

Town of Stoughton, Massachusetts
COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

PHASE I : VISION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

July 2013



Prepared by:
Brown Walker Planners, Inc. and
BETA Group, Inc.

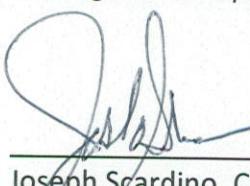
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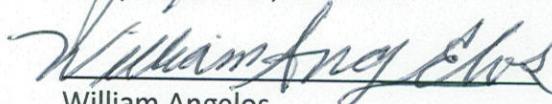
Stoughton Master Plan

Vision and Existing Conditions Report

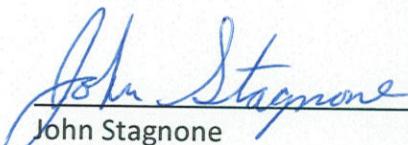
Master Plan Committee Approval and Acceptance

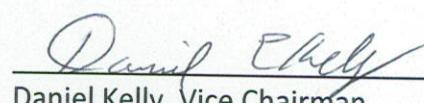
The Stoughton Master Plan Committee has voted unanimously to approve and accept *Stoughton Comprehensive Master Plan Phase I: Vision and Existing Conditions Report* dated July 2013.

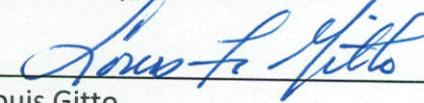

Joseph Scardino, Chairman


William Angelos


Forrest Lindwall


John Stagnone


Daniel Kelly, Vice Chairman


Louis Gitto


Christopher Petrie


Date



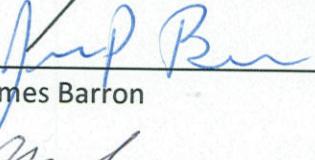
Stoughton Master Plan

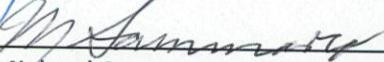
Vision and Existing Conditions Report

Planning Board Approval and Acceptance

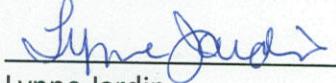
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Stoughton Comprehensive Master Plan Phase I: Vision and Existing Conditions Report
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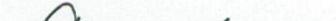

Joseph Scardino, Chairman


James Barron


Michael Sammarco


William Angelos, Vice Chairman


Lynne Jardin


August 22, 2013
Date



WITH THANKS

The Stoughton Master Plan Committee wishes to acknowledge and thank members of the Stoughton community and all who have contributed to the Stoughton Master Plan visioning process. With your help this planning effort has reached thousands within our community and together we have established our vision and set the groundwork necessary for future planning efforts that will take Stoughton successfully into the future.

We wish to extend special thanks to the 128 students who contributed their time and talents to create a logo for this planning process and to Mr. John Kearns of the Fine Arts Program at Stoughton High School for coordinating their efforts.

We especially thank Stoughton High School students Diep Tran and Nicole Kerman who collaborated to produce the winning Master Plan logo seen below.



We would also like to thank the Avon Food Company, LLC, John P. Russell Insurance, and Orange Leaf Yogurt for donating \$1,000 in cash and prizes to the logo contest participants.

Master Plan Committee

Joseph Scardino, Chair
Daniel Kelly, Vice Chair
Bill Angelos
Lou Gitto
Forrest Lindwall
Chris Petrie
John Stagnone

Noreen O'Toole, Town Planner, staff support

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cynthia A. Walsh, Vice Chair
Stephen G. Anastos
John M. Anzivino
Robert J. O'Regan

Town Manager

Michael Hartman
Joseph Feaster (Interim)

Planning Board

Joseph Scardino, Chair
William Angelos, Vice Chair
James Barron
Lynne Jardin
Michael Sammarco

Prepared for the

Stoughton Master Plan Committee

by

Brown Walker Planners, Inc.
BETA Group, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
Part 1 - The Vision	4
1.1 PROCESS	5
1.2 OUR SHARED COMMUNITY VISION	10
1.3 GOALS	13
Part 2 - Key Issues & Recommendations	16
2.1 KEY ISSUES	17
2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHASE II	21
Part 3 - Existing Conditions	
3.1 POPULATION PROFILE	27
3.2 HOUSING	41
3.3 LAND USE	51
3.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	63
3.5 TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION	75
3.6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES	101
3.7 NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES	131
3.8 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION	141
RESOURCES	149
APPENDIX	152

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents the culmination of Phase I of Stoughton's master planning process. It synthesizes the ideas of hundreds of planning participants and sets a directive for continuing with Phase II of the planning process. Phase I meets three primary objectives.

1. Creates a community vision that is based on shared values, paints a clear picture of what the community wants Stoughton to be, and inspires and motivates the community to take action.
2. Documents existing conditions based on available studies, reports and published data for demographics, housing, land use, economic development, transportation, public facilities and services, natural and cultural resources, and open space and recreation.
3. Identifies key issues that the community believes should be specifically studied by the Master Plan and for which a clear set of actions should be developed.

To meet these objectives, the Master Plan Committee (MPC) created a framework for a series of community discussions and other opportunities for the public to share ideas, thoughts, and concerns. Over the course of nine months hundreds of community members exchanged ideas in face to face meetings, hundreds more responded to an on line survey and over a hundred youth participated in a Master Plan logo contest. These contributions are the foundation of the entire planning process and assure this report is grounded in Stoughton.

Community Vision

A clear and compelling vision for the future that is shared by community members is the foundation of an effective master plan and the beginning of change. Our vision has grown from a tentative hope as we began this community visioning process to a full and powerful intention as we have found causes that unite us and goals that inspire us. We have come together because we believe in the future of Stoughton, and our belief grows stronger with greater and more diverse participation.

As a community we have made a clear choice to embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead, to honor our town's past, to actively steward our resources, to respect and harness the power of our citizens, and to trust in ourselves to guide change and create the future we desire.

Our community vision clearly defines Stoughton's future. By diligently working together with trust and respect, we will create a quality of life for all who live and work here. Our public services, facilities and infrastructure will support lifetime learning, efficient and convenient transportation, and cohesive, healthy neighborhoods. Our town policies, regulations and initiatives will help our businesses prosper providing employment opportunities, goods and services, and a diversified tax base. Our natural environments along with tree lined streets and sidewalks, town squares, parks, playgrounds, and trails will provide us with an abundance of special places where we can meet, gather, celebrate and build personal and community bonds.

Existing Conditions

As a beginning step in the planning process we documented existing conditions and trends in town to help ground community discussions and provide data needed for the comprehensive assessment that will be part of Phase II of the Master Plan. Existing studies and reports, town records, data from regional, state and federal data collection sites and communications with town staff, board and committee members provided information to complete the documentation. The information profiles the following elements independently however, we recognize that each affects the other and believe that by taking a comprehensive approach to planning we will build on those interrelationships to create a stronger and more resilient community.

- Population Profile
- Housing
- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Transportation & Circulation
- Community Facilities & Services
- Natural & Historic Resources
- Open Space & Recreation

Key Issues

Through the course of the visioning process planning participants were asked to identify key issues that the town is facing. While the number of issues was initially large and diverse, when we were asked to choose what issues were the most critical to address, six issues were chosen far more often than any others. Phase II therefore should study these issues and recommend a set of actions to address them.

We believe focusing attention, energy and resources on these six key issues first will result in dramatic positive changes, and position Stoughton for success. The issues are listed here in the order of priority as rated by participants in the planning process to date.

- Town Center: There is near consensus that Town Center in its current state is a liability to the town rather than an asset. We are enthusiastic about revitalizing the Center to take advantage of its transportation choices, compact form, historic architecture and civic services. We believe that Town Center can be much more than a confluence of streets and a collection of businesses. We believe it can be a distinctive and vibrant neighborhood the entire community can enjoy.
- Schools: The physical condition of facilities and the school's performance rankings are areas of deep concern. We agree that a strong public school system serves us all and is critical to the town's success and stability.
- Economic Development: Stoughton has a diversity of businesses within its borders but can do more to attract high value businesses that will increase employment options and strengthen the town's fiscal base. We see opportunities to build our local economy and to support our youth, families and seniors with a greater diversity of recreational and entertainment options and more goods and services.
- Transportation: Identifying strategies that can ease congestion and increase pedestrian safety are primary transportation goals the community supports. We want to maximize the effectiveness and convenience of our public transportation system and create transportation options that provide mobility and access to all community members.
- Community: Areas of concern or need related to community include services such as youth and seniors

programs, parks and trails, walkability and opportunities for self governance and participation in community events. We want to create opportunities for community members to meet, recognize each other in passing, work together and celebrate together. We believe changes in these areas will contribute to our sense of community and enhance our quality of life.

- Image: Planning participants agree that people's perceptions of Stoughton are a hindrance to the town's success. Many, though not all, feel that targeting this issue directly would improve Stoughton's image and put the town in a better position to advance its other goals for economic development, schools, community and Town Center.

Recommendations

Throughout Phase I, community engagement and excitement has been building. The planning process has brought a great deal of attention to issues that concern community members and has initiated a groundswell of support to address them now. It is critically important that the planning process continue by moving into Phase II without delay.

This plan also recommends that the town continue to use the tools put in place by the visioning process to make the transition between phases seamless for the public. These tools include a Master Plan Steering Committee that will continue to guide the planning, the project website as a source of information, focus groups to continue advancing community discussions, and continued communications with community members already involved along with continued outreach to expand participation.

Maintaining the public's interest and building confidence in the planning process may be enhanced by taking some early actions along with the continued planning. Recommendations for early actions include building capacity, assessing capital needs, making the planning process more visible still, discussing differences and making a physical change representative of our vision.

Part 1 - The Vision



1.1 PROCESS

Why?

As Chapter 41 of the General Laws of Massachusetts states, the purpose of a Master Plan is to “provide a basis for decision making regarding the long term development of the municipality.” The word “development” is used by the statute to generalize all actions that affect land use and community character. In other words, a Master Plan clearly and practically describes the best and most appropriate way to manage change that reflects the community’s vision by providing guidance in designing policies, guidelines, and ordinances that preserve and enhance a town’s quality of life and culture.

The Master Planning process itself is as important as the documents it produces. This process brings a diverse community together to discuss, listen and understand common and competing interests to plan for the town’s future. It increases civic awareness and interest, heightens aspirations and commitments, contributes to our sense of community, and is crucial to sound planning. Planning seeks a balance among the goals of residents, as well as in the relationship between the elements that comprise a place where people live and work, to establish a desirable and coordinated approach to community stewardship.

Phase I of the Master Planning process (now complete) focused on articulating the town’s shared vision for our desired future and overall goals for attaining that vision. The visioning effort successfully engaged a broad range of citizens and other community stakeholders to ensure that the plan is grounded in the community’s desires, shared values and unique needs. The result of the visioning effort, “Stoughton’s Shared Community Vision and Goals” and the “Existing Conditions” reports will be the foundation for the analysis and subsequent recommendations of the Master Plan.

How?

At Stoughton’s 2010 Town Meeting, the Stoughton Board of Selectmen sought and received funding to begin a Master Plan. The early planning efforts halted when the town’s planner position was vacant for a year, but resumed in 2011 when the Planning Board and Redevelopment Authority proposed the development of a Master Plan Committee (MPC) to guide the master planning process. The Committee, composed of seven members including two from the Planning Board, two from the Redevelopment Authority, one from the Board of Selectmen, one from the Conservation Commission and one from the business community, assisted by the Town Planner developed a scope of work, and through a public proposal and bidding process selected a consultant team to assist the town with visioning and documenting existing conditions, foundational components of a comprehensive Master Plan.

In June 2012 the Stoughton Master Plan Committee committed to undertake a visioning process that would openly and meaningfully engage the town’s residents, business owners, resource managers, and other stakeholders in an examination of personal and shared values, the town’s sense of place, its challenges, and its potential and propensity for change. The goal was to collectively create a community vision that would inspire and motivate the community and be the foundation for future planning. Over the course of nine months, through a comprehensive outreach program, we reached thousands of local stakeholders including hundreds of community members that exchanged ideas in large and small meetings, hundreds more that responded to an on line survey, and over a hundred youth that used their graphic abilities to create a logo representative of the planning process.

The visioning process is more thoroughly described in the following pages. Survey results, event summaries and notes are provided in the Appendix.

“If you don’t know where you are going,
you’ll end up someplace else.”
Yogi Berra

Master Plan Web Site

A Master Plan web site was developed at the beginning of the visioning process to provide information and raise awareness about the planning process. The site includes a project overview, links to past studies and other documents relevant to the planning process, a calendar of events, meeting summaries, and draft reports. It also directs visitors to the Town Planner for more information and allows visitors to share ideas with the Master Plan Committee (MPC) via e-mail. A link to the site was provided on the town web site home page and was promoted in all project correspondence and communications.



Stoughton Master Plan
Taking Us into the Future

Welcome

The Town of Stoughton has embarked on a new comprehensive community planning (Master Plan) project that will help guide Stoughton's growth and development for the next ten years and beyond. The project seeks to engage a broad range of citizens and other community stakeholders to ensure that the plan is grounded in our community's shared values and is responsive to our unique needs.



The plan will reflect the ideas of citizens, elected officials, town officials, town departments, boards, committees and the business community in an effort to reach consensus using the best practices and techniques available. The final plan will be a viable ongoing document with recommendations directed to the appropriate groups for consideration and implementation.

Stoughton's Master Plan Committee is overseeing this process and has engaged a consultant team led by the community planning firm Brown Walker Planners, Inc. to assist the Town in this endeavor. Please check back frequently to get updates on upcoming meetings, master plan reports, and how you can stay involved.

Project Introduction and Updates to Department Heads

Stoughton's Town Planner, Noreen O'Toole, provided an introduction to the visioning process by a presentation and a memorandum to town department heads at a Department Head meeting and provided updates at each successive meeting. These bi-weekly reports assured that all town departments were aware of the project's goals, events and outcomes. Department Head meetings typically included the following:

Town Manager

Fire

Building Commission

Procurement

Town Accountant

Town Engineer

Library

Cedar Hill Golf Course

Assessor

Recreation

Town Planner

Police

Department of Public Works

Town Clerk

Treasurer

Facilities Manager

Visiting Nurses Association

Senior Center/Youth Services

Veteran's Affairs

Human Resources

Schools

Introductory Letter to Town Meeting Representatives, Boards and Committees

While a mass mailing to all Stoughton households was cost prohibitive, the MPC elected to send an introductory letter to Town Meeting Representatives, and all town board and committee members; over 200 in all. The introductory letter outlined the goals for the visioning process, announced the first public forum and encouraged participation. A copy of the letter can be found in the Appendix.

Logo Contest

To specifically engage Stoughton's youth in the visioning process, the MPC enlisted the help of school staff to promote and assist with a logo contest. The contest, open to Stoughton High School students, invited participants to design a graphic that would symbolize the Master Planning process and be featured on all Master Plan correspondence, reports and documents. Local businesses contributed \$1,000 in cash and prizes to the 128 students who submitted logos. The winning logo became a collaboration, symbolic of the planning process, when the MPC asked two students to meld their individual ideas into one graphic.



Local Access Television

Stoughton Media Access Corporation, a local non-profit station that creates, produces and manages public, educational and municipal local access programming, invited the MPC to take part in three Master Plan panel discussions and appear on two Community Forum broadcasts between October 2012 and February 2013. The broadcasts provided the MPC an opportunity to share information about the visioning process and discuss findings and outcomes from various events and initiatives. The programs were aired for more than fifty hours helping to keep community members aware of the Master Plan process and informed of its outcomes.

Existing Conditions Reports

Documenting existing conditions within the town is an important part of the planning process. It allows planning participants to consider what exists today and draw conclusions about what they want in the future. To understand existing conditions in town the consultant team first spent a day touring town with a number of Master Plan Committee members. They then researched previous planning documents relevant to the town, town records, and census, revenue, and real estate data. The consultants then interviewed department heads and other town staff to answer any remaining questions. Existing conditions reports outline baseline information and trends for each of the following:

- Population Profile
- Housing
- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Transportation & Circulation
- Community Facilities & Services
- Natural & Historic Resources
- Open Space & Recreation

Public Visioning Forums

Public visioning forums are key elements of the visioning process because they provide an opportunity for a large group of community members to come together face to face and share ideas in an open setting. Successful visioning requires grassroots support and participation from a cross-section of the community, active listening, and a willingness to learn from each other. The interaction allows an examination of core values and can foster a greater level of community spirit as participants seek to understand each other and build upon the values they share.

The MPC reached out to the community in multiple ways to encourage everyone to attend the two visioning forums held in October 2012 and January 2013. They used targeted and mass e-mails, selected mailings, paid newspaper announcements in the Penny Saver and Stoughton Journal, articles in the Globe South, and public service announcements on community access television (SMAC). They also



posted flyers throughout town and distributed flyers at various community events, requested announcements in agency newsletters including Council on Aging and the Stoughton Chamber of Commerce, and they used flashing highway signs that were moved to various locations around town. Each MPC member also encouraged community and business members to tell their neighbors, friends and coworkers. The committee's diligence paid off with over a hundred community members attending both forums.

Chamber Visioning

The MPC accepted an invitation from the Stoughton Chamber of Commerce to attend a Chamber meeting to involve the business community in the planning process. The Committee worked with the Chamber to develop an agenda that allowed the MPC to both provide and to gather information. Following a brief presentation on the goals of master planning and visioning, about 25 Chamber members shared their ideas about Stoughton's strengths and challenges from the perspective of the business community.

Youth Visioning

Youth are often left out of community planning either by design or default. Recognizing that Stoughton's youth are critical to the town's current and future success, the MPC asked the Stoughton Youth Commission (SYC) to help answer the question, "What can we do to encourage our youth to stay in or return to Stoughton?". In response, the SYC held two visioning sessions, one during an assembly for 300 High School Freshmen and the other during an evening meeting

with 35 young Youth Commission participants. In both sessions, participants were asked to share what they like about Stoughton and what they would like to see change. They were also asked if they plan to stay in Stoughton or leave and to share the reasons why.

Community Survey

Understanding that not all community members find it possible, convenient or comfortable to attend a community wide forum, the Master Plan Committee identified alternative ways for the town's residents, business owners and other stakeholders to share ideas and participate in the planning process. Soliciting help from community volunteers and with support from the schools and the Stoughton Integrated Technologies Director, the Committee designed and managed an on-line community survey. A notice of the survey was sent to all households with school age children via the school's e-mail correspondence. It was also publicized through targeted e-mails, newspaper notices, the project web-site, local access television, flashing highway signs, and Department Head meetings. Nearly four hundred community members responded to the survey, 87% of which were new to the planning process.

Focus Groups

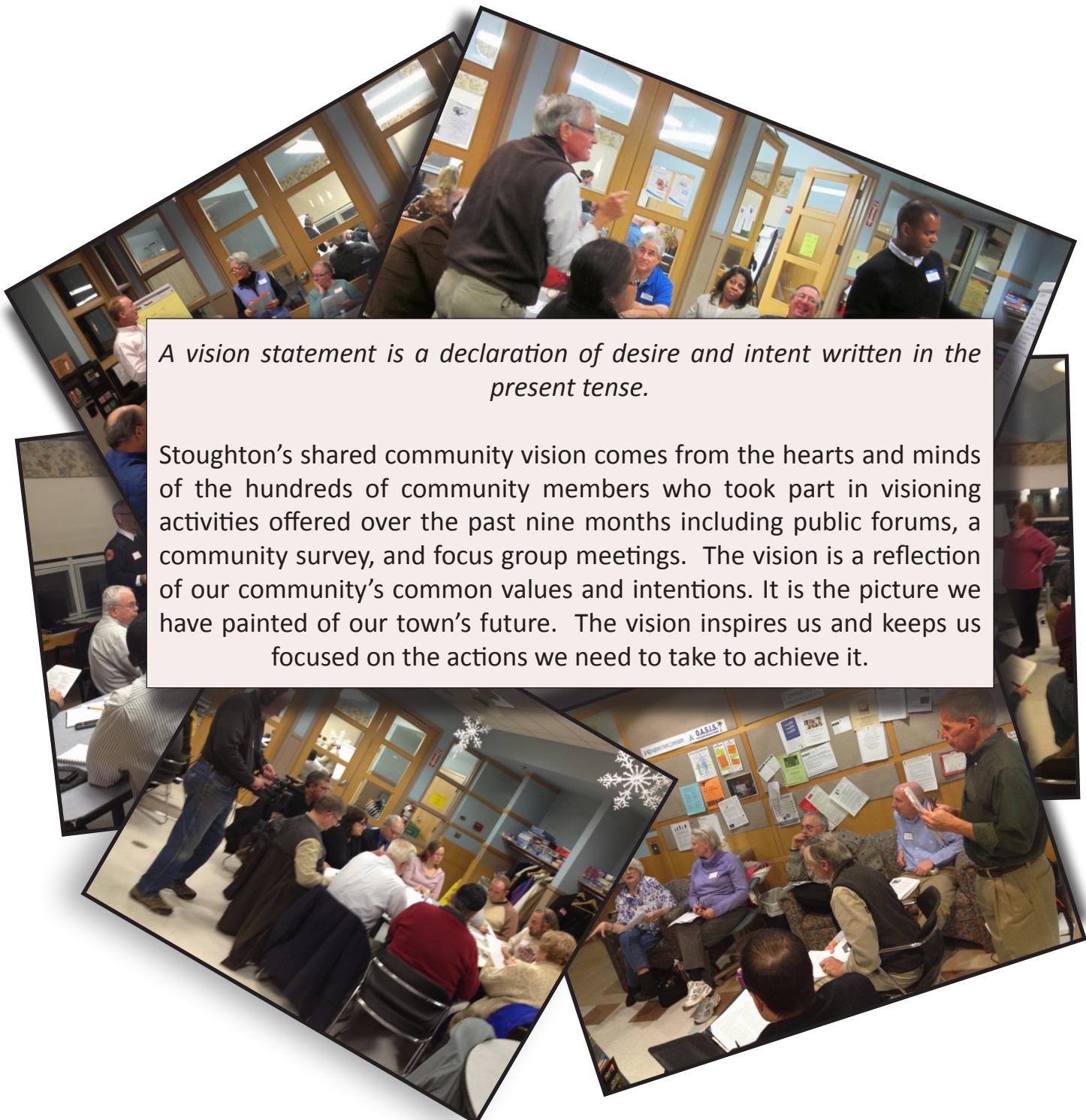
After synthesizing input from the first community visioning forum, the MPC identified eight issues they wanted additional community input on.

- Town Image
- Town Center
- Transportation
- Public Infrastructure
- Open Space and Recreation
- Schools
- Energy and Sustainability
- Healthy Communities

The Committee formed groups of eight to twelve invited members for six of the eight issues and also opened the meetings to the general public. The members were representatives of town government departments and organizations, or individuals with relevant experience, as well as community members who were interested in the topic without any particular affiliation or related experience. The intent of each group was to discuss the issue in detail, identifying challenges, and suggesting goals and solutions. Each group host produced notes documenting the group's discussion. Notes from each Focus Group can be found in the Appendix.

The Master Plan Committee used two existing committees, Stoughton's Energy and Sustainability Committee and Pioneering Healthy Communities to provide input on these two issues. Stoughton's Energy and Sustainability Committee hosted a focus group meeting with MPC members and shared goals and recommendations from its recently completed Local Energy Action Plan developed in collaboration with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Pioneering Healthy Communities is focused on policy and environmental change to promote healthy lifestyles and provides an opportunity for continuing public input on issues of health, safety and livability.

1.2 OUR SHARED COMMUNITY VISION



VISION STATEMENT

The people of Stoughton have made a clear choice to embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead, to honor our town's past, to actively steward our resources, to respect and harness the power of our citizens and to trust in ourselves to guide change and create the future we desire.

Our shared community vision will take us into the future where:

Stoughton is widely recognized as an inclusive, vibrant and resilient community offering an exceptional **quality of life** to its residents, businesses and visitors.

Stoughton provides **public services , facilities and infrastructure** that assure a clean, healthy, safe and vital community. Our investments respond directly to community needs and are balanced with our fiscal and operational capacity.

We are proud of our **school system** that boasts state-of-the art facilities, a strong curriculum, exceptional educators, and students who achieve at the highest academic levels. Through a strong partnership between the school system and the community, we set high standards that enable all students to achieve success.

Town Center is the municipal, social and cultural heart of Stoughton. Anchored by restored and repurposed historic buildings and served by beautiful public gathering spaces, accessible sidewalks, safe streets, and convenient parking, Town Center is active with a mix of residential, commercial/retail and government buildings.

Stoughton's **transportation system** is more about people and less about automobiles. Our demand for safety along with efficiency has resulted in greater use of public transportation, an extensive network of sidewalks, trails and bike lanes and reconfigured and managed streets that better serve drivers, riders and walkers.

Stoughton's landscape contributes to our suburban character with a mosaic of healthy **natural systems** that includes open fields, ponds, wetlands, waterways, forests and street trees. We honor our natural heritage by protecting, preserving and celebrating it. We provide exceptional stewardship and abundant opportunities for residents and visitors to access, explore and enjoy nature within our town.

Stoughton's **history** adds to the richness of our town's character. Throughout town historic buildings and landscapes are preserved to provide space for municipal, cultural, recreational and educational programs as well as for offices, shops and restaurants. The stories of Stoughton's past are highlighted in our town's traditions and celebrations.

Stoughton's attractive and active **business corridors and centers** provide an array of activity centers, services, jobs and tax revenues. Through proactive planning and commitment to sensitive and sustainable economic development, the town is well positioned to maintain diversity and balance for decades to come.

Neighborhoods are distinct yet unified with varying housing styles, lot sizes and settlement patterns that serve a diversity of residents. They are connected by pathways and open space systems, schools and town activities, and events that bring people of all neighborhoods together.

Above all, Stoughton's **sense of community** is our town's defining quality. It is seen in our participation on boards and committees, in our support for youth activities, our commitment to our seniors, our attendance along parade routes, at community concerts, at chamber meetings, farmers markets, and at school graduations. We are dedicated to our town and its continued success.

1.3 GOALS

The following preliminary goals are intentionally broad and intended to inform the next phase of the master planning activity and support us in attaining our shared community vision. Early in Phase II these goals should be synthesized and specific actions and measurable benchmarks should be added.

Quality of Life

- Advance municipal policies, regulations and initiatives that assure all community issues have a fair and transparent hearing.
- Support the development of facilities for activities and events for all ages and lifestyles.
- Create a balanced economic base capable of supporting required public services.

Town Center

- Increase and improve active retail businesses as ground floor uses.
- Support housing and offices on upper floors.
- Create beautiful public gathering spaces.
- Provide adequate, accessible and safe parking to meet the needs of businesses, residents, and visitors.
- Assure that the design and maintenance of buildings, infrastructure, and landscapes create a cohesive and attractive center.
- Create traffic and pedestrian patterns that promote safety and accessibility.

Schools

- Provide exceptional educational opportunities for students and residents of all ages in up-to-date and well maintained facilities.
- Attract and retain outstanding educators and administrators.
- Assure transparency of fiscal and operational activities to enable a trusting partnership between schools, town government and community members.
- Improve the academic standing of our schools.
- Increase community participation in advancing educational goals and celebrating successes.

Business Corridors and Centers

- Develop business corridors and centers that are attractive and portray a positive image.
- Broaden Stoughton's tax base with high value businesses.
- Attract and retain businesses and industry that provide valuable employment opportunities without compromising the town's character.
- Create a culture of support and cooperation between the government and business community.

Transportation and Circulation

- Manage traffic throughout Stoughton to minimize congestion and maximize safety.
- Create a pedestrian and cyclist circulation system that provides safe and convenient access to schools, the library, shopping, activity centers, and neighborhoods.
- Increase use of alternative transportation modes.
- Develop local capacity to address transportation and circulation needs on an ongoing basis.

Community

- Maintain a high level of participation in community governance and management.
- Develop a planning framework that is inclusive and proactive.
- Support grass roots organizations and initiatives that advance the health and safety of our citizens and the vitality of our town.
- Increase and celebrate community pride/community spirit.

Neighborhoods

- Provide a variety of housing that meets the needs of householders throughout all life stages and of varying income levels.
- Increase opportunities for chance encounters and organized meetings between community members.
- Provide equitable access to and promote usage of parks, trails, public facilities and programs for all neighborhoods.
- Preserve and create neighborhoods with distinct identities.

Public Services, Facilities and Infrastructure

- Assure that public safety facilities, equipment, and staffing enable prompt, professional responses to the community's needs.
- Provide drinking water, wastewater and stormwater collection systems adequate to serve the community's current and projected needs and to protect the town's natural resources.
- Create a network of public parks, open spaces, trails and sidewalks that bring people together and create a strong sense of community.
- Sustain a level of public service to ensure a clean, healthy, and safe environment.
- Assure public facilities, equipment and operations are energy efficient and cost effective.

Natural Resources and Suburban Character

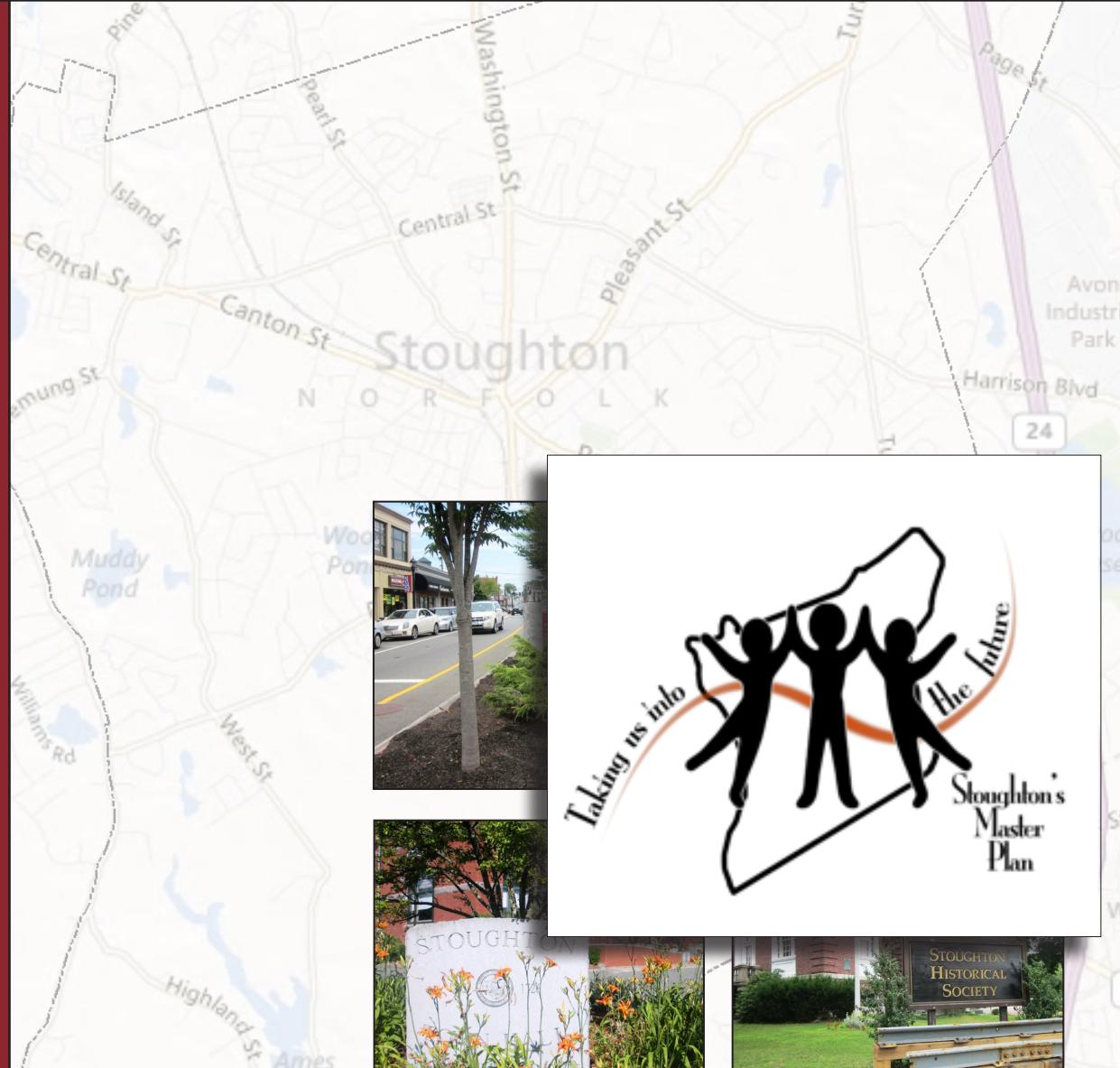
- Preserve the town's natural resources and suburban landscapes.
- Provide programming within the town's parks and open spaces that strengthens our understanding of their value and enhances our experiences with them.

History

- Preserve and repurpose the town's historic resources to meet current needs.
- Honor and promote the town's history and culture through events, education and art.

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Part 2 - Key Issues and Recommendations



2.1 KEY ISSUES

Community members have identified a set of six key issues they feel must be addressed by Phase II of the master planning process for Stoughton to become the town we envision. It is important to remember that many other issues are necessary to address as well including all those associated with the variety of goals identified earlier. However, planning participants generally agree that by focusing greater attention first on these six issues will result in dramatic positive changes and position Stoughton for continued success.

Town Center

Master Planning participants voiced universal support for addressing a wide variety of issues that are impacting Town Center. Nearly 80% of survey respondents indicated that Stoughton's greatest challenges include Town Center. When asked what aspect of Stoughton they were least satisfied with, 84% of survey respondents included Town Center, a greater percent than any other characteristic. At the second visioning forum, when asked to prioritize key issues facing the town 74% of respondents included Town Center as one of three top priorities.

Town Center, in its current state, is seen as a detraction rather than an asset. While there are a number of beautiful historic buildings, some well designed and maintained businesses, and a recently improved streetscape, these elements alone are not enough to overcome the negative aspects of the Center. The more pervasive characteristics are the deteriorated properties, vacant and unattractive store fronts, undeveloped lots, and unappealing signs and public spaces. Town Center's problems are compounded further when these physical characteristics are coupled with traffic congestion, a lack of convenient parking, and a limited variety of retail businesses or activity or entertainment venues.

Citizens see Town Center as unrealized potential and offered a number of ideas for redevelopment and revitalization. Ideas include repurposing the Stoughton Train Station Depot building and State Theatre, redeveloping the Post Office site, infilling existing development with shops and restaurants



with upper floor residential units, focusing strategies to create an arts district, encouraging eclectic restaurants, developing a pedestrian and automobile friendly circulation system by reconfiguring streets and ensuring a continuous circuit of safe and accessible sidewalks, and developing gathering places to accommodate chance meetings and town-wide celebrations. Town Center focus group participants provided additional targeted suggestions including creating a parking management program to address customer as well as employee needs, developing working groups to provide greater opportunities for networking and collaborating, and establishing a more visible police presence to discourage jay walking and encourage more considerate driving behaviors. Participants also discussed the need to limit non-active store fronts, and to assess customer needs with tools such as questionnaires and surveys.

Despite the lack of current physical appeal and the automobile oriented nature of the Center, its strengths are considerable. Stoughton's Town Center is compact with the majority of destinations within easy walking distance from each other. Train service and automobile access provide the Center with the opportunity to capitalize on thousands of commuters a day. In addition, the dense residential population in close proximity can provide a sense of neighborhood that could add vitality throughout the day and evening and provide eyes on the street for increased safety. Town Center is also the municipal heart of Stoughton with town offices, a post office, and public safety facilities within a two block area.

Schools

Participants at Stoughton's first visioning forum identified Stoughton schools as both a community asset and an area that needs improvements. The positive aspects of the schools most often mentioned include the music program and teachers. The negative aspect most often noted is the physical condition of the schools followed by the school's performance rankings. Participants revealed they are most concerned with the physical condition of the High School. Whether participants felt schools are an asset or a liability, they agreed that the public school system should be a priority for the town as it is seen as a key to maintaining and growing a strong residential base and local economy.

Respondents to the community survey are divided on how they rated schools with 35% selecting it as a strength (the fourth highest rated town element listed) and 31% selecting it as one of the town's greatest challenges (the sixth highest rated town element listed). In a question asking participants to rate their satisfaction with the school system 42% indicated they are somewhat or very satisfied and only 23% indicated they are somewhat or very dissatisfied. The element of the school system survey respondents are most dissatisfied with is the physical condition of the schools. Survey respondents are most satisfied with the Elementary School and less satisfied with the Middle and High School.

Both the Image and the School focus groups discussed schools and outlined a number of ideas for improving

them. Priorities include improving the school's buildings in a systematic way starting with building a new High School and updating all schools with new technology. Focus group members noted the need for openness, transparency and collaboration between community members, town leaders and school administrators and staff to improve all aspects of the education experience. Celebrating and promoting the school's successes ranging from improved test scores, to music and athletic achievements to civic engagement are seen as very important.

Stoughton's final community visioning forum group activity asked participants to identify the three most important issues the town must address to reach its community vision. Schools ranked first of seven identified issues with 77% of participants indicating it is one of the town's highest priorities.

Economic Development

While Stoughton has a well developed economic base, community members feel there is a need to improve in this area. Planning participants cited the need for town policies and regulations to be business friendly and for public infrastructure to better support businesses. More and better jobs, convenient shopping, stability through business diversity and expanded tax roles were identified as benefits that sound economic development policies and strategies would bring about. Seventy five percent of community survey respondents indicated a desire for some or much more retail development and 69% desired some or many more restaurants.



Planning participants noted that the physical characteristics of development are also important.

Development's proximity to and compatibility with existing residential uses, its scale, and its design are all elements that require consideration.

The poor condition of the physical environment of many existing development areas, in particular along business corridors within Stoughton, was identified and discussed by many groups at the public forums. Participants were critical of what they see as underlying causes including improper zoning, lack of design standards and code enforcement, and inadequate maintenance as well as the results including poorly designed and maintained commercial development, sign clutter, deteriorated streetscapes, and an overall look of disrepair and complacency.

Transportation

Traffic congestion and pedestrian safety are the two transportation issues most identified by planning participants. Sixty-five percent of community survey respondents noted that traffic is one of Stoughton's greatest challenges, second only to Town Center and 69% identified it as an element of town they are least satisfied with. Traffic issues are an integral part of Town Center concerns including impact on business. Forty-five percent of respondents also noted that traffic is a challenge for their own neighborhood. Interestingly while the survey indicates traffic is a key irritant and a great deal of discussion revolved around traffic during Stoughton's first public forum, considerably fewer discussions focused on traffic at the second forum and only 14% of forum participants ranked it as a top priority to address.

The number of accidents involving pedestrians and cyclist is of particular concern. While a number of intersections and stretches of road have been identified as most problematic for congestion, input suggests that a holistic approach to transportation and circulation management is needed to create lasting improvement. Suggestions for improvements include addressing school bussing policies, enforcing jaywalking and parking laws, upgrading sidewalks, adjusting travel patterns and signal timing among others. One idea for developing the capacity within the town to address transportation issues effectively is to create a transportation management committee

responsible for developing a priority list of roadway, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements to reduce traffic congestion and improve walkability and pedestrian safety.

Community

The measure of a town's success is evidenced by its ability to attract residents, businesses and visitors. Public input coupled with recent population and housing trends indicates that Stoughton lacks strength in this area. Visioning participants noted that a safe and enjoyable living environment would necessitate increasing activities for youth and assuring adequate public facilities and services including sidewalks and trail systems, parks and playgrounds and other areas to come together as a community. Over 80% of survey respondents indicated a desire for more active and passive recreation in town. Focus group members noted opportunities existed to improve recreational offerings by developing town-owned Capen Reynolds and Glen Echo properties and by updating Ames Pond facilities. Members also advocated for downtown parks, greater connectivity between resources and activity centers and a playground near the youth and senior center.



A number of discussions in forums and focus groups centered on how people choose where they want to live and what Stoughton offers compared to neighboring communities. Housing cost and availability and the quality of schools are thought to be primary considerations. Stoughton's lower housing costs in comparison to neighboring communities are seen as

both positive and negative. Fully half of community survey respondents indicated that Stoughton needs some or much more higher priced housing while more than half feel that more apartments and condominiums are not needed and nearly half feel that more affordable housing is also not needed. Focus group participants think that lower priced homes may encourage home ownership in Stoughton over more expensive communities. Conversely, some feel that lower priced homes may flag Stoughton as less desirable.

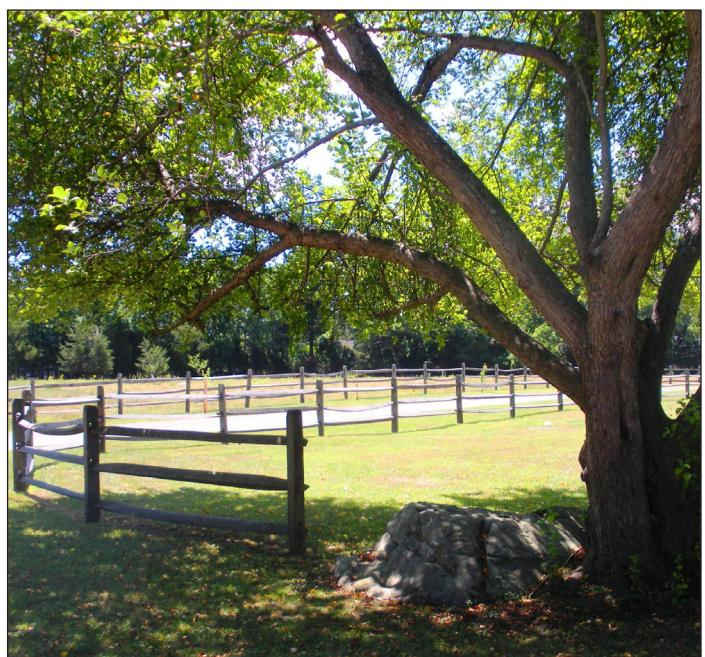
The livability of a community also includes the opportunity to meaningfully participate in self governance. Planning participants in forums, focus groups and the on-line survey all indicated town government could and should improve the process to support greater involvement. Suggestions for increasing opportunities for meaningful participation include creating term limits for elected officials and appointed board and committee members, increasing transparency to foster greater understanding and trust, and improving communications and outreach. Together these changes could increase collaboration and support across town departments, organizations and interest groups for the great variety of initiatives that help to enrich the community.

Image

Residents at the community forum were quick to share their feelings that Stoughton's image, or people's perceptions of what is true about Stoughton, is a hindrance to the town's success. Forum participants noted a variety of community elements that contribute to the poor image including town governance, school performance, lower priced housing, crime, and physical appearance including vacant and or deteriorating buildings, poorly maintained businesses, inappropriately placed businesses, graffiti and trash. Sixty-four percent of community survey respondents identified "poor image" as one of the town's major challenges, ranking it third after Town Center and traffic.

Focus group volunteers discussed the idea that Stoughton's image is impacted by how it is governed. Volunteers noted that there has been widely publicized

controversy in the police department (now addressed, but not known outside the community) and a lack of transparency, accountability and inclusivity in local government that has led to distrust and a limited pool of residents willing to engage in the planning and governing process. Nearly half of survey respondents noted dissatisfaction with town planning ranking it fourth in the list of town challenges. Volunteers also noted that the lack of commitment or capacity to make substantive changes has led to the deterioration of town properties and resources. Universally, planning participants want town leaders to commit to working together, across interest groups, through an open and inclusive process to get things done.



Planning participants generally agree that Stoughton has an image problem but there are differences of opinion on whether to address image as an issue itself or whether to focus on addressing the underlying causes and have faith that perceptions will change as the issues are corrected or situations improved. Some feel that a public relations and image campaign will begin to inject pride and confidence in community members and help sway public opinion which may increase home sales and interest from business partners. Image campaign advocates noted a number of community strengths to promote including desirable and affordable housing, exceptional location, student accomplishments, outstanding school programs including music and sports, and exceptional police and fire departments.

2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHASE II

Overview

In Phase I of the master planning process the Stoughton community has put forth a powerful and inspiring community vision expressing the town's desires, has identified preliminary supporting goals and prioritized key issues the town must face to move toward its desired future. The town is now ready to begin Phase II of its master planning process. Phase II will focus the town on assessing its needs, projecting potential for change, evaluating existing policies, regulations and practices and making recommendations to fulfill the vision and goals outlined.

The final comprehensive Master Plan will set out strategies, detailed plans and benchmarks that town elected and appointed leaders, departments, boards and committees will use to guide change and preserve and manage the town's resources to fulfill its community vision. It will:

- Serve as the basis and justification for changes to the town's zoning and land use regulations.
- Serve as a reference for departments, boards and committees to make clear, fair, and consistent decisions.
- Strengthen funding requests to local, state and federal agencies by showing the request supports a planned for and community defended capital improvement program and/or initiative.

Phase II - Elements

The Phase II process will study the following elements focusing on their relationships to each other and to key issues, and their impact on the community as a whole. For each element, the Master Plan will recommend policies and strategies to address identified needs.

Land Use - A comprehensive examination of existing land use information and analysis of trends and an assessment of where future development is likely to occur. The analysis will:

- Identify areas of incompatible uses and/or densities
- Assess future need of various land uses
- Assess effectiveness of current regulations in managing growth
- Identify areas with potential for redevelopment and/or revitalization

Housing – An analysis of existing residential development patterns, an assessment of existing and forecasted housing needs and an identification of potential areas of growth and preservation. The study should also address local and regional market forces that may influence the development and affordability of housing in Stoughton.

Economic Development – An evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of Stoughton's labor force and local economy to help determine the appropriate mix of businesses to support economic stability and community vitality. The study should also consider factors of industry and business location to identify local improvements that support the community's economic development goals.

Natural and Historic Resources – An assessment of the condition and functional significance of the town's natural and historic resources. The study will identify particularly sensitive and at-risk areas or elements as well as potential or known sources of resource degradation.

Open Space and Recreation – An inventory and assessment of open space and recreational facilities and programs and identification of community and management needs.

Community Services and Facilities – An analysis of Stoughton's infrastructure and public services, including schools. The study will forecast needs based on existing documentation, public input and discussion with key personnel. The study will consider local and regional water resources, wastewater infrastructure and systems, and stormwater management, as well as electrical, gas and telecommunications services. It will also assess the age, capacity and function of existing public facilities to determine their ability to serve the town's current and projected demographics and land uses.

Transportation & Circulation – An analysis of the existing transportation network, compiling available data from town, regional and state agencies to assess traffic, bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation, parking, transit service and other transportation system elements.

Strategic Planning Areas – A Master Plan may include Strategic Plan Areas. These are geographic areas within the community where opportunities for change exist. In a sense, these are micro-level Master Plans where a number of community issues and opportunities intersect. In Stoughton, Town Center may be seen as a Strategic Planning Area.

Implementation – A series of specific strategies and actions that support the goals identified for each element. These strategies may include zoning ordinances, regulations, town policies, building and site design standards, infrastructure investments, additional studies and others. The Implementation Plan also prioritizes recommendations and actions and identifies responsible parties (boards, committees, departments, etc.) in carrying out the strategies.

Existing Tools

During Phase I of the master planning process, the Master Plan Committee put in place a number of valuable tools that should be carried into Phase II.

Master Plan Committee

The Master Plan Committee, in its current form, or with changes made to accommodate member's interest and needs, should continue to guide the work of the selected Phase II consultant team. The Committee should also continue to coordinate focus groups, and be active in outreach efforts. Regularly scheduled meetings, prompt review of deliverables, and a framework that supports open and respectful communication have been essential for success and should be continued into Phase II.

Master Plan Website

The Master Plan website (www.stoughtonmasterplan.org) should continue to be updated to reflect the current status of the project and to give site visitors access to the Phase I report and various support documents that the MPC and consultant team referenced to understand the issues involved in preparation of the plan. The website should also provide an anticipated project work plan and schedule.

The site should be updated as often as feasible to keep the community up to date and engaged in the process in the interim between phases and throughout Phase II.

Focus Groups

The focus groups established during Phase I should be kept intact and encouraged to continue to meet and advance discussions and ideas. The groups need not be entirely static though keeping a core group is advisable. New members should be provided with the group's notes so they can understand what has preceded them. Focus groups should be considered an extension of the MPC and can be looked to for technical expertise as well as a diversity of opinions.

Outreach and Communications

Phase I has employed a wide variety of outreach and communication techniques which can be continued into Phase II. The MPC should maintain relationships

with news providers, supportive agencies and organizations and others who have raised awareness of the planning process. Each agency, organization and individual should be provided with an anticipated schedule of Phase II activities and should be updated on those events on an on-going basis.

Town Meeting Representatives, board and committee members and department heads should also be provided with on-going updates to assure there is not a disconnect between visioning and identifying strategies to bring about the vision.

The Master Plan Committee should also seek to further diversify community outreach and communications by enlisting the help of previously unsolicited groups and agencies.

Maintaining Momentum

Comprehensive planning takes time and maintaining a community's excitement and energy becomes a challenge when action or change does not quickly follow decisions. The declaration of a community vision and the identification of key issues are decisions that provide a basis for taking action. While comprehensive planning is not done at the completion of the visioning stage, actions that begin to move the community toward its vision can and should be started. The first action is to begin Phase II which will identify a short and long term plan of many actions. Following are suggestions for additional actions that can begin now.

Build Capacity: Further studying the key issues that have been identified and then implementing the Master Plan's recommendations will require that the town increase its capacity to engage the community to leverage professional support. Technical advisory committees, partnership organizations, and community support groups must be organized within a framework that capitalizes on the expertise of volunteers and identifies where professional assistance is needed.

Assess Capital Needs: A number of requests for capital improvements arose from the visioning process, however clearly the town can not undertake all needed improvements at once. Capital improvements must be balanced with fiscal capacity and must be responsive to the town's most pressing needs first. The town should begin an assessment of public facilities to determine priorities for capital projects based on the physical condition of the facilities. The community can then consider both physical and social needs as it decides what and when to fund capital improvements.

Be Visible: The planning process should be open and transparent. In an effort to elevate both these goals the MPC should consider creating a visible meeting place for a variety of planning meetings in a vacant storefront in Stoughton Center. Given that the community envisions Stoughton Center as the social, cultural and civic heart of the community, creating a storefront planning office would serve multiple purposes. It would give visibility to planning if focus groups, MPC and others could meet here. It would help bring focus to the Town Center by illuminating and activating an otherwise vacant storefront. It can also serve to bring

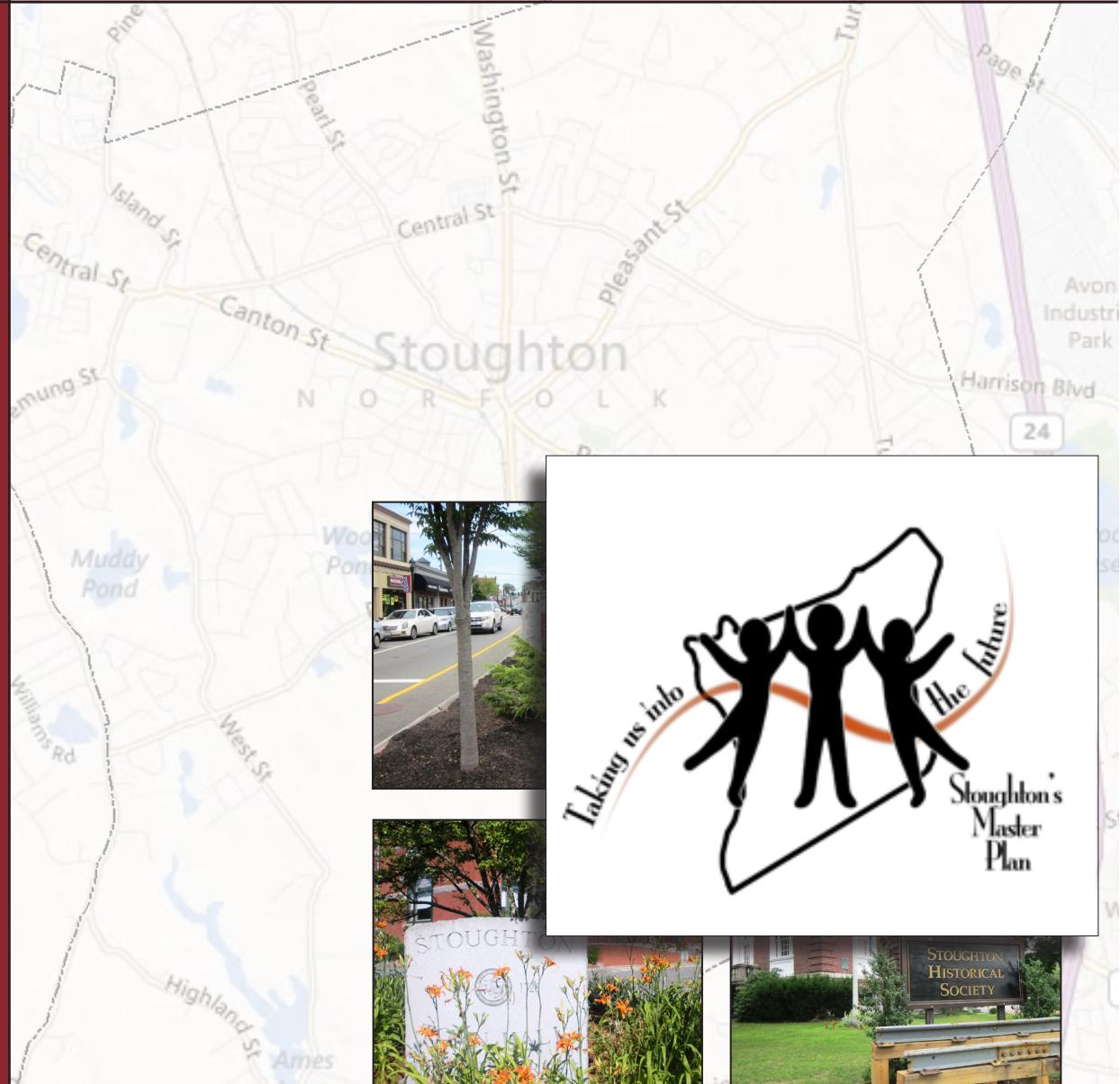
others into the process with open doors and posted invitations. Combined with the Master Plan Logo banners hung in Town Center, this early action item could powerfully illustrate the town's commitment to the Center as well as to an open and transparent process.

Discuss Differences: There is a great deal of consensus around many issues in Stoughton, however the community is not in agreement for example on the types of housing that should be supported. To come together on issues of disagreement, the community must be willing to listen to and learn from each other. Acknowledging that there are differences and resolving to identify strategies or develop our own solutions that bridge the differences should be early action items that maintain momentum.

Make a Change: It is true that actions speak louder than words. Changing something in the physical environment may serve as a notice to the community that we are committed to moving forward to attain our vision, e.g, benches, trees. The change should be a part of a larger commitment that responds to a goal we have set. It could be a community event that results in a change in Town Center, to a public facility, or to a street corridor. Involve the community, make it fun, and make it clear that this is a small step in the direction we are determined to go.

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Part 3 - Existing Conditions



3.1 POPULATION PROFILE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Regional Context	28
Population Trends	28
Population Growth.....	28
Population Projections	30
Population Density and Distribution	31
Age Distribution	33
Household and Family Characteristics	35
Income	37
Education	38
Diversity	39

FIGURES

Figure 1: Population Growth in Stoughton, 1910-2010.....	29
Figure 2: Regional Comparison,% Population Change, 1990 - 2010.....	29
Figure 3: Projected Population Growth.....	30
Figure 4: Census Tract Population and Size	32
Figure 5: Population by Age Group.....	33
Figure 6: Portion of Total Population by Age Group	34
Figure 7: Stoughton Public School Enrollment, 1994-2012	34
Figure 8: Average Household Size in 2010, Sub-region	36
Figure 9: Composition of Households 2010	36
Figure 10: Regional Comparison of Household Median Income, 2010	37
Figure 11: Level of Educational Attained for Population over 25	38
Figure 12: Racial Diversity of Stoughton's Population, 2000 and 2010	39
Figure 13: Primary Languages Spoken at Home	40

TABLES

Table 1: Statewide Community Comparison of Population Density	31
Table 2: Statewide Community Comparison of Ratio of Population per Road Miles	31
Table 3: Household Composition, 2000-2010	35
Table 4: Income, 2010	37

Population characteristics affect community planning in multiple ways. School districts must plan for growing or shrinking school enrollments. Town governments may have to adjust provision of services for seniors, youth, veterans, the disabled and determine the appropriate balance of housing types and transportation options. Demand for parks and recreation areas and community centers shifts with changes in the composition of households and families as well as the ages of residents. For these reasons it is important for communities to consider how their population demographics are changing in order to accommodate or anticipate future needs.

In general, while the size of Stoughton's population has remained relatively stable over the past thirty years, demographic changes can be seen throughout the town. Household sizes are shrinking at the same time that the number of households is increasing. Stoughton's population is aging, reflecting trends within Massachusetts and the nation as a whole. Stoughton has more ethnic and racial diversity than other mature suburban communities in the region, and a significant population of non-English speakers.

Regional Context

Stoughton is represented by two regional planning agencies – the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC).

OCC serves fifteen communities in southeastern Massachusetts – Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, Easton, Halifax, Hanson, Kingston, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman. OCPC is also the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation and transit planning, a designated Economic Development District by the US Department of Commerce, and the Area Agency on Aging.

MAPC serves 101 cities and towns in the Boston metro area. Stoughton is part of MAPC's subregion, the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC), which is comprised of thirteen communities located south of Boston: Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Medfield, Milton, Needham, Norwood, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole, and Westwood.

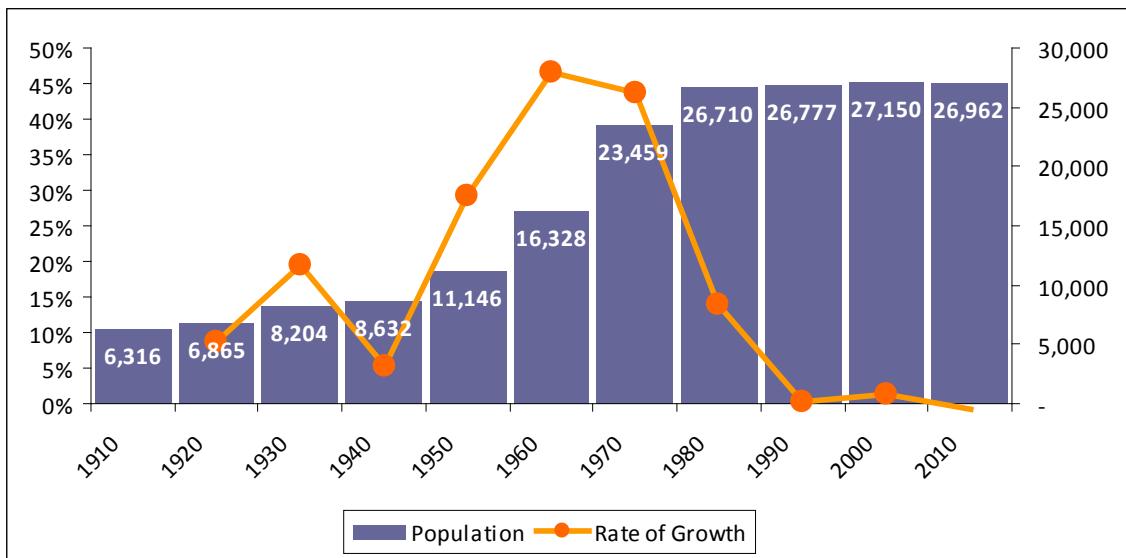
Stoughton falls at the intersection of these two regions and it has commonalities and differences with each. The comparative statistics used in the following sections use a combination of communities from both MAPC and OCPC rather than either region exclusively. For the most part, the comparative communities include Norwood, Randolph, Sharon, Canton, Milton, and Foxborough, Avon, Brockton, Easton, Bridgewater, and West and East Bridgewater.

Population Trends

POPULATION GROWTH

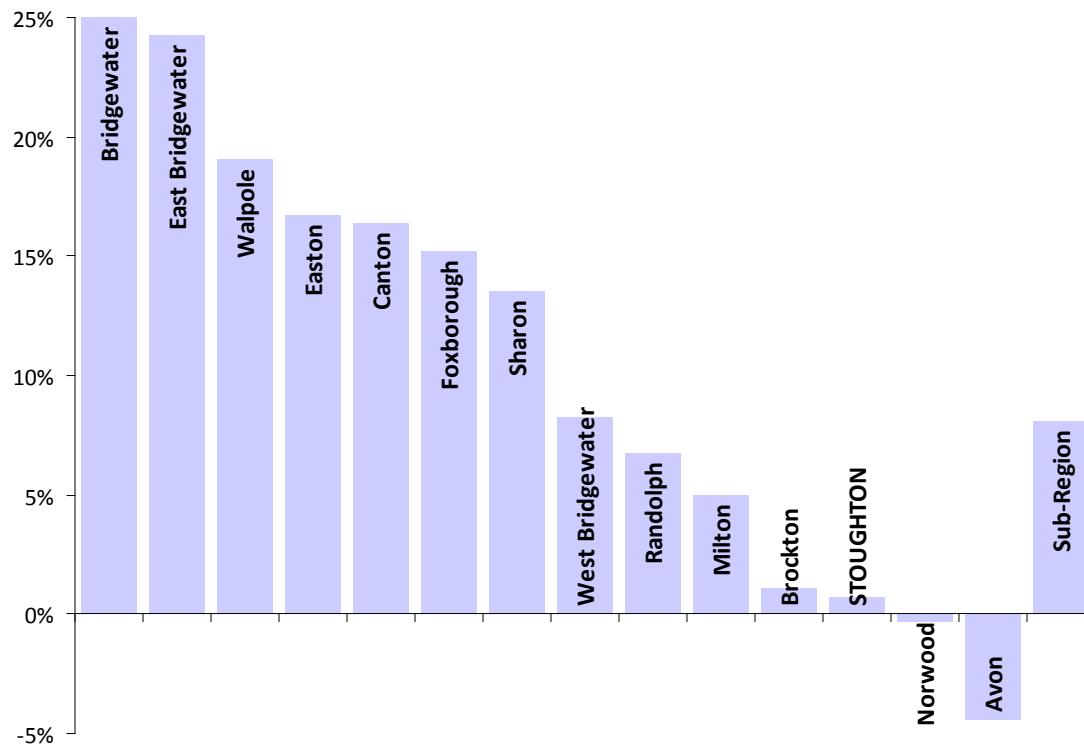
Stoughton experienced relatively slow population growth from 1910 to 1940, a substantial growth spurt between 1940 and 1980 and a leveling of the population growth from 1980 to the present. Between 1980 and 2000, the population grew by less than 1% a decade, and the 2010 US Census showed a population decrease of 188 (0.7%) since 2000. Three other communities in the comparison sub-region show a population loss or growth of less than 1% over the past decade (Brockton, Norwood, Avon).

Figure 1: Population Growth in Stoughton, 1910-2010¹



The rate of population growth across the sub-region has decreased from a little over 7% in the 1990s to about 2% in the 2000s. After a high rate of population growth in the 1940 to 1980 period, Stoughton's rate of growth over the past two decades has slowed substantially compared to most of the communities in the comparison sub-region (as shown in the following Figure).

Figure 2: Regional Comparison,% Population Change, 1990 - 2010²



1 US Census Bureau

2 US Census

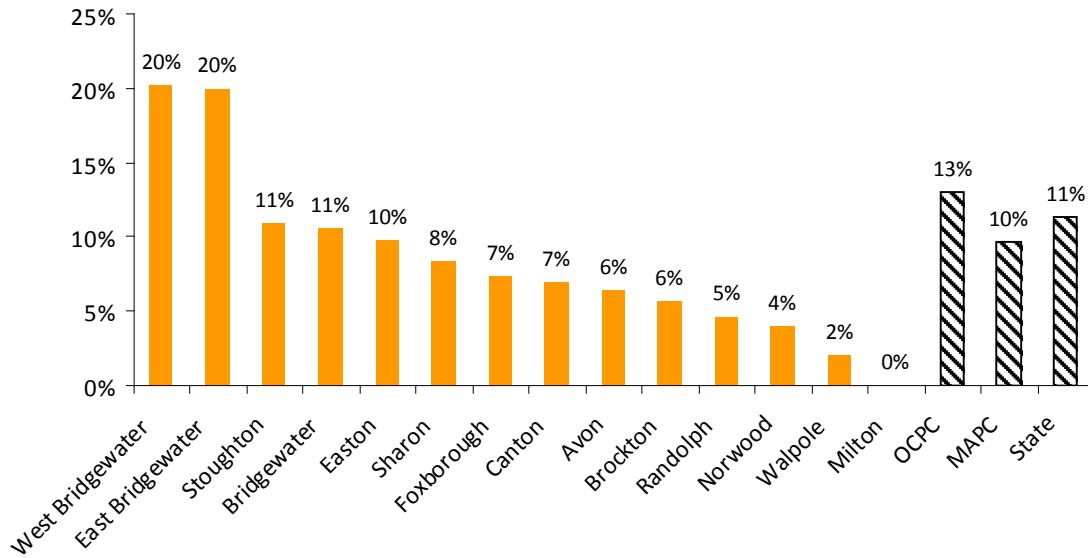
POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in 2011 showed an anticipated 11% increase in the rate of growth over the next 25 years for Stoughton. This projection, which sets the growth for the next three decades at ten times that of the past three decades, seems unrealistic. There are a few reasons these projections could be so high. These projections use a “top-down” approach, in which the regional projections developed by MassDOT are allocated to the communities. Factors considered in the allocating process include current community level share of the regional total; development trends; availability of developable land and/or existing development below capacity; known planned developments; and proximity to major transportation routes and transit facilities. As shown on the following figure, MassDOT projected population growth for the MAPC region at about 8% and OCPC region at about 11% from 2010 to 2035. Therefore, Stoughton’s projected rate of growth is similar to the regional averages. It is important to note that community level forecasts are based on regional historical growth trends and are derived with the following assumptions:

- Regional control totals were developed by MassDOT through a process that involved estimating state-level population in future years and then allocating population to the state’s thirteen Regional Planning Agency districts.
- The projections assume that historical patterns of net domestic out-migration will diminish (though not disappear) in the coming decades.
- The reliability of municipal-level data for estimating available developable land and known planned / or permitted development projects is subject to accuracy of reporting, local market fluctuations, changes of ownership, local land use controls and other factors that may influence whether or not projected development occurs.
- MassDOT used 2009 population estimates (2010 data was not yet available when the projections were done and Stoughton’s actual population change was less than estimated).³

The following figure shows projections for Stoughton, the comparison communities, the entire MAPC region (164 communities were included in the projection), the entire OCPC region (15 communities), and the state. As noted above, Stoughton’s projected rate of growth seems high compared to historical trends.⁴

Figure 3: Projected Population Growth⁵



³ MetroFuture Projections Update 2010-2035 Technical Methodology and OCPC 2012 Regional Transportation Plan.

⁴ Mansfield is excluded from this comparison because it is not part of either the MAPC or OCPC regions.

⁵ MAPC Metrofuture 2035 and 2012 Old Colony Planning Council Regional Transportation Plan

POPULATION DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Stoughton ranks in the top 20% of municipalities in the state for population density (66 communities are more densely settled, 284 are less densely settled). Population density is calculated by dividing the total population by total square miles of land area, so does not necessarily reflect how population is distributed throughout the community. However, when combined with other factors, it can be useful for understanding the character of settlement for a given community. Communities state-wide with similar densities are identified in the table below.

