



# Town of Bridgewater

# COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

May 2022





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# BRIDGEWATER

## COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

## COMMUNITY VISION

This Comprehensive Master Plan envisions a future in which Bridgewater continues to embrace its historic heritage and charm while welcoming opportunities for growth, change, and economic prosperity. Professional Town staff, committed volunteers, elected officials, and citizens will realize this vision through hard work and respectful collaboration. The Town will cultivate strong partnerships with state institutions and leverage these relationships for the betterment of the community.

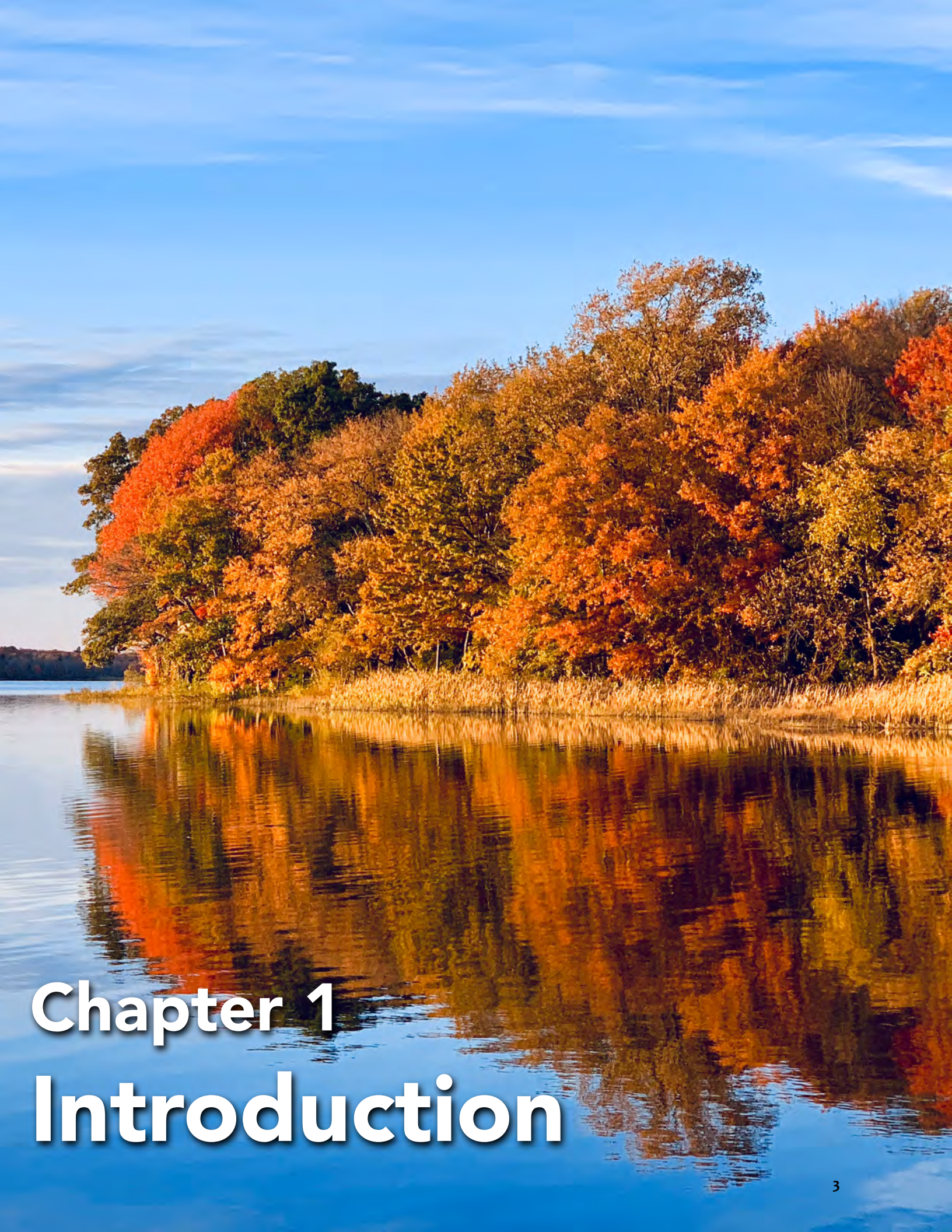
Sound fiscal management and careful consideration of local and regional needs will allow Bridgewater to offer excellent schools, reliable municipal services, sustainable infrastructure, and a breadth of housing options. The Town will plan for resilience to climate change and reduce its overall environmental impact by using renewable energy sources, sustainable development practices, and innovative transportation solutions. Bridgewater's commitment to open space access and natural resources conservation will enable residents and visitors to treasure the Town's many scenic landscapes.

The Town will partner with Bridgewater State University to promote economic, intellectual, and recreational engagement within and outside of the community. Bridgewater's convenient location, proximity to major highways, and commuter rail service will enable the Town to establish itself as an accessible hub of culture, commerce, education, and entertainment in the greater region. Successful traffic and parking improvements will enhance the downtown experience for residents, businesses, students, and visitors. The revitalized central business district will act as an economic, social, and cultural engine for the Town, and local employment opportunities will flourish.

Achieving this vision will define and enhance Bridgewater's sense of place, reflected in the Town's natural beauty, history, culture, accessibility, and community pride.

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# Chapter 1

# Introduction

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1. What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is a blueprint for the physical evolution of a community over ten to twenty years, together with an existing conditions inventory and assessment of local needs and priorities. The purpose of a Master Plan is to guide policy decisions that will shape the community's physical, social, and economic development through leadership, regulations, public investment, and effective public engagement in the civic life of the town. Community conversation and a regular, predictable evaluation process help to ensure that the Master Plan's guidance can remain attentive to community priorities and values as they change over time.

Massachusetts G.L. c. 41, § 81D describes the responsibility of a Planning Board to prepare a master plan that addresses discrete yet deeply interconnected elements of a community's composition and conditions, including land use, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation, services and facilities, and circulation. Much of Bridgewater's history and culture is preserved through parks, conservation and recreation areas, and the built environment. These connections can be seen in the Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources chapter. Just as Bridgewater's unique history and resources influence the town today, they are also reflected in the structure of the Town's Comprehensive Master Plan. Collectively, all of the chapters present a snapshot of Bridgewater as it is today, and the community vision statement, goals and recommendations, and Implementation Plan comprise a plan for the future.

## 1.2. Community Snapshot

The Town of Bridgewater is situated south of Boston and east of Providence, poised conveniently at the junction of Interstate 495 and State Route 24 for easy access to Cape Cod and the nearby cities of Taunton and Brockton. Located in Plymouth County, Bridgewater has a rich history and traditional New England character, and it is home to the oldest state college (today's Bridgewater State University) and correctional institute (today's Old Colony Correctional Center) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Bridgewater has abundant natural resources, including Hockomock Swamp, the Commonwealth's largest freshwater wetland, as well as the Town and Matfield Rivers, which meet in Bridgewater to form the federally designated "Wild and Scenic" Taunton River.

First chartered in 1656, Bridgewater has grown and evolved from agricultural roots to a manufacturing hub and over time to the suburb it is today. In addition to the major roadways that foster Bridgewater's popularity among commuters working in regional employment centers, Bridgewater has access to Boston by MBTA commuter rail. Bridgewater is home to 28,633 residents<sup>1</sup> who enjoy its cultural amenities, including the Bridgewater Public Library, historic Memorial

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<sup>1</sup> United States Decennial Census, 2020. This population increase from 2010 to 2020 required the addition of two new voting precincts, increasing the number of precincts from seven to nine.



**Chapter 1. Introduction**

Building, Olde Scotland Links Municipal Golf Course, Cole-Yeaton Senior Center, Music Alley next to Old Town Hall, and many other community resources such as parks and recreation facilities.



There are **9,028 households** in Bridgewater.



**4,514 Bridgewater residents (16 percent)** live in **group quarters**, which represents **38 percent of Plymouth County's** residents living in group quarters.



Bridgewater is connected to an interstate (**I-495**), four large arterials (**State Routes 18, 24, 28, and 104**), and an **MBTA commuter rail station**.



Bridgewater is home to several **state institutions**, including the oldest and largest state college (Bridgewater State University) and correctional facility (Old Colony Correctional Center).



Bridgewater has extensive open space, including **six major parklands**: Carver's Pond, Iron Works Park, Stiles & Hart, Titicut Conservation Area, Tuckerwood Conservation Area, Wyman Meadow



**Hockomock Swamp** is the **largest freshwater wetland** in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It extends across parts of Bridgewater as well as five neighboring communities.

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### 1.3. Plan Framework

Creating a Master Plan begins with public input and the development of a Vision Statement that reflects the common goals and objectives of the community. The vision for this plan — shared at the beginning of this document — was crafted by the Comprehensive Master Plan Committee (CMPC) based on community input and reflects the unique opportunities available to Bridgewater. Each element chapter (Chapters 2-7) describes the existing conditions, issues, and opportunities from which topic goals, policies, and recommendations were developed in support of the plan's vision. These recommendations culminate in the Implementation Plan (Chapter 8), which lists all of the recommended actions for the plan, along with responsible parties, timing, and required resources. Below is an overview of the plan's overarching goals, all of which serve to support the plan's vision.



### **LAND USE GOALS**

- Provide clear, concise, and transparent zoning regulations to guide regulatory boards and landowners.
- Balance land use and development with environmental stewardship and social equity.

### **TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION GOALS**

- Improve safety and accessibility for all transportation modes and users.
- Encourage multimodal transportation to minimize vehicular congestion, especially downtown.

### **HOUSING GOALS**

- Preserve, improve, and expand Bridgewater’s housing stock in a manner that promotes sustainability and a balance with natural resources.
- Accommodate the housing needs of seniors, people with disabilities, students, families, and other types of households at all income levels to encourage population diversity and equitable access to housing.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

- Retain existing business while drawing a variety of new establishments to encourage residents to spend time and money in town and build Bridgewater’s tax base.
- Co-locate housing, shopping, and jobs in select areas to reduce single-occupancy commutes and support healthy lifestyles.

### **NATURAL, CULTURAL, AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES**

- Establish Bridgewater as a cultural, intellectual, and recreational hub in the region.
- Protect natural resources while providing and promoting open space access.

### **FACILITIES & SERVICES**

- Provide efficient, reliable, high-quality services and well-maintained facilities that residents consider town assets rather than unnecessary tax burdens.
- Reduce municipal energy use and water consumption.

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## **1.4. Community Engagement**

Public participation informed the creation of this Comprehensive Master Plan throughout its development. Between December 2018 and December 2020, meetings with Bridgewater’s Comprehensive Master Plan Committee, Town staff, and the community at-large led to the development, drafting, and finalization of the Vision Statement.

### **COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE**

The Comprehensive Master Plan Committee (CMPC) met for the first time on December 5, 2018. Appointed by the Town Manager, the CMPC met monthly with the consulting team and Town staff.

## Chapter 1. Introduction

To support the Planning Board in the master planning process, the CMPC was charged with the following responsibilities:

- Assist with developing a Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) for the Town of Bridgewater;
- Assist the Town’s consultants with identifying and obtaining local sources of information to support the CMP effort;
- Organize and carry out community outreach and engagement to involve residents, businesses, and others in the planning process, in concert with Town staff and the Town’s planning consultant;
- Assist with developing goals and policies for all elements of the CMP, including land use, transportation, housing, economic development, natural resources and cultural resource areas, open space and recreation, and community facilities and services, and the corresponding implementation framework;
- Review draft products prepared by the Town’s planning consultant and provide constructive feedback;
- Provide positive citizen leadership for community planning.

When the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the CMPC from convening in person, the group met virtually starting in May 2020 after a two-month hiatus.

### CORE ASSESSMENT MEETINGS

The community engagement process began with “core assessment” meetings with town officials, residents, and staff. These meetings allowed the consultants to learn about Bridgewater as insiders know it. The elements that make up all master plans in Massachusetts framed these meetings, which were tailored to reflect Bridgewater’s community context. Recurring themes of these meetings included Bridgewater’s wealth of natural and cultural resources and unique assets, ideal location and access to major roads, and dedicated community with willing volunteers. These meetings also shed light on the Town’s limited capacity, walkability, and ability to support future growth. Meetings occurred on the following dates in in February 2019:

- Transportation – 2/4/2019
- Economic Development – 2/8/2019
- Housing – 2/11/2019
- Infrastructure and Public Realm – 2/19/2019
- Cultural Resources – 2/20/2019
- Natural Resources and Open Space – 2/25/2019
- Community Facilities and Services – 2/27/2019
- Land Use – 2/28/2019

### COMMUNITY MEETINGS

As part of public outreach to create this plan, the consulting team, CMPC, and Town staff hosted three public forum events to solicit community input and feedback.

The first open community meeting was held March 23, 2019. The meeting began with a presentation from the consultants about what the Comprehensive Master Plan is and can do for the community, as

## Chapter 1. Introduction

well as the process that goes into its development. They opened the meeting up to discussion, both as a large forum and in smaller breakout groups. The primary purpose of the forum was to listen, learn, and gather data from residents about Bridgewater's strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats that may shape its future.

The second community meeting was an open house held June 5, 2019. It focused on the goals and recommendations from Bridgewater's 2002 Master Plan, mainly to find out whether townspeople thought the priorities and actions reflected in it had been met and if they remain relevant today. Residents were invited to indicate their thoughts and preferences at their own pace and leave comments as they saw fit. They were asked to indicate if any still-relevant recommendations in the 2002 Master Plan should be funded or explored further in the new Comprehensive Master Plan.

The third public forum took place on December 7, 2020. This meeting provided an update on the status of the CMP and welcomed community input about the draft vision, goals, and strategies it includes. In small groups, participants were asked to help prioritize some of the draft recommendations. There was also discussion of the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic may have had on Bridgewater's vision for its future.

### ONLINE FEEDBACK

From March through December 2019, Bridgewater residents had the opportunity to provide online feedback through CoUrbanize, a community engagement platform designed for municipal planning. Over this interval, there were nearly a thousand visits to Bridgewater's CMP page, and 370 total comments (including responses from the CMPC, Town, and consulting team). There were poll questions as well as open-response fields, and there was significant feedback and productive conversation in these online comments. Residents' answers helped in identifying and prioritizing community needs and wants.

### ONLINE STRATEGIES SURVEY

From March through May 2020, Bridgewater residents were invited to participate in an online survey. About two hundred respondents each identified three strategies to prioritize in each element of the CMP. Of the respondents:

- 94 percent were Bridgewater residents
- 25 percent had children in the Bridgewater-Raynham School District
- 19 percent worked in Bridgewater (including 6.5 percent Town staff)
- 13 percent had family in Bridgewater whom they visit

While the survey responses indicated strong preferences and priorities for some CMP strategies, the findings were not always conclusive. In some cases, lack of consensus may indicate a greater number of immediate needs in one subject area than in others. In other cases, ambiguity in the data may indicate divisions in residents' priorities.

The survey yielded strategies that were most often selected among respondents' high priority actions:

- Employ smart growth strategies to preserve open space and encourage sustainable development practices (71 percent)
- Identify potential available real estate and seek various funding sources to invest in the economic development of the downtown business district (67 percent)
- Improve town-wide roads, parking, and infrastructure to draw businesses (62 percent)
- Educate the public and town boards on zoning to shape future land use (61 percent)
- Create, maintain, and promote pedestrian- and bicycle- friendly infrastructure (59 percent)
- Improve access to parks and open space and wayfinding to connect open space resources (56 percent)
- Continue to implement the Town's Complete Streets policy (54 percent)

Respondents also had the opportunity to indicate their preferences in an open-response comment field. There were six subject areas for which respondents could write in answers, and nearly one hundred of these suggestions were collected.

### **DRAFTING AND REVIEWING THE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT CHAPTERS**

The consulting team drafted the Inventory and Assessment chapters of the CMP with the guidance of the CMPC and Town staff. The CMPC reviewed this work and provided comments and suggestions to correct, clarify, or otherwise change some chapters. Although the Committee's tenure ended in December 2020, the revised chapters were returned to the former CMPC members for review in April 2021. From April to May 2021, Town staff, boards, committees, and commissions were invited to provide their feedback on these revised plan elements as well.

### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND WORKSHOPS**

The CMP's implementation plan was developed in partnership with Town staff. Two implementation plan workshops were held on September 10, 2021 and September 20, 2021 to invite feedback on the implementation plan and draft recommendations from the CMP's six elements. The first workshop invited the feedback of Town staff, and the second workshop invited the input of members of Bridgewater's boards, committees, and commissions. Participants discussed the feasibility and complexity of the recommendations, considering the Town's capacity to implement them.

### **PLANNING BOARD MEETINGS ON DRAFT PLAN**

The consultant team met with the Planning Board in December 2021 and March 2022 to discuss gather feedback on the draft plan, primarily on the recommendations and implementation. Following the March 30, 2022 Planning Board meeting, the consultant team made final adjustments to the plan's recommendations to reflect the Board's feedback where possible, and the plan was submitted to the Town for approval in April 2022.

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## **1.5. Community Planning in Bridgewater**

The CMP builds on recent planning work done by the Town itself, the regional planning agency, state agencies, and other consulting firms. Plans and studies consulted for the CMP include those

**Chapter 1. Introduction**

summarized below, as well as others. These plans are discussed in greater depth in the Inventory chapters to which they are relevant.

**2020 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PLAN**

The Bridgewater Community Preservation Committee (CPC) developed a Community Preservation Plan to guide the allocation of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for the next five years (fiscal years (FY) 2020-2024). The principles and goals outlined in the Plan are not binding—rather they are meant to provide guidance for decisions on the use of CPA funds. In accordance with CPA statute, the CPC consulted appropriate municipal boards and commissions through its CPC member liaisons and gathered additional community input through a public hearing, online community survey, and focus groups.<sup>2</sup>

**2020 CENTRAL SQUARE STUDY**

The Central Square Study assessed circulation around Central Square and Bridgewater’s Town Green. The Town’s consultants analyzed the feasibility of three potential redesign concepts for a safe, attractive, and multimodal Central Square.

**2019 MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Bridgewater received a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant and hired a consultant to develop a climate change preparedness plan and build resilience against climate hazards. The goal of the plan was to identify and develop a plan to mitigate Bridgewater’s climate vulnerabilities.

**2018 GREATBLUE COMMUNITY SURVEY**

The Town of Bridgewater engaged a firm to study resident satisfaction town amenities and future development needs. The primary goal of this research was to assess current perceptions of the Town, drivers and barriers to increased visitation or patronage, and priorities for future economic development initiatives.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Executive Summary, Bridgewater Community Preservation Plan FY2020-2024, JM Goldson LLC, 2020

<sup>3</sup> Project Overview, Community Survey, GreatBlue Research, Inc., 2018

### **2017 HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN**

The Housing Production Plan Update (HPP) provides a framework and strategy to increase the production of affordable housing in Bridgewater. The HPP updates the 2012 Bridgewater Housing Production Plan. It includes a comprehensive housing needs assessment and housing production goals and strategies aimed at meeting the Town's housing needs over the next five years (2017-2022).<sup>4</sup>

### **2017 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN**

The 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan was prepared under the guidance of the Bridgewater Community & Economic Development Department and the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee. It provides an update to the 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan. The 2017 plan updates the social and environmental profiles of the town, discusses influences of present growth and development trends, inventories existing conservation and recreation areas and facilities, and examines community recreation needs. The Plan refreshes community goals and objectives to preserve and enhance resources and summarizes implementation actions towards achieving the goals.<sup>5</sup>

### **2016 DOWNTOWN BRIDGEWATER PLAN**

The goal of the Downtown Bridgewater Plan, developed with the Old Colony Planning Council, was to determine the type of development that can be supported by the market, to identify where there are key development opportunities and to develop strategies for the Town to attract desired development in the Downtown. The study provides an analysis of existing conditions, including demographics, land use, and zoning, as well as key retail and housing market data. This analysis and a 2015 Consumer Survey informed the recommendations developed to enhance the area to better support current local businesses, to broaden the current customer base, and to attract additional targeted development.<sup>6</sup>

### **2016 RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

In 2016, the Town hired a consulting firm to conduct a comprehensive recreation needs assessment of the Bridgewater's existing recreational facilities. The findings of the needs assessment guide the Town's efforts in recreation resources protection and improvements.<sup>7</sup>

### **2014 UPDATE OF SELECTED MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS**

In 2014, the Town used Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to to update components of the 2002 Master Plan, drafting new chapters on Bridgewater's demographic profile and trends, housing, and open space and natural resources. The document included an update of the vision and selected goals, recommendations, and the implementation plan. The Planning Board adopted these updated chapters and the document was filed with the Commonwealth.

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<sup>4</sup> Executive Summary, Town of Bridgewater Housing Production Plan, Old Colony Planning Council, 2017

<sup>5</sup> Plan Summary, Town of Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan, VHB, 2018

<sup>6</sup> Project Background, Downtown Bridgewater Plan, Old Colony Planning Council, 2016

<sup>7</sup> Purpose, Town of Bridgewater Recreation Needs Assessment, VHB, 2015

## **2014 BRIDGEWATER DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN**

The Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Master Plan presents a vision for and a comprehensive revitalization plan for the Bridgewater Central Business District. The plan was funded by a Community Development Fund grant in combination with a gift from Bridgewater State University and Bridgewater Savings Bank. It addresses the revitalization of Bridgewater’s Central Square and includes branding and marketing, a façade improvement program, parking and circulation, streetscape improvements, focus areas for investment, zoning recommendations, and off-street utilities.<sup>8</sup>

## **2002 MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Bridgewater’s 2002 Master Plan Update addressed Bridgewater’s explosive growth in the 1990s and sought to manage growth into the future. The Town’s residential and commercial growth, as well as that of Bridgewater State College (now University) were areas of particular focus. The Master Plan provided the community with information and specific strategies to address growth issues and their impact on natural resources, economic development, municipal facilities and services, cultural and historic resources, and the transportation system. These strategies were integrated into a long-term land use plan to guide development over the next 10 years and fulfill the community’s vision for its future.<sup>9</sup>

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### **1.6. A Note on the Data**

This Comprehensive Master Plan utilizes United States Census data, especially on the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates, and other official sources. Late in the process of drafting of this plan, the Census Bureau released preliminary data which provides official Census 2020 population, race, and household counts for all municipalities in the United States. Because this preliminary data is not available at the block group level and does not include detailed demographic, housing, references to census tracts or census block groups will be based on 2010 geographies. Demographic data discussed uses a mix of Census 2020 and ACS 2015-2019 references, as detailed demographic information is either exclusively reported through ACS or may not be available yet from the 2020 Census data.

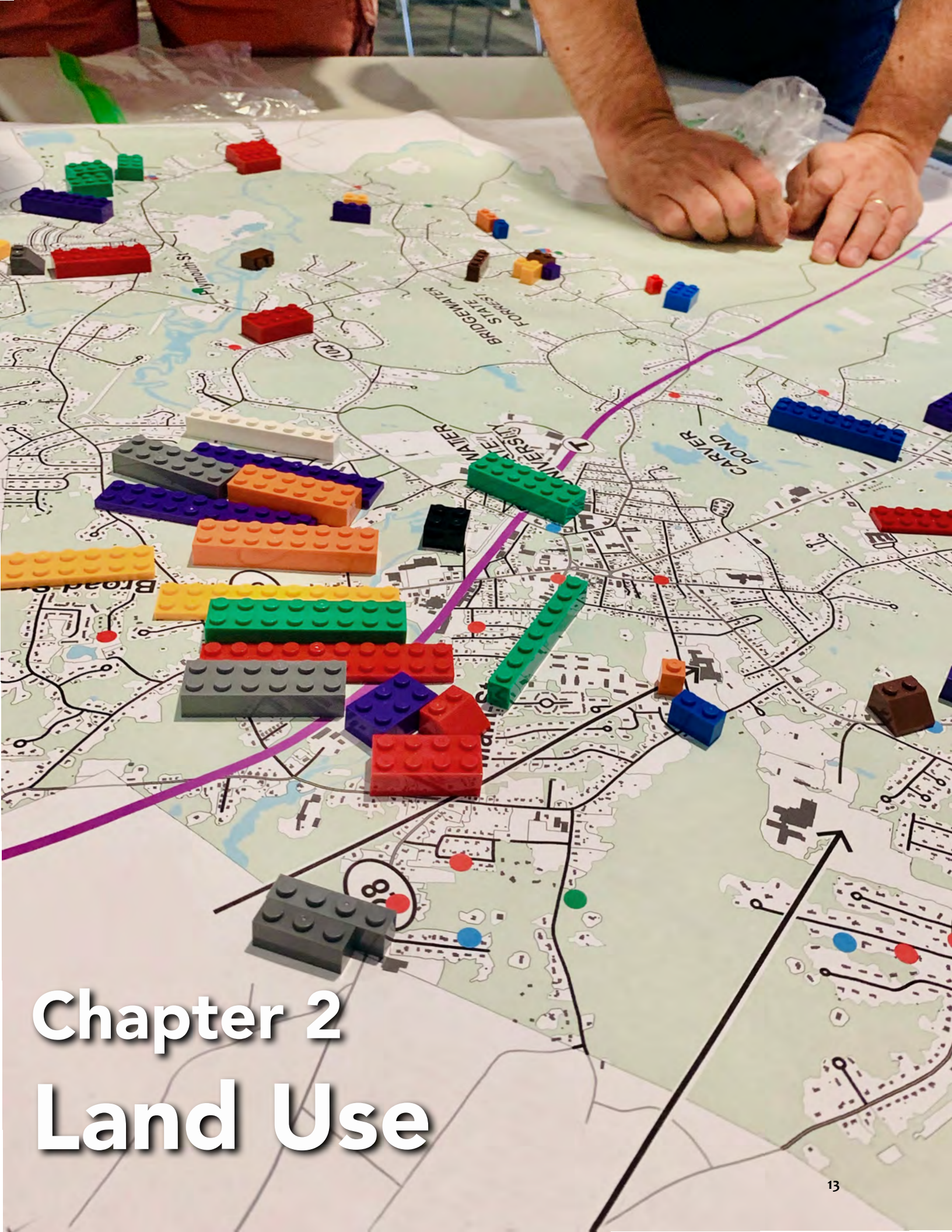
This plan references several comparison communities to place Bridgewater’s demographic data in context. These communities include the Town’s five direct neighbors: Raynham, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Middleborough, and West Bridgewater, as well as other “peer towns” picked from nearby or for their comparable characteristics to Bridgewater’s. For the purposes of this plan, comparison communities place the Town’s transportation, demographic, housing, and economic trends in a regional context.

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<sup>8</sup> Introduction, Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Master Plan, The Cecil Group and Nelson\Nygaard, 2014

<sup>9</sup> Why a Town Plan?, Comprehensive Master Plan. Dufresne-Henry, Inc., 2002





# Chapter 2 Land Use

## 2. Land Use

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### 2.1 Introduction

The way land is used and developed affects all facets of a community — and therefore all elements of a comprehensive master plan. Land use decisions can influence the transportation systems necessary to serve development; the housing available to residents; the success of a community’s commercial districts; the protection or destruction of the natural environment and local historic resources; and the efficiency of public service delivery. Understanding a municipality’s past land use patterns and future land use opportunities is essential to recognizing how the “how” and “why” of a community’s evolution and to guiding future changes.

No development goal contained within this plan will come to pass unless there is a space within Bridgewater where it is practically and legally possible. The Land Use section of a master plan is intended to delineate the opportunities and challenges that will shape all future development goals. As such, this section will examine both Bridgewater’s past and potential future: the past, by examining historic development patterns and the current layout that these patterns have created; and the future, by analyzing the Town’s zoning regulations, which govern the type of development that can currently take place.

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### 2.2 Existing Conditions and Trends

Development and land use in Bridgewater have changed drastically throughout the Town’s 370-year history but have followed clear patterns still visible in its landscape today. The axes along which development has occurred in town are the traditional Town Center, dating back to Bridgewater’s founding, and the robust system of state highways that crisscross the landscape, opened in the twentieth century.

Beginning as a pastoral colonial settlement, Bridgewater was incorporated as a town in 1656. Farming was the most significant land use in Bridgewater’s early days, and agriculture continued to play an important role in the Town’s identity well into the twentieth century. Like many Massachusetts towns the community played a role in the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as factories were built along the Town River, bolstering the densely populated Town Center. Notable industries included ironworking and shoe manufacturing. Subsequently, post-World War II suburbanization and deindustrialization, along with the advent of modern zoning practices, substantially shifted development patterns toward the rural periphery. Now, many people have come to appreciate walkable, tight-knit mixed use communities where they can live, work, and shop, and development is following suit. This represents an opportunity for



*Stanley Iron Works Park, located along the Town River, was designated as a Town parkland in 1996. Listed on National Register of Historic Places since 2002, the park provides a glimpse into Bridgewater’s long history as a leading manufacturer of iron.*

**Chapter 2. Land Use**

Bridgewater to encourage redevelopment of its downtown in accordance with long-standing revitalization goals (see the 2014 Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Master Plan).

Bridgewater experienced a period of rapid growth and development from the 1970s through 2000, essentially doubling its population in a span of 30 years, as demonstrated in Table 2.1. Unsurprisingly, given this period of rapid growth, the majority of dwellings in town were constructed after 1970 (see Housing section Map 5.6, “Year Residential Structure Built”). The Town also saw major projects such as Waterford Village apartments and Scotland Industrial Park. According to MassGIS Land Use Summary Statistics, the Town of Bridgewater lost 3,148.6 acres of undeveloped land between 1971 and 1999, with the biggest decreases in agricultural uses and natural land/undisturbed vegetation and the biggest increases in low- and medium-density residential uses.<sup>1</sup> Trends in housing development are further described in the housing chapter of this comprehensive plan.

**Table 2.1. Percent Increase Over Ten-Year Period**

Period	% Increase in Population	% Increase in Housing Units	% Increase in Households
1970-1980	45.4%	66.7%	66.5%
1980-1990	23.5%	18.2%	17.0%
1990-2000	18.5%	22.8%	26.5%
2000-2010	5.4%	8.9%	6.2%
2010-2020	7.8%	12.1%	12.9%

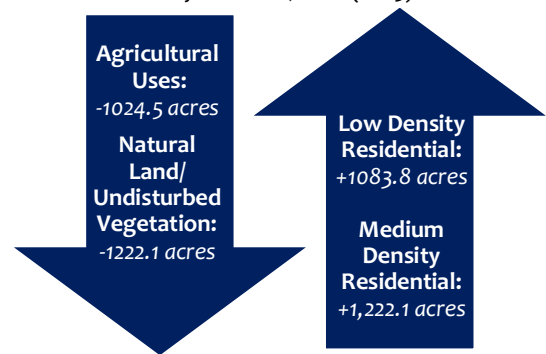
Source: US Census Bureau, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020

Three state highways (Routes 18, 28, and 104) converge in downtown Bridgewater, another (Route 24) runs north-south in western Bridgewater, and Interstate 495 and Route 106 follow the Town’s southwestern and northeastern borders, respectively. This system of highways has strongly defined commercial and industrial use patterns, as each non-residential zone borders at least one of these routes.

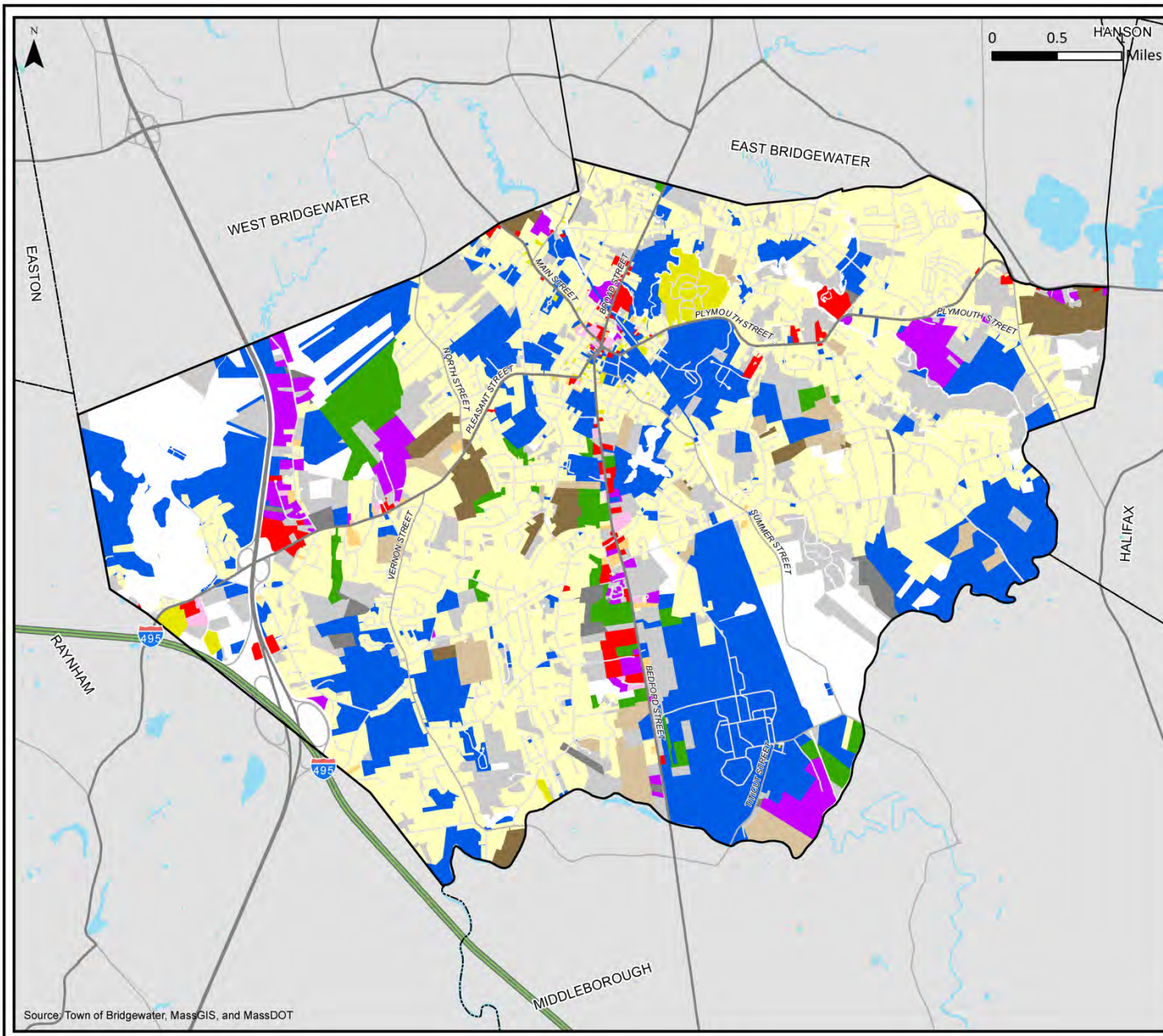
Today, residential uses continue to dominate Bridgewater’s landscape, with low-density residential development taking up the largest portion of the Town’s land area by a large margin. Industrial and commercial uses, in contrast, occupy only a combined six percent of its land. Map 2.1 shows the current land use pattern in Bridgewater, while Table 2.2 outlines land use by acre.

**Figure 2.1. Changes in Land Use, 1971-1999**

Source: MassGIS Land Use Summary Statistics, Set 1 (2003)



<sup>1</sup> MassGIS Land Use Summary Statistics, Set 1, 2003. This data set is only available statewide for the years 1971, 1985, and 1999.



**MAP 2.1. TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER LAND USE**

- Residential <3 Units
- Apartments > 4 Units
- Mixed-Use
- Office
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Res/Ag and Res/OS
- Agriculture
- Open Space and Recreation
- Utility and Transportation
- Vacant
- No Data

*Based on Bridgewater Assessor's Records as of 2021. Some parcels have been edited to reflect current major developments but the map may not include all developments as of publication of this plan.*

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

Table 2.2. Bridgewater Land Use Summary

Class of Use	Acres	% of Total Acres
Single-family Residential	6,016.7	39.4%
Open Space*	1,650.1	10.8%
Vacant (Undevelopable)	1,204.7	7.9%
State Departments	1,201.7	7.9%
Municipal	1,103.9	7.2%
Vacant (Developable)	1,009.4	6.6%
Mixed-use, primarily residential	470.3	3.1%
Educational Institutions	397.8	2.6%
Industrial	362.3	2.4%
Commercial	345.2	2.3%
Mixed-use, other	306.0	2.0%
2-3 Family Residential	249.4	1.6%
Condominiums	209.6	1.4%
Mixed-Use, primarily commercial	195.4	1.3%
Apartments (4+ Units)	181.3	1.2%
Residential (Other)	171.0	1.1%
Utilities	142.3	0.9%
Misc. Nonprofit	60.7	0.4%
<b>TOTAL (Not including parcels for which there is no data)</b>	<b>15,277.7</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Includes municipal, state, private protected open space

Source: Bridgewater Assessor's Data 2021, via MassGIS

## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

As of 2019, Bridgewater had an estimated 8,531 units of housing spread out over nearly every region of town. Most older units are found near the center, but more recent housing construction has been spread out throughout Bridgewater's countryside. The Town's 2002 Master Plan describes its recently residential history clearly and succinctly:

*The apparent strength of the Center in 1980 was due in large part to the traditional (higher density) development patterns and the construction of two large apartment complexes in the late 1970s (Waterford Village and Kingswood Park) totaling 896 units. However, a change in zoning prohibited further construction of new multi-family development of this type. At the same time, more single-family subdivisions were being constructed on the outskirts of Bridgewater where land was less expensive and more available. During the 1990s, very little residential construction occurred in [Bridgewater Center] while the outlying areas of Bridgewater experienced a population and housing boom.*

The 2014 Master Plan Update provides additional detail surrounding this period of housing growth, noting that "Between 1990-2000, over 1,300 single-family building permits were issued, which represented 82% of all residential construction." Comparatively, between 2015-2019, 253 single-family building permits have been issued.

## Chapter 2. Land Use

Residential development has spread freely throughout most of the northeast and southwest quadrants of the Town, but only in limited areas within the others. In the northwest, large stretches of wetlands (including Lake Nippenicket and Hockomock Swamp) and highways limit buildable areas and to the southeast the correctional facility and surrounding swaths of state-owned land discourage residential development. Map 4.6 (in the Housing section), depicting the year built for residential structures, illustrates the evolution of residential development throughout the Town's history.

The vast majority of residential lots in Bridgewater contain single-family dwellings, with some condominiums closer to the Town Center. There are a few major developments that provide pockets of high-density housing: Waterford Village and Axis at Lakeshore are large apartment complexes, and the High Pond/Stone Meadow neighborhoods provide prefabricated 55+ single dwelling units.

As much of its developable land zoned for single-family residences has already been subdivided and built on, developers have turned to higher-density projects and mixed-use conversions. Notable recently permitted higher density developments include VIVA Bridgewater (300 units, open and accepting tenants at the time of writing), McElwain School Apartments (57 units), and Duxburrow Estates (148 single family units).

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Traditionally, downtown Bridgewater acted as a commercial hub, and like residential uses commercial activity has spread out from that central location to a large degree. It continues to host many businesses, both locally owned and national chains. Long-term plans for several developed commercial nodes in Bridgewater as described in the 2002 Comprehensive Master Plan have not come to fruition; there are commercial corridors along Routes 104 and 28, but these developments tend to be more scattered with the exception of a retail-heavy area to the west anchored by a Home Depot and a well-developed segment of Bedford Street. Other notable commercial areas include a plaza anchored by a Roche Bros. north of the Town center, and multiple commercial entities in the industrial-zoned areas of Elm Street to the west. However, even along the Town's major highways, most land is either undeveloped or residential. Commercial uses in Bridgewater are typical for a New England town with gas stations, restaurants, drug stores, auto repair, and other common businesses.

### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

A far cry from its former days as a manufacturing center, today Bridgewater hosts relatively few active industrial uses, with large swaths of its industrial zoning districts either undeveloped or being used for commercial or residential purposes. Still, several industrial parks exist in Town, located off of highways. Both Scotland Industrial Park and Bridgewater Industrial Park were opened in the 1970s, corresponding to the start of Bridgewater's modern population boom and the opening of new transportation corridors. The 2002 Master Plan highlights the PDD (Planned Development District) south of Lake Nippenicket as an emerging industrial park, but these plans did not come to fruition, although recently the Town has had success seeing the area developed for residential and commercial uses. The nearby Elm Street Industrial District on the other hand has seen significant development over the past several years, bringing new commercial and industrial uses to Bridgewater.

### INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bridgewater's land use history is influenced by state institutions to an unusual degree. Bridgewater State University (founded in 1840) to the north, adjacent to the Central Square and MBTA station, and Bridgewater Correctional Complex (BCC) to the south not only occupy large parcels of land but

**Chapter 2. Land Use**

influence the use of surrounding land. The BCC includes several MA Department of Corrections facilities including the Old Colony Correctional Center and Bridgewater State Hospital, and the complex's history can be traced back to an asylum opened on the site in the nineteenth century. The MBTA Commuter Rail's Middleborough-Lakeville line (reopened in 1997) passes through the Town Center, connecting Bridgewater to Greater Boston's public transportation system.

Table 2.3 shows the land in Bridgewater owned by state, municipal, and nonprofit institutions. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is the largest institutional landholder, with over 2,300 acres held by several state departments. The Department of Corrections is the largest individual institutional landholder, but conservation and open space uses make up an even larger portion of institutional land, over 1,200 acres combined. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and Department of Conservation and recreation have over 900 acres of conservation land in Bridgewater, primarily located in Hockomock Swamp and the southeast of town along the Taunton River. The Town of Bridgewater owns over 1,100 acres across town and BSU owns about 239 acres, mostly adjacent to downtown.

**Table 2.3. Institutional Land Use by Institution Type**

Institution Type	Acres	% of Institutional land	% of total town land
MA Department of Corrections	1143.14	28.5%	7.5%
Town Council Land	871.97	21.7%	5.7%
MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife	842.03	21.0%	5.5%
Conservation (Nonprofit)	266.21	6.6%	1.7%
State Educational Institutions	238.81	5.9%	1.6%
Tax Title Land	177.42	4.4%	1.2%
Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District	134.93	3.4%	0.9%
Other Nonprofit	108.90	2.7%	0.7%
Conservation (Municipal)	70.35	1.8%	0.5%
MA Department of Conservation and Recreation	68.99	1.7%	0.5%
Other State Agencies	47.39	1.2%	0.3%
Education (Municipal)	46.15	1.1%	0.3%
<b>Total institutional land</b>	<b>4,016.31</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>

Source: Bridgewater Assessor's Data 2021

**Chapter 2. Land Use**



*Bridgewater State University remains one of the most recognizable state institutions in*

While institutional land not owned by the Town generally represents land that is not available for development, the potential for cooperation and partnership with Bridgewater State University in the Town Center is significant. Unlike other institutions, BSU has expanded their operations in the heart of Bridgewater, including a new Welcome Center in 2019 and the Dana Mohler-Faria Science and Mathematics Center in 2012.

**VACANT LAND**

**Table 2.4. Vacant Land in Bridgewater**

*\*Includes “potentially developable” parcels*

Type of use	Acres	% of Vacant Land	% of Total Land
Developable Residential	734.02	33.2%	4.8%
Developable Commercial*	222.18	10.0%	1.5%
Developable Industrial*	53.17	2.4%	0.3%
<b>Total developable</b>	<b>1,009.37</b>	<b>45.6%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>
Undevelopable Residential	1,127.71	50.9%	7.4%
Undevelopable Commercial	74.68	3.4%	0.5%
Undevelopable Industrial	2.34	0.1%	0.0%
<b>Total undevelopable</b>	<b>1,204.73</b>	<b>54.4%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>
<b>TOTAL VACANT LAND<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2,214.10</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14.49%</b>

Source: Bridgewater Assessor’s Data 2021

<sup>2</sup> This does not include land in Chapter 6I (forest management), 6IA (agricultural or horticultural use), and 6IB (land maintained in substantially natural, wild, or open condition). While such lands may be developable in the future, this is not currently a possibility.



As of 2019, roughly 14.5% of Bridgewater’s land area<sup>1</sup> remain vacant, with an fairly even split between areas considered developable by the Assessing Department (46 percent) and those considered undevelopable (54 percent). The Assessing Department categorizes land as “developable” based on whether it meets zoning standards for buildable lots (i.e., frontage, square feet, etc.); if a parcel meets these criteria, it is considered developable *unless proven otherwise*.<sup>3</sup> Map 2.2 displays these parcels, broken down by use. Table 2.4 indicates the breakdown of vacant land, showing that only 6.6 percent of Bridgewater’s land area is currently developable according to zoning criteria. This number likely drops when environmental constraints are taken into account; Maps 2.3 (FEMA Wetlands) and 2.4 (Soils Suitability) display environmental factors that further impact development potential, including:

- *Soil slope*: the percent slope (rise or fall) of the soil surface over 100 feet. If the slope is too steep, erosion and soil instability can result.
- *Wellhead protection areas*: zones protecting the recharge area around public water supply groundwater sources. Zone I refers to the protective radius required around a public water supply well or wellfield,<sup>4</sup> while Zone II extends beyond this radius and must be approved by the DEP’s Drinking Water Program (DWP).<sup>5</sup> Section 15<sup>6</sup> of Bridgewater’s zoning ordinance defines Zones I, II, and III, and the Town’s zoning map (Map 2.5) shows that the Aquifer Protection District follows Zone II areas within the Town’s boundaries.
- *High-yield and medium-yield aquifers*: layers of permeable water-bearing rock or sediment beneath the water table.
- *FEMA national flood hazard risk layer*: indicates special flood hazard areas and regulatory floodways.

Due to limited available land, the Town can no longer rely on land-intensive subdivisions as the primary form of residential development; instead, redevelopment, infill, and flexible design solutions must be the norm moving forward.

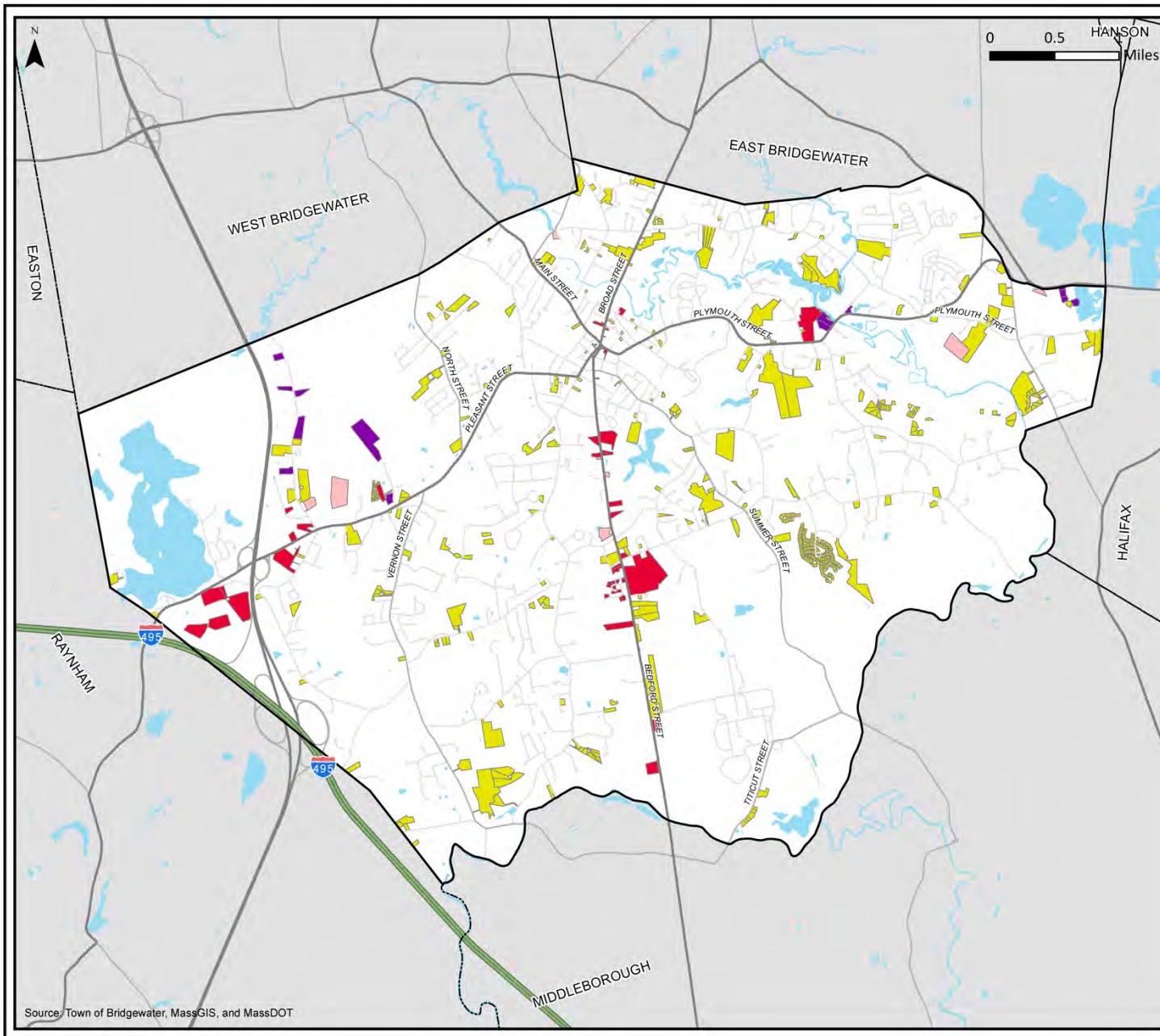
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<sup>3</sup> Per email with assessor, 11/25/2020

<sup>4</sup> 310 CMR 22.02

<sup>5</sup> Per MassGIS, “In cases where hydro-geologic modeling studies have not been performed and there is no approved Zone II, an Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA) is established based on DEP DWP well pumping rates or default values.” There are no IWPA’s within Bridgewater’s boundaries.

<sup>6</sup> Aquifer Protection District; see Map 1.4 for boundaries.

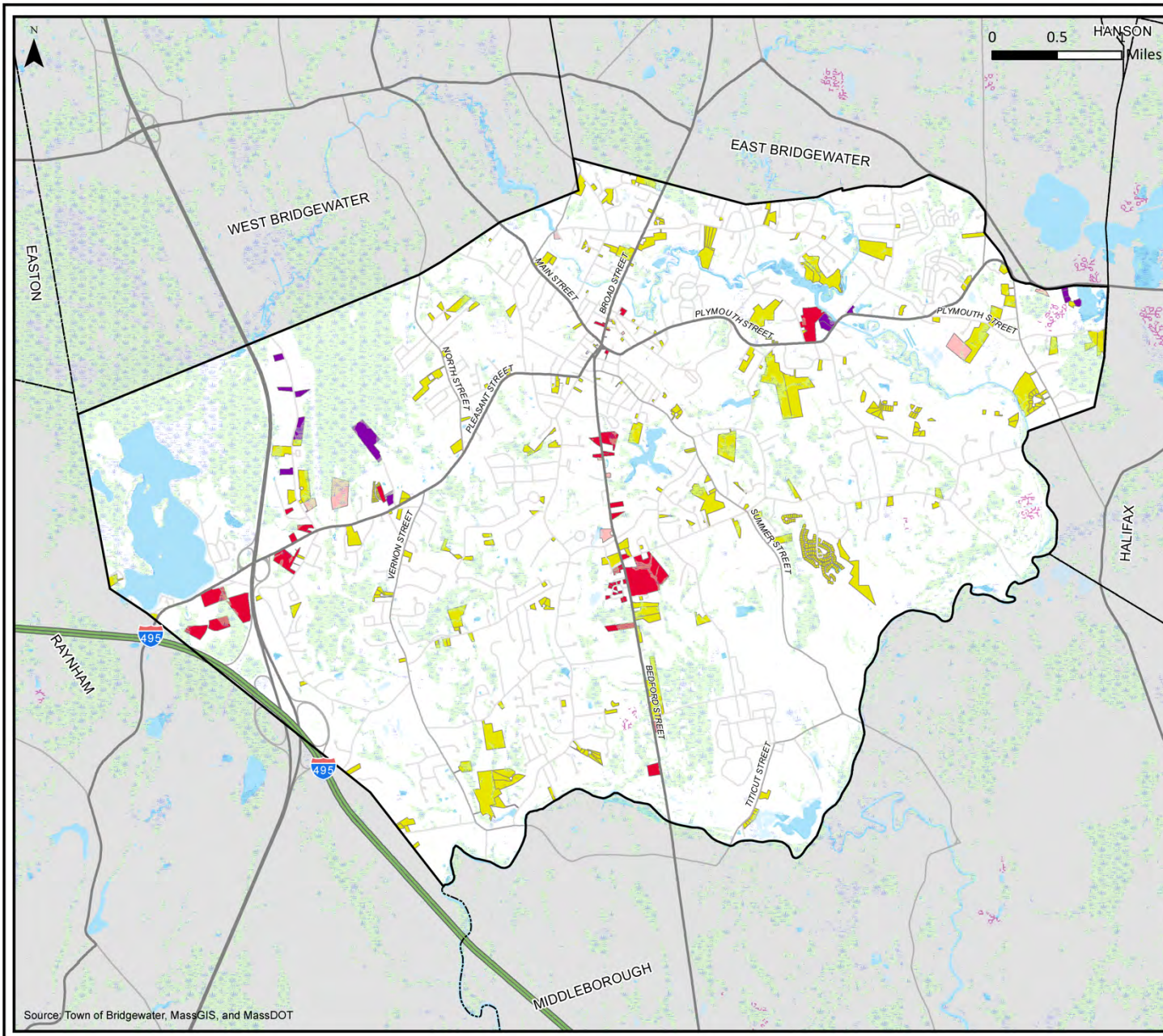


**MAP 2.2.A. TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER DEVELOPABLE VACANT LAND AS OF 2021**

- Use Description**
- Developable Commercial Land
  - Developable Industrial Land
  - Developable Residential Land
  - Potentially Developable Commercial Land
  - Potentially Developable Industrial Land



*"Developable" based on meeting dimensional requirements for buildable lots as noted in Bridgewater Assessor's Records as of 2021. Some parcels may have since been developed.*

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT



**MAP 2.2.B. TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER DEVELOPABLE VACANT LAND AS OF 2021 WITH WETLANDS LAYER**

**Wetlands**

-  Marsh/Bog
-  Wooded marsh
-  Cranberry Bog
-  Open Water

**Use Description**





-  Developable Commercial Land
-  Developable Industrial Land
-  Developable Residential Land
-  Potentially Developable Commercial Land
-  Potentially Developable Industrial Land

*"Developable" based on meeting dimensional requirements for buildable lots as noted in Bridgewater Assessor's Records as of 2021. Some parcels may have since been developed.*





Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

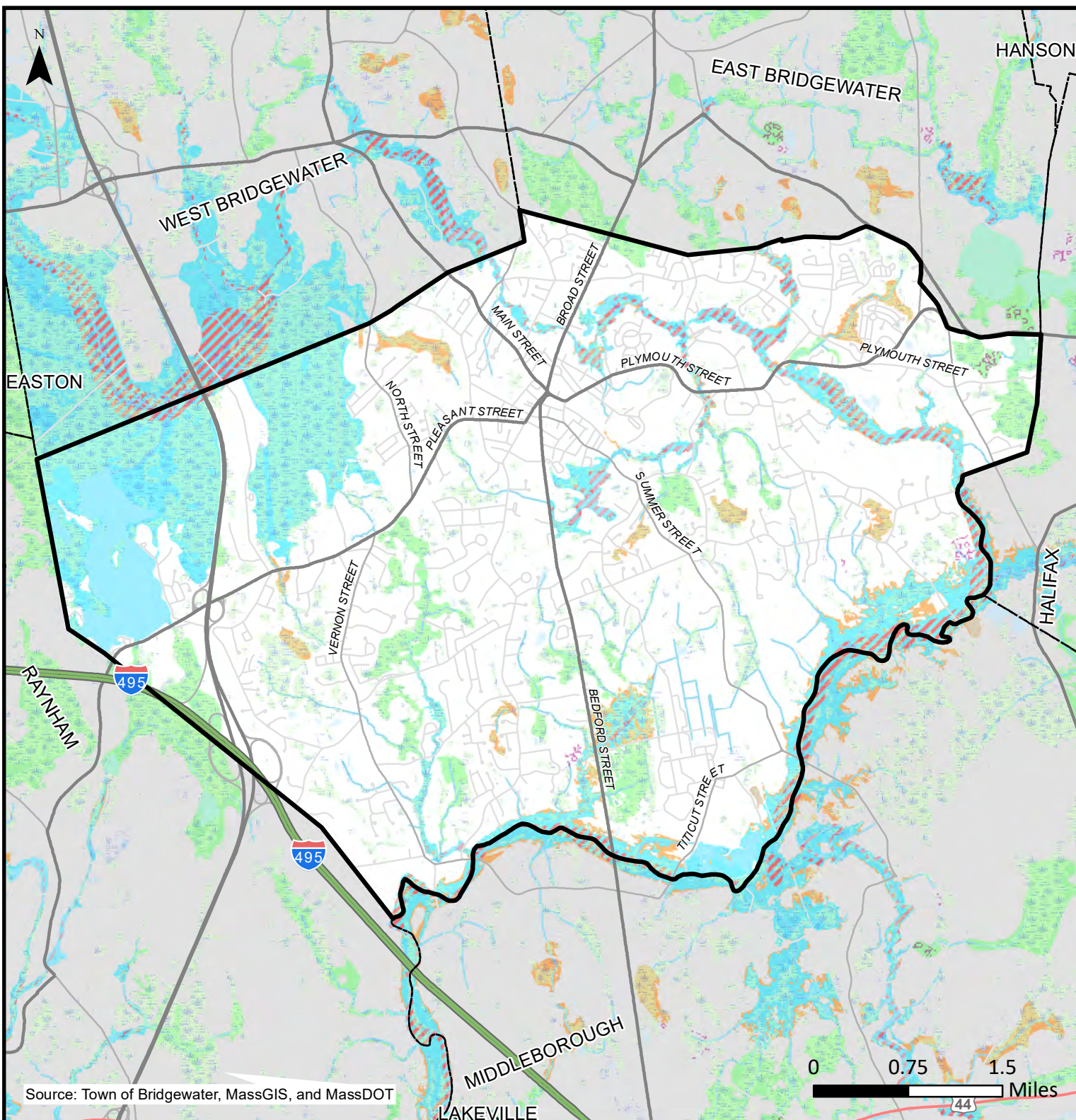
# MAP 2.3. TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER FEMA WETLANDS

## Wetlands

-  Marsh/Bog
-  Wooded marsh
-  Cranberry Bog
-  Open Water

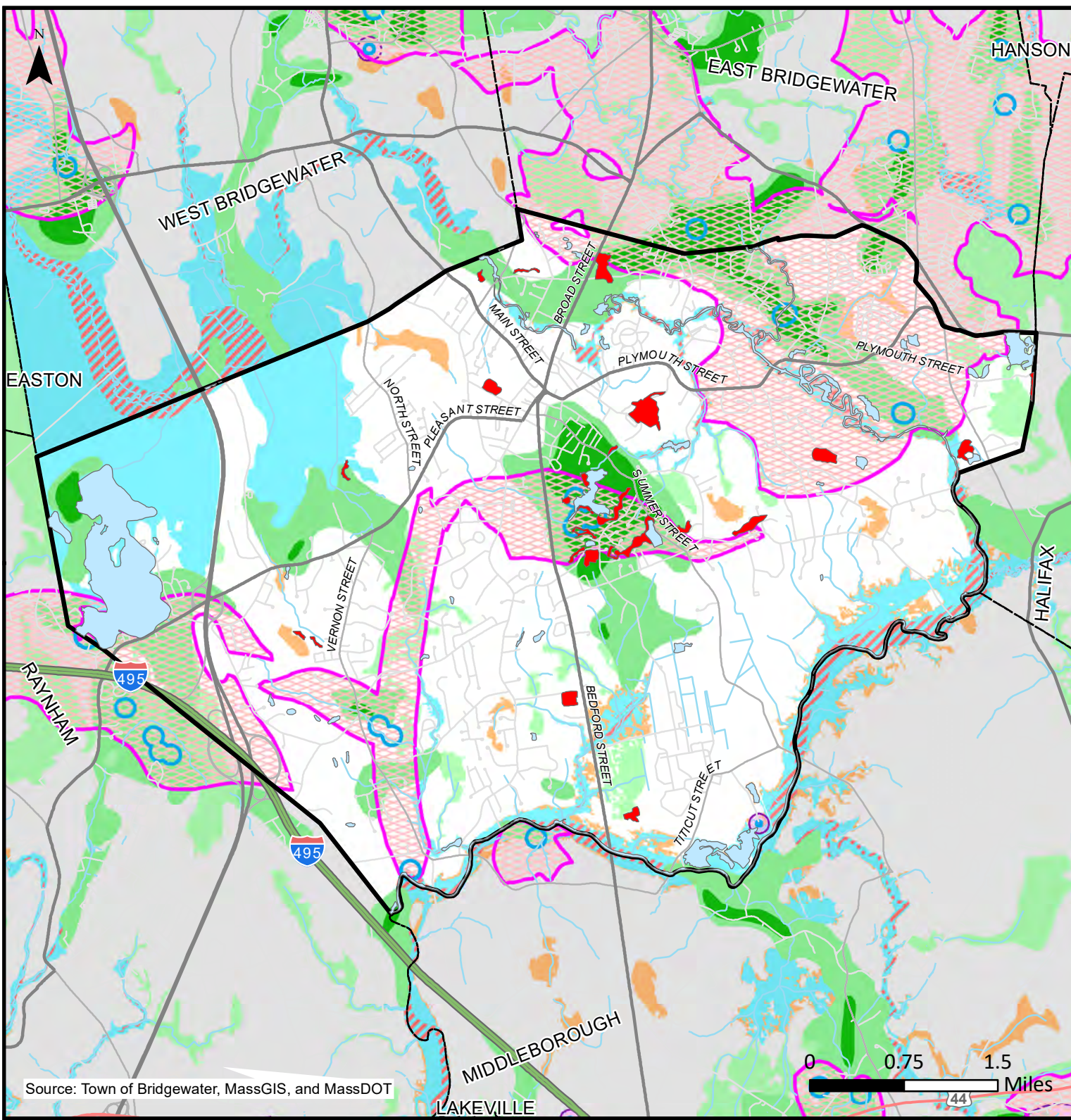
## FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer

-  A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE
-  AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE
-  AE: Regulatory Floodway
-  X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding



Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

# MAP 2.4. TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER SOILS SUITABILITY



### Soils Slope

- 0: Water or Urban Land (no assigned slope)
- A, B, C: Under 15% Slope
- E: Over 15% Slope

### Wellhead Protection Areas

- DEP Approved Zone I
- DEP Approved Zone II
- Interim Wellhead Protection Area

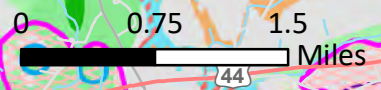
### Aquifers

- High Yield
- Medium Yield

### FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer

- A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE
- AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE
- AE: Regulatory Floodway
- X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

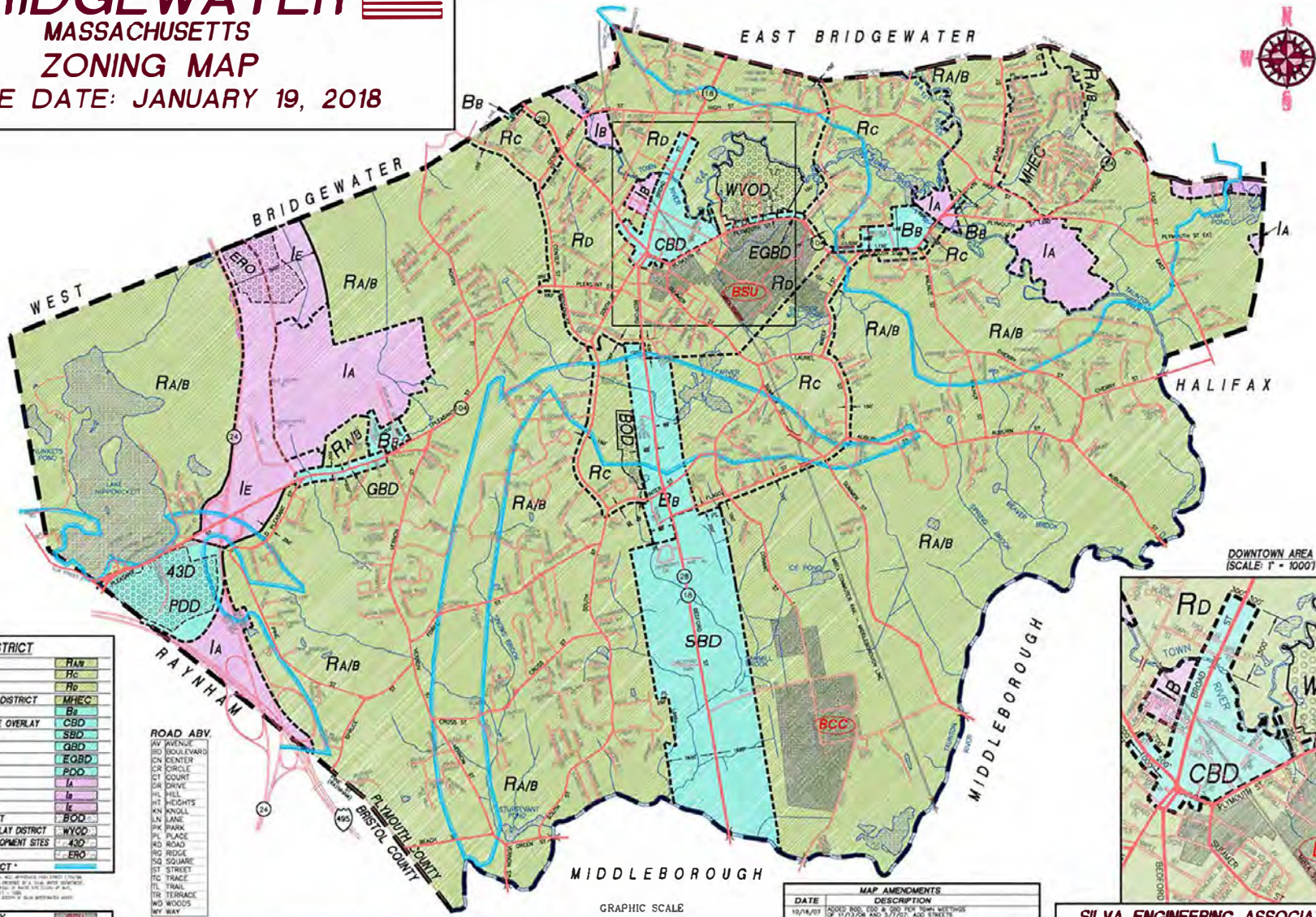


# MAP 2.5. BRIDGEWATER ZONING MAP



## BRIDGEWATER MASSACHUSETTS ZONING MAP

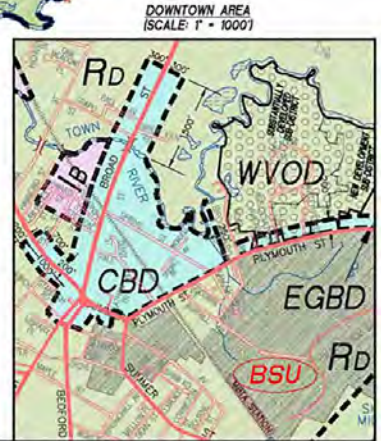
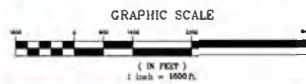
ISSUE DATE: JANUARY 19, 2018



ZONING DISTRICT	
RESIDENTIAL - A/B	RA/B
RESIDENTIAL - C	RC
RESIDENTIAL - D	RD
MOBILE HOME ELDERLY COMMUNITY DISTRICT	MHECC
BUSINESS - B	B
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT - MIXED USE OVERLAY	CBD
SOUTH BUSINESS DISTRICT	SBD
GATEWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT	GBD
EAST GATEWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT	EGBD
PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT	PDD
INDUSTRIAL - A	IA
INDUSTRIAL - B	IB
ELM STREET INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	IE
BEDFORD STREET OVERLAY DISTRICT	BOD
WATSFORD VILLAGE SMART GROWTH OVERLAY DISTRICT	WVOD
EXPEDITED PERMITTING AND PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT SITES	43D
ELM STREET RETAIL OVERLAY	ERO
ZONE II-AQUIFER PROTECTION DISTRICT*	

ROAD ABBV	
AV AVENUE	AV
RD ROAD	RD
ON CENTER	ON
CR CIRCLE	CR
CT SQUARE	CT
DR DRIVE	DR
HL HILL	HL
KN KNOLLS	KN
LN LANE	LN
PK PARK	PK
PL PLACE	PL
RD ROAD	RD
RG RIDGE	RG
SG SQUARE	SG
ST STREET	ST
TR TRAIL	TR
TR TERRACE	TR
WD WOODS	WD
WY WAY	WY

THE INTENT OF THIS PLAN IS TO ILLUSTRATE THE APPROXIMATE LIMITS OF THE VARIOUS ZONING DISTRICTS. FOR AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF THE ZONING DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, SEE SECTION 3 ZONING BOUNDARY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS ZONING BY-LAW.



BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY  
 BRIDGEWATER CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX  
 SEA ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES, P.C.

MAP AMENDMENTS	
DATE	DESCRIPTION
10/18/07	ADDED BOD, ERO & IE TO TOWN MEETING 11/13/08 AND 5/7/07. ADD STREETS
3/17/08	ADDED SBD AND WVOD PER TOWN MEETING 11/13/07
7/28/08	CORRECT CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD) BOUNDARY
2/24/09	UPDATE BUSINESS B, INDUSTRIAL A AND I; UPDATE AQUIFER PROTECTION BOUNDARIES
7/23/09	ADD 43D OVERLAY PER TOWN MEETING ARTICLE 30 5/1/09
10/27/13	RETRACT ST WATSFORD ST ZONING CHANGE
11/15/15	ADD IA, IB, IE, SBD, ERO, ZONING MAP AMENDMENT EASY 11

**SILVA ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES, P.C.**  
 CIVIL ENGINEERS, LAND SURVEYORS & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS  
 1615 BEDFORD STREET BRIDGEWATER, MA. 02324  
 PHONE (508) 697-3100 FAX (508) 697-3136 www.silvaeng.com

## ZONING REVIEW

**Table 2.5. Bridgewater Zoning Districts**

Zoning District	Gross Acres	% of Town Area
<b>Residential Districts (Total)</b>	<b>(15,418.90)</b>	<b>(84.9%)</b>
Residential A/B	11,876.96	65.4%
Residential C	1,500.49	8.3%
Residential D	1,733.19	9.5%
MHEC	308.26	1.7%
<b>Commercial Districts (Total)</b>	<b>(1,200.95)</b>	<b>(6.6%)</b>
Business B	287.45	1.6%
Central Business District	129.66	0.7%
South Business District	741.32	4.1%
Gateway Business Districts	30.07	0.2%
East Gateway Business District	12.45	0.1%
<b>Industrial Districts (Total)</b>	<b>(1,539.36)</b>	<b>(8.5%)</b>
Industrial A	823.93	4.5%
Industrial B	62.35	0.3%
Elm Street Industrial District	454.55	2.5%
Planned Development District	198.53	1.1%
<b>Total (Includes both land and water area)</b>	<b>18,159.21</b>	<b>100%</b>

Bridgewater’s Zoning Ordinance is not only a document prescribing how the Town’s landscape may be altered in the future, but also a historical document of how past Bridgewater citizens and governments wanted their community to look and operate. Zoning is how municipalities shape the future of land use. Boards’ interpretations of their zoning documents will decide the shape of new development to come. Regardless of what principles a community espouses, ultimately zoning prevails.

Bridgewater’s ordinances are explicit about the purpose of its specialized zoning districts. Basic use districts that act as “defaults” for each zoning category such as Residence A/B and Business B do not have “Purpose” sections describing their intended function, but overlay districts and specialized zones do. Thus, little guesswork is required in assessing whether the intent of most of Bridgewater’s zoning districts has translated to the built environment.

The logic behind much of Bridgewater’s zoning is density control. Zones within the three major zoning classes (residential, commercial, industrial) do not differ dramatically regarding dimensional aspects and allowed uses; rather, each zone within each class creates a gradient of similar but gradually more intensive uses and denser development.

The arrangement of these zones imposes a town-wide development logic where dense development is focused in the downtown area and gradually becomes less dense as one moves outward. High-impact uses (ones requiring large lots or heavy machinery, for example) are located near highways and away from core residential areas. Multifamily developments larger than two units and mixed-use developments, for example, can only be built in or adjacent to the Central Business District. In this way, Bridgewater expects to attract more modern, growth-oriented projects to certain areas while having much of the Town keep its ever-desirable “rural New England character.”

**Chapter 2. Land Use**

Maximum building height in town is consistent across zoning districts; where specified, the maximum is always either forty or thirty-five feet. Regulations for development near wetlands are strong. Buildings are prohibited within fifty feet of wetlands, and buildable lots must consist of either 50% upland or 10,000 sf of upland, whichever is greater.

**Changes from Previous Master Plan (2002)**

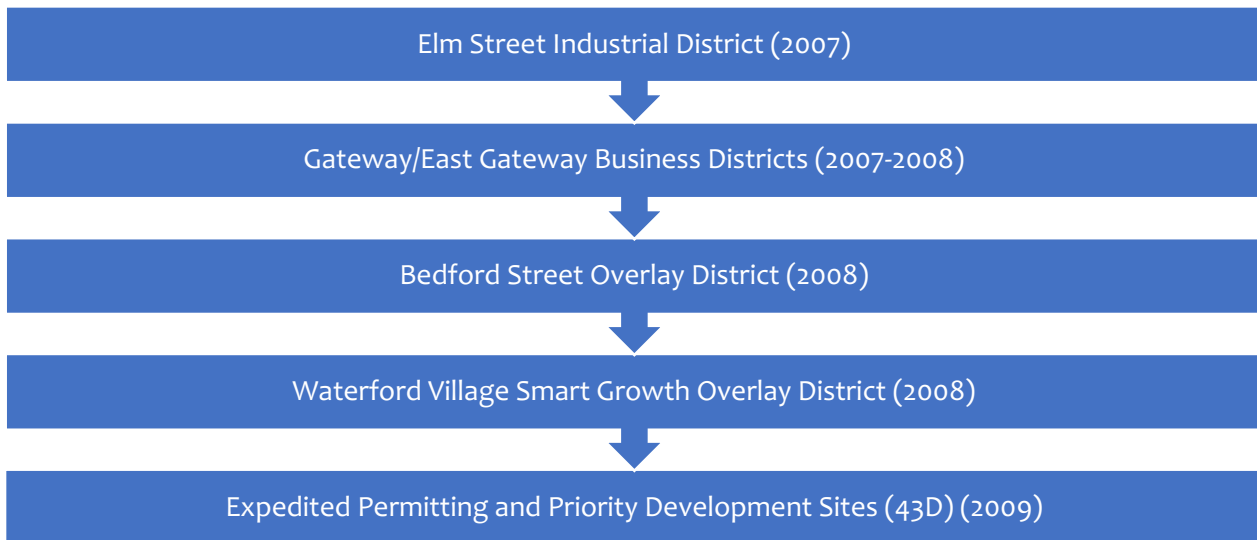
Bridgewater’s most recent completed Master Plan is approaching two decades old, providing plenty of hindsight with which to evaluate how that plan’s recommendations shaped the Town’s development. There are several amendments to the Zoning Ordinance since 2002 that can be traced to goals outlined in the 2002 Master Plan and 2014 Master Plan Update, but many other recommendations that are as valid in 2020 as they were in 2002 (see Table 2.6).

**Table 2.6. Implementation of Selected 2002 & 2014 Master Plan Recommendations**

2002 Master Plan Recommendation	Current Status
Prioritize high density/senior housing near Town Center, promote mixed use	Provisions for mixed-use developments in the Central Business District, allowable with benefit of Site Plan Review.
Concentrate commercial activity into compact, walkable districts rather than strip development; limit commercial land to attract denser, healthier retail environments to fewer locations	Little change since 2002 outside of CBD
Channel development into already-disturbed areas, encourage infill, connectedness	CBD and Gateway Districts encourage pedestrian improvements, working within existing lot dimensions
Establish 4 mixed-use commercial/residential nodes outside of the Center, rather than focus on “strip” commercial areas	Little change since 2002; outside of the CBD mixed use is not encouraged. Some new commercial development in nodes areas such as Bedford St.-Winter St. intersection
Determine parking based on actual need	Little change since 2002, although many development options include measures for partial reduction of parking requirements
Create design standards for commercial areas	Gateway Districts incorporate this recommendation, requiring feedback from a Design Review Committee and compliance with design criteria
Upgrade existing cluster development standards	Open Space Conservation Development regulations adopted
Consider phased growth ordinance	Little change since 2002; the decades since have not seen a continuation of the same rapid population growth experienced previously



Since the adoption of the previous Master Plan in 2002, the following zoning district and four overlays have been adopted:



With the exception of IE, these districts are either very small or cover a specific property and seem to represent the Town using zoning to address issues on a more granular level than in the past.

### Residential Zoning Districts

#### Residential A/B, C, & D

Like most Massachusetts towns, the vast majority of Bridgewater’s land is zoned for low-density residential use, most often taking the form of lots with one single-family dwelling. The *Residential A/B* zone represents the majority of residential land, and the majority of total town land, about 65%. It can be thought of as the Town’s “default” zoning that applies everywhere that a more specialized or intensive use is not present. *Residential C & D* are smaller, centrally located zones similar to Residential A/B but allowing for denser development and a select set of more varied uses.

The Residential D zone surrounds the Central Business District and can be thought of as the Town’s “core” residential district as it covers the most densely populated and developed area. Proximate to the CBD’s commercial and mixed-use activities as well as Bridgewater State University, Residential D appropriately boasts the most permissive set of allowed uses of any residential zone. Uses such as Incubator Innovation Centers, veterinary uses, and conversions to live-work units are all allowable, albeit by Special Permit. Residential D is friendlier to multiple units on a single lot than either of the other zones; while duplexes and free-standing two family developments are allowable by Special Permit in both C and D, only in D is the minimum lot area per dwelling unit smaller than the minimum lot size. This serves to incentivize single-family developments in A/B and C more than in D.

The Residential C zone is in turn arranged in a partial ring around the Residential D zone. This arrangement of districts serves to create density that “radiates” outward from the highly developed Central Business District outward to the more rural Residential A/B areas. Residential C and D have a much smaller minimum lot size (18,500 sf vs. 43,560 sf), lower frontage requirement, smaller minimum lot depth, and the ability to develop a greater portion of the lot.

**Chapter 2. Land Use**

Residential A/B is Bridgewater’s preferred zone for Solar Energy Systems, with “small/medium scale” allowed by right and large-scale projects requiring a Special Permit. Smaller scale solar uses may be allowable in Residential C or D via a Special Permit. Given that the large portion of the Town’s open land lies within the Residential A/B district, it makes a highly practical location to allow this type of use.

Lastly, Bridgewater recently adopted provisions allowing “retreat lots” by Special Permit in Residential A/B, C, and D. This allows residential use of backlands, with some restrictions: the parcel must be large (150,000 square feet minimum), curb cuts must be kept over 25 feet away from existing curb cuts, some small amount of frontage is required (30 feet minimum), and only one retreat lot may be created from a contiguously owned area of land.

**Mobile Home Elderly Community (1994)**

The MHEC zoning district is home to two major age restricted (55+) communities of single-family prefabricated dwellings (“prefabricated” is a more accurate description than “mobile home,” a term that often conjures an image of trailers on wheels). The communities, Stone Meadow and High Pond, are owned, developed, and operated by the same entity.

The overlay is clearly meant to facilitate a small number of large projects, as the minimum lot size is 50 acres, and was enacted to facilitate the Stone Meadow /High Pond developments, specifically. The MHEC is completely built out, containing two large lots with one mobile home community each. While the MHEC represents a successful effort by the Town and developer to facilitate a specific type of development in the 1990’s, it’s importance to the future of Bridgewater’s land use is extremely limited.

These retirement communities offer a valuable option to Bridgewater’s seniors. As the population continues to age, the Town should consider age-restricted development options closer to the Town Center to reduce reliance on automobile transit.

**Waterford Village Smart Growth Overlay District**

Located north across Route 104 from BSU’s main campus, WVOD is a Chapter 40R Smart Growth district approved by the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in 2008. According to DHCD, adopting 40R regulations allows towns to “create dense residential or mixed-use smart growth zoning districts, including a high percentage of affordable housing units” (mass.gov). The goal in Bridgewater was to expand the existing Waterford Village Apartments (built during the housing boom period of the 1970s) and fill in the remaining developable area, including the potential for commercial uses along Route 104.



*Waterford Village Apartments*

Centrally located and proximate to multiple commercial areas, highways, the MBTA station, and the University, this was a well-targeted initiative expected to create almost 600 new units (127 affordable) in a high-demand area. However, due to the WVOD being contiguous with a single large property it is dependent on a single property owner/developer, and no development plans have ever moved forward with the current owner.

### Open Space Conservation Development

The OSCD is an alternative application for a residential subdivision allowing for denser development than would otherwise be allowed in any underlying residential district in exchange for the preservation of significant areas of open space. To determine the total number of allowed units, a very simple formula is used: buildable land divided by the district's minimum lot size. This does not constitute a substantive increase in allowable number of units, although because the proof of conventional yield is purely hypothetical, the base yield for an OSCD has the potential to count units that might not have been successfully included in a Definitive Subdivision. The requirement that a Definitive Subdivision Plan be filed concurrently with any Open Space Plan is not uncommon, yet it can serve to undermine the process. It is also redundant alongside a formula that also determines unit yield, but in a much more convenient way.

Despite the similar number of units, an OSCD is denser than the traditional residential development allowed in Bridgewater, requiring a minimum of only 10,000 square feet of lot area and 25 feet of frontage. The Planning Board does have discretion to either increase or decrease these dimensional standards "to conform to the stated purposes and intent" (Bridgewater Zoning Ordinance 9.2.4) of the Ordinance. OSCDs are explicitly limited to single family residential units.

At least 60% of land must be preserved as open space, and design process measures are implemented to maximize the quality of open space, requiring developers to prioritize valuable, usable areas, and limiting the amount of wetlands that can be counted. Developers must also "incorporate multimodal transportation approaches."

While much attention is focused on mixed-use and higher-density development elsewhere in this Land Use section, it is inevitable that subdivisions will continue to be proposed in town and will likely continue to be the default form of development in the Residential A/B district. The OSCD should serve as the preferable subdivision option going forward, perhaps even the default if possible, to preserve as much of Bridgewater's scenic and environmentally sensitive open space as possible.

