range of income levels.
5. Promote economic development to increase the tax base and provide additional job opportunities.

2.) PHASE II – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2018)

Phase II of the master planning process involved the public providing their input at two town-wide forums as well as through a survey (either paper or online submission). This phase focused on an assessment of existing conditions answering the questions, “*What do we have?*” and “*What is most important?*” During the last stage of the process, the development of an Implementation Plan, the question answered is: “*How do we get there?*”

Survey of Millbury Households

A survey was prepared by the Master Plan Committee and administered by Dr. Melinda Tarsi and her graduate students at Bridgewater State University as part of a Master of Public Administration Program. A paper survey was mailed to all households in Millbury, and respondents could either fill out and return the paper survey, or complete the survey via a weblink online. There were 971 responses - a 19% response rate - considered to be excellent. Many respondents were between 56 and 70 years old (32%) with approximately an even division between male (47%) and female (49%) responders. More than half (53%) of respondents have lived in Millbury for more than 20 years, with 28% living as a couple with children at home and 24% living as a couple with adult children not at home.

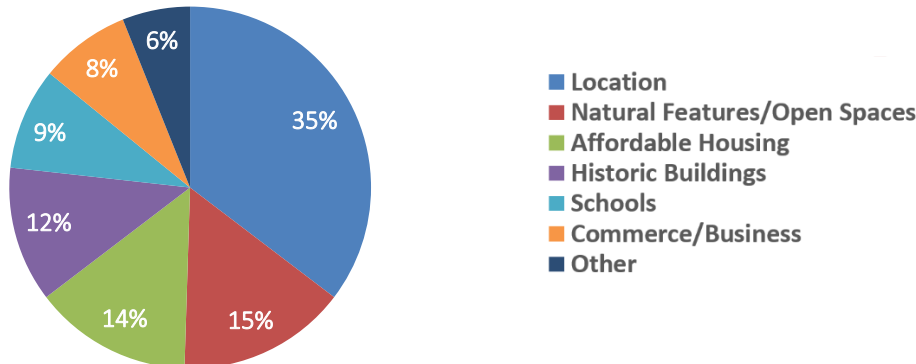
Survey Highlights

The following are some highlights of the top responses to the survey questions:

Neighbor Interaction: How well do you know the neighbor you know best?

Millbury residents appear to live in a tight-knit community where, for the most part, they know their neighbors well. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of respondents have a level of comfort interacting with their neighbors. Of those, 22% reported feeling comfortable asking a favor, 24% visit socially on occasion, and 22% socialize frequently.

In your opinion, what are Millbury's three most important assets?



As shown in the above chart, respondents believed the top three most important assets in Millbury are location (35%), natural features/open spaces (15%), and affordable housing (14%).

Do you think Millbury should encourage more of the following businesses? (Top "Yes" Answers)

Hospitality/Restaurant	76%
Personal and Professional Services	72%
High Tech and Emerging Industries	71%

When it comes to Millbury's local economy, what are the Town's greatest challenges?

Twenty-six percent (26%) of respondents felt the greatest perceived challenge for the town was empty storefronts and/or underutilized buildings, 13% cited lack of job opportunities, 12% cited inadequate transportation facilities, and 11% cited lack of adequate tax incentives for businesses.

How should the Town/Aquarion Water Co. fund sewer & water line extensions along Rt. 146?

Split costs of extending sewer/water with developers	44%
Require property owners to cover extension costs through betterments	37%
The Town and Aquarion should NOT help fund or extend water/sewer lines	14%
Raise sewer/water user fees	3%

Which of the following economic development strategies should the Town pursue regarding Millbury Center?

Survey respondents felt that the Town should do the following: make Millbury Center more attractive through streetscape improvements (24%), improve the maintenance of public spaces (19%) and increase the number of parking spaces and/or the visibility of the municipal parking lot (18%).

Which changes to the transportation system should occur in Millbury?

In terms of improvements to the transportation system, 33% felt the Town should improve roadway maintenance, 13% felt pedestrian safety needed improvement, and 11% wanted to see expanded transportation services for the elderly and disabled.

Where should the Town accommodate new homes?

In terms of where new residential development should occur in Millbury, the top 3 answers included: evenly spread throughout the town (38%), concentrated in undeveloped areas (22%) and clustered on a portion of a parcel with remaining land as protected open space (20%).

What are the top housing needs in Millbury?

Single family homes on small lots	20%
Single family homes on large lots	19%
Townhouses	17%
Assisted living, extended care and nursing facilities	16%
Garden-style apartments	13%
In-law apartments	10%
Other	7%

How important is it to preserve or protect the following?

On a scale from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important)

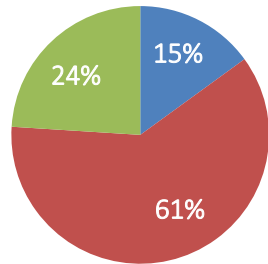
Respondents felt the following were most important to preserve or protect: Open spaces to protect water quality/quantity (64%), open spaces for recreation purposes (56%), and buildings and sites of historic interest (48%).

Are you concerned about the following open space/historic resource-rated issues in Millbury?

Selecting up to three answers, respondents were most concerned about disappearing wildlife habitat and forests (21%), followed by degradation of water bodies and wetlands and degradation of drinking water supplies (tie at 16%).

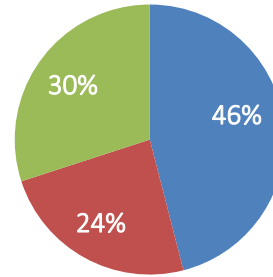
To preserve open spaces, would you:

Support establishment of a surcharge on property taxes?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

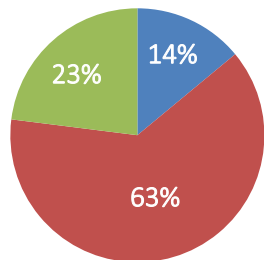
Support town-sponsored land acquisition through appropriation?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

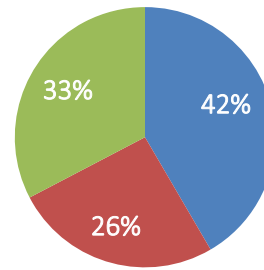
To preserve historic resources, would you:

Support establishment of a surcharge on property taxes?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

Support town-sponsored land acquisition through appropriation?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Unsure

For the above questions, most respondents are not in favor of establishing a surcharge on property taxes to preserve open space (61%) or historic resources (63%), however there was more uncertainty in supporting town-sponsored land acquisition through appropriation for both. Preservation of open spaces and historic resources is clearly important to Millbury's residents, and one tool that will allow the town to achieve this is through the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA).

The CPA "allows communities to create a local Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. Community preservation monies are raised locally through the imposition of a surcharge of not more than 3% of the tax levy against real property, and municipalities must adopt CPA by ballot referendum."¹ This survey question is in direct conflict with the results of public forums in which attendees clearly and overwhelmingly favored the adoption of the CPA.

¹ <http://www.communitypreservation.org/content/cpa-overview>

Should the Town promote the following measures to protect the environment?

Many respondents answered a resounding “yes” to the town promoting the following measures:

- Safe disposal of hazardous waste – 95%
- Annual Earth Day cleanups – 86%
- Energy conservation initiatives – 81%
- Provide education and incentives to residents and property owners – 81%

How often did you use the following public facilities last year?

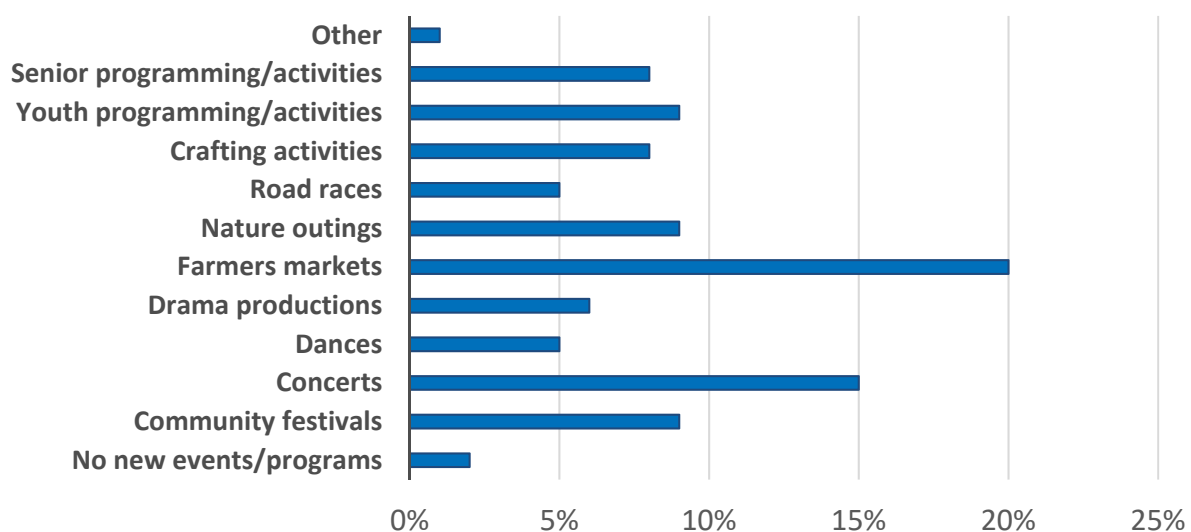
Respondents were asked to rank how often they used certain public facilities in the prior year. The most used public facilities (combined ranking of “sometimes” and “often”) included:

Millbury Public Library	46%
Blackstone River Bikeway	39%
School Grounds (including Windle Field)	38%
Town Common	33%
Asa Waters Mansion and Local Ponds/Boat Ramps (Tie)	32%

Which new public recreation facilities do you feel are most needed?

Respondents were asked to choose up to 5 answers for this question. Boat access points (11%), conservation areas (10%), skateboarding facility (8%), picnic facility (8%), and ball field (7%) received the most votes.

Which of the following special events, programs, or efforts would you like to see in Millbury?



If you had \$100 to spend on the following capital improvements projects, how would you spend it?
(Respondents indicated dollar amounts for each category; average amounts reported.)

Road maintenance received the highest average dollar allocation at \$49. Additionally, renovation/expansion/replacement of Shaw School received an average \$16 allocation and the construction of emergency services complex for Police/Fire/EMS received an average \$15 allocation.

See Appendix C, Master Plan Public Engagement for the survey report produced by Bridgewater State University.

PUBLIC FORUMS

PUBLIC FORUM #1

A public forum was held on June 5, 2018 at the Senior Center that was attended by approximately 65 stakeholders. The purpose of the forum was three-fold: 1.) To present findings regarding an inventory and assessment of Millbury's existing resources; 2.) To review a vision and goals for the town's future and to discuss ideas about how to achieve them; and 3.) To solicit community input regarding these items.

At the meeting, attendees received a brief presentation that included information about the master plan process and why it is important for the Town. This presentation included facts about Millbury and a summary of a public opinion survey that was conducted by Bridgewater State University on the Town's behalf. Attendees then visited breakout stations to learn about and discuss master plan elements and goals.

Topics discussed at the breakout stations included:

- Land Use Zoning
- Transportation
- Town Facilities/Services
- Economic Development
- Open Space/Recreation/Natural Resources
- Housing
- Historic/Cultural Resources
- Sustainability

Attendees were provided with post-it notes to make comments, add thoughts and ask questions. They were also provided with five (5) small dots per station to prioritize recommendations within each master plan element, placing up to three (3) dots on any one item. Attendees were then provided with three (3) large dots to identify the goal, objective or strategy they believed was top three in importance across all master plan elements, using only one dot per item.

Summary sheets of the results of this exercise were created. The summary sheets identify the element, goal, strategy and action, along with the number of small and large dots received. In reviewing this information, the top ten actions that received the most small dots and the top five

actions that received the most large dots were highlighted. The summary sheets assisted with generating formal recommendations and an implementation matrix for this master plan.

Small Dots

Priorities within each master plan element are indicated by the number of “small dots” allocated by forum participants. The top results of this exercise are shown in the table below.

Element	Action	Small Dots
Housing	Explore options for increasing senior housing in Millbury (e.g. small cottages, condos, apartments, congregate residences, assisted living) and identify ways to encourage them.	23
Land Use	Review town bylaws, zoning, etc. for clarity, ease of use and appropriateness regarding support of master plan goals.	18
Transportation	Improve downtown sidewalks, ramps, and crosswalks to be ADA compliant.	16
Community Facilities	Maintain existing and expand programs and services to meet needs of Millbury’s increasing senior citizen population (socializing, health and wellness, transportation, housing).	16
Transportation	Implement traffic calming measures (e.g. bump outs, flashing crosswalk signage).	14
Economic Development	Promote and publicize the contributions local businesses make to the community.	14
Land Use	Establish a demolition delay bylaw for historically or architecturally significant buildings.	13
Land Use	Encourage development that will increase the tax base and minimize the need for additional Town services.	13
Community Facilities	Support Library in its efforts to expand its role in the community and increase programming to all ages.	12
Community Facilities	Consider feasibility of reusing Dorothy Manor School for the Police Department.	12
Natural Resources/ Open Space	Work with landowners and stakeholders to pursue the Millbury Bike Path and the RH White “canal trail” and to finalize the Blackstone River Bikeway.	12
Housing	Create more flexible ways to preserve open space as part of new residential developments.	12
Transportation	Extend and repair sidewalks in key locations.	12

Large Dots

Through the exercise of placing the large dots where participants believed an item was top three (3) in importance, the consultant team determined the top five (5) priorities across all master plan elements. The results are depicted in the following table.

Element	Action	Large Dots
Community Facilities	Support School Department in its efforts to optimize its use of existing facilities (including renovation/expansion of Shaw Middle School)	11
Transportation	Improve downtown sidewalks, ramps, and crosswalks to be ADA compliant	10
Land Use	Encourage development that will increase the tax base and minimize the need for additional Town services	8
Community Facilities	Build a new Fire Station Headquarters at site of former McGrath High School	7
Natural Resources/ Open Space	Provide comprehensive information about existing recreational resources (location/access to trails, athletic fields, ponds, docks, dog park, etc.)	6

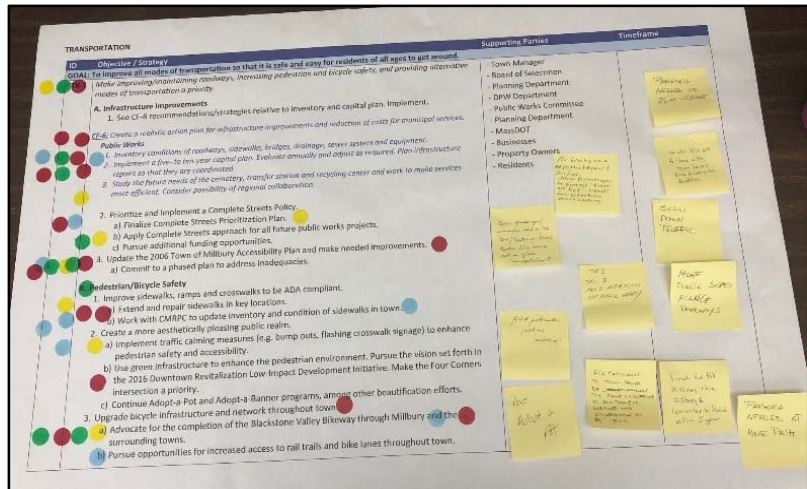
Overall, residents were concerned with a host of issues related to the master plan elements. Consistently, feedback was that the Town should focus on updating/maintaining its public facilities, improving its transportation network, encouraging development to increase the tax base, and creating more awareness surrounding the preservation of and promotion of existing natural resources/open space.

See Appendix C for the full summary sheet package of results from the June 5, 2018 public forum.

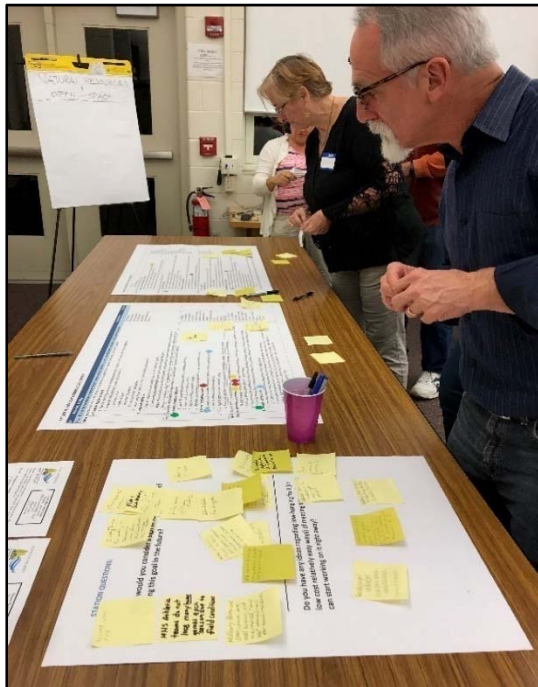


PUBLIC FORUM #2

A second public forum was held on October 4, 2018 at Millbury Junior-Senior High School. The purpose was to present strategies proposed for the plan's implementation - the actions to take to meet the vision and goals as set forth in the initial stages of the overall master planning process – for feedback. Approximately forty people attended the forum. Some of those in attendance reported having attended previous master plan forums and many had responded to the town-wide survey discussed in detail earlier in this section. There were also some residents who were participating in the master plan process for the first time.



Stations were set up with large-scale print outs of proposed strategies and actions for successfully achieving the goal created for each master plan element. The goals, objectives and recommendations were developed by incorporating public input (from previous public forums and the town-wide survey), research and assessment of existing resources, and consultant expertise regarding how to address the opportunities and challenges identified during the planning process.



Participants were asked to comment on the recommendations at each of the stations. Participants were also asked to respond to two questions at each station: 1) “What would you consider a sign of success in terms of meeting this goal in the future?” and 2) “Do you have any ideas regarding low-hanging fruit (or relatively low cost easy ways) of meeting this goal so that we can start working on it right away?” Time was given for each participant to visit stations and provide initial feedback on post-it notes.

Afterward, participants were asked to prioritize implementation strategies. Each participant received ten (10) dots, and were asked to place the dots on the actions they felt were most important for the Town to focus on and pursue in the short-term (e.g. to initiate within the first five years).

Participant Feedback

In terms of the two questions respondents were asked to respond to at each station, the most common feedback included:

Element	Success Meeting Goal in Future?	Low-Hanging Fruit?
Community Facilities	New Public Safety Facility; New Shaw School; New Youth Center	Expanded hours/programming at library; Expanded programs, services, housing opportunities for seniors
Economic Development	Larger Commercial Developments/Industry	Inventory of large parcels of land
Historic/Cultural Resources	Active Historical Commission; Updated Inventory; Preservation of Historic Buildings	Recruit volunteers
Housing	Senior Housing; Affordable Housing; Accessible Housing (Universal Design and Adaptability)	Partner with a non-profit for housing development
Land Use	CPA Adoption; Revised Zoning	Work with local college to hire a part-time planner; inventory of available land for use and targeted development
Natural Resources/ Open Space	CPA Adoption; Public Access to Town Water Bodies; Swimming Facility (Beach or Indoor);	Recruit volunteers for park/open space maintenance; Donation option for Quarterly Tax Bill for land acquisition
Transportation	Roadway/Sidewalk Repair; Better/More Sidewalks; Bike Path Installation	Build/repair sidewalks

Ranking of Priorities for Master Plan Implementation

For the prioritization of implementation strategies, there were varying levels of actions and strategies developed for each master plan element. The implementation matrix found in this master plan discusses these actions and strategies in much more detail. As mentioned above, attendees received ten (10) dots and were asked to place them on the actions they felt were most important for the Town to focus on in the short-term. The top results were as follows:

1. **Transportation (TR-1):** *Make improving/maintaining roadways, increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety, and providing alternative modes of transportation a priority. (43 dots)*
2. **Open Space (OS-4):** *Maintain and protect the town's open space and recreation facilities through improved regulatory controls, acquisition of additional open space, and infrastructure upgrades. (23 dots)*
3. **Community Facilities (CF-1):** *Prepare for an increase in the town's population aged 65+ and the services that will be expected. (21 dots)*
4. **Land Use (LU-2):** *Evaluate zoning bylaws and adopt provisions to fully achieve the goals and vision of this master plan. (20 dots)*
5. **Historic/Cultural Resources (HR-1):** *Integrate the preservation of Millbury's historic character into economic development, housing, and open space policy/regulatory framework. (Tie - 19 dots)*
5. **Housing (H-3):** *Ensure that Millbury remains affordable to many types of households as it grows and attracts higher-income families who find the town a desirable place to live. (Tie - 19 dots)*

Overall, the ranking exercise will be useful for the Town to utilize as it works to prioritize and implement this master plan as well as budget for improvements that residents would like to see made.

INTRODUCTION

At a very general level, land use refers to how the natural and built environment is used by people. An important step in unlocking a community's DNA is understanding the how, where, and why of land use. Every community is uniquely shaped by its geography, topography, networks, systems, and people. Land use is not an isolated phenomenon – patterns in land use development are strongly influenced by industry, transportation, infrastructure, natural resources, market forces, and regulatory provisions like zoning, among others.

Millbury was an attractive location for its first settlers due to its proximity to the Blackstone River and its tributaries, and the need for a water source for consumption and hydro-power. The current development pattern has vestiges of the town's early development, with concentrated residential and commercial uses clustered in the locations of the original settlements. Consistent with development prior to the automobile, housing and businesses were located within walking distance of one another. Outlying areas were sparsely developed and used for agriculture.

In the 19th Century, the advent of the railroad, followed by street car service, tended to reinforce this earlier development pattern and provide greater mobility opportunities for goods and people. The arrival of the automobile as well as technological advances in power (steam and electricity) had a dramatic influence on development patterns - industry was no longer dependent upon hydro power, and the greater mobility derived from the automobile no longer dictated the need to live near shopping and employment. Housing development became dispersed with larger lot sizes. Commercial and industrial development sought locations with greater access and visibility to regional highways.

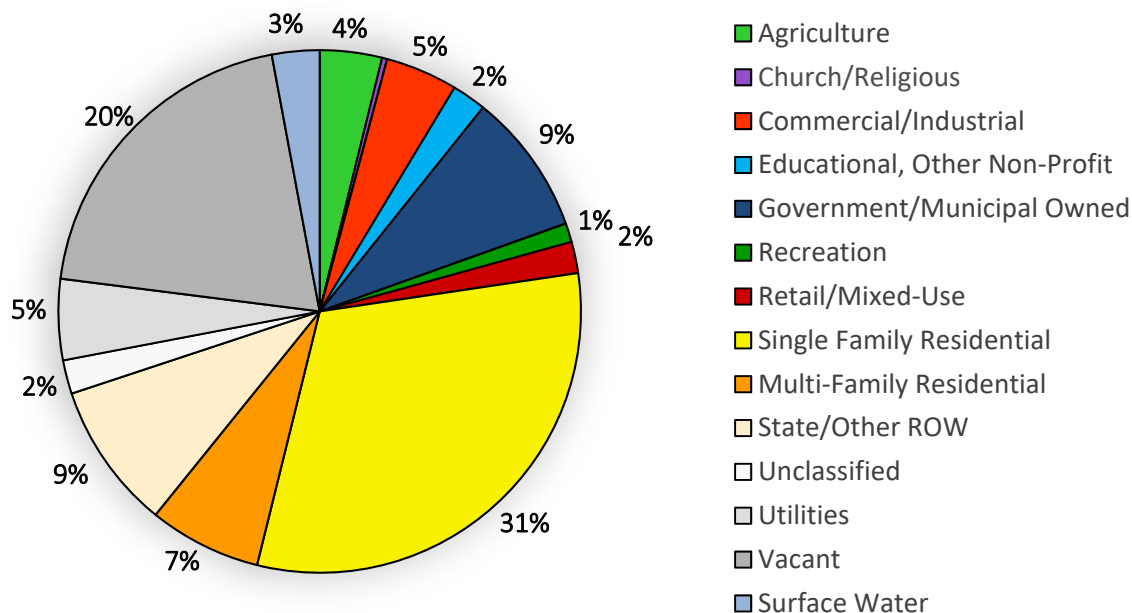
The way land has been used in Millbury has evolved over time, in response to both natural and man-made factors. This section discusses the current land uses and patterns in Millbury, and provides analysis, recommendations, and strategies for town officials to implement moving forward.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Millbury's total area is 16.3 square miles, comprised of 15.7 square miles of land and 0.6 square miles of water, covering approximately 10,500 acres. The predominant land use in Millbury is residential at 38%, followed by vacant land at 20%, State/Other right of way at 9% and Government/Municipal land at 9%. Typical of a more suburban "bedroom" community, commercial and industrial land uses in Millbury account for just 5% of total land use. Agricultural land uses, which make up 4% of total land use are concentrated in West Millbury.

The chart below shows total land use type by percentage in Millbury, and an accompanying table can be found in the Land Use Information Sheet in Appendix C.

Land Use Type by Percentage in Millbury



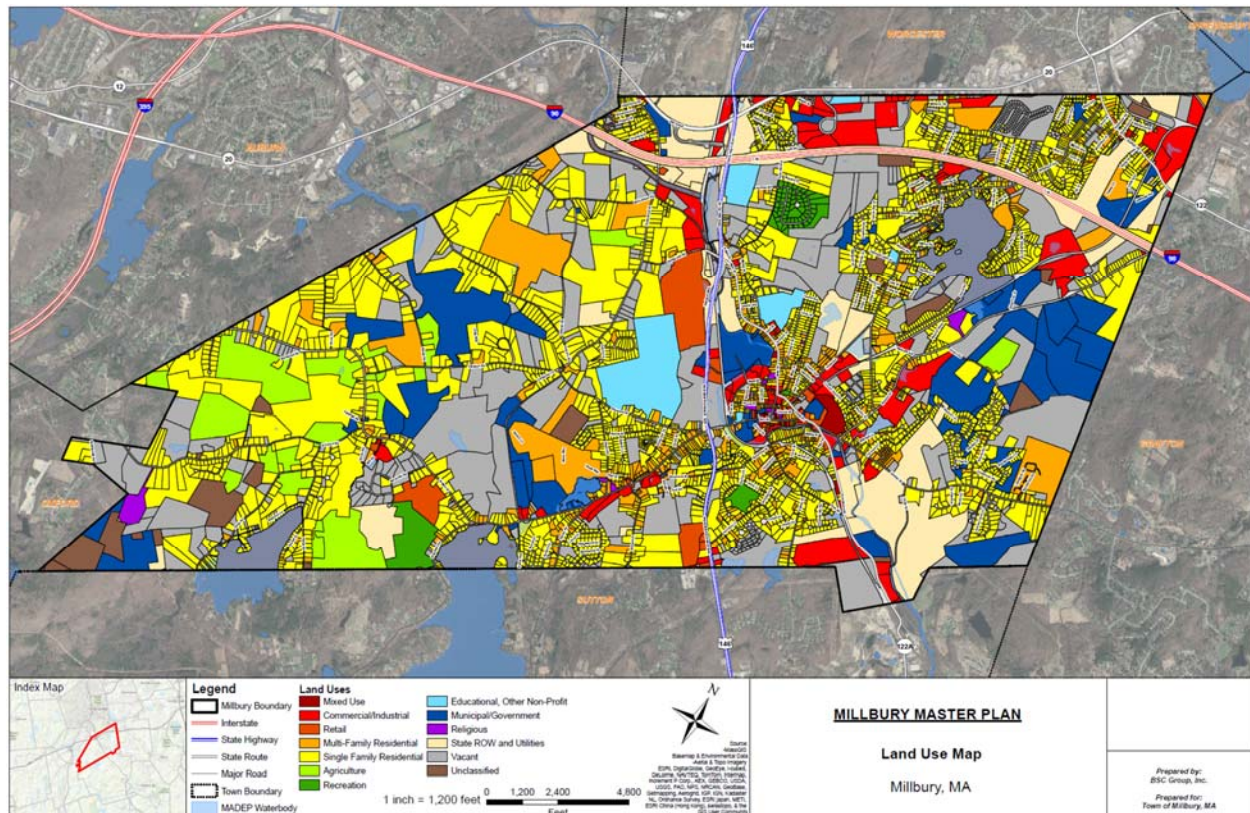
As Millbury became settled, development clustered around village centers where industry flourished, often near the Blackstone River. Bramanville and the downtown center became two key areas with a mix of uses and denser development. In addition, as transportation routes evolved, commercial activity soon followed. Commerce continues to have a strong presence in the downtown center as well as in Bramanville. It has also grown along transportation corridors, particularly adjacent to Route 146, Route 122A, and Route 20.

A prime example of proximity to regional transportation routes influencing the development of commerce is the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley (Shoppes). This outdoor retail center has direct access from Routes 122A and 146. It is near Interstate 90 (Mass Pike Exits 10/10A) and has easy access to Route 20. It is the town's largest economic development project to date, providing more than 750,000 square feet of retail, restaurant, and entertainment space. With the success of the Shoppes, smaller commercial retail developments have located along the Route 146 corridor in the recent past. Another transportation node that deserves further consideration is the Route 122 Corridor at the Mass Pike interchange. It is an area that has residential and non-residential uses interspersed and is currently underutilized. Future development in the area should leverage the Corridor's proximity to this major transportation interchange.

Since 1998, residential land use has risen from 23 percent of Millbury's land area to 38 percent. Residential land use in Millbury is dispersed throughout the town. Single family residential homes account for over 80 percent of the type of residential land use and two-family, three-family, and multi-family residential account for the remaining 20 percent. Less dense residential development

is found in West Millbury while more concentrated residential development is found in East Millbury.

Millbury Land Use Map

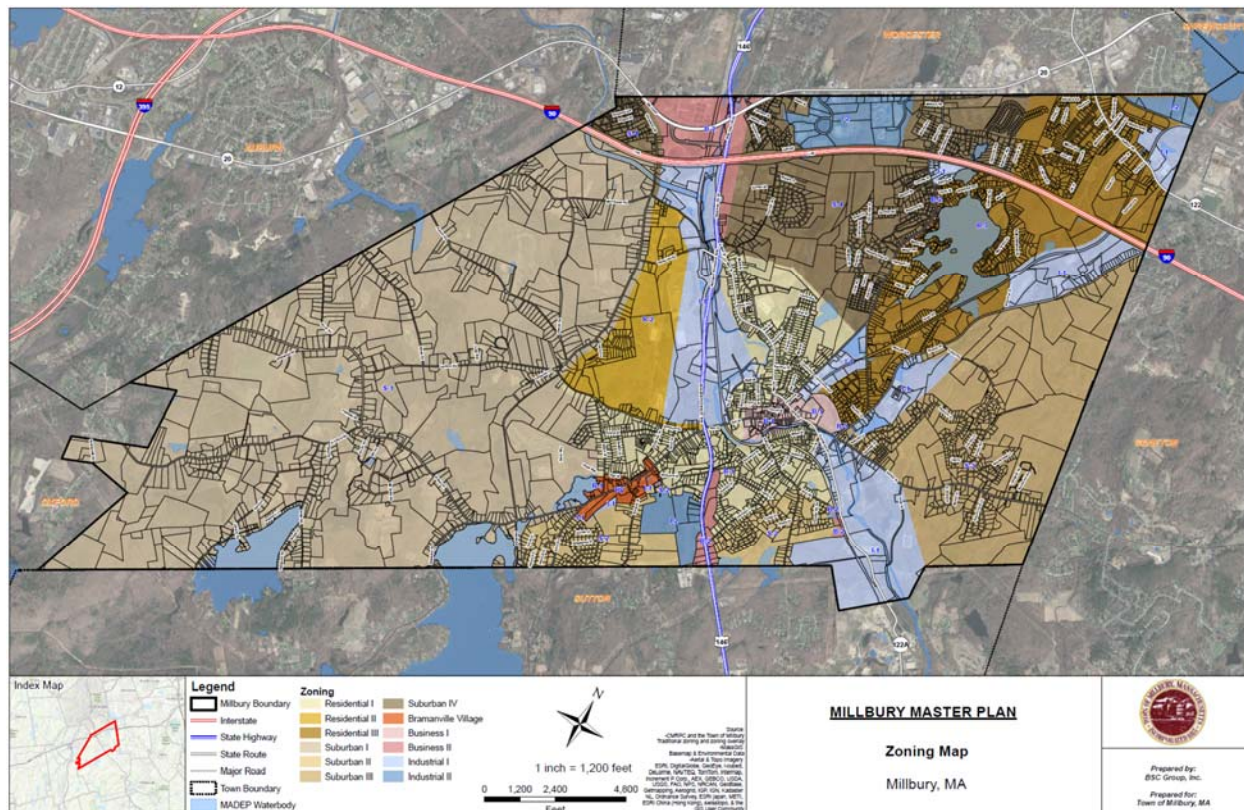


At the time of the 1998 Millbury Master Plan, two-thirds of Millbury's land was undeveloped. Based on the above land use map and data from 2017, there is still a significant amount of undeveloped land in Millbury. However, uses on this undeveloped land include open space, natural resources and recreation, agriculture, right of way, and utility.

ZONING

Zoning is a regulatory tool that guides the physical development of land and controls the kinds of uses that are allowed in certain areas. Zoning in Millbury has had a dramatic influence on where and how land has been developed in town. The purpose of the zoning bylaw is to promote the health, safety, convenience, amenity, and general welfare of Millbury residents by encouraging the most appropriate use of land. The original zoning bylaw was adopted by the Town on February 5, 1957. This adoption came well after much of the current land use arrangement within town was established. As such, certain provisions of zoning appear to be based on past development patterns. Over time, various amendments were made to the zoning bylaws in a piecemeal fashion. These changes have diluted the organizational structure and user friendliness of the zoning bylaw.

Millbury Zoning Map



Zoning Districts

Millbury's Zoning Bylaws provide an explanation of the intent of each zoning district as well as each overlay district. There are (12) twelve zoning districts and five (5) overlay districts.

