

Rochester

2024 Master Plan



Acknowledgements

The Town of Rochester's Master Plan would not have been possible without the support, input, and local knowledge provided by Rochester's residents, professional staff, leadership, and the volunteer members of the Master Plan Steering Committee. The Town would like to acknowledge the following for their role in preparing this plan.

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Data Sources and Definitions

2020 United States Census Data

Mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the Census occurs every ten years and counts every person living in the United States, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status. Census data is used to define state legislature districts and determine state representation in the United States Congress, calculate how federal funding is allocated to states, and develop vital information to help understand local communities.

UMDI-2022 MA DOT Massachusetts Population Projections

With support from the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, UMDI produces population projections by age and sex for all Massachusetts municipalities. Projections are available by sex and 5-year age group for each city, town, county, and state region in 5-year intervals to 2050. UMDI uses a component-of-change method based on trends observed in: town-level fertility and mortality from 2010 through 2019; regional, gross migration-by-age trends observed in data from the 2012-2019 American Community Survey; residual net-migration-by-age trends observed from 2010 through 2019 at the county level; and estimated 2020 launch populations by age and sex controlled to the U.S. Census Bureau's Census 2020 PL-94 population counts of under 18 and 18-plus populations at the town level. It is important to note that Census 2020 counts by 5-year age groups and by sex were not available at the time of the V2022 series production, such that the populations by 5-year age group in 2020 in the V2022 series data will not match the 5-year age groups in the 2020 Census counts.

MA Department of Economic Research (DER) - Employment and Wages Report

The Massachusetts Department of Economic Research (DER) Employment and Wages Report is a comprehensive publication produced by the Massachusetts Department of Economic Research, which is part of the state's Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). This report provides detailed data on employment levels, wages, and industry-specific information across various regions in Massachusetts.

The primary purpose of the report is to offer insights into the labor market conditions within the state. It includes data on employment numbers, average wages, and employment trends across different sectors and industries. The report is typically compiled from data collected through the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), which is a cooperative program between the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and state labor market information agencies. Key components of the report include: Industry Breakdown; Geographic Analysis; Trends and Comparisons; and Policy and Planning.

Introduction to the Master Plan

What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chapter 41 Section 81D, indicating that the Town Planning Board shall make a Master Plan of the Town, and from time to time may extend or update that plan. Its purpose is to serve as a blueprint guiding long-term physical development decisions within the municipality.

This Master Plan consists of nine essential elements, each focusing on critical aspects:

 **Statement of Goals and Policies (Vision)**

 **Land Use**

 **Housing**

 **Economic Development**

 **Open Space & Recreation**

 **Natural & Cultural Resources**

 **Services & Facilities**

 **Transportation & Circulation**

 **Implementation Strategies**

Each chapter of the Master Plan contains comprehensive information, beginning with 'Key Planning Information.' This section explains the topic and identifies pertinent issues and opportunities specific to Rochester. Subsequently, 'Goals' are proposed within each chapter to address problems and leverage opportunities. Finally, 'Strategies' are presented to achieve these goals. These strategies include important details such as steps to be taken, project lead, state, and federal programs to pursue each goal, required timeframes and resources, and recommended partnerships.

The 'Implementation' element of the Master Plan encapsulates all these details in a user-friendly table. It defines and schedules specific municipal actions necessary to fulfill objectives outlined in each element of the master plan.

The Master Plan is comprehensive in that it applies to the entirety of the Town of Rochester. The full town is seen on the map on the following page which depicts the neighborhood geography that is referenced throughout the plan.

Master Plan can:

- Offer a vision and policy guide for the town.
- Preserve the town's unique character and strengthen its identity.
- Help prioritize infrastructure development and maintenance.
- Guide town staff to make decisions in line with community goals.

Vision: Plan Elements

Rochester's Vision

This chapter introduces the Master Plan's Guiding Principles – the Vision Statements which describe a community's shared image of the future, equal parts aspirational and practical. The development of these Guiding Principles involved a comprehensive approach: reviewing past plans and policy statements, analyzing current socioeconomic trends, and, crucially, incorporating public feedback collected over 22 months through events, surveys, workshops, meetings, and online platforms. The Guiding Principles outlined reflect the core beliefs and aspirations expressed through the Master Plan process and envisioned as planning practices and decisions in Rochester. This meticulous process ensures that the Vision Statements reflect a data-driven and community-focused perspective, providing a roadmap for Rochester's development over the next decade.

Crafting these principles is a complex task, as it involves defining the community's relationship to their environment. The resulting Vision Statements span key areas such as Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Open Space and Recreation, Natural and Cultural Resources, Transportation and Circulation, and Services and Facilities, offering a cohesive overview of the community's aspirations and planning goals.

Integral to this process is the importance of improving government effectiveness, communication, and public education regarding town activities and services. Strengthening communication channels and ensuring that residents are well-informed about ongoing projects, available services, and future planning efforts is critical for fostering civic engagement, trust, and transparency in government operations. By improving access to information, enhancing government responsiveness, and creating opportunities for residents to learn about town functions, Rochester can ensure that community members are empowered to participate actively in shaping their town's future. An improved and more accountable government, supported by enhanced communication, will serve as a foundation for more effective governance and a more connected, informed, and engaged population.

Government Effectiveness → **Communication** → **Education**

Land Use

Maintain Rochester's scenic, rural, small-town character. Protect characteristic farmland, open space, and forested landscapes. Protect groundwater supplies. Refine local bylaws to minimize the impact of new development.

Housing

Create more housing options that can serve the needs of different demographics. Create more senior housing to ensure the ability to age in place. Ensure affordable housing options so that residents don't get priced out. Balance new development with natural preservation.

Economic Development

Support small businesses and diverse commercial activities. Attract various businesses along Route 28, enhancing our industrial and service sectors. Prefer businesses related to farms, wineries/ breweries, restaurants, small retail, or arts/specialty shops. Existing local businesses need infrastructure maintenance, better internet connections and cell reception, and stable tax rates.

Open Space & Recreation

Protect and enhance Rochester's open spaces and recreational facilities. Acquire and improve public spaces to ensure they are safe, and accessible, thereby improving community life.

Natural & Cultural Resources

Maintain high quality ground water resources. Conserve Rochester's natural habitats, forested landscapes, and agricultural land. Preserve historic landscapes and architecture. Maintain the town's heritage and ecological health for future generations.

Services & Facilities

Create stabilized capital expenditures through long-term planning. Enhance and maintain Rochester's infrastructure through strategic management, ensuring service efficiency and accessibility. Continue to foster a safe and engaged community with support for community projects. Ensure reliable broadband communication and electrical systems. Improve the permitting process.

Transportation & Circulation

Enhance mobility, including those with disabilities and seniors, through comprehensive transportation solutions. Improve transit awareness. Enforce safe driving. Key intersections need improvements.

“63% of respondents support the creation of more community events.”

Rochester Master Plan Public Survey

Previous Planning Efforts

The Town of Rochester has undertaken recent planning studies that should be viewed as companion documents to the Town's Master Plan. The recent planning efforts have been reviewed as part of the Master Plan process. Relevant findings, data, and recommendations have been incorporated into the Master Plan. Generally, the companion planning documents go deeper into the topic upon which they are focused than the Master Plan. The list below highlights the most relevant previous planning efforts and companion documents in chronological order:

- **Rochester Hazard Mitigation Plan (2024)**
- **Priority Protection and Priority Development (2008, 2013, 2024)**
- **Regional Assawompset Pond Complex (2022)**
- **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness and Community Resilience Building (2019)**
- **Housing Production Plan (2018)**
- **Open Space & Recreation Plan Update (2016)**
- **Buzzard Bay Updated Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (2013)**
- **South Coast Rail Corridor Plan (2008 - 2013)**
- **Rochester Historic Report (2010)**
- **Master Plan (2009)**
- **MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report (2001)**

Rochester has previously completed two Master Plans - once in 1999 and again in 2009. During the process of updating the Town's current master plan, a review was conducted on the most recent master plan. This exercise shed light on the progress made since the last plan and showcased the evolution of the town's goals and focus over the past decade. See pages 166-172 for a list of Action tasks from the 2009 Master Plan, categorized as completed, in progress, or ongoing.

Master Plan Process

The community-centered Master Plan process occurred over about an 18 month a 1.5-year period primarily in 2023 and 2024. The process involved several distinct phases of engagement in which the type of outreach varied in order to match with the specific needs of the community to support the creation and refinement of Master Plan content. The engagement consisted of a combination of in-person and virtual meetings, and community events.

Timeline

2023		2024	
Kick-off <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick-off Meeting • Mapping and Analysis • Literature Review • Meetings with Departments, Town Boards, Committees, and stakeholders 	Discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery Open House • Community Survey • Developed shared vision, priorities, and goals 	Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Outreach • Tabling Events • Two Topic Areas Workshops • Revisit vision, priorities, and goals • Topic Surveys • Pocket Pop-up Displays • Meetings 	Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Plan for public review • Gather final thoughts • Final Planning Board Adoption of Plan
Steering Committee meetings 2023: June 7 and July 18 2024: January 10, April 12, May 16, August 23, September 24, and October 3, October 9, and November 1.			

“Rochester is the most beautiful place to live.”

Rochester Residents

Master Plan Committee

The Town of Rochester, under the direction of the Planning Board, selected an eight member Master Plan Committee to provide input and guidance throughout the Master Plan process. The Committee consists of representatives from various stakeholders including boards, committees, and public entities including the Planning Board, Select Board, Historic District Commission, Facilities Department, Highway Department, Park Commission, and Cultural Council. The Committee was structured to advise on the development of the Master Plan, and to facilitate and encourage public participation in the planning process.

Community Engagement by the Numbers

Overall, based on meeting attendance and survey responses, it is estimated that the Master Plan process had over 780+ participants throughout the 20-month long process including all the events and engagement opportunities. In comparing Rochester households, about 37% of the 2,117 households¹ have participated in this process.

Community Priorities

The Rochester Master Plan Public Survey was the first major outreach platform for the 20-month process for the Rochester Master Plan. The survey consisted of 41 questions and was available online from July to November 2023. The survey was promoted widely and received 240 responses from community members.

1. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/rochestertownplymouthcountymassachusetts/POP060210>

The survey was divided into seven sections of questions – “Vision”, “Business Owner Supplemental”, “Land Use, Economic Development, and Housing”, “Transportation, Town Services, and Facilities”, “Natural & Cultural Resources and Open Space”, “Community Building and Public Engagement”, and “Demographic”. The Survey Results were used to frame community member values, goals, and priorities for the Town. Highlights from the results are summarized below.

People love Rochester for the quality of the school district, town character, tax rate (pro/con), cost of living, and municipal services. Residents are worried about the loss of open space, loss of opportunities to connect with the community, improvements to recreational options, while preserving and maintaining the rural, small-town character.

Survey respondents identified proximity to employment centers, and major highways and / or local shopping amenities of the least importance.

The rural and agricultural setting, open space, forested landscape, safety, quality of schools, and historic architecture were

respondents’ favorite things about Rochester. Other responses included:

- ***One of the last small Massachusetts towns that we can preserve.***
- Right to farm.
- Quiet back roads with very little traffic.
- A vibrant Counsel on Aging.
- It’s my hometown.

Most people love the small-town vibe and natural environment in Rochester.

Initial Master Plan Survey

The loss of open space as well as the residential tax rate, more opportunities to connect with the community were selected as the top needs for improvement for the Town of Rochester.

The survey asked, how important are the following issues to you?

The top five topics included:

- 1) Protection of groundwater supply (i.e. wells) (76.44%)
- 2) Loss of rural qualities of the town (74.40%)
- 3) Residents feel safe in town and in our schools (70.19%)
- 4) Loss of natural habitats (68.45%)
- 5) Quality of surface water (i.e. ponds, rivers, streams) (68.27%)

In addition to the insights from the Rochester Master Plan Public Survey, the Visioning Workshop held on October 2, 2023, highlighted residents' favorite locations in Rochester, including Eastover Farms, Rochester Memorial School, Plumb Corner, and Gifford Park/Dexter Lane. Walking and hiking were among the most cherished activities in the community.

Additional results from the Rochester Master Plan Survey, Topic Surveys, and Workshops are presented in the following chapters, particularly framing a vision for Rochester with core priorities and specific community priorities highlighted in each of the topic chapters.

Concerns Identified within the Community

Tax base remained a topic of concern throughout the Master Plan process. Property taxes have long been the main pillar of community government finances. Often, property taxes depend on home values that may not reflect a homeowner's income level. Local tax limitations can create daunting challenges, hamper fiscal stability, as communities try to balance their budgets.

Property Protection vs. Tax Base Conflicts - As more property is protected, conflict grows with the desire to protect Rochester's precious properties while those property taxes slip away. Creative solutions will be necessary to maintain a healthy tax base while protecting future properties in Rochester.

Political polarization is intensifying in society today, which has included a desire by some advocates to demonstrate that elected officials and leaders favor their opinion. Understandably, elected officials have strong opinions in order to improve their communities.

Today's technology supports increased polarization as we generally choose to read and view only information that supports our own opinions. Keeping local government out of the fray is important due to the fact that many decisions are decided by consensus on community issues rather than voting. Officials typically use their roles to build community trust, relationships, collaboration and compromise to solve problems and provide services. Local government's effectiveness will continue to be enhanced by a nonpartisan nature.

Communities across the Commonwealth face the challenge of

recruiting and retaining workers with the right skills to provide government services effectively. This need has been heightened by the economic recession and recovery, the aging workforce, and changing preferences concerning benefits and job mobility among younger workers. Several issues have been identified across the municipal sector including designing a compensation package that attracts younger workers planning for a large upcoming retirement wave, recruiting and retaining workers for hard-to-fill positions.



Land Use

Protect Rochester’s scenic, rural character through effective policies. Enhance access to open spaces and trails, preserve water resources and refine local bylaws to ensure sustainable development.

Key Planning Information

Historical Background

Rochester is a small rural town with a total area of 36.4 square miles of which 33.9 square miles is land and 2.5 square miles is water. Situated in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, it immediately neighbors Middleborough, Lakeville, Wareham, Marion, Mattapoisett, Freetown and Acushnet. Located 50 miles south of Boston, Rochester sits almost entirely within the Buzzards Bay Watershed. Its rural character and landscapes are a result of an intentional balancing of growth and protection, or preservation by design. Geographically, the town is divided into four distinct neighborhoods: North Rochester, East Rochester, Bisbee Corner, and Varella Corner. The primary land uses in Rochester consist of 4,822 acres of single-family homes and 2,966 acres of condominium residential, totaling 33.91% of the Town. The Town has permanently protected 5,066 acres of open space and an additional 1,777 acres are in Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B, a program that gives landowners an opportunity to reduce their property taxes in exchange for providing public benefits.

The land use and growth patterns in Rochester have been influenced by the historic and economic evolutions of the Town, the natural features that have always been present, and the supportive infrastructure that has been developed.

Rochester’s history can be traced back to seasonal Native American settlements most likely located around the three major freshwater ponds and the moderate uplands of what is now the town center. According to the Native Land and territories map, Rochester resides in Pokanoket (Massachusetts) ancestral territory. Native Americans sought the more exposed coast (Mattapoisett, Marion, Wareham) during the spring and summer months, and, during the winter, came inland to what is now Rochester, seeking protection from the coastal storms. Expanding European settlement from the Marshfield, Plymouth, and Scituate areas during the colonial period (1675-1775) displaced the native population. Rochester’s first European settlement node developed in the 1680s at the junction of Perry Hill (currently New Bedford Road), Rounseville, and Marion Roads. Rochester’s Common was established in 1697, with the first meeting house built shortly thereafter and the First Church of

Rochester was established in 1703.

The town center was solidified in the 18th century through the development of local highways. The settlement pattern at that time concentrated in or near the town center. Sawmills developed near the rivers that supplied lumber to coastal shipbuilding centers.

During the 19th century, the secession of what is now Mattapoisett and Marion removed Rochester's two largest villages – which were also the town's two main business centers. The town's principal product remained lumber. During the late 19th century, the rising popularity of cranberry growing added a needed supplement to Rochester's agricultural economy.

During the early 20th century, the automobile brought greater travel freedom, paved roads, and additional residential development along existing roads. The Hartley Mill became the town's largest industry and the growing cranberry industry saw the consolidation of family-owned bogs into large companies. Many of the bogs in the community remain family owned. Residential development during the early 20th century included Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Dutch Colonial Revival style cottages clustered in the western half of town.

During the mid-late 20th century, Rochester experienced its largest development. Between 1945 and 1979, the town more than doubled its population. Over 400 buildings were constructed during the 1970s alone. The town's industrial base diminished to one mill, which closed in 1964, and several cranberry

bog operations, which continue to present time. Residential development has included multiple subdivisions, with pressure for suburban development in outlying areas, especially near Snipatuit and Mary's Ponds.

Despite the new construction that occurred in the late 20th century, Rochester retains much of its historic settlement pattern and historic homes and structures. These give the town the integrity of setting, feeling, and association with its long and rich history.

Planning & Zoning

This historic and economic evolution of the Town was once closely connected to the three major freshwater ponds and moderate uplands. Today, land use is determined by the Town's zoning which is enforced through the work of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. The Town of Rochester is primarily zoned for residential/agriculture land use (approximately 22,462 acres). The General Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts in Rochester are both significantly less extensive than the Residential/Agriculture Zoning District, indicating a focus on localized commercial and industrial development. To preserve the agricultural roots of Rochester, the Town has consistently ensured in its bylaws that agriculture be an allowed use within their residentially zoned areas of Town. Rochester also has 516 acres zoned for industrial, 34 acres zoned for general commercial, and 46 acres zoned for limited commercial.

Rochester has eight Overlay Zoning Districts designed to

address various environmental and developmental priorities. The Mattapoissett River Valley Watershed and Groundwater Protection districts safeguard water resources vital for the community's drinking supply. The Historic Overlay District preserves areas of cultural and historical significance, while the Flood Plain District regulates development in flood-prone areas. The Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations Overlay District promotes renewable energy, and the Sippican River Protection zone preserves local waterways. Additionally, the Renewable or Alternative Energy R&D Facilities or Manufacturing district encourages sustainable industry, and the Cranberry Highway Smart Growth Overlay District supports sustainable development along a key corridor.

Zoning regulates the use and development of land in Rochester. Rochester established its zoning code on September 10, 1959, and last updated it in May 2024.

Recent changes included updates to the Flood Plain District bylaw. Much of Rochester's zoning bylaws address a comprehensive set of topics to regulate and manage land use and development within Rochester. They provide guidelines for different zoning districts, overlay districts, and special zoning considerations, ensuring that development aligns with the town's goals and protects its natural and historic resources.

Land Use

Land use planning is a vital tool for towns like Rochester, enabling

them to shape the development of land in ways that directly influence the town's appearance and character. Decisions regarding the interaction of residential, recreational, commercial, and industrial areas are guided by both the preferences of residents and the broader socioeconomic goals of the community. Central to this process is the principle of self-determination, which empowers communities to enact rules and regulations that guide the town's evolution while preserving its unique sense of place. These regulations are codified in the Zoning By-Law, the Rules & Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land, and regulations set forth by the Board of Health and Conservation Commission. While primarily aimed at protecting public health, safety, and welfare, these local constraints also allow residents to actively shape their town's future.

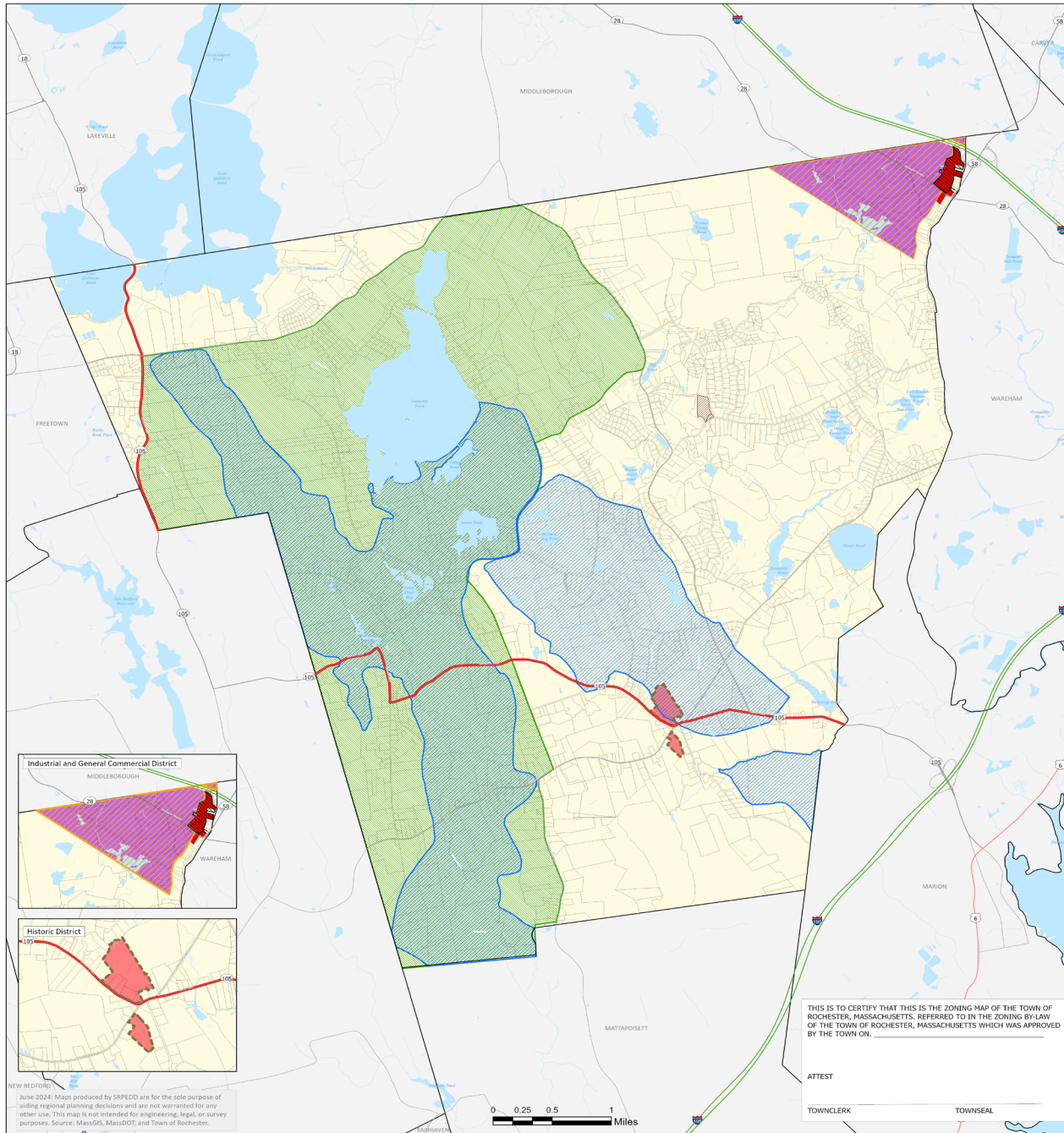
To remain effective, these rules and regulations must be carefully crafted and regularly reevaluated to ensure they continue to reflect the evolving needs and desires of residents and property owners. The Planning Board and Board of Appeals must operate with confidence, ensuring they represent all stakeholders or, at the very least, work towards acceptable compromises. The key drivers of land use planning include the need to balance development with the preservation of the town's character and environment. Effective planning anticipates and guides change in a manner that aligns with community goals.

In Rochester, where 80% of the land is privately owned by individuals or businesses, the potential for development or redevelopment is significant. This capacity for change underscores

the importance of wise land use planning to ensure that any development aligns with the community’s vision. Rochester’s zoning framework includes key districts such as Residential/Agriculture, General Commercial, Industrial, and Limited Commercial. The town has also established overlay districts like the Mattapoissett River Valley Watershed, Groundwater Protection District, and Rochester Historic District to address specific environmental and historical concerns.

Most of Rochester is zoned for Residential/Agriculture use, with only small areas in the northeast corner zoned for Industrial and General Commercial purposes, and a limited area in the south zoned as Limited Commercial. The town’s residential zoning, which includes a two-acre minimum lot size, reflects its predominantly residential character. The careful distribution of residential areas interspersed with green spaces enhance the quality of life by balancing development with the preservation of natural environments.

Town of Rochester Zoning Map



NEW BEDFORD
 June 2024: Maps produced by SRPEDD are for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and are not warranted for any other use. This map is not intended for engineering, legal, or survey purposes. Source: MassGIS, MassDOT, and Town of Rochester.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS IS THE ZONING MAP OF THE TOWN OF ROCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, REFERRED TO IN THE ZONING BY-LAW OF THE TOWN OF ROCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE TOWN ON _____

ATTEST
 TOWNCLERK _____ TOWNSEAL _____

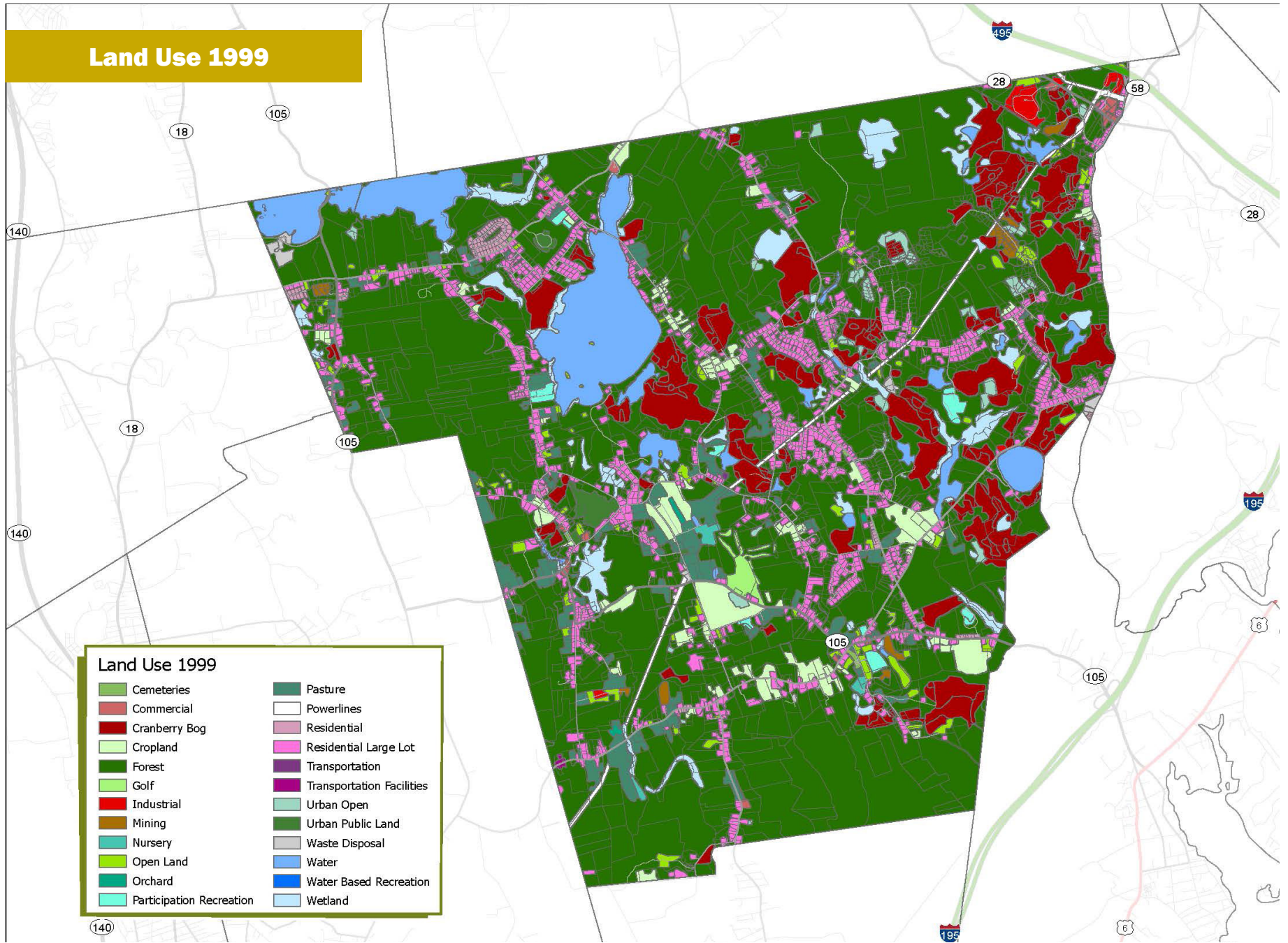
- Zoning Districts**
- Residential/Agriculture
 - General Commercial
 - Limited Commercial
 - Industrial

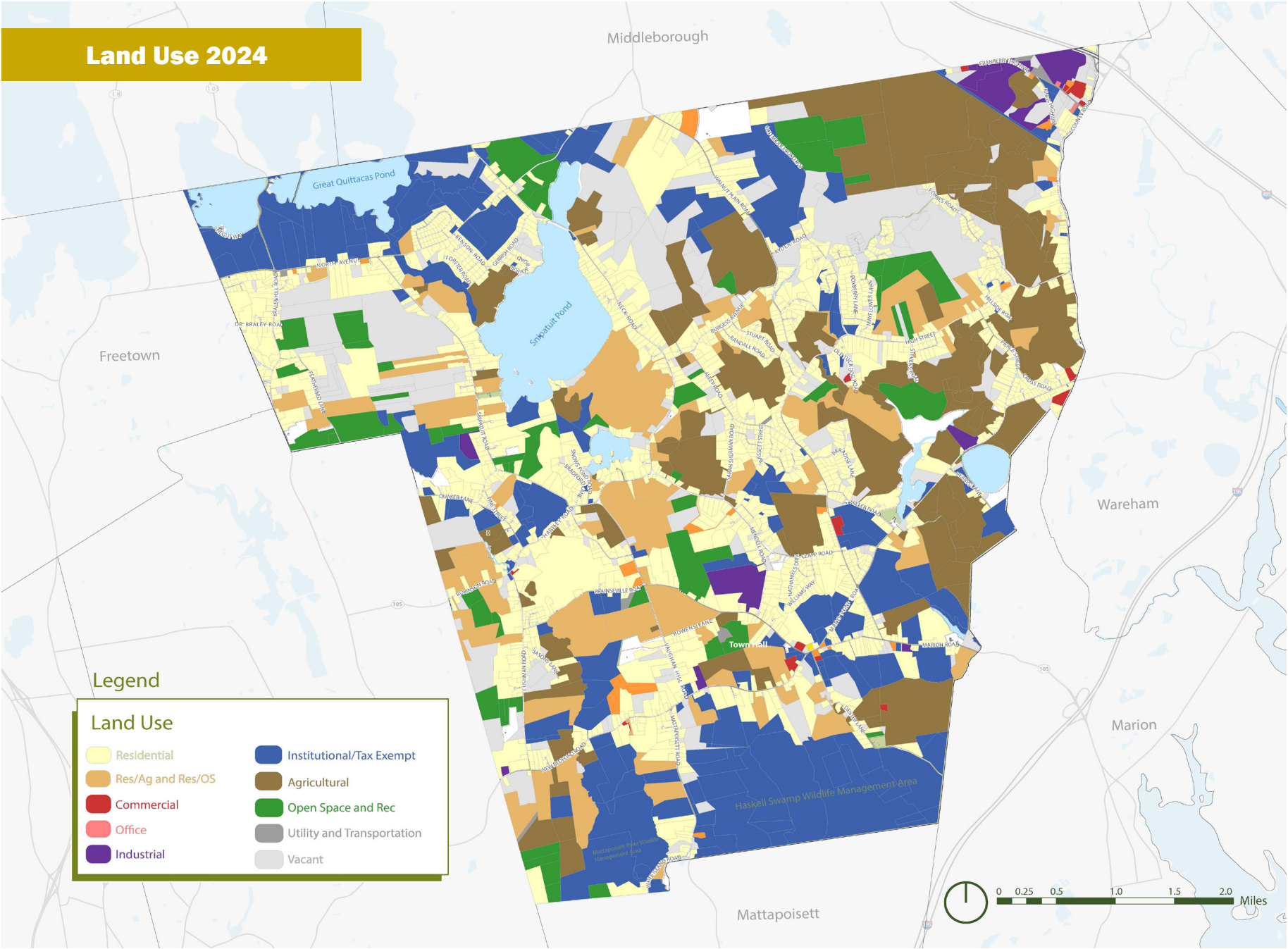
- Overlay Districts**
- Mattapoisett River Valley Watershed *per MGL Chapter 407 of 1983
 - Groundwater Protection District (Section 21.20)
 - Ground Mounted Solar (Section 21.40)
 - Cranberry Highway Smart Growth Overlay District (Section 21.60)
 - Flood Plain District (Section 21.10) (See FEMA Flood Plain Maps)

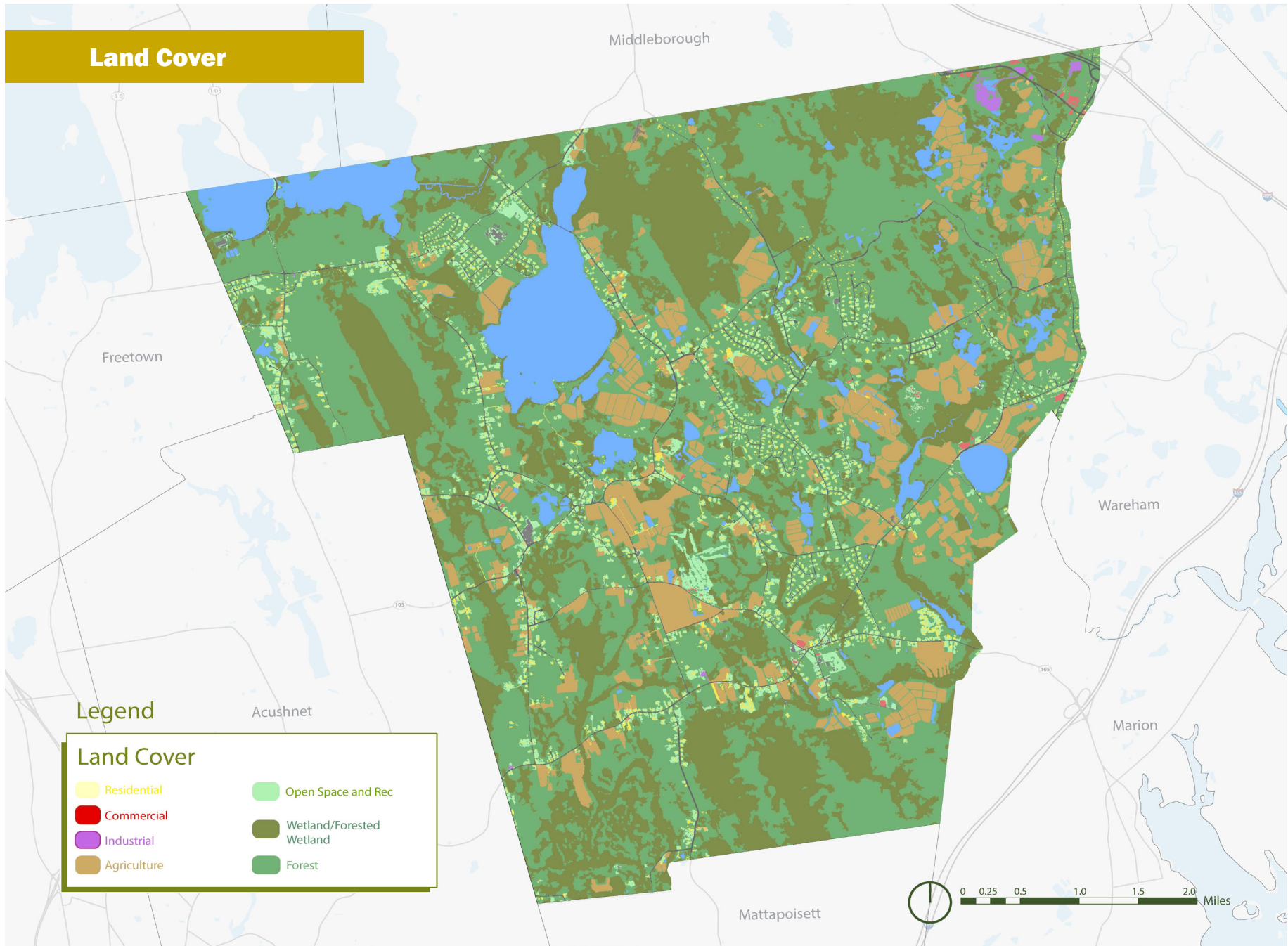
- Overlay Districts Industrial Zone**
- Adult Entertainment (Section 21.10)
 - Renewable Energy (Section 21.50)
- Overlay District Limited Commercial Zone**
- Historic District (Section 23.10)
 - Sippican River Protection (Section 21.20) (200' buffer from each bank including East and West Branches)

- Roadways**
- Scenic Road
 - Waterbodies
 - Stream
 - Intermittent Stream
 - Surrounding Towns

- Roadways**
- Interstate
 - US Highway
 - State Route
 - Arterial and Collector









Land Use

Protect Rochester’s scenic, rural character through effective policies. Enhance access to open space and trails, preserve water resources, and refine local bylaws to ensure sustainable development.

Goals and Strategies Overview

Goal 1.1: Explore policies and programs that help Rochester protect its scenic, rural character.

1. *Establish written rural development design guidelines within the zoning bylaw to regulate future growth in agricultural and residential areas preserving the town’s character and ensuring any existing or future water line infrastructure is thoughtfully integrated to support sustainable future development.*
2. *Promote agri-tourism and support local farmers to sustain agricultural landscapes.*

Complimentary Strategies: 1.3.3 and 3.1.2

Goal 1.2: Protect, create, and improve access to additional open space trails and natural areas while preserving water resources and supplies.

1. *Support, expand and prioritize the protection of critical natural areas, while considering tax implications of taking land off the tax rolls.*
2. *Partner with local land trusts, to assess financial impacts of open space protection, public water resources, and other natural areas.*
3. *Continue to study the Town of Rochester and the surrounding communities water resources as it pertains to Rochester.*
4. *Define and identify priority areas that are critical to Rochester for future preservation.*

Complimentary Strategies: 4.2.1 and 5.3.2

Goal 1.3: Update local bylaws/regulations to minimize the impact of new development while maintaining the Town’s character, ensuring that each development contributes positively to the town’s progress without altering its fundamental identity.

1. *Conduct a third-party review to:*
 - Identify conflicts and outdated provisions, ensuring that all bylaws are legally defensible and align with the town’s long-term goals.
 - Update Rochester’s zoning bylaw by analyzing each zoning district to identify sustainable and appropriate land uses that minimize development impacts to prevent growth in areas where it could strain infrastructure.
 - Perform a comprehensive zoning review to ensure that local bylaws incentivize desired land uses and support effective zoning enforcement.
2. *Develop a detailed use table that clearly outlines and organizes permitted uses for each district, ensuring alignment with the town’s goals of protecting rural character, supporting agriculture, and guiding responsible development.*
3. *Thoughtfully expand mixed use areas with open space and recreation design bylaw standards that allow for desired growth while protecting rural character and natural resources.*

Complimentary Strategies: 6.3.1

Goal 1.1

Explore policies and programs that help Rochester protect its scenic, rural character.

Strategy 1.1.1: Establish written rural development design guidelines within the zoning bylaw to regulate future growth in agricultural and residential areas preserving the town's character and ensuring any existing or future water line infrastructure is thoughtfully integrated to support sustainable future development.

Designed to guide growth in agricultural and residential zones, this strategy is committed to preserving Rochester's distinctive character while encouraging sustainable development practices.

The Master Plan strategically emphasizes protecting Rochester's rural character by conserving its historic landscapes and open spaces, which are crucial to the town's unique identity. By thoughtfully regulating development, the plan aims to balance growth with preservation efforts, thereby maintaining the aesthetic and ecological integrity that epitomizes Rochester. Such efforts are vital not only for preserving the town's visual allure but also for fostering biodiversity and safeguarding natural habitats.

Further, the strategy highlights the necessity of thoughtfully integrated infrastructure development. It proposes development that considers the capacity and strategic placement of both existing and future water line infrastructure, ensuring the town's long-term sustainability. This approach is designed to ensure that infrastructure growth supports and does not detract from Rochester's rural and scenic charm, thus supporting concurrent development and conservation objectives.

Zoning and regulatory frameworks play a pivotal role in this strategy.

The guidelines established within the zoning bylaw aim to set clear development expectations, particularly in zones primarily designated for agricultural or residential use. These regulations are devised to reflect the community's values and the natural characteristics of the landscape, ensuring that growth is not only well-managed but also aligns with Rochester's long-term vision for its environment.

Community involvement is a cornerstone of this strategy. The Master Plan's development process garnered extensive input from Rochester's residents, ensuring the guidelines represent a widely endorsed collective vision. This inclusive approach guarantees that the planning guidelines are customized to the unique needs and preferences of the community, fostering a deep sense of ownership and commitment to sustainable development among the residents.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning, Agricultural Commission, Conservation Commission, Conservation, Town Administrator, and Economic Development Committee

Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The Town of Westport's rural development design guidelines reflect its commitment to preserving rural character and protecting natural resources through detailed zoning regulations for agricultural and residential growth. Key elements of this success include community-driven planning, open space protection, sustainable growth policies, infrastructure and environmental considerations, agricultural support, and broad community engagement.



Goal 1.1

Explore policies and programs that help Rochester protect its scenic, rural character.

Strategy 1.1.2: Promote agri-tourism and support local farmers to sustain agricultural landscapes.

This strategy is fundamental to preserving Rochester’s rural heritage and enhancing its local economy, as detailed in the Master Plan. It focuses on boosting small-scale agricultural businesses and incorporating agri-tourism into the town’s economic framework. The primary objective is to support farms and agricultural enterprises, implementing targeted strategies to ensure their ongoing viability within the community.

