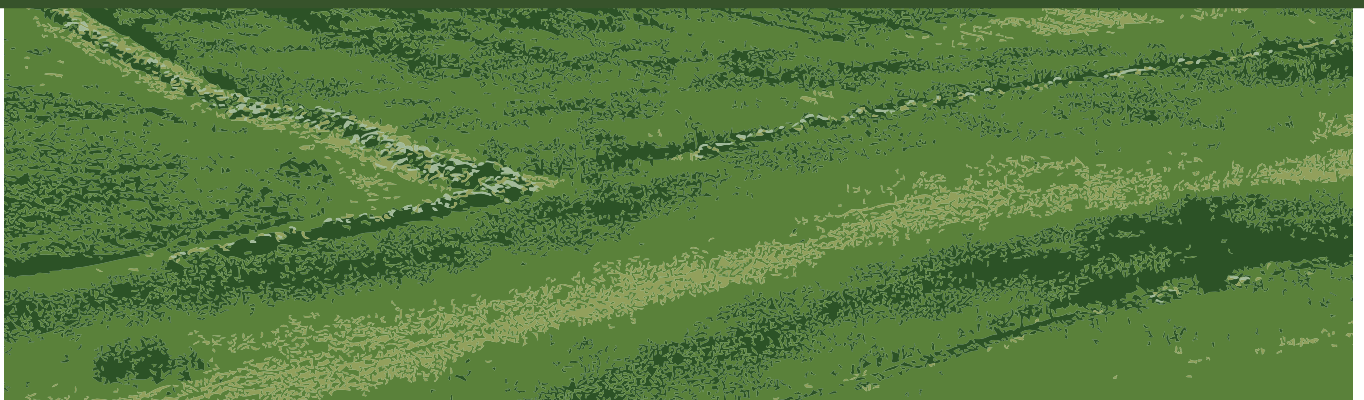


## *SECTION 4*

# *INFRASTRUCTURE*



### Chapter 9 | Services and Facilities

Current data on the town's facilities and operations with recommended improvements.

### Chapter 10 | Circulation and Transportation

Improving the movement of people and goods throughout town.

### Chapter 11 | Climate Change and Resilience

Proactively planning for natural hazards and trends amplified by climate change.







## CHAPTER 9

# SERVICES AND FACILITIES

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While more ineffable qualities like share history, culture and sense of place make up the heart of a community, the tangible services and facilities that are accomplished and maintained every day are its backbone. This Master Plan chapter examines Dartmouth's services and facilities – those spaces and people-drive processes that are essential to maintaining essential elements of life in Dartmouth, from the education of its young people, to drinking water and public safety.

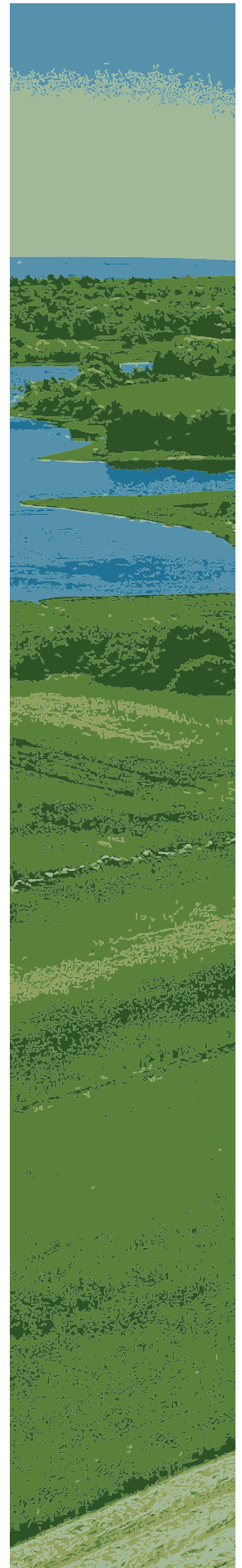
**Town Facilities** include the buildings and operation centers that Dartmouth maintains, staffs, and makes available for public use in support of the local government mission to steward community assets and preserve the quality of life in town.

**Town Services** include goods we typically think of like water and sewer management, or police and fire services, but also adequate staffing in town offices and the maintenance of certain processes, such as various town permit and facility reservation procedures, and the formation of Boards and Commissions to consider specific topics, among other potential government services.

Generally, town service and facility requirements vary directly with the size of the town's population and/or growth in development; the more people who reside in town, the greater the demand for water supply; the more housing units there are, the more complex emergency response protocols become, etc. Though Dartmouth's population declined between the 2010 and 2020 census, housing development continued, indicative of more households with fewer average persons per household. Growth in either population or development can increase demands for all the services provided by the community from public education to public safety to public infrastructure to public management.

As a result, each department within municipal government should regularly attempt to forecast future demand, and prepare plans for meeting these increased service demands. Some municipal departments are under regulatory mandates to plan while others complete only the five-year capital plan for the review of the Finance Committee and Select Board.

The present moment is, however, a difficult period for making these kinds of predictions in Southeastern Massachusetts, which is at an unpredictable turning point with the realization of South Coast Rail. Communities in which stations are located are not the only communities that will be affected. Part of an Economic Development Bill enacted in January 2021 created a new Section 3A of M.G.L. c. 40A (the Zoning Act). This new section requires that an MBTA community – including MBTA adjacent communities - shall have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right, with a minimum gross density of 15 units per acre, and with no age restrictions. Dartmouth is not in the initial round of affected communities, but one can envision a time when it is so implicated





once the New Bedford stations are complete and operational. Such land use requirements will likely increase demand for services and facilities. In order to maintain service delivery, both operational and capital investments will be necessary.

This chapter presents a brief overview of each department's current operations, the type of planning that each has undertaken, and the needs identified.

## KEY SERVICES AND FACILITIES PLANNING DATA

### Town Hall

The current Town Hall facility at 400 Slocum Road is adequate but not ample, for town offices. As the Town grows and staffing increases additional space may be needed to adequately accommodate staff, records, and equipment. The following departments are currently headquartered at Town Hall:

Accounting	Maintenance
Animal Control	Management Information Systems
Assessor	Parks and Recreation
Board of Appeals	Planning Board
Board of Health	Public Health Nurse
Building Department	Town Administrator
Community Development / Grants	Town Clerk
Conservation Commission	Town Collector
Energy / Sustainability	Treasurer / Director of Budget and Finance
Human Resources	Youth Advocate
Legal	





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As funded by a \$54,000 State Community Compact Information Technology initiatives grant, the Town has been making progress in digitizing both historical records and routine town operations. A new online licensing and permitting system allows for residents and businesses to apply for, pay and track building permits, health permits and licenses, and business and liquor licenses 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It also allows for internal departments to collaborate and process licenses and permits much more efficiently, as well as perform inspections in the field which are tracked in real time. The result is reduced turnaround time for applicants, and increased communication with the public. In the first six months after going online, over 1,300 permits were issued, 402 inspections were completed and over \$335,000 in revenue was collected.

The Town also received an additional \$30,000 State Community Compact Information Technology initiatives grant for the implementation of digital document imaging system that also integrates with the new online licensing and permitting system. This digital document imaging system, named Laserfiche, allows Town departments to scan and index historical paper documents into an online database, which can then be accessed by the public through a keyword search or searching by property address. The new system provides residents and businesses access to a large variety of public records, increases transparency, saves space in Town Hall, and eliminates the need to visit Town offices.