### Accessory Dwelling Units

Referred to as "expanded living space (in-law living area)", ADUs are allowed by right in RA/B, RC, RD, and the two Gateway Business Districts, and allowable through Special Permit in all other zones. The additional unit must be no more than 600 square feet, contain a maximum of two bedrooms, and must not be closed off from the main dwelling area. This last provision in particular seems designed to limit "expanded living spaces" to family members, or at least to discourage renting the space to strangers as much as possible. Overall, these regulations are vague, although allowing ADUs by right for the vast majority of residences provides a flexible option for Bridgewater residents to adapt their homes to changing family needs while remaining in town.

### Home Occupations & Other Accessory Uses

Section 6.3 Table of Use Regulations allows "customary" home occupations or home offices by right in every district except for the MHEC, where they are prohibited. Such uses may occupy no more than 50 percent of the gross floor area of a dwelling, employ no more than three people, and does not alter the existing residential character of the building. This is a very flexible home occupation ordinance, although its open-ended nature could invite potential abuse. In addition, several customary accessory uses are allowed by right in residential districts, including keeping livestock for personal use, swimming pools, and trades such as carpentry or masonry. In keeping with Bridgewater's agricultural

history, the Town is a “right-to-farm” community, allowing farming activities by right in every zoning district but the Planned Development District.

### **Mixed Use Development & Live Work Conversion**

As of 2016, the Central Business District (CBD) has allowed developments with a mix of commercial and residential uses. This provision, Section 19 (Mixed Uses), is the Town’s first major initiative to encourage housing in a non-residential zone (See the CBD section for details). Conversions of existing units to hybrid commercial-residential “live-work units” is also allowable by Special Permit in the CBD and surrounding districts, including Residential D. CBD regulations were modified in 2018 to allow for more flexibility for Special Permit conditions and provide added density incentives for developers.

### **Commercial Zoning Districts**

The largest commercial zoning district in Bridgewater is the South Business District along Route 28. In contrast, the heart of commercial activity in town is unsurprisingly the Central Business District, which is roughly synonymous with Downtown Bridgewater. Several smaller commercial districts are located along the multiple state highways that cross through the Town.

The BB and SBD have minimum open space requirements, 20-30 percent of the lot depending on overall lot size, with larger lots requiring a greater percentage of open space.

### **Business B**

Despite acting as Bridgewater’s default commercial zoning district, the Business B district represents a minority of the Town’s total commercial area. It follows a commercial corridor along the northern portion of Bedford Street/Route 28, south of the Town Center. The BB district has the smallest minimum lot size of any district, at 10,000 square feet (some other districts do not have a minimum lot size) and some of the least intensive setback requirements: 30 feet in the front, 15 feet on the sides, and 25 feet in the rear. The district allows most common commercial uses by right, including gas stations and other automotive uses, fast food establishments, and offices, among many others. As might be expected of the Town’s basic commercial zone, it boasts few unique uses amongst Bridgewater’s business districts. The development here is typical strip-style highway-side commercial space.

### **Gateway/East Gateway Business Districts**

Although established as two separate zoning districts with their own detailed regulatory articles in the Bridgewater Zoning Ordinance, the Gateway Business District (GBD) and East Gateway Business District (EGBD) are almost functionally identical and can be considered as a single zone occurring in two separate locations. The legal differences between the two zones consist of a more inclusive set of allowable uses in the EGBD, including banks, dry cleaning, and veterinary services. Both are narrow strips of land along Route 104, the major east-west road passing through Bridgewater, and their defining feature is an Architectural Review process and set of design standards that seek to “reserve and maintain the historic character of the neighborhood... while facilitating economic development.”

All projects already subject to Planning Board review in the Gateway districts must seek the input of the Design Review Committee or another qualified design consultant. The design standards presented in the Zoning Ordinance push developers to mimic historic New England styles with a handmade

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aesthetic and wood as the preferred material. Signs are particularly strictly regulated in this regard. Landscaped buffers are also required, contributing to these districts' focus on aesthetics.

A permanent 12-foot sidewalk easement along Route 104 is required, implying that pedestrian access within each Gateway district is a long-term goal. Currently, however, these areas are very much still highways, lacking the walkable New England village shopping areas found in the CBD. The districts' narrow width and current reliance on vehicular travel limit development to distinct highway-side commercial entities rather than pockets of holistic, integrated development. These Gateway districts are designed to ensure these areas are developed consistent with the surrounding structures and historic Town character, and future pedestrian infrastructure will further enhance these districts.

**Central Business District**

Roughly contiguous with "downtown" Bridgewater and the traditional Town Center, the regulations of the CBD govern the development of the Town's commercial and cultural hub. Section 3.31 of the Zoning Ordinance lays out the purpose of the CBD, the key goals of the district are "economic revitalization and re-development" in a manner consistent with existing "small retail and pedestrian service establishments," and to direct growth in relation to the neighboring Bridgewater State University and MBTA station (the station, opened in 1997, was in the proposal phase at the time of the adoption of the CBD in 1994).

Dimensional requirements in the CBD are extremely flexible to account for the fact that the majority of development in the area took place pre-zoning following the dense development patterns of New England village center. There are no minimum dimensional requirements for existing lots, in effect grandfathering Bridgewater's downtown into compliance with modern zoning regulations and allowing for the preservation of existing settlement patterns and density. New lots created in the district are subject to dimensional regulations, but with higher allowable density than any other zoning district. Requirements include a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, minimum frontage of 100 feet, rear setbacks of 15 feet, and side and front setbacks of 5 feet each.

Major updates to the function and purpose of the CBD came in 2016 and 2018 with the addition of regulations allowing for mixed use projects through a Site Plan Review process, making the CBD the only zoning district allowing such projects (while "remain[ing] sensitive to the historic and cultural importance" of the area). These projects allow a much higher density of units than elsewhere in Bridgewater, up to a maximum of 26 units or 27 bedrooms per acre.

**South Business District**

Located along the southern portion of Route 28, the SBD is Bridgewater's largest commercial district by area, and according to Section 3.32 of the Zoning Ordinance is meant to "encourage the development of major business parks involving a variety of commercial, light manufacturing and transportation" uses. The large area of the district is meant to encourage planned developments and on-site traffic management efforts, and larger developments are further incentivized through provisions for "shared drainage facilities, access ways and open space between sites as well as through the streamlining of permit approval procedures." The SBD is also the one area of Bridgewater where Adult Uses are permitted.

The SBD has the most intensive dimensional requirements of any commercial district, which elsewhere tend allow smaller, tighter lots than Bridgewater's residential areas. In fact, the SBD's

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setbacks are the most stringent of any Bridgewater zoning district, requiring 60 feet in the front 25 feet on the sides, and 40 feet in the rear. These requirements can be lessened for any developments with their sole means of access through a street approved under the Subdivision Control Law.

Development in the SBD has been minimal since its inception in 1994, with two modestly sized industrial developments present (Fireworks Circle and Bedford Park), one of which may have been in existence beforehand. Development options east of Route 28 are limited, as most of the SBD on that side of the highway is owned by the state as part of the land holdings surrounding the Bridgewater Correctional Complex. The west side of the highway is likely where further development in this district will occur.

**Bedford Street Overlay District**

The Bedford Street Overlay District (BSOD) is directly west of the Business B district along the northern portion of Bedford Street. The underlying zoning is Residential C rather than a commercial zone, but the Ordinance is explicit that the district is meant to “facilitate the expansion of a commercial node along Bedford Street.” The BSOD is designed to host intensive commercial uses while preserving land in the adjacent Aquifer Protection District, through the use of transfer of development rights. A developer may permanently preserve a parcel of open space elsewhere in the RC and Aquifer Protection Districts in exchange for the right to develop an equivalent piece of land in the BSOD. This is a newer, innovative approach that serves economic and preservation interests at the same time, each in the best-suited location.

**Elm Retail Overlay District**

The ERO is a zone established along Elm Street in the underlying IE district for the purpose of allowing the operation of medical marijuana treatment centers/dispensaries, several of which have subsequently opened.

**Industrial Zoning Districts**

All three of Bridgewater’s industrial districts have similar dimensional requirements: 40,000 sf minimum lot size, 200 ft minimum frontage, 40 ft front and rear yard setbacks, 25-foot side setbacks, and roughly 70 percent maximum lot coverage (IB allows up to 75 percent).

**Industrial A & B**

These districts differ in the intensity of allowed uses. Industrial B is made up of two small areas directly northwest of the CBD and has a much more restrictive set of uses than IA due to the density of development in the area. Uses such as lumber/building suppliers, retail, or health clinics

**Elm Street Industrial District**

The Elm Street Industrial District (IE) is Bridgewater’s newest base zoning district, established in 2007 and located off of the intersection of Routes 24 and 104. According to Section 3.33 of the Zoning Ordinance, the IE is meant to foster “office and industrial development” while utilizing Low Impact Design principles to reduce impact on surrounding natural resources (notably, Lake Nippenickett and Hockomock Swamp). The Ordinance also makes a point of that the zone should be “limited to industrial, office, and limited commercial uses,” explicitly stating that residential uses are incompatible with the purposes of the district.

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The Zoning Ordinance contains a special permit procedure for a “commercial/industrial park” within the IE district on a lot of at least 5 acres and less stringent setback requirements than in the underlying district (rear and side setbacks both reduced to 20 feet). Principal uses allowed in such a development are Office and Laboratory, Industrial, Wholesale, and Transportation, with up to 20 percent of the floor area being usable for Retail, Restaurant, or Commercial Service uses. The Special Permit process is meant to “[allow] greater flexibility for larger-scale planned development projects.”

The IE district includes Bridgewater’s two marijuana dispensaries. Bridgewater was awarded a \$3 million MassWorks Infrastructure Grant in 2018 for the reconstruction of the district’s infrastructure to enable transformative employment and housing along the corridor. Electricity extension and traffic improvements were also part of the revitalization plan, which was completed in 2020.

**Planned Development District (1989)**

The Town’s only PDD has been almost completely overlaid with a 43D zone, where the major commercial development “Axis at Lake Shore” was completed in 2014. The original purpose of the PDD was to encourage industrial parks to “achieve significant revenue or employment benefits without adverse impacts on their neighborhoods or on the Town’s natural resources” through a more flexible Special Permit procedure. Single family housing can be built as of right under Residential A/B requirements.



*Lakeshore Center at Lake Nippenicket features a 77,000 sq ft office building situated on 142 acres of land. The office and technology park is owned by Claremont Companies, the developer behind Axis at Lakeshore and VIVA Lakeshore.*

The dimensional requirements are similar to other industrial districts, but use regulations are handled differently than in other districts. Each permissible use may only take up to a certain percentage of the total floor area of a development; for example, up to 80 percent of a development may be devoted to health care facilities or research and development (Section 9.641). However, reading the Ordinance section on PDDs does not provide a fully accurate picture of what development can occur there, because there is an overlay district that effects the majority of Bridgewater’s only PDD, described in the next section.

**Expedited Permitting and Priority Development Sites District (2009)**

Per MGL Chapter 43D, an expedited permitting process meant to attract development by streamlining administrative procedures and ensuring a maximum 180-day turnaround for permits. Chapter 43 does not affect underlying use or dimensional requirements. Bridgewater has one 43D overlay over the PDD district. The district has successfully attracted large-scale developments: major projects completed in the 43D overlay since its inception include apartment complexes Axis at Lakeshore and VIVA Bridgewater. Additional commercial uses have been permitted for the 43D Overlay within the last year, so further buildout of the area is expected.

### Other Notable Zoning Districts

#### Flood Plain & Aquifer Protection Districts

Designed to protect Bridgewater’s water resources, these overlay districts impose additional restrictions on development near sensitive area, on top of underlying zoning requirements. The defining characteristic of the Flood Plain District is the requirement of a Special Permit from the Board of Appeals if a new building is “erected, altered, [or] enlarged.” Additional feedback from the Planning Board and Conservation Commission are required before any permit is issued. The Board must find that new developments are adequately protected from flooding, Town water supplies are protected, and water flow patterns are preserved.

The Aquifer Protection district is also very likely to trigger a Special Permit process. Projects creating an impervious area of more than 2,500 square feet in a 10,000 square foot or smaller lot or an impervious area of more than 50 percent of a lot larger than 43,560 square feet require a Special Permit; lots in between these size categories use a formula to determine if a permit is required. Certain uses considered hazardous to the Town’s groundwater supply are prohibited in the district, such as gas stations, storage of animal manure, or landfills. The expansion or alteration of a prohibited use will also require a Special Permit.

### Development Standards and Permitting Regulations

#### Site Plan Approval

Called “Site Approval” under Section 9.80, Site Plan Review is a process used across the Commonwealth for regulating projects expected to have “substantial impact” on a community. The Planning Board is designated as the Special Permit Granting Authority for Site Approval in Bridgewater, and they have discretion when considering an application. The process is required for a set of intensive uses (including industrial uses, retail business, hospitals, hotels, etc.) when parking requirements trigger a need for 6 or more spaces. In this way, the Ordinance hopes to capture only more impactful projects.

A preliminary site plan is encouraged, a process where the Board may give an Applicant extensive feedback on a draft plan before the main application is filed. The Ordinance also includes a detailed set of criteria and guidelines.

#### Special Permits

The Special Permit process is utilized liberally throughout Bridgewater’s Zoning Ordinance, covering uses and project types that the Town wishes to allow but regulate more closely than an activity allowed by right. There are many uses that require a Special Permit, and several overlay districts carry their own Special Permit requirements. Bridgewater’s default Special Permit Granting Authority is the Planning Board, although this designation is given to the Zoning Board for several types of Special Permit (for example, Flood Plain District Special Permits as described in the previous section).

#### Off-Street Parking

Bridgewater’s parking requirements are consistent and straightforward based on broad use categories. For example, all residential uses regardless of type require 2 spaces per dwelling unit absent any allowable modifications of standards.



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Other uses require parking based on floor area: commercial space and retail stores require one space per 200 square feet of gross floor area, manufacturing facilities require one space per 600 square feet, and fast food restaurants require one space per 75 square feet plus one space per employee.

Several sections of the Ordinance offer the option of a reduction in required parking spaces at the discretion of the Planning Board, up to a maximum reduction of 25 percent to what would otherwise be required. Green parking incentives are also provided in Gateway Districts, allowing for a reduction in required spaces if best practices for reducing impervious area are followed. Depending on the type of use, requirements could be lowered to 3.3 spaces per 1000 sf of gross floor area. In mixed use development projects providing bike or auto sharing or rental facilities the combined parking requirement may be reduced by the Special Permit Granting Authority by 25 percent.

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### 2.3. Challenges and Opportunities

It is typical for a Comprehensive Master Plan to make recommendations for improving the structure, clarity, and consistency of a Zoning Bylaw or Ordinance in order to clarify future land use possibilities and streamline future permitting processes. Bridgewater's Zoning Ordinance is in the middle of a long, comprehensive rewrite process that will not be complete until after the adoption of this plan. Therefore, it is recommended that the zoning rewrite be completed as a vital first step in addressing the Town's issues and goals related to land use. Other land use and zoning opportunities are outlined below.

- Update and streamline the Town's approach to subdivisions; encourage open space subdivisions as much as possible and make sure that it offers a significantly more streamlined process than conventional. The most direct way to accomplish this is to make the Open Space Conservation Development the default form of subdivision development in Town. Otherwise, incentives should be considered, such as offering density bonuses to developers for addressing goals like affordable housing.
- As covered in the Zoning Review section, Bridgewater does have a state-accepted Chapter 40R Smart Growth district but has been unable to take advantage of it. Attempt to preserve the Chapter 40R Smart Growth infrastructure laid out in the Waterford Village Overlay District (WVOD). The Town should make an effort to periodically review the viability of development in the WVOD so as to hopefully make use of the valuable legal framework already incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance. Alternate locations for a 40R district should be explored as well, as the current Ordinance could be adapted to a nearby location with minimal tweaking. This overlay is one of the few ways the Ordinance encourages affordable housing, mixed use, and denser development, and it should be preserved.
- Consider amending zoning districts (especially those close to the Town Center) to allow for more natural mixed-use development patterns. Some newer regulations are already oriented around organic use patterns rather than existing arbitrary zoning categories. For example, Incubator Innovation Centers and conversions to live-work units are allowed by Special Permit in the Central Business, Industrial B, and Residential D districts. Despite being zoned for different use categories, these three districts are all present in and around the densely populated and commercially oriented Bridgewater Center, and their common characteristics make them a fit for innovation centers.

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- Districts that have struggled to achieve their stated goals such as the SBD and EGBD should be reevaluated. Either tweak regulations to better serve those goals or rethink those goals entirely. Perhaps valuable housing projects, for example, could find a home in these districts.
- To the extent possible, the Ordinance should be clear about what is or is not allowed by right in any district, reducing reliance on the subjective interpretations of the regulations. While Bridgewater residents do not desire to reduce reliance on Special Permits, making the process as clear and streamlined as possible will help the Special Permit process function more effectively. The Town should, however, make sure that current Special Permit requirements are appropriate. An example of where Bridgewater succeeds at this is Accessory Dwelling Units, allowing modest additions by right in most residential areas where many other Towns would require a public hearing process.
- Consolidate or simplify the delegation of Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) powers. Like many Massachusetts towns, Bridgewater designates either the Planning Board or Board of Appeals as the SPGA interchangeably throughout its Zoning Ordinance. Consistency in this regard would increase comprehension of zoning procedures for the public and make applications requiring multiple Special Permits less difficult.

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## **2.4. Goals, Policies, and Recommendations**

### **LAND USE GOALS**

- Provide clear, concise, and transparent zoning regulations to guide regulatory boards and landowners.
- Balance land use and development with environmental stewardship and social equity concerns.

### **LAND USE POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Policies for decision makers are listed **in bold** with relevant recommendations listed below the policy. For detail regarding timing and responsible parties for each recommendation, please see the Implementation Program in Chapter 8.

#### **Use “smart growth” development approaches to preserve open space and encourage sustainability.**

- Develop flexible Open Space Design regulations for commercial development to complement Bridgewater’s existing residential Open Space Conservation Development option.

#### **Improve public access to zoning information and education.**

- Develop a publicly available interactive GIS zoning map to help citizens understand and visualize current zoning policy and physical characteristics of the town.
- Schedule and promote a monthly “Zoning 101 Drop-In” hour for members of the public to ask Town staff zoning-related questions.

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**Create and support an environment where staff, boards, and other volunteers regularly communicate, cooperate, and share knowledge.**

- Develop or update, and periodically review, written administrative policies and procedures for all boards, committees, and commissions, working with board chairs as needed.
- Conduct annual reviews of the Zoning Ordinance to check for consistency, clarity, efficacy, and timely incorporation of new regulations.
- Provide annual training to members of boards, commissions, and committees. Engage in regular training exercises, such as those offered by the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) or a comparable entity.

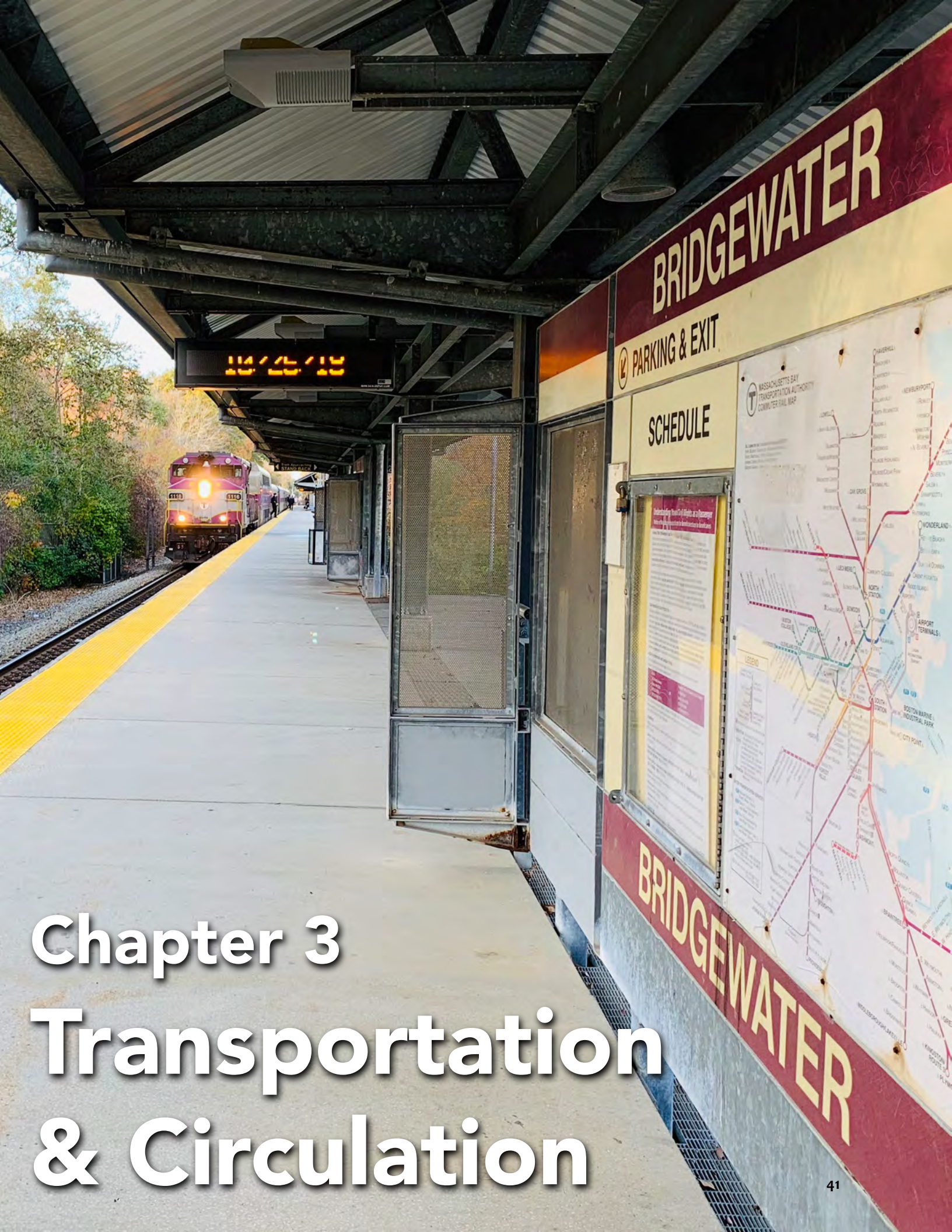
**Continually review district and regulations to evaluate their efficacy in achieving desired goals and consistency with this Comprehensive Master Plan.**

- Conduct a physical and economic analysis of the South Business District to determine if its boundaries or regulations should be changed to encourage commercial development.

**Strengthen the Town's environmental sustainability policies relating to land use and zoning.**

- Evaluate the present Zoning Ordinance and review future proposed amendments for impact on sustainability and equity.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the Town's land use regulatory framework using Mass Audubon's LID Bylaw Review Tool or similar guidance. Adopt Low Impact Development (LID) standards in the Town's Subdivision Rules and Regulations and site plan review standards and refine existing LID standards in the Stormwater Management Regulations.
- Explore the adoption of more robust outdoor lighting policies within the zoning ordinance to limit light pollution.
- Explore the feasibility of adopting a rooftop solar requirement for large commercial projects.

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# Chapter 3 Transportation & Circulation

## 3. Transportation & Circulation

### 3.1. Introduction

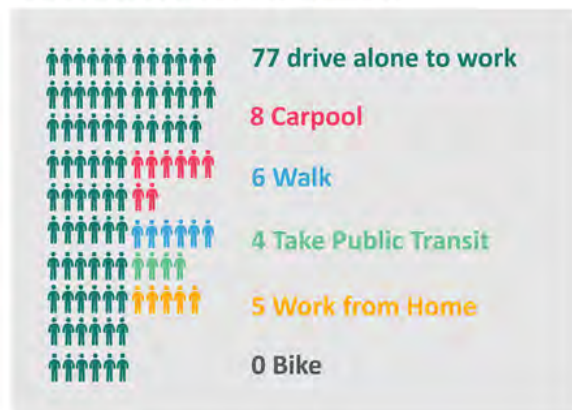
Local and regional transportation connections are key to how people live, work, and play in Bridgewater. Transportation relates to other plan elements by influencing how and where development occurs, and in turn the preservation of open space, types of housing provided, and opportunity for economic development. The transportation system provides important connections for all people – to healthcare, grocery stores, parks, and schools. For Bridgewater in particular, accessible networks for seniors and connections to senior housing is an important transportation issue to consider.

Mobility town-wide and to neighboring towns is mainly influenced by Bridgewater’s roadway network, which facilitates travel by foot, bike, car, and bus, and it is also home to the MBTA Bridgewater commuter rail station. Currently, Bridgewater residents and the workers employed in Bridgewater most commonly drive to work for transportation, as shown in Figure 3.1. As seen by the rate of public transit use (which includes buses and trains), Bridgewater’s MBTA station appears to be used more by residents of Bridgewater for commuting compared to workers; however, Bridgewater workers are more likely to walk to work. Overall, biking is the least common way for people to get to/from work in Bridgewater.

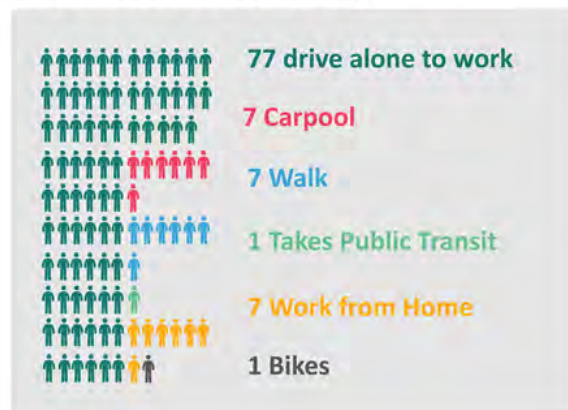
**Figure 3.1. Mode to Work for Bridgewater Residents and Workers**  
 Source: ACS Five Year Estimates (2014-2019)

## MOBILITY IN BRIDGEWATER

### Out of every 100 residents...



### Out of every 100 workers...



More Bridgewater residents take public transit to work compared to those who work in Bridgewater



More Bridgewater workers walk to work compared to residents who work throughout the region

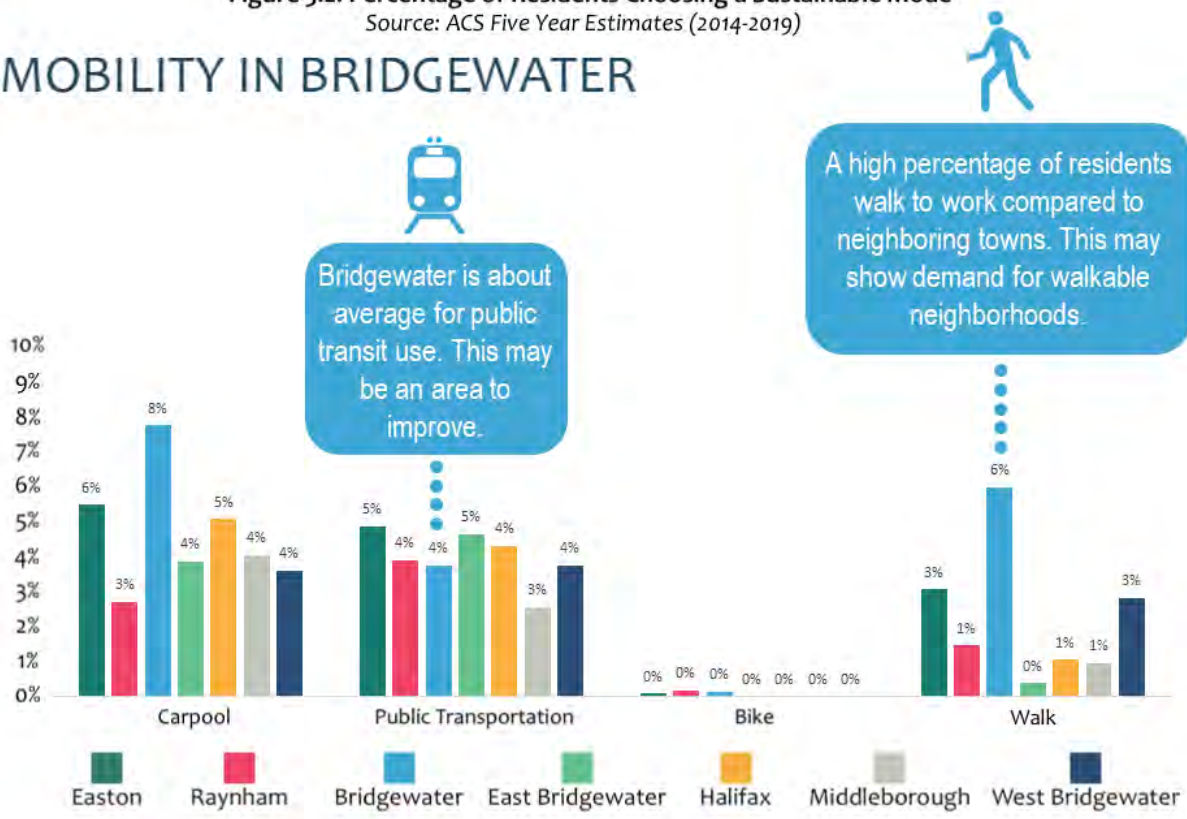
**Chapter 3. Transportation & Circulation**

When compared to neighboring towns (Figure 3.2), Bridgewater has a relatively high percentage of residents who walk to work at 6%, with the second highest in Easton at 3%. Despite Bridgewater having an MBTA station close to the town center and to Bridgewater State University (BSU), use of public transit to get to work is about average compared to neighboring towns, and slightly less than towns without a commuter rail station, like Easton and Raynham. These comparisons can help identify which areas of transportation and connectivity to focus on and improve in town to meet the needs of the population.

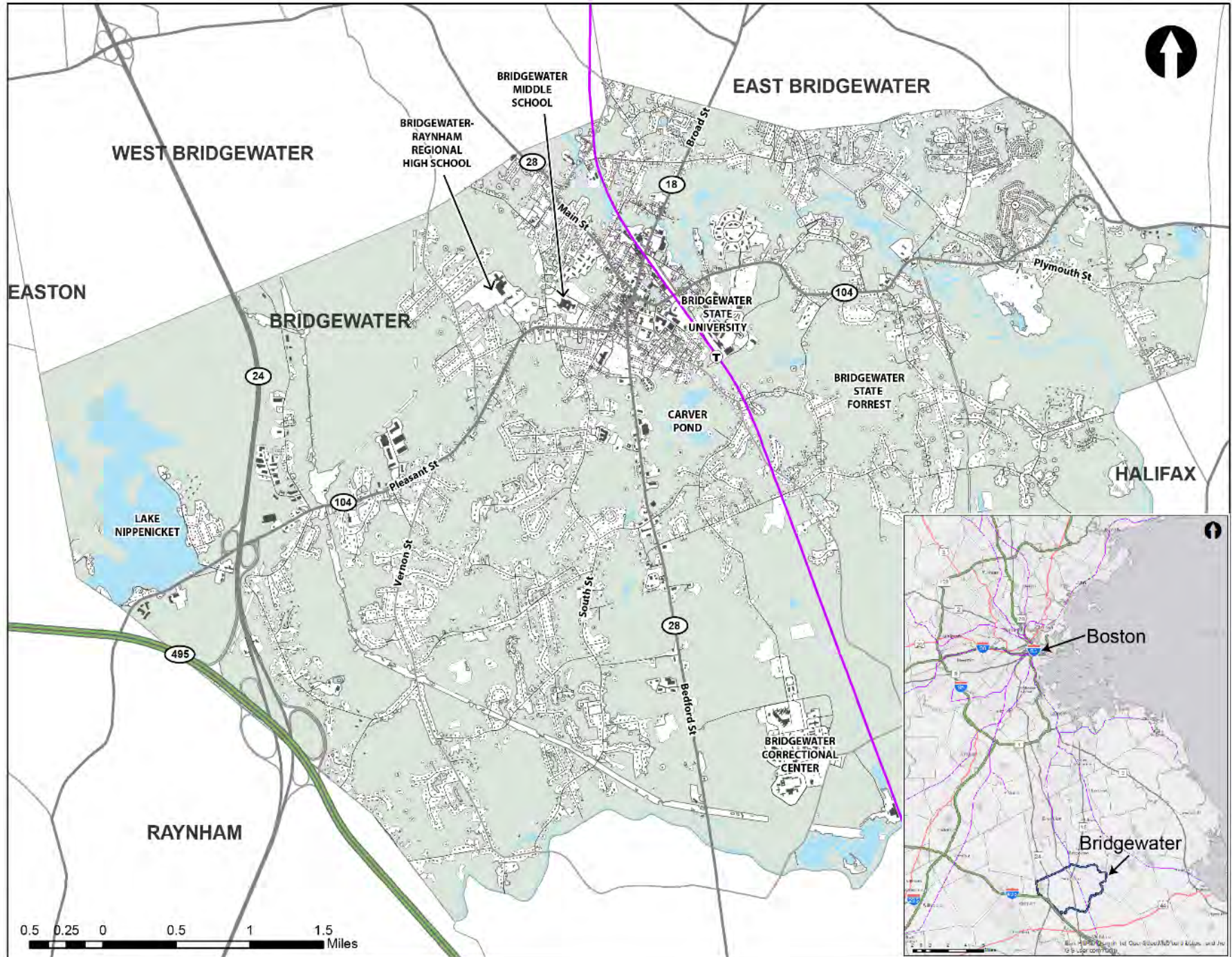
**Figure 3.2. Percentage of Residents Choosing a Sustainable Mode**

Source: ACS Five Year Estimates (2014-2019)

**MOBILITY IN BRIDGEWATER**



MAP 3.1. BRIDGEWATER'S TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE BOSTON REGION





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## 3.2. Existing Conditions and Trends

Bridgewater's transportation and circulation patterns are regionally influenced by its proximity to the cities of Boston and Providence, and locally by its institutional land uses including Bridgewater State University and Bridgewater Correctional Complex. Regionally, Bridgewater is located 30 miles south of Boston and 25 miles northeast of Providence. Bridgewater's connection to these major cities is facilitated by Route 24 and Interstate 495, the junction of which is in southwestern Bridgewater. The Bridgewater MBTA commuter rail station is located in the center of Bridgewater and provides access between Boston and Middleborough.

Bridgewater has approximately 120 miles of local roads<sup>1</sup> and approximately 12 miles of limited access highway,<sup>2</sup> including Interstate-495 and Route 24. As seen in Map 3.1, the interchange of Interstates 495 and Route 24 is located in the southwest corner of Bridgewater, with I-495 running southeast to northwest along its western edge and Route 24 running north-south along its northern border. Routes 104, 28, and 18 run through Bridgewater, with their intersection in the center of town. These routes provide connections to neighboring towns in each direction, including Brockton to the north, Kingston to the east, Halifax to the east, and Taunton to the southwest. Bridgewater's town center, known as Central Square, is the confluence of these regional routes.

### WALKING & BIKING

Walking and biking are important modes of travel for connecting local networks in Bridgewater. Local networks include connecting people already in Bridgewater with the town's open space resources, schools, transit, and downtown. Walkable downtowns are linked to economic development, as pedestrian activity supports local businesses and restaurants. If visitors to downtown Bridgewater walk instead of drive between destinations within downtown, they are more likely to make additional stops on their way to or from their main destination, further supporting economic development, while reducing vehicle miles traveled.

The Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) completed Bicycle and Pedestrian Livability Studies in 2013 and 2018. The 2018 report documents pedestrian and bicycle networks and gaps as seen in Maps 3.2 and 3.3. Bridgewater has a strong sidewalk network in some areas of town, such as Central Square and bordering BSU, but lacks a connected network through town, with many major corridors in need of sidewalks. Areas in town with older sidewalks are typically in poor condition with sections lacking Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations and too narrow for people in wheelchairs.<sup>3</sup> In particular there is a need to better connect pedestrian networks between BSU, the commuter rail station, and downtown Bridgewater. While many local, residential roads outside of the downtown area have sidewalks, connectors such as South Street and High Street lack pedestrian infrastructure.

Safety is also crucial in creating a walkable environment. If people do not feel safe using a mode of transportation, they will not use it. Many factors contribute to safety, including roadway design,

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Bridgewater Roadways Department. Town of Bridgewater. <https://www.bridgewaterma.org/175/Roadways>

<sup>2</sup> MassGIS Road Inventory File. Massachusetts Department of Transportation Office of Transportation Planning.

<sup>3</sup> Old Colony Planning Council. Bicycle and Pedestrian Livability Study. 2018.

behaviors, technology, and policies. Vehicle speed, in particular, plays a large role. While a pedestrian struck by a vehicle traveling 20 miles per hour faces an 18% chance of fatality or severe injury, that risk goes up to 50% at 30 miles per hour, and 77% at 40 miles per hour.<sup>4</sup>

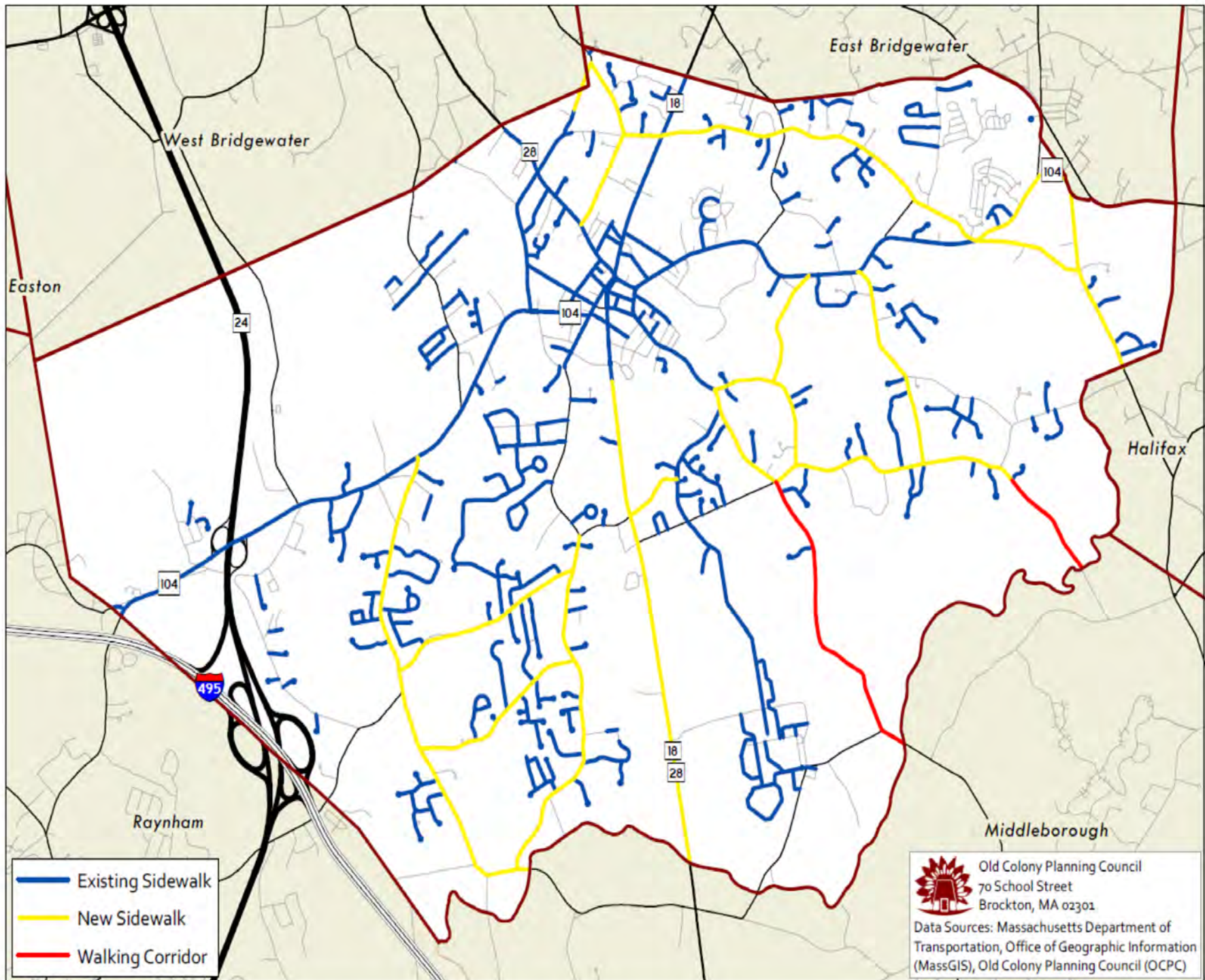
Bicycle infrastructure in Bridgewater is more limited, though Bridgewater is home to the Bay Circuit Trail. This trail provides the community with access to the natural and historic elements in town, including Iron Works Park and Bridgewater Stiles and Hart Conservation Parkland, and can be a starting point for providing a more connected network. Recommendations to improve the bike network have been made in multiple previous studies, and include:

- Better signage and installation of bike racks at key locations
- A bicycle network that helps revitalize downtown
- A town-wide recreational bicycle plan
- A bicycle network that connects to conservation areas and open space

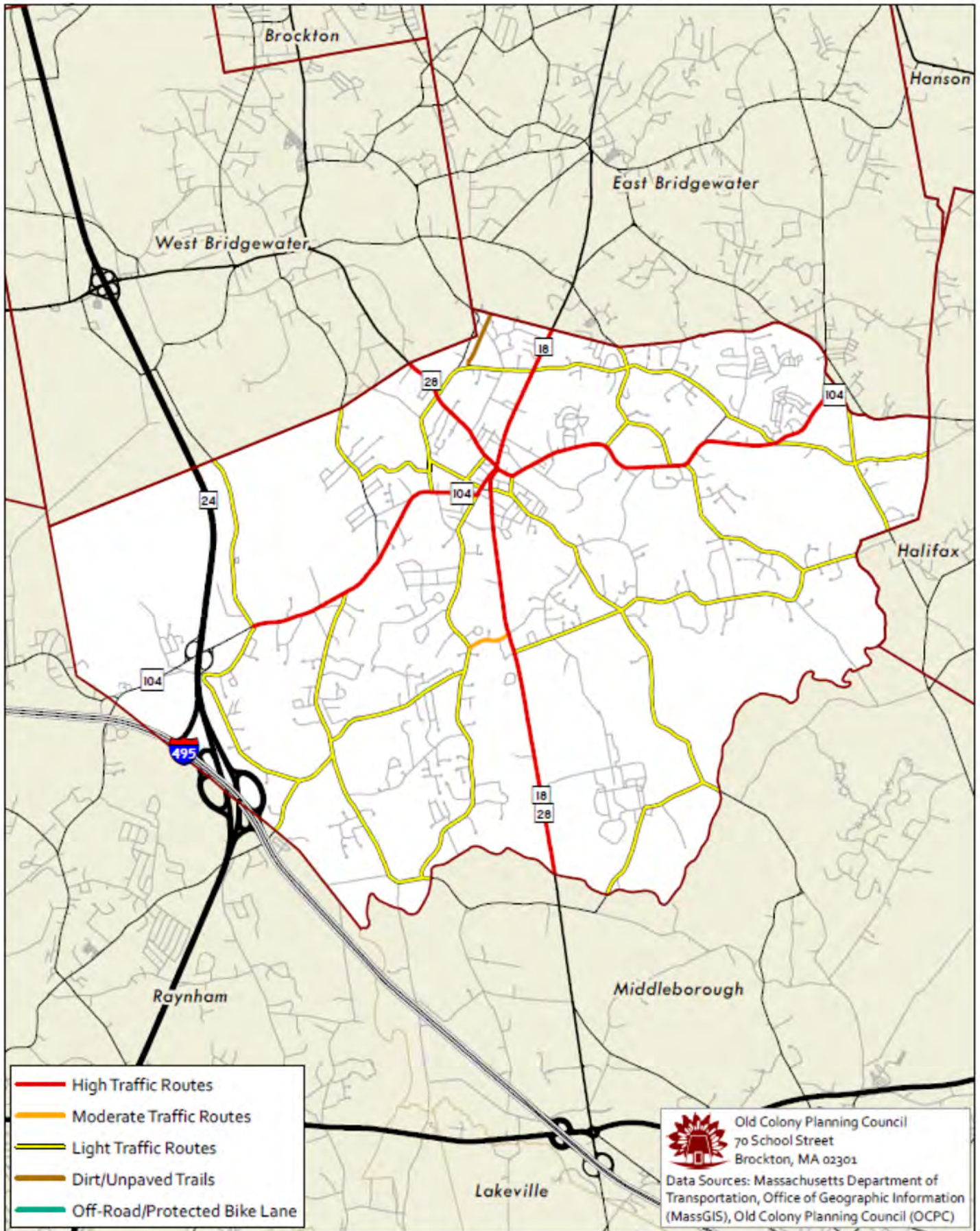
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<sup>4</sup> City of Seattle Department of Transportation. <https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/safety-first/vision-zero/speedlimits>

MAP 3.2. OCPC BRIDGEWATER SIDEWALK GAP ANALYSIS (2018)



MAP 3.3. OCPC PROPOSED BICYCLE NETWORK (2018)



## CENTRAL SQUARE

Central Square, which joins Routes 28, 104, and 18 in downtown Bridgewater, has been the focus of several planning efforts in recent years. Its existing configuration, including the common serving as a rotary, makes circulation for all modes confusing and unsafe, as seen in Figure 3.3.<sup>5</sup> Making Central Square safer and more accessible for people walking and biking, and improving the sense of place downtown through improved parking and urban design have been the focus of recent studies. In October 2014 the Town Council approved a vision for the revitalization of Downtown. The plan contains several key recommendations for transportation:

- Create special signage and wayfinding
- Adopt a “Park once and walk” approach
- Implement traffic calming strategies
- Improve safety and access by re-aligning crosswalks to shorten crossing distances, adding curb extensions, and creating off-street pathways
- Implement parking management strategies, including: reassess time limits and streamline regulations, designated employee shared parking, update regulations in municipal lots, and replace head-in angle parking with parallel parking to improve pedestrian safety.
- Review circulation patterns



**Figure 3.3. Central Square Circulation**

*One-way roads in Central Square lead to confusion for all modes.*

The main issues for pedestrians and bicyclists in Central Square are listed in Table 3.1.

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5 Howard Stein Hudson. Central Square Pedestrian Safety Assessment. 2017

**Table 3.1. Identified Pedestrian and Bicycle Issues in Central Square**

Pedestrian	Bicycling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angled parking obscures sight lines</li> <li>• Lack of curb ramps/non-ADA compliant curb ramps</li> <li>• Confusion related</li> <li>• Fading crosswalks</li> <li>• Long pedestrian crossing distances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicles pulling out of parking spaces creates hazardous condition</li> <li>• Lack of bicycle lanes – bicyclists share the road with two lanes of traffic</li> <li>• Limited formal bicycle storage</li> </ul>

Sources: Old Colony Planning Council, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Livability Study*, 2013; The Cecil Group and Nelson\Nygaard, *Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Master Plan*, 2014; Howard Stein Hudson, *Central Square Pedestrian Safety Assessment*, 2017.

### PARKING

Downtown Bridgewater contains a mix of on-street and off-street public parking regulated by time from 15 minutes to one hour. The majority of the off-street parking supply is designated for BSU and private owners. The on-street, head-in angled parking in Central Square has been documented to be unsafe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers in previously completed studies (listed under “Sources” in Table 3.1).

A utilization study conducted as part of the Downtown Revitalization Plan found that peak parking utilization in the downtown area occurred at 12:00 PM with 60% of all spaces utilized (66% Central Square publicly available spaces utilized).<sup>6</sup> Further information on issues and opportunities for downtown parking is provided in section 3.4 of this report.

### LOCAL ROADWAYS

Roads and highways are grouped into classes or types that are based on the road’s intended character of service. The key characteristic defining roadway classification is the degree to which a roadway emphasizes movement through an area versus access. The five major classifications of roads are Freeway/Expressway, Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Collector, and Local. Distinctions are made according to the varying degrees that a road facilitates travel mobility or local access. For example, local roads provide a greater proportion of direct access to property, while collectors and arterials provide a greater proportion of travel mobility. Table 3.2 lists the classifications of local roadways in Bridgewater. Map 3.4 shows traffic count data for local corridors and intersections in Bridgewater.

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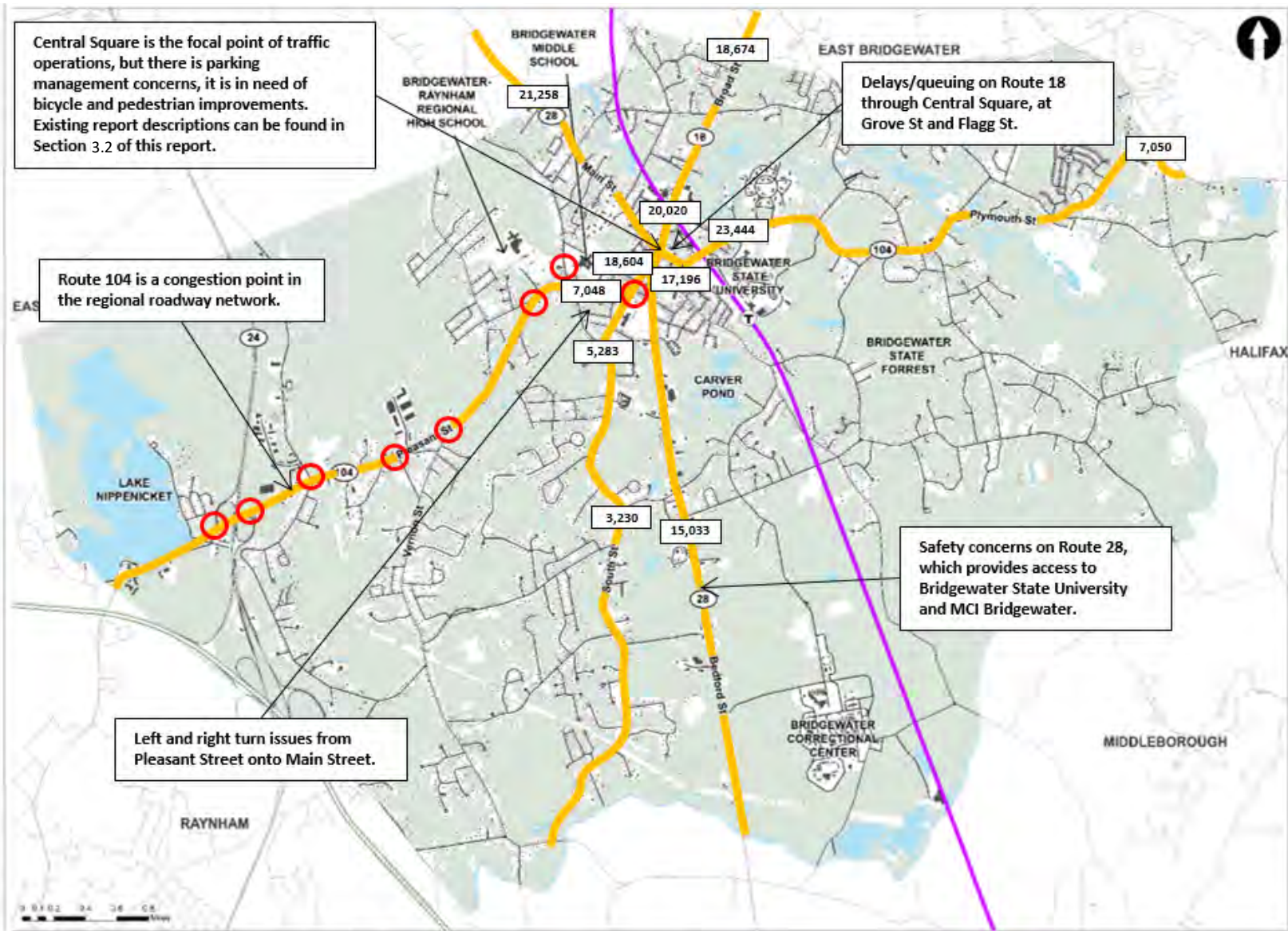
<sup>6</sup> The Cecil Group and Nelson\Nygaard. *Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Master Plan*. 2014.

**Table 3.2. Local Roadway Classification and Characteristics**

	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Street Name</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Vehicles Per day (VPD)</b>
Route 28	Principle Arterial	Main Street north of Central Square, Bedford Street south of Central Square	Two-Way	21,258 AADT @ Austin Street 17,196 AADT @ School Street 15,033 AADT @ Flagg Street
Route 18	Principle Arterial	Bedford Street south of Central Square, Broad Street north of Central Square	Two-Way	18,674 @ Comfort Street 20,020 north of Central Square
Route 104	Minor Arterial	Pleasant Street west of South Street, Plymouth Street east of Summer Street	Two-Way	7,050 AADT P@ Old Plymouth Street 23,444 AADT east of Hale Street 18,604 AADT south of Central Square
South Street	Major Collector	South Street	Two-Way	5,283 ADT south of Crescent (2001) 7,048 ADT south of Pleasant Street (2010) 3,230 ADT south of Winter Street (2007)

Sources: Old Colony Planning Council. Old Colony Traffic Volumes Report, 1987-2017. 2018 - Data from 2018 except where noted. AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic, ADT – Average Daily Traffic

# MAP 3.4. IDENTIFIED LOCAL ROADWAY ISSUES IN BRIDGEWATER



### Legend:

○ Intersections that experience congestion and delays due to the lack of gaps on Rt 104

Vehicles Per Day (VPD)

### Recommendations from Existing Reports:

**Route 104**  
 Access management, bicycle lanes, intersection alignments, signage & pavement markings at Birch St, and traffic signal or roundabout at South St.

**Route 28**  
 Access management, and address safety concerns.

**Route 18**  
 Coordinate signals between the MBTA railroad crossing and traffic signals at the norther end of Central Square, as well as add pedestrian crossing signage.



## SAFETY

Safety is an important element of transportation because if people do not feel safe using a mode of transportation, they will not use it. It is important to consider safety not just in terms of vehicular crashes, but roadway elements that lead to feelings of safety for walkers and bikers as well. The town currently uses tactics including speed limit signs, mobile traffic signs to warn people of excess speed, and random traffic enforcement officers at directed locations.<sup>7</sup>

Table 3.3 shows Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) crash clusters identified by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) from 2013-2015. An HSIP cluster is where the total number of “equivalent property damage only” crashes are within the top 5% in the region. As seen in the table, the majority of crashes occurred either at the ramps to Route 24 from Route 104 or in the Central Square area between Main Street, High Street, Bedford Street, and Grove Street. There was one fatality in this period at Bedford Street at Grove Street. These crashes are also illustrated in Map 3.5.

MassDOT identifies Central Square as a high vehicle and pedestrian crash location. The Central Square area is in the top 5% of pedestrian crash clusters for 2005-2014, and the northern end of the Central Square is in the top 5% for 2012 to 2014.<sup>8</sup> During this time there were four pedestrian crashes located at Bedford Street and School Street, two at the intersection of Bedford Street, Summer Street, and Main Street, and one at Plymouth Street and Summer Street.

**The Bridgewater Police Department has identified existing traffic safety concerns and future safety needs.<sup>6</sup>**

### **Existing Safety Concerns:**

- Grove Street and Bedford Street: Speed and flow direction
- Plymouth/Hale/Railroad crossing area
- Broad/Plymouth (Summer) to Meadowbrook Lane
- Pleasant Street at Route 24: left turn to get to Route 24 North
- Spring Street/Plymouth Street
- Center and Pleasant Street intersection: light timing issues
- Speeding on Bedford Street from Central Square to Winter Street

### **Future Safety Needs:**

- Improve tree trimming program at intersections to ensure sign visibility
- Improve street lighting on Broad Street, Summer Street, and Plymouth Street in Central Square
- Central Square cross walk locations and signage
- Central Square traffic flow configuration
- Speed limit reduction in specific locations

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<sup>7</sup> Chris Delmonte, Police Chief, Town of Bridgewater, interviewed by Carlton Hunt, Bridgewater Comprehensive Plan Committee, February 15, 2019.

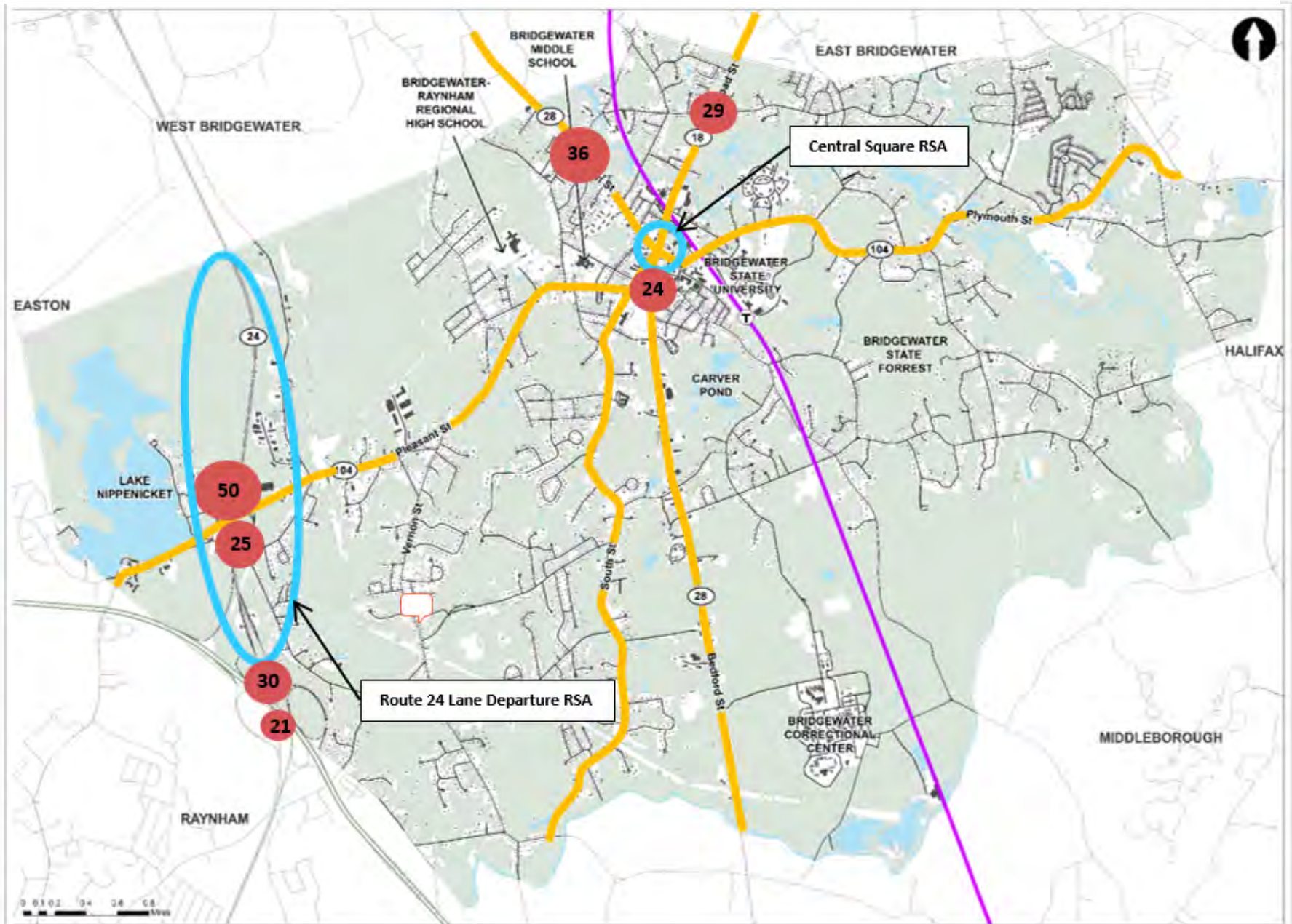
<sup>8</sup> Howard Stein Hudson. Central Square Pedestrian Safety Assessment. 2017

**Table 3.3. 2013-2015 HSIP Crash Clusters in Bridgewater (Excludes Interstate Highways)**

Street/Intersection	HSIP Type	Crash Count	Injuries	Fatalities
Main Street @ High Street	2013-2015 HSIP Cluster	36	10	0
Bedford Street @ Grove Street	2013-2015 HSIP Cluster	24	8	1
Broad Street @ High Street	2013-2015 HSIP Cluster	29	4	0
Amvets Memorial Highway @ North Route 104 Ramps	2013-2015 HSIP Cluster	50	15	0
Amvets Memorial Highway @ South Route 104 Ramps	2013-2015 HSIP Cluster	25	17	0
I-495 @ Route 24 (Fall River Expressway)	2013-2015 HSIP Cluster	30	9	0
Route 24 (Fall River Expressway) @ Raynham Town Line	2013-2015 HSIP Cluster	21	9	0

Source: Massachusetts Department of Transportation. MassDOT Top Crash Locations. <https://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/topcrashlocations/>

MAP 3.5. HSIP CRASH CLUSTER AND RSA LOCATIONS IN BRIDGEWATER



**Legend:**

- # Crash Count of HSIP Crash Clusters (2013-2015)
- Road Safety Audit (RSA) location

### **PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT**

Bridgewater completed a Street Scan process to develop a pavement management program. Having a comprehensive database of roadway conditions as part of a pavement management program will facilitate roadway maintenance and can contribute to the prioritization of roadway projects as funding becomes available.

### **LOCAL TRANSIT**

Bus service is available in Bridgewater through the Brockton Area Transit (BAT) system. Bus stops are typically placed about every other block along a route, with signs mounted on utility poles. The exception to this is the longer Route 28, which provides service between Harrington Hall on the BSU Campus and the BAT Centre in Brockton 5 times. While this route has longer stop spacing, with typically one stop on the return route at Kingswood Village, passengers may request a stop or flag down the bus anywhere along this route. Trips depart BSU at 6:50 AM, 9:00 AM, 12:10 Pm, 3:05 PM, and 5:35 PM and return trips depart the BAT Centre at 7:20 AM, 9:30 AM, 12:40 PM, 3:35 PM, and 6:05 PM.

BAT provides additional service within the BSU campus from the start of fall semester in September to the end of spring semester in May. There are five routes that serve the campus, four of which also serve the commuter rail station. Service ranges from every 10 to 20 minutes depending on the route from 7:15 AM to 7:00 PM, with night and weekend service available on the Gold route.

BAT also provides demand response paratransit service via Dial-a-BAT. This paratransit service is available for the elderly, people with disabilities, and human service agencies. Senior service for medical transport is provided in Bridgewater for those 65 and older from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. Fares are \$3.00 each way within the same community and \$4.00 from one dial-a-bat community to another.<sup>9</sup>

Transportation for seniors is provided through the town's Department of Elder Affairs. Vans operate Tuesdays and Wednesdays providing trips to Market Basket on Route 106 in West Bridgewater. Trips are made once a month to Walmart on Route 44 in Raynham. Vans pick up passengers at their selected address based on call in requests, with scheduled stops at the Housing Authority Complexes at Heritage Circle and Hemlock Drive.

### **REGIONAL ROADWAYS**

As described in the local roadways section above, roads and highways are grouped into classes based on the road's intended character of service. Table 3.4 lists the classifications of regional roadways in Bridgewater.

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<sup>9</sup> Brockton Area Transit. Dial-A-Bat. <http://www.ridebat.com/dial-a-bat/>, accessed January 29, 2021.

**Table 3.4. Regional Roadway Classification and Characteristics**

	Classification	Street Name	Direction	Vehicles Per day (VPD)
Route 24	Principle Arterial/Other Freeways or Expressways	Amvets Memorial Highway North of Exit 14 (2018) Note: exit numbers were updated in January 2021; Exit 14 is now Exit 22.	Two-Way	98,865 AADT
Route 495	Interstate	Interstate 495 South of Route 24 (2018)	Two-Way	60,970 AADT

Sources: Old Colony Planning Council. *Old Colony Traffic Volumes Report, 1987-2017. 2018. Report - Data from 2018. AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic*

The most direct regional roadway connection in Bridgewater is the junction of Route 24 and I-495 in the southwestern corner of town. I-495 provides access southeast to Wareham and northeast to Amesbury, circling the Greater Boston area. This regional connection is influenced by the ability for residents to access Route 24 via Route 104. As seen previously in Map 3.4, the ramps between Route 104 and Route 24 are two of the highest crash locations in town, with the northbound ramps (Exit 24, formerly Exit 15, on Route 24) being the highest.

### FREIGHT

Located off the I-495 and Route 24 interchange, Bridgewater is subject to traffic by heavy vehicles, which need to be accommodated in a way to maintain safety for other modes. Bridgewater Farm Supply and junk yards are on the opposite side of the town, though, taking them through the center. The majority of companies with large box trucks or semi-trails are concentrated around Scotland Boulevard, Elm Street, and First Street.<sup>10</sup> The only truck restricted route in Bridgewater is Roberts Road, located off Route 104 on the eastern edge of Bridgewater.<sup>11</sup> The effectiveness of truck routes and exclusions in town is unknown.

### COMMUTER RAIL

The Bridgewater Commuter Rail Station is located just over ½ mile south east of Central Square. While there are multiple routes to walk between Central Square and the commuter rail station, pedestrian infrastructure could be improved. The shortest walking path is through BSU campus, with other routes much longer. For example, if one drives via Great Hill Road to Route 104/Plymouth Street the route is almost two miles, as seen in Figure 3.4. Bridgewater Station has just under 500 parking spaces, and due to the lack of bicycle and pedestrian connections to the station, it is likely that the majority of riders drive and park, however; its location next to BSU campus makes it a convenient method of regional transportation for students. Figure 3.4 also shows the roadway condition and lack of multimodal facilities on Great Hill Drive leading into the station. Burrill Avenue has sidewalks on both sides for the majority of the corridor, but lacks sidewalks and curbs as it connects to Great Hill

<sup>10</sup> Carlton Hunt, Bridgewater Comprehensive Plan Committee, via email, February 22, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Chris Belmonte, Police Chief, Town of Bridgewater, interviewed by Carlton Hunt, Bridgewater Comprehensive Plan Committee, February 15, 2019.

Drive (although a walkway connects to the station prior to the intersection with Great Hill Drive). A full list of station characteristics is provided in Table 3.5.

Figure 3.4. Potential Pedestrian Routes to Bridgewater Station



1 Sidewalk network on Burrill Ave ends leaving an incomplete connection to BAT bus stop and as it intersects with Great Hill Drive.



2 Lack of sidewalks and bicycle lanes on Great Hill Drive. Curves in the road also limit sight lines.

**Table 3.5. Bridgewater Commuter Rail Station Characteristics**

Location	85 Burrill Avenue, just over ½ mile southeast of Central Square
Parking	MBTA surface lot of 499 spaces 10 accessible space
Fare Zone	6
Bicycle Parking	Regular bike racks
Multimodal Connections	Multimodal connections to Bridgewater Station are lacking. Both Great Hill Avenue and Burrill Avenue that connect the station to Route 104/Plymouth street lack sidewalks and bicycle lanes and curbs in some locations, though they do have marked crosswalks. The direct connection between the station and Central Square travels through BSU campus.
Service	<b>Weekdays</b> Inbound: 5:30 AM to 9:35PM Outbound: 7:38 AM to 11:16 PM <b>Weekends</b> Inbound: 7:00 AM to 9:32 AM Outbound: 9:27 AM to 11:23 PM
Ridership	1,036 weekday inbound boardings

*Sources:*

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. *Bridgewater Station Information*.

<https://www.mbta.com/stops/Bridgewater>, accessed January 29, 2021.

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. *MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics, 14th Edition*. 2014.

**CURRENT PLANNING**

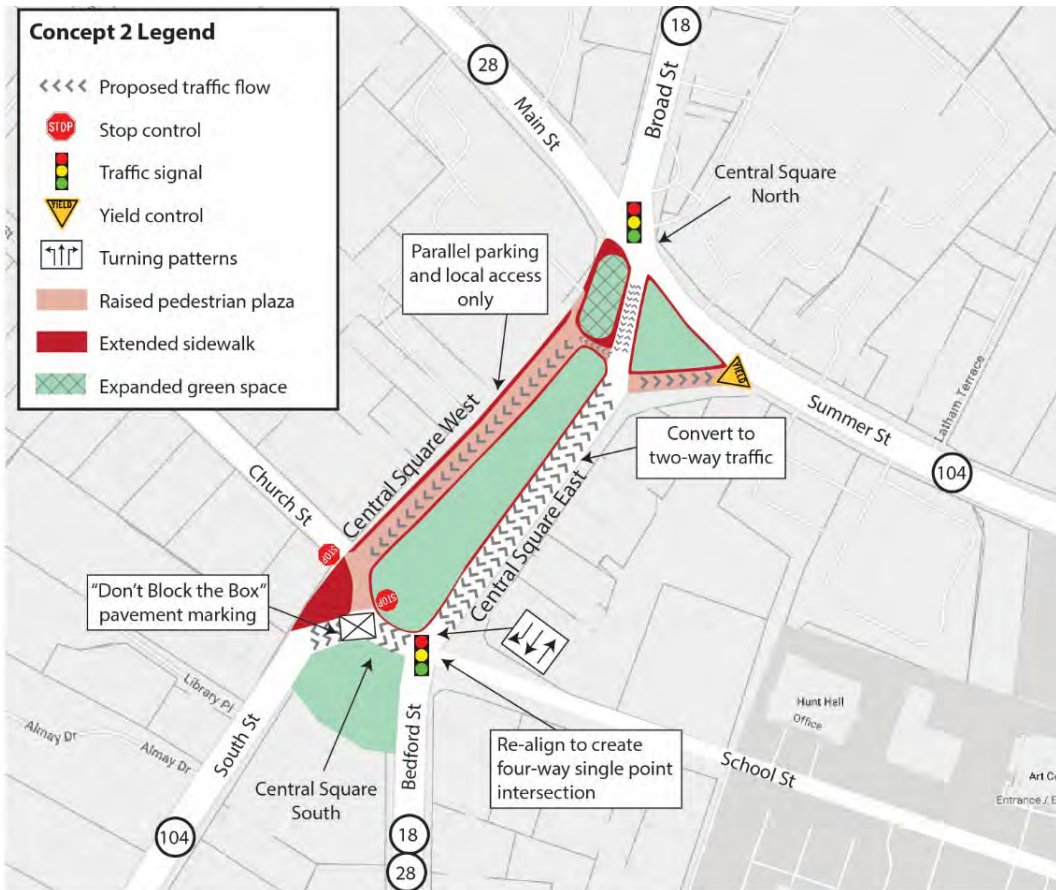
There are several completed and in progress transportation initiatives for improving mobility and safety in Bridgewater. The following current planning efforts are documented further in the following Current Trends section of the report.

**2020 Central Square Study**

This study assessed circulation changes around Central Square and the Town Common to enhance traffic operations and safety for all modes, while creating an aesthetic charm to define the Town Common. The study, concluded in January 2020, analyzed the feasibility of three different design concepts with the goal of creating a safe, attractive, and walkable pedestrian environment, while ensuring adequate vehicular operations.

A Town Council meeting was held September 8, 2020, which showed support by Town staff for Concept 2, converting the east side of Central Square to a two-way roadway with a pedestrian plaza on the west side of Central Square (the preferred option from the 2014 Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Plan). This concept, shown in Figure 3.5, provides the greatest opportunity to meet goals of the master plan for improving multimodal safety and contributing to local vitality.

**Figure 3.5. Concept 2, Central Square Study (2020)**  
**Convert Central Square East to Two-Way Traffic Flow**  
(Cecil Group Concept from 2014 Downtown Community Development Master Plan)



### 2020 School Access Assessment at Bridgewater Middle School/Mitchell Elementary School and Williams Intermediate School

An evaluation and improvement study was conducted for each school to improve safety and access, reduce vehicular and pedestrian conflicts, and improve mode choice for students and employees. The study, completed in January 2020, made various recommendations for each school to improve traffic operations, accessibility and safety concerns. These included strategies such as bus phasing, wayfinding, and infrastructural improvements.



### 2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan

The plan, building off the 2016 town Complete Streets policy, identified projects to improve safety and provide a connected network for all road users in Bridgewater.<sup>12</sup> A Complete Street is defined as, “one that provides safe and accessible options for all travel modes—walking, biking, transit and vehicles—for people of all ages and abilities.”

### 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

The plan identified opportunities to improve and expand trails and parks throughout town, which help support walking and biking connections.

### South Coast Rail Project

This project proposes to extend commuter rail service from Bridgewater to southeastern Massachusetts along the Middleborough/Lakeville line, including service to Taunton, New Bedford, and Fall River.

## TRENDS

### Downtown Activity

While downtown Bridgewater is a common destination, easy access is limited by its existing traffic circulation and lack of pedestrian infrastructure, and wayfinding for both drivers and pedestrians. In particular there is a need to better connect pedestrian networks between BSU, the commuter rail station, and downtown Bridgewater. Input, received through the community outreach process has shown support for a focus on pedestrian safety downtown, especially accessibility for seniors, increased traffic calming on all town roads, and an improved parking and wayfinding system. The majority of parking issues are experienced between customers of downtown businesses and BSU students. The primary complaint is confusing traffic patterns leading to lack of ability to find parking, congestion and unsafe conditions.<sup>13</sup> A parking utilization study completed in 2014 shows that parking in downtown Bridgewater peaks midday at about 60% of total capacity of both on-street and off-street parking supply.<sup>14</sup> This study also shows that the majority of residents prefer no parking in Central Square, as seen in Figure 3.6.

Survey Results from Public Input Session on Central Square On-Street Parking Options

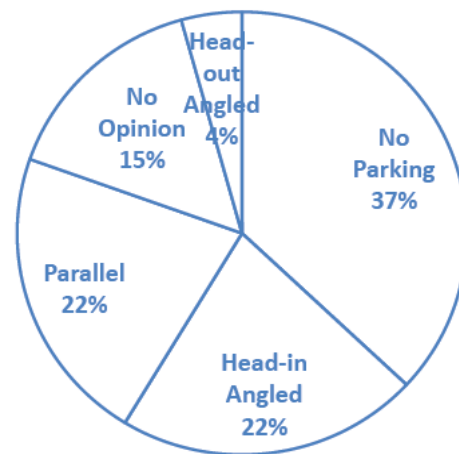


Figure 3.6. Downtown Revitalization Plan Survey Results

Community concern was also raised regarding truck traffic through Central Square, particularly by trucks traveling through town to reach outside destinations. Freight patterns will need to be further

<sup>12</sup> Howard Stein Hudson. Bridgewater Complete Streets Prioritization Plan Report. 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Old Colony Planning Council. Downtown Bridgewater Plan. 2016

<sup>14</sup> The Cecil Group and Nelson\Nygaard. Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Master Plan. 2014

explored to improve traffic operations in the Central Square area and create a safe downtown environment for all modes.

There is also a desire to expand local transit service to the downtown area, especially for seniors and disabled people. The BAT schedule is limited in terms of coverage and frequency, and does not service Central Square or the Commuter rail station, though BAT paratransit does serve disabled riders. Access to Central Square for seniors is particularly important, for both walking within downtown as well as connecting to senior housing via ride-share services.

### **Recreational Access**

Open space, recreational, and historic areas are important assets to the community. To enhance these areas, improved multimodal access is needed through both on-road and off-road walking and biking connections. The 2017 Open Space and Recreation plan includes goals to maintain trails, increase access to the waterfront areas, and create and preserve town-wide regionally linked trails and parks system that connects neighborhoods and various open space and recreational amenities.<sup>15</sup> The community has demonstrated interested in a branded wayfinding system to better connect open space and recreational areas. Concepts have been presented to the Town Council for approval.

### **Family Friendly Streets**

Easily accessible streets with multimodal options for all ages are essential to a thriving community where people can safely and conveniently live, work, and play. Seniors and families with young children are important demographics in Bridgewater that need to be able to move safely through town. Issues identified by the community that impact family-friendly streets include traffic bottlenecks, speeding on rural and neighborhood roads, and congestion around schools.

As stated in the Existing Conditions section, Bridgewater completed its Complete Streets Prioritization Plan in 2017. The MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program provides technical assistance and construction funds to municipalities that develop Complete Streets Policies and Prioritization Plans. To develop the Prioritization Plan, community input and a contracted review of the existing transportation network, including pedestrian and bicycle level of comfort, crash locations, walking and biking demand, BAT routes and ridership, and points of interest in town were compiled. Community input generated information on transportation needs, including walking connections, biking connections, safety, access for people with disabilities, and transit. The public process revealed interest in an interconnected town-wide sidewalk network.

Once a project is approved as part of a Complete Streets Prioritization plan, it can be included in an application for yearly funding from MassDOT. The top five prioritized Complete Streets projects in Bridgewater are listed in Table 3.6. All fifteen prioritized projects are illustrated in Figure 3.7. The types of improvements in Bridgewater's prioritization plan include:

- Sidewalk maintenance/reconstruction
- Realignment of intersections and crossings
- Construction of curb bumpouts

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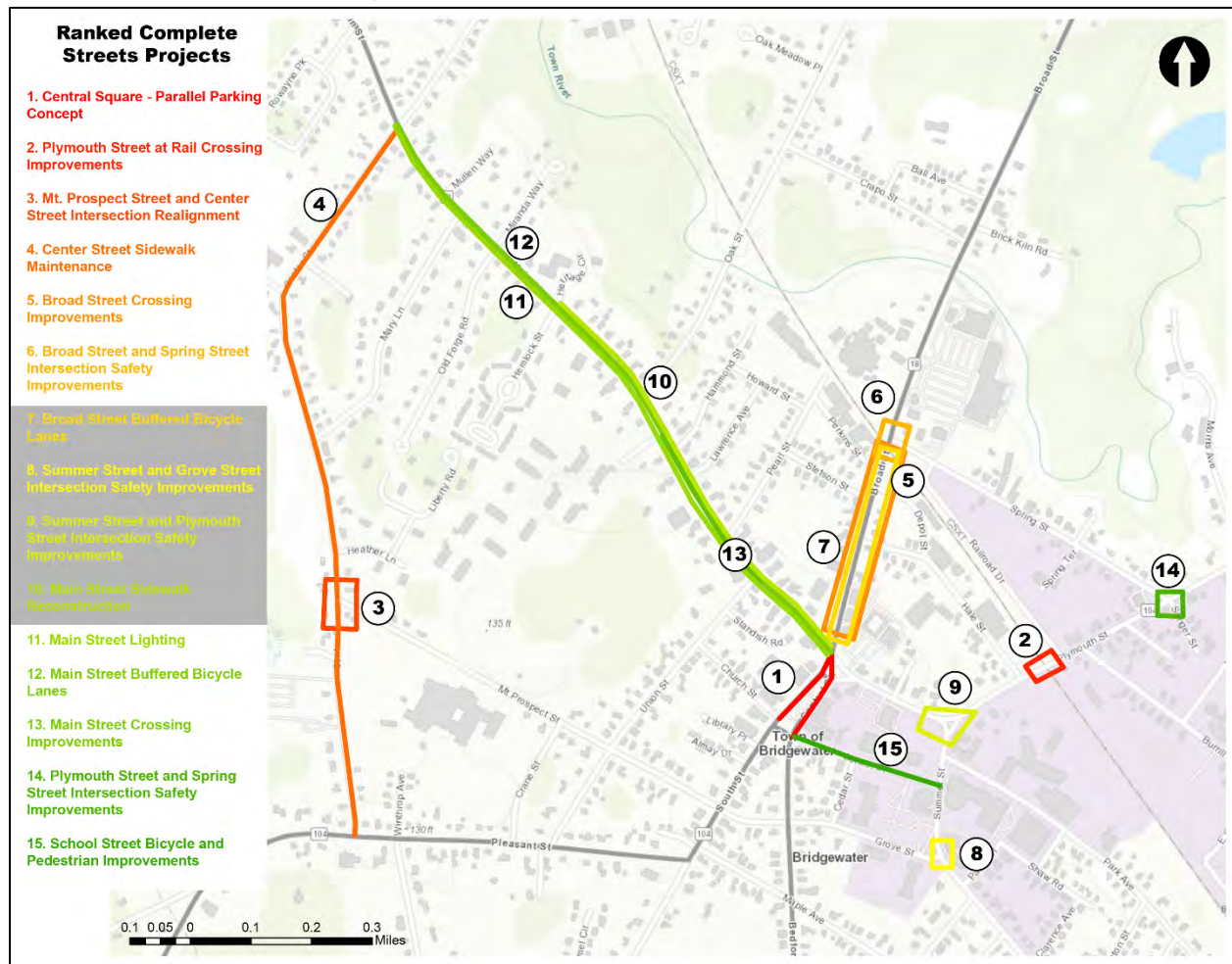
<sup>15</sup> VHB. Town of Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan Update. 2017.

Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan  
**Chapter 3. Transportation & Circulation**

- Crosswalk and curb ramp ADA upgrades
- On-street parking reconfiguration
- Addition of bicycle lanes
- Upgrades to pedestrian signals

In 2021, Bridgewater received funding for the first time through the program, for bicycle lanes and crossing improvements for Main Street. All other projects remain on the list and eligible for funding in future rounds.

**Figure 3.7. Complete Streets Prioritization Plan**



**Table 3.6. Top 5 Complete Streets Projects in Bridgewater**

Rank	Project	Description	Project Limits
1	Central Square – Parallel Parking Concept	Convert angled parking to parallel parking, including extending existing curb bumpouts and adding bumpouts at key locations to shorten crossing distances and provide traffic calming. Add bicycle lanes and intersection treatments. Reconstruct all sidewalks and curb ramps for ADA compliance.	Central Square- Intersection of Main St./Broad St./Summer St. to intersections of Church St. and South St., and Bedford St. and School St.
2	Plymouth Street at Rail Crossing Improvements	Replace existing midblock crossing with raised crosswalk. Replaced existing signs with flashing LED pedestrian crossing signage. Potentially shift BSU parking to commuter rail lot/north of Plymouth Street to reduce student crossings.	Plymouth Street and rail crossing
3	Mt. Prospect Street and Center Street Intersection Realignment	Realign Mt. Prospect Street and Center Street to improve sight distances, reduce speeding, and improve difficult pedestrian crossing. Construct curb extension on north side of Mt. Prospect Street to shorten crossing distance and create more perpendicular approach. Repaint crosswalks and reconstruct curb ramps for ADA compliance	Mt. Prospect Street and Center Street Intersection
4	Center Street Sidewalk Maintenance	Maintenance/reconstruction of sidewalk as needed from High Street to Pleasant Street	Center Street from High Street to Pleasant Street
5	Broad Street Crossing Improvements	Relocate and repaint crosswalks and add curb bumpouts. Reconstruct all curb ramps for ADA compliance.	Broad Street from 160' north of Main Street to Spring Street

Sources: Howard Stein Hudson. *Bridgewater Complete Streets Prioritization Plan Report*. 2017.

### DRIVER AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Safety is an important aspect of mobility and connectivity and a primary concern in Bridgewater, especially around schools. People need to feel safe when they travel by any mode, at any time of day. Community input on safety has included the need for traffic calming to reduce speeding on rural and neighborhood roads and focusing around schools, the Senior Center, and the commuter rail station. Particularly the railroad crossing at Broad Street is an area of concern for the community – a signal was studied at this location in the 2020 Downtown Circulation report. Crash data provided in the Existing Conditions section (Table 3.3 and Map 3.5) illustrates a need for improved traffic safety throughout town, specifically at the north and south ramps to Route 24 at Route 104 and in Central Square.

