

**FAVERMANN  
DESIGN**



# TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

COMMUNITY BRANDING & WAYFINDING PROJECT

FINAL REPORT WINTER 2018-2019

Prepared by Favermann Design

Prepared for the Department of Housing  
and Community Development (DHCD)

MASSACHUSETTS  
DOWNTOWN  
INITIATIVE







## BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Town of Foxborough is strategically located between New England's three largest cities – Boston, Providence and Worcester. Foxborough is 29 miles from Boston; 22 miles from Providence and 47 miles from Worcester. The Town is located at the intersections of Interstates 95 and 495. It should be noted that while "Foxborough" is the official spelling of the town's name for government functions; "Foxboro" is also commonly used. In fact, the latter is still used by the U.S. Postal Service today.

Foxborough, MA is a tale of two towns: the first is a traditional mixed use mill town with a Town Common and downtown commercial district, and the second is the Route 1 area, home to the National Football League's New England Patriots. The Route 1 area includes the 68,000 seat Gillette Stadium, adjacent Patriot Place shopping center with eateries, entertainment venues, shops, a museum, medical facilities, and vast parking lots, as well as nearby hospitality entities. The focus of this MDI grant was on the traditional downtown area of Foxborough.

Foxborough was formally settled in 1704 on land purchased in 1666 from Wampanoag chief King Philip, and incorporated in 1778. It is named for Charles James Fox, a Whig member of Parliament and a staunch supporter of the rights of the Colonies in the years leading up to the American Revolution. Foxborough's early settlement pattern was comprised of a strong center with industry, civic and religious institutions, along with retail and services served by a rail line surrounded by a compact residential area with schools, along with some village settlements dotting the countryside.

This historic pattern of the center – Downtown Foxborough – continues to frame the development pattern in Town. The advent of the interstate highway system and suburban growth fueled the development of additional commercial nodes in Foxborough, namely Route 1 with Patriot Place and the Gillette Stadium; Chestnut Green with the redevelopment of Foxborough State Hospital; and south Route 140 area with Foxboro Plaza, Foxfield Plaza and Foxborough Boulevard.



*Vintage photo of Central Street*

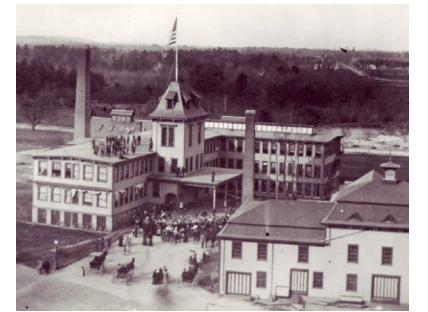
Until the early 1900s, Foxborough was composed of small neighborhood communities. These included Foxvale/Paineburgh; Quaker Hill in South Foxborough; and Lakeview/Donkeyville in West Foxborough. They remained semi-independent until the early twentieth century.

In 1850, as the Town became more prosperous and industrious, the Foxborough Fire Company was formed. By now, the straw hat industry had spread throughout the community and in 1853, the world's largest straw hat factory, Union Straw Works, was built on Wall Street by local businessman E.P. Carpenter. The population of Foxborough neared

3,000 with hundreds more living in boarding houses provided by local manufacturers.

The Town of Foxborough was thriving. In 1857, the Town beautified the "downtown" area by laying out the Town Common as it exists today. The unique fence surrounding the Common was cast at Cary Foundry on Mill Street in Foxborough. The Town House, a magnificent structure built to house town offices and later a public high school, was built nearby on the current site of the Town Hall.

The Civil War would be a time to test the young community, which would be called on to bury twenty one of its sons as a result of the conflict. Deciding on a "suitable monument," the community erected Memorial Hall in the town center as a tribute "to all those whose lives were touched by the war."<sup>1</sup>



*Vintage photo of Foxboro Company*

After the Civil War, prosperity returned to town. The business district then included tinsmiths, grocers, cobblers, apothecaries, barber shops, and launderers. Passenger trains passed through town on their trips between Boston and Providence. A freight line opened near the center to the broader regional and national markets.

The following decades saw growth in a number of industries. But by the turn of the 20th century, the straw hat industry was in rapid decline. However an emerging industry was being created by The Van Choate Electric Company, a firm that held patents for manufacturing various electric devices, which erected a large complex of buildings on Neponset Street.

The year 1900 would be a difficult year for Foxborough, challenging the community and its industries on several fronts. First, around this time, The Van Choate Electric Co. went into receivership. Then, on May 28, 1900, The Union Straw Works was engulfed in flames and totally destroyed in about ninety minutes. On June 4, 1900, the Town House became engulfed in flames. Without warning, the front tower collapsed, and the building's large bell came crashing down. All of the town offices and the high school were gone.