## Public Works Facilities

The Town of Dartmouth Department of Public Works (DPW) maintains three buildings, three water treatment facilities, and one wastewater treatment facility:

*759 Russells Mills Road*

- DPW Administration
- Water Pollution Control Division (wastewater treatment facility)
- Engineering Division







*976 Russells Mills Road*

- Solid Waste / Recycling Division
- Highway and Sanitation Division, Equipment
- Construction Division

*751 Allen Street - Water & Sewer Billing Office*

*687 Chase Road Water Treatment Plant*

*299 Chase Road Water Treatment Plant*

*Violetta Treatment Plant*

As documented in Dartmouth's draft 2021 Town Report, the DPW has several areas of operation, all of which are key for maintaining the infrastructure that supports daily life in Dartmouth. The following paragraphs describe these areas and current DPW priorities within them.

#### Transportation and Circulation

The DPW oversees and carries out improvements to Dartmouth's Roads and sidewalks, and is the department that works with MassDOT, regional transportation planning bodies. It also utilizes Chapter 90 funds as provided by the State. Current priorities are the next phase of sidewalk and roadway reconstruction in the Bliss Corner neighborhood (Hemlock, Pike, Sheridan and Tripp Streets); the design and engineering for reconstructing Potomska and Flag Swamp Roads; identifying funding sources to replace Padanaram Bridge; Route 6 corridor improvements; the design of a new four-way intersection at Route 6, Hathaway Road, and a southerly extension to Tucker Road; design of the reconstruction of Dartmouth Street from Howland Street to Middle Street, and Prospect Street from Middle Street to Elm Street; design of the reconstruction of Faunce Corner Road from I-195 Interchange North to Old Fall River Road; design of the Cross Road Improvement Project Phase 1 from District 3 Fire Station to just east of Pine Top Lane; and continued tree trimming.

#### The Water Division

The Water Division ensures safe drinking water and adequate drinking water supply for all residents and businesses connected to public water. Current priorities are the installation of cellular meter endpoints, which will allow for viewing of real-time data usage and more frequent billing cycles; addressing instances when EPA/DEP limits on total trihalomethane have occurred in the water supply with aeration and changes in water treating agents; reducing haloacetic acids; and working with a consultant to evaluate the entire water treatment and distribution system to arrive at recommendations for design upgrades.

#### The Water Pollution Control Division (WPC)

The WPC ensures the treatment of wastewater for those users connected to public sewer. Current priorities are the completion of upgrades to the SCADA communication system at each sewer pump station; the installation of energy efficient upgrades within the wastewater treatment facility as well as the DPA Administration building; improvements to the WPX facility; and future upgrades to the facility's aeration system that include possibilities for reducing nitrogen.



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Department of Services and Infrastructure

The Department of Services and Infrastructure provides construction, maintenance, solid waste and recycling services to the community. Current priorities are to continue providing solid waste & recycling collection, water & sewer system maintenance, snow plowing operations, roadway maintenance, new recycling opportunities, and affordable options to residents for specific food waste composting.

### Drinking Water Supply Systems

The town's water department services approximately 70% of the population; the other 30% is on private wells. The public water system is largely concentrated in central Dartmouth, within Padanaram, Bliss Corner, and Route 6, and in select developments off of water mains that follow major roads (Fauce Corner Road, Slocum Road, Chase Road, Gulf Road, and Smithneck Road, among others). The public water supply is drawn from 14 gravel-packed wells, and processed in three water treatment facilities. There is also a well on Route 6, but it is inactive.

General Location	Well IDs	Combined Draw Capacity (gallons per minute)
299 Chase Road	A, B, C, F-1, F-2	1,555
687 Chase Road	D, E-1, E-2	1,550
579 Old Westport Road	V-1, V-2, V-3, Panelli-1, Panelli-2, Panelli-3	1,820

Additionally, in order to cover peak water demands in summer, the Town has a connection to the New Bedford water system, which draws from the Assawompset Ponds Complex.

In Massachusetts, public water systems are subject to MassDEP Drinking Water Regulations (310 CMR 22.00), which set enforceable legal standards with which public utilities are required to comply. The Massachusetts Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for contaminants are based on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) federal standards for drinking water, though MassDEP has adopted more stringent







standards in some cases. Overall, water quality in Dartmouth consistently meets the high requirements set for water supply, with limited exceptions. The town's 2020 Water Quality Report noted two violations, one for Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM), which lasted from August 4, 2020 to October 3, 2020, and one for Total Coliform Bacteria positive samples. The town took corrective actions to address both issues.

The State's Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) is another protective water quality measure. The most recent SWAP for Dartmouth's water supply sources commended the town for taking an active role in promoting source protection measures, but also recommended that the town further pursue a few key actions, including:

1. Establish a wellhead Protection Committee;
2. Continue to monitor Zone I wellhead protection areas and remove all non-water supply activities;
3. Work with emergency response teams to ensure awareness of stormwater drainage issues in Zone II wellhead protection areas; and
4. Educate residents on ways they can help to protect drinking water sources, especially by:
  - a. Practicing good septic system maintenance;
  - b. Supporting water supply protection measures at town meeting;
  - c. Properly disposing of hazardous household chemicals; and
  - d. Limiting pesticide and fertilizer use.

While not listed in the SWAP, the town could also consider limiting the number of wells that are possible on a residential property in the context of verifying the water capacity of developments that have private water.

The town's most recent analysis of water supply capacity occurred in 2005-2006, when the Water Division hired a firm to complete a study of the water supply and distribution system for the Town and prepare projected needs through 2015.

Using historical use data and population projections derived from a review of different sources (SRPEDD, MISER), the *Town of Dartmouth Water Works System Master Plan Study* estimated the future demand for water use. This analysis took into consideration water use by different sectors (residential, commercial, industrial, and unaccounted for or system loss) and the service area limits within Town.

Dartmouth is meeting its water demands for both the average day use and the peak maximum day use through existing local supplies and the current New Bedford contract limit. At present, there are no pressing water supply capacity concerns, assuming that the service area remains the same. That is, if infill development occurs where lines are already in existence, the system can accommodate such growth. Line extensions into



new service areas would diminish the amount of water available within the existing service areas. The Board of Public Works supports limiting extensions to the existing service area and a minor number of areas that can improve the system by providing closed loops.

In the interest of redundancy and to provide pricing flexibility, the *Master Plan Study* recommended that Dartmouth explore a possible connection with Fall River and continue to investigate additional local sources. These recommendations are still valid today. The need for an outside water source makes the Town vulnerable with regard to pricing and in the face of increased pressure from unpredictable drought years. The Town's Water Enterprise account is used to fund a program of routine maintenance and replacement of piping and storage facilities.

**Figure 9.1: Dartmouth Water Demands**

Sources	2004 (MGD)	2020 (MGD)
<b><u>Average Day Water Supply Adequacy</u></b>		
Total Local Well Sources	3.27	3.27
New Bedford Connection	2.00	2.00
Average Day Demand	3.06	2.51
<b><u>Maximum Day Water Supply Adequacy</u></b>		
Total Local Well Sources	4.88	4.01
New Bedford Connection	2.00	2.00
Maximum Day Demand	5.14	4.88

The town's MVP planning process unearthed some recommendations for enhancing the resilience of the town's water supply, including:

- Elevate the access road and retrofit the adjacent stream crossing with a larger





box culvert in order to maintain access to Town Wells D and E during large storms.

In future years, the town may also need to step in to both assist residents and/or to enforce additional regulations that may come in to effect governing minimum testing and water quality standards for private wells. In contrast to public water supply systems, private wells are not subject to any statewide drinking water standards that would ensure that private well water has contaminants below federal and state health and safety limits. Private wells in Massachusetts are also not subject to requirements for routine water quality testing, whereas other states have regulations requiring testing upon transfer of property. Well water regulations are determined by each individual town's Board of Health.

MassDEP released Model BOH Regulations for Private Wells in July 2018, but they have not been widely adopted. Many towns have no regulations in this area. Some organizations, such as The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, are seeking legislation that would establish minimum statewide standards for private wells. The town may benefit from keeping up with developments in this area, and from instituting a program of mandatory periodic testing on private wells.