The 2019 school access evaluation identified circulation improvements to meet current and future needs at Bridgewater Middle School/Mitchell Elementary School and Williams Intermediate School. The evaluations looked to identify critical gaps and deficiencies in the pedestrian network and

develop appropriate enhancements to address them. The improvements considered included sidewalks, curb ramps, raised crosswalks, and enhanced or active signage, as well as traffic calming measures, such as roadway narrowing, curb bumpouts, raised crosswalks, colored crosswalks, and strategic use of bollards.

### **REGIONAL CONNECTIONS**

Regional connections to Boston, Providence via highways and commuter rail are important, but are limited by existing infrastructure. Some community members have expressed concern about the northbound ramp from Route 104 to Route 24, in that it is a major crash site and does not provide an efficient connection to Route 24, potentially hindering regional access to support economic development.

The Bridgewater MBTA commuter rail station provides a regional connection directly into Boston, which expands economic, employment, and educational opportunities for Bridgewater. The community outreach process has showcased a desire to expand the influence of this connection by making the station more accessible by non-motorized modes, more ADA accessible, better connected to the BAT bus service, and by expanding service, especially at night and potentially more centrally located in the downtown area.

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## **3.3. Challenges and Opportunities**

### **DOWNTOWN ACTIVITY**

#### ***Pedestrian safety & Circulation***

In 2017, a Pedestrian Safety Assessment was completed in Central Square in conjunction with the town's Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. The study evaluated vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns, and recommended three main strategies to improve pedestrian safety: implementing traffic calming measures to slow vehicles, increasing visibility of pedestrians to reduce potential conflicts, and shortening pedestrian crossing distances.<sup>16</sup> The 2019 downtown circulation study examined circulation patterns in Central Square to create a safer, walkable, attractive pedestrian environment, while maintaining sufficient vehicular operations. The study identified potential alternatives for improving Central Square and circulation around the Town Common, which will help address and implement the community concerns and needs noted in the Trends section of the report for pedestrian safety, accessibility, and traffic flow.

#### ***Parking***

Downtown parking is a key factor within the context of Bridgewater's master planning efforts. A downtown parking management plan and program could provide downtown Bridgewater with multiple benefits, ranging from economic benefits to safety benefits. When parking is managed to ensure there is an appropriate amount, the turnover of cars supports business accessibility, the presence of on-street parking provides traffic calming to increase pedestrian safety, the reduction of vehicles searching for parking improves traffic circulation, and parking near transit stations increases transit use. The most efficient use of parking in a typical downtown area is 85% utilization, as this means it is well utilized while also providing space for those seeking parking. A well-managed and

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<sup>16</sup> Howard Stein Hudson. Central Square Pedestrian Safety Assessment. 2017

designed parking system can also promote pedestrian connectivity and create a sense of place by creating a “park once and walk” environment through streetscape and wayfinding improvements.

Exploring strategies for parking management can help Bridgewater meet its goals for transportation and circulation, as well as housing and economic development downtown, by finding ways to better accommodate demand within the existing parking supply.

### **Senior Mobility**

The Town anticipates a future increase in ridership for senior transportation. OCPC recently completed a senior citizens transportation needs survey for the Bridgewater Elder Affairs Department. The Elder Affairs Department would like to add grocery shopping days and increase funding to provide four days of service per week to meet projected demand. With multiple residential developments catering to over 55-year-olds, including High Pond Estates and Stone Meadow, there is an opportunity to encourage van usage and expand the Elder Affairs Service.

## **RECREATIONAL ACCESS**

### **Zoning for Pedestrian Access**

An existing opportunity for improving pedestrian connectivity is the town’s zoning requirement that pedestrian circulation be provided by a system of pathways providing direct routes to major buildings, parking areas, roads, and open spaces. Bridgewater’s subdivision rules and regulations require pedestrian ways or footpaths to provide convenient circulation or access to schools, playgrounds, shopping, churches, transportation, parks and conservation areas with a 15 to 20-foot right of way. However, according to the Open Space and Recreation Plan, these standards are not well defined or enforced. The plan recommends a town-wide pedestrian/bikeway system to help enforce these standards and ensure that newly constructed paths can be connected to an existing network.

### **Existing Trails and Open Space**

Bridgewater is home to the Bay Circuit Trail. This trail provides the community with greater access to the natural and historic elements in town, including Iron Works Park and Bridgewater Stiles and Hart Conservation Parkland, and is a starting point for providing a more connected network.

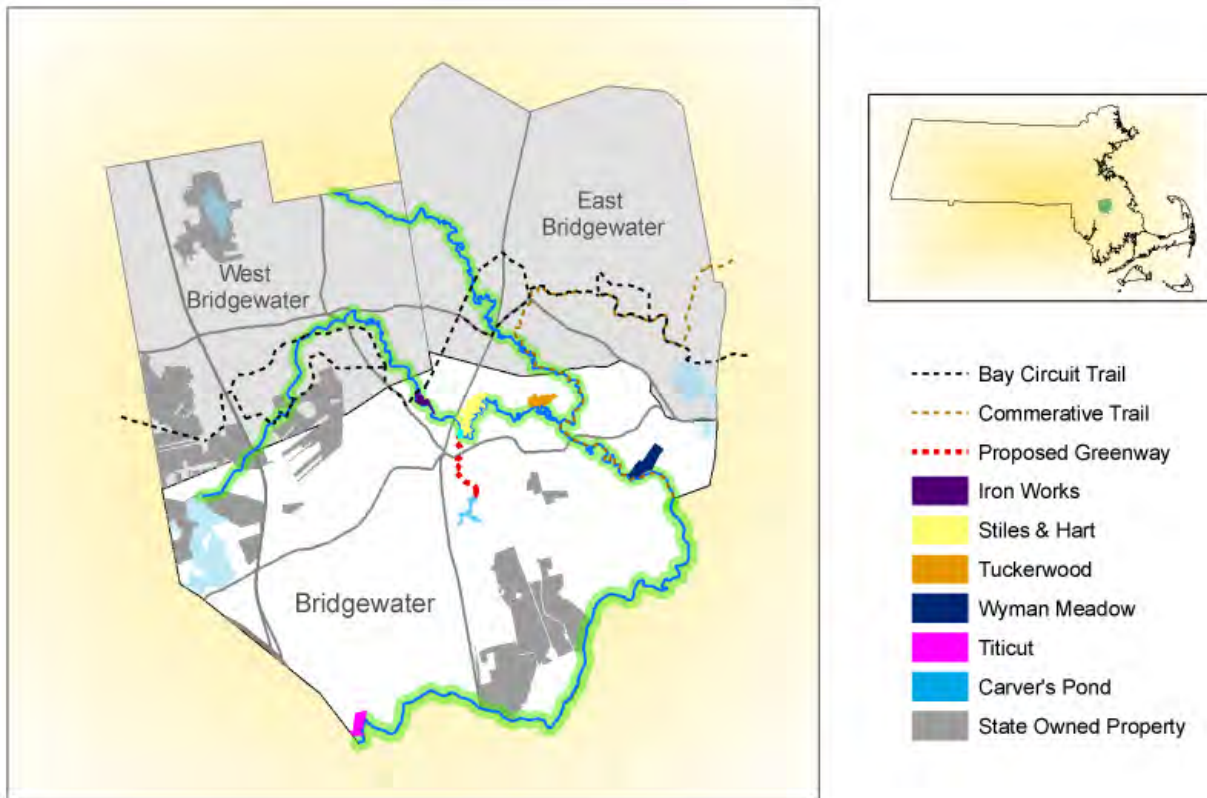
Bridgewater’s open space resources, including Lake Nippenicket, Tuckerwood Conservation Area, Stiles and Hart Conservation Area, Great River Preserve, Wyman Meadow, and Carver Pond provide opportunities throughout town to develop a connected network. The Nunckatessett Greenway is envisioned as a greenbelt along the Town River and into West Bridgewater to link town-owned conservation areas to the Bay Circuit Trail, to create a contiguous, walkable or paddleable trail and parkland system. The report, *Nunckatessett Greenway: A Call to Action* was completed in 2014 to further support the need for a greenway master plan.<sup>17</sup> A concept for connecting the Bay Circuit Trail and Nunckatessett Greenway is illustrated in Figure 3.8. Community input as part of the Master Plan

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<sup>17</sup> The Nunckatessett Greenway – Bridgewater, MA. Accessed at <http://www.nunckatessettgreenway.org/explore/bridgewater/> on February 15, 2021.

process as also included creating branded wayfinding and publicity between recreational points in town.

Figure 3.8. Nunckatessett Greenway Vision in Bridgewater



### FAMILY-FRIENDLY STREETS

#### *MassDOT Complete Streets*

Bridgewater can use funding from the MassDOT Complete Streets Program to link transportation improvements with other elements of the Master Plan, such as Land Use, Housing, and Economic Development. For example, the town can apply for funding at prioritized locations for senior housing, which may warrant accessibility improvements on sidewalks and at crosswalks, or areas where the town wants to improve multimodal access to help generate economic development.

### Complete Streets for Economic Development

Complete Streets can provide accessible connections between land uses, thus providing greater opportunity for people to access activities that support daily life, recreation and entertainment, and other activities. The more activity an area can generate, the greater the investment. Numerous Complete Streets projects have demonstrated economic benefits through higher property values and increased business revenues.

*MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program Guidance*

#### **MassDOT Safe Routes to Schools**

The MassDOT Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program is another state resource that Bridgewater can use to fund safety improvements to create family-friendly streets. As part of the SRTS program, neighborhood schools may conduct student travel and transportation evaluations, walking route evaluations, creation of walking maps, and the promotion of road improvements. SRTS program resources can help the town understand specific safety challenges and desires of the neighborhood residents, school children and parents, and inform where special treatments for protected crossings and increased visibility are most needed.



### DRIVER AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

#### **MassDOT Road Safety Audit Program**

MassDOT's Road Safety Audit Program (RSA) provides a formal safety review of existing and planned roads or intersections by an independent, multidisciplinary team. An RSA is required for 25% design plans where all or part of a project is in a HSIP eligible location. An RSA can be requested from MassDOT at HSIP locations by the Town. A Lane Departure RSA was completed in 2008 for Route 24. The RSA report recommended congestion reduction and clean-up efforts. This intersection of Route 24 and Route 104 was identified as a high crash location based on 2011 HSIP cluster data.

A Road Safety Audit was also completed at Bedford Street and Grove Street, where the town is conducting a safety assessment. Safety at this intersection is a concern, as a fatality occurred involving a dump truck and a motorcycle. As part of the safety assessment, improvements to provide ADA compliance, traffic calming, and potential roadway reconfigurations to promote safety will be recommended.

### REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

#### **OCPC Transportation Improvement Program**

The Old Colony Planning Council's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a means for the state to allocate federal money to projects throughout the eastern Massachusetts region. Projects are selected based on how they meet goals and objectives, defined in the region's Long Range Transportation Plan. Currently all of the projects programmed or likely to be programmed on the TIP are on roadways outside of Bridgewater's jurisdiction, as seen in Table 3.7. Bridgewater's Master Plan



can help identify local roadway projects that may be eligible to be programmed on the TIP (TIP eligibility requires 25% design) and receive federal funding.

**Table 3.7. OCPC TIP Projects within Bridgewater Town Boundary**

Project Name	TIP ID	Estimated Cost	Program Year
Cleaning, Painting and Repairing 11 Steel Bridges On/Over Route 24	606021	Not Listed Total Program Funds: \$1,259,683	TBD
Pavement Preservation and Related Work on Route 24	608820	Not Listed Total Program Funds: \$9,674,112	2022

Sources: Old Colony Planning Council. FFY 2019-2023 Old Colony Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). [http://www.ocpcrpa.org/docs/mpo/FFY\\_2019\\_2023\\_Transportation\\_Improvement\\_Program\\_\(TIP\).pdf](http://www.ocpcrpa.org/docs/mpo/FFY_2019_2023_Transportation_Improvement_Program_(TIP).pdf).

### **South Coast Rail Commuter Rail Extension**

Bridgewater Station has the highest number of in-bound boardings of all stations on the Middleborough/Lakeville Line. The demand for regional transit, and general location of the station set a foundation for increasing transit use in Bridgewater for travel to Boston, Providence, and surrounding towns. Focusing efforts on improving the multimodal features of streets that connect to the station, identifying potential local transit connections to the station, and creating a wayfinding system between downtown and the station for all modes can increase ridership even more and reduce some of the regional traffic in town.

The South Coast Rail project,<sup>18</sup> which would extend commuter rail service from Bridgewater to southeastern Massachusetts along the Middleborough/Lakeville line, may provide funds in a future phase for the reconstruction of Bridgewater Station. This could be an opportunity for the town to improve safety and multimodal connections between the station and Central Square based on the vision and goals developed in this plan. As part of the planning process, the town can determine what it wants from this project and guide the impacts of the commuter rail expansion in Bridgewater.

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## **3.4. Goals, Policies, and Recommendations**

### **TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION GOALS**

- Improve safety and accessibility for all modes and users.
- Encourage multimodal transportation to minimize vehicular congestion, especially downtown.

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<sup>18</sup> Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. South Coast Rail. <https://www.mbta.com/projects/south-coast-rail>, accessed January 29, 2021.

## **TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Policies for decision makers are listed **in bold** with relevant recommendations listed below the policy. For detail regarding timing and responsible parties for each recommendation, please see the Implementation Program in Chapter 8.

### **Improve safety across transportation modes for users of all ages and abilities.**

- Investigate lowering speed limits in conjunction with the Bridgewater Police Department.
- Where appropriate, use traffic calming to manage traffic speeds and traffic volumes.
- Implement the 2019 Bedford Street and Grove Street Road Safety Audit (RSA) and work with MassDOT to conduct RSAs at additional HSIP locations identified in Town.
- Improve tree trimming program at intersections to ensure sign visibility.
- Improve street lighting in Central Square on Broad Street, Summer Street, and Plymouth Street, as identified by the Bridgewater Police Department.

### **Ensure equitable access to transportation facilities from all users, including those with disabilities, seniors, and families with young children.**

- Continue to use data from the 2019 StreetScan to identify locations for improvements to pedestrian crossing infrastructure and increase ADA compliance and access; plan to conduct StreetScans at regular intervals to maintain current records of the Town's street and sidewalk conditions.
- Work with the Department of Elder Affairs to increase funding for more paratransit services, e.g., increasing frequency or expanding access to certain types of trips (e.g., grocery shopping.)
- Work with the School District to register schools for MassDOT's Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program to fund safety improvements for family-friendly streets.

### **Create, maintain, and promote pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure.**

- Continue implementing the Town's Complete Streets policy; apply for funding through the MassDOT Complete Streets Program for projects from the Prioritization Plan.
- Develop town-wide pedestrian and bicycle master plans to link regional and local connections, fill in network gaps, and improve access to transit.
- Clarify and enforce the Town's zoning requirement for pedestrian circulation, ensuring that all new major development enhances the town-wide pedestrian/bikeway system.
- Create trail connections and a wayfinding program, such as between the Bay Circuit Trail and the Nunckatesset Greenway, to increase awareness of pedestrian/bicycle mobility between recreational points in town.

### **Improve downtown access for all modes, including supporting the reconfiguration of Central Square and parking management.**

- Develop a strategy to implement the Central Square Study (2020), Option 2, i.e., converting Central Square to two-way traffic and installing a pedestrian plaza along Central Square West.

**Chapter 3. Transportation & Circulation**

- Monitor parking utilization in Central Square following completion of the Central Square project.
- Design and implement a parking management and wayfinding program to encourage visitors to Central Square to park and walk between destinations.
- Investigate freight activity and travel patterns through Bridgewater in effort to route trucks around rather than through Central Square as feasible.

**Improve circulation and reduce congestion town-wide.**

- Identify locations for implementing short-term, low-cost operational improvements such as traffic signal timing, pavement markings, and vehicle detection.
- Implement recommendations from the 2019 Route 18 signal inspection, i.e., improve signal equipment and timings, install curb ramps, and restripe crosswalks.
- Adopt zoning to require access management in new nonresidential developments along Routes 104, 28, and 18.
- Adopt recommendations from the January 2020 assessment of transportation access at Bridgewater Middle School and Williams Intermediate School.

**Improve public transit efficiency and connections between transit and other modes.**

- Explore options to provide better bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connections to the Bridgewater commuter rail station (for example, providing sidewalks along the length of Great Hill Avenue).
- Advocate for the inclusion of Bridgewater Station improvements in later stages of the South Coast Rail Project.
- Work with BAT to improve signage and bus stop visibility for bus stops in Bridgewater.
- Study parking demand at the Bridgewater Commuter Rail station and use the results to inform parking management strategies.

**Encourage the adoption of advanced transportation modes and other sustainable transportation solutions.**

- Upgrade signal systems through adaptive signal control technology.
- Use the results of a parking utilization study to allow more flexible use of curb space in desirable areas, such as Central Square and at the commuter rail station, e.g., through the use of Smart Parking meters.
- Study demand for a mobility on-demand shuttle to expand first/last mile connections and meet local transit needs in Bridgewater.
- Support and incorporate solutions to encourage sustainability and anticipate impacts of autonomous vehicles, both for private use and potential shuttles. This includes adding electric vehicle charging stations at Town facilities such as Town Hall, the Library, and requiring electric vehicle charging stations in new private developments.

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# Chapter 4 Housing

## 4. Housing

### 4.1. Introduction

The housing element of a master plan identifies housing needs, projections, and opportunities for a community and its residents. As such, it arguably is the most relevant plan element to the general population. While all topics discussed in a master plan have the potential to shape a city or town, housing is a tangible topic that directly affects *all* members of a community each day. As households continue to evolve and diversify, a community’s master plan can provide a valuable road map for ensuring that the needs of its residents of all ages, family and household types, and backgrounds are met.

For this chapter, comparison communities generally consist of the five towns surrounding Bridgewater (East and West Bridgewater, Halifax, Middleborough, and Raynham, referred to in some tables as tier 1 communities), with some discussion topics also including the cities and towns bordering this inner ring (referred to as tier 2 communities).

**Figure 4.1. Housing Comparison Communities**

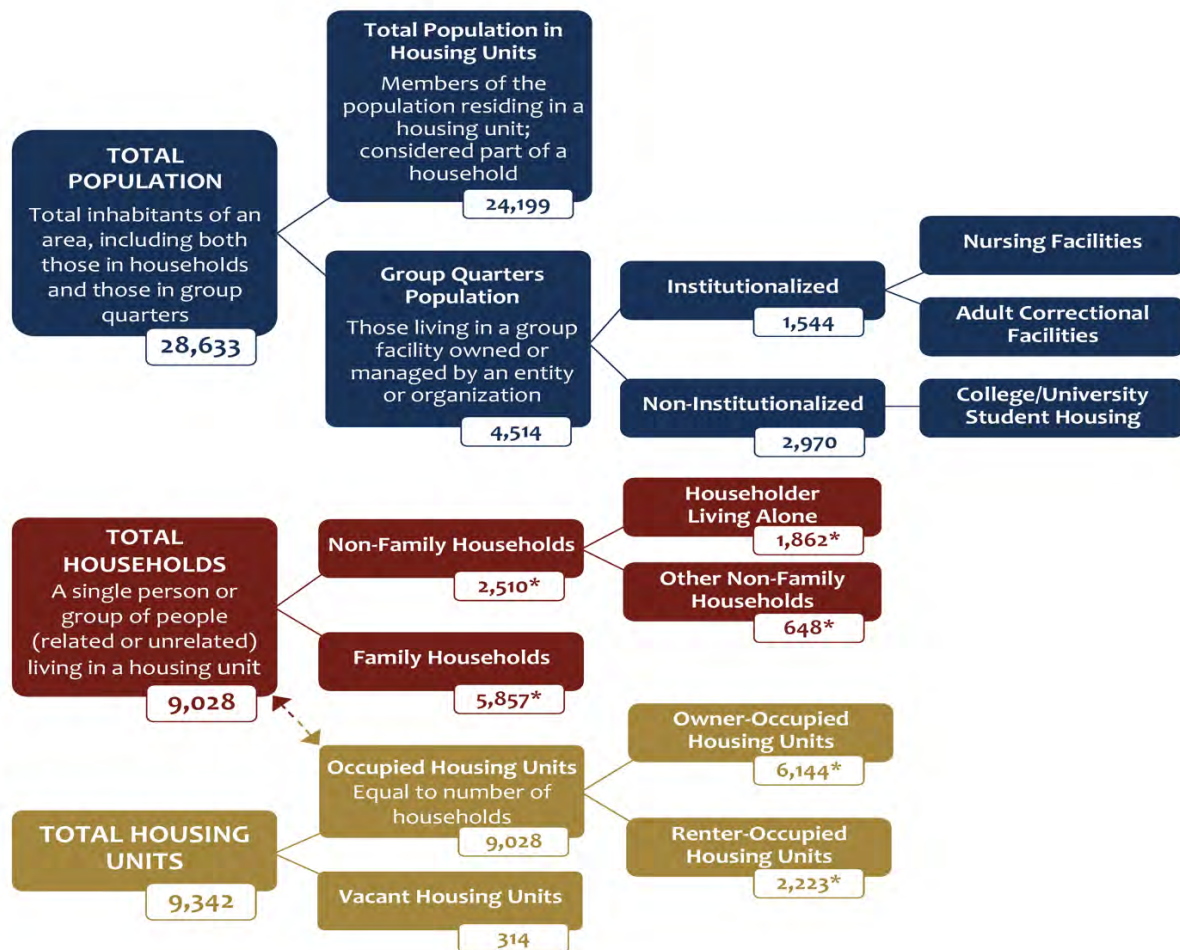
Source: 2020 US Decennial Census



**A note on the data:** As of January 2022, Census 2020 data was not yet fully available for all data sets. Furthermore, many detailed demographic data sets are only reported through American Community Survey (ACS). As such, this report often uses 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. This map, however, provides the most recent US 2020 Census figures for populations and households.

Analyzing Bridgewater’s demographics and existing conditions can be challenging due to the presence of three state institutions: Bridgewater State University (BSU), and Bridgewater State Hospital (BSH), and Old Colony Correctional Center (OCCC), which includes the Massachusetts Treatment Center (MTC). Each of these facilities contain “group quarters populations” i.e., people living in the community but not members of a *household*. Group quarters residents may be “non-institutional,” like college students, or “institutional,” such as prison inmates. Either way, they count toward a community’s total population if they have lived for at least two months in one of these types of facilities.<sup>1</sup> However, they do not count toward the makeup of a community’s households. Together, Figure 4.2 and Table 4.1 describe the difference between total population, households, and housing units, as well as where these definitions overlap.

**Figure 4.2. Understanding Bridgewater’s Population, Households, and Housing Units<sup>2</sup>**  
 Sources: 2020 US Decennial Census, \*ACS 2015-2020 5-Year Estimates, Tables B01003, B25002, B25026, B26001.



<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau, “Group Quarters/Residence Rules.” Last revised March 18, 2018. Accessed June 27, 2020 at <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/group-quarters.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Figures are from the 2020 U.S Decennial Census unless otherwise noted. Numbers with an asterisk (\*) are from the 2020 ACS 5-year estimates because these figures are not yet available from the 2020 Census and therefore will not total the category under which they fall.

**Table 4.1. Understanding Bridgewater’s Populations and Households**

	Population	Group Quarters Population	Population in Households	Households
<b>Includes Non-Institutionalized Group Quarters Population?</b> <i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSU students living on campus</li> <li>• Residents of group homes</li> </ul>	✓ YES	✓ YES	✗ NO	✗ NO
<b>Includes Institutionalized Group Quarters Population?</b> <i>Examples:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCCC/MTC/BSH inmates</li> <li>• Bridgewater Skilled Nursing &amp; Rehabilitation Center Residents</li> </ul>	✓ YES	✓ YES	✗ NO	✗ NO
<b>Includes BSU Students Living Off-Campus in Bridgewater?</b>	✓ YES	✗ NO	✓ YES	✓ YES
<b>Includes BSU Students Commuting from outside Bridgewater?</b>	✗ NO	✗ NO	✗ NO	✗ NO

## 4.2. Existing Conditions and Trends

### POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Compared to its contiguous communities, Bridgewater’s total population grew more rapidly from 1970-1990, coinciding with a major period of expansion for the college during which time enrollment quadrupled.<sup>3</sup> Figure 4.2 displays population growth trends from 1930-2019 and shows that the clearest spike for Bridgewater occurred between 1970-1980. Student enrollment alone does not account for this growth, as the number of households nearly doubled during this time, increasing from 3,057 in 1970 to 5,953 in 1990.<sup>4</sup> As discussed in the land use chapter and shown in Table 4.2, the Town saw significant loss of agricultural land use between 1971 and 1999 and an *increase* in residential land use as farms were sold and subsequently subdivided. (Also see Table 4.7, Year Structure Built.) As noted in the housing chapter of 2014 Master Plan Update, this trend continued into the early 2000s; between 2002-2013, 29 subdivisions resulted in 382 new housing units on 625 acres.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Bridgewater State College, “Timeline,” (Archived), accessed at <https://web.archive.org/web/20120512111724/http://webhost.bridgew.edu/dwilson/hist.html> on July 2, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> US Decennial Census: 1970, 1980, 1990

<sup>5</sup> Bridgewater Master Plan Update, 2014, Housing (Chapter 2), p.2-7.

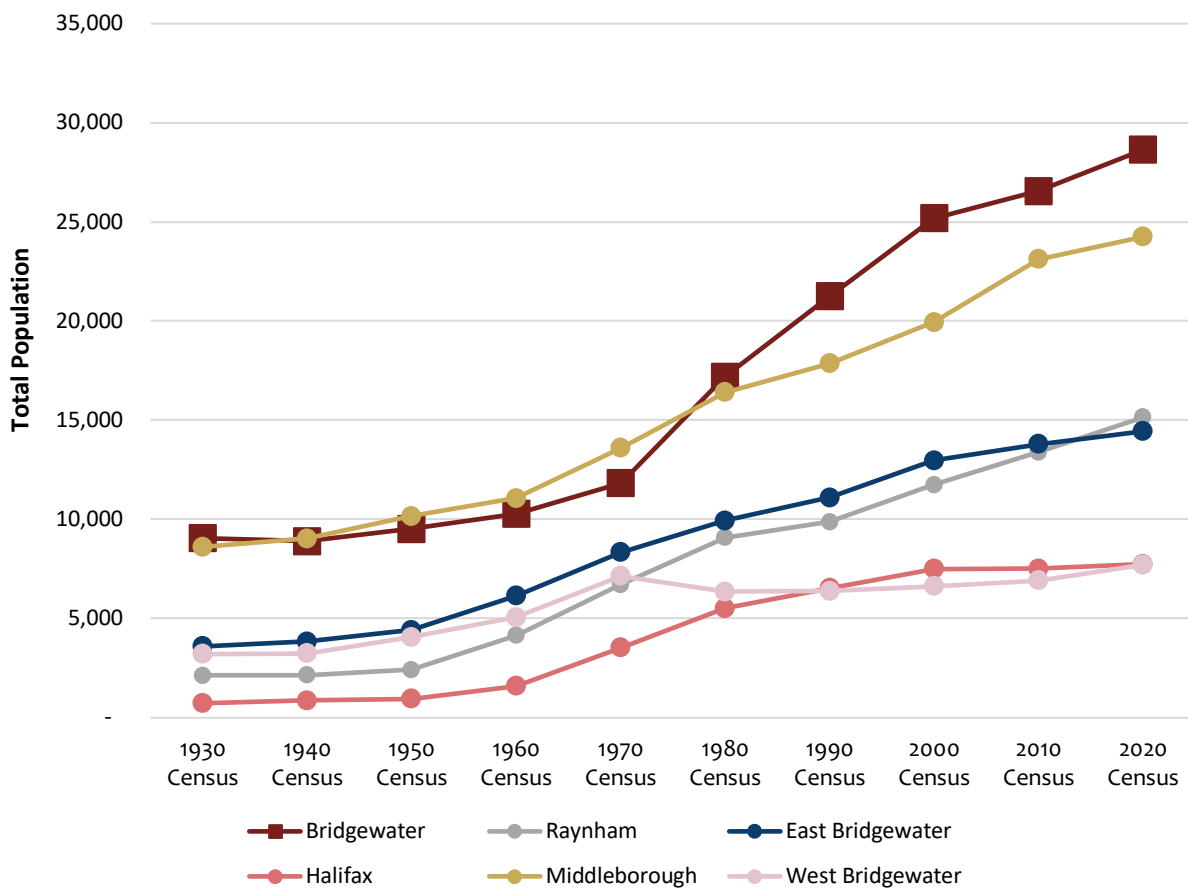


**Table 4.2. Change in Acreage for Select Land Uses From 1971-1999**

	Agriculture	Natural Land/ Undisturbed Vegetation	Medium Density Residential	Low Density Residential
1971-1985	-368 acres	-888 acres	+489 acres	+272 acres
1985-1999	-657 acres	-1091 acres	+733 acres	+812 acres
<b>Total Change 1971-1999</b>	<b>-1024 acres</b>	<b>-1979 acres</b>	<b>+1222 acres</b>	<b>+1084 acres</b>

Source: MassGIS Land Use Summary Statistics, Set 1, 2003

**Figure 4.2. Population History for  
 Bridgewater and Surrounding Towns from 1930-2020**  
 (Source: US Decennial Census, 1930-2020)



More recently, however, population growth has slowed. From 2010-2020, the Town saw the lowest percent population increase compared to Middleborough and Easton, the two peer communities most similar to Bridgewater in population size and number of households (Table 4.3 below).

**Table 4.3. Percent Growth for Population and Number of Households from 2010-2020**

	<b>Geography</b>	<b>Percent Growth: Population</b>	<b>Percent Growth: Number of Households</b>
<b>Tier 1</b>	Bridgewater	7.8%	12.9%
	East Bridgewater	4.7%	6.9%
	Halifax	3.1%	5.0%
	Middleborough	4.9%	11.0%
	Raynham	13.1%	14.7%
	West Bridgewater	11.4%	8.8%
<b>Tier 2</b>	Brockton	12.6%	7.4%
	Carver	1.2%	4.6%
	Easton	8.4%	10.8%
	Hanson	4.2%	9.0%
	Lakeville	8.7%	13.8%
	Pembroke	2.9%	6.1%
	Plympton	3.9%	3.0%
	Taunton	6.3%	6.2%
	Whitman	4.4%	7.9%
<b>State</b>	Massachusetts	7.4%	7.9%
<b>County</b>	Plymouth County	7.3%	8.9%

*Source: 2010 and 2020 US Decennial Census via Social Explorer, Table and Table 3*

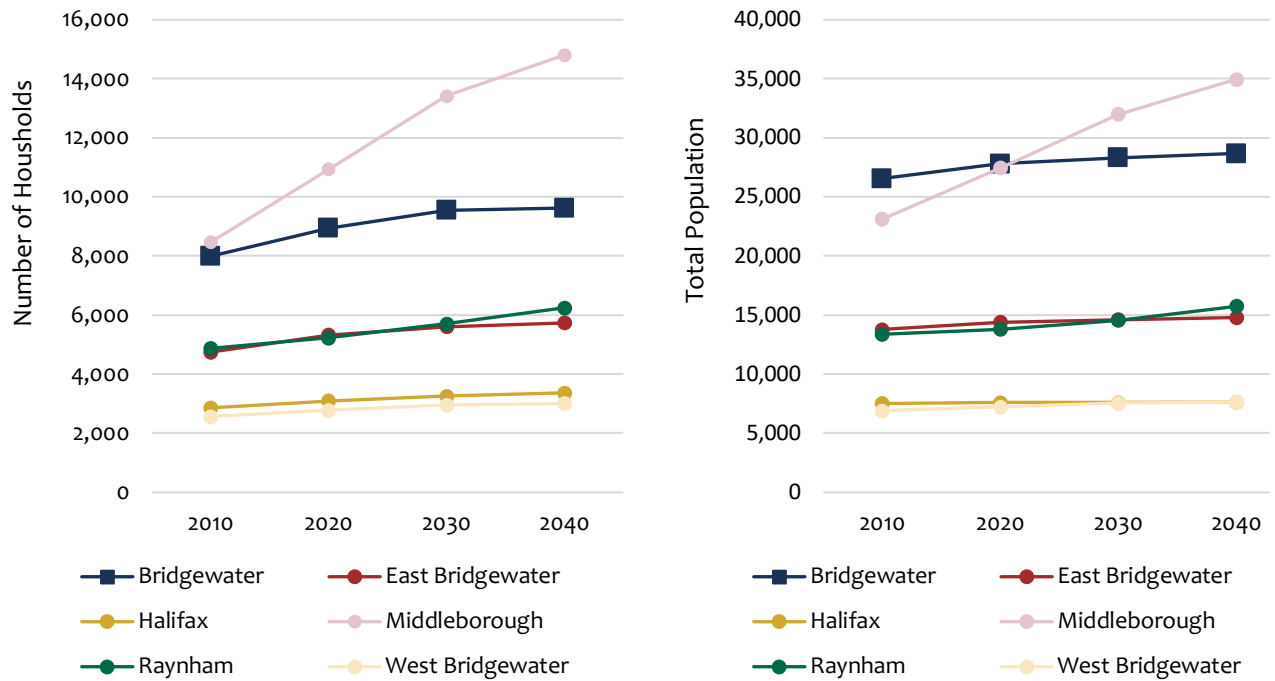
### **Population Projections**

In 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) — in conjunction with an advisory team of experts from regional and state agencies, the Massachusetts Donohoe Institute (UMDI) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) — projected regional increases in population and housing demand through the year 2040. This project was intended to inform 2020 Regional Transportation Plans and analyzed demographic trends, labor force participation, commuting patterns, and other data to estimate population and household growth.<sup>6</sup> According to this metric, Bridgewater is projected to experience a 6.7 percent increase in population between 2010 and 2040.

<sup>6</sup> Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), “Socio-Economic Projections for 2020 Transportation Plans.” Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), “Metro Boston Population and Housing Demand Projections Executive Summary.” Accessed December 30, 2020 at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/socio-economic-projections-for-2020-regional-transportation-plans>. “Working closely with an advisory committee of regional and state agencies and other interested stakeholders, [UMDI] and [MAPC]... under contract to MassDOT . . . developed, tested and refined a variety of methods and assumptions about the components of socio-economic changes occurring throughout Massachusetts now and over the next 20 years.”

**Figure 4.4. Growth Projections for Bridgewater and Surrounding Towns from 2010-2040**

Source: MassDOT Socio-Economic Projections for 2020 Regional Transportation Plans

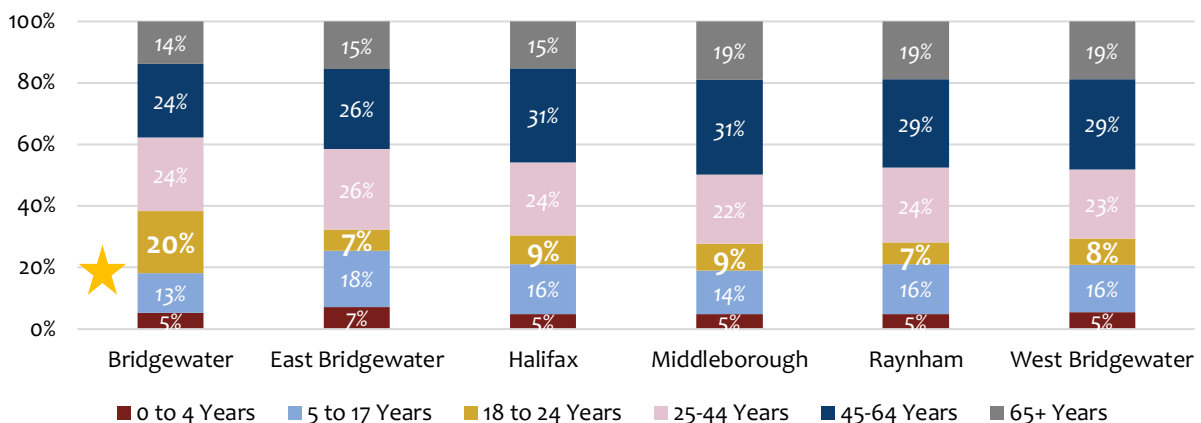


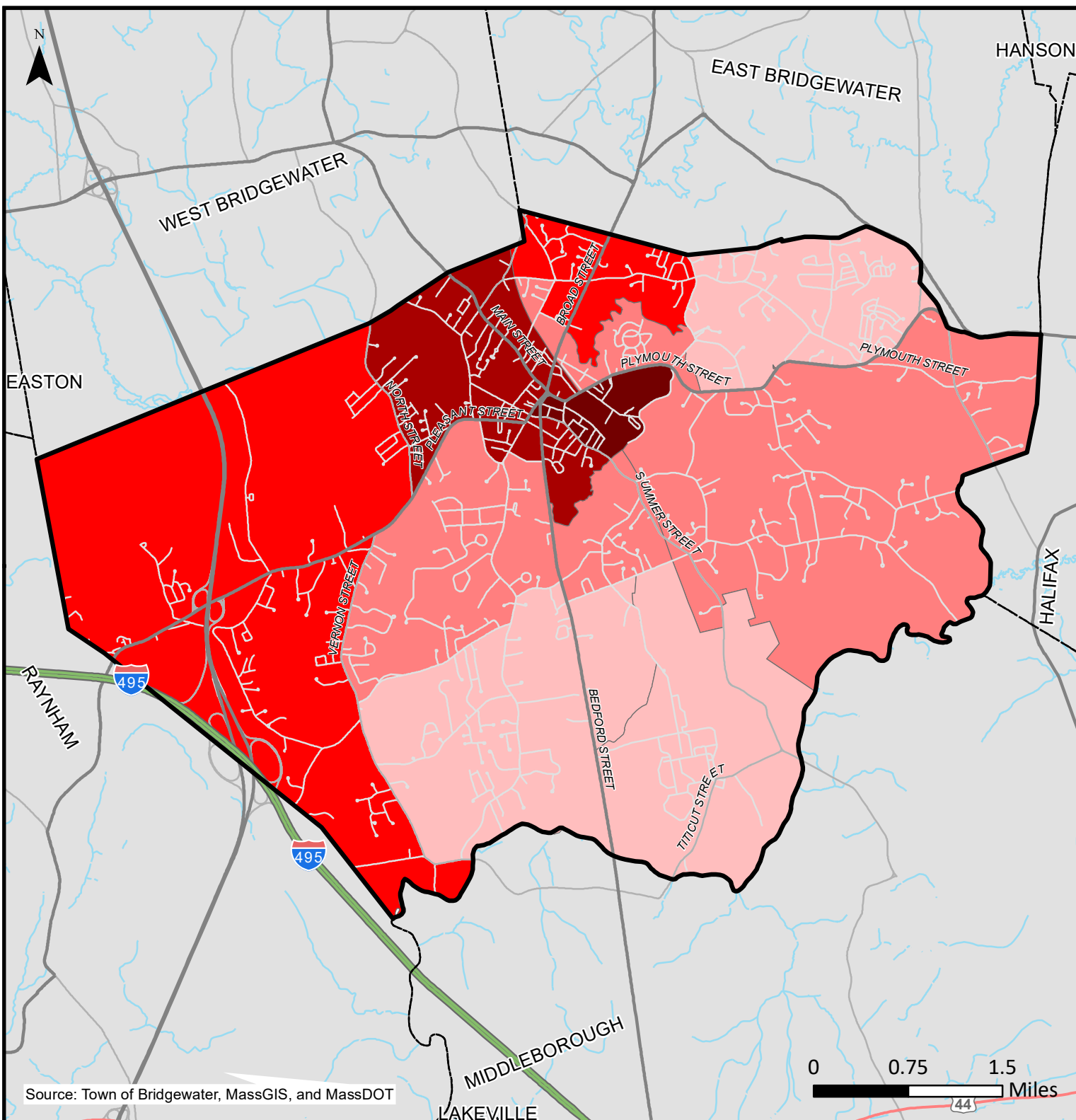
**Age**

**18-24 Age Group**

Compared to its surrounding communities, Bridgewater has a significantly higher percentage of the population ages 18-24. This comes as no surprise considering the sizeable student population and is confirmed by Map 4.1, which shows the population concentration of 18-24 year-olds by census block group and highlights the large percentage of this age cohort living in proximity to BSU.

**Figure 4.3. Comparison Population Age Breakdown**  
 (Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, via Social Explorer, Table A01001)





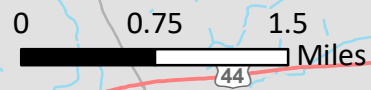
**MAP 4.1. PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE 18-24 BY CENSUS BLOCK GROUP**

**Population 18-24 Years Old**

- 1.02% - 4.06%
- 5.59% - 8.44%
- 13.5% - 15.1%
- 22% - 30.4%
- 90.8%

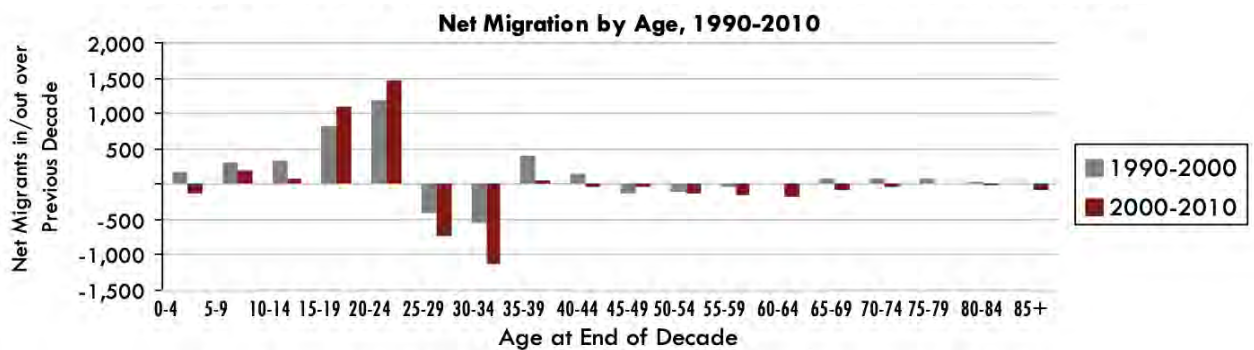
*Note: Block groups are based on 2010 census geographies.*

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT



While MassDOT provides the most current population and household data projections data, MAPC’s Population and Housing Demand Projections report (2014) provides valuable insight into past trends relating to age of residents. Most notably, between 1990 and 2010, Bridgewater experienced a staggering migration *into* Town for the 15-24 population, and a nearly equally notable migration *out* for ages 25-34.<sup>7</sup> No comparison communities have a similar migration pattern for these age cohorts except Easton, which is home to Stonehill College where eighty-eight percent of its approximately 2,800 students live on campus.<sup>8</sup> While this trend is not surprising for a college town, it may indicate that BSU students either cannot afford to remain in town after graduation, or that they are choosing not to establish roots in Bridgewater.

**Figure 4.5., Taken from MAPC’s Population and Housing Demands Projections for Metro Boston, 2014**

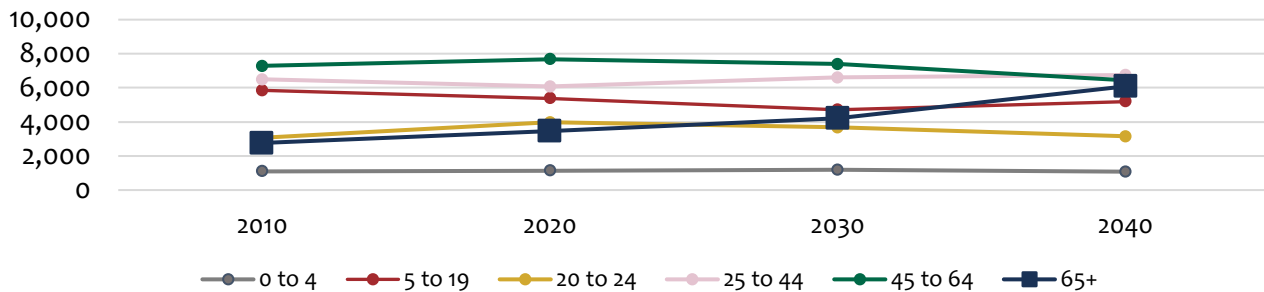


**Senior Population**

Also of note is the significant projected increase in Bridgewater’s 65+ population while the other age cohorts are projected to remain fairly stable or even decrease, as shown in Figure 4.6. This trend of an “aging population” can be observed nationally<sup>9</sup> and will surely define the evolving housing needs of communities with inadequate affordable, accessible housing and assisted living options for seniors. Map 4.2 displays the concentration of Bridgewater’s 65+ population.

**Figure 4.6. Projected Population Increase in Bridgewater by Age from 2010-2040**

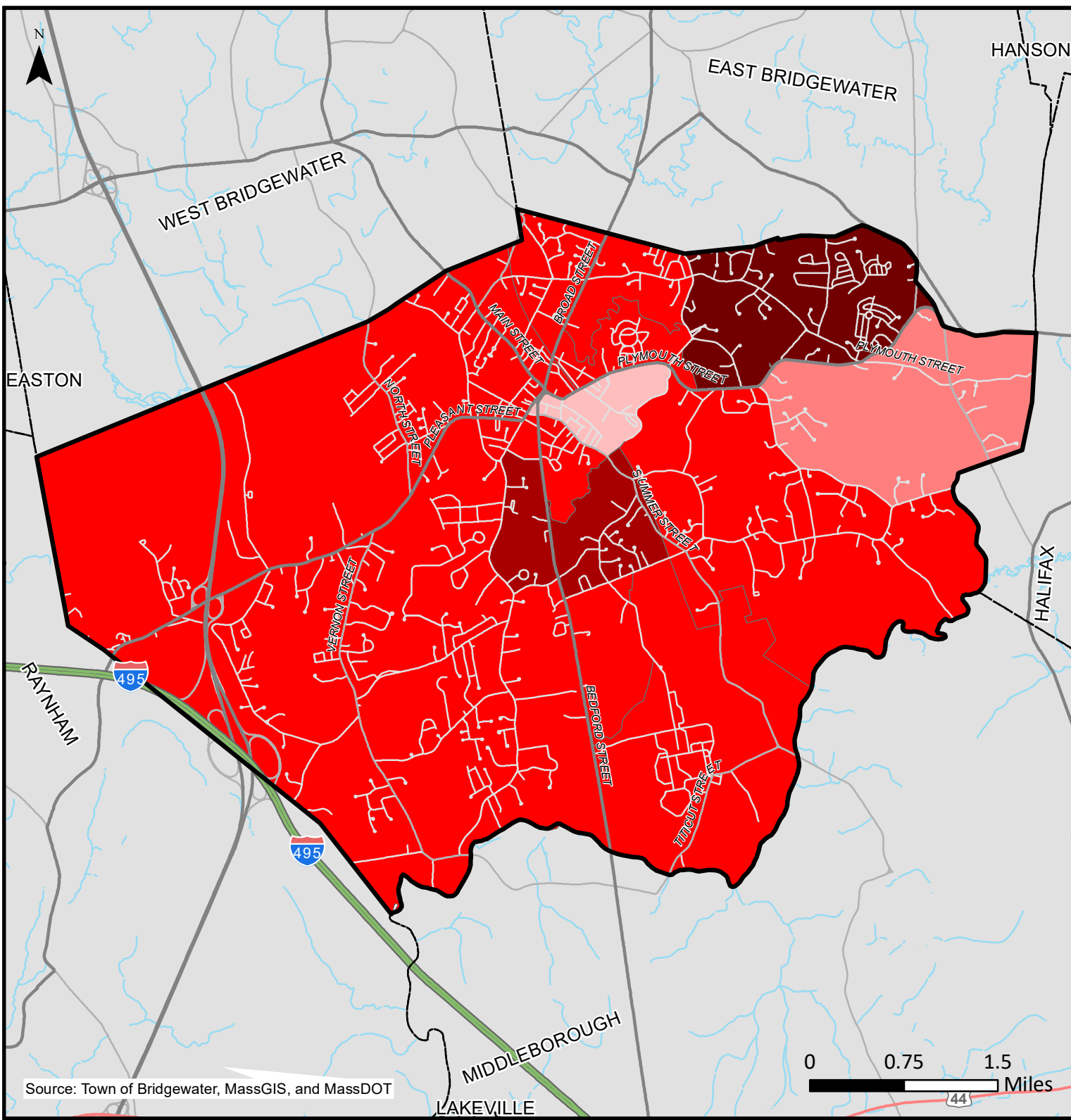
Source: MassDOT Socio-Economic Projections for 2020 Regional Transportation Plans



<sup>7</sup> MAPC Population and Housing Demand Projections Report, 2014

<sup>8</sup> “Stonehill College at a Glance,” <https://www.stonehill.edu/about-stonehill/at-a-glance/>

<sup>9</sup> Lauren Medina, Shannon Sabo, and Jonathan Vespa, “Living Longer: Historical and Projected Life Expectancy in the United States, 1960 to 2060,” U.S. Census Bureau, February 2020, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1145.pdf>.



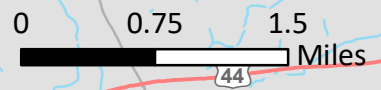
**MAP 4.2. PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE 65+ BY CENSUS BLOCK GROUP**

**Population 65 Years+**

- 1.81%
- 1.82% - 8.81%
- 8.82% - 15.3%
- 15.4% - 19.9%
- 20% - 37.5%

*Note: Block groups are based on 2010 census geographies.*

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT



### Race and Ethnicity

The South Shore is among the least diverse regions of the Commonwealth in terms of race, ethnicity, and national origin, and Bridgewater is no exception, although this is shifting. In 2010, 91 percent of Bridgewater's population was white compared to 82.6 percent in 2020. Black residents make up the highest minority group at 7.2 percent compared to 4.9 percent in 2010.<sup>10</sup> According to American Community Survey estimates, ninety percent of households are white (as defined by the race of the head-of-household) with Black households again comprising the largest minority group in Bridgewater at 6.5 percent; once 2020 Census figures for Households by Race of Householder (as opposed to population) are available, the community will have another source of comparison available to track this apparent increase in racial diversity. In terms of ethnicity, In 2010, 3.2 percent of the population was Hispanic or Latino compared to 4.4 percent in 2020.<sup>11</sup>

### Immigration

Approximately 1,436 Bridgewater residents (5.2 percent of the total population) are foreign-born, which is in line with the (non-city) comparison communities but lower than Plymouth County's foreign-born population, which is 9.5 percent.<sup>12</sup> Latin America, Asia, and Europe are the most common places of birth for Bridgewater's foreign-born population, as shown in Figure 4.7.

**Figure 4.7. Place of Birth for Bridgewater's Foreign-Born Population**  
(Source: ACS 2019, Table B05006)



### Disabilities

Nineteen percent of households in Bridgewater have a household member with a disability, with the most common type being an ambulatory limitation. The breakdown by disability type for households is as follows:

- Ambulatory Limitation: 8.6 percent
- Hearing or Vision Impairment: 8.5 percent
- Self-Care or Independent Living Limitation: 7.5 percent
- Cognitive Limitation: 7.2 percent<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> 2010 and 2020 US Decennial Census, via Social Explorer, Table T4.

<sup>11</sup> 2010 and 2020 US Decennial Census, via Social Explorer, Table T5.

<sup>12</sup> ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B05002

<sup>13</sup> Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, Table 6, 2017

As is consistent with the county and state statistics for age and disability status, the 75+ population is the most heavily affected in Bridgewater (Table 4.4).

### Group Quarters Populations

Bridgewater has significant numbers of “group quarters” residents: people present in Bridgewater because they reside in some type of institutional or non-institutional setting. Most of the available demographic statistics

for cities and towns are based on total population, which includes group quarters residents. Thus, the 3,300 undergraduate students residing on the BSU campus<sup>14</sup> and approximately 1,550 inmates of OCCC and BSH<sup>15</sup> are counted in the total population, but they do not count toward the community’s *households*. At 16.2 percent, the share of Bridgewater’s total population living in group quarters is significantly higher than the surrounding communities together (1.2 percent), Plymouth County (2.2 percent), and the state as a whole (3.4 percent). For this reason, this element examines *households* when possible rather than population, although both categories are used throughout the chapter.

## HOUSEHOLDS

### Household Types

Bridgewater has a higher percentage of nonfamily households not living alone (i.e., unrelated adults sharing a housing unit) than its neighboring communities (Table 4.5). The highest concentration of these unrelated households exists in the census block groups near BSU, as shown in Map 4.3 in the Appendix. (Note that this does not include students who live in university housing, as they are not counted toward Bridgewater’s households.)

**Table 4.5. Household Type**

	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	Family Households			Nonfamily Households	
		Married Couple	Single Parent, Male	Single Parent, Female	Living Alone	Not Living Alone
Bridgewater	8,133	53.8%	6.2%	9.7%	21.7%	8.5%
East Bridgewater	4828	61.7%	3.1%	11.7%	17.9%	5.5%
Halifax	2,904	61.5%	4.9%	6.2%	23%	4.4%
Middleborough	9,283	54%	3.8%	10.6%	26.1%	5.5%
West Bridgewater	2,499	57.2%	5.1%	7.4%	23.4%	6.9%
Raynham	5,255	58.7%	4.1%	9.2%	21.4%	6.6%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2014-2019), Table B11001

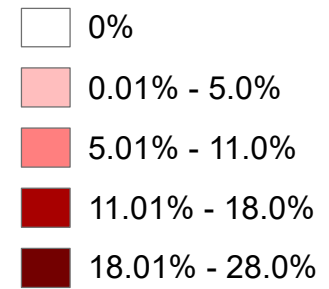
<sup>14</sup> Bridgewater State University, “Living on Campus.” Accessed July 5, 2020 at <https://www.bridgew.edu/student-life/residence-life-housing>.

<sup>15</sup> Massachusetts Department of Corrections, “January 2020 MA DOC Institutional Fact Cards.” At the time of publication of these fact cards, BSH housed 225 individuals (179 committed inmates; 85 for observation), and OCCC housed 758 criminally convicted inmates, with an additional 571 at Massachusetts Treatment Center (529 inmates; 42 temporary commitments).



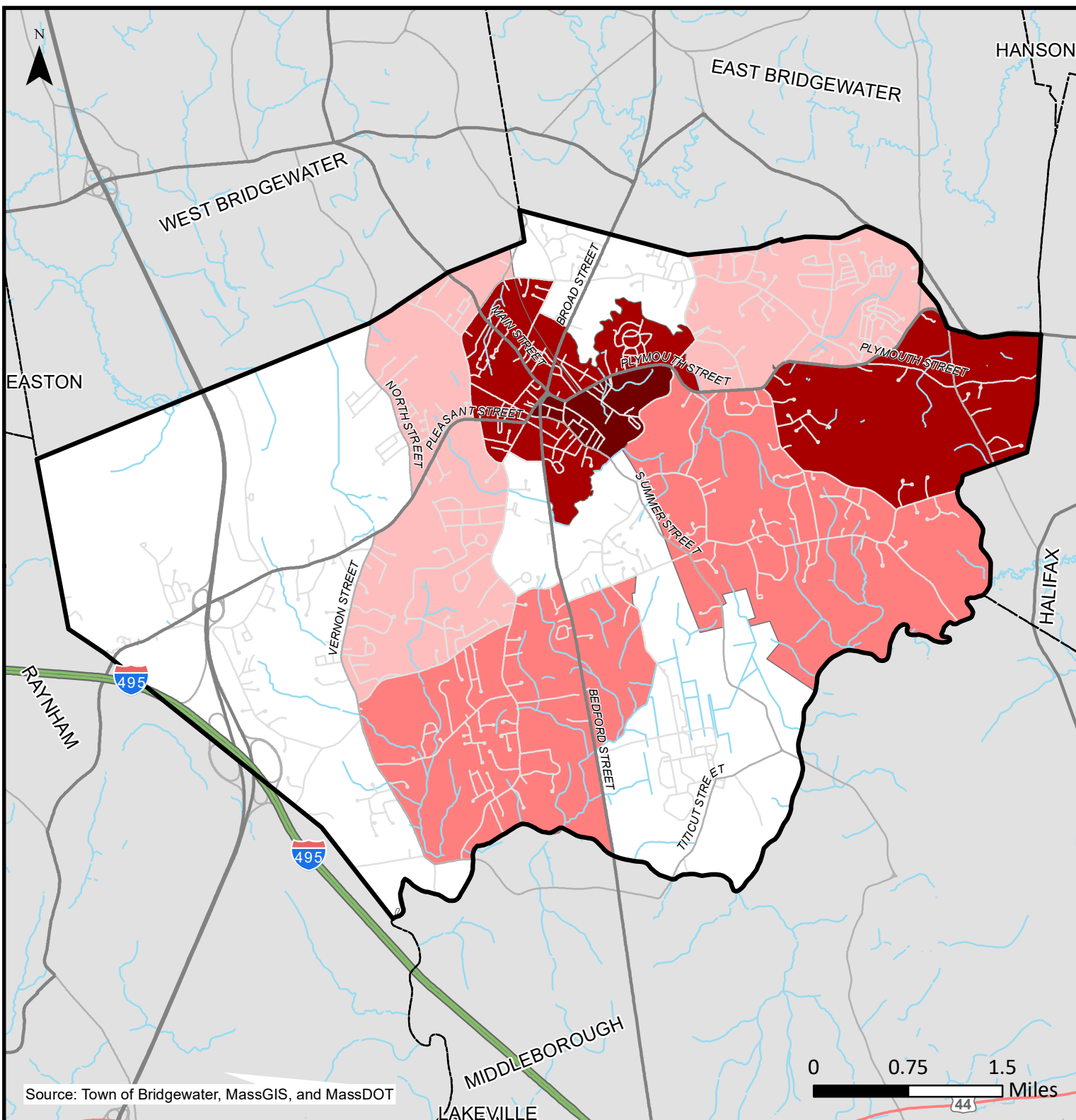
**MAP 4.3. PERCENT OF UNRELATED HOUSEHOLDS BY CENSUS BLOCK GROUP**

**Unrelated Households**



*Data only represents multiperson unrelated households and does not include householders living alone.*

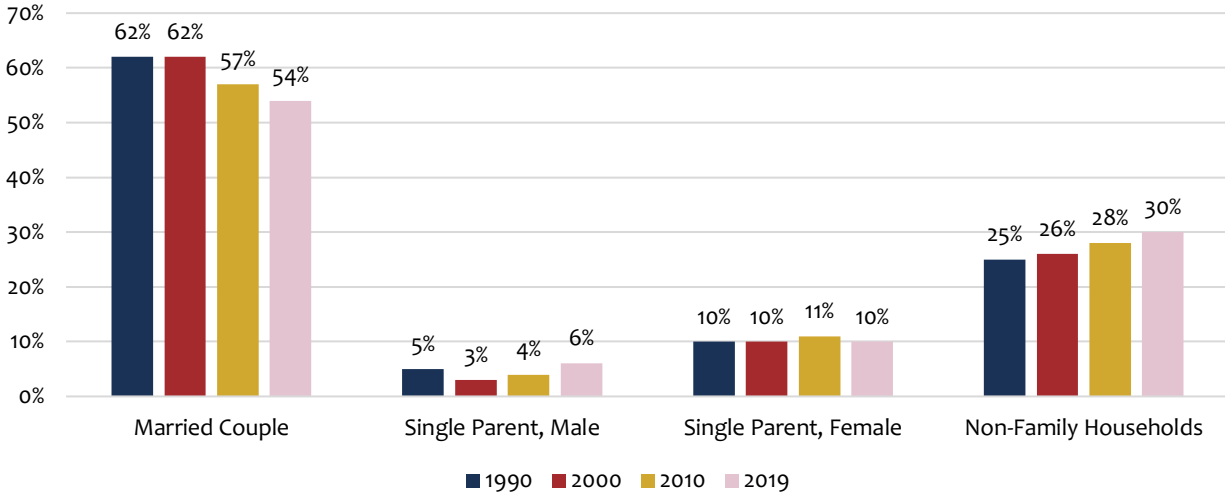
*Note: Block groups are based on 2010 census geographies.*



Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

### Household Sizes

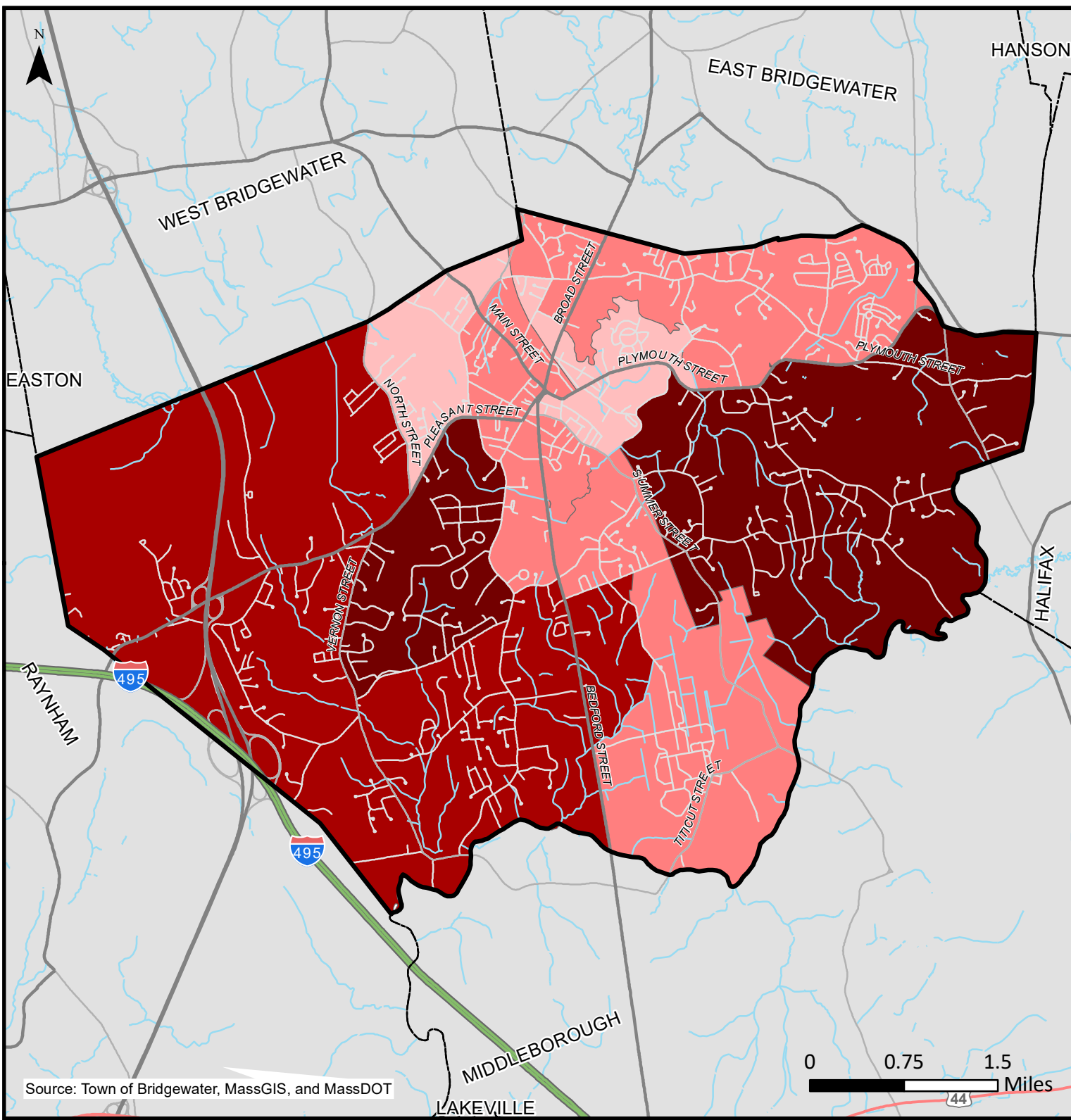
**Figure 4.8. Trends in Bridgewater's Household Types**  
(Source: US Census, 1990, 2000, 2010; ACS 2019)



The average household size in Bridgewater is 2.80, which is slightly higher than the county average of 2.69.<sup>16</sup> A few particular census block groups have notably higher average household sizes, as shown in Map 4.4.

<sup>14</sup> ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B25010

<sup>15</sup> ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B25012



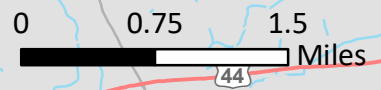
**MAP 4.4. AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE BY CENSUS BLOCK GROUP**

**Average Household Size**

- 2.14 - 2.28
- 2.29 - 2.73
- 2.74 - 3.14
- 3.15 - 3.41

*Note: Block groups are based on 2010 census geographies.*

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

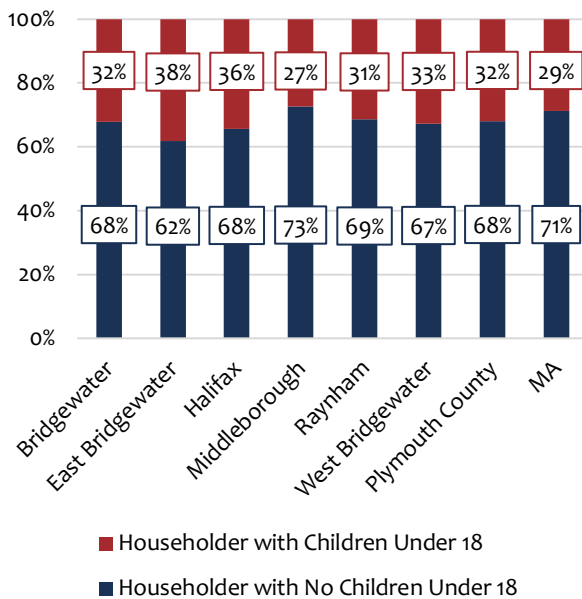


### Households with Children

An estimated thirty-two percent of Bridgewater households have children under 18, on par with Plymouth County (thirty-two percent) and Bridgewater’s neighboring communities (Figure 4.9).<sup>17</sup> Approximately forty-five percent of these households with children under 18 have children under 6 (Figure 4.10) which may contribute to the projected increasing student enrollment; in 2017, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)<sup>18</sup> provided enrollment projections which drove planning efforts for rebuilding Mitchell Elementary School, which is under construction: “The MBSA’s base enrollment forecast indicates that the Town of Bridgewater’s K-3 enrollment will be stable for the next two years before experiencing a rising trend over the next ten years.”<sup>19</sup>

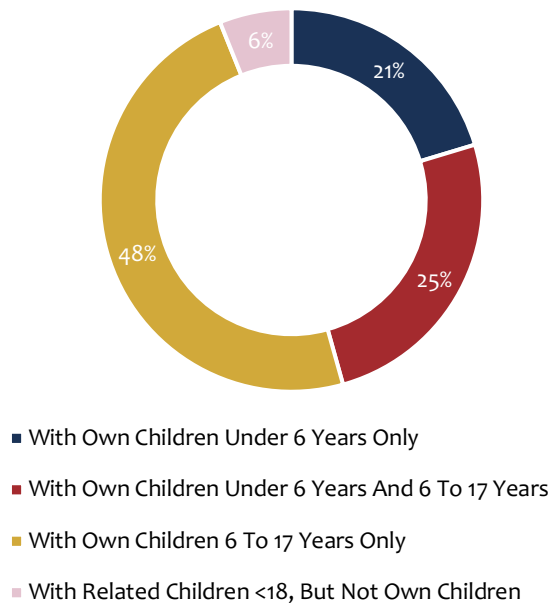
**Figure 4.9. Presence of Children Under 18 in Households**

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B25012



**Figure 4.10. Households with Children Under 18**

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B25012



### Age of Householders

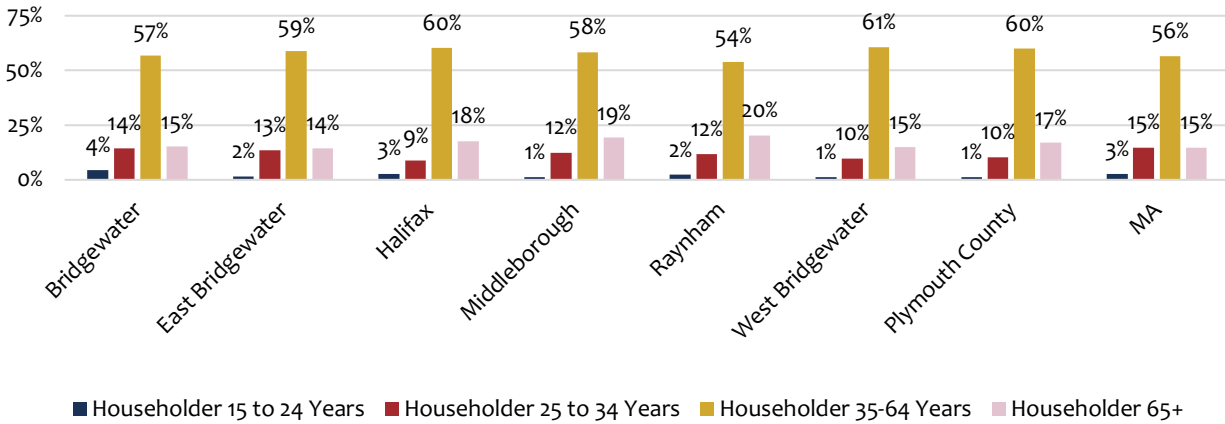
The term **householder** refers to the **head of a household** or the person who owns or rents a dwelling unit. Householders 15 to 24 make up 4.3 percent of all householders in Bridgewater, which is

<sup>18</sup> The MSBA was created in 2004 to help fund capital improvement projects in MA public schools. As part of the feasibility study to construct a new Mitchell Elementary School, MSBA provided enrollment projections through the year 2027.

<sup>19</sup> Massachusetts School Building Authority. Letter to Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District Superintendent Derek Swenson outlining enrollment projections for Bridgewater’s K-2 and K-3 student populations. September 13, 2017. Accessed at <https://bridgewater-school-project.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Appendix-Tab-D-Enrollment-Certification.pdf> on January 31, 2021.

significantly higher than Plymouth County’s rate of 1.2 percent for the same age cohort. This can likely be attributed to Bridgewater’s higher share of nonfamily, college-age households as compared to its neighbors. While not a dramatic difference, the least well represented age group is householders age 35-64 at fifty-seven percent compared to Plymouth County’s sixty percent.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 4.11. Age of Householder (Head of Household)**  
 (Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, via Social Explorer, Table A10020)



**Household Incomes**

Bridgewater’s median household income is higher than that of the county and state overall, as well as in all age cohorts except for the Under 25 group compared to the county.<sup>21</sup> The median household income also varies greatly across Bridgewater depending on the census block group, with the low median household income of \$37,788 in census block group associated with BSU, and a high median household income of \$156,250 in the eastern part of Town south of Route 104.<sup>22</sup> Map 4.5 displays median household incomes by block group.

**Table 4.6. Median Household Income and Comparison Ratios**

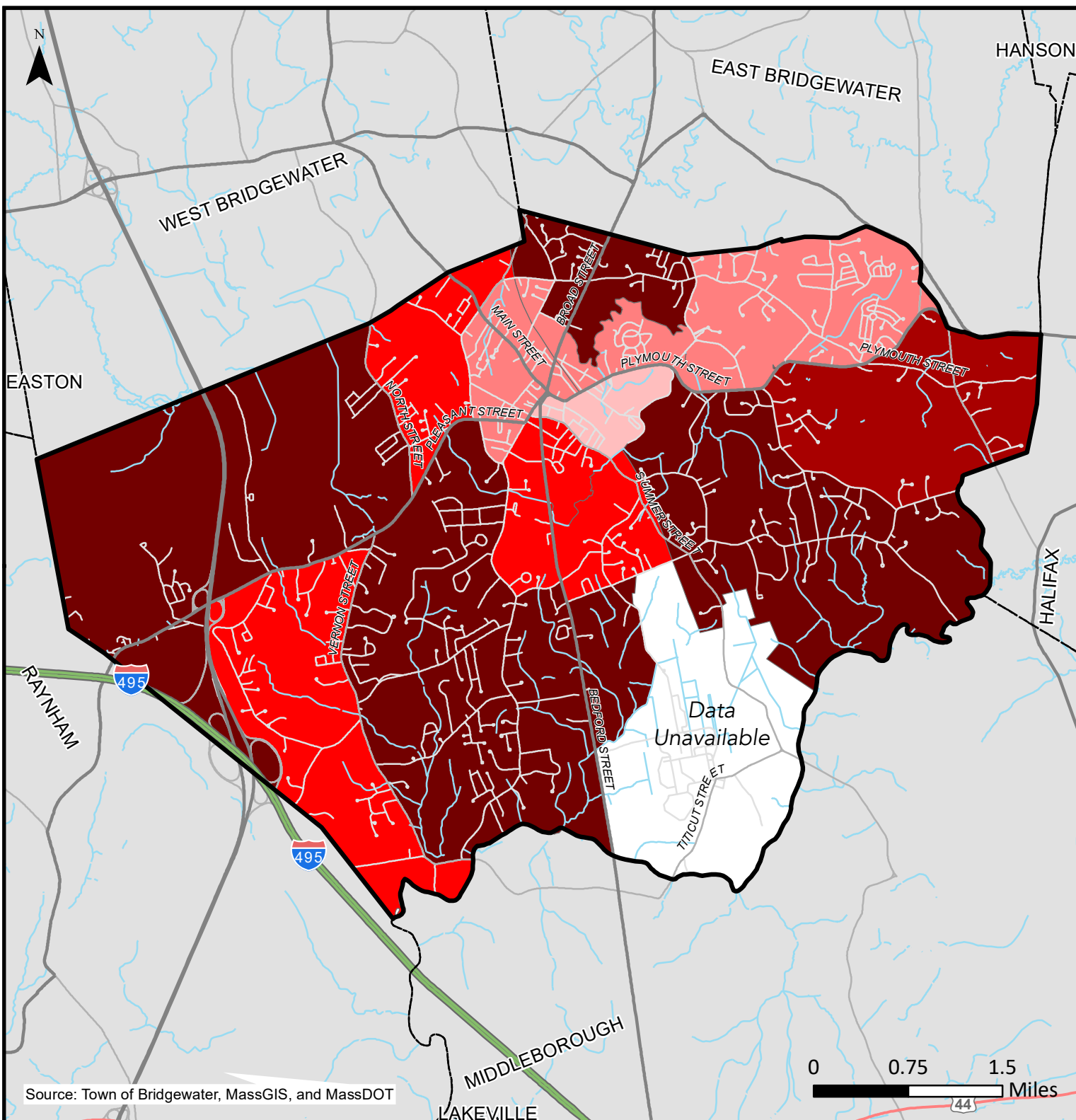
	Bridgewater	Plymouth County	MA	Bridgewater to County	Bridgewater to MA
<b>Overall</b>	<b>\$95,675</b>	<b>\$89,489</b>	<b>\$81,215</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>1.18</b>
<b>Householder Under 25</b>	\$45,967	\$47,868	\$41,095	0.96	1.12
<b>Householder 25-44</b>	\$105,130	\$100,793	\$92,545	1.04	1.14
<b>Householder 45-64</b>	\$122,316	\$110,094	\$100,386	1.11	1.22
<b>Householder 65+</b>	\$62,872	\$55,397	\$50,475	1.13	1.25

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B19049

<sup>20</sup> ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, via Social Explorer, Table A10020

<sup>21</sup> The “householder” age refers to the age of the designated “head of household.”

<sup>22</sup> ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B19049



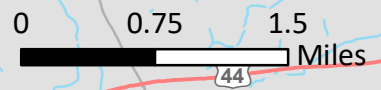
**MAP 4.5. MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY CENSUS BLOCK GROUP**

**Median Household Income**

- \$28,750.00
- \$28,750.01 - \$75,000.00
- \$75,000.01 - \$110,000.00
- \$110,000.01 - \$115,000.00
- \$115,000.01 - \$130,125.00

*Note: Block groups are based on 2010 census geographies.*

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT



## HOUSING INVENTORY AND TRENDS

### Age of Housing

Approximately eighteen percent of Bridgewater’s homes were built before 1940 (Table 4.7), the first year the Census Bureau began to collect detailed information about the nation’s housing stock. The largest increase in the number of housing units occurred from 1970-1979, which coincides with a period of significant population growth for the town and a loss of both agricultural and natural land.

**Table 4.7. Year Structure Built**

		Total Housing Units as of 2019	2014-2019	2010-2013	2000-2009	1990-1999	1980-1989	1970-1979	1960-1969	1950-1959	1940-1949	1939 or Earlier
<b>Tier 1</b>	Bridgewater	8,531	5%	3%	8%	14%	14%	22%	10%	5%	2%	16%
	East Bridgewater	4,947	2%	1%	11%	11%	12%	13%	14%	8%	3%	25%
	Halifax	2,950	2%	3%	7%	13%	20%	21%	9%	6%	9%	9%
	Middleborough	9,936	1%	3%	23%	12%	9%	10%	7%	6%	7%	22%
	Raynham	5,539	6%	1%	20%	11%	9%	18%	11%	11%	5%	9%
	West Bridgewater	2,696	2%	1%	8%	6%	10%	13%	10%	12%	5%	34%
<b>Tier 2</b>	Brockton	33,861	1%	1%	3%	3%	7%	16%	15%	12%	5%	38%
	Carver	4,478	0%	1%	5%	11%	27%	31%	6%	7%	2%	10%
	Easton	8,858	2%	2%	6%	12%	20%	21%	8%	9%	3%	17%
	Hanson	4,009	2%	2%	7%	11%	12%	16%	17%	10%	3%	20%
	Lakeville	4,471	1%	7%	13%	12%	17%	13%	5%	13%	8%	9%
	Pembroke	6,799	1%	1%	15%	12%	17%	10%	14%	12%	6%	13%
	Plympton	1,072	0%	4%	11%	14%	17%	23%	15%	3%	4%	10%
	Taunton	23,922	1%	1%	5%	12%	15%	10%	7%	8%	4%	35%
	Whitman	5,686	3%	1%	8%	6%	3%	12%	13%	11%	4%	41%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2014-2019), Table B25034

While houses built prior to 1920 are scattered throughout Bridgewater, they tend to be concentrated in the center of Town (Map 4.6). This year is particularly significant because of Bridgewater’s demolition delay ordinance; under this provision, a public hearing of the Historic Commission is required to determine if a structure built in 1920 or earlier is eligible for a 60-day delay prior to issuance of a permit. Generally the purpose of such a demolition delay ordinance is to discourage tearing down older homes. However, Bridgewater’s 60-day delay is shorter than that of many Massachusetts communities that opt for at least a one-year delay period. While there are 987 residential structures in Bridgewater built in or prior to 1920, the demolition delay ordinance has not been utilized since its adoption in 2017.

Two factors can contribute to teardown risk — the age of a housing unit, and the relationship between the value of any buildings on a property compared to the land value. Older homes with a low building-to-land value ratio are more at risk for tear down by property owners looking to increase the value of their property with the construction of a newer home. Of the 610 single-family homes built 1920 or earlier, 134 have ratios under 1.0, and 45 have ratios under 0.75.

**Table 4.8. Single-Family Housing Characteristics by Year Built**

Years	Period	No. of Homes	Average Floor Area (Square Feet)	Average Rooms	Average Height (Stories)	Average Lot Area (Acres)	Average Floor Area Ratio	Average Building to Land Value Ratio
To 1775	Colonial Period	31	2372	8	1.9	1.55	0.035	1.594
1776-1830	Federal Period	43	2218	8	1.8	1.02	0.050	1.585
1831-1870	Early Industrial	70	1949	8	1.8	1.02	0.044	1.486
1871-1920	Later Industrial	466	1755	7	1.8	0.72	0.056	1.391
1921-1945	Between the Wars	177	1531	6	1.5	1.11	0.032	1.237
1946-1970	Postwar Baby Boom	1132	1463	7	1.3	0.68	0.050	1.515
1971-1990	Late Cold War	1583	1830	7	1.5	0.98	0.043	1.867
1991-2010	Millennial	1674	2273	7	1.9	1.31	0.040	2.073
Since 2010	Post-Millennial	446	2267	7	1.9	1.27	0.041	2.471

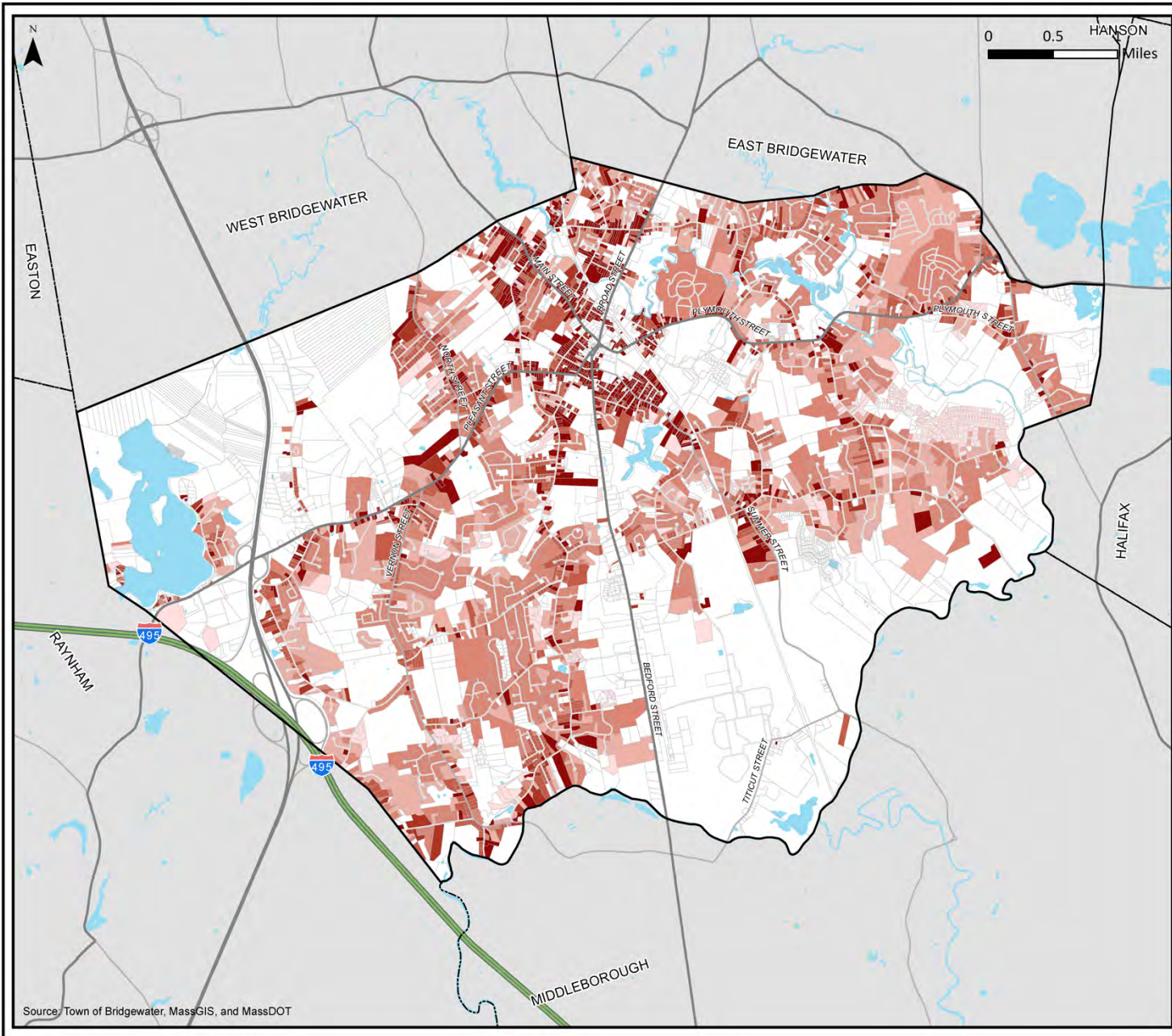
Source: Town of Bridgewater Assessor’s Office, 2021

### Other Housing Types

While the bulk of Bridgewater’s dwelling units are single family homes (5,622), according to assessing records through 2021, Bridgewater also has 968 condominium units, an assortment of two-family (327) and three-family (63) structures, and small ( $\leq 10$  units), typically older multi-unit buildings (39). In addition, there are three large apartment complexes – Waterford Village (588 units), Axis at Lakeshore (289 units), and VIVA Bridgewater (300 units), and Dwell85 (58 units). Currently, 16.5 percent of Bridgewater’s population over 55 live in Census Tract 5252.03, Block Group 2, which is home to the Town’s Mobile Home Elderly Community District’s two 55+ communities — Stone Meadow and High Pond Estates.<sup>23</sup> Map 4.7 illustrates the housing mix found in various parts of Bridgewater, although due to data limitations it does not include forthcoming projects including Burrill Place (multi-family, 58 units), and McElwain School Apartments (multi-family, 57 units), Duxburrow Estates (148 single-family homes, 37 of which are SHI-eligible), and other developments currently unfolding.

