Town of Shrewsbury Master Plan

March 3, 2016

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Town of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts

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List of Acronyms

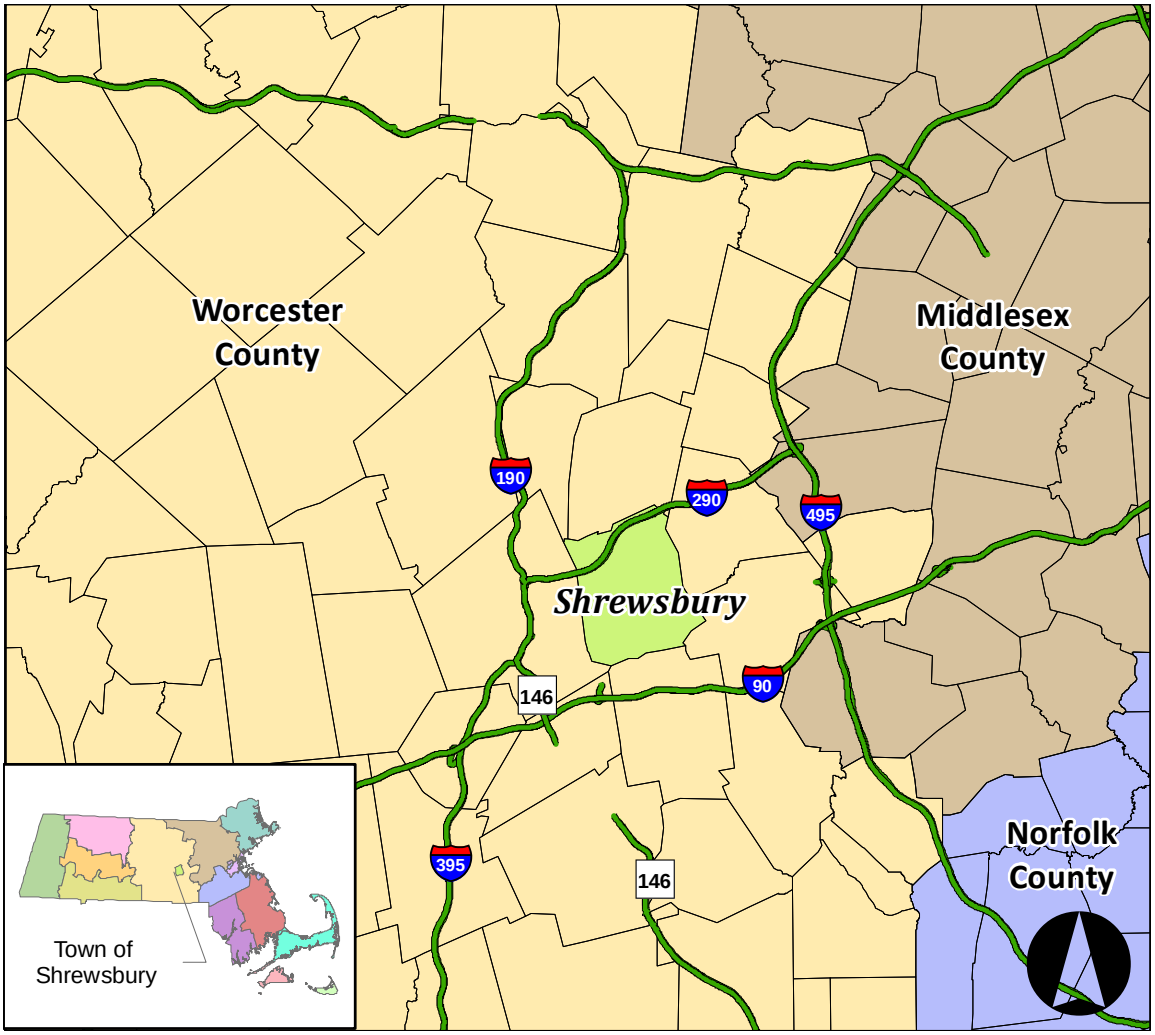
ACS	American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau)
ALB	Asian Longhorned Beetles
CIP	Commercial, Industrial, and Personal Property
CMRPC	Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
CRL	Charles River Laboratories
EDIC	Economic Development and Industrial Corporation
EDSAT	Economic Development Self Assessment Tool
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FTTH	Fiber-to-the-Home
HAC	Housing Appeals Committee
HDHC	Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
IWPA	Interim Wellhead Protection Area
LBDA	Lakeway Business District Association
MassDEP	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
MassDOT	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
MBTA	Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority
MEPA	Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act
MWRTA	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority
NEFF	New England Forestry Foundation
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OSRP	Open Space and Recreation Plan
PAYT	Pay-As-You-Throw program
PCI	Pavement Condition Index
PRD	Planned Residential Development
SDC	Shrewsbury Development Corporation
SELCO	Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations
SHS	Shrewsbury High School
SYSF	Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
UMass	University of Massachusetts
TOD	Transit Oriented Development
WBDC	Worcester Business Development Corporation
WPI	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
WRCC	Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce
WRTA	Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Introduction

The Town of Shrewsbury is located in central Massachusetts, approximately 34 miles west of Boston. With a population of 35,608, it is the second largest municipality in Worcester County, following its neighbor the City of Worcester. Shrewsbury is a suburban, residential community about 22 square miles in size.

The Shrewsbury Master Plan is a road map that guides the Town toward a prosperous future. The document calls for building on the Town's assets and overcoming barriers to maintain the Town as a great place to live and work today, and for future generations. The Master Plan draws from a common vision for the Town's future and identifies the issues that are unique to Shrewsbury. As a forward-thinking, dynamic document, the Master Plan sets priorities for the short-term (within three years), mid-term (between three and ten years) and long-term (10 to 20 years). Revisiting the plan periodically allows the Town to monitor progress and update as local conditions change.

The Master Plan is used by Town staff and elected officials to make decisions about growth, economic development, natural, cultural and historic resource protection, transportation improvements, and public services. Developers also use it to understand how the Town envisions its future and how their project might contribute to that vision. Without the Master Plan, decisions are made in limited context, not considering future needs or implications. Other documents that support the Master Plan are the Town's 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the 2012 Housing Production Plan, the Economic Development Self Assessment Tool (EDSAT) prepared in December 2013 and other resources, which are cited throughout the Plan as appropriate.



Cross Cutting Themes

Several cross-cutting themes emerged through the development of the Master Plan. These are themes that cut across different topic areas, showing the interconnectedness of typical Master Plan issues and the need to develop a plan that explores these connections.

Future Growth and Public Services and Facilities

One of the major focuses of the Master Plan is to stimulate economic development that will increase revenue and reduce the financial burden of public services on residents. Sections of Town designated for commercial and industrial activities that can bring in this revenue are in areas that have access to major roads with the capacity to accommodate traffic associated with employees, deliveries, and customers. However, limited availability and access to water and wastewater treatment that can drive desired economic development is an impediment.

For Shrewsbury, state and federal policies and mandates have created hurdles that make it either very expensive to build new wastewater and water infrastructure or limit access to resources that are available. Most of the Town is connected to the Westborough Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant with a small portion connected to the City of Worcester. The Westborough treatment plant has limited capacity, and both state and federal agencies will not allow an increase in its capacity in the near future. Shrewsbury and other communities that use the treatment plant are meeting this challenge by implementing local policies that reduce unnecessary flow into the plant as a way to open up capacity for the future. Shrewsbury is also looking to Worcester and working with the City to develop a strategy to expand their partnership and connect future commercial and industrial development along Route 9 and Route 20 to the City's system. This opens an opportunity to stimulate economic growth in these corridors.

Developing the Town's water supply also has its hurdles. It is important to balance the need for water consumption and sustaining the water supply for future generations. There are currently limitations on withdrawals from Shrewsbury's existing public water wells to minimize environmental impacts to the Poor Farm sub-basin of the larger Blackstone River Basin. The limitations are a barrier to accommodating future growth, particularly commercial and industrial activities which require larger volumes of water than residential uses. If the Town can offset and mitigate the impacts of increased withdrawals by returning water into the wells' aquifer, it could potentially increase its withdrawals. The fact that much of the wells' Zone II protection areas are almost entirely outside of the Town boundaries is a challenge, and implementing best management practices that can infiltrate stormwater back into the aquifer is limited. Increasing water availability in Shrewsbury is a long-term issue that requires the Town to be creative and diligent. New opportunities will continue to present themselves, and the Town needs to be ready to act.

Transportation-Land Use Connection

The historic development patterns of Shrewsbury over the past several decades centered on the reality that most people get around by car. The impact of this type of development over time is increased traffic and congestion and the inability of older parts of the community, such as the Town Center, to meet modern accommodations for cars (i.e. parking and road capacity). Historical focus on cars as the primary way to get around has also limited the development of infrastructure that would bolster the use of other types of transportation, such as public transit, walking and biking.

Shrewsbury town line; Route 9

Today, residents are asking that other types of transportation be considered when new developments are proposed. Cars will likely remain the primary mode of travel for many years to come, but residents see the added benefits of being more active while doing everyday activities, including going to work or school. Steps can be taken on the neighborhood level, such as

connecting residents with adjacent retail areas, a park, or a school by a multi-use path, or installing sidewalks. Increasing these opportunities can incrementally take some cars off local streets to reduce congestion, and also provide residents with the opportunity to have a more active, healthier lifestyle.

Civic Engagement & Volunteerism

Shrewsbury residents get involved. Volunteering is extremely important to Shrewsbury residents of all ages. It is truly linked to local pride. Thousands of residents and interested individuals each year give their time to schools, the library, the senior center, neighborhood parks, the historical society, and sports programs, just to name a few. As an example, in 2014, the library had 862 volunteers providing over 4,700 hours of service. Additionally, over the past four years, Shrewsbury High School (SHS) students have participated each year in a great deal of community service including the "10,000 Hour Challenge," where the goal is for students to perform at least 10,000 hours collectively each year (Seniors 4,000 hours, Juniors 3,000 hours, Sophomores 2,000 hours, and Freshmen 1,000 hours) and, using these same goals each year, for each individual class to complete at least 10,000 hours by the time they finish high school. Since the 10,000 Hour Challenge's inception, SHS students have completed over 62,000 hours of community service, and the Class of 2015, the first group of students to complete four years of the challenge, completed over 16,000 hours of service. During the 2014-2015 school year alone, SHS students completed over 19,500 hours of service.

This activism should be harnessed and used to drive the goals of this Master Plan. Implementation of the Master Plan can increase civic engagement. While there are many residents that participate in government through committees, boards and Town Meeting, there are many more that do not for a variety of reasons. Some might not understand the government process, or there might be cultural differences or language barriers. Some may feel that the Town is running well and there is really no need to get involved. Others simply are not aware of how their engagement can make a difference.

During the update of the Master Plan, it became clear that work is needed to educate the public about the planning process, why documents like a Master Plan are important, and how the Town's planning staff and different Boards shape everyday life. Terminology in the world of planning and regulation is different, and there are a lot of rules and proceedings that need to take place for projects to go from paper to bricks and mortar. During the Master Plan process, some progress was made in bridging the gap, but it was clear that community outreach about planning and the role of government in general needs to continue as the Master Plan is implemented. Doing so can bolster civic engagement in all aspects of government. It can also build support for implementing the policies and actions outlined in the Master Plan.

Changing Demographics

Oak MIddle School Leaders of Tomorrow volunteers (Photo credit: The Shrewsbury Lantern)

Over the past couple of decades, new trends emerged in Shrewsbury's demographics. For one, Shrewsbury's population is aging. From 1990 to 2010, the U.S. Census reported that residents between the ages of 45 and 54 increased by 122 percent, more than doubling in size, and are now the Town's largest age group. Seniors have diverse needs for housing, transportation and recreation. As Baby Boomers age, this group will continue to grow, and it is anticipated that their interests will be different from those of seniors before them. Baby Boomers will be more physically active and may not be interested in "age restricted" communities. Diverse recreational opportunities along with a variety of housing options will be important to retain these individuals in Shrewsbury.

In 2010, Shrewsbury's largest immigrant population was from Asia (17.2 percent of the total population), with a majority born in India (one third of which were born outside the U.S.). The growing ethnic populations in Shrewsbury provide opportunities and challenges. Increased cultural diversity enriches the community and opens doors to new experiences for residents. Sometimes cultural differences create barriers to communication. Increasing participation in local government may require direct outreach to community leaders to understand neighborhood needs around housing, transportation, safety, education and other areas.

Sustaining Quality of Life

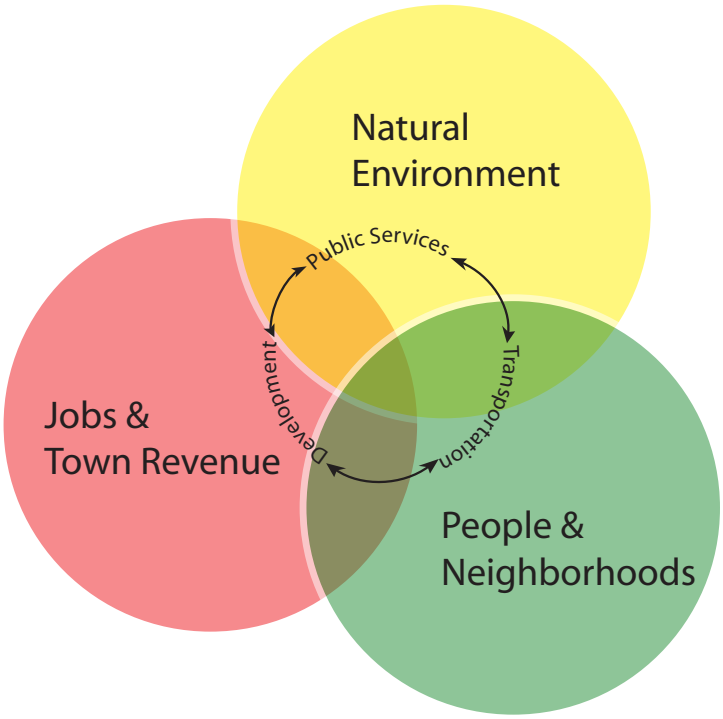
Another cross-cutting theme that surfaced during the Master Plan process was the desire for Shrewsbury to maintain the high quality of life for residents. Of course, the ideas presented on how this would be done covered a diverse spectrum. Many talked about increasing revenue collected by the Town through more economic development activities. Others wanted to protect neighborhoods from encroaching commercial uses. Still others focused on conserving the remaining natural areas to protect water quality.

When the Town makes decisions about growth, preservation and investment in the future, all these issues and many others should be weighed together. Decision makers will need to consider the environmental, economic and social implications of different policy directions on the community. A sustainable approach to planning balances impacts (positive and negative) so not one natural resource, or one neighborhood, or one group of people bears a disproportionate burden of major decisions. Sustainable communities also promote broad-based citizen participation in the decision-making process.[1]

Quality of life, as a concept, permeates every aspect of this Master Plan:

- Open Space and Recreation goals call for acquiring properties for natural resource protection.
- Economic Development goals call for the development of incentives that lead to business growth.
- Public Services and Facilities goals look to maintain efficient and reliable services for all residents and businesses.
- Transportation goals call for an increase in transportation choices with a focus on increasing biking and walking opportunities.
- Housing goals call for increasing access to housing diversity and supporting neighborhood needs.
- Natural, Cultural and Historic goals call for expanding the community's number of protected historic resources and increasing cultural experiences as well as goals for conservation and preservation of Shrewsbury's natural resources.

All of these policies and the others in this Master Plan come together as a cohesive, sustainable approach to growth and prosperity for all Shrewsbury residents while maintaining the Town's fiscal health, unique character, protecting its natural environment, allowing businesses to prosper, and opening opportunities for anyone to live here.



1 Sustainable Communities Online, formerly the Sustainable Communities Network. http://www.sustainable.org/about

Public Process

The Shrewsbury Master Plan was developed through a public process with three primary components: a Master Plan Steering Committee, interviews and focus groups, and a series of public forums. Throughout the development of the plan, public comments were received through the Shrewsbury departments of Engineering, and Planning and Economic Development.

Key to all of these outreach efforts was to gain an understanding of what was most valued in the Town of Shrewsbury that made it attractive to residents and businesses, what issues will the Town face in the short and long terms, and what needs to change to address these challenges. As part of the overall communications strategy for the project, the Shrewsbury Master Plan Website was developed at the outset of the Master Plan process. Project updates, news, meeting agendas and minutes, presentations, online surveys, and other important information were made easily accessible to the public, either directly on the site or via links to others.

Master Plan Steering Committee

The Master Plan Steering Committee helped guide the development of the plan. It was made up of representatives of municipal departments, boards and commissions, and residents of the community at large. Regular public meetings were held to monitor the progress of the plan and give input on issues as they arose.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews and focus groups were conducted at various stages of the update process. In the beginning, department staff and local officials were interviewed to understand the structure of local government, to idenfity issues important to Shrewsbury, and to understand how local decisions are being made. Local property owners and developers were also interviewed to understand their perspective in the development process. As draft goals, policies and strategies were developed, individuals and groups were asked if the plan was developing in the right direction and what corrections were needed at a given point in the process.

Public Forum #1

Public Forums

The Town sponsored two public forums. A full discussion of these events can be found in Appendix A.

Public Forum #1

The **first public forum**, on November 18, 2013 asked participants to think about what areas of Shrewsbury should be protected, which are already changing and need additional support, and which need to be transformed and what would they look like. Attendees talked in small groups about their ideas, and common themes emerged. Most attendees chose the following:

- Areas that residents wanted to **preserve** included Dean Park, Prospect Park and Ward Hill.
- Areas to **strengthen** included the Town Center, Allen Farm, and Lake Quinsigamond.

Attendees talked extensively about areas of Town that could be **transformed**, what they might look like, and the challenges that would have to be overcome to make the transformations. ***Below provides only an overview of the most popular areas discussed during the forum and the types of opportunities and challenges attendees highlighted.*** A full summary of the first public forum can be found in Appendix A.

Route 9/Lakeway District/White City

This corridor could be transformed into a more walkable area that has a mix of uses and better access to the lake. A more attractive area would draw people to businesses, thus increasing interest from current and new developers and property

owners to invest in the area and increase the Town's commercial tax base. Making the corridor more walkable would require investments in pedestrian features, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and landscape to create a safer, more positive walking experience. A business association, such as the Lakeway Business District Association, could take the lead in implementing improvements. It has shown to be successful with new signage, banners and landscaping in the District. Through incentives, other property owners could be encouraged to invest in their properties that would contribute to a shared vision for the area.

Route 20

A higher concentration of office space, commercial uses and high-tech industries could transform Route 20. Concerns about traffic along the roadway could be managed through shared-driveways among developments. Improved connections with the Grafton MBTA commuter station could improve accessibility to the area and reduce traffic congestion associated with increased development. One possible way to accommodate commuters could be through a shuttle service, which could be developed in a variety of ways. A critical mass of businesses can form an association to support the shuttle, or it could be supported through state and federal grant programs, or user fees.

Public Forum #2

During the **second public forum**, groups talked about specific topics of the Master Plan to confirm formative issues that had surfaced during the first public forum as well as during interviews and focus groups. Approximately 60 people attended the forum on May 7, 2014. ***Below is only a summary of most common issues discussed among the groups.*** A full summary can be found in Appendix A.

Open Space and Recreation

- Parks and open spaces are in generally good condition, but staffing and funding for long-term maintenance are concerns.
- By protecting the northwest corner of Shrewsbury, which is over the Town's main aquifer, the Town can implement groundwater protection and conservation efforts. The property can be used for passive recreation.
- Access to Lake Quinsigamond is limited because most of its shoreline is private property. The Town should continue efforts to find creative approaches to increase access to the lake.
- Walking and biking paths and trails for all abilities increase opportunities for residents to be more active and live healthier lifestyles. They can link together existing parks and open spaces as well as neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Some open space lands offer opportunities for renewable energy, such as wind or solar.

Public Forum #2

Economic Development

- The most desirable economic development opportunities lie in high tech, bio tech and medical industries.
- Public infrastructure, specifically water and sewer service, is seen as limiting the economic development potential of Shrewsbury.
- Creating more efficient local permitting procedures and developing cost-sharing programs with the private sector are seen as ways to attract new businesses.

Housing

- Single and multi-family homes are appropriate types of housing for Shrewsbury.
- The Town is meeting the needs of residents, who are particularly satisfied with the school system and its being an overall safe community in which to live.

- While it has made great strides, the Town still needs to work towards its affordable housing goals and meeting the state mandate (Chapter 40B).

Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources

- Open space acquisition will help in protecting water quality, including groundwater and the Town's water supply.
- The existing historic district in the Center of town should be refocused, perhaps expanding it; the Town should consider historic designation regulations.
- Maintenance of historic resources is challenging, but there may be opportunities through public-private partnerships for funding and the use of volunteers.

Transportation

- There is a demand for additional sidewalks throughout Town, but particularly along Maple Avenue in front of businesses.
- Route 9 in the Lakeway District could be more pedestrian friendly with better sidewalks and crossings.
- Bike safety in Town could be improved through the addition of bike lanes where appropriate.
- Parking needs in the Town Center as well as some businesses on Route 9 are not being met. Alternative approaches to meeting these demands might include increasing the comfort and ability to walk to businesses.

Public Services and Facilities

- Town staff is at capacity and just meeting current demands for public services. There is concern that the current level of service cannot be maintained under the current system and budget.
- Increasing revenue into the Town can help the town sustain services. Non-residential development, including redevelopment of older commercial areas, should be targeted.

Community Vision

As the foundation for this Master Plan, a Vision Statement was developed along with a set of Guiding Principles. These principles are markers by which the Town of Shrewsbury will evaluate the goals, policies, and strategies of this Master Plan. The principles are also used by local decision makers to determine if they are moving towards the shared vision for the Town.

Community Vision

Our twenty-year vision for Shrewsbury is we will be a prosperous community, continuing to be one of the most attractive towns in the region for businesses and residents alike. Our neighborhoods will be beautiful and strong, providing good homes to residents of all backgrounds and ages, and children who live in Shrewsbury will continue to have access to the highest quality schools. Our local economy will be a diverse collection of businesses and industries across a wide range of sizes and sectors. These businesses will provide employment across many income levels, and they will be encouraged to explore innovation in both product development and business practice. Local government will play a critical supporting role for the everyday quality of life of our residents, the ability of our businesses to thrive, and the protection of the natural resources necessary to a healthy community.

Guiding Principles

To achieve this twenty-year vision, Shrewsbury adopts the following Guiding Principles:

- Recognize the unique character and history of different neighborhoods, but be open to new development and redevelopment opportunities to strength community identity.
- Support the Town Center as a focal point for bringing the community together through social, economic, cultural and civic activities.
- Support arts, local culture, and high quality educational opportunities not only for school children, but also for residents of all ages.
- Adopt land use patterns that meet the capacity of the natural environment and are supported by existing or planned infrastructure.
- Act as part of the broader region through resources and services that are borderless, such as watersheds, transportation, services, economic development, culture, and community goals.
- Encourage broad and diverse civic engagement through well-managed, transparent government and accessible information.
- Become a home for all ages, incomes, and backgrounds by supporting a mix of housing types that create a range of affordability and choice in housing options.
- Support businesses that open jobs to residents of all ages.
- Motivate residents to live active and healthy lifestyles through community design, access to resources and opportunities, and a cleaner environment.
- Forge partnerships among the Town, businesses, institutions, community organizations and other governments as well as individual residents for better collaboration to achieve shared goals.

Lake Quinsigamond

Master Plan Structure

The Master Plan is divided into topic areas. As noted earlier, many of the topic areas overlap. While each chapter provides distinct goals, policies and strategies, it is also important to consider where policies may complement or compete with one another. Those intersections are highlighted where they present themselves.

LAND USE	• Current development patterns • Where future development happens and what it can look like
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	• Local business growth and development • Where and how future economic growth happens
PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES	• Public services meeting current and future demands • Meeting state and federal requirements
HOUSING	• Available rentals and homeownership • Meeting needs of all residents, considering low income, elderly, and young families
TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY	• Traffic and congestion • Walking and biking safety • Public transportation needs
NATURAL, CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES	• Protecting natural resources, including drinking water sources • Identifying cultural and historic resources
OPEN SPACE & RECREATION	• Implementing 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan • Maintenance of existing resources

Land Use

The Importance of Land Use

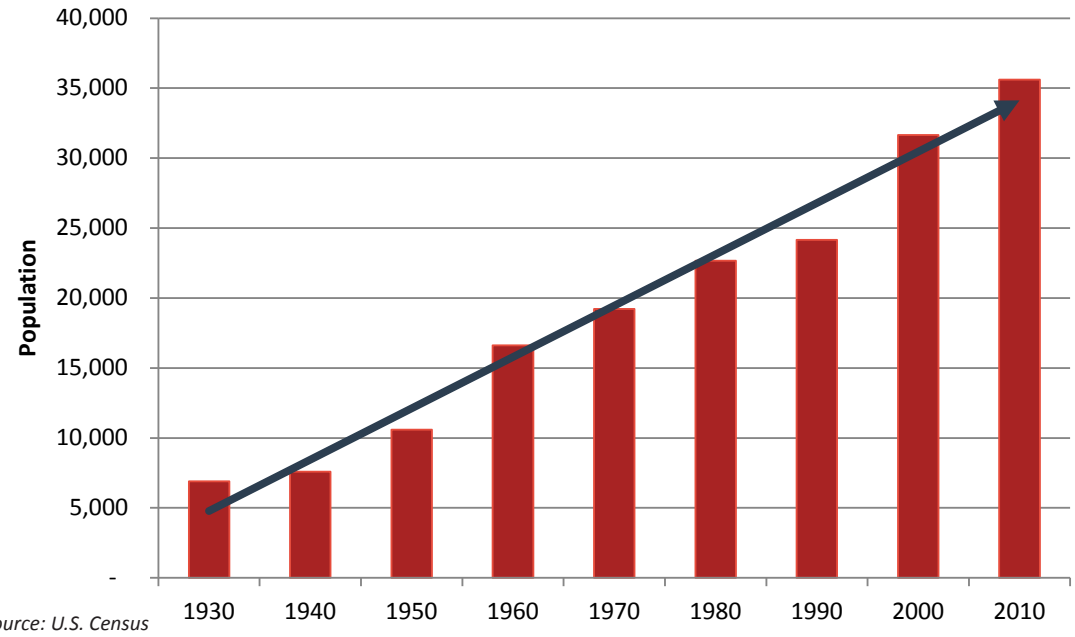
Where development takes place, what it looks like, and how it impacts the surrounding areas are critical issues for any community. The Master Plan provides a framework for addressing these issues and guides the Town as it makes decisions about new development and redevelopment opportunities. With the accompanying Future Land Use Plan, the Master Plan, and particularly the Land Use chapter, articulates the Town's preferred path for future growth.

Over the past 50 years, Shrewsbury's population has grown steadily (Figure 1). The decade of slowest growth was between 1980 and 1990 (6 percent) and its highest growth was between 1950 and 1960 (56 percent).[2] In recent years, between 1990 and 2000, the Town's population increased by 31 percent. Ever since the Great Recession in 2008, the Town continues to feel residential development pressure, and its neighbors are in a similar situation (Table 1).

The Town's high quality school system and its location near Worcester with access to jobs, health care, and educational opportunities make Shrewsbury an attractive place to live. In recent years, the Town has recognized the need to balance residential development with commercial and industrial development to

2 Shrewsbury Open Space and Recreation Plan (2012). Available at http://www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/egov/docs/133103984336.htm

Figure 1. Population Growth of Shrewsbury, 1930-2010



Source: U.S. Census

Table 1. Population Growth of Shrewsbury and Surrounding Communities, 1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010	Percentage Change 2000-2010
Shrewsbury	24,146	31,640	35,605	13%
Boylston	3,517	4,008	4,355	9%
Grafton	13,035	14,894	17,765	19%
Northborough	11,929	14,013	14,155	1%
West Boylston	6,611	7,481	7,669	3%
Westborough	14,133	17,997	18,272	2%
Worcester	169,759	172,648	181,045	5%
Worcester County	709,705	750,963	798,552	6%
Massachusetts	6,016,425	6,349,097	6,547,629	13%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990, 2000, 2010

increase its tax base while still protecting important natural and cultural resources that are important to everyday quality of life.

Focus Areas for Land Use

Balancing Growth with Community Character

Growth in Shrewsbury needs to be more responsible and balanced in order to maintain the qualities of the Town that are important to existing and future residents. When asked what you most connect with in Shrewsbury, many will say the schools, local parks and the Town Center. These areas can easily be impacted by growth that is not within the capacity of the natural environment or the Town's ability to provide services. A "checks and balances" approach gives the Town the ability to determine if the impacts of a particular development can be offset through such strategies as a community benefits agreement, a project-specific covenant, or through the Town's ability to increase its services capacity. This is done during the development and redevelopment review process through established policies and standards in the Town Bylaws and Planning Board Subdivision Regulations.

A project's physical layout and design can impact the natural environment. Policies that promote high quality design and limit environmental impacts can improve aesthetics, minimize property damage and increase the quality of natural areas. Policies the Town should consider evaluating include:

- Set standards to reduce the creation of odd-shaped lots during subdivisions. Focus on criteria that create lots that are developable and have roadway access.
- Develop a bylaw that limits impacts to and loss of existing wetlands. Healthy wetlands act as buffers during storms, absorbing floodwaters and runoff. They are also natural filters for runoff, removing pollutants before entering surface or groundwater.
- Prohibit or severely limit development on slopes greater than 15 percent. Limiting development on slopes is important to reduce property damage and risk for property owners and their neighbors.

Development can also impact the character or feel of an area. Particularly in the older areas of Town, such as the Town Center, a project should be consistent with architectural style and building scale, such as its height and location relative to other buildings around the site. Areas vulnerable to changes in character are historic local buildings and areas of Town that are not registered on the National Register of Historic Places or the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Residential areas, such as those around the Town's ponds and lakes, are also impacted by teardowns and rebuilding. Neighborhood character and scale are also important.

For both situations, design guidelines can be a tool the Town uses to articulate what features are important to maintain an area's character or enhance areas that could benefit from higher quality design. Promoting low impact development and innovative subdivision design can reduce impact on the natural environment and give opportunities to increase open space and recreational offerings.

Critical to implementing any of these approaches is comprehensive and extensive outreach to the public. The land development process can be complex and involves zoning and land use policies that are not commonly understood by the general public. The Town should take steps to increase the awareness of local land use policies, how they are related to state requirements, and what is required of property owners if they want to make improvements to their land. Property owners should also know what regulations govern their neighbors and other parts of the community. The development of the Master Plan is the first step in the public education process. It must continue on a regular basis. Find the teachable moments. If a project demonstrates a common development issue and it is resolved, consider a factsheet that highlights the challenges and how they were overcome, listing lessons learned.

Supporting the Town Center as a Destination

Many New England communities have a town center that is the focal point of civic life, and this is certainly the case in Shrewsbury. The Town Center has the look and feel of a traditional village; it is seen as an area that should be strengthened, so it becomes more of a destination. The center is generally walkable, buildings are multi-story and multi-use, and these structures are positioned close to the street and sidewalk. This traditional "main street" layout creates a comfortable environment for pedestrians and encourages people to visit more than one shop in a single visit.

New investments are already being made in the Town Center. In 2004, the sidewalks were upgraded, new light poles were installed and a traffic light was installed at the intersection. Linking mobility and accessibility with new land uses is important to the enhancements

of the Town Center. A more detailed discussion about traffic and pedestrians moving through this area is in the Transportation and Mobility chapter.

The civic uses that sit within the Town Center are an important piece of its identity. The Fire Department headquarters was relocated into the area in 2007. Public events are held at the Town Common, an historic feature that brings local pride. The Public Library is moving forward with reconstruction of its facility to increase its capacity and service to the community.

First Congregational Church and gazebo on Town Common

Along with the Town Common, the library is an anchor for the Town Center and its renovations will surely increase activity in an already busy area.

Future opportunities exist around the Beal School, a significant structure in the Town Center. Currently, kindergarten and some first grade classes are held here to relieve pressure at the Floral Street School, which is overcrowded. The Town has been selected by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in January 2016 to enter the Eligibility Period to determine if the district is ready to manage and fund a capital project for the school. The Beal School's location and size make it a potential focal point and destination.

The Town Common Historic District represents another important opportunity for the Town as a whole. Building on this designation, the Town can promote development and redevelopment that enhances the historic character of the Town Center. A well articulated vision that includes visualizations of what new development activity should embrace is an important future policy tool, part of a larger economic development strategy. One approach to protecting historic or other important structures within an Historic District is a demolition delay bylaw. [3] The bylaw allows the local Historic District Commission to approve a delay in the demolition of a potentially significant structure to allow for public review. During that time, opportunities to preserve or move the structure could be explored. The delay period is typically 6, 12 or 18 months.

With all of the Town Center's opportunities, there are challenges as well. Parking management and design are the most significant drivers for recent and future development design. Businesses and customers claim there is not enough parking for general access to the area. Further, businesses cannot meet the minimum parking requirements in the Zoning Bylaw because they simply do not have enough space to meet the letter of the law. Those that do have space for parking, locate the spaces in front of their buildings, pushing the buildings back from the street and chipping away at the traditional development pattern in the area. Parking alternatives need to be explored and might include shared parking between private property owners or a central public lot.

Overall, conducting a design study on the Town Center can help focus ideas and develop a clear vision for the area. Input from businesses and residents is critical for this type of study to be successful. The study can lead to public /private partnerships, recommendations for managing parking, building design guidelines, connectivity to nearby uses (Town Hall or Prospect Park), streetscape improvements, and historic preservation.

Developing Land Use Strategies for Economic Development

As shown in the Future Land Use Plan (Map 1), areas with high potential to increase Town revenue with non-residential development are areas designated as Office and Research (which includes CenTech Park North), Limited Industrial, Lakeway Overlay District, Commercial Business, Limited Commercial Business, and the Route 20 Overlay District. These areas are zoned to accommodate businesses that can offer high employment opportunities and services for residents and the region. It should be noted that Limited Commercial Business is only located along Route 9 from Oak Street to the Route 9 bridge, completely contained within the Lakeway Overlay District. These land use categories provide guidance on how the Town envisions these areas.

3 Massachusetts Historical Commission, Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances (October 2010). Available at http://www.mapreservationconference.org/downloads/A1_Preservation%20Through%20Bylaws%20and%20Ordinances.pdf

The overlay districts, such as the Lakeway (further discussed below), Route 20, and Edgemere Districts, are tools the Town has used to entice investment from property owners and developers. The districts offer incentives to provide a mix of uses and promote high quality site design that will improve aesthetics and perhaps attract new businesses to Shrewsbury. These districts require a special permit for many of the more complex activities, which allows the applicant, Town and neighbors to discuss a project, and provides some flexibility in reaching a design solution that benefits involved parties. In some communities, acquiring a special permit adds considerable uncertainty and time to a project timeline. While some projects may require more in depth engagement, the Town of Shrewsbury is committed to getting through the special permit process in 60 days to the greatest extent practicable. Current practice demonstrates that this is achievable and the Town wishes to continue with these expedited reviews.

Administratively, there could be opportunities to expand the use of overlay districts elsewhere along Route 9 or in other sections of Town. The Town should continue to review and update incentives to ensure that the local costs of the incentives translate into added benefits for the community. They should also consider if incentives are still relevant and respond to changing markets and development trends.

Route 20

The types of land use strategies Shrewsbury has used for economic development are exemplified in the Route 20 corridor. Through the public input process for the Master Plan, residents expressed their desire to see Route 20 transformed into an area that can spark the local economy in Shrewsbury. The area has larger parcels and there are opportunities to redevelop existing warehouse and other trucking-oriented businesses. Amenities for employees, such as services, shopping and restaurants, can also be integrated to make a more cohesive, self-sustaining design. Other strategies might include design guidelines for commercial development that address site layout, signage and circulation within a site.

Identifying access management strategies onto the roadway early in the planning process can help the Town direct developers in their design schemes. For example, the Town may want to explore strategies that encourage shared driveways and secondary access roads. Some communities have developed incentives encouraging businesses to implement programs that reduce single-occupancy vehicles. These might include carpooling, discounted transit passes, or shuttle services from nearby transit stops (such as the MBTA commuter station in Grafton).

The greatest challenge in redeveloping this area and other locations is infrastructure limitations associated with available water and sewer. The Town continues to explore alternatives to meet these needs, and they are further discussed in the Public Services and Facilities chapter.

Route 9

The Route 9 commercial corridor is a mix of different types of commercial development. There are large-scale retail businesses in the White City Shopping Center, which is set back from the roadway with expansive parking lots. There are also smaller businesses in the Lakeway Business District with buildings situated at the street. Route 9 is a major roadway, comprised of four lanes and additional turning lanes at lighted intersections. While sidewalks and crosswalks exist, it is not a comfortable environment for pedestrians. Immediately abutting these businesses are neighborhoods with little to no buffer from the commercial activity.

During the Master Plan process, Route 9 was identified as a corridor that should transform into an area that is more walkable, having a greater mix of uses. There are several tools already in place that can help make this transformation. In 2004, the Town adopted the Lakeway Overlay District, which is designed to reduce commercial sprawl, encourage a better use of limited land and resources, and result in higher quality development. The Lakeway Business District Association also proactively organizes local efforts to improve the appearance of the area with new

Gateway to the Lakeway Business District

landscaping and lighting as well as supporting local businesses with a marketing and promotional program.

Route 9 has many challenges that are typical to major arterial commercial corridors. At times, new development and redevelopment along Route 9 creates conflicts with adjacent residential neighborhoods. Commercially zoned properties are often very shallow off of the roadway, and there is little room to buffer views or mitigate noise. Uses that generate lower traffic volumes and less noise should be prioritized for these areas. The established Lakeway Business District Association provides an opportunity to improve this situation, as the Town could partner with the District and work with residential neighborhoods to discuss issues and solutions before development or redevelopment proposals are put forward. A charrette-style workshop is one way to work through these issues and develop a shared vision for the corridor. With a shared understanding by both residents and the business community, redeveloping properties will perhaps be a smoother and more predictable process. Demonstrating to potential investors in the area that this process has already happened and neighboring residents already have buy-in can be a selling point. Increased commercial development will increase revenue for the Town and keep taxes relatively lower for residences.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal LU1: Continually engage the community in an open and transparent public planning process when making land use decisions.

Policy LU1.1: Educate Shrewsbury residents about land use issues and the planning process.

a. Keep the Town's website updated with current information about ongoing and upcoming planning projects.
b. Use existing Town events to showcase successful local planning efforts.
c. Design a process to communicate with individual neighborhoods as a way to reach residents and distribute information about upcoming events, specific projects, or planning topics of interest (e.g. transportation, traffic flow, stormwater runoff, flooding).