Table 1: Statewide Community Comparison of Population Density⁶

Municipality	County	Population	Land Area	Population Density
North Attleborough	Bristol	28,712	18.64	1,540
Billerica	Middlesex	40,243	25.89	1,554
Attleboro	Bristol	43,593	27.51	1,585
Abington	Plymouth	15,985	9.94	1,608
Hudson	Middlesex	19,063	11.50	1,658
Stoughton	Norfolk	26,962	16.04	1,681
West Springfield	Hampden	28,391	16.75	1,695
Shrewsbury	Worcester	35,608	20.73	1,718
Rockland	Plymouth	17,489	10.02	1,745
Longmeadow	Hampden	15,784	9.02	1,750

Another way to gauge a community's development pattern is to compare the ratio of population to miles of road. A community that has a larger population in relation to miles of road is more compactly settled (like Stoughton). Stoughton ranks in the top 20% of municipalities in the state for this comparison as well. Communities with similar ratios are identified below.⁷

Table 2: Statewide Community Comparison of Ratio of Population per Road Miles⁸

Municipality	County	Population	Land Area	Population Per Road Miles
Burlington	Middlesex	24,498	11.81	211.3
Natick	Middlesex	33,006	15.08	211.7
Taunton	Bristol	55,874	46.61	212.1
Chicopee	Hampden	55,298	22.87	213.2
Wellesley	Norfolk	27,982	10.18	214.8
Milton	Norfolk	27,003	13.04	215.5
Stoughton	Norfolk	26,962	16.04	218.4
North Attleborough	Bristol	28,712	18.64	218.6
Methuen	Essex	47,255	22.40	220.0
Amesbury	Essex	16,283	12.40	220.8
Attleboro	Bristol	43,593	27.51	223.8

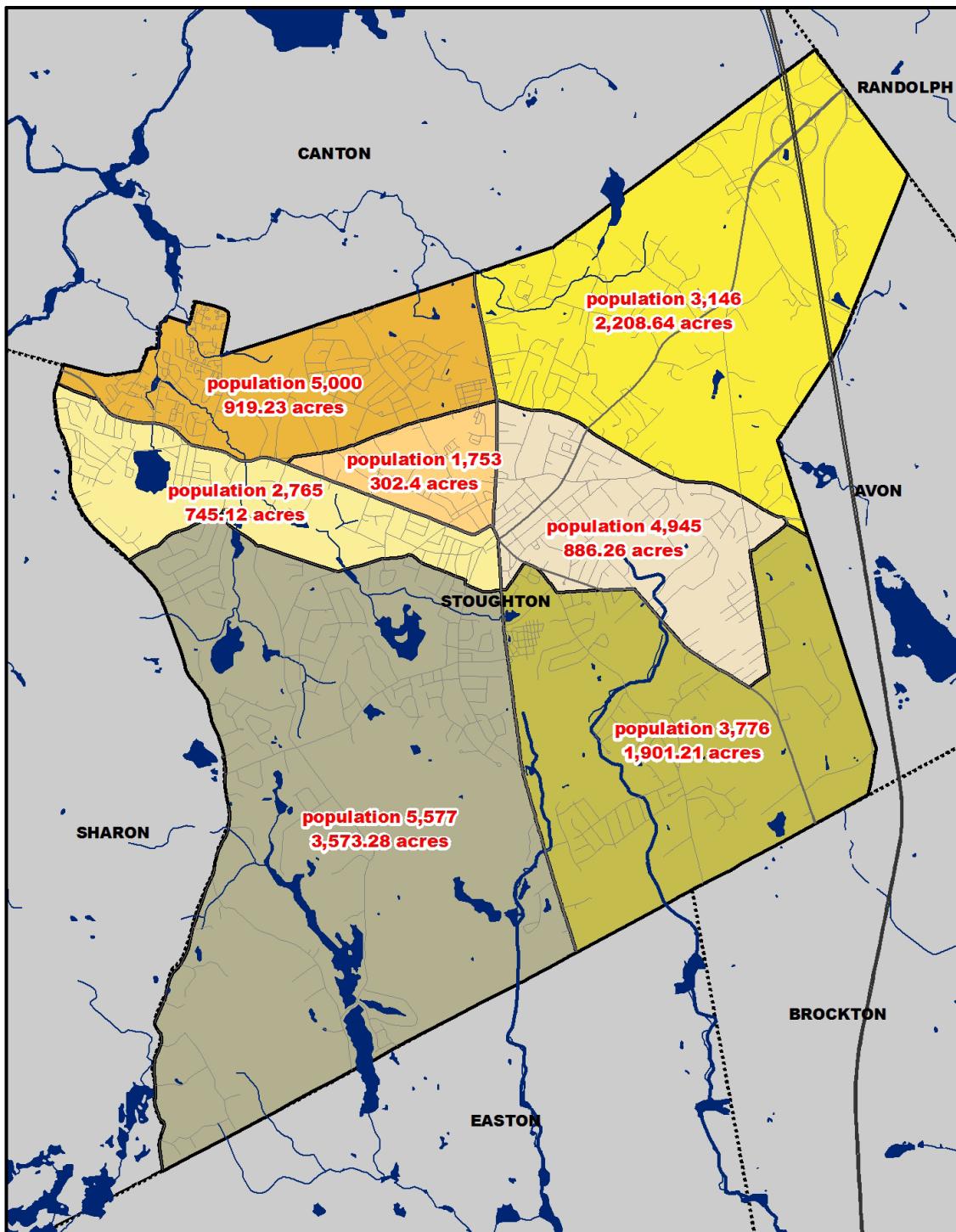
⁶ MA Department of Revenue, Community Comparison Report, June 2012.

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ Map produced by Brown Walker Planners, Inc. with data from MA Department of Revenue, US Census Bureau, Bing maps, and MassGIS.

The following map shows the distribution of population within the town's seven census tracts.

Figure 4: Census Tract Population and Size⁹

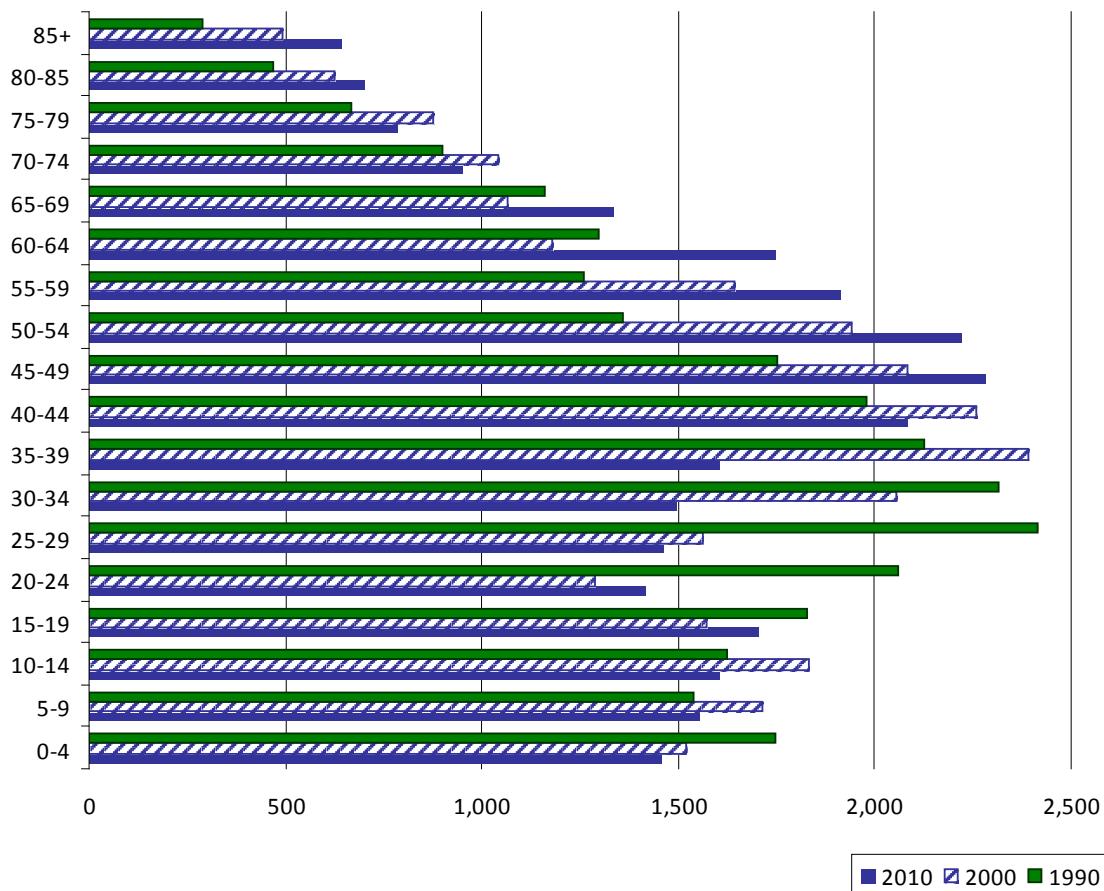


⁹ Map produced by Brown Walker Planners, Inc. with data from MassGIS and US Census Bureau.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

As is the case in other communities in New England, the population of Stoughton is aging. The median age rose from around 39 in 2000 to just under 43 in 2010.¹⁰ This is higher than the county-wide median (41) and statewide median (39). Stoughton also has an older population than most of its neighboring communities with the exception of Avon and Sharon.

Figure 5: Population by Age Group¹¹



All of the age groups under 40 have decreased over the past three decades. All age groups 40 and over have increased. Over the past decade, the significant shifts have been the 60 to 69 age cohorts (which increased by 37% or 838), the 85 and over age group (up 31% or 152), and adults in the 30 to 39 age cohorts (which fell by 30% or 1,345).¹²

Mirroring the decrease in the school age cohort, K-12 enrollments in the Stoughton public schools have declined over the past two decades. During the 1993-1994 school year 4,054 children were enrolled in the public schools, but in the 2011-2012 school year K-12 enrollments dropped to 3,819 students.

10 US Census Bureau

11 US Census Bureau

12 *Ibid*

Figure 6: Portion of Total Population by Age Group¹³

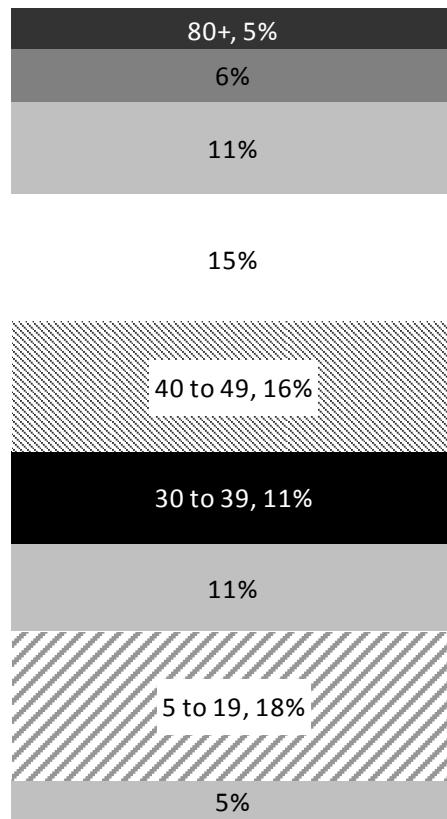
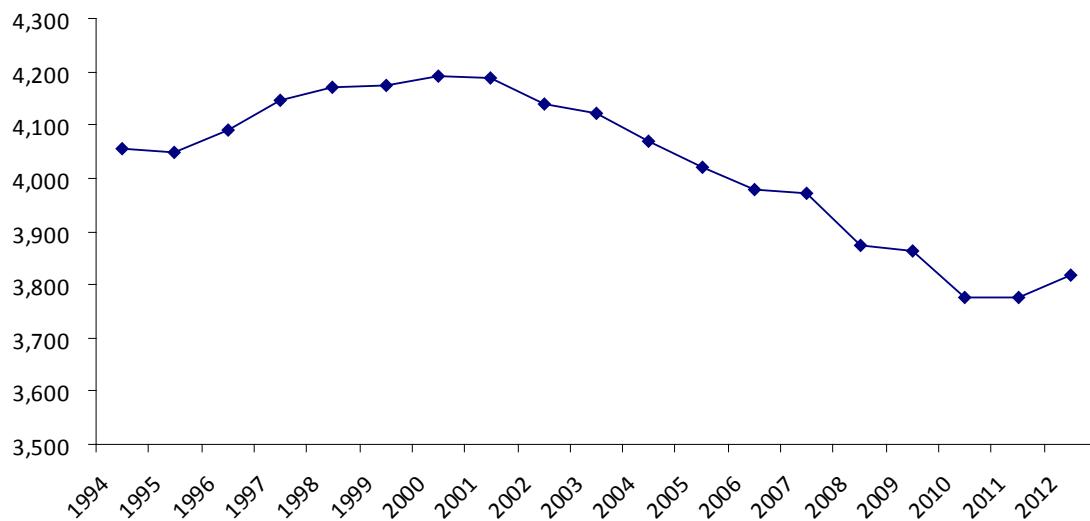


Figure 7: Stoughton Public School Enrollment, 1994-2012¹⁴



13 US Census Bureau

14 MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School / District Profiles

Household and Family Characteristics

Household and family characteristics affect many aspects of local governance and provision of community services. The number of households influences demand for infrastructure and facilities and the cost of town services. Furthermore, the composition of households and families may influence demand for social services and public facilities.

The following table provides a snapshot of family and household characteristics. A family is defined by the US Census as *a group of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption*. A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence. Not all households contain families since a household may comprise a group of unrelated people or one person living alone. Families and non-family households together make up the total number of households in a community as defined by the US Census. Households do not necessarily equal the total number of housing units (discussed further in Housing Chapter) as housing units include vacant as well as occupied units. Furthermore, there may be more than one household in a housing unit (family and non-family members living in the same unit will be counted separately).

Despite a small increase in the number of households, the average household size has remained steady at 2.6 people. Although families with school age children make up almost 28% of the resident population, the trend over the past decade reflects an increasing number of individuals living alone as well as families without children, and a growing number of households with seniors.

Table 3: Household Composition, 2000-2010¹⁵

Household or Family Type	2000	2010
Total Households	10,254	10,295
Households with individuals under 18 years	33.4%	31.3%
Households with individuals 65 years and over	27.1%	30.5%
Families with school age children	30.3%	27.9%
Two-parent families with school age children	23.6%	20.5%
Single parent families with school age children	6.7%	7.4%
Persons living alone	24.4%	25.6%
Seniors (over 65) living alone	9.9%	11.1%

As the following figure illustrates, Stoughton has a smaller average household size than most of its neighbors. Stoughton also has fewer households with children under 18 and more households with seniors (over 65) than most of the comparison communities.

Figure 8: Average Household Size in 2010, Sub-region¹⁶

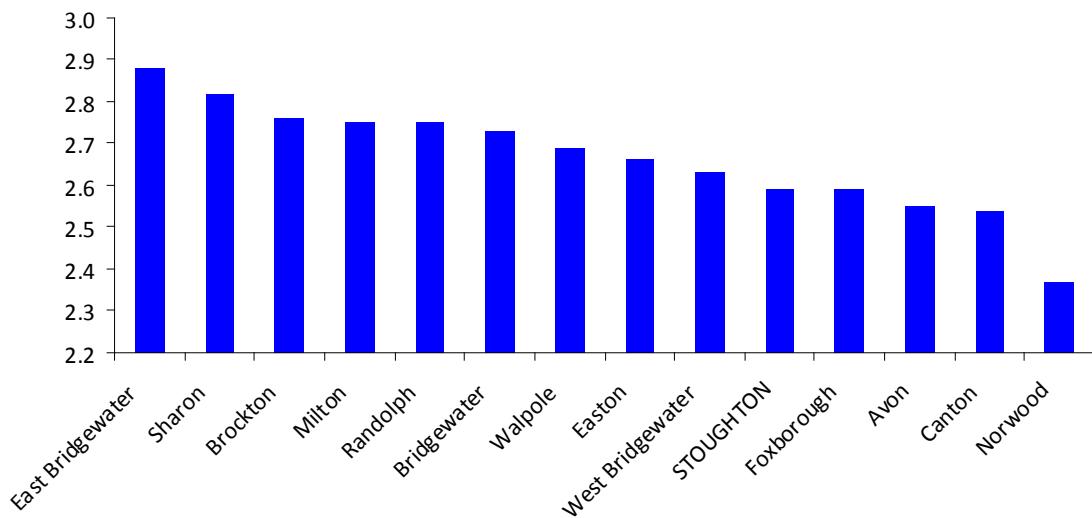
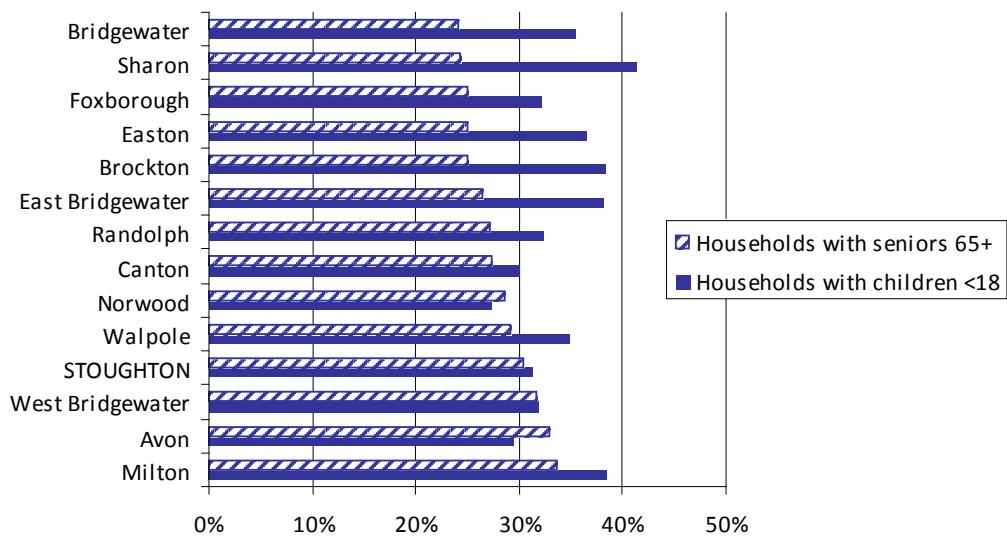


Figure 9: Composition of Households 2010



Income

Since 2000, median household income has increased in real dollars, but has actually decreased when adjusted for inflation. Median household income rose from \$57,838 to \$69,945 between 2000 and 2010, representing a 20.9% increase.¹⁷ However, when adjusted for inflation, the 2000 household income is worth over \$75,000 in today's dollars, which would represent a decrease of 7.6%. Therefore, the increase in household income did not outpace inflation.

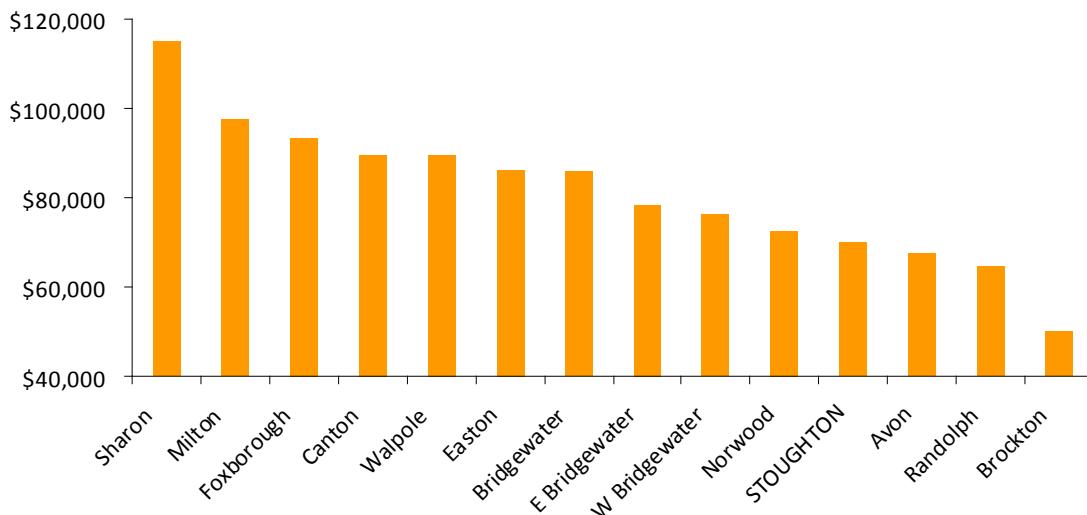
The median household and family incomes for Stoughton are lower than the county, but slightly higher than the state, and comparable to the Boston metropolitan area. There are still a significant number of low-income households. More than 24% of households have incomes of less than \$35,000. The number of individuals living in poverty has increased from 4% to almost 8% since 2000. Poverty rates for children under 5 (13.1%) and seniors 65 years and over (10.1%) are higher than the poverty rate for the entire town population.¹⁸

Table 4: Income, 2010¹⁹

	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Median Non-Family Income	Per Capita Income	% of People in Poverty
Stoughton	\$69,945	\$84,265	\$33,532	\$32,162	7.7%
Norfolk County	\$80,981	\$102,309	\$44,624	\$42,867	6.1%
Boston Metro Area ¹	\$69,784	\$87,751	\$41,746	\$36,714	9.8%
Massachusetts	\$63,691	\$80,734	\$37,491	\$33,969	10.8%

The following figure presents household median incomes for the comparison communities. Stoughton is in the bottom bracket for median household income for these communities.

Figure 10: Regional Comparison of Household Median Income, 2010²⁰



Income levels vary depending on household type. As is true in most communities, non-family households in Stoughton have lower incomes and family households have higher incomes than the average household income. Nonfamily households consist of single people living alone and unrelated people living together.

17 US Census Bureau (2000) and American Community Survey, 3-Year estimates (2008-2010)

18 *Ibid*

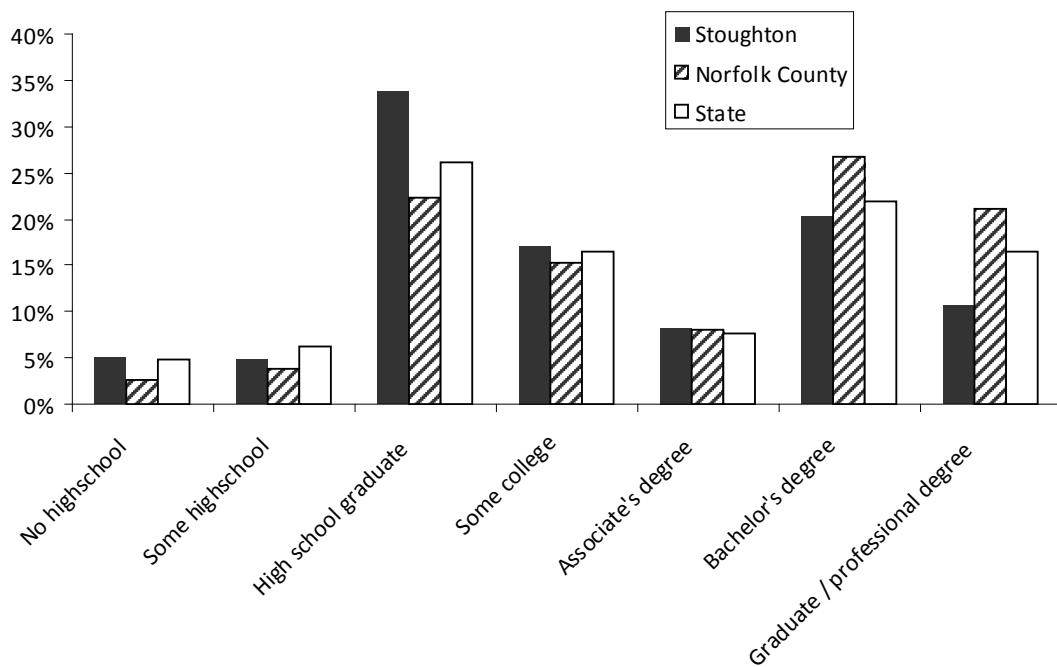
19 American Community Survey, 3-Year estimates (2008-2010)

20 American Community Survey, 5-Year estimates (2006-2010)

Education

More than half (approximately 56%) of Stoughton's population over the age of 25 has achieved education levels beyond high school. An estimated 20% have a bachelor's degree and almost 11% have a graduate or professional degree. The following figure shows that in general, Stoughton's population is slightly less educated (in terms of educational attainment) than Norfolk County as a whole and as well as the statewide population.

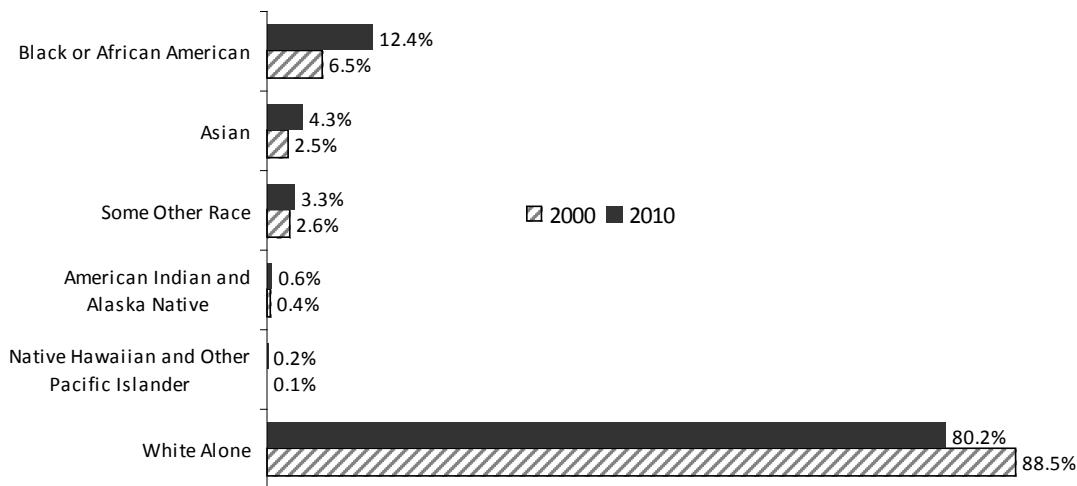
Figure 11: Level of Educational Attained for Population over 25²¹



Diversity

In the last few decades, Stoughton's population has become increasingly diverse. In 2000, almost 89% of Stoughton residents identified themselves as white alone, but by 2010, this dropped to just over 80%. The change is attributable primarily to an increase in African-American and Asian populations. The following figure represents the portion of the population identifying themselves with one or a combination of the following racial groups.

Figure 12: Racial Diversity of Stoughton's Population, 2000 and 2010²²



Statistics reported by the Massachusetts Department of Education show significant increase in the racial diversity of the Stoughton school population. For the 2011-2012 school year, 71% of students identified themselves as white alone as compared to 87.0% a decade ago. African Americans comprise 17.6% of students as compared to 8.8% during the 2000-2001 school year. Hispanics and Asians represent 5.9% and 4.6% of the school population as compared to 1.2% and 2.9% respectively.²³

About 17% of Stoughton's population is estimated to be foreign-born. About 42% of the foreign-born population lists Latin America as place of birth, 40% indicate they were born in Europe, and 11% list Asia as place of birth. Of the foreign-born population an estimated 62% are naturalized U.S. citizens.²⁴

An estimated 21% of the total resident population over 5-years of age speaks a language other than English at home, and about 9% of those speak English less than "very well" (a US Census description).²⁵

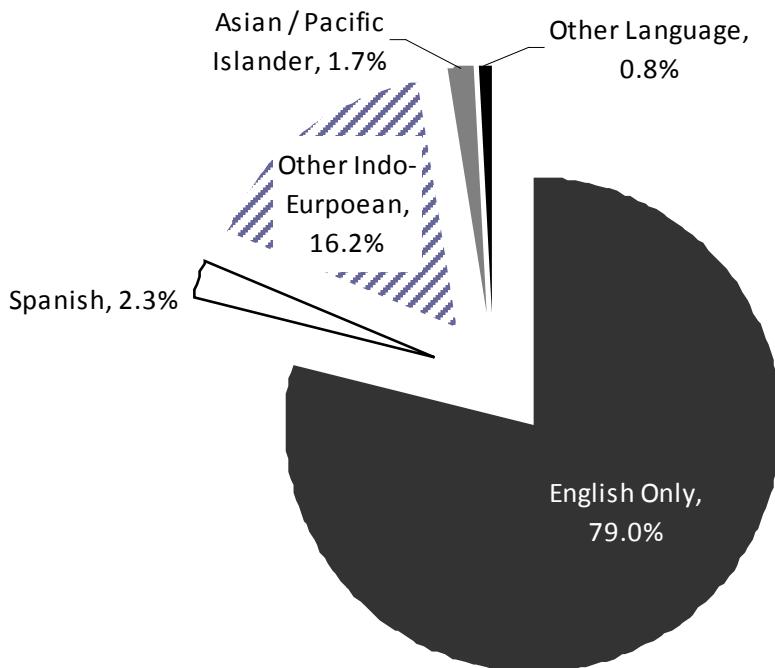
22 US Census Bureau

23 MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School / District Profiles

24 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates (2006-2010)

25 *Ibid*

Figure 13: Primary Languages Spoken at Home²⁶



In addition to the foreign-born residents, Stoughton's population includes people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 21% of residents report their primary ancestry as Irish, 11% Italian, 9% Portuguese and Cape Verdean, and 4% Brazilian. Other primary ancestry reported included English, Russian, West Indian, Polish, German, and French Canadian.²⁷

(Footnotes)

1 Census statistical area includes communities in Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Middlesex, and Plymouth Counties in Massachusetts and Rockingham County in New Hampshire.

26 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2006-2010)

27 *Ibid*

3.2 HOUSING

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Growth	42
Housing Options.....	45
Housing Costs.....	47
Affordable Housing.....	49

FIGURES

Figure 1: Housing Units - Year Built	42
Figure 2: Population Growth in Stoughton, 1910 - 2010.....	43
Figure 3: Year Householder Moved Into Unit.....	43
Figure 4: Housing Vacancy Rates	44
Figure 5: Housing Types.....	45
Figure 6: Housing Types: Comparison	45
Figure 7: Number of Bedrooms	46
Figure 8: Household Size	46
Figure 9: Change in Housing Prices, 1990 - 2011.....	47
Figure 10: Percent of Housing Units on SHI.....	49

TABLES

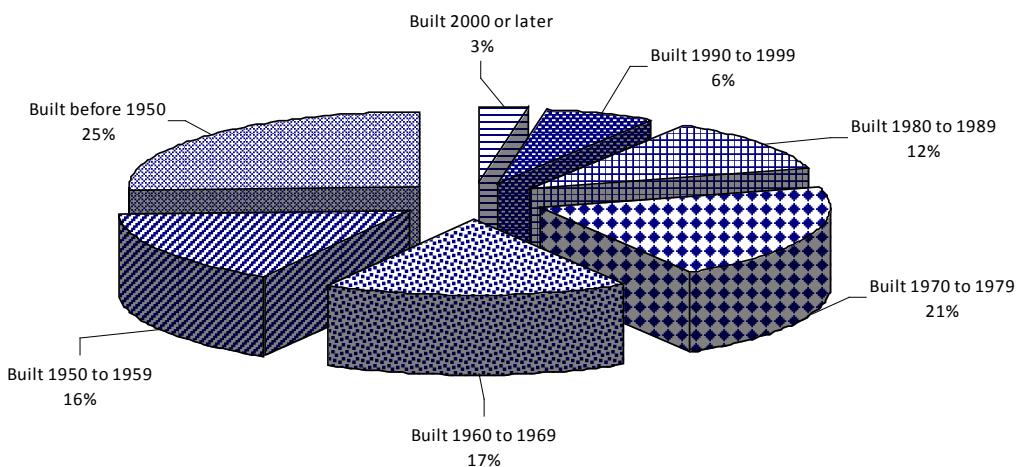
Table 1: Year Householder Moved into Current Home.....	44
Table 2: Change in Rental Units, 2000 to 2010.....	47
Table 3: Median Sale Prices.....	48
Table 4: Percent of Households with Housing Costs Exceeding 30% of Annual Household Income	48

Stoughton offers a variety of housing choices including some of the lower priced housing in the region. Options range from historic farms and contemporary homes on large lots in the rural south west and north east regions of Stoughton, to well established subdivisions of modest homes, to urban single family homes and multi-family apartments in Town Center, to spacious homes in new subdivisions. The largest percentage of Stoughton's housing is single family, a quarter of all units are rental and less than half of multi-family units are in structures of ten or more units.

Growth

While Stoughton has seen a limited increase in the number of housing units built in the last decade, a full 75% of its housing has been built since 1950. The largest period of growth was between 1950 and 1979 when total housing stock increased by an average of 18% a decade.

Figure 1: Housing Units - Year Built¹



Note the growth rate of the population in comparison as shown in Figure 2. Even while the population remained nearly unchanged from 1980 to 2010, the number of housing units built during the same period accounts for about 20% of Stoughton's existing housing units

Figure 2: Population Growth in Stoughton, 1910 - 2010²

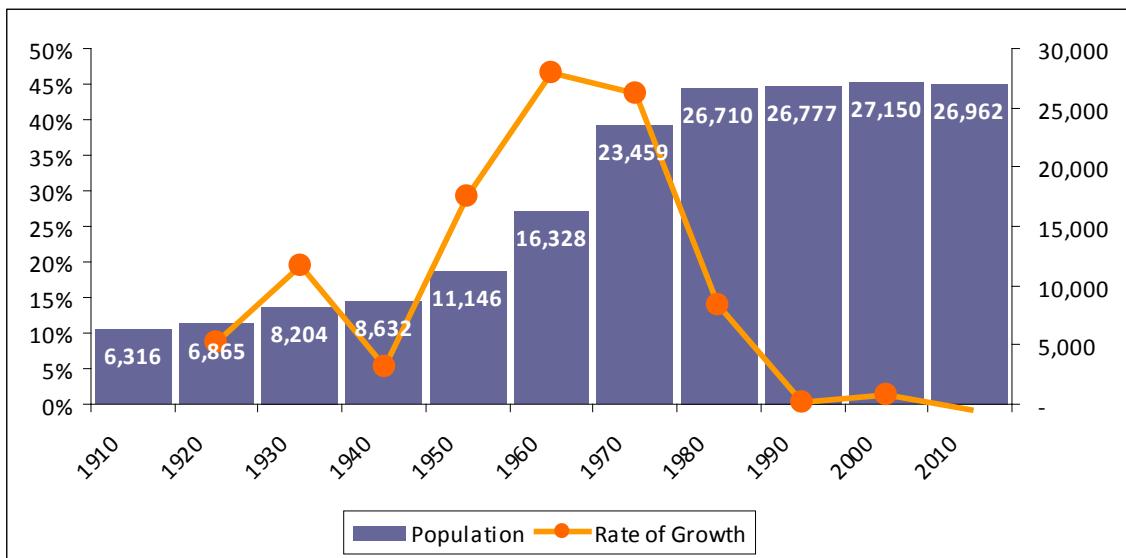
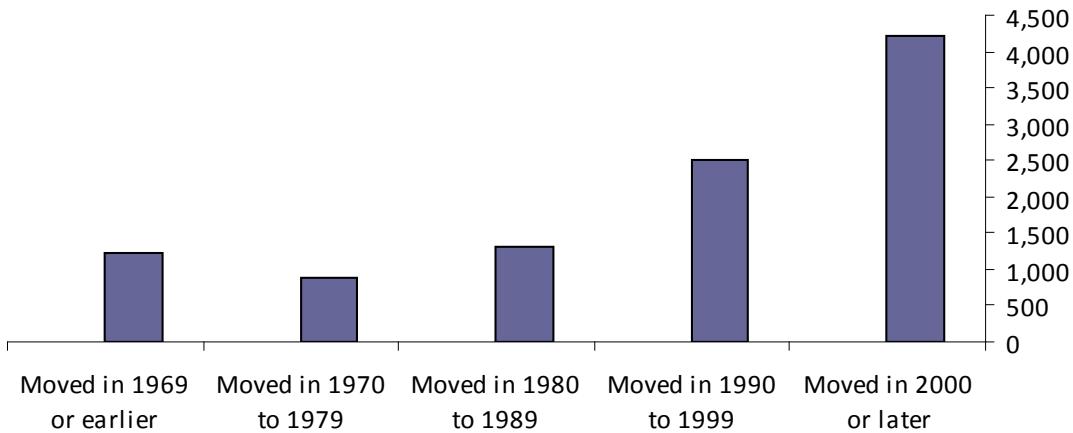


Figure 3: Year Householder Moved into Unit illustrates that of the people living in Stoughton today, two thirds moved into their current home after 1990, and over 40% have moved in since 2000.

Figure 3: Year Householder Moved Into Unit³



This trend is similar throughout the region with more than half of all householders moving into their current homes since 1990. In the last decade alone 41% of Stoughton's householders moved into their current home. Note that Stoughton ranks highest when comparing the percent of householders that lived in their current home prior to 1970.

2 US Census Bureau

3 American Community Survey, Selected Population Tables, 2006-2010

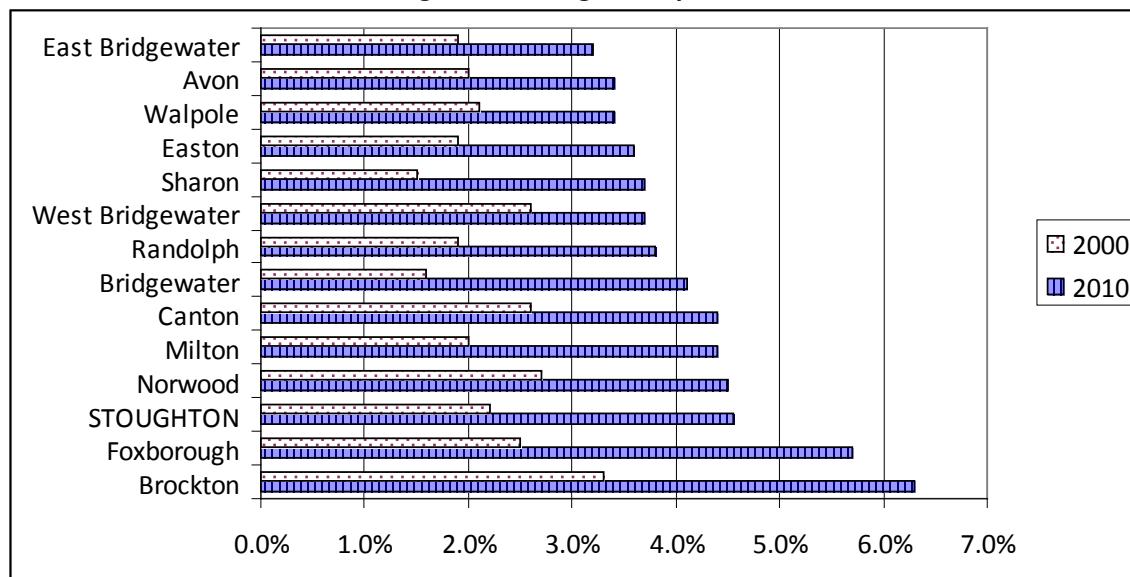
Table 1: Year Householder Moved into Current Home

	Moved in 1969 or earlier	Moved in 1970 to 1979	Moved in 1980 to 1989	Moved in 1990 to 1999	Moved in 2000 or later
Brockton	5.4%	5.0%	7.4%	20.5%	61.7%
Norwood	8.6%	6.5%	11.2%	22.0%	52.0%
Canton	7.5%	6.9%	8.9%	24.7%	51.9%
Foxborough	6.3%	7.7%	8.1%	27.3%	50.6%
Easton	3.6%	8.3%	13.1%	25.1%	50.0%
Randolph	7.2%	6.2%	11.4%	27.0%	48.3%
Bridgewater	4.0%	6.5%	10.1%	32.1%	47.3%
Avon	9.3%	10.9%	12.9%	24.3%	42.7%
Walpole	6.1%	8.5%	12.7%	29.8%	42.6%
Stoughton	12.0%	8.8%	12.9%	24.7%	41.7%
Milton	6.4%	6.9%	14.3%	32.5%	40.0%
West Bridgewater	11.4%	11.3%	12.9%	26.0%	38.6%
East Bridgewater	6.3%	8.1%	15.7%	31.9%	37.9%
Sharon	9.2%	10.3%	16.6%	27.4%	36.5%

According to the 2010 Census Stoughton has a total of 10,787 housing units, representing a modest 2.9% increase since 2000. This represents one of the lowest housing growth rates in the past decade of communities within the comparison area⁴; higher than Brockton and Avon at 2.1% and 1.7% and half the average rate for the region (5.8%). Stoughton's rate was also lower than the state's average housing growth rate of 4.2% and the national average of 10.7%. Although there was limited growth of new units, existing units saw a considerable turnover of householders as shown in figures above. A low housing growth rate since 2000 may not be seen as negative given the impacts residential growth can have on municipal services.

Of Stoughton's total housing units, 10,295 are occupied which represents only a 0.4% increase in occupied units. This indicates that while some housing is being built in Stoughton, new construction has exceeded demand over seven-fold in the past decade. Stoughton's home vacancy rate in 2000 was 2.2% (234 houses vacant) and in 2010 had doubled to 4.6% (492 housing vacant), a trend that was consistent among all towns within the region. Stoughton's vacancy rate is higher than the region's average of 3.5%.

Figure 4: Housing Vacancy Rates



⁴ Comparison area includes the following cities and towns: Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, Canton, East Bridgewater, Easton, Foxborough, Milton, Norwood, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole and West Bridgewater.

Housing Options

Stoughton offers some diversity in types of housing that are available, though owner-occupied, single-family units are most prevalent. Of Stoughton's existing housing stock, 75% are single-family and 19% are condominiums.⁵ About 40% of multi-family structures have ten or more units, 35% have three to nine units and 25% are two-family structures. Three quarters of Stoughton's housing units are owner-occupied, a figure that has remained consistent since 2000.

Figure 5: Housing Types⁶

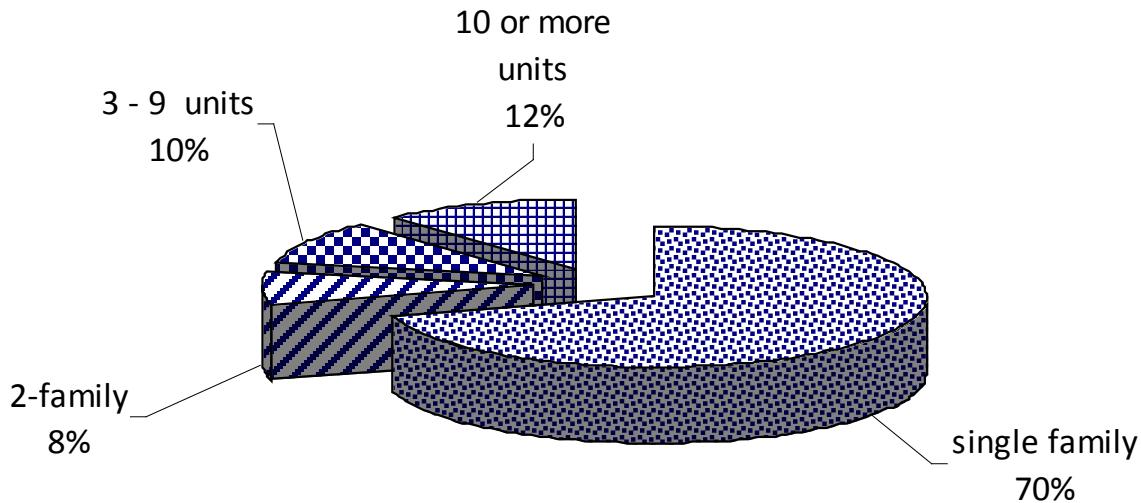
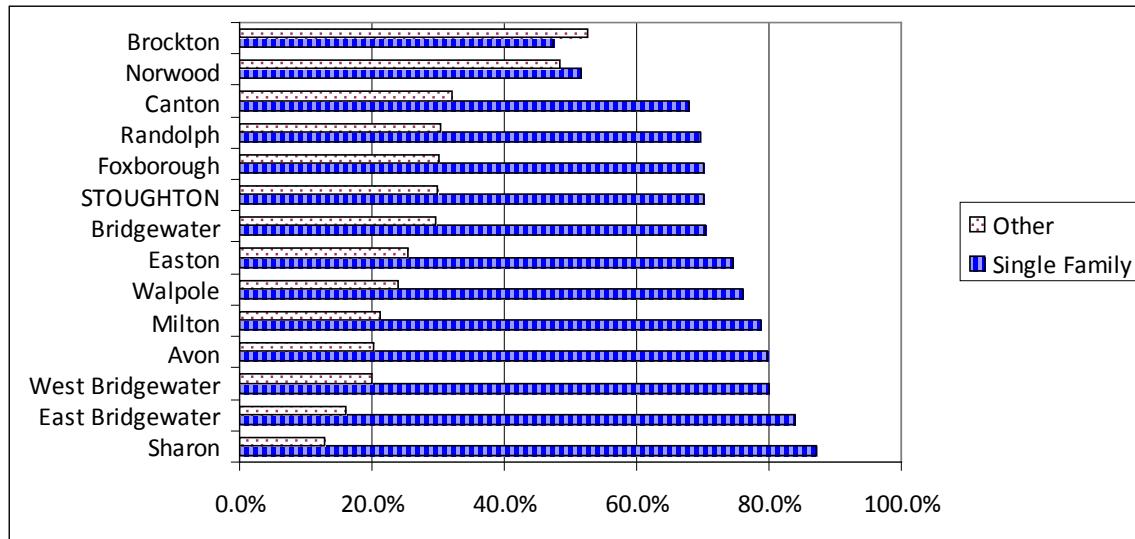


Figure 7 shows a comparison of housing types in nearby communities.

Figure 6: Housing Types: Comparison



Stoughton also enjoys diversity in housing options based on the number of bedrooms which has some parity to household size. For example 23% of housing units in Stoughton have four or more bedrooms and 24% of households have four or more people.

5 Stoughton Assessor, 2012

6 US Census, 2010

Figure 7: Number of Bedrooms⁷

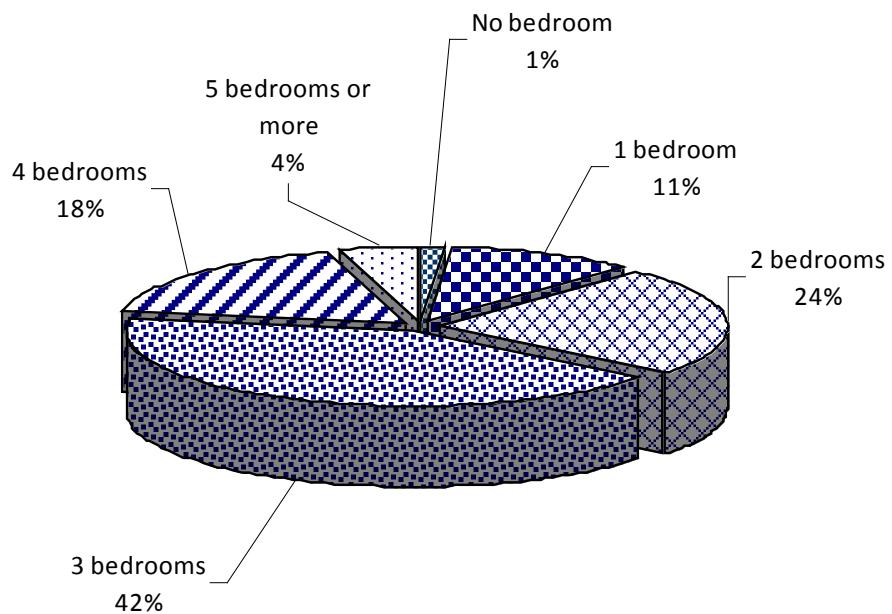
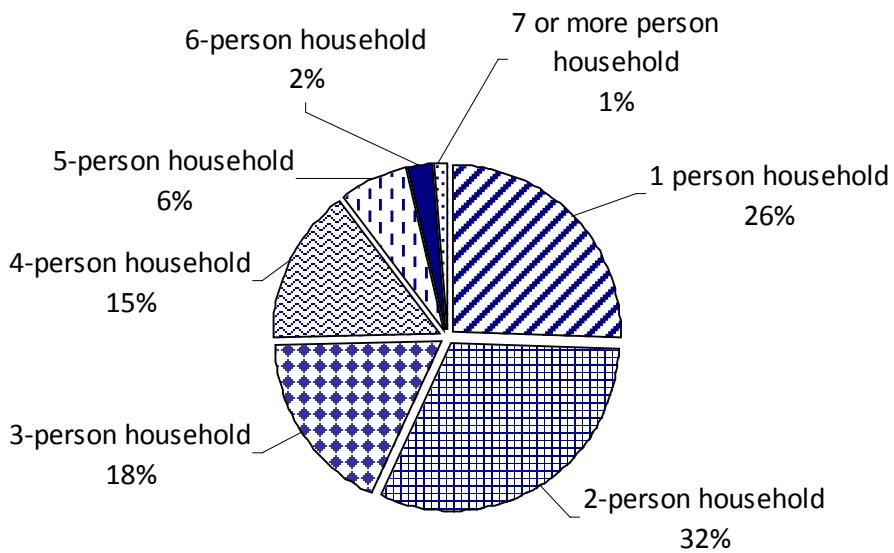


Figure 8: Household Size⁸



One in four of Stoughton's residential units are rental, a figure that is unchanged from 2000. Comparatively, the rental units as a percent of total housing units within the comparison communities, is 19.2% and the range runs from a low of 13.5% in Sharon to a full 44.2% in Brockton.

⁷ American Community Survey, 5 year estimate

⁸ US Census, 2010

Table 2: Change in Rental Units, 2000 to 2010

	2000	2010	% Change
Brockton	45.4%	44.2%	-2.6%
Norwood	42.8%	42.6%	-0.5%
Foxborough	28.1%	30.1%	7.1%
Randolph	27.7%	29.3%	5.8%
Canton	25.8%	26.2%	1.6%
Stoughton	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Bridgewater	25.4%	23.7%	-6.7%
Avon	23.5%	23.4%	-0.4%
Walpole	14.9%	17.7%	18.8%
Milton	15.9%	17.6%	10.7%
East Bridgewater	18.0%	16.8%	-6.7%
Easton	18.4%	16.2%	-12.0%
West Bridgewater	14.4	14.5%	0.7%
Sharon	10.0%	13.5%	35.0%
Average	18.5%	19.2%	3.5%

Housing Costs

The median sale price for a single-family home in Stoughton in 2011 was \$243,750 (a 68% increase since 1990); and for a condo it was 192,500 (a 79% increase). The figures below, however, show that while overall prices are increasing, they have fluctuated dramatically within the past two decades, and in 2011 the median sale price of a single-family was 31% lower than at its peak in 2005. Figure 8, Median Sale Prices also shows that while the median sale price for a home in Stoughton's rose at a rate lower than most of its neighboring communities for the past two decades, its median sale price dropped by the fourth largest percent from its peak in 2005 to 2011. Only Brockton, Randolph and Bridgewater saw median sale prices drop by a larger percent.

Figure 9: Change in Housing Prices, 1990 - 2011⁹

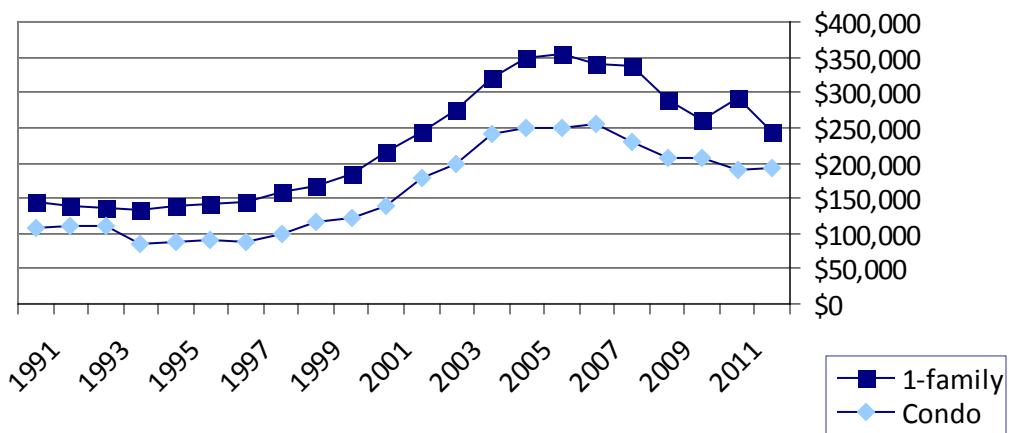


Table 3: Median Sale Prices

	1990	2000	2005	2011	% change 1990 to 2011	% change 2000 to 2011	% change 2005 to 2011
Brockton	\$122,000	\$142,900	\$275,000	153,850	26.1%	7.7%	-44.1%
Randolph	\$145,000	\$190,000	\$347,000	\$216,875	49.6%	14.1%	-37.5%
Bridgewater	144,700	\$229,900	\$385,000	\$262,500	81.4%	14.2%	-31.8%
Stoughton	\$145,500	\$215,000	\$353,750	\$243,750	67.5%	13.4%	-31.1%
Avon	\$135,000	\$178,250	\$328,000	\$226,750	68.0%	27.2%	-30.9%
East Bridgewater	\$156,750	\$190,000	\$322,000	\$238,750	52.3%	25.7%	-25.9%
West Bridgewater	\$139,000	\$200,500	\$350,000	\$264,000	89.9%	31.7%	-24.6%
Canton	\$205,000	\$312,500	\$508,000	\$405,000	97.6%	29.6%	-20.3%
Sharon	\$205,000	\$320,000	\$476,250	\$395,500	92.9%	23.6%	-17.0%
Easton	\$173,000	\$275,000	\$411,000	\$345,000	99.4%	25.5%	-16.1%
Norwood	\$178,125	\$235,500	\$405,000	\$344,950	93.7%	46.5%	-14.8%
Foxborough	\$169,950	\$257,500	\$399,450	\$350,000	105.9%	35.9%	-12.4%
Walpole	\$175,500	\$297,000	\$451,000	\$400,700	128.3%	34.9%	-11.2%
Milton	\$194,000	\$330,000	\$475,000	\$445,000	129.4%	34.8%	-6.3%
Average	\$172,180	\$251,211	\$411,532	\$317,605	86.3%	26.6%	-22.8%
State	\$150,000	\$215,000	\$359,500	\$286,000	90.7%	33.0%	-20.4%
Norfolk County	\$175,000	\$275,000	\$428,000	\$367,150	109.8%	33.5%	-14.2%

Throughout the state similar fluctuations in housing price trends occurred, but with a larger average increase than was seen in Stoughton. The state-wide median sale price for a single-family in 2011 was 17% higher than in Stoughton, and for a condo 40% higher. The Norfolk County median sale price was 51% higher for a single-family and 48% higher for a condo.

In Stoughton according to the ACS¹⁰, the median monthly housing costs for mortgaged homeowners was \$2,008, non-mortgaged homeowners \$656, and renters \$1,095. Generally, housing is considered affordable if total costs (rent or mortgage plus utilities) are no more than 30% of a household's annual income. Forty-five percent of owners with mortgages, 30 % of owners without mortgages, and 62 % of renters in Stoughton spent 30 % or more of household income on housing. When comparing households with mortgages Stoughton has the third highest percent of households paying 30% or more of household income on housing costs, having a lower percent than Brockton and Randolph. In comparing households without mortgages Stoughton ranks the highest of all communities. And when comparing renting households, Stoughton ranks second only behind Easton. Together the high cost of housing and the lower household incomes in Stoughton make affordable housing a principal challenge for many residents.

Table 4: Percent of Households with Housing Costs Exceeding 30% of Annual Household Income

	with mortgage	without mortgage	pay rent
Brockton	55%	28%	57%
Randolph	51%	23%	57%
Stoughton	45%	30%	62%
Avon	41%	20%	59%
Canton	39%	27%	46%
East Bridgewater	38%	22%	33%
Norwood	37%	20%	37%
Walpole	37%	21%	46%
Easton	37%	27%	65%
West Bridgewater	35%	24%	28%
Milton	34%	24%	57%
Sharon	33%	23%	50%
Foxborough	32%	12%	32%
Bridgewater	31%	19%	41%

Affordable Housing

Subsidized Housing Inventory

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts encourages each community to set aside 10% of its total year-round housing stock to meet the housing needs of low and moderate income residents (affordable housing). If a municipality in Massachusetts has less than 10% of its year-round housing set-aside for low- and moderate-income residents, it is considered not to be meeting the regional and local need for affordable housing. Not meeting this affordability standard makes the town susceptible to a state override of local zoning if a developer chooses to create affordable housing through the Chapter 40B comprehensive permit process, which requires 25% of all units to be affordable.

Overrides to zoning can include, for example, multi-family housing in areas designated for only single family housing, residential development in non-residential zoning districts, smaller lot sizes, greater height, or reduced setbacks.

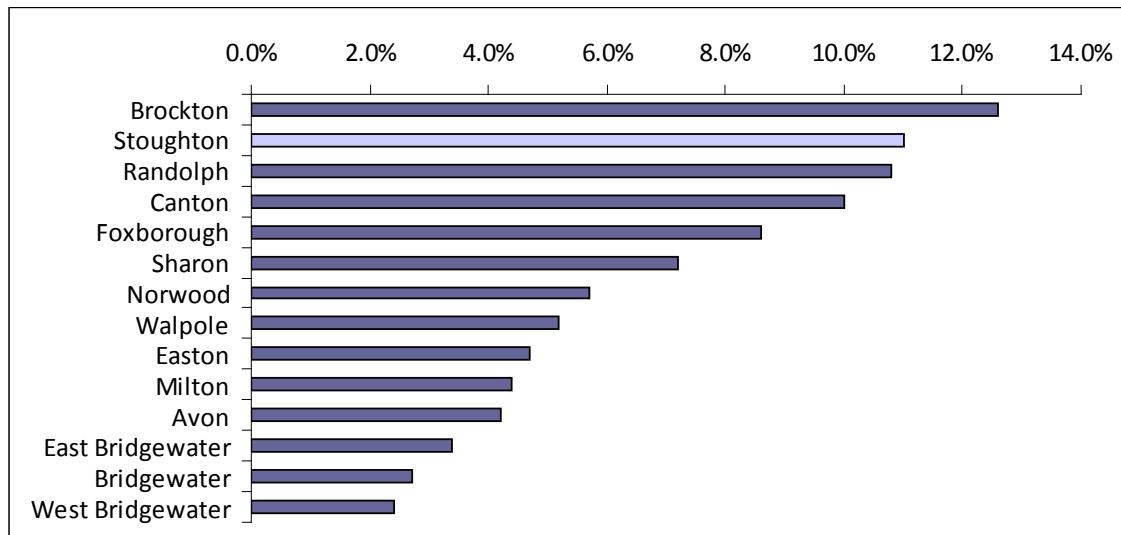
In order to be counted as “affordable” units toward the 10% mandated by Chapter 40B housing statute and be listed on the municipality’s Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) housing must meet the following criteria:

- Subsidized by an eligible state or federal program, or developed through a Local Initiative Program (LIP)¹¹,
- Subject to long term use restriction limiting occupancy to income eligible households for a specified period of time (at least thirty years or longer for newly created affordable units, and at least fifteen years for rehabilitated units); and
- Subject to an affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan

Over eleven percent (11.05%) of Stoughton’s homes is included on the Town’s (SHI):¹²

The following figure illustrates the percent of housing units included on the SHI for neighboring communities. The average for all comparison communities is 6.6%.

Figure 10: Percent of Housing Units on SHI¹³



¹¹ LIP is a state program that provides technical assistance and other non-financial assistance to housing developed through the initiative of the local government to serve households below 50% of the Town’s median household income.

¹² Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, July 2012

¹³ Department of Housing and Community Development, July 2012

Stoughton Housing Authority¹⁴

The Stoughton Housing Authority (SHA) is a state agency, overseen by a five-member board of directors, all residents of Stoughton (four elected, one appointed by the Governor). The SHA manages 264 state (224) and federally owned (40) housing units in Stoughton providing subsidized housing¹⁵ to about 500 residents. Housing units include congregate care units (19), single to three bedroom units in multi-family facilities, and single family homes and townhouses (43). While close to half of all units are located in the downtown area, the others are in various neighborhoods throughout town. Roughly three out of four units serve residents 65 and over, with the remaining one quarter serving families. As required by State regulations. 13.5 percent of non-elderly housing serves residents with disabilities. The occupancy rate for subsidized housing is near one hundred percent offering very little opportunity for individuals or families not already served.

In addition to managing the agency's own units, the Stoughton Housing Authority, through contracts with owners of 40B housing, monitors the subsidized housing units to assure on-going compliance with state regulations and deed-restrictions.

The Stoughton Housing Authority has an administrative staff that includes a director, three full-time employees and one part-time employee, and a maintenance staff of four full-time and one part-time employee. The agency's principle challenges include obtaining state and federal funding for capital improvement projects and assuring compliance with state regulations.

¹⁴ Information received from Stoughton Housing Authority Director, Greg Bartlett during telephone interview, July 25, 2012
¹⁵ All SHA housing is included on the Town's SHI Inventory.

3.3 LAND USE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Zoning By-Law	58
Residential Districts.....	58
Commercial Districts.....	58
Industrial District.....	58
Flood Hazard, Wetlands and Watershed Districts.....	58
Cluster Development	59
Planned Business Development.....	59
Planned Industrial Development	59
Stoughton Center Mixed Use Overlay District.....	59
Site Plan Review	60
Potential for Land Use Change	60
Buildout Projections.....	60

FIGURES

Figure 1: Residential Zoning Districts	53
Figure 2: Nonresidential Zoning Districts	54
Figure 3: Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Land Use Classes	55
Figure 4: Public, Agricultural, Recreational, Charitable, Religious, Educational Land Use Classes	56
Figure 5: Stoughton's Zoning Districts	57
Figure 6: Results of EOEA Buildout Analysis Showing Developable Lands	61

TABLES

Table 1: Land Use Profile – Town of Stoughton	52
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Stoughton contains a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, public and nonprofit uses, and open land. The table below presents a generalized profile of land uses in the town, based on data assembled from the Town Assessor.¹ Approximately 41 percent of the town's land is devoted to residential uses; about 29 percent is in municipal, other public or nonprofit use; and 12 percent is occupied by commercial, industrial, or mixed use properties. The remaining area—1,597 acres, representing about 18 percent of the total parcel acreage—is comprised of agricultural uses and vacant private land. Some of the municipal and other public land is open space as well.

Table 1: Land Use Profile – Town of Stoughton

	Parcels (#)	Parcels (%)	Acres (#)	Acres (%)
Residential (Single Family)	6,518	58.3%	3,427	37.6%
Residential (Other)	2,155	19.3%	336	3.7%
Commercial	434	3.9%	500	5.5%
Industrial	176	1.6%	442	4.9%
Mixed Use (Residential / Commercial)	73	0.7%	148	1.6%
Agriculture / Outdoor Recreation	21	0.2%	166	1.8%
Municipal	570	5.1%	2,410	26.4%
Other Public / NonProfit	92	0.8%	263	2.9%
Vacant, Developable	136	1.2%	379	4.2%
Vacant, Potential Developable	253	2.3%	351	3.9%
Vacant, Undevelopable	757	6.8%	702	7.7%
TOTAL	11,185		9,122.40	

A total of 389 parcels, containing 730 acres (8 percent of the total area in parcels in the town) is listed by the Assessor as “developable” or “potentially developable.” Moreover, site-specific investigation would likely reveal that portions of these “developable” parcels have development limitations, so that their buildout potential is reduced from what might be expected on the basis of raw acreage figures.

¹ The Town Assessor's database is the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information on the use of land in Stoughton. In addition to land use, the database includes information on ownership, parcel and building area, valuation, types of buildings and dwelling units. A limitation of the Assessor's database is it does not include non-parcel areas such as streets and highways.