<sup>23</sup> Additionally, 49 percent of the residents in this Block Group are 55+. This is the highest concentration throughout the Town. SE C01001.



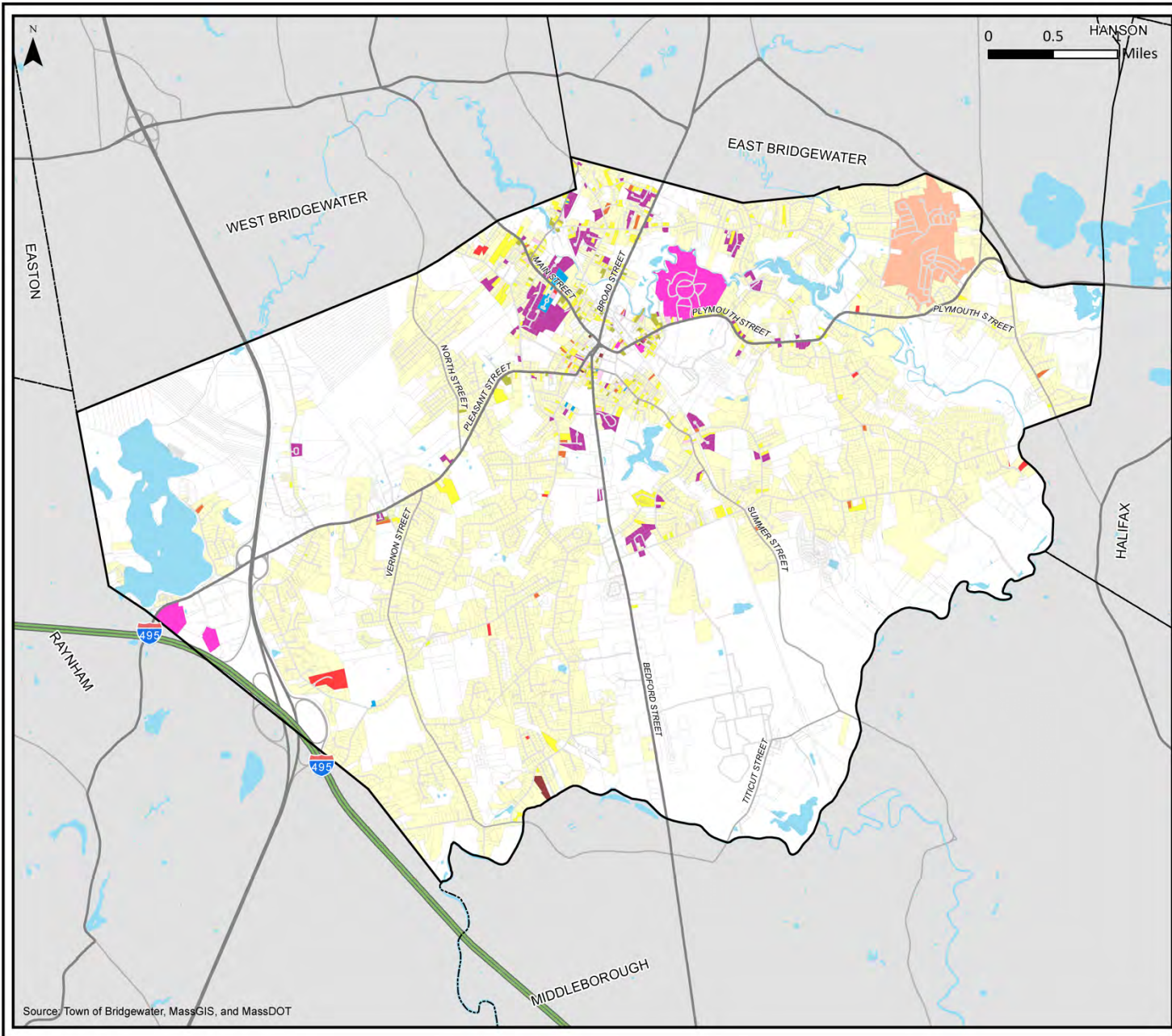


**MAP 4.6. YEAR  
RESIDENTIAL  
STRUCTURE BUILT**

**Year Structure Built**

- Pre-1920
- 1921 - 1945
- 1946 - 1970
- 1971 - 1995
- 1996 - 2010
- 2011 - 2021

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT



**MAP 4.7. HOUSING TYPES BY PARCEL**

- Bridgewater Parcels 2021
- HOUSING TYPE**
- Single Family Residential
- Two-Family Residential
- Three-Family Residential
- Manufactured Homes (55+)
- Multiple Houses on one parcel
- Apartments with Four to Eight Units
- Apartments with More than Eight Units
- Condos
- Housing Authority
- Rooming and Boarding Houses
- Other Housing Types

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

### Housing Value<sup>24</sup>

Table 4.9 lists the median home value for owner-occupied units, as well as the ratio of Bridgewater’s median to comparison geographies. A ratio of less than 1.0 indicates that Bridgewater’s median home values are lower than the comparison geography, and a ratio over 1.0 indicates that Bridgewater’s median home values are higher. Overall home values for owner-occupied residences in Bridgewater are higher than the five immediate surrounding towns, but are somewhat lower than five of the nine Tier 2 communities, as well as the county and the state. The share of homes valued over \$500,000 is slightly higher than the average share for all fifteen comparison communities (13.8 percent), but is significantly lower than Plymouth County as a whole.

**Table 4.9. Home Value for Owner-Occupied Homes**

	Geography	Median Home Value	Ratio: Bridgewater to Comparison Geography	Percentage of Homes Valued Over \$500,000
<b>Tier 1</b>	Bridgewater	\$358,900	--	12.6
	East Bridgewater	\$352,300	1.02	15.2
	Halifax	\$299,300	1.20	10.9
	Middleborough	\$308,100	1.16	5.9
	Raynham	\$351,300	1.02	19.1
	West Bridgewater	\$351,900	1.02	9.6
<b>Tier 2</b>	Brockton	\$264,800	1.36	3.5
	Carver	\$291,500	1.23	4.6
	Easton	\$414,100	0.87	30.2
	Hanson	\$363,700	0.99	9.3
	Lakeville	\$371,300	0.97	18.7
	Pembroke	\$398,400	0.90	26.4
	Plympton	\$383,600	0.94	19.8
	Taunton	\$271,800	1.32	3.7
	Whitman	\$327,100	0.91	8.4
<b>County</b>	Plymouth County	\$370,300	0.97	25.7
<b>State</b>	Massachusetts	\$381,600	0.94	31.2

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Tables B25075 and B25077, and Barrett Planning Group LLC

### Property Taxes

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue publishes an average single-family tax bill for most of the 351 municipalities in the state,<sup>25</sup> as well as a ranking to compare communities — the lower the numeric

<sup>24</sup> These property values do not reflect the upward trends in real estate from 2020 to present (2022). For context, the current median sale price for a single-family home in Bridgewater is \$510,000 for the year 2021 compared to \$490,000 for Plymouth County. Bridgewater’s 2021 median single-family sales price exceeded that of the surrounding tier 1 communities. The percent of homes valued over \$500,000 in real-time is likely significantly higher than what ACS estimates indicate.

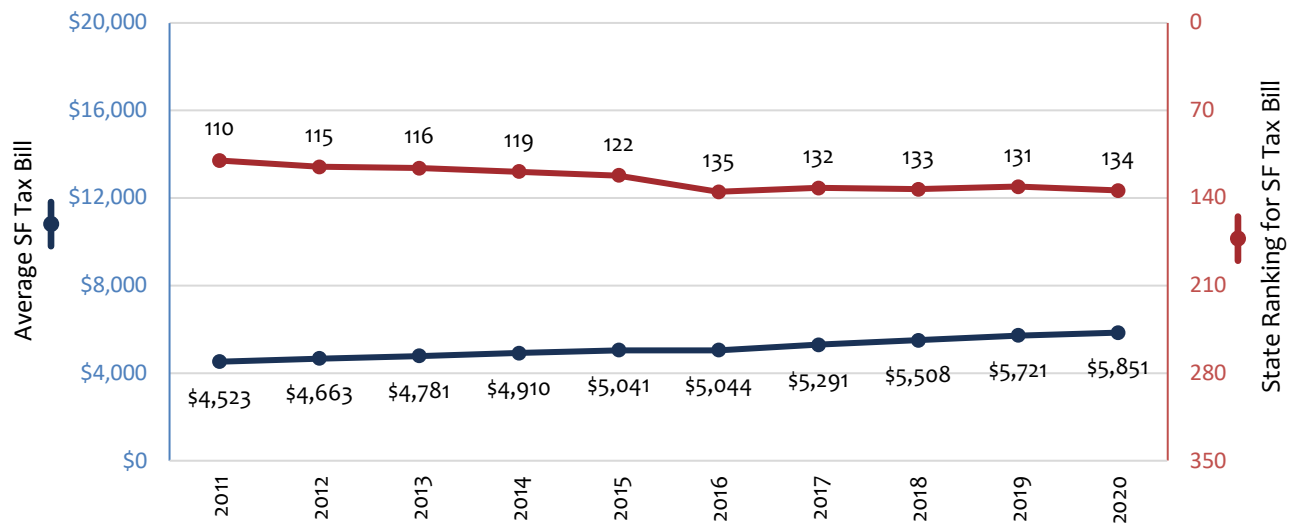
<sup>25</sup> DLS does not have sufficient data to calculate an average single-family tax bill for communities that have adopted the residential exemption (MGL c59:5C).

ranking, the higher the average tax bill. For example, the Town of Weston has been ranked #1 since 1988 (the furthest year back for which DOR provides data), which means its residents have the highest average single family tax bill. Bridgewater’s average ranking over the past ten years is 125 (out of 351 municipalities). While rising property taxes can be a source of frustration for residents, these statewide rankings yield greater context and perspective. Among the comparison geographies used in this chapter, Easton has the highest average single family tax bill, and Lakeville has the lowest, with Bridgewater slightly on the higher end. Figure 4.12 shows that while Bridgewater residents have seen an increase in the dollar amount for property tax bills, the Town’s comparative ranking has dropped.

Comparing the average single-family tax bill with the median household income of homeowners yields further insight into the severity of a community’s residential tax burden, as Figure 4.13 below shows. By this measure, Carver residents experience the greatest strain relative to the comparison communities; the average 2019 single family tax bill in Carver was equivalent to 7.0 percent of the median household income of homeowners. Conversely, Lakeville has the second highest median household income, but one of the lowest average tax bills at 4.2 percent of its median homeowner household income. Bridgewater’s average single family tax bill is equivalent to 5.2 percent of its median household income, slightly less than the average of 5.4 percent rate of all comparison communities.

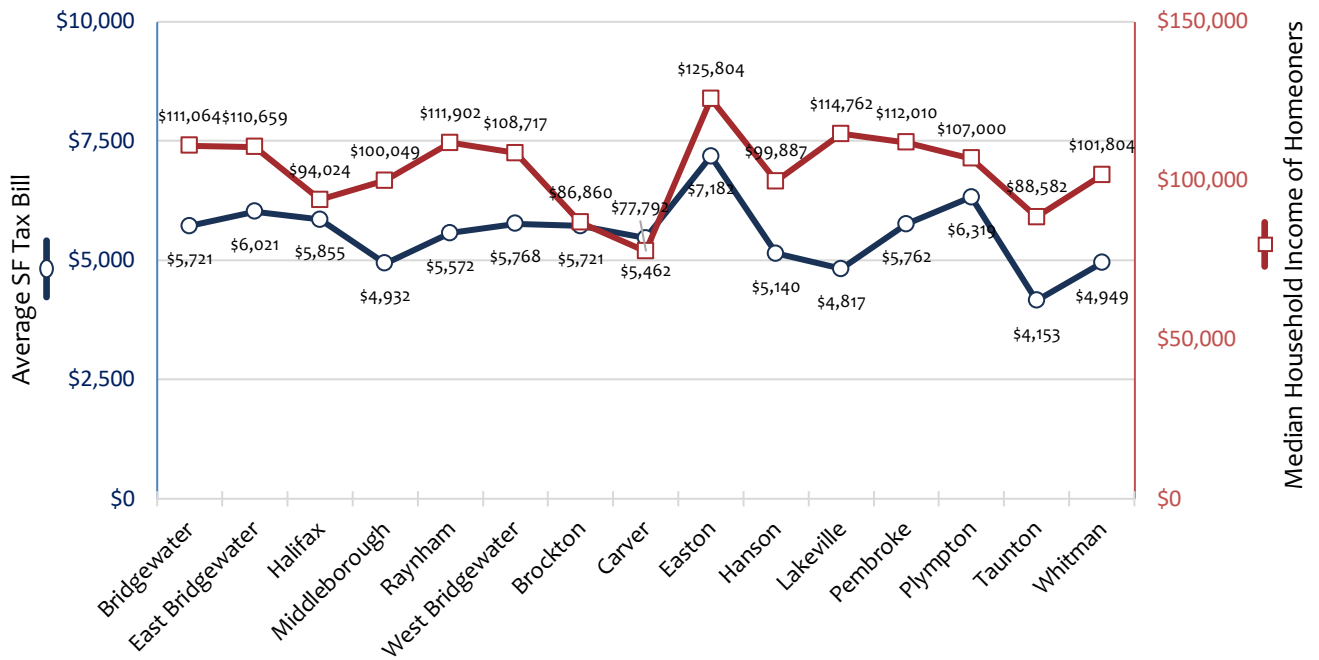
**Figure 4.12. Average Single Family Tax Bill Trends in Bridgewater, 2011-2020**

Source: MA Department of Revenue



**Figure 4.13. Relationship Between Property Tax Bill and Median Household Income of Homeowners in 2019**

(Source: MA DOR Average SF Tax Bill for FY 2019; ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B25119)

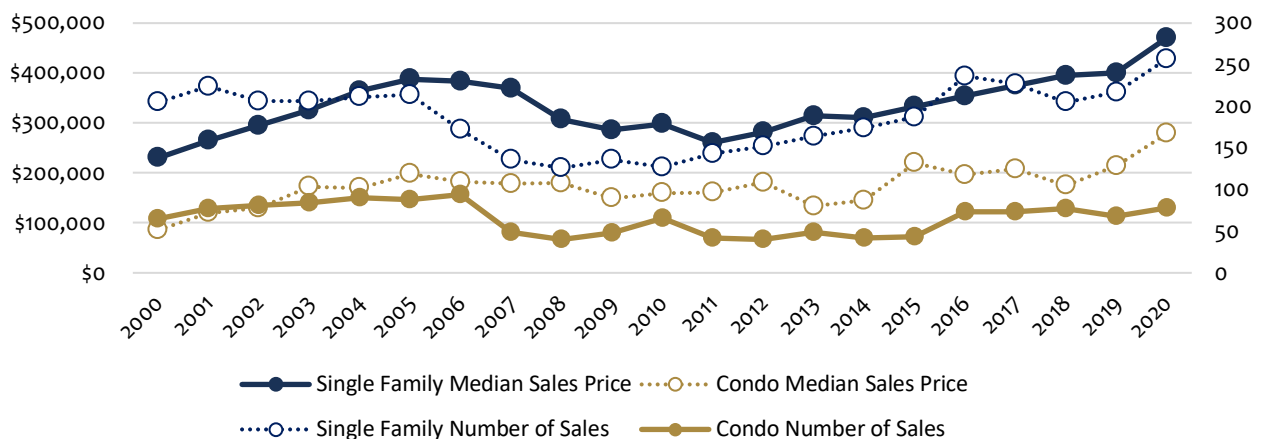


**Housing Market**

The median sale price for single family homes in Bridgewater has consistently been higher than the median sale price in Plymouth County since at least 2000, whereas the median condo price has been lower. However, the overall median sale price for all homes has been Bridgewater fairly consistent with Plymouth County for at least twenty years. From 2011-2020, 1,962 single family homes and 585 600 condos changed hands in Bridgewater.<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 4.14. Median Sale Price and Sale Volume in Bridgewater by Year**

(Source: The Warren Group, Townwide Stats)



<sup>26</sup> Banker & Tradesmen, Town Stats Report, Years 2000-2020; Retrieved February 17, 2021

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

### Housing Cost Burden

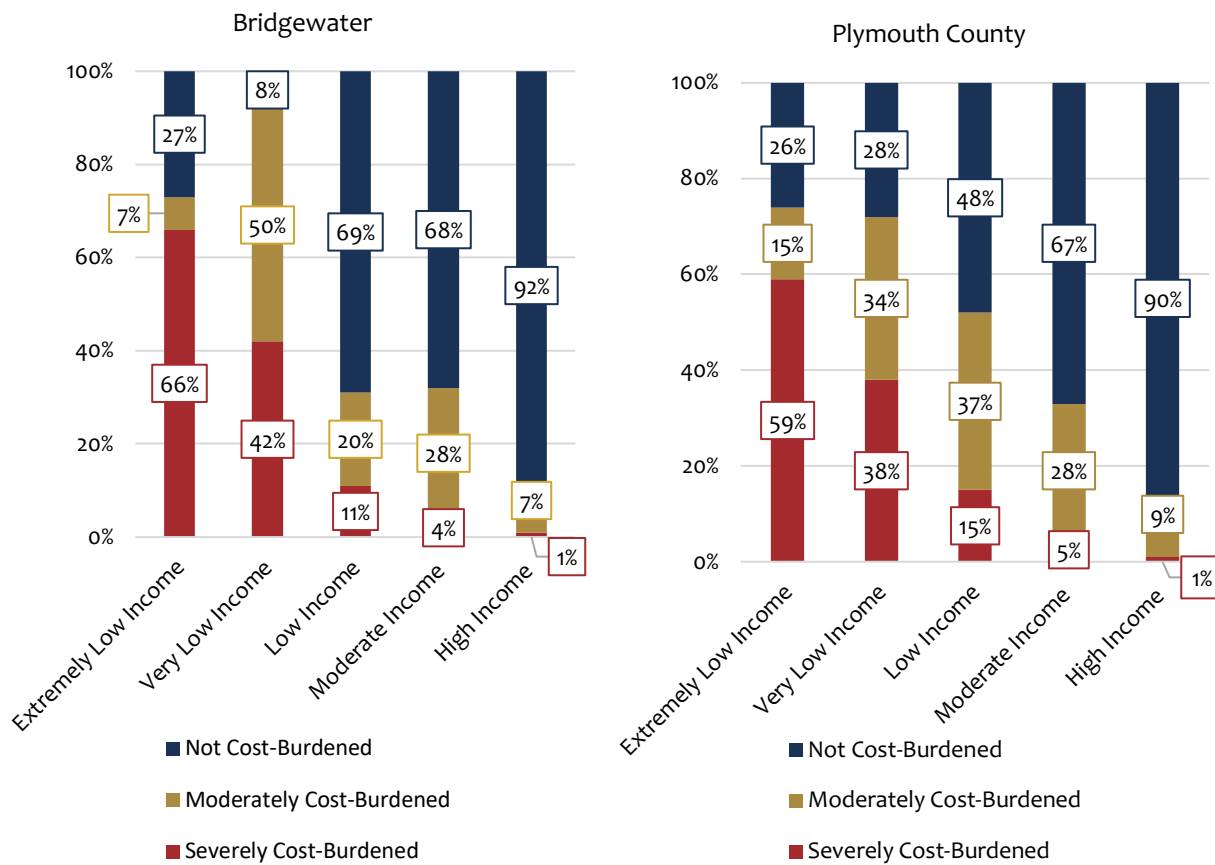
Income alone does not adequately measure a household's financial health; the proportion of income that must be allocated toward housing costs is a major factor in determining whether a household is considered affordably housed. "Cost burdened" households pay more than thirty percent of their income toward housing costs, limiting the amount of "leftover" money available for other expenses and the ability to accumulate savings. Twenty-six percent of Bridgewater's households are cost-burdened, with renters (44 percent) more likely to struggle than homeowners (19 percent).<sup>27</sup> Figure 4.15 displays the detailed cost burden status of Bridgewater households and Plymouth County for comparison. Technical definitions are as follows:

- **Moderately cost-burdened** households pay between 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.

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<sup>27</sup> Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data, 2017

**Figure 4.15. Housing Cost Burden by Income Level for Bridgewater and Plymouth County Households**  
 Source: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 2017



**Maximum Home Affordability**

Each year the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) publishes household area median family incomes (HAMFI) for larger statistical areas. Bridgewater is under the Brockton, MA HUD Metro FMR (Fair Market Rent) Area. In 2018, the HAMFI this statistical area was \$93,400, whereas Bridgewater’s median family income was \$111,684. Based on Bridgewater’s property tax rate and industry standards for housing affordability, mortgage terms, insurance rates, and other factors, households earning Bridgewater’s median family income can reasonably afford a home at Bridgewater’s median sales price; however, those earning the HAMFI cannot afford to purchase a home at Bridgewater’s median sales price, which may prohibit families in the larger metro area from moving to Bridgewater. Table 4.11 outlines the maximum affordability for households earning the median family income in Bridgewater compared to households earning the regional HAMFI. For consistency with the ACS year used, this table uses 2019 for all figures.

**Table 4.11 Maximum Single-Family Home Affordability Based on Median Family Income**

Median Sales Price*	Maximum Affordability**	
	Bridgewater	Brockton Metro Area
\$399,900	\$428,848	\$358,640

\*Data Source: Banker & Tradesmen, Median Sales Price for Single Family Homes in Bridgewater (2019)

\*\*Data Sources: Bridgewater Median Family Income (2019 ACS, Table B19113), Brockton Metro Area HAMFI (2019 HUD Income Limits), and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

### Rent

Median gross rent as a percentage of household income in Bridgewater slightly exceeds the 30 percent affordability metric at 30.7 percent. This is not unique to Bridgewater, as Plymouth County’s rate is 30.7 percent and several comparison communities also have a rate over thirty percent.<sup>28</sup> Within Bridgewater, the area surrounding BSU has the lowest gross rent (\$946, compared to the town-wide median of \$1597) but the highest percentage of median gross rent compared to household income at 51 percent. Away from the university, the south west pocket of Town bordering Raynham has the highest median rent at \$2386.<sup>29</sup> Map 4.8 depicts median gross rent by census block.

### Subsidized Housing Inventory

The affordable housing law in Massachusetts, commonly called Chapter 40B, has the over-arching purpose of providing for a regionally fair distribution of affordable housing for people with low or moderate incomes. Affordable units created under Chapter 40B remain affordable over time because a deed restriction limits resale prices and rents for many years or permanently, in some cases. The law establishes a statewide goal that at least 10 percent of the housing units in every city and town will be deed-restricted affordable housing. This 10 percent minimum represents each community’s “regional fair share” of low- or moderate-income housing and is not a direct measure of actual housing needs.

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) maintains the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), the official roster of affordable units.<sup>30</sup> Bridgewater currently exceeds the 10 percent minimum with 11.44 percent affordable units in its housing stock. This figure is a result of a state policy implemented in the early 1990s allowing all the units in a rental development with at least 25 percent affordable units to “count” on the SHI. Consequently, even though 75 percent of the 289 Axis at Lakeshore units and 75 percent of VIVA Bridgewater’s 300 units are market rate, all of these mixed-income units count toward the SHI. For ownership developments, however, all units must be affordable.

<sup>28</sup> ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B25071. Of the comparison communities, Carver has the highest percentage of median gross rent compared to household income (43.7 percent) and Halifax has the lowest (22.6 percent).

<sup>29</sup> ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019, Table B25064

<sup>30</sup> The term “subsidized” is somewhat misleading because most mixed-income housing developments today have no public funding.



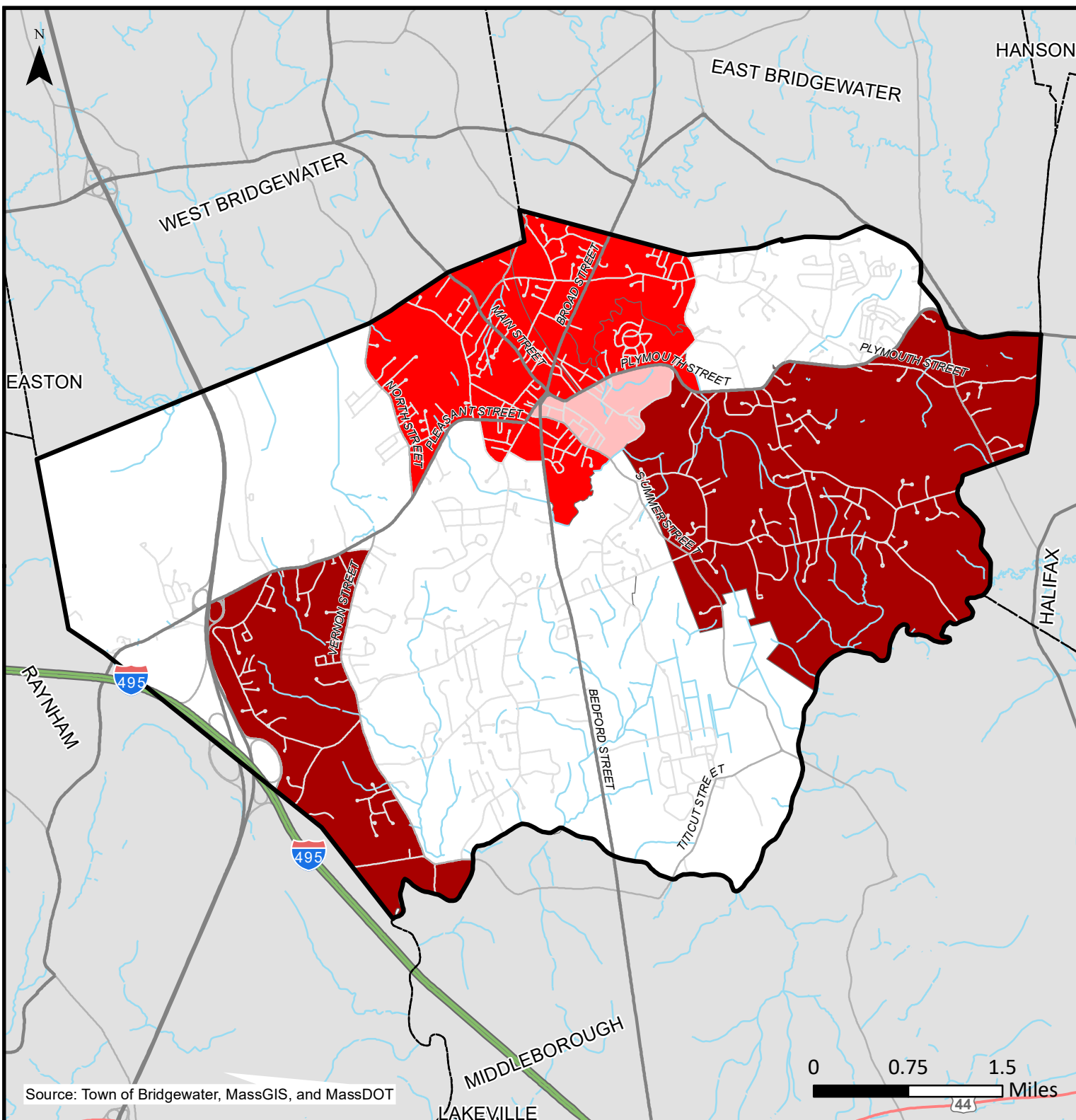
**Table 4.12. Bridgewater Subsidized Housing Inventory**

Project Name	SHI Units	Project Type	Affordability Expiration Date
Hemlock Drive	40	Rental	Perpetuity
Hemlock Drive	56	Rental	Perpetuity
10 Heritage Circle	50	Rental	Perpetuity
15 Heritage Circle	8	Rental	Perpetuity
Scattered Sites	12	Rental	Perpetuity
Hayward Place	4	Rental	2029
South Shore HDC	4	Rental	2024
DDS Group Homes	27	Rental	N/A
DMH Group Homes	16	Rental	N/A
49 Mt. Prospect Street	4	Rental	Perpetuity
Southbridge	4	Rental	Perpetuity
143 Plymouth Street	4	Rental	Perpetuity
The Residences at Lakeshore	289	Rental	Perpetuity
Aldrich Place	0	Ownership	Perpetuity
Old Cedar Village	9	Ownership	Perpetuity
37 South Street	3	Ownership	Perpetuity
30 Church Street	3	Rental	Perpetuity
Cassidy Place	5	Ownership	Perpetuity
The Groves	6	Ownership	Perpetuity
Sophia Lane	5	Ownership	Perpetuity
Bedford Commons	5	Rental	Perpetuity
VIVA Bridgewater	300	Rental	Perpetuity
Burrill Place Apartments	0	Rental	Perpetuity
Duxburrow Estates	37	Ownership	Perpetuity
McElwain School Apartments	57	Rental	Perpetuity
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>948</b>		

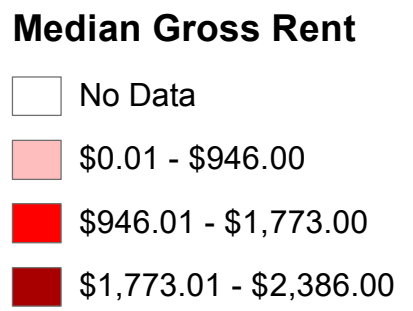
Source: DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory as of January 2021. A unit count of zero indicates that a year passed without issuance of a building permit. Once a building permit is issued, the units will be added to the SHI. Burrill Place is expected to be 58 units and Aldrich Place

### **Housing Needs and Housing Demand**

While Bridgewater has met the ten percent threshold under 40B, it is important to remember that this metric does not necessarily indicate a community has truly addressed its affordable housing needs. Low-and moderate-income (LMI) households are defined as earning less than eighty percent of the area median income; thirty percent of Bridgewater households are considered LMI and would therefore qualify for a moderate-income 40B unit. While Bridgewater households fare better than the county (37 percent LMI) and state (41 percent LMI), the number of households eligible for moderate-income SHI units significantly exceeds the ten percent minimum. While housing needs are not limited to low- or moderate-income people, often other needs — such as accessible housing for disabled individuals — overlap with economic need.

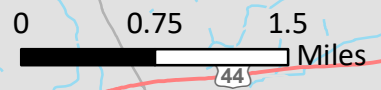


**MAP 4.8. MEDIAN GROSS RENT BY CENSUS BLOCK GROUP**



*Note: Block groups are based on 2010 census geographies.*

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT



**LOCAL CAPACITY AND CURRENT PLANS**

**Capacity**

The table below outlines the Town’s housing partners, although currently the Town’s Affordable Housing Trust and Housing Partnership Committee are not active.

**Table 4.13. Capacity and Resources**

<b>Community Preservation Act Fund</b>	In April 2005, Bridgewater residents voted to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) per MGL Chapter 44B. CPA revenue consists of funds generated by a local 2% property tax surcharge as well as distributions from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund. Ten percent of CPA funds must be allocated toward community housing. Bridgewater’s FY 2020-2024 Community Preservation Plan outlines goals for the creation and preservation of affordable community housing options, primarily for both younger families and individuals, as well as seniors. These goals tie into the 2017 Housing Production Plan and 2016 Downtown Bridgewater Plan and can be facilitated by the housing reserves of the CPA fund, estimated at the time of the plan’s publication to be \$426,962.98. <sup>31</sup>
<b>Bridgewater Housing Authority</b>	The Bridgewater Housing Authority is governed by a five-member board of commissioners and has a staff of four. The Authority manages 166 state public housing units for low-income families, seniors, and disabled persons. There are twelve scattered family sites and 154 low-income senior/disabled units at the Heritage Circle and Hemlock Drive developments. As of December 2019, the BHA had a waitlist of over 4,000. <sup>32</sup>
<b>Bridgewater Affordable Housing Trust</b>	The Bridgewater Affordable Housing Trust was established in 2015 with the mission of providing for the creation and preservation of affordable housing for the benefit of low and moderate income households. While currently dormant, the Trust when active has the authority to acquire real estate and personal property by gift, purchase, or otherwise, and to use such property toward the fulfilment of the Trust’s mission. The 2017 Housing Production Plan prioritized capitalizing the AHT fund in two of its five goals (under Goal 1, “Capitalize the Affordable Housing Trust Fund” and under Goal 5, “Fund the Affordable Housing Trust.”)
<b>Bridgewater Housing Partnership Committee</b>	Currently dormant, the Housing Partnership Committee was established to act as an advisory committee focused on the development of affordable housing and ensuring equal access to housing. The Committee is tasked with providing guidance to the Town Manager regarding the Town’s policies and programs for meeting 40B requirements; reviewing all Local Initiative Program (LIP) applications; and making recommendations for their acceptance or denial. When active, the Housing Partnership Committee is composed of five members, two of whom are appointed by the Town Manager, one member appointed by the Affordable Housing Trust, one member appointed by the Water and Sewer Board, and one member appointed by the Planning Board.

In addition to the above boards and committees, community groups working toward strengthening Bridgewater’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion could become partners with the Town to create community awareness around fair and affordable issues. Current groups with missions to

<sup>31</sup> Town of Bridgewater Community Preservation Plan, FY 2020-2024

<sup>32</sup> BHA Town Report, 2019. Online at [http://bridgewaterhousingauthority.org/?page\\_id=277](http://bridgewaterhousingauthority.org/?page_id=277)

make Bridgewater a more equitable community that appreciates the value of diversity include Bridgewater Communities for Civil Rights (BCCR) and Diversity & Inclusion for Community Empowerment (DICE).

### Recent Plans

#### Master Plan Update (2014)

The 2014 Bridgewater Master Plan Update revised the Demographics, Housing, and Open Space chapters of the 2002 Master Plan to reflect the changes that Bridgewater underwent between 2002 and 2014. The housing chapter organized goals into two broad categories: goals that support the creation and preservation of affordable housing and, goals that support preservation and revitalization. These goals are summarized as follows:

- Support incremental production of affordable housing until Bridgewater has met the statutory minimum under ch.40B.
- Encourage development of rental units affordable for extremely low-income households.
- Encourage development of homeownership units that are affordable to households at or below 80 percent of area median income to meet the need for affordable starter homes.
- Create affordable housing through adaptive reuse of existing buildings, including through historic preservation of historic buildings, and redevelopment of previously developed properties.
- Strengthen the Town's capacity to support creation of affordable housing, preserve existing affordable units through both local and regional resources, and monitor existing units.
- Increase support for housing rehabilitation to improve safety and energy efficiency of housing units downtown and in surrounding neighborhoods that are occupied by LMI households.
- Support downtown economic revitalization goals by encouraging the creation of new market rate and affordable housing downtown primarily in mixed-use buildings.
- Encourage new residential buildings affordable to a range of income levels and compatible with surrounding homes in neighborhoods within walking distance of downtown.
- Reduce the impact of new residential development by promoting site planning for low-impact development, green infrastructure, and innovative technology.

#### Downtown Bridgewater Plan (2016)

In 2016, OCPC produced the Downtown Bridgewater Plan, which was focused on parcels within the Central Business District. While this plan is specific to a particular area of Bridgewater, its recommendations if implemented could address town-wide housing goals identified in other planning efforts. The following outlines the housing recommendations of this plan and the current status:

**Continue the Housing Rehab Program.** For the FY 2014-2015, Bridgewater received \$30,000 through state-managed federal community development funds (matched by Bridgewater Savings, bringing

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the total to \$60,000). Bridgewater applied for this grant along with the Town of Norwood, and together the towns established The Norwood-Bridgewater Housing Rehabilitation Program. Housing rehab efforts allow for the reuse of existing structures to create affordable housing. While continuing this program, the town is working to reinstate this program.

**Evaluate the Potential to Create Chapter 40R Districts in the Downtown.** The Waterford Village 40R District was adopted in 2008. No associated building permits have been issued under this 40R designation, as the area is already significantly built out with existing apartments. The Downtown Revitalization Plan identified the creation of additional 40R districts as a goal, noting the presence of multiple underutilized or vacant sites downtown.

**Evaluate and Consider Enhancing the Mixed-Use Bylaw [Ordinance].** The Town’s mixed-use ordinance was adopted in 2013 as a bylaw and was amended 2016 and 2018. As stated in Section 19 of the Zoning Ordinance, “The purpose of this section is to allow for the redevelopment of the Central Business District to expand small retail and restaurant uses while providing flexibility to respond to changing household sizes and needs.” The Town is currently exploring the development of a mixed use project on Broad Street.

**Housing Production Plan (2017)**

In 2017, the Town commissioned the Old Colony Planning Council to update its 2012 Housing Production Plan (HPP). Like the 2014 Master Plan update, the HPP prioritized reaching the 10 percent statutory minimum for SHI-eligible units. While this goal has since been met, both the HPP and the 2014 Master Plan update also emphasized the importance of monitoring and maintaining this threshold once it has been reached. The Housing Production Plan’s five overarching goals focused on the creation, preservation, and maintenance of affordable housing units through a variety of strategies, including (but not limited to):

- Adopting an inclusionary zoning ordinance;
- Capitalizing the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and leveraging existing funding sources such as CPA funds;
- Engaging in community education about affordable housing to combat negative stereotypes;
- Providing training opportunities for Town boards, committees, and officials;
- Making Town-owned properties available for affordable housing; and
- Employing sustainable practices such as the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and infill development.

**Community Preservation Plan, FY 2020-2024 (2020)**

The Town’s Community Preservation Plan (2020) is the most recent planning effort addressing housing needs, and outlines the following goals:

- Create and preserve affordable housing options for older residents to allow them to stay in the community as they age—prioritizing locations that provide easy access to services and other resources.

- Create affordable and community housing through the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, specifically historic properties.
- Support a variety of affordable and community housing options, specifically for young individuals; young families; and entry-level housing.
- Preserve long-term affordability for existing affordable and community housing units and preserve them through eligible repairs and improvements.

The plan also outlined how each of the above goals tie into Community Preservation Act categories as well as other community planning efforts such as the Downtown Bridgewater Plan and the Housing Production Plan.

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### **4.3. Challenges and Opportunities**

#### **CHALLENGES**

##### **Public Perception**

At the outset of the comprehensive plan process, the Town solicited resident input through an online platform called CoUrbanize, as well during as two larger public meetings, smaller core assessment meetings, and later through an online survey. In addition, the Comprehensive Master Plan Committee met monthly to discuss plan topics and provide input. Through these public feedback opportunities, residents expressed their concerns about the need for more housing options as well as the strain additional housing could place on the community.

##### **Development Constraints**

The 2017 Housing Production Plan cited environmental and infrastructure constraints (as identified in the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan) that must be taken into consideration when planning residential development:

#### **Environmental**

- Much of Bridgewater’s land, particularly in the southern and western parts of the town, is low-lying with poor drainage and scattered wetlands.
- Bridgewater has compact glacial soils, limiting on-site septic opportunities.
- There have been minor flooding incidents at various locations in Bridgewater that require temporary road closures.
- Bridgewater has approximately 3,000 acres of wetlands, including approximately 450 acres of non-forested wetlands such as streamside marshes and wet meadows, and extensive areas of wooded swamp. (See Chapter 6 for detail.)
- Bridgewater has thirteen Certified Vernal Pools and approximately 300 Potential Vernal Pools requiring protection. (See Chapter 6 for detail.)

- There may be inadequate sewer capacity for future growth; however, as of 2017, the Water Department did not anticipate water supply to be a significant hindrance to future development. Additionally, the Town has since begun upgrading the High Street Water Treatment Plant.
- While Bridgewater State University operates bus service for its students, the Town of Bridgewater itself does not have regularly scheduled bus service.
- Bridgewater's sidewalks suffer from access problems, and the Town lacks adequate bicycle infrastructure.

### **Lack of Capacity**

Although the Town currently has an Affordable Housing Trust and Housing Partnership Committee, neither are active at this time.

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

Despite these limitations, Bridgewater has opportunities for increasing its variety of housing stock to meet the needs of its residents, including:

- Implementing the existing Housing Production Plan and ensuring coordination with the Community Preservation Plan;
- Exploring opportunities for mixed residential, and mixed-use housing, particularly downtown;
- Establishing clear regulations for converting older residences to small multi-unit dwellings as an alternative to demolition/rebuild;
- Utilizing infill development to incentivize the creation of affordable units or senior housing (e.g., on lots otherwise unbuildable because they lack the minimum lot area or frontage to conform to current zoning);
- Establishing an inclusionary zoning bylaw, including provisions for units affordable to moderate-income and middle-income households; and
- Providing dedications of property (land or buildings) and a predictable stream of annual funding and for the Affordable Housing Trust to help the Town stay above the Chapter 40B 10 percent minimum.

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## **4.4. Goals, Policies, and Recommendations**

### **HOUSING GOALS**

- Preserve, improve, and expand Bridgewater's housing stock in a manner that promotes sustainability and a balance with natural resources.

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- Accommodate the housing needs of seniors, people with disabilities, students, families, and other types of households at all income levels to encourage population diversity and equitable access to housing.

**HOUSING POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Policies for decision makers are listed **in bold** with relevant recommendations listed below the policy. For detail regarding timing and responsible parties for each recommendation, please see the Implementation Program in Chapter 8.

**Strengthen, collaborate with, and support the Town’s housing-related groups.**

- Implement the Housing Production Plan and Community Preservation Plan and keep both up to date.
- Activate the dormant Affordable Housing Trust and facilitate collaboration between the Town’s housing entities (AHT, CPC, and BHA).
- Work with other towns to fund a shared housing coordinator to provide professional staff support to Bridgewater’s housing groups and Board of Appeals.

**Encourage a mix of housing types with convenient walking and biking access for residents.**

- Encourage development on sites near existing amenities such as retail, public open space, and pedestrian- and bicycle infrastructure.
- Work with developers to incorporate infrastructure improvements and amenities into new developments.
- Explore the adoption of Inclusionary Zoning that requires developments over a certain size to include a minimum percentage of affordable units (which may include payment of a fee in lieu of units to the Affordable Housing Trust.)

**Encourage development of senior housing and disability housing with services.**

- Adopt accessibility design standards for senior residential and mixed-use development.
- Work with local and regional disability service providers to increase options for supportive housing in Bridgewater.

**Use “smart growth” approaches to develop housing in a sustainable manner.**

- Strengthen the Town’s provisions for Open Space Residential Design and make this the default (as-of-right) approach to residential development for any project of two or more units.
- Conduct a study to provide options to revitalize Bridgewater’s existing 40R Smart Growth District to realize its full residential and commercial development potential.
- Using guidance from the Department of Housing and Community Development as it becomes available, evaluate existing multifamily regulations for consistency with the Housing Choice Bill’s requirements for MBTA communities.





# Chapter 5 Economic Development

## 5. Economic Development

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### 5.1. Introduction

A community's economy is primarily driven by the wealth of its households, the makeup of its commercial and industrial base, access to local jobs and the wages paid by local establishments, and the skills of workers within its labor shed. The economy of each community contributes to a larger regional marketplace, where cities and towns are connected by employment, interrelated industries, transportation systems, labor and trade, and water. A comprehensive approach to economic development can lay the groundwork for any community to become a better contender in the regional economy by examining economic development as one part of a whole system of activity.

Since local governments depend on property taxes for operating revenue, most of them pay close attention to the size and structure of their **tax base**. This can result in deliberate actions to zone large areas of the community for business and commercial use, with possible support of tax incentives, infrastructure, and various public/private partnerships. Sometimes, people think the tax base is synonymous with the **employment base**, but this is not really true. Non-taxpaying organizations like Bridgewater State University (BSU) or the state prison pay wages and provide many jobs in Bridgewater. BSU in particular presents partnership opportunities that enhance the Town's economic development efforts while offering in-kind services to the community. Additionally, the Town and BSU often collaborate grant and donation opportunities, and the state prison pays pilot payments to the Town.

Moreover, not everyone with a job works for someone else. Full- and part-time self-employment abounds in many small towns, and the gig economy plays a prominent role in the work lives of many people due, in part, to widespread access to technology. The consultant working in a home office, the artist in a home studio, and the Uber driver contribute to the vitality of the local economy even though they do not pay commercial property taxes.

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### 5.2. Existing Conditions and Trends

#### LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

A town's **labor force** includes all residents age 16 and over who are currently employed or looking for work. In 2019, Bridgewater's labor force included 15,507 people and its **labor force participation rate** was 67.0 percent, essentially on par with the statewide rate (67.3 percent),<sup>1</sup> as well as with its **peer group communities** (67.1 percent).<sup>2</sup> Table 5.1 reports basic labor force and unemployment statistics for the same communities.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table B23025, Employment Status for the Population 16 Years and Over.

<sup>2</sup> Peer group communities include Dartmouth, Foxborough, Mansfield, Middleborough, Northampton, Raynham, Stoughton, and Walpole.

<sup>3</sup> Note: the annual unemployment rates reported in Table 5.1 are 12-month averages computed by the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). The Census Bureau also reports "point-in-time" unemployment estimates gathered for the American Community Survey (ACS). These two sources can produce

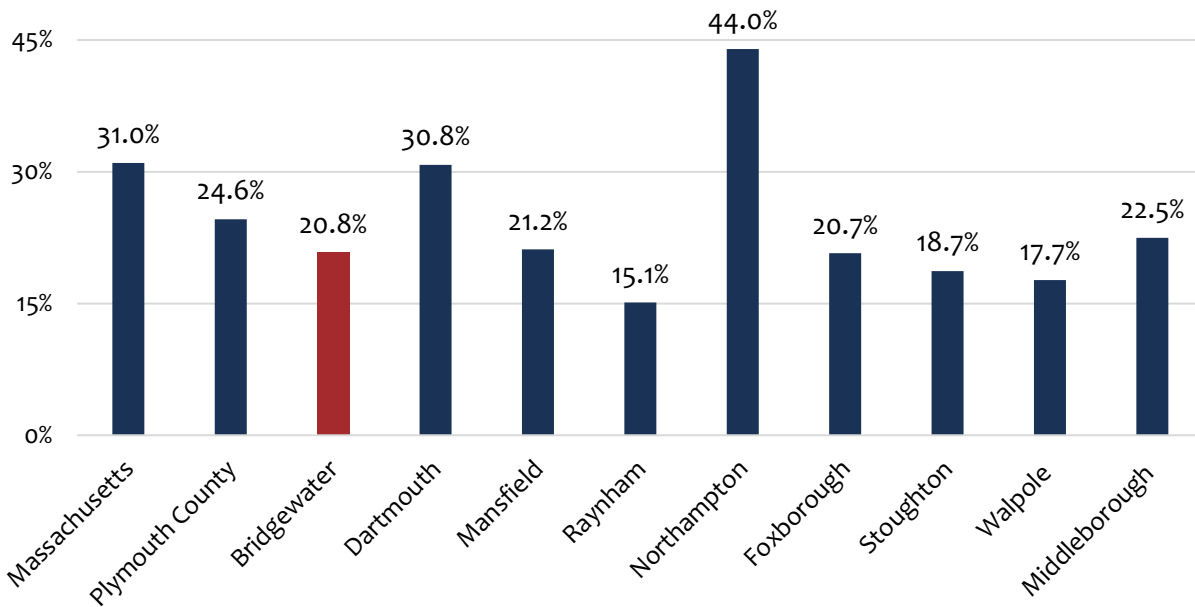
**Table 5.1. Labor Force and Employment Profile, Bridgewater and Peer-Group Communities**

Geography	Labor Force	Labor Force Participation Rate	Employed	Annual Unemployment Rate
BRIDGEWATER	15,507	67.0%	14,525	4.1%
Dartmouth	17,686	59.2%	16,841	2.8%
Foxborough	9,740	68.1%	9,244	3.4%
Mansfield	15,041	78.6%	14,264	4.1%
Middleborough	13,962	66.8%	13,415	2.5%
Northampton	15,526	62.8%	14,947	2.3%
Raynham	8,070	69.6%	7,681	3.1%
Stoughton	16,835	69.8%	16,082	3.0%
Walpole	13,326	68.1%	12,837	2.5%
Massachusetts	3,800,931	67.3%	3,612,375	3.3%

Sources: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table B23025 and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

**Figure 5.1. Individuals Working in Their City/Town of Residence**

(Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table B08009)



**Where do Bridgewater Residents Work?**

Nearly twenty-one percent (20.8) of Bridgewater’s labor force works in Bridgewater (Fig. 5.1). While this figure is lower than the county and state rates for people living and working in the same city or town (24.6 percent and 31.0 percent respectively), it is in line with the median among the comparison

significantly different pictures of unemployment. Point-in-time estimates are Decennial Census data snapshots of the population on April 1.

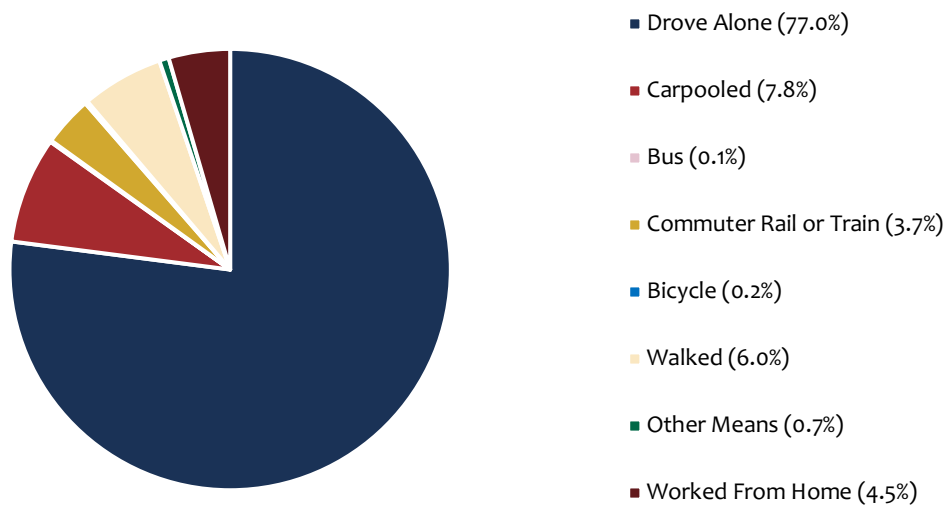
towns (21.2 percent).<sup>4</sup> The remaining 79 percent of working Bridgewater residents commute to non-local jobs with Brockton as the largest out-of-town workplace destination, followed by Boston, West Bridgewater, Stoughton, Taunton, Quincy, and other smaller towns in the region.<sup>5</sup> Maps 5.1 and 5.2 (Appendix) illustrate the commuting destinations of Bridgewater residents and the place of residence for commuters to Bridgewater jobs.

### Earnings and Means of Transportation to Work

There is a link between means of transportation to work and median earnings for Bridgewater residents.<sup>6</sup> While only 4.5 percent of working Bridgewater residents work from home and 3.7 percent take the commuter rail to work, these residents earn significantly more, on average, than residents commuting to work in other ways (Table 5.2). In 2019, for each dollar earned by Bridgewater residents, those who worked from home earned \$1.84, and commuter rail users earned \$1.68. These correlations indicate that, in general, higher-paying jobs are often based outside of town. The lowest wage earners walked to work, making \$0.14 per dollar earned town-wide.<sup>7</sup> Nationally, it is common for walkers-to-work to earn less than the general labor force, but the difference is particularly stark in Bridgewater.

**Figure 5.2. Means of Transportation to Work**

(Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table B08301)



<sup>4</sup> 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B08009, Sex of Workers by Place of Work – Minor Civil Division.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Residence MCD/County to Workplace MCD/County Commuting Flows for the United States and Puerto Rico Sorted by Residence Geography, Table 3, 5-Year ACS, 2011-2015.

<sup>6</sup> Please note, this analysis was completed before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore does not take into account its impacts on the number of Bridgewater residents working from home.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates, 2015-2019 Table B08121, Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months by Means of Transportation to Work, and Barrett Planning Group LLC. This table does not take into account whether the worker holds full- or part-time employment.

**Table 5.2. 2019 Median Earnings by Means of Transportation to Work for Workers 16 Years and Over**

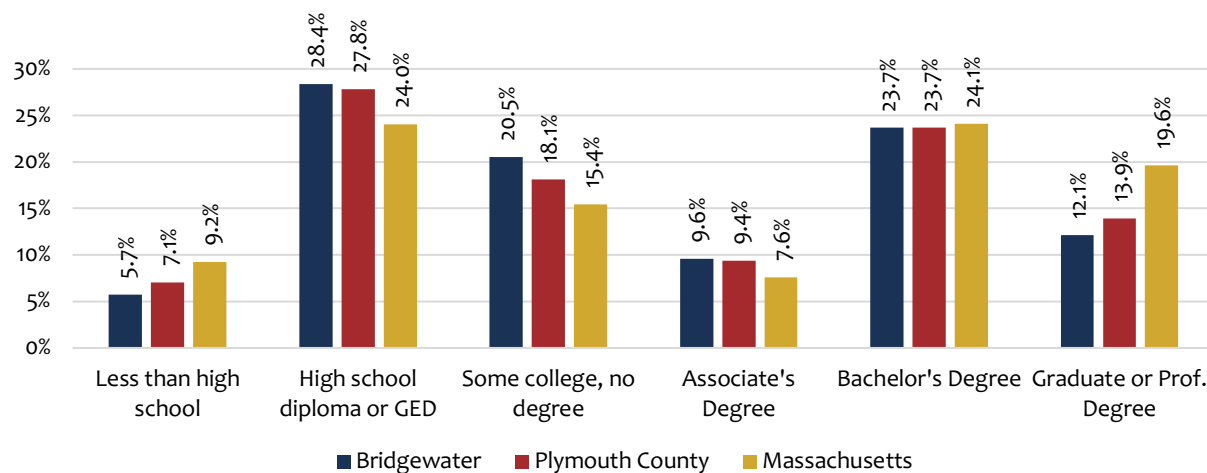
Mode	Bridgewater		Plymouth County		MA	
	Median Earnings	Ratio	Median Earnings	Ratio	Median Earnings	Ratio
Overall	\$44,251	--	\$49,012	--	\$48,323	--
Car, alone	\$47,566	1.07	\$49,548	1.01	\$50,682	1.05
Car, carpool	\$29,596	0.67	\$35,433	0.72	\$35,503	0.73
Public Transit	\$74,444	1.68	\$77,761	1.59	\$51,800	1.07
Walked	\$6,397	0.14	\$13,221	0.27	\$25,199	0.52
Other*		--	\$31,060	0.63	\$38,195	0.79
Worked at home	\$81,354	1.84	\$56,777	1.16	\$52,301	1.08

Source: American Community Survey 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates, Table B08121, and Barrett Planning Group LLC. \*"Other" includes taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means.

### Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education people have completed. It is an important component of labor force analysis because education is so intertwined with the job choices available to people and the wages they are likely to earn over time. Fig. 5.3 presents educational attainment statistics for the population 25 years and over in Bridgewater, Plymouth County, and the Commonwealth. The data shows pluralities of 28.4 percent of Bridgewater residents and 27.8 percent of Plymouth County residents completed a high school diploma or equivalent (GED). Statewide, Bachelor's degrees have recently become as common a level of educational attainment as high school diplomas, each representing 24 percent of Massachusetts residents. This trend toward increasing levels of educational attainment is particularly evident because residents with Bachelor's degrees or higher make up 35.8 percent of Bridgewater, 37.6 percent of Plymouth County, and 43.7 percent of Massachusetts. Wage correlations indicate that workers with high levels of educational attainment are most likely to be commuting to work via public transportation or working from home.

**Fig. 5.3. Highest Level of Education Completed**  
 (Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table B15003)



### Labor Force by Industry

A diverse labor force helps to ensure that a community's economy can remain dynamic and adapt to change. The industries most likely to employ Bridgewater residents are: health care and social services (15.9% of working Bridgewater residents), retail (14.3%), educational services (11.4%), accommodations and food service (10.4%), and construction (7.4%).<sup>8</sup> Employers in these leading local industries include Bridgewater State University, the Bridgewater State Hospital, and the Old Colony Correctional Center. The remaining 40.5 percent of the labor force works in other fields classified by the federal North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), such as professional, scientific, and administrative services, as well as manufacturing, finance, and public administration. The section below explains which industries in Bridgewater are the largest employers.

### EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

A community's **employment base** includes its wage and salary jobs. Unlike labor force metrics, which pertain to the community's working-age residents, employment base metrics describe the kinds of employers that provide jobs in the community. According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), Bridgewater has 599 employer establishments with a combined average monthly employment of 9,038 people.<sup>9</sup> The industries with the largest number of jobs in Bridgewater include: service-providing (86.9 percent of employment base); educational and health services (37.4 percent); trade, transportation, and utilities (16.1 percent); goods-producing (13.0 percent); and leisure and hospitality (12.0 percent).

### Location Quotients

Location quotients (LQ) indicate the strength of local industries by comparing a community's employment base with that of a larger geographic area, called a "reference economy." The proportion of jobs in each industry in the community weighted against the proportion of jobs in those industries in the larger reference economy results in a ratio that sheds light on the unique employment characteristics of a community. Generally, a ratio between 0.90 and 1.10 means the proportion of jobs per industry is similar between the compared geographies, and a ratio below 0.85 or over 1.15 points to a noteworthy difference. The higher the ratio, the stronger the industry is in the community. Table 5.3 reports location quotients for Bridgewater's employment base, considering two reference economies: the Brockton Workforce Development Area (WDA)<sup>10</sup> and Plymouth County.

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, Table C24030, Sex By Industry for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over.

<sup>9</sup> Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), "Employment and Wages," (ES-202), 2019 Annual Report.

<sup>10</sup> The Brockton WDA includes Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, Easton, Hanson, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman

**Table 5.3 Location Quotients for Select Industries**

Industries	Bridgewater to WDA			Bridgewater to County		
	2009 LQ	2014 LQ	2019 LQ	2009 LQ	2014 LQ	2019 LQ
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	2.43	1.14	--	0.54	0.40	--
Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction	--	--	--	--	--	--
Construction	1.14	1.02	1.16	1.24	1.12	1.25
Manufacturing	0.35	0.30	0.42	0.42	0.34	0.50
Durable Goods Manufacturing	0.54	0.50	0.66	0.68	0.52	0.73
Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	0.09	0.08	0.12	0.10	0.09	0.16
Utilities	--	--	--	--	--	--
Wholesale Trade	0.49	0.59	0.52	0.68	0.63	0.63
Retail Trade	0.61	0.60	0.64	0.58	0.58	0.63
Transportation and Warehousing	0.59	1.07	1.00	0.90	1.56	1.61
Information	0.47	0.47	0.27	0.38	0.30	0.18
Finance and Insurance	2.20	2.61	1.97	1.35	1.64	0.99
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.04	0.64	0.99	1.13	0.71	1.18
Professional and Technical Services	0.62	0.72	0.91	0.53	0.47	0.67
Management of Companies & Enterprises	--	--	--	--	--	--
Administrative and Waste Services	0.21	0.19	0.37	0.24	0.31	0.44
Education and Health Services	1.19	1.26	1.20	1.28	1.37	1.33
Health Care and Social Assistance	0.22	0.26	0.56	0.24	0.29	0.63
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.54	0.92	0.97	0.64	0.39	0.38
Accommodation and Food Services	1.42	1.28	1.33	1.17	0.99	1.03
Other Services, Except Public Administration	0.73	0.66	0.68	0.79	0.69	0.69
Public Administration	--	--	--	--	--	--

Sources: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), "Employment and Wages," (ES-202), Annual Reports (2009, 2014, 2019), and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

Table 5.3 shows that Bridgewater's most robust industries relative to its greater area include finance and insurance, education and health services, and the construction trades. Although Bridgewater's leisure and hospitality industry is strong as compared to the WDA, the leisure and hospitality industry across Plymouth County represents a larger share of its jobs than Bridgewater's. Service-providing makes up the majority of the workforce, but the industry is about on par with the WDA as well as Plymouth County. Of the industries for which data are consistently available in Bridgewater, the most under-represented are non-durable goods manufacturing, professional and technical services, and information.

### Wages

The size of a community’s employment base is just one aspect of economic analysis. The number and types of industries, together with the wages they pay, provide a clearer indication of the local economy’s influence on quality of life. In 2019, the average weekly wage for jobs in Bridgewater was \$1,122, higher than both comparison geographies.

**Figure 5.5. Average Weekly Wages by Industry in Bridgewater**

(Source: MA ES202)

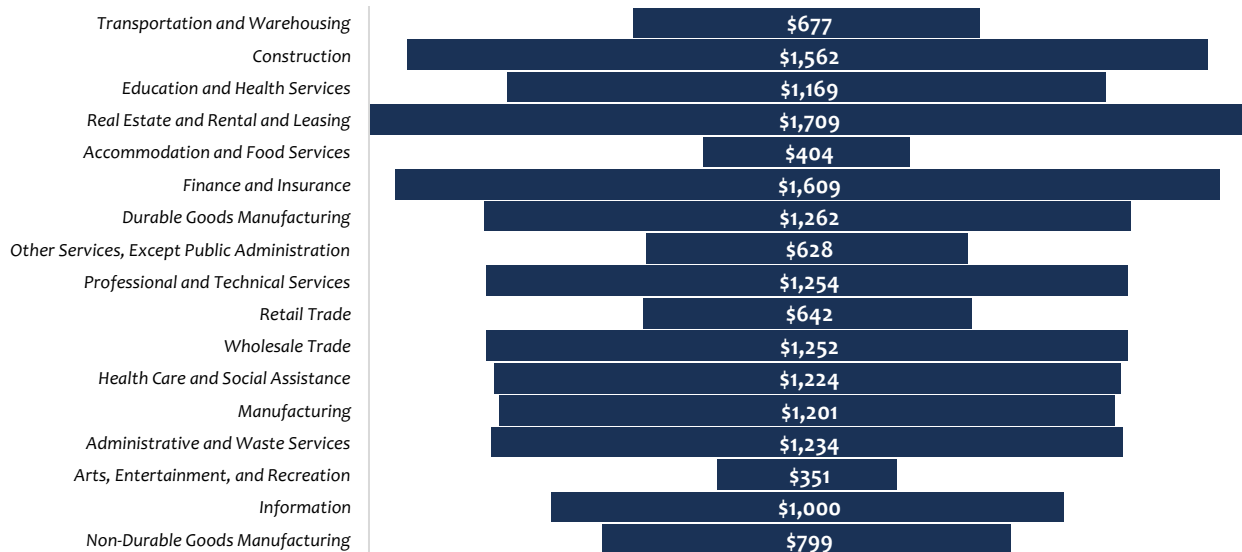
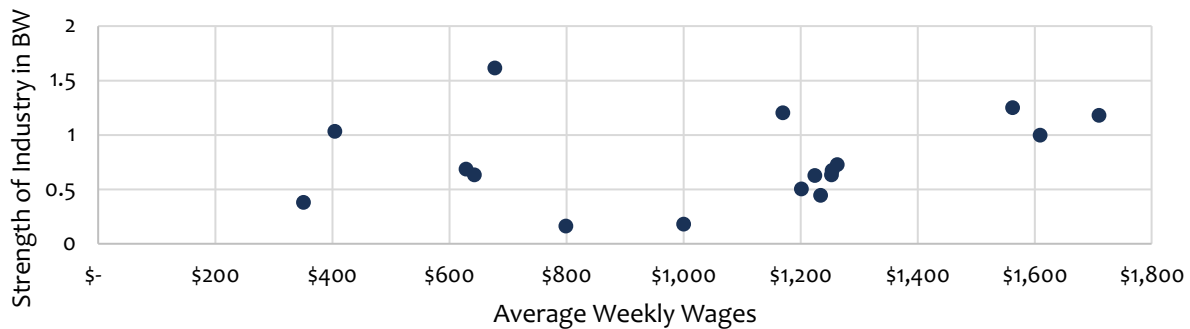


Figure 5.5 displays average weekly wages by industry for Bridgewater’s workers, with the largest blue bars representing the highest average weekly wages. Jobs in the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry have the lowest average weekly wage at \$351 per week, and leisure and hospitality (which makes up 12.0 percent of Bridgewater’s employment base) is the second-lowest average wage at \$400 per week.<sup>11</sup> Comparing Figure 5.5 to Table 5.3 suggests that the industries that tend to be strong in Bridgewater do not necessarily pay living wages. Some of the highest-wage industries have a limited presence in the employment base. Figure 5.6 plots the correlation between an industry’s strength in Bridgewater (its LQ) to its average weekly wages. Some of the stronger local industries (LQs of 1.0 and higher) are only paying up to \$700 a week, compared to weaker industries (LQs lower than 1.0), paying up to \$1,200 per week. This suggests that some of the highest-paying jobs in Bridgewater may not be locally-based. However, Bridgewater has seen a recent rise in the correlation between industry strength and wages relating to real estate and construction, both paying upwards of \$1,500 per week.

<sup>11</sup> Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), “Employment and Wages,” (ES-202), 2019 Annual Report.



**Figure 5.6. Bridgewater Industry Strength in Relation to Wages**  
 (Source: MA ES202)



### Employment Base Trends

The number of employers in Bridgewater increased by 12 percent from 2009 to 2019. By comparison, Massachusetts experienced 22.1 percent growth in employers during the same period, and Plymouth County employer establishments rose by 21.4 percent. Total employment in Bridgewater rose 16.2 percent, representing a similar pace of growth to the 15.6 percent employment increase county-wide. Wage growth in Bridgewater has outpaced Plymouth County, with 32.6 percent and 27.1 percent growth in average wages, respectively. While total employment has increased locally, job losses have occurred in manufacturing, wholesale trade, information, finance and insurance, arts and entertainment, and other services. A reduction in employees does not always correlate with a reduction in establishments, however. Some industries that lost jobs actually gained in number of employers, most notably financial services. This can be attributed to people starting their own businesses, relocations, or similar scenarios. Likewise, the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry experienced a 23.3 percent drop in jobs, yet the number of establishments inched upward, from 9 to 12.

Employment growth occurred in the following industries between 2009 and 2019: health care and social assistance (226 percent), natural resources and mining (179 percent), transportation and warehousing (128 percent), administrative and waste services (108 percent), construction (64 percent), goods-producing (56 percent), professional and business services (54 percent), non-durable goods manufacturing (43 percent), professional and technical services (42 percent), real estate and rental and leasing (37 percent), trade, transportation and utilities (33 percent), education and health services (24 percent), manufacturing (19 percent), retail trade (17 percent), durable goods manufacturing (16.5 percent), accommodation and food services (13 percent), service-providing (12 percent), and leisure and hospitality (10 percent). Health care and social assistance absorbed the most significant increase in employment.

### Jobs to Workers Ratio

The **ratio of jobs to resident workers** indicates whether a town serves as an importer or exporter of employees and jobs within a particular industry and provides insight as to how easily Bridgewater residents can find local employment in their industries of choice. Where the ratio of available jobs to residents who work in that industry is higher than 1.0, that employment sector is a **net importer** of jobs to the community; conversely, where the ratio is less than 1.0, there are more resident workers in the industry than there are jobs available (Table 5.4). Nearly all major industries in Bridgewater are **net exporters** of jobs — particularly in information, professional and technical services,

manufacturing, administration and waste services, arts and entertainment, retail trade, and finance and insurance. Education and health services is the only industry for which Bridgewater is a net importer of jobs. Transportation and warehousing is on the cusp of becoming a net importer industry, with a ratio of 0.94.

**Table 5.4. Jobs to Resident Workers**  
*Cells without a figure indicate that no industry data are available for the Town.*

	# of Jobs	# of Workers	Difference	Ratio
Total, All Industries	9,038	14,525	(5,487)	0.622
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	No data	91	--	--
Mining, Quarrying, Oil & Gas Extraction	No data	13	--	--
Construction	847	1,081	(234)	0.784
Manufacturing	251	958	(707)	0.262
Utilities	No data	40	--	--
Wholesale Trade	197	277	(80)	0.711
Retail Trade	801	2,083	(1,282)	0.385
Transportation & Warehousing	453	480	(27)	0.944
Information	20	131	(111)	0.153
Finance & Insurance	330	825	(495)	0.400
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	97	143	(46)	0.678
Professional & Technical Services	225	866	(641)	0.260
Administrative & Waste Services	166	629	(463)	0.264
Education and Health Services	3,384	1,655	1,729	2.045
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,048	2,309	(1,261)	0.454
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	79	277	(198)	0.285
Accommodation & Food Services	1,002	1,517	(515)	0.661
Other Services Except Public Administration	288	491	(203)	0.587
Public Administration	No data	642	--	--

Sources: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, “Employment and Wages,” (ES-202), 2019; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table C24030, and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

### Daytime Population

Bridgewater’s estimated **daytime population**, or the number of people present in town during regular business hours, is 33,254.<sup>12</sup> The daytime population figure is commuter-adjusted and includes workers, shoppers, and visitors. The daytime population is important, as it can stimulate a community’s economy by supporting local businesses and commerce. Bridgewater’s daytime population rate is lower than that of all the communities in its peer group. The formula for estimating daytime population does not include a college or university’s commuter students but does include students in dormitories (“group quarters” population). This helps to explain why Dartmouth and Northampton have a higher daytime population ratio than Bridgewater: they have more resident

**Daytime Population:**  
 Total Bridgewater population plus non-residents who work in Bridgewater minus Bridgewater residents commuting to out-of-town

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Tables B01003, Total Population; B08604, Worker Population for Workplace Geography; and B08009, Sex of Workers by Place of Work – Minor Civil Division Level for Twelve Selected States.

students. Nevertheless, the presence of commuter students in Bridgewater, along with the “counted” daytime population is a potential economic opportunity.

**Table 5.5. Ratio of Daytime Population to Total Population**

Geography	Daytime Population	Total Population	Ratio
BRIDGEWATER	33,254	27,436	1.212
Dartmouth	47,741	34,204	1.396
Foxborough	29,831	17,727	1.683
Mansfield	33,095	23,947	1.382
Middleborough	32,142	24,850	1.293
Northampton	43,412	28,516	1.522
Raynham	23,818	14,196	1.678
Stoughton	39,387	28,639	1.375
Walpole	33,264	25,129	1.324

Sources: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Tables B01003, B08064, and B08009, and Barrett Planning Group LLC. These ratios do not include the commuting student populations for Bridgewater, Dartmouth, or Northampton, all of which are home to universities/colleges.

### Snapshot of Local Employers

Bridgewater has fourteen employers with over 100 employees per establishment, many of which have been in town for decades. Although Bridgewater is a net exporter of jobs, several employers are among the largest in both the Brockton WDA and Plymouth County: the Bridgewater-Raynham School District, Bridgewater State University (BSU), Bridgewater State Hospital, and the Old Colony Correctional Center.<sup>13</sup> Other businesses with over 100 employees include Roche Brothers, Home Depot, DePuy Synthes (a medical device company), and Claremont Companies, a real estate development, investment, and asset management firm established in 1968 with 60 properties, including hotels, office space, residences, and more.<sup>14</sup> A & A Metro Transportation is another longtime Bridgewater-based business, having opened in 1952 as Bill’s Taxi and now acting as regional transit service with over 50 employees and locations in Boston, Mansfield, Randolph, and Medford.<sup>15</sup> Infrastructural improvements and rezoning within the Elm Street Industrial District have generated a building spurt that is projected to bring additional job opportunities and substantial tax revenue.



*Bridgewater State University*

<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, “Largest 100 Employers in Bridgewater,” 2022.

<sup>14</sup> “Company Overview: Claremont Companies.” Accessed May 15, 2020. <http://www.claremontcorp.com/company-overview/>

<sup>15</sup> “About Us.” A & A Metro Transportation, January 17, 2020. [www.aametro.com/about-aa-metro-transportation/](http://www.aametro.com/about-aa-metro-transportation/)

### State and Regional Institutions

The Bridgewater school system is reputable, attractive to families, and one of the largest employers in the town.<sup>16</sup> Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School, located on the north side of town, serves about 1,500 students. Bridgewater State University recently expanded to include several facilities on campus, including a new Welcome Center in 2019 and the \$98.7 million Dana Mohler-Faria Science and Mathematics Center in 2012.<sup>17</sup> Bridgewater State Hospital employs specially trained security forces and health care professionals.<sup>18</sup>

### Other Businesses

Bridgewater continues to support smaller, service-based businesses in the Central Business District and along Routes 104 and 18. Many businesses see the commercial districts as good places to operate and prosper. They have described Bridgewater as a welcoming place and generally report a positive working relationship with Town Hall. The Bridgewater Business Association, formed in 1984, hosts networking and community events such as Autumn-Fest and Christmas on the Common.<sup>19</sup> Bridgewater also supports other businesses by prioritizing the changing natural environment, remaining aware that vulnerability will substantially affect the Town’s ability to grow economically, and the implications this has on local businesses. Through efforts such as the Comprehensive Municipal Vulnerability Plan (MVP), the Town is working to identify and alleviate these concerns to ensure businesses are not impeded.

### Tax Base

The majority of Bridgewater’s tax base is residential (Table 5.6), and the town has many non-taxable land uses such as its schools, BSU, over ten houses of worship, protected open space and recreation land, cultural institutions, Old Colony Correctional Institute, and Bridgewater State Hospital.<sup>20</sup> In 2020, just 12.9 percent of Bridgewater’s tax levy came from commercial, industrial, and personal (CIP) property.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 5.6. Tax Rate by Class (FY 2020)**

Geography	Average SF Tax Bill	Tax Rate				% of Total Revenue	
		Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	R	CIP
Bridgewater	\$5,851	14.73	14.73	14.73	14.73	87.1%	12.9%
Dartmouth	\$4,217	9.93	16.80	16.80	16.72	84.2%	15.8%
Foxborough	\$6,892	14.98	32.30	32.30	32.30	77.8%	22.2%
Mansfield	\$7,175	15.36	21.60	21.60	21.60	77.9%	22.1%
Middleborough	\$5,264	15.88	16.86	16.86	16.86	82.2%	17.8%
Northampton	\$5,571	16.80	16.80	16.80	16.80	80.6%	19.4%
Raynham	\$5,788	14.41	19.80	19.80	19.80	75.7%	24.3%
Stoughton	\$5,722	14.89	25.59	25.59	25.59	79.7%	20.3%
Walpole	\$7,937	14.99	19.44	19.44	19.44	86.9%	13.1%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue; Average Single Family Tax Bill and Fiscal Year Tax Classification, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Bridgewater State University, “A History of Bridgewater State University,” 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Deborah Becker, “Officials Mark Positive Changes at Bridgewater State Hospital,” *WBUR*, May 16, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Bridgewater Business Association, “About the Bridgewater Business Association,” 2019.

<sup>20</sup> Please note there are no separate written PILOT agreements with state institutions other than the regular PILOT payments for state properties, following the state’s formula.

<sup>21</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue Division of Local Services Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section, Bridgewater Fiscal Year Tax Classification, 2019.

From FY 2015-2020, the percentage of tax revenue generated by commercial/industrial and personal (CIP) properties decreased from 14.3 percent to 12.9 percent, whereas from FY 2010-2015, the CIP percentage of the total steadily increased from 12.2 to 13.2 percent. Discussions with the ad hoc Comprehensive Master Plan Committee highlighted current obstacles involved with increasing Bridgewater’s commercial tax base due to limited available land. This affects the scale and extent of expected economic growth, ultimately influencing the tax base.<sup>22</sup>

**ZONING FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Bridgewater has four commercial districts, three industrial districts, and several overlays or special districts (Map 2.5). Each district is governed by unique rules for permitted uses, lot area and building size, and other requirements. The nonresidential districts include:<sup>23</sup>

**Nonresidential Districts**

- Business (B)
- Central Business (CB)
- South Business (SB)
- Gateway Business (GB)
- East Gateway Business (EGB)
- Industrial A (IA)
- Industrial B (IB)
- Elm Street Industrial (IE)

**Overlays**

- Bedford Street Overlay District (BOD)
- Planned Development District (PDD)

Further development is anticipated in the South Business District, Elm Street Industrial, and Central Business District. Recent developments in the gateways districts, originally intended to be overlay districts, have completed the design review process with established zoning criteria. Table 5.7 below describes the dimensional regulations for each of the major business districts in Bridgewater. Please note a complete a zoning review and update is ongoing.

**Table 5.7. Dimensional Regulations for Commercial Districts in Bridgewater**

Land Space Requirements	South Business District	Elm Street Industrial District	Central Business District
Min. Lot Size	40,000 ft*	40,000 ft	None for existing. For new lots – 10,000 sq ft
Min. Frontage	200 ft*	200 ft	None for existing. For new lots – 100 ft
Min. Depth - Front	60 ft*	40 ft	None for existing. For new lots - 5 ft
Min. Depth - Rear	40 ft*	40 ft	15 ft

<sup>22</sup> Please note, there are no businesses receiving tax breaks (TIFs, etc.) in Bridgewater.

<sup>23</sup> Unless otherwise specified, zoning descriptions in this draft refer to terms used in the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) recodification, which is still in development.

**Table 5.7. Dimensional Regulations for Commercial Districts in Bridgewater**

Land Space Requirements	South Business District	Elm Street Industrial District	Central Business District
Min. Depth - Side	25 ft*	25 ft	None for existing. For new lots - 5 ft
Max. Building Height	40 ft	40 ft	40 ft or 3.5 stories
Max. % Building Coverage	**See note below	-	Determined by requirements for yard depth & parking
Max. % Lot Coverage	75%	70%	80%
Min. % Open Space	25%	30%	20%
Min. Lot Area/Dwelling Unit	-	-	2,420 sq ft (Special Permit)

Source: Town of Bridgewater Zoning Bylaw, 8.40 Land Space Requirements Table

\* For lots in SBD with sole means of vehicular access and egress only from streets approved under Subdivision Control Law, the lot area and frontage requirements are 10,000 sq ft and 100 ft respectively. Building on such lots shall be located at least 60 ft from any public way; otherwise the front, rear and side yard depth requirements shall be 30 ft, 25 ft, and 15 ft respectively.

\*\* Lots of 20,000 sq ft or more require minimum percentage of protected open space: 20,000-30,999 sq ft = 20%; 40,000-400,000 sq ft = 25%; 400,000 sq ft or more: 30%.

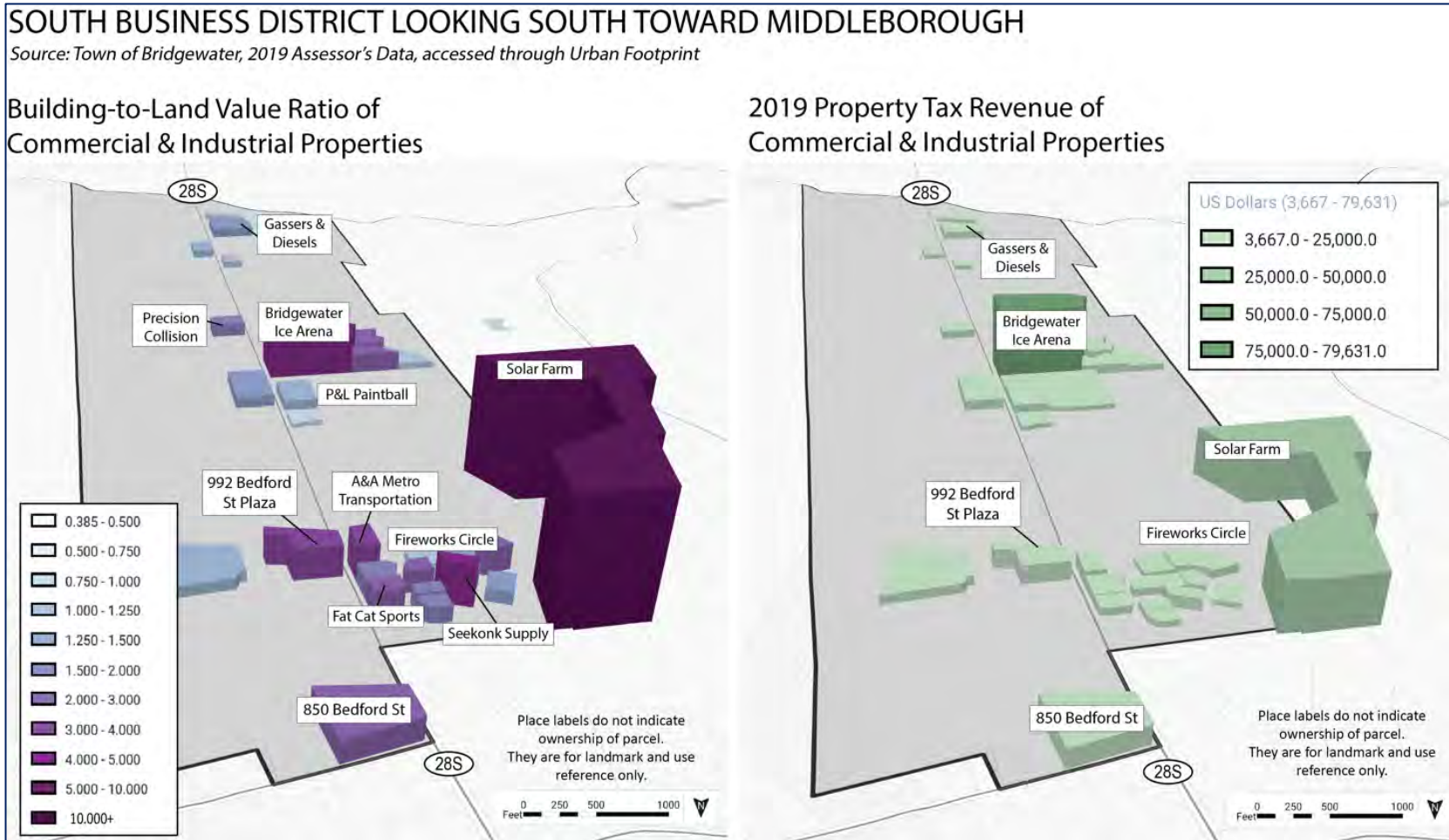
### South Business District

The South Business District (SBD) is the town’s largest business district. It extends north from the Middleborough-Bridgewater town line, along Bedford Street on Route 18 to just south of Cottage Street. This district is approximately 3 miles long and varies in width. From the town line to just south of Flagg Street, the district is 3,200 feet wide. It then shortens to about 1,600 feet wide from Flagg Street onward. The SBD is a commercial and industrial district that allows for many uses by-right, with allowances for other uses via special permit. Allowed uses range from institutional, recreational and educational, to agricultural, office, laboratory, and transportation. The goal of the district is to encourage a variety of planned development to maximize opportunities and to streamline permit approvals, particularly in the southern portion.