## Wastewater Systems

### Dartmouth's Sewer System

Over 48% of Dartmouth residents and all of the major commercial areas are served by the sewer system with the remaining areas relying on Individual Septic Disposal Systems (ISDS). The town's sewer service area covers the Route 6 corridor, areas east of Tucker Road to the New Bedford line, Bliss Corner, and Padanaram. The Wastewater Treatment Facility pipes treated wastewater to an offshore release point east of Mishaum Point.

The Wastewater Treatment Facility is nearing capacity. The facility is designed to accommodate the treatment of 4.2 million gallons each day. The volume treated varies greatly ranging in 2020 from 1.6 gallons per day during dry periods to 4.87 gallons per day during rainy periods. When the facility runs at 80% of capacity for 90 consecutive days, EPA regulations require the community to become proactive in managing the remaining plant capacity.

The Public Works Board has been permitting sewer extensions in accordance with a 1988 *Wastewater Management Plan*. Areas identified in the plan have gradually been added to the system. It is estimated that infill projects within the existing areas serviced by sewer could use the remaining capacity, and with projects such as 40B and 40R developed at greater densities than present zoning, the capacity may be used before all areas with infill potential are developed. Any sewer extensions beyond the existing service areas would likely trigger the need for expansion of the treatment facility.

Choices must be made about the future of wastewater treatment. As the plant nears capacity the following are possible responses:

- Gain capacity by reducing infiltration of groundwater/rainwater,
- Set up a moratorium on hook-ups,



- .....
- Expand the wastewater treatment plant, and/or
  - Utilize package treatment plants and/or septic systems for new development.

The DPW plans to apply for revolving loan funds to complete a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan in order to establish an approach to wastewater treatment for the development that will come over the next 20 years. It will take \$500,000 – \$700,000 to complete this plan. This plan will address the issue of expanding the treatment plant. This is a costly option and one no longer favored by regulators, who are increasingly looking to return treated water to the general location where it is withdrawn. Small package treatment plants are an approach that meets these environmental objectives and can be more cost efficient. The Comprehensive Wastewater Treatment Plan will be developed in accordance with the policies and growth reflected in the Master Plan.

Aside from treatment, the town's Sewer Master Plan map shows planned sewer extensions in North Dartmouth along a segment of Old Fall River Road, and in South Dartmouth along Chase Road up to Russells Mills Road, as well as a new pumping station on Gulf Road near the YMCA property.

The town's 2020 MVP planning process unearthed some recommendations for enhancing the resilience of the town's wastewater treatment system, including:

- Perform a vulnerability analysis of all pump stations and their proximity to existing and projected floodplains to identify those that are most at-risk and design mitigation measures to address flooding.
- Implement new treatment technologies for nitrates, a growing issue as temperatures rise and contribute to different concentrations of nitrates.

## Dartmouth's Stormwater System

Pollutants from stormwater runoff are a contributing factor to the impairment of Dartmouth's waterbodies, including high levels of nitrogen, turbidity and bacterial contamination. The EPA requires the town to manage stormwater runoff, as well as to protect public health and safety, preserve environmental resources, and safeguard town character against these negative stormwater impacts. EPA and MassDEP originally authorized Dartmouth to discharge stormwater to local waterbodies through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) in 2003 under an NPDES MS4 General Permit, known as the "2003 General Permit." These bodies issued a revised General Permit to the town in 2016, which significantly increases stormwater management requirements in Dartmouth, and mandates specific timelines for compliance. The 2016 permit expires on June 30, 2022.

As required by the permit, Dartmouth developed a Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) in 2020. The 2020 SWMP sets out a path of implementation measures through which the town will meet its 2016 General Permit requirements. The MS4 General Permit applies to stormwater discharges within a limited portion of town that is the "regulated area," specifically, within "Urbanized Areas" as delineated by the US Census. These



boundaries are revised after each new decennial Census. As of the 2010 Census, 26% of Dartmouth qualified as an Urbanized Area for the purposes of the MS4 permit. The SWMP must be implemented within all regulated portions of Town at a minimum. In Dartmouth, the Department of Public Works is the lead entity in implementing the SWMP, though other departments have a role in carrying out actions. For reference, the SWMP has helpful explanations of the NPDES program, MS4 requirements, the history of MS4 implementation in Dartmouth, and general definitions of a municipal separate storm sewer system.

Per the 2016 General Permit, the town must take specific actions within certain categories of Minimum [stormwater] Control Measures as summarized in the table below. The table also includes examples of specific implementation measures that the town committed to pursuing in the 2020 SWMP.

**Figure 9.2: Dartmouth’s 2020 SWMP – Brief Overview of Permit Requirements**

Minimum Control Measure Category	2016 General Permit Requirements	Key SMWP Implementation Measures
<b>Public Education and Outreach</b>	Specific messages required and prescriptive deadlines for their delivery to the public.	Distribute a minimum of two educational messages spaced at least a year apart to residents, businesses, industrial entities and developers. Topics such as: Proper lawn maintenance (use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer); information about Low Impact Development (LID) principles and technologies; proper management and disposal of wastes.
<b>Public Involvement and Participation</b>	Public participation in stormwater management.	Provide annual opportunity for the public to participate in the review and implementation of the SWMP.  Organize public cleanups.  Continue Stormwater Working Group meetings.
<b>Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination</b>	Complete drainage system mapping. Add interconnections to the outfall inventory. Delineate catchment areas and prioritize catchment investigations. Perform dry and wet weather screening and sampling priority MS4 interconnections and outfalls. For impaired waters without TMDLs, implement an approach to address the discharges including BMPs, source identification.	Complete full system map 10 years after effective date of MS4 permit.  Track number of illicit discharges identified & volume removed.  Annual employee trainings on topics related to illicit discharge detection and elimination.





<p><b>Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control</b></p>	<p>Add and/or continue inspection and enforcement as part of the site plan review procedure.</p>	<p>Enforce Stormwater Management By-law.</p> <p>Develop additional regulations for additional implementation details where necessary.</p> <p>Perform inspections during construction; modify procedure if necessary.</p>
<p><b>Stormwater Management in New Development and Redevelopment</b></p>	<p>For new development, retain the first 1 inch of runoff from all impervious surfaces on site, or provide pollutant removal with a BMP.</p> <p>For redevelopment, retain the first 0.80 inches of runoff from all impervious surfaces on site or provide pollutant removal with a BMP.</p> <p>Evaluate local code for consistency with smart growth and green infrastructure principles.</p>	<p>Develop a report assessing regulations that result in the creation of impervious cover and analyze potential changes to design standards for streets and parking lots to support low impact design options.</p> <p>Develop a report assessing existing local regulations to determine the feasibility of allowing green infrastructure practices.</p> <p>Inventory of Town-owned properties and rank for retrofit potential.</p>
<p><b>Good Housekeeping and Pollution Prevention</b></p>	<p>Develop a program to repair and rehabilitate the MS4 infrastructure. Sweep/clean municipal streets once in the spring. Include all potential pollutants associated with each activity in municipal facilities in the stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) for the facility.</p>	<p>Establish and implement program for repair and rehabilitation of MS4 infrastructure.</p> <p>Develop and implement SWPPPs for the Highway Facility.</p>

Finally, the SWMP also contains specific implementation actions to mitigate stormwater impacts in the town's officially listed impaired waterbodies (Category 5 on the State's 2014 List of Integrated Waters as needing a Total Maximum Daily Load to stem specific pollutants – see Master Plan Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter for additional information), which also receive stormwater discharges. The waterbodies that currently meet these two criteria and thus receive specific treatment in the SWMP are Apponagansett Bay (impaired for total nitrogen), Noquochoke Lake Main Basin (impaired for Enterococcus and turbidity), Noquochoke Lake South Basin (impaired for turbidity), and Noquochoke Lake North Basin (impaired for turbidity).