Policy LU1.2: Support local boards and commissions in their ability to make sound land use decisions.

a. Continue to offer boards and commissions the opportunity to participate in land use training events, such as webinars and conferences.
b. Distribute educational materials and relevant articles that exemplify and promote the goals and objectives of the Town's Master Plan.

Goal LU2: Promote land use patterns that are compatible with the Town's natural environment and existing landscape character.

Policy LU2.1: Guide development and redevelopment into areas that have the physical, environmental, and infrastructure capacity to absorb and reduce impacts.

a. Reevaluate Shrewsbury's zoning bylaw to ensure that zoning in each district is compatible with the character of the land.
b. Review the existing zoning bylaw for needed revisions to strengthen protection of natural resources.

Policy LU2.2: Discourage development in environmentally sensitive areas, including land that provides wildlife habitat or groundwater recharge.

a. Where feasible, acquire lands that contribute to the quality and diversity of wildlife habitat, or the protection of the Town's drinking water supply.
b. Continue to require developers to identify critical environmental, historic and cultural resources on their properties. Develop incentives for their protection if they are outside of environmental protection or historic districts. Examples to explore include, but are not limited to, Wetlands Bylaw and Demolition Delay Bylaw as well as standards for minimum slopes, stormwater runoff, lot dimensions, and lot coverage.

Goal LU3: Balance growth with community character.

Policy LU3.1: Balance the need for additional non-residential development to increase the local tax base with existing residential neighborhoods.

a. Develop design standards and site design guidance, similar to what was developed in the overlay districts, to minimize impacts on adjacent neighborhoods while still allowing meaningful commercial development to take place.

Policy LU3.2: Ensure that local regulations and policies are directing development to desired results.

a. Review existing zoning bylaws to identify ways to strengthen the transformation of such areas as Route 9, Route 20, Main Street at Route 290, and Route 9/Oak Street into economically viable districts.
b. Review special overlay districts to ensure that incentives are achieving desirable results and the community is receiving positive benefits from developers that take advantage of these incentives.

Policy LU3.3: Encourage high-quality redevelopment and infill of commercial and industrial areas.

a. Develop town-wide guidelines for commercial and industrial development that promote high quality design that is attractive, considers building layout related to adjacent uses and internal circulation, and allows for a mix of uses.
b. Study access management strategies that are most appropriate for different areas of Town, prioritizing Route 9, Route 20 and the Town Center.

Goal LU4: Strengthen and preserve Shrewsbury's Town Center.

Policy LU4.1: Maintain and enhance the character of Shrewsbury's historic Town Center by promoting appropriate development and redevelopment.

a. Review the existing zoning bylaws to ensure that the remaining traditional features of the Town Center remain intact and future infill is complementary to the compact style of the area.

Policy LU4.2: Promote the Town Center as a pedestrian-friendly shopping and service area and a neighborhood gathering place.

a. Conduct a design study of the Town Center to help focus ideas and develop a clear vision for the area. Through the study, determine the limits of the Town Center and its sphere of influence. Consider making recommendations for managing parking, building design guidelines, connectivity to nearby uses (Town Hall or Prospect Park), streetscape improvements, wayfinding, and historic preservation.
b. Explore the interest in developing a business association and the feasibility of an independent organization that promotes the Town Center as a cultural center for Shrewsbury.

Jordon Pond

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Plan (Map 1) illustrates future land use patterns for the Town of Shrewsbury. It is important to understand that it is not a zoning map. It is much broader and offers a framework for future zoning amendments.

Land Use Category Descriptions

Future land use patterns are depicted through land use categories. The following descriptions offer the intent of each land use category.

Residential

Nearly half of the land in Shrewsbury is categorized as Residential. These areas contain the Town's older neighborhoods that have access to municipal water and sewer service. Cluster or conservation subdivision design is strongly encouraged to accommodate and protect the natural features of the land, such as wetlands, wildlife areas, and open spaces, including farms and fields.

Lower Density Residential

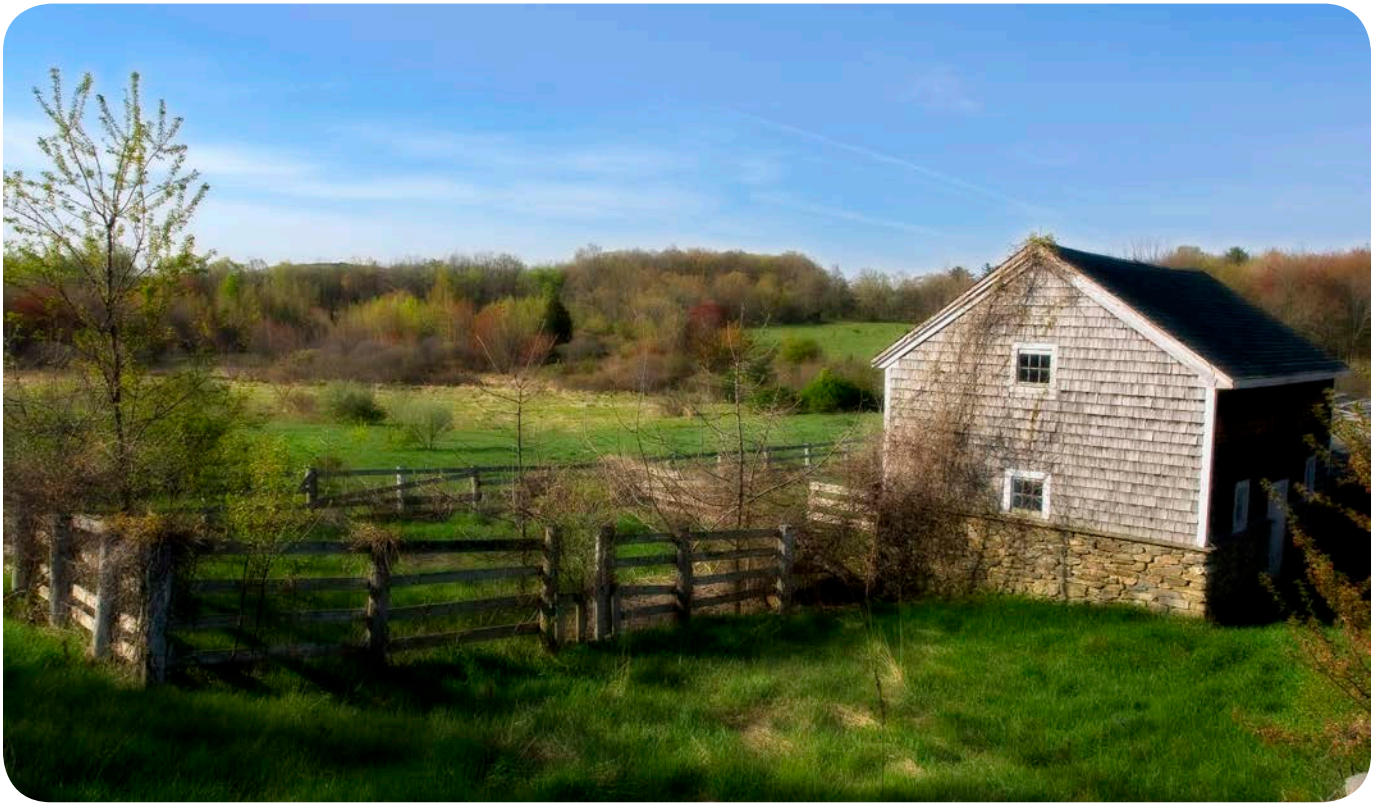
Lower Density Residential areas are identified as single-family residential uses at a lower density than what is typical in the Residential designations. These areas are dispersed along the outer perimeter of Town where the landscape is more sparsely developed. Homes are more likely to have wells for drinking water and on-site wastewater treatment systems than other areas of Town. As with Residential areas, cluster development is also strongly encouraged.

Higher Density Residential

Higher Density Residential represents areas with condominiums, townhouse, multifamily developments and apartment buildings. They are primarily found near major roadways like Main Street, Route 9, Route 140, and Route 20. Higher density residential developments should be situated near services, jobs, and transportation.

Commercial

Commercial areas accommodate a range of commercial uses and services. They are clustered along Route 9, Route 70 and Route 20 as well as the I-290 interchange on Main Street. Establishments in these areas serve both the local neighborhoods and residents Town-wide and tend to be more auto-oriented, in that customers reach them predominately by car. Management of driveways and on-site travel lanes should be considered



Centech Park North (former Allen Farm)

to minimize curb-cuts on busy roadways. Landscaping and buffering are important to not only improve the aesthetics of development, but also to minimize impacts to neighboring residential uses. Special attention should be paid to Commercial areas along Route 9 that abut residences.

Neighborhood Business

Neighborhood Business encompasses the Town Center. Businesses are small-scale and serve the immediate neighborhood as well as customers who travel into the area by automobile. This district is meant to be a destination, providing a place to do errands, meet people, or enjoy a meal. The collection of civic uses in the area strengthens its identity as Shrewsbury's true "center"; providing access to residents on foot will continue to be a priority in future investments.

Office and Research

Office and Research areas are dedicated to laboratories and associated office buildings for specialized development in the biomedical, pharmaceutical, and research and development fields. Developments in Office and Research areas that are closer to residential areas should be compatible, as prescribed in zoning, and buffers should be used to mitigate nuisances such as noise and traffic.

Limited Industrial

Limited Industrial areas are located on Route 20, near Route 70, Route 140 south of Route 9, areas on Route 9 to the east, and at the Grafton Town line. These areas are intended to support research laboratory, office, and light industrial activities. Zoning regulations outline conditions that must be met to minimize impacts on surrounding areas, including operational requirements and buffer distances.

Lakeway District

The Town envisions the Lakeway District will transform from commercial sprawl to a vibrant, walkable commercial area. Property owners are allowed to create developments with a mix of commercial, residential, institutional and civic uses. Design and layout of these uses should be safe for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Scale, design and operation should be that of a typical New England downtown or business center. As a result, much of the development that will occur in the Lakeway District will be infill. "Big box" development is prohibited. Shared access for vehicles from Route 9 is encouraged to reduce curb cuts. Pedestrian links between developments create opportunities for visitors to park once and walk to different destinations in the District. The primary tool to reach these objectives is the Lakeway District Overlay.

Route 20 District

The Town envisions the Route 20 District as an economic driver with light industrial, research and development, and associated office uses. The District gives flexibility in mixing uses and creating high quality site design that is attractive. Commercial uses that support the employees of these businesses, such as banks, restaurants and retail are allowed in the District. The primary tool to reach these objectives is the Route 20 District Overlay.

Edgemere Village District

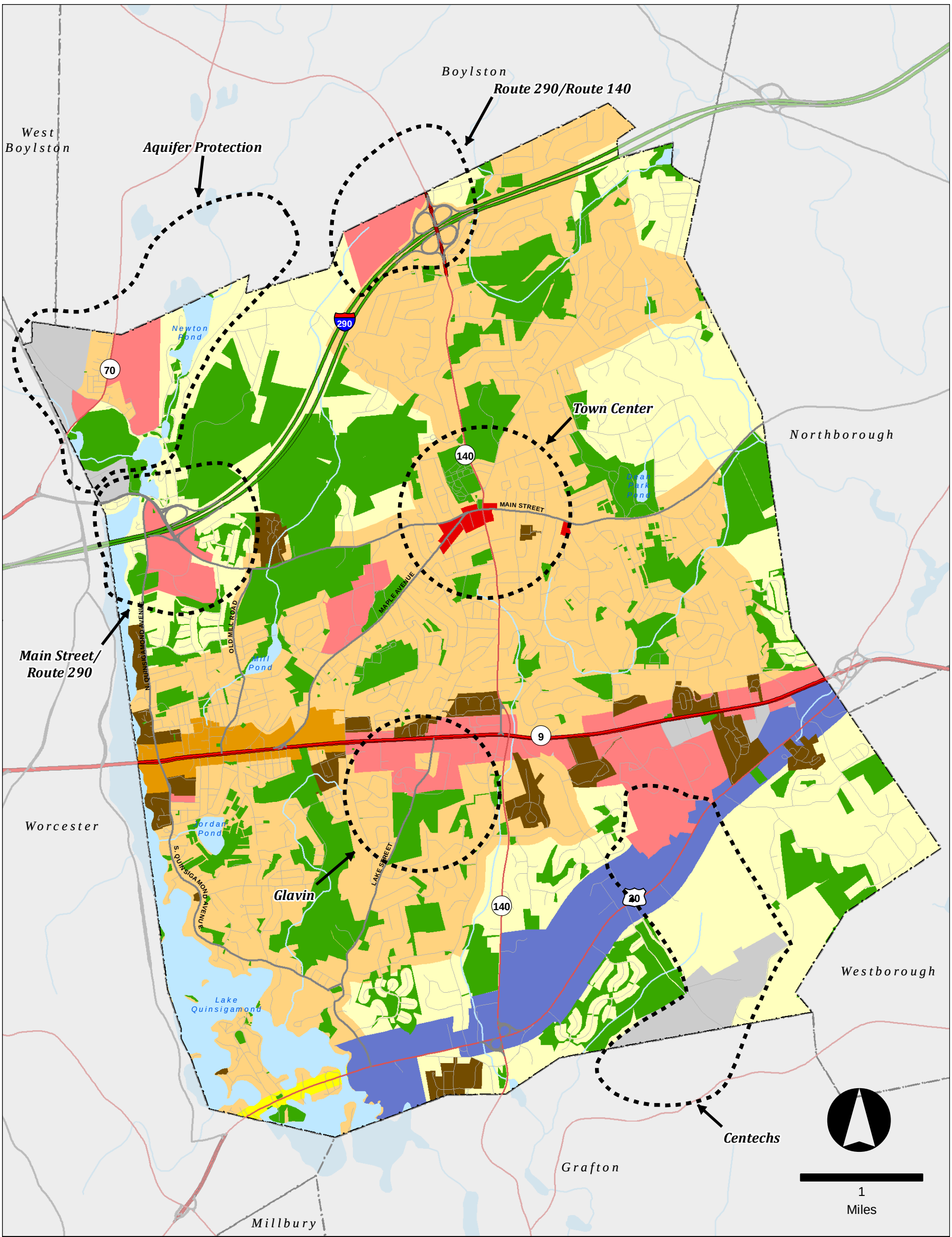
The Town envisions the Edgemere Village District to be a mix of commercial and residential uses. Businesses are small-scale and serve the immediate neighborhood. The primary tool to reach these objectives is the Edgemere Village District Overlay.

Public and Private Open Space and Recreation Lands

This land use category encompasses public and private open space and recreation properties. Some are protected from development in perpetuity, while others only have limited protection from future development. The 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan should be referenced when reviewing these properties.

Areas of Special Planning Interest

Areas of Special Planning Interest are those places in Shrewsbury that have been identified as areas in need of transformation or specific actions to reach their full potential. Areas may be related to the Town's character (Town Center), economic development (the Centech properties, Route 290/Route 140, and Glavin), or environmental resources (aquifer protection). Throughout the Master Plan these areas are highlighted and discussion focuses on actions to build on these assets. They are delineated on the Future Land Use Plan with dashed lines, indicating that the specific boundaries or areas of study have not been determined at this time. Some areas may warrant detailed focus outside of the Master Plan to delineate these boundaries and test the feasibility of strategies presented in the Master Plan.



Legend

- Higher Density Residential
- Residential
- Lower Density Residential
- Commercial/Office/Research
- Neighborhood Business
- Limited-Industrial
- Areas of Special Planning Interest
- Lakeway Business District
- Edgemere Village District
- Route 20 District
- Public & Private Open Space/Recreation Lands (See OSRP for levels of protection)

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Future Land Use Plan

Prepared by: KDM
Sources: Town of Shrewsbury, MassGIS

Map 1. Future Land Use Map

Economic Development

The Importance of Economic Development

A community's economy is shaped by its location, natural resources, infrastructure, the types of industries it attracts, the education, skills, and incomes of its residents, and its land development policies. Economic development matters to Shrewsbury because it provides jobs and tax revenue, and it has a direct impact on the community's quality of life. Every town is part of a larger economic statistical region connected by water, employment, trade, and transportation characteristics. Shrewsbury is no exception. The health and well-being of the Worcester metropolitan area (Worcester County south of Route 2) affects the economic growth opportunities that exist in Shrewsbury and other towns nearby; understanding the regional economy is important even though this master plan is for and about Shrewsbury.

On one level, Shrewsbury is poised to attract a share of the Worcester region's economic growth. It has a highly skilled workforce, relatively low tax rates, and town-owned, operated, and competitively priced utilities. It also has vacant commercial land and buildings that are ripe for reinvestment. Furthermore, Shrewsbury is a well-run town that has worked hard to develop a business-friendly culture both inside and outside of Town Hall. On another level, Shrewsbury remains stymied by limited water and sewer capacity, and to some extent by its location within the larger New England economic region. These factors have made it difficult to attract and keep certain types of businesses. In addition, since Shrewsbury does not meet the state's ten percent minimum for affordable housing, its limited supply of commercial and industrial land remains vulnerable to comprehensive permits for mixed-income developments.

During this Master Plan process, residents voiced strong support for more commercial development with better site and architectural design. They say Shrewsbury needs a larger non-residential tax base in order to handle the cost of population and school enrollment growth. Since other sources of revenue tend to fluctuate beyond a town's control, the size, value, and growth potential of a property tax base is critical for most communities. Still, the scope of economic development extends far beyond real estate taxes. It is fundamentally about jobs and wages. In fact, a vibrant, durable employment base with many types of jobs hinges on a mix of for-profit, non-profit, and public sector employers. Planning for economic development in Shrewsbury should focus on promoting industry clusters, addressing problems with infrastructure capacity and access, and strategies to cultivate the best possible outcomes in Shrewsbury's primary commercial areas: Route 9, Route 20, and the Town Center.

Entering Lakeway Business District

Focus Areas for Economic Development

Strength and Diversity of the Tax Base

Shrewsbury relies on residential taxpayers for 86.7 percent of its tax levy (2014). Commercial, industrial, and personal property (CIP) taxes provide the remaining 13.3 percent. By contrast, residential taxes make up 53 percent of the tax levy in Marlborough and 64 percent in Westborough (see Table 2). While these other communities collect a larger share of the levy from nonresidential taxpayers, they have higher tax rates than Shrewsbury and the levy accounts for a larger share of total revenues. As a result, while Marlborough's home values fall somewhat below Shrewsbury's, homeowners there pay a higher tax bill – and homeowners in Westborough pay a much higher tax bill. Shrewsbury residents do not have a substantially higher tax burden than their counterparts in neighboring communities, but they are accustomed to having a full-service town government at a lean cost per household. Since the cost of government has accelerated ahead of revenue growth, Shrewsbury's capacity to meet residents' expectations has been compromised. This problem is exacerbated by the absence of a strong commercial tax base to buffer

residents from the impact of spending growth – or the possibility of reduced services.

Tax Rate

Shrewsbury has a single (uniform) tax rate by long-standing tradition. Town officials have always thought that residents and businesses should each pay their fair share, so the option of a split rate, which exists in several towns nearby, has never had much support. As shown in Table 2, Shrewsbury's single tax rate ($12.17 in 2014) is the lowest among all neighboring cities and towns, and clearly the lowest rate paid by businesses in any of these communities. Still, except for Grafton and the more rural Boylston, Shrewsbury has a smaller nonresidential tax base at only 13.3 percent.

The combined tax levy from all classes in Shrewsbury represents about 52 percent of total municipal revenues, with state aid providing 23 percent; local receipts, 12 percent; and other sources, 13 percent (see Table 3). Over the past ten years, state aid has gradually declined as a percentage of total revenues, down from 27 percent. Today, the average tax levy share of total revenues is 57.5 percent statewide, i.e.,

Table 2. Property Tax Rates (2014) and Tax Levy in Shrewsbury and Neighboring Cities and Towns

Location	Residential	CIP	Residential Taxes % Tax Levy	CIP Taxes % Tax Levy
Shrewsbury	12.17	12.17	86.7%	13.3%
Boylston	17.39	17.39	90.4%	9.6%
Grafton	15.26	15.26	90.4%	9.6%
Marlborough	16.11	28.22	53.2%	46.8%
Millbury	17.10	17.10	76.8%	23.2%
Northborough	16.59	16.59	73.7%	26.3%
Westborough	19.29	19.29	63.5%	36.5%
Worcester	19.54	30.83	61.6%	38.4%

CIP: Commercial, industrial, and personal property
Source: Mass DOR Municipal Database; Property Tax Trend Report 2014, Fiscal Year 2013 Revenue Components

Table 3. Municipal Revenue Components, Percent Total (FY 2014)

Location	Tax Levy	State Aid	Local Receipts	Other
Shrewsbury	51.6%	23.2%	12.0%	13.1%
Boylston	75.4%	6.3%	11.7%	6.7%
Grafton	59.0%	19.4%	12.2%	9.4%
Northborough	71.6%	9.2%	13.3%	5.7%
Westborough	64.8%	9.9%	21.7%	3.7%
West Boylston	55.8%	19.7%	16.9%	7.6%
Worcester	38.7%	43.4%	16.5%	1.4%
Massachusetts	57.5%	20.8%	17.8%	3.9%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Municipal Databank.
Note: "State Aid" includes payments to Shrewsbury from the Massachusetts School Building Assistance Authority

Table 4. Change in Average Home Value and Tax Bill (2000-2013)

Year	Average Single Family Home Value	10-Year Percentage increase	Average Single Family Home Tax Bill	10-Year Percentage increase
2003	$ 284,389	30%	$ 3,015	43%
2008	$ 400,008		$3,656	
2013	$ 370,331		$ 4,322	

a somewhat higher share than in Shrewsbury. Most neighboring towns are above the state average tax levy while Worcester (and most Massachusetts cities) are considerably below.

The distribution of the tax levy between residential and CIP properties has barely changed in Shrewsbury over the past decade: from 85.5 percent to 86.9 percent residential between 2003 and 2013. However, the total assessed value for residential property in this period increased by a substantial 39 percent due to new development and gains in housing values in general. The total value of CIP property increased by just 25 percent while the average single family home value increased by 30 percent (see Table 4).

Reduced State Aid

State aid as a portion of municipal revenue has steadily decreased since 2008. State aid (including Chapter 70 education funding) accounted for 23.2 percent of Shrewsbury's 2013 budget, down from 27.9 percent five years earlier. When state aid (or any other non-tax revenue source) declines, communities can either increase their taxes to make up the difference or choose to go without: reduce spending or maintain level spending, in either case eventually leading to reduced services. As the town becomes even more dependent on the tax levy to pay for community services, residents will feel the effects in their property tax bills. Bolstering the local commercial and industrial tax base will, therefore, be an important part of the town's approach to economic development and land use.

Commercial and Industrial Areas

Route 9

Commercial and industrial location decisions are influenced by many factors, including access and visibility. Most of Route 9 is a divided roadway with few or no left turn options between signalized intersections; this creates some challenges for car and truck access. In addition, the lighting and signage along Route 9 and Route 20 make it difficult to navigate and locate businesses. In interviews and community meetings for this plan, residents said signage, traffic flows, circulation, and access present real problems for local businesses. In addition, many of Shrewsbury's commercial properties, particularly on Route 9 west of Route 140, have significant development constraints. In some areas, the lots are very shallow, and this limits options for land use, site design, use, and accommodating truck access and turnaround radii. Moreover, many of these small properties abut residential neighborhoods, creating concerns for homeowners in such close proximity to businesses.

Route 20

Development opportunities along Route 20 (in Shrewsbury and beyond) are hindered by a lack of infrastructure capacity, efficient traffic circulation, and urban design constraints.

Infrastructure: The lack of sewer connections is the most significant obstacle for commercial development in this part of town. There is currently no sewer service on Route 20 from South Street to the Worcester city line, which limits the type or size of business that Shrewsbury can attract. Though a heavily traveled highway, Route 20 has several vacant or underutilized parcels that remain unmarketable due to the lack of sewer service and Shrewsbury's inability to meet the water demands of many types of industry. This lack of infrastructure lowers property values and discourages job creation.

Traffic circulation and aesthetics: Excessive commercial driveways and curb cuts on short road segments usually create an unappealing landscape of asphalt, parking, chaotic signage, and a dearth of green space. In turn, these conditions spawn an unsightly and pedestrian un-friendly environment. To a great extent, this type of landscape exists on Routes 9 and 20 west of Memorial Drive, where multiple, often adjacent curb cuts create a chaotic and unattractive image. The same problems can lead to congestion and create dangerous driving conditions.

The Centech Parks

For the past several years, Shrewsbury has focused on two key economic development opportunities: Centech Park East, located on Fortune Boulevard near the Grafton line, and Centech Park North, the former Allen Property on South Street and Route 20 (Figure 2). These new industrial/business parks intend to build on the success of the original Centech Park, which Grafton and Shrewsbury initiated in 1994. The 121-acre Centech Park site, located primarily in Grafton, was developed by the Worcester Business Development Corporation (WBDC). The project relied on federal and state grants for infrastructure, including construction of Centech Boulevard to connect the site with Route 20 in Shrewsbury. Today, Centech Boulevard facilitates easy access between Shrewsbury and the Grafton MBTA station, the Tufts University Veterinary School at the former Grafton State Hospital, and Centech East.

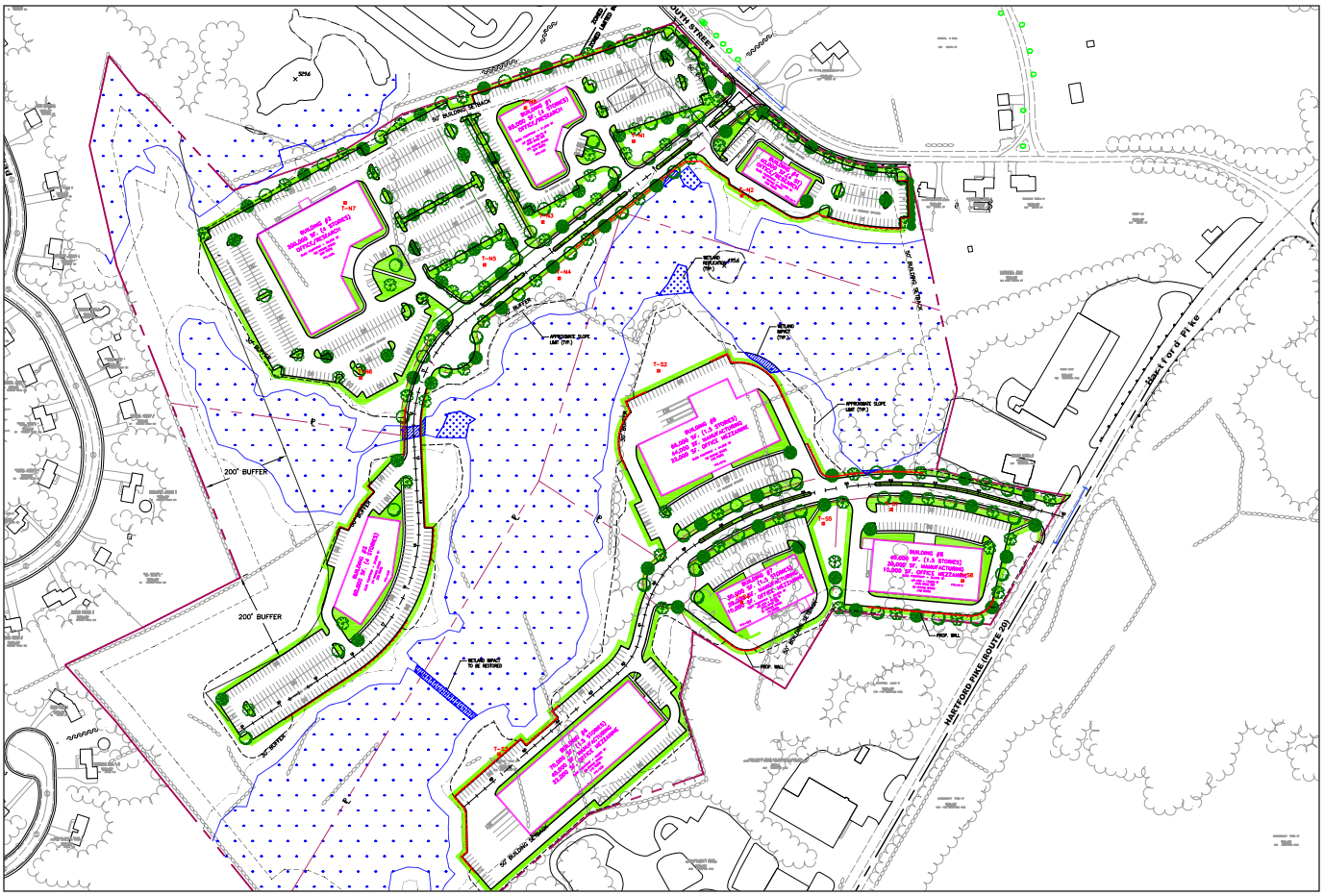


Figure 2. Conceptual Plan for Centech Park North (prepared by Beta Group, Inc., 2008)

Centech Park North: Centech Park North has been an economic development priority in Shrewsbury for over a decade. Located about two miles from the other Centech Parks, Centech Park North is a 66-acre tract with frontage on South Street and Route 20. Shrewsbury rezoned and purchased the property in 2002 in order to control the site's future use. At the same time, Town Meeting created an economic development and industrial corporation (EDIC), now called the Shrewsbury Development Corporation (SDC), to oversee development of Centech Park North and take on similar initiatives at the Town's request.[4] By acquiring the Allen Property and rezoning it under a newly conceived Office-Research district, Shrewsbury began to implement some of the economic development and land use recommendations of the 2001 Master Plan.[5] Since 2010, the Town has had a broker for the property.

Centech Park North abuts the Charles River Laboratory facility, and on the other side of South Street, its neighbors include the administrative offices of U-Mass and a regional facility for Seagate Technology. Though ideally situated for some types of office or industrial uses, Centech Park North has been a challenging site to develop. In 2004, WBDC conducted a market analysis for Centech Park North in order to understand the property's development potential and limitations. WBDC predicted that building out the site for higher-end office and research uses could take at least ten years, but industrial and warehouse uses would develop more rapidly, e.g., four to five years.[6] SDC and Board of Selectmen decided to hold the site for office and research tenants in hopes of luring better jobs and more tax revenue. Four years later, Shrewsbury adopted a state economic development incentive program known as Chapter 43D and designated Centech Park North as a Priority Development Site (PDS). Doing so qualified the Town for a Chapter 43D grant to prepare a master plan for the property.

4 Establishing the EDIC also enabled Shrewsbury to extend the period for interest-only payments from two years to ten, which the Town hoped would be enough time to sell the land for industrial development.

5 The Daylor Group, Shrewsbury Master Plan (2001), 116.

6 WBDC, *Executive Summary of Market Analysis for Potential Development of Allen Property* (June 2004).

According to the *Allen Property Master Plan*, the south pod of the site (closest to Route 20) is better suited for light industrial use and not for office-research, as zoned. The report confirmed some of WBDC's earlier conclusions about the prospects for Centech Park North and cautioned that any major development of the property could trigger difficult-to-meet environmental requirements. It also noted that road widening and intersection improvements would be required at South Street and Routes 9 and 20 in order to support development at the site.[7] After the site master plan process, Shrewsbury amended the zoning overlay district associated with Centech Park North in order to accommodate a wider variety of tenant businesses. Under current zoning, the property could support up to 610,000 square feet of floor space, but build-out will likely remain a slow, long-term process. Several conditions make Centech Park North a challenging site for development: the Town's inability to supply water to high water users, the steep topography on the Route 20 side of the site, the primary access along South Street, traffic, wetlands, and development costs.[8] Although Centech Park North still has no tenants, the SDC reports that interest has picked up as both the MetroWest commercial and industrial market grows and the region emerges from the recession.

Centech Park East: WBDC and the Town of Shrewsbury collaborated as co-developers for Centech Park East. This 84-acre site, located across from Centech Park, includes an access road (Fortune Boulevard) and utility-ready lots; it can support up to 650,000 square feet of commercial or industrial floor space. Centech Development, LLC owns most of the property, which is subdivided into four parcels. In 2014, Altec Inc. purchased and developed about 24 acres in the park. Centech East benefits from an inter-municipal agreement between Shrewsbury and Grafton to provide water and sewer service to the development. Centech East has also been designated as a Priority Development Site under Chapter 43D.

University of Massachusetts Medical School

The University of Massachusetts (UMass) Medical School controls two large properties within Shrewsbury. At 333 South Street is Central Administration, University Collaborative Services Conference Center, the UMass Donahue Institute, UMass Online, and the UMass Foundation. The property at 222 Maple Avenue is home to the Office of Science Education, Office of Community Programs, Office of Technology Management, and various other research programs. The Maple Avenue property has additional land for development and several conceptual master plans have been considered. The concepts include a connector road through the property from Main Street to Maple Avenue. The Town would benefit from this development because it supports economic development and addresses traffic network needs.

Charles River Laboratories

Charles River Laboratories International, Inc. (CRL) bought the 400,000 square feet former Hewlett-Packard facility on South Street in 2005. With headquarters in Wilmington, Massachusetts and facilities throughout the U.S. and Europe, CRL is a research and development firm that supports the pharmaceuticals and biotech industries. According to company officials at the time, the purpose of acquiring the site in Shrewsbury was to relocate CRL's Central Massachusetts operations from Southbridge to a facility with enough room for expansion. Over 300 people worked at the Shrewsbury campus for almost five years until it closed its doors and laid off or relocated its highly skilled workforce by mid-2010. CRL was Shrewsbury's largest taxpayer at the time, for even with a five percent tax break under a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement, it paid over $380,000 in property taxes on a facility valued at $40 million. CRL also provided funds for a position in the school department. The CRL plant closed under the grip of the Great Recession, which had a significant impact on the local economy; however, CRL reopened in 2016.

Access

Shrewsbury lies along the outermost edge of the I-495 region, a condition that has both benefits and drawbacks for economic development. Many industries seek highway access within easy, unimpeded reach of an interchange, but Shrewsbury has trouble satisfying that requirement. Interstate Route 290, a 20-mile roadway that extends between I-495 in Marlborough and Route 20 in Auburn, is the only interstate highway that runs through Shrewsbury. It crosses the north side of town and provides connections to Shrewsbury via State Route 140 and Main Street. The location of these two interchanges, roughly halfway between Marlborough and Auburn, means that I-290 is not all that close to other components of the regional roadway network. Moreover, it is not very close to the economic opportunity areas that exist within Shrewsbury, other than the Secured Financial Parcel that partially lies in

7 Community Opportunities Group, Inc., and BETA Group, Inc. *Allen Property Master Plan* (2009).
8 Shrewsbury Annual Town Reports, 2012, 2013.

Boylston and some land off Main Street zoned Limited Commercial Business. Routes 9 and 20 are four-lane, partially divided arterial roadways that provide direct access to most businesses in town, and both provide options to connect with I-495 and the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90). However, these connections provide only limited value for local economic development, first because of distance and second, both roads are somewhat congested during peak commuting hours.

Worcester Airport

The Worcester Airport, located six miles from Shrewsbury, provides commercial flights (JetBlue Airlines) and private and charter services. A 2013 study by Frasca and Associates for the Massachusetts Port Authority (MassPort) estimates JetBlue's total economic impact (direct and induced) to the Worcester area at $368.6 million over the next ten years.[9] This new regional amenity could change transportation flows and affect business location criteria. Shrewsbury is a 35-minute drive from the airport and may stand to benefit from its growth.

Commuter Rail

A commuter rail station opened in Grafton in 2003, followed by stations in Westborough and Southborough three years later. The station adds approximately 300 trips to inbound service to Boston daily, but there are very few incoming commute trips to Grafton and Shrewsbury. Although located adjacent to the Centech Park campus and Tufts University Veterinary School, the Grafton MBTA station is not designed to create a transit-oriented development (TOD) environment. According to MBTA ridership studies by the Central Transportation Planning Staff, an average of seven passengers exit the station in the morning.[10] The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) operates a new bus service connecting the station to Grafton and Millbury, with only a few riders a day along its entire route as of February 2014. Shrewsbury does not yet provide any public transit connections to the station.

In Westborough, the Town and WRTA collaborated to create a shuttle bus service to connect to the commuter rail station. An 11-passenger shuttle van provides thirteen round trips throughout Westborough, with morning and evening trips to the office parks and the Westborough MBTA.[11] The 495/MetroWest Partnership and the Corridor Nine Area Chamber of Commerce promote the shuttle to local businesses as an alternative mode for bringing employees into the area from other parts of the region.

Local Capacity for Economic Development

Professional Staff

Shrewsbury did not have a planning department until 2013. The town had a planner during the 2001 Master Plan process, but the position was eliminated when the planner left. Eventually, a member of the Engineering Department assumed some of the duties of town planner while continuing to serve as an engineer. In 2010, Shrewsbury hired a professional planner whose job includes both planning and responsibility for all aspects of economic development. The benefits of having an in-house planner became apparent to everyone, and in 2013 the position was reclassified as a department head overseeing the newly created Planning Department. Shrewsbury recently hired an assistant planner to assist the Principal Planner due to growth in the department's workload.

The Planning Department maintains an inventory of available commercial and industrial properties and publishes the inventory on Shrewsbury's website. Its purpose is to help business locators and realtors identify sites for new business development. The inventory contains not only the usual elements of a land inventory (parcel size, address, and owner), but also the size of existing facilities on each site, the zoning – both conventional use district and any overlay districts that apply – along with the existing lot coverage ratio, and notes about the status of each property.

Shrewsbury Development Corporation

In 2002, Shrewsbury took an unusual approach to economic development by purchasing the land for Centech Park North and creating an EDIC (now the SDC) to handle the developer selection and disposition process (see "The Centech Parks" above). The state legislation that authorized the SDC gives Shrewsbury a quasi-public development agency with more flexibility than a city or town and some degree of neutrality from local politics.[12] Since 2002, the SDC has focused almost exclusively on Centech Park North, its primary charge. However, the SDC can operate as a land bank and land disposition agent for other parcels with economic

9 Worcester Regional Airport: Economic Impacts of New Air Service. Franca and Associates, Nov. 1, 2013.

10 Central Transportation Planning Staff, MBTA Commuter Rail Passenger Count Results (2012). The number of passengers alighting in Grafton in the morning has declined by over 100 percent since CPTC conducted a system-wide survey in 2008-2009.

11 Worcester Regional Transit Authority press release, Dec. 6, 2013. "Westborough officials cut ribbon to commemorate new business shuttle service".