Zoning Districts:

Residential I	Suburban I	Business I
Residential II	Suburban II	Business II
Residential III	Suburban III	Industrial I
Bramanville Village	Suburban IV	Industrial II (Industrial Park)

Overlay Districts:

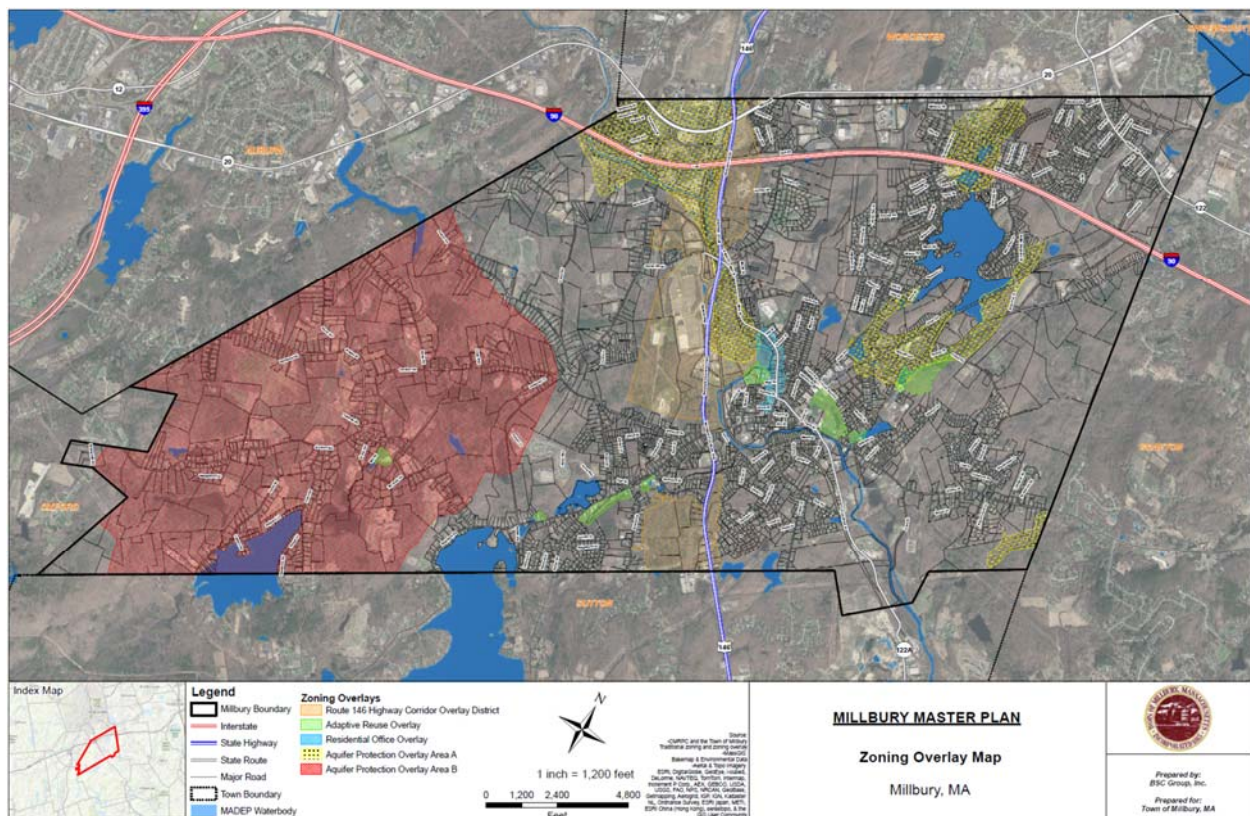
- Residential Office Overlay District
- Aquifer and Watershed Protection Overlay District
- Floodplain Overlay District
- Adaptive Reuse Overlay District
- Route 146 Highway Corridor Overlay District

In the **Residential Districts**, the bylaw provides for a range of dwelling types in areas with existing development at relatively high densities and public utility service. In the **Suburban Districts**, the bylaw provides for one- and two-family residential development at moderate density where public services are available and at a low density where they are not.

The intent of the **Bramanville Village District** is to enable the redevelopment and infill development of the central part of the historical Bramanville area in keeping with historic development patterns. The goal is to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly village center allowing high-density residential and small-scale commercial uses that serve the residents of the district and adjacent residential districts.

In the **Business Districts**, the bylaw provides for commercial service in a pattern compatible with existing high-density commercial development (Business I) or appropriate for auto orientation where space permits (Business II). However, one- or two-family residential dwellings are permitted in Business I as a by-right use. In the **Industrial Districts**, the bylaw provides for environmentally compatible industry in areas suited to that use by access, absent of conflicting use and services.

Millbury Zoning Overlay Map



Overlay Districts

Overlay districts are a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district placed over a base zone, and identifies special provisions in addition to those in an underlying zone. Some overlay districts are implemented to guide development.

In Millbury, the Residential Office Overlay District, Adaptive Reuse Overlay District and Route 146 Highway Corridor Overlay District are examples of development overlay districts where additional land uses not usually allowed within a base zone become permissible in an overlay. For others, like the Aquifer and Watershed Protection Overlay District and Floodplain Overlay District, the main purpose is for implementation of additional measures and protections for natural resources.

The **Residential Office Overlay District** provides for a limited range of compatible business uses within the Residential I District.

The purpose of the **Adaptive Reuse Overlay District** is to encourage adaptive reuse of abandoned, vacant or underutilized mill buildings; encourage flexibility in site and architectural design; and allow for a mix of new land uses that are appropriate to both the needs of the community and the scale of the surrounding neighborhoods. Specific properties are identified within this overlay district, and any proposal for development or redevelopment of property within this overlay district requires the submission of an Adaptive Reuse Master Plan for review and approval of the Planning Board.

The intent of the **Route 146 Highway Corridor Overlay District** is to provide for development that is conducive at highway interchanges; promote economic growth while avoiding negative effects locally and in the region by encouragement of the most appropriate use of adjacent corridor lands; maintain the scenic natural and historical features of the area; and maintain the safe, efficient movement of traffic throughout the corridor by the orderly development of the land.

The purpose of the **Aquifer and Watershed Protection Overlay District** is to ensure an adequate quality and quantity of drinking water for the residents, institutions, and businesses; preserve and protect existing and potential sources of drinking water supplies; conserve the natural resources of the town, and prevent temporary and permanent contamination of the environment.

The **Floodplain Overlay District** was implemented to provide that lands subject to seasonal or periodic flooding are not used for residence or other purposes that will endanger the health, safety, or welfare of the public, or to burden the public with costs resulting from unwise individual choices of land use. It was also meant to assure the continuation of the natural flow pattern of the watercourses within the town, to provide adequate and safe floodwater storage capacity to protect against the hazards of flood inundation.

Dimensional Requirements by Zoning District

District *	Minimum Lot Area**	Minimum Lot Frontage	Minimum Yards Front/Side/Rear	Max. Lot Coverage	Max. Building Height
Residential (I, II, III)	40,000 sf	100 feet	25 ft. / 10 ft. / 10 ft.	30%	30 feet
Suburban I	60,000 sf	150 feet	25 ft. / 10 ft. / 10 ft.	30%	30 feet
Suburban II	40,000 sf	150 feet	25 ft. / 10 ft. / 10 ft.	30%	30 feet
Suburban III	40,000 sf	150 feet	25 ft. / 10 ft. / 10 ft.	30%	30 feet
Bramanville Village	5,000 sf	60 feet	*** / 10 ft. / 10 ft.	50%	40 feet
Business I/II - Dwellings	12,500 sf	100 feet	25 ft. / 10 ft. / 10 ft.	30%	30 feet
Business I - Other Uses	No req.	No req.	No req.	No req.	40 feet
Business II - Other Uses	16,500 sf	250 feet	75 ft. / 10 ft. / 10 ft.	40%	40 feet
Industrial I	80,000 sf	150 feet	30 ft. / 20 ft. / 20 ft.	40%	50 feet
Industrial II	80,000 sf	200 feet	30 ft. / 20 ft. / 20 ft.	35%	55 feet

* Multi-family housing is not a by-right use in any zoning district. It is allowed in Residential, Residential (Office), Suburban, and Business I Districts through a special permit granted by the Planning Board. Additional lot area requirements per bedroom and unit apply in the Residential III, Suburban and Business Districts.

** In some instances, the minimum lot area requirement may be reduced to 32,000 SF if the lot will be serviced by public water. The minimum lot area requirement may be reduced to 15,000 or 20,000 SF if the lot will be serviced by public sewer. The minimum lot area requirement may be further reduced in a Residential District to 12,500 SF if the lot will be serviced by public water and public sewer.

*** The front yard setback requirement for a property containing exclusively residential uses shall be a minimum of 18 feet and a maximum of 25 feet. The front yard setback requirement for a property containing non-residential uses or mixed-uses shall be a minimum of 0 feet and a maximum of 18 feet.

ZONING BYLAW

Organization

The Zoning Bylaw provides the regulatory framework for implementing the land use vision of the Master Plan. The Bylaw resembles elements of a “pyramid” or “inclusive” zoning scheme where district regulations become successively less restrictive, like peeling an onion. The bylaw also reflects additions and amendments made over the years. As such its organizational structure has diminished, making it less accessible for users and the public. A re-write of the bylaw into a clear, more user-friendly format is recommended. For example, the District Regulations contain provisions for Wireless Communication Facilities. This clause should be located under Special Regulations. Additionally, the Special Regulations contain provisions for certain Overlay Districts,

which should be located within the District Regulations. Lastly, the Scenic Road provisions relate to a non-zoning State Statute, and should be relocated to the Planning Board Regulations.

Use and Dimensional Regulations

The District Regulations are organized in a manner that combines use and dimensional requirements by individual district. This creates a certain amount of repetition and difficulty for the reader to follow and understand. A schedule of use regulations and a dimensional table in the Zoning Bylaw would eliminate repetition, provide better clarity and make these requirements more accessible.

District Regulations

The number of residential districts (7) is more than is necessary, as there are few differences in underlying dimensional standards and permitted uses. At a minimum, a consolidation of districts should be examined.

The minimum lot area in the residential districts is determined by the availability of water and sewer service. This creates a situation where a de-facto zoning amendment can occur outside the normal zoning amendment process, requiring Town Meeting approval. Merely the extension or expansion of water and sewer service to a property would amend the applicable zoning relative to minimum lot area. The provision of public water and sewer reduces the land required for on-site septic and private wells. Therefore, a single minimum lot area for each district may suffice as lots requiring onsite septic and wells would need to be sized larger, irrespective of zoning, to accommodate these features.

Multi-family uses are permitted by special permit in all Residential and Suburban Districts with certain prerequisites relating to public water and sewer availability and access to major streets. The creation of a multi-family zoning district that codifies the prerequisites would provide the Town greater ability to designate appropriate locations where public services and infrastructure are in place or needed to accommodate this type of development.

Parking Requirements

The current parking requirements require an update to expand the types of uses and revise the required parking ratios. In certain instances, the amount of required parking is based on the number of employees rather than the building floor area. Basing a parking standard on the number of employees can be an elusive metric to enforce. The Town may wish to consider both minimum and maximum requirements to minimize lot coverage.

Split Lots

There are certain locations where zoning districts were created based on distance from road frontage which left portions of lots in more than one zoning district. The zoning has provisions

which apply to lots divided by zoning districts and municipal boundaries, however, it might be beneficial for the Town to re-examine the district boundaries in relation to lot line boundaries and/or street centerlines.

Use Variances

The Millbury Zoning Bylaw authorizes the Zoning Board of Appeals to grant variances for uses, as well as for dimensional relief. Use variances are viewed as a disfavored form of zoning relief. Dimensional variances are a form of relief where literal enforcement of the Zoning Bylaw, owing to special circumstances relative to lot shape, topography, or soil conditions, would result in a substantial hardship to the property owner. Use variances on the other hand are viewed as an administrative means to permit uses or developments by the Board of Appeals that would otherwise require Town Meeting approval of a zoning bylaw or map amendment without regard to hardship created by unique features of the lot. This sentiment is reflected in the current state Zoning Act adopted in 1975 which specifically prohibits Use Variances unless they are expressly authorized in the bylaw.

Locations of Zoning Districts

Most of the business and industrial districts are found near the interstate highways and minor arterials in town. However, in many instances, these zones abut a residential zone without any sort of buffer between districts other than dimensional requirements. As a result, residential properties often fall within an industrial zone and commercial properties often fall within a residential zone. This becomes a problem when industry causes contamination and properties downgradient or adjacent to a source of contamination become impacted. As the Town looks to re-work its Zoning Bylaw, consideration should be made to create a Zoning Map where business zones can act as a buffer between residentially zoned and industrially zoned land.

ESTIMATED DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

GIS data and land use data records from the Town Assessor were analyzed in conjunction with existing zoning to calculate an estimate of future development capacity for the Town of Millbury. Vacant land was broken down into zoning districts, and then filtered by the availability of public sewer. Efficiency loss factors for infrastructure (roads, stormwater management, wetlands, etc.) and ratios for multi- and single-family development were assigned based on current development trends. The development capacity under existing zoning was used to calculate the dwelling unit yield per acre for residential districts. For corresponding Business and Industrial Districts, Floor-to-Area Ratios (FAR) were applied.

It is estimated that residentially zoned vacant land can accommodate an additional 2,712 residential units under current zoning regulations. It is estimated that future development within business and industrial zoned districts has the capacity to accommodate approximately 561,624

and 2,295,612 square feet of floor area respectively. Previous build out analysis performed in 2000 by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and updated in 2010 varied widely.

The 2010 results projected far greater development capacity than the 2000 analysis and the results contained herein. The difference can be attributed to the fact that this analysis focused on vacant parcels and did not include underdeveloped or underutilized property. Additionally, the recent development activity since 2010 has reduced development potential accordingly.

Millbury Buildout Analysis

SEWER SERVICE AREA								
Zoning District		Acres Vacant	MF/SF Filter	Efficiency Factor	DU/Acre FAR		# Units/ Bldg sf	
SF	R-1	43	0.25	0.85	4	DU/Acre	37	Units
MF	R-1	43	0.75	1	16	DU/Acre	516	Units
SF	R-2	6.7	0.25	0.85	4	DU/Acre	6	Units
MF	R-2	6.7	0.75	1	16	DU/Acre	80	Units
SF	R-3	249	1	0.85	4	DU/Acre	847	Units
SF	S-2	17	1	0.85	4	DU/Acre	58	Units
SF	S-3	38	0.75	0.85	3	DU/Acre	73	Units
MF	S-3	38	0.25	1	16	DU/Acre	152	Units
	B-1	7	1	1	1	FAR	304,920	Sq Ft
	B-2	4	1	1	1	FAR	174,240	Sq Ft
	BV	1.9	1	1	1	FAR	82,764	Sq Ft
NON-SEWER SERVICE AREA								
SF	S-1	719	1	0.8	0.55	DU/Acre	316	Units
SF	S-3	12	0.75	0.8	0.75	DU/Acre	5	Units
MF	S-3	12	0.25	1	8	DU/Acre	24	Units
SF	S-4	187	0.75	0.8	1	DU/Acre	112	Units
MF	S-4	187	0.25	1	8	DU/Acre	374	Units
	I-1	155	1	0.85	0.4	FAR	2,295,612	Sq Ft
	I-2	57	1	0.8	0.35	FAR	695,218	Sq Ft

Total Vacant Acres: 1,310

Acres Residential: 1,084
 Residential Units: 2,712
 Single-Family: 1,565
 Multi-Family: 1,146

Acres Commercial: 13
 Acres Industrial: 212
 Business Sq Ft: 561,924
 Industrial Sq Ft: 2,990,830

SUSTAINABILITY AS PART OF A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Town of Millbury Zoning Bylaw incorporates language relative to sustainability within its framework. This language is meant to ensure that Millbury's historic small-town character is protected and maintained, and that additional development is consistent with the town's goals for sustainable growth.

The bylaw incorporates design standards, environmental controls, and special density provisions for certain districts, as well as requirements relative to natural resource management and protection such as open space/conservation of land, floodplain controls, aquifer and watershed protection, tree protection, scenic roads, wind energy systems, and solar photovoltaic installations.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings identified below incorporate analysis from the evaluation of the existing conditions and present land use/zoning as well as feedback received through the master planning public outreach and engagement process.

- Single-family residential development is the dominant land use in Millbury.
- The Shoppes at Blackstone Valley provide the densest retail development in town in a prime, easily accessible location for the region.
- Potential exists to grow the town's commercial and industrial base. It is estimated that approximately 560,000 square feet of business zoned floor area and over 2.9 million square feet of industrial zoned floor area could be developed under current zoning.
- Downtown and Bramanville Village offer the most advantageous location for adaptive reuse, mixed-use development, and higher density development.
- Residents would like to see the adoption of regulatory tools for the preservation of historically or architecturally significant buildings; additional development to increase the tax base and minimize the need for additional Town services; and a review of town by-laws, zoning, etc. for clarity, ease of use and appropriateness regarding the support of master plan goals.
- The Millbury Zoning Bylaw could benefit from an improved organizational structure, elimination of redundancy, reduction in the number of residential districts, and incorporated provisions to achieve the vision of the Master Plan.
- The Route 122 Corridor's proximity to the Mass Pike's interchange presents an opportunity for economic development through a rezoning to a business district.

CHALLENGES/ISSUES

- Housing - Evaluate the current regulatory framework relative to present and future housing needs for residents of all ages in Millbury.

- Vacant Land - Based on the Zoning Map, there is a significant amount of vacant space remaining within the Town. It would be advantageous to understand where developable vacant land exists versus undevelopable land due to environmental constraints, to better plan for future development.
- Open Space – Evaluate the effectiveness of the 2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan to assess whether the current regulatory framework is consistent to achieving the goals as outlined in the plan.
- Historic Preservation – Evaluate the current regulatory framework relative to the preservation of historic and cultural assets.
- Commercial/Industrial Development – Evaluate whether the current zoning in the downtown and within key commercial corridors is as effective as it can be in promoting additional commercial and/or industrial development.
- Residential Districts – Evaluate the current zoning to eliminate redundancy and excessive number of residentially zoned districts.
- Use/Dimensional Requirements - The present bylaw presents the use and dimensional requirements in a confusing manner and could be refined for clarity.
- Eliminate minimum lot area requirements dependent on the provision of public water and/or sewer service.
- Evaluate the Zoning Map to determine where rezoning of districts makes sense to eliminate split zoned parcels and create buffers between industrial development and residential development.
- Create suitable zoning provisions and processes for the Route 122 corridor for business development to leverage its proximity to the Mass Pike.

GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

The overall goal for the land use section of the Master Plan is to retain the town's character while accommodating future growth. To that end, Millbury should look to capitalize on vacant, undeveloped land adjacent to Routes 20, 122A and 146, particularly to enhance its commercial and industrial development base. Such opportunities could include, but might not be limited to:

- Millbury – Sutton Industrial Park – Route 122A Priority Development Area – Vacant land is available for development and consists of 81 acres in Millbury and 438 acres in Sutton.
- Land owned by utilities or railroads – Evaluate land presently under the jurisdiction of utilities or railroads. Work with utilities and railroads to identify surplus land that could be sold for development. Implement land use controls to guide said development, as needed.
- State owned rights-of-way along transportation corridors – Coordinate with the State to identify if any surplus land for development exists. Work with the State on a strategy for surplus land disposition for development of said parcels.

- Government/municipal land – Evaluate if land owned by government and/or the town could be leased/sold as surplus land. This would allow for the capture of additional tax revenues.
- Coordinate the expansion of public infrastructure to the areas designated for future growth and development/redevelopment in the Master Plan.
 - Pursue funding for the installation of sewer along the Route 146 corridor to stimulate commercial development.
- Recodification/Update the Zoning Bylaw – The Zoning Bylaw needs to be reorganized and amended to be more user-friendly to better reflect the vision of the Master Plan. Eliminate/combine residential zoning districts.
- Amend the Zoning Map as appropriate to reflect the areas where public and private investment should be targeted to achieve the vision of the Master Plan.
- Consider the creation of a Route 122 Corridor Overlay District that would set forth development standards, use and dimensional requirements, and a special permit process to facilitate business growth along the corridor.

In addition to cultivating additional commercial/industrial growth, Millbury should focus its efforts on residential development, particularly to meet the needs of its population, whether they are related to age, affordability, etc.

Lastly, the Town should evaluate what changes should be made to its existing bylaw to fully achieve the goals and vision of this master plan. It appears that an important update to the regulatory framework should be relative to the historic preservation of culturally significant buildings. Potential strategies to achieve this are through the implementation of local historic districts, the creation of a demolition delay bylaw, or through adoption of the Community Preservation Act, discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

4

HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

Housing is the most common land use in Millbury, as is true in almost every town in the Commonwealth. The cost and supply of housing and the types of housing available to buyers and renters play a critical role in defining the town's visual character, economy, and well-being.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

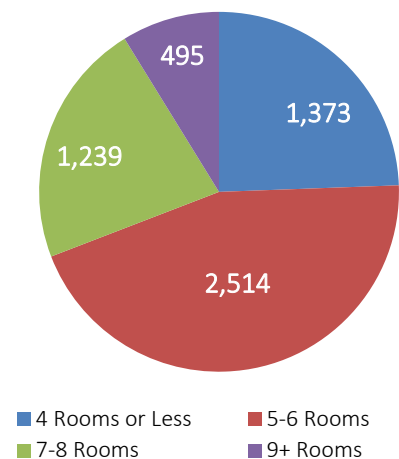
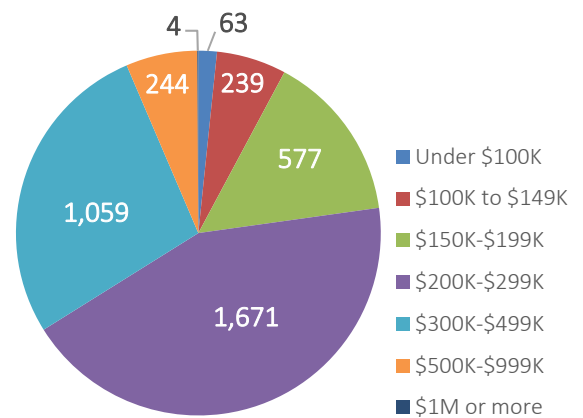
Current Inventory

The most recent estimates from the Census Bureau indicate that Millbury's housing inventory includes 5,621 units. The majority are traditional detached single-family homes, ranging from modest postwar ranches to higher-end, spacious residences that appeal to many of today's homebuyers. Millbury's predominantly single-family home profile goes together with its housing occupancy statistics. Seventy-three percent (73%) of all households in the town are homeowners, while 27% are renters.² According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), the average value of a single-family home in Millbury is approximately \$269,000 narrowly surpassing the owner-occupied housing values found in Worcester County overall.

Millbury's housing stock presents a range of ages. Approximately 26% of all units in Millbury pre-date 1940, the first year the Census Bureau began to report the age of housing stock. There are not many new units in the town, but recent building permit statistics belie the sluggish picture of housing growth estimated in census tables. Data from the University of Massachusetts' Donohue Institute shows that since 2010, residential building permits have steadily increased in Millbury, from 12 new single-family

Owner-Occupied Housing Values
Millbury, Massachusetts

(Source: ACS 2012-2016)



² U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates 2012-2016, DP04.

homes in 2010 to 55 in 2016.³ The town's newest homes tend to be larger, both in terms of total living area and number of rooms, as evidenced both in data from the Assessor's Office and estimates from the Census Bureau.

Nevertheless, while the majority of the new housing in Millbury consists of detached single-family homes, other housing types have been created, too. Town staff note that of the five housing developments currently under construction in Millbury in 2018, two are multi-family projects: Stratford Village, with 47 duplex and triplex units, and Cobblestone Village, with 72 garden-style units, including two affordable units. A new five-unit multifamily dwelling is currently under construction on West Main Street as well. Furthermore, the town has approved construction of several new accessory apartments under a bylaw adopted in 2007. Household sizes in Millbury have continued to decline consistent with statewide and national trends, and there seems to be a desire for smaller sized units in Millbury because market-rate development is responding in kind.

Millbury offers relatively modest home prices compared with some of the surrounding towns, such as Sutton and Grafton. The market has rebounded since the 2007 recession, evidenced by an uptick in residential building permits and a decrease in owner and rental vacancies. Zillow reports that in the past year (2017-2018), home values have increased 7.4% in Millbury and are predicted to increase another 8% in 2019. However, Millbury's market position in the region is projected to remain roughly in the middle.

Millbury Regional Home Values (Zillow Home Value Index)

Name	Median ZHVI	Name	Median ZHVI	Name	Median ZHVI
Shrewsbury	\$392,100	Northbridge	\$311,200	Auburn	\$243,000
Sutton	\$351,800	Douglas	\$299,900	Oxford	\$227,800
Grafton	\$340,600	MILLBURY	\$294,900	Worcester	\$214,100

Source: Zillow, 2018. ZHVI refers to Zillow Home Value Index.

HOUSING DEMOGRAPHICS

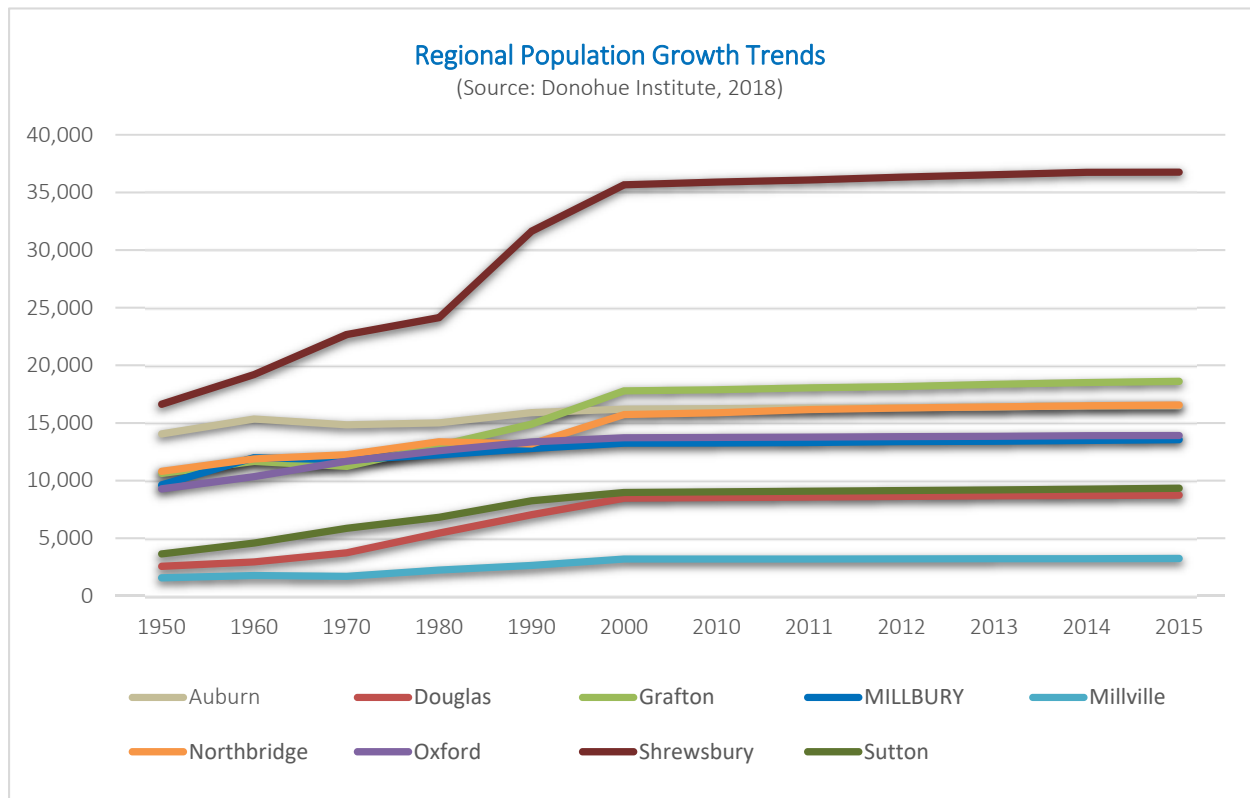
Population

The U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2012-2016 place Millbury's population at 13,431. While Millbury and the surrounding communities have added population since 1950, only Shrewsbury has witnessed transformative population growth – a fundamental change in the town's economic and social fabric as well as its physical development pattern.

For most Central Massachusetts towns close to Interstate 90, population growth has been slow but stable. The UMass Donohue Institute predicts that Millbury will continue to gain population

³ Donohue Institute, University of Massachusetts Amherst, "Residential Building Permits 2000-2016."

until 2030, at which point the number of people living in town will begin to drop. Declines are forecast at almost every age level except senior citizens. Between 2010 and 2035, the number of people 65 and over in Millbury is predicted to increase 76%.⁴ This shift, coupled with across-the-board decreases among working-age people, means that the age dependency ratio in Millbury will jump from 0.48 in 2010 to 0.68 by 2035. This means that for every working-age person in town, there will be 0.68 “dependent” people under 16 years of age and over 65 years of age. As the age dependency ratio rises, so does the pressure on the productive labor force to support the needs of the community.



Households

While population trends are important, household patterns and dynamics matter even more for a housing analysis. A household is one or more people occupying the same housing unit. Different household types often have different housing needs and preferences. The size and composition of a community’s households can indicate how well suited the existing housing inventory is to residents. The number and type of households and their spending power have a direct impact on housing demand.

The Census Bureau divides households into two broad classes: families and non-families. A family household includes two or more related people living together in the same housing unit, and a non-family household can be a single person or two or more unrelated people living together.

⁴ Donohue Institute, *Long-Term Population Projections for Massachusetts Regions and Municipalities* (March 2015)

Though exceptions do exist, most non-family households are smaller than families and often, they are both elderly and living alone. This pattern is evident in Millbury. On a town-wide basis, non-families constitute 31% of all 5,267 households. Of the 1,628 non-family households, 89% are comprised of one person. Seniors account for about half of Millbury's one-person households. As Millbury's "Phase I" Master Plan report notes, growth in senior households will increase the town's need for different types of housing, ideally concentrated in places where the elderly can easily access services and purchase goods.

Millbury families tend to be slightly smaller than families throughout Worcester County. In Millbury today, the average family size is 3.07 people, yet for Worcester County, the average family size is 3.18. About one-third of the town's families have one or more dependent children under 18 years of age.

Incomes

Household income influences where people choose to live, their health care and quality of life, and the opportunities they can afford their children. Millbury households have a somewhat higher economic position than households across Worcester County. The most recent income estimates available for Millbury indicate that the town's median household income is \$72,566, yet for Worcester County, the median income is \$67,005. Statistically, families tend to have higher incomes than all households simply because families are more likely to have two working people. Relative to median family income, Millbury families fare better than elsewhere in Worcester County – \$88,622 v. \$85,560. Family incomes can vary significantly depending on the family type, number of employed family members, and number of dependent children (if any). In Millbury, about 8% of all families are single women raising children on their own.

Affordable and Fair Housing Policies and Implementation Framework

Affordable housing is just as it sounds – housing units for those whose income is at or below the median household income in an area. There are generally two types of affordable housing – deed restricted and unrestricted. Deed restricted housing is housing that is affordable to low-income households and remains affordable to them, even when home values appreciate under robust market conditions. Unrestricted housing units are considered affordable based on price, but are not restricted to low-income households. An example of unrestricted affordable housing is an older, moderately priced dwelling that lacks the features and amenities of new, high-end homes. Both types of affordable housing meet a variety of housing needs and both are important. However, there are other differences, too. For example, any household, regardless of income, may purchase or rent an unrestricted affordable unit but only a low- or moderate-income household qualifies to purchase or rent a deed restricted unit. The difference is that the market determines the price of unrestricted affordable units while a legally enforceable deed restriction determines the price of restricted units.

The Comprehensive Permit Act, M.G.L. Chapter 40B, was enacted in 1969 to help address the shortage of affordable housing statewide by reducing barriers created by local approval processes,

zoning, and other restrictions. M.G.L. Chapter 40B allows developers to override local zoning bylaws to increase the stock of affordable housing in municipalities where less than 10% of the housing stock is defined as affordable.

The purpose of Chapter 40B is to provide for a regionally fair distribution of affordable housing for people with low incomes. Affordable units created under Chapter 40B remain affordable over time because a deed restriction limits resale prices and rents for many years, if not in perpetuity. The law establishes a statewide goal that at least 10% of the housing units in every city and town be deed restricted affordable housing. This minimum represents each community's "regional fair share" of low-income housing. It is not a measure of housing needs.

Chapter 40B authorizes the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to grant a comprehensive permit to pre-qualified developers to build affordable housing. "Pre-qualified developer" means a developer that has a "Project Eligibility" letter from a state housing agency. A comprehensive permit covers all the approvals required under local bylaws and regulations. Under Chapter 40B, the ZBA can waive local requirements and approve, conditionally approve, or deny a comprehensive permit, but in communities that do not meet the 10% minimum, developers may appeal to the State Housing Appeals Committee. During its deliberations, the ZBA must balance the regional need for affordable housing against valid local concerns such as public health and safety, environmental resources, traffic, or design. In towns that fall below 10%, Chapter 40B tips the balance in favor of housing needs. In addition, a Zoning Board of Appeals cannot subject a comprehensive permit project to requirements that "by-right" developments do not have to meet, e.g., conventional subdivisions.

Today, Millbury has very few deed restricted affordable units. The 10% statutory minimum is based on the total number of year-round housing units in the most recent federal census. For Millbury, the 10% minimum is presently 560 units. However, only 220 units (approximately 4% of all housing units) in Millbury qualify under Chapter 40B. Thus, the Town falls short of the 10% minimum by 339 units.

Millbury Subsidized Housing

The Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) is used to measure a community's stock of low- or moderate-income housing for the purposes of Chapter 40B. Most of the units on Millbury's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) are public housing, owned and operated by the Millbury Housing Authority. The majority (169 units) are state-funded one-bedroom apartments for seniors and people with disabilities. Public housing for families is available in two locations: 1. Burbank Street, Riverlin Street, Waters Street, West Main Street, North Main Street, and Forest Drive – Thirteen (13) units created with the state's "Chapter 705" family housing program; and 2. Memorial Drive – Twenty-five (25) units developed under the Massachusetts veterans housing program.

Interest in developing new housing under Chapter 40B has been remarkably limited in Millbury. It is also important to note that there are 22 subsidized affordable units at the Cordis Mills that the

Commonwealth’s Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has not added to Millbury’s SHI. The financing agency, MassDevelopment, reportedly allowed the owner to market the units widely without a state-approved affirmative fair housing marketing plan in place. Since fair housing compliance plays a key role in DHCD’s review process, the affordable units at Cordis Mills do not qualify for listing on the SHI.

Millbury Subsidized Housing Inventory⁵

Development	Location	Type	Units
Memorial Drive Development	Memorial Drive	Rental/Family	25
Centerview Apts	95 Elm St.	Rental/Elderly	54
Colonial Drive Apts	Colonial Dr.	Rental/Elderly	60
Congregate Housing Program	10 Colonial Dr.	Rental/Elderly	23
Linden Apartments	2 Pearl St.	Rental/Elderly	32
Elmwood Heights	Salo Terrace	Ownership	1
DDS Group Homes	Confidential Location	Rental	4
DMH Group Homes	Confidential Locations	Rental	8
MacArthur Drive	MacArthur Drive	Ownership	1
N/A	Water/Riverlin/Forest/W.& N.Main/ Burbank	Rental/Family	13

The Housing Authority also administers three state-funded mobile vouchers. This type of assistance helps a low-income tenant afford a privately-owned market-rate apartment available for a reasonable rent.

Housing Production Plan

A Housing Production Plan (HPP) is an analysis of a community’s affordable housing needs and a strategy for making steady progress toward the 10 percent statutory minimum under Chapter 40B. Through a HPP, a community creates an action plan to meet its affordable housing needs consistent with Chapter 40B, and produces housing units in accordance with the HPP.

By creating a HPP, a community can understand its current housing conditions and determine both projected housing needs of the current population as well as the growth/change in composition of the population. A HPP helps a community determine the type and pace of housing growth. If a community has a DHCD approved HPP and is granted certification of compliance with the plan by DHCD, a decision by the ZBA relative to a comprehensive permit application will be deemed “consistent with local needs” under Chapter 40B. This is a protection in place against the flexibility afforded to a developer under Chapter 40B. The last Housing Production Plan that Millbury created was in 2006. HPP plans expire every five years, thus this plan is expired. Millbury has no HPP in place presently.

