

# Town of Pepperell Housing Production Plan

for 2021 – 2025 (Draft)



September 2020

Prepared for the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee  
By Northern Middlesex Council of Governments





# Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

September 30, 2020

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Jennifer Maddox, Undersecretary  
Department of Housing and Community Development  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 400  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Pepperell Housing Production Plan (HPP)

Dear Undersecretary Maddox,

The Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) worked closely with the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) and Pepperell town staff to develop the enclosed *Town of Pepperell Housing Production Plan for 2021-2025 (HPP)*. The HPP summarizes the current housing market in the community and outlines a Five-Year Plan to increase the number of affordable housing units in order to move the town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) closer to 10% even after the release of the 2020 U.S. Census.

The AHC recommended the adoption of the draft HPP at its August 18, 2020 meeting. The Pepperell Planning Board adopted the draft HPP unanimously at its meeting on September 21, 2020, while the Pepperell Select Board adopted the document unanimously at its meeting on September 28, 2020. Copies of the adoption letters have been included with this submission. The adoption of the draft HPP reflects the Town's willingness to work in partnership with your office to increase the availability of affordable housing in Pepperell.

The HPP addresses the requirements outlined under Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws, as well as the 2008 program regulations developed by your office. This document is consistent with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles and establishes goals and strategies that reflect Pepperell's specific community characteristics consistent with the town's updated 2020 Master Plan. Once approved by DHCD, the HPP will serve as a guide for the Town's affordable housing program for the next five years.

The Town of Pepperell currently has five (5) affordable housing units in its "pipeline". The AHC and town staff also identified twenty-five (25) privately-owned and

eight (8) publicly-owned potential development sites that could generate 180-235 additional housing units. These efforts reflect how seriously the Town of Pepperell is taking its responsibilities in supporting the development of affordable housing for the community.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, do not hesitate to contact Jay Donovan, Assistant Director, directly at (978) 454-8021 ext. 116 or at [jdonovan@nmcog.org](mailto:jdonovan@nmcog.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly Woods".

Beverly Woods  
Executive Director

cc: Andrew MacLean, Town Administrator  
Pepperell Select Board  
Pepperell Planning Board  
Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee  
NMCOG Councilors  
Lisa Davis, Planning Consultant  
Philip DeMartino, DHCD



## Town of Pepperell Select Board

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Andrew MacLean, Town Administrator  
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September 29, 2020

Jennifer Maddox, Undersecretary  
Department of Housing & Community Development  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 400  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Undersecretary Maddox,

The Pepperell Select Board formally adopted the *"Pepperell Housing Production Plan for 2021-2025"* by a vote of 3-0 at its meeting on September 28, 2020. The Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee and Pepperell staff worked with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) to complete this document.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this process and look forward to implementing the plan over the next five years. The development of this document would not have been possible without the availability of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds from your office.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact Andrew MacLean, Town Administrator, at (978) 650-1621.

Sincerely,

William Greathead  
Chair

Margaret Scarsdale  
Clerk

Tony Beattie  
Member

cc: Andrew MacLean, Town Administrator  
Pepperell Planning Board  
Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee  
Beverly Woods, NMCOG  
Phil DeMartino, DHCD



# Town of Pepperell Planning Board

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September 22, 2020

Jennifer Maddox, Undersecretary  
Department of Housing & Community Development  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 400  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Undersecretary Maddox,

The Pepperell Planning Board formally adopted the "*Pepperell Housing Production Plan for 2021-2025*" by a unanimous vote of 5-0 at its meeting on September 21, 2020. The Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee and Pepperell staff worked with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) to complete this document.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this process and look forward to implementing the HPP over the next five years. The development of this document would not have been possible without the availability of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds from your office.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact Lisa Davis, Planning Board Advisor, at (978) 433-0336.

Sincerely,

L. Casey Campetti  
Chair, Pepperell Planning Board

cc: Andrew MacLean, Town Administrator  
Pepperell Select Board  
Beverly Woods, NMCOG  
Phil DeMartino, DHCD

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## Executive Summary

The Town of Pepperell requested the assistance of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) in developing a Housing Production Plan (HPP) that met the Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit requirements for affordable housing production in Massachusetts. Through funding provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) under the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program, NMCOG staff worked closely with the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee over the past year to complete this document. Building upon the previous work related to the *Pepperell Affordable Housing Production Plan for 2014-2018*, NMCOG staff made presentations to the Pepperell Planning Board and Pepperell Select Board on the importance of this document to housing production in Pepperell. The *Pepperell Housing Production Plan for 2021-2025* outlines a housing production schedule that addresses the community's local housing needs, while also meeting the state's requirements, as outlined under Chapter 40B, to produce more affordable housing for Pepperell residents.

The *Pepperell Housing Production Plan for 2021-2025* utilizes population and household projections prepared by the UMass Donahue Institute for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). The Donahue Institute developed these population and household projections for the Greater Lowell region from 2020 through 2040. These projections were based upon a statewide model that assigns a specific share of population to each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) region and then to the individual communities.

### A. Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Pepperell residents have a range of housing needs based upon household size, income, household type and age. The following summarizes the primary findings from the Comprehensive Needs Assessment section:

#### Population and Households

- Between 2000 and 2010, Pepperell's population grew by 3.2% resulting in a population of 11,497 in 2010. The Town's population represented 4% of the total population for the Greater Lowell region.
- During the same period, Pepperell's households increased by 9.1%. Between 2010 and 2020, households are projected to increase by 22.4%. The growth rate will then decrease to 4.4% between 2030 and 2040.
- By 2040 Pepperell's population is expected to reach 12,335 residents living in 5,973 households.
- In 2010, more than seventy-four percent (74.2%) of Pepperell's households were family households, as compared to 72.6% in 2013-2017.
- Two-person households comprised the greatest number of family households at 36% in 2010 and 40.3% in 2013-2017.
- One-person households comprised the greatest number of nonfamily households at 78.6% in 2010 and 83.6% in 2013-2017.

- Married households comprised the largest portion of family households at 81.1% in 2010 and 79.6% in 2013-2017, while householders living alone comprised 78.6% and 83.6% of nonfamily households in 2010 and 2013-2017 respectively.
- Pepperell's population is aging. Residents aged 60 and above represented 16.2% of Pepperell's population in 2010 and 20.4% in 2013-2017. By 2040 residents aged 60 and above will represent 22.1% of the total population with a 48.6% increase between 2010 and 2040.
- Between 2012/2013 and 2018/2019, school enrollment decreased by 17.1%. Enrollment projections between 2019/2020 and 2028/2029 reflect a 2.1% decrease in total enrollment to 2,902 students in 2028/2029.

### **Income**

- Median household income in Pepperell increased by 38.2% between 1999 and 2013-2017, which is comparable to the Greater Lowell region and the nation, but less than the state and the surrounding communities (Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend). When adjusted for inflation, Pepperell's median household income decreased by 6%.
- Median family and per capita incomes in Pepperell increased by 41% and 59.1% respectively. When adjusted for inflation, Pepperell's median family income decreased by 4.1%, which was comparable to the nation (-3.7%). The Greater Lowell and surrounding communities, as well as the Commonwealth, had positive median family incomes when adjusted for inflation. When adjusted for inflation, Pepperell's per capita income increased by 8.2%, which was comparable to the surrounding communities.
- Pepperell Households earning \$100,000 or more increased from 22.9% in 1999 to 44.2% in 2013-2017, which represented an increase of 218.1%.
- In 2013-2017, 674 residents, or 5.6% of the town's population, were living in poverty. More than sixty percent of those living in poverty were between the ages of 18 and 64 (63.4%), 24.5% were youth under the age of 18, and 12.2% were 65 years of age and older.

### **Housing Production, Sales and Costs**

- The majority of housing units in Pepperell are single-family, detached homes, which comprised 74.6% of the housing stock in 2013-2017. Nearly 80% of all housing units were owner-occupied.
- Between 2010 and 2019, 194 building permits were issued for 204 residential units. The number of residential building permits issued was highest in 2016 (40) and lowest in 2015 (12).
- Between 2012 and 2019, residential sales peaked in 2016 and 2017 with 139 single-family homes sold, while condominium sales peaked at 26 in 2019.
- The median sales prices for single-family homes increased by 55% between 2012 and 2019, while the median sales prices for condominiums increased from \$125,100 in 2012 to \$258,625 in 2019, or by 106.7%.
- In 2013-2017, 943 owner-occupied households in Pepperell (or 27.7%) were considered moderately burdened by their housing costs, paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs. More than a third of renters (34%) were considered moderately burdened by their renting costs.

## **B. Addressing Local and State Affordability Goals for Housing Production**

In order to address the affordable housing needs in Pepperell, the following goals were developed by the Affordable Housing Committee. These goals build upon the goals in the *Pepperell Affordable Housing Production Plan for 2014-2018* and the recommendations in the draft Housing Chapter of the 2020 Master Plan. These goals are summarized in Section II of the HPP:

1. Provide a variety of housing opportunities that serve all segments of the community, especially those below 80% of the area median income (AMI).
2. Ensure new housing development is consistent with the rural, residential and historic character of the town, and sustainable use of natural resources.
3. Provide a range of housing, including rental, home ownership, and other occupancy arrangements, if any, for families, individuals, persons with special needs and for seniors.
4. Adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to support affordable housing initiatives.
5. Establish the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) to consolidate funds to support affordable housing activities.
6. Develop supportive rental housing of 1-4 bedroom units for very low income households, including seniors and residents with disabilities, to enable them to age in place, as well as congregate housing to act as transitional housing for vulnerable populations (senior, disabled, veterans).
7. Adopt an Inclusionary Zoning bylaw that makes all affordable housing deed restrictions permanent, and contains a unit threshold requiring that 25% of the units be affordable.
8. Ensure that affordable housing development in Pepperell adheres to the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles (see *Figure 18*).
9. Update the zoning bylaw, development review processes and permitting policies so they are clear and consistent.

## **C. Strategies to Address Housing Needs and Increase Production**

In order to implement the goals identified previously, strategies to address the housing needs of the community have been developed. These strategies are designed to increase and improve housing opportunities in Pepperell, particularly subsidized housing. The strategies are summarized below and in Section II.

### **Maintain Existing Housing and Expand Housing Opportunities**

1. Restore the effort to achieve the 10% Affordable Housing Goal.
2. Be proactive in monitoring and maintaining existing affordable housing units.
3. Coordinate the activities of the Affordable Housing Committee, Planning Board, Select Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals to achieve consistency in the interpretation and administration of affordable housing requirements.
4. Utilize the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee to oversee the implementation of the DHCD-approved *Pepperell Housing Production Plan for 2021-2025* as a management tool to develop new housing opportunities in meeting the Town's annual housing production goals.
5. Utilize the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee, the Pepperell Housing Authority, and non-profit developers, such as the Coalition for a Better Acre, Common Ground Development

Corporation, Inc. and Habitat for Humanity to develop local affordable housing development capacity.

6. Encourage re-use or redevelopment of underutilized property (e.g. historic, municipal, blighted or vacant) as appropriate and consistent with the housing goals and sustainable development principles.
7. Examine the current bylaw related to tax title properties to see if they may be developed into affordable housing, as appropriate and consistent with the housing goals and sustainable development principles.
8. Document the specific needs of Pepperell veterans and construct affordable veterans housing units that meet those needs. Organizations like the [Veterans Northeast Outreach Center](#) and the local Veteran's Agent can be consulted for housing assistance.
9. Examine opportunities available under the Chapter 40R Smart Growth Overlay District, particularly under the Starter Homes program. Utilize other tools, such as Inclusionary Zoning and "friendly" Chapter 40B developments to increase the supply of affordable housing.
10. Monitor the level of affordable housing development under the Open Space Residential Development Bylaw.
11. Work with State agencies and other stakeholders to develop group homes to provide supported, supervised living arrangements to include congregate housing for veterans, and disabled individuals with physical and mental disorders.
12. Utilize the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) to partner with the Affordable Pepperell Housing Committee, the MassHousing Partnership, and non-profit developers to produce neighborhood friendly affordable housing developments.

#### **Policies, Programs and Services**

1. Evaluate and revise existing development regulations and guidelines for fairness and efficiency through the development of an Affordable Housing Permitting Guide to assist applicants in navigating the review process.
2. Working in conjunction with the Planning Board, Select Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and other town committees and boards, build upon the approved zoning changes so as to provide more affordable housing opportunities, such as through special permits for multi-family units, accessory apartments, and retirement communities.
3. Develop an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw to encourage development of new housing that is affordable to low and moderate-income households. Model Inclusionary Housing Bylaws can be found at: [http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf).
4. Examine the use of Community Preservation Funds to support affordable housing development with a focus on the following programs and services:
  - Community education regarding affordable housing programs;
  - First-time home buyer's assistance program;
  - Rental assistance;
  - Renovation and sale of properties as affordable unit(s) from town tax lien properties acquired;

- Purchase of property for use as an affordable housing development;
  - Provide betterment to donated buildings and/or land for use of affordable housing; and
  - Partnerships with private developers and public agencies for affordable housing initiatives that address the housing needs of the community.
5. Support legislative and/or regulatory reforms at the state level that recognize the efforts of communities like Pepperell to proactively provide “workforce housing” to serve households at 80-120% of the area median income (AMI), in addition to current efforts supporting households earning below 80% of the AMI.
  6. Adopt local selection preferences that are consistent with DHCD Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan (AFHMP) Guidelines and all applicable State and Federal laws/regulations. The project will justify the extent of the local preference (the percentage of units proposed to be set aside for local preference), but in no event will a local preference exceed 70% of the (affordable) units in a project.
    - Allowable Preference Categories
      - (1) Current residents: A household in which one or more members is living in the city or town at the time of application. Documentation of residency should be provided, such as rent receipts, utility bills, street listing or voter registration listing.
      - (2) Municipal Employees: Employees of the municipality, such as teachers, janitors, firefighters, police officers, librarians, or town hall employees.
      - (3) Employees of Local Businesses: Employees of businesses located in the municipality.
      - (4) Households with children attending the locality’s schools, such as METCO students.

### **Education**

1. Provide affordable housing training and educational opportunities to local Board and Committee members and staff, including the Affordable Housing Committee. These training opportunities could include updates on current policies to support affordable housing (i.e., the Comprehensive Permit Guidelines) and any revisions to state law or regional opportunities. This will allow boards and committees to provide guidance to the development community to improve the quality of proposals and result in a more expedited permitting process.
2. Increase public awareness of and support for affordable housing through increased outreach and public education.
3. Utilize resources available through the MassHousing Partnership and work with local financial institutions and the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership to encourage home ownership of affordable housing units.
4. Provide education programs on housing rehabilitation.

### **Funding**

1. Pursue the purchase of units and provide a subsidized buy-down on the purchase price to qualified first-time homebuyers.
2. Develop local partnerships with developers to utilize the State’s Local Initiative Program (LIP) to develop “friendly 40B” development projects.

3. Seek funding for a pilot project for the development of affordable housing that achieves LEED certification.
4. Research federal and state grant opportunities for the enhancement of affordable housing including: HUD's Housing for the Elderly (Section 202) Program, [Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation](#) (CEDAC) and [Neighborworks Capital](#) (NWC).

#### **Regional Coordination**

1. Participate in a Regional Housing Committee to create a Regional Housing Plan for the Greater Lowell region and work with the towns of Ashby, Ayer, Groton, and Townsend to address common housing issues.
2. Work with non-profit entities, such as the [Common Ground Development Corporation](#), a subsidiary of Community Teamwork, Inc., and the Coalition for a Better Acre, and Habitat for Humanity to develop and manage affordable housing projects.
3. Collaborate with other communities to promote First-Time Homebuyer Program opportunities in the region and State to make existing homes more affordable.
4. Research and promote Foreclosure Assistance Programs through the State's Emergency Homeowners Loan Program (EHLPP) or Community Teamwork, Inc. to help homeowners avoid foreclosure and maintain strong residential neighborhoods.

#### **D. Housing Production Plan Implementation Requirements**

Section III of the Housing Production Plan describes the characteristics preferred for affordable housing in Pepperell, the zoning changes that would be needed to be made in order to generate more affordable housing and the specific locations in the community that have been identified as potential subsidized housing sites.

To meet the State's requirements for developing a Housing Production Plan, the Town identified private and public parcels with the potential for future affordable housing development. Twenty-five (25) privately-owned and eight (8) publically-owned sites were identified through this process. It is anticipated that between 180 and 235 new housing units could be developed on the identified sites. The list of potential housing sites will be utilized as a guide in implementing the Housing Production Plan.



## **Introduction**

### **A. Overview of Housing Production Plan**

The development of housing that is accessible and affordable to people with a range of incomes, household characteristics, and demographic qualities is critical to successful and sustainable community planning. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Permit Law (Chapter 774 of the Acts of 1969, a.k.a. Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws), enacted in 1969, is designed to “increase the supply and improve the regional distribution of low- or moderate-income housing by allowing a limited override of local requirements and regulations which are inconsistent with local and regional affordable housing needs” (DHCD 2009). While many residents understand the need for more affordable housing options, housing developments proposed vis-à-vis the Comprehensive Permitting process are often controversial.

The development and approval of a local Housing Production Plan (HPP) is an integral component of achieving safe harbor status from Comprehensive Permit/Chapter 40B proposals in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) defines a Housing Production Plan (HPP) as:

*“A community's proactive strategy for planning and developing affordable housing by: creating a strategy to enable it to meet its affordable housing needs in a manner consistent with the Chapter 40B statute and regulations; and producing housing units in accordance with the HPP.”*

To qualify for approval from DHCD, an HPP must contain three main components: a Comprehensive Needs Assessment; Affordable Housing Goals and Strategies; and Implementation Strategies. The purpose of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment section is to determine the community context, which relies on demographic, community development (zoning and infrastructure), and economic data to assess the extent to which housing needs match the existing housing stock in the community.

The Affordable Housing Goals and Strategies component determines the appropriate housing mix for the community, paying special attention to local and regional needs. This section also sets the minimum affordable housing production goal, as determined by the total number of year-round housing units in the most recent decennial Census. According to recent revisions to the Chapter 40B requirements, the minimum annual affordable housing production goal is greater or equal to 0.5% of the year-round housing stock.

Finally, the purpose of the Implementation Strategies section of the plan is to identify potential growth areas and zoning districts, target specific sites for the production of affordable housing, assess municipally-owned land to develop into mixed-income housing, and identify regional housing development collaborations.

Once approved by DHCD, an HPP is valid for five years. Additionally, communities may apply to have their HPP certified by DHCD. A community will be certified in compliance with an approved HPP if, during a single calendar year, it has increased its number of low- and moderate-income housing units by at least 0.5%. Certification lasts for one year if the community has increased its Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) units by 0.5%, and two years if it has increased the number of SHI units by 1.0%. According to Chapter 40B, once a plan has been certified, the local community has greater power in controlling new residential development because a decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals to deny a Comprehensive Permit application will be considered “consistent with local need,” meaning that the ZBA’s decision would be upheld by DHCD’s Housing Appeals Committee (HAC).

## **B. Defining Affordable Housing**

There are several definitions of affordable housing in the United States depending on whether one utilizes Federal or State criteria. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers housing *affordable* if housing costs do not exceed 30% of a household’s annual income. For rental units this includes gross rent plus utilities, whereas for ownership units this includes the cost of mortgage, property taxes, and insurance. According to HUD’s affordability criteria, when a household pays more than 30% of its income on housing-related costs, it is considered *burdened* by housing, and households spending 50% or more of their income on housing are considered *severely burdened*.

Another measure of housing affordability is based on *Area Median Income (AMI)*. AMI calculations are the most popular way of prioritizing households for affordable housing opportunities. According to HUD, *extremely low income* characterizes households earning 30% or less than AMI; *very low income* households earn between 31% and 50% of AMI; *low income* households earn between 51% and 80% of AMI; and *moderate income* households earn between 81% and 100% of AMI.

At the state level, DHCD counts a housing unit as affordable if it is subsidized by state or Federal programs that support low- and moderate- income households at or below 80% AMI. Generally speaking, programs that subsidize rental units target households earning within 50% or 60% AMI, and first-time homebuyer programs apply income limits of up to 80% AMI.

Under Chapter 40B, housing is considered “affordable” if it meets the following criteria:

1. The unit(s) must be part of a subsidized development built by a public agency, non-profit, or limited dividend corporation;
2. At least 25% of the units in the development must be income-restricted to households earning  $\leq 80\%$  AMI and have rent/sale prices restricted to affordable levels (determined by AMI). Affordability restrictions must run in perpetuity unless there is demonstrated justification for a shorter term;
3. The development must be subject to a regulatory agreement and monitored by a public agency or non-profit organization; and
4. Project sponsors must meet affirmative marketing requirements.

If Pepperell has achieved certification within 15 days of the opening of the local hearing for the Comprehensive Permit, the ZBA shall provide written notice to the Applicant, with a copy to DHCD, that it considers that a denial of the permit or the imposition of conditions or requirements would be consistent with local needs, the grounds that it believes has been met, and the factual basis for that position, including any necessary supportive documentation.

If the Applicant wishes to challenge the ZBA's assertion, it must do so by providing written notice to the Department, with a copy to the Board, within 15 days of its receipt of the ZBA's notice, including any documentation to support its position. DHCD shall thereupon review the materials provided by both parties and issue a decision within 30 days of its receipt of all materials. The ZBA shall have the burden of proving satisfaction of the grounds for asserting that a denial or approval with conditions would be consistent with local needs, provided, however, that any failure of the DHCD to issue a timely decision shall be deemed a determination in favor of the municipality. This procedure shall toll the requirement to terminate the hearing within 180 days.

### **C. Data Sources and Definitions**

The *Pepperell Housing Production Plan for 2021-2025* relies on a variety of data sources including, but not limited to, the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey (ACS), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and NMCOG. The two main survey tools used include the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS).

It is important to note that differences in sampling methodology, terminology, and timeframe can make it difficult to compare one source to another. For instance, one key difference between the U.S. Census and the ACS is that the Census samples every individual in a community, whereas the ACS samples a subset of the community. This is because the Census strives to provide counts of people for the purpose of Congressional apportionment, whereas the ACS is designed to measure the social and economic characteristics of the U.S. population, which can be achieved through estimates.

These differences in sampling methodology mean that some values, such as the number of households in a community, are reported differently in the ACS versus the census. More accurate household numbers are available through the Census, because it samples everyone in a community. However, ACS numbers still hold value because the survey asks a wider variety of questions. Information on household income, for instance, is only available in the ACS, and was not requested as part of the 2010 U.S. Census. Another key difference between the Census and the ACS is that the Census collects data once every 10 years, whereas ACS data are collected continuously. Typically, data from the Census are collected between March and August in a single year, whereas data from the ACS are collected each month and reflect conditions throughout the year.

Furthermore, there are differences in questions and terminology across the Census and the ACS. For example, the Census Bureau introduced a new set of disability questions in the 2008 ACS Questionnaire, which makes comparisons of disability data from 2008 or later with prior years quite difficult. Within the HPP there will be an attempt to minimize any confusion about these data sources and to note where two different data sources are being used. Comparison across data sources is avoided whenever possible. When comparison is unavoidable, the HPP will describe any caution that should be taken.

In addition to these various data sources, it is important to clarify the definitions for terms, such as *housing unit*, *household* and *family*. The U.S. Census Bureau utilizes the following definitions:

*Housing Unit* – A house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied as separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall. For vacant units, the criteria of separateness and direct access are applied to the intended occupants whenever possible. In general the term *housing units* refers to all the residential structures in the community.

*Household* – A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence. The term “households” includes all family or nonfamily households.

*Family* – A group of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage or adoption.

