

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Town of Millbury

Comprehensive Master Plan 2019

MILLBURY



TOWN OF MILLBURY



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1. WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

Simply put, a master plan is a tool that a community uses to create a vision for its future. Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.), Chapter 41, Section 81D, states that a master plan is “designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality.” A master plan document identifies future growth and development in a community through an interactive public process. This process determines which goals are priorities, and which actions can be implemented to achieve the goals identified over a set period, usually ten years. Per M.G.L., a master plan must be approved through a majority vote by a municipality’s Planning Board. Once approved, a master plan not only provides a framework for strategic action, it also helps a municipality receive grant funding through various State programs.

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



The Basics of a Master Plan

1.) The Document. The Millbury master plan contains discussion of the following elements:



2.) Interactive Public Process.

It is important for a Master Plan to be supported by a transparent, well-informed development process comprised of professional technical analysis and effective citizen engagement. Through this process, the Millbury community assisted in the development of policies and strategies to achieve the goals outlined for each master plan element. The elements were then woven together and integrated into a holistic plan reflecting the shared values of the community. The public's input helped to develop a vision and set of goals, as well as a plan of action (implementation matrix) to achieve the goals.

A Master Plan Committee was created to assist with the development of the master plan. The Committee was comprised of residents and representatives of select Town departments, boards, and commissions. The Committee met approximately once a month throughout the process, and assisted with outreach and creating awareness of the opportunities for residents to participate in the community engagement process. They also provided support at the forums and feedback for the Consultant team and Town officials.

2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

PHASE I – DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION FOR MILLBURY’S FUTURE (2016)

In 2016, residents participated in several forums to voice their concerns and desires regarding Millbury’s future. Forums included: a mini-visioning session at the Senior Center, town-wide public forum, survey of the business community, youth forum, and an online survey. The feedback received was used to develop a vision, goals, and a plan of action to achieve those goals. Key themes from these Community Conversations included:

- A desire to preserve the small town feeling while revitalizing the downtown.
- An interest in improving transportation and circulation.
- A wider range of housing to support people through various stages of the life cycle.
- An appreciation for Millbury’s natural features and historic structures.
- Additional services, programs, and opportunities for the increasing senior population, youth, and the disabled.
- A desire for beautification and maintenance of public and private properties, especially in the downtown.

Goals

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

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

A VISION FOR MILLBURY'S FUTURE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PHASE II – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (2018)

Phase II of the master planning process involved the public providing input at two town-wide forums as well as through a survey (either paper or online submission). This phase focused on an assessment of existing conditions as well as strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities.

Survey of Millbury Households

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



TOWN-WIDE PUBLIC FORUMS

PUBLIC FORUM #1

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

At the meeting, attendees received a brief presentation that included information about the master plan process and why it is important for the Town. This presentation included facts about Millbury and a summary of a public opinion survey that was conducted by Bridgewater State University on the Town's behalf. Attendees then visited breakout stations to learn about and discuss master plan elements and goals. Topics discussed at the breakout stations included Land Use & Zoning, Transportation, Town Facilities/Services, Economic Development, Open Space, Recreation & Natural Resources, Housing, Historic/Cultural Resources, and Sustainability.

Attendees were provided with post-it notes to make comments, add thoughts and ask questions. They were also provided with five (5) small dots per station to prioritize recommendations within each master plan element, placing up to three (3) dots on any one item. Attendees were then provided with three (3) large dots to identify the goal, objective or strategy they believed was top three in importance across all master plan elements, using only one dot per item. Summary sheets of the results of this exercise were created. The summary sheets assisted with generating formal recommendations and an implementation matrix for this master plan.

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

Element	Action	Small Dots
Housing	Explore options for increasing senior housing in Millbury (e.g. small cottages, condos, apartments, congregate residences, assisted living) and identify ways to encourage them.	23
Land Use	Review town bylaws, zoning, etc. for clarity, ease of use and appropriateness regarding support of master plan goals.	18
Transportation	Improve downtown sidewalks, ramps, and crosswalks to be ADA compliant.	16
Community Facilities	Maintain existing and expand programs and services to meet needs of Millbury’s increasing senior citizen population (socializing, health and wellness, transportation, housing).	16
Transportation	Implement traffic calming measures (e.g. bump outs, flashing crosswalk signage).	14
Economic Development	Promote and publicize the contributions local businesses make to the community.	14

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

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

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

PUBLIC FORUM #2

A second public forum was held on October 4, 2018 at Millbury Junior-Senior High School. The purpose was to present strategies proposed for the plan's implementation – the actions to take to meet the vision and goals as set forth in the initial stages of the overall master planning process – for feedback. Approximately forty people attended the forum.