The map on the left in Figure 5.7 illustrates the ratio of the building and land improvements value of a parcel to the land value. Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate that the buildings and improvements to the land (such as paving, lighting, etc.) hold more value than the land itself. The second map (right) indicates how much property tax revenue each parcel generated in FY 2019.

Figure 5.7. Building-to-Land Value and Property Tax Revenue in the South Business District, 2019

1  
2



*Note that this is based on the 2019 Assessor's database, which is the most current available as of March 2021 and may not reflect all current development.*

### Elm Street Industrial District

The Elm Street Industrial District (IE) is located off of the intersection of Routes 24 and 104. It is about 1.5 miles (along Elm Street) and is widest near the West Bridgewater Town line to the north at more than half a mile wide. Bridgewater was awarded a \$3 million MassWorks Infrastructure Grant for the reconstruction of the district’s infrastructure, which allows transformative employment and housing along the corridor. Electricity extension and traffic improvements were part of the revitalization plan and were completed in the summer of 2020.<sup>24</sup> Construction began once the land was available for development and today, a major warehouse facility (300,000+ ft<sup>2</sup>) has been built, along with numerous other building approvals. The IE district includes Bridgewater’s two marijuana dispensaries,<sup>25</sup> as well as a growing facility.



*Entrance to the Bridgewater Industrial Park located in the Elm Street Industrial District*

Allowed uses in the Elm Street Industrial District are similar to those in the SBD, except most retail uses require a special permit. Residential uses are limited to renting existing single-family homes to up to three people. Upon construction completion under the MassWorks grant, this could change. Elm Street will continue to be a high-growth area with strong interest to developers. The growth and financial value added to the Town since the District’s inception is notable and indicative of an “open-for-business” mindset. The first map in Figure 5.8 displays the ratio of the building and land improvements value to the land value, while the second map indicates how much property tax revenue the parcel generated in 2019.<sup>26, 27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Corlyn Voorhees, “‘Deplorable’ Bridgewater Street Primed for Reconstruction,” *The Enterprise*, October 17, 2018.

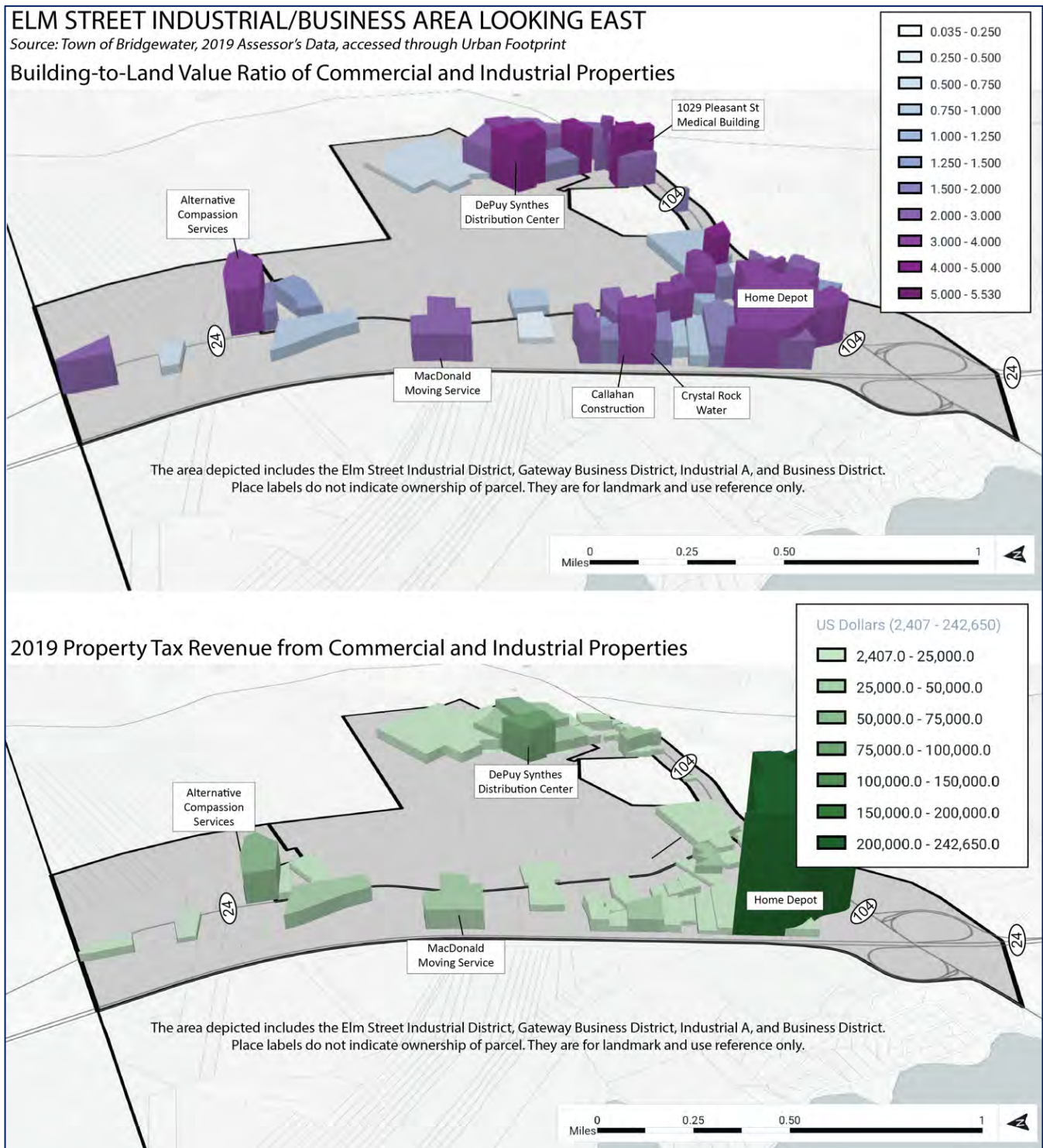
<sup>25</sup> Town of Bridgewater Zoning By-Laws 3.36 Elm Street Retail Overlay District, October 12, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Please note there have been recent developments within the Elm Street Industrial District during and following the drafting of this Master Plan that will not be reflected in the maps.

<sup>27</sup> Note: the white parcel is town-owned land.



**Figure 5.8. Building-to-Land Value and Property Tax Revenue in the Elm Street Industrial District, 2019**



*Note that this is based on the 2019 Assessor's database, which is the most current available as of March 2020 and may not reflect all current development.*

### Central Business District

The CBD includes Downtown Bridgewater and the Common/Central Square and is a hub of activity for Bridgewater residents and business owners. Local businesses, public services, and several houses of worship surround the Common. It is close to BSU and the commuter rail, and three major state highways (Routes 104, 28, and 18) pass through Bridgewater and converge at the Common. The Town has commissioned several studies and reports to support downtown revitalization, including the 2014 Downtown Revitalization Plan, the 2016 Complete Streets analysis, the 2018 OCPC Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity and Livability Study, a 2019 intersection safety study, and a 2018/2019 branding and wayfinding project.<sup>28</sup>

The Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) conducted a downtown market analysis in 2016.<sup>29</sup> The study centered around development opportunities and strategies grounded in demographic analysis, land use and zoning, retail and housing market data, and a consumer survey in 2015. OCPC found that Downtown has a strong asset base despite disjointed retail shopping areas, a lack of housing options, a limited business mix, placement on heavily traveled roadways, and a lack of pedestrian amenities. Combined implementation of these plans, with infrastructure improvements and mixed-use zoning, would meet several objectives stated in Bridgewater’s zoning: economic revitalization with small retail, service establishments, and supporting uses, preservation of the historic nature of existing development, pedestrian-oriented activities, and enhanced recreational uses consistent with growth patterns within proximity to the MBTA station, BSU, and related parking areas.



*Streetscape in Central Square,  
Downtown Bridgewater*



*Pedestrian walkway to the Common from the  
sidewalk in Downtown Bridgewater*

Community support is strong in Bridgewater, as shown through events such as Music Alley’s summer and fall concert series adjacent to the Town Common, which began in 2015. The Town coordinated and paid for permitting, inspections, and other coordination logistics, while local businesses donated items and BSU provided funding through its University Community Initiative (UCI). A private artist completed Music Alley’s mural. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) recommended funds to help construct the “park,” and the

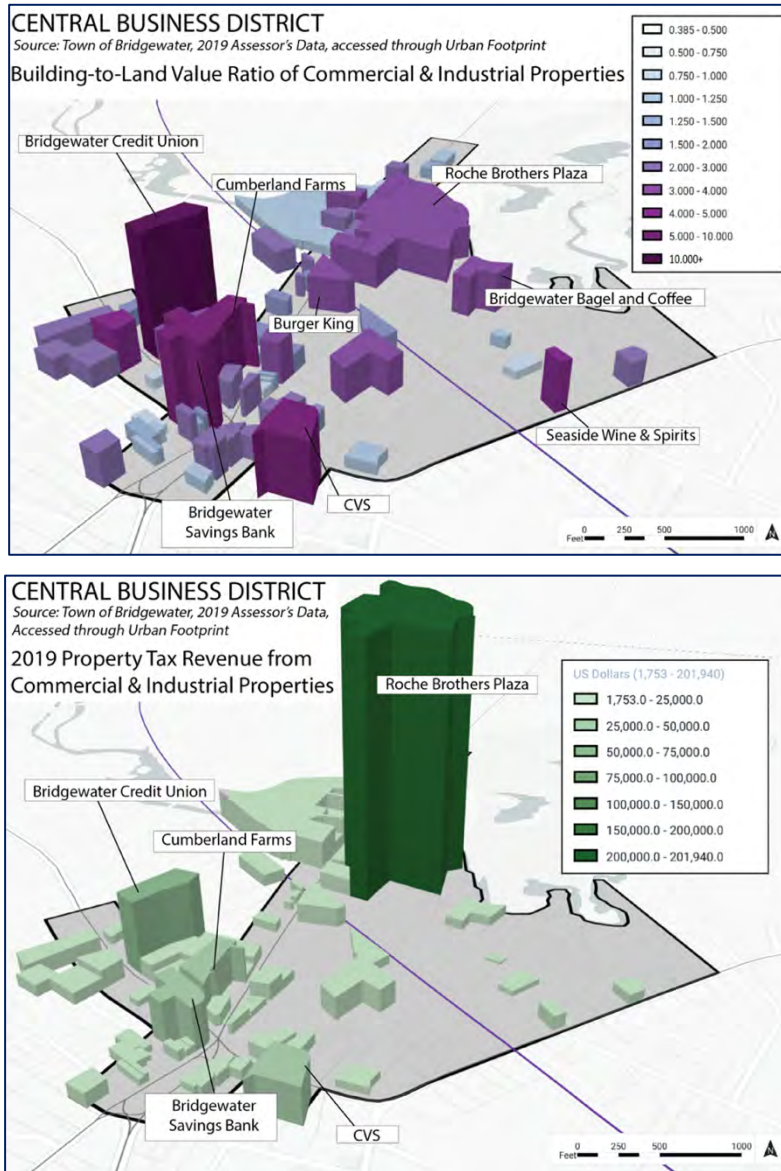
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<sup>28</sup> The Cecil Group, Nelson/Nygaard, *Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Master Plan*, September 22, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Old Colony Planning Council, *Downtown Bridgewater Plan*, July 2016.

Recreation Department and citizens provided labor to complete the venue. The concerts at Music Alley have become one of the most popular events in Bridgewater, praised for their support of local music and artists.<sup>30</sup> The first map in Figure 5.9 displays the ratio of the building and land improvements to the land value, and the second map indicates how much property tax revenue the parcel generated in FY 2019.

**Figure 5.9. Building-to-Land Value and Property Tax Revenue in the Central Business District, 2019**



*Note that this is based on the 2019 Assessor's database, which is the most current available as of March 2020 and may not reflect all current development.*

<sup>30</sup> Marilee Hunt, Town Clerk, Town of Bridgewater, interviewed by Fiona Coughlan, Barrett Planning Group, May 10, 2019.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL REPORT**

In September 2014, Northeastern University submitted an Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool (EDSAT) for Bridgewater.<sup>31</sup> The EDSAT identifies economic development strengths and weaknesses in Bridgewater, as well as obstacles to future economic development and potential opportunities. The EDSAT analysis compares Bridgewater’s responses to its questionnaire to those of its Comparison Group Municipalities (CGM). Each finding is interpreted based on: (1) level of importance businesses and developers place on that question; (2) how other jurisdictions participating in EDSAT have typically responded to that question; and (3) how your jurisdiction’s response compares to the typical response. Table 5.8 outlines some of the report’s major findings.

**Table 5.8. Select EDSAT Findings**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site availability</li> <li>• Predictable and fast-track permitting for certain uses in overlay districts</li> <li>• Low crime</li> <li>• Presence of the commuter rail</li> <li>• Proximity to BSU</li> <li>• Quality of available/vacant space</li> <li>• Website that supports daily town functions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate infrastructure capacity</li> <li>• Poor parking and traffic</li> <li>• High rental rates</li> <li>• Proximity of commercial and industrial uses to highway access</li> <li>• Absence of an economic development plan/strategy or ombudsman</li> <li>• Little cross-marketing,</li> <li>• Poor physical attractiveness</li> <li>• Smaller portions of retail or office within proximity to the commuter rail</li> </ul>

Commercial rental rates reported in the EDSAT were higher than the surrounding Comparison Group Municipalities (CGM), a group identified by Northeastern as having traits similar to Bridgewater (much like a peer group). Despite the absence of Class A office space in town, the analysts from Northeastern found that at the time, Bridgewater had about 250,000 sq. ft. of vacant office space, 300 acres of vacant developable land zoned for commercial/industrial development, and the potential to support an additional 270,000 to 390,000 square feet of retail space.<sup>32</sup>

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY**

Bridgewater’s Community and Economic Development (C/ED) department has a staff of five, including the Director – a position created in response to one of the weaknesses identified in the 2014 EDSAT report. Consistent with professionalization trends in many local governments today, C/ED consolidates planning and zoning, economic development, conservation, and stormwater

<sup>31</sup> Northeastern University Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, *Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool*, September 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Northeastern University Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, *Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool*, September 2014.

management under one roof. It worked closely with advisory committees and citizens to develop the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan Update, helped develop a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, and was responsible for overseeing subsequent studies and assessments to date. There is no economic development commission or similar entity of business leaders working in an advisory capacity with C/ED or the Town Manager. However, staff roles are designed to provide a comprehensive system of service delivery, helping residents and businesses navigate the permitting process, acting as liaisons between established boards/commissions and the public, and commissioning and implementing municipal studies for the betterment of the Town. Addressed further in the Implementation Plan, it is recommended that responsible departments incorporate a consistent quarterly meeting schedule with their associated boards/commissions chairs. The C/ED Department recently hired an environmental planner to manage environmental components of planning, conservation, and stormwater operations.

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### **5.3. Challenges and Opportunities**

The Town plans to allocate \$50 million toward upcoming infrastructure improvements across Bridgewater. The proposed Capital Improvement Program identifies approximately \$1,665,000 in capital investment needs between 2019 and 2025.<sup>33</sup> Recently funded improvements under the plan include the Memorial Building, the Mitchell School, and LED streetlight upgrades. Upon securing Green Communities and Department of Energy grants, the Town contributed additional capital funds for the streetlights, which are expected to reduce electricity costs by \$150,000 per year. The 2021 capital budget also includes provisions for a new fire station. The Elm Street Industrial District will see the most activity, with improvements funded under a District Improvement Financing (DIF) plan approved in 2018, as well as a MassWorks grant. The South Business District (Bedford Street) will also see forthcoming activity and major changes.

Recent development wins that will spur local economic opportunities and untapped tax revenue opportunities are the 142-acre office park adjacent to Lake Nippennicket at Lakeshore Center, the alternative energy installation on the Halifax Landfill (8 acres will be in Bridgewater), and the McElwain School Apartments. The McElwain School Apartments affordable housing development is an important example of housing innovation in Bridgewater, bringing apartments within walking distance of the CBD and BSU. Bridgewater's Economic Opportunity Zone (2018) offers hope- vitality in an overlooked area through mixed-use development opportunities and economic growth. Among the goals of the Opportunity Zone, which we will discuss in greater depth in the coming sections, is the creation of more innovation spaces in the downtown area to attract entrepreneurs and professionals from a variety of fields.

#### **THE DOWNTOWN AND BROAD STREET**

##### ***Mixed-Use Development***

Downtown Bridgewater is the nucleus of the town. As such, there is a strong desire among Bridgewater residents to revitalize Central Square and Broad Street. The 2016 OCPC Downtown Revitalization study found that Downtown suffers from the lack of variety of uses, despite having a strong asset base and a projected 2.1 percent increase in population within five miles between 2015 and 2020. Recommendations from the plan were aimed at increasing economic activity, expanding housing options, and enhancing pedestrian and motorist safety in the area. A 2012 Slums and Blight Inventory reported that 33 percent of properties in Downtown are abandoned, deteriorated, or

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<sup>33</sup> Town of Bridgewater, MA, Proposed Capital Improvement Program 2019-2025, 2019.

contaminated.<sup>34</sup> The Inventory assessed more than 180 buildings on major streets downtown, including existing residential and commercial structures and vacant lots. Despite the inventory’s age, many of these same buildings exist today and a more recent inventory has not been created to date.

By incorporating mixed-use development and reuse/retrofitting, Bridgewater can integrate housing with these properties to attract the critical mass needed to support amenities and new businesses. The Downtown Bridgewater Consumer Survey (part of OCPC’s 2016 market analysis) highlighted the need for smaller dwelling units in the Downtown for underserved populations such as seniors and young professionals, a finding reinforced in Bridgewater’s 2017 Housing Production Plan.

### Retaining Businesses

Vacant and underutilized parcels in Downtown and along Broad Street have been an issue in Bridgewater for many years. Issues highlighted during business interviews for this Comprehensive Plan pointed to traffic circulation and parking as major challenges when trying to attract the needed customer base to stay in business. However, there have been some exceptions, such as the Juice Mill, Better Bean Coffee Company, and Chessman’s Pizza. As shown in past studies, opportunities exist to combat commercial vacancy. OCPC reported that the five-mile retail market area surrounding the Downtown accumulated an average retail leakage of \$344 million in 2016. Table 5.9 outlines the leakage by merchandise category.

**Table 5.9. Downtown Bridgewater 5 Mile Radius Market (2015)**

Merchandise Category	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Target Sales (\$/SF)	Potential Space (SF)
Furniture/ Home Furnishings	\$18,295,227	\$7,112,460	\$11,182,767	\$140	79,877
Electronics & Appliances	\$24,738,893	\$2,848,114	\$21,890,779	\$199	110,004
Building Materials & Garden Equipment	\$23,808,994	\$31,482,884	(\$7,673,890)	-	-
Clothing & Accessories	\$53,524,621	\$5,570,178	\$47,954,443	\$209	229,447
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books, Music	\$19,863,146	\$6,964,201	\$12,898,945	\$216	59,717
General Merchandise	\$76,276,662	\$9,422,541	\$66,854,121	\$216	309,510
Miscellaneous Store Retail	\$18,275,444	\$9,313,534	\$8,961,910	\$216	41,490
Food & Beverage Stores	\$144,037,371	\$47,820,372	\$96,216,999	\$390	246,710
Health & Personal Care	\$70,577,363	\$16,069,105	\$54,508,258	\$365	149,338
Restaurants	\$82,588,758	\$58,998,778	\$23,589,980	\$263	89,696

Sources: ESRI BOA, Urban Land Institute, Old Colony Planning Council, Downtown Bridgewater Plan, 2016, and Barrett Planning Group.

OCPC reported 32,285 workers within the five-mile local trade area at the time of OCPC’s market analysis. If 10 percent of these workers spent at least \$10 in Downtown each week, revenues would increase by over \$1,680,000. Offering financial incentives to Downtown businesses with well-integrated mixed-use development would keep people in the area, stimulate economic activity, and keep commerce local. Educating businesses and commercial operations interested in locating in the CBD would encourage and sustain growth.

<sup>34</sup> Town of Bridgewater, *Housing Production Plan 2012*, August 17, 2012.

### **Property Redevelopment and Façade Improvement**

Vacant, deteriorated, and contaminated properties are eligible for redevelopment in Downtown, and existing businesses would benefit from a Façade Improvement Program. Façade Improvement Programs are popular in small and moderately-sized towns because they are often less expensive and easier to implement than other revitalization efforts. Small business grants specifically for these programs are widely available and often underutilized. Programs such as these improve both the aesthetic and monetary value of a property and its surroundings and can help create uniform design guidelines. By matching public and private funds, communities typically offer grants of \$5,000 or more for building improvements. The 2014 Revitalization Plan recommended establishing a Façade and Sign Improvement District in the Downtown that would include periodic property inspections and a program criteria worksheet based on a points system. The Improvement District would ensure final applicant approval of involvement and assign responsibility for property renovation and repair to that applicant. Feedback in favor of a Façade Improvement Program has been consistent throughout this Master Plan’s outreach process, as many of the storefronts along Main Street do not depict a cohesive vision for the area.

## **EXPANDING THE EMPLOYMENT BASE**

### **Targeted Industry Recruitment**

Nearly all major industries in Bridgewater are **net exporters** of jobs, with the exception of educational services. This means that the Town loses potential resident labor to other communities, as well as the economic opportunities they can offer for retail and other services. Of the industries with a larger share of resident labor force participants, retail trade, finance, and insurance and professional and technical services are underrepresented among Bridgewater’s business establishments. A diverse commercial and industrial base has many benefits to a community, including higher property values, stronger self-sufficiency, better community services, lower taxes, and resiliency. Additionally, having the ability to recruit work-from-home professionals in these fields can have alternative yet rewarding benefits, keeping that critical resident labor and talent pool.

### **Becoming a Regional Competitor**

Bridgewater contains some “magnet businesses,” or businesses that attract local and regional workers. Magnet businesses include Claremont Companies, CNT Inc., Bridgewater State Hospital, The Old Colony Corrections Center, BSU, and Nuance Communications Inc. Bridgewater has sixteen of the 200 largest employers in Plymouth County, giving it an added competitive edge. However, public feedback during this Comprehensive Plan process indicates that lack of ability to provide utilities and services and lack of clarity during the development process hinder Bridgewater’s ability to maximize its economic opportunities and attract more magnet businesses.

### **Innovation Spaces, Entrepreneurship, and Self-Employment**

Telecommuting tax credits for employers and remote worker incentive programs reflect a statewide trend in working-from-home, coworking, innovation and makerspaces, and other forms of non-location-based work environments. Innovation spaces, self-employment, and place-based entrepreneurship are growing as commutes lengthen. American Community Survey (ACS) data show that 8.0 percent of Bridgewater’s labor force is self-employed.<sup>35</sup> This, coupled with newer industries relocating to the area and BSU’s new Interdisciplinary Makerspace, can create opportunities for

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<sup>35</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table C24060, Occupation by Class of Worker for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over.

Bridgewater. Coworking spaces are rapidly growing, with over 27 million sq. ft. as of 2016.<sup>36</sup> A goal of Bridgewater's Opportunity Zone is to create more innovation spaces in the downtown area to attract entrepreneurs and professionals from a variety of fields.

## **OPPORTUNITY ZONE (OZ)**

### **Existing Conditions and Potential**

The Opportunity Zone (OZ) Program designates specific geographic areas where individuals can gain favorable tax treatment on their capital gains by investing in economic activity in the area.<sup>37</sup> OZ areas are chosen based on census tract data and are designed to stimulate investment into lower-income tracts through a privately-created Opportunity Fund. As of 2018, Bridgewater has an Opportunity Zone (OZ) bordered by South Street to the west, Plymouth Street to the north, and Great Hill Drive and Summer Street to the east and south. The population of Bridgewater's OZ is 2,993 people, and the median household income is \$40,769. The zone encompasses the BSU campus and the southeastern portion of Central Square.

OZ designation supplemented the rezoning of the area for mixed-use redevelopment.<sup>38</sup> Goals for Bridgewater's OZ program are: redeveloping properties abutting the Central Square, developing market-rate housing in the Downtown, complementing BSU's campus improvements, encouraging mixed-use development - specifically one and two-bedroom residential, commercial, and retail - creating innovation space, and relocating the Fire Department's headquarters. OZ's across the state have generated \$331 million through 167 infrastructure projects, created more than 13,000 new housing units, including 11,000 affordable units and 600 units of workforce housing, and contributed \$30M to 50 collaborative workspace projects to date.<sup>39</sup>

### **Partnership with Bridgewater State University (BSU)**

Bridgewater State University is an underutilized asset to the community. It is the second-largest university in the state college system and the tenth-largest four-year college/university in the state, with 10,990 undergraduate and graduate students.<sup>40</sup> As the university expands its programs and services, Bridgewater can capture the talent being fostered there to supplement the employment base, and share ideas and information. At times, the university and town have seemed to have limited communication and an ineffective relationship, but many say this has changed. The OZ is a chance to build on their improving relationship, working to expand economic opportunity, innovation spaces and start-ups, corporate partnerships, job growth, and internship/externship/co-ops to keep young professionals living, working, and playing in Bridgewater. Continued engagement with BSU to forward the development of a business incubator/makerspace, and undertaking a student marketing campaign were recommendations from OCPC's 2016 Downtown Plan.

## **MARKETING, BRANDING, AND REPRESENTATION**

### **Site Finders, Social Media, and Availability of Information**

Bridgewater's website is not optimized as a source of information. While the website was recently updated, economic information can be difficult to locate, and a landing page for those interested in

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<sup>36</sup> Julie Wagner and Dan Watch, "Innovation Spaces: The New Design of Work," *Brookings Institute*, April 2017.

<sup>37</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, "Opportunity Zone Program," 2019.

<sup>38</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, *Town of Bridgewater*, 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, *Opportunity Zones in Massachusetts*, December 12, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> Bridgewater State University, "BSU Facts," 2019.



learning more does not always have updated information. These limitations have an impact on department-level pages, too. The Economic Development/Planning page would benefit from providing data, technical assistance resources, and tools for business owners to use. Clickable links to social media sites, developable properties, office/commercial/industrial properties for sale or lease, and business listings would make helpful additions as well. Applications for businesses, including licensing applications, are scattered on other pages of the website that are not readily accessible or easy to find. There is also no information on the website about the OZ.

### **Marketing**

Many people interviewed for this plan and many participants in community meetings said the Town needs “branding,” wayfinding, and marketing materials that make it readily recognizable. Although proven to be difficult to implement in the past, consistent signage and wayfinding for trails, transportation routes, cultural amenities and economic districts to display a unified vision, especially for the Downtown, matter. Business recruitment materials such as business guides, district informational packets, or virtual newsletters can simplify the sharing of information to the business sector. Cross-marketing with entities such as BSU, the Bridgewater Business Association, the Metro South Chamber of Commerce, or the Cranberry Country Chamber of Commerce can also expand advertising capacity. Both the OCPC Plan and the 2014 Revitalization Plan support implementing a marketing/branding strategy to educate visitors and residents and form a shared identity as part of a broader business strategy.

### **Leadership**

Bridgewater’s town departments are busy and generally not well-staffed when compared to the volume of functions they are expected to carry out. Although operating within their bandwidth, the department is not staffed to conduct additional, proactive visits with existing businesses or visit new businesses at the recommended rate of three visits per week. Current outreach is completed at a baseline level, answering questions and providing technical assistance when appropriate. Marketing, online information-sharing, and partnering can help, but the Town should consider a dedicated economic development ambassador or a Business Expansion and Assistance Team (BEAT) to supplement operations and efficiently distribute the extra workload required in welcoming new commercial businesses to Town. An ambassador or group dedicated to supporting economic development can connect with local employers, serve as liaisons, manage independent research, pilot new programming, provide staff support, seek new financing mechanisms, and host events to magnify the department’s capabilities. These groups are common across the state and have historically met with success because they support understaffed departments and allow them to reach their full potential. Examples of successful economic development organizations representing different types of models are the Needham Council of Economic Advisors (advisory to the Town Manager), the Plymouth Growth and Development Corporation (PGDC), and Dedham Square Circle.

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## **5.4. Goals, Policies, and Recommendations**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

- Retain existing business while drawing a variety of new establishments to encourage residents to spend time and money in town and build Bridgewater’s tax base.
- Co-locate housing, shopping, and jobs in select areas to reduce single-occupancy commutes and support healthy lifestyles.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Policies for decision makers are listed **in bold** with relevant recommendations listed below the policy. For detail regarding timing and responsible parties for each recommendation, please see the Implementation Program in Chapter 8.

### **Encourage collaboration between the Town, businesses and property owners, representatives of BSU, and local and regional Chambers of Commerce to support economic development in Bridgewater.**

- Investigate the formation of a downtown business group to work with local business organizations and the C/ED Department.
- Host and promote regular Community and Economic Development office hours (remotely or in-person) to improve communication with business owners and build rapport with the Bridgewater Business Association and Metro South Chamber of Commerce.
- Strengthen the relationship between the Town, BSU, and local businesses and capitalize on the Town's identity as the home of BSU.

### **Provide the Community and Economic Development Department with the resources it needs to do the job the Town expects it to do.**

- Fund an economic development strategic plan for the Town.
- Establish an Economic Development Commission or Council of Economic Advisors to advise the C/ED, the Town Manager, and the Town Council's C/ED Committee to expand the Town's economic development capacity.
- Incorporate a quarterly meeting schedule for associated boards, commissions, and staff to review and further progress on various economic development initiatives.
- Leverage new funding and technical assistance resources from state and federal sources, including the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

### **Strengthen, support, and enhance the character of the Town's businesses districts.**

- Seek help from MassDevelopment to study the feasibility, benefits, and tradeoffs of using District Improvement Financing (DIF) to fund infrastructure improvements in Bridgewater's business districts.
- Review and strengthen the existing "Mixed Use (CBD)" ordinance to encourage mixed-use development in the Central Business District and attract commercial activity.
- Develop architectural and site design standards tailored to each business area, and use architectural peer review services as needed during the permitting process for larger commercial, industrial, or mixed-use developments.
- Inventory vacant land in the South Business District to evaluate development feasibility, market demand, adjacent uses, wetlands, topography, and potential site constraints.

### **Develop a town brand to define Bridgewater.**

- Establish a working group to assist with developing a "brand" for the Town through a public engagement process.

**Chapter 5. Economic Development**

- Market Bridgewater to external audiences and residents to keep existing businesses and attract new businesses, featuring video interviews with existing companies and entrepreneurs, local success stories, timely economic and real estate data, and Town contacts.

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**5.5. Appendix – Maps**

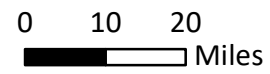
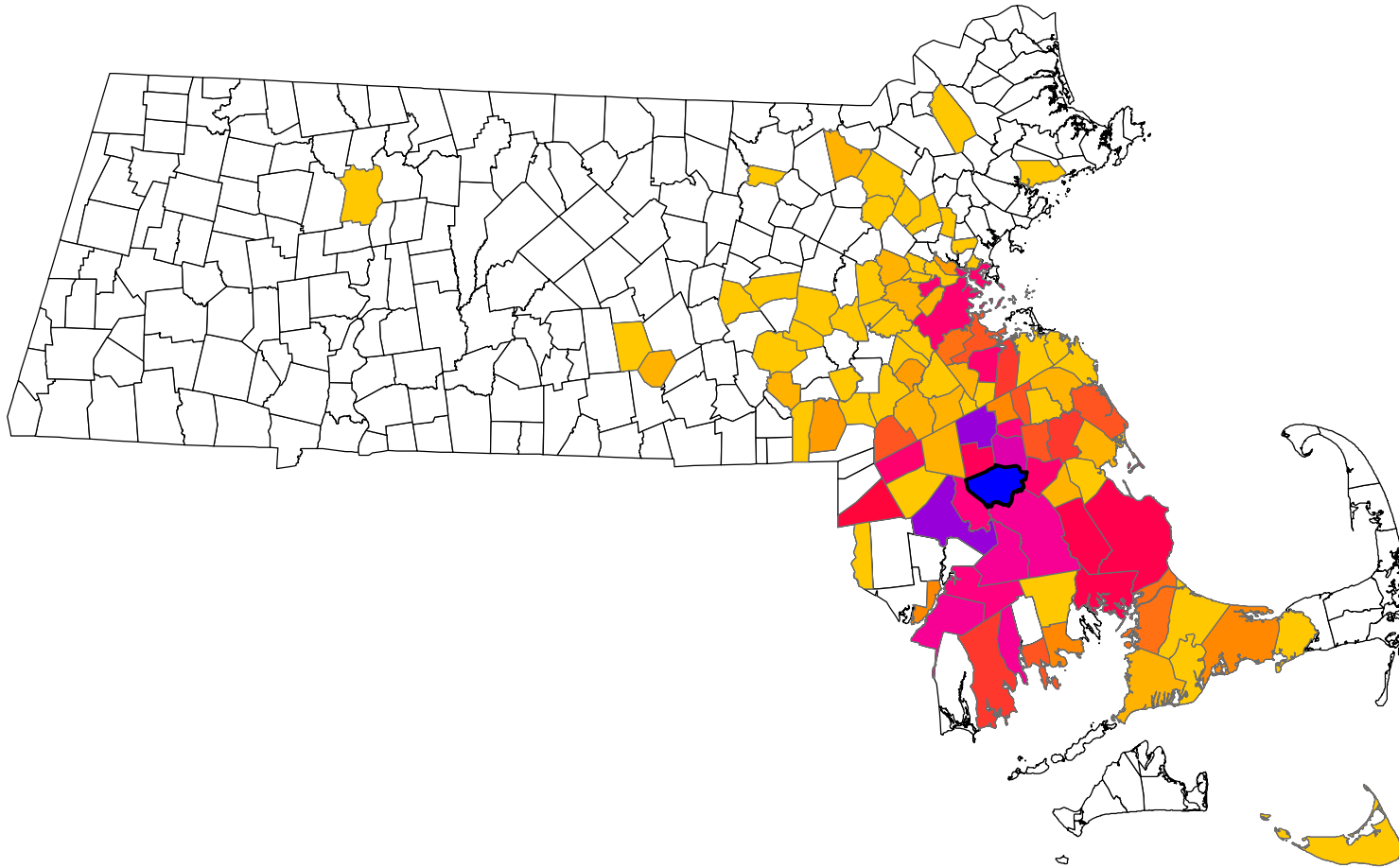
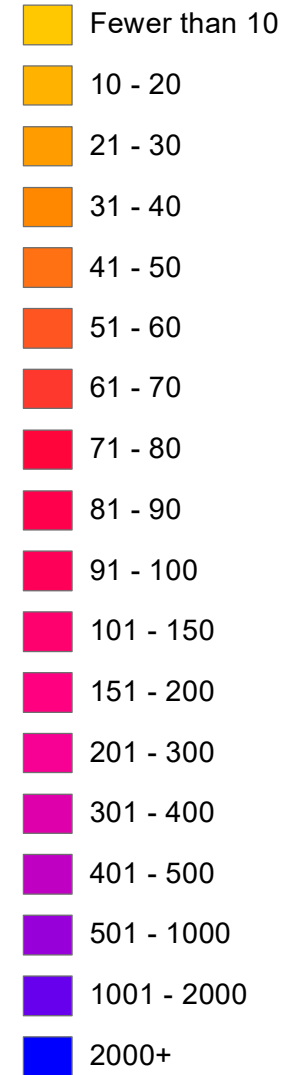
Map 5.1. – Journey to Work For Bridgewater Residents

Map 5.2. – Journey to Work for Bridgewater Workers



# MAP 5.1. BRIDGEWATER JOURNEY TO WORK DATA FROM BRIDGEWATER RESIDENCE

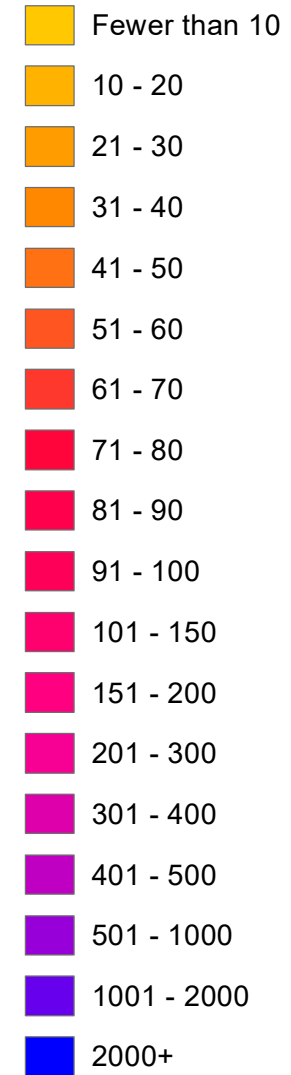
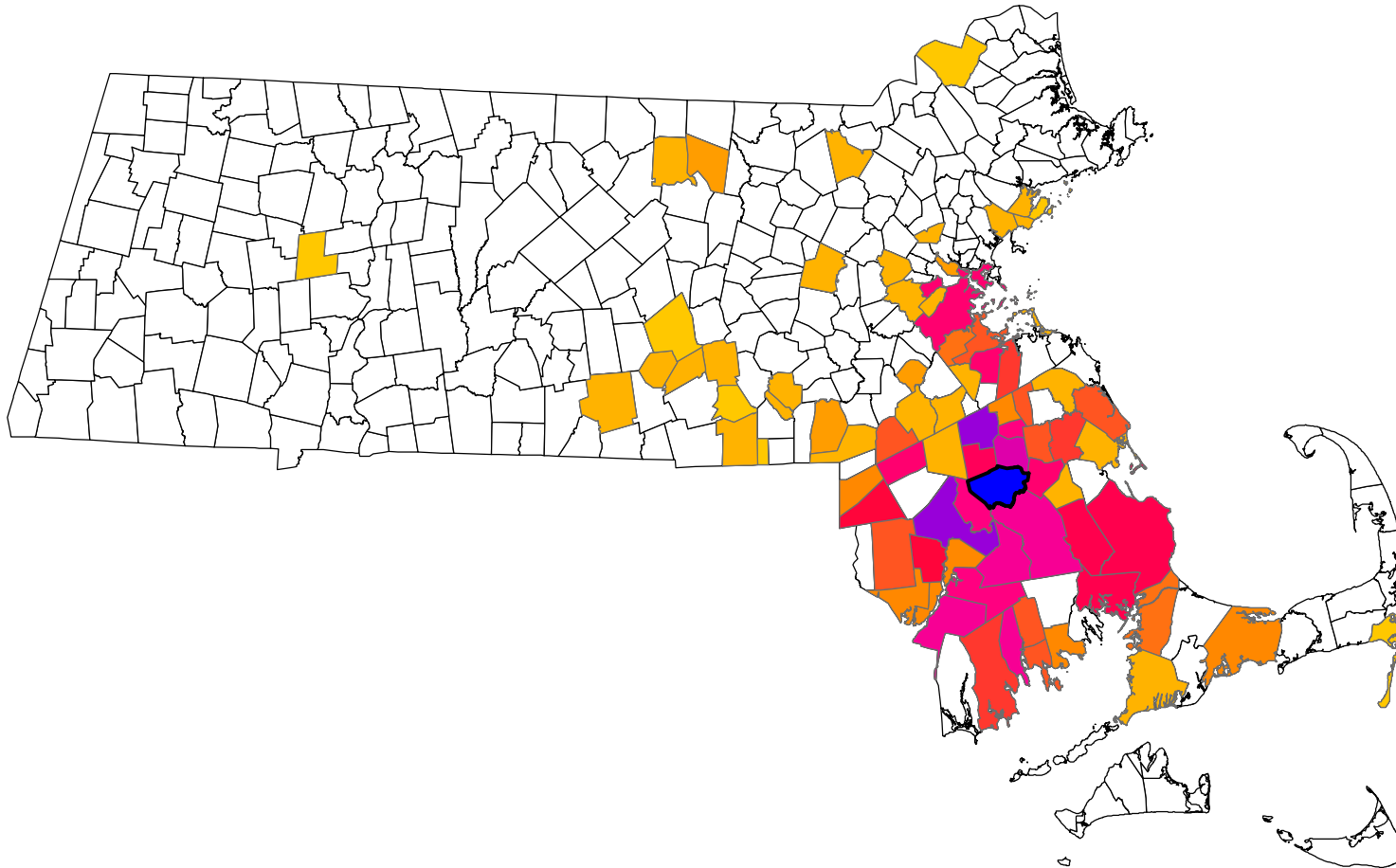
## Where Bridgewater Residents Work (MA Only)



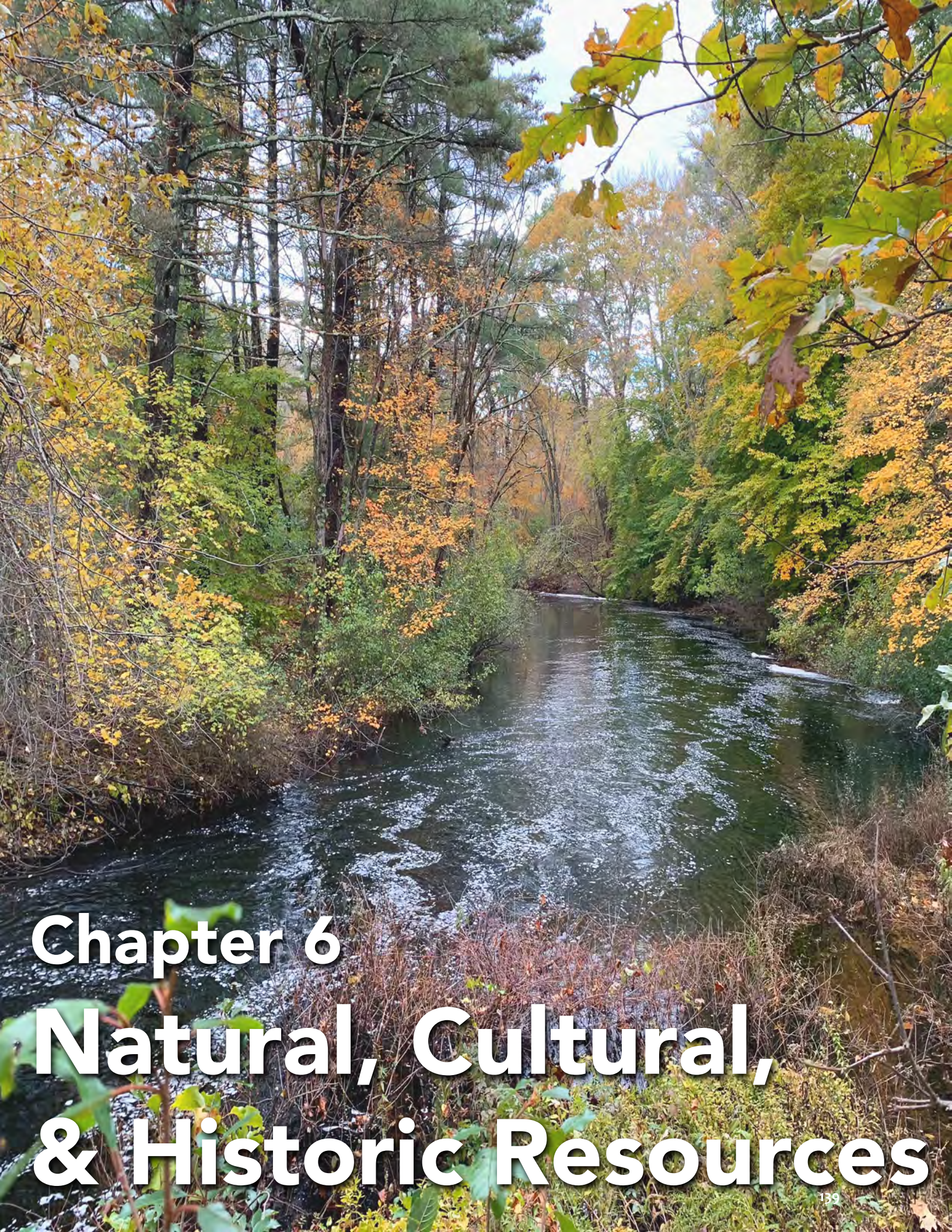


## MAP 5.2. BRIDGEWATER JOURNEY TO WORK DATA FROM OTHER MUNICIPALITY TO BRIDGEWATER

### Where Bridgewater Workers Live (MA Only)



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## Chapter 6

# Natural, Cultural, & Historic Resources

## 6. Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources

### 6.1. Introduction

Bridgewater’s patterns of land use and open space are a reflection of the landscapes that have helped to shape Bridgewater over thousands of years. The region of Bridgewater was originally populated by an Indigenous hunter-gatherer community for at least 12,000 years, with abundant anadromous fish in the freshwater streams, and woodland habitat available to this population. According to archeological studies, agriculture in the area began about 3,000 to 1,500 years ago.

Shortly before the English settlers arrived, a disease that was most likely carried on the vessels of European explorers, traders, and fishermen decimated the Indigenous population, and upon the establishment of Plymouth Colony in 1620, tensions, conflicts, and collaborations ensued. As the colony grew, so too did its demand for natural resources. In 1649, Wampanoag Sachem Massasoit, then called Ousamequin (written today in Wôpanâôt8âôk, the Wampanoag language, as 8sâmeeqan) and three Duxbury residents, including Captain Myles Standish, negotiated the sale of 196 square miles of land, now known as Old Bridgewater.<sup>1</sup> The area encompasses modern-day Bridgewater (the former South Parish, incorporated in 1716),<sup>2</sup> East Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, Brockton, and parts of other surrounding communities. The English chartered the Town of Bridgewater in 1656, and residents made use of the natural landscape: ponds (used to carve ice), clay soils (used to make bricks), bogs (a source of iron for nails, cotton gins, other industrial machinery), power from several significant rivers (for mills and shoe manufacturing), and land for forest, crops, and cattle.

Bridgewater grew as an agricultural community, and over time it was home to factories as well. With the construction of nearby highways in the 1960s, the population grew more quickly: from 1960 to 1970, the Town saw 25 percent population growth, and from 1970 to 1980, the population grew 33 percent. In the decades since commuting took hold across the South Shore, Bridgewater became an increasingly suburban community as farmland was converted to housing developments, and Bridgewater’s population grew 23 percent between 1980 and 1990 and 18 percent between 1990 and 2000. Population growth slowed to 5 percent from 2000 to 2010, and picked up to an increase of 8 percent between 2010 and 2020.

Older business districts are located to the north around Central Square and along Broad Street, while many newer businesses situated to the south are proximal to the Route 104 corridor near the Route 24 interchange and south on Route 18 (Bedford Street). Older manufacturing sites lie along the riverine areas, where preserved open spaces still contain remnants of these earlier industries. Among these sites is the Camp Ticut Reservation, where shipbuilding took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, facilitated by the Taunton River and the abundance of white oak trees, until a dam was installed downstream near the Taunton-Raynham line.<sup>3</sup> Foundries and iron works were located north of downtown and along the Bridgewater’s northerly Town River. The Old Paper Mill

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<sup>1</sup> The “Bridgewater Deed” survives today. It is housed in the Old Bridgewater Historical Society’s Memorial Building.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, Nahum. *Mitchell’s History of Bridgewater*, p.44, 1897; originally published in 1850 Access on March 4, 2021 at <https://archive.org/details/historyofearlyset00mitcch/page/44/mode/2up?view=theater>

<sup>3</sup> “Shipbuilding on the Upper Taunton,” The Taunton River Stewardship Council, accessed October 7, 2021 at <http://tauntonriver.org/shipbuilding.htm>



Village is located on Route 104, just below the junction of the Town and Matfield Rivers where the Taunton River begins. The Stiles & Hart Conservation area off Broad Street is the site of the historic Bridgewater Brick Company, purchased in 1913 by Stiles & Hart Brick Company. Today, Stiles & Hart Brick Co. is located further south in Bridgewater, along the Taunton River, south of the intersection of Titicut Street and Summer Street.

Important centers of activity include Downtown Bridgewater (where the original commuter rail station was located), Bridgewater State University to the east of the downtown area, and the Bridgewater Correctional Complex in the south-central part of town. A variety of residential neighborhoods sprang up throughout the community as commuting became an established part of life in Bridgewater.<sup>4</sup> The Hanson Farm, Bridgewater's only working farm, has been operated by the Hanson family since 1938. The farm-store is open year-round and sells fresh produce grown on the farm seasonally as well as eggs, wood, and other farm products through the winter. Adjacent to the farm, the Hanson Sugar Hill Dairy is a popular destination for ice cream. The farm property offers scenic vistas along both sides of Pleasant Street.

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## 6.2. Existing Conditions and Trends

Bridgewater is situated between two major cities – Boston to the north and Providence to the south – and at the confluence of two major rivers: the Town and Matfield Rivers, which join to form the Taunton River. Bridgewater abuts West Bridgewater and East Bridgewater to the north (with Brockton located less than ten miles to the north), Raynham to the west, Halifax to the east, and Middleboro to the south. The proximity to state highways (Route 24 and Route 495) provide easy access to the surrounding cities by car, and Route 104 runs east-west through the Town while Route 28 runs north-south. There is a commuter rail stop adjacent to the Bridgewater State University campus east of Downtown Bridgewater. Map 6.1 on the following page shows Bridgewater's fairly easy access to these major routes.



*Taunton River, off Broad Street*

*The Taunton River is nationally recognized as a designated **Wild and Scenic River** and creates much of the eastern and southern boundaries of the Town. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was created by Congress in 1968 to protect "certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values [and] shall be preserved in free-flowing condition. . . . [Designated rivers] and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."*

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<sup>4</sup> VHB, Town of Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Update, 2017.

MAP 6.1. LOCUS MAP



## OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### *Geology, Topography, and Soils*

The topography of the landscape in Bridgewater has influenced development and land use patterns significantly. There are hills, flatter areas, rivers, streams and ponds, with historic dams and low-lying wetter land areas. A little over 3,000 of Bridgewater's roughly 18,000 acres are mapped wetlands.<sup>5</sup> Over 20,000 years ago, Massachusetts was covered in glacial ice, and these massive ice formations sculpted the landscape with the deposits and imprints.

Bridgewater has landforms running north-south known as drumlins, which are glacial till deposits and land scrapes from the glacial ice sheets as they moved across the land. Examples of drumlins are along Forest Street east of South Street. These drumlins typically contain dense pockets or layers of clay, with packed gravel and other materials, making the absorption of water slower than more sandy and looser soils. The relative height of the drumlins provide scenic views, and add to the natural hillsides and scenic beauty of the landscape. Elevations in the Town range from ten feet above mean sea level (MSL) to over 150 feet above MSL on some of the higher hilltops.

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<sup>5</sup> VHB Town of Bridgewater OSRP Update, 2017.

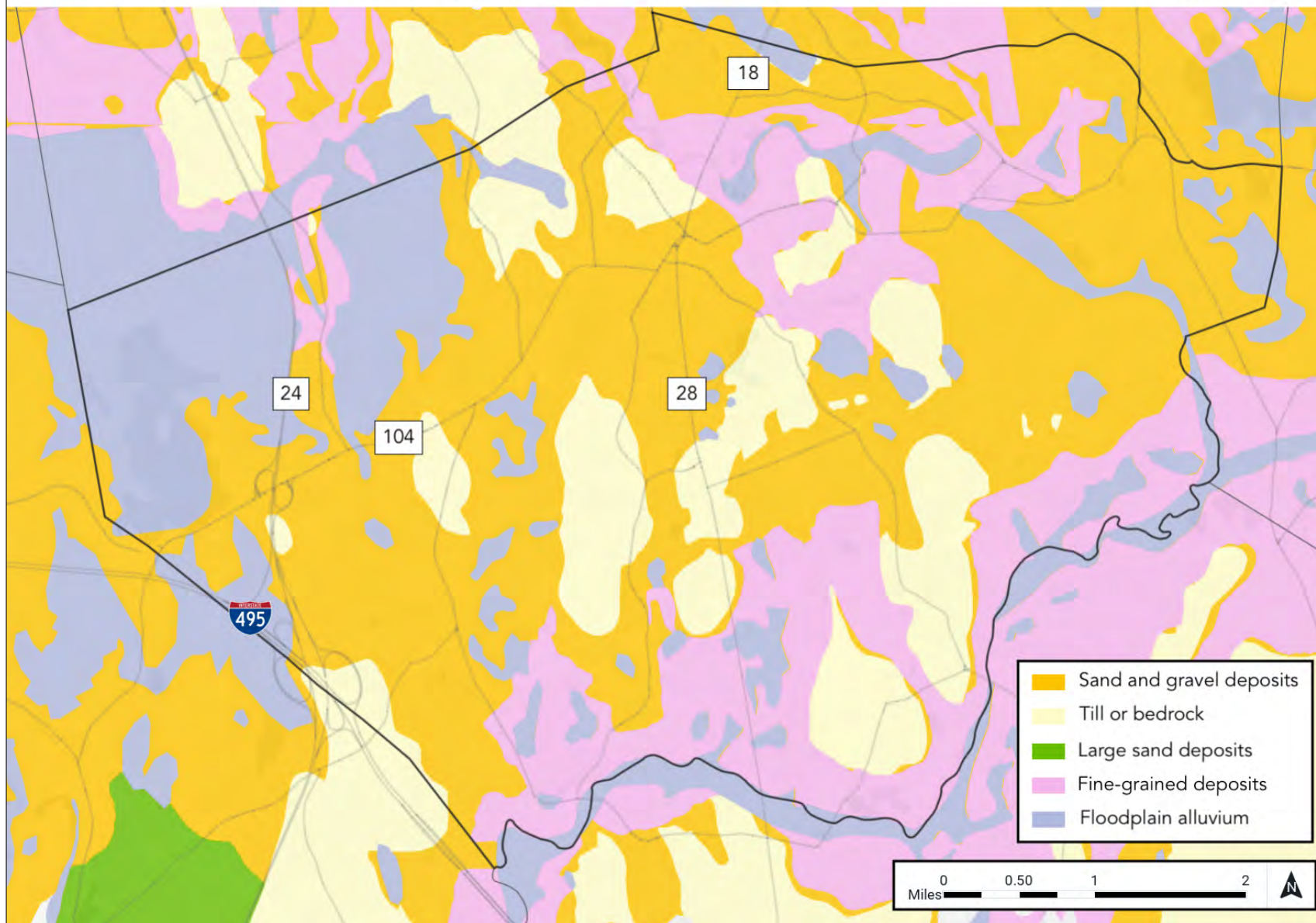
**Chapter 6. Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources**

Glacial meltwaters left behind fluvial outwash soils, primarily consisting of sand and gravel, which drain surface water quickly and can contain significant amounts of groundwater, and these soils are located throughout Bridgewater. Where these meltwaters slowed, lacustrine (lake bottom) soils were formed, leaving thick deposits of fine silts and clays above gravel and sand. Especially prevalent in the south and easterly portions of Bridgewater, the clay pits along streams supported brick production in Bridgewater, first along the Town River (Stiles & Hart Conservation Area) and later on the Taunton River (current Stiles & Hart Brick Co. location). This type of soil deposit is very slow to drain and not suitable for septic systems.





Organic soils in Bridgewater are prevalent in the northwestern part of town in what is known as the Hockomock Swamp, as well as in some wetland pockets in other parts of the Town. This soil type is also poor for drainage and can hold significant amounts of water and peat, making it difficult to build on or use for roads and trails. In Map 6.2 on the following page, drumlins appear as light yellow, comprised of till or bedrock; orange indicates outwash areas made up of sand and gravel deposits; pink areas generally indicate fine-grained deposits; and areas where more organic soils have developed are in blue. There are large swamp deposits in the northwestern portion of the town under these organic soils. Areas with more frequent flooding include the riverine areas and the Hockomock Swamp, along with other low-lying bogs and wetlands. By comparing the flood hazard areas (shown in Map 6.3) with the surficial geology, it is easier to visualize where the soils left behind by the glaciers are impacting the water flow at the surface today.

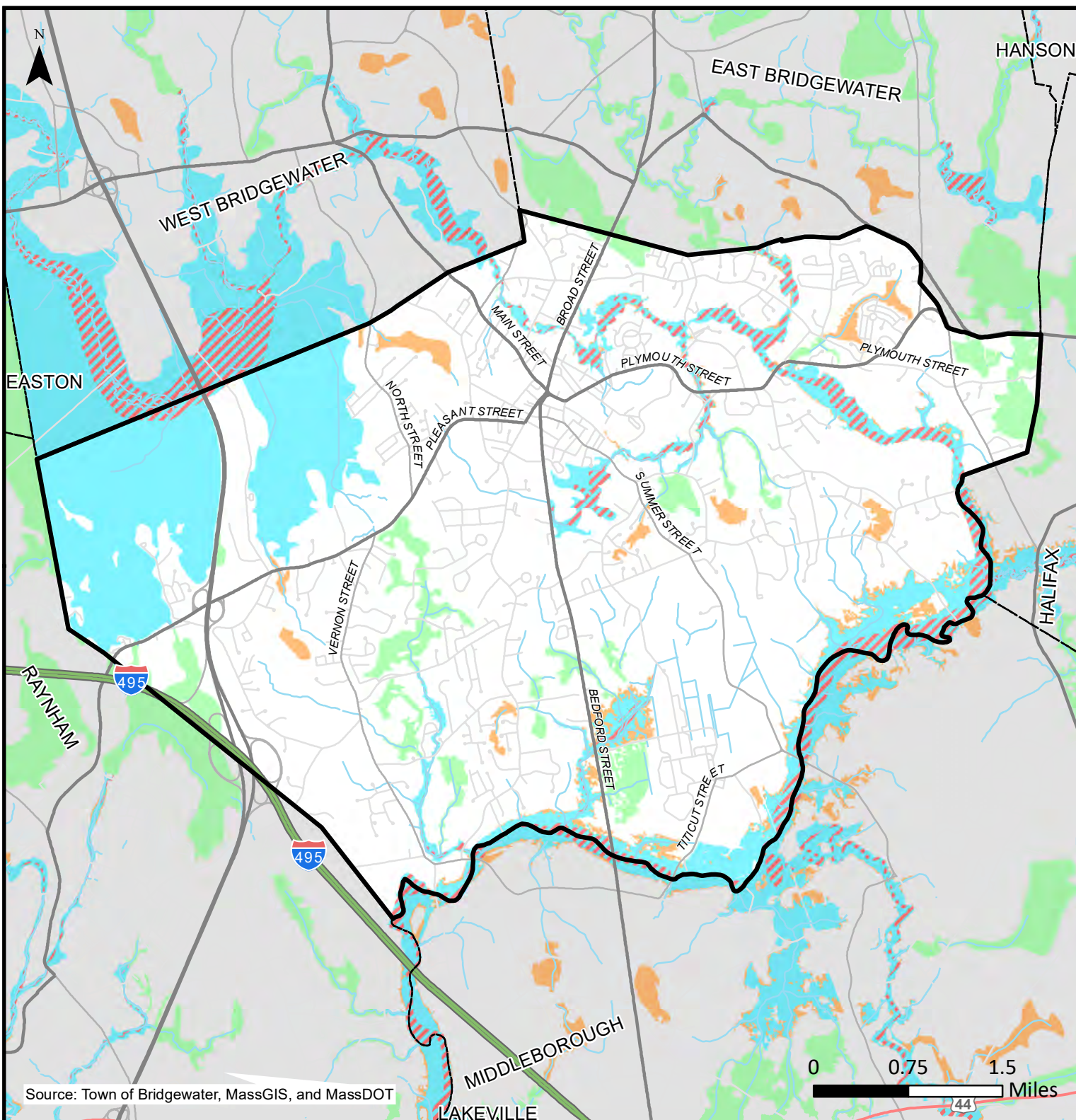
**MAP 6.2. SURFICIAL GEOLOGY (1:250,000)**

Source: MassGIS



# MAP 6.3. FEMA NATIONAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

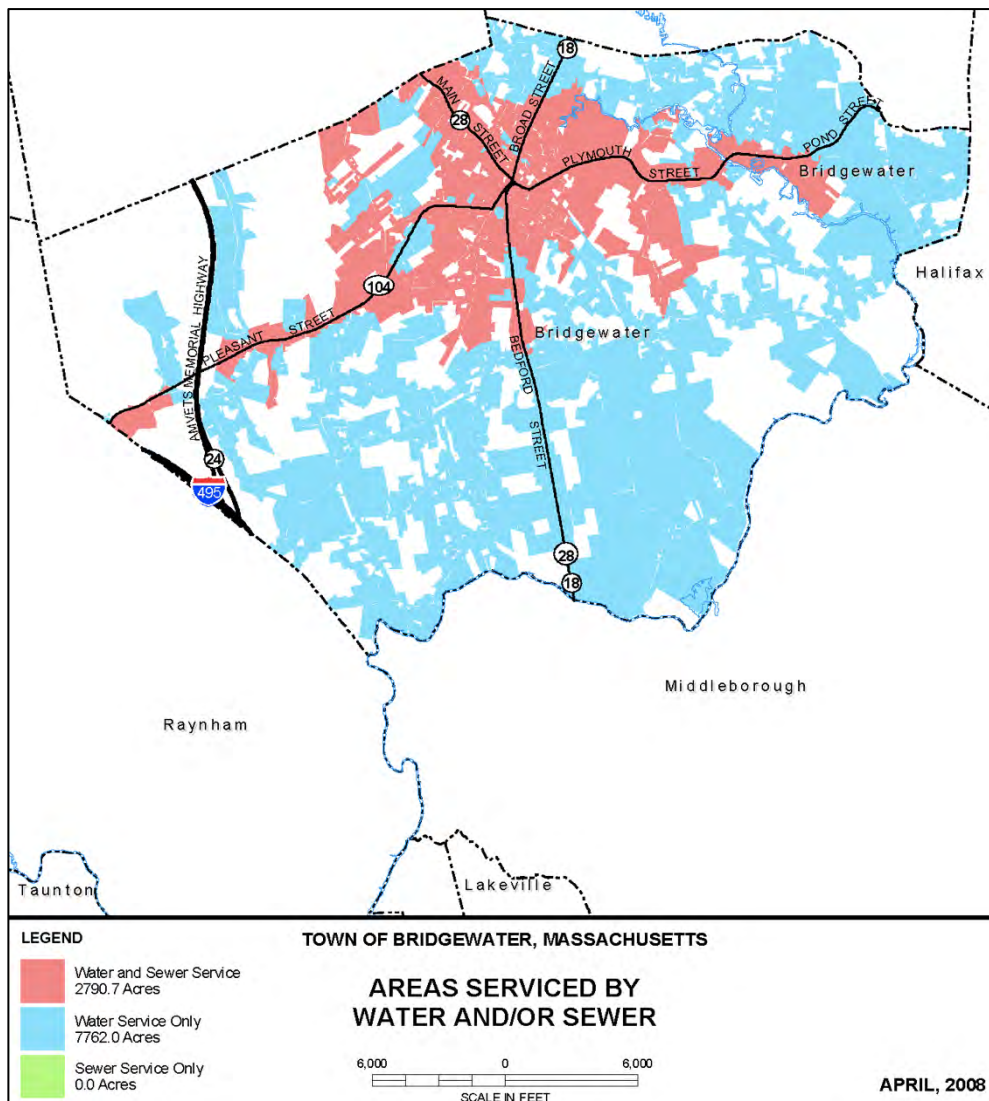
-  A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE
-  AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE
-  AE: Regulatory Floodway
-  X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding



Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

Some areas of the community with soils less suitable for septic systems have been sewered to properly treat sanitary waste where septic systems have failed over time. An advanced wastewater treatment plant is located off Morris Avenue and discharges into Town River. This system serves the downtown center, Bridgewater State University, and some other more densely populated areas encompassing the older parts of Town along Main, Summer, Pleasant, and Plymouth Streets, as well as newer housing complexes south of Lake Nippenicket.<sup>6</sup> Sewer may be extended to other areas with poorly drained soils over time.

**Figure 6.1. Map of Water and Sewer Service in Bridgewater**  
 Excerpted from Phase I of the Taunton River Watershed Study, 2008



<sup>6</sup> Horsley Witten Group, Final Report: Water and Sewer Service Area Maps, Taunton River Watershed Project Phase I, 2008.

The Flood Plain (overlay) District has been zoned to prevent residential use of land that floods seasonally or periodically, to protect and maintain the water table, and to ensure proper function of watercourses to provide adequate and safe floodwater storage capacity. Development is only allowed if it can be done safely without causing problems elsewhere (for example, by taking up needed flood storage and endangering downstream uses, or conversely, blocking flow and causing flooding upstream). In 2018, the Planning Board upgraded its Rules and Regulations for drainage design in compliance with DEP’s Best Management Practices to further protect flood plains and to allow for Low Impact Development Patterns in drainage designs.

### Forests and Habitat

Maps 6.4 and 6.5 display Bridgewater soils mapped as Prime Farmland and Prime Forest Land based on the Natural Resource Conservation (NCRS) soils survey. While this data is helpful for understanding the makeup of Bridgewater’s soils, it does not correlate to current land use; in Bridgewater and many towns, both forests and agricultural land are being fragmented by development patterns, which can be seen by comparing Bridgewater’s Land Use Map (Map 2.1) with Maps 6.4 and 6.5.

Forests in Bridgewater include northern hardwoods, hemlocks and white pines, mixed with red maples, grey birch, and red and white oak. This type of habitat is suitable for a variety of birds including owls, as well as a variety of mammals such as white-tailed deer, coyote, fox, wild turkey, squirrels, and other wildlife typical in this part of New England. Land-based migration areas include intact wooded corridors, riverine areas, and large meadows.

#### What is Prime Forest Land?

MassGIS provides **prime forest land** data to indicate potentially forested land classified into nine different categories. These classifications are based in part on the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soils data, which is also the basis for Prime Farmland determination.

#### What is Prime Farmland?

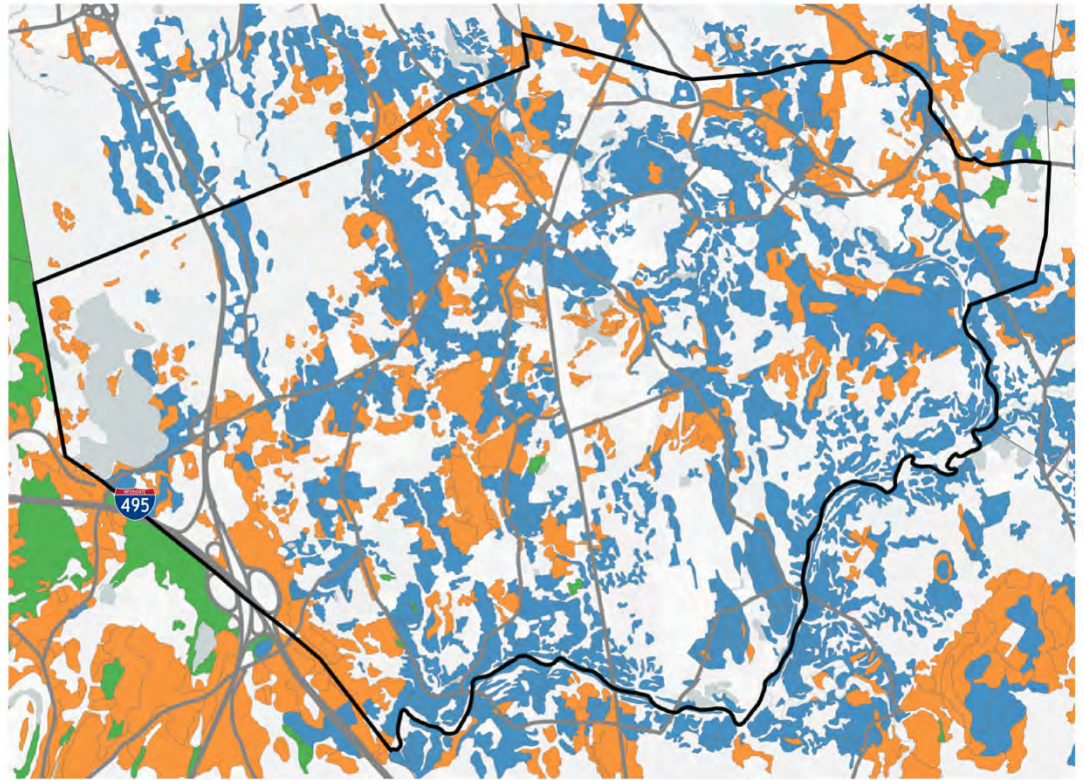
According to the NRCS, **prime farmland** “has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops *and is also available for these uses.*” (Emphasis added.) Because the data for soil surveys was collected over various time periods, the data does not accurately reflect land that has been developed since the time of sampling. **Unique farmland** is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, such as citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, and other fruits and vegetables. In some areas, land that does not meet the criteria for prime or unique farmland is considered to be **farmland of statewide importance** for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops.

There may be overlap with areas designated as **prime forest lands**, as these are included in all three farmland categories if they meet the appropriate criteria.

## MAP 6.4. PRIME FARMLAND SOILS

Source: National Resource Conservation System and MassGIS (Bureau of Geographic Information)

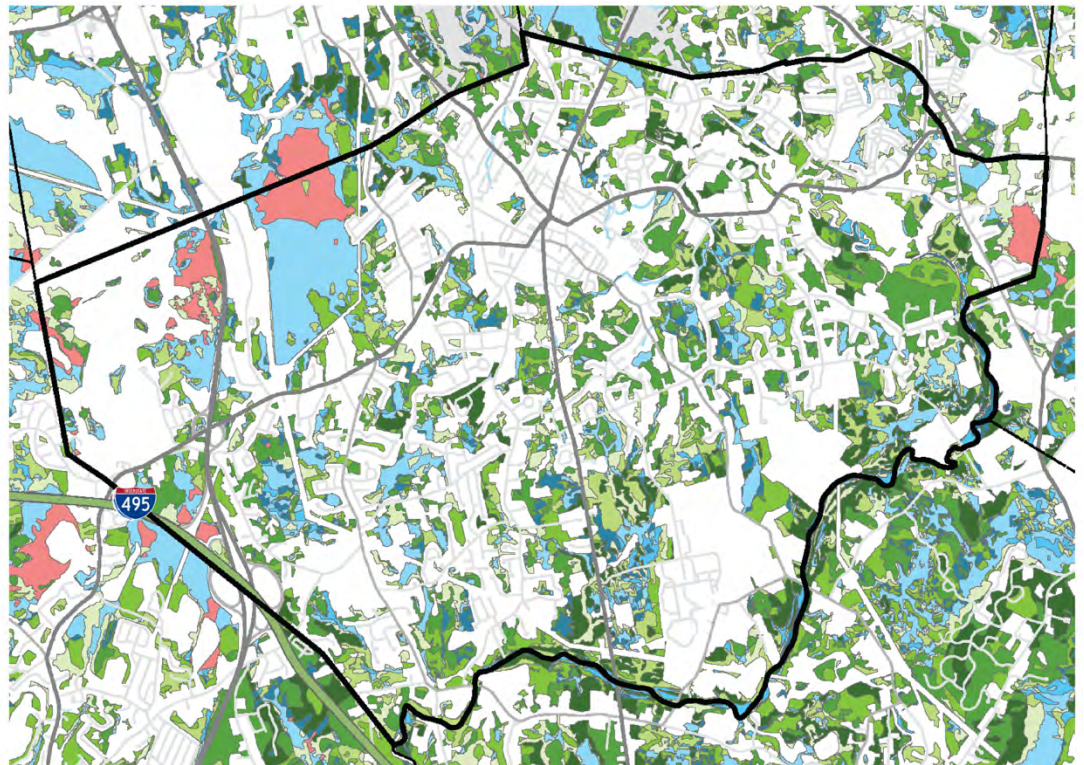
- Prime Farmland
- Statewide Importance
- Unique Importance



## MAP 6.5. PRIME FOREST LAND SOILS

Source: National Resource Conservation System and MassGIS (Bureau of Geographic Information)

- Prime 1
- Prime 2
- Prime 3
- Statewide Importance
- Local Importance
- Prime 3 Wet
- Statewide Importance Wet
- Local Importance Wet
- Unique Wet
- Non-Forested Land





Map 6.6, BioMap2 Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape, displays high priority habitats targeted for preservation to protect biodiversity in the next decade. These areas are designated by the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program and the Nature Conservancy.

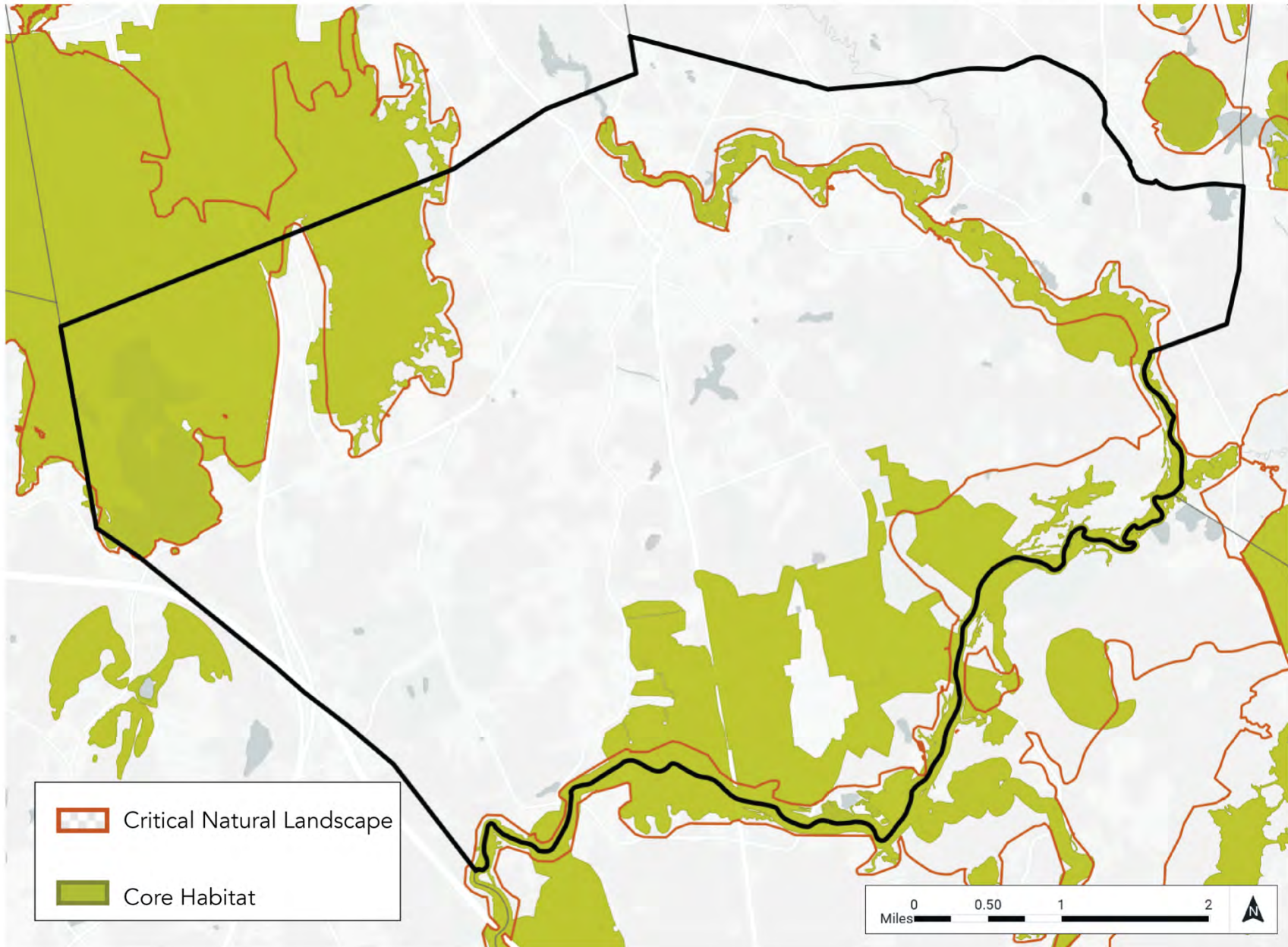
#### What is BioMap2?

In 2010 the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) and The Nature Conservancy's Massachusetts Program developed the *BioMap2* plan, which replaced the existing *BioMap* (2001) and *Living Waters* (2003) plans. The *BioMap2* plan was created to guide biodiversity conservation in an effort to protect rare and native species and their habitats. *BioMap2* has two main components:

- **Critical Natural Landscape** identifies intact landscapes in Massachusetts best able to support ecological processes and disturbances as well as an array of species and habitats over long time frames. This *BioMap2* category includes subcategories including (but not limited to):
  - *Landscape blocks*: Large areas of predominately natural vegetation including contiguous forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and ponds, as well as coastal habitats.
  - *Wetland and aquatic buffers*: Upland habitat adjacent to wetlands and aquatic cores.
- **Core Habitat** identifies areas necessary to promote the long-term persistence of Species of Conservation Concern, exemplary natural communities, and intact ecosystems. This category includes (but is not limited to) the following subsets:
  - *Forest Core*: Large, intact forests least impacted by roads and development and providing critical habitat for numerous woodland species.
  - *Species of Conservation Concern*: Combined footprint of all species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) and all mapped non-listed species present in the State Wildlife Action Plan.
  - *Priority Natural Communities*: The Priority Natural Communities data set is maintained by NHESP and represents the various natural communities of biodiversity conservation interest in Massachusetts.
  - *BioMap2 Wetlands*: Important wetland habitat in Massachusetts.
  - *Aquatic Core*: Integrated and functional ecosystems for fish and other aquatic Species of Conservation Concern.
  - *Vernal Pool Core*: A GIS model developed by the University of Massachusetts Landscape Ecology Program that identifies the top 5 percent most interconnected clusters of Potential Vernal Pools within an ecoregion, as well as a buffer area that includes the surrounding habitat.

# MAP 6.6. BIOMAP2 CORE HABITAT & CRITICAL NATURAL LANDSCAPE

Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and MassGIS (Bureau of Geographic Information). NHESP/TNC BioMap2



Hockomock Swamp, the Matfield and Taunton Rivers, and south central Bridgewater are mapped as important habitats for protection. The Town of Bridgewater and the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) designated Hockomock Swamp and the Town and Taunton Rivers as priority protection areas (PPA) in 2013.<sup>7</sup> The largest mapped Estimated Habitat of Rare Wildlife, EH 614, overlaps the Hockomock Swamp (Figure 6.2), and the Taunton River along the southern border of the Town creates another sizable Estimated Habitat of Rare Wildlife (EH 593) that runs across Route 28 into south-central Bridgewater.<sup>8</sup> In 1990, the Hockomock Swamp was first listed as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), a designation by the state's Secretary of Environmental Affairs that followed petition of the local community.<sup>9</sup> This designation is based on a goal of a long-range management plan to help maintain and protect the resource, and triggers state review of larger projects in the area.

**Figure 6.2. Hockomock Swamp as an Estimated Habitat of Rare Wildlife**  
Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition Heritage Atlas



<sup>7</sup> VHB Bridgewater Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife, 14<sup>th</sup> Edition Heritage Atlas, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> "Designation of the Hockomock Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern" available at <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/vh/hock-des.pdf>. Accessed January 4, 2021.

**Endangered and Vulnerable Species**

Endangered species in the Town include plants associated with wetlands, including certain orchids and other herbal species. A variety of vulnerable turtles, salamanders, and certain birds are known to be located in the Town, relying on the available habitat and clean water. Table 6.1 provides greater detail about vulnerable wildlife as designated by the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) list and the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP).

**Table 6.1. Endangered and Vulnerable Species**

TAXONOMIC GROUP	MESA STATUS				
	ENDANGERED	THREATENED	SPECIAL CONCERN	OTHER*	HISTORIC/ LAST SIGHTED**
MUSSEL			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tidewater Mucket</li> <li>• Eastern Pondmussel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triangle Floater</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creeper/2005</li> </ul>
INSECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kennedy’s Emerald (Dragonfly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water-willow Stem Borer (Moth)</li> <li>• Chain Fern Borer (Moth)</li> <li>• Scarlet Bluet (Damselfly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pale Green Pinion (Moth)</li> <li>• Hessel's Hairstreak (Butterfly)</li> </ul>		
AMPHIBIAN			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue-spotted Salamander</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-toed Salamander</li> </ul>	
REPTILE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Red-bellied Cooter (Turtle)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blanding’s Turtle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern Box Turtle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spotted Turtle</li> <li>• Eastern Ribbon Snake</li> <li>• Northern Black Racer (Snake)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood Turtle/2004</li> </ul>
BIRD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grasshopper Sparrow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barn Owl</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upland Sandpiper/1980</li> <li>• Long-eared Owl /1978</li> </ul>
PLANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round-fruited False-Loosestrife</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long's Bulrush</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plymouth Gentian</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pale Green Orchid /1912</li> </ul>

\*Other – The State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) identifies species of regional conservation concern that do not meet the requirements for inclusion on the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) list.

\*\*Per NHES, “Natural Heritage does not have the resources to be able to conduct methodical species surveys in each town on a regular basis. Therefore, the fact that the 'Most Recent Observation' recorded for a species may be several years old should not be interpreted as meaning that the species no longer occurs in a town. However, Natural Heritage regards records older than twenty-five years historic.”

**Sources:**

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program:

NHESP Species Viewer (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer>)

BioMap2 Town Report ([http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap/pdf/town\\_core/Bridgewater.pdf](http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap/pdf/town_core/Bridgewater.pdf))

## Water

### Drinking Water

According to the Town's most recent Annual Water Quality Report (2019)<sup>10</sup> drinking water is sourced from wells ranging from 40-60 feet in depth located in three aquifers. The first aquifer consists of four wells on High Street along the Matfield River. Water in this system was once treated for nitrates, but the loss of dairy and agriculture in this watershed has reduced nitrate concentrations to below

#### What are DEP Wellhead Protection Zones?

Wellhead protection areas are important for protecting the recharge area around public water supply groundwater sources. There are three types of WPAs:

**Zone I:** The protective radius required around a public water supply well or wellfield.

**Zone II:** Zone II applies to the larger recharge area around Zone I. Per 310 CMR 22.02 Zone II is "The area of an aquifer which contributes water to a well under the most severe pumping and recharge conditions that can be realistically anticipated (180 days of pumping at safe yield, with no recharge from precipitation)."

**Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA):** If there is no approved Zone II, DEP delineates IWPA as the primary protected recharge area for public water supply groundwater sources. Because Bridgewater has approved Zone II areas, the Town does not have any IWPA at this time.

treatable levels. The Town is currently upgrading the water treatment plant on High Street, and designs include iron removal for this water source, according to Water Department information. The second aquifer consists of two newer wells, developed in 2006, to ensure the adequacy of the water supply on Plymouth Street along the Taunton River. The 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) groups these together as one aquifer with six wells. A third aquifer is located along the south and west sides of Carver's Pond, with five active public wells. The Carver's Pond Treatment Plant removes iron and manganese from the area's drinking water. Per the OSRP, "With the recent increase in safe yields and its continuing efforts to expand supplies, the Water Department does not expect water supply to be a significant constraint on development for the foreseeable future."

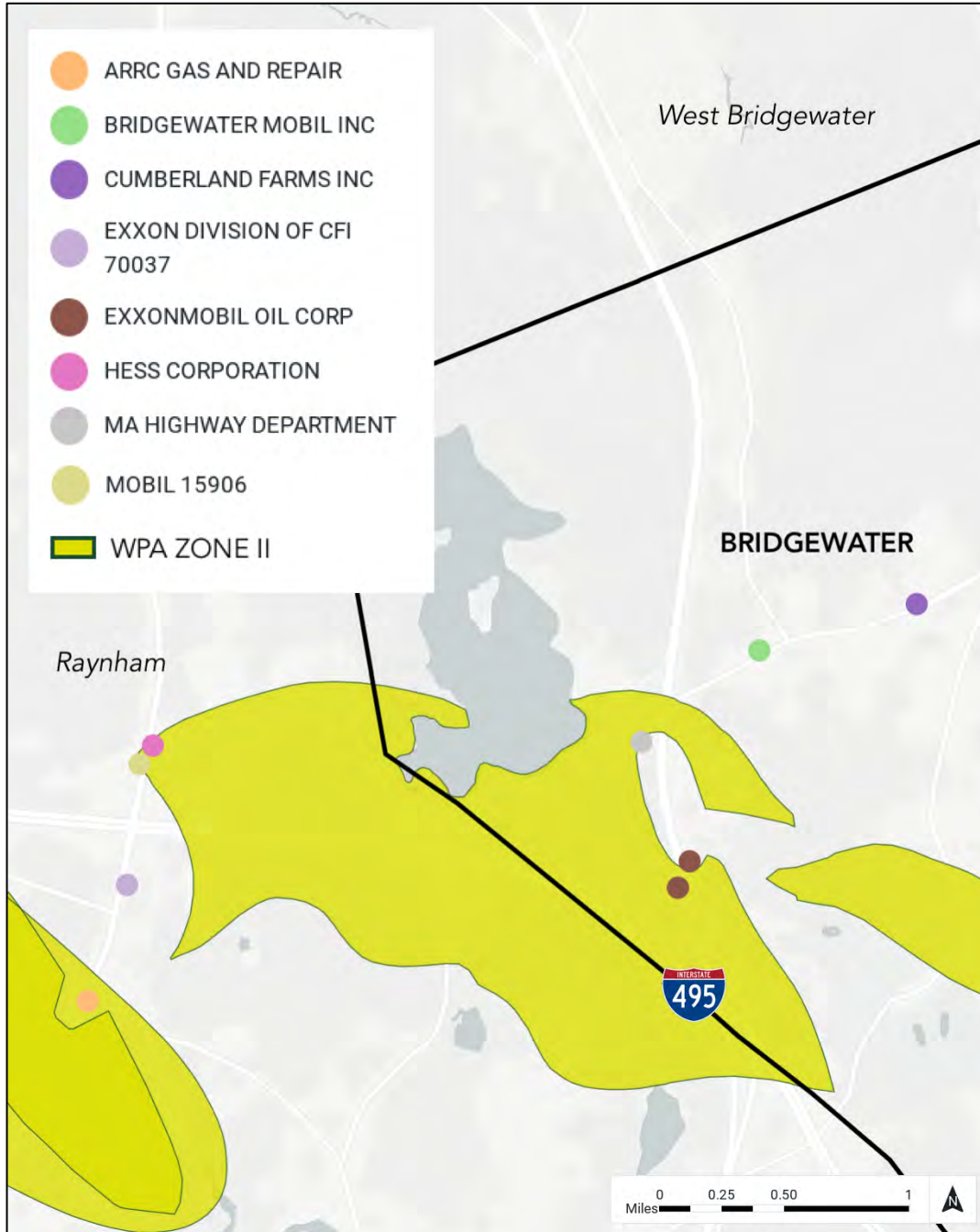
The Town's Aquifer Protection District boundaries are based on the Zone II groundwater recharge areas (Map 6.7), established through testing according to DEP standards in 1988 and updated in 1994. The Town adopted this Aquifer Protection District as part of its zoning to limit uses that could contaminate the aquifer. These areas require careful review of stormwater management and water impoundments.

The Underground Storage Tank (UST) program under the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) regulates the installation, maintenance, inspection, and closure of UST systems for petroleum and other hazardous waste. UST records indicate that there are sixteen active underground storage tanks in Bridgewater, most of which are located along the highway corridors. While most of these storage tanks are not within groundwater recharge areas, a few appear to be within or near the Zone II area that includes the Route 495/Route 24 interchange (Figure 6.3).

<sup>10</sup> Town of Bridgewater Annual Water Quality Report 2020.



Careful monitoring of these tanks and proper construction to prevent groundwater contamination is important for these sites over the long term.

Figure 6.3. Underground Storage Tank Locations by Owner





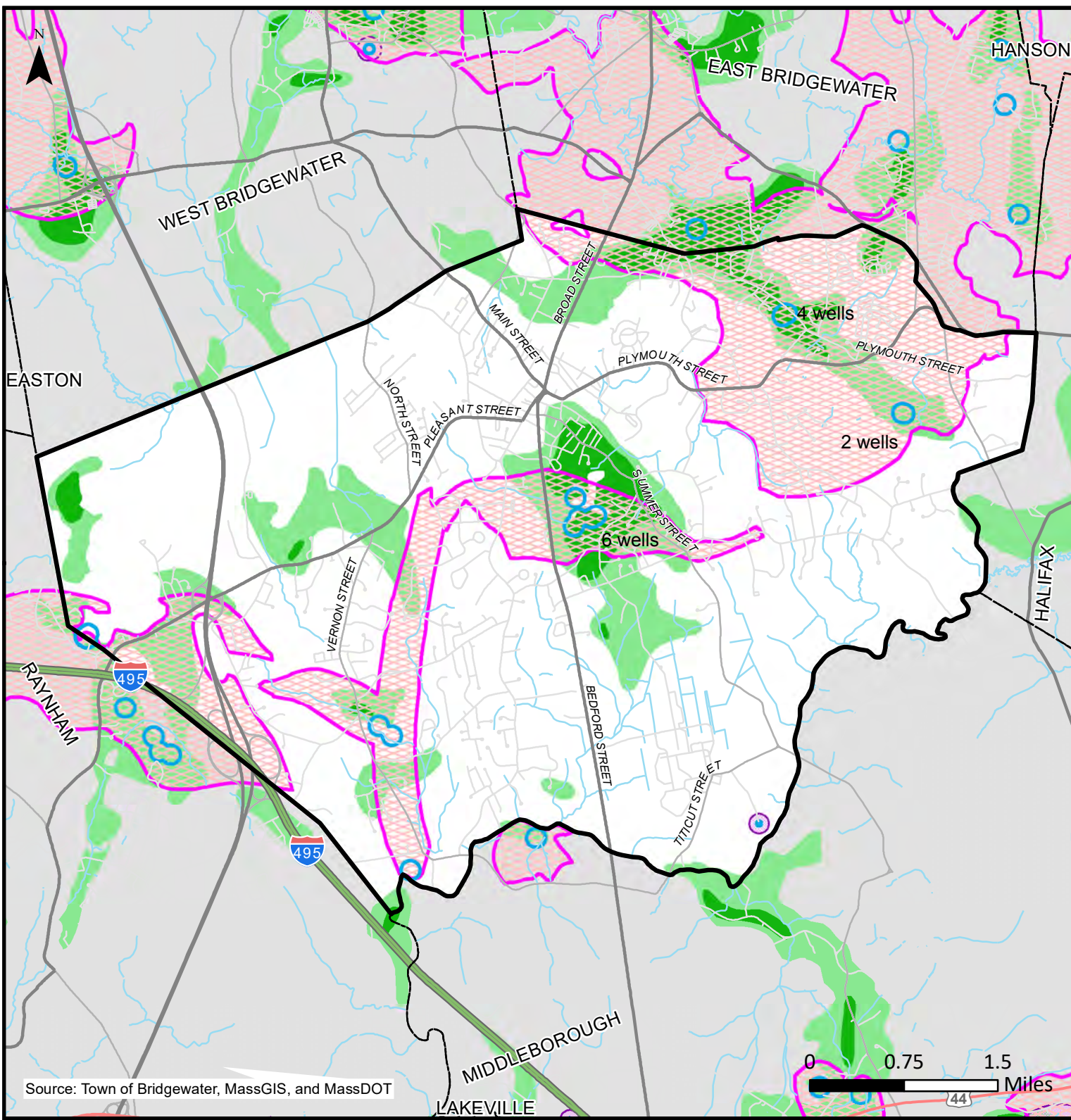
# MAP 6.7. TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER WATER RESOURCES

## Wellhead Protection Areas

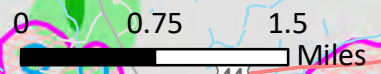
-  DEP Approved Zone I
-  DEP Approved Zone II
-  Interim Wellhead Protection Area

## Aquifers

-  High Yield
-  Medium Yield



Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

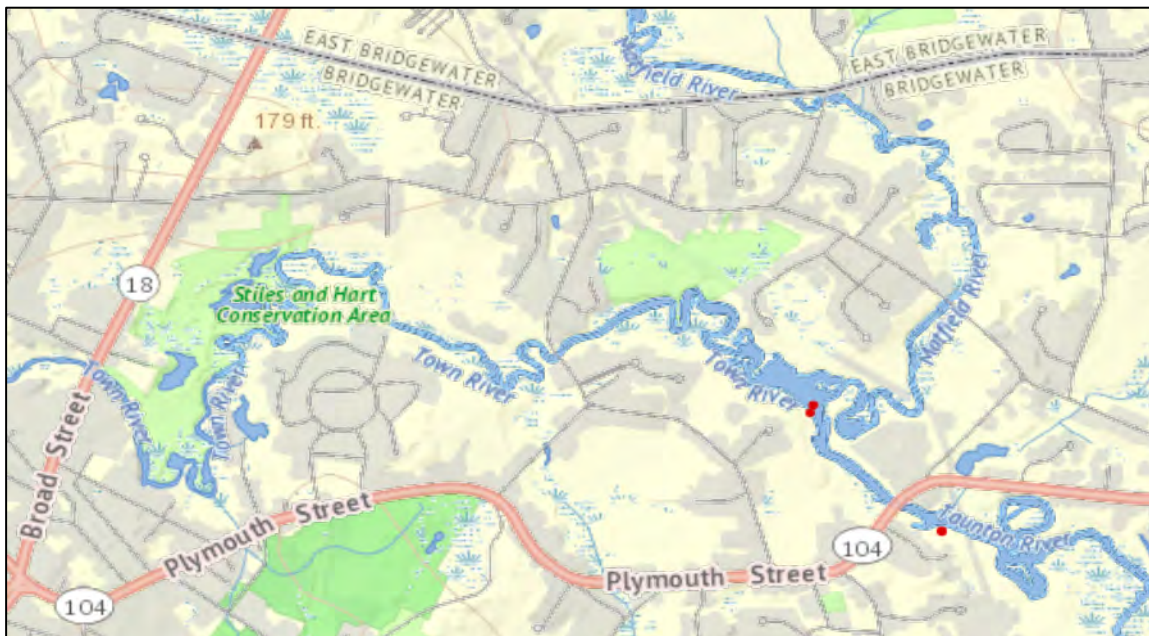


RIVERS

The primary rivers are the Town River, Matfield River, and the Taunton River (shown in Figure 6.4 and described in Table 6.2). Other streams are lesser in size due to the many small watersheds within the Town, limiting the amount of flow in these smaller systems, which drain into the rivers.

**Figure 6.4. Confluence of Town, Matfield, and Taunton Rivers**

Source: OLIVER (OnLine ViewER) MassGIS



**Table 6.2. Major Rivers in Bridgewater**

River Name	Length	Comments
Town River	10.6 miles	Designated Priority Protection Area by Town and OCPC (2013); contains a canoe launch; anadromous fish presence.
Matfield River	6.3 miles	Overlies water supply area.
Taunton River	37.0 miles	Starts at confluence of Matfield and Town Rivers in Bridgewater; discharges to the south. Designated Priority Protection Area by Town and OCPC (2013); designated Wild and Scenic – special status of protection established by US Congress in 1968, and has national significance as the longest undammed coastal river in New England; state-designated Wampanoag Commemorative Canoe Passage. Anadromous fish are found in the upper reaches in Bridgewater.

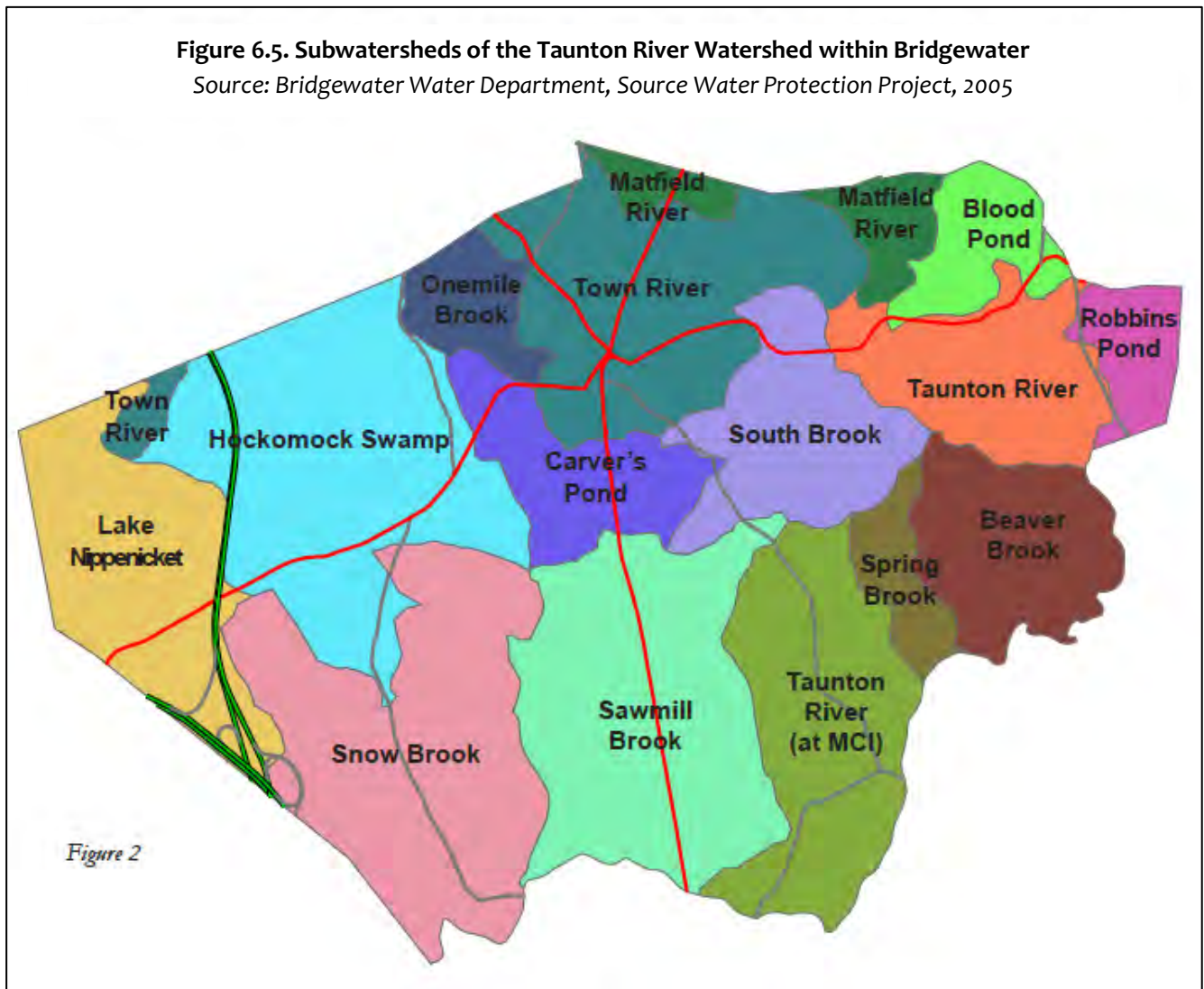


**Table 6.3. Brooks in Bridgewater**

Brook Name	Comments
Beaver Brook	See diagram of subwatersheds below. Each brook is relatively small as the larger rivers are fed by the brooks over short distances, and even smaller brooks are not listed here.
Spring Brook	
Sawmill Brook	
South Brook	
Blood Pond Brook	

**Figure 6.5. Subwatersheds of the Taunton River Watershed within Bridgewater**

Source: Bridgewater Water Department, Source Water Protection Project, 2005



## LAKES AND PONDS

The 2017 OSRP lists nine primary lakes and ponds in Bridgewater: Lake Nippenicket, Carver's Pond, Mill Pond, Sturdevant's Pond, Blood Pond, Ice Pond, Cross Street Pond, the Town River Impoundment, and Paper Mill Village Backwater. Many of the ponds in Bridgewater result from man-made impoundments (dams). More detail is located in the inventory later in this section. As noted in the OSRP, these lakes and ponds are ecological, recreational, and historic assets to the community.

## VERNAL POOLS

Map 6.8 displays the Town's thirteen vernal pools, where certain frogs, salamanders, and other species reproduce in the spring and where fish are unlikely to be present as predators. Vernal pools dry completely by the end of summer at least every few years, which prevents fish from taking them up as a habitat. This map also includes the approximately 300 potential vernal pools located throughout Town. The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) identified potential vernal pools statewide based on analysis of from 1:12,000 scale, color infrared aerial photographs taken during early- to mid-Spring. The process for obtaining vernal pool certification relies on volunteers to submit documentation of certain biological and physical characteristics of the potential vernal pool to NHESP. Efforts to locate these potential vernal pools and submit for NHESP certification could help protect habitats that a variety of species rely upon to reproduce.

#### What is the 303(d) List?

Section 303(d) of the Clean Waters Act (1972) provides a framework for categorizing surface waters based on quality. The 303(d) list refers to Category 5 waters ("Impaired Waters") require the establishment of a TMDL for identified pollutants. Water quality categories are as follows:

**Category 1:** Waters suitable for all designated uses

**Category 2:** Waters suitable for some uses; other uses not assessed

**Category 3:** No uses assessed

**Category 4a:** TDML completed

**Category 4b:** Impairment controlled by alternative pollution control requirements

**Category 4c:** Impairment not caused by a pollutant – TMDL not required

**Category 5 – i.e. 303(d) List:** Impaired waters requiring a TDML

## IMPAIRED WATERS

Some of the surface waters in Bridgewater have been or are currently listed on the 303(d) list of impaired waters. This refers to Section 303(d) of the Clean Waters Act, which relates to the testing and designation of Impaired Waters and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL). Category 5 bodies of water require the development of a TMDL, which establishes the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed in a waterbody so that the waterbody will continue to meet quality standards for that particular pollutant. According to the state's most recent report,<sup>11</sup> the Taunton River and Matfield River are currently on the 303(d) list for multiple pollutants and Lake Nippenicket has had a TDML completed for mercury in fish. air, affecting fish edibility) and Carver's Pond is listed as a Category 4C related to eutrophication.

Activities to help improve water quality by managing nutrients from things like fertilizer on lawns, agricultural uses, salts from ice

<sup>11</sup> MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs & MA Department of Environmental Protection, Final Massachusetts Year 2016 Integrated List of Waters.

management on roadways, and other runoff sources can be undertaken by the community to help to improve water quality. Federal and state grants are available to create systems to help treat stormwater before it enters the water body, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Urban Waters Small Grant, Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant, Stormwater MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program, and more.<sup>12</sup> While individual cities and towns are eligible for these grants, collective efforts among the neighboring communities within the Taunton River Watershed may prove more productive (i.e., through the collaboration of the regional planning agencies that serve these communities or the nonprofit Taunton River Watershed Alliance).

Collaboration with the residential homeowners and larger institutions such as Bridgewater State University and the Correctional Complex can be encouraged to limit their use of pesticides and fertilizer to help protect water quality, and use of private irrigation wells for lawn care can also be managed to help conserve groundwater and surface water levels, although there is no evidence that this is a challenge in the present.

### **Resiliency**

The Resilient Taunton Watershed Network (RTWN) was formed in 2014 as a collaborative effort between regional, state, federal, private, and non-profit partners to support climate resilience in this critical natural resource area. Among these partners are Bridgewater State University and the regional planning agencies that serve Bridgewater and its neighboring communities to the north and east (Old Colony Planning Council, OCPC) and to the south and west (Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, SRPEDD), as well as Mass Audubon, the Nature Conservancy, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), and many others. The Taunton River Watershed spans 42 cities and towns, of which Bridgewater and Raynham are at the center. In 2018, RTWN received a two-year, \$100,000 Southeastern New England Program (SNEP) Watershed Grant from the EPA and Restore America's Estuaries to support environmental restoration and encourage nature-based solutions for climate resilience and stormwater management. RTWN is involved in the ongoing (as of 2021) High Street Dam removal project.

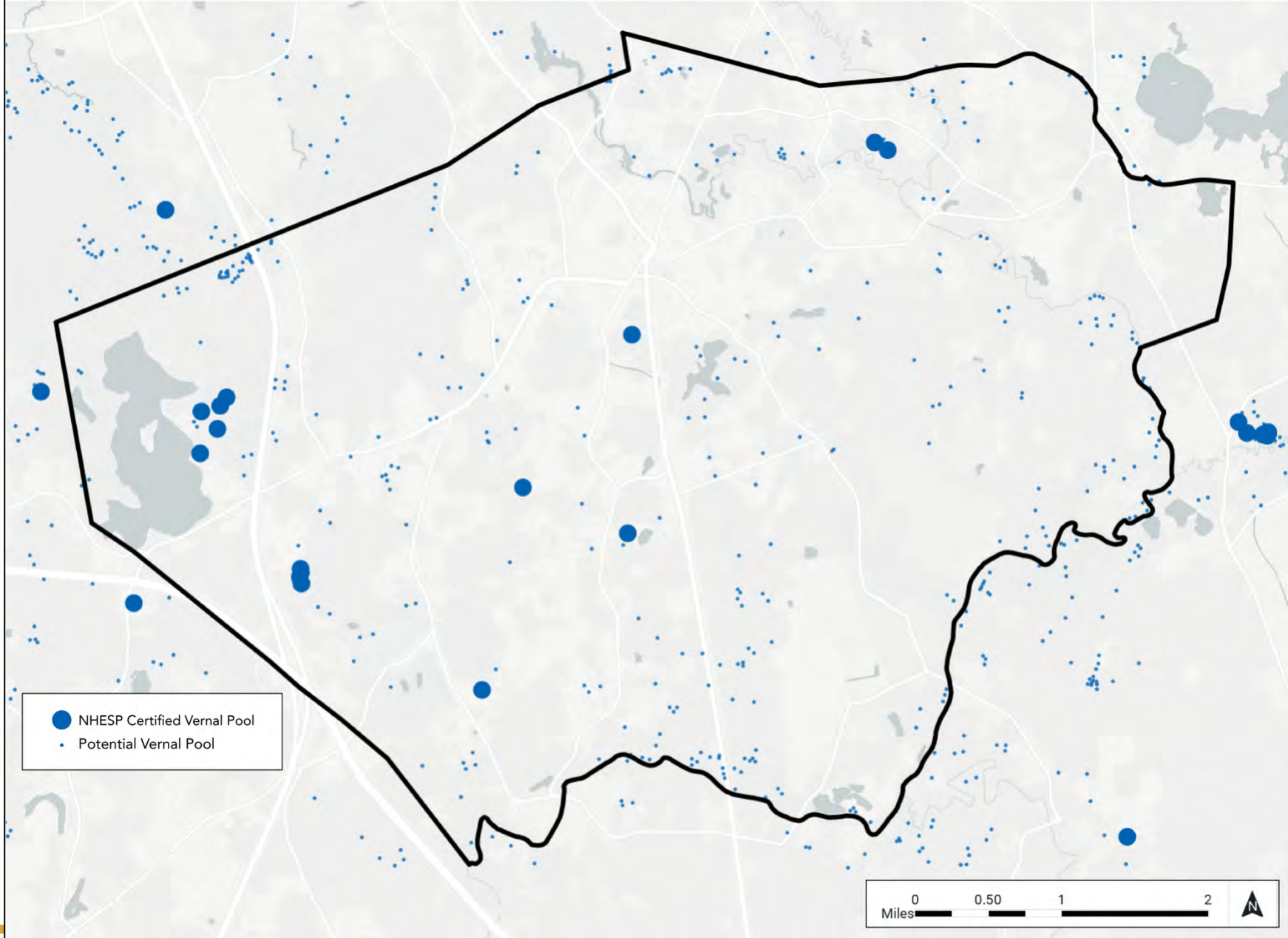
In 2019, the Town of Bridgewater engaged Green International Affiliates for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (described further in the next section) through funding from the Commonwealth MVP Program. Flood storage capacity, stormwater management during heavy rainfall events and for water quality, cooling vegetation, wildlife corridors and fisheries habitat are all important aspects of both of these long-term resiliency strategies and could affect open space and natural resource planning. The Taunton River is impacted by tidal and ocean storm surges, so modeling of upstream impacts will be important for long-term flood management in Bridgewater, as this could affect the ability for upstream rivers to discharge during heavy rain events.

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<sup>12</sup> MA Department of Environmental Protection, Grants & Financial Assistance: Watersheds & Water Quality. Accessed at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality> on March 15, 2021.

### MAP 6.8. NHESP-CERTIFIED VERNAL POOLS & POTENTIAL VERNAL POOLS

Source: MassGIS and Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP).  
Note that potential vernal pools are NOT equivalent to Certified Vernal Pools.



### **Regional Open Space**

Within a relatively short drive, the Blue Hills Reservation in Quincy and Milton provides many hiking trails with scenic vistas. Other nearby outdoor areas include Ames Nowell State Park in Abington, D.W. Field Park in Avon and Brockton, and several conservation areas in Easton. Peterson’s Swamp in Halifax and Plympton and the over 6,000 acre Hockomock swamp extending beyond Bridgewater, are accessible. Other areas include the Burrage Wildlife Management Area in Hanson and Halifax, Massasoit State Forest in Raynham, open space on the Bridgewater Correctional Complex, and rural areas to the south and along the Taunton River.

### **Existing Trails and Open Space**

As stated in Chapter 3 (Transportation), Bridgewater is home to the Bay Circuit Trail. This trail provides the community with greater access to the natural and historic elements in town, including Haseotes Mass Wildlife Trail, Holmes Hill, War Memorial Park, Iron Works Park, and Bridgewater Stiles & Hart Conservation Parkland, and is a starting point for providing a more connected network. Individual trails are mapped within the conservation areas in the 2017 OSRP.

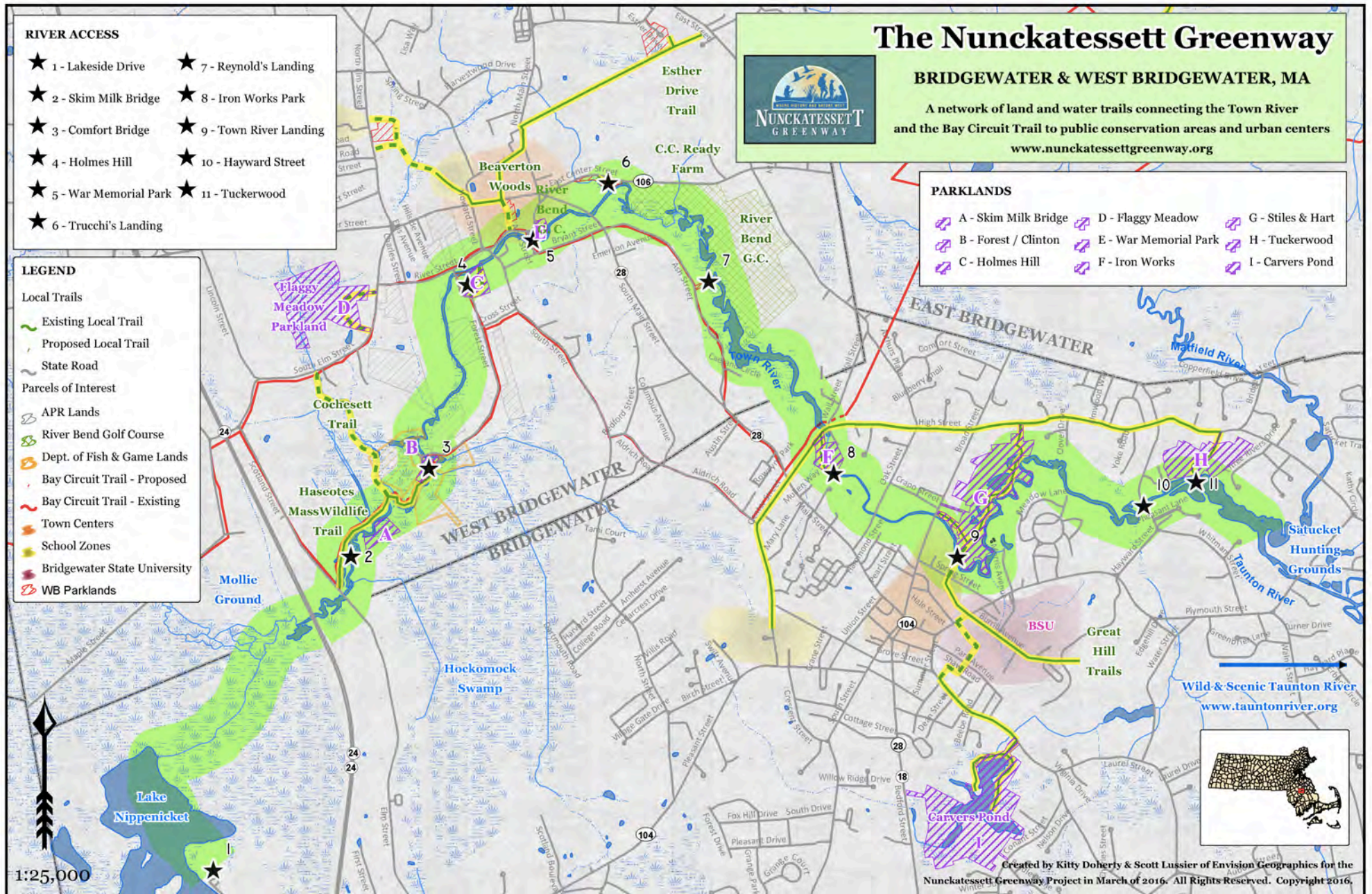
Bridgewater’s open space resources including Lake Nippenicket, Tuckerwood Conservation Area, Stiles & Hart Conservation Area, Great River Preserve, Wyman Meadow, Carver Pond, Titicut Conservation Area, and Iron Works Conservation Area provide opportunities throughout town to develop a connected network. The Town also owns the Olde Scotland Links Golf Course, a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. Participation in the program requires regulation of five major components: site assessment and environmental planning; wildlife and habitat management; water; resource management; and outreach and education.

The Nunckatesset Greenway is envisioned as a greenbelt along the Town River and into West Bridgewater to link town-owned conservation areas to the Bay Circuit Trail to create a contiguous, walkable or paddle-able trail and parkland system (Figure 6.6.). OCPC’s “Nunckatesset Greenway: A Call to Action, a South Coast Rail Technical Assistance Study” was completed in 2014 to further support the need for a greenway master plan and included a concept for connecting the Bay Circuit Trail and Nunckatesset Greenway. Access points along the proposed greenway include the Iron Works Park, Stiles & Hart and Tuckerwood Conservation Areas within Bridgewater. Town River and the Town River Landing are also parts of the envisioned greenway. To date, links from these locations to the downtown center, the conservation areas, and the university need to be specified and implemented. There is also a Taunton River trailhead on Summer Street at the Town Line by the Woodward Bridge with a steep canoe launch.

Map 6.9 displays open space parcels by owner and Map 6.10 specifically displays Bridgewater’s parklands. These parklands were identified by the Town for further improvements to enhance trail amenities, canoeing/kayaking and fishing access, and access to the natural environment are outlined in the Parklands Assessment Report prepared by Anthony Hebert, Bridgewater State University Graduate Student, 2018. These include the Iron Works Park, Titicut Conservation Area, Carver’s Pond, Tuckerwood Conservation Area, Stiles & Hart Conservation Area, and Wyman Meadow.

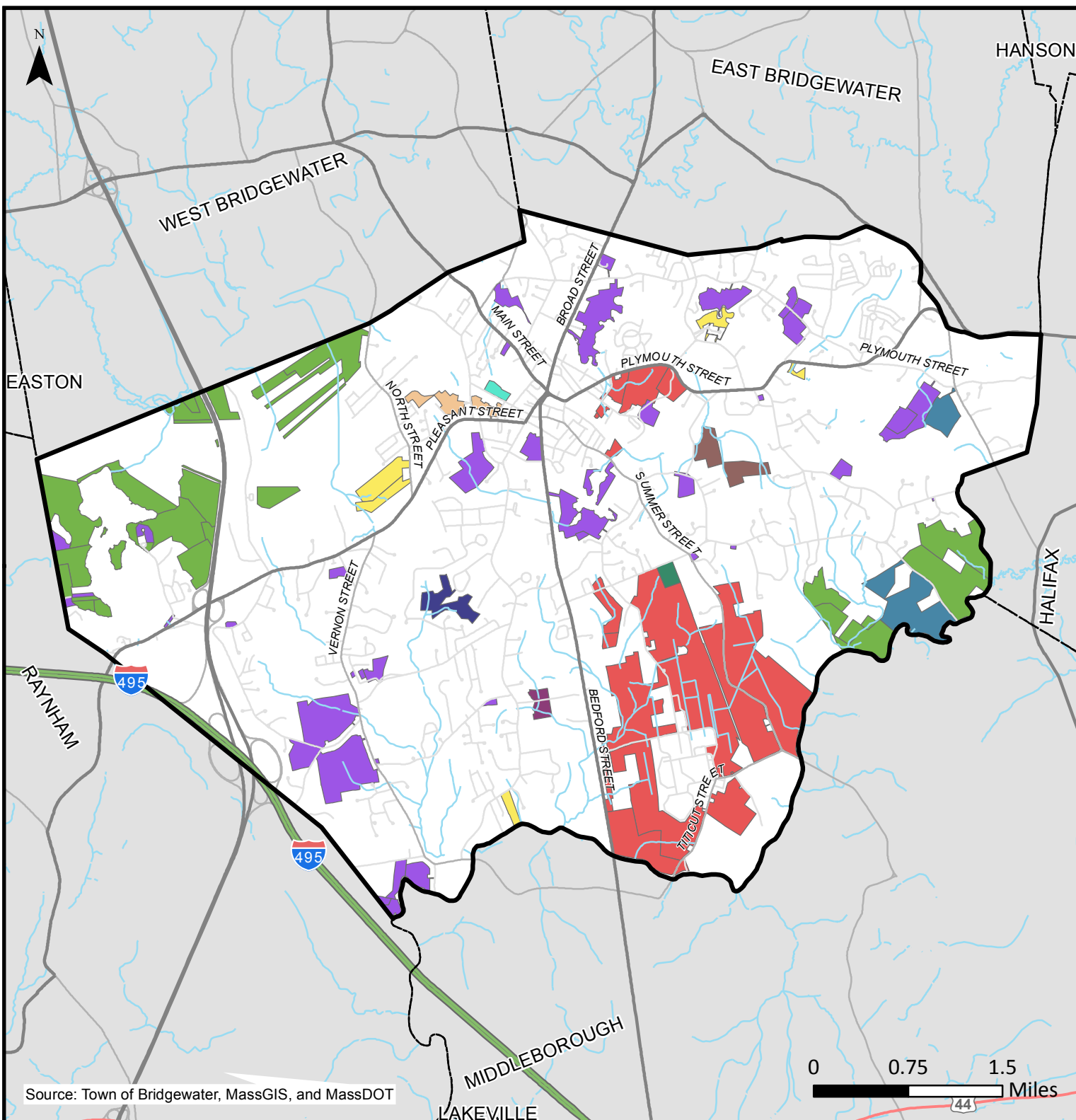
Figure 6.6. The Nunckatessett Greenway

(Source: The Nunckatessett Greenway Project; <http://www.nunckatessettgreenway.org>)



# MAP 6.9. TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER OPEN SPACE PARCELS BY OWNER

- Town of Bridgewater
- Department of Fish and Game
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Wildlands Trust
- Bridgewater/Raynham School District;  
Bridgewater/Raynham Regional School District
- Bridgewater Cemetery Corporation
- Bridgewater Lakeside LLC
- Chaves and Cincotta Inc
- DCR - Division of State Parks and Recreation
- Private Owners
- Deer Hollow Charitable Wildlife Trust Inc
- Department of Corrections



Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

# MAP 6.10. BRIDGEWATER PARKLANDS

## Bridgewater Parklands

Stiles & Hart - Precinct 6



Titicut - Precinct 1



Iron Works - Precinct 7



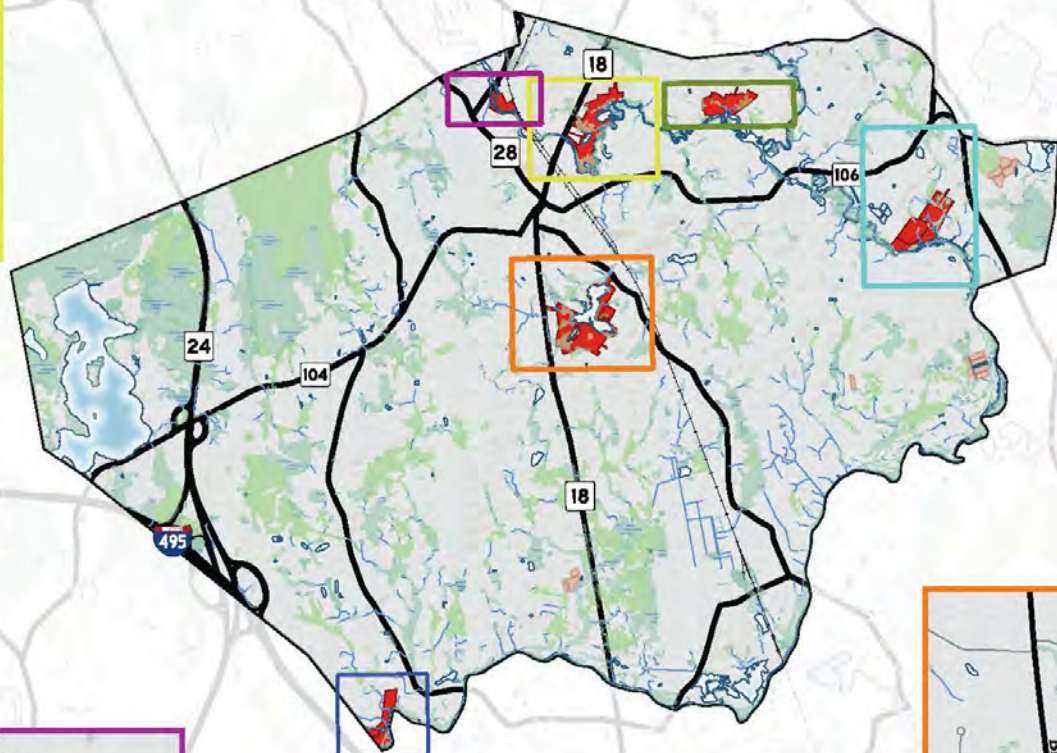
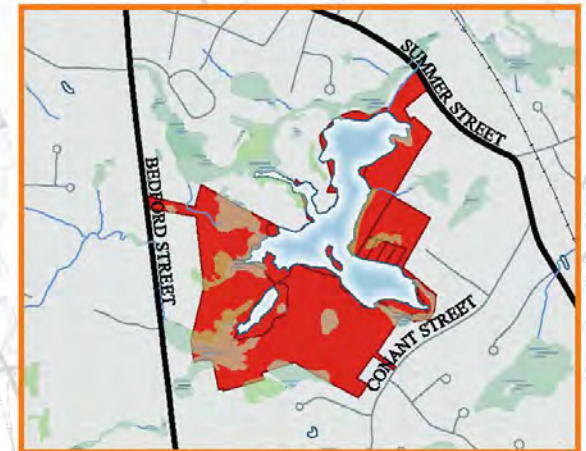
Tuckerwood - Precinct 3



Wyman Meadow - Precinct 3



Carvers Pond - Precinct 2



Map created by Scott Lussier and Kitty Doherty in September of 2019 using MassGIS data.



**Chapter 6. Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources**

**Table 6.4. Existing Trails and Open Space** (Source: Bridgewater 2017 Open Space & Recreation Plan)

Property Name/Address	Size (Acres)	Manager/Owner	Comments
Aldrich Road	5.3	Town	Open space used for passive recreation. Public access.
Auburn Street Cemetery/Auburn Street	0.8	Town	Historic resource and open space. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Bedford Street Woods Bedford Street	11	Town	Open space used for passive recreation. Public access.
Bob White Lane Old Forest Street	9.9	Town	Open space used for passive recreation. Public access.
Bridgewater State Forest/Water Street	58.5	State Dept. of Conservation and Recreation	Passive recreation and conservation. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Bridgewater State University Campus off Plymouth Street and Grove Street	211.1	State university	Portions are used for recreation. Public access.
Broad Street	2.8	Town	Open space. Public access.
Carver’s Pond Watershed/Winter & Conant Streets	70.1	Conservation Commission and Water & Sewer Department, portion by Mass Audubon	Open space used for passive recreation – fishing, hiking, picnicking, hunting, ice skating and as an outdoor classroom for local schools. Significant groundwater recharge area for public water supply. Is located near downtown center. Includes a 34-acre man-made pond (Carver’s Pond) which is not swimmable due to eutrophication; 6.5 acres is set aside for water supply protection, but over 50 acres is owned and controlled by the Water Department. Over 3,000 feet of trails. Is known site of Native American use over 12,000 years, and has been used as a site for a sawmill, iron foundry, making of cotton gins, ice making and shoe manufacturing. Could connect to other nearby conservation and open space areas. Trails are well-maintained. Dam here is very old and repairs are planned. Public access, Protected in perpetuity.
Chaffee Farm Vernon Street	60	Varies: Golf Commission, Highway Department, Town	Used for town compost and passive open space. No public access.

**Chapter 6. Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources**

**Table 6.4. Existing Trails and Open Space** (Source: Bridgewater 2017 Open Space & Recreation Plan)

Property Name/Address	Size (Acres)	Manager/Owner	Comments
Cobblestone Lane Subdivision Vernon Street	21.5	Conservation Commission and Town	Used for open space and conservation. Public access. Protected in perpetuity
Conservation Restriction off South Street	12.7	Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts	Conservation restriction. No public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Crescent Street Farms & Marathon Park Crescent Street	49.9	Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission	Active recreational fields are managed by the Recreation Commission. Portions are open space, wetlands, and hiking trails. More trails could be added. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Cross Street	2.3	Town	Open space used for passive recreation. Public access.
Dundee Drive	20.1	Town	Open space used for passive recreation. Public access.
East Street Sand Pit Tony Terrace	19.1	Town	Open space. No public access.
Emerald Lane/Cross Street	19.1	Town	Open space. Public access.
Great Hill Water Tank Great Hill Drive	10.7	Water Dept.	Water tank location. Public access.
Heather Hill Woods Heather Hill Drive	6.2	Town	Open space. Public access.
Hockomock Wildlife Management Area off Harvest Land and Brown Avenue	415.6	Mass Division of Fish and Wildlife	Wildlife protection, stormwater storage , passive recreation and conservation. This swamp is the largest freshwater swamp in the state. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Hogg Farm	50	Town	Municipal and recreational use.
Iron Works Park High Street	16.0	Conservation Commission and Highway Dept.	Conservation and open space. Fishing site with potential to add a canoe launch. Contains limited industrial ruins and the Town River runs through it with a bridge in good condition contained within the site. A private dam in poor condition, fish ladder, and remnants of an industrial brick building are also found here. Fish passage over the dam was studied by the state (Division of Fish and Game) at High Street. Dam is deteriorated and historic and is planned for removal by 2023. State/local partnership and collaboration on park design and historic preservation and access is underway. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.

**Table 6.4. Existing Trails and Open Space** (Source: Bridgewater 2017 Open Space & Recreation Plan)

Property Name/Address	Size (Acres)	Manager/Owner	Comments
Jennie Leonard Park Cherry Street	10.4	Town	Former playground with possibility of walking trails. Developers of Oldfield Estates removed playground structures in disrepair as part of the approvals process and the area is now clear and abutting open space. Public access.
Area surrounding Keith Homestead off Lakeside Drive	8.5	Mass Division of Fish and Wildlife	Passive recreation. Acquired in 2011. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Lake Nippenicket Overlook Drive Bridle Road Lakeside Drive	17.8	Managed by Conservation Commission	Passive recreation with some lake frontage. Connected to state lands where there is a public boat ramp for boats, canoes, kayaks and jet skis. Historic Keith Homestead is located at end of Lakeside Drive and is protected by a deed restriction acquired with CPA funds. Beach has been marked closed due to a drowning in the past – could be explored for re-opening under the right conditions. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Lake Nippenicket off Route 104	252.8	Mass Division of Fish and Wildlife	Conservation and wildlife habitat, boating and passive recreation. Shallow but nearly 500 acres of lake. Swimming is not currently a use. Adjacent to the Keith Homestead. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Lake Nippenicket Peninsula	88.00	Mass Division of Fish and Wildlife	Conservation and passive recreation. Protected in perpetuity.
Laurel Street	12.2	Town	Passive open space. Public access.
Matfield River Lands High Street	34.0	Water Department	Water supply land that could be used for passive recreation especially parcel 14-17. Public access.
Murray Farm on North Street of Pleasant Street	63.2	Town	Conservation restriction acquired with CPA funds in 2015 for farmland preservation on 37 acres; limited hiking and pond frontage – priority is agricultural use (hay field).
Music Alley	0.1	Town and Private	Built and licensed for use with Community Preservation Act funding for outdoor music events. ADA accessible. Public access.
North Fork Preserve off Plymouth Street and East Street	41.2	Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts	Conservation. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Old Forge Road/Old Forge Road	0.06	Town	Open space available for passive recreation. Public access.

**Chapter 6. Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources**

**Table 6.4. Existing Trails and Open Space** (Source: Bridgewater 2017 Open Space & Recreation Plan)

Property Name/Address	Size (Acres)	Manager/Owner	Comments
Old State Farm and Bridgewater Correctional Complex off State Farm Road and Conant Street	1,485.7	State Dept. of Corrections	Open space and agriculture on 425 acres protected under Article 97.
Plymouth Street	2.6	Town	Open space available for passive recreation. Public access.
Red Mill Road Cluster Land/Jaclyn Way	16.6	Town	Open space available for passive recreation. Public access.
Red Wing Drive	0.6	Town	Drainage land (wetland). No public Access. Protected in perpetuity
Skeeter Mill Pond off of Water Street	34.4	State Division of Capital Asset Management	Conservation and passive recreation; pond is between 5 and 8 acres in size, impounded by water control structure with boards. Used for fishing; pond is mostly private.
Starr Park/Starr Road	10.5	Town	Open space available for passive recreation. Public access.
Stiles & Hart Conservation Area High Street & Route 18	69.0	Conservation Commission	Wooded trails, passive recreation and fishing, with some non-motorized boating. Located across from the Town River Landing, with occasional scenic vistas. Trails and access need improvements and maintenance. Could be connected to Iron Works Park and Town River Landing as well as the downtown center. Public Access. Protected in perpetuity.
Sturdevant’s Pond Green & South Streets	3.3	Conservation Commission	Pond is 9 acres formed by an impoundment of Snow’s Brook. Open space available for passive recreation. Public access. Protected in perpetuity, but Town only owns 1/3 of shore.
Taunton River WCR (WCR = Watershed Conservation Resource)	125	Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts	Conservation restriction; the remains of a collapsed former mill dam create what is known as the Paper Mill Village Backwater on the Taunton River downstream of Mill Street, and needs to be cleared to help prevent backwater flooding at some future date. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Titicut Conservation Parkland Beach Street	20.2	Water Department and Conservation Commission	Well land not likely to be used; located on the Taunton River. Extends into Raynham with another 7.8 acres. In the 1800s, the construction and launching of brigs happened here during the ship-building era. Small informal campsite and canoe/kayak put-in. Hiking and supervised camping (permission required). Native American burial site located here. Informal trail network. Needs significant trash cleanup and trail maintenance; has limited parking. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.

**Chapter 6. Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources**

**Table 6.4. Existing Trails and Open Space** (Source: Bridgewater 2017 Open Space & Recreation Plan)

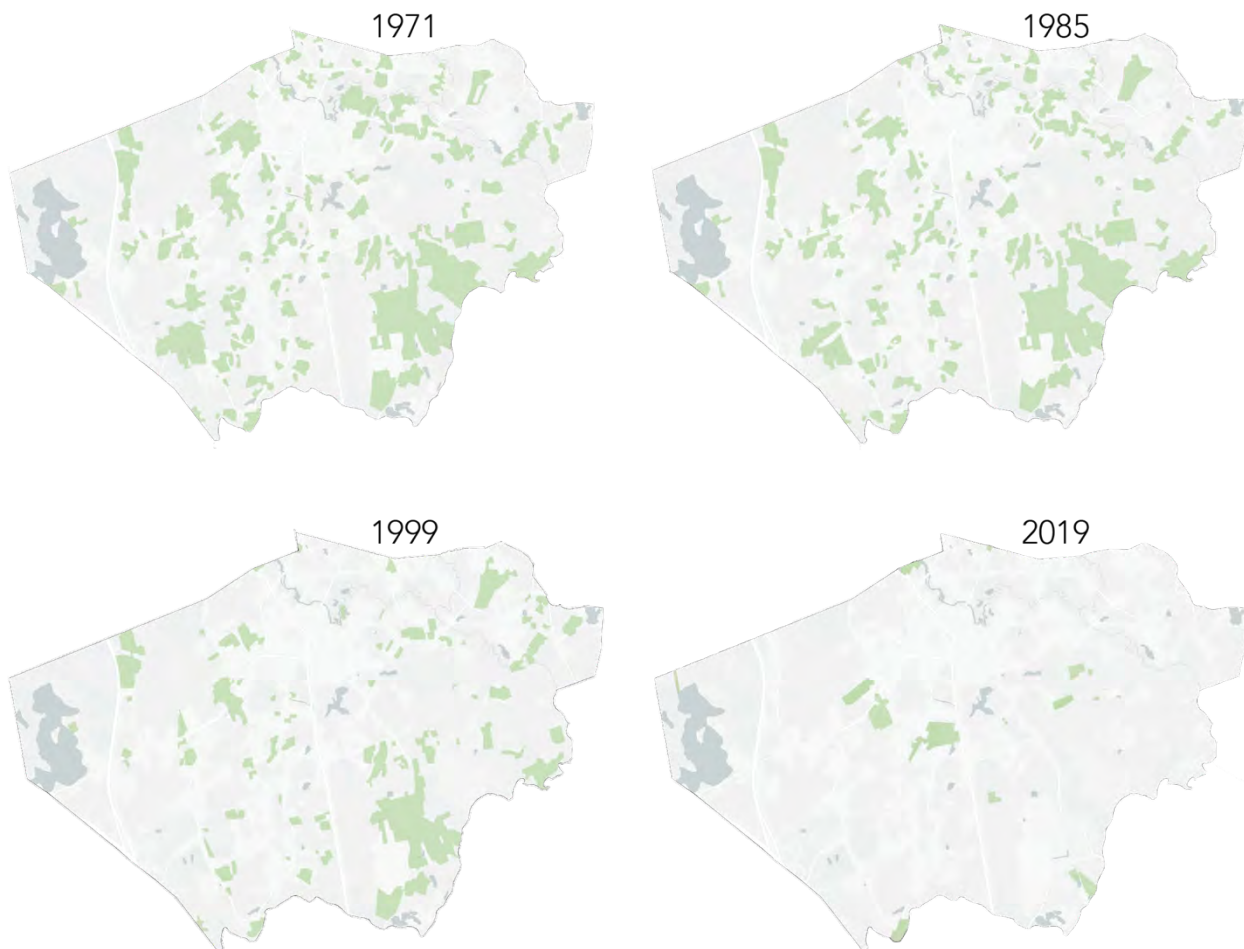
Property Name/Address	Size (Acres)	Manager/Owner	Comments
Toole Park Pleasant Street	9.2	Town	Open space available for passive recreation. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Town River Landing Spring Street	2.2	Town	Boat launch. Public access.
Tuckerwood Conservation Area High Street	33.0	Conservation Commission	Passive open space, pine and oak forested areas with walking trails, used for canoeing, kayaking and fishing, views of the Town River as it is adjacent to the river. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.
Winter Street Canton Street	4	Town	Open space available for passive recreation. Public access.
Wyman Meadow Plymouth Street	55.0	Conservation Commission and Water Department	Conservation and passive open space on the Taunton River. 20 acres are set aside for water supply and well. The remainder is used for kayaking, cross-country skiing, fishing and canoeing. Some scenic views are located here across fields and wet areas. Contains an unused sand pit. Public access. Protected in perpetuity.

### AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural farmland has declined from 2,964 acres in 1971, to 263 acres in 2019 (Figure 6.8). Efforts by the community have preserved significant open space including some of the remaining farmlands, river corridors, and significant ponds throughout the Town. As a recent example, two parcels neighboring Murray Farm were protected from subdivision and subsequent residential development in 2015 through a conservation restriction funded with CPA funds and a Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) state grant. The former Wyman Farm property provides another example of agricultural land protected through conservation restrictions; although its use for agriculture was not preserved, the land itself has been protected in an undeveloped state since 2000 when the Town acquired the land and placed conservation restrictions on two parcels – one used for a wellfield protection (managed by the Water Department; no public access), and the other (Wyman Meadow) for conservation (managed by the Conservation Commission; public access).

**Figure 6.8. Loss of Farmland from 1971-2019**

Sources: MassGIS Land Use Summary Statistics, Set 1 (2003) and Town of Bridgewater Assessors Database



## HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

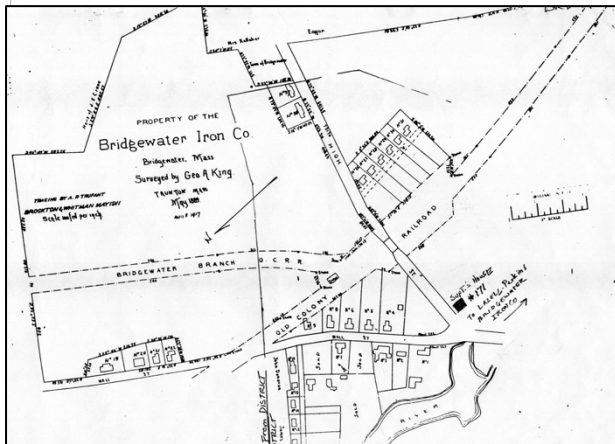
### Historic Properties

Bridgewater has 385 historic resources documented on MACRIS, the MA Historical Commission's Cultural Resource Information System.<sup>13</sup> While most properties are only documented as historic resources at the state level, the Stanley Iron Works and the McElwain School are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Forty-nine of the historic resources were constructed in the 18th century, including eight of the Town's cemeteries and numerous homes such as the Tory House located on 57 Central Square. The vast majority (264; 257 extant) of the Town's documented historic resources date back to the 19th century. The Academy Building, a Colonial-Revival, Italianate-style building constructed in 1848 for use as a school, is currently used for town offices and was rehabilitated in 2016 with the help of CPA funds. Also located in Central Square is the Romanesque Revival-style Memorial Building, originally constructed in 1881 as a public library and currently being considered for other uses after the town offices located in the building were relocated to the Academy Building. The old Town Hall, built in 1843, is also currently being considered for adaptive reuse as a cultural center, an undertaking Bridgewater residents strongly favor according to a recently completed Town Hall feasibility study.<sup>14</sup> Map 6.11 displays the historic properties and features listed on MACRIS by type.

#### What is the National Register of Historic Places?

Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, the National Register of Historic Places coordinates the identification and protection of historic and archaeological resources. Properties included on this list qualify for federal preservation grants when available and tax credits for rehabilitation of income-producing historic structures. Federal planning processes that may affect properties included on the register are required to give consideration to these properties and to allow comments from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The two properties in Bridgewater listed on this registry are pictured below.

*Tracing of Stanley Iron Works Land Survey  
(1911; Source: MACRIS)*



*McElwain School, 250 Main Street*

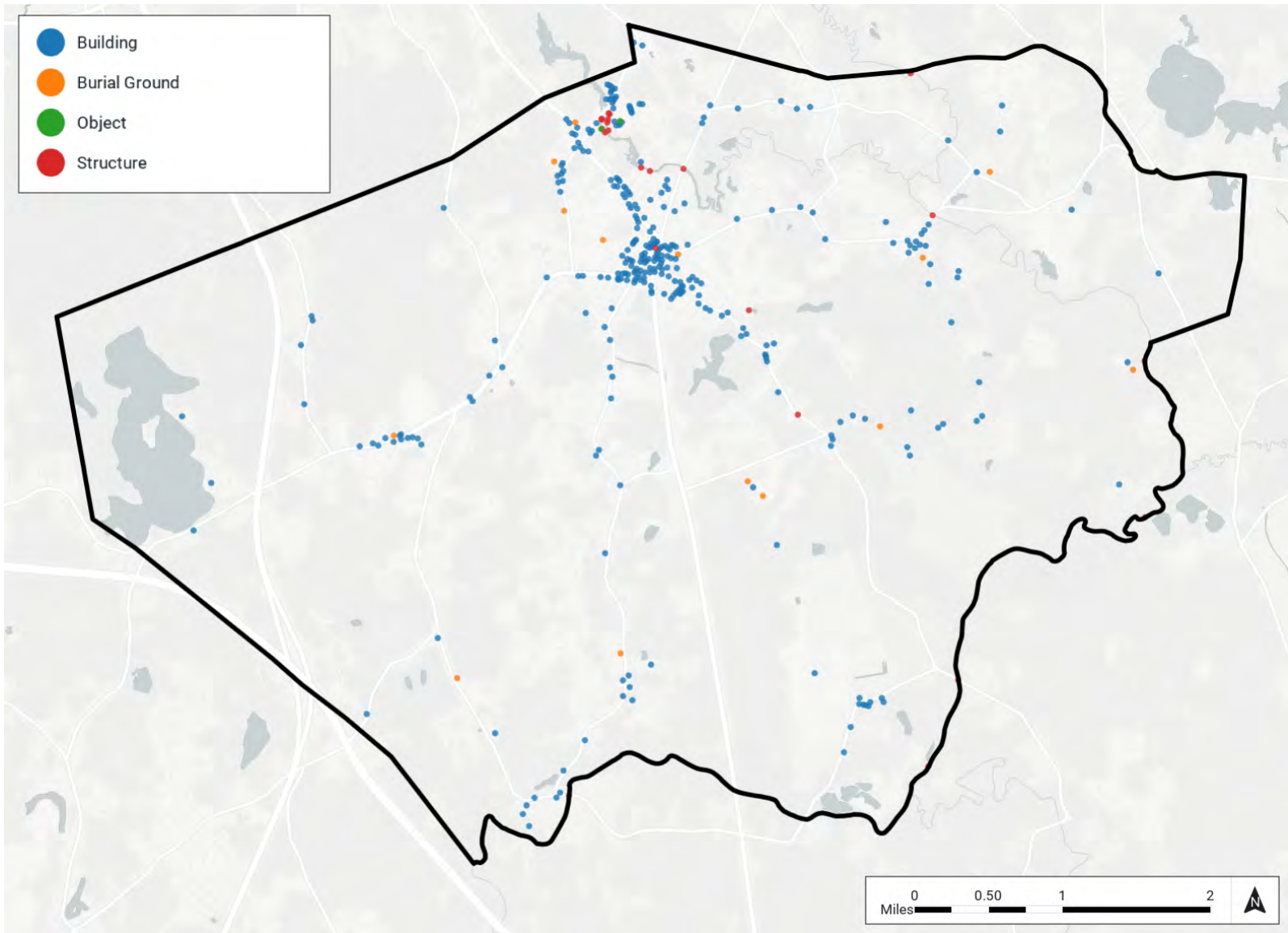


<sup>13</sup> Records accessed on March 1, 2021 indicate 385 historic resources including areas, buildings, burial grounds, objects, and structures.

<sup>14</sup> Epstein Joslin Architects, Findings and Recommendations to the Town of Bridgewater, MA for the Adaptive Reuse of Old Town Hall, 2021.

**MAP 6.12. HISTORIC PROPERTIES BY TYPE**

Source: MassGIS and MACRIS





### **Bridgewater Center Historic District**

The Bridgewater Center Historic District (Figure 6.9) was established in 1986. Currently MACRIS lists seventeen extant buildings (including those named in the inventory section above) and one structure within the district. The Historic District Committee, described in the next section, regulates the external features of buildings, structures, signs, and other settings within the district.

**Figure 6.9. Bridgewater Center Historic District and Other Historic Resources**



### **Churches**

Of the nine churches listed as historic structures on MACRIS, two are in the historic district – the New Jerusalem Church, a prominent Gothic Revival built in 1871, and the First Trinitarian Congregational Church, an Italianate-style structure built in 1862. The Scotland Trinitarian Congregational Church (1000 Pleasant Street) was constructed in 1822 in the Federal style and is the oldest Bridgewater church registered on MACRIS.

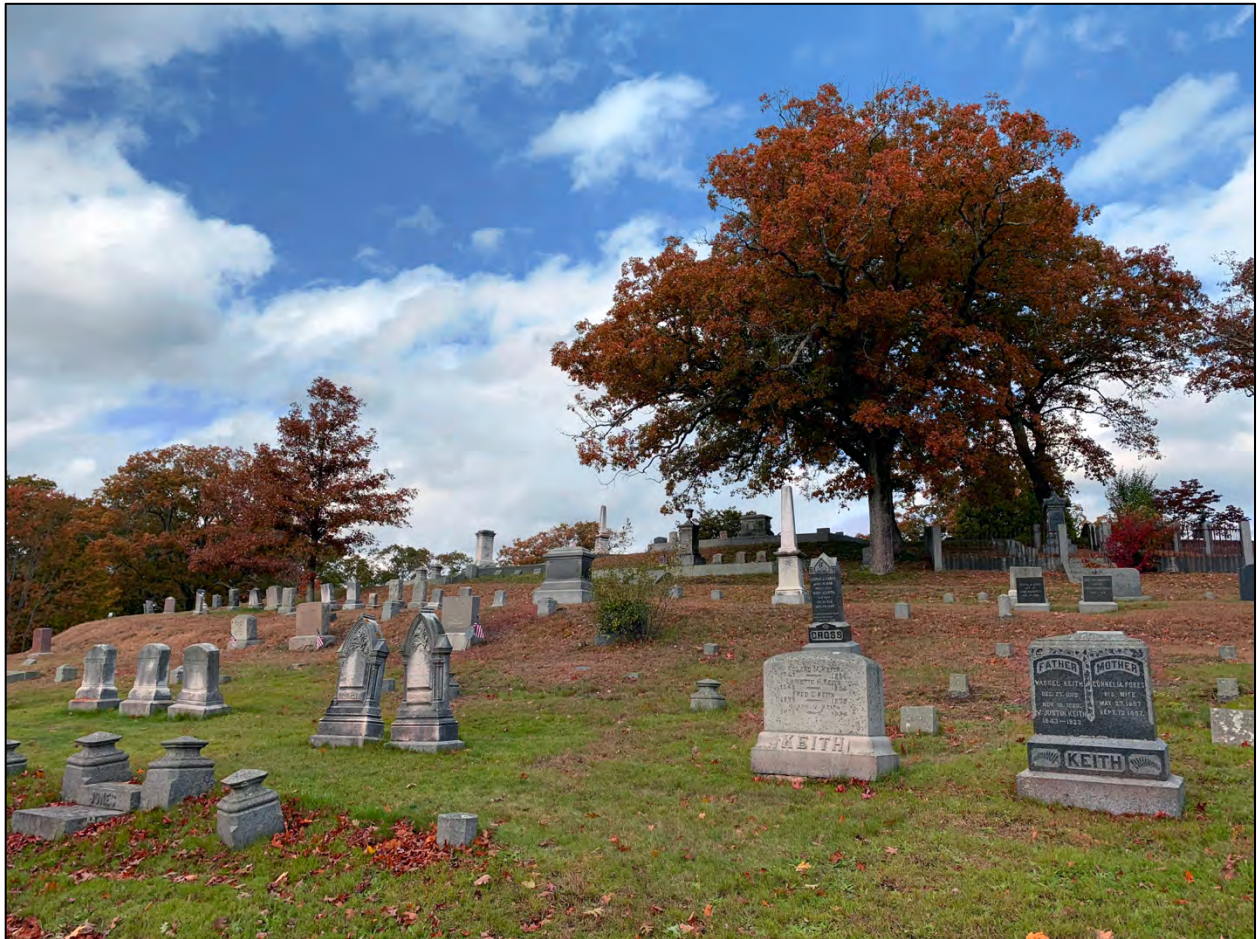
### **Cemeteries**

According to the Old Bridgewater Historical Society, there are eighteen cemeteries located in Bridgewater,<sup>15</sup> fourteen of which are also inventoried on MACRIS and eleven of which are Town-

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<sup>15</sup> Old Bridgewater Historical Society, “Cemeteries in Bridgewater.” Accessed at <https://www.oldbridgewater.org/learn/local-cemeteries/> on August 27, 2020.

owned (see Chapter 7, Public Facilities and Services). Outreach during this comprehensive planning process indicates that many of these cemeteries are of historic significance but are not actively managed in a way that could preserve their significance.



*Mount Prospect Cemetery*

### **Preservation & Conservation Restrictions**

Three buildings catalogued on MACRIS are listed as having preservation restrictions: First Parish Church (50 School Street, built in 1845), Bridgewater Memorial Library (25 South Street; built in 1881), and the Keith Homestead property home (515 Lakeside Drive, built in 1783). Numerous properties have conservation restrictions, with the Murray/Needs Farm serving as a recent example. More regions mapped as BioMap2 Core areas and potential connectors for trails and wildlife corridors can be identified and targeted for future acquisition and protection.

### **Historic Homes**

MACRIS lists 212 single-family homes (209 extant), twenty-eight of which were built in the 18th century. Bridgewater has a demolition delay bylaw that requires a public hearing of the Historic Commission to determine if a structure built in 1920 or earlier is eligible for a 60-day delay prior to issuance of a permit. Bridgewater's 60-day delay is shorter than that of many Massachusetts

communities that opt for at least a one-year delay period, and the demolition delay ordinance has not been utilized since its adoption in 2017.

*The Joseph Leonard House/Tory House*

*MACRIS records indicate that the first part of this historic home in Central Square house was built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century with additions during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Currently a privately owned boarding house, this home is known for being a stop on the Underground Railroad.*



### **Industrial History**

Many documented historical resources relate to the Town's industrial history. In addition to Bridgewater Iron Works structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places, MACRIS lists twenty-four homes originally used for Bridgewater Iron Manufacturing company housing, one of which was used for the company Superintendent. There are also four Plymouth Creamery worker homes on Summer Street (1900), one former brick worker housing residence on Cook Street (1890), two duplex structures on Bedford Street (1885) for builder Henry G. Prophet's workers. Bridgewater also has a history in shoe manufacturing, as evidenced by the W.H. McElwain Shoe Manufacturing Company building on Perkins Street (1898), a large structure currently used as a self-storage facility, and Bridgewater Shoe Corporation building (1915) formerly at 42 Spring Street.

### **Music Alley**

Several cultural events take place downtown at Music Alley, built and licensed for music events with CPA funds and owned and maintained by the Town. Should the abutting old Town Hall be transformed into a cultural center, this area could be wholly transformed and ripe for hosting community events. At this time it is unknown if live events will resume for the 2021 season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Bridgewater State University**

A cooperative agreement between the Historical Commission and Bridgewater State University has begun to archive and make publicly available important historic documents about Bridgewater’s history previously unavailable for viewing. This partnership is encouraging expanded public outreach and engagement on the historic landscape, and during comprehensive planning outreach the possibilities of walking historic tours, kiosks and markers to help tell the story of the land along trails and in the downtown center have been expressed. More cultural events that draw the residents into the events held at Bridgewater State University is desired, and in recent years the University has mailed brochures and public announcements regarding cultural events at the school to encourage more participation from the residents of the Town. BSU’s strategic plan is described in the upcoming section on Needs Identified in Recent Plans.

**Boards, Committees, and Commissions**

Table 6.5 describes the active volunteer boards, committees, and commissions whose efforts relate to the Town’s natural, cultural, or open space resources. Collaboration between these groups collectively and with Town staff can help advance shared goals that define and promote Bridgewater’s story.



*Collaborative Efforts for Preservation*

*Town committees including the Historic Commission are currently advocating for the preservation of some of the materials used in the construction of the High Street Dam and options are being explored. (Source: Historic Commission Meeting, March 16, 2021.) Following completion of a feasibility study conducted by the Nature Conservancy, Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), and Division of Marine Fisheries, the High Street Dam at Stanley Iron Works Park is slated for removal by 2023 due to its impediment of migratory fish. This project was also highlighted in the Town’s recently approved MVP plan as a priority action.*

**Table 6.5. Relevant Boards, Committees, and Commissions**

Agricultural Commission	The Agricultural Commission is an advisory and ministerial committee to Town. The AC encourages pursuit of agriculture in Bridgewater and acts as mediators, advocates, educators, and negotiators on farming issues. The Commission pursues initiatives to create a sustainable agricultural community and works toward preservation of prime agricultural lands.
Community Preservation Committee	The CPC is a ministerial and advisory committee to Town and makes recommendations to Town Council relating to funding the acquisition, protection, and improvement of open space, historic resources, land for recreational use. Additionally, the CPC makes recommendations relating to funding the creation of community housing, recommending the adaptive reuse of existing buildings whenever possible, as is the case with the planned future reuse of the McElwain School building. CPA funds are generated through a 2%

**Table 6.5. Relevant Boards, Committees, and Commissions**

	property tax surcharge (with some exemptions), and over \$10.2 million raised since its local adoption in 2005 through local and state funds. <sup>16</sup>
Cultural Council	The Cultural Council is an advisory and ministerial committee of the Town and decides the distribution of arts lottery funds or other funds available to it. The CC conducts other activities to promote and encourage the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences.
Historical Commission	The Historical Commission is an advisory committee to Town and seeks to preserve, protect, promote, and develop Bridgewater’s historical and archaeological assets. The HC maintains a listing of all historical sites and buildings within the Town and determines the requirements for their repair and protection. Subject to the approval of the Town Council, the HC makes recommendations to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for the certification of historical or archaeological landmark. To further its objectives and programming, the HC makes recommendations to the Town Manager regarding contracts with individuals, organizations, and institutions as well as the acquisition of property, and may accept gifts and funds upon Town Council approval.
Historic District Commission	The Historic District Commission is an advisory and regulatory committee of the Town that promotes Bridgewater’s educational, cultural, economic, aesthetic and literary significance through the preservation and protection of buildings, settings, and places within the historic district. The HDC determines the appropriateness of exterior architectural features of buildings and structures within the district; reviews the demolition or removal of any building or structure; determines the appropriateness of the signs or billboards within the district; and promulgates rules and regulations relating to the issuance of certificates of appropriateness. Membership must include a resident of the district as well as an architect, builder with at least five years of demonstrated historic renovation experience, or a professional educator or attorney specializing in historic preservation.
Open Space Committee	The Open Space Committee advises the Town Manager regarding the preservation of open space and updating the Open Space Plan. The OPC evaluates opportunities for acquiring and protecting open space parcels against stated criteria and works with residents, local officials, state and federal agencies, and private nonprofit land conservation organizations.
Parks & Recreation Commission	The Parks and Recreation Commission advises the Town Manager in establishing rules and regulations concerning the delivery of active and passive recreation activities and the maintenance and use of all athletic fields, playgrounds, parks, recreational areas, and the Olde Scotland Links Golf Course. Additionally, the Commission advises the Town Manager on the development and content of the Town’s Recreation Plans.

### 6.3. Challenges and Opportunities

#### NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN RECENT PLANS

Several recent plans described issues, opportunities, and recommendations for Bridgewater’s cultural, natural, and open space resources. Common themes in these plans include the need to increase capacity for maintenance of the Town’s parklands, linking the Town’s cultural resources and history to the landscape, connecting these spaces together to create regional connections and wildlife corridors where appropriate, improving pedestrian and bicycle access, protecting agricultural land, promoting awareness of the Town’s resources, and developing a brand for the Town. Many goals,

<sup>16</sup> Community Preservation Committee Public Hearing, March 24, 2021.

strategies, and recommendations from these plans are still applicable and may frame opportunities for the Town to revisit and explore. This theme of increasing safe access to and connectivity between the myriad historic and open space resources that represent Bridgewater is resonant through many recent plans as a top priority.

#### ***Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Master Plan (2014)***

In 2014, the Cecil Group and Nelson/Nygaard prepared the Bridgewater Downtown Community Development Master Plan, which primarily focused on the revitalization of Central Square and its surrounding area. The plan outlined recommendations relating to branding, façade improvement, parking and circulation, streetscape improvements, and zoning. These recommendations for Bridgewater’s Central Business District (CBD) would help to reinvigorate the area to serve as a cultural hub for the Town. Together these improvements, many of which are still applicable, can help Bridgewater develop a rich identity and sense of place rooted in its cultural, historic, and natural resources.

#### ***Master Plan Update (2014)***

The 2014 Bridgewater Master Plan Update revised select chapters of the 2002 Master Plan, one of which was the Open Space chapter. The open space goals of the Master Plan Update “focus on protecting and appreciating the most significant open space properties for the purposes of farming, environmental and habitat protection, scenic vistas, and passive outdoor recreation” and were based on both the Town’s 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan and input from the community.

#### ***Downtown Bridgewater Plan (2016)***

Prepared by Old Colony Planning Council, this plan primarily focused on economic development and housing-related factors within the context of the Central Business District. However, like other recent plans, this included promotion of the Nunckatessett Greenway/Bay Circuit Trail.

#### ***Recreation Needs Assessment (2015; Approved 2016)***

VHB evaluated twelve active and nine passive recreation facilities and conducted community outreach to determine recommendations relating to the Town’s recreational needs. These recommendations relating to open space focused on improving entrances and access to passive recreation areas, adding consistent furnishings and signage to these areas, establishing a Town point person managing the Town’s passive recreation opportunities, and creating a map of recreational and conservation areas, trails, and paths.

#### ***Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (2017)***

The plan identifies opportunities to improve, expand trails and connect trails; increase public awareness of available open space and recreation opportunities; preserve and cultivate public and private agricultural lands; and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

#### ***Bridgewater State University Institutional Strategic Plan (2018)***

This 5-year strategic plan outlines five goals, one of which most clearly lends itself to supporting the Town’s goals for cultural resources; goal 4 of the university’s strategic plan is to “Serve as a regional catalyst for economic, cultural and intellectual engagement.” Strategies relating to this goal focus on fostering regional collaboration to build economic, cultural and intellectual capacity and facilitating opportunities for family-friendly educational, cultural and recreational activities.

### ***Parklands Assessment Report (2018)***

This report, prepared for the Town by Anthony Hebert, Bridgewater State University Graduate Student, outlines specific steps, priorities and estimated costs for improvements to the Town's parklands. The report recommends increasing staff in the Parks & Recreation Department to support parklands maintenance and oversee volunteers, increase signage, and promote the parklands through advertising in multiple formats.

### ***2019 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan***

This plan identifies priority actions to help improve the Town's resilience to climate change and natural disasters. Many of the plan's recommendations focused on the use of climate change projections to: develop specific climate change resiliency action plans for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, water supply wells, and parks and recreational areas; update the stormwater ordinance based and establish a stormwater education program; and review and update zoning requirements to address climate change resilience. The plan's recommendations also reinforce priorities identified in other planning efforts, including the High Street Dam removal and High Street Bridge replacement and continued implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan to protect agricultural land.

### ***Town of Bridgewater Community Preservation Plan (FY2020-2024)***

The Town's Community Preservation Plan was approved in April 2020, making it the most recent formal planning document relating (in part) to the Town's cultural, historic, and open space resources. The plan is organized into goals relating to community housing, historic preservation, open space and passive recreation, and active recreation. The CPA evaluates projects in part based on their compatibility between these categories and with existing planning and community goals. With this in mind, the each of the plan's goals identify which CPA categories and existing community goals they reinforce.

## **PARTNERSHIP POTENTIAL**

### ***Stewardship***

An interesting characteristic of much of the open space, water conservation, and preserved landscapes in Bridgewater is that they are often managed for both active and passive recreation and are more familiarly thought of by the community as "parkland." Stewardship roles for management of the conservation and passive open space is not clearly identified in the inventory of open space for the Town, and Bridgewater has not completed a detailed inventory of its conservation lands and what is in each park. Volunteer stewards are relied upon to help manage these areas; however, no particular entity is directing implementation activities, fundraising, or public outreach. Some groups are more active than others, and some do not have adequate time and resources to meet the goals of the community as outlined in its planning documents for these resources.

Outreach during the comprehensive planning process identified a need to designate specific town departments or land stewards to take up the implementation of management plans for some of the more significant open space and conservation properties, including the potential to link these areas through pedestrian walking trails or canoe launches where rivers and streams can be used as a connection. In addition, sharing the important historic significance of past land uses — particularly where remnants of sawmills, brick works, ice houses, forges, and other industrial uses still can be found — supports the goal of expanding the general public's understanding of the cultural resources and rich history of the landscape.

There are opportunities to expand on the partners in the Town – the Conservation Commission, Water Department, Open Space Committee, students and staff at Bridgewater State University, Eagle Scouts, friends of conservation areas, The Wildlands Trust, and the State Department of Fish and Game share several common resources and interests relative to restoring the habitat and water quality, building a stronger understanding of the historic natural landscape and previous industries, and encouraging improved public access to these sites. Revitalizing the Bridgewater’s Natural Resources Trust, a non-profit 501c3 organization which helped to coordinate volunteer days, could also represent an opportunity for building partnerships. The Taunton River Watershed is the subject of a series of studies to plan for maintaining good water quality and supply as the region continues to develop and increase in population. The community needs a framework for bringing these resources to the table to help prioritize and implement these complex projects.

### **Funding**

As stated above, the vision of a greenbelt creating the connection of the various open spaces for habitat protection, flood storage capacity and connectivity for recreation share common goals – these areas are all overlapping, and it is possible that funding projects like dam removal, land acquisition for increased flood storage capacity or programs to restore habitat can help to also expand on the connection of these natural areas for pedestrian, water-based recreation and fisheries – many values can be achieved by bringing these goals together.

### **Partnerships for Historic Resources and Cultural Expansion**

The Old Bridgewater Historic Society’s records, engagement and interest by the faculty and students at Bridgewater State University, and involvement of the Historical Commission in helping to bring records into the public can be leveraged to create events that can bring the community together around these resources. History hikes into the natural areas from the Downtown Center, informational kiosks, speaking events and archives at the University are ways that can build public engagement, knowledge, and understanding of these natural and historic places through a group approach to limit the burden on any particular group. Again, the framework for bringing these resources to the table to help prioritize and synergize these efforts is needed. The Town is seeking staff to be tasked to represent the Town on such outreach and collaborative efforts.

Bridgewater State University has over 1,500 alumni in Bridgewater alone that can be a place to start to do direct outreach to residents and students to collaborate on these challenges. The University has close to 11,000 students enrolled annually and its possible that classes could be asked to help facilitate, market, design, and create some of the needed assets and grant proposals. Officials from BSU have attended the planning outreach meetings and expressed a strong interest in collaborating.

### **HERITAGE TOURISM**

Protecting, connecting, and *promoting* the breadth of local historic, cultural, and natural resources has the potential to elevate the Town as a regional destination for heritage tourism. This in turn can have a positive impact on the Town’s economic vitality. Crafting a plan for heritage tourism would require significant collaboration between volunteer boards, Town staff, local businesses, and ideally BSU, but the benefits of such an undertaking could be well worth the effort.



## 6.4. Goals, Policies, and Recommendations

### NATURAL, CULTURAL, AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCE GOALS

- Establish Bridgewater as a cultural, intellectual, and recreational hub in the region.
- Protect natural resources while providing and promoting open space access.

### NATURAL, CULTURAL, AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCE POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies for decision makers are listed **in bold** with relevant recommendations listed below the policy. For detail regarding timing and responsible parties for each recommendation, please see the Implementation Program in Chapter 8.

#### **Provide for adequate planning, monitoring, and management of the town's open space.**

- Implement the Town's OSRP and conduct 5-7 year updates.
- Fund a designated staff position for parklands maintenance and to support the efforts of volunteers, boards, committees, and commissions working to protect and enhance Bridgewater's open space resources.

#### **Improve access to and maintenance of parks and open space.**

- Enhance wayfinding to connect and enhance awareness of open space resources.
- Acquire land or conservation restrictions to create connections between open space and priority natural and cultural resources, consistent with the OSRP.
- Use the permitting process to negotiate access points with developers of property that can support open space links.
- Organize, train, support, and recognize the efforts of volunteer park stewards to help maintain and protect public parks and open space.

#### **Preserve and promote awareness of cultural and historic resources to give residents a sense of place and of what is available to them and their families.**

- Establish a local heritage tourism plan that covers the breadth of what Bridgewater has to offer with its open space, historic resources, and other cultural assets.
- Tap the technical assistance resources available from MassDevelopment and the Urban Land Institute to continue exploring and planning for reuse of the old Town Hall as a Cultural Center.
- Propose Bridgewater sites and activities for inclusion in the Plymouth County Development Council's travel guide (<https://seeplymouth.com>).
- Create a community-wide historic preservation plan that identifies needs, guides funding, and protects Bridgewater's historical assets
- Expand efforts to educate owners of historic properties about methods for protecting historic homes.