For other definitions, consult the U.S. Census Bureau web page at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

## I. Comprehensive Needs Assessment

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment includes a Demographic Analysis and a Housing Stock Analysis. The demographic analysis involves a discussion of population, household types, age cohorts, school enrollment, race, ethnicity, disabled community, and income. The housing stock analysis provides an analysis of unit types, tenure, new residential development and housing market conditions. It also looks at housing affordability, gaps between existing housing needs and current supply, and affordable housing efforts in Pepperell.

### A. Demographic Analysis

The Demographic Analysis provides an overview of the demographic changes that have occurred in Pepperell since the publication of the *2014-2018 Town of Pepperell Affordable Housing Production Plan*. Using data from the U.S. Census on household, age, race, ethnicity, disability, and income, this section analyzes past, current and future demographics in Pepperell in order to predict future population changes and to inform the Housing Needs section of this plan. Throughout the Comprehensive Needs Analysis, Pepperell is compared to the Greater Lowell region, as well as the immediate surrounding communities. The surrounding communities include Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend, while the Greater Lowell region includes Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Lowell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough and Westford in addition to Pepperell. Additional data is available in the Housing chapter of the *2020 Updated Pepperell Master Plan*.

#### 1. Population

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Pepperell had a population of 11,497 residents residing in 4,197 households. Over the last few decades, the population in Pepperell, as well as in the Greater Lowell region as a whole, has increased steadily. According to the *Regional Strategic Plan for Greater Lowell* (2011), between 1960 and 2010, the population in the region grew by 70% from 169,403 to 286,901 in 2010 or an average of 14% per decade. Similarly, according to the U.S. Census, Pepperell's population increased by about 62% between 1960 and 2010, with a growth rate of 10% in 2000. This was similar to the surrounding communities, which experienced an 11.8% growth rate in 2000.

**Table 3: Actual and Projected Population (2010-2040)**

Year	Pepperell		Surrounding Communities <sup>1</sup>		Greater Lowell Region	
	Population	Growth Rate <sup>2</sup>	Population	Growth Rate <sup>2</sup>	Population	Growth Rate <sup>2</sup>
2010	11,497	3.2%	34,210	5.6%	286,901	2.0%
2020	12,295	6.9%	35,140	2.7%	299,617	4.4%
2030	12,354	0.5%	35,730	1.7%	298,889	-0.2%
2040	12,335	-0.2%	36,280	3.2%	295,061	-1.3%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2020, 2030 and 2040 projections developed by the Mass Donahue Institute for MassDOT 1. Surrounding communities include Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend.

2. Growth rate applies to the periods: 2000-2010, 2010-2020, 2020-2030 and 2030-2040.

Pepperell's population growth, as well as that of the region, has slowed since 2000. Pepperell's growth rate decreased to 3.2% in 2010, while the regional growth rate decreased to 2% (Table 1). The growth rate for Pepperell's surrounding communities was 5.6% during this period. Growth rates for both Pepperell and the region as a whole are expected to increase between 2010 and 2020, but decrease from 2020-2030 and 2030-2040, actually losing population between 2030 and 2040. The surrounding communities will experience 3.2% growth between 2030 and 2040. MassDOT projections indicate that Pepperell's population will consistently comprise more than 4% of the region's total population.

## 2. Households and Household Types

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit (e.g. house, apartment, single room). A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, or foster children who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit, is also counted as a household. The household count excludes group quarters.

Household growth rates in both Pepperell and the Greater Lowell region experienced a slow-down between 2000 and 2010. Yet, household growth in Pepperell is expected to increase from 9.1% in 2010 to 22.4% in 2020. The household growth rate in the Greater Lowell region will increase at a slightly lower rate from 4.7% in 2010 to 11.8% in 2020. Within the surrounding communities, the growth rate will increase from 8.3% in 2010 to 13.9% in 2020. Household growth in Pepperell is expected to increase between 2020 and 2030 (11.4%) and then decline to 4.4% between 2030 and 2040 (Table 2). This is greater than the regional household growth rate, which are expected to decrease from 4.5% to 1% over the same timeframe. Similar to the population figures, Pepperell's households are expected to consistently comprise more than 4% of the region's total households over the next 30 years.

**Table 4: Total Number of Households (2010-2040)**

Year	Pepperell		Surrounding Communities <sup>1</sup>		Greater Lowell Region	
	Households	Growth Rate <sup>2</sup>	Households	Growth Rate <sup>2</sup>	Households	Growth Rate <sup>2</sup>
2010	4,197	9.1%	12,375	8.3%	104,022	4.7%
2020	5,136	22.4%	14,094	13.9%	116,271	11.8%
2030	5,720	11.4%	15,548	10.3%	121,559	4.5%
2040	5,973	4.4%	16,423	5.6%	122,740	1.0%

Sources: 2010 U.S. Census and 2020, 2030 and 2040 projections developed by the Mass Donahue Institute for MassDOT 1. Surrounding communities include Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend.

2. Growth rate applies to the periods: 2000-2010, 2010-2020, 2020-2030 and 2030-2040.

Households are divided into two categories: family and nonfamily. In a family household, those who occupy a housing unit are related by birth, marriage or adoption, whereas in a nonfamily household, those who occupy a housing unit are not related (e.g. roommates). According to the 2010 U.S. Census,

family households comprised approximately three quarters (74.2%) of all households in Pepperell (Table 3). This figure declined to 72.6% according to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey.

**Table 3: Household Type (2010 and 2013-2017)**

Household Type	2010		2013-2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Family households	3,116	74.2	3,156	72.6
Nonfamily households	1,081	25.8	1,190	27.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,197</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,346</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey

### 3. Head of Household Age Distribution

The U.S. Census also provides information on the head of household age distribution in Pepperell's households. In 2010, the majority head of households in both family and nonfamily households were between the ages of 35 and 64 (Table 4). More than 78% of head of households in family households and 56.7% head of households in nonfamily households were in this age category. In 2013-2017 the 34 years and under and 65 and older age groups for family households increased from 2010, whereas the 35-64 age group decreased by 6%. Within the nonfamily households, the 65 and older category increased by more than 6%, which reflects the aging population in Pepperell.

**Table 4: Head of Household Age Distribution (2010 and 2013-2017)**

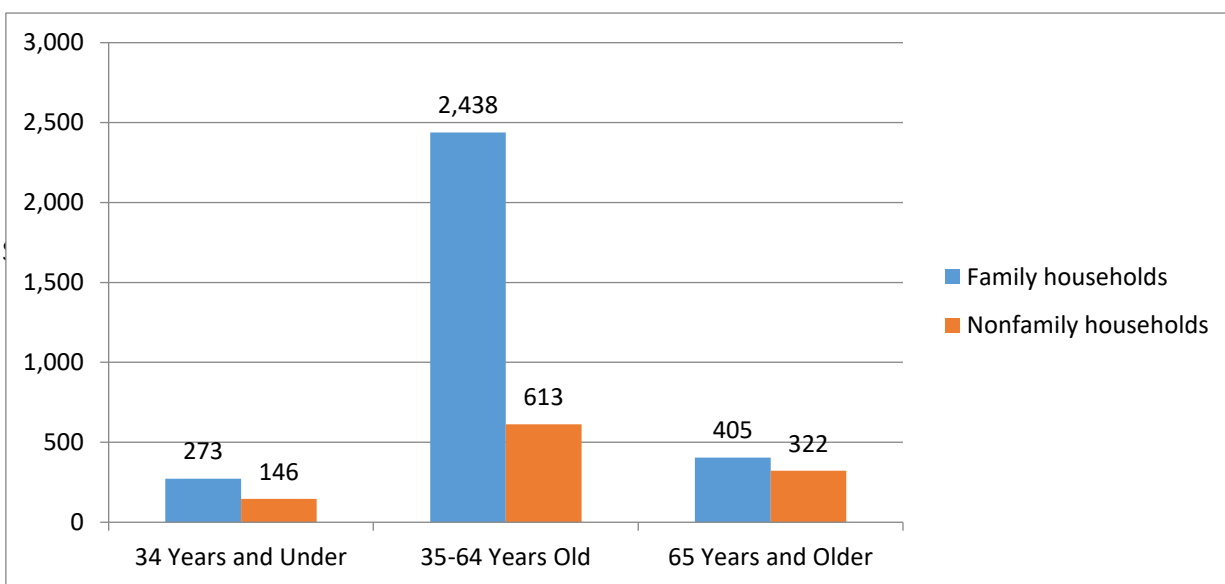
Household Type	2010		2013-2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Family households</b>				
34 Years and Under	273	8.8	343	10.9
35-64 Years Old	2,438	78.2	2,278	72.2
65 Years and Older	405	13.0	535	17.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,116</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,156</b>	<b>100.1</b>
<b>Nonfamily households</b>				
34 Years and Under	146	13.5	127	10.7
35-64 Years Old	613	56.7	621	52.2
65 Years and Older	322	29.8	442	37.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey

The breakdown of head of households by age group is shown on the next page in Figures 1 and 2.

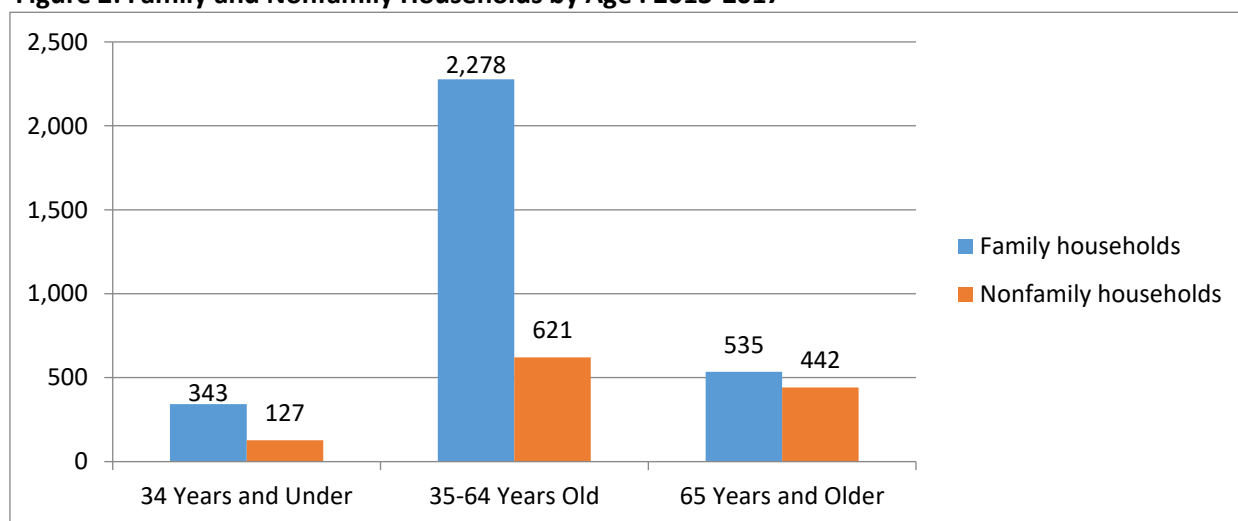


**Figure 1: Family and Nonfamily Households by Age : 2010**



Source: 2010 U.S. Census

**Figure 2: Family and Nonfamily Households by Age : 2013-2017**



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

#### **4. Household Size**

Information from the U.S. Census shows Pepperell's households tend to be smaller than most communities. The average household size for Pepperell decreased from 2.89 persons in 2000 to 2.74 persons in 2020. Family households typically contain two-four people and only 11.1% of family households contained five or more people in 2010 (Table 5). This figure decreased slightly to 11% in 2013-2017 according to the American Community Survey.

**Table 5: Household Size - Family and Nonfamily (2010 and 2013-2017)**

Household Type	Household Size - 2010							Total
	1-Person	2-Person	3-Person	4-Person	5-Person	6-Person	7 + Person	
Family Households								
Number in each category	0	1,122	786	744	313	94	57	3,116
% in each category	0	36.0	25.2	23.9	10.0	3.0	1.8	74.2
Nonfamily Households								
Number in each category	850	207	16	7	1	0	0	1,081
% in each category	78.6	19.1	1.5	0.6	0.1	0	0	25.8
Total	850	1,329	802	751	314	94	57	4,197
Household Type	Household Size – 2013-2017							Total
	1-Person	2-Person	3-Person	4-Person	5-Person	6-Person	7 + Person	
Family Households								
Number in each category	0	1,271	588	820	306	112	59	3,156
% in each category	0	40.3	18.6	26.0	9.7	3.5	1.9	72.6
Nonfamily Households								
Number in each category	995	195	0	0	0	0	0	1,190
% in each category	83.6	16.4	0	0	0	0	0	27.4
Total	995	1,466	588	820	306	112	59	4,346

Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS)

Two-person households comprised the largest group in family households for 2010 (36%) and 2013-2017 (40.3%). Within the nonfamily household category, the largest group was the one-person household comprising 78.6% in 2010 and 83.6% in 2013-2017. These figures indicate that the household size has not become more diversified, although there has been a slight increase in the 4-person, 6-person and 7+-person family households between 2010 and 2013-2017. Within the nonfamily households, the only housing choices in Pepperell are 1-person and 2-person households – there are no 3- to 7+ households available.

## 5. Household Characteristics

While Pepperell's housing stock is not becoming more diverse, its households have become more diverse. Married couples decreased from 2,527 households in 2000 to 2,513 households in 2013-2017, reducing their overall share from 81.1% to 79.6% (Table 6). The percentage of married couples with related children under 18 years decreased from 45.2% in 2010 to 41.3% in 2013-2017. Male householders without a spouse have decreased by 24.7% from 190 households in 2010 to 143 households in 2013-2017. Female householders without a spouse increased from 399 households in 2010 to 500 households in 2013-2017, or by 25.3%.

Within the nonfamily households, householders living alone increased by 17.1% from 850 households in 2010 to 995 households in 2013-2017. Householders 65 and older living alone increased at an even greater rate – 43.7% - from 302 households in 2010 to 434 households in 2013-2017. This trend may indicate an increase in the number of Pepperell residents who choose to live with roommates, which may be due to economic necessity. These trends indicate single-person and married couples without

children are becoming more prominent. This could be due to a variety of factors including an aging population whose children have moved out of the home, married couples choosing not to have children and increases in the divorce rate.

**Table 6: Household Characteristics (2010 and 2013-2017)**

Household Type	2010		2013-2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Family households</b>	<b>3,116</b>	<b>74.2</b>	<b>3,156</b>	<b>72.6</b>
Married – couple	2,527	81.1	2,513	79.6
With related children under 18 years	1,141	45.2	1,038	41.3
No related children under 18 years	1,386	54.8	1,475	58.7
Male householder, no spouse	190	6.1	143	4.5
Female householder, no spouse	399	12.8	500	15.8
<b>Nonfamily households</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>27.4</b>
Householders living alone	850	78.6	995	83.6
Householders 65 and older living alone	302	35.5	434	43.6
Householders living with others	231	21.4	195	16.4
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>4,197</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,346</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey*

The growth and prevalence of nontraditional households living alone justifies the need to provide a variety of housing types that do not fit within the traditional, market rate, detached single-family home model. In particular, this data indicates the importance of providing smaller, affordable dwelling units – especially for those residents who need to live with a roommate due to economic necessity. In addition, future housing types will need to accommodate residents over the age of 65 who want to “age in place.” In addition to a diverse supply of housing in terms of size and structure, a range of affordability options are needed for households and families who cannot afford to pay market rate prices. These options will be further explored in the Housing Needs section of this report.

## 6. Age Cohorts

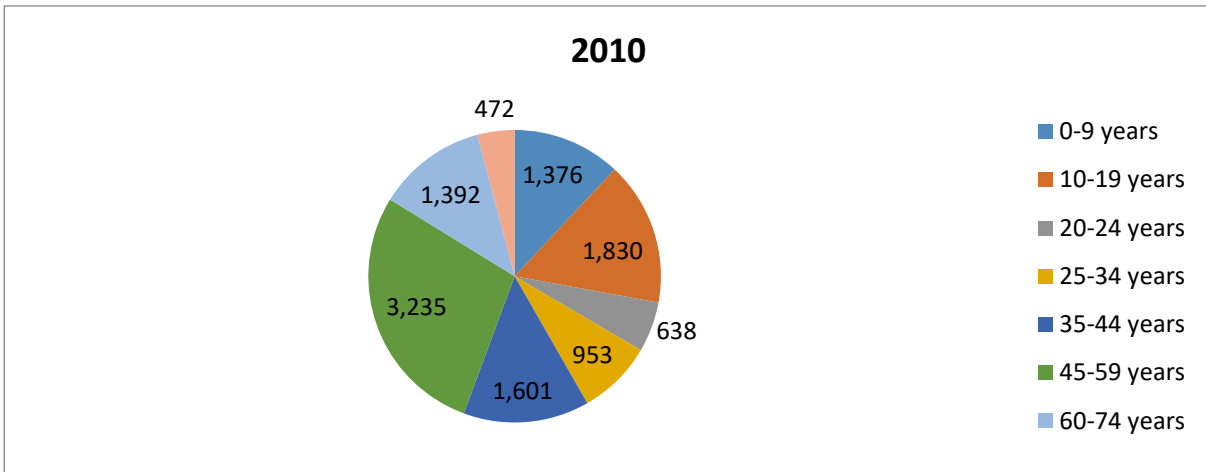
In order to determine the types and characteristics of Pepperell’s housing stock in the future, it is important to analyze the age distribution trends of the population and then consider how the projected population will break down by age group over the next 20 years. Between 2010 and 2013-2017, the overall population increased by 4.8% (Table 7). The age groups with the greatest increase in population were the 25-34 (47.6%), 75+ (33.7%) and 60-74 (31.8%) age cohorts. Those age groups with the largest decrease in population were the 35-44 (-21.8%) and 10-19 (-19.3%) age cohorts. These figures reflect the need for more senior housing, “starter homes”, and condominiums to accommodate seniors and new families. The comparison of the change in age cohorts between 2010 and 2013 is summarized in Table 7 and Figures 3 and 4 on the next page.

**Table 7: Age Distribution of Pepperell Residents (2010 and 2013-2017)**

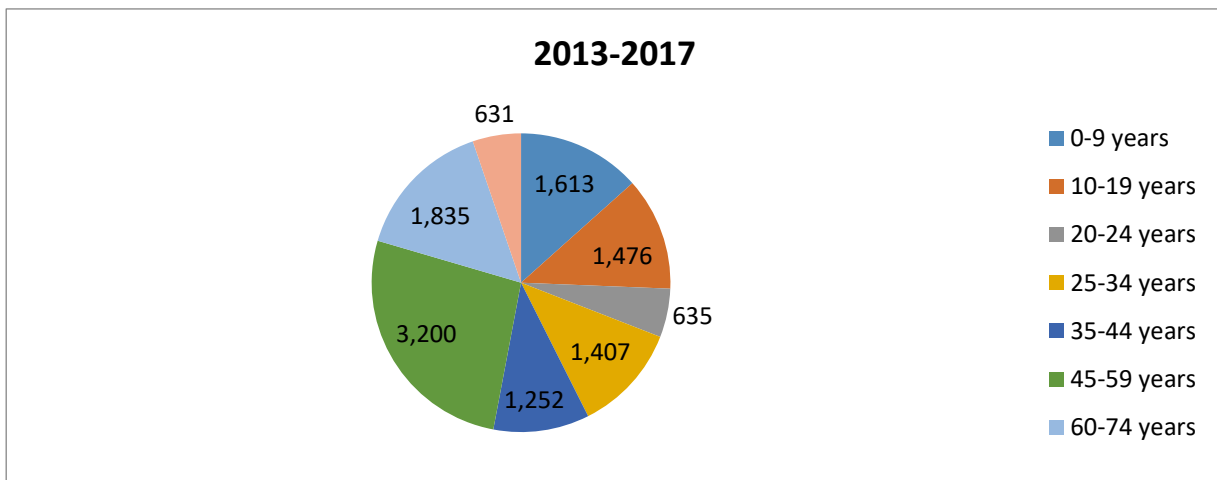
Age Groups	2010		2013-2017		Percent Change 2010-2013/2017
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
0-9 years	1,376	12.0	1,613	13.4	17.1
10-19 years	1,830	15.9	1,476	12.2	-19.3
20-24 years	638	5.5	635	5.3	-0.5
25-34 years	953	8.3	1,407	11.7	47.6
35-44 years	1,601	13.9	1,252	10.4	-21.8
45-59 years	3,235	28.1	3,200	26.6	-1.1
60-74 years	1,392	12.1	1,835	15.2	31.8
75+ years	472	4.1	631	5.2	33.7
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>11,497</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>12,049</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4.8</b>

Source: U.S. Census for 2000 and 2010; totals may not sum due to rounding.

Figures 3 and 4 reflect the age distribution information for 2010 and 2013-2017 in a pie chart format.

**Figure 3: Age Distribution of Pepperell Residents: 2010**

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

**Figure 4: Age Distribution of Pepperell Residents (2013-2017)**

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

The UMass Donahue Institute developed population projections for 2020, 2030 and 2040 on behalf of MassDOT. NMCOG broke down those population projections by age cohort based upon the MetroFuture analysis of the regional population. Table 8 reflects the projected age distribution of Pepperell residents for 2020, 2030, and 2040 and then shows the percentage change between 2010 and 2040. While the overall population is projected to increase by 9.2% between 2010 and 2040, there are significant differences within specific age cohorts. The greatest population increases by age group were in the 75+ (57.6%), 60-74 (45.5%), 0-9 (29.7%) and 35-44 (29.7%) age cohorts, while the largest decreases were in the 25-34 (-15.8%), 45-59 (-15%) and 20-24 (-12.7%) age cohorts.

**Table 8: Projected Age Distribution of Pepperell Residents (2020 – 2040)**

Age Groups	2020		2030		2040		Percent Change 2010 - 2040
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
0-9 years	1,610	13.82	1,709	14.29	1,785	14.22	29.7
10-19 years	1,718	14.75	1,736	14.51	1,815	14.46	-0.8
20-24 years	593	5.09	541	4.52	557	4.44	-12.7
25-34 years	914	7.85	821	6.86	802	6.39	-15.8
35-44 years	1,599	13.73	1,920	16.05	2,076	16.54	29.7
45-59 years	3,159	27.12	2,823	23.60	2,749	21.90	-15.0
60-74 years	1,672	14.35	1,866	15.60	2,025	16.13	45.5
75+ years	383	3.29	546	4.56	744	5.93	57.6
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>11,648</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>11,962</b>	<b>99.99</b>	<b>12,553</b>	<b>100.01</b>	<b>9.2</b>

*Source: Projections developed by the UMass Donahue Center for MassDOT. Age cohorts based upon the MetroFuture analysis of the regional population.*

These trends developed by the UMass Donahue Center indicate the population in Pepperell is aging, thus increasing the need for senior housing. The projected population growth in Pepperell, especially the increase in the senior population, has important implications for housing planning and development. In addition to a general need for more housing units, special attention should be paid to the housing needs of seniors. This Housing Production Plan will consider these unique housing needs as it develops a framework for housing production in Pepperell over the next five years.

## 7. School Enrollment and Projections

School enrollment trends are a crucial component of Pepperell's town-wide growth and population trends. An analysis of school enrollment trends helps frame a discussion of the potential future impacts of population change on the school system and Town and helps better plan for the housing needs of the Town. The results of the analysis are useful in formulating an affordable housing strategy that is sensitive to these changes over time.

Pepperell, along with the towns of Townsend and Ashby, is a member of the North Middlesex Regional School District. The district provides three schools for Pepperell children and these students comprise 48.4% of the entire District enrollment:

- Varum Brook Elementary School (K to 4)
- Nissitissit Middle School (4 to 8)

- North Middlesex Regional High School (9 to 12).