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

Participants were asked to comment on the recommendations at each of the stations. Afterward, participants were asked to prioritize implementation strategies. Each participant received ten (10) dots, and were asked to place the dots on the actions they felt were most important for the Town to focus on and pursue in the short-term (e.g. to initiate within the first five years). The participant feedback included:

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

Ranking of Priorities for Master Plan Implementation

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

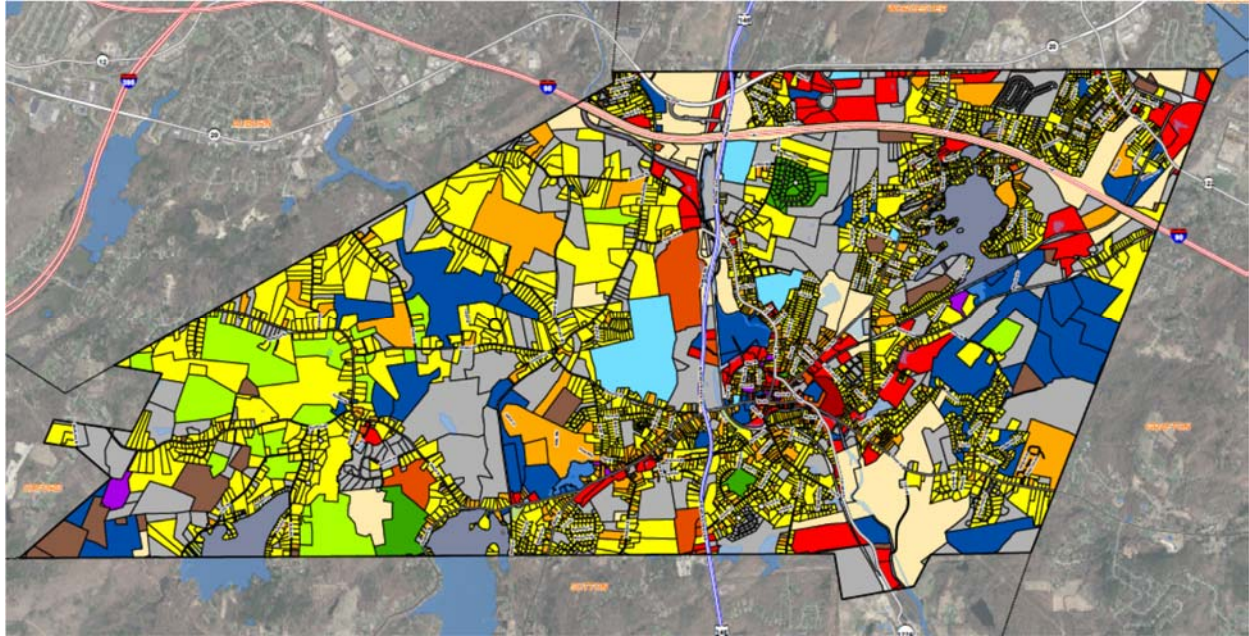
1. **Transportation (TR-1):** *Make improving/maintaining roadways, increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety, and providing alternative modes of transportation a priority. (43 dots)*
2. **Open Space (OS-4):** *Maintain and protect the town's open space and recreation facilities through improved regulatory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

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



3. LAND USE

GOAL: Retain the town's character while accommodating future growth.



The way land has been used in Millbury has evolved over time, in response to both natural and man-made factors. There is still a significant amount of undeveloped land in Millbury. However, uses on this undeveloped land include open space, natural resources and recreation, agriculture, right of way, and utility. It is estimated that residentially zoned vacant land can accommodate an additional 2,712 residential units under current zoning regulations. It is estimated that future development within business and industrial zoned districts has the capacity to accommodate approximately 561,624 and 2,295,612 square feet of floor area respectively.