12 Chapter 493 of the Acts of 2002.

development importance to the Town. It also could play an instrumental role in business recruitment and retention and helping to promote the process of creating a coherent economic development vision for the Town.

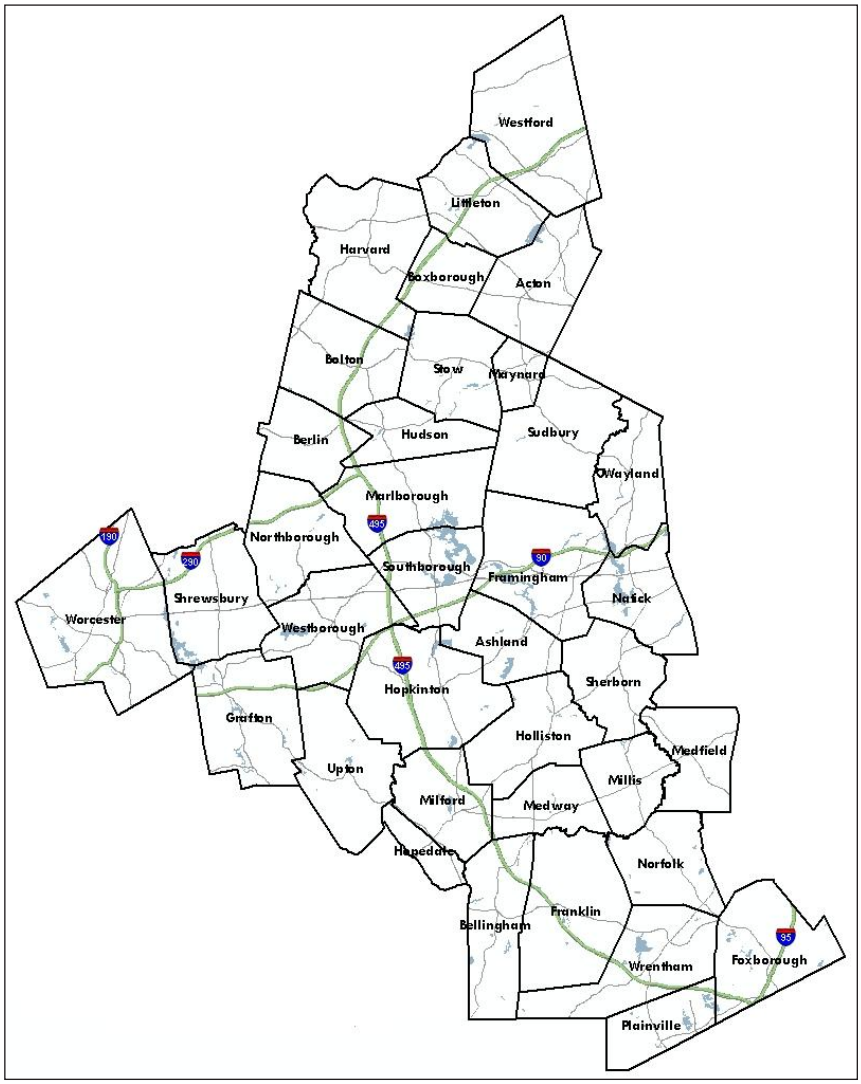
Clearly, Shrewsbury has invested in infrastructure and human resources to foster economic development. Nevertheless, some of the participants at a master plan public forum said the Town should assign economic development functions to a single person in order to avoid missed opportunities. The lack of dedicated staff for economic development can mean that local businesses are largely left to their own devices to navigate through the town's permitting and licensing processes, boards, and regulations, or to coordinate among themselves for events or cross-promotion and marketing. Finally, not having a dedicated economic development professional means the Town has no one actively recruiting new businesses and working to retain existing businesses. Absent dedicated staff, a volunteer board or committee could also help to champion economic development issues and connect the Town with its business community and the regional economy. The SDC has certainly done some of these tasks, but its primary mission is developing Centech Park North. Nevertheless, Shrewsbury has made progress by developing outreach materials for the business community and beginning collaborations with the local Chamber of Commerce, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD), and the 495/MetroWest partnership.

Business Partners

Corridor Nine: In 2000, Shrewsbury's business community joined the Westborough/Northborough Chamber of Commerce, part of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce (WRCC). The organization was then renamed the "Corridor Nine Area Chamber of Commerce" with headquarters in Westborough. In 2003, Corridor Nine dissolved its connection with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and became an independent organization. Towns in Corridor Nine include Shrewsbury, Northborough, Southborough, Westborough, and Grafton. Along with networking and public policy work, Corridor Nine provides regional marketing promotional support for its member towns.

Lakeway Business District Association: The Lakeway Business District Association (LBDA) was formed in January 2010 to unite and serve businesses along Route 9 between the Burns Bridge at Lake Quinsigamond and the Oak Street intersection. This thickly-settled street section of Route 9 differs entirely from the highway section that defines the remainder of the route in Shrewsbury. The association's goals include preserving and enhancing the streetscape improvements made to Route 9 in 2007, and promoting local businesses, including signage and banners in the Lakeway area. The LBDA holds monthly board meetings and annual general meetings and open forums.

495/MetroWest Partnership: In 2003, regional leaders worked with the state, the regional planning agencies, businesses, and local governments to



Source: 495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan*, March 2012*

Figure 3. 495/MetroWest Development Compact Regional Study Area

create the 495/MetroWest Partnership (Figure 3). An advocacy organization for over thirty cities and towns along I-495, from Route 2 (north) to Route 1 (south), the 495/MetroWest Partnership has made transportation, economic development, and water resources its priorities because they are critical issues for virtually all of the member communities. The 495/MetroWest Partnership recently led the effort to create a development compact plan for an area that includes its members plus the City of Worcester. The compact plan process called upon participating communities to identify priority development and preservation areas. For Shrewsbury, the plan identifies ten properties, including Centech Park East and Centech Park North as priority development areas and, not surprisingly, limited water and sewer capacity as the primary constraints against economic growth.

Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT)

Hoping to identify its strengths and weaknesses for economic development and develop a strategic plan, Shrewsbury participated in the Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) program in 2013. The Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Planning at Northeastern University created the EDSAT to help cities and towns understand their strengths and weaknesses for economic development and the steps they can take to become more "business friendly." The EDSAT requires an in-depth survey of many stakeholders: local officials, developers, commercial property owners, business owners, residents, and others concerned about the health of a community's economy. A detailed analysis of the survey results culminates in a summary of the community's economic development advantages, constraints, and shortfalls, as well as its competitiveness with similar communities. This allows a participating town to see how it stacks up against other towns, and what it can do to improve.

The EDSAT for Shrewsbury produced dozens of observations and four key recommendations:[13]

Strengths:

1. Very low rents for manufacturing.
2. Highly educated and skilled workforce.
3. Attractive suburban community.
4. "Moderately" active business association and two regional chambers of commerce.
5. Effective marketing across various jurisdictions and organizations.
6. Large proportion of commercially zoned parcels has five acres or more of developable land.
7. The Town has an active inventory of commercial and industrial spaces.
8. Fast track permitting (Chapter 43D).
9. Low crime rate.
10. Excellent local schools.
11. Single and relatively low tax rate for CIP properties.
12. Aggressive approach to tax delinquencies.
13. Proximity to universities and research facilities.

Weaknesses:

1. Long turnaround for decisions on a site plan review, and associated appeals.[14]
2. Lack of capacity in water and sewer infrastructure, which is restricted by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations for current needs only and not for growth.
3. Town offers no Class A or Class B office space.[15]
4. Lower than average highway access.
5. Lack of handbook for permitting process.
6. Lack of economic development plan.
7. Lack of marketing plan and business partnerships to promote the town.
8. Compared with similar communities:
   a. Limited/no public transit for CIP sites
   b. Higher housing costs
   c. Higher retail and office rents

Priority Recommendations:

1. Collect empirical evidence and business community feedback about timeliness of permit approvals to determine if the town needs to streamline its permitting process.

13 Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, Northeastern University, *EDSAT: Results for the Town of Shrewsbury* (January 2014).

14 While the Town's scoring indicated long turnarounds, local decisions are generally made within a reasonable timeframe and longer periods are the result of factors outside of the Town's control (e.g. state or federal permits).

15 While Class A and Class B office space are currently unavailable in Shrewsbury, Zoning does allow for their development.

2. Work with local businesses and residents to create a comprehensive economic development vision and plan, including identifying business sectors to target.
3. Create a comprehensive marketing plan that enlists existing businesses to shape the brand and image of Shrewsbury.
4. Explore best practices, innovative solutions, and a lobbying agenda to address the infrastructure capacity constraints.

Streamlined Permitting

The expedited permitting law (M.G.L. c. 43D) allows cities and towns that opt into the Chapter 43D program to target areas for development and establish a streamlined, maximum 180-day local permitting process. The program is meant to attract business to a development-friendly environment. Statewide, eighty-six communities have adopted Chapter 43D and designated a combined total of 179 Priority Development Sites (PDS). Shrewsbury has designated two: Centech Park North and Centech Park East. Although Shrewsbury usually makes all permitting decisions in less than 180 days, the PDS designation is supposed to qualify sites for marketing assistance and infrastructure grants from the state.

Employment in Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury's proximity to UMass Medical School in Worcester, the Tufts Veterinary School in Grafton, and life science and research facilities in the Worcester area and MetroWest communities should be an advantage for economic growth. Cluster economies built around specific industries or people are emerging across the state, particularly near colleges and universities and in locations with resources both for the employer and the employee. The cluster of colleges and universities in Worcester as well as Tufts University in Grafton has been a major catalyst for business development in the area. Despite its location, however, Shrewsbury does not have the life science, research, technology, education, and health care jobs that would be expected for a suburb so close to Worcester, where these industries have clustered and generated some spin-off activity.

Location quotients compare employment by industry in two or more geographic areas. The quotient is a ratio of the percentage of an industry's employment in one area to that of a larger comparison (or reference) area. If the location quotient for an industry's employment falls between 0.90 and 1.10, that industry's share of jobs is virtually equal in both places. A location quotient of less than 0.90 identifies an industry that is under-represented in the local economy; one that is more than 1.10 identifies an industry with a disproportionally large percentage of local employment. For planning purposes, location quotients can suggest opportunities for industries to claim a larger share of employment, or indicate the danger of over-dependence on a single industry. Sometimes a high location quotient simply signals unique regional conditions, e.g., hospitality and tourism businesses in seasonal resort areas or the orchards of north-central Massachusetts.

Table 5 shows that in most cases, industries in Shrewsbury tend to provide fewer jobs locally than they do in the Worcester Metro Area or the state as a whole. The construction trades, retail trade, transportation and distribution, and recreation are fairly strong in Shrewsbury, and education and health care jobs are about on par for the region. However, the technology, finance, information, and professional services sectors are conspicuously weak, and these sectors usually provide high-wage employment. Shrewsbury's shortage of jobs in these industries has been an issue for a long time. Building a base of higher-wage employment will take intensive marketing and incentives, and adequate utilities.

Self-Employment

In addition to the 13,219 jobs that comprise Shrewsbury's employment base (Table 5), the Town has approximately 1,500 self-employed residents – people whose work is not included in traditional employment and wage statistics reported by federal and state agencies. Approximately 64 percent are self-employed people working alone, or sole proprietors in professional services, the construction trades,

Small Businesses in the Town Center

Table 5. Location Quotients for Shrewsbury's Employment Base: Snapshot of Strengths and Weaknesses

	Shrewsbury Jobs		Location Quotients	
Industry	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages	State	Worcester Metro Area
Goods-Producing Domain	1,404	$1,150	0.893	0.798
Construction	593	$1,108	**1.106**	**1.159**
Manufacturing	774	$1,200	0.770	0.633
Durable Goods	684	$1,241	1.044	0.821
Nondurable Goods	91	$880	0.260	0.234
Service-Providing Domain	11,815	$878	1.015	1.031
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	5,084	$846	**2.174**	**1.927**
Wholesale Trade	487	$1,460	0.984	0.906
Retail Trade	2,005	$608	**1.439**	**1.334**
Transportation and Warehousing	2,592	$914	**6.564**	**5.019**
Information	156	$1,148	0.424	0.687
Financial Activities	366	$1,224	0.439	0.497
Professional and Business Services	733	$1,406	0.357	0.529
Education and Health Services	3,770	$962	1.021	0.861
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,560	$1,062	1.095	0.935
Leisure and Hospitality	1,139	$329	0.835	0.951
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	256	$286	**1.110**	**1.170**
Accommodation and Food Services	883	$341	0.779	0.902
Other Services	366	$541	0.814	0.866
Total, All Industries	13,219	$907		

Source: RKG Associates, Inc., and Mass. Office of Labor & Workforce Development, 2013.

information, and arts and entertainment industries. Federal census data indicate that the vast majority of self-employed individuals work at home for all or at least a portion of the week. The Town does not currently have any co-work facilities for self-employed individuals and emerging small businesses, but there are at least three life sciences incubators operating in Worcester (Massachusetts Biomedical Initiatives), an incubator that supports medical device development at UMass/Worcester, and an accelerator offering educational programs and services to technology entrepreneurs at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI).[16]

BioReady Shrewsbury

Many of the issues raised in this chapter are intrinsically tied to marketing and public relations of the town. In one of the Master Plan roundtable discussions, residents wanted to promote Shrewsbury as a center for medical innovation. The immediate proximity to the UMass Medical School in Worcester and the Tufts Veterinary School in Grafton provide the institutional anchors that would support such a title. In addition, in 2011 the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council included Shrewsbury on its list of "BioReady©" communities. As of March 2014, there were seventy-six such communities in the Commonwealth. Shrewsbury is "gold"-rated Bio-Ready, indicating that it:

1. Allows biotech laboratory and manufacturing by right.
2. Has identified buildings and/or land sites for biotechnology uses in municipal plans.
3. Has identified priority development sites per Chapter 43D.
4. Has sites or buildings pre-permitted for biotechnology laboratory or has manufacturing activities taking place, or the municipality has existing buildings in which biotech laboratory or manufacturing activities are taking place.

16 ACS 2009-2013 Five-Year Estimates, B24080, B08301; Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, and Massachusetts Association of Business Incubators.

The gold level also indicates that there are additional actions Shrewsbury has not yet taken, such as including land or buildings in the "BioSites" inventory operated by MassEcon. To reach the platinum level, which is currently held by Grafton, Westborough, Marlborough, and Framingham, Shrewsbury would need to:

1. Have the local Board of Health adopt the National Institutes of Health guidelines on rDNA[17] activity as part of its regulations.
2. Include a building or buildings that are already permitted for biotech uses and have 20,000 square feet or more of available space for biotech uses.

   Or Have a shovel-ready pre-permitted site with completed Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) review and municipal water and sewer capacity to meet additional demand.

Business Locator Criteria

Businesses choose locations based on many factors, including consumer market, employee market, access, and the presence of auxiliary services. In a positive economic environment, the issue of tax incentives or government support may actually be the least important factor. Furthermore, the actual real estate conditions or prices are lower in priority than what may commonly be believed. According to the Commonwealth's Chapter 43D Site Evaluation Guide: "Unless the type of site or facility desired is unique in size or other attributes, companies will frequently screen locations initially for labor presence, overall operating costs, transportation access, education resources, and logistic positioning prior to evaluating real estate."[18] It supports this presumption with the following "screening" criteria for site selection:

1. Screen "A": Geographic Preferences
   - Driven by logistics or other business considerations
2. Screen "B": Industry Presence
   - Indicator for determining the presence of certain skills or industry cluster
3. Screen "C" Resource Availability
   - Demographic profile (population, growth rates, education levels, etc.)
   - Transportation access (air, interstate, rail and port depending on operation)
   - Workforce (quantity/quality of available skills)
   - Education and training resources
   - Overall costs (real estate, labor, construction, taxes, power, insurance, etc.)
   - Availability of water, sewer, gas, telecom and electric power
   - Ability to recruit staff to an area (quality of life/cost of housing)
   - The presence of certain suppliers, competitors and/or industry partners
   - Gather examples of available real estate options and lease/purchase costs/terms

Only then are lease/purchase options reviewed, incentives investigated, and a feasibility analysis performed.

Shrewsbury's Advantages for Economic Development

The capacity problems that frustrate Shrewsbury's economic development efforts will not be solved in the short run. However, the Town has many strengths from which to draw, and those strengths should remain central to any steps Shrewsbury takes in marketing, promotions, or a more formal business recruitment program. During development of the Centech Park North master plan in 2008, participants in a focus group for key stakeholders readily identified Shrewsbury's strong suits, and those qualities endure in 2015:

1. Shrewsbury has a favorable reputation. It has great schools and town services, young families, a well-educated labor force, rising levels of household wealth, and the infrastructure to make construction-ready sites.
2. Shrewsbury is a business-friendly town with cooperative town boards and customer-oriented staff.
3. Unlike the vast majority of towns in Massachusetts, Shrewsbury has an economic development and industrial corporation, the SDC. The fact that Shrewsbury was able to amass support for a large land acquisition (Centech Park North), a zoning change, and home rule

17 Recombinant DNA (rDNA) refers to DNA molecules formed in laboratory settings by bringing together different genetic material.
18 Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. Site Evaluation Guide (October 2008).

legislation to create the SDC all in one town meeting speaks volumes about the town's ability to be decisive and efficient.

4. Shrewsbury operates not only a local water and sewer system, but also local electric, phone, cable, and internet utilities with very competitive pricing.
5. Shrewsbury has the lowest property tax rate of any town in the region, and it has been this way for a long time.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal ED1: Create an economic development strategic plan.

Policy ED1.1: Continue to revisit the Town's short and mid-term economic strategies, focusing both on increasing the tax base and building a diverse and durable employment base.

a. Conduct an annual economic development strategic planning process and develop a coherent economic development vision.
b. Enlist participation in strategic planning from local businesses, the business associations that are active in Shrewsbury, and non-profit employers as well.
c. Identify business retention and business attraction priorities.
d. Provide opportunities for businesses and residents to participate in the planning process online.

Policy ED1.2: Reinvigorate the SDC to provide leadership and support for town-wide economic development policy and economic development initiatives. The SDC's responsibilities could include any or all of the following:

a. Take the lead in coordinating an economic development strategic planning process and updating the plan each year (per above).
b. Sponsor education programs for Shrewsbury's small business establishments and self-employed people.
c. Review the existing inventory of commercial and industrial sites, conduct a risk assessment, identify priority parcels that may be appropriate candidates for obtaining site control in order to steer development toward Town-preferred opportunities.
d. Provide business retention and attraction support.
e. Assist the Board of Selectmen and Town staff with marketing and promotions for Shrewsbury as a desirable place to do business (see also, Policy 2.2).
f. Review proposed commercial and industrial site plan and special permit applications and provide comments to approval authorities on project consistency with the strategic plan.

Policy ED1.3: Monitor the town's progress on achieving short- and longer-term economic development goals and objectives.

a. Determine appropriate roles and responsibilities of the SDC, town staff, business associations, or others to track, analyze, and report economic data.
b. Hold periodic (annual) roundtable events to examine the state of Shrewsbury's economy and update goals, and to strengthen town-business relationships by highlighting the importance of economic development for the town's well-being.

Goal ED2: Support economic development activity in Shrewsbury that provides needed services and contributes to the local tax base.

Policy ED2.1: Provide infrastructural support for economic development.

a. Plan for and complete sewer extensions along Route 20.
b. Improve intersection signage and lighting in commercial and industrial districts.
c. Develop consolidated business and way-finding signage for the commercial and industrial districts.
d. Increase wastewater capacity.
e. Continue to work with the MassDEP, Shrewsbury Water Department, and other agencies and organizations to ensure that Shrewsbury has enough water to support economic development (see also, Public Facilities Goal P1).
f. Study the provision of shuttle access to/from business parks, connecting with the Grafton MBTA station, UMass Medical campus, or other locations.

Policy ED2.2: Promote Shrewsbury to the business community as a strong, centrally located, networked, and well-resourced place to do business.

a. Support the growth of a bio-tech/medical products industry, including the creation of a partnership with UMass Medical, and elevating the town's "BioReady" status to platinum level.
b. Develop stronger relationships with UMass Medical School and Tufts Veterinary School, including internship/externship opportunities.
c. Create a marketing campaign directed at firms that conduct business location services.
d. Coordinate with neighboring cities and towns, particularly with other Corridor Nine communities and Worcester, to establish a regional bio-tech or life sciences business cluster environment.

Policy ED2.3: Resolve vacancies and the underdevelopment of commercial and industrial properties.

a. Ensure staffing in the Planning Department is sufficient for economic development planning and operations.
b. Consider flex-zoning to allow for additional uses of part of Centech Park North and other relevant properties.
c. Perform a comprehensive update to local zoning and other regulations to ensure a transparent and efficient regulatory process and reduce or eliminate the need for use variances.
d. Engage commercial and industrial property owners in working collaboratively to attract and secure tenants that provide higher-wage jobs, consistent with the Town's economic development goals.

Goal ED3: Promote economic development strategies that maintain or enhance environmental quality and sustainability.

Policy ED3.1: Promote redevelopment of existing retail and commercial areas into mixed-use retail/office and research and development/industrial centers through zoning, infrastructure planning, and marketing the town.

a. Promote redevelopment of existing retail and service areas in order to upgrade the quality of development and increase the mix of uses.
b. Identify appropriate areas to modify zoning or circulation patterns so as to promote the development of more integrated centers.
c. Work with the Town's legislators and state housing agencies to direct new mixed-income housing developments to residentially zoned land near goods and services.

Policy ED3.2: Support and encourage independent small business as a significant component of Shrewsbury's overall business mix.

a. Continue to audit fees and other regulatory requirements (e.g., parking requirements) that can serve as a burden to small business development.
b. Remove unnecessary barriers to home-based business while maintaining reasonable protections for residential neighborhoods.
c. Ensure zoning regulations allow for development that may include flex-space, shared resources, combined manufacturing and sales of specialty goods, and other characteristics of entrepreneurial activity.
d. Evaluate demand, need for, and feasibility of developing "incubator" facilities to support emerging small businesses and provide co-work spaces for self-employed entrepreneurs.

Public Facilities and Services

Shrewsbury is a well-run town and, as a result, the quality of its public services, including schools, library, emergency services, and general government administration, sets it apart from all other communities. These services impact neighborhoods, businesses, and the fiscal health of the Town. Expectations of residents are high, and there is pressure to sustain a level that may be strained as the Town continues to grow and meet the challenges of dynamic state and federal mandates. The Town is charged with sustaining the services it provides in a cost efficient way. As the need to expand services to accommodate new development or new business growth, the Town will have to prioritize projects and seek alternative funding to help along the way.

The Importance of Public Facilities and Services

Shrewsbury offers its community a wide range of services, which are supported through a variety of mechanisms, including user fees, license fees, various taxes, loans and grants.

Town Hall – Richard D. Carney Municipal Office Building, built in 1966 and expanded in 1997, is home for the Town's administrative offices, including those of the Town Manager, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Assessor, Accounting, Engineering and Planning, Building Inspector, Highway Department, Water and Sewer Department, School Department, and Parks and Recreation Department. Department staff also supports many local boards and commissions.

Electricity and Cable – Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations (SELCO), also located in the municipal office building, provides electric, cable, Internet, and telephone services to the community.

Police – The Police Department has its headquarters on Maple Avenue, adjacent to the municipal office building. Prior to the summer of 2014, staffing was down from its peak in 2008, which impacted delivery of service. Many officers were also assigned to special positions, such as school liaison, traffic issues, elderly affairs, domestic violence, etc. In June 2014, voters passed the Town's first Proposition 2 ½ operational override, which has allowed the department to hire a

Shrewsbury Town Hall

new dispatcher and two sworn officers. These officers entered the police force in the spring of 2015.

Fire and Emergency Response – The Fire Department has three stations: the Headquarters on Church Road, Station 2 on Harrington Avenue, and Station 3 on Centech Boulevard. The Headquarters building opened in 2007. Overall, the department is considered understaffed in relation to the Town's population in order to meet demands for emergency response and cover shifts as well as fire code inspections.

Public Library – The Public Library is located on Main Street in the Town Center. It was constructed in 1903 with additions made in 1922 and 1980. Programming and services at the library are diverse, and range from adult computer classes, English for non-native speakers, book clubs, teen clubs, and story time. The library is used as a resource for research, job searching, and tutoring.

The Public Library is moving forward with repairs, improvements and expansion of its current space. The remodeled library will expand from 25,000 square feet to 38,600 square feet. The new building is designed with current and future usage patterns in mind. The children's area will be tripled in size, with dedicated preschool play area, school aged study space, computer stations and a separate children's program room. There will be improved technologies for both staff and public. More self-serve and automated systems will allow patrons to check out and return their own materials, freeing staff to provide enhanced public service. There will be high speed access for Wi-Fi and library computers, new display and presentation equipment for meeting rooms, collaborative computer workstations and training spaces for technology learning for all ages. Users will enjoy ample amounts of comfortable seating for study, reading and Wi-Fi use, and there will be more computers for public use, with portions dedicated for teens and children. There will be ample community gathering and meeting spaces, available while the library is open and after hours. Enhanced outdoor spaces include a largely expanded children's courtyard, new walkways connecting the library to the town common and much expanded parking capacity, to serve both library and town center needs.

Seniors – The Senior Center is located on Maple Avenue adjacent to the municipal office building. It is home to the Council on the Aging Department and the Village Café, which serves meals provided by the Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc. The Senior Center offers programming, services, and activities for Shrewsbury seniors.

Roadways – The Highway Department maintains the Town's 151 miles of public roadways and 22 miles of public sidewalks, including repairs, cleaning and striping. It also helps with removal of Town-owned trees that fall during storm events.

Drinking Water – The Water Department maintains the Town's water supply and infrastructure. The Town's water supply comes from gravel-packed wells. Water is treated before it is distributed through the 200 miles of water main to over 11,000 service connections, supplying water to approximately 33,000 people.

Wastewater – The Sewer Department maintains the Town's wastewater infrastructure. Wastewater is treated with primary and secondary treatment at the regional Westborough Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Town's infrastructure includes 165 miles of sewer main and 40 pump stations.

Schools – The School Department oversees one preschool program at two sites (one town-owned and one rented), one early childhood center (full and half day kindergarten and first grade overflow classrooms from an overcrowded elementary school), four elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. As of October 1, 2014 there was an all-time high of 6,017 students enrolled in the Shrewsbury school system, pre-K through high school, not including 134 students attending vocational-technical high school and 75 students attending out-of-district special education schools on a tuition basis.

Solid Waste Management - Solid waste and recycling is collected by a private contractor through a Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) program. Residents are required to recycle using blue and green bins for paper and containers. Other materials can be recycled at facilities in Town and around the region, including leaf and yard waste, clothing and textiles, household hazardous materials, cardboard, items containing mercury, and tires. The Health Department has locations available that will pick up these materials from residences or drop-off locations.

Parks – The Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Department is responsible for the Town's recreation programming, maintenance of park facilities, school athletic fields, and operation of the Mountain View Cemetery. More discussion of the facilities and programming supported by the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Department is found in the 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Health – The Shrewsbury Board of Health is a member of the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance, which includes the City of Worcester and the Towns of Holden, Leicester, Millbury, Grafton and West Boylston. The goals of the Alliance focus on regionalizing health department services to provide cost-savings and efficiencies in services and programming and address gaps in capacity at the local level. The Board and department are involved in activities related to public health and the environment, such as disease control, solid waste management and recycling, on-site sewage control, food safety and protection, and nuisances such as noise, dust and odor. They also support policies and programming that promote healthier lifestyles for Shrewsbury residents, such as those that address smoking, obesity, and health disparities as well as community design that encourages more walking and biking.

Public Access Television – Shrewsbury Media Connection provides residents a wide variety of public access television through SELCO on three channels (28, 29 and 30). In 2013, on Channel 28 1,067 shows were aired, of which approximately half were locally produced. On Channel 29 (Educational Access) 123 programs were produced, and on Channel 30 (Government Access), 131 meetings and 44 locally produced programs were aired. As of 2013, SELCO airs public access channels in HD, the first cable system in Massachusetts to do so.

Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services (SYFS) – Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services, Inc. (SYFS), formerly Shrewsbury Community Services, is Shrewsbury's only private, non-profit community counseling and social services agency. Established in 1983, Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services, Inc. serves people of all ages who either live or work in the town of Shrewsbury. SYSF offers professional counseling and support networks, youth development programming and services to meet basic needs such as heating assistance, housing referrals, and advocacy. While it is not a municipal entity, the Town partners with SYFS in meeting local needs and provides municipal funds to the organization, which support approximately 30 percent of its annual budget.

Focus Areas for Public Facilities and Services

Sustaining Public Facilities and Services

In the near future (five to ten years), most municipal buildings will need to be upgraded, or new construction may be required. This is particularly true of the Police Station. The growth of the Town has increased and changed the needs of the department. Additional square footage is needed along with a more functional layout. Other buildings, such as the Beal School, may have out-lived their functionality and their future may involve a transformation into something other than a municipal use. The Public Library is one example of how services can outgrow existing facilities and the Town is moving forward with construction of its expansion in its current location. This requires building local support through such organizations as the Friends of the Shrewsbury Public Library and the Shrewsbury Public Library Foundation to provide enhancement funds for library services and programs.

To understand the condition of municipal facilities, a detailed Facilities Plan can determine the condition of each building and estimated costs for future upgrades, or the need for new construction. Upgrades may be related to building expansions or improving energy efficiency to lower costs. This study can lead to projects for the Capital Improvement Fund over the next five to ten years.

During the Master Plan process, residents expressed general satisfaction with the quality of services provided by the Town; however, overall most departments caution that existing budgets and staffing will not sustain the current level of delivery or meet future demands as the population grows and commercial development increases. Below provides a summary of specific issues that arose during the update process.

Public Safety

Population growth impacts public safety and emergency response resources because staffing and equipment are a factor of population size. As the population grows and development brings in more traffic, the Town is more likely to see increased medical emergency incidences and traffic accidents, which require additional staff to respond and to address additional workloads. At current staffing levels, the Fire and Police Departments

are proportionally too small compared to other similar or like-sized communities.

The demands on public safety and emergency response are further compounded by growing domestic and international terrorism incidents. Both the Fire and Police Departments have taken on additional training and responsibilities to deal with possible shootings, bomb threats and hazardous materials that threaten public health. As a result, for example, the Fire Department demands additional levels of supervision in their ranks (i.e. Deputy Chief, Lieutenants) to support the more "traditional" services the department provides as well as "post-911" needs, including incident management, emergency response, firefighter/citizen safety, and inspection services. A similar assessment could be made of the Police Department. Overall, public safety needs to increase staff to meet existing needs and anticipated residential and commercial growth.

In the near future, the Shrewsbury Police and Fire Departments will need to address replacing the aging emergency communications system. This will include base radios, dispatch centers, transmitters, portable radios, and other supporting infrastructure. The cost for such a project will be substantial and the Town will have to consider diverse funding sources.

Schools

Shrewsbury Public Schools are recognized for their high achievements. The Center for American Progress conducted a national study of over 7,000 K-12 school districts to determine "return on educational investment," and it ranked the Shrewsbury Public Schools among only 1.8 percent in the entire U.S. who received the highest ratings, both overall and when controlling for economic and demographic factors. This is the second time in recent years this study was conducted, and Shrewsbury had similarly strong results both times.

In 2014, *Newsweek* ranked Shrewsbury High School 146th out of 14,454 high schools ranked - the top 1percent - in the U.S., and 12th in Massachusetts. This ranking also included a special distinction for the achievement of low-income students at Shrewsbury High School.

In 2015, *U.S. News & World Report* awarded silver medal status to Shrewsbury High School in its ranking of American high schools, ranking it 710th out of 19,753 high schools nationally (top 3.6 percent) and 34th in Massachusetts.

The Shrewsbury Public Schools also earned the distinction of being named to the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Roll twice, in both 2011 and 2012, for simultaneously providing access to AP courses for a greater number of students while maintaining or improving performance on the AP exams.

Shrewsbury High School

Even with these accolades, in the years leading up to the 2014-2015 school year the School Department faced growing educational demands with limited capacity and resources. Class sizes had become very large (28 to 32 students per class) in all middle school sections, the vast majority of high school sections, and many elementary sections. Additionally, investments in curriculum and technology resources had been minimal. Due to an infusion of funding from the operational override passed in June 2014, a large number of teachers were hired in order to resolve the class size problem, and resources were added to provide better resources for teaching and learning.

Even with increased staff and additional resources, providing adequate funding for public education in Shrewsbury will remain challenging. State funding is expected to remain flat for the next several years. Inflationary pressures and multiple new state and federal educational mandates will also impact funding allocation. There is also the growing need to address students' mental and behavioral health and school safety and security.

Further, current projections indicate that the student population is expected to remain steady overall, but with the high school population increasing from approximately 1,680 to a peak of a little more than 1,800 by 2019. It is projected to follow by a slight decline; however, factors such as potential housing growth through further development (especially dense

projects such as apartment complexes like the current project proposed under Chapter 40B), or significant student in-migration where families with school-aged children move in to homes being vacated by those without, could put significant pressure on existing school building space. There is virtually no slack in the system to absorb any significant increases in the student population.

Long-range educational program planning is complicated further by the district's recent expansion of in-district programming for students with significant learning needs. This allows these students to attend community schools and have their special needs appropriately met. Doing so is more cost-effective than having these students attend specialized out-of-district schools. In-district programming has already put more pressure on school space, and if this population of students continues to grow, the district will not have adequate space to provide this programming within its existing school buildings.

The largest elementary school, the high school, the preschool, and both middle schools have been constructed or renovated/expanded in the past 18 years, and the other elementary schools are in sound condition (although supplemented with modular classrooms to address space needs). That said, the Beal Early Childhood Center is housed in a 1922 building that is nearing the end of its useful life. The School Committee and the Board of Selectmen recently jointly submitted a "statement of interest" to the Massachusetts School Building Authority to ask that the state consider the Beal Early Childhood Center for potential replacement or renovation/addition, which would address not only the age and suitability of this particular building, but also the overall need for additional space at the early childhood and elementary levels. This would address an already overcrowded elementary program, and provide adequate space for special programming (particularly for students with severe disabilities) and for full day kindergarten (which is in high demand from families and, while not yet mandated, is being strongly encouraged by the state government). While it will be important to monitor all school buildings' needs for maintenance and capital investment, the Beal Early Childhood Center is most in need of being addressed.

The School Department has laid out strategic priorities to meet these challenges:

- Engage and challenge all students
- Enhance learning through technology
- Promote health and wellbeing
- Increase value to the community

While they all are supported, the priorities most relevant to the Master Plan are the goals and policies of increasing value to the community.

Roadways

For the Highway Department, sustaining staff and equipment up-keep to maintain existing infrastructure continues to be strained by limited budgets. Sidewalks lack maintenance and are not generally cleared after it snows due to lack of staffing.

Private contractors are used frequently for tasks that used to be done by the department, such as catch basin cleaning and roadway striping; however, there are gaps in these services that need to be filled, preferably with additional municipal staff.

Shrewsbury Municipal Garage

Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations (SELCO)

SELCO is a unique utility service for Shrewsbury. It provides electricity, cable and Internet services to the Town. SELCO electricity rates are some of the lowest in the state and new infrastructure will improve service and reach areas currently undeveloped, specifically Fortune Boulevard, the Allen property and the Route 20 corridor. SELCO recently completed a $7.7 million sub-station on Centech Boulevard to serve the aforementioned area of Town. The substation also significantly improves overall system reliability by providing a connection to a separate transmission line feeding the entire town.

SELCO has approximately 11,000 cable customers. It provides a complete "triple play" product of video, internet, and phone. SELCO, like almost all cable operators, is experiencing a shift in demand for its

SELCO Radio Tower

products. Because the price of video programming is rising dramatically, many consumers are "cutting the cord" and utilizing less expensive streaming services like Hulu and Netflix. While video subscriber counts are decreasing, internet customers continue to increase, albeit at a slower growth rate. In the fall of 2013, SELCO's totals for internet customers exceeded its video customers for the first time. The cable industry is shifting its focus from video to broadband. Because of this shift, SELCO cable will prioritize its capital investment towards broadband over video. SELCO intends to stay ahead of the industry norm in terms of the broadband speed and reliability it provides to its customers. As a result, SELCO must proceed cautiously with significant capital expenses on video enhancements. In 2011, SELCO commissioned a Fiber to the Home (FTTH) study. The cost of replacing the existing system with a state of the art fiber system proved to be too much. Recent advances in technology allow SELCO to maintain its existing plant while at the same time provide broadband download speeds similar to those of a FTTH system. That said, SELCO will continue to monitor FTTH costs as the technology is the best available in the industry.

Unfunded Mandates

Along with sustaining existing services, the Town must also look to meet mandates of the federal and Commonwealth governments, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Phase II permit stormwater requirements and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (MADEP) requirements for drinking water supply management. These mandates will exceed existing staff and financial capacity of the Water and Sewer Department as well as Engineering. Implementation will require departments to undertake additional responsibilities, which may lead to the need for additional staff, and may necessitate new equipment.

Meeting the staffing needs and costs of unfunded mandates is a significant challenge for the Town. Outside funding, such as federal or state grants, may be available in the future. There also may be opportunities for regional collaboration. Shrewsbury has had success in this regard, particularly in addressing public health issues and participation in the Central Massachusetts Stormwater Coalition. The Town will have to consider these new, additional costs in future budgets and the Capital Improvement Fund.

Overall, the Town needs to identify ways to increase its staffing and revenue or services will be cut. The major source of revenue into the Town is fees for services and residential and non-residential taxes, which may have to increase if no other funding can be secured. Increasing non-residential tax base is a key factor, but has challenges, as noted below. Federal and state grant opportunities may arise, but with budget cuts at these levels, it will also impact the amount of resources available to local governments.

There are other strategies the Town can implement to give it the tools to improve its ability to provide services in a more efficient way.

- Increase capacity of electronic recordkeeping across municipal departments to minimize redundancy.
- Review department training needs and costs town-wide; correspond needs with budgets and available space.
- Work with volunteer organizations, but be conscious of their capacity to manage and coordinate maintenance and upkeep.

Supporting Future Growth with Public Infrastructure

In order to increase revenue, the Town must build its non-residential tax base. This requires strategic investments in public services and infrastructure that support this type of development, particularly drinking water and sewer. In Shrewsbury, challenges exist.

Drinking Water

The Town's 2010 Water Management Act (WMA) permit from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) limited water withdrawal from its six groundwater wells to 3.91 million gallons per day (MGD). The wells are located in the northwest area of Town in the Poor Farm Sub-basin of the Blackstone River Basin, and much of the Zone II protection areas for the wells extend into the City of Worcester and the Towns of Boylston and West Boylston.

