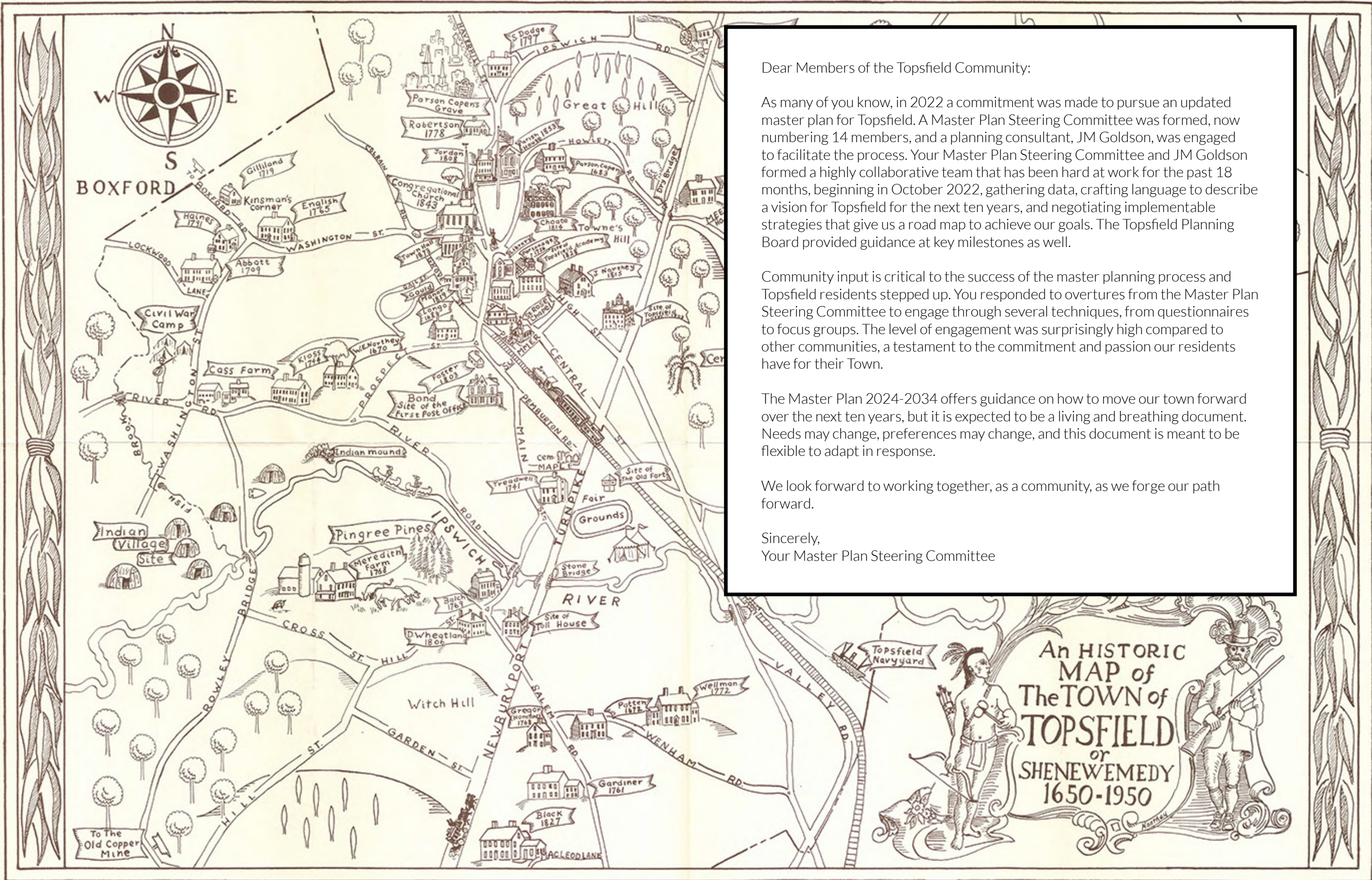




05/01/2024

TOPSFIELD MASTER PLAN 2024 - 2034

Prepared By JM Goldson



Dear Members of the Topsfield Community:

As many of you know, in 2022 a commitment was made to pursue an updated master plan for Topsfield. A Master Plan Steering Committee was formed, now numbering 14 members, and a planning consultant, JM Goldson, was engaged to facilitate the process. Your Master Plan Steering Committee and JM Goldson formed a highly collaborative team that has been hard at work for the past 18 months, beginning in October 2022, gathering data, crafting language to describe a vision for Topsfield for the next ten years, and negotiating implementable strategies that give us a road map to achieve our goals. The Topsfield Planning Board provided guidance at key milestones as well.

Community input is critical to the success of the master planning process and Topsfield residents stepped up. You responded to overtures from the Master Plan Steering Committee to engage through several techniques, from questionnaires to focus groups. The level of engagement was surprisingly high compared to other communities, a testament to the commitment and passion our residents have for their Town.

The Master Plan 2024-2034 offers guidance on how to move our town forward over the next ten years, but it is expected to be a living and breathing document. Needs may change, preferences may change, and this document is meant to be flexible to adapt in response.

We look forward to working together, as a community, as we forge our path forward.

Sincerely,
Your Master Plan Steering Committee



Topsfield Master Plan Steering Committee

Gregor Smith, Chair
 Zillie Bhujju, Vice Chair
 Jen Collins Brown, Clerk
 Andrew Mulholland
 Bradley Bissel
 Elizabeth Mulholland
 Gary Bergmann
 Josh Rownd
 Marshall Hook
 Rosalee DiScipio
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Town Staff

Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator
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 Stephanie Bilotti, Digital Communications

Planning Board

Martha Morrison, Chair
 Steven Hall, Clerk
 Jennie Merrill
 Greg Mellinger
 Josh Rownd

Select Board

Marshall Hook, Chair
 Rafael McDonald, Vice-Chair & Clerk
 Boyd Jackson
 Lynne Bermudez
 Cameron Brown

With the assistance of planning consultants:

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Photo Credits

Unless noted in the photos, images are courtesy of the Town of Topsfield, the Master Plan Steering Committee, and JM Goldson LLC.

Historic Map on previous page courtesy of Topsfield Historical Society.

THANK YOU!

This plan could not have been created without the hard work and dedication of the Topsfield Master Plan Steering Committee, Town Staff, Planning Board, and community members. Special thanks to each community member who took the time to participate in events and engagement opportunities.



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(left)
Topsfield Linear Common
Source: Eric Roth

1 INTRODUCTION

Topsfield, Massachusetts, is a charming New England town in Essex County, roughly 22 miles north of Boston. Formerly known as Shenewemedy, Topsfield has a rich history that echoes the footsteps of its original stewards, the Agawam tribe of the Algonquian people. The name Shenewemedy is understood today to mean “the pleasant place by the flowing waters,” a poetic description that still resonates with the Town’s serene charm, rural character, and access to the Ipswich River, which winds its way through the Town’s landscape.

The Town is characterized by its agricultural past, tree-lined streets, and colonial-style homes, offering residents and visitors opportunities to explore Topsfield’s rich heritage. But what truly sets Topsfield apart is its abundant community pride, a spirit that is brought to life by its dedicated volunteers. These individuals, through their selfless efforts, have been the essential force in shaping the Town’s identity, inspiring others with their commitment and dedication, and continue to fuel its collective vision for the future.

The Town of Topsfield’s last Master Plan was a 2004 Community Development Plan, and since then, the Town’s needs and vision for the future have evolved.

***The name
Shenewemedy is
understood today as,
“the pleasant place by
the flowing waters.”***

(left)
Ipswich River
Source: Janelle Pescatore



Purpose of this Master Plan

Topsfield is embarking on a new chapter of growth and progress. As the Town continues to evolve, this master plan will provide a flexible roadmap to guide local decision-makers. Acting as a bridge between Topsfield’s past and its future, this plan recognizes the need for sustainable development to advance community well-being while preserving what makes the Town unique and paying homage to its agricultural heritage.

A comprehensive master plan responds to change over time. It provides a vision to direct and motivate future land use and regulatory decisions for the next ten years.



What forces have shaped the community over time?

What makes Topsfield unique?

How should the Town move forward into the next ten years?

Components of this Master Plan

Master Plans are tailored to reflect the communities in which they are produced but follow statutory requirements. Massachusetts, under MGL c.41 § 81D, requires master plans include the following components:

- An analysis of existing conditions that builds on past and current plans with the most current data available;
- A ten-year community vision with measurable goals to support the vision;
- Specific regulatory, programming, and physical improvement strategies;
- A future land use map (FLUM) outlining desired land use changes; and
- A ten-year implementation strategy.

Statutory Elements

Massachusetts municipal master plans require planning for seven required elements: 1) Housing, 2) Economic Development, 3) Natural and Cultural Resources, 4) Open Space and Recreation, 5) Services and Facilities, 6) Circulation, and 7) Land Use.

To create a meaningful and effective Master Plan, the elements of this plan are overlapped into Core Themes. Rather than planning for each component individually, Topsfield’s Master Plan combines elements into themes so they consider and reinforce one another to support the Town’s overall vision. That said, this plan does meet statutory requirements and covers each element.

Topsfield’s Master Plan’s Elements



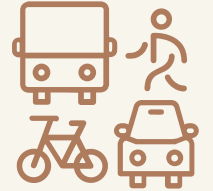
LIVE
Demographics & Housing



WORK
Economic Conditions



PLAY
Recreational Amenities & Cultural Resources



CONNECT
Transportation



PROTECT
Historic Resources, Natural Places, & Ecosystems



ADAPT
Climate Change Prevention, Adaptation, & Resilience



SERVE
Local Government, Public Facilities, & Services



LAND USE
Development Patterns & Zoning

Town Planning Initiatives

Since 2004, Topsfield has made significant strides to plan for the future of these elements individually. These studies and plans, completed by dedicated volunteers and town staff, have provided an essential foundation for and are cited throughout this plan.

These include, but are not limited to:

- [2007 Water Conservation Plan](#)
- [2013 Town Building Assessment Study & Capital Master Plan](#)
- [2017 ADA Transition Plan](#)
- [2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan](#)
- [2018 Financial Policy Guidelines](#)
- [2019 Downtown Revitalization Plan](#)
- [2019 Open Space & Recreation Plan](#)
- [2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan](#)
- [2022 Topsfield Town Library Strategic Plan](#)
- [2024 Sustainability Advisory Committee Strategic Plan](#)



(left)
Topsfield Town Library Benches
Source: Eric Roth

Plan Framework

To best capture the overlap among the different community planning topics and reflect the community values and priorities that emerged from the planning process, this plan is organized by core themes that comprise the community’s vision. Each theme has associated goals and strategies.

Topsfield’s 2034 Master Plan complies with all statutory requirements per MGL c.41 s.81D. Additionally, this plan was developed with considerations for sustainability, resilience, and planning for vulnerable groups woven throughout each core theme.

Planning for vulnerable groups requires recognizing previous planning practices have had a disparate impact on specific communities and actively working with affected residents to create a better community for all.

Health, income, mobility, and other inequities are institutionalized in policies and systematic practices that disproportionately limit opportunity and assign undue burden to individuals and groups based on their race, age, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, religion, disability, or any intersection of marginalized identities.

The American Planning Association American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct describes this principle:

“People who participate in the planning process shall work to achieve economic, social, and racial equity.” The association also calls on planners to “incorporate equity principles and strategies as the foundation for preparing plans and implementation programs to achieve more socially just decision-making.”

