

Town of East Bridgewater

Master Plan

2024-2034



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The East Bridgewater 2024-2034 Master Plan was adopted by the East Bridgewater Planning Board, in accordance with M.G.L. C. 41, § 81D: 07/15/2024.

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- The Steering Committee
- Old Colony Planning Council
- Town Administrator Charlie Seelig

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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	7
<i>How is the master plan outlined?</i>	7
Who wrote the Master Plan?.....	8
Community Engagement	8
General Government in East Bridgewater	10
ELEMENTS.....	13
LAND USE.....	15
History of Growth.....	17
Existing Conditions:.....	19
Trends and Influences:	23
Soils:	24
Areas of Concern:	25
Land Use Goals and Actions:.....	26
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.....	28
Existing Conditions.....	28
Jobs & Workforce	28
Tax Base	30
New Growth	31
Accessing Existing Space	31
Brownfields	32
North Bedford Street Sewer District	33
Intensify Commercial Value & Identity of East Bridgewater Center	34
Long Term Strategies	37
Economic Development Goals and Actions	40
HOUSING.....	42

Existing Conditions	42
Household Characteristics	44
Housing Characteristics	45
Household Wealth.....	45
Housing Affordability	46
Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)....	47
Affordability Gap.....	48
Housing Units.....	48
Housing Strategies	49
Housing Goals and Actions.....	50
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	52
Current Status of the Land	52
Biomap.....	53
Agriculture	56
Important Local Species	58
Water Resources and Wetlands	59
Historical Features	62
Natural and Cultural Resources Goals and Actions	64
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION.....	66
Open Space Inventory.....	68
Recent Progress.....	70
Future Needs	71
Open Space and Recreation Goals.....	77
CLIMATE AND RESILIENCY ELEMENT (CRE)	79
Key Findings.....	79
Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness..	80
Green Communities	82

Climate Resilience and Adaptation.....	87
State Response to Climate Change	91
Climate and Resiliency Goals and Actions	92
TRANSPORTATION.....	94
Vehicular Safety	95
Traffic Volumes and Traffic Characteristics.....	95
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Projects	97
Pedestrian Safety.....	98
Public Transportation	99
Future Potential Traffic and Infrastructure Concerns	100
Transportation Goals and Objectives..	102
FACILITIES AND TOWN SERVICES..	104
Inventory	106
Municipal Facilities	106
Municipal Infrastructure	112
Human Services	112
Capital Management and Preventative Maintenance.....	119
Meeting Future Needs.....	119
Facilities and Public Services Goals and Actions	120
ACTION PLAN	121

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Public Outreach Event.....	9
Figure 2: Town Administrator Introduces Project	9
Figure 3: Master Plan Public Outreach.....	10
Figure 4: East Bridgewater Commute Time	29
Figure 5: East Bridgewater Small Business	30
Figure 6: East Bridgewater Farm Stand....	52
Figure 7: East Bridgewater Pastureland....	56
Figure 8: Sandhill Crane	58
Figure 9: Boating in East Bridgewater.....	66
Figure 10: Open Space Parcel.....	70
Figure 11: Bay Circuit Trail Map.....	72
Figure 12: Bay Circuit Trail Hiking Map	73
Figure 13: Bay Circuit Trail Hiking Map	73
Figure 14: Sachem's Rock.....	74
Figure 15: Bridging the Bridgewaters Official Map.....	75
Figure 16: EV Charging Station.....	84
Figure 17: Green Communities Efficiency and Use Chart.....	86
Figure 18: Green Communities Annual Report Table	86
Figure 19: Commuting Profile	95
Figure 20: East Bridgewater Crash Data ..	96
Figure 21: Bridge Replacement of Pond Street Bridge over Satackut River.....	98
Figure 22: Commuter Rail Map.....	99
Figure 23: East Bridgewater High School	117

Table of Tables

Table 1: Select Board Powers and Responsibilities	11
Table 2: Losing Ground Report	16
<i>Table 3: Land Use Table 1971 - 1999</i>	<i>17</i>
Table 4: East Bridgewater Current Land Use Table.....	18
<i>Table 5: Population Growth 2000 - 2050..</i>	<i>23</i>
Table 6: Housing Type	49
Table 7: Core Habitat	53
Table 8: MESA Identified Rare Species in East Bridgewater.....	59
Table 9: Publicly & Non-Profit Owned Open Space	67
Table 10: Green Communities Grant Awards	82
<i>Table 11: Municipal Buildings and Open Space Sites.....</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>Table 12: Municipal Energy Use in Baseline and Projected Savings.....</i>	<i>85</i>
Table 13: Steps to Building Resilience	89
Table 14: East Bridgewater School Enrollment.....	118
Table 15: School Enrollment	118

Table of Maps

Map 1: East Bridgewater Land Use	21
Map 2: East Bridgewater Zoning Map.....	22
Map 3: East Bridgewater Soil Drainage ...	24
Map 4: East Bridgewater Food Access	39
Map 5: Housing Stock	43

Map 6: East Bridgewater Biomap Elements	54
Map 7: East Bridgewater Biomap Components	55
Map 8: East Bridgewater Chapter 61 Lands	57
Map 9: East Bridgewater Wetlands Map ..	61
Map 10: East Bridgewater Historical Sites	63
Map 11: East Bridgewater Critical Facilities	105

To access the Appendix for this plan please view on the Town's Master Plan website or reach out to the Planning Board.

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” .

INTRODUCTION

East Bridgewater, located within Plymouth County, is home to 14,440 people. The town is bordered by Whitman to the north, Hanson to the east, Halifax to the southeast, Bridgewater to the south, West Bridgewater to the west, and Brockton to the northwest. East Bridgewater's town center is located twenty-seven miles southeast of Boston. Comprised of mostly residential homes, compact local businesses, and scenic views overlooking ponds, forests, and farmland, many residents live here for its rural, small-town New England feel. The East Bridgewater Master Plan sets the course for our future. It expresses our aspirations as a community to protect and support what we love about living in East Bridgewater and lays a roadmap for the future. The East Bridgewater Master Plan considers where we are, where we want to go, and how we will get there. It helps us to be proactive and strategic about what happens in East Bridgewater over the next ten years and beyond.

East Bridgewater was established in 1823. With 11,225 acres in town, the community has experienced significant growth and evolving needs. With the most recent master plan, written in 1988, is set to update the demographic changes in the town over time, capture the success of the town, and outline the community's wants and needs for the future.

Because it outlines our future path, it will be used to guide public and private investments and decisions. The collaboration between town residents and municipal officials will determine where to preserve, where the community should be strengthened, and what could be transformed to meet the current and future needs of residents and the business community based on community-wide values.

How is the master plan outlined?

The East Bridgewater Master Plan comprises a series of chapters that reflect the state's guidelines and the goals for the town. Each chapter has three sections: *Master Plan*, *Action Plan*, and *Community Profile*. The following outlines how information is displayed in these sections.

The Master Plan is the primary document for setting policies and strategies in East Bridgewater.

It identifies the formative issues that will shape policy in all areas. It lays out the framework for how the Town will reach its vision. Public input from workshops, open houses, surveys, focus groups, and interviews guided its development. The Master Plan sets short-, mid-, and long-term goals and will be used by Town leaders, staff, boards, committees, and other decision-makers.

The Action Plan details how the Master Plan is implemented.

It includes individual action items needed to address community issues and needs. An advocate, such as a Town department, board, committee, or commission, is identified along with implementation timeframes and funding sources.

In addition to the data within each chapter, the plan's appendix contains a larger resource called the Community Profile.

Staff use the Community Profile to gain a quantitative understanding of the town before gathering all other information.

Examining East Bridgewater's population provides a snapshot of where the town is today and where the community has grown over time. While demographics are continually changing, analyzing patterns over time helps us understand how East Bridgewater has changed and projects the community's future needs. From this understanding, we can plan for needs around the different chapters of the master plan, including housing, recreation, transportation, and other aspects of our community that impact the quality of life.

Who wrote the Master Plan?

Through its residents and Town officials, the Town of East Bridgewater collaborated with the Old Colony Planning Council to draft this new version of the Master Plan. The community shaped the East Bridgewater Master Plan by sharing their lived experiences and hopes for the community. Led by the Master Plan Steering Committee, the Town used various methods to gather

feedback and disseminate information about the Master Plan update process to residents, businesses, workers, and visitors of East Bridgewater as well as Town staff. These tools included:

- Public events such as open houses.
- Online and paper surveys.
- Interviews with stakeholders.
- Attendance at local events.
- Editorials and news articles in the local paper.
- Master Plan Steering Committee website.

Additionally, the Master Plan Steering Committee held meetings that were open to the public. Many residents took advantage of this and participated in meeting discussions by offering their personal experiences living and working in East Bridgewater.

Community Engagement

Public engagement is the most influential step in drafting a master plan. The Town of East Bridgewater put together a steering committee to inform the strategy. The committee's role included sharing their lived experience and expertise of the town. This translated into helping prepare public engagement materials and editing goals and document chapters.

A survey was made public to residents, asking them about their experience of living in town and where they wanted to see improvements or enhancements in their

community. The survey launched on 10/31/2023 and closed on 03/24/2024, with 757 responses and 549 fully complete responses.

Additionally, three (3) public meetings allowed the town to participate in planning. The first meeting, on January 11th, 2024, introduced the process and the data collected to prepare the plan. OCPC staff prepared a hybrid presentation that described the plan's creation process, the RPA's role in the plan, and an initial look at the data gathered. Participants were then invited to ask questions about the plan and process. They were then encouraged to walk around and view posters containing previously presented data and a series of posters depicting land use and land of ecological significance in town.

The second meeting allowed for deeply informed conversations on specific topics and concerns of the town to facilitate discussions on the town's priorities moving through the next decade. Two dates were held, one in person and one online, to allow for flexible participation options. The in-person session was held on February 22, 2024, and the online session was held on Zoom on March 6, 2024.

Participants were again encouraged to look at an expanded collection of grouped maps to promote conversation. Conversations primarily focused on the potential to repurpose town-owned land, areas of traffic and dangerous intersections, grocery stores, and locally grown and sold produce, and how to expand local transit to create accessibility to grocery stores and urgent cares for those without vehicles or limited mobility.

The third meeting was a review of the vision and goals created through the planning process, allowing the community to see and comment on the results of their participation. This was a hybrid meeting held both on Zoom and at East Bridgewater Public Library on June 17th, 2024.

Figure 1: Public Outreach Event



Figure 2: Town Administrator Introduces Project

Figure 3: Master Plan Public Outreach



The Council on Aging in East Bridgewater hosted OCPC staff to ask participants how long they had lived in town and what could improve their lives. Responses included increased public programming, improved infrastructure, and pedestrian safety. 95 individuals responded to the question of how long they had lived in town.

- Less than 10 years: 13
- 10-25 years: 23
- 25 to 50 years: 36
- 50+ years: 23

For a full list of responses, please see the Community Outreach Appendix.

General Government in East Bridgewater

The Town of East Bridgewater has an Open Town Meeting form of government, with a three-member Select Board and a Town Administrator.

What is a Town Meeting?

“Town Meeting” refers to the event and the legislative body. As an event, one might say, “The spring Town Meeting will begin next Tuesday,” and as a body, “The budget must be approved by a vote of the Town Meeting.” State law requires every town to have an annual Town Meeting.

What is the Purpose of the Town Meeting?

- Receive reports from several town officials and boards.
- Pass the town budget for the coming fiscal year (July 1 to June 30)
- Authorize debt issuances
- Enact local laws, known as bylaws, including zoning bylaws
- Approve fund transfers and expenditures for specific projects
- Establish studies and committees

What is a Town Administrator, and What do They do?

The Town Administrator is the chief administrative officer in a town. A town management position's powers, duties, and responsibilities are determined and defined locally by a special act approved by the Legislature or the town charter. The primary duties of the Town Administrator include overseeing the town’s personnel system and the central administration of non-school employee files, recruitment, appointment, and supervision of personnel; labor negotiations; and development of personnel policy and procedures serves as the Town's Chief Procurement Officer for Goods and Services. Most Town Administrators have delegated appointment authority, authority to direct the budget and capital plan process, responsibility for coordinating financial operations, and other duties as assigned by the Select Board. The Town Administrator also assists and works under the direction of the Select Board in formulating policy.

What is the Select Board, and What do They do?

Table 1: Select Board Powers and Responsibilities

Powers and Responsibilities	Position Particulars
Prepare and issue the Town Meeting warrant (agenda)	Composed of three members
Make appointments to town boards and offices	Elected at-large (not by district)
Employ professional administrative staff.	Elections each spring for staggered, three-year terms
Approve the payment of all town bills	Typically meets weekly or bi-weekly
Grant licenses and permits	Must have posted public meetings with a majority of the board present to have legal authority
Review budget recommendations before they go before the Town Meeting	Volunteer position
Place any Proposition 2½ question on the local ballot.	

How does the Master Plan play a role in town government?

The Master Plan creates a guideline of community needs for decision-making over

the next ten years. It should be used by the Town Administrator, Select Board, Planning Board, and other committees in the Action Plan. The boards were a part of the ongoing process to ensure that the Plan reflected the ongoing goals of these Boards.

During the creation of the Master Plan, the town put together a Steering Committee consisting of residents who were involved in relevant boards or were interested in the process. After completion, this committee will transition to a Master Plan Implementation Committee to assist in the continued use of the document. According to Massachusetts General Law, the Planning Board approves the Master Plan.

How can I get Involved in Local Government?

Attend Town Meetings and Events:

Participate in annual town meetings, where important decisions are made. There are also Town Elections you can vote at. Check the town calendar for other events and gatherings that you can attend.

<https://www.eastbridgewaterma.gov/town-clerk/pages/elections-voting-town-meeting>

Explore Boards and Committees:

East Bridgewater has various boards, committees, and commissions that manage different aspects of town government. These include the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and more. If you want to serve on a town board, committee, or commission, visit <https://www.eastbridgewaterma.gov/boards> for more information.

Learn About Local Government Offices:

Visit the East Bridgewater Town Offices at 175 Central St. They handle various town-related matters, including land use planning and zoning. You can also explore other town departments and their functions.

Remember that community involvement is essential for a thriving town, and your participation can make a difference!

ELEMENTS

State Requirements - M.G.L. c. 41, s. 81D directs Planning Boards to prepare a Master Plan with the following elements.

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

While Sustainability and Climate Change are not mandated, it is required that towns with a completed Hazard Mitigation Plan or Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan include the outcomes and goals from those plans in all other town documents. This element will cover that requirement.

Each element will be dedicated to a chapter in the rest of the document, which will include relevant data, survey outcomes, and strategies for the town to rely on over the next decade.

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

The town's vision hinges on the land use plan, which serves as its fundamental cornerstone. According to the "Losing Ground Report" written by Mass Audubon (2020), 93% of the land is not permanently protected, or about 10,439 acres. Decisions regarding the utilization of developable and conservation land are pivotal, influencing the Town's capacity to realize its vision while maintaining its character.

Furthermore, thoughtful planning is essential for both the utilization of available land and the redevelopment of currently used land. The land use plan is the overarching framework for the entire plan, as various elements are interconnected. Housing and business locations, open space plans, town services, streets, utilities, and financial decisions derive from and align with the land use plan, highlighting its central role in shaping the Town's future.

Commercial zoning has remained relatively the same over the past decade; however, upcoming alterations in zoning, such as those related to MBTA communities, housing production, and other policy adjustments, are set to bring about significant transformations.

The "Losing Ground Report" provides a comprehensive overview of land conservation and development in a particular area. The report uses the following categories and definitions:

- Natural lands consist of forests, wetlands, and water.

- Open lands consist of agricultural areas, bare soil, beaches, barrens, or low vegetation. Development includes low density residential and commercial/ industrial/ high density residential development.
- Percentage calculations are based on the state's total land area, excluding major water bodies.
- Rank in relation to other towns/cities is indicated. There are 351 towns/cities in Massachusetts.

Here's a summary of the key findings:

- **Total Area of Permanently Conserved Land:** The area of permanently conserved land is 827 acres, ranking 30th in the state. This represents approximately 7% of the town's total land area.
- **Newly Conserved Land (2012-2017):** From 2012 to 2017, 133 acres of new land were conserved, contributing to preserving biodiversity and natural habitats.
- **Town Development:** During the same period, the town experienced development activities, with 62 acres of new development. When standardized by town size, the rate of development is 3.6 acres per square mile.
- **Total Area of Development and Natural Lands:** The total development area is 3,449 acres. Natural lands cover a substantial portion of the town, accounting for 57% of the total land area. Additionally, 10% of the land is categorized as open land.

Overall, the report highlights efforts in land conservation and ongoing development within the town. It provides valuable insights into the balance between preserving natural habitats and accommodating development needs and the town's progress in conserving biodiversity and open spaces over time.

Table 2: Losing Ground Report

Losing Ground Report		
Category	Value	Rank in state
Total Area of Permanently conserved land (acres)	827	30
Overall percentage permanently conserved	7%	323
Total area of newly conserved land from 2012 to 2017 (acres)	133	285
Total area of newly conserved within biomap core habitat (acres)	6	311
Total area of newly conserved within bioMap2 CNL (acres)	11	280
Total area of newly conserved within TNC resilient land (acres)	1	314
Total area of newly conserved within GIN (acres)	133	285
Total of newly developed land from 2012 to 2017	62	146
Total area of newly developed land from 2012 to 2017, standardized by town size (acres per square mile)	3.6	131
Total area of development (acres)	3449	115
Total area of natural lands	57%	234
Percent open lands	10%	111
Size of town in acres	11,225	217
Size of town in Sq Miles	17.5	217

History of Growth

Since the 18th and 19th centuries, when the town largely consisted of farms and few industrial buildings along waterways, it has expanded to be largely residential, maintaining a quiet rural feel with some suburban areas.

Table 3 illustrates changes in land use from 1971 to 1999 across various categories. Cropland decreased by 25%, while pastureland decreased significantly by 65%. Forest areas saw a 16% reduction, and wetlands decreased by 7%. However, mining (sand/gravel) increased by 19%. Open land expanded notably by 83%, and participation in recreation areas grew by 34%.

Conversely, water recreation areas decreased by 21%. Residential areas experienced substantial growth across all categories, with multi-family residences increasing by 596%, <1/4 acre lots by 183%, 1/4 - 1/2 acre lots by 47%, and >1/2 acre lots by 190%. Commercial and industrial areas expanded by 81% and 35%, respectively. Urban open spaces decreased by 16%, while transportation areas increased by 100%. Waste disposal areas also saw a significant increase of 121%. Water areas remained relatively stable with only a 1% change. Lastly, woody perennial areas, including orchards and nurseries, experienced a substantial increase of 279%.

Previous Land Use	1971	1999	% Change
Cropland	704.77	528.92	-25%
Pasture	676.14	236.01	-65%
Forest	6,533.82	5,481.11	-16%
Wetland	480.55	448.83	-7%
Mining (sand/gravel)	103.25	123.19	19%
Open Land	340.51	623.99	83%
Participation Recreation	117.95	157.68	34%
Water Recreation	2.90	2.29	-21%
Residential (Multi-Family)	4.73	32.91	596%
Residential (<1/4 Acre Lots)	10.12	28.68	183%
Residential (1/4 - 1/2 Acre Lots)	1,540.63	2,261.11	47%
Residential (>1/2 Acre Lots)	200.96	582.02	190%
Commercial	68.82	124.42	81%
Industrial	62.82	84.57	35%
Urban Open	154.51	129.98	-16%
Transportation	-	2.91	100%
Waste Disposal	28.84	63.69	121%
Water	161.48	162.96	1%
Woody Perennial (Orchard, Nursery, Cranberry Bog)	41.96	158.92	279%

Table 3: Land Use Table 1971 - 1999

Table 4: East Bridgewater Current Land Use Table

Land Use	Acres	Percentage of Current Land Use
Residential - single family	4061.6	36.2%
Residential - multi-family	485.9	4.3%
Residential - other	4.5	0.0%
Mixed use, primarily residential	70.2	0.6%
Mixed use, other	67.0	0.6%
Commercial	325.1	2.9%
Industrial	487.9	4.3%
Open land	3087.2	27.5%
Recreation	183.3	1.6%
Agriculture	629.3	5.6%
Forest	52.2	0.5%
Water	207.0	1.8%
Right-of-way	598.8	5.3%
Tax-exempt	775.4	6.9%
Unknown	190.8	1.7%

Comparing previous and current land use in Tables 3 and 4 reveals several differences in land use patterns between the two time periods and locations:

Residential Areas:

In the previous land use, residential areas witnessed substantial growth across various categories, with significant increases in single-family, multi-family, and other residential types.

In the current land use residential areas are more diversified, including single-family, multi-family, and other residential types. Still, they collectively occupy a smaller land percentage than the previous.

Commercial and Industrial Areas:

Commercial and industrial areas increased in the previous land use, indicating urban development and economic activity.

In the current land use, commercial and industrial areas occupy a smaller percentage of land, suggesting less emphasis on urban development or industrial expansion in this area.

Forest and Natural Areas:

Deciduous and evergreen forests occupy significant portions of land in the current land use, indicating a substantial amount of natural and preserved areas.

In the previous land use, forest areas decreased, suggesting potential deforestation or conversion of forested land to other uses over time.

Open Spaces and Recreation:

Developed open space is a notable category in the current land use, indicating efforts to preserve green spaces and recreational areas.

Wetlands and Water Bodies:

Wetlands occupy a considerable portion of land in both current and former land use, indicating the importance of preserving these ecological habitats.

Water bodies and aquatic beds are present in both, though the percentages may vary slightly.

Overall Landscape Composition:

Previous land use reflects a mix of urban development, agricultural land, and natural habitats undergoing significant changes over time.

East Bridgewater’s current land use shows a landscape with a significant proportion of forested and natural areas, focusing on preservation and conservation efforts.

These comparisons suggest different land use and development trends between the two time periods and locations, reflecting variations in local priorities, policies, and environmental conditions.

Existing Conditions:

The Town of East Bridgewater is located within the “Greater Brockton” area of the Old Colony region and is approximately 27 miles southeast of Boston. It borders Brockton and Whitman to the north, Halifax and Hanson to

the east, Bridgewater to the south, and West Bridgewater to the west.

East Bridgewater covers an area of 17.54 square miles and has a population of 14,440 persons, according to the 2020 U.S. Census. The town's population density was 801.6 persons per square mile in 2020. East Bridgewater's population increased by 4.68% between 2010 and 2020, compared to a population increase of 3.71% for the Old Colony region overall. In 2010 the median age in East Bridgewater was 41.3 years, with 10% of the population being 65 years of age or older. Approximately 3.9% of the population's income in the past twelve months was below the poverty level, according to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

In 2010, there were 4,906 housing units in town, with the average housing unit housing 2.81 persons. There is an average of 279.70 housing units per square mile. East Bridgewater's public school system, which includes one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school, had an enrollment of 2,297 students for the 2013-2014 academic year.

East Bridgewater is primarily a residential community. The predominant land uses are forest (40.9%), residential (23.3%), wetlands, and water (20.5%). East Bridgewater's natural features include the 124-acre Robbins Pond in the southeastern corner of town, as well as the Satucket River, Matfield River, and Meadow Brook.

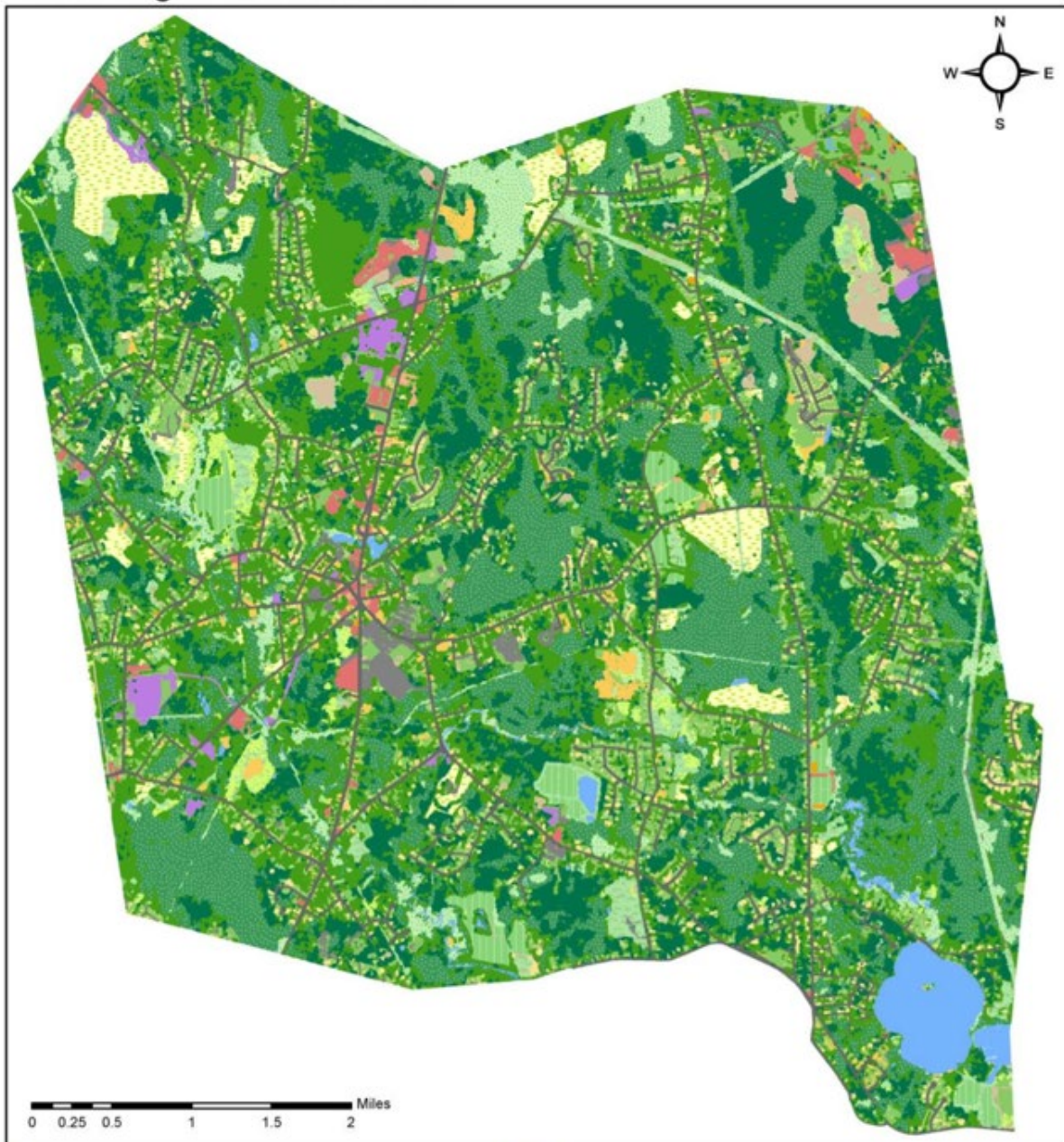
East Bridgewater's commercial development is concentrated along the north-south Route 18 corridor. The heavily traveled Route 18 corridor is home to various uses, including the town center, which serves as the town's commercial hub.

East Bridgewater's municipal drinking water supply is drawn from five wells. The wells are protected by Zone II wellhead protection areas and by East Bridgewater's Floodplain and Watershed Protection District. East Bridgewater does not have municipal wastewater service, so wastewater must be disposed of via on-site septic systems.

The Town has a small sewer system, the Central District, which provides service to the municipal buildings along with some commercial properties on the west side of Bedford Street south of the Bedford Street/Central Street intersection. East Bridgewater has recently zoned for sewers in the northern district, which will be used as a development tool for future planning initiatives in the town. future North Bedford Street Sewer District properties on the west side of Route 18 from Grove Street up to the Whitman line.