*View from Common*

The Van Choate buildings stood empty until 1908. When Bennett and Edgar Bristol broke away from their family business and formed the Industrial Instrument Company and later acquired the Standard Gauge Company, they purchased the brick complex on Neponset Avenue. This was what again jumpstarted Foxborough's economy. In 1914, the Bristol Brothers reorganized and changed the name of their business to "The Foxboro Company" (now known as Schneider Electric). While the company started with close to 100 employees, within a few decades, it would include over two thousand. For a while, Foxborough truly was a "Company" town.

<sup>1</sup>Foxborough Historical Commission - <http://www.foxboroughhc.org/history>.



When the country went to war in 1941, Foxborough was very involved. The Foxboro Company made control mechanisms for British torpedoes, eventually working three shifts around the clock under tight security. The community rallied with blackout regulations, air raids, war rations, scrap drives, and successful war bond drives. The Town of Foxborough played its part.

After WWII, the town continued to develop. Within a few years, the town doubled in size, constructed and improved roads and schools, created a new town hall and public library, built two senior housing complexes, and renewed civic interest to improve the town overall. It should be noted that throughout Foxborough's history, there is a major theme of patriotic service and sacrifice.

In the last quarter century or so, there have been several middle size companies that have thrived in Foxborough. These include Invensys Systems (now Schneider Electric), Brigham and Women's/Mass General, GE Lighting, Bearing Point Inc., Paychex Inc. and several others. The biggest employer in town is The New England Patriots Team and all of their various subsidiaries including Gillette Stadium, Patriot Place Shopping Complex, and the New England Revolution soccer team.

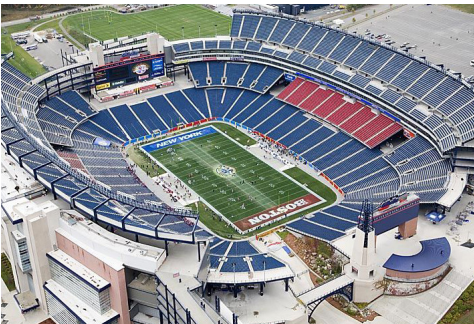


Tom Brady and Coach Bill Belichick

Founded in 1959 as the Boston Patriots, an original member of the American Football League (AFL), the Patriots joined the NFL in the leagues' 1970 merger. It changed its name when it moved to Foxborough in 1971. The New England Patriots played their home games at Foxboro Stadium through 2001, and then moved to Gillette Stadium at the start of the 2002 season.



Robert Kraft became the franchise's fourth owner after purchasing the team for \$175 million in 1994. The Patriots are now worth about \$ 3.7 billion and are considered the 6th most valuable sports franchise in the world according to Forbes Magazine. Kraft also founded the New England Revolution, one of the charter clubs of Major League Soccer, in 1996.



Gillette Stadium

TOWN GOVERNMENT

Open Town Meeting is the form of government managed by a five-member Board of Selectmen and a Town Manager. Volunteers and elected officials make up the various town boards and commissions.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Over several months during 2018-19, the Foxborough Branding and Wayfinding Working Group met many times to review and develop various approaches and "looks" for the eventual design for application to wayfinding, signage and social media. The members included the following:

**Leah Gibson, Selectman,** Human Resources, Real Estate

**Kevin Weinfeld, Planning Board,**  
owns and manages real estate firm

**Taylor Ford, Foxborough Historical Commission,**  
Retired Engineer

**Lt. McGrath, Police Dept.,** Foxborough Police Department

**Roger Hill/Chris Gallagher,** Foxborough DPW

**Ryan Norton, GIS Specialist,** DPW

**Tom Murphy, EDC,** Works at Facilities, Security at Amundi Pioneer

**Cindi Haddad-Drew,** downtown business owner (Cindi's Jewelry)

**Bill Buckley,** downtown business owner  
(owns local engineering firm)

**Colby Barrows,** downtown business owner  
(owns local insurance firm)

**Gaby Jordan, staff planner, resident**

**Paige Duncan, Planning Director**

**Bill Keegan, Town Manager**



Town Hall



Orpheum





## PROCESS

The design and planning process to create the new Foxborough brand and develop consistent wayfinding elements began with a presentation to the Advisory Committee of encyclopedic and provocative ways to reinforce community branding and underscore a sense of place.

Following, the initial presentation and discussion, Favermann Design presented several case study narratives of cities and towns that had previously gone through a branding and wayfinding process.