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Sustainability practices for a livable community, as inspired by the Living Community Challenge, include:

1. Providing nurturing places that promote healthy lifestyles for everyone and supporting nature-based climate solutions;
2. Contributing more than it takes concerning water, soil, and energy –focusing on energy conservation and renewable energy generation, collecting and retaining soil nutrients, and water capture and treatment;
3. Designs and develops multi-functional properties, understanding that nothing needs only a single purpose– that everything can offer multiple benefits to the community and environment;
4. Providing regenerative, resilient, and connected spaces for people and natural ecosystems to thrive, even in the most developed portions of the community; and
5. Promoting equity by creating walkable and bikeable places, offering affordable housing options, and sustaining and growing public transportation options.

1

Vision

A vision statement is an aspirational view of what residents hope the community will be like at its very best. Before a meaningful plan can be created, the community needs to imagine the future it is striving for. The vision statement then becomes the driving force behind the plan.

5

Core Themes

Five core themes emerged through the planning process based on the communities’ values and priorities:

- Preserving Historic and Natural Resources
- Connected, Accessible, and Affordable Community
- Strategic Economic and Business Development
- Bringing People Together
- Meeting Community Needs

17

Goals

This plan includes 17 goals that describe the conditions for striving to achieve the community vision over time. Goals describe what the community wants to achieve.

77

Strategies

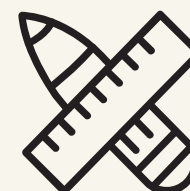
This plan includes 77 strategies describing how to achieve the community’s goals. Strategies are ways that the Town will work to achieve its goals. They are actionable and involve funding, regulations, programs, and other town resources, such as staff or volunteer time.

Strategy Types

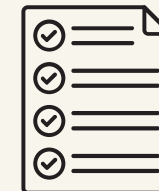
This report includes icons to indicate strategy types.



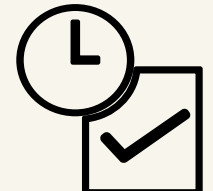
CAPACITY BUILDING



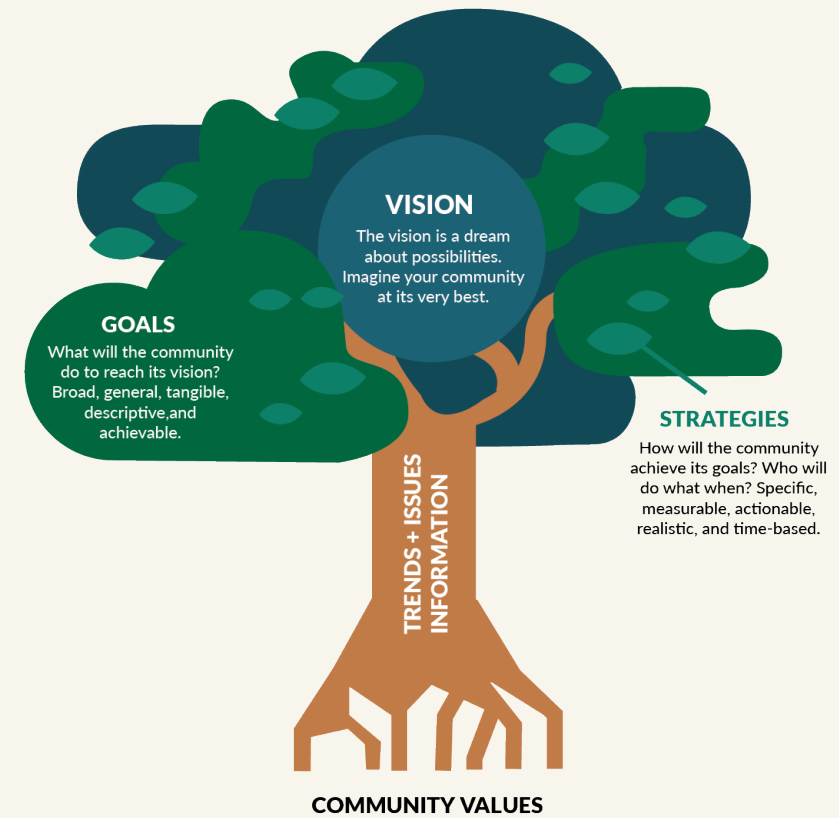
DESIGN, PHYSICAL, & ACQUISITION



REGULATORY & POLICY



PROGRAMMATIC





2 PLANNING PROCESS

This Master Plan was created through a four-phase, nineteen-month-long process that began in October 2022 and ended in April 2024. Topsfield’s comprehensive planning process involved:

- Actively understanding the Town’s current conditions.
- Engaging the community in envisioning its future.
- Collaboratively formulating a Master Plan Vision and Goals.
- Determining realistic strategies to achieve these goals, and, ultimately,
- Planning for their implementation in the Town.

PHASE I

Topsfield Yesterday & Today

Phase I laid the foundation for this plan by reviewing various Town and regional planning documents and gathering insight from community members to understand current issues and opportunities. Studying Topsfield’s current and past social, economic, and environmental conditions created a baseline for later planning.

PHASE II

Topsfield Tomorrow

Phase II encouraged community members to share their hopes and dreams for Topsfield’s future. Community members and Master Plan Steering Committee members developed and revised the community vision, core themes, and goals statements, which serve as the guiding framework for Topsfield’s future.

PHASE III

Achieving Topsfield Tomorrow

Phase III proposed and vetted the strategies for achieving Topsfield’s desired future. This phase identified actionable steps that, if implemented, will contribute to realizing Topsfield’s community vision and goals.

PHASE IV

Plan Finalization & Adoption

Phase IV discussed implementing Topsfield’s master plan to successfully reach the community’s vision and goals. This phase developed an implementation strategy as a roadmap for reaching Topsfield’s goals by 2034.

(left)
Topsfield Master Plan Open House
Source: JM Goldson

3 TOPSFIELD TODAY: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Topsfield is a 12.8-square-mile inland town situated in Essex County, Massachusetts. It is approximately 22 miles north of Boston and less than 10 miles from the Atlantic Ocean coastline in various directions. The Town shares borders with six municipalities: Boxford to the northwest, Ipswich to the northeast, Hamilton and Wenham to the east, Danvers to the south, and Middleton to the southwest.

Before European settlers arrived in 1630, the Agawam tribe, part of the Algonquian-speaking Indigenous peoples, inhabited Topsfield. They lived off the land, engaging in hunting, fishing, and agriculture. The region provided abundant natural resources, making it an ideal place for indigenous communities.

By 1638, all the Agawam's land had been deeded to Governor John Winthrop, including "New Meadows," or modern-day Topsfield. In 1648, just two years before the Town's incorporation, the General Court of Massachusetts renamed the land Topsfield, likely after the parish Toppesfield in England. Town and church were the same for the Puritan settlers, and the economy was almost exclusively agricultural.

Topsfield's economy was initially centered around agriculture. Farms dotted the landscape, and the Town became known for its fertile soil, producing corn, wheat, and flax crops. Over time, Topsfield also developed small-scale industries, including mills powered by the stream that flows into Ipswich River, which runs through the Town.

The Town continued to be primarily agricultural through the 19th Century but also saw growth in industry. The arrival

of the Essex Railroad in the mid-1800s improved transportation and facilitated the movement of goods and people. Topsfield saw further changes in the 20th Century, with suburbanization and developing a more diverse economy. As the Boston metropolitan area expanded, Topsfield became a residential suburb while maintaining its rural character. The Town has preserved its historic charm; many colonial-era homes and structures still stand today.

Driving access to Topsfield is facilitated by well-connected roadways, with the Newburyport Turnpike (US R-1) traversing the Town's longitude, interstate 95 (I-95) passing through the southwest corner, and MA Route 97 extending from the northwest corner to the southeast corner. The former Essex Railroad Newburyport Branch Rail Line has been converted into the Topsfield Linear Common Rail Trail, linking Topsfield to other North Shore communities through the Border to Boston trail.

Topsfield continues to be known for its colonial history, agricultural heritage, picturesque countryside, multiple wedding venues, and tight-knit community. The Topsfield Fair, one of the oldest agricultural fairs in the United States, has been held annually in Town since 1910, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. The Town's educational institutions, comprised of a local grade school district and an upper regional school district, as a part of the Masconomet Regional School District, are a source of community pride and contribute to the Town being a great place to raise a family.

(right)
Topsfield Town Commons
Source: Eric Roth





TOPSFIELD BY THE NUMBERS



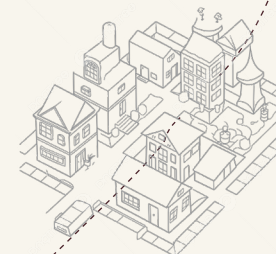
Population: 6,565 (2020 US Census)
Population Density: 512.8 (2020 US Census)
Housing Units: 2,221 (2020 US Census)
Single-Family Homes: 84 percent (American Community Survey (ACS) 2020)
Racial Make Up: 90 percent white (2020 US Census)
Percentage Aged 65+: 22 percent (ACS 2020)



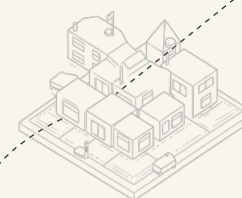
Median Price of Single-Family Home: \$745,000 (August 2020, Massachusetts Association of Realtors)
Median Household Income: \$144,258 (ACS 2020)



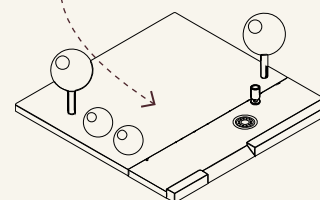
Acres of Critical Habitat: 124
Acres of Critical Natural Landscapes: 1,925
Potential and Certified Vernal Pools: 74
Acres of Wetlands: 1,701
Acres of Agricultural Lands: 660.4
Total Acres: 8,192



Municipal Departments: 26
Boards and Commissions: 31
Municipal Buildings: 10



Public Schools: 2 local, 2 regional
Students in Public School: 1,099 (Topsfield K-6 and Topsfield students in Masconomet 7-12, 2022-2023)



Residential Land: 40 percent
Zoning Districts: 7 primary, 6 overlay

(left)
 Town Common Historic District Wayfinding Signage
 Source: Eric Roth

*This data was collected as a part of the Existing Conditions Analysis. Data collection and analysis were performed during fall 2022, and reflect the latest data at that time.

2023 Existing Conditions Analysis

The 2023 Existing Conditions Analysis included eight topics, which follow the typical master plan statutory elements: housing and demographics (LIVE), economic development (WORK), recreation and cultural resources (PLAY), transportation (CONNECT), natural and historic resources (PROTECT), sustainability and resilience (ADAPT), public facilities and services (SERVE), and land use (LAND USE). Unlike a typical master plan, this plan is organized by the core themes, not statutory elements. However, all statutory elements are covered in the substance of the plan and the report.

LIVE

Topsfield has seen steady population growth over 40 years, with projections indicating an increase in older adults and smaller households. Most of the housing (90 percent) is owner-occupied single-family homes. Still, there's a recent rise in mixed-use and rental units. Despite most homes having four or more bedrooms, there's a trend toward smaller households, creating a mismatch between housing supply and demand. This suggests a need for housing with only three bedrooms and, in some cases, as few as one or two bedrooms.



PLAY

Topsfield boasts diverse public and private recreation areas, including parks, athletic fields, walking paths, and equestrian and nature trails. Notable events like the Topsfield Fair, Strawberry Festival, and Holiday on the Green contribute to the Town's vibrancy. Water recreation is accessible at Hood Pond and the Ipswich River, offering canoeing, fishing, and swimming activities. The Town's open spaces, a mix of private and public areas, feature essential facilities like Pye Brook Park, Community Park, Klock Park, Topsfield Fairgrounds, Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary, and Bradley Palmer State Park, among others. Despite resident interest in more programming and family-friendly events, limited town funding and staffing mean current activities are predominantly volunteer-led and privately funded.