Map 1: East Bridgewater Land Use

East Bridgewater Land Use



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Residential - Single Family | Other Impervious | Scrub/Shrub |
| Residential - Multi-Family | Right-of-way | Bare Land |
| Residential - Other | Cultivated | Forested Wetland |
| Commercial | Pasture/Hay | Non-forested Wetland |
| Industrial | Developed Open Space | Saltwater Wetland |
| Mixed Use - Primarily Residential | Deciduous Forest | Water |
| Mixed Use - Primarily Commercial | Evergreen Forest | Unconsolidated Shore |
| Mixed Use - Other | Grassland | Aquatic Bed |



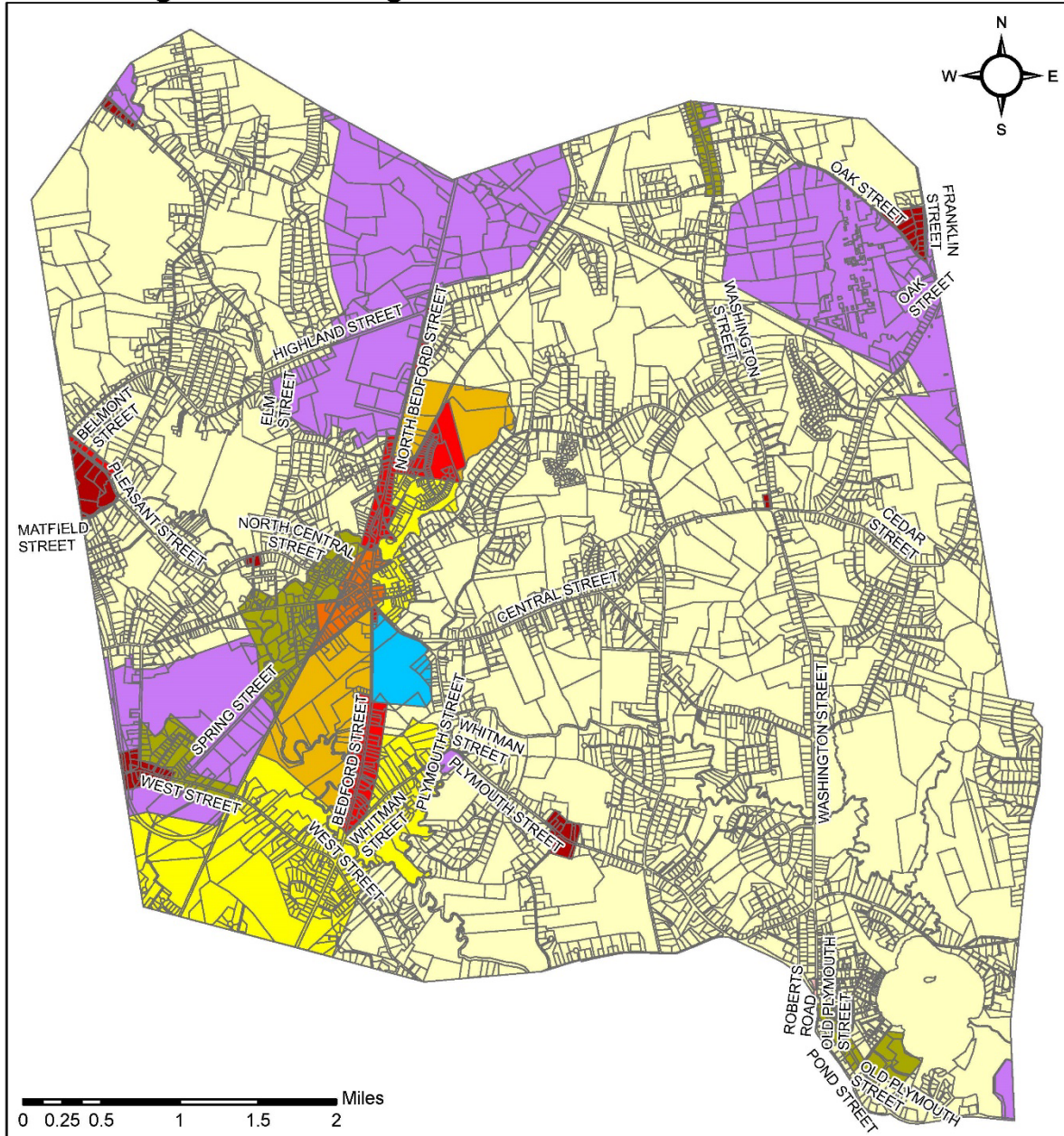
Old Colony Planning Council
70 School Street, Brockton,
MA 02301











oldcolonyplanning.org
Created July 2023

GIS Data Sources: MassGIS,
Old Colony Planning Council

Map 2: East Bridgewater Zoning Map

East Bridgewater Zoning



- | | | | |
|---|------------|---|---------------|
|  | Business-1 |  | Industrial |
|  | Business-2 |  | Municipal |
|  | Business-3 |  | Residential-1 |
|  | Business-4 |  | Residential-2 |
|  | Business-5 |  | Residential-3 |



Old Colony Planning Council
70 School Street, Brockton, MA 02301

oldcolonyplanning.org
Created July 2023

GIS Data Sources: MassGIS,
Old Colony Planning Council

Trends and Influences:

Population Projections

Population projections are a planning tool to understand our community's needs in the following decades.

Projections are based on historical growth, regional factors, and expected change but are only an estimation. These values can be derived from historic city, county, or state population counts. From 2021 to 2023, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) led an effort to update population, household, and employment projections for Massachusetts and its metropolitan planning regions.

Working closely with an advisory committee of regional and state agencies and other interested stakeholders, the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) – both under contract to MassDOT – developed, tested, and refined models incorporating the components of socio-economic changes throughout Massachusetts occurring now and projecting more than two

Table 5: Population Growth 2000 - 2050

	Census 2000	Census 2010	Census 2020	Population 2030	Population 2040	Population 2050
East Bridgewater	12,974	13,794	14,440	14,832	14,835	14,466

decades into the future. UMDI's work focused on population change (including birth, death, and migration rates), employment trends, and projections.

The SPC projected that the Town of East Bridgewater will maintain 14,000 residents through 2050. The existing projection continues to represent growth over the next thirty years using varied five-year growth rates representing slowing growth over time.

Infrastructure

East Bridgewater is served by Route 18 (north to south), Route 106 (east to west), and Route 14 (northeast). These routes provide the Town with easy access to Route 24, Route 495, Route 44, Route 27, Route 104, and Route 105.

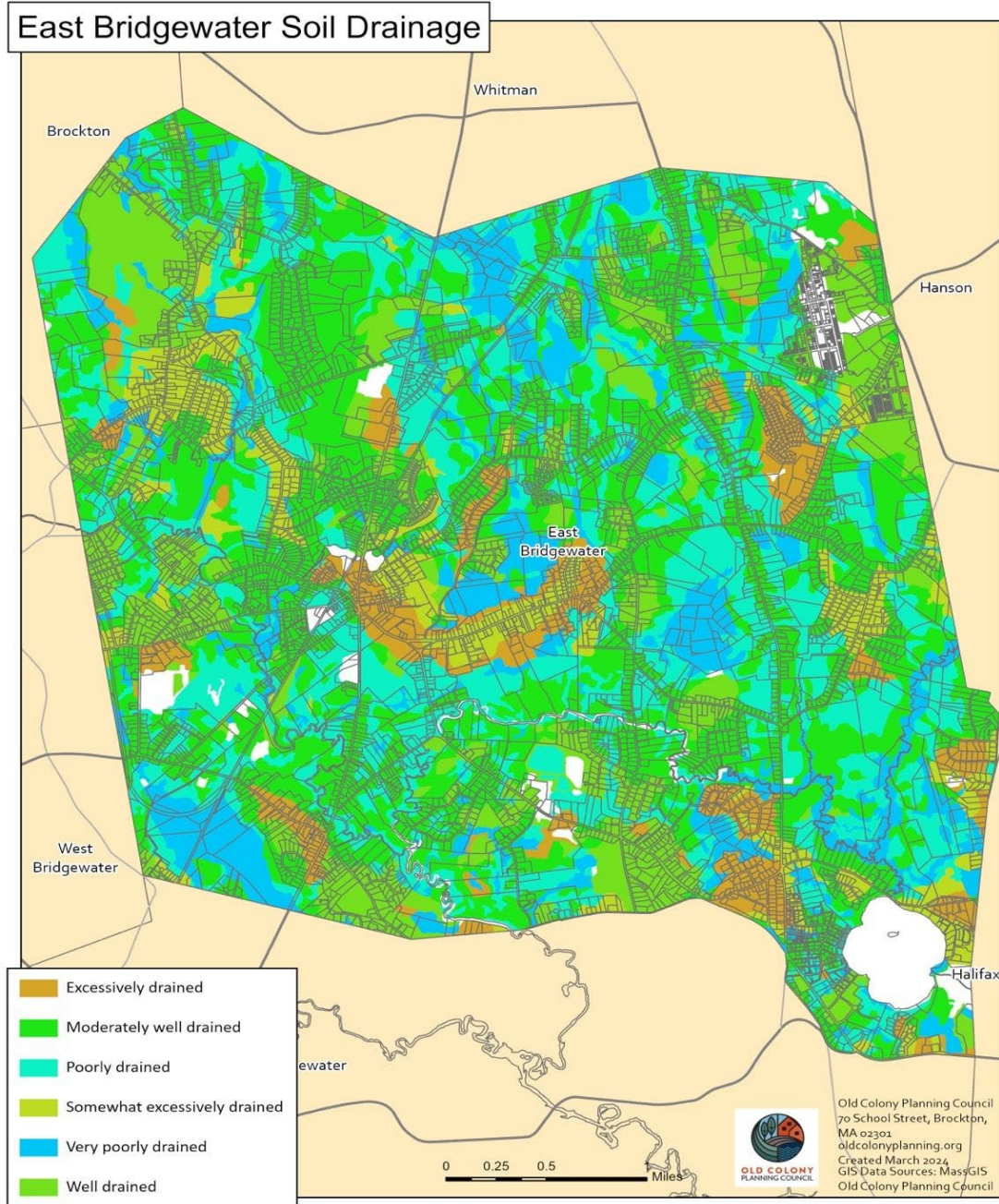
Plymouth, Washington, Bridge, Crescent, Central, Union, and Pine Streets are the major roads in Town. These roads connect large, developable tracts of land with the major commuting routes, which is understandable given that these two factors have resulted in major residential development along these streets.

Soils:

Soil characteristics play a pivotal role in shaping development possibilities, influencing the viability of on-site sewage

disposal and the land's suitability for construction. East Bridgewater currently has limited sewer, which limits safe development, especially for a town with a high concentration of wetlands and poorly drained soil surrounding it.

Map 3: East Bridgewater Soil Drainage



Areas of Concern:

Entrances to the Town

As one enters the Town of East Bridgewater, they may or may not know it, as there are only a few “Entering East Bridgewater” signs along the major routes. There are no notable changes as one enters the town. There is an opportunity to create a welcoming and noticeable entrance to the town by adding signs and landscaping. It would help create a sense of community and benefit economic development and property values.

Town Center

The Town Center of East Bridgewater is often overlooked because of the five-way intersection, which is hard to navigate. There is no sense of place as this area is not pedestrian-friendly; those in vehicles are too focused on navigating through the intersection. This is also where numerous small businesses are located including some of East Bridgewater’s favorite places to shop and eat.

Historical District

The town's historic district surrounds the Town Hall. Addressing pedestrian safety is incredibly important to making the district enjoyable for the community. Creating local historical education through outdoor signage and flags will give the district character.

Northern Commercial District

This area of town will likely see the most change over the next ten years. With the extension of public sewers in this area, the town is awaiting the introduction of new commercial facilities and housing opportunities. These investments in the town will help diversify the tax base but also require close monitoring over time to see longer impacts on traffic along Route 18 and throughout town.

Land Use Goals and Actions:

1. Conduct an in-depth review of the town's current zoning bylaws to ensure they promote the type of growth East Bridgewater wants to see.
 - a. Consider amending bylaws to support mixed-use, increase building heights, 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 of the Master Plan including but not limited to Open Space and Recreation Plan, and Housing Production Plan.
 - a. Create a schedule that includes when plans expire and ways to access funding to limit the town's burden of updates.
 - b. Maintain a master list of town objectives across different themes and plans.
 - c. Create active steering committees
 - d. 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

A local economic development plan for East Bridgewater seeks to create a strategic framework to guide and promote economic growth to attract investment, create jobs, and improve the community's well-being by leveraging its strengths and addressing challenges. By expanding the town's tax base through infrastructure, developing specific pro-growth strategies and goals, and undertaking various policy initiatives, East Bridgewater can become more desirable, livable, and resilient.

Existing Conditions

The Masterplan public input process identified the Downtown, Route 18 Corridor, Carriage Crossing Shopping Center, and a few of the Town's industrial-zoned areas as its principal competitive advantages for future growth and opportunity. Additionally, business development targeted at various industries (including agriculture) and enhancing East Bridgewater's sense of place have been identified as potential focal points that could substantially benefit businesses and residents. This blended approach fits the typical inland community of southeastern Massachusetts, with ponds, woods, rivers, and low to moderate density. East Bridgewater is also a historic town that has contributed to its character and identity for generations.

However, East Bridgewater is perhaps most well-known by many for its abundance of farms, semi-rural neighborhoods, and local agricultural roots. East Bridgewater was primarily a farming community until the second half of the twentieth century. Although neighborhoods have been developed and local industry has evolved, this remains a defining characteristic of the town. While East Bridgewater has not undertaken any extensive planning efforts in recent years, several topics, areas, and sites have re-emerged as priorities in 2024, supported by several data points and the desires expressed by residents throughout this process.

Jobs & Workforce

Like other towns in Plymouth County, East Bridgewater is primarily a residential community; however, for a town of its size and population, a modest number of jobs comprise its local commercial sector. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) 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%). While today's local farms are nearly all non-commercial enterprises that are family-owned and operated, local agriculture contributes very little to the economy and

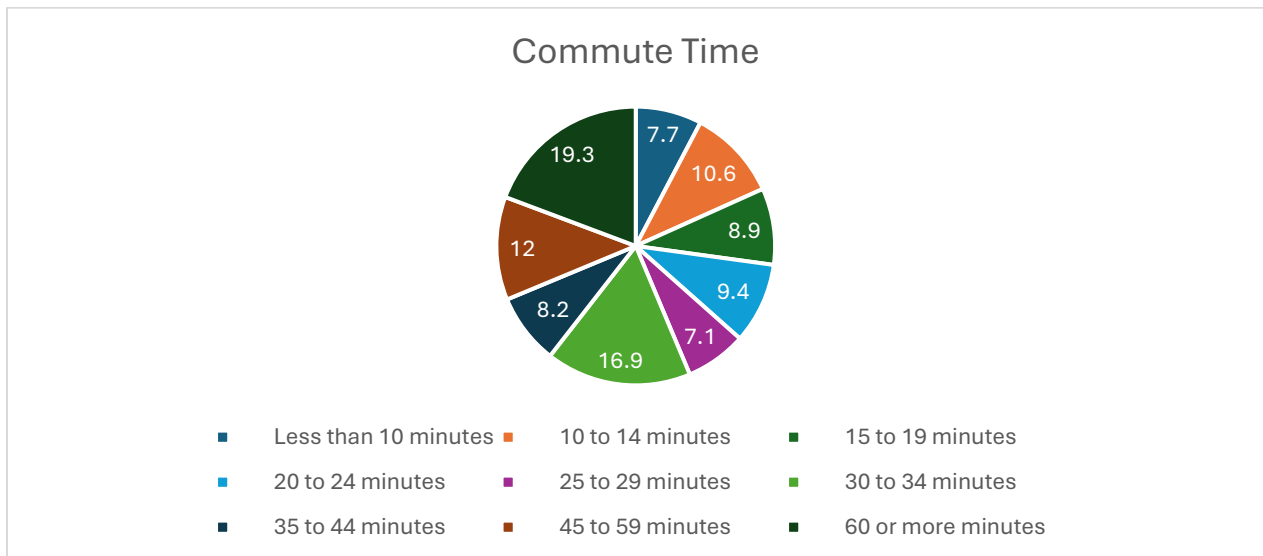
workforce and only accounts for fewer than 100 jobs.

Between 2010 and 2020, East Bridgewater added 652 jobs, likely within healthcare administration - an overall gain of 23% in 10 years. In the long term, the MADOT Forecast estimates that East Bridgewater employment will decrease to 3,383 jobs by 2050 due to low birthrates and its consequential dwindling labor force, projecting job numbers to have peaked around the year 2030 at a figure only slightly higher than today's – a trend that mirrors most of the region. Employment opportunities in East Bridgewater are expected to continue to be dominated by the trade and service sectors, particularly along Route 18, where the Town is investing in its infrastructure. In the near term, however, most of the Town's workforce will find employment in industrial and commercial centers outside of East Bridgewater, even though there is an empty Industrial Park in the north part of the Town. According to 2021 ACS estimates, East

Bridgewater's labor force consists of roughly 8,800 workers in jobs spanning the region/state – a notably robust age-eligible workforce for a small southeastern Massachusetts town.

Most of the local labor force travels outside the community for work, with 60% staying within Plymouth County and 40% commuting outside. Based on 2021 data from the ACS, the average travel time to work (one way) for East Bridgewater workers aged 16 and over is 33.8 minutes. Top commute times in order are 60 or more minutes (19.7%), followed by 30 to 34 minutes (16.10%) and 10 to 14 minutes (11.4%). State Routes 18, 14, and 106 are major access routes to and from the Town. The MBTA commuter rail lines linking Middleborough to Boston and Kingston to Boston can be conveniently accessed at Bridgewater, Brockton, and Hanson stations.

Figure 4: East Bridgewater Commute Time



In April of 2024, East Bridgewater had an average monthly unemployment rate of 3.2 percent, with an average of 279 unemployed residents each month, up from an unemployment rate of 2.9 percent in April 2023. Similarly, the Commonwealth had an average unemployment rate of 3.1, with 118,540 residents unemployed each month on average. Unemployment increased significantly across the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but rates are closer to pre-pandemic levels. It's worth noting that East Bridgewater has one of the lowest unemployment rates among the OCPC region, with Duxbury and Hanover being the lowest and remaining close to the state average.

Figure 5: East Bridgewater Small Business



Tax Base

East Bridgewater's FY24 tax base is 89% residential. This compares to 93% in Hanson, 92% in Halifax, 90% in Whitman, 85% in Bridgewater, and 58% in West Bridgewater (all communities sharing a border with EB). From an obvious perspective, East Bridgewater relies heavily on residential property taxes and has a limited commercial tax base. However, recent history would suggest that the town's business community has been fairly sustainable, with very few commercial vacancies or departures that have disrupted growth or negatively impacted neighborhoods. While the town's small business ecosystem appears to have a solid footing within the community, with a labor force that is proportionally large given the community's size and population, there is a great incentive to prioritize commercial growth and expansion.

While not an extreme hindrance, East Bridgewater does rank somewhat low on its tax rate competitiveness when drawing comparisons to other communities in the OCPC region (17). The town has a tax rate of \$13.84, scoring 13th in residential and 10th in commercial – notably falling behind several similar communities in population, geography, and density, such as Hanson, Whitman, and Abington. This is an additional incentive for the town to concentrate on growing its commercial market, as the cost of doing business in East Bridgewater is slightly more expensive than in some neighboring towns.

New Growth

In recent years, the town has been slow to add new growth – mainly a few annual residential developments constructed each year that contribute minimally to expanding East Bridgewater’s tax base, typically with a positive deviation of around 1%. However, new commercial development along Route 18, in what has become known as the North Bedford Street Sewer District, has begun to spur some positive growth trends. In FY24, at only partial completion, the new 400,000 sq ft Greystar Warehouse facility has boosted new growth figures to nearly 2% - representing \$35 million in total growth, roughly 40% of which has been generated by new residential developments in local neighborhoods.

Growth planning should be given priority to diversifying East Bridgewater’s tax base and strengthening the local business community. Relying too heavily on a narrow range of revenue sources [especially from residents] can leave the Town particularly vulnerable. By expanding its commercial footprint and attracting businesses from diverse industries, the town will be able to spread its tax burden more evenly and foster a more dynamic and vibrant local economy. Although the River’s Act, zoning changes, and an increased understanding of the need to protect wetlands may diminish the amount of developable land, the fact remains that large tracts of buildable land remain available. These tracts merit careful attention and planning.

To encourage growth that “belongs in East Bridgewater,” attention should be given to

the possibility of future commercial investment at C/I zoned areas that remain undeveloped (or bare commercial frontage), expanding the North Bedford Street Sewer District, improving walkability and pedestrian connections to Carriage Grove, increasing vibrancy in the Downtown, and engaging the local business community to thrive. Furthermore, the Town may consider re-integrating agriculture and farming into the local economy by encouraging buy-local and grow-local programs that would benefit residents. Such programs like Farmer’s Markets and Co-ops could inspire buy/eat local initiatives that aid commerce, impact the local economy and region, and encourage public health.

Accessing Existing Space

Route 18 has a large Industrial district in East Bridgewater north of the town center from Grove Street to the Whitman Line. This industrial area along the west side of Route 18 is where the new sewer district overlay is located. This particular area, between the Whitman line and Highland Street, remains largely undeveloped. However, most of the town’s best land has been developed, and much of the new development is on marginal land which has poor soil, borders on wetland, or has a high water table. Notwithstanding potential land use and conservation restraints, as wetlands are indeed prevalent in this area despite its “industrial” designation, it still would seem advantageous for the town to assess any potential for new commercial development here. Roughly 34 acres of land

behind the Miraval Ballroom and stretching north is owned by the Town of East Bridgewater. Since this is within the heart of the town's new sewer district, buildable land here could be very attractive to new businesses. Just north of the town-owned parcels is also a large 64-acre parcel on the Whitman line that is privately owned and residentially zoned, but which could pose a great opportunity for new development of some kind.

Additionally, and perhaps more realistically, the potential for new commercial development may also exist at the existing industrial area located on the Hanson line at the intersections of Routes 27 and 14. This area is home to "Industrial Drive," which houses several industrial-type businesses that essentially spill over into the Town of Hanson, where they are investing in their town-owned "Commerce Park," which is roughly 8 acres. At the end of Industrial Avenue in East Bridgewater, in the rear, is buildable acreage for a potential future expansion of this modest industrial area. Providing even more incentive for development here is the Town of Hanson's recent efforts to expand Commerce Park into individual commercial-industrial sites, of which its potential development could yield several lots. This could provide great overall economic benefit, considering Hanson's commitment to this area directly spills over into East Bridgewater. Perhaps a collaborative effort can be made by both towns to plan and design for a future expansion of this area that is seamless.

One other industrial area also flagged for future development potential is the 116 acres of land off Laurel Street which currently houses MAC Wholesale. This was a former warehouse for Shaw's Grocery Store decades ago, and while privately owned and operated, roughly 10 acres of the site is being utilized, yet all 116 sit within a cordoned industrial zone on the West Bridgewater Town Line. Provided there is interest from the owner, the Town may wish to examine what opportunity may lie here.

The historic Carver Cotton Gin Mill at 15 Whitman Street could offer a fairly significant opportunity for mixed-use or other development that would fall just outside East Bridgewater's Downtown boundaries. Built in 1872, the mill employed nearly 2,000 workers and was a world-renowned marker of Carver's "patent cotton gin" and other machines. The factory was an important industry in East Bridgewater until it closed in 1992. While this building remains privately owned, its location and size pose real opportunity. They should be prioritized by the town to determine their possible future use and potential for value-adding to the downtown area within remote proximity.

Brownfields

On the outskirts of East Bridgewater's downtown are two abutting former industrial sites [in the town's possession] with great redevelopment potential, but that are stymied by significant contamination that has burdened the neighborhood for decades – 1)

the Precise Engineering site, a 3-acre unoccupied site with a 30,000 SF (partially collapsed) building that operated as a shoe manufacturer, metalworking and stamp manufacturer for over 100 years, and 2) the adjacent Eastern States Steel property, a 5-acre site (with one remaining 1,100 SF facility) that housed a steel fabrication operation for equally as long. These uses caused the site to become contaminated due to the improper disposal of hazardous materials associated with those heavy industrial uses. Since industrial operations ceased on the site in the mid-1990s, it has been vacant and abandoned by the owners.

These sites are located very conveniently within the downtown B-5 (business district) zone abutted by a clustered residential area that connects residents, businesses, and local town government offices. Despite a long and detailed history of assessment activities and other decontamination efforts conducted at these sites by various agencies, more environmental assessment and remediation is necessary to position them for purchase and sale. With Old Colony Planning Council as a partner, the town seems well-positioned to continue these efforts through the underway OCPC Brownfields Assessment program.

The availability of undeveloped acreage downtown presents a unique opportunity for the community, as such vacant space in post-industrial centers of southeastern Massachusetts is a very rare commodity. This potential development location could attract investment from developers and businesses, further stimulating economic growth in the area and expanding the town's tax base.

Developing the land could catalyze enhanced quality of life downtown, creating a more vibrant and economically sustainable community hub. The town can create attractive spaces that draw people in by repurposing these properties, ultimately fostering community engagement and pride.

The Town should prioritize further environmental assessment and clean-up at these properties to achieve its longstanding goal of marketing the sites to accommodate a multi-acre mixed-use development to support affordable and market-rate housing with light retail use. Property taxes from residential units, rental income from commercial spaces, and potential sales tax could contribute significantly to the town's financial stability. Furthermore, additional residents in the vicinity may influence potential customers for local shops, restaurants, and services – of which the increased foot traffic could lead to higher revenues and sustained growth. The recently funded sewer system extension could unlock additional development, especially if there are plans to extend the line further by tapping into the existing system located by the high school. For any successful development here to occur, this is a must.

North Bedford Street Sewer District

The newly formed North Bedford Street Sewer District includes 42 parcels and is generally located west of North Bedford Street (Route 18), south of the Whitman municipal town line, north of Grove Street, and East of Winter, Plain, and Captains Way.

The ongoing project consists of constructing sewer infrastructure to collect and convey wastewater from the sewer district to the City of Brockton municipal sewer system for treatment at their existing AWRP. Based on the Town of East Bridgewater Zoning Map, the entire Sewer District is zoned for “Industrial” use; however, much remains undeveloped in this area as it is limited by existing soils and high groundwater conditions. Installing the sewer collection system in this area will mitigate many of the limitations associated with on-site wastewater systems and open up these industrial-zoned land resources for higher valued and level-of-use development.

The current district, of which the proposed sewer line is anticipated to create up to 700 new jobs, is confined only to the western side of North Bedford Street, along Route 18. The Town of East Bridgewater may consider expanding this district to include the easterly side, which would encapsulate several additional parcels for new future development and commercial opportunity inspired by the availability of sewer access. If one of East Bridgewater’s primary goals is developing the town’s economic base while balancing growth and affordability and creating more diverse employment to encourage a sustainable and engaged population, then a district expansion could profoundly impact that effort. The presence of sewer infrastructure here may signal to developers, investors, and businesses that the Route 18 corridor area is well-equipped for growth and development in the region.

Specifically, reviewing the town’s current zoning on the east side of Route 18 outside the district could be advantageous. Expanding these sites to accommodate bigger lots beyond limited commercial frontage could attract a range of businesses of increased scale and volume, of which their investments could provide a deep financial impact on the town. Much land parallel to the existing sewer district (roughly the center) is residentially zoned; however, it bears a very narrow strip of commercial frontage along North Bedford Street. The town may wish to consider an examination of its zoning in this area and C/I zones to the south to determine the value of an expansion and gauge opportunity for connections. A mixed-use overlay in this area may provide flexibility that would allow for widespread integration of different uses based on an individual project’s value as determined by the Town and its residents.

East Bridgewater is also currently underway with a feasibility study funded by the state’s One Stop program to examine an extension of the district to commercial properties in the retail/commercial area of Central Street, Union Street, and Spring Street west of the Bedford Street/Central Street intersection. Although oriented toward design engineering, the findings in this report could supplement what other work the Town completes in determining future plans.

Intensify Commercial Value & Identity of East Bridgewater Center

East Bridgewater’s Downtown has a variety of amenities, with fairly active businesses

and storefronts that have defined the area's quaintness and unique character for a long time. However, due mostly to its size and geography (limited undeveloped space), and perhaps lack of wastewater disposal alternatives, the number of stores and businesses has always been minimal, with a handful of popular and convenient establishments in this area attracting most residents and visitors. Undeveloped space in this area is somewhat scarce, but the two brownfield sites on the 8 acres of vacant land on the Downtown's outskirts pose a significant opportunity for mixed-use development (discussed in greater length later in this section). More open space (roughly 60 acres among five different parcels to the immediate south) between Spring and North Bedford is privately owned but could potentially offer future opportunities. Environmental constraints in this area do exist (some wetlands), but there is a swath of C/I-zoned developable land here that may provide added value to the Town Center and help eat into retail sales leakage at the Carriage Grove Plaza and extend south. Of particular interest to the Town could be that this is a potential site for a grocery store, which East Bridgewater lacks and finds currently in demand. At this time, there are no grocery stores within town boundaries. The Town Center could benefit greatly from this as it would likely serve as a retail anchor to the area and other businesses.

Streetscape Improvements

Most of East Bridgewater Center is largely automobile-dependent, but sidewalks and basic pedestrian infrastructure exist as the

area is dense. However, it is neither inviting nor particularly hazard-free as it does not entice patrons, aid in visual appeal to storefronts, clearly guide secure pathways, or encourage visual cues from people traveling on foot. Parking is also extremely limited here, with heavy peak hour traffic volumes and unusual alignment at the Route 18 corridor intersection (which has six approaches), impeding opportunities for new development and discouraging passersby. This has not been ideal for many of the local businesses, schools, town institutions, or other establishments in the area that may rely on curb appeal and walkability of residents. Focusing enhancements on creating a more attractive, pedestrian-friendly, and vibrant environment may positively impact the Downtown's local business community and improve safety.

This well-traveled area gives businesses great visibility and exposure to prospective consumers. However, an amalgamation of typical downtown storefront street retail and strip center developments makes it difficult to project a uniform identity and challenges the area to coalesce. A downtown beautification strategy that introduces placemaking (perhaps a seasonal farmers market, concert series, etc.) and encourages storefront improvements, including curb appeal, may enhance vibrancy that will help lure customers and develop the neighborhood's character. Supporting this is the existing Pocket Park at 88 Bedford Street and the local Town Green across from Town Hall, which is under-utilized. Both could serve as the host location for many events, encouraging community engagement and creating a more

bustling town center. By incorporating streetscape elements that will assist in creating a more attractive and cohesive area, such as functional and aesthetic items in pedestrian spaces that provide a more convenient, safe, and visually attractive space for pedestrians, the town may be able to increase the intensity of its retail activity here. Streetscape elements include period/historic light fixtures, trees and plants, sidewalk enhancements, and street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, and bollards). Including streetscape elements in East Bridgewater Center will assist in identifying the area as a special and distinct place.