The town will need to continue making progress in all of the areas described above to achieve compliance with its 2016 General Permit in its MS4-regulated areas. In addition, the town's MVP planning process unearthed some recommendations for enhancing the resilience of the town's stormwater system, including:



- Conduct a comprehensive vulnerability and resiliency assessment of all town drainage and flood-prevention infrastructure.
- Work with MassDOT on funding for a town-wide Transportation Improvement Program.
- Obtain approvals to enable maintenance and restoration of key stormwater infrastructure.

## Dartmouth Public Schools

The Dartmouth Public School system includes four elementary schools (one of which, Cushman, houses a pre-school program), one middle school for grades 6, 7 & 8, and one high school.

The stated mission of the Dartmouth Public Schools is to provide a quality education for all learners:

“The Dartmouth Public School District, in partnership with parents and community, will deliver challenging, standards-based instruction for all students that fosters academic, physical, social and emotional development. Utilizing data analysis to drive instruction, we will implement specific strategies to support every student to think critically, solve problems, and become a responsible, contributing citizen. Our high school graduates will possess the required skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in their academic and vocational ambitions.”

The Dartmouth School Committee functions as the legislative body of the district, establishing the policies by which the school district operates. The School Committee meets twice monthly at 6:30 pm in the Library Media Center at the Dartmouth High School. Agendas are published on the web Friday prior to the meeting. Meetings are open to the public for parents to attend and speak up, and are televised as taped delayed broadcasts on Dartmouth Community Television.

In previous town Master Planning processes, space needs and school capacity limitations have been top issues. However, the total student population in the Dartmouth school system has trended downward since at least 2009. The following chart shows overall enrollment numbers from 2009 to 2019, with 2009 being the decisive peak after which the school population falls. Though there are small upticks in certain years, the overall trend is a steady decrease.

The table below breaks these enrollment figures down by school as reported by the Massachusetts Department of Education website for the 2020-2021 school year, and compares these recent numbers to the figures in the town's 2007 Master Plan. In that period of comparison, overall enrollment has declined by 20%. Quinn Elementary School stands alone as having experienced an increase in enrollment, though this may have resulted from redistricting with the closure of Gidley Elementary School in 2007.



Figure 9.3: Dartmouth School System Enrollment Over Time

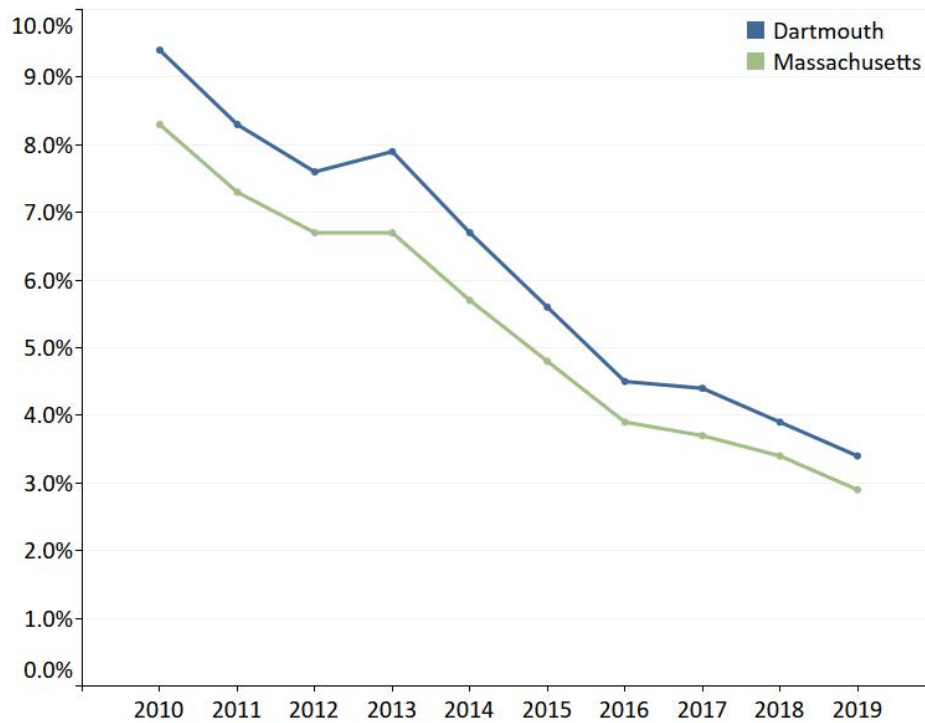


Figure 9.4: Total Dartmouth Public Schools Enrollment

School	Year Built/ Year Renovated	Enrollment 2006	Enrollment 2020	Percent Change
<i>Elementary Schools</i>				
Cushman	1922/1949	202	120	-41%
Potter	1955/1965	454	369	-19%
Quinn	1967/2003	623	646	+4%
Gidley [closed 2007]	1922/1965 & 1967	254	-	-100%
DeMello	1955/1965	399	367	-8%
<b>Middle School</b>	1956/1960, 1981, 2003	1,048	872	-17%
<b>High School</b>	2002	1,315	1,045	-21%
<b>TOTAL</b>		4,295	3,419	-20%



Dartmouth High School



Quinn ES



DeMello ES



Dartmouth Middle School



Potter ES



Cushman ES



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It remains to be seen whether school enrollments will continue this downward trend, plateau, or eventually increase again with additional development that could occur should the town need to one day meet state development requirements such as the new 2021 MBTA Zoning Rule. With declining enrollments, for the time being, focus may temporarily switch to concerns related to school facility quality rather than space quantity constraints. To that end, the draft 2021 Town Report documents the planned facility upgrades of: HVAC upgrades for all schools; flooring replacement at several schools; grease trap replacement; parking lot paving; Dartmouth High School auditorium AV and lighting; interior and exterior painting; vehicle replacement; and furniture replacement. Within the Master Plan time horizon, it is also likely that the district will want to study lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, and make facility or technology changes based on this experience.

As document in the town's draft 2021 Town Report, a selection of the school system's current priorities for enhancing teacher professional development include:

- Aligning Dartmouth Public Schools' curriculum to Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) current frameworks
- Managing Rubicon/Atlas, Dartmouth Public Schools online curriculum management platform, with unit designs, lesson plans, instructional materials, and assessments
- Enhancing teachers' expertise by providing multiple opportunities for teacher collaboration across schools through professional and curriculum development work
- Guiding and supporting teachers, instructional coaches and administrators in the implementation of research-based instructional practices
- Collaborating with Special Educators and teachers of English Language Learners to ensure maximum accessibility for students
- Developing and maintaining the Dartmouth Public Schools Title I Program
- Oversees aligning DESE Digital Literacy Computer Science standards in order to ensure all students have the opportunity to master the digital literacy standards along with the process for software acquisition, alignment to curriculum.

## Libraries

The population of Dartmouth is served by two public library facilities, Southworth Library and the North Branch Library. The library system has recently seen the culmination of decades of work for improving the system with the construction of the new North Branch Library, which opened on January 27, 2020. The new library replaces the North Dartmouth Library on Tucker Road which was too small to provide the services expected of a public library in the 20th century. The Tucker Road building was closed in August 2019 in preparation for moving the collection to the new North Branch Library building on Cross Road. It was also expected that the state would be taking the Tucker Road property to accommodate a project to re-align Tucker Road with Hathaway Road.



The construction of a new library in north Dartmouth was a high priority for Dartmouth Library Trustees and Directors. The 1961 building on Tucker Road was much too small to serve the needs of residents in north Dartmouth, and Southworth Library, the main library, is located in the far southeastern corner of the town. It can be challenging and time-consuming for north Dartmouth residents to navigate through the heavy traffic and congestion of State Road to get to Southworth Library. In 2016, the town was awarded a grant of over \$5,000,000 for the construction of a new library building on Cross Road.