Housing Cost Burden

⁵ MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

A disparity between growth in housing prices and household incomes contributes to a housing affordability problem known as housing cost burden. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines housing cost burden as the condition in which low-income households spend more than 30% of their monthly gross income on housing. When they spend more than half their income on housing, they are said to have a severe housing cost burden. Housing cost burden – not Chapter 40B – is the key indicator of affordable housing need in cities and towns. The table below reports HUD’s current housing program income limits by family size for the Worcester Area and the maximum housing payment that is affordable in each tier. “Very Low” and “Low” incomes are based on percentages of the HUD Area Median Family Income adjusted for household size.

Low & Moderate-Income Limits and Affordable Housing Costs ⁶				
	Very Low Income		Low Income	
Household Size	HUD Income Limit	Maximum Affordable Housing Payment	HUD Income Limit	Maximum Affordable Housing Payment
1	\$30,050	\$751	\$48,100	\$1,203
2	\$34,350	\$859	\$54,950	\$1,374
3	\$38,650	\$966	\$61,800	\$1,545
4	\$42,900	\$1,073	\$68,650	\$1,716
5	\$46,350	\$1,159	\$74,150	\$1,854
6	\$49,800	\$1,245	\$79,650	\$1,991

Approximately 1,865 low-income households call Millbury their home. Among them, 65% are housing cost burdened (1,221) and 23% (440) are severely housing cost burdened.⁷ Most of the households struggling with housing costs in Millbury today are homeowners. Many, but not all, are seniors. Where so many of the jobs in Millbury’s employment base provide low wages, the limited inventory of affordable housing and high incidence of housing cost burden are significant not only as matters of basic social fairness, but also for the health and resilience of the town’s economy.

Local Capacity

Millbury has a Housing Authority that provides deeply affordable housing for very low-income elders and families. The Town does not currently have a housing partnership or similar committee

⁶ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, FY 2018 Worcester Metro Income Limits.

⁷ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data.

devoted to advocacy for fair and affordable housing. To date, Millbury has not adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), unlike many of its neighbors to the east. As a result, there is no readily available source of funding to create or preserve affordable housing.

Town staff report that Millbury had an active Housing Partnership until 2011. A few years earlier, Millbury had donated land on MacArthur Drive to Habitat for Humanity MetroWest/Greater Worcester for construction of the Town's first Habitat home. The Partnership eventually dissolved, but while the group was still active, it sponsored an amendment to the Town Code to create the Millbury Affordable Housing Trust Fund. This action involved adopting a relatively new state law, Chapter 44, Section 55C, which paved the way for cities and towns to create a local housing trust without going through the burdensome process of seeking special permission from the state legislature. To date, Millbury has not appointed anyone to the Housing Trust Fund board of trustees. Thus, while the opportunity exists to have a local fund for affordable housing, this option has not been exercised.

There are regional resources available to the town, and some of them could be allies to help educate and train Millbury residents to be effective advocates for housing. Among them, Worcester Community Housing Resources, NeighborWorks Homeownership Center of Central Massachusetts, and RCAP Solutions in Worcester.

KEY FINDINGS

Key findings relative to housing include:

- The most common land use in Millbury is residential; and nearly three-quarters of residents in Millbury are homeowners.
- As more residents age in the community, there will be an increased demand for a variety of housing types to meet changes in lifecycle needs.
- Millbury has a shortage of affordable housing.
- Survey results show that respondents felt that Millbury's top housing needs include more single-family homes on small lots, single-family homes on small lots, townhouses, and assisted-living, extended care and nursing facilities.

CHALLENGES/ISSUES

- Millbury faces tremendous challenges in the short-term future as its population ages and seniors become an ever-larger share of all households. While recent developments of so-called 55+ housing create opportunities for retirees with comfortable incomes, they do not address the growing problem of seniors with a fixed income and high housing cost burden, whether owners or renters. Cottages or small homes, congregate residences, subsidized apartments, and accessory dwelling units are some of the ways Millbury can help provide additional opportunities to the low- to moderate income senior population.

- Millbury has not yet established capacity to address the variety of housing issues that many other Massachusetts communities have made a priority. It does not have the zoning, funding sources, or working partnerships with developers that are needed to create affordable housing. It does not have an active Housing Production Plan. It takes knowledge and resources to create affordable housing; it takes even more to preserve existing affordable units, and it takes political capacity to advocate for housing as a policy priority.
- Housing is a crucial economic development issue in communities like Millbury, where a large base of retail employment provides tax revenue but not living-wage jobs. Developing a good working relationship between housing and economic development interests would bring Millbury in line with contemporary practice in other Massachusetts towns and regions, and position the town to work effectively with Chapter 40B developers.
- The presence of new, higher-end housing in Millbury benefits the town in many ways, and it reinforces that Millbury is an attractive place for families. At the same time, the trend toward larger, pricier residences brings with it the risk of a social and cultural “divide” between the town’s traditional residents and newcomers who can afford a higher standard of living and higher taxes to support town/school services.

GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

Millbury’s overall housing goal is to provide a range of housing options to accommodate people at different stages in the lifecycle and with a range of incomes. The following recommendations were developed as a result of the existing conditions analysis as well as through the public engagement process:

- Promote accessory dwelling units as an opportunity to create affordably priced housing in established neighborhoods.
- Create more flexible ways to permanently preserve open space as part of new residential developments.
- Increase local capacity to create and preserve affordable housing so that people who work in Millbury can choose to live in Millbury as well.
 - Activate the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
 - Educate residents on various affordable housing terms – subsidized housing, deed restricted housing, workforce housing, etc. to gain support for the passage of the Community Preservation Act.
 - Use the Community Preservation Act as a source of dedicated revenue for the creation of affordable housing.
- Create a HPP as a strategy to promote and increase affordable housing opportunities for Millbury residents. The HPP will help ensure that Millbury remains affordable to many types of households as it grows and attracts higher-income families who find the town a desirable place to live.

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 boundaries of cities and towns. Instead, the geography of cohesive economic areas 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. Access to water has historically enabled the creation of industrial settlements that have over time evolved into economic centers. 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 Millbury.

Regional conditions influence the economic opportunities available to a community's population, but local policies also affect the health of a region's economy. There is an undeniable relationship between the number and types of industries located within a town's borders and the amount of revenue available to finance local government services. Since municipalities 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.

As a result, communities often think of "economic development" as zoning for commercial and industrial uses, yet building a local economy involves much more than zoning. Moreover, not all economic growth generates local tax revenue. A host of non-taxable land uses prime the economy of cities and towns, regions and the overall State – 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. Other local government policies, such as housing policies, also affect operating revenue, service costs, and the composition of the regional labor pool.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Location

Millbury has geographic advantages for economic development. Its direct access to regional highways and Interstate 90 is conducive to regional retail, hospitality, food services, businesses, and support operations for the biotech, healthcare, education, and other industries centered in Worcester. Location is a major reason the developer of the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley chose to build in Millbury. The project's location on Route 122A and Route 146 clearly positions it to capture retail spending in a large regional trade area. Furthermore, bisected by the Blackstone River, Millbury is a part of the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor and this creates a unique marketing niche for Millbury as a center for heritage tourism. Structures such as the Cordis Mill

and Felter’s Mill celebrate Millbury’s heyday as an industrial village while also enabling new kinds of economic activity through mixed-use development.

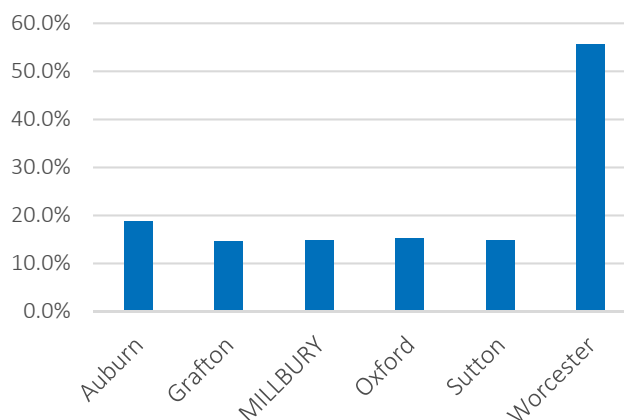
Labor Force

A community’s labor force consists of its own residents 16 years of age and over, employed or looking for work. A labor force participation rate represents the ratio of people in the labor force to the total population 16 and over. Communities with high labor force participation rates tend to be growing suburbs with large percentages of younger households and married-couple families, i.e., householders that make up a majority of the working-age population, and household types that often have more than one employed adult. Often, higher labor force participation rates tend to correlate with higher levels of household wealth.

According to the American Community Survey, Millbury’s labor force of 7,736 people represents 71.2% of the total population 16 and over.⁸ Millbury’s small-town character and proximity to Worcester help to explain why most of the labor force commutes to jobs outside the town. Less than 15% of Millbury’s employed labor force works in Millbury, and very similar statistics can be seen in the surrounding towns. Communities like Millbury and Grafton that once functioned as rural economic centers have gradually become bedroom communities for nearby cities and larger suburban employment nodes.

**Residents Working in Their Own Town:
Millbury vs. Region**

(Source: American Community Survey)



The Census Bureau currently estimates that about 200 Millbury residents work at home all or a portion of the work week.⁹ However, planners and policy analysts generally agree that federal census statistics understate the size of the “work-at-home” population, and this is probably true in Millbury. Though 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. Regulations that encourage home-based employment can have a significant impact on the well-being of a community’s working population.

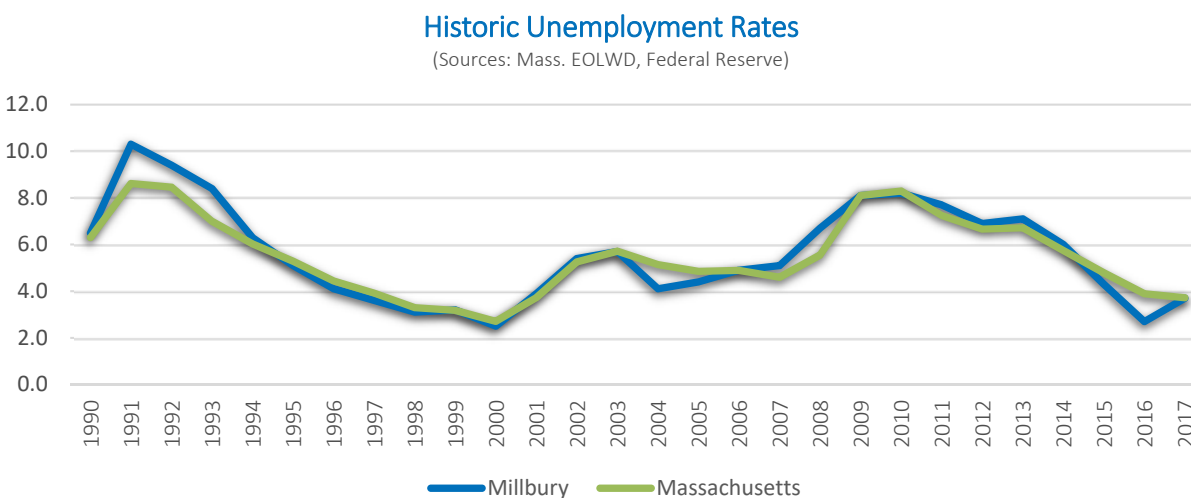
⁸ Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates, 2012-2016, DP-03.

⁹ Ibid, and B08601.

Unemployment

Unemployment rates shed light on the condition of the economy over time. During periods of economic recovery and expansion, job growth and job diversification lead to decreasing unemployment rates. By 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. From time to time, Millbury's labor force has fared somewhat better than the labor force statewide and the Central Massachusetts region.

When the "Great Recession" unemployment rate for Massachusetts peaked at 9.1% in July 2010, Millbury was not far behind at 8.2%. By contrast, when the state's unemployment rate reached 8.6% during the 1990-1991 recession, Millbury suffered far more, with over 10% of its labor force jobless. A pattern of hovering very close to the state average can be seen in Millbury's recent past, as shown in the following chart.



Education

Millbury's labor force is generally competitive with the state in terms of educational attainment. More than 34% of the town's adult population 25 years and over has earned at least a four-year bachelor's degree, and many of these residents have also completed graduate or professional degrees.¹⁰ Workers seeking job skills training or retraining have access to workforce development services at the MassHire Worcester Career Center (formerly known as Workforce Central Career Center in Worcester). The town operates its own K-12 school district, with two elementary schools and a combined junior-senior high school serving 1,730 students.¹¹ Millbury accepts "School Choice" students from other school districts on a limited basis, depending on school operating

¹⁰ American Community Survey 2012-2016, DP-02.

¹¹ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School District Profiles: Millbury/ Millbury Public Schools

capacity and enrollment projections. In addition to the local schools, Millbury belongs to the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical School in Upton. Over the past five years (2013-2017), public school enrollment in Millbury has gradually decreased. The most noticeable enrollment drops have occurred in the early primary and high school grades.¹² This is not unique to Millbury, for many communities in Massachusetts are experiencing similar trends in school enrollment.

Employment and Wages

Millbury has approximately 380 employers with a combined total of 5,200 employees.¹³ The retail sector supplies the largest number of jobs in town, which is easily explained by the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley. The transportation and warehousing sector also generates many jobs, with an average of 18 employees per business. In most instances, however, Millbury employers are small establishments with fewer than 10 employees. The highest-paying industries are the construction trades, manufacturing, wholesale trade, finance, administration and support services, and public administration. It is important to note that these statistics represent most employers in Millbury, but not the employees of non-profit charitable organizations or people working as self-employed individuals.

Millbury Employers: Average Weekly Wages by Industry

Industry	Average Wage	Industry	Average Wage
Construction	\$1,166	Finance and Insurance	\$1,188
Manufacturing	\$1,067	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$630
Durable Goods	\$1,103	Professional and Technical Services	\$845
Nondurable Goods	\$994	Administrative and Waste Services	\$1,025
Wholesale Trade	\$1,346	Health Care and Social Assistance	\$902
Retail Trade	\$475	Accommodation and Food Services	\$380
Transportation and Warehousing	\$858	Other Services	\$859
Information	\$524	Public Administration	\$1,011

Source: MA EOLWD, ES-202 (2016)

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. Millbury's job losses and gains over the past five years tell only one part of the story of the

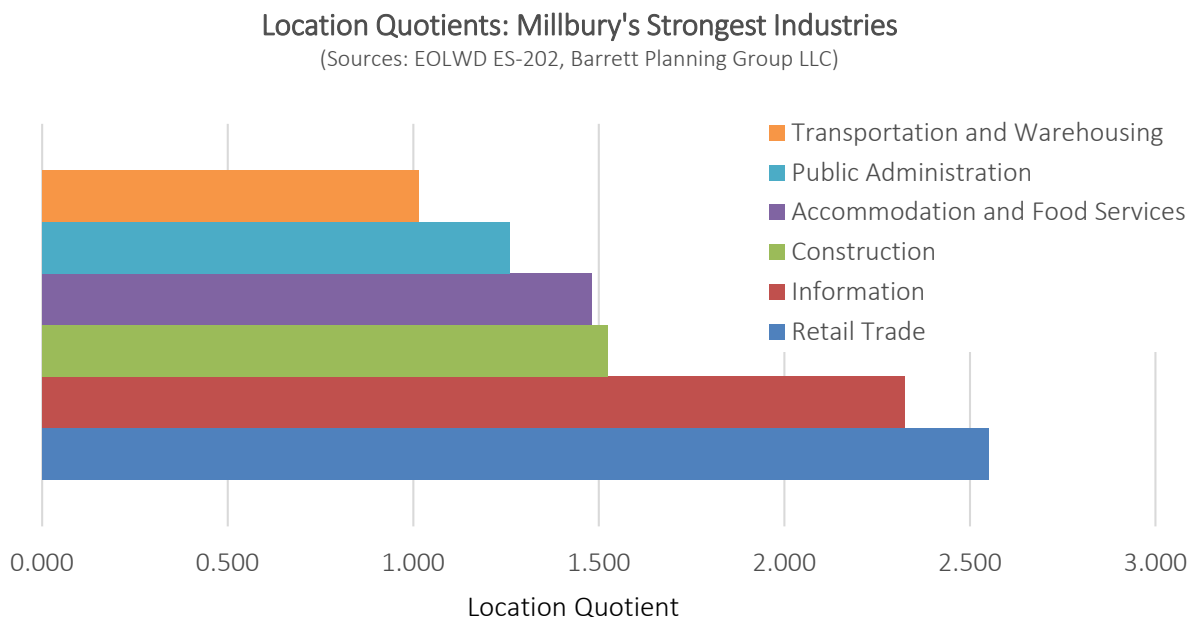
¹² Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Enrollment Trends.

¹³ Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, ES-202 Millbury Employment and Wages, CY 2016 Annual Data.

changes that occurred within its employment base. The changes are not entirely consistent with employment patterns elsewhere in the state. From 2012 to 2016, Millbury lost over 500 jobs in the construction, manufacturing, retail, information, and administrative and support sectors. The average local wage in most of these industries exceeded the average wage in Central Massachusetts. The healthcare and social assistance industries produced net employment growth due to an increase of 134 jobs. However, many of the industries with net job losses also created new jobs. Cycles of 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, healthcare, information services, and professional services. In Millbury, the most stable sources of employment – largely unaffected by swings in the regional economy – are finance and insurance and professional services.

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 may also be influenced by unique local or sub-regional conditions, for instance, orchards/tree farms in Millbury. The confluence of regional economic forces and unique local assets makes some communities a magnet for unique types of economic activity. The emphasis on a specific industry or sub-sector thereof can be seen in an employment base analysis known as a location quotient. Millbury shares some employment base characteristics with other communities south of Worcester, 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 Millbury's employment relative to the rest of the State, but manufacturing is underrepresented in Millbury relative to Worcester County. The high location



quotient for Worcester County means that manufacturing plays a far more important role in the economy of Central Massachusetts as a region, but not so much in Millbury.

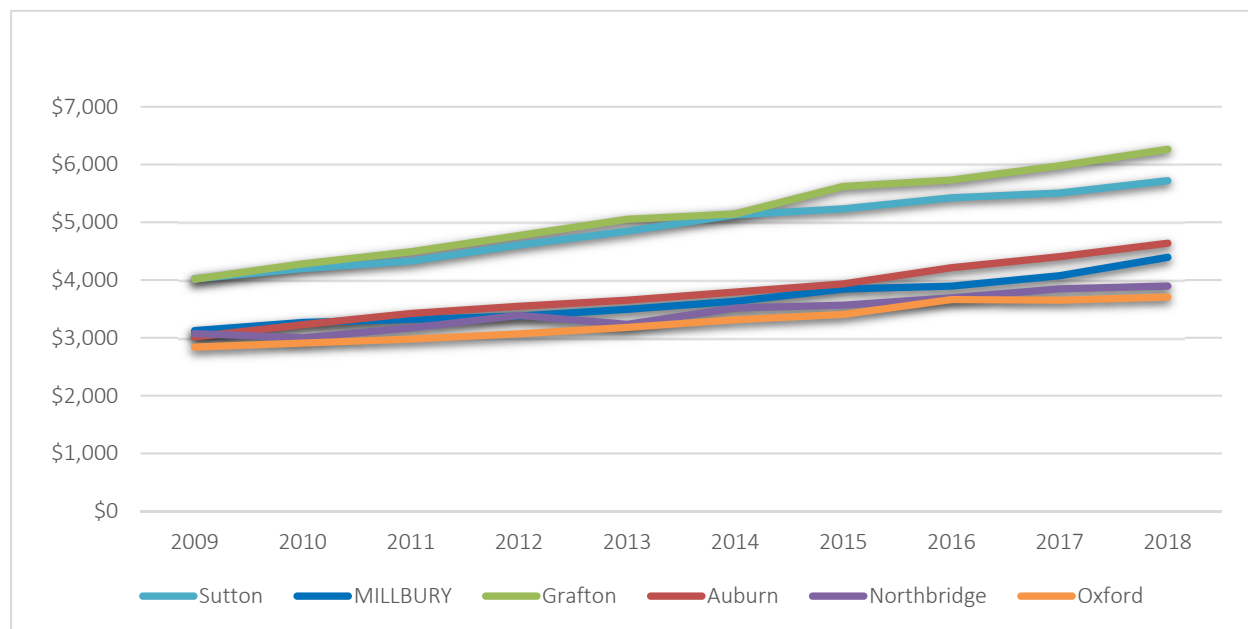
Workers by Place of Residence

The approximately 5,200 people working in Millbury travel from many communities in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, but most employees of local establishments live either in Millbury or one of the adjacent towns. Residents comprise 23 percent of the total number of people working for Millbury employers, and about 40 percent commute from Worcester, Auburn, Grafton, Sutton, or Northbridge.¹⁴

Tax Base

Compared with many small towns in Massachusetts, Millbury obtains quite a bit of its annual tax revenue from nonresidential development. Millbury taxes all properties at the same rate. This is known as a uniform tax rate. Data reported by the Department of Revenue shows that over the past few years, more than 20% of Millbury's tax levy has come from commercial, industrial, and personal property (CIP).¹⁵ The CIP assessed value in Millbury is \$337,623,934. Due to the size of Millbury's nonresidential tax base, single-family homeowners in Millbury pay a tax bill on average that is somewhat lower than that of many of its neighbors – \$4,395 in Fiscal Year 2018. In Millbury, 21% of the tax base is non-residential, which is high for a small town. The presence of a large regional retail center, the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley, is clearly a contributing factor.

Average Single-Family Tax Bills – Millbury vs. Neighboring Towns



Source: Department of Revenue

¹⁴ Census Bureau, Journey to Work Tables, ACS 2013.

¹⁵ Department of Revenue, Tax Levy Data Tables, Municipal Data Bank.

Housing and the Economy

The common tendency to fuse “economic development” with commercial and industrial land uses sometimes makes housing an overlooked ingredient in building a local or regional economic base. In fact, housing has a major impact on the size, composition, and vitality of the economy. The strength of the construction trades in Millbury points to the importance of housing for economic development planning and policy making.

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 community or region. Millbury has a reasonably good jobs-to-housing ratio of 0.92, but the employment base is small and it does not have a competitive inventory of higher-wage jobs. This can be attributed, at least in part, to infrastructure constraints, the character of Millbury’s housing inventory, and the lack of amenities that tend to lure employers competing for young professional workers in the labor market.

Housing market indicators, including developments in the pipeline, residential 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 together with rising unemployment levels, foreclosure rates and tax delinquencies, and an absolute decline in consumer spending. The recent fluctuations in construction trades jobs in Millbury was clearly influenced by the softening of the region’s housing market after 2006.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Zoning for Business Development

Millbury provides for commercial and industrial uses in several districts. The zoning bylaw is an older form of “pyramid” zoning in which districts of successively fewer restrictions build on (like a pyramid) a base of more restrictive districts. Zoning is discussed in more detail in the land use section of this Master Plan. It is relevant to note, however, that zoning does have an impact on how “business-friendly” Millbury is perceived to be.

Commercial/Industrial Corridors

An Industrial II zone abuts the Worcester line along Route 20, and specifically accommodates the Millbury Industrial Park. The industrial park boasts approximately 85 acres off Latti Farm Road with ten sites ranging from 1.32 acres to 38 acres. Buildings range in size from 18,000 square feet to 167,000 square feet and are a combination of light industrial, warehousing, training/research, and office space. The overall total building square footage within the Millbury Industrial Park is approximately 560,000 square feet. Uses presently include an auto dealership, office, training facility (utility), warehousing, light industrial, and distribution uses. It appears the buildings within the Industrial Park were all constructed after 1989. Therefore, the facilities tend to be in good condition and offer many of the dimensions needed for modern day manufacturing.

In 2018, 5-7-9 Latti Farm Road, the largest site in the Industrial Park, sold for \$5.6 million. There is a smaller Industrial II zoned district at the Sutton border along Route 146.

Industrial I districts are generally found within East Millbury and along Route 146. These districts are near the railroad network, the interstate highway system and along minor arterial roadways. The largest Industrial I zone, along Route 146, is also subject to the Route 146 Highway Corridor Overlay District. This overlay district allows retail sales and services, among other uses, with a special permit. Like other nearby communities, retail is slowly eroding the land available for industrial use. While not necessarily a present concern, in the future, the Town should carefully evaluate how much industrial land it is willing to give up for retail sales/services or other non-industrial or light manufacturing uses. Retail typically provides larger quantities of part-time jobs at lower wages, while light industry/manufacturing typically requires a skilled workforce at higher wages.

In terms of districts zoned for business, the Business I District is more compatible with existing high-density commercial development, while the Business II District is more appropriate for auto orientation. The only Business I District is in the Downtown. Small businesses such as retail sales and services, restaurants, personal services, financial services, medical, municipal/government, and office are the typical uses. There is a certain density in the downtown, with multi-story buildings providing ground floor retail and upper floor office/residential opportunities.

The downtown business district could benefit from public realm improvements such as green infrastructure for sidewalk improvements and traffic calming (planned as part of the Downtown Revitalization Low-Impact Development Initiative). The Town has started a beautification initiative in Millbury Center as well. The purpose of the initiative is to undertake low-cost, easy-to-implement projects that add color and vitality to Millbury Center. Launched in 2016, the initiative sponsors Adopt-a-Pot and Adopt-a-Banner programs, which finance additional streetscape improvements. Millbury could also benefit from the creation of a façade program to create a cohesive design for ground-floor storefronts. Storefront improvements could include design elements such as lighting, signage, and canopy treatments. In addition, decorative streetlights could help to further distinguish this district.

There is a Business II District on Route 146 at the Millbury/Sutton border as well as north at the Millbury/Worcester border. There is also a Business II district along Millbury Ave. near Dorothy Pond. This business corridor serves more as a neighborhood center to the surrounding residents. The Bramanville Village zoning district provides for the redevelopment/infill development of the historical Bramanville area, aiming to promote a vibrant village center with mixed-use development and adaptive reuse of former mill buildings. This zoning provides for small-scale commercial uses, such as pizza shops and a variety store, that serve and support the residents of the district and adjacent residential zones. The Bramanville Village District has a great supply of older industrial mill buildings, providing for some fantastic opportunities for adaptive reuse and mixed-use development.

Business Incentives

Since Millbury is known more as a suburban bedroom community, it has not been very aggressive with offering incentives to businesses. Presently, there are two identified Priority Development areas in town – one along Route 146 and one along Route 122A. Through this designation, the sites qualify for expedited permitting during site development. Additionally, Millbury Center is part of the Blackstone Valley Economic Target Area (ETA). Properties within the ETA could potentially qualify for designation as an Economic Opportunity Area through the Commonwealth’s Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP). Through the EDIP, state and local tax incentives are offered to qualified businesses in exchange for new investment and job creation. This tool provides state tax credits or local property tax relief, in the form of a Tax Increment Financing Agreement (TIF), for qualified projects. There is one project, Felter’s Mill, that has received the state credit through the EDIP in Millbury. However, there are no TIF agreements to date.

Local Capacity

Like most towns its size, Millbury does not have an economic development department. Economic development planning and implementation are handled largely by the Planning Department, with other departments or boards and commissions involved on an as-needed or as-appropriate basis. Because the Town has a full-time professional planner and planning department, Millbury has been able to pursue opportunities such as a “shared” or inter-local Priority Development Site designation with neighboring Sutton for 519 acres on Route 122A. Out of that process, Millbury developed a local permitting guide to help nonresidential developers and businesses navigate the town’s permitting and licensing procedures.

The town does not have an economic development committee or commission, or a council of business advisors. There have been efforts in the past to organize for downtown revitalization, but to date, a “Main Street” initiative has not taken hold in Millbury. While there is not a “Main Street” initiative presently in Millbury Center, the first steps toward developing one is to first define the downtown/town center boundaries and create a task force or committee charged with economic development growth.

KEY FINDINGS

Key findings relative to economic development include:

- There are many factors that impact Millbury’s local economy – land use, location, tax rate, and labor force, among others.
- Even though commercial/industrial use comprises 5% of total land use in Millbury, it accounts for 21% of the overall tax base.
- Limited town staffing capacity is an obstacle to economic development growth in town, particularly for areas of focus, such as in Millbury Center.

CHALLENGES/ISSUES

While there are advantages to economic development in Millbury, such as proximity to major transportation corridors, there are challenges as well.

- Adequate Infrastructure and Utilities – Ensure future large-scale developments, whether retail or commercial in nature, provide sufficient site access and egress. In addition, ensure that existing water/sewer/stormwater systems and utility networks can support the Town's future growth.
 - As the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley prove, access into and out of a site is critically important for attracting people to come. With only one access/egress, traffic control is challenging, particularly during peak shopping times throughout the year. While adjustments have been made to streamline impact, for instance paid police details, a second access/egress point would have made a considerable difference to the consumer experience.
 - With available developable land, particularly zoned for business/industry, the Town needs to ensure that adequate infrastructure and utilities are available to support future large-scale development. The extension of sewer and other utilities (water, gas, fiber optics) should be made in areas where it is lacking, specifically along Routes 146, 20 and 122A as an incentive for developers.
- Business Attraction and Retention Efforts – Communities with aggressive economic development agendas work to make economic and siting data readily available to commercial and industrial developers. They are proactive about forming and nurturing partnerships with the business community and giving business leaders a seat at the table for economic development planning and policy making. For these communities, marketing, incentives, and strategizing to help businesses locate and thrive are considered essential responsibilities of local government. Millbury, like many small towns, has a harder time accomplishing these tasks simply because it lacks the resources and staff needed to compete with economic development initiatives in cities and larger suburbs.
- Housing, Community Amenities, and Millbury's Niche – It cannot be emphasized too much that housing development policies and economic prospects go together. Companies seeking to expand or relocate must think about where their workers will live and play, and what kind of quality of life, or lifestyles, those workers will want. For firms offering higher-wage, specialized jobs in science, technology, management, and professional services, location choices are increasingly influenced by factors that will attract and keep younger, well educated workers. Millbury has much to offer, but its housing stock is not very diverse and it does not have a broad range of entertainment, recreation, and leisure activities.
- Economic Vision – Generally, communities to the east of Worcester have higher levels of household wealth, more amenities, more resources, and enjoy the advantages of easier access to Boston. None of these factors presents an inherent barrier for Millbury to cultivate

the kind of economy it wants, but the town's economic vision needs to be clear and the strategies to achieve it need to be realistic.

GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

The overall goal for economic development in the Town of Millbury is to increase the tax base and provide additional job opportunities. To that end, through the public engagement process, residents voiced support of the following strategies/recommendations:

- Explore creating a Business Improvement District (BID) for downtown Millbury;
- Actively support and promote a “Buy Local” campaign;
- Take steps to “streamline” and simplify the development review and permitting process for nonresidential development;
- Promote and publicize the contributions local businesses make to the community; and
- Review land use policies and regulations to reduce or prevent conflicts between business development and residential neighborhoods.
- Seek funding sources for the installation of infrastructure needed to support economic development along key corridors such as Routes 146, 20, and 122A.

In addition, the Town should evaluate how high a priority fostering economic development and growth is, and assess if it makes sense to increase town staffing capacity to focus on these efforts, particularly in terms of fostering small business development in the center of town, and larger-scale development along main transportation routes. Lastly, town officials should determine if business assistance programs, such as microloans/façade loans/tax relief packages may help with business attraction and/or retention efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural and historic resources are generally features that are relevant to individual town character and the overall sense of place. They can be any number of things, for example a building, main street, residential home, site, district, structure, cemetery, bridge or object of historical, architectural, archaeological, engineering or cultural significance. Millbury's town character is due in no small part to its villages, historic buildings, landscapes, and well-preserved features, many of which reflect its New England manufacturing past. Examples are the Felter's Mill, the Asa Water's Mansion, and the Old Common.

The protection and preservation of Millbury's historic character are an integral component of the town's vision for the future. This section presents a summary of Millbury's historic development, including Native American settlement, colonial settlement, and the industrial revolution. A review of existing conditions of cultural and historic resources is followed by recommendations intended to guide the town's future decisions in the protection and adaptive reuse of these resources.

MILLBURY'S HISTORY

Native American Settlement

The Nipmuc, a subgroup of the Southern Algonquians, were present in Millbury before Anglo-American settlement. Nipmuc means "fresh water people" and local tribes occupied the interior portion of what is now Massachusetts, parts of Rhode Island and Connecticut.¹⁶ Their trail system likely used the Blackstone River corridor as a major north-south route, with a cross trail that may be like present-day West Main Street.

Millbury is archeologically notable for quarry sites and rock shelters, as well as small campsites along the river that would have been used for seasonal hunting and fishing activities. In the second half of the 17th century, colonial missionaries established several Christian-Indian towns in the area, including the Hassanamisco Reservation, which is still present in nearby Grafton, and the Chaubunagungamaug Reservation to the south in Webster. The Nipmuc people experienced extensive loss of lands and independence in the aftermath of King Philip's War, which was the last large-scale Native American effort to drive out English Settlers (1675-76) in New England.¹⁷ Millbury was part of a colonial land purchase from Nipmuc sachem Wampus (John White) in 1704 which was centered in Sutton and included part of Auburn.¹⁸

¹⁶ <http://www.nipmucmuseum.org/history/>

¹⁷ <http://historyofmassachusetts.org/what-was-king-philips-war/>

¹⁸ *Millbury Reconnaissance Report, Blackstone Valley / Quinebaug-Shetucket Landscape Inventory*, Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program, July 2007, p. 2.

Historic Settlement

Present day Millbury originally comprised the northern section of the Town of Sutton, referred to as the Second Parish (or North Parish). The earliest settlement occurred around 1720 in what is now West Millbury. By 1742, a parish was formed in the Old Common area with a membership population of 40 males and 30 females.¹⁹

Industrial development proceeded quickly in West Millbury due to water power available from Singletary Pond. For example, the S & D Spinning mill was built in 1753 by John Singletary. The mill is still operational, making it one of the oldest continuously operating mills in the country. An image of the S & D Spinning Mill is featured on the Millbury Town Seal. Manufacturing in West Millbury also included the Burbank Paper Mill on Singletary Brook, which commenced operations in 1777. While industrial endeavors historically propelled Millbury's economy, agriculture also played a vital role, particularly in West Millbury, Grass Hill, and the Old Common where underlying soil conditions were better suited to support farming compared to the eastern section of town. Sheep raising was dominant in the late 1700s, but the emphasis shifted to cattle-raising and dairying in the 1800s. Additional crops were grains, potatoes, vegetables and, for a short time in the 1860s, tobacco.

Industrial activity in Armory Village, now the center of Millbury, began with an iron refinery and forge in 1740. An armory was soon established to produce guns during the Revolutionary War. As manufacturing and economic activity in Armory Village escalated, residents relocated from the Old Common area to be closer to this employment center. A second armory called Waters & Co. was erected in 1808 on the site of the original iron refinery by Asa Waters II and his brother, Elijah.

Sutton was separated into two communities in 1813 and the Second Parish was incorporated as the Town of Millbury. Throughout the 1800s, with the opening (and closing) of the Blackstone Canal and the introduction of the Providence and Worcester and Boston and Albany Railroad lines, manufacturing throughout Millbury thrived in a dynamic market. Textiles and textile machinery for wool, cotton, linen, leather products, metalworking, and wood production are just a few examples of the diverse range of industrial production.

Residential development occurred concurrently with the economic development of the mills as workers, managers and owners typically lived within walking distance of work. Thus, villages sprang up around factory sites with larger settlements in Bramanville and near the Armory and Canal Street along the Blackstone. Smaller villages include the Old Common, Bucks Village and the Wheelerville-Singletary Village near Singletary Lake. Manufacturing, particularly in the textiles, continued to dominate the town's industry well into the 20th century, but by the 1960s and 1970s many of the mills had gone out of business or relocated operations to southern states.