Promoting agri-tourism and supporting local farmers are crucial for maintaining the agricultural landscapes that define Rochester. These efforts not only help preserve the town’s rural character but also bring economic benefits by attracting tourists and promoting local produce and products. Agri-tourism serves an educational purpose, increasing public awareness about farming and local food production, while providing direct market opportunities that enhance farmers’ income potential and encourage the preservation of agricultural land.

Additionally, supporting local farmers aligns with Rochester’s sustainability objectives by promoting agricultural practices essential for environmental conservation.

This strategy is executed through a variety of actions intended to develop agri-tourism and establish strong support systems for farmers, thus preserving the agricultural foundation crucial to Rochester’s character and economic diversity. Possible actions for this strategy include:

- Creating an Agri-Tourism Welcome Center
- Develop Farm Trail Maps
- Launch an Agri-Tourism Website and/or Mobile Application
- Host Annual Agri-Tourism Festivals
- Offer Business Development Workshops for Farmers
- Implement Signage and Infrastructure Improvements
- Establish a Farm Internship and Volunteer Program
- Promote Farm-to-Table Dining Experiences
- Encourage Collaboration with Local Schools and Educational Institutions

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Agricultural Commission, Select Board, Economic Development Committee, and Events Committee

Performance Measures: By the end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Town of Shelburne’s initiatives through the Shelburne Falls Farmers’ Market and broader agri-tourism efforts have bolstered the local economy, diversified farmers’ income, and preserved the town’s agricultural landscape and rural character. By supporting farmers and raising awareness of local food production, these efforts promote sustainable community viability. Key elements of success include developing agri-tourism attractions, farm trails, collaborative marketing, farm-to-table programs, educational outreach, community engagement, and infrastructure improvements.



Goal 1.2

Protect, create, and improve access to additional open space trails and natural areas while preserving water resources and supplies.

Strategy 1.2.1: Support, expand and prioritize the protection of critical natural areas, while considering tax implications of taking land off the tax rolls.

This strategy focuses on protecting critical natural areas, a key element in managing Rochester's scenic and rural character while considering the financial implications for the town's tax base. By expanding the use of conservation easements—voluntary legal agreements that permanently restrict land use to protect its conservation values—the town aims to safeguard essential natural areas that support biodiversity, enhance water quality, and contribute to the community's overall aesthetic.

The rationale for this strategy stems from the need to balance environmental stewardship with fiscal responsibility. While conservation easements may reduce property tax revenue by limiting development potential, the preserved lands deliver substantial ecological, educational, and recreational benefits. These benefits not only improve quality of life but may also attract tourism and related economic activities, offering a potential increase in other revenue streams. Additionally, maintaining these natural landscapes aids in stormwater management, preserves water quality, and mitigates flood risks—critical factors in adapting to weather events/patterns that may also result in long-term infrastructure cost savings.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Conservation Commission, Select Board, Assessors, Land Trust, and Planning

Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The Town of Acushnet successfully utilized conservation easements and other measures to protect key natural areas. Acushnet's success demonstrates that balancing conservation with fiscal responsibility can strengthen environmental health, community well-being, and economic resilience. Key elements of Acushnet's success include: collaboration with land trusts and state programs; balancing tax implications with conservation goals; preserving water resources; economic and recreational benefits; and the use of tax incentives and public engagement.



Goal 1.2

Protect, create, and improve access to additional open space trails and natural areas while preserving water resources and supplies.

Strategy 1.2.2: Partner with local land trusts, to assess financial impacts of open space protection, public water resources, and other natural areas.

This strategy is aimed at achieving a harmonious balance between the conservation of Rochester’s natural resources and the town’s economic sustainability. By forming partnerships with local land trusts and state agencies, Rochester can tap into the expertise and resources of these organizations to deploy effective conservation strategies. Such collaborations are essential for safeguarding important natural landscapes that enhance biodiversity, recreational opportunities, and the overall environmental health of the community.

A crucial element of this strategy is the financial assessment, which evaluates the economic impacts associated with removing land from the tax rolls—an often cited concern in conservation initiatives. The strategy focuses on understanding and mitigating potential reductions in tax revenue that occur when lands are conserved by the town or another tax-exempt entity and thus removed from development potential and the town’s property tax base. This assessment is vital for ensuring that conservation efforts do not compromise Rochester’s financial stability but rather contribute to the community’s long-term resilience and economic health.

The rationale for this approach is deeply rooted in the community’s desire to preserve the unique character and environmental assets

of Rochester, which are greatly cherished by its residents. The town’s natural landscapes not only define its identity and enhance quality of life but are also critical for maintaining ecological balance and fostering public engagement. This strategy is designed to maintain these values, ensuring that Rochester’s development remains economically sound and environmentally sustainable, embodying a comprehensive approach to sustainable development.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Water Commission, Conservation Commission, Select Board, and Board of Assessors

Performance Measures: By the end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth has worked collaboratively with local land trusts, such as the Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust (DNRT), to protect vital natural spaces while carefully evaluating and addressing the financial implications of these conservation efforts. By partnering with local land trusts and conducting thorough financial assessments, Dartmouth was able to protect critical natural areas while ensuring that the town’s fiscal health remained intact. The town’s strategy showcased how collaborative conservation efforts, when carefully planned and communicated, can lead to long-term economic and environmental benefits. Key elements of Dartmouth’s success include: strong partnerships with land trusts; comprehensive financial assessments; innovative use of payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) programs; water resource protection; public engagement and educational and long-term economic and environmental benefits.



Goal 1.2

Protect, create, and improve access to additional open space trails and natural areas while preserving water resources and supplies.

Strategy 1.2.3: Continue to study the Town of Rochester and the surrounding communities water resources as it pertains to Rochester.

Water resources in Rochester are essential for sustaining local ecosystems, providing drinking water, and supporting agricultural and recreational activities. As Rochester and its neighboring communities develop, a deeper understanding and management of these resources become crucial. The town is integrated into the region's hydrological framework through key features like the Mattapoissett River Valley and Snipatuit Pond, along with numerous streams that connect to the bay. These water resources support a diverse range of flora and fauna, crucial for maintaining biodiversity and ecological health. However, they face increasing pressures from population growth, land use changes, and climate variations, highlighting the need for a robust strategy for their study and management.

Recent collaborative initiatives, such as those focused on the Assawompset Pond Complex, underscore Rochester's interdependence on regional water systems and the challenges of nutrient loading, habitat disruption, and water quality. Continuing to study these resources is vital for developing adaptive management approaches that effectively respond to environmental changes and regulatory requirements. This ongoing study is grounded in three main objectives: enhancing scientific understanding of hydrological processes to ensure water management strategies are empirically based, ensuring regulatory compliance through

continuous monitoring and data analysis and integrating water resource management with community planning to ensure sustainable growth while preserving the natural resources that define Rochester's character.

Collaboration with neighboring towns, regional agencies, and environmental groups is crucial for pooling resources and expertise, enhancing the ability to manage these resources holistically. This strategic approach not only aims to safeguard water quality and availability but also ensures that management practices contribute positively to the region's overall sustainability goals.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Water Commission, Planning, and Town Administrator

Performance Measures: By then end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Assawompset Pond Complex (APC) in Southeastern Massachusetts exemplifies successful collaborative water resource management. This initiative united the towns of Rochester, Lakeville, Freetown, and Middleborough, as well as regional agencies and environmental groups, to tackle water management challenges in a shared watershed. Key factors contributing to its success include enhanced data monitoring, adaptive management practices, adherence to regulatory standards, active community engagement, and strong inter-municipal cooperation. This approach not only addresses current environmental issues but also sets a valuable precedent for similar collaborative efforts in the region.



Goal 1.2

Protect, create, and improve access to additional open space trails and natural areas while preserving water resources and supplies.

Strategy 1.2.4: Define and identify priority areas that are critical to Rochester for future preservation.

This strategy is a critical component of Rochester’s comprehensive efforts to ensure both sustainable growth and effective conservation. It involves a systematic evaluation to identify areas within Rochester that possess significant ecological, historical, or recreational value, earmarking them for future preservation. This process leverages environmental and land use studies, community feedback, and historical insights to develop a robust framework for prioritization.

The necessity for this strategy stems from the desire to maintain Rochester’s picturesque rural and scenic character, while fostering responsible development. By identifying and prioritizing areas for preservation, the town can adeptly manage its natural and cultural resources, directing conservation efforts to the areas that are most in need. This careful stewardship ensures that vital habitats, water resources, and historical sites are protected from the potential negative impacts of development.

Furthermore, the delineation of priority areas facilitates strategic planning and the effective allocation of conservation funds. This enables Rochester to more efficiently tap into state and federal programs dedicated to land protection. This proactive and strategic approach not only safeguards Rochester’s environmental and historical assets but also enriches the quality of life for its residents by preserving the town’s unique character and natural charm. Achieving this balance between

development and conservation is essential for maintaining the town’s allure and ensuring its long-term livability and appeal.

The 2023-2024 Priority Area Project Update, conducted by SRPEDD, provided Rochester with a starting point for this strategy. Rochester was provided with updated priority area boundaries via modern mapping and active community engagement. These maps can be used to inform decision-making and propose more detailed recommendations and example scenarios for key Priority Areas.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Agricultural Commission, Historic Commission, and Land Trust

Performance Measures: By the end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Town of Marion’s strategic identification and prioritization of critical natural and historical areas provide a strong example of how thoughtful planning can achieve significant preservation outcomes. Using a collaborative, data-driven, and community-inclusive approach to land conservation, Marion prioritized areas that are ecologically, historically, and recreationally significant, ensuring that its preservation efforts provided long-term benefits to its residents and aligned with broader community goals. Key elements of Marion’s success include: collaborative approach to identifying priority areas; strategic land protection through partnerships; designation of priority areas for wetlands and water resources; preservation of historical and scenic sites; proactive community engagement; and utilization of state and federal funding sources.



Goal 1.3

Update local bylaws/regulations to minimize the impact of new development while maintaining the Town's character, ensuring that each development contributes positively to the town's progress without altering its fundamental identity.

Strategy 1.3.1: Conduct a third-party bylaw review to:

- **Identify conflicts and outdated provisions, ensuring that all bylaws are legally defensible and align with the town's long-term goals.**
- **Update Rochester's zoning bylaw by analyzing each zoning district to identify sustainable and appropriate land uses that minimize development impacts to prevent growth in areas where it could strain infrastructure.**
- **Perform a comprehensive zoning review to ensure that local bylaws incentivize desired land uses and support effective zoning enforcement.**

This comprehensive review process focuses on several key actions:

- **Identifying Conflicts and Outdated Provisions:** The review will address existing bylaw conflicts and outdated elements that may hinder strategic plans or pose legal risks. This ensures bylaws are robust, withstand scrutiny, and facilitate smooth governance.
- **Updating Zoning Bylaws:** Analyzing each zoning district to refine bylaws for sustainable and appropriate land use. This helps minimize developmental impacts, especially in areas where growth may strain local resources, directing development to suitable regions.
- **Comprehensive Zoning Review:** A thorough review ensures bylaws promote preferred land uses, support effective zoning enforcement,

and achieve a balance between urban and rural development.

This strategy is crucial for preserving the town's character and sustainability. By ensuring coherent, up-to-date legal frameworks for land use, it helps manage growth, conserve natural areas, and promote sustainable, community-beneficial development. Aligning bylaws with modern standards boosts Rochester's appeal as a place to live and work, while protecting environmental and historical assets. This proactive approach ensures flexibility and resilience amid changing conditions.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning, Bylaw Review Committee, Building, and Zoning Board of Appeals

Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The Town of Westport's comprehensive bylaw review, conducted with the help of a third-party consultant, modernized zoning regulations, resolved conflicts, and aligned them with long-term goals. This strengthened the town's regulatory framework, promoted sustainable development, and protected its rural character. Key elements of success included third-party bylaw review, alignment with strategic goals, incentives for preferred land uses, strengthened zoning enforcement, and strong community engagement and support.



Goal 1.3

Update local bylaws/regulations and minimize the impact of new development while maintaining the Town's character, ensuring that each development contributes positively to the town's progress without altering its fundamental identity.

Strategy 1.3.2: Develop a detailed use table that clearly outlines and organizes permitted uses for each district, ensuring alignment with the town's goals of protecting rural character, supporting agriculture, and guiding responsible development.

This strategy is an important step towards refining Rochester's zoning regulations to ensure they align with the community's broad objectives. Developing a detailed use table will provide transparent, accessible information on permissible activities and developments within each district, facilitating more informed planning and decision-making for residents, developers, and town officials alike.

Key Reasons for the Detailed Use Table:

- **Protection of Rural Character:** By precisely outlining allowable uses in each district, the use table will help Rochester manage development effectively, preserving its rural essence. This includes restricting certain types of development in regions designated to remain agricultural or sparsely developed, thus maintaining the scenic landscapes and open spaces that characterize the town.
- **Guidance for Responsible Development:** A well-structured use table enables the town to channel development towards the most appropriate areas, avoiding excessive strain on local infrastructure or harm to ecological systems. This approach is essential for fostering sustainable development that corresponds with Rochester's long-term

planning objectives.

- **Enhancing Transparency and Predictability:** This strategy will increase clarity and consistency in the town's planning process, helping all stakeholders understand the regulations and expectations for each part of the town. This not only aids in maintaining Rochester's unique characteristics but also promotes an environment that supports prudent growth and development.

By implementing this strategy, Rochester aims to strengthen its planning framework, ensuring that it not only preserves the town's unique attributes but also supports dynamic and sustainable growth.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Bylaw Review Committee, Building, and Zoning Board of Appeals

Performance Measures: By the end of 20230.

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth's use table demonstrates the power of a well-structured use table in aligning zoning regulations with community goals. By clearly defining permissible uses for each district, the town preserved its rural character, supported agricultural activities, and guided responsible development, all while enhancing transparency and community trust. Key elements of Dartmouth's success include: creation of comprehensive use table; protection of agricultural lands; guiding responsible development; enhancing transparency and predictability; and community engagement and input.



Goal 1.3

Update local bylaws/regulations and minimize the impact of new development while maintaining the Town's character, ensuring that each development contributes positively to the town's progress without altering its fundamental identity.

Strategy 1.3.3: Thoughtfully expand mixed use areas with open space and residential design bylaw standards that allow for desired growth while protecting rural character and natural resources.

This strategy emphasizes fostering desired growth while preserving Rochester's rural character and natural resources by thoughtfully expanding mixed-use areas with well-defined open space and recreation design standards. By blending residential, commercial, and recreational uses into cohesive districts, Rochester aims to create vibrant, functional spaces that contribute to the community's appeal and long-term goals.

Expanding mixed-use areas under carefully crafted design standards allows for controlled growth, minimizing environmental impacts and preserving open spaces and Rochester's rural charm. This balance is especially critical in areas facing significant development pressures, ensuring that growth aligns with the community's values and character. Integrating mixed-use developments also enhances community functionality by reducing the need for residents to travel long distances for services, goods, and recreation. This approach not only promotes a reduced carbon footprint but also increases accessibility to various amenities, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life.

Well-designed mixed-use areas can serve as catalysts for local economic growth by attracting businesses and residents who value proximity to essential services and natural spaces. This, in turn, boosts property

values and generates increased tax revenue, which can be reinvested into further community development and amenities. Additionally, the inclusion of open spaces and recreational amenities within these developments ensures that these natural assets are preserved and integrated into the community's fabric. This approach benefits the environment, promotes sustainable development, and fosters healthier, more active lifestyles among residents.

Priority: Low - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning, Select Board, Building, Zoning Board of Appeals, Zoning Bylaw Review Committee, and Conservation Commission



Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The redevelopment of Union Point, formerly South Weymouth Naval Air Station, in Weymouth. This large-scale, mixed-use project exemplifies how thoughtful planning can blend residential, commercial, and recreational spaces while maintaining natural resources and green spaces. Key elements of Union Point's success include: thoughtful mixed-use development; preservation and integration of Open Space; sustainable and environmentally sensitive design standards; community accessibility and reduced carbon footprint; economic and social benefits; and community engagement in planning.



Housing

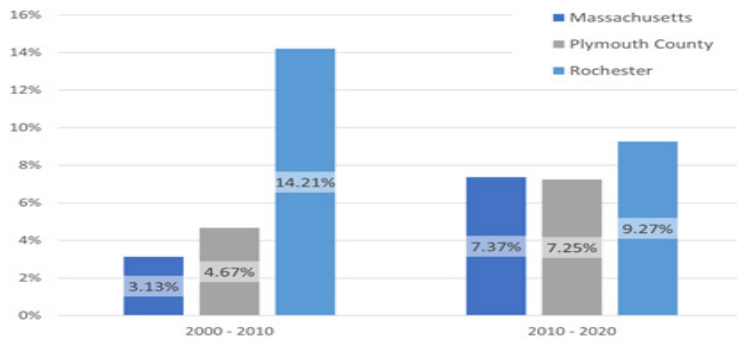
Provide diverse housing options suitable for all residents, including seniors and families, aiming to increase affordability and supporting aging in place. Balance new developments with natural preservation.

Key Planning Information

Demographics

The demographic trends in Rochester encompass several key aspects, including population growth, an aging population, changes in household sizes, and a decrease in families with children.

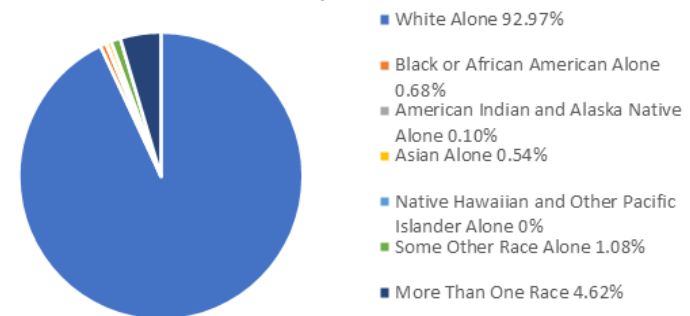
Over the past two decades, Rochester’s population has consistently increased, while household sizes have decreased, indicating a growing demand for diverse housing options. Housing costs have followed regional trends, and the town’s appeal is attributed to its attractive neighborhoods, quality schools, and local services.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census
Population Growth Comparison

Rochester has experienced population growth, surpassing Plymouth County and Massachusetts averages. The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates reports a population of 5,727, a 25% increase from 2000. Projections estimate a further increase to 6,045 by 2030, according to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation’s socio-economic projections.¹

Racial Composition



2018-2022 American Community Survey

The town’s population is predominantly White, comprising 93% of residents. Other racial categories include More than One Race (4.6%), Some Other Race Alone (1.1%), and Black or African

1. <https://donahue.umass.edu/business-groups/economic-public-policy-research/massachusetts-population-estimates-program/population-projections>

American Alone (0.68%), based on the 2018-2022 American Community Survey.

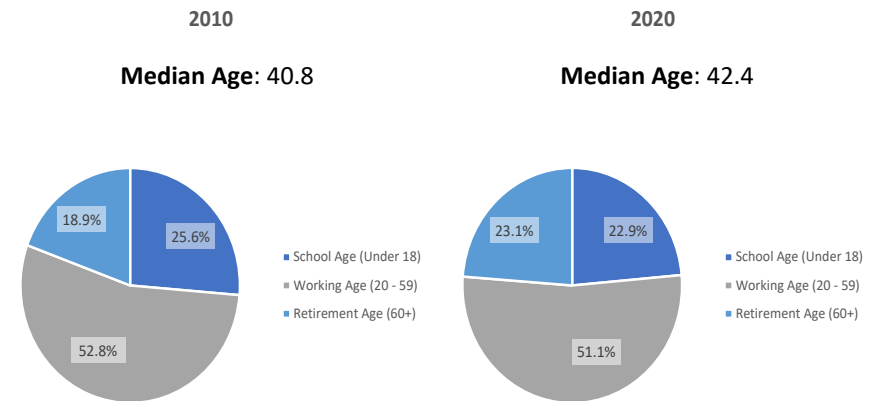
Several factors impact Rochester's ability to meet housing demands, especially for seniors looking to downsize. For example, the Agricultural-Residential Zoning District, covering 97% of the town's land area, imposes a 2-acre minimum lot size due to septic requirements. The lack of sewer and water infrastructure limits the possibility of smaller lot sizes and diverse housing options.

The 2018-2022 American Community Survey reveals that the Town of Rochester currently has 2,154 households, with family households representing 71.1% and nonfamily households totaling 28.9%. Two- and four-person households constitute the majority, with 1-person households at 13.8%, 2-person households at 39.8%, 3-person households at 21.12%, and 4-person households at 23.86%.

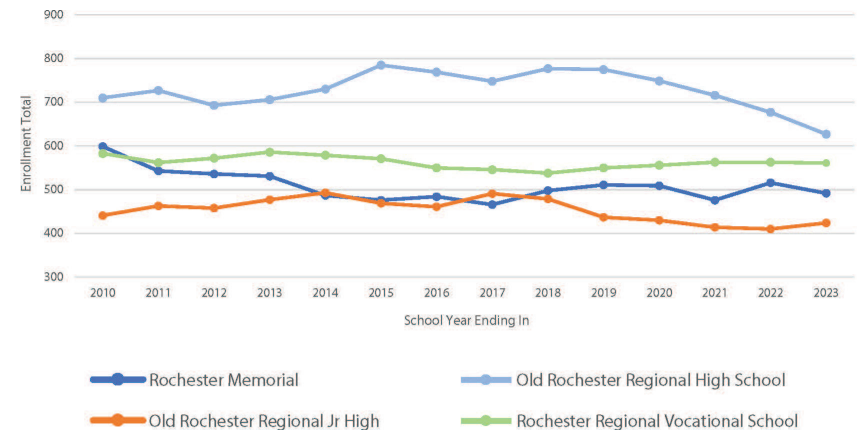
Of the population aged 16 years and over, 3,198 residents are part of the workforce in Rochester, an 8.5% increase from 2010. The median household income is \$114,604, a 20.6% increase from 2010.

The Town has a considerable youth population, with 25% aged 0-19 years old, and 31.08% of family households have school-aged children.

Age Distribution, 2010 & 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 5-Year Estimates



Average household size has decreased slightly.



38.3% of Rochester households include a person age **65+** (up from 24.5% in 2000)

22.1% of households include children under 18 (down from 47.3% in 2000)



Household Statistics (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census)

Additionally, 34.1% of the total population is 60 years or older, with a growing senior population experiencing a 150% increase from 2000 to 2022.

According to the 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 7% of the population in Rochester lives with a disability, including hearing difficulty (2.9%), vision difficulty (0.9%), and ambulatory difficulty (3%).

Rochester has a foreign-born population of 4.85%, lower than Plymouth County (11.15%) and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (18.04%). Most foreign-born residents are from Europe (192 people), followed by North America (46), Africa (22), Latin America (10), and Asia (8).

Housing

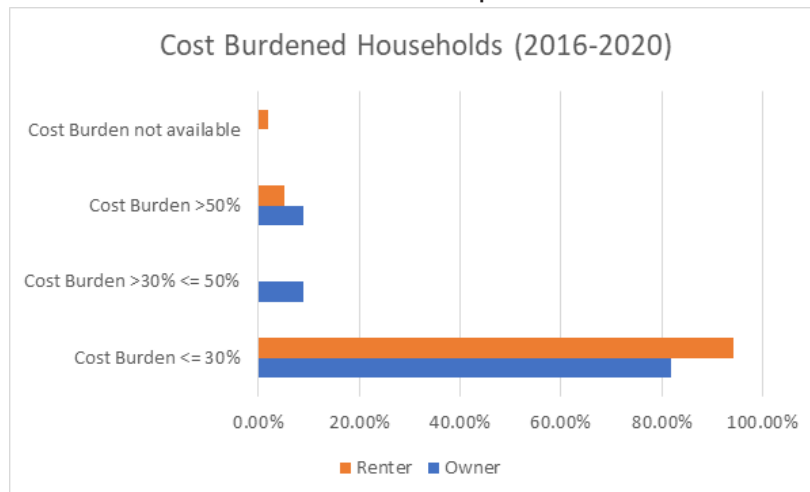
According to the 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 91.7% of Rochester’s population, or 5,254 residents,

speak only English and do not report speaking another language. 8.3% who speak another language, only 0.4% (21 residents) indicate difficulty speaking English. In terms of housing tenure, Rochester predominantly consists of ownership units, with 89.2% being owner-occupied housing units and 10.8% being renter-occupied housing units. A small percentage, 1.7 % (37 units), is vacant. Despite potential development projects, as per the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), Rochester currently has eight SHI units, rendering the town non-compliant with subsidized housing inventory requirements as of June 2024. With the recent permitting approval, when the development of the 40R along Route 28 is constructed, the Town would be in compliance to meet the inventory requirements.

The average household size in the Town of Rochester is slightly higher than the state and county averages, standing at 2.7. In comparison, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has an average household size of 2.46, and Plymouth County’s average is 2.61. The disparity in average household size becomes apparent when examined by tenure, with owner-occupied households having an average size of 2.75, while renter-occupied households have a smaller average size of 2.30.

Based on 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the poverty rate in Rochester is 3%. As indicated by the Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R), the cost burden is defined as the ratio of housing costs to household income. For renters, housing cost is gross rent (contract rent plus utilities).

For owners, housing cost is “select monthly owner costs”, which includes mortgage payment, utilities, association fees, insurance, and real estate taxes. A household is considered cost burdened when it spends more than 30% of its gross income on housing and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, medical care, and transportation. When a household spends more than 50% of its gross income on housing, it is considered severely burdened. Cost burdened households have greater difficulty covering the costs of other necessities such as food, healthcare, and transportation. They also have less discretionary income to contribute to the local economy. Households experiencing housing-related cost burden are more vulnerable to the financial impacts of unexpected events, whether personal, such as job or illness, or society-wide, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of 1,955 households, of which 1,760 are owner-occupied and 195 are renter-occupied, 8.13% of households are cost burdened while 8.44% of households are severely cost burdened. The median rent in Rochester is \$1,408 and the median price of a home is \$484,000.



Source: Office of Policy Development & Research - CHAS Data

Massachusetts is currently dealing with a severe housing crisis. Many factors have led to the growing crisis citing housing production, soaring rents, outpaced wages, elevated mortgage rates, material cost and record high home prices, just to name a few. Home prices jumped to record highs, elevated mortgage rates keep many would-be home buyers and sellers on the sidelines, coupled with the lack of homes for sale is driving up prices for homes that are on the market. In addition, many people who already own homes are reluctant to sell, since that would mean giving up their current, cheaper mortgage. Many downsizers whose homes have surged in value face a negligible cost difference between their current home and a smaller one. Plus, smaller homes or apartments in the neighborhoods they’ve come to love are rare or non-existent. Fewer older homeowners are selling their homes is in part of what is keeping the inventory of homes historically low and pushing prices even higher.

The ripple effects are everywhere. Young people unable to afford that first apartment are living at home longer. Families and individuals trying to buy their first home are looking elsewhere. While normally this would create an opening for builders, new construction is slowing. New specialized building codes to fight weather related incidents referred to as Stretch Code is raising the cost on housing development and couple that with a trade labor shortage which contributes to project delays and rising costs. The primary factor is the difficulty in attracting and retaining younger people. The road to repairing the housing crisis needs to be multi-faceted as there is no one solution to the problem.

In Massachusetts, affordable housing is required to meet specific eligibility levels. While the Town of Rochester aims to increase their affordable housing portfolio, they wish to do so within their specific requirements, including seniors and veterans that currently reside in Rochester. Rochester residents take care of Rochester residents and there is a comfort in that. It reflects the fabric of the community and the ties that bind them together. The Annie Maxim House is a perfect example of that, a congregate living program free of charge to its residents. Congregate housing is a shared living arrangement that combines housing and services. The story begins with Annie Bishop Maxim and George Alden Cowen. In 1959, Annie passed away and George drafted a directed Trustee to invest their assets until there were sufficient funds to construct a residential living environment. The will instructed that a house be built with these funds to accommodate, free of charge, people who met certain criteria. In 1984, the Annie Maxim House was constructed and opened and continues to provide a compassionate household to residents.

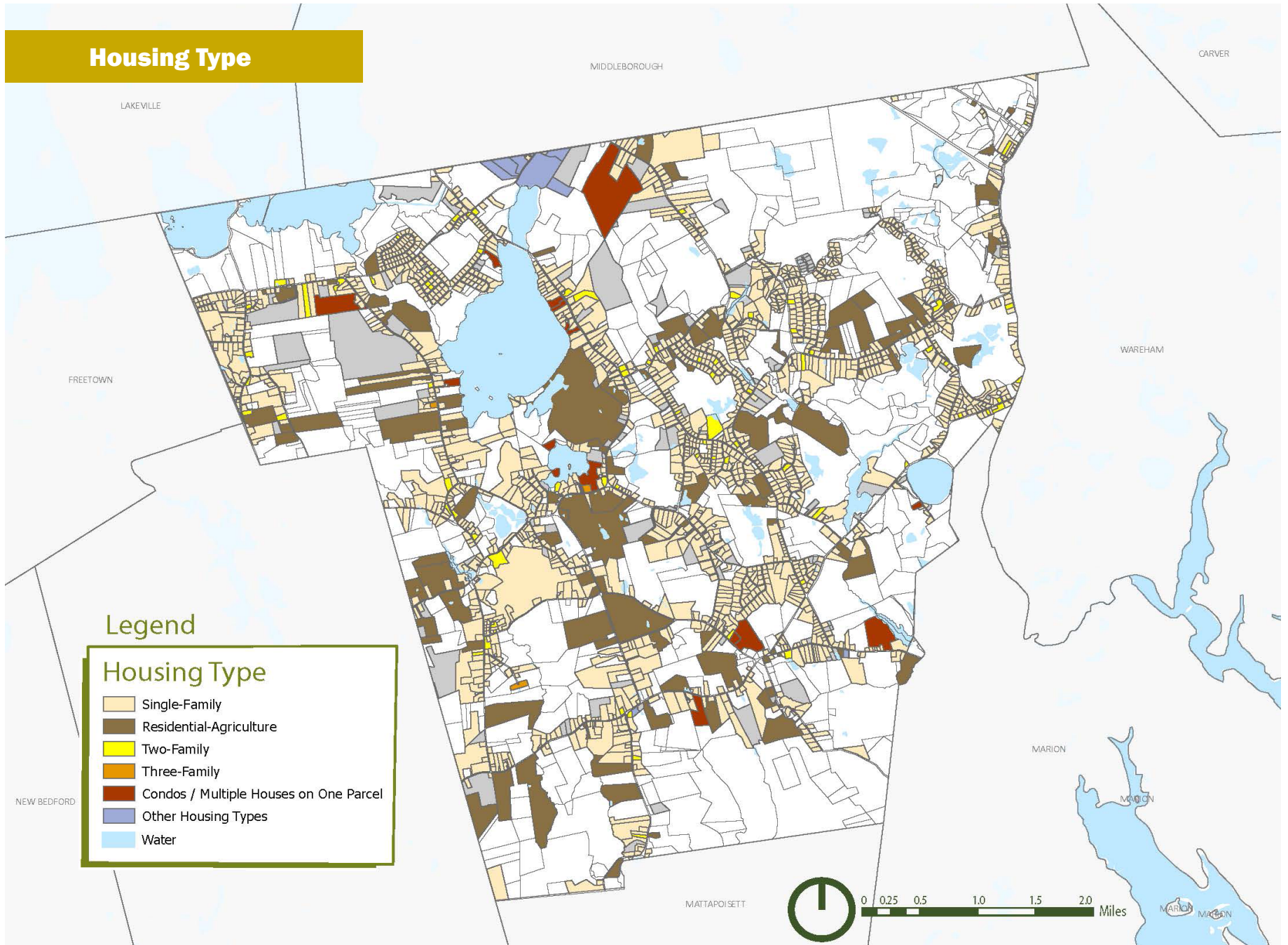
In January 2021, the MBTA Communities Act was adopted, as part of legislation to strengthen the state's economy [Source: H.5250]. The economic development bill was included in the new Section 3A of M.G.L.c.40A (the Zoning Act). The MBTA Communities Act Requires 177 Cities and Towns to establish "at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right." Where possible, the district must be within a half mile from public transportation (commuter rail, bus station, ferry terminal or subway). MBTA Communities must permit the development of

housing suitable for families with children, and may not impose age restrictions, within the district. After public comments, and engagement EOHLC issued final guidelines to determine if an MBTA community is in compliance with Section 3A.

The Town of Rochester has been designated as an MBTA Community as an Adjacent Small Town Community. In order to remain compliant all MBTA Communities must submit a timeline and an Action Plan to EOHLC to achieve interim compliance. Rochester is currently working with SRPEDD on an application for district compliance as the Cranberry Highway Overlay District adopted by the Town of Rochester in 2019 fits the ideal compliance requirements. The state extended the deadline of December 31, 2025, to submit a District Compliance Application. On August 6, 2024, Governor Healy signed the Affordable Homes Act into law (Chapter 150 of the Acts of 2024). This historic legislation, which authorized \$5.16 billion in spending over five years along with nearly 50 policy initiatives, amends the Zoning Act to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) up to 900 square feet to be built by right in single-family zoning districts.

An ADU must maintain a separate entrance, either directly from the outside or through an entry hall or corridor with the principal dwelling, sufficient to meet the state building code for safe egress. It must be no larger than half the gross floor area of the principal dwelling or 900 square feet, whichever is smaller, and meet municipal restrictions, including but not limited to, additional size restrictions and prohibitions on short-term rental.

Housing Type



Legend

Housing Type

- Single-Family
- Residential-Agriculture
- Two-Family
- Three-Family
- Condos / Multiple Houses on One Parcel
- Other Housing Types
- Water



Housing

Provide diverse housing options suitable for all residents, including seniors and families, aiming to increase affordability and supporting aging in place. Balance new developments with natural preservation.

Goals and Strategies Overview

Goal 2.1: Create more diverse housing options, such as single-family, small multi-family, senior housing, and assisted living facilities.

1. *Encourage mixed-age housing developments that:*
 - Include both senior-friendly units and options for young families.
 - Create multigenerational communities that support diverse housing needs and foster neighborhood connections.
2. *Create incentives for developers to include diverse housing types in their projects.*
3. *Explore zoning changes to allow a broader range of housing types where appropriate in Rochester.*
4. *Identify and share opportunities for housing production with potential speculators.*

Complimentary Strategies: 1.3.5

Goal 2.2: Support Aging-in-Community by creating housing options that fit the changing needs of the population.

1. *Incentivize senior housing and promote Aging-in-Community strategies, such as complementary services and programs.*
2. *Ensure adequate information is available regarding tax credits for seniors such as, but not limited to, the Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit.*

Complimentary Strategies: 5.2.1

Goal 2.3: Balance new housing development with natural features and open space.

1. *Review and amend the cluster development bylaw, as needed, to encourage open space preservation alongside housing development, ensuring water line infrastructure is strategically planned and integrated to support new growth.*
2. *Collaborate with the Rochester Land Trust to protect critical open space and secure water infrastructure needs.*

Complimentary Strategies: 1.2.2, 4.1.2 and 5.3.1

Goal 2.1

Create more diverse housing options, such as single-family, small multi-family, senior housing, and assisted living facilities.

Strategy 2.1.1: Encourage mixed-age housing developments that:

- **Include both senior-friendly units and options for young families.**
- **Create multigenerational communities that support diverse housing needs and foster neighborhood connections.**

This strategy promotes the development of mixed-age housing that integrates both senior-friendly units and family-oriented options, creating multigenerational communities that meet the diverse needs of Rochester residents. By encouraging housing that accommodates a range of ages, this approach fosters neighborhood connections, supports family cohesion, and enriches community life.

Designing housing developments that are inclusive of both seniors and young families allows for a greater mix of housing options that suit various life stages. Senior-friendly units, equipped with accessibility features, enable older residents to age in place, while family-focused housing provides young families with affordable, well-situated homes. Together, these options contribute to a vibrant community fabric where residents of all ages can live and interact, enhancing the sense of neighborhood and mutual support across generations.

Moreover, creating multigenerational housing developments aligns with Rochester's goals of fostering a connected, inclusive community. This approach not only addresses the growing demand for senior housing

but also helps young families find suitable accommodations within the community, allowing them to contribute to and benefit from Rochester's shared resources and social networks. Through thoughtful design and a mix of housing types, these developments support Rochester's long-term vision of sustainable, community-focused growth. Possible actions include:

- Encouraging Flexible Zoning for Mixed-Use Developments
- Providing Incentives for Senior and Family Housing Integration
- Ensuring Accessible Design
- Promoting Housing Diversity
- Developing Shared Community Spaces
- Partnering with Nonprofits and Housing Agencies
- Leveraging State and Federal Programs
- Engaging the Community and Providing Education
- Incorporating Affordable Housing Options
- Addressing Infrastructure Needs

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning, Select Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals



Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth's Lincoln Park Redevelopment Project transformed a former amusement park into a mixed-use, multigenerational community with diverse housing options. Key factors in its success included mixed-age housing, flexible zoning, collaboration with developers, integration of community amenities, an affordable housing component, and effective use of state and federal resources.

Goal 2.1

Create more diverse housing options, such as single-family, small multi-family, senior housing, and assisted living facilities.

Strategy 2.1.2: Create incentives for developers to include diverse housing types in their projects.

This strategy is a forward-thinking approach to enhancing the variety and affordability of housing options within Rochester. By creating incentives for developers to include different housing types—such as townhouses, multi-family units, and senior living facilities—the town aims to meet the diverse needs of its residents and ensure a more inclusive and adaptable housing market. Encouraging developers to incorporate a wide range of housing options allows Rochester to better serve its diverse population, including young families, seniors, and single professionals. This diversity ensures that housing options are available for different income levels, life stages, and lifestyle preferences, fostering a more inclusive and accessible community.

Offering diverse housing options helps attract a broader demographic to Rochester, contributing to a more vibrant and resilient local economy. By providing suitable living arrangements, the town can attract new residents and retain existing ones, stabilizing and enriching the community's demographic and economic base. Mixed housing developments promote interactions among a wide range of residents, strengthening neighborhood ties and cultivating a more cohesive community fabric. These interactions foster mutual understanding and a sense of belonging, enhancing Rochester's social capital.

Integrating diverse housing types within development projects also contributes to more efficient and sustainable land use. This approach

helps to reduce urban sprawl, manage traffic congestion, and preserve open spaces, contributing to a healthier and more sustainable environment for current and future generations. Overall, incentivizing developers to diversify housing types is a strategic effort to ensure that Rochester's growth remains balanced, inclusive, and sustainable. By addressing immediate housing needs and supporting long-term community goals, this strategy lays the groundwork for a vibrant and resilient town.

Proposed Incentives:

- Flexible Zoning and Updates
- Tax Incentives
- Incentivize Affordable Housing through Special Permits
- Development Incentives for Senior Housing

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Select Board, Town Administrator, and Assessors

Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The Cedar Dell Residential Development in Dartmouth expanded housing options by incentivizing diverse housing types, increasing affordability and meeting the needs of seniors and young families. Key factors contributing to its success included incentives for varied housing, flexible zoning, tax benefits, senior-friendly and multi-family options, community collaboration, integrated amenities, and affordability measures.



Goal 2.1

Create more diverse housing options, such as single-family, small multi-family, senior housing, and assisted living facilities.

Strategy 2.1.3: Explore zoning changes to allow a broader range of housing types where appropriate in Rochester.

This strategy focuses on adapting Rochester's zoning laws to better accommodate the diverse housing needs of its population by revising regulations to permit a broader range of housing types, such as duplexes, townhouses, and multi-family units, in appropriate areas. The goal is to balance growth with preservation, carefully selecting zones for increased density that do not compromise the town's rural character or natural resources. By expanding the range of allowable housing types, Rochester can increase the availability of affordable housing options and cater to different demographic and income groups, including young professionals, small families, and seniors. This approach supports a more inclusive and adaptable community by providing various living arrangements that meet the needs of a diverse population.

Strategic zoning changes that permit a mix of housing types in selected areas can lead to more efficient and sustainable land use. This approach aligns with smart growth principles, which emphasize compact, walkable communities that integrate residential, commercial, and recreational spaces. By reducing the need for extensive infrastructure expansion and minimizing reliance on automobiles, this approach fosters a more sustainable urban form and enhances quality of life. Broadening the scope of housing options can boost local economic development by stimulating construction activity, supporting local businesses, and attracting new residents. A diverse and dynamic housing market makes Rochester more appealing to potential investors, strengthening the town's economic vitality.

Thoughtfully crafted zoning changes ensure that new development respects and complements the existing character of the community. By identifying appropriate areas for different types of housing, Rochester can manage growth in a way that protects its rural and historic areas while accommodating new residents and modern housing needs. Overall, exploring zoning changes to incorporate a broader range of housing types is a strategic approach for Rochester to meet its housing and community development objectives. This effort allows the town to grow in a thoughtful and controlled manner, providing housing solutions for both current and future residents while preserving the community's cherished identity and values.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning and Building

Performance Measures: By the end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Town of Falmouth's Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Multi-Family Zoning Reforms successfully expanded the range of housing types while preserving the community's historic and rural character. The changes increased the availability of affordable and diverse housing options, fostering a more inclusive and adaptable community. Key elements of Falmouth's success include: zoning changes to allow diverse housing options; expanding housing opportunities and affordability; careful consideration of community character; community engagement and buy-in; promoting smart growth principles; stimulating economic development; and the implementation of incentives.



Goal 2.1

Create more diverse housing options, such as single-family, small multi-family, senior housing, and assisted living facilities.

Strategy 2.1.4: Identify and share opportunities for housing production with potential speculators.