The design of the new library building reflects the changing roles of public libraries in recent years:

1. Sustainable design elements were incorporated into the building, including rain gardens, meadow plantings, permeable paving, and a solar power system that should provide nearly 40 percent of the building's electrical use.
2. The branch has an emergency generator to run the building during power outages.
3. The new facility has been designed to accommodate growth and the site has sufficient room to accommodate the longer-term potential building expansion.
4. The branch was designed with public space being a high priority:
  - a. The Suzanne E. McDonald Community Room – can accommodate more than 100 people and has a built-in audiovisual system and equipment for programs and meetings.
  - b. The small Conference Room – can accommodate a meeting of 6 to 8 people.
  - c. Two Quiet Study Rooms – can comfortably hold up to 4 people.
  - d. Children's Program Room – can accommodate about 20 people.
  - e. Numerous soft seating options are located throughout the building.
5. Public access to the Internet was given a high priority:
  - a. The new building has a strong Wi-Fi signal for public use.
  - b. Counters with numerous power outlets and chairs line several large windows.
  - c. Ten Internet computers are available for free public use, 6 in the adult area, 2 in the young adult room and 2 in the children's room.
  - d. Laptops will soon be available for public use within the building.

Over the years, numerous changes have been made at Southworth Library to accommodate the changing needs and demands of staff and patrons. During David Cressman's time as Town Administrator, a new phone system, new windows, new lighting, and a new fire alarm system were installed at Southworth Library and updates were made to the HVAC system. Director Denise Medeiros converted the lower level of Southworth into a Children's Room and turned the Trustee Meeting Room into a Story Time Room. The Story Time Room is used for preschool story programs and a program called Baby Songs. It is also stocked with board books, puppets, puzzles, coloring

pages, etc., and is a popular destination for preschoolers. Denise also purchased a new, larger circulation desk for the upper level of Southworth. The new desk has workstations for 3 staff members, and it is installed in a location that provides good sight lines for staff members to monitor activity in the building.

More recently, changes were made to the layout of the upper level of the building to make better use of the available space. At one time, a large display unit for magazines divided the adult space from the children's space upstairs. This magazine "wall" was removed, which made it possible to turn the book stacks on the parking lot side of the building to line up with the book stacks on the Dartmouth Street side. This immediately let more natural light into the building.

The magazines were moved to new shelving units purchased by the Dartmouth Library Foundation and installed along the back of the building. At the same time, two book stacks along the back corner of the building were removed, which made space for tables and chairs and two small sofas to be set up by the magazines. The tables in this space have built-in power outlets for patron use which allow 4 people to plug in their devices at each table. This has become the quiet space for patrons who want to sit and read or plug in a laptop to work.

**Figure 9.5: Dartmouth Library Facilities**

Location	Building Size (sq ft)	Year Built	ADA Compliance
Southworth	22,120	1969	Complete
North Dartmouth [New]	16,000	2019	Complete

The Dartmouth Libraries have adapted and expanded their collections and services to meet the changing needs of library patrons. Providing free access to books is still a main focus for the library, but those books are now available in a variety of formats. Books in print format are the most popular, but there is increasing demand for audiobooks and for electronic options for reading or listening to books. DVDs and music CDs are popular and are also available in both physical and electronic format.

The Dartmouth Libraries also provide a growing selection of online resources on a variety of subjects. A Dartmouth library card gives patrons free access to several electronic resources including:

1. Ancestry.com: genealogical research
2. AtoZ World Culture: a useful resource for travelers and for students writing reports on countries of the world
3. AtoZ World Travel: provides city-based travel information for the world's most popular travel destinations
4. Consumer Reports: online access to product reviews and recommendations
5. Craftsy: online classes and instruction on a variety of activities including sewing, quilting, photography, cooking, wood-working, etc.
6. Freading e-books: provides unlimited access to e-books





7. Freegal music: provides free music downloads and streaming music
8. Heritage Quest: genealogical research
9. Hoopla: online access to movies, TV shows, music albums, e-audiobooks, e-books, and comics/graphic novels
10. Kanopy: online access for streaming movies including the Criterion Collection
11. Mango Languages: language learning for 70+ languages
12. Tumble Books Library for Kids: provides over 1 100 titles for grades K-6 and includes animated, talking picture books, read-along chapter books, videos, graphic novels and books in Spanish and French
13. Universal Class: free online classes on a wide variety of topics
14. Value Line: a highly regarded resource for people investing in the stock market

The libraries in Dartmouth are members of the SAILS Library Network which is a regional nonprofit consortium of 73 area libraries and branches in 40 Southeastern Massachusetts communities. The Dartmouth libraries are managed by the Library Board of Trustees, which establishes policy guidelines and direction for the operation of the library in consultation with the Library Director. The Library Board of Trustees consists of six members, all of whom are elected. All Trustees are Dartmouth residents concerned with the well-being of the Library and its role in providing high quality library service for the Dartmouth residents and non-resident users.

The Library Trustees have a consistent track record of undertaking strategic planning efforts to assess the overall needs of the library system. The current strategic Plan of Service was completed in 2017, and covers the period of 2018-2023. Library staff members, library trustees, a Library Planning Committee, and a hired consultant conducted a strategic planning effort that included two community forums, compilation of relevant data, and analysis of the results of a library use public survey conducted in 2014 with 240 community member responses.

Based on these, the Library Planning Committee selected four priority action themes for the long-range plan:

1. Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access
2. Create Young Readers: Early Literacy
3. Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure
4. Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces.

Within these categories, the document outlines eight goals with 18 objectives.

The trustees and library staff are assisted in their mission for fulfilling the strategic plan by the Friends of the Dartmouth Libraries. The Friends are volunteers who donate their time and energy to raising funds to support library programs and purchases. The Friends also plan, fund, and promote much of the library programming for adults. The group's website highlights their 2019 achievement of raising \$25,000 to support amenities in the new North Branch's Children's Room.



Figure 9.6: Dartmouth Library System Usage Statistics, Fiscal Year 2021

Books Circulation	76,066
Print periodicals Circulation	1,829
Audios (compact disks, cassettes) Circulation	5,393
Videos (DVD, VHS) Circulation	18,342
E-books Circulation	25,253
Downloadable Audio Circulation	10,023





Downloadable Video Circulation	606
Usage of local electronic collections	52,243
Usage of network electronic collections	152
Usage of state-wide electronic collections	2,310
Number of physical items owned by the library	124,918
Number of electronic books and audiobooks owned by the libraries	91,360
Number of registered borrowers	15,436
Number of public internet computers	15
Number of library visits	10,313
Receipts plus donations	\$81,639
Attendance at Children's Programs	1,806
Attendance at Adult Programs (Friends of Dartmouth Libraries)	884

Source: Dartmouth draft 2021 Town Report

## Dartmouth Council On Aging

The Dartmouth Council on Aging is dedicated to the safety and overall wellbeing of town residents aged 60 and over. A six-member board governs the Council. The Council has five employees and four van drivers.

