



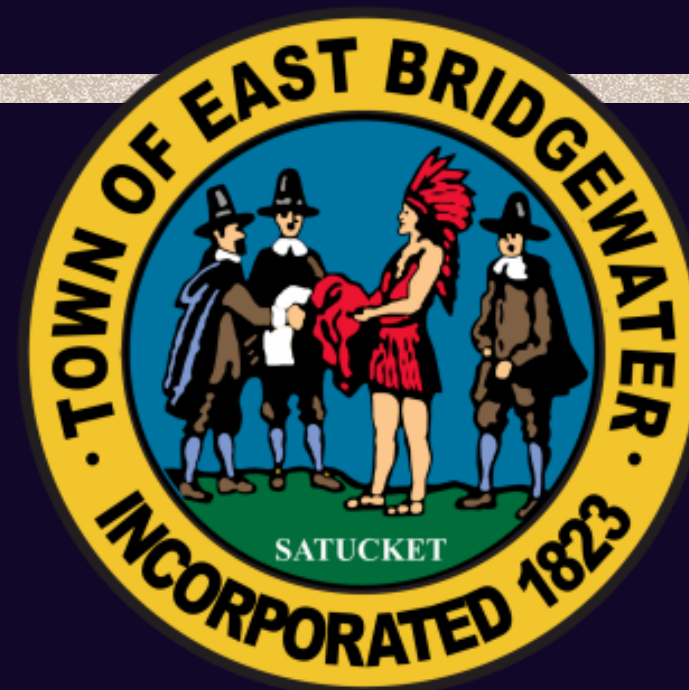
OLD COLONY
PLANNING COUNCIL

EAST BRIDGEWATER

CREATING YOUR 2024-2034 MASTER PLAN

CHARLIE SEELING

Town Planner
East Bridgewater



RHIANNON DUGAN

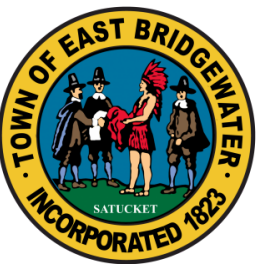
Senior Comprehensive Planning
Old Colony Planning Council

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law:

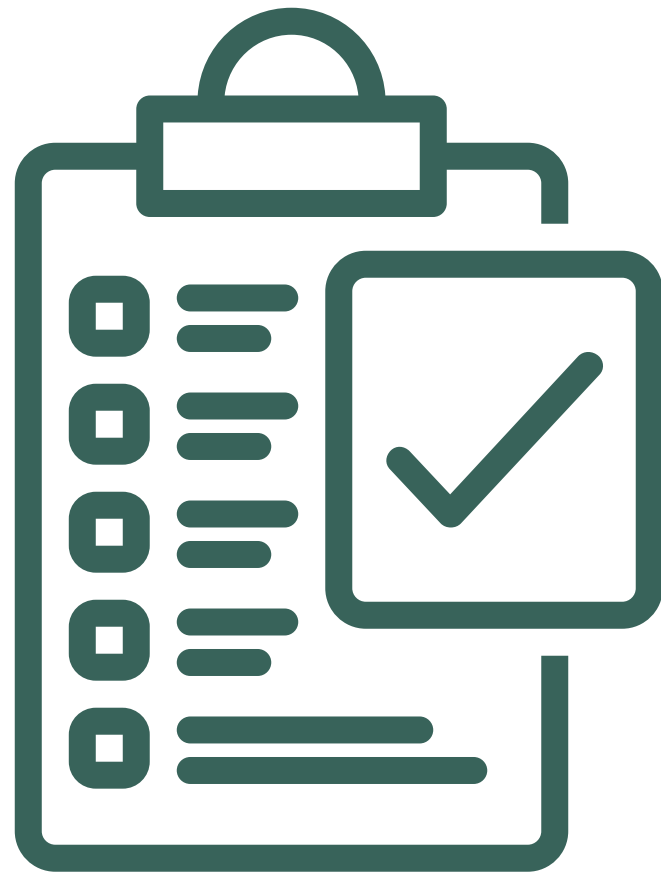
Such plan shall be a **statement**, through text, maps, illustrations or other forms of communication, that is designed to **provide a basis for decision making** regarding the **long-term** physical development of the municipality. The comprehensive plan shall be internally consistent in its policies, forecasts and standards . . . [M.G.L. c. 41, s. 81D]

Long-term typically interpreted as a guide for the next 10 or more years.