The next meeting was focused on an “Ideation Exercise” that was an interactive process among the Advisory Committee members. They were asked in different ways to verbally describe Foxborough. From the results of this exercise, the consultants created a number of design options that addressed the descriptions stated by the committee members. Among these were multiple concepts and images of the Town Common, Militia Soldiers, versions of Town Hall and Memorial Hall. The consensus was that the “brand” needed to be referential to the history of the Town of Foxborough.



*Statue on Building*

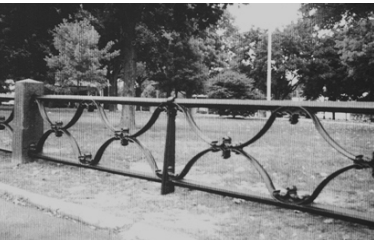
## FINAL DESIGN

The final design selected is a partial image of Memorial Hall. This building is set facing the Town Common. Built in 1868 and for many years housed the town of Foxborough’s Public Library, Memorial Hall is a historic Grand Army of the Republic hall at 22 South Street in Foxborough, Massachusetts, United States. It is a single-story granite Gothic Revival structure, octagonal in shape, with four projecting wings and a turret capped by a statue of a Union Army soldier (carved in wood by noted sculptor by Charles H. Pizzano. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

The lettering for the signs is based on the font used on the “FOXBOROUGH” sign in the town common. At the bottom of the largest wayfinding sign elements (Gateways) are metal bands reflecting the unique fencing on the Town Common.



*FOXBOROUGH town common*



*Detail of fence*

After the Town Planner Paige Duncan and members of the Advisory Committee along with Consultant Mark Favermann met to apply new sign elements to a GIS map of Downtown Foxborough. Prior to this strategic exercise, existing signs in the Town were recognized and documented. Those to be removed were visually documented as well. In addition, a review and application of an expanded wayfinding program was discussed developing a phased approach for the whole town. Phase 1 applies to the Downtown area.

Two weeks after a preliminary presentation to the Board of Selectman by Town Planner Paige Duncan and consultant Mark Favermann, the Board of Selectman voted unanimously to approve the designs and Phase 1 of the overall program.