This strategy represents a proactive effort to facilitate the development of diverse and affordable housing options within Rochester. By identifying and securing potential grants, subsidies, and other financial incentives, the town aims to reduce cost barriers for housing development.

Communicating these opportunities to developers is a key component, as it encourages the construction of housing that meets the needs of the town's growing and diverse population. Securing funding sources can make it financially viable for developers to undertake projects that include affordable housing units, benefiting low- to moderate-income families. By reducing development costs through financial incentives, Rochester can expand the availability of affordable housing, ensuring that residents who might otherwise be priced out of the market have access to quality homes.

Facilitating housing development through funded opportunities can also stimulate local economic activity by creating jobs, increasing demand for local goods and services, and revitalizing community spaces. This economic stimulation has a positive ripple effect, enhancing the quality of life for a broad spectrum of residents and strengthening local businesses. Communicating funding opportunities to developers allows the town to influence the type of housing built, ensuring it aligns with the community's diverse needs, including housing for different family sizes, age groups, and accessibility requirements. This fosters an inclusive and adaptable community that meets the varied needs of its residents. This strategy is important for balancing growth with sustainability

and inclusivity in Rochester. By effectively securing and utilizing funding sources, the town can support housing developments that are economically feasible, socially beneficial, and aligned with the community's long-term goals. This approach not only addresses current housing needs but also contributes to Rochester's vision of a vibrant, inclusive, and desirable place to live.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Town Administrator, and Select Board



Performance Measures: By the end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Town of Middleborough's Affordable Housing Initiative's efforts to secure funding and communicate opportunities to developers resulted in the successful creation of new affordable housing units that met the needs of diverse populations. Key elements of Middleborough's success include: identifying and securing funding sources; proactive communication with developers; incentivizing affordable housing development; public-private partnerships; aligning housing production with community needs; economic and community benefits; and community education and engagement.

Goal 2.2

Support Aging-in-Community by creating housing options that fit the changing needs of the population.

Strategy 2.2.1: Incentivize senior housing and promote Aging-in-Community strategies, such as complementary services and programs.

This strategy aims to create a supportive environment for Rochester’s elderly population by developing housing and community services tailored to their specific needs. It focuses on providing financial incentives for the construction of senior-friendly housing while enhancing community programs and services that enable seniors to live independently and actively within their communities. With a growing senior population, there is an increasing demand for housing options that cater to their unique requirements, including homes designed for physical accessibility and environments that encourage social engagement, as well as proximity to healthcare services and daily necessities. By addressing these needs, Rochester can better support its aging residents.

Aging-in-Community strategies seek to enable seniors to continue living in familiar surroundings, preserving their social networks and remaining active participants in community life. This continuity is vital for seniors’ mental and emotional well-being and contributes to a robust, intergenerational community. Encouraging senior housing development can also lead to mixed-age living arrangements that promote interaction among different age groups, bringing economic benefits such as local business stimulation, and job creation, thereby enhancing Rochester’s economic resilience and community vitality.

Complementary services and programs—such as community centers,

health and wellness initiatives, and accessible transportation —are essential components of Aging-in-Community strategies. These services help seniors maintain their independence, health, and active community engagement, significantly enhancing their quality of life. Overall, the strategy to incentivize senior housing and promote Aging-in-Community in Rochester represents a holistic approach to urban planning that values and supports the aging population. It ensures that seniors can continue to lead fulfilling lives while remaining connected to the broader community, contributing to Rochester’s vision of an inclusive and vibrant place to live.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning, Town Administrator, Select Board, and Council on Aging



Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth’s focus on senior-friendly housing and Aging-in-Community strategies has created a supportive environment for aging residents. By offering housing incentives, expanding accessible services, and fostering intergenerational connections, Dartmouth has enhanced community vibrancy and quality of life. Key elements of success included senior housing development, aging-in-community initiatives, community programming, and economic and social benefits.

Goal 2.1

Support Aging-in-Community by creating housing options that fit the changing needs of the population.

Strategy 2.2.2: Ensure adequate information is available regarding tax credits for seniors such as, but not limited to, the Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit.

This strategy is focused on enhancing the financial well-being of Rochester's senior population by increasing awareness and understanding of available tax relief programs designed to alleviate financial burdens, particularly for those living on fixed incomes. By making information on tax credits, such as the Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit, readily accessible, the town can provide meaningful support to its elderly residents. Many seniors face significant financial challenges due to fixed or limited incomes, with property taxes often being a substantial expense. Programs like the Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit offer critical relief, allowing eligible seniors to claim a credit on their state income taxes for a portion of real estate taxes paid on their primary residence, whether owned or rented. By reducing these costs, the credit helps seniors maintain their homes and better manage the cost of living in Massachusetts.

Ensuring that seniors are informed about available tax credits reinforces Rochester's dedication to being an age-friendly community. Access to accurate information and support regarding tax relief options enables older residents to achieve greater financial stability and security, reducing financial strain and improving their overall well-being. Financial stress can have a profound impact on seniors' quality of life, especially those facing health challenges. By providing clear information and assistance in accessing tax credits, Rochester can help reduce this stress, ultimately contributing to an enhanced quality of life for its senior citizens. This

proactive approach allows seniors to focus more on enjoying their daily lives and remaining active in the community.

The strategy also emphasizes outreach efforts to ensure all eligible seniors are aware of available tax credits and understand how to access them. This may involve hosting informational workshops, distributing brochures, and offering one-on-one assistance programs. Such initiatives foster a supportive, engaged community that values and cares for its senior residents. Overall, by promoting awareness of and access to tax credits, Rochester strengthens the economic well-being of its seniors and enhances their ability to fully participate in community life. This initiative underscores the town's commitment to being a supportive, inclusive community for residents of all ages.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Council on Aging, Accounting, Treasurer, Tax Collector and Board of Assessors

Performance Measures: By the end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Town of Fairhaven's proactive support for senior residents through financial literacy and tax relief programs underscores its commitment to their well-being and dignity. Key elements of success included senior workshops, collaboration with local experts, effective outreach, positive financial impacts, and ongoing community support.



Goal 2.3

Balance new housing development with natural features and open space.

Strategy 2.3.1: Review and amend the Flexible Development Bylaw, as needed, to encourage open space preservation alongside housing development, ensuring water line infrastructure is strategically planned and integrated to support new growth.

This strategy focuses on refining local regulations to balance open space preservation with housing development through amendments to the Flexible Development Bylaw. The aim is to encourage developments that cluster homes within a smaller footprint, preserving larger contiguous areas of land for recreation, agriculture, or natural habitats. This approach supports environmental conservation while enhancing community aesthetics by integrating green spaces into neighborhoods. It also ensures that water line infrastructure is strategically planned to effectively support new growth.

Cluster development preserves meaningful tracts of open space, maintaining the town's rural character, enhancing biodiversity, and protecting water quality. By concentrating on housing, it reduces the demand for extensive infrastructure like roads and utilities, minimizing environmental impact and reducing costs.

This strategy facilitates sustainable growth, accommodating new housing without contributing to sprawl, thus protecting ecological and community health. Cluster developments often include shared amenities like parks and trails, promoting community interaction, healthier lifestyles, and attractive, livable neighborhoods.

Amending the Flexible Development Bylaw to integrate open space and infrastructure planning aligns with Rochester's goals of sustainable development, environmental stewardship, and enhanced community living, preserving the town's rural and natural character while meeting residents' needs.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning, Zoning Board of Appeals, Building, and Conservation

Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth's refined cluster development regulations align development with environmental, social, and infrastructure goals to promote community resilience and sustainability. Key elements of success included bylaw amendments for open space, strategic infrastructure planning, enhanced community and environmental benefits, efficient growth, and community engagement.



Goal 2.3

Balance new housing development with natural features and open space.

Strategy 2.3.2: Collaborate with the Rochester Land Trust to protect critical open space and secure water infrastructure needs.

This strategy seeks to leverage local expertise and resources to preserve critical natural areas and enhance essential services through collaboration with the Rochester Land Trust (RLT). By working together, the town and the Trust aim to identify and protect open spaces vital to the community's ecological health and water security, ensuring these areas are maintained for public benefit and long-term environmental stability. The Rochester Land Trust is dedicated to conserving open spaces that support biodiversity, offer recreational opportunities, and preserve the town's scenic beauty. By collaborating with the Trust, the town can benefit from their specialized expertise and resources, resulting in more effective conservation initiatives that align with community goals and enhance Rochester's natural landscape.

Many critical open spaces play a key role in managing and safeguarding water resources. Through this partnership, the town and the Land Trust can prioritize preserving lands vital for water infrastructure sustainability, such as aquifer recharge areas and watershed lands. Protecting these spaces helps secure a reliable water supply for the community and strengthens resilience against environmental challenges. This strategy ensures that growth and infrastructure projects do not undermine the town's natural resources by maintaining the integrity of critical open spaces. By balancing development and environmental preservation, Rochester can promote sustainable growth that considers ecological impacts and long-term community needs.

Partnering with the Rochester Land Trust also strengthens community ties and boosts public support for conservation initiatives. Collaboration can inspire greater community involvement, fostering a sense of ownership and stewardship among residents for their natural surroundings. This collective effort exemplifies how local partnerships can create lasting, positive changes. Overall, collaborating with the Rochester Land Trust aligns with broader goals of environmental preservation, sustainable development, and community well-being. By working together to protect open spaces, the town ensures ecological health, recreational opportunities, and water security, ultimately contributing to a resilient and thriving Rochester.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Conservation, Land Trust, and Water Commission

Performance Measures: By the end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Town of Marion's partnership with the Sippican Land Trust (SLT) serves as a strong model for Rochester's potential collaboration with the Rochester Land Trust to protect critical open spaces and secure water infrastructure. By partnering with the Land Trust, Rochester can prioritize preserving key lands for both conservation and infrastructure needs, fostering sustainable development while safeguarding natural resources. Key elements of Marion's success included joint conservation efforts, water resource prioritization, community engagement, leveraging resources, balancing development with conservation, and educational initiatives.





Economic Development

Support small businesses and diverse commercial activities. Attract various businesses along Route 28, enhancing our industrial and service sectors. Prefer businesses related to farms, wineries/breweries, restaurants, small retail, or arts/specialty shops. Existing local businesses need infrastructure maintenance, better internet connections and cell reception, and stable tax rates.

Key Planning Information

There is no one-size-fits-all economic development strategy for rural communities, as traditional economic development seeks to create high-wage jobs and expand a municipality's tax base through various infrastructure and policy initiatives. Rochester defines the importance of supporting economic development while preserving the community's character and open space. Rochester's tax base is 86% residential; this compares to 78% in Carver, 75% in Dartmouth, 94% in Marion, 85% in Wareham, and 94% in Mattapoisett. The residential, commercial, and industrial tax rates are \$11.06 per 1,000¹. Despite fluctuations in the local economy, the proportion of taxes derived from commercial and industrial properties has demonstrated stability, consistently hovering between 13% and 15% since 2010. Rochester is considered a bedroom community as residents live but do not necessarily work in the community. Often like a suburb, suburban communities are often located around the perimeter or a city with

little noticeable transition between where the city ends, and the suburb begins. Whereas a bedroom community is typically further away, separated from the city by open space and located in rural settings. As a rural community, Rochester has limited economic development in town. This indicates a reliance on residential tax revenue for the majority of the town's fiscal resources, with commercial contributions maintaining a relatively steady share over the past decade. This also reflects that a rural character is highly valued by Rochester residents.

Agriculture is the cornerstone of Rochester's rural landscape. Today, farmland is vanishing. According to the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, the average age of a principal operator of farms in Massachusetts is 59 years old. Many of these farms do not have an identified successor to take over their businesses, land, and farming assets. For many next generation farmers finding land and opportunities can mean many roadblocks in their path. As the price of land continues to rise, and a steep learning curve for folks who

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didn't grow up in a farming family, the challenges are real.

Cranberry production holds deep roots in Southeastern Massachusetts and continues to be the state's leading agricultural product, with the cranberry harvest in 2022 worth \$82 million. However, the nature and scale of growing, harvesting and marketing cranberries is changing. About a decade ago big business cultivation pushed smaller family farmers out. The industry itself is going through a transformation, old traditional varieties are retooling to newer varieties which can produce twice the number of berries. For cranberry farming it isn't just the aging farmers, lack of generational handover and big agribusiness, but also a labor crunch, where farming struggles to compete for scarce workers.

Demographics

- Median Household Income:

- According to the 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the median household income in Rochester is \$114,604. This represents a 20.6% increase from 2010, where the median income was \$95,022.

- Educational Attainment (Aged 25 and older)

- 68.5% of the population attained at least a high school diploma.

- 43% of the population have attained an associate's degree.

or higher.

- 34.4% of the population have attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

- 14.4% of the population have attained a master's degree or higher.

- Unemployment Rate

- The unemployment rate in Rochester, according to the 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, was 2.3%. This figure is low compared to the broader unemployment rate in Massachusetts in 2022, which averaged about 3.8%.

Industry Sector	Average Monthly Employment (2012)	Average Monthly Employment (2022)	Change (%)
Construction	66	112	70
Education and Health Services	228	346	52
Financial Activities	37	29	-22
Information	n/a	12	n/a
Goods-Producing	112	201	79
Leisure and Hospitality	37	87	135
Manufacturing	9	49	444
Construction	66	112	70
Education and Health Services	228	346	52
Financial Activities	37	29	-22
Information	n/a	12	n/a
Goods-Producing	112	201	79
Leisure and Hospitality	37	87	135
Manufacturing	9	49	444
Natural Resources and Mining	47	n/a	n/a
Professional Business Services	96	117	22
Services-Providing	561	757	35
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	57	91	60
Total Monthly Employment in Rochester	683	957	

Source: MA Department of Economic Research (DER) - Employment and Wages Report

In 2022, an average of 957 jobs were filled in town, with the three largest sectors being Service-Providing, Education and Health Services, and Goods-Producing. Notably, the Service-Providing sector experienced a 35% increase in employment, making it the largest job contributor, up from 561 in 2012. Overall, the sectors of Service-Providing, Education and Health Services, Goods-Producing, Construction, Manufacturing, Leisure and Hospitality saw significant growth in job numbers. Industries that were once prominent, such as Natural Resources and Mining, experienced a complete decline, while new industries like Information emerged in 2022, indicating potential economic development and diversification in Rochester over the decade from 2012 to 2022.

Old Colony Regional Vocational High School and Rochester Memorial School are the top employers in Rochester with staff numbers ranging between 100 and 249 employees.

Looking at the largest employers in Rochester based data from the Massachusetts Department of Economic Research (DER), it is evident that the employment landscape is quite diverse, encompassing various sectors and sizes of businesses. The top employers fall within the range of 100-249 employees, which includes educational institutions like the Old Colony Regional Vocational School and Rochester Memorial. These organizations contribute significantly to the job market in Rochester and potentially play a vital role in the local economy.

Following these larger employers, there's a cluster of businesses employing between 20-49 individuals. This range includes a mix

Largest Employers in Rochester	
Company Name	Number of Employees
Old Colony Regional Vocational	100-249
Rochester Memorial School	100-249
Barnes Tree SVC	20-49
Jonathan's Spouts	20-49
Outdoor World Cape Cod Resorts	20-49
Rochester Fire Department	20-49
United States Postal Svc	20-49
Van Roy Oil Co	20-49
APC New England	10-19
Capt. Bonney's Creamery	10-19
Creative Sensor Technology Inc	10-19
Friends' Marketplace-Rochester	10-19
It's All about the Animals Inc	10-19
Robins Nest	10-19
Rochester MA Police Dept	10-19
Rochester Town Hall Offices	10-19
Secret Garden	10-19
Shea Concrete	10-19
Sperry Fabric Architecture	10-19
Countryside Child Care	5-9
MBH Services Inc	5-9
Rochester Golf Club	5-9

Source: MA Department of Economic Research (DER) - Largest Employers by Area

of services such as tree services, food production, reports, the postal service, fire departments and oil companies. These entities collectively contribute to the employment landscape by providing a range of services and opportunities in various sectors.

Furthermore, there are smaller businesses in the range of 10-19 and 5-9 employees. These include diverse services like police departments, town hall offices, animal care, restaurants, landscaping, and construction-related businesses. While individually smaller in size, together, they contribute to job creation and the economic vibrancy of the region.

This diversity among the largest employers indicates a varied job market in Rochester, encompassing education, healthcare, public services, hospitality, small businesses, and more. It also suggests a blend of both larger institutions and smaller businesses contributing to the employment landscape, which can add resilience and stability to the local economy.



Economic Development

Support small businesses and diverse commercial activities. Attract various businesses along Route 28, enhancing our industrial and service sector. Prefer businesses related to farms, wineries/breweries, restaurants, small retail, or arts/specialty shops. Existing local businesses need infrastructure maintenance, better internet connections and cell reception, and stable tax rates.

Goals and Strategies Overview

Goal 3.1: Support farms and agricultural businesses.

1. *Form an Economic Development Committee to oversee economic initiatives, support local businesses, and guide policies for sustained economic growth.*
2. *Explore an agricultural preservation zoning district and create a supporting farm map for Rochester farms.*
3. *Energize the Agricultural Commission.*
4. *Strengthen the Town's involvement in programs such as, but not limited to the SouthCoast Food Policy Council to engage in regional food policy discussions.*
5. *Promote state-funded soil quality programs to support farms and agricultural businesses by providing financial incentives for farmers with high-quality soil.*
6. *Establish a farmers' cooperative to support shared resources and marketing.*
7. *Provide partnerships and other incentives for farms that host community-related events to promote local agriculture and community engagement.*
8. *Ensure Rochester farms are featured on the state MassGrown Map.*
9. *Offer educational opportunities and speakers on various topics related to farmland stewardship.*

Complimentary Strategies: 3.1.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.4, 4.4.5 and 5.4.2

Goal 3.2: Support businesses in the town center.

1. *Foster a greater sense of place in the Rochester Village through wayfinding, coordinated façade and signage improvements, events, and local partnerships.*
2. *Expand the Limited Commercial Zoning District to allow for more businesses in the existing area.*
3. *Develop a "Shop Local" campaign to support local businesses.*

Complimentary Strategies: 1.3.3, 3.1.1 and 4.3.4

Goal 3.1

Support farms and agricultural businesses.

Strategy 3.1.1: Form an Economic Development Committee to oversee economic initiatives, support local businesses, and guide policies for sustained economic growth.

This strategy focuses on establishing a dedicated group to oversee and guide Rochester's economic initiatives. The proposed Economic Development Committee would be responsible for supporting local businesses, fostering a business-friendly environment, and developing policies aimed at sustained economic growth. Composed of key stakeholders from various sectors—such as business owners, community leaders, and local government officials—the committee would collaborate to align economic development efforts with the town's overall strategic goals. The creation of an Economic Development Committee would centralize and streamline Rochester's efforts to promote economic growth, providing a cohesive and coordinated approach to economic planning and development. By centralizing leadership, the town can ensure that all economic activities and strategies are aligned with its long-term vision and objectives.

A core responsibility of the committee would be to support and nurture local businesses by offering resources, facilitating access to funding, and providing business development guidance. This support is crucial for the success and expansion of small businesses, which often serve as the foundation of local economies. Empowering these businesses can create jobs, enhance community vibrancy, and strengthen Rochester's economic resilience. The committee would also play a vital role in crafting and implementing economic policies that foster a dynamic and healthy business environment. This includes developing regulations that encourage entrepreneurship, attract investment, and promote

sustainable business practices. Through effective policy guidance, the committee can ensure that economic growth is both robust and environmentally responsible.

The Economic Development Committee would serve as a platform for meaningful engagement among business owners, residents, and government officials. This collaborative approach allows for the development of comprehensive economic strategies that reflect diverse perspectives, ultimately leading to more effective and broadly supported economic policies. With a dedicated committee in place, Rochester would be better positioned to market itself to potential investors and businesses interested in relocation or expansion. The committee can showcase the town's strengths, facilitate site visits, and build strong relationships with potential new businesses, enhancing Rochester's appeal as a destination for business investment.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Select Board and Town Administrator

Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth established an Economic Development Foundation (EDF) and Committee focused on fostering a thriving business environment, supporting local businesses, and guiding policies for economic growth. Key elements of Plymouth's success include: creation of a dedicated economic development entity; supporting and empowering local businesses; developing policies and initiatives for sustained economic growth; collaboration with multiple sectors; marketing and promotion of Plymouth as a business destination; facilitating economic resilience and diversification; and community engagement and input.



Goal 3.1

Support farms and agricultural businesses.

Strategy 3.1.2: Explore an agricultural preservation zoning district and create a supporting farm map for Rochester agricultural properties.

This strategy aims to strengthen and sustain agriculture in Rochester by designating specific areas where farming is prioritized and protected. Creating an agricultural preservation zoning district will keep designated lands primarily for agriculture, shielding them from development pressures. A complementary farm map will showcase local farms' locations and characteristics, enhancing planning and raising community awareness of Rochester's agricultural assets.

By establishing an agricultural preservation zoning district, Rochester can protect farmland from non-agricultural development, preserve its rural character, maintain local food production, and resist urban sprawl. Specific zoning regulations demonstrate a long-term commitment to safeguarding these essential lands.

A farm map can support local farmers by increasing visibility, connecting them with the community, promoting agritourism, and highlighting educational opportunities about Rochester's agricultural heritage. Increased awareness can boost local farm patronage and strengthen the community's economic base. This strategy aligns with sustainable land-use practices, as preserved farmland contributes to carbon sequestration, water management, and biodiversity, benefiting local ecosystems and environmental resilience.

Beyond its practical applications, the farm map can serve as an

educational tool for schools and community programs, fostering agricultural appreciation, sustainability awareness, and promoting agricultural literacy. Supporting agriculture through zoning districts and informational resources can diversify the economy, stimulate related industries, and enhance economic resilience.

Overall, creating an agricultural preservation zoning district and a farm map protects and promotes Rochester's agricultural assets, supports local farmers, strengthens food security, and contributes to the town's educational, economic, and sustainability goals.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning, Building, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Agricultural Commission



Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth created an agricultural preservation zoning district and a farm map to help protect valuable farmland, support local farmers, and promote sustainable agriculture. The zoning district provided long-term stability for agricultural operations, while the farm map enhanced community engagement, agritourism, and local food system connections. Key elements of Dartmouth's success include: creating an agricultural preservation zoning district; collaborative efforts with farmers and community stakeholders; development of a farm map; promoting agritourism and local food systems; sustainable land-use practices and environmental benefits; and educational and community engagement programs.

Goal 3.1

Support farms and agricultural businesses.

Strategy 3.1.3: Energize the Agricultural Commission.

This strategy focuses on revitalizing the Agricultural Commission to enhance its role in supporting, promoting, and advocating for Rochester's agricultural sector. The initiative aims to reinvigorate the commission by potentially broadening its responsibilities, increasing its resources, and improving its visibility and engagement within the community. The goal is to ensure that the commission effectively represents the interests of local farmers and the wider agricultural community, fostering growth and sustainability in this vital sector. The Agricultural Commission serves as a crucial link between the farming community and local government, providing a platform for farmers' voices to be heard. By energizing the commission, Rochester can ensure that agricultural needs and concerns are considered in town policies and decisions, resulting in more informed, supportive policies that help sustain and strengthen the agricultural economy.

Empowering the commission allows for more effective allocation of resources dedicated to agricultural development and preservation, such as facilitating access to grants, offering land use planning assistance, and providing other forms of support that can significantly benefit local farmers and enhance the town's agricultural landscape. An active and dynamic Agricultural Commission can engage the community by organizing events, educational programs, and initiatives that highlight the importance of agriculture to Rochester's heritage and economy. Increased community engagement can build stronger connections between the agricultural sector and the broader community, fostering mutual understanding and support.

The commission can lead initiatives to encourage sustainable farming practices among local producers by advocating for and assisting in the adoption of environmentally friendly techniques. This contribution helps conserve natural resources, minimize environmental impacts, and ensure the long-term viability of Rochester's agricultural sector. Additionally, a revitalized Agricultural Commission can play a key role in economic development by supporting agribusinesses and related sectors, promoting local produce, fostering agritourism, and attracting new businesses that complement and enhance the agricultural sector, thereby contributing to a vibrant local economy.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Commission, Select Board, and Town Administrator

Performance Measures: By the end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Town of Westport's experience in reactivating and expanding the scope of its Agricultural Commission illustrates how such efforts can strengthen local agriculture and foster broader community engagement. Key elements of Westport's success include: revitalization and expansion of responsibilities; engagement with the farming community; promoting community awareness and agritourism; facilitating access to resources and grants; encouraging sustainable agricultural practices; supporting economic development through agriculture; and collaboration with other commissions and organizations.



Goal 3.1

Support farms and agricultural businesses.

Strategy 3.1.4: Strengthen the Town’s involvement in, but not limited to, the SouthCoast Food Policy Council to engage in regional food policy discussions.

This strategy seeks to enhance Rochester’s regional collaboration and influence food policy discussions by actively participating in initiatives that address food security, sustainability, and agricultural practices. Engaging more deeply with the SouthCoast Food Policy Council and similar entities allow the town to contribute to and benefit from collective knowledge, resources, and advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening local and regional food systems. Active involvement in regional councils and programs enables Rochester to collaborate with neighboring communities and key stakeholders to tackle common challenges related to food production, distribution, and sustainability. Working together across municipal lines fosters comprehensive solutions that go beyond what can be achieved independently, promoting regional cohesion and greater collective impact.

Participation in regional food policy discussions ensures that Rochester’s interests and those of its agricultural community are represented in broader policy decisions. This engagement provides the town with a voice in shaping policies concerning food security, agricultural land use, and economic opportunities for local farmers, making sure their needs and priorities are considered. Involvement in programs like the SouthCoast Food Policy Council offers access to a broad array of resources, such as funding opportunities, expert guidance, and best practices in food system management. This access bolsters the town’s ability to support local food producers, implement innovative solutions, and drive sustainable agricultural growth.

Strengthening the town’s engagement in food policy initiatives can yield direct community benefits, including improved access to healthy, locally-produced food, enhanced food security, and a more robust agricultural economy. By supporting a resilient local food system, Rochester can improve public health, economic stability, and the vibrancy of its agricultural sector. Participation in regional discussions and initiatives also promotes sustainable agricultural practices and resilience within food systems, which are increasingly crucial amid weather related incidents and economic uncertainty. By engaging in these efforts, Rochester contributes to the long-term viability of its agricultural lands, environmental health, and overall community resilience.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Commission, Planning Select Board, and Town Administrator



Performance Measures: By the end of 2030.

Example Success Story: The Town of New Bedford’s active participation in the SouthCoast Food Policy Council (SCFPC). which strengthened the city’s local food system, increased access to healthy food, and supported regional collaboration to address food security and agricultural sustainability. The city’s efforts demonstrated the power of regional partnerships to create meaningful change. Key elements of New Bedford’s success include: active participation and regional collaboration; representation of local interests in policy discussions; development of programs to support local food systems; improved food security and access to healthy food; access to regional resources and expertise; promotion of sustainable agricultural practices; and community engagement and public awareness.

Goal 3.1

Support farms and agricultural businesses.

Strategy 3.1.5: Promote state-funded soil quality programs to support farms and agricultural businesses by providing financial incentives for farmers with high-quality soil.

This strategy aims to support farms and agricultural businesses by providing financial incentives for maintaining high-quality soil. By encouraging best practices in soil management, this initiative seeks to enhance soil health, ensuring sustainable agricultural productivity and delivering environmental benefits. Through participation in these programs, farmers can access financial support to help offset the costs associated with implementing soil-enhancing practices, making it more feasible to invest in sustainable techniques. Promoting soil quality is essential for sustainable agriculture, as healthy soil leads to higher crop yields, improved plant health, and greater resistance to pests and diseases. Financial incentives motivate farmers to prioritize long-term soil health, creating a foundation for resilient and productive farming operations.

Healthy soils also play a critical role in environmental sustainability by storing carbon, filtering water, and supporting diverse ecosystems. State-funded programs that promote soil health contribute to broader environmental objectives such as carbon sequestration and water quality improvement, with lasting positive impacts on the ecosystem. Financial incentives make it economically feasible for farmers to adopt advanced soil management practices like crop rotations, cover cropping, organic farming, and the use of natural fertilizers. By reducing financial barriers, these programs enable farmers to implement techniques that improve soil quality but may come with higher initial costs.

Promoting state-funded soil quality initiatives also helps disseminate best practices throughout the local farming community, enhancing agricultural expertise and innovation. Sharing knowledge and encouraging the widespread adoption of proven methods boosts the productivity of individual farms and strengthens the agricultural sector as a whole. Improved soil quality leads to healthier crops, providing better nutrition for the community. Additionally, reducing reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides improves environmental health, resulting in a cleaner and safer environment for all residents and contributing to both individual and public health improvements.

Priority: Low - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Conservation, Soil Board, and Agricultural Commission



Performance Measures: By the end of 2027.

Example Success Story: The implementation of the Massachusetts Healthy Soils Program in the Town of Dartmouth offers financial incentives and support, empowering farmers to invest in long-term soil health, resulting in economic, environmental, and public health benefits. Key elements of Dartmouth's success include: participation in the Healthy Soils Program; financial support to offset costs; enhanced soil health and agricultural productivity; environmental benefits and climate resilience; knowledge sharing and dissemination of best practices; strengthening the agricultural community; and improving public and environmental health.

Goal 3.1

Support farms and agricultural businesses.

Strategy 3.1.6: Establish a farmers' cooperative to support shared resources and marketing.

This strategy focuses on creating a structured network that enables local farmers to pool resources, share knowledge, and collectively market their products through a farmers' cooperative. By working collaboratively, the cooperative allows farmers to benefit from economies of scale in purchasing supplies, accessing services, and marketing their produce. This collective effort can reduce operational costs, expand market access, and strengthen bargaining power within the agricultural marketplace. One key advantage of a farmers' cooperative is the opportunity to share resources such as machinery, seeds, and other essential farming inputs, significantly lowering individual costs and enhancing the economic viability and sustainability of farming operations. By reducing expenses, farmers can reinvest in their businesses and adopt new practices that improve efficiency and productivity.

A cooperative can also offer collective branding and marketing initiatives that may be difficult for individual farmers to achieve on their own. This includes accessing broader markets, participating in regional and national trade shows, and organizing joint advertising campaigns. Such efforts elevate the visibility of Rochester's agricultural products, open new revenue streams, and build a stronger market presence for local farmers. By joining forces, farmers can improve their leverage when negotiating with buyers, suppliers, and service providers. This collective bargaining power can lead to better prices for their products and lower costs for inputs and services, providing a competitive edge in the marketplace.

Farmers' cooperatives often promote sustainable agricultural practices among their members by offering access to shared expertise and resources for organic farming, integrated pest management, soil conservation, and more. Encouraging sustainable practices benefits the environment, meets growing consumer demand for environmentally friendly goods, and enhances long-term farm viability. Establishing a farmers' cooperative also contributes to local economic development by strengthening Rochester's agricultural sector. It fosters a sense of community and mutual support among farmers, enhancing social ties and collaboration within the farming community. This shared spirit of cooperation can lead to innovations and a stronger collective voice in shaping the future of agriculture in the region.

Priority: Low - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Commission, Select Board, and Town Administrator



Example Success Story: While the Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) is a regional organization that supports farmers broadly rather than a specific cooperative, it exemplifies many of the principles of collaboration, resource-sharing, and marketing highlighted in this strategy. SEMAP's efforts have helped strengthen the agricultural sector in southeastern Massachusetts by promoting shared resources, collective marketing, and sustainable practices. Key elements of SEMAP's success include: collaborative support for farmers; resource sharing and cost reduction; collective marketing and branding; market access and networking opportunities; promotion of sustainable practices; advocacy influence; and community engagement and support.

Goal 3.1

Support farms and agricultural businesses.

Strategy 3.1.7: Provide partnerships and other incentives for farms that host community-related events to promote local agriculture and community engagement.

This strategy seeks to promote local agriculture while fostering deeper community engagement by encouraging farms to host events such as farm-to-table dinners, agricultural education programs, and seasonal festivals. These gatherings offer residents opportunities to connect with and support local farmers, strengthening ties between the agricultural sector and the broader community. To make hosting such events more feasible and attractive for farmers, incentives such as financial assistance, marketing support, or logistical aid may be provided. Community events hosted on farms play a key role in raising awareness about the importance of local agriculture to the community's food supply and economy. These gatherings allow farmers to showcase their products and share their practices, building a loyal customer base and potentially increasing direct sales by enhancing public appreciation and connection to their work.

Events on farms also offer unique opportunities for community members of all ages to learn about farming, food production, and environmental stewardship. By engaging in agricultural practices firsthand, attendees gain a deeper appreciation for the dedication and skills of local farmers. This engagement strengthens community bonds, encourages support for local agriculture, and fosters environmental awareness. Providing incentives for hosting community events can help farms diversify their income streams beyond traditional agricultural sales. These events can be valuable revenue sources, especially if they attract tourists or gain popularity as local attractions, thereby promoting economic resilience

and growth within the local agricultural economy.

Farm-hosted events often serve as social gatherings, bringing together diverse groups within the community. By creating spaces where residents can interact and connect, these events foster social cohesion, build community pride, and encourage mutual support—essential qualities for a strong and resilient community. Moreover, events that highlight sustainable farming methods can inspire more farmers to adopt environmentally friendly practices. Showcasing sustainable techniques aligns with consumer demand for ethical and eco-conscious products and reinforces Rochester's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Priority: Low - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Commission, Cultural Council, Select Board, Economic Development Committee, and Town Administrator



Example Success Story: The Coastal Foodshed initiative in New Bedford and surrounding areas work in promoting farm-hosted community events has been instrumental in strengthening the connection between local agriculture and the broader community. By providing resources and support for farms to host educational and social gatherings, the initiative has boosted public appreciation for local farming, increased sales of local produce, and fostered community pride and cohesion. Key elements of Coastal Foodshed's success include: partnerships to host community events; financial and logical support for farms; raising awareness about local agriculture; educational programs and environmental stewardship; diversification of farm income streams; strengthening community bonds; and highlighting sustainable farming practices.

Goal 3.1

Support farms and agricultural businesses.

Strategy 3.1.8: Ensure Rochester farms are featured on the state MassGrown Map.

This strategy aims to boost the visibility and accessibility of local agricultural products by featuring Rochester farms on the MassGrown Map—a Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)-sponsored resource that highlights local farms, their products, and agri-tourism opportunities. By making it easier for consumers to find and support local agriculture, this initiative promotes the town’s agricultural sector, attracts visitors, and increases sales for local farmers. Being featured on the MassGrown Map, which can be accomplished by submitting a simple form to MDAR’s Markets Division, significantly enhances the visibility of Rochester farms, reaching not only local residents but also tourists and other visitors. This increased exposure can lead to more foot traffic, greater direct sales, and heightened awareness of the diverse agricultural offerings in the town.

The MassGrown Map serves as a valuable marketing tool that allows farms to reach a broader audience without the need for significant individual marketing expenses. Local farms benefit from the state’s promotional efforts, which can be particularly advantageous for smaller farms with limited resources. Increased traffic to local farms bolsters the local economy directly through product sales and indirectly through related community spending, such as dining at nearby restaurants, shopping at local stores, and using accommodation services, creating a ripple effect that strengthens Rochester’s economic base. Wholesale farmers can also participate in the MassGrown Exchange.

Featuring local farms on this platform also encourages community pride

and engagement by showcasing the variety and quality of agricultural products produced in Rochester. This visibility fosters a stronger connection between residents, visitors, and the town’s agricultural heritage, enhancing community bonds. Additionally, inclusion on the MassGrown Map can stimulate agri-tourism, encouraging farms to offer tours, events, and other visitor-centered activities. This diversification provides new revenue streams and financial stability by expanding beyond traditional agricultural sales.

Priority: Low - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Commission, Cultural Council
Economic Development Committee, and Planning



Example Success Story: The value of featuring local farms on the MassGrown Map is found in the efforts of Westport farms and agricultural businesses to promote their local products and agri-tourism opportunities. Key elements of Westport’s success include: increased visibility through MassGrown Map listing; boosted foot traffic and sales for farms enhanced marketing and promotion efforts; strengthening community and regional identity; promotion of agri-tourism and diversification; and the ripple effect on the local economy.

Goal 3.1

Support farms and agricultural businesses.

Strategy 3.1.9: Offer educational opportunities and speakers on various topics related to farmland stewardship.

This strategy aims to enhance the knowledge and practices of local farmers and the broader community in sustainable agriculture through workshops, seminars, and guest lectures covering a wide range of topics such as soil health, water conservation, crop rotation, pest management, and the economic aspects of sustainable farming. By creating educational opportunities, Rochester seeks to empower its agricultural community with the tools needed for effective farmland stewardship. Education plays a vital role in advancing both productive and sustainable farming techniques. Providing farmers with access to the latest research and innovative methods enables them to adopt practices that boost yields, minimize environmental impact, and ensure the long-term health and viability of their land. Additionally, educating the broader community about the challenges and practices of modern agriculture fosters greater understanding and support for local farms, which can lead to stronger consumer interest in locally produced goods and heightened community backing for local agricultural initiatives.

A deeper understanding of sustainable practices allows farmers and landowners to adopt methods that enhance biodiversity, improve soil and water quality, and minimize chemical use. These environmentally friendly practices benefit the natural ecosystem while making farms more resilient and better able to adapt to changing conditions. Educated farmers are also more likely to implement cost-effective and efficient techniques, reducing waste and increasing profitability. Farms known for sustainable methods can attract premium markets that value environmental stewardship, providing new economic opportunities.

Offering regular educational sessions helps build a community dedicated to lifelong learning and agricultural innovation. By positioning Rochester as a leader in sustainable farming, the town can attract new farmers and agribusinesses, contributing to a vibrant and forward-thinking agricultural sector.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Agricultural Commission, Economic Development Committee, and Planning

Example Success Story: The work done by the Marion Institute's Grow Education program, based in New Bedford, has significantly contributed to enhancing farmland stewardship and sustainability in southeastern Massachusetts. By offering regular educational opportunities and fostering a culture of learning and innovation, the program has helped local farmers improve their land management practices, boost their productivity, and strengthen their ties to the community. Key elements of Grow Education's success include: workshops and educational seminars; hands-on learning experiences; collaborative partnerships; community engagement and awareness; promotion of sustainable farming practices; economic benefits for farmers; and building a knowledge-sharing network.



Goal 3.2

Support businesses in the town center.

Strategy 3.2.1: Foster a greater sense of place in the Rochester Village through wayfinding, coordinated façade and signage improvements, events, and local partnerships.

This strategy seeks to enhance the identity and appeal of Rochester Village, transforming it into a more inviting and cohesive community hub. The approach involves several components designed to improve the village’s aesthetic appeal and functional aspects, creating an attractive destination for residents and visitors alike. By focusing on wayfinding systems, coordinated façade and signage improvements, events, and partnerships, this initiative aims to strengthen the village’s sense of place and community character. Establishing a strong sense of place fosters community pride and a feeling of belonging among residents through consistent and attractive signage and façade improvements that reflect the village’s character and heritage. Implementing wayfinding systems makes the village more navigable and accessible, enhancing the experience for both visitors and locals while reinforcing Rochester’s unique identity.

Creating a visually appealing and easily navigable village environment can attract more visitors and increase foot traffic, directly benefiting local businesses and stimulating economic activity. Events and festivals further enhance this effect by drawing crowds, promoting local products and services, and showcasing the village as a vibrant and welcoming destination. Collaborating with local businesses, community groups, and government entities to implement these improvements fosters stronger community ties and a more unified approach to village enhancement. These partnerships help ensure that changes align with the community’s


needs and desires, adding authenticity and making improvements more effective and enduring.

Regular community-focused events and a visually engaging environment contribute to the quality of life for residents by transforming the village into a vibrant gathering place that encourages social interaction, community bonding, and a lively atmosphere—essential for a thriving, cohesive community. Thoughtful design and community engagement in Rochester Village improvements ensure both immediate and long-term benefits by maintaining the village’s relevance and vibrancy as a central part of Rochester, adapting to future needs and preserving its charm for generations to come.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning, and Economic Development Committee

Example Success Story: The revitalization of Fairhaven Center demonstrates how thoughtful improvements in wayfinding, façade and signage enhancements, and community partnerships can create a strong sense of place and foster community engagement. By combining aesthetic upgrades with regular events and collaborative efforts, Fairhaven transformed its village into a vibrant and cohesive hub, benefitting both residents and visitors. Key elements of Fairhaven Center’s success include: wayfinding systems and improved accessibility; coordinated facade and signage improvements; regular community events and festivals; local partnerships and collaborations promoting historical and cultural identity; economic revitalization and increased foot traffic; and community pride and social cohesion.



Goal 3.2

Support businesses in the town center.

Strategy 3.2.2: Expand the Limited Commercial Zoning District to allow for more businesses in the existing area.

This strategy aims to facilitate economic growth and diversification by allowing for more businesses within the existing Limited Commercial Zoning District. The proposed expansion would adjust zoning regulations to include additional land within the designated commercial zone, increasing the space available for commercial activities and potential business developments. This approach seeks to enhance Rochester's economic vitality and create new opportunities for local businesses and services. Expanding the Limited Commercial Zoning District would enable Rochester to attract a broader range of businesses, stimulating local economic growth by drawing in retail stores, service industries, and small to medium-sized enterprises that contribute to the town's tax base, increase employment opportunities, and drive local economic activity.

As Rochester's population grows, so does the demand for diverse services and amenities. Expanding the commercial zone can address these needs locally, reducing the necessity for residents to travel outside the town for goods and services. By enhancing local business sustainability and community development, this initiative promotes a more self-sufficient and thriving community. Effective utilization of areas already zoned for commercial use can help concentrate development, minimizing urban sprawl and fostering focused commercial growth. This strategic approach to land use preserves the balance between residential, agricultural, and commercial areas in Rochester, maintaining the town's rural character while accommodating growth and economic expansion.