The terms of the 2010 WMA permit did not provide enough water to Shrewsbury to accommodate the desired level of future growth because of resource limitations. The withdrawal limit was making it impossible for certain types of new business to locate in Shrewsbury. Therefore, the Town requested of MassDEP to increase the withdrawal an additional 1.37 MGD. MassDEP issued a new permit authorizing an additional 0.44 MGD to allow 4.35 MGD. After an extensive appeal of the permit issuance and subsequent mediation, MassDEP issued the Final Modified WMA Permit on July 2, 2015. Therefore, in order to meet with the Town's estimated increase water demands due to future economic development initiatives in the next 20 years, alternative water supply sources continue to be explored.

Though not permitted under the requirements of the Sustainable Water Management Initiative (SWMI), the Final Permit incorporates many of the principles laid out in SWMI requiring the Town to implement offset and mitigation actions that minimize and compensate for impacts of increased water withdrawal in the recharge areas of the wells. The SWMI process states that the permittee must be able to quantify their offset/mitigation measures and provide a gallon-per-gallon replacement. Actions fall into six categories:

- In-stream flow improvement
- Habitat improvement
- Wastewater improvement
- Stormwater/impervious cover
- Water supply management
- Demand management

Overall, this proves to be a challenge for most municipalities that will be requesting additional water withdrawals, including the Town of Shrewsbury. A majority of the Shrewsbury wells' recharge areas are located in Worcester, Boylston and West Boylston, making it improbable that Shrewsbury can mitigate 440,000 gallons of water on its own. The Town simply does not control enough of the land above the aquifer. Regardless, the Town continues to work on developing an approach to meet offset/mitigation requirement through several approaches including water supply management, stormwater infiltration and wastewater management improvements (see below).

Prospect Park Water Storage Tanks

An alternative to increase its water supply is for the Town to find other water supply sources outside of the Blackstone River Basin. The Town recently undertook a study to locate alternative water sources from within the Town, but was unable to identify feasible locations. In the Concord River Basin, the Town has limited property available. There are no parcels large enough to develop a water supply well. A future option could be Prospect Park, but this is not currently viewed as a feasible alternative due to community sentiment.

The Town has had initial conversations with neighboring communities such as the City of Worcester and the Towns of Northborough, Boylston and Grafton to explore the potential of purchasing water from those communities. None of the Towns has adequate excess water to meet the Town's needs. However, the City of Worcester potentially has adequate capacity available for purchasing a portion or all of the Town's current

and future needs. However this option has political, environmental, and logistic obstacles that will continue to be discussed with Worcester officials.

Another option is to obtain water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). While the Town is not adjacent to the MWRA service area, the feasibility of connecting to the MWRA has been and will continue to be considered. This would have to occur by constructing a connection from the MWRA water plant in Marlborough, constructing a dedicated transmission main through Northborough to Shrewsbury, or taking raw water directly from the Wachusett Reservoir via the existing City of Worcester's intake located in West Boylston and constructing a dedicated transmission main through Boylston to Shrewsbury.

The issues that present themselves with the MWRA options are water treatment and cost of infrastructure improvements from the source to the Town. In addition, there is a buy-in fee to the MWRA based upon the requested volume. Preliminary estimates of the MWRA costs, including the buy-in, infrastructure improvements, and treat plant construction start at $30 million dollars. This estimate does not include improvements that would be required within the Town such as booster pumps, additional chemical treatment, existing pump station re-configurations, etc. From that point, there would be additional costs for a treatment system to accommodate a water supply with different characteristics with different treatment requirements prior to consumption.

Increasing water availability in Shrewsbury is a long-term issue that requires the Town to be creative and diligent. New opportunities will continue to present themselves, and the Town needs to be ready to act. It also needs to be persistent with MassDEP in quantifying offset and mitigation actions, particularly as the Commonwealth develops standards for stormwater infiltration and other strategies that are more advantageous for the Town to pursue in meeting these requirements.

Sewer

The Town has municipal sewers serving approximately 85 percent of the Town with a majority of the sewage discharging to the wastewater treatment plant in Westborough. A very small portion of Town discharges to the City of Worcester sewer system. The areas that drain to Worcester are the industrial buildings located on Bowditch Drive and several residential dwellings on Elk Court.

The Westborough treatment plant was recently ungraded for improved phosphorous removal with no increase in additional capacity provided. MADEP and EPA have determined that the Westborough plant will not be given additional capacity in the near future. In addition, as each permit cycle (five year intervals) is renewed, additional final treatment levels are placed on the plant such as nitrogen, phosphorous, metals, etc.

The Town started installing municipal sewers in the 1960s and currently maintains over 165 miles of various sized sanitary sewer mains. As it grew and the demand for sanitary sewers increased, the Town and private developers extended the sewers to the farther reaches of the Town. Due to the topography of Town and the timing for when sewers were extended, the Town currently maintains 40 municipally owned pump stations.

Starting in 2001 and completed in 2007, the Town prepared a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan/Environmental Impact Report (CWMP). As a result of the plan and the latest improvements to the Westborough treatment plant, the Town was required to be under a sewer moratorium. Sewer extensions are not allowed except within the needs areas identified in the CWMP: along the Route 20 corridor and the northern side of Lake Quinsigamond (Oakland Avenue area).

As noted, the capacity of the Westborough treatment plant will not be increasing in the near future; therefore, in order to accommodate future needs, the current amount of flow into to the Westborough treatment plant needs to be reduced. Infiltration and inflow (I/I) is a term used to describe flow into a treatment system that may not necessarily be wastewater, such as rainfall and groundwater. Some I/I are unavoidable, but excessive flow can cause unnecessary volumes of flow through the treatment system, resulting in health and environmental risks and reducing the system's overall capacity. Beginning in 2009 the Town has made a conscious effort in eliminating I/I from entering the sewer system. The Town prepared a 10-year schedule and has appropriated funds at each of the last several Annual Town Meetings for I/I investigations and improvement projects. The Town retained a consultant to assist in the investigations, design document, and inspections.

Opening up capacity at the Westborough treatment plan is important in order to facilitate areas identified for future economic development activity, particularly industrial uses along Route 20 and Route 9. Both of

these areas lack connections to sewer infrastructure. One potential long term approach to address this issue is on-going and includes working with the City of Worcester and Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District, of which Shrewsbury is a member. Worcester is receiving funding and is continuing to secure additional funding to extend their sewer infrastructure along Route 20 from the treatment plant located in Millbury. This opens a potential opportunity for the Town to connect to Worcester's wastewater system.

In addition to the potential City of Worcester connection, the Town continuously looks at other potential options for sewage disposal within the Town limits and with other surrounding Towns. These options appear to be limited and not promising, but all options continue to be explored.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal P1: Provide functional, sustainable and efficient public services and facilities.

Policy P1.1: Provide adequate water, sewer, electric and communications infrastructure in order to promote Shrewsbury's land use objectives.

a. Review existing bylaws to ensure that aquifer recharge areas are protected. Work with neighboring communities to make certain portions of the aquifer areas within their jurisdiction are meeting Shrewsbury drinking water quality objectives.
b. Continue to investigate and evaluate alternatives to increase the Town's potential water supply to meet SWMI requirements.
c. Monitor new development to ensure that Shrewsbury's residences and business have sufficient water for their needs, but do not exceed the capacity of the local aquifer to supply water.
d. Continue to provide reliable service to areas that are currently serviced with water and sewer.
e. Expand sewer service only where it is required to mitigate environmental problems or promote land use objectives.
f. Monitor and update the Town's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan/Environmental Impact Report as needed to meet water quality objectives.
g. Continue to upgrade electric and communication infrastructure to provide Shrewsbury residences and businesses with high quality service with current technology.
h. Stay engaged with state and federal regulatory environmental requirements; monitor unfunded mandates and the restrictions that may result from decisions around these requirements.

Policy P1.2: Continue the school district's reputation for excellence and recognize its value to the community at large.

a. Monitor the adequacy of school buildings and provide expansions, renovations, or new facilities when necessary.
b. Ensure that the highest educational standards are maintained.
c. Support the community's long-range academic program needs.
d. Establish partnerships with municipal departments, boards and commissions to meet student community volunteer objectives.

Policy P1.3: Ensure that public services and facilities adapt as the population grows, demands increase and community needs change.

a. Maintain an updated long-range capital improvement plan, schedule and budget to ensure the timely and fiscally responsible provision of new Town facilities and capital projects.
b. Ensure that there will be sufficient town land for the construction or expansion of public facilities, and investigate acquiring additional properties as necessary.
c. Increase capacity of electronic recordkeeping across municipal departments to minimize redundancy.
d. Build capacity of support organizations to provide enhancement funds for municipal services and programs as appropriate.
e. Identify additional staffing and equipment needs to maintain existing municipal services and ensure the health, safety and welfare of the community. Evaluate alternatives for funding (tax structure, grants, etc.) to support current and future needs.

Housing

The Importance of Housing

Shrewsbury is a desirable suburb of Worcester with a housing mix that distinguishes it from most of its neighbors. It has a variety of neighborhoods ranging from older, moderately dense residential areas near the Town Center to new, upscale subdivisions scattered throughout the north and south sides of Town. Shrewsbury residents have convenient access to jobs, health care, schools, and goods and services in the region's largest cities and suburban employment centers. These amenities help to explain its appeal to families.

Communities influence the make-up of their population by the decisions they make to control housing growth, and in many ways this can be seen in Shrewsbury. Though it offers more housing options than a majority of its suburban neighbors, Shrewsbury's housing inventory is dominated by detached single-family homes on relatively small lots. Its zoning places very few barriers in the way of residential development, and as a result the Town has absorbed rapid growth over the past 30 years. Subdivisions with "loops and lollipops" street patterns exist all over Town. They appeal to families looking for safe roads with very little traffic. Despite the drawbacks associated with cul-de-sac streets (poor circulation, excess pavement, etc.), families with children like them and so do developers. In Shrewsbury, they seem to reinforce a sense of neighborhood identity – a characteristic many residents say they appreciate.

Though Shrewsbury's open land supply may be dwindling, the demand for housing is not. The fact that people want to live in Shrewsbury is both an opportunity and a challenge. As easily developable land disappears and buildable lots become scarce, pressure will continue to mount on housing that traditionally offered a pathway to homeownership in Shrewsbury: the inventory of older, modest homes, most of which date to the interwar era and the 1950s. That pressure will be felt in major expansion/alteration and teardown/rebuild projects, as can already be seen in neighborhoods such as Edgemere. In addition, despite Shrewsbury's cooperative relationship with developers and creativity, the Town still has a "deficit" under Chapter 40B,[19] the state law that supersedes local zoning for construction of affordable and mixed-income housing. Finally, like most towns, Shrewsbury will face complex housing policy questions about housing suitability and price appropriateness as its population continues to age.

In census terms, **household** *means all of the people – related or unrelated – who live in a housing unit. By contrast, family means two people or more related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.*

Home near the Town Center

Focus Areas for Housing

Changing Population, Changing Expectations, Changing Needs

Population and Household Growth

In 2001, Shrewsbury's Town officials were taken by surprise when they received the first set of population statistics from Census 2000. According to the Census Bureau, 31,640 people lived in Shrewsbury as of April 1, 2000 – a 31 percent increase since 1990 – yet as late as 1998, the Census Bureau had placed Shrewsbury's population estimate at just under 28,000.[20] The amount of housing and population growth occurring in Central Massachusetts at the time had escaped many people, including demographers both at the Census Bureau and the Massachusetts State Data Center at UMass. Shrewsbury, Westborough, and nearby

19 Chapter 40B is a state statute, which enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve affordable housing developments under flexible rules if at least 20-25 percent of the units have long-term affordability restrictions. http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/40b-plan/.

20 Massachusetts State Data Center, "Population of Massachusetts Cities, Towns & Counties: Census Counts and Estimates, 1930-1998" (June 30, 1999).

Table 6. Population Growth, Shrewsbury and Region: 1980-2010

Geography	1980	1990	% Change 80-90	2000	% Change 90-00	2010	% Change 00-10	% Change 80-10
Boylston	3,470	3,517	1.4%	4,008	14.0%	4,355	8.7%	25.5%
Grafton	11,238	13,035	16.0%	14,894	14.3%	17,765	19.3%	58.1%
Northborough	10,568	11,929	12.9%	14,013	17.5%	14,155	1.0%	33.9%
SHREWSBURY	22,674	24,146	6.5%	31,640	31.0%	35,608	12.5%	57.0%
West Boylston	6,204	6,611	6.6%	7,481	13.2%	7,669	2.5%	23.6%
Westborough	14,480	14,133	-2.4%	17,997	27.3%	18,272	1.5%	26.2%
Worcester	161,799	169,759	4.9%	172,648	1.7%	181,045	4.9%	11.9%
Worcester County	646,352	709,705	9.8%	749,973	5.7%	798,552	6.5%	23.5%
Massachusetts	5,737,037	6,016,425	4.9%	6,349,097	5.5%	6,547,629	3.1%	14.1%

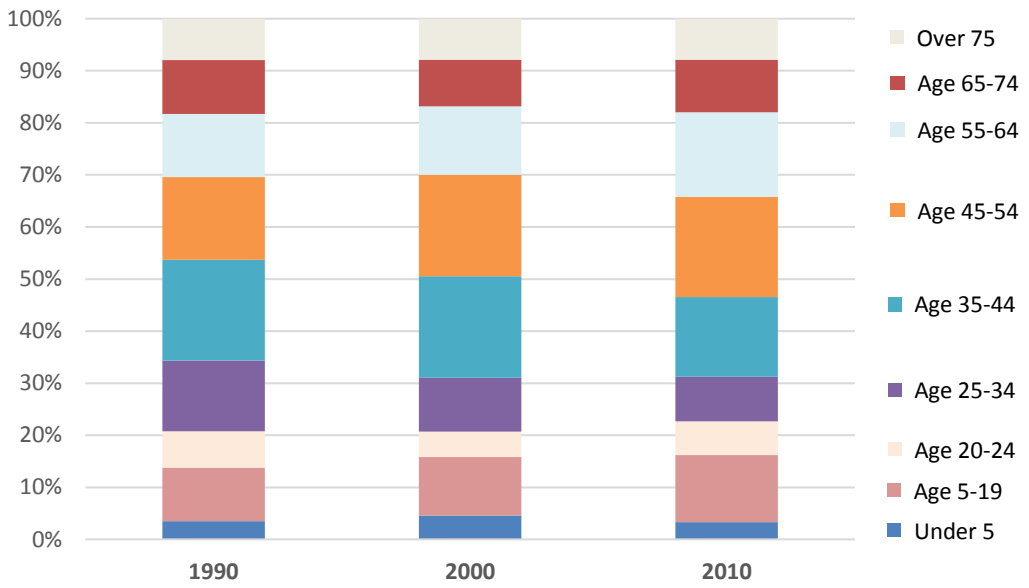
Source: State Data Center, Population of Massachusetts Cities, Towns, and Counties, 1930-2010, and RKG Associates.

Southborough were among the fastest growing towns in Massachusetts during the 1990s (Table 6).

Not surprisingly, the 31 percent growth rate Shrewsbury experienced between 1990 and 2000 did not recur in the first decade of the new millennium. By Census 2010, Shrewsbury's population had increased to 35,608, or a 12.5 percent ten-year growth rate: high for the region, but a more manageable pace for the Town and its public schools. Nevertheless, population counts alone do not tell the whole story about the changes that take place in a community as new people arrive, others leave, and yesterday's generation of children become tomorrow's households. In fact, decennial population growth rates contradict the more complex and interesting demographic changes that have taken place in Shrewsbury and the larger Boston-Worcester metro area over the past few decades.

Ever since the end of the so-called "Baby Boom" era (1946-1964), American household sizes have slowly declined and household types have changed as well, yet the average size of single-family homes has increased. In general, the number of children per family has decreased, the number of one-parent families has increased, and the number of non-family households – mainly single people living alone – has also increased. These trends coincide with at least two conditions that have a direct impact on housing policy: household formation rates that exceed population growth rates, and the gradual "graying" of the population, such that older households (55 and over) and retirees (65 and

Figure 4. Population Age in Shrewsbury: 1990-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 7. Household and Family Trends

Total Households					
Geography	1990	2000	% Change	2010	% Change
Boylston	1,330	1,573	18.3%	1,698	7.9%
Grafton	4,799	5,694	18.6%	6,892	21.0%
Northborough	4,058	4,906	20.9%	5,110	4.2%
Shrewsbury	9,302	12,366	32.9%	13,424	8.6%
West Boylston	2,214	2,413	9.0%	2,616	8.4%
Westborough	5,392	6,534	21.2%	6,924	6.0%
Worcester	63,884	67,028	4.9%	68,613	2.4%
Worcester County	260,153	283,927	9.1%	303,080	6.7%
Massachusetts	2,247,110	2,443,580	8.7%	2,547,075	4.2%
Family Households					
Geography	1990	2000	% Change	2010	% Change
Boylston	999	1,141	14.2%	1,231	7.9%
Grafton	3,575	3,952	10.5%	4,736	19.8%
Northborough	3,360	3,866	15.1%	3,892	0.7%
Shrewsbury	6,629	8,689	31.1%	9,494	9.3%
West Boylston	1,700	1,746	2.7%	1,817	4.1%
Westborough	3,629	4,520	24.6%	4,763	5.4%
Worcester	40,433	39,228	-3.0%	39,987	1.9%
Worcester County	186,020	192,423	3.4%	202,602	5.3%
Massachusetts	1,525,198	1,576,696	3.4%	1,603,591	1.7%

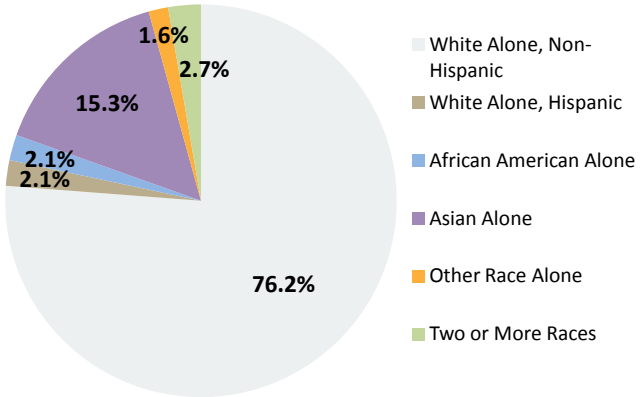
Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, SF3; Census 2000, DP1; Census 2010, DP1; and RKG Associates

over) make up larger shares of all households today than at any point in the recent past. Households, not population, generate demand for housing.

In Massachusetts, Worcester County, and most of the communities around Shrewsbury, the rates of population growth and family household growth have lagged behind total household growth (Table 7). However, the situation in Shrewsbury is different. The 1990-2000 rates of household and population growth in Shrewsbury are almost the same, and in 2010, population growth actually outpaced household growth. These conditions suggest that Shrewsbury is attracting somewhat larger households – primarily families – and this is largely born out in population age trends. Like other communities, Shrewsbury has gained many retirees, but it also has experienced significant growth among middle-age householders: typically people with school-age children (Figure 4).

Local realtors and others knowledgeable about housing in Central Massachusetts say the Town's excellent schools and traditionally reasonable home prices make Shrewsbury very appealing to families. They report that people will consider longer commutes (e.g., to employment centers closer to Boston) if doing so gives them a spacious home in a safe, family-oriented Town with a well-respected school district: all conditions that apply to Shrewsbury. Live-and-work statistics from the Census Bureau shed light on these kinds of choices, for while just over half of Shrewsbury's residents work in or right around Worcester, about 20 percent commute to Eastern Massachusetts destinations between Route 495 and Boston.[21] In addition, job growth in the biotech, health care, and education sectors in the Worcester metro area means the region has more to offer today than 20 years ago in terms of higher-wage employment. To underscore the inseparable ties between housing and economic development, the region's success in these sectors has contributed to educational, ethnic, income, and migration changes in Shrewsbury's labor force and by

Figure 5. Population by Race and Ethnicity



Sources: U.S. Census 2010, RKG Associates

21 U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Residence MCD/County to Workplace MCD/County Flows for the United States and Puerto Rico Sorted by Residence Geography: 2006-2010," County-to-County Commuting Flows: 2006-2010, *Commuting: Journey to Work*.

143 North Quinsigamond Avenue

extension, its households. Over time, household wealth in Shrewsbury has increased significantly, and so have housing costs. Together, all of these changes affect the expectations that people have about services the Town should provide, especially the schools.

Geographic Mobility

Nationally, about 85 percent of the population 1 year or older has lived in the same place for at least the past twelve months, and most newcomers are people relocating within the same county. People move for jobs, education, health, and other reasons. For the most part, however, the U.S. population does not stray very far from home. Shrewsbury's experience is similar to the nation's, but there are some noteworthy exceptions. Compared with most of the surrounding communities, Shrewsbury is somewhat more likely to attract people moving from other states in the U.S. and locations abroad, and less likely to draw new residents from other parts of Worcester County. Both Shrewsbury and Westborough have attracted regionally significant shares of people moving from foreign countries.

Education, Race and Culture

Education levels have increased in most parts of the U.S. since the 1960s, and the same can be said about Shrewsbury. Today, over half the Town's residents 25 and over have completed a four-year college degree or graduate school, up from 46 percent a decade ago and from 34 percent twenty years ago. In addition, more than 2,000 Shrewsbury residents currently attend college or graduate school (roughly 500 more than a decade ago). The rising levels of educational attainment in Shrewsbury go hand-in-hand with dramatic increases in home prices and population growth among two groups (which partially overlap): people 35 to 54 years, and Asian Indian immigrants, most of whom have moved to the U.S. since 2000. The foreign-born Indian population represents half of Shrewsbury's 4,400 Asian immigrants and 30 percent of all foreign-born people living in the Town today.[22]

According to the Census Bureau, the foreign-born population from India is generally the most well educated of all immigrant groups in the U.S., with about 74 percent of its 25-and-over population holding at least a four-year degree. The Asian Indian community's labor force participation rate and median earnings exceed those of other immigrant groups, and the overwhelming majority of its workers have science, engineering, technology, or management jobs.[23] A spokesperson for the India Society of Worcester says the Worcester metro area's colleges and science-oriented employment base play a significant role in attracting Asian Indians to the region. The excellent reputation of Shrewsbury's public schools makes the Town very attractive to Indian families – many of whom are younger, on average, than their American neighbors. Due to the importance of education for their children, Asian Indian families took pride in promoting Shrewsbury's recent override of Proposition 2 ½ (much of which concerned funding for the schools) and debt exclusion for a new $23 million public library.[24] There are other indicators in Shrewsbury of the high value that international newcomers place on education. For example, Shrewsbury is also home to the first accredited Islamic school in the state, Al-Hamra Academy.

Household Wealth

The in-migration of new, educated young families over the past several years has had a significant impact on Shrewsbury's economic profile. Estimates from the 2009-2013 American Community Survey place Shrewsbury's state rank for median household income at 83 out of 351 cities and towns: up from 100 in 2000 and 116 in 1990. In general, the economic position of Shrewsbury households is quite high. Still, the income growth that has occurred in Shrewsbury tends to be concentrated in the Town's younger married-couple households, and there are many people in Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury's state rank for median household income is currently 83 out of 351 cities and towns: up from 100 in 2000 and 116 in 1990.

22 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey, "B05006: Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population."
23 U.S. Census Bureau, "The Foreign-Born Population in the United States" (undated) and "The Foreign Born from Asia: 2011," *American Community Survey Briefs* (October 2012): 7.
24 Ashish Cowlagi, India Society of Worcester, Interview (March 23, 2015).

Table 8. Median Income by Household Type (Estimated, 2013)

Geography	Families (Total)	Married Couples with Children	Single Parent Families: Female Head of Household	Single Parent Families: Male Head of Household	Nonfamily Households (Total)	Elderly Women Living Alone
Boylston	$124,653	$178,125	$57,885	-	$53,158	$22,852
Grafton	$109,515	$135,739	$41,118	$40,893	$44,175	$16,683
Northborough	$124,128	$133,345	$57,386	$91,458	$38,953	$22,813
Shrewsbury	$107,955	$135,183	$34,847	$77,621	$40,376	$19,703
West Boylston	$126,902	$141,250	$51,382	-	$61,682	$30,136
Westborough	$87,569	$113,156	$70,592	$67,917	$46,607	$35,172
Worcester	$57,704	$76,798	$21,329	$30,758	$30,922	$16,250
Worcester County	$81,519	$106,117	$28,311	$46,042	$34,334	$18,749
Massachusetts	$84,900	$113,187	$28,116	$44,880	$38,862	$20,305

Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2009-2013, and RKG Associates

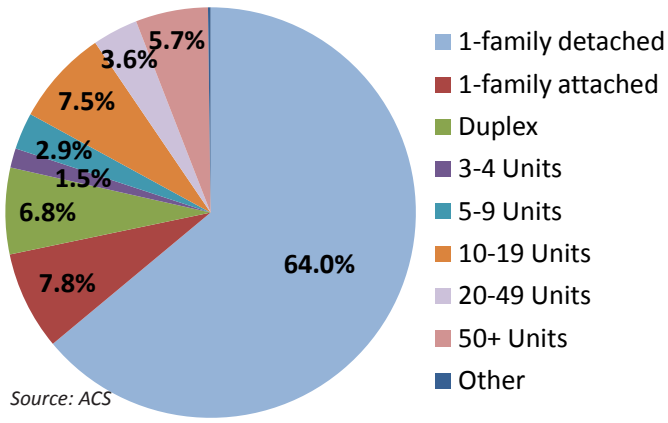
with much lower incomes. For example, 39.3 percent of single women with children and 39.4 percent of householders 65 years and over have incomes below $35,000 a year.[25] The median family income of single women with children is only 32 percent of the median income of all families, and the median income of retirees with fixed incomes is just 25 percent of median family income.[26] These and other income differences make it difficult for residents to reach agreement about municipal and school spending priorities.

Housing Inventory

Shrewsbury's housing inventory increased about eight percent between 2000 and 2013.[27] Today, the Town has approximately 13,700 housing units, 63 percent of which are detached single-family homes. Shrewsbury has a wider range of housing types than most of the surrounding communities because the Town has zoned for housing diversity for a long time. In addition to small post-war single-family homes in neighborhoods near the center of Town, Shrewsbury's townhouse-style units and duplexes have traditionally offered pathways to homeownership.

Though it is mainly a community of homeowners, Shrewsbury has quite a bit of rental housing, too. Approximately 28 percent of Shrewsbury households rent the unit they occupy, and for the most part rental units in Shrewsbury exist in multi-family developments.[28]

Figure 6. Shrewsbury's Housing Mix



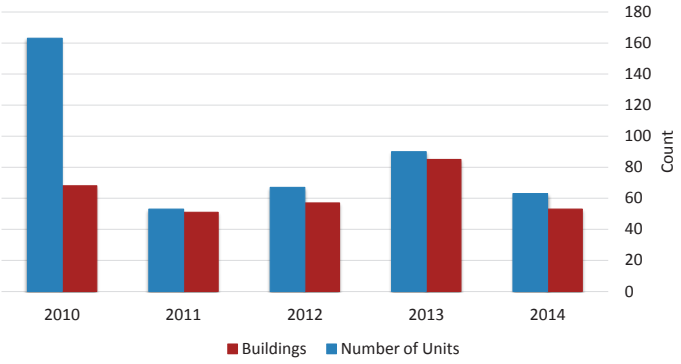
Source: ACS

Housing Market

Although Shrewsbury is a maturely developed suburb, it continues to absorb housing growth. The Town regulates housing development in nine residential zoning districts, most of which favor single-family or two-family home development (Figure 6). In addition, Shrewsbury also has three zoning districts for multifamily development and two overlay districts for mixed residential and commercial uses. While the land supply is diminishing, Shrewsbury has a remarkably small minimum lot area requirement; the largest single-family house lot requirement is only 20,000 square feet (The exception is the Glavin Center in the Rural AA District, where the minimum lot is 40,000 square feet. However, the Glavin Center is unlikely to ever be developed as large single-family house lots.) As a result, residential development continues, but often on constrained sites because for the most part, the best upland is already developed. As shown in Figure 7, the Town has issued building permits for approximately 436 new housing units since 2010, mainly single-family

25 2006-2010 5-Year American Community Survey, B19131, B19049.
26 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey, B11010, B19126.
27 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey, 25024, and Census 2000, Summary File 1, H1.
28 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey, 25003, 25032.

Figure 7. Residential Building Permits (2010-2014)



Source: Shrewsbury Annual Town Reports

and two-family dwellings and one multifamily rental development (Madison Place).[29]

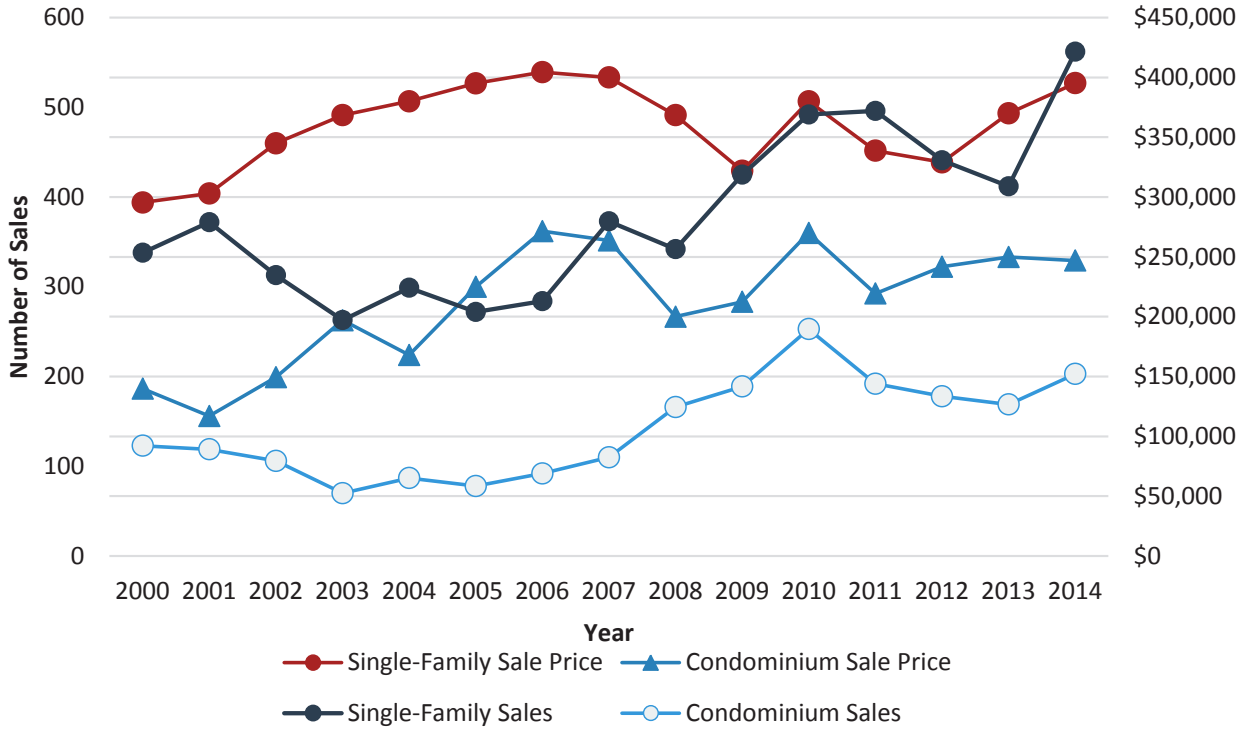
New construction of single-family residences still dominates the housing pipeline in Shrewsbury (Figure 5), but the Town has begun to witness market interest in other opportunities, including mixed-use development. After years of trying to work with the owner of the former "Spags" property on Route 9, Shrewsbury learned that a developer planned to acquire the site (about 21 acres) and create a mixed-use project substantially as envisioned when Town Meeting established the Lakeway Overlay District in 2004. If built as planned by the developer, Lakeway Commons on Route 9 will provide 250 new apartments and thirteen townhouses in Shrewsbury. Twenty-seven of the units would be affordably priced for lower-income households. A nearby project known as The Grove would transform the former Spags warehouse into a large mixed-use project with retail, office, and restaurant space, a fitness center, 136 apartments, and two single-family homes. There is considerable interest in developing multifamily housing in Shrewsbury, as evidenced by recent proposals to build mixed-income housing.

Shrewsbury was not immune to the effects of the "Great Recession" and associated foreclosure crisis. Its housing market is strong, and as Figure 7 shows, single-family home sale prices have largely recovered. At the peak of the recession, Shrewsbury witnessed a significant uptick in foreclosure petitions and auctions, with almost one single-family foreclosure for every four single-family homes sold in conventional arm's length transactions in 2010.[30] Today, housing sale prices are up again, having almost recaptured pre-recession conditions. In Shrewsbury and most Eastern

29 Town of Shrewsbury, *Annual Town Reports* 2009-2013, and Bureau of the Census, Building Permits Survey Program, Town of Shrewsbury, 2014.

30 The Warren Group, Foreclosure Stats, 2015.

Figure 8. Trends in Housing Sales



Source: The Warren Group, April 2015

Table 9. Owner-Occupied Housing Values and Household Incomes

	Median Housing Value (Estimated)			Median Household Income		
Geography	Census 2000	ACS 2013	Change	Census 2000	ACS 2013	Change
Boylston	$178,700	$348,900	95.2%	$67,703	$97,938	44.7%
Grafton	$183,500	$337,000	83.7%	$56,020	$87,077	55.4%
Northborough	$228,300	$368,300	61.3%	$79,781	$108,415	35.9%
Shrewsbury	$195,500	$363,400	85.9%	$64,237	$92,132	43.4%
Westborough	$262,200	$397,300	51.5%	$73,418	$100,905	37.4%
West Boylston	$155,100	$272,800	75.9%	$53,777	$72,026	33.9%
Worcester	$119,600	$216,000	80.6%	$35,623	$45,932	28.9%
Worcester County	$146,000	$259,200	77.5%	$47,874	$65,223	36.2%
Massachusetts	$185,700	$330,100	77.8%	$54,077	$66,866	23.6%

Sources: Census 2000, American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2009-2013, and RKG Associates

Massachusetts suburbs, the condominium market remains "soft," but it has begun to improve.

Over time, housing growth in Shrewsbury has been attended by dramatic increases in home values. For example, Shrewsbury's housing values rose twice as fast as household incomes between 2000 and 2013 (Figure 8). The trend toward more valuable homes goes hand-in-hand with the production of larger houses. Though not quite as large as the homes in Westborough, new housing units in Shrewsbury are much larger than the units built 25 to 30 years ago. Market demand for large homes has triggered many additions and alterations of existing housing, too, and demolition of older units to make way for new stock. Over time, the enlargement of older housing stock is likely to create some neighborhood tension in Shrewsbury, as it has in suburbs close to Boston. The renovated or reconstructed homes usually dwarf the houses around them. Since Shrewsbury has evolved with so many small single-family house lots, the eventual teardown and "mansionization" of once-modest houses can have a significant physical and visual impact on abutters.

One example of where teardown-and-rebuild has begun to affect neighborhood character is Edgemere, located in the southern part of town around Lake Quinsigamond and along Route 20. Comprised of modest lakeside cottages built during the interwar years, the Edgemere area is slowly transforming into a community of modern, more expensive single-family homes. Real estate sources say that Edgemere housing values have appreciated slightly faster than in the town as a whole, and this is largely because major renovations of existing homes and teardown/rebuild projects are making the neighborhood more attractive to new homebuyers. While small, relatively affordable homes can still be found around the southern side of the lake, in many cases the house next door is more than twice the size (floor area) and value. Another part of town that is becoming more expensive due to renovations and teardown/rebuild projects is North Street. Buyers priced out of Shrewsbury's upscale neighborhoods can still find a fairly affordable house on small side streets like Karen Avenue and Birch Lane. However, improvements to the older ranch-style homes and small Capes in these neighborhoods have triggered growth in home values. In these and other locations, replacement houses built in the past five years have begun to dominate the built environment and drive up the asking prices of houses for sale.

The suburban Worcester apartment inventory is fairly limited because so many towns either prohibit or place many constraints on multifamily development, or they lack the infrastructure to support higher-density housing. The situation in Shrewsbury is different. Unlike most towns in the region, Shrewsbury has provided for multi-family housing development along and near Route 9 for a long time. Shrewsbury also has several mixed-income rental developments, so the Town offers housing choices that do not exist or are in short supply in other parts of the region. Rents vary quite

Affordable housing *means a monthly housing cost that does not exceed 30 percent of a lower-income household's monthly gross income. For homeowners, "monthly housing cost" includes a mortgage payment, property taxes and house insurance, while for tenants it includes monthly rent and basic utilities. When lower-income households have to spend more than 30 percent of their monthly gross income on housing, they are considered housing cost burdened.*

a bit based on the age of the units and the amenities offered to residents, so even in the inventory of market-rate apartments there is a range of price points. For example, at the Town's newest rental development, Madison Place, the one- and two-bedroom asking rents range from $1,475 to $1,850 per month, but the inventory-wide range of rents spans from a low of $999 to a high of $2,505. In general, Worcester area market rents fall well below rents closer to Boston, but renter household incomes are lower, too.

Housing Affordability

Most communities have some modestly priced housing, such as older single-family homes that are less valuable than new homes, or apartments that can be leased for relatively low monthly rents. This type of affordable housing often stays affordable as long as the market will allow. Under Chapter 40B, a Massachusetts law that went into effect in 1969, all communities are supposed to have housing that is affordable to low-income households and remains affordable even under robust market conditions. These units remain affordable because their resale prices and rents are governed by a deed restriction that lasts for many years, if not in perpetuity. Both types of affordable housing (market rate and deed restricted) meet a variety of housing needs and both are important. The crucial difference is that the market determines the price of unrestricted affordable units while a recorded legal instrument determines the price of deed restricted units. There are other differences, too. For example, any household - regardless of income - may purchase or rent an unrestricted affordable unit, but only a low- or moderate-income household is eligible to purchase or rent a deed restricted unit.

When less than 10 percent of a community's housing consists of deed restricted affordable units, G.L. c. 40B, Sections 20-23 ("Chapter 40B") authorizes the Zoning Board of Appeals to grant a comprehensive permit to qualified affordable housing developers.[31] The 10 percent minimum is based on the total number of year-round housing units reported in the most recent decennial census. As of 2015, Shrewsbury has 861 affordable units (Table 10), or 6.2 percent of the Town's year-round housing stock. Many of the existing units are owned and managed by the Shrewsbury Housing Authority, an organization the Town has worked with closely and successfully for many years.