KEY FINDINGS

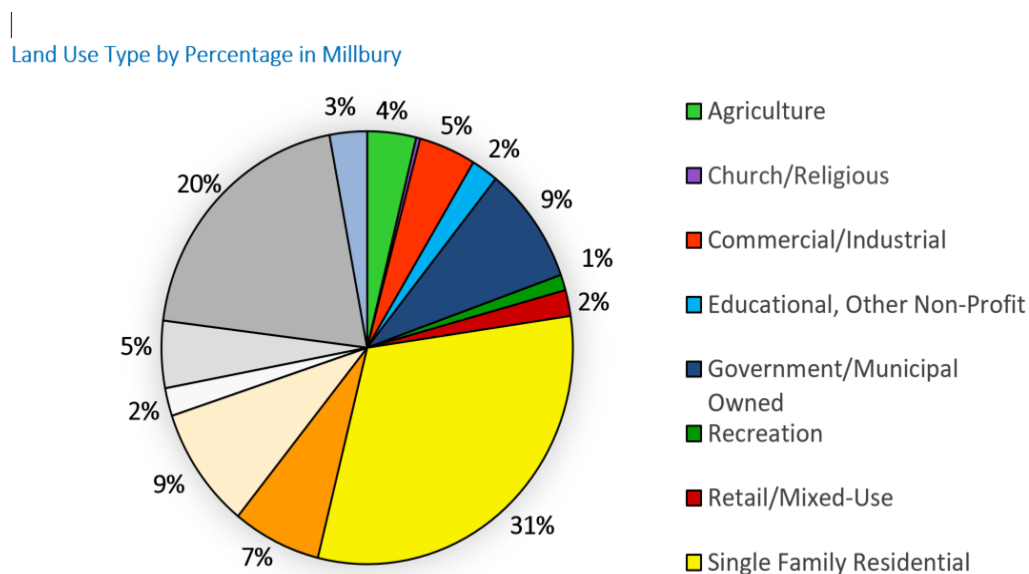
- Single-family residential development is the dominant land use in Millbury.
- The Shoppes at Blackstone Valley provide the densest retail development in town in a prime, easily accessible location for the region.
- Potential exists to grow the town's commercial and industrial base. It is estimated that approximately 560,000 square feet of business zoned floor area and over 2.9 million square feet of industrial zoned floor area could be developed under current zoning.
- Downtown and Bramanville Village offer the most advantageous location for adaptive reuse, mixed-use development, and higher density development.
- Residents would like to see the adoption of regulatory tools for the preservation of historically or architecturally significant buildings; additional development to increase the tax base and minimize the need for additional Town services; and a review of town by-laws,

zoning, etc. for clarity, ease of use and appropriateness regarding the support of master plan goals.

- The Millbury Zoning Bylaw could benefit from an improved organizational structure, elimination of redundancy, reduction in the number of residential districts, and incorporated provisions to achieve the vision of the Master Plan.
- The Route 122 Corridor's proximity to the Mass Pike's interchange presents an opportunity for economic development through a rezoning to a business district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recodification/Update the Zoning Bylaw – The Zoning Bylaw needs to be reorganized and amended to be more user-friendly to better reflect the vision of the Master Plan. Eliminate/combine residential zoning districts.
- Amend the Zoning Map as appropriate to reflect the areas where public and private investment should be targeted to achieve the vision of the Master Plan.
- Consider the creation of a Route 122 Corridor Overlay District that would set forth development standards, use and dimensional requirements, and a special permit process to facilitate business growth along the corridor.
- Millbury should look to capitalize on vacant, undeveloped land adjacent to Routes 20, 122A and 146, particularly to enhance its commercial and industrial development base.
- Coordinate the expansion of public infrastructure to the areas designated for future growth and development/redevelopment in the Master Plan.



4. HOUSING

GOAL: Provide a range of housing options to accommodate people at different stages in the lifecycle and with a range of incomes.



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

Most recent estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that Millbury's housing inventory includes 5,621 units. The majority are traditional detached single-family homes, ranging from modest postwar ranches to higher-end, spacious

residences. Seventy-three percent (73%) of all households in the town are homeowners, while 27% are renters. According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, the average value of a single-family home in Millbury is approximately \$269,000.

KEY FINDINGS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create more flexible ways to permanently preserve open space as part of new residential developments.
- Promote accessory dwelling units as an opportunity to create affordably priced housing in established neighborhoods.