Expanding the commercial district has the potential to revitalize the area by attracting new investment and economic activity. Focusing this expansion within already developed or partially developed areas promotes more efficient use of existing infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and public services. This approach minimizes the costs and environmental impacts associated with new infrastructure development, making growth more sustainable.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning Board

Example Success Story: The Town of Lakeville's expansion of its Limited Commercial Zoning District successfully stimulated local economic growth, attracted new businesses, increased local employment, and provided residents with enhanced access to goods and services. The town's thoughtful approach to expanding commercial zoning demonstrated how strategic land-use planning and community collaboration can drive economic development while preserving community character and quality of life. Elements of Lakeville's success include: zoning expansion to promote economic growth; enhanced business attraction and retention efforts; strategic land use and controlled development; community benefits from local business expansion; collaborative planning and public engagement; and efforts to preserve community character.



Goal 3.2

Support businesses in the town center.

Strategy 3.2.3: Develop a “Shop Local” campaign to support local businesses.

This strategy is designed to strengthen Rochester’s local economy by expanding the Limited Commercial Zoning District, encouraging the establishment and growth of local businesses. This expansion would create more opportunities for residents and visitors to support businesses within the town, fostering a vibrant commercial environment. To maximize the impact, this initiative may be complemented by targeted marketing efforts, promotions, events, and collaborations with local businesses to highlight their unique products and services. Expanding the commercial zoning district provides more opportunities for local businesses to thrive, keeping money circulating within the community. By creating a supportive environment for business growth, this initiative can generate a positive economic ripple effect, as increased sales for one business led to more spending and investment in other areas of the local economy.

Encouraging local commerce fosters a strong sense of community identity and pride by showcasing unique, homegrown products and services that reflect Rochester’s character. This expansion can help strengthen community ties, create a distinct sense of place, and build pride among residents in the town’s offerings. Supporting local businesses through expanded commercial opportunities can help reduce the need for long-distance transportation of goods, leading to cost savings and greater convenience for both businesses and consumers. Local businesses also help strengthen the regional economy by keeping money circulating within the community and often rely

on more streamlined, locally based supply chains. Expanding the Limited Commercial Zoning District can lead to the creation of new jobs and greater employment stability within the community. Local businesses often hire locally, enhancing economic stability and providing meaningful work opportunities for residents.

Local businesses are uniquely positioned to cater to the specific needs and preferences of the Rochester community. By creating more space and opportunities for these businesses to grow, the town ensures that residents continue to benefit from personalized, locally focused products and services.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Town Administrator, and Economic Development Committee



Example Success Story: The “Shop Local” campaign spearheaded by the “Downtown New Bedford Inc.” (dNB Inc.) initiative in New Bedford has been highly effective in strengthening the local economy, promoting New Bedford’s unique offerings, and fostering a sense of community pride. By creating more opportunities for residents and visitors to support local businesses, the campaign has contributed to economic resilience, job creation, and community vitality. Key elements of the dNB Inc. Campaign’s success include: targeted marketing efforts and promotions; collaborative events to drive foot traffic; partnerships with local businesses; expanding commercial space and business opportunities; building a strong sense of community pride; economic benefits and job creation; and sustainability and reduced environmental impact.



Natural & Cultural Resources

Maintain high quality ground water resources. Conserve Rochester’s natural habitats, forested landscapes, and agricultural land. Preserve historic landscapes and architecture. Maintain the town’s heritage and ecological health for future generations.

Key Planning Information

Rochester is rich in natural resources, ranging from aquifers that supply drinking water to protected forests and critical habitats for both common and endangered wildlife species in Massachusetts. The preservation of these assets aligns with the town’s commitment to maintaining its rural character, a feature cherished by residents drawn to the picturesque landscapes. Notably, many of the natural resources serve dual purposes, functioning not only as environmental assets, but also as cultural resources for activities such as fishing, boating, hunting, and hiking. Preservation of these spaces not only benefits wildlife but also enhances the quality of life for the town’s residents.

Due to Rochester’s landscape being dominated by forests and waterways, many surrounding towns benefit from Rochester’s abundant water resources. In fact, Rochester’s aquifers provide drinking water for its own residents and neighboring towns, including Marion, Mattapoisett, and Fairhaven, totaling over 25,000 people served. In addition, the Assawompset Pond Complex, which acts as the primary source of drinking water for the City of New Bedford and a secondary source for the City of Taunton, is located

partially within Rochester’s borders. Rochester’s two largest rivers, the Mattapoisett and the Sippican, both eventually empty into Buzzards Bay. Rochester’s high-water table, dependence on private wells and septic systems, and role as a local hub for drinking water supply, make water resources protection a central issue in town.

Rochester is in a unique position of having unpolluted groundwater resources. The challenge is to preserve this position for the future. The best way to accomplish this is to implement strict regulations supported by the best scientific information available. It is easier to protect a clean aquifer than to try to clean up a polluted one. Rochester has implemented a strong stormwater management by-law that addresses such concerns.

There are three primary risks associated with groundwater in Massachusetts: increase in groundwater levels, groundwater resource depletion, and contamination of groundwater by pollution. Rochester, with its abundant water resources, is vulnerable to all three risks impacting groundwater resources. Since the majority of residents in the region obtain their water from either Rochester’s aquifer and / or surface water from the

Assawompset Pond Complex APC), residents face a unique situation wherein local water resources are not primarily locally-controlled. This competition for groundwater water resources translates into insufficient supply for Rochester residents, especially when droughts occur, and the local water table may be drawn down to supply other communities.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPAs) are invaluable for protection the recharge area around public water supply groundwater resources as well as how they are established, including:

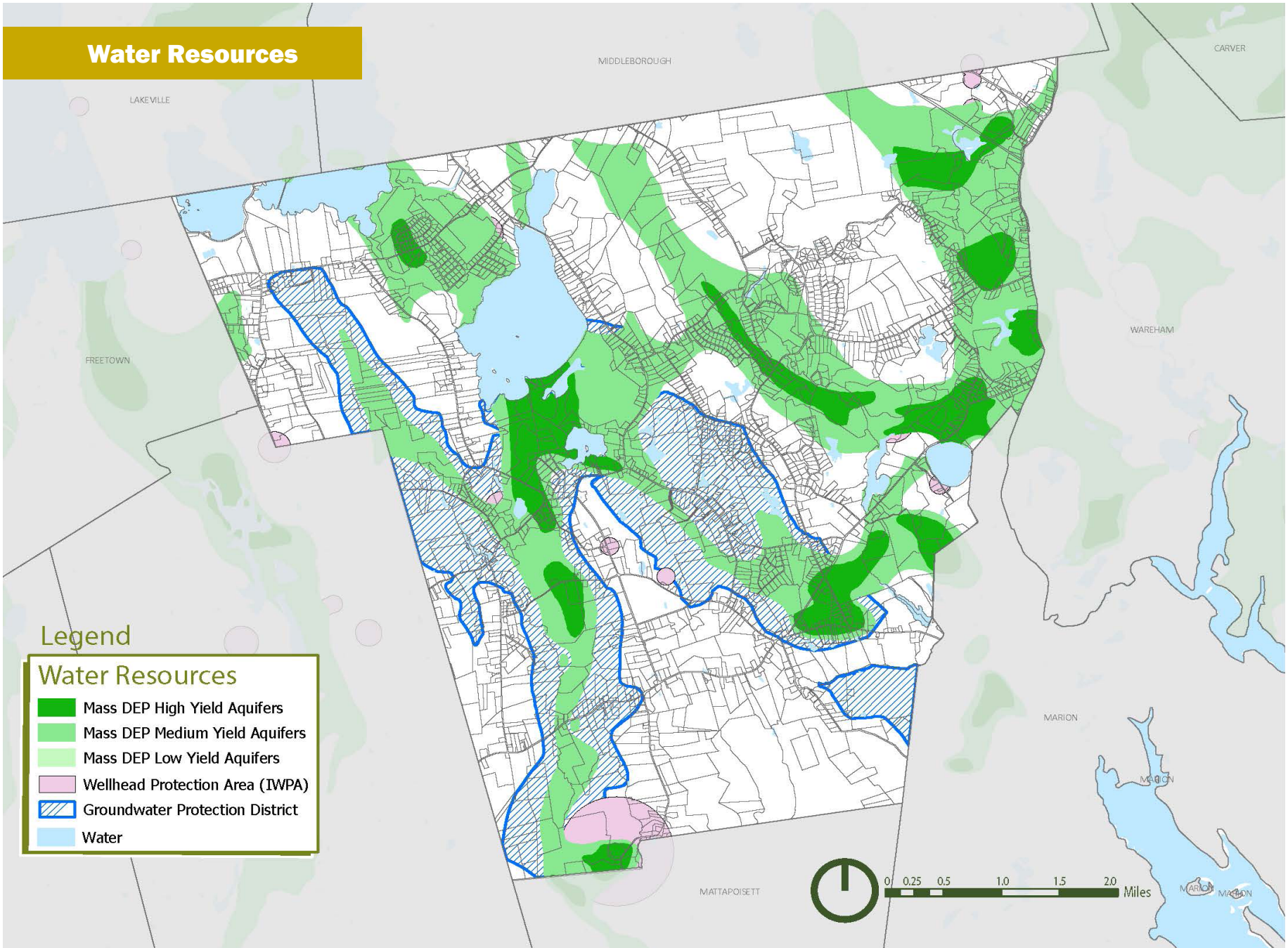
- Public Water Supply Groundwater Sources (wells/wellfields)
- Zone I: Zone I represents the protective radius required around public water supply well or wellfield.
- Zone II: Zone II is a WHPA that has been determined by hydrogeologic modeling and approved by MA DEP's Drinking water Program.
- Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA): IWPA are established based on DEP's well pumping rates or default values in cases where the hydrogeologic modeling studies have not been performed and there is no approved Zone II.

Water quality and quantity concerns are closely linked in Rochester. The interaction between increased precipitation, significant fluctuations in the water table, increased consumption, and

improper septic management pose increasing risks to public health.

As Rochester continues to transition from a rural to bedroom community with many new residents moving to town who are unaccustomed to country living and who may not be familiar with the maintenance requirements for wells and septic systems, the potential for hazardous conditions and contamination risks exists for the entire community. In addition, excessive fertilizer, pesticides and herbicide use also pose threats to groundwater resources.

The Town of Rochester is currently (2023-2024) working with the SRPEDD and a consultant to install two monitoring wells and conducting streamflow data to better understand the hydrological connection between the APC (New Bedford's water supply) and Snipatuit Pond (groundwater for Marion, Mattapoisett, Fairhaven, and Rochester). The Town continues to further this study to more closely evaluate and better understand the hydraulic response of the Snipatuit Pond, its dam, and the Snipatuit Brook during a variety of hydrological conditions.

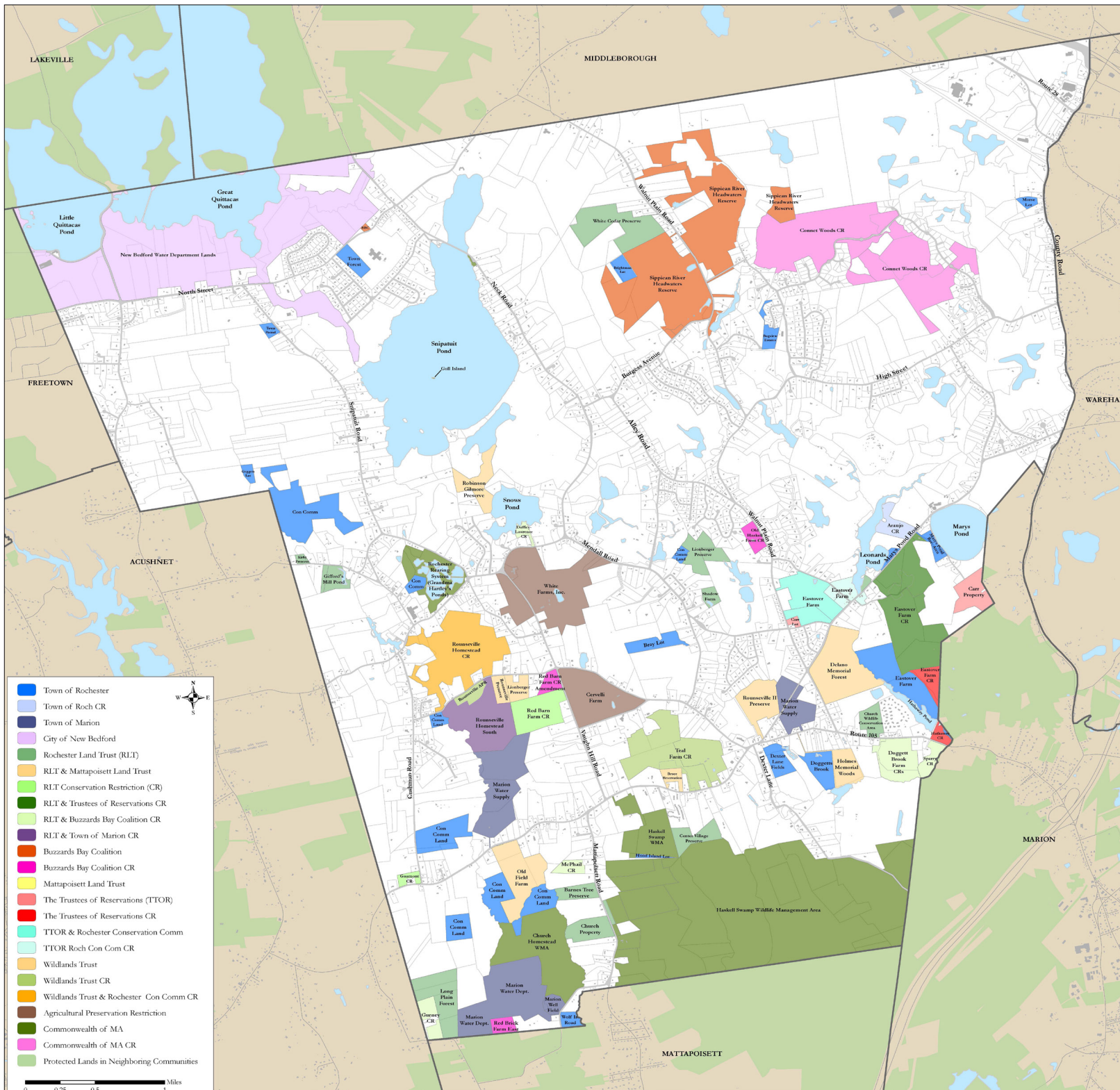


In 2008, 2013 and 2024, Rochester actively participated in the Community Priority Area Initiative as part of the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan Community Priority Area Project Update. This collaborative effort involved updating Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) across the South Coast Rail Corridor communities. Rochester specifically identified areas for protection, encompassing vital water resources like the Mattapoissett River and Snipatuit Water Resources (8,261.02 acres), the Sippican River Area Aquifer (3,763.6 acres), and areas designated for combined protection and development, such as the Northeast Rochester Industrial District (55.58 acres) and the Village Center (198.02 acres) as shown on the 2024 Priority Areas - Rochester Map.

“Rochester Residents are concerned about loss of open space, with more opportunities to connect, improvements to recreation & preserving the Town’s character.”

Master Plan Survey

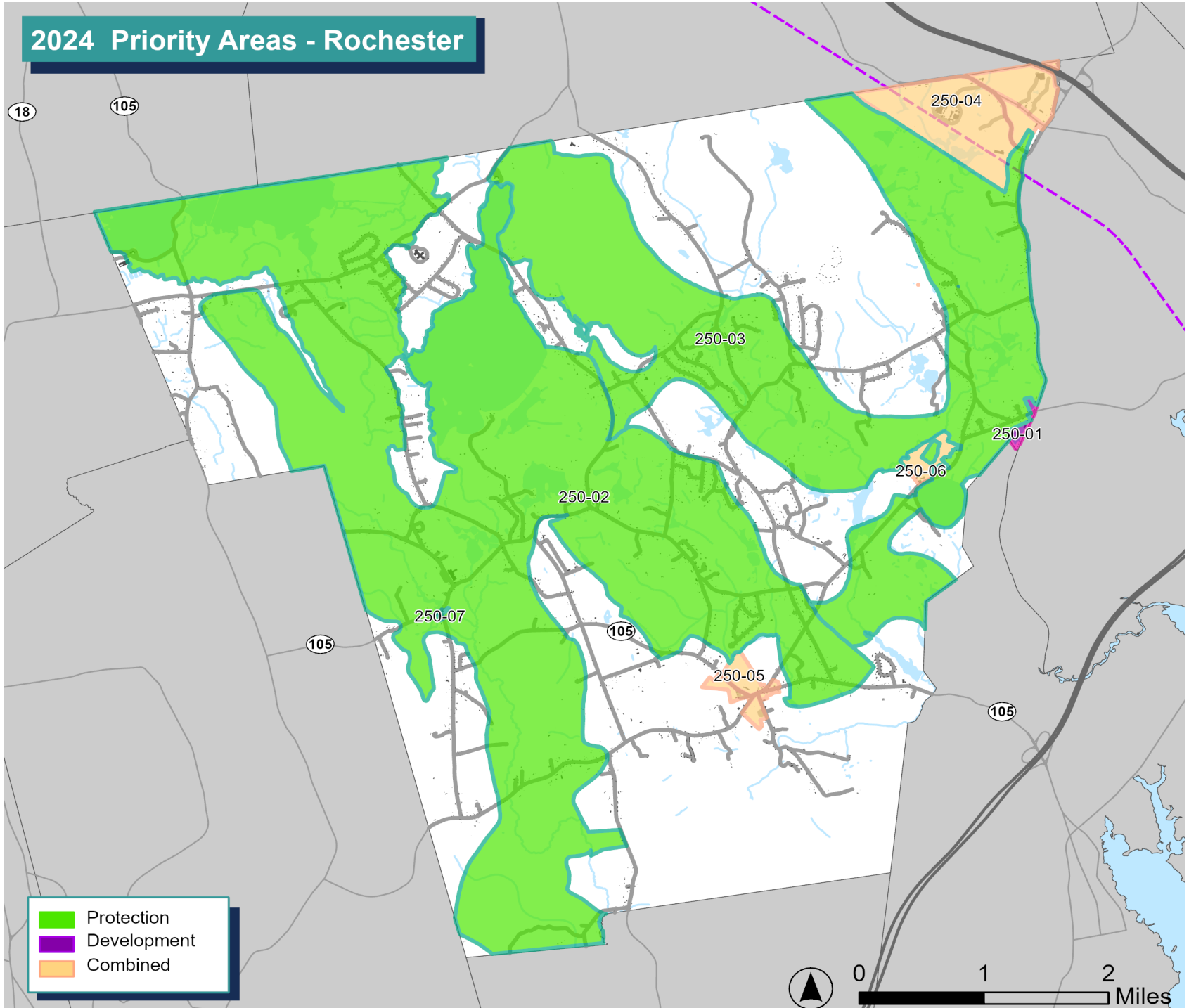
Protected Lands in the Town of Rochester



- Town of Rochester
- Town of Roch CR
- Town of Marion
- City of New Bedford
- Rochester Land Trust (RLT)
- RLT & Mattapoisett Land Trust
- RLT Conservation Restriction (CR)
- RLT & Trustees of Reservations CR
- RLT & Buzzards Bay Coalition CR
- RLT & Town of Marion CR
- Buzzards Bay Coalition
- Buzzards Bay Coalition CR
- Mattapoisett Land Trust
- The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR)
- The Trustees of Reservations CR
- TTOR & Rochester Conservation Comm
- TTOR Roch Con Com CR
- Wildlands Trust
- Wildlands Trust CR
- Wildlands Trust & Rochester Con Comm CR
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction
- Commonwealth of MA
- Commonwealth of MA CR
- Protected Lands in Neighboring Communities



2024 Priority Areas - Rochester



Utilizing tools like BioMap, developed by MassWildlife and The Nature Conservancy, these mapping resources identify Core Habitat and Critical Landscapes, guiding efforts to protect vital lands and waters. In Rochester, the mapping areas predominantly feature Forest Core and Endangered Species Core, underscoring the importance of these regions for ecological resilience and species preservation, as illustrated on the Natural Resource BioMap.

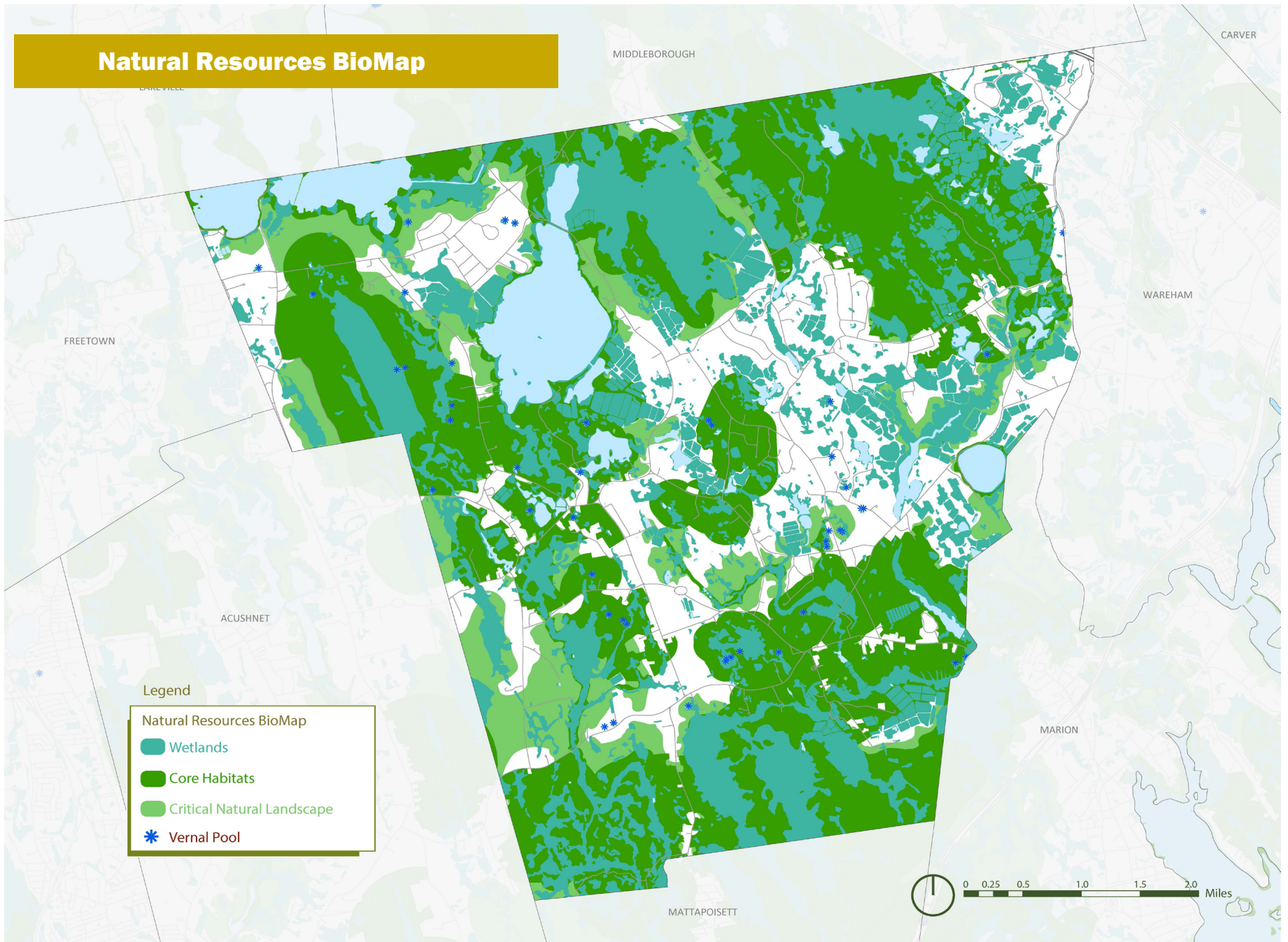
“Although Rochester doesn’t touch Buzzards Bay coastline, more than 90% of the town’s land area lies within the Buzzards Bay watershed. The Mattapoissett River and the Sippican River flow through Rochester, which connect the town to Buzzards Bay.”¹

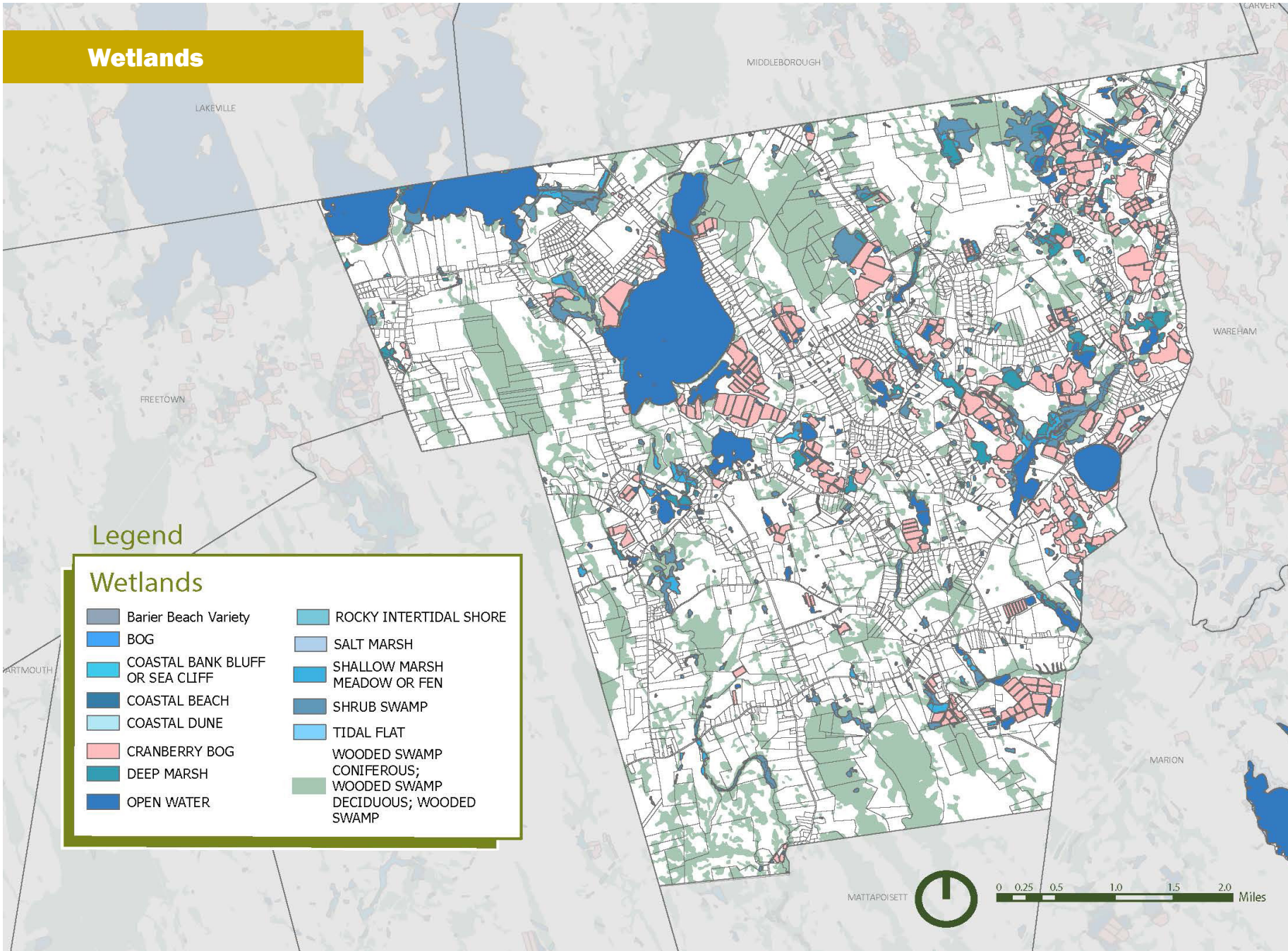
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates the land areas covered by the floodwaters of the base flood as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) created under the National Flood Insurance Program.

Floods occur naturally and can happen almost anywhere. They may not even be near a body of water, although river and coastal flooding are the most common types. Heavy rains, poor drainage, and even nearby construction projects can be a risk for flood damage. Current flood construction requires that structures adhere to 2021 International Codes (I-Codes) and the referenced standards by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). New construction must be elevated and existing building expansions may be subjected to elevations above the base flood elevation designated on the FEMA FIRM Maps. If the cost of improvements

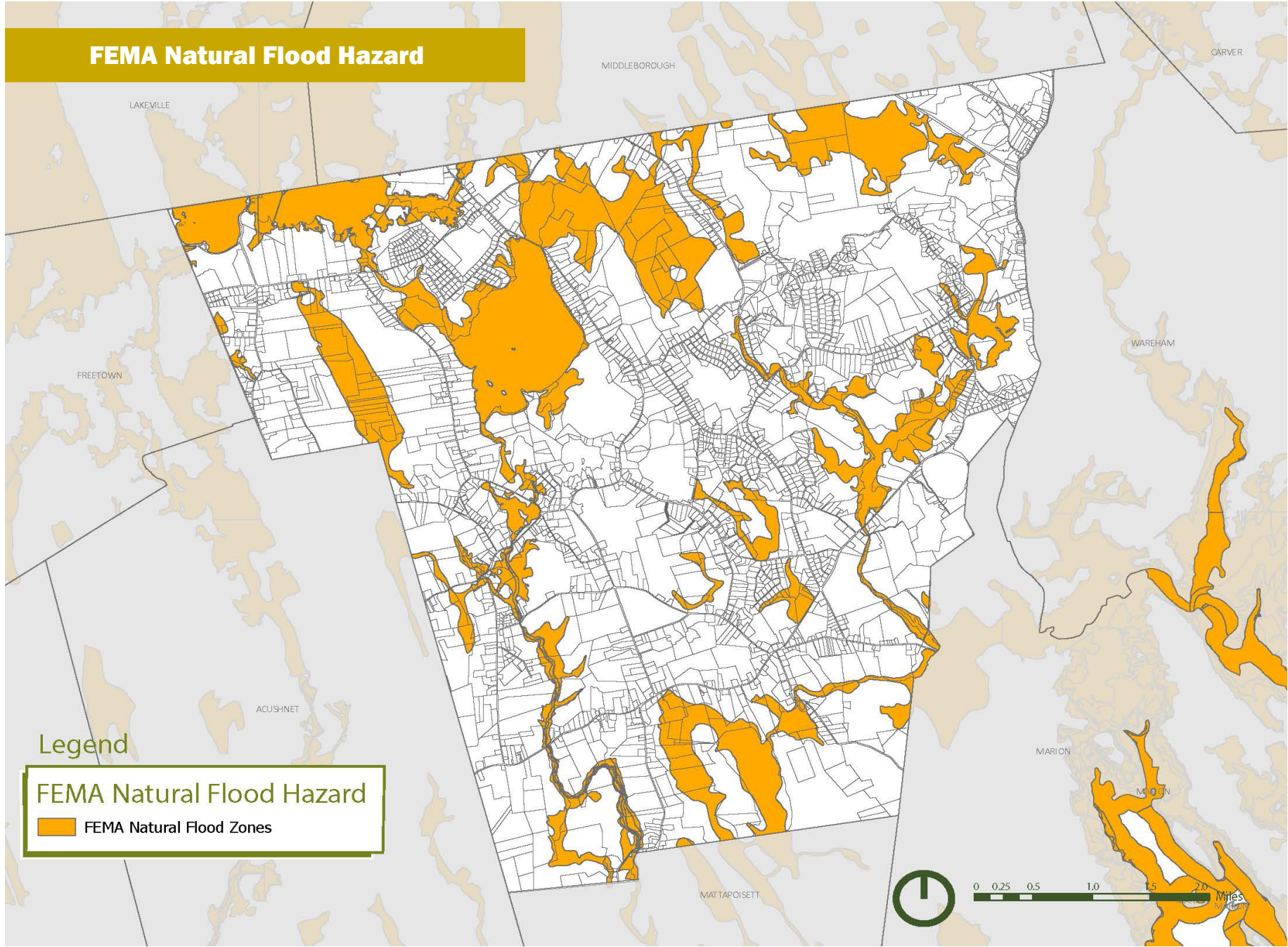
or the cost of repairing the damage exceeds 50% of the market value of the building, it must be brought up to current floodplain management standards. FEMA maintains and updates data through flood maps and risk assessments. Flood maps show how likely it is for an area to flood. Any place with a 1% chance of experiencing a flood each year is considered to have a high risk. Those areas have at least a one-in-four chance of flooding during a 30-year mortgage. On July 6, 2021, FEMA updates the Town of Rochester’s FEMA Firm Maps. The Town of Rochester Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024 was recently completed by the Planning Department in collaboration with the Horsley Witten Group, and the Rochester Emergency Management Team.

1. <https://www.savebuzzardsbay.org/in-your-community/rochester/>





FEMA Natural Flood Hazard



Legend

FEMA Natural Flood Hazard

 FEMA Natural Flood Zones

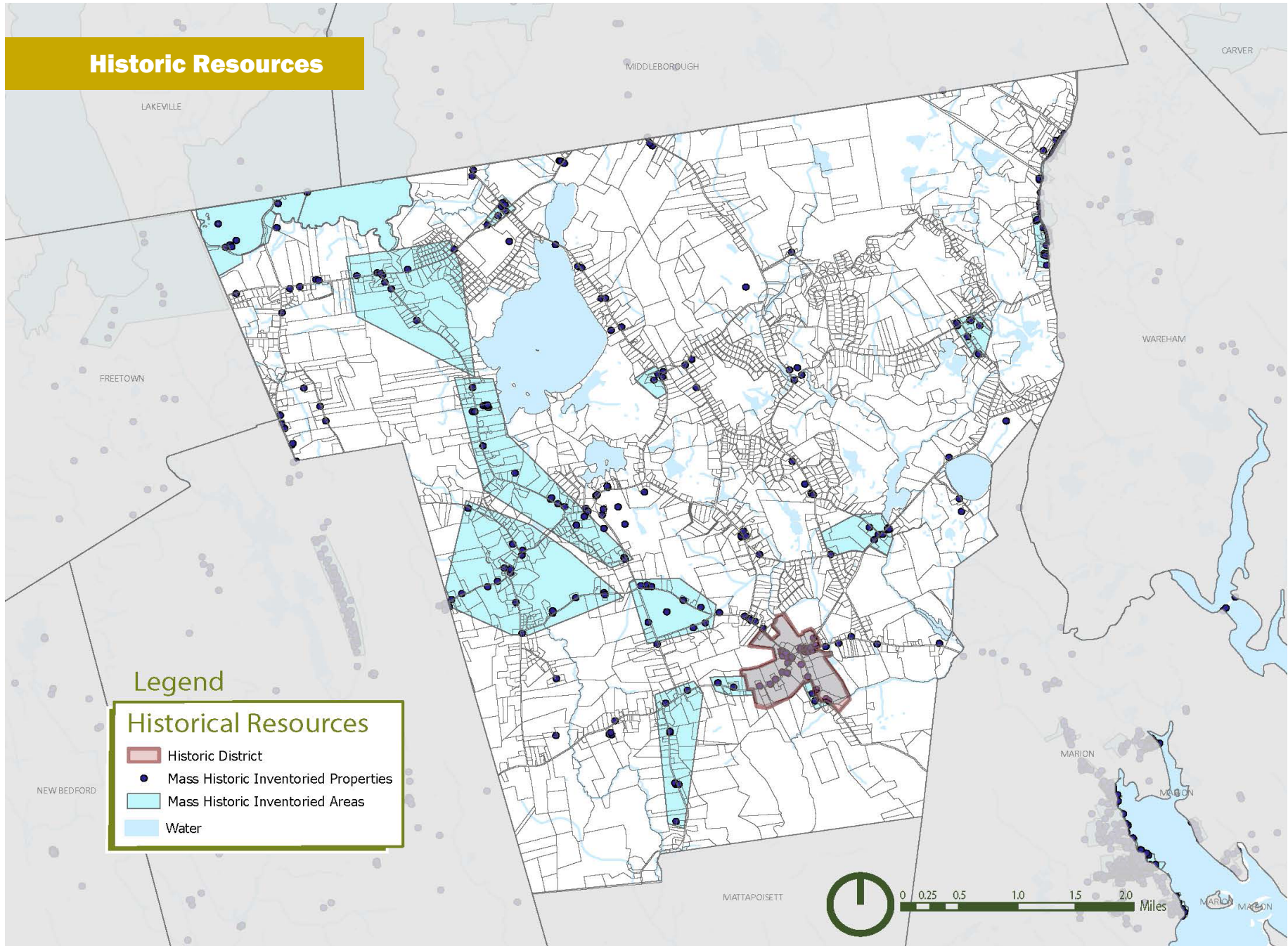
Historic Resources

Despite the new construction that occurred in the late 20th century, Rochester retains much of its historic settlement patterns, homes and structures. These give the town integrity of setting, feeling, and association with its long and rich history.

Some of the most appreciated characteristics of Rochester are its historic public and private buildings. Although it is not always recognized, features such as stone walls and agricultural fields are also historic, representing some of the first activities of settlers.

In 1998, the Historic District Commission was appointed by the Rochester Board of Selectmen to oversee changes to the town center.

Historic Resources





Natural & Cultural Resources

Maintain high quality ground water resources. Conserve Rochester’s natural habitats, forested landscapes, and agricultural land. Preserve historic landscapes and architecture. Maintain the town’s heritage and ecological health for future generations.

Goals and Strategies Overview

Goal 4.1: Protect and preserve the quality of surface water and groundwater supplies and resources.

1. Continue to work on a comprehensive water flow analysis to assess and ensure the quality and quantity of availability of public water resources for residents.
2. Implement a watershed management plan to protect water resources.
3. Continue to partner with state, regional, and non-profit environmental stewards to understand and improve groundwater and surface water.
4. Develop a public education campaign on water conservation practices that also highlights the role of water line infrastructure in sustaining water quality.
5. Apply for state and/or federal grant funding to implement stormwater management strategies identified by the Rochester Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan.

Complimentary Strategies: 1.2.1 and 7.4.2

Goal 4.2: Conserve natural habitats, forested landscapes, and agricultural land with creative solutions to retain tax base.

1. Promote sustainable forestry practices on public and private lands.
2. Explore creative solutions to retain the tax base while protecting open spaces.
3. Offer educational opportunities and speakers on various topics related to natural, forested and agricultural landscapes regarding stewardship.

Complimentary Strategies: 5.3.1 and 5.3.2

Goal 4.3: Protect and maintain historical preservation landscapes and architecture.

1. Review and amend Historic Bylaw and restructure.
2. Review the Historic District Zoning District and create accompanying design guidelines for development.
3. Promote heritage tourism through the Historical Society, Library, and regional groups.
4. Foster a greater sense of place in the “Rochester Village” through wayfinding, coordinated façade and signage improvements, events, and local partnerships.

Goal 4.4: Support the creation of more opportunities for community events throughout Town.

1. Leverage key locations as venues for recurring community events.
2. Collaborate with local businesses, farmers, and civic groups to create events that highlight Rochester’s cultural, historic, and natural resources.
3. Promote and share cultural and recreational events to boost community participation and provide benefits to all members of the community, young and old.
4. Create an Events Committee with Economic Development Committee collaboration to advance and support community events throughout the Town, strengthening local engagement and economic growth.
5. Strategically connect cultural spaces throughout town to enhance resident access and engagement, fostering a network of accessible, community-oriented locations for cultural events and gatherings.

Complimentary Strategies: 3.1.1 and 4.4.5

Goal 4.1

Protect and preserve the quality of surface water and groundwater supplies and resources.

Strategy 4.1.1: Continue to work on a comprehensive water flow analysis to assess and ensure the quality and quantity of availability of public water resources for residents.

Building on Rochester’s strategic approach to managing water resources, continuing with a comprehensive water flow analysis is essential for safeguarding both the quality and quantity of public water supplies. This initiative involves an in-depth evaluation of water supply systems, encompassing sources, distribution networks, and factors that may impact water availability or quality. Conducting regular and thorough analyses of water resources is crucial to maintaining high standards of water quality. This ensures the health and safety of Rochester’s residents while meeting regulatory compliance requirements from state and federal agencies. The proactive management of Rochester’s groundwater and surface water resources underscores the town’s dedication to maintaining clean aquifers and its critical role as a regional water supplier.

By continuously monitoring and evaluating water flow and availability, Rochester can better anticipate future demands and adapt to changes, including those driven by weather related incidents. This enables informed decisions on water management, conservation strategies, and land use that ensure the sustainable use of resources. Insights from comprehensive water flow analyses also guide infrastructure planning, identifying areas that may need system upgrades or expansions. Such efforts ensure Rochester’s water infrastructure is resilient enough to meet the demands of population growth, economic development, and evolving environmental challenges.


Additionally, understanding water flow dynamics supports proactive risk management strategies, such as drought mitigation, flood control, and emergency planning. By assessing how water systems respond to changing conditions, Rochester can prepare for and manage potential water-related crises more effectively. Engaging residents through transparent communication about water resource challenges and management efforts fosters community trust and support for water conservation initiatives and infrastructure investments. Providing accurate information and addressing public concerns strengthens collective efforts to protect and sustain Rochester’s valuable water resources.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning and Water Commission

Performance Measures:

Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth’s Integrated Water Resources Management Plan has helped ensure the quality and availability of public water resources for residents by providing a comprehensive and proactive approach to water management. The town’s commitment to monitoring, planning, and improving water infrastructure has positioned it as a leader in sustainable water resource management. Key elements of Plymouth’s success include: comprehensive assessment of water resources; monitoring water quality and availability; addressing weather related incidents and future demands; infrastructure planning and upgrades; proactive risk management; community engagement and communication; and collaboration with regional partners.