**Chapter 6. Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources**

- Adopt and implement educational and regulatory techniques identified by the Massachusetts Historical Commission as tools to protect historic and cultural resources and their context.
- Explore the feasibility of developing an adaptive reuse ordinance for the preservation of historical or significant structures with design guidelines.
- Partner with Bridgewater Public Library to preserve and retain historic documents.

**Encourage resident interaction with the cultural, intellectual, and recreational resources available in the community.**

- In collaboration with Bridgewater Public Library and BSU, develop a strategy to promote and raise awareness of the Town's cultural, historic, and recreational opportunities and programs.
- Convene quarterly meetings of boards and committees engaged in cultural activities (Community Preservation Committee, Cultural Council, Historical Commission, Open Space Committee, etc.), or their chairs as appropriate, to encourage collaboration, advocate, and promote resources.
- Explore establishing a downtown cultural district.

**Plan for resilience to climate change to protect Bridgewater's natural resources.**

- Implement the Town's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan and provide regular updates on its implementation.



# Chapter 7 Facilities & Services

## 7. Facilities and Services

### 7.1. Introduction

A municipality's public facilities and the services it provides to its residents reflect the priorities of a community and its capacity for future growth. **Public facilities** are municipally-owned improved properties that provide space for the administration of local government and the delivery of municipal programs and services. **Public services** represent what the local government does to meet the needs of its residents and businesses. These concepts are fundamentally inseparable and best examined together.

Investment in municipal properties, utilities, and services can be costly but nonetheless essential, so local governments must carefully prioritize spending. Suburban areas do not always have the resources to fund a range of services and facilities, emphasizing the need for participation in the planning process by residents; business owners; Town staff; volunteers; advisory and regulatory committees, commissions, boards; and other stakeholders who make a municipality function effectively. The master planning process highlights immediate needs, plans for sustainable growth, and informs budgeting. It is important that residents have clear means to provide input, beyond public comment opportunities at the community's legislative meetings.



*The Academy Building - Town Hall*

The majority of 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. The Town Manager's Office periodically publishes the Capital Budget and the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which is critical to coordinating and financing future projects and acquiring assets.

The Town is in the process of recodifying its Zoning Ordinance to promote the community's welfare and encourage appropriate uses of available land. Select chapters of the 2002 Master Plan was updated in 2014, serving as a roadmap for the community's development. Other examples of efforts to uphold and preserve high-functioning services and facilities, and create new revenue streams to fund them, include the 2019 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan, the 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan, and the 2020-2024 Community Preservation Plan. Each plan is referenced throughout this chapter.

## 7.2. Existing Conditions and Trends

Communities pay for government services with property tax revenue, user fees and charges, and state aid. Local government departments are responsible for identifying funding sources, for determining and prioritizing needs, and for appropriately distributing funds for services and projects that serve the community. According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue’s Schedule A Revenue and Expenditure Reports, Bridgewater collected \$63,417,480 in FY2021 general fund revenue and expended \$59,776,834 in general funds.<sup>1</sup> Table 7.1 provides a glimpse into Bridgewater’s typical revenue streams.

**Table 7.1. Bridgewater Schedule A Revenues, FY2021**

Revenue Source	Amount
Taxes	\$52,737,541
Service Charges	\$188,770
Licenses and Permits	\$1,386,211
Federal Revenue	\$0
State Revenue	\$4,390,935
Revenue from Other Governments	\$64,917
Special Assessments	\$0
Fines and Forfeitures	\$31,971
Miscellaneous	92,008
Other Financing Sources	\$0
Transfers	\$4,525,127
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$63,417,480</b>

Source: Municipal Data Bank, Division of Local Services, Massachusetts Department of Revenue

Bridgewater is home to several regional and state services and facilities, including Bridgewater State University, the MBTA Commuter Rail, the Old Colony Correctional Center, and Bridgewater State Hospital (on the Correctional Center campus). These entities serve residents of Bridgewater and the surrounding communities, as well as the regional and state agencies that own and operate them. They also consider the needs and priorities of many municipalities.

Large-scale planning and transportation efforts requiring regional collaboration are completed in coordination with the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC). Collaboration with state and regional entities continues to be an important goal in Bridgewater.

### MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATION

Bridgewater is one of the fourteen municipalities in the commonwealth that have a city form of government but retain “town” in their official name. In 2010, Bridgewater’s government transitioned to an appointed Town Manager leading the executive branch, and nine elected Town Councilors as the legislative body. Bridgewater’s population increase during the 2020 census prompted an increase in the precinct count (as required by law). The Town, working with the Commonwealth, submitted an updated nine-precinct plan to the LEDRC (local election districts review commission), who approved the plan in January 2022. The updated plan also requires a vote to revise Town Council make up. Currently, seven of these nine councilors represent their respective voting precincts and two serve as councilors-at-large. The new organization will consist of three District Councilors and six Councilors at-Large, as reflected in the Town Charter.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Schedule A General Fund Revenues Report, FY 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Bridgewater’s Town Charter was recently updated and is scheduled for Committee and state review in 2022. At this time, provisions affected by Census 2020 are under review.

Per the Town Charter, Bridgewater’s municipal organization consists of an Executive Branch, Administrative Branch, and Operational Branch, each broken down into various departments, as shown in Table 7.2A. According to the Annual Report, approximately thirty boards, committees, and commissions representing various interests and groups serve Bridgewater in regulatory, ministerial, or advisory roles (or combinations thereof) to departments and ensure staff is informed when making policy decisions. Boards and Commissions are critical to daily municipal operations, lobbying for public interests and bringing a range of ideas and expertise. Appendix 7.5 contains an organizational diagram of Bridgewater’s municipal department structure and their interrelationships with multi-member bodies.

**Table 7.2A. Municipal Operational Organization by Town Code<sup>3</sup>**  
**\*Elected Positions**

	<b>Departments and Functions<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Department Heads</b>	<b>Boards, Committees, and Commission Interrelationships</b>
<b>Executive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Town Manager</b></li> <li>• <b>Legal Office</b></li> <li>• <b>Informational Technologies (IT) Department</b></li> <li>• <b>Human Resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Hearings Officer</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Attorney</li> <li>• IT Director</li> <li>• Human Resources Director</li> <li>• Hearings Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town Manager and Human Resources interact with all multiple member bodies as needed or required.</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative Branch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community and Economic Development Department</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Planning</i></li> <li>○ <i>Economic Development</i></li> <li>○ <i>Building</i></li> <li>○ <i>Conservation</i></li> <li>○ <i>Health</i></li> <li>○ <i>Housing</i></li> <li>○ <i>Zoning Enforcement</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building &amp; Zoning Official</li> <li>• Community &amp; Economic Development Director</li> <li>• Health Agent</li> <li>• Conservation Agent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Board</li> <li>• Zoning Board of Appeals</li> <li>• Historical Commission</li> <li>• Historic District Committee</li> <li>• Affordable Housing Trust</li> <li>• Community Preservation Committee</li> <li>• Disabilities Commission</li> <li>• Open Space Committee</li> <li>• Board of Health</li> <li>• Transportation Committee</li> <li>• Conservation Commission</li> <li>• Parks &amp; Recreation Commission</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Finance Department</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Accounting</i></li> <li>○ <i>Assessing</i></li> <li>○ <i>Procurement</i></li> <li>○ <i>Revenue Collection</i></li> <li>○ <i>Treasury</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance Department Director</li> <li>• Town Accountant</li> <li>• Director of Assessing</li> <li>• Collector/Treasurer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Assessors</li> <li>• Financial Committee</li> <li>• Budget and Finance Committee of Town Council</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, February 27, 2017; amended October 22, 2021, Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 1: Offices and Standards, p.74. For a complete list of Department and staff responsibilities and functions, please refer to the Town Code.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

**Table 7.2A. Municipal Operational Organization by Town Code<sup>3</sup>**  
**\*Elected Positions**

	<b>Departments and Functions<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Department Heads</b>	<b>Boards, Committees, and Commission Interrelationships</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Town Clerk<sup>5</sup></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keeper of vital statistics</li> <li>○ Custodian of Town seal and records</li> <li>○ Administers oath of office to Town officers</li> <li>○ Issues licenses and permits</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Not applicable (p.79)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town Clerk interacts with Town Council, administrative bodies of Town, and all multimember bodies and other elective organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Operational Branch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Department of Public Works</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Roadways</li> <li>○ Solid Waste</li> <li>○ Structures and Grounds</li> <li>○ Water Pollution Control</li> <li>○ Water Supply</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Works Director</li> <li>• Roadways Superintendent</li> <li>• Water Pollution Control and Water Supply Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation Committee</li> <li>• Water and Sewer Board</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parks and Recreation Department</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cemeteries</li> <li>○ Golf</li> <li>○ Parks</li> <li>○ Fisheries<sup>6</sup></li> <li>○ Recreation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks and Recreation Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks and Recreation Commission</li> <li>• Golf Committee</li> <li>• Fisheries Committee</li> <li>• Veterans Council</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Elder Affairs Department</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Council on Aging</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elder Affairs Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elder Affairs Commission</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Veterans' Department</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Veterans' Services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Veterans Affairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veteran's Council</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Library Department</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Library Services</li> <li>○ Town Records Cataloguing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library Board of Trustees*</li> <li>• Historical Commission</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Police Department</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Policing</li> <li>○ Animal Control</li> <li>○ Parking</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief of Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None listed</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fire and EMS Department</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fire Services</li> <li>○ Emergency Medical Services</li> <li>○ Emergency Management</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire Chief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None listed</li> </ul>

Source: Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, February 27, 2017; amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> While the Town Clerk is not listed as part of the Administrative Branch on p.74 of th Town Code, (Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 1: Offices and Standards), the Town Clerk's role as described on p.50 states that the Town Clerk "participates in the Town's administration through its Administrative Branch" (Part II, Chapter I, Article I, Section 4: Town Clerk.)

<sup>6</sup> Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 14. Parks and Recreation Department, p.96 lists fisheries management although this role is not listed in Section I on p.74.

**A Note on Operational Organization:**

The departmental organization outlined in Bridgewater’s Town Code (Table 7.2A.) does not seamlessly align with the format of the Town’s budget, partially outlined in Table 7.2B. As an example, the Town Code places the Building Department under the umbrella of Community and Economic Development; however, in the budget it is listed under Public Safety alongside the Police and Fire Departments. Because municipalities report their annual budgets in a standard format to the state, budget categories may not reflect the internal departmental organization of an individual community.

**Table 7.2B. Municipal Operational Organization and Expenditure by Budget Category for FY 2020**

Function	Departments	Total Expenditure	Percent of Budget
General Government	Town Council, Town Manager, Finance Committee, Reserve Fund, Accountant, Assessors, Treasurer, Legal, IT, Town Clerk, Parking, Conservation, Planning, Zoning, Town Buildings	\$3,204,286	5.2%
Public Safety	Police, Fire, Inspectional Services, Animal Control	\$12,235,636	20.0%
Education	Tuition: Bridgewater-Raynham Regional District, Bristol Agricultural, Bristol Plymouth, Norfolk County Agricultural	\$31,915,071	52.2%
Public Works	Town Engineer, Highway Department, Snow/Ice, Street Lighting	\$1,684,778	2.8%
Health & Human Services	Health, Council on Aging, Veterans’ Services	\$491,202	0.8%
Culture & Recreation	Library, Recreation	\$636,228	1.0%
Other	Debt Service, Intergovernmental, Unclassified Benefits, Unclassified Expenses, Transfers Out	\$11,008,671	18.0%

Source: Town of Bridgewater 2020 Annual Report, p.137-140 and Barrett Planning Group LLC.



**GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**Town Manager**

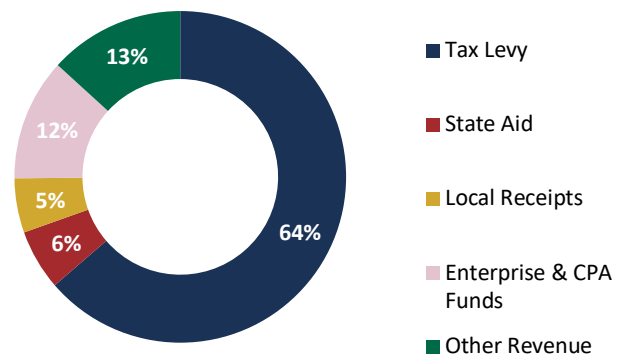
The Town Manager reports to the Town Council and serves as the Chief Administrative Officer, while performing other responsibilities per the Town Charter. The Town Manager’s responsibilities range from overseeing municipal departments (not including the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District), appointing and supervising Town Officers, administering provisions of general or special law, maintaining Town facilities, approving and negotiating contract awards, making recommendations to Town Council, and serving as Bridgewater’s liaison to all regional and local entities. One of the position’s most critical tasks is the preparation and submission of the annual operating budget, Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and long-term financial forecast. The Town Manager is supported by the Assistant Town Manager. The Town Manager and Town Council also receive support from the nine-member Finance Committee on the operating budget, the school budget, long-term financial planning, and the capital improvement program. Of the Finance Committee members, the Town Manager appoints three, Town Council appoints three, and the Town Clerk appoints three.



**Finance Department**

Bridgewater’s Finance Department responsibilities include **Accounting, Assessing, Tax Collection,** and the **Treasury**.<sup>7</sup> The Department is led by the **Director of Finance** who works in tandem with the Town Accountant, the Treasurer-Collector, the Chief Assessor.<sup>8</sup> The Town Manager appoints each of these positions. All financial matters are reviewed for appropriateness by both the Director of Finance and the Town Manager and go through a system of checks and balances. As an example, the Town Accountant approves all warrants and expenditures (with approval from the Director of Finance and Town Manager) and advises the Town Manager on financial policies. The Treasurer-Collector ensure monies are managed through sound investment and

**Figure 7.1. FY 2021 Revenues by Source**  
 (Source: Ma Municipal Data Bank)



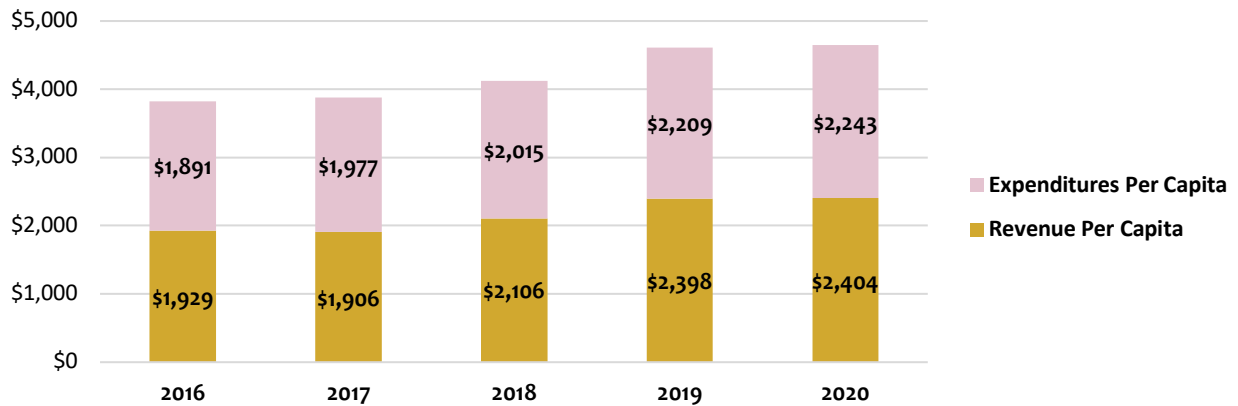
<sup>7</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part 2, Chapter 2, Article 1, Section 9: Finance Department, p.87-92, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> The Finance Director also serves one of these roles, per the Town Code.

disbursement, working with the Town Accountant and Town Manager on cash flow projections, planning, and borrowing. Lastly, the Finance Department regularly interacts with the **Board of Assessors** and the Town Council through the **Finance Committee**.

Accounting regulates financial transactions including Enterprise Funds operations and Charitable Fund disbursements. It also maintains a ledger of Town accounts, conduct financial reconciliations, process all invoices, and produce reports including the monthly budget report, state and federal reports, the annual financial audit, and the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The Treasury handles investment policies, cash management, debt management, and collection of real estate liens. It is responsible for producing the Town payroll, wage reporting, paying vendors, making payroll tax deposits, overseeing disbursement of vendor checks, and issuing/servicing of the Town's bonds. The Treasurer collects all accounts due and payable to the Town. Assessing appraises taxable property and ensures equitable distribution of tax burden. The department provides administrative support to the Board of Assessors, handle taxation provisions including excise taxes, and oversee the classification of land for taxation. The Board of Assessors may revise rules, regulations, and guidelines to establish minimum standards of performance.<sup>9</sup> Figures 7.1 and 7.2 provide a summary of Bridgewater's revenues managed by the Treasurer, and an overview of revenues and expenditures per capita in Bridgewater from 2016-2020.

**Figure 7.2 Revenues vs. Expenditures Per Capita**  
 Source: Massachusetts Municipal Data Bank



**Town Clerk<sup>10</sup>**

Bridgewater's Town Clerk is elected for three-year terms. The Town Clerk's duties are mandated by the Town Charter, state law, Town Council, and the Town Code. Per Town Council order, the Clerk prepares the annual Town Report, which is one of the position's most crucial functions.<sup>11</sup> The Clerk keeps all records and vital statistics of the Town, conducts local elections, and completes the annual Town Census. The Clerk records and certifies all official actions, prioritizing those relating to the Annual Report, is the custodian the Town Seal and Flag, and administers the oath of office to Town Officers. The Town Clerk also issues licenses, permits, and certifications as provided by law and meets

<sup>9</sup> Town of Bridgewater, "Boards, Committees & Commissions," June 10, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter I, Article II, Section 4: Town Clerk, p.51, February 27, 2017, amended December 25, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Preparation of the Annual Town Report by the Clerk is not mandated for cities.

annually with the Town Council Administrative agencies, elective bodies, and boards and commissions to access specific records or information pertaining to elected officials.

### **Land Use and Development**

As designated by the Town Charter and state law, Town Council and Town Manager facilitate planning, development, and land use decisions, supporting Bridgewater's **Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, and the Community and Economic Development Department**. These decisions have widespread implications on the local landscape and the future of the community.

#### **Community and Economic Development**

The Community and Economic Development Department (C/ED) provides administrative and technical expertise to: the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Historical Commission, the Historic District Commission, the Housing Partnership Committee<sup>12</sup>, the Open Space Committee, the Board of Health, the Affordable Housing Trust, the Community Preservation Committee, the Disabilities Commission, the Transportation Committee, and the Conservation Commission.<sup>13</sup> The department itself consists of six subdepartments, each with specific responsibilities and functions according to the provisions of state law: Planning, Community Development, Economic Development, Building, Conservation, and Health. The overall mission of the Community and Economic Development is to protect natural land uses while promoting the local economy, affordable housing, and the public health of residents. The C/ED department supervises the collaborative development of the Master Plan with the Comprehensive Master Plan Committee, and the Planning Board approves the finalized Plan. The Master Plan serves as a guide to streamline development review, strengthen community and economic planning efforts, and manage transportation, open space and recreation, and facilities and services through its core components: a vision, goals, inventory and existing conditions, strategies, recommendations, and an implementation plan.

The department is run by the Community and Economic Development Director, a Building and Zoning Official, a Health Agent, and a Conservation Agent. Each role is appointed by the Town Manager. (One person may serve in more than one role.) The department also has an Environmental Planner and Executive Assistant. The Director consults the Town Manager, other departments, and multi-member bodies regarding interdisciplinary concerns. The department also consults with regional or state agencies such as the Old Colony Planning Council on long-term planning projects, non/for-profit organizations on development projects, and other related groups. Recent successes of the C/ED department include streamlining residential permitting via a new software, recodifying the Town's zoning, and hiring the Town's first Environmental Planner, who also serves as the Conservation Agent.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Conservation**

Both the Environmental Planner and the Town Engineer/Conservation Agent work with the Conservation Commission to enforce the Wetlands Protection Act, MGL Chapter 131 and the Town's

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<sup>12</sup> The Housing Partnership Committee is not currently active.

<sup>13</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 8: Community and Economic Development Department, p.83-85, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2019, Community and Economic Development, p.58, December 31, 2019.

Wetlands Protection Ordinance. Together, they protect Bridgewater’s natural resources, wetlands, and wildlife through planning, acquisition, land management, regulation, research, and education. The Conservation Agent assists with the permitting process, reviewing and issuing permits subsequent to Commission decisions. The Commission evaluates land proposed for donation, acquisition fees, and tax titles, and completes site inspections. The Conservation Agent is supported administratively and in a more technical capacity by Community and Economic Development.

### Information Technology

Bridgewater’s IT Department consists of an IT Director and a Computer Systems Administrator. The department supports essential technological advancements and it plays an important role in daily government functions regarding communications, archiving, and security. Residents and business owners rely on digital means to pay bills, apply for permits, learn about municipal processes, communicate with Town staff, and more. The Town’s commitment to implement fully digitized procedures has increased the need for IT specialists. IT manages the wireless network, software/hardware, operational equipment in public facilities — including public schools — and nearly every other piece of municipal electronic and digital infrastructure. They provide user and system support for all department computers and programs, manage computer network operations in multiple locations, provide training for employees, and offer courses for the public. The department regularly engages with the Town Manager and other departments to troubleshoot issues, ensure compliance, and work on special projects.

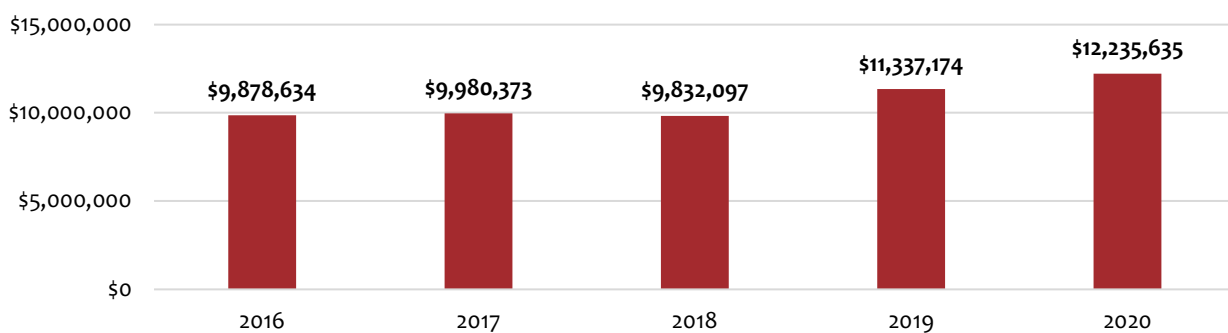
According to the Town Code, the IT department is also responsible for the following functions: systems development and planning, systems modification and enhancement, central services and management and administration for geographic information systems (GIS), software acquisition, website and social media management, supplies management, binding/printing/plotting/scanning services, desktop publishing, and processing municipal software programs on the host computer system, web-based, and cloud technology.<sup>15</sup>

### PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety includes the Police Department, Fire Department, and the Building Department. Public safety is highly prioritized in town, receiving funding allocations surpassed only by education. Figure 7.3 outlines public safety general fund expenditures between 2016 and 2020.

**Figure 7.3. Public Safety Expenditures: 2016-2020**

Source: MA Municipal Data Bank



<sup>15</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 15: Police, p.97-98, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

### **Police Department**

The Bridgewater Police Department (BPD) receives nine percent of the Town's yearly budget (\$5,558,278, FY 2020) to support a full-service department - one Chief of Police, one Captain, two lieutenants, one court prosecutor, two detectives, four sergeants, one detective sergeant, twenty-seven officers, and two administrative staff members. Of the twenty-eight officers, there is one K9 officer, one motorcycle officer, one School Resource Officer, and one Firearms Licensing Officer.<sup>16</sup> There are five divisions within the Bridgewater Police Department: Bike Patrol, Detectives, Motorcycle Unit, Patrol Division, and the Whitman, West Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, Bridgewater, and Bridgewater State University (W.E.B.) Task Force. 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. BPD Officers meet with the Town Manager and other departments, particularly the regional 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 pertaining to wildlife and pet ownership.

Aligning with the community policing model, the Bridgewater Police Department offers the Citizens Police Academy, a program designed to inform the community and develop working relationships to solve collective issues. Classes are held for residents at the Police Station and taught by officers. Topics include: domestic violence, use of force, patrol procedures, constitutional/motor vehicle law, sex offender registry, narcotics enforcement, drunk driving, the Satucket Regional Tactical Team, canine patrol, courtroom procedure, and criminal investigation. Participants can also ride with officers on patrol, tour the Old Colony Correctional Center, and view proceedings at Brockton District Court.<sup>17</sup>

Other programs offered are Civilian ALICE Training (Civilian Response Training to Active Shooter/Violence Incidents), women's self-defense courses, and domestic violence resources. Bridgewater PD are members of the Southeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (SEMLEC) SWAT Team, the SEMLEC Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team, the regional W.E.B. Major Crimes and Drug Task Force, the Brockton Area Opioid Abuse Collaborative, the Bridging LIVES Coalition (with local officials and the school district), and Plymouth County Outreach.

Bridgewater Police obtain supplemental funding through federal and state grants to support operations. Recently awarded grants include a Coalition of Plymouth County Police Departments Jail Diversion Program Grant (2018), a Byrne Justice Assistance Grant for new security cameras, and a grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) to address impaired driving. The local Police maintain strong relationships with the Bridgewater State University (BSU) Campus Police, the Old Colony Correctional Center, and with the police forces of surrounding towns. The Town has roughly 1.49 uniformed personnel per 1,000 residents.<sup>18</sup> The majority of police calls are accidental or abandoned calls, with the second most prevalent issue being a request for an officer at the scene as shown in Figure 7.4.

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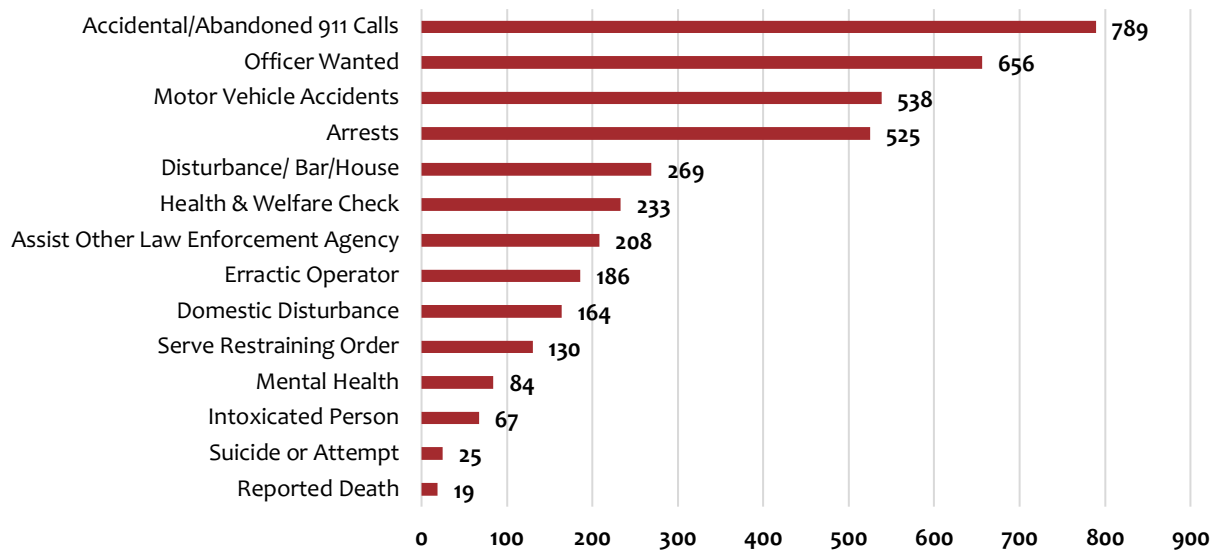
<sup>16</sup> Bridgewater Police Department [www.bridgewaterpolice.org](http://www.bridgewaterpolice.org).

<sup>17</sup> Bridgewater Police Department, "Citizen's Police Academy," June 10, 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Based on a total population of 27,436 (2015-2019 ACS Five-Year Estimates). This does not include BSU Campus Police.

**Figure 7.4. 2019-2020 Bridgewater Police Department Calls for Service**

Source: Bridgewater Police Department



### Fire Department

The Bridgewater Fire Department (BFD) protects the community through fire prevention, suppression, and education, and by training for natural and man-made disasters. The Department interacts with the Town Manager, other departments, and regional/state entities such as the Bridgewater Raynham Regional School District, Public Works, Information Technology, BSU, and the Massachusetts Department of Corrections. The Bridgewater Fire Department received \$5,829,469 in FY 2020 (10 percent of the yearly budget) to serve the residents of Bridgewater, BSU, the Old Colony Correctional Center, and the Bridgewater State Hospital.<sup>19</sup> The Department also operates as the Emergency Preparedness Department (Bridgewater Emergency Management Agency – BEMA), providing emergency management services to residents in addition to fire and emergency medical preparedness and operations. BFD is responsible for preplanning and coordinating emergency disaster services in accordance with the Town’s Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)<sup>20</sup> approved in 2020.<sup>21</sup>

The Fire Department is a full-service operation consisting of 51 full-time firefighters including the Chief, one Deputy Chief, one Training Captain/Paramedic, one Fire Prevention Officer/Lieutenant/Paramedic, one EMS Lieutenant/Paramedic, an Executive Assistant, an Office Administrator, and forty-two firefighters. Four duty groups staff the headquarters and the substation (11-12 firefighters per group), each member being a certified paramedic or EMT. BFD’s apparatus consists of three engines, a tower engine, three ambulances, a special operations vehicle, two forest

<sup>19</sup> This is the sum from the general fund and does not include ambulance receipts and other financial sources.

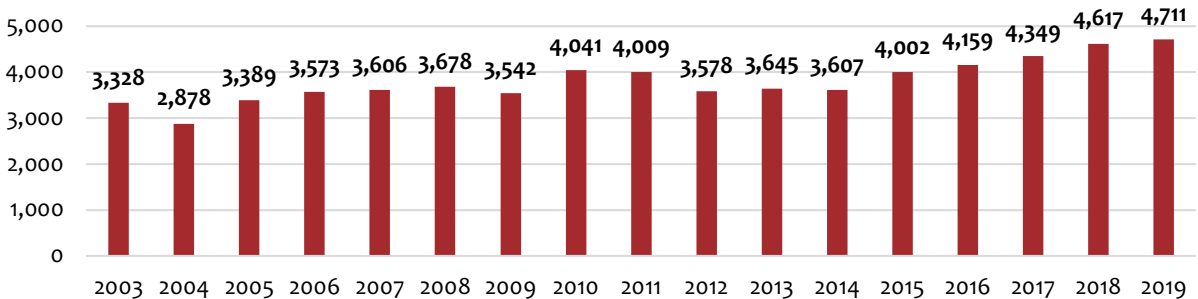
<sup>20</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 16: Fire and EMS, p.8-99, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, July 2020

fire vehicles, an airboat, a quad, an ATV, and five cars.<sup>22</sup> Bridgewater has roughly 1.85 fire personnel per 1,000 residents.<sup>23</sup> In 2019, BFD responded to approximately 4,700 calls for service, the majority of which were regarding inspections or medical emergencies. The call rate increased by 2 percent since 2018 and 42 percent since 2003. The Department responds to all local calls, including those from BSU and the Old Colony Correctional Center.

**Figure 7.5. 2003-2019 Bridgewater Fire Department Calls for Service**

Source: Bridgewater Fire Department



The Fire Department participates in community events and offers outreach that include the SAFE (Student and Senior Awareness Fire Education) Fire Prevention Education Program and Bridgewater Seniors First. The SAFE program is a grant program to educate the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional 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. Bridgewater Seniors First is an outreach program that works with the Office of Elder Affairs to provide home safety visits and fire safety consultations. There have been roughly 200 home safety visits since the program began in 2015.

BEMA is involved with multiple organizations at the regional scale in terms of emergency planning, and serves as backup for surrounding towns. They are a member of the Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC) with East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanson, Raynham, West Bridgewater and Whitman. REPC coordinates resources and initiatives to integrate an emergency management system and hazard plan. The emergency planning region is known as the Sachem Rock Regional Emergency Planning Zone (SRREPZ). SRREPZ has its own regional Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The CERT team has over 200 volunteers assisting regional first responders during an emergency/planned event. BSU provides training facilities and resources for CERT, receiving funding from the BSU University Community Initiative (UCI). The Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District offers the Teen CERT program for community service credit.<sup>24</sup>

### Building Department

While the Building Department is housed under the responsibilities of the Community and Economic Development in the Town Charter, it is considered a line item in the “Public Safety” portion of the

<sup>22</sup> Bridgewater Fire Department, “About Us,” June 11, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Based on a total population of 27,436 (2015-2019 ACS Five-Year Estimates).

<sup>24</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2018, Fire: Emergency Management, Fire: Fire Services, p.85-87, December 31, 2018.

budget. The Building Department is responsible for the administration and enforcement of applicable codes for building, plumbing, gas, and electrical wiring. The Building Department is also responsible for ensuring the accuracy for weights and measures, and zoning determinations and enforcement.<sup>25</sup> This includes enforcing sign ordinances and the state building code. The six-member Department includes an Inspector of Buildings/Zoning Enforcement Officer, a Local Inspector, a Plumbing and Gas Inspector, a Wiring Inspector, a Sealer of Weights and Measures, and an Office Administrator. Table 7.3 provides a summary of permit values for 2020. The Building Department received 0.7 percent, or \$439,372 of the Town budget for FY 2020.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 7.3. Building Permits, Values, and Construction Fees (2020)**

<b>Building Permits</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Permit Fees</b>
Certificates of Inspection	135	\$6,150
Mechanical	19	\$48,284
Sheet Metal	64	10,360
Commercial Permits—Signs, Alterations, Etc.	57	\$424,850
<b>Total Commercial Permits</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>Construction Value: \$36,534,942</b> <b>Permit Fees: \$489,644</b>
Single Family Dwellings	79	\$284,464
Duplex Dwellings	1	\$3,000
Over-55 Manufactured Homes	19	\$18,294
Residential Additions, Alterations, Decks, Sheds, Pools, Stoves, etc.	815	\$116,740
<b>Total Residential Permits</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>Construction Value: \$35,095,189</b> <b>Permit Fees: \$422,498</b>
Wiring Permits	795	\$174,390
Plumbing Permits	393	\$57,055
Gas Permits	444	\$27,990
<b>Total Wiring &amp; Plumbing Permits</b>	<b>1,632</b>	<b>\$259,435</b>
Weights & Measures	-	\$9,555
Occupancy Permits	92	\$2,980
Vacant and Abandoned Buildings	6	\$1,200
<b>Other</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>\$13,735</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>\$1,185,312</b>

Sources: Town of Bridgewater 2020 Annual Report of the Town Officers and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

The Department of Public Works (DPW) manages Bridgewater’s 120 miles of public roads, engineering review of public construction/infrastructure, the Town’s transfer station and solid waste disposal (as Bridgewater does not provide curbside trash pickup), water supply, water pollution control, stormwater, and Town parks, cemeteries, and public building grounds. DPW obtains \$1,893,393 (FY 2019) of the Town’s budget (3 percent) to support the following staff positions: the DPW Director, the Roadways Superintendent, the Water/Sewer Superintendent, the Assistant Sewer Superintendent, the Transfer Station Agent, and four administrative roles. There are five subdepartments led by the Director of Public Works: Roadways, Solid Waste, Structures and Grounds,

<sup>25</sup> Town of Bridgewater, “Building Department,” June 12, 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2020, FY 2020 Expenditure Actuals, p.138, December 31, 2020.



Water Pollution Control, and Water Supply. The Town Manger appoints all department heads. If the DPW Director is not appointed by the Town Manager, one of other listed positions may serve as the Director.<sup>27</sup> DPW briefs the Town Manager regularly, collaborates with other departments, and is advised by the Water and Sewer Board and the Transportation Committee on an as-needed basis. Most operations are funded via an enterprise fund that separates the water, sewer, transfer station, and golf course revenues/expenditures from the general fund. Excess revenue is placed into a capital reserve for improvements. The formal duties of each subdepartment are as follows:

- The **DPW Director** provides centralized administration and management to subdepartments and other Town departments; formulates policy; provides procedural guidance; oversees operations, procurement, personnel, capital planning and budgetary management; and establishes and maintains community relations.
- The **Roadway Subdepartment** maintains and improves roadways, public parking facilities, sidewalks and town-owned stormwater drainage; oversees stormwater testing and management; support traffic flow management decisions and enhances pedestrian and vehicle safety; plants/maintains/removes Town trees;<sup>28</sup> provides snow and ice removal and routine or emergency repairs to Town vehicles and equipment. Roadways is currently understaffed, processing approximately 420 work orders in one Spring to Summer work season. Chapter 90 monies contribute significantly to the department's capacity, supplying \$530,000 for projects in 2020.<sup>29</sup>
- The **Solid Waste Subdepartment** manages residential solid waste and certain hazardous waste collection programs; manages the Transfer Station (with the Board of Health); promotes recycling programs; markets recyclable materials; coordinates with the SEMASS waste-to-energy plant (or other vendor) for transfer/disposal of solid waste; and coordinates a leaf and brush disposal program. Roughly 2,000 residents purchase stickers to utilize the Transfer Station per year, which does not reflect the flow of those who have already purchased said stickers.
- The **Structures and Grounds Subdepartment** consists primarily of Structures and Grounds Superintendent who protects, preserves and maintains municipal buildings and facilities; manages construction, renovation and maintenance with a priority on energy-efficiency and conservation; and provides support to the Parks and Recreation Department for the grounds keeping of cemeteries and parks.
- The **Water Pollution Control Subdepartment** manages wastewater collection and disposal, including operation and maintenance of the treatment plant and septage processing facility, pumping stations, and gravity sewage collection mains; operation of an industrial pretreatment program testing laboratory for septage/sewage and effluent regulatory compliance; and maintenance of an accounts receivable and billing system for sewer use. There are 42 miles of sewer lines in Bridgewater. The sewage treatment plant treated 392 million gallons in 2019, or 1.074 million gallons per day and the wastewater treatment facility received 5.2 million gallons of septage in 2019, or 14,247 gallons per day. The Town recently completed its Comprehensive

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<sup>27</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 10: Public Works Department, Pages 91-92, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>28</sup> This is done in conjunction with the Bridgewater Improvement Associate (BIA), a non-profit organization that supports tree planting along Town streets through its endowment and volunteer efforts, They also fund maintenance of the Common and Little Park.

<sup>29</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2020, Public Works: Roadways, p.86, December 31, 2020.

Wastewater Management Plan, which recommends the extension of the municipal sewer system.<sup>30</sup> The EPA/DEP also recently required a treatment plant upgrade a part of their regulatory compliance schedule, which may impact those on the Town system.

- **Water Supply Subdepartment** provides commercial and residential properties with safe drinking water; operates and maintains the water treatment facility, pump stations, and distribution system; and maintains the accounts receivable and billing system for water use. Operations at the Carver Pond Treatment Plant and the Nitrate Plant are overseen by this subdepartment. There are roughly 140 miles of distribution piping and 10 gavel-packed wells in Bridgewater. As with the sewer system, services are funded by the Enterprise Fund through user fees. Approximately 683 million gallons of water are produced at the plant per year, or a daily average flow of 1.87 million gallons per day.

**Table 7.4. FY2020 – FY2021 Enterprise Fund Operating Budgets – Water and Sewer**

Budget Items	FY2020 - Sewer	FY2021 - Sewer	FY2020 - Water	FY2021 - Water
Salaries/Wages/Benefits	\$968,327	\$1,021,339	\$1,289,212	\$1,378,071
Expenses	\$627,740	\$545,146	\$1,326,345	\$1,009,506
Debt Services	\$437,068	\$509,800	\$679,494	\$910,458
Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-
Transfers Out	\$115,037	\$1,474,706	\$146,162	\$280,525
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,148,172</b>	<b>\$2,250,991</b>	<b>\$3,441,213</b>	<b>\$3,578,560</b>

Source: Town of Bridgewater FY2021 Enterprise Funds Operating Budgets, Town Manager’s Office

## CULTURE AND RECREATION

Bridgewater has a long, rich cultural tradition that is kept vibrant and alive through the activities of its boards and commissions, residential groups, the public library, and the school district. Cultural and recreational programming makes up 1 percent (\$629,339) of the general fund budget; however, many of the Town’s most well-known cultural attractions and nonprofit organizations (Music Alley, the Bridgewater Improvement Association, the Bridgewater Arts & Music Festival, AutumnFest, and Fourth of July celebrations) are privately organized and funded. State funds are available to support culture and recreation, such as the grant awarded to the Cultural Council to assess the use of the “Old Town Hall” as a cultural center.

### Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department is rooted in collaborative partnerships and offer passive and active recreation, social, and leisure activities/services to residents.<sup>31</sup> There are five subdepartments: Recreation Management, Parks Management, Golf Course Management, Fisheries Management, and Cemetery Management. They share a headquarters with the Water Department at 90 Cottage Street and consist of a Director (appointed by the Town Manager) and an administrative assistant - a small staff when compared to the number of programs offered and duties required. User fees and donations

<sup>30</sup> Weston and Sampson, Town of Bridgewater, Massachusetts Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (with Water Resources), December 2019.

<sup>31</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 14: Parks and Recreation, Pages 95-97, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

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make up the majority of the Department's budget, with \$99,000 allocated for salaries, benefits, and wages from the general fund.<sup>32</sup> The subdepartments are charged with providing:

- **Recreation Management** develops and delivers educational, social and recreational services, and facilities and playing fields for independent leagues. This subdepartment assesses the need for renovation/development of facilities, manages staff and volunteers, and is regularly seeking to diversify and strengthen programming.
- **Parks Management** provides oversight for over 700 acres divided between six parklands, and the Taunton and Town River watersheds. It is also responsible for maintenance, coordinating special events, completing management plans for park properties, and delivering educational services to residents. Parks Management works with volunteers and other committees to accomplish its mission. This subdepartment has been historically understaffed and the parklands have not been frequently maintained. Hiring a managerial position to fix this issue has been a reoccurring topic throughout the Master Plan's citizen participation process.
- **Golf Course Management** services the community's golfing population by operating an attractive, self-supporting public golf facility named the Olde Scotland Links municipal golf course. The course is located at 695 Pine Street. It is run as an enterprise account — users of the service pay for the operational needs and any related debt service. The Parks and Recreation Commission oversees golf operations. The course is a Certified Audubon Cooperative Bird Sanctuary Golf Course. There are only 9 in Massachusetts, and 473 worldwide.
- **Fisheries Management** supports the preservation of fisheries within and abutting the Town. Fisheries Management relies on Town staff and volunteers to repair or replace fish ladders and restock streams and ponds. The Parks and Recreation Commission develops and recommends rules and procedures for the operation of the Town fisheries. There is also a Town River Fisheries Committee, a joint committee with citizens who advise on fisheries issues and conduct annual fish counts at the High Street Dam.
- **Cemetery Management** preserves and supports cemeteries under the Town's jurisdiction. Duties include showing and selling burial lots, coordinating grounds keeping with the DPW, preparing grounds for events, arranging interments, protecting grave markers, and assisting the public. Cemetery Management works with funeral directors, families, relatives, and the Town's Veteran's Agent to coordinate burials, lot sales, foundation and monument installations, and genealogical research.

The department works closely with other municipal departments, the **Parks and Recreation Commission**, the **Open Space Committee**, the golf course staff and **Golf Commission**, and the school department/regional school district. The Town Manager confers with the Director on program approval, rate setting, budgeting, expenditures, grant assistance, policy implementation, and facility coordination. Public Works assists with facilities management. The Police perform special details and patrols. The Conservation Commission advises on land use. The School Department shares the usage of gyms and fields. The Parks and Recreation Commission is the five-member advisory body to the Town Manager regarding rules and regulations. It collaborates with Town Council on relevant

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<sup>32</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Town of Bridgewater FY2021 General Fund Operating Budget, May 19, 2020.

policies and legislation.<sup>33</sup> The Open Space Committee (five members) advises on all matters pertaining to open space and natural resources,<sup>34</sup> and it works closely with the Town Manager, the Community and Economic Development Director, and the Community Preservation Committee.<sup>35</sup>

#### **Cultural Council**

The Bridgewater Cultural Council operates pursuant to the provisions of MGL Chapter 10, promoting excellence, access, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences for all Bridgewater residents while contributing to the community's economic vitality.<sup>36</sup> It is the advisory and ministerial body that decides the distribution of arts lottery funds and other funds that may be available. The Council also conducts local activities and partners with other towns to promote the arts. The Council obtains most of its support and resources from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the state organization supporting all things arts and culture. Additionally, the Council receives administrative support, financial assistance, and property for sponsoring exhibits and related displays/activities from the Town Manager. The Town Manager is the Council's liaison to Town Council concerning policy and legislation around the arts.<sup>37</sup> The Council granted \$19,599 to support 32 projects in 2020.<sup>38</sup>

#### **Historical Commission**

The Historical Commission is a five-member advisory body consisting of three regular members and two alternates. The Commission has many responsibilities including protecting and developing the Bridgewater's historical and archaeological assets, conducting research, cooperating with the state archaeologist, making landmark recommendations to Town Council and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, advising on the execution of contracts, surveying historical sites and buildings, determining the historical significance of structures subject to the demolition delay bylaw, and hosting seminars/hearings with individuals, organizations, institutions or services. The Commission may recommend the acquisition of property by gift, purchase, grant, bequest, devise, lease or a fee or lesser interest in real or personal property. Town Council and the Commission work together on preservation and development policies and legislation of assets.

#### **Historic District Commission**

The Historic District Commission is seven-person advisory and regulatory committee that must have an architect, a builder with five years of historic renovation experience, or a professional educator or attorney specializing in historic preservation. Members are appointed for three-year terms. At least one member must be a resident or property owner in the District. The Historic District Commission endorses the educational, cultural, economic, aesthetic, and literary significance of structures within the district's boundaries through preservation and protection. The Commission is responsible for

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<sup>33</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter I, Article III, Section 22: Parks and Recreation Commission, p.68-69, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Inactive from 2016 to late 2019 because the number of members did not reach a quorum

<sup>35</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter I, Article II, Section 21: Open Space Committee, p.68, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Massachusetts Cultural Council, "Bridgewater Cultural Council," June 14, 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter I, Article III, Section 10: Cultural Council, p.60, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2020, Cultural Council, p.46-49, December 31, 2020.

developing and maintaining standards of historical appropriateness for the appearance of building exteriors and settings within the District. Part of this task is weighing in on demolition or removal of protected structures and on the appropriateness of displays when a certificate of appropriateness is required.<sup>39</sup> The Town Manager and the Community and Economic Development Department provide assistance for Commission activities. Town Council works with the Committee on legislation/policy. The ZBA, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Community Preservation Committee, and the Historical Commission also work closely with the Historic District Commission as needed.

### Community Preservation Committee

Bridgewater voted to authorize the Community Preservation Act (CPA), MGL Chapter 44B, a local option statute enacted by the Massachusetts legislature, in 2005. Bridgewater citizens voted to impose a 2 percent surcharge on property taxes after the first \$100,000 of assessed value to create funding for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing, and recreation. CPA funds are also generated through a variable distribution from the state Community Preservation Trust Fund. Since its adoption by Town vote, Bridgewater has collected roughly \$8.5 million, and the Community Preservation Trust Fund distribution has ranged from 18 to 100 percent of local receipts.<sup>40</sup> The CPA Fund had a balance of \$3,661,790 at the end of FY19. Bridgewater's **Community Preservation Committee** (CPC) is responsible for evaluating the Town's needs and resources regarding community preservation, including reviewing applications and recommending spending appropriations to Town Council for authorization. The CPC is composed of nine members, appointed by the Town Manager, subject to recommendation from their respective committees: one member of the Conservation Commission; one member of the Bridgewater Historic District Commission; one member of the Historical Commission; one member of the Planning Board; one member of the Affordable Housing Trust; one member of the Housing Authority; one member of the Open Space Committee; and one member of the Parks and Recreation Commission. These appointees do not require ratification from the Town Council. The Town Manager shall appoint one at-large member, whose appointment shall be ratified by the Town Council. These members bring needs from their respective associations, but vote independently of those associations under CPA legislation. The CPC consults with the Town Manager and other boards/commissions as needed.

### Bridgewater Public Library

The Bridgewater Public Library (BPL) is a historically and culturally significant institution in Town. The history of the library at its current location of 15 South Street extends back to 1967, when Flora T. Little bequeathed half a million dollars to the Board of Library Trustees. This location is slightly north of the original library, the Memorial Building,<sup>41</sup> commissioned and constructed in 1872 as a memorial to Bridgewater Citizens killed in the Civil War. There are nine staff members, including a Director appointed by the Town Manager. The Director is appointed upon the recommendation of the Board of Library Trustees. According to the 2020 Annual Town Report, the Library had an operating budget of about \$634,126 and offered 266 programs for children, young adults, and adults, which were attended by 7,777 patrons.<sup>42</sup> Unlike in previous years, all programming in 2020 was held online due

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<sup>39</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter I, Article III, Section I6: Historic District Commission, p.64-65, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>40</sup> JM Goldson, Town of Bridgewater Community Preservation Plan FY2020-2024, February 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Bridgewater Public Library, "About the Library," June 15, 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2020, Public Library, p.85, December 31, 2020.

to the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 7.5 details the library’s holdings, programming, revenue, and expenditure for the years 2019 and 2020 as reported by the Massachusetts Libraries Board of Commissioners.<sup>43</sup>

The library has a Children’s Room, an Art Gallery on the second-floor mezzanine featuring local artists, and hosts weekly events. Events range from movies, to lectures and guest speakers, to performers. The library undergoing renovations, including painting and installing new carpeting. The library is also working on reinstating their used bookstore and is hoping to accomplish this in the near future. BPL also provides museum passes and public meeting space that host roughly 400 meetings per year. The library is a member of the SAILS Library Network, a 72-member network throughout 40 communities in Southeastern Massachusetts.<sup>44</sup> Membership in SAILS entails direct access to the Enterprise Online Catalog and Circulation system, vastly expanding availability of resources for Bridgewater residents.

**The Board of Library Trustees** is an advisory Board consisting of nine members elected for three-year terms. Their duties are to guarantee free/open access to information and ideas, foster literacy, and encourage learning in Bridgewater.<sup>45</sup> They interact with Town Council and pertinent bodies on matters within their purview, and with the Town Manager on budgetary items. The Trustees are responsible for maintaining certification under the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and coordinating with staff to offer materials and services for the public.

<b>Table 7.5. Public Library Survey Statistics, 2019 and 2020</b>		
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Total Holdings	122,634	131,447
Total Circulation	102,587	77,105
Total Nonresident Circulation	14,949	10,868
Total Visits	63,670	41,392
Total Number of Children Programs	229	247
Total Number of Other Programs	61	44
Number of Registered Users	14,390	13,934
Municipal Government Operating Income	\$562,553	\$591,500
State Operating Income	\$22,851	\$29,396
Other Operating Income	\$17,057	\$32,466
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>\$602,461</b>	<b>\$653,362</b>
Salaries Paid from Library Budget	\$498,651	\$405,429
Total Materials Expenditures	\$67,689	\$56,371
Total Other Operating Expenditures	\$108,561	\$102,155
<b>Total Operating Expenditures*</b>	<b>\$826,965</b>	<b>\$718,702</b>

Source: Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, 2019 and 2020 Library Statistics Reports.

\*Total Operating Expenditures reported differs from total of expenditure categories.

<sup>43</sup> 2020 is most recent calendar year available for this report; 2019 also included to show the last full calendar year before COVID-19 pandemic. Because the library was closed for much of 2020 due to the pandemic, the figures for visits and circulation dropped for that year. Presumably these figures will trend upward in the 2021 and 2022 reports when they are available.

<sup>44</sup> SAILS Library Network, “What is SAILS?” June 15, 2020, <https://www.sailsinc.org/about-us/>.

<sup>45</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter I, Article II, Section 3: Library Trustees, p.49-50, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

## 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 Bridgewater are those focusing on the elderly, veterans, and general health. During FY 2020, Human Services received \$491,202, or 0.8 percent, of the Town's general fund budget. Eighty percent of the Health and Human Services budget was dedicated to salaries, wages, and benefits.<sup>46</sup>

### Health Department

Bridgewater's Health Department is staffed by a full-time Health Agent and an office administrator. The main office is in the Municipal Office Building at 66 Central Square. The department received roughly 31 percent of the Health and Human Services budget in FY2020 (\$151,717), with the other monies allocated to the Council on Aging and the Veterans Agent. 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, waste water, the water supply and trash removal.<sup>47</sup> The department works specifically within Community and Economic Development to issue disposal works construction permits and licenses to food service and retail establishments.<sup>48</sup> These establishments are inspected once a year. They also collaborate with Public Works on a 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. One of these members must be a physician or health care professional.

### Elder Affairs

Elder Affairs is located at the Senior Center on 10 Wally Krueger Way. The Senior Center offers a plethora of programming for Bridgewater's estimated 3,773 seniors,<sup>49</sup> including art classes, health insurance counseling, legal services, Meals on Wheels, and transportation. Through its programming, Elder Affairs promotes the emotional, physical, and economic well-being of older adults and encourages their participation in Bridgewater community life.<sup>50</sup> The department consists of an Elder Affairs Director, an Executive Assistant, an Outreach Coordinator, and two van drivers. The Director is appointed by the Town Manager to oversee operations, capital planning, budget management, community relations, and procedures.<sup>51</sup> The Town Manager approves any expenditures and new procedures. Approximately 46 percent of the Health and Human Services operating budget was allocated to the Council on Aging (Senior Center), at \$227,812 in FY2020.<sup>52</sup> This amount is

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<sup>46</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2020, FY 2020 Expenditure Actuals, p.138-139, December 31, 2020.

<sup>47</sup> Town of Bridgewater, "Health Department," June 15, 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2019, Community and Economic Development: Health, p.61, December 31, 2019.

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table A01001, ACS Demographic And Housing Estimates.

<sup>50</sup> Town of Bridgewater. "Elder Affairs," June 15, 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 11: Elder Affairs Department, p.92-93, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>52</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2020, FY 2020 Expenditure Actuals, p.138-139, December 31, 2020.

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supplemented by grants such as those from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and private donations. Dialogue is maintained with Public Works, the Health Department, the **Elder Affairs Commission**, and other boards as-needed. The Elder Affairs Commission also serves as the Trustees of the Senior Center funds, making recommendations to the Director and the DPW Director on capital needs/repairs, issues with building condition, and beyond.<sup>53</sup> The Commission primarily interacts with the Elder Services Director, who then reports to the Town Manager. The Town Manager then relays the needs and concerns of the elderly population and the Senior Center to Town Council.

### **Veterans' Services**

The Department of Veterans' Services is responsible for supporting Bridgewater's veteran community. The Department has one Veteran's Agent (also known as a Veterans Service Officer) serving roughly 1,200 veterans residing in the Town. The Veterans Agent is appointed by the Town Manager. Veterans' Services receives 31 percent of the Health and Human Services operating budget, or \$153,411.<sup>54</sup> This is in addition to federal VA benefits and state-sponsored financial and medical benefits received.

The Veteran's Agent advises and assists resident veterans and their dependents in accessing state and federal benefits. The Agent also provides outreach, counseling, medical, and support services, and regularly works with the Town Manager on all matters relating to veteran policies, facilities, budgets, procurement, personnel, and operations. The Agent may work with the Finance Director and the Town Treasurer to provide the financials and to assist veterans with real estate tax abatements.<sup>55</sup> **The Veterans' Council** supports and advises the Veterans Agent on programs, services, policies, and financial management. The Council's communication with the Town Manager is done through the Veterans' Agent; communication with Town Council is done through the Town Manager. There are between five and fifteen members on the Council at any given time, serving three-year staggered terms.<sup>56</sup>

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

### **Bridgewater-Raynham School District**

The Bridgewater-Raynham School District is a K-12 regional school district serving the communities of Bridgewater and Raynham. There are seven schools in the district: Mitchell Elementary School (Bridgewater), Laliberte Elementary School (Raynham), Merrill Elementary School (Raynham), Bridgewater Middle School (Bridgewater), Raynham Middle School (Raynham), Williams Intermediate School (Bridgewater), and Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School. The majority of young adults attend the regional high school, but some may attend the Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical School, Norfolk County Agricultural School (Norfolk Aggie), or others depending on their area of interest. There are also private schooling options in the surrounding communities for each grade level.

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<sup>53</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter 1, Article III, Section 12: Elder Affairs Commission, Pages 62-63, February 27, 2017, amended December 17, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Town of Bridgewater FY2021 General Fund Operating Budget, May 19, 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 13: Veterans' Department, p.94-95, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>56</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter 1, Article III, Section 28: Veterans' Council, p.72, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.



The **Bridgewater-Raynham School District Committee** is an independent committee elected by both Raynham and Bridgewater registered voters and created via the Regional District Agreement. The Committee requests funding from both Bridgewater and Raynham but does not have any independent legislative or regulatory authority in either municipality’s operations. It does, however, meet with Town Council, the Town Manager, the Finance Committee, and the Finance Department to discuss pertinent budgetary issues.<sup>57</sup> The **Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical School District Committee** was also created via the Regional District Agreement, and has one elected member from Bridgewater representing its interests. As with the Bridgewater-Raynham School District Committee, Bristol-Plymouth does not have municipal authority but meets with the Council and Town Manager on matters relating to education and budgeting.<sup>58</sup>

**Enrollment Trends**

The Massachusetts Department of Education reported district-wide enrollment of 5,392 students in the Bridgewater-Raynham School District during the 2021 to 2022 school year. Table 7.6 displays a breakdown for Bridgewater enrollment for the three schools serving Bridgewater residents only, plus the high school and Therapeutic Day School.

**Table 7.6. Enrollment by School, 2021-2022**

Grade	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SP	Total
Mitchell Elementary	152	258	273	262	259											1,204
Bridgewater Middle									238	273						511
Williams Intermediate						260	243	236								739
BR Regional*											375	309	316	355	13	1,368*
Therapeutic Day School*									1	1	1	4	1	5	0	13*

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

\*District-Wide Total

Bridgewater-Raynham student performance meets expectations for language arts, mathematics, and science according to 2021 MCAS scores, which indicates higher average scaled scores in all subjects for the district as compared to the state.<sup>59</sup> The 2021 Accountability Classification for the district - related to progress in improvement targets, accountability percentiles, graduation rates, and assessment participation rates - was classified as “substantial progress toward targets.” The state’s

<sup>57</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter I, Article II, Section 5: Bridgewater-Raynham School District Committee, p.51, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>58</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Bridgewater Massachusetts Town Code, Part II, Chapter I, Article II, Section 6: Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical School District, p.51-52, February 27, 2017, amended October 22, 2021.

<sup>59</sup> The average scaled score for a district is a number from 440-560 and represents the average of individual student scaled scores measuring the extent to which students have attained or are progressing toward proficiency in a given subject.

District Analysis Review Tool (DART) compares Bridgewater-Raynham’s progress with similar districts, as shown in Table 7.7 below.<sup>60</sup>

**Table 7.7. Bridgewater-Raynham School District - 2021 District Assistance Level (DART) Trends**

District Name	# Enrollment	% Econ. Disadvantaged	% Disabilities	% English Lang. Learner
BRIDGEWATER-RAYNHAM	5,272	20.5%	16.3%	2.8%
Chelmsford	4,826	14.7%	16.6%	4.2%
Dudley-Charlton Reg	3,439	25.6%	16.1%	3.5%
Hampden-Wilbraham	2,865	20.2%	15.4%	1.3%
Mansfield	3,504	16.9%	15.8%	1.7%
<b>Milton</b>	4,355	11.4%	16.0%	2.1%
<b>Natick</b>	5,251	10.7%	14.8%	3.0%
North Andover	4,510	18.6%	17.4%	2.0%
North Attleborough	3,936	20.6%	18.5%	3.9%
Shrewsbury	5,974	13.6%	14.3%	2.7%
Whitman-Hanson	3,583	22.5%	15.8%	1.9%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), DART Trends, and Barrett Planning Group LLC. DESE determines district similarity based on grades span, total enrollment, and special populations.

### Expenditures

The Town of Bridgewater allocates \$31,000,000 or roughly 55 percent, of its general fund budget to public education. The FY21 proposed budget by the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District Committee allocated \$80,892,974 without capital and debt. The budget proposes \$ 86,961,572 for total operations with capital and debt.<sup>61</sup> The district spends about \$13,940 in per pupil expenditures, which is \$3,635 less than the state (\$17,575). When compared to similar school districts as designated by DESE, Bridgewater-Raynham ranks number nine out of eleven. This indicates that there is a need for greater resource allocation and targeted funding needs. Since 2010 there has been a 32 percent increase in expenditures per pupil, one of the lowest increases among comparison districts.

**Table 7.8. Expenditures per Pupil. 2010-2020**

School District	2010	2015	2020	% Change Since 2010
BRIDGEWATER- RAYNHAM	\$10,522.47	\$12,759.08	\$13,939.78	32%
Chelmsford	\$10,550.40	\$13,288.93	\$15,658.95	48%
Dudley-Charlton Reg	\$10,209.34	\$11,584.81	\$13,935.32	36%
Hampden-Wilbraham	\$11,403.26	\$13,829.67	\$16,185.08	42%

<sup>60</sup> Similar districts are determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). DESE determines district similarity based on grades span, total enrollment, and special populations.

<sup>61</sup> Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District, Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District 2020-2021 Preliminary Student Success Budget Presentation, January 22, 2020.

**Table 7.8. Expenditures per Pupil, 2010-2020**

School District	2010	2015	2020	% Change Since 2010
Mansfield	\$10,163.47	\$13,790.47	\$17,726.19	74%
Milton	\$11,750.08	\$14,116.37	\$15,508.44	32%
Natick	\$12,909.95	\$14,044.07	\$16,744.78	30%
North Andover	\$11,276.57	\$12,054.90	\$14,995.83	33%
North Attleborough	\$9,836.82	\$11,245.15	\$13,845.34	41%
Shrewsbury	\$10,563.86	\$13,147.35	\$14,377.55	36%
Whitman-Hanson	\$10,204.17	\$11,703.17	\$14,198.56	39%
State Total	\$13,047.92	\$14,942.16	\$17,575.17	35%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DOE), Per Pupil Expenditures - All Funds, and Barrett Planning Group LLC. **DESE determines district similarity based on grades span, total enrollment, and special populations.**

The majority of school-related funding in the Town Manager’s FY2019-2025 Capital Improvement Program was allocated to the new G.H Mitchell Elementary School. Following \$39,900 spent in 2019 on access improvements for the site, an estimated \$88,766,000 was apportioned in the CIP to cover the cost of the project, \$33,828,113 of which would be reimbursed by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).<sup>62</sup> The MSBA and the Town of Bridgewater worked closely with the **Bridgewater School Building Committee** to develop the 132,000 ft<sup>2</sup> school at 500 South Street. The new facility includes 42 classrooms, 17 resource and special education spaces, 1 flexible learning space, 6 multi-functional classrooms, outdoor and visible learning areas, common areas/community spaces, and a new gymnasium and stage.<sup>63</sup> In 2017, the MSBA invited the Bridgewater-Raynham School District to participate in a Feasibility Study along with three other districts. This invitation followed the collapse of the school’s roof in 2015 after years of disrepair and neglect. The project was approved for construction by referendum vote and is now scheduled for occupancy in 2022. It is anticipated to have a long-lasting positive impact on Bridgewater.

In addition to the reimbursement from MSBA for the G.H Mitchell School, an MSBA grant was awarded for accelerated repair projects in recent years for the Bridgewater Middle School (\$1,006,807).<sup>64</sup> Bridgewater continues to prioritize its educational facilities and work on its most pressing capital building needs by working with local, regional, state, and federal parties to access untapped resources. The district’s *Student Success Plan* for 2018-2023 reiterates the desire to continuously improve educational facilities. Their Strategic Plan works toward achieving the goal of having seven, fully-functioning educational facilities that follow regulatory guidelines for health and safety by 2023. Bridgewater continues to prioritize its school facilities, looking beyond the final construction of new Mitchell school. The FY2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan slates \$4,425,000 to Bridgewater Middle School, \$4,525,000 to Williams Intermediate School, \$2,642,400 to the High School, and \$130,252 to the District.

<sup>62</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Proposed Capital Improvement Program 2019-2025, January 17, 2019.

<sup>63</sup> Raymond Design Associates and Aedalus, G.H Mitchell Elementary School Community Presentation, October 17, 2019.

<sup>64</sup> Massachusetts School Building Authority, “List of Projects for the District by School District,” June 16, 2020, [http://info.massschoolbuildings.org/Project\\_List/ShowProject.aspx?LEA\\_Code=0625](http://info.massschoolbuildings.org/Project_List/ShowProject.aspx?LEA_Code=0625)

## MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

The Town of 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 in nature 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.<sup>65</sup> Examples of capital projects are construction of or major improvements to public buildings and roads. Many of Bridgewater’s buildings are historically and culturally significant, requiring specialized care and maintenance that qualifies as a capital project. Older historic buildings often pose structural and financial challenges when attempting to renovate for modern-day use and code compliance. There are several buildings that remain in need of ADA-accessible infrastructure installations, for example the Memorial Building.

Bridgewater’s municipally-owned buildings and structures have a combined value of approximately \$55,500,000.<sup>66</sup> 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 Bridgewater-Raynham School District has their own Facilities Department reporting to the Superintendent and the School Committee.

### Public Buildings

#### The Academy Building/Municipal Office Building

The Academy Building has served as Bridgewater’s “new” Town Hall since 1916. The building is located at 66 Central Square in the Central Business District (CBD), overlooking the Town Common and within the Historic District. The majority of government services are conducted here, offering a “one-stop-shop” for activities pertaining to government operations. The only departments not housed in the building are Parks and Recreation, the Water/Sewer Department, the Roadways Department, and the Council on Aging. Up until the renovations, Town Hall was unable to meet space, storage, and service demands. The building now contains three levels, five meeting spaces, and a 28-space rear parking lot. Proximity to local businesses, Bridgewater State University, and other municipal operations such as the Bridgewater Public Library maximize the efficiency of this location.



*David Flynn Town Hall (also known as Old Town Hall)*

#### David Flynn Town Hall

The David Flynn Town Hall, also known as the “Old Town Hall” or the “Town House,” was constructed in 1843 and has been a landmark in the community for over 150 years. The building is located at 50 Central Square, abutting the Fire Station headquarters. While it is currently unused, a study to evaluate its feasibility as a cultural center was completed in 2019. The David Flynn Town Hall is also the subject of a historical designation

<sup>65</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Proposed Capital Improvement Program 2019-2025, January 17, 2019.

<sup>66</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Schedule of Locations, prepared for the Town by MIIA Property and Casualty Group, Inc., September 30, 2019.

effort. The Town Hall was dedicated to Mrs. A. Evelyn Norris (former Town Clerk) and Mr. David Flynn (former Town Moderator, Selectman, and State Representative who became Dean of the House. Feedback from Core Assessment meetings, public forums, and Comprehensive Master Plan Committee (CMPC) meetings highlights overwhelming support for transforming the Old Town Hall into a cultural center. Music Alley, a popular seasonal performance venue, takes place next to the building.

### Bridgewater Public Library

Bridgewater's Public Library is located at 15 South Street. It is a relatively new structure when compared to Bridgewater's repository of public facilities, many being historically significant. The Library was built in 1972 using local, state, and federal funding and features an architectural design that complements the historic appearance of the area. A major addition was made in 1995 which created additional meeting, resource, and collection space.<sup>67</sup> Today, the building accommodates 63,000 annual visitors and has 119,600 total holdings. The FY2019-2025 CIP proposed an allocation of \$190,000 in Debt Exclusion funds for repairing and repaving the parking lot and a roof replacement.<sup>68</sup> The 2021-2026 CIP has allocated the following: \$100,000 for roof replacement, \$50,000 for parking lot repairs, \$54,000 for interior upgrades, \$50,000 for windows, \$66,000 for a door access system, and \$65,000 for a camera system upgrade.



*Bridgewater Public Library*

### Memorial Building

The Memorial Building is another landmark located within the Historic District, at 25 South Street. The building was approved by Town Meeting in 1882 for three functions: a library, a Civil War memorial, and a museum for display of historic artifacts. The building housed municipal offices and was fully functioning until the collapse of the main hall ceiling in 2012 due to an earthquake.<sup>69</sup> Since then, the Town has worked vigorously to renovate the Memorial Building to be ADA-accessible and house other municipal services. The basement will be an archive for documents the Town is required to maintain under MGL. A Green Communities grant was awarded to improve the heating and cooling system and upgrade insulation in 2016. Other sources include the Community Preservation Fund (CPC), the Memorial Building Capital Fund, and the Water Supply and Water Pollution Control Capital Fund. The 2019-2025 CIP dedicated \$600,000 from the CPC (\$350,000 of which has been awarded for accessibility improvements). Seven Hundred Thousand dollars was made available later

<sup>67</sup> Town of Bridgewater Master Plan Study Committee and Dufresne-Henry, Inc., Town of Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan, "7.8 Bridgewater Public Library," p.7-11, November 2002.

<sup>68</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Proposed Capital Improvement Program 2019-2025, January 17, 2019.

<sup>69</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Full CPA Application – FY'20, Submitted by Michael Dutton, September 30, 2019, <https://www.bridgewaterma.org/DocumentCenter/View/2970/Memorial-Building-Application-revised>

for improvements upon the Town Manger’s request to Town Council. The updated 2021-2026 CIP has slated \$275,000 for technology improvements and general rehabilitation throughout FY2022.

### **Bridgewater Police Station**

The Police Station has a modern, 15,000 ft<sup>2</sup> campus equipped with the space to accommodate their full-time police force of five divisions and administrative staff, plus their apparatus. The 60-acre station was built in 2002 and is located on Route 104 at 220 Pleasant Street. Bridgewater has a long history of supporting public safety, usually earmarking nine percent (\$5,000,000) of the general fund for the Police. There will be \$690,000 allocated to BPD facilities and equipment between 2019 and 2025 from the Capital Stabilization Fund and a percentage of the general government allocation. The Town used Green Communities grant money to improve energy efficiency at the station. Students from the Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School worked with the Police Department to construct the new outbuilding in the parking lot behind the station. The new outbuilding replaced two older storage sheds.<sup>70</sup>

### **Bridgewater Fire Stations**

Bridgewater has two fire stations that host four duty groups of 51 employees: a headquarters located near the Town Common at 22 School Street and Station 2 (Prattown) located at 774 Plymouth Street. The seven-bay headquarters was constructed in the 1860s, with additions made in 1951, 1960, and 1972.<sup>71</sup> Station 2, constructed in 2001, is a three-bay substation east of the CBD. It serves as a regional equipment cache site through the Department of Homeland Security. This entails housing message boards, light towers, and generators for emergency or planned use by communities in the southeast region. The equipment is in a steel-framed fabric shelter.<sup>72</sup> As the host community, Bridgewater is responsible for coordinating the loan of cache resources. Approximately ten percent (\$5,500,000) of general fund spending is allocated to the Fire Department. BFD received ten percent of 2019-2025 Capital Improvement Program funds. Ten million dollars (Debt Exclusion) of that funding was put toward the new Fire Headquarters and Substation 1. The Headquarters’ schematics have since been approved by the ad hoc Fire Station Committee and presented to Town Council and the public. The cost estimate for the building and Substation 1 upgrades are roughly \$23 million. The 2021-2026 CIP allocated \$35,000 to HVAC improvements in Station 2, and \$15,600,000 to the building design and construction of Station 1.

### **Department of Public Works Facilities**

The DPW has various locations throughout the Town that support each subdepartment’s services:

- Engineering offices: 151 High Street
- Highway Department: 151 High Street, with accessory facilities at 215 High Street<sup>73</sup>
- The Transfer Station/Recycling Center: 1200 Bedford Street

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<sup>70</sup> “Construction Continues on Bridgewater Police Department Outbuilding,” Wicked Local, September 24, 2019.

<sup>71</sup> Bridgewater Fire Department, “History,” June 18, 2020.

<sup>72</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Annual Town Report 2018, Fire: Emergency Management, p.85-86, December 31, 2018.

<sup>73</sup> These accessory facilities include a highway garage and fueling depot, a bulk storage canopy, and a salt shed.

- Wastewater Treatment Plant: 100 Morris Avenue
- High Street Water Treatment Facility
- Water and Sewer Department: 90 Cottage Street
- Carver's Pond Water Treatment Plant

The 16,000 ft<sup>2</sup> \$1.3 million Highway Department site is comparatively new and became the home to roadways/highway operations in 1999.<sup>74</sup> Water and Sewer manage all municipal water supply facilities including wells, pumping stations, transmission and distribution mains, treatment facilities, and storage reservoirs. The wastewater treatment plant is located at 100 Morris Avenue and required upgrades based on findings from the 2019 Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) - a new treatment facility is now located on High Street.

The DPW receives about three percent of the Town's general fund budget (nearly \$2,000,000) for capital management, facilities, and operations. The department has been underfunded and understaffed for some time, barely managing to keep up with demand. DPW received \$16,304,799 from the 2019-2025 Capital Improvement Plan (13 percent of total) and \$23,783,589 from the 2021-2026 CIP (39 percent); funding for 2021-2026 will be for bridge repair, building improvements, highway/road construction and maintenance, the drainage program, equipment, stormwater, and pedestrian and traffic safety.

#### **Parks and Recreation Facilities**

Parks and Recreation shares a central office with the Water and Sewer Department on Cottage Street. The office is next to Legion Field, allowing shared use of the field's facilities and streamlined programming/service delivery. Facilities under the department's jurisdiction include Town-owned playing fields, Legion Field's gazebo, press box, concession stand, storage building, and the Bob Stearns Field House. These facilities are off Bedford Street, fronting the Williams Middle School. Parks and Recreation also manages the Girls Softball concession stand and storage facility, and the Marathon Park Playground on Crescent Street. Marathon Park - established in 2014 by a private fund - offers active recreation facilities and conservation/open space for passive recreation. The park was funded and built by a private entity, carrying the stipulation that the Town would maintain it. It now has considerable equipment issues, which are in the process of being repaired. The BW Youth Soccer Association works with Parks and Recreation to use the Flagg School Meeting Hall Building. This building was constructed in the 1850s and is the last remaining one-room schoolhouse. It is still owned by the Town today.<sup>75</sup> Lastly, although the Town does not own Scotland Field, programming and facilities are overseen and managed by the Parks department which includes a baseball diamond, basketball court, and a playground.

Over the upcoming seven years, the department will receive \$110,000 for buildings, fields, and recreation; with sixty-three percent of funding awarded in 2019, and thirty-seven percent to be awarded in 2023. Funding is pooled from the Community Preservation Fund, the Capital Stabilization

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<sup>74</sup> Town of Bridgewater Master Plan Study Committee and Dufresne-Henry, Inc., Town of Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan, "7.5 Infrastructure Services and Facilities," p.7-4, November 2002.

<sup>75</sup> Benjamin Spence, Bridgewater, Massachusetts: A Town in Transition "Education in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, 1900-1910," 2008.

Fund, and alternative sources for: building repairs, Legion and Scotland Field basketball courts, Legion’s small playground, Babe Ruth Field, a dog park, and the Senior Center Pickle Ball courts.<sup>76</sup>

### Olde Scotland Links Golf Course



*Olde Scotland Links Municipal Golf Course  
Source: Olde Scotland Links Website*

The Olde Scotland Links is an eighteen-hole links-style championship course located at 695 Pine Street - the former Chaffee Farm property. The course is managed by on-site staff and the Parks and Recreation Department via the Golf Commission, and is a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. The 210-acre course was founded in 1997 and is popular with residents and visitors alike.<sup>77</sup> Olde Scotland Links offers discounted membership rates and programs for residents, and instructional lessons. The course regularly hosts tournaments and functions. On-site facilities include the driving range, a maintenance facility, a Clubhouse, Pro Shop, a storage building, and a golf cart pavilion, with

an additional storage building at 690 Pine Street. The Town owns and maintains each of these structures. The course is funded via the Town’s Golf Course Enterprise Fund, meaning users of the service pay for operational and capital needs. The total FY2021 golf budget was \$1,502,835, of which 56 percent was dedicated to salaries, wages, and benefits, the remainder is for general operations and equipment.<sup>78</sup>

### The Cole Yeaton Senior Center

The Senior Center is a community staple in Bridgewater. Now known as the Cole-Yeaton Senior Center, the facility is located at 10 Wally Krueger Way and offers a wide variety of programming and services for local seniors. The Center contains administrative offices for staff, a cafeteria, and an open activity space. The layout of the activity space can be changed depending on the type of activity. In addition to roughly \$200,000 allocated to the Council on Aging (COA)/Senior Center from the general fund, funding is also used from the Senior Center Trust Fund, the Capital Stabilization Fund, Debt Exclusion funds, and alternative funding sources. The 2019-2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) awarded \$405,000 to the Center for an upgraded electrical panel, interior improvements, roof improvements, parking lot repavement, and a new van. The FY2021-2026 CIP is allocating \$75,000 for parking lot improvements, \$100,000 to interior renovations, and \$100,00 to roof repairs. Plans are also

<sup>76</sup> Town of Bridgewater, Proposed Capital Improvement Program 2019-2025, January 17, 2019.

<sup>77</sup> Town of Bridgewater Master Plan Study Committee and Dufresne-Henry, Inc., Town of Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan, “7.10 Olde Scotland Links Golf Course Committee,” p.7-16, November 2002.

<sup>78</sup> Town of Bridgewater, FY2021 Enterprise Funds Operating Budgets, 2020.



underway for an outdoor seating and recreation area with a Pickle Ball court. Bridgewater continues to support its senior population and Elder Affairs staff as much as possible.

#### Pratt School Building Meeting Hall/VFW Post 2125

The Pratt School Building Meeting Hall is a former schoolhouse erected in 1856. It is located at 40 Orange Street in Bridgewater’s eastern neighborhood of Prattown.<sup>79</sup> The building was enlarged in 1908 to accommodate the growing population and provide meeting space. The Town owns the facility, which is now the James A. Oliver Jr. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2125 and the Bridgewater Veterans Council.

#### McElwain School

The McElwain School at 250 Main Street is a former elementary school that served the community of Bridgewater for 80 years. The two-story brick building was built in 1912 on two acres of land northwest of the CBD. The school was designed by Loring and Phipps, a prominent Boston architectural firm at the time. The school underwent little to no changes during its 80-year lifespan, closing in 1997.<sup>80</sup> The roof, however, was replaced in 2002. The building has served as a storage facility since its closure. Today, the building has been refurbished into 57 mixed-income apartments, with occupancy slated for 2022. The project also includes a detached rear building with housing units and the rehabilitation of a three-family home and barn at 242 Main Street.<sup>81</sup> The Community Preservation Fund granted, with appropriation from Town Council, \$1.35 million from CPA housing funds for this project in 2018.



*The McElwain School*

#### BTV Town Cable

BTV Access Corporation (Bridgewater Community Television) is a non-profit public television enterprise serving the community. The facility is located at 80 Spring Street. BTV produces and broadcasts original programming over cable channel nine and [btvaccess.com](http://btvaccess.com).<sup>82</sup> Content includes news, sports, religious programming, music, cooking, performing arts, political programming and more. BTV also provides support for the Government Access Channel 22 and Education Channel 98 with Town Council and School Committee meetings. Ninety percent of programming is shot, edited, and produced by volunteers. There are four staff members, including a Station Manager, and a seven-person board. Comcast subscribers fund the BTV Access Corporation, with a percentage of the

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<sup>79</sup> Benjamin Spence, Bridgewater, Massachusetts: A Town in Transition “Education in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, 1900-1910,” 2008.

<sup>80</sup> Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, “William H. McElwain School, Bridgewater, Approved for Nomination to the National Register Of Historic Places,” September 17, 2012.

<sup>81</sup> CoUrbanize, “McElwain School Apartments,” June 16, 2020.

<sup>82</sup> BTV Bridgewater Access Online, “About Us,” June 17, 2020.

operating income of Comcast subscription fees earmarked for operating expenses and equipment acquisition.

**Public School Facilities**

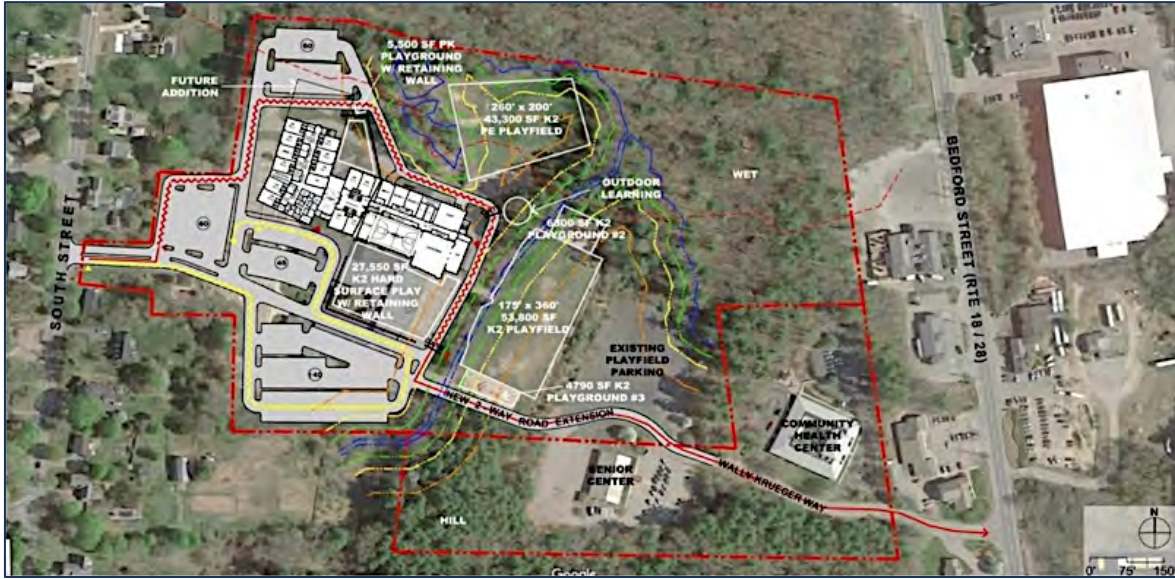
Four of the seven Bridgewater-Raynham School District facilities are in Bridgewater, with the elementary, intermediate, and middle schools serving Bridgewater residents only. The G.H Mitchell School is undergoing a complete redesign and reconstruction. The new school will provide a state-of-the-art gymnasium, media center, storage, and recreation areas including two playgrounds, a play field and a PE field. The old building has been torn down (Spring 2020), the School Building Committee has approved the final design, and the new building is under construction. The building is slated for completion in 2023. The table below summarizes the current public school buildings and their associated recreational facilities.