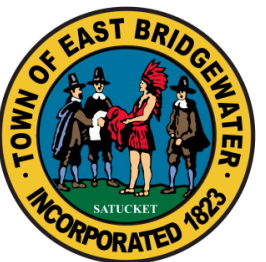


STATE REQUIRED ELEMENTS

State Requirements - M.G.L. c. 41, s. 81D directs Planning Boards to prepare a Master Plan with the following chapters (aka “elements”):



- 1.Statement of Goals and Policies
- 2.Land Use
- 3.Housing
- 4.Economic Development
- 5.Natural and Cultural Resources
- 6.Open Space and Recreation
- 7.Sustainability and Climate Change
- 8.Services and Facilities
- 9.Transportation and Circulation
- 10.Implementation Strategies



OCPC COLLABORATION



LISTEN

to the community



UNDERSTAND

the community's
goals and
priorities for the
town



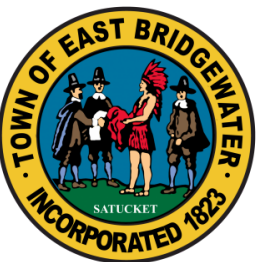
GATHER

analyze, and
present
information



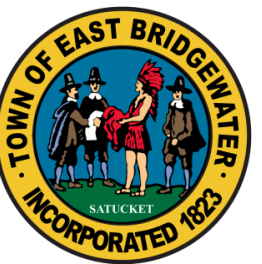
HELP

make a plan that
responds to your
goals

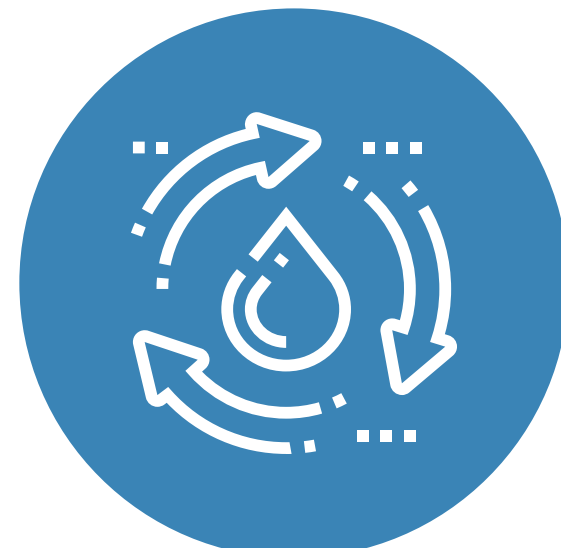


WHAT DOES A MASTER PLAN MEAN FOR A TOWN?

- **A guide for local public policy**
- **Bylaws**
- **Land preservation**
- **Targeted economic development**
- **Prioritize conservation areas**
- **Allocate funds for capital improvements**
- **Advocate for needed services**
- **Capture the wants and needs of the community**



WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION DO WE LOOK AT?



- Land Use Patterns
- Zoning and Bylaws
- Town Priority Areas
- Municipal Land and Facilities
- Water Resources
- Conservation
- Wildlife Habitat

- Agriculture
- Transportation
- Emergency Statistics and Services
- Land Values
- History
- Demographics
- Economy



AND YOUR INPUT!



Public Workshops

Today and more to come!