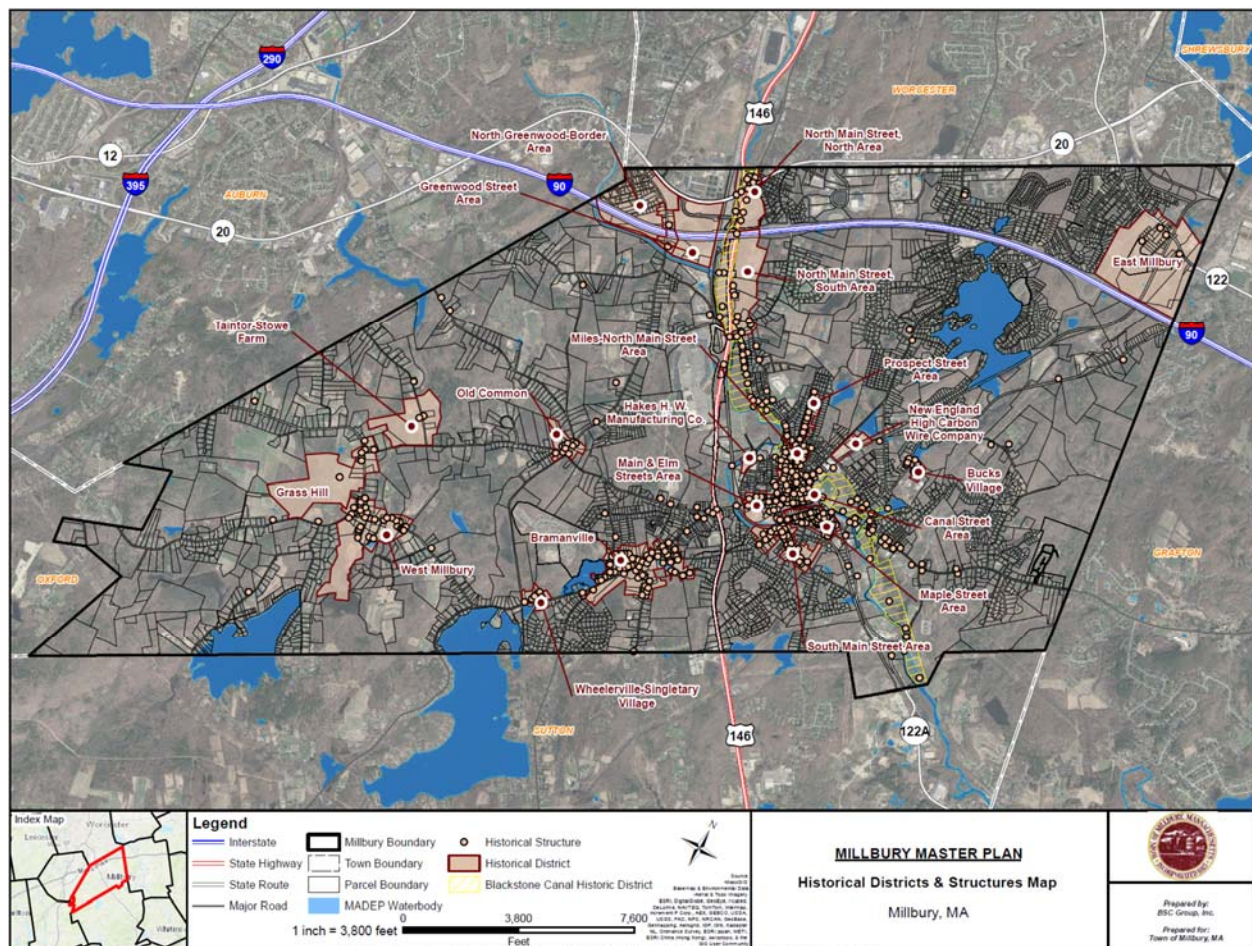
¹⁹ *MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report, Millbury*, 1984, p. 3
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/mlb.pdf>

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section addresses the following cultural and historic resources in Millbury:

- Notable assets, adaptive reuse, and cultural resources at risk in Millbury
- State-inventoried historic buildings, objects, structures and burial grounds
- State-inventoried historic districts
- National Register of Historic Places District and listed Properties
- The Blackstone Heritage Corridor
- Significant Heritage Landscapes

Millbury's Historic and Cultural Resources



This map presents an overview of the historic and cultural resources in Millbury.²⁰ A larger version of this figure is presented in Appendix B.

²⁰ The Historic and Cultural Resources Map includes information from the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) database and related records on file at the MHC, including the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth, National Register nomination forms, local historic district study reports, local landmark reports, and other materials.

Notable Assets, Adaptive Reuse, and Cultural Resources at Risk in Millbury

As discussed below in the *State Inventoried Cultural Resources* section, Millbury has many intact historic structures and features. Examples of significant historic assets/sites throughout Millbury include the following:

- The Dwinnell, County Bridge and West Millbury Cemeteries – Established in the 1700s, these three cemeteries provide the final resting place for many of Millbury’s esteemed residents.
- Grass Hill School, 1861-1968 – A former schoolhouse currently being restored by the Millbury Historical Society for interpretive educational and community use.
- Bramanville First Congregational Church, 148 W. Main St. – This church was originally built on Old Common in 1803 and moved to its current location.
- The Old Common Village, 1740-1850 – An architecturally intact settlement village surrounding a manicured common.

Adaptive reuse is an extremely important means of thoughtful preservation. Examples of successful adaptive reuse projects in Millbury include:

- Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm Street – A stunning Georgian Colonial-style mansion built by the prosperous Armory owner, Asa Waters II, between 1826 and 1829. In 1977 the town acquired the property. By 1994, the structure had fallen into disrepair and was in danger of demolition. The Friends of the Asa Waters Mansion preservation society undertook fundraising and began interior and exterior restoration. Still owned by the town, the mansion is now used as a special events venue and serves as the Millbury Historical Museum.
- Senior Center, River Road – A former rail station converted for use as the Millbury Senior Center. This town-owned facility provides weekday lunches, classes and clinics for Millbury seniors.
- The Cordis Cotton Mill, 65 Canal Street – now a three-story, 112-unit luxury apartment and medical office complex. The redevelopment was constructed to respect historic detail and incorporates the display of antique mill equipment in Common areas. A portion of the Cordis site is occupied by medical offices and support facilities.
- The Felter’s Mill, 22 West Street – currently occupied by a mix of commercial, medical, food and service uses. The lobby retains extensive structural framework from the original factory.

Some resources or features may be at risk of being lost due to demolition, inappropriate alteration, neglect, decay, site redevelopment, or environmental threats. Another risk is nearby development which is out of character and inconsistent with the overall sense of place. Based on available information, the following cultural resources at risk in Millbury are listed to provide some examples of potentially at-risk resources. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list.

- Frederick A. Lapham House, 4 Burbank Street (MLB.70)
- 1 Mill Road, Ramshorn Wool Scouring Mills (MLB.60)
- Worker housing structures throughout town
- Agricultural and heritage landscapes in West Millbury

- Congregational Church Parsonage, 11 Beach Street (MLB.66)
- Millbury Fire House, 124 Elm Street (MLB.166)

The **Frederick A. Lapham House** (MLB.70) is a large Queen Anne style 2.5-story single family dwelling in Bramanville Village. It was built in 1888 by Lapham, son of the textile mill founder, Mowry A. Lapham. The ornate home is located on a hillside behind the textile mill (MLB.120).²¹ The structure was in fair condition until it was partially destroyed by fire in 2017. Portions are now open to the elements and the building's condition is degrading quickly. The out-of-state owner, who also owns the adjacent mill building, has not acted to protect or preserve the damaged building.

Another example is the **Congregational Church Parsonage** at 11 Beach Street (MLB.66), located across the street from the First Congregational Church (MLB.129). The building was constructed around 1845 in the Greek Revival style after the church was moved from the Old Common in 1835. The Parsonage is in good condition and retains extensive original details on the exterior and interior. However, it is currently for sale and future plans for the structure are uncertain.

State Inventoried Cultural Resources

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) database lists over 500 inventoried cultural resources in Millbury, including residences, churches, worker housing, mills, civic and office buildings, schools, cemeteries, dams, waterways, and bridges situated throughout the town dating from the early 1700s. Millbury's many historic residential structures include examples of multi-family mill housing structures as well as ornate dwellings from the Georgian era (1714 to 1830) and the Victorian era (1837 to 1901).

Many factory buildings still exist throughout Millbury today. While some are abandoned and in poor condition, others have been restored to accommodate residential or commercial uses, e.g., Cordis Mills and Felter's Mills, respectively. Several provide space for contemporary industrial uses, e.g. the Steelcraft facility at 115 West Main Street in Bramanville, formerly the Lapham Woolen Mills. Others are in fair to poor condition but have been roughly divided into low-rent spaces used by artists, antique stores or entrepreneurs as "incubator" space. Examples are the former Whitney-MacDuff Thread Mill at 175 West Main Street and the H.W. Hakes Manufacturing Mill on River Street. The MACRIS output for Millbury is referenced in Appendix F.

State-Inventoried Historic Districts

The MACRIS database identifies 21 State-Inventoried Historic Districts in Millbury, one of which is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places (referred to herein as the National Register), as noted in the following table.

²¹ Mowry A. Lapham Woolen Mill, also known as the Mayo Woolen Mill #1, located at 115 Main Street (1879). The mill now houses Steelcraft Inc. to manufacture IV stands and medical equipment.

State-Inventoried Historic Districts

Inventory No.	District Name	General Location	Characterization/ Period of Significance
MLB.A	Old Common	West Millbury	Residential Village 1740-1850
MLB.B	Grass Hill	West Millbury	Residential Village 1800-1850
MLB.C	Taintor - Stowe Farm	West Millbury	Agricultural 1750-Present
MLB.D	West Millbury	West Millbury	Residential Village 19 th Century
MLB.E	Bramanville	South Millbury	Mill Village, 1825-1900
MLB.F	Wheelerville - Singletary Village	South Millbury	Mill Village, 1840-1880
MLB.G	North Greenwood - Border Area	North Millbury	Residential Village, early 20 th Century
MLB.H	Main and Elm Streets Area	Central Millbury	Commercial and Institutional Core, 19 th Century
MLB.I	Canal Street Area	Central Millbury	Residential, 19 th Century
MLB.J	Miles - North Main Street Area	Central Millbury	Residential, 19 th Century
MLB.K	Prospect Street Area	Central Millbury	Residential, 1875-1935
MLB.L	Maple Street Area	Central Millbury	Residential, 1830-1870
MLB.M	South Main Street Area	Central Millbury	Residential, 1820-1880
MLB.N	Hakes, H. W. Manufacturing Company	Central Millbury	Industrial Manufacturing, 1895+
MLB.O	New England High Carbon Wire Company	Central Millbury	Industrial Commercial Mixed Use, 1921-1950s
MLB.P	Bucks Village	Central/East Millbury	Residential/Industrial, 19 th Century 4 th Quarter
MLB.Q	East Millbury	East Millbury	Residential, 1875-1935
MLB.R	North Main Street, North Area	North Millbury	Commercial Residential, Early to Mid-20 th Century
MLB.S	North Main Street, South Area	North Millbury	Residential Commercial, Late 18 th to Mid-20 th
MLB.T	Greenwood Street Area	North Millbury	Agricultural Residential, Mid-19 th to Early 20 th
MLB.U	Blackstone Canal Historic District and National Register District	South, Central and North Millbury	Transportation Commerce Agriculture Domestic Landscape, 1925-1949, 1900-1924, 1875-1899, 1850-1874, 1825-1849

Preservation Restrictions

A Preservation Restriction (M.G.L. c. 184 § 31-33) protects historic and archaeological properties from changes that may be inappropriate by restricting present and future owners from altering a

specified portion of that building, structure, or site. The restriction can run for a few years or in perpetuity and may be part of the property deed. MHC's Director of the Preservation Planning Division has responsibility for managing all aspects of MHC's approval process under M.G.L. Chapter 184, sections 31-33.²²

Two Millbury properties have Preservation Restrictions: Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm Street; and the Millbury Public Library, 128 Elm Street. Preservation restrictions can be donated or purchased by a government body or private preservation organization and are enforced by the holder of the restriction.

National Register of Historic Places Districts and Properties

The National Parks Service (NPS) administers the National Register program. There is one National Register-listed district and three National Register-listed properties in Millbury:

- Blackstone River Canal District (1828)
- Asa Waters Mansion, 123 Elm Street (1826)
- First Presbyterian Society Meeting House (1828) (now Millbury Federated Church), 20 N. Main Street
- U.S. Post Office – Millbury Main, 119 Elm Street (1940)

According to the NPS website, National Register designation provides formal recognition of a property's historical, architectural, or archeological significance based on national standards used by every state. It may also provide opportunities for preservation incentives, such as federal or state grants and tax credits for planning and rehabilitation. The nomination process for listing a property is undertaken through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at the MHC.²³ Under Federal Law, the listing of a property in the National Register does not restrict what a non-federal owner may do with property up to and including destruction, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance, usually funding or licensing/permitting.

John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (NPS), MA & RI and the Blackstone Heritage Corridor

The Blackstone River Canal National Register District is part of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and its successor, the Blackstone Heritage Corridor (BHC) (collectively referred to as "the Corridor").²⁴ The Corridor is centered around the former Blackstone Canal, which was constructed to move freight between Providence and Worcester by a barge pulled by two horses. The canal extended through 24 cities and towns (including Millbury) in two states. At nearly 45 miles long with 49 locks, the canal was operational from 1828 to 1848.

²² *Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Plan 2018-2022*, July 26, 2018, p. 2-9

²³ <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/how-to-list-a-property.htm>

²⁴ Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Inc. (BHC) is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) corporation. It is the successor of the former federal commission and the management entity for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

For approximately 10 percent of its length the canal ran in the Blackstone River.²⁵ Its operation transformed the region by bringing new development along the route and improving trade opportunities. As part of its mission, BHC works closely with the new Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park and provides services throughout the towns of the National Heritage Corridor to complement the work of the NPS. BHC provides community assistance programs for historic preservation, civic engagement, recreation, natural resource conservation, and education projects. These programs are an important resource to member communities like Millbury, because they provide advice, technical assistance, recognition and grants.²⁶ For example, through the NPS community assistance program, Millbury installed interpretive signage in three locations to honor the historic context and provide an explanation for the events, subjects or sites that they highlight. Additional information on grant programs is referenced in Appendix F.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)

The APR Program helps to preserve and protect agricultural land to keep valuable farmland soil from being built on by development companies for non-agricultural purposes that could be detrimental to the environment. The program offers to pay farmland owners the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of their farms in exchange for a permanent deed restriction which precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability. It is a voluntary program which offers a non-development alternative to farmers who are faced with a decision regarding future use of their farms. The main objective of the APR program is to protect productive farmland through the purchase of deed restrictions and revitalize the agricultural industry by making land more affordable to farmers and their operations more financially secure.²⁷ The majority of Pearson's Farm, now called Elmhurst Dairy Farms, LLC, is under the APR program. The farm, in the Grass Hill area, is one of the oldest working farms in Millbury. Most of the property lies west and south of West Main Street, while the main farmhouse, retail operation and a barn are located on the east side of the street. The total acreage of the farm is 293 acres, of which 250 are in the APR program. The property is about half forested, half open.²⁸

Heritage Landscapes

In addition to information available from the MHC and the NPS, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), along with the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, completed a comprehensive landscape inventory, as documented in the 2007 *Millbury Reconnaissance Report, Blackstone Valley / Quinebaug-Shetucket Landscape Inventory*. This report was completed as part of the MA Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. The purpose of this

²⁵ <http://www.worcesterhistory.org/bcinfo/bcinfo-home.html>

²⁶ <https://www.nps.gov/getinvolved/communities.htm>

²⁷ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/agricultural-preservation-restriction-apr-program-details>

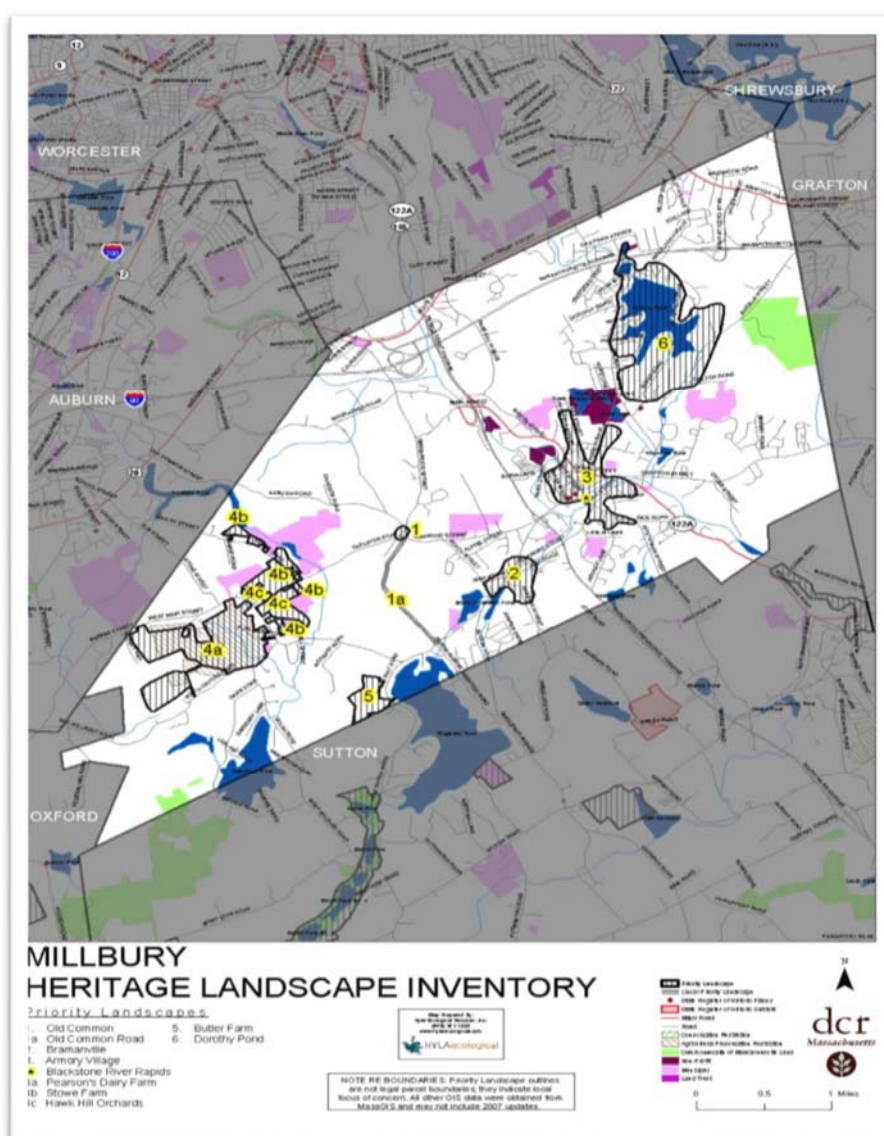
²⁸ *Millbury Reconnaissance Report, Blackstone Valley / Quinebaug-Shetucket Landscape Inventory*, Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program, DCR et. al., p. 13.

program was to identify a wide range of landscape resources and provide communities with strategies for preserving heritage landscapes.

According to the study, heritage landscapes are described as:

“Special places created by human interaction with the natural environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past. They are dynamic and evolving: they reflect the history of a community and provide a sense of place; they show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns; and they often have scenic qualities. This wealth of landscapes is central to each community’s character, yet heritage landscapes are vulnerable and ever changing.”²⁹

Millbury’s Priority Landscapes



²⁹ *ibid*, p. 1.

The Priority Landscapes shown include the following:

- 1 Old Common
 - 1a Old Common Road
- 2 Bramanville
- 3 Armory Village and Blackstone River Rapids
- 4 Grass Hill Farms
 - 4a Pearson's Dairy Farm
 - 4b Stowe Farm and
 - 4c Hawk Hill Orchards
- 5 Butler Farm
- 6 Dorothy (Dority) Pond (Big and Little)

Each of the priority landscapes is highly valued and contributes to community character, but none has any permanent form of protection for significant resources.³⁰ The report, which is available online, presents a comprehensive overview of issues and needs, as well as detailed recommendations, for each location.

EXISTING LOCAL PROTECTION OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Local Historic Districts

There are currently no locally-designated historic districts in Millbury. Previous planning studies have recommended that local historic districts be designated for high priority areas, such as Old Common and Millbury Center.

Millbury Zoning Bylaws relative to Historic and Cultural Resources

The Millbury Zoning By-Law authorizes the following bylaws relative to historic and cultural resources:

- Bramanville Village Zoning District – The intent of the Bramanville Village Zoning District is to “enable the redevelopment and in-fill development of the central part of the historical Bramanville area in keeping with the historic development pattern, to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly village center.”³¹
- Adaptive Reuse Overlay District – This zoning designation encourages creative and flexible reuse of abandoned, vacant, or underutilized mill buildings. The By-law identifies specific parcels and mill facilities.

³⁰ *ibid*, p. 5.

³¹ *Town of Millbury Zoning Bylaws*, Accepted May 1, 2018/May 2, 2018, p. 32.

- Scenic Roads Regulations - Section 49 of the Millbury Zoning By-Law contains the town's Scenic Road regulations intended to guide the designation and any subsequent alteration of local scenic roads based on established criteria.

For a more detailed discussion of the Bramanville Village Zoning District and the Adaptive Reuse Overlay District, refer to the Land Use section.

Scenic Roads Regulations

To-date, three public ways have been approved as scenic roads:

1. Stone Road from West Main Street to the Town of Auburn boundary;
2. Stowe Road from Carleton Road to the Town of Auburn boundary; and
3. Federal Hill Road which extends between the boundaries of the Town of Auburn to the Town of Oxford.

There are no state-inventoried properties along Stone Road and most appear to be constructed recently on previously farmed fields. However, there is a federalist-style farmhouse and barn which may have originally had an address on West Main Street. Stone Road is lined with mature trees near West Main Street, and stone walls occur intermittently along the road.

Stowe Road, just to the east off Carleton Road, encompasses the large active agricultural area associated with Taintor-Stowe farm, noted previously as a state historic District and significant heritage landscape.

Federal Hill Road is a narrow tree-lined roadway with dense vegetation to the east and scattered residential development on the west side of the road. There are no state-inventoried resources or stone walls observed along Federal Hill Road.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

As noted previously, the Nipmuc were present in the Central Massachusetts area prior to white-European settlement. Archaeological evidence indicates that rock shelters and quarries were used by small bands during short-term visits for specific tasks such as tool making, fishing in the waterways or to hunt in the uplands. Native American activities in Millbury occurred primarily seasonally near waterbodies such as Ramshorn Pond and Brook, Singletary Pond and Brook, Dorothy Pond and the Blackstone River. Transportation routes probably followed along the Blackstone River and paths to water resources and quarry sites southwest of the Blackstone. In archaeological terms, a quarry is a site where raw material was mined for use as a building material, tool construction or arrow heads.

Archaeological sites are typically referred to as “pre-contact” or “post-contact”, indicating whether the site dates to before or after the Native Americans had contact with white-Anglo

settlers. There are 17 recorded pre-contact archaeological sites and 32 post-contact archaeological sites in the town.³²

HISTORIC RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a relevant consideration for historic preservation. Information presented in this section was largely obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website, which has developed extensive information relative to smart growth and the preservation of historic buildings.³³ A historic building or district can be a tangible symbol of a community's interest in honoring its heritage, valuing its character and sense of place, getting the most out of initial investments in infrastructure and development, and encouraging growth in already-developed areas.

Rehabilitating historic properties can also be a critical part of promoting energy efficiency by preserving the energy already represented by existing buildings (known as "embodied energy"), rather than expending additional energy for new construction. A new, green, energy-efficient office building that incorporates as much as 40 percent recycled materials would take approximately 65 years to recover the energy lost in demolishing a comparable existing building.³⁴ Repurposing old buildings, particularly if they are vacant, reduces the need for construction of new buildings and the consumption of land, energy, materials, and financial resources.

Current codes and many green building standards can be inconsistent or unclear about how to redevelop and revitalize historic and other existing buildings to achieve sustainable outcomes. For example, replacing windows and doors – key elements for an energy-efficient building envelope – often poses a challenge to preserving the historic integrity of older buildings. Research and coordination with experienced professionals can overcome this potential obstacle.

Another aspect of sustainability is the identification of cultural resources which are vulnerable to flooding or other environmental conditions due to changes in weather patterns and increased storm severity associated with climate change, even in non-coastal regions. This was recognized in MHC's *State Historic Preservation Plan 2018-2022*, which noted that "*many historic, industrial cities and villages, sited along rivers for waterpower, are particularly vulnerable to flooding and erosion*" and that "*agriculture is also likely to be impacted from additional weather extremes such as flooding or droughts.*"³⁵

Mitigation measures may provide protection to resources which experience or are threatened with chronic flooding conditions.

³² Information regarding locations and artifacts yielded from these sites is maintained by the MHC and is not available to the public. This is intended to preserve the integrity and significance of sites.

³³ US EPA, Smart Growth and Preservation of Existing and Historic Buildings, <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-and-preservation-existing-and-historic-buildings>

³⁴ Moe, Richard. "Sustainable Stewardship." *Traditional Building*, June 2008.

³⁵ *Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Plan 2018–2022*, p. 3-18.

PRIOR PRESERVATION PLANNING

The most recent preservation planning effort was the 2007 DCR Millbury Heritage Landscape study. Local preservation planning efforts have included:

- The 1998 Millbury Master Plan
- Inventory of Historic Properties (the Inventory) prepared in 1989 by the Millbury Historical Commission and Millbury Historical Society, including:
 - Revised Town Report and the Summary Report; and
 - Summary Report: Comprehensive Inventory Project
- Centennial History of the Town of Millbury, 1915

The 1989 Inventory primarily consists of a compilation of the MHC Inventory forms organized by village, along with summary sheets listing resources by subareas of town. Chapters 6 and 7 of the Inventory contain the *Revised Town Report* and the *Summary Report, Comprehensive Inventory Project*, respectively. These materials, written by Claire Dempsey and Peter Stott, provide extensive background information about Millbury's development as well as previous research. Although the Inventory, Revised Town Report and Summary Plan were completed almost 30 years ago, the work provides an excellent foundation for future planning efforts. The historical narrative contained in the *Centennial History of the Town of Millbury*, originally prepared in 1915, was reprinted in commemoration of Millbury's bicentennial in 2013.

In addition to the document-related planning efforts, the Millbury Historical Society has been collecting and archiving items which have historical significance. They have created the Millbury Historical Museum, housed in the refurbished Asa Waters Mansion, to preserve and display historical documents, relics and objects that celebrate Millbury's history.

PRESERVATION TOOLS AND FUNDING

Economic incentives for historic preservation and rehabilitation serve to stimulate research and preserve our historic properties. The website PreservationDirectory.com provides an excellent grant and fundraising reference for historic and cultural resource preservation, and others are available through EPA, NPS, and Preservation Massachusetts, and Preservation Worcester's websites.

Potential Funding Opportunities for Preservation and Rehabilitation is referenced in Appendix F.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities to preserve, protect, and reutilize historic and cultural resources include:

- Integrate the preservation of Millbury's historic character into economic development, housing, and open space when planning for future growth.

- Emphasize sustainable reuse of historic buildings, where feasible, to meet today's building standards.
- Consider important landscapes, features, and village character during zoning and development review.
- Foster a sense of stewardship for historic resources among residents and businesses.
- Implement a local tax credit program for rehabilitation of historic properties.
- Incorporate the Issues and Recommendations of the Heritage Landscape Inventory into discussions and options for future actions.
- Inform property owners about incentive programs for the preservation and rehabilitation of historic homes and agricultural areas.
- Identify easily implementable measures that protect cultural resources in areas vulnerable to flooding or storm damage.

KEY FINDINGS

Based on input received at Public Forum #1 and through the Master Plan Survey results, key findings relative to historic and cultural resources include the following:

- Millbury residents recognize the importance of supporting the Millbury Historical Society and Millbury Museum at the Asa Waters Mansion.
- The town would benefit from an up-to-date inventory of cultural and historic properties, sites, villages and cultural landscapes to identify risks and prioritize needs.
- The adaptation and reuse of former mill buildings for housing and commercial use is important to preserving Millbury's character.
- Some cultural resources may be located within flood-prone areas, placing them at greater risk of damage or destruction due to increased duration or severity of storms associated with climate change.

CHALLENGES/ISSUES

- While Millbury residents place a high value on the historic character of the town and its villages, there are no local controls regarding demolition or modification of most cultural resources.
 - Without local regulations (e.g., local historic districts or demolition delay bylaws) in place, there is a potential for critical and important historic and cultural resources to be lost.
- Many important resources are threatened by lack of maintenance or changes that alter significant historic details.
- It is difficult for the Town to establish priorities for preservation efforts without an active local historical commission.

- Lack of funding to preserve historic resources is probably the most significant impediment to implementation. For example, Millbury has not adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), a potential source of local funds. However, 64% of respondents to the Master Plan Survey clearly indicated a lack of support for establishing a surcharge on property taxes to preserve historic resources.

GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

- Apply for grants for interpretive signage to educate and inform residents and visitors.
- Add Local Historic District designation regulations to the Zoning Bylaw.
- Implement a Demolition Delay By-law to provide time for the town to react before significant resources are destroyed.
- Expand the existing Adaptive Reuse Overlay District to additional industrial areas of town, as appropriate.
- Consider options for permanent protections of heritage landscapes in Millbury.
- Establish protocols to actively share information about the importance of protecting cultural resources and heritage landscapes with the public. These might incorporate the use of social media, pop-up events, and school outreach.
- Implement development guidelines, particularly within historic areas, to ensure that new development is in keeping with the town's historic character.
- Update and computerize the 1989 comprehensive inventory of architectural and archaeological resources in Millbury to establish priorities for preservation and identify potential future uses.
- Develop an inventory of cultural resources which may be at risk of damage or destruction due to increased duration or severity of storms associated with climate change, e.g., resources within the 100-year flood zone or agricultural areas prone to erosion.
- Take steps to make resources pertaining to architectural preservation available to homeowners. This may include adding to the Town's website, distributing lists to local realtors, and general community outreach.

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Millbury offers a wide range of open space and recreational resources ranging from athletic fields to playgrounds and tot lots, active and passive use trails, a dog park, and boating access. Additional open space resources include municipally-managed cemeteries, a private golf course, and other public and privately-owned open space land without public access, such as the Merrill Pond Wildlife Management Area and farms.

Total land in Millbury accounts for 10,432 acres out of which 1,973 acres can be categorized as open space (18% of the total landscape). This section discusses the types of open space found in Millbury, assesses the challenges pertaining to open space and recreational resources, and provides recommendations and strategies for town officials to utilize in the future.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Over the past twenty years, Millbury's demographics have been changing. While the total number of residents has increased slightly, the town's senior population has increased significantly. The town's population is expected to continue to increase over time, and this will result in pressures to convert open spaces to residential and commercial facilities. In addition, the rise in number of residents has increased the demand for updated amenities at existing open space and recreational facilities and the need for a diversification of available recreational opportunities. Opportunities for recreation include hiking, biking, boating, playing fields, and playgrounds, among others.

Location

Millbury's location is attractive for its proximity to jobs from Worcester to Boston, along the I-495 corridor and I-90/MassPike. As Boston property values continue to rise, Millbury will become even more attractive to commercial and residential developers. There is a need to identify, preserve, and protect the landscapes, recreation resources, historic buildings and neighborhoods that contribute to Millbury's attractiveness and high quality of life before they are lost to development.

Population Density

Population density is defined as the population per square mile for an area. Population density is an important consideration for open space and recreation needs. Millbury has three census tracts: 7371 (West Millbury), 7372 (Millbury Center) and 7373 (East Millbury). The table below shows the population density per census tract in Millbury.

Census Tract	Name	Population (2016)	Area (Sq. Mi.) ³⁶	Density
7371	West Millbury	4,984	10.11	493
7372	Millbury Center	1,791	0.59	3,036
7373	East Millbury	6,656	5.74	1,160

Millbury has both urban and rural characteristics. Millbury Center and East Millbury have a higher density of development; while West Millbury is more agrarian and less developed. Denser areas require more neighborhood parks and playgrounds, while less developed areas provide a resource for larger tracts of open land for use such as conservation trails, biking, and hiking. Based on the information above, Millbury should plan parks and playgrounds strategically in East Millbury and Millbury Center, and focus on the protection and management of larger tracts of land in West Millbury.

Open Space and Recreation Plan

Millbury's Open Space and Recreation Plan was last updated in 2008. An Open Space and Recreation Plan provides a municipality with a way to identify and devise a strategy for protecting key natural, scenic and historic resources before they are lost to residential, commercial, or industrial development. The goals of the 2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan were to:

1. Preserve and enhance Millbury's historic character.
2. Work proactively to enhance, preserve and promote Millbury's unique features.
3. Enhance the number, variety and maintenance of the Town's recreational facilities and programs.
4. Manage water resources to ensure good water quality for public consumption, wildlife, and recreation.
5. Promote community participation in conservation and recreation projects.
6. Develop financial plan to acquire and maintain conservation lands and recreation facilities.

It is the Town's intention to update this plan in the short-term.