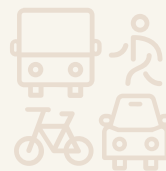
WORK

Massachusetts municipal governments, particularly smaller communities like Topsfield, heavily rely on property taxes for sustained operating revenue. The structure of the tax base significantly influences land use priorities and development focus. A well-balanced mix of commercial, industrial, and residential land uses is crucial for the Town's functional built environment and the provision of essential services. In addition to these considerations, Topsfield's economic development opportunities include leveraging its historic and natural amenities, wedding destinations, and events like the Topsfield Fair.



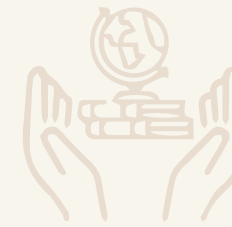
CONNECT

Topsfield has convenient access to regional highways and the commuter rail via the Hamilton/Wenham Commuter Rail station. While the Town's roads are generally safe, MassDOT road safety data highlights two high-crash locations, emphasizing the need for attention. Given limited transportation alternatives, car usage is essential for most daily activities in Topsfield. The Town has approximately 25 miles of local sidewalks, with limited bike infrastructure beyond the Topsfield Linear Common Rail Trail and the bicentennial bike paths to Klock Park, Pye Brook Community Park, and Hood Pond. The Town adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2016 and received a \$400,000 grant in 2020 for sidewalk replacement on Grove Street (from South Main Street to Washington Street), which positions Topsfield to make transportation improvements, prioritizing safety and accessibility for all modes of travel.



PROTECT

Topsfield's scenic beauty, characterized by rolling hilltops, meadows, brooks, marshes, fields, and forests, forms a priceless visual identity. The Town's cultural richness is evident in the 420 historical resources documented on MACRIS. Around 20 percent of Topsfield's land area is designated for agricultural, forest, open space, recreational use, or water purposes. Notably, one-third of the total land area is either owned by government entities, conservation nonprofits, or subject to conservation restrictions. A remarkable 85 percent of Topsfield's open space is safeguarded from development, highlighting a significant commitment to preservation. This wealth of natural resources, combined with active agriculture and substantial protection measures, forms a notable strength for the Town.



SERVE

Topsfield oversees ten municipal buildings, including two elementary schools, while the regional school campus is in Boxford. A 2019 Facility Condition Assessment highlighted improvement needs in critical areas. Compared to the schools, Topsfield lacks full-time maintenance and internal IT staff. The 2021 Memorandum of Understanding established the North Shore Regional IT Collaborative, enhancing shared IT resources.

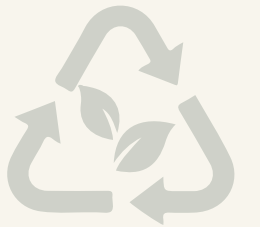


Between Topsfield's Elementary Schools and Masconomet Regional Schools, the District has 1,099 public school students. Despite declining enrollment, projections hint at stability. The District is exploring elementary-level regionalization with no immediate need for new school facilities.

In Fiscal Year 2020, 78.6 percent of Topsfield's \$26.1 million revenue came from property taxes. The FY2023-FY2027 Capital Improvement Plan outlines a \$22,572,800 budget, with \$14,841,700 for the Water Enterprise fund (66 percent). Key water projects include tank replacement, treatment upgrades, pump station rehabilitation, well upgrades, and water main replacements.

ADAPT

Topsfield actively engages in a community movement to enhance environmental sustainability and adapt to climate change. In 2021, the Town established a Hazard Mitigation Plan with support from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program. Recognized as a Green Community by the state, Topsfield has utilized grant funds to enhance energy efficiency in the library and plans to extend these efforts to local elementary schools. The 2022 Green Communities Grant was to improve energy efficiency and install variable frequency drives in schools, with plans for additional enhancements in administrative buildings. Notably, the Town has recently acquired its first all-electric police cruiser, installed solar-powered downtown street lighting and a solar-powered bench, and introduced two electric vehicle charging stations at the Town Hall.



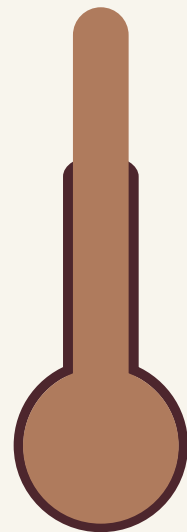
LAND USE

Topsfield follows a typical New England town land use pattern, featuring a compact, walkable town center with a common. The Downtown Revitalization Plan aims to create a welcoming village supporting diverse activities and job opportunities. Residential neighborhoods radiate from the town center and are characterized by decreasing density. The Town primarily consists of low-density, single-family homes. Identified as an "adjacent small community" under the new MBTA Communities Law, Topsfield is expected to zone for 118 multi-family units. It has seven zoning districts and six overlay districts, each with specific regulations. Ongoing efforts include a comprehensive bylaw codification project and updates to ensure accuracy and completeness.



4 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the many Topsfield community members whose active engagement and invaluable contributions have significantly shaped the development of this Master Plan. Your diverse insights, commitment to civic responsibility, and passion for community improvement have laid the groundwork for a future that reflects Topsfield's collective aspirations. The Master Plan is a testament to the strength of our unity. We thank you for your dedication, and we recognize that your participation has been instrumental in crafting a vision for Topsfield that is inclusive, sustainable, and vibrant. As we progress, we look forward to your continued support in implementing this shared vision of our community, which we can continue to be proud of. A full breakdown of public engagement efforts through Phase II can be found in the Community Engagement Appendix.



We hit 186% of our outreach goal!



Images above were taken during Master Plan Engagement activities by a variety of team members including Nike Village Meeting-in-a-Box (Jen Collins-Brown), Steward Elementary School Third Grade Student Council Meeting-in-a-Box (Zillie Bhaju), Master Plan Steering Committee Members and Open House Attendees (JM Goldson), and Steward School Passion Time (Jen Collins-Brown).



*Approximately 756 total survey responses, 621 of which were year-round residents.

We had over 1,225 total touch points with the Topsfield community throughout this process.

If each touch point was a different community member, this would be equal to 19% of the Topsfield community! This is an exceptional response rate for the community's size.

5 TOPSFIELD TOMORROW: A VISION THROUGH 2034

Historic Rock Wall in Topsfield
Source: Mark Sanders

Our vision for the future is that by 2034 ...

Topsfield will be a *welcoming and vibrant small town* defined by its expansive open space, exceptional schools, agricultural character, and historic village charm. Strategic, well-designed development will create a thriving business community. Topsfield will be known for its *flourishing local economy* with restaurants and shopping options, widely accessible recreational opportunities, and a variety of housing choices.

Topsfield will continue to *protect its open spaces, natural places, and historic character*. Understanding the needs of a growing and changing population, Topsfield will expand *housing variety and business diversity* while continuing to provide *quality public facilities, services, and education*. Topsfield remain fiscally responsible, *balance needs and wants, and foster sustainability*.

Topsfield will work regionally, maximizes grant opportunities, and encourage *community collaboration and volunteerism*.





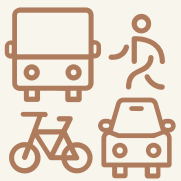
LIVE



WORK



PLAY



CONNECT



PROTECT



ADAPT



SERVE



LAND USE



TOPSFIELD TOMORROW: VISION CORE THEMES

Core Theme 1 – Preserving Historic and Natural Resources



3 GOALS



13 STRATEGIES

Core Theme 2 – Connected, Accessible, and Affordable Community



3 GOALS



11 STRATEGIES

Core Theme 3 – Strategic Economic and Business Development



3 GOALS



13 STRATEGIES

Core Theme 4 – Bringing People Together



3 GOALS



16 STRATEGIES

Core Theme 5 – Meeting Community Needs



5 GOALS



24 STRATEGIES

Topsfield Beach at Hood's Pond
Source: Zillie Bhuju



LIVE



WORK



PLAY



CONNECT



PROTECT



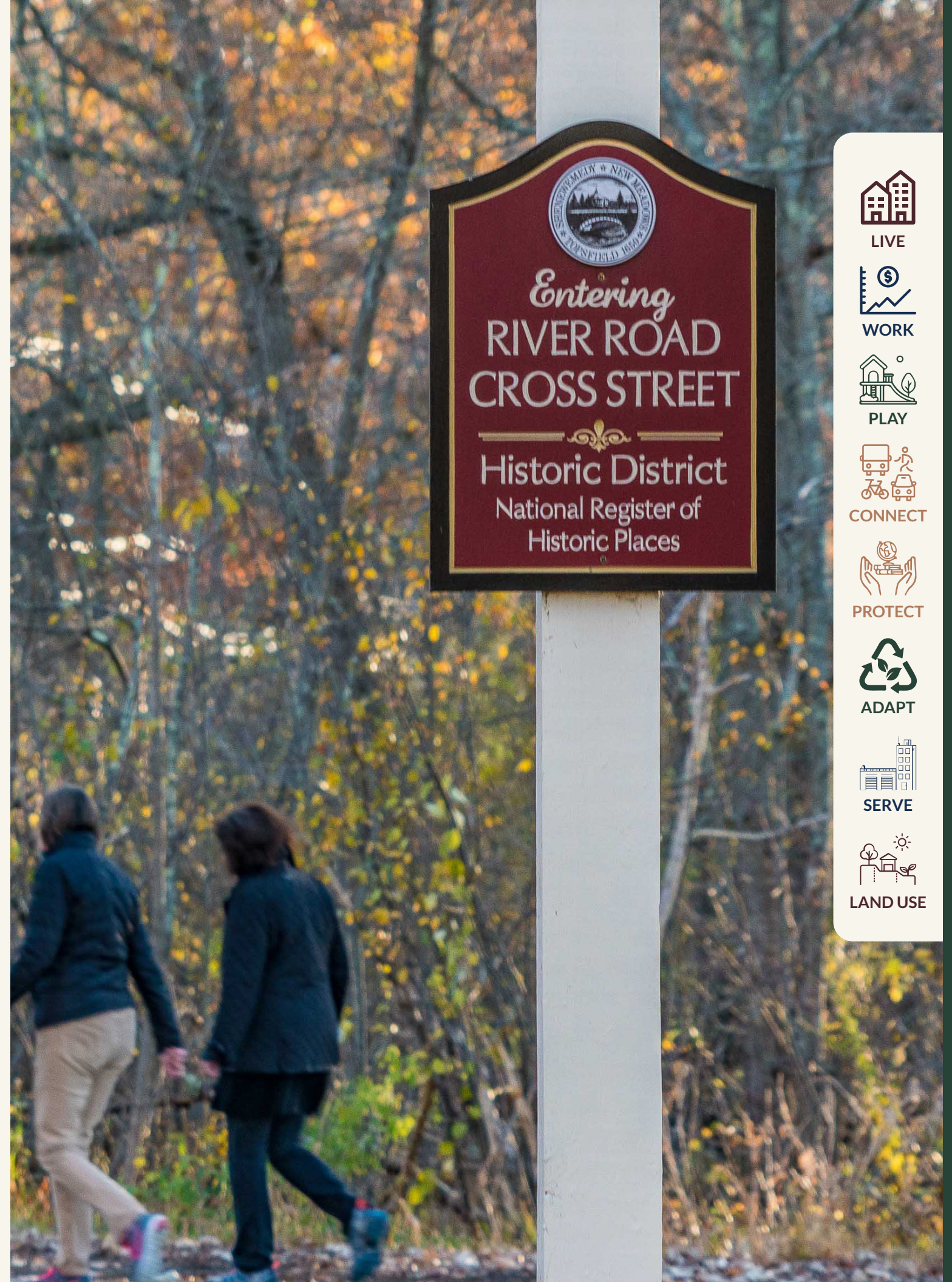
ADAPT



SERVE



LAND USE



(right)
River Road Cross Street Sign
Source: Eric Roth

6 CORE THEME ONE: PRESERVING HISTORICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Guiding Principles:

Topsfield safeguards our historic resources, open spaces, and natural assets, including regional efforts to protect water resources. Topsfield strives to be a leader in local sustainability initiatives to help minimize the impacts of climate change.