Website & Social Media



Public Comment Submissions



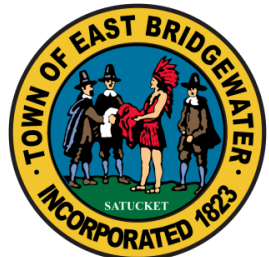
Table Events

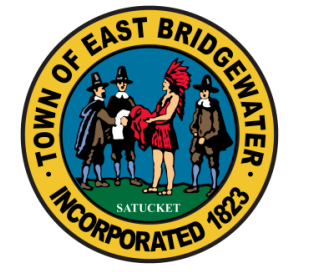
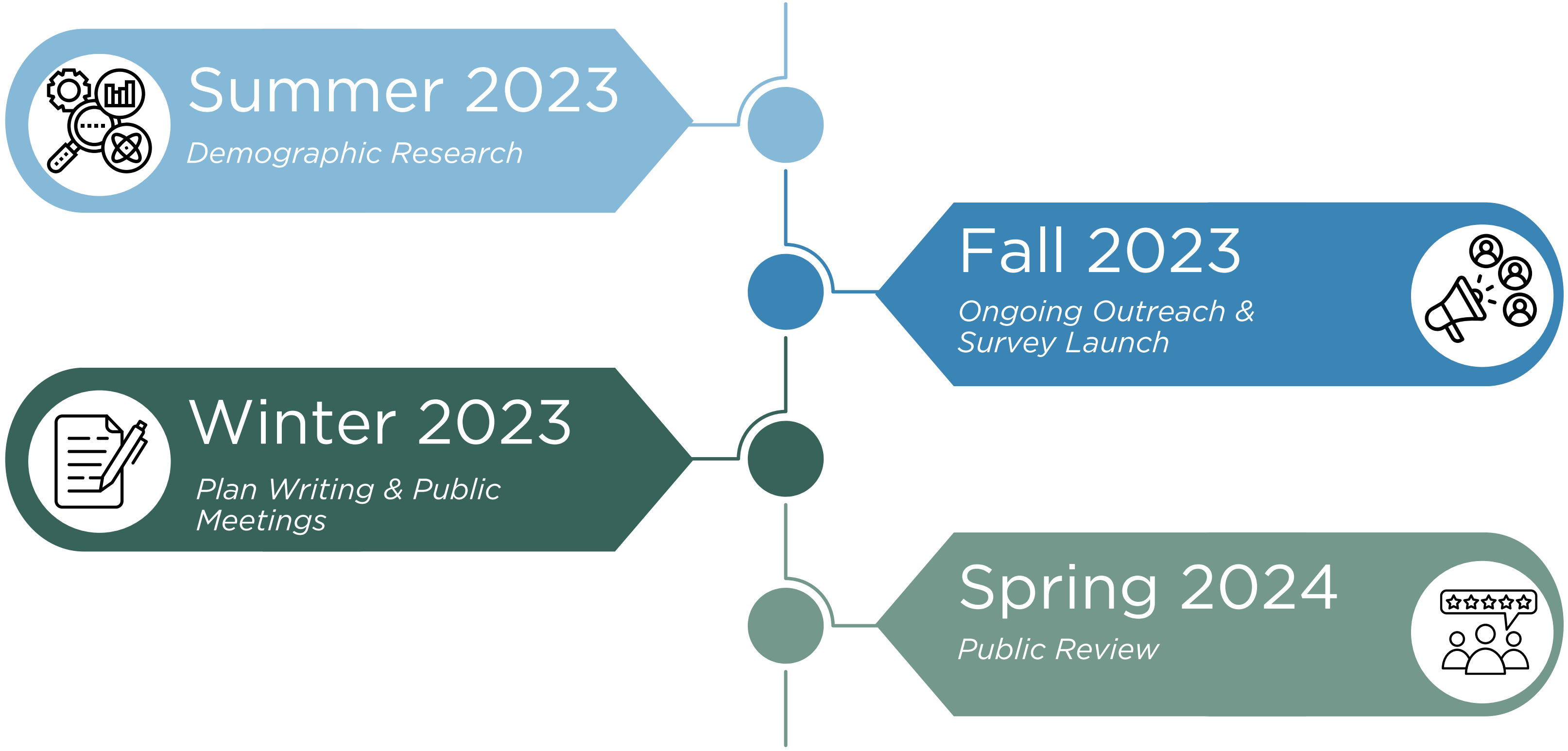


Master Plan Committee



THE COMMUNITY'S CHARACTER, INPUT, AND GOALS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART TO MAKE THE PLAN UNIQUE AND EFFECTIVE.





HOW DOES THIS BECOME CHAPTERS?



Looking at the data presented here, previous planning efforts from the town and your engagement we determine where the town is thriving and where the town wants to improve! Using this, we create goals for the town to work towards over the next 10 years.