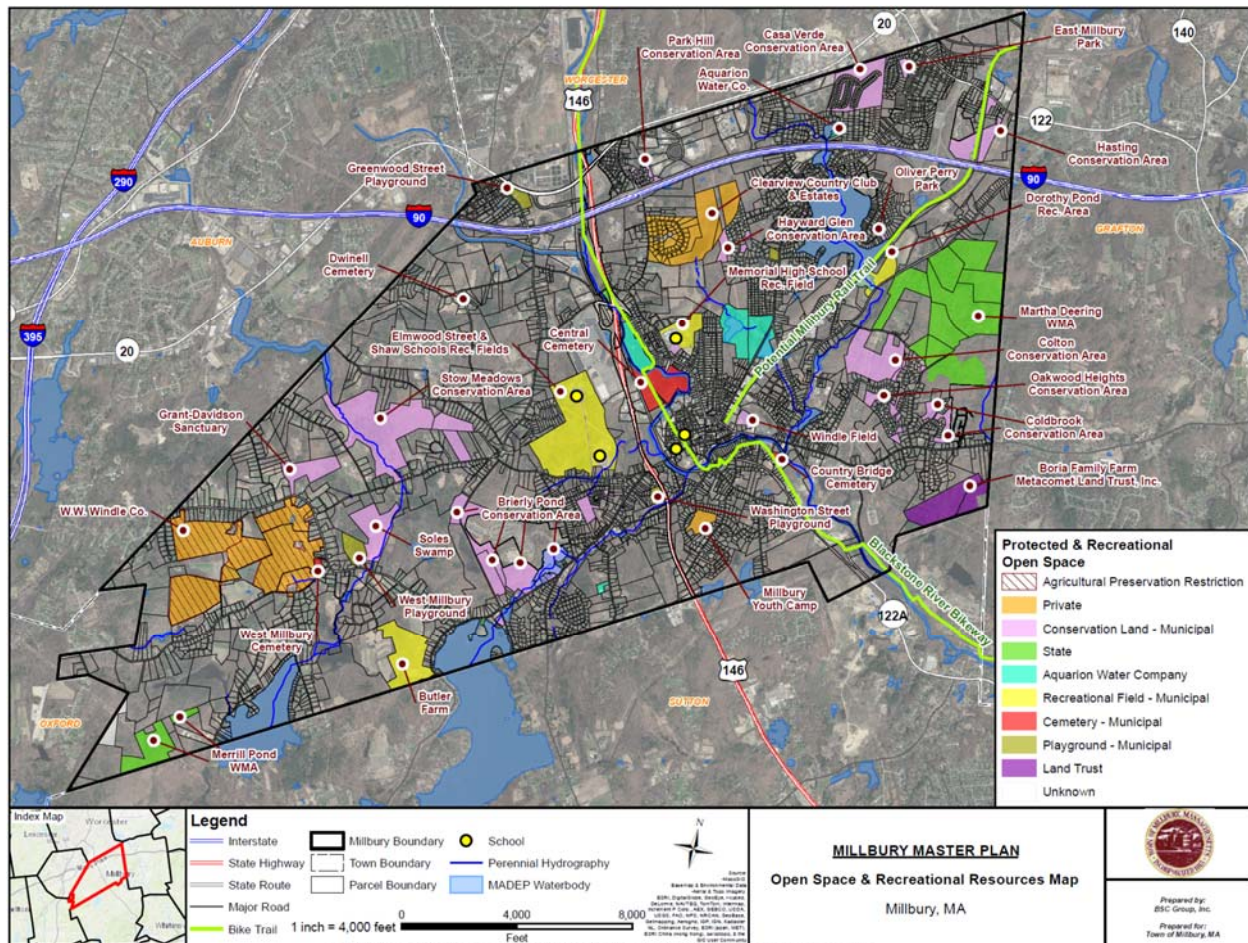
Inventory

Presently, Millbury has an inventory of 48 open space properties, ranging in size from less than an acre (playgrounds) to 237 acres (conservation trails). This inventory consists of agricultural land, conservation land, historic cemeteries, parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities, water supply protection areas, and open space. The continued protection of open space and recreational resources is essential for realizing the Town's goal of preserving its landscape and character.

An inventory of open space properties within Millbury by name, owner, manager, primary purpose, public access and total acres of land is found in Appendix A.

³⁶ <http://www.usboundary.com/Areas/Census%20Tract/Massachusetts/Worcester%20County/2>

Open Space and Recreation Map



Land Use Regulations

Open Space Community – In 2006, the Town of Millbury replaced its former Open Space Community Bylaw (1986) with a by-right alternative. The new Open Space Community bylaw allows for greater flexibility and creativity in the design of residential developments; facilitates the permanent protection of open space and natural, historic and scenic resources; and encourages a more economical and efficient form of development that is sustainable and conservative from a land protection and municipal services perspective. The 1986 version of the Open Space Community allowed greater density and a smaller open space set-aside than the 2006 version. Also, previous open space set-aside of tended to have a disproportionate amount of wetlands and steep slopes protected while the 2006 revision requires the open space set aside to be upland.

The Open Space Community bylaw mandates the following: the land being developed must be a contiguous ten-acre tract or larger; density bonuses allow for the number of dwelling units permitted on the site to exceed the maximum allowed per zoning; a minimum of 50% of the tract must be dedicated to common open space; and common open space must be conveyed to the

Conservation Commission, a non-profit with a principal purpose of conservation of open space, or a homeowner's association. The common open space will be documented in a recorded, enforceable restriction perpetually keeping it as open space, and will be used for conservation, forestry, horticulture, agriculture, historic preservation, outdoor education, active and passive recreation.

Since the adoption of the current ordinance in 2006, Millbury permitted one Open Space Community, which is nearing completion, consisting of a total of 98 single family homes and 39 acres of preserved open space.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings identified below incorporate analysis from the evaluation of the existing conditions and open space inventory as well as feedback received through the master planning public outreach and engagement process.

- Many of Millbury residents are unaware of the open space resources available in the town other than the athletic fields and other active recreational areas.
- Based on preliminary field observation and community feedback, many of Millbury's open space resources show signs of overuse and aging and require maintenance and/or upgrades.
- There is a need for a diversification of open space resources to meet the demands of Millbury's growing and aging population.
- Regulatory land use controls, like the Open Space Community bylaw is an effective tool that provides for the preservation and protection of open space in Millbury.

CHALLENGES/ISSUES

The following are a summary of challenges and issues pertaining to open space and recreational resources in Millbury.

- Municipal capacity
- Lack of awareness
- Aged amenities, lack of shade, growing and aging population
- Diversification of available open space resources and recreational opportunities
- Funding

GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

The overall goal of this section is to preserve, maintain, and enhance the town's open spaces, parks, and outdoor recreational facilities. To that end, the following actions are recommended:

- Increase staffing and municipal capacity.

- Planning – Additional part-time or full-time staff could assist with several strategic initiatives intended to increase awareness of resources, raise funds and write grants related to conservation of open space, and manage/maintain open space land under the jurisdiction of the Town's Conservation Commission, and assist with inventory/mapping updates.
- Conservation Commission – Conservation commission members are volunteers that receive staff assistance from a part-time clerk. There are no town staff assigned to oversee and manage Conservation Land, conservation restrictions, easements and open space set asides deeded to the Commission. No town staff are employed to ensure compliance with Conservation Commission Order of Conditions and the Wetlands Protection Act. Millbury should consider hiring a full-time agent to oversee these responsibilities.
- Department of Public Works – Parks Commission – The Department of Public Works has one full-time staff member and 2-4 seasonal staff dedicated to the maintenance of municipal cemeteries, parks, playing fields, the Blackstone River Bikeway parking lot and various facilities, including the Asa Waters Mansion, Fire Department Station 2, Public Library, and McGrath School. Due to the limited staff, only minimal maintenance is performed (i.e. mowing, landscaping, field striping, and trash pick-up). Hire additional full-time or seasonal staff to assist with park maintenance and park upgrades.
- Focus on the preservation of agricultural landscapes. Farmscapes are an important piece of the landscape in Millbury. There are several farms in Millbury, however, only portions of the Pearson's Elmhurst Dairy Farm are protected under the Commonwealth's APR Program. Pearson's Dairy Farm is one of the oldest working farms in Millbury. It is the last dairy operation in town, which once had many, and one of the last in southern Worcester County. Most of the property lies west and south of West Main Street, while the main farmhouse, retail operation and a barn are located on the east side of the street. The total acreage of the farm is 293 acres, of which 250 are in the APR program. The property is about half forested, half open. Originally the farm was 3,000 acres and went west into neighboring Auburn.
- Other farms located in Millbury that could be protected under the APR program include the farms located in the Grass Hill neighborhood, Stowe Farm and Hawk Hill Orchards. Provide outreach to the non-APR farms about the APR program.
- The Town should consider exercising its right-of-first refusal when farmland is released from the Chapter 61A program.
- Consider acquiring or establishing partnerships with *regional* land trusts to secure conservation restrictions to protect farmlands from future development.
- Increase awareness of open space resources.
 - Install way finding signs at the entry way and within open space resources.

- Install informational kiosks/displays – Kiosks and bulletin display boards provide an opportunity to share information with the public about upcoming activities, open space rules and regulations, and share opportunities to volunteer.
- GPS the local trail system and create maps to publish on the town website.
- Adopt additional considerations relative to the Open Space Community Bylaw.
 - Implement in-lieu fee program as a potential alternative to an open space set aside.
 - With demands to upgrade and maintain existing facilities within the town, an in-lieu fee program would allow developers to set aside funds earmarked for specific open space improvement and maintenance; particularly for those properties near the proposed residential development which may have an increase in use when property owners inhabit the proposed development.
 - Consider allowing common driveways as a means of protecting open space and preserving the town's character.
 - To minimize demands on municipal departments, it is recommended that all new subdivision set asides should be managed by a homeowners' association.
 - To ensure open space protection, a conservation restriction should be transferred to the Conservation Commission.
 - Continue to ensure that, if a stormwater feature is proposed and approved within the open space set-aside, the Town should consider requiring an operation and maintenance plan to ensure proper functioning of the stormwater feature.
- Make maintenance and diversification of open space resources a priority.
 - Maintain, upgrade and/or replace amenities such as benches, playground and recreational equipment, concessions, bathrooms, etc.
 - Install amenities such as shade shelters and potable water features.
 - Complete stormwater and ADA-accessibility improvements in parking lots.
 - Maintain trails and upgrade water crossing features (if any).
 - Consider multi-purpose/multi-use fields.
 - Consider the addition of walking paths around larger recreational facilities.
 - Redesign open spaces to include multi use/multi age recreational facilities (e.g. playground, field, court or walking path/fitness clustered in one facility).
 - Evaluate locations suitable for a town beach, including privately owned property. Possible areas include Brierly Pond, Ramshorn Pond, and Lake Singletary.
- Identify and pursue funding opportunities related to the preservation of Millbury's open spaces.

- Pursue the adoption of the Community Preservation Act.
 - Community outreach and education to build constituent support relative to the benefits of the CPA regarding preservation of open space.
- Seek funding for stormwater and accessibility improvements in parking lots.
- Seek recreational trail funding for trail improvements.
- Consider corporate partnerships/advertising at athletic fields and playgrounds for monetary assistance.

INTRODUCTION

Millbury's landscape is defined by natural resources such as its lakes, ponds, the Blackstone River, brooks, wetlands, forests, wildlife and geological formations. The resources provide important public health and ecological benefits and, in some cases, recreational opportunities. In addition, these resources influence the location and intensity of land uses. Managing the way in which people and the natural landscape interact brings together land use planning, water management, biodiversity conservation, and the future sustainability of industries such as agriculture. It is important to identify and preserve key natural resources before they are lost to future residential, commercial and industrial development. Implementation of growth management tools will go a long way to assist Millbury in the preservation of natural resources for decades to come. This master plan element focuses on irreplaceable land and water resources that must be considered in decisions about where, what, and how much development to support as Millbury continues to evolve.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

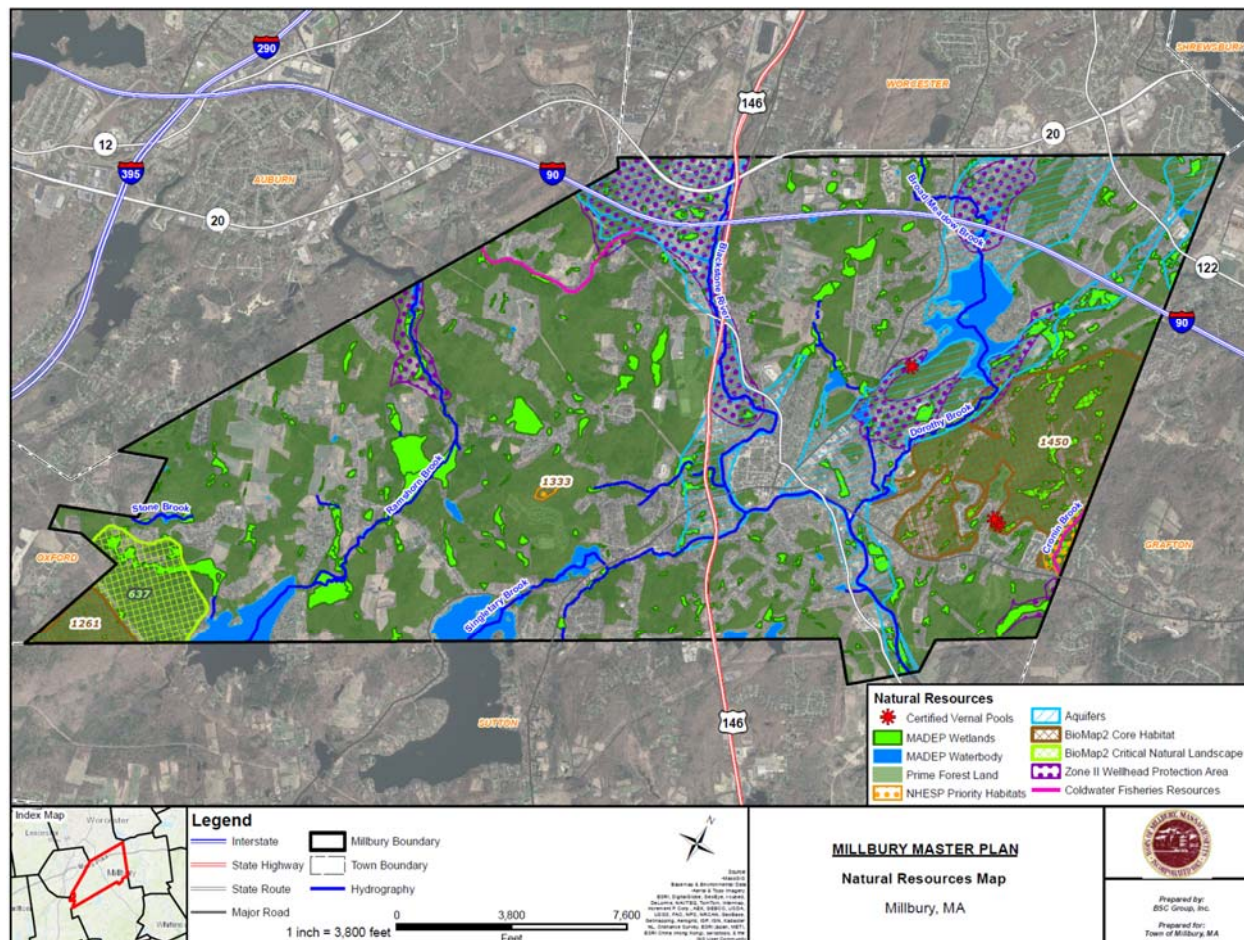
Millbury has a diversity of natural resources that adds to the attractiveness and high quality of life in town. Natural resources within the Millbury landscape include wetlands, waterways, ponds, forests, habitat of rare and endangered species, critical natural landscapes, vernal pools, aquifers, cold water fisheries and FEMA floodplain. The most well-known natural resource is the Blackstone River, which flows approximately 48 miles from Worcester, through Millbury, to Providence, Rhode Island. An extensive baseline inventory of Millbury's Natural Resources is provided in the 2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Millbury lies in the middle of the Worcester Plateau on the Blackstone River. The town is bordered by Worcester, Grafton, Sutton, Oxford, and Auburn. Topographically, elevations within the town decrease significantly from west to east, dropping 300-feet across approximately six miles into the lower Blackstone Valley. Good quality loamy soils are present in the western portion of Millbury and along the Blackstone River floodplain providing favorable soils for agricultural uses. Rocky soils with hilly terrain, streams and wetlands are present on the eastern side. While the changes in elevation and geologic formations provide a scenic back drop they also present development challenges that should be addressed as part of municipal land use considerations. Most of the topographical suitable land lies in the already more developed sections of East Millbury.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated thirteen (13) eco-regions in Massachusetts by assessing geology, hydrology, climate, the distribution of species and other criteria. Eco-regions denote areas within which ecosystems are generally similar and designed to

serve as a spatial framework for conservation and environmental resources management. Millbury is located within the Boston Basin and Southern New England Coastal Eco-region.

Natural Resources in Millbury



Wetlands and Waterways

Millbury is located within the Blackstone River Watershed and the following sub-watersheds: Upper Blackstone River, Singletary Brook, Middle French River, Upper Blackstone River-West River and Quinsigamond River. It is also located within the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. Established in 1986 by an act of Congress, the goal of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is to protect the valley's historic, cultural and natural resources.

The Blackstone River, its tributaries, and the town's ponds and brooks are the most significant surface water features. Millbury contains four major ponds, ranging in size from the 18-acre Brierly Pond to the 330-acre Lake Singletary. Isolated and bordering vegetated wetlands are present across the Millbury landscape. Approximately 10% of Millbury's land surface is covered by waterways, wetlands and ponds.

Two main aquifers are present in Millbury. One is located along the Blackstone River, and one is located around Dorothy Pond and Dorothy Brook. Most of the Dorothy Pond aquifer is also designated as a Zone II wellhead protection area by the Department of Environmental Protection. Current risks to wetland and waterway protection include fill resulting from development, hydrological changes due to beavers, invasive species, stormwater runoff and other pollutants, and dam integrity.

Forests

Approximately 41% of Millbury is covered in prime forested land.³⁷ Forest composition mainly consists of a mixed stand of soft woods such as pines and hemlocks, and hard woods such as beech, maples, oaks, birch, hickory, and ash. Much of the forest understory is being overtaken by invasive plant species such as multiflora rose, occidental bittersweet, Japanese barberry, Japanese knotweed, Norway maple and garlic mustard. Invasive species are expected to continue to expand as our local flora becomes less resilient to climate change.

Priority and Estimated Habitat

According to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), National Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species, NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife, and BioMap Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscapes are present in Millbury. BioMap Core Habitat is in eastern Millbury and encompasses the Martha Deering Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the Colton and Coldbrook Conservation Areas as well as land surrounding these protected open spaces. Critical Natural Landscapes are located at the southwestern most extent of Millbury and include the habitat within the Merrill Pond Wildlife Management Area. Priority Habitat (PH 1028) is located at the summit of Mt. Ararat while Priority Habitat (PH 1070) and Estimated Habitat (EH 821) are located along Cronin Brook at the border between Millbury and Grafton and south of the Martha Deering WMA.

The BioMap reports provide local biodiversity information to assist in specific conservation efforts at the town or regional level. These habitats were previously not identified within the town's boundary. The BioMap Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscapes present in Millbury were mapped in 2012 during the BioMap 2. BioMap Core Habitat identifies key areas that are critical for the long-term persistence of rare and other Species of Conservation Concern, as well as a diversity of natural communities and intact ecosystems across the Commonwealth. Critical Natural Landscapes identifies large natural landscape blocks that are minimally impacted by development. If protected, these areas will provide habitat for wide-ranging native species, support intact ecological processes, maintain connectivity among habitats, and enhance ecological resilience to natural and anthropogenic disturbances.

³⁷ The prime forested land layer is a MassGIS datalayer created using NRCS /MassGIS Soils data. Forested land was classified into nine different categories based on potential average timber productivity of white pine and red oak per year at culmination of mean annual increments. Other data sets used to refine this Prime forest classification, include aspect, land cover, riparian, slope position, wetlands, hydrologic soil association and unique areas.

Based on updated 2017 mapping, Priority and Estimated Habitat has been reduced in the Town of Millbury. Previously, habitat was present along the Millbury/Auburn town line and the Millbury/Sutton town line. This is likely the result of the lack of updated species records within the town and not the result of anthropogenic habitat destruction since the habitat appears to remain unaltered since the prior revision.

Information regarding the specific rare or endangered species present in Millbury is protected by the MESA. However, based on consultation with the NHESP and the NHESP database, there is habitat for Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*, Special Concern) and a Special Concern plant (name not released) present in Millbury. Populations of these species account for the presence of priority and estimated habitat within the town boundaries. Records for all other MESA listed species previously recorded in Millbury have expired. These included records for one special concerned turtle, three threatened plants, an endangered bird and an endangered plant.

Vernal Pools

In addition to rare and endangered species habitats, wetlands and waterways and forest, approximately sixty-seven (67) potential vernal pools and three (3) certified vernal pools are present. Vernal pools are ephemeral pools of water that serve as breeding habitat for amphibians such as wood frogs and mole salamanders. Vernal pools are also home to hundreds of invertebrates making them one of the most diverse ecosystems in New England.

Cold-Water Fisheries

One cold-water fisheries resource (CFR), SARIS_ID 5132761, is present in Millbury along a Blackstone River tributary located south of McCracken Road. CFR are sensitive habitats whose identification and protection is based on fish samples collected by biologists and technicians. Dwinell, Waskiewicz, and McCracken Brooks are the last streams in Millbury to have a native Brook Trout population. The CFR lists are updated annually on the Commonwealth's cold-water fisheries website to reflect the most current fish surveys. However, the presence of the following fish corresponds with the designation of a cold-water fishery: Longnose sucker, slimy sculping, lake chub, American brook lamprey, burbot, rainbow trout, rainbow smelt, landlocked salmon, brown trout, brook trout, and lake trout.

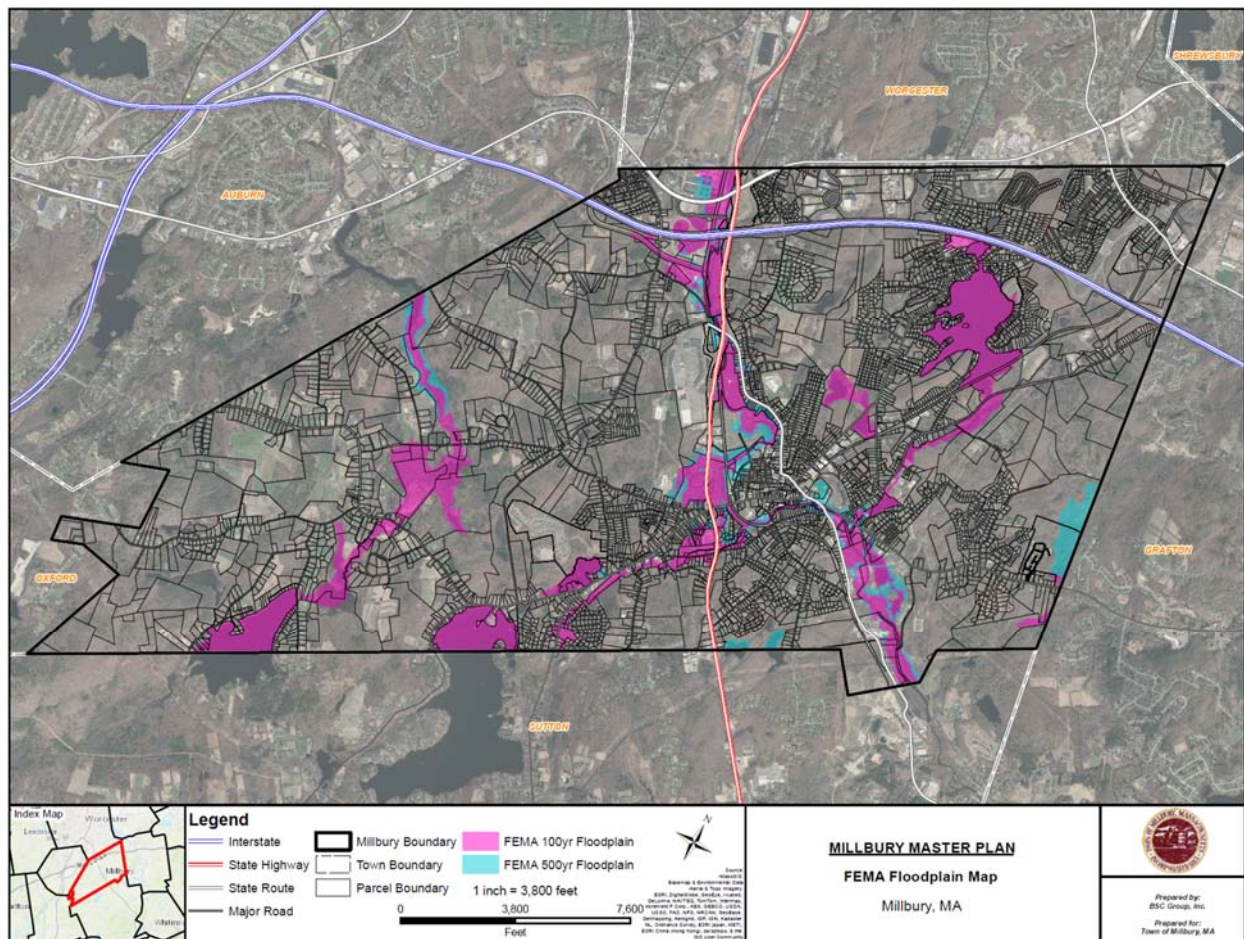
Floodplain-FEMA Flood Hazard Areas

The FEMA Flood Map Service Center is the official public source for flood hazard information produced in support of the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA flood maps are continually updated. The last FEMA Map updates for the Town were completed in 2011. Approximately 8% of Millbury is located within the federal flood hazard areas map. Flood hazard areas are located along Ramshorn Brook, the Blackstone River, Blackstone River tributaries, Singletary Brook and Pond, Dorothy Brook and Pond, and Cronin Brook. Additional areas have been mapped since the previous master plan, including areas near Singletary Brook and Pond and Ramshorn Brook and Pond.

FEMA maps for the town of Millbury include the following flood maps:

- 25027C0808E
- 25027C0809E
- 25027C0807E
- 25027C0826E
- 25027C0828E
- 25027C0836E
- 25027C0817E
- 25027C0816E
- 25027C0812E
- 25027C0814E

FEMA Floodplain Map, Millbury



Water Supply and Management

Millbury relies on ground water for its water supply. Aquarion Water Company, now a subsidiary of Eversource Energy, owns and operates the water system in Millbury by maintaining four wells

located on the two aquifers, Dorothy Pond Aquifer and Blackstone River Aquifer, for the town supplied water system.³⁸

Water from the Millbury Avenue wells is filtered at the Millbury Avenue treatment facility to provide protection from microbes. Water from the Jacques Wells is treated in an ion exchange facility to remove perchlorate discovered in the town water supply in 2004. Aquarion also owns the Burbank Tank, a 110-year old buried fieldstone tank,³⁹ which augments Millbury's groundwater supplies and acts as the system's only water distribution system. Two additional elevated tanks provide storage for Millbury's water. Rehabilitation of the Burbank Tank was completed by Tata & Howard in 2017. Additional augmentation to the Millbury water supply is provided by the City of Worcester.

Due to consistent low groundwater levels across the region, increased water demands, and water pumping limits set by DEP, mandatory water restrictions were implemented in 2013 and remain effective to date. Under these restrictions, nonessential outdoor water use is not allowed between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Nonessential water use includes irrigation of lawns by sprinklers and automatic irrigation systems; washing of vehicles; and washing of exterior building surfaces, parking lots, and driveways. However, hand-held watering of plants and gardens is allowed. Outdoor water use is only allowed after 5 p.m. and before 9 a.m., on an odd/even water schedule. (Customers with odd numbered street addresses can water on odd numbered days and those with even numbered street addresses can water on even numbered days.) Under Aquarion's Rules and Regulations approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, failure to comply with the mandatory restriction program results in a written warning. Subsequent violations can result in the discontinuance of water service, including a termination and restoration fee.

MS4 Community Status, Stormwater Discharges, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

Polluted stormwater runoff is commonly transported through municipal separate storm water systems (MS4s), and then often discharged, untreated, into local water bodies. To prevent harmful pollutants from being washed into the storm sewer system, Millbury has obtained a NPDES permit and developed a stormwater management program (SWMP). The Millbury SWMP describes the stormwater control practices that will be implemented consistent with the NPDES permit requirements to minimize the discharge of pollutants from the sewer system.

Millbury's SWMP includes: creating a stormwater program; developing and conducting community based educational programs; inventorying and mapping of storm drain systems; outfalls and receiving waters; developing and implementing an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Plan; developing well head protection and stormwater management plans within Zone II; promoting household waste recycling and proper management of hazardous waste; storm

³⁸ In 2017, Eversource Energy acquired Aquarion Water Company. Prior to this purchase, Aquarion had been owned by a partnership led by Macquaries Infrastructure Partners.

³⁹ Information provided by Aquarion.

drain stenciling; community cleanups; and developing and implementing a municipal operations and maintenance plan for DPW work. By implementing the BMPs highlighted in the SWMP plan, Millbury is making progress in meeting the waste load allocations and waste load reductions identified in the MS4 permit for Brierly Pond, Dorothy Pond, Howe Reservoir and Pondville Pond.

According to the 2018 MS4 General Permit Annual Report, Millbury has continued to make progress toward implementing the 2016 MA MS4 Permit Requirements. These include a cost evaluation with detailed implementation plan for the five-year permit cycle, continued involvement in the Central MA Regional Stormwater Coalition, and putting together grant applications to obtain funding for the Armory Village Green Infrastructure Project. Additional accomplishments include the creation of a stormwater management position, outreach to 13,000 property owners, implementation of school curricula, erosion and sediment control and post development stormwater management requirements, and 98% completion of outfall and storm sewer infrastructure mapping.

Millbury SWMP goals for future years include developing additional public outreach materials, continuing to work with partners to implement LID techniques and educate the public regarding stormwater impacts and green infrastructure resources, additional storm drain stenciling and area cleanups, continued BMP maintenance and infrastructure mapping efforts, and illicit discharge detection and elimination bylaw enforcement and inspections.

Millbury Transfer Station/Recycling Center

Millbury has one recycling facility and a solid waste transfer station. The Department of Public Works and the Recycling Committee urge residents to maximize their recycling efforts for both economic as well as environmental benefits. The Town encourages the recycling of all clean paper, cardboard, most plastics, glass and metal cans by providing no sort recycling bins. This process is called Zero-Sort or co-mingled recycling. These efforts resulted in a 20% reduction of trash tonnage at the landfill and an increase in recycling tonnage between 2000 and 2016.

Places are provided to drop off items such as computers, television sets, car batteries, used motor oil, tires and large metal items for a fee. The transfer station also offers areas for leaf and brush composting. However, invasive species have taken over this area in recent years. Compost should not be used when invasive plants are present, as this encourages their spread. Millbury also partners with the neighboring town of Sutton on hazardous items and disposal.

The town's landfill has been studied for solar power.

Some of Millbury's waste is transferred to the Wheelabrator Millbury Trash to Energy Facilities.

ZONING REGULATIONS AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

In addition to State regulations (such as the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Construction General

Permit, the Millbury Municipal Code and Zoning Bylaws provide additional layers of protection for the town's natural resources.

Overall Natural Resource Protection During Development or Construction Activities:

Post Construction Storm Water Management of New Developments and Redevelopment (Title 13, Chapter 13.15 Millbury Municipal Code)

This bylaw establishes storm water management standards for the final conditions that result from development and redevelopment projects to minimize adverse impacts off site and downstream. Construction activities, including clearing, grading and excavation exceeding certain thresholds, require a permit from the Planning Board.

Activities are classified as major or minor projects depending on the size of the land disturbance. Thresholds include: disturbance of 5,000 square feet or more or more than 25% of the parcel or lot (whichever is less); disturbance greater than 5,000 square feet which would result in an increased amount of storm water runoff from the property to public/private property or resource areas; construction activities which will increase the flow to the municipal storm or sanitary sewer systems or would alter or modify an existing drainage system; and any construction activity that disturbs land with 15% or greater slope and where the land disturbance is greater than or equal to 2,000 square feet within the sloped areas. Some construction activities are exempt from this bylaw (13.15.040 (b)).

Earth Removal (Title 12 Chapter 12.20)

In addition to requiring a permit for the removal of more than 500 cubic yards of soil, loam, sand, gravel, stone or other earth material within a 12-month permit, the earth removal bylaw regulates grading, site stabilization and soil containment. In combination with Title 13, Chapter 13.15 above, the Earth Removal bylaw minimizes sediment migration into potentially sensitive resource areas such as wetlands and streams.

Open Space Community Bylaw, Zoning Bylaw Section 44

The Millbury Open Space Community bylaw advances the goals and policies of this Master Plan as well as the municipal Open Space and Recreation Plan and allows for creative and flexible residential facility design that encourages economic development. The bylaw also provides a mechanism for the minimization of impact and permanent protection of open space and natural, historic and scenic resources. The bylaw grants the Planning Board the authority to approve construction and occupancy of an Open Space Community in a Residential I, II and III, and Suburban I, II, III and IV districts, provided that the community contains at least ten contiguous acres. In addition to generic and site-specific design standards, Open Space Community Plans require the allocation of common open space which, unless conveyed to the Conservation Commission or open space conservation nonprofit organization are subject to a recorded restriction enforceable by the Town to ensure that the land is perpetually kept as open space.

Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land in Millbury (1980, revised in 2005) and Town of Millbury Zoning Bylaws (accepted May 2018)

To protect the health, safety, convenience and general welfare of the community, the town of Millbury requires a review of plans for uses and structures that may have significant impacts on the town's infrastructure, economy, natural resources and values. As part of the site plan review, applicants must conduct an environmental impact assessment describing the impacts of the proposed activity with respect to on-site and off-site environmental quality of air, surface water, and groundwater. If impacts are identified, the proponent must provide mitigation measures. In addition, the land subdivision and zoning bylaws provide a set of design standards geared towards the protection of natural resources including but not limited to:

- Preservation of landscape – conserving the site in its natural state to the maximum extent possible with respect to vegetative and soil cover as well as topographical contours.
- Surface water drainage – no net increase if stormwater runoff across the property is allowed unless provisions have been made to tie into public storm drains or other reasonable storm water management systems.
- Low impact development (LID) – implementation of systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in infiltration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and aquatic habitat.
- Maximization of ground water recharge and quality preservation such as reduction of impervious surfaces, bioretention areas, vegetated open channel systems, buffer strips, rain gardens, etc.
- Maintain protective cover and function of such cover where ground water elevation is close to the surface.

Protection of Water Resources

Discharges to the Municipal Drain System (Title 13, Chapter 13.20)

Regulation of illicit connections and discharges to the municipal storm drain system is necessary for the protection of Millbury's natural resources, municipal facilities, and to safeguard the public health, safety, wetland and environmental. This bylaw prohibits illicit discharges into the municipal storm sewer system and waters of the commonwealth as well as illicit connections and obstructions of the municipal storm drain system. Activities listed in 13.20.070(d) are exempt. Civil and criminal remedies are available as remedies for violations of this bylaw.

In addition, this bylaw requires notification of any volume of discharge of pollutants to the municipal drainage system or waters of the commonwealth. Notification shall be made to the municipal fire and police department in the event of a release of oil and hazardous materials. The release of a non-hazardous material requires notification no later than the next business day.

Aquifer and Watershed Protection Overlay District, Zoning Bylaw, Section 47

To prevent contamination of the town's drinking water, protect groundwater recharge areas near aquifers, conserve the natural resources of the town, and prevent temporary and permanent contamination of the environment, Millbury has designated an Aquifer and Watershed Protection Overlay District over aquifers and recharge areas. The District is divided into Area A and Area B and includes all areas within the District designated by the DEP as "Zone II" and one area designated as "Zone III." The overlay district applies to all new construction, reconstruction or expansion of existing building and new or expanded uses. All activities and uses within the district shall comply with the requirements of the bylaw. The bylaw provides a list of prohibited uses (Section 47.6), activities and uses requiring a special permit (Section 47.7) and building dimensional requirements within Area B of the Overlay District.

This District protects approximately 74-acres of land around existing town wells.

Floodplain District Requirements, Section 36

The floodplain district includes all special flood hazard areas within the Town of Millbury designated as Zone A and AE on the Worcester County Flood Insurance Rate Maps issued by FEMA. Encroachments are prohibited within the regulatory floodway in Zones A and AE which would result in an increase in flood levels within the community during a base flood discharge. In addition, no new buildings can be constructed, and some land uses that may impact water, plants, wildlife and flooding downstream are prohibited without a special permit (Section 36.3).