Goal 4.1

Protect and preserve the quality of surface water and groundwater supplies and resources.

Strategy 4.1.2: Implement a watershed management plan to protect water resources.

To enhance the strategy for implementing a watershed management plan in Rochester, the plan should further emphasize integrated approaches to managing land and water use. This involves expanding partnerships with local stakeholders, such as the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD), and utilizing scientific data to guide management decisions. Specifically, the plan should leverage local expertise and data to better understand and manage the complex interactions between land use and water resources, ensuring that growth and development do not compromise watershed health.

The strategy could be improved by specifying actions that address the interconnectedness of watershed components. This includes developing detailed management practices that focus on both pollution prevention and mitigation across various land uses, from agricultural to residential areas. Moreover, engagement with the community through educational programs can enhance public awareness and participation in watershed protection efforts.

Lastly, it's important to continually update the watershed management plan based on the latest environmental data and changing regulatory frameworks. This dynamic approach ensures that Rochester can adapt to new challenges and opportunities in water resource management, thereby securing clean and abundant water for future generations.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Conservation, Planning, Highway, and Water Commission



Example Success Story: The Buzzards Bay Coalition's efforts with the Buzzards Bay Watershed Management Plan have been highly effective in improving water quality and protecting the watershed's health. By using a collaborative, data-driven, and adaptive approach, the coalition has successfully engaged stakeholders, reduced pollution, and promoted sustainable land and water use practices. Key elements of the Buzzards Bay Coalition's success include: integrated watershed management approach; data-driven decision making; collaborative partnerships; pollution prevention and mitigation efforts; community engagement and education; adaptive management; significant environmental improvements; and support for local municipalities.

Goal 4.1

Protect and preserve the quality of surface water and groundwater supplies and resources.

Strategy 4.1.3: Continue to partner with state, regional, and non-profit environmental stewards to understand and improve groundwater and surface water.

This strategy represents a collaborative approach to water resource management. This initiative involves working closely with various stakeholders including government agencies, regional environmental organizations, and non-profits dedicated to water conservation. The aim is to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks to enhance the quality and sustainability of local water resources through shared knowledge, technical assistance, and coordinated efforts.

Leveraging Expertise and Resources: Partnering with experienced organizations gives Rochester access to specialized knowledge and technologies, introducing advanced monitoring, pollution control, and water management techniques to improve local practices.

Cost Efficiency: Collaborative efforts often lead to cost-effective solutions by spreading expenses among multiple stakeholders, benefiting large-scale projects like watershed management or infrastructure upgrades.

Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring and Management: Partnerships with environmental stewards improve water quality monitoring and establish comprehensive programs that generate critical data for assessing resource health and identifying pollution sources.

Policy Influence and Compliance: Collaborating with state and regional entities keeps Rochester informed about regulatory changes and

ensures compliance with environmental laws, while offering insights and advocacy opportunities to shape water management policies.


Community Engagement and Education: Non-profits play a key role in engaging and educating the community. Partnering with them enhances public awareness and involvement in water conservation, critical for long-term success.

Strengthening Environmental Resilience: Broad collaborations bolster water resource resilience by integrating diverse approaches to tackle weather events/patterns, pollution, and habitat degradation, ensuring a sustainable future for water management.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Select Board, Planning, and Water Commission

Example Success Story: The Taunton River Watershed Alliance (TRWA), in collaboration with state, regional, and non-profit partners, has improved water quality and strengthened the resilience of the Taunton River watershed. By leveraging expertise, resources, and community involvement, TRWA has protected water resources, promoted sustainable practices, and built public support for conservation. Key factors of success include partnerships, water quality monitoring, pollution prevention projects, community engagement, policy advocacy, cost-effective shared solutions, and climate resilience initiatives.



Goal 4.1

Protect and preserve the quality of surface water and groundwater supplies and resources.

Strategy 4.1.4: Develop a public education campaign on water conservation practices that also highlights sustaining water quality.

To enhance a public education campaign on water conservation and the role of water line infrastructure in maintaining water quality, targeted messaging and diverse educational formats should be used to deepen community engagement and understanding. Tailoring educational materials for specific audiences—such as homeowners, businesses, schools, and agricultural sectors—ensures relevance by addressing unique water usage patterns and offering customized conservation strategies.

Using varied formats like workshops, webinars, brochures, social media campaigns, and interactive school programs helps reach diverse demographics. Incorporating real-life case studies of successful conservation efforts can further inspire community involvement. Highlighting the importance of water line infrastructure with visual aids, such as diagrams and videos, illustrates its role in preventing water loss and delivering safe water, as well as potential consequences of infrastructure failure.

The campaign should promote community engagement through conservation challenges, incentives like rebates for water-efficient appliances, and recognition programs for water-saving achievements. Emphasizing economic benefits, such as lower water bills, along with environmental benefits like improved water quality and reduced habitat disruption, can drive participation.

Providing clear information about water use regulations and their role in sustaining water resources fosters community responsibility and compliance. Feedback mechanisms, including surveys and interactive Q&A sessions, can assess the campaign's effectiveness and guide improvements, fostering a cooperative, informed approach to water sustainability.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Water Commission and Conservation

Example Success Story: The City of New Bedford's Water Conservation Initiative effectively raised awareness about water conservation and the importance of water line infrastructure for water quality. This comprehensive approach led to reduced water usage, increased adoption of water-saving practices, and enhanced community understanding of water management. Key elements of success included targeted messaging, diverse educational formats, interactive school programs, emphasis on infrastructure, community challenges with incentives, demonstrated economic and environmental benefits, and robust community engagement and feedback.



Goal 4.1

Protect and preserve the quality of surface water and groundwater supplies and resources.

Strategy 4.1.5: Apply for state and/or federal grant funding to implement stormwater management strategies identified by the Rochester Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan.

To effectively apply for state and federal grants for stormwater management projects as outlined in the Rochester Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan, it is crucial to align these efforts with broader environmental and community resilience goals. This approach leverages external funding to enhance Rochester’s ability to address stormwater challenges such as flooding, erosion, and water pollution, which are exacerbated by weather events/patterns and urbanization.

Implementing innovative stormwater management techniques, including bio-retention systems, green roofs, permeable pavements, and constructed wetlands, is key to mitigating intense rainfall and reducing flood risks. These green infrastructure solutions also enhance urban greenery and biodiversity. State and federal grants are vital for funding these infrastructure upgrades without placing financial burdens on local taxpayers and often require proposals demonstrating alignment with water management and weather event/pattern adaptation priorities.


Properly designed stormwater systems protect local waterways by capturing and filtering runoff, preserving aquatic ecosystems, and maintaining water quality for recreation. Enhanced infrastructure minimizes flood damage, safeguarding public health and property while ensuring community functionality during storm events.

Compliance with state and federal regulations mandating stormwater runoff management can be achieved through securing funding and implementing robust solutions, potentially avoiding fines and supporting sustainability initiatives. Effective stormwater systems yield long-term savings by minimizing flood damage, reducing emergency costs, and extending the lifespan of critical infrastructure.

By aligning stormwater initiatives with the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan, Rochester can bolster resilience against weather events/patterns and environmental hazards, enhancing environmental health, community safety, and regulatory compliance while fostering a sustainable urban environment.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Highway, Planning, and Town Administrator



Example Success Story: The Town of Scituate’s MVP-funded stormwater initiatives enhanced its ability to manage runoff, mitigate flooding, and protect water quality. A collaborative, proactive approach yielded environmental and public health benefits, strengthened infrastructure resilience, and boosted community awareness. Key elements of success included leveraging MVP grants, comprehensive stormwater projects, partnerships with state and regional entities, community education, regulatory compliance, improved flood mitigation, cost-effective grant solutions, and alignment with climate resilience goals.

Goal 4.2

Conserve natural habitats, forested landscapes, and agricultural land with creative solutions to retain tax base.

Strategy 4.2.1: Promote sustainable forestry practices on public and private lands.

To promote sustainable forestry practices on public and private lands, it is crucial to adopt a multifaceted approach that balances ecological health with economic viability. This strategy supports environmental goals and ensures the long-term sustainability of forestry as an economic activity. It emphasizes integrating timber production with conservation through practices such as selective logging, controlled burns, and habitat preservation, which maintain biodiversity, protect soil, and ensure water quality.

By encouraging sustainable logging, the strategy supports economic viability, allowing steady income for landowners and local communities while preserving resources for future generations. Sustainable forestry enhances forests' economic value by preventing resource depletion, avoiding clear-cutting, and maintaining forest cover, which protects against soil erosion and supports water quality. Forests filter rainwater and sustain the water cycle, benefiting ecosystems and human communities.

Forests also act as critical carbon sinks, absorbing CO₂ and mitigating weather events/patterns. Sustainable practices optimize this function, aligning with broader environmental goals. Educating landowners and the public about these benefits fosters widespread adoption and community involvement in conservation efforts. Public support can be strengthened through educational initiatives and outreach.

Sustainable practices help landowners comply with environmental regulations and achieve certifications like the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), increasing the market value of forest products and opening new market opportunities. Overall, promoting sustainable forestry practices addresses environmental, economic, and social needs, ensuring forest longevity, resilience, and community well-being for generations to come.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Tree Warden and Conservation

Example Success Story: The Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance (SEMPBA) has promoted sustainable forestry, leading to healthier forest ecosystems, greater biodiversity, and increased adoption of sustainable practices among landowners and the community. By balancing economic, ecological, and social needs, SEMPBA has highlighted sustainable forestry's role in long-term forest health, weather events/patterns, and community well-being. Key factors in their success include sustainable practices on public and private lands, habitat restoration, economic viability, carbon sequestration, community education, stakeholder collaboration, certification opportunities, and regulatory compliance.



Goal 4.2

Conserve natural habitats, forested landscapes, and agricultural land with creative solutions to retain tax base.

Strategy 4.2.2: Explore creative solutions to retain the tax base while protecting open spaces.

To balance economic development with environmental conservation in Rochester, the town is committed to innovative solutions that preserve open spaces while maintaining financial stability. This strategy addresses the challenge of property tax revenue reductions due to land conservation by exploring alternative revenue sources and sustainable development practices, ensuring both economic and environmental viability.

Open space protection may limit development and impact property tax revenues. However, creative solutions can mitigate this by enhancing open spaces in ways that support surrounding property values. Diversifying revenue sources, such as payment for ecosystem services programs that monetize benefits like carbon sequestration and water filtration, or implementing special assessment districts, can also help retain the tax base while preserving natural areas.

Open spaces attract tourists and recreational users, creating opportunities for local business growth and additional sales tax revenue. Eco-tourism and recreation facilities can be developed thoughtfully to provide economic benefits while maintaining the integrity of these spaces.

Securing conservation grants and partnering with non-profits and private entities can bring in funds to support conservation efforts or

offset municipal service costs, enhancing financial health.

Engaging the community in discussions about open space value and economic trade-offs can build support for innovative funding mechanisms, such as local levies or bonds dedicated to conservation.

Overall, balancing tax base retention with open space protection ensures sustainable growth for Rochester, supporting economic needs and environmental goals through creative solutions and community-backed initiatives.

Priority: High - Immediate 

Responsible Parties: Board of Assessors, Accounting, Treasurer, Planning, and Conservation

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth's Agricultural Preservation Trust and conservation initiatives effectively balanced economic development with environmental conservation by using innovative approaches. Leveraging alternative funding mechanisms, fostering eco-tourism, and forming partnerships demonstrated how creative land use and conservation strategies can enhance financial sustainability and community well-being. Key elements of success included the Agricultural Preservation Trust Fund, conservation restrictions, increased property values through open space preservation, eco-tourism opportunities, special assessment districts, collaboration with non-profits, grant funding, community engagement, and payment for ecosystem services (PES) programs.

Goal 4.2

Conserve natural habitats, forested landscapes, and agricultural land with creative solutions to retain tax base.

Strategy 4.2.3: Offer educational opportunities and speakers on various topics related to natural, forested and agricultural stewardship.

This strategy aims to enhance community knowledge and engagement in environmental conservation and sustainable practices through workshops, lectures, and field days covering topics such as wildlife conservation, sustainable farming, forest management, and habitat preservation. By offering diverse educational opportunities, the initiative deepens community understanding, encouraging active participation in conservation efforts and the adoption of sustainable practices that benefit environmental health.

The sessions will share the latest research and advancements in sustainable land management, with practical applications like rotational grazing, organic farming, and integrated pest management for farmers and landowners. These techniques promote sustainable agriculture, benefiting both the land and the community. Increasing awareness of the ecological and economic benefits of sustainable stewardship is a primary goal, motivating community involvement and emphasizing biodiversity, ecosystem services, and healthy forests and agricultural lands.

Expert speakers and events foster a sense of community around shared environmental goals and provide networking opportunities among landowners, farmers, educators, and conservationists, potentially leading to collaborative projects. Educated communities become effective advocates for supportive environmental policies, understanding the

importance of natural, forested, and agricultural stewardship. This knowledge empowers informed decision-making that positively impacts environmental health and preservation.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Conservation and Planning

Example Success Story: The Cape Cod Cooperative Extension's educational programs have significantly advanced sustainable land and resource management in southeastern Massachusetts. Through diverse learning opportunities, expert-led discussions, and practical guidance, the Extension has empowered residents to adopt sustainable practices, enhance land stewardship, and support conservation. Key elements of its success include educational workshops, hands-on learning, expert speakers, community outreach, tailored programs for farmers and landowners, a focus on ecological and economic benefits, advocacy promotion, and increased community engagement.



Goal 4.3

Protect and maintain historical preservation landscapes and architecture.

Strategy 4.3.1: Review and amend Historic Bylaw and restructure.

This strategy is designed to enhance the preservation of Rochester’s cultural heritage while addressing contemporary needs and concerns within the community. This initiative acknowledges the importance of historic preservation as a means to maintain the town’s character and charm, while also recognizing the necessity for a regulatory framework that is both effective and flexible.

The existing Historic Bylaw serves as a foundational tool for protecting historically significant structures and areas, but it may require updates to better reflect current preservation practices, community values, and the evolving landscape of the town. A thorough review of the bylaw will assess its strengths and weaknesses, identify gaps in coverage, and ensure that it aligns with the broader goals outlined in the Rochester Master Plan.

Key components of the review process may include engaging with local stakeholders, such as residents, property owners, and historical organizations, to gather input on their experiences and perspectives regarding the bylaw. This collaborative approach aims to foster a sense of ownership and support for the bylaw, encouraging community involvement in the preservation process.

Amendments to the Historic Bylaw might involve clarifying definitions, expanding the list of protected properties, and streamlining the review

process for proposed changes to historic structures. Additionally, the restructuring may consider integrating more modern tools and techniques for preservation, ensuring that the bylaw is not only a regulatory document but also a resource for education and guidance on best practices in historic preservation.

By implementing this strategy, Rochester aims to create a balanced framework that supports the preservation of its historical and cultural assets while also allowing for sustainable development and community growth. This proactive approach will contribute to the town’s identity and ensure that future generations can appreciate and learn from the rich history that defines Rochester.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Historical Commission, Historic District Commission, and Planning



Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth’s restructuring of its Historic District Bylaw demonstrated how comprehensive review, inclusive community engagement, and modern preservation practices can protect historical assets while accommodating contemporary needs. By balancing preservation with community growth, Plymouth created a model regulatory framework. Key elements of success included stakeholder engagement, modernization efforts, a streamlined review process, balancing preservation with development, educational initiatives, increased protection for historical assets, and enhanced community pride and economic benefits.

Goal 4.3

Protect and maintain historical preservation landscapes and architecture.

Strategy 4.3.2: Review the Historic District Zoning District and create accompanying design guidelines for development.

This strategy is focused on preserving Rochester’s architectural and cultural heritage while accommodating compatible development. By reviewing the current Historic District zoning regulations, the strategy aims to protect significant historical features and landscapes crucial to maintaining the town’s identity. The development of clear design guidelines will provide a framework for new constructions or renovations, ensuring that they complement the historical context and enhance the district’s character.

In Rochester, the importance of such measures is underscored by the town’s rich history, which includes numerous historic structures and landscapes that contribute to its unique charm and appeal. These elements are not only aesthetically and culturally significant but are also valuable for boosting local tourism and maintaining property values. Therefore, reviewing and updating Historic District zoning is essential for preserving these elements for future generations, ensuring that any new development is sympathetic to the existing historic fabric.

Additionally, the strategy advocates for adaptive reuse within the guidelines, promoting sustainability by retrofitting older buildings, which is often more resource-efficient than new construction. This approach helps in maintaining the integrity of the district while ensuring compliance with local, state, and potentially federal preservation standards. By implementing updated zoning and clear guidelines,

the town can ensure that all development within the Historic District enhances rather than detracts from the area’s historical significance, fostering a sense of community identity and pride.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Historical Commission, Historic District Commission and Planning



Example Success Story: The City of New Bedford’s review and amendment of its Historic District Zoning regulations, along with the creation of detailed design guidelines, have preserved its architectural heritage while fostering economic growth and community pride. The revitalized historic district has become a major attraction and economic driver, illustrating the value of protecting historic areas alongside compatible development. Key elements of success included a comprehensive zoning review, clear design guidelines, stakeholder engagement, promotion of compatible development, economic revitalization, emphasis on adaptive reuse and sustainability, consistent compliance standards, and strengthened community identity and pride.

Goal 4.3

Protect and maintain historical preservation landscapes and architecture.

Strategy 4.3.3: Promote heritage tourism through the Historical Society, Library, and regional groups.

This strategy seeks to leverage local institutions like the Historical Society, Plumb Library, and regional groups to enhance Rochester’s historical and cultural assets’ visibility and appeal. Collaborating with these organizations, the town aims to develop and market tourism initiatives such as guided tours, educational programs, exhibitions, and special events that highlight Rochester’s rich heritage. Heritage tourism acts as a key economic driver, attracting visitors who support local businesses through spending on dining, shopping, and other services, thus contributing to economic growth.

Additionally, heritage tourism helps maintain and spotlight cultural and historical resources, safeguarding them for future generations while increasing public appreciation of Rochester’s history. Collaboration with the Historical Society and Plumb Library offers educational opportunities for both residents, fostering community pride, and visitors, providing a meaningful experience of the town’s heritage.

Promoting heritage tourism encourages community participation through various events, strengthening local ties and fostering collaboration among different groups in Rochester. Working with regional organizations expands Rochester’s reach, attracting a larger visitor base and streamlining marketing and best practices in tourism development.

Heritage tourism emphasizes culturally respectful, non-invasive tourism

that sustains the town’s environment, culture, heritage, and residents’ well-being. Overall, this strategy offers a comprehensive approach to building a sustainable tourism sector, enriching the community while providing visitors with a deeper connection to Rochester’s history.



Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Library, Cultural Council, Economic Development Committee, and Historical Commission

Example Success Story: The Old Colony History Museum’s partnership-driven heritage tourism initiatives in Taunton have revitalized the city’s heritage tourism sector. By showcasing historical assets and creating engaging visitor experiences, these efforts have boosted the local economy, strengthened community pride, and preserved cultural landmarks. Key factors in their success include collaborations with local institutions, heritage tours, educational programs, special events, exhibitions, community involvement, economic benefits for local businesses, regional partnerships, non-invasive tourism promotion, and innovative marketing strategies.

Goal 4.3

Protect and maintain historical preservation landscapes and architecture.

Strategy 4.3.4: Foster a greater sense of place in the “Rochester Village” through wayfinding, coordinated façade and signage improvements, events, and local partnerships.

This strategy aims to enhance the distinctiveness and appeal of Rochester Village by improving its functionality and aesthetic charm, making it more inviting and accessible for residents and visitors. Effective wayfinding systems will help people navigate with ease, enhancing their overall experience and encouraging exploration of key attractions and services.

Coordinated signage will boost the village’s greater sense of place, maintain a cohesive character, and reinforce its identity. Organizing community events, such as festivals and markets, will bring public spaces to life, fostering local pride and highlighting the village’s heritage and culture.

Collaboration with local businesses, cultural institutions, and community groups strengthens ties and resources for shared goals, leading to cohesive and sustainable community development. A well-defined sense of place boosts economic vitality by attracting visitors and supporting local businesses, stimulating the economy.

Enhancing public spaces and encouraging local involvement builds stronger community bonds. Engaged residents are more likely to support preservation efforts and participate in local activities, contributing to the village’s resilience and vibrancy. This approach not only makes Rochester Village more attractive and functional but also strengthens its cultural

and historical connections, promoting a thriving local community.

Priority: Low - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning and Economic Development Committee



Example Success Story: The revitalization of Wareham Village created a vibrant community hub by enhancing wayfinding, coordinating façade and signage improvements, hosting community events, and forming strategic partnerships. These efforts boosted the village’s attractiveness, strengthened community bonds, preserved its heritage, and spurred economic growth. Key elements of success included improved navigation systems, façade enhancements, engaging events, collaborative partnerships, economic revitalization, public art, streetscape improvements, historic preservation, and increased community engagement and pride.

Goal 4.4

Support the creation of more opportunities for community events throughout Town.

Strategy 4.4.1: Leverage key locations as venues for recurring community events.

This strategy focuses on maximizing the use of prominent public spaces to foster social cohesion, cultural expression, and economic activity. This involves identifying strategic venues that can host a variety of events regularly, such as festivals, markets, concerts, and other community gatherings. These locations are chosen for their accessibility, visibility, and potential to accommodate different types of activities.

Community Engagement and Cohesion: Regular events strengthen bonds among residents, fostering a sense of belonging and providing opportunities for social interaction, cultural exchange, and communal celebration.

Economic Stimulation: Hosting events attracts visitors who support local businesses through spending on food, shopping, and services. Regular events increase area visibility, encouraging repeat visits and new business investments.

Cultural Promotion: Public events showcase local talent and cultural heritage through arts fairs, performances, and festivals, promoting cultural pride and diversity.

Maximizing Public Space Usage: Strategically using public spaces ensures vibrancy, deters negative uses, and prevents neglect.

Attracting a Diverse Audience: Events in accessible locations draw diverse participants, enriching experiences and providing broader social and economic benefits.

Enhancing Quality of Life: Regular events provide entertainment and leisure activities, enhancing residents' quality of life and fostering community well-being.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Park Commission, Cultural Council, Council on Aging, Economic Development Committee, and Library Department



Example Success Story: The New Bedford Seaport Cultural District transformed into a thriving community hub by strategically using public spaces for regular events, which strengthened social cohesion, promoted local culture, and stimulated economic growth. This vibrant destination for residents and visitors demonstrated how consistent events can build community identity, drive economic activity, and celebrate cultural expression. Key elements of success included strategic public space use, diverse events, community engagement, economic benefits for local businesses, cultural promotion, attracting diverse audiences, and strong partnerships.

Goal 4.4

Support the creation of more opportunities for community events throughout Town.

Strategy 4.4.2: Collaborate with local businesses, farmers, and civic groups to create events that highlight Rochester's cultural, historic, and natural resources.

This strategy aims to foster community and promote local pride by showcasing Rochester's cultural, historic, and natural resources through collaborative events. Partnering with local businesses, farmers, and civic groups, it involves activities like farm-to-table dinners, historical reenactments, art exhibitions, and nature walks to entertain and educate both residents and visitors about Rochester's heritage and environmental assets.

Engaging local businesses, farmers, and civic groups in planning strengthens community bonds and encourages broad participation, making events more representative and engaging. Highlighting local products and talents drives economic activity by attracting visitors and boosting spending, benefiting small businesses and artisans.

By focusing on cultural and historical resources, these events help preserve Rochester's heritage, maintain community identity, and raise awareness about conservation and historical preservation. They offer educational opportunities that foster a well-informed community valuing its assets.

Well-organized events attract tourists, boosting revenue for local hospitality sectors and enhancing Rochester's reputation as a cultural and historical destination. Regular events improve residents' quality of

life by celebrating the town's unique landscape, culture, and history, fostering a shared sense of pride and belonging.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Cultural Council, Historical Commission, Agricultural Commission, Economic Development Committee, Conservation, and Planning Board

Example Success Story: The "AHA! New Bedford" monthly celebration has transformed the city into a thriving cultural hub by revitalizing its downtown and uniting people to celebrate its heritage. Through collaboration with diverse community partners, the program has driven widespread engagement, boosted the local economy, and created vibrant events showcasing New Bedford's culture, history, and natural resources. Key elements of success include cross-sector partnerships, promoting local culture and businesses, community engagement, educational opportunities, economic stimulation, nature walks, environmental education, strengthened community bonds, and sustained growth.



Goal 4.4

Support the creation of more opportunities for community events throughout Town.

Strategy 4.4.3: Promote and share cultural and recreational events to boost community participation and provide benefits to all members of the community, young and old.

This strategy is designed to boost community participation and provide benefits to all members, regardless of age. This involves organizing and publicizing a diverse range of events that cater to various interests and demographics, such as music festivals, sports tournaments, art exhibitions, and community picnics. The promotion of these events is crucial for ensuring wide community engagement and participation.

Enhancing Community Cohesion: Cultural and recreational events bring individuals from various backgrounds together, fostering unity and strengthening community ties.

Promoting Cultural Diversity: Events celebrating different cultural traditions enrich the community, promoting mutual understanding and respect among members.

Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles: Recreational activities promote active lifestyles and enhance physical well-being through sports, outdoor games, and fitness challenges.

Economic Benefits: Well-attended events drive economic growth by increasing foot traffic to local businesses, attracting tourists, and boosting local spending.

Providing Inter-generational Engagement: Events appealing to all ages foster inter-generational interaction, allowing for the exchange of traditions, values, and mutual respect.

Educational Opportunities: Cultural and recreational events often offer educational experiences, such as learning new artistic techniques, exploring different cultures, or understanding new sports, enriching community knowledge and appreciation.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Cultural Council, Council on Aging, Economic Development Committee, and Park Commission



Example Success Story: The Town of Wareham’s Onset Bay Association’s year-round events have revitalized Wareham’s Onset Village by strengthening community bonds, celebrating cultural diversity, promoting healthy lifestyles, and driving economic growth. These events have become cherished community gatherings with positive social and economic impacts. Key factors of success include diverse events, community engagement, cultural enrichment, healthy lifestyle promotion, economic benefits, inter-generational participation, educational and artistic opportunities, and effective community promotion.

Goal 4.4

Support the creation of more opportunities for community events throughout Town.

Strategy 4.4.4: Create an Events Committee with Economic Development Committee collaboration to advance and support community events throughout the Town, strengthening local engagement and economic growth.

This strategy aims to enhance community participation and benefit all members by organizing and promoting diverse cultural and recreational events such as music festivals, sports tournaments, art exhibitions, and community picnics, catering to various interests and demographics. Effective promotion ensures broad engagement and participation. Cultural and recreational events serve as focal points for community gatherings, fostering unity and stronger ties across different backgrounds and age groups.

Showcasing diverse cultural traditions celebrates diversity and promotes mutual respect, creating a vibrant, inclusive atmosphere. Recreational activities encourage active lifestyles, improving community health and wellness. Well-attended events boost the local economy by increasing foot traffic to businesses and attracting tourists, driving spending and revenue growth.

Inter-generational events foster engagement across age groups, promoting the sharing of traditions and values. Many events also offer educational opportunities, such as learning new artistic techniques, exploring different sports, or experiencing various cultures, enriching community knowledge and appreciation.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Select Board and Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth's collaborative approach to community events and economic development fostered community cohesion, economic growth, and cultural enrichment while engaging residents and visitors. By leveraging expertise from its Events and Economic Development Committees, Plymouth enhanced its events calendar, boosted local pride, and generated economic benefits. Key factors of success included a coordinated events committee, diverse events for all ages, cultural promotion, economic growth through increased foot traffic, support for local businesses, health and wellness initiatives, inter-generational engagement, educational components, and effective promotion and engagement.



Goal 4.4

Support the creation of more opportunities for community events throughout Town.

Strategy: 4.4.5: Strategically connect cultural spaces throughout town to enhance resident access and engagement, fostering a network of accessible, community-oriented locations for cultural events and gatherings.

This strategy aims to enhance residents’ access and engagement by creating a cohesive network of community-oriented locations rich in historical and culturally significant spaces for cultural events. This involves mapping and linking venues like libraries, galleries, theaters, and community centers through improved infrastructure, coordinated programming, and targeted promotions. Connecting these spaces physically and programmatically ensures residents have easy access to cultural activities, regardless of their location, and may include pathways, transit routes, or digital platforms to enhance convenience.

Greater accessibility and interconnectedness of cultural spaces lead to higher participation rates, enriching community life. Active cultural spaces foster social cohesion, providing gathering points for interaction, idea exchange, and relationship-building. Culturally vibrant towns attract visitors and boost local economies, supporting businesses and attracting residents and entrepreneurs. Enhanced connectivity also provides artists and cultural organizations with more opportunities to engage with audiences, sustaining the cultural economy and encouraging new works. Integrated cultural spaces offer educational benefits through diverse programs and exhibits, maximizing learning opportunities for all ages.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Historical Commission, Agricultural Commission, Cultural Council, Planning, Economic Development Committee, and Select Board



Example Success Story: The New Bedford Creative initiative and its “Cultural Districts” model have transformed the city into a dynamic cultural hub by connecting cultural spaces and fostering broad community engagement, economic growth, and artistic innovation. By enhancing access to venues and linking diverse programming, the initiative has strengthened community bonds, supported local artists and businesses, and enriched residents’ cultural lives. Key elements of success include connecting cultural spaces, coordinated events, improved connectivity, targeted promotions, inclusivity, economic benefits, artist support, and educational impact.



Open Space & Recreation

Protect and enhance Rochester’s open spaces and recreational facilities. Acquire and improve public spaces to ensure they are safe, and accessible, thereby improving community life.

Key Planning Information

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation Services (DCS) defines “open space” comprehensively, encompassing various types of land such as conservation land, forested land, recreation land, agricultural land, corridor parks, and amenities like small parks or green buffers along roadways, all owned by agencies or organizations dedicated to conservation. Additionally, the term extends to undeveloped or underutilized parcels with specific conservation or recreation interest. Preserving and expanding the town’s open space necessitates a multifaceted approach, including strategies like agricultural preservation, direct investments, continued participation in Chapter 61 Mass General Law programs, and coordinated land conversation efforts. Rochester residents have emphasized the significance of supporting the acquisition of more open spaces, better utilization of existing spaces through improved information and park maintenance, the establishment of a Recreation Department, and consideration of new amenities such as a splash pad, pickleball courts, volleyball courts, bike paths, playgrounds, and summer programming, while improving other amenities such as hiking trails throughout town.

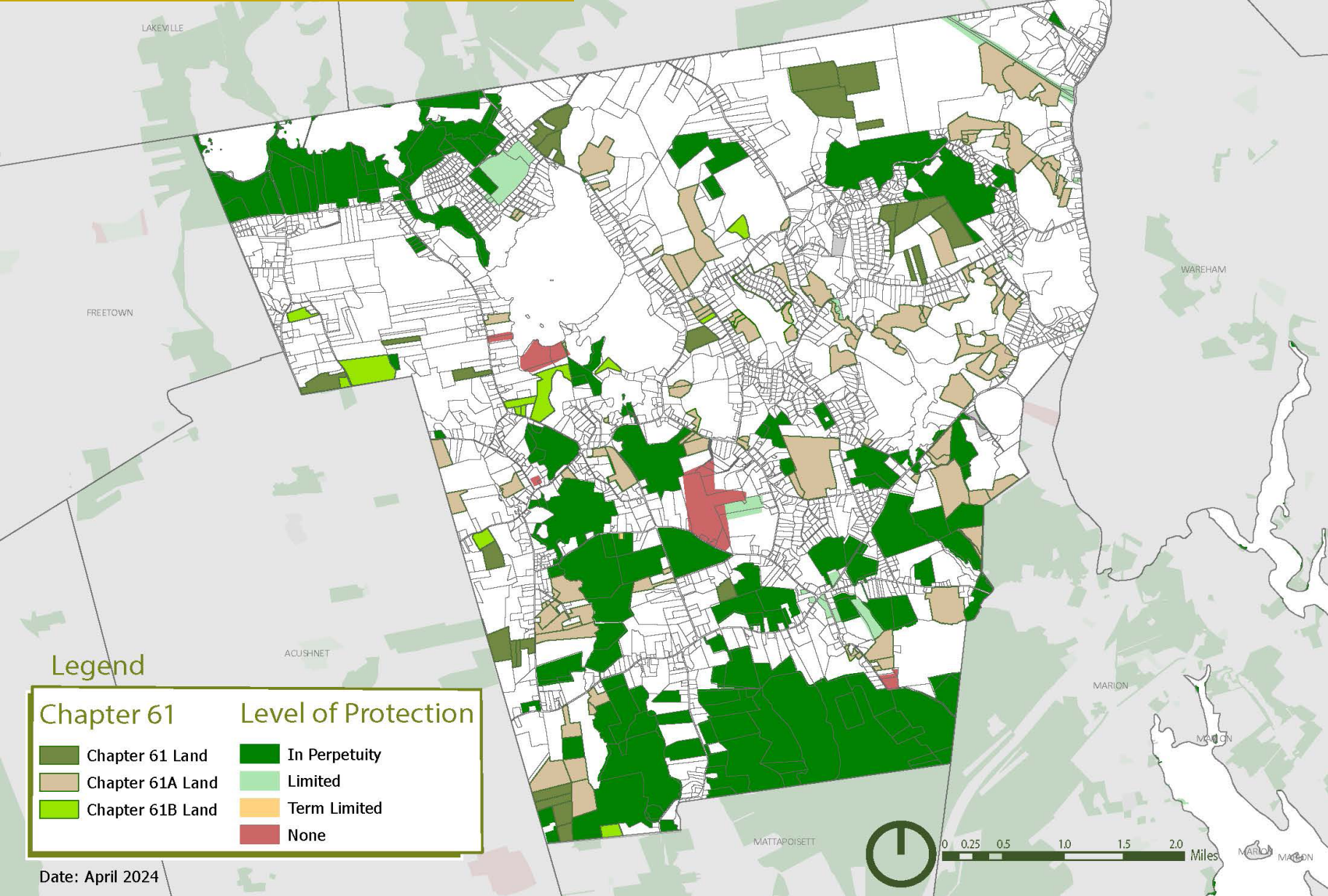
The land holds immense value for Rochester residents in preserving and enhancing the charm of their town. The survey underscored the residents’ belief in the importance of preserving farmland and the open space networks. Access to parks, water bodies, and natural areas is highly valued by Rochester residents. The town’s commitment to open space stewardship is evident through its updated Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). The OSRP serves as a guide for Rochester’s future landscape, drawing on forty years of planning, protecting, and building by the town. It identifies unique resources to be protected while addressing the recreational needs of residents at all stages of life. The OSRP goals aim to protect the quality of life by stewarding the surface water and groundwater, maintaining large privately-owned open spaces, preserving farm and forest views, and ensuring wildlife habitat. Large blocks of protected open space contribute to maintaining natural systems, supporting a clean environment for water, air, and soil that sustains healthy human and wildlife populations. The plan also emphasizes providing outdoor recreational opportunities for the town’s 5,717 residents. To balance growth

and protection dynamically, the plan includes goals for monitoring change, reviewing and updating goals, and maximizing the use of protective tools.

In the early 1970s, Massachusetts Chapter 61 programs were established to enable landowners to protect water resources, wildlife habitats, continue agricultural practices, sustain rural character, and provide outdoor recreation in exchange for property tax reductions. Under certain conditions, the town also holds the “right of first refusal” to purchase any Chapter 61 lands in the process of being converted from their protected use. According to Mass Audubon’s Losing Ground 2020 report, Rochester ranked 9th highest in the state for new development, including 245 acres of new growth from 2012 to 2017. Concurrently, the town conserved 460 acres during the same period, highlighting its commitment to balancing development and conservation.

Cultural and recreational resources are abundant in Town for youth families and seniors. The Town’s library and Council on Aging center offer internet access, education, and a range of programming. Rochester features two parks, Raynor Gifford Park and Dexter Lane Recreational Facilities, both equipped with playing fields and trailheads leading to conserved land. These parks support youth baseball and provide additional playing fields for neighboring towns. The Rochester Golf Course serves as a locally owned public golf course, contributing to the town’s recreational offerings. The abundance of hiking trails, detailed in Rochester’s own trail guide, is accessible to the community, showcasing public trails owned by the Town, the Rochester Land Trust, or private owners.

Chapter 61 & Protected Lands





Open Space & Recreation

Protect and enhance Rochester's open spaces and recreational facilities. Acquire and improve public spaces to ensure they are safe, and accessible, thereby improving community life.

Goals and Strategies Overview

Goal 5.1: Enhance public recreation opportunities by providing better information about recreational activities.

1. *Create, post, and frequently update an interactive online map of recreational facilities and trails on the town website.*
2. *Continue to apply for grants to upgrade park facilities and equipment.*
3. *Create a Recreation position with a keen eye to developing a department.*

Goal 5.2: Maintain parks and recreational facilities to ensure they are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all.

1. *Partner with the COA and Park Commission to create inclusive playgrounds, senior-friendly fitness, and multigenerational activities that encourage benefits for old and young.*
2. *Create a field fee structure for the use of all Rochester parks and recreational spaces.*

Complimentary Strategies: 5.1.2 and 5.1.3

Goal 5.3: Actively seek and acquire additional open spaces and expand community access to natural areas for recreation and conservation, while also finding avenues for creative tax incentives.

1. *Encourage land donations and use state and federal grants for open space acquisition.*
2. *Thoroughly review all financial impacts of open space acquisition efforts on the community.*
3. *Find strategic solutions for creating tax incentives.*

Complimentary Strategies: 1.2.2

Goal 5.4: Commit to the protection and preservation of farm and forested lands.

1. *Enforce Chapter 61 plans.*
2. *Continue to partner with the Rochester Land Trust, local farmers, and regional entities to actively conserve land.*
3. *Explore a Community Wood Bank Program and other innovative approaches, such as opportunities to utilize wood as secondary products, with local and regional forestry partners.*
4. *Offer educational opportunities and speakers to inform the public on various topics related to forestry and land stewardship. Create listening sessions for property owners to better understand their challenges and to create solutions.*

Complimentary Strategies: 3.1.1 and 5.1.3

Goal 5.1

Enhance public recreation opportunities by providing better information about recreational activities.

Strategy 5.1.1: Create, post, and frequently update an interactive online map of recreational facilities and trails on the town website.

This strategy aims to enhance accessibility and encourage active use of Rochester’s recreational assets by creating and regularly updating an interactive online map on the town website. This digital tool will offer up-to-date information about parks, trails, sports facilities, and other recreational areas, simplifying their discovery and access. The map will provide detailed data, including trail lengths, difficulty levels, amenities, and current conditions, encouraging increased community and visitor use of these resources.

A user-friendly online tool can enhance community engagement by enabling residents to easily plan and participate in outdoor activities, fostering a healthier, socially connected community. For visitors, it showcases Rochester’s dedication to maintaining and promoting its recreational offerings, making it a more attractive destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

Regular updates with current facilities and trail conditions help the town manage its assets more effectively and reduce inquiries to town staff, improving operational efficiency. By promoting physical activities like walking and cycling, the map supports public health initiatives. It also serves as a tool for managing and maintaining recreational facilities, identifying underutilized areas, and guiding resource allocation.

This approach enhances recreational engagement and health while

supporting economic and operational goals.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Conservation Commission, Land Trust, and Park Commission

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth’s “Dartmouth Trails and Recreation” online platform has transformed resident and visitor engagement with local recreational facilities and trails. By providing comprehensive, up-to-date information, it has fostered outdoor activity, boosted tourism, and supported local businesses. Key elements of success include a user-friendly interactive map, real-time updates, enhanced accessibility, tourism promotion, educational value, health and wellness support, streamlined operations, community input, and collaboration with local organizations.



Goal 5.1

Enhance public recreation opportunities by providing better information about recreational activities.

Strategy 5.1.2: Continue to apply for grants to upgrade park facilities and equipment.

This strategy focuses on enhancing the quality and accessibility of local parks through external funding sources, allowing the town to invest in improvements such as modern playground equipment, updated sports facilities, better accessibility features, and enhanced landscaping without straining local budgets. By securing grants, the town can upgrade park facilities and equipment, significantly improving the recreational experience for community members and offering safer and more diverse options for play, exercise, and relaxation. Modern, well-maintained facilities are more likely to meet the needs and expectations of a wide range of users, from children to seniors.

Grants provide critical funding that enables the town to enhance public spaces without allocating substantial local funds, helping to maintain or even lower local taxes while still achieving community development goals. Quality parks and recreational facilities promote physical activity and mental well-being, serving as community hubs where people can engage in healthy activities and connect with others, contributing to overall community health. Upgraded facilities can be designed to be inclusive and accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities, ensuring that everyone can enjoy public spaces and supporting the town's commitment to accessibility and equal opportunity.

Well-equipped and aesthetically pleasing parks enhance the visual

appeal of the community, quality of life, and instill a sense of pride among residents. This attractiveness can also draw new residents and visitors to the area. Modern park facilities often incorporate sustainable materials and designs that minimize environmental impact, with upgrades including eco-friendly landscaping, energy-efficient lighting, and water conservation systems that align with environmental sustainability goals. Additionally, enhanced parks can support a wide range of community programs and activities, from youth sports leagues to outdoor educational sessions, enriching community life and providing vital services to residents.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Facilities, Highway, and Park Commission



Example Success Story: The Town of Fairhaven's success in upgrading its parks through grant funding has revitalized public spaces, improved accessibility, and promoted community health and well-being. The town's proactive approach to securing grants has minimized the burden on local taxpayers while achieving significant community development goals. Key elements include: securing state and federal grants for park improvements; modernization of park facilities and equipment; enhanced accessibility and inclusivity; community health and well-being; focus on environmental sustainability; increased community pride and quality of life; support for community programming and events; and proactive community involvement.