Metrics to measure progress:

- Number of residents who use the Town’s yard waste collection program and total number of pounds of solid waste, recycling, compost, and hazardous material produced in Topsfield.
- Compliance with all National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES*) permit requirements for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4*).
- Number of gallons of drinking water available per day (allowed withdrawal amount) vs Number of gallons of water used by town per day (municipal water enterprise only, not private wells).
- Number of historic resources* in Topsfield that are protected through a preservation restriction, acquisition, or local historic district designation.
- Townwide energy usage.

*See glossary for definitions.

Topsfield in 2034:

This map represents a scenario for possible future land use based on the community's vision.



CONSERVATION AREA – Areas include all open space with full or limited protections including Chapter 61 lands. These lands will continue to be conserved land in Topsfield's future.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITY – In considering an expanded, thematic Local Historic District, this map identifies all of Topsfield's recorded historic resources pre-dating 1800. There are 29 locations identified.



EXISTING HISTORIC DISTRICT – A local historic district is the greatest preservation tool for preserving historic buildings and other significant resources. Topsfield's Town Common Historic District was listed on the State Register in 1976 and is expected to remain.

Goal 1A:

Protect Topsfield's vulnerable open spaces and water resources from development pressures.

Goal 1B:

Elevate historic properties by increasing local awareness and protecting and restoring historic resources, including buildings and landscapes.

Goal 1C:

Mitigate climate change on a local level through energy efficiency, waste management, and water conservation practices.



CAPACITY BUILDING



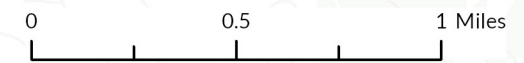
DESIGN, PHYSICAL, & ACQUISITION



REGULATORY & POLICY



PROGRAMMATIC



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap, Town of Topsfield, Massachusetts Complete Street, Topsfield Facility Condition Assessment 2019, MACRIS

GOAL 1A: *Protect Topsfield’s vulnerable open spaces and water resources from development pressures.*



Strategy 1A1: Consider amending the Open Space Residential Design bylaw to align with the Open Space Design / Natural Resource Protection Zoning model bylaw*.



Strategy 1A2: Provide guidelines for and education on installing and maintaining sustainable landscapes on public and private lands, for example, through the Greenscapes North Shore Coalition’s guidelines or other readily available resources (see also the Water Conservation Plan 2007).



Strategy 1A3: Increase involvement with regional collaborations (e.g., Ipswich River Water Association) to help meet common water quality, groundwater protection, and stormwater management goals and objectives (see the Water Conservation Plan 2007).



Strategy 1A4: Develop a specific policy, process, and priority list by which the Town determines whether to exercise its right of first refusal under Chapter 61.



Strategy 1A5: Use grants and other funding mechanisms to purchase conservation restrictions or acquire prioritized high-value conservation land designated on the Town’s priority list, especially properties that abut existing open space and recreational land. The Town could also partner with a regional land trust on acquisition or holding conservation restrictions.

**See glossary for definitions.*

(left)
Apple Tree
Source: Eric Roth

See also the Open Space and Recreation Plan 2019.



GOAL 1B:

Elevate historic properties by increasing local awareness and protecting and restoring historic resources, including buildings and landscapes.



Strategy 1B1: Collaborate and support revising and resurrecting the existing Historical Commission's self-guided historic walking route centered around the Town Center, share it via the website, make paper copies available, and create a virtual town-wide tour.



Strategy 1B2: Identify, assess, and prioritize areas for new local historic districts*, including the potential for a floating district to protect thematic resources that are not co-located.



Strategy 1B3: Identify possible incentives for private property owners to invest in and maintain historic structures and educate private property owners of historic structures about existing incentives.



Strategy 1B4: Continue partnerships with the Topsfield Historic Commission, Friends of the Topsfield Library, and Topsfield Historical Society to build public knowledge and tourism base for historical figures and events (e.g., Salem witch trials, religious history, indigenous history, agricultural history, etc.).



Strategy 1B5: Explore opportunities to install appropriate wayfinding and interpretive signage, especially in the Historic District.

**See glossary for definitions.*

(left)
Parson Capen House
Source: Mark Sanders



GOAL 1C:

Mitigate climate change on a local level through energy efficiency, waste management, and water conservation through the practices.



Strategy 1C1: Seek grants to incentivize private water storage and groundwater recharge through a no/low-cost rain barrel program.



Strategy 1C2: Educate the public on sustainability and resiliency topics, such as water conservation, renewable energy options, and solid waste management.



Strategy 1C3: Establish a Solid Waste Advisory Committee to evaluate new services, expand existing services, and educate residents about programs that improve recycling rates, encourage composting, and reduce the amount of waste being landfilled. Examples might be to expand bi-weekly recycling to weekly pickup and set up a “swap shed” where residents can exchange unwanted, still-usable items.



(left)
Composting Education Installation
Source: GREEN Topsfield Facebook Page

See also the Sustainability Advisory Committee's Strategic Plan (2024).

7 CORE THEME TWO: CONNECTED, ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE COMMUNITY

Guiding Principles:
Topsfield provides safe, sustainable, accessible transportation options and diverse, affordable housing choices that maintain a welcoming and inclusive small-town feel for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities. The Town advocates, plans, and designs for residents with the most vulnerabilities and the fewest choices.



Metrics to measure progress:

- Number of non- single-family housing units developed (planned, in progress, and completed).
- Number of affordable* housing planning efforts in progress, completed, and not yet started.
- Housing + Transportation (H + T) Index*.
- Number of Complete Streets* projects planned, in progress, and completed.

*See glossary for definitions.



(right)
 Congregational Church of Topsfield from High St.
 Source: Zillie Theodorou

Topsfield in 2034:

This map represents a scenario for possible future land use based on the community's vision.

CONNECTIVITY IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Intersection – Crossroads identified as needing improvements including road repair and safety. Areas selected include Topsfield's busiest intersections and crash hot spots as identified on the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and community feedback.



Corridor – Streets identified as needing improvements including road repair and safety. Improvements to these corridors would provide for enhanced opportunities for getting around Topsfield. Areas selected include Topsfield's busiest roads as identified on the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and community feedback.



Area – Buffers identify a half-mile radius surrounding Topsfield's schools (including Masconomet). Increasing walking and biking safety options within these areas would provide safer routes to school for Topsfield's children.

Goals 2A:

Make roads safer, accessible, and connected for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially higher-speed roads, and pedestrian-heavy roads.

Goals 2B:

Address the high cost of housing by encouraging the development of various housing choices to foster a socioeconomically diverse community, especially for families and seniors.

Goals 2C:

To look for ways to increase access to transportation, especially for older adults, residents with disabilities, commuters, and those accessing medical appointments.



CAPACITY BUILDING



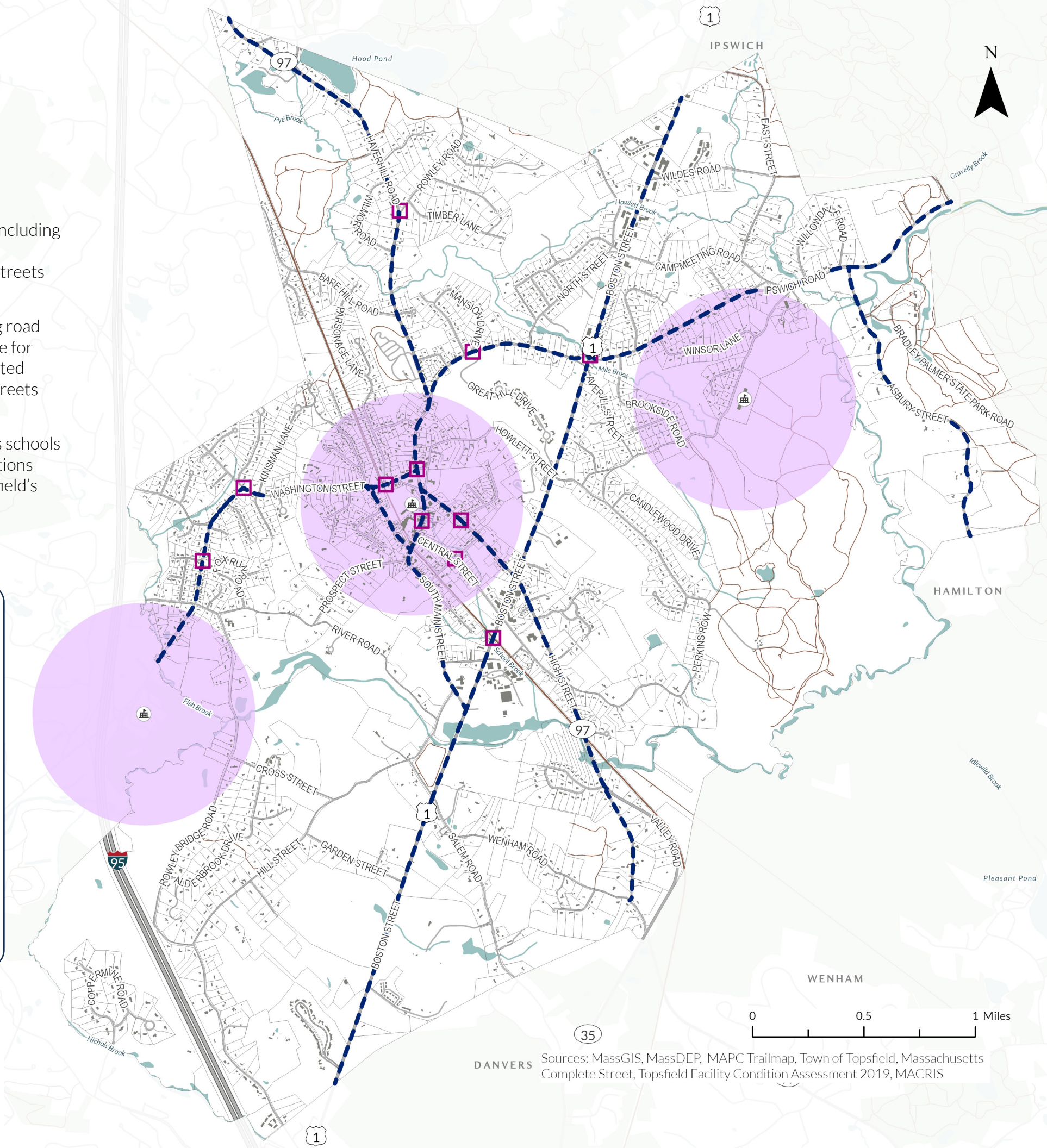
DESIGN, PHYSICAL, & ACQUISITION



REGULATORY & POLICY



PROGRAMMATIC



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap, Town of Topsfield, Massachusetts Complete Street, Topsfield Facility Condition Assessment 2019, MACRIS

GOAL 2A:

Make roads safer, accessible, and connected for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially higher-speed roads, and pedestrian-heavy roads.



Strategy 2A1: Update the Topsfield 2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan to identify what has already been accomplished and where to prioritize investment in biking infrastructure around the Town, such as bike parking at municipal facilities and open spaces, public repair stations in strategic locations, and bike lanes along major thoroughfares.