- Create a Housing Production Plan (HPP) as a strategy to promote and increase affordable housing opportunities for Millbury residents. The HPP will help ensure that Millbury remains affordable to many types of households as it grows and attracts higher-income families who find the town a desirable place to live.
- Increase local capacity to create and preserve affordable housing so that people who work in Millbury can choose to live in Millbury as well.
 - Activate the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
 - Educate residents on various affordable housing terms – subsidized housing, deed restricted housing, workforce housing, etc. to gain support for the passage of the Community Preservation Act.
 - Use the Community Preservation Act as a source of dedicated revenue for the creation of affordable housing.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Increase the tax base and provide additional job opportunities.

Millbury has geographic advantages for economic development. Its direct access to regional highways and Interstate 90 is conducive to regional retail, hospitality, food services, businesses, and support operations for the biotech, healthcare, education, and other industries centered in Worcester. Structures such as the Cordis Mill and Felter’s Mill celebrate Millbury’s heyday as an industrial village while also enabling new kinds of economic activity through mixed-use development.

Twenty-one percent (21%) of the tax base is non-residential in Millbury. The presence of a large regional retail center, the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley, is clearly a contributing factor.



KEY FINDINGS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explore creating a Business Improvement District (BID) for downtown Millbury;
- Actively support and promote a “Buy Local” campaign;
- Take steps to “streamline” and simplify the development review and permitting process for nonresidential development;
- Promote and publicize the contributions local businesses make to the community; and
- Review land use policies and regulations to reduce or prevent conflicts between business development and residential neighborhoods.
- Determine if business assistance programs, such as microloans/façade loans/tax relief packages may help with business attraction and/or retention efforts.

Quick Snapshot: Millbury's Local Economy

- About 7,000 Millbury residents work either in Millbury or a nearby community, and 6% are self-employed.
- 5,300 people work in Millbury, including town residents with a local job and non-residents commuting to Millbury.
- Millbury's 381 employers provide jobs for a combined total of 5,200 people.
- The strongest industries are Retail Trade, Construction, Manufacturing, Logistics (Transportation and Warehousing), and Accommodation and Food Services.
- The average weekly wage is \$762.
- Millbury's highest-wage jobs are in Construction and Manufacturing.
- Commercial and industrial properties generate 21.7% of the town's tax levy. The FY 2018 real and personal property tax rate is \$16.34.



In addition, the Town should evaluate how high a priority fostering economic development and growth is, and assess if it makes sense to increase town staffing capacity to focus on these efforts, particularly in terms of fostering small business development in the center of town, and larger-scale development along main transportation routes.

6. CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

GOAL: Preserve, protect, and reutilize the many cultural and historic resources and village centers, and ensure that new development is consistent with the town's historic character.

Millbury's town character is due in no small part to its villages, historic buildings, landscapes, and well-preserved features, many of which reflect its New England manufacturing past. Examples are the Felter's Mill, the Asa Water's Mansion, and the Old Common. The protection and preservation of Millbury's historic character are an integral component of the town's vision for the future.



The Massachusetts Historical Commission's Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) database lists over 500 inventoried cultural resources in Millbury, including residences, churches, worker housing, mills, civic and office buildings, schools, cemeteries, dams, waterways, and bridges situated throughout the town dating from the early 1700s.