Site Plan Review and Environmental Controls, Section 35

In addition to regulating uses that cause sensory disturbances, this bylaw regulates the establishment of buildings within fifty horizontal feet from the bank of any stream or river having a year-round flow of water or of any lake or pond with surface of one thousand square feet or more of water eleven months of the year. This bylaw also prohibits the removing, filling, dredging or building upon any wetlands without a Special Permit that shall be issued upon a determination that the requirements of the Wetlands Protection Act have been satisfied. Finally, Section 35 requires a special permit or a valid building permit for the removal or filling of an area of more than one acre if erosion control and restoration methods are implemented.

Wetland Protection

Millbury does not have a Wetland Protection Ordinance; the Conservation Commission reviews projects pursuant to the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA), under M.G.L. Chapter 131, and it's implementing regulations. However, many of the bylaws, rules and regulations highlighted within this section provide additional protection to wetlands, waterways and floodplains in Millbury. A wetland protection bylaw would be beneficial to enhance protection of resource areas such as isolated bodies of water not meeting the isolated land subject to flooding

requirement of the WPA as well as wet depressions that may provide suitable breeding habitat for obligate vernal pool species.

Tree Protection

In addition to the Public Shade Tree Act, multiple sections of Millbury's Zoning Bylaws protect trees and require approval prior to tree removal.

Tree Protection Ordinance:

- Protects endangered or valued trees including American Elm (*Ulmus Americana*), Laurel Oak (*Quercus laurifolia*) and Life Oak (*Quercus virginiana*).
- Requires review for the removal of disease-free trees of any species with a diameter of eight (8) inches or larger, when removal is associated with a development.
- Prohibits clear cutting except for property classified for tree farming. Clear cutting is defined as cutting more than 75% of trees six inches in trunk diameter or larger. Clear cutting associated with an approved development plan requires the planting of replacement trees.
- Requires concurrent approval from the tree warden acting under M.G.L. Chapter 87, Public Shade Tree Act.

Additional tree protection is afforded by the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land in Millbury (Revised in 2005) and Zoning Bylaw Section 49, Scenic Roads. Although not statutorily named in the zoning bylaw, Millbury has three designated scenic roads: Stowe Road, Stone Road and Federal Hill Road. Cutting, including pruning of live branches, trunks and root system along the edge of these scenic roads requires review and approval by the Planning Board and the tree warden.

SUSTAINABILITY

As highlighted in the preceding summary of existing natural resource protection regulatory bylaws and zoning, the Town of Millbury has incorporated most of the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles into its policy development and decision-making. The Town should fully embrace these principles and educate the residents about these principles during the Master Plan implementation period. Millbury has been proactive in its efforts to reduce energy consumption and protect its natural resources for future generations. A summary of the town's efforts to improve sustainability is explained in the Community Services and Facilities chapter of this Master Plan.

Green Community

Millbury was selected as a Massachusetts Green Community on July 19, 2011, and has received over \$900,000 in funding from the Commonwealth to undertake significant steps to increase energy efficiency at the municipal level and reduce the town's carbon footprint. In 2016, the Town achieved its goal of reducing energy consumption by more than 24% from its base year of 2009.

On the private end, photovoltaic installations can be found in large-scale solar farms on properties, both commercial and residential, throughout town.

Environmental Stewardship in Millbury

During the last ten years, the Millbury Conservation Commission and the Millbury DPW host a clean-up event at one of the town properties during Earth Day. Volunteers have included Commissioners, family and friends of the Conservation Commission, residents and students from Millbury High School. In addition to the municipally-hosted clean up, the Blackstone River Watershed Association sponsors an earth day clean up in Millbury as well as other municipalities along the Blackstone River Corridor. Both volunteer days meet community services requirements for many organizations, including schools. Other volunteer clean ups are hosted throughout the year and residents are encouraged to do their part in helping to preserve Millbury's natural resources.

Vulnerability Preparedness

The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program was launched by the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) to implement local vulnerability assessments and action-oriented resiliency plans using a community resilience building workshop framework developed by the Nature Conservancy. In 2017, Millbury, Grafton and Northbridge were awarded an MVP planning grant by the Commonwealth. The objectives of the planning process were to:

- Define top local natural and climate-related hazards of concern;
- Identify existing and future strengths and vulnerabilities;
- Develop prioritized actions for the communities (regionally and as single towns); and
- Identify immediate opportunities to collaborate and advance actions to increase resilience.

Strategies recommended in the summary of findings included broad actions such as infrastructure repair, upgrades and maintenance. Infrastructure action items include roads, dams, culvert, drains and stormwater drainage. Additional recommendations included updating the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan, mitigating the effects of salt and debris from the Mass Pike on Dorothy Pond, educating the elderly and disabled population regarding natural hazards and improved emergency response/communication, replacing the generator at Town Hall, improving the Town's emergency and evacuation planning, expanding the town's water supply and the increased protection of trees, forests, wetlands and water supply.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings identified below incorporate analysis from the evaluation of the existing conditions, as well as feedback received through the master planning public outreach and engagement process.

- Millbury has extensive regulatory mechanisms to protect its natural resources. These regulatory mechanisms codified in multiple rules, regulations, codes and bylaws, and are overseen by a combination of municipal departments.
- Millbury promotes clean energy efforts, and sustainable economic and residential development in a way that supports its natural resources and landscapes.
- As a Green Community, Millbury has led the way in implementation of energy conservation measures at its town-owned facilities.
- Stormwater runoff, drainage and flooding continue to be a hazard for the Town. The Town presently faces climate challenges such as flooding, winter storms, and drought/wildfire. The Blackstone River has a significant impact on stormwater drainage and downstream flooding in Millbury. Vulnerabilities identified in Millbury include infrastructure, dams, the elderly population, stormwater drainage, and pollution.⁴⁰ However, Millbury has been improving and maintaining its infrastructure, and continues to seek out grants and assistance to remediate some of these issues.
- Millbury has invested a lot of time and effort in public outreach and education involving stormwater management, water resource protection, and proper recycling and rubbish disposal.
- While there are existing opportunities, such as trails, to enjoy Millbury's natural resources, there is an increased demand for additional access and use of the resource. While access to resources is an important component of an environmental stewardship program consideration to sustainable use practices should be considered to protect these resources for future generations.

CHALLENGES/ISSUES

- Overall Protection – Evaluate the current regulatory framework relative to present and future community natural resources demands to ensure sustainable natural resources protection practices.
- Many important resources are threatened by lack of maintenance and management that have the impact of altering Millbury's natural resources.
- Lack of funding to preserve natural resources is probably the most significant impediment to implementation. For example, Millbury has not adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), a potential source of local funds. Although 64% of respondents to the Master Plan Survey indicated a lack of support for CPR, feedback provided during the Master Plan's public meetings indicated the contrary. A CPA campaign providing outreach and education for the community prior to the next Town Meeting should be completed to enact CPA in Millbury.

⁴⁰ Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program – Grafton, Millbury, and Northbridge, Massachusetts; Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings, June 2018

GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

The overall goal of this section is to preserve, maintain and enhance the town's natural resources, including its parks, conservation areas, waterways, wetlands, and other open spaces. To that end, the following actions are recommended:

- Improve access to and increase awareness of the Town's natural resources.
 - Strengthen existing partnerships with conservation organizations/groups like the Blackstone Heritage Corridor to conduct environmental education programming to inform residents, businesses and visitors about Millbury's natural resources.
 - Continue to engage watershed group and volunteers: community clean ups, resource inventories, vernal pool certifications outreach and education regarding rivers and wetlands.
 - Continue to promote household waste recycling and proper disposal of hazardous waste material.
 - Create informational flyers about the town's natural resources inventory for public distribution; post to the town's website.
- Maintain and protect natural resources through infrastructure upgrades and enhanced regulatory controls.
 - Evaluate, amend, enhance, and enforce By-Laws relative to environmental regulatory controls to better protect existing resources, reduce fragmentation, and ensure consistency with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles.
 - Low-Impact Development
 - Tree Protection
 - Energy/Sustainable Development
 - Consider establishing a Wetlands Protection Bylaw to afford additional regulatory protection to resources not protected by the Wetlands Protection Act.
- Protect the integrity of the Town's ecosystem and natural landscapes as development continues in Millbury.
 - Update the Open Space and Recreation Plan including the comprehensive based line inventory of natural resources in Millbury.
 - Identify lands critical to ecological function and make them preservation priorities.
 - Locate alternative sources of potable water.
 - Identify stream/habitat continuity infrastructure upgrades.
- Identify and pursue funding opportunities related to the preservation of Millbury's natural resources and reduction of energy consumption.
 - Complete outreach and education to pursue adoption of Community Preservation Act.

- o Apply for additional MVP/resiliency funding.
- o Partner with watershed associations and other environmental groups to seek grants for resource protection.
- o Continue to implement and expand the LID/Green Infrastructure plan.
- o Continue to implement Millbury's Energy Reduction Plan and encourage the placement of alternative energy facilities within town.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter identifies and describes the community facilities and services that the Town of Millbury provides to its residents and business owners. Over the next two decades, aging facilities will need to be repaired, replaced and/or upgraded. Existing services will need to be evaluated as the demand for greater efficiency, updated building codes, and technological advances occur. Future planning of public facilities and community services will need to address demographic changes as well as projected and desired development patterns. Regionalization of services may become increasingly more important in the future, particularly from an efficiency and cost-effective standpoint.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

One of the key recommendations found in the Town of Millbury's 1998 Master Plan was to expand and improve services, infrastructure and community facilities. Goals created at the time focused on improving, maintaining and enhancing access and transportation, water and sewage infrastructure, and recreational facilities. While progress has been made, these goals remain today.

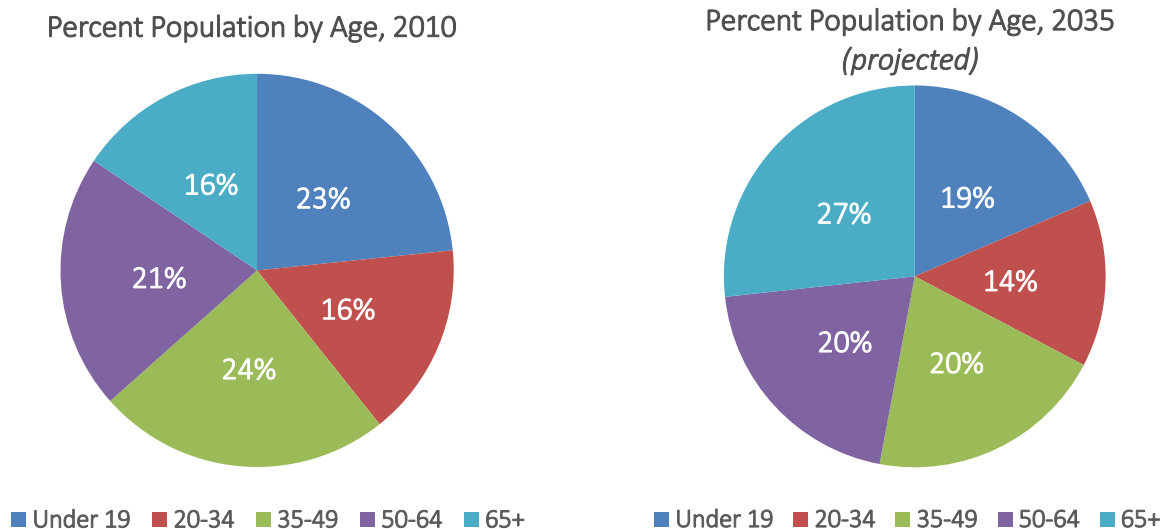
Population Projections

As stated in the 1999 Master Plan, the Town's population was expected to be between 13,800 and 16,000 by 2030. However, as technology has evolved, so have estimates. Through the UMass Donohue Institute's Population Estimate Program,⁴¹ the following population projection for every five years from 2010 through 2035 was created.

Age Group	Census 2010	Projection 2015	Projection 2020	Projection 2025	Projection 2030	Projection 2035	Change 2010-2035 (Projected)
Under 19	3,100	2,923	2,792	2,665	2,556	2,528	-572
20-34	2,111	2,108	2,094	2,081	2,005	1,929	-182
35-49	3,201	2,928	2,780	2,709	2,770	2,762	-439
50-64	2,780	3,016	3,158	3,115	2,909	2,774	-6
65+	2,069	2,454	2,779	3,144	3,494	3,641	1,572
TOTAL	13,261	13,429	13,603	13,714	13,734	13,634	373

⁴¹ UMass Donahue Institute, Vintage 2015 Population Projections: <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/>

While the total population of Millbury remains relatively stable with a projected net gain of approximately 373 people by the year 2035, the most striking change projected is a decrease in population in all age groups except for the 65+ age group. The loss in population in the Under 19, 20-34, 35-49, and 50-64 age groups is offset by a substantial increase in the senior population. The data shows that in 2010, the 65+ age group comprised 16% of the total population in Millbury. This age group is projected to comprise 27% of the total population in Millbury by 2035.



This age shift is expected to have an impact on facility and service needs. More specifically, the Town should anticipate an increased demand for programming and services oriented to a wide range of senior needs, including housing, transportation, social, health and wellness programs.

Sustainability

The Town of Millbury was designated a Green Community in 2011 and has undertaken several initiatives to reduce energy consumption, protect its natural resources, and preserve the environment for future generations. A more detailed description of Millbury as a Green Community can be found in the Natural Resources section of this Master Plan.

Inventory

Millbury has sixteen (16) town buildings of various ages, fifteen (15) pump stations, and five (5) structures associated with recreation facilities, as well as municipal cemeteries, numerous athletic fields, and conservation lands.

The Town's largest facilities are its schools – Millbury Memorial Junior/Senior High School, the Elmwood Street Elementary School, and the Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School. Other town facilities include the Municipal Office Building, Public Library, Senior Center, Highway Barn, Parks Building, Sewer Administration Building, and the Asa Waters Mansion, a historic landmark. In addition, the Town has four (4) Fire Stations, a Transfer Station, and two former school buildings,

the McGrath School and Dorothy Manor School, that are rented to private parties.

The Town currently has a fleet of fifty-seven (57) vehicles comprised of emergency response vehicles, public works trucks, passenger vehicles, and light trucks.

The Municipal Office Building, or Town Hall, is located at 127 Elm Street and was built in 1973. The building houses most of Millbury's municipal offices including the Town Manager, Police Department, Assessor's Office, Public Works Department, Finance Department, Human Resources, Tax Collector/Treasurer, Health Department/Board of Health, Town Clerk, Veterans Services, and Planning & Development (includes Planning, Inspectional Services, Conservation Commission, and an Energy Manager).

The Municipal Office Building was recently upgraded. New flooring was installed throughout the building in 2015. The heating system was converted from oil to gas and the HVAC system was upgraded in 2015/2016. Several new offices to accommodate new staff were constructed in 2016 and 2017. The building is considered adequate, except for the following:

- Roof – The roof leaks in some locations and needs repair. Additionally, the Town would like to install solar panels in the future.
- Police Department – The Police Department would like to relocate to a new facility, thus vacating the entire lower level of the Municipal Office Building. Relocation creates an opportunity to provide additional space not only for municipal departments in need, but also for new positions the Town may be able to add in the future. Other potential reuses include converting the conference area into community meeting space and the police holding cells into storage.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT⁴²

The Millbury Public School District serves grades Pre-K through 12. The district includes three (3) schools, the Superintendent's Office, and the School Committee. The total 2017 district enrollment was 1,734 students.

Elmwood Street Elementary School was built in 1968 and renovated in 2001. The school is 87,343 square feet. Located at 40 Elmwood Street, it services Grades Pre-K through Grade 3. Enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year was 580. The student to teacher ratio was 15.3 to 1.

Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School was built in 1975. The school is 76,930 square feet. Located at 58 Elmwood Street, it services Grades 4 through 6. Enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year was 436. The student to teacher ratio was 15.2 to 1.

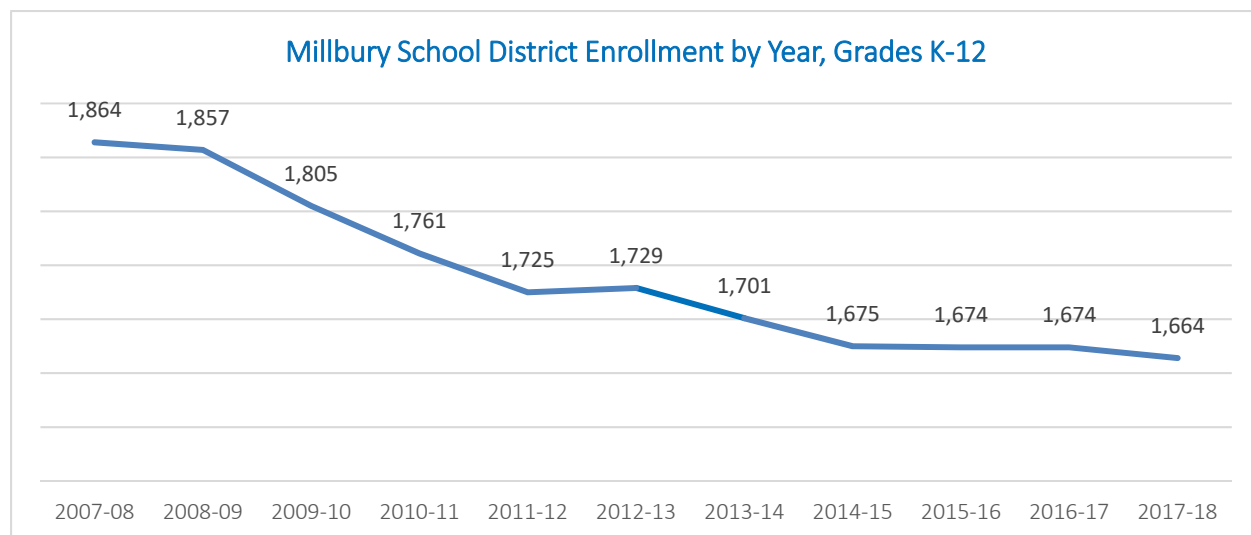
⁴² MA Dept. of Education, School and District Profiles, <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>

Millbury Memorial Junior/Senior High School was constructed in 1950 and renovated in 2002. The school is 165,793 square feet. Located at 12 Martin Street, it services Grades 7 through 12. Enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year was 718. The student to teacher ratio was 11.8 to 1.

High School students in Millbury also have the option to attend **Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School** (Valley Tech) in Upton, MA. Valley Tech is its own school district, and services students in the towns of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, and Uxbridge. It offers 18 vocational technical programs and an academic curriculum, as well as a post-secondary program.⁴³

Enrollment Trends

According to the MA Department of Education, Millbury Public School District's student enrollment peaked in 2007-2008 at 1864 students. Since then, it has trended downward, as shown in the graph below.



Based on population projections of the various age groups in Millbury as well as enrollment projections received by the Superintendent's Office, it is fair to say that the downward trend of student enrollment will continue over the next ten years.

Non-Millbury Public School Students

According to the MA Department of Education, most of Millbury's school aged population attends the Town's public schools. However, the following data from the 2016-2017 school year was available for those students residing in Millbury but not enrolled within the Millbury Public School system:⁴⁴

⁴³ While Millbury students can attend BVT, it is not part of the Millbury School District. Thus, students from Millbury attending BVT are not accounted for in the total enrollment count for the Millbury Public School District.

⁴⁴ Source: <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/schoolattendingchildren.aspx> (last updated 11/9/17)

Vocational Technical Regional Schools	69
Collaboratives	9
Charter	3
Out-of-District Public	29
Home Schooled	18
In State Private and Parochial	112

Each year, some students leave the Millbury public school system to attend other educational institutions, primarily area parochial and private schools as well as the vocational high school. This typically occurs during the transition from 8th to 9th grade, and the number of students leaving has reportedly been slightly increasing over the last few years.⁴⁵ This results in creating capacity at Millbury Jr./Sr. High School to accept school choice students from other communities. While Millbury has not exercised this option in the past, the School Committee voted for the first time in 2018 to accept a small number of Choice Students from other communities as a trial of this policy.

School Facility Conditions and Space Needs

The Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School is in poor condition and requires significant repair. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) is assessing the Town’s request for a larger, more updated school. Once a feasibility study is complete, the Town will choose between new construction, renovation, or renovation with an addition. There are also increasing demands on the existing space in the other two schools. While student enrollment is declining, several factors have resulted in the need for additional programmatic space. These include:

- Lower class size limits – The School Committee has set lower class size limits in grades K-3, resulting in the need for additional classrooms at those grade levels.
- Expanded programming, including a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) classroom.
- Specialized services, including occupational and physical therapy and English Language Learning classrooms.
- More preschool space at Elmwood Elementary School.

As a way of addressing the need for additional space, the School Department is considering a plan to reconfigure the grades each school services. With a larger, updated facility to replace the current Raymond E. Shaw School, the following configuration becomes possible.

⁴⁵ A survey of families who left the Millbury schools conducted by the School Department found that there were a few reasons that students were sent to other educational institutions including a desire to better prepare for college/more rigorous education, family tradition (attendance at parochial school), negative peer interaction, and convenience for parents (e.g. close to their place of work).

School	Present Configuration	Proposed Configuration
Elmwood Street	Grades Pre-K to 3	Grades Pre-K to 2
Shaw School	Grades 4-6	Grades 3-6
Jr./Sr. High School	Grades 7-12	Grades 7-12

School Athletic Facilities

Another facilities issue is the fact that the athletic fields are scattered around the Town. Students at the high school are bused to their athletic activities held at Elmwood Street Elementary, the Shaw School, and Windle Field. Windle Field, which is open to the public when not used by the schools, is used for soccer, softball, and football. The School Department is responsible for its maintenance but it is used for a wide variety of public events, which reportedly causes wear and tear. There is some disagreement regarding upgrading the park, which is in a central location.

The Millbury community uses the school buildings in several ways – community meeting space, recreation, and other community purposes. The gymnasiums, school cafeterias, and libraries are utilized by the community, including for some town committee meetings. In addition, the Jr./Sr. High School houses the town’s local cable access studio, which is used regularly after school. The Elmwood Street and Shaw School Libraries are reportedly underutilized, especially in the summer.

Surplus School Buildings

Two (2) former schools, presently commercial uses, are or will soon be vacant.

1. The McGrath School (Elm Street) is largely vacant with the departure of YOU, Inc. Discussions are underway to demolish this former high school and build a new Fire Station Headquarters at this site.

Youth Group Center at McGrath School - The Millbury Youth Commission, which has six members, has been in existence since 2013 and operates the Youth Group Center (“Youth Center”) currently located at the McGrath School building. The Youth Center provides activities to second graders through sixth graders on Friday nights from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. This service is free of charge and includes activities such as karaoke, game night, movies, table hockey, and other games. The Youth Commission also organizes off-site activities such as bowling, roller skating, and dances several times a year, for a nominal fee. Anywhere from 30 to 200 youth attend these activities. This year, the Youth Center has experienced an increase in the number of children attending Friday night events. This increase is attributed to better coordination with the Parents Club.

2. The former elementary school at 153 Millbury Avenue, called Dorothy Manor School, that is currently occupied by Pakachoag Acres (daycare/pre-school) will be vacated within the year. The Police Department is exploring the feasibility of reusing this facility as a police station.

OTHER TOWN FACILITIES

Asa Waters Mansion

The Asa Waters Mansion is a historic landmark appearing on the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places. Located at 123 Elm Street in the Town Center, it is protected by a preservation restriction. It was designed by Boston architect Asher Benjamin and constructed in 1826. The Town purchased it in 1993. An entertainment venue, the Asa Waters Mansion is used for community events, business meetings, and private functions such as weddings, birthday parties, showers, retreats for non-profits, etc. Plans are underway to expand the capacity of the Mansion to enhance its revenue-generating potential. Planned facility improvements include adding insulation, installing a commercial kitchen, adding technology in a way that respects the historic structure, and providing additional bathrooms.

Senior Center

The Millbury Council on Aging (COA) runs the Millbury Senior Center in a converted former railway station located at One River Street. The Senior Center has been at this location since 1995. The current building is spacious with multiple rooms, ample parking and a meditation garden. Services include information/referral, nutrition counseling, outreach, transportation, health clinics, advocacy, meals, and numerous social activities, among others. Seniors come to the Millbury Senior Center from surrounding towns for the services it provides.

A critical service provided by the Council on Aging is transportation to the elderly. The Council on Aging, in cooperation with the Friends of Millbury Seniors and the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA), provides paratransit and minivan service to seniors, as well as the disabled, in need of transportation to a medical appointment or other services.

Additionally, a variety of exercise classes are offered as well as programs and services such as legal, car license renewals, help with budgeting, tax preparation, home delivered meals, etc. A food pantry services approximately 165 people once a month. Blood pressure clinics are also held. The Council on Aging organizes many intergenerational activities, including:

- National Honor Society students assisting with technology, Facebook, etc.
- Helping Hands Program, a fee for service program where a teen is matched up with a senior and is paid to assist with chores around the house.
- Elder Community Services Program, a program where participants receive up to \$1,500 a year to offset property taxes in return for voluntary service at a town department, board, agency, or program.

According to senior citizens that attended a visioning session during Phase I of the Master planning process, the majority felt that the Council on Aging meets the needs of elderly residents in terms of health care, fitness/wellness programs, socializing, transportation, home delivered meals,

emergency care and information, and referrals regarding available services. However, many felt their needs are not adequately met in terms of appropriate and affordable housing – size, location, amenities, cost. There are no assisted living facilities in Millbury, and residents must go to Auburn or Worcester for such a facility.

Millbury Public Library

The Millbury Public Library is located at 128 Elm Street. The original library was built in 1916. An expansion was constructed in 2000, and included a new entry, children's room, young adults' room, community meeting room, offices, local history room and adult reading material. The building is listed on the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places and is subject to a preservation restriction, which impacts physical alterations to the historic portion of the building. The Millbury Public Library's Long-Range Plan for 2017-2022 offers the following objective:

To continue to establish the library as an integral asset to the town and provide the community with:

- *Greater responsiveness to the information needs of the Town;*
- *An ability to adjust and grow with the changes in population and business;*
- *Effective management that makes informed decisions;*
- *An accessible, friendly milieu for activities and patrons; and*
- *An institution that looks to the future and stays in tune with people's needs.*

Presently, the Library is open five days a week, and is closed Sundays and Mondays. Over 6,000 residents have library cards. There are six (6) computers with internet available for public use. The Library has approximately 40,000 volumes, subscribes to over 100 periodicals and newspapers, and has a telescope that can be checked out for one week intervals. Movies, DVDs and CDs are also part of the collection. Recent borrowing analysis indicates an increase in the number of e-books checked out and a decrease in the number of hardcover books borrowed.

Current library programming includes story time for preschoolers, tween and teen groups, an adult book discussion group, and summer reading programs. The Library plans to include the addition of more computers and displays of local art in the future.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Millbury Public Safety consists of the Fire Department, Police Department, and the Emergency Medical Service (EMS). The Town has a contract with Med-Star Ambulance for EMS. Med-Star is required by contract to be housed by the Town and to respond to any request by Police or Fire. Med-Star also provides health clinics at the Senior Center, at no charge, per its contract.

The Department of Public Works is also focused on public safety of roadways, and a description of the department is found in this section, however, any discussion of a public safety complex solely revolves around Fire and Police.

Fire Department

The Millbury Fire Department belongs to a consortium of 25 towns (Fire District 7). The consortium trains together and meets once a month. The Fire Department operates four (4) stations:

1. **Fire Headquarters**, located at 126 Elm Street, is the main station. Built in 1947, it no longer adequately serves the Department's needs. The heating system was converted from fuel oil to natural gas in calendar year 2012. The building needs repairs and it lacks space for specialty equipment and programs such as public education and fire prevention.
2. **Station 2**, located on West Main Street, was built in 1978 and is reportedly in the best condition of the four stations with updated heating and electrical systems. The heating system was converted from fuel oil to natural gas in calendar year 2016.
3. **Station 3**, located at 1489 Grafton Road, was built in 1974. The space is in good condition, and the size is adequate. If a new Fire Headquarters gets built, two trucks in the station would relocate to the new station, leaving just an engine. It has updated electrical, plumbing, and new windows. The heating system will be converted from fuel oil to natural gas in 2018.
4. **Station 5**, located at 240 Millbury Avenue, was built in 1954 and is in good condition. It is a well-built structure, with updated electrical and heating systems. It lacks storage space and parking. The storage space can be supplemented with space at Station 3, but the parking continues to be an ongoing issue.

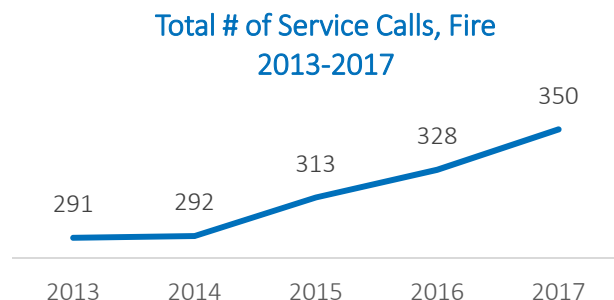
Equipment

Each station has one engine. Fire Headquarters has an aerial tower and a rescue truck. Station 3 has a forestry truck and fire alarm truck. Station 2 has a tanker truck needed to service fires in West Millbury, since it is not served by the municipal water system. The Department has 4 pumpers, one 3,000-gallon tanker, one 95-foot tower, a heavy rescue, a large diameter hose reel truck, a 4x4 forestry unit, and a fire alarm bucket truck. Special equipment consists of three sets of Hurst JAWS, 5 eclipse thermal imagers, and 8 AEDs.

Calls for Service

The number of calls for service has increased every year over the last five years.

It is speculated that the increase in the elderly population may be responsible for at least a portion of this increase. The top incident types reported from 2013-2017 include: building fire, smoke detector malfunction, carbon monoxide detector, alarm system (malfunction), alarm system (unintentional), and odor of smoke/smoke scare.



Police Department

The Police Department is in the basement of the Municipal Office Building, built in 1973. The present space configuration consists of five adult holding cells, a workout area, storage converted to office space for an officer, shared garage space with janitorial equipment, and office space. The facility does not adequately meet the present needs of the Department.

Equipment

The Department currently has 13 cars including 4 unmarked cruisers. These vehicles are stored in the Town Hall surface parking lot.

Calls for Service

The Police Department provides emergency and non-emergency dispatch for all town departments. This is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by civilian dispatchers. The dispatchers provide emergency medical dispatch, which entails advising callers of medical procedures until EMS arrives. Millbury explored joining a regional dispatch service with seven of the surrounding towns but determined that it didn't meet the Town's needs.

The number of calls for service has averaged 11,625 per year from 2013-2017. Since the opening of the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley, between 40% and 50% of the total yearly criminal complaints/summons arrests are generated from the mall, mostly by non-residents in the form of larceny, scams, shop-lifting, and identity theft. A "No Trespassing" policy implemented in 2010 has resulted in a reduction of calls for assistance at the mall.

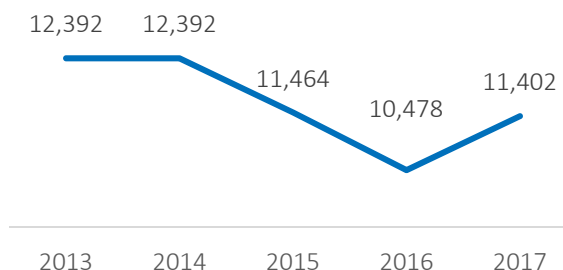
Although the Police Department receives a large portion of calls relative to crime, most of the reported accidents, citations issued, and traffic infractions occur throughout the Town, and not at the shopping center. Over the last five years, reportable crimes were consistently reported in the following categories:⁴⁶

- Simple Assault (including Domestic Violence)
- Shoplifting
- Larceny
- Destruction/Vandalism
- Breaking and Entering
- Traffic Stops

⁴⁶ "The categories of criminal and non-criminal activity are beneficial in identifying crime trends, what time of day or night criminal activity is occurring, the impact on various shifts, amounts of resources utilized in different areas of town in response to crime and for tactical decision-making and strategic planning." (Millbury Police Department, Annual Report)

Like the region, Millbury has been impacted by the opioid crisis. All full-time Millbury officers began carrying Narcan in January 2017. There is a push in Town to decriminalize the use of opioid narcotics. With the decriminalization of marijuana, construction of a recreational marijuana dispensary is underway and a proposed large-scale marijuana cultivation/manufacturing facility is currently going through the permitting process.

Total # of Service Calls, Police
2013-2017



The Chief of Police has voiced public health concerns regarding siting in town, especially relative to driving under the influence of marijuana. In the absence of an on-the-spot drug test, as well as a law that determines safe thresholds for driving, the Police Chief anticipates that there will be more service calls due to increased access to marijuana.

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for roads, stormwater collection, sanitation (sewer collection), Central Cemetery, all town parks, public shade trees, culverts, dams, bridges, and the Transfer Station. The operation and maintenance of DPW is guided by the input of several boards and commissions: Parks Commission, Cemetery Commission, Recycling Committee, Sewer Commission, and Roadway Advisory Committee.

The most critical issue DPW faces is failing infrastructure, mainly its roads, bridges, and retaining walls. Thirty-five percent of all town roads were rated Very Poor by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission in an inventory conducted in conjunction with the MA Department of Transportation (MassDOT). An estimated \$15 to \$20 million⁴⁷ is needed to make these major repairs.

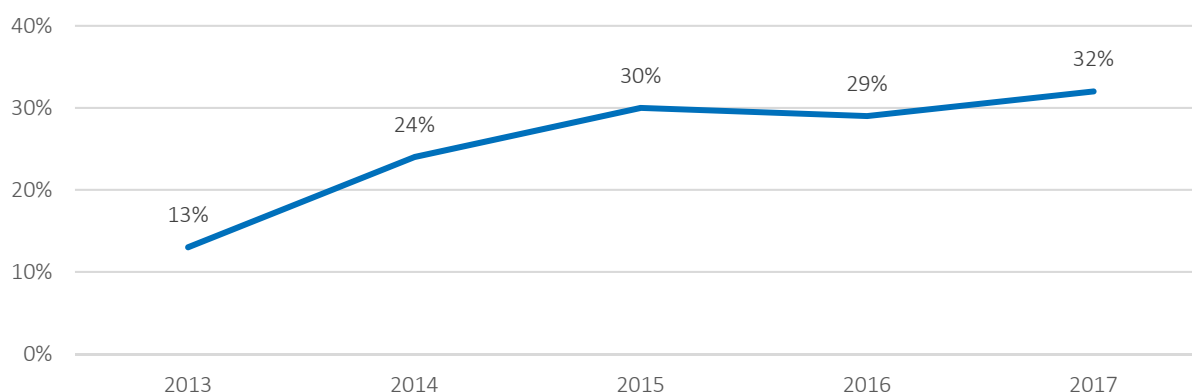
Transfer Station/Recycling Center

The Town's Transfer Station/Recycling Center is located on Riverlin Street adjacent to the Town's capped landfill, and operated by the DPW Solid Waste Division. Millbury does not offer curbside trash pickup. Residents must hire a private hauler or bring their disposables to the Transfer Station. To use the Transfer Station, residents must purchase an annual sticker that allows unlimited trash and recycling disposition and one free large furniture item. Historically, approximately 3,200 stickers are issued per year. Trash is hauled by the Town to Wheelabrator in Millbury. Recycling is hauled by a contractor, currently Casella, to a separation facility in Auburn.

⁴⁷ Estimate provided by Town Manager.