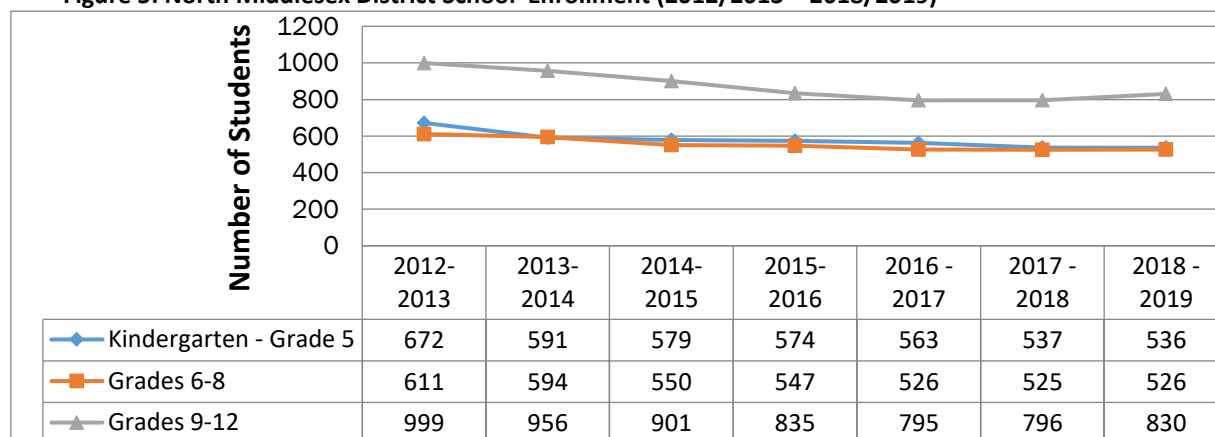


The school district administers each of these schools. The other two towns in the district also have local elementary schools, but all three towns share the North Middlesex Regional High School.

The Nashoba Valley Technical High School in Westford is the region's vocational high school, serving students from Pepperell and the towns of Ayer, Chelmsford, Groton, Littleton, Shirley, Townsend, and Westford. There are also charter schools, licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, available to students in grades 7-12. Pepperell students attend one of three charter schools: the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School in Devens, Innovation Academy in Tyngsborough and the North Central Essential Charter School in Fitchburg. Pepperell students also attend Lawrence Academy in Groton, Bishop Guertin in Nashua, and the Academy of Notre Dame in Tyngsborough.

According to the North Middlesex District Superintendent's office, public school enrollment has declined since 2012/2013 for all age groups. K-5 students have decreased by 20.2% between 2012/2013 and 2018/2019, while the 6-8 grade students (-13.9%) and 9-12 grade students (-16.9%) have experienced smaller declines as shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: North Middlesex District School Enrollment (2012/2013 – 2018/2019)**

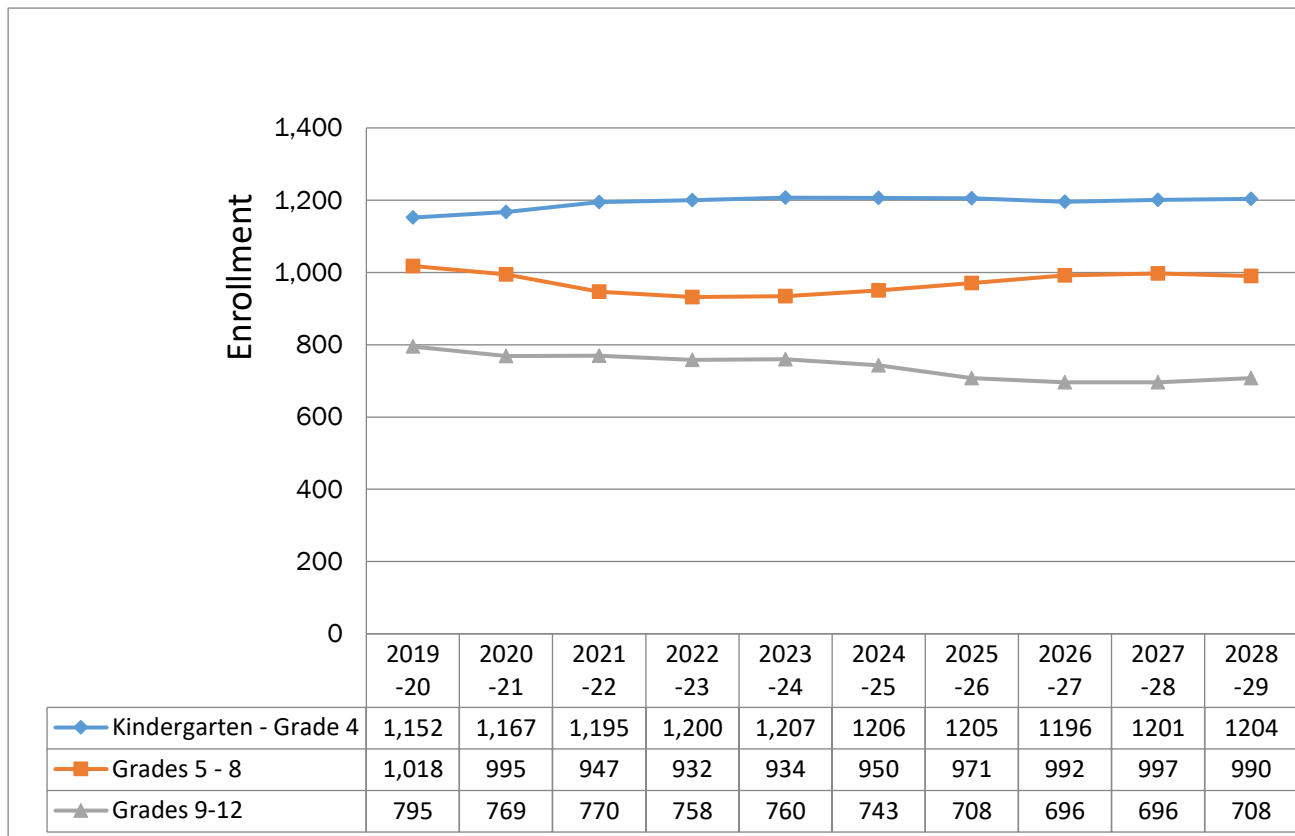


*Source: MA Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education*

The New England School Development Council has developed school enrollment projections for the North Middlesex District as of January 2019. According to these projections, the K-4 students will

increase by 4.5% between 2019/2020 and 2028/2029, while the 5-8 grade students (-2.8%) and 9-12 grade students (-10.9%) will show slight declines. Overall the total enrollment for the North Middlesex District is projected to decrease by 2.1% from 2020/2021 (2,965) to 2028/2029 (2,902).

**Figure 6: Pepperell School Enrollment Projections (2020/2021– 2025/2026)**



Source: New England School Development Council, January 2019

## 8. Race and Ethnicity

In 2010, the majority of Pepperell residents (96.4%) identified themselves as White, while the minority population was comprised of Black or African American (0.52%), American Indian and Alaska Native (0.17%), Asian (1.17%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (2 residents) and Some Other Race or Two or More Races (1.73%). The Hispanic or Latino population consisted of 194 residents or 1.7% of the population. Table 9 compares the racial and ethnic diversity of residents between 2010 and 2013-2017.



**Table 9: Racial and Ethnic Diversity of Residents (2010 and 2013-2017)**

Racial/Ethnic Category	2010		2013-2017		Population Percent Change
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent	2010-2013/2017
White	11,082	96.39	11,347	94.17	2.39
Black or African American	60	0.52	141	1.17	135.00
American Indian and Alaska Native	20	0.17	0	0.00	NA
Asian	134	1.17	246	2.04	83.58
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	2	0.01	0	0.00	NA
Some Other Race and Two or More Races	199	1.73	315	2.61	58.29
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>11,497</b>	<b>99.99</b>	<b>12,049</b>	<b>99.99</b>	<b>4.80</b>
Hispanic or Latino (All races)	194	1.69	315	2.61	62.37

Source: 2010 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey

Pepperell's overall population increased by 4.8% between 2010 and 2013-2017. The White population increased by 2.39%, but its overall share of the population decreased from 96.4% in 2010 to 94.2% in 2013-2017. Significant increases were seen in the Black or African American (135%), Asian (83.58%), and Some Other Race and Two or More Races (58.29%) populations. The minority share of the population increased by 2.2% between 2010 and 2013-2017. The Hispanic or Latino population increased by 62.37% and increased its overall share of the population from 1.7% in 2010 to 2.6% in 2013-2017. Despite increases in the minority population, Pepperell remains a largely racially homogeneous community.

## 9. Residents with Disabilities

The total number of disabled residents in Pepperell, according to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, was 1,225 residents, which represented 10.2% of the total population. As shown in Table 10, the majority of disabled residents (56.9%) were between 5 and 64 years old. The types of disabilities ranged from an ambulatory difficulty (38.8%), to an independent living difficulty (38.8%), to a hearing difficulty (32.2%), to a cognitive difficulty (30%), to a vision difficulty (18.9%), and to a self-care difficulty (13.6%). It should be noted that residents may report more than one disability.

**Table 10: Characteristics of the Disabled Community in Pepperell (2013-2017)**

Disability Status	Total Number	Percent of Total
<b>Age Characteristics</b>		
Under 5 years old	0	0.0
5-17 years old	100	8.2
18-64 years old	597	48.7
65+ years old	528	43.1
<b>Disability Characteristics (All Ages)</b>		
With hearing difficulty	394	32.2
With a vision difficulty	232	18.9
With a cognitive difficulty	366	30.0

**Table 10 (cont'd): Characteristics of the Disabled Community in Pepperell (2013-2017)**

Disability Status	Total Number	Percent of Total
With an ambulatory difficulty	475	38.8
With a self-care difficulty	167	13.6
With an independent living difficulty	475	38.8
<b>Total Number of Disabled Residents</b>	<b>1,225</b>	<b>10.2</b>

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Residents may report more than one disability.

Disabled residents often have unique housing needs, both in terms of the physical design/accessibility of their homes and the cost relative to a fixed or limited income. The Housing Production Plan will address the needs of seniors and disabled residents related to these issues. Addressing the need to incorporate universal design within housing units is now more commonplace in affordable housing, and is most important to plan for the health and well-being of an increasingly aging population.

## 10. Household Income

This section examines the household, family and per capita incomes in Pepperell, and compares Pepperell's income distribution to HUD eligibility thresholds and U.S. poverty thresholds. By examining these values, we can understand the percentage of Pepperell residents who may be in poverty or living on a restricted income.

### a. Median Household Income

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, median household income is calculated based on the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household. Over the past twenty years, Pepperell has seen a significant increase in its median household income. The median household income for Pepperell increased from \$65,162 in 1999 to \$90,029 in 2013-2017 or by 38.2%. Pepperell experienced a lower growth rate in median household income than Massachusetts (46.9%), the surrounding communities (46.7%), and the Greater Lowell region (38.6%), but outpaced the nation (37.4%) as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11: Median Household Income for Selected Geographies (1999 and 2013-2017)**

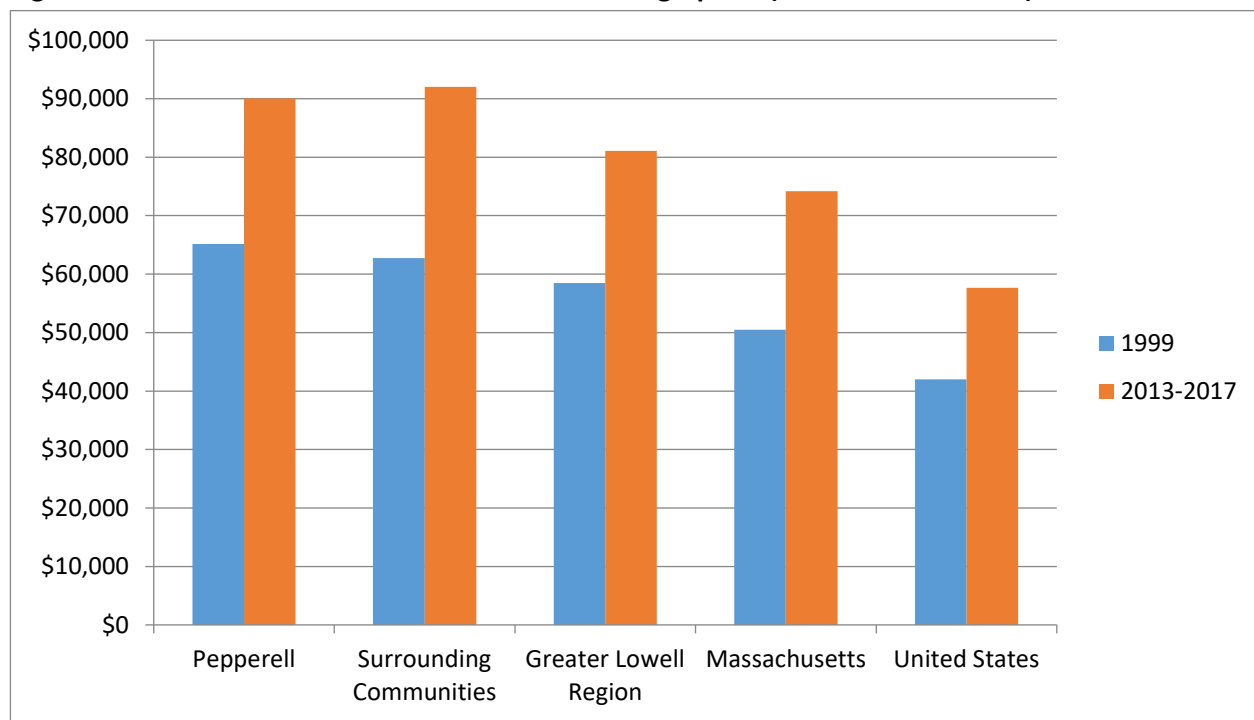
Geographic Area	1999	2013-2017	% Increase 1999- 2013/2017	% Change Inflation Adjusted
Pepperell	\$65,162	\$90,029	38.2	-6.0
Surrounding Communities	\$62,744	\$92,043	46.7	-2.1
Greater Lowell Region	\$58,472	\$81,061	38.6	-5.7
Massachusetts	\$50,502	\$74,167	46.9	-0.1
United States	\$41,944	\$57,652	37.4	-6.5

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Surrounding communities include Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend.

It is important to adjust these values for inflation so an absolute comparison can be made. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Inflation Rate Calculator, one dollar in 1999 has the same buying

power as \$1.47 in 2017 dollars, which indicates a rate of inflation of 47% between 1999 and 2017. The inflation calculator uses the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) for a given calendar year, and the data represents changes in prices of all goods and services purchased for consumption by urban households. When adjusted for inflation, the median household income in Pepperell decreased by 6%, while the median household income for the United States (-6.5%), Greater Lowell (-5.7%), the surrounding communities (-2.1%) and Massachusetts (-0.1%) also decreased.

**Figure 7: Median Household Income for Selected Geographies (1999 and 2013-2017)**



Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey

## b. Median Family Income

Median family income is calculated based on the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household who are related. Median family income is often greater than median household income because a household can consist of single individuals, whereas family income always consists of two or more individuals. The median family income has increased in Pepperell, its surrounding communities, the Greater Lowell region, Massachusetts and the nation from 1999 to 2013-2017, as shown in Table 12 and Figure 8.

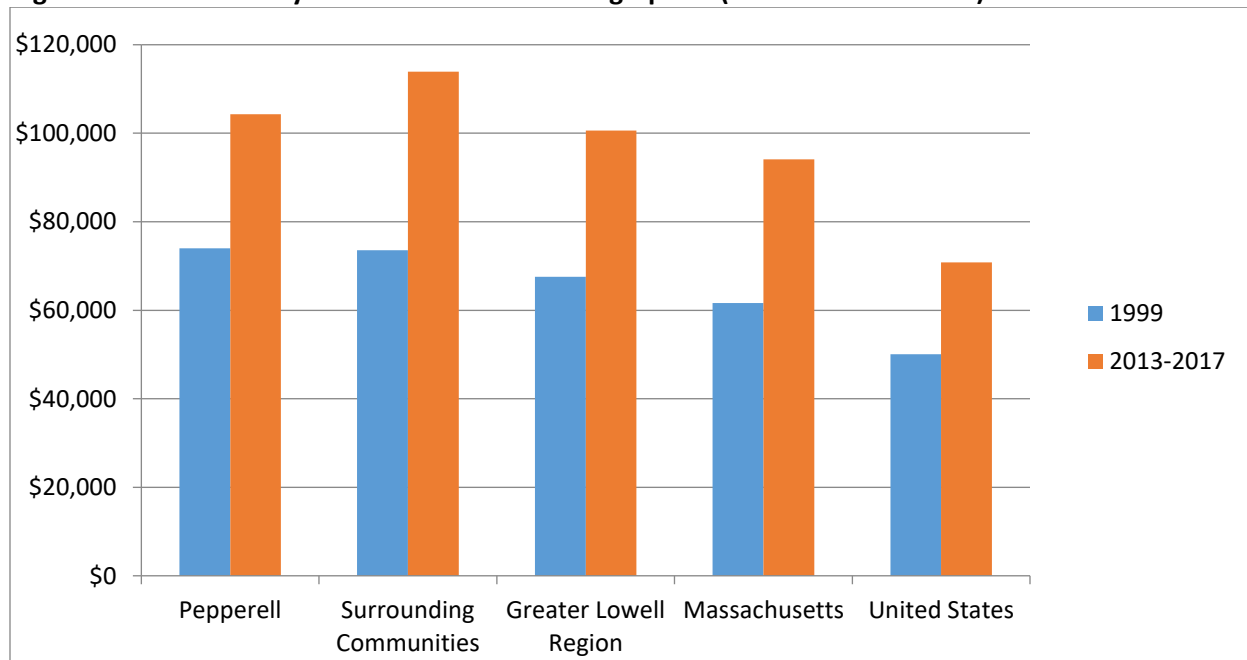
**Table 12: Median Family Income for Selected Geographies (1999 and 2013-2017)**

Geographic Area	1999	2013-2017	% Increase 1999 – 2013/2017	% Change Inflation Adjusted
Pepperell	\$ 73,967	\$ 104,265	41.0	-4.1
Surrounding Communities	\$ 73,558	\$ 113,904	54.8	5.3
Greater Lowell region	\$ 67,583	\$ 100,581	48.8	1.2
Massachusetts	\$ 61,664	\$ 94,110	52.6	3.8
United States	\$ 50,046	\$ 70,850	41.6	-3.7

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Surrounding communities include Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend

Pepperell's median family income increased from \$73,967 in 1999 to \$104,265 in 2013-2017 – an increase of 41%. Median family incomes also increased in the surrounding communities (54.8%), Massachusetts (52.6%), the Greater Lowell region (48.8%) and the United States (41.6%), as shown in Table 12 and Figure 8.

When adjusted for inflation, Pepperell experienced a negative growth rate of 4.1% in median family income. Pepperell's surrounding communities (5.3%), Massachusetts (3.8%) and the Greater Lowell region (1.2%) experienced positive growth in median family income when adjusted for inflation, while the nation experienced a negative growth rate of 3.7%.

**Figure 8: Median Family Income for Selected Geographies (1999 and 2013-2017)**

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey

### c. Per Capita Income

The U.S. Census Bureau defines per capita income as the average income received in the past twelve months for every man, woman, and child in a geographic area. It is derived by dividing the total income of all people 15 years old and over in a geographic area by the total population in that area. Income data is not collected for people under 15 years old, even though those people are included in the denominator for per capita income.

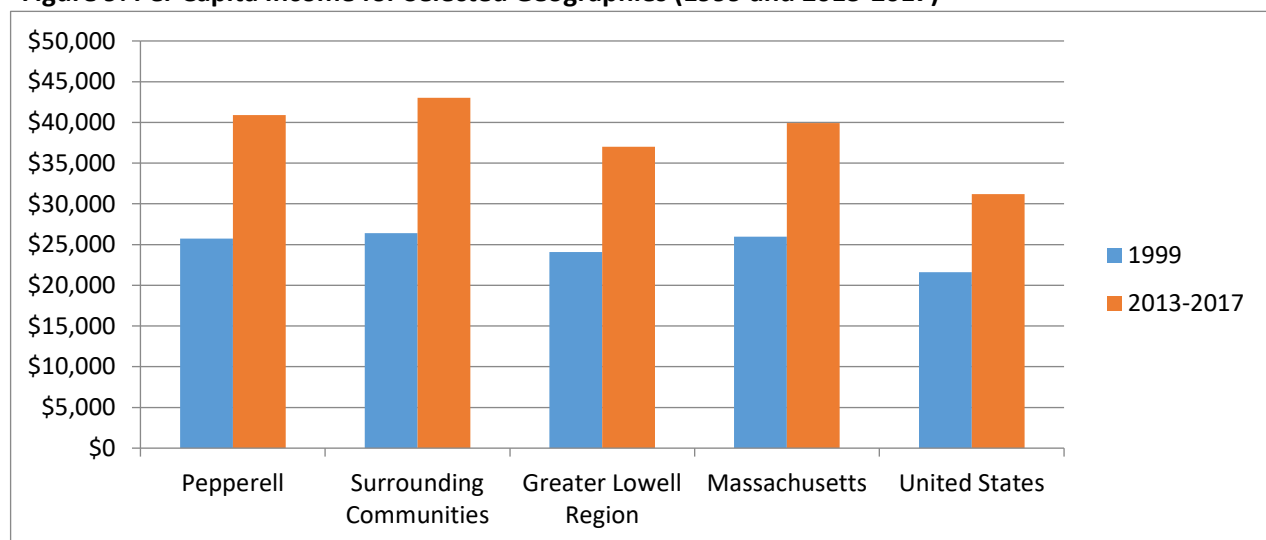
Between 1999 and 2013-2017, Pepperell's per capita income increased from \$25,722 to \$40,919, or by 59.1% as shown in Table 13 and Figure 9. The increase in Pepperell's per capita income outpaced the increase in Massachusetts (53.8%), the Greater Lowell region (53.7%) and the nation (44.4%), but lagged behind the surrounding communities (63%). When adjusted for inflation, Pepperell had a positive per capital income growth of 8.2%, while the surrounding communities (10.9%), Massachusetts (4.6%), and the Greater Lowell region (3.2%) also had positive per capita income growth. The national per capita income decreased by 1.8% when adjusted for inflation.

**Table 13: Per Capita Income for Selected Geographies (1999 and 2013-2017)**

Geographic Area	1999	2013-2017	% Increase 1999 – 2013/2017	% Change Inflation Adjusted
Pepperell	\$ 25,722	\$ 40,919	59.1	8.2
Surrounding Communities	\$ 26,392	\$ 43,021	63.0	10.9
Greater Lowell Region	\$ 24,081	\$ 37,016	53.7	3.2
Massachusetts	\$ 25,952	\$ 39,913	53.8	4.6
United States	\$ 21,587	\$ 31,177	44.4	-1.8

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey  
Surrounding communities include Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend.

**Figure 9: Per Capita Income for Selected Geographies (1999 and 2013-2017)**



Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey

#### d. Income Distribution

While median household and median family incomes are valuable indicators, they do not account for the range, or distribution, of household incomes in a community. Table 14 compares the household income distribution in Pepperell in 1999 and 2013-2017. The number of households in the 100,000+ categories increased by 118.1% from 882 households in 1999 to 1,924 households in 2013-2017. Households in the \$10-14,000 and \$25-34,999 also increased. All the other income categories decreased. With the median household income increasing from \$65,162 in 1999 to \$90,029 in 2013-2017, there was a shift upwards in the median household income levels for Pepperell households.