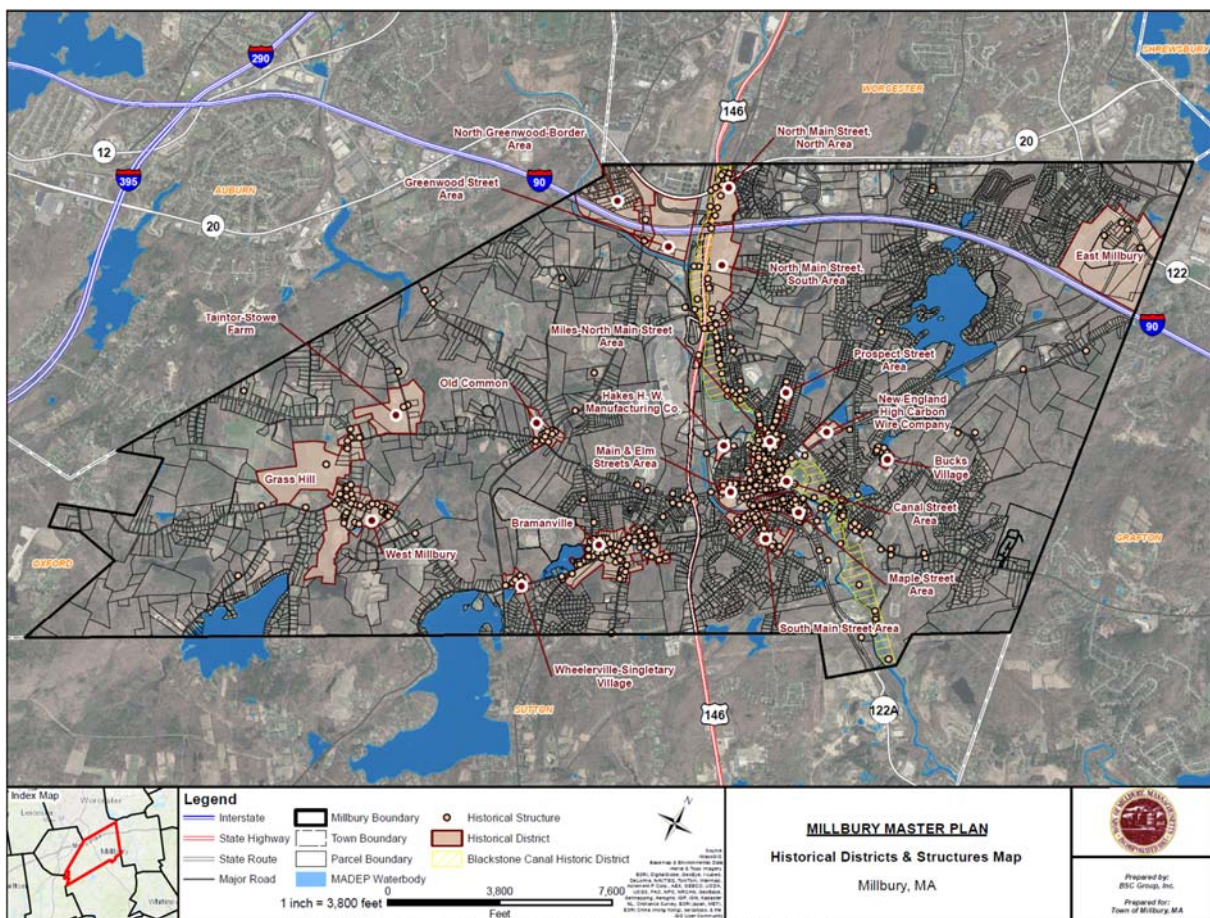
KEY FINDINGS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Apply for grants for interpretive signage to educate and inform residents and visitors.
- Add Local Historic District designation regulations to the Zoning Bylaw.
- Implement a Demolition Delay By-law to provide time for the town to react before significant resources are destroyed.
- Expand the existing Adaptive Reuse Overlay District to additional industrial areas of town, as appropriate.
- Consider options for permanent protections of heritage landscapes in Millbury.

- Establish protocols to actively share information about the importance of protecting cultural resources and heritage landscapes with the public. These might incorporate the use of social media, pop-up events, and school outreach.
- Implement development guidelines, particularly within historic areas, to ensure that new development is in keeping with the town's historic character.
- Update and computerize the 1989 comprehensive inventory of architectural and archaeological resources in Millbury to establish priorities for preservation and identify potential future uses.
- Develop an inventory of cultural resources which may be at risk of damage or destruction due to increased duration or severity of storms associated with climate change, e.g., resources within the 100-year flood zone or agricultural areas prone to erosion.
- Take steps to make resources pertaining to architectural preservation available to homeowners. This may include adding to the Town's website, distributing lists to local realtors, and general community outreach.



7. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

GOAL: To preserve, maintain, and enhance the town's open spaces, parks, and outdoor recreational facilities.

The Town of Millbury offers a wide range of open space and recreational resources ranging from athletic fields to playgrounds and tot lots, active and passive use trails, a dog park, and boating access. Additional open space resources include municipally-managed cemeteries, and other public and privately-owned open space land without public access, such as the Merrill Pond Wildlife Management Area and farms. Eighteen percent of the total landscape in Millbury can be categorized as open space. Presently, Millbury has an inventory of 48 open space properties, ranging in size from less than an acre (playgrounds) to 237 acres (conservation trails).

Over the past twenty years, Millbury's demographics have been changing. While the total number of residents has increased slightly, the town's senior population has increased significantly. The town's population is expected to continue to increase over time, and this will result in pressures to convert open spaces to residential and commercial facilities.