Annual tonnage of trash at the Transfer Station has decreased as recycling has increased, resulting in the Town receiving a \$100,000 rebate (on average) from Wheelabrator per year. Unfortunately, the large increase in recycling has resulted in larger recycling fees, predominantly caused by the hauling charges. As a result, the Town is actively seeking grants for technical assistance and equipment to allow evaluation and redesign of the recycling center and waste streams.

Overall Facility Recycling Rate, 2013-2017



Source: *Transfer Station Annual Tonnage Summary 2017*

The landfill has been closed and capped since the late 1980s. It is monitored in accordance with a MA Department of Environmental Protection approved plan. No issues have been observed or documented. Presently, residents must take any hazardous waste to Worcester. The Town of Millbury recently completed the procurement process to lease the landfill property to a party interested in erecting, owning and maintaining a solar photovoltaic system on the mound. Negotiations are underway with the successful bidder.

Central Cemetery (Cemetery Commission)

The Central Cemetery, located at 24 West Street, is the only Town funded cemetery in operation. The Cemetery is operated by the DPW Parks and Cemeteries Division with assistance from a three-member Cemetery Commission. The cemetery is experiencing additional pressure to expand. Due to space limitations, burial plots cannot be pre-purchased. However, the Town bought an adjacent 4.7-acre parcel along the Blackstone River. This parcel expansion is currently in design, however, very little of the parcel may be usable for burials due to Rivers Protection Act buffer and floodplain district limitations.

Town Sewer

Approximately 75% of Millbury has access to public sewer. The northwest section of town does not, and those without sewer have septic systems. Seventy percent (70%) of the Town's residents are connected to the sewer system.

The system has the following number of connections:

- Residential: 4,512
- Commercial: 143
- Industrial: 63
- 208 streets have sewer
- 68 streets –no sewer
- 10 commercial properties on septic (2.3% of total commercial)
- 3,380 billable users ⁴⁸

The Town charges user fees based on water usage, which finances the operation and maintenance costs of the system. A betterment fee includes a sewer hook-up fee (\$5,000 per residence). The collection system is comprised of 15 pump stations that pump to the Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District (UBWPAD), the regional wastewater treatment facility.

Millbury Sewer Usage: Jan. 2018- June 2018 – Million Gallons

Jan 2018	Feb 2018	March 2018	April 2018	May 2018	June 2018
37.707	42.854	53.903	49.103	39.111	31.543

Sewer System Expansion

Millbury underwent a huge sewer expansion project in 2008/09 that added many new users to the system. That year, the Town completed Phase II of an \$18 million sewer expansion program providing sewer service to more than 800 homes and businesses in the Laurel Heights and Lake Singletary area (affecting 11 roadways and approximately 222 homes), Greenwood Street area (affecting the Massachusetts Turnpike Pump Station, 6 roadways and approximately 115 homes), East Millbury area (affecting 22 roadways and approximately 267 homes), Park Hill Avenue and Martin Street areas (affecting 4 roadways and approximately 93 homes). ⁴⁹

A 2010 *Infiltration and Inflow Study* recommended that maintenance be conducted in several sections of Millbury. The Downtown work was completed, but improvements in the other neighborhoods were not completed. The Sewer Commission is now in the process of obtaining cost estimates and conducting further studies of older sections of the system to determine if there are ways to increase efficiency. A study exploring the expansion of the sewer system to West Millbury was conducted but it was determined to be too expensive.

⁴⁸ The number of billable users (sewer connections) does not equal the total number of residential, commercial and industrial connections because many multi-family residential buildings have one sewer connection although many families live there.

⁴⁹ From 2008 Open Space and Recreation Plan, “Growth and Development Patterns”

There are currently no plans for Town investment in expansion.⁵⁰ However, the sewer system is continually being expanded through the construction of subdivisions. If a development occurs on a street with no sewer connections and runs a line to connect to the public system, the developer must also run a pipe to the property line of each house along the street. Property owners then can switch from a septic system to Town sewer.

Upper Blackstone Wastewater Treatment Facility

Located at the headwaters of the Blackstone River in Millbury and Worcester, the UBWPAD is a clean water treatment plant serving roughly 250,000 people in the greater Worcester area. The District consists of the Cherry Valley Sewer District, Auburn, Holden, Millbury, Rutland, West Boylston, and Worcester, along with portions of Oxford, Paxton, Shrewsbury, and Sutton. It was created by the Massachusetts General Court in 1968. The Upper Blackstone Wastewater Treatment Facility (UBWTF) was designed to provide secondary treatment at an average flow of 56 million gallons per day, and it opened in 1976.

While the City of Worcester is the biggest user of the UBWTF, Millbury's usage has increased over time. In 2005, it was 3.5% of the total flow to the Blackstone Wastewater Facility; it has increased to approximately 4.5% of the total flow (2018).⁵¹ There is no maximum permitted capacity stipulated in the agreement and the regional facility gives 1,250,000 gallons of credit annually to Millbury. Millbury has an average flow of 1.2 million gallons per day, and there are currently no limitations on discharge.

Town Water Service (Private)

Aquarion Water Company, a private enterprise, provides water to approximately half of Millbury. Eversource recently purchased Aquarion, however there is reportedly no change in operations or cost. Residents and businesses located in a portion of West Millbury are on private wells and do not receive water service from Aquarion. Aquarion has four wells in Town and is conducting a distribution system study to evaluate the capacity of the system.

Aquarion operates two water treatment plants to comply with regulatory standards and the water quality is reportedly excellent.⁵² The storage tank has a capacity of 1.5 million gallons of water. There are approximately 50 miles of water main pipes in Millbury. System improvements are coordinated with DPW's paving program for efficiency and convenience to residents.

In addition to a system development charge for a new connection, residents and businesses pay user fees for water that is based on the size of the meter. New developments pay a surcharge that is used to fund water conservation projects to offset future demand. Aquarion supports water

⁵⁰ In 1998, there was a ballot question regarding extending sewer to the rest of the Town, but it was voted down. At the time, the estimated cost was \$34 million.

⁵¹ Based on interview with Sewer Commissioner

⁵² While some residents report disliking the taste of the water, testing reveals the quality is excellent.

conservation for residential and commercial properties by installing energy saving toilets, shower heads, and faucets, free of charge to the customer.

SUSTAINABILITY

Millbury has been proactive in its efforts to reduce energy consumption and protect its natural resources for future generations. The Town Planner and the Business Manager of the Public Schools worked together to compile an inventory of the town-owned or operated assets that consume energy, such as town buildings, recreational facilities, motor vehicles, and street/traffic lights. Using Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09) as the baseline year, the Town's energy consumption continues to be monitored. In FY16, the Town achieved its goal of reducing total energy consumption by 20% over the baseline year. Working together with utility companies and a variety of vendors, the Town conducted energy audits for most of its facilities, identifying areas of inefficiency, and alternatives for reducing energy consumption. The Town continues to take steps to become more energy efficient.

All of Millbury's municipal buildings are heated using natural gas or heating oil. Energy audits conducted in the Spring of 2011 concluded that four facilities: Millbury Jr./Sr. High School, Elmwood Street School, the Municipal Office Building and the Library consumed 53% of the energy used by municipal buildings in FY09. The two biggest consumers of energy, the High School and Elmwood Street School, use natural gas.⁵³ The Raymond E. Shaw School is the third largest energy consumer. With a feasibility study currently underway for major renovation or new construction, solar power is proposed as this building's main source of energy. In the past ten years, the Town has undertaken numerous efforts related to sustainability of natural resources and protecting the environment.

2009

The Millbury Board of Selectmen established the Energy Advisory Committee to assist the Town Planner with energy efficiency efforts.

2010

The Town secured an \$85,000 grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center to study the feasibility of siting a wind turbine at Butler Farm. The study ultimately determined that insufficient wind exists at the site rendering the project economically infeasible.

2011

Millbury was designated as a **Green Community**. Since that time, the Town has been awarded four grants totaling \$903,000 from the Green Communities Initiative to implement various energy reduction improvements including both interior and exterior lighting upgrades, building weatherization (insulation and windows), conversion of street and parking lot lights to lower

⁵³ For a complete breakdown of Municipal Energy Use, see Energy Baseline and Energy Reduction Plan, May 24, 2011, Table 1, p. 5.

wattage LEDs, improvements to HVAC systems, and the purchase of four electric cars and four electric charging stations.

An **Energy Reduction Plan** was adopted by the town officials and the school district. The Town pledged to reduce municipal electricity, heating fuel and gasoline/diesel consumption by 20% within a 5-year timeframe. This milestone was reached in FY2016.⁵⁴

The Town adopted a **Stretch Energy Code**. The Stretch Code provided the Town with an energy-efficient alternative to the base energy code encompassed within the State Building Code. The Stretch Code has stricter standards for new residential construction and renovations and additions, providing a performance-based approach that looks at the overall efficiency of the home.

2012

Millbury and the Town of Sutton joined forces to participate in the **SolarizeMass Program**. This program was a coordinated education, marketing, and outreach effort by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, Green Communities Division and selected municipalities to bring competitively priced solar photovoltaic (PV) modules to home and business owners in the Commonwealth.

The Town entered into a 20-year **Utility Credit Purchase Agreement** to purchase net metering credits from a 1 megawatt (MW), ground-mounted solar facility located on Stafford Street in Leicester, Massachusetts. The 5-acre solar facility consists of 4,264 PV modules, producing 1.2 million kilowatt hours (kWh) per year. The electricity the facility generates is fed into the power grid for consumption by a variety of customers, and Millbury is a recipient of 40% of the net metering credits. The value of the credits produced by the solar facility are reflected on the Town's electric bills as "avoided costs." If the system performs as anticipated, avoided costs will total approximately \$540,000 over the life of the contract.

2013

Millbury entered into a **second 20-year Utility Credit Purchase Agreement** to purchase net metering credits from a 3 MW, ground-mounted solar facility located at 29 McGrath Road in town. This larger solar facility (21.5 acres) consists of 13,000 PV modules. These modules produce approximately 2.4 million kWh per year. If the system performs as anticipated, avoided costs will total approximately \$2.42 million over the life of the contract.

2016

The Town was awarded a **technical assistance grant** from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program to engage the services of a consultant team to create a comprehensive plan to address non-point source pollutants while simultaneously revitalizing Millbury Center through low impact design, open space upgrades, parking, sidewalk and streetscape improvements, and enhanced accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

⁵⁴ Energy Advisory Committee, 2016 Annual Report

2017

The Town was awarded a \$150,000 Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant from the MA Department of Environmental Protection to fund a portion of the design and construction of Phase I of the Millbury Center green infrastructure project. The project focuses on the intersection of Main and Elm Streets, Upper and Lower Commons, and a portion of South Main Street. The Town of Millbury committed to a \$100,000 match, which will fund public outreach efforts and the balance of design costs.

The Town launched **Millbury Power Choice**, a municipal aggregation program that leverages the Town's collective purchasing power to procure lower cost electricity for residents and businesses.

2018

The Energy Advisory Committee obtained a GAP II grant from the MA Department of Environmental Protection to construct a **solar carport** at DPW's sewer facility which will power the administration building's heating/cooling system.

The Town recently issued an **RFP** for the lease of certain parcels of Town-owned property comprising a portion of the former Millbury municipal transfer station/capped landfill and a portion of DPW's main sewer pump station for the **siting of a solar energy system**. The Town is negotiating with the successful bidder.

Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources

The Town has various recreation, open space, and natural resources that fall under its jurisdiction. A detailed inventory and discussion is found in the Open Space and Recreation and Natural Resources section of this master plan.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings identified below incorporate analysis from the evaluation of the existing conditions of town facilities and services, as well as feedback received through the master planning public outreach and engagement process.

- Upgrading the Town's facilities and services overall is a high priority for residents, as is meeting the needs of residents of all ages.
- The projected increase in the population aged 65+ will result in an increased need for municipal services in the future.
- The School Committee and School District are focused on tackling space constraints and facility conditions, particularly related to the condition of the Raymond E. Shaw School as well as the demand for smaller classroom sizes and additional programmatic spaces.
- Both the Fire and Police Departments are in outdated facilities in need of repair and would benefit from newer, updated ones.

- Funding and implementing infrastructure improvements throughout the Town is critical to maintaining safe and accessible streets and sidewalks and promoting economic development.
- Under DPU regulations, Aquarion has no plans to expand its water distribution system. The company is at approximately 90% of its permitted capacity for water and can request additional withdrawals to meet expected growth in Millbury.
- The Town has made significant progress relative to its energy consumption goals. The Town continues to monitor energy consumption, conduct energy audits and retrofit energy reduction alternatives where feasible. It should continue to pursue grants to implement more sustainable infrastructure in the future.

CHALLENGES/ISSUES

- While student enrollment is projected to decrease, several factors are driving the need for increased space at each of the schools. Ways to address these will include both expanding facilities as well as grade reorganization. Other policy decisions, including receiving school choice students at the high school where there is extra capacity will need to be evaluated.
- As the 65+ population of Millbury increases, the Council on Aging will be challenged to provide additional, and in some circumstances, different kinds of services and programs. In addition, as the 65+ population increases and people live longer, the need for alternative transportation and housing options will become even greater than it is now.
- The Youth Commission will need a new space to operate out of if the Town sells or demolishes the former McGrath School.
- In this digital age, the Millbury Public Library will need to evaluate how to maintain its base users and attract new users.
- Lack of funding requires the Town to do more with less staff, impacting services offered, investment in necessary infrastructure enhancements, and stalling economic growth.
- In 2014, the Fire and Police Departments requested \$17 million in funding to construct 2 separate buildings on the same site; voters did not approve the request. Several sites are under consideration presently by the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Fire and Police.
- As the cost to recycling increases, the Town will have to evaluate how it handles the operation of its transfer station and recycling center.

GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

The overall goal of the Community Facilities and Services section is to preserve, maintain and/or enhance municipal facilities and services so that they meet the needs of all residents. To that end, the below recommendations and strategies were created to achieve this goal:

- Continue to survey users of the Senior Center to ensure that programming and services continue to meet the needs of the population, as well as to solicit ideas for new programming or services in the future.
- An opportunity exists and should be explored for the Town to take over the transportation service currently provided by the Council on Aging so that it can be expanded to all residents, perhaps with cost savings.
- Collaborate to foster stronger intergenerational relationships between the younger and older populations in town. Entities could include the Council on Aging/Senior Center, Public Library, and Schools, with support from town officials.
- Form a committee to explore housing needs and options for seniors, including Town-owned and developed senior housing and assisted living facilities.
- Focus on the evolving role of public libraries to actively encourage the use of the library for a variety of activities for patrons of all ages.
 - Offer educational workshops and trainings to attract new users.
 - Actively market the services the Library provides.
 - Solicit input from users and residents to create new programming.
 - Coordinate with School Department to schedule events at the Library when demand cannot support the use of a school's library or cafeteria.
 - Work with community groups to foster awareness of all the services the Library offers.
- The School Department should consider and prioritize actions that will increase funding.
 - Preschool (Pre-K) is presently tuition-based and there is a demand for additional spaces in that program.
 - Offering School Choice provides additional funding opportunity, as well as before and after-school care for a fee.
- Evaluate the Town's staffing capacity, limitations, priorities, and funding.
 - Staffing – Many departments are short-staffed and handling very high workloads. To make progress and achieve the goals set forth in this Master Plan, town officials will need to prioritize and invest in additional staff.
 - Funding – Pursue grant funding to support the hiring of additional staff, as well as to supplement existing municipal services and/or add new municipal services.
 - Facilities – Continue to evaluate and implement sustainable measures to decrease the town's cost to operate its facilities.

- Surplus Land – Inventory town-owned parcels that can be sold to a private developer. By disposing of surplus town-owned land, parcels will generate taxes that can then be allocated for town use.
- Collaboration - Continue to lobby and work with the Commonwealth on cost-sharing arrangements leading to infrastructure investment, e.g. MSBA for schools, MassDOT for roads, and Green Communities and public safety funding.
- Regionalization – Continue to work with surrounding towns to evaluate opportunities to regionalize studies, designs, infrastructure improvements, and services.
- Geospatial Systems – GIS, database, asset, and document management applications can improve the level of service provided to the community, increase efficiencies, automate routine tasks, and improve organization and analysis of data for a wide variety of municipal departments, including the School Department. The Town should consider implementing a system that can be accessed and used across departments for information sharing and planning purposes.
- Work with DPW to create a realistic action plan for improvements to infrastructure and reduction of costs for services provided.
 - Evaluate conditions of roadways, sidewalks, bridges, drainage, sewer system and equipment. By implementing a plan for improvements, repair work will become routine, saving costs (particularly through need for emergency repairs) over the long-term.
 - Study the future needs of the cemetery, as well as the transfer station and recycling center. As costs grow, consider options to create better efficiency of services, including through regional agreements with surrounding towns and cities.
- Work to maximize the capacity of Asa Waters Mansion to become revenue-neutral to the Town.
 - Identify and evaluate whether proposed improvements will create a higher rate of return on investment. Proposed improvements could include a commercial kitchen, bandstand, carriage house, children’s garden, etc.
 - Pursue grant opportunities/collaborations with partners to implement facility improvements that are needed but do not generate a high return on investment. Such improvements include ADA, HVAC, lighting, minor repairs, etc.
- If the Police Department moves out of the basement of the Municipal Office Building, the layout of the municipal offices in the building can be revised to accommodate needs for additional departmental space. Alternatively, this space could benefit the Youth Commission if it becomes displaced from its current location.
- Continue to support energy saving efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Located directly to the south of the City of Worcester, Millbury is well served by regional highways, with access to Interstate 90 (Massachusetts Turnpike), Massachusetts Route 146 (Worcester-Providence Turnpike), and U.S. Route 20 (Southwest Cutoff). Millbury is also connected to the surrounding communities of Worcester, Auburn, Sutton, and Grafton through arterial roadways, collector roadways, and local roadways.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Roadways are typically classified by their function and purpose. These types of classifications identify the hierarchy for the effective collection and distribution of vehicles. Roadways may be classified as interstates, arterials, collectors, and local roadways. Millbury is a member community of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), which assists with functional classification of roadways when appropriate. For practical purposes, roads in Millbury can be classified based on jurisdiction, ownership, and maintenance responsibility, including state-numbered, state-owned and maintained; state-numbered, town-owned and maintained; town-owned and maintained; and unaccepted roads.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation Year End Road Inventory (2017)⁵⁵ identifies centerline miles and lane miles by city/town jurisdiction, functional classification, and federal aid designation. Functional classification includes interstate highways, arterial roadways, collector roads, and local roads. Aid category refers to funding categories for the upkeep and maintenance of roadways. National Highway System funding funds the roadway network representing all interstate roadways and principal arterials spanning the state. Surface Transportation Program Funding funds the roadway network comprised of all urban arterials, urban collectors, and rural arterials, with limited funding available for rural collectors. State and local aid includes Chapter 90 and other non-federal aid categories.

Functional Classification

Interstate highways and principal arterials form the regional network of roads connecting cities over state lines. They provide access to urban activity centers and major commercial areas, and they are state owned and maintained. They serve only motorized vehicles with controlled access, and carry high volumes of traffic. In Millbury, I-90, Route 122, Route 146, and Route 20 fall into this category. I-90 and Route 146 handle a traffic volume greater than 30,000 vehicles daily.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/03/19/2017-ri-ye-rpt.pdf>

⁵⁶ http://www.millbury-ma.org/Public_Documents/MillburyMA_BComm/FORMS/RAC2014Report.pdf

Minor arterials are secondary roads that support and connect principal arterials. They support travel within geographic regions with lower speeds and traffic volumes than principal arterials. Minor arterials may also serve long-distance travel movements and connect principal arterials on a regional level. Within Millbury, Route 122A, Elm Street, Canal Street/Grafton Street, Howe Avenue/Millbury Avenue, Singletary Road/West Main Street, and Sutton Road serve as minor arterials.

Major collectors gather trips from local roads and distribute them to arterials. They serve a smaller geographic area and provide access at a local level. Compared to arterials, major collectors support fewer vehicles and usually lower speeds. A collector system may access residential, commercial, and industrial areas to connect with local roads. Major collectors within Millbury include Elmwood Street, Greenwood Street, McCracken Road, Millbury Avenue, Riverlin Street, South Main Street, West Main Street, and Wheelock Avenue.

Local roads form the most basic unit of roadway systems, and they are designed for lower traffic volumes and speeds by providing direct access to residential areas, local businesses, educational institutions, industrial areas, and access between adjacent neighborhoods.

Centerline Miles⁵⁷

Millbury has 85.13 centerline miles. Of this number, MassDOT has administrative authority over approximately 12% of the centerline miles, with town accepted roadways accounting for 83% and unaccepted roadways capturing the remaining 5%. The roadway network in Millbury is comprised of 64% local, 18% arterial, 13% collector, and 5% interstate centerline miles. Of the total centerline miles in Millbury, 36% qualify under federal aid while the remaining 64% are characterized as state/local roadways.

Lane Miles⁵⁸

Millbury has 186.83 lane miles. Of this number, MassDOT has administrative authority over approximately 23% of the lane miles, with town accepted roadways accounting for 74% and unaccepted roadways capturing the remaining 3%. The roadway network in Millbury is comprised of 55% local, 21% arterial, 12% collector, and 12% interstate lane miles. Of the total lane miles in Millbury, 45% qualify under federal aid while the remaining 55% are characterized as state/local roadways.

Comparison to Surrounding Communities

⁵⁷ Centerline miles refers to the linear length of a road segment.

⁵⁸ Lane miles refers to the linear length of lanes of a road segment. The number of lanes on both sides of the roadway are counted in the mileage calculation.

Overall, Millbury has less centerline and lane miles than the surrounding communities of Grafton, Auburn, Sutton, and Oxford. However, it ranks third among these communities in federal aid eligible roadways by centerline miles, and second in federal aid eligible roadways in lane miles.

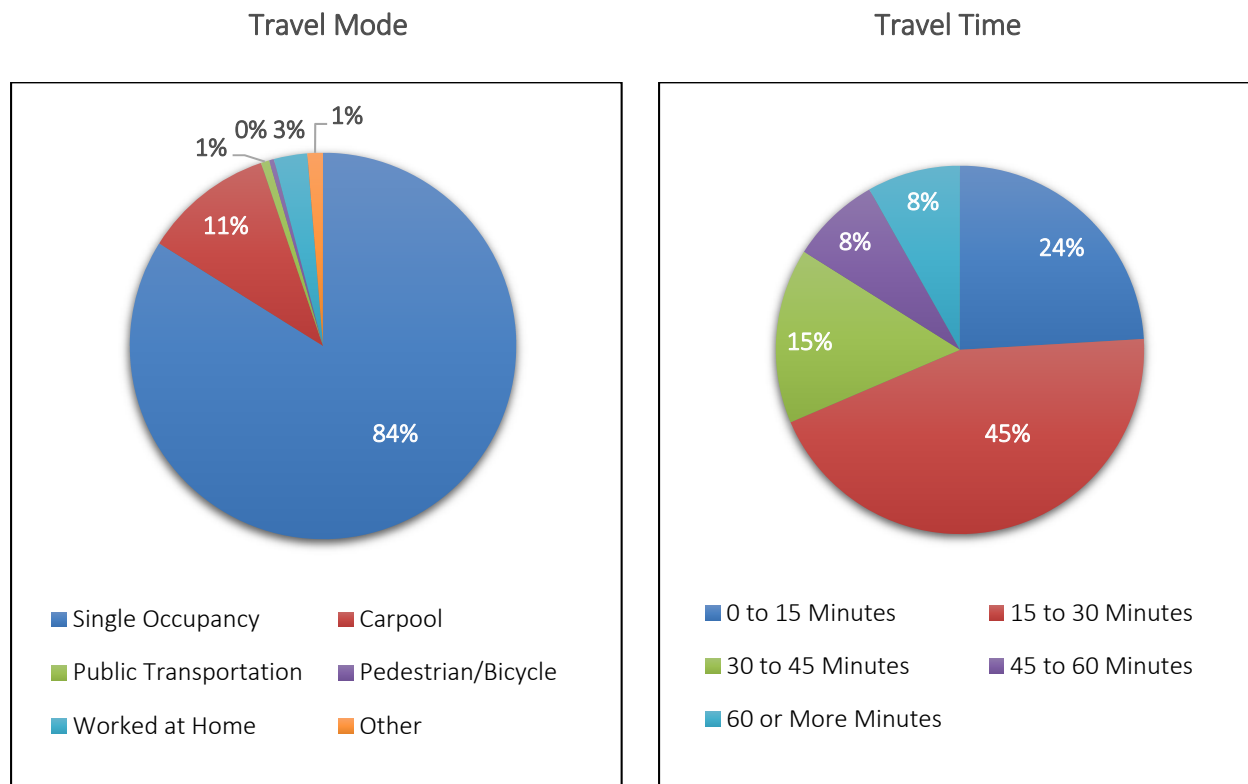
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Commuting Patterns

Commuting patterns are usually influenced by a jurisdiction's location in the region, as well as land use, development density, and roadway connectivity. Millbury's proximity to Route 146 and I-90 provides excellent access to the regional highway network, multiple places of employment along the I-90 corridor and elsewhere in central and eastern Massachusetts. As described in the economic development section herein, less than 15% of Millbury's employed labor force works in Millbury.

Travel Mode and Travel Time

The following travel mode chart depicts that most residents in Millbury prefer the use of personal vehicles over any other mode of travel. In fact, 84% use a single-occupancy vehicle while 11% carpool. Similarly, the following travel time chart reveals 45% of residents experience a commute travel time between 15 and 30 minutes, while 24% experience a travel time between 0 and 15 minutes.



Traffic Generators

The largest traffic generator in Millbury is The Shoppes at Blackstone Valley, a 790,000-square foot outdoor shopping mall that includes a movie theater, restaurants, and retail stores. It is located off Route 146 (Worcester-Providence Turnpike) approximately one mile south of Exit 10A of I-90 (Massachusetts Turnpike).

Traffic Volumes

Traffic volume data is typically available through counts performed and collected by the regional planning agency, MassDOT and, occasionally, by the municipality. The table below summarizes traffic volumes collected by CMRPC and/or MassDOT for major roadway segments in Millbury based on data collected between the years 2002 and 2017. It should be noted these traffic counts do not contain sufficient historical data to show trends.

Traffic Volumes			
Roadway	Location	Year	Volume
Grafton Street	at Grafton Town Line	2014/2016	4,108/4,463
Grafton Street	East of Riverlin Street	2014/2016	6,178/6,712
Greenwood Street	at Worcester City Line	2006/2009	8,249/7,311
Howe Avenue	South of Millbury Avenue	2008/2014	7,774/7,427
McCracken Road	East of Greenwood Street	2004	7,249
McCracken Road	West of Greenwood Street	2002	1,388
Millbury Avenue	at Worcester City Line	2009/2012	8,613/8,426
Millbury Avenue	South of Howe Avenue	2011/2017	4,081/3,983
Millbury Avenue	South of Wheelock Avenue	2011/2017	8,741/8,980
Park Hill Avenue	South of Route 20 (Southwest Cutoff)	2006/2017	1757/2107
Riverlin Street	North of Grafton Street	2011/2017	6,579/7,438
Riverlin Street	North of Millbury Avenue	2014/2016	3,474/3,774
Riverlin Street	North of Route 122A (Providence St.)	1987/2017	3,113/3,842
Route 122 (Grafton Road)	at Grafton Town Line	2011/2017	13,218/15,916
Route 122 (Grafton Road)	at Worcester City Line	2012/2016	17,020/20,643
Route 122 (Grafton Road)	North of I-90 Access	2011/2017	16,588/17,127
Route 122A (Main Street)	North of Canal Street	2014/2016	11,128/12,090
Route 122A (Providence St.)	at Sutton Town Line	2008/2014	6,447/6,276
Singletary Road	at Sutton Town Line	2011/2017	2,853/2,813
South Main Street	at Sutton Town Line	2014/2016	843/915
Sutton Road	at Sutton Town Line	2011/2017	2,611/2,704
West Main Street	at Auburn Town Line	2002/2011	720/1,021
West Main Street	West of Route 146	2001/2005	5,700/2,700
West Main Street	West of Sutton Road	2001/2011	4,365/4,722
Westborough Street	at Worcester City Line	2012/2015	1,680/1,899
Wheelock Avenue	South of Route 122 (Grafton Road)	2014/2016	3,283/3,567

Crash Data

There are essentially three sources for crash data typically used for analysis by communities, including data from the local regional planning commission entity, the State and the local jurisdiction's police department. Although the CMRPC and MassDOT keep good records of crashes, the information is typically outdated and does not have the detailed information needed to fully understand the crash (i.e. type, time of day and road conditions). Oftentimes, the most reliable crash data is provided by the local police department as the records are very detailed and current – providing a better understanding of why and how the crash occurred. This information is particularly important to the planning and design of roadways and intersections.

Congress established the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The HSIP is a federal-aid program that was developed to help States plan highway safety improvement projects using a performance-driven process; implement those projects; evaluate the effectiveness of past projects and report annually on the status of HSIP implementation efforts. MassDOT, working with Federal Highway and the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies, has developed a ranking system and guidelines for HSIP-eligible projects and programs. An HSIP eligible cluster is one ranking within the top 5% in the region. Based on information provided by CMRPC, there is presently one (1) HSIP eligible location in Millbury – at the intersection at Route 146 NB/Route 122A/Route 20 NB. A second HSIP location exists on I-90 in Millbury, but the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) does not have jurisdiction over that location.

Based on a review of records from MassDOT's crash history database for the years 2013 to 2015, as well as information provided by the CMMPO, local high crash locations in Millbury include the following: McCracken Road at Greenwood Street (15), Route 20 Connector at I-90 Ramp (14), Canal Street at North Providence Road (11), Canal Street at Grafton Street (8) and Elmwood Street at Beach Street (8).

Parking

Millbury currently supplies ample on-street parking in the downtown area, including parking spaces on Elm Street, South Main Street, and North Main Street. Off-street parking is also available to the public by way of a municipal parking lot off Elm Street and Harris Place. Downtown parking availability appears to be adequate with present day uses. Should more dense development occur in the center of town in the future, or costs increase to maintain downtown infrastructure, town officials may want to pursue best practices related to parking management strategies – including the implementation of a paid parking system and/or a structured parking facility.

Public Transportation

Millbury is within the Worcester Regional Transit Authority's (WRTA) service area. The WRTA is committed to providing high quality transportation services for the 37 communities that comprise its service area.

These communities include:

Auburn	Holland	Shrewsbury
Barre	Leicester	Southbridge
Berlin	Millbury	Spencer
Boylston	New Braintree	Sturbridge
Brimfield	Northborough	Sutton
Brookfield	Northbridge	Wales
Charlton	North Brookfield	Warren
Clinton	Oakham	Webster
Douglas	Oxford	Westborough
Dudley	Paxton	West Boylston
East Brookfield	Princeton	West Brookfield
Grafton	Rutland	Worcester
Holden	Shrewsbury	

Transit facilities within the WRTA include buses and paratransit. These facilities provide connections to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter rail at Union Station in Worcester, which services Boston and several communities in between.

Presently, WRTA Bus Route 4 provides service between Union Station in Worcester and the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley via downtown Millbury. The WRTA provides paratransit services as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The WRTA ADA Complimentary Paratransit Service is a curb-to-curb paratransit service for seniors and people with disabilities who reside within the thirty-seven communities serviced by the WRTA, operating from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Riders are provided with lift-equipped vehicles or sedan-type vehicles depending on their requirements.

Additionally, the Town of Millbury provides curb-to-curb van service for the elderly and disabled, which can be utilized for medical appointments and daily errands.

ACCESSIBILITY

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Pedestrian and bicycle amenities are an essential component of a community's transportation network. They offer an alternative, non-motorized and non-polluting means of transportation. They also encourage physical activity, which is a health benefit. In addition, these amenities provide recreational opportunities, enhance community interaction, and provide a vital source of transportation for those with limited access to an automobile. Pedestrian traffic within commercial areas also reduces the need for large parking lots and reduces traffic congestion because sidewalks help to avoid shorter vehicles trips between retail stores within walking distance of each other.

In contrast, lack of sidewalks or gaps in existing sidewalk networks, poor maintenance, and substandard pedestrian crossing locations create barriers to walking. Providing continuous and well-maintained sidewalks encourages the public to walk and maintain an active lifestyle.

Sidewalks

Millbury's sidewalks vary in condition and location. Millbury Center has the most abundant sidewalks, whereas in other areas of the town sidewalks are non-existent. In terms of Federal-aid eligible roadways, most of the sidewalks in Millbury Center were characterized as in excellent to good condition in the 2014 Town Conditions Report. On major collector roads such as the majority of Riverlin Street and the portion of West Main Street beyond the Beach Street intersection, sidewalks are in poor condition or do not exist. Where sidewalks are non-existent, the Town should evaluate whether they are a necessity, and how a Complete Streets approach may help improve mobility for pedestrians. A weakness in the sidewalk network within town is a lack of ADA accessibility.

In 2016, Millbury embarked on a **Downtown Revitalization Low-Impact Development Initiative** with a goal to retrofit the downtown by replacing pavement with planted areas, making strategic parking improvements, and applying green infrastructure for sidewalk improvements and traffic calming. This project will not only provide aesthetic benefits, it will also encourage people to come to Millbury Center, and provide economic development, public safety, and stormwater management benefits.

Local Trails

The *Rayburn Trails* are located within and adjacent to the town owned Colton Road Conservation Area around utility power lines. These dirt trails are popular as a biking trail but also used for walking and hiking.

The *Singletary Trails* are a twisty, single track trail located off Old Common Road within the Brierly Pond Conservation Area. Old Common Road is a historic cart path that links West Main Street to Carleton Road that is a popular hiking and horseback riding destination for those living within Brierly Pond Village, a large 55 and older residential community.

The *Blackstone River Bikeway* is a proposed 48-mile bikeway that, when fully constructed, will connect Worcester, Massachusetts, to Providence, Rhode Island. The Bikeway consists of both on- and off-road segments, and has been designated an official section of the East Coast Greenway, a 2,600-mile bikeway that extends from Maine to Florida. In Rhode Island, the bikeway is the state's second-longest bike path with 16.5 miles of bikeway and 4.7 miles of on- and off-road bikeway from Providence to Pawtucket. In Massachusetts, the Bikeway will follow the Blackstone River through the communities of Worcester, Millbury, Sutton, Grafton, Northbridge, Uxbridge, Millville, and Blackstone.

The Bikeway begins in Millbury at a paved parking lot off North Main Street near the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley and terminates at McKeon Road in Worcester. There are plans to link this section to the rest of the Blackstone River Bikeway, which in Massachusetts extends 3.5 miles from the Town of Uxbridge through Blackstone to the Rhode Island border. Segments 3, 4, & 5 of the Bikeway remain to be completed. Section 7, connecting McKeon Road to Union Station in Worcester via on-street bicycle lanes, was advertised by the State in 2018. A Blackstone River Bikeway report drafted in 2017 sets forth best practices and suggested routes for this extension through Uxbridge, Northbridge, Grafton, Sutton, and Millbury to connect existing segments in Uxbridge and Worcester. It identifies sub-segments within Millbury and assesses the portions of key properties that would need to be acquired to accommodate the proposed bikeway alignment. This report is referenced in Appendix D.