The Council on Aging (COA) facility is a multi-purpose center that provides diverse services for the approximately 9,445 elders in the Dartmouth community (about 3,500 more persons than noted in the 2007 Master Plan). In FY2021, a total of 1,678 rides were provided for medical appointments, pharmacies, banks, grocery stores and to the Senior Center. Programming includes: adult day-care, elderly nutrition programming, case management services, van transportation to medical appointments and shopping, health screening clinics, various clubs, and other assorted services such as tax assistance. The COA provides health prevention activities including exercise and mediation classes, and support groups for elders and family members coping with Parkinsons, Alzheimer's, bereavement, and low vision or hearing impairment. A listing of the services currently provided per the 2021 draft Town Report is as follows:



Source: Dartmouth draft 2021 Town Report





Support/Health Services	Alzheimer's support group Parkinson's support group Widows support group Caregiver support group Legal appointments Blood pressure screenings Flu clinics (with the Board of Health) Podiatry services Dental cleanings/screenings Parkinson's Fitness Parkinson's Boxing Dance for PD Weight loss support group Veterans Corner Exercise classes for all ability levels Line dancing Café 628
Social Services	SHINE (health insurance/open enrollment) Boston Food Bank On-site food pantry SNAP applications (formally Food Stamps) PACE applications (fuel assistance) Nutritious lunch program (congregate) Meals on Wheels File of Life Telephone reassurance program Informational programs/guest speakers Tax assistance/Circuit Breaker forms

Services are provided at the Council on Aging site at 628 Dartmouth Street and the Norma Vaz Center at 11 Anderson Way. The main building was moved to its present site in 1978 and has undergone several additions to meet the changing and expanding needs of the population served. The Adult Day Care program uses a large portion of



the building. Fees collected from those served covers all the costs associated with staff and other expenses related to this program. There are three garages at the site all of which are inadequate for the vans the Council owns.

The Council relies on volunteers and to be effective, there is a need for volunteer training, recruitment, and coordination. Volunteers are active in the delivery of services.

Ongoing strategic planning is required to identify future needs related to the projected continued increase in the elderly population that, like the rest of the state and country, Dartmouth faces with the aging of the baby boom generation. It is likely that the programming for this aging segment of the population will be modified from existing services. In general, due to medical technology and lifestyle education this group is expected to be healthy longer and remain fairly active later in life.

## Police Department

The stated mission of the Dartmouth Police Service is to: "Uphold the law fairly and firmly, to prevent crime, to pursue and bring to justice those who break the law, to keep the peace, to protect, help and reassure the people in Dartmouth, and to be seen to do all this with integrity, common sense, and sound judgment." The department's website situates its self-conception and commitments within the current national context in which disproportionate use of force is often applied to black and brown people:

"We must be compassionate, courteous and patient, acting without fear or favor, or prejudice to the rights of others. We need to be professional, calm, and restrained in the face of violence and apply only that force which is necessary to accomplish our lawful responsibility. We must strive to reduce the fears of the public and, so far as we can, to reflect their priorities in the actions we take, and we must respond to well-founded criticism with a willingness to change."

According to Dartmouth's draft 2021 Town Report, the Police Department presently has 70 full-time sworn employees, 7 part-time sworn employees, and 19 non-sworn employees in the following positions:

- Chief of Police – 1
- Deputy Chief – 2
- Lieutenant – 3
- Sergeant – 9
- Police Officer – 55
- Special Police Officer – 7
- Dispatcher – 10
- I.T. Services – 1
- Crime Analyst – 1
- Administrative Assistant – 1
- Administrative Clerk – 2
- Traffic Supervisors – 3



Should the population of Dartmouth increase or community needs change, additional officers may be required to maintain a high level of service. With additional officers comes the need for additional equipment such as cruisers, and additional office space. The Department has traditionally requested the replacement of 3-4 cruisers each year. The Department's goal is to have a fleet that is fully hybrid by 2025.

The Police Department performs many duties. In calendar year 2020, the Department responded to 21,989 calls for service. The following table provides additional insight into the scale of activities performed by the police department.

**Figure 9.7: 2020 Calendar Year Police Activity Summary**

Calls for Service	21,989
911 Calls	14,156
Accidents	1,123
Alarms	1,953
Arrests	353
Citations	2,937
Medical Calls	4,413
Offense Reports	2,355
Summons	174
Traffic Enforcement	3,200
Firearms Licenses Issued	825
Fingerprinting	20

The 2007 Master Plan noted the need for a new police station. This recommendation took on greater force of effect when the police were forced to shut their station in 2014 after a health issue connected to the building's hot water heating system. For five years, the department operated out of mobile units. In September 2019, the department moved into a permanent home in a new building on Tucker Road at the former site of the Gidley School. This new Dartmouth Police Headquarters was constructed to support reasonable growth of the police department should that become necessary.

## Police Department Needs

### Upgraded Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)/Records Management System (RMS)

The police department currently relies on a CAD/RMS computer software system to support the majority of its operations. CAD is run in the communications division to log calls-for-service, dispatch responders, track response times, and run queries on people and vehicles. RMS is what officers use to create police reports, book arrests, charge offenders, and track crime. The department has been utilizing the same CAD/RMS software since 1994. Although the software has been updated over the years, it is slowing falling behind the capabilities of modern police software. The cost of transitioning to a modern CAD/RMS system is substantial from both the original purchase and data migration costs along with the annual maintenance and support service agreements. Transitioning to an updated CAD/RMS system will allow for more efficient and effective police operations.





## Support for Police Officer Hiring and Retention and Responsibilities

Difficulty hiring and retaining police is a nationwide trend that is being experienced locally. The hiring and retention of police officers has become more challenging over the last few years, likely due to the increased criticism and scrutiny for law enforcement, and reduced respect in some circles. This climate puts officers at greater risk of losing their job, experiencing public criticism, and in some cases, leads to imprisonment. The job of policing has become more complex over the years with a greater reliance on modern technology coupled with an ever-expanding list of responsibilities. The advent of the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) commission in MA now provides police oversight from a predominately civilian board. Decertification by this body will result in a police officer not being able to work in this state or any of the other 48 states that have POST. Police departments are now competing for officers with some departments actively soliciting trained officers by offering sign-on bonuses, increased pay, and benefits. This must be considered by the town if we are to continue hiring and retaining the best candidates.

Over the last 5 years we have experienced an unprecedented number of drug overdoses in town. Some of these have resulted in the death of the victim. Many times, using officer administered Narcan, police have been able to save the life of the person overdosing. The use of Narcan by police is an additional responsibility that will continue. In addition to fentanyl, police are now beginning to see methamphetamine in this area, further compounding the problem.

Homelessness has continued to expand around the nation and that trend is evident here as well. The homeless population in town is expanding to the point that the town has formed a task force to provide aid. The police department has appointed an officer to join this task force. There is no easy solution to this issue - it will likely continue and possibly worsen.

Currently, mental health services availability is inadequate. The department has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of calls involving people in crisis. Many times, police are left as a last resort to handle these highly volatile situations. We have partner with clinicians from Child and Family Services in New Bedford to improve our response to these calls. In many cases, if time allows, they can send a clinician to the scene to assist officers. Otherwise, Child and Family Services staff are available by phone to help. Officers have also received additional training in this area.

Training has become critically important to the department's success. Current police officers often feel that they are being held to a higher standard today that at any time in modern history, while being asked to perform a wider variety of tasks with near perfection. In many cases, these standards are set at a bar that is quite difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. It is incumbent upon us to provide these officers with the equipment and training to allow them to succeed in this environment. Training can be costly. In addition to the cost of classes, there are the cost of paying the officer to attend and hiring an additional officer (often at overtime) to cover the opening created by the officer attending the training. The department has begun looking at utilizing virtual reality simulators to be able to conduct some of this training on a more frequent basis while reducing the overall cost, so that training can be conducted while officers are on-duty. This does require the purchase of an ongoing subscription to this service, but this method of enhancing training will become more and more viable as the technology matures.

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In 2022 the department implemented body-worn cameras for all officers and will be installing cruiser mounted cameras in all patrol vehicles early in 2023. These cameras accurately capture police/citizen encounters, enabling enhanced accountability and officer protection. The use of such technology will likely go a long way in helping to restore public faith in the policing profession. These cameras do, however, create a vast amount of data that the department pays to store. Funding for this program has been appropriated by town meeting. The town's continued support of this program will be required if this program is to continue.

## Fire Districts

Dartmouth has three Fire Districts that are independent municipal agencies. Voters in the Districts elect Prudential Committee Members as the executive body of the Fire District. The Prudential Committee is charged with appointing the Fire Chief, expending money raised or borrowed, and approving all bills rendered on behalf of the district before being paid by the Treasurer.