KEY FINDINGS

- Many of Millbury residents are unaware of the open space resources available in the town other than the athletic fields and other active recreational areas.
- Based on preliminary field observation and community feedback, many of Millbury's open space resources show signs of overuse and aging and require maintenance and/or upgrades.

- There is a need for a diversification of open space resources to meet the demands of Millbury's growing and aging population.
- Regulatory land use controls, like the Open Space Community bylaw is an effective tool that provides for the preservation and protection of open space in Millbury.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase staffing and municipal capacity, particularly within the Planning Department, Conservation Commission, and Department of Public Works – Parks Commission.
- Focus on the preservation of agricultural landscapes. Farmscapes are an important piece of the landscape in Millbury. There are several farms in Millbury, however, only portions of the Pearson's Elmhurst Dairy Farm are protected under the Commonwealth's APR Program.
- Increase awareness of open space resources. Ways to do this include installing wayfinding signs at entry ways and within open space resources, installing informational kiosks/displays, and GPS the local trail system to create maps for publishing on the town website.
- Adopt additional considerations relative to the Open Space Community Bylaw.
- Make maintenance and diversification of open space resources a priority.
- Identify and pursue funding opportunities related to the preservation of Millbury's open spaces.
 - Pursue the adoption of the Community Preservation Act.
 - Seek recreational trail funding for trail improvements.
 - Consider corporate partnerships/advertising at athletic fields and playgrounds for monetary assistance.

8. NATURAL RESOURCES, WATER, AND ENERGY

GOAL: To preserve, maintain, and enhance the town's natural resources, including its parks, conservation areas, waterways, wetlands, and other open spaces.

Millbury has a diversity of natural resources that adds to the attractiveness and high quality of life in town, and includes wetlands, waterways, ponds, forests, habitat of rare and endangered species, critical natural landscapes, vernal pools, aquifers, cold water fisheries and FEMA floodplain.

Millbury's landscape is defined by natural resources such as the Blackstone River. The Blackstone River, its tributaries, and the town's ponds and brooks are the most significant surface water features.

Approximately 10% of Millbury's land surface is covered by waterways, wetlands and ponds. Approximately 8% of Millbury is located within the federal flood hazard areas map.



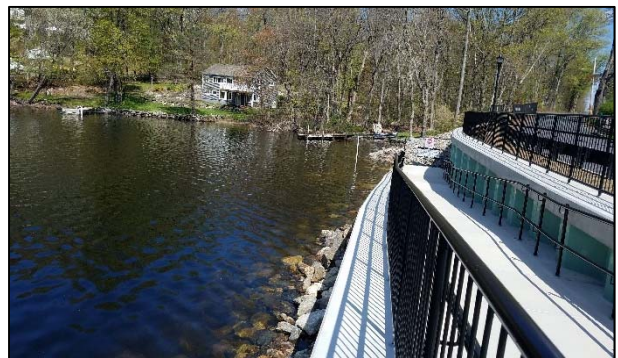
KEY FINDINGS

- Millbury has extensive regulatory mechanisms to protect its natural resources.
- Millbury promotes clean energy efforts, and sustainable economic and residential development in a way that supports its natural resources and landscapes.
- As a Green Community, Millbury has led the way in implementation of energy conservation measures at its town-owned facilities.
- Stormwater runoff, drainage and flooding continue to be a hazard for the Town. The Blackstone River has a significant impact on stormwater drainage and downstream flooding in Millbury. However, Millbury has been improving and maintaining its infrastructure, and continues to seek out grants and assistance to remediate some of these issues.
- Millbury has invested a lot of time and effort in public outreach and education involving stormwater management, water resource protection, and proper recycling and rubbish disposal.
- While there are existing opportunities, such as trails, to enjoy Millbury's natural resources, there is an increased demand for additional access and use of the resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve access to and increase awareness of the Town's natural resources.

- Maintain and protect natural resources through infrastructure upgrades and enhanced regulatory controls such as low-impact development, tree protection, energy/sustainable development, and wetlands protection.
- Protect the integrity of the Town's ecosystem and natural landscapes as development continues in Millbury.
- Identify and pursue funding opportunities related to the preservation of Millbury's natural resources and reduction of energy consumption.
 - Complete outreach and education to pursue adoption of Community Preservation Act.
 - Apply for additional MVP/resiliency funding.
 - Partner with watershed associations and other environmental groups to seek grants for resource protection.
 - Continue to implement and expand the LID/Green Infrastructure plan.
 - Continue to implement Millbury's Energy Reduction Plan and encourage the placement of alternative energy facilities within town.



9. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

GOAL: To preserve, maintain, and/or enhance the town's municipal facilities and services so that they meet the needs of all residents.

Over the next two decades, Millbury's aging facilities will need to be repaired, replaced and/or upgraded. Existing services will need to be evaluated as the demand for greater efficiency, updated building codes, and technological advances occur. Millbury has 16 town buildings of various ages, 15 pump stations, and 5 structures associated with recreation facilities, as well as municipal cemeteries, numerous athletic fields, and conservation lands.

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



KEY FINDINGS

- Upgrading the Town's facilities and services overall is a high priority for residents, as is meeting the needs of residents of all ages.
- The projected increase in the population aged 65+ will result in an increased need for municipal services in the future.

- The School Committee and School District are focused on tackling space constraints and facility conditions, particularly related to the condition of the Raymond E. Shaw School as well as the demand for smaller classroom sizes and additional programmatic spaces.
- Both the Fire and Police Departments are in outdated facilities in need of repair and would benefit from newer, updated ones.
- Funding and implementing infrastructure improvements throughout the Town is critical to maintaining safe and accessible streets and sidewalks and promoting economic development.
- Under DPU regulations, Aquarion has no plans to expand its water distribution system. The company is at approximately 90% of its permitted capacity for water and can request additional withdrawals to meet expected growth in Millbury.
- The Town has made significant progress relative to its energy consumption goals. The Town continues to monitor energy consumption, conduct energy audits and retrofit energy reduction alternatives where feasible. It should continue to pursue grants to implement more sustainable infrastructure in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- An opportunity exists and should be explored for the Town to take over the transportation service currently provided by the Council on Aging so that it can be expanded to all residents, perhaps with cost savings.
- Collaborate to foster stronger intergenerational relationships between the younger and older populations in town. Entities could include the Council on Aging/Senior Center, Public Library, and Schools, with support from town officials.
- Form a committee to explore housing needs and options for seniors, including Town-owned and developed senior housing and assisted living facilities.
- Focus on the evolving role of public libraries to actively encourage the use of the library for a variety of activities for patrons of all ages.
- The School Department should consider and prioritize actions that will increase funding.
- Evaluate the Town's staffing capacity, limitations, priorities, and funding.
- Work with DPW to create a realistic action plan for improvements to infrastructure and reduction of costs for services provided.
- Work to maximize the capacity of Asa Waters Mansion to become revenue-neutral to the Town.
- Continue to support energy saving efforts.

10. TRANSPORTATION

GOAL: To improve all modes of transportation so that it is safe and easy for residents of all ages to get around.



Located directly to the south of the City of Worcester, Millbury is well served by regional highways, with access to Interstate 90 (Massachusetts Turnpike), Massachusetts Route 146 (Worcester-Providence Turnpike), and U.S. Route 20 (Southwest Cutoff).

Millbury is within the Worcester Regional Transit Authority's (WRTA) service area. However, most residents in Millbury prefer the use of personal vehicles over any other mode of travel. Eighty-four percent (84%) use a single-occupancy vehicle. Similarly, 45% of residents have a commute travel time to work between 15 and 30 minutes.

KEY FINDINGS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Extend and repair sidewalks in key locations.
- Create a more aesthetically pleasing public realm, particularly within the downtown.

- Implement traffic calming measures (e.g. bump outs, flashing crosswalk signage) to enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility.
- Pursue the vision set forth in the 2016 Downtown Revitalization Low-Impact Development Initiative. Make the Four Corners intersection a priority.
- Improve sidewalks, ramps and crosswalks to be ADA compliant.
- Pursue grant funding to assist in an updated inventory and making corrective measures.
- Implement a five-year capital improvement plan, revisiting the plan annually during the budget development process.
- Prioritize and implement the Town's Complete Streets policy.
- Upgrade bicycle infrastructure and network throughout town.
 - Advocate for the extension of the Blackstone River Bikeway through Millbury and the surrounding towns.
 - Pursue opportunities for increased access to rail trails, bike lanes and enhanced on-road accommodations throughout Town.