Introduction

Summary:

A Master Plan is defined by Massachusetts General Laws as a “Statement, through text, maps, illustrations, or other forms of communication, which is designed to provide a basis for decision-making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality.” [Chapter 41, Section 81-D]. A master plan is a guiding document for the town, formed through the collaboration of local government and residents, that serves as a guide for local public policy that will support the vision and goals of the community.

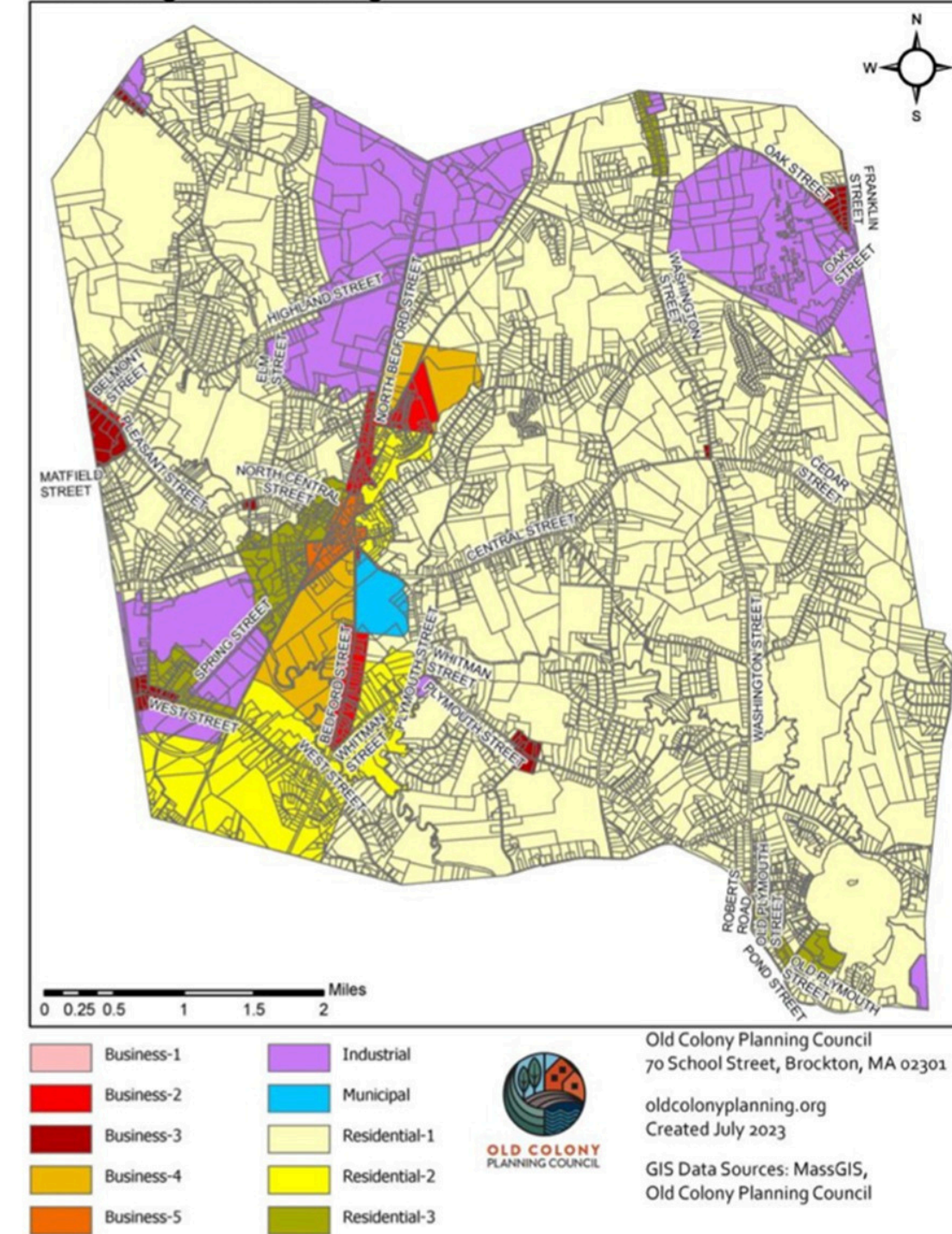
Relevant Data:

- The Master Plan consists of the following chapters, Introduction, Land Use, Economic Development, Housing ,Natural and Cultural Resources , Open Space and Recreation , Sustainability and Climate Resiliency, Services and Facilities, Transportation , Action Plan for Implementation, Community Profile, and an Appendix.