**Table 14: Income Distribution for Households (1999 and 2013-2017)**

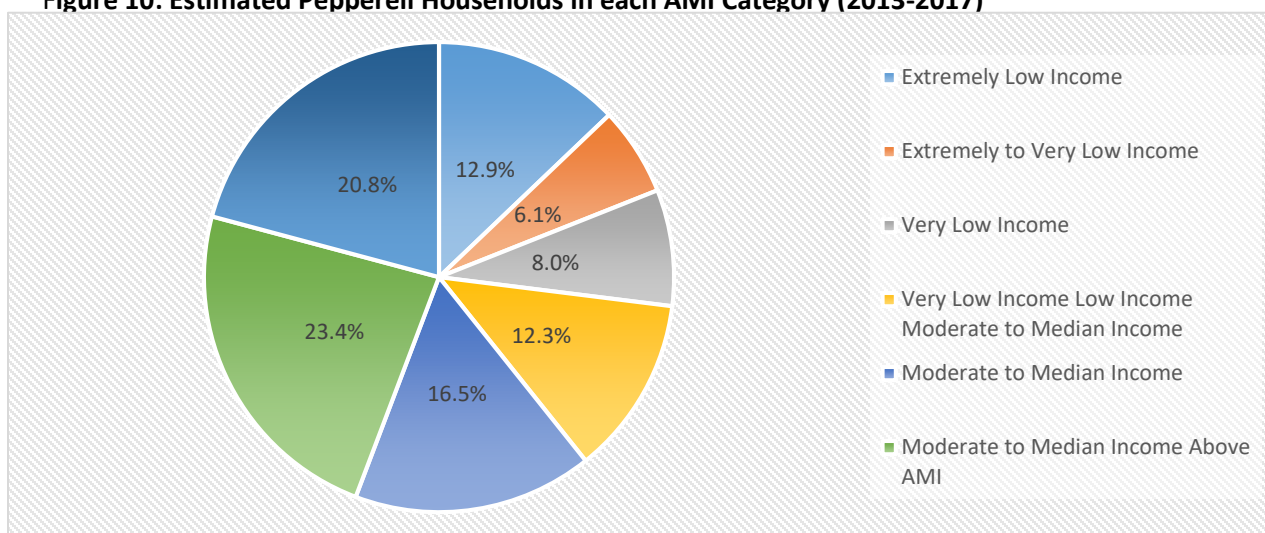
Income Category	1999		2013-2017		Percent Change	HUD Threshold for 2013-2017 data
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	1999-2013/2017	
Less than \$10,000	166	4.3	96	2.2	-42.2	Extremely Low Income
\$10,000-\$14,999	83	2.2	213	4.9	156.6	Extremely Low Income
\$15,000-\$24,999	314	8.2	251	5.8	-20.1	Extremely Low Income
\$25,000-\$34,999	259	6.7	264	6.1	1.9	Extremely Low Income Very Low Income
\$35,000-\$49,999	572	14.9	346	8.0	-39.5	Very Low Income
\$50,000-\$74,999	803	20.9	534	12.3	-33.5	Very Low Income Low Income Moderate to Median Income
\$75,000-\$99,999	766	19.9	718	16.5	-6.3	Moderate to Median Income
\$100,000-\$149,999	562	14.6	1,018	23.4	81.1	Moderate to Median Income Above AMI
\$150,000-\$199,999	167	4.3	449	10.3	168.9	Above AMI
\$200,000 or more	153	4.0	457	10.5	198.7	Above AMI
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,845</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,346</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13.0</b>	

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey

There is currently no accurate data that breaks down Pepperell's income by family size. However, using household income data and the HUD thresholds, it is possible to make generalized assumptions about the number of residents eligible for HUD assistance. Assuming a three-person household, it is possible to estimate the percentage of households that fall within each category, as shown in Table 15 and Figure 10 on the following page. After matching each income category to a HUD threshold, the percentage of households in Pepperell that are associated with various income thresholds can be estimated.

As shown in Figure 10, 60.7% of Pepperell households earn an income at or above the AMI, while 39.3% of households are in the moderate, low, very low, or extremely low income categories. This indicates that while there are some very high earning households in Pepperell, nearly 40% of the total households still earn less than the AMI and could be eligible for HUD assistance.

**Figure 10: Estimated Pepperell Households in each AMI Category (2013-2017)**



Source: 2013 - 2017 American Community Survey

#### e. Area Median Income

Affordable housing requirements base a household's eligibility for income restricted units on a series of income thresholds. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines these thresholds as percentages of Area Median Income (AMI) – a number determined by the median family income in a given Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Income thresholds are often capped at 80%, 60%, 50%, and 30% of AMI, but vary depending on the number of individuals in the household. In general, households earning 80% of AMI are considered “moderate income”, whereas those households earning 60% of AMI are considered “low income”. Households earning 50% of AMI and 30% of AMI are considered “very low income” and “extremely low income” respectively. HUD income thresholds for the Greater Lowell region are used to determine which households in the region are eligible for income-restricted units, including Chapter 40B, Section 8, and Low Income Housing Tax Credit units. These values are based on the AMI for the Lowell region, which HUD lists as \$105,400 for FY 2018 (Table 15).

**Table 15: Adjusted Income Limits by Household Size, Lowell Metro FMR Area, FY 2018**

Income Limit Area	Median Income for FMR Area	FY 2012 Income Limit Category	Household Size					
			1-Person	2-Person	3-Person	4-Person	5-Person	6-Person
Lowell, MA HUD Metro FMR Area	\$ 105,400	30% - Extremely Low	\$ 22,150	\$ 25,300	\$ 28,450	\$ 31,600	\$ 34,150	\$ 36,700
		50% - Very Low	\$ 36,900	\$ 42,200	\$ 47,450	\$ 52,700	\$ 56,950	\$ 61,150
		80% - Low	\$ 50,350	\$ 57,550	\$ 64,750	\$ 71,900	\$ 77,700	\$ 83,450

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD User data

#### f. Veterans Income

Information on veterans is limited in the ACS and, in most instances, is not provided and is described as being “not applicable or not available”. However, the 2013-2017 ACS does indicate that within the 18

years and older age cohort, approximately 746 Pepperell residents are veterans. Of these veterans, 8.5% are unemployed, which is 3.5% higher than the 2013-2017 unemployment rate for the local workforce in general (5.0%). Within the 2013-2017 ACS, 2.9% of veterans were below the poverty line and 26.9% of veterans have a disability. Additional information should be developed either through the State Veterans agencies or the local Veterans Agent.

**g. Residents Living in Poverty**

Every year the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) establishes the Federal Poverty Guidelines, while the U.S. Census Bureau updates the poverty thresholds principally for statistical purposes. These Poverty Guidelines vary by family size and composition to determine who is living in poverty (Table 16). If a family's total income is less than the poverty guideline based on family size, than that family, and every individual in it, is considered to be living in poverty. The official poverty definition uses income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps).

**Table 16: Federal Poverty Level Guidelines (2019)**

Number of Persons in Family	Poverty Guideline
1	\$ 12,490
2	\$ 16,910
3	\$ 21,330
4	\$ 25,750
5	\$ 30,170
6	\$ 34,590
7	\$ 39,010
8	\$ 43,430
For each additional person	\$ 4,420
Source: Department of Health and Human Services <a href="http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines">http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines</a>	

Utilizing the 2019 Federal Poverty Guidelines, approximately 5.6% of Pepperell's total population in 2013-2017 was living in poverty.<sup>1</sup> Of those residents, more than sixty percent (63.4%) were between the ages of 18 to 64, with 24.5% under the age of 18, and 12.2% over the age of 65 (Table 17). More than sixty percent of those in poverty were male (62.8%), while 37.2% were female.

**Table 17: Characteristics of the Population Living in Poverty (2013-2017)**

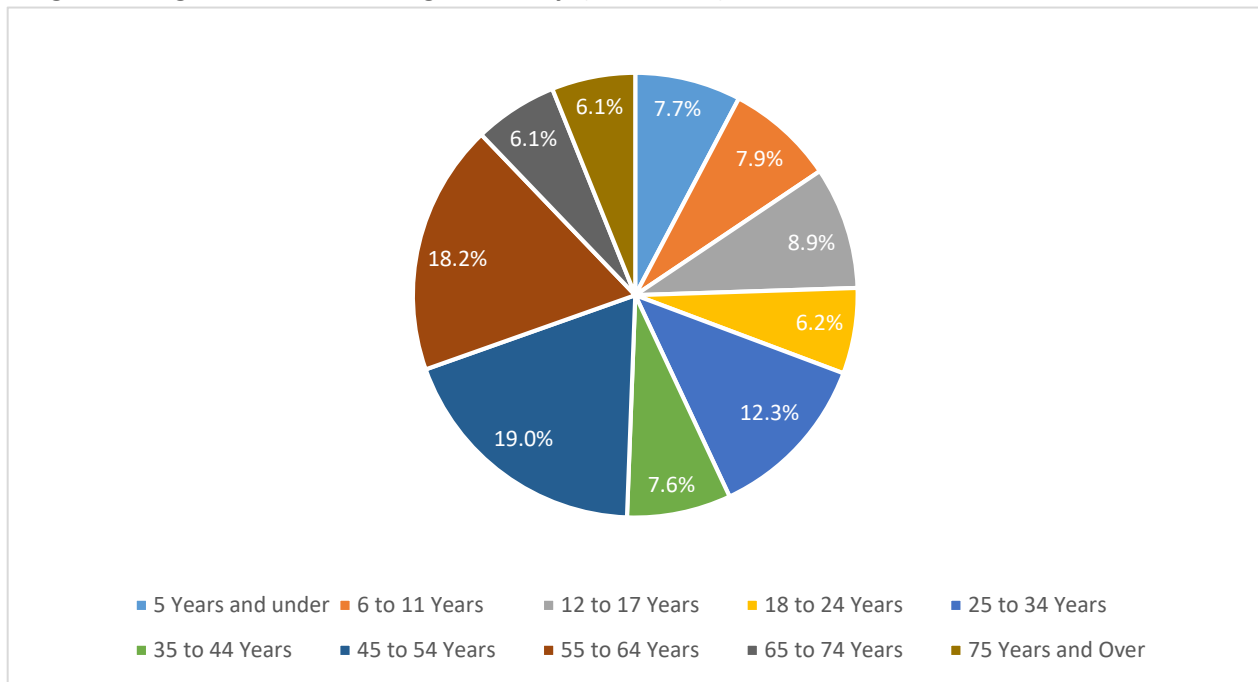
Characteristics	Number Below Poverty Level	Percent in Poverty	Percent of Total
<b>Age</b>			
Under 18 Years	165	5.8	24.5
18 to 64 Years	427	5.6	63.4
65 Years and Older	82	5.2	12.2
<b>Total Individuals Living in Poverty</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>100.1</b>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	423	2.7	62.8
Female	251	5.3	37.2
<b>Total Individuals Living in Poverty</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total Pepperell Population</b>	<b>12,021</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007-2011

<sup>1</sup> For more information about how the U.S. Census Bureau defines poverty thresholds, refer to: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/methods/measure.html>.



**Figure 11: Age of Residents Living in Poverty (2013-2017)**



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey

## B. Existing Housing Stock Analysis

This section summarizes the characteristics and condition of the current housing stock and local housing market in Pepperell. By analyzing housing types and home values, development and sales trends, and housing affordability, this examination provides an affordable housing update since the publication of the *Pepperell Affordable Housing Production Plan for 2014-2018*.

### 1. Housing Unit Types

Pepperell supports a variety of housing units from single-family homes to multi-unit dwellings. As shown in Table 18 on the next page, Pepperell had 3,917 housing units in 2000 of which 75% were single-family homes. Multi-unit dwellings accounted for an additional 20.5%, and nontraditional housing units (e.g. mobile homes) accounted for 4.5% of all dwellings. According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) data, total housing units increased by 19.1% to 4,665 housing units in 2013-2017 with single-family homes comprising 80.8% of the total housing units. Single-family houses increased by 28.3% from 2,939 units in 2000 to 3,772 units in 2013-2017. According to the ACS data, the number of duplexes decreased from 288 units in 2000 to 280 units in 2013-2017, or by 2.8%, while the number of 3 or 4 units increased from 172 units in 2000 to 176 units in 2013-2017 (2.3%). The number of 5-19 units decreased by 19.5% from 272 units in 2000 to 219 units in 2013-2017, while the number of 20+ units increased from 70 units in 2000 to 115 units in 2013-2017, or by 64.3%.

**Table 18: Housing Units by Type (2000 and 2013-2017)**

Number of Units per Structure	2000		2013-2017		Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	2000-2013/2017
1-unit, detached	2,790	71.2	3,482	74.6	24.8
1-unit, attached	149	3.8	290	6.2	94.6
2 units	288	7.4	280	6.0	-2.8
3 or 4 units	172	4.4	176	3.8	-2.3
5 to 9 units	182	4.6	121	2.6	-33.5
10 to 19 units	90	2.3	98	2.1	-8.9
20 or more units	70	1.8	115	2.5	64.3
Mobile Home	176	4.5	103	2.2	-41.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,917</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,665</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19.1</b>

Data Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey

## 2. Housing Tenure

Information on housing tenure and age of householders provides additional information to plan for the appropriate types of housing to accommodate current and future households. Housing tenure figures show that the majority of units are owner-occupied. In 2000 and 2013-2017, approximately 79% of homes were owner-occupied, while only about 21% were renter-occupied, as outlined in Table 19 below. While the total occupied housing units increased by 13% between 2000 and 2013-2017, there was an 11.2% increase in owner-occupied units and a 19.9% increase in renter-occupied units.

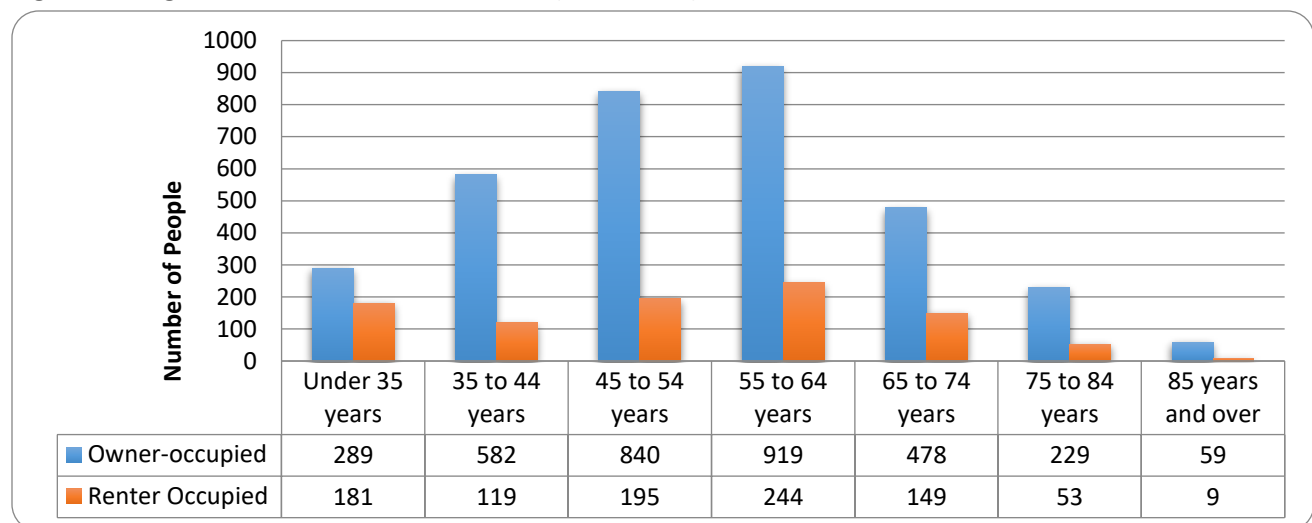
**Table 19: Housing Tenure (2000 and 2013-2017)**

Characteristics	2000		2013-2017		Percent Change 2000 – 2013/2017
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Owner Occupied	3,055	79.4	3,396	78.1	11.2
Renter Occupied	792	20.6	950	21.9	19.9
<b>Total Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>3,847</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,346</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13.0</b>

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS)

Home ownership is more common than rental in for every age group in Pepperell. Home ownership peaks at 55-64 years of age and then steadily declines. Even in the 85 years and over category, home ownership is still more common than renting with 59 owner-occupied units and 9 renter-occupied units, as shown in Figure 12 on the next page. This data reflects the need for more rental units, particularly within senior housing developments that include affordable rental units.

**Figure 12: Age of Homeowners and Renters (2013-2017)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

### 3. New Residential Development

Reviewing the residential permits issued from 2010 to 2019 provides an overview of the changing housing stock in Pepperell. Unlike most communities, the residential permits reflect an increase in single-family housing instead of a diversity of housing in terms of bedroom units. Between 2010 and 2019, 194 residential permits were issued for 204 residential units, as shown in Table 20 below and Figure 13 on the next page. The number of residential units permitted is greater than the number of permits because one permit can be issued for multiple units in the case of multi-family dwellings.

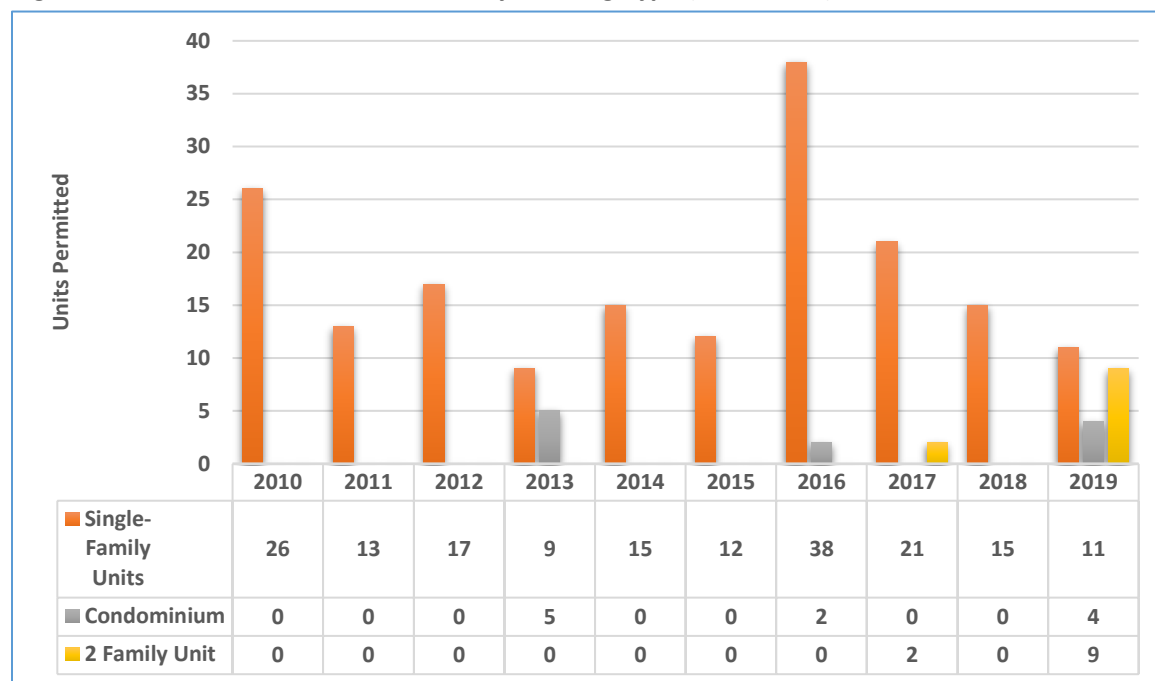
Most permits issued were for single-family units or condominiums, although there were a few two-family units permitted in 2017 and 2019. The number of residential units permitted peaked at 40 units in 2016. The conversion of older homes to two-family units and accessory family dwellings are becoming more common place. The number of permits issued in 2020 may be impacted by COVID-19.

**Table 20: Residential Units Permitted (2010-2019)**

Year	Total Building Permits	Total Units Approved	Estimated Construction Cost	Average Est. Construction Cost Per Unit
2010	22	22	\$4,849,500	\$220,432
2011	13	13	\$2,825,000	\$217,308
2012	17	17	\$3,400,500	\$200,029
2013	14	14	\$2,720,500	\$194,321
2014	15	15	\$3,025,000	\$201,667
2015	12	12	\$3,720,000	\$310,000
2016	40	40	\$12,112,000	\$302,800
2017	22	23	\$7,104,000	\$308,870
2018	15	15	\$4,250,000	\$283,333
2019	24	33	\$5,355,250*	\$334,703*
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>\$49,361,750</b>	<b>\$263,967**</b>

Source: Pepperell Building Department (2010-2019) \*Partial list in 2019 (values for 16 units); \*\*187 units

**Figure 13: Residential Units Permitted by Housing Type (2010-2019)**



Source: Pepperell Building Department (2012-2019)

**a. Number of House Sales**

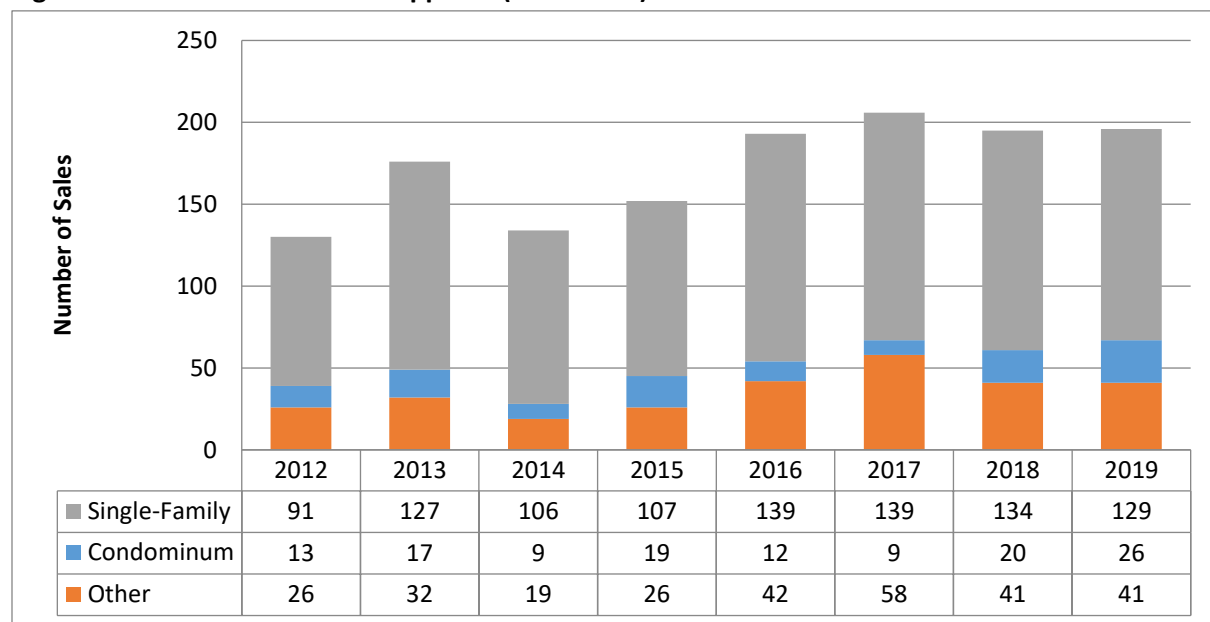
Table 21 and Figure 14 below show the number of residential sales in Pepperell between 2012 and 2019, comprised of 972 single-family, 125 condominium and 1,382 total sales. Single-family home sales comprised 70.3% of total residential sales, while condominiums only comprised 9% of total residential sales between 2012 and 2019. Single-family home sales increased by 52.7% between 2012 and 2016, stayed the same in 2017 and then decreased in 2018 and 2019. Condominium sales showed a 46.2% increase between 2012 and 2015, decreased in 2016 and 2017 and then increased in 2018 and 2019.