Chapter 40B supersedes zoning and other local regulations that make it too expensive to build low- and moderate-income housing. A comprehensive permit is a type of unified permit: a single permit that replaces the approvals otherwise required from separate city or Town permitting authorities. By consolidating the

31 A qualified developer under Chapter 40B has to meet three basic conditions: it must have site control (usually in the form of a purchase and sale agreement), it must be a public agency, a non-profit housing corporation, or a limited dividend organization; and it must have a project eligibility determination (sometimes called a site approval letter) from a recognized housing subsidy program. A developer entity that does not meet all three of these requirements is ineligible to apply for a comprehensive permit.

Table 10. Subsidized Housing Inventory in Shrewsbury

Name	Location	Type	SHI Units	Affordability Expires
Shrewsbury Towers	36 North Quinsigamond Ave.	Rental	99	Perpetuity
Shrewsbury Housing Authority	Francis Ave.	Rental	100	Perpetuity
Shrewsbury Housing Authority	Elizabeth Street	Rental	36	Perpetuity
Shrewsbury Housing Authority	South Street	Rental	4	Perpetuity
Shrewsbury Housing Authority	Scattered Sites	Rental	13	Perpetuity
Town Arbor	100 Arbor Drive	Rental	302	Perpetuity
DDS Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	24	N/A
DMH Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	8	N/A
Avalon Shrewsbury	870 Hartford Turnpike	Rental	251	Perpetuity
Madison Place	100-900 Madison Place	Rental	15	Perpetuity
Lakeshore Development	N. Quinsigamond Ave.	Rental	1	Perpetuity
Ridgeland Road	Ridgeland Road	Rental	5	Perpetuity
Grove Meadow Farms	Lake Street	Ownership	2	Perpetuity
Total SHI Units			**860**	

approval powers of multiple Town boards, the state legislature hoped to provide more low-income housing options in suburbs and small towns. Under Chapter 40B, the Zoning Board of Appeals may approve, conditionally approve, or deny a comprehensive permit, but in communities that do not meet the 10 percent minimum, developers may appeal to the state Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). Although comprehensive permits may still be granted after a Town achieves the 10 percent minimum, the HAC no longer has authority to overturn a local board's decision.

Shrewsbury has worked for years to provide decent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents who cannot afford to buy or rent market-rate units. Though Shrewsbury has been fairly affordable compared with its wealthier neighbors, home prices in Shrewsbury have increased dramatically. Residents say that most young adults who grew up in Shrewsbury cannot make the choice to remain in Shrewsbury due to the Town's high housing costs – this, despite the Town's historically low tax rates and single-family tax bills. Trends toward pricier homes and higher housing values were identified both in Census 2010 data and interviews with community members and real estate professionals. Furthermore, there has been a disproportionate drop in the number of young adults (between 20 and 34 years old) in Shrewsbury relative to Worcester County or the state as a whole.

Chapter 40B has noble intentions, but it is very controversial because the comprehensive permit process substantially reduces local control. Furthermore, it opens the door to large developments that can exceed the capacity of a community's municipal and school services. In Shrewsbury, a developer can apply to build as many as 300 units in a single Chapter 40B project.[32]

Local Capacity, Local Initiatives

In an effort to provide affordable housing at a pace the Town could absorb, Shrewsbury adopted an inclusionary zoning bylaw several years ago. The bylaw requires projects over a certain size to create affordable housing, and developers who include affordable units within their projects qualify for an automatic density bonus. In addition, Shrewsbury prepared a Housing Production Plan under the state's Chapter

Madison Place

40B regulations in 2004 and again in 2012. By having a state-approved Housing Production Plan, Shrewsbury can earn credit for creating new affordable housing units and potentially qualify for relief from issuing more comprehensive permits for one or two years, depending on actual production. The key is production, however. Having an affordable housing plan does not affect a community's status under Chapter 40B unless there is an actual increase in the supply of low- or moderate-income housing units.

In 2007 and again in 2014, Shrewsbury conducted outreach to identify developers the Town could work with in order to make significant progress toward the 10 percent statutory minimum. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Devleopment (DHCD) offers cities and towns the option of pursuing "local initiative" developments that can potentially give local boards more control and produce housing the community really wants. In fact, Shrewsbury was the first Town in Massachusetts to "partner" with a for-profit developer for a large apartment development (Avalon Shrewsbury). Since Shrewsbury had a DHCD-approved Housing Production Plan at the time, the Avalon Shrewsbury project gave the Board of Appeals a two-year grace period during which they could deny comprehensive permits without fear of having their decision overturned by the HAC.

More recently, Shrewsbury's attempt to find a new developer for a "local initiative" project led to proposals that triggered considerable opposition from abutters. The Town hoped to work with a developer whose proposal addressed local priorities, but the project did not go forward. Another developer whose proposal was not chosen decided to pursue a comprehensive permit on his own even though the Town had rejected the project and had concerns about the site. MassHousing, the state agency that processes most "project

32 A proposed Chapter 40B development can include more than 300 units, but a larger project can be denied by the Board of Appeals and for that reason alone, most developers would not propose more than 300 units unless the Town requested and demonstrated support for a larger development.

eligibility" requests, ultimately issued a favorable project eligibility determination despite the Town's objections. At the time of this writing, the project is currently before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Shrewsbury has clearly tried to create more Chapter 40B housing, but in general its efforts are not recognized by state government. A missing piece in Shrewsbury's approach to housing is the lack of a body within town government to work with housing developers, conduct public education, coordinate with local banks to provide and promote first-time homebuyer assistance, oversee lotteries for affordable housing units, and advocate for the Town's interests. These are the kinds of functions typically handled by a local housing partnership: a town committee that focuses on affordable housing, networks with regional and state housing leaders, advises the Board of Appeals during the comprehensive permit process, advises the Board of Selectmen and others about changes in state policy, and essentially builds rapport between the Town and state housing officials. It is ironic that the state does not recognize the efforts of a community where so much multifamily housing has been built without comprehensive permits, but that is the situation Shrewsbury finds itself in today. The Town needs better ways to represent its interests, but it also needs a well-informed, effective group of housing advocates inside town government.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal H1: Preserve and enhance the physical character of Shrewsbury's established neighborhoods.

Policy H1.1: Explore new regulatory and advisory tools to maintain neighborhood character, such as zoning changes and advisory design guidelines.

a. Ensure that new development projects protect existing trees to the degree feasible and restore some trees removed during the construction process.
b. Consider the benefits and drawbacks of instituting a large-house review process for single-family residences over a certain size (measured in floor area).
c. Consider the benefits and drawbacks of a demolition delay bylaw as a mechanism for managing the impact of teardowns on older, established neighborhoods.

Policy H1.2: Preserve and enhance the walkable character of Shrewsbury neighborhoods.

a. Maintain sidewalks and pedestrian paths serving existing neighborhoods.
b. Investigate opportunities to establish a Safe Routes to School program and leverage funding for pedestrian improvements.
c. Provide adequate lighting and continuous sidewalks for pedestrians.

Goal H2: Implement the Town's Five-Year Housing Production Plan.

Policy H2.1: Establish a Housing Partnership of citizen volunteers to oversee the Housing Production Plan and advise the Town on affordable housing policies.

a. Develop guidelines for review of Chapter 40B comprehensive permits, including incentives (such as true streamlined permitting) for projects that address the Town's policy preferences.
b. Develop expertise to administer affordable housing funds received from developers who are subject to the inclusionary zoning bylaw.
c. Increase advocacy for housing diversity and affordability.
d. Strengthen capacity to identify, analyze, and respond to housing needs in the community.
e. Build knowledge and credibility to review and comment on proposed Chapter 40B regulatory and policy changes and to lobby on Shrewsbury's behalf.
f. Create a housing resource guide that describes local, regional, and state-level housing assistance programs, including fuel assistance, housing improvement assistance, resources for public/subsidized housing and tenant assistance.

Policy H2.2: Maintain timely updates of the Five-Year Housing Production Plan and expand the Town's toolkit for implementation.

a. Enlist participation from the Housing Partnership (see below) and support from the Planning Department, to survey the Town's housing needs, including, but not limited, to affordable housing needs.
b. Continue to pursue partnerships with developers to create new affordable housing.

c. Study and consider options for simplifying the inclusionary zoning bylaw.

d. Explore opportunities to use Chapter 40R (alone or in conjunction with District Improvement Financing (DIF) or Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing) to create mixed-income developments that provide a financial benefit to the Town.

Goal H3: Address the varied housing needs of Shrewsbury's seniors and young adults entering the workforce.

Policy H3.1: Prepare for success as a multigenerational community.

a. Conduct an independent livability policies and practices review.

b. Identify and reduce or eliminate barriers (if any) to being an "age-friendly" community.

c. Consider opportunities for zoning to encourage accessory dwellings (apartments or free-standing cottage structures) that could address some senior housing needs and also provide housing options for young householders.

d. Work with the Shrewsbury Housing Authority to increase the inventory of accessible senior housing units.

Goal H4: Promote mixed-use developments in the Lakeway area and other areas identified in the master plan or through area or district plans.

Policy H4.1: Work with the state to coordinate the project eligibility review process for affordable housing with Town's mixed-use development policies.

a. Form a coalition with other Central Massachusetts suburbs to work with the Governor's office and DHCD to make the Chapter 40B project eligibility process more responsive to local planning concerns.

Transportation and Mobility

The Importance of Transportation and Mobility

Transportation issues are a part of Shrewsbury's history of development as a community, and it is important to integrate the transportation perspective into the broader Master Plan process. As Shrewsbury grew considerably over the latter half of the 20th century, roadways were constructed primarily for motor-vehicle transportation. For Shrewsbury to develop into a healthy and sustainable community moving forward, transportation systems cannot be limited exclusively to motor-vehicles. Designing for all roadway users gives residents and visitors the greatest number of options for traveling through the Town. A multimodal transportation system does not ignore the needs for safe and efficient movement of cars and trucks throughout the Town and issues related to congestion and safety are obviously important priorities for future study and improvement. However, a multimodal transportation system is designed to go beyond just automotive travel and acknowledges the needs for healthy pedestrian and bicycle networks.

In general, the following ideas should be considered in planning Shrewsbury's future transportation network:

Complete Streets – Motor-vehicle centric design has created roadways that favor cars over pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. The planning approach that takes into account the needs of all transportations users, regardless of age or ability, is sometimes referred to as the "Complete Streets" approach. Complete streets provide transportation access for all roadway users by re-allocating roadway space to enhance the experience of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

Access and Equity – Roadways are one of the biggest public assets of a Town. They connect the citizens to employment centers, recreation, education and everyday services, serving as one of the pillars for a healthy local and regional economy. Unfortunately, roadways can also be barriers to mobility and inadvertently reduce quality of life. Intersections without curb ramps are barriers for people with disabilities and roads without sidewalks prevent children from safely walking to school. Roadways designed for all ages and abilities ensure that all residents can access everyday needs in Shrewsbury.

Public Transit – Public transit is currently very limited for the residents of Shrewsbury. Additional connections could be provided to Worcester, MetroWest Regional Transit, and the MBTA Commuter Rail line to enhance regional mobility and local connections for all residents.

Existing Transportation Network

Roadways in Shrewsbury are the primary form of transportation for most residents. Within the Town, the State (Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)) and Town are responsible for the ownership and maintenance of the roadways within their separate jurisdictions. The Town of Shrewsbury has jurisdiction over the majority of the Town's roadways, with the exception of the following MassDOT roadways:

- Route 290
- Route 9
- Route 20
- Maple Avenue from Route 9 to Main Street
- Main Street from Maple Avenue to the Northborough Town line

The Town has a pavement management system that it implements through the Highway Division of the Public Works Department. A pavement management system allows the Town to monitor roadway conditions and prioritize those that need maintenance. The pavement management system calculates the pavement condition index (PCI), which ranges from 0 to 100. As of spring 2015, the Town had a PCI rating of 83, and this indicates a majority of roads are in good condition.

There are currently three projects in Shrewsbury that have received funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The projects are identified on the MassDOT website and are listed in the Table 11.

Table 11: TIP Projects

Project Name	Type	TIP Year
Resurfacing and related work on Main Street, from I-290 ramps easterly to Maple Avenue	Resurfacing	2017
Shrewsbury-Northborough-Westborough: Resurfacing and related work on Route 9	Resurfacing	2016
Shrewsbury-Boylston-Northborough: Maintenance and related work on Route 290	Resurfacing	2017

Source: MassDOT, obtained January 7, 2015

Additionally, MassDOT worked with the Town of Shrewsbury to conduct two Roadway Safety Audits which bring together planners, engineers, first responders, and other municipal workers to create a safety improvement program for locations with a history of high crash levels. The following two locations were audited in April 2015:

- Hartford Turnpike (Route 20) at Grafton Street
- Main Street at Old Mill Road/Ireta Road

Journey to Work data from the 2010 U.S. Census was reviewed for the Town of Shrewsbury to determine where residents of Shrewsbury work and where workers in Shrewsbury live. The top five workplaces for Shrewsbury residents and top five residences for Shrewsbury workers are shown in Table 12.

ACS estimates indicate that Shrewsbury workers overwhelmingly choose an automobile mode of transportation with 83.5 percent of workers driving alone and 7.5 percent carpooling (Table 13).

The number of people who use a bicycle or walk to work is low in Shrewsbury, which could be, in part, a symptom of insufficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Currently there are pedestrian and bicycle projects being carried out in the Town of Shrewsbury with assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). In August 2014 CMRPC conducted pedestrian and bicycle counts and a sidewalk inventory at the intersection of Main Street and Maple Street. Counts were conducted on Wednesday August 20, 2014 from 7:00AM to 9:00AM, Thursday September 4, 2014 from 4:00PM to 6:00PM and Saturday August 16, 2014 from 10:00AM to 1:00PM. There were 19 pedestrian/bicycles observed during the morning, 33 during the afternoon and 67 during the Saturday count periods. At the intersection there are sidewalks on all approaches, two crosswalks and four non-compliant ADA ramps at the intersection.

Additionally, the Town is participating in the planning process with CMRPC, Northborough and Westborough for the Boston to Worcester Airline Trail. The trail would connect Worcester to Framingham with a mix of on-road and off-road paths generally following the old Boston to Worcester trolley route. In the spring of 2013, CMRPC compiled an alternatives assessment detailing the costs, bikeability, funding options, and acquisition challenges for each of the proposed routes. There are four sections of trail in Shrewsbury, and the Town should explore opportunities to build them.

Table 12: Journey to Work: Living and Working in Shrewsbury

People living in Shrewsbury, where do they work?		People working in Shrewsbury, where do they live?	
Workplace	Percentage of Residents	Residence	Percentage of Workers
Worcester	22%	Worcester	27%
Shrewsbury	18%	Shrewsbury	25%
Westborough	9%	Auburn	3%
Marlborough	6%	Holden	3%
Framingham	5%	Webster	2%
Other	40%	Other	40%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

Table 13: Travel to work for Shrewsbury residents

Means to Travel to Work	Percentage
Drove Alone	83.5%
Carpooled	7.5%
Public Transportation	1.4%
Walked	1.9%
Taxi, Motorcycle, Bicycle, Other	1.2%
Worked at Home	4.4%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2008-2013

Focus Areas for Transportation and Mobility

Active Transportation

Public outreach and interviews with municipal officials suggest there is a demand for more sidewalks and bikeways Town-wide, but narrow roadways and right-of-ways as well as high traffic speeds present challenges. Bike lanes, which have frequently been raised by the community during public meetings, are only safe and feasible where roadway widths and traffic volumes allow. However, the Town can take an integrated approach to improving safety for different modes on all streets within its transportation network. Two of the most important principles to be addressed if more active transportation is to be achieved in Shrewsbury are access management and traffic calming.

For commercial corridors with high traffic volume like Route 9, access management would greatly improve traffic operations and enhance the aesthetic appearance of the corridor, which was a concern raised in

Active transportation *is a means of getting around that is powered by human energy, primarily walking and bicycling. Often called 'non-motorized transportation,' we prefer the term 'active transportation' since it is a more positive statement that expresses the key connection between healthy, active living and our transportation choices.*

public meetings. The illustration on the following page shows some of the elements to an access management approach. Shared driveways and interconnected parking are among the most notable practices not currently in use along Route 9 in Shrewsbury. Best practices also call for accommodation of non-motorized travel with sidewalks and bike lanes, which is aided by the consolidation of curbs cuts and separation of parking from the right-of-way.

Traffic calming is more relevant to the Town Center and to residential streets, especially where speeding and visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists is an issue. The goal of traffic calming is to slow or reduce auto traffic to make streets safer for people to walk and bike. In doing so, cars no longer dominate and the area becomes safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. According to the Project for Public Spaces, traffic calming "helps build human-scale places and an environment friendly to people on foot."[33] When the term traffic calming is mentioned, many people think first of "speed bumps" and have a negative view of the impact on traffic flow. But traffic calming includes a much more diverse set of techinques and devices, each best suited to different circumstance. These include the following:

- Diagonal parking
- Changing a one-way street to two-way
- Widening sidewalks/narrowing streets and travel lanes
- Curb extensions (bulb-outs) and neckdowns
- Chicanes
- Roundabouts
- Traffic circles
- Raised medians/pedestrian refuge
- Tighter corner radius
- Diverters
- Road humps, speed tables, and cushions
- Rumble strips and other surface treatments

One major advantage of traffic calming (as compared to larger roadway improvement projects) is the relatively low cost and ease of implementation. In many cases, traffic calming treatments may be implemented as "test" cases and modified or removed based on experience. Each tool has its own specific application and not every one fits every case. Some of the issues to consider for implementation include:

- Do emergency vehicles use the roadway? School buses or transit?
- Is cut-through traffic an issue in the area?
- What are the surrounding land uses?
- Who are the typical users?
- What are the future land use and tranportation plans for the area?
- What is the function and classification of the street? What is the ideal travel speed?
- What are the drainage needs in the area?

In discussions with residents and Town officials, Route 20, Route 9, and the streets neighboring local schools could all benefit from improvements for active transportation. Traffic calming measures can also be required as mitigation for new developments and as part of roadway maintenance or improvement programs.

Access Management *refers to the coordination between roadway design and adjacent land development to ensure safe and efficient traffic operations on major arterials and intersections while providing adequate access to abutting land uses. Common techniques include:*

- *Driveway closure, consolidation, or relocation*
- *Restricted-movement designs for driveways*
- *Raised medians that prevent cross-roadway movements and focus turns to key intersections*
- *Adding auxiliary turn lanes*
- *Using roundabouts and mini-roundabouts to provide desired access*

Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)

33 Project for Public Spaces, "The Traffic Calming Toolbox." Available at www.pps.org.

The crossroads along Route 20 and Route 9 generally do not provide adequate pedestrian or bicycle facilities, creating barriers to walking and biking in Town. Route 20 and Route 9 are under MassDOT jurisdiction, which somewhat limits the Town's control over improvements. However, when roadway improvements are initiated, the Town must ensure that pedestrians and bicycles are accommodated with the new improvements. Additionally, the Town can control access management along the MassDOT roadways by not approving additional curb cuts during the MassDOT Access Permit review process (Figure 9).

Figure 9. llustration of Access Management for Commercial Development

Source: MassDOT Project Development and Design Guide (2006)

Traffic congestion at public schools has increased with the increase in student population and the Town's charging a fee for school bus service. There is also congestion at private schools. To reduce congestion at Shrewsbury schools, the schools should work with the Town to create a strategy that improves site circulation and reduces vehicle trips to the schools during the peak morning and afternoon periods. A Safe Routes to School program could encourage more children to walk or bike, and improved site circulation could keep school congestion from impacting Town roadways.

Walkable Town Center

Shrewsbury's Town Center was a major focal point in community discussions, with a strong desire to build upon this area's historic and walkable character. The area generally accommodates pedestrians with sidewalks, but there are many opportunities to build upon this base with specific design improvements. The ongoing challenge is to maintain and enhance traffic operations and safety for all modes of travel while preserving the aesthetic charm of the Town Center.

The intersection of Route 140 and Main Street is geographically Shrewsbury's Town Center and has several mobility challenges for all modes of transportation. Past efforts have already addressed some automotive congestion and capacity issues here, such as adding turn lanes and improving the traffic signals. Walking at the intersection of Route 140 and Main Street is challenging due to long crosswalks, large curb radii that encourage motorists to turn at higher speeds, and wide roadway shoulders that increase the distance pedestrians have to travel to cross the street (Figure 10). Future improvements should avoid further widening of the roadway and, instead, focus on other operational improvements for traffic, such as signal timing and coordination. Key elements for sidewalk improvement include ADA compliant curb cuts and ramps, and enhanced crosswalks with curb extensions and/or median refuges where appropriate (Figure 11). These improvements are important for making the Town Center more walkable for a range of ages and abilities.

Business driveways should also be designed with the pedestrian in mind, and this should be addressed in relevant Town regulations. Currently, numerous curb-cuts increase the number of spaces where pedestrians and cars come into conflict, reducing the walkability of the Town Center. Parking regulations should be revisited to encourage shared parking within the area and to promote, not hinder, walking around the Town Center with appropriate layout, landscaping, and screening. While some of the roadways in the business area fall under MassDOT jurisdiction, MassDOT encourages access management and shared access points. Furthermore, the Town plays a role in the MassDOT's access permitting process, allowing opportunities for the Town and MassDOT to work collectively towards access management goals.

The Town is currently at the 75 percent design phase with the reconstruction of Main Street between Maple Avenue and the I-290 Ramps. The project will improve drainage, add sidewalks to both sides of the road, and install bicycle tolerant shoulders. The

Walkable *refers to an area where most people feel comfortable and safe walking, and have an enjoyable experience getting around on foot.*

Figure 10. Main Street looking east to the intersection with Route 140. Even with clearly marked crosswalks and pedestrian signals, the long crossing distance is a challenge.

Figure 11. Examples of median refuge (left) and curb extension (right) to shorten crossing distances.

project is currently funded for construction with 2017 Transportation Improvement Plan funding. Adding sidewalks and bicycle tolerant shoulders as part of roadway reconstruction projects is an effective way for the Town of Shrewsbury to encourage active modes of transportation.

Public Transit

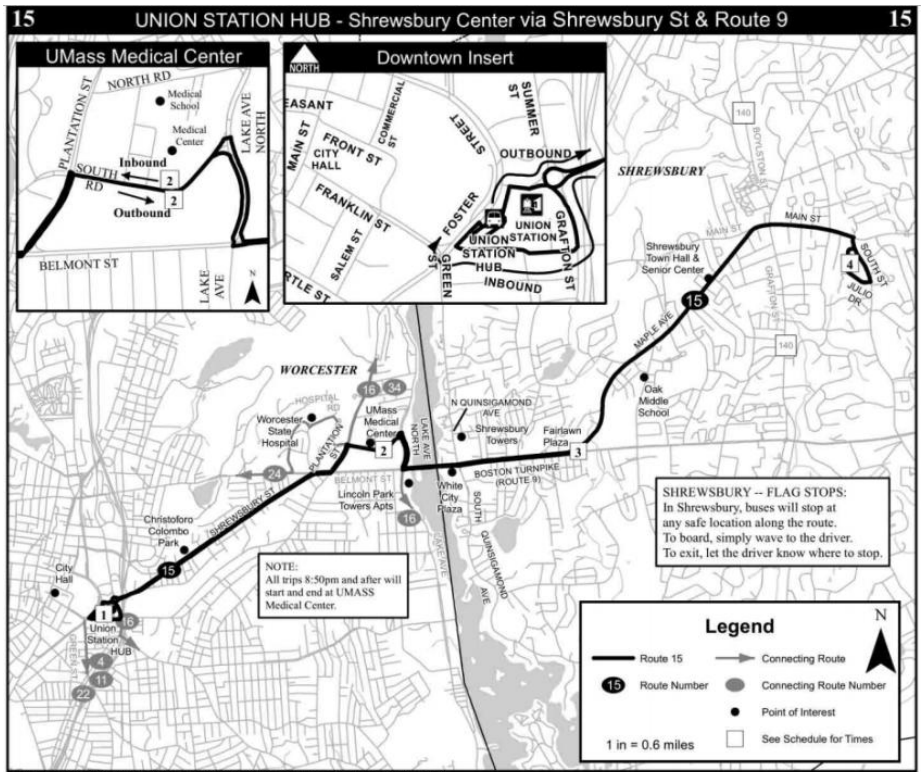
Existing public transportation services do not match community needs, particularly for the seniors, disabled populations, and youth with no cars. Routes are not located near these populations or service is not available when it is needed.

Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) is the public transportation provider for Shrewsbury and the surrounding region, and MBTA Commuter Rail service is available nearby from the Worcester, Grafton, and Westborough rail stations. Improved public transportation service was an issue raised in public forums, with a focus on connecting desired destinations. Residents identified Worcester, Boston and Providence as the key destinations, and also specified Logan Airport as a destination lacking convenient access from public transportation.

WRTA currently serves Shrewsbury via the Route 15, which serves the Route 9 corridor and White City Plaza through to the Town Center and Julio Drive. While there is not necessarily demand for transit access from other parts of Town, there is widespread desire to enhance connection with populations in Worcester that may want access to businesses in Shrewsbury. The MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) operates in the towns just east of Shrewsbury, but currently provides no connections.

The connection to Boston is most conveniently achieved through the MBTA Commuter Rail service to Boston's Yawkey, Back Bay, and South Stations. Each of these stations connects to employment and other destinations, as well as to the MBTA's rapid transit system. Connections to Logan Airport are available from South Station via the Silver Line rapid transit connection.

Figure 12. WRTA's Route 15 – Union Station to Shrewsbury Center



WRTA already provides bus transit service to MBTA Commuter Rail stations in its service area, such as the Route B connecting Grafton MBTA station to points south, and the Westborough Shuttle, which connects Westborough MBTA station to employment destinations along Route 9 (Figure 12). This route (or a variation) represents one potential for improved connection to Shrewsbury via Route 9. The Town may approach WRTA and CMRPC to explore more options.

Summary

Shrewsbury is working towards an equitable transportation system that is safe and efficient for all people, regardless of the mode they choose. It has made recent progress by working with MassDOT and CMRPC on construction projects and traffic counts around the Town Center. The projects have aimed to improve safety deficiencies and provide opportunities for active transportation. As seen in the existing conditions data provided, 25 percent of workers in Shrewsbury also live in Town. Biking and walking could easily become a very popular option for residents because of the Town's small size. Shrewsbury has focused on creating a walkable Town Center, active transportation and public transportation.

The walkable Town Center can be achieved by creating a space where all ages feel welcomed walking. Design consideration can be made for curb cuts, crossing distances, and curb radii. Enhancements like landscaping and furniture can make the spaces more inviting. As users transition out of the Town Center, there is still need for active transportation infrastructure. Encouraging access management and traffic calming will start to create a network of walking and biking routes everyone can enjoy. Regional connections on public transportation are very important for seniors and youth without cars. Connections to Worcester and Boston are currently provided through the WRTA and MBTA Commuter Rail. Improved coordination between the Town and regional transit providers could give residents of Shrewsbury increased mobility options.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal T1: Provide a safe and efficient transportation system for all modes.

Policy T1.1: Improve traffic safety at key intersections.

a. Coordinate with MassDOT and the Shrewsbury Police Department to identify high crash locations.

b. Initiate studies and/or roadway safety audits to identify potential improvements for high-accident locations.

c. Implement recommendations from studies and/or roadway safety audits.

d. Coordinate with CMRPC to have safety studies conducted.

e. Coordinate with CMRPC to apply for grants for improving traffic safety.

Policy T1.2: Promote safe and efficient travel along arterial routes, such as Route 9 and Route 20.

a. Initiate corridor studies of the arterial routes within Shrewsbury that identify problem areas and potential improvements.

b. Implement curb cut guidelines along arterials that promote regional road-network access over local parcel access. Work with MassDOT towards these goals for roadways that fall under state jurisdiction.

Policy T1.3: Maintain roadways and sidewalks.

a. Continue to implement and update the pavement management program to maintain and rehabilitate roadways and sidewalks.

b. Enhance the pavement management system into an asset management program to include: parking, snow removal, markings, signage, and traffic control devices.

c. Investigate revisions to the General Bylaws to have property owners keep abutting sidewalks clear of debris, snow, etc.

d. Identify potential funding sources for implementation of maintenance projects.

Policy T1.4: Integrate the transportation-land use connection for future development to manage traffic and parking demand.

a. Encourage employer transportation demand management programs in order to reduce traffic congestion around employment and retail centers. As examples, these programs typically include features such as carpool incentives, employee reimbursement of public transit fares, staggered work hours, and facilities for bicyclists such as showers and bike racks/security.

b. Develop shared parking policies. Encourage interconnection of adjacent developments and parking areas.

c. Pursue interconnection between subdivisions. Incorporate this element into the subdivision approval process.

d. Review parking requirements in the Zoning Bylaw and make adjustments to ensure that average condition parking needs are met while avoiding the implementation of spaces that are rarely utilized.

Goal T2: Support a variety of transportation choices for multimodal travel within Shrewsbury, including healthy and environmentally sustainable options.

Policy T2.1: Improve accommodation for non-motorized modes (walking and bicycling), especially at key locations like the Town Center, near schools, churches and other public spaces.

a. Identify locations and install bicycle racks, pedestrian benches, street art, and vegetation, to enhance the built environment for non-motorized users.

b. Initiate a study of the Route 140/Main, Main/Maple, and Route 140/Prospect intersections to identify pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

c. Develop a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle network that include low stress routes for all abilities and utilitarian routes for experienced users.

d. Continue to explore the Boston to Worcester Airline Trail with Northborough and Westborough.

e. Include pedestrian and bicycle improvements in all roadway improvement and resurfacing programs. Identify roadways with sufficient width and implement bike facilities.

f. Identify key missing links and desired paths in the pedestrian and bicycle network. Develop a program to fill the gaps.

g. Initiate a “Safe Routes to School” and/or “Safe Routes to Play” program and implement the recommendations.

Policy T2.2: Expand and support public transportation service, including local and regional bus transit, and paratransit services for senior and disabled populations, in a manner consistent with other community goals.

a. Provide adequate curbside and streetside facilities for bus operations, including clearly marked bus and bus stop amenities that enhance rider comfort and safety.

b. Coordinate with MassDOT, WRTA, and the MWRTA to identify and implement expanded service within Shrewsbury. Focus on connections

to MBTA Commuter Rail for community members without cars and seniors, add connections to Worcester's colleges and business centers, and provide links to MWRTA.

c. In conjunction with sidewalk programs, identify missing links in pedestrian infrastructure between bus stops and residential areas with high transit usage, and implement improvements.

Policy T2.3: Promote education among pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists on how to use the road safely and interact with other users.

a. Develop and implement a public education program about bicycle safety and bicyclist and motorist rights and responsibilities. Establish and organize "Bike to School Days" and "Bike to Work Days".

b. Develop and implement a bicycle safety curriculum in schools and library in conjunction with MassBike.

c. Develop an educational enforcement program with the Shrewsbury Police Department.

Policy T2.4: Promote education among the public about the benefits of active transportation modes for recreational and utilitarian trips, and encourage these activities.

a. Develop an education campaign about the benefits of active transportation.

b. Develop an annual community event with local businesses that activates Town Center streets by temporarily eliminating vehicular traffic. For example, use the Town Common as the center of the event and close Church Street and adjacent lanes on Main Street and Route 140.

Policy T2.5: Adopt a Complete Streets policy that provides for a variety of transportation choices that meet the needs of all age groups, abilities, and preferences.

a. Utilize the complete streets training completed by Town officials to educate decision makers and implement methodologies throughout Town.

b. Work with the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance and Town of Shrewsbury Board of Health when developing complete street guidelines.

c. Develop and/or adopt a complete streets policy for Shrewsbury.

d. Require that appropriate roadway projects incorporate the complete streets policy.

Goal T3: Provide a well-connected transportation system, within Shrewsbury and to the region

Policy T3.1: Establish and enhance connections between major destinations and neighborhoods within Shrewsbury.

a. Coordinate with local stake holders when developing pedestrian, bicycle, transit and arterial roadway improvements identified in the action items above.

b. In tandem with a Safe Routes to School Program, work with schools to study traffic impacts from schools on local roadways and initiate short and long-term improvements.

Policy T3.2: Promote regional connectivity to support economic development.

a. Identify missing links for regional connectivity and pursue solutions.

b. Identify and encourage development within areas that have regional connectivity.

Policy T3.3: Provide local and regional connections between modes of transportation.

a. Coordinate with regional transportation providers (MBTA, MassDOT, and WRTA) to ensure Shrewsbury residents can make efficient connections between modes.

b. Investigate potential connections with MWRTA system.

Policy T3.4: Manage finite parking resources to accommodate the needs of residents, commuters, and local businesses.

a. Inventory the Town Center parking supply and initiate programs to encourage high turnover for businesses and safe and efficient parking for residents and commuters.

b. Develop strategically placed parking areas to encourage carpooling (park 'n ride lots) and to allow mode shifts (parking with access to MBTA train).

c. Review parking requirements for all uses in the Zoning Bylaw.

Natural, Cultural & Historic Resources

The Importance of Our Natural Resources

Shrewsbury is a mature suburb that has experienced tremendous growth and development over the past 50 years. As part of the greater Worcester economy, the Town enjoys continued market pressure to grow and develop. For these reasons, it is critical that Shrewsbury is mindful of the natural systems that still play an integral role in the local economy and contribute to overall community health and sustainability. The benefits of healthy natural resources include:

Clean water – The residents and businesses of Shrewsbury experience the benefits of clean water in their homes, their gardens, and the network of streams and ponds that are part of the landscape. Poor decisions about where and how development occurs can have a profound effect on these systems.

Clean air – The benefits of clean air to everyone in Shrewsbury are obvious. However, sometimes it is not immediately apparent how land use decisions can affect air quality for residents. The natural areas and landscaping in Shrewsbury play a critical role in reducing airborne pollution and maintaining a healthy environment.

Recreation – Shrewsbury residents enjoy swimming, boating, fishing, and walking in many of the natural areas within the community. Maintaining the health of these resources helps to maintain the health of those people who take advantage of these recreational opportunities.

Biodiversity – With close to 900 acres of wetland and over 500 acres of protected natural area, Shrewsbury still maintains pockets of wilderness that are crucial to wildlife diversity. Policies and regulations designed to protect wildlife contribute to the overall health of natural systems and, therefore, to the quality of life for residents.

Scenic Beauty – Several natural areas in the community provide scenic enjoyment for residents of Shrewsbury. Winding roads offer views of woods, fields, stone walls and ponds. Scenic areas include views from the Town's many hills, such as Ward Hill, Green Hill, and Boston Hill, as well as from the shoreline of Lake Quinsigamond and the waterbodies

First Congregational Church on Town Common

The Importance of Historic and Cultural Resources

Historic and cultural resources are valued because they represent a significant person, place or event in the community's past. All these resources contribute to the quality of life in Shrewsbury and attract visitors that simulate business activity.

Connection to the Past – Visiting historical landmarks or learning about local history gives residents a connection to the contributions of pivotal people and events in Shrewsbury's unique past. An example is General Artemas Ward House Museum, which provides a venue to learn of his leadership during the American Revolutionary War, in the Massachusetts Senate, in the Continental Congress, and during Shay's Rebellion. Making these links can be inspirational and instill local pride.

Education – Residents take great pride in the local education system. They feel it is one of the primary

reasons people move here. Its success is a great asset to the community and serves as an important cultural resource. Increasing student involvement in cultural awareness and local activities not only enriches their educational experience, but also expands outreach to families and brings together a broader circle of residents and visitors. Equally, the Shrewsbury Public Library provides support to students and educators, as well as lifelong learning opportunities for all ages.

Community – Celebrating the Town's history and culture brings the community together and recognizes its growing cultural diversity. Historical landmarks and cultural events can be formal and informal focal points. For example, the Town Common is a natural central location that draws residents for events like the Spirit of Shrewsbury Fall Festival or Caroling on the Common. It also serves as an informal gathering spot around the local Civil War Memorial.

Economic Development – Promoting local historic attractions and cultural events not only bring residents together, but can also attract visitors as well. These types of events support local restaurants and shops, and can encourage visitors to return to Shrewsbury.

The Role of the Open Space and Recreation Plan

The 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) outlines the Town policies and strategies to protect and enhance its open space and recreational resources. The OSRP inventories the Town's natural environment and recreational facilities, outlines environmental challenges, and summarizes additional community needs. It was developed with a strong public participation effort and provides a vehicle through which the Town may apply for open space acquisition grant funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Natural resources are the primary focus of the OSRP, but the document also provides information on historic and cultural resources. The plan provides a detailed, up to date discussion of the Town's natural environments, describing its topography, wetlands, surface and ground waters and vegetation types. The OSRP outlines a seven-year action plan with priorities, responsible parties, collaborators, and resources needed for implementation. Like the Town's Housing Production Plan, the OSRP serves as a valuable resource for the Town and for the development of this Master Plan. References to these discussions are provided here. The reader should understand that the goals and policies of the OSRP are supported by the Master Plan. In some cases, language from the OSRP is cited directly into this document in order to minimize duplicate discussion and ensure consistency.

Focus Areas for Natural Resources

Water Resources Protection

Maintaining and improving the quality of the natural environment in Shrewsbury includes a strong focus on protecting surface water and groundwater resources. The Town's lakes, rivers and streams provide scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and habitat for wildlife. Surface water quality is threatened by adjacent development, stormwater runoff containing pollutants, failing onsite wastewater treatment systems, and other land use activities that obstruct and degrade natural systems.

EPA and MassDEP have standards in place to regulate and manage stormwater runoff, both in piped systems and open areas such as roadways, parking lots and building roofs. Under EPA's National Pollutant Discharge

Natural Area Assets in Shrewsbury

Vegetation: Much of the forested areas of Shrewsbury were harvested or cleared for agriculture long ago. Today, much of the treed areas are mostly second or third growth. There are a few rare vegetation species observed in Shrewsbury, including Black Cohosh (1937), Houghton's Flatsedge (1945), Philadelphia Panic-grass (1929), and Vasey's Pondweed (2007).

Wildlife: Because of rapid development over the past several decades, the number and diversity of wildlife in Shrewsbury has declined. However, several large unbroken retracts of land can still be found in isolated sections and provide the best places for animal habitat. Rare animal species that have been observed in Shrewsbury include the Blue-spotted Salamander (2006), Orange Sallow Moth (2003), and Wood Turtle (2007).

Fisheries: Lake Quinsigamond attracts anglers for its challenges in landing valued warm-water species such as northern pike, chain pickerel, common carp, white perch, and largemouth bass.