*Town Common*

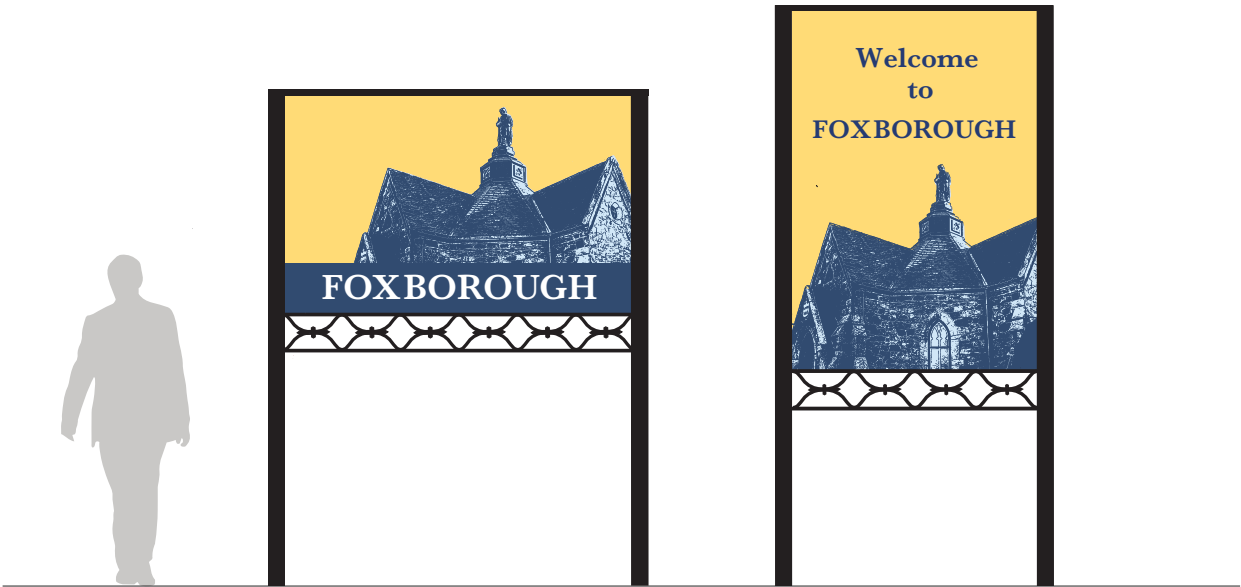


*Central Street*



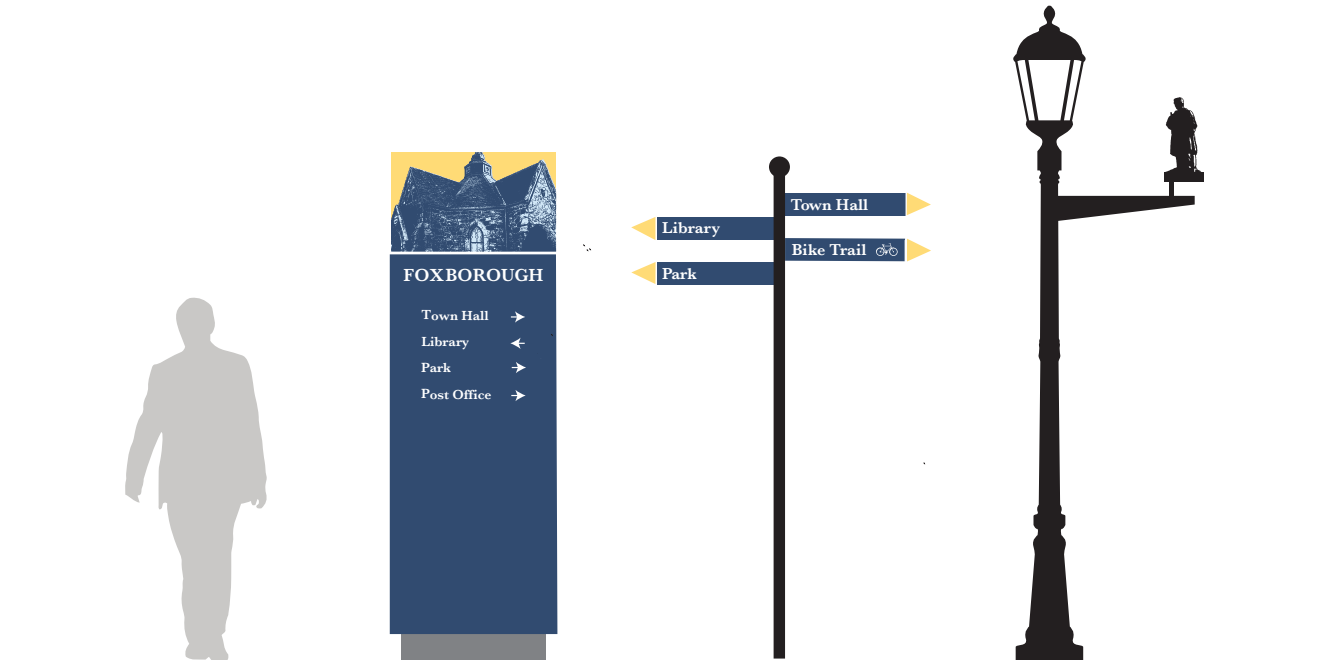
*Various Housing*

FAMILY OF ELEMENTS



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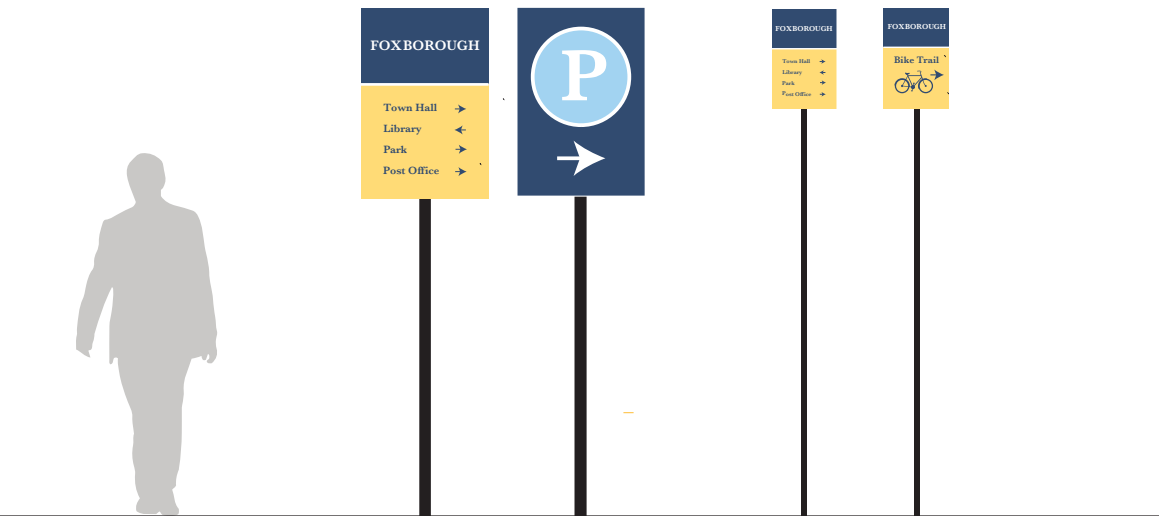
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C1

C2

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