**Table 21: Residential Sales in Pepperell (2012–2019)**

Year	Single-Family	Condominium	Other	All
2012	91	13	26	130
2013	127	17	32	176
2014	106	9	19	134
2015	107	19	26	152
2016	139	12	42	193
2017	139	9	58	206
2018	134	20	41	195
2019	129	26	41	196
<b>Total</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>1,382</b>

Source: The Warren Group, 2019

**Figure 14: Residential Sales in Pepperell (2012-2019)**



Source: The Warren Group, 2020

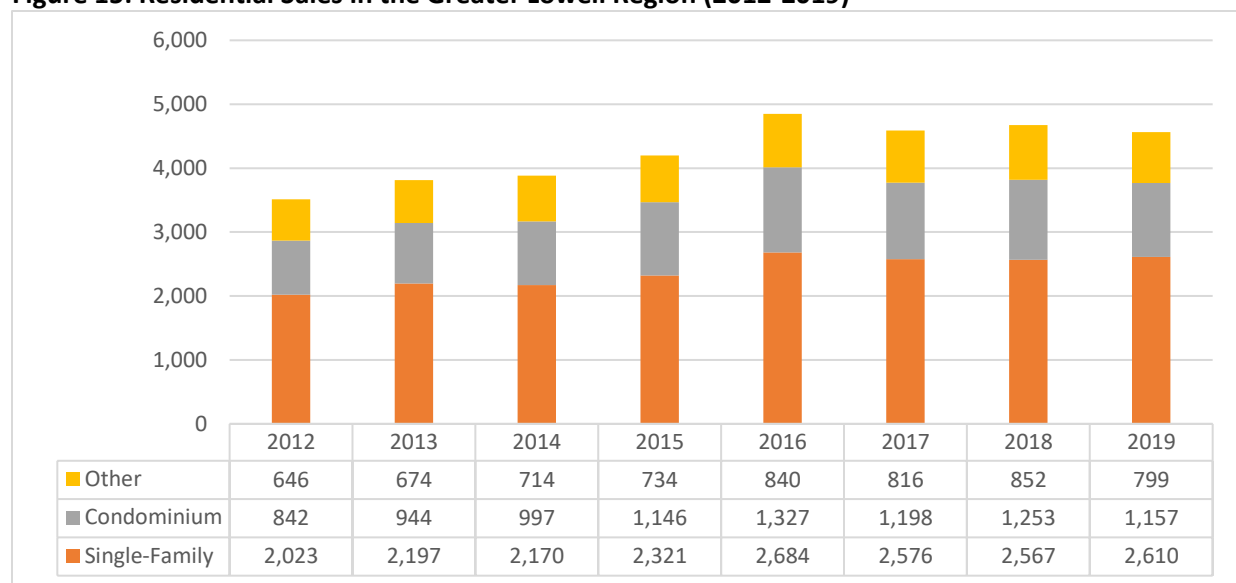
Outlined on the next page in Table 22 and Figure 15 are the total residential sales in the Greater Lowell region for the same period. Housing sales in the region reflect an increase from 2012 to 2016, a slight decrease in 2017 and 2018, and a slight increase in 2019. Single-family home sales in the region comprised 56.2% of total residential sales, while condominiums only comprised 26% of total residential sales between 2012 and 2019. Single-family home sales increased by 32.7% between 2012 and 2016 and then decreased by 4.4% between 2016 and 2018. Condominium sales showed a 57.6% increase between 2012 and 2016 and a 12.8% decrease between 2016 and 2019. This may reflect a cooling down of the condominium market since 2016.

**Table 22: Residential Sales in the Greater Lowell region (2012–2019)**

Year	Single-Family	Condominium	Other	All
2012	2,023	842	646	3,511
2013	2,197	944	674	3,815
2014	2,170	997	714	3,881
2015	2,321	1,146	734	4,201
2016	2,684	1,327	840	4,851
2017	2,576	1,198	816	4,590
2018	2,567	1,253	852	4,672
2019	2,610	1,157	799	4,566
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,148</b>	<b>8,864</b>	<b>6,075</b>	<b>34,087</b>

Source: The Warren Group, 2020

**Figure 15: Residential Sales in the Greater Lowell Region (2012-2019)**



Source: The Warren Group, 2020

**b. Median Sales Prices**

Table 23 and Figure 16 on the next page show the change in median sales prices in Pepperell for single-family, condominiums and all housing sales between 2012 and 2019 based upon data from the Warren Group. The median sales price for single-family homes in Pepperell increased from \$242,000 in 2012 to \$375,000 in 2019. The condominium median sales prices increased from \$125,100 in 2012 to \$258,625 in 2018, while the total median sales prices increased from \$222,550 to \$355,500 during the same period. These median sales prices reflect the relative affordable nature of the Pepperell housing market compared to the rest of the Greater Lowell region.

**Table 23: Median Sales Prices in Pepperell (2012-2019)**

Year	Single-Family	Condominium	All
2012	\$242,000	\$125,100	\$222,550
2013	\$295,000	\$160,000	\$275,000
2014	\$300,000	\$224,900	\$295,000
2015	\$310,000	\$189,000	\$281,500
2016	\$320,000	\$191,000	\$309,000
2017	\$335,900	\$241,500	\$328,000
2018	\$343,700	\$248,750	\$339,000
2019	\$375,000	\$258,625	\$355,500

Source: The Warren Group, 2020

**Figure 16: Median Sales Prices in Pepperell (2012-2019)**



Source: The Warren Group, 2020

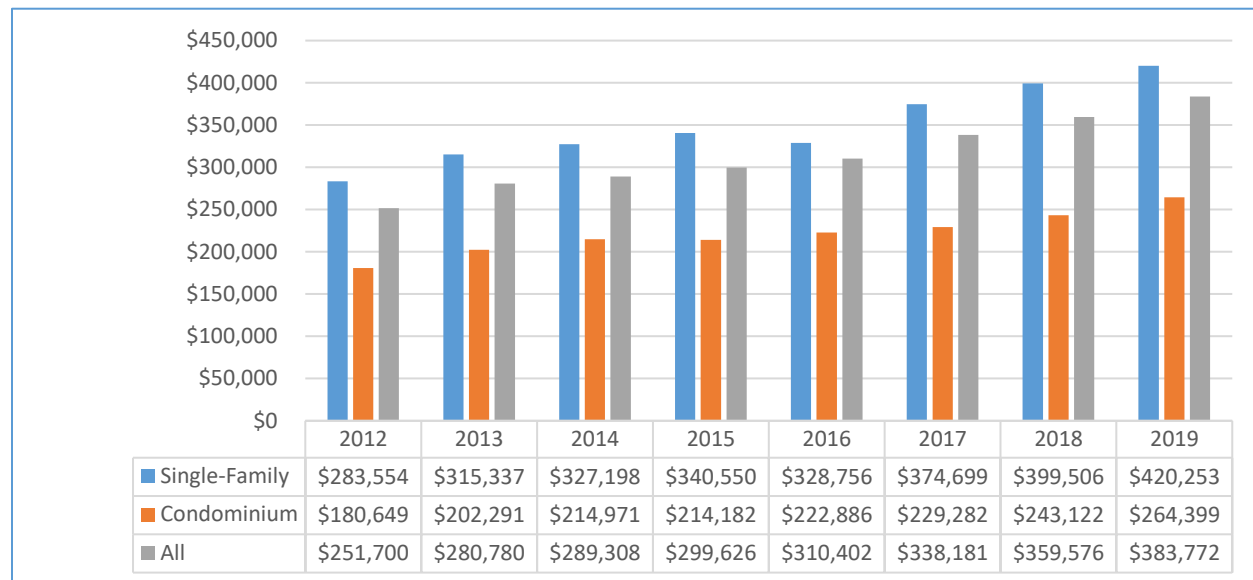
The median sales prices in the Greater Lowell region for 2012-2019 are provided in Table 24 and Figure 17 on the next page. When compared to the Greater Lowell median sales prices, Pepperell is at the lower end of the median sales prices for residential properties, particularly condominiums. This will be more evident in Tables 25 and 26 when there is a comparison of median sales prices with the Greater Lowell and surrounding communities in 2016-2019 and 2019 respectively.

**Table 24: Median Sales Prices in the Greater Lowell Region (2012-2019)**

Year	Single-Family	Condominium	All
2012	\$283,554	\$180,649	\$251,700
2013	\$315,337	\$202,291	\$280,780
2014	\$327,198	\$214,971	\$289,308
2015	\$340,550	\$214,182	\$299,626
2016	\$328,756	\$222,886	\$310,402
2017	\$374,699	\$229,282	\$338,181
2018	\$399,506	\$243,122	\$359,576
2019	\$420,253	\$264,399	\$383,772

Source: The Warren Group, 2020

**Figure 17: Median Sales Prices for the Greater Lowell Region (2012-2019)**



Source: The Warren Group, 2020

Table 25 compares the median sales prices for single-family and condominiums between 2016 and 2019 for Pepperell, its surrounding communities and the other Greater Lowell communities. Pepperell's single-family sales prices are generally higher than those for Ayer, Dracut, Lowell, and Townsend, while its condominium prices remain higher than Ayer, Dracut, Lowell, Shirley and Townsend. These trends have continued from 2016 through 2019. Pepperell offers lower cost housing options than most of the communities, which will attract first-time home buyers looking for affordable and workforce housing. The ability to attract young families to Pepperell will have a positive impact upon its future.

**Table 25: Median Sales Price Comparison with Surrounding/Greater Lowell Communities (2016-2019)**

Community	2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos
Ayer	\$338,000	\$218,000	\$335,000	\$213,500	\$349,950	\$218,800	\$346,000	\$250,000
Groton	\$449,500	\$310,000	\$479,900	\$258,700	\$500,000	\$286,500	\$510,000	\$400,000
Shirley	\$292,000	\$187,000	\$350,000	\$148,000	\$345,000	\$180,750	\$370,950	\$182,500
Townsend	\$249,900	\$156,786	\$272,400	\$130,000	\$296,000	\$158,500	\$307,450	\$79,900
<b>Surrounding Communities</b>	<b>\$347,431</b>	<b>\$224,667</b>	<b>\$369,293</b>	<b>\$204,705</b>	<b>\$382,527</b>	<b>\$228,128</b>	<b>\$393,785</b>	<b>\$260,685</b>
<b>Pepperell</b>	<b>\$320,000</b>	<b>\$191,000</b>	<b>\$335,900</b>	<b>\$241,500</b>	<b>\$343,700</b>	<b>\$248,750</b>	<b>\$375,000</b>	<b>\$258,625</b>
Billerica	\$385,000	\$270,000	\$418,000	\$220,950	\$429,000	\$237,450	\$457,000	\$320,500
Chelmsford	\$385,000	\$236,000	\$410,500	\$257,000	\$432,000	\$280,000	\$450,000	\$285,000
Dracut	\$301,000	\$169,550	\$324,950	\$185,000	\$352,000	\$210,000	\$365,000	\$220,000
Dunstable	\$449,900	\$0	\$439,950	\$0	\$525,000	\$0	\$519,000	\$0
Lowell	\$252,400	\$160,000	\$267,650	\$180,039	\$295,000	\$186,000	\$316,375	\$215,000
Tewksbury	\$382,000	\$290,000	\$404,900	\$307,750	\$429,900	\$327,000	\$445,000	\$330,000



**Table 25 (cont'd): Median Sales Price Comparison with Surrounding/Greater Lowell Communities (2016-2019)**

Community	2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos	Single-Family	Condos
Tyngsborough	\$379,900	\$197,450	\$385,000	\$232,000	\$425,000	\$220,000	\$400,000	\$249,950
Westford	\$489,000	\$363,250	\$532,000	\$361,500	\$575,000	\$385,000	\$589,500	\$373,500
<b>Greater Lowell region</b>	<b>\$328,756</b>	<b>\$222,886</b>	<b>\$374,699</b>	<b>\$229,282</b>	<b>\$399,506</b>	<b>\$243,122</b>	<b>\$420,253</b>	<b>\$264,399</b>
<b>Middlesex County</b>	<b>\$480,000</b>	<b>\$385,195</b>	<b>\$515,000</b>	<b>\$415,000</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$449,000</b>	<b>\$557,750</b>	<b>\$467,000</b>
<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>\$348,000</b>	<b>\$329,500</b>	<b>\$365,000</b>	<b>\$341,000</b>	<b>\$385,000</b>	<b>\$364,900</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>\$380,000</b>

Source: The Warren Group, 2020

Table 26 provides a comparison between Pepperell and the surrounding and Greater Lowell communities in terms of residential sales and median sales prices for 2019. When compared to surrounding communities (Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend), Pepperell's median sales prices fall below the average of these communities, largely due to Groton's median sales prices. Pepperell's median sales prices are greater than those for Ayer, Shirley and Townsend, except for total sales. Pepperell's overall housing sales have exceeded those in the other four communities.

When compared to the Greater Lowell communities, Pepperell's single-family median sales prices exceed those for Dracut and Lowell, while its condominium and total median sales prices exceed those in these two communities and Tyngsborough. The median sales price for all residential sales in Pepperell for 2019 was \$335,500, which was below the median sales prices for the surrounding communities, the Greater Lowell region, Middlesex County and the State.

**Table 26: Median Sales Price Comparison with Surrounding/Greater Lowell Communities (2019)**

Community	Single-family		Condos		Total Sales	
	Median Sales Price	Number of Sales	Median Sales Price	Number of Sales	Median Sales Price	Number of Sales
Ayer	\$346,000	72	\$250,000	39	\$342,000	157
Groton	\$510,000	135	\$400,000	24	\$486,000	193
Shirley	\$370,950	60	\$182,500	12	\$350,000	101
Townsend	\$307,450	126	\$79,900	11	\$299,950	156
<b>Surrounding Communities</b>	<b>\$393,785</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>\$260,685</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>\$378,310</b>	<b>607</b>
<b>Pepperell</b>	<b>\$375,000</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>\$258,625</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>\$335,500</b>	<b>196</b>
Billerica	\$457,000	460	\$320,500	80	\$452,000	627
Chelmsford	\$450,000	384	\$285,000	211	\$410,250	648
Dracut	\$365,000	317	\$220,000	163	\$335,000	561
Dunstable	\$519,000	43	\$0	0	\$568,500	61
Lowell	\$316,375	558	\$215,000	387	\$300,000	1,331
Tewksbury	\$445,000	354	\$330,000	128	\$415,000	520
Tyngsborough	\$400,000	115	\$249,950	68	\$328,479	241
Westford	\$589,500	250	\$373,500	94	\$500,000	381
<b>Greater Lowell</b>	<b>\$420,253</b>	<b>2,610</b>	<b>\$264,399</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>\$383,772</b>	<b>4,566</b>
<b>Middlesex County</b>	<b>\$557,750</b>	<b>11,778</b>	<b>\$467,000</b>	<b>6,529</b>	<b>\$547,000</b>	<b>21,749</b>
<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>59,178</b>	<b>\$380,000</b>	<b>24,533</b>	<b>\$396,000</b>	<b>105,776</b>

Source: The Warren Group, 2020

#### 4. Housing Affordability Analysis

Public officials generally agree on a definition of affordable housing as that which costs no more than 30% of a household's total annual income. Households that spend between 30% and 50% of their annual incomes on housing and related costs (including basic utilities and fuels) are said to be moderately burdened, while those spending more than half of their incomes are considered severely burdened. This section analyzes the housing costs for homeowners and renters in Pepperell and provides an overall analysis of the rental market.

##### a. Housing Burden

Viewing monthly housing costs for homeowners as a percentage of annual household costs can shed light onto the housing burden faced by Pepperell residents. In Pepperell 28.8% of homeowners with a mortgage and 24.9% without a mortgage were considered at least moderately burdened by their housing costs because they spend 30% or more of their income on housing-related costs, as shown in Table 27. In total, 943 households, or 27.8% of owner-occupied households in Pepperell, are burdened by their housing costs. Not surprisingly, homeowners with a mortgage are more likely to be burdened than those without a mortgage.

**Table 57: Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Annual Household Income for Homeowners**

Characteristics	Households in Pepperell	Less than 20%		20%-29%		30% or more	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Households with a mortgage	2,505	1,097	43.8	687	27.4	721	28.8
Households without a mortgage	891	507	56.9	162	18.2	222	24.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Data does not include households with zero or negative income.

##### b. Rental Market

Renters are also burdened by monthly payments, as shown in Table 28 below. According to data collected in the 2013-2017 ACS, 323 rental households in Pepperell, or 34% of all rental households, have a rent payment that creates a moderate burden because it is greater than or equal to 30% of their income.

**Table 28: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (2013-2017)**

Rent as a Percent of Income	Number of Rental Households	Percent
Less than 10%	16	1.7
10% to 19%	179	18.8
20% to 29%	361	38.0
30% to 49%	97	10.2
50% or more	226	23.8
Not computed	71	7.5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013-2017

Fair Market Rents (FMRs) are primarily used to determine payment standard amounts for the Housing Choice Voucher program, initial renewal rents for some expiring project-based Section 8 contracts, initial rents for housing assistance payment (HAP), contracts in the Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy (SRO) program (Mod Rehab), and to serve as a rent ceiling in the HOME rental assistance program.<sup>2</sup> HUD annually establishes FMRs for 530 metropolitan areas and 2,045 nonmetropolitan county FMR areas. The final FMRs are published and available for use on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The FY 2020 FMR for a single bedroom apartment in the Lowell MA HUD Metro FMR area was \$1,188 per month, as shown in Table 29 below.

**Table 29: Fair Market Rent for Lowell, MA HUD Metro FMR Area (FY 2020)**

	Efficiency	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom
Fair Market Rent	\$ 1,066	\$1,188	\$1,534	\$ 1,912	\$ 2,078

*Source: FY 2020 Lowell, MA HUD Metro FMR Area, HUD Fair Market Rent Documentation System, effective October 1, 2019*

According to the 2013-2017 ACS, Pepperell had a median gross rent of \$1,118, as below shown in Table 30. This median gross rent is lower than every other surrounding and Greater Lowell community, except for Ayer, Lowell, Shirley and Townsend.

**Table 30: Median Gross Rent in the Area**

Community	Median Gross Rent
Ayer	\$934
Groton	\$1,289
Shirley	\$972
Townsend	\$912
Pepperell	\$1,118
Billerica	\$1,340
Chelmsford	\$1,306
Dracut	\$1,281
Dunstable	\$1,682
Lowell	\$1,089
Tewksbury	\$1,647
Tyngsborough	\$1,266
Westford	\$1,841

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey*

### c. Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) regularly reports the housing developments in a community that count toward its 10% affordability goal through the issuance of a Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) report. This information summarizes individual projects by project names, housing type (rental versus homeownership), total subsidized housing units, affordability

<sup>2</sup> HOME is the largest Federal block grant to State and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households. States and localities use HOME grant to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership or provide direct rental assistance to low-income people.

expiration, subsidizing agency, and whether the development was built using a Comprehensive Permit. Table 31 lists the housing developments included in Pepperell's Chapter 40B SHI Report as of December 2019.

Units are added and subtracted from the SHI throughout the cycle of their initial approval, final construction, and occupancy. A unit is added to the SHI once it has received a Comprehensive Permit. The Town must then document that a building permit has been issued within one year and a certificate of occupancy has been granted within a year and a half from the issuance of a building permit to remain on the inventory.

**Table 31: Pepperell Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of December 2019**

Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Affordability Expires	Built with a Comp Permit?	Subsidizing Agency
N/A	4 Foster Street	Rental	51	Perpetuity	No	DHCD
N/A	8 Foster Street	Rental	12	Perpetuity	No	DHCD
N/A	68 Groton Street	Rental	5	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
N/A	Cottage Street	Rental	2	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
Mayfield Park	22-24 Tucker Street	Ownership	7	2029	No	DHCD
Pepperell Meadows	River Road	Rental	40	2032	No	RHS
DDS Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	5	N/A	No	DDS
Emerson Village	196 Nashua Road	Ownership	7	Perpetuity	Yes	DHCD
Lowell Place	131 Lowell Road	Ownership	1	Perpetuity	Yes	MassHousing
<b>Total</b>			<b>130</b>			

Source: Department of Housing and Community Development, Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

In addition to the affordable housing units identified in the DHCD SHI report, there are additional affordable housing units in the "pipeline". The Town could issue building permits for five affordable housing units at the 20-unit Birch Drive development. These additional units would increase the Town's SHI to 135 affordable units or 3.1%.

#### **d. Subsidized Housing Inventory Changes in the Region and Surrounding Communities**

In January 2014, there were 130 subsidized housing units in Pepperell, representing 3% of the 2010 U.S. Census year-round housing stock in the community. Compared to the Greater Lowell region and the surrounding communities, as seen in Table 32 on the next page, Pepperell had one of the lowest affordable housing percentages, just above Shirley (2.48%) and Dunstable (0.0%).

As of December 2019, the number of subsidized units in Pepperell had remained at 130 units, or 3%. Within the Greater Lowell region and the surrounding communities, Pepperell currently ranks below all the other communities, except for Dunstable (0.0%) and Shirley (2.36%). Except for Ayer, Dracut, Lowell, Pepperell and Shirley, all the other communities increased the number of subsidized housing units in their communities between January 2014 and December 2019.

**Table 32: SHI Reports for the Surrounding/Greater Lowell Communities: January 2014 and December 2019**

Community	Year Round Housing Units	Total Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) Units			Percent SHI Units	
	2010	January 2014	December 2019	Percent Change	January 2014	December 2019
Ayer	3,440	286	267	-6.64	8.31	7.76
Groton	3,930	207	224	8.21	5.27	5.70
Shirley	2,417	60	57	-5.00	2.48	2.36
Townsend	3,356	126	145	5.66	3.75	4.32
<b>Surrounding Communities</b>	<b>13,143</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>5.17</b>	<b>5.27</b>
<b>Pepperell</b>	<b>4,335</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>
Billerica	14,442	857	1,178	37.46	5.93	8.16
Chelmsford	13,741	1,064	1,340	25.94	7.74	9.75
Dracut	11,318	719	590	-17.94	6.35	5.21
Dunstable	1,085	0	0	N/A	0.00	0.00
Lowell	41,308	5,215	5,154	-1.17	12.62	12.48
Tewksbury	10,803	1,030	1,052	2.14	9.53	9.74
Tyngsborough	4,166	340	436	28.24	8.16	10.47
Westford	7,671	351	1,037	195.44	4.58	13.78
<b>Greater Lowell Region</b>	<b>108,869</b>	<b>9,706</b>	<b>10,917</b>	<b>12.48</b>	<b>8.91</b>	<b>10.03</b>

Source: Massachusetts DHCD, Chapter 40B SHI, January 2014 and December 2019

#### **e. Affordable Housing Development in Pepperell**

The *Pepperell Affordable Housing Production Plan for 2014-2018* was submitted to DHCD on July 10, 2014 and approved on August 25, 2014. According to the January 2014 SHI report, Pepperell had 130 subsidized housing units or 3% and needed 304 additional subsidized housing units to meet its 10% goal. This plan outlined a planned production schedule of 16 subsidized housing units in 2014 and 64 subsidized housing units in 2015-2018 for a total of 210 subsidized housing units. Unfortunately, the private sector was not able to produce the number of affordable units envisioned in the Plan. In fact, according to the DHCD SHI report for December 2019, the Town of Pepperell was credited with no additional subsidized housing units and remain at 130 subsidized housing units or 3%. In developing the *Pepperell Housing Production Plan for 2021-2025*, the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee wanted to put the necessary incentives in place to meet its subsidized housing production schedule for the next five years.