Source: 2012 OSRP

Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II regulations, the Town is required to implement different strategies to manage stormwater runoff. These strategies include, but are not limited to, mapping outfalls of the Town's piped stormwater system, catch-basin cleaning every two years, street sweeping twice a year, and collecting and testing stormwater discharges. EPA will be reissuing a new five-year cycle permit in the coming year, thereby renewing the Town's commitment to these strategies.

At the local level, Shrewsbury regulates and manages water resource protection issues primarily through the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, and the Town Engineering Department. In 2007, a Stormwater Management Bylaw was established that gives the Town the ability to prohibit illicit connections and discharges into the stormwater system. It also grants the Town the authority to regulate stormwater management for any development disturbing 5,000 square feet or more of land. While these new controls allow the Town to improve water quality, the added costs associated with implementation will be difficult to meet with existing budgets. Little federal or state funding is available. To potentially mitigate this cost burden, the Town is currently exploring the creation of a stormwater utility fee. The Town also participates in the Central Massachusetts Regional Stormwater Coalition, a regionalized stormwater group of 30 municipalities to address stormwater issues. Shrewsbury was part of the original 13 members that received a $310,000 in fiscal year 2012 grant from the state Community Innovation Challenge Grant Program. The grant helped to develop some standardized operation procedures and purchase shared equipment for stormwater infrastructure mapping.

Groundwater resources are also critical to the day-to-day quality of life and the local economy of Shrewsbury. The northwest corner of Town lies over the aquifer that supplies the Town's drinking water. Protecting the aquifer from contamination as well as depletion is a priority of the Town to maintain a sustainable drinking water supply (see Public Services and Facilities). The Town has implemented source protection areas in the northwest corner of Town and in the vicinity of Lake Quinsigamond. There are two interim wellhead protection areas (IWPAs) that encompass the Town's wells. Approved Wellhead Protection Areas (Zone II) generally overlap the IWPAs and extend from just north of Route 290 up to the northern extent of Lake Quinsigamond. It will continue to monitor activity around the wells. One opportunity may be to acquire the land in close proximity to the Town's wells. Mining operations have removed much of the soil covering in this area and have diminished natural recharge activity. In addition to protecting water quality, this acquisition could also open passive recreational opportunities.

The Aquifer Protection Overlay District is another tool the Town uses to protect the public water supply from contamination. It is more restrictive than underlying zoning districts. The overlay district is divided into three zones, where Zone 1 is the most restrictive (it encompasses the 400-foot radius around water supply wells). The ordinance lists uses are allowed by right, uses that require a special use permit, and uses that are prohibited. Each zone has its own lists. Performance standards are also in place to control the impacts of earth removal/grading, fill material, hazardous materials, impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff, and the storage of materials such as deicing chemicals, chemical fertilizers, and animal manure.

Water Resource Assets in Shrewsbury

Watersheds and Drainage: Shrewsbury is within the Blackstone and Concord Watershed Basins. The Blackstone River basin covers two-thirds of the Town, and the Concord River Basin covers the remaining areas to the east.

Floodplain and Wetlands: There are approximately 877 acres of wetlands in Shrewsbury. Slocum Meadow, located in the vicinity of I-290 between Route 140 and the City of Worcester is the largest. It is mostly undeveloped with a few trails.

Groundwater Resources: A large and very productive aquifer is located in the northwestern area of Town, from Boylston south into Shrewsbury through the area of Newton Pond and south towards Lake Quinsigamond. This is where the Town's drinking water wells are located.

Surface Water: Less than 5% of the Town's surface is covered with open water as lakes or ponds. Major surface water bodies are Lake Quinsigamond (which is partially in Worcester), Jordon Pond, Mill Pond, Newton Pond, and a portion of the Northborough Reservoir. There are many smaller ponds as well as brooks.

Source: 2012 OSRP

Lake Quinsigamond

Flooding, Sedimentation, and Erosion

Intense rainfall events or rapid melting of heavy snowpack can create localized flooding in the vicinity of many streams and areas with high water tables. This flooding and the associated runoff often erode roadsides, stream banks and construction sites with exposed soils. As the water levels retreat or dissipate, the remnant gravel, sand, and silt is deposited in catch basins, sewer grates, or in low spots along roadways and parking lots. Over time, these deposits can become a steady source of pollution and can also cause stormwater management systems to fail. As discussed above, the Town does monitor construction sites for erosion/ sedimentation issues, and requires on-site management and mitigation where necessary. The Town must also monitor and maintain the performance of municipal infrastructure, which can require considerable investments in staff time and equipment.

The issues of flooding, sedimentation, and erosion demand increased attention as the effects of global climate change become more pronounced. Climate change is creating a generally warmer, wetter environment in New England and the larger northeast region. *The Massachusetts Climate Change Adaptation Report* was published in September 2011 by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the state's Adaptation Advisory Committee. Important findings cited directly from that document include:

- In its 2007 report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that the —warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea levels.
- New England is expected to experience changes in the amount, frequency, and timing of precipitation. Since 1900, precipitation recorded at United States Historical Climatology Network weather stations across the Northeast has increased on average by 5 to 10 percent.
- A more recent 50-year [review of precipitation records] shows an increase in total precipitation by approximately 10 percent (2.12 mm/ year). Also, the most recent 30- year normal precipitation for Massachusetts is the highest it has been since records started to be taken.

The impacts of increased levels of precipitation—more frequent and more intense—will continue to elevate the challenge of providing adequate stormwater management and flood control in every New England municipality.

Invasive Species

One of the greatest threats to Shrewsbury's remaining habitat areas is that posed by invasive plant and insect species. Invasive plants can grow rapidly and be difficult to remove or control once established. When invasive species take over large areas of habitat, ecological processes are changed and native species that provide food and habitat for local species can be forced out. There are dozens of plants that have been identified as being a threat to Massachusetts forests. Some of the more notable species include Norway Maple (*acer platanoides*), Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Phragmites or Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Japanese Knotweed and Bamboo (*Polygonum cuspidatum*). Identifying and monitoring invasive species is an important first step in controlling or eradicating them. Education campaigns are important to raise awareness. Shrewsbury DPW cuts brush along public roads as needed to control vegetation.

On August 6, 2008, the United States Department of Agriculture confirmed the identification of Asian Longhorned Beetles (ALB) in Worcester, Massachusetts. The ALB is a foreign insect that bores into and kills a variety of tree species, including maple, elm, willow, birch, horsechestnut, London plantree/sycamore, poplar, ash, mimosa (silktree) hackberry and mountain ash.

Since August of 2008, a partnership between federal, state and local agencies has been working to eradicate

ALB in Worcester and surrounding communities. Previously the ALB was limited in the Town of Shrewsbury to 18 trees that have been removed. All were located in the Route 70 area approximate to the Town's boundary with the City of Worcester and Town of Boylston. To prevent the spread of further infestation, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation established a "regulated area" in which residents and businesses are prohibited from moving or transferring ALB regulated materials (including firewood (all hardwood species), live beetles, wood, logs, stumps, roots, branches, leaves, and green lumber from ALB host trees). As of October 2011, all of Shrewsbury was captured within the regulated area (quarantine zone). Tree removal, trimming of host trees, and composting performed in the quarantined zones are now performed in compliance with Asian Long Horn Beetle regulations. These rules apply to residents, business owners, and municipal employees alike.

Hazardous Waste Releases

MassDEP listed 175 Waste Sites/Reportable Releases in its Database for the Town of Shrewsbury on January 11, 2012. Several sites have had multiple releases. Response Tracking Numbers have been closed on 21 releases and transferred to another primary listing, likely a site listed multiple times for multiple releases. Seven sites are Tier classified sites and three have yet to be classified. Tier classification indicates varying levels of DEP or Licensed Site Professional investigation, assessment, and remediation oversight.

While each site has its own particular problems, a few general statements apply: 1) the sites are located on the Town's most traveled state highways, Route 9 and Route 20; 2) gas stations, either active or former, make up the many of the sites; and 3) as a result, the most common problems are soil and/or ground water releases of petroleum products from leaky underground storage tanks.

Focus Areas for Cultural and Historic Resources

Protecting and Promoting Cultural and Historic Resources

As shown in Map 2, there are two historic districts in Shrewsbury that are overseen by the Shrewsbury Historic District Commission (the Commission):

- The Artemas Ward homestead owned by Harvard University; and
- The Town Common Historic District in the center of Shrewsbury, which extends north of Main Street, including the Town Common, The First Congregational Church and the old graveyard in the southeast section of Mountain View Cemetery.

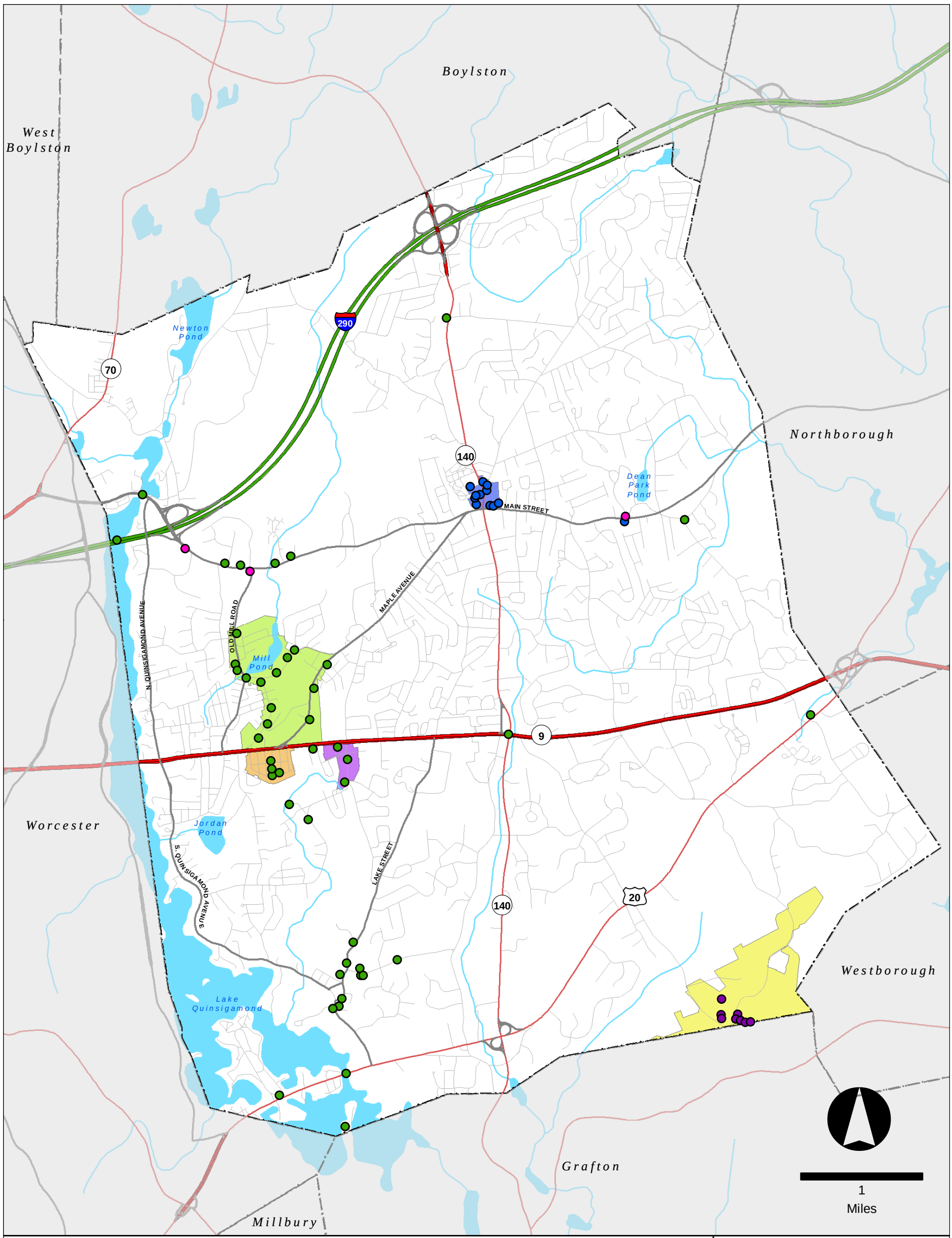
Mount View Cemetery

Within these areas, the Commission reviews activities related to new development, redevelopment, restoration, alteration, relocation and demolition. There are no historic district regulations, which may represent an opportunity to strengthen the role of the Commission and its preservation efforts.

Shrewsbury's development regulations require proposals to identify historic and cultural resources; developers are encouraged to preserve historic structures. For example, under the Planned Residential Development and Cluster bylaws, the open space requirement allows developers to dedicate open space for historic preservation. In the Lakeway Overlay District, developers are encouraged to preserve and enhance historically significant buildings or other historic or cultural resources.

Additional tools, such as a Demolition Delay Bylaw,[34] can also be used to promote the preservation of potentially significant historic structures. The bylaw allows the local Historic District Commission to approve a delay in the demolition of a potentially significant structure to allow for public review. During that time, opportunities to preserve or move the structure could be explored. The delay period can be 6, 12 or 18 months. One area that could benefit from this type of bylaw is the Town Center.

34 Massachusetts Historical Commission, Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances (October 2010). http://www.mapreservationconference.org/downloads/A1_Preservation%20Through%20Bylaws%20and%20Ordinances.pdf.



Legend

Individual Properties

- Inventoried but not designated
- State Historic Register & Local Historic District
- National Register
- National Register - Multiple Property Submission

Historic Areas

- Fairlawn
- Grafton State Hospital
- Oak Street Area
- Old Mill Road - Elm Street Area
- Town Center Historic District

- Surface Water
- Rivers and Streams

Major Roads

- Limited Access Highway
- Multi-lane Hwy, not limited access
- Other Numbered Highway
- Major Road, Collector
- Local Roads

Horsley Witten Group
Sustainable Environmental Solutions
55 Dorrance Street • Suite 403 • Providence, RI 02903
Phone - 401-272-1717 • Fax - 401-437-9388 • www.horsleywitten.com

Historically Significant Areas and Properties

Prepared by: KDM
Sources: Town of Shrewsbury, MassGIS

Map 2. Historically Significant Areas and Properties

Historic & Cultural Assets in Shrewsbury

State Historic Register: There are 10 properties within the Town Common Historic District (local historic district) listed on the State Historic Register. The Artemas Ward Homestead is also listed and the property is designated a local historic district. Additional properties on the State Historic Register are:

- *Grafton State Hospital*
- *Grafton State Hospital Ice Pond Complex*
- *Green Hill Find Spot 3*
- *Green Hill Shelter Boulder Site*
- *Green Street Culvert*
- *Milestone 1767, West Main Street*
- *Milestone 1767, Boston Post Road at Dean Park*

Cemeteries: Four cemeteries add to the history of Shrewsbury:

- *Mountain View Cemetery*
- *Hillcrest Cemetery*
- *St. Anne's Church Yard Cemetery*
- *Hillside Cemetery*

Other Landmarks: There are other structures and landmarks in Shrewsbury that are also important historic and cultural resources. They include:

- *1830 Schoolhouse*
- *#5 Schoolhouse*
- *The Public Library*
- *Jonas Sloan House*
- *Numerous mills town-wide*

Source: 2012 OSRP

Increasing awareness of historic and cultural resources locally builds support for future preservation activities. Education and outreach programs can be linked with existing activities with the Public Library, Senior Center, or Parks and Recreation Department as well as in classrooms. Coordinated events are another way to increase awareness.

The primary challenge with maintaining historic and cultural resources and programming is identifying funding for important initiatives. Volunteers are always needed for the Commission, and the Shrewsbury Historical Society is a resource that can help with information and guidance. State and federal funding may also be available to develop historical surveys of new neighborhoods or structures that are historically and culturally significant.

Cultural Institutions

Cultural institutions are linked to archaeological and historical landmarks, artifacts, districts and buildings, but they can include other "human" aspects of a community that offer enrichment through religious, social, arts, education or other activities that engage residents community-wide.

The Public Library – The Public Library is a community resource that has expanded over the years beyond books and local archives. The institution has become a resource for residents for meeting space, job searching, tutoring, and continuing education. Programming at the Public Library is as diverse as its patrons offering basic computer classes, English Conversation Circle, where non-native English speakers can practice speaking English in a safe and comfortable environment, story time for children of all ages, adult book clubs, and multi-cultural events. Computers are available to the public and provide Internet access to meet every day and special project needs. Of course, its traditional use as a quiet place to read, to do homework, and to conduct research are always available.

The popularity of the library has created the need for additional functional space, which will be met with the expansion from 25,000 square feet to 38,600 square feet. As noted earlier, the new building is designed with current and future usage patterns in mind. The children's area will be tripled in size, with dedicated preschool play area, school aged study space, computer stations and a separate children's program room. There will be improved technologies for both staff and public. More self-serve and automated systems which will allow patrons to check out and return their own materials; freeing staff to provide enhanced public service. There will be high speed access for Wi-Fi and library computers, new display and presentation equipment for meeting rooms, collaborative computer workstations and training spaces for technology learning for all ages. Users will enjoy ample amounts of comfortable seating for study, reading and Wi-Fi use, and there will be more computers for public use, with portions dedicated for teens and children. There will

Shrewsbury Public Library

be ample community gathering and meeting spaces, available while the library is open and after hours. Enhanced outdoor spaces include a largely expanded children's courtyard, new walkways connecting the library to the town common and much expanded parking capacity, to serve both library and town center needs.

Schools – Shrewsbury residents take great pride in the high quality of their school system and many participants in the Master Plan process cited the public schools as one of the most important draws to the community. In this regard, the public schools serve the community as broad and powerful cultural assets. Classrooms offer opportunities to engage students in the community and its history with the hope of both encouraging civic participation later in life and building community pride. When students are engaged, they also bring their families and their diverse traditions and values. Bringing the community into the classroom also enriches and inspires residents. Showcasing the accomplishments of students instills community pride and sets the stage for future success throughout life.

There are also private institutions in Shrewsbury, including Lilliput Early Education Center (pre-school through 2nd grade), St. John's High School, St. Mary School (pre-school through 8th grade), Shrewsbury Montessori School (pre-school through 6th grade), and Al-Hamra Academy (pre-school through 8th grade). Students are from Shrewsbury and throughout the region.

Cultural Diversity

As Shrewsbury's population grows, so does its cultural diversity. The Indian community has a strong presence in Shrewsbury compared to Worcester County and Massachusetts. Asians comprise an estimated 16 percent of the Town's population. Nearly half (an estimated 8.7 percent) are Asian Indians, making them the Town's largest ethnic minority group. In contrast, Asian Indians make up only an estimated 1.2 percent of the total state population and 1.3 percent of the Worcester County population.[35]

Understanding and appreciating different cultures helps to build strong, successful communities. A community's uniqueness attracts visitors as well as people who want to live where they can experience different foods, art, or festivals. Shrewsbury has the opportunity to celebrate its growing diversity.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal NHC1: Preserve, protect, manage, and restore Shrewsbury's natural resources.

Policy NHC1.1: Protect and enhance the quality of Shrewsbury's surface and groundwater resources.

a. Consider the feasibility of acquiring the land associated with land in the aquifer recharge area.
b. Implement strategies of EPA's NPDES permit to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff and reduce illicit connections and discharges.
c. Implement a stormwater utility as a tool to meet NPDES permit requirements and create a sustained funding mechanism for stormwater management.
d. Encourage the use of low impact design and vegetated stormwater management practices as a way to increase water quality protection and groundwater recharge.
e. Identify, certify, and protect vernal pools and other habitats of unique value to wildlife.
f. Maximize habitat value by protecting contiguous tracts of open space and by linking open space parcels to promote wildlife movement.
g. Explore funding opportunities through the state's Drinking Water Supply Grant Program.

Policy NHC1.2: Protect residents, business owners and resources from the impacts of flooding and erosion.

35 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05: Demographic and Housing Estimates.

a. Continue to revisit and revise local regulatory and design standards to account for increased storm frequency and severity related to climate change.

b. Ensure development proposals demonstrate awareness of upstream contributions and downstream impacts related to stormwater management.

Policy NHC1.3: Protect forests, wetlands, fields, and ponds from the harmful impacts of invasive species.

a. Prohibit the planting of any species that is listed on the most recent version of the Massachusetts Invasive Plants Advisory Group.

b. Provide continuing education to municipal staff about the identification, management and removal of invasive plant species.

c. Continue to manage tree pruning and cutting in accordance with the regulations set forth by Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services for the ALB.

d. Implement a tree planting program to replace trees that have been cleared because of the ALB.

Policy NHC1.4: Protect residents, business owners and resources from the impacts of historic and any potential future discharges of hazardous materials or waste.

a. Continue to revisit and revise local regulatory and design standards to ensure the use of best practices in storing and handling hazardous materials.

b. Coordinate with the MassDEP to ensure the efficient and effective clean-up for any existing contaminated sites.

Goal NHC2: Protect and document Shrewsbury's historic and cultural resources.

Policy NHC2.1 Protect the Town's historic buildings and sites against significant alteration, demolition, or incompatible development.

a. Review the bylaws of the Shrewsbury Historic District Commission to ensure they have the authority and tools needed to meet stated objectives.

b. Increase awareness of historic properties and structures as well as historic and cultural events that have taken place in Shrewsbury. Do this in conjunction with the Public Library and Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Department programming.

c. Consider the Community Preservation Act as a potential resource for preservation efforts.

d. Support efforts to preserve and digitize historic artifacts and documents.

Policy NHC2.2 Build on existing cultural assets to expand the community's cultural experiences.

a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of cultural resources in Shrewsbury.

b. Find opportunities to link existing historic and cultural organizations with other active groups in Shrewsbury.

c. Identify potential locations for artists as live/work spaces.

d. Support the implementation of the Shrewsbury Public Schools Strategic Priorities: 2012-2016.

e. Support the implementation of Shrewsbury Public Library Strategic Plan of Service 2012-2016 and the FY2016 Action Plan.

f. Build capacity of local organizations that support the library, schools, and other institutions that provide enhancement funds for services, programs and other activities. These groups include the Friends of the Shrewsbury Public Library, the Shrewsbury Public Library Foundation, and School's Colonial Fund, among others.

g. Develop ways to recognize growing diverse populations in Shrewsbury as a way to celebrate different cultures and expand residents' experiences.

Open Space and Recreation

The Importance of Open Space and Recreation

Open Space and recreation lands are important to the Town of Shrewsbury in many ways. They become more critical as the pressures to develop land increases, and the most sensitive and environmentally significant resources need to be protected and managed.

Social benefits – Open space and recreation lands contribute to our quality of life as opportunities to be active, enjoy the outdoors, and engage with other people who are enjoying the same resources. Open spaces also contribute to the character and aesthetics of Shrewsbury, and provide scenic views.

Environmental benefits – Natural areas left in their natural state contribute to biodiversity, improved water quality and cleaner air.

Economic benefits – Protected open space enhances property values and is an appealing factor for new residents. People like the idea of living next to a property that will be protected because of its important environmental functions or scenic qualities. According to a recent report by the Trust for Public Land (2013),[36] open space preservation in Massachusetts increases property values. They cite studies and local examples that demonstrate how open space preservation stimulates real estate development and boosts property values, which in turn increases municipal tax revenues. The value of land is greater if it is adjacent to permanently protected open space, either publically accessible or privately held.

Quality open space and recreational areas also attract users who participate in organized programming through fees paid directly to the Town. These users may also stop by a local store to buy provisions before visiting an area, or end the day in a local restaurant after visiting a local park.

The Role of the 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan

The 2012 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)[37] outlines the Town policies and strategies to

protect and enhance its open space and recreational resources. The OSRP inventories the Town's natural environment and recreational facilities, outlines environmental challenges, and summarizes additional community needs. It was developed with a strong public participation effort and provides a vehicle through which the Town may apply for open space acquisition grant funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

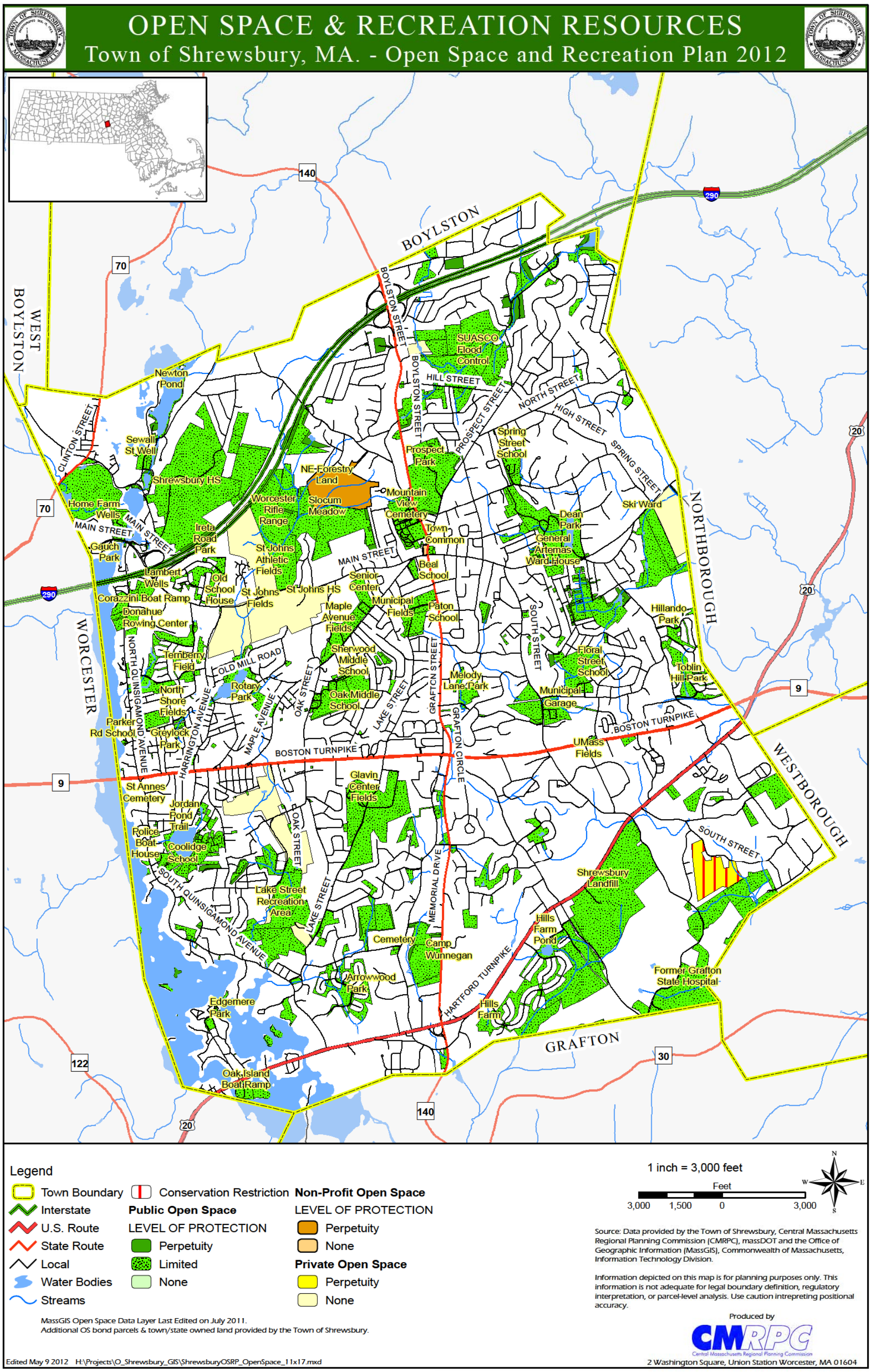
The OSRP provides a detailed, up to date discussion of the Town's lands with conservation and recreation interest. The OSRP outlines a seven-year action plan with priorities, responsible parties, collaborators, and resources needed for implementation. Like the Town's Housing Production Plan, the OSRP serves as a valuable resource for the Town and for the development of this Master Plan. References to these discussions are provided here and the reader should understand that the goals and policies of the OSRP are supported by the Master Plan. In some cases, language from the OSRP is lifted directly into this document in order to minimize duplicate discussion and ensure consistency.

In the OSRP, strong community desires have been expressed to acquire or control open space properties that will:

- Provide public access to Lake Quinisgamond;
- Provide greater protection to Shrewsbury drinking water supplies;
- Protect surface water resources;
- Protect sensitive habitat; and
- Provide recreational opportunity.

Map 3 is taken from the OSRP. It shows the Town's open space and recreation resources.

36 The Trust for Public Land. The Return on Investment in Parks and Open Space in Massachusetts. (September 2013). Available at http://communitypreservation.org/TPL-MA-ROI.pdf.
37 Shrewsbury Open Space and Recreation Plan (2012). Available at http://www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/.



Map 3. Open Space and Recreation Resources (2012 Shrewsbury Open Space and Recreation Plan)

Definitions

When we talk about open space and recreation lands, we are referring to diverse properties with a range of uses. As part of developing the OSRP, the Town inventoried lands from a variety of sources and included:

- Conservation lands: habitat protection with minimal recreation, such as walking trails
- Recreation lands: outdoor facilities such as Town parks, commons, playing fields, school fields, golf courses, bike paths, scout camps, and fish and game clubs. These may be privately or publicly owned facilities.
- Town forests
- Parkways: green buffers along roads, if they are a recognized conservation resource
- Agricultural land: land protected under an agricultural preservation restriction and administered by the state Department of Agricultural Resources
- Aquifer protection lands: not zoning overlay districts
- Watershed protection lands: not zoning overlay districts
- Cemeteries: if a recognized conservation or recreation resource
- Forest lands: if designated as a forest legacy area.

The inventory included properties that are both publically and privately held and have different levels of protection from future development. Some have no protection; however, the Town identified them because they are important resources where a level of protection should be considered in the future. The different levels of protection are:

In Perpetuity/Permanently Protected – Lands protected in perpetuity are legally protected and recorded as such in a deed or other official document. Examples of public lands protected in perpetuity are:

- Land owned by the Town, including the Conservation Commission or Water Department;
- Land with a Town conservation restriction;
- Land owned by one of the state's conservation agencies; or
- Land purchased or improved by the Town with federal or state assistance.

Lands acquired for watershed and aquifer protection, habitat conservation, or state parks are often permanently protected open space. Municipally-owned properties used for cemeteries, public recreation and conservation areas may be permanently protected via a Town Meeting Vote. Often these lands are placed under the ownership or protection of the Conservation Commission.

Private lands, including those owned by non-profit organizations, can also be protected in perpetuity through deed conservation restrictions, Conservation Restrictions[38] (Division of Conservation Services), Agricultural Preservation Restrictions[39] (Department of Agricultural Resources), historic preservation restrictions, or wetlands restrictions.

Temporary or Limited Protection – These lands include those legally protected for less than perpetuity (e.g. short term conservation restriction or Chapter 61[40] lands), or temporarily protected through an existing functional use. For example, some water district lands are only temporarily protected while water resource protection is their primary use. These lands could be developed for other uses at the end of their temporary protection or when their functional use is no longer necessary. These lands will revert to unprotected status at a given date unless protection status is extended. In addition, some easements may run for a more limited period (like 30 years), and those are not considered permanently protected.

Properties with limited protection are protected by legal mechanisms other than those above, or protected through functional or traditional use. These lands might be protected by a requirement of a majority municipal vote for any change in status. This designation also includes lands that are likely to remain open space for other reasons (e.g. cemeteries and municipal golf courses).

None – Privately owned land is not legally protected from future development. It could be sold without restriction at any time for another use. Examples

38 Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Land conservation planning and strategies: http://www.mass.gov/eea/state-parks-beaches/land-use-and-management/land-conservation/.
39 Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR) http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/land-use/agricultural-preservation-restriction-program-apr.html.
40 Massachusetts Forest Tax Program Chapter 61 program http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/forestry-and-fire-control/ma-current-use-forest-tax-program.html.

include scout camps, rod and reel clubs, private golf courses, and private woodlands.

Focus Areas for Open Space and Recreation

Strengthening Protection of Open Space and Recreation Lands

There are ways in which the Town can strengthen the protection of open space and recreation lands, particularly those with limited or no protection. During the public process for this Master Plan, residents continued to express concern over properties with limited or no protection from development and the need to ensure that there are opportunities to maintain and include them as part of the Town's protected open space and recreational resources.

Areas in Need of Protection

A large portion of the land around the Shrewsbury drinking water supply areas remain susceptible to contamination and should have increased protections, which can take the form of restrictions on use. Short of land acquisition or deed restrictions, efforts should be advanced to minimize negative impacts from point source contamination that may result from use mishandled chemicals, hazardous waste, or oil in the vicinity of these lands. One action can be to educate businesses, institutions, and residential property owners on methods to limit potential contamination of area water supplies from storm water runoff, failing septic systems, etc.

In order to protect wildlife habitat and water quality, it is best to first consider riparian corridors. Riparian corridors and associated habitat areas along brooks and streams are important "buffers" because they protect the stream from nutrient loading, erosion/sedimentation, and temperature increase (by providing shade, buffers keep stream water cool and thus maintain higher oxygen levels and more biotic activity). Riparian corridors are even more important where they connect other large blocks of protected open space and when adjoining streams contribute to surface water sources. Most wildlife use riparian corridors to travel throughout their home territories and to migrate seasonally. Many people also consider brooks and streams to be important components of scenic landscapes. Portions of the West Brook, Straw Hollow Brook, and Big Bummet Brook might be excellent examples of riparian corridors that currently need protection. These streams may be vulnerable to the pressures of growth in locations that do not have permanent protection. Protection of groundwater recharge areas along waterways will help to ensure high quality drinking water, as well as to preserve wildlife habitat.

Juniper Trail at Dean Park

Private Lands with Limited or No Protection

Many private landowners participate in voluntary Chapter 61 programs[41] that benefit forestry, agriculture, or open space uses. Owners of ten or more acres who manage their land for forestry uses can enroll in Chapter 61, which allows a 95 percent reduction in property taxes. Owners of five or more acres can enroll in Chapter 61A if they use their land for agriculture, or they can enroll in Chapter 61B if their land is used for open space/recreation purposes. The Chapter 61A and 61B programs also allow a reduction in property taxes. Communities have the right of first refusal on Chapter 61 lands if owners sell or convert to residential, commercial, or industrial uses (unless it is a residential use for a family member).

Stewardship of privately-owned lands preserves open fields and hilltops, productive forests and scenic stream valleys throughout the Town. Often, Chapter 61 lands have been owned by families for generations and are important places in Shrewsbury's history. The Town's right of first refusal on Chapter 61 properties is an important conservation and recreation opportunity. To be prepared, the Town should have a policy and a well-defined process for working with a Chapter 61 landowner who decides to divest the property.

There are also lands that could be of interest in protecting that currently are have no legal protection from future development. These include:

- Scandinavian Athletic Club
- AMF Town and Country Bowling Lanes

41 Ibid.

Jordon Pond Walking Trail

- Subliminal Indoor Skate Park
- Shrewsbury Health and Racquet Club
- Gymnastics Learning Center
- Ski Ward
- Shrewsbury Sportsmen's Club

In addition the following privately owned properties should also be investigated for use as open space or increased protections.

- Worcester Sand and Gravel - 113 acres on Holden St.
- The Artemis Ward Homestead (acreage uncertain) at 788 Main St.
- Veteran's Inc. - 21 acres at 59 South St.

Outreach to property owners and managers is the first step in learning the potential availability of these lands.

Public Lands and Non-Profits with Limited Protection

Not all publicly owned land is permanently protected. State land under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Management and Department of Fisheries and Wildlife is permanently protected open space, but Grafton State Hospital and Glavin Center lands are not committed to open space uses and are classified as unprotected. Currently the Town leases 63 acres from the State at Glavin Center for soccer fields and farming activities. Town lands that are managed for conservation and water supply purposes and Town parks are classified as protected, but school sites and land owned for general municipal purposes are listed as unprotected.

All Town-owned property, especially conservation and recreation lands, should be reviewed to evaluate the actual level of protection, so recommendations can be made to address these management issues. In addition, all Town-owned lands should be reviewed to determine suitability for low-impact recreation activities.

One open space preservation issue facing the Town is the lack of non-profit involvement. These organizations have been very helpful in other communities. Non-profits do not have the same restrictive processes that often slow down or stand in the way of municipal protection efforts. In some cases they may have cash to use for acquisition, but usually their real value comes in the form of expertise and good relations with individual property owners. In Shrewsbury, the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) is the only non-profit entity shown holding land. Several local organizations including, the Sudbury Valley Trustees, The Greater Worcester Land Trust, and the Grafton Forest and Lands Conservation Trust all cover Shrewsbury. Regional organizations such as Massachusetts Audubon and NEFF, and national organizations such as the Trust for Public Land, could all potentially lend assistance to the Town in helping preserve open space.

Increasing Public Access

A majority of the respondents in the OSRP survey indicated that the ability to access open space and recreational spaces by walking or biking was important, very important, or incredibly important. Residents during the Master Plan update process continued to express the need to increase or improve access to existing open space and recreation areas. Many steps can be taken to create more walkable or bikable routes around Town. Safer sidewalks and formalizing and mapping trails, bike routes, and paths can encourage more walkable communities. Parking has also been cited as an important issue, and facilities at certain recreational areas are limited. Increasing access to areas via walking and biking can decrease some of the demand for parking.

Connections between existing open spaces and recreational areas can also increase access. Development standards that incorporate the dedication of open space encourage these types of links with adjacent properties to create habitat corridors. They can also be used to connect pathways and bikeways to access different public resources.

While Shrewsbury has abundant recreational resources, many of its gems are apparently hidden. Many respondents were unaware of places such as Former Camp Wunnegan, Gauch Park, Greylock Park, New England Forestry Foundation, Rotary Park, Toblin Hills Park, and Hills Farm Pond.

One of the Town's greatest natural resources is Lake Quinsigamond; however, it has limited public access. Most of the land along its shore is privately held. Boating on the lake is very popular and views of the lake and across it from the shore are scenic. Finding resources and avenues to increase public access to Lake Quinsigamond and other ponds and lakes in Shrewsbury should be linked to improving water quality as well.

Trails Committee

Supporting the Town's efforts to increase public access to recreational areas and open spaces is the Shrewsbury Trails Committee. It was formed in 2012. There are many trails in Shrewsbury that are underutilized for various reasons, including inadequate parking, overgrowth and general lack of awareness, and the Trails Committee is working on strategies to address these issues. To promote local trails, they created a trails map that is available on the Town's website.[42] They are also working to identify ways to connect these trails into a town-wide network.

The Trails Committee is also participating in the development of the Boston Worcester Air Line Trolley Bike Trail.[43] The trail would extend from Lake Quinsigamond in Shrewsbury east through Westborough and would connect the towns of Shrewsbury, Northborough and Westborough. Three alternatives are being considered.