Figure 1: Residential Zoning Districts

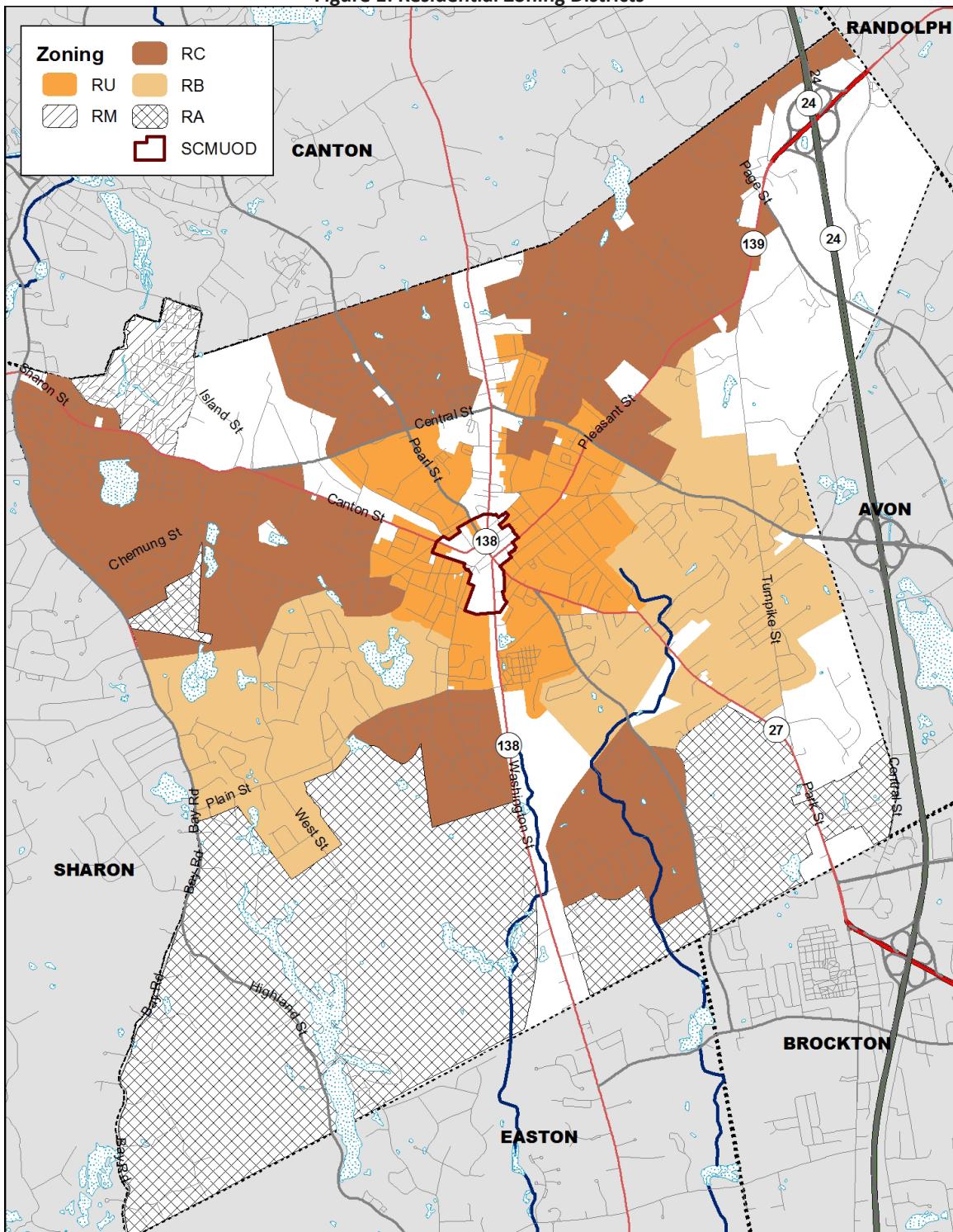


Figure 2: Nonresidential Zoning Districts

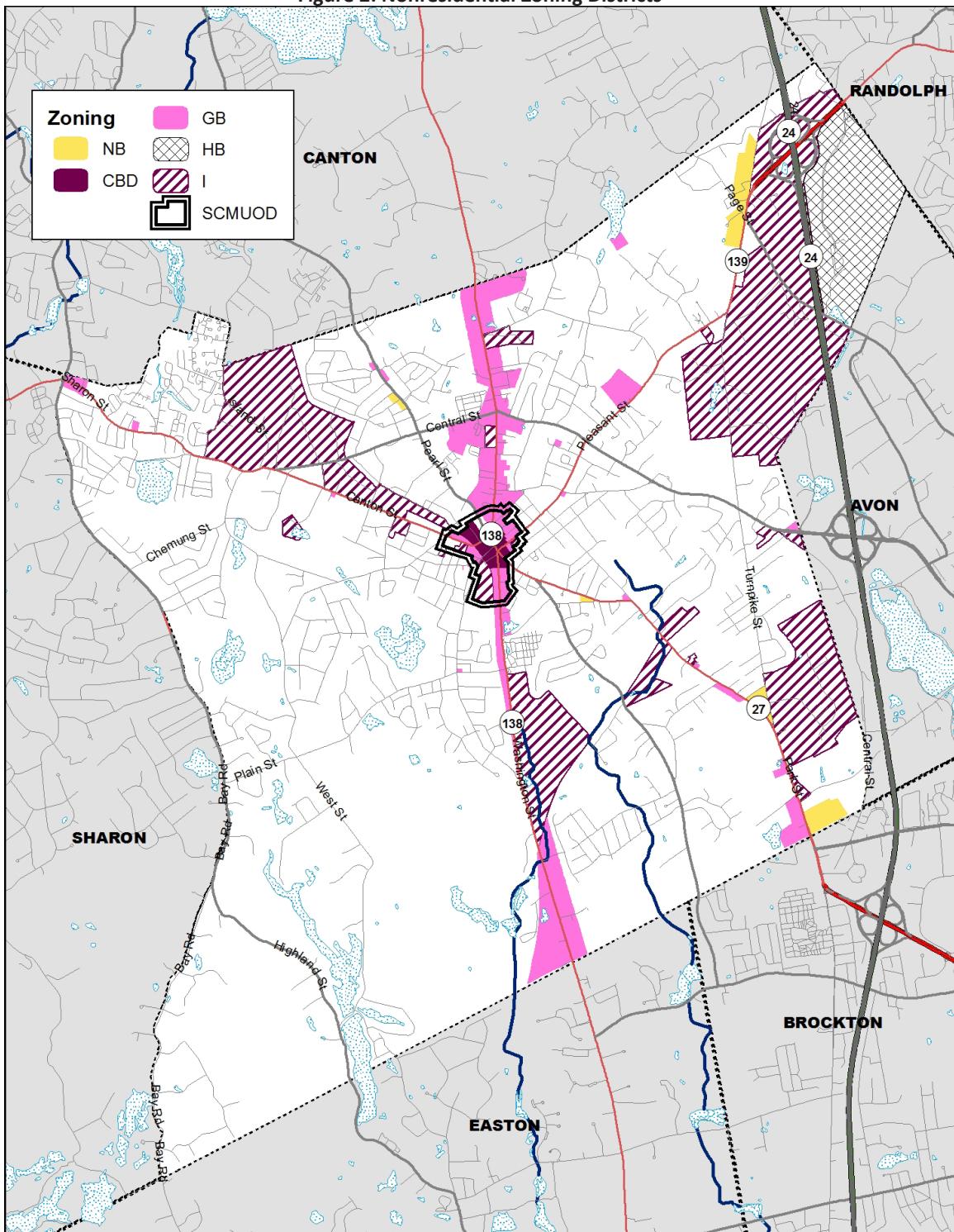


Figure 3: Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Land Use Classes

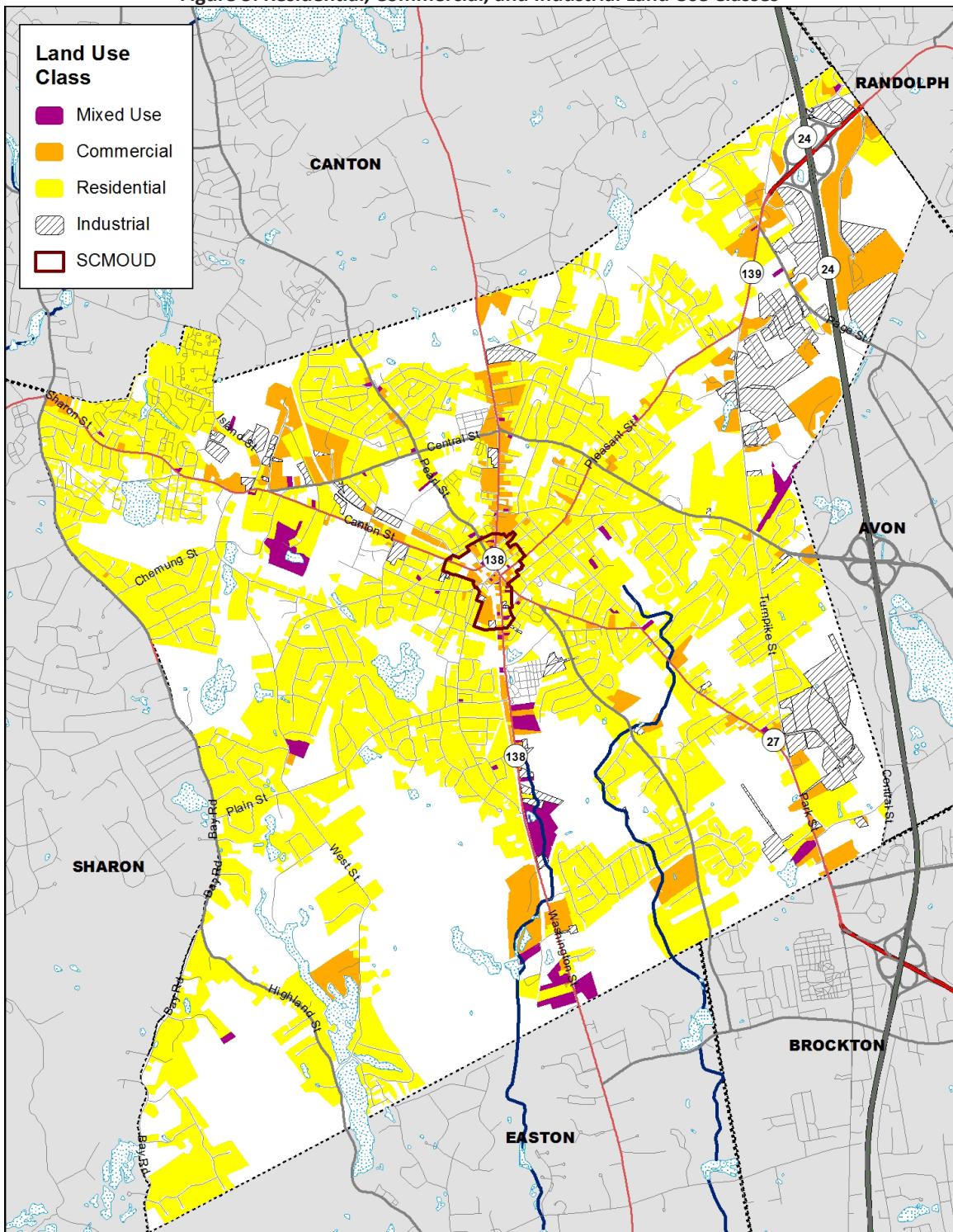


Figure 4: Public, Agricultural, Recreational, Charitable, Religious, Educational Land Use Classes

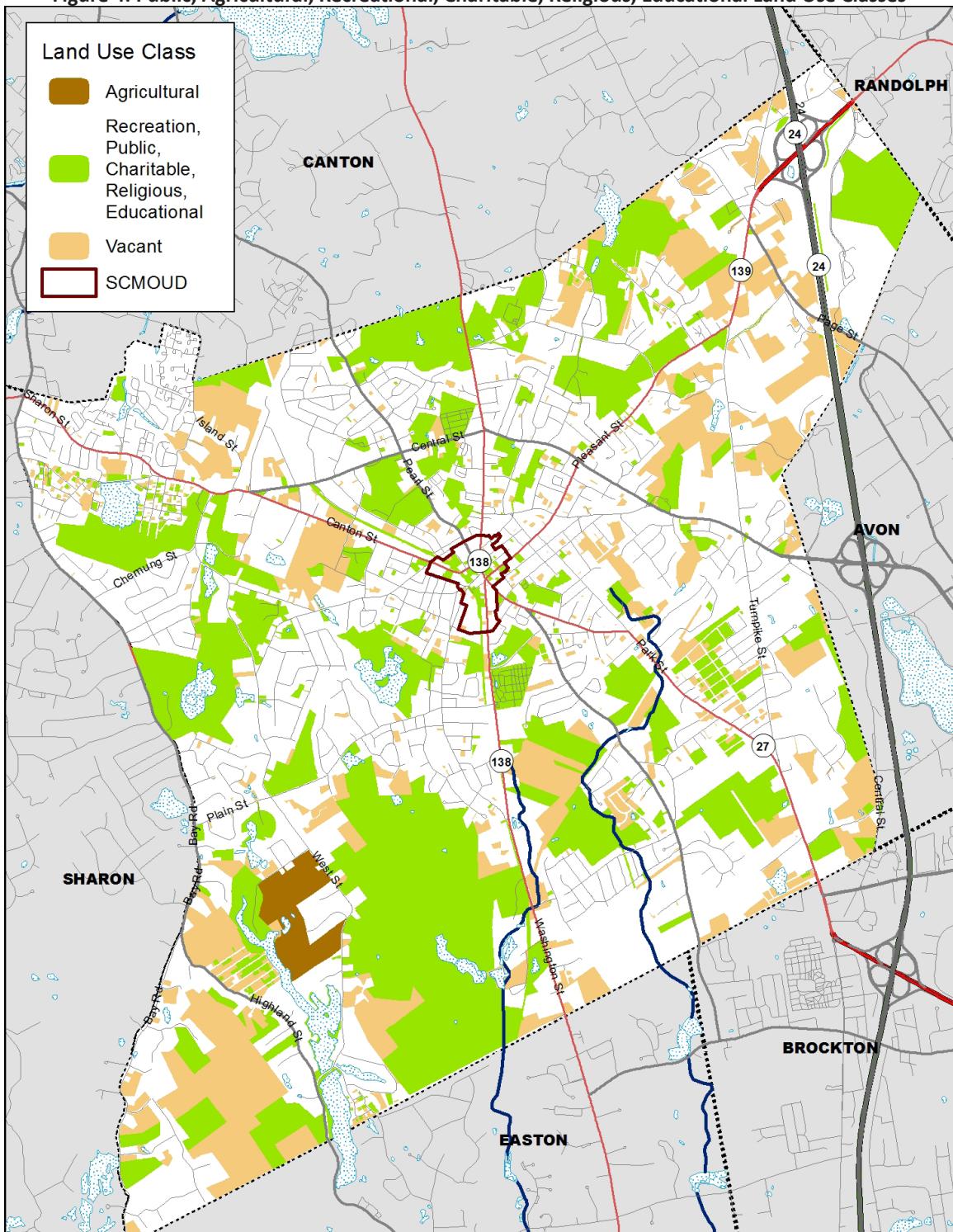
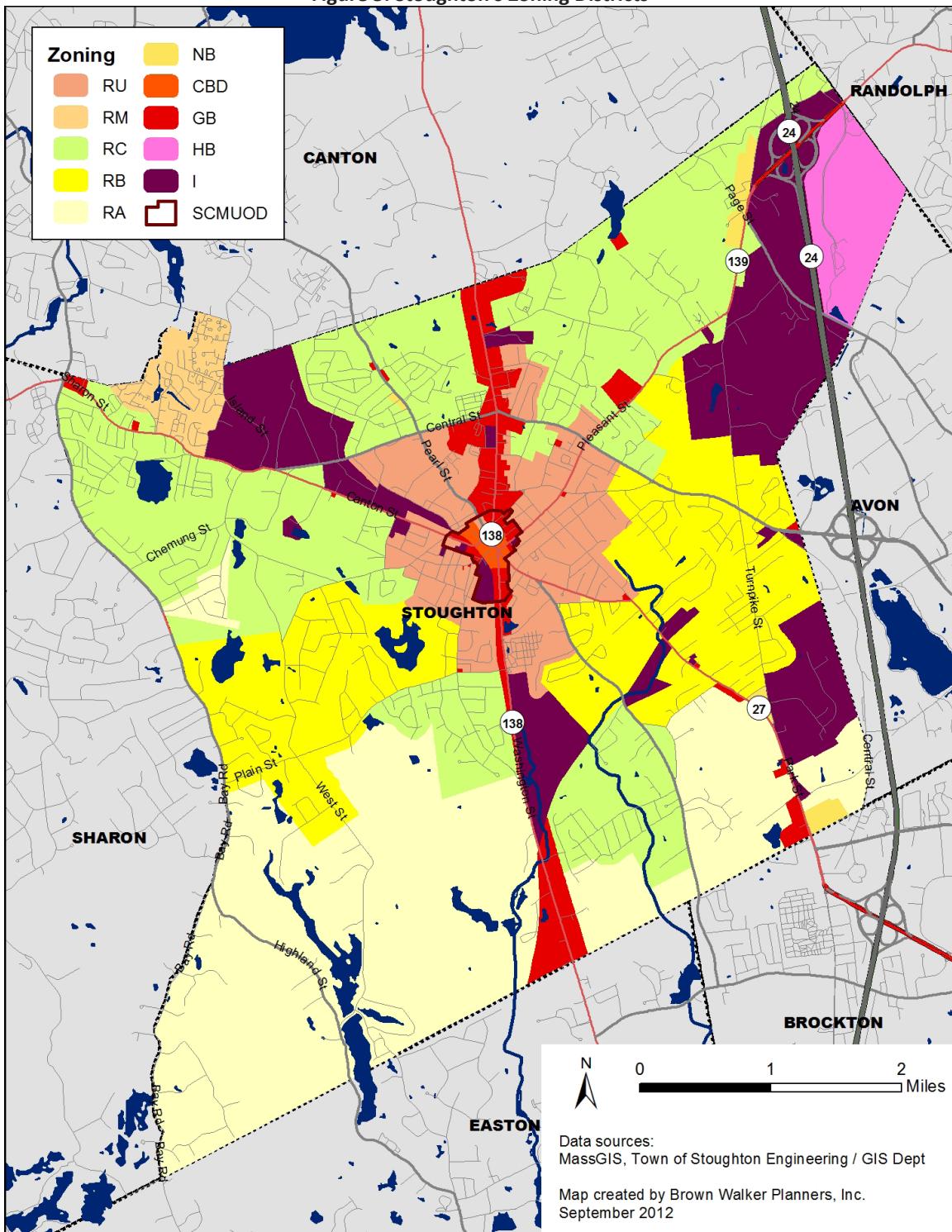


Figure 5: Stoughton's Zoning Districts



RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

All but one of the five residential districts in Stoughton limit building heights at 35 feet, the Multifamily district allows a maximum height of 40 feet, and allowed uses (whether by right or by special permit) within all of these districts include certain residential and accessory uses, most municipal uses, religious and educational institutions, non-profit (and non-membership) recreational facilities, parks and conservation areas, certain public utilities, essential community services, agriculture (except for retail or greenhouse), non-commercial forestry, and home occupations. In addition, the following uses are allowed (by right or special permit) in each of the residential districts.

Residential-Suburban A (RA) -- allows single family dwellings, cluster residential development, non-profit recreation clubs and camps, hospitals, nursing homes, farm stands, commercial forestry, quarries and earth removal, and heliports.

Residential-Suburban B (RB) -- allows single family dwellings, cluster residential development, non-profit recreation clubs and camps, hospitals, nursing homes, farm stands, commercial forestry, quarries and earth removal, and heliports.

Residential-Suburban C (RC) -- allows single family dwellings, congregate and elderly housing, non-profit recreation clubs and camps, hospitals, nursing homes, farm stands, and heliports.

Residential-Urban (RU) -- allows single family dwellings, two-family dwellings, conversion to multi-family (not more than 4 units), congregate and elderly housing, nursing homes, funeral homes, and power or sewage treatment plants.

Residential-Multifamily (R-M) -- allows for two or more family dwellings, congregate and elderly housing, lodging houses, and funeral homes.

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Allowed uses (whether by right or by special permit) within all of these districts include certain municipal uses, religious and educational institutions, parks and conservation areas, essential community services, retail establishments, eating and drinking establishments, personal and consumer services, membership clubs, professional and business office services, miscellaneous business or repair services, motion picture theatres, other indoor recreation, commercial parking lots or structures, trade or professional schools, bakeries, and certain transportation services. In addition, the following uses are allowed (by right or by special permit) in each of the commercial districts.

Central Business District (CBD) -- multi-family dwellings, fast food, other outdoor recreation, and adult entertainment establishments.

General Business (GB) -- conversion to multi-family dwellings, elderly or congregate housing, public utilities, agriculture (including retail and greenhouse), farm stands, commercial stables and veterinary hospitals, fast food, lodging houses, funeral homes, and childcare centers.

Neighborhood Business (NB) -- public utilities, farm stands, funeral homes, and childcare centers.

Highway Business (HB) -- public utilities, agriculture (including retail and greenhouse), commercial stables and veterinary hospitals, drive-ins, fast food, new or used motor vehicle sales and accessories, hotels / motels, lodging houses, funeral homes, automotive repair and service, junk yards, outdoor motion picture theatres, other outdoor recreation, and body piercing and tattoo parlors.

INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

Allowed uses in the industrial district (whether by right or by special permit) include certain municipal uses, religious and educational institutions, parks and conservation areas, public utilities, power and sewage plants, essential community services, agriculture, commercial forestry, eating and drinking establishments, hotels / motels, membership clubs, professional and business office services, automotive repair and service, junk yards, outdoor motion picture theatres, other outdoor recreation, commercial parking lots or structures, and trade or professional schools.

FLOOD HAZARD, WETLANDS AND WATERSHED DISTRICTS

Otherwise referred to as the Wetlands Protection By-Law, the purpose of these districts are to guide or restrict land use and development on these lands in order to:

- protect public health and safety from potential hazards related to periodic or seasonal flooding and / or alteration of existing surface or sub-surface water flows;
- preserve existing and potential public and private water supplies;
- assure the continuation of the natural flow pattern of water courses;
- protect watershed areas and swamps, marshes, bogs, wet meadows, and other wetlands, along water courses, and areas subject to floods;
- conservation of natural areas, wildlife, and open spaces for the general health, safety, and welfare of the public.

These bylaws prohibit certain land uses in designated zones, restrict others, and require that certain commercial, industrial and residential owners modify their property to comply with the bylaw. As a result of limitations on the availability of town water, residential development has been limited to areas where water can be produced by private wells.

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

Subject to a special permit, the Cluster Development provision has been in Stoughton's zoning regulations since at least 1975. The type of development allows for the division of land into lots for use as single family building sites with less than the minimum dimensional and density requirements. The clusters or groups of lots can be no more than eight and shall be separated from adjacent property and other groups of lots by intervening "common land". This can only be applied to lots of 30 acres or more. At least 20 percent of the total tract area (of which at least 50 percent can not be wetlands) must be reserved as common land to be preserved for recreation, conservation or public use.

PLANNED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Subject to a special permit and site plan review and in existence since at least 1978, this provision applies to lots of five acres or more. This provides for maximum building coverage more than the maximum permitted in the density and dimensional regulations and less than the parking requirements (by up to 10%). Certain requirements have to be met including uses in one continuous building or group of buildings, one common parking area, one exit and entrance, a gross floor area to lot area ratio of no more than 0.50, and service by a public water system.

PLANNED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Subject to a special permit and site plan review, this provision allows for the planned industrial development of land for manufacturing or service industrial purposes subject to area regulations less than the minimum required. The provision requires a lot of 15 acres or more, required minimum lot sizes can be reduced by no more than 10%, limited to manufacturing or service industrial uses contained entirely in one building, service by a public water system, and reserving of common land area equal to 10% of the total land area (50% of which can not be wetlands). The common land must be reserved for conservation and recreation or public use.

STOUGHTON CENTER MIXED USE OVERLAY DISTRICT

The SCMUOD covers the Town Center including portions of the Central Business District (CBD), General Business (GB) district, Industrial (I) district, and Residential Urban (RU) district. As an overlay district, the district does not restrict uses that are already permitted in the underlying zoning district. However, if the property owner elects to use the SCMOUD for development purposes, the owner must comply with the requirements of the overlay district in addition to the underlying zone. The SCMUOD was established to accomplish the following purposes:

- maintaining the cultural and architectural integrity of the Center;
- promoting a range and balance of residential and commercial uses in the Center;
- promoting efficient use of land within the town;
- facilitating integrated physical design and synergies between activities;
- facilitating an increase in the variety of housing stock available in the Center;
- enhancing vitality in the Center during both day and night-time;
- promoting a pedestrian-friendly living and working environment that encourages transit use and bicycling;
- facilitating economic development of the Center while remaining consistent with the established Design Guidelines and sensitive to environmental impacts;

- encouraging building reuse and appropriate infill development;
- promoting innovative and sustainable building and site design.

To achieve these goals, the Overlay District regulations provide for different dimensional requirements for lot size and width, frontage, setbacks, and building height than would otherwise be allowed in the underlying zoning. The regulations include a requirement for affordable housing, provision of open space and public space if appropriate, encourage pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and relax parking requirements for residential uses. Finally, the overlay district includes provisions for design review standards to guide architecturally appropriate and sustainable building and site design.²

SITE PLAN REVIEW

All buildings other than single-family and two-family residences and accessory uses and any change of use that requires additional parking or an increase in impervious surface is required to undergo Site Plan Approval. The requirements of Site Plan Approval include a public hearing and action by the Planning Board. Components of review include traffic analysis and mitigation measures, visual impact assessment, and stormwater management.

Potential for Land Use Change

BUILDOUT PROJECTIONS

A buildout analysis is an estimate of the maximum amount of development that can theoretically occur under the existing zoning regulations. By itself, the buildout analysis is not a prediction of the amount of development that will actually occur; but an estimate of the level and types of development that the town has stated, through its regulations, is acceptable.

The most recent buildout analysis performed for the Town of Stoughton was done in 2000 by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). Assuming no change to current zoning, that analysis predicted an addition of 772 dwelling units.³ According to the US Census, there were 10,488 housing units in Stoughton in 2000 and there were 10,787 as of 2010. Therefore with the addition of 299 units in the past decade, Stoughton has potential capacity for 473 according to the EOEA projections.

The 2000 buildout analysis projected an addition of 12,030,998 square feet of commercial / industrial space.⁴ According to Town Assessor records approximately 1,999,561 square feet of commercial / industrial space has been constructed since 2000, leaving a remaining 10,031,437 of potentially developable area based on the EOEA buildout. This calculation does not necessarily include land with existing development that could potentially be redeveloped.

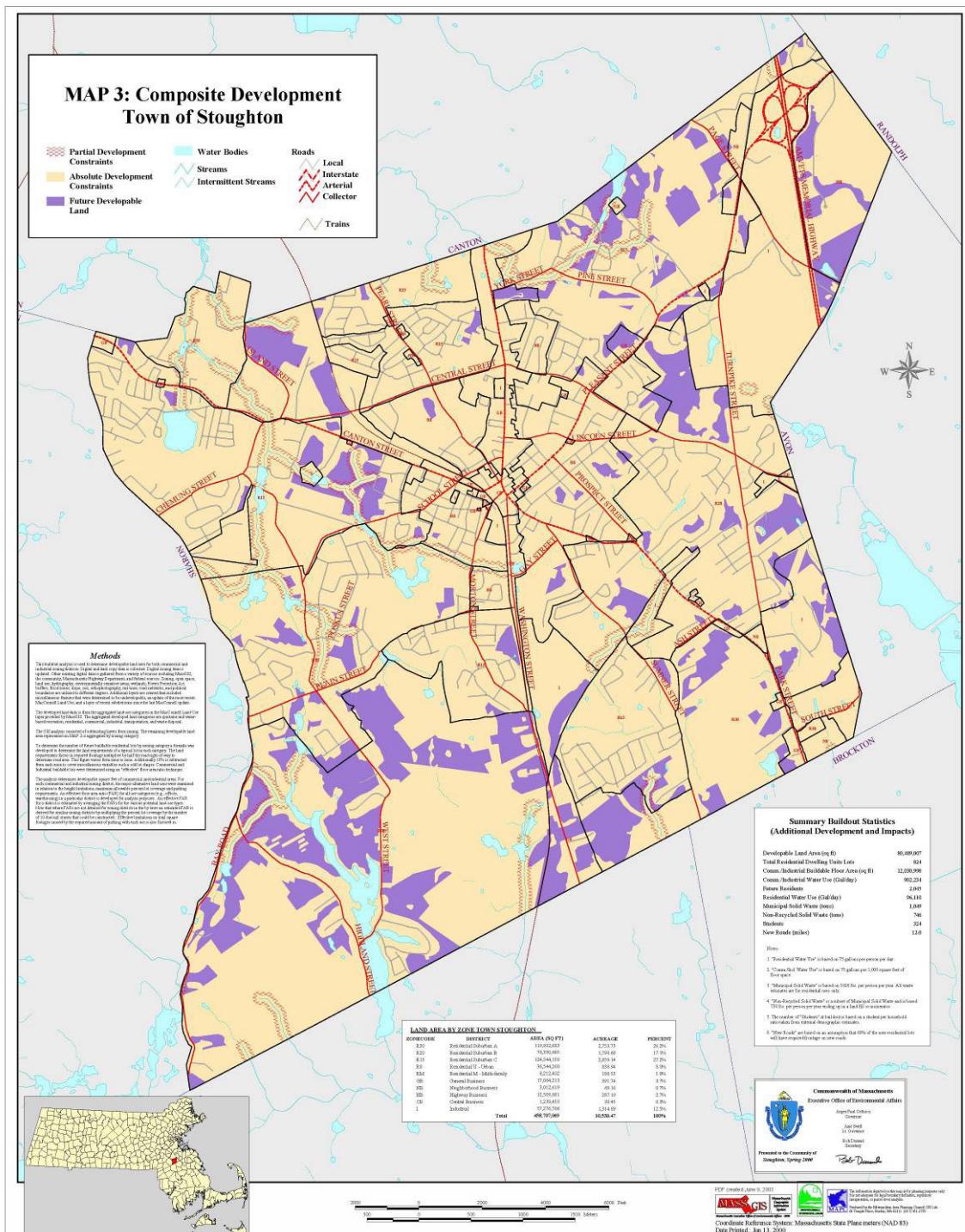
This analysis does not take into account potential development under Chapter 40B (Comprehensive Permit), Cluster Development, Planned Business or Industrial Development or other land use regulations which may allow a greater density of development (and number of dwelling units) than would otherwise be permitted.

2 Stoughton Zoning Bylaw

3 Stoughton Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2006

4 Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Community Buildout Analysis, 2000.

Figure 6: Results of EOEA Buildout Analysis Showing Developable Lands



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3.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Labor Force.....	64
Job Base	65
Wages.....	68
Tax Base.....	69
Economic Growth Opportunities.....	72
Stoughton Town Center	72
North Stoughton	72
East Stoughton	73

FIGURES

Figure 1: Labor Force and Unemployment Rates, 2000-2011	64
Figure 2: Occupations of Stoughton Residents, Norfolk County and State	65
Figure 3: Local Jobs to Labor Force Ratios.....	66
Figure 4: Stoughton Jobs and Workers, 2000-2011.....	66
Figure 5: Portion of total jobs in Stoughton by Industry Sector, 2001 and 2010.....	67
Figure 6: Total Local Employers	67
Figure 7: Average Weekly Wages for Stoughton and Norfolk County by Industry Sector, 2010....	69
Figure 8: Regional Comparison of Total Assessed Value per Capita and Commercial / Industrial / Personal Property Share of Total Assessed Value, FY2012	70
Figure 9: Comparison of Residential Tax Rates and % Change in Assessed Value, 2003 - 2012	70
Figure 10: Area Average Single Family Tax Bills 2003 and 2012 (with percent increase)	71
Figure 11: Equalized Valuation Per Capita in Stoughton and Comparison Communities, 2012	71

TABLES

Table 1: Largest Private Sector Employers in Stoughton	68
Table 2: Stoughton's Property Tax Base, FY2012	69

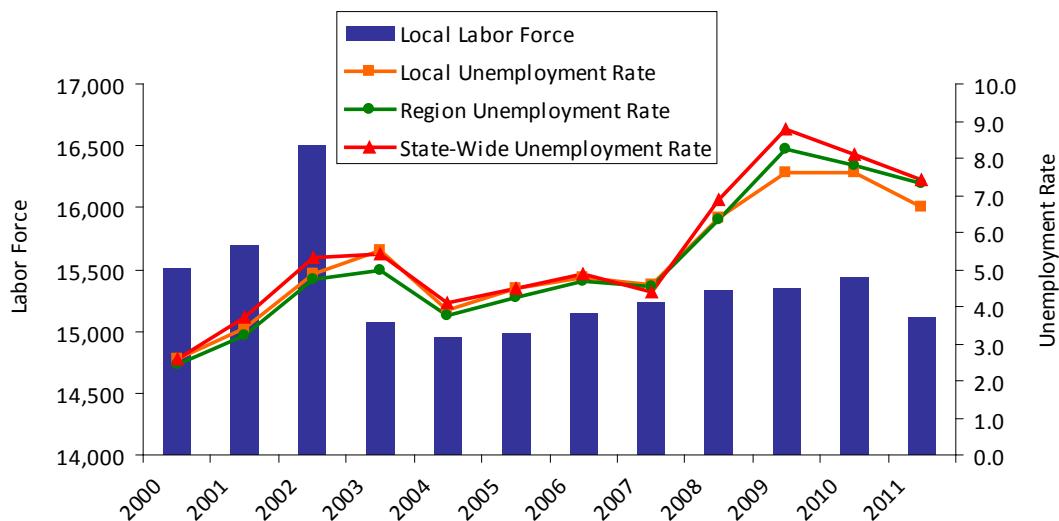
A community's economic profile is defined by more than its businesses and workforce. A community's economy is also influenced by the wealth of its households and their sources of income, infrastructure and transportation, property values, as well as municipal investments. In turn, each community is an integral part of an economic region.

Stoughton is a former mill town that has transitioned to a more diversified economy. Its resident workforce has a lower median income than the county and most of its neighbors and is less well-educated than the region as a whole. The local economy has a small manufacturing base, but health services and retail provide the largest number of local jobs. The commercial tax base is higher than average in the region and has represented a sector of growth over the past decade.

Labor Force

A community's labor force includes the segment of the population 16 years or older that is employed or actively seeking work. Stoughton's population declined by less than 1% between 2000 and 2010, and the labor force decreased by the same proportion during that time period.¹ Historical data from the state since 2000 shows the number of Stoughton residents active in the workforce growing steadily, with a leveling off towards the end of the decade. More recent data shows a shrinking labor force in the town since 2010, which may be a factor contributing to a corresponding decrease in the unemployment rate. Since 2008, Stoughton's unemployment rate has remained slightly lower than the region as well as the state.²

Figure 1: Labor Force and Unemployment Rates, 2000-2011³



As of the 2000 US Census, just over 80% of Stoughton's working population commuted to other communities (19% to Boston and 9% to Canton).⁴ As of 2012, updated information on location of workplace was not yet available, however the American Community Survey estimates that the average commute time has remained about the same since a decade ago (about 30 minutes).⁵

The occupational profile of Stoughton residents approximately mirrors that of the state and the county with a large concentration of people in managerial, business, science and arts occupations. The percentage of the working population in these "knowledge-based" occupations has continued to grow since the 1990s, which is consistent with national trends.⁶ Employment in production and construction occupations is estimated to have declined a few percentage points since 2000,

1 US Census (population) and MA Dept. of Revenue, Division of Local Services (labor force).

2 MA Dept. of Revenue, Division of Local Services.

3 MA Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services

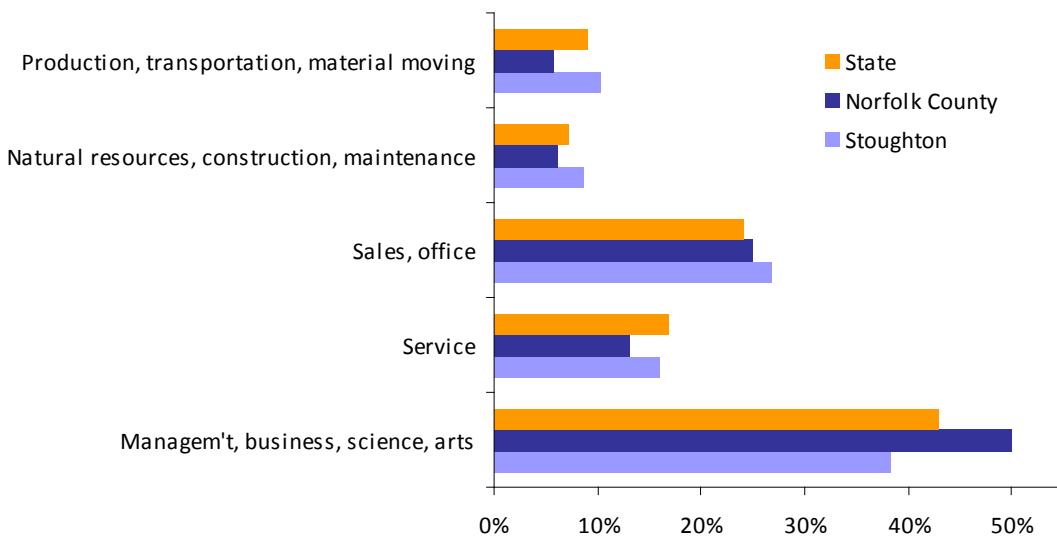
4 Stoughton Community Development Plan, 2004.

5 US Census (2000) and American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates (2008-2010).

6 Stoughton Community Development Plan, 2004.

but still continues to represent a larger proportion of the local workforce than the county.⁷

Figure 2: Occupations of Stoughton Residents, Norfolk County and State⁸



More than half (approximately 56%) of Stoughton's population over the age of 25 has achieved education levels beyond high school. An estimated 20% have a bachelor's degree and almost 11% have a graduate or professional degree. In general, Stoughton's population is slightly less educated (in terms of educational attainment) than Norfolk County as a whole as well as the statewide population.

Job Base

Stoughton has a history as a mill town, and while manufacturing still plays a role in the local economy, the trend has continued to shift toward the services sectors. Overall, local employers provide about 12,700 jobs today.

The number of local jobs as reported by the state over the past decade peaked in 2007 at (13,628), which was still lower than the highest reported during the previous decade (almost 14,000 in 1995).⁹ The ratio of local jobs to local labor force (those living in Stoughton) rose to about 0.9 before falling back to under 0.85. This indicates there is less than one part or full-time job for every worker. In comparison to the region, this puts Stoughton in the middle of its neighbors (the median is about 0.8) in terms of ratio of jobs to workers. The highest in the region is Avon at 2.2 and the lowest is East Bridgewater at 0.3.

7 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates (2008-2010)

8 American Community Survey 3-Year estimates (2008-2010)

9 MA Employment and Wage data are derived from reports filed by all employers subject to unemployment compensation laws, both state and federal. Therefore, this will not capture those who are self-employed.

Figure 3: Local Jobs to Labor Force Ratios

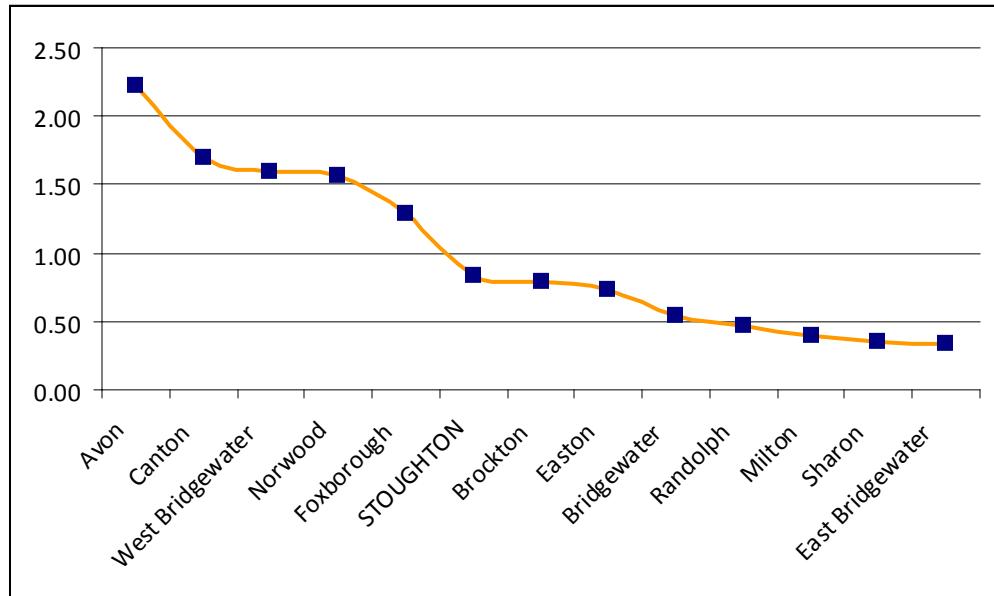
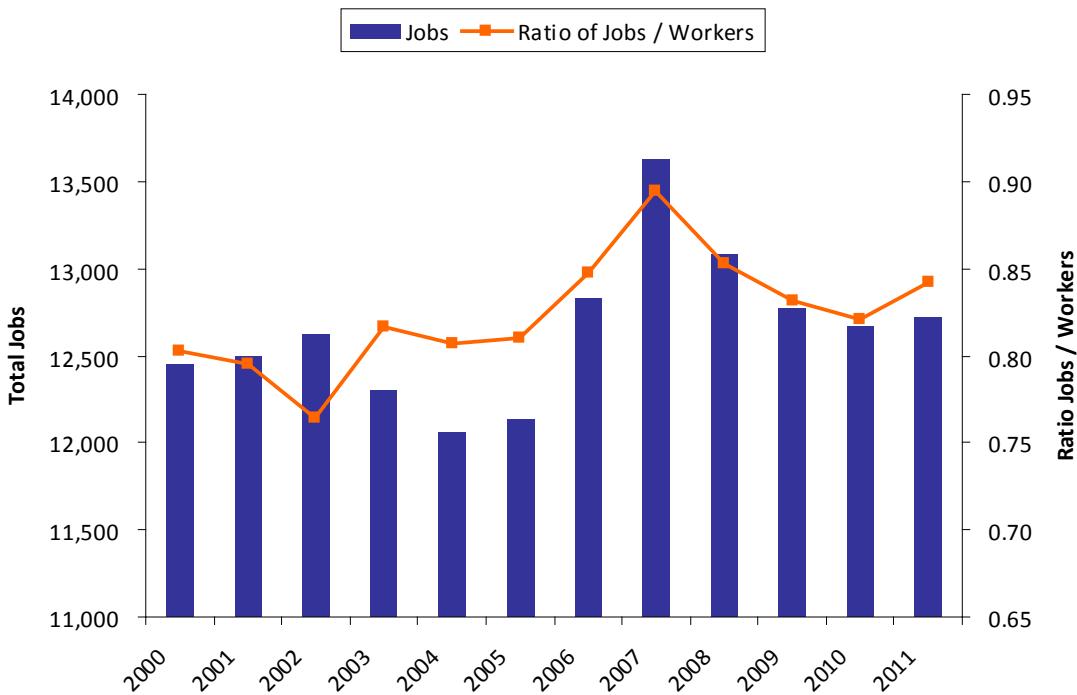


Figure 4: Stoughton Jobs and Workers, 2000-2011¹⁰

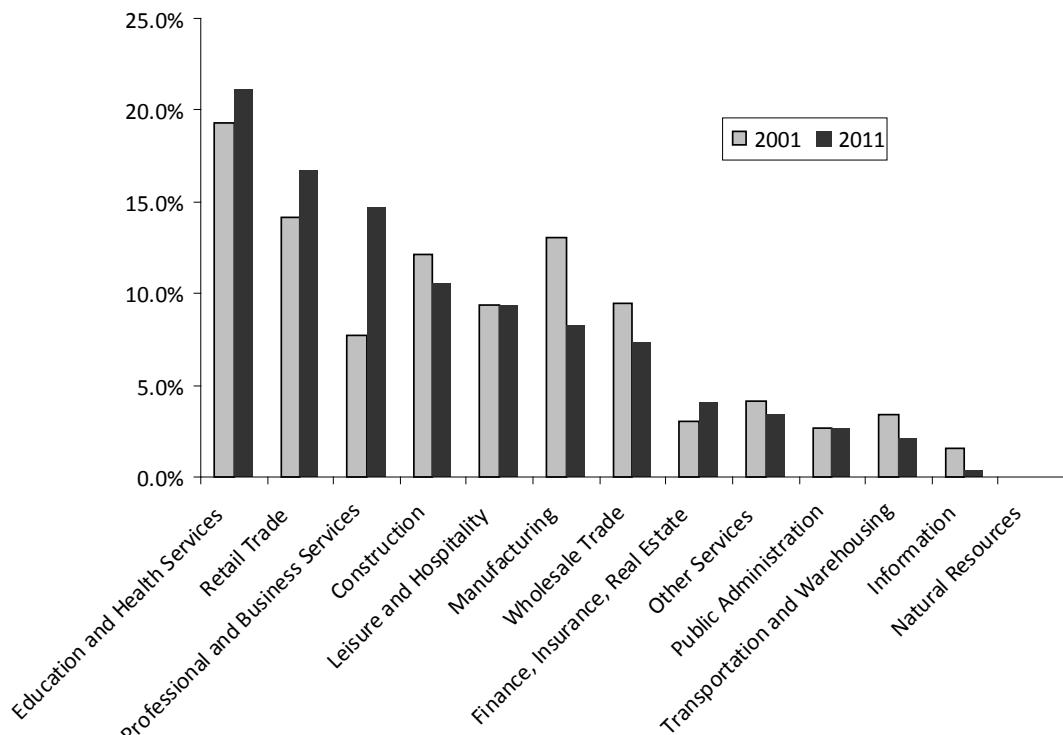


Over the past decade, the education and health services industries have been the leading local employers and currently provide about 22% of local jobs. The retail trade sector provides about 16% of local jobs. Employment in each of these sectors has remained fairly consistent over the past few decades. Professional and business services sectors have seen the most growth in the past decade, climbing over 6 percentage points to about 14% of the local jobs. Manufacturing has decreased from about 13% of the local jobs in 2001 to just under 9%, continuing a declining trend since the 1980s. Other job sectors that have declined over the same period include construction (down about 3 points) and wholesale trade (down about 2 points). The following figure shows change in the distribution of employment by industry sector in the past decade. The Town of Stoughton is a major employer in the public sector, with approximately 340 non-school employees and over 900 affiliated with the public school system.¹¹

10 MA Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services

11 School and town employee numbers were provided by the Town of Stoughton in August 2012.

Figure 5: Portion of total jobs in Stoughton by Industry Sector, 2001 and 2010¹²



The number of local employers has grown over the past decade, increasing to 1,028 in 2011 which is the highest since 1990.

Figure 6: Total Local Employers

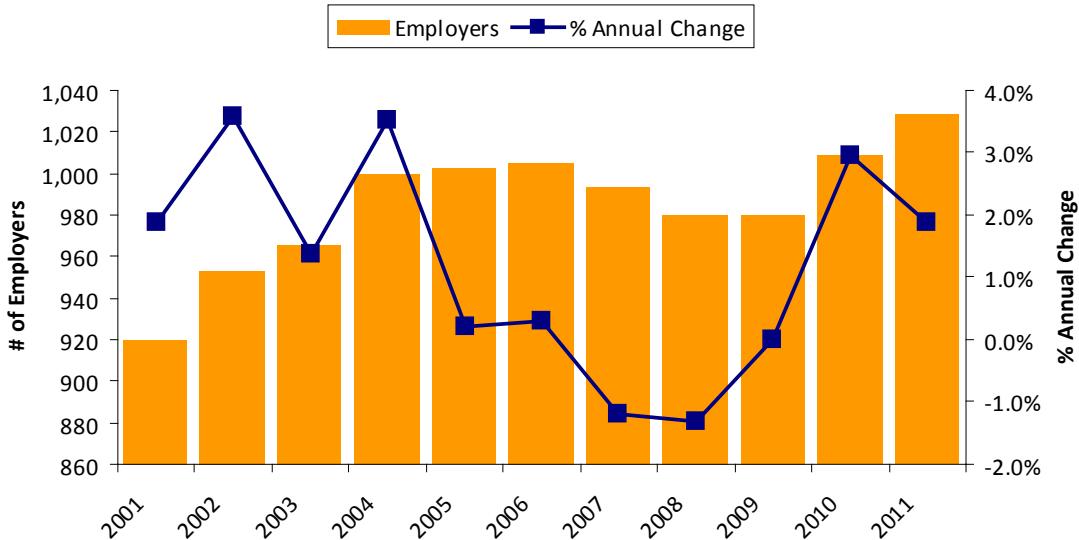


Table 1: Largest Private Sector Employers in Stoughton¹³

Company Name	Address	Number of employees	Industry Sector
New England Sinai Hospital Ctr	York St	500-999	Healthcare -- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Shaw Group Inc	Technology Center Dr	500-999	Manufacturing -- Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
Kindred Hospital	Sumner St	250-499	Healthcare -- General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Target	Hawes Way	250-499	Retail Trade – Department Stores
Chinese American Nurses Assn	5 th St	100-249	Business Services -- Employment Services
Olive Garden Italian Restaurant	Technology Center Dr	100-249	Food Services -- Restaurants and Other Eating Places
Town Spa Pizza	Washington St	100-249	Food Services -- Restaurants and Other Eating Places
Blue Hills Alzheimers Care Ctr	Park St	100-249	Healthcare -- Nursing Care Facilities
Copley at Stoughton	Sumner St	100-249	Healthcare -- Nursing Care Facilities
Std Med Inc	Mill St	100-249	Manufacturing -- Medical Equipment and Supplies Manufacturing
YMCA	Central St	100-249	Other Services -- Personal Care Services
Cyn Environmental Svc	Tosca Dr	100-249	Professional Services -- Scientific Research and Development Services
Re/Max Landmark Realtors	Park St	100-249	Real Estate -- Offices of Real Estate Agents and Brokers
Kohl's Department Store	Technology Center Dr	100-249	Retail Trade – Department Stores
Boston Interiors	Page St	100-249	Retail Trade -- Furniture Stores
Shaw's Supermarket	Washington St	100-249	Retail Trade – Grocery Stores
Stop & Shop Supermarket	Washington St	100-249	Retail Trade – Grocery Stores
BJ'S Wholesale Club	Technology Center Dr	100-249	Retail Trade – Other General Merchandise Stores
Garber Bros Inc	Rte 139 & Kay Way	100-249	Wholesale Trade -- Miscellaneous Nondurable Goods Merchant Wholesalers

Wages

The figure below compares average weekly wages by industry sector for the town and all of Norfolk County. Town establishments pay a lower than average wage than the county in all industry sectors with the exception of construction and natural resources / mining. The natural resources / mining sectors contributes relatively few jobs in Stoughton and the construction industry represents about 9% of local jobs.

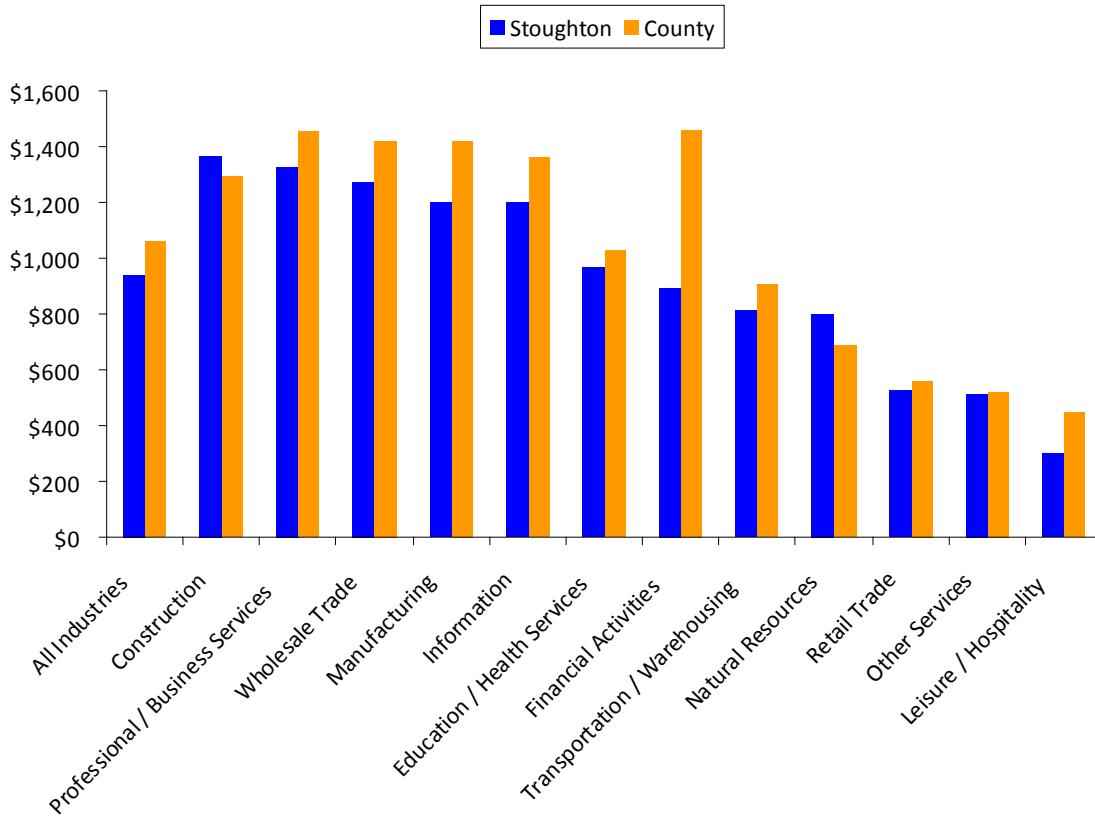
Jobs in the largest employment sector in Stoughton (education and health services) fall in the median range for wages. Health services (which represent the largest proportion of local jobs within this sector) tend to offer a wide range of entry level to highly skilled, highly paid positions. This is one of the largest employment sectors regionally, as well.¹⁴

The professional and business services sectors, which are the fastest growing employment sectors in Stoughton, also pay a relatively higher on average wage.

13 Infogroup 2012

14 Stoughton Community Development Plan, 2004.

Figure 7: Average Weekly Wages for Stoughton and Norfolk County by Industry Sector, 2010¹⁵



Tax Base

Stoughton has a somewhat broader tax base than Massachusetts cities and towns generally and less reliance on residential taxes than neighboring communities. The distribution of the tax base among land use categories provides an initial glimpse of the town's economic structure. As indicated in the table below, residential uses account for approximately 78.3% of the total assessed valuation in Stoughton. The median residential percentage for all Massachusetts communities was 87.9% and the mean was 85.8%.

Table 2: Stoughton's Property Tax Base, FY2012¹⁶

Classification	Assessed Value	% of Total
Residential	\$2,344,859,588	78.3%
Commercial	\$388,589,578	13.0%
Industrial	\$153,965,335	5.1%
Personal Property*	\$105,396,750	3.5%
Total	\$2,992,811,251	

* "Personal Property" refers to furnishings, equipment, inventory, etc. used in a business, and thus is part of the commercial and industrial tax base.

As the following figure indicates, Stoughton's nonresidential share (21.7%) of the town's tax base is in the mid-range of the other comparison communities. It is also higher than the state-wide average (14.2%). The town's nonresidential tax share was as high as 25% in the early 1990s and then dipped to below 16% in 2006. Just over 60% of the nonresidential value is contributed by commercial properties and roughly 30% is industrial.

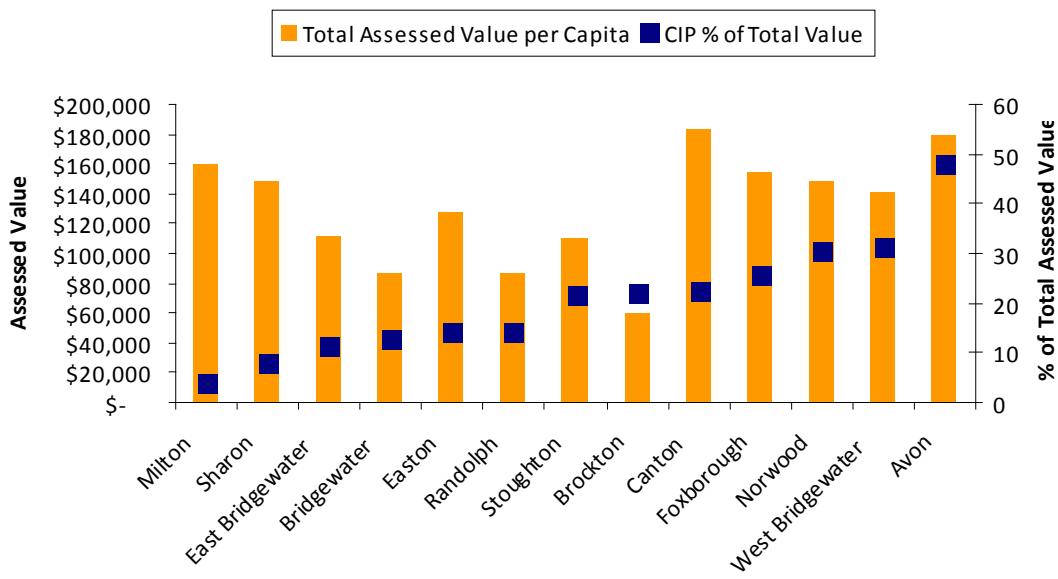
Stoughton's per capita assessed valuation is fourth lowest among the comparison communities. Per capita assessed value

15 MA Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, ES-202. 2010 is the most recent period for which annual, seasonally-adjusted information is available.

16 MA Department of Revenue, Community Comparison Report, 2012

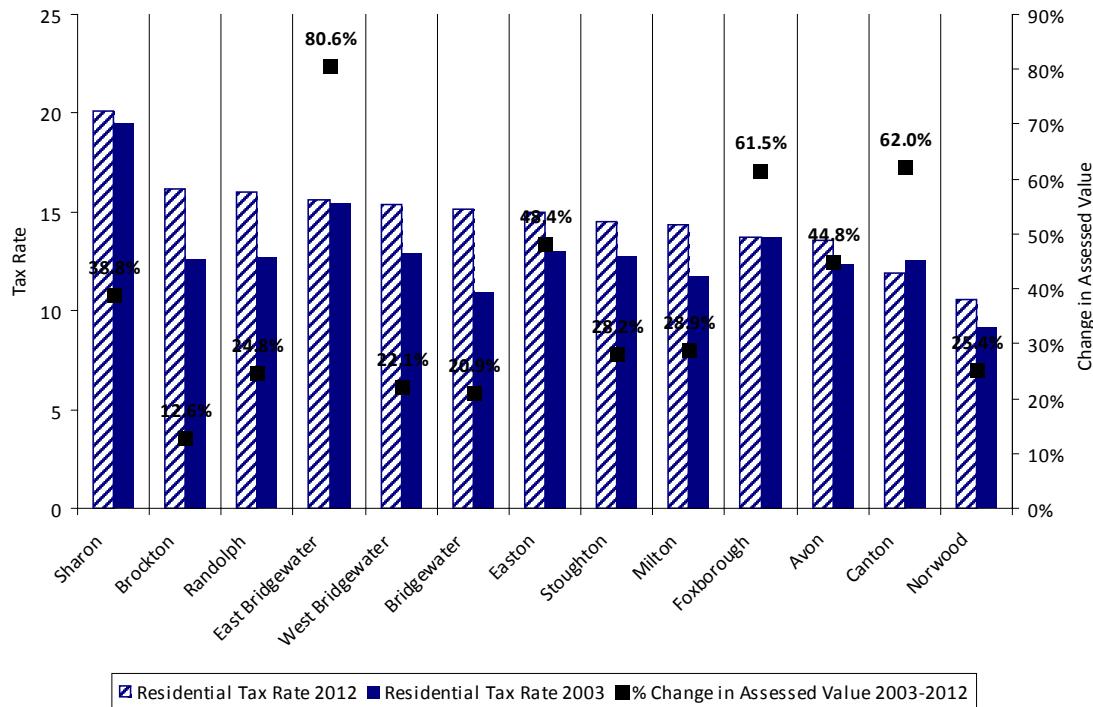
is often used as a way to gauge a community's affluence.

Figure 8: Regional Comparison of Total Assessed Value per Capita and Commercial / Industrial / Personal Property Share of Total Assessed Value, FY2012¹⁷



Property values for all of these communities have increased significantly over the past decade, as shown in the following figure. At the same time, for much of the comparison communities, tax rates have also increased (with the exception of Canton). Stoughton's residential and nonresidential tax rates fall just about in the mid-range for the comparison region.

Figure 9: Comparison of Residential Tax Rates and % Change in Assessed Value, 2003 - 2012¹⁸



For a property owner, the amount of the tax bill is usually more important than the tax rate: a low rate applied to a high valuation might result in a higher annual cost to the property owner than a higher rate applied to a much lower valuation.

¹⁷ MA Department of Revenue, Community Comparison Report, 2012

¹⁸ Ibid

Because of the wide variability of commercial and industrial properties, it is difficult to compare nonresidential tax bills among communities; however, a comparison of residential tax bills may provide some insight into this cost factor. Figure 10 compares the average tax bills for single-family homes for Fiscal Years 2003 and 2012 as well as the percent increase between those years. Stoughton's average 2003 tax bill ranked in the mid-range for all Massachusetts communities as well as for the comparison region. By 2012, Stoughton's average residential tax bill had increased slightly relative to the state, but dropped to the fourth lowest in the region.

Figure 10: Area Average Single Family Tax Bills 2003 and 2012 (with percent increase)

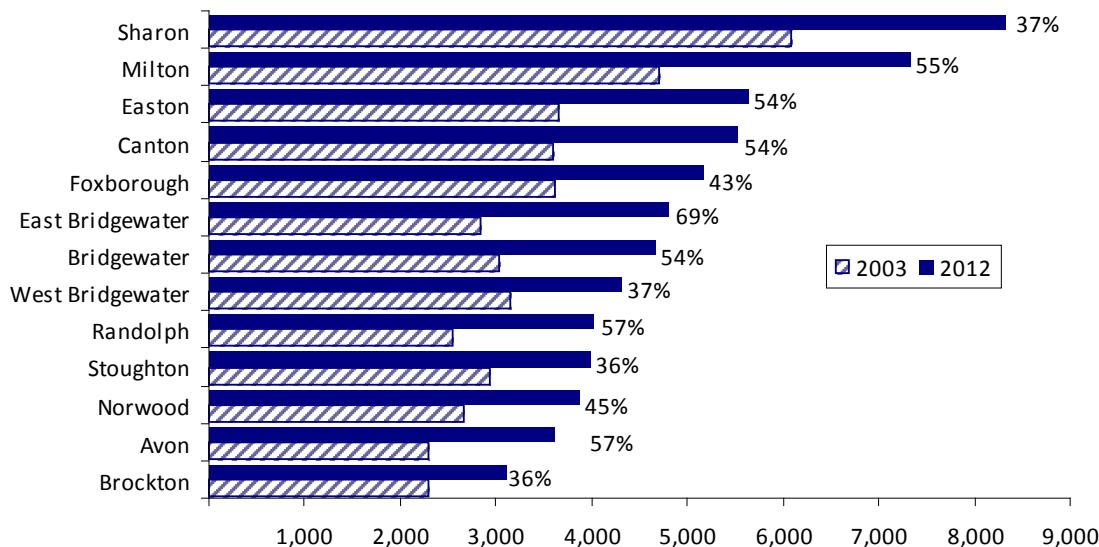
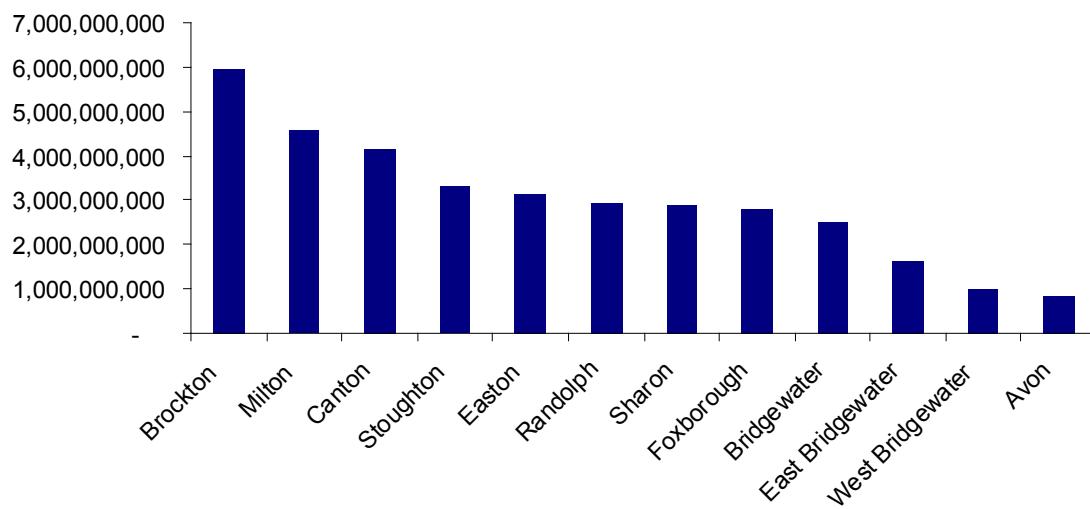


Figure 1 shows the equalized value (EQV) per capita of Stoughton and the comparison communities. EQVs present an estimate of fair cash value of all taxable property. The EQV is a measure of the relative property wealth in each municipality. Stoughton's EQV falls in the upper half of the comparison communities.

Figure 11: Equalized Valuation Per Capita in Stoughton and Comparison Communities, 2012¹⁹



¹⁹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue (2012). The Commissioner of Revenue, in accordance with MGL Ch. 58 Section 10C, is charged with the responsibility of biannually determining an equalized valuation for each city and town in the Commonwealth. Its purpose is to allow for comparisons of municipal property values at one point in time, adjusting for differences in local assessing practices and revaluation schedules.

Economic Growth Opportunities

Within the past decade town and regional studies have reviewed potential for economic growth in some key areas in Stoughton.

STOUGHTON TOWN CENTER

The Stoughton Central Business District Study completed in 2005 highlighted the compact and varied character of the downtown and explored the potential for change to increase economic activity in this area. This study particularly focused on transit-oriented development opportunities to diversify and intensify the types of uses in and around the commuter rail station. The Center's strengths are its central location (at the intersection of major transportation corridors), its concentration of historic and attractive buildings, the combination of public and private properties, and access to transit systems. At the same time, the Center has some challenges to overcome. Located at a cross roads presents difficulties with traffic congestion and limited parking may place certain commercial properties at a disadvantage compared to commercial areas outside the Center. Buildings are not fully occupied and it can be challenging to find tenants. The study reported there was weak demand for retail and office space in the Center, although these are uses that may be typical of a vibrant downtown. The 2005 study identified opportunities for positive change in the Center to increase pedestrian activity by adding pedestrian amenities and encouraging land uses on the first floor that create a busy atmosphere at the street level. The study proposed encouraging possible niche markets in financial / legal services, immigrant and ethnic services, and the creative arts. Some of these uses are already represented in the Center.

A follow-up study in 2006, *Mixed Use Development and Parking in Stoughton Center*, evaluated opportunities for mixed use development and parking. The study developed various development scenarios within the downtown reflecting transit oriented design principles.²⁰ A subsequent Downtown Visioning focused on potential for a mix of uses in and around the commuter rail station comparing implications for relocating the commuter rail platform.²¹

The 2009 South Coast Economic Development and Land Use Plan identified Stoughton Center as a Regional Priority Development Area, noting it is already served by an existing commuter rail station and the redevelopment opportunities that could capitalize on the transit access.²²

NORTH STOUGHTON

The North Stoughton Planning Study in 2006 focused on an area with a substantially different character than the Center. Although this area is predominantly industrial there is a mix of significant commercial and residential areas as well. At the time of the study, recent development had included destination retail centers – IKEA, Boston Interiors, and Target. Many of the existing uses and proposed future uses take advantage of the highway access with proximity to Route 24. The Study identified opportunities for new development and redevelopment on underutilized properties.

The 2006 study listed some of the challenges to economic growth in North Stoughton related to capacity of local transportation infrastructure and utilities, and concern about lack of growth management regulations to guide appropriate development and offset potential detrimental community impacts. The latter point is particularly relevant in areas where commercial and industrial use is in close proximity to residential areas and due to North Stoughton being a primary gateway for the town. Another challenge was existing zoning regulations, which would have to be modified to accommodate many of the types of development identified below.

The 2006 study identified economic opportunities presented by a continued demand for regional retail and associated businesses, potential demand for regional entertainment and lodging, and potential ability to expand light manufacturing uses. All of these uses are likely to have a positive impact on the town's tax base with low relative demand for community services. The study also suggested there is potential for provision of housing referencing a continued rise in household median income and growing number of households. The study presented a list of potential types of development based

20 Mixed Use Development and Parking in Stoughton Center Study, 2006.

21 Downtown Stoughton Visioning, 2009.

22 South Coast Economic Development and Land Use Plan, 2009.

on an analysis of available land:²³

- Lifestyle retail center (350,000 to 450,000 sq. ft.)
- Neighborhood retail (75,000 to 200,000 sq. ft.)
- Highway commercial (150,000 to 300,000 sq. ft.)
- Garden / Town house (150 to 200 units)
- Active adult community (500 to 1,500 units)
- Hotel with conference center
- Hotel with destination resort
- Recreational complex

The 2009 South Coast Economic Development and Land Use Plan identified North Stoughton as a Regional Priority Development Area due to its existing commercial and industrial uses and good highway access. The Plan noted that expansion was limited by infrastructure capacity, particularly local roadway access.²⁴

EAST STOUGHTON

The 2009 South Coast Economic Development and Land Use Plan identified Campanelli Industrial Park as a Regional Priority Development Area noting it has vacant and underutilized warehouse facilities. The Plan observed that the site is currently served by septic, and sewer is available just over the town line in Brockton. Redevelopment potential is supported by good highway access, especially with signalization improvements at the intersection of Route 27 (Park Street) and Turnpike Street.

The 2009 regional plan also identified Roche Brothers Plaza, which is in North Easton just across the Stoughton border. A new commuter rail station is proposed for the site, which could bring some potential for transit-oriented development. There is currently some undeveloped land north of this site, and there may be potential along Route 138 in Stoughton if zoning were modified.

23 North Stoughton Planning Study, 2006.

24 South Coast Economic Development and Land Use Plan, 2009.

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3.5 TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Circulation	77
Traffic Volumes.....	81
Crash Data	84
Traffic Signals.....	86
Travel Patterns.....	88
Congestion	89
Town Center	91
Future Roadway Projects	92
Public Transportation	92
South Coast Rail	93
Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	95
Safe Routes to School.....	97
Trails & Scenic Roads.....	99
Parking	99

FIGURES

Figure 1: Roadway Classification in Stoughton	79
Figure 2: Jurisdiction of Stoughton Roadways.....	80
Figure 3: Permanent Count Station Volumes	82
Figure 4: High Crash Locations	85
Figure 5: Signalized Locations.....	87
Figure 6: Previous Town Center Improvements.....	91
Figure 7: South Coast Rail Concept Plan.....	94
Figure 8: Pedestrian Level of Service	96
Figure 9: Bicycle Level of Service	96

TABLES

Table 1: Classification of Roadway Mileage	78
Table 2: Historic Permanent Count Station Traffic Volumes	81
Table 3: Other Traffic Volume Counts	83
Table 4: High Crash Locations	84
Table 5: Signalized Locations	86
Table 6: Top Commuting Destination for Stoughton Residents	88
Table 7: Means of Transportation to Work – 1990/2000	88
Table 8: Top Place of Residence for Stoughton Employees	89
Table 9: Congested Intersections.....	90
Table 10: Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities at Signalized Locations	97

The Town of Stoughton's transportation system is one which is well integrated into the greater Boston metropolitan region. Route 24, a limited access highway, lies on the town's eastern border and provides a strong connection to the regional transportation network. Three state number routes, Route 27, 138 and 139 provide connections to Route 24 and the surrounding communities. The MBTA commuter rail provides a direct transit connection to downtown Boston and the Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT) provides a fixed bus service connection to Brockton and adjoining communities.