At annual meetings of the Fire District, voters decide general policy and approve the district's budget and capital outlay. The Districts are financed by property taxes levied by the annual Fire District meetings.

District 1, which includes Padanaram, has 46 total members including a Fire Chief and Deputy Chief, and 5 dispatchers. District 1 has 4 fire engines, a fire boat, a rescue raft, and an oil spill response trailer. District 1 has obtained its Emergency Medical Service license and works very closely with STAT Dartmouth in providing emergency medical services.

District 2 covers the low-density areas of southwest Dartmouth. This area has seen a marked increase in the size of homes to be protected and includes large areas that have no town water service. District 2 is interested in ways to protect new development with either water tanks put in by subdivision developers or sprinkler systems in new housing. While District 2 does not have a dedicated webpage (though one is in development as of the writing of this plan), it has an active social media presence on Facebook with regular helpful posts related to the District and fire safety.

District 3 protects the largest land area, consisting of a large business district, Interstate 195, and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. District 3 operates from three fire stations. Headquarters Station 1 at 140 Cross Road houses an engine, a ladder, a heavy rescue, and a squad. The Headquarters fire station houses the district's administrative offices and is staffed with permanent and on-call firefighters. Station 2 at 1140 North Hixville Road houses two engines, a tanker, and a forestry vehicle. Station 2 is staffed by on-call firefighters. Station 3 at 254 State Road houses an engine and a forestry vehicle. Station 3 is staffed by on-call firefighters. District 3 is staffed by 43 employees, 12 permanent full-time and 32 on-call. Staffing includes a permanent Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Captain/Fire Inspector, Administrative Assistant, 8 Firefighter/EMTs, and 31 On-Call Firefighters. District 3 conducts over 500 fire inspections annually and responded to 1033 calls for service in 202.

Some of the major manpower challenges faced by the 3 districts include:

- Adding additional permanent firefighters to the present 3-firefighter company at the Headquarters fire station to decrease response time and mitigate fires and other emergency conditions in high life hazard facilities within the District.
- Recruitment and retention of On-Call Firefighters (especially given the decrease

in residents that work in town and are allowed to leave their work to respond to a fire call)

- Need for affordable housing to keep the younger generation (which is the group more likely to become On-Call Firefighters) in Town.

The three districts have specific cultures and traditions but participate in mutual aid agreements. All of the Districts have experienced an increase in demand for services, as well as, an expansion of the types of services they are responsible to provide. The continued growth within the community will eventually lead to major decisions about the adequacy of the call system, although a full-time fire department would be very costly for the community. Most residents are unaware of the Fire District/ Call Firefighter system and the District Chiefs report that residents often have demands that do not align with the call system, such as expecting the stations to be open on a regular basis.

## Emergency Management Agency

Dartmouth operates with an unpaid Director of Emergency Management Services. This function of town government has experienced considerable expansion as additional federal and state level planning, reporting, and training requirements have been passed. The Emergency Management Agency acts in case of civilian disasters caused by hurricane, flood, or major power failure. The Department will provide auxiliary police communications service and emergency lighting to help control such disasters.

Dartmouth's Emergency Management Agency works under the general direction of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.





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## Ambulance Services

Dartmouth ambulance services are provided through a private contractor. The current provider is SouthCoast Emergency Medical Services (STAT), which has provided this service to the town for 30 years. The contract was most recently renewed for a five-year term in December 2021 with a vote of the Select Board. Under the new contract, STAT will agree to pay the Town of Dartmouth \$148,782 with annual increases each year of the agreement. By 2026, the EMS provider will pay the town \$159,707.97. In the previous contract, STAT paid \$95,000 a year. The contract also establishes response time thresholds. Code 1 and code 2 calls (more time-urgent calls) must have a monthly average response time of at or below eight-minutes and 12-seconds. For code 3 calls (non-urgent calls), the monthly average limit is 20 minutes. The Police Department is in charge of dispatching the ambulance service.

## University of Massachusetts- Dartmouth

The University's most recent Campus Master Plan was completed in 2017. Plan highlights include:

- Renovation, replacement, and expansion of academic facilities that are now between 30-50 years old. This will create 21st century flexible, collaborative, technology-rich, and engaging learning environments.
- Replacement of first-year housing that is now 40-plus years old to provide an attractive mix of living and learning options for students.
- A renovated and expanded Campus Center/Student Union to provide improved student activity and student government spaces.
- Improved athletics and recreational facilities to increase student participation and health, enhance recruitment of student-athletes, expand community access, and build a stronger sense of Corsair pride.
- Improved parking and signage to make the campus more welcoming to the community, parents, and visiting high school students.
- A renovated and re-designed Ring Road that integrates pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile traffic, and an improved main entrance (aligned with Cross Road) and secondary entrance to enhance traffic safety on Old Westport Road.
- Sustainability best practices in construction and landscaping.

Most pertinent for the Town of Dartmouth are the redesign of Ring Road, and the replacement of first-year housing, which is complete and open as of fall 2020.

The University also released a new Strategic Plan in 2020, which highlights two significant challenges that it is facing: declining enrollment and declining revenue. Declining enrollment is attributed to the national trend of decreasing numbers of high school students. Declining revenue may have temporarily ceased with federal government contributions to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on universities. To address these challenges, the University is committed to a focus on three core activities: educating learners, generation and dissemination of knowledge, and community engagement, aligned with an appropriate and sustainable financial plan

The University is interested in keeping open and clear lines of communication with



the community and in finding new ways to share resources. The University tries to be open to community use of its facilities. With regard to the University's impacts on the community, there is awareness about the traffic circulation, emergency calls and off-campus student activities. The University attempts to do all within its control to minimize negative impacts and to work with the local law enforcement and other departments on these issues.

## Harbors and Waterways

The seven member Waterways Commission was established in May of 2003 to oversee and manage the harbor and all tidal waterways of Dartmouth. According to the Harbormaster's website, the Commission was charged with establishing policies and rules "to develop, administer, manage and regulate the tidal waterways and related public facilities within the Town of Dartmouth, including, without limitation, all marine ramps, docks, wharves, piers and moorings, and the Commission shall have all of the other powers and duties which are given to waterways commissioners by general law."

The Harbormaster carries out the policies and rules of the Commission and operates under the direction of the Town Administrator. The Waterways Commission operates an enterprise account where fees collected for boat moorings, waterways use, boat ramp use and waiting list reservations, are used to maintain and improve public waterways facilities and meet the equipment needs of the Harbormaster.

The Harbormaster's office administers 1,000 moorings in Dartmouth waters; provides pump out services of wastewater; responds to calls ranging from distress to lost sailors to mechanical failures; polices any problems among the vessels regularly in Dartmouth waters, as well as, guest vessels; and works with other town departments to oversee the use of Padanaram Harbor. The Harbormaster presently rents office space. Procuring a permanent office space at an appropriate location with good water access is also a goal.

The projected growth of Dartmouth, and surrounding areas, will increase the demand for harbor and waterways facilities. The one public boat ramp facility is already experiencing 24/7 activity. Increasing demands on the harbor and waterways will require additional manpower and expanded facilities. There is interest in developing additional launching areas that could ease the pressure on the existing facility. Toward that end, the town commissioned the Urban Harbors Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston to prepare a Feasibility Study for a Boating Facility at Arthur F. Dias Town Landing. The draft report was issued in June 2021. The feasibility study for a berthing facility at Dias Landing drew heavily from responses to a public survey, site visits, interviews with managers of municipal docks and potential users of the facility, insights from the Dartmouth Waterways Management Commission, and reviews of other municipal regulations and practices pertaining to dock facilities. Additional work by the Town will be needed to determine a potential path forward, including developing a final engineering design, obtaining permits, and establishing a fee and administrative structure.