Strategy 2A2: Update the Topsfield Complete Streets Prioritization Plan to identify what has already been accomplished and where to prioritize infrastructure improvements at key intersections, such as Route 1 and Route 97, Route 97 and Main Street, Central Street and Route 1, and Washington Street and Boxford Road.



Strategy 2A3: Update the Topsfield Complete Streets Prioritization Plan to identify what has already been accomplished and where to prioritize sidewalk access across the Town, such as Town facilities, school buildings, open spaces, and major thoroughfares.



Strategy 2A4: Conduct an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) audit of key corridors in town and the Rail Trail to identify locations needing improvements, such as curb ramps, crosswalks, and accessible pedestrian signals.

(left)
Topsfield Bike Rack
Source: Eric Roth

See also the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan (2017).



GOAL 2B:

Address the high cost of housing by encouraging the creation of various housing choices to foster a socioeconomically diverse community, especially for families and seniors.



Strategy 2B1: Encourage the development of multi-family*, non-age restricted housing in the Business Village, Business Highway, Business Highway North, and Business Park Districts through existing and newly proposed zoning and a new Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) district.



Strategy 2B2: Establish a Housing Advisory Committee. The Housing Advisory Committee could advocate for zoning changes in response to housing needs, improve town capacity to implement housing strategies and policies, build public and political support for Topsfield's housing goals, do community outreach and education, and foster partnerships with regional housing organizations.



Strategy 2B3: Seek funding and a consultant to create a housing plan to analyze housing needs, evaluate the market feasibility and impacts of zoning changes, and work with the Town to identify other regulatory, programmatic, coordination, and capacity strategies.

**See glossary for definitions.*

(left)
Amberwood Farm Sign
Source: Michelle Mercier-Link



GOAL 2C:

To look for ways to increase access to transportation, especially for older adults, residents with disabilities, commuters, and those accessing medical appointments.



Strategy 2C1: Explore options to reinstate the Topsfield Park and Ride bus service to offer options to local commuter rail stations and/or commuting into Boston.



Strategy 2C2: Collaborate with the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) to host regular Older Adult safe driving workshops for residents and caregivers to extend independent living options for older adults and reduce related crashes in town.



Strategy 2C3: Seek funding opportunities to expand the Council on Aging shuttle bus capacity, service routes, vehicle type, adding lift-assists, and ridership requirements.



Strategy 2C4: Investigate the potential use of Council on Aging vehicle(s) for on-demand shuttle use during off hours.

(left)
Route 1
Source: Google Satellite imagery





(right)
Topsfield Business Park Entrance Sign
Source: Loop Net

8 CORE THEME THREE: STRATEGIC ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Guiding Principles:
Topsfield fosters sensible economic development to reinforce the community’s vibrancy and provide a more diverse tax base. The community promotes locally owned shops and restaurants to create healthy business districts.



- Metrics to measure progress:**
- The number of commercial development projects planned, in progress, and completed.
 - Square footage of vacant industrial and commercial space.
 - Number of mixed-use* (non-residential and residential use) buildings developed (planned, in progress, and completed).
 - Tax revenue from industrial and commercial uses.

**See glossary for definitions.*

Topsfield in 2034:

This map represents a scenario for possible future land use based on the community's vision.



EVOLVING OPPORTUNITY AREA — Areas Topsfield supports and would prioritize revitalization and development including commercial, residential, and mixed-use development.

- Downtown, Main Street/S. Main Street.
- Business Highway District
- Business Highway North District

Goals 3A:

Support the vibrancy of Topsfield's downtown.

Goals 3B:

Strategically bolster Route 1 business districts with infill development.

Goals 3C:

Improve Topsfield's economic development policies and capacity.



CAPACITY BUILDING



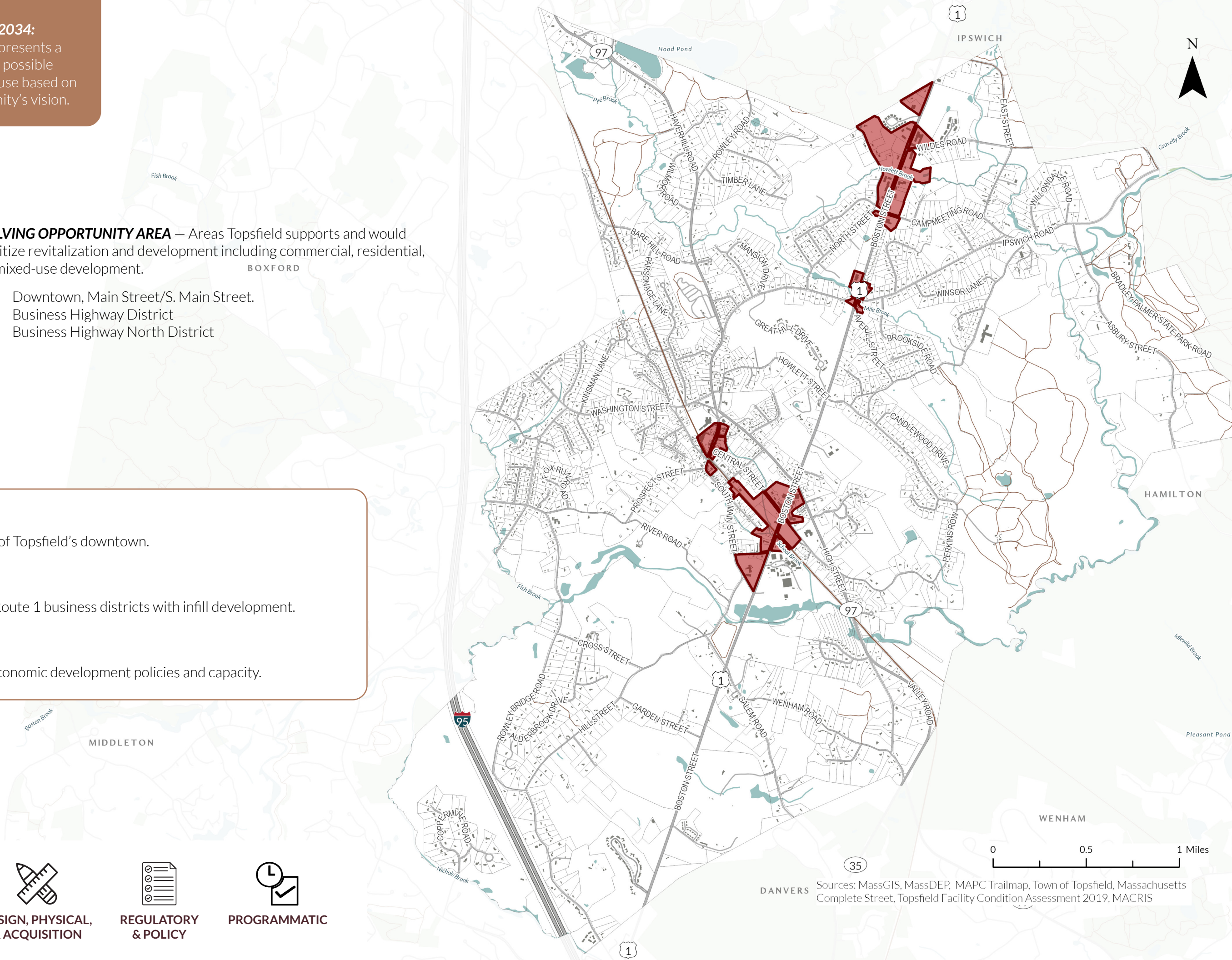
DESIGN, PHYSICAL, & ACQUISITION



REGULATORY & POLICY



PROGRAMMATIC



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap, Town of Topsfield, Massachusetts Complete Street, Topsfield Facility Condition Assessment 2019, MACRIS

GOAL 3A: Support the vibrancy of Topsfield's downtown.



Strategy 3A1: Continue to regularly review and update zoning downtown and in commercial areas on Route 1 to be conducive to development by allowing more by-right* target industries as new commercial uses arise.



Strategy 3A2: Capitalize on residents' overwhelming support for increased business activity by advancing market-ready* economic development opportunities.



Strategy 3A3: Encourage and incentivize the development of a restaurant or pub in the downtown area to enhance its vibrancy and build community through actively seeking out innovative and creative programs as well as formal paths such as federal and state grants.



Strategy 3A4: Continue to invest in beautification and placemaking* initiatives downtown to attract residents and visitors, through ongoing stewardship of existing amenities, and new placemaking initiatives as maintenance capacity allows.



Strategy 3A5: Explore opportunities to expand wastewater infrastructure capacity downtown.



Strategy 3A6: Investigate options for design guidelines for Topsfield's commercial districts or modify the site plan review standards to ensure new development is compatible with the Town, as a part of the site plan review process.

**See glossary for definitions.*

(left)
Main Street Performance
Source: Zillie Bhujju

See also the *Topsfield Downtown Revitalization Plan (2019)*.



GOAL 3B: *Strategically bolster Route 1 business districts with infill* development.*



Strategy 3B1: Work proactively with existing landowners to support the redevelopment* of vacant or underutilized properties on Route 1.



Strategy 3B2: Support existing business retention and expansion through open communication and coordination with business owners.

**See glossary for definitions.*

“The Town will pursue economic development opportunities in the Downtown and on Rt. 1 by attracting desirable amenities including but not limited to retail, restaurants and housing, fostering positive relationships with business communities, activating the downtown through placemaking/ events, continued beautification and making Topsfield an attractive community for commercial investment.”

Economic and Community Development Committee Vision Statement (2024)

(left)
Essex County Co-Op off Route 1
Source: Michelle Mercier-Link



GOAL 3C: Improve Topsfield's economic development policies and capacity.



Strategy 3C1: Explore hiring a Community Development Director or Town Planner to support small businesses, take advantage of economic development opportunities (e.g., financing incentives, grants, etc.), and develop a marketing strategy for attracting new business that aligns with the Town's vision and goals.



Strategy 3C2: Develop, update, maintain, and promote clear and standardized guidelines and procedures for prospective entrepreneurs, including a point-person to speak with at the Town and user-friendly website interfaces (contingent on additional town capacity).



Strategy 3C3: Expand awareness of volunteer opportunities and strengthen community partnerships related to economic development and entrepreneurship (Topsfield Community Partnership).



Strategy 3C4: Cultivate strong working relationships between the Town and key businesses/ economic development players, either formally (i.e., through a local or regional Business Chamber) or informally through open communication and mutual respect.



Strategy 3C5: Continue to support and promote small businesses and local farms, including events showcasing local businesses.

(left)
Topsfield Wayfinding Signage
Source: Brian Pearce, omloop





(right)
Topsfield Council on Aging Mahjong Group
Source: Town of Topsfield

9 CORE THEME FOUR: BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Guiding Principles:
Topsfield nurtures a proud, engaged community that cares for one another. The community features vibrant public spaces and places where people can gather and play. The Town has modern, accessible, transparent communication systems to engage and inform community members.



Metrics to measure progress:

- Number of public facilities, open spaces, and playgrounds that meet and exceed ADA-compliance.
- Number of town permitting processes moved to virtual/hybrid alternatives.
- Digital engagement analytics (e.g., social media engagement, newsletter engagement, digital engagement platforms).
- Number of open space and recreational amenity improvements planned, in progress, and completed.

Topsfield in 2034:

This map represents a scenario for possible future land use based on the community's vision.

-  Schools
-  Municipal Facilities
-  Trails
-  Open space

SCHOOLS

ID	Site Name
A	Proctor Elementary School
B	Steward Elementary School
C	Masconomet Regional Middle/High School

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

ID	Site Name
1	Library
2	Town Hall
3	Pye Brook Park
4	Town Common
5	Klock Park

Goals 4A:

Support additional fun cultural activities and events for community members of all ages, especially celebrating historically significant places or events.