Based upon the 2010 U.S. Census, Pepperell had 4,335 year-round housing units and, therefore, needed to have 434 subsidized housing units to meet its 10% goal. Based upon the December 2019 SHI report from DHCD, Pepperell needed an additional 304 subsidized housing units to meet its 10% goal. However, with the release of the 2020 U.S. Census in 2021, there will be a new year-round housing unit figure. If you review the number of housing units approved between 2010 and 2019, or 170 units, this

number can be added to the 4,335 figure to estimate the 2020 Census figure as 4,505 units. Under this estimated figure, the Town would need to have 450 subsidized units in its housing inventory to meet the 10% goal. Therefore, the Town would need an additional 320 affordable units, or 64 subsidized units per year over the next five years, to meet its 10% goal. Given that there is currently one “pipeline” project – Birch Drive – with five affordable units, the Town will need to focus on developing the 315 additional subsidized housing units through the potential development sites identified in Section III.

If you utilize the average growth rate in total housing units approved by Pepperell between 2010 and 2019, or 3.9%, an additional 90 housing units, or 18 units per year, could potentially be added to the Town’s housing stock between 2021 and 2025 to reach 4,595 total units. In order to move closer to attaining the 10% affordable housing unit “gap” (315 units), 9 of the 18 units per year would need to be affordable. Table 33 below outlines a timeframe for the development of those units.

**Table 33: Affordable Housing Production Timeline for Pepperell – Average Growth Rate**

Year	Number of Market Rate Units	Number of Affordable Units	Additional Affordable Units	Total Units	Percent Affordable*
2021	4,379	144	14	4,523	3.2
2022	4,388	153	9	4,541	3.4
2023	4,397	162	9	4,559	3.6
2024	4,406	171	9	4,577	3.8
2025	4,415	180	9	4,595	4.0

*Source: Initial estimate of total 2020 year-round housing units based on 2010 U.S. Census figure plus new permitted units. DHCD SHI Report, December 6, 2019. \*Percentage affordable based upon percentage of estimated year-round housing units (4,505) in the 2020 U.S. Census.*

Since the housing market is not always predictable and the private housing market may fluctuate from year to year in the quantity of market-rate and affordable housing units developed, two alternative scenarios have been developed. Table 34 outlines two additional scenarios for Pepperell, which projects growth in subsidized housing units at 0.5% and 1.0% increases per year. A community will be certified to be in compliance with an approved Housing Production Plan (HPP) if, during a single calendar year, it has increased the number of subsidized units in accordance with the production schedule approved by DHCD. Certification lasts for one year if the community has produced the equivalent of 0.5% of year-round housing units as SHI units, and two years if it has produced 1.0%.

According to M.G.L. Chapter 40B, once a plan has been certified, the local community has greater power in controlling Chapter 40B developments because a decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to deny a Comprehensive Permit application will be considered “consistent with local need,” and would be upheld by the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). Based on the estimated 2020 U.S. Census figures, Pepperell needs to produce 23 affordable units annually to achieve 0.5% development certification and 45 units per year to achieve 1.0% development certification.

If Pepperell has achieved certification within 15 days of the opening of the local hearing for the Comprehensive Permit, the ZBA shall provide written notice to the Applicant, with a copy to DHCD, that it considers that a denial of the permit or the imposition of conditions or requirements would be consistent with local needs, the grounds that it believes has been met, and the factual basis for that position, including any necessary supportive documentation.

If the Applicant wishes to challenge the ZBA's assertion, it must do so by providing written notice to the Department, with a copy to the Board, within 15 days of the receipt of the ZBA's notice, including any documentation to support its position. DHCD shall thereupon review the materials provided by both parties and issue a decision within 30 days of its receipt of all materials. The ZBA shall have the burden of proving satisfaction of the grounds for asserting that a denial or approval with conditions would be consistent with local needs, provided, however, that any failure of the DHCD to issue a timely decision shall be deemed a determination in favor of the municipality. This procedure shall toll the requirement to terminate the hearing within 180 days.

As with the previous scenario, Table 34 assumes a 3.9% annual growth rate in housing units over five years. Under the 0.5% scenario, the Town would exceed its affordable housing production under the growth scenario: 5.5% by 2025 instead of 4%. Under the 1.0% increase in affordable units per year, the Town would attain 8% by 2025. Under these three scenarios, Pepperell would still need additional time to exceed its 10% affordable housing goal. However, the community could demonstrate its commitment to affordable housing through these annual increases.

**Table 34: Affordable Housing Production Timeline for Pepperell – 0.5% or 1% Annually**

Year	# of Market Rate Units	0.5% Increase				1.0% Increase			
		# of Affordable Units	Additional Units - 0.5%	Total Units	Percent Affordable*	# of Affordable Units	Additional Units - 1.0%	Total Units	Percent Affordable*
2021	4,365	158	28	4,523	3.5	180	50	4,523	4.0
2022	4,383	181	23	4,564	4.0	225	45	4,586	5.0
2023	4,378	204	23	4,582	4.5	270	45	4,604	6.0
2024	4,373	227	23	4,600	5.0	315	45	4,622	7.0
2025	4,368	250	23	4,618	5.5	360	45	4,640	8.0

*Source: Initial estimate of total 2020 year-round housing units based on 2010 U.S. Census figure plus new permitted units. DHCD SHI Report, December 6, 2019. \*Percentage affordable based upon percentage of estimated year-round housing units (4,505) in the 2020 U.S. Census.*

## 5. Gaps between Existing Housing Needs and Current Supply

### a. Small Households and Families

According to the 2013-2017, most residents in Pepperell were between the ages of 35 and 74. Eighty-two percent (82.2%) of head of households in family households (2,813) and eighty-nine percent (89.3%) of nonfamily households (1,063) were in this category. Two-person households were the most common



household, comprising 40.3% of all family households (1,122). One-person nonfamily households are the second most common size comprising 83.6% of nonfamily households. Within nonfamily households, 83.6% lived alone and 43.6% housed residents over the age of 65.

Between 2000 and 2013-2017, there was a large growth in single-family homes. During that time, 833 single-family units were added. There was a 2.8% decrease in duplexes, a 2.3% decrease in 3-4 units, a 33.5% decrease in 5-9 units and an 8.9% decrease in 10-19 units. Developments with 20 or more units increased by 64.3%, while mobile homes decreased by 41.5%. These multi-family units will accommodate the smaller households that are increasing in number, such as the one-person households, 65+ householders, and the two-person family households. However, the decrease in many multiple unit housing structures reduces the housing options for small families and leaves them with the choice of a single-family home or moving to another community with more diverse housing options.

As with many suburban communities in the Greater Lowell region, most of the housing is owner-occupied. However, from 2010 to 2013-2017, renter-occupied units increased at a higher rate than owner-occupied units – 19.9% compared to 11.2%. According to the 2013-2017 ACS, 78.1% of units were owner-occupied with the majority of these units occupied by head of households in the 35-64 age cohort. Renter-occupied housing mainly consists of head of households aged 35 to 64. This data shows that the rental housing needs are somewhat diverse considering the variety of ages that occupy these units, with a focus on not just 1- or 2-bedroom units, but also 3- and 4-bedroom units, which need to be available for growing families.

The growth and prevalence of nontraditional households also justifies the need to provide a variety of housing types that do not fit within the traditional, market-rate, detached single-family home model. In particular, this data indicates the importance of providing smaller, affordable dwelling units – especially for those residents who need to live with someone else due to economic necessity. In addition, future housing types will need to accommodate residents over the age of 65 who want to “age in place”. In addition to a diverse supply of housing in terms of size and structure, a range of affordability options are needed for households and families who cannot afford to pay market rate prices.

## **b. Aging Populations**

Overall, the population is getting older in Pepperell. According to the 2013-2017 ACS, 50% of Pepperell’s population was 41 years of age or older, with the 35-59 age cohort representing 37% of the total population. Between 2010 and 2013-2017 the largest increase in age groups was between the ages of 25-34, 75+ and 60-74, which increased by 47.6%, 33.7% and 31.8% respectively. Between 2020 and 2040, the 75+ age group is expected to grow the most – increasing by an additional 57.6%. The Healthy Aging Indicators for Pepperell reflect increased housing needs for seniors and people with disabilities (10%), which need to be addressed in the housing design and construction of affordable housing. In addition, as outlined in the Residents with Disabilities section, 10.2% of the Pepperell population experienced some form of disability.



According to the 2018 Healthy Aging Report for Pepperell, 9.9% of Pepperell residents over 60 years of age had a fall within the last year and 3.1% of residents over 65 years of age had a hip fracture. Chronic disease is the leading cause of death and disability in the nation and Pepperell residents over 65 years of age had 771 emergency room visits/1,000 in 2018.

Considering the current trend of people getting married and settling down later in their thirties and the dramatic increase in residents 65 and older, the Housing Production Plan needs to embrace housing that's affordable and flexible to meet the diverse lifestyles of these two groups. Access to services, public transit, health care, open space, and amenities are in demand and for its senior citizens, the Town will need to consider not just what's inside the unit, but what is available outside of it as well. This requires thoughtful placement and planning of housing for all age groups.

With an aging population, the need for larger homes is likely declining in Pepperell, while the need for housing to accommodate seniors is increasing. The projected population growth in Pepperell, especially the increase in seniors and people with disabilities, has important implications for housing planning and development. In addition to a general need for more housing units, special attention will need to be paid to the housing needs of seniors. This Housing Production Plan will consider these unique housing needs as it develops a framework for housing production in Pepperell over the next five years.

#### **c. Decreasing Household Incomes and Poverty**

The median household income in Pepperell increased by 38.2% between 1999 and 2013-2017, which surpassed the nation, but fell behind the State of Massachusetts, the surrounding communities, and the Greater Lowell region. Those earning more than \$100,000 per year increased by 218% during the same period. When adjusted for inflation, Pepperell experienced a -6% growth in median household income. These changes compare to a 0.1% decrease for the State of Massachusetts to a 6.5% decrease for the nation.

In Pepperell 674 residents, or 5.6% of the total population, were living in poverty according to the 2013-2017 ACS. More than sixty percent (63.4%) of the impoverished community in town were adults ages 18-64, while 24.5% were youth under the age of 18. Senior citizens represented 12.2% of this group. Thirty-nine percent of households were categorized as moderate, low, very low, or extremely low income. This indicates that while there are some very high earning households, an estimated 39.3% of all households still earn less than the AMI and may be eligible for HUD assistance.

#### **d. Households with Housing Costs that Exceed Affordability Thresholds**

In addition to looking at income, it is important to compare how much of that income is being spent on housing to determine their housing burden. In Pepperell 29.6% of households with a mortgage pay more than 30% of their income for housing, which means they are burdened by their housing costs. For renters, only 17.7% of rental households pay more than 30% of their income on housing.

While renters in Pepperell are less burdened than homeowners, the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies provided important and crucial information regarding rental properties. Their report entitled *America's Rental Housing: Meeting Challenges, Building on Opportunities*, finds “long-term increases in rents and utility costs combined with falling renter incomes put a strain on many renters' budgets. The Great Recession in 2008 made matters worse, increasing the cost burden on once-secure working and middle class Americans.”<sup>3</sup> Between falling incomes and rising rent prices, rental properties that are affordable for all ages needs to continue to be encouraged to maintain affordability. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased pressure on renters to pay their rents or be evicted. Without a job, this provides a major challenge for renters, as well as homeowners.

## **6. Affordable Housing Efforts in Pepperell**

### **a. Summary of Town of Pepperell Affordable Housing Production Plan (2014-2018)**

The Town's Affordable Housing Committee developed a set of goals and strategies designed to assist the Town in its efforts to develop affordable housing units in Pepperell. To ensure that these goals and strategies are implemented, it also recommended that these goals and strategies serve as the framework for the Housing Chapter in any future updated Master Plan.

### **Housing Goals**

1. Provide a variety of housing opportunities that serve all segments of the community, especially those below 80% of the area median income.
2. Maintain the rural, residential and historic character of the town through housing development.
3. Create diverse rental units, in terms of types of units (duplexes vs. multi-family) and number of bedrooms (three or more), for Pepperell residents.
4. Support the creation of workforce<sup>4</sup> housing units and broaden the range of potential homebuyers and tenants.
5. Develop rental and ownership options for senior citizens, disabled residents and veterans that allow them to live independently.
6. Encourage new housing development consistent with community character and identified needs.
7. Update the zoning bylaw, development review processes and permitting policies so they are clear and consistent.
8. Coordinate the activities of the Affordable Housing Committee, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and Zoning Board of Appeals to achieve consistency in the interpretation and administration of affordable housing requirements.

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<sup>3</sup> *America's Rental Housing: Meeting Challenges, Building on Opportunities*, Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2011. <http://www.worldpropertychannel.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Workforce housing is a term commonly used to describe “housing for the occupations needed in every community, including teachers, nurses, police officers, fire fighters and many other critical workers.” This is typically defined as 80-120% AMI. Source: Center for Housing Policy, 2011 - <http://www.housingpolicy.org/>

9. Ensure that affordable housing development in Pepperell adheres to the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles.
10. Utilize the DHCD-approved *Affordable Housing Production Plan* as a management tool to develop new housing opportunities in meeting the Town's annual housing production goals.

## **Housing Strategies**

### **Maintain Existing Housing and Expand Housing Opportunities**

1. Be proactive in monitoring and maintaining existing affordable housing units.
2. Develop more affordable rental housing (less than 30% of annual income) with the increased availability of 3- and 4-bedroom units.
3. Encourage re-use or redevelopment of underutilized property.
4. Document the specific needs of Pepperell veterans and construct affordable veterans housing units that meet those needs. Organizations like the [Veterans Northeast Outreach Center](#) and the local Veteran's Agent can be consulted for housing assistance.
5. Consider Chapter 61 properties as potential affordable housing opportunities in the future.
6. Examine opportunities available under the Chapter 40R Smart Growth Overlay District.
7. Monitor the level of affordable housing development under the Open Space Residential Development Bylaw.
8. Incorporate the *Affordable Housing Production Plan* into future updates to the Pepperell Master Plan.
9. Work with State agencies and other stakeholders to develop group homes to provide supported, supervised living arrangements for citizens with mental and physical disorders.
10. Utilize the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee to implement the DHCD-approved *Affordable Housing Production Plan*.

## **Policies, Programs and Services**

- a. Evaluate and revise existing development regulations and guidelines for fairness and efficiency through the development of an Affordable Housing Permitting Guide to assist applicants in navigating the review process.
- b. Working in conjunction with the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Zoning Board of Appeals and other town committees and boards, build upon the approved zoning changes to provide more affordable housing opportunities, such as through special permits for multi-family units, accessory apartments, assisted living facilities, and retirement communities.
- c. Develop an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw to encourage the development of new housing that is affordable to low and moderate-income households. Model Inclusionary Housing Bylaws can be found at: [http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth/toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth/toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf).
- d. Examine the use of Community Preservation Funds to support affordable housing development with a focus on the following programs and services:
  - Community education regarding affordable housing programs;
  - First-time home buyer's assistance program;
  - Rental assistance;

- Renovation and sale of properties as affordable unit(s) from town tax lien properties acquired;
- Purchase of property for use as an affordable housing development;
- Provide betterment to donated buildings and/or land for use of affordable housing; and
- Partnerships with private developers and public agencies for affordable housing initiatives that address the housing needs of the community.
- e. Support legislative and/or regulatory reforms at the state level that recognize the efforts of communities like Pepperell to proactively provide “workforce housing” to serve households at 80-120% of the area median income (AMI), in addition to current efforts supporting households earning below 80% of the AMI.
- f. Adopt local selection preferences that are consistent with DHCD Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan (AFHMP) Guidelines and all applicable State and Federal laws/regulations. The project will justify the extent of the local preference (the percentage of units proposed to be set aside for local preference), but in no event will a local preference exceed 70% of the (affordable) units in a project.
- Allowable Preference Categories
  - (1) Current residents: A household in which one or more members is living in the city or town at the time of application. Documentation of residency should be provided, such as rent receipts, utility bills, street listing or voter registration listing.
  - (2) Municipal Employees: Employees of the municipality, such as teachers, janitors, firefighters, police officers, librarians, or town hall employees.
  - (3) Employees of Local Businesses: Employees of businesses located in the municipality.
  - (4) Households with children attending the locality’s schools, such as METCO students.

## **Education**

- a. Provide affordable housing training and educational opportunities to local Board and Committee members and staff, including the Affordable Housing Committee. These training opportunities could include updates on current policies to support affordable housing (i.e., the Comprehensive Permit Guidelines) and any revisions to state law or regional opportunities. This will allow boards and committees to provide guidance to the development community so as to improve the quality of proposals and result in a more expedited permitting process.
- b. Increase public awareness of and support for affordable housing through increased outreach and public education.

## **Funding**

- a. Pursue the purchase of units and provide a subsidized buy-down on the purchase price to qualified first-time homebuyers.
- b. Develop local partnerships with developers to utilize the State’s Local Initiative Program (LIP) as a means to develop “friendly 40B” development projects.

- c. Research federal and state grant opportunities for the enhancement of affordable housing including: HUD's Housing for the Elderly (Section 202) Program, [Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation](#) (CEDAC) and [Neighborworks Capital](#) (NWC).

### **Regional Coordination**

- a. Participate in a Regional Housing Committee to create a Regional Housing Plan for the Greater Lowell region.
- b. Work with non-profit entities, such as the [Common Ground Development Corporation](#), a subsidiary of Community Teamwork, Inc., and the Coalition for a Better Acre to develop and manage affordable housing projects.
- c. Collaborate with other communities to promote First-Time Homebuyer Program opportunities in the region and state to make existing homes more affordable.
- d. Research and promote Foreclosure Assistance Programs through the State's Emergency Homeowners Loan Program (EHLPP) or Community Teamwork, Inc. to help homeowners avoid foreclosure and maintain strong residential neighborhoods.

### **b. Summary of 2020 Pepperell Comprehensive Master Plan**

The Pepperell Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) updated the previous Master Plan Update (2007-2016) through the development of the 2020 Pepperell Comprehensive Master Plan. The Housing Chapter outlines specific Housing Goals and Recommendations related to the production of housing, including affordable housing, as outlined below:

### **Housing Goals**

- Promote the creation and maintenance of sound, affordable housing for renters and homeowners.
- Increase the public's awareness of housing needs through informational and education programs.
- Provide additional housing options for aging residents and for those with disabilities.
- Provide a variety of housing options with varying styles and densities to meet the needs of all residents.
- Encourage the use of green design principles, renewable energy and energy efficiency for future housing construction and rehabilitation projects.

### **Housing Recommendations**

- Reactivate the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee to work with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments to update the *2014-2018 Pepperell Affordable Housing Production Plan* (AHPP).
- Use the DHCD-approved Housing Production Plan (HPP) as a management tool to develop new affordable housing opportunities in meeting the Town's annual housing production goals.
- Encourage the production of multi-family rental units as a means of making progress toward DHCD's 10% affordability goal, thereby allowing Pepperell to attain "safe harbor" status.

- Establish a mechanism to monitor and maintain existing affordable housing units.
- Utilize the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee, the Pepperell Housing Authority and non-profit developers, such as the Coalition for a Better Acre, Common Ground Development Corporation, Inc., and Habitat for Humanity, to develop local affordable housing development capacity.
- Apply for designation as a Housing Choice Community if the Town meets the housing production eligibility. If designated, apply for Housing Choice Capital and Technical Assistance Grants.
- Utilize state and local funds and other “tools”, such as Chapter 40R, Inclusionary Zoning and “friendly” Chapter 40B developments, to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Examine the current bylaw related to tax title properties to see if they may be developed into affordable housing.
- Develop an Affordable Housing Trust to partner with the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee to work with developers to produce neighborhood friendly projects.
- Once the Community Preservation Act (CPA) is adopted, finance the Affordable Housing Trust initially through CPA funds and then use developer funds in lieu of affordable housing units to increase the availability of funding for future affordable housing developments.
- Encourage the Pepperell Housing Authority to work closely with the newly created Affordable Housing Trust to determine how each entity’s resources could be maximized in creating affordable housing units.
- Access existing resources related to first-time homebuyer and foreclosure assistance programs.
- Develop a pilot project under the Green Communities Initiative to address climate change and sustainability issues as an example of what can be accomplished locally in conjunction with the Enterprise Community Partners, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and private developers.
- Utilize the resources provided by the MassHousing Partnership to study and consider the adoption of an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw.

### **c. Affordable Housing Entities**

#### **i. Pepperell Housing Authority**

The Pepperell Housing Authority is responsible for all public housing programs and oversight in the town. The Housing Authority is comprised of a five member Board of Directors with the members serving a five-year term. Four members of the Board of Commissioners are elected at Town election, while the other member is appointed by the Governor. The Chairman and other officers are elected by the Board. The Board meets once a month and acts as a policy setting board.

The Authority currently owns and/or manages seventy (70) units of low- and moderate-income housing, including the following:

- Fifty-seven (57) one bedroom units for senior or disabled citizens (four of the units are barrier-free);

- Six (6) bedrooms within congregate apartment housing for mentally challenged senior or disabled citizens (staffed 24 hours/day); and
- Seven (7) family units (six two-bedroom apartments and one barrier-free 3-bedroom unit).

The Board of Commissioners is responsible for setting and adhering to all federal and state policies pertinent to the “proper and efficient” operation of the Authority. The Housing Authority Board is supported by an Executive Director and an Administrative Assistant. The Executive Director is responsible for the daily operations and oversight of the Authority. Services are provided without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex or national origin. The Pepperell Housing Authority adheres to the Massachusetts income limits as reported in 2012.

## **ii. Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee**

The Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee consists of seven (7) members appointed by the Select Board. These members consist of three citizens at large, a representative of the Planning Board, a representative of the Zoning Board of Appeals, a representative of the Select Board and a representative of the Finance Committee. The principal role of the Affordable Housing Committee is to develop the Housing Production Plan (HPP), which identifies goals and strategies designed to enable Pepperell to meet the Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit requirements for affordable housing production. Once the HPP has been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Committee may be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the HPP. This could include the establishment of an Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) to help finance the development of affordable housing in the future.

## **d. Development Constraints and Limitations**

This section examines land constraints and limitations that impact the development of new housing opportunities in Pepperell. It includes an analysis of land use, zoning and infrastructure components, and concludes with a summary of the plans that the Town has to address these limitations.

## **i. Land Use Development Patterns and Potential**

Land use in Pepperell generally follows the historic development patterns along the town’s main travel corridors established prior to zoning. Over the past fifty years, residential development has replaced farmland and forest. Between 1971 and 2016, acreage classified as residential grew by nearly 246%, while agricultural land decreased by 42%. Overall, developed acreage grew by 204%, while the total acreage of undeveloped land decreased by 23%. Residential uses currently comprise 27.11 % of the total developed area in Pepperell. With 67% of the acreage in the town still undeveloped, there is additional opportunity for sustainable residential development. Outlined in Table 35 is a summary of the land use development in Pepperell from 1971 to 2016.

**Table 35: Land Use Development Patterns by Acreage in Pepperell: 1971-2016**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Percent Change 1971 -2016</b>	<b>Percent of Total 2016</b>
<i>Residential</i>	1,163	2,125	3,386	4,022	245.86	27.11
<i>Commercial</i>	50	61	67	59	17.99	0.40
<i>Industrial</i>	103	225	178	188	82.26	1.27
<i>Government/Institutional</i>	126	211	96	113	-10.56	0.76
<b>Developed</b>	<b>1,443</b>	<b>2,622</b>	<b>3,726</b>	<b>4,383</b>	<b>203.74</b>	<b>29.54</b>
<i>Agricultural</i>	2,673	2,488	2,069	1,560	-41.66	10.51
<i>Other Undeveloped</i>	10,344	9,352	8,643	8,496	-17.87	57.26
<b>Undeveloped</b>	<b>13,018</b>	<b>11,839</b>	<b>10,712</b>	<b>10,055</b>	<b>-22.76</b>	<b>67.77</b>
<i>Water</i>	378	378	400	400	5.95	2.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,838</b>	<b>14,838</b>	<b>14,838</b>	<b>14,838</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: University of Massachusetts, MacConnell Land Use Data; 2016 land use data was updated from 1999 MacConnell land use data using 2016 aerial imagery*

According to the assessor's data, 51.9% of the Town's land is classified as residential. Single-family residences, by far the largest residential use, account for 46.9% of the total acreage in Pepperell, and comprise 90.5% of Pepperell's residentially used land. Two-family dwellings account for 2.3% of Pepperell's land area, while multi-family dwellings account for just 1.2% of the land area.