Community Survey Results:

- When asked what they liked most about living in town, 71% selected “Small-town charm/ rural atmosphere” and 57% chose “Natural and Scenic Areas”. Other common choices were “Public Safety” and “Strong Sense of community / feeling of belonging” .

East Bridgewater Zoning



Land Use

Summary:

This chapter reviews past and current land use trends in East Bridgewater. Creating a balance between conservation and development will allow the town to thrive. Trends are identified by reviewing zoning, maps and residential experience.

Relevant Data:

- East Bridgewater has many wetlands that impact where development can happen.
- The town's population will likely peak in 2040 at around 14,835 people.

Community Survey Results:

- When asked what they liked most about living in town, the following received the most selection: Small-town charm/ rural atmosphere 68%, Strong sense of community/ feelings of belonging 33%, Public Safety 30%, and Natural and Scenic areas 30%. When asked what they were most concerned about in town, the following received the most selection: Affordability/Cost of Living 44%, Development / Losing small-town feel 42%, Quality of public school education 42%.

Land Use Goals and Actions:

1. Do an in-depth review of current zoning bylaws in town to ensure they are promoting the type of growth East Bridgewater wants to see.
 - a. Consider the amendment of bylaws to support mixed-use to increase the height of buildings and reduce parking spot minimums to help reduce the footprint of future developments and preserve open space.
 - b. Create a position for a Town Planner to help with long term consistency and implementation of bylaws.
2. Update supporting plans including but not limited to Master Plan 2035, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and Housing Production Plan.
 - a. Create a schedule to include when plans are set to expire and ways to access funding to limit the burden of updates on the town.
 - b. Maintain a master list of objectives of the town across different themes and plans.
 - c. Create steering committees for each board that remain active after the completion of a plan to help ensure implementation across varying boards and departments.

Economic Development

Summary:

Economic Development seeks to create a strategic framework that will guide and promote economic growth for attracting investment, creating jobs, and improving the well-being of the community by leveraging its strengths and addressing challenges.

Relevant Data:

- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MADOT) Demographic and Socio-Economic Forecast indicated there were 3,455 jobs in town in 2020, most of which were in “Education & Health Services” concentrated along Route 18 (occupying 27% of those jobs), and “Leisure & Hospitality” that includes retail, restaurants, and other accommodation jobs (consisting of 21%).
- The average commute time for residence is 33.8 minutes.

Community Survey Results:

- Of those who had an opinion (i.e. did NOT select “not sure”) 32.5% would not support more land in town be rezoned for commercial and/or light industrial use, whereas 10% indicated that they would support such rezoning(s). However, when combined with “yes, but only in specific spots,” 41% would support rezoning certain parcels for commercial and/or light industrial use. “A walkable downtown with small businesses would be lovely. I think we're all set on industrial/warehouse use.”

Economic Development Goals and Actions

1. Enhance the capacity of current Industrially zoned areas
With space as a limiting factor for the town, maximizing industrial areas is important to diversify the tax base.

- a. Remediate Brownfield sites commonly known as Precise Engineering and Eastern State Steel.
- b. Consider working with the Hanson Planning Department to connect abutting industrial spaces
- c. Investigate potential areas of expansion following the sewer district expansion feasibility study.
- d. Consider allowing mixed-use buildings as a means to provide space for more small businesses surrounding existing industrial space.

2. Create a connected commercial space through aesthetics.
The businesses in the center of town and the Carriage Street lot are walkable but lack safety.

- a. Continue working with the state to repair sidewalks and increase pedestrian safety along Route 18
- b. Consider creating a commercial district identity for the stretch of space including and connecting through streetscaping

3. Increase agricultural promotion as a need for both food and economic growth

At this time, East Bridgewater does not have a grocery store. Enhancing local agriculture promotions provides local food while building a customer base for farmers.

- a. The Agriculture Commission and Planning Board should reach out to local farms and existing farmers’ markets to establish a market for East Bridgewater.