Goals 4B:

Leverage new technologies to proactively educate and engage the community.

Goals 4C:

Nurture Topsfield's public facilities, playgrounds, and open spaces through physical improvements, enhanced programming, and additional amenities that encourage residents to gather and interact.



CAPACITY BUILDING



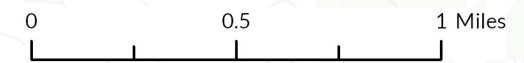
DESIGN, PHYSICAL, & ACQUISITION



REGULATORY & POLICY



PROGRAMMATIC



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap, Town of Topsfield, Massachusetts Complete Street, Topsfield Facility Condition Assessment 2019, MACRIS

GOAL 4A: Support additional fun cultural activities and events for community members of all ages, especially celebrating historically significant places or events.



Strategy 4A1: Explore opportunities to expand the Recreation Department’s capacity through a Community Development Director and/or Recreation Director.



Strategy 4A2: Continue supporting and collaborating with local groups to offer historical and cultural education-based events for residents and promote volunteerism in the community, for example through the Topsfield Public Library, the Historical Society, the Parent Teacher Association Organization (TESPTO), the TriTown Council, Cultural Council, and Council on Aging.



Strategy 4A3: Continue to host community events for residents and visitors near the Town Common area, such as the Holiday on the Green and HomeGrown Market.



Strategy 4A4: Continue to explore intergenerational programs to connect youth and young adults with older adults.



Strategy 4A5: Update and maintain a town-wide online shared event coordination calendar.

(left)
Ice Rink at the Topsfield Common
Source: Marshall Hook

See also the Open Space and Recreation Plan (2019).



GOAL 4B: *Leverage new technologies to proactively educate and engage the community.*



Strategy 4B1: Move towards lower barriers for public participation by maintaining the Town website, recording public meetings, and holding virtual or hybrid meetings (contingent on staff capacity and available technology).



Strategy 4B2: Continue to advance the use of electronic applications for permit submittal and review.



Strategy 4B3: Continue modernizing policies and implement staff training on social media and maintenance (updating) of the Town website as effective communication tools.



Strategy 4B4: Support the Board of Library Trustees in their goals to enable all residents access to current technologies and to provide education on how to work those technologies.



(left)
Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages Lecture
Source: Topsfield Town Library (Facebook)

See also the Library Strategic Plan (2022).

GOAL 4C:

Nurture Topsfield’s public facilities, playgrounds, athletic fields, and open spaces through physical improvements, enhanced programming, and additional amenities that encourage residents to gather and interact.



Strategy 4C1: Implement the Topsfield Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP 2019) through its seven-year Action Plan.



Strategy 4C2: Increase Town beautification efforts by identifying places for permanent and temporary public art and landscaping installations.



Strategy 4C3: Expand public-private partnerships to activate public and private facilities in off-hours for cultural activities and to boost indoor athletic and art-based recreation opportunities. Ideas may include the school buildings, Public Hall, Library, Tri-Town Council event spaces, Emerson Center, and Topsfield Fairgrounds.



Strategy 4C4: Support ongoing efforts to create a linked trail network per the 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan.



Strategy 4C5: Consider opportunities to promote Recreational Amenities such as the new Pump Track and Pye Brook Disc Golf Course to host races and tournaments to draw tourism.



Strategy 4C6: Create an updated ADA Transition Plan to improve access to public facilities, playgrounds, and open spaces for people with disabilities (see the 2017 ADA Transition Plan).

(left)
Town Library
Source: Eric Roth

See also the Library Strategic Plan (2022), Open Space and Recreation Plan (2019), and ADA Transition Plan (2017).



10 CORE THEME FIVE: MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Guiding Principles:

Topsfield ensures high-quality town services and facilities, including public safety, schools, and recreation amenities. The Town embraces and honors cultural diversity and prioritizes equity and inclusion in all municipal processes. The Town supports key infrastructure and resources to protect vulnerable populations, and the community is resilient to changing economic and climate conditions and events.



Metrics to measure progress:

- Number of grants Topsfield has received for road and facility improvements.
- Number of capital improvement projects for improving municipal facilities in progress, planned and completed.
- Municipal employee retention rates.
- Total amount of energy (renewable and fossil fuel) used by municipal properties.

(right)
Source: Town of Topsfield



Topsfield in 2034:

This map represents a scenario for possible future land use based on the community's vision.

 **Municipal Facilities**

 **Schools**

SCHOOLS

ID	Site Name
A	Proctor Elementary School
B	Steward Elementary School
C	Masconomet Regional Middle/High School

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

IDCh10	Site Name
1	DPW Building
2	Fire Station
3	Klock Park
4	Library
5	Old Highway Garage
6	Park & Cemetery Building
7	Police Station
8	Town Hall
9	Water Pump - North
10	Water Pump - Perkins

Goals 5A:

Integrate initiatives within municipal and school properties and public infrastructure to reduce greenhouse gases, increase energy efficiency, and become climate prepared.

Goals 5B:

Utilize state and local projections to ensure Town services can comfortably accommodate projected population growth and demographic changes.

Goals 5C:

Expand Town services through incentivizing volunteers.

Goals 5D:

Ensure the Town's continued financial well-being and strong bond rating by following the Financial Policy Guidelines set by the Town in 2018 (or most recent version).

Goals 5E:

Support the schools in the implementation of their strategic plans (for example, the Masconomet Regional School District Strategic Plan 2023-2028 or most recent planning efforts).



CAPACITY BUILDING



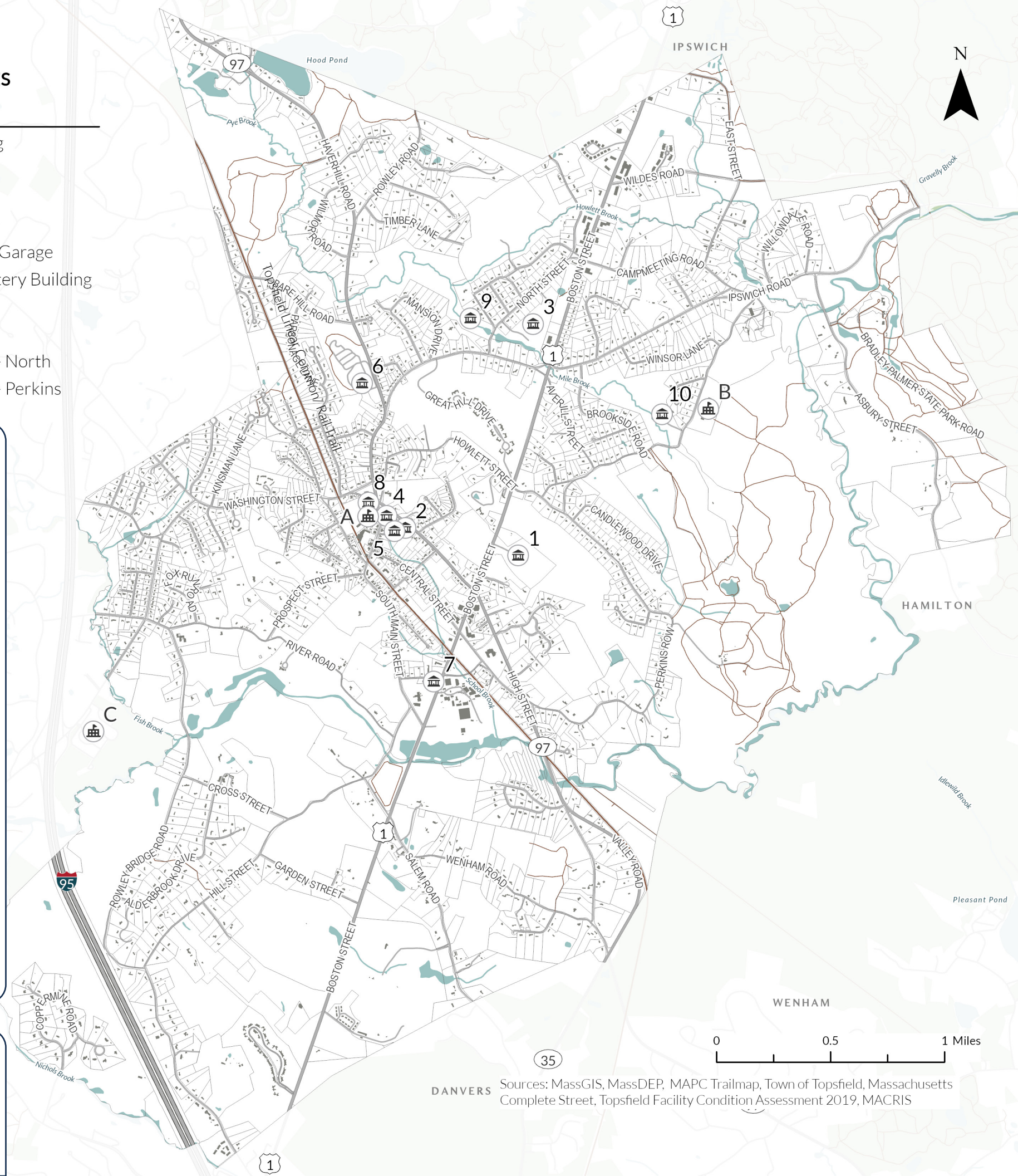
DESIGN, PHYSICAL, & ACQUISITION



REGULATORY & POLICY



PROGRAMMATIC



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap, Town of Topsfield, Massachusetts Complete Street, Topsfield Facility Condition Assessment 2019, MACRIS

GOAL 5A:

Integrate initiatives within municipal and school properties and public infrastructure to reduce greenhouse gases, increase energy efficiency, and become climate prepared.



Strategy 5A1: Seek grant opportunities to use green building design components in any municipal or school renovations or improvements where feasible and cost effective, such as weatherization, material sourcing, indoor environmental quality, water usage, and waste management.



Strategy 5A2: Implement the recommendations in the Hazard Mitigation Plan/ Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (2021).



Strategy 5A3: Continue to invest in energy-efficient equipment and facilities for municipal operations, including schools, that reduce carbon emissions, energy consumption, and costs.



Strategy 5A4: Prioritize based on a cost/benefit analysis electric or energy-efficient municipal vehicles whenever possible as new vehicles are purchased.



Strategy 5A5: Build on recent efforts, such as solar-powered streetlamps, to increase solar and other alternative energy sources at town facilities and in Topsfield’s public spaces with consideration for natural resource protection.



Strategy 5A6: Develop a greenhouse gas inventory to help understand Topsfield’s baseline of significant sources of emissions, establish a greenhouse gas emission reduction goal, and document current measures taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, develop an Action Plan to address gaps focusing on municipal energy reduction with high return on investment.

(left)
Solar Powered Light Post
Source: Kindra Clineff

See also Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan 2021 and Sustainability Advisory Committee’s 2024 Strategic Plan.



GOAL 5B:

Utilize state and local projections to ensure Town services can comfortably accommodate projected population growth and demographic changes.



Strategy 5B1: Continue supporting all departments to compete for grants that could provide training, planning support, or funds for physical improvements to roads and facilities.



Strategy 5B2: Continue to maintain and upgrade the municipal water supply infrastructure and capacity (e.g., through shared or alternative water resources such as regional planning with the Ipswich Watershed, the Salem-Beverly Water Supply Board, or MWRA) (see also the Water Conservation Plan 2007).



Strategy 5B3: Identify where different departments or cross-departmental issues may require more intensive study (e.g., public safety building feasibility study) and identify funding needed to perform those studies.



Strategy 5B4: Explore opportunities to enhance municipal services utilizing programs and funding opportunities from the Massachusetts Rural Policy Plan.