Integrate Connection Between Downtown & Carriage Grove Crossing

East Bridgewater Center is particularly unique and challenging in that it is separated by the Downtown to the north and Carriage Grove Crossing, an active retail plaza along Route 18 to the south – a roughly 5-minute walk between each other. These two areas, together known as East Bridgewater Center, represent the most significant concentration of commercial activity in town. It is within a short distance of several destinations to the east along Central Street, including Town Hall, Police Headquarters, the High School, and several ball fields and playgrounds that people could travel to on foot. Just across the way at Carriage Grove is a movie theater, a bank, two restaurants, Ocean State Job Lot, and a few other retail establishments. However, pedestrian circulation and safety

remain challenging due to the lack of pedestrian accommodations.

Additionally, a 2016 market analysis indicated significant sales leakage from this area, a demand gap of approximately \$67 million of retail in all categories – representing an opportunity for several business niches to be filled in the Town Center. To determine this, OCPC staff analyzed ESRI Business Analyst data within the three defined trade areas to conduct a retail gap analysis. A retail opportunity or gap analysis looks at the overall demand for retail goods and services within a designated trade area based on the spending potential of the households (demand), and the actual sales for those goods and services within the market area (supply). If the demand exceeds the supply, there is “leakage,” meaning that residents must travel outside the area to purchase those goods. An analysis of East Bridgewater Center data indicates an opportunity to capture significant spending within the market area to support new retail investment - a market area leakage of \$67 million of retail trade and food and drink within a 5 Minute Drive Time. Therefore, it could be highly advantageous for the town to create an infrastructure-based linkage that connects these two areas more efficiently with people, goods, and services.

Precise Engineering and Eastern State Steel properties hold potential for mixed-use redevelopment. Mixed-use in this area containing ground-floor retail space and upper-level residential units could breathe new life into the downtown area and serve as a great catalyst for intensifying commercial

activity at Carriage Grove. Without municipal sewer service, the town has relied exclusively on on-site disposal systems for wastewater needs. However, the 30,000 GPD package treatment facility, built in conjunction with the new EB high school, can treat up to 60,000 gallons of wastewater per day, as it was specifically designed to allow for expansion. Currently, the town only uses 4,000 – 5,000 GPD. The town may want to pursue further using the excess capacity of this system to extend sewer for downtown development and business development as private investment tends to follow reliable water and sewer facilities in the future.

Although privately owned, there exists buildable land that could someday accommodate new development, whether it be additional retail spaces or dense, multi-use properties. The few developable lots represent the most likely maximum extent of future development within East Bridgewater Town Center. Behind the cinema and Dewhurst Lumber, between Bedford and Spring Streets, lies 2-3 potential future opportunity sites roughly 30 acres in size, directly abutting the Downtown and offline brownfield sites. While these sites are geographically ideal for future growth and expansion of the Town Center, these would depend purely on current owners' willingness to subdivide their property and individual site characteristics that could inhibit construction.

Long Term Strategies

The Center continues to experience heavy traffic congestion at peak commuting times (7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM), causing some people to avoid the Center completely and resulting in lost business opportunities. As a result of the heavy traffic on Route 18, the Center feels more like a corridor than a “downtown.” Given that, as well as other infrastructure-related limitations and challenges, a more long-term solution for East Bridgewater to consider would be the construction of a new roadway between Spring Street and the southern leg of Route 18 to re-route eastbound Spring Street traffic. While costly, there would seem to be much opportunity for new growth with this as it may seamlessly connect two vital areas: the Downtown and the convenient Carriage Grove Crossing. This proposed road could serve as a strategic link, enhancing accessibility and promoting commerce while avoiding the congestion-prone intersection of Route 18.

The envisioned roadway will span from Spring Street to Bedford Street, providing a direct route between these key districts. By bypassing the busy Route 18 junction and practical pedestrian infrastructure, it would aim to improve traffic flow and reduce travel time for both residents and businesses. This thoughtful infrastructure investment will enhance convenience and stimulate economic activity. Residents, workers, and visitors could easily move between the downtown area and Carriage Grove Crossing, fostering greater interaction and economic activity. Improved connectivity encourages people to explore both areas, leading to increased foot traffic and potential

sales to customers. With links to future sites that include brownfield properties on West Union and the 30 or so acres behind CVS, businesses in the downtown area may benefit from increased visibility and access to potential customers from Carriage Grove Crossing. The Commonwealth's MassWorks program through the One Stop for Community Growth portal may be one route to secure a subsidy of funding for this project.

Promote and Integrate Agriculture/Farming into Local Commerce & Culture

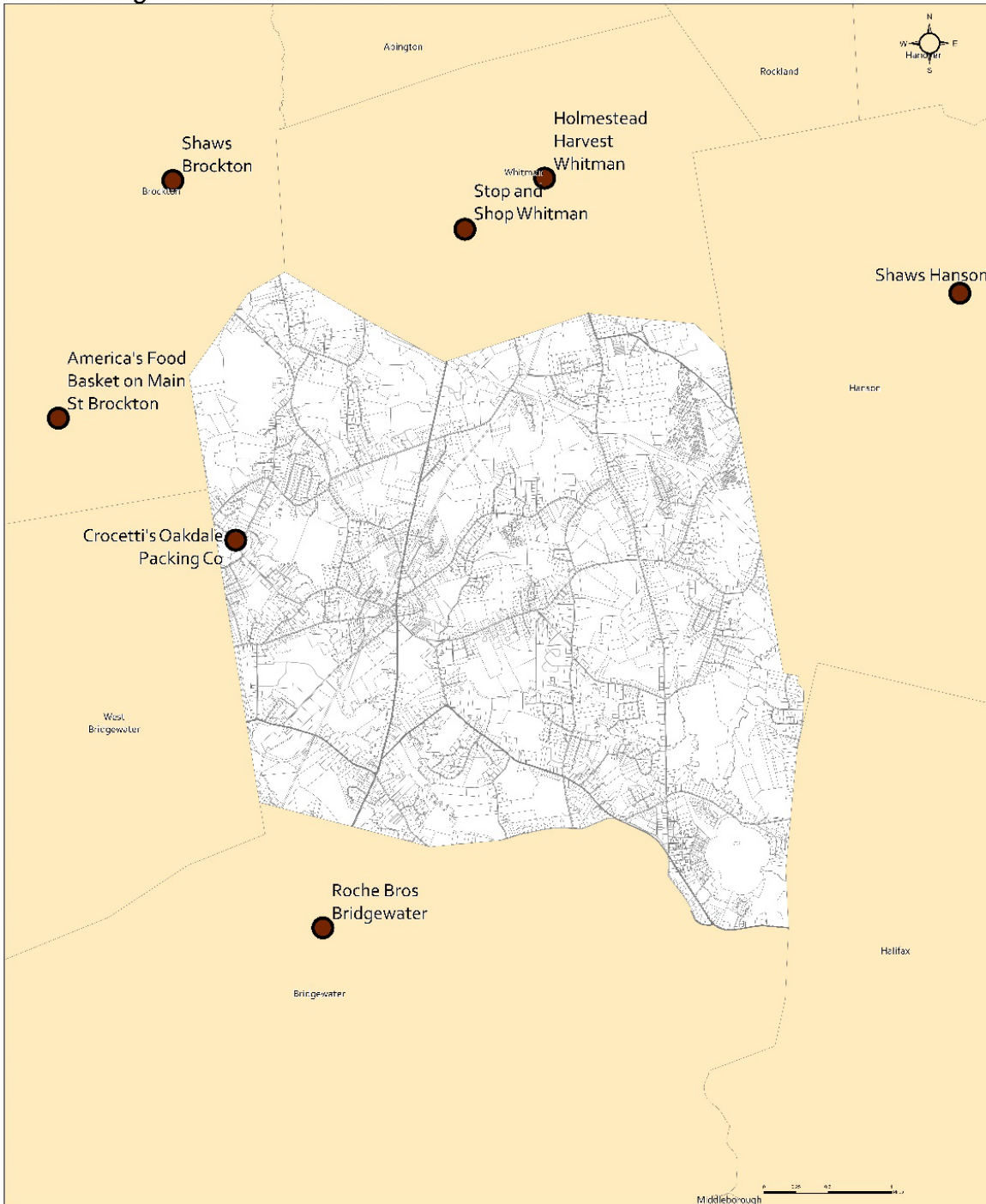
East Bridgewater's legacy of agriculture and farming lives on in today's modern era, certainly within its character. However, the industry itself has not provided any meaningful economic contribution for some period - since the industry has evolved and the town has been immersed in the suburban residential culture. However, while there may only be a handful of local farms or agricultural businesses in East Bridgewater that commit to the industry full-time as their total source of income [with employees], according to town Assessor's records, there are several dozens of property owners with a Chapter 61A tax classification for land designated as agricultural or horticultural. Properties with that designation have reductions in their property tax assessments. Still, they must meet certain revenue levels to qualify (\$500 for the first five acres, \$5 more for each additional acre). This would suggest that although only a few known


farms/agriculture-based businesses operate to turn a profit, many households participate in its culture, which is significant for purposes of community development branding or even local commerce.

Given this information, what is known about East Bridgewater's rich history in the agricultural industry, and the ongoing efforts to enhance economic development, the Town may wish to consider the establishment of community programming, such as a local farmers market to encourage local commerce and build the community's character. A buy-local/grow-local market could create buzz, inspire residents to pursue supplemental sources of income and revive the town's historic past. A Farmers Market could provide a direct avenue for local farmers to showcase their produce and other products. By buying locally, residents support our farmers, keeping dollars within the community. This circulation of funds may stimulate economic activity and strengthen local businesses. As an idea, locations could be established throughout various parts of town or focused within East Bridgewater Center where there is a heavy commercial/retail presence. As a seasonal pop-up or all-year-round endeavor, it could serve as more than just a transactional space; but a social hub. An East Bridgewater Farmers Market could bring neighbors together, fostering connections between producers and consumers.

Map 4: East Bridgewater Food Access

East Bridgewater Food Access



 Grocery Store



Old Colony Planning Council
76 School Street, Brockton,
MA 02301
oldcolonyplanning.org
Created Feb 2024
GIS Data Sources: MassGIS,
Old Colony Planning Council

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. Prioritize attracting new commercial investment in the undeveloped areas along the Route 18 Corridor (from the Whitman line to Highland Street).
- b. Investigate potential areas for expanding the 'North Bedford Street Sewer District' following the completion of the ongoing Expansion Feasibility Study.
- c. Consider working with the Hanson Planning Department to connect abutting industrial spaces at the intersection of Routes 27 and 14.
- d. Remediate Brownfield sites are commonly known as Precise Engineering and Eastern State Steel.
- e. Consider allowing mixed-use buildings as a means to provide space for more small businesses surrounding existing industrial space.

2. Create a connected commercial hub through aesthetics and infrastructure.

The businesses in the town center and the Carriage Street lot are walkable but lack safety.

- a. Consider establishing a commercial district identity for Downtown through streetscaping,

placemaking, seasonal pop-ups, and other beautification strategies that are inviting to patrons.

- b. Continue working with the state to repair sidewalks and improve pedestrian safety at the busy Route 18/Spring/Central Street intersection.
 - c. Consider a long-term strategy for large-scale infrastructure connections that includes the development of open space between Spring & North Bedford, and a connecting roadway.
 - d. Investigate the possibility of utilizing extra wastewater capacity from the High School package treatment facility for the Downtown and any new incoming development.
- ### 3. Increase agricultural promotion to re-integrate farming back into the community, but also contribute to local commerce and economic growth.
- EB has a rich history of farming and agriculture, however, the Town has neither a local farmers' market nor a grocery store.
- a. Without a local grocery store, the Agriculture Commission and Planning Board should reach out to local farms and existing farmer's markets to establish a market for East Bridgewater.
 - b. Consider a buy-local/grow-local campaign that could offer residents a place to buy fresh-grown produce and local farmers an opportunity to sell their products as a supplemental source of income.

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

East Bridgewater is located near some of the South Shore’s most rapidly growing towns, which could make it attractive to market-rate and mixed-income housing developers. East Bridgewater also has land and redevelopment opportunities poised to grow. Over time, East Bridgewater has adopted very few regulatory tools that Massachusetts communities rely upon to promote housing diversity and affordability. Yet, in most cases, the affordable housing created in East Bridgewater has relied upon Chapter 40B comprehensive permits - and they, in turn, have relied upon the strength of the regional housing market. However, the most pressing housing needs, such as housing options for recent college graduates and young families, workforce housing for teachers and paraprofessionals and nurses, and housing options for downsizing seniors in East Bridgewater and the surrounding towns, will continue to defy market-based solutions.

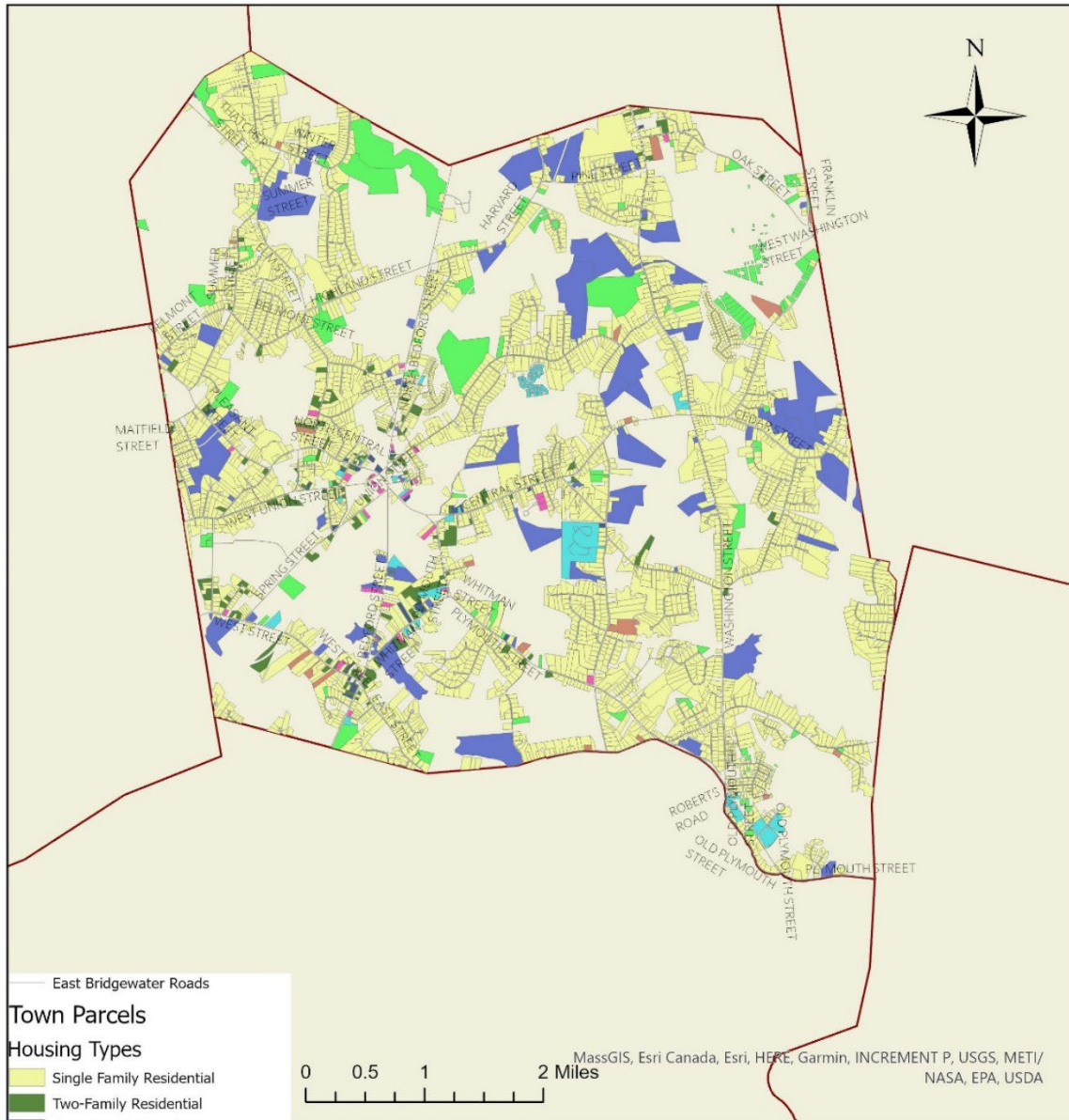
Existing Conditions

- The number of households was estimated to be 4,949, an increase of 6.59% between 2010 and 2021.
- East Bridgewater’s estimated 81.2% homeownership rate was in 2020, compared to 76.8% for Plymouth

County and 62.2% for the Commonwealth.

- Married-couple families constituted 61.4% of East Bridgewater households in 2021 versus 52.3% for Plymouth County and 46% for the Commonwealth.
- The number of East Bridgewater households led by married couples with children has decreased by 15% during the past decade, while those without children have increased by 20.70%. In comparison, for Plymouth County, the number of married couples with children decreased by 5% and by 3.10% for the Commonwealth.
- 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.
- 23% of East Bridgewater Families have an income of \$200,000 annually, slightly higher than the county average of 21.9% and the state average of 21.7%.

East Bridgewater Housing Stock



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May 2024

GIS Data Sources: MassDOT, Office of
Geographic Information (MassGIS)
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Household Characteristics

A household can be a single person living alone, a married couple, a family headed by a single parent, or unrelated people living together as a single housekeeping unit. By contrast, a family is a household of two or more people, usually only sometimes related. Given that East Bridgewater is small and so much of its housing comprises detached single-family homes, it is no surprise that most households are families.

More than population, the number and type of households and their spending power within a community correlate with housing demand.

A household is a single person or two or more people who occupy the same housing units, which can be a house, apartment, mobile home, group home, or a single room occupied as separate living quarters.

According to the US Census Bureau, a household comprises everyone occupying a housing unit (e.g., house, apartment, single room). A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers or foster children who share the housing unit or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit, also called a household. The household count excludes group quarters.

According to the US Census Bureau, the number of households in East Bridgewater has increased steadily over the past twenty years. East Bridgewater had an estimated 5,085 households in 2021, an increase of 6.5% between 2010 and 2021. The 2000 – 2010 years experienced the most significant percentage increase (29.22%) with the addition of 1,050 new households, which is larger than the average for the OCPC Region, which increased the number of households by 11.66% during the same time. East Bridgewater experienced a 6.59% increase in

households between 2010 and 2021, near average for the entire region at 6.01%. Between 2010 and 2021, Plymouth County experienced a 9.8% increase in households, while the number of homes in the Commonwealth increased by 12.3%.

East Bridgewater's households have a slightly higher income (\$110,842) than residents of the OCPC region (\$110,704), higher than in Plymouth County (\$ 98,190), the Commonwealth (\$ 89,645), and significantly higher than the United States (\$ 69,021).

East Bridgewater has an average number of family households living below the poverty level (6.9%) compared to Plymouth County (5.3%) and the Commonwealth (7.10%). East Bridgewater families with children under 18 living below the poverty level were estimated at 13.90%, while Plymouth County estimates were 8.2% and 10.7% for the Commonwealth.

The average household size in East Bridgewater has increased slightly; in 2010, it was 2.87 persons, and in 2021, it increased to 2.89. The average household size for Plymouth County in 2021 was 2.58; for the Commonwealth, the average family size was 2.44.

The average family size decreased slightly from 3.29 per family in 2010 to 3.26 in 2021. East Bridgewater continues to be a town primarily composed of families. 61.43% of the population of East Bridgewater resides in married-couple households, but only 23.5% of those households have children under 18 years of age. Overall, East Bridgewater has more married-couple households and households with children under 18 than Plymouth County and Massachusetts. It also has a larger average household and family size.

As seen in local and county estimates, the number of households without children has increased by 1.5% in Massachusetts, and the number of households with children has

decreased by 3.10%. The number of married-couple families in the Commonwealth has reduced by 1.6% from 2010 to 2021.

Housing Characteristics

According to the 2021 ACS, there are 5,172 housing units in East Bridgewater, of which 5,085 are occupied and 87 are vacant. Between 2000 and 2010, 671 new housing units were developed (13%), and 256 were constructed from 2010 to 2020 (4.9%). Most of the housing in East Bridgewater consists of 1-unit detached housing (83.10%), which increased by 4.30% between 2010 and 2021. There was no change to 1-unit attached housing, while three or 4-unit housing increased by 1.3% (63 new units). Most of the housing stock in East Bridgewater is older, constructed in 1959 or earlier (38.80%) or between 2000 and 2009 (14.7%).

Household Wealth

The Income Distribution for East Bridgewater indicates that 1.5% of households earn less than \$10,000 per year, while 19.1% earn more than \$200,000 yearly. The median household income in East Bridgewater is \$110,842, and the median family income is \$128,039. The median income for nonfamily households was significantly less at \$53,199 annually. The financial health of a community is generally examined using median household income and per capita income. Median household income is calculated by combining the income of everyone living in a single housing unit. Per Capita income is calculated by taking the payment of an entire area and dividing it by all people living there (including those not earning income, such as children).

The median household income in East Bridgewater is \$110,842, slightly more than the median income for Plymouth County (\$98,190) and Massachusetts (\$89,026). Approximately 2.7% of East Bridgewater residents live below the poverty line, with seniors 65 and over accounting for 4.9% of those living below poverty.

East Bridgewater has a higher median and per capita income than the average for the OCPC region, Plymouth County, the Commonwealth, and the US. The median income for East Bridgewater during the 2010 – 2021 decade increased by 41.2%, while the per capita income increased by 59.7%, significantly more than increases observed in the county, OCPC region, the state, and the US. The median income for the OCPC region increased by 36.7%, and the per capita income increased by 43.9%.

Table 8: Median Household Income

Median Household Income					
	East Bridgewater	Plymouth County	OCP Region	Massachusetts	United States
2021 Median Household Income	\$ 110,842	\$ 98,190	\$ 110,704	\$ 89,645	\$ 69,021
2021 Per Capita Income	\$ 49,445	\$ 48,785	\$ 48,411	\$ 49,746	\$ 37,638
2010 Median Household Income	\$ 78,492	\$ 73,131	\$ 80,970	\$ 64,509	\$ 51,914
2010 Per Capita Income	\$ 30,965	\$ 33,333	\$ 33,633	\$ 33,633	\$ 27,334
Median Income % Change 2010 – 2021	41.2%	34.3%	36.7%	39.0%	33.0%
Per Capita Income % Change 2010 – 2021	59.7%	43.4%	43.9%	46.5%	37.7%
Source: 2010, 2021 ACS S1901, S19301					

Housing Affordability

Housing Cost Burden

Income alone does not adequately measure a household’s financial health; the proportion of income allocated toward housing costs is a major factor in determining whether a household is considered affordably housed.

“Cost-burdened” households spend more than thirty percent of their income on housing, limiting the amount of “leftover” money available for other expenses and the ability to accumulate savings.

In East Bridgewater, 35 percent and 10 percent of households are cost-burdened and severely cost-burdened, respectively, compared to 29 percent and 14 percent statewide.

Cost Burden by Tenure

Cost burden rates are typically higher among renter households. Statewide, 47% of renters and 31% of owners are cost-burdened. In East Bridgewater, 40% of renters are cost-burdened versus 36% of owners.

Cost Burden by Household Type

Younger, non-family, and elderly households typically have lower incomes and are more

likely to rent. They are also more likely to be cost-burdened. Statewide, 38% of elderly family households and 30% of non-elderly, non-family households are cost-burdened, respectively. As the number of elderly households increases, the number of cost-burdened elderly households is likely to increase. In East Bridgewater, the cost burden among elderly family households and non-elderly non-family households is 38% and 30%, respectively.

Technical definitions are as follows:

- **Moderately cost-burdened** households pay 30-49 percent of their income toward housing costs, whereas **severely cost-burdened** households pay 50 percent or more.
- **Extremely Low-Income** households earn 0-30 percent of the HUD Area Median Family Income, known as HAMFI. (HUD refers to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.)
- **Very Low-Income** households earn between 31-50 percent of the HAMFI.
- **Low-income** households earn 51-80 percent of the HAMFI.

- **Moderate Income** households earn between 80-100 percent of the HAMFI.
- **High-income** households earn over 100% of the HAMFI.

Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)

The Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) measures a community's stock of low-moderate-income housing for MGL Ch. 40B, the Comprehensive Permit Law.

Chapter 40B is a state statute that enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve affordable housing development under flexible rules if at least 20-25% of the units have long-term affordability restrictions. The law allows developers to build affordable housing (both affordable homeownership and rental units) by allowing for a streamlined permit process and more flexible zoning rules. While housing developed under Chapter 40B is eligible for inclusion in the inventory, many other housing types (such as Inclusionary Development units, increases to Housing Authority portfolio, housing built by community development corporations, or other affordable housing developers) qualify to count toward a community's affordable housing stock.

In Massachusetts, housing units eligible for the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) must be affordable to households with incomes not exceeding 80 percent of AMI for the HUD region in which the units will be located. Housing units generally qualify for listing in the SHI if they are subsidized under an eligible subsidy program and/or subject to an affordable housing restriction that controls sale prices or rents and limits occupancy of the units to income-eligible people on a fair, open basis. Because Chapter 40B exists by state mandate, the law grants authority to the

Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) to adjudicate appeals arising from the ZBA's denial or conditional approval of comprehensive permits. In other words, the mission of the Housing Appeals Committee is to provide, within the parameters of the comprehensive permit process established by G.L. c. 40B, §§ 20-23, an impartial forum to resolve conflicts arising from the siting of new affordable housing¹. However, the HAC's discretion to overturn local decisions applies only to cases involving a city or town that has not met its regional fair share obligations under the statute (at least 10% of a community's housing stock is affordable for moderate-income households). If the town meets one of the statutory minima, the HAC must uphold the decision as "consistent with local needs." The statutory minima include:

- If the number of low- or moderate-income housing units in the community exceeds 10 percent of the total number of housing units reported in the most recent federal (decennial) census or,
- If low or moderate-income housing has been developed on sites comprising 1.5 percent or more of the total land area in the community zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial use or,
- If the comprehensive permit application before the ZBA would lead to the construction of low or moderate-income housing on sites comprising more than 0.3 of 1 percent of the total land area in the community zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial use or ten acres, whichever is larger, in the calendar year.

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities releases a Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) to

account for the number of affordable housing units available per community.

The most recent release identifies East Bridgewater as having 5,186 housing units, according to the 2020 Census (as of 06/29/2023). The SHI identified 230 total development units and 176 subsidized housing units, resulting in an SHI of 3.39%.

Per state mandate, the Town of East Bridgewater needs to meet the statutory tests described above to increase the supply and availability of subsidized housing and get closer to the 10 percent minimum. Therefore, “consistent with local needs” means balancing the regional need for affordable housing against local health, safety, open space, and site and building design concerns.

Affordability Gap

Units that are affordable to low-income households are not necessarily occupied by low-income households. This mismatch between households’ incomes and their units can exacerbate affordability problems. We calculate the affordability gap to measure the extent to which affordability is a supply problem versus a distribution problem. The gap is the difference between the number of households at a given income level and the number of units affordable to households at that income level. A positive gap indicates a shortage of units at a given income level, even if households and units were perfectly matched by incomes and costs. East Bridgewater households at less than 50% AMI, 50 to 80% AMI, and above 80% AMI face affordability gaps of 240, 20, and -250, respectively.

Housing Units

According to the 2021 ACS, there were 5,172 total housing units in East Bridgewater; 5,085 were estimated to be occupied housing units (98.3%), with 87 vacant housing units (1.7%). Of the 5,085 occupied housing units, 4,128 are occupied by the owner(s), and a renter or renters occupy the remaining 957 units. The town was estimated to increase housing choice by developing 256 new units between 2010 and 2021 (4.30%).

According to the US Census Bureau, the vacancy rate for East Bridgewater, MA, in 2020 was 0.5% for homeowners and 2.3% for rental units, down from 1.0% in 2010 for homeowners and 3.7% for rental units. This is lower than the national average of 9.7% but higher than the state average of 2.1%. Low homeowner and rental vacancy rates are typically interpreted as a sign of tight housing markets, with lower vacancy rates signaling a more significant housing shortage. A lower vacancy rate means fewer available housing units for rent or sale, indicating a higher demand and a tighter market. However, other factors, such as the type, size, price, and location of the housing units, also affect the vacancy rate and the housing market.

Of the occupied housing units in East Bridgewater in 2020, 80.7% were estimated to comprise 1-unit detached dwellings (single-family homes). The number of 1-unit attached dwellings increased to 215 units (4.2%) during the 2010 to 2021 years through the construction of 58 new attached housing units (+37%).

The 2-unit (apartments, townhouses, duplexes) housing choices decreased by 72 units between 2010 and 2021 to 82 two-unit housing opportunities.

In 2021, three or four units were estimated to be 5% of the total housing stock at 260 housing units and **were estimated to have increased by 87 housing opportunities between 2010 and 2021**. Five to nine-unit housing was estimated to be 4.8% of the total

housing stock at 246 units, **a loss of 167 units between 2010 and 2021.** Significant decreases were in multi-family housing choices for residents of 2-unit and 5-to-9-unit housing developments. Ten or more housing units were estimated to be 2.20% of the total housing stock, with an increase of 142 units between 2010 and 2021. Mobile homes and other housing types increased by 46 during the decade.