Housing

Summary:

Housing takes in to account the overall housing stock of the community and how it compares to the wealth and households of the town. The Housing Chapter also complies with the Town's Housing Production Plan and the Commonwealth's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory program.

Relevant Data:

- The number of households was estimated to be 4,949 in 2021, an increase of 6.59% between 2010 and 2021 East Bridgewater was estimated to have
- 28.3% of households with at least one person over 65, Plymouth County for 35.7%, and the Commonwealth for 31.7%. East Bridgewater's estimated median household income in 2021 was \$110,842. The estimated household
- income for owner-occupied housing was \$127,989; renter-occupied housing was \$43,852 annually.

Community Survey Results:

- If residents were to move out of their current home, 38% would do so for a smaller home with less maintenance; 36% would do so to reduce housing costs; and 32% would want a home that is more suitable for to aging (a home without stairs, for example) 63% of survey respondents think
- housing affordability is an issue for either themselves or anyone they know in town

Housing Goals and Actions

1. The town will address needed zoning amendments to accommodate the growing need for housing across different scales and sizes.
 - a. The town will implement MBTA zoning-mandated requirements.
 - b. The town will consider the need for mixed-use housing that allows for smaller units to be built upon first-floor retail, specifically in areas adjacent to current commercial growth.
 - c. Prepare to bring enrollment in CPA in town meeting with supporting educational materials and cost-effective breakdown.
2. Staff from the Housing Authority and Housing Committee will work with the planning board on ways to increase housing potential to meet the following needs:
 - a. Deeply subsidized rental units for low-income families: units rarely built under any form of regulatory relief except by public agencies and private non-profit housing development organizations.
 - b. Subsidized and modestly priced studio apartments and single-room occupancy units for one-person households with low or moderate incomes.
 - c. Deeply subsidized senior citizens' rental units to relieve pressure on the East Bridgewater Housing Authority's waiting list.
 - d. Homeownership units for people in a somewhat lower income range than Chapter 40B or inclusionary zoning developments typically serve.
3. Increase opportunity for Veteran and Senior Tax Relief programs to keep the most financially threatened residents in their homes.

Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Summary:

East Bridgewater has many natural and cultural resources within the town, including lakes, rivers, parks, trails, and historic properties. These assets are important to both the aesthetic of the town but also provide rich recreational opportunities and are essential to maintaining healthy ecosystems and clean waterways.

Relevant Data:

- The area of permanently conserved land is 827 acres, ranking 30th in the state. This represents approximately 7% of the total land area of the town, which is 11,225 acres or 17.5 square miles. East Bridgewater is home to many unique
- habitats which attract various wildlife, including the rarely seen Sandhill Crane. East Bridgewater's Historic Commission worked to create a Historic
- District in town.

Community Survey Results:

- When asked what approaches the town should pursue for land conservation 63% recommended promoting the use of existing spaces, followed by purchase new land for conservation or recreation at 58%. Protecting land through zoning initiatives rounded out the top three at 47%. Most
- respondents prioritized water sources (streams, ponds, groundwater), woodlands, and trails as natural resources most in need of attention. Wetlands and parks were tied at roughly 40%.

Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources

Goals and Actions

1. Protect agricultural lands and scenic views in town.

a. Conservation Commission will use data identified in the Master Plan process to begin tracking land of significance. These efforts will be continued through the update of an Open Space and Recreation plan.

b. The Conservation Commission and Agriculture Commission will need to work together to create outreach to landowners

2. Protect water resources in town.

a. The Conservation Commission will consider the creation of a Town bylaw regarding wetlands protection and those affecting earth removal.

b. The Conservation Commission will strategize to create public outreach on water resources in town and educate homeowners on reducing runoff.

3. Showcase the history of the town through preservation and education.

The Historical Commission continues to work to maintain historical records in town and engage the public.

a. The Historical Commission will work with the town manager to identify a space available in town that can display local artifacts and safely store those in more fragile conditions.

Open Space and Recreation

Summary:

Open space refers to a relatively continuous area of public or private lands without buildings or highways that holds significant value either for conservation or recreation. To provide a functional network of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for a town's future, the protection of key open space properties is important. Open space comes in varied forms, especially farmland, playing fields, parks, and other types such as golf courses and gravel pits.