Strategy 5B5: Support capital improvements to municipal facilities per the 2013 Town Facility Condition Assessment Study and Capital Master Improvement Plan*.

**See glossary for definitions.*

(left)
'Love Lives Here' Rally
Source: Eric Roth

See also the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan 2017; Water Conservation Plan 2007; Town Facility Condition Assessment; Town Capital Improvement Plan; Schools Capital Improvement Plan.



GOAL 5C: Expand Town services through incentivizing volunteers.



Strategy 5C1: Evaluate the potential to develop a volunteer program through the Elementary and Masconomet Regional Schools, including the high school's volunteer requirement, local Scouts troops, and others, to aid in occasional, supplemental caretaking for Topsfield's public spaces.



Strategy 5C2: Create a working list of "Wishlist" projects for departments to add to as necessary for volunteers to assist with.



(left)
Volunteers Do Leaf Clean Up
Source: Joe Geller

GOAL 5D:

Ensure the Town’s continued financial well-being and strong bond rating by following the 2018 Financial Policy Guidelines (or most recent version).



Strategy 5D1: The Town should adopt balanced budgets in which current revenues (non-one-time) equal or exceed current expenditures. The Finance Committee’s budget proposal to the Town Meeting will strive to include a financial plan including all general and enterprise funds and activities for the ensuing fiscal year, an accompanying budget message, and supporting documents.



Strategy 5D2: Each year the Town Administrator, in consultation with the Finance Committee, will work to prepare a five-year Financial Forecast and a five-year Capital Improvement Plan.



Strategy 5D3: The Town will maintain a personnel system that accurately tracks authorized, filled, and unfilled positions as well as their funding source. Pay plans and pay rates will be regularly monitored to ensure accuracy and compliance with labor contracts and personnel policies.



Strategy 5D4: The Town will continue to utilize accounting practices that best conform to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) set forth by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) including an independent outside audit each year.



Strategy 5D5: The Town should follow the guidance contained in the Inspector General’s “The Chapter 30B Manual: Procuring Supplies, Services and Real Property” to comply with the requirements of M.G.L. Ch. 30B.



Strategy 5D6: All efforts to collaborate among the Select Board, Finance Committee, and the local School Committee will be made to ensure transparency and coordination throughout the budgeting process. This may include holding joint meetings as necessary and feasible.

(left)
Town Hall Clock
Source: Eric Roth



GOAL 5E:

Support the schools in the implementation of their strategic plans (e.g., Masconomet Regional School District Strategic Plan 2023-2028) or most recent planning efforts.



Strategy 5E1: Reorient the school curriculum towards real-world readiness and 21st century competencies through a curriculum development and review process, student outcomes, assessments, and reporting systems.



Strategy 5E2: Meet individual student learning goals and enhance teaching practices through reviewing student service practices and programming, strengthening teacher collaboration systems and professional learning, and establishing ways to highlight successes and areas for improvement.



Strategy 5E3: Foster a safe, trusting, and joyful school culture where students and adults thrive and grow through developing a comprehensive system to support the development of social-emotional competencies and positive mental health.



Strategy 5E4: Build internal and external relationships through the development of mentoring and advisory programs to support both adults and students in the school.



Strategy 5E5: Implement a capital plan to ensure school facilities support the type of learning envisioned in the schools' vision and values.

(left)
Masconomet Regional High School
Source: Eric Roth



11 FUTURE LAND USE MAP

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

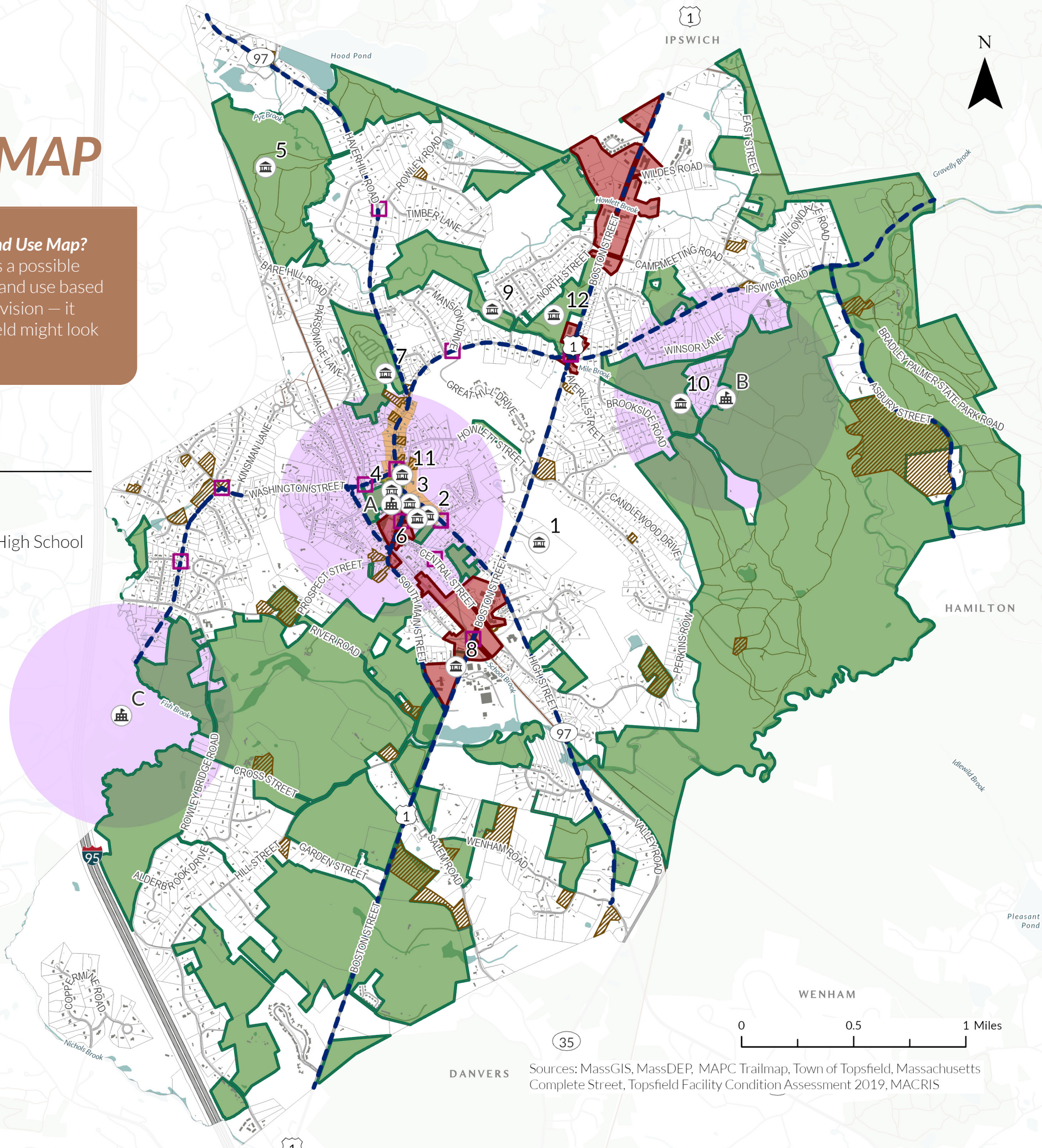
ID	Site Name
1	DPW Building
2	Fire Station
3	Library
4	Town Hall
5	Pye Brook Park
6	Old Highway Garage
7	Park & Cemetery Building
8	Police Station
9	Water Pump - North
10	Water Pump - Perkins
11	Town Common
12	Klock Park

SCHOOLS

ID	NAME
A	Proctor Elementary School
B	Steward Elementary School
C	Masconomet Regional Middle/High School

-  Schools
-  Municipal Facilities
-  Historic District
-  Connectivity Improvement Intersections
-  Connectivity Improvement Corridors
-  Connectivity Improvement Buffers
-  Conservation Areas
-  Historic Preservation Opportunities
-  Evolving Opportunity Areas

What is a Future Land Use Map?
 This map represents a possible scenario for future land use based on the community's vision – it depicts what Topsfield might look like in 2034.



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap, Town of Topsfield, Massachusetts Complete Street, Topsfield Facility Condition Assessment 2019, MACRIS

*See next page for descriptions

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

CONNECTIVITY IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Intersection – Crossroads identified as needing improvements including road repair and safety. Areas selected include Topsfield’s busiest intersections and crash hot spots as identified on the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and community feedback.



Corridor – Streets identified as needing improvements including road repair and safety. Improvements to these corridors would provide for enhanced opportunities for getting around Topsfield. Areas selected include Topsfield’s busiest roads as identified on the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and community feedback.



Area – Buffers identify a half-mile radius surrounding Topsfield’s schools (including Masconomet). Increasing pedestrian safety and cyclist options within these areas would provide safer routes to school for Topsfield’s children.



CONSERVATION AREA – Areas include all open space with full or limited protections including Chapter 61 lands. These lands will continue to be conserved land in Topsfield’s future.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITY – In considering an expanded, thematic Local Historic District, this map identifies all of Topsfield’s recorded historic resources pre-dating 1800. There are 29 locations identified.



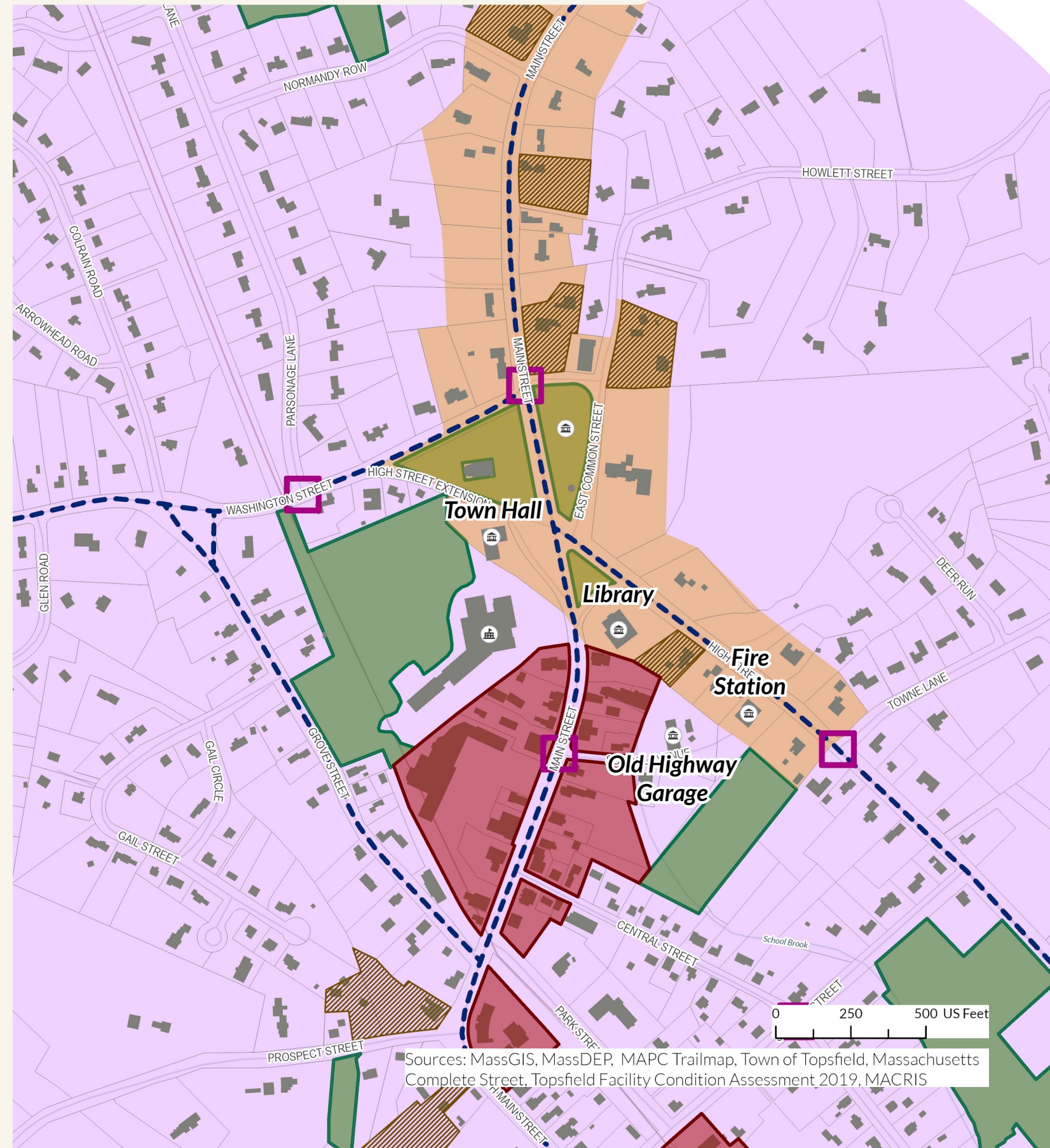
EVOLVING OPPORTUNITY AREA – Areas Topsfield supports and would prioritize revitalization and development including commercial, residential, and mixed-use development.