Acquiring New Open Space and Recreation Lands through the Development Process

Shrewsbury has several mechanisms it can use to acquire open space and recreation. It can purchase land and accept donations of land. Land development policies are also used to acquire land for the purpose of preserving open space and natural features in perpetuity for the public interest. Through a special permit, the Cluster Development is an option for residential subdivisions on five acres or more. At least 40 percent of the site must be dedicated as common open space. Open space must be contiguous and not fragmented throughout the site. It also must have the maximum value for wildlife habitat, aquifer recharge, riparian protection, scenic value, and/or historic and cultural value, and where possible, provide a connection to open space on adjacent properties.

Dean Park Pond

The open space can be conveyed to the Town as open space or park use, to a non-profit, or a corporation or trust owned by the owners of the subdivided lots in the development. If the open space is not dedicated to the Town, a conservation restriction must be placed on the land. The zoning bylaw outlines further criteria and requirements for dedication of the open space.

Planned Residential Development (PRD) is a special permit in the Rural AA zoning district that encourages a developer to maximize the amount of land reserved for open space, wildlife habitat, passive recreation, and agricultural, horticultural, and/or forestry uses. For a PRD, at least 60 percent of a site must be preserved as protected open space in perpetuity. Like Cluster Development, open space should be contiguous and make connections to adjacent resource areas. The PRD zoning bylaw details further open space requirements and permitted uses. Ownership of the open space is either the Shrewsbury Conservation Commission; a non-profit organization; a private owner for agricultural, horticultural, forestry, or other purposes not consistent with a conservation restriction; or a homeowners association. Land not dedicated to the Conservation Commission must have a conservation or agricultural preservation restriction.

Goals, Policies and Actions

The OSRP articulates goals and objectives, which are provided below. The OSRP also includes a seven-year action plan with detailed strategies, responsible parties and timeframe for completion. This detail is not provided here, but should be referenced to identify future actions by the Town in meeting open space and recreation needs. The OSRP contains a seven-year action plan that serves as the implementation plan for open space and recreation goals and objectives.

42 Shrewsbury Trail Maps available at http://www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/egov/docs/1380562561635.htm.

43 Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, Boston Worcester Air Line Bike Trail Route Planning. (2013) Available at http://www.cmrpc.org/sites/default/files/Documents/CDAP/OGP/BWALT%20summary%20report%20v1%20compiled.pdf.

2012 Shrewsbury Open Space and Recreation Plan: Goals & Objectives

Goal I: Protect and preserve open space parcels.

A. Minimize net loss of protected biohabitat.

B. Minimize net loss of forested acres.

C. Town and OSRP implementation committee to meet with nonprofit conservation organizations on a regular basis to discuss cooperative efforts related to open space preservation activities.

Goal II: Protect and enhance habitat.

A. Educate the public about prudent and best practices with respect to the Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB). Increase distribution of educational material regarding ALB to schools, developers, and others.

B. Increase distribution of educational material regarding special habitats to schools, developers, and others.

C. Increase the number of volunteer or other community building events such as community, field or stream cleanups.

Goal III: Plan and develop greenways in the Town with consideration to appropriate regional connections.

A. Increase mapped paths, trails, bike and pedestrian routes by 100%.

B. Launch efforts with neighboring towns to develop greenway connections.

C. Perform a Walkable Communities Survey.

Goal IV: Maintain and enhance the Town's recreational facilities.

A. Increase participation in active recreation activities.

B. Increase the non-municipal funding for open space protection and recreation by 20% by 2019.

C. Improve the level of satisfaction with recreation facilities to generally "satisfied" or "very satisfied" among all age groups.

D. Improve the awareness of the open space and recreation facilities among all residents.

E. Increase the public access to water bodies.

Goal V: Protect the Town's potable drinking water sources.

A. Permanently protect more land area in the Lake Quinsigamond watershed to protect the surface and ground water supplies.

B. Educate businesses and developers within wellhead protection areas about low impact development practices and opportunities for watershed land protection.

C. Align public policy and regulations with low impact development, green, healthy community and similar approaches.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan prioritizes the actions discussed in the Master Plan. Individuals, groups and municipal departments are assigned as responsible for bringing the action forward. The coordination of the Implementation Plan is done through the Master Plan Implementation Committee. The Committee monitors progress and will work on updates as needed.

Time Frames for Completion:

- Short Term (ST) – within 3 years
- Mid Term (MT) – 3 to 10 years
- Long Term (LT) – more than 10 years
- Ongoing

Responsible Parties:

AO – Assessor's Office

BD – Building Department

BOS – Board of Selectmen

CC – Conservation Commission

COA – Council on the Aging

E – Engineering

FD – Fire Department

HDC – Historic District Commission

HwyD – Highway Department

IC – Implementation Committee

LIB – Library

OSRPC – Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee

PB – Planning Board

PBD – Public Buildings Department

PD – Police Department

PED – Planning and Economic Development

PRC – Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Department

RHA – Central MA Regional Health Alliance

SBH – Shrewsbury Board of Health

SchC – School Committee

SchD – School Department

SDC – Shrewsbury Development Corporation

SELCO – Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations

SHA – Shrewsbury Housing Authority

SwD – Sewer Department

TM – Town Manager

WD – Water Department

ZBA – Zoning Board of Appeals

Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party

Land Use

Goal LU1: Continually engage the community in an open and transparent public planning process when making land use decisions.		
Policy LU1.1: Educate Shrewsbury residents about land use issues and the planning process.		
a. Keep the Town's website updated with current information about ongoing and upcoming planning projects.	ST/ Ongoing	PED
b. Use existing Town events to showcase successful local planning efforts.	ST	PED
c. Design a process to communicate with individual neighborhoods as a way to reach residents and distribute information about, upcoming events, specific projects, or planning topics of interest (e.g. transportation, traffic flow, stormwater runoff, flooding, mixed use, housing)	ST	PED, TM, BOS, PB, E
Policy LU1.2: Support local boards and commissions in their ability to make sound land use decisions.		
a. Continue to offer boards and commissions the opportunity to participate in land use training events, such as webinars and conferences.	Ongoing	PED, TM, BOS
b. Distribute educational materials and relevant articles that exemplify and promote the goals and objectives of the Town's Master Plan.	ST/ Ongoing	PED, IC, PB
Goal LU2: Promote land use patterns that are compatible with the Town's natural environment and existing landscape character.		
Policy LU2.1: Guide development and redevelopment into areas that have the physical, environmental, and infrastructure capacity to absorb and reduce impacts.		
a. Reevaluate Shrewsbury's zoning bylaw to ensure that zoning in each district is compatible with the character of the land.	ST	PED, PB, ZBA
b. Review the existing zoning bylaw for needed revisions to strengthen protection of natural resources.	ST/ Ongoing	PED, PB, ZBA
Policy LU2.2: Discourage development in environmentally sensitive areas, including land that provides wildlife habitat or groundwater recharge.		
a. Where feasible, acquire lands that contribute to the quality and diversity of wildlife habitat, or the protection of the Town's drinking water supply.	MT	PED, PB, BOS, TM, PRC, CC
b. Continue to require developers to identify critical environmental, historic and cultural resources on their properties. Develop incentives for their protection if they are outside of environmental protection or historic districts. Examples to explore include, but not limited to, Wetlands Bylaw and Demolition Delay Bylaw as well as standards for minimum slopes, stormwater runoff, lot dimensions, and lot coverage.	MT	PED, PB, BOS, CC, HDC

AO – Assessor's Office BD – Building Department BOS – Board of Selectmen CC – Conservation Commission COA – Council on the Aging E – Engineering FD – Fire Department HDC – Historic District Commission HwyD – Highway Department IC – Implementation Committee	LIB – Library OSRPC – Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee PB – Planning Board PBD – Public Buildings Department PD – Police Department PED – Planning and Economic Development PRC – Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Department	RHA – Central MA Regional Health Alliance SBH – Shrewsbury Board of Health SchC – School Committee SchD – School Department SDC – Shrewsbury Development Corporation SELCO – Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations SHA – Shrewsbury Housing Authority	SwD – Sewer Department TM – Town Manager WD – Water Department ZBA – Zoning Board of Appeals **Time Frame for Completion** Short Term (ST) – within 3 years Mid Term (MT) – 3 to 10 years Long Term (LT) – more than 10 years

Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Goal LU3: Balance growth with community character.		
Policy LU3.1: Balance the need for additional non-residential development to increase the local tax base with existing residential neighborhoods.		
a. Develop design standards and site design guidance similar to what was developed in the overlay districts to minimize impacts on adjacent neighborhoods while still allowing meaningful commercial development to take place.	MT	PED, PB
Policy LU3.2: Ensure that local regulations and policies are directing development to desired results.		
a. Review existing zoning bylaw to identify ways to strengthen the transformation of such areas as Route 9, Route 20, Main Street at Route 290, and Route 9/Oak Street into economically viable districts.	ST	PED, PB
b. Review special overlay districts to ensure that incentives are achieving desirable results and the community is receiving positive benefits from developers that take advantage of these incentives.	MT	PED, PB
Policy LU3.3: Encourage high-quality redevelopment and infill of commercial and industrial areas.		
a. Develop town-wide guidelines for commercial and industrial development that promote high quality design that is attractive	MT	PED, PB, BOS
b. Study access management strategies that are most appropriate for different areas of Town, prioritizing Route 9, Route 20 and the Town Center.	LT	E, PED
Goal LU4: Strengthen and preserve Shrewsbury's Town Center.		
Policy LU4.1: Maintain and enhance the character of Shrewsbury's historic Town Center by promoting appropriate development and redevelopment.		
a. Review the existing zoning bylaw to ensure that the remaining traditional features of the Town Center remain intact and future infill is complementary to the compact style of the area.	ST	PED, HDC, IC, PB
Policy LU4.2: Promote the Town Center as a pedestrian-friendly shopping and service area and a neighborhood gathering place.		
a. Conduct a design study of the Town Center to help focus ideas and develop a clear vision for the area. Through the study, determine the limits of the Town Center and its sphere of influence. Consider making recommendations for managing parking, building design guidelines, connectivity to nearby uses (Town Hall or Prospect Park), streetscape improvements, wayfinding, and historic preservation.	ST	PED, PB, HDC, BOS, E
b. Explore the interest in developing a business association and the feasibility of an independent organization that promotes the Town Center as a cultural center for Shrewsbury.	ST	PED, LIB, SDC

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Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party

Economic Development

Goal ED1: Goal ED1: Create an economic development strategic plan.		
Policy ED1.1: Continue to revisit the Town's short and mid-term economic strategies, focusing both on increasing the tax base and building a diverse and durable employment base.		
a. Conduct an annual economic development strategic planning process and develop a coherent economic development vision.	ST	SDC, PED, BOS
b. Enlist participation from local businesses, the business associations that are active in Shrewsbury, and non-profit employers as well.	ST	SDC, PED
c. Identify business retention and business attraction priorities.	MT	SDC, BOS, PED
d. Provide opportunities for businesses and residents to participate in the planning process online.	ST	PED
Policy ED1.2. Reinvigorate the SDC to provide leadership and support for town-wide economic development policy and economic development initiatives. The SDC's responsibilities could include any or all of the following:		
a. Take the lead in coordinating an economic development strategic planning process and updating the plan each year (per above).	MT	SDC, PED
b. Sponsor education programs for Shrewsbury's small business establishments and self-employed people.	MT	SDC, PED
c. Review the existing inventory of commercial and industrial sites, conduct a risk assessment, identify priority parcels that may be appropriate candidates for obtaining site control in order to steer development toward Town-preferred opportunities.	MT	SDC, PED
d. Provide business retention and attraction support.	MT	SDC, PED
e. Assist the Board of Selectmen and Town staff with marketing and promotions for Shrewsbury as a desirable place to do business (see also, Policy 2.2).	MT	SDC
f. Review proposed commercial and industrial site plan and special permit applications and provide comments to approval authorities on project consistency with the strategic plan.	MT	SDC, PED
Policy ED1.3: Monitor the town's progress on achieving short- and longer-term economic development goals and objectives.		
a. Determine appropriate roles and responsibilities of the SDC	ST	BOS, SDC
b. Hold periodic (annual) roundtable events to examine the state of Shrewsbury's economy and update goals	MT	SDC
Goal ED2: Support economic development activity in Shrewsbury that provides needed services and contributes to the local tax base.		
Policy ED2.1: Provide infrastructural support for economic development.		
a. Plan for and complete sewer extensions along Route 20.	MT	E, SwD
b. Improve intersection signage and lighting in commercial and industrial districts.	MT	E, HwyD
c. Develop consolidated business and way-finding signage for the commercial and industrial districts.	MT	PED, E, HwyD, HDC
d. Increase wastewater capacity.	LT	BOS, E, SwD

Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party
e. Continue to work with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and other agencies and organizations to ensure that Shrewsbury has enough water to support economic development (see also, Public Facilities Goal P1).	LT	BOS, E, WD
f. Study the provision of shuttle access to/from business parks, connecting with the Grafton MBTA station, UMass Medical campus, or other locations.	MT	PED
Policy ED2.2: Promote Shrewsbury to the business community as a strong, centrally located, networked, and well-resourced place to do business.		
a. Support the growth of a bio-tech/medical products industry including the creation of a partnership with UMass Medical School, and elevating the town's "BioReady" status to platinum level.	MT	SDC, PED
b. Develop stronger relationships with UMass Medical School and Tufts Veterinary School, including internship/externship opportunities.	MT	SDC, PED, SBH
c. Create a marketing campaign directed at firms that conduct business location services.	MT	SDC, PED
d. Coordinate with neighboring cities and towns, particularly with other Corridor Nine communities and Worcester, to establish a regional bio-tech or life sciences business cluster environment.	LT	SDC, PED
Policy ED2.3: Resolve vacancies and the underdevelopment of commercial and industrial properties.		
a. Ensure staffing in the Planning Department is sufficient for economic development planning and operations.	ST	TM
b. Consider flex-zoning to allow for additional uses of part of Centech Park North.	ST	PB, PED
c. Perform a comprehensive update to local zoning and other regulations to ensure a transparent and efficient regulatory process and reduce or eliminate the need for use variances.	MT	PB, PED, BOS, IC
d. Engage commercial and industrial property owners in working collaboratively to attract and secure tenants that provide higher-wage jobs, consistent with the Town's economic development goals.	ST	PED
Goal ED3: Promote economic development strategies that maintain or enhance environmental quality and sustainability.		
Policy ED3.1: Promote redevelopment of existing retail and commercial areas into mixed-use retail/office and research & development/industrial centers through zoning, infrastructure planning, and marketing the town.		
a. Promote redevelopment of existing retail and service areas in order to upgrade the quality of development and increases the mix of uses.	MT	SDC, PED, PB
b. Identify appropriate areas to modify zoning or circulation patterns so as to promote the development of more integrated centers.	ST	PED, IC

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Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party
c. Work with the Town's legislators and state housing agencies to direct new mixed-income housing developments to residentially zoned land near goods and services.	LT	BOS, TM, PED
Policy ED3.2. Support and encourage independent small business as a significant component of Shrewsbury's overall business mix.		
a. Continue to audit fees and other regulatory requirements (e.g., parking requirements) that can serve as a burden to business development.	ST	BOS, SDC, PED
b. Remove unnecessary barriers to home-based business while maintaining reasonable protections for residential neighborhoods.	ST	PB, PED
c. Ensure zoning regulations allow for development that may include flex-space, shared resources, combined manufacturing and sales of specialty goods, and other characteristics of entrepreneurial activity.	ST	PB, PED
d. Evaluate demand, need for, and feasibility of developing "incubator" facilities to support emerging small businesses and provide co-work spaces for self-employed entrepreneurs.	MT	SDC, PED

Public Services and Facilities

Goal P1: Provide functional, sustainable and efficient public services and facilities.		
Policy P1.1: Provide adequate water, sewer, electric and communications infrastructure in order to promote Shrewsbury's land use objectives.		
a. Review existing bylaws to ensure that aquifer recharge areas are protected. Work with neighboring communities to make certain portions of the aquifer areas within their jurisdiction are meeting Shrewsbury drinking water quality objectives.	MT	PED, PB, BOS, E, CC
b. Continue to investigate and evaluate alternatives to increase the Town's potential water supply to meet SWMI requirements.	Ongoing	E, WD
c. Monitor new development to ensure that Shrewsbury's residences and business have sufficient water for their needs, but do not exceed the capacity of the local aquifer to supply water.	Ongoing	E, PB, PED, ED
d. Continue to provide reliable service to areas that are currently serviced by water and sewer.	Ongoing	E, SwD
e. Expand sewer service only where it is required to mitigate environmental problems or promote land use objectives.	LT	E, SwD
f. Monitor and update the Town's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan/Environmental Impact Report as needed to meet water quality objectives.	Ongoing	E, SwD
g. Continue to upgrade electric and communication infrastructure to provide Shrewsbury residences and businesses with high quality service with current technology.	Ongoing	SELCO, PD, FD
h. Stay engaged with state and federal regulatory environmental requirements; monitor unfunded mandates and the restrictions that may result from decisions around these requirements.	Ongoing	E
Policy P1.2: Continue the school district's reputation for excellence and recognize its value to the community at large.		
a. Monitor the adequacy of school buildings and provide expansions, renovations, or new facilities when necessary.	Ongoing	PBD, SchD

Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party
b. Ensure that the highest educational standards are maintained.	Ongoing	SchC, SchD
c. Support the community's long-range academic program needs.	Ongoing	SchC, SchD, BOS
d. Establish partnerships with municipal departments, boards and commissions to meet student community volunteer objectives.	ST	SchC, SchD
Policy P1.3: Ensure that public services and facilities adapt as the population grows, demands increase and community needs change.		
a. Maintain an updated long-range capital improvement plan, schedule and budget to ensure the timely and fiscally responsible provision of new Town facilities and capital projects.	Ongoing	E, SwD, WD, PBD, HwyD, TM, BOS
b. Ensure that there will be sufficient Town land for the construction or expansion of public facilities, and investigate acquiring additional properties as necessary.	MT	E, PED, BOS, TM
c. Increase capacity of electronic recordkeeping across municipal departments to minimize redundancy.	ST	BD, AO, PED, E, TM, SELCO
d. Build capacity of support organizations to provide enhancement funds for municipal services and programs as appropriate.	Ongoing	SchD, SchC, LIB, HDC, PRC, COA
e. Identify additional staffing and equipment needs to maintain existing municipal services and ensure the health, safety and welfare of the community. Evaluate alternatives for funding (tax structure, grants, etc.) to support current and future needs.	ST	HwyD, PRC, WD, SwD, TM, PD, FD

Housing

Goal H1: Preserve and enhance the physical character of Shrewsbury's established neighborhoods.		
Policy H1.1: Explore new regulatory and advisory tools to maintain neighborhood character, such as zoning changes and advisory design guidelines.		
a. Ensure that new development projects protect existing trees to the degree feasible and restore some trees removed during the construction process.	ST/ Ongoing	PB
b. Consider the benefits and drawbacks of instituting a large-house review process for single-family residences over a certain size (measured in floor area).	MT	PED, HDC, PB
c. Consider the benefits and drawbacks of a demolition delay bylaw as a mechanism for managing the impact of teardowns on older, established neighborhoods.	MT	PED, HDC
Policy H1.2: Preserve and enhance the walkable character of Shrewsbury neighborhoods.		
a. Maintain sidewalks and pedestrian paths serving existing neighborhoods.	ST/ Ongoing	HwyD
b. Investigate opportunities to establish a Safe Routes to School program and leverage funding for pedestrian improvements.	MT	SchD, PD, HwyD
c. Provide adequate lighting and continuous sidewalks for pedestrians.	MT	HwyD

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WD – Water Department
ZBA – Zoning Board of Appeals

Time Frame for Completion
Short Term (ST) – within 3 years
Mid Term (MT) – 3 to 10 years
Long Term (LT) – more than 10 years

Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Goal H2: Implement the Town's Five-Year Housing Production Plan.		
Policy H2.1: Establish a Housing Partnership of citizen volunteers to oversee the Housing Production Plan and advise the Town on affordable housing policies.		
a. Develop guidelines for review of Chapter 40B comprehensive permits, including incentives (such as true streamlined permitting) for projects that address the Town's policy preferences.	ST	PED, Hsg. Partnership
b. Develop expertise to administer affordable housing funds received from developers who are subject to the inclusionary zoning bylaw.	MT	PED, Hsg. Partnership
c. Increase advocacy for housing diversity and affordability.	MT	Hsg. Partnership, SHA
d. Strengthen capacity to identify, analyze, and respond to housing needs in the community.	MT	Hsg. Partnership, PED
e. Build knowledge and credibility to review and comment on proposed Chapter 40B regulatory and policy changes and to lobby on Shrewsbury's behalf.	ST	BOS, PB
f. Create a housing resource guide that describes local, regional, and state-level housing assistance programs, including fuel assistance, housing improvement assistance, resources for public/subsidized housing and tenant assistance.	MT	Hsg. Partnership
Policy H2.2: Maintain timely updates of the Five-Year Housing Production Plan and expand the Town's toolkit for implementation.		
a. Enlist participation from the Housing Partnership to survey the Town's housing needs (including but not limited to affordable housing needs).	ST	Hsg. Partnership
b. Continue to pursue partnerships with developers to create new affordable housing.	MT	PED, Hsg. Partnership
c. Study and consider options for simplifying the inclusionary zoning bylaw.	MT	PED
d. Explore opportunities to use Chapter 40R (alone or in conjunction with District Improvement Financing (DIF) or Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing) to create mixed-income developments that provide a financial benefit to the Town.	MT	PED, TM
Goal H3: Address the varied housing needs of Shrewsbury's seniors and young adults entering the workforce.		
Policy H3.1: Prepare for success as a multigenerational community.		
a. Conduct an independent livability policies and practices review.	MT	COA
b. Identify and reduce or eliminate barriers (if any) to being an "age-friendly" community.	MT	COA, BOS
c. Consider opportunities for zoning to encourage accessory dwellings (apartments or free-standing cottage structures) that could address some senior housing needs and also provide housing options for young householders.	ST	PB
d. Work with the Shrewsbury Housing Authority to increase the inventory of accessible senior housing units.	MT	Hsg. Partnership

Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Goal H4: Promote mixed-use developments in the Lakeway area and other areas identified in the master plan or through area or district plans.		
Policy H4.1: Work with the state to coordinate the project eligibility review process for affordable housing with Town's mixed-use development policies.		
a. Form a coalition with other Central Massachusetts suburbs to work with the Governor's office and DHCD to make the Chapter 40B project eligibility process more responsive to local planning concerns.	MT	BOS, PB

Transportation

Goal T1: Provide a safe and efficient transportation system for all modes.		
Policy T1.1: Improve traffic safety at key intersections.		
a. Coordinate with MassDOT and the Shrewsbury Police Department to identify high crash locations.	ST	E, PD, HwyD
b. Initiate studies and/or Roadway Safety Audits to identify potential improvements for high-accident locations.	MT	E, HwyD
c. Implement recommendations from studies and/or Roadway Safety Audits.	LT	E, HwyD
d. Coordinate with CMRPC to have safety studies conducted.	MT	E, HwyD
e. Coordinate with CMRPC to apply for grants for improving traffic safety.	MT	E, HwyD
Policy T1.2: Promote safe and efficient travel along arterial routes, such as Route 9 and Route 20.		
a. Initiate corridor studies of the arterial routes within Shrewsbury that identify problem areas and potential improvements.	ST	E, PED, HwyD
b. Implement curb cut guidelines along arterials that promote regional road-network access over local parcel access. Work with MassDOT towards these goals for roadways that fall under state jurisdiction.	MT	E
c. Provide adequate lighting and continuous sidewalks for pedestrians.	MT	E, HwyD
Policy T1.3: Maintain roadways and sidewalks.		
a. Continue to implement and update the pavement management program to maintain and rehabilitate roadways and sidewalks.	ST/ Ongoing	HwyD
b. Enhance the pavement management system into an asset management program to include: parking, snow removal, markings, signage, and traffic control devices.	MT	HwyD
c. Investigate revisions to the General By Laws to have property owners keep abutting sidewalks clear of debris, snow, etc.	MT	HwyD, BOS
d. Identify potential funding sources for implementation of maintenance projects.	MT	HwyD, E

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FD – Fire Department
HDC – Historic District Commission
HwyD – Highway Department
IC – Implementation Committee
LIB – Library
OSRPC – Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee
PB – Planning Board
PBD – Public Buildings Department
PD – Police Department
PED – Planning and Economic Development
PRC – Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Department
RHA – Central MA Regional Health Alliance
SBH – Shrewsbury Board of Health
SchC – School Committee
SchD – School Department
SDC – Shrewsbury Development Corporation
SELCO – Shrewsbury Electric and Cable Operations
SHA – Shrewsbury Housing Authority
SwD – Sewer Department
TM – Town Manager
WD – Water Department
ZBA – Zoning Board of Appeals

Time Frame for Completion
Short Term (ST) – within 3 years
Mid Term (MT) – 3 to 10 years
Long Term (LT) – more than 10 years

Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Policy T1.4: Integrate the transportation-land use connection for future development to manage traffic and parking demand.		
a. Encourage employer Transportation Demand Management programs in order to reduce traffic congestion around employment and retail centers. As examples, these programs typically include features such as carpool incentives, employee reimbursement of public transit fares, staggered work hours, and facilities for bicyclists such as showers and bike racks/security.	ST	E, PB
b. Strengthen shared parking policies. Encourage interconnection of adjacent developments and parking areas.	ST	PED, PB
c. Pursue interconnection between subdivisions. Incorporate this element into the subdivision approval process.	ST	PED, PB
d. Review parking requirements in zoning bylaws and make adjustments to ensure that average condition parking needs are met while avoiding the implementation of spaces that are rarely utilized.	ST	PED, PB, IC
Goal T2: Support a variety of transportation choices for multimodal travel within Shrewsbury, including healthy and environmentally sustainable options.		
Policy T2.1: Improve accommodation for non-motorized modes (walking and bicycling), especially at key locations like the Town Center, near schools, churches and other public spaces.		
a. Identify locations and install bicycle racks, pedestrian benches, street art, and vegetation, to enhance the built environment for non-motorized users.	ST	PED, E
b. Initiate a study of the Route 140/Main, Main/Maple, and Route 140/Prospect intersections to identify pedestrian and bicycle improvements.	MT	PED, E
c. Develop a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle network that include low stress routes for all abilities and utilitarian routes for experienced users.	MT	PED, E
d. Continue to explore the Boston to Worcester Airline Trail with Northborough and Westborough.	Ongoing	PED, E, PRC, OSRPC
e. Include pedestrian and bicycle improvements in all roadway improvement and resurfacing programs. Identify roadways with sufficient width and implement bike facilities.	ST	E, HwyD
f. Identify key missing links and desired paths in the pedestrian and bicycle network. Develop a program to fill the gaps.	ST	E, PED
g. Initiate a “Safe Routes to School” and/or “Safe Routes to Play” program and implement the recommendations.	MT	PED, SchD
Policy T2.2: Expand and support public transportation service, including local and regional bus transit, and paratransit services for senior and disabled populations, in a manner consistent with other community goals.		
a. Provide adequate curbside and streetside facilities for bus operations, including clearly marked bus and bus stop amenities that enhance rider comfort and safety.	Ongoing	E, PED, HwyD
b. Coordinate with MassDOT, WRTA, and the MWRTA to identify and implement expanded service within Shrewsbury. Focus on connections to MBTA Commuter Rail for community members without cars and seniors, add connections to Worcester’s colleges and business centers, and provide links to MWRTA.	ST	E, PED
c. In conjunction with sidewalk programs, identify missing links in pedestrian infrastructure between bus stops and residential areas with high transit usage, and implement improvements.	MT	E, PED, HwyD

Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party
Policy T2.3: Promote education among pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists on how to safely use the road and interact with other users.		
a. Develop and implement a public education program about bicycle safety and bicyclist and motorist rights and responsibilities. Establish and organize "Bike to School Days" and "Bike to Work Days".	MT	SchD, SchC
b. Develop and implement a bicycle safety curriculum in schools and library in conjunction with MassBike.	MT	SchD, SchC
c. Develop an educational enforcement program with the Shrewsbury Police Department.	MT	SchD, SchC, PD
Policy T2.4: Promote education among the public about the benefits of active transportation modes for recreational and utilitarian trips, and encourage these activities.		
a. Develop an education campaign about the benefits of active transportation.	LT	PED
b. Develop an annual community event with local businesses that activates Town Center streets by temporarily eliminating vehicular traffic. For example, use the Town Common as the center of the event and close Church Street and adjacent lanes on Main Street and Route 140.	MT	PED, HwyD, E, LIB, HDC, PD
Policy T2.5: Adopt a Complete Streets policy that provides for a variety of transportation choices that meet the needs of all age groups, abilities, and preferences.		
a. Utilize the complete streets training completed by Town officials to educate decision makers and implement methodologies throughout Town.	Ongoing	PED, E
b. Work with the Central Massachusetts Regional Health Alliance and Town of Shrewsbury Board of Health when developing complete street guidelines.	LT	PED, RHA, SBH
c. Develop and/or adopt a complete streets policy for Shrewsbury.	MT	PED, E, PB, SBH
d. Require that appropriate roadway projects incorporate the complete streets policy.	MT	E, HwyD
Goal T3: Provide a well-connected transportation system, within Shrewsbury and to the region.		
Policy T3.1: Establish and enhance connections between major destinations and neighborhoods within Shrewsbury.		
a. Coordinate with local stakeholders when developing pedestrian, bicycle, transit and arterial roadway improvements identified in the action items above.	Ongoing	PED, E
b. In tandem with a Safe Routes to School Program, work with schools to study traffic impacts from schools on local roadways and initiate short and long-term improvements.	MT	E, PED, SchD
Policy T3.2: Promote regional connectivity to support economic development.		
a. Identify missing links for regional connectivity and pursue solutions.	ST	PED, E

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Action	Timeframe	Responsible Party
b. Identify and encourage development within areas that have regional connectivity.	LT	PED, PB
Policy T3.3: Provide local and regional connections between modes of transportation.		
a. Coordinate with regional transportation providers (MBTA, MassDOT, and WRTA) to ensure Shrewsbury residents can make efficient connections between modes.	Ongoing	PED, COA
b. Investigate potential connections with the Metrowest Regional Transit system.	LT	PED
Policy T3.4: Manage finite parking resources to accommodate the needs of residents, commuters, and local businesses.		
a. Inventory the Town Center parking supply and initiate programs to encourage high turnover for businesses and safe and efficient parking for residents and commuters.	MT	PED, HDC, LIB
b. Develop strategically placed parking areas to encourage carpooling (park 'n ride lots) and to allow mode shifts (parking with access to MBTA train).	MT	PED

Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources

Goal NHC1: Preserve, protect, manage, and restore Shrewsbury's natural resources.		
Policy NHC1.1: Protect and enhance the quality of Shrewsbury's surface and groundwater resources.		
a. Consider the feasibility of acquiring the land in the aquifer recharge area.	LT	CC, BOS, E
b. Implement strategies of EPA's NPDES permit to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff and reduce illicit connections and discharges.	Ongoing	E, CC
c. Implement a Stormwater Utility as a tool to meet NPDES permit requirements and create a sustained funding mechanism for stormwater management.	ST	E, BOS, TM
d. Encourage the use of low impact design and vegetated stormwater management practices as a way to increase water quality protection and groundwater recharge.	Ongoing	PB, PED, E, CC
e. Identify, certify, and protect vernal pools and other habitats of unique value to wildlife.	Ongoing	CC
f. Maximize habitat value by protecting contiguous tracts of open space and by linking open space parcels to promote wildlife movement.	Ongoing	CC
g. Explore funding opportunities through the state's Drinking Water Supply Grant Program.	ST	E
Policy NHC1.2: Protect residents, business owners and resources from the impacts of flooding and erosion.		
a. Continue to revisit and revise local regulatory and design standards to account for increased storm frequency and severity related to climate change.	MT	E, PED, BOS
b. Ensure development proposals demonstrate awareness of upstream contributions and downstream impacts related to stormwater management	Ongoing	PB, PED
Policy NHC1.3: Protect forests, wetlands, fields, and ponds from the harmful impacts of invasive species.		
a. Prohibit the planting of any species that is listed on the most recent version of the Massachusetts Invasive Plants Advisory Group (MIPAG)	Ongoing	PB, E, CC
b. Provide continuing education to municipal staff about the identification, management and removal of invasive plant species.	ST	E, PRC, CC

c. Continue to manage tree pruning and cutting in accordance with the regulations set forth by DCS for the Asian Longhorned Beetle.	Ongoing	HwyD, PRC
d. Implement the tree planting program to replace trees that have been cleared because of the Asian Longhorned Beetle.	ST/ Ongoing	HwyD, PRC
Policy NHC1.4: Protect residents, business owners and resources from the impacts of historic and any potential future discharges of hazardous materials or waste.		
a. Continue to revisit and revise local regulatory and design standards to ensure the use of best practices in storing and handling hazardous materials.	MT	E, PED, BOS, TM, FD
b. Coordinate with the Mass Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to ensure the efficient and effective clean-up for any existing contaminated sites.	MT	E, BOS, SBH, FD
Goal NHC2: Protect and document Shrewsbury's historic and cultural resources.		
Policy NHC2.1 Protect the Town's historic buildings and sites against significant alteration, demolition or incompatible development.		
a. Review the bylaws of the Shrewsbury Historic District Commission to ensure they have the authority and tools needed to meet stated objectives.	ST	HDC, PED, BOS
b. Increase awareness of historic properties and structures as well as historic and cultural events that have taken place in Shrewsbury. Do this in conjunction with the Public Library and Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Department programming.	ST	HDC, LIB, PRC
c. Consider the Community Preservation Act as a potential resource for preservation efforts.	MT	HDC, BOS, PED
d. Support efforts to preserve and digitize historic artifacts and documents.	LT	HDC, LIB, SELCO
Policy NHC2.2 Build on existing cultural assets to expand the community's cultural experiences.		
a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of cultural resources in Shrewsbury.	ST	HDC, LIB, OSRPC
b. Find opportunities to link existing historic and cultural organizations with other active groups in Shrewsbury.	MT	HDC, LIB, PRC
c. Identify potential locations for artists as live/work spaces.	LT	PB, PED
d. Support the implementation of the Shrewsbury Public Schools Strategic Priorities: 2012 – 2016.	Ongoing	SchC, SchD
e. Support the implementation of Shrewsbury Public Library Strategic Plan of Service 2012-2016 and the FY2016 Action Plan.	Ongoing	LIB
f. Build capacity of local organizations that support the library, schools, and other institutions that provide enhancement funds for services, programs and other activities. These groups include the Friends of the Shrewsbury Public Library, the Shrewsbury Public Library Foundation, and School's Colonial Fund, among others.	Ongoing	LIB, SchC, SchD, HDC, PRC
g. Develop ways to recognize growing diverse populations in Shrewsbury as a way to celebrate different cultures and expand residents' experiences.	Ongoing	LIB, SchC, SchD, HDC, PRC

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Appendix A
Public Workshop Summaries

Shrewsbury Master Plan Update
Public Workshop #1
Summary

As part of the Master Plan Update process, approximately 60 Shrewsbury residents met on Monday, November 18, 2013 to discuss the pressing issues in town and how the Master Plan might help. To start the evening off, Kristen Las, Shrewsbury's Principal Planner and Economic Development Coordinator, welcomed everyone and gave a brief introduction of herself and the consultant team, and the purpose of the evening – to begin the public engagement piece of the Master Plan Update. The consultant team, Horsley Witten Group, McMahon and Associates, and RKG Associates, was going to give an overview of what a master plan, and then lead the group through an exercise that got them thinking about what Shrewsbury looks like today and how it might be transformed in the future.

Nate Kelly of the Horsley Witten Group started with a brief presentation [link to presentation]. He explained what the Master Plan is, what's in it, and how it is used. He also gave an overview of the Master Plan update process.

The focus of the evening was the group exercise. Each table was going to talk about areas of Shrewsbury that need to be preserved or protected as they are, areas that had good bones but need to be strengthened to realize their full potential, and areas that didn't function as they were and need to be transformed. For the areas that are need to be transformed, the group was asked to think of how the area might change for the better, what it might look like, and what are the challenges to making it happen. To help spark ideas, Nate offered in his presentation examples of other communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island that have taken specific initiatives to transform areas of their towns to generate economic development or create neighborhoods. Each table at the workshop was given a town-wide map to mark areas with Post-Its and markers. A facilitator was assigned to lead and guide discussion and a note taker documented what was discussed on flip charts.

There were common issues that came out of all the tables.

Areas that residents wanted to **preserve** were Dean Park and Prospect Park.

Areas to **strengthen** were the Lakeway District, White City/Route 9 commercial corridor, Route 20 corridor, and Lake Quinsigamond.

Participants talked extensively about areas of Town that could be **transformed**, what they might look like, and the challenges that would have to be overcome to make the transformations. The following provides a summary of all the tables.

Route 9/Lakeview District/Spags/White City

What would it look like?

- More walkable

- More attractive
- A mix of uses
- A business association that would lead improvements in the area and all businesses could participate
- Public access to lake

Challenges

- Depth of the commercial zoning is limited.
- There are a lot of vacant store fronts.
- Commercial properties abut residential areas and this becomes a conflict.
- There is a lack of incentives for businesses to improve property appearance.
- Getting buy-in from businesses and residences to transform the area.

Edgemere Drive In

What would it look like?

- Family-oriented destination, like mini-golf or a driving range
- Mix of commercial uses

Challenges

- Being on the lake and water quality issues
- Traffic
- Water limitations

I-290/Main Street

What would it look like?

- Upscale commercial development with office uses
- Hotel

Challenges

- Regulatory issues
- Water limitations

Route 20

What would it look like?

- Mix of commercial and office uses
- High end industrial
- Better connection to Grafton commuter train and/or possible shuttle service to businesses

- Shared driveways

Challenges

- Lack of sewer
- Water limitations
- Lack of knowledge on demand for commercial/industrial land

Fairlawn

What would it look like?

- Mixed use of retail and office

Challenges

- Water limitations
- Potential conflicts with abutting residential areas
- Zoning

420/Boston Turnpike

What would it look like?