Table 6: Housing Type

Housing Type	Total	Change Since 2010
1-Unit Detached	81.4%	347 New Units
1-Unit Attached	4.2%	58 New Units
2 Units	1.6%	-72 Units
3-4 Units	5%	87 New Units
5-9 Units	4.8%	-167 Units
10+ Units	2.2%	86 New Units
Mobile and Other	0.9%	46 New Units

Housing Strategies

Community Preservation Act

East Bridgewater has not yet adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which gives access to a housing subsidy source many Massachusetts cities and towns still need to embrace. CPA creates a minimal local tax matched by state dollars to provide a funding source for towns to increase affordable housing initiatives and continue to invest in open space and recreation lands. East Bridgewater needs development capacity to leverage the best funding opportunities, including CPA and additional state funding pools. The existing capacity gap

should be addressed by establishing a municipal housing trust and strong working partnerships with Housing Solutions for Southeastern Massachusetts (formerly South Shore Housing Development Corporation) and other non-profit housing development organizations in the Greater Boston area.

Diverse Housing Stocks

The need for diverse housing surpasses the requirements of the Subsidized Housing Inventory. First-time home buyers, young adults returning from college, and seniors looking to downsize require housing at varying price points and sizes. Addressing ways to create diverse housing stock in a town primarily relying on septic is important for East Bridgewater. Creating zoning for mixed-use can help create affordable rentable units in town. Creating buildings with small first-floor retail space with upper floors hosting apartments complements encouraging small businesses in town that preserve local character and economic needs while creating affordable housing near resources. East Bridgewater is also an MBTA Adjacent Community and will need to work with the state to comply with new zoning regulations under the MBTA Zoning.

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 for smaller units to be built upon first-floor retail, specifically in areas adjacent to current commercial growth.
 - c. Prepare to bring enrollment to the CPA in-town meeting with supporting educational materials and a cost-effective breakdown.
2. Staff from the Housing Authority and Housing Committee will work with the planning board on ways to increase housing potential through state and federal programs to meet the following needs:
 - a. Create a Housing Production Plan to begin working to meet state housing requirements.
 - b. Create 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.
 - c. Subsidized and modestly priced studio apartments and single-room occupancy units for one-person households with low or moderate incomes.
 - d. Deeply subsidized senior citizens' rental units to relieve pressure on the East Bridgewater Housing Authority's waiting list.
 - e. 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%.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

As East Bridgewater sees continued population growth, protecting existing resources in town is very important. Maintaining vibrant landscapes as the town expands is important to those living and working there. The town has many streams and rivers, historic sites, active farms, and recreational lands contributing to its rural feel. Data is essential to identify the most important pieces of land to the landscape.

Current Status of the Land

Most conservation land is in a natural state (i.e., not planted or intensively managed), and is protected against development in perpetuity. Conservation lands may be permanently protected through fee-simple ownership or a conservation restriction (CR). Conservation and other public and private lands may be further restricted under an agricultural preservation restriction (APR), to preserve farmland use in perpetuity. Currently, the town has a limited amount of land under permanent conservation. According to data compiled between 2012 and 2017 by Mass Audubon, the town only had 827 acres of permanently conserved land, approximately 7% of the total land. Based on current state records, this has since increased to 1,495 acres. However, 57% of the land in town is still in a natural state, and 10% of the

Figure 6: East Bridgewater Farm Stand



land is classified as open space. While the town still has lots of undeveloped land, the town needs to create a strategy to move the most important land from temporary to permanent protection. Prioritizing parcels of land can be done by viewing said land's significance to local, state, and protected land contiguity.

Biomap

Reviewing the most recent update of Biomap, data presented by The Nature Conservancy and the state of Massachusetts, two areas of land are specifically important to statewide ecosystems. First, the town river and surrounding floodplains are along the western part of the town. Preserving land within flood plains of rivers helps protect local infrastructure and homes. On the east side of the town is the Poor Meadow Brook, running to Robbin’s Pond. These water sources play a key role in the ecology of East

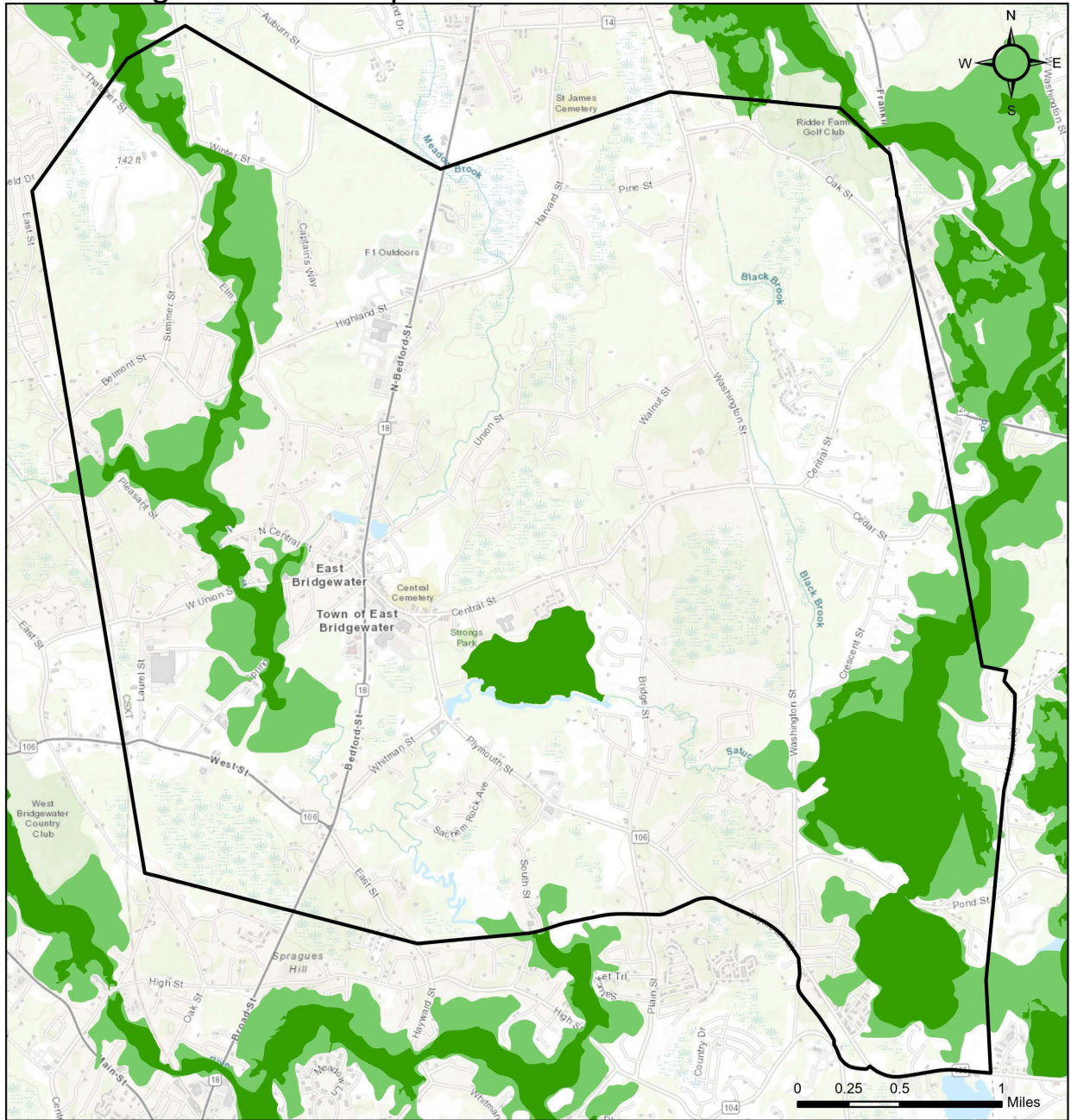
Bridgewater and the larger region as these bodies of water cross through multiple towns and impact water quality and wildlife. As shown in the Biomap Components figure, other parcels of land hold local importance, largely located around existing vernal pools in town. The largest space is East of Route 18 between Harvard St and Union St. This land is a mixture of public and privately owned lands that make up a patch of forest in town. Lands identified in Biomap help the town compare areas that are in the most need of permanent protection. These are areas where development should be limited or may require sustainable features such as on-site groundwater treatment. Additionally, these maps help create connecting parcels of land for conservation that serve the purpose of passive recreation for hiking trails around town.


Table 7: Core Habitat

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rare Species Core: 325.1 acres • Forest Core: 0.0 acres • Aquatic Core: 632.6 acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland Core: 39.7 acres • Vernal Pool Core: 422.8 acres • Priority Natural Communities: 0.0 acres
Critical Natural Landscape	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Blocks: 0.0 acres • Coastal Adaptation Areas: 0.0 acres • Tern Foraging Habitat: 0.0 acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatic Core Buffer: 986.7 acres • Wetland Core Buffer: 94.9 acres
Local Components	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Landscapes: 2,523.4 acres • Local Wetlands: 517.6 acres • Local Wetland Buffer: 681.6 acres • Local Rare Species Core: 0.0 acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Aquatic Habitats: 152.3 acres • Local Aquatic Habitat Buffer: 433.4 acres • Local Vernal Pools: 86.0 acres
Regional Components	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Connectivity: 0.0 acres • Regional Rare Species Core: 29.9 acres 	

Map 6: East Bridgewater Biomap Elements

East Bridgewater BioMap Elements



-  Core Habitat
-  Critical Natural Landscape



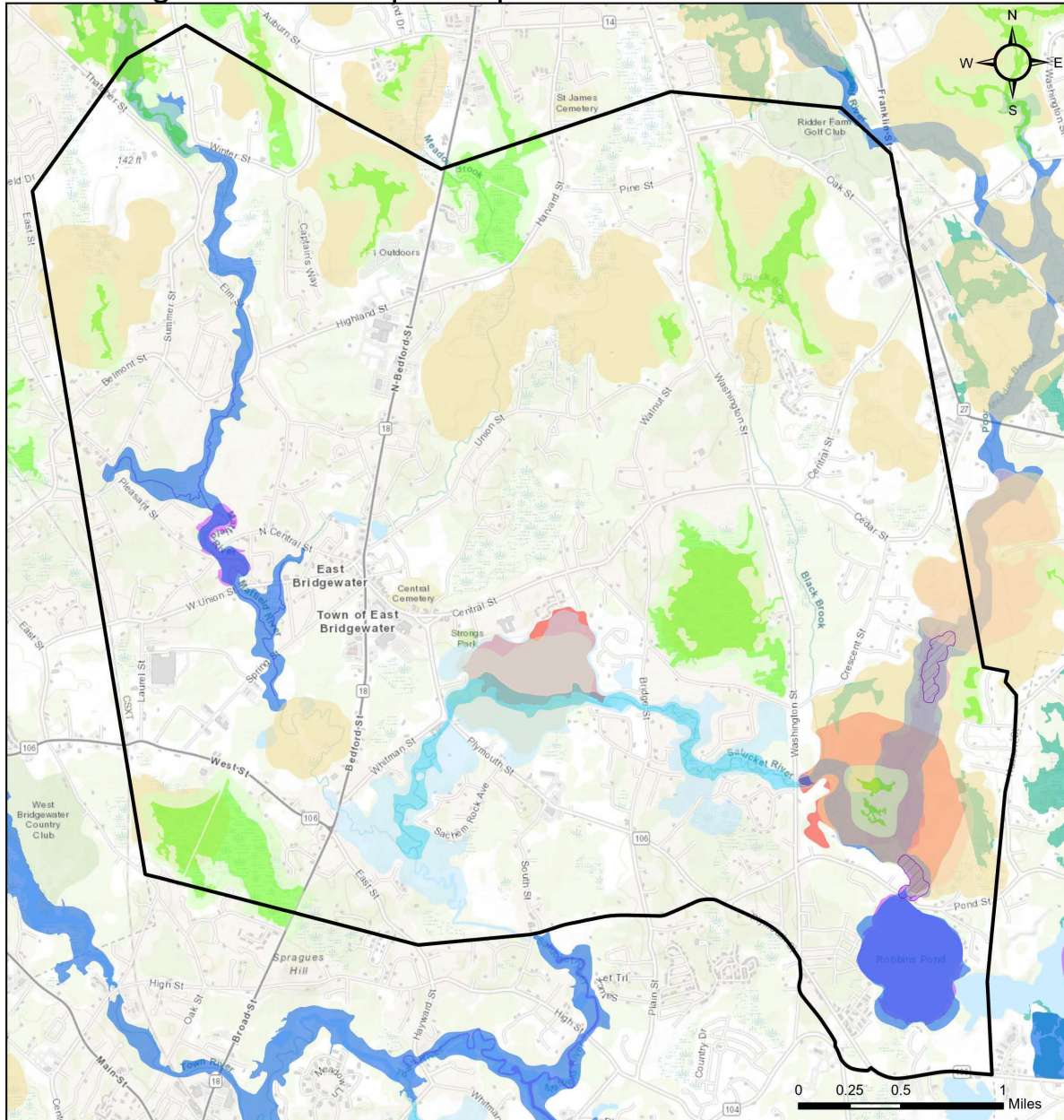
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




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Created Nov 2023

GIS Data Sources: ESRI, MassGov,
Old Colony Planning Council

Map 7: East Bridgewater Biomap Components

East Bridgewater BioMap Components



- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--------------------|
|  | Regional Rare Species |  | Local Vernal Pools |
|  | Local Aquatic Habitats |  | Aquatic Core |
|  | Local Aquatic Habitat Buffers |  | Wetland Core |
|  | Local Wetlands |  | Vernal Pool Core |
|  | Local Wetland Buffers |  | Rare Species Core |
|  | Local Landscapes | | |



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Agriculture

Agriculture and agricultural lands remain a large part of the identity of towns along the South Shore, such as East Bridgewater. Several farms are still working in town, and many more are in the surrounding area. Farms in East Bridgewater include Leland Farm, C.N. Smith Farm, Komarnisky Bros, Mistletoe Acres Tree Farm, and Beaver Brook Farm (MassGrown). These farms hold valuable land for towns to keep protected. The Chapter 61 state incentive program allows agricultural land to be temporarily protected in exchange for tax relief. Land may fall under Ch. 61, Ch. 61A, and Ch. 61B.

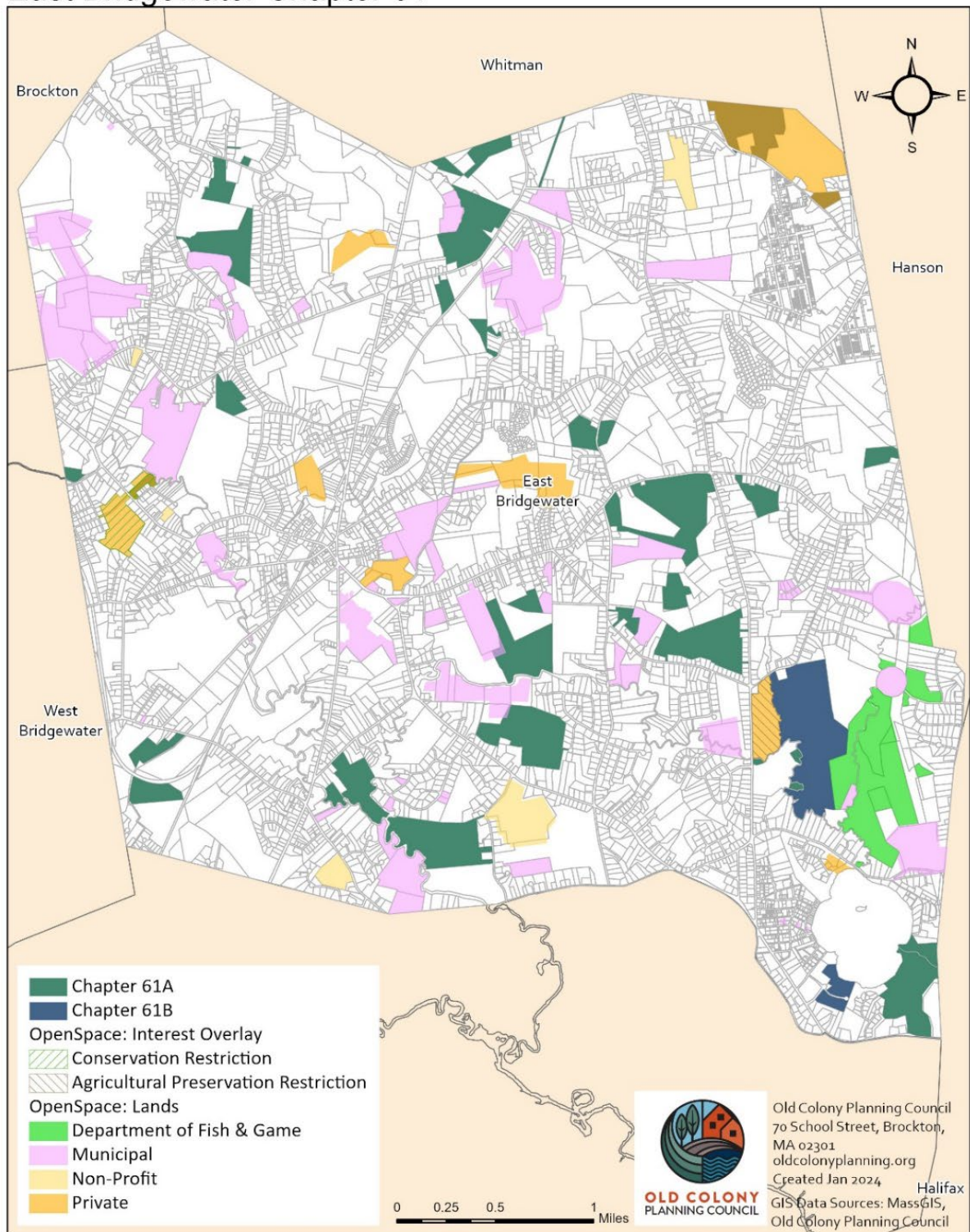
Figure 7: East Bridgewater Pastureland



Protecting agricultural lands can be done by supporting local agriculture and working with owners who no longer wish to farm the land and are seeking to sell it. Agricultural land is valuable for the food it grows, scenic views, and important habitat. The town has already begun taking action to support these initiatives by becoming a Right to Farm community and having an Agricultural Commission. The Conservation Commission is also looking to create an inventory of agricultural lands that are only under temporary protection and strengthen their partnership with local land trusts to ensure that should said lands fall out of the ownership, they are preserved whenever possible.

Map 8: East Bridgewater Chapter 61 Lands

East Bridgewater Chapter 61



Important Local Species

The [Sandhill Crane](#) is a species rarely seen in the Commonwealth that has particularly liked East Bridgewater. Birders come from around the area to search for them. MassAudubon noted the first sighting of the 2024 season in East Bridgewater at Leland Farm in their [Recent Bird Sightings post on March 1st, 2024](#). Leland Farms is considered a scenic view to many in town. Views from the farm reiterate the feeling of living in a small town. The significance of the importance of conservation of this land spreads across the need to preserve agricultural lands, migrate bird breeding grounds, and provide passive recreation space in town, such as birding.

The Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) protects 173 species of animals and 259 species of plants in the Commonwealth. MESA identifies the following rare species of plants and animals as being in East Bridgewater.

Figure 8: Sandhill Crane

Sandhill Crane

Grus canadensis



Table 8: MESA Identified Rare Species in East Bridgewater

MESA Identified Rare Species in East Bridgewater				
Common Name	Scientific Name	Taxonomic Group	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
American Brook Lamprey	Lethenteron appendix	Fish	Threatened	2007
Eastern Box Turtle	Terrapene carolina	Reptile	Special Concern	2015
Eastern Pondmussel	Ligumia nasuta	Mussel	Special Concern	2014
Long's Bittercress	Cardamine longii	Vascular Plant	Endangered	2012
Pale Green Orchid	Platanthera flava var. herbiola	Vascular Plant	Threatened	1997
Plymouth Gentian	Sabatia kennedyana	Vascular Plant	Special Concern	2016
Tidewater Mucket	Leptodea ochracea	Mussel	Special Concern	2014

Water Resources and Wetlands

East Bridgewater is located in the Taunton River Watershed, and drainage patterns are typical of southeastern Massachusetts. The terrain is predominately gently rolling plains, which causes streams to have meandering courses along broad floodplains. Eight named streams flow through the town, six with headwaters outside town.

Stoney Brook: Stoney Brook does not appear on the Geodetic Survey Maps, but it has a charm of its own. The brook originates at a cold-water spring near Washington Street and is home to the eastern brook trout. Its short existence ends as it flows into the Satucket River.

Black Brook: Black Brook is a small tributary of the Satucket River, originating in the northeast section of town near Northville. It flows south to the Satucket River.

Poor Meadow Brook: Poor Meadow Brook has its headwaters in Holbrook and Weymouth, and it flows southwesterly to the Satucket River just north of its beginning at Robinns Pond. The portion of Poor Meadow Brook in East Bridgewater has seen only a little development over the years. The river is an area deemed important to the East Bridgewater Conservation Commission for conservation purposes.

Beaver Brook Beaver Brook originates in Holbrook and flows south through Abington and Brockton. The brook has previously supplied water for Captain's Pond and Jones Pond. At present, the brook has been only

lightly developed. Beaver Brook joins Salisbury Plain River north of Pleasant Street. The watershed, for the most part, is lightly developed except for a few portions in Brockton.

Meadow Brook: Meadow Brook has a fairly long length. Its headwater is in Abington, and it flows south through Whitman to join the Salisbury Plain River just west of Spring Street to form the Matfield River. In East Bridgewater, Meadow Brook flows through Forge Pond. A substantial portion of the watershed in East Bridgewater has been developed for residential housing along Union Street, which has created a silting problem in Forge Pond.

Satucket River: The Satucket River originates from Robin's Pond and flows west to the Matfield River just east of Elmwood Village. This watershed has been receiving intense developmental pressure, so the East Bridgewater Conservation Commission has scrutinized it. The unusual characteristic of the Satucket River is that during high flow and heavy storms, the upper section of the river is so flat that it flows backward during storm runoff.

Salisbury Plain River: The Salisbury Plain River begins in Brockton and travels southeasterly through West Bridgewater into East Bridgewater. The headwater region is densely urbanized and was a major pollution problem in the not-too-distant past. Presently, there have been vast improvements. The portion of the river that flows through East

Bridgewater has a lightly populated watershed, but development is beginning in this area.

Matfield River: The Matfield River is the focus point for the East Bridgewater Watershed. It flows southeastward through Elmwood to Bridgewater and eventually joins the Town River in Bridgewater to become the Taunton River. The Matfield River is relatively undeveloped past Elmwood and is a very pleasurable canoe trip through Bridgewater, Middleborough, Raynham, and Taunton to the Taunton River.

Conditions

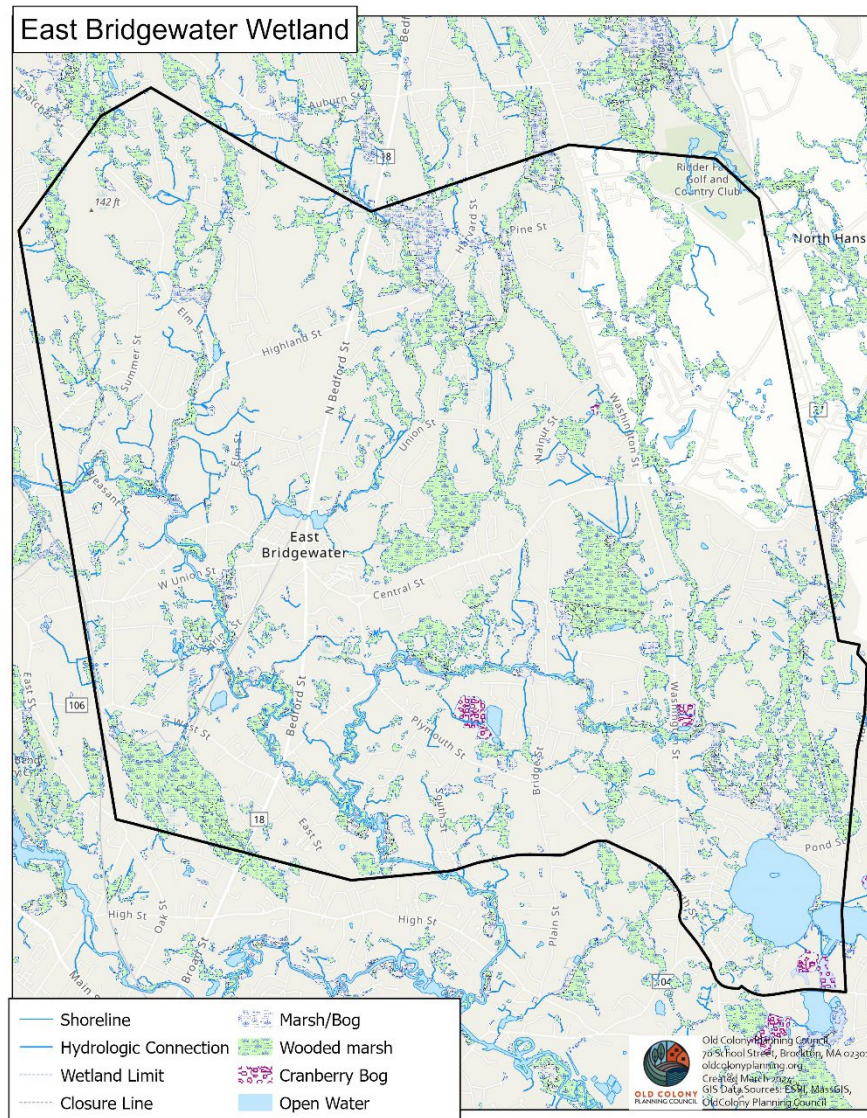
Generally, the rivers and streams are in good condition except for the Matfield and Salisbury Plain Rivers. The development and improvements to the Brockton Sewerage Treatment Plant have improved them, and the offensive odor and water pollution in the Matfield and Salisbury Plain Rivers are slowly being solved.

Surrounding these major bodies of water are wetlands, which play an essential role in water quality and provide important habitat for many New England wildlife. The wetlands and shallow marshes, which abut streams and ponds in East Bridgewater, provide habitat for herons and waterfowl. Some waterfowl found in East Bridgewater include Black Ducks, Wood Ducks, Mallards, Greenwing Teals, Bluewing Teals, and Canada Geese.

Through the work of the Conservation Commission of East Bridgewater, these lands are protected from disruptions from development. The Conservation Commission's role is to enforce federal and state restrictions that protect wetlands. By enforcing buffer zones of a minimum of 25ft in front of the boundary of a wetland by preventing construction and vehicles and tagging these boundaries, they protect the unseen assets of the town. Other efforts the town can take to protect these lands include

protecting abutting forested or natural lands, creating a locally specific wetlands bylaw, reviewing low-impact development regulations in town (see Timber and Earth Removal Zoning Bylaw), and providing local education on how landowners can do their part to protect pollution in waterways.

Map 9: East Bridgewater Wetlands Map



Historical Features

The Town's Historical Commission plays a key role in identifying sites in the town of historic or archaeological value. The commission has helped identify over 200 properties in town that are now recognized by the state as historical buildings, properties, or features. The commission also worked to create a Historic District recognized by the state of Massachusetts.

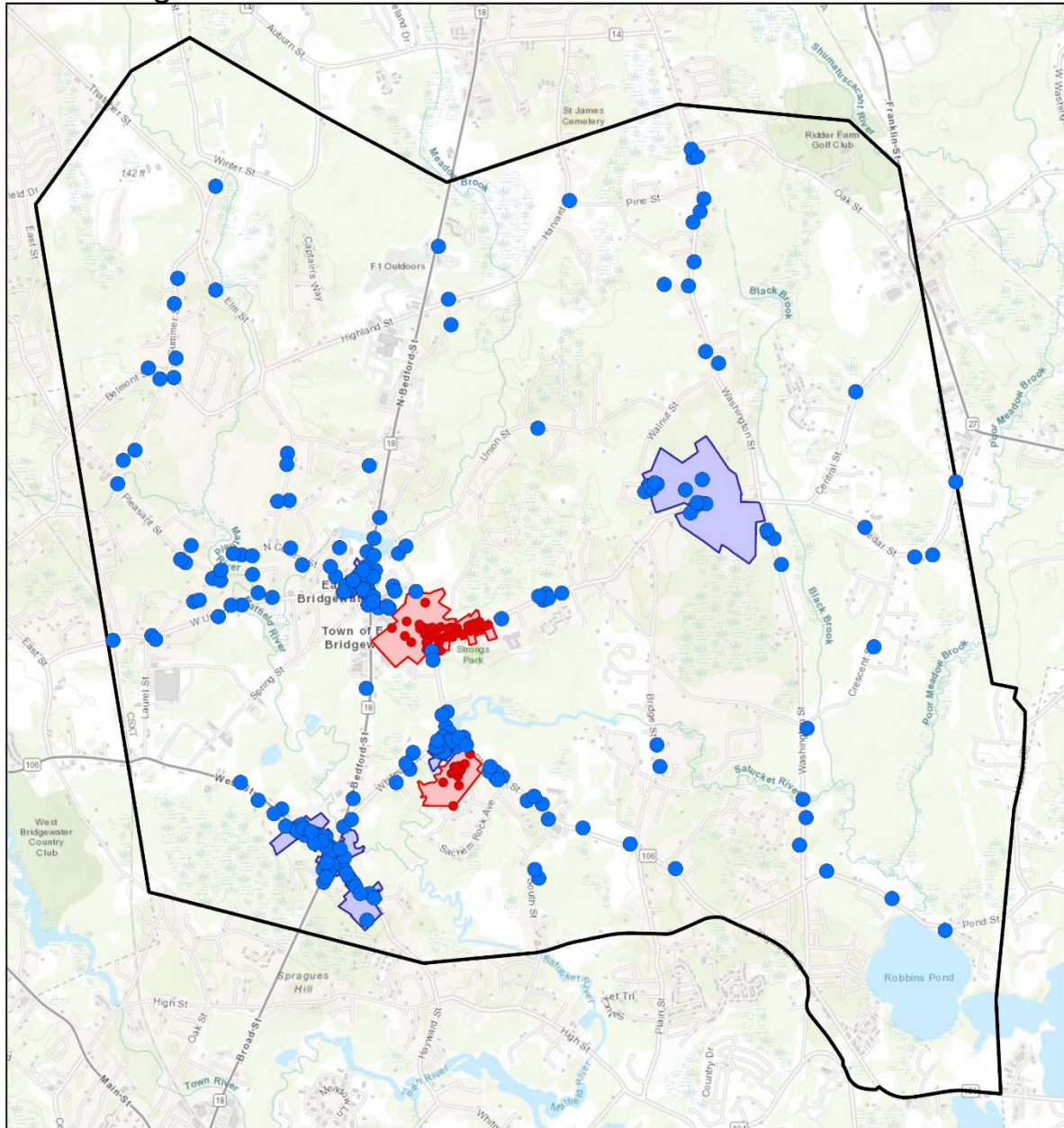
“The East Bridgewater Common Historic District is a district of religious, civic, and residential buildings surrounding the historic Town Common in the easterly part of East Bridgewater. The 1.7 acre, triangular-shaped Town Common lies at the district's center,

bounded by Central Street at its wide northern side, Plymouth Street to its southwest, and Morse Avenue to its southeast. The district is located a block eastward of the town's nineteenth-century commercial center at Bedford and Central Streets and strongly retains its historic scale and streetscape continuity.”