Relevant Data:

- Currently, the town does not have a land trust to put town-owned land into conservation.
- The town owns 698 acres of Open Space.
- There is 1,495 acres of permanent conservation space or about 13% in town held by various partners.

Community Survey Results:

- Of the 587 responses, 38%, use open space/recreational spaces regularly (either multiple times per week or at least one per week). Of the outdoor activities respondents most enjoy, walking or hiking was overwhelmingly favored among 87% of respondents. Playgrounds (33%) and team sports (31%) rounded out the top three. When asked about recreation improvements for the town, the majority prioritized sidewalks, trails for walking, hiking and/or jogging, and water recreation access (canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and swimming).

Open Space and Recreation Goals

1. Enhance public awareness of volunteer and recreation opportunities within East Bridgewater.

a. Create a detailed recreation site that lists all fields and park spaces in addition to what is already listed.

b. Work with the town website manager to create a volunteering page under the "How Do I?" tab to increase the number of board members and per diem volunteering.

c. Work with schools, recreation, and youth sports to cross-share information on collaborative events and sports sign-ups.

2. Perform Site Assessments for Leland Farm.

a. There is potential for expanded recreational opportunities at Leland Farm.

3. Create a system for improved land management moving forward.

a. When updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Recreation Committee and Master Plan Implementation Committee should create a database of all parks and trail systems, including conditions, current needs, and gaps in accessibility where appropriate.

b. The town should consider hiring staff to help enhance public spaces. This may include a Town Planner for grant management surrounding parks and trails and a Recreation Director to work with the Recreation Commission and Highway Department to create better management strategies and assist with maintenance.

c. The town should ensure that most of these parcels are placed under Chapter 97 to provide long-term protection for these spaces not used for active recreation. Chapter 97 is a state wide conservation restriction that creates permanent protection of lands.

4. The Planning Board in connection with the Recreation Board should consider selecting a site in town for a playground off of school grounds that is adequate for community needs.

Sustainability and Climate Resiliency

Summary:

Sustainability and Climate Resiliency is building and maintaining a healthy and safe community by reducing climate pollution, adapting to a changing global climate, enhancing natural resources and the environment, fostering a prosperous and just regional economy, and meeting the needs of current and future generations.

Relevant Data:

- The town became a Green Community, earned in June 2022, has allowed the Town to receive \$160,000 in state-funded grants over the first two years. These funds have been instrumental in implementing energy efficiency projects in schools and municipal buildings. East Bridgewater completed a
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) plan through the Commonwealth. This allows the town to apply for competitive MVP grants to assess concerns identified in the plan such as flooding, local emergencies, and relevant infrastructure.

Community Survey Results

When asked what the town should promote or pursue to ensure current and future generations enjoy high quality of life in town the following were ranked the highest: Improved walkability throughout town 70%, Improved management of stormwater to prevent flooding and improve water quality 52%, Energy efficiency and renewable energy production 47%, and Improved access to fresh locally grown food 47%.

Sustainability and Climate Resiliency Goals and Actions

1. Continue working with Green Communities to lower energy usage and bills in the municipality.
 - a. Remain compliant with annual reporting requirements and apply for competitive grants when applicable.
 - b. Make reporting available to the public so that the public can see the town's ongoing efforts to reduce energy usage and GHG emissions.
2. Use the existing MVP plan to guide infrastructure needs in town.
 - a. Flooding poses a large risk for East Bridgewater as identified in the MVP plan and the OCPC Climate Change Transportation Vulnerability Plan. Culverts, bridges, and roads identified in these plans should be key areas for improvement in upcoming years.
 - b. Consider updating the MVP plan with the state's new grant program.
3. Establish clear actions that assist community members, especially the most vulnerable, in building resiliency to the adverse impacts of climate change.
 - a. The Town shall coordinate responses to extreme weather events, such as extreme heat, flooding, storms, and other natural hazards for those most vulnerable. Response actions may include amplifying weather warning systems, establishing cooling centers or emergency shelters, and providing access to social support programs.
 - b. The Town shall encourage community-scale resources such as emergency hubs, community gardens, and local food banks to help increase community resiliency and reduce the adverse impacts of climate and weather events.
4. Continue to protect natural resources, including town forest canopy and water quality.
 - a. Implementing goals from the Master Plan and updating the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan will work to protect land conservation that promotes healthy forests and watersheds.