- Mixed use with retail and office
- Cinema

Challenges

- Stormwater management and drainage on the site
- Need for secondary access to the site
- Potential conflicts with abutting residential areas

Detailed Notes from Each Workgroup Table

Areas to Preserve

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7

• Prospect Park
• Dean Park
• Ward House
• Ward Ski
• Hook Farm
• Open space
• Glavin Soccer Fields
• Sloculm Meadow
	• Parks in dedicated wetlands
	• UMass- Hoagland-Pincus Area—Soccer fields
	• Ward Hill
	• Dean Park
	• Glavin
	• Artemis Ward
		• Town-owned land
		• Dean Park
		• Town open space on Gulf Street
		• White City
		• Wetland areas townwide
			• Prospect Park
			• Dean Park
			• Fairlawn Neighborhood
			• SAC Park
			• Foundation
			• Bummet Brook
				• Dean Park
				• Historic Downtown
				• Prospect Park
				• Open space on Lake St. between 9 & 20
				• Lake Quinsigamond
				• Farms
				• Jordan Pond
				• Town Parks
					• Lake Street Gavin Fields
					• Dean Park
					• Lake Quinsigamond area
					• Town Common
					• Masonic property
					• Ward Hill
					• Moally property
						• Zoning
						  ○ Too many small infill lots popping up (South and North Streets)
						  ○ Stormwater issues
						• Open Space/Active Recreation
						  ○ The Common
						  ○ Dean Park
						  ○ Prospect Park
						• Historic District
						  ○ First Church
						• Housing Diversity
						• Old School House (south of Route 290)
						• Aquifer Recharge Watershed Area
						  ○ Newton Pond/Mud Pond

Areas to Strengthen

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7

• Downtown
  ○ Transportation
  ○ Walkable
  ○ Destination
• North side of Main Street at Center
• Lake Quinsigamond
  ○ Jewel of town
• Donahue Rowing Center
  ○ Open space
  ○ Athletic
• Route 20 Corridor
  ○ Services, grocery, etc.
  ○ Strengthen commercial development (not residential)
• Route 9 Commercial Areas
  ○ Strengthen viability of some existing sites
• Lakeway District
	• Ward Hill
	• Route 20
	• Shrewsbury Nursery area—new restaurants
	• Centech Boulevard
	• Jordan Pond
	• Sherwood Fields
	• Prospect Park
	• Develop a process to market our town
	  ○ Medical/business should be vetted because of plethora of electricity/ internet
		• Camp Winnegan, old Girl Scout camp
		• Edgemere
		• Town Center
		  ○ More walkable
		  ○ Shops
		  ○ Make it a gathering place, more inviting
		• Area in front of Town Hall
		• From Beals School to Town Hall
			• Lake Quinsig, water quality
			• Allen Farm
			• Fairlawn Plaza & Canada Cry
			• White City
			• Jordan Pond, water quality
			• Town Center
			• Ward Hill
			• #5 School House (Old Mill)
			• Coolidge School
			• Beal School
				• Parker Road School
				• Sidewalks town-wide
				• Open space
				• Downtown/center
				• Watersports Area on Lake Q.
				• Clinton Street- finish job
				• Traffic congestion
				• Recreation areas
				• Neighborhood parks
				• Dangerous roadways/intersections
				• Route 9 business enhancement east of S. Quinsigamond
					• Route 9/South St.
					• Spags/Building 19
					• Route 9/Lakeway District
					• Fairlawn/Canada Dry building
					• Allen Property
					• White City/Maironis Park
					• Shrewsbury Public Schools
					• Boston Hill—Valente Drive
					• SAC Park
					• Glavin Center/zoning
					• Edgemere Drive
						• Research and Development re-zone around water supply/groundwater recharge
						• Route 9 Business District (White City)
						• Tax Base (Route 20 redevelopment)
						• Services and Facilities
						  ○ Schools
						  ○ Police/Fire
						  ○ Library
						• Town Center
						  ○ Traffic is a nightmare
						  ○ Parking is an issue

Areas to Transform

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7

• South side of Main Street at town center needs investment
• Attract tech companies (at Route 20 or 290, 112/146)
• Challenge to attracting biotech is providing water service
  ○ No building to re-do, just open space they need to build on
• Old Drive-In
• Holiday Inn proposal site on Route 140 (north of I-290)
• Bicycle paths/routes/marked lanes
• Lot turnover: how zoning laws affect sales of lots, lose started houses
• Schools: strengthening our schools make us an attractive town
• Downtown, south side of Main Street at Town Common
  ○ Improve walkability
  ○ Transform whole downtown
• Public Transportation
  ○ From train station to office parks
  ○ Intermodal
• Water infrastructure
• Energy services (diversify)
  ○ Tax incentive for solar panels
	• Lake Quinsigamond has limited access
	• Downtown development—Town Center needs help
	  ○ Traffic problems, need solution
	• Edgemere, Route 20
	• Spags
	• Landfill on Route 20
	• Route 20, Route 9, Christmas Tree Shop
		• Route 20: Could be:
		  ○ Mixed use
		  ○ Focused on meeting needs of the commuter
		  ○ Shops/restaurants to bring people in
		  ○ Bike trails
		• Wegman's Plaza: there are no restaurants
		• Businesses that can coexist with residential areas
		• Centech East is designated for economic development
		• Route 9 property
		• Christmas Tree Shop
		• Focus on Route 9 area to the east: St. Ann's Church to Oak Street (Lake)
		  ○ Both sides of the street
		  ○ There is no order to the buildings
		  ○ No one is walking, or wants to walk. It is dangerous.
		• Prospect Park
		  ○ Not really a park
		  ○ Needs new trails
		• Lake Quinsigamond
		  ○ Could improve the riverfront
		  ○ Provide walkways and public access
		  ○ North area, there are private properties along
			• Flint Pond—clean up
			• 290 access Boylston line—business development
			• Allen Farm
			• Police Station
			• Spags/Building 19
			• Route 70—Sun Valley—Pit
			• 420 Boston Turnpike
			• Fairlawn
			• White City
			• Beal School
				• Spags
				• 290/Main Street cloverleaf, commercial developed
				• Allen Farm
				• Old drive-in
				• Route 20 corridor clean up
				• Route 20 corridor development
				• Route 70/Clinton St
				• NW corridor of 140/290
				• Lake-oriented Route 9 development
				• Prospect Park
					• 420 Boston Turnpike
					• Spags property
					• Route 20/Old Grafton & Lake St.
					• Fairlawn/Chelmsford
					• 290 & 140 intersection
					• Edgemere drive-in
					• Landfill
					• I-290/Main "Old Holiday Inn Prop"
					• Worcester sand & gravel (Holden St/Route 40)
					• Empire Cleaners/Brawnfield (Richards Family Trust)
					• Shropshire Shop/ Main & 140 (South Side)
					• Land behind Bio-Foundation/ Main St. near Episcopal Church
						• Lakeway District
						• Route 20
						• Postal sorting facility
						• Edgemere drive in
						• Allen property
						• Air Line Trail
						• Vacant commercial buildings

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7

• Traffic concerns/hotspots
  ○ Route 9 + South Street
  ○ Town Center
• Edgemere: develop dirt roads/access for safety vehicles
• Spag's Route 9 proposal
  ○ Ownership issue: different parcels; need to buy and develop together
• 420 B.P.R (Commerce park)
  ○ Needs zoning change to approve access
• Beal School
  ○ Capacity/traffic
		the lake that limit access
		• Routes 140/290
		  ○ Commercial and business development
		  ○ Partner w/ Boylston
		• Main Street and Route 290
		  ○ Commercial
		  ○ Needs to be rezoned
		  ○ Include where the dairy was
		• Drive-In
		• Open space behind Tanella
		• Route 20 – properties on its south side
		  ○ Water is restricted
		  ○ Sewer is limited: There is a need for a treatment plant. There are lines are down street
		  ○ Zoning, allow more uses
		  ○ Perception of corridor as a truck stop/uses
		  ○ Need more marketing to promote its development.
		  ○ No expansion of landfill
		  ○ A master plan for area to improve area will cause people to invest
		  ○ Need an overlay (like in Mashpee)
		  ○ Upgrade, starting				

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7

		at east of Route 9
		  ○ Depth of zoning off Route 20
		  ○ Problem there: out town
		  ○ Connection to T station in Grafton
		• As get closer to Town Center, more office space
		• Explain to residents that you are working to office + businesses				

What would the Transformed Areas look like? What needs to happen? What are the challenges?

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7

• What is plan for all schools? Determines what town center will be
• Are utilities privatized? How to sustain town utilities?
• Tax rate vs. service expectation
• Limiting residential development
• Concerns: US Postal Site
	• Trail around Jordon Pond
	• Transform Route 9 to increase tax base
	• Lakeway District with combined residential and commercial development
		On Route 9: St. Ann to Oak
		• Zoning abutting res.—depth
		• Lack of maintenance at some properties
		• Better incentive for property owners to use overlay
		• Cannot walk it, incomplete sidewalk
		• Create/more attractive
		• All businesses participate
		Prospect Park
		• Parking
		• Access to the park
		Glavin Center
		• Soccer fields & farmland
		• Protected
		Main St/290
		• Hotel never happened
		• USPS – if closed it will be a challenge for the town.
		• Would it be used for commercial?
		• Town water uses
			Flint Pond
			• Clean up
			• Police activity—A design CPTED
			• Weed removal
			• Dredging
			• Non native plants
			• Beach access
			• Storm water
			290 access along Boylston Line/Main St
			• Zoned commercially
			• Business development
			• Joint conversation w/ Boylston
			• Traffic solutions
			• 1-way traffic in more impact on N. Quinsig
			Allen Farm
			• Commercial use—appropriate size
			• Preserve natural aspect—Tower Hill like
			• Pedestrian friendly
			Police Station
			• Location good
			• Too small
			• Environmental problems—mold
			• Update
			Spags/Bldg 19
			• Tear down
			• Mixed use—utilize overlay
			• Tight commercial zone
			• Traffic impact
			• Landmark to some
			• Frontage
			• Spags memorial
			Route 70—Sun Valley—Pit
				Route 20 Transformation
				• Shared driveways/entrances and exits from businesses (i.e. Flynn's)
				• Development of drive-in (sports fields?)
				• Consider Route 20 recreational/lakeside use
				• Challenges
				  ○ Lack of sewer (South St to the Lake)
				  ○ Lake of infrastructure in East Shrewsbury
				  ○ Lack of information on commercial development demand
				  ○ Challenge of where water is coming from
				Route 9 Walnut St → Lake
				• Consolidated development of businesses' aesthetics
				• Add tree frontage for short-term
				• Integrating a mix of uses on Route 9
				  ○ 55 + condos, housing, skating rink
				• Business Associations as a solution for business buy-in
				• Tap into Worcester college community &
					420 Boston Turnpike
					• Class A retail/office, cinema, mixed use
					• Challenges
					  ○ Drainage
					  ○ Secondary site access
					  ○ Abutting land uses (industrial)
					  ○ Neighbors/ abutters
					Spags/Building 19 (Route 9 West)
					• Options: mixed use incl. residential, commercial, "become destination," diamond in rough
					• Medical, recreation/open space included
					• Challenges
					  ○ Parcel assembly, limited frontage on Route 9
					  ○ Right of way
					  ○ Abandoned streets
					  ○ Underground brook (King's Brook)
					  ○ Romance the neighborhood prob.
					  ○ Eminent domain option
					  ○ Very expensive
					  ○ Current owners
					Old Grafton Street & Lake Ave on Route 20
					• Options: High end industrial (lack of vision)
					• Challenges: ledge,
						Lakeway District (Route 9 and 20)/Sewer Down Route 20 to Expand Commercial District/Increase Commercial Tax Base
						• Opportunity for mixed use development
						• Sidewalks are limited/very unsafe for pedestrians
						• Development should be linear/corridor with activity nodes around critical intersections
						• Consideration for shuttle service would be great
						• There are a lot of vacant storefronts and vacant land
						• Needs to be pedestrian-oriented
						Postal Sorting Facility
						• Is in a strategic location
						• Opportunity for big box development
						• Would be perfect as a truck stop area…only existing one is at Flynn's)
						• Expanding commercial development here would expand the tax base
						• Area is very ledgy…slopes to Boylston
						• Perfect location for a low rise hotel

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7

			• Rundown
			• More sand + gravel
			• Pharma
			420 Boston Turnpike
			• Ownership issue
			• Lack of investment
			• Not a dealership
			• Potential mixed use
			• Something for kids?
			Fairlawn
			• Development should fit property
			• Relief granted by ZBA
			• Impact on neighborhood/services/traffic
			• Info presented @ town meeting
			White City
			• Develop lakeside to be user-friendly
			• Parking reduced/issues
			• Develop former gym
			• Northboro crossing—better tenants
			Beal School
			• Building requires maintenance
			• Changed use doubles w/ little improvement
			• ADA compliance
			Edgemere Drive-In
			• Something for kids
			• Mini Golf/Driving range/Crystal Caves
			On lake—water quality issue
				explore transit/shuttle
				• Challenges
				  ○ No set backs
				  ○ Long time frame for completion
				  ○ Getting buy-in from local commercial businesses
				290/Main St Cloverleaf
				• Legacy Place—develop as upscale as market will handle
				• Learn from Bay State Commons & do it right
				• Integrate commuting city shuttle to future commercial development
				• Challenges
				  ○ Explore regulatory issues regarding development
					sewer, slope/topography, road capacity (2 lanes)
					Fairlawn/Old Canada Dry
					• Retail office, mixed use (non-residential)
					• Neighbors as challenge, update water system
					• Relocation of current tenants (Masonic Lodge)
					290/140 Intersection
					• Office Park, medical facility, Shrews/Boylston discussion
					• Challenge: water capacity a consistent problem all over town, roadway improvements, ledge everywhere
					Edgemere Drive-In
					• Vision/transformation: Golf driving range, commercial, mixed use (non-residential)
					• Challenges: water, land, traffic
					Landfill
					• Golf course, solar park (on closed part of landfill)
					• Challenge: active landfill, no control, long term contract
					290/Main St. "Holiday Inn"
					• Vision: Hotel, retail, office, medical
					• The right developer, residential surrounding, water aquifer
						• Wegman's Plaza in Westborough is a great example
						Edgemere Drive In
						• Presently closed, approx. 100 acres
						• On Flint Pond
						• Infrastructure (sewer is available, water is in the area, but can't tie in)
						• Possible solar array?
						Additional Water Availability (East side of town)
						• Town has a well, which passes flow/quality…State keeps holding it up (conflicts with state policies).
						Existing Rights-of-Ways
						• Opportunities for solar power
						Retail Development Where Appropriate/ Enforcement
						• Pad-ready site that did not come to fruition…now being used by sand and gravel to stockpile…directly in view of residential backyards
						Services and Facilities (lowest tax rate around, services affected…why?)
						• Schools: decrease class sizes, hire more personnel
						• Fire/Police: increase personnel and equipment
						Vacant Commercial Buildings
						• Abandoned 'Tiki

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7
					neighborhoods Worcester Sand & Gravel (Holden St. & Route 70) • Transformation: town water supply • Challenges: big drainage problem, ownership & money, existing property usage and users Empire Cleaners/Brownfield • Vision: office, retail restaurant, walkable retail • Challenges: environmental cleanup, money, assembly of parcels, owner in MT., getting fed $ to help, traffic, parking Shropshire Shop/140 & Main • Vision: tie in with medical facility behind	Hut'…remove pavement • Develop a plan for vacant storefronts…does not encourage new investment Allen Property • Town purchased, marketed…nothing came about Air Line Trail • Potential bike path?

Shrewsbury Master Plan Update
Public Workshop #2 Summary
May 7, 2014

The Town sponsored its second public forum as part of the Master Plan Update process. Approximately 60 Shrewsbury residents met on Wednesday, May 7, 2013. To start the evening off, Kristen Las, Shrewsbury's Principal Planner and Economic Development Coordinator, welcomed everyone and gave a brief introduction of herself, the Master Plan Steering Committee, and the consultant team.

Nate Kelly of the Horsley Witten Group started with a brief presentation. He explained what the Master Plan is, what's in a plan, and how it is used. He also gave an overview of the Master Plan update process then introduced the group exercise. Each table was given a set of questions to guide discussion on a focus of the master plan. These questions were based on issues raised during interviews and focus groups held to date. The purpose was to confirm these formative issues and to identify further research needs before drafting the master plan.

The table's facilitator read the first question aloud to the group, then asked participants to take a few moments to write their answers on worksheets provided. The facilitator then went around the table and asked each person to give one answer, which was written on a flip chart. After everyone had a turn giving an answer, participants picked their top two answers by placing a sticker on the flip chart. Doing so provided some indication of priority of a particular issue or idea. This process was repeated for each question. At the end of the evening, the worksheets were collected so all answers and ideas would be documented. It is important to note that responses that received few votes or no votes does not mean that they will be dismissed. Collecting the worksheets allows us to consider all ideas.

The following is a summary of the discussions at each table. The number of stickers given to each answer is noted with a " * ".

Open Space and Recreation

Question #1: ***Are there open space or natural resources that should be protected but are not? What is their significance?***

- Landfill – a good location for wind farm or other passive energy use.
- Worcester Sand and Gravel – land for water conservation because it is over aquifer, and passive recreation in forested areas nearby. *
- Prospect Park.
- There is a concern that some parks have limited protection and could be developed in the future. Examples were school properties.

Worksheets:

- The land between Route 70 and the Holden Street extension are critical parts of the recharge area for the aquifer that provides 70% of Shrewsbury's water. Development of these ledges would seriously impact water availability.
  The sand pit between Route 70 and Sewall Street is the aquifer. Passive development (a solar farm) would be ideal for "Sun Valley."
  Development of renewable energy projects (wind farm at land fill, solar in Sun Valley) could gain federal grants, provide employment and educational opportunities/internships at the high school.
- Prospect Park – limited protection.
  Shrewsbury Commons – limited protection.
  Spags property.
  Dean Park – limited protection.
  Nelson Point.
  Sunset Beach.
  Sewell Street wells (Sun Valley, NW part of town) – under a pit, fed in by stream, renewable energy through solar.
  Affordable housing is undermined chapter 40B providing town services.

Question #2: ***Are there open space or recreational resources where access could be improved? What are some ways to improve access?***

- Limited access to Lake Q because private property dominates the shoreline. The northern part of the lake is generally cleaner and increased access to this area would allow for swimming. *
- Prospect Park has limited parking and if by car there is only one entrance. *
- Galvin Center and SAC Park are accessed by Lake Street, which is a dangerous road, windy and not in good condition. *
- Balancing rock, but on private property.

Worksheets:

- Public access to either Lake Quinsigamond, Newton Pond, Jordon Pond or some swimming areas.
  Shuttle service along Route 9 to bridge.
  Access to Newton Pond.
- Prospect Park access by car, beyond gate.
  Lake Street recreation area off of Lake Street near S. Quinsigamond.
  SAC Park Road Access.

Question #3: ***Are there recreational needs that are not being met? Who is not being served?***

- Swimming.

- Walking, hiking and bike trails/paths that connect recreation areas and open spaces; go around Lake Quinsigamond (like the Holden Trail). These should meet the needs of all ages and abilities. **
- There are no real connections to be made.
- Ice skating: possible locations are Jordon Pond, Old Mill Pond, flooding ball parks.

Worksheets:

- Swimming! There are not public pools or beaches.
- Swimming.
  Bike trail.
  Scenic Views (Ward Hill).
  Town ice skating.

Question #4: ***How are conditions of open space and recreational resources and facilities? Is there a need for maintenance?***

- In generally good condition.
- There is a reliance on non-profits like the PTA to maintain school playgrounds.
- Decrease dependency of nonprofit funding for playground maintenance. More balance to spread the costs.
- Decrease the dependency on fee-based activities (all activities on town fields are fee-based and part of that fee goes to Parks and Rec for maintenance).
- Can developers of housing pay for new parks and be required to maintain as well?

Worksheets:

- Well kept and maintained (ball fields and playgrounds).
  However, there aren't playgrounds in NW corner of town except by Parker Road.
  Make developers (Spags) put playground in the village.
- Pretty well maintained, Prospect Park and Dean Park.
  Decrease dependency on nonprofit funding.
  Decrease dependency of fee-based activities.

Economic Development

Question #1: ***What types of businesses are appropriate for Shrewsbury, and where?***

- Light industry / fabricators (non-toxic).
- Commercial (low-impact). **
- Retail.
- Health-related (medical) – take advantage of UMass resources / biotech. – get creative, with taxes! *
- Driving range. *
- Starbucks.
- Office space for consulting / professional building (2 story).

- Bakery /specialty. **
- Restaurants (food tax) / hotels.
- R&D (taxable / private industry).
- Entertainment / theatre (bowling / indoor rec) / museum.
- Medical devices / high tech (specific). *****
- "Real mixed-use" – (see Moe). *
- Distribution warehouse (truckers RT 20).

Worksheets:

- Retail; Health-care related.
- Light industry; Commercial, low traffic; Medical uses.
- Office, research; Retail; Medical, medical technology/manufacturing; Light industry.
- Retail; R&D; Bowling, indoor recreation; Restaurants; Entertainment, theater, museum; Distribution/warehousing (Truckers on Route 20).
- Driving range; Medical/dental/offices; Consulting businesses; Automotive repair; Bakery.
- Driving range; Small retail (Starbucks); Business, especially technology.

Question #2: ***What types of infrastructure improvements need to happen to attract new businesses or support existing businesses? Who might be responsible for these improvements?***

- Water / sewer (capacity). **********
- Natural Gas (not distributed everywhere in town, unclear where).
- Roads (RT 20 – safety); (RT 9 – capacity); Traffic flow.
- Create barriers on highways (e.g. RT 20).

Worksheets:

- Water/sewer.
  Roads, especially divided highway on Route 20, capacity.
- Water/sewer.
  Roads/Route 20.
  Power.
- Traffic flow.
  Gas infrastructure for electricity generation.
- Route 20 – 2 lanes.
  Water/sewer and natural gas.

Question #3: ***What incentives might be used to attract new businesses or to support existing businesses?***

- Monetary incentive to upgrade the infrastructure between town streets, sewer lines, drainage, etc. *
- Cost sharing – public/private partnership. ***
- Fast track permitting (a la Devens); 43D. *******
- More flexible (accommodating) commercial zoning. *
- TIF.
- Tax breaks.

- Abate / incentivize with reduction the Personal Property tax on equipment.
- Create access to Mass Pike – "Gateway" project. **

Worksheets:

- Tax incentives.
- Streamlined permit.
  More accommodating zoning.
  TIF.
- Low taxes.
  Fast track permits.
  43D.
- Tax breaks.
  Fast track permitting.

Question #4: ***Are there programmatic changes that need to happen at the local level to support economic development?***

- Change the composition of Town meeting members.
- Economic development plan. *****
- Economic development staff – need to appropriate staff. *
- Marketing Shrewsbury. ****
- Create Internship for (university) student in economic development. ***
- (Issue) an anonymous survey for local area businesses to get input. *

Worksheets:

- Change composition of town meeting members.
- Economic development plan.
  Market strategy.
  Interns.
  Surveys – anonymous.
- Economic development plan.
- Appropriately staffed economic development office.
- Change composition of town meeting.

Housing

Question #1: ***What types of housing are appropriate for Shrewsbury?***

- Single-family. *********
- Duplex.
- Senior. **
- Condo – Attached or detached. *****
- Over 55.
- Special needs.
- Multi-unit. ***
- Sustainable green building. **
- Assisted living.
- Affordable.

- Gated communities.
- Homeless shelters and transitional housing. *

Worksheets:

- Single family.
  Condos (gated community).
  Multifamily.
- Single family, duplex, senior, over 55, condo (single) and detached, special needs residential.
  Watch impact on school enrollment.
- Single family.
  Multiple unit, owned rental.
  No high rise condos/apartments.
- Multiple varieties.
  Sustainable green building.
- Assisted living.
  1/3 acre zoning?
- Single family.
  Senior housing.

Question #2: ***What are the current needs of Shrewsbury residents or those wanting to move to Shrewsbury? Are all of these needs being met, or do barriers exist?***

MET

- Proximity to work.
- Proximity to transportation – train etc. *
- Good schools. ****
- Utilities.
- Tax rate (low).
- Town services.
- Reputation.
- Safety. **
- Parks and Recreation. *
- Library.
- Affordability. *

NOT MET

- Affordability – per 40B. ***
- Natural gas.
- Water Quality (hard) – very good quality.

Worksheets:

- Not met: Homeless.
  Schools, tax rate, water/sewer/gas, SELCO.
- Sidewalks, bike travel, milk delivery, good schools, safety, affordability.
- Low cost of maintenance – gas.
  Sewer/water/electricity.
  Environmental inspections.
  Public transportation.
  Water quality.
  Safety.
- Affordability and therefore access to schools, parks and transportation.
  Currently good services, good tax base, safety, parks and rec.

- Need Met
  Schools Yes
  Infrastructure Not
  Reputation Not
  Good people Not

Question #3: ***What strategies or incentives could the Town pursue in order to address housing needs?***

- Designate area for affordable housing.
- Continue school excellence. *
- Continue Parks and Rec.
- Continue Library.
- More sidewalks (devil strips). ****
- Natural gas availability. *
- More green buildings – encourage not require.
- Tax incentive for energy efficiency / conservation.
- Bike lanes on roads.
- Storm cleanup (residents to take volunteer ownership).
- Advocacy for organized effort (town).
- Public education around safety.
- Implement affordable housing by-law. *
- Impact fees – new residential construction.
- Maintain town services. *
- Recycling – composting. ** (Satellite) (Swap area)**

Worksheets:

- Allow for public sand/salt station during winters for exchange.
  Have safety meeting.
  Hold meetings for troubled youth.
  Make incentive for composting and gardening and recycling.
  Make incentive for community clean-up projects on a monthly basis or as needed.
  Bike travel paths.
- Fund schools well.
  Maintain town services well.
  Zoning incentives for affordable housing.
- Continue with O&M annual programs – roads, utilities, infrastructure.
  Promote development – affordable, what is needed.
  Provide utilities to all (gas).
- Incentive to energy conservation and improvement.
  School investment.
  Bike route/lane.
- Incentive for builders to create more 40B housing (tax incentives).
  More sidewalks.
  Continue to maintain school excellence.
  Continue to support parks & rec, library, and senior resources.
  Increase natural gas availability in older neighborhoods.
  Create more green building.

Question #4: ***Are there issues that affect the quality of life in Shrewsbury neighborhoods? Are there amenities/features/access that would improve neighborhoods?***

The group did not have time to answer this question.

Worksheets (one person filled out their worksheet in response to this question):

- Sidewalks.
  School buses run almost empty daily as many residents drive their kids and high school kids drive themselves. Charge for buses or penalty for driving?? Too much waste.
  Plow more carefully as what sidewalks are available are not useable most of winter.
  More playgrounds (public) for younger children instead of just Dean Park. Be sure that all of them at schools are current and safe.

Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources

Question #1: ***Are there natural resources that need to be protected, but are not? How could they be protected?***

- Are water resources at Worcester Sand and Gravel protected?
- Open space protection. ***
- Water supply. ***
- Open space for land cover. *
- Water supply – interbasin and transfer.
- Open space and private ownership. *
- Access and utility of ponds/lakes. *
- Tree replacement – ALHB/education.
- CPA funding for conservation land.
- Interconnectivity of open space, trails, etc.
- Alternative energy sources. ****

Worksheets:

- 1. Water supply is limited due to rules regarding basin use and transfer.
  Continue conservation.
  Continue I&I efforts.
  2. Open space is being rapidly development.
  Largely in the hands of private owners whose highest and best use for them is to develop it.
  Likely single family homes – puts economic pressure on our school budgets.
- I don't think so much in terms of protecting resources as I do using them better. E.g. the various ponds in town are neither protected nor developed in a way that makes them attractive and useable. Dean Park Pond is polluted with ducks and geese droppings to the point of being a health hazard. Access to the pond is virtually non-existent, except to sit in a car. Why not try to turn it into a wading beach or picnic area? Or at least make it useable as water. Similar for Jordon Pond. How about fishing? And access to the lake for other than boaters.
  Trees.
  Enforcement of water rules.
- Too late for participation in Community Preservation Act?
  Power – electric – wind/solar – alternative energy sources.
  Protection of open space to:
  Increase vegetation.

Decrease development.
Save resources.

- Protect water resources at Lake Quinsigamond and Worcester Sand and Gravel (protect water quality).
  Open space for farmland (farmland to produce for local residents).
- Open space and conservation preservation and acquisition is underfunded. Community Preservation Act funding from the state could be available if the town meets certain criteria.
  Trails for hiking and biking.
- 1. Water supply is a constant issue. Drought control – watering on odd days helps a great deal. We could do more with low water use programs (better marketing, bigger incentives for rain barrels, water use going down for your household through water conservation measures).
  2. Protect open space for farmland, vegetation, interconnectivity of other open spaces. I don't know of any areas designated as such (vegetation) but there could be.
  3. Energy/electricity/fuel – solar power, fuel efficient vehicles, electric cars.
- Water supply – Sewall street wells at Worcester Sand and Gravel are subject to activity at the site. Need additional protection. Own the property.
  Some open space parcels still privately owned and may not remain open. Solution: another open space bond bill, but public probably not ready for that.

Question #2: ***Are there historic and cultural structures or areas in town that have historic significance that are threatened? How could they be protected?***

- Downtown has traffic problem. *
- Identify historic buildings – cultural and historic inventory. *
- Refocus historic district. ****
- Historic designation regulations. *****
- Long term plan for Prospect Park. ***
- Identify historic homes.

Worksheets:

- Don't really know of any threatened historic structures.
  Center of town has businesses in building not necessarily historic. What's the plan?
  Running low on cemetery space. What's the plan going forward?
  Prospect Park – changed over the years with water towers and equipment. What is the long-term preservation plan?
- We don't seem to have identified truly historic or culturally significant buildings or areas (maybe a few).
  Protect the historic and cultural center of town (Main and 140).
  Walking tours of historic/cultural.
- Artemus Ward House?
  Main Street District – preserving historic character.
- Center of town kept as a village center.

- Protect center.
  Not enough parking.
  Preserve character of town.
  Center is threatened.
- I am not aware of a list of "protected" properties other than what falls within the historic district.
  In the historic district, what are the rules for maintaining character? Do we have them? Outside of zoning, by law? Is that sufficient?
  Easy access to our historic sites and buildings.
- Expand historic districts in town center, especially on Main Street.

Question #3: ***What resources are available to the town to increase maintenance and programming at important cultural and historic areas?***

- Incentive programs to preserve, purchase, utilize culturally significant sites.
- Public/private partnerships for funding mechanism. *****
- Better programming/education of cultural areas.
- Create non-profit to promote awareness.
- Volunteer program for maintenance/utilization (docent). ***
- Better awareness of what Historic Commission does. **
- Coordination of various boards and commissions. ***
- Seek grant funding. **

Worksheets:

- Fees – sports fees limited to maintaining staff.
  Volunteer organizations.
  Better understanding of what cultural commission mission is and what they do on an annual basis. Presentation.
- Gathering data.
  Disseminating data.
  Talented people in town.
  Volunteer maintenance, docents.
- Maintenance – fee for membership into a society.
  Programming needed to identify historic areas – website, registry, same with cultural commission.
  Preservation society.
- Public awareness to provide assistance to the town.
- None.
  Private funding.
  Increased awareness of the areas.
- 1. Organized volunteer maintenance – rotate each month. Groups can sign up.

2. Establish commission funded through donations for programming and maintenance. Buy a month, buy a weekend.

- Grants?
  Better coordination/cooperation between various historic groups/commissions. Also more publicity of what is available.

Transportation

Question #1: ***Are the transportation needs in our community being met? Who is not being served and how can they be met?***

- Lack of public transportation to Boston. *
- Need transportation from Shrewsbury to major connections/sub hubs (i.e. Westboro/Worcester Train Stations). *
- Need Park and Ride Locations.
- Need Ride Shares/ Transportation Demand Management.
- Need sidewalks. ****
- Need bike paths. **
- Need less confusing traffic signal system.
- Traffic congestion (particularly town center) & Route 9, Maple Ave/Main St. *
- Route 290 Exit off ramp is dangerously confusing/ & onramp. *
- Need central parking for businesses to survive in center.
- Cherry St/Center Blvd area is problematic with traffic on Cherry St (need sign at Cherry St directing traffic).
- Lack of public transportation. *
- Lack of shuttle service to and from. *
- Lack of "traffic calming".
- Poor visibility from side neighborhood roads onto main roads. *

Worksheets:

- Congestion in Town Center, along Route 9.
- Limited train access or information for bus service - e.g. Worcester to Boston.
- Too much traffic.
- Needs for parking not being met.
- Use of Cherry St to get to Grafton Station.

Question #2: ***In what areas of town is walking a challenge or could benefit from redesign? What types of changes could be made?***

- Maple Ave and along businesses (no natural or safe transition from sidewalks to business driveways). ****
- Main St past St. Johns. *
- Route 9 in Lakeway District. ***

- Prospect St, Harrington Ave/Old Mill Rd Area. **
- Further from town center towards Town Hall walkability deteriorates, use stop for Pedestrian signs. *
- Left turns conflicting with pedestrians. *
- No sidewalks to get to Spring St School. *
- No sidewalks to get to Dean Park on Spring St side.
- Main St entrance has conflicts between pedestrians and cars.

Worksheets:

- Spring St lack sidewalks.
- Reduce multiple curb cuts.
- Add sidewalks.
- Crossing from Trader Joes Plaza to White City is very difficult.

Question #3: ***Where is biking the greatest challenge? What are some ways to improve safety?***

- Town center due to curb cuts and intersections. **
- Route 9 due to curb cuts and intersections. **
- Lack of bike lanes. ****
- Lack of easy bike to High School.
- Lack of easy bike to Rail Trail. *
- Spring St where road curves and crests. *
- Main Cir and Main St intersection.
- Maple Ave to Main St towards Northboro. *
- Main St corridor too dangerous to bike.
- Route 140 to dangerous to bike (issue not road, but drivers). *
- Route 20.
- Route 140/290 on and off ramps.

Worksheets:

- There is a lack of bike lanes.

Question #4: ***How can the demand for parking be met in the different areas of town? Are there ares where parking demands are not being met?***

- Repurpose existing parking to satisfy a wider need. *****
- Lack of parking for shops along Route 9E (i.e. Post Office/jewelry store, etc.). ***
- Downtown/Town Center needs more. ***
- Lack of parking on Route 9W (i.e. Lovey's etc area). ***
- Create underground parking.
- Pool or community/shared parking.

- Better signage for existing parking (i.e. when parking is in back of store, but no signage to indicate).
- Signs to integrate pedestrian-friendly parking. ***

Worksheets:

- Shared parking can ease constraints in center of town.
- Pedestrian-friendly crossings.
- Take parking away and add more bike lanes/wider sidewalks.
- Route 9 Strip Malls need to have parking worked out.

Question #5: ***Are there adequate public transportation options? Are the public transportation options linked to other modes of transportation?***

- Need public transportation to Boston/Logan. ****
- Need public transportation to designated Worcester locations (i.e. Theatre). *
- Need public transportation for youth/teens/seniors. *
- Need links to Worcester/Westboro/Grafton train stations. *
- Need link to Framingham-Logan express. **
- Need Frequency of public transportation considered. **
- Lack of education on Public Transportation. *
- Need shuttles. *
- Bringing businesses into the transportation conversation (have them create TDM's).

Worksheets:

- No. There is very limited bus service and it is not easily accessible from non-Main St areas.
- There are no park and ride areas.
- Need more options to get into Boston and Worcester.
- Route 15 bus only adequate option.
- Lack of adequate public transportation to Boston and Framingham/Natick.

Public Services and Facilities

Question #1: ***Are there services the town could offer that are not?***

- Water system maintenance.
- Fire prevention bureau (inspections). ***
- Consider licensing services. *
- Small medical facilities.
- Guaranteed full day kindergarten. **
- Finding for school activities.
- Continuing education.
- Stormwater maintenance.
- Making recycling profitable to town.
- Swimming pool.

Worksheets:

- Ambulance services.
  More profitable recycling program.
  Water system control system.
  Full day kindergarten.
- Water system.
  Ambulance.
  Fire prevention.
- More adult parks and recreation opportunities.
  More frequent sweeping, detention basin maintenance.
- Full day kindergarten guaranteed, free?
  Funded sports for schools.
  Free busing
- Transportation – new and improved, quality of life.
  Water/sewer.
  Utilities, infrastructure – profitable, revenue generation; market economy.
  Revenue generation, profit centers such as high tech space/facilities, sports facilities, ambulance services.
- Adult education.
  Full day kindergarten.

Question #2: ***Could current town services be improved? Which ones? How?***

- General staff increase to meet population demands.
- Retain staff.
- Clear division of labor.
- Street sweeping.
- More staff – police, fire highway, water/sewer, planning, parks and recreation.
- Boston flower show bus.
- More resources for schools.
- More frequent and single stream recycling.
- Improvement to cable.
- Small classes/expanded education services. **
- More aggressive tax collection. **
- Electric/cable/internet improvement. *
- Expand online services.

Worksheets:

- More people for highway department → sweeping.
  More fire/police.
  Town planning staff.
  Electronic communications.
- Staffing, specific duty: fire, police, water, highway.
- More adult parks and recreation opportunities.
- More funding for school department.
- Continuing education.
  Expand fire prevention and ambulance.
  Electric communications.
  SELCO services.
  Online businesses.
- More frequent & comprehensive recycling.
  SELCO → more flexibility in products/ options.
  Education → smaller classes, more services, etc.

Question 3: ***What kind of condition do you find town buildings, facilities and recreation/park areas? Where are improvements needed?***

- Improve/modernize parts and recreation structures and facilities. *
- Facilities planning. *
- Beal and Parker road improvements (police department).
- Improve/develop bike-walkways – Jordon Pond walk. *
- Better maintenance of existing buildings. *****

Worksheets:

- Buildings are mostly in good condition.
- Good age of buildings.
  No maintenance.
  Poor planning.
- Need police cruisers.
  Water and sewer trucks look beaten up.
  Coolidge School playground sprucing up.
  Bike trails.
  Encircle walk around Jordon Pond.
- Infrastructure is ok; town buildings are ok.
  Parks and recreation need major improvements and modern infrastructure that can generate revenue and bring out of town people.
- Some schools are crowded/in tough shape: Parker Road preschool shared with SELCO; Beal School in tough shape.
  Sports fields should be more expansive/well kept; we current rent field space from UMASS/Seagate.

Question 4: ***How does the town sustain its existing level of service to the community?***

- Override.
- Increase tax revenue. **
- Look at more "pay as you go" models. *
- Negotiate better "pilots". *
- Stop leakage – better tax collection. *
- Commission on Revenue Generation.
- Increase lot sizes.
- Encourage redevelopment of older commercial properties. ***
- Build tax positive housing.
- Reexamine dual tax rate.
- Redevelop Centech North.

Worksheets:

- Override.
  Raise commercial tax rate.
  Curb residential growth.
  Offset cost of fire department by providing EMS and appropriate permitting through fire prevention.
- Override.
- Better revenue generation.
  Better tax collection.
  Wise spending.