Stoughton's transportation system does experience considerable strains. This is most evident in Town Center, a confluence of major traffic routes, commuter rail access, downtown pedestrian activity and the focus of redevelopment desires. While recent improvements have had a positive effect on safety and traffic flow in the Center, continued efforts are required. The state's South Coast Rail Project, a potential boon to regional connectivity, could be a game changer for traffic and circulation concerns within Town Center and the surrounding area. Additional congestion points, safety deficiencies and insufficient pedestrian/bicycle amenities are common throughout the town.

Much of Stoughton's traffic congestion results from peak period commuting traffic. Traffic congestion obtained during the peak commuting periods spills into off-peak commuting periods. This often occurs on Saturday during the mid-day periods. Census data indicate that 83.9% of Stoughton residents drive alone to work, higher than the statewide average (72.3%)¹, and that vehicle availability is also slightly higher per housing unit than the Massachusetts average for similar communities².

Stoughton's population growth has slowed over the past decade; however there exists substantial potential for additional commercial and industrial sector growth in town. The outflow of Stoughton residents traveling outside of Stoughton's borders for work is now only slightly higher than the influx of workers traveling into Stoughton on a daily basis. The resulting traffic patterns have manifested themselves into various safety and congestion concerns. For instance the intersection of Washington Street (Route 138) at Central Street is currently ranked #16 on the state's Top 200 Top Crash Locations³. Additional growth in the employment base of Stoughton will likely bring additional commuting traffic which must be properly planned for less the town risk compounding existing deficiencies. Focused operational enhancements at key intersections and implementing access management measures at new and existing developments are essential to improve the transportation system wherever possible.

The ability to walk and bicycle along Stoughton streets also needs to be improved. Crashes involving pedestrians are a concern all too frequently. The town's participation in the state's Safe Route to School Program and recent improvements made in Town Center notwithstanding, a town-wide approach should be considered to ensure that children and adults who choose an alternative to driving are afforded safe and effective facilities.

The remainder of this chapter details the existing Transportation and Circulation conditions within the Town of Stoughton. It should be noted that the Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (OCMPO) and the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization provide transportation and community planning services to Stoughton. These MPOs perform transportation studies, prepare long range regional transportation plans and select projects for use of federal transportation funds in the region. The MPOs, particularly the OCMPO, have conducted numerous relevant transportation planning studies in Stoughton in recent years. These studies have lent significant relevant information to this master plan and include:

- 2012 Regional Transportation Plan - OCMPO
- 2011 Stoughton Square Origins and Destinations Study – OCMPO
- 2011 Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity and Livability Study - OCMPO
- 2010 Route 139 Corridor Study – OCMPO
- 2008 Route 27 Corridor Study – OCMPO

1 U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

2 Non-Principal Cities in urbanized areas

3 2009 Top Crash Locations Report, MassDOT, August 2011

Circulation

Four state numbered routes serve the Town of Stoughton, seen in Figure 1. Route 24 (north-south), is a limited-access highway which provides a freeway connection to nearby Interstate 93 to the north and Interstate 495 and the State of Rhode Island to the south. Route 27 (Canton Street/Park Street), Route 138 (Washington Street) and Route 139 (Pleasant Street/Turnpike Street) function as the main arterial roadway backbone to the Town of Stoughton's roadway system. The three routes (138, 27, 139) intersect in Town Center creating a key junction point for inter-town travel; although, they are often very congested and exceed their capacity. Key roadways are described below:

Route 24

Route 24 is a north-south limited access highway that links the Boston metropolitan area with communities in southeastern Massachusetts. Opened in 1951 Route 24 provides a vital freeway connection to the Town of Stoughton. Within the town limits interchange 20 provides access to Route 139 (Turnpike Street). Just outside of the town limits Interchanges 18 and 19 provide connections to Route 27 (Park Street) and Central Street respectively, both key Stoughton roadways. While Route 24 is a limited access highway, various elements of the freeway do not meet federal design standards, such as shoulder widths and interchange ramp designs. For this reason Route 24 is not designated as part of the interstate highway system. There have been multiple initiatives over the past two decades to upgrade Route 24 to interstate standards however a comprehensive plan has yet to emerge. Over the years commercial development such as IKEA and the Page Pointe retail development in Stoughton have contributed towards already congested peak period conditions along Route 24 near the interchanges which serve Stoughton.

Route 27

Route 27 (Canton Street/Park Street) is an east-west principal arterial roadway which connects Sharon to Brockton through the Town of Stoughton. Overall Route 27 connects the Town of Chelmsford to the Town of Kingston in an arc which generally acts as an intermediate route between Interstate 95 and Interstate 495. As seen in Figure 2, Route 27 is under state jurisdiction east of Sumner Street and the Town of Stoughton west of Sumner Street. In 2008 the Old Colony Planning Council prepared a Route 27 Corridor Study. In Stoughton this study concluded that with the exception of intersections within Town Center all operationally constrained locations along the Route 27 corridor consisted of stop controlled intersections. These stop sign controlled intersections in Stoughton have poor alignment, poor sight lines, and long delays on the side street approaches to Route 27. This study included recommendations to install a traffic signal at West Street, add left-turn lanes at Island Street, add a traffic signal at Canton Street/Tosca Drive, and to realign the intersection with School Street in addition to installing a traffic signal. The latter is also the recommendation of a 2009 MassDOT safety audit and the OCMPO 2012 Regional Transportation Plan.

Route 138

Route 138 (Washington Street) is a north-south arterial roadway which connects Canton to Easton through the Town of Stoughton. Overall, Route 138 connects the Town of Milton to the Rhode Island state line where it continues as Rhode Island State Route 138. As seen in Figure 2, Route 138 is under state jurisdiction north of Lincoln Street and south of Walnut Street. Between these two roadways, including Town Center, Route 138 is under the jurisdiction of the Town of Stoughton. In 2002 the Boston Region MPO prepared a Route 138 Corridor Study. Within Stoughton this study concluded that the town should work to implement traffic and pedestrian improvements in Town Center. These improvements have since been implemented at Town Center and have enhanced pedestrian amenities, improved traffic flow, and have created a more pedestrian friendly environment. Nevertheless, traffic progression remains problematic through Town Center. The Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) is currently undertaking a major bottleneck analysis study from Town Center to the Canton town line. It should also be noted that the intersection of Route 138 at Central Street is ranked #16 on the state's Top 200 Top Crash Locations list.

Route 139

Route 139 (Pleasant Street) is an east-west primary arterial roadway which connects Town Center to the Town of Randolph, Route 139 then continues to the Town of Duxbury. As seen in Figure 2, Route 139 is under town jurisdiction with the exception of the immediate vicinity to Route 24 where it is under state jurisdiction. As mitigation for the Page Pointe

development project signal upgrades were completed at four locations⁴ along Route 139 in 2008. In addition the bridge deck on Route 139 over Route 24 was replaced by MassDOT in 2010. In 2010 the OCPC prepared a Route 139 Corridor Study. In Stoughton this study included recommendations to install a traffic signal at Lincoln Street along with additional geometric improvements, adjust existing signals at Central Street as well as upgrade pedestrian facilities, install a traffic signal at Pine Street along with additional geometric improvements as well as to reconstruct Turnpike Street between Page Street and Pleasant Street to repair issues related to the settling of earth beneath the roadway.

Other key minor arterial roadways in Stoughton include Central Street (east-west), Pearl Street (north-south), Sumner Street (north-south) and Highland Street (north-south).

Overall the Town of Stoughton roadway network consists of 123.4 miles of roadway as classified in Table 1 and Figure 1. Of this total 109.6 miles are under the jurisdiction of the Town of Stoughton.

Table 1: Classification of Roadway Mileage⁵

Class	Description	2009 Miles
Arterial	Important Highways supplementing the interstate highway system	23.64
Collector	Provide land access and service circulation. Provide less mobility than arterials at lower speeds.	18.33
Local	Provide high level of access to local streets but low mobility	81.46
Total Miles		123.43

⁴ Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Turnpike Street; Turnpike Street (Route 139) at Page Street; Lindelof Avenue (Route 139) at Turnpike Street / Shoppes at Page Pointe; Lindelof Avenue (Route 139) at Kay Way / Technology Center Drive

⁵ MassDOT 2009 Road Inventory Year End Report via 2012 OCPC Regional Transportation Plan

Figure 1: Roadway Classification in Stoughton

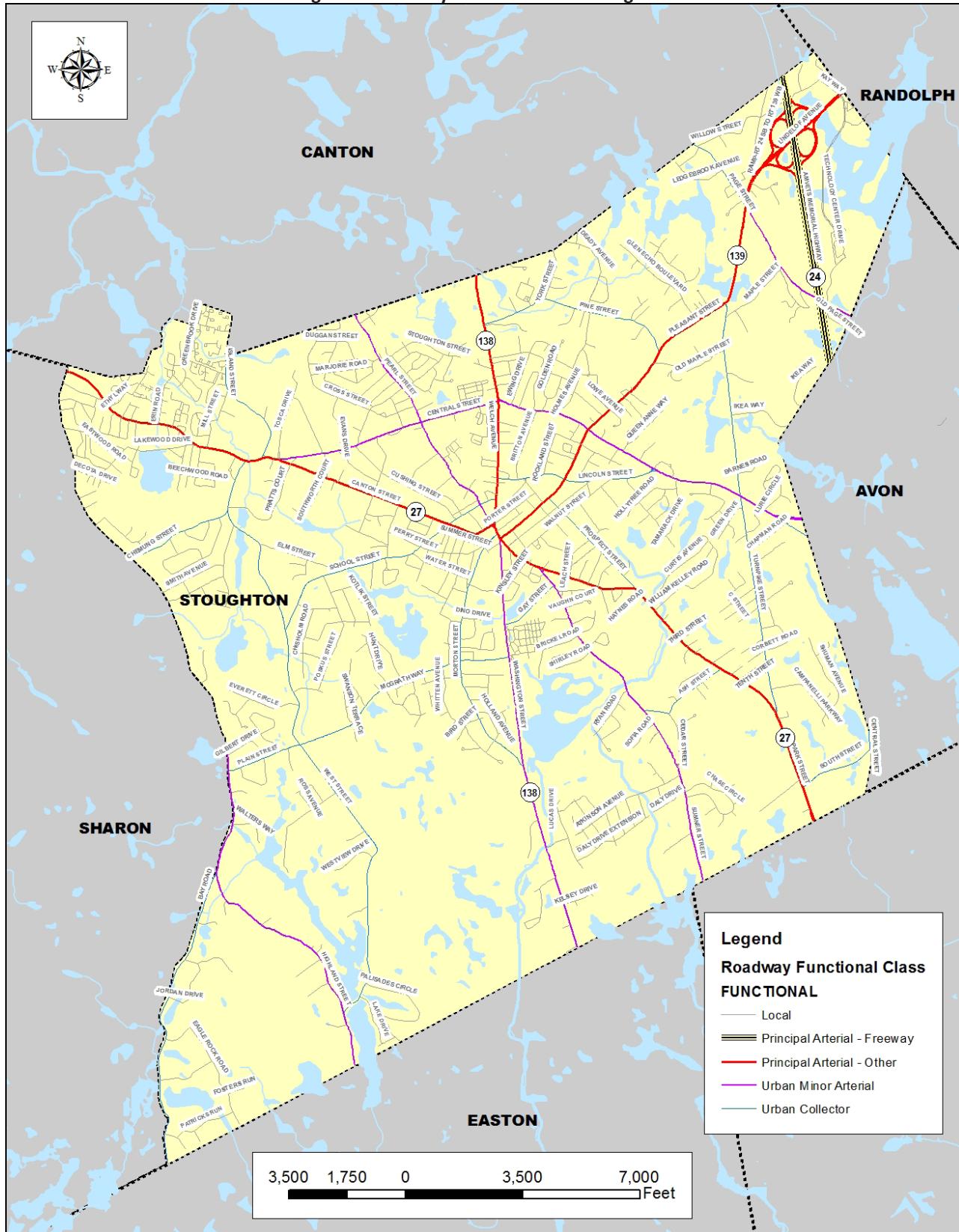
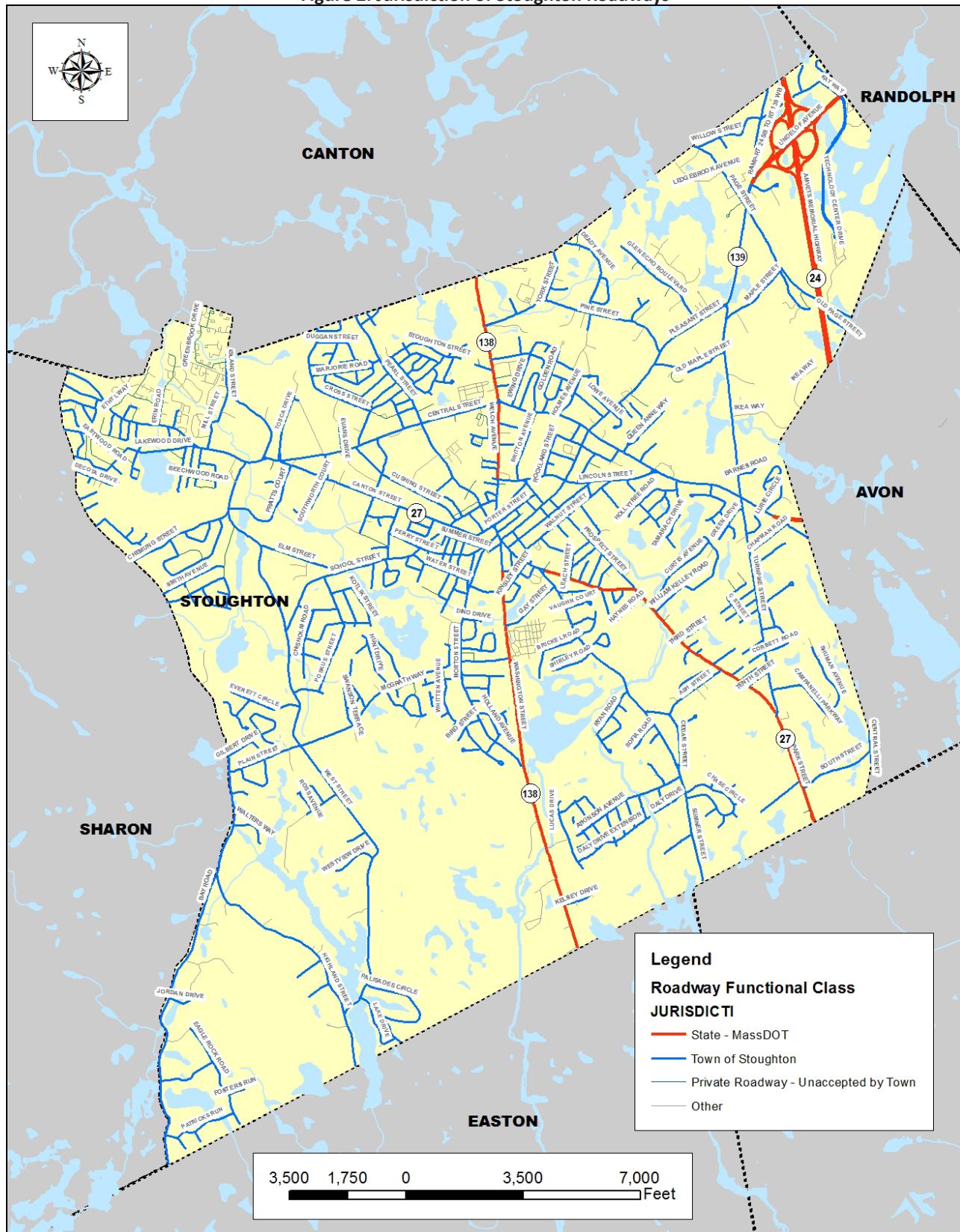


Figure 2: Jurisdiction of Stoughton Roadways



Traffic Volumes

MassDOT maintains permanent count stations on some of its roadways. In addition, the Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (OCMPO) also routinely collects traffic count data. The MassDOT Count Book provides volume count data up to the year 2009, though data availability varies by count location. From these data sources it can be seen that traffic volumes on Stoughton primary roadways have decreased in the last few years, as is shown in Table 2 and Figure 3. The exception to this is freeway traffic on Route 24, which increased 6% between 2004 and 2009, and Route 139 traffic in the vicinity of Route 24, which increased 16% between 2002 and 2007. The latter can most likely be attributed to the development of commercial properties in the area. The decrease in traffic volumes along Route 139 between Town Center and Turnpike Street should also be noted.

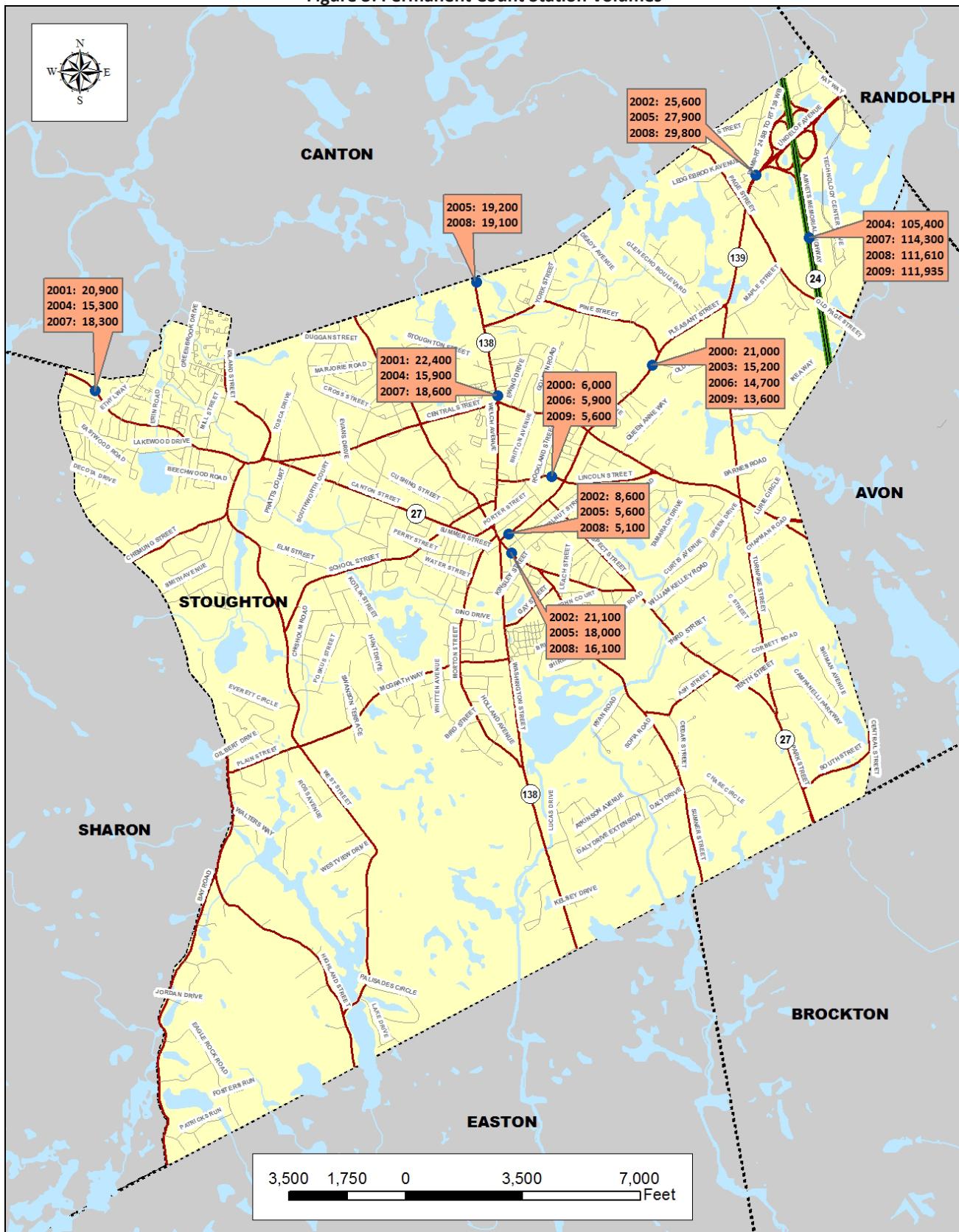
While the traffic volumes may indicate decreases, it should be noted that roadway congestion remains a problem on the major roadway network arterials in Stoughton. A decrease in volume does not always attribute to an improvement in roadway operational capacity. Major roadways and intersections in Stoughton are still operating at poor level of services that exceed operational capacity.

Table 2: Historic Permanent Count Station Traffic Volumes⁶

Location	AADT 2000	AADT 2001	AADT 2002	AADT 2003	AADT 2004	AADT 2005	AADT 2006	AADT 2007	AADT 2008	AADT 2009	Percent Change
Lincoln Street west of Central Street	6,000	-	-	-	-	-	5,900	-	-	5,600	-7%
Route 24 South of Route 139	-	-	-	-	105,400	-	-	114,300	111,610	111,935	6.20%
Route 27 East of Route 139	-	-	21,100	-	-	18,000	-	-	16,100	-	-24%
Route 27 South of Bay Road	-	20,900	-	-	15,300	-	-	18,300	-	-	-12%
Route 138 North of Central Street	-	22,400	-	-	15,900	-	-	18,600	-	-	-17%
Route 138 at Canton T/L	-	-	-	-	-	19,200	-	-	19,100	-	-0.50%
Route 139 East of Route 27	-	-	8,600	-	-	5,600	-	-	5,100	-	-41%
Route 139 South of Pine Street	21,000	-	-	15,200	-	-	14,700	-	-	13,600	-35%
Route 139 West of Route 24	-	-	25,600	-	-	27,900	-	-	29,800	-	16%

AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic

Figure 3: Permanent Count Station Volumes



Outside of the permanent count stations traffic volumes have also been collected on a variety of roadways by both MassDOT and OCPC since 2007, as shown in Table 3. The 2012 volumes in this table were collected from the 2012 Route 138 Bottleneck Study.

Table 3: Other Traffic Volume Counts⁷

Location	ADT	Location	ADT
2007			
Ash Street west of Park Street	2,700	Park Street South of Summer Street	13,600
Central Street East of Canton Street.	15,300	Pearl Street at Canton T/L	10,700
Central Street West of Canton Street	21,500	Pearl Street North of Stoughton Square	6,200
Central Street East of Route 27	21,000	Prospect Street North of Park Street	4,500
Central Street West of West Street	19,300	Sharon Street at Sharon T/L	18,800
Island Street at Canton T/L	4,300	South Street East of Park Street	1,800
Park Street North of Ash Street	16,900	Summer Street South of Park Street	4,300
Park Street North of Turnpike Street	18,800	West Street South of Central Street	5,200
2008			
Canton Street East of Simpson Street	11,100	School Street West of Canton Street	3,800
Park Street South of Turnpike Street	22,700	School Street East of Canton Street	6,600
Park Street East of Washington Street	18,000	Turnpike Street North of Park Street	6,100
Park Street south of Prospect Street	18,200		
2009			
Pleasant Street South of Union Street	5,600	Turnpike Street North of Pleasant Street	19,400
Pleasant Street South of Lincoln Street	8,800	Turnpike Street North of Page Street	22,200
Pleasant Street South of Central Street	9,100	Lindelof Avenue East of Route 24	35,210
Pleasant Street South of Pine Street	14,900		
2010			
Washington Street North of Stoughton Square	14,100	Washington Street South of Stoughton Square	11,500
Porter Street East of Stoughton Square	700	Porter Street West of Stoughton Square	9,400
Freeman Street East of Stoughton Square	500	Wyman Street West of Stoughton Square	4,100
Pleasant Street East of Stoughton Square	5,600	Pearl Street North of Stoughton Square	5,300
Park Street South of Stoughton Square	16,400		
2012			
Washington Street South of Canton T/L	21,700	Washington Street South of Central Street	20,600
York Street East of Washington Street	5,600	Lincoln Street East of Washington Street	5,300
Washington Street South of York Street	21,800	Washington Street South of Lincoln Street	18,100
Washington Street North of Central Street	19,600	School Street West of Washington Street	9,100
Central Street West of Washington Street	25,800	Park Street South of Stoughton Square	11,300
Washington Street North of Stoughton Square	14,300	Central Street East of Washington Street	24,600

Crash Data

In order to identify crash trends, safety concerns, and/or roadway deficiencies within the town, crash data maintained by MassDOT was reviewed for the period between January 1, 2006, and June 30, 2008. During this time period a total of 2,427 crashes occurred within the Town of Stoughton. This equates to 19.61 crashes per mile, higher than the OCMPO region of 13.47 crashes per mile. It is important to note however these figures are per roadway mile, not vehicle miles traveled, therefore it is reasonable to expect a higher ratio in communities which experience heavier traffic volumes such as Stoughton. During this same time period 627 crashes, or 25.83% involved injury. This is lower than the MPO regional average of 32.77%. There were a total of five fatal crashes during this time period.

As part of its 2012 Regional Transportation Plan the OCMPO published its 100 Most Hazardous Intersections in the region between 2007 and 2009. Nine intersections in Stoughton were included on this list as shown in Table 4 and Figure 4.

Table 4: High Crash Locations⁸

Intersection	OCPC Rank	Total Crashes	Average # of Crashes	Traffic Control	Fatal Injuries	Non-Fatal Injuries
Washington Street (Route 138) at Central Street	12	87	29	Signal	0	21
Canton Street (Route 27) at School Street	28	33	11	Stop Sign	1	21
Plain Street at West Street	52	13	4.3	Stop Sign	0	21
Lindelof Avenue (Route 139) at Technology Center Drive	70	23	7.7	Signal	0	17
School Street at Pearl Street	72	41	13.7	Stop Sign	0	13
Washington Street (Route 138) at York Street	79	28	9.3	Stop Sign	0	14
Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Lincoln Street	86	23	7.67	Stop Sign	0	14
Central Street at Pearl Street	95	36	12	Signal	0	11
Turnpike Street (Route 139) at Page Street	100	30	10	Signal	0	12

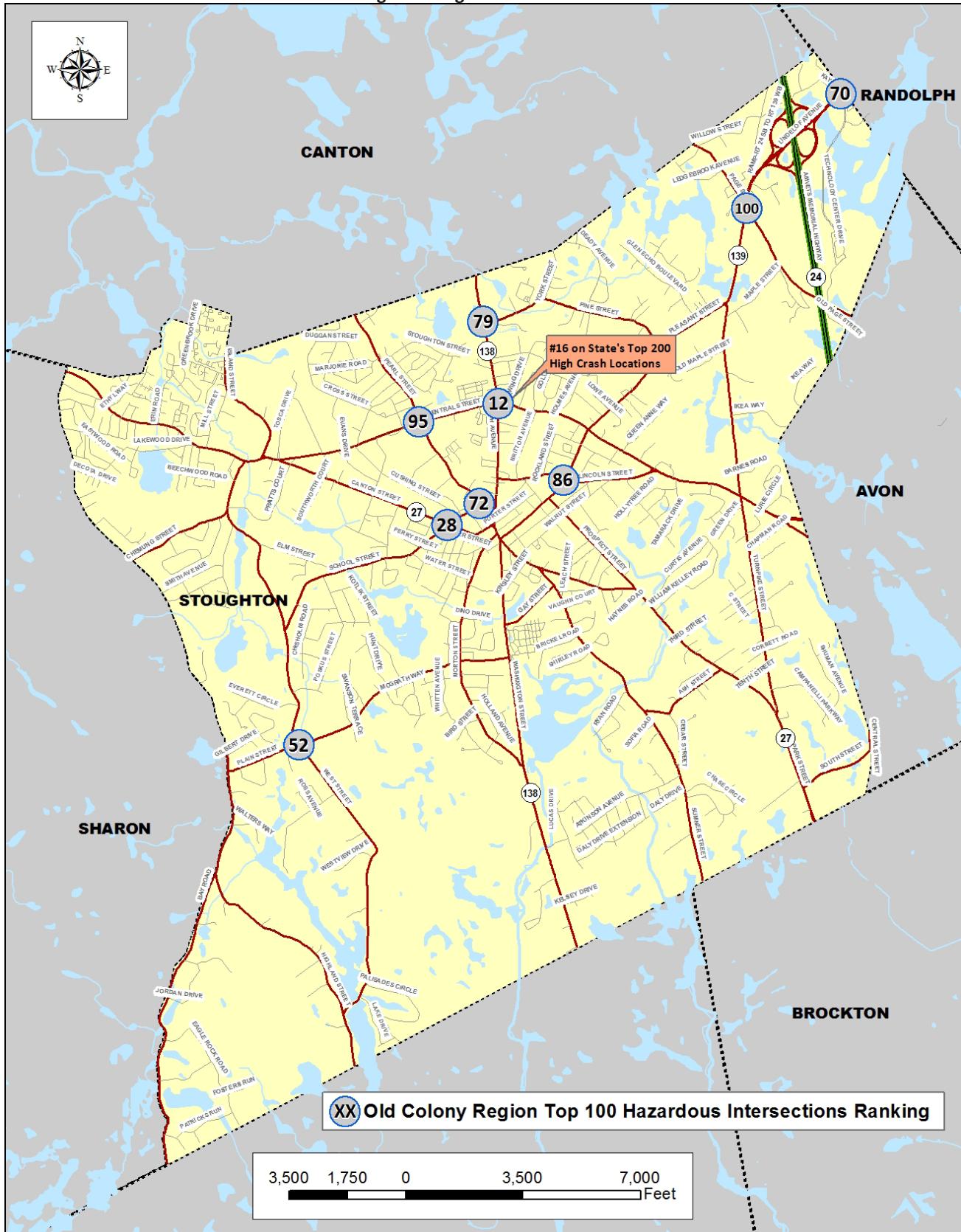
It should be noted that the intersection of Washington Street (Route 138) at Central Street is ranked #16 on MassDOT's statewide Top 200 Top Crash Locations list.

Of particular note in Stoughton are the number of crashes which involve pedestrians and bicyclists. During the 2006 to 2008 time period Stoughton experienced 34 crashes involving pedestrians and 19 crashes involving bicycles. In the Old Colony region only the City of Brockton experienced a higher frequency of pedestrian and bicycle crashes. It should be noted that Stoughton has experienced some significant pedestrian related accidents in more recent years. In one evening in January 2010 two separate fatal pedestrian accidents occurred, and in September 2012 a toddler was struck and killed near an elementary school.⁹

8 OCPC 2012 Regional Transportation Plan

9 <http://stoughton.patch.com/articles/toddler-struck-killed-near-hansen-school>

Figure 4: High Crash Locations



Traffic Signals

Within the Town of Stoughton there are a total of seventeen traffic signals as well as three flashing beacons. Traffic signals, when properly designed and supplemented with other necessary traffic control devices (signs and pavement markings) improve safety and facilitate traffic flow by assigning right of way at intersections. Justification for the installation of a traffic signal is provided in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The MUTCD defines nine warrants that, if satisfied, suggest that a traffic signal should be considered. These warrants represent the minimum standards by which the need for a traffic signal should be judged. Flashing beacons are sometimes used at intersections or locations where a full traffic signal is not warranted, but conditions merit alerting drivers to the notable intersection conditions.

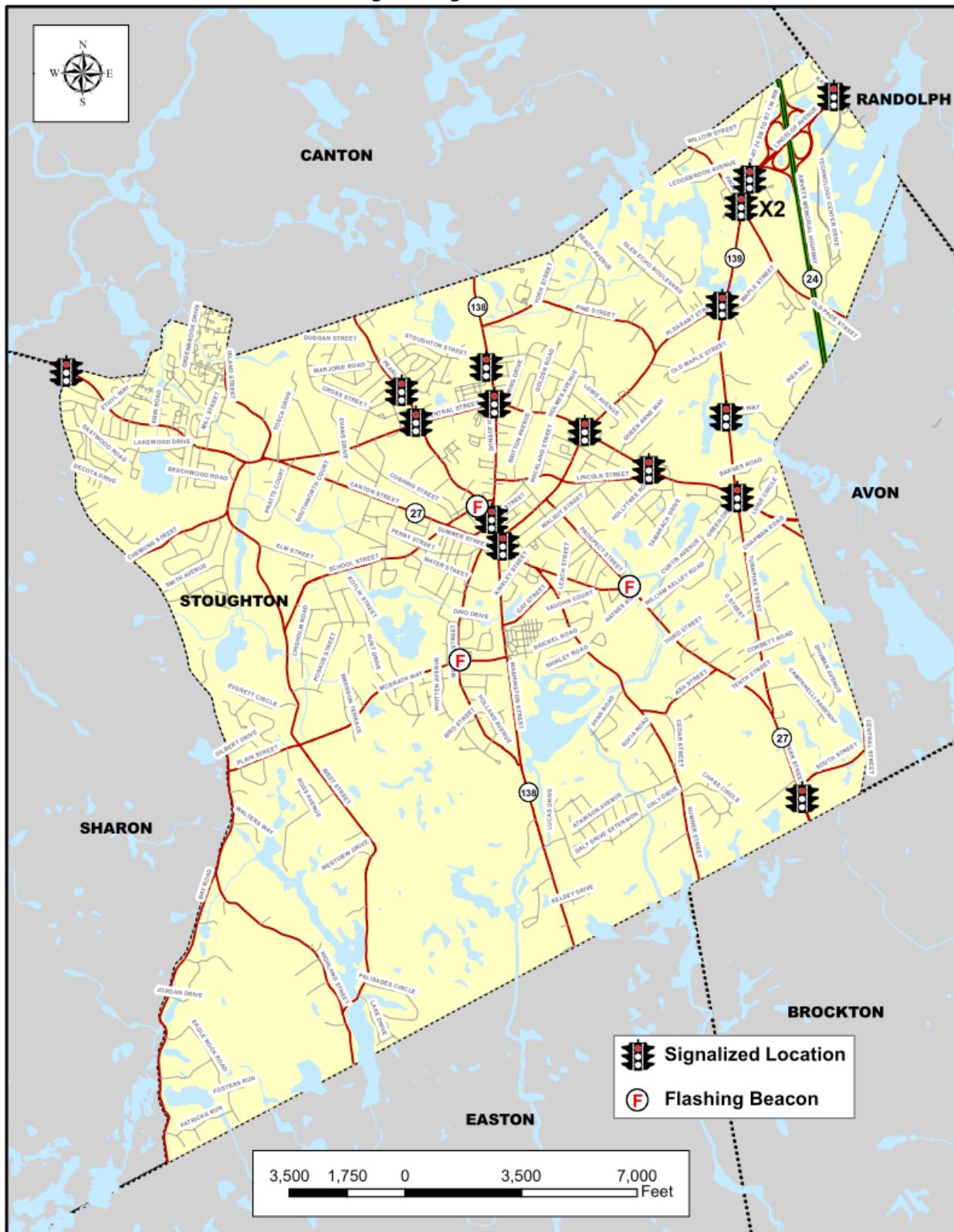
Some of the traffic signals in Stoughton are maintained by MassDOT while others are under the jurisdiction of the town. Table 5 provides the locations of these signals as well as the maintaining authority. A map of these signal locations can be seen in Figure 5.

Table 5: Signalized Locations

Intersection	Type	Jurisdiction*
Central Street at Lincoln Street	Full	Stoughton
Central Street at Pearl Street	Full	Stoughton
Central Street at Turnpike Street	Full	Stoughton
Park Street (Route 27) at RK Plaza	Full	MassDOT
Sharon Street (Route 27) at Bay Road	Full	Stoughton
Pearl Street at Ralph Mann Drive	Full	Stoughton
Lindelof Avenue (Route 139) at Technology Center Drive/Kay Way	Full	MassDOT
Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Central Street	Full	Stoughton
Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Turnpike Street	Full	Stoughton
Turnpike Street (Route 139) at Dunkin Donuts Driveway (Page St)	Full	Stoughton
Turnpike Street (Route 139) at Page Street	Full	Stoughton
Turnpike Street (Route 139) at Target Plaza	Full	MassDOT
Turnpike Street at IKEA Way	Full	Stoughton
Washington Street (Route 138) at Central Street	Full	MassDOT
Washington Street (Route 138) at Pleasant Street (Route 139)	Full	Stoughton
Washington Street (Route 138) at Porter Street	Full	Stoughton
Washington Street (Route 138) at Stop & Shop Driveway	Full	MassDOT
Pearl Street at School Street	Flashing Beacon	Stoughton
Plain Street at Morton Street	Flashing Beacon	Stoughton
Prospect Street at Park Street	Flashing Beacon	MassDOT

**Presumed from roadway jurisdiction*

Figure 5: Signalized Locations



"X2" -- Two traffic signals are closely spaced at Turnpike Street and Page Street, one of which includes the Dunkin Donuts driveway

The majority of the signals in town are under the jurisdiction of the Town of Stoughton. Please note that those listed as under MassDOT jurisdiction are presumed based on roadway jurisdiction. Further coordination with MassDOT is required for any location where jurisdiction is disputed.

Travel Patterns

The majority of Stoughton residents do not work in Stoughton, although the percentage that does appears to be increasing. According to information obtained by the US Census Bureau during the 2000 census and the 2006-2008 American Community Survey, the percentage of Stoughton residents who work in Stoughton has increased from 19% to 26%. Outside of Stoughton, the single greatest commuting destination for Stoughton residents is the City of Boston, seen in Table 6. This trend coupled with a relatively unchanged population between 2000 and 2010 contributes significantly to the leveling off of traffic growth in Stoughton over the past decade.

Table 6: Top Commuting Destination for Stoughton Residents¹⁰

	Commute Destination	2006-08	2000	% Increase
1	Stoughton	27%	19%	8%
2	Boston	19%	19%	-
3	Brockton	7%	6%	1%
4	Canterbury	6%	9%	-2%
5	Norwood	5%	3%	2%
6	Randolph	4%	3%	1%
7	Quincy	3%	4%	-1%
8	Braintree	3%	2%	1%
9	Taunton	3%	1%	2%
10	Newton	2%	2%	-
11	Other	21%	32%	-11%

The average commute time for Stoughton workers is 28.8 minutes, two minutes less than the OCMPO regional average. Stoughton's proximity to Boston in relation to other communities in the region is likely a factor.

The majority (60%) of households in Stoughton have access to more than one vehicle. Approximately 18% have access to more than two vehicles. Both percentages are nearly identical to similar community types in the state of Massachusetts.

As seen in Table 7, between the years of 2000 and 2006-08 the number of residents who drove alone to work increased nearly five percent while those utilizing carpools and public transportation decreased.

Table 7: Means of Transportation to Work – 1990/2000¹¹

Mean of Transportation	2000 (%)	2006-08 (%)
Drove alone	78	82.9
Carpooled	8.5	6.2
Public transportation	9	4.7
Walked	1.6	2
Other means	0.5	1.2
Worked at home	2.4	2.8

As seen in Table 8, the Stoughton employment base is primarily comprised of workers from outside of town although Stoughton residents are the single highest employment group. Outside of Stoughton, residents of the City of Brockton contribute the most to the Stoughton employment base.

10 US Census Bureau. Census of Population Data 2000 and 2006-2008 American Community Survey

11 US Census Bureau. Census of Population Data 2000 and 2006-2008 American Community Survey

Table 8: Top Place of Residence for Stoughton Employees¹²

	Commute Destination	2006-08	2000	% Increase
1	Stoughton	27%	21%	6%
2	Brockton	16%	11%	0.05
3	Boston	6%	4%	2%
4	Randolph	4%	3%	1%
5	Taunton	4%	3%	1%
6	Easton	3%	3%	-
7	Quincy	3%	2%	1%
8	Weymouth	3%	2%	1%
9	Canton	3%	3%	-
10	Middleborough	2%	1%	0.01

Congestion

Traffic congestion is a significant negative factor to both personal productivity and a region's economic health. Traffic congestion occurs when the demand placed on a transportation facility exceeds the facility's capacity. This can occur for a number of reasons, both reoccurring and non-reoccurring. Non-reoccurring congestion occurs mainly due to random events, crashes, weather, etc. Reoccurring congestions is often the result of a baseline lack of roadway or intersection capacity.

Congestion most often materializes during peak commuting periods. Historically, commuting patterns in and around Stoughton have been orientated to and from Boston. In recent decades, as the metropolitan area expanded, more and more employment locations were located in the surrounding suburbs around Boston, including Stoughton. Commuting patterns in Stoughton are now comprised of a mix of competing patterns. As vehicles cross paths, local roadways and their intersections experience more congestion than if everyone were traveling the same direction.

Within Stoughton there are a number of locations where congestion routinely occurs. The most notable location of congestion in Stoughton is Town Center. This special case is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section. Outside of Town Center there are a number of other congestion locations ranging from systemic congestion along roadway corridors to intersection specific congestion. Notable congested corridors include:

- Route 24 – Inadequate design and heavy commuting traffic often lead to congestion along Route 24 through Stoughton. Notable bottlenecks occur at Lindelof Avenue (exit 20) and Harrison Boulevard/Central Street (exit 19) both of which serve the Town of Stoughton.
- Washington Street (Route 138) from Town Center to the Canton town line.– This stretch of Washington Street experiences heavy commuting period traffic volumes as it serves as an alternative to Route 24 which is also heavily congested during these periods. Access to local land use also compounds congestion issues as there are a significant number of curb-cuts to the adjacent commercial plazas/properties. Much of the Route 138 congestion is attributed to the heavy congestion at intersections located in Canton, namely at Randolph Street and at Washington Street.
- Central Street from Canton Street (Route 27) to the Avon town line – This important urban arterial connects Town Center to the commercial area along Stockwell Drive in Stoughton (featuring IKEA, Jordan's Furniture and Home Depot amongst others), Avon Industrial Park and Route 24. Major congestion can be found at intersections along Route 138, Route 139, and Turnpike Street. Due to the retail nature along Stockwell Drive congestion remains significant along the corridor during weekend peak periods.
- Pearl Street from the Canton town line to Town Center – This roadway runs parallel to Route 138 and serves as an alternative route to Route 128/I-95 in Canton and Westwood. The intersection of Pearl Street and Central Street is impacted by congestion along this stretch of roadway as it connects Pearl Street with Route 138 and

12 US Census Bureau. Census of Population Data 2000 and 2006-2008 American Community Survey
STOUGHTON MASTER PLAN

Route 27.

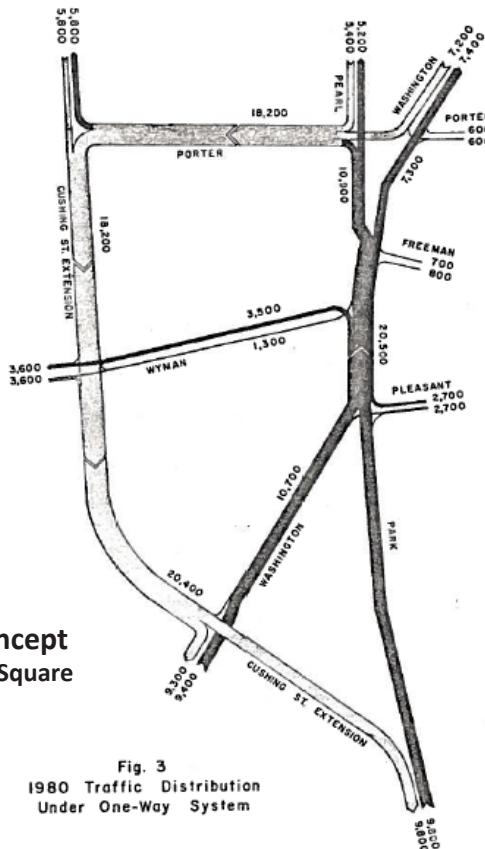
In addition to these corridors a number of intersections contribute to the town's traffic congestion concerns as identified in Table 9.

Table 9: Congested Intersections¹³

Intersection	Type	Periods
Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Prospect Street	Stop Sign	Morning and Evening Commute
Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Lincoln Street	Stop Sign	Evening Commute
Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Central Street	Signal	Evening Commute
Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Pine Street	Stop Sign	Morning and Evening Commute
Lindelof Avenue (Route 139) at Route 24 Ramps	Yield Sign	Morning and Evening Commute
Canton Street at School Street	Stop Sign	Systemic along School Street

Some intersections in Stoughton exhibit unconventional roadway geometry. Two examples are Canton Street at Central Street (non-signalized) and Turnpike Street at Page Street (signalized). A conventional intersection is attributed to two roadways crossing perpendicular to each other. These two intersections exhibit skewed geometry, that being the roadways cross at angles other than perpendicular. Skewed intersections often have limited sight distance, which may be troublesome for some drivers. These locations also contain curb cuts, driveways, and local roadways that also feed vehicles into the intersection. Since these alternate approaches aren't always designed with the intersection, entering/exiting vehicles can disrupt normal flow of the intersection.

Figure 6: Previous Town Center Improvements



Town Center presents a unique transportation bottleneck. Town Center is not only the municipal center for the town but also the home of the Stoughton MBTA Commuter Rail Station and many local businesses. The Center is also located at the junction of three state numbered routes (27, 138 & 139) as well as a number of local roadways. It is estimated that 30,000 vehicles enter the Center on a daily basis. This traffic, combined with notable pedestrian activity within the Center creates significant traffic congestion, particularly during peak commuting periods.

The congestion issues associated with Town Center have long been studied and understood. Studies conducted in 1959, 1965, 1975 and 1982¹⁴ document the congestion issues associated with the Center and present conceptual alternatives to ease traffic congestion. Simply put, as is the finding of these historical studies, the demand placed on the Center exceeds its capacity. The multitude of conflicting traffic movements traveling on or between the state routes, coupled with crossing movements from local side streets, train crossings and significant pedestrian volumes, creates excessive strain on the Center's ability to process traffic during peak periods. The recommendation of each of these historic studies is the consideration of traffic alternatives which consist of the creation of additional roadways in and around the Center to ease congestion.

In 2002 the Central Transportation Planning Staff, a component of the Boston Region MPO, prepared a Route 138 Corridor Study. This study concluded that the town should work to implement traffic and pedestrian improvements to Town Center. Subsequently, the town received a Public Works and Economic Development (PWED) grant to implement the recommended improvements. These include adding traffic signals to the north and south ends of the Center and improvements to the pedestrian amenities within the Center. These improvements have improved the overall safety of the Center and have been beneficial to managing the traffic flow through the Center. Traffic congestion however still remains a concern.

¹⁴ A Plan for Stoughton Square, Adams, Howard and Greeley, 1959, Downtown Concept Plan, Stoughton Redevelopment Authority, Candeub, Fleissig, Adley and Assoc., 1965, Proposed Report on Major Improvements, Stoughton Square, TAMS, 1975, Route 138 Corridor Study, 1982, as reported in the 1987 Town of Stoughton Strategic Plan, OCPC

The future of Town Center is linked directly to MassDOT's South Coast Rail Project. This project, which looks to restore commuter rail service to the cities of Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford, is anticipated to be completed via an extension of the Stoughton Line which currently terminates at Stoughton Station. While much has yet to be determined with this project, the town is taking proactive steps to plan for its implementation. In 2006 the town amended its zoning by-laws to create the Stoughton Center Mixed-Use Overlay District. One intent of this new zoning by-law is to encourage Transit Oriented Development (TOD) around the Stoughton Station. TOD by its nature generates less vehicular traffic than standard development. As development in this district takes place it could have the potential to reduce vehicle traffic in and around Town Center. More information about the South Coast Rail Project is discussed in a subsequent section.

In 2011 the OCMPO completed its Stoughton Square (Town Center) Origins and Destinations study. This study was initiated at the request of the Town of Stoughton to determine traffic patterns within the Town Center and to evaluate the effectiveness of extending Rose Street to Washington Street, creating a parallel by-pass of the Square to the west. This study found that the overwhelming majority of traffic flow in Town Center is between Washington Street (Route 138) and Porter Street/Park Street (Route 27). The study also concluded that the extension of Rose Street, as conceptualized, would have a minimal effect on congestion within Town Center. It is recommended that further study be conducted during the South Coast Rail environmental review process.

Future Roadway Projects

The OCMPO annually prepares its Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The TIP is a listing of transportation projects proposed for implementation during the next four federal fiscal years. Projects listed in the TIP include those identified in the Old Colony Regional Transportation Plan. In the TIP, projects are programmed under federal and non-federal funding categories and assigned a local priority. The TIP briefly describes the project as well as its projected costs and funding sources. The 2012-2015 Old Colony TIP does not include any programmed roadway improvement projects within the Town of Stoughton. The TIP does include one project which has been approved, but yet to be assigned to a funding category, as well as four projects which have been identified as potential projects within the Town of Stoughton. For the latter projects to advance in the TIP process the Town of Stoughton must follow the project initiation process in the MassDOT Project Development & Design Guide Book.

Project approved in TIP but yet to be assigned to a funding category:

- Resurfacing & related work on Washington Street (Route 138) from Canton town line to 300 feet north of Thomas Street.

Identified potential projects:

- Bay Road reconstruction.
- Canton Street (Route 27) at School Street signalization.
- Canton Street (Route 27) at Central Street/Tosca Drive intersection improvements.
- Turnpike Street and Central Street resurfacing
- Washington Street (Route 138) at Central Street intersection improvements

Public Transportation

The most visible means of public transportation available to Stoughton residents and workers is the Providence/Stoughton branch of the MBTA's Commuter Rail providing service to South Station in Boston. The sole stop in Stoughton is at Stoughton Station located on Wyman Street adjacent to Town Center. Stoughton Station is also currently the terminal point of the Stoughton Branch of the commuter rail. Fixed bus route service is also provided in Stoughton by the Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT). BAT Route 14 provides service between Cobb's Corner and the Westgate Mall in Brockton, and further to the BAT Center in Brockton, via Town Center Monday through Saturday.

Stoughton Station is located at the terminus of the Stoughton branch of the Providence/Stoughton commuter rail line. Accordingly it exhibits very convenient service levels to those passengers boarding/alighting the train at this final stop.

Ridership estimates indicate 785 passengers board inbound trains from Stoughton Station during the morning peak period and 596 passengers alight trains during the evening peak period. The fare for a one-way passage on the commuter rail between Stoughton Station and South Station in Boston is currently \$7.25. Stoughton Station provides a 333 space commuter rail parking lot and charges \$4.00 per vehicle. Recent observations made during the OCPC 2011 Stoughton Square Origins and Destinations Study indicate this lot to be 50% occupied on a typical day. Of vehicles parked in the lot, 51% were registered to owners in the Town of Stoughton, 19% were to owners from the Town of Easton and 16% to owners from the City of Brockton. Historic parking counts provided by the MBTA indicate usage of this commuter rail lot has decreased in recent years. The decrease in parking may be attributed to riders switching to new stations in surrounding areas like Brockton.

The BAT provides 15 fixed bus routes to six communities in the region, Abington, Avon, Brockton, Bridgewater, Easton and Stoughton from its central hub in downtown Brockton. Route 14, Stoughton, operates Monday through Saturday and provides connections to Cobb's Corner via Town Center. Buses run up to ten times a day between the Westgate Mall in Brockton and four times a day to the BAT center in Brockton. Fares are \$1.25 for adults, children under 12, senior citizens and disabled patrons are \$0.60, children under five are free. In 2010 Route 14 provided service to a daily average of 203 passengers, making it the least utilized of the 15 fixed bus routes provided by the BAT. The BAT currently has about 17,000 active subscribers per month for this service, region wide.

The BAT also provides limited paratransit service to Stoughton residents. This service provides door-to-door service for anyone 65 years of age or older and anyone qualifying for an ADA pass. Trips can be for any purpose provided they are within $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile of a regularly scheduled fixed bus route. Fares are \$2.50 each way within the same community and \$3.50 each way between communities.

Other public transportation options include senior/disabled van service operated by the Town of Stoughton Council on Aging. Service is available to nearby communities for medical appointment and every Tuesday to Shaw's Supermarkets in Canton and Stoughton. Transportation services for other purposes are available upon coordination with the Council. The fee for this service is \$2.50 in each direction. The Town of Stoughton also provides bus transportation for all students K-6 that live more than two miles from the school they attend. The Stoughton Public Schools also provides a pay-and-ride service for bus transportation for students that are not otherwise eligible for bus transportation. The fee for this service is \$360 per year per student.

South Coast Rail

The South Coast Rail project seeks to restore commuter rail transportation from South Station in Boston to the Cities of Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford. This project is subject to both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). In March of 2011 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This document serves as the initial environmental review document for both NEPA and MEPA review. A number of alternatives to restore south coast rail service were studied in this document. Currently the preferred alternative identified by the DEIS is to develop this service via an extension of the Stoughton line which currently maintains its terminus at Stoughton Station. Significant issues analyzed in the DEIS/DEIR include, but are not limited to: impacts to waters of the U.S., including vernal pools and other wetlands; cultural resources; threatened and endangered species; transportation; air quality, including greenhouse gas emissions; noise and vibration; surface water and groundwater; hydrology and water quality; and socioeconomic effects.

In June of 2011 the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs issued a certificate on the DEIS/DEIR stating that the document adequately complies with MEPA and authorized the preparation of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS/FEIR). This document is still under preparation. According to DEIS/DEIR certificate:

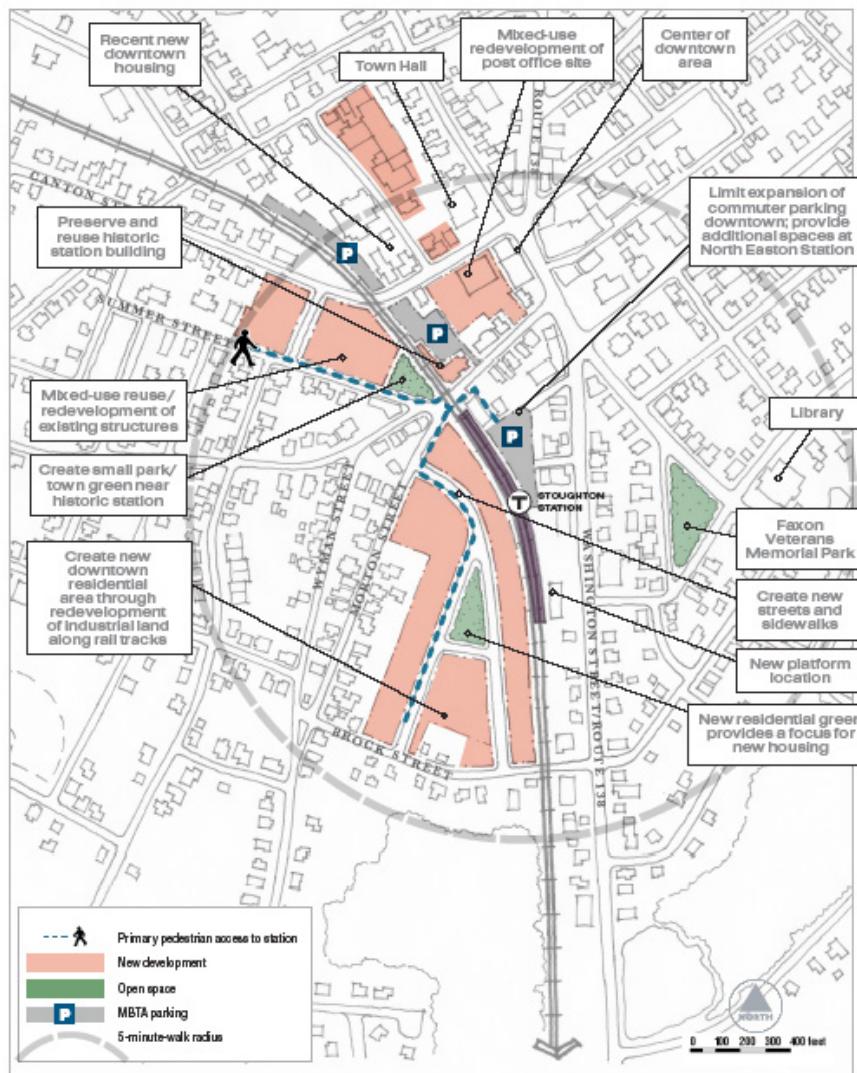
The existing Stoughton Station is located off Route 138 and is proposed for modification to accommodate a second track. The station will be relocated from its present position between Wyman and Porter Streets to a new location south of the Wyman Street station at-grade crossing. Two new platforms are proposed adjacent to each track, which will require changes to the existing parking layout. Approximately 185 existing parking spaces will be

relocated and loss of 28 spaces is proposed. Approximately 350 spaces will remain undisturbed, for a total of 507 parking spaces. Driveway access is proposed from Washington Street, Wyman Street, Porter Street and Canton Street. No accommodations for bus riders are proposed. Nine vehicular drop-off spaces are proposed. Sidewalks will be constructed to connect with existing sidewalks allowing pedestrians to use the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing at Wyman Street.

While the certificate clearly documents significant changes to the downtown Stoughton Station, including a relocation of the station and modifications to parking, the DEIS/DEIR did not contain detailed analysis of the projects impacts to Stoughton other than the need to upgrade at-grade crossings south of Stoughton Station where rail service would be restored. The assumption was made that existing stations will not experience significant changes in operations upon completion of the project. The FEIS/FEIR may provide additional clarification on these issues based on comments to the DEIR.

MassDOT is providing technical assistance to Stoughton for the visioning of the Town Center area upon realization of the South Coast Rail project. Part of this includes the incorporation of the new Stoughton Center Mixed-Use Overlay District by-law implemented in 2006 by the town. A preliminary concept plan, as shown in the June 2009 South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land Use Corridor Plan prepared by the Massachusetts Executive Offices of Transportation and Housing and Economic Development, is provided in Figure 7.

Figure 7: South Coast Rail Concept Plan



Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian and bicycle safety is a significant concern in the Town of Stoughton. For those municipalities in the Old Colony Planning Region only the City of Brockton experienced a higher frequency of crashes involving pedestrians and bicycles than the Town of Stoughton. Within the past few years numerous accidents involving pedestrians have been noted in the local press, including an evening in January 2010 when two separate fatal pedestrian accidents occurred within minutes of each other on Canton Street and Park Street.¹⁵ While some improvements have recently been made to the pedestrian facilities in town, notably within Town Center, generally the town lacks sufficient pedestrian and bicycle facilities to not only meet safety needs, but also to promote livability and alternative modes of transportation.

For example, there are seven crosswalks located between Town Center and Charles Avenue (Stop & Shop). Crosswalks are located at School Street, Lincoln Street, south of Warren Avenue, south of Phillips Avenue, Central Street and south of Charles Avenue at Washington Street. These crosswalks consist of white striped pavement markings with no ADA warning pads. In addition, the majority of the wheelchair ramps at the crosswalks do not meet ADA requirements.

The OCPC is currently undertaking a Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity and Livability Study for all of the municipalities in the region. This study seeks to improve walking and bicycling conditions in the region by first defining existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure conditions and then developing recommendations and funding strategies. In October of 2011 Phase I, the existing conditions assessment, of this study was completed.¹⁶ This study revealed that along many of the major roadways in Stoughton there is a significant lack of adequate pedestrian/bicycle accommodations. This information was conveyed as Level of Service maps separately for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. These maps are provided in Figure 8 and Figure 9. Preliminary recommendations of the study include:

- Upgrade sidewalks and crosswalks along Central Street (Route 27) west of Canton Street and Pearl Street
- Create an overlay district along Washington Street north of Town Center that allows mixed-use development and access management
- Connect bicycle network with open space and multi-use trails in the southwest portion of town (Bird Street Conservation Area)
- Improve bus stop at the Center with dedicated pull-out lanes, benches for pedestrian and adequate street lighting for safety.

15 <http://www.patriotledger.com/news/x1685421351/Pedestrian-killed-another-hurt-in-two-Stoughton-accidents>

16 http://www.ocpcrpa.org/docs/projects/bikeped/2011_Bicycle_and_Pedestrian_Connectivity_Study.pdf (large file)

Figure 8: Pedestrian Level of Service

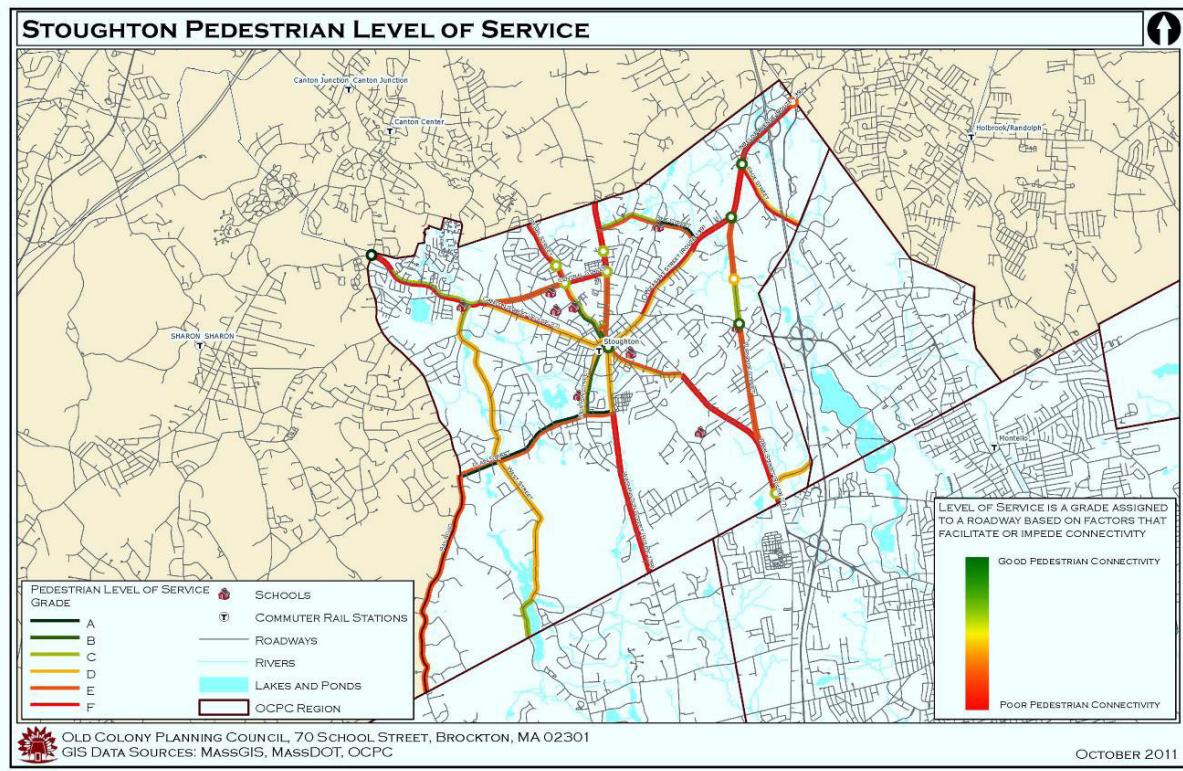
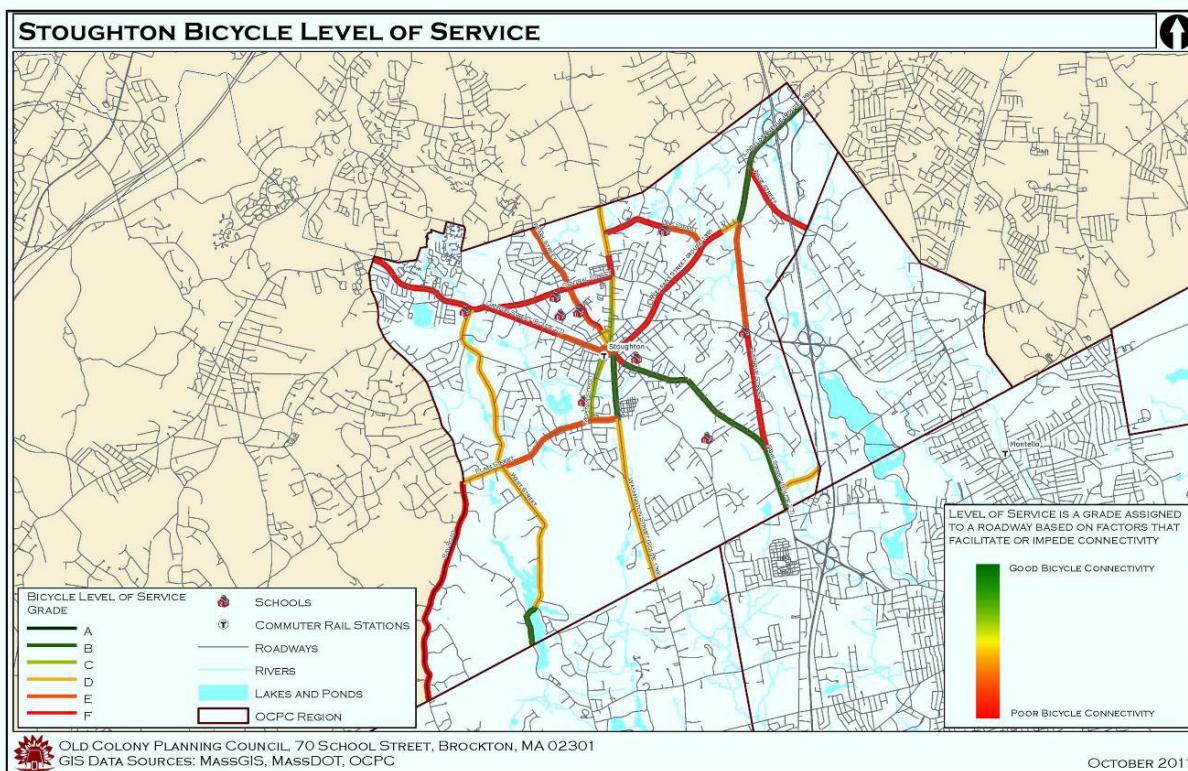


Figure 9: Bicycle Level of Service



In addition a 2008 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan prepared by OCMPO assessed the existing pedestrian and bicycle amenities at existing traffic signals in town. Table 10, below, provides a summary of this inventory. Note the new signals within Town Center at Porter and Pleasant Streets were not yet installed at the time of this inventory. Count-down refers to pedestrian signals which count down the remaining time available for pedestrian crossings, warning panels are raised

truncated dome panels which provide crossing indication for the visually impaired, audible pedestrian signals emit an audible sound and a tactile arrow which aid crossing for the visually impaired, bike detectors allow bicyclists to be identified as vehicles at traffic signals.

Table 10: Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities at Signalized Locations¹⁷

Intersection	Pedestrian			ADA		Bike
	Crosswalks	Push-Buttons	Count-Down	Warning Panels	Audible Ped Signals	Detectors
Sharon Street (Route 27) at Bay Road	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Park Street (Route 27) at RK Plaza	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Central Street at Lincoln Street	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Central Street at Pearl Street	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Pearl Street at Ralph Mann Drive	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Central Street	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Lindelof Avenue (Route 139) at Technology Center Drive/Kay Way	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Central Street at Turnpike Street	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Pleasant Street (Route 139) at Turnpike Street	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Turnpike Street (Route 139) at Page Street	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Turnpike Street (Route 139) at Target Plaza	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Washington Street (Route 138) at Central Street	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Washington Street (Route 138) at Stop & Shop Driveway	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Turnpike Street at IKEA Way	No	No	No	No	No	No

It should be noted that the town has made notable progress towards upgrading the pedestrian amenities in Town Center. Newly installed traffic signals along Washington Street at Porter Street and Pleasant Street have significantly increased pedestrian safety in the Center. The adoption of the overlay district to encourage transit orientated development in the area surrounding the Center will also facilitate improvements to the pedestrian amenities in the area.

Safe Routes to School

The Town of Stoughton is actively involved in the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. SRTS helps to reduce congestion, air pollution, and traffic congestion near schools, while increasing the health, safety, and physical activity of elementary and middle school students.¹⁸ Through participation in the program more students may be encouraged to walk to school, thus reducing the number of parents seeking vehicular access to the school. The program is managed by MassDOT who provide technical assistance and marketing. Implementation of the program is completed through a partnership between the school/community and MassDOT. The program consists of five components, termed the five E's:

1. Education – Completed through classroom visits and presentations to stakeholders. Education Goals:
 - a. Teach children and parents about the broad range of transportation choices.
 - b. Instruct them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills.
 - c. Create awareness among drivers in the vicinity of schools.
 - d. Improve the physical health, environmental health and safety of our children.
2. Encouragement – Promote healthy transportation alternatives through special events and activities. Help create excitement about walking and bicycling by providing schools with information through games, contests, and events.