Creation of the *Millbury Branch Rail Trail*, which extends from Millbury Center to the Wyman-Gordon Company in North Grafton, was championed by the citizens of Millbury in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The 2-mile railroad right-of-way linking the Hastings Conservation Area, Dorothy Pond Recreational Area, and Deering Estate Wildlife Management Area to Millbury Center is currently owned by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, formerly known as the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT). In 2002, the Town of Millbury commenced negotiations with the EOT to transfer ownership of the abandoned right-of-way (ROW) so that it can be used as a multi-purpose trail; however, negotiations have been unsuccessful to date.

Roadway Bicycle Routes

Millbury's roadways currently have no designated bicycle routes or lanes. This kind of infrastructure is particularly common around commercial centers, office parks, and public institutions such as schools and community centers. MassDOT guidelines encourage the provision of bicycle accommodation in the form of wide shoulders or dedicated bicycle lanes on state-funded roadway projects, where feasible. There is consideration of creating some on-street bicycle lanes as part of the Blackstone Bikeway Project. The Town should consider other routes where the installation of a bike lane makes sense, particularly in Millbury Center.

Bridges

Structurally deficient bridges in Millbury include:

- Brightside Street - Dorothy Brook Culvert
- Broadmeadow Ave. - Broad Meadow Brook Culvert
- Wheelock Avenue over Dorothy Pond Outlet
- South Main Street - Blackstone River Concrete Bridge

Freight Railroads

The Providence and Worcester Railroad, owned and operated by Genesee & Wyoming, passes through Millbury. The rail line intersects with Town streets at three at-grade crossings. The three at-grade rail crossings are located on South Main Street, Curve Street, and Rice Road.

ROAD MAINTENANCE POLICIES

During every budget development cycle, the Department of Public Works submits its funding requests for roadway projects as part of its Road Paving Program, Chapter 90 Supplement for Roads, and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects. The Town has identified many miles of roadways with pavement conditions of fair, poor, or failed. It would be beneficial to the Town to create a five-year capital plan to prioritize transportation infrastructure upgrades addressing roadway, bridge, drainage and ADA needs to support allocation of additional funding for infrastructure improvements. Once created, the capital plan should be evaluated and revised yearly, as projects occur.

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a federally-required planning document that lists all highway, bridge, transit, and intermodal projects in the Central Massachusetts planning region that are programmed to receive federal-aid funding. The STIP is a multi-year, intermodal program of transportation projects consistent with a metropolitan transportation plan. The CMRPC, through the CMMPO, oversees the management of the STIP in this region, and works closely with MassDOT and local officials on funding and implementation of projects under the STIP.

The McCracken Road project is presently on the STIP for FY 2020. It is a \$10.4 million project, with the Town responsible for the design and right of way. The project includes roadway straightening and upgrades to accommodate increased traffic to and from the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley, providing a safer route for all to use, and increasing the economic development potential along this route. The design is approximately 75% complete and construction is scheduled for 2020.

Complete Streets Policy

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, “Complete Streets” are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users, across all modes of transportation, regardless of age and ability. Complete Streets policies are set at the state, regional and local levels, and vary based on the community.

The MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program provides technical assistance and construction funding to eligible municipalities. It was created through the 2014 Transportation Bond Bill. Municipalities choosing to participate can receive funding for technical assistance to analyze their community needs and develop a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan in addition to funding for the construction of Complete Streets infrastructure projects. For municipalities that meet eligibility requirements, funding is available as follows: 1. Technical Assistance – up to \$50,000 for analysis in support of a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan; and 2. Construction Funding – up to \$400,000 per year.

Millbury is well positioned to receive Complete Streets funding because approximately 10% of the population in town is within an Environmental Justice area, a major consideration for scoring. In addition, the median household income for Millbury in 2016 was \$74,420, below the State average

of \$75,297, another factor in scoring. These considerations will increase the town's chances of receiving construction funding, once eligible. In June 2018, the Millbury Board of Selectmen adopted a Complete Streets Policy. This policy "aims to accommodate the full range of users of the town's roadways, walkways, trails, and transit systems by creating a transportation network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes." For Millbury to take advantage of the Complete Streets Funding Program, it needs to have an approved Completed Streets Prioritization Plan (CSPP). The CSPP was approved by MassDOT on March 4, 2019. The CSPP is referenced in Appendix D.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings identified below incorporate analysis from the evaluation of the existing conditions and present transportation network as well as feedback received through the master planning public outreach and engagement process.

- Millbury has a strong regional transportation network that handles a significant amount of daily travel.
- Most residents rely on personal vehicles as their main mode of travel.
- Except for Millbury Center, sidewalks are in poor condition or do not exist, making it hard for pedestrian accommodations and accessibility.
- The Town recently adopted a Complete Streets policy, and is in the process of developing a Complete Street Prioritization Plan that will create a pathway of funding for transportation projects within town.
- Requests for maintaining/improving/upgrading the Town's roadways occur in the development of the annual budget.
- Millbury has many local trail systems providing opportunities for walkers, hikers, and cyclists.

CHALLENGES/ISSUES

- Resiliency readiness of transportation infrastructure – As climate change causes more extreme weather events to occur, Millbury is prone to roadway flooding and concurrent damage to pavement, sidewalks, bridges, railroads and other structures disrupting traffic, emergency responses, and utility services. While Millbury participated in a regional municipal vulnerability preparedness (MVP) planning effort, it would be beneficial for the Town to now focus on the implementation of the recommendations within the report (e.g. upgraded stormwater drainage systems) to maintain and improve the resiliency of its infrastructure network.
- Complete Streets – Since Millbury has adopted a Complete Streets policy, implementation will need to be a priority for Town officials to achieve real progress on this goal. MassDOT has approved the Town's Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. The information compiled through that effort included an updated rating of existing sidewalks and gap analysis.

- Lack of Funding/Capital Improvement Plan – It would benefit the Town to have a full inventory of its roadway network as well as a mid- to long-term plan in place to address improving and upgrading streets, sidewalks, bike paths/lanes, and alternative modes of transportation. Much of this can be realized through the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan process.
- Sidewalks/ Lack of Sidewalks – The Town should evaluate whether sidewalks are a necessity, and how a Complete Streets approach may help improve mobility for pedestrians. A weakness in the sidewalk network within town is lack of ADA accessibility.
- ADA Compliance – Opportunities exist to address issues with ADA compliance and the general condition of sidewalks and wheelchair ramps in Millbury, especially throughout Millbury Center. Community feedback received through the master plan public outreach process indicates that there is strong public interest in addressing these issues. Although a recent study by the CMRPC found that sidewalks in downtown Millbury are in generally good condition, the findings show that most of the wheelchair ramps in the downtown area are classified as “historic” or “non-compliant,” or there are no ramps present at all. Only a small number of wheelchair ramps were found to be ADA compliant. Site visits confirmed many of the issues identified by the CMRPC study, and identified additional ADA issues such as ponding at the bottom of existing curb ramps and locations where minimum ADA clearance is not available around obstructions in the sidewalk.
- Public Transportation – Most residents do not use public transportation as a main mode of travel. To increase utilization, the Town should work with the WRTA to promote ridership, particularly among the most vulnerable populations.

GOALS/RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES

The overall goal for transportation in Millbury is to improve all modes of transportation so that it is safe and easy for residents of all ages to get around. To that end, many residents’ input was focused on the Town improving road maintenance, increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety, and providing viable alternatives modes of transportation. The following actions are recommended:

- Extend and repair sidewalks in key locations.
 - Complete an inventory and create a mid- to long-term plan to address this concern. Pursue additional funding opportunities.
- Create a more aesthetically pleasing public realm, particularly within the downtown.
 - Implement traffic calming measures (e.g. bump outs, flashing crosswalk signage) to enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility.
 - Pursue the vision set forth in the 2016 Downtown Revitalization Low-Impact Development Initiative. Make the Four Corners intersection a priority.
 - Improve sidewalks, ramps and crosswalks to be ADA compliant.

- Pursue grant funding to assist in an updated inventory and making corrective measures.
- Implement a five-year capital improvement plan, revisiting the plan annually during the budget development process.
- Prioritize and implement the Town's Complete Streets policy.
 - Pursue additional funding opportunities.
- Upgrade bicycle infrastructure and network throughout town.
 - Advocate for the extension of the Blackstone River Bikeway through Millbury and the surrounding towns.
 - Pursue opportunities for increased access to rail trails, bike lanes and enhanced on-road accommodations throughout Town.

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11

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

LAND USE

ID	Objective / Strategy	Supporting Parties	Timeframe
GOAL: To retain the Town's character while accommodating future growth.			
LU-1	<i>Capitalize on vacant, undeveloped land adjacent to Routes 20, 122A and 146, particularly to enhance its commercial and industrial development base.</i> A. Millbury-Sutton Industrial Park – Route 122A Priority Development Area - Vacant land available for the development of light industrial, manufacturing, and commercial use. Utilities will have to be installed. - Work with property owners and the Town of Sutton on a development strategy and set of incentives for development. B. Land Owned by Utilities/Railroads - Evaluate and inventory land presently under the jurisdiction of utilities or railroads. - Work with utilities/railroads to identify surplus land that could be sold for development. - Implement land use controls to guide said development. C. State Owned Rights of Way along Transportation Corridors - Coordinate with the State to identify surplus land for development. - Work with the State on a strategy for surplus land disposition for development of said parcels. D. Zoning for Business - Re-zone key commercial corridors for Business where residential uses are either in an industrial district or directly adjacent to an industrial zone. E. Southwest Cutoff/Rt. 20 - Promote heavy industrial/manufacturing development at available land near Wheelabrator. F. Route 146	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - DPW Department - Planning Board - Aquarion Water Co. - Town of Sutton - MassDOT/DCAMM - G&W (P&W) Railroad - National Grid - Property Owners - Developers - Real Estate Brokers - Business Owners - Residents - Interns	LU-1(A): Ongoing LU-1(B): Years 8-10 LU-1(C): Years 8-10 LU-1(D): Years 1-4 LU-1(E): Ongoing

	1. Identify areas where infrastructure is lacking capacity or does not exist, particularly sewer. 2. Complete a cost analysis and create an implementation plan.		
LU-2	<i>Evaluate zoning bylaws and adopt provisions to fully achieve the goals and vision of this master plan.</i> A. Update Regulatory Framework 1. Recodification of Zoning Bylaws a) Update zoning districts to clarify/streamline land use and permitting process. b) Use business zone as a buffer between commercial/industrial and residential uses. c) Make dimensional changes; incorporate dimensional and use tables into bylaws for better clarity and less confusion. d) Upon zoning re-write, evaluate whether overlay districts are needed. Make necessary changes/revisions/deletions. e) Update zoning district and overlay maps. f) Evaluate the Zoning Map to determine where rezoning of districts makes sense to eliminate split-zoned parcels. g) Eliminate minimum lot area requirements dependent on the provision of public water and/or sewer. B. Adopt a Land Use Strategy for Future Growth 1. Adopt the Community Preservation Act. a) Appoint a Community Preservation Advisory Committee to study the CPA, create bylaws, draft a ballot question at a regularly scheduled election, and devise and conduct a public education and promotion campaign. 2. Update the Open Space and Recreation Plan. a) Provide for additional protections to preserve open space/natural resources before they are lost to development. 3. Focus commercial/industrial development in key transportation and business corridors only. 4. Identify targeted areas for new residential development, particularly to meet the needs of the town's changing population – type, age, affordability, location, etc.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - Planning Board - Zoning Board of Appeals - Conservation Commission - Residents	LU-2(A): Years 1-4 LU-2(B): Years 1-4

HOUSING

ID	Objective / Strategy	Supporting Parties	Timeframe
GOAL: To provide a range of housing options to accommodate people at different stages in the lifecycle and with a range of incomes.			
H-1	<i>Encourage accessory dwelling units as an opportunity to create affordably priced housing in established neighborhoods.</i> A. Regulatory Changes 1. Consider allowing interior accessory dwellings as of right in all Residential and Suburban Districts, subject to conformance with basic conditions such as those listed under Sec. 46.2. 2. Increase the maximum floor area for an accessory dwelling. 3. Regulate exterior accessory dwellings, i.e., in detached accessory buildings, by special permit.	- Town Manager - Planning Department - Board of Selectmen - Residents	H-1(A): Years 1-4
H-2	<i>Ensure that Millbury remains affordable to many types of households as it grows and attracts higher-income families who find the town a desirable place to live.</i> A. Encourage Creation of Affordable Housing 1. Adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to provide dedicated revenue for subsidized affordable housing. 2. Create a Housing Production Plan. 3. Adopt an effective inclusionary zoning bylaw that provides built-in “bonus unit” incentives for affordability. 4. Require projects over a certain size to provide affordable units on site in the proposed development while allowing small projects the option to pay a fee in lieu to the Millbury Affordable Housing Trust Fund. (See H-4 below.) 5. Use Trust Fund and other resources to acquire land for small-scale affordable housing and existing buildings that can be redeveloped for mixed-income housing. 6. Use the Request for Proposals (RFP) process under Chapter 30B to find competent developers to create affordable housing with municipally owned property. 7. Work with developers of assisted living residences to create some affordable units even if the units cannot qualify for the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory.	- Town Manager - Planning Department - Planning Board - Board of Selectmen - Residential Developers - Residents	H-2(A): Ongoing

	8. Work with developers of commercial property to create mixed-use developments that include both market-rate and affordable units.		
H-3	<i>Increase local capacity to create and preserve affordable housing so that people who work in Millbury can choose to live in Millbury as well.</i> A. Millbury Affordable Housing Trust 1. Recruit qualified, interested residents to serve on the Millbury Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT). 2. Provide CPA funds or other resources to the MAHT to obtain training and technical assistance and to develop a housing trust strategic plan. 3. Work with surrounding towns to create and fund a regional housing coordinator comparable to the Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) serving Acton, Concord, Sudbury, and neighboring communities. This will require an inter-local agreement with participating towns. 4. Seek training resources for the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, ZBA, and others to negotiate with developers to create affordable units in new developments even without an inclusionary zoning bylaw. 5. Conduct an affordable housing needs assessment through a partnership of the MAHT and Council on Aging. 6. Consider allowing nonresidents to serve on the MAHT in order to recruit people with specialized knowledge or breadth of experience with affordable housing development.	- Town Manager - Planning Department - Board of Selectmen - Planning Board - Zoning Board of Appeals - Neighboring Towns - Residential Developers - Residents	H-3(A): Ongoing

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ID	Objective / Strategy	Supporting Parties	Timeframe
GOAL: Promote economic development to increase the tax base and provide additional job opportunities.			
ED-1	<i>Foster small business development in the center of Town.</i> A. Promote Small Businesses 1. Actively support a “Buy Local” campaign. a) Create a series of downtown events to generate foot traffic in the area. 2. Promote and publicize the contributions local businesses make to the community. 3. Work to create relationships with property owners.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - Business Community - Business Owners - Property Owners - Real Estate Professionals	ED-1(A): Years 1-7

	a) Inventory available downtown ground floor space and identify preferred uses for these spaces to help market them. 4. Create a small business financial assistance program to fund façade loans, equipment loans, assist with start-up costs, etc. 5. Create a downtown merchants' association in the short-term to advance efforts in the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown Millbury over the long-term.	- Residents - Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce - Interns	
ED-2	<i>Focus on large-scale development along main transportation corridors.</i> A. Attract New Business 1. Inventory larger parcels of land available for development. Keep inventory updated. 2. Create an infrastructure plan to upgrade infrastructure system and support future development in these corridors, i.e. Route 146 sewer installation. B. Support Business Growth and Development 1. Create financial incentive programs to attract commercial and industrial development. Examples include funding for environmental site assessments/cleanup, equipment loans, tax increment financing packages, and EDIP incentives. 2. Take steps to “streamline” and simplify the development review and permitting process for nonresidential development. 3. Survey existing property owners and business owners in commercial/industrial zones to determine what needs are not being met. 4. Review land use policies and regulations to reduce or prevent conflicts between business development and residential neighborhoods.	- Planning Department - DPW Department - Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Property Owners - Developers - Business Owners - Residents - Interns	ED-2(A): Years 1-4 ED-2(B): Ongoing
ED-3	<i>Increase staffing capacity to focus on economic development growth.</i> A. Economic Development 1. Add an Economic Development Coordinator position to the Planning Department. a) Focus on downtown development, small business marketing and support, grant writing, incentive programs, inventories, etc. B. Grant Writing/Marketing 1. Add a Marketing/Grant Writer to assist town in efforts to market the Town and pursue funding opportunities for priority initiatives.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Residents	ED-3(A): Years 1-4 ED-3(B): Years 1-4

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

ID	Objective / Strategy	Supporting Parties	Timeframe
GOAL: To preserve, protect, and reutilize the many cultural and historic resources and village centers, and to ensure that new development is consistent with the town's historic character.			
HR-1	<i>Integrate the preservation of Millbury's historic character into economic development, housing, and open space policy/regulatory framework.</i> A. Local Historical Commission 1. Re-activate Local Historical Commission a) Educate the public about the importance of preserving historical and cultural resources. b) Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw. c) Implement Local Historic District process/designation. d) Seek grant sources for the preservation of local historical and cultural resources; including passage of the Community Preservation Act. 2. Recommend and implement various regulatory/policy changes. a) Demolition delay bylaw to provide time for the town to react before significant resources are destroyed. b) Local historic district designation regulations to preserve historic landscapes. c) Expansion of the existing Adaptive Reuse Overlay District to additional areas in town, as appropriate. d) Design guidelines, particularly within historic areas, to ensure that new development is consistent with the Town's character. e) Local tax credit program for rehabilitation of historic properties. 3. Update and computerize the 1989 comprehensive inventory of architectural and archaeological resources in Millbury to establish preservation priorities and identify potential future uses. a) Use the inventory to identify cultural resources which may be at risk due of damage or destruction due to increased duration or severity of storms associated with climate change, e.g., resources within the 100-year flood zone or agricultural areas prone to erosion. b) Apply for preservation grants/awards.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - Planning Board - Historical Commission - Massachusetts Historical Commission - Interns	HR-1(A): Years 1-7

HR-2	<i>Work with community groups to educate the public as to the importance of the Town's existing historic and cultural resources.</i> A. Compile Information and Improve Outreach & Education Efforts 1. Establish protocols to actively share information about the importance of protecting cultural resources and heritage landscapes with the public. 2. Incorporate the use of social media, pop-up events, and school outreach. 3. Take steps to make resources pertaining to architectural preservation available to homeowners. This may include adding to the Town's website, distributing lists to local realtors, and general community outreach. 4. Foster a sense of stewardship and recognition for historic resources and landscapes among residents and businesses through development of a Historic Market Program. 5. Install additional interpretive signs that increase awareness of the people, events and sites that shaped Millbury's historic development, particularly its role in the American Industrial Revolution. 6. Map and publicize the location of key historic sites, including interpretive signage.	- Town Manager - Historical Commission - Millbury Historical Society - Massachusetts Historical Commission - Asa Waters Mansion - Blackstone Corridor, Inc. - Blackstone Chamber of Commerce - Residents - Interns	HR-2(A): Ongoing
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NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

ID	Objective / Strategy	Supporting Parties	Timeframe
GOAL: To preserve, maintain and enhance the town's natural resources, including its parks, conservation areas, waterways, wetlands, and other open spaces.			
NR-1	<i>Maintain and protect the town's natural resources through improved regulatory controls and infrastructure upgrades.</i> A. Enhanced Regulatory Controls 1. Evaluate, amend, and enforce Zoning Bylaws relative to environmental regulatory controls. a) Wetlands Bylaw b) Low-Impact Development c) Energy/Sustainable Development B. Infrastructure Upgrades 1. Create an implementation plan for catch basin and other stormwater upgrades.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - DPW Department - Planning Board - Conservation Commission - Residents	NR-1(A): Ongoing NR-1(B): Years 1-4

	- Expand efforts to incorporate low impact development principles and green infrastructure into the town's capital infrastructure plan. - Continue to implement Millbury's Energy Reduction Plan and encourage the placement of alternative energy facilities within town.		
NR-2	<i>Protect the integrity of the Town's ecosystem and natural landscapes as development continues in Millbury.</i> A. Identify, Inventory, and Update - Update the comprehensive baseline inventory of all existing natural resources. - Identify lands critical to ecological function. - Identify stream/habitat continuity upgrades. - Identify the most important contributing parcels and make them preservation priorities. - Identify possible locations for a town beach. B. Pursue Funding Opportunities - Complete outreach and education to pursue adoption of Community Preservation Act. - Apply for additional MVP/resiliency funding. - Apply for additional Green Communities funding. - Partner with watershed associations and other environmental groups to seek grants for resource protection.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - Planning Board - Conservation Commission - Blackstone Corridor Inc. - Blackstone Chamber of Commerce - Other Conservation Groups - Local Land Trust - Residents - Youth Groups - MA EEA/DCR - Interns	NR-2(A): Years 5-7 NR-2(B): Ongoing
NR-3 OS-1	<i>Improve access to and increase awareness of the town's natural resources, open spaces and recreation opportunities.</i> A. Education and Outreach - Strengthen existing partnerships with conservation organizations/groups to conduct environmental education programming to inform residents, businesses and visitors about Millbury's natural resources. - Engage watershed groups and volunteers to continue and expand community clean ups, resource inventories, vernal pool certifications. - Create informational flyers about the town's natural resources for public distribution, post to the town's website, use social media to promote. B. Increase Staffing Capacity - Create a Conservation Planner/Agent position in the Planning Department.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - Planning Board - Conservation Commission - Blackstone Corridor Inc. - Blackstone Chamber of Commerce - Other Conservation Groups - Local Land Trust - Residents	NR-3/OS-1(A): Years 8-10 NR-3/OS-1(B): Years 8-10

	a) Staff the Conservation Commission and enforce the Wetlands Protection Act and Orders of Condition. b) Oversee and manage town-owned conservation land, conservation restrictions, easements and open space set asides deeded to the commission c) Act as a liaison between town and the public, State agencies, conservation groups, land trusts and related entities. d) Update and maintain inventories of natural resources, including the Open Space and Recreation Plan. e) Implement vulnerability planning and sustainability efforts. f) Update GIS maps and other resources. g) Pursue grant opportunities, and implement other strategic initiatives.	- Youth Groups - MA EEA/DCR - Interns	
OS-2	<i>Focus on the preservation of agricultural landscapes.</i> A. Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program 1. Promote protection of additional agricultural land within town prior to threat of development. 2. Exercise town's right of first refusal when farmland is released from the Chapter 61 program. 3. Provide outreach to the non-APR farms about the APR program. 4. Establish partnerships with regional land trusts to secure conservation restrictions to protect farmlands from future development.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - Conservation Commission - Agricultural Property Owners - Other Conservation Groups - Local Land Trust - MA EEA/DCR	OS-2(A): Years 5-7
OS-3	<i>Improve physical access to the town's natural resources.</i> A. Increase Visibility/Accessibility 1. Install wayfinding signs at entryways and within open space resources. 2. Install informational kiosks/bulletin display boards to provide an opportunity to share information with the public about upcoming activities, open space rules and regulations, and opportunities to volunteer. 3. GPS the local trail system and create maps to publish on the town website. B. Identify and Pursue Funding Opportunities	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - Planning Board - Conservation Commission - Blackstone Corridor Inc. - Other Conservation Groups - Local Land Trust - Residents	OS-3(A): Years 1-4 OS-3(B): Ongoing

	1. Adopt the Community Preservation Act to assist with preservation of open space. Use CPA funds for acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space, including capital expenditures. 2. Seek recreational trail funding for trail improvements. 3. Consider corporate partnerships/advertising at athletic fields and playgrounds for monetary assistance.	- Youth Groups - MA EEA/DCR - Interns	
OS-4	<i>Maintain and protect the town's open space and recreation facilities through improved regulatory controls and infrastructure upgrades.</i> A. Improve Regulatory Controls 1. Adopt additional considerations relative to the Open Space Community Bylaw. a) Implement in-lieu fee program rather than an open space set aside to allow developers to set aside funds earmarked for specific open space improvement and maintenance. b) Allow common driveways as a means of protecting open space and preserving the town's character. c) Require all new subdivision set asides to be managed by a homeowners' association, unless specifically requested otherwise by the town. B. Upgraded Infrastructure and Amenities 1. Complete a capital plan for existing parks and recreational facilities. a) Make maintenance and diversification of open space resources a priority. b) Proactively manage forests owned by the Conservation Commission for both timber and invasive species. c) Maintain and replace amenities such as benches, playground and recreational equipment, concessions, bathrooms, etc. at recreational facilities. d) Install amenities such as shade shelters and potable water features, including ADA accessible features. e) Complete stormwater and accessibility improvements in parking lots. f) Maintain trails and upgrade water crossing features (if any). g) Maintain and enhance multi-purpose/multi-use fields.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - Planning Board - Conservation Commission - DPW Department - Residents	OS-4(A): Years 1-4 OS-4(B): Ongoing

	h) Add walking paths around larger recreational facilities. i) Redesign open spaces to include multi-use/multi-generational recreational facilities (for eg. playground, field, court or walking path/fitness clustered in one facility). j) Allow common driveways and/or retreat lots.		
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COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

ID	Objective / Strategy	Supporting Parties	Timeframe
GOAL: To preserve, maintain and/or enhance municipal facilities and services so that they meet the needs of all residents.			
CF-1	<i>Prepare for an increase in the town's population aged 65+ and the services that will be expected.</i> A. Anticipate Needs of Aging Population 1. Expand transportation services for seniors in town. 2. Identify housing needs and options for seniors, including town-owned and developed senior housing and assisted living facilities. 3. Use the Senior Center as a tool for data gathering. a) Continue to survey users of the Senior Center to gather input on programming and services. b) Solicit ideas for new programming or services in the future. 4. Foster strong intergenerational awareness and relationships. a) Form a committee with a purpose to create opportunities for residents to participate in intergenerational events/activities. b) Work with recreation groups to create an intergenerational recreation opportunity for all residents to enjoy (e.g. Coes Park in Worcester).	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Council on Aging - Senior Center - Millbury Public Library - Millbury Public Schools - Residents - Interns	CF-1(A): Ongoing
CF-2	<i>Focus on the evolving role of the Public Library to actively encourage its use by patrons of all ages.</i> A. Increase Facility Usage 1. Offer educational workshops, trainings, and opportunities for life-long learning to attract new users. 2. Actively market the services the Library provides. 3. Solicit input from users and residents to create new programming and offer additional technology/books/media.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Millbury Public Library - Millbury Public Schools - Residents - Interns	CF-2(A): Ongoing

	4. Coordinate with the School Department to schedule events at the Library when demand cannot support the use of a school's library or cafeteria. 5. Work with community groups to foster awareness of all the services the Library offers.		
CF-3	<i>Support the School Department's efforts to provide high quality educational spaces and active learning opportunities.</i> A. School Facility Conditions and Space Needs 1. Work with MSBA to expedite the process to construct a significant renovation or new facility to replace the existing Raymond E. Shaw Elementary School. 2. Implement a plan to manage increasing demands on existing space at the schools. Demands include new programming (STEAM etc.) and smaller class sizes. 3. Restructure grade configurations throughout the district. B. Prioritize Actions to Increase Funding 1. Add capacity to the tuition-based Preschool (Pre-K) program as the demand exceeds the capacity presently available. 2. Offer School Choice at the high school level. 3. Promote and enhance the fee-based before and after-school care programs to increase usage.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Millbury Public Schools - School Committee - Superintendent's Office - Residents	CF-3(A): Years 1-4 CF-3(B): Years 1-4; Ongoing
CF-4	<i>Increase town staffing, funding, and collaboration/shared resources to achieve the goals of this master plan.</i> A. Staffing/Funding/Shared Resources 1. Add positions to increase staff capacity and expertise in order to achieve the goals and priorities identified in this master plan. 2. Pursue alternative sources of funding to support the hiring of this additional staff. 3. Work with surrounding towns to evaluate opportunities to share staff and services. 4. Continue to lobby and work with the Commonwealth on cost-sharing arrangements leading to infrastructure investment, e.g. MSBA for schools, MassDOT for roads, and Green Communities and public safety funding.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - State Agencies - Neighboring Towns - CMRPC - Residents - Interns	CF-4(A): Years 1-4; Ongoing

	5. Inventory and evaluate town-owned surplus land to create a disposition strategy. Selling these parcels will generate additional taxes that can be allocated for town use. 6. Pursue geospatial software that can be shared across departments, expand electronic capability, make data analysis easier, automate tasks, create efficiencies, and be shared with the general public.		
CF-5	<i>Invest in new public safety facilities and take advantage of additional municipal space resulting from Police/Fire Department relocations.</i> A. Public Safety Needs 1. Determine the best site for a new Fire Department Headquarters and begin lobbying for additional funding to construct a new station. a) Evaluate if the town can utilize the existing headquarters upon relocation by the Fire Department and identify a disposition strategy, as needed. 2. Determine the best site for a new Police Department and begin lobbying for additional funding to construct a new facility. a) Evaluate best re-use of the town municipal space from the vacated Police Department.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Police Department - Fire Department - Public Safety Committee - Residents	CF-5(A): Years 5-7
CF-6	<i>Create a realistic action plan for infrastructure improvements and reduction of costs for municipal services.</i> A. Public Works 1. Inventory conditions of roadways, sidewalks, bridges, drainage, sewer system and equipment. 2. Implement a five- to ten-year capital plan. Evaluate annually and adjust as required. 3. Study the future needs of the cemetery, transfer station and recycling center and work to make services more efficient. Consider possibility of regional collaboration.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Public Works Department - Public Works Committee - Residents	CF-6(A): Years 1-4; Ongoing
CF-7	<i>Maximize the use and revenue generation of the Asa Waters Mansion as a cultural and historic resource of the town.</i> A. Make Strategic Facility Improvements 1. Implement facility improvements to create a higher rate of return on investment. (Proposed improvements could include commercial kitchen, carriage house, children's garden, etc.)	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Asa Waters Mansion - Millbury Historical Society - Residents	CF-7(A): Ongoing CF-7(B): Ongoing

	2. Pursue grant opportunities/collaborations with partners to implement facility improvements that are needed but do not generate a high return on investment. Such improvements include ADA, HVAC, lighting, minor repairs, etc. B. Maximize Revenue Generation 1. Work with regional agencies to promote the facility as a cultural, historic and entertainment facility. 2. Conduct outreach to businesses in the region about holding workshops and special events at the facility. 3. Increase visibility on social media relative to what the facility can offer.	- Interns	
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TRANSPORTATION

ID	Objective / Strategy	Supporting Parties	Timeframe
GOAL: To improve all modes of transportation so that it is safe and easy for residents of all ages to get around.			
TR-1	<i>Make improving/maintaining roadways, increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety, and providing alternative modes of transportation a priority.</i> A. Infrastructure Improvements 1. See CF-6 recommendations/strategies relative to inventory and capital plan. Implement. 2. Prioritize and Implement a Complete Streets Policy. a) Implement Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. b) Apply Complete Streets approach for all future public works projects. c) Pursue additional funding opportunities. 3. Update the 2006 Town of Millbury Accessibility Plan and make needed improvements. a) Commit to a phased plan to address inadequacies. B. Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety 1. Improve sidewalks, ramps and crosswalks to be ADA compliant. a) Extend and repair sidewalks in key locations. b) Work with CMRPC to maintain inventory and condition of sidewalks in town. 2. Create a more aesthetically pleasing public realm.	- Town Manager - Board of Selectmen - Planning Department - DPW Department - Public Works Committee - Planning Department - MassDOT - Businesses - Property Owners - Residents - Interns	TR-1(A): Years 1-4; Ongoing TR-1(B): Ongoing

	a) Implement traffic calming measures (e.g. bump outs, flashing crosswalk signage) to enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility. b) Use green infrastructure to enhance the pedestrian environment. Pursue the vision set forth in the 2016 Downtown Revitalization Low-Impact Development Initiative. Make the Four Corners intersection a priority. c) Continue Adopt-a-Pot and Adopt-a-Banner programs, among other beautification efforts. 3. Upgrade bicycle infrastructure and network throughout town. a) Advocate for the completion of the Blackstone River Bikeway through Millbury and the surrounding towns. b) Pursue opportunities for increased access to rail trails and bike lanes throughout town.		
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APPENDIX

A. Open Space Inventory

B. Master Plan Maps

1. Parcel Map
2. Land Use Map
3. Land Use Map (Downtown)
4. Zoning Map
5. Zoning Overlay Map
6. Historic and Cultural Resources Map
7. Millbury Open Space & Recreation Map
8. Millbury Natural Resources Map
9. FEMA Floodplain Map
10. Environmental Justice Map

C. Master Plan Public Engagement

1. Public Participation Survey - 2018 (Bridgewater State University)
2. Public Participation Survey Report -2018
3. Public Forum #1 – Summary Sheet Package of Results (June 5, 2018)
4. Public Forum #2 – Summary Sheet Package of Results (October 4, 2018)
5. Information Sheets prepared by Consultant Team for Forum #1

D. Millbury Reports

1. “Town of Millbury Master Plan” prepared by Planners Collaborative (1998)
2. “Millbury Master Plan: Phase I: Vision & Goals” prepared by Community Circle with Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC (2016)
3. “Millbury Reconnaissance Report” by Elizabeth Vizza Consulting, Oakfield Research and Hyla Ecological Services, Inc. (2007)
4. “Town of Millbury Open Space and Recreation Plan Update” prepared by the Open Space Committee (2008)
5. “BioMap 2 Conserving the Biodiversity of Massachusetts in a Changing World, Millbury Report” prepared by MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (2012)
6. “Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program – Grafton, Millbury, and Northbridge MA – Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings” prepared by CMRPC (2018)
7. “Town of Millbury Energy Baseline & Energy Reduction Plan” prepared by the Energy Advisory Committee (2011)

8. “Millbury Downtown Improvement Through Low-Impact Development & Green Infrastructure” prepared by Mass Audubon (2016)
9. “Blackstone River Bikeway (Segments 3, 4 & 5)” prepared by Fuss & O’Neill for Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (2017)
10. “Retail Market Analysis for the Town of Millbury, MA” prepared by Todreas Hanley Associates, Inc. (1999)
11. “Millbury Center (Armory Village), A Comprehensive Village Plan and Action Program” prepared by Larry Koff & Associates & Pierce Lamb Architects (2000)
12. “The Millbury/Sutton Industrial Park Site Development Feasibility Study” prepared by Terrasphere and BSC Group (2002)
13. “Town of Millbury Accessibility Plan” prepared by James M. Mazik (2006)
14. “Inventory of Historic Properties” prepared by Millbury Historical Commission (1998)
15. “Town of Millbury Housing Plan” prepared by the Millbury Housing Task Force (2006)
16. “Town of Millbury Complete Street Policy” prepared by the Millbury Complete Street Committee (2018)
17. “Town of Millbury Complete Street Prioritization Plan” prepared by the Millbury Complete Street Committee (2019)

E. Land Use, Zoning, Development

1. Land Use Chart and Table
2. Zoning By-Laws
3. Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land in Millbury
4. Millbury Stretch Energy Code

F. Other

1. Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) Database – Inventory of Cultural Resources in Millbury
2. Historic and Cultural Resources – Information on Grant Programs
3. Potential Funding Opportunities for Preservation and Rehabilitation
4. Funding Programs and Cycles
5. Millbury Green Communities Project Funding
6. MassDOT Road Inventory Comparison
7. WRTA Bus Routes for Millbury