- Downtown, Main Street/S. Main Street.
- Business Highway District
- Business Highway North District



EXISTING HISTORIC DISTRICT – A local historic district is the greatest preservation tool for preserving historic buildings and other significant resources. Topsfield’s Town Common Historic District was listed on the State Register in 1976 and is expected to remain.

TOPSFIELD TOWN CENTER IN 2034



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap, Town of Topsfield, Massachusetts Complete Street, Topsfield Facility Condition Assessment 2019, MACRIS

12 IMPLEMENTATION

The Topsfield Master Plan serves as the community's roadmap for the coming decade, guiding significant decisions and actions necessary to realize the Town's envisioned future. Over the next ten years, the implementation of studies, regulatory changes, programs, and infrastructure projects outlined in this document will demand close coordination among staff, boards, commissions, and ongoing communication with residents and local representatives.

Accountable implementation can be supported through three main systems:

- A **Master Plan Implementation Committee**
- Tracking measurable **metrics**
- A modifiable **Action Plan** (or implementation matrix)

Implementation Committee

Action Plan



Metrics

(right)
Topsfield Town Hall Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
Source: Eric Roth



Implementation Committee



Topsfield's Master Plan Implementation Committee is established and populated by the Select Board and is responsible for coordinating and monitoring implementation of the Master Plan. It is tasked with:

- Meeting regularly.
- Measuring progress toward achieving the goals and metrics.
- Liaising with town boards and commissions.
- Providing regular updates and prepare annual reports.
- Maintaining an updated live Action Plan spreadsheet for a high level of public transparency.
- Making document modifications when needed.

Metrics



Topsfield's metrics are listed at the beginning of each Core Theme chapter, as well in the Action Plan.

- Metrics measure quantitative progress toward achieving goals.
- Metrics should be tracked annually on the Action Plan (or implementation matrix).

Action Plan

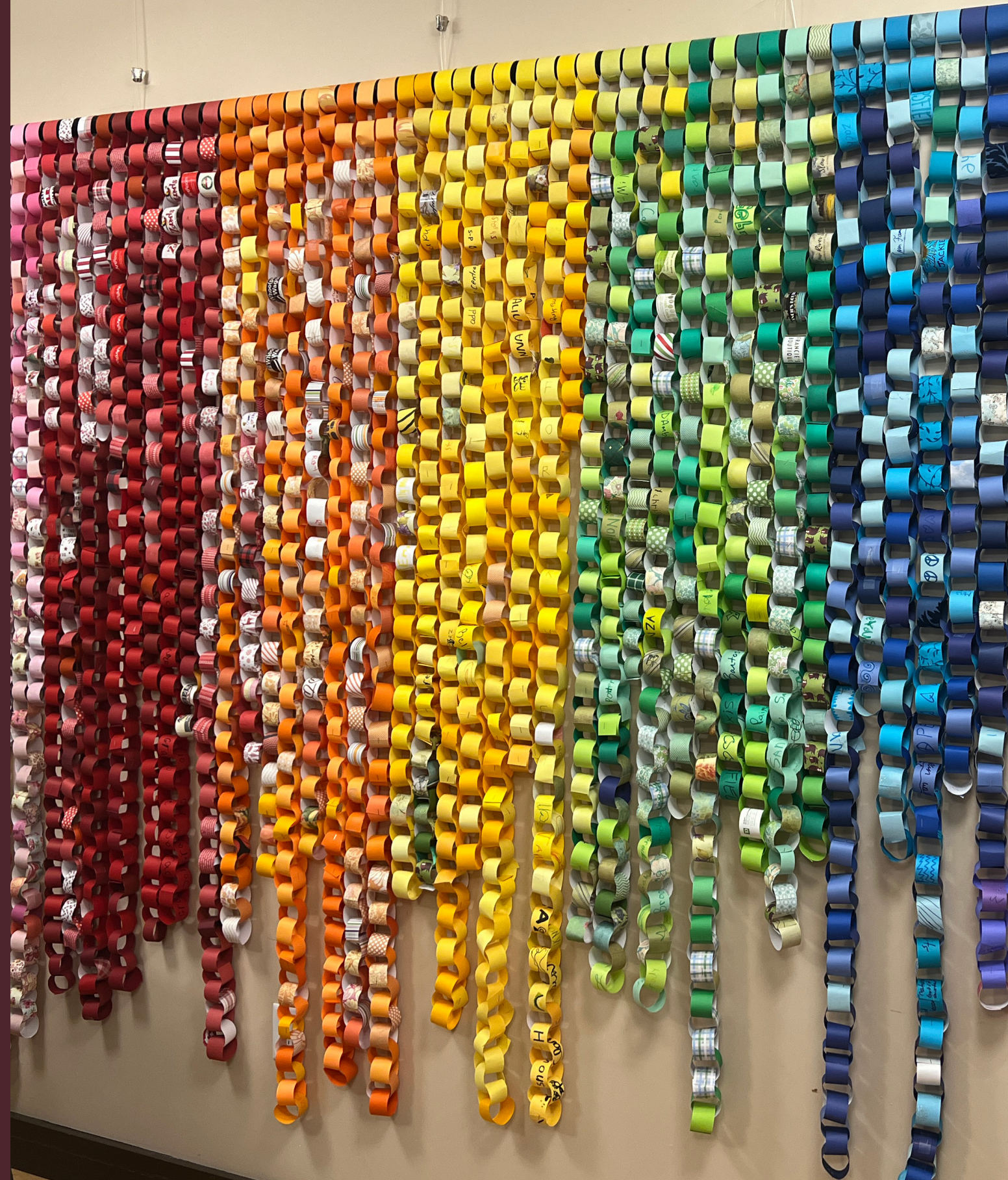


The Action Plan (or implementation matrix) details individual strategies needed to meet community goals. It is meant to be regularly updated and put on the Town's website.

It includes items such as:

- Strategy type (Programmatic; Regulatory and Policy; Capacity Building; Design, Physical, and Acquisition)
- Responsible parties (Town Departments, Boards/Committees, Local Organizations)
- Funding Opportunities (Municipal, State, Federal, Non-Profit)
- Logistics (Approximate Cost, Timing)
- Examples and Case Studies

(left)
Rainbow Paper Chain Wall Hanging
Source: Elana Zabar



13 GLOSSARY

This list of key definitions is intended to assist the reader and is not intended to replace applicable legal definitions of these terms. The following definitions are for key terms used throughout the document, many of which are based on definitions per other statutes and regulations.

Affordable Housing	Housing targeted to and affordable by households that meet specific income eligibility levels, typically households earning below 80% of the metropolitan area’s median income (or AMI). “Affordable housing” does not refer to the design, type, or method of construction of a housing unit or development, but to the cost of the housing to the consumer. Housing is generally considered affordable if the household pays less than 30 percent of its monthly income to secure the housing.
By-right	Development that may proceed under a zoning ordinance or by-law without the need for a special permit, variance, zoning amendment, waiver or other discretionary zoning approval.
Capital Improvement Plan	A capital improvement plan lays out the financing, location, and timing for capital improvement projects over several years (typically five years).
Complete Streets	Streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. Those include people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders. MassDOT offers a program through which registered municipalities can apply for funding towards eligible projects prioritized by the community.
Historic Resource	A building, structure, document, or artifact that is listed on the state register of historic places or National Register of Historic Places or has been determined by the Historic Commission to be significant in the town’s history, archeology, architecture or culture.
Housing & Transportation Affordability Index (H + T)	A tool that measures the percentage of a household’s income that is spent on housing and transportation combined. The index is made up of two parts: housing costs and transportation costs. The H+T index uses data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Location Affordability Index (LAI), which uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS). The LAI estimates transportation costs based on land use mix, commute patterns, and socioeconomic information.

Infill Development	Infill development encourages the development of underused or vacant land in existing areas to place new development near existing resources and infrastructure.
Infrastructure	The basic equipment and structures that are needed for a community to function properly. These include roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, bridges, drinking water, wastewater systems, and more. These are generally government-built and publically owned.
Local Historic District	An area or group of historic structures that are deemed significant to a town’s history, archeology, architecture, or culture and protected by public review.
Market-Ready	Commercial sites that are ready to be developed. Also sometimes called “shovel ready” sites.
Mixed-use development	Development containing a mix of residential uses and non-residential uses, including, without limitation, commercial, institutional, industrial or other uses
Multi-family housing	A building with 3 or more residential dwelling units or 2 or more buildings on the same lot with more than 1 residential dwelling unit in each building.
Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)	A system of publicly-owned conveyances that collects and transports stormwater to surface waters. MS4 systems include streets, ditches, gutters, catch basins, curbs, and storm drains. There are about 7,250 MS4s across the United States, including large and small MS4s that operate under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) MS4 permit. In Massachusetts, the MS4 General Permit allows most cities and towns to operate municipal stormwater systems.
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)	A program that regulates the release of pollutants into surface waters in the United States. The Clean Water Act created the NPDES in 1972, and it authorizes state governments to perform many of the program’s administrative, permitting, and enforcement aspects. The NPDES permit program controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States.

Natural resource protection zoning

Zoning ordinances or by-laws enacted principally to protect natural resources by promoting compact patterns of development and concentrating development within a portion of a parcel of land so that a significant majority of the land remains permanently undeveloped and available for agriculture, forestry, recreation, watershed management, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat or other natural resource values.

Open Space Residential Development

A residential development in which the buildings and accessory uses are clustered together into 1 or more groups separated from adjacent property and other groups within the development by intervening open land. An open space residential development shall be permitted only on a plot of land of such minimum size as a zoning ordinance or by-law may specify which is divided into building lots with dimensional control, density and use restrictions for such building lots varying from those otherwise permitted by the ordinance or by-law and open land.

Placemaking

There are many uses of the term placemaking. The simplest definition comes from the Center on New Urbanism, "Placemaking is the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in." The process of placemaking is often an incremental method of improving a location over time through many small separate projects or activities.

Redevelopment

The construction of new buildings in an area, typically after demolishing the existing buildings.

Zoning

Ordinances and by-laws, adopted by cities and towns to regulate the use of land, buildings and structures to the full extent of the independent constitutional powers of cities and towns to protect the health, safety and general welfare of their present and future inhabitants.



(right)
Topsfield Town Banner
Source: Elizabeth Mulholland