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## ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE

### Community Goals and Objectives for Services and Facilities in Dartmouth

#### Services and Facilities Workshop

Public engagement on town Services and Facilities consisted of two activities. First, a selection of online activities were advertised to residents, including a survey asking questions relating to the services and facilities in town and an online mapping tool that enabled people to provide comments about improvements to each specific town facility. Finally, a real-time virtual workshop was held on March 18, 2021, in which participants discussed the town's service and facility needs in a small group setting.

The Dartmouth Community Services and Facilities Survey asked people how they interacted or utilized the services and facilities in town based on daily, weekly, monthly, or annual use. The town hall and the library were the top two facilities used on an annual basis. In fact, the majority of people who took the survey used the library daily or weekly. The library has high usage as a community meeting location and, of course, for access to library holdings. People use the town hall to pay bills, attend meetings, request information, and attend programs. At the end of the survey there were additional questions asking what are some positive or challenging experiences people face with town facilities. People have the most positive experiences with the library because of their extensive resources and welcoming staff. People have the most challenging experiences at town hall because of the lack of signage or central location for people to find where they are going within town hall to access the correct department.

The Improvement Mapper asked people to comment on the different facilities in town, especially if they need improvements. People were able to click on the name of the facility and provide their comment. Users of the mapper were concerned with the police station being located in an area with heavy traffic and it affecting police deployment. Others thought that the high school is not located in a central spot for all students. It is a long commute for those students in the northern part of Dartmouth. They suggested a decentralized concept for the high school. A comment was placed on the sewer treatment plant questioning the sewer system's remaining capacity for additional future development in Dartmouth. Participants also commented on the need for a new town hall within the next 25 years.



Workshop 5

Screen shot of the online Services and Facilities Mapper with comment about Town Hall showing

## Services and Facilities Goal 1:

### Maintain service levels while accommodating growth.

#### Why Dartmouth / Why Now?

After growing at a significant rate for decades, Dartmouth's overall population growth has plateaued. For the first time, population declined between 2010 and 2020 by 249 persons. However, this trend could reverse itself given the amount of land present in Dartmouth, and with the installation of and new zoning requirements around South Coast Rail. Even as population fell, the construction of new houses continues and may require increased service provision as overall population plateaus. The town should stay on top of growth trends from year to year and the implications for town service and facility requirements.

#### Key Strategies for Action

Strategy		Responsible Party	Time frame
SF-1A	Continue 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan efforts.	Town Admin, Department Heads, Select Board	On-going
SF-1B	<b>Define upcoming capital needs for new facilities.</b> Since the last Master Plan, several needed new buildings have been constructed and opened in town, including the new Police Station and North Branch Library. However, there are still space constraints and possibilities for needed expansion in the form of a new <b>Town Hall</b> , an expansion to the <b>Council on Aging building / outbuildings</b> , any additional facilities needed for the <b>DPW</b> , and a permanent office for the <b>Harbormaster</b> .	All Departments	On-going
SF-1C	Town services are only as effective as town staff. As housing prices increase in Dartmouth, there is a risk that professional public service pay scales will not keep pace with housing costs in Dartmouth. As recommended in the housing section, <b>adjust zoning to allow for the construction of home types that are affordable to moderate income households.</b>	Planning Board, Town Meeting	5 yrs



SF-1D	<p><b>Maintain population and housing growth data, especially GIS databases, with adequate staffing.</b> Having reliable datasets, especially spatial datasets and the staffing capacity to utilize them regularly to inform services and facilities operations is imperative to efficient service provision.</p> <p><b>Hiring a town GIS Coordinator</b> to meet the GIS needs of all town departments may be the most cost effective way to ensure the utilization of GIS resources.</p>	Town Admin., Select Board	<p>On-going;</p> <p>3 yrs for new hire</p>
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## Services and Facilities Goal 2:

### Promote long-term planning among all departments.

#### Why Dartmouth / Why Now?

Planning processes are essential in Dartmouth at the departmental level to ensure that the town has actionable information upon which to make decisions, as well as a set of publicly-vetted goals and objectives toward which to work. Groups and departments like the Library Trustees who consistently undergo planning cycles have a clear set of goals and are able to communicate these effectively to funders and to the community.

Key Strategies for Action			
Strategy		Responsible Party	Time frame
SF-2A	Implement the <b>Library's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan</b> , and develop the next strategic plan iteration by 2025.	Library Trustees	3 yrs
SF-2B	Implement the <b>Harbor Management Plan's</b> objectives related to water-related services and facility needs.	Harbor Mgmt Plan Implement-ation Committee	10 yrs
SF-2C	Consider a <b>strategic plan for the town's fire districts</b> if there are continued efforts toward replacing portions of the on-call team with full-time staff. Such a strategic plan could also help to standardize the information that each district disseminates to the public, which varies at the moment with some districts having a dedicated website, while others do not.	Fire Districts	3 yrs





<b>SF-2D</b>	Coordinate with the School Committee to accomplish necessary improvements to the town's school facilities.	School Committee and Town Administration	on-going
<b>SF-2E</b>	Work with police and fire officials to address public safety issues like mental health, overdoses, and homelessness. Continue the work of the town's task force around homelessness.	Police and Town Administration	on-going
<b>SF-2F</b>	Implement the Emergency Response recommendations from the Padanaram Harbor Management Plan	HMPIC, with other partners depending on the specific action	on-going
<b>SF-2G</b>	Modernize police operations with an upgraded Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD)/Records Management System (RMS)	Town Administration, Police	1-2 years
<b>SF-2H</b>	Continue to provide adequate resources to support police officer hiring and retention. Police departments are now competing for officers with some departments actively soliciting trained officers by offering sign-on bonuses, increased pay, and benefits. This must be considered by the town if we are to continue hiring and retaining the best candidates.	Town Administration, Town Meeting, Finance Committee, Police	On-going
<b>SF-2I</b>	Expand and enhance collaboration with clinicians at Child and Family Services in New Bedford to intervene in police calls involving people in crisis.	Town Administration, Police	On-going
<b>SF-2J</b>	Utilize virtual reality based police training options to assist in lowering ongoing training costs.	Town Administration, Police	On-going
<b>SF-2K</b>	Continue to fund a program for the storage of data generated by police body-worn and patrol vehicle cameras.	Town Administration, Town Meeting, Finance Committee, Police	On-going



## Services and Facilities Goal 3:

### Maintain efficient, well managed, environmentally sound drinking water and wastewater services.

#### Why Dartmouth / Why Now?

The provision of safe water and wastewater treatment is essential to the public health. There is additional need for water and wastewater capacity considerations, especially now in light of unpredictable drought cycles.

Key Strategies for Action			
Strategy		Responsible Party	Time frame
SF-3A	Develop a new <b>Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan</b> . The current plan dates to 1988, making it 33 years old.	Town Admin, Director of Development, DPW	3 yrs
SF-3B	Implement the town's <b>Stormwater Management Plan</b> .	DPW with support from other depts. as needed	On-going
SF-3C	Continue to improve the water system to <b>support hydraulic functions</b> , such as closing loops and adding storage.	DPW	On-going
SF-3D	Where it would support other town goals, <b>consider sewer and public water extensions</b> .	Public Works Board	On-going
SF-3E	Implement recommendations from the town's MVP plan related to <b>bolstering resilience of the town's water systems</b> .	Town Admin, DPW	10 yrs
SF-3F	Continue to monitor private septic systems through <b>Title V</b> processes.	Board of Health	on-going
SF-3G	Mandate periodic private well inspections. Keep up with any new state regulations related to private wellwater standards.	Town Admin, DPW	on-going
SF-3H	Continue to explore a tie in to the Fall River water supply system as a backup and for pricing flexibility.	DPW	10 yrs

# Services and Facilities Map

Source: MassGIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, EPA, NPS