¹⁷ OCPC 2008 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

¹⁸ <http://www.commute.com/schools/about>

3. Enforcement - Ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings, and proper walking and bicycling behaviors) and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guards. Partnering with local police/safety officers to create a community effort and enhance the safety of students walking and bicycling.
4. Evaluation - Monitoring outcomes and documenting trends through data collection before and after safe routes activities is an important component of Safe Routes to School programs.
5. Engineering – Schools which partner with MassRIDES on education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation activities become eligible for infrastructure projects targeted to enhancing safe access to schools. Selected schools will represent diverse socio-economic communities, in urban/suburban/rural environments statewide, all committed to implementing ongoing Safe Routes to School initiatives. An on-call team of engineers, planners, and pedestrian/bicycle experts assess school environments making recommendations for possible operational and physical improvements to the roads and walkways surrounding schools. Safety enhancements may include speed reduction improvements, pedestrian and bicycle crossings, on- or off-street bicycle facilities providing school access, secure bicycle parking, and sidewalks.

To participate in the SRTS program, a school or community completes the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Partnership Enrollment Form. It is important to note that only partner schools with programs covering the four E's of education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation are allowed to receive funding for the fifth E, engineering improvements. Each year the program provides \$1.3 million to be allocated to fund operational and physical improvements to community infrastructure related to pedestrian facilities within the next year.

Currently the following schools are partner schools in the SRTS program:

- JH Gibbons Elementary School
- Joseph R. Dawe Jr. Elementary School
- South Elementary School
- West Elementary School

Trail Map Bird St. West St. Conservation Land



The Town of Stoughton Conservation Commission administers and maintains the 580 acre Bird Street Conservation Area. Walking trails are provided within this area. These trails connect various fields and notable town features and take between 35 and 90 minutes to walk. Limited parking is provided along Bird Street, West Street and Forest Road. No motorized vehicle access is allowed.

The Stoughton Town Meeting has designated three Stoughton roadways as scenic roads. Scenic road designation requires that any roadway maintenance shall not involve the removal of trees or destruction of stone walks without Planning Board approval. The following roadways are designated as scenic roadways:¹⁹

- Bay Road – portion lying within the bounds of Stoughton from Plain Street to the Easton town line
- Page Street – from the northerly side of the intersection of Turnpike Street to the Canton town line
- West Street – from Highland Street to Central Street

Parking

Parking requirements in the Stoughton zoning bylaw reflect standard conditions for suburban municipalities in Massachusetts. These parking requirements have been developed over the past decades and reflect conditions established for prescribed development desires during these periods. Over time the draw-backs of these parking requirements have become evident in their relationship to suburban sprawl, vehicle miles traveled and environmental consequences. While there are areas where these zoning requirements are applicable, they also need to be amended as some municipalities seek to alter development potential towards more dense environments with a focus on alternative modes of transportation.

The Town of Stoughton has amended its zoning by-laws with the adoption of the Stoughton Center Mixed Use Overlay District. This overlay district reduced the parking requirements for residential uses and provides the town permit granting

19 <http://www.stoughton.org/FV2-0003AE4F/S015731F0-02067298>
STOUGHTON MASTER PLAN

authorities more leeway in determining parking adequacy and location of parking. The by-law introduces shared parking and bicycle parking as part of the district.

In 2006, The Cecil Group provided planning recommendations regarding mixed-use development and parking improvements for Stoughton Center²⁰. An estimated 1,900 total available parking spaces within the area of Stoughton Center (Town Cener) were reported. This included useable off street parking lots and street side parking. The estimated parking demand for the area was determined to be approximately 2,400 spaces, which results in a deficit of 500 parking spaces. It should be noted that the estimated parking demand was conservative, because it was based on the assumption that all the building footprints within the town center study area are at full occupancy. The report examined parking availability for all off street lots within Town Center. It was shown that MBTA parking facilities were 95% to 100% full for most of the work day, emptying out around the PM peak period. The surrounding private business parking lots peaked at around 50% to 80% full throughout the day. Street side parking is available on and around Washington Street with time restrictions ranging from 15 minutes to two hours. Parking restrictions were violated for almost all of the street side parking locations examined, with more violations occurring north and east of Town Center.

Parking was found to be in high demand in Town Center, mainly due to the commuter rail station. A relocation of the train station, as noted previously, is being reviewed. Moving the train station will dramatically alter the location and availability of parking in Town Center. The Cecil Group report recommended using publicly owned locations around the MBTA station, like the post office, to create new parking areas and mixed use, transit oriented development. It was also noted that MBTA parking could be consolidated to incorporate a parking deck or a parking garage adjacent to the existing train station. The study concluded that the existing buildings were high enough to block the garage and/or parking deck from view of Town Center. Adding a garage and/or deck would provide more centralized parking that would be a viable alternative to street side parking. Lowering the amount of on-street parking would increase the amount of right-of-way for Town Center, allowing traffic calming measures or other roadway improvements to be added to reduce congestion at peak hour. Reducing the number of street side vehicles also decreases the amount of strain on drivers and pedestrians when crossing Washington Street as pedestrians would be less concealed behind parked vehicles.

3.6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Form of Government.....	104
Administration and Finance	104
Town Manager	104
Finance.....	104
Assessing	105
Town Clerk	105
Public Safety.....	105
Police Department	105
Fire Department.....	106
Emergency Management.....	109
Board of Health and Building Department.....	109
Land Use and Development	109
Engineering Department.....	109
Building and Zoning Department.....	110
Board of Health.....	110
Zoning Board of Appeals	110
Planning Board.....	111
Conservation Commission	111
Stoughton Redevelopment Authority	111
Public Education	112
School Facilities.....	112
Enrollment	114
Alternative and Adult Education	115
Culture and Recreation	116
Historical Commission.....	116
Recreation Department	116
Public Library	116
Community Television	118
Social Services	119
Council on Aging	119
Youth Commission	120
Stoughton Public Health/Visiting Nurse Association	121
Veteran's Services	121
Public Works.....	121
Solid Waste	122
Water	123
Wastewater	126
Stormwater	128

FIGURES

Figure 1: Stoughton Public School Enrollment, 1994-2012	114
Figure 2: Enrollment by Grade Level as Percentage of Total Enrollment.....	114
Figure 3: Elementary School Enrollment	115
Figure 4: Increase in Demand for Library Services	117
Figure 5: Stoughton Water Network	124
Figure 6: Public Sewer Network	127
Figure 7: Public Stormwater System.....	129

TABLES

Table 1: Call Volume Summary by Situation: 2005 to 2011.....	107
Table 2: Unit Response Times under Four Minutes: 2005 to 2011.....	108
Table 3: School Facilities.....	112
Table 4: Municipal Recycling Rates, 2008.....	122

A public facility is any town property that has been developed for a particular public purpose and provides a base of operations for community services. Together, a town's buildings, land, infrastructure, and equipment make it possible for municipal employees and volunteers to deliver basic services to residents and businesses. Providing quality public services depends both on adequate facilities and adequate personnel to staff them.

Most municipal departments are housed within Town Hall at 10 Pearl Street, a historic 2½-story masonry structure built in 1881. According to a 2010 Facilities Study, several major building systems in Town Hall including the building envelope, mechanical and roofing systems were in fair to poor condition. The study recommended that the town pursue historical grants to repair the exterior envelope and upgrade the interior acoustics.



Town Hall

In addition to Town Hall community facilities include:

Fire Station One
Fire Station Two
Police Station
Youth Commission and Senior Center
Public Works
Animal Control
Library
Lucius Clapp Memorial
Stoughton Waterworks

Stoughton High School
O'Donnell Middle School
Joseph R. Dawe Junior Elementary School
Joseph H. Gibbons School
Helen Hansen Elementary School
South Elementary School
West Elementary School
Edward A. Jones Early Childhood Center

Information on these facilities is provided in subsequent sections.

Stoughton offers governing, planning, health and safety services consistent with that of most towns in Massachusetts. There are 263 full-time municipal staff and 75 part-time staff working in fifteen town departments and approximately 473 full-time and 219 part-time positions in the Stoughton School District. There are also numerous volunteers that sit on various appointed and elected town boards and committees.

Form of Government

Stoughton operates under a Representative Town Meeting form of government. Twenty one representatives are elected to three year terms from each of the eight Stoughton voting precincts. In 1921, Stoughton became the third town in the Commonwealth to adopt a Town Manager Act. Under the Town Charter, Stoughton's executive branch is led by the Board of Selectmen, a five-member elected board with general responsibility for the health, safety, and welfare of the town. The Board of Selectmen shares some executive-branch powers with other elected officials, such as the Town Meeting, Housing Authority, Town Moderator, Redevelopment Authority, and School Committee. All other Boards and Committees are appointed by the Town Manager or Board of Selectman.

Town Meeting representatives meet at least once a year at the Annual Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen submits articles into the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting and Town Meeting representatives vote to accept or deny the articles. Town Meeting representatives also have a number of special committees that are standing and are expected to provide recommendations to the full Town Meeting.

Administration and Finance

TOWN MANAGER

The Town Manager, as the Chief Executive Officer of the Town of Stoughton is responsible for all day to day operations of the town that are under his authority as defined by Town Charter. The Town Manager is appointed by the five-member Board of Selectmen. In addition to the Town Manager, office staff consists of, an executive assistant to the Town Manager, secretary to the Board of Selectmen and an administrative assistant to the Finance Committee and the Board of Health.

FINANCE

The Accounting Department is a three-person team that is primarily responsible for overseeing the financial operation of all departments. The department processes all vendor bills for payment and submits a warrant on a weekly basis for Selectmen approval. The staff reviews and books to the financial system all revenue received by the Town Collector's office.

The Town Collector (Treasurer) is responsible for cash management (tax collections and other bills due to the town, accounting for all available cash, disbursement of town funds, and maintenance of all related records), administration of all town Trust Funds, managing the employee group benefit programs, and debt management.

The Committee on Finance and Taxation (FinCom) is a standing committee of the Town Meeting. FinCom is comprised of 17 volunteers – eight members are elected from Town Member Precincts and nine are selected by the Town Moderator. The FinCom works in conjunction with the Board of Selectman, School Committee, Town Manager, School Superintendent, and other town committees to manage the financial oversight and planning for the community at-large and, in particular, town and school departments.

FinCom has three main areas of responsibility:

1. To recommend an annual fiscal year budget and all articles that require appropriation to Town Meeting;
2. To ensure that the town has a sound fiscal policy, strong financial management and pro-active fiscal planning;
3. To authorize transfers from the Reserve Fund for "extraordinary and unforeseen" expenditures and/or in the last three months of the fiscal year to allow the Selectman to make interdepartmental transfers as outlined by Massachusetts General Law.¹

¹ Stoughton Annual Report, 2011

ASSESSING

The Assessing Department is responsible for the measuring and valuation of real and personal property. The Department is led by the Director of Assessing, and includes three other staff. The department is overseen by a three-member elected Board of Assessors. The department handles data collection and analysis for state-required triennial certification and revaluations of property, updates records when building permits are issued, and makes an attempt to visit every parcel of real estate and business property. In addition, the staff assists residents with processing personal exemptions, property abatements, and motor vehicle excise payments. The Assessor coordinates with the Engineering Department to maintain and update an on-line property record database that is searchable by the public.

TOWN CLERK

The Town Clerk, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, operates by powers delegated through both state law and the Town Charter. With general responsibility as the official keeper of record, the Town Clerk organizes and oversees the election process, conducts the annual town census, records and certifies all official actions of the town, records and preserves vital statistics, administers the oath of offices, issues various licenses, certifications, and permits, and submits bylaws adopted by Town Meeting to the Attorney General for approval. The Town Clerk is supported by a staff of three.

Public Safety

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Stoughton Police Department, led by a Chief appointed by the Board of Selectmen, is responsible for promoting and maintaining public safety and security for town citizens and businesses and their property as prescribed by federal, state, and local laws. The Police Department works a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week shift. The department responded to 23,189 calls for service in 2011, made 1,090 arrests, and issued 2,430 citations. These represent a downward trend from 2010 of 1.7 % in calls, to over 6% in arrests and citations.²

Facility and Fleet

The Stoughton Police Department is located at 26 Rose Street, in Town Center. The station, built in 1999, includes administrative offices, a roll call room, a community room, an evidence room, locker rooms, a drive in sally port and ten holding cells. Though the station is just over a decade old it has a number of structural and program issues. Ongoing heating and air conditioning issues have led to water damage and unacceptable cell conditions during cold weather resulting in the failure of State audits, and cause overall energy inefficiency. The lack of office space is also a concern to the department.

The department's vehicle fleet includes about 21 vehicles including patrol cars, administrative and undercover vehicles, motorcycles, all terrain vehicles (ATV) and bicycles. The department does not staff a mechanic, but some vehicle maintenance is provided by the Department of Public Works.

Personnel

The Stoughton Police Department is staffed by 56 employees including 49 uniformed officers and seven civil employees including, custodians and dispatchers. The department is in the process of adding to their staff of officers and have requested additional dispatch personnel as well.

Services

The Stoughton Police Department maintains an active presence in the community through a variety of programs and services. Through these community policing initiatives the department's chief and officers:

- Maintain a liaison officer with the Council on Aging
- Maintain a dedicated School Resource Officer (SRO)
- Run a year round Junior Police Program known as the Explorers that includes a ten week academy
- Inspect Child Safety Seats every two weeks by appointment

² Stoughton Town Report, 2011

- Are founding members of Organizing Against Substances in Stoughton (OASIS)
- Provide informational seminars on a range of topics from Risk Assessment, Gang Culture, What parents should know about drug abuse, Internet Safety, Bullying, Alcohol Abuse, and Social Host Liability
- Provide Community Service Hours for local youth
- Maintain a fifteen-officer mountain bike unit for resident complaints in those hard to reach areas
- Provide child fingerprinting at annual school fairs
- Maintain a seven-member Honor Guard for town ceremonies and funerals of law enforcement or their families
- Run an annual raffle benefitting school PTSOs (for elementary school students to be taken to school by the Chief of Police)
- Join with the Stoughton Fire Department in an annual charity hockey game to raise money for Stoughton Youth Hockey

In addition, the department has put on safety fairs, held open houses at the Police Headquarters, organized disaster relief drives for other parts of the country, taken local youth on weekly mountain bike rides with bikes provided free of charge, and maintained an after school open gym program giving children somewhere to go between the crucial hours of 3 and 5 pm.

Accreditation

The Stoughton Police Department is focused on gaining State Accreditation a recognition that only 45 departments in the state have obtained to date. The accreditation program is a voluntary, self-initiated evaluation process by which police agencies voluntarily strive to meet and maintain standards established by the profession. These standards include but are not limited to compliance in the following areas: Use of Force, Authority and Jurisdiction, Recruitment, Selection and Promotion of Personnel, Training, Discipline and Internal Affairs, Patrol and Criminal Investigations, Victim / Witness Assistance, Traffic Operations, Prisoner Transportation and Holding Facilities, Records and Communications, Collection and Preservation of Evidence and Property and Evidence Control.³ The process has required the Department to document its significant practices, rules, procedures and facilities that meet the standards and change what does not comply. The Department recently received certification status putting the Department one step closer to its accreditation goal.

Animal Control

Animal Control is a division of the Police Department, but operates out of the Animal Control Facility at 499 West Street. The facility includes a limited animal holding area and an office. Department responsibilities are handled by the town's single Animal Control Officer who helps residents deal with problems caused by animals, responds to complaints and concerns of the public with regard to animal disturbances, enforces town bylaws and state statutes relating to animal control, patrols the streets for stray or injured animals (domestic or wildlife), provides first aid and rescue operations for injured animals, responds to requests for emergency animal assistance, and annually inspects farms with animals.

The Animal Control Officer estimates a sixty percent increase in wildlife calls from the past year and states he receives an average of three calls a day primarily reporting sightings of fox and coyote.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Stoughton Fire Department provides fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to the residents and visitors of Stoughton. It is also responsible for the permitting, inspection and plan review of all new construction, home sales and businesses in the town. The Department also conducts quarterly fire inspections for all health care and educational facilities, monitors all blasting operations within the town's boundaries and oversees the school fire education program. The Stoughton Fire Department has mutual aid commitments to other communities in the surrounding area as well as throughout Massachusetts under the Statewide Fire Mobilization Plan. The Department responded to 5,491 calls for assistance in 2011, including 25 building fires. Of those calls, 3,124 (57%) were responded to by ambulance resulting in the transport of 2,200 patients.⁴

³ Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/msp/administrative-services.html> September, 2012

⁴ Fire Chief Mark Dolloff, Personal Interview July 31, 2012

The types of situations the Department responds to is broken out in the table below. Situations listed separately include building fires followed by situations with the greatest number of calls.

Table 1: Call Volume Summary by Situation: 2005 to 2011⁵

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Total Calls	5,491	5,299	5,177	5,329	5,246	5,166	5,232
Building fires	25	26	22	30	31	15	16
EMS call, excluding vehicle accident	2656	2727	2637	2602	2455	2483	2459
Motor vehicle accident with no injuries	324	254	262	237	271	220	193
Alarm system sounded, no fire, unintentional	262	214	216	212	198	182	94
Cooking fire, contained to container	210	209	228	197	195	208	180
Motor vehicle accident with injuries	201	200	212	174	203	232	296
Dispatched and cancelled en route	153	156	148	170	174	145	226
Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	115	120	112	105	99	102	75
Lockout	84	107	113	131	141	143	162
All others	1461	1286	1227	1471	1479	1436	1531
Total dollar loss	\$342,500	\$1,835,000	\$1,405,000	\$1,002,000	\$603,050	\$32,500	\$2,259,000

Total dollar loss from fire during the same period ranged from a low of \$325,000 in 2006 to a high of \$2,259,000 in 2005.

Stoughton Fire Department provides an exceptional level Emergency Medical Service (EMS) on Advanced Life Support (ALS), a program it has strived to upgrade. It also maintains excellent response times, with an average rate of under four minutes per call.

The following chart indicates the number of vehicles with response times under four minutes based on all fire and EMS vehicles from all sources responding to calls within Stoughton from 2005 to 20011. Responding units also come from the neighboring towns of Canton, Avon Easton, Randolph, Sharon and Brockton as needed.

Table 2: Number of Units with Response Times under Four Minutes: 2005 to 2011⁶

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Total responding units within the year	23	19	25	28	22	19	17
Units with average response times under four minutes	10	12	13	10	14	12	14

Facility and Fleet

The Stoughton Fire Department operates out of two facilities: Station One at 30 Freeman Street built in 1927 and Station Two at 1550 Central Street built in 2001. Station One was last updated in the 1960's and has major structural and programmatic deficiencies. The six-bay station includes living quarters, the Department's dispatch center and a mechanic's bay used for vehicle repair. The Department's ambulances as well as engines and ladder trucks are housed at this facility. A facilities study completed in 2010 found several major systems at this site to be in fair to poor condition and recommends the town undertake a feasibility study to evaluate the investment value of the Freeman Street facility to determine if further investment is appropriate. Deficiencies as identified by Chief Dolloff include failing vehicle bay drainage systems, cracked bay floors, inadequate bay size, lack of ADA compliance, no separate facilities for women, out of code kitchen, antiquated bathrooms, and a total lack of energy efficiency due to lack of insulation and other building envelope deficiencies, aged doors and windows, and window unit air conditioners.

Chief Dollof is looking forward to a feasibility study for Station One that will assess both the facility and its location. The Department feels strongly that moving the station out of its present location in Town Center would improve fleet management and efficiency as well as decrease traffic congestion which is often exacerbated by changes made to traffic signals when responding vehicles exit and enter the station.

Station Two was built in 2001, was temporarily closed due to mold issues, and was repaired and reopened in 2008. The facility includes four bays, administrative offices and living quarters. Administrative offices are open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. The 2010 facilities study made no recommendations for the Central Street facility.

**Station Two**

The Department is served by a fleet of vehicles including:

- 4 engines (including two spares)
- 2 ladder trucks (including one spare)
- 1 brush truck
- 3 ambulances
- 5 day staff vehicles
- 2 service vehicles used by the Department mechanic
- 1 fire alarm truck
- 1 rescue boat

Personnel

The Stoughton Fire Department is staffed by the following full time personnel:

- 44 fire fighters – including twelve officers
- 5 administrative officers (day staff)
- 1 office administrative assistance
- 1 mechanic
- 4 civilian dispatch officers

In addition to full time personnel, the Department employs one per diem dispatch officer.

⁶ Stoughton Fire Department , Average Response Time, August 2012

Services

The Stoughton Fire Department provides a number of services in addition to fire suppression, and advanced life support medical services. The Department also focuses on fire prevention, public education, and code enforcement, and participates in community initiatives including community celebrations and school fund raising events.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Town of Stoughton has in place an Emergency Management Team, lead by Fire Chief Dollof who's responsibility it is to develop, coordinate and lead the town's Emergency Management Program, enabling effective preparation for, and efficient response to, emergencies and disasters in order to save lives, reduce human suffering and reduce property loss. The program involves multiple town departments including fire, police, public works, public health and board of health, as well as coordination with state (MEMA)⁷ and federal (FEMA)⁸ emergency aid agencies. The most prevalent emergencies Stoughton's Emergency Management Team responds to are weather and power related. The Team also plans vaccine dispensing sites in the event of a possible epidemic.

BOARD OF HEALTH AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Although not typically thought of as having a role in public safety, building inspection and code enforcement services protect the health, safety, and welfare of a community. In Stoughton, the Building Department provides building, electrical, plumbing, and gas inspectional services as well as enforcement of certain aspects of the town's zoning bylaws, and the state building code. The Board of Health, staffed by the Health Agent, provides oversight for public safety, health emergency preparedness, and enforcement of health and sanitation laws. See the Land Use and Development section below for more information on these departments.

Land Use and Development

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The Engineering Department in Stoughton houses the Health Agent, GIS services, Conservation, and Planning in addition to the Town Engineer and support staff. The Department maintains many of the plan and map related records for the town used by different town departments as well as for review by the public including records of water and sewer service, on site septic systems, and development plans. The Department assists the Conservation Commission and Planning Board with plan review, assists in compliance with state stormwater regulations, and provides guidance on drainage matters and other site issues. The Department conducts periodic inspections of approved development projects to assure compliance with the approved plans.

The Department's GIS Coordinator is responsible for maintaining the Geographic Information System for the town and also responds to mapping requests from all town departments.

The Engineering Department provides support services to other departments and boards including the Assessor's Department, Public Works, Town Manager, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, and Planning Board. The Department is responsible for keeping the Assessor's Maps up to date, preparing easement plans for town utility easements, and preparing construction plans, specifications and documents for town construction projects. The office also keeps up to date the town's utility plans and does field surveys to determine locations of all water and sewer services for every building in town. The Department serves as the Town's Sewer Department (inspecting and issuing sewer connection permits), and inspects water connections for the Water Department.

The Town Engineer directs the Department, which includes an assistant Town Engineer and Junior Engineer, the Town Planner (who also staffs the Planning Board), the Health Agent (who also staffs the Board of Health), the GIS Coordinator,

⁷ Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency with primary responsibility for ensuring the state's resilience to disasters.

⁸ Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency with primary responsibility for ensuring the state's resilience to disasters.

the Environmental Affairs Officer (who also staffs the Conservation Commission), and two support staff.

BUILDING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

The Building Department oversees the construction, alteration, repair and demolition of structures throughout the town. The Department serves as the zoning enforcement office for bylaws and regulations related to zoning, building, plumbing, gas-fitting, electrical, fire safety and demolition. The Department handles inspections and processes building permits for all new construction and additions. In addition, the Department processes gas, plumbing, and electrical permits. The Building Commissioner directs the department, which also includes two administrative staff and two inspectors.

BOARD OF HEALTH

The Board of Health is a five-member board appointed by the Town Manager it is staffed by the Health Agent / Town Sanitarian. Its activities include regulatory oversight for public safety, health emergency preparedness, and enforcement of health and sanitation laws. The Board oversees issuance of permits and licenses for certain establishments / business operations including:

- Food services
- Tobacco product sales
- Certain food manufacturing
- Tanning facilities
- Body art
- Mobile home parks
- Lodging houses
- Swimming pools
- Bathing beaches
- Recreational day camps for youth
- Trash haulers / transporters

In addition, the Board oversees inspections for on-site sewage disposal systems and Title 5 percolation test witnessing. The Board is also responsible for enforcing all aspects of the housing code and may conduct inspections upon its own initiative or upon a public request. The Board investigates public health nuisance issues including trash, vermin, and odors and takes enforcement action to abate these nuisances.⁹

Ongoing initiatives of the Board of Health that are done in collaboration with other town boards and departments and regional and state agencies include the Septic Betterment Loan Program for homeowners, Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day, mosquito control, the Emergency Preparedness and Medical Reserve Corps. The Board also regularly updates its website to provide pertinent public health alerts and information.¹⁰

The Board of Health receives a high number of requests and inquiries from the public. A single staff person (the Health Agent / Town Sanitarian) responds to these and maintains an intake log for all requests. Some administrative support is provided by the Engineering Department staff. The Health Agent coordinates where possible with the Building Department inspections as well as with Public Safety personnel, but there is always opportunity for improvement in this area. More recently, some public safety concerns have arisen related to abandoned homes and derelict buildings and the Board of Health is interested in working with other town departments to address these.¹¹

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

The Zoning Board of Appeals hears petitions for variances, special permits, and persons appealing the decisions of the Building Commissioner or Planning Board. The ZBA is also responsible for making determinations on Comprehensive

9 Stoughton Annual Report, 2011

10 *Ibid*

11 Interview with Sandra Gabriel, Health Agent, August 2012

Permit applications. The Board of Appeals has five regular members and five alternate members appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

PLANNING BOARD

The five-member elected Stoughton Planning Board is responsible for numerous matters related to community planning, development, and land use. The Board addresses short-term planning needs through administration of the zoning bylaw and subdivision control law. The Board reviews and approves preliminary and definitive subdivision plans and approval not required plans (ANR). It also has review authority of site plans on commercial and industrial developments. The Board conducts required public hearings for scenic roads. The Planning Board also makes recommendations for long-term land use planning policies and strategies including land use zoning changes, growth and development management, and attracting commercial and industrial development. The Board interacts with other town boards and committees to address water supply demand, affordable housing, transportation, open space, and environmental impacts. The Board is staffed by the Town Planner and is also supported by other staff in the Engineering Department.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Stoughton Conservation Commission is the local environment agency responsible for protecting the town's natural resources, most specifically water resources. The Commission consists of seven appointed members and is staffed by a Conservation Agent who provides guidance to filing applicants and administrative support to the Commission.

The Commissions' authority comes from several sources: the Conservation Commission Act (MGL Chapter 40 section 8C) for open space protection; the Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131 section 40) for protecting wetlands and waterways, and the home rule provisions of the state constitution for non-zoning wetlands bylaws. Thus the Commission serves the community in a regulatory as well as a conservation capacity.

The Commission's responsibilities for regulating work in protected resource areas includes preservation of the Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (the flood plain), protection of vernal resource areas, implementation of Massachusetts Stormwater Management regulations on regulated projects, prevention of pollution in wetlands, and prevention of the destruction of wetland resources.

The Conservation Commission is the managing agency for approximately 1,300 acres of conservation land, more fully described in Section entitled Open Space and Recreation.

STOUGHTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Stoughton Redevelopment Authority was established in the 1960s, following the completion of an urban renewal plan for the downtown. For the past twenty years, the Redevelopment Authority has been focusing efforts on redevelopment of the Technology Drive area. It acquired all of the land in this area and then sold it off over time to individual developers. Now that Technology Drive is largely built-out, the Authority has focused on redevelopment opportunities in North Stoughton as well as in Town Center. The Redevelopment Authority has four elected members and one member appointed by the state. It has some remaining funding from the sale of properties, but has no paid staff. Its mission, recently rewritten, is as follows:

The Stoughton Redevelopment Authority is dedicated to the improvement of the Town's economic base through redevelopment of its physical resources including commercial and retail facilities, infrastructure, and underutilized land areas.¹²



Pond View from West Street

Public Education

The Stoughton public school system currently serves 3,819 K-12 students in addition to its extended education programs. The core curriculum is complemented by departments in business / technology, fine arts, music, foreign languages, and health and physical education as well as a strong athletic program. The school system is governed by an elected School Committee and administered through the Superintendent's office that is located at the High School on Pearl Street. The School Committee establishes educational goals and policies, prepares the school system budget, and oversees system-wide performance standards and professional development in conjunction with the Superintendent. In the 2011 school year, there were approximately 473 full-time and 219 part-time positions in the Stoughton School District.¹³

In an economic climate where many school districts have been forced to close and consolidate schools, Stoughton continues to retain its neighborhood schools and its average class size (at 17.8) remains below the state-wide average (19.2). Its facilities are aging, but good facility maintenance has enabled many of the buildings to last beyond their normal life span. Despite aging facilities, the school system is technologically sophisticated and is collaborating with other municipal staff to improve technology capabilities town-wide.

The school district reports that approximately 17 different languages are spoken by its student population, about 12% of students first spoke a language other than English, and over 5% have limited English proficiency. About 29% of the student population is from low-income households and over 28% receive free or reduced fee school lunch.

Despite lower than average per pupil expenditures, Stoughton's students continue to score higher than the state average on standardized tests and have access to a well-rounded academic program. The district offers one of the few free full-day kindergarten programs in the state and has a strong early childhood program. The high school dropout rate is just over 1% below the state-wide average of just under 3%. The school system appears to attract highly qualified educators. It has received high scores from its teachers and 99.7% of the core academic classes are taught by teachers who are highly qualified.¹⁴

SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Town of Stoughton currently operates five elementary schools, a middle school, a high school, and an early childhood education center. All of these facilities are approximately two miles from Stoughton Center (Town Center).

Table 3: School Facilities¹⁵

Name	Location	Grades	Opened	Last Renovation	Square Footage
Edwin A. Jones Early Childhood Center	137 Walnut St	PK	1930	1953	43,200
Joseph R. Dawe Junior Elementary School	131 Pine St	K-5	1969	2006	67,600
Joseph H. Gibbons Elementary School	235 Morton St	K-5	1971	2007	67,600
Helen Hansen Elementary School	1800 Central St	K-5	1962	2007	36,821
South Elementary School	171 Ash St	K-5	1962	1967	38,000
West Elementary School	1322 Central St	K-5	1951	2005	48,662
O'Donnell Middle School	211 Cushing St	6-8	1960	2001	144,400
Stoughton High School	232 Pearl St	9-12	1923	1964	195,000

In 2010 a town-wide Facility Master Plan (FMP) was completed, detailing repair costs for all town-owned buildings including

13 Stoughton School District administrative office, August 2012

14 Tell Mass survey 2012 and MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School / District Profiles

15 MSBA

the schools.¹⁶ Subsequently, the School Committee formed a Facilities Committee on School Buildings to work with the School Supervisor of Support Services to assess and prioritize school building repairs. The two schools identified as highest priority were the South Elementary and the High School. In 2011, the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC), which accredits all public high schools, placed the high school on “Warning Status”, which means the District will lose its accreditation if it does not correct the deficiencies in its facilities.

In early 2012, Statements of Interest were submitted to the MSBA for both schools, which is the required first step for becoming eligible for state funding for school repairs. The 2012 Town Meeting voted to fund a Feasibility Study which is the next required step in the MSBA application process. A Feasibility Study Committee will oversee this process which will:

- identify educational program needs;
- determine if existing facilities meet those needs, and;
- propose design alternatives to correct deficiencies.

The study will include conceptual site and building plans and options considered may include renovation, addition, and new construction. Schematic designs will be prepared for the preferred option.



Edwin A. Jones Early Childhood Center

Although repairs are required to several major systems including mechanical and roofing systems, the 2010 FMP recommendation was to extend the longevity of the building by continuing regularly scheduled maintenance and repairs.



Joseph R. Dawe Junior Elementary School

Several major systems including HVAC and window systems were observed to be in fair to poor condition. As the school is a candidate for the MSBA Repairs program, the 2010 FMP recommended pursuing state funding prior to significant town investment.

Joseph H. Gibbons Elementary School

Several major systems including HVAC and window systems were observed to be in fair to poor condition. As the school is a candidate for the MSBA Repairs program, the 2010 FMP recommended pursuing state funding prior to significant town investment.



Helen Hansen Elementary School

Although repairs are required to several major systems including mechanical and roofing systems, the 2010 FMP recommendation was to extend the longevity of the building by continuing regularly scheduled maintenance and repairs.

South Elementary School

Several major building systems including the exterior building envelope, mechanical and roofing systems were observed to be in fair to poor condition. The 2010 FMP recommendation was to commission a comprehensive feasibility study to evaluate the full range of alternatives including new construction.



West Elementary School

Although repairs are required to several major systems including the exterior building envelope and mechanical systems, the 2010 FMP recommendation was to extend the longevity of the building by continuing regularly scheduled maintenance and repairs.

O'Donnell Middle School

The mechanical system was observed to be in fair to poor condition. As the school is a candidate for the MSBA Repairs program, the 2010 FMP recommended pursuing state funding prior to significant town investment.

Stoughton High School

Several major building systems including the exterior building envelope, mechanical and roofing systems were reported to be in fair to poor condition. In addition to applying for MSBA funding to address the major system issues, the 2010 FMP recommended performing minimum urgent repairs that may not be eligible for state funding.

ENROLLMENT

Total public school enrollment in Stoughton has declined by about 9% since reaching just over 4,100 in 2000. Enrollment by grade levels has remained fairly steady with the greatest change in the K-5 enrollment which has fallen by 5%.

Figure 1: Stoughton Public School Enrollment, 1994-2012¹⁷

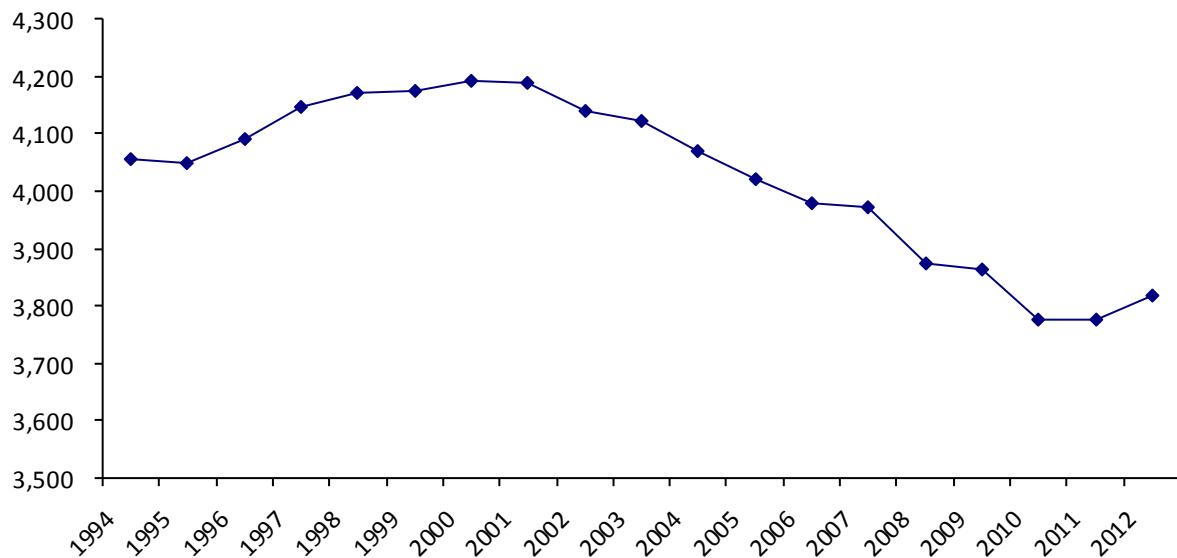
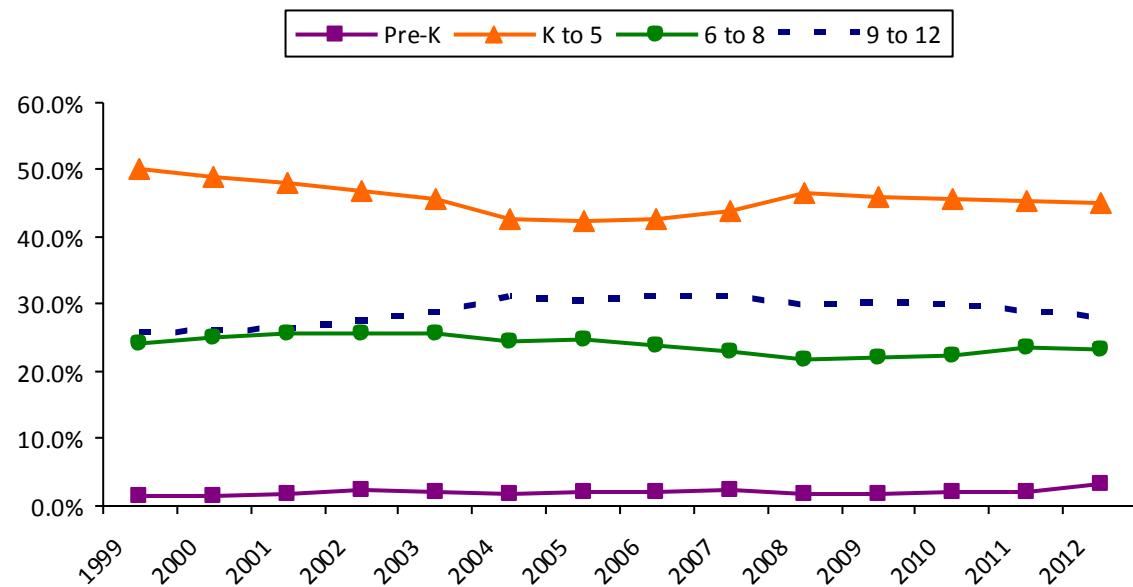


Figure 2: Enrollment by Grade Level as Percentage of Total Enrollment¹⁸



17

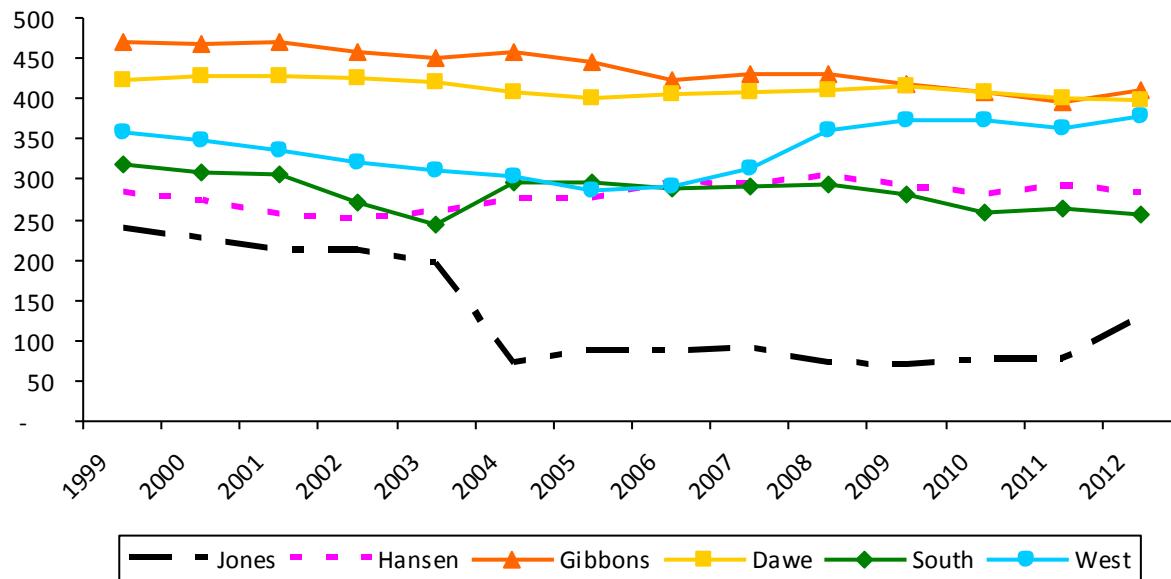
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School / District Profiles

18

Ibid

The following figure shows enrollment trends since 1999 in each of Stoughton's elementary schools. In the 2003-2004 school year, the Jones school became the Early Childhood Center, concentrating on Pre-K exclusively. Prior to that time, Pre-K students were attending the Dawe elementary school. West has seen the largest percentage growth over the past decade at 5.6% and South has seen the largest percentage decrease in enrollment at 19.4% although the Middle School had the largest actual numbers decrease (-111).

Figure 3: Elementary School Enrollment¹⁹



ALTERNATIVE AND ADULT EDUCATION

The Stoughton Academy was established in 1995 and is run by Stoughton Public Schools to offer an adult diploma program for residents of Stoughton and neighboring communities. All students must complete twelve course requirements, as well as pass the MCAS tests in the areas of Math, English Language Arts, and Biology in order to receive a High School diploma. The program is fee-based.

Recently the Stoughton Academy has undertaken a partnership with Quincy College to offer college-level courses as well.

The Stoughton Evening School offers fee-based community enrichment programs for adults. Offerings include fitness and hobby classes and vary based on instructor availability and community interest.

The Stoughton Adult Basic Education Program (ABE) is a collaborative partnership among Massasoit Community College, Stoughton Public Schools, and the town, and is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Education. The Stoughton ABE assists adults to gain English proficiency. All classes are offered free of charge to residents with limited English proficiency and topics include reading, writing, grammar, American culture, conversation, pronunciation, and computers.

19 *Ibid*

Culture and Recreation

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Stoughton Historic Commission is a five-member body appointed by the Board of Selectmen and tasked with promoting the town's sense of history and preserving the town's historic and cultural resources. The commission is currently focused on refilling its vacant seats so it can play a more active role in historic preservation initiatives in Stoughton. More information on the Historical Commission can be found in the section titled Natural and Cultural Resources.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Stoughton Recreation Department is responsible for facilitating recreation programs and community service programs-round employees and ten to thirty seasonal employees as needed to staff programs. More information on the Recreation Department can be found in the section titled Open Space and Recreation.



Community Playground

PUBLIC LIBRARY

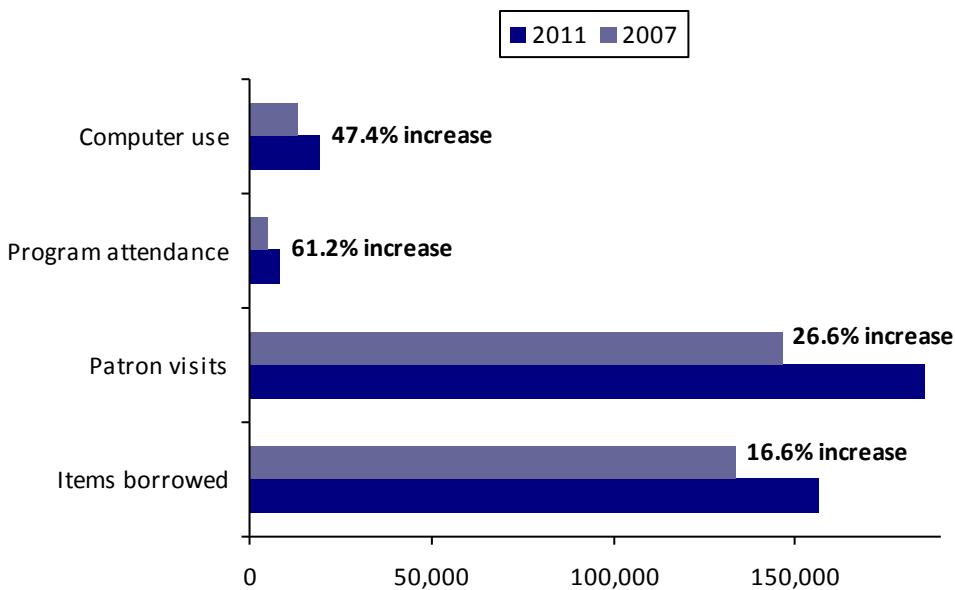
The Stoughton Public Library is part of the Old Colony Library Network, a consortium of 28 libraries that share materials and resources. The library is open 64 hours per week, 6 days per week. The Library Board of Trustees appointed by the Board of Selectmen oversees library staff and operations, establishes policy, and ensures implementation of the library's long-range plan.

Facility

The library is located on Park Street across from the Veterans Memorial Park. The library opened in 1874 at Morton Square and moved to the Lucius Clapp Building (current home of the Stoughton Historical Society) in 1904.²⁰ It has been at its current location since 1969. The library is built in contemporary style with 22,000 sq. ft. on two floors and an open format on the interior. It is centrally located near the Town Center and within walking distance of public transportation and several public schools.

The library is heavily used by patrons from the town and the region, and has seen a steady increase in demand as the following figure illustrates.

Figure 4: Increase in Demand for Library Services²¹



Due to the aging facility and increased demand for services, the library has embarked on a building expansion project. Funds for preliminary designs as well as for renovations were approved by Town Meeting in FY2011. The library is seeking additional funding from a Massachusetts Public Library Construction Grant. The goals of the expansion project are to:

- Expand the capacity;
- Improve energy efficiency;
- Ensure that the public building is fully accessible to all.²²
-

The project design also seeks to accomplish a number of objectives, working within the constraints of the existing location:

- Preserve or increase existing parking spaces;
- Provide full handicap accessibility;
- Offer a variety of meeting spaces for Library and public use;
- Expand Children's Area to offer enclosed craft and story hour space;
- Avoid need for addition of staff to manage safely.²³

Library Services

The library has a collection of over 100,000 items as well as reference sources. The location provides computers for internet access as well as individual reading and study spaces.

The library offers a wide variety of programs for all ages and has a large program space that is well-used on its second floor. The library's outreach and community services include a specialized delivery to homebound patrons, a student homework center, and an adult literacy program.²⁴

In collaboration with the Stoughton School Department, the library offers a Monday Night Homework Center providing homework assistance for children in grades 6 to 10. It is staffed by volunteer tutors from the High School Honor Society as well as two teachers.²⁵

21 Town Annual Report, 2011

22 Feasibility and Design Study Report, 2011

23 *Ibid*

24 Stoughton Annual Report, 2011

25 *Ibid*



Proposed Library Conceptual Design Model (from Feasibility & Design Study Report Presentation, 2011)

The Adult Literacy program has been in operation for 13 years and offers free tutor training and in-service workshops to match adult student learners with volunteer tutors. As of 2011, there were 60 matched tutor/student pairs, with 100 on the waiting list. The students are a mix of ethnicities and education levels who are seeking to attain fluency in reading, writing, and speaking English. The program also provides computer classes for English learners and American History classes. The Stoughton Library also oversees the Sharon Public Library Literacy Program, which has enabled the program to serve more students. The program relies on state grants and town financial support.²⁶

Community Television

Stoughton Media Access Corporation (SMAC), a 501(c)(3) non profit member based organization was established in 2009 to provide Stoughton residents greater access to municipal governance and opportunities to create locally controlled programming. Principle services provided by most local community access stations, including SMAC include recording and broadcasting local board and committee meetings, such as Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance, Town Meeting, and other meetings as capacity allows. SMAC is overseen by a five-member Board of Directors, managed by an Executive Director and staffed with a Program Director and a part time production access coordinator. In addition about sixty member volunteers record, edit, produce and broadcast a variety of programs.

SMAC is funded to date by revenues received from local cable providers Verizon and Comcast based on a percent of revenues the providers receive from local resident cable contracts. Both cable providers are under multi-year contracts, assuring a funding source for over ten years. SMAC is also looking in the future to secure funding from sponsorships and grants.

SMAC recently completed construction of a state-of-the-art access facility at 421 Page Street which includes two production studios, a control room, three editing suites, a broadcast room, a Board Room, staff offices, a duplication room, green room, lobby, kitchenette and rest rooms.

SMAC has developed programming that goes far beyond broadcasts of live and recorded board and committee meetings. SMAC covers community events and celebrations such as parades and sporting events. It also gives the residents of

²⁶ *Ibid*

Stoughton the ability to create and produce their own public, government and educational access programs. Twelve locally produced shows are currently airing ranging from comedy, to movie review, to golf lessons and community information programming (Community Forum). SMAC also offers training classes in all areas of television production.

SMAC has a successful partnership with the high school helping oversee educational programming, and offering training courses and internships. It has also recently contributed \$68,000 in improvements to the schools' education access program including three new studio cameras and an undated playback system.

SMAC has also contributed \$65,000 in updates to Town Hall including robotic cameras to allow better coverage of Board and Committee meetings.

Social Services

COUNCIL ON AGING

The Stoughton Council on Aging (COA) serves seniors aged 60 and over as well as residents of any age with a disability. The COA is overseen by a nine-member Board of Directors appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The COA and Youth Commission Director, a licensed Social Worker, is shared by the Youth Commission and there are approximately fourteen (14) other full and part-time staff that support the COA's activities. The activities and programs of the COA are supported by town funds as well as a number of grants.

The Council's primary responsibilities are to:

- Identify the needs of the community's senior population and resources available to meet those needs;
- Design, promote, and implement needed services and programs to coordinate with existing services;
- Educate the community at large about the needs of its senior citizens.²⁷

Council on Aging / Youth Commission Center

The Senior / Youth Commission Center is a 6,000 square foot facility located at 110 Rockland Street. It was constructed in 2000 and includes office space, food service and dining areas, small and large group meeting areas, and informal gathering spaces.²⁸ There is plenty of parking available on-site. There is interest in potentially expanding the center, which is in high demand and frequently used by community groups. However, the environmental constraints of the existing property limit expansion opportunities. The COA / Youth Commission has considered acquiring an abutting property that is currently for sale, although that property also has environmental restrictions.²⁹

Programs / Outreach Activities

The COA serves its seniors and citizens with disabilities by providing a variety of services and hosting a number of programs and activities. The COA vans offer rides for a small fee to those unable to drive themselves to medical programs, the COA's day programs, errands and shopping. The transportation service area includes the abutting towns of Avon, Brockton, Canton, Easton, Randolph, and Sharon. The COA operates five vans and, in 2011, served approximately 380 individuals and provided over 14,300 one-way trips.³⁰

In cooperation with Old Colony Elder Services, the COA serves daily hot meals at the Center and also delivers meals to ailing and homebound individuals. Between 60 and 80 meals are served daily.³¹

Two COA outreach workers connect seniors with needed services including fuel assistance, welfare, health information, support for families, referrals to nursing homes, day programs, and assessments. In addition, a SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elderly) Counselor helps seniors navigate the often complicated health insurance system. According

27 *Ibid*

28 Facilities Master Plan, 2010

29 Interview with Karen Hall, July 2012

30 Stoughton Annual Report, 2011

31 *Ibid*

to the COA Director, one of the primary areas of need in Stoughton is helping seniors who wish to continue to live independently in their own homes. Many of the services offered by the COA enable seniors on a limited income with limited mobility to continue to function with a high degree of independence.³²

Other programs offered by the COA include exercise classes, social events, educational workshops and classes, and excursions and outings to area attractions. The COA partners with other municipal and regional agencies to provide many of these programs, including the Stoughton Visiting Nurses Association and Police and Fire. Over 19,000 participants signed into these programs in 2011.³³

YOUTH COMMISSION

Since 1974, the Stoughton Youth Commission (SYC) is one of only 25 or so similar organizations in Massachusetts. Its purpose is broad -- to provide support and outreach to Stoughton's youth and their families. Today their programs focus on empowerment and engagement and building a community-wide system of support that promotes healthy living and mutual respect.

The SYC shares a director with the Council on Aging and is overseen by an appointed seven-person board of directors. In addition to the director, the SYC has a staff of four that carry out its outreach and specialized programs.

Programs / Services

The SYC provides free professional mental health counseling services for youth and families. In 2011, counseling was provided to 79 clients.³⁴

The Organizing Against Substances in Stoughton (OASIS), focuses on substance abuse prevention and, since 2004, has received a series of grants to fund a full-time Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator, a part-time bilingual Outreach Coordinator, as well as related activities. Like many of the SYC programs, the OASIS team works in collaboration with the Stoughton School Department and Police and Fire Departments to implement substance abuse prevention measures in the community.³⁵

To support and strengthen families of youth in the community, the SYC provides a skill-building class to improve family communication, stress management, and family functioning. A collaboration of the Stoughton School Department, the YMCA, and the SYC operates a Parent Information and Wellness Center at the Jones Early Childhood Center.³⁶

The Preteen Esteem Group is offered for 5th grade girls to aid in the transition from grade school to middle school and is one of the SYC's longest running programs. Other groups include Conflict Resolution, Babysitter Training, and PASS (Positive Action Stops Substances) for youth that have been referred to treatment for substance abuse.³⁷

The Youth Advisory Council is a leadership group for high school students (9th through 12th grade). The group focuses on fostering community engagement and volunteerism and supports different community projects throughout the year including the annual Pride of Stoughton Day which organizes clean ups at several public sites in the town.

Getting youth outdoors and active and promoting healthy living is another focus area of the SYC. The Operation Horizons program provides regular weekly field trips during the summer months to area attractions. The program is funded largely through donations and business sponsorship, although there is a nominal participation fee.³⁸ The SYC is currently working on developing a "Story Book Trail" at the conservation land known as the Libby property behind the Bradley Lessa Memorial Playground.

32 Interview with Karen Hall, July 2012

33 Stoughton Annual Report, 2011

34 *Ibid*

35 Stoughton Youth Commission OASIS brochure

36 Stoughton Youth Commission brochure

37 Stoughton Annual Report, 2011

38 *Ibid*

The focus on community engagement is also supported by the Community Garden Project. This intergenerational effort uses a garden plot located behind the COA / SYC Center to grow organic vegetables. Workshops are also provided on organic growing techniques.³⁹

STOUGHTON PUBLIC HEALTH / VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION

Stoughton Public Health Association provides health services to individuals within the town and neighboring communities and has been operating for over 100 years. The staff is trained and certified for nursing, physical, speech and occupational therapy, home health aide, and medial social work. The services include screening, clinics, and immunization shots as well as care for homebound individuals. Many of the VNA services are Medicare / Medicaid eligible and are also supported through town funding. In 2011, the VNA provided the following types of home visits to 215 patients:

- 2,655 skilled nursing
- 997 physical therapy
- 433 occupational therapy
- 106 speech therapy
- 9 medical social work
- 1,978 home health aid

The VNA has a director and six (6) full-time staff as well as part-time staff that provide various services.

VETERAN'S SERVICES

Stoughton's Veteran's Services department provides aid and benefit assistance to veterans and their families. The Department has one full-time Veteran's Agent as well as a part-time clerical position. It is funded through state and federal reimbursements as well as town funding.

The 2011 Town Census reported 1,392 resident veterans, and the Veteran's Services department estimates that 15% to 20% of Stoughton's population includes veterans, their dependents and widowed spouses. The benefits available to veterans include federal, state, and local sources. A primary state source for veteran benefits in Stoughton is the MGL Chapter 115 program. Seventy-five percent of the program benefits is reimbursed to the town by the state. This program has been expanding steadily over the past few years and provides much needed assistance to veterans at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.⁴⁰ Veteran's Services advocates on behalf of veterans and their families to secure aid and benefits from a variety of other federal and state programs.

In addition, the department is responsible for overseeing the maintenance of veterans' graves and memorials in the town and conducting ceremonies on Memorial Day, Veterans Day and at other town events. The department conducts the dedications at Memorial Square and appropriate ceremonies at the time of death.

As with other social service departments in Stoughton, one of the biggest challenges for Veterans Services is getting the word out to the town's residents about its services and programs. It can be particularly challenging to reach aging and disabled veterans. Another area of need is providing transportation, particularly for longer distances if veterans need transit to state or federal agency offices that are located beyond the immediate area. Housing for veterans on a limited income is challenging particularly for those under 60. Affordable housing provided by the Stoughton Housing Authority is primarily (75%) for 60 and over although twenty-six of the Housing Authority's units are reserved for veterans and their families.

Public Works

The Public Works Department is responsible for the management and maintenance of town infrastructure including more than 100 miles of paved roadways, parks and squares mowing, cleaning and repairing of storm drains

39 *Ibid*

40 *Ibid*

and other stormwater control facilities, water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection services, equipment and building maintenance, forestry management and sanitation.

The Public Works complex at 950 Central Street was built in 2003 and includes three buildings on one and one half acres. Facilities include offices, fleet and equipment bays, and storage and supply facilities. The town's recent Facilities Master Plan noted that no significant repairs were required.

SOLID WASTE

Stoughton through its Department of Public Works is responsible for collecting trash and recycling from all residential addresses with three or fewer housing units. Multi-family housing with greater than three units and commercial businesses contract with private sanitation companies for waste disposal.

Operation and Maintenance

The Town, through the Department of Public Works collects residential trash five days a week and transfers it for incineration to SEMAS facilities in Rochester, MA. The town's sanitation services contract with SEMASS has recently been extended for another 15 years guaranteeing a direct disposal site through the year 2030. In 2011 the Public Works Department removed 8,612 tons of trash and 3,441 tons of recyclables.

Based on rates reported by Department of Environmental Protection in 2008 Stoughton recycled slightly lower than in 2011 at 26%. This rate was below the average rate of reporting comparison communities. It was also a lower rate than six of the twelve communities and higher than five.

Table 4: Municipal Recycling Rates, 2008⁴¹

Recycling Rate	
Foxborough	62%
Milton	55%
East Bridgewater	49%
Canton	40%
Walpole	39%
Brockton	28%
Stoughton	26%
Sharon	25%
Easton	22%
Norwood	21%
Randolph	20%
West Bridgewater	18%
Bridgewater	Not Available
Avon	Not Available
Average	33.75%

The DPW has a minimum staff of 12 full time employees year round dedicated to sanitation. Three crews run up to eight routes a day to collect curbside trash on a weekly basis and recyclables twice a month. Large household appliances/metal items must be called into the Public Works Department for an appointment to have these items picked up.

The newly formed Stoughton Energy and Sustainability Committee (SESC) is a citizen's advisory group to the Town's Board of

⁴¹ Department of Environmental Protection, History of residential recycling rates based on data reported by individual municipalities, June 2010

Selectmen. One area of focus for the SESC is recycling and waste reduction.

The town's former landfill site on Page Street serves the town's recycling program accepting commingled recyclables, and mixed paper as well as leaves and grass clippings. The Recycling Center is open only on Sundays from 8 AM to 5 PM and six additional Sunday afternoons in the fall.

Prior to 1976, the town disposed of its solid waste at a community landfill on Page Street. The landfill was closed in September of 1976 but continued to operate as a transfer station with solid waste transferred from there to an off-site location. On July 1st, 1990, the site was changed to a recycle center under private management which still exists today. The landfill is scheduled to be capped by the end of 2013 and a reuse plan for the site featuring an alternative energy project is to be developed and approved under an amendment to a 2006 State Department of Environmental Protection Administrative Consent Order.

WATER

The Stoughton Water Department is responsible for supplying water to the residents and businesses of the Town of Stoughton. The water department is operated by the DPW and serves a population of approximately 26,600 and maintains approximately 8,800 water service accounts.

Water is supplied by seven groundwater wells and supplemental water is purchased from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Some Stoughton residents purchase water from the towns of Canton, Easton, Randolph and Sharon where the town water system does not extend. Certain residents of Canton and Sharon beyond their town system limits also purchase water from the Town of Stoughton.

In 2011, the Water Department, with assistance of the MWRA Canton connection supplied a total of 694,811,001 gallons of water. The highest day of consumption occurred on August 31, 2011 with 2,449,000 gallons. Average daily consumption is 1,903,592 gallons. Under the existing agreement with MWRA, the town is required to pay for 500,000 gallons of water per day from the MWRA source and it is the DPW's objective to ensure that at least this much is withdrawn.

The supply and distribution system consists of seven wells, one green sand filtration treatment plant, four storage tanks with a capacity of 14.24 million gallons, one MWRA supplementary connection, and 148.22 miles of distribution mains, and operates on one pressure zone. The town also maintains three emergency inter-municipal connections (Canton, Easton and Sharon).

Six of the system's seven wells are located along the western town boundary. The other well is located west of Sumner Street and Goddard Memorial Hospital. All wells with the exception of Pratt Court Well have hydrated lime added for corrosion control. Potassium hydroxide and potassium permanganate are added to Pratt Court well for pH adjustment and iron and manganese removal. Gaseous chlorine is added to four of the seven wells for disinfection.

According to the town's 2011 Annual Report, the existing McNamara and Dykeman Wells look to be promising supplies of water into the future and continuing assessment is on-going.

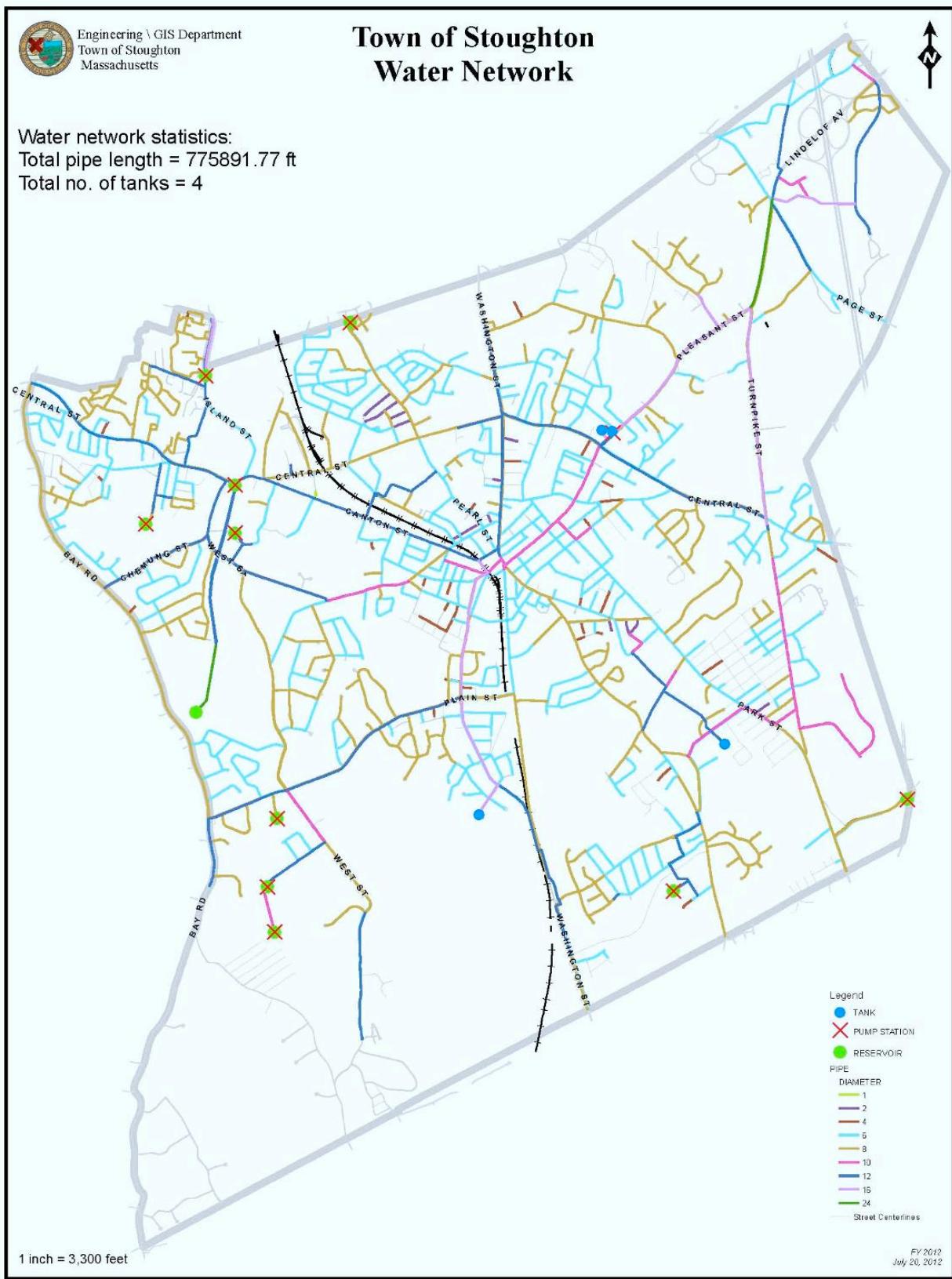
Operation and Maintenance

Operation of the water system is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works. Planning and proposed upgrades are typically a joint venture of the DPW and the Engineering Department. Design and procurement is the responsibility of the Engineering Department.

The Water Department repaired 18 water main breaks and replaced 48 water services in 2011. The water department also repaired 18 shutoffs/curb boxes and installed service to one new customer. Water service replacement is an ongoing program that ensures quality service to customers.

Driven by the shortage and cost of water, the leak detection program seeks to stop leakage before it becomes an additional

Figure 5: Stoughton Water Network



unaccounted for expense and maintenance problem. The program monitors the whole system on a yearly basis. The hydrant replacement program replaced 30 hydrants and repaired two hydrants in 2011. Approximately 3,004 feet of new water main were also added to the system in 2011.

Conservation

Water conservation is also a key strategy for protecting and preserving the town's water resources. Education as well as best management practices are a part of this strategy. The town has recently partnered with the Neponset River Watershed Association to help facilitate a grant received from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for a one year water conservation program.

The water conservation program includes:

- leak detection surveys and repair
- residential rebates for the purchase of:
 - qualifying water efficient toilets
 - toilet retrofit kits
 - clothes washers
- development of a water conservation curriculum within the Stoughton schools
- public outreach

Water System Master Plan, June 2006

In 2005, Weston and Sampson Engineers assisted the town in developing a 20-year master plan for the town water system including a \$17M capital improvement program. The master plan evaluated existing assets, water demands, storage, available fire flow, unlined mains, breaks, supply and potential expansion. An electronic model of the water system was developed and calibrated to help identify system strengths and deficiencies and allow for evaluation of expansion or other system changes.

Nine areas were identified by the Insurance Services Office (ISO)⁴² in 2000 and by flow testing conducted by Weston and Sampson in 2005 showing insufficient fire flow volume. The Ames Pond and Bay Road areas of town were identified as areas of potential system expansion.

The Capital Improvement Plan recommendations are summarized as follows:

Priority	Recommended Improvement	Est Cost (2006)
1	12-inch Transmission Mains	\$5,436,000
2	Abandon Oakland Street Standpipe	\$150,000
3	Abandon Small Diameter, Parallel Mains	\$4,022,500
4	Low Fire Flows-Replace with 8-inch Water Mains	\$4,147,500
5	Frequent Water Main Breaks-replace with 8-in Main	\$2,407,500
6	Construct New High Service Area	\$800,000
Total without Ames Pond Area		\$16,963,500

Recently the town has obtained approval to borrow \$4.48M from the MWRA to upgrade the water system by addressing unlined tuberculated pipe identified in the water system master plan. The Water Department is favoring replacing instead of cement lining of old mains due to indications of exterior pipe deterioration seen during repairs of breaks. MWRA's Local Pipeline Assistance Program ("LPAP") provides interest-free loans to MWRA water communities to perform local water main rehabilitation projects. \$4.48M is approved in Stoughton for distribution through Fiscal Year 2013.

⁴² ISO is a leading source of information about property/casualty insurance risk. Assessment includes reviewing the fire-fighting capabilities of individual communities and measures the major elements of a community's fire-suppression system and develops a numerical grading for insurance rate calculation.

WASTEWATER

The town owns and maintains 109 miles of sewer mains, 2,693 manholes, 15 pump stations, about 5,800 service connections, and a metered discharge connection to the MWRA sewer system. Wastewater is processed by the MWRA at its wastewater treatment plant on Deer Island in Boston Harbor.

As can be seen on the Wastewater System map following, there are a number of areas within Stoughton that are not served by the town's system. Most notably, areas not serviced by the town's public system include the more rural south west quadrant of town and the south east corner of town adjacent to lower Park Street and lower Turnpike Road as well as scattered neighborhoods in central and western areas of Stoughton.