There are several parcels that the Tax Assessor classifies as mixed residential with commercial, or as mixed residential with agricultural. Together, these parcels comprise approximately 738.8 acres, or 5.3% of the Town's land area, with 580.4 acres consisting of mixed residential use with agriculture, and the remaining 158.4 acres with mixed residential and commercial use.

## **ii. Zoning**

This section summarizes the local zoning regulations that are pertinent to the development of housing, and affordable housing in particular, in Pepperell. It includes a discussion of the density and dimensional requirements for a residential subdivision, as well as a summary of the special permits that are available for a typical housing development. Where appropriate, affordability requirements for Special Permit projects are also outlined.

### **1. Residential Development**

Pepperell's five residential zoning districts: Rural Residence (RR), Town Residence (TR), Recreational Residence (RCR), Suburban Residence (SR), and Urban Residence (UR), account for 96.5% of the town's land area. Therefore, the residential zoning regulations shape the development and land use for the vast majority of Pepperell. Four of the five residential districts: RR, TR, RCR and SR, allow identical uses by-right, including single-family dwellings, and also allow most of the same uses by Special Permit, including two-family dwellings. However, multi-family residences are prohibited in all four districts.

The UR district, which accounts for 171.6 acres or 1.2% of Pepperell, allows two-family dwellings by-right and multi-family units by Special Permit. The Commercial district is the only other conventional zoning district in Pepperell where multi-family residences are allowed, although a Special Permit is



required. Multi-family dwellings are also allowed in the Mixed Used Overlay District. The Commercial district is the only conventional zoning district where residences are allowed above commercial space by-right. However, single- family and two-family dwellings are prohibited in the Commercial district, as well as in the Industrial district.

The Town's three largest zoning districts, RR, TR and RCR require a minimum 80,000 square foot lot size, and a 50-foot minimum front yard. Together, these three districts, with identical by-right uses and minimum lot sizes, account for 12,908.6 acres, or 87% of the town's land area. In contrast, the SR and UR districts both requires a 40,000 square foot minimum lot size and a 30-foot minimum front yard requirement. The permitted uses for residential zoning district are outlined in Table 36 and the dimensional requirements relative to each district are described in Table 37.

**Table 36: Permitted Residential Uses by Zoning District**

Residential Use	Zoning District							
	Rural Residence (RR)	Town Residence (TR)	Recreational Residence (RCR)	Suburban Residence (SR)	Urban Residence (UR)	Commercial (C)	Industrial (I)	Mixed Use Overlay District (MUOD)
Single Family Dwelling	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N*
Two Family Dwelling	PB	PB	PB	PB	Y	N	N	N*
Multi-Family Dwelling	N	N	N	N	PB	PB	N	PB
Dwelling unit(s) above first floor	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	PB
Boarding house	BOS	BOS	BOS	BOS	BOS	BOS	N	N*
Assisted Living Facility	PB	PB	PB	PB	PB	PB	N	N*
Trailer or mobile home park	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

*Source: Town of Pepperell Zoning Bylaw, July 2014*

**Table 37: Dimensional and Density Requirements for Districts Allowing Residential Dwellings**

	Zoning District						
	Rural Residence (RR)	Town Residence (TR)	Recreational Residence (RCR)	Suburban Residence (SR)	Urban Residence (UR)	Commercial (C)	Mixed Use Overlay District (MUOD)
Minimum Lot Area (sf)	80,000	80,000	80,000	40,000	40,000	*	5 acres
Minimum Lot Frontage (ft)	200	150	150	150	150	*	100
Minimum Lot Width (ft)	40	40	40	40	40	*	100
Minimum Front Yard (ft)	50	50	50	30	30	*	30
Minimum Side Yard (ft)	30	25	25	15	15	*	**
Minimum Rear Yard (ft)	75	60	60	45	45	*	**
Maximum Building Height (ft)	35	35	35	35	35***	35***	60

\* A residential use hereafter located in a Commercial district shall conform to the dimensional requirements of the nearest residential district, except dwelling units above the first floor as allowed in the Commercial district.

\*\* Side Yard and Rear Yard for lots within the Mixed Use Overlay District are the same as the underlying zoning district.

\*\*\* The Planning Board may authorize greater height by Special Permit.

Source: Town of Pepperell Zoning Bylaw, July 2014

## 2. Mixed Use Overlay District

The Mixed Use Overlay District allows the Planning Board to issue a Special Permit in the Commercial and Industrial districts on sites of five (5) acres or more. The bylaw is intended to create mixed commercial, residential and open space areas, and to: encourage pedestrian activity by creating a pleasant environment for pedestrians; provide opportunities for retail services, housing and employment in close proximity; and encourage the sharing of parking lots and driveway curb cuts, thereby minimizing the amount of paved parking surface area, and reducing traffic congestion. Currently, the only designated MUOD is the former Pepperell Paper Mill site north of Route 113 on the western bank of the Nashua River.

Most uses permitted in a Commercial district are eligible for consideration as part of a Mixed Use District project, including multi-family dwellings, municipal facilities, above and below ground utilities, and parking facilities. Uses may be commingled into a single structure or structures, along with other eligible uses, or they may be located in separate structures on the site. Business professional offices or retail uses must comprise a minimum of 10% of the floor area in a Mixed Use Development. Several uses normally allowed in the Commercial or Industrial districts are prohibited from the MUOD, including car washes and motor vehicle repair.

Any MUOD project that results in the creation of ten (10) or more residential units must designate at least 10% of the units as affordable, in accordance with the State's criteria for listing on the subsidized housing inventory (SHI). Furthermore, the bylaw states a preference that the affordable housing component be proposed under the Local Initiative Program (LIP), also known as a "friendly 40B" which is created through a partnership with the Town, developer and the State subsidizing agency. Alternatively, a developer may provide fees-in-lieu of the construction of affordable units.

The minimum lot frontage in the MUOD is 100 feet, and the minimum front yard is 30 feet. The maximum building height allowed in the district is 60 feet, and the maximum lot coverage is 70%.

### **3. Special Permits**

The Town's Zoning Bylaw includes a number of Special Permit allowances intended to encourage the development of housing for Special Needs populations, including low- and moderate-income families, smaller households, and senior citizens.

#### **a. Open Space Residential Development**

The Town of Pepperell established the Open Space and Residential Development Bylaw in order to:

- Allow for flexibility in design and minimize land disturbance;
- Encourage the protection of open space, natural and cultural resources, agricultural land, and the town's water supply;
- Enhance community character; and
- Provide affordable housing to persons of low and moderate income.

Pepperell's Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) regulation allows for the issuance of a Special Permit for flexible site design with reduced lots sizes and dimensional requirements. An OSRD must set aside at least 40% of the total tract area as permanently protected open space, and the Planning Board may award a density bonus of up to 20% of the maximum dwelling units allowed under conventional zoning. To be eligible, the tract of land must have a minimum of five (5) acres in the SR or UR districts, or ten (10) acres in the RR, TR and RCR districts or any of the Water Resource Protection Overlay District (WRPOD). All major subdivisions of five or more lots must be presented to the Planning Board as OSRD developments, unless waived by the Board due to site suitability issues. Smaller size subdivisions have the option of creating a conventional subdivision of utilizing the OSRD bylaw.

Under the OSRD, the basic number of lots and dwelling units cannot exceed what would be allowed under a conventional subdivision plan. Minimum lot sizes and other dimensional requirements are established according to whether the project is located in an area served by town water and/or sewer and range from 20,000 sf to 40,000 sf for an area that has neither municipal water nor sewer service. Minimum frontage requirements range from 75 feet to 120 feet. Lots with duplexes or multi-family units require twice the minimum lot area.

To promote affordable housing, a small number of duplexes or multi-family structures (no more than 10% of the total number of lots) are allowed within an OSRD project. The Planning Board may award a density bonus up to 20% that allows for additional dwelling units in exchange for the preservation of additional open space or the creation of additional affordable housing units. A density bonus of one affordable or market rate unit may also be applied to projects that use low impact development (LID) site design principles or green infrastructure, or when the project is designed to effectively link open space to existing conservation or open space property.

### **b. Planned Unit Development**

On parcels of at least 120,000 square feet, the Planning Board may authorize a Special Permit for a Planned Unit Development that allows a mixture of uses and a variety of building types by-right or by Special Permit. The designation of a portion of the parcel as common or open land is required, and the total number of dwelling units cannot exceed the number otherwise allowable in the district.

### **c. Multi-family Housing**

Multi-family residential development is allowed in the Urban Residence and Commercial districts with a special permit from the Planning Board. No more than four units may be constructed per building, and 10,000 square feet of land is required for each unit. Units constructed within an apartment building must be at least 480 square feet in size. For project with eight units or more, no more than 20% of the units can contain three or more bedrooms. Projects where six or more detached single-family dwelling units are proposed on a site designated for multi-family development, 10% of the units must be affordable, as defined by the State.

### **d. Mobile Homes**

Trailers or similar mobile equipment may not be used for dwelling purposes except for temporary circumstances not exceeding six months and licensed by the Selectmen. This restriction does not apply to existing trailers used for dwellings or to trailers placed into existing trailer parks. Such trailers may be replaced by a trailer not more than 20% larger in volume than the lawfully preexisting trailer.

### **e. Accessory Apartments**

In order to provide additional rental units, create housing options for **senior** residents, and assist owners of single-family home with the upkeep of structures that are larger than they require, accessory apartments are allowed in all five residential districts by Special Permit from the Board of Appeals. The dwelling must be owner occupied and only one accessory apartment may be established per lot. The accessory apartment cannot exceed 800 square feet, and it must be located in the primary residential structure.

### **f. Residential Accessory Uses**

Pepperell's Zoning Bylaw allows certain accessory uses by right or by special permit. In some cases, this section of the bylaw is more permissive than what is allowed in other communities. A homeowner may accommodate up to two boarders by right in a single-family home. The Bylaw then states that three (3) or (4) boarders are allowed by special permit, but adds that 4 or more boarders are treated as a boarding house under the Zoning Bylaw. There appears to be a conflict in this language as it is difficult to determine whether the accommodation of 4 boarders in a single family home can be addressed through a special permit, or if one needs to comply with the requirements for a boarding house.

Contractor's yards and commercial landscaping businesses are also allowed under this section of the Zoning Bylaw by special permit. There are no limitations set within the bylaw as to the amount of materials and equipment that can be stored on site for these types of businesses. In some cases, this

may create a conflict with adjacent residential uses, as such operations often utilize significant stockpiles of material such as loam, sand, mulch, building and construction materials, vehicles, trailers, and heavy equipment, and can generate significant noise.

## **C. Infrastructure**

This section summarizes the existing sewer, water and transportation infrastructure and identifies the infrastructure gaps that present barriers to new residential development. This summary is based upon the various sections in the 2020 Comprehensive Master Plan.

### **1. Sewer Capacity**

The Sewer District delineates the portion of the Town where sewer service is currently provided or is planned. This section of the bylaw is also intended to regulate sewer connections and use within the area. Within the Sewer District, all residential or commercial structures constructed after the zoning section's effective date of May 2, 2005 that have legal access to the municipal sewer must connect prior to use or occupancy. All existing single-family residences in the district are allowed access to the municipal sewer system. Any single-family residence existing in May 2005 which is outside the Sewer District but directly abutting a parcel within the Sewer District may be allowed access to the municipal sewer system through demonstrated hardship with the permission of the Board of Public Works. No other properties outside the Sewer District are entitled to access to the municipal sewer system.

The Sewer Division operates a Grade 6 wastewater treatment facility serving Pepperell and Groton. The Pepperell Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is an extended aeration type of facility that includes physical, chemical and biological treatment processes. Approximately 1.1 million gallons per day of sewerage may be treated at the plant and discharged as effluent to the Nashua River. The collection system transports the wastewater from individual homes and buildings to the treatment plant. The system consists of 11,600 linear feet of sewer interceptor, 13,900 linear feet of lateral sewer, 800 manholes, three siphons (Shawnee Road, Lowell Street. and Broad Meadow Road) and two river crossings. Wastewater flows by gravity to the treatment plant via a 24-inch line.

The Sewer Division employs seven licensed operators who regularly inspect the plant and eight pumping stations. Seasonal inspections and monitoring of the collection system and its infrastructure is an ongoing process. Inspections are performed utilizing the National Association of Sewer Service Companies (NASSCO) Pipeline Assessment and Certification Program (PACP) guidelines.

The wastewater treatment facility operates under a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The MassDEP and the EPA require over 420 analytical tests annually to ensure that the facility meets the current effluent discharge requirements. Thousands of readings and laboratory tests are performed each year to maintain compliance with clean water standards. The facility has achieved a 100% compliance rate under its current NPDES permit, with no exceedances occurring in 2019.

A \$3.5 million upgrade to the wastewater treatment facility, which includes the addition of offices, process buildings, an aeration system, SCADA upgrades<sup>5</sup> and chemical addition for final effluent treatment, was completed in the early part of 2020. The bulk of the work (all but the offices) is to ensure compliance with the Town's latest National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. There is no change to the facility's capacity or overall treatment scheme.

The Town also has completed an Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) study as required by DEP. Infiltration occurs when groundwater enters the sanitary sewer system through manholes or faulty pipes, which might have cracks or leaks that let the water in as a result of age, design, installation, maintenance issues or even tree root intrusion. Additional investigations, including smoke and dye test in the system, will be completed in the fall of 2020. Minor repairs will be performed on the Town's collection system as recommended in the I/I report.

## **2. Water Supply**

The public water system has 3,200 connections and delivers approximately 250 million gallons annually. The water system in Pepperell is classified as a Treatment Grade 1 (1T) and Distribution Grade (2D) and water operators are required to possess professional licenses to operate the system. With the start-up of the new Greensands filtration facility at the Bemis well site, it is expected that the treatment Grade will be upgraded to a Grade II (2T) facility. Drinking water supply is supplied by five gravel-packed wells, which have an average depth of sixty feet. The wells are located at the end of Bemis Road, off Jersey Street and off Emerson Circle, and the town is permitted by MassDEP to pump no more than 1.3 million gallons per day. Pepperell's water system has a storage capacity of 3 million gallons. Two booster pump stations send water from the Heald and Mason Street storage tanks to the Townsend Street storage tank, where pressure is maintained to supply water to the town's higher elevations and for fire protection.

In 2019, 400 water samples were tested for 60 contaminants to ensure that drinking water safety standards are met. The water pumped from the Bemis Road well is treated with potassium hydroxide to raise pH and make the water less corrosive to plumbing, resulting in lower copper and lead residuals. Polyphosphate is added to sequester iron and manganese and assist in the control of lead and copper. Bemis Road finished water is treated with sodium hypochlorite as a disinfectant. The water pumped from the Emerson Circle well is directed through an aeration tower to reduce carbon dioxide levels, which can cause corrosion, then potassium hydroxide is added to further adjust pH. Sodium hypochlorite is then introduced to disinfect the final product.

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<sup>5</sup> Supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) is a system of software and hardware elements that allows industrial organizations to:

- Control industrial processes locally or at remote locations;
- Monitor, gather, and process real-time data;
- Directly interact with devices such as sensors, valves, pumps, motors, and more using software; and
- Record events into a log file.

Improvements to the drinking water system are implemented on a regular basis, including the following measures that were undertaken in 2019:

- Continuation of a valve exercise program;
- Installation of a design for a new Greensands Filtration facility at the Bemis Road well site to filter out iron and manganese. It is expected this system will be online in 2021.

The Water Department has also investigated operational and maintenance alternatives for the Townsend Street storage tank directed at further improving overall water quality.

The MassDEP Source Water Assessment and Protection Report for Pepperell recommends that the Town do the following:

- Continue to inspect protection Zone I regularly and, when feasible, remove any non-water supply activities;
- Educate residents on how they can help protect drinking water sources;
- Work with emergency response teams to ensure that they are aware of stormwater drainage in protection Zone II and cooperate in responding to spills or accidents; and
- Work with horse owners in the protection zones to encourage the use of a National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) farm plan to protect water supplies.

The Water Division imposes a mandatory odd/even outdoor water ban each year from May 1st to October 31st.

### **3. Transportation Network and Public Transit**

While Pepperell is not directly served by a limited access highway, it is reasonably proximate to Route 3 via Routes 111 and 113, and access to I-495 is available via Route 119. The community is served by a regional transportation network comprised of several modes, including automobiles, buses, bicycles and pedestrians. There are 87.39 centerline miles of roadway, including the numbered state roads - Routes 111, 113 and 119. There are approximately 26 miles of arterial roadway in Pepperell, comprising approximately 30% of the centerline miles in town. Collector roads are generally shorter than arterials and collect trips from local roads and distribute them to arterials. Collector roads make up 3% of all centerline miles in Pepperell. There are approximately 59 miles of local roadway within the Town of Pepperell, accounting for 67% of the town's roadway mileage.

Pepperell lies within the Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) service area. The LRTA is one of sixteen regional transit authorities across Massachusetts dedicated to increasing the use of mass transit. In addition to Pepperell, the LRTA service area includes Acton, Billerica, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Groton, Lowell, Maynard, Tewksbury, Townsend, Tyngsborough and Westford. The LRTA does not currently operate fixed route bus service in Pepperell.

The Pepperell Council on Aging provides senior demand-response transportation service within the Town and to surrounding communities. Transportation is available five days a week. The one-way fare

for this service is \$2.50 for an in-town trip and \$3.50 for an out-of-town trip. A two-day advanced reservation is generally required. Long distance medical transportation is available to Pepperell residents through the Groton Council on Aging as part of a cooperative agreement between the two communities.

MBTA regional commuter rail service to and from Boston via the Lowell line is available at the Gallagher Terminal in Lowell. The Lowell line service consists of twenty-two daily inbound trains operating between 5:35 A.M and 12:10 A.M. Headways are 30 minutes during the peak travel periods, and approximately hourly during other times of the day. In addition to Lowell, the train stops at North Billerica, Wilmington, Anderson, Mishawum, Winchester, Wedgemere, and Medford and terminates at North Station in Boston. Weekend and holiday service consists of eight daily round trips between Lowell and Boston.

The MBTA commuter rail service between Boston and Fitchburg via the Fitchburg line is available at the Ayer commuter rail station. Between Ayer and Boston, the train stops at eight locations in Littleton, Acton, Concord, Lincoln, Weston, Waltham, Belmont and Cambridge. Heading west from Ayer, there are commuter rail stops in Shirley, Leominster and Fitchburg. The Fitchburg line service consists of nineteen daily inbound trains operating between 4:50 A.M and 10:35 P.M. Headways are approximately 30 minutes during the peak travel periods and hourly during other times of the day. Weekend and holiday service consists of seven daily round trips between Fitchburg and Boston.

The Nashua River Rail Trail may be utilized to access the Ayer Commuter Rail station, thereby providing an automobile-free commute between Pepperell and Boston. Private bus service (Boston Express) to Boston is available at the MassDOT park-and-ride lot located on Route 113 in Tyngsborough, just east of Route 3.



## II. Affordable Housing Goals and Strategies

The Town's Affordable Housing Committee has developed a set of goals and strategies to assist the Town in its efforts to develop affordable housing units in Pepperell. These goals and strategies build upon the goals and strategies set forth in the *2014-2018 Affordable Housing Production Plan* and the recommendations in the draft Housing Chapter of the updated Master Plan. These goals and strategies are in no particular order of priority, but should be implemented by the Town of Pepperell.

### A. Housing Goals

1. Provide a variety of housing opportunities that serve all segments of the community, especially those below 80% AMI.
2. Ensure new housing development is consistent with the rural, residential and historic character of the town, and sustainable use of natural resources.
3. Provide a range of housing, including rental, homeownership, and other occupancy arrangements, if any, for families, individuals, persons with special needs and for seniors.
4. Adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to support affordable housing initiatives.
5. Establish the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) to consolidate funds to support affordable housing activities.
6. Develop supportive rental housing of 1-4 bedroom units for very low income households, including seniors and disabled residents, to enable them to age in place, as well as congregate housing to act as transitional housing for vulnerable populations (seniors, disabled, veterans).
7. Adopt an Inclusionary Zoning bylaw that makes all affordable housing deed restrictions permanent, and contains a unit threshold requiring that 25% of the units be affordable.
8. Ensure that affordable housing development in Pepperell adheres to the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles (see *Figure 18*).
9. Update the zoning bylaw, development review processes and permitting policies so they are clear and consistent.

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***Figure 18: Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts' Sustainable  
Development Principles***

- 1. Concentrate Development and  
Mix Uses*
- 2. Advance Equity*
- 3. Make Efficient Decisions*
- 4. Protect Land and Ecosystems*
- 5. Use Natural Resources Wisely*
- 6. Expand Housing Opportunities*
- 7. Provide Transportation Choice*
- 8. Increase Job and Business  
Opportunities*
- 9. Promote Clean Energy*
- 10. Plan Regionally*

## **B. Housing Strategies**

### **1. Maintain Existing Housing and Expand Housing Opportunities**

- a. Restore the effort to achieve the 10% Affordable Housing Goal
- b. Be proactive in monitoring and maintaining existing affordable housing units.
- c. Coordinate the activities of the Affordable Housing Committee, Planning Board, Select Board and Zoning Board of Appeals to achieve consistency in the interpretation and administration of affordable housing requirements.
- d. Utilize the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee to oversee the implementation of the DHCD-approved *2021-2025 Housing Production Plan* as a management tool to develop new housing opportunities in meeting the Town's annual housing production goals.
- e. Utilize the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee, the Pepperell Housing Authority and non-profit developers, such as the Coalition for a Better Acre, Common Ground Development Corporation, Inc. and Habitat for Humanity to develop local affordable housing development capacity.
- f. Encourage re-use or redevelopment of underutilized properties (e.g. historic, municipal, blighted or vacant) as appropriate and consistent with the housing goals and sustainable development principles.
- g. Examine the current bylaw related to tax title properties to see if they may be developed into affordable housing, as appropriate and consistent with housing goals and sustainable development principles.
- h. Document the specific needs of Pepperell veterans and construct affordable veterans housing units that meet those needs. Organizations like the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center and the local Veteran's Agent can be consulted for housing assistance.
- i. Examine opportunities available under the Chapter 40R Smart Growth Overlay District, particularly under the Starter Homes program. Utilize other tools, such as Inclusionary Zoning and "friendly" Chapter 40B developments to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- j. Monitor the level of affordable housing development under the Open Space Residential Development Bylaw.
- k. Work with State agencies and other stakeholders to develop group homes to provide supported, supervised living arrangements to include congregate housing for veterans, and disabled individuals with physical and mental disorders.
- l. Utilize the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) to partner with the Affordable Housing Committee, the MassHousing Partnership, and non-profit developers to produce neighborhood friendly affordable housing developments.

### **2. Policies, Programs and Services**

- a. Evaluate and revise existing development regulations and guidelines for fairness and efficiency through the development of an Affordable Housing Permitting Guide to assist applicants in navigating the review process.