Their continued work has also included celebrating the town's bicentennial and holding active meetings to help manage restoration or filing projects. At this time, the town needs to identify a space for proper storage of historical artifacts. This can tie into creating local knowledge with younger generations in town.

Map 10: East Bridgewater Historical Sites

East Bridgewater Historical Sites



MassHistoric Commission Inventory (Points)

- National Register of Historic Places
- Inventoried Property

MassHistoric Commission Inventory (Areas)

- National Register of Historic Places
- Inventoried Property



OLD COLONY
PLANNING COUNCIL

Old Colony Planning Council
70 School Street, Brockton,
MA 02301
oldcolonyplanning.org

Created Jan 2024
GIS Data Sources: MassGIS, ESRI,
Old Colony Planning Council

Natural and Cultural Resources
Goals and Actions

1. Protect agricultural lands and scenic views in town.

Residents have identified character as a key reason for living in town. Preserving land that holds both scenic and ecosystemic value is important.

- a. Conservation Commission will use data identified in the Master Plan process to track land of significance. These efforts will be continued by updating 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.

The town has abundant water resources, including ponds, streams, rivers, and vernal pools.

- 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 administrator to identify a space to 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

Open space refers to a relatively continuous area of public or private lands without buildings or highways that holds significant value for conservation or recreation.

Protecting key open space properties is essential to provide a functional network of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for a town's future. Open space in East Bridgewater takes on various forms, each uniquely contributing to our town's character. We have farmland, playing fields, parks, and even unconventional types like golf courses and gravel pits. The town-owned open space is primarily recreational, municipal, or public school land. We also have land owned by the Commonwealth that is permanently

protected and managed for conservation values such as wildlife habitat, groundwater, and aquatic ecosystems. On the other hand, municipal land is managed for various town purposes, which may change over time and include areas for potential future needs. It's important to note that town municipal land may consist of natural areas managed for but not protected for conservation value. Currently, the town does not have a land trust to put town-owned land into conservation. In addition to the Conservation Commission, the Town also has a Recreation Commission. The Recreation Commission works to obtain funding for recreation sites in town and promotes programming, engagement, and multigenerational event planning.

Figure 9: Boating in East Bridgewater



Recreation is not just a pastime for school-aged children but a vital aspect of our town's life for residents at all stages. Many people live in East Bridgewater because they can access scenic views, trails, and parks. The following section will delve into the existing inventory of recreation spaces in town and identify future needs, focusing on ensuring that these spaces cater to our residents' diverse needs and interests.

Table 9: Publicly & Non-Profit Owned Open Space

Publicly & Non-Profit Owned Open Space	Acres	% of Total Land Area in East Bridgewater (11,225 acres total)
Town Owned - Total	1,717.50	15.30%
Town-owned – Conservation Commission	452.1	4.03%
Town Owned – Water Department	143.4	1.28%
Town Owned – Recreation	41	0.37%
Public Schools	60.2	0.54%
Commonwealth of Mass – protected by Article 97	636.5	5.67%
Land permanently protected by ownership or CR	859.3	7.66%
Total publicly owned open space	698.1	6.22%
Total permanently conserved open space	1495.8	13.33%

Open Space Inventory

The town is fortunate enough to have many beautiful recreation areas. These areas include scenic views of ponds and rivers in town, historic mill sites, hiking trails, and sports fields. The following inventory identifies conservation and recreation grounds. These do not include play spaces or sports fields located on the site of public schools in town.

1. Robins Pond Area consists of about 3.7 acres of scattered lots. Access and parking are on Rose Street. This area could be updated with equipment to increase recreational opportunities along the waterfront.
2. Satucket River Frontage is comprised of over 60 acres. This area is a large contiguous holding on the south side of the Satucket River between Plymouth and Bridge Streets. There is a hiking trail along the river. Access and parking are located at the bridge on Bridge Street and the end of Bennett Lane. Uses include canoeing, hiking, nature study, picnicking, and protecting wetlands. This area needs trail maintenance and amenities, including bridges to cross often-flooded areas and benches along pathways.
3. Sachem Rock Farm runs along the opposite side of Plymouth Street, creating a significant connection between these two conservation areas. Sachem Rock Farm is the land surrounding the Senior Center. This space is also home to the Community Gardens and a series of hiking trails. The town is in the process of attaining funding that will be used to improve trail conditions and add a bridge. This area in particular would be a great space for an ADA trail. This conservation area abuts the town's Senior Center and is enjoyed by all ages and abilities.
4. Lorraine Drive Area is a small parcel of about 5 acres at the end of Lorraine Drive near the Housing for the Elderly. Access and parking are at the end of Lorraine Drive, and the area could be used for wetland protection, hiking, and nature study.
5. Church Street Area is a large contiguous area of about 40 acres. This land has soccer, basketball, baseball, and pickleball facilities. Surrounding these fields are a brook, woods, and wetlands. Parking and access are off Church and Hobart Streets. Uses are for wetland protection, recreation, walking, nature study, and picnicking. The town has continued to update recreation sites here. Parking is a long-term issue for this site. The only playground off the school grounds is on Hobart Street. It is small and does not meet the needs of families in town. Families must also park along main roads, disrupting pedestrian views and creating risk. Church Street and adjacent fields are subject to regular flooding during weather.
6. The Rogers-Sheldon Mill Site comprises two parcels on each side of West Union Street. The parcel on the south side of West Union Street is the Rogers & Sheldon Mill site. The site is 16 acres of

forest, marsh, and wetlands. Its uses are historic preservation, nature study, picnicking, and wetlands protection.

7. Beaver Brook Beagle Club—The local Beagle Club formerly used this area as a beagle training ground. The property is 129 acres of forest with limited hiking trails. Access is from Belmont and Summer Streets, with parking off both streets. This site uses wetland preservation, nature study, hiking, and picnicking. There is a building at this site that is not safe for use. The town may consider repurposing the building at a later time.
8. Jones and Captains' Pond contains about 50 acres of forest, pond, and marshland. Access is off Elm Street, with parking along the wide shoulder of Elm Street. This site is used for fishing, nature study, skating, wetland wildlife management, and protection. Challenges with this parcel include a lack of developed trails or seating areas. Illegal dumping and littering often happen at this site. This parcel has the potential to be linked with the Beagle Club property and would make an excellent green belt and wildlife corridor between two resource areas.
9. Meadow Brook is an area of about 12.5 acres of contiguous holdings on the east side of Meadow Brook in the northern part of town. Its vegetation is hardwood forest, marsh vegetation, and wetland shrubs. Its uses are green belt/corridor components, wildlife habitat, and wetland protection. Additionally, the site can be used for hiking and nature study. Access is off North Bedford Street, and

parking is limited to the shoulder of this busy state highway.

10. Washington Street Area is a parcel off Washington Street between Northville and Eastville comprising 21.5 acres. Access is off Washington Street, with parking on the shoulder of Washington Street. This site has the potential for hiking, nature study, wetland protection, and picnicking
11. Leland Farm helps preserve an important piece of open space for the town and will require an in-depth review of potential use and conservation restrictions to maintain its character.

Public School Inventory

East Bridgewater has three public schools: Central Elementary School, Gordon W Mitchell School, and East Bridgewater Jr/Sr High School. The public schools total 60 acres of land. The elementary school has a playground for students during the day, open to the public after school hours. Behind East Bridgewater Jr/Sr High School is a soccer field, a baseball field, and a track course.

Recent Progress

The town's Master Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan have remained outdated. The completion of the Master Plan intends to recap changes from the previous plan and reassess older plans. Despite the outdated plans, volunteers across the Recreation Commission and Conservation Commission

Figure 10: Open Space Parcel



have ensured that open space and natural resources remain a community priority.

The Recreation Commission recently completed the update of two basketball courts and the addition of Pickleball Courts. The courts are located at Church St/ Hobard St Fields.

The Commission also purchased an outdoor movie theater set that will be used for public engagement over the summer.

The Recreation Commission has two subcommittees: Friends of East Bridgewater Trails and the Christmas Parade Committee.

Friends of East Bridgewater Trails (FEBT) is a group of volunteers who started in 2006 to maintain access to trail systems in town. This work includes trail maintenance and creating community connections to enhance and expand the greater trail network. Current work includes working with Appalachian Mountain Club, which maintains the Bay Circuit Trail, and connecting with other local trail management groups, including the Bridgewater Trail Commission. They have formerly worked on connecting projects with the Towns of Hanson, Bridgewater, and West Bridgewater.

In addition to updating trails and creating maps and kiosks, FEBT has hosted many events, including the Annual Earth Day Clean Ups, Annual Pumpkin Walks, and guided hikes in town. FEBT is always seeking new volunteers.

The Christmas Parade Committee is dedicated to keeping the annual parade in town and spends its efforts coordinating with

the town, vendors, and local groups to create memorable experiences for the community.

Future Needs

Site Specific Needs

Through the engagement process of this plan, the need for open space and recreation continued to occur. The most critical step for updating parks in town is updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Not only will this help the town develop a more specified list of conditions for parks and open space in town, but it will also unlock state grants that provide funding to enact many of the needs identified. In the interim, the recreation commission should work with the Master Plan committee to create a locally shared database to update the conditions and needs at each specific site listed in the plan.

The Leland Farm Site requires in-depth future-use planning. There have been existing studies to create a better use of the space without implementation. Therefore some of the work may already be done for creating a park plan. Creating a long-term plan is important for preserving its natural state as a critical parcel of open space.

Church Street has made many improvements over the past few years, but several needs remain in terms of safety including increased lighting in the area. The town may also need to address concerns of flooding along Hobart St.

The town needs a play structure that is accessible during school hours for non-

school-age children and students who are home-schooled.

Moving forward, to better manage parks and facilities in town, there will need to be communication with the Highway Department. There may be the potential to hire a Recreation Director to work with the Highway Department and Recreation Commission to help with park maintenance.

Hiking Trail Needs

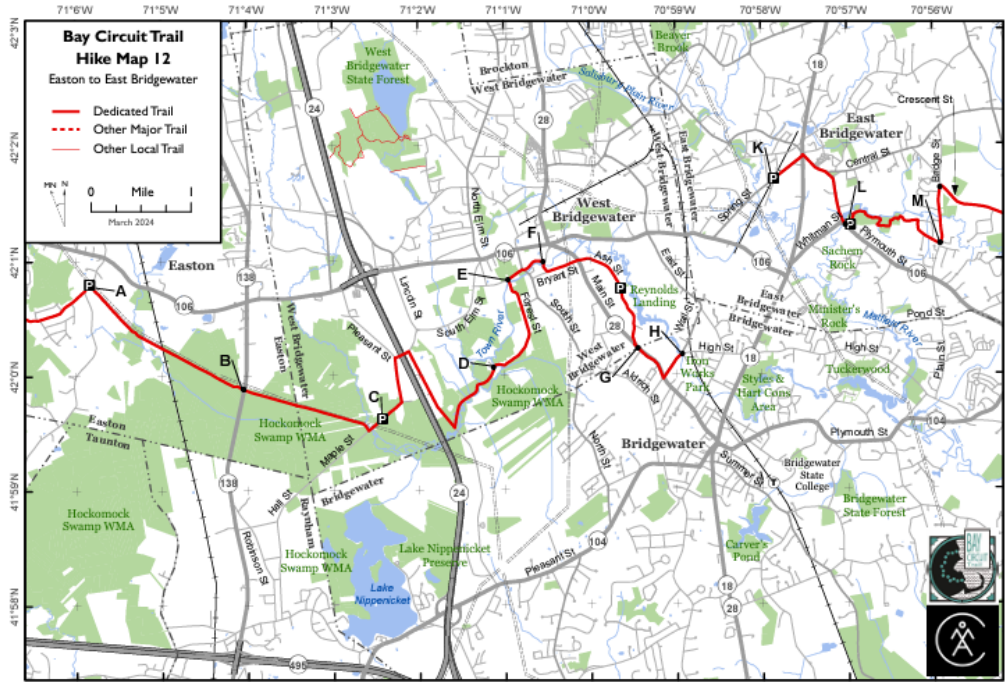
The Bay Circuit Trail connects Newburyport to Kingston over 230 miles of trails and runs through East Bridgewater as the Bennet Trail. Bay Circuit Trail system connects East Bridgewater to other local features, including Poor Meadow Brook off Crescent St through to the Burrage in Hanson. The Bay Circuit

Trail network is operated through the Appalachian Mountain Club. The Friends of East Bridgewater Trails will need to continue to work with them to create better connections in town to the trail system. Specifically, there is a sizable gap between West Bridgewater and East Bridgewater in the area. <https://www.baycircuit.org/>

Figure 11: Bay Circuit Trail Map



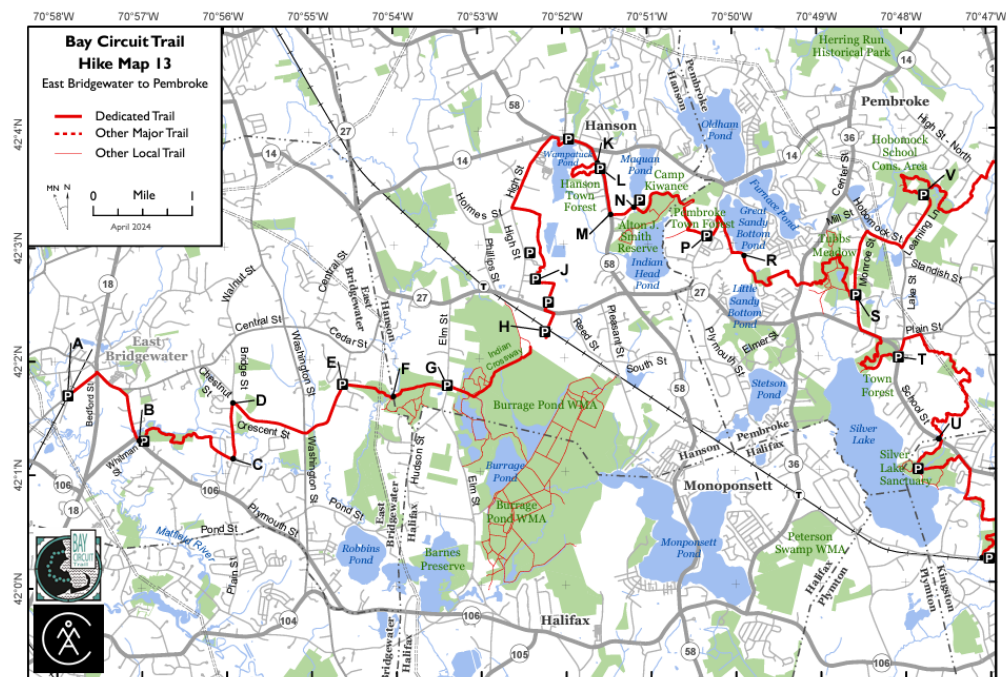
Figure 12: Bay Circuit Trail Hiking Map 12



Disclaimer and Cautions: The Bay Circuit Alliance, as the advocate and promoter of the Bay Circuit Trail, expressly disclaims responsibility for injuries or damages that may arise from using the trail. We cannot guarantee the accuracy of maps or completeness of warnings about hazards that may exist. Portions of the trail are along roads or train tracks and involve crossing them. Users should pay attention to traffic and walk on the shoulder of roads facing traffic, not on the pavement, cross only at designated locations and use extreme care. Children and pets need to be closely monitored and under control. Bay Circuit Trail maps are intended for personal use only. Reproduction for commercial purposes is prohibited. © Bay Circuit Alliance.

Map 12

Figure 13: Bay Circuit Trail Hiking Map 13



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Map 13

Sachem Rock also has a heavily used trail

Figure 14: Sachem's Rock



system wrapping around the fields and into the forest. There is also a connection to the trail system that runs along the Sawtucket River. Families in town heavily use Sachem Rock, accessible from the senior center. Many trails are in poor condition due to washout and erosion. The group has recently applied for grant funding to try to assist in maintaining these trails. This area is an excellent spot for the town to create ADA-accessible trails at the grounds that already have handicapped parking and facilities for the Senior Center.

Another large project the Friends of East Bridgewater Trails wishes to accomplish in the coming decade is to create an extensive rail trail system following abandoned rail beds between Whitman, East Bridgewater, and Bridgewater. The possible route includes connections from:

- Michaelson Drive through the Center of Town
- Center of Town down West St
- West St to Bridgewater Town Line

This comprehensive project will require grant funding to assess public vs. private parcels along the way and build a trail system.

Additionally, Members of FOEBT have joined the local initiative Bridging the Bridgewaters. Bridging the Bridgewaters is led by 501 (C) (3) Natural Resources Trust of Bridgewater (NRTB). This ongoing initiative is working towards the creation of a tri-town blue-green trail system, to connect private lands, town-owned conservation areas, and urban centers to the nationally recognized AMC's Bay Circuit Trail, to the Town and Satucket - Matfield Rivers, and the National Park Service's Wild & Scenic Taunton River.

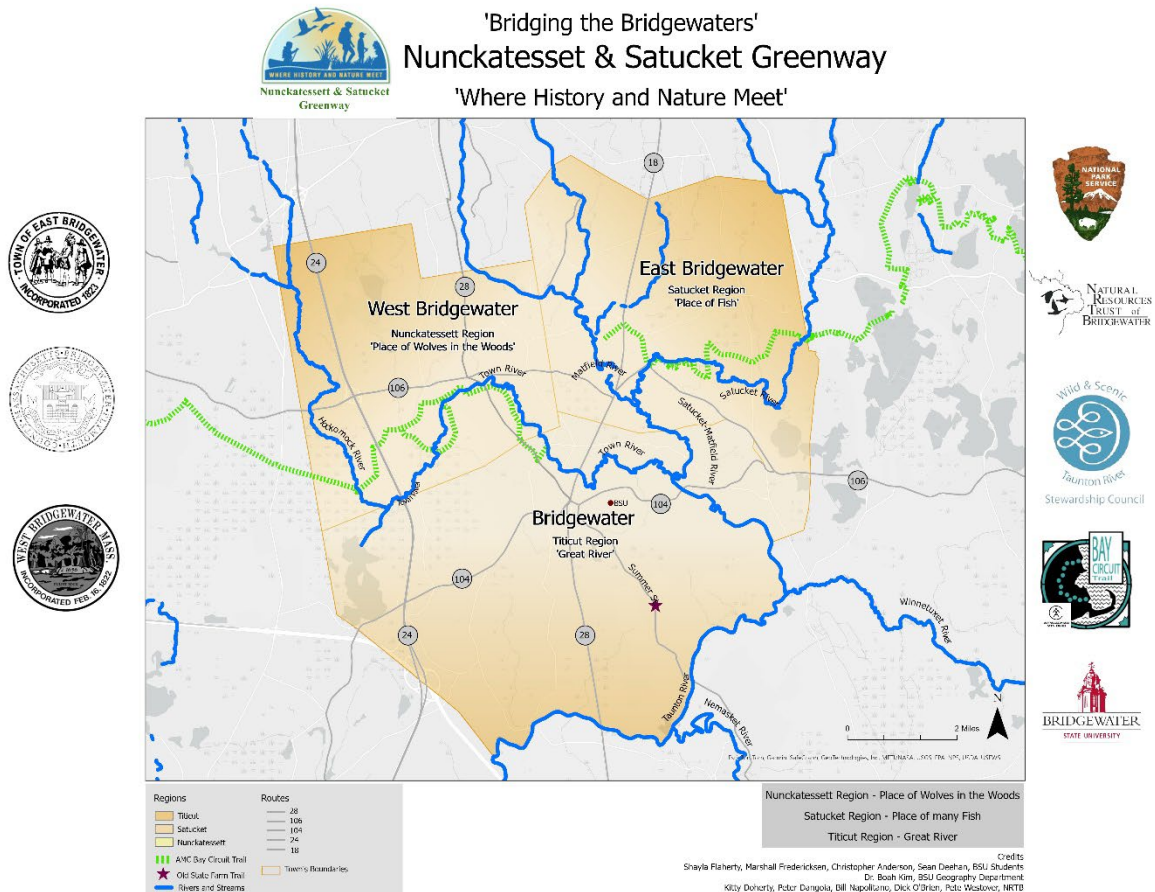
The genesis for Bridging the Bridgewaters began in the fall of 2009 when a dozen leaders from state and federal environmental groups and grassroots nonprofits met at the Summer Street Canoe launch site in Bridgewater to discuss the possibility of improving that canoe landing into a more user-friendly area and to possibly also create a hiking trail along the Taunton River – a wild & scenic river under the National Park Service banner. Work did not truly launch

until 2020 Legislation created a permanent 50' trail easement to be transferred from the MA Department of Corrections to the Town of Bridgewater for the creation of a 1.8-mile woodland hiking trail (Outdoor Classroom) along the Wild & Scenic Taunton River.

NRTB was asked to spearhead the design and construction of what became known as the Old State Farm Trail (OSFT); this multi-phased project was a magnet that attracted many collaborators and funders, including BSU, Taunton River Stewardship Council, AMC, and the National Park Foundation; this collaboration soon expanded to embrace a new tri-town initiative - Bridging the

Bridgewaters- its goal to link a network of sustainable, user-friendly land and water trails throughout the three Bridgewater towns in accord with each community's Open Space and Master Plans. This will be an ongoing initiative for years to come which will require the support of not only FOEBT but also staff from East Bridgewater to represent the town's commitment to being a partner in the endeavor.

Figure 15: Bridging the Bridgewaters Official Map



Connections and Communications

The town needs an update to its recreation webpage. Creating a landing spot for active and passive recreation in town would help generate better outreach for the town. Having an updated list of parks and trails available to the public allows residents to see what is readily available. This can also clear up confusion surrounding youth sports sign-ups, which are often volunteer-led.

Because the town does not have a planner or recreation director, most of the work outlined in this chapter falls on a limited pool of volunteers. Creating a more extensive network of volunteers is essential to maintaining these spaces and coordinating much-wanted outreach programming. The town should dedicate a page to volunteer opportunities. These should include keeping boards and commissions full of members and specific outreach days to help groups like Friends of East Bridgewater Trails assess large maintenance projects on particular days and times. This may also help get parents involved in recreation planning and programming.

Having more volunteers is essential to expanding programming opportunities at local parks. Creating events requires a budget and a heavy lift for time dedicated to communication, advertisement, and outreach.

There are also opportunities for cross-collaborations between boards, specifically Friends of East Bridgewater Trails, Recreation Commission, and Conservation Commission, to host educational events and

outreach materials. Other connections can be created with Friends of Seniors supporting the Council on Aging.

Corrective Deeds

Any significant, Town-owned conservation land that is not currently permanently protected should be protected by the most appropriate means (transfer to the Conservation Commission, Conservation Restriction, etc.). The appropriate departments or commissions within the Town should also research the deeds of the property under their control, including the acquisition history of each. The next step is to identify the parcels with affirmative Town Meeting Votes stating that the subject property is to be dedicated to either conservation or recreation use and determine that the deed reflects the purpose of the acquisition. If research reveals that the accompanying deed does not reflect the intent of the acquisition, the situation may be remedied by recording a corrective deed (it is recommended that the authorizing Town Meeting Vote is recorded as an adjunct to the corrective deed)

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. This list should include needs addressed in this plan.
4. The Planning Board, in conjunction with the Recreation Board, and Conservation Commission should regularly work together to meet the current recreation needs and opportunities for the town.
 - a. Consider selecting a site in town for a playground off of school grounds that is adequate for community needs.
 - b. The town will provide representation of East Bridgewater on the Bridging the Bridgewaters initiative.
5. 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.
 - a. The town should ensure that most of these parcels are placed under Chapter 97 to provide long-term protection for spaces not used for active recreation. Chapter 97 is a state-wide conservation restriction that creates permanent protection of lands.

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%.

CLIMATE AND RESILIENCY ELEMENT (CRE)

The Climate and Resiliency Element seeks to build and maintain a healthy and safe community by reducing climate pollution, adapting to a changing global climate, enhancing natural resources and the environment, and meeting the needs of current and future generations. Resiliency is "the capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity, and structure while maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning, and transformation."

East Bridgewater has taken many initial steps to combat these concerns through state programs. This includes adopting Green Communities and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Planning, as outlined in this chapter. Many residents also noted in the survey that energy efficiency was important to them.

Climate hazards also affect other inequities residents may face regarding housing affordability, food insecurity, lack of resources, and access to robust social and safety networks and preventative health services.

This Sustainability and Climate Resilience chapter presents a road map to build a sustainable community. It also aims to serve historically marginalized and vulnerable community members and establishes a vision

that addresses the emerging societal challenges posed by the changing climate and racial inequities. It emphasizes building resilience and outlines the town's actions to build a sustainable governmental agency and community.

Key Findings

- As East Bridgewater moves forward, energy efficiency should be a top consideration in any building construction or renovation project. The Town's participation in the DOER Green Communities program has already shown significant benefits, helping to track energy use better and provide substantial grants for energy-saving projects. This ensures that recently implemented measures perform as expected and deliver substantial savings.
- Incorporate climate resilience into all future municipal plans and capital improvement planning.
- Address energy sources, building energy, transportation, land use, food systems, waste systems, trees and forests, carbon sequestration, and waste: recognizing that the first steps in carbon neutralization are conservation and reducing demands.

This Climate and Resiliency Element ensures that comprehensive plans, development regulations, policies, plans, and strategies adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate. Local communities can support a

reduction in greenhouse gas; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and most importantly, advance environmental justice, a crucial aspect that underscores the urgency and significance of our collective efforts.

Building the town's resilience is an interdisciplinary effort that requires action from municipal departments, public service providers, agencies, and the public. Public engagement and adaptability are integral to the entire process.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness

East Bridgewater faces climate threats, most notably impacts from *heat waves, flooding, drought, and intense storms*. Increased annual rainfall means the region could experience a single intense downpour that can cause serious flooding, damaging critical facilities and infrastructure or limiting access to essential roads. Climate impacts the natural environment, development and infrastructure, economy, and public health, and municipal-level strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change are necessary.

Driven by the desire to assess its vulnerabilities, build community resilience, and expand its potential to address hazards caused by climate change, the Town of East Bridgewater chose to pursue certification from the Massachusetts MVP program. In the fall of 2019, the Town received funds to start

a town-wide conversation about climate change and its effects on the community.

At the MVP Workshop sessions, participants, including residents and town officials, discussed the impacts of the four hazards and articulated features they saw as community strengths and vulnerabilities. These features were discussed as they relate to three community components: *Environmental, Infrastructural, and Societal*, as outlined in the MVP process. The workshop attendees were broken into two teams. Each team was tasked with reviewing the details of each feature identified under each component. Team members used a matrix to track each feature, whether a strength or a vulnerability, the hazard that affects it, and the priority and timeline associated with implementation.

HEAT WAVES - The biggest challenges related to heat waves and higher temperatures were providing cooling centers for residents in need, anticipating and controlling power needs for cooling, and if or when wildfires may occur, including access to areas owned and operated by other entities and utilities. The Council on Aging, Library, Town Hall, or Schools could all be used in an emergency. Like many other extreme events, this will rely on the use of generators. Over time, the town needs to assess which buildings have or need access to generators to plan accordingly.

FLOODING - The town has many wetlands, streams, rivers, and ponds, and large rain events result in major flooding throughout the Town and at multiple stream/river crossings. Flooding issues are primarily due

to insufficient storage capacity, dams, natural blockages throughout the stream segments, and inadequate culvert size.

DROUGHT - Drought threatens East Bridgewater's supply capacity, as the town relies on wells and surface water resources. It also affects the Town's agricultural lands and influences other natural features.