Goal 5.1

Enhance public recreation opportunities by providing better information about recreational activities.

Strategy 5.1.3: Create a Recreation position with a keen eye to development of a Recreation Department.

This strategy aims to enhance the organization and management of community recreational activities by creating a dedicated Recreation position with the potential to develop a full Recreation Department.

This position would centralize the planning, promotion, and oversight of recreational programs to ensure they effectively meet community needs. A dedicated recreation professional can better manage services, leading to higher-quality offerings tailored to residents' interests.

This role can expand the range of activities offered to different age groups, fostering greater community engagement and promoting active, healthy lifestyles. Centralized management through this position will improve resource efficiency, ensuring better coordination of facility use, maintenance schedules, and program timing, thereby reducing service gaps and overlaps.

The Recreation position can focus on strategic community development goals, such as expanding recreational access, improving fitness levels across the community, and aligning efforts with broader health initiatives. By handling both program development and direct community engagement, this position will bring new ideas, industry best practices, and innovative approaches to recreational programming.

Creating diverse and well-maintained programs and facilities can attract visitors and new residents, contributing to economic development

and enhancing the town's appeal as a vibrant, active community. This approach sets the stage for potential departmental growth as community needs evolve, further enhancing recreational offerings and community engagement.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator and Select Board

Example Success Story: The establishment of Lakeville's Recreation Department and supporting staff transformed the town's recreational offerings by centralizing management and providing dedicated resources. This enabled a broad range of high-quality programs that engaged residents, promoted healthy lifestyles, and strengthened community bonds. Key factors of success included the creation of a dedicated department, expanded recreational activities, key staff appointments, efficient resource use, community health focus, collaboration with local organizations, economic benefits, and positive community engagement and feedback.



Goal 5.2

Maintain parks and recreational facilities to ensure they are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all.

Strategy 5.2.1: Partner with the COA and Park Commission to create inclusive playgrounds, senior-friendly fitness, and multigenerational activities that encourage benefits for old and young.

This strategy aims to create a community environment catering to all ages through collaboration with the Council on Aging (COA) and Park Commission. The goal is to develop facilities and programs that promote active participation, enhancing physical health and social interaction across generations. A key focus is on designing inclusive and accessible playgrounds and fitness areas, ensuring enjoyment and benefits for all, from children to the elderly. This includes age-appropriate playground equipment for kids and low-impact exercise options for seniors, addressing diverse community needs.

Multigenerational activities foster interactions, strengthen community ties, and reduce age-related stereotypes, promoting a cohesive environment. Facilities encouraging physical activity improve overall health, with senior-friendly programs supporting mobility and independence, and inclusive playgrounds benefitting children’s development.


Collaboration with the COA and Park Commission optimizes resource allocation and ensures cost-effective, well-coordinated recreational programs. This strategy supports aging in place, enabling older adults to remain independent and engaged within their community.

Broad community participation in planning and using these facilities boosts civic pride and ensures outcomes reflect community needs, enhancing satisfaction and usage. This approach strengthens physical infrastructure while building a healthier, more inclusive community.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Council on Aging Department and Park Commission

Example Success Story: The Town of Falmouth’s development of the “Senior Center Fitness Park” and inclusive playgrounds transformed its recreational offerings by prioritizing accessibility, health, and social engagement. This effort improved the quality of life for all residents through collaborative partnerships, inclusive and accessible designs, multigenerational activities, health and wellness promotion, and strong community engagement, fostering a greater sense of community.



Goal 5.2

Maintain parks and recreational facilities to ensure they are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all.

Strategy 5.2.2: Create a field fee structure for the use of all Rochester parks and recreational spaces.

This strategy involves establishing a standardized fee structure for various groups and individuals wishing to use Rochester’s park and recreational facilities. This fee structure would apply to activities such as sports leagues, special events, and potentially some high-demand public uses, helping to manage demand and maintain the quality of these communal assets. Implementing a field fee structure can generate revenue that can be reinvested into the maintenance and enhancement of park facilities. This revenue helps ensure that parks and recreational spaces are well-maintained and upgraded when necessary, reducing the reliance on general municipal funds.

A fee structure helps regulate the use of recreational spaces, ensuring that those who use the facilities most contribute to their upkeep. This approach promotes fair and equitable access, preventing overuse by certain groups and ensuring that facilities are available for the broader community. With additional funds from usage fees, the town can afford to improve the quality of recreational facilities by adding new equipment, enhancing safety features, or expanding services offered. Improved facilities can attract more users and potentially increase the fees that can be charged, creating a positive cycle of investment and improvement.

The income from field fees provides a predictable stream of revenue that can be used for long-term planning and development of recreational

spaces. This financial predictability is crucial for effective budgeting and resource allocation. When users pay a fee for facility usage, they are often more conscious of the condition in which they leave the facilities. This can lead to better cared-for spaces and less vandalism, reducing maintenance costs over time. Implementing a fee structure also provides an opportunity to engage with local stakeholders to assess their needs and expectations, which can help in setting fair and acceptable rates. This process can enhance community relations and ensure that the fee structure meets local needs while supporting broader community goals.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Accounting, Town Administrator, Select Board, and Park Commission

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth’s implementation of a field usage fee structure has successfully maintained and enhanced parks and recreational spaces by creating a dedicated revenue stream. This approach has improved facility quality, ensured equitable access, and promoted responsible use. Key elements of success include a standardized fee structure, revenue for maintenance and upgrades, fair access, quality improvements, transparency, community involvement, responsible use encouragement, and flexible fee application.



Goal 5.3

Actively seek and acquire additional open spaces and expand community access to natural areas for recreation and conservation, while also finding avenues for creative tax incentives.

Strategy 5.3.1: Encourage land donations and use state and federal grants for open space acquisition.

This strategy focuses on expanding and preserving green spaces, recreational fields, and natural habitats by combining local initiatives with external funding sources. By securing land through donations and leveraging state and federal grants, the town can acquire public land without significant budget expenditure, minimizing financial strain. Preserving open spaces protects natural resources, biodiversity, and ecological balance, sustaining wildlife habitats and enhancing community quality of life.

Open spaces offer essential areas for recreation and leisure, promoting physical and mental well-being through outdoor activities like walking, cycling, and playing. Funding acquisitions through grants and donations is financially advantageous, expanding public lands while reducing the burden on taxpayers and improving fiscal sustainability.

Proximity to parks and recreational areas often improves the quality of life, making the community more appealing to residents and investors, benefiting the local real estate market. Preserving open spaces also protects against overdevelopment, manages urban sprawl, and maintains the town's character for long-term sustainability.

Open spaces contribute to climate resilience by managing stormwater, reducing urban heat island effects, and storing carbon, supporting the mitigation of certain weather elements/patterns. Encouraging land

donations fosters community pride and engagement, allowing residents and businesses to directly contribute to conservation and community enhancement.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Assessors, Town Administrator, and Conservation



Example Success Story: The Buzzards Bay Coalition (BBC), in partnership with towns like Wareham, has successfully preserved hundreds of acres of open space, protecting critical environmental resources and enhancing public access to nature. By leveraging grants and land donations, Wareham has safeguarded its natural character, promoted climate resilience, and improved residents' quality of life while minimizing budget strain. Key elements of success include strategic land acquisition, collaboration, resource and biodiversity preservation, public access and recreation, climate resilience, economic benefits, community engagement, and reduced local budget burdens.

Goal 5.3

Actively seek and acquire additional open spaces and expand community access to natural areas for recreation and conservation, while also finding avenues for creative tax incentives.

Strategy 5.3.2: Thoroughly review all financial impacts of open space acquisition efforts on the community.

This strategy involves assessing the economic implications of acquiring and maintaining open spaces, including costs of land purchase, potential tax revenue loss when private lands become public, and ongoing maintenance expenses. It also evaluates benefits like the quality of life, potential tourism, and reduced infrastructure costs due to natural stormwater management and limiting urban sprawl. Understanding these financial impacts helps town planners make informed decisions about public land investments, ensuring efficient and sustainable budgeting.

While acquiring open spaces may involve upfront costs and potential loss of taxable land, long-term benefits often offset these expenses. These include improved air and water quality, flood mitigation, carbon sequestration, quality of life, and enhanced resident quality of life. A thorough financial review builds community support by clearly communicating the impact on taxes, public services, and amenities.

Assessing financial impacts ensures that acquiring open spaces is economically sustainable and manageable over time. This approach can also identify opportunities to leverage external funding sources, such as state and federal grants or private donations, minimizing local budget impacts. Properly managed open spaces can drive local economic growth by attracting tourists and new residents, stimulating the economy and creating new business opportunities.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Assessors, Accounting, Conservation, and Planning



Example Success Story: The Town of Westport's partnership with the Westport Land Conservation Trust (WLCT) enabled informed land preservation decisions by balancing environmental conservation with economic sustainability. Through transparent communication of costs and benefits, leveraging external funding, and conducting thorough financial reviews, the town secured community support and achieved lasting conservation goals. Key elements of success included cost-benefit analyses, state and federal funding, understanding long-term economic benefits, community engagement, balancing conservation with tax base impacts, adaptive financial strategies, and mitigating infrastructure costs.

Goal 5.3

Actively seek and acquire additional open spaces and expand community access to natural areas for recreation and conservation, while also finding avenues for creative tax incentives.

Strategy 5.3.3: Find strategic solutions for creating tax incentives.

This strategy focuses on creating financial incentives for businesses, individuals, or developers to encourage investments and behaviors aligned with community goals, such as economic development, environmental conservation, and housing affordability. Developing these incentives requires careful analysis of their impact on the tax base, legal feasibility, and policy alignment.

Tax incentives can stimulate economic growth by reducing the tax burden on businesses, attracting new enterprises, fostering job creation, and revitalizing the community. For environmental goals, incentives can encourage renewable energy adoption, sustainable land use, and open space preservation by offering reduced property taxes for undeveloped land.

Tax incentives can also address housing affordability by offering tax abatements for developers who include affordable housing, supporting social equity. These incentives can facilitate public-private partnerships, making projects financially viable for private entities while meeting public goals, enhancing community services without straining public budgets.

Although tax incentives may reduce certain tax revenues initially, they can lead to broader tax bases and greater economic activity over time. Effective incentives balance immediate costs with long-term benefits

and gain community support when perceived as fair and aligned with priorities, with transparent structures maintaining public trust.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Select Board, Town Administrator, Planning, Accounting, Assessors, and Land Trust



Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth effectively used tax incentive programs to promote economic development, conservation, and social equity. Through targeted incentives, the town stimulated economic growth, preserved open spaces, and expanded affordable housing options. Plymouth's success highlights the potential of tax incentives as tools for community priorities while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Key elements included tax increment financing (TIF) agreements, conservation tax incentives, balancing economic and environmental goals, support for affordable housing, public-private partnerships, transparency, community engagement, fiscal sustainability, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Goal 5.4

Commit to the protection and preservation of farm and forested lands.

Strategy 5.4.1: Enforce Chapter 61 plans.

This strategy focuses on implementing and upholding the provisions under Chapter 61 of the Massachusetts General Laws, which offer tax incentives to landowners who commit to maintaining their land for agricultural, forest, or open space use. Enforcing these plans ensures that landowners adhere to their commitments, thereby protecting and preserving valuable open spaces and natural resources. Chapter 61 plans play a crucial role in conserving open spaces, forests, and agricultural lands by providing financial incentives to keep land undeveloped. This enforcement supports biodiversity and ecosystem health by preventing premature conversion of these lands to non-qualifying uses.

By encouraging the maintenance of agricultural and forest lands, Chapter 61 plans help sustain local agriculture and forestry operations, which is essential for preserving the rural character and heritage of communities like Rochester. These plans also support local agriculture and forestry-based businesses, strengthening the local economy. Enforcing Chapter 61 ensures compliance with tax laws and equitable tax revenue collection, guaranteeing that tax incentives are applied correctly and supporting effective local government budgeting and financial planning.

Chapter 61 plans contribute to sustainable land use strategies that balance development with environmental stewardship. Enforcing these plans helps control urban sprawl and maintain the ecological integrity of rural and semi-rural areas, fostering a sustainable approach to development. Proper enforcement of Chapter 61 aligns with broader

community planning and development objectives, aiding efforts to manage growth, preserve community character, and enhance residents' quality of life. This strategic alignment ensures that development is balanced with conservation, promoting long-term community benefits.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Conservation, Assessors, Select Board, Agricultural Commission, and Planning



Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth's management of Chapter 61 lands has successfully preserved critical open spaces, farmland, and forests, enhancing community character, supporting the local economy, and promoting sustainable development. By adhering to Chapter 61 requirements, Dartmouth has balanced economic and environmental priorities while protecting its natural and cultural heritage. Key factors include comprehensive land monitoring, agricultural and forest land preservation, support for local businesses, equitable tax incentives, community engagement, strategic conservation partnerships, and the use of the Right of First Refusal provision.

Goal 5.4

Commit to the protection and preservation of farm and forested lands.

Strategy 5.4.2: Continue to partner with the Rochester Land Trust, local farmers, and regional entities to actively conserve land.

This strategy aims to enhance land preservation and sustainable land management by strengthening collaborations with the Rochester Land Trust (RLT), local farmers, and regional entities. By leveraging these partnerships, the town can access additional expertise, resources, and community support to effectively protect its natural landscapes and agricultural heritage. Working with the Rochester Land Trust provides a strategic framework for identifying and safeguarding key natural, historic, and agricultural areas, ensuring well-informed and focused conservation efforts.

Collaboration with local farmers aligns conservation goals with agricultural practices, promoting sustainable farming that maintains agricultural viability while protecting environmental resources. Partnering with regional entities allows Rochester to access broader resources, including funding, technical expertise, and policy support, amplifying the impact of local initiatives.

These partnerships also foster community engagement and education by involving stakeholders and the public in conservation efforts, deepening their commitment to land protection and raising awareness. Land conservation brings economic benefits by supporting eco-tourism and preserving scenic beauty. Sustainable practices also improve soil health and water quality, boosting agricultural productivity.

Active conservation preserves biodiversity and essential ecosystem services like carbon sequestration, water filtration, and wildlife habitats, contributing to ecological balance and resilience. Strengthening partnerships with the Rochester Land Trust, farmers, and regional entities is a strategic approach that supports Rochester’s environmental and agricultural goals, fostering a more sustainable community.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Conservation, Historical Commission, Land Trust, and Agricultural Commission

Example Success Story: The collaborative efforts of the Mattapoisett and Rochester Land Trusts, local farmers, and conservation partners preserved hundreds of acres of critical land in southeastern Massachusetts’ Mattapoisett River Valley. This joint approach safeguarded natural resources, supported agriculture, and engaged the community in meaningful conservation, creating lasting environmental and economic benefits. Key elements of success included strategic land conservation, farmer collaboration, regional partnerships, community support, leveraging state and federal funding, innovative approaches, and a long-term commitment to monitoring.



Goal 5.4

Commit to the protection and preservation of farm and forested lands.

Strategy 5.4.3: Explore a Community Wood Bank Program and other innovative approaches, such as opportunities to utilize wood as secondary products, with local and regional forestry partners.

This strategy seeks to promote sustainable forestry and enhance the economic value of Rochester's forested resources by exploring a Community Wood Bank Program and other innovative approaches. The initiative could establish a system to collect and redistribute wood from local forest management for community projects or as fuel wood and identify opportunities to create secondary wood products, such as furniture or building materials crafted by local artisans. By implementing a Community Wood Bank, local wood resources can be sustainably used, supporting conservation, reducing waste, and aligning with environmental goals.

This approach can boost the local economy by creating opportunities for small businesses and craftsmen to transform wood into valuable products, fostering entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic growth. Using wood as biomass fuel offers an affordable, eco-friendly heating option, reducing energy costs and reliance on fossil fuels.

A wood bank can also serve as a community resource, encouraging wood donations, volunteerism, and educational workshops, fostering community bonds and a culture of sustainability. Collaborating with forestry partners and regional experts leverages their knowledge and resources, enhancing program impact through technical expertise,

funding, and market opportunities for wood products.

Overall, a Community Wood Bank Program and innovative wood use strategies provide significant environmental, economic, and social benefits, encouraging sustainable forestry, supporting local development, and fostering community engagement.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Conservation, Tree Warden, Highway, Land Trust, Select Board, and Town Administrator



Example Success Story: The Town of Middleborough and the Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance (SEMPBA) have successfully promoted sustainable forestry and wood utilization, providing economic relief, supporting local businesses, and fostering community engagement. Key elements of their success include the creation of a wood bank, collaboration with forestry partners, promotion of secondary wood products, educational and volunteer opportunities, use of wood for biomass fuel, community and economic benefits, and leveraging regional expertise.

Goal 5.4

Commit to the protection and preservation of farm and forested lands.

Strategy 5.4.4: Offer educational opportunities and speakers to inform the public on various topics related to forestry and land stewardship. Create listening sessions for property owners to better understand their challenges and create solutions.

This strategy focuses on boosting public understanding and engagement in sustainable land management in Rochester through educational programs and open communication channels. It includes workshops, seminars, and guest lectures on topics like sustainable forestry, wildlife conservation, and habitat restoration to empower community members with the knowledge needed for effective land stewardship. These educational efforts are aimed at promoting practices that enhance the sustainability of local ecosystems, including soil and water conservation and sustainable harvesting.

Additionally, the strategy incorporates listening sessions where property owners can discuss their challenges and experiences, allowing for direct dialogue with local authorities. This feedback informs tailored solutions that may adjust zoning laws or property tax policies, thereby enhancing community involvement and satisfaction with local governance. By fostering a knowledgeable and engaged citizenry, the strategy enhances civic participation, supports local conservation efforts, and builds capacity for managing natural resources, which is crucial for the community's economic and social well-being. This comprehensive approach aims to strengthen community relations, promote innovative land use strategies, and ensure that local policies are responsive to residents' needs.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Conservation, Tree Warden, Planning, Agricultural Commission, and Town Administrator



Example Success Story: The Southeastern Massachusetts Pine Barrens Alliance (SEMPBA), in collaboration with local communities like Plymouth, Wareham, and Carver, demonstrated that educational initiatives combined with open communication effectively engage property owners in land stewardship. By providing practical information and fostering dialogue, the program promoted shared responsibility for natural resource management, strengthened community bonds, and encouraged sustainable land use. Key elements of success included educational workshops, listening sessions, expert collaboration, community engagement, customized solutions, tangible conservation outcomes, and tailored resources and policy adjustments.



Services & Facilities

Stabilize capital expenditures through long-term planning. Enhance and maintain Rochester's infrastructure through strategic management, ensuring service efficiency and accessibility. Continue to foster a safe and engaged community with support for community projects. Ensure reliable broadband communication and electrical systems. Improve the permitting process.

Key Planning Information

A community facility in Rochester is any town-owned asset serving a public purpose, supporting community services like school facilities or public safety facilities such as parks, playgrounds, and cemeteries.

Rochester's facilities play a crucial role in providing the expected services to its residents. Well-designed and well-maintained community facilities significantly contribute to Rochester's quality of life, enhancing the town's attractiveness as a place to live, work, and do business.

These facilities are instrumental in enabling municipal employees and volunteers to provide services for the public good.

The services offered include day-to-day administrative activities ensuring the town's smooth operation and enriching programming for the community. While municipal services and utilities, including public safety, public health, education, recreation, public water, as well as partner organizations and contracted services such as solid waste and recycling or street maintenance, all fall under the umbrella of community services. Rochester's schools, police and fire departments,

library, water supply, town offices, parks and recreation, council on aging, and cemeteries collectively provide essential services to its residents.

The Council on Aging and the Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Public Library, established in 1971 and 1976 respectively, are highly regarded sources of entertainment, community engagement, and support. The Senior Center, constructed in 2002, has proven effective in promoting senior activities and sociability. Rochester's library first originated in the late 1800s by Charles and Elizabeth Leonard. Governed by an elected Board of Trustees, it continues to thrive with a small full-time staff and dedicated volunteers. The Rochester Free Public Library was first housed at the Town Hall until the Joseph H. Plumb Library was built.

The dedicated staff of the Town of Rochester provides residents and business owners with the necessary services for day-to-day functions. As the town's population grows, there is an increasing demand for

expanded services.

In 2022, the community conducted a feasibility study to evaluate its existing emergency facilities and space needs. The original study offered facility recommendations for both short and long-term viability to improve efficiencies for emergency services into the future. Currently the focus has narrowed to the Fire Station as the present facility on Pine Street is inadequate and, in many ways, only operational due to the extraordinary commitment of the department personnel.

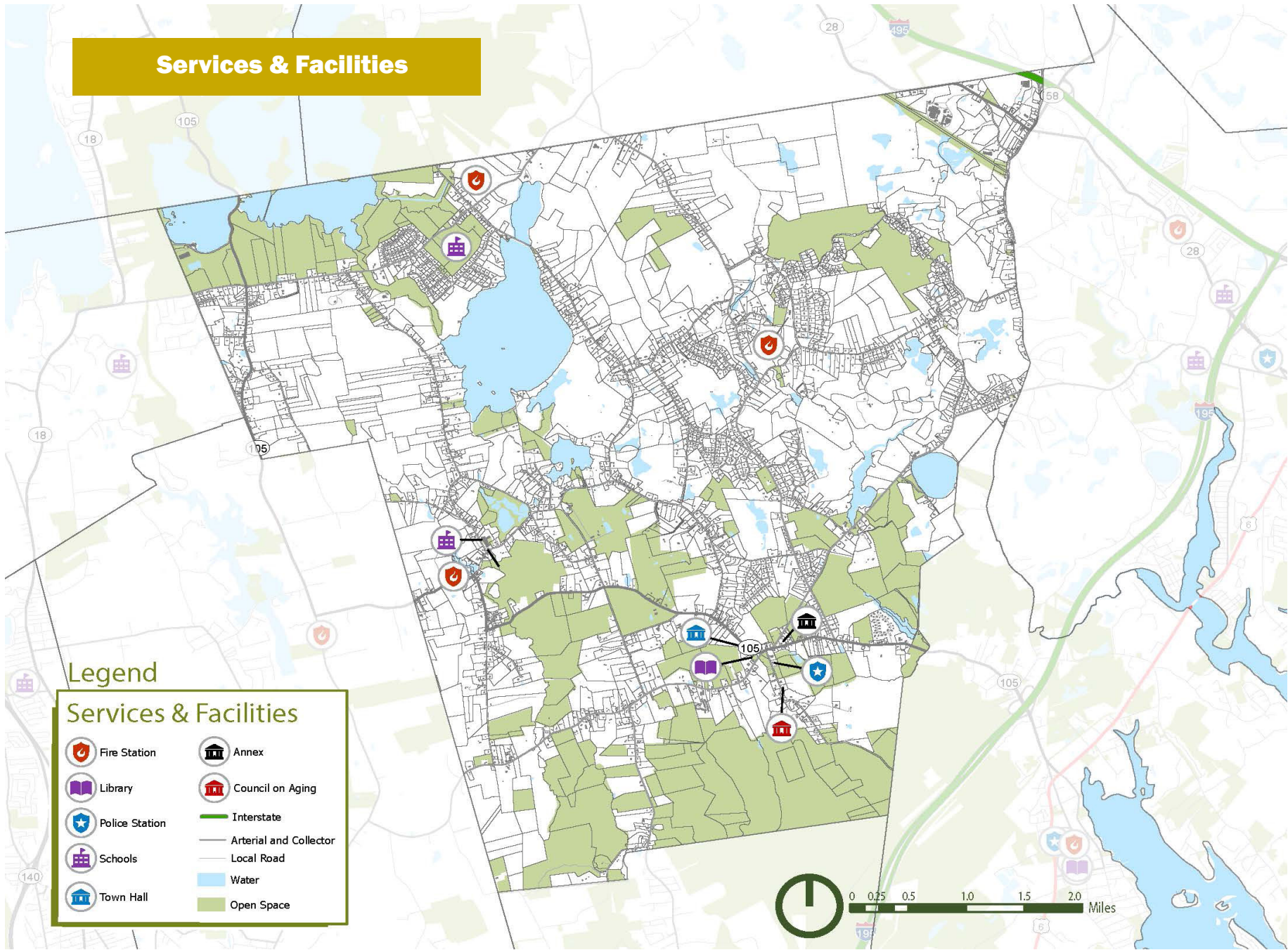
Rochester, acting as the caretaker of the region's water supply, plays a pivotal role in providing water to neighboring communities. Although most Rochester residents rely on private wells for their domestic water needs, except for those few residing on Mattapoissett Road, New Bedford Road, Marion Road, and County Road. These specific areas are connected to the municipal water supplies of Marion or Wareham. Key town facilities such as the Town Hall, Plumb Corner Mall, Police Station, Senior Center, and Town Hall Annexes are all linked to the Marion water supply. While existing municipal infrastructure, owned by either the Town of Marion or Wareham, along with private wells, currently meet the water needs.

However, the surrounding communities should exercise prudence by exploring future options to ensure the water resources remain viable. Ongoing expansion of waterlines to accommodate current and upcoming projects, include the 40R development initiative and the Old Colony Vocational High School.

The town's limited budget serves as a constraint on its operations,

affecting the scope of work that town staff can undertake. This fiscal reality necessitates a prioritization of projects for long-term capital improvements. While town employees are enthusiastic about pursuing various projects, workforce and time constraints pose challenges. Despite these limitations, Rochester remains dedicated to addressing critical infrastructure needs and fostering sustainable growth within the confines of its financial resources.

Services & Facilities





Main Entrance

ROCHESTER
SENIOR CENTER
COUNCIL ON AGING

Services & Facilities

Stabilize capital expenditures through long-term planning. Enhance and maintain Rochester's infrastructure through strategic management, ensuring service efficiency and accessibility. Continue to foster a safe and engaged community with support for community projects. Ensure reliable broadband communication and electrical systems. Improve the permitting process.

Goals and Strategies Overview

Goal 6.1: Enhance and sustain town infrastructure with strategic financial management.

1. *Develop a capital improvement plan to prioritize infrastructure projects and growing needs of the community.*
2. *Establish a reserve fund for emergency infrastructure repairs.*
3. *Implement energy efficiency upgrades in town buildings to reduce costs.*
4. *Create a funding source for waterline improvements when the time comes to accept the responsibility of maintenance on the Wareham waterline.*

Complimentary Strategies: 6.4.2, 7.4.1 and 7.4.3

Goal 6.2: Improve service efficiency and accessibility.

1. *Conduct a comprehensive service delivery audit involving all town departments and staff to identify areas for improvement.*
2. *Implement a customer feedback system to gather input on service quality.*
3. *Improve the development and permitting process, then create a user-friendly Development and Permitting Guide to encourage new businesses and existing business growth.*
4. *Implement the recommendations of the ongoing regional broadband infrastructure plan to ensure reliable high-speed internet access for all residents and businesses.*
5. *Improve and enhance internal communications and relationships with all staff*

Complimentary Strategies: 6.3.2 and 6.3.6

Goal 6.3: Continue to foster an engaged, informed and safe community.

1. *Improve communication methods between the Town and its residents.*
2. *Enhance communication and collaboration between town employees and boards to improve coordination and streamline decision-making processes.*
3. *Create a community engagement plan to involve residents in decision-making*
4. *Review organizational structures and create a visual flowchart to improve understanding of the roles and responsibilities of town staff.*
5. *Host regular town hall meetings and public forums to keep residents informed, such as a Citizens Academy.*
6. *Encourage youth participation in local government.*
7. *Develop a community engagement program to enhance public safety.*

Complimentary Strategies: 4.1.4, 4.4.2, 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.4.1

Goal 6.4: Secure financial support for community projects, i.e. Fire Station.

1. *Establish clear communication strategies for funders to ensure they understand the project's impact and value.*
2. *Apply for state and federal grants to fund community projects.*
3. *Develop a public-private partnership program to leverage private investment.*
4. *Create a crowdfunding platform for community-led projects.*

Complimentary Strategies: 4.1.5, 6.1.4, 7.2.1 and 7.4.3

Goal 6.1

Enhance and sustain the town's infrastructure with strategic financial management.

Strategy 6.1.1: Develop a capital improvement plan to prioritize infrastructure projects and growing needs of the community.

This strategy aims to prioritize infrastructure projects and address the growing needs of the community through the development of a comprehensive capital improvement plan. This plan involves a systematic assessment of the town's infrastructure requirements, including roads, bridges, public buildings, parks, and utilities. By identifying and prioritizing these needs, Rochester can more effectively allocate resources, plan for future expenditures, and ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with community growth and development.

A capital improvement plan enables strategic resource allocation by directing financial and other resources toward projects that are most critical to the community's development and well-being, maximizing the impact of limited funds. It also facilitates enhanced planning and coordination among various municipal departments, ensuring projects that may overlap or impact one another are synchronized, reducing redundancies, and creating complementary efforts.

By prioritizing necessary infrastructure improvements, the plan enhances the quality and efficiency of community services, improving everything from road safety and water quality to recreational facilities and emergency services. Well-planned infrastructure projects can stimulate economic development by increasing the town's attractiveness to businesses and residents, increasing quality of life, and attracting investments.

The plan also emphasizes public safety and health by prioritizing projects that address infrastructure-related safety or health concerns, such as upgrading water systems to prevent contamination, improving roads to reduce traffic accidents, or enhancing public spaces to promote physical activity and community health. Additionally, a capital improvement plan offers transparency and accountability by providing a clear roadmap of planned projects and associated costs, which can be communicated to the public. This transparency helps build trust in local government and ensures responsible use of public funds.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Select Board, Town Administrator, Capital Planning Committee, Accounting, and Department Heads



Example Success Story: The Town of Fairhaven's Capital Improvement Plan effectively prioritized infrastructure projects to address community needs, enhance public safety, and improve municipal services. Through strategic resource allocation, community engagement, and cross-departmental coordination, the plan achieved tangible improvements, increased public trust, and promoted sustainable development. Key elements of success included comprehensive planning, community-driven prioritization, cross-departmental coordination, public transparency, funding strategies, economic and community benefits, a focus on resilience and sustainability, and regular accountability updates.

Goal 6.1

Enhance and sustain the town’s infrastructure with strategic financial management.

Strategy 6.1.2: Establish a reserve fund for emergency infrastructure repairs.

This strategy focuses on creating a financial safety net that can be quickly accessed when unexpected infrastructure issues arise. Proactive financial planning is essential for addressing urgent repairs without needing to reallocate funds from other important projects or services at the last minute. By establishing a reserve fund for emergency infrastructure repairs, the town can ensure an immediate response to unforeseen failures, such as water main breaks, road collapses, or damage from severe weather events. Rapid response minimizes disruptions to community services and safeguards public safety.

Setting aside funds specifically for emergencies promotes financial stability by preventing the need for sudden, disruptive budget reallocations. This approach maintains overall budget integrity and ensures the continuity of other essential projects and services. Promptly addressing infrastructure issues through the reserve fund can also reduce long-term costs, as quick interventions often prevent further deterioration and escalating repair expenses.

Having a dedicated reserve fund for emergencies can enhance public confidence and trust in local government management. Residents can feel more secure knowing that the town is prepared to handle sudden infrastructure challenges effectively and efficiently. In addition, maintaining a reserve fund may help ensure compliance with state or federal risk management guidelines, improving the town’s eligibility for

grants and other funding opportunities.

The reserve fund is also a key component of strategic long-term financial planning, enabling the town to manage its resources more sustainably. With this financial cushion in place, annual budget allocations can be more precise and forward-looking.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Select Board, Town Administrator, Accounting, Facilities, and Highway



Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth’s proactive creation of an Infrastructure Reserve Fund has been instrumental in maintaining public safety, financial stability, and infrastructure integrity. By effectively managing this fund, the town was able to respond swiftly to emergencies, preserve budget balance, and minimize long-term costs. Key elements of success included proactive fund establishment, effective oversight, rapid response capability, cost savings, minimized budget disruptions, increased community confidence, and improved grant eligibility and support.

Goal 6.1

Enhance and sustain the town's infrastructure with strategic financial management.

Strategy 6.1.3: Implement energy efficiency upgrades in town buildings to reduce costs.

This strategy aims to reduce energy consumption and associated costs in municipal buildings while contributing to environmental sustainability by upgrading lighting, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to more energy-efficient models, improving insulation, and installing energy management systems in town facilities such as town halls, libraries, and community centers. Implementing energy efficiency upgrades leads to a substantial reduction in energy costs, enabling the town to cut utility expenses and redirect savings toward other essential community projects and services. Reduced energy consumption also lowers the carbon footprint of town operations, aligning with broader goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate certain weather events/patterns.

Energy-efficient upgrades enhance indoor air quality, thermal comfort, and overall building performance, creating healthier and more pleasant environments for employees and visitors, which boosts productivity and satisfaction. Although initial investments may be significant, the long-term savings from reduced energy costs often outweigh these expenditures. Many projects are also eligible for rebates, grants, or tax incentives, further lowering the net cost and making energy efficiency upgrades financially appealing. By upgrading municipal buildings, the town sets a positive example for businesses and residents, encouraging the wider community to adopt similar sustainability measures and fostering a culture of responsible energy use.

Implementing energy efficiency measures also ensures compliance with state and federal regulations aimed at improving energy efficiency in public buildings, demonstrating the town's commitment to adhering to mandated standards and sustainable practices. This comprehensive approach enhances building functionality and comfort, supports environmental goals, and positions the town as a leader in energy efficiency and sustainability.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Select Board and Facilities Department



Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth's energy efficiency upgrades led to substantial cost savings, reduced environmental impact, and improved building performance. This proactive approach demonstrated the financial and environmental benefits of sustainable practices, inspiring community action and establishing Dartmouth as a leader in energy management. Key elements of success included comprehensive energy assessments, strategic upgrades, grant utilization, cost savings, environmental gains, improved building comfort, community leadership, and compliance recognition.

Goal 6.1

Enhance and sustain the town’s infrastructure with strategic financial management.

Strategy 6.1.4: Create a funding source for waterline improvements when the time comes to accept the responsibility of maintenance on the Wareham waterline.

This strategy focuses on establishing financial mechanisms to ensure that necessary funds are available for the maintenance, repair, and potential upgrades of the Wareham waterline when the town assumes responsibility for its upkeep. This can include creating a dedicated fund, implementing usage fees, and exploring grant opportunities to support ongoing and future needs.

Maintaining and upgrading water infrastructure is essential for ensuring a reliable and safe water service for residents. Proactively securing funding helps prevent service disruptions and allows for timely responses to any issues, thereby safeguarding public health and enhancing community well-being. By setting up a specific funding source for waterline improvements, the town can better manage the financial demands associated with maintaining essential services, reducing the risk of unexpected financial burdens that could strain other municipal budgets or lead to sudden increases in user fees.

Investing in regular maintenance and timely upgrades offers long-term cost savings, as it can prevent more expensive emergency repairs and extend the lifespan of the waterline system. Well-maintained infrastructure operates more efficiently, providing a better return on the town’s investment. Furthermore, keeping water systems up to date is crucial for compliance with state and federal regulatory standards, which

protect public health and can help the town avoid fines and penalties for noncompliance.

A well-maintained waterline is also critical for supporting community growth and development. Reliable water infrastructure promotes residential and commercial development, boosting the community’s economic health and vitality. Establishing a dedicated funding source positions the town to leverage additional financial support from state and federal programs, many of which require local matching funds or demonstrate a financial commitment to the project.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Select Board, Accounting, and Water Commission



Example Success Story: The Town of Marion’s proactive creation of a dedicated fund for waterline improvements ensured a reliable water supply, reduced service disruptions, and achieved long-term cost savings through preventive maintenance. This commitment supported community growth, economic vitality, and regulatory compliance. Key elements of success included a dedicated infrastructure fund, long-term financial planning, user fee structures, grant utilization, timely upgrades, regional collaboration, and community engagement and transparency.

Goal 6.2

Improve service efficiency and accessibility.

Strategy 6.2.1: Conduct a comprehensive service delivery audit involving all town departments and staff to identify areas for improvement.

This strategy focuses on evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of current municipal operations and services through a comprehensive service delivery audit involving all town departments and staff. This audit will systematically review all aspects of service delivery, including processes, resource allocation, and performance outcomes, with the goal of identifying areas for improvement, streamlining operations, enhancing service quality, and increasing community satisfaction.

By examining existing service delivery methods, the town can identify inefficiencies and opportunities to enhance or streamline processes. This leads to better utilization of resources, faster service delivery, and cost reductions, ultimately improving operational efficiency and effectiveness. A comprehensive audit also increases transparency in how municipal services are delivered and resources are allocated, fostering accountability that is crucial for maintaining public trust and aligning government operations with community expectations and standards.

The insights gained from such an audit can drive data-driven decision-making, ensuring that any changes or improvements are grounded in solid analysis and align with the community's actual needs and priorities. This approach minimizes guesswork and provides a clear path forward. Furthermore, the auditing process promotes increased coordination and collaboration between departments, encouraging communication, the

sharing of best practices, and more integrated service delivery, especially in areas where departmental functions overlap.

Identifying areas for improvement and implementing targeted changes can significantly enhance the quality of services delivered to the community, leading to higher levels of resident satisfaction and engagement. The audit also serves as a valuable foundation for long-term strategic planning, helping the town anticipate and prepare for future needs, whether related to demographic shifts, economic growth, or other changes.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Select Board, Town Administrator, and All Departments



Example Success Story: The Town of Franklin's comprehensive service delivery audit improved service efficiency, resident satisfaction, and cost management. By proactively evaluating and enhancing municipal operations, Franklin effectively addressed community needs. Key elements of success included a thorough review, identification of inefficiencies, improved coordination, data-driven enhancements, cost savings, greater public engagement, and strategic future planning.

Goal 6.2

Improve service efficiency and accessibility.

Strategy 6.2.2: Implement a customer feedback system to gather input on service quality.

This strategy focuses on gathering input from residents about the quality of services provided by the town through a customer feedback system. This system can include a variety of methods such as surveys, feedback forms, digital platforms, and regular town meetings, giving residents the opportunity to express their opinions and experiences related to municipal services. Analyzing the collected feedback allows the town to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in service delivery.

Direct feedback from service users is invaluable for understanding how well services meet their needs and expectations, leading to targeted improvements and an overall improvement of service quality. Additionally, a feedback system enables the town to respond more quickly and effectively to resident issues and concerns, fostering greater satisfaction and trust in municipal management. The data collected from feedback can also inform decision-making processes within town departments, ensuring that actions and initiatives are aligned with residents' actual experiences and needs.

A structured feedback system demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability, showing that the town values resident input and is proactive about making improvements based on that input. Encouraging residents to provide feedback can increase community engagement and participation, as people who feel their voices are

heard are more likely to take an active interest in local governance and community activities. Regular feedback also helps the town remain adaptable, allowing for adjustments in services in response to changing resident needs and circumstances. This continuous cycle of feedback and improvement ensures high service standards over time.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator



Example Success Story: The Town of Barnstable's customer feedback system improved service quality, boosted community satisfaction, and enhanced resident engagement. By actively listening and responding to feedback, Barnstable strengthened its relationship with residents and became a model of responsive governance. Key elements of success included multiple feedback channels, proactive responses, data-driven improvements, increased satisfaction, regular town hall meetings, transparent communication, and a continuous improvement cycle.

Goal 6.2

Improve service efficiency and accessibility.

Strategy 6.2.3: Improve the development and permitting process, then create a user-friendly Development and Permitting Guide to encourage new businesses and existing business growth.

This strategy aims to streamline the steps required for businesses to establish themselves and expand by simplifying the complexities and redundancies often found in the permitting process. The initiative seeks to create a more efficient and accessible system for businesses, ultimately leading to the development of a comprehensive guide that provides clear and user-friendly information on navigating development and permitting. This guide will support both new and existing businesses in understanding and efficiently managing their development and permitting needs.

Streamlining the development and permitting process reduces the time and resources businesses typically spend dealing with bureaucratic procedures, facilitating smoother operations and growth. This support makes it easier for local business owners and new entrepreneurs to invest and expand, which contributes to the overall economic health of the community through job creation and increased investment.

By simplifying the permitting process, government departments can operate more efficiently, allowing town staff to allocate their time and resources more effectively. A streamlined process not only accelerates the timeline for applicants but also improves departmental productivity. Additionally, a user-friendly guide demystifies the permitting system,

making it more transparent and accessible for business owners. This transparency builds trust and reduces potential barriers to entry, particularly for small and medium enterprises that may lack the resources to navigate complex systems.

The creation of a more business-friendly environment, supported by a simplified and clearly explained permitting process, can significantly enhance Rochester's appeal to new residents and investors. It demonstrates a commitment to fostering economic growth and community development while supporting local businesses in their efforts to grow and thrive.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Economic Development Committee, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Building, Fire, Police, and Highway

Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth's streamlined permitting process and comprehensive Development and Permitting Guide reduced barriers for businesses, fostered economic growth, and improved community satisfaction. Key elements of success included a simplified permitting process, user-friendly guide, digital system, increased efficiency and transparency, economic growth, and positive business feedback.



Goal 6.2

Improve service efficiency and accessibility.

Strategy 6.2.4: Implement the recommendations of the ongoing regional broadband infrastructure plan to ensure reliable high-speed internet access for all residents and businesses.

This strategy aims to ensure that all Rochester residents and businesses have reliable high-speed internet, enhancing digital connectivity and creating a more inclusive, forward-thinking community. Addressing service gaps and future-proofing digital infrastructure will boost economic development by attracting and supporting businesses, fostering growth, and driving innovation.

Broadband access is crucial for educational equity, giving students tools for learning and equal opportunities for success. High-speed internet also supports telemedicine, improving healthcare access and outcomes, especially in rural areas. Reliable internet enables effective remote work, promoting work-life balance and reducing commuting and traffic congestion.