Operations and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance of the sewage collection system is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works that dedicates eight full-time employees to operations and maintenance. Planning and proposed upgrades are typically a joint venture of the DPW and the Engineering Department. Design and procurement is the responsibility of the Engineering Department.

While the system is in good shape overall, regular and preventative maintenance is a focus for the Department of Public Works. The sewer jetting truck continues to keep the lines free and reduce sewer obstructions by keeping the lines open. The sewer camera truck remains a vital tool in sewer investigative work. Monitoring of all new sewer lines installations and/or repairs has proven to be a valuable asset in keeping the system tight.

The Department is working to identify and decrease/eliminate the illegal inflow of water into the sewer system. The ongoing I/I program (Infiltration and Inflow) continues to reduce the leakage (infiltration) in the town's sewer system but still more work has to be done to keep this flow down and keep the sewer bills as low as possible.

Extensive repairs on sewer manholes and catch basins were completed in 2011. The nine sewer lift stations the town presently owns are all in relatively good shape as they have been carefully maintained to obtain a maximum life span from each station. The Department accepted three new sewer pump stations in 2011: Village at Ames Pond, Pondview Village and Ledgebrook. Ledgebrook pump station has been a challenge to bring up to town specifications.

The town currently has a sewer betterment program that encourages sewer extensions by supplementing one third of the cost to property owners through zero interest loans. The town has allocated \$950,000 in funding since 2010 and has assisted 27 households.

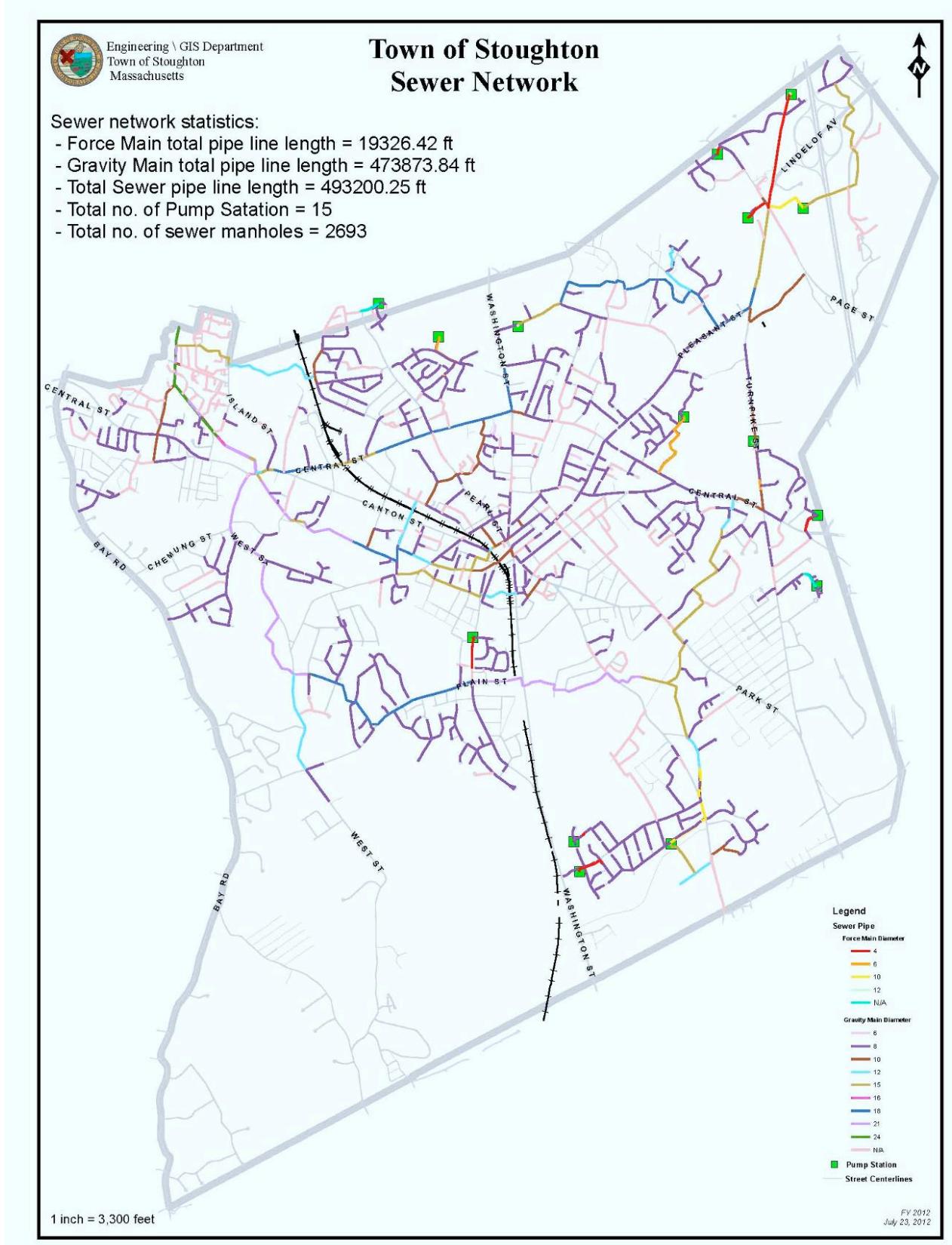
The town faces a number of challenges as its system tries to accommodate growth. A primary challenge facing system expansion is capacity restrictions due to inadequate coordination between multiple private developments leading to numerous small pump stations. The lack of sewer in some densely populated residential and industrial locations is also problematic. The town has a number of residential neighborhoods with small lots that accommodate both a well and septic system without the required distances separating them. One example is the neighborhood around Ames Pond where summer cottages have been converted to year round homes. There are a number of other areas as well where both the size of the lots and the soil conditions make accommodating private water and sewer difficult or imprudent and place hardships on homeowners and water and other natural resources at risk.

The Stoughton Board of Selectmen put forth Article 61 at the May 2012 Town Meeting requesting \$500,000 for the survey and design of a sewerage system to serve the southern end of Park Street from near Ash Street to the town line and the Campanelli Industrial Park. The proposed system was intended to increase economic competitiveness in the area, increase the town's tax base, and allow the town to expand the system into adjacent residential areas. The article failed to pass.

A follow up study to further assess infrastructure needs for the southern Park Street (Route 27) area was completed in June 2012. The plan's recommendations call for the town to:

- Support the idea of bringing sewer service to the study area, particularly along Route 27 and the Industrial Park

Figure 6: Public Sewer Network



and other adjacent property.

- Encourage RK Plaza to obtain sewer service through Brockton if that is deemed to be the most efficient, environmentally beneficial, and readily achievable approach.
- Support the proposed \$500,000 sewer engineering feasibility/design study while ensuring that it examines alternative systems, routes, and disposal areas.
- Give full attention to the efficiency, cost and environmental benefits of disposing of a maximum flow to the Brockton system and on to the Matfield River.
- Seek financial support from a variety of sources to limit the costs of sewer service to local interests and taxpayers and to support related economic development.
- Work with potential users to ensure equitable betterment costs to abutters, and fair ultimate connection charges and user fees for the system's users.

STORMWATER

The Department of Public Works is responsible for stormwater management within its boundaries. The town's stormwater collection system consists of 2,989 catch basins or inlets, 1800 manholes and 200 outfalls.

The purpose of the town's stormwater system is to collect and distribute stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff is rainfall and snowmelt that fails to infiltrate the ground where it falls or melts. Stormwater runoff is directly impacted by impervious surfaces including roads, buildings, and parking lots and is the single largest source for water quality impairments to the state's and town's water resources. Both MassDEP (Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection) and US EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) regulate stormwater in Massachusetts. In addition Stoughton's stormwater management bylaw (Chapter 159 of the Town Code) further protects the town's resources from the adverse affects of stormwater runoff by decreasing contaminated stormwater runoff, regulating illicit connections and discharges to the municipal storm drain system, and inhibiting the impacts of soil erosion and sedimentation.

Operation and Maintenance

Operation of the stormwater collection system is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works. Planning and proposed upgrades are typically a joint venture of the DPW and the Engineering Department. Design and procurement as well as annual reports required by state are the responsibility of the Engineering Department.

DPW maintains an aggressive catch basin maintenance program continuously monitoring, cleaning and inspecting the catch basins and roadway surfaces in town. The town-owned sewer cleaning truck and TV inspection vehicles are utilized regularly to keep on top of cleaning. Additionally, new culverts and drainage improvements are constructed as needed. The Department is not adequately staffed or equipped to handle the required oversight and or maintenance of detention basins however, or to adequately monitor and maintain water bodies that are impacted by stormwater runoff.

Mapping

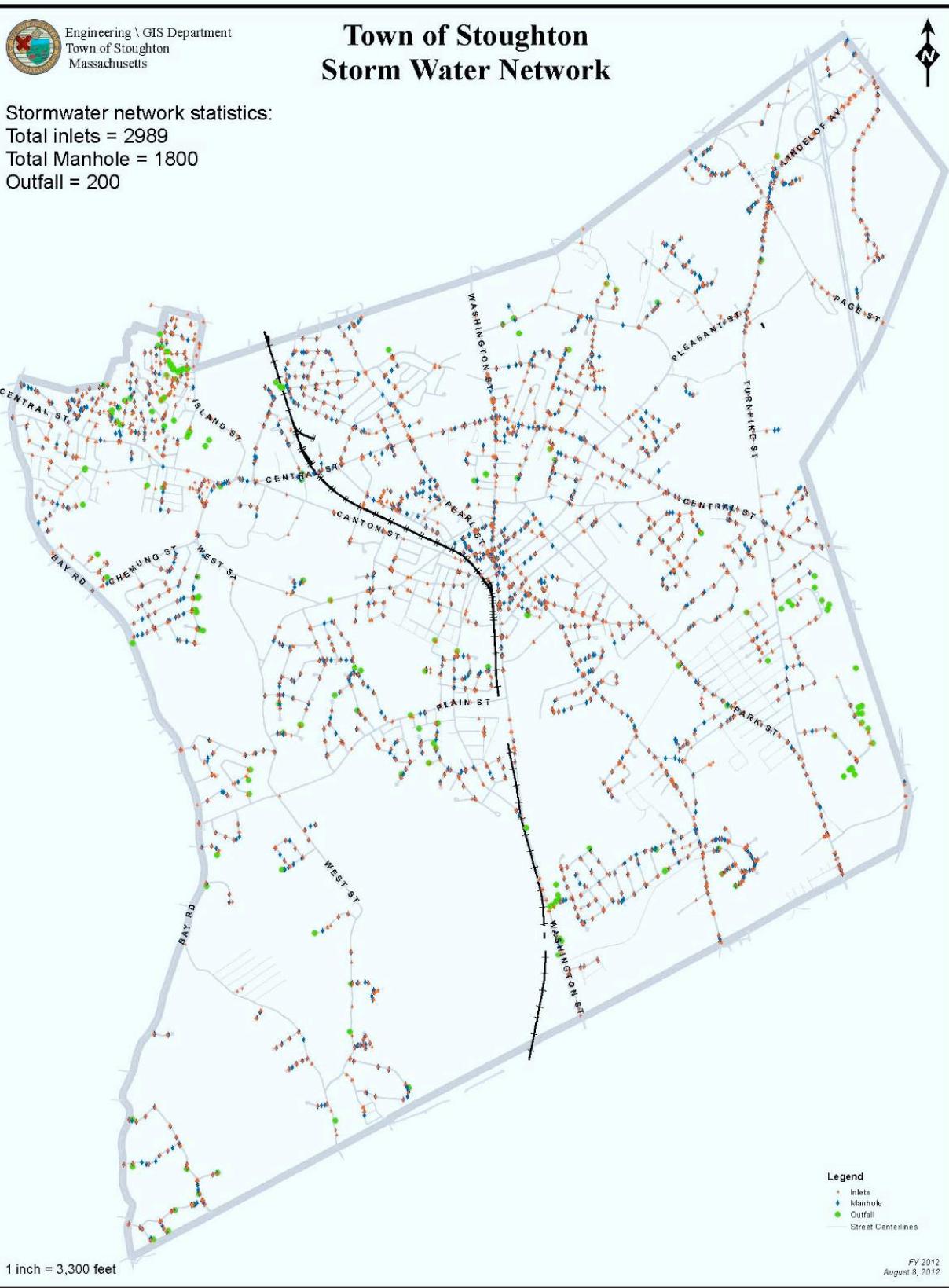
The town's Engineering Department is working to map the town's stormwater infrastructure. Approximately \$30,000 was allocated for the NPDES MS4 Program (EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) and will be used to obtain locations of all town-owned catch basins and drainage manholes. With any future funds, one priority is to locate missing drainage structures and obtain pipe connectivity from the inlet to the outfall. The end result will be a stormwater network map depicting all catch basins, manholes, Best Management Practices (BMP's), and outfalls that will be part of the town's GIS database. These maps will aid in locating and controlling future illicit discharges and will aid in the hydrologic and hydraulic modeling of the storm water network.

Regulations Compliance

The town under an agreement with the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA) is working toward compliance with the new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System MS4 permit.⁴³ The town is assisting NepRWA, as they seek ways and means of constructing stormwater management facilities throughout the town and the Neponset River

⁴³ EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems

Figure 7: Public Stormwater System



watershed. The town anticipates that NepRWA will provide assistance with stormwater monitoring and sampling aspects of the regulations.

Other efforts include control measures slated for the entire permit term that include enforcing the stormwater bylaw, enforcing the illicit discharge bylaw, performing continuous construction inspections, enforcing the submittal of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans for all projects greater than one acre in size, and completing a comprehensive review of all construction documents by the Engineering Department. The town has also implemented a review process for single lot construction (projects less than 1 acre) that require the use of Best Management Practices and Erosion Controls under certain circumstances. Moreover, the town continues to perform good housekeeping best management practices as part of ongoing operation and maintenance of facilities, roadways, storm drains and open spaces.

Pending NPDES MS4 Permit

The new draft stormwater discharge permit, known as the “North Coastal Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit,” will require Stoughton to continue to build upon stormwater management programs designed to reduce pollutants discharged from municipal storm drains to rivers, lakes and bays. The new permit is in draft form and date of issue is not known at this time.

Measures to help prevent water pollution caused by stormwater include “best management practices” such as removing illegal sewage connections to storm drains, street sweeping, public education and steps to expand the infiltration of stormwater rather than diverting stormwater into sewer systems. To improve the effectiveness of stormwater management programs and reduce the adverse effects of stormwater runoff on surface waters, the proposed permit includes enhanced detection of illegal discharges and requirements to identify isolate and remove sanitary and other wastes from the stormwater system. The draft permit also includes measures to encourage low impact development and green infrastructure techniques, requirements for monitoring of stormwater discharges, and measures to implement approved watershed restoration plans called total maximum daily loads or TMDLs.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and an allocation of that load among the various sources of that pollutant.

3.7 NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Natural Resources	132
Geology and Topography	132
Water Resources	132
Vegetation.....	134
Wildlife.....	135
Cultural Resources.....	136
National Register of Historic Places	136
Massachusetts Cultural Resources Inventory.....	137
Heritage Landscapes	138

TABLES

Table 1: Summary of Existing Surface Waters in Stoughton	133
Table 2: Wetlands	133
Table 3: Rare and Endangered Plant Species in Stoughton	135
Table 4: Invasive Indigenous Aquatic Vegetation	135
Table 5: Rare and Endangered Animal Species in Stoughton	136
Table 6: Municipal Buildings Included in Cultural Inventory	137
Table 7: Buildings Associated with Industry and Economy Included in Cultural Inventory.....	138

The Town of Stoughton has accommodated development since its settlement in 1716 when settlers found a mild rolling and heavily wooded landscape. Today very little of Stoughton's landscape resembles its pre-developed state. Human occupancy however, in addition to consuming and altering the town's natural resources, has created cultural resources that are valuable in their own right.

Natural Resources

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

When the area's last ice sheet retreated from the lands that were to become Stoughton, they left behind the regions characteristic north south drumlins and drainage patterns, and a gently rolling terrain. The underlying rock formation is largely igneous in origin, with outcroppings most common in the northeast and southwest areas of town. Granite was plentiful in some areas sufficient to support quarrying for a period in the town's history.

Though the highest elevation in Stoughton is 335 feet above sea level and the lowest is 128 feet, it is considered a top-of-the-watershed community as all run-off collects in water bodies in surrounding towns in the Taunton and Neponset River Basin watersheds and the Weymouth River sub-watershed. The towns' two hundred feet elevation change also produces gentle hills along with more dramatically inclined terrain particularly in the west and southwest parts of town.

WATER RESOURCES¹

The principal open water resources within Stoughton are its ponds that range in size from less than an acre to just over one hundred acres and together account for about 234 acres. Twelve of its seventeen ponds are less than ten acres, four are between ten and thirty acres and only Ames Pond is over 100 acres. All of Stoughton's ponds are man-made.



Ames Pond

¹ Town of Stoughton Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2006

Phase I Report - Existing Conditions - Natural & Historic Resources

Table 1: Summary of Existing Surface Waters in Stoughton²

Name	Acres	Recreational Access	Watershed
Farrington's	3.5	yes	Neponset
Woods Pond	30	yes	Neponset
Britton's Pond	3	no	Neponset
Southworth's Pond	3.5	no	Neponset
Muddy Pond	2.8	no	Neponset
Town Pond	9	yes	Neponset
Pinewood Lake (Harris Pond)	23	partial	Neponset
Glen Echo Pond	16	no	Neponset
Bohnenbergers Pond	5	no	Neponset
Turnpike Street (unnamed)	3	no	Taunton
Ames Pond	106	yes	Taunton
Bird Street Connor Pond	.75	yes	Taunton
Welch's Pond (Stoughton F & G)	14	partial	Taunton
Totman's Pond (Stoughton F & G)	5	partial	Taunton
Parent's Pond (Golf Course)	.75	no	Taunton
Snow's Pond (off Park Street)	5	no	Taunton
Dry Pond	4	no	Taunton

Total 234.3

Stoughton's wetland communities are mostly wooded swamp or shrub swamp with a scattering of meadow-emergent marsh communities and quite a few small isolated pockets, many of which are vernal pools. Major named wetland systems include Bear Swamp and Cedar Swamp. According to the town's 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan there are over 1,312 acres of wetlands in Stoughton.

Table 2: Wetlands³

Wetland Type	Acreage
Bog	28.2
Cranberry Bog	2.4
Deep Marsh	102.2
Open Water	170.1
Shallow Marsh Meadow or Fen	75
Shrub Swamp	184.5
Wooded Swamp Deciduous	634.5
Wooded Swamp Mixed Trees	115.5

Total 1312.3

A number of streams and brooks feed into the town's ponds and wetlands including Dorchester, Whitman, Steep Hill and Redwing Brooks.

Water resources that are important but not visible include the town's aquifers and wells. Stoughton's most significant high

2 *Ibid*3 *Ibid*

yield aquifer runs north to south nearly the length of the town west of West Street from just south of Route 27 nearly to Ames Pond. A second high yield aquifer is located primarily between Rout 138 and Pearl Street north of Town Center to the Canton town line. A much smaller high yield aquifer is located in the northwest corner of town just west of Island Street and continuing into Canton. Medium yield aquifers fan out from these high yield sites. Additional medium yield aquifers are also located south of Town Center generally between Route 138 and Pearl Street and in North Stoughton generally north of York and Pine Streets. Stoughton protects the town's aquifer and aquifer recharge areas considered potential for public drinking water supply through its aquifer protection area regulations.⁴

VEGETATION

Stoughton's 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan cites estimates of 4,129 acres of forest in different areas of the community including wetland and riverine communities. The town's upland forests contain a mix of hard and soft woods including Red, Black and White Oaks, Shagbark and Pignut Hickories, some Big Tooth and Quaking Aspens, American Beech, very few Elms, and plentiful remnants of the struggling American Chestnut. Conifers include White Pine, Northern Red Cedar and limited Canadian Hemlock. Most of Stoughton's wetlands are Red Maple wooded swamps, with a few open-meadow marsh habitats and shrub swamps and some vernal pools.

In addition to its forests, Stoughton is working to preserve its remaining agricultural and grasslands estimated at about 200 acres by the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The southwest section of town is the most rural and contains the most forested and agricultural lands (including grassland) including the Bird Street Conservation Area and Cedar Swamp as well as private farms. Other significant woodlands occur toward North Stoughton in the triangle between Pleasant, Central and Turnpike Streets.



Bird Street Conservation Area

The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), part of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, is responsible for keeping a list of endangered species within the state. The following plant species on the state's MESA (Massachusetts Endangered Species Act) list noted as endangered, threatened, or of special concern have been sited in Stoughton.

⁴ Aquifer protection areas are delineated on the town's groundwater protection map (on file with the Town Clerk)

Table 3: Rare and Endangered Plant Species in Stoughton⁵

Scientific Name	Common Name	Designation	Date Sighted
<i>Carex polymorpha</i>	Variable Sedge	Endangered	1930
<i>Cyperus houghtonii</i>	Houghton's Flatsedge	Endangered	1928
<i>Panicum philadelphicum</i> ssp. <i>philadelphicum</i>	Philadelphia Panic-grass	Special Concern	1931
<i>Potamogeton confervoides</i>	Algae-like Pondweed	Threatened	1972
<i>Rotala ramosior</i>	Toothcup	Endangered	Historic

Invasive Species⁶

Invasive vegetation species occur on land along the edges of woodland, fields, access roads and public roadways, residential, and developed or disturbed areas.⁷

Glossy Buckthorn is a common invasive species found within open fields of the Bird Street Conservation Area. This as well as New England secondary ecological succession is managed by once to twice annual mowing of the fields.

Black swallow-wort (*Cynanchum louiseae*) has been identified in the fields in the vicinity of the Leo P. Green Veterans Memorial Park and the Conservation Commission is considering how to address the issue.

The Conservation Commission has also implemented a program to manage and control aquatic vegetative species of the town's lakes and ponds. Exotic invasive species include: Carolina fanwort (*Cabomba carolinia*), variable milfoil and curly-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*). Extensive overgrowth of indigenous species include a number of emergent macrophytes⁸ that warrants removal and management including:

Table 4: Invasive Indigenous Aquatic Vegetation

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Brasenia schreberi</i>	watershield
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	white water lily
<i>Nuphar luteum</i>	yellow pond lily or spatterdock
<i>Utricularia spp</i>	Bladderwort
<i>Proserpinaca palustris</i>	marsh mermaidweed

WILDLIFE

Though densely settled, Stoughton offers a number of habitats including large forest tracts, meadows, shrub lands and swamps that support a variety of wildlife. Most common forest wildlife can be found in forested areas and common wetland species within wetlands. Birds of note include Coopers Hawks, Goshawks and Merlin. Other notable sightings of wildlife include river otters, fishers and spotted turtles. Rare and endangered animal species in Stoughton are listed in Table 5.

⁵ MA Divisions of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 2012

⁶ Information provided by John Conlon, Stoughton Conservation Agent, July 2012

⁷ Invasive species invade native plant communities and impacts those native communities by displacing or replacing native vegetation. Invasive species can be native or exotic.

⁸ A macrophyte is a marine plant large enough to be visible by the naked eye.

Table 5: Rare and Endangered Animal Species in Stoughton⁹

Scientific Name	Common Name	Designation	Date Sighted
<i>Cicindela purpurea</i>	Purple Tiger Beetle	Species of Concern	1923
<i>Notropis bifrenatus</i>	Bridle Shiner	Species of Concern	1951
<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Blanding's Turtle	Threatened	1982
<i>Terrapene carolina</i>	Eastern Box Turtle	Species of Concern	2006

Cultural Resources

State and local organizations including Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), Department of Conservation and Recreation, Stoughton Historical Commission and Stoughton Historical Society have identified more than one hundred cultural resources within Stoughton's borders. These buildings, areas, landscapes and objects help tell the story of the town's evolution from an unsettled territory to a colonial settlement to a farming and industrial community to the suburban community it is today. The resources are recognized in different ways and have varying degrees of protection. Most are privately held and have no form of protection from change beyond the will of the landowner.

The Stoughton Cultural Council, Historical Commission, and Community Preservation Committee are the primary municipal bodies that, along with the Stoughton Historical Society, a local non-profit agency, are involved in the identification, protection and promotion of Stoughton's cultural resources.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been determined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Two structures in Stoughton are included on the National Register.

Lucius Clapp Memorial opened on the corner of Park and Pleasant Streets as a Public Library in 1904. It was named for its benefactor Lucius Clapp, a successful Stoughton farmer and active participant in local affairs. Today the Lucius Clapp Memorial is the home of the Stoughton Historical Society.

Stoughton Railroad Station at 33 Wyman Street is a prominent focal feature within Stoughton's Town Center. The station was built in 1888 to service rail travelers. The station received substantial repair in the 1980s and continued serving commuter train service into the 21st century. While the commuter train still stops at this location the station remains closed. It is owned by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) which is seeking a buyer. The Town of Stoughton is considering a bid to purchase the property and evaluating options to repurpose the building as a critical element of Town Center.



Lucius Clapp Memorial



Stoughton Train Station

⁹ MA Divisions of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 2012

Phase I Report - Existing Conditions - Natural & Historic Resources



Stoughton Water Works

The Massachusetts Historical Commission through its Mass Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS)¹⁰ lists 108 items in its inventory of properties, areas, and objects in Stoughton that are historically or architecturally significant. This inventory includes 84 individual properties including homes, barns, businesses, and religious, state and municipal facilities. Nine listings are of culturally significant areas that include farm, village, and industrial areas. The remaining listings include cemeteries, markers, bridges and a statue. The inventory's properties and objects span a range in history from pre-European settlement (Old Bay Road; a Native American trail) to the 1950's; most however are examples of architect, industry and landscapes from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Many of Stoughton's past and current municipal buildings are included in the state's inventory of cultural resources. The town retains ownership of Stoughton Water Works, Stoughton Fire Station, Lucius Clapp Memorial and Town Hall. Only Town Hall and the Fire Station continue to serve their original purposes.

Table 6: Municipal Buildings included in Cultural Inventory ¹¹

Building	Location	Built	Current Use	
Stoughton Water Works*	1748 Central Street	1892	vacant, reuse desired	
Stoughton Fire Station	30 Freeman Street	1927	Fire Station	
1st Stoughton Public Library	Morton Square	1854	residential	
Lucius Clapp Memorial	6 Park Street	1903	Stoughton Historical Society	
Kimball School	Park Avenue	1903	church activities	
Stoughton Town Hall	10 Pearl Street	1881	Town Hall	
Smith School	Plain Street	1871	residential	
Park School	Weaver Street	1859	church activities	
Stoughton Station**	Railroad	33 Wyman Street	1888	vacant, for sale

* Designated an American Water Landmark in 1987 by the American Water Works Association

**State-owned (MBTA)

Cultural resources that highlight Stoughton's industry and economy include areas of cultural significance, a quarry, a tavern, banks, mills, factories and retail and service companies.

10 MACRIS data are compiled from a variety of records and files maintained by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), including but not limited to, the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth, National Register of Historic Places nominations, State Register of Historic Places listings, and local historic district study reports. The list includes no information on archaeological sites.

11 Massachusetts Historical Commission, MACRIS
STOUGHTON MASTER PLAN

Table 7: Buildings Associated with Industry and Economy Included in Cultural Inventory¹²

Resource	Location	Built
Britton Block	Pearl Street	1899
Factory Village Area	Canton, Central, Mill, Southworth	19th C
South Stoughton Farm Area	Park St by Brockton border	18th & 19th C
Tavern Turnpike Area	Junction Turnpike and Central	18th & 19th C
Dr. Swan Block	752-770 Washington Street	1904
French and Ward Lower Mill	1779 Central St	1857
George E. Belcher Company	Pleasant Street	1893
Gilbert Quarry	Conservation Area off Bird & West	1872
Hansen General Store	600 Pleasant Street	1926
Meade Rubber Company	25 Brock Street	1916
Monks Block	Washington Street	1886
Mystic Rubber Company	2 Canton Street	1877
Phillips Company	471 Washington Street	1913
Phinney & Boot Counter Mfg Co	Winter Street	1848
Phinney Worker Housing	School Street	1876
Porter Coal and Wood Company	893 Washington Street	1876
Shoddy Mill	Southworth Court	1861
State Theatre	807 Washington Street	1927
Stoughton Earth Company	King Street	1916
Stoughton Trust Company	810 Washington Street	1917
Swan's Tavern	710 Turnpike Street	1807
Webster Smith and Company	Porter Street	1880
Withington Furniture and Undertaker	Porter Street	1860
Wood. Elastic Web Company	Rose Street	1936

HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) through its Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative assists Massachusetts communities to identify, document and plan for the protection of the heritage landscapes that are vital to the history, character and quality of life of their communities. Heritage landscapes are those special places and spaces that help define the character of a community and reflect its past. They are the result of human interaction with the natural resources of an area, which influence the use and development of land. Heritage landscapes come in many forms and can include:

cemeteries	cranberry bogs	shipyards
commons	river corridors	institutional campuses
mill sites	estates	archaeological sites
formal gardens	farms	scenic roads
parks	camp meeting grounds	village centers

DCR noted three distinct types of land uses in Stoughton – an urban core, a suburban surrounding neighborhood, and an agricultural edge within which DCR and the community identified an initial 25 heritage landscapes¹³ and concluded its planning process by making three recommendations to help protect a more limited number of resources.

1. Undertake further studies on Glen Echo Pond, Bay Road, Pearl Street and Dry Pond Cemeteries, Libby Farm, and Capen Reynolds Farm.
2. Seek National Register Nominations for the Stoughton Water Works and the Capen-Reynolds Farm.
3. Undertake cemetery documentation and develop preservation and maintenance plans for each.

¹³ For the full report see Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Heritage Landscape Inventory Program, "Stoughton Reconnaissance Report," Public Archaeology Lab, Inc., 2002.

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3.8 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Protected Open Space.....	142
Municipal Ownership.....	142
Conservation Restrictions	144
Unprotected Open Space.....	145
Recreation	145
Municipal Facilities.....	145
Private Recreational Facilities	147
Stoughton Recreation Department.....	147
Sports Leagues	148

FIGURES

Figure 1: Protected Open Space	143
Figure 2: Fully and Partially Protected Open Space.....	147

TABLES

Table 1: Municipally-Owned Protected Open Space	144
Table 2: Areas of Conservation Interest.....	145
Table 3: Public Outdoor Recreation Facilities	146

Open space and recreation are components of a town that contribute to its character and its livability. Remaining open space in Stoughton is estimated to be about 4,000 acres, roughly half permanently protected, and consists of a variety of landscapes including open fields and pastures, open waters, wetlands, swamps, and forests. Southwest Stoughton has the greatest abundance of protected open space and the largest tracts of undeveloped lands. North Stoughton however has a considerable amount of undeveloped land scattered throughout the area as well as the recently acquired Glen Echo property. Undeveloped land that is not currently protected does for the time being offer some of the benefits of open space such as buffer areas, rural character, and resource protection.

Figure 1 illustrates the general volume, distribution and type of protected open space in Stoughton excluding some recently acquired parcels not yet in the State's database.

Recreational lands and facilities are found throughout the town with most fields and courts located in the central and northern areas of Stoughton. Recreational pursuits in town include a variety of organized activities including soccer, baseball, football, basketball, hockey, volleyball, golf and arts and crafts, as well as informal activities including hiking, bicycling, swimming, fishing, hunting, and skating. A number of private recreation based businesses also contribute to the town's ability to access to recreational activities.

Stoughton is seeking to increase its holdings of open space and recreational facilities to assure protection of irreplaceable resources, to maintain existing rural character, add beauty to its urban center, and to secure opportunities for meeting the recreational needs of existing and future residents.

Protected Open Space

There are about 2,000 acres of protected open space in Stoughton, representing 19.1 % of the town's total area.

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

Municipally-owned open space in Stoughton totals over 1,660 acres, about 15.3% of the total area within the town's borders. Roughly 1,300 acres are managed by the Stoughton Conservation Commission and just over 300 acres are managed by the town's Water Department. All properties managed by the Conservation Commission serve conservation purposes and many are recreational resources as well. Open space managed by the Water Department protects the town's wellheads and watershed lands.

Properties range in size from just over three acres to 675 acres. The two most prominent and visited open spaces in Stoughton are the Ames Pond Area (185 acres) and Bird Street Conservation Area (675 acres), providing a variety of passive recreational opportunities including summer and winter water based activities.

Since 2000 three significant parcels totaling over 230 acres have been acquired by the town. The 80-acre Libby Farm in the south area of town was purchased in 2003 with assistance from Trust for Public Land (TPL) and with town funds and state grants. The Libby Farm property includes wetlands, forests, meadows, and rocky outcrops, and is crossed by popular hiking trails and old cart roads. It is now also home to the newly created Bradley Lessa Memorial Playground. The Libby Farm is surrounded on three sides by town conservation land, including Stoughton Memorial Conservation Lands and the Edward F. McNamara Farm, which the town purchased for permanent conservation in 2000.

The 92-acre Glen Echo property is the town's most recent purchase. A conservation restriction on the property is held by Easton Land Trust. The site contains Glen Echo Pond, fields and wooded uplands as well as wetlands. Six acres of the property have been set aside for active recreation. This property is seen as a principal open space for passive recreation as well as conservation purposes in north east Stoughton. The town has awarded Community Preservation Act funds to the Conservation Commission for the development of a site study and master plan.

Figure 1: Protected Open Space

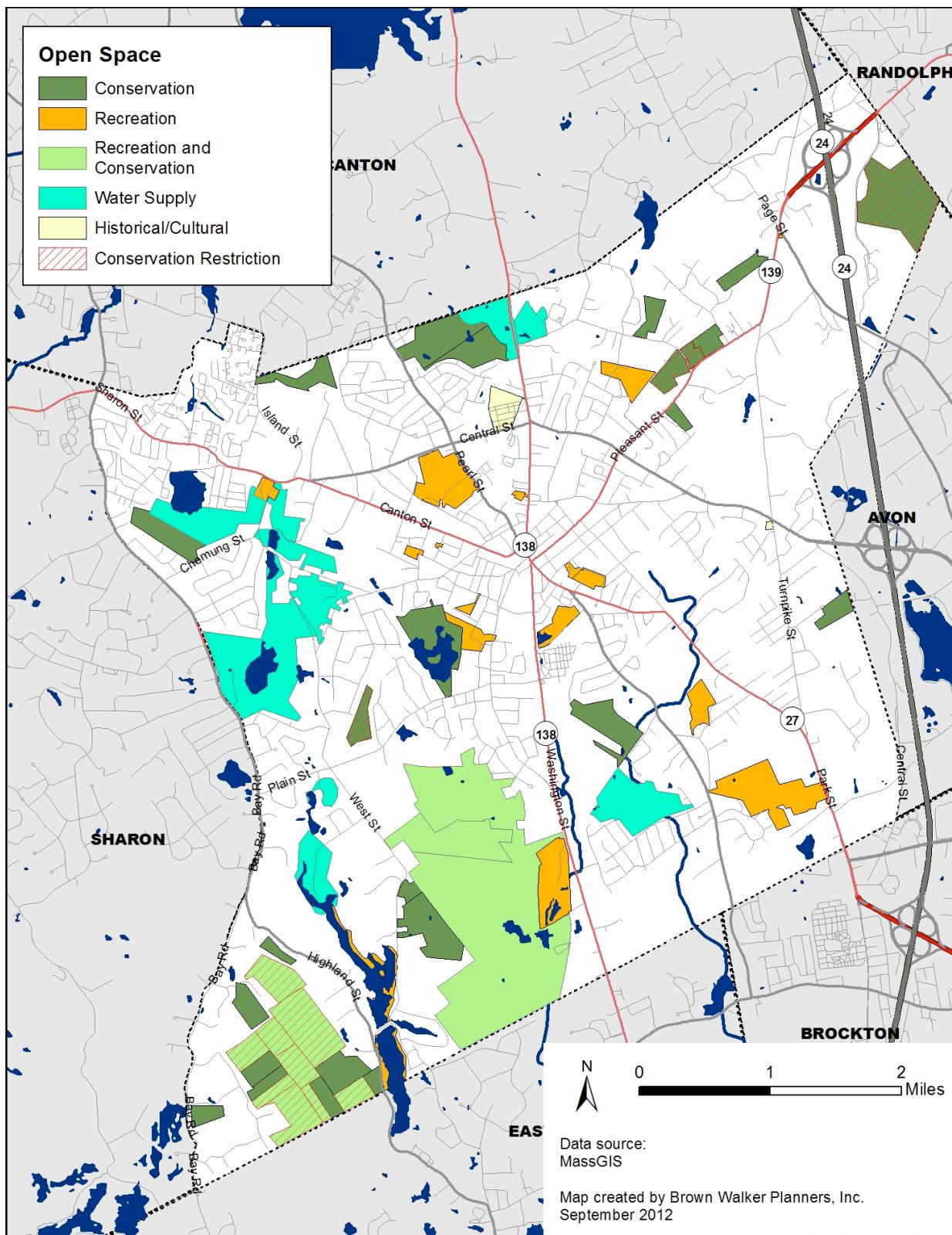


Table 1 indicates size and managing entity of town-owned parcels, along with each parcel's primary uses.

Table 1: Municipally-Owned Protected Open Space¹

Property	Acres	Use
Managed by Stoughton Conservation Commission		
Almon Fredericks	3.5	pedestrian
Ames Pond Area	185.0	hunting, fishing, swimming, sailing, skating
Capen Reynolds Farm	28.0	education, passive recreation, hiking
Cedar Swamp (Summer Gardens)	92.0	conservation only
Chemung Hill Area	27.7	hiking
D Forbes Estate	15.0	conservation only
Dogwood Estates (Shiretown Parcel)	14.3	passive recreation, hiking
Glen Echo Lake	97.2	passive recreation, hiking, swimming
Libby Farm	80.0	passive recreation, hiking
North Stoughton Area	31.4	conservation only
Edwin McNamara Land	48.4	passive recreation, hiking
Stonehill College Gift (Cedar Swamp)	39.9	conservation only
Stoughton Conservation Memorial Lands (Bird Street Conservation Area)	675.0	passive recreation, hiking, swimming, playground
Tanglewood Area	7.2	conservation only
T L Edwards Estate	12.9	conservation only
Wood Pond	62.2	conservation only
Managed by Canton Conservation Commission		
Canton Conservation Lands	40.0	passive recreation
Managed by Stoughton Water Department		
Ames Long Pond Watershed	43.2	watershed and well protection
Dry Pond/Guerney Well Area	13.6	Watershed and well protection
Muddy and Town Pond	204.7	watershed
Pinewood Lake Watershed	50. 9	Watershed and well protection
Managed by Stoughton DPW Forestry and Veterans Department		
Faxon Memorial Park	1.0	passive recreation

CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS

An additional 270 acres of open space in the southwest portion of Stoughton are protected in perpetuity by conservation restrictions. These include lands of the Ames Rifle and Gun Club (201 acres), the Welch Memorial Fish and Game Preserve (49 acres) and private land owners (20 acres). Club properties are used for hunting and fishing, hiking and wildlife viewing.

¹ Adapted from Stoughton Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2006

Unprotected Open Space

In addition to its protected open space, the town owns a number of cemeteries as well as school and other recreational facilities that are unprotected. The ten town-owned and privately held cemeteries account for 56.5 acres and though unprotected are highly unlikely to change use. The town's school and recreational properties account for another 214 acres. School and recreational properties may change use, though some restrictions apply based on designations and funding sources used for the original purchase. (Recreational properties are covered more thoroughly under Recreation below.)

One hundred twenty acres in Stoughton are enrolled in the state's Chapter 61 program that allows communities to tax land at its "current use" (forest, farm or recreation land) to encourage preservation of open space. In exchange for the reduced tax rate, the land owner agrees to certain conditions of ownership and sale including the town's right to purchase the property at fair market value or bona fide offer price if the land changes use or is sold. All so-called Chapter 61 lands in Stoughton are held by just two owners.

Stoughton's 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan noted that there were 1,835 acres of privately owned open space in town (including Glen Echo). Of that amount, five areas totaling 529 acres were identified as "areas of conservation interest". The Glen Echo property was purchased in 2011.

Table 2: Areas of Conservation Interest²

Property	Acres	Intended Use
Ames Long Pond East - 3 parcels east of Ames Long Pond	110.0	resource protection,
Benson Road – Benson and Summer Streets	177.5	resource protection
Britton's Pond - 11 parcels adjacent to Britton's Pond	86.0	wetland protection
Glen Echo Pond – north Stoughton/Canton border	62.9	recreation
Memorial Lands - 20 parcels abutting Bird St Conservation Area	92.7	resource protection

Recreation

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

Recreation facilities in the Town of Stoughton can be classified as school and town facilities. School facilities are managed by the school's athletic director. Town facilities, with the exception of Cedar Hill Golf Course are managed and maintained by a combination of services from the Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works.

Cedar Hill Golf Course is a town-owned facility financed and operated as an enterprise fund.³ The course is operated by a general manager and overseen by the eight-member Cedar Hill Golf Course Committee. It employs a staff of eight part-time grounds keepers seasonally and staffs its pro-shop with volunteers who accept golf time as a benefit. The facility has a nine-hole par 33 course, a pro shop, a practice putting green and bar and restaurant. The bar and restaurant is leased by the town to a private entity. The 16-acre facility is open generally from March to December and offers lessons and league play. Cedar Hill serves approximately 12,000 golfers yearly, an estimated 60 percent are residents of Stoughton. The focus of the Cedar Hill Golf Course is on providing a quality golfing experience at a reasonable price. It hosts the high school golf team and is also open to community and charity events.

Cedar Hill's expenses have outpaced income for the past two years due to required major facilities repairs, while income

² *Ibid*

³ An enterprise fund gives municipalities flexibility to account separately for financial activities associated with certain municipal services. It establishes a separate accounting and financial reporting mechanism for municipal services for which a fee is charged in exchange for goods or services.

has remained relatively stable.

In total, outdoor recreation facilities in Stoughton include 224 acres of land that support playgrounds, athletic fields and courts, multi-purpose fields, a beach, a golf course and a skating pond.

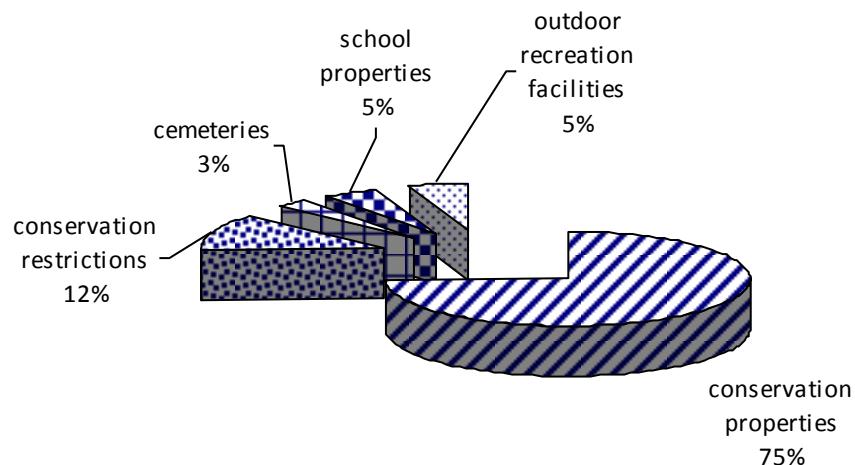
Table 3: Public Outdoor Recreation Facilities⁴

Facility	Acres	Playground	Baseball/ Softball	Soccer/ Football	Multi- Purpose	Tennis	Basketball
Cedar Hill Golf Course	16						
Dawe School	36	1	1				2
Gibbons School	10	1	1	1	2		4
Glen Echo Pond	6						
Halloran Park	8	1					1
Hansen School	14	1	1		1		
High School	10			2		3	1.5
Jones School	2	1					1
Bradley Lessa Memorial Playground	4	1					
Babe Ruth Field (Samarcco's)	32		1				
Mark's Field	5		1				
Meades Meadow (skating)	7						
Middle/West School Athletic Complex	13	1	6	2	1		
South School	7	1	1				1
STOYAC Community Field	7	1		1			
Town Beach – Ames	3						
Manny Koltz Soccer Fields	24			2			
Youth Baseball Complex	20		7				
Total	224	9	18	8	4	3	10.5

⁴ Adapted from Stoughton Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2006

Of the 2,167 acres of open and recreational space illustrated in figure 1, 87% (conservation and conservation restriction properties) is fully protected.

Figure 2: Fully and Partially Protected Open Space



PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

There are numerous private recreational facilities in Stoughton including gyms, fitness centers, rinks, and dance, gymnastics, and martial arts studios that help meet the recreational needs of Stoughton residents. Several private facilities uniquely serve the Stoughton community including the Stoughton YMCA and the state-owned Asiaf Arena in neighboring Brockton.

The Old Colony Striar YMCA has recently moved onto the Fireman campus at the intersection of Central and Lincoln Streets in the North Stoughton area. The YMCA provides a diversity of programs and services to Stoughton and area residents including child care, summer camps, sports and fitness programs, and active adult and family programs and events. The Striar YMCA and Stoughton leaders are collaborating on Pioneering Healthier Communities (PHC), a national initiative that focuses on policy and environmental change in communities to promote healthy lifestyles. Striar YMCA is one of 117 YMCAs across the country to receive funding and support to take on this work.

The Asiaf Arena is a Commonwealth of Massachusetts (DCR) public ice skating facility, managed by FMC Ice Sports since 1992. The arena is a year-round, full-service skating facility offering an extensive variety of skating programs for all ages and abilities. The arena is the home rink for Stoughton school teams. Many Stoughton residents also use the public Metropolis skating rink in Canton as well. This indoor arena is open seasonally September through April.

STOUGHTON RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Stoughton Recreation Department located in Town Hall is managed by a Recreation Director and staffed by a Program Facilitator as well as about thirty seasonal employees in the summer and ten in the winter that are principally responsible for facilitating recreational camps and community service programs. The Department served over 600 local youth in programmed activities in 2011 and counts at the town beach exceeded 4,000 visitors.

Programs offered by the Department in 2011 included:

soccer	tennis	multi-sport
basketball	golf	open playground
ceramics	snowboarding & skiing	pre-playground
crafts	baseball	volleyball
zumba	swimming	baking

In addition to programming, the Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance of outdoor recreation facilities, other than school properties and the Golf Course, and for permitting athletic fields. The Department contracts for grounds maintenance for the West School Athletic Complex as well as its playgrounds. The Department licenses a number of fields to a variety of youth groups including Stoughton Youth Athletic Club (STOYAC), Little League, Babe Ruth League and Youth Soccer which in turn assume responsibility for maintenance as well as capital improvements approved by the Town. The Department of Public Works is responsible for maintenance of Halloran Park and Faxon Memorial Park.

The School Department maintains all school properties other than the West School Complex primarily through contracted services throughout the summer. The School Department also employs a part time grounds keeper who lines fields for high school athletic events.

SPORTS LEAGUES

Stoughton is served by a variety of sports leagues serving youth and adults including Stoughton Youth Athletic Club (STOYAC) which offers softball, basketball and Pop Warner football, Youth Soccer, Stoughton Youth Baseball, Babe Ruth and Legion Baseball, Men's Slow Pitch, NFL Youth Flag Football and Mohawk Youth Hockey.

RESOURCES

2012 Community Preservation Plan, Fiscal Years 2012 – 2015, JM Goldson
2012 Regional Transportation Plan, Old Colony Planning Council
2012 Route 138 Bottleneck Analysis Study, Old Colony Planning Council
2012 Stoughton Energy Action Plan, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
2011 Bicycle and Pedestrian, Connectivity and Livability Study, Old Colony Planning Council\\
2011 Stoughton Library Feasibility and Design Study Report, CBT Architects
2011 Stoughton Square, Origins and Destinations Study, Old Colony Planning Council
2011 Town of Stoughton Annual Report, Town of Stoughton
2010 (June 10) Downtown Visioning Workshop Presentation, VHB and Cecil Group
2010 (June 10) Downtown Visioning Workshop Presentation, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
2010 Route 139 Corridor Study, Old Colony Planning Council
2010 Stoughton Facilities Master Plan, Drummeay Rosane Anderson, Inc.
2009 South Coast Rail Economic Development and Land use Corridor Plan, Good Clancy, Inc.
2009 Stoughton Housing Production Plan, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
2008 Route 27 Corridor Study, Old Colony Planning Council
2008 Stoughton Downtown Traffic Study, Camp, Dresser and McKee, Inc
2006 North Stoughton Planning Study, Cecil Group, Bonz & Company, Edwards & Kelcey
2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan, Horsley Witten Group
2006 Multi-Use Development and Parking in Stoughton Center, Planning Evaluations and Recommendations, Cecil Group
2005 Stoughton Central Business District Study, Old Colony Planning Council
2004 Stoughton Community Development Plan, Town of Stoughton
2002 Stoughton Reconnaissance Report, Heritage Landscape Inventory, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Public Archaeology Lab, Inc.
1987 Town of Stoughton Strategic Planning Study, Old Colony Planning Council
1968-1970 Master Plan for Stoughton Massachusetts, Metcalf & Eddy
1967 Feasibility Study North Stoughton Industrial Park, Austin Engineering Company & Malcolm E. Austin
1965 Downtown Concept Plan, Candeub, Fleissig, Adley and Associates
1960 A General Plan for Stoughton, MASS, Adams, Howard & Greeley

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Massachusetts Divisions of Fisheries and Wildlife
Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Erin Brandt,
Stoughton Assessor, Joseph Gibbons
Stoughton Animal Control Officer, Michael Gormaley
Stoughton Community Preservation Committee, John Morton
Stoughton Conservation Agent, John Conlon
Stoughton Council on Aging, Karen Hall
Stoughton Department of Engineering, Ben Fehan, Marc Tisdelle
Stoughton Department of Public Works, John Batchelder
Stoughton Department of Recreation, John Denison
Stoughton Fire Department, Chief Mark Dolloff
Stoughton Health Agent, Sandra Gabriel
Stoughton Historical Commission, Dwight Mackerron

Stoughton Housing Authority, Greg Bartlett
Stoughton Open space Committee, John Morton
Stoughton Police Department, Executive Officer Robert Divine
Stoughton Youth Commission, Karen Hall
Stoughton Zoning Bylaws
US Census Bureau
Warren Group

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APPENDIX

A-1: Introductory letter to Town Meeting Representatives, Boards and Committees

A-2: Chamber Visioning Summary

A-3: October 15, 2012 Community Visioning Forum Summary

A-4: October 2012, Youth Visioning Notes

A-5: Focus Group Meeting Notes

A-6: January 2013, Youth Visioning Notes

A-7: January 28, 2013 Community Visioning Forum Summary

A-8: Community Survey Results

Appendix

Item 1 of 8: Introductory letter to Town Meeting Representatives, Boards and Committees

Master Plan Committee

Master Plan Committee

Stoughton Master Plan

Taking Us into the Future[®]



Master Plan Committee

Stoughton Town Hall
Town Planner
10 Pearl Street, 2nd Floor
Stoughton, MA 02072

The Stoughton Master Plan Committee consists of seven members: Planning Board (two members), Stoughton Redevelopment Authority (two members), Board of Selectmen (one member), Conservation Commission, (one member) and a member of the business community. One of the goals of the Master Plan Committee is to provide an overview of policies and recommendations with action based items which will *Take our Community into the Future.*

Joe Scardino, Chairman, Planning Board
Dan Kelly, Vice Chairman, Conservation
John Stagnone, Board of Selectmen
Forrest Lindwall, Redevelopment Authority
Lou Gittu, Redevelopment Authority
Chris Petrie, Chamber of Commerce
Bill Angelos, Planning Board

The Master Plan Committee will be advised by our Town Planner, Noreen O'Toole and assisted by a professional planning consulting team led by Sue Brown and Juliet Walker of Brown Walker Planners and Kien Ho of BETA Group.

Stoughton Master Plan

Taking Us into the Future®



Overview

The Master Plan process will involve professional planning expertise as well as participation from the community. The process will identify and prioritize major issues for the Town. The plan will then address how to resolve those issues and shape a successful future for the Town. Master Plan Committee is looking forward to your participation in this important initiative.

We hope you, as a valuable stakeholder, will join us and encourage your friends and neighbors to participate in our first public forum.

Master Plan Community Forum
Monday, October 15, 2012
6pm to 9pm
Stoughton Senior / Youth Center
110 Rockland Street

A light dinner will be provided. Free transportation and childcare are available on a first-come first-serve basis. For more information about childcare and transportation call (781) 344-8882.

community discussions will engage the community — its residents, businesses, interest groups, and leaders — in conversations that will help to create a shared community vision (or future) for Stoughton and set goals for reaching that vision.

Stay in Touch

We would like to add you to our e-mail list so we can send you updates throughout the planning process. Please send an e-mail message (including your full name) to stoughtonmp@gmail.com. You can also send comments or questions about the Master Plan to that e-mail address or contact the Town at the phone number below.

Stoughton Town Hall
Town Planner
10 Pearl Street, 2nd Floor
Stoughton, MA 02072
Phone: (781) 341-1300 x9201 (Town Planner)
Email: stoughtonmp@gmail.com
Website: www.stoughtonmasterplan.org

Master Plan Committee

Using the existing conditions reports as a starting point for discussion, the consultants will help the Town create a vision statement and list of goals. The

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Appendix

Item 2 of 8: Chamber Visioning Summary

Summary of Visioning Discussion

Stoughton Chamber of Commerce
September 13, 2012 6:00- 8:30 PM
Stoughton Marriot, 200 Technology Center Drive

The Stoughton Chamber of Commerce following its regular monthly meeting on September 13, 2012 hosted a visioning discussion as part of the town's master planning process. About 25 Chamber members participated.

Brown Walker Planners provided a brief presentation on the town's Master Plan initiative focusing on what is being done in Phase One (Existing Conditions and Visioning) to help the community develop a shared vision for its future and identify key issues the town is facing. Participants in groups of 4 to 8 responded to questions provided and then shared the highlights of those conversations with each other.

A number of themes emerged from the conversations:

- Stoughton Center is seen as an area that requires immediate attention.
 - Fill vacant storefronts
 - Improve aesthetics and character of businesses and public areas
 - Encourage a mix of businesses that are diverse yet complimentary
 - Improve traffic conditions and the pedestrian environment
- Great schools benefit the business community as well as the community as a whole
 - Continue to improve school system including academic programs
 - Update school facilities
 - Create a culture that honors education
- Town and businesses must work together
 - Create consistent zoning and enforcement
 - Improve communications
 - Increase involvement with/from town government and residents

Notes as recorded by participants.

Share in a word or phrase what you think is a key characteristic of an economically healthy community. (This can be a characteristic that may or may not describe Stoughton at present. It can be something you want to work toward or make sure is retained in the future.)

- No Empty Stores
- Economically diverse and accessible
- Place where people can gather
- No need for food pantry
- Great schools – high academics
- Attract affluence
- Destination town
- Family attraction – great place to raise a family
- Downtown that doesn't look like a "dump"
- School system that will attract residents
- Better test scores for Stoughton
- Downtown road repairs
- Less road neglect
- Want more involvement from towns people
- Awnings in center of town
- Vibrant community setting
- New façade development
- Downtown revitalization
- Update infrastructure town wide
- Better workforce
- Managed traffic
- Identify businesses desired
- Fill empty spaces
- Active merchants associations
- Mixed use – residential uses above businesses
- Positive first impression
- Good schools

- Housing value
- Public safety
- Strong business community
- Low commercial vacancy
- Healthy transportation
- Business friendly
- Low commercial tax base

What do you believe are the town's principal challenges affecting its economy/business sector?

- Empty stores downtown
- Parking issues
- Gridlock
- Traffic
- Commercial taxes
- Rents
- Successful examples – china Town, Town Spa, Bobs destination location
- Zoning laws/guidelines
- Transient traffic
- Easy flow of traffic
- Expediting permitting and licensing
- Consistent zoning
- Business mix – diverse businesses and complimentary businesses
- Improved business relationship with the town
- Number of vacancies
- Enforcing signage laws
- Improving facades
- Improving curb appeal
- Lack of funding
- Infrastructure/facilities including Library and High School
- Town Center
- Area of Focus- identified priorities

- Financial resources are lacking
- Not enough commitment from residents
- Political atmosphere that is “anti-business”
- Lack of unilateral communication due to apathy

What tools/strategies do you believe will help Stoughton improve economically and better support its business sector?

- Lower commercial tax rates
- Move town yard – industrial area
- Post Office – go somewhere else
- Develop a parking area
- Improve education so more people want to come to Stoughton
- Bylaws and zoning that are consistent
- Clarification of zoning laws
- Improved public image
- Business liaison to attract and retain businesses
- Grants to improve business facades
- We need to get politicians more involved in businesses in town
- Make town more inviting
- Reduce red tape
- Hold business expo
- Promote and work with Chamber
- Merchants Group
- Create inviting environment
- Identify property owner needs
- Marketing/branding
- Collaboration between Boards and Committees
- Education
- Brochures/education
- Business Impact Board
- Business and Industry Commission

What challenges (as offered/listed from Question 3) should be first priorities for the Master Plan to address? **Choose 2 or 3.**

- Adjust commercial tax rates
- Move town yard
- Can we become more attractive to new businesses
- Open minds for business diversity
- Improve schools, library and other facilities
- Focus on downtown first
- We need to get politicians more involved with the businesses in a positive way
- Clarification of zoning laws
- Improve public image
- Business liaison to attract businesses

What tools or strategies (offered or new) best address the top priorities above? **Choose 2 or 3.**

- Business Impact Board
- Marketing
- Increase/find funding
- Reform existing Town zoning bylaws
- Code enforcement
- Increase town/resident involvement
- Promotion
- Make town more inviting
- Business expo



Appendix

Item 3 of 8: October 15, 2012 Community Visioning Forum Summary

Public Forum Summary

The Stoughton Master Plan Committee (MPC) hosted a public forum on Monday, October 15, 2012 from 6:00 to 9:00 PM at the Stoughton Senior Center. Child care services were provided on site by the Stoughton Youth Commission and transportation was offered by the Council on Aging.

The purpose of the forum was to provide an opportunity for community members to come together to begin to develop a shared community vision and identify key opportunities and challenges that the town faces.

One hundred fourteen participants registered on the sign in sheets representing a variety of Stoughton stakeholders including residents, business owners and managers, elected officials, town meeting representatives, town department, board and committee members and town staff.

SOCIAL HALF HOUR

6:00 to 6:30 PM

Participants were invited to come together for a light dinner and social half hour. Copies of Existing Conditions summaries were provided on tables in the center of the room. Maps of zoning districts, open space, and water and sewer service areas were displayed.



PRESENTATION

6:30 to 7:00 PM

The Master Plan Steering Committee chair Joe Scardino welcomed forum participants, acknowledged Town officials and staff and introduced speakers including Interim Town Manager Robert Feaster and Board of Selectman, Chair John Stagnone. Following remarks by the speakers on the importance of planning for Stoughton and the timeliness of this process the consultant team continued with a powerpoint presentation defining what a community vision and goals are, why they are important and how they are developed. The presentation also included facts about the Town's population, housing,

economy, land use, open space, natural and cultural resources, transportation, and public facilities and services (Powerpoint presentation is appended).

FACILITATED GROUP DISCUSSIONS

7:00 to 8:30 PM

Participants were asked to move into one of eight groups for facilitated discussions. The purpose of these discussions were to 1) share ideas about community values to help participants articulate a Community Vision and 2) discuss the challenges and opportunities to help identify key issues the community is facing.

Master Plan Committee members, town residents and a business manager as facilitators asked participants to imagine their desired future for Stoughton in 2030 and share what they like/value about Stoughton, and what they would like to see change. Participants were then asked what they think the primary challenges and opportunities are for Stoughton to achieve its community vision. As a final exercise participants were asked to indicate those likes and dislikes they felt most strongly about (using 6 dots per person), and indicating those challenges and opportunities they felt most strongly about (using 3 dots per person).

A scribe from each group took notes to document the discussion (Notes are appended).





GROUP PRESENTATIONS

8:30 am to 8:55 PM

Participants came back together in a large group to share information. A volunteer from each group summarized the highlights and outcome of their group discussion and prioritization activity.



FORUM WRAP UP

8:55 to 9:00 PM

The consultant team and MPC closed the meeting by thanking participants and inviting them to stay involved in the process. Participants were asked to leave additional comments on space provided on agendas, and to consider serving on working groups, to follow the process by visiting the project's web site (www.stoughtonmasterplan.org), and by attending future meetings. Existing Conditions Report summaries (appended) were distributed to each participant.

THANK YOU

The MPC wishes to thank the following for their time and energy in assisting in various ways with the Public Forum.

Karen Hall and the staff of the Council on Aging and Stoughton Youth Commission

Department of Public Works

Engineering Department

Stoughton Library

Stoughton Media Access Corporation

Stoughton Patch

Boston Globe

Group Facilitators

Most importantly thank you to all the members of the Stoughton community who came out and shared your thoughts and ideas.

FACILITATOR NOTES FROM TOWN FORUM

10/15/2012

PART 1:

What are your favorite things about Stoughton (that you want to ensure are continued into the future)?

- Services provided are great, Library, sports, STOYAC
- Town still has some rural feel, open space, lots of family ties.
- Proximity to Boston, Providence, Cape, highways and
- Public transportation.
- Playgrounds in town are nice; well kept
- Elementary/Middle Schools very good
- Fire and Police services are great
- Historical town with historical buildings a plus

What are your least favorite things about Stoughton (that you feel are important to change in the future)?

- Consensus of the group was that the Town Center needs to be the first priority of any plan for Stoughton.
- The Theater and Train Station need to be on that list as Historical buildings that should be saved and improved for use
- Parking in the center needs to be addressed, and there was even a few ideas about “bulldozing a lot of the Center and having a Town Green with roads nowhere near the actual center.
- Faxon Park was brought up as a possible paring area
- Zoning was a concern, specifically in some areas of town
- Where there is residential and business mixed that does not make any sense.
- Making Stoughton a “destination” town was mentioned more than one time
- Improvement of dangerous intersections and making Stoughton
- A safer place to walk or bike to get around
- Making Town Hall and its policies in regards to new
- Businesses easier to deal with
- Extend sewer all the way to Panera Bread on Rte 27
- Improvements need to be made to the school buildings as well as the perception that Stoughton High is not the place to send your kids.

- Stoughton is a “cut through” town, not somewhere where you would stop to do something i.e. shop, dine etc.
- Stoughton should look into attracting over age 55 communities
- Attract more large corporations like IKEA
- Train situation needs to be decided/rectified (Southeast Rail)

PART 2:

What do you think are the primary challenges and/or opportunities for Stoughton to achieve its desired future?

-
- Town Center
- Schools
- Perception of the town of Stoughton
- All need to assistance.
- Some felt Stoughton was not safe, drugs crime up??
- To many 40B's
- Median Income is dropping

Overall my group was very critical about their town, but they all liked their town and had no plans of leaving. Most of the folks in my group had been in Stoughton for the majority of their lives and wanted to see it succeed. Everyone was excited for what we were doing for the future of Stoughton. Everyone also thought that Stoughton could change for the better, but currently was not.

Facilitator Notes

Visioning Report
October 15, 2012

Note: Listing is prioritized with number of participant stickers in parenthesis

Part 1

1. ***What are your favorite things about Stoughton (that you want to ensure are continued into the future)?***
 - Public Transit – Commuter Rail (6)
 - Sense of community (5)
 - Diversity of population (5)
 - Open space (3)
 - Rural character (3)
 - Low tax rate (3)
 - Events, Holiday celebrations (2)
 - Proximity to Boston (2)
 - Sports Teams (1)
 - Ames Pond (1)
 - Lions Club Band Concerts (1)
 - Adoption of CPA
 - Public Safety

2. ***What are your least favorite things about Stoughton (that you feel are important to change in the future)?***
 - Design Standards / Signage Control (5)
 - Schools, Construction (5)
 - Traffic (3)
 - Zoning enforcement and control (3)
 - Route 138 Streetscape (3)
 - New large house development, Apts (3)
 - Public Transportation (2)
 - Lack of downtown parking and trees (2)
 - Lack of sidewalks, pedestrian safety (1)
 - Lack of rationalized zoning (1)
 - Business property landscaping (1)
 - Better jobs (1)
 - Lack of participation in Town government by younger residents (1)
 - Town Meeting structure (1)
 - Alex's (strip joining)
 - Street Name signs

PART 2

What do you think are the primary challenges and/or opportunities for Stoughton to achieve its desired future?

Challenges:

- Improve Schools- performance ranking (7)
- Improve Downtown appearances (6)

- Solve traffic congestion (5)
- Raising funds to meet challenges (3)
- Get new people to choose to live here for the right reasons (3)
- Access to good jobs (3)
- Signage, zoning and design controls (1)
- Expand sewer system with fair betterment cost allocation (1)
- Improve overall town image / branding (1)
- Redevelopment of deteriorated buildings – use eminent domain if necessary
- Overcome negative resistance to change
- Character and function changing for the worse
-

Opportunities:

- Form committee to implement Master Plan recommendations (3)
- Proximity to Boston (1)
- Commuter rail stop
- Better / More aggressive use of CPA funding
- Redevelopment of buildings

Part 1

- 1. What are your favorite things about Stoughton (that you want to ensure are continued into the future)?**
 - Open space and other resources (8)
 - Organizations work together
 - Convenient to highways (1)
 - Great municipal services
 - Ames Pond – lots of votes (4)
 - Train station (1)
 - Cynthia's Farm
 - Railroad station building (3)
 - Schools and teachers (2)
 - Local business owners (3)
 - Easy to walk around – safe (1)
 - Stoughton square (1)
 - Way people work together (3)
 - Library and services (2)
 - Youth Commission/Senior Center (1)
 - Services in general are good (2)
 - Nature (3)

- 2. What are your least favorite things about Stoughton (that you feel are important to change in the future)?**
 - Stoughton Center traffic, parking and layout (10)
 - Empty storefronts and lots (5)
 - Dirty railroad bed from Canton to Stoughton (1)
 - Poor enforcement of zoning regulations – hazardous buildings (2)
 - Traffic everywhere in town (1)
 - Lack of infrastructure for economic development (4)
 - Projects voted with no definite source for funding (3)
 - Trash around town – litter in general (3)
 - Lack of recreation for teens (movies, bowling, etc.) (3)
 - Lack of or condition of sidewalks (1)
 - Crosswalks – hard for pedestrians and drivers – better marking (2)
 - Alex's (1)

Part 2

What do you think are the primary challenges and/or opportunities for Stoughton to achieve its desired future?

Challenges

- Promote Stoughton's richness and history (5)
- Improve high school to attract and retain teachers (4)
- Increase revenue (3)
- Moving forward in thinking (4)
- How to utilize new South Coast Rail (2)
- Improve town meeting (2)
- Bring more young families in (1)
- Figure out what type of business diversity will work best (1)
- Make the center attractive for businesses (5)
- Utilize business development areas better and attract bigger businesses (2)
- Small town politics – change it (2)
- How to promote community given our diversity (2)

Opportunities

- Same opportunity throughout town
- Promoting Stoughton transportation, location, people, businesses (2)
- Creative thinking about utilizing resources of people (4)
- More grants and resources to improve (1)
- Open mindedness
- Plan for rail utilization
- Investigate other forms of government (1)
- Re-zone in more organized way (2)
- Make Stoughton more attractive to school families
- Encourage more business in town (2)
- More community activities like the farmer's market, community gardens, etc. (3)

Town of Stoughton Comprehensive Master Plan

Visioning, Existing Conditions and Key Issues

Part 1:

1. *What are your favorite things about Stoughton (that you want to ensure are continued into the future)?*

- a. Great Spirit
- b. People
- c. Atmosphere
- d. History
- e. Volunteers
- f. Inclusive
- g. Continuing involvement
- h. Pizza
- i. Library
- j. Good teachers/schools
- k. Train
- l. Community events
- m. Generous Business Community
- n. Central Location
- o. Senior Center
- p. Conservation Land
- q. Good Restaurants
- r. Chamber of Commerce

The group certainly rallied around the citizens of the town. They seemed to feel that no matter the physical appearance, there would always be redeeming qualities in the *people* that make this community great. That being said, having that as a top “like” is also a concern because you would only know that the people are great if you already *are* a part of this community. It takes living here to recognize such a perk, but how do we get people to realize this who have not already spent a good deal of time here? This is why we need other incentives to attract newcomers. Aside from the positive spirit and upbeat atmosphere, we liked the history of the town, the fact that as you drive through town there are historic sites—not only nationally historic, but particularly memory-linked locations for community members. The group felt that the volunteerism in the town, combined with the spirit creates an inclusive atmosphere where all can feel welcome.