MORE INTENSE STORMS - The biggest challenges related to intense storms, including nor'easters and hurricanes, are prolonged power outages from wind or falling trees and limbs.

TOP PROJECTS IDENTIFIED FOR ACTION

- Open Space Master Plan / Comprehensive Plan
- Forge Pond Evaluation and Restoration
- Water Supply Vulnerability Assessment
- Watershed Specific Drainage Studies
- Evaluation of Emergency Generators for Town-owned Facilities

Below is the list of additional action items identified and discussed under each community component, listed in the order of the number of votes they received:

ENVIRONMENTAL:

1. Open Space Master Plan / Comprehensive Plan – evaluate the use and purchase of land for preservation (water resources, stormwater/flood management, public use/recreation).
2. Forge Pond Restoration.
3. Robbins Pond Restoration.

4. Town Wide Watershed Restoration Plan (ecological restoration, potential river dredging/debris clearing, restoring access for recreational use).

INFRASTRUCTURE:

1. Water Supply Vulnerability Assessment
2. Highway Facility Assessment / Site Relocation Study
3. Watershed specific drainage studies
4. Emergency Services Satellite location
5. Street Tree / Power Grid Vulnerability Assessment
6. Evaluation of Washington Street Bridge (future high-water conditions)
7. Evaluation of Septic Systems / Alternative Treatment

SOCIETAL:

1. Evaluation of Emergency Generators for Town-owned Facilities
2. Conduct an Analysis of Sheltering Needs
3. Enhance and Further Develop Communication Systems for the Council on Aging
4. Update / Upgrade Code Red – Provide education and Outreach on the Program
5. Update Evacuation Routes / Signage
6. Develop Education and Outreach for Food Pantries on Preparedness Resources
7. Further Develop and Formalize the CERT Program

All climate strategies must prioritize the equity and well-being of our most vulnerable residents. The plan's success hinges on the ability to ground climate action in human relationships. We must put people at the

forefront of climate adaptation, advocating for continued changes, which will lay the groundwork and require resources for bold and creative action in East Bridgewater.

Green Communities

East Bridgewater has achieved a significant milestone by being designated a Green Community under the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities program. This recognition, 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. The Town's commitment to energy efficiency will continue, with plans to apply for additional grants to complete other identified priority projects and save energy and money in Town-owned facilities.

The Town received \$160,000 to fund energy conservation measures, LED lighting, and administrative assistance in municipal

facilities, including but not limited to the Community Center, Fire Station, Public Library, and Town Hall. In January 2022, the town received a \$200,000 competitive grant to fund energy conservation measures, transformer, LED lighting, motors and variable frequency drives, weatherization, and administrative assistance in municipal facilities, including Mitchell Middle School, Junior/Senior High School, Town Hall, and the Public Library.

Energy use dramatically affects both budgets and the environment locally and globally. Total energy costs represent a significant portion of annual town spending and offer a corresponding prospect for savings.

The Town of East Bridgewater was designated as a Green Community in 2021, and its baseline year is Fiscal Year 2019.

In 2019, the total municipal energy use was 52,918 MMBTUs (not weather-normalized). East Bridgewater's energy use reductions will be measured against this baseline. The town aims to achieve a 20% reduction in municipal energy use before the start of FY25. For the town to achieve a 20% municipal energy use reduction, at least 10,584 MMBTUs will need to be saved

Table 10: Green Communities Grant Awards

Designation Date/Award Date	Designation/Competitive Grant Award	Grant Project Summary
June 2022	\$160,000	To fund energy conservation measures, LED lighting, and administrative assistance in municipal facilities, including, but not limited to, the Community Center, Fire Station, Public Library, and Town Hall. (Completed)
Jan 2024	\$200,000	To fund energy conservation measures, transformer, LED lighting, motors, variable frequency drives, weatherization, and administrative assistance in municipal facilities, including Mitchell Middle School, Junior/Senior High School, Town Hall, and Public Library.

Working with Energy Conservation Inc., the town has identified a variety of measures for implementation that will achieve savings of 19%:

- Boiler replacement
- Combustion controls
- Commissioning
- EMS controls upgrade
- Heating system upgrade
- HW temperature reset.
- LED lighting improvements
- Motors and VFDs
- Pipe insulation.
- Transformer replacements
- Weatherization

These measures will be implemented at the following facilities:

- Schools – Central, Mitchell, and High School
- Drinking water facilities – wells and pumping stations
- Library
- Town Hall
- Fire Department
- Council on Aging
- Water Department

The town uses energy in 10 municipal buildings and at two open space sites.

- **Open Space** – East Bridgewater’s energy use related to open space is <1% of its municipal energy use and, therefore, is not an area of priority within this plan.

- **Buildings—East Bridgewater’s municipal buildings use about 85% of the town’s energy. The high school uses the most building energy** (45%) and is relatively inefficient (129 kBTU/SF). Seventy-eight (78) kBTU/SF is the median energy use intensity for all buildings in Mass Energy Insight, from municipalities across Massachusetts. This number is used as a benchmark for building efficiency in this plan. Overall, East Bridgewater’s kBTU/SF across its buildings is 92.

Although the Mitchell and Central Schools are the second (20%) and fourth (10%), respectively, greatest users of building energy, both are relatively efficient – energy use intensity for Mitchell is 65 kBTU/SF and Central's is 69 kBTU/SF.

Two other buildings are energy-saving priorities: the water department is the third-greatest user of building energy (11%) and the least efficient municipal building (1,182 kBTU/SF). The town offices are the fifth-greatest users of building energy (8%) and are also inefficient (151 kBTU/SF).

Water and Sewer

The municipal well sites use natural gas and propane. The town also has one water holding tank. The town has one wastewater treatment facility, which uses natural gas. It serves the East Bridgewater Fire Station, East Bridgewater High School, Central Elementary School, and Bedford Street CVS.

The third largest use of municipal energy is to supply and treat drinking water and dispose of wastewater (3%). Most of this use is attributed to the drinking water side of town operations.

Vehicles

East Bridgewater has 52 vehicles, of which only two are not exempt from the fuel-efficient vehicles policy due to having a gross vehicle weight rating of >8,500 pounds and being used for emergency response. The

town fleet uses gasoline and diesel. The town does not own any hybrid or electric vehicles. Town vehicles' energy use (11%) is the second largest municipal energy use. Some town vehicles are exempt from the adopted fuel-efficient vehicle policy because they weigh more than 8,500 pounds or are used for emergencies.

Figure 16: EV Charging Station



Table 11: Municipal Buildings and Open Space Sites

Streetlights and Traffic Lights

The town pays 13 streetlight electricity accounts and three traffic light electricity accounts. The streetlights are owned by National Grid but included in the town’s energy use baseline. National Grid is updating all streetlights to LED (about 65% have been completed as of December 2020). The town’s electricity use related to streetlighting is expected to decrease.

East Bridgewater’s energy use related to streetlights and traffic lights is <1% of its municipal energy use and, therefore, is not an area of priority within this plan.

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS AND OPEN SPACE SITES		
Category	Subcategory	Facility
Buildings	Administration	Council on Aging
		Town Offices
	Library	Library
	Public Safety	Fire Department
		Police Garage
	Public Works	Water Department
		Willow Avenue
	School	Central Elementary
		Mitchell Intermediary
High School		
Open Space	Outdoor Recreation	Silva Athletic Complex
		Strong Field

Table 12: Municipal Energy Use in Baseline and Projected

MUNICIPAL ENERGY USE IN BASELINE FY19 AND PROJECTED PLANNED SAVINGS OVER FIVE YEARS				
Facility category	MMBTU used in the baseline year	% of total MMBTU baseline energy consumption	Projected planned documented MMBTU savings	Savings as % of total MMBTU baseline energy consumption
Buildings	44,906	84.86%	9,803	22%
Open Space	85	0.16%	0	0%
Street/Traffic Lights	336	0.63%	0	0%
Vehicles	5,996	11.33%	0	0%
Water/Sewer	1,596	3.02%	222	14%
Total	52,918	100%	10,025	19%

Savings

Figure 18: Green Communities Annual Report Table

Annual Report Table 2 (MMBTU) Fiscal Year (July 1 start) 2019 Baseline

Please make sure that any data submitted to DOER contains complete Data!
The data in this table reflects the data in the Baseline. Buildings marked in MassEnergyInsight as "Exclude from Baseline" are not included in this dashboard. Please set the baseline year filter on the right to your baseline year and create a custom view so that this report always shows the correct data.

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Building	Use (MMBTU)	46,223	45,626	40,999	37,826	35,444
	% Difference from Baseline	0.00%	-1.29%	-11.30%	-18.17%	-23.32%
Open Space	Use (MMBTU)	85	36	84	97	96
	% Difference from Baseline	0.00%	-57.46%	-0.95%	14.19%	13.15%
Street/Traffic Lights	Use (MMBTU)	336	267	275	257	257
	% Difference from Baseline	0.00%	-20.54%	-18.16%	-23.45%	-23.47%
Vehicle	Use (MMBTU)	5,996	5,398	5,459	5,480	6,041
	% Difference from Baseline	0.00%	-9.96%	-8.95%	-8.60%	0.76%
Water/Sewer	Use (MMBTU)	1,596	1,609	1,485	1,636	1,727
	% Difference from Baseline	0.00%	0.81%	-6.94%	2.54%	8.21%
Grand Total	Use (MMBTU)	54,235	52,937	48,302	45,296	43,565
	% Difference from Baseline	0.00%	-2.39%	-10.94%	-16.48%	-19.67%

Efficiency and Use

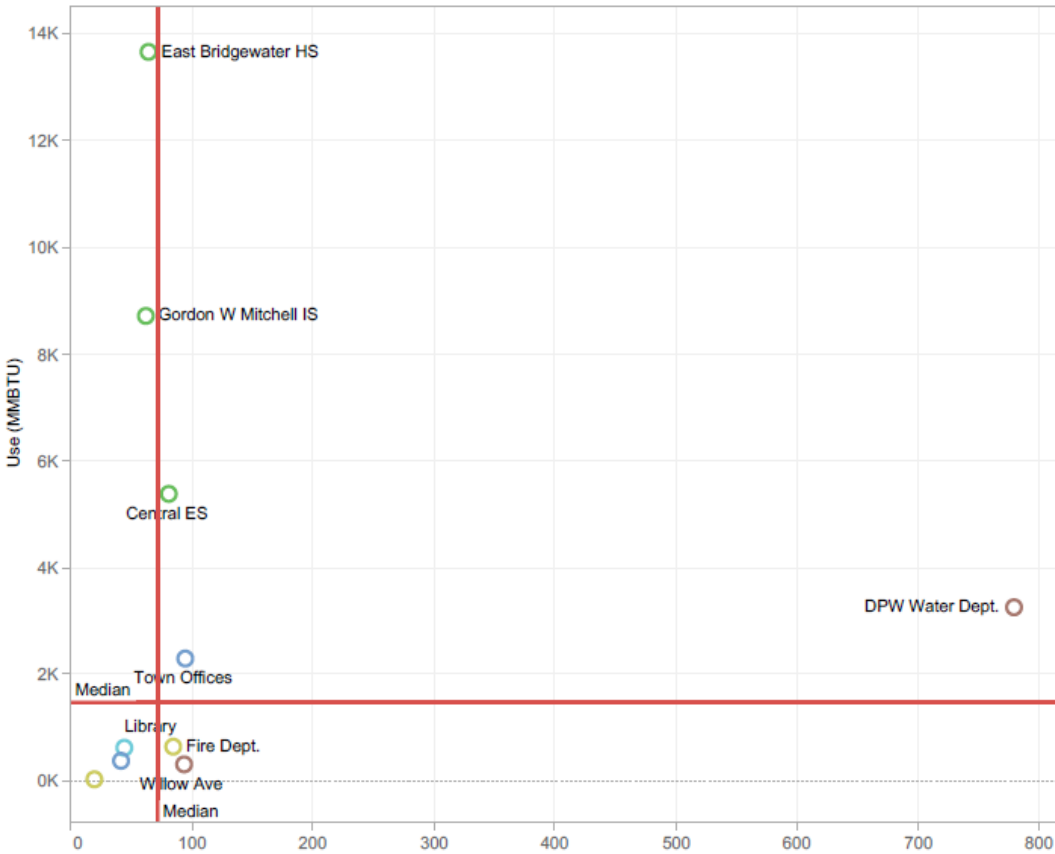


Figure 17: Green Communities Efficiency and Use Chart

Climate Resilience and Adaptation

Climate resilience is anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to climate changes and minimizing negative impacts on our natural systems, infrastructure, and communities. Climate resilience and adaptation goals and policies aim to improve the resiliency of East Bridgewater's natural and built assets and communities to the negative impacts of climate change.

- ***Emergency Preparedness and Response***—Community preparedness, response, and recovery adaptation are needed as heat waves, drought, flooding, wildfires, and water shortages' impacts on individuals and households will likely increase with the changing climate.

Public Health – Harmful algal blooms, flooding that impacts wells and onsite septic systems, respiratory illnesses from wildfire smoke, temperature-related health issues from intense heat waves, and groundwater recharge changes that affect onsite septic systems and wells are the most likely impacts to public health due to climate change. Food insecurity and health issues could increase for people with natural resource-related occupations, such as fishing, forestry, agriculture, recreation, service industries, and construction. Frontline communities, or communities that often face climate's worst impacts, have and will continue to experience disproportionately higher climate-related health risks. These groups of people include the elderly, children, communities of color, people with chronic illnesses, Tribal and Indigenous peoples, and outdoor laborers.

- ***Economy*** - Future flooding and sea level rise may adversely affect property values in low-lying areas. Various

industries may be affected, including construction and development, manufacturing, food and hospitality services, and natural resource economies. Workers displaced by flooding, extreme heat, fire, and other natural hazards exacerbated by climate change result in lost wages and productivity.

- ***Cultural Resources*** - Future flooding, extreme heat, and shifting precipitation patterns will likely damage historical sites and buildings, parks, waterfronts, and archaeological sites. Flooding, habitat shifts, and impacts on certain species will have cultural and health impacts.
- ***Public Infrastructure*** – Coastal flooding impacts from rising sea levels, storm surges, and heavy precipitation can result in substantial physical, ecological, and infrastructure damage. These can also influence inland flooding. Inland flooding from storms and increased participation also pose risks to public infrastructure. This includes flooding of transportation routes, impacts to onsite sewage systems, impacts to drinking water wells, and overload of stormwater systems.
- ***Land Use and Development*** – Future urbanization and the increased use of impervious pavements will likely increase the probability and severity of climate impacts such as urban flood events. Land use and vegetation cover may also shift with warmer temperatures and changing precipitation patterns,

which may have secondary effects on natural flood control, urban heat island effect, and wildfire risk.

- ***Hydrology and Hydrogeology*** – Intense precipitation events, changes in seasonal precipitation patterns, higher water temperatures, changing streamflow patterns, less groundwater recharge, and declining water quality have implications for ecosystems, infrastructure, agriculture, and local communities.
- ***Geologic and Natural Hazards*** – Landslide risk will likely increase due to heavier rain events, soil erosion and destabilization, and sediment transport patterns. Bluff erosion rates may accelerate from winter storms, storm surges, sea level rise, and heavy rain events. Increased erosion rates will have

long-term implications for properties, roads, and habitat on bluffs.

- ***Habitat*** – Climate change will likely alter terrestrial, freshwater, marine, and coastal habitats. These habitat changes will have a wide range of impacts on sensitive species and ecological processes. The prevalence of invasive species and diseases is likely to increase.
- ***Wildfire***—Plymouth County's wildfire risk is growing under future climate conditions. New development within or adjacent to previously undeveloped (wildland) areas. increases the risk of larger, more frequent, and destructive fires in susceptible areas and the likelihood that fires will spread uncontrolled across large areas and broad landscapes.

Table 13: Steps to Building Resilience

STEPS TO BUILDING RESILIENCE BASED ON THE US CLIMATE RESILIENCE TOOLKIT														
Step	What it means	How to accomplish												
Inventory Assets	Assets are the tangible and intangible things people or communities value. These could include people, resources, ecosystems, infrastructure, and the services they provide	Data sets from the U.S. Census, County or cities, public service providers, and open-source data—survey communities for culturally and historically valued places.												
Explore Hazards	Climate change hazards include extreme heat, rising sea levels, storms, wildfire risks, and wind damage. Landslides and flooding are natural hazards exacerbated by climate change.	Data sets from the UW Climate Impacts Group (CIG), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), state Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association. Coordinating efforts with the Massachusetts Department of Emergency Management and hazard mitigation planning.												
Identify potential hazards for each of your exposed assets.	<p>Next to each asset, list all the weather and climate-related events or situations that could damage it.</p> <p>Example:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Asset</th> <th>Hazard</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Residents</td> <td>Extreme heat</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roadways</td> <td>Flooding Landslide</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Winter Recreation</td> <td>Warming, early snow melt</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Residential Property</td> <td>Wildfires, Flooding, Landslides</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parks</td> <td>Wildfires, storms, water shortage</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Asset	Hazard	Residents	Extreme heat	Roadways	Flooding Landslide	Winter Recreation	Warming, early snow melt	Residential Property	Wildfires, Flooding, Landslides	Parks	Wildfires, storms, water shortage	<p>Use a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Tool like the MVP CRB, US Census for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wildfire ▪ Extreme Heat ▪ Flood ▪ Sea Level Rise ▪ Ozone Particulate ▪ Heat Island ▪ Reduced Snowpack
Asset	Hazard													
Residents	Extreme heat													
Roadways	Flooding Landslide													
Winter Recreation	Warming, early snow melt													
Residential Property	Wildfires, Flooding, Landslides													
Parks	Wildfires, storms, water shortage													
Sensitivity	The degree to which a system, population, or resource is or might be affected by hazards.	Data sets for health conditions (diabetes, asthma, heart disease), age, housing stock, and housing data—coordination with social service providers and emergency management.												
Adaptive Capacity	The ability of people, assets, or systems to adjust to a hazard, take advantage of new opportunities, or cope with change.	Information regarding community resources, data including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Race/Ethnicity 												

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Income ▪ Level of Education ▪ Language Proficiency ▪ Household Size ▪ Housing Cost Burden ▪ Housing Condition.
Assessing vulnerability	Risk is the potential for negative consequences where something of value is at stake. In assessing climate impacts, the term often refers to the potential for adverse consequences of a climate-related hazard. Risk can be assessed by multiplying the probability of a hazard by the magnitude of the negative consequence or loss.	A program or geospatial tool to consolidate data and information, such as a climate change vulnerability and risk assessment tool.
Understanding Risk	Risk is the potential for negative consequences where something of value is at stake. In assessing climate impacts, the term often refers to the potential for adverse consequences of a climate-related hazard. Risk can be assessed by multiplying the probability of a hazard by the magnitude of the negative consequence or loss.	A program or geospatial tool to consolidate data and information, such as a climate change vulnerability and risk assessment tool.
Investigate Options	List of strategies that could reduce risk.	Working from existing policies, programs, and projects, identify gaps, particularly for areas at high risk of the impacts of climate change.
Prioritize and Plan	Develop an adaptive resiliency action plan with a schedule and funding sources that involve input from various interested parties and the public.	Through interdepartmental committees, community groups, interested parties, and public input. Coordinating efforts with Hazard Mitigation Plans. Funding opportunities include grants, loans, and third-party partnerships.
Take Action	Proceed with a town-wide resiliency plan with progress reports and opportunities to reassess and make any adjustments.	Update and report on the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Develop a town-wide resiliency plan with Select Board support and review. Work with the municipal departments, historically and currently marginalized groups, and other community interest groups.

State Response to Climate Change

Global Warming Solutions Act

Massachusetts approved the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) on August 7, 2008, as a comprehensive response to the impacts of global climate change. The GWSA requires the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) to set the state's economy-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals in consultation with other state agencies and the public. The GWSA approved (in consultation with the state executive office of administration and finance) the use of market-based compliance mechanisms to address climate change concerns and to set and reach reduction goals. In addition, it allowed the state to work with other states to develop a plan to expand market-based compliance mechanisms, such as the regional greenhouse gas initiative, to other sources and sectors necessary or desirable to achieve greenhouse gas emissions. This includes those states that have participated in the regional greenhouse gas initiative in the past and other interested states and Canadian provinces.

Massachusetts Clean Energy And Climate Plan For 2025 And 2030

The Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2025 and 2030 (2023/2030 CECP) details the Commonwealth's actions over the next decade to meet the 2025 and 2030 emission limits. The 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap informs the development of the 2023/2030 CECP, so the strategies, policies, and actions outlined in the 2025/2030 CECP will put the Commonwealth on a pathway to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

2025 And 2030 Emissions Limits and Sub-Limits

Under the Global Warming Solutions Act, as amended in 2021 by An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, the Secretary of EEA has adopted the interim 2025 statewide greenhouse gas emissions limit of 33 percent below 1990 level and the interim 2030 statewide greenhouse gas emissions limit of 50 percent below 1990 level.

Climate and 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 Master Plan, 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.
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.
 - 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.

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

Transportation refers to the movement of people and goods and modes of travel.

When reviewing transportation, we must consider necessary infrastructure, maintenance, land use, transportation connection, and trip traffic. To keep this system moving, safety and infrastructure are top concerns. Roads in town are either owned by the town, are privately maintained, or are state-owned. State-owned roads include major cross-town routes, including 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. The Town is also a part of the Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT). While no routes have stops in East Bridgewater, residents can use the Dial-A-Bat Program.

Several major routes in town connect East Bridgewater to nearby towns and grant quick access to other highways, which greatly benefits those who work out of town and local businesses. Being quickly connected to the rest of the region appeals to businesses that need to distribute goods.

Major routes:

Route 18 (North Bedford Street, Bedford Street) from south of Whitman to north of Bridgewater

Route 106 (West Street, Whitman Street, Plymouth Street) from east of West Bridgewater to west of Halifax

Route 14 (Oak Street, Washington Street) from south of Whitman to west of Hanson

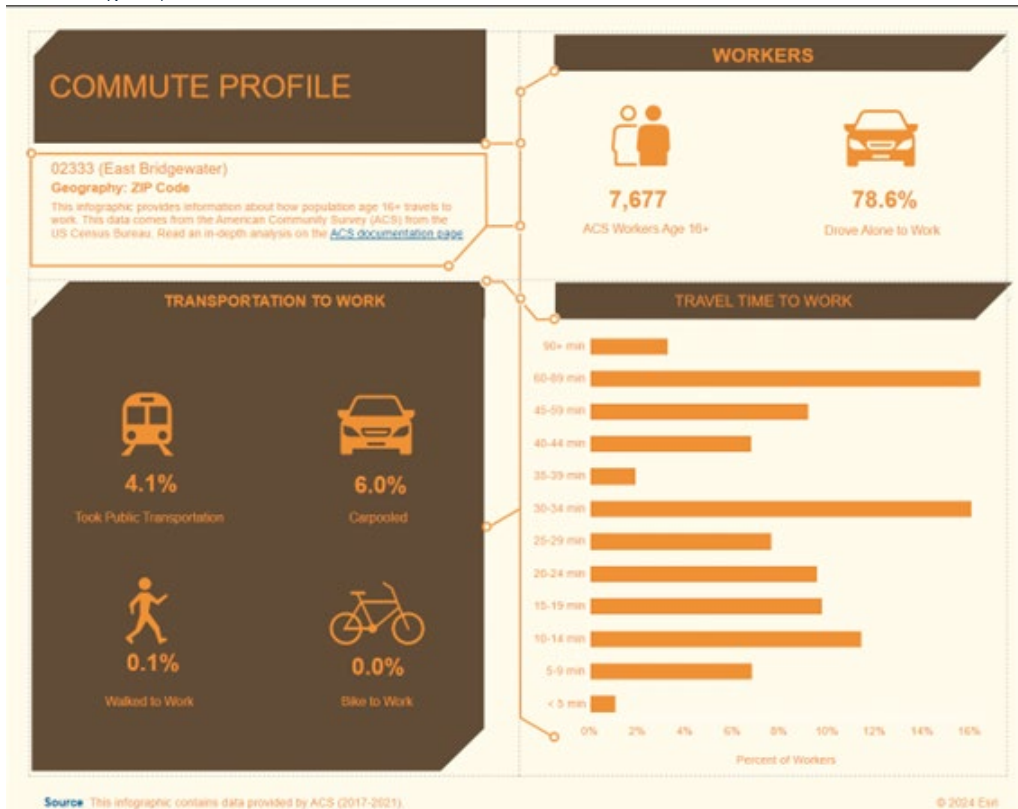
Pleasant Street, North Central Street, Central Street, Cedar Street, and Franklin Street from east of West Bridgewater to west of Hanson

Washington Street, from junction Route 106 to Whitman town line on North.

East Bridgewater relies heavily on motor vehicles for transportation. There are no consistent public modes of transportation in town, leaving those who work no choice but to drive to work. Even if they use the MBTA line out of Hanson in a surrounding town, many still take their car to the train. Additionally, East Bridgewater has no grocery stores, leading to an increased need for transportation out of town.

Route 18 is the most congested space in town, often creating traffic delays in the center where it intersects with 106. Route 18 is a major route for the town as it connects to neighboring towns and houses most of its commercial zoning, making it a frequent spot for those using local businesses.

Figure 19: Commuting Profile



Vehicular Safety

Routes 18 and 106 are the most prone areas in town to crashes. The intersection at the East Bridgewater Center is a major bottleneck along the Route 18 corridor, and along with congestion and delay, the intersection has a higher-than-average crash rate. These problems are due to heavy peak hour volumes entering the intersection and the unusual alignment of the intersection with six approaches. This intersection was a part of the Route 18 Corridor Study conducted by the Old Colony Planning Council, written in 2023. The recommendations included the following: an engineering study focusing specifically on upgrading the signal timing

and phasing, lane use, channeling traffic through the intersection, and improving pedestrian and bicycle accommodation. The engineering study should include a double-lane roundabout analysis and geometric improvements that eliminate turning conflict. It should also consider shortening or minimizing the length of vehicles that must travel through the intersection and a potential bypass collector around the town center.

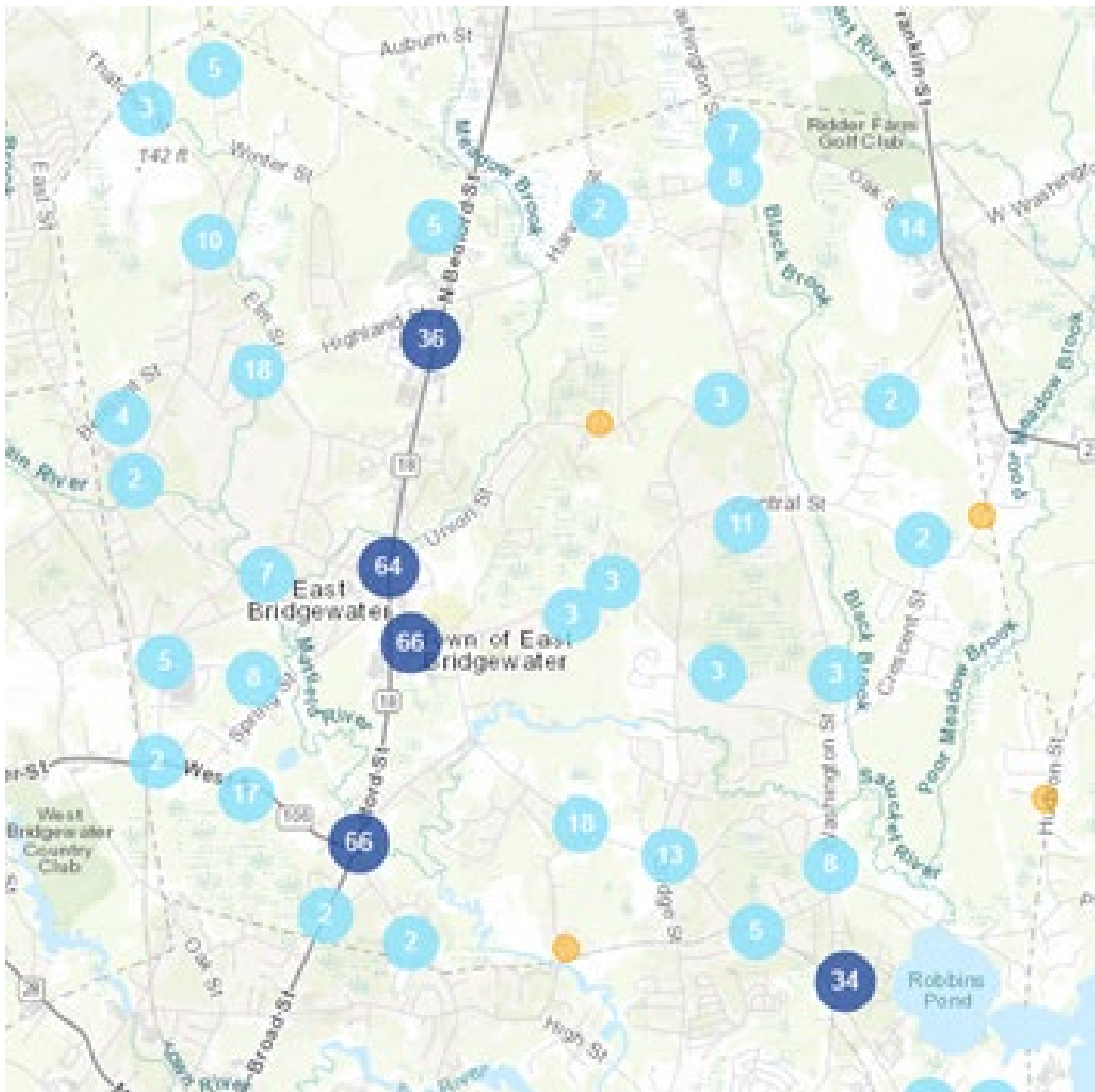
Traffic Volumes and Traffic Characteristics

The major routes that run through town are a part of the state's ongoing traffic flow monitoring. There has been a large increase in traffic volume throughout the town. Overall, traffic peaks in the evening are worse than those during the morning commute.