Universal broadband promotes social inclusion, allowing residents to access government services, engage online, and bridge the digital divide. Implementing regional broadband recommendations will position Rochester for sustained growth, economic development, educational equity, and improved quality of life, establishing it as a modern, connected community.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Select Board and Town Administrator



Example Success Story: The Town of Middleborough's expansion of broadband access through the SouthCoast Internet initiative showcased a proactive effort to bridge the digital divide. This initiative provided universal high-speed internet, enhancing educational equity, supporting business growth, and improving community health and connectivity. Key elements of success included regional collaboration, grant funding, public-private partnerships, community engagement, infrastructure investments, economic and social benefits, and improved telehealth and remote work opportunities.

Goal 6.2

Improve service efficiency and accessibility.

Strategy 6.2.5: Improve and enhance internal communications and relationships with all staff.

This strategy aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations by enhancing internal communications within Rochester's town administration. The initiative focuses on adopting new communication tools, refining existing channels, and fostering a culture of open, transparent communication among staff. The primary objective is to ensure smooth information flow across departments, facilitating better coordination, decision-making, and service delivery.

Enhanced communication tools and protocols streamline interactions among different town departments, leading to more efficient project management and quicker responses to community needs. Effective internal communications also contribute to a positive work environment, keeping staff informed, engaged, and aligned with municipal goals, which boosts job satisfaction and retention.

When internal communications are clear and effective, staff can deliver better services to residents. Accurate and timely dissemination of information about public services and initiatives enhances the overall quality of service delivery. Open channels of communication foster transparency and accountability, ensuring that staff members are well-informed about policies and administrative processes, which empowers them to perform their roles responsibly.

Improved communication also promotes adaptability and problem-

solving, as it enables staff to share insights and feedback more readily, leading to innovative solutions and greater flexibility in the face of changing circumstances. Additionally, regular communication supports knowledge sharing and professional development, helping staff stay updated on best practices, new regulations, and industry trends, ultimately raising the professional standards of the town's workforce.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The Town of Fairhaven prioritized internal communication, fostering transparency, engagement, and mutual respect within municipal operations. By investing in tools, regular dialogue, and professional growth, Fairhaven improved governance and staff morale, benefiting both employees and the community. Key elements of success included new communication platforms, regular interdepartmental meetings, an open-door policy, professional development, and internal newsletters.



Goal 6.3

Continue to foster a safe, engaged, and informed community.

Strategy 6.3.1: Improve communication methods between the Town and its residents.

This strategy focuses on enhancing the effectiveness, reach, and clarity of communication between municipal authorities and the community. Initiatives could include upgrading digital platforms like the town website and social media channels, introducing regular and comprehensive newsletters, hosting community forums, and utilizing local media more effectively to share information.

Improved communication methods foster greater civic engagement by keeping residents well-informed about town affairs, upcoming events, and public consultations. When citizens are knowledgeable about their community, they are more likely to participate in activities and decision-making processes that shape the town’s future.

Effective communication also increases transparency by clearly communicating the town’s actions, plans, and procedures. This openness builds trust between residents and local government, an essential element for successful governance and community support. In times of emergencies or urgent notices, enhanced communication channels ensure that critical information is disseminated quickly and efficiently, helping protect and inform residents during crises.

A key aspect of this strategy is incorporating mechanisms for residents to provide feedback. Two-way communication channels enable the town to gauge public sentiment, gather suggestions, and address issues

effectively, fostering a responsive and adaptive local government.

Inclusivity is another critical component. By diversifying communication methods, the town can reach a broader demographic, including those who may lack access to digital platforms, such as the elderly or low-income residents. This ensures that every community member has access to important information and can engage in town affairs.

Effective communication also supports local development and services by promoting events, services, and new initiatives. This helps stimulate economic growth and strengthens the connection between residents and their community.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The Town of Marion’s communication enhancement efforts demonstrate how strategic communication improvements can transform local governance, foster a sense of community, and enhance residents’ quality of life. Key elements of Marion’s success include: upgraded digital presence; regular newsletters; enhanced social media engagement; community forums and town hall meetings; emergency communication system; and inclusivity efforts.



Goal 6.3

Continue to foster a safe, engaged, and informed community.

Strategy 6.3.2: Enhance communication and collaboration between town employees and boards to improve coordination and streamline decision-making processes.

This strategy focuses on improving coordination and streamlining decision-making processes by enhancing communication and collaboration among town employees and boards. This initiative involves establishing clearer communication channels, regular meetings, joint training sessions, and integrated planning efforts. By fostering a more collaborative environment, the town can ensure that various departments and boards work together effectively, aligning their efforts towards common goals.

Enhanced communication and collaboration help prevent overlapping duties and conflicting initiatives between departments and boards, resulting in better-coordinated efforts and more efficient government operations. When employees and boards communicate effectively, decision-making becomes faster and more streamlined, with information flowing more freely. This reduces delays and misunderstandings that can otherwise hinder progress on projects and initiatives.

Open lines of communication contribute to increased transparency within the town government, building trust among employees and enhancing public confidence in how decisions are made and implemented. Collaborative environments also foster innovative thinking and problem-solving, as employees and boards pool their expertise and resources to develop creative, effective solutions to the challenges the

town faces.

Regular interaction and collaboration among town employees and board members promote professional development. Exposure to different perspectives and experiences broadens their understanding and skills, which they can apply to their roles, enhancing their overall effectiveness. This improved coordination ultimately leads to better services for the community, as aligned departments and boards are better positioned to respond to community needs and priorities, resulting in higher resident satisfaction.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth's Strategic Communication and Collaboration Initiative improved local government operations by fostering strong internal communication and collaboration among departments and boards. Through aligned efforts and transparent dialogue, Dartmouth achieved greater operational efficiency and community trust, enhancing service to residents. Key elements of success included regular cross-departmental meetings, integrated planning, improved communication protocols, joint training programs, and technology integration.



Goal 6.3

Continue to foster a safe, engaged, and informed community.

Strategy 6.3.3: Create a community engagement plan to involve residents in decision-making.

This strategy focuses on involving residents more directly in decision-making processes through a structured community engagement plan. The aim is to gather input and feedback from community members on various town initiatives, projects, and policies. This engagement could take the form of public forums, surveys, advisory committees, and digital platforms to promote broad participation and communication.

By involving residents in decision-making, this strategy enhances democratic participation, giving community members a meaningful voice in how their town is governed. This active participation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, encouraging residents to take a vested interest in community outcomes. Input from a diverse cross-section of the community leads to more informed and effective policy decisions, ensuring that initiatives better reflect the actual needs and preferences of the people they affect.

Regularly engaging residents increases transparency and builds trust in local government. When people see their feedback being taken seriously and resulting in tangible outcomes, they are more likely to believe in and support municipal efforts. Greater community engagement can also promote cohesion, as bringing a broad range of residents together can help bridge divides, build consensus on contentious issues, and foster stronger community bonds.

A structured engagement plan makes the town more adaptable and responsive to emerging issues and changing circumstances. Ongoing dialogue with residents allows local leaders to quickly assess public sentiment and adjust policies as needed. Engaged residents are also more likely to support and participate in local initiatives, enhancing their effectiveness and impact through volunteerism, partnerships, and other cooperative efforts.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator



Example Success Story: The Town of Fairhaven’s Community Engagement Initiative involved residents in shaping local projects and policies, demonstrating the impact of a well-structured engagement plan. By fostering meaningful participation, Fairhaven improved policy outcomes and strengthened community bonds, creating a sense of collective ownership and pride. Key elements of success included diverse engagement methods, advisory committees, digital platforms, targeted outreach, and transparent feedback loops.

Goal 6.3

Continue to foster a safe, engaged, and informed community.

Strategy 6.3.4: Review organizational structures and create a visual flowchart to improve understanding of the roles and responsibilities of town staff.

This strategy focuses on clarifying and communicating the roles and responsibilities of town staff more effectively through a comprehensive review of the current organizational set-up. The process involves identifying areas of overlap or gaps in responsibilities and creating a visual flowchart that represents the structure of town government. This flowchart will illustrate how different departments and positions connect and interact, providing clear guidance on reporting relationships and areas of responsibility.

A visual flowchart offers enhanced clarity and communication by providing an easily understandable overview of the organizational structure. Both new and existing employees can quickly grasp their roles and the town government's hierarchy, improving internal communication and fostering more effective collaboration. Clearly delineated responsibilities within the flowchart help prevent duplication of efforts and guide staff on whom to approach for specific issues or approvals, streamlining operations and reducing confusion.

For new staff, a visual organizational structure is particularly valuable for onboarding and training. It allows new hires to understand their role in the larger context of the town's operations more quickly, accelerating the training process and aiding smooth integration. Moreover, a well-defined organizational chart enhances transparency by clearly showing

lines of accountability, making it easier for residents and town council members to understand how decisions are made and who is responsible for specific functions.

If the town chooses to reorganize departments or modify staff roles, a current organizational flowchart simplifies the process of identifying potential impacts and communicating changes both internally and externally. Understanding their place within the structure enables staff members to facilitate decision-making more efficiently, as they know who has decision-making authority and who needs to be consulted, thereby expediting processes and improving responsiveness.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth's review of its organizational structures and creation of a detailed flowchart improved communication and operational efficiency within its government. Key elements of success included a comprehensive review, user-friendly flowchart, staff training, improved internal communication, enhanced transparency, accountability, and streamlined decision-making.



Goal 6.3

Continue to foster a safe, engaged, and informed community.

Strategy 6.3.5: Host regular town hall meetings and public forums to keep residents informed, such as a Citizens Academy.

This strategy aims to increase transparency, foster community engagement, and improve communication between town officials and residents by organizing regular town hall meetings and public forums. These scheduled events provide opportunities for community members to receive updates, ask questions, and discuss local issues directly with elected officials and municipal staff.

Regular town hall meetings and public forums create a platform for open communication about the town’s operations, decisions, and initiatives, enhancing transparency and accountability. This openness builds trust between residents and government officials by making municipal activities more accessible and understandable. Active participation in these meetings allows residents to express concerns, offer feedback, and influence decision-making processes, ensuring that community needs and preferences are reflected in local governance.

These forums also serve as a means for officials to keep residents informed about ongoing projects, future plans, and community issues. An informed community is better equipped to engage meaningfully in civic matters. Additionally, town hall meetings offer a direct feedback mechanism for residents to communicate with town leaders, providing valuable insights for officials to gauge public sentiment and make adjustments to policies or procedures as needed.

Programs such as a Citizens Academy can further enhance educational opportunities, offering residents a chance to learn about the inner workings of municipal government. This understanding can demystify governmental processes and encourage broader public involvement. Bringing residents together in a common space to share ideas and solutions promotes community cohesion and a sense of mutual responsibility.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The Town of Barnstable has fostered greater public participation and community trust by creating opportunities for residents to connect with and understand local government functions. Consistent communication, transparency, and educational initiatives have transformed community engagement. Key elements of Barnstable’s success include regular town hall meetings, public forums, a Citizens Academy, engaging communication platforms, and community-driven input.



Goal 6.3

Continue to foster a safe, engaged, and informed community.

Strategy 6.3.6: Encourage youth participation in local government.

This strategy seeks to actively involve younger residents in civic processes and decision-making, fostering a sense of responsibility, engagement, and connection with their community from an early age. Initiatives to achieve this can include creating youth councils, offering internships and volunteer opportunities within local government, and integrating civic education into school curriculums.

By engaging young people in local government processes, the strategy emphasizes civic engagement and education, providing foundational knowledge about civic responsibilities and how government functions. This understanding can inspire greater democratic participation and community service as young people mature. Furthermore, youth bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to local government, offering valuable insights into contemporary challenges such as technology, education, and social justice. Their involvement can lead to the development of more forward-thinking, inclusive, and effective policies.

Participating in government initiatives also promotes leadership development among young individuals. These experiences build confidence, enhance communication skills, and deepen their understanding of community issues, laying the groundwork for future community leaders. Early involvement in civic activities increases the likelihood of long-term community engagement, fostering continuity and strengthening the fabric of local leadership over time.

Encouraging diverse youth participation ensures that the local government reflects the community's demographic makeup and promotes policies that are inclusive and representative of all community members. Moreover, engaging youth in governance strengthens community ties by fostering mutual respect and collaboration across generations, enhancing cohesion and understanding throughout the community.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth has engaged young residents in civic processes and decision-making, fostering a new generation of active citizens and leaders. By creating pathways for meaningful youth involvement, Plymouth has strengthened community bonds and promoted innovative, inclusive policy development. Key elements of success included forming a Youth Council, youth representation on committees, internship and volunteer programs, and school partnerships.



Goal 6.3

Continue to foster a safe, engaged, and informed community.

Strategy 6.3.7: Develop a community engagement program to enhance public safety.

This strategy focuses on creating initiatives that foster collaboration between law enforcement, local government agencies, and community members to enhance public safety. The program could include community policing efforts, public safety workshops, neighborhood watch programs, and regular public meetings aimed at discussing safety concerns and identifying effective solutions.

Community engagement in public safety efforts builds trust and cooperation between law enforcement and residents. When community members feel that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed, they are more likely to collaborate with and support law enforcement efforts. This trust is crucial for fostering a safe and unified community.

Proactive crime prevention is another key benefit of community engagement. By involving residents in public safety initiatives, law enforcement can leverage valuable local knowledge to address potential safety issues before they escalate into more serious problems. Community members' insights can guide effective crime prevention strategies and create a safer environment for everyone.

Educational components within public safety programs increase community awareness about safety practices, emergency preparedness, and crime prevention techniques. This knowledge empowers residents

to protect themselves and assist others during emergencies, fostering a more resilient community. Additionally, involving residents in safety initiatives helps to empower the community as a whole. When residents actively participate in maintaining safety, it strengthens community cohesion and creates a collective sense of responsibility for neighborhood well-being.

Community engagement also enables public safety officials to better understand the specific needs and challenges of different neighborhoods. This targeted insight allows for a more efficient and strategic allocation of resources, ensuring that public safety measures are responsive and effective. Furthermore, such programs ensure that the needs of vulnerable populations, including the elderly, children, and those with disabilities, are taken into consideration. This inclusivity ensures that public safety efforts are comprehensive and equitable.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator and Police

Example Success Story: The City of New Bedford's collaboration between law enforcement, local agencies, and community members has significantly enhanced public safety and trust. Key elements of success included community policing, neighborhood watch programs, public safety workshops, youth engagement initiatives, and partnerships with local agencies.



Goal 6.4

Secure financial support for community projects, i.e. Fire Station.

Strategy 6.4.1: Establish clear communication strategies for funders to ensure they understand the project's impact and value.

This strategy, deeply rooted in the Rochester Master Plan, aims to establish clear communication with funders to ensure they fully understand the impact and value of the town's initiatives. The Master Plan outlines Rochester's long-term vision and goals, emphasizing community engagement, strategic use of local resources, and clear articulation of the outcomes and benefits associated with proposed projects. Effective communication with funders is essential for demonstrating how the town's goals align with their interests and priorities, fostering strong financial partnerships.

Transparent and ongoing communication builds trust and credibility with funders, paving the way for long-term financial support. By having a well-defined communication plan, the town can clearly convey the impact of funders' contributions, thereby encouraging sustained or increased funding. Listening to and understanding funders' expectations and feedback allows for more tailored and effective projects that address community needs while maintaining financial viability. This strategic approach not only helps secure necessary funding but also creates partnerships that enhance the reach and impact of initiatives, contributing to the sustainable development of Rochester.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The Buzzards Bay Coalition's approach to engaging funders emphasizes clear, consistent communication to build trust, showcase impact, and foster lasting financial partnerships. By aligning project goals with funder interests and demonstrating tangible community benefits, the Coalition has ensured ongoing support for critical initiatives. Key elements of success included a detailed communication plan, regular updates, demonstrating results, tailored messaging, and leveraging partnerships for greater impact.



Goal 6.4

Secure financial support for community projects, i.e. Fire Station.

Strategy 6.4.2: Apply for state and federal grants to fund community projects.

This strategy is a crucial element of the Rochester Master Plan, focusing on leveraging state and federal grants to fund community projects and enhance local initiatives. This approach aligns with the Master Plan’s broader objectives, which prioritize sustainable development, improved community services, and upgraded infrastructure. By securing these grants, Rochester can implement projects that may otherwise be financially unfeasible, thus advancing the town’s development goals without imposing additional financial burdens on local taxpayers.

The rationale for this strategy is multifaceted. First, utilizing state and federal grants allows the town to broaden and enhance its services and infrastructure while diversifying funding sources beyond local revenues, which can be limited. This diversification is particularly vital for funding significant projects that could have a substantial positive impact on the community but are not feasible with local funding alone. Second, this strategy opens the door to a wider range of resources and innovative solutions accessible through specific grant programs focused on areas such as environmental protection, educational initiatives, or technological advancements. Additionally, successfully securing grants can strengthen Rochester’s case for future funding opportunities; each successful project demonstrates the town’s ability to manage and implement complex initiatives, thereby attracting further investment. Overall, this strategy is essential for maximizing Rochester’s capacity to achieve its development goals while fostering a robust and resilient

community.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator, Facilities, Fire, Highway, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

Example Success Story: The City of New Bedford’s strategic use of state and federal grants has driven transformative community projects, enhancing sustainability, resilience, and quality of life while promoting economic development. Key elements of success included environmental and waterfront revitalization grants, infrastructure and resilience funding, historic preservation investments, community engagement initiatives, and economic development through federal support.



Goal 6.4

Secure financial support for community projects, i.e. Fire Station.

Strategy 6.4.3: Develop a public-private partnership program to leverage private investment.

This strategy aims to develop a public-private partnership (PPP) program that leverages private investment to complement public funds and expertise, thereby enhancing Rochester's ability to implement significant projects. This approach is a critical component of the broader economic and infrastructure development plans outlined in the Rochester Master Plan. By collaborating with private entities, the town can access additional resources, innovative technologies, and specialized skills that may be too costly or complex to develop independently within the public sector.

The justification for this strategy is based on several practical benefits. First, PPPs can accelerate project timelines by combining public oversight with the efficiency and responsiveness of the private sector. This synergy is particularly valuable for complex projects that require high levels of technical expertise or are situated in sectors where the private industry has more refined processes. Second, PPPs help distribute the financial risk associated with large projects, making them more feasible and sustainable over the long term. This is especially important during times of budget constraints when public funds must be allocated across various community needs. Furthermore, these partnerships often drive higher quality standards and foster innovation due to the competitive nature of the private sector. Ultimately, developing a PPP program enables Rochester to enhance its infrastructure and services in a cost-effective manner, promoting sustainable community growth and

improving the overall quality of life for its residents.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator and Select Board

Example Success Story: The City of New Bedford's Marine Commerce Terminal Project exemplifies how public-private partnerships can drive transformative local development and economic growth by leveraging private investment. This approach achieved ambitious goals, fostered economic growth, and promoted sustainable, innovative solutions. Key elements of success included leveraging private investment, economic and community benefits, innovation and sustainability, and long-term impact through continued partnerships.



Goal 6-4

Secure financial support for community projects, i.e. Fire Station.

Strategy 6.4.4: Create a crowdfunding platform for community-led projects.

This strategy introduces a crowdfunding platform for community-led projects, as outlined in the Rochester Master Plan. The initiative aims to empower residents and foster a strong sense of community ownership and participation in local development. This platform would serve as a centralized hub where community members can propose various projects, ranging from small-scale improvements to larger community enhancements, to Events Committee.

The justification for implementing a crowdfunding platform rests on its numerous community and economic benefits. First, it democratizes the funding process, enabling all community members, regardless of their economic status, to contribute to projects they are passionate about. This inclusivity can significantly enhance community engagement and satisfaction, as residents witness the tangible outcomes of their contributions. Second, crowdfunding can expedite project funding and implementation by circumventing traditional funding avenues that are often slow and bogged down by bureaucratic red tape. Additionally, the platform allows for a diverse range of projects to be funded, including innovative or non-traditional initiatives that may not qualify for conventional funding sources. This platform would serve as a centralized hub where community members can propose to the Events Committee various projects, ranging from small-scale improvements to larger community enhancements.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator, Select Board, and Events Committee



Example Success Story: The South Coast Bikeway Alliance (SCBA) is a grassroots initiative in southeastern Massachusetts focused on expanding and connecting regional bike paths and trails. Through community engagement and innovative collaboration, SCBA raised funds and built support, reflecting principles similar to crowdfunding. Key elements of their success included grassroots engagement, collaborative fundraising, visible community input, promotion of health and connectivity, and fostering community ownership and support.



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Transportation & Circulation

Enhance mobility, including those with disabilities and seniors, through comprehensive transportation solutions. Improve transit awareness. Enforce safe driving. Improve key intersections.

Key Planning Information

A robust transportation network is essential for a community’s vitality, ensuring efficient, safe, and enjoyable movement of both people and goods. It significantly influences land use, development, and environmental factors such as air and water quality, noise pollution, and even public health. Especially for individuals who are reliant on alternative modes of transportation, like walking, cycling, or public transit, an equitable and well-structured transportation system becomes pivotal in ensuring their safety and daily connectivity.

However, the major difference between a city and the countryside is transportation. The fact is there are more options to move around a big city with public transport systems. Since cities tend to be well connected to transportation hubs and have the ability to provide regular services as a necessity to mobility. The flipside is that there is more stress involved in commuting around a congested city than the countryside where a car is likely to be your principal mode of transportation. Inevitably it comes down to personal choices. Residents in Rochester enjoy their quality of life over the hustle and bustle of a more urban environment where there are more transportation options.

Total Miles of Roads	75.56
MassDOT	6.44
Town Accepted	67.75
Unaccepted	1.37

In Rochester, the natural beauty is intertwined with careful planning efforts aimed at preserving scenic vistas and mature tree canopies, showcasing a commitment to maintaining the town’s aesthetic charm. Presently, major transportation projects are not in the immediate pipeline, with the primary focus directed towards prudent fund allocation for necessary road maintenance.

The Town of Rochester in collaboration with the SRPEDD and Towns of Wareham and Middleboro are conducting a comprehensive review of the Route 28 corridor, spanning from Cushman Street in Middleborough to Charlotte Furnace Road in Wareham, indicates a proactive approach. This study will address safety, traffic operations, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit conditions, aligning future

recommendations with the evolving needs of the community

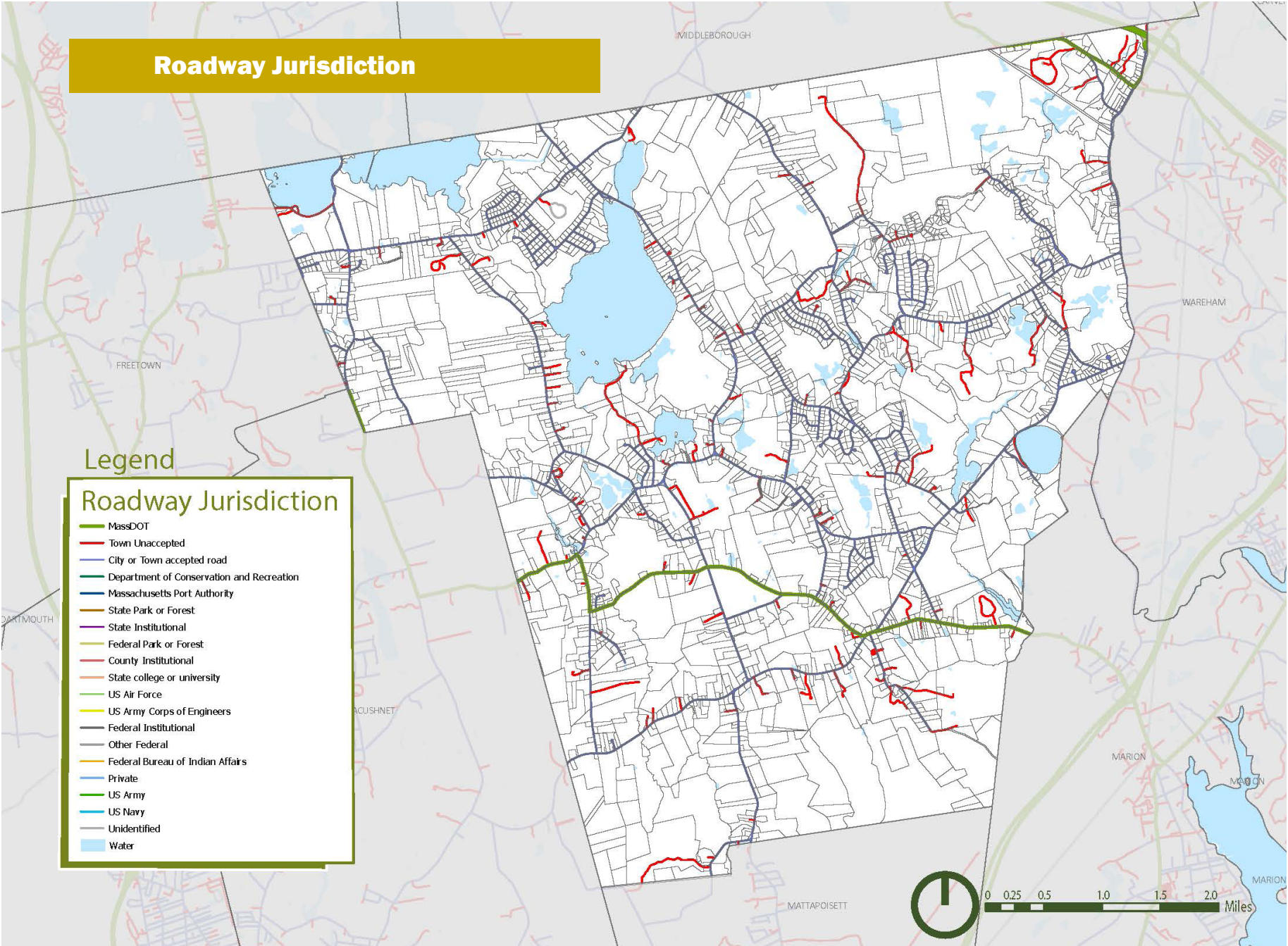
Rochester's access to major highways is limited, primarily with I-495 traversing the northeast section and I-195 traversing the south section. The town's road network, catering to automobile drivers, currently operates efficiently, as revealed by transportation safety data analysis that identified only minor safety concerns and no congestion issues.

Nevertheless, the absence of bicycle lanes and limited pedestrian infrastructure, poses safety risks for pedestrians. To mitigate these hazards, expanding pedestrian pathways within the communities' vast open spaces away from roadway traffic could potentially utilize the extensive trail system and enhance pedestrian opportunities, especially in dispersed residential neighborhoods where walking is primarily for leisure.

Rochester's main public transportation infrastructure is serviced solely by GATRA the regional transit agency (RTA) with a dedicated bus stop at the Cranberry Highway Smart Growth Overlay District once constructed. Nearby Wareham hosts the closest fixed-route bus service, while the Rochester Council on Aging (COA) fills a crucial gap by offering transit services for individuals aged 60 and above, boasting a fleet of 5 vehicles that cover over 35,000 miles, catering to essential travel needs.

The 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates shed light on commuting habits in Rochester, revealing that 90.9% of the 2,749 commuters predominantly rely on personal vehicles, with

86.2% driving alone. Public transportation serves 0.2% of commuters, while 1.6% utilize alternative modes like taxicabs or motorcycles. A notable 6.4% work from home, contributing to an average commute time of 31.2 minutes for workers aged 16 and above, consistent with neighboring areas. Each household in Rochester also possesses at least one vehicle, with 46.6% owning two and 44.3% owning three, as per the 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. These figures underscore the heavy reliance on personal vehicles for commuting within Rochester.



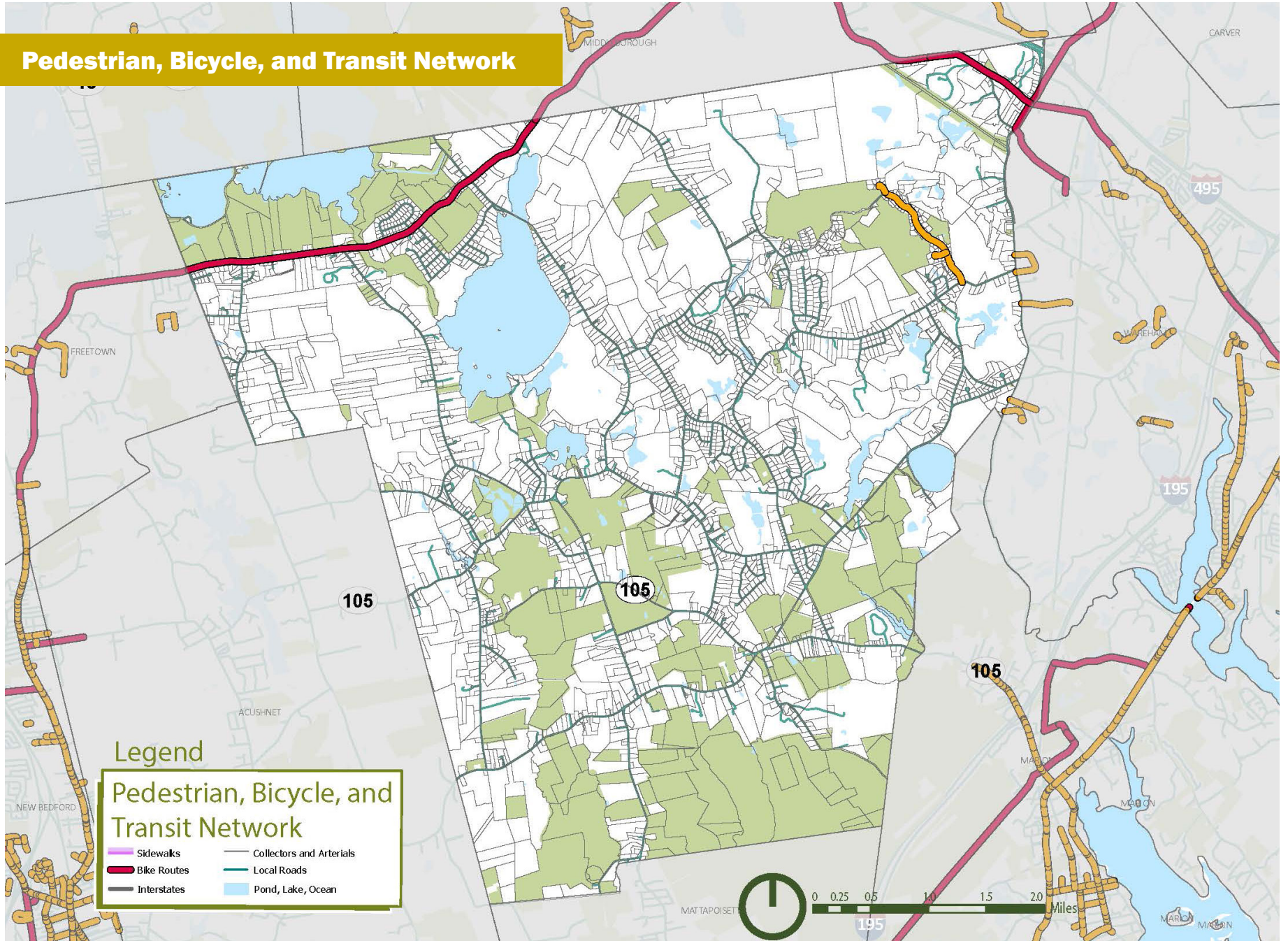
Roadway Jurisdiction

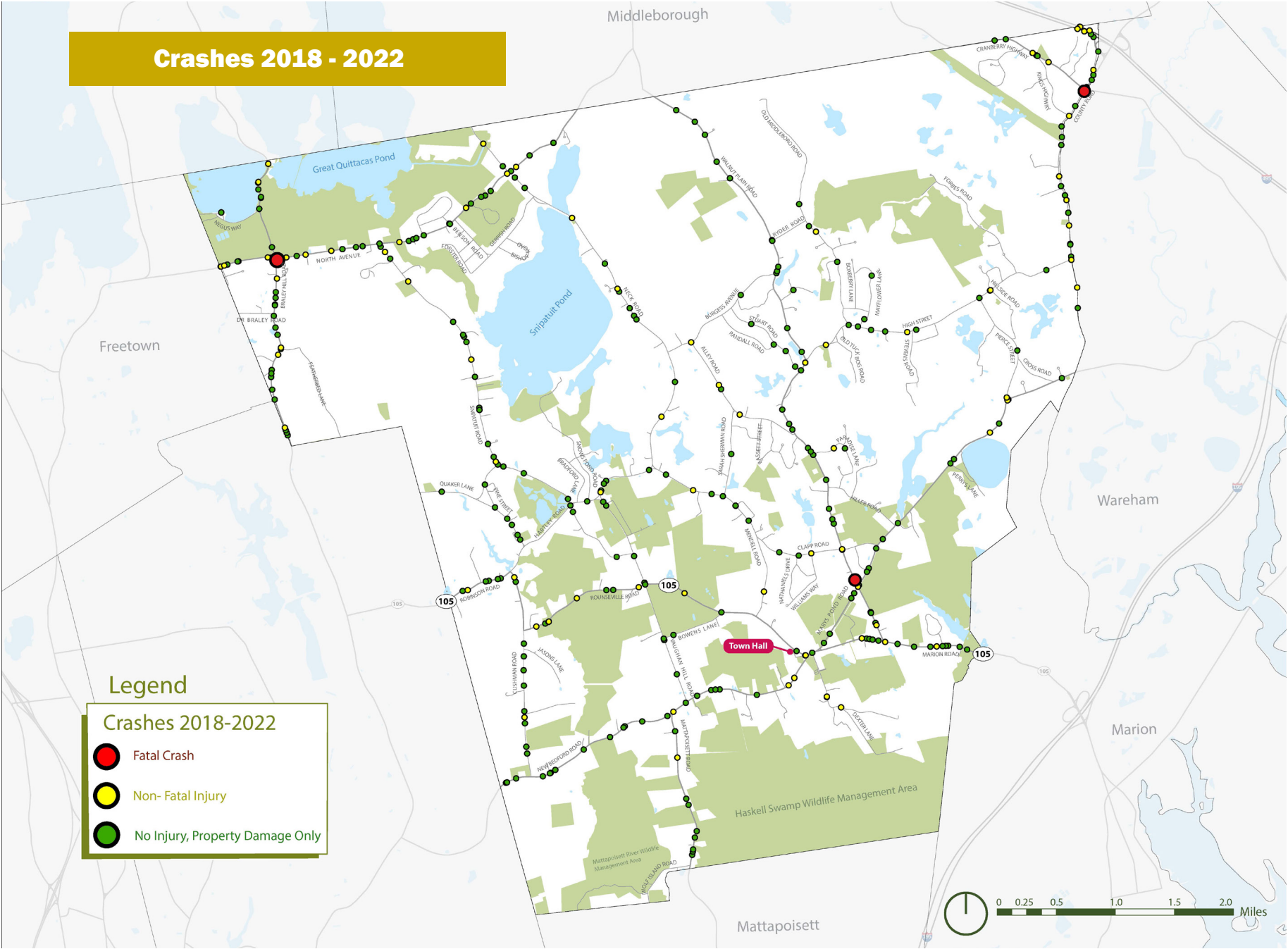
Legend

Roadway Jurisdiction

- MassDOT
- Town Unaccepted
- City or Town accepted road
- Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Massachusetts Port Authority
- State Park or Forest
- State Institutional
- Federal Park or Forest
- County Institutional
- State college or university
- US Air Force
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Federal Institutional
- Other Federal
- Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Private
- US Army
- US Navy
- Unidentified
- Water

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Network







Transportation & Circulation

Enhance mobility, including those with disabilities and seniors, through comprehensive transportation solutions. Improve transit awareness. Enforce safe driving. Improve key intersections.

Goals and Strategies Overview

Goal 7.1: Explore the creation of a bike path network through dedicated protected properties.

1. *Conduct a feasibility study for potential bike path routes.*
2. *Explore partnerships with regional organizations, such as SRPEDD and the South Coast Bikeway Alliance, to conduct a feasibility study for potential bike path routes.*
3. *Apply for state and federal funding to develop bike paths.*

Complimentary Strategies: 6.4.2 and 6.4.4

Goal 7.2: Continue to provide and support transportation opportunities for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

1. *Seek state and federal funding to support roadway improvement projects.*
2. *Continue to support and circulate COA transportation options and explore partnerships with regional transit authorities.*
3. *Ensure accessible transportation options are available for all residents to reach essential destinations, including voting locations, to promote civic engagement and equitable access.*

Complimentary Strategies: 7.4.1

Goal 7.3: Improve the awareness of existing transit options.

1. *Coordinate a program of standardized signage and wayfinding throughout town.*
2. *Investigate the creation of a Traffic Safety Committee that would regularly meet to review documented safety issues and other transportation related issues.*

Goal 7.4: Improve existing overall transportation-related infrastructure, with a focus on enhancing safety at dangerous intersections.

1. *Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and public transit facilities.*
2. *Continue to prioritize and implement necessary repairs and upgrades to maintain safe roadways.*
3. *Seek state and federal funding to support infrastructure improvement projects.*

Complimentary Strategies: 6.1.1

Goal 7.1

Explore the creation of a bike path network through dedicated protected properties.

Strategy 7.1.1: Conduct a feasibility study for potential bike path routes.

This strategy focuses on conducting a feasibility study for potential bike path routes as part of Rochester’s Master Plan to enhance transportation options and promote sustainable mobility. The study will identify practical routes and assess the environmental, social, and economic impacts of developing bike paths. This initiative demonstrates Rochester’s commitment to creating a healthier, more active community, reducing traffic congestion, and lowering vehicle emissions.

A feasibility study ensures the integration of safe, efficient, and well-connected bicycle infrastructure, improving residents’ quality of life. Bike paths encourage physical activity, support public health and environmental goals, and offer non-motorized travel options for recreation and commuting. The study facilitates informed, economically sound decision-making to benefit the community. Additionally, well-planned paths can attract new residents and businesses, enhance quality of life, and stimulate local economies by improving business access.

Key implementation steps include:

- Securing funding through sources such as the Community Compact Cabinet, MassTrails Program, and MassDOT Shared Streets and Space Program.
- Hiring a professional planning or engineering firm to conduct the study within 2 to 5 years.

- Exploring partnerships and grant funding for feasible trail projects
- Considering the formation of a Trails or Bike Path Committee to oversee these projects.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Town Administrator, Land Trust, and Highway



Example Success Story: The Mattapoisett Rail Trail project, a key part of the South Coast Bikeway, demonstrates the value of a thorough feasibility study for planning bike paths that connect communities and support alternative transportation. Through careful assessment, community engagement, funding acquisition, and strong partnerships, the trail became a reality, delivering lasting benefits. Key elements included a comprehensive feasibility study, community support, funding and partnerships, economic and community benefits, and ongoing stewardship and expansion.

Goal 7.1

Explore the creation of a bike path network through dedicated protected properties.

Strategy 7.1.2: Explore partnerships with regional organizations, such as SRPEDD and the South Coast Bikeway Alliance, to conduct a feasibility study for potential bike path routes.

This strategy involves exploring partnerships with regional organizations, such as SRPEDD and the South Coast Bikeway Alliance, to conduct a feasibility study for potential bike path routes. This proactive approach to transportation planning aims to enhance community connectivity by leveraging the expertise, resources, and insights of these regional bodies. By collaborating with established organizations, Rochester seeks to develop viable cycling routes that will improve local mobility and integrate with existing regional networks.

The justification for this strategy is rooted in several compelling benefits. Partnering with established regional organizations like SRPEDD and the South Coast Bikeway Alliance provides valuable technical expertise and experience in similar projects, which can significantly enhance the quality of the feasibility study. This collaboration ensures that potential issues are addressed comprehensively, leading to more effective outcomes. Additionally, these partnerships can unlock access to broader funding opportunities, such as state and federal grants, which are often more accessible to regional collaborations than to individual municipal initiatives. By aligning with regional transportation and mobility goals, Rochester can ensure that its local projects contribute to and benefit from larger-scale planning efforts, thus optimizing the impact of infrastructure improvements.

This collaborative approach not only improves the feasibility of bike path development but also fosters regional cohesion, ensuring that these developments effectively serve both local and wider community needs. Overall, by engaging with regional partners, Rochester can enhance its cycling infrastructure and promote a more connected and active community.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning and Highway



Example Success Story: The South Coast Bikeway Alliance and SRPEDD have played a key role in connecting South Coast communities through a continuous, safe, and accessible bike route from Swansea to Wareham. Their collaborative, partnership-driven approach has successfully guided the planning and implementation of regional bike paths, providing municipalities with shared resources, expertise, and funding access. This regional collaboration has transformed transportation infrastructure and strengthened community bonds, serving as a model for similar efforts in Rochester. Key success factors included collaborative planning, funding acquisition, regional connectivity, stakeholder engagement, and a focus on environmental and social benefits.

Goal 7.1

Explore the creation of a bike path network through dedicated protected properties.

Strategy 7.1.3: Apply for state and federal funding to develop off-road bike paths.

This strategy focuses on applying for state and federal funding to expand and enhance the sustainable transportation infrastructure in Rochester. By securing external funding, the town aims to develop bike paths that facilitate safe and accessible non-motorized transportation options. This approach aligns with broader environmental, health, and community connectivity goals, promoting a greener commute and reducing reliance on vehicular travel.

The justification for seeking state and federal funding for bike paths is rooted in several key advantages. First, these funding sources can significantly alleviate the local financial burden, enabling the town to undertake substantial infrastructure projects without straining municipal budgets. This is especially crucial for smaller communities where funding for capital-intensive projects may be limited. Second, implementing bike paths with the support of state and federal funds can accelerate Rochester's ability to achieve its sustainability and public health objectives by promoting active lifestyles while simultaneously reducing traffic congestion and emissions.