**Table 7.9. Bridgewater Public School Facilities**

School	Grades	Address	Year Opened	Square Footage	Year Renovated	Recreation Facilities Summary
George H. Mitchell Elementary School	PK-2	500 South St.	Pending	132,045	N/A	Basketball (1), Volleyball (1), Playground (2), PE Field, K-2 Play Field
Williams Intermediate School	4-6	200 South St.	1968	150,808	2006	Baseball (9), Football/Soccer (1), Basketball (2), Gazebo, Skateboard Park
Bridgewater Middle School	7-8	166 Mt. Prospect St.	1961	182,000	2007	Football (2), Tennis (8), Soccer (1), Softball (1)
Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School	9-12	415 Center St.	2007	300,035	N/A	Football/Multipurpose Turf Field (1), Track, Soccer (1), Baseball (2), Softball (2), Indoor Gym

Source: Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District, and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

Bridgewater Comprehensive Master Plan  
Chapter 7. Facilities and Services



*The Mitchell School MSBA's Preferred Schematic Design  
Source: The Bridgewater School Building Project*



**Other Recreational Facilities<sup>83</sup>**

**The Common**

Situated in Central Square where Routes 18, 28, and 104 converge, the Common is surrounded by local businesses and some of Bridgewater’s most historic buildings. There are several memorials in the Common, the largest of which being the WWI Memorial facing the Academy Building. While the area’s central location, open lawn, and beautiful greenery have the potential for making this area a true gathering spot, community feedback indicates that it is underutilized, in part due to vehicular traffic. Nonetheless, it is a popular destination for annual community events such as Christmas on the Common.



*All-Foreign Wars and Ladies Auxiliary Memorials - The Common*

**Cemeteries**

There are eighteen cemeteries in Bridgewater, eleven being Town-owned according to Assessor’s database. The oldest cemetery is First Cemetery, also known as the First Parish Cemetery or the South Parish Cemetery, at the corner of Summer and Pleasant Street. The Parks and Recreation Department handles cemetery groundskeeping and parks management for the Town-owned cemeteries, with support from the Department of Public Works Structures and Grounds subdepartment.

**Table 7.10. Cemeteries in Bridgewater, MA**  
**Cemeteries in bold are Town-owned**

Name	Estimated Date	Aliases
<b>Conant Street Cemetery</b>	1821	Conant-Town Cemetery
<b>First Cemetery</b>	1716	South Parish Cemetery, Old Graveyard, First Parish Cemetery, Revolutionary Cemetery
First Saint Thomas Aquinas Cemetery	1854	
<b>Great Woods Cemetery</b>	1793	Alden's Bridge Cemetery, Titicut Cemetery
<b>Harlow Cemetery</b>	1826	Cherry Street Burial Ground
<b>Hillside Cemetery</b>	1813	Auburn Street Cemetery, Auburnville Cemetery, Benson Town Cemetery
<b>Jennings Hill Cemetery</b>	1750	Old Graveyard, Japan Cemetery
Mount Prospect Cemetery	1842	Bridgewater New Cemetery
Old Saint Thomas Aquinas Cemetery	1867	Roman Catholic Cemetery
<b>Pine Street Cemetery</b>	1833	
<b>Pratt Town Cemetery</b>	1828	Pratt Town Burial Ground, Orange Street Cemetery
Saint Thomas Aquinas Cemetery	Unknown	
Scotland Cemetery	1753	Scotland Burial Ground

<sup>83</sup> Passive recreational facilities are covered in the Open Space and Natural Resources chapter.

**Table 7.10. Cemeteries in Bridgewater, MA**  
**Cemeteries in bold are Town-owned**

Name	Estimated Date	Aliases
<b>Smallpox Cemetery</b>	1785	Small Pox Cemetery
<b>South Street Cemetery</b>	1756	Keith Cemetery
State Farm Cemetery	Unknown	MCI Cemetery, State Workhouse Graveyard
<b>Trinity Church Cemetery</b>	1748	Episcopal Cemetery
<b>Vernon Street Cemetery</b>	1751	Alden Cemetery

Source: Old Bridgewater Historical Society, and Barrett Planning Group LLC.

## MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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 sewer distribution system serves the majority of commercial corridors and residential areas. However, the public outreach process indicated that the availability of these utilities must be extended to support new business and residential development in 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. The Community and Economic Development Department is required to develop a Stormwater Management Plan to control the impacts of contaminated stormwater on the water supply. The Plan also recommends for sustainable on-site development practices to reduce stormwater runoff such as green infrastructure and nature-based solutions. 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. For example, the Town performed a streetlight conversions assessment, funded by a Green Communities grant. Public Works maintains the 120-mile roadway network, including servicing roads, sidewalks, and mitigating drainage issues.<sup>84</sup> Examples of common problems are drainage installations, flooding (road water), potholes, and the removal of debris/oil in road. Capital funds are also allocated for streetlight and pedestrian/traffic safety improvements in busy areas.

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### 7.3. Challenges and Opportunities

Bridgewater is making substantial and overdue decisions throughout its 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Program lifespan. In total, \$61 million is allotted for capital projects and assets over a seven-year period, or about \$12 million per year. The Town has proven that it can adapt to changing conditions by updating its Master Plan accordingly. With the understanding that the Master Plan is a dynamic document, Bridgewater commits to using its recommendations as an overarching guide during decision-making. Improving facilities and infrastructure through partnerships with the private sector, local/regional institutions, and the state is how the Town will support existing service delivery while investing in its expansion. Using long-range planning, data-driven decision making,

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<sup>84</sup> Town of Bridgewater, “Public Works,” June 17, 2020.

community engagement, and current assets, the Town can balance the demand for services with current capacity.

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING

### *What Has Already Been Done?*

In addition to the Capital Improvement Program, there have been several strategic planning efforts made to optimize facilities and services for future use. These efforts have been supplemented by departmental assessments such as the Fire Substation Feasibility Study, studies associated with the G.H Mitchell School, and previously conducted studies for the Memorial Building and Old Town Hall. These studies, in conjunction with Master Plan recommendations, will guide capital planning and budgeting, minimize the risk of duplicating efforts, increase access to alternative funding sources, and utilize available resources wisely.

#### **Pavement Management Program (2011) and Management Program Update (2016)<sup>85</sup>**

The Pavement Management Program completed by Weston and Sampson is a comprehensive inventory of paved surfaces and a staff manual of roadways, program ratings, and street evaluations. The Pavement Program is designed to assist highway department officials effectively evaluate the condition of flexible asphalt pavements, as well as help Bridgewater maximize funding efficiency for improvements. The Program is complete with descriptions of possible causes, visual examples, and potential treatments for each of the distresses analyzed, from potholes, to raveling, rippling, edge cracking, and lane/shoulder drop-offs. This manual is often used by the DPW and has been instrumental in addressing current pavement issues and preventing reoccurrence. Weston and Sampson updated the 2011 Program in 2016. The 74-page update is designed to further assist Town officials when evaluating flexible asphalt pavement usage. It provided street ratings in the context of the then-five-year Capital Improvement Plan, outlined specific roads on a case-by-case basis, and recommended annual road re-evaluation to determine market costs. The update reported that rehabilitation projects have been reviewed and incorporated into the Pavement Management Program database, with updates to pavement condition evaluations.<sup>86</sup> In 2019 the Town purchased StreetScan, a software program to track surface conditions of roads and sidewalks. The company scanned the streets, and the data is use by the Highway Department and Finance Department for capital planning. The software is for internal use; there is not a public version available.

#### **Bridgewater Master Plan Update (2014)<sup>87</sup>**

The 2014 Bridgewater Master Plan Update revised select chapters of the 2002 Master Plan. While Public Facilities and Services was not among the revised chapters, the updates to Demographics, Housing, and Open Space reflect the changes that Bridgewater underwent between 2002 and 2014. The seven strategies in the 2002 Plan related to Public Facilities and Services were based on anticipated future needs: enhance protective services and facilities for a growing population base; expand and improve infrastructure services and facilities; address community development issues and needs; work with the regional school district on the necessary improvements to school facilities and services; develop active and passive recreational programs and facilities to serve groups within the community;

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<sup>85</sup> Weston and Sampson, Pavement Management Program, October 2011.

<sup>86</sup> Weston and Sampson, Pavement Management Program Update, May 2016.

<sup>87</sup> Town of Bridgewater Master Plan Study Committee and Dufresne-Henry, Inc., Town of Bridgewater Master Plan 2014, "Chapter 8- Facilities and Services for the People," p.8-1-8-40, November 2002.

enhance services through careful evaluation of policies and inter-department coordination; and foster inter-local cooperation where opportunities exist to improve services and reduce costs.

#### **Bridgewater Recreation Needs Assessment (2015)<sup>88</sup>**

The 2015 Recreation Needs Assessment was completed by VHB for later inclusion in the updated 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan and Master Plan Update. The assessment identifies future recreation needs by cross-referencing current inventory with demographic trends and the Level of Service (LOS) for existing facilities. The plan was compiled using information from field visits, interviews with Town staff and stakeholders, public outreach, and research regarding demographics, land use patterns, and levels of service for different types of recreation facilities.

#### **Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (2019)<sup>89</sup>**

The Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) is a critical study for the DPW. The plan, developed by Weston and Sampson, is a 20-year management plan for continued environmental protection and fiscal responsibility with regard to future permitting. It is a reevaluation of the needs and the alternatives for two-thirds of Bridgewater properties who rely on individual on-site (septic) systems for wastewater treatment and disposal. For residents relying on the centralized system or will in the future, evaluation and upgrades of the wastewater treatment plant are needed to meet stringent discharge permit requirements from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The CWMP augmented ongoing and past planning efforts when assessing existing conditions. Public participation included local public meetings, department coordination, BSU outreach, CWMP Review meetings, and CWMP public hearings.

#### **GreatBlue Community Survey (2018)<sup>90</sup>**

The GreatBlue Community Survey was administered by GreatBlue Research, a company specializing in evidence-based research and cross-functional engagement with diverse sets of methodologies. The Town of Bridgewater commissioned the research team to gain an understanding into residents' satisfaction with amenities and future development needs. The goal was to assess perceptions, drivers and barriers to increased visitation or patronage, and priorities for future economic development initiatives. Outreach included 303 telephone interviews among randomly selected residents and 261 online survey responses. Call-backs were set up for respondents who could not complete the survey at the time of the call. A URL link was provided to the Town to collect online responses. The study found that the top priority was "improving local infrastructure" (42.2 percent). Seventy-one percent of residents reported that they would be "very willing" or "somewhat willing" to contribute more in order to increase funding for infrastructure improvements. Among the other key findings were: most believe Bridgewater provides a good quality of life; public safety is exceptional; the school system (68.5 percent), public works/road maintenance (63.1 percent) and planning and zoning services (57.9 percent) are dissatisfactory; most residents leave Town for business/recreation/leisure; and there are too few options for affordable housing for first-time home buyers (30 percent).

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<sup>88</sup> Town of Bridgewater and VHB, Recreation Needs Assessment – 2015, April 2016.

<sup>89</sup> Weston and Sampson, Town of Bridgewater, Massachusetts Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (with Water Resources), December 2019.

<sup>90</sup> GreatBlue Research Inc., Town of Bridgewater, Massachusetts Community Survey Report of Findings, September 10, 2018.

### Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (2019)

In September 2016, Governor Baker issued Executive Order No. 569 (EO 569), establishing an Integrated Climate Change Strategy for the Commonwealth. Under the order, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) created the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant program. An MVP is required to receive future state grant funds to support resiliency planning and implementation of climate change adaptation actions for resiliency. When awarded an initial MVP grant to develop a resilience plan, the Town hired Green International Affiliates, Inc. They are an MVP-certified provider trained to deliver technical assistance to communities using the Community Resilience Building (CRB) Framework. Information garnered from two workshops, observational and statistical data analysis, and Town staff expertise allowed for the development of the plan's action steps to improve resiliency to climate change in Bridgewater. High priority recommendations from the plan included (plus five others, and 8 low- to medium priorities):

- Develop a Climate Change Resiliency Action Plan for the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP);
- Develop a Climate Change Resiliency Action Plan for the Town's water supply wells and treatment facilities;
- Review and update the Town's Stormwater Ordinance;
- Purchase and Install an emergency generator at the Senior Center and develop an Emergency Back-up Power Plan for other public facilities that serve vulnerable populations; and
- Develop a Town-wide emergency transport and food supply emergency action plan for vulnerable populations.

## MEETING FUTURE NEEDS

### *School Enrollments and Population Changes*

Bridgewater is rapidly changing, growing, and diversifying. MassDOT's growth projections confirm that Bridgewater's population is projected to increase by 8 percent between 2010 and 2040.<sup>91</sup> The 2020 Census confirms that Bridgewater has already matched this, growing from 26,563 to 28,633 since 2010. Population growth results in changes household types, household sizes, as well as 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) is anticipated to decrease or level off. The Town is experiencing the greatest change among seniors as Baby Boomers age. Seniors are anticipated to grow by 120 percent between 2010 and 2040, and 77 percent between 2020 and 2040. Aging populations come with additional demands on municipal services and facilities. The Town must realize for the impact these demographic changes will have, and prepare contingency plans accordingly.

### *Capital Management and Preventative Maintenance*

Bridgewater has finite resources, often leading to difficult decision-making. Maintaining services is a balance, and the demand for certain services outweighs demand for others. Because of their importance in ongoing operations and attracting new residents, public works, public safety and

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<sup>91</sup> Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), "UMDI-DOT Vintage 2018 City/Town Totals, January 2022.



education are usually prioritized. The Town Manager and Town Council ultimately decide which services are kept, which are not, and which capital projects are prioritized over the coming years.

Given past issues with the structural integrity of 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 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.

Bridgewater should also consider appointing or electing a municipal facilities commission to conduct regulatory reviews and data analysis, advise the Town Manager and Council, advocate for policies and legislation, secure funding, and interact with other governing bodies or departments to enhance the quality of facilities.

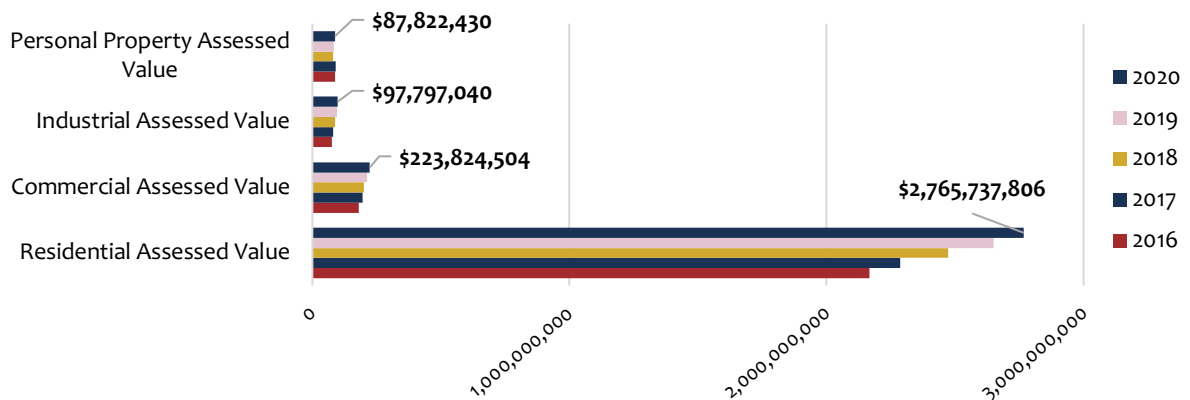
**Tax Revenue, Services, and Town-Owned Land**

The Town of Bridgewater has a set tax rate for all land uses. The rate is currently 14.73, a 1 percent decrease since 2016. The total assessed value of Town land has increased 26 percent since 2016, or 6.5 percent per year (\$2,512,988,630 to \$3,175,181,780). Residential property continues to be the most revenue-generating land use (28 percent increase since 2016); however, industrial land has seen the greatest increase in value over the past four years (30 percent since 2016). Commercial values have grown by 23 percent.<sup>92</sup> Figure 7.6 below outlines in detail the value changes in Bridgewater since 2017.

The 2020 residential levy was \$40,739,318. From 2015-2020, the percentage of tax revenue generated by commercial/industrial and personal properties decreased from 14.3 percent to 12.9 percent. The Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property increase is higher than that of the preceding five-year period (2010-2015), when it increased more slowly. An important point to note is that assessed values are becoming dominated by residential and commercial values. This should be examined, considering the Town’s single tax rate. Another point to note is the difficulty associated with industrial and commercial value gains, given the limitations of suitable land. These increases are good for Bridgewater; however, the feasibility of sustaining growth and meeting future needs given the limitations of industrial and commercial land should be considered.

Certain services, particularly Public Works, Culture/Recreation and Education will require more resources to sustain growth. Departments are compromising programs, activities, and staff while

**Figure 7.6. 2016-2020 Assessed Tax Values in Bridgewater**  
 Source: MA Municipal Data Bank



<sup>92</sup> Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section Data Analytics and Resources Bureau, Community Comparison Report: Bridgewater, July 10,2020.

competing for limited state and federal funds. The quality of services is critical to attracting new residents and keeping current residents, which affects tax revenue, quality of facilities, municipal operations, and service delivery. With the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remaining unpredictable, Bridgewater should focus on attracting new, high-quality commercial and industrial investment by maximizing available land. Additionally, Bridgewater owns upwards of 200 parcels of land, including with on-site properties. The assessed value of the parcels is roughly \$102,041,800, according to the Assessor's database. An inventory and assessment of buildable parcels could analyze available space for (re)development, ensure that parcels reserved for open space or similar purposes are maintained, and unearth those parcels with environmental constraints. This Master Plan includes a map of vacant and occupied public parcels.

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## **7.4. Goals, Polices, and Recommendations**

### **PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES GOALS**

- Provide efficient, reliable, high-quality services and well-maintained facilities that residents consider town assets rather than unnecessary tax burdens.
- Reduce municipal energy use and water consumption.

### **PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES POLICES & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Policies for decision makers are listed **in bold** with relevant recommendations listed below the policy. For detail regarding timing and responsible parties for each recommendation, please see the Implementation Program in Chapter 8.

#### **Commit to environmental sustainability in all Town of Bridgewater policies.**

- Maintain the Town's "Green Community" designation from the state.
- Employ green infrastructure design in town-owned properties to reduce surface water runoff.
- Reinvigorate and encourage resident involvement in the Energy Committee.
- Investigate and promote alternative energy production and storage on Town-owned parcels.
- Continually review and implement the Town's Water Conservation Program.
- Create a Citizen's Board, Advisory Committee, or other body to advise on tree protection, replacement, management, and maintenance.

#### **Collaborate with the Bridgewater-Raynham School District to meet the diverse needs of all students.**

- Provide opportunities for students to exercise required community service hours in service of the Town.
- Work with relevant Town staff and the BRRSD to improve and maintain recreation facilities and secure additional financial resources where possible.

#### **Balance services with careful short- and long-term budget considerations.**

- Continue to prioritize the implementation of a schedule of preventive and major maintenance for all Town facilities.

**Chapter 7. Facilities and Services**

- Pursue interlocal agreements or sharing services with other communities where opportunities exist to improve services, reduce costs, and expand capacity.
- Analyze the feasibility and costs and benefits of contracting with private firms to operate selected services as a municipal enterprise, such as the Olde Scotland Links Golf Course and the Transfer Station.
- Re-examine the possibility of sharing sewer capacity with the Old Colony Correctional Center.

**Prioritize clear and open communication with the public.**

- Report on the status of the Comprehensive Master Plan’s implementation as part of the Town Manager’s State of the Town report for inclusion in the Annual Town Report.
- Encourage participation in departmental office hours/listening sessions for the public.
- Solicit resident input about satisfaction with municipal facilities and services at regular intervals. Bring the results to leadership meetings and develop and publish plans to address concerns based on responses.
- Hold regular Town Manager office hours/listening sessions for members of the public.
- Periodically review the Town Code for accuracy and update as necessary.

**Provide adequate support for Town departments to ensure they are equipped to provide resident services efficiently.**

- Solicit staff input annually to assess and plan for addressing capacity deficits by department.
- Conduct a municipal space needs study to determine space deficits and surplus facilities spaces Town-wide.
- Continue to plan for construction of a new fire station.
- Create, review, and periodically update operational manuals for departments, boards, committees, and commissions.

**Ensure consistency and implementation of existing and future plans.**

- Hold an annual workshop for department heads and chairs of boards, committees, and commissions as part of the annual evaluation process to review the status of implementing this Comprehensive Master Plan, identify needed amendments (if any), and set goals for the next year.
- Implement the 2019 Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan to ensure future availability of high-quality water, meet future permit conditions, and restore the life of existing facilities.
- Continue to pursue funding to implement the high-priority facilities and hazard mitigation recommendations in the MVP.
- Annually review current plans by responsible departments and provide status updates as part of the “State of the Plan” report.

**Chapter 7. Facilities and Services**

- Engage the Town Council’s Strategic Planning Committee to help oversee the implementation of this Comprehensive Master Plan and work with the Town Manager’s office to develop the annual “State of the Plan” report.

**Provide necessary infrastructure to meet the Town’s community development needs.**

- Maintain accurate and up-to-date studies of water and sewer capacity and continue to explore opportunities for expansion.

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## **7.5. Appendix**

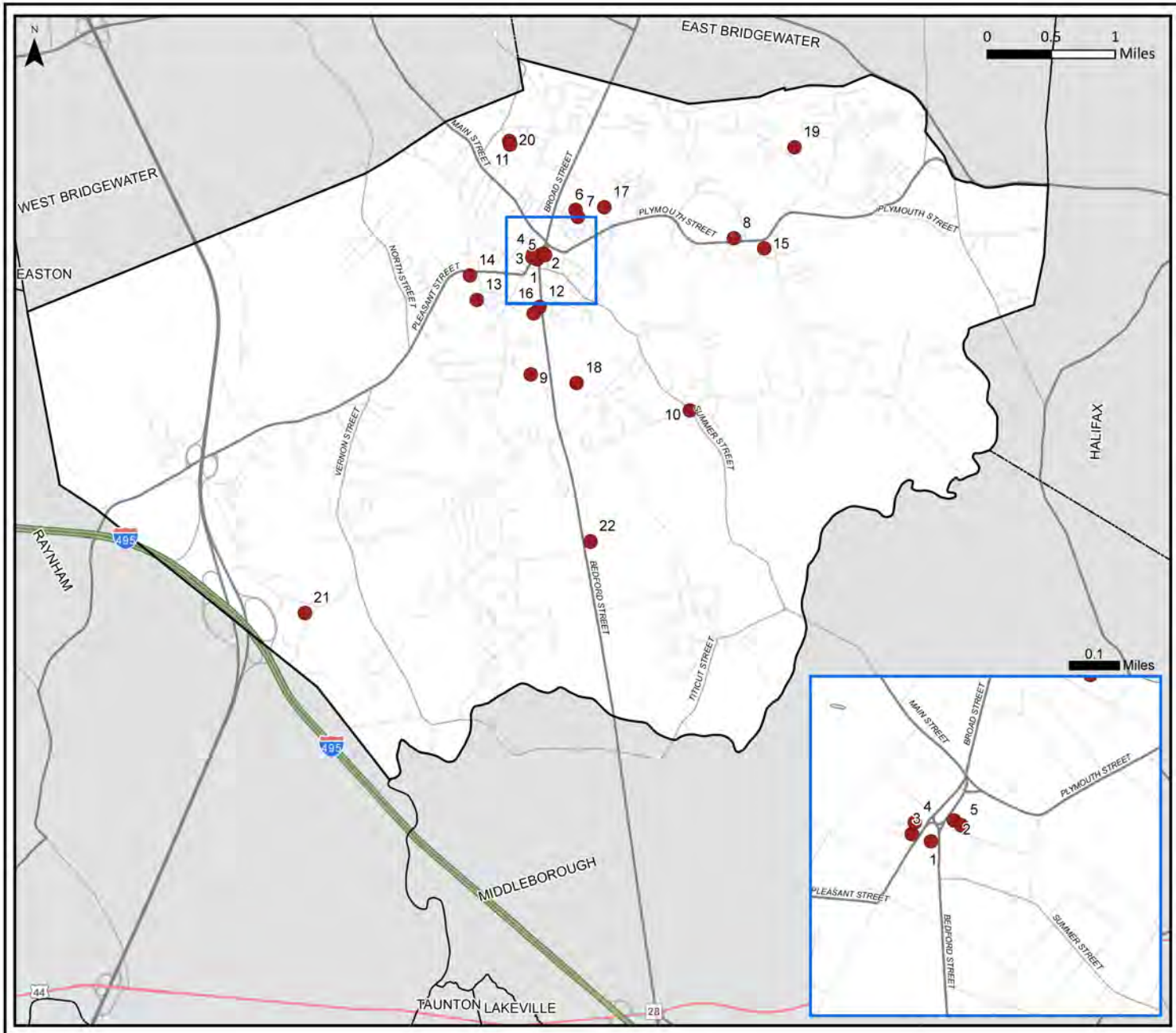
### **MAPS**

Map 7.1 – Town of Bridgewater Major Public Facilities

Map 7.2 – Town of Bridgewater Town-Owned Parcels

### **OTHER**

Town of Bridgewater Organizational Chart of Paid Government

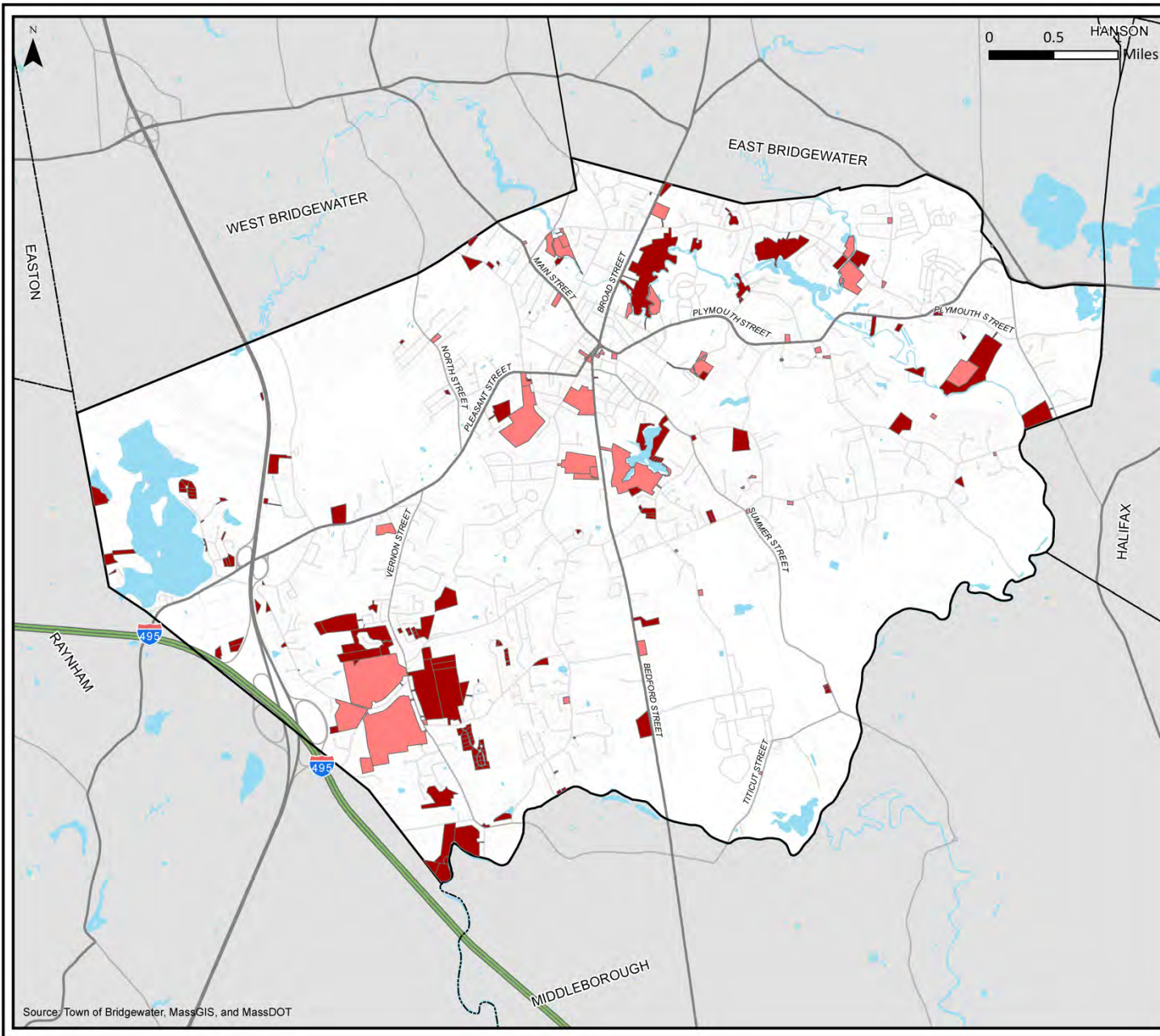


**MAP 7.1. TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER  
MAJOR PUBLIC FACILITIES**

● Town-Owned Facilities  
(Partial Inventory)

1. Academy Building/Municipal Office Building
2. David Flynn Town Hall
3. Memorial Building
4. Bridgewater Public Library
5. Fire Headquarters
6. BTV Town Cable TV
7. Building Department Storage
8. Fire Station 2
9. Council on Aging Elderly Center
10. Flagg School Building
11. Highway Department
12. Legion Field
13. Marathon Park
14. Police Station
15. Pratt School Building
16. Recreation Department Office
17. Wastewater Treatment Facility
18. Carver's Pond Wellfield/Water Treatment Facility
19. Bridgewater Nitrite Plant
20. Salt Shed
21. Olde Scotland Links Golf Course
22. Transfer Station

Source: Town of Bridgewater, "Statement of Values," prepared for the Town by MIAA Property and Casualty Group, Inc. (September 30, 2019), MassGIS, and MassDOT



**MAP 7.2. TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER TOWN-OWNED PARCELS**

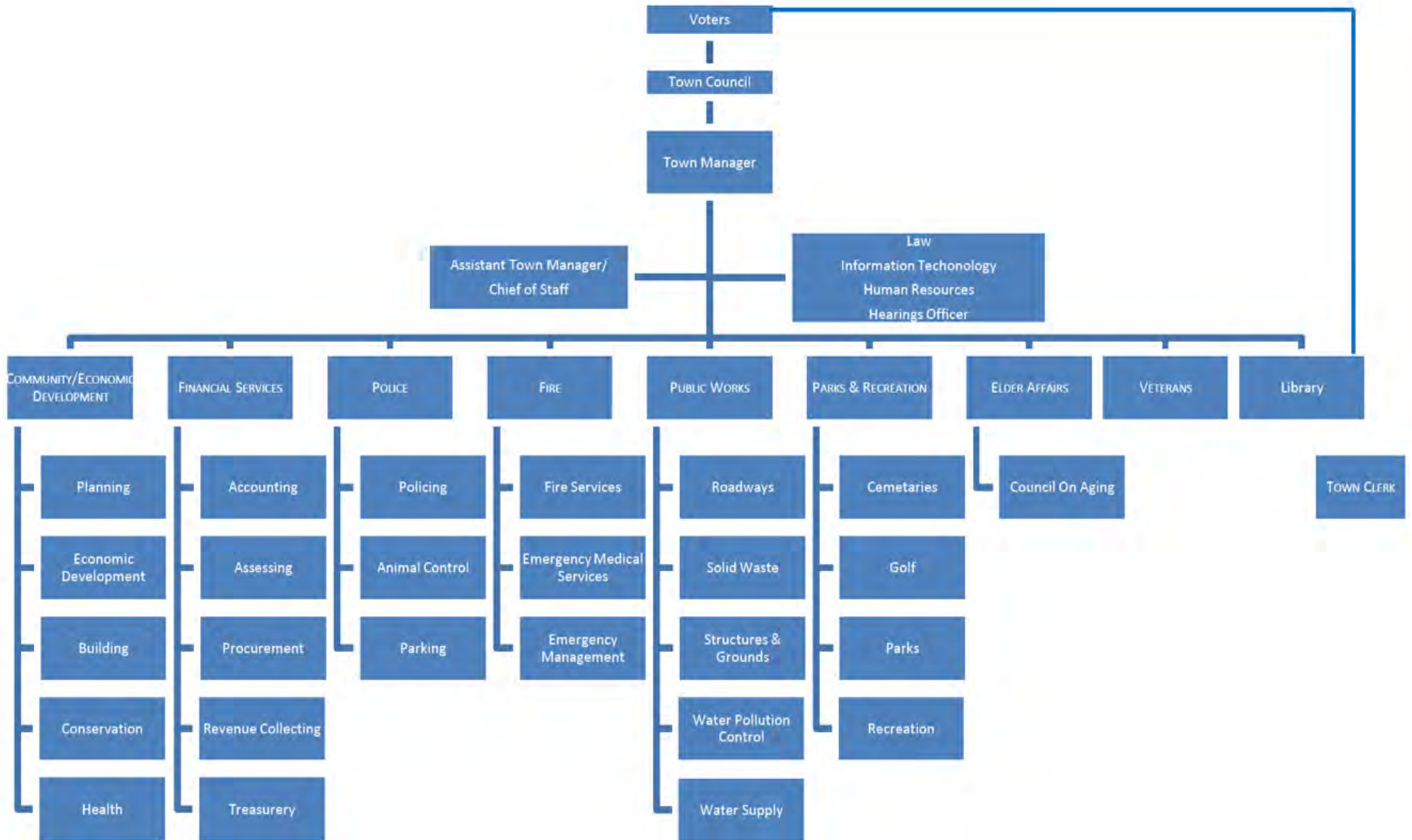
- Improved Land
- Vacant Land (Including Town-owned protected open space)

*Based on Bridgewater Assessor's Records as of 2021. Some parcels have been edited to reflect current status.*

Source: Town of Bridgewater, MassGIS, and MassDOT

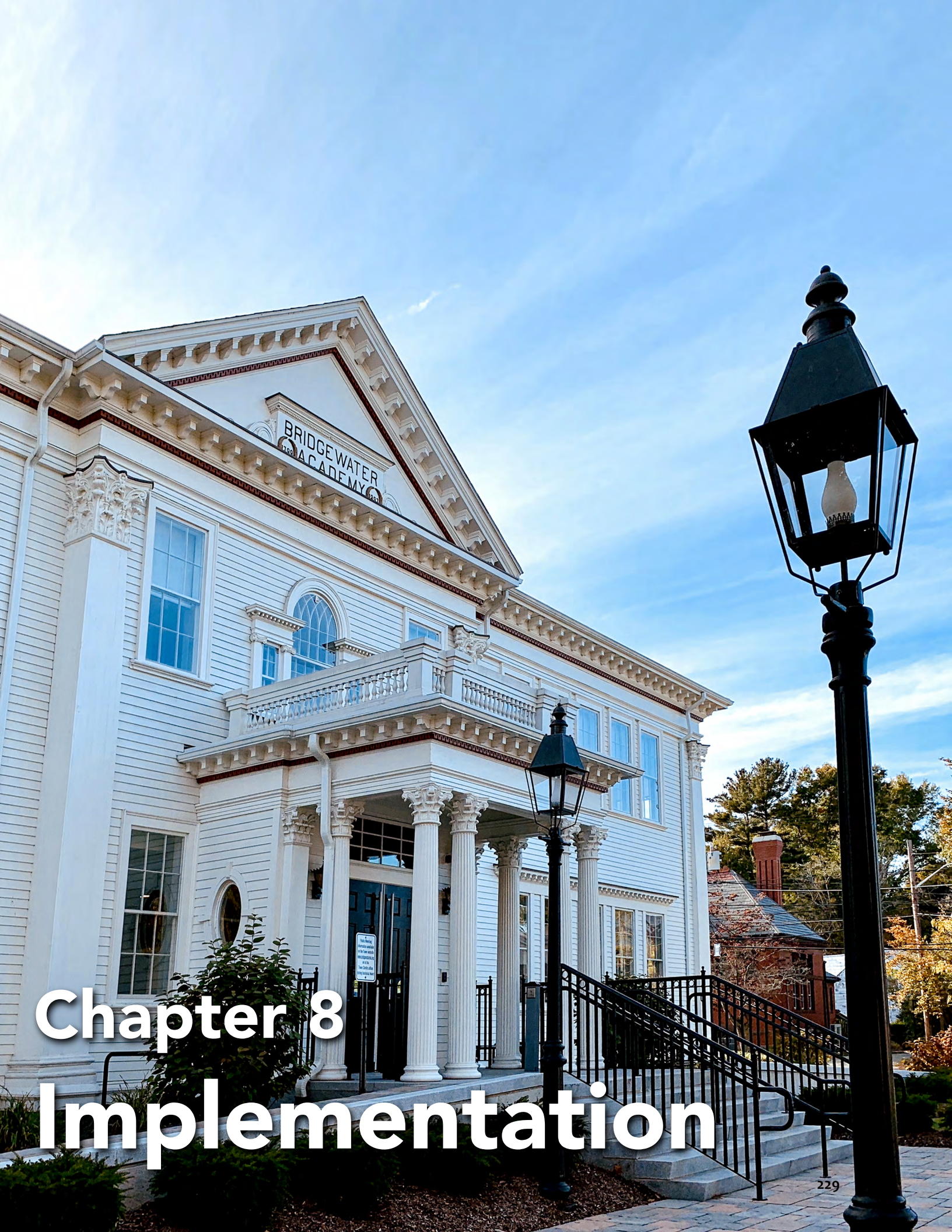
**Town of Bridgewater Organizational Chart of Paid Government**

*Source: Bridgewater Town Code, Updated October 2021, p.76*



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BRIDGEWATER  
ACADEMY

# Chapter 8 Implementation

## 8. Implementation Program

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### 8.1. Introduction

The success of any plan depends on its feasibility and a town's ability to balance near-term interests with long-term needs. The role of a Comprehensive Master Plan's implementation program is to provide balance by bringing all of the key recommendations into focus and organizing them into a plan of action. The timeframes for various actions can be changed if Bridgewater needs to respond to unforeseen opportunities, but overall, the timeframe designations provided in this section imply that some steps have a higher priority than others or can simply be accomplished faster than others.

Several of the major Comprehensive Master Plan recommendations call for additional planning and zoning amendments that can help local officials exert more control on growth and change in Bridgewater. As some areas may be ripe for change more than others, it will be important for the Town to focus resources first where change is likely to occur in the near term. The goal is to arrive at a plan that protects (if not enhances) the rights of property owners while getting the best possible outcome for Bridgewater.

Bridgewater will contend with master plan implementation challenges because the town is small and growing, and it is still dealing with the struggles usually associated with a change in form of government. The Town does not have enough staff, volunteers, or financial resources to juggle lots of initiatives all at once – at least not without the potential for tension. As a result, implementation will most likely require several years, patience, and periodic reassessments of the implementation schedule as local priorities change over time. In addition, Bridgewater found it difficult to implement the last master plan (2002 with 2014 updates), yet some of the earlier recommendations remain relevant today. Like other towns, Bridgewater has a history of tension about how far local government should go to manage growth and change. Many residents would like the town to stay just as it is, yet Bridgewater has already changed in ways that are obvious from a review of historic maps, photographs, and reports.

On one level, Bridgewater has a variety of unique resources that residents want to protect, including the Town's inventory of historic buildings and its network of open spaces. On another level, the Town has needs that have been deferred for financial, policy, or other reasons. Balancing these needs and wants is challenging for a town with limited capacity. Finally, master plan implementation in Massachusetts is difficult because planning has such an ambiguous legal position. Here more than in most states, the propensity of master plans to "sit on a shelf" can be attributed, at least in part, to the limited, obsolete tools that local governments have to control their destiny.

Despite these challenges, Bridgewater has resources to bring to master plan implementation. Residents obviously love their town, and this seems to apply just as much to long-time residents and newcomers. They value the schools and the services they receive from town government, and they appreciate the qualities that make Bridgewater a pleasant community. The Town also has talented officials and staff, so even though Bridgewater's relatively small local government limits how much can be done in any given year, the capacity for competent master plan implementation is very strong.

## KEEPING A COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN ALIVE – AND IMPLEMENTED

**Establish implementation roles.** The Town Manager should move to establish a staff working group as well as a defined role for the Town Council Strategic Planning Committee to oversee the implementation of this plan.

**Develop an evaluation plan.** One of the first steps the staff implementation working group and Strategic Planning Committee should take is to develop a plan to evaluate and periodically update or modify the Implementation Plan. An annual review often works best, first because it can take a full year to complete seemingly simple steps, and second, a systematic review will institutionalize a process for affirming or revisiting Comprehensive Master Plan recommendations. Recommendation 8.7.6.A specifies holding an annual workshop for staff and Town bodies, although some communities have used an annual “retreat” process to involve town officials and interested residents in evaluating and adjusting the plan.

**Annual goal setting: elected leaders.** The Town Council should make at least one master plan goal or strategy a priority in Bridgewater’s annual goal setting process. Having the Town’s primary political leaders make at least one goal or strategy a high priority helps to ensure that the Comprehensive Master Plan continues to live on, evolve, and accommodate change over time.

**Annual goal setting: Town departments.** Engage town departments in annual goal-setting that calls on staff to focus on at least one master plan goal or strategy as they plan their new year’s operations and programs. Similar to the process the Town Council could undertake each year, the Town Manager should facilitate a discussion with department heads and staff to determine a subset of the Comprehensive Master Plan’s recommendations that are to be worked on in a given year. A discussion that involves all department heads in the same room at the same time – not only the executive leadership – could help determine which strategies have overlap across different town departments. Decisions about funding, staff time, and roles and responsibilities should be discussed in this meeting as well.

**Annual report.** Town bodies and departments should provide the staff implementation working group or Town Council Strategic Planning Committee with an update any annual goals as well as the status of plan recommendations for which they are responsible. These updates should culminate in the production of an annual report from the Town Manager on the status of this Plan’s implementation as part of the existing “State of the Town” report. Such a report should also include any changes that have been or need to be made to the Implementation Program, any needs that have changed since 2022, and any new needs that have arisen. This report can also feed into the Annual Town Report or attached as an addendum. Keep the Town Council and community at-large informed.

Remember that the Comprehensive Master Plan is not an inflexible planning tool. **This is a plan, not a book. Use it to plan.** Plan now – in 2022 – for launching a full update of the Comprehensive Master Plan in 2032. What resources will the Town need, and how what does it need to do every year between now and 2032 to ensure that Bridgewater will be ready to update this Plan?

## WHAT DO THE “TIMEFRAME” DESIGNATIONS MEAN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION TABLES?

- **Near-Term:** action should commence as soon as possible – within one to two years
- **Mid-Term:** action should commence following the implementation of near-term actions
- **Long-Term:** action should commence following the implementation of mid-term actions
- **Ongoing:** action should commence and remain ongoing

## 8.2. Comprehensive Master Plan Element: Land Use

### OVERVIEW

The Land Use element illustrates how the shift from organic to regulated growth patterns affect Bridgewater’s choices today. Understanding the Town’s evolution in terms of residential, commercial, and industrial development or institutional uses such as Bridgewater State University or the Old Colony Correctional Center can shed light on today’s opportunities and constraints, and policies to manage future change. This element also includes a review of Bridgewater’s current land use regulations, which affect what can be built in Town today. The land use policies and recommendations in the Comprehensive Master Plan will help Bridgewater shape future development to meet future needs.

### SUSTAINABILITY

The Comprehensive Master Plan’s land use recommendations balance development, preservation, economic prosperity, and climate resiliency. Incentives to mix commercial space and housing in and around the downtown area and other already developed parts of town will result in using less land, producing fewer impervious surfaces, and generating fewer negative environmental impacts than new low-density development. Creating safe, secure pedestrian environments also encourages people to walk more and drive less. Leadership and staff training opportunities will also help prepare Bridgewater for future climate emergencies and better understand the role that land use regulations can play to achieve that end.

### GOALS

- Provide clear, concise, and transparent zoning regulations to guide regulatory boards and landowners.
- Balance land use and development with environmental stewardship and social equity.

### POLICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Policy 8.2.1. Use “smart growth” development approaches to preserve open space and encourage sustainability.

8.2.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Develop flexible Open Space Design regulations for commercial development to complement Bridgewater’s existing residential Open Space Conservation Development option.	PB, ConC, C/ED, TC	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Funding for zoning consultant	ED, NCOS

**Key for Responsible Parties:** AC, Agricultural Commission; AHT, Affordable Housing Trust; BHA, Bridgewater Housing Authority; BPL, Bridgewater Public Library; BRS, Bridgewater Raynham Public Schools; ConC, Conservation Commission; C/ED, Community & Economic Development; COA, Council on Aging; CPC, Community Preservation Committee; CC, Cultural Council; DC, Disability Commission; EC, Energy Committee; MOBD, Mass. Office of Bus. Dev; PB, Planning Board; PD, Police Department; PRC, Parks and Recreation Commission; PRD, Parks and Recreation Department; TC, Town Council; TCSPC, Town Council Strategic Planning Committee; TCL, Town Clerk; TCom, Transportation Committee; TE, Town Engineer; TM, Town Manager; OSC, Open Space Committee.

**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **232**

**Chapter 8. Implementation Program**

**Policy 8.2.2. Improve public access to zoning information and education.**

8.2.2. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Develop a publicly available interactive GIS zoning map to help citizens understand and visualize current zoning policy and physical characteristics of the town.	C/ED, IT	Not complex	Mid-term	Staff capacity, software, funding	PF
B. Schedule and promote a monthly “Zoning 101 Drop-In” hour for members of the public to ask Town staff zoning-related questions.	C/ED, TM	Not complex	Near-term; ongoing	Staff capacity	N/A

**Policy 8.2.3. Create and support an environment where staff, boards, and other volunteers regularly communicate, cooperate, and share knowledge.**

8.2.3. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Develop or update, and periodically review, written administrative policies and procedures for all boards, committees, and commissions, working with board chairs as needed.	Individual boards	Somewhat complex	Near-term; ongoing	Staff, board chairs	PF
B. Conduct annual reviews of the Zoning Ordinance to check for consistency, clarity, efficacy, and timely incorporation of new regulations.	C/ED, PB, individual boards	Not complex	Mid-term; ongoing	Staff, board chairs	N/A
C. Provide annual training to members of boards, commissions, and committees. Engage in regular training exercises, such as those offered by the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) or a comparable entity.	TM	Not complex	Mid-term; ongoing	Volunteer capacity, scheduling	PF

**Key for Responsible Parties:** AC, Agricultural Commission; AHT, Affordable Housing Trust; BHA, Bridgewater Housing Authority; BPL, Bridgewater Public Library; BRS, Bridgewater Raynham Public Schools; ConC, Conservation Commission; C/ED, Community & Economic Development; COA, Council on Aging; CPC, Community Preservation Committee; CC, Cultural Council; DC, Disability Commission; EC, Energy Committee; MOBD, Mass. Office of Bus. Dev; PB, Planning Board; PD, Police Department; PRC, Parks and Recreation Commission; PRD, Parks and Recreation Department; TC, Town Council; TCSPC, Town Council Strategic Planning Committee; TCl, Town Clerk; TCom, Transportation Committee; TE, Town Engineer; TM, Town Manager; OSC, Open Space Committee.

**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **233**

**Chapter 8. Implementation Program**

**Policy 8.2.4. Continually review district and regulations to evaluate their efficacy in achieving desired goals and consistency with this Comprehensive Master Plan.**

8.2.4. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Conduct a physical and economic analysis of the South Business District to determine if its boundaries or regulations should be changed to encourage commercial development.	PB, C/ED, TC	Complex	Mid-term	Consultant or OCPC, funding	ED

**Policy 8.2.5. Strengthen the Town’s environmental sustainability policies relating to land use and zoning.**

8.2.5. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Evaluate the present Zoning Ordinance and review future proposed amendments for impact on sustainability and equity.	PB, ConC, OSC, C/ED	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Staff, board training, zoning review tools	NCOS, H
B. Conduct a comprehensive review of the Town’s land use regulatory framework using Mass Audubon’s LID Bylaw Review Tool or similar guidance. Adopt Low Impact Development (LID) standards in the Town’s Subdivision Rules and Regulations and site plan review standards and refine existing LID standards in the Stormwater Management Regulations.	PB, ConC, C/ED, TC	Somewhat complex	Near-term	LID Working Group, Staff capacity, funding	NCOS
C. Explore the adoption of more robust outdoor lighting policies within the zoning ordinance to limit light pollution.	PB, C/ED, EC	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Funding for zoning consultant	NCOS, PF
D. Explore the feasibility of adopting a rooftop solar requirement for large commercial projects.	PB, C/ED, EC	Somewhat complex to complex	Mid-term	Staff, consultant or OCPC, Town Counsel to review	ED

**Key for Responsible Parties:** AC, Agricultural Commission; AHT, Affordable Housing Trust; BHA, Bridgewater Housing Authority; BPL, Bridgewater Public Library; BRS, Bridgewater Raynham Public Schools; ConC, Conservation Commission; C/ED, Community & Economic Development; COA, Council on Aging; CPC, Community Preservation Committee; CC, Cultural Council; DC, Disability Commission; EC, Energy Committee; MOBD, Mass. Office of Bus. Dev; PB, Planning Board; PD, Police Department; PRC, Parks and Recreation Commission; PRD, Parks and Recreation Department; TC, Town Council; TCSPC, Town Council Strategic Planning Committee; TCl, Town Clerk; TCom, Transportation Committee; TE, Town Engineer; TM, Town Manager; OSC, Open Space Committee.

**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **234**

### 8.3. Comprehensive Master Plan Element: Transportation & Circulation

#### OVERVIEW

The Transportation and Circulation element includes many recommendations that fall outside of a regulatory framework, such as conducting safety studies, improving infrastructure maintenance, and evaluating parking and circulation techniques. However, many recommendations involve the Complete Streets Policy adopted by the Town in 2016, and the Zoning Ordinance determines parking and sidewalk infrastructure requirements for new development. This element recommends that Bridgewater’s zoning regulations be configured to encourage that new development enhance the Town’s pedestrian and bikeway transportation systems as well as require access management on major routes.

#### SUSTAINABILITY

Transportation policy directly affects sustainability and resiliency. As such, the Transportation and Circulation element emphasizes improving multimodal transportation options for the benefit of the environment and the community at-large. Connecting more public spaces, making spaces accessible to all ages and abilities, and encouraging density where development already exists are all ideas supported by national planning and public health organizations and advocates for helping seniors stay in their communities. The Town should focus on updating safety, accessibility, and connectivity and use strategies such as traffic signal timing and pavement markings to fulfill its “Complete Streets” commitments.

#### GOALS

- Improve safety and accessibility for all transportation modes and users.
- Encourage multimodal transportation to minimize vehicular congestion, especially downtown.

#### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

##### Policy 8.3.1. Improve safety across transportation modes for users of all ages and abilities.

8.3.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Investigate lowering speed limits in conjunction with the Bridgewater Police Department.	TM, PD, DPW, TCom	Complex	Mid-term	Traffic consultant	N/A
B. Where appropriate, use traffic calming to manage traffic speeds and traffic volumes.	TM, PD, DPW, TCom	Complex	Mid-term; ongoing	Traffic consultant, funding	N/A
C. Implement the 2019 Bedford Street and Grove Street Road Safety Audit (RSA) and work with MassDOT to conduct RSAs at additional HSIP locations identified in Town.	DPW, TE, C/ED	Complex	Mid-term; ongoing	Staff capacity, OCPC	N/A

**Key for Responsible Parties:** AC, Agricultural Commission; AHT, Affordable Housing Trust; BHA, Bridgewater Housing Authority; BPL, Bridgewater Public Library; BRS, Bridgewater Raynham Public Schools; ConC, Conservation Commission; C/ED, Community & Economic Development; COA, Council on Aging; CPC, Community Preservation Committee; CC, Cultural Council; DC, Disability Commission; EC, Energy Committee; MOBD, Mass. Office of Bus. Dev; PB, Planning Board; PD, Police Department; PRC, Parks and Recreation Commission; PRD, Parks and Recreation Department; TC, Town Council; TCSPC, Town Council Strategic Planning Committee; TCl, Town Clerk; TCom, Transportation Committee; TE, Town Engineer; TM, Town Manager; OSC, Open Space Committee.

**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **235**

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8.3.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
D. Improve tree trimming program at intersections to ensure sign visibility.	DPW	Not complex	Ongoing	DPW Staff	PF
E. Improve street lighting in Central Square on Broad Street, Summer Street, and Plymouth Street, as identified by the Bridgewater Police Department.	TM, PD, DPW	Not complex	Near- and mid-term	Funding	LU

**Policy 8.3.2. Ensure equitable access to transportation facilities from all users, including those with disabilities, seniors, and families with young children.**

8.3.2. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Continue to use data from the 2019 StreetScan to identify locations for improvements to pedestrian crossing infrastructure and increase ADA compliance and access; plan to conduct StreetScans at regular intervals to maintain current records of the Town’s street and sidewalk conditions.	DPW, TE, TM	Not complex	Near-term	Funding, commitment from Town Council	N/A
B. Work with the Department of Elder Affairs to increase funding for more paratransit services, e.g., increasing frequency or expanding access to certain types of trips (e.g., grocery shopping.)	TM, EA	Not complex	Mid-term	Funding, staff or OCPC to seek outside resources	PF
C. Work with the School District to register schools for MassDOT’s Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program to fund safety improvements for family-friendly streets.	TM, BRS	Not complex	Near-term	Town-Schools staff; working group	PF

**Policy 8.3.3. Create, maintain, and promote pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure.**

8.3.3. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Continue implementing the Town's Complete Streets policy; apply for funding through the MassDOT Complete Streets Program for projects from the Prioritization Plan.	TM, DPW, TE	Not complex	Ongoing	Staff capacity	N/A

**Key for Responsible Parties:** AC, Agricultural Commission; AHT, Affordable Housing Trust; BHA, Bridgewater Housing Authority; BPL, Bridgewater Public Library; BRS, Bridgewater Raynham Public Schools; ConC, Conservation Commission; C/ED, Community & Economic Development; COA, Council on Aging; CPC, Community Preservation Committee; CC, Cultural Council; DC, Disability Commission; EC, Energy Committee; MOBD, Mass. Office of Bus. Dev; PB, Planning Board; PD, Police Department; PRC, Parks and Recreation Commission; PRD, Parks and Recreation Department; TC, Town Council; TCSPC, Town Council Strategic Planning Committee; TCI, Town Clerk; TCom, Transportation Committee; TE, Town Engineer; TM, Town Manager; OSC, Open Space Committee.

**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **236**



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8.3.3. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
B. Develop town-wide pedestrian and bicycle master plans to link regional and local connections, fill in network gaps, and improve access to transit.	DPW, C/ED	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Consultant or OCPC; Town Staff	N/A
C. Clarify and enforce the Town’s zoning requirement for pedestrian circulation, ensuring that all new major development enhances the town-wide pedestrian/bikeway system.	C/ED, PB, TE, TCom,	Not complex	Near-term	Staff	H
D. Create trail connections and a wayfinding program, such as between the Bay Circuit Trail and the Nunckatesset Greenway, to increase awareness of pedestrian/bicycle mobility between recreational points in town.	C/ED, OSC, PRC, PRD	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Town Staff, trails grants, MAPC Trail Toolkit	NCOS

**Policy 8.3.4. Improve downtown access for all modes, including supporting the reconfiguration of Central Square and parking management.**

8.3.4. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Develop a strategy to implement the Central Square Study (2020), Option 2, i.e., converting Central Square to two-way traffic and installing a pedestrian plaza along Central Square West.	TM, DPW, TE	Complex	Near-term	Staff, consultant, public education, OCPC	ED
B. Monitor parking utilization in Central Square following completion of the Central Square project.	TM, DPW	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	OCPC, MassWorks	ED
C. Design and implement a parking management and wayfinding program to encourage visitors to Central Square to park and walk between destinations.	TM, C/ED	Complex	Mid-term	Consultant, logo & signage graphic designer	ED
D. Investigate freight activity and travel patterns through Bridgewater in effort to route trucks around rather than through Central Square as feasible.	TM, PD, DPW	Complex	Near-term	Consultant, OCPC	ED

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**Policy 8.3.5. Improve circulation and reduce congestion town-wide.**

8.3.5. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Identify locations for implementing short-term, low-cost operational improvements such as traffic signal timing, pavement markings, and vehicle detection.	TM, DPW, TE	Not complex	Ongoing	OCPC, Chapter 90 funds, development mitigation, MassWorks	N/A
B. Implement recommendations from the 2019 Route 18 signal inspection, i.e., improve signal equipment and timings, install curb ramps, and restripe crosswalks.	TM, DPW, TE	Not complex	Near-term	Funding	N/A
C. Adopt zoning to require access management in new nonresidential developments along Routes 104, 28, and 18.	C/ED, PB, TC	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Staff, consultant	LU
D. Adopt recommendations from the January 2020 assessment of transportation access at Bridgewater Middle School and Williams Intermediate School.	TM, BRS	Not complex	Near-term	Staff, coordination with schools	PF

**Policy 8.3.6. Improve public transit efficiency and connections between transit and other modes.**

8.3.6. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Explore options to provide better bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connections to the Bridgewater commuter rail station (for example, providing sidewalks along the length of Great Hill Avenue).	TM, C/ED, DPW	Potentially complex	Ongoing	OCPC, consultant	N/A
B. Advocate for the inclusion of Bridgewater Station improvements in later stages of the South Coast Rail Project.	TM	Potentially complex	Longer-term	OCPC, consultant	N/A
C. Work with BAT to improve signage and bus stop visibility for bus stops in Bridgewater.	DPW, PD, C/ED, TCom	Not complex	Ongoing	Town Staff, possibly OCPC	N/A
D. Study parking demand at the Bridgewater Commuter Rail station and use the results to inform parking management strategies.	TM, TCom	Complex	Mid-term	Consultant, OCPC	N/A

**Key for Responsible Parties:** AC, Agricultural Commission; AHT, Affordable Housing Trust; BHA, Bridgewater Housing Authority; BPL, Bridgewater Public Library; BRS, Bridgewater Raynham Public Schools; ConC, Conservation Commission; C/ED, Community & Economic Development; COA, Council on Aging; CPC, Community Preservation Committee; CC, Cultural Council; DC, Disability Commission; EC, Energy Committee; MOBD, Mass. Office of Bus. Dev; PB, Planning Board; PD, Police Department; PRC, Parks and Recreation Commission; PRD, Parks and Recreation Department; TC, Town Council; TCSPC, Town Council Strategic Planning Committee; TCI, Town Clerk; TCom, Transportation Committee; TE, Town Engineer; TM, Town Manager; OSC, Open Space Committee.

**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **238**

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**Policy 8.3.7. Encourage the adoption of advanced transportation modes and other sustainable transportation solutions.**

<b>8.3.7. Recommendations</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Related Chapters</b>
A. Upgrade signal systems through adaptive signal control technology.	PD, DPW	Moderately complex	Mid-term	Consultant, OCPC	N/A
B. Use the results of a parking utilization study to allow more flexible use of curb space in desirable areas, such as Central Square and at the commuter rail station, e.g., through the use of Smart Parking meters.	TM, TE, C/ED	Complex	Mid- or longer-term	Consultant or OCPC	ED
C. Study demand for a mobility on-demand shuttle to expand first/last mile connections and meet local transit needs in Bridgewater.	C/ED	Complex	Longer-term	OCPC, BAT	N/A
D. Support and incorporate solutions to encourage sustainability and anticipate impacts of autonomous vehicles, both for private use and potential shuttles. This includes adding electric vehicle charging stations at Town facilities such as Town Hall, the Library, and requiring electric vehicle charging stations in new private developments.	C/ED, PD	Complex	Longer-term	Funding, public education	PF, H

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**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **239**

## 8.4. Comprehensive Master Plan Element: Housing

### OVERVIEW

Bridgewater has taken innovative steps to provide housing options from its early adoption of a Chapter 40R district to making surplus municipal property available for affordable housing development. Today, much of the remaining developable land in Bridgewater falls outside areas with sewer service, which increases the likelihood of larger-lot single-family development that can threaten open space. As one of 173 MBTA communities in Eastern Massachusetts, Bridgewater is subject to new requirements under the 2020 “Housing Choice Bill” to provide for an “as of right” multifamily zoning district in the vicinity of the Commuter Rail. Draft guidance for MBTA communities has been released with the public comment period ending in March 2022. The Town should remain prepared to address this legislation as more guidance becomes available.

### SUSTAINABILITY

The Comprehensive Master Plan includes common-sense approaches to housing. Locating homes near businesses, simplifying multi-unit conversions, retrofitting of older properties, and siting new affordable housing on reuse sites with water and sewer service are all consistent with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Smart Growth policies and programs. Bridgewater can provide for future housing needs and do much to protect the environmental and respond to climate change through planning, promoting green building standards and water conservation, and putting housing close to transit.

### GOALS

- Preserve, improve, and expand Bridgewater’s housing stock in a manner that promotes sustainability and a balance with natural resources.
- Accommodate the housing needs of seniors, people with disabilities, students, families, and other types of households at all income levels to encourage population diversity and equitable access to housing.

### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Policy 8.4.1. Strengthen, collaborate with, and support the Town’s housing-related groups.

8.4.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Implement the Housing Production Plan and Community Preservation Plan and keep both up to date.	C/ED, AHT, CPC	Not complex	Near-term	Funding or OCPC	NCOS
B. Activate the dormant Affordable Housing Trust and facilitate collaboration between the Town’s housing entities (AHT, CPC, and BHA).	TM, C/ED, CPC, BHA, AHT	Not complex	Near-term	Volunteer recruitment plan and volunteer coordinator	N/A

**Key for Responsible Parties:** AC, Agricultural Commission; AHT, Affordable Housing Trust; BHA, Bridgewater Housing Authority; BPL, Bridgewater Public Library; BRS, Bridgewater Raynham Public Schools; ConC, Conservation Commission; C/ED, Community & Economic Development; COA, Council on Aging; CPC, Community Preservation Committee; CC, Cultural Council; DC, Disability Commission; EC, Energy Committee; MOBD, Mass. Office of Bus. Dev; PB, Planning Board; PD, Police Department; PRC, Parks and Recreation Commission; PRD, Parks and Recreation Department; TC, Town Council; TCSPC, Town Council Strategic Planning Committee; TCI, Town Clerk; TCom, Transportation Committee; TE, Town Engineer; TM, Town Manager; OSC, Open Space Committee.

**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **240**

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8.4.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
C. Work with other towns to fund a shared housing coordinator to provide professional staff support to Bridgewater’s housing groups and Board of Appeals.	TM, C/ED, AHT, CPC	Somewhat complex	Longer-term	Technical assistance from MHP, funding	PF

**Policy 8.4.2. Encourage a mix of housing types with convenient walking and biking access for residents.**

8.4.2. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Encourage development on sites near existing amenities such as retail, public open space, and pedestrian- and bicycle infrastructure.	C/ED, PB, AHT	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Commitment of staff time and political leadership, public education	LU, NCOS, ED, T
B. Work with developers to incorporate infrastructure improvements and amenities into new developments.	C/ED, PB	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Use regulations & design standards	PF
C. Explore the adoption of Inclusionary Zoning that requires developments over a certain size to include a minimum percentage of affordable units (which may include payment of a fee in lieu of units to the Affordable Housing Trust).	C/ED, PB, AHT	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Staff, funding for consultant or OCPC assistance	LU

**Policy 8.4.3. Encourage development of senior housing and disability housing with services.**

8.4.3. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Adopt accessibility design standards for senior residential and mixed-use development.	C/ED, PB, COA	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Zoning consultant or OCPC	LU, ED
B. Work with local and regional disability service providers to increase options for supportive housing in Bridgewater.	DC, C/ED, BHA, AHT, CPC	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Funding	N/A

**Key for Responsible Parties:** AC, Agricultural Commission; AHT, Affordable Housing Trust; BHA, Bridgewater Housing Authority; BPL, Bridgewater Public Library; BRS, Bridgewater Raynham Public Schools; ConC, Conservation Commission; C/ED, Community & Economic Development; COA, Council on Aging; CPC, Community Preservation Committee; CC, Cultural Council; DC, Disability Commission; EC, Energy Committee; MOBD, Mass. Office of Bus. Dev; PB, Planning Board; PD, Police Department; PRC, Parks and Recreation Commission; PRD, Parks and Recreation Department; TC, Town Council; TCSPC, Town Council Strategic Planning Committee; TCI, Town Clerk; TCom, Transportation Committee; TE, Town Engineer; TM, Town Manager; OSC, Open Space Committee.

**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **241**

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**Policy 8.4.4. Use “smart growth” approaches to develop housing in a sustainable manner.**

8.4.4. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Strengthen the Town’s provisions for Open Space Residential Design and make this the default (as-of-right) approach to residential development for any project of two or more units.	C/ED, PB, TC	Slightly complex	Near-term	Staff capacity, zoning reform	NCOS, LU
B. Conduct a study to provide options to revitalize Bridgewater’s existing 40R Smart Growth District to realize its full residential and commercial development potential.	C/ED, PB	Slightly complex	Mid-term	Funding	ED, LU
C. Using guidance from the Department of Housing and Community Development as it becomes available, evaluate existing multifamily regulations for consistency with the Housing Choice Bill’s requirements for MBTA communities.	C/ED, PB, TC	Slightly complex	Near-term	Staff, consultant	LU, T

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**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **242**

## 8.5. Comprehensive Master Plan Element: Economic Development

### OVERVIEW

The Economic Development provides an analysis of Bridgewater’s employment base, labor force, and tax base, and considers Bridgewater’s regional competitiveness for business growth. It examines opportunities to attract and retain industries and outlines Bridgewater’s infrastructure, marketing/recruitment, regulatory, and capacity needs in order to achieve the Town’s economic development goals.

### SUSTAINABILITY

The Comprehensive Master Plan furthers environmental sustainability and resiliency by encouraging environmentally friendly development practices that capitalize on current foot traffic and commonly-traveled routes. By discouraging large-lot parking, scattered-site development, single-trip commercial land-uses, and new development on vacant land, Bridgewater can cultivate a prosperous local economy. Investing in infrastructure and utilities to support the business districts can help Bridgewater carry out mixed-use development and infill and redevelopment, retain businesses, strengthen the tax base, and support local entrepreneurs.

### GOALS

- Retain existing business while drawing a variety of new establishments to encourage residents to spend time and money in town and build Bridgewater’s tax base.
- Co-locate housing, shopping, and jobs in select areas to reduce single-occupancy commutes and support healthy lifestyles.

### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

**Policy 8.5.1. Encourage collaboration between the Town, businesses and property owners, representatives of BSU, and local and regional Chambers of Commerce to support economic development in Bridgewater.**

8.5.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Investigate the formation of a downtown business group to work with local business organizations and the C/ED Department.	C/ED, TM	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	OCPC, DHCD, consultant	N/A
B. Host and promote regular Community and Economic Development office hours (remotely or in-person) to improve communication with business owners and build rapport with the Bridgewater Business Association and Metro South Chamber of Commerce.	C/ED	Not complex	Near-term and ongoing	Staff time	N/A

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**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **243**

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8.5.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
C. Strengthen the relationship between the Town, BSU, and local businesses and capitalize on the Town’s identity as the home of BSU.	TM, C/ED	Somewhat complex	Longer-term	Leadership, political commitment, staff support	NCOS

**Policy 8.5.2. Provide the Community and Economic Development Department with the resources it needs to do the job the Town expects it to do.**

8.5.2. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Fund an economic development strategic plan for the Town.	TM, C/ED	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Funding, consultant	N/A
B. Establish an Economic Development Commission or Council of Economic Advisors to advise the C/ED, the Town Manager, and the Town Council’s C/ED Committee to expand the Town’s economic development capacity.	TM	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Recruitment strategy, commitment of Town staff time	N/A
C. Incorporate a quarterly meeting schedule for associated boards, committees, commissions, and staff to review and further progress on various economic development initiatives.	C/ED, relevant Town bodies	Not complex	Near-term; ongoing	Staff and volunteer time	N/A
D. Leverage new funding and technical assistance resources from state and federal sources, including the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).	TM, C/ED	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Commitment of staff time	N/A

**Policy 8.5.3. Strengthen, support, and enhance the character of the Town’s businesses districts.**

8.5.3. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Seek help from MassDevelopment to study the feasibility, benefits, and tradeoffs of using District Improvement Financing (DIF) to fund infrastructure improvements in Bridgewater’s business districts.	C/ED, TM	Complex	Near-term	Technical assistance	LU
B. Review and strengthen the existing “Mixed Use (CBD)” ordinance to encourage mixed-use development in the Central Business District and attract commercial activity.	C/ED, PB	Somewhat complex	Near-term and ongoing	Regulatory reform, staff	H, LU

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**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **244**



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8.5.3. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
C. Develop architectural and site design standards tailored to each business area, and use architectural peer review services as needed during the permitting process for larger commercial, industrial, or mixed-use developments.	C/ED, TM, PB	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Consultant, staff, working group	NCOS
D. Inventory vacant land in the South Business District to evaluate development feasibility, market demand, adjacent uses, wetlands, topography, and potential site constraints.	C/ED, CC	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Consultant or OCPC	LU, PF, NCOS

**Policy 8.5.4. Develop a town brand to define Bridgewater.**

8.5.4. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Establish a working group to assist with developing a “brand” for the Town through a public engagement process.	TM, C/ED	Complex	Mid-term	Funding, qualified consultant, working group, town staff	NCOS
B. Market Bridgewater to external audiences and residents to keep existing businesses and attract new businesses, featuring video interviews with existing companies and entrepreneurs, local success stories, timely economic and real estate data, and Town contacts.	C/ED	Complex	Mid-term and ongoing	Funding, Town staff, EDC	N/A

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**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **245**

## 8.6. Comprehensive Master Plan Element: Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources

### OVERVIEW

The Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources element emphasizes caring for Bridgewater’s existing conservation areas and parks, protecting lands with recognized open space and natural resource significance, and valuing the Town’s historic resource areas and cultural resources. Together, these features express the community’s heritage and convey the relationship people experience with past and present Bridgewater. The Comprehensive Master Plan process revealed how deeply residents care about Bridgewater’s natural and built environment. This element elevates public sentiments and advocates for a number of preservation priorities.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental stewardship, local volunteers, and the repurposing of existing spaces will go a long way toward helping Bridgewater preserve the qualities residents say they love about the Town. The actions listed below address maintaining critical natural assets, public education about the role of open space and natural resources in protecting public health, and the connection between the environment, history, and culture. Preserving these resources is not only sustainable and feasible, but it promotes appreciation for tradition and heritage. Partnering with local groups that work to preserve and maintain Bridgewater’s most cherished spaces will be an important part of planning for resiliency today and in the future.

### GOALS

- Establish Bridgewater as a cultural, intellectual, and recreational hub in the region.
- Protect natural resources while providing and promoting open space access.

### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Policy 8.6.1. Provide for adequate planning, monitoring, and management of the town’s open space.

8.6.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Implement the Town’s OSRP and conduct 5-7 year updates.	C/ED, ConC, OSC, PRD, PRC	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Staff time, funding, OCPC	LU, PF
B. Fund a designated staff position for parklands maintenance and to support the efforts of volunteers, boards, committees, and commissions working to protect and enhance Bridgewater’s open space resources.	TM	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Funding	PF

**Key for Responsible Parties:** AC, Agricultural Commission; AHT, Affordable Housing Trust; BHA, Bridgewater Housing Authority; BPL, Bridgewater Public Library; BRS, Bridgewater Raynham Public Schools; ConC, Conservation Commission; C/ED, Community & Economic Development; COA, Council on Aging; CPC, Community Preservation Committee; CC, Cultural Council; DC, Disability Commission; EC, Energy Committee; MOBD, Mass. Office of Bus. Dev; PB, Planning Board; PD, Police Department; PRC, Parks and Recreation Commission; PRD, Parks and Recreation Department; TC, Town Council; TCSPC, Town Council Strategic Planning Committee; TCI, Town Clerk; TCom, Transportation Committee; TE, Town Engineer; TM, Town Manager; OSC, Open Space Committee.

**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **246**

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**Policy 8.6.2. Improve access to and maintenance of parks and open space.**

8.6.2. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resourced Needed	Related Chapters
A. Enhance wayfinding to connect and enhance awareness of open space resources.	C/ED, ConC, DPW, OSC, PRD, PRC	Not complex	Near-term	Wayfinding program, funding	T
B. Acquire land or conservation restrictions to create connections between open space and priority natural and cultural resources, consistent with the OSRP.	TM, C/ED, AC, CC, OSC, CPC	Not complex	Ongoing	Funding, identification of connectivity areas in OSRP	T
C. Use the permitting process to negotiate access points with developers of property that can support open space links.	PB, C/ED, OSC	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Staff and volunteer time, training	T, LU
D. Organize, train, support, and recognize the efforts of volunteer park stewards to help maintain and protect public parks and open space.	OSC, DPW, TM	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Volunteers and Town staff, volunteer training	N/A

**Policy 8.6.3. Preserve and promote awareness of cultural and historic resources to give residents a sense of place and of what is available to them and their families.**

8.6.3. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Establish a local heritage tourism plan that covers the breadth of what Bridgewater has to offer with its open space, historic resources, and other cultural assets.	HC, AC, EDC, CC, OSC	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Staff, volunteers, heritage tourism consultant, MHC funding	ED
B. Tap the technical assistance resources available from MassDevelopment and the Urban Land Institute to continue exploring and planning for reuse of the old Town Hall as a Cultural Center.	HC, TM, CPC, CC	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Funding, technical assistance	PF
C. Propose Bridgewater sites and activities for inclusion in the Plymouth County Development Council’s travel guide ( <a href="https://seeplymouth.com">https://seeplymouth.com</a> ).	C/ED	Not complex	Near- or mid-term	Staff time, political leadership	ED

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8.6.3. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
D. Create a community-wide historic preservation plan that identifies needs, guides funding, and protects Bridgewater’s historical assets	HC, TM	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Funding, preservation consultant	N/A
E. Expand efforts to educate owners of historic properties about methods for protecting historic homes.	HC, C/ED	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Staff time, web page on Town site	H
F. Adopt and implement educational and regulatory techniques identified by the Massachusetts Historical Commission as tools to protect historic and cultural resources and their context.	HC, C/ED	Somewhat complex to complex	Ongoing	Staff time, consultant, possibly MHC grants	N/A
G. Explore the feasibility of developing an adaptive reuse ordinance for the preservation of historical or significant structures with design guidelines.	HC, C/ED	Somewhat complex	Mid-Term	Staff time, consultant, possibly MHC grants	LU
H. Partner with Bridgewater Public Library to preserve and retain historic documents.	HC, TCI, BPL, TM	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Staff time, consultant, possibly MHC funding	PF

**Policy 8.6.4. Encourage resident interaction with the cultural, intellectual, and recreational resources available in the community.**

8.6.4. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. In collaboration with Bridgewater Public Library and BSU, develop a strategy to promote and raise awareness of the Town’s cultural, historic, and recreational opportunities and programs.	C/ED, PRD, BPL, HC, CPC, PRC, OSC, CC	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Consultant or OCPC	N/A
B. Convene quarterly meetings of boards and committees engaged in cultural activities (Community Preservation Committee, Cultural Council, Historical Commission, Open Space Committee, etc.), or their chairs as appropriate, to encourage collaboration, advocate, and promote resources.	HC, AC, OSC, CC, CPC, BPL	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Leadership from participating boards	N/A
C. Explore establishing a downtown cultural district.	C/ED, HC, CC	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Staff and volunteer time, coordination	ED

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**Policy 8.6.5. Plan for resilience to climate change to protect Bridgewater’s natural resources.**

8.6.5. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Implement the Town’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan and provide regular updates on its implementation.	TM, C/ED	Somewhat to moderately complex	Ongoing	Funding	PF

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**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **249**

## 8.7. Comprehensive Master Plan Element: Public Facilities & Services

### OVERVIEW

Local governments provide basic facilities and services that residents expect and that no other level of government is capable of offering. Cities and towns form commissions, construct office buildings for government operations, fund capital improvements to deliver water and support safe mobility, and hire staff to protect public health and safety, manage public funds, administer programs, resolve conflicts, care for seniors, educate children, and provide culture, leisure, and social programming for people of all ages and abilities. People everywhere have high expectations for the quality, reliability, and speed of service delivery, and Bridgewater is no exception. The Public Facilities and Services element provides an inventory of the facilities and capacity for government services Bridgewater has today and identifies priorities that will need to be addressed as the Town develops and changes over time.

### SUSTAINABILITY

The Comprehensive Master Plan incorporates sustainable and resilient recommendations ranging from hazard mitigation to green infrastructure and wastewater management. Public facilities and services recommendations anticipate climate change, extreme weather, and flooding. Using the Community Resilience Building framework of Bridgewater’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan, these recommendations focus on educating the public, business owners, landowners, developers, boards/commissions, Town staff, and others about climate change and resiliency. Reducing energy and water consumption, encouraging alternative energy, creating a comprehensive facilities plan, monitoring water quality, and improving the emergency communications network will equip Bridgewater for unexpected surge events while upholding the safety of residents and businesses.

### GOALS

- Provide efficient, reliable, high-quality services and well-maintained facilities that residents consider town assets rather than unnecessary tax burdens.
- Reduce municipal energy use and water consumption.

### POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Policy 8.7.1. Commit to environmental sustainability in all Town of Bridgewater policies.

8.7.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Maintain the Town’s “Green Community” designation from the state.	C/ED, TM, EC	Not complex	Ongoing	Town staff, funding	N/A

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8.7.1. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
B. Employ green infrastructure design in town-owned properties to reduce surface water runoff.	DPW, TE	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Town staff, funding, consultant	NCOS
C. Reinvigorate and encourage resident involvement in the Energy Committee.	TM	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Town staff, volunteers	N/A
D. Investigate and promote alternative energy production and storage on Town-owned parcels.	C/ED, TM, EC	Complex	Near-term; ongoing	Town staff, volunteers	LU, NCOS
E. Continually review and implement the Town’s Water Conservation Program.	DPW	Not complex	Ongoing	Town staff, data collection, public educational resources	NCOS
F. Create a Citizen’s Board, Advisory Committee, or other body to advise on tree protection, replacement, management, and maintenance.	TM, TC	Not complex	Near-term	Political leadership, volunteers	NCOS, LU

**Policy 8.7.2. Collaborate with the Bridgewater-Raynham School District to meet the diverse needs of all students.**

8.7.2. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Provide opportunities for students to exercise required community service hours in service of the Town.	TM, BRS, All departments and boards, committees, and commissions	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Coordination, supervision, regular communication with schools	All
B. Work with relevant Town staff and the BRRSD to improve and maintain recreation facilities and secure additional financial resources where possible.	TM, DPW, BRS leadership, PRD	Complex	Mid-term; ongoing	Coordination, supervision, regular communication with schools	NROS

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**Policy 8.7.3. Balance services with careful short- and long-term budget considerations.**

8.7.3. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Continue to prioritize the implementation of a schedule of preventive and major maintenance for all Town facilities.	TM, FinD, FM	Complex	Near-term; ongoing	Funding, staff time	N/A
B. Pursue interlocal agreements or sharing services with other communities where opportunities exist to improve services, reduce costs, and expand capacity.	TM	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Town staff, Town counsel, OCPC	H
C. Analyze the feasibility and costs and benefits of contracting with private firms to operate selected services as a municipal enterprise, such as the Olde Scotland Links Golf Course and the Transfer Station.	TM, DPW	Somewhat complex	Mid-term	Funding, consultant	ED, NCOS
D. Re-examine the possibility of sharing sewer capacity with the Old Colony Correctional Center.	TM, DPW	Complex	Longer-term	Funding, staff, political leadership	N/A

**Policy 8.7.4. Prioritize clear and open communication with the public.**

8.7.4. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Report on the status of the Comprehensive Master Plan’s implementation as part of the Town Manager’s State of the Town report for inclusion in the Annual Town Report.	TM, TCSPC, TCI	Somewhat complex	Near-term; ongoing	Commitment of staff time	All
B. Encourage participation in departmental office hours/listening sessions for the public.	TM	Not complex	Ongoing	Management policy	LU
C. Solicit resident input about satisfaction with municipal facilities and services at regular intervals. Bring the results to leadership meetings and develop and publish plans to address concerns based on responses.	TM	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Funding for satisfaction surveys (should not be done inhouse)	N/A
D. Hold regular Town Manager office hours/listening sessions for members of the public.	TM	Not complex	Ongoing	Commitment of staff time	N/A
E. Periodically review the Town Code for accuracy and update as necessary.	TM, TCI	Not complex	Ongoing	Commitment of staff time	N/A

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**Policy 8.7.5. Provide adequate support for Town departments to ensure they are equipped to provide resident services efficiently.**

8.7.5. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Solicit staff input annually to assess and plan for addressing capacity deficits by department.	TM	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Management policy Staff time	N/A
B. Conduct a municipal space needs study to determine space deficits and surplus facilities spaces Town-wide.	TM	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Funding for qualified consultant	N/A
C. Continue to plan for construction of a new fire station.	TM, FD	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Funding, Architect/ Design team	N/A
D. Create, review, and periodically update operational manuals for departments, boards, committees, and commissions.	TM, chairs of boards, committees, commissions	Somewhat complex	Near-term	Commitment of staff and volunteer time, technical assistance from OCPC	All

**Policy 8.7.6. Ensure consistency and implementation of existing and future plans.**

8.7.6. Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Complexity	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Related Chapters
A. Hold an annual workshop for department heads and chairs of boards, committees, and commissions as part of the annual evaluation process to review the status of implementing this Comprehensive Master Plan, identify needed amendments (if any), and set goals for the next year.	TM, TCSPC, C/ED	Somewhat complex	Near-term; ongoing	Commitment of staff and volunteer time	All
B. Implement the 2019 Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan to ensure future availability of high-quality water, meet future permit conditions, and restore the life of existing facilities.	TM, DPW, TE	Complex	Ongoing	Funding, capital plan, staff time	N/A
C. Continue to pursue funding to implement the high-priority facilities and hazard mitigation recommendations in the MVP.	TM, C/ED, DPW	Somewhat complex	Near-term; ongoing	Staff time, funding, management policy	All

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**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **253**

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<b>8.7.6. Recommendations</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Related Chapters</b>
D. Annually review current plans by responsible departments and provide status updates as part of the “State of the Plan.”	All departments depending on plan, TM	Not complex	Ongoing	Management policy, staff time	N/A
E. Engage the Town Council’s Strategic Planning Committee to help oversee the implementation of this Comprehensive Master Plan and work with the Town Manager’s office to develop an implementation status report as part of the annual State of the Town report.	TM, TCSPC, TCI	Somewhat complex	Near-term; ongoing	Commitment of staff and volunteer time	All

**Policy 8.7.7. Provide necessary infrastructure to meet the Town’s community development needs.**

<b>8.7.7. Recommendations</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Related Chapters</b>
A. Maintain accurate and up-to-date studies of water and sewer capacity and continue to explore opportunities for expansion.	TM, DPW	Somewhat complex	Ongoing	Funding	ED, LU, H

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**Key for Related Chapters:** ED, Economic Development; H, Housing; LU, Land Use; NCOS, Natural, Cultural, and Open Space Resources; PF, Public Services and Facilities; T, Transportation and Circulation. **254**

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