Route 18 Bedford Street at Route 106 West Street and East Street, this intersection operates at an acceptable level-of-service under existing peak hour conditions, level-of-service “B” in the AM and “D” in the PM. Although the level-of-service is still at level-of-service “B” under the 2014 AM peak, the PM peak under 2014 conditions drops to level-of-service “E.” Additionally, this intersection's crash rate is at 1.51 crashes per million entering vehicles, which is well

above the 0.80 rate for the Massachusetts average and the 0.75 for the MassDOT District 5 average. The discussion of issues for this intersection at the stakeholder's meeting focused on the cause of the high number of cross-movement crashes at this location. The Route 18 southbound approach has three lanes: a shared left-through lane, a through lane, and an exclusive right-turn lane to Route 106 westbound. Route 18's northbound approach has shared left-through and right-through lanes.

Figure 20: East Bridgewater Crash Data



Based on the stakeholder's discussion during the Route 18 Corridor Study, it appears that there are many crashes due to Route 18 southbound vehicles in the lane closest to the centerline yielding to northbound left-turning vehicles, which in turn hit through vehicles using the other Route 18 southbound lane that do not yield. The vehicles turning left often cannot see the southbound vehicles in the far lane because the sight line is blocked by vehicles in the lane closest to the centerline. Further analysis of the crash data provided by the East Bridgewater Police Department confirmed that the percentage of crashes at this intersection were due to vehicle cross-movement crashes involving left-turning vehicles from the northbound approach. Forty percent of the crashes at this intersection involved vehicles turning left onto Route 106 West Street from Route 18 Bedford Street northbound, according to the police department data.

<https://oldcolonyplanning.org/document/corridor-study-route-18/>

Resident conversations also noted the increased traffic flow at the intersection of 14 and 27 on the East Bridgewater Hanson town line. Due to the increased traffic flow over the last decade, the current structure of this intersection no longer meets the demand. Cars are often backed up along both routes during peak travel times. This intersection is also angled and has visibility concerns especially while cars are entering the intersection to turn. These are state routes and will require a collaborative effort but this intersection poses a risk to East Bridgewater

and Hanson residents as well as neighboring towns with commuters.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Projects

Old Colony Planning Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region, one of the responsibilities of MPOs is to implement the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The MPO will gather the community's feedback, create a Transportation Improvement Plan that covers a period of at least 4 years, and recommend the distribution of funds. This plan must be developed in cooperation with the State and public transportation providers. The TIP should include capital and non-capital surface transportation projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, other transportation enhancements, Federal Highway Projects, and safety projects included in the State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The TIP recently completed a project in 2020:

Route 18 Reconstruction from Central Street to Whitman Street (Route 106) – (2020)

Work on this project included resurfacing Route 18 and constructing new sidewalks and bicycle lanes along the corridor. Drainage upgrades and minor intersection improvements at Route 106 were also included.

Upcoming projects include the following:

Intersection Improvements at Route 18 and Highland Street – (Planned)

The project proposes improving the existing signalized intersection by constructing a roundabout, upgrading signal equipment, and tightening curb radii/modifying intersection geometry to reduce speeds and promote safety. The feasibility of constructing multi-use paths along each leg of the intersection will be explored to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, subject to right-of-way, environmental, utility, grading, and constructability constraints.

Bridge Replacement of Pond Street Bridge over Satackut River– (Planned).

This project will include a full replacement of the Pond Street culvert bridge over the Satucket River in East Bridgewater.

Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian safety is a big concern for residents in East Bridgewater. There are very limited sidewalks, which make it hard to walk around town. When asked about what residents wanted to see in town, sidewalks were a frequent ask. The sidewalks within the town are not all in safe condition.

Pedestrian safety is also a major concern for students in East Bridgewater. Many middle and high school students spend time in town after class. A major safety concern is students going to the library after school, which includes crossing Route 18 at the intersection in the center of town. There is also a major safety concern with Elderly patrons having

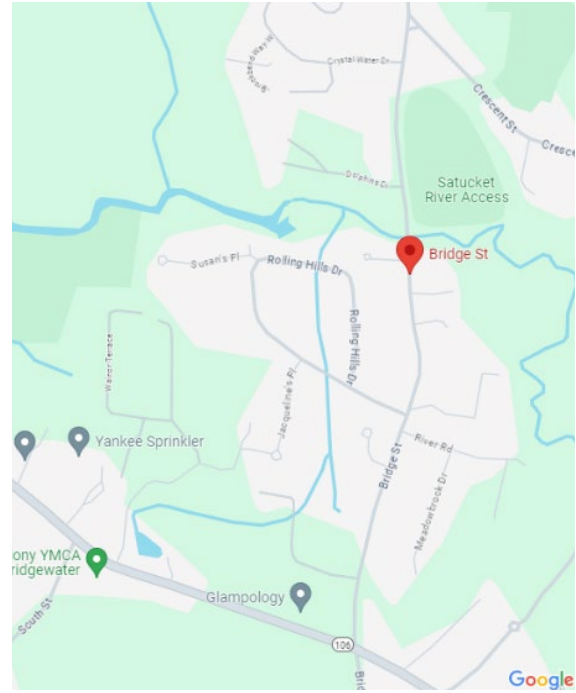


Figure 21: Bridge Replacement of Pond Street Bridge over Satackut River

difficulty walking between the library and the senior housing on the opposite side of Route 18.

Fortunately, East Bridgewater is already a part of the state's Complete Streets program and has an active plan for increasing pedestrian safety. Complete Streets projects include sidewalks, bike routes, and safe routes to school. They consider the width and signage of the road as well. Based on the residential interest in sidewalks and pedestrian safety, it would benefit the town to revisit its complete street goals through public engagement. The town has two upcoming projects through this program:

East Bridgewater- Hanson- reconstruction of Route 27 (Franklin Street).

The reconstruction of Franklin Street begins at the Whitman Town Line and continues towards the Hanson Town Line for about

one-half mile. The project also includes a new traffic signal at the Route 14 intersection (Oak Street/ West Washington Street).

East Bridgewater- intersection improvements, 3 locations Route 106 @ Route 18; Union St. @ Central St.; & Union St. @ Route 18.

This project will reconstruct three intersections: Bedford Street (Route 18)/Whitman Street (Route 106), Bedford Street (Route 18)/Union Street, and Central Street/Union Street. The project involves pavement, drainage system improvements, concrete sidewalks, traffic signal installation, pavement markings, traffic signs, landscaping, and other necessary work.

The next Complete Streets project, which is in the preliminary design phase, will improve the intersections at Bedford Street (Route 18), West Street (Route 106), and East Street.

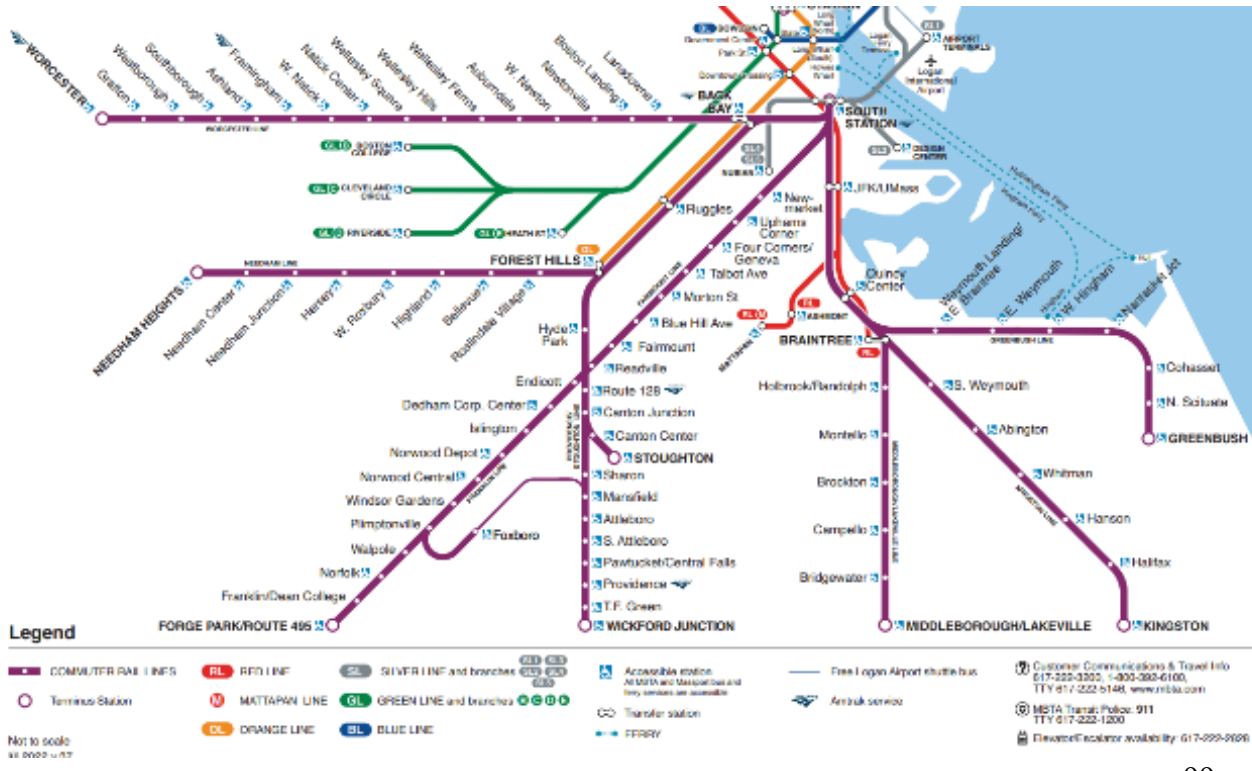
For recent updates, please see the state program’s website at <https://hwy.massdot.state.ma.us/projectinfo/projectinfo.asp>

Public Transportation

Currently, East Bridgewater does not have regularly scheduled public transit. Brockton Area Transportation Authority (BAT) offers some services to East Bridgewater residents, including the Dial-A-BAT program for anyone with an ADA pass or seniors.

Defined by BAT as “ADA—Anyone, regardless of age, who, because of physical or developmental disability, cannot ride a fixed-route BAT bus will be eligible upon acquiring an ADA pass.

Figure 22: Commuter Rail Map



Seniors – Anyone 65 or older will be eligible with proof of age and residency presented to the Customer Service office at 10 Commercial Street (BAT Centre).”

These services, however, are limited.

Many who need similar services defer to their local COA. East Bridgewater’s COA does assist with scheduling rides for seniors in town as needed.

East Bridgewater is also an MBTA-adjacent community. The MBTA Commuter Rail for Kingston stops in Hanson and Whitman, and the Middleboro line also stops in nearby Bridgewater. While residents in town may travel to either of these stops, they are vehicle-dependent. These stops also have limited and costly parking passes for those using the system regularly.

With significant pedestrian concerns, East Bridgewater should work with the Old Colony MPO about possible expansions through the town. If there were a bus line that could bring students who use the BAT Bridgewater State University Services from campus back to the city through East Bridgewater, this might be an advantage for them. East Bridgewater has discussed the need for public transportation to connect residents to medical facilities in town and for those to access grocery stores in neighboring towns as the Town remains a food desert.

Future Potential Traffic and Infrastructure Concerns

East Bridgewater has seen a significant population increase over the past few decades, which has had a visible impact on

traffic and circulation in the town. The town center is tight, with a dangerous intersection that has seen increased accidents with more residents in town and the surrounding area.

With many businesses in this area, there are concerns about the increased number of heavy-duty vehicles coming through narrow side streets in town to get to routes. There is also a need to deliver supplies to local businesses along the commercial corridor in this area, which can add to existing congestion. There is also limited parking within the commercial district in town, especially in areas where street parking is inadequate. Road safety and additional public parking should be considered as the town looks to increase business potential in this area. With no public transportation, economic prosperity depends on vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and the town should consider more public parking and pedestrian connectivity.

The town has recently completed a sewer expansion project in the northern part of town that aligns with its industrial district. This will allow for more significant housing developments and industrial uses along Route 18. This part of town is also being considered for MBTA Zoning changes that allow for multifamily housing within the range of public transportation to be built (See Housing Chapter). While housing is a need for East Bridgewater and the South Shore, transit-oriented development in towns without direct access may increase traffic flow.

Flooding from climate change has also been considered a risk for East Bridgewater as

identified in the Municipality Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (MVP) and OCPC's Climate Change Vulnerability Transportation Assessment.

The East Bridgewater DPW identified three main flooding areas on three different roads in East Bridgewater. These roads, listed below, have been closed for multiple days due to flooding.

- West Union Street at the bridge near Oregon Street
- Spring Street near Park Avenue
- Route 18 south of Whitman and north of Route 106 West Street

In addition, bridges and culverts in East Bridgewater along the Salisbury Plain River were inspected and maintained by the town with town funds. These culverts and bridges do not meet the minimum criteria to be included in the state inspections. The Town of East Bridgewater has also received a small bridge grant for Elm Street for \$497,000, due to rising costs, there may be a need for more funding sources to complete this project. Other areas that are problematic for flooding include Forge Pond off Route 18, which has settlement problems with sediment filling upstream.

<https://oldcolonyplanning.org/document/climate-change-vulnerability-transportation-assessment-study/>

-

Transportation Goals and Objectives

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.

OCPC Resources

<https://oldcolonyplanning.org/document/road-safety-audit-east-bridgewater-n-central-street-north-central-street-at-union-street-west-union-street/>

<https://oldcolonyplanning.org/document/road-safety-audit-east-bridgewater-n-bedford-street-route-18-from-whitman-street-to-central-square/>

<https://oldcolonyplanning.org/document/road-safety-audit-east-bridgewater-n-belmont-street-at-summer-street/>

<https://oldcolonyplanning.org/document/road-safety-audit-east-bridgewater-n-plymouth-street-route-106-at-washington-street/>

<https://oldcolonyplanning.org/document/road-safety-audit-east-bridgewater-n-lane-departure-road-safety-audit-for-thatcher-street/>

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 TOWN SERVICES

The Town of East Bridgewater has managed over the years to build facilities and infrastructure and provide staff to support the public service needs of a semi-rural community. East Bridgewater's public facilities and services keep residents safe, active, educated, and informed. Departments providing services like emergency services, infrastructural maintenance, education, and recreation continue to serve East Bridgewater's current residents and newcomers looking to establish roots in the community.

The Public Facilities chapter provides an overview of municipal entities involved in public services administration, assesses the condition of public assets, and provides actionable recommendations supporting improving public services in the Town. This chapter relies on existing reports and pertinent community and stakeholder feedback.

The master planning process highlights immediate needs, and plans for sustainable growth, and informs budgeting. Most municipal funding goes to direct services, such as schools, libraries, parks and playgrounds, public safety, and public works; however, special projects such as parking expansion, studies, revitalization, commercial and industrial growth, and beyond also require funding to move forward. Other examples of efforts to uphold

and preserve high-functioning services and facilities, and create new revenue streams to fund them, including the 2021 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan, and the 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

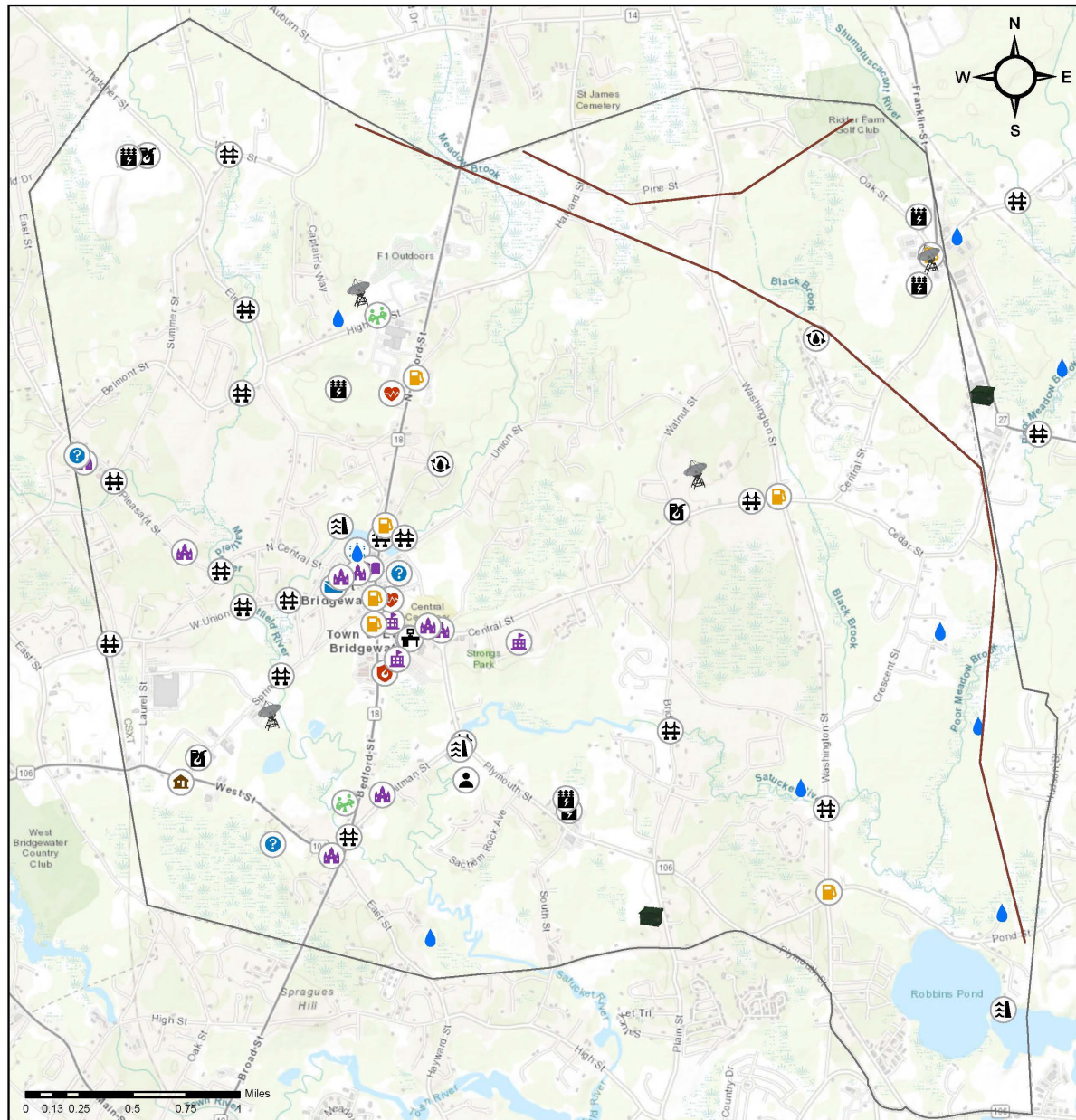
The following municipal entities impact the provision of public services or maintenance of public infrastructure and facilities in East Bridgewater:

- Town Administration
- Department of Public Works
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Board of Health
- Council on Aging/Senior Center
- East Bridgewater Public Schools
- East Bridgewater Public Library

The Town's vision is to respond to growth management challenges by addressing the current facility and staffing needs. Identifying new revenue sources and building consensus around new staffing and organizational challenges will take continued leadership by the elected and volunteer citizens who work on the town's behalf.

Map 11: East Bridgewater Critical Facilities

East Bridgewater Critical Facilities



- Antenna
- Bridge
- Childcare
- Dam
- Elder Services
- Electrical Infrastructure
- Fire Station
- Fuel Station
- Fuel Storage
- Health & Medical Facility
- Human Services
- Library
- Nursing Facility
- Place of Worship
- Police
- Postal Services
- Power Generation
- Public Works
- Rest Home
- School
- Town Offices
- Waste Disposal
- Wastewater Facilities
- Water Infrastructure



Old Colony Planning Council
 70 School Street, Brockton,
 MA 02301
oldcolonyplanning.org
 Created July 2023
 GIS Data Sources: ESRI, MassGIS,
 Old Colony Planning Council

Inventory

Municipal facilities are housed in several locations throughout East Bridgewater. The Town Hall at 175 Central Street houses various departments, including the Assessor's Office, Board of Health, Building Department, Town Clerk, Town Administrator, Veteran's Services, and more.

The Police Department, which houses Animal Control, is in the basement of Town Hall at 153 Central Street.

Departments conducting business at independent facilities include Public Works (49 Dean Place), Council on Aging/Senior Center (355 Plymouth Street), Fire Department (268 Bedford Street), East Bridgewater Public Library (32 Union Street), and School Department (143 Plymouth Street).

Municipal Facilities

The Town of East Bridgewater owns and operates public facilities, equipment, and infrastructure that are classified as either capital assets or capital projects. Capital assets are new or rehabilitated physical assets that are non-recurring and have a useful life of at least five years. Capital projects are used to acquire capital assets and exceed \$25,000 – the qualification to be included in the Capital Improvement Plan. The Town of East Bridgewater does not currently have a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Examples of capital projects are the construction of or major improvements to public buildings and roads. Many of East Bridgewater's buildings are historically and culturally significant,

requiring specialized care and maintenance that qualifies as a capital project. When renovated for modern-day use and code compliance, older historic buildings often pose structural and financial challenges. Several buildings 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. Custodial or maintenance staff report issues/needs to a department head overseeing capital improvements for the specific building. The East Bridgewater School District has its Facilities Department reporting to the Superintendent and the School Committee.

Public Buildings

Town Hall

The majority of government services are conducted here, offering a "one-stop-shop" for activities pertaining to government operations. Proximity to local businesses and other municipal operations, such as the Fire Department and East Bridgewater Public Library, maximize the efficiency of this location.

East Bridgewater Public Library

The East Bridgewater Public Library (BPL) is a historically and culturally significant institution in Town. East Bridgewater's Public Library is located at 32 Union Street.

There are nine staff members, including a Director appointed by the Board of Library Trustees. It was built in 1896 thanks to the generosity of Cyrus Washburn, who donated \$10,000 to finance its construction. The Children's Room was added in 1932 via the Federal Works Project, and the mezzanine was added in 1963. The building was expanded in 1978, and a new circulation desk was added in 2009. The library features an architectural design that complements the historic appearance of the area. Today, the building accommodates 36,000 annual visitors and has 42,710 total holdings. At the time of this report, the Library Director identified the need for one more full-time employee for adult services and one more part-time for teen services/after-school. Capital improvements needed to the building include brick repointing and window replacements.

East Bridgewater Public Safety

East Bridgewater has a long history of supporting public safety, usually earmarking 12 percent (\$6,806,039) of the general fund for public safety (police, fire, emergency services)

Police Station

The Police Station has a 9,350 sq ft department equipped with the space to accommodate its full-time police force of five divisions and administrative staff, plus their apparatus. The station was built in 1991 as part of an expansion into Town Hall and is located at 135 Central Street. The structure, consisting of approximately 9,350 sq ft, has separate men's and women's locker rooms,

five (5) holding cells, two (2) booking rooms, a sallyport (a secure, controlled entryway to an enclosure), an IT server room, vault, armory, office space, conference room, and dispatch room. The police department is equipped with an enhanced security system consisting of cameras and electronic door access. The stand-alone parking garage could fit approximately 5-6 vehicles. Currently, the garage is not used for vehicles, just storage. It is an inadequate facility for today's police department, which now employs 24 sworn, full-time officers plus part-time and general support staff such as dispatch and administrative.

The East Bridgewater Police Department (EBPD) received \$3,243,160.77 in FY 2024 to support a full-service department - one Chief, one Deputy Chief, an Administrative Assistant, one Detective Sergeant, two Detectives, six Patrol Sergeants, and 11 Patrol Officers. Included within the police force there is one K-9 officer with one Patrol K-9, one School Resource Officer (SRO) with one Comfort K-9, one Prosecutor, 16 Reserve Officers, and six full-time Civilian Dispatchers and two part-time Civilian Dispatchers. There are five divisions within the Bridgewater Police Department: Administrative, Patrol, Investigations, Motorcycle Unit, and Bike Unit.

In addition to internal operations, the East Bridgewater Police Department is a member of:

- the Whitman, West Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, Bridgewater, and Bridgewater State University (W.E.B.) Task Force

- FBI Metro Boston Task Force
- Mass State Police Commonwealth Interstate Narcotics Reduction Enforcement Team (CINRET)
- Plymouth County Human Trafficking Task Force
- MSP Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC)
- FBI Cybercrime Unit.
- Southeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (SEMLEC) SWAT Team
- SEMLEC Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team
- W.E.B. Major Crimes and Drug Task Force
- Brockton Area Opioid Abuse Collaborative
- Bridging LIVES Coalition (with local officials and the school district)
- Plymouth County Outreach

The Police are responsible for providing a safe environment for the residents by enforcing the law and ensuring a sense of security to enhance the quality of life. Department activities managed by the Police are patrol, detective, records, identification, prosecution, animal control, auxiliary police, parking enforcement, and ancillary services related to those tasks. EBPD Officers meet with the Town Administrator and other departments, particularly the school district, Public Works, Information Technology, and the Legal department. The Police and Animal Control work together on nuisance complaints, violations of the animal control ordinance, and any matters of wildlife and pet ownership. Aligning with the community

policing model, the East Bridgewater Police Department offers a Comfort K-9 assigned to the SRO and for community events. The police department also hosts a Student Police Academy for high school students, college internships, and a ride-along program, and EBPD officers engage the community through Coffee with a Cop, as well as raising funds to help the community members most in need throughout the year, especially during the holiday season.

East Bridgewater Police obtain supplemental funding through federal and state grants to support operations. Recently awarded grants include a Body Worn Camera Grant, 911 Grant, Traffic Enforcement Grant, AED Grant, MED Project Grant, JAG Byrne Grant, Comfort Dog Grant, and K-9 Grant.

The Town has roughly 1.6 full-time officers per 1000 inhabitants, which is below the nationwide recommended rate of 2.4 full-time sworn officers per 1000 inhabitants. The Department hopes to continue hiring to meet the needs of the Town's growing population. At the time of this report, the Police Chief noted that the office needs six (6) additional officers to bring them to the industry standard for a town of East Bridgewater's size. The majority of police calls are vehicle-related calls (traffic stops, accidents, etc.), with medical emergencies (mental health, medical emergencies) and suspicious activity being the second and third most prevalent issues. The greatest challenges for the Police Department are budget constraints and recruitment.

The Town has created a Public Building Safety Committee to conduct a feasibility study for a new public safety building, which would house the Fire Department and Police Department in a single building. The current police station is crowded and antiquated. At the time of this report, finances have not been secured. The Town has entered into an Inter-Municipal Agreement for a regional dispatch system tie-in with Holbrook, starting in January of 2025. Currently, all dispatch calls are made directly to the police department.

Fire Department

East Bridgewater has one fire station that hosts four duty groups of 24 employees. The East Bridgewater Fire Department (EBFD) protects the community through fire prevention, suppression, and education, and by training for natural and man-made disasters. The Department interacts with the Town Administrator, Select Board, Police Department, Department of Public Works, Planning & Building Departments, and Accounting. The East Bridgewater Fire Department received \$3,093,895.26 in FY 2024 to serve the residents of East Bridgewater. EBFD is responsible for pre-planning and coordinating emergency disaster services per the Town's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), which expired in 2020; the Chief is working on the updated plan.

There are currently 27 full-time firefighters, including the Chief, one Deputy Chief, one Captain, four Lieutenants, 20 firefighters, two part-time firefighters, and one Office

Administrator. Five are EMTs, and 24 are Paramedics. Four duty groups staff the headquarters (6 firefighters per group, one of which is the shift commander). There is also a day Deputy Chief and a day Administrative Officer.

The Fire Department is a full-service operation consisting of a 100x50 apparatus bay, a first, second, and 50x30 attic. The first floor comprises administrative, deputy, and chief offices and one unisex bathroom. The Second floor houses a unisex bathroom, locker room, bunkroom, eat-in kitchen, and day room. The unfinished attic is used for storage and houses the electrical and IT systems.

The department's fleet is in good condition, consisting of two engines, five ambulances, one front-line truck, one tower truck, two Brush Fire vehicles, two boats (one aluminum, one inflatable), and three SUVs. East Bridgewater has roughly 1.0 full-time fire personnel per 532.67 residents. In 2023, EBFD responded to approximately 2,555 calls for service, the majority of which were regarding medical emergencies and fires. The call rate has decreased by 3 percent since 2022, but it has seen a 5 percent increase over the last five years.

In addition to responding to health and fire emergencies, the Fire Department participates in community events and offers outreach that includes the SAFE and Senior SAFE programs, a smoke detector program, and CPR training for high school nursing students. The SAFE program is a grant program to educate the East Bridgewater School District about fire prevention and

safety via demonstrations and curricula in classrooms and at community events. The Senior SAFE program is an arm of the SAFE program that educates those over the age of 65 and partners with service providers including the Council on Aging, senior centers, visiting nurse associations, and related agencies.