We have great amenities like good restaurants, businesses, schools, a public library and a senior center. The group wanted to make sure these amenities were well-known and well-utilized. Another “like” is the fact that we have the commuter rail running right through town. It provides easy access to already close surrounding cities. The group also felt that the conservation in land and the places untouched by development were to be cherished as places where nature can thrive and our citizens can explore. The group had no problem coming up with things they liked about the

town. Most of the group members were long time citizens, 20+ years, and were beaming with pride despite having a lot they would also like to fix as you can see in the next section.

2. *What are your least favorite things about Stoughton (that you feel are important to change in the future)?*

- a. Town Center
- b. Traffic
- c. No parking downtown
- d. Not enough merchants downtown
- e. Perception of schools compared to neighboring towns
- f. Age of schools/high school
- g. Bad press/image
- h. Too many apartments
- i. Vacant stores/ lots
- j. No regulations for facades
- k. No “walkable” downtown

When the group members began discussing their least favorite things about Stoughton, they exhibited just as much passion as they did about their most favorite things. There was general conformity among answers and an overall sense of agreement. The hot-button issues were certainly the town center and the fact that there are so many vacant buildings or unappealing buildings in and around the center. The group would like to see more merchants down town—a community feeling. A group member with young children mentioned that she would like to be able to go to the center on a weekend evening with her family to see a movie in the theater and then walk around and maybe get ice cream in the square after. There is no sense of livelihood or warmth in the center. Businesses that do exist aren't exactly places in which you could browse. Businesses that the group members would like to see would be a quaint (used) bookshop, a shoe store, and other small community oriented businesses. Many of the vacant spots near the center should be filled, group members believe, before any new construction or development should happen. Another issue is that the businesses that are already established are aesthetically unappealing. There should be rules for signage and facades. There should be uniformity and bylaws about trash and general upkeep should be strictly enforced.

Another popular issue was the traffic in town. Group members feel that something needs to be done about traffic. One member also added that if we are going to have so many cars on our roads, the least we can do is give them a reason to stop rather than see them pass right through.

Additionally, group members felt that the perception of our schools is not too great even though *they* feel that we have strong schools. They think that perhaps getting new, updated schools would help with the negative perception. Group members agreed that having a positive perception of our schools by citizens in and out of the town's lines is essential to attracting young families with children. The structural soundness of the high school is highly questionable and this well-known fact, group members believe, could easily be a sole determinant for families to go elsewhere.

Additional questions asked and discussed during Part 1:

What does Stoughton look like, what areas or neighborhoods are distinctive?:

- a. Tanglewood
- b. Woods Pond
- c. Lennox Village
- d. Near Center
- e. Strip Malls (felt that if they were fixed up, each one could have its own unique flair and attract customers—many of the existing strip malls are in disrepair and may be unattractive to people, but there is potential)
- f. Cobbs Corner
- g. Ames Pond/West Street Area (conservation, parks, pond, nature)

What commercial businesses or clusters exist or are important in Town?:

- a. Ikea/Avon Retail Center
- b. Town Spa
- c. Target/Friday's
- d. The "Y"
- e. Technology Park
- f. Elite
- g. Lastoria
- h. Chinatown
- i. Cheng Du
- j. Mr. Chef
- k. Chateau
- l. Vargas Ins.
- m. Page's
- n. Bob's Foodmart
- o. Panera Mall

How might the government be different in 2030 than it is today?:

- a. Mayor as the form of government
- b. More transparent
- c. More responsive
- d. Boards on local TV
- e. More volunteers (have a greater percentage of the town be active in town government)
- f. Fewer boards

Who lives in Stoughton and what types of housing do they live in?:

- a. Apartments/ more transient (we have too many apartments and group members felt that people who are just renting may not have the same level of commitment to the community)
- b. More expensive homes (group members felt that adding more expensive homes now wouldn't exactly help because people who have the money to afford these homes wouldn't want to come here, but if we could improve the

community, adding more upscale homes would be an asset and raise the property value for everyone else)

- c. Smaller (more nice small homes for entry level people—would give younger generation an opportunity to move to Stoughton—as of now too expensive and no other incentives to bring people who grew up in Stoughton back to the town to raise new families)
- d. More over 55 housing

How do you retain residents?

- a. Improve high school/ school system
- b. Offer incentives
- c. Energy efficiency
- d. Lower taxes (this was the input of one group member but other group members argued—how can we lower taxes when we need to accomplish all of the things we have talked about tonight? We have lower tax increases than the towns around us so there is no dire need to lower taxes as an incentive)
- e. Efficient use of what we have (fill vacant buildings and beautify what already exists before jumping into new projects)
- f. Invest in community invest in downtown ***
- g. Build civic pride
- h. Pride in homes/ neighborhood
- i. Increase volunteers
- j. More entry level/elderly housing

What detracts from your quality of life here in Stoughton?:

- a. Lack of parks
- b. Traffic
- c. More sidewalks/ crosswalks
- d. Rental properties
- e. Route 138 properties

Part 2:

3. *What do you think are the primary challenges and/or opportunities for Stoughton to achieve its desired future?*

- a. Downtown ****
- b. Incentives to locate here
- c. Better PR
- d. Money
- e. Train (This was an important one to the members. They felt that it was ridiculous that we weren't capitalizing on the amount of people coming and going in the area by the Stoughton commuter rail stop. People are simply getting dropped off and picked up but there is nothing to make them stay and possibly spend money in any local shops while they wait/depart.)

- f. New High School ***
- g. Existing Zoning
- h. Existing Development Patterns
- i. Enforce bylaws
- j. Pick up trash
- k. Developing sense of pride
- l. Traffic (particularly 138 North of town) ****

The question that summed up the experience for the group members is the following:

Is the character of the town changing for the better?

NO!

It was evident that the group members really love Stoughton, but really want to see improvements. The group members expressed frustration and reiterated the fact that they hope this process is fruitful. They all agreed on so much and mostly hit home the fact that this town has so much potential. A point that was made in various ways throughout the discussion that is worth noting is the fact that the group members felt that that the town had no sense of a true identity, no distinct flavor, flair, or personality. You might let someone know you live here by saying, “that’s where Ikea and Town Spa are.” But beyond identifying key businesses, Stoughton has no clear elements of recognition. Possessing a “fingerprint,” if you will, members felt, could push Stoughton forward as a destination rather than a place through which you drive on your way to somewhere else.

I received positive reaction to the process, but again, members’ positivity was somewhat jaded by a slight doubt as to whether this process would pan out or not.

Favorite things:	Least Favorite
Accessibility (many major roads, train, easy to get to Boston and elsewhere) #4	Traffic #4
Public transportation/train station #5	Stoughton Center/ (navigating through) #2
Location (close to Boston and other locations ... Providence, cape) #2	Parking Downtown (not enough not convenient) #3
Convenience (shopping needs) #4	
Government (like current form - not city government)	Zoning issues/land use (behind the times) #3
Reasonable tax rate #2	Outdated regulations
Public safety (police & fire)	Lack of sewer plan
Snow removal (best around)	Need for code enforcement #2
	Lack of Sewer #1
	Electrical issues (power outages - takes a long time to get power restored)
	Not enough stop lights
	Lack of sidewalks #1
	Lack of crosswalks
Community spirit (especially when a person/family is in need) #3	Divisiveness – youth vs. voters (Government [town/school] pits one against other) #2
Wonderful Community events	Nepotism/(politics - and town jobs ... who you know)
Level of involvement of town	Need New Faces at community events/ recruitment of volunteers – not enough participation - same people take on many tasks
Neighborhoods	
Good school system #5	Schools (good – could be better) #2
Youth programs	Infrastructure of school buildings (many built at same time and now in bad shape) #1
	Dilapidated High School in need of replacement #1
Diverse housing	(NB see Part 3 re CH 40B housing especially rentals)
Diverse population	Fear of overdevelopment #3
History of town	Aesthetics #1
Historical society/landmarks	So many vacancies in downtown area #2
Train station (historic - should be used as a train station)	Fix/restore train station #3
Wetlands #1	Fear of flooding
Open space in town #2	

Footnote: a # symbol followed by a number indicates the number of votes for an item.

Vision for Stoughton's Future Challenges and opportunities

Decision making

- Make decisions not just for today but for 5, 10, 15 years from now #4
- Need to make 2 or 3 BIG decisions and not be afraid to act on them (e.g., be willing to change roadway pattern in downtown) #4

Commercial development

- Coherent strategic plan for commercial development with support from workforce development
- Build a sustainable commercial base #5
- Vibrant downtown for community and businesses #6
- Sustainability (building, planning)

Schools

- To have highly ranked schools, current technology, current resources
- We need a vision for the schools – we need great schools #4
- More funding for the schools #2
- Additional services for children before HS to prepare them for AP classes and to help them become advanced students #1

Demographic change

- 40B housing strains social issues (fights before school), demographics (lower income), schools, resources #3
- Balance needs of demographics within a financial pool #1
- Maintaining/expanding community events ... more intergenerational events/programs

Footnote: a # symbol followed by a number indicates the number of votes for an item.

Stoughton Master Planning Meeting Recap

Favorite Aspects of Stoughton, MA

- 1) The open space (the group wanted to keep the open space such as parks)
- 2) The Proximity to transportation/ease of access to Highway and Commuter
- 3) The diversity of population
- 4) The School system (teachers)
- 5) Public Safety
- 6) The group felt that the public services in town were good
- 7) The community atmosphere (youth and senior programs)
- 8) The school's music program
- 9) Some other mentions: Cost of living/Good volunteers/involvement, close to shopping

Please Favorite Things About Stoughton/Things to Change

- 1) The number 1 thing that was a problem contender with the group is the blight within Stoughton. The vacant lots, so many empty buildings, the buildings that are in disrepair
- 2) The school infrastructure was a giant negative issue
- 3) In the school regards: The buildings and maintenance of the schools
- 4) Traffic and safety (for pedestrians, bikers, crosswalks, etc)
- 5) The Center of Town was a large issue: from navigation, appeal, parking, and overall visual and feel
- 6) There was a desire for increased sidewalk access in town
- 7) Other aspects: Bike paths, town website, library building maintenance,

From here we moved into a 'Brainstorming' session

- 1) What Do We Need To Do: Increase Tax base
- 2) We would like to see a 'Business Concierge or Economic Development Agency to help mitigate the transition for a business into town
- 3) Why would people not want to live in Stoughton: the school system rating going down, bad press for the town, and the Stoughton School staff is not diverse enough
- 4) Why do people want to remain in Stoughton: Potential. The Town of Stoughton has potential to grow. There is a great community and all the recreational open space makes Stoughton a great town. Plus the location to both the city and other areas of importance

What Detracts from the Quality of Life in Stoughton:

- 1) Stoughton is not pedestrian/cyclist friendly
- 1) Challenge for Stoughton: Building the correct and positive infrastructure: water/sewer/etc.

Facilitator Notes

The following notes are taken directly from a facilitated small group discussion at the Public Forum on October 15, 2012. Numbers in parenthesis indicate # of dots placed on item during prioritization activity.

Part 1

1. ***What are your favorite things about Stoughton (that you want to ensure are continued into the future)?***
 - Schools (3)
 - Local Theater/Café (2)
 - Open Space/Conservation/Parks and Recreation (2)
 - Sporting events/teams (baseball/soccer/football)
 - Train
 - Historical sites (3)
 - People (4)
 - Trend of increasing diversity (5)
 - Farmer's Market/Community Gardens (2)
 - Access to Transportation
 - Library (3)
 - Community Activities
 - Active Government/Town Meetings (4)
 - YMCA (1)
 - Stoughton Media Access
 - Pennysaver/Stoughton Journals (2)

2. ***What are your least favorite things about Stoughton (that you feel are important to change in the future)?***
 - Traffic!! (1)
 - Sewer & Water upgrades/new (1)
 - Separating indoor/outdoor water
 - Parking in Town (1)
 - Street lights/heavy pedestrian traffic areas (schools) (1)
 - Sidewalk improvements
 - Crosswalks (need signage) (2)
 - Crossing guards
 - Update zoning bylaws (3)
 - Police presence
 - Enforcing traffic laws/jaywalking (1)
 - Bike paths(safe) for children (3)
 - Business friendly (tax practices), uniform tax rates, permits (2)
 - Encourage more cultural activities: concerts/art & participation (5)
 - Beautification o route 138
 - Reroute 27 (1)
 - Demolition/Beautification of dilapidated dwellings/improvements to architecture (3)
 - Technological advancements to improve street traffic (sensors) (1)
 - Improve student achievement (1)
 - Increase Town Hall hours (2)
 - Urban renewal of Stoughton Center (1)
 - Train Underground/tunnel (3)/Stoughton Center Flyover (3)

- Fix sink hole rt 139
- Reroute 139 (3)
- Transparent dome over Stoughton Center (1)
- Attract businesses with high paying jobs (2)
- Pedestrian bridge at schools/town center (1)
- More pronounced art district/eclectic restaurants (3)
- More residents' feedback (pennysaver/voting privileges), what do people really want – serve different demographics (2)
- Car traffic heavy at Hanson, West and middle School (1)
- Need to develop open space we already own (1)
- More merchant participation in Town Meetings/Decisions (2)
- Bring infrastructure to southern portion of 27 (2)
- Improve roadway lighting (3)

PART 2

What do you think are the primary challenges and/or opportunities for Stoughton to achieve its desired future?

- Better Schools – Educating parents to empower their children (1)
- Develop parking/traffic in Stoughton center (7)
- Stoughton lacks a unique identity tat we all cherish (2)
- Needs inspirational architecture /improve vacant dilapidated buildings (2)
- Help local merchants/businesses (3)
- Relocate Post Office out of Town Center (4)
- Make Stoughton Center a cultural/civic center , relocate businesses (theaters/restaurants) (5)
- What do businesses/merchants need to make their businesses thrive (seek merchant participation) (1)
- Can small businesses compete with big box stores? What kinds of businesses can succeed?
- Update zoning bylaws (2)
- Marketing ploy – why should businesses come to Stoughton?
- Create better environment for the arts (6)
- Visioning survey (Andover) (2)
- Encourage destination businesses (create business communities) (2)
- Architectural dome/Iconic community structure (2)
- What is Stoughton's reputation?(3)
- Decrease crime/homelessness/drug use (1)

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Appendix

Item 4 of 8: October 2012, Youth Visioning Notes

Master Plan: Group 8 notes (# of stickers)

Positive Reviews:

- Positive: Scenic Roads
- Positive: Ames Pond and Bird Street Conservation land (1)
- Positive: Library and Concerts in the Park (2)
- Positive: Parades
- Positive: 4th of July events (3)
- Cedar Hill golf course—but, could use a new clubhouse
- Senior Center (1)
- New Farmers Market (1)
- Lessa Playground: people visit from neighboring towns, a positive draw (1)
- School has great Fine Arts programs (music and art) and Sports program outstanding (4)
- STOYAC
- IKEA (2)
- Costco is on the border
- Target
- Community Spirit
- YMCA (3)
- Stoughton Chamber (1)
- Public Safety Services (4)

Negative/Needs improvement:

- Downtown-Uniformity needed (2)
- Increase Open Space downtown (1)
- Increase education rating: raise the bar (3)
- Traffic signals cause problems due to timing issues and placement
- DD Turnpike Street, signal issue (1)
- Speed traps and schools could be strictly enforced, to increase safety
- Negative: Stoughton Center (6)
- Negative: State Theater and could use a specific site to support the community theater
- Could improve beautification of Stoughton with more trees and plants (2)
- Need an active Garden club
- Youth need a positive place to “hang out”; Suggested establishing center at the Train Station
- Town Should purchase the Train Station (2)
- Town should utilize the Armory
- Town could use a Dog Park; suggests this could be adjacent to the Lessa Playground
- Groom Chemung Hill, so youth could use it safely for winter sledding
- Need a Bike Shop
- New businesses: Trader Joes or Whole Foods (2)

- 40b Development (2)
- Judge Rottenberg (2)
- Traffic (6)

Challenges or Recommendations for improvement:

- Parking!! (3)
- Lack of funds/money
- Commuter rail: Seen as a positive opportunity, but some concern about what exactly Town will get from this arrangement; wonder what is going to happen next (1)
- Congestion, traffic (1)
- Low School ratings (6)
- Alex's: positive and negative business (2)
- Establish a Town Green (2)
- Fish and Game: Neighbors disturbed by the constant shooting
- Downtown buildings (2)
- Recommendation: 100% Coverage of town sewer and water (2)
- Town should purchase down town, bulldoze it and turn it into a green area, and move the businesses to another location nearby, bordering the green or just down the road
- Town should purchase downtown, make the renovations needed to improve the area , and then lease to businesses (2)
- Town should move the post office lot, tear down the current building and turn it into parking
- Dredge the ponds (6)
- Get a Dog park (1)
- We should lower the tracks and depress the rail (so the road can go over it)

Needs Changing

redo stoughton center, center needs traffic lights, crossing guards, undercover cops to help pedestrians	8
add shopping center / shopping	9
entertainment	1
drama / problems	6
more restaurants	9
improve high school	2
make it look better/cleaner/pretty	1
better teachers	2
SHS and OMS needs to be redone	
not appealing to visitors	
spread the word about events	
space	
my neighborhood house prices dropping from 700,000s to mid 600,000	
no bike paths	
it's in the swamp	1
school lunches	
more school dances	
more places kids can be kids	3
more businesses (more small businesses)	
more money	
safer	
things to do	
more teen centers	1
people's attitudes (bad towards town)	
garbage	
it's tiny	
things to do	1
town clean up	
too much fast food	
not enough "sit down" restaurants	
center is dirty and no stores	
taxes	1
size/population	
cops	
more video game stores	
reopen theater	1
more brazilian restaurants	
appearance (rundown areas)	2
crime rate	
sidewalks / walking safety	1
SHS football field	
drugs	
"kind of ratchet" / "ghetto parts"	1
MCAS	
not scenic	
nicer roads	1
more police control	
athletic facilities	
food	
spanish teachers	

Keep you healthy

sports	11
new food policy	3
community garden	3
healthy food (no ice cream)	2
health programs	
subway / healthy foods	x
half-a-days walking	
subway	
lunch options	
only water in class	
ability to hike	
ability to walk	
ability to bike	
track	
activities	
gyms	5
more programs	x
less fast food	
workout	
athletics	3
walking places	
good influence from	
community	
YMCA	7
gym class	1
grocery stores	1
salads	1
good health programs	
fitness places	1
lots of sports programs	
better places to eat	
more fields	
biking in neighborhoods	
people	
food	
veggies	
healthy drinks	
more entertainment	
farmer's market	
school	1
fast food	
McDonald's	1
Stoyac	
renovation of CAPP	
after school sports	
school weight room	
physical ed. at school	
salad bars	
school lunch	2
parents	
sushi restaurant	
friends	1
healthier restaurants	
calories on menus	

make it hard to be healthy

not pedestrian friendly	4
drugs	1
alcohol	29
fast food (wendy's, taco bell, McDonald's)	5
school lunches	
everyone eats junk food	2
hard to walk around / no sidewalks	1
can't have snacks (unfair to athletes)	2
bad food in cafe ("pizza - how is that a veg?")	
food not appealing to students for school lunches	
burgers / chips in lunch	
too much homework, no time to exercise	
no space to go on early morning run	
hard to get to biking, hiking and walking trails	
can't really walk around town	
classes aren't as interactive	
less programs	
not a lot of fitness centers let kids in	1
not enough crosswalks to walk safely	
some people are bad influences	
no enough sidewalks	
no bike routes	1
not enough affordable gyms	
all the pizza (Town Spa)	4
TGI Fridays	
not many are motivated	
no gyms	
no sidewalks to run/jog	
trash everywhere	
no healthy restaurants	1
need smoke free environment	
convenience stores	
junk food	
"gangstas"	
people are negative	
restaurants are only place for fun	
all the ice cream (Daddy's Dairy)	3
all the chinese food	
grease on food	
lack of activity all day	
drugs	
small gyms	
sit at desk all day	2
homework	1
cost of sports	
home life	
people	

Freshmen Visioning Survey Results

Best Things about Stoughton

people	10
sports	11
school	3
friends	7
town spa	4
cheng du	
diversity	5
community	3
school / community spirit	5
memories	
support	
accessibility	
how close to city	
know people around	
school	2
music	4
houses	
pizza	2
knowing a lot of people	
athletic department	
center	
close community	4
everywhere you can walk	
close family and friends	
low crime rate	1
nice neighborhoods	
grocery stores	
space	
“chill spots”	
the society	
food	
friendliness of people	
public parks	
after school activities	
McDonald's	
Wendy's	
Dunkin Donuts	
good police	
good to live here	
grew up here	
came together over tragedy	
nice teachers	
YMCA	
playgrounds	
jobs	
small	

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Appendix

Item 5 of 8: Focus Group Meeting Notes



Downtown Focus Group Report
January 22, 2013

On December 6th 2012 we started the Downtown Focus Group meeting with a Power Point Presentation, providing some existing conditions as background information which leads us into our questionnaire. Included is the presentation as well as other exhibits (downtown renderings, traffic circulations alternatives) used during our discussions.

Issues Raised (Existing and Future)

Traffic Volume, Patterns/Circulation
Signage for parking and T
Number of Vacancies
Lack of Design Consistencies
South Coast Rail Extension (How it fits in what we want to do)
Lack of Businesses to draw people to the downtown
Post Office (Relocate)
Lack of Public Open Space (park, green space)
Malcom and Parson's Demolished Building

Strengths

Potential
Theater
MBTA
Clubs
Historic Buildings
Traffic Volume (How do you get them to stop and shop)



Types of Businesses for the Downtown

Specialty Shops
Restaurant
Coffee Shop
Dry Cleaners
Bank
Drug Store
Ice Cream Shop
Theater

Town Positives

Great Community/Residents
Open Space/Conservation Land
Jogging/Hiking Trails
Organized Youth Programs
Government/Town Services
Chamber of Commerce
Exposure/Proximity to Boston

The group felt that additional housing projects should come after an over plan is complete for the downtown, with a preference that new businesses should be a priority, then housing. Having a better business base would provide a stronger housing market.

Traffic circulation or the lack of, was a major concern for the group and the impacts the South Coast Rail Extension would have on our ability to develop and implement an urban development plan for the downtown. The Town has been studying the downtown traffic patterns since the mid 60's, the time is now to make a decision on changes to circulation patterns as that will affect future land uses within and around the downtown. Included with this report is potential Canton Street Extension running parallel with the existing train tracks, one way circulation patterns from the 70's, (done by MASS HIGHWAY) and others.



The group also felt the downtown would benefit from a design and signage by-law, as well as enforcement of existing by-laws.

The re-opening of the theater and relocation of the post office were also strongly supported by the group. As the theater would be a draw to bring folks to the downtown and provide much needed entertainment for residents and supporting other businesses in the downtown area. The Post Office site is one of the single largest sites in our downtown and is underutilized. Depending on traffic changes this site could be used for redevelopment or a park.

Submitted by the Downtown Focus Group

Stoughton Fire/Rescue
1550 Central St
Stoughton MA 02072

To: Noreen O'Toole
From: Chief Mark W. Dolloff
Date: January 8, 2013
Subject: Master Plan Focus Group Notes
Public Infrastructure

Members Present: Ben Fehan, John Batchelder, Bill Millet, Scott Carrara, Scott Hersee, Paul J. Berger and Eric Arbeene

As a group we decided to prioritize the importance of the Towns top 4 Public Infrastructure needs.

We feel all items given as examples are important but the number one item of sewer will greatly affect all other items. The committee's priority list is as follows.

1. Sewer(expansion, new connection policies and bylaws requiring connections)
2. Water (lack of proper fire protection flows industrial, current only 66% of residential)
3. Transportation (most important traffic in Stoughton Center)
4. Storm water (drainage; start in the downtown area and work outward)

The focus group felt strongly about the expansion of sewer in the community would have the positive effects of an increased tax base. The expansion of sewer on Washington St. south of the center and the expansion on Park St towards the Brockton line would provide greater opportunity for industrial and commercial expansion of the town's tax base. This type of expansion will have a low impact on the use of the towns services yet provide the increased revenue needed to maintain the other infrastructure items discussed by the group, Public Safety and Schools.

Eric Arbeene explained to the group what OCPC can do to assist the town with funding and technical assistance. We also talked about availability of possible grants to assist in accomplishing any of the desired outcomes.

As a group we were all in agreement with items in the priority list. To sum it all up the group felt very strongly that an important key to the future of Stoughton's infrastructure is like building a house. All components are important but they are only as good as a strong foundation and that is what sewer expansion will provide.

Memorandum

To: Town of Stoughton Master Plan Committee
From: Erin Brandt, Energy Planner, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
On: January 11, 2013
Re: Stoughton's Comprehensive Master Plan Energy Questions

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) presented the draft Stoughton Energy Action Plan to the Stoughton Local Energy Action Plan (LEAP) Working Group on December 5, 2012. An updated version of the plan and the December 5 presentation are attached to this memo. Members of the Stoughton Master Plan Committee took part in the meeting and raised valuable questions and comments regarding the promotion of clean energy efforts in Stoughton through the Stoughton Comprehensive Master Plan. This memo answers the Master Plan Committee's questions regarding MAPC's work to develop the Stoughton Energy Action Plan. It also highlights how clean energy work can be integrated into the Stoughton Comprehensive Master Plan.

Question 1 - Is the focus (of the Energy Action Plan) on municipal properties, policies, and initiatives or private or both?

Both. The Stoughton Energy Action Plan contains recommendations, including facility improvement projects, financing tools, policies, programs, and utility incentives on advancing clean energy efforts in the municipal, residential, and commercial sectors. On the municipal side, pursuing energy work in municipal facilities will not only bring significant energy savings, it will also position the Town as a leader in the realm of energy efficiency and renewable energy development in the community. However, given that the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors in Stoughton account for 96% of the Town's energy consumption, it is crucial that any clean energy or sustainability effort, like the Stoughton Master Plan, address energy use outside of municipal facilities.

Question 2 - What rate of change is reasonable?

The Stoughton Energy Action Plan outlines a five-year plan that guides the Town through the process of establishing clean energy goals, prioritizing clean energy projects, allocating financing resources, and designing and implementing community energy projects and programs.

On the municipal side, it is recommended that the Town utilize the data from MassEnergyInsight from various energy assessment reports that are documented in the Action Plan to establish a reasonable energy reduction target and renewable energy goals as soon as possible. Common energy reduction targets for Massachusetts municipalities range from 10 to 20%. Further, many communities have established a five year municipal energy reduction target of 20% to qualify for the Green Communities Program. The Town of Stoughton must consider its priorities, staff capacity, and funding sources before establishing an energy reduction goal. Please refer to pages I-18 and I-19 for MAPC's recommended scenarios for municipal energy targets and goals. Once goals

are established, the Town can prioritize projects and develop a viable timeline for achieving municipal energy goals.

On the residential and commercial side, in order to guide community energy efficiency efforts and increase participation in MassSave, it is recommended that the Town establish a MassSave participation goal and, potentially, an energy reduction goal in the residential and commercial sectors. The Action Plan recommends that the Town set a goal of increasing residential/commercial MassSave participation by 25%, meaning if 100 households participated in year X, the following year's goal would be 125 participants. The 25% target was set based upon recommended targets for other MassSave outreach programs in Massachusetts. Setting such a target requires the Town acquiring aggregate utility baseline data on community energy consumption and participation in MassSave. Once such data is acquired and original goals are set, the Town can adjust its goals and the timeline for meeting such goals based on initial results.

It is recommended that the Master Plan Committee work closely with the Energy Committee and the Stoughton Town Manager and Board of Selectman to establish the various energy targets and goals in 2013 in order to include such goals in the Stoughton Master Plan.

Question 3 - How informed is the general public about this issue?

Feedback from the Stoughton LEAP Working Group, which included representatives from the Municipality, the Stoughton Energy Committee, the Stoughton Chamber of Commerce, and residents, revealed that there is at least a perceived lack of awareness on clean energy opportunities among Stoughton residents and businesses, and that this is a critical barrier to promoting clean energy adoption in Stoughton. The Working Group found that there are currently insufficient ways for Stoughton residents and businesses to learn about available resources and financing options for energy efficiency and renewable energy installations. Additionally, the group concluded that there is also a lack of trust in third-party energy service vendors, such as energy auditors and renewable energy developers, among the community, and that more the community needs guidance from trusted sources on who to trust.

The Stoughton Energy Committee is interested in designing and implementing an outreach campaign and clean energy programs that (1) inform residents and businesses on the benefits of and incentives for clean energy opportunities, (2) help residents and businesses vet vendors and aggregate demand, and (3) showcase local success.

Question 4 - What is the Town's capacity to deal with this issue?

The Town of Stoughton has an eight member Energy & Sustainability Committee (ESC) is a citizen's advisory group to Stoughton's Board of Selectmen that focuses on local energy and sustainability issues pertaining to energy and resource conservation, greenhouse gas monitoring, waste reduction, and community outreach. The Committee is comprised of volunteer members from the Stoughton community who leverage their broad range of individual expertise-including

environmental science, biological science, facility management, construction management, mechanical and systems engineering, education, and public policy-to advance local energy and sustainability efforts in the community.

The ESC has been a critical driving force behind many of the town's energy and sustainability efforts to date. Although the ESC has plans to continue to promote both municipal and residential/commercial clean energy work, MAPC's work on the Action Plan highlighted the need for additional support and capacity. On the municipal side, in order to achieve significant energy savings, it is critical for the Town to identify a municipal position that can lead and manage energy projects, serving as a champion for clean energy efforts and as a liaison to the ESC.

In order to maximize the Town's municipal capacity for implementing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, it is also recommended that the Town take advantage of available utility incentives, grants, as well as creative financing mechanisms, such as Energy Services Company (ESCO) performance contracting. It should also leverage regional collaboration efforts, such as MAPC's Bulk Purchasing of LED Street and Outdoor Lighting project and the Regional ESCO Procurement project, to consolidate lower pricing and better quality services, as well as to mobilize peer-to-peer learning opportunities with other communities.

On the residential and commercial side, while the Committee has plans to support residential and commercial efforts, due to their limited capacity, it will be important that municipal staff, as well as others in the community help with this effort. It is recommended that Stoughton capitalize on existing programs like MassSave and other utility incentives to promote community energy efficiency and renewable energy installation. To mobilize participation in such programs, strong outreach that helps familiarize residents and businesses with available opportunities and build trust in utilities and third-party vendors is crucial. Workshops and competitions are examples of outreach activities that have worked well in many communities throughout the country.

Question 5 - What can we learn from comparable communities?

Throughout the Commonwealth, municipalities play a critical role in leading by example for clean energy and sustainability work. For example, many cities and towns are Green Communities and have showcased clean energy opportunities through municipal efficiency improvement projects.

There are many valuable resources that provide best practices for designing and implementing clean energy actions in cities and towns. A good starting point is the Department of Energy Resources (DOER)'s Green Communities Library (<http://www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities-clean-tech/green-communities/green-communities-library.html>). The website features a list of example plans and case studies provided by cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth to help municipalities pursue clean energy opportunities. Part II of the Energy Action Plan also provides some best practices of clean energy actions that can be adopted in Stoughton.

Notes from Image Focus Group

POOR IMAGE

Real estate perspective

Most people that move to town do so by default. It is not their 1st choice.

Usually Stoughton is the second or third choice community

Stoughton is the poor step child to Sharon, Canton & Easton

Median price of homes is \$ 251,000

Canton is \$ 391,000

Easton is \$ 379,000

Sharon is \$ 408,000

Poor School System

Public Safety/Government

Poor condition of public property from the streets, to the town owned buildings and schools

Lack of commitment to make any substantive changes

Neglect of the town, its people and resources

Lack of credibility in town government due to lack of accountability

Lack of trust in the town government

There has been no transparency in the government (A lot of back door deals)

Town does not have a mission statement

Government offices have personal agendas that maybe counterproductive to the good of the town

Poor public relations

Poor relations between the school department and the governing body leading to the perception of a dysfunctional or at least below par school system.

Town is known for:

Adult bookstore
Blighted town center
Poor press stories
Dysfunctional Government
IKEA
Target
Jordan's Furniture

POSITIVE IMAGES

Actor who starred in Footloose
High School Band
Open Space
Recreation Facilities
High School Programming
Library – Investment, Renovation & Addition
Town Activities – 4th of July
Sister city of Wisconsin
Diverse Demographics
Proximity to Boston
Stoughton's nexus of transportation
Train Infrastructure
Did you know we have a former HS football player who now plays for the Giants?
Did you know there is a Stoughton Native & HS graduate who is now a top urologist @ John Hopkins
Lori McKenna – Does she really need an introduction.

State & Federal judges who are town natives

Ways to help image

Promote the historical treasures of the town

Create value and ownership to the residence by creating segments of a village highlighted by the commonality from a historic perspective.

Good Things about Stoughton

The people are welcoming

The community sticks together and helps each other out

2nd Meeting

We need to put forward our image for who we are and not who we are not.

This is a working class town and we need to embrace that as an ideal not as a negative. However we cannot accept that it is good enough we must strive for better and not become complacent.

We need a unified plan for our downtown. This will require:

Support of the entire town

Changes in zoning

Support of the businesses in that area

Promote new street scape plan!!! Investment

Town government

Need to overcome the apathy with in the town

Need incentive for people to fix town property. Maybe tax credits to fix property downtown

Capital planning committee

Schools

Don't judge schools on MCAS???

The town needs to better promote successful High School Graduates.

Need to promote the hall of fame at high school

Need to promote Town Pride

We need to promote the idea that just good enough is not good enough.

We need to strive for excellence

We need to get rid of the inferiority complex that pervades the town

We need to promote the good things the kids of town do:

The David Wade shooting death

Issues with government accountability

Money spent on Library

Water tanks so far behind on maintenance now must be fixed to the tune of 12 million dollars.

Cell companies won't even mount their towers on the tanks.

The following are demographics of our town:

Low degree of post-secondary education correlates:

Low SAT Scores

Lower Income

Lower real estate prices

Town entrance at 138 why hasn't trees been planted to cover NGRID – Where is Money??

Taxes

There was a lot of discussion around raising taxes to pay for the things that are needed not only to improve the Town image but to maintain and upgrade its infrastructure, elevate its schools and change the fiscal outlook of the town. To raise taxes however there must be:

1. A better accountability of how the taxes are being spent now
2. Specifically what a tax increase would be used for – Not just put into the general fund for example

The consensus is that we must be willing to pay for it by better use of the funds available to us, obtaining outside funds through grants, and both federal and state funding, and a tax increase only when all other options have been exhausted.

It was noted that a tax increase of any type would put a burden on many families in Stoughton initially but the long term benefits would far out way any short term benefits. Not moving forward with change will cause further depreciation and deprivation in the town.

Conclusion from these two meetings:

The town needs a multifaceted approach to put forward a new and enlightening Image for the town. This must be accomplished on several fronts and through the diligent efforts of the Town leaders, the town volunteers, the local politicians, the local businesses, and the media. The focus should be as follows however it is imperative that this is ever evolving and changing as the needs persist.

Town Government

1. Reduce the town apathy
 - a. Create term limits for all elected positions, appointed board members, and members of all commissions. This must start from the top down with the Board of Selectmen.
 - b. Shorten town meeting to make access greater for all residence.
2. Increase the credibility of the Town government and affiliate agency's by increasing accountability and transparency

Town Pride

1. Promote the High School Grads that have made it the Hall of Fame
2. Promote Stoughton residence – both past and present that are making a difference in this world.
3. Promote the good things that the youth of this town continue to do.

4. Promote how close this community is and how well they come together to help each other.

Town schools

1. Promote the education our students receive
2. Promote the good in the schools
3. Promote the school sports programs
4. Promote the school music program
5. Promote the education level of all of our faculty
6. Promote the history of our schools
7. Down play the MCAS scores

Town access

1. 138 - From North - Use money set aside to screen NSTAR substation
2. 138 – From South – Add sewer to increase development along corridor from Brockton to town square.
3. 138 through town center in both directions – Create a street scape plan that can be promoted as the upcoming face of Stoughton. The new up and coming town.
4. 139 - promote development @ Stoughton Crossing
5. Town center – Promote upgrades and new development by creating a master plan for this area and implement it through zoning changes, permit access and tax incentives to the owners.

Town Real Estate

1. Promote the historical nature of the town
2. Create neighborhoods and promote each one for what is positive about that neighborhood.
3. Promote the good homes and downplay the blighted homes
4. Use local brokers to help bring up the perception of Stoughton

This is just the beginning. We have an engaged group and I plan on setting up another meeting soon to see how many of these idea's can be implemented.

To: Noreen O'Toole, Town Planner
From: John W. Denison, Jr. Recreation Director
Re: Open Space and Recreation Focus Group, 1/17/13
Date: 1/22/13

In Attendance: Laurie Dembowski, Amanda Dembowski, Tim Howe, Donna Ayers, Laurice Rubel, Gerry McDonald, Gail Piatkowski, Ardis Johnston, Alicia Toney, James Conlon, Denise Lochiatto, John Linehan, Karen Hall, Christine Howe

Does the Town have adequate open space and recreation facilities and programs?

Facilities – Consensus was that the Town should acquire more green space when it is available. Existing open space needs to be better marked with appropriate signage and maps where applicable. A greater effort to make the public aware of the existing open space and its offerings is a necessity. Bike racks at and bicycle access to existing open space (Bird St. and Glen Echo conservation areas) might encourage more users. Bike path development in conjunction with the South Coast rail would create connectivity across Stoughton. Adequate and well-marked parking would also encourage use. Planning for, and developing both Glen Echo and the Capen Reynolds to their full potential is a priority and acquiring small parcels in neighborhoods (Lambert St. property near the Council on Aging/Youth Commission) may provide opportunities for pocket parks.

Programs – Stoughton's nonprofit youth leagues provide many sports opportunities and Recreation programming supplements that. However, little is offered for teens of a social nature beyond what the schools offer.

Is the current condition of these resources acceptable?

The group thought access and parking to open space facilities needed improvements. Trash receptacles and pet waste stations would encourage clean use of the properties. Residential yard waste and commercial dumping is problematic on some properties. Much discussion took place around the weed choked condition of many of our ponds that are found in our open space and conservation parcels. Harvesting weeds and maintaining the ponds would allow fishing and other passive aquatic recreation to occur. Upgrading and better markings for trail systems in the Bird St./Libby conservation would encourage use. The town owned bathhouse and fencing at Ames Pond is in need of renovations.

Are all age groups served with current resources?

In general the group thought that all age groups were served but, not equally. For example establishing a program to introduce children to our open space/trail systems would encourage appropriate use. Providing kits or guides on the flora/fauna might help in this endeavor. Likewise providing safe surface walking areas in neighborhoods would encourage senior citizen activity.

Are facilities and programs found throughout the town or are they concentrated in one or a few areas?

Facilities – It was agreed that open space and active recreation areas are found throughout the town. Open space is concentrated to the southeastern part (Bird St./Libby conservation areas and Ames Pond) of town but the acquisition of Glen Echo provides space in the northern section of town. The one swimming area we have is isolated on the Stoughton/Easton line and is really only accessible if you have a car. It was thought that making connections between open space areas via bike routes/safe walking routes would lend itself to better use. Two usable parks, Halloran and Faxon, are close to the center.

Programs-

Programs are focused nearer to the center of town and are directly connected to a particular facility, i.e., West School Athletic Complex which is adjacent to three school buildings. However land licensed to nonprofit youth groups is sprinkled throughout town, i.e. youth soccer fields, youth baseball complex, Babe Ruth field, Community field.

Does the town have appropriate partnerships to support open space and recreation needs?

The group felt as though we had some valuable governmental partnerships with the Old Colony Planning Council and between town departments. There are some volunteer organizations like the friends of Capen/Reynolds and the establishment of a Glen Echo use committee that support a particular property, however the group felt strongly that some private/public partnerships and intertown collaboration (given that two prime parcels of open space border neighboring communities) would greatly enhance awareness of our open space and enable maintenance.

Summary of key issues

In no particular order...

1. Information about and awareness of existing open space
2. Access and parking for open space areas
3. Clean up and maintenance of open space
4. Positive movement toward acquisition of available open space
5. Public/private partnerships to support use and maintenance of facilities.
 - Provide information on how to volunteer and become a partner.
 - Coordinate support groups and partnerships so they know what others are doing.
6. Development of smaller neighborhood pocket parks.

SCHOOL FOCUS GROUP FINAL REPORT

January 18, 2013

As School Focus Group Leader, I've including the Stoughton School System Mission statement here to show that it is in line with the educational goal statement and many of the suggestions we adopted. The Focus Group work especially expands upon the last sentence in the schools' mission statement.

Mission of the Stoughton Public Schools:

Our mission is to challenge individuals to reach their potential in an educational environment that promotes excellence.

The Stoughton Public School System environment honors excellence, celebrates its diversity, and challenges its members to realize their potential. We set high standards using innovative and inclusive programs that enable students of varying learning styles to achieve success. The partnership between the school system and the community, with our vision of excellence, continues to be a source of community pride.

Educational Goal: Our community values education - [high educational achievement within a diverse student population] - and sees all of this as important to the wellbeing of the entire community. To achieve this goal the community must support educational needs and the schools must perform at a level to support the community's expectations.

Community educational support takes the forms of providing appropriate monetary resources for the physical plant and educational delivery and the support by parents and the rest of the community (providing time, attention and encouragement to students) to achieve a high educational outcome for each student. For its part, the school's support involves the delivery of high quality services, involvement of parents and the community and open communication with all constituents of the service delivery and use of the resources provided by the community.

The strategies and actions listed under each of the three desired results (below) represent samples of actions (many of which the schools are engaged in at present). They do not in any way portray the entire array of actions that may be required over time to achieve the desired results.

Desired Result 1: Good - up to date buildings and physical resources

This result includes: New Buildings (High School & others) and new technology (up to date computers, labs, etc.) – whether a student is going into the workplace right out of High School or going on to college. Strategies to achieve these results include the following:

- The schools must provide up to date facilities and technology plans and have an ongoing maintenance commitment and communicate improvement needs clearly.
- The Town must recognize the importance of these needs to the wellbeing of the entire community and provide appropriate resources.

Desired Result 2: Delivery of an excellent educational experience to K-12 students and parents and to the entire community

This result requires support for the following:

Excellent Curriculum

K-12: Enrichment (gifted and talented) programs should be strong, challenging, and innovative. The schools and the community should celebrate and promote accomplishments of programs and students. The schools and parents must work together to nurture and support the educational interests of students and embrace the ethic "we expect everybody to do well - we value education" – be the best you can. Success will be when the vast majority of townspeople sit you down for a long conversation (or monologue) that begins, "Let me tell you all the good things that are happening in the Stoughton Schools".

- Have competitive programs for students - chess competitions, debate team, robotics, literacy, foreign languages, geography, computers, inventions, math, art, science, music, legal club, sports, etc. that are competitive and attract high caliber students and a high degree of student interest/participation. Celebrate success widely!
- Capturing student and parent interest should start in elementary school. HS students in these programs/competitions should reach down to middle school and elementary schools ... focus on joy/fun/value of learning. Don't wait until high school AP courses to challenge students – many opportunities will be lost if this happens. Some of this challenge should occur during the class day for students with advanced proficiency in one or more areas.
- Establish a professional relationship between our high school and a well respected college (Quincy College) so that advanced students can take college level courses.
- Involve talented residents/town employees in classroom presentations, mentoring and shadowing programs.
- Address each student's special needs, work collaboratively with his/her family and assess progress to make sure interventions work.
- Help students that seek a different educational path (SE Regional, Norfolk Ag, etc.) make that transition well.

K-12: School should encourage innovation in curriculum and course offerings and routinely take its operational pulse to see if it is delivering services well.

- It must reach out to staff, community, parents and students for periodic surveys on “How we are doing? What can be improved? What other things should be implemented?”
- It must demonstrate that it is listening to those suggestions.

Lifelong Learning:

- The schools should continue to support continuing education programs for adults such as Stoughton Academy.

Guidance and Adjustment

Guidance staffing and focus

- Students and parents need guidance earlier and with more frequent substantive interactions to enhance (maximize) their post HS advancement by letting students and parent know of the wide range of educational opportunities available along with things as simple as when SAT tests are offered.

Mental health and Adjustment Counseling issues

- In middle school and high school there's a need for greater collaborative attention among family, student and school to deal with social and emotional challenges, especially where student backgrounds are wide-ranging.

Staffing and staff development

Hiring, training, retaining, and evaluation

- Make sure we hire and retain talented staff with vision and good leadership capabilities that will insist that all stakeholders are accountable.
- Establish a professional relationship between our high school and a well respected college so that teacher interns will be in our schools with the enthusiasm of young prospective teachers bringing cutting edge teaching ideas to our school
- School should provide quality professional development for teachers
- Make sure that a clear and fair performance system is working

Leadership is an important skill for staff as well as administrators. Leadership should be bottom-up as well as top-down, encouraging ideas on projects to pursue, commitment to take on a task and a willingness to evaluate objectively the results of an effort.

- The Board of Selectmen as well as the School Committee and the School Administration should work as a leadership collaborative to advance the educational objectives of the schools for the benefit of the town.

Desired Result 3: Good communication tells the story of an organization in order to garner trust and support. In a government setting it is also important to routinely address perceptions/misperceptions and in the process create an ethic that if there's an issue, we want to solve it, not just look for a culprit.

Success will be a positive relationship with constituents (students, parents, townspeople, others who might have a stake in the town) to receive the support required to achieve Desired Results 1&2.

3A: Don't let schools backslide

- Communicate that once schools start to spiral down it's hard to stop it ... it's much easier to tear down a system than to build it up.

3B: Market Schools (facilities and curriculum) to young families

Town/schools need to attract and maintain young families who are vested in education; these families are the backbone of our town.

- Focus on selling our school system to young families. Address items such as: tour of school – review of curriculum – pattern of asking for and accepting input on curriculum, etc. – highlight student success.
- School and Town need to stress there's a contract between the schools and parents in the education of a child. The parent's obligations: make sure child is prepared for class, help support school programs and take an interest in the child's education. The school's obligations: provide high quality education; keep parents informed of child's progress and help parents to prepare their child by providing a schedule of what's going to be taught.
- Showcase: Student's activities, same for teacher – show opportunities for success in Stoughton schools.
- Deliver those things in Desired Results 1 and 2. Vigorously communicate success. Address shortfalls quickly and with grace.

3C: Enlist townspeople in supporting students/school efforts

3C1: Celebrate students' success and opportunities to support the school

Engage entire community to celebrate student and school success – (Like POPS but with an even broader group of parents, people without kids in school and those without kids). This is not a money issue, but an opportunity for the community to demonstrate pride in education related accomplishments.

- Townspeople get together and send kids (Robotics, Math, history, etc) someplace(s) to show tangible recognition of their success in their area of interest.
- Private funding of particular items (e.g., a grand piano) - which townspeople can take pride in supporting.
- Continue to support efforts to celebrate success of former SHS students.

3C2: Embrace diversity while stressing excellence

Recognize that all of society is changing, and address the issue directly. Be clear that (for instance) Sharon is a very ethnically diverse community – so diversity alone is not the issue. Some townspeople who don't like the social changes (increased diversity) taking place in town - send their kids away to school in either middle school or high school because of this concern and don't support investing in education. Kids may not have as strong a concern with diversity as their parents.

- Deliver on Desired Results 1&2 and reiterate expectation that everyone is expected to do well and perform at the highest level.
- Demonstrate the successes of students in the system.

3C3: Provide money and support to create/maintain an excellent school system for the town's overall wellbeing

Schools need to be a priority for Funding at Town Meeting. There are difficult challenges. Some perceive that the schools are getting enough money but aren't using it well. Some 'town-side' perception is that the schools get everything - there's a mythical 70% 30% split – although when the Enterprise accounts and other funding are considered the amount is about 50-50. This same debate/competition for funding exists in all towns.

- The schools must continue to present a transparent budget.
- The Board of Selectmen and the School Committee and school administration must provide collaborative leadership to help guide the Town Meeting to a decision that benefits the entire town along with recognizing that the school system is a major determinant of where young families choose to settle.
- We must seek to change the political culture of dealing with "town-school" competition for a fixed budget. Last year the process seemed to work more smoothly than in the past. It may be a model to follow or a better model may be available.
- Schools must connect with community (all of the communication items address this need)
 - Invite townspeople into schools to share experiences, teaching, shadowing, mentoring, and assisting in an enrichment program.
 - Have school employees/students help support others within the community (think of the fire department).

3C4: Openness/Transparency - Address parent and citizen concerns openly, honestly and quickly

MCAS scores and School Rank both need to improve; people look to these when deciding to move to Stoughton.

- The school must persist and improve service delivery and receive support to do so. The alternative is a downward spiral.

Provide open communications with all parents on a range of issues - some perceive that the schools are not listening.

- Engender trust: Provide a forum for concerns and suggestions to be raised and demonstrate that each item is heard by taking prompt, fair and appropriate action.

Safety/Discipline

- Policies and practices are in place. When addressing issues, refer to them and the rationale behind the policies and practices. Administer policies evenly.

Address school operational issues that cause interest and/or concern (the "town-gown" issues)

- Engender trust and understanding within the community. As noted above in dealing with all issues, provide a forum for concerns and suggestions to be raised and demonstrate that each item is heard by taking prompt, fair and appropriate action. The traffic/safety issue caused by dropping off and picking up students is a case in point ... and is one of many that arise.

Transportation Focus Group Notes

Notes from a very enthusiastic Transportation Focus Group held on Wed 12/12/12 from 8:30 to 10:00 AM in Town Hall. Will send copy of attendees under separate cover.

Q&R

1. KEY ISSUES RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION Two major Issues identified-- Traffic Congestion and Pedestrian Safety

Traffic Congestion:

- a. Stoughton Square is a Funnel w/ Rtes 27,138 and 139 squeezed to overflowing.
- b. Town needs to prioritize and implement intersection improvements in many locations.
- c. Find a way to create a by-pass or set of one way couplets to reduce congestion in the Square.
- d. Reduce congestion at schools during AM drop-off and PM pick-up.
- e. Review intersections where Exclusive Left Turn Lanes and Signal Timing adjustments could improve flow quickly at minimal costs.
- f. Driver and Pedestrian Education.
- g. Square needs to be more of a Village setting rather than a thoroughfare.
- h. South Coast Rail, if extended should, be depressed through the downtown area.

Pedestrian Safety:

- a. Standardize Crosswalk pavement markings and signage along major roadways throughout the Town.
- b. Install a Ped Light or High Definition Overhead Warning Panel for the crosswalk in the center of the Square at Honey Dew.
- c. Reduce Pedestrian/Vehicular conflicts at the schools AM drop-off/ PM pick-up.
- d. Enforce Jaywalking penalties and parking regulations--1 or 2 hour pkg limits.
- e. Collaborate with Healthy Communities activities to promote walkability.
- f. Upgrade Sidewalks including new locations to be more walkable for seniors/students and others that enjoy walking regularly.
- g. Upgrade Crosswalks/Handicap Ramps to meet ADA and Mass Architectural Barrier Board Regulations.

2. RESULTS TOWN SHOULD STRIVE FOR RELATED TO KEY ISSUES

- a. Form a pro-active TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE to develop a priority list of roadway, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements that will reduce traffic congestion and improve walkability and pedestrian safety.
- b. Quickly implement low cost changes such as intersection turning lanes, signal timing adjustments, one way travel adjustments (Pearl St from Square to School St); monitor the results and evaluate the effectiveness of such changes.
- c. Eliminate School Bus Fees and promote ridership to reduce traffic congestion at schools.

- d. Increase Police presence in the Square to enforce the rules of the road for drivers and pedestrians.

3.DIFFERENCES REGARDING GOALS/DESIRED CONDITIONS

- a. School Bus Fees vs. Overall School Budget and Tax Levy
- b. Budget Impact for Police presence in the Square and Driver/Pedestrian Education.
- c. Professional Liability/Costs regarding changes in traffic patterns, intersection lane arrangement, signage etc.
- d. Funding for traffic improvement projects--long range capital planning

OTHER POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- a. Areas Most Affected by Key Issues:

Stoughton Square
Central Street Intersections (West/Island/Tosca/Canton/Pearl/Washington/Pleasant)
School Street (Washington to Canton)
Washington (Square Northerly to Canton Town Line)

- b. Ease/Convenience for Pedestrians/Bicycles:

Traffic Calming
Sidewalk/Crosswalks
Bike Lanes or other pavement markings or sidewalk sharing (peds/bikes)
Driver/Pedestrian Education
Support Economic Development

- c. Impact on Quality of Life:

Traffic congestion and unsafe pedestrian conditions have a negative impact .

- d. Impact on Visitors:

No significant level of visitors to Stoughton

- e. Impacts are similar for "All Groups"

- f. Town's Capacity to Deal with Transportation Issues:

Very Limited at present

Need a Transportation Management Committee to engage the issues noted above.

Suggest a Committee appointed by Board of Selectmen

with a charge to meet monthly and report quarterly regarding efforts. Members to include representatives from DPW, Engineering, Police,

Planning, OCPC and two citizens with professional traffic engineering experience.

Downtown Stoughton Business-Owners Breakfast

MAPC and Town of Stoughton, South Coast Rail

January 25, 2013, Old Colony YMCA, Stoughton

Discussion Group Notes



Angela's group

- Parking is a huge issue
 - o On-street parking time limits are not enforced
 - o Difficulties providing employee parking; employees parking in customer spaces and stay all day, etc.
 - o No meters
 - o Need a parking management strategy that is enforced
 - o Police ticket once in a while and scare customers away
 - o Even just having better signage would help
- There is no merchants group
 - o COC does not have much membership
 - o Business owners would like to do more networking events if they existed
- Downtown is not walkable – it's "taking your life in your own hands" going from one side of the street to another – 4 lanes of traffic
 - o This has always been a problem and people do not have much hope of it improving
 - o 3- 4 people have been hit in the past year
 - o Some discussion of moving PO and how that would help with circulation
- Downtown is ugly!
 - o Cheng Du building has been vacant for 3 years
 - o Property/business owners don't see point in investing in façade improvements or simply can't afford it
 - o Any grants, tax credits, or loans would be helpful
- *Would definitely be interested in a monthly or bi-monthly meeting for downtown merchants*

Erin's group

1. What do you see as the biggest issues/problems facing Stoughton's downtown businesses?
 - Not great signage for local businesses
 - Lack of brand/singular image of the Stoughton Community
 - Lack of code enforcement
 - Lack of parking
 - Lack of sidewalks
2. What resources or assistance would be most helpful to you in solving these problems?
 - Help with signage
 - i. Getting signage but also allowing for some flexibility in what the signs look like (this comment came from an artist who wanted to make sure that the local artists could have some creativity in how their signs looked)

Downtown Stoughton Business-Owners Breakfast

MAPC and Town of Stoughton, South Coast Rail

January 25, 2013, Old Colony YMCA, Stoughton

Discussion Group Notes



- ii. Someone else commented that signage restrictions and enforcement should be more focused on making sure temporary signs are not allowed permanently and that perhaps special zoning districts that would allow for unique and quaint signs to reflect local business charm
- iii. Get local students to help with sign design
- Create a local, united brand/image that everyone can rally around and use to promote the town and its businesses
 - i. One person had the idea of using the train station as a central focus for the brand – “Train your sites on Stoughton”; set up a local train ride in the center of town, like that the current post office depot. Have local business set up toy train displays in their businesses. This would allow the community to leverage its history with trains as well as upcoming projects like the South Coast Rail.
 - ii. Use existing events like road race, farmers market for marketing
 - iii. Promote the community on a regional level
 - iv. Leverage what Stoughton is known for like IKEA, Jordan’s, LA Fitness to create a “Hip-factor”
- Promote businesses that are not as visible (there are many business clusters across the community)
 - i. Have an artist’s night out, where people travel from business to business on foot and trolley
- Create a local downtown business group or association
- Make downtown safer and easier to access
 - i. Better crosswalks
 - ii. ADA accessible
 - iii. Parking
 - iv. Signage
 - v. Traffic

Steve's group

1) What do businesses need right now in downtown Stoughton (wayfinding signage, roadway infrastructure, parking, etc)?

- The town center is needlessly difficult to navigate for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- The traffic moves through downtown a little more slowly, but that is negated by the fact that drivers are still very confused by what they encounter. Some stores are directly on the roadways, and can be found easily with Google maps (etc) but in several instances one cannot take a right or left turn off the road to get to the “easily identified” place of business.
- There remains a convergence of too many roads in downtown---traffic calming will not solve this issue, this is an issue of numbers of vehicles overwhelming the milieu.

Downtown Stoughton Business-Owners Breakfast

MAPC and Town of Stoughton, South Coast Rail

January 25, 2013, Old Colony YMCA, Stoughton

Discussion Group Notes



- I am not certain everyone would agree on just what "Downtown Stoughton" includes. Is there a reason we cannot clearly identify our downtown?
- If we have had traffic studies, I am not aware of the town paying attention to those studies, and I have not seen those studies myself. There has been steady talk about traffic studies for many, many years, and no outcomes that I can see. We need a large, holistic traffic study that encompasses ALL of what we call Downtown Stoughton.
- There is not "one thing" that is the transportation issue in Downtown Stoughton----there is a convergence of issues. I do not think we look at the transportation issue in this way and maybe this is why we cannot solve the problem.
- The Rail Station needs to be renovated and used for something.
- "It is in a bad part of town, so there is less traffic there."
- Who owns the station?
- We heard the MBTA wants to sell the station----we do not know what is going on regarding station issues.

(2) What specific interventions would help to meet these needs?

- Can the South Coast rail money help us with any of these issues? We do not know.
- Stoughton used to be the endpoint of the rail line----now it will not be. Will this make downtown even more difficult to get around---are we headed for even more trouble than we know?
- "We have a lot of old and archaic zoning regulations." We must fix this before we can develop.
- "Developers who are looking at Stoughton cannot find language they need to find in our zoning laws."
- The overall----not just downtown----ratio of retail to residential in Stoughton is not correct. We know this----but none of know how to fix this.
- It seems that the issues all become political issues, as they should in the process of solving local problems-----but Stoughton cannot seem to solve local issues through a political process. Just does not happen here.
- "People get used to bad management" We expect nothing because we get nothing.
- The Stoughton Theatre Project is one activity among many that Stoughton needs to work on----but people working on the Theatre issue feel like no one else in the town cares what they are doing.

Emily's group

1. What are the problems/issues?
 - 1.1. Empty store fronts & burned building: The group started the conversation by talking about some of the empty buildings in Downtown Stoughton and people shared the information that

Downtown Stoughton Business-Owners Breakfast

MAPC and Town of Stoughton, South Coast Rail

January 25, 2013, Old Colony YMCA, Stoughton

Discussion Group Notes



they knew on the buildings. Noreen spoke to the time it takes and the long process of getting these buildings up and running. She also said that there are things that are happening behind the scenes but obviously the public is not aware.

1.1.1. The Theatre - A 501 Non-Profit signed a lease for 20 yrs. They are going to raise money for renovations. The Theatre is from the 1920s and was a major piece to the downtown. People at our table shared stories about how the Theatre was an important part of the Downtown and it brought life to the area. People would walk from their homes and eat something along the way. It was a destination. It seats 300 with the balcony & downstairs. However, the building is not up to fire codes and has many accessibility issues.

1.1.2. Malcolm/Parson Building under construction, owner passed away.

1.1.3. Hardware store – purchased, is being restored, historical preservation.

1.1.4. Someone had suggested that the Town fill empty spots with only companies that pay sales tax, money for the town versus non-profits.

1.1.5. Property owners - need to take care of their buildings.

1.2. Window displays & unified signs: The group discussed wanting attractive signage. There was a sign-by-law that did not pass a couple of years ago and they want to try again. The window displays are also an issue. Especially the Churches and other stores that have their windows covered.

1.3. Housing: Some of the people at the table talked about senior housing and how it would be nice for the empty lots. People were not in agreement that senior housing would be a good thing – they said it would kill the downtown.

1.4. Parking destination

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1.4.1. Valet Parking – there was a time that the Theatre had valet parking.

1.4.2. Paid parking – could be an option

1.4.3. Railroad Ave. – possible parking at night

1.5. Station – plans to move?

1.6. How to attract business?

1.6.1. Service industry

1.6.2. More retail

1.6.3. Lower the rents – the rents are too high. example: Freeman Street, \$18 per SF.

1.6.4. More focus on the business plan from Town Hall

1.7. Questionnaire (Patrick): Patrick Williams from the Clock and Jewelry store asks his customers their thoughts. He has a 5 question survey that he goes through with customers to find out why they come to his store, how they found out about the store and other related questions. He specifically asks about accessibility and parking. The group thought this would be a great thing to have at all the businesses. If there is a questionnaire that everyone can use then as a group we could get a better understanding of what people think.

Downtown Stoughton Business-Owners Breakfast

MAPC and Town of Stoughton, South Coast Rail

January 25, 2013, Old Colony YMCA, Stoughton

Discussion Group Notes



2. **Resources** - people are scared to borrow money
3. Traffic/Routes merging in Downtown: Pro – Many routes coming to one place brings people to the area. For the destination businesses the routes are great. Patrick wants a corner store – more visibility. Cons – too much traffic. It is a hard place to drive through. Honey Dew – example of how the accessibility is horrible. Ever since they put up the “7am to 9am no left turn” it has killed his business. He said people can just keep going and get coffee anywhere. His lease is up in 3 yrs/less and he will be gone.
4. “Specialty” Businesses: Look at who is doing well and why? And who is not doing well and why? The group talked about how the stores that have a special unique product or customer base were the stores that were doing well. They also said that you cannot have too much food in one place.
 - Prom rental – doing well
 - Barbershop – doing well
 - Tax services (Brazilian owner) – doing well
 - Farmer’s Market – doing well
 - Drugstore - ? – “people go in there but you have to blow the dust off the products”



Appendix

Item 6 of 8: January 2013, Youth Visioning Notes

Youth Commission Visioning for the Master Plan

January 16, 2013

Approximately 35 in attendance

What do you like about Stoughton?

- Diversity of people
- Acceptance of each other (people)
- Restaurants
- Fast food convenience
- Convenience of small stores
- Being close to the city and highways
- Town Spa
- Good sports programs
- Known for good sportsmanship
- Gym facilities (choices)
- Nail salons
- Good Music Dept at High School
- Location of the Train Station

What needs to be changed about Stoughton?

- Downtown, traffic, pedestrian safety
- Construct a new High School
- Alternate ways in which to walk to school
- Build a retail mall
- Construct sidewalks and develop maintenance program
- Add healthier stores
- Add structure to school system
- Too much (marijuana) in school system, drug test randomly
- Re-open the movie theater
- Train schedules and bus schedules should be posted at Train Station
- Open up the Train Station
- Re-open the African store
- Need clothing stores
- Lack of street lights
- Need a Boys & Girls Club
- Softball fields

- No place to hang out after school
- Bowling alley
- Community recycle center
- Clean up run down buildings
- Convert Gold's Gym into a roller skating and laser tag facility
- Clean up the trash, esp. Glen Echo of glass & trash
- Close down Alex's or move to a better location
- List how money is being used in the government
- Job opportunities, (i.e. co-ops)

Do you want to stay in Stoughton when you graduate from High School?

- 90% no
- 10% yes like community, people, school pride

Did your parents grow up in Stoughton?

- 50% of both parents grew up in Stoughton
- Remaining percentages varied

What would change your mind to stay here?

- Better education system
- More outside activities
- Town needs to be cleaner to have more pride
- Re-open the movie theater
- Create programs so we are environmentally friendly community
- Better stores in the downtown
- Ice skating rink
- Retail mall
- Let younger people have a "Voice"
- New zoning laws
- Should be allowed to eat food in school, besides during lunch periods (i.e. hungry during classes)

What are the kinds of things in Stoughton that help you / make easier to stay healthy?

- Transportation
- All the different types of gyms
- Town sports
- More youth activities
- Healthier foods served in school
- Healthy foods served in restaurants
- Healthy foods offered in stores

What are the kinds of things in Stoughton that make it difficult to be healthy?

- Too many fast food establishments
- Places to be active that are cost effective (i.e. Y, and health clubs memberships are expensive)
- Not enough sidewalks in the Town
- School lunches
- Too many pizza shops
- No healthy alternatives
- drugs



Appendix

Item 7 of 8: January 28, 2013 Community Visioning Forum Summary



Public Forum Summary

The Stoughton Master Plan Committee (MPC) hosted a second public forum for Community Visioning on Monday, January 28th from 6:00 to 9:00 PM at the Stoughton Senior and Youth Center. Child care services and transportation were offered by Youth Services and the Council on Aging.

The purpose of the forum was to provide an opportunity for community members to come together to provide input on the community vision, goals and key issues that were presented.

One hundred twenty (120) participants registered on the sign-in sheets representing a variety of Stoughton stakeholders. Several questions by the consultant revealed that participants included a mix of stakeholders who had attended the first meeting and those who were attending for the first time. In addition many participants identified themselves as having participated in focus group meetings hosted by the Master Plan Committee and a number of participants indicated that they had taken part in the on-line Master Plan Community Survey.

SOCIAL HALF HOUR

6:00 to 6:30 PM

The forum began with a half hour set aside for participants to enjoy a light dinner and social time. Agendas were distributed as participants entered that included an outline of forum events as well as the Community Vision, Goals and Key Issues that they would be discussing. The Vision, Goals and Key Issues were also posted around the room on large posters.

PRESENTATION

6:30 to 7:00 PM

Master Plan Steering Committee chair Joe Scardino welcomed forum participants, acknowledged MPC members and Noreen O'Toole and introduced Stoughton's Town Manager Michael Hartman. Mr. Hartman and Mr. Scardino welcomed and thanked participants for attending on a snowy evening and for being involved in determining the town's future. The consultant team continued with a powerpoint presentation that provided an introduction to master planning and visioning and shared some results from youth visioning exercises and the community survey. The consultants then asked a number of participants to assist by reading the draft Vision Statement that had been developed from information the master plan team (MPC and consultants) had received from the community to date (Powerpoint presentation is appended).

FACILITATED GROUP DISCUSSIONS

7:00 to 8:15 PM

Following the presentation participants were asked to move into one of eight groups for facilitated discussions. The purpose of these discussions were review the draft Community Vision, Preliminary Goals and Key Issues and provide feedback in response to three sets of questions. A scribe from each group took notes to document the discussion (notes are appended) and a reporter from each reported discussion highlights to the reassembled large group following the small group discussions.

The first set of questions focused on the draft Community Vision.

- Do you think the Community Vision as written, captures your hopes for the future of Stoughton?
 - If yes, what in particular do you look forward to?
 - If no, what needs to change or be added?

The second set of questions focused on the draft Preliminary Goals.

- What goals do you feel will bring about the most needed change?
- Are there any goals here that you feel are not needed?
- Are there any goals you would like to see added?

The final set of questions asked if the planning process identified the town's key issues

- Are there any issues here that you feel are not of primary importance?
- Are there any issues you would like to see added?
- What issues do you feel if properly addressed will most help Stoughton attain its vision?

At the end of the discussion participants were asked to prioritize the top three issues by placing stickers (each participant received three) on the three issues they feel are most important to address.



GROUP PRESENTATIONS

8:15 am to 9:00 PM

Participants came back together in a large group to share information. A volunteer from each group summarized the highlights and outcome of their group discussion and prioritization activity.