Transportation

Summary:

Transportation refers to the movement of people, goods, and modes of travel. When reviewing transportation, we must consider necessary infrastructure, maintenance, land use, transportation connections, trip traffic, and movement drivers.

Relevant Data:

- Major routes in town include Route 18, Route 106 and Route 14.
- East Bridgewater is an MBTA-adjacent community with a nearby commuter rail stop in Hanson, Whitman, Brockton and Bridgewater.

Community Survey Results:

- Most respondents reported driving themselves as their main mode of transport, with 79% of respondents saying they use driving as the main source of transport for getting around town on a daily basis, followed by 16% of respondents saying they use driving as the main source of transport for getting around town 3-6 days a week. Bicycling “less than once a week” received 16% of responses and walking “less than once a week” and “1-2 days a week” rounded out the top choices at 27% and 16% respectively.

Transportation Goals and Actions

1. Increase Pedestrian Safety
 - a. The town will continue to work with the Complete Streets program and state initiatives to improve sidewalks and increase the number of sidewalks in town.
 - b. More public outreach could be done to grasp the ongoing priorities of residents in town.
 - c. The town could consider adding longer periods for crossing guards at the town center specifically to aid students using the public library.
2. Assess the potential for public transportation in town.
 - a. The town could have representatives working with the local MPO and BAT directly to consider the expansion of public transportation for access to grocery stores in neighboring towns and health facilities
3. Upgrade infrastructure to meet the needs of increased congestion.
 - a. Continue to work with the State TIP to improve Route 18 driving and walking conditions
 - b. Consider the impact future buildings and industry will have on traffic, specifically along major routes. With increased traffic, Route 18 may need to be diverted.

Public Facilities and Services

Summary:

Community facilities provide essential services and amenities to Town residents and provide the basis for a feeling of belonging and a unique community identity. Community facilities include parks and other recreational facilities, open space, historic buildings, Town services, public safety and emergency services, schools, libraries, infrastructure (such as water and sewer systems and utility corridors), and other cultural resources and programs.

Relevant Data:

- There are several buildings that remain in need of ADA-accessible infrastructure installations, for example the library.
- East Bridgewater's municipally owned buildings and structures have a combined value of approximately \$159,405,108.00.
- Public school facilities have their own maintenance budgets for salaries/wages, supplies, and upgrades.

Community Survey Results:

- Of those who had an opinion (i.e., did NOT select "neither dissatisfied nor satisfied"), the majority rated the following town facilities/services favorably: fire services, police services, and the public library. Trash and recycling services, and public schools received the lowest satisfaction levels. Respondents agreed to some extent that there are many facilities in town that serve important functions and roles for residents. Libraries, community events/festivals, and community centers ranked the highest, Places of faith and art galleries, studios, and related facilities ranked the lowest.

Facilities and Public Services Goals and Actions

1. Balance services with careful short- and long-term budget considerations.
 - a. Create Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for all Town-owned and/or managed municipal buildings to prioritize and address capital needs as they arise.
 - b. Continue to plan for construction of a new Public Safety Campus.
 - c. Analyze the feasibility and costs and benefits of hiring and/or expanding Town personnel, including but not limited to Human Resources, Town Planner, additional staff in offices of need.
 - d. Examine the costs and impact associated with the Plymouth County Retirement System and re-examine the current goal of the program being fully funded by FY2030; refine goals as necessary.
2. Provide adequate support for Town departments to ensure they are equipped to provide public services efficiently.
 - a. Solicit staff input annually to assess and plan for addressing capacity deficits by department.
 - b. Conduct a municipal space needs study to determine space deficits and surplus facilities spaces Town-wide.
 - c. Create, review, and periodically update operational manuals for departments, boards, committees, and commissions.
 - d. Encourage participation in departmental office hours/listening sessions for the public.
3. Commit to environmental sustainability in all Town of East Bridgewater policies.
 - a. Investigate and promote alternative energy production and storage on Town-owned parcels.
 - b. Continually review and implement the Town's Water Conservation Program

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

CONTACT US!

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OLD COLONY
PLANNING COUNCIL

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oldcolonyplanning.org/east-bridgewater-master-plan/