- b. Working in conjunction with the Planning Board, Select Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and other town committees and boards, build upon the approved zoning changes so as to provide more affordable housing opportunities, such as through special permits for multi-family units, accessory apartments, and retirement communities.
- c. Develop an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw to encourage the development of new housing that is affordable to low and moderate-income households. Model Inclusionary Housing Bylaws can be found at: [http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf).
- d. Examine the use of Community Preservation Funds to support affordable housing development with a focus on the following programs and services:
  - i. Community education regarding affordable housing programs;
  - ii. First-time home buyer's assistance program;
  - iii. Rental assistance;
  - iv. Renovation and sale of properties as affordable unit(s) from town tax lien properties acquired;
  - v. Purchase of property for use as an affordable housing development;
  - vi. Provide betterment to donated buildings and/or land for use of affordable housing; and
  - vii. Partnerships with private developers and public agencies for affordable housing initiatives that address the housing needs of the community.
- e. Support legislative and/or regulatory reforms at the state level that recognize the efforts of communities like Pepperell to proactively provide "workforce housing" to serve households at 80-120% of the area median income (AMI), in addition to current efforts supporting households earning below 80% of the AMI.
- f. Encourage universal design principles in all housing development.
- g. Adopt local selection preferences that are consistent with DHCD Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan (AFHMP) Guidelines and all applicable/ State and Federal laws/ regulations. The project will justify the extent of the local preference (the percentage of units proposed to be set aside for local preference), but in no event will a local preference exceed 70% of the (affordable) units in a project.
- Allowable Preference Categories
  - (1) Current residents: A household in which one or more members is living in the city or town at the time of application. Documentation of residency should be provided, such as rent receipts, utility bills, street listing or voter registration listing.
  - (2) Municipal Employees: Employees of the municipality, such as teachers, janitors, firefighters, police officers, librarians, or town hall employees.
  - (3) Employees of Local Businesses: Employees of businesses located in the municipality.
  - (4) Households with children attending the locality's schools, such as METCO students.

### 3. Education

- a. Provide affordable housing training and educational opportunities to local Board and Committee members and staff, including the Affordable Housing Committee. These training

opportunities could include updates on current policies to support affordable housing (i.e., the Comprehensive Permit Guidelines) and any revisions to state law or regional opportunities. This will allow boards and committees to provide guidance to the development community to improve the quality of proposals and result in a more expedited permitting process.

- b. Increase public awareness of and support for affordable housing through increased outreach and public education.
- c. Utilize resources available through the MassHousing Partnership and work with local financial institutions and the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership (MVHP) to encourage home ownership of affordable housing units.
- d. Provide education programs on housing rehabilitation.

#### **4. Funding**

- a. Pursue the purchase of units and provide a subsidized buy-down on the purchase price to qualified first-time homebuyers.
- b. Develop local partnerships with developers to utilize the State's Local Initiative Program (LIP) to develop "friendly 40B" development projects.
- c. Seek funding for a pilot project for the development of affordable housing that achieves LEED certification.
- d. Research federal and state grant opportunities for the enhancement of affordable housing including: HUD's Housing for the Elderly (Section 202) Program, Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC) and Neighborworks Capital (NWC).

#### **5. Regional Coordination**

- a. Participate in a Regional Housing Committee to create a Regional Housing Plan for the Greater Lowell region and work with the towns of Ashby, Ayer, Groton and Townsend to address common housing issues.
- b. Work with non-profit entities, such as the Common Ground Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Community Teamwork, Inc., the Coalition for a Better Acre, and Habitat for Humanity to develop and manage affordable housing projects.
- c. Collaborate with other communities to promote First-Time Homebuyer Program opportunities in the region and state to make existing homes more affordable.
- d. Research and promote Foreclosure Assistance Programs through the State's Emergency Homeowners Loan Program (EHLPP) or Community Teamwork, Inc. to help homeowners avoid foreclosure and maintain strong residential neighborhoods.

### **III. Housing Production Plan Implementation Requirements**

#### **A. Characteristics of Proposed Residential or Mixed-Use Developments**

The Select Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals will consider the adoption of a Comprehensive Permit Policy that reflects the expectations of the Town for housing developed under Chapter 40B. By outlining our expectations through the adoption of a Comprehensive Permit policy, we believe that the development community will be able to produce the affordable housing that meets the needs of our community. The components of a Comprehensive Permit Policy will include the following elements:

- The Town will not limit a comprehensive permit submittal process for reasons of zoning districts or geographic location.
- The Town will be proactive in supporting affordable housing developments and the review of such developments will include documentation of the potential impacts upon schools, water, sewer, traffic, recreation, open space, community character and consistency with the recommendations in the updated Master Plan.
- The Town will consider the future growth impacts on the community as identified in the *Housing Production Plan for 2021-2015* (HPP) and will work in partnership with private developers and public agencies to ensure that the affordable housing initiatives are in the best interest of the community.
- The Town will consider a variety of affordable housing initiatives, including multi-family and open space residential subdivisions (OSRD), accessory apartments, assisted living facilities, retirement communities, and other opportunities.
- Preference for available affordable housing program opportunities will be given to Pepperell residents and municipal employees, as specified under state regulations. Meeting the needs of our community is primary in our vision and plan for future housing growth and opportunities.
- The Town will comply with all applicable federal and state housing policies and will continue to meet the requirements of the Chapter 40B program.

#### **B. Proposed Modifications to Zoning Districts to Create SHI Housing Units**

As outlined in the Permitted Residential Uses by Zoning District, single-family development is permitted by right in all residential zoning districts (RR, TR, RCR, SR and UR). Two-family developments are only permitted by right in the Urban Residence (UR) district and are permitted in the other residential zoning districts through a special permit from the Planning Board. Multi-family dwellings are permitted with a special permit from the Planning Board in the Suburban Residence (SR) and Urban Residence (UR) districts. These dwellings are also permitted in the Mixed Use Overlay District (MUOD), as described in the Special Permits Section.

The 2020 Comprehensive Master Plan recommends the adoption of an Inclusionary bylaw and examining mixed-use development in the Railroad Square and Hollis Street/Brookline Street areas to increase the supply of affordable housing. In addition, the Town has identified a number of privately-owned and publicly-owned parcels of land (Tables 38 and 39) that might require zoning bylaw changes

to permit any residential development other than single-family. It is anticipated that any changes to the zoning bylaw will need to be presented to Town Meeting for adoption. Where appropriate, it is anticipated the Town will modify the zoning bylaw to support the creation of affordable housing units to meet its housing production goals.

### C. Privately-Owned Land with Potential for Affordable Housing

In meeting the DHCD requirement to identify potential affordable housing sites, the Pepperell Affordable Housing Committee identified privately- and publicly-owned parcels throughout the community that could be developed for affordable housing in the future. Numerous parcels were identified and analyzed by current use, zoning, location and site characteristics. NMCOG staff conducted site visits to identify the development limitations of the identified properties, which are included under the characteristics/site constraints column of Table 38.

As shown below in Table 38, twenty-five (25) privately-owned sites were identified, which could generate 100-125 additional affordable housing units, depending upon the development constraints of each individual property. This list of privately-owned land with potential for affordable housing will help guide the Town as it moves forward in addressing its affordable housing needs over the next five years. As stated in the Policy and Regulatory Reform strategies section, the Town is committed to coordinating the actions of the various boards and committees on the development of these parcels to meet the open space and historic preservation goals of the Town as well. Map 1 in the Appendix shows the location and distribution of the SHI and potential development sites throughout the community, while Maps 2 and 3 show the location of these parcels in relation to the current zoning and overlay districts. Map 4 shows these parcels in relation to the water and sewer infrastructure.

**Table 6: Privately-owned Parcels with Potential for Affordable Housing**

Site Address	Acres	Current Use	Map/ Block/Lot	Characteristics/ Site Constraints	Zoning District	Zoning Bylaw Amendment (Y/N)
12 Bancroft Street (South Wind Farm)	64.91	Front portion is a horse farm. Back portion is vacant land.	33-50-0	Vacant land is flat with a limited number of wetlands. Would need access road for the property.	TR	N
19 Chestnut Street*	2.427	Vacant lot	13-98-0	Flat and wooded lot.	RR	N
21 Chestnut Street*	2.417	Vacant lot	13-98-1	Flat and wooded lot with some wetlands.	RR	N
27 Chestnut Street*	3.837	Vacant lot	13-99-0	Landlocked parcel with wetlands.	RR	N
122 Chestnut Street*	2.052	Undeveloped lot	12-5-0	Flat, wooded lot with extensive wetlands. Combine with 122A Chestnut Street	RR	N
122A Chestnut Street*	4.8	Undeveloped lot in the rear	12-6-0	Combine with 122 Chestnut Street. Landlocked parcel with limited wetlands.	RR	N

**Table 7 (cont'd): Privately-owned Parcels with Potential for Affordable Housing**

Site Address	Acres	Current Use	Map/ Block/Lot	Characteristics/ Site Constraints	Zoning District	Zoning Bylaw Amendment (Y/N)
52B Dow Street	11.1	Undevelopable Residential Land	5-3-0	Part of Dow Street and Nashua Road properties. Not accessible.	RCR	N
Off Dow Street	17.3	Undevelopable Residential Land	5-4-0	Part of Dow Street and Nashua Road properties. Not accessible.	RCR	N
Off Dow Street	14.7	Undevelopable Residential Land	5-20-0	Part of Dow Street and Nashua Road properties. Not accessible.	RCR	N
Off Dow Street	9.54	Undevelopable Residential Land	6-18-2	Part of Dow Street and Nashua Road properties. Not accessible.	RCR	N
64 Groton Street*	0.63	Multi-family apartment	26-172-0	Owner interested in selling property – could be used for affordable housing.	SR	N
2-26 Herget Drive	13.19	Apartments with More than Eight Units	29-13-0	Three multi-family (12 units each) apartment buildings with large, flat open lots in between.	SR	N
33-35 Hollis Street*	1.03	Single-family house with land	22-30-0	Approved for three lots in the past that expired. Limited constraints.	UR	N
85 Hollis Street*	3.828	Vacant lot	15-86-0	Located north of child care facility. Would share driveway.	RCR	N
128 Main Street	9.36	Developable Industrial Land	26-32-0	Former Pepperell Paper Mill site. Buildings have been demolished.	I MUOD Overlay	Y
113 Mt. Lebanon Street*	2.007	Vacant lot	38-30-2	Long and very narrow lot. Partially wooded with vegetation.	TR	N
128-148 Nashua Road	25.8	Single Family Residential	11-1-0	Borders Nissitissit Lane and Nashua Road. Access was limited.	RCR	N
135 Nashua Road	4.3	Potentially Developable Residential Land	11-49-0	Undeveloped land between and behind 133 and 137 Nashua Road.	RCR	N
139 Nashua Road	5.1	Potentially Developable Residential Land	11-51-0	Undeveloped land behind 137 Nashua Road.	RCR	N
141-163 Nashua Road	49.06	Unknown	6-20-0	Flat and predominantly wooded lot tied to 165 Nashua Road.	I	Y
150 Nashua Road	40.78	Mixed Use (Primarily Residential, some Recreation)	6-18-0	Old run down barn on the property. Abuts other properties on Dow Street.	RCR	N

**Table 8 (cont'd): Privately-owned Parcels with Potential for Affordable Housing**

Site Address	Acres	Current Use	Map/ Block/Lot	Characteristics/ Site Constraints	Zoning District	Zoning Bylaw Amendment (Y/N)
28 River Road*	1.837	Vacant lot	24-79-0	Flat lot, but may be prone to flooding.	TR	N
154-158 South Road*	22.69	Vacant lot	36-21-2	Long rectangular shaped lot with little road frontage. Prone to flooding.	UR	N
181B South Road*	1.837	Vacant lot	32-63-2	Prone to flooding with wetlands.	UR	N
44 Townsend Street*	5.88	Apartment building with extra land	20-64-0	Proposal for additional apartment building denied by ZBA due to density.	TR	N

**Zoning Districts:** RR – Rural Residence; TR – Town Residence; RCR – Recreational Residence; SR – Suburban Residence; UR – Urban Residence; C – Commercial; and I – Industrial. **Overlay Districts:** MUOD – Mixed-Use; SD – Sewer District; WRPOD – Water Resource Protection; WCOD – Wireless Communications.

### D. Publicly-Owned Parcels with Potential for Affordable Housing

The Affordable Housing Committee has been able to identify nine (9) publicly-owned potential housing sites that could provide 80-110 additional affordable housing units to the SHI Inventory. The sites outlined in Table 39 on the next two pages have various constraints to being developed, including wetlands, slope of the land, size constraints and limited access. In addition to the tax title properties identified in Table 39, the Town is committed to evaluating additional tax title parcels and any future land use changes on Town-owned land to assess the potential for affordable housing development. Map 1 in the Appendix shows the location and distribution of the SHI and potential development sites throughout the community, while Maps 2 and 3 show the location of these parcels in relation to the current zoning and overlay districts. Map 4 shows these parcels in relation to the water and sewer infrastructure.

**Table 9: Publicly-owned Parcels with Potential for Affordable Housing**

Site Address	Acres	Current Use	Map/ Block/Lot	Characteristics/ Site Constraints	Zoning District	Zoning Bylaw Amendment (Y/N)
33 Chace Avenue	77.91	Nissitissit Middle School athletic fields and vacant lot	22-4-0	Property includes a large wooded area with a small portion of wetlands. Lot is flat and dry.	TR	N
45 Main Street	2.6	Fitzpatrick School	23-147-0	Contains building and paved areas. Included with parcels 20-48-0 and 23-150-0 below.	TR	N
Off Main Street	13	Wing of the Fitzpatrick School and playground	20-48-0	Largest of three properties, but also wettest and least open. Also includes dry woods and a swamp area (riverfront).	TR	N



**Table 10 (cont'd): Publicly-owned Parcels with Potential for Affordable Housing**

Site Address	Acres	Current Use	Map/ Block/Lot	Characteristics/ Site Constraints	Zoning District	Zoning Bylaw Amendment (Y/N)
37 Nashua Road*	5.34	Senior Center land	25-22-1	Left side of parcel could be available for affordable units.	RCR	N
108A Nashua Road*	2.7	Tax title property	11-23-0	Elevation and potential access issues from Sharon land.	RCR	N
90 Park Street	5.12	Vacant lot, tax title property	9-135-0	Narrow opening onto Park Street but widens into a larger rectangular parcel behind 92 and 94 Park Street.	TR	N
0 River Road	3.4	School parking lot and playground	23-150-0	"L" shaped property with wetlands on 50% of the property. An active riverfront runs through the property.	TR	N
137 South Road	4.83	Vacant, Tax Title/Treasurer	37-73-0	Undeveloped land bordering 139 South Road to the west and a single-family residence to the east. Elevation rises before leveling off towards the center of the parcel. Large wetland areas and a swamp comprise the rear half of the parcel.	RR	N
139 South Road	3.33	Vacant lot, Tax Title property	37-74-0	Borders Jehovah Witness Church to the west and 137 South Road to the east. Similar terrain as 137 South Road, but not as large a wetlands or swamp area.	RR	N

**Zoning Districts:** RR – Rural Residence; TR – Town Residence; RCR – Recreational Residence; SR – Suburban Residence; UR – Urban Residence; C – Commercial; and I – Industrial. **Overlay Districts:** MUOD – Mixed-Use; SD – Sewer District; WRPOD – Water Resource Protection; WCOD – Wireless Communications.

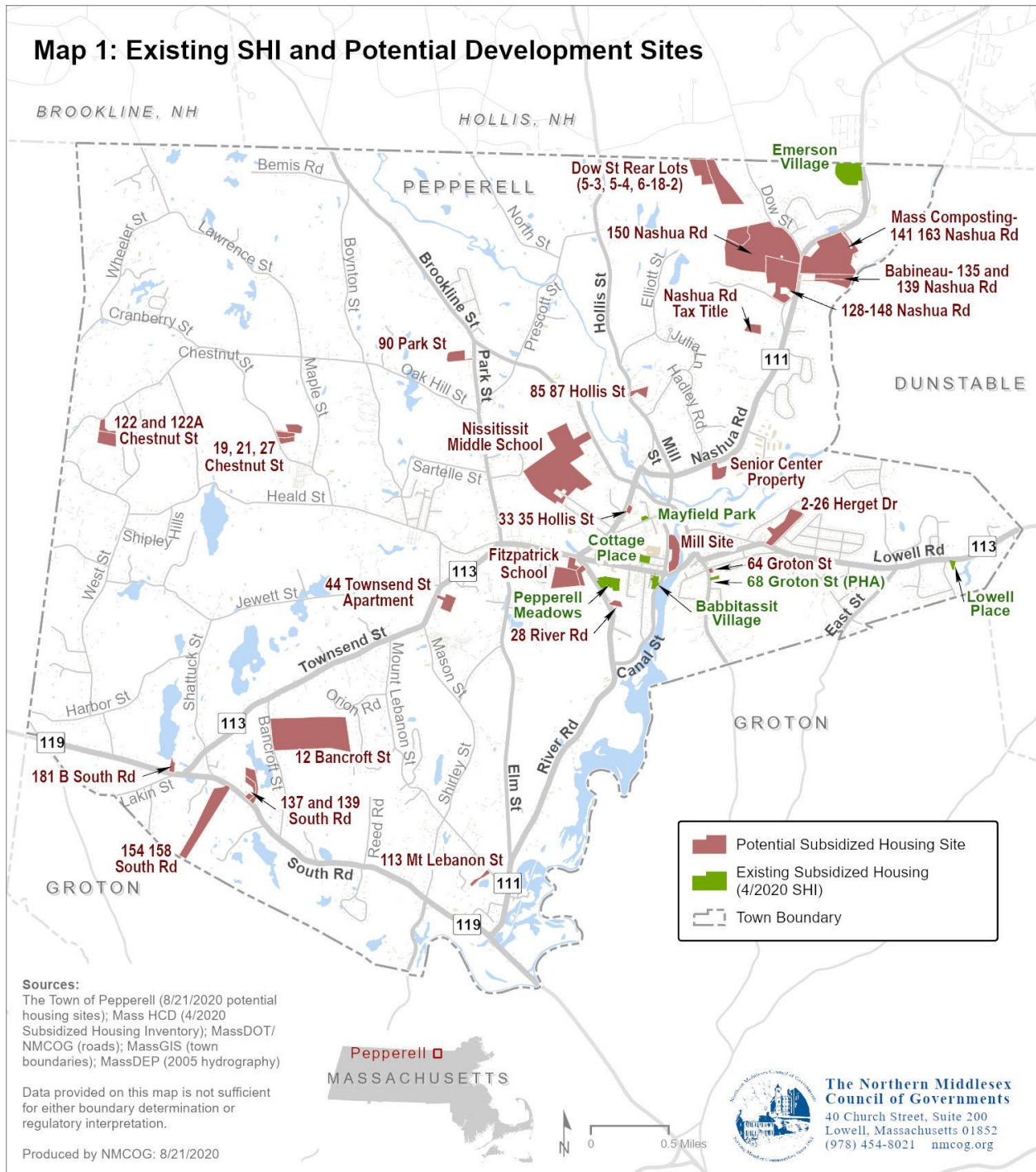
## **E. Participation in Regional Collaboration that Address Housing Development**

Pepperell will investigate the following opportunities to participate in regional initiatives to develop affordable housing in the Greater Lowell region:

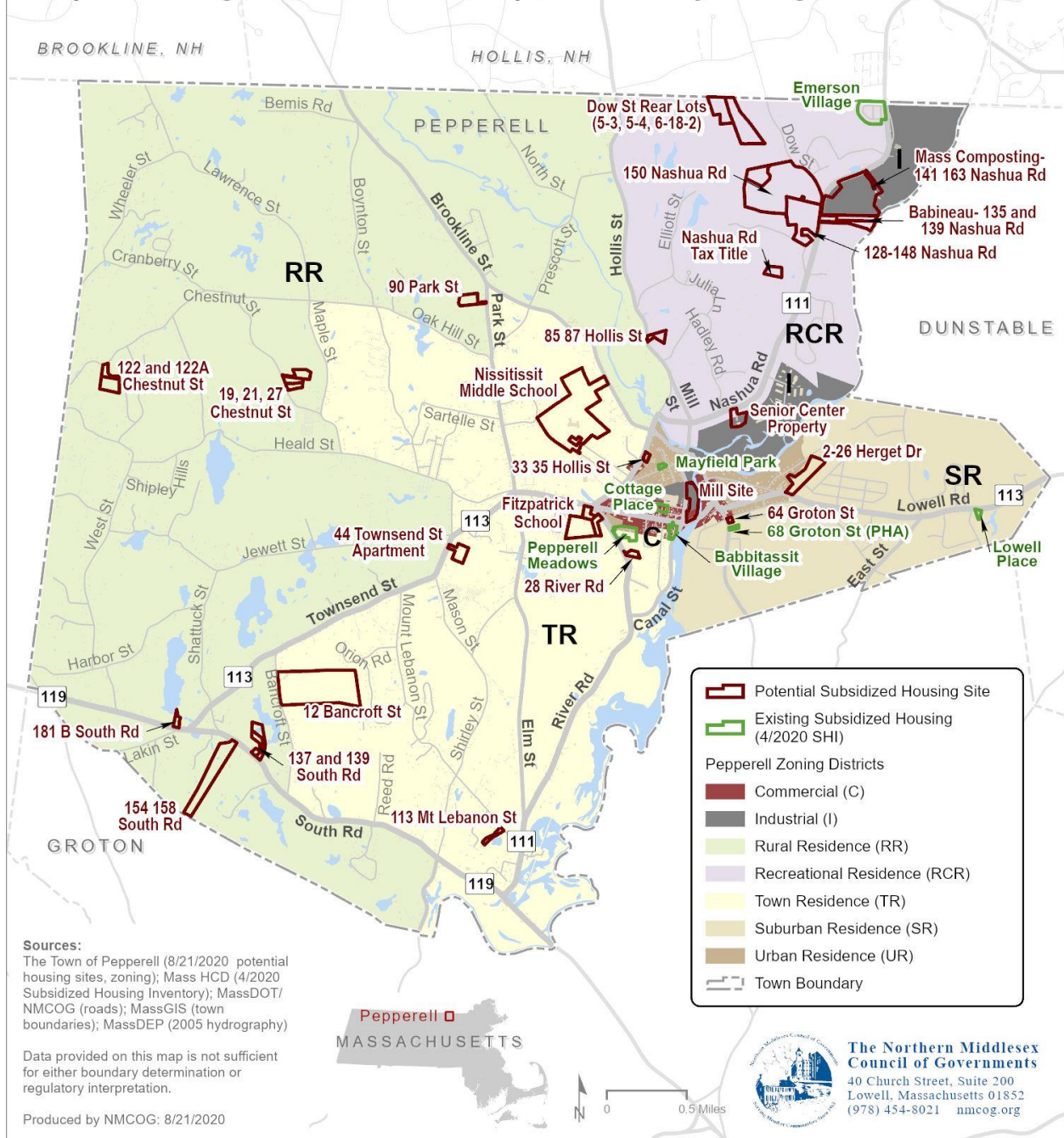
- Investigate the resources available through Common Ground Development Corporation, Inc., the non-profit development arm of Community Teamwork, Inc., the Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA) and Habitat for Humanity;
- Work with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), local communities and housing entities in the Greater Lowell region to develop a Regional Housing Plan; and
- Continue to research opportunities to implement development strategies outlined in the Greater Lowell Regional Strategic Plan.
- Work collaboratively with the surrounding communities of Ayer, Groton, Shirley and Townsend on common housing issues and projects that benefit Pepperell.

## **Appendix: Maps**

**Map 1: Existing SHI and Potential Development Sites**



## Map 2: Existing and Potential Development Sites by Zoning District





HOLLIS, NH



# Map 4: Existing and Potential Development Sites with Water and Sewer Infrastructure