FORUM WRAP UP

9:00 to 9:10 PM

The consultant team and MPC closed the meeting by thanking participants for coming and outlining final steps in the planning process for Phase I (Visioning) and the next steps leading to Phase II (Recommended Actions).

THANK YOU

The MPC wishes to thank the following for their time and energy in assisting in various ways with the Public Forum.

Karen Hall and the staff of the Council on Aging and Stoughton Youth Commission

Department of Public Works

Stoughton Schools

Engineering Department

Stoughton Patch

Department Heads

Snyder's Stoughton

Board and Committee Members

Stoughton Journal

Dr. Lawrence Gray, Stoughton IT
Director

Boston Globe

Stoughton Media Access
Corporation

Group Facilitators

Most importantly thank you to all the members of the Stoughton community who came out and shared your thoughts and ideas.

Group 1

Vision:

Group was in general agreement with vision – but questioned importance of schools teaching Stoughton history on list.

Other highlighted positive items of agreement include community activities (parades, etc.), natural resources, outdoors, environment and nature trails (but would like open space better maintained with more of a feeling of safety), parks (but would like them safer and age appropriate – “tweens – and inappropriate language” with younger kids not a good mix), walkable - healthy and nice neighborhoods. Highlighted negatives: not enough buffer between industry/commercial and residential (a zoning issue), small steps to unify downtown (signage, design), need upscale shops in downtown, need more teeth in policies – implementation of by-laws and other codes – to force what we need in downtown. The school ranking state-wide must improve (affects all else in town).

Goals:

All goals are important to reach vision, but some more important than others. Energy and sustainability is one that isn't high on the list.

The missing piece is the South Coast Rail (the 100 pound gorilla in the closet) - how it is handled if it comes through is critical.

The major goals include the following. The schools and ranking are the key element to the affect on housing values, etc. Stoughton's opportunities are great (location-wise – easy to get to Boston, Providence, the Cape). Image is important. Transportation and economic development are interrelated. Smart zoning is important. Small public areas (parks), integrate infrastructure improvements into park plans. Protecting natural resources is important. To achieve our vision will take money – higher taxes will be needed (conflict with elderly), seek outside funding.

The priority of issues from our group of 12 was as follows:

Issue	count
Schools	9
Livability	6
Economic Development	5
Image	4
Town Center	4
Transportation	4
Physical Environment	3
Safety	1

Facilitator Notes

The following notes are taken directly from a facilitated small group discussion at the Public Forum on January 28, 2013.

Group #2
Facilitated by Forrest Lindwall

Part 1 Vision

- **Do you think the Community Vision as written, captures your hopes for the future of Stoughton?**
 - *If yes, what in particular do you look forward to?*

Group was in general agreement with Vision but commented on a variety of elements. The two elements generating the most commentary were:

- Schools:
 - Improve Facilities
 - Emphasize Curriculum
 - Improve to Highest Standards
 - Promote Positive Image
 - Operational Transparency
- Town Center:
 - Improve Center with more parking;
 - more residential rather than retail development;
 - pedestrian safety/walkability and
 - planning for South Coast Rail.

Other Vision elements noted included:

- Library /Community Center and other service improvements
- More business development in North Stoughton
- Town Government revisions to include more transparency; term limits for elected and appointees to all Boards and Commissions(2 terms max.) to encourage more citizen participation (new blood/new ideas)
- More Youth Center activities and hangout locations especially for Tweeners (8 to 15 Y.O.)
- Better overall promotion of community activities/events

Part 2 Goals

- **What goals do you feel will bring about the most needed change?**

With respect to which Goals bring the most needed change the responses were as follows:

- Economic Development/Employment Opportunities
- Schools
- Town Center and Image

- Infrastructure Improvements (Water/Sewer etc) for North Stoughton/Park Street corridor as well as sewer planning townwide.
- Transparency of Government with cooperative school and town hall leadership.

Group agreed that all of the Goals are essential ingredients in order for the Town to attain the community vision. Of particular concern for most of the group was that the:

- Education Goal needs to be strengthened to include:
 - Administrative Transparency (both operationally and financially);
 - Improved academic performance for K-12 students;
 - Fast Track replacement of outdated buildings and facilities;
 - Improved relationships with town government officials and
 - A more positive/cohesive public relations program.

There is now a growing understanding that the present quality of the School System is failing to support the foundation for growth of real estate values and attendant attractiveness for young people to see Stoughton as a desirable place to reside with school age children. (As a sidebar--two group members with youngsters approaching middle school age children are contemplating moving out of town before their youngsters reach high school age unless a new High School building is on the immediate horizon)

- **Are there any goals here that you feel are not needed?**

None of the Goals presented were deemed "not needed".

- **Are there any goals you would like to see added?**

Goals worthy of being added included:

- Financial Stability and
- The employment of grant writer(s) to obtain more grants.

PART 3 ISSUES

- **Are there any issues here that you feel are not of primary importance?**

Group commented that it is difficult to define the full meaning of "Livability"

- **Are there any issues you would like to see added?**

- **What issues do you feel if properly addressed will most help Stoughton attain its vision?** (Numbers in parenthesis indicate # of dots placed on item during prioritization activity. Each person placed one dot on top three priorities.)

Schools (8.5)
Town Center (6.5)
Economic Development (5)
Image (4)
Livability (2)
Physical Environment (2)
Transportation (1)
Safety (0.5)

Facilitator Notes

The following notes are taken directly from a facilitated small group discussion at the Public Forum on January 28, 2013.

Group #3
Facilitated by Mark Snyder

Part 1 Vision

- **Do you think the Community Vision as written, captures your hopes for the future of Stoughton?**
 - *If yes, what in particular do you look forward to?*
 - Traffic and parking changes to make it more useable
 - More upscale housing – potential benefit to schools
 - Disconnect between vision and reality in downtown (blight/plywood)
 - Town Center traffic flow is unorganized – Wyman St. left turn is a disaster
 - School curriculum – education system going downhill
 - Neighborhoods diversified, yet distinctive
 - Greater utilization of natural areas
 - Leave town for playgrounds and children's recreational spaces – little money spent every year
 - Glen Echo nicely developed
 - Bird Street Great Asset
 - Town Center has some good aspects, but big problems currently – great potential
 - Great vision, but needs prioritization
 - Well written, but bike lanes won't work on main roads
 - *If no, what needs to change or be added?*
 - Town Meeting more sensitive to people on fixed income

PART 2 GOALS

- **What goals do you feel will bring about the most needed change?**
 - Town Center priority
 - Reroute traffic around it and make it very pedestrian friendly
 - Safety greatly improved, but must keep going
 - Ponds in town need maintenance (eutrophication) need dredging
 - Support businesses through infrastructure (ie. Park Street sewer)
- **Are there any goals here that you feel are not needed?**
- **Are there any goals you would like to see added?**
 - More business friendly (Boards move faster)

PART 3 ISSUES

- **Are there any issues here that you feel are not of primary importance?**
- **Are there any issues you would like to see added?**

What issues do you feel if properly addressed will most help Stoughton attain its vision? (Numbers in parenthesis indicate # of dots placed on item during prioritization activity. Each person placed one dot on each of three top priorities.)

- Image (7)
- Safety (1)
- Physical Environment (2)
- Economic Development (4)
- Town Center (8)
- Schools/School Image (10)
- Livability (1)
- Transportation (0)

January 28, 2013 Master Planning Meeting - Group #4 Notes

Community Vision

The group members were asked which of the Shared Community Visions did they most want to see.

The first to be mentioned was:

Paragraph No. 2: Public Services/Schools The Stoughton school system currently provides an excellent opportunity for students to excel in academics, music and athletics. This needs to continue to be supported by the provision of state-of-the-art facilities; particularly via a new high school. A strong school system would make all of Stoughton an attractive place to live.

Second was paragraph No. 3: Town Center – One member felt focusing on renovating the theatre was not going to be effective in rehabilitating the center. Others pointed to surrounding towns such as Dedham, Foxboro, and Norwood which have successfully renovated historic theatres for multiple uses.

One group member suggested that a successful center needs to have a mix of residences and businesses to be successful. A comparison with Dover, NH by a new arrival in town from that city said that ten years ago Dover looked a lot like Stoughton and now it is a vibrant commercial, arts, restaurant area partly due to it being made attractive to young adults with disposable income.

Not everyone lives near the center, so it may be good to focus on other “centers” as well, such as North Stoughton or the plaza on the Brockton Stoughton line.

Parking and traffic in the center was recognized as an issue, as well as the necessity of dealing with private property owners, and coming up with a comprehensive fix.

Goals

Historic Resources – most felt the restoration and reuse of the train station would be a valuable addition to a redeveloped town center.

Transportation and circulation – Definitely a need to improve the flow of traffic issues in the center while also providing more parking. Bicycle lanes a possibility. Could we have two lane sidewalks for bikes and pedestrians? More sidewalks in general to connect neighborhoods and the center. Could traffic be rerouted under the center?

Economic development – this is an important one. The other goals may need to flow from success in this area. Extending sewer services to more parts of the town will be important.

Community – It is important to get people informed and interested. The DPW sign promoting this meeting seemed to be effective. Should look into using as many modes of notice as possible.

Energy & Sustainability – The town should be looking to incorporate smart growth and smart energy use. Not even necessarily to use less energy, but look to use alternatives and minimize waste.

Neighborhoods – A better sidewalk network would be helpful. Also, does the existing zoning still make sense? Some towns such as Newton are a series of villages that are separate but still linked.

Education – A strong curriculum is important. A strong school system is an advantage to everyone in the town as it increases the desirability of the town to new residents, raises property values, etc.

Votes on Priorities

Image: 2

Safety: 1

Physical Environment: 4

Economic Development: 7

Town Center: 9

Schools: 4

Livability: 5

Transportation: 4

Facilitator Notes

The following notes are taken directly from a facilitated small group discussion at the Public Forum on January 28, 2013.

Group #5
Facilitated by Teresa Tapper

Part 1 Vision

- **Do you think the Community Vision as written, captures your hopes for the future of Stoughton?**
 - *If yes, what in particular do you look forward to?*
 - *If no, what needs to change or be added?*
- Get to the point (rid fluff)
- Highlight- Senior Center and COA is a great resource to be supported and appreciated in our community
- Make economic vitality a top priority – as a foundation
- Providing places for mix of generations to come together
- Hopes for change
- Sustained development—negative concerns expressed by one participant who brought in material to share, in reference to what “sustained development” really means for our community (ie perhaps not what we should be supporting as a goal). Note: this individual was introduced to BWP briefly, in hopes she could pass on her specific concerns, as they were not fully understood or necessarily shared by the other members of the group
- Protect town from agendas (note: an extension of prior comment)
- Do not specify exact buildings to restore and repurpose (not everyone support this for the theater and/or train station; although, there were a couple participants who strongly support this idea)
- Housing for senior, disabled, low income
- Stoughton is inclusive (leave out highly recognized)

PART 2 GOALS

- **What goals do you feel will bring about the most needed change?**
 - Building something with substance and let the image follow
 - Providing adequate parking in center
 - Marketing and branding campaign for Stoughton
 - Preserve and repurpose the town's historic resources
- **Are there any goals here that you feel are not needed?**
 - Make goals more direct, consolidated
 - Promoting arts and culture utilizing theatre (some agree)
- **Are there any goals you would like to see added?**

- Connect directly and specifically visions to goals – line them up specifically
- Provide for helping out each other (ie. Volunteers paint a house that needs it.)

PART 3 ISSUES

- **Are there any issues here that you feel are not of primary importance?**
- **Are there any issues you would like to see added?**

What issues do you feel if properly addressed will most help Stoughton attain its vision? (Numbers in parenthesis indicate # of dots placed on item during prioritization activity. Each person placed one dot on top three priorities.)

- Image (3)
- Safety (0)
- Physical Environment (0)
- Economic Development (4)
- Town Center (9)
- Schools (5)
- Livability (6)
- Transportation (2)

The Results of Group 6 Discussion Group

Facilitator Mark W. Dolloff

Part 1 Vision

The group did not disagree with any of the vision statements given but they did feel there should be the following items added to the vision statement. The following are not listed in order of priority.

1. Better intergovernmental agency cooperation between elected and appointed boards and committees.
2. Emphasis on local food and gardening efforts
3. More community sports and activities.

Part 2 Goals

The group felt the following are important goals for the Town.

1. A more vibrant down town area.
2. Improved quality of education and school facilities
3. A more proactive approach to maintaining and replacing town buildings.

They wanted to add the following goals.

1. Prioritize town budget to promote community vision
2. Invest in infrastructure to increase tax base.

Part 2 Goals (not to pursue)

The group felt strongly about stating this.

Preserve only the most valuable historic resources.

Don't let historic buildings get in the way of revitalizing the down town area.

Part 3 Key Issues

Analyze town meeting and restructure for better leadership

Prioritizing Issues

Image 4 Safety 1 Physical Env. 1 Eco.Developement 5

Town Center 7 Schools 4 Livability 1 Transportation 4

Facilitator Notes

The following notes are taken directly from a facilitated small group discussion at the Public Forum on January 28, 2013.

Group #7
Facilitated by John Morton

Part 1 Vision

- **Do you think the Community Vision as written, captures your hopes for the future of Stoughton?**
 - *If yes, what in particular do you look forward to?*
 - *In general - yes but emphasis should be given to the following:*
 - Town Center
 - Schools – particularly the High School
 - Problems related to the proposed Rail road expansion - demand depression of the rail track bed through at least four crossings in or near the Center
 - Lack of zoning appropriate restrictions and poor enforcement of existing zoning regulations
 - Town image concerns - chicken and egg problem
 - Larger Town Center concerns -open space, pedestrian friendly, ease of access, parking commuter rush traffic (move the "train stop" and train parking south)
 - Need better overall development: design controls, landscaping, tree planting, signage controls
 - Need school improvement both the physical plant and the achievement goals
 - Lack of business diversity - too many fast food, donut and pizza shops, need better businesses that bring better jobs
 - Move train stop south of existing station
 - Clear derelict buildings; speed up repair or replacement requirements for buildings in town
 - Improve downtown parking
 - *If no, what needs to change or be added?*
 - *No specific suggestions*

PART 2 GOALS

- **What goals do you feel will bring about the most needed change?**
 - Improve retail business and promote office space, residential, parking and open space in the center (defined as the Washington street entries to the Center from Central Street to Plain Street and within one half mile from east to west of the station)
 - Improve traffic flow – add or eliminate roads.

- Remove old and outdated buildings.
- Insist that the rail bed be depressed for at least four surface crossings in or near the center
- Improve town image to attract better development - but image follows improvement.

- **Are there any goals here that you feel are not needed?**
- **Are there any goals you would like to see added?**
 - Better utilization of buildings
 - Replace outdated buildings
 - Improvements need more revenue sources including grants, federal and state involvement and public private partnerships
 - Need private investment
 - Grant Money
 - Improve town stability
 - Promote building efficiency
 - Public lighting improvement
 - Adopt better business policies

PART 3 ISSUES

- **Are there any issues here that you feel are not of primary importance?**
- **Are there any issues you would like to see added?**
 - Diversity in Housing
 - Business Friendly
 - Energy Efficiency

What issues do you feel if properly addressed will most help Stoughton attain its vision? (Numbers in parenthesis indicate # of dots placed on item during prioritization activity. Each person placed one dot on each of three top priorities.)

- Economic Development (6)
- Business Friendly (2)
- Education (12)
- Diversity in Housing (2)
- Town Center (9)
- Energy Efficiency (2)

Facilitator Notes

The following notes are taken directly from a facilitated small group discussion at the Public Forum on January 28, 2013.

Group #8
Facilitated by Stephanie Patton

Part 1 Vision

- **Do you think the Community Vision as written, captures your hopes for the future of Stoughton?**
 - *If yes, what in particular do you look forward to?*
 - State-of-the-art Schools/high school
 - Revitalized Town Center (like Lexington)
 - Need reason to go there
 - Fill empty spaces
 - Farmers Market
 - Image – People have good impression through
 - “Art Concept” – brand the Town Center – uniform look
 - Reclaim Post Office Area – Wyman Street – Make an open space, place for street fair, parking (Medfield Day)
 - Fix Traffic patterns in Center
 - Commuter Rail as is – no freight, no South Coast Rail
 - Walking and bike routes
 - Open areas, trees, recreation
 - Embrace Uniqueness of our town
 - *If no, what needs to change or be added?*

PART 2 GOALS

- **What goals do you feel will bring about the most needed change?**
 - Brand as an art district (think Norwood, Providence)
 - Downtown
 - Improve Parking
 - Expand Downtown north up Rt 138, more trees, fewer gas stations
 - Traffic
 - Attract new businesses & restaurants (culinary arts school?)
 - Design standards, bylaws & enforcement
 - Cheng Du empty space
 - Low hanging fruit?
 - Dress up empty store fronts
 - Local artists, murals, chalkboard
 - Preserve open space
 - Family activities, more community events
 - Town communication – get more people involved
 - Firehouse – art studio, dance studio, etc.

- **Are there any goals here that you feel are not needed?**
- **Are there any goals you would like to see added?**
 - Actionable items
 - Parents contact legislators regarding schools
 - Make more focused vision so we have actionable items – prioritize
 - Firehouse – sell building and utilize street for parking

PART 3 ISSUES

- **Are there any issues here that you feel are not of primary importance?**
- **Are there any issues you would like to see added?**
 - Town Center Parking
 - Post Office takes up too much space
 - South Coast Rail will be a problem

What issues do you feel if properly addressed will most help Stoughton attain its vision? (Numbers in parenthesis indicate # of dots placed on item during prioritization activity. Each person placed one dot on top three priorities.)

- Town Center (12)
- Economic Development (especially Town Center) (4)
- Schools (11)
- Livability (open space, spend free time) (9)

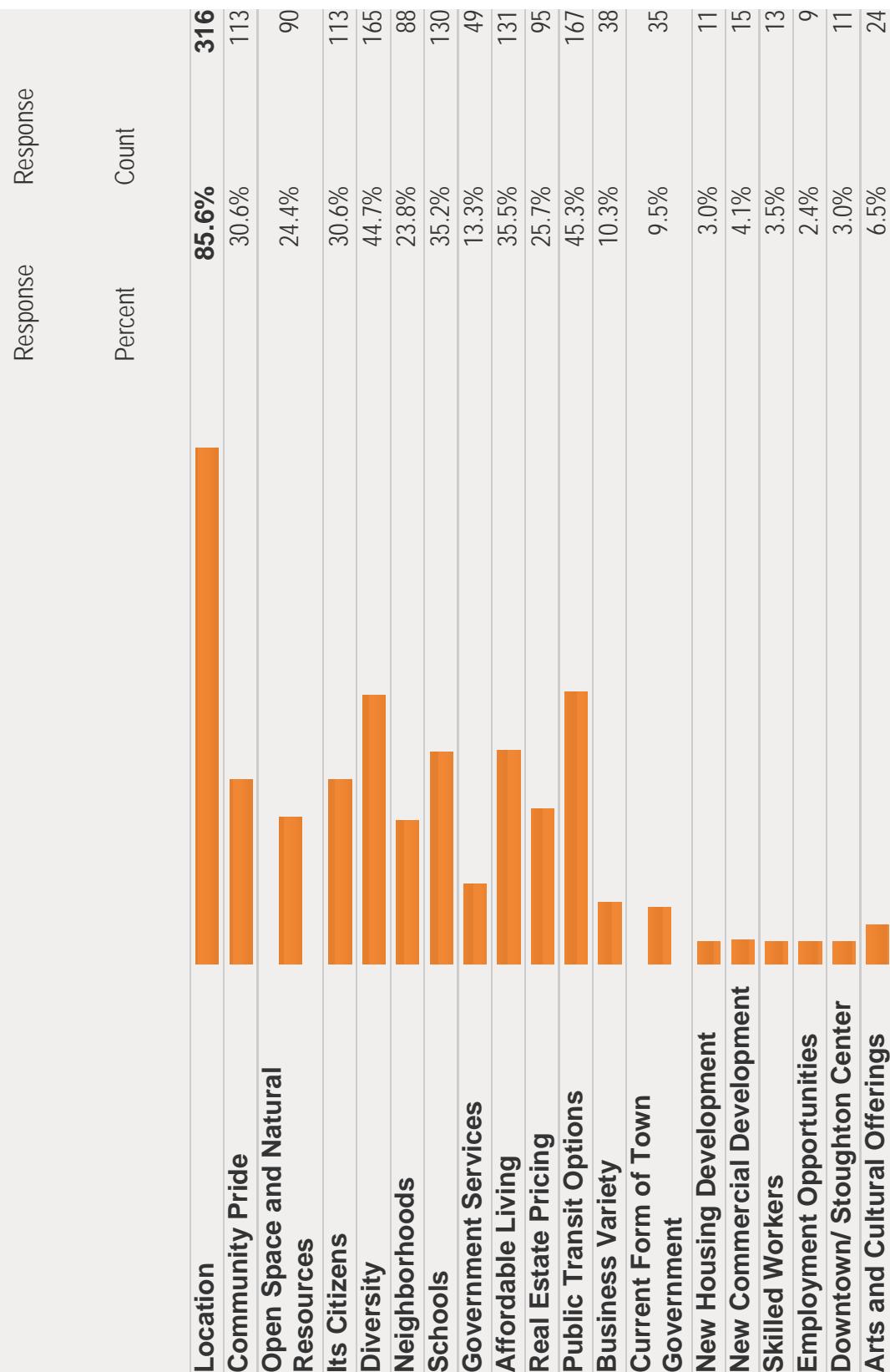
Appendix

Item 8 of 8: Community Survey Results

The following tabulation of survey results does not include written responses to open ended questions. For a complete survey summary please contact the Stoughton Town Planner.

Page:

1. Which of the following best describes Stoughton's strengths? (Check all that apply)

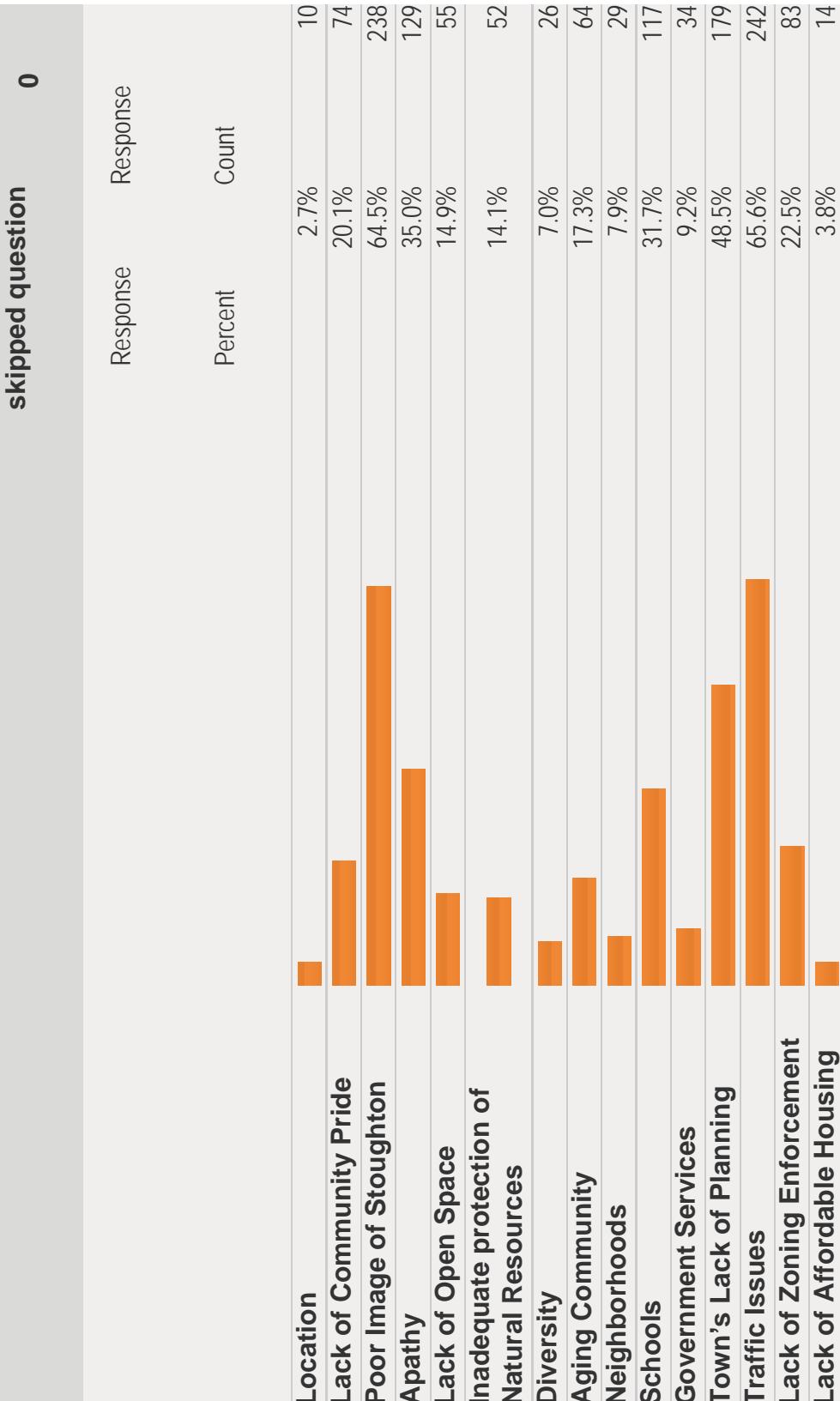
answered question
369skipped question
0

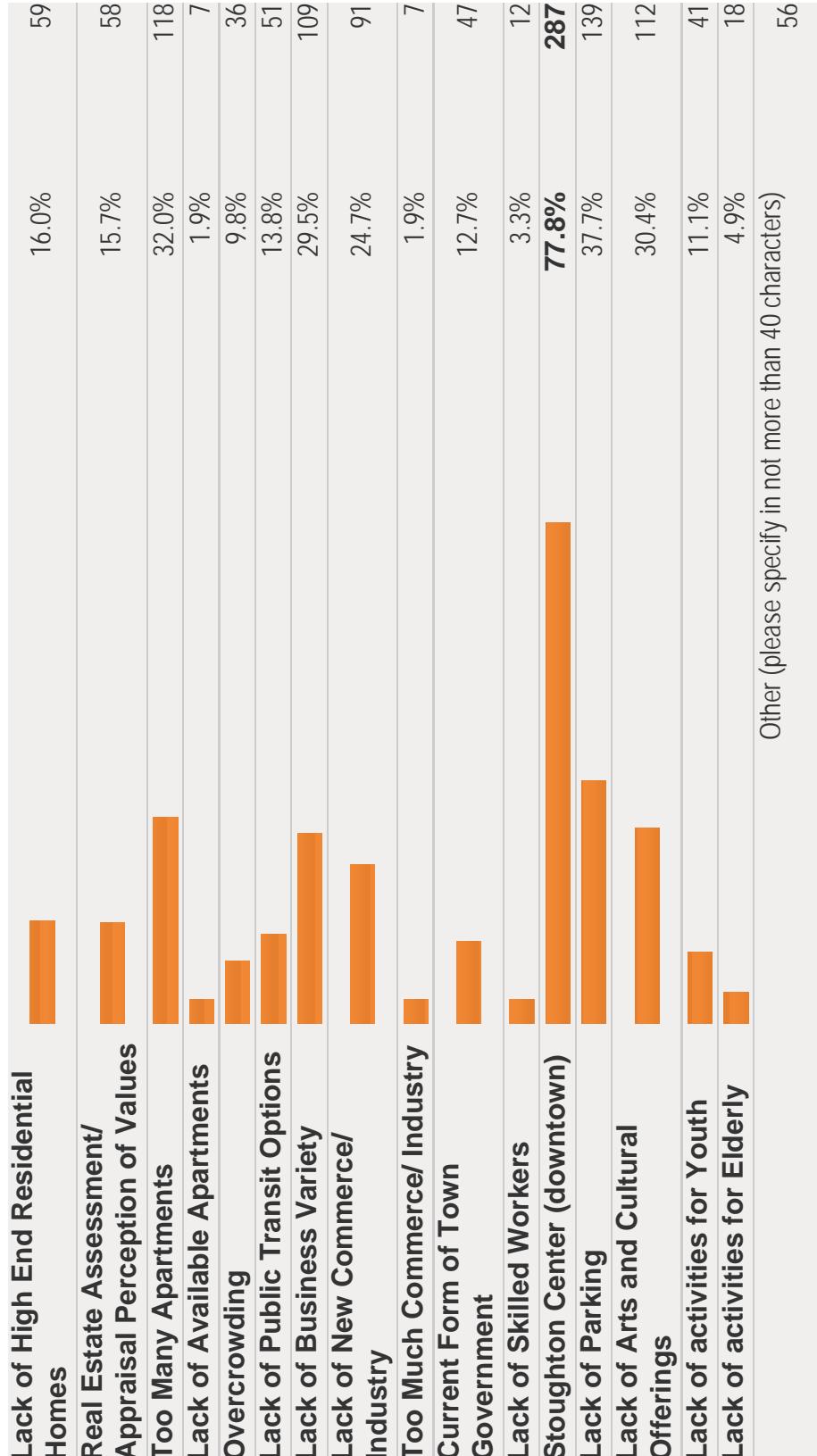
Quality of Youth Activities		30.4%	112
Quality of Council on Aging Activities		19.5%	72
Other (please specify in not more than 40 characters)	20		

2. Which of the following best describes Stoughton's greatest challenges? (Check all that apply).

answered question

369





3. In the next few questions, we are seeking your relative interest in or relative satisfaction with several features of Stoughton. Indicate your satisfaction level with the following (Select one answer per row).

answered question	369
skipped question	0

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	OK	Somewhat dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Average	Rating	Count
Town Services	21.8% (80)	37.6% (138)	33.8% (124)	5.2% (19)	1.6% (6)	3.73	367	
Parks and Recreation	13.2% (48)	28.5% (104)	37.3% (136)	16.7% (61)	4.4% (16)	3.29	365	
Open Space	13.6% (49)	24.4% (88)	41.8% (151)	16.3% (59)	3.9% (14)	3.27	361	
Arts and Culture	5.4% (19)	12.4% (44)	39.3% (139)	31.4% (111)	11.6% (41)	2.69	354	
Schools	14.8% (53)	26.9% (96)	34.5% (123)	17.6% (63)	6.2% (22)	3.27	357	
Youth Activities	17.5% (60)	29.2% (100)	34.5% (118)	15.8% (54)	2.9% (10)	3.43	342	
Elderly Activities	13.7% (42)	25.8% (79)	49.3% (151)	9.2% (28)	2.0% (6)	3.40	306	
Town Center	1.4% (5)	5.5% (20)	9.9% (36)	28.1% (102)	55.1% (200)	1.70	363	
Town Planning	2.0% (7)	6.0% (21)	23.0% (80)	39.7% (138)	29.3% (102)	2.12	348	
Residential Development	3.2% (11)	9.0% (31)	55.4% (190)	23.0% (79)	9.3% (32)	2.74	343	
Commercial Development	3.2% (11)	11.9% (41)	39.5% (136)	32.6% (112)	12.8% (44)	2.60	344	
Industrial Development	2.7% (9)	10.5% (35)	50.5% (168)	27.9% (93)	8.4% (28)	2.71	333	
Zoning Enforcement	2.1% (7)	8.2% (27)	53.5% (176)	21.6% (71)	14.6% (48)	2.62	329	
Signage Regulations	2.2% (7)	8.7% (28)	52.6% (170)	21.1% (68)	15.5% (50)	2.61	323	
Traffic Management	1.7% (6)	5.7% (20)	23.6% (83)	40.3% (142)	28.7% (101)	2.11	352	
Parking - Increased Availability	1.8% (6)	9.2% (31)	41.1% (138)	31.3% (105)	16.7% (56)	2.48	336	
Speeding Enforcement	7.5% (25)	19.5% (65)	51.7% (172)	10.2% (34)	11.1% (37)	3.02	333	
“Walkability/Bikeability”	3.9% (14)	9.9% (35)	31.5% (112)	33.5% (119)	21.1% (75)	2.42	355	

Personal and Family Safety	12.3% (43)	28.2% (99)	39.3% (138)	16.0% (56)	4.3% (15)	3.28
						351

4. Which of the following type of development would you like to see more of in Stoughton? (Select one answer per row).

369
answered question

skipped question 0

	Much More is Needed	More is Needed	Some More is Needed	Not Much Needed	Rating	Rating	Count
Single Family Homes	10.7% (36)	36.4% (122)	33.1% (111)	19.7% (66)	2.38	335	
Apartment Buildings	2.1% (7)	5.6% (19)	19.8% (67)	72.5% (245)	1.37	338	
Condominium Buildings	2.1% (7)	11.8% (40)	29.9% (101)	56.2% (190)	1.60	338	
Senior Housing	7.5% (24)	37.8% (121)	34.1% (109)	20.6% (66)	2.32	320	
Affordable Housing	6.7% (22)	12.5% (41)	31.8% (104)	48.9% (160)	1.77	327	
Higher Priced Housing	17.9% (59)	32.5% (107)	24.9% (82)	24.6% (81)	2.44	329	
Retail Businesses	29.6% (102)	45.5% (157)	16.8% (58)	8.1% (28)	2.97	345	
Restaurants	25.3% (89)	38.4% (135)	23.6% (83)	12.8% (45)	2.76	352	
Industrial	8.7% (28)	32.3% (104)	33.9% (109)	25.2% (81)	2.25	322	
Offices	10.8% (35)	33.1% (107)	38.1% (123)	18.0% (58)	2.37	323	
Active Recreational Parks/ Activities (i.e. playing courts, playing fields, trails, skating rinks)	40.7% (146)	43.5% (156)	11.7% (42)	4.2% (15)	3.21	359	

Passive Recreational Parks/ Activities (i.e. benches, picnic areas, common areas)	37.1% (130) 42.6% (149)	14.9% (52)	5.4% (19)	3.11	350
Other (please specify, not to exceed 120 characters)	54				

5. What has been your experience with the services provided by the Town? (Select one answer per row).						answered question 369	skipped question 0
	Very	Somewhat	OK	Somewhat	Very	Never used	Rating
	satisfied	satisfied		dissatisfied	dissatisfied	service	Average
						Count	
Snow Plowing	40.9% (150)	26.4% (97)	22.1% (81)	4.9% (18)	2.5% (9)	3.3% (12)	3.89
Street Repair	17.8% (65)	29.0% (106)	31.2% (114)	12.9% (47)	5.8% (21)	3.3% (12)	3.30
Water Service	29.9% (108)	22.4% (81)	24.9% (90)	4.4% (16)	3.3% (12)	15.0% (54)	3.26
Sewer Service	26.4% (94)	17.7% (63)	26.1% (93)	2.2% (8)	2.2% (8)	25.3% (90)	2.88
Visiting Nurse Assistance	15.0% (51)	5.0% (17)	7.0% (24)	0.3% (1)	0.6% (2)	72.1% (246)	1.17
Ambulance Service	34.9% (123)	4.3% (15)	5.1% (18)	0.3% (1)	0.6% (2)	54.8% (193)	2.08
Fire Service	45.4% (159)	7.7% (27)	6.6% (23)	0.3% (1)	0.3% (1)	39.7% (139)	2.79
Police Protection	40.1% (143)	19.9% (71)	13.4% (48)	5.3% (19)	1.7% (6)	19.6% (70)	3.32

High School Education

14.6% (52) 13.8% (49) 12.1% (43) 7.3% (26) 4.8% (17) **47.5%** (169) 1.91 356

School Special Projects and Fieldtrips

12.1% (43) 19.2% (68) 23.4% (83) 5.6% (20) 4.2% (15) **35.5%** (126) 2.28 355

After School Academic Programs

8.2% (29) 12.5% (44) 14.8% (52) 7.4% (26) 6.3% (22) **50.9%** (179) 1.64 352

After School Extracurricular Activities (e.g., Clubs, Music)

16.6% (58) 14.0% (49) 16.3% (57) 6.3% (22) 4.6% (16) **42.3%** (148) 2.11 350

School Athletics

13.0% (46) 18.1% (64) 15.8% (56) 2.5% (9) 3.7% (13) **46.9%** (166) 1.96 354

School Dealings with Discipline Issues

7.4% (26) 8.8% (31) 18.8% (66) 9.4% (33) 9.1% (32) **46.4%** (163) 1.66 351

School Involvement of Parents

13.3% (48) 16.4% (59) 26.1% (94) 9.7% (35) 6.9% (25) **27.5%** (99) 2.47 360

Physical Condition of School Facilities

2.8% (10) 10.4% (37) 20.8% (74) **25.0% (89)** 19.4% (69) 21.6% (77) 2.12 356

Other (please specify, not to exceed 120 characters). If you need more space, feel free to email the Master Planning Committee through its website (but your email response will not be anonymous). 64

7. If you have ever applied to the Town or participated at a Board or Commission meeting, please select the statement which best describes your experience. (Select one answer per row).

answered question

369

skipped question

0

Very Somewhat Okay Somewhat Very Never used Rating Rating

satisfied satisfied dissatisfied dissatisfied service Average Count

Building Permit

11.2% (40) 8.1% (29) 18.7% (67) 3.6% (13) 2.5% (9) **55.9%** (200) 1.54 358

Occupancy Permit	4.4% (15)	3.5% (12)	7.6% (26)	1.8% (6)	1.8% (6)	81.0% (277)	0.64	342
Special Permit	2.9% (10)	2.6% (9)	6.1% (21)	2.0% (7)	2.6% (9)	83.7% (288)	0.50	344
Planning Board Approval	3.8% (13)	2.3% (8)	6.1% (21)	1.7% (6)	2.6% (9)	83.5% (288)	0.52	345
Zoning Board of Appeals Variance	3.8% (13)	3.2% (11)	7.0% (24)	4.3% (15)	5.8% (20)	75.9% (262)	0.67	345
Board of Health Approval	2.6% (9)	2.0% (7)	6.4% (22)	0.9% (3)	2.0% (7)	86.1% (298)	0.44	346
Conservation Commission Approval	3.2% (11)	2.0% (7)	6.1% (21)	3.5% (12)	1.5% (5)	83.7% (288)	0.51	344
Board of Selectmen Approval	4.9% (17)	2.9% (10)	7.8% (27)	2.6% (9)	6.3% (22)	75.6% (263)	0.71	348
			Other (please specify, not to exceed 120 characters)		18			

8. Which commercial/retail areas of Stoughton do you frequent most often and why? (Select all that apply per row).

answered question

369

skipped question
0

	Close to Home	Available	Parking	Walkability	Stores	Specialty	Shopping	Rating	Count
Cobbs Corner	51.1% (165)	56.0% (181)	14.6% (47)	58.2% (188)	75.5% (244)				323
Peppercorns/Pages Pearl Street	65.6% (40)	45.9% (28)	23.0% (14)	9.8% (6)	13.1% (8)				61
CVS Plaza	66.0% (132)	58.0% (116)	6.5% (13)	6.0% (12)	24.5% (49)				200
Walgreens Plaza	60.4% (131)	57.1% (124)	5.1% (11)	7.4% (16)	24.9% (54)				217
Tedeschi's/AutoZone (Central Street)	51.7% (45)	32.2% (28)	6.9% (6)	32.2% (28)	24.1% (21)				87

Stop & Shop Plaza	57.9% (140)	60.3% (146)	5.4% (13)	8.7% (21)	40.5% (98)	242
IKEA	41.3% (88)	50.7% (108)	2.8% (6)	42.3% (90)	42.3% (90)	213
Page's II/Dunkin Donuts (Page& Turnpike Sts)	56.1% (32)	31.6% (18)	3.5% (2)	15.8% (9)	22.8% (13)	57
Technology Drive (Kohl's, Olive Garden, etc.)	44.7% (114)	59.6% (152)	2.0% (5)	36.1% (92)	63.5% (162)	255
Target Plaza	49.3% (142)	63.9% (184)	5.2% (15)	22.6% (65)	57.3% (165)	288
Washington St. from Shaws to Central Street	65.8% (79)	40.8% (49)	14.2% (17)	25.8% (31)	39.2% (47)	120
Shaws Plaza	63.2% (127)	51.7% (104)	12.9% (26)	14.9% (30)	34.8% (70)	201
Downtown Stoughton Square	59.2% (45)	15.8% (12)	50.0% (38)	26.3% (20)	23.7% (18)	76
Stoughton Pizza/Tedeschi's Plaza	68.5% (50)	34.2% (25)	15.1% (11)	11.0% (8)	27.4% (20)	73
Bob's Food Mart Plaza	60.8% (87)	45.5% (65)	15.4% (22)	13.3% (19)	34.3% (49)	143
RK Plaza (Panera Bread, etc)	44.2% (106)	58.8% (141)	10.0% (24)	46.7% (112)	68.3% (164)	240
		Other (please specify, not to exceed 120 characters)				
		27				

9. Which commercial/retail areas OUTSIDE of Stoughton do you frequent that you would like to see in Stoughton?

answered question	187
skipped question	182
Response	
Count	187

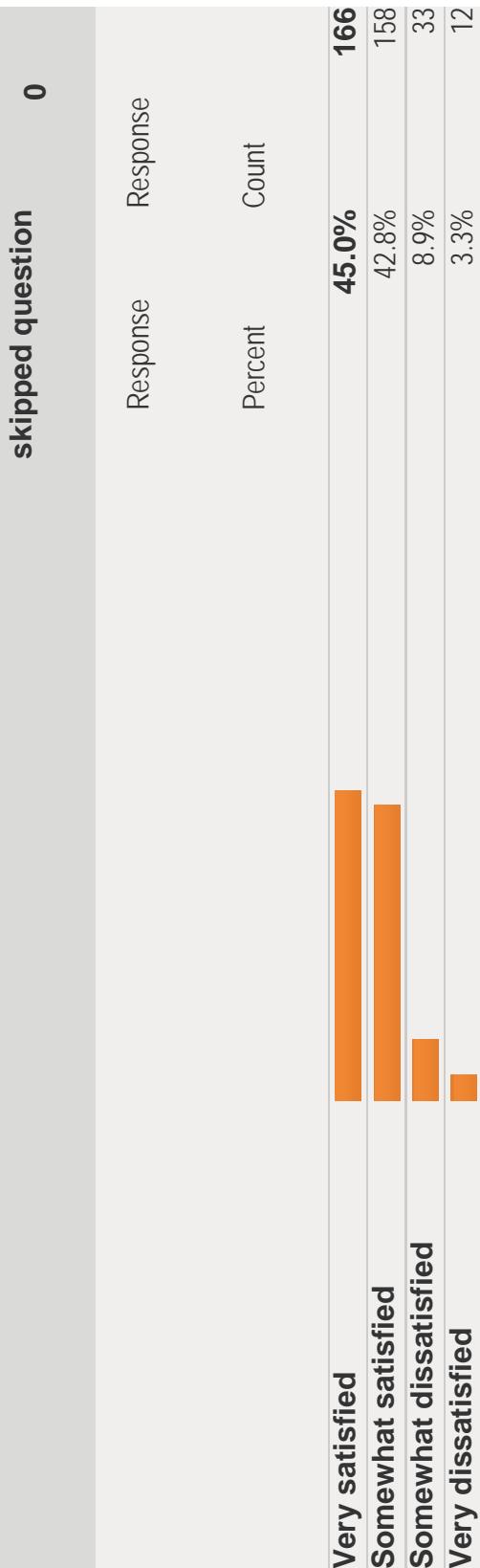
10. Where is your home, business or property located? (Please select your neighborhood by these general landmarks). Check all that apply.

answered question 369

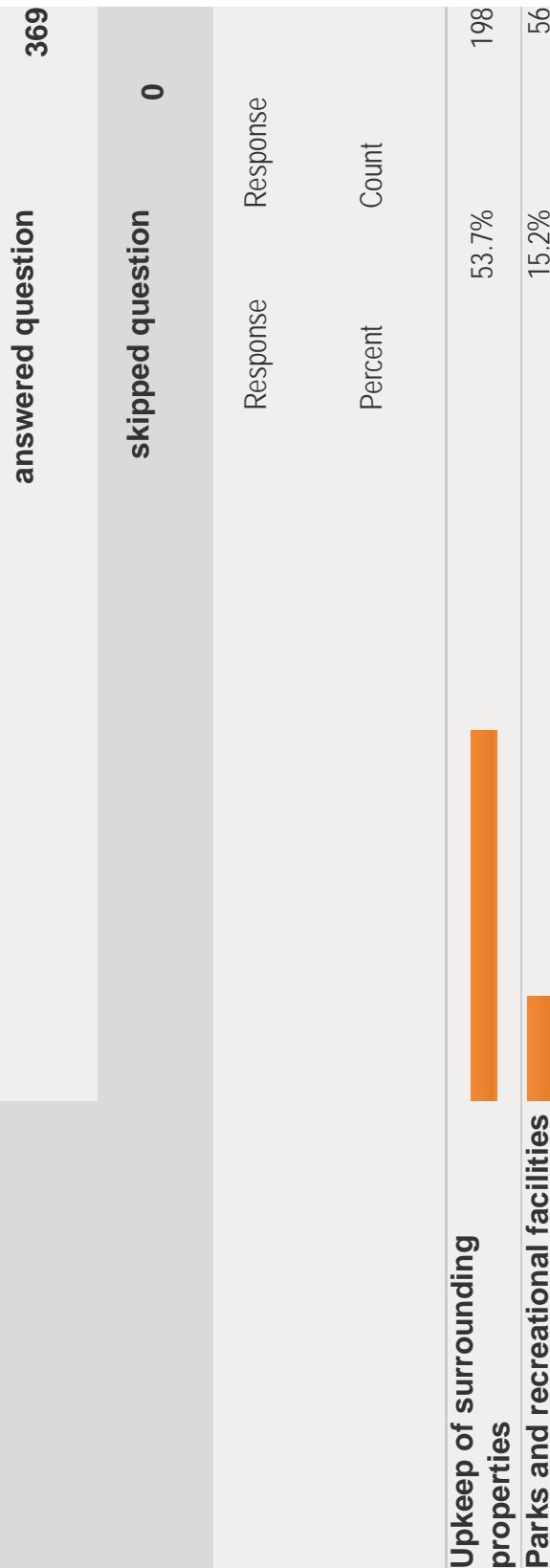
		Rating	Count
Residence	Business	Property	
		skipped question	0
Precinct 1 vote at Dawe School (Stop & Shop, Glen Echo, IKEA)	93.3% (56)	5.0% (3)	10.0% (6)
Precinct 2 vote at Jones School (Across from Striar/Old Colony YMCA, Chapman Rd Area)	90.5% (38)	11.9% (5)	14.3% (6)
Precinct 3 vote at South School (Goddard Medical Center, Copley Nursing Facility)	100.0% (50)	2.0% (1)	10.0% (5)
Precinct 4 vote near door Gibbons School (Dry Pond, Ames Pond,Bird Street)	98.7% (77)	3.8% (3)	11.5% (9)
Precinct 5 vote away from door Gibbons School (Train Station, Faxon Park,Hunt Dr-Poskus St)	88.9% (32)	13.9% (5)	19.4% (7)
Precinct 6 vote at Hansen School (Cobbs Corner, Crescent Ridge,Pinewood Lake)	100.0% (44)	2.3% (1)	15.9% (7)
Precinct 7 vote at West School (Pages,Pinecrest Acres, Marjorie Rd,Tosca Drive)	97.3% (36)	0.0% (0)	5.4% (2)
Precinct 8 vote at Middle School (Downtown,High School, Shaws,Senior Center)	87.9% (29)	12.1% (4)	9.1% (3)

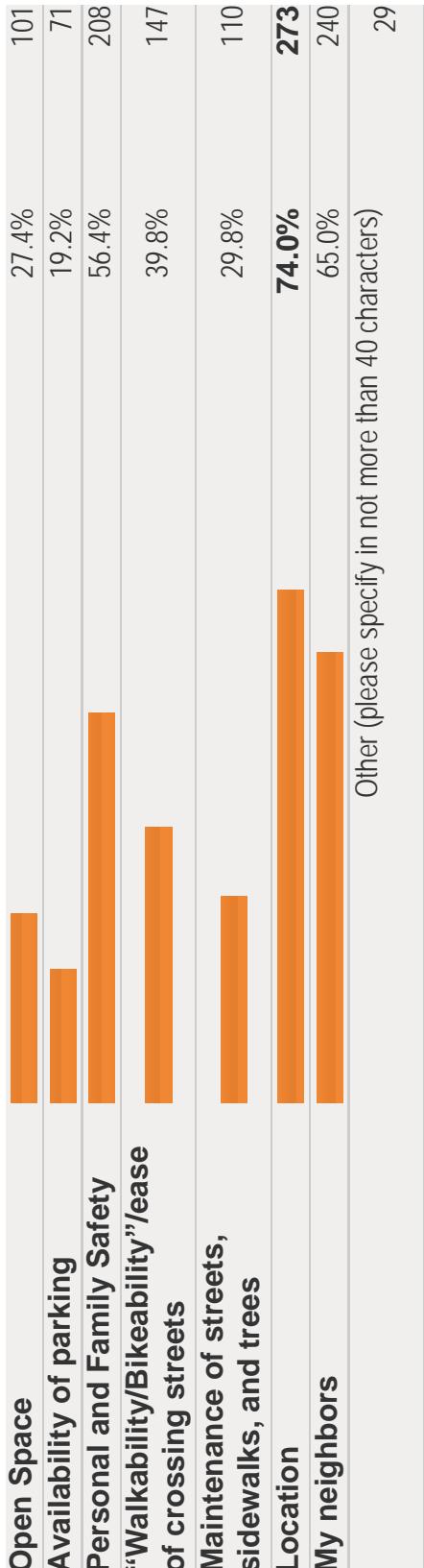
11. How satisfied are you with your neighborhood? (Please select one of the following).

answered question
369

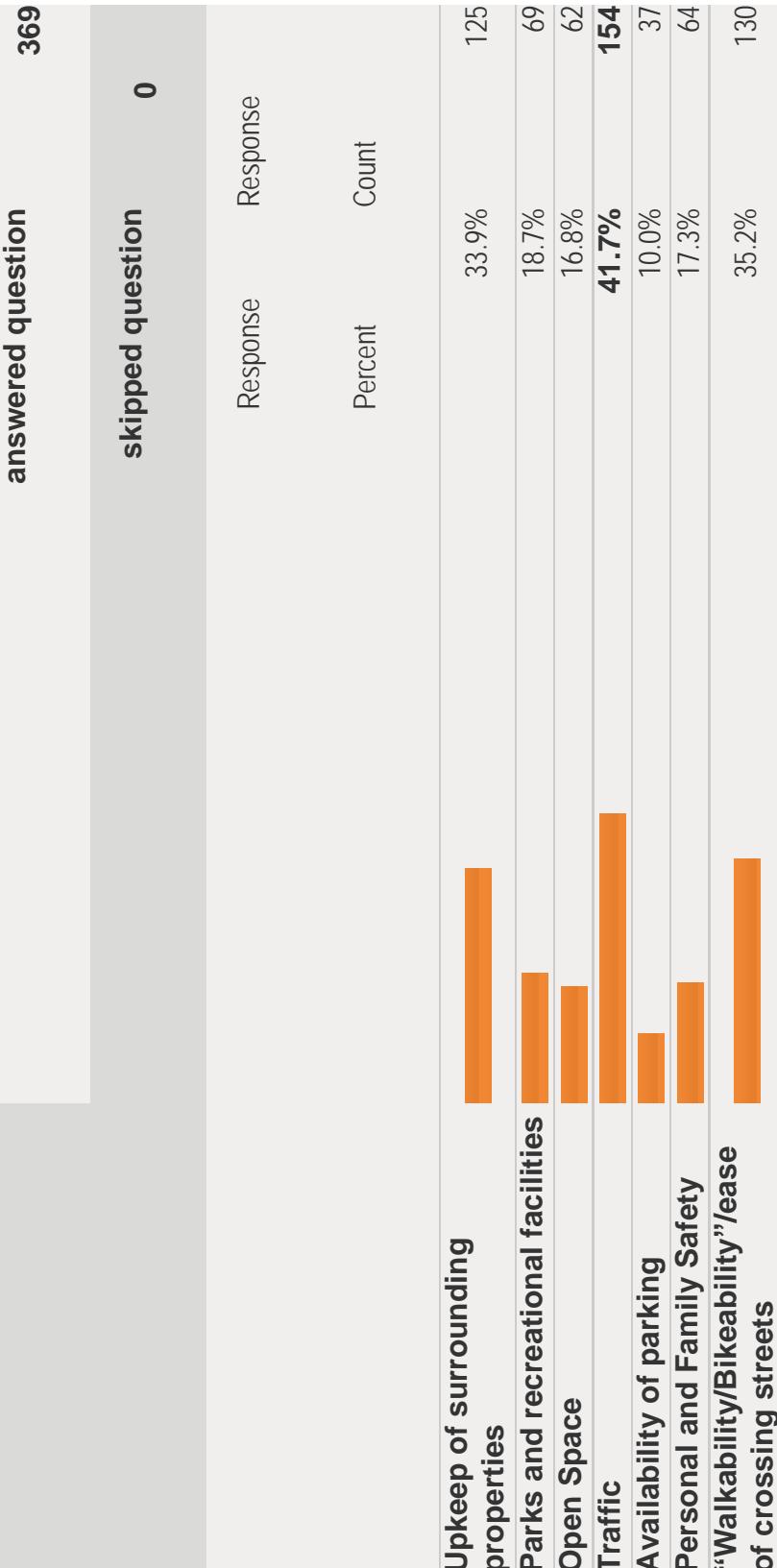


12. Which of the following best describes your neighborhood's strengths? (Select all that apply).





13. Which of the following best describes your neighborhood's challenges? (Select all that apply).





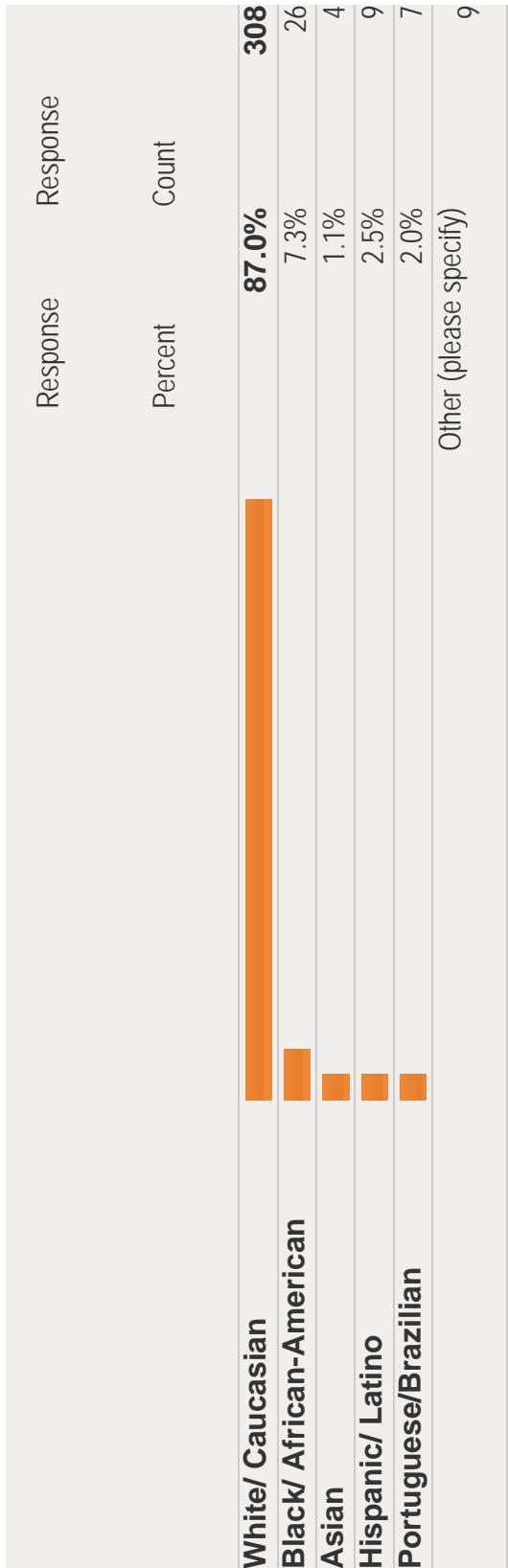
14. Do you plan to live in Stoughton for at least the next 10 years? If yes - why? ... If no - why not? (Please do not to exceed 10 lines)

Response	Count	Percentage
answered question	369	100%
skipped question	0	0%
Count	369	100%

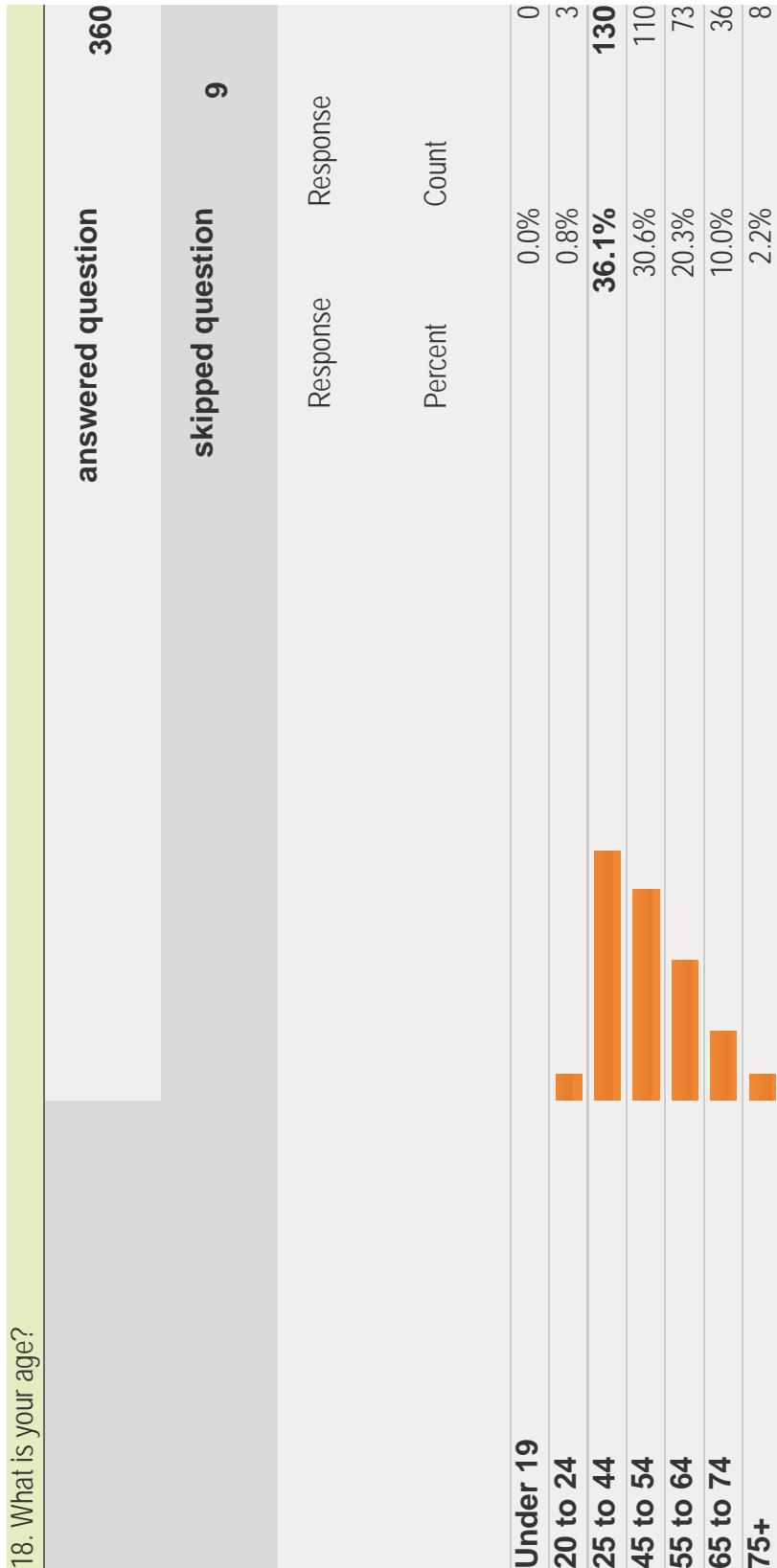
15. Please provide any other comments (not to exceed 10 lines). If you need more space, feel free to email the Master Planning Committee through its website (but your email response will not be anonymous).

Response	Count	Percentage
answered question	149	100%
skipped question	220	0%

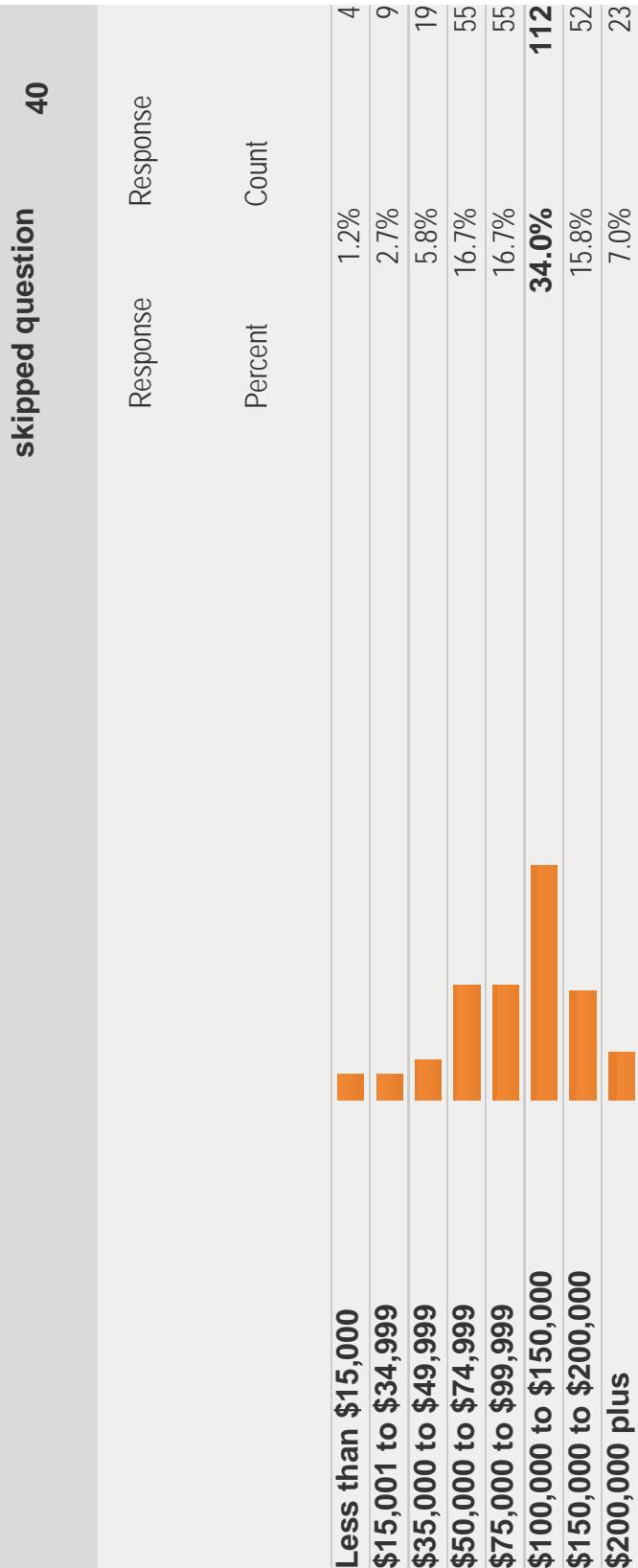
Response		
Count	Response	Percent
149		
16. This survey is entirely anonymous and no personal information will be shared. In order to know if we've reached a representative sample of Stoughton's residents, we would like you to answer the following questions about yourself. This information will be compared with US Census information about our town. What is your gender?		
	answered question	364
	skipped question	5
17. Which ethnic or racial group do you most closely identify with?		
	answered question	354
	skipped question	15
https://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=llZnt17DRMZM2RFMVEgfr0DqpQvKZz1a412Y1WnJMJM8%3d (15 of 21) [2/20/2013 4:44:08 PM]		



18. What is your age?



19. What is your annual gross household income?

answered question
329

20. What level of education did you complete?

answered question
356skipped question
13

	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Less than a high school diploma	0.0%	0
High school diploma/ GED	5.9%	21
Some college	17.1%	61
College graduate	40.7%	145
Post-graduate study	36.2%	129

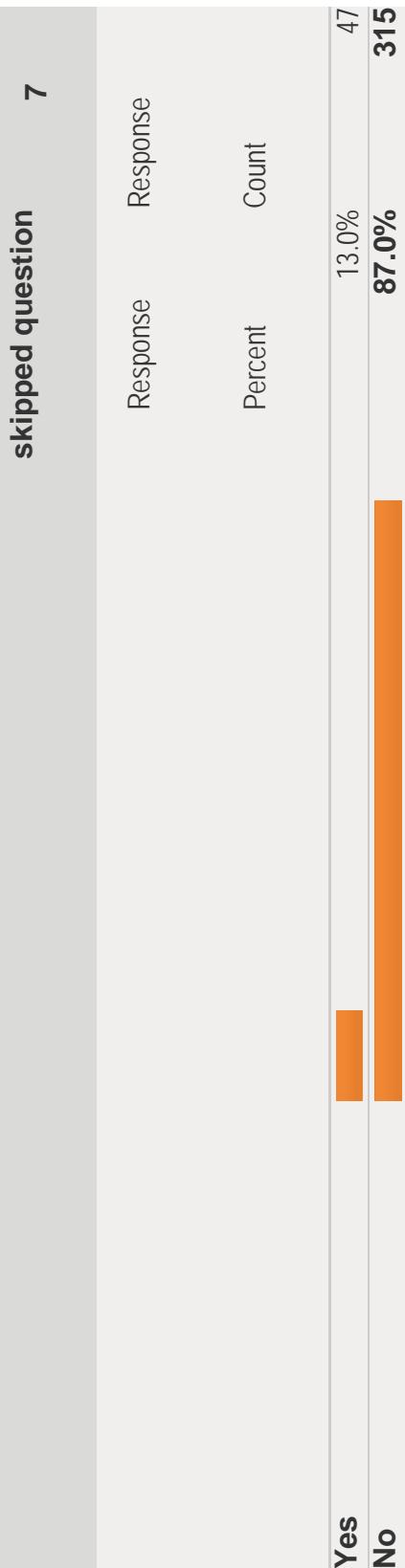
21. What type of house do you live in? (Please select one of the following)

	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
answered question	347	
skipped question	22	

	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Single Family House	94.2%	327
Two-Family House	3.2%	11
Three-Family House	0.3%	1
Four-Family House	0.0%	0
Five units or greater in building	2.3%	8
Other Housing Type (please specify)		22

22. Did you attend the Visioning Workshop on October 15th?

answered question 362



23. How long have you lived in Stoughton or operated a business here? (One answer per row – choose most appropriate)



Own other residential property	62.9% (22)	11.4% (4)	5.7% (2)	20.0% (7)	35
Own or rent other commercial property	84.6% (22)	7.7% (2)	3.8% (1)	3.8% (1)	26
Own or rent other industrial property	90.9% (20)	9.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	22

24. How many people are in your household and how many people are under the age of 18 and /or over 65?

answered question
359

skipped question
10



25. Where do you work and how do you travel to get there? (select all that apply)

answered question
315

skipped question
54

	Bicycle	Car	Walk	Bus	Train	Rating
						Count
Stoughton	1.3% (1)	91.0% (71)	17.9% (14)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (1)	78
Boston	0.9% (1)	62.4% (68)	4.6% (5)	1.8% (2)	60.6% (66)	109
(Neighboring towns: Brockton, Avon, Randolph, Canton, Easton, Sharon)	3.9% (3)	100.0% (76)	1.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (1)	76
Other location (specify below)	4.3% (5)	96.6% (113)	0.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.4% (4)	117
				Other Location		124