The East Bridgewater Fire Department is a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program member of the local and national Citizen Corps effort to incorporate and utilize volunteers in the community. The CERT teams are designed to assist first responders during a long-term incident. They can also provide direct support to communities and/or private agencies within the scope of emergency management support functions. The CERT teams operate under the sole direction of the East Bridgewater Director of Emergency Management, CERT Coordinator, or their designee.

The Department hopes to continue hiring to meet the needs of the Town's growing population. At the time of this report, the Fire Chief noted that the department needed two additional paramedics to meet the emergency response needs for a town of East Bridgewater's size. Similarly to the Police Department, the Fire House is crowded and antiquated. The heating system is aging and there is an overall lack of space in the building. The Fire House desperately needs an area for gear storage that is separate from working areas to let gear air out following fires.

Department of Public Works Facilities

DPW facilities manage all DPW functions, including municipal water supply facilities such as wells, pumping stations, transmission and distribution mains, treatment facilities, and storage reservoirs. The wastewater treatment plant is located at the East Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School (143 Rear Plymouth Street).

East Bridgewater's Department of Public Works (DPW) comprises six (6) divisions (Highway and Grounds, Water, Facility Maintenance, Fleet Maintenance, Solid Waste and Recycling, and Snow and Ice Operations). All but one, solid waste and recycling, are staffed. East Bridgewater's Public Works received 3.4 percent of the Town's yearly budget (\$1,889,315 in FY 2024).

The department has been underfunded and understaffed for some time, barely managing to keep up with demand.

Highway and Grounds Division

The Highway and Land Management division combines the highway and tree departments to form one division. The Highway Division, staffed by nine (9) full-time employees, maintains nearly 85 miles of roads in town. The Highway Division conducts emergency and routine maintenance of roads, sidewalks, and storm drains, installs street signs, and paints roadway stripes. The DPW maintains all municipal and school grounds including over 100 acres of athletic fields, park spaces, and

parking lots. The DPW Director is appointed as Tree Warden for the Town in addition to being a Massachusetts Certified Arborist, therefore the Town meets the requirements that a community with more than 10,000 residents have a qualified Tree Warden per MGL Ch 87. The care of the Town's public shade trees is a budgeted function of the DPW.

There are 2,086 catch basins throughout East Bridgewater's MS4 Area (2000 + 2010 Census) that have been previously mapped in Geographic Information System (GIS) format using historic aerial flyover data, handheld GPS units, and DPW employee knowledge.

Water Division

The Water Division of the East Bridgewater Department of Public Works is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the town's water supply and distribution system. The division maintains the town's five municipal wells, two green sand filtration plants, a 1.5-million-gallon water storage tank, approximately 112 miles of water mains, more than 4,000 water service connections, and over 1000 fire hydrants. Division personnel also read, install, and maintain the water metering of the system, inspect and survey for backflow protection, and perform bi-annual hydrant flushing and other associated programs. In addition, the EBDPW has replaced over 35,000 feet of the oldest cast iron water main to improve the overall system's water quality and eliminate fire protection issues. Additional water main replacement is currently in the planning stages. All residential and business properties

are on private septic systems except six (6) commercial properties located on Route 18 which are connected to the DPW's municipal treatment plant. At the time of this report, approximately 215 residences are served by private wells.

Facility Maintenance

In 2014 the facilities maintenance division was established under the umbrella of the DPW. The Town's Facilities Department maintains 28 Town-owned buildings. These facilities include East Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School, Gordon W. Mitchell Middle School, Central Elementary School, Town Hall, Police Department, Farren Cottage, Public Library, Fire Station, The Center at Sachem Rock, Public Works Department, Strong's Field Complex, all three Water Treatment Plants, all five Well Buildings, Belmont Street Sports Complex, Church Street Sports Complex, and the Town Common. The facilities division assists all departments with capital building projects and has managed renovations in the Fire Dept., Town Hall, and the Police Dept. The division is currently staffed with a director and 1 full-time person who performs a variety of tasks.

Fleet Maintenance

The Fleet Maintenance division is responsible for the maintenance and repair of all DPW vehicles and equipment as well as general maintenance and service of the EB Fire and Police dept. vehicles. The division is staffed by 2 full-time mechanics.

Snow and Ice Operations

In East Bridgewater, de-icing operations begin when road conditions are deemed hazardous by the Director of Public Works or his designee. During off business hours, the police department may advise the department of hazardous conditions. Typical de-icing operations require 5 trucks. Coverage of the entire town takes approximately three hours. The priority is to treat main roads first, followed by secondary and through roads. Sub-divisions and dead ends are treated last. It may be up to three hours between treatments for any specific road. The approximately 85 miles of roadway and municipal buildings the town is responsible for maintaining are divided into 14 routes. The Town of East Bridgewater has 20 snow removal units ranging from four-wheel drive pick-up trucks to large dump trucks and several pieces of heavy equipment that may be assigned to these routes. An additional 40 pieces of contractor equipment are required to supplement the town's removal equipment.

At the time of this report, the DPW Director indicated that the Town is facing dual challenges of an aging infrastructure of buildings, bridges, water pipes, drain lines, stormwater management, and wastewater treatment that is going to reach its end of serviceable life within the next 10 to 25 years while the demand for these services is increasing exponentially with no dedicated funding sources. The town needs to create a maintenance plan to best budget for large expenses anticipated within the next 30 years.

Municipal Infrastructure

East Bridgewater's municipal infrastructure generally pertains to public water and sewer facilities, which are managed and maintained by the DPW. The Town's water and septic system serves the majority of commercial corridors and residential areas. However, the public outreach process indicated that the availability of a town sewer system must be extended to support new business and residential development in East Bridgewater, incentivizing businesses to locate there. The Town conducts stormwater management and treatment under local regulations and the stormwater ordinance to comply with state and federal discharge standards. East Bridgewater continues to invest in the installation, repair, and development of public roadways, sidewalks, bridges, and similar infrastructure with the assistance of state and federal funds. Public Works maintains the 85-mile roadway network, including servicing roads, and sidewalks, and mitigating drainage issues. Examples of common problems are drainage installations, flooding (road water), potholes, and the removal of debris/oil in the roadway. Capital funds are also allocated for streetlight and pedestrian/traffic safety improvements in busy areas

Human Services

Human services are defined as any municipal service related to public health, including

social services assisting special needs populations. Local governments often share human service delivery functions and resources with state and federal entities. The majority of human service programs in East Bridgewater are those focusing on the elderly, veterans, and general health. During FY 2024, Human Services received \$660,795, or 1.2 percent of the Town's general fund budget.

Health Department

East Bridgewater's Board of Health oversees all topics related to public health and safety, including permitting all septic, trash, and medical waste haulers, restaurant and retail sales establishments milk & cream permits, food trucks, residential kitchens, tobacco, Body Art Establishments and Practitioners, Installers and Title V Inspectors, and both irrigation and potable water supplies. East Bridgewater's Board of Health is comprised of one full-time Public Health Agent, one full-time Administrative Assistant, and a six-hour per-week Public Health Nurse. Their responsibilities include assisting other departments with health matters as necessary, such as issuing permits/applications, managing and processing health forms and file requests, tracking the COVID-19 pandemic, offering services to employees, and publishing information about septic systems, wastewater, the water supply and trash removal. The department works specifically with the Building Department to issue disposal works construction permits and licenses to food service and retail establishments. They also collaborate with

Public Works on the septic betterment program and with Animal Control and the Veterinary Clinic on their annual Rabies Clinic. The three-member Board of Health acts as a professional advisory and regulatory board to the Department and establishes its policies and programs.

Council on Aging

The mission of the East Bridgewater's Council on Aging (COA) is to "Serve older persons, disabled persons of all ages and their caregivers, and others in need of services and referrals. Programs that enhance dignity, support independence, and encourage general wellness are developed, coordinated, and promoted to meet the needs of these individuals." The COA strives to keep East Bridgewater's residents aging well in their community and is committed to providing services, and educational, recreational, and social opportunities to the rapidly increasing number of older and disabled residents of East Bridgewater.

According to information from the 2020 census and the UMass Donahue Institute, the population of adults aged 60 years and older residing in East Bridgewater increased to 3,853 - an increase of 100 from the previous year, representing over 27% of the town's overall population. This number is expected to grow steadily over the next several years as residents move into the town or reach their 60th birthday. In East Bridgewater, it is estimated that 33% of the town's population will be 60 or older by 2030.

The Council on Aging is located at the East Bridgewater Senior Center at 355 Plymouth

Street. The site of the Senior Center was purchased by the Town of East Bridgewater in 1996 and remodeled in 2011. The original building was constructed in 1927. The Center contains administrative offices for staff, a large function hall, two (2) small classrooms, and various flexible spaces for programmatic needs. The total appropriation for the COA in FY24 was \$277,227.00. This amount is supplemented by grants such as those from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and private donations. Plans are underway for an upgraded audio/visual system. East Bridgewater continues to support its senior population and Council on Aging staff as much as possible.

The Senior Center offers a plethora of programming for East Bridgewater's estimated 3,853 seniors, including educational programming, exercise programs, tax prep support, Meals on Wheels, and transportation. In 2023, the COA provided 9,321 Meals on Wheels to 81 people. The Senior Center also brings in a hairdresser, podiatrist, and dental hygienist to provide free or low-cost services. Through its programming, the COA promotes the emotional, physical, and economic well-being of older adults and encourages their participation in East Bridgewater community life. The department consists of a full-time Director, a full-time Activities Coordinator, a full-time Client Services Coordinator, a part-time Coordinator of Volunteers, and two per diem van drivers. Staff are supported by a dedicated group of volunteers. 121 unique individuals supported COA services and activities for a total of 3,446 volunteer hours completed in 2023. The Director is hired by

the Select Board to oversee operations, capital planning, budget management, community relations, and procedures. Dialogue is maintained with Public Works, the Health Department, Veterans Affairs, and other boards as needed.

The COA offers referrals for elder services and is a place for the community. They provide support with fuel assistance, food assistance, and transportation. The COA employs two (2) per diem drivers who operate the COA's vans. Dial-A-Bat, with whom the COA has an ongoing contract, performs the bulk of COA's transportation services. With the help of Dial-A-Bat the COA completed approximately 3,639 rides in 2023.

Challenges experienced by the Senior Center include staffing and space constraints. At the time of this report, the Director indicated that she would need one (1) additional full-time staff member and renovation of an unfinished basement to meet the needs of East Bridgewater's aging population. Additionally, further planning and funding to support seniors living at home, facilitating additional safe and public transportation, and enhancing connectivity between senior housing and the Town Center should be considered a priority.

Veterans' Services

The Department of Veterans' Services is responsible for supporting East Bridgewater's veteran community. The mission of this office is to provide eligible veterans and their families who are residents

of East Bridgewater with financial assistance and medical care per a formula that considers the number of dependents and income from all sources under the provisions of Chapter 115, Massachusetts General Law. The Veterans Service Officer is hired by the Select Board. The Veterans Service Officer advises and assists resident veterans and their dependents in accessing state and federal benefits. The Officer also provides outreach, counseling, medical, and support services and regularly works with the Town Administrator on all matters relating to veteran policies, facilities, budgets, procurement, personnel, and operations. The Officer may work with the Finance Director and the Town Treasurer to provide the financials and to assist veterans with real estate tax abatements.

EBTV Town Cable

EBCAM (East Bridgewater Community Access Media) is a town department responsible for public television enterprise serving the community. The facility is located at 143 Plymouth Street. EBCAM produces and broadcasts original programming over cable channel nine and eb-cam.org. Content includes news, sports, religious programming, music, cooking, performing arts, political programming, and more. EBCAM also supports Government Access Channel 6 and Education Channel 98 with Town Council and School Committee meetings. The majority of programming is shot, edited, and produced by volunteers. There are three (3) staff members, including an Executive Director, an Assistant Director,

and a Production Assistant. EBCAM is funded through a 10-year Cable Television contract between the Comcast Cable Company and the community of East Bridgewater. EBCAM also relies on donations from residents, non-profit organizations, and businesses to fund its operations.

Public School Facilities

The Central School Building Committee is charged with investigating the possible options for renovating, repairing, or replacing the Central Elementary School. In October 2023, the Town of East Bridgewater appropriated \$1,500,000 for a feasibility study for the Central Elementary School. In February 2024, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) authorized the Town to begin hiring an Owner's Project Manager for this project. The Town expects approval by the MSBA in June 2024 of the firm chosen by the Town. A designer/architect should be hired by early fall 2024. The feasibility study and schematic design are scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2026. At that time, the Town will need to decide how to move forward and will need to approve the necessary appropriation for construction.

East Bridgewater School District

The East Bridgewater School District is a K-12 school district consisting of three (3) schools: Central Elementary School, Gordon W. Mitchell Elementary School, and the East

Bridgewater Jr/Sr High School. The majority of young adults attend East Bridgewater Jr/Sr High School, but some may attend the Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical High School or Southeastern Technical Institute each located in South Easton.

There are also private schooling options in the surrounding communities for each grade level. The East Bridgewater School District Committee is an independent committee elected by registered voters. The Committee requests funding from East Bridgewater but has no independent legislative or regulatory authority in the municipality's operations. It does, however, meet with the Select Board, the Town Administrator, the Finance Committee, and the Accounting Office to discuss pertinent budgetary issues.

Central Elementary School

107 Central Street

The 77,100 square-foot Central Elementary School was opened in 1949 and last renovated in 2006. It presently houses grades PK-2. It has a 2023-2024 enrollment of 515, slightly down (6%) from the 548 of the 2022-2023 school year.

Gordon W. Mitchell Middle School

435 Central Street

The 164,399 square-foot Gordon W. Mitchell Middle School was opened in 1968 and was last renovated in 1997. It presently houses grades 3-6. It has a 2023-2024 enrollment of 616, slightly down (2%) from the 628 of the 2022-2023 school year.

East Bridgewater JR/SR High School

11 Plymouth Street

The 155,063-square-foot East Bridgewater JR/SR High School was opened in 1958. It currently houses students from grades 7 to 12. Its 2023-2024 enrollment was 877, slightly down (5%) from the 931 of the 2022-2023 school year.

Students at East Bridgewater

The student body at the schools served by the East Bridgewater School District is 86.1% White, 5% Black, 0.9% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander, 4.4% Hispanic/Latino, 0.5% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. In addition, 3.1% of students are of two or more races, and 0% have not specified their race or ethnicity. 47% of students are female, and 52% of students are male. 0.8% of students are English language learners.

Teachers at East Bridgewater

Within East Bridgewater, 99.5% of teachers are licensed, and 81.5% have three or more years of experience. The student-to-teacher ratio is above the state average, at 13:1. The district has 7 full-time counselors on staff.

Test Scores

In East Bridgewater, 56% of elementary students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 38% tested at or above that level for math. Also, 56% of middle school students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 38% tested at or above that level for math. And 62% of high school students tested at or above the proficient level for reading, and 45% tested at or above that level for math.

Finances

East Bridgewater spends \$14,981 per student each year and has an annual revenue of \$36,212,000. The district spends \$8,726.5 million on instruction, \$5,194.9 million on support services, and \$323.1 million on other expenses.

Enrollment Trends

The Massachusetts Department of Education reported district-wide enrollment of 2,008 students in the East Bridgewater School District during the 2023-2024 school year. Table 15 shows East Bridgewater enrollment breakdown for the NUMBER OF schools serving East Bridgewater.

Figure 23: East Bridgewater High School



East Bridgewater student performance meets expectations for language arts, mathematics, and science according to 2023 MCAS scores. The 2023 Accountability Classification for the district - related to progress in improvement targets, accountability percentiles, graduation rates, and assessment participation rates - was classified as “moderate progress toward targets.” The state’s District Analysis Review Tool (DART) compares East Bridgewater’s progress with similar districts, as shown in Table 16.

Table 14: East Bridgewater School Enrollment

Enrollment by Grade (2023-24)																
	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SP	Total
Central	109	129	126	151	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	515
East Bridgewater JR./SR. High School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	163	168	134	147	122	142	1	877
Gordon W. Mitchell School	0	0	0	0	151	151	149	165	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	616
District	109	129	126	151	151	151	149	165	163	168	134	147	122	142	1	2,008

Table 15: School Enrollment

Comparable Districts Overview

*Districts most similar to your district in terms of grades span, total enrollment, and special populations.
Orange-Shaded row: Your district

District Name	2023 Enrollment				2023 Next Gen MCAS								
	Total Enrollment #	Low Income %	SWD %	ELL %	% Meeting or Exceeding Expectations				Growth average SGP				
					Grades 3-8		Grade 10		Grades 5 and 8		Grades 3-8		Grade 10
					ELA	Math	ELA	Math	Science	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
Ashburnham-Westminster*	2,309	25.6	17.0	2.3	43%	41%	59%	49%	44%	47	48	37	46
Belchertown*	2,125	25.4	21.3	2.2	44%	36%	74%	58%	42%	50	48	61	55
Blackstone-Millville*	1,468	32.7	17.4	2.2	39%	39%	54%	36%	32%	44	43	44	36
Carver*	1,525	31.0	18.9	2.2	29%	31%	52%	41%	32%	43	50	51	45
East Bridgewater*	2,063	27.8	18.3	2.6	46%	40%	48%	36%	42%	48	45	37	32
East Longmeadow*	2,541	27.4	20.9	1.8	45%	43%	64%	49%	48%	51	48	36	43
Monomoy Regional School District*	1,769	37.3	18.4	3.8	51%	48%	62%	61%	53%	53	49	47	55
Sandwich*	2,142	24.5	19.9	1.7	55%	55%	67%	64%	61%	56	54	54	60
Seekonk*	2,062	19.4	19.3	2.8	53%	51%	75%	56%	65%	49	49	52	42
Triton*	2,231	30.6	19.9	1.4	47%	45%	57%	56%	55%	49	59	45	55
Uxbridge*	1,644	27.9	18.5	2.2	40%	43%	53%	54%	47%	48	48	48	62

Capital Management and Preventative Maintenance

East Bridgewater has finite resources, which often leads to difficult decision-making. Maintaining services is a balance, and the demand for certain services outweighs the demand for others. Public works, public safety, and education are usually prioritized because of their importance in ongoing operations and attracting new residents. Given past issues with the structural integrity of East Bridgewater's public buildings and the average age of the infrastructure, the Town should consider planning for preventative maintenance, implementing a strategic asset plan, or commissioning a comprehensive facilities capital improvement and management plan. Planning for preventative maintenance stops problems before they start, increases the life expectancy of assets, and prevents long periods of vacancy and decline when revenue could be generated.

Meeting Future Needs

East Bridgewater is rapidly changing, growing, and diversifying. Population growth changes household types, household sizes, and the demographic landscape. As with most Southeastern Massachusetts municipalities, the number of seniors (those aged 65+) is anticipated to increase, and the number of young people (aged 15-34) will decrease or level off. The Town is experiencing the greatest change among

seniors as Baby Boomers age. Aging populations come with additional demands on municipal services and facilities. The town must realize the impact of these demographic changes and prepare contingency plans accordingly.

Facilities and Public Services Goals and Actions

East Bridgewater should commit to using its recommendations as an overarching guide during decision-making. The town will support existing service delivery while investing in its expansion by improving facilities and infrastructure through partnerships with the private sector, local/regional institutions, and the state.

1. Balance services with careful short- and long-term budget considerations.
 - a. Create a 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 the construction of a new Public Safety Campus.
 - c. Analyze the feasibility, costs, and benefits of hiring and/or expanding Town personnel, including, but not limited to, Human Resources, the Town Planner, and additional staff in offices of need.
 - d. Examine the costs and impact associated with the Plymouth County Retirement System and re-examine the program's current

goal of 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 the department.
 - b. Conduct a municipal space needs study to determine space deficits and surplus facility 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

Action Plan

Chapter	Goals	Actions	Responsibility	Funding Sources
Land Use	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.	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.	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission	District Local Technical Assistance, General Fund, Staff Time
		Create a position for a Town Planner to help with long term consistency and implementation of bylaws.	Town Administrator, Select Board	General Fund, Staff Time
	Update supporting plans including but not limited to Master Plan 2035, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and Housing Production Plan.	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.	Planning Board (Town Planner when achieved)	General Fund, Staff Time
		Maintain a master list of objectives of the town across different themes and plans.	Planning Board (Town Planner when achieved)	General Fund, Staff Time
		Create steering committees for each board that remain active after the completion of a plan to help ensure implementation across varying boards and departments.	Various Boards and Department Heads	General Fund, Staff Time
Economic Development	Enhance the capacity of current Industrially zoned areas. With space as a limiting factor for the town, maximizing	Remediate Brownfield sites commonly known as Precise Engineering and Eastern State Steel.	Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works	EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant, General Fund, Staff Time

	industrial areas is important to diversify the tax base.	Consider working with the Hanson Planning Department to connect abutting industrial spaces	Capital Improvement Planning Committee	General Fund, Staff Time
		Investigate potential areas of expansion following the sewer district expansion feasibility study.	Department of Public Works	General Fund, Staff Time
		Consider allowing mixed-use buildings as a means to provide space for more small businesses surrounding existing industrial space.	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Capital Improvement Planning Committee	District Local Technical Assistance, General Fund, Staff Time
	Create a connected commercial space through aesthetics. The businesses in the center of town and the Carriage Street lot are walkable but lack safety.	Continue working with the state to repair sidewalks and increase pedestrian safety along Route 18	Department of Public Works	General Fund, Staff Time, District Local Technical Assistance
		Consider creating a commercial district identity for the stretch of space including and connecting through streetscaping	Planning Board, Capital Improvement Planning Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, Select Board	General Fund, Staff Time

	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.	The Agriculture Commission and Planning Board should reach out to local farms and existing farmers' markets to establish a market for East Bridgewater.	Agriculture Commission, Planning Board	General Fund, Staff Time
Housing	The town will address needed zoning amendments to accommodate the growing need for housing across different scales and sizes.	The town will implement MBTA zoning-mandated requirements.	Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board	General Fund, Staff Time
		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.	Planning Board, Capital Improvement Planning Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, Housing Authority	District Local Technical Assistance, One Stop for Growth Community Planning Grant Program, General Fund, Staff Time
		Prepare to bring enrollment in CPC in town meeting with supporting educational materials and cost-effective breakdown.	Town Administrator, Planning Board	General Fund, Staff Time

	Homeownership units for people in a somewhat lower income range than Chapter 40B or inclusionary zoning developments typically serve.	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.	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Select Board	Mass Housing Partnership, Local Initiative Program, Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Community Preservation Act, Housing Innovations Fund, Community Based Housing, General Fund
		Subsidized and modestly priced studio apartments and single-room occupancy units for one-person households with low or moderate incomes.	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Select Board	Mass Housing Partnership, Local Initiative Program, Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Community Preservation Act, Housing Innovations Fund, Community Based Housing, General Fund

		<p>Deeply subsidized senior citizens' rental units to relieve pressure on the East Bridgewater Housing Authority's waiting list.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Housing Authority, Zoning Board of Appeals, Select Board</p>	<p>Mass Housing Partnership, Local Initiative Program, Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Community Preservation Act, Housing Innovations Fund, Community Based Housing, General Fund</p>
		<p>Homeownership units for people in a somewhat lower income range than Chapter 40B or inclusionary zoning developments typically serve.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Select Board</p>	<p>Mass Housing Partnership, Local Initiative Program, Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Community Preservation Act, Housing Innovations Fund, Community Based Housing, General Fund</p>

	<p>Increase opportunity for Veteran and Senior Tax Relief programs to keep the most financially threatened residents in their homes.</p>		<p>Town Veterans' Agent, Housing Authority, Council on Aging, Tax Assessor, Select Board</p>	<p>Bob Woodruff Foundation, Department of Veteran Affairs, Community Economic Development Assistance, https://www.mass.gov/info-details/housing-resources-for-elders-and-veterans, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.</p>
<p>Natural and Cultural Resources Goals and Actions</p>	<p>Protect agricultural lands and scenic views in town. Residents have identified character as a key reason for why they live in town. Preserving land that holds both scenic value and ecosystemic value is important.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Conservation Commission</p>	<p>General Fund, Staff Time</p>
	<p>Protect water resources in town. The town has an abundance of water resources including ponds,</p>	<p>The Conservation Commission and Agriculture Commission will need to work together to create outreach to landowners</p>	<p>Conservation Commission, Agriculture Commission</p>	<p>General Fund, Staff Time</p>
	<p>Protect water resources in town. The town has an abundance of water resources including ponds,</p>	<p>The Conservation Commission will consider the creation of a Town bylaw regarding wetlands protection and those affecting earth removal.</p>	<p>Conservation Commission</p>	<p>General Fund, Staff Time</p>

	streams, rivers, and vernal pools.	The Conservation Commission will strategize to create public outreach on water resources in town and educate homeowners on reducing runoff.	Conservation Commission	General Fund, Staff Time
	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.	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.	Historical Commission, Town Manager	General Fund, Staff Time
Open Space and Recreation		Create a detailed recreation site that lists all fields and park spaces in addition to what is already listed.	Recreation Commission	General Fund, Staff Time
	Enhance public awareness of volunteer and recreation opportunities within East Bridgewater.	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.	Recreation Commission, Town Website Manager	General Fund, Staff Time
		Work with schools, recreation, and youth sports to cross-share information on collaborative events and sports sign-ups.	Recreation Commission, School Committee	General Fund, Staff Time
	Perform Site Assessments for Leland Farm.	There is potential for expanded recreational opportunities at Leland Farm.	Recreation Commission, Agricultural Commission	General Fund, Staff Time

	Create a system for improved land management moving forward.	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. This list should include needs addressed in this plan.	Recreation Commission, Master Plan Committee	District Local Technical Assistance, General Fund, Staff Time
		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.	Town Administrator	General Fund, Staff Time
		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.	Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Recreation Commission	General Fund, Staff Time
	The Planning Board, in conjunction with the Recreation Board, and Conservation	Consider selecting a site in town for a playground off of school grounds that is adequate for community needs.	Planning Board, Recreation Commission	General Fund, PARC Grant, Staff Time

	Commission should regularly work together to meet the current recreation needs and opportunities for the town.	The town will provide representation of East Bridgewater on the Bridging the Bridgewater initiative.	Select Board, Planning Board, Recreation Board	Staff Time
Climate and Resiliency	Continue working with Green Communities to lower energy usage and bills in the municipality.	Remain compliant with annual reporting requirements and apply for competitive grants when applicable.	Town Administrator	General Fund, Staff Time, Department of Energy Resources Funding
		Make reporting available to the public to see the ongoing efforts of the town to reduce energy usage and GHG emissions.	Town Administrator	General Fund, Staff Time
	Use the existing MVP plan to guide infrastructure needs in town.	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.	Department of Public Works, Planning Board (Town Planner when achieved)	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Grant Funding, General Fund, Staff Time
		Consider updating the MVP plan with the state's new grant program.	Planning Board (Town Planner when achieved)	Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Program, General Fund, Staff Time

	Establish clear actions that assist community members, especially the most vulnerable, in building resiliency to the adverse impacts of climate change.	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.	Planning Board, Department of Public Works, Council on Aging, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Various other Department Heads	Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Grant Funding, General Fund, Staff Time
		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 change.	Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, Planning Board, Town Planner when achieved	General Fund, Staff Time
	Continue to protect natural resources including town forest canopy and water quality.	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 to offset the impact of climate change.	Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission	General Fund, Staff Time
Transportation	Increase Pedestrian Safety	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.	Department of Public Works, Planning Board (Town Planner when achieved)	Complete Streets, General Fund, Massachusetts Department of Transportation

		More public outreach could be done to grasp the ongoing priorities of residents in town.	Town Administrator	General Fund, Staff Time
		The town could consider adding longer periods for crossing guards at the town center specifically to aid students using the public library.	Town Administrator, Police Department	General Fund, Staff Time
	Assess the potential for public transportation in town.	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	Planning Board	General Fund, Staff Time
	Upgrade infrastructure to meet the needs of increased congestion.	Continue to work with the State TIP to improve Route 18 driving and walking conditions	Planning Board (Town Planner when achieved)	Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Funding, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, General Fund, Staff Time
		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.	Capital Improvement Planning Committee	General Fund, Staff Time

Facilities and Public Services	Balance services with careful short- and long-term budget considerations.	Create Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for all Town-owned and/or managed municipal buildings to prioritize and address capital needs as they arise.	Capital Improvement Planning Committee	General Fund, Staff Time, District Local Technical Assistance
		Continue to plan for construction of a new Public Safety Campus.	Public Safety Building Committee	General Fund, Staff Time
		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.	Town Administrator	General Fund, Staff Time
		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.	Town Administrator, Council on Aging	General Fund, Staff Time
	Provide adequate support for Town departments to ensure they are equipped to provide public services efficiently.	Solicit staff input annually to assess and plan for addressing capacity deficits by department.	Town Administrator, Various Department Heads	General Fund, Staff Time
		Conduct a municipal space needs study to determine space deficits and surplus facilities spaces Town-wide.	Town Administrator, Planning Board, Department of Public Works	General Fund, Staff Time
		Create, review, and periodically update operational manuals for departments, boards, committees, and commissions.	Town Administrator	General Fund, Staff Time

		Encourage participation in departmental office hours/listening sessions for the public.	Various Department Heads	General Fund, Staff Time
	Commit to environmental sustainability in all Town of East Bridgewater policies.	Investigate and promote alternative energy production and storage on Town-owned parcels.	Town Administrator, Department of Public Works, Conservation Commission	Green Communities Grant Funding, General Fund, Staff Time
		Continually review and implement the Town's Water Conservation Program	Department of Public Works	General Fund, Staff Time