Additionally, well-designed bike paths can enhance the aesthetic appeal and livability of the community, potentially increasing quality of life and attracting new residents and businesses. Overall, applying for state and federal funding to develop off-road bike paths is a strategic move that supports Rochester's vision of becoming a more connected, sustainable,

and health-conscious community.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Planning, Highway, and Town Administrator

Example Success Story:

The New Bedford-Fairhaven Bike Path, also known as the Phoenix Bike Trail and Mattapoisett Rail Trail, demonstrates how state and federal funding can drive transformative infrastructure projects. By leveraging these funds, the communities have developed a sustainable, interconnected bike path network that supports active transportation, public health, local economies, and the preservation of cultural and environmental heritage. Key success elements included state and federal funding, community and environmental benefits, economic and recreational impact, strong regional collaboration, and cultural and educational connections.



Goal 7.2

Continue to provide and support transportation opportunities for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Strategy 7.2.1: Seek state and federal funding to support roadway improvement projects.

This strategy focuses on securing state and federal funding to enhance and maintain Rochester’s roadway infrastructure, including roads, intersections, and bridges. By accessing external financial resources, the town can efficiently address infrastructural needs while minimizing financial strain on local budgets and residents.

State and federal funds enable larger-scale projects that may be unfeasible with local funding alone, accelerating critical improvements to safety, efficiency, and service quality. Such projects can also boost local economic growth by creating jobs and attracting new businesses.


Enhanced infrastructure improves residents’ quality of life, offering safer travel and potentially new public spaces. Pursuing this funding supports Rochester’s goals of sustainable growth, public safety, and improved services, positioning it for long-term development.

Access to these funds can be achieved through the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO), which works with MassDOT to allocate transportation investments. Rochester should maintain representation within the SMMPO or its Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG) and actively develop projects through the SMMPO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Highway

Example Success Story: The Route 18 Improvement Project in New Bedford highlights the impact of securing state and federal funding for roadway upgrades. With these external funds, the city achieved transformative infrastructure improvements beyond local resource capacity. Key elements of success included state and federal funding, roadway and safety enhancements, economic and community benefits, public engagement, and improved quality of life.



Goal 7.2

Continue to provide and support transportation opportunities for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Strategy 7.2.2: Continue to support and circulate COA transportation options and explore partnerships with regional transit authorities.

This strategy is a vital aspect of Rochester’s commitment to enhancing mobility for its senior population. This approach focuses on maintaining and potentially expanding the transportation services offered through the COA, ensuring that elderly residents have access to reliable, safe, and convenient transportation. Additionally, by exploring partnerships with regional transit authorities, such as the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) or Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA), Rochester aims to integrate and perhaps extend these services into broader regional transportation networks, increasing the coverage and efficiency of transit options available to seniors.

The justification for this strategy is rooted in its comprehensive benefits to the community. First and foremost, continued support for COA transportation options ensures that seniors, who may no longer drive, have the mobility necessary to attend appointments, participate in community events, and manage daily needs independently. This support is crucial for maintaining their quality of life and social connections, which are key components of healthy aging. Furthermore, partnerships with regional transit authorities can enhance service delivery by pooling resources, expanding service areas, and coordinating schedules, making public transit more effective and user-friendly for seniors. These collaborations can also lead to cost efficiencies through shared funding and operational synergies, reducing the financial burden on

local government while improving service quality. Additionally, robust transportation options contribute to broader community goals of reducing vehicle emissions and traffic congestion by encouraging the use of public transit. Overall, this strategy aligns with Rochester’s goal of fostering an inclusive, accessible, and environmentally conscious community.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Council on Aging and Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The collaboration between Dartmouth’s Council on Aging (COA) and the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) improved transportation options for senior residents. This partnership demonstrates how COA services and regional transit collaboration can enhance senior mobility. Key elements of success included COA transportation, regional partnerships, accessibility and safety improvements, expanded service options, cost efficiencies, and positive community impact.



Goal 7.2

Continue to provide and support transportation opportunities for seniors and individuals with disabilities.


Strategy 7.2.3: Ensure accessible transportation options are available for all residents to reach essential destinations, including voting locations, to promote civic engagement and equitable access.

This strategy is integral to Rochester’s commitment to promoting civic engagement and ensuring equitable access for all residents. It focuses on addressing transportation barriers that may hinder residents from fully participating in community life, whether for everyday needs such as shopping and medical appointments or critical civic duties like voting. By enhancing transportation access, Rochester aims to foster a more inclusive and active community where every resident can contribute to and benefit from local resources and opportunities.

The justification for this strategy is multi-faceted and strongly aligned with the principles of equity and community participation. Accessible transportation is vital for civic engagement, enabling residents to participate in elections, town meetings, and other community activities that influence local governance and policy-making. Ensuring that all residents—especially those who are elderly, disabled, or without private vehicles—can easily reach voting locations is essential for upholding the democratic process and ensuring that all voices are heard.

Additionally, accessible transportation supports broader social equity goals by providing community members with the means to access essential services and participate in economic and social activities. This inclusivity can lead to improved health outcomes, reduced social

isolation, and enhanced economic opportunities for traditionally underserved or marginalized groups. Furthermore, a well-designed transportation network prioritizing accessibility can help mitigate traffic congestion, lower emissions, and encourage sustainable travel habits, aligning with environmental objectives. Overall, this strategy is essential for building a resilient, engaged, and equitable Rochester, ensuring that all residents have the opportunity to participate fully in their community.

Priority: High - Immediate 

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator and Council on Aging

Example Success Story: The City of New Bedford has improved transportation options, especially for underserved communities, ensuring access to essential services like voting locations. This effort highlights how enhancing accessible transportation can foster civic engagement, equitable access, and community well-being. Key elements of success included partnerships with the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA), accessible transportation for civic engagement, innovative mobility solutions, a focus on equity and inclusivity, civic engagement programs, and positive community outcomes.

Goal 7.3

Improve the awareness of existing transit options.

Strategy 7.3.1: Coordinate a program of standardized signage and wayfinding throughout town.

This strategy is integral to Rochester’s commitment to promoting civic engagement and ensuring equitable access for all residents. It focuses on addressing transportation barriers that may hinder residents from fully participating in community life, whether for everyday needs such as shopping and medical appointments or critical civic duties. By enhancing transportation access, Rochester aims to foster a more inclusive and active community where every resident can contribute to and benefit from local resources and opportunities.

The justification for this strategy is multi-faceted and strongly aligned with the principles of equity and community participation. Accessible transportation is vital for civic engagement, enabling residents to participate in elections, town meetings, and other community activities that influence local governance and policy-making. Ensuring that all residents—especially those who are elderly, disabled, or without private vehicles—can easily reach voting locations is essential for upholding the democratic process and ensuring that all voices are heard.

Additionally, accessible transportation supports broader social equity goals by providing community members with the means to access essential services and participate in economic and social activities. This inclusivity can lead to improved health outcomes, reduced social isolation, and enhanced economic opportunities for traditionally underserved or marginalized groups. Furthermore, a well-designed

transportation network prioritizing accessibility can help mitigate traffic congestion, lower emissions, and encourage sustainable travel habits, aligning with environmental objectives. Overall, this strategy is essential for building a resilient, engaged, and equitable Rochester, ensuring that all residents have the opportunity to participate fully in their community.

Priority: Low - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Planning, Highway, and Town Administrator

Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth’s standardized signage and wayfinding program improved community connectivity, boosted economic activity, and fostered a strong sense of place. Key elements of success included a comprehensive wayfinding plan, collaboration and community input, enhanced connectivity, tourism and economic growth, cohesive branding, and improved accessibility for all residents.



Goal 7.3

Improve the awareness of existing transit options.

Strategy 7.3.2: Investigate the creation of a Traffic Safety Committee that would regularly meet to review documented safety issues, and other transportation related issues.

This strategy focuses on enhancing road safety and managing transportation-related concerns more effectively by investigating the creation of a Traffic Safety Committee. This proposed committee would regularly meet to review documented safety issues and address other transportation-related matters within the town. By establishing a dedicated group with a specific mandate to oversee traffic safety, Rochester aims to adopt a more responsive and proactive approach to managing its transportation infrastructure and ensuring the safety of all road users.

The justification for this strategy is rooted in the critical need to improve public safety and streamline the management of transportation concerns. A Traffic Safety Committee can offer several significant benefits. First, it would provide a structured platform for the continuous monitoring and assessment of traffic safety, enabling timely interventions and improvements based on emerging needs and issues. This proactive approach can help reduce the incidence of accidents and enhance the overall safety of the town's roadways.

Second, by involving various stakeholders—including local government officials, public safety personnel, and community representatives—the committee can foster a collaborative approach to solving traffic

problems. This inclusivity ensures that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making processes. Furthermore, the committee can serve as a forum for public input, increasing transparency and encouraging community involvement in traffic-related planning and policy development.

Additionally, this proactive approach to traffic management can help mitigate the impacts of new developments on the town's traffic flow and safety, ensuring that growth does not come at the expense of public welfare. Overall, the formation of a Traffic Safety Committee aligns with Rochester's goals of promoting a safe, accessible, and community-oriented transportation system, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

Priority: High - Immediate

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator, Police Department, and Highway Department



Example Success Story: The Town of Dartmouth illustrates how a dedicated Traffic Safety Committee can proactively and collaboratively address transportation issues using data-driven approaches. Key elements of success included proactive safety measures, data-informed decisions, improved coordination, impactful solutions, and community engagement, fostering trust and positive outcomes.

Goal 7.4

Improve existing overall transportation-related infrastructure, with a focus on enhancing safety at dangerous intersections.

Strategy 7.4.1: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and public transit facilities.

This strategy is an integral part of the town’s proactive approach to infrastructure management and development. This assessment is designed to evaluate the existing condition, capacity, and performance of the transportation network to identify areas needing improvement, maintenance, or upgrades. Such an evaluation is crucial for planning future projects and ensuring that the infrastructure can meet current and anticipated needs of the community.

The justification for this comprehensive infrastructure is multifaceted. First, it allows the town to prioritize and allocate resources more effectively by identifying the most critical needs and vulnerabilities within the transportation system. This can lead to more targeted and efficient use of funds, avoiding wasteful expenditures on less critical areas. Second, a detailed understanding of the infrastructure’s current state supports better planning and forecasting, essential for accommodating future growth and changes in traffic patterns. This is particularly important for Rochester, as it seeks to balance development with preservation of its rural character. Thus, such assessments can enhance public safety by identifying and rectifying potential hazards in the transportation network, such as structurally deficient bridges or deteriorating road sections. Additionally, by assessing public transit facilities, the town can improve accessibility and encourage more residents to use alternative modes of transport, reducing environmental impacts.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Highway

Example Success Story: The City of New Bedford’s strategic review of its transportation network resulted in impactful improvements, showcasing the value of comprehensive infrastructure assessments. Key elements of success included data-driven analysis, prioritization of critical needs, targeted upgrades, enhanced public transit accessibility, community engagement, and support for long-term planning and growth.



Goal 7.4

Improve existing overall transportation-related infrastructure, with a focus on enhancing safety at dangerous intersections.

Strategy 7.4.2: Continue to prioritize and implement necessary repairs and upgrades to maintain safe roadways.

This strategy is a key component of Rochester’s infrastructure management plan, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing and implementing necessary repairs and upgrades to maintain safe roadways. This proactive approach ensures that the town’s roads are kept in optimal condition, enhancing safety and efficiency for all road users. By systematically addressing the need for repairs and upgrades, Rochester aims to prevent the deterioration of its road network and avoid the higher costs associated with deferred maintenance.

The justification for continually prioritizing roadway maintenance is grounded in several crucial factors. First and foremost, maintaining roads in good condition significantly enhances safety by reducing the likelihood of accidents caused by poor road surfaces, such as potholes or inadequate drainage. Well-maintained roads contribute to the overall quality of life by ensuring smooth and reliable access for commuters, school buses, emergency services, and all residents. This reliability is vital for fostering economic activities and ensuring access to essential services.

Moreover, investing in regular maintenance is a cost-effective strategy in the long run, as it helps avoid the exponentially higher expenses associated with major overhauls or emergency repairs resulting from neglect. Additionally, these maintenance efforts support environmental sustainability by improving traffic flow, which can reduce vehicle emissions through decreased idling and smoother rides.

Priority: Low - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Highway



Example Success Story: The Town of Plymouth’s Road Maintenance and Safety Initiative highlights the effectiveness of a proactive, data-driven approach that integrates regular assessments, community engagement, and strategic funding. Key elements of success included comprehensive assessment and prioritization, proactive maintenance, community involvement, funding strategies and grants, safety upgrades, and economic and quality of life benefits.

Goal 7.4

Improve existing overall transportation-related infrastructure, with a focus on enhancing safety at dangerous intersections.

Strategy 7.4.3: Seek state and federal funding to support infrastructure improvement projects.

This strategy is a critical component of Rochester’s comprehensive planning efforts aimed at enhancing and maintaining its essential services and facilities. By focusing on securing state and federal funding, the town seeks to upgrade and expand vital infrastructure, including roads, bridges, public utilities, and recreational facilities. Tapping into these external financial resources enables Rochester to address its infrastructural needs more efficiently and effectively, alleviating the financial burden on local government budgets and residents.

The justification for this strategy is multi-faceted. First, leveraging state and federal funds allows for the implementation of larger-scale projects that might be unfeasible with local funding alone. This can accelerate the improvement of critical infrastructure, resulting in faster enhancements to safety, efficiency, and overall service quality. Second, infrastructure projects funded through these channels can stimulate local economic growth by creating jobs and improving the business environment, thereby making Rochester more attractive to investors and new enterprises.

Moreover, improved infrastructure directly enhances the quality of life for residents by providing safer roads, better water systems, and more enjoyable public spaces. Up-to-date infrastructure also helps the town meet its environmental and sustainability goals, such as reducing carbon emissions through improved public transit facilities and sustainable water management systems.

Priority: High - Flexible

Responsible Parties: Highway

Example Success Story: The City of New Bedford’s Waterfront Redevelopment Project showcases the transformative power of state and federal funding for infrastructure projects. Key elements of success included comprehensive planning, strategic funding partnerships, economic and environmental impact, job creation, community engagement, and resilience and safety upgrades.





2009 Master Plan Goals

Key Planning Information

Many of the goals outlined in the 2009 Master Plan are ongoing and have been reaffirmed within the 2024 Master Plan. They are viewed as continuous actions or positioned as the subsequent steps following prior actions. The creation of an updated master plan is imperative to ascertain development or infrastructure needs as local conditions change. Most plans are written to provide direction for future activities over a 10-to-20-year period after plan adoption. However, plans should receive a review and possibly update every five years. The final community updated plan serves the following functions:

- Provides stability across time and gives successive public bodies a common framework for addressing land-use issues.
- It is the means by which a community can balance competing private interests. Planning seeks to strike a balance among the many competing demands on land by creating development patterns that are orderly and rational, provide the greatest benefits for individuals and the community as a whole and avoid nuisance conflicts between land uses.
- Offers a platform to avoid digging up last years' new road to lay this year's new waterline. Well planned, orderly and phased development patterns are also less expensive for a community to provide public services than scattered development.

- Sets policies that offer a distinctive sense of place.
- Can provide justification for decisions. Providing a factual and objective basis to support zoning decisions and can be used by communities to defend their decisions if challenged in court.
- Most importantly, through public dialogue, citizens express a collective vision for the future. A master plan developed through a robust public input process enjoys strong community support. Subsequently decisions that are consistent with the plan are less likely to become embroiled in public controversy.

Considering changes in staff and board members since the 2009 Master Plan, it's crucial that the 2024 Master Plan is accessible and aligns with the Town's staffing capacity. Identifying workload and staffing capacity is pivotal for the Town to effectively pursue the community's set goals and vision.

REPOSIBLE PARTY	TOPIC	IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TASK	PRIORITY	COMPLETE/ INCOMPLETE/ ONGOING/CONTINUE
Administrator	Housing	Form a comprehensive, proactive “Affordable Housing Plan” to promote and manage development of Inventoried Affordable housing as well as modestly priced housing for most of us with modest means.	1	Complete
		Assemble a committee to evaluate the incentives to creation of an approvable Planned Production Plan.	1.1	Incomplete
		Initiate a program to build small Affordable units on town owned land using the Local Initiative Program (LIP) option of the Comprehensive Permit Law.	1.2	Incomplete (Rochester Housing Initiative)
		Reenergize the Rochester Housing Opportunity Partnership and charge the group with conducting a Housing Needs Analysis as defined by the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Community Development.	1.3	Incomplete
		Evaluate incentives to create a formal Housing Authority.	1.4	Incomplete
	Community Facilities Circulation & Infrastructure	Continue to seek all grants to supplement funding initiatives for town facilities.	2	Ongoing
	Governance	Continue to maintain 5-year capitalization plan outlining critical needs for capital expenditure to assist in long term planning.	3	Continue
	Community Services Government	Continue exploration of regionalization agreements to cut the cost of services.	4	Incomplete
Board of Health	Community Services Government	In conjunction with Planning Board Town Center Plan, develop conceptual plans for a Town Center-wide treatment plant concurrent with development of Town Center activities.	1	Incomplete
	Community Services Government	On-going evaluation of pond and stream health.	2	Ongoing
Board of Selectmen	Community Services Government	Fully evaluate public water supply options for broad dissemination to residence. Take appropriate action.	1	Continue
	Governance	Begin early study to enter regionalization agreements for wastewater treatment and a public water system.	2	Continue
	Economic Development	Reenergize the Rochester Industrial Development Commission to be proactive about attracting revenue producing developments for Rochester.	3	Continue
	Economic Development	Expand jurisdiction of Industrial Development Commission to include all potential Commercial activity.	4	Incomplete

REPOSIBLE PARTY	TOPIC	IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TASK	PRIORITY	COMPLETE/ INCOMPLETE/ ONGOING/CONTINUE
Board of Selectmen	Community Services Government	Evaluate regionalization of Emergency Medical services to enable upgrade of Emergency Medical Technician status to the Intermediate Level of care.	5	Continue
	Housing	Encourage the Habitat for Humanity organization to achieve "Affordable" living units.	6	Incomplete
	Community Facilities	In conjunction with the Council on Aging and Planning Board, provide affordable housing for the elderly.	7	Continue
	Land Use	Assemble a list of potentially attractive and economically viable projects as candidates for the large Chapter 61 properties. This may possibly position the town to make acceptable plans to acquire such properties within the allowable 120-day decision "window" provided by statute should the owner exercise the right to request release.	7	Continue
	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	Implement the recommendation of the 1999 Town Hall Renovation & Expansion Study.	8	Continue
	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	Design, construct, or renovate the Town facilities in keeping with the rural character of the town.	8	Continue
	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	Explore future possibilities for public transport for the disabled and other unable to drive private vehicles.	8	Complete
	Community Services Government	Continue to practice fiscal responsibility while maintaining community facilities.	8	Continue
	Governance	Undertake a study to determine which commissions can be combined for efficiency.	8	Incomplete
	Governance	Determine which positions can be combined and the costs associated with it.	8	Incomplete
	Governance	Combine the office of Tax Collector and Treasurer.	8	Incomplete
	Governance	Combine Tree Warden and Highway Surveyor and rename it as Director of Public Works.	8	Incomplete
	Governance	Create a Board of Public Works to oversee Public Works and the Director.	8	Incomplete
	Governance	Create a Department of Inspection Services.	8	Incomplete
	Governance	Rename the Park Commission as the Recreation Committee and expand its duties.	8	Incomplete
Governance	Make the town more "people friendly" with walking and bicycling paths and selected sidewalks.	8	Incomplete	
Cemetery Commission	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	Consider future locations for cemetery expansion.	1	Incomplete

REPOSIBLE PARTY	TOPIC	IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TASK	PRIORITY	COMPLETE/ INCOMPLETE/ ONGOING/CONTINUE
Conservation Commission	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	Install wells and sump systems at each of the six main cemeteries.	2	Incomplete
	Open Space	Identify people with enthusiasm to staff an Open Space Action Committee, form a committee and charge it with broad array of challenges listed in the Implementation Action Tasks section of Open Space Chapter.	1	Continue
	Natural Resources	Continue to pursue a broad array of land preservation activities through the Rochester Conservation Commission, the Rochester Land Trust and many interested citizens.	2	Continue
	Natural Resources	Educate the public about the need for protection of all water resources, with regard to wetlands and surface water.	3	Continue
	Natural Resources	Educate the public about the environmental damage caused by conventional lawn care as well as the importance of maintaining wells including the implications of road salting.	4	Continue
Council on Aging	Community Services Government	Conduct feasibility analysis to identify or build senior daycare space	1	Incomplete
	Community Services Government	Expand outreach efforts to attract more senior resident participation.	2	Complete
	Community Services Government	Develop new volunteer opportunities for COA participants and identify programs	3	Complete
	Community Services Government	Conduct an annual program survey of the Council on Aging constituency seeking updates on evolved interests and needs	4	Complete
	Community Services Government	Host a biannual welcoming meeting in the spring and fall for new residents. This would be sponsored by the Rochester Council on Aging. The benefits of such a gathering would serve many purposes. It would provide new residents with information regarding the town, an opportunity to volunteer, and would also provide a venue for vendors. In addition, it would blend new residents with long-time residents and elderly with youth.	5	Complete
Highway Surveyor	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	Identify, design and seek funding for roadway drainage problems throughout town	1	Continue
	Community Facilities, Circulation	Consider adding painted crosswalks at Town Center	2	Continue

REPOSIBLE PARTY	TOPIC	IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TASK	PRIORITY	COMPLETE/ INCOMPLETE/ ONGOING/CONTINUE
Highway Surveyor	Community Facilities, Circulation	Develop a prioritized schedule to implement intersection design and for building sidewalks and pursue necessary funding	3	Incomplete
	Community Facilities, Circulation	Address increased traffic on roads leading through Rochester Center with configuration changes and increased safety features to enhance community friendliness including intersections to be as close to traditional 90-degree intersections as possible and include sidewalks	4	Incomplete
	Community Facilities, Circulation	Initiate a volunteer project for collecting large, non-toxic items for disposal. A nominal fee would be charged. The metal items could be sold for scrap.	5	Incomplete
Historical Commission	Historic Preservation	Identify historic and archeological sites throughout town and take measures to protect them. Explore such alternatives as local, state, or national landmark designation	1	Incomplete
	Historic Preservation	Cultivate an understanding of historic artifacts and their importance to our sense of "Place"	2	Incomplete
	Historic Preservation	Research and public accounts of historic artifacts such as stagecoach roads, early waterway projects, water-power mills and how they worked, etc.	3	Incomplete
	Historic Preservation	Explore funding possibilities for protection of viewsapes through regional, state, and federal sources	4	Incomplete
Library Trustees	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	Renew library 5-year plan per imminent Trustees schedule	1	Continue
	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	Continue to expand the collection of printed and non-printed materials (music, videos) for circulation	2	Continue
	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	Expand outreach for awareness of Library services	3	Continue
Planning Board	Economic Development	Conduct a town-wide forum to discuss expansion of commercial zoning and to identify Permitted Uses in any such expansion. Of course, existing residential uses would be fully "grandfathered" for all residential privileges.	1	Continue
	Economic Development	Re-evaluate the Permitted Uses allowed in Commercial/Industrial zones to make them more conducive to business	1.1	Continue
	Land Use	Provide recommendations to rezone more territory for commercial activities	1.3	Incomplete
	Economic Development	Recommend a variety of new commercial venues through redistricting and/or creation of zoning overlay districts	1.4	Continue

REPOSIBLE PARTY	TOPIC	IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TASK	PRIORITY	COMPLETE/ INCOMPLETE/ ONGOING/CONTINUE
Planning Board	Open Space	Develop and implement Commercial project options for Chapter 61 land-release applications to include Open Space provisions	1.5	Incomplete
	Land Use	Consider “revamping” the two Commercial District by-laws to accommodate mixed use but exclude stand-alone residential units.	1.6	Continue
	Housing	After achieving an “Affordable Housing Plan”, and a Commercial development plan covered in the Economic Development section of this Master Plan, recommend economically viable projects as candidates for the large Chapter 61 properties including Inventoried	1.7	Incomplete
	Economic Development	Consider forming a Special Commercial/Agricultural District to allow unobtrusive commercial activity as well as agriculture in the areas where growers retain non-bog real estate.	1.8	Continue
	Land Use	Develop a comprehensive Town Center Plan	2	Incomplete
	Economic Development	Recommend a Mixed Use by-law and creation of Mixed Use overlay districts.	2.1	Incomplete
	Economic Development	From the land-use plan identify area that would be suitable to support one bedroom apartment or condominium that can provide modest, cost effective housing for people while placing very little demand on municipal services	3.1	Incomplete
	Community Facilities, Circulation & Infrastructure	In conjunction with Highway Surveyor, promote Scenic Road status or equivalent for all in-town roads	3.2	Incomplete
	Natural Resources	Protect Sippican River and adjoining medium/high yield aquifers in parallel with the current Ground Water Protection District and strengthen the provisions	3.3	Continue
	Housing	Create an Open Space Residential Subdivision (OSRD) By-Law (Rural Subdivision Design) with bonus lots for creation of “Affordable” units	3.4	Incomplete
	Land Use	Sponsor an “Open Space Residential Development” by-law to provide a place for TDR development rights to transfer into	3.5	Incomplete
	Open Space	Develop and propose zoning By-laws for OSRD, TDR and Flex-Development as “preferred methods of development”	3.6	Incomplete
	Land Use	Develop and enact a Tradable Development Rights (TDR) By-Law to save the illusion of “country” on the roads we use daily	3.7	Incomplete
	Natural Resources	Propose a Tradable Development Rights (TDR) by-law allowing sale of development rights on undeveloped lots on public ways to save important Viewscapes	3.8	Incomplete
	Natural Resources	Study and recommend more Scenic Roads designations as specified in MGL 40, 15 D as a way to limit road widening and excessive improvement which encourage more aggressive and faster traffic	3.9	Incomplete
	Open Space	Identify and implement liability management techniques for public access to privately owned open space	4.1	Continue
Economic Development	Growing food may become a local “growth industry” should the “oil crisis” exacerbate. In conjunction with the Agricultural Commission evaluate need to preserve areas of known agricultural capability	4.2	Continue	

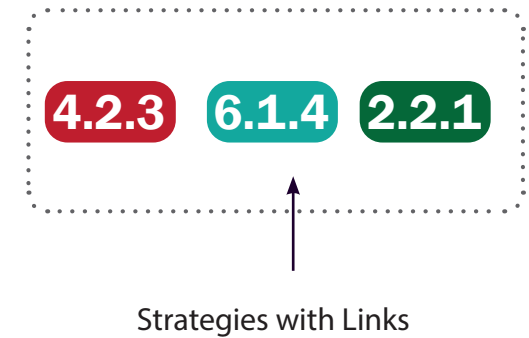
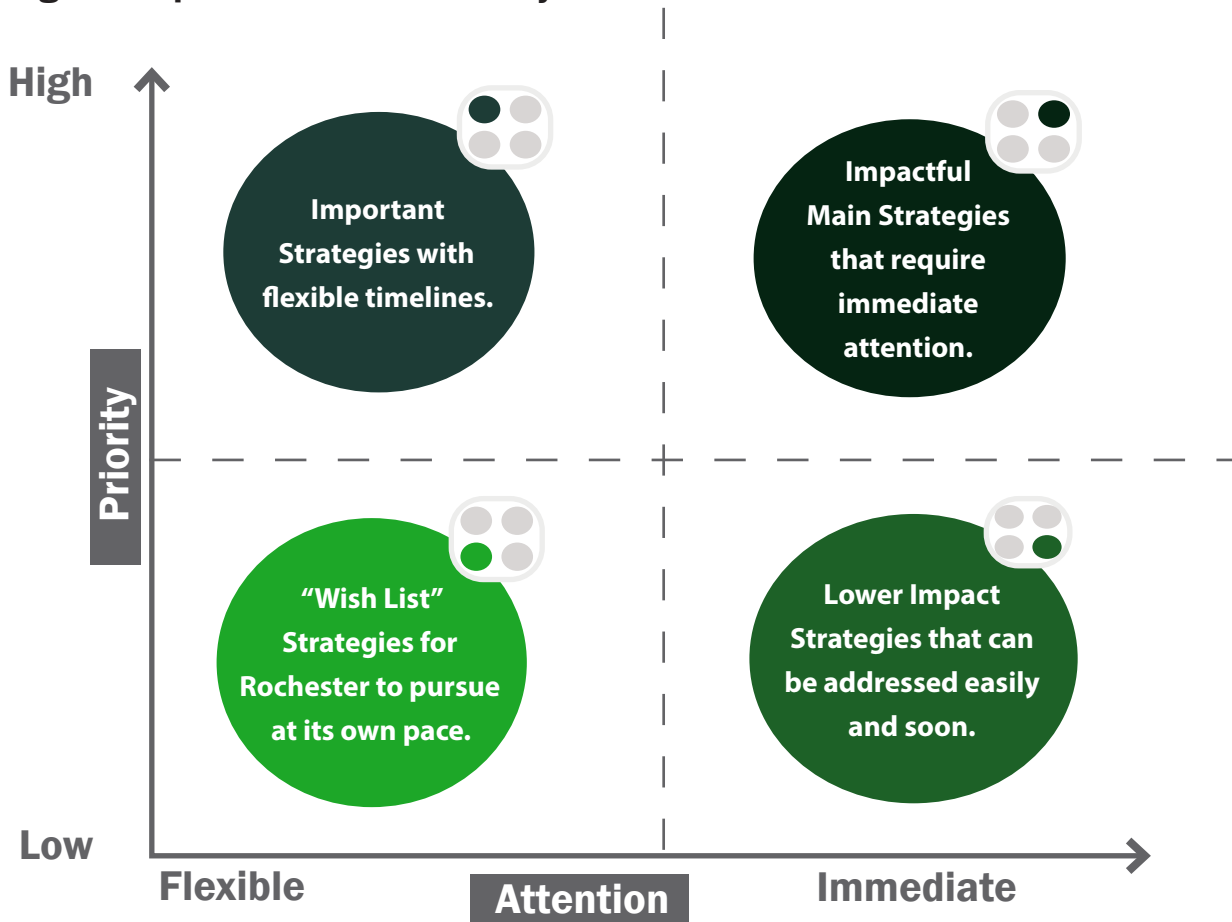
REPOSIBLE PARTY	TOPIC	IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TASK	PRIORITY	COMPLETE/ INCOMPLETE/ ONGOING/CONTINUE
Planning Board	Natural Resources	Generate by-laws designed to retain parcels suitable for truck-gardens to provide local-source produce	4.3	Incomplete
	Historic Preservation	Include historic and archeological impact in local special permit, site plan review, and subdivision control criteria	4.4	Continue
	Historic Preservation	Recommend approaches to protect viewsapes (farm fields, stone walls, tree-lined roads, open views to woodland) throughout town	4.5	Continue
	Land Use	Manage development to create Open Space with specifications on approved plans: * Especially encourage preservation of existing agricultural use and existing fields *Public access is desirable, casual access should be accommodated	4.6	Continue
	Natural Resources	Identify and save some undeveloped space for those who need "constitutionals" in "wild" space	4.7	Incomplete
	Natural Resources	Develop zoning, site plan review regulations, and special permit decision criteria that encourage environmental protection, preservation of natural vegetation, and special wildlife areas	4.8	Continue
	Natural Resources	In conjunctions with Board of Health, begin promotion of waste-water recharge concepts for Rochester-source water currently discharge into Buzzards Bay	4.9	Incomplete
	Housing	Enhance the bonus-lot provisions of the Flexible Development by-law for creation of "Affordable" units and add an "Affordable" requirements to the SRD (over age 55) by-law	5.1	Incomplete
	Housing	In conjunction with Board of Appeals recommend an Accessory Apartment Special Permit which requires qualification as Inventoried Affordable under Commonwealth rules to replace the current two-family Special Permit by-law	5.2	Incomplete
	Housing	Explore strategies to offer housing solutions living groups not qualified by earnings for Inventoried Affordable housing but still unable to "reach" the style of the present single family residential homes being constructed	5.3	Incomplete
Housing	Proactively cultivate developers interested in utilizing the LIP provisions to achieve small "Affordable" housing projects	5.4	Incomplete	
Housing	Zone to encourage Inventoried Affordable by DHCH criteria and financially accessible living facilities. *Refine By-Laws to define an Accessory Apartment concept and require them to qualify as "Affordable" under the State DHCD rules. (See "Housing") *Refine By-Laws to permit more densely settled districts to enable moderate income living	5.5	Continue	
Town Clerk	Community Service Governance	Distribute animal control regulations annually during licensing and enforce such regulations by means of fines for violations.	1	Continue
Town Council	Governance	Town Counsel should review applicable rules and regulations to develop a procedure to implement the nomination-approval method of appointing key personnel.	1	Continue
	Governance	Town Counsel should review appropriate sections of Chapter 41 to ascertain the process and procedures for conversion of elected to appointed positions.	2	Continue



The Big Idea: Implementation Priority

To address resource and staffing limitations, the planning team has prioritized the strategies outlined in this Plan. The chart below illustrates these priorities: strategies in the top-right quadrant are of highest priority and require immediate attention, while those in the bottom-left have a more flexible timeline and are considered “wishlist” items. Each strategy is categorized by a combination of High/Low priority and Flexible/Immediate action, represented visually by a small circle graphic within this framework, as explained in the key. Many strategies call upon the same departments or boards to take action. As noted in the “Introduction to the Master Plan,” each strategy is assigned a High/Low impact priority and a Flexible/Immediate level of attention, with all strategies color-coded by Element.

Using the Implementation Summary

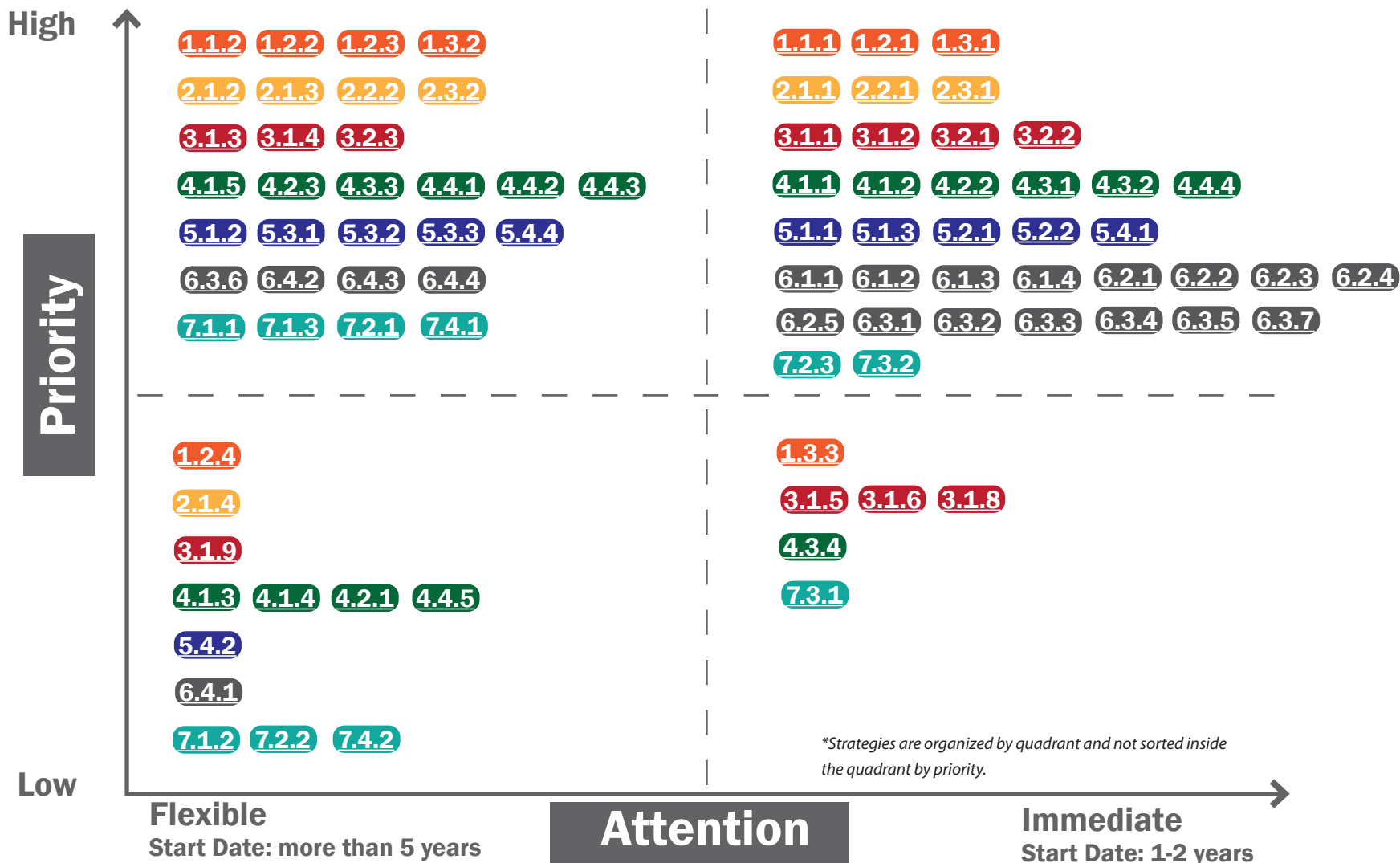


Element Color Code

- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Open Space & Recreation
- Natural & Cultural Resources
- Services & Facilities
- Transportation & Circulation

The Big Idea: Implementation Priority

The Plan outlines a wide range of strategies, many of which require coordinated action from the same departments or boards. As noted on page 174, each strategy is assigned a priority level based on its impact (High/Low) and the urgency of attention required (Flexible/Immediate). This section provides a summary of all strategies, with color-coding by Element for clarity. For a more detailed breakdown of the strategies, refer to the Goals and Strategies Overview sections of each topic throughout the Plan.



STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
Goal 1.1: Explore policies and programs that help Rochester protect its scenic, rural character.				
Complementary Strategies: 1.3.3 and 3.1.2				
1.1.1: Establish written rural development design guidelines within the zoning bylaw to regulate future growth in agricultural and residential areas preserving the town's character and ensuring any existing or future water line infrastructure is thoughtfully integrated to support sustainable future development.	High - Immediate	Planning, Agricultural Commission, Water Commission, Conservation, Town Administrator, and Economic Development Committee	Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD), American Planning Association (APA), Local Zoning Bylaw Workshops, and Planning Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct community input sessions to gather feedback on zoning and design standards. Draft guidelines incorporating community feedback, with a focus on protecting agricultural and residential character. Collaborate with the Planning Board to incorporate guidelines into zoning bylaws. Conduct public hearings to finalize and adopt guidelines.
1.1.2: Promote agri-tourism and support local farmers to sustain agricultural landscapes.	High - Flexible	Planning, Agricultural Commission, Select Board, Economic Development Committee, and Events Committee	Massachusetts Agri-Tourism Association, Local Farmers' Markets and Cooperative Programs, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT), and State and federal grants supporting agricultural innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and map key sites for agri-tourism opportunities. Develop marketing campaigns in collaboration with local farmers and tourism boards. Work with agricultural commissions to create incentives for farmers participating in agri-tourism initiatives.
Goal 1.2: Protect, create, and improve access to additional open space trails and natural areas while preserving water resources and supplies.				
Complementary Strategies: 4.2.1 and 5.3.2				
1.2.1: Support, expand and prioritize the protection of critical natural areas, while considering tax implications of taking land off the tax rolls.	High - Immediate	Conservation Commission, Select Board, Assessors, Land Trust and Planning	Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, Local Conservation Commissions and Land Trusts, Buzzards Bay Coalition, State-level Conservation Incentive Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a comprehensive assessment of critical natural areas. Identify opportunities for land acquisition or easements in collaboration with conservation organizations. Implement strategies to offset tax implications for conserved lands.
1.2.2: Partner with local land trusts, to assess financial impacts of open space protection, public water resources, and other natural areas.	High - Immediate	Water Commission, Conservation Commission, Select Board, and Board of Assessors	Land Trusts, Local Watershed Protection Organizations, Collaborative Programs with the Board of Assessors and Water Commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a working group with local land trusts and municipal departments. Assess financial and resource needs for open space projects. Create public awareness campaigns about the benefits of protected open spaces.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
1.2.3: Continue to study the Town of Rochester and the surrounding communities water resources as it pertains to Rochester.	High - Flexible	Water Commission, Planning, and Town Administrator	U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Studies, Regional Water Resource Collaborations with SRPEDD, and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular water resource assessments and studies. • Collaborate with neighboring towns on regional water resource initiatives. • Share findings with the public and integrate results into future planning efforts.
1.2.4: Define and identify priority areas that are critical to Rochester for future preservation.	Low - Flexible	Planning, Agricultural Commission, Historic Commission, and Land Trust	Mass Audubon and their Conservation Mapping Tools, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, State and Federal Conservation Grant Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize GIS mapping and public input to identify priority areas. • Establish a prioritization plan for conservation projects. • Seek funding sources for preservation efforts.
<p>Goal 1.3: Update local bylaws/regulations to minimize the impact of new development while maintaining the Town’s character, ensuring that each development contributes positively to the town’s progress without altering its fundamental identity.</p> <p>Complimentary Strategies: 6.3.1</p>				
1.3.1: Conduct a third-party bylaw review to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify conflicts and outdated provisions, ensuring that all bylaws are legally defensible and align with the town’s long-term goals. • Update Rochester’s zoning bylaw by analyzing each zoning district to identify sustainable and appropriate land uses that minimize development impacts to prevent growth in areas where it could strain infrastructure. • Perform a comprehensive zoning review to ensure that local bylaws incentivize desired land uses and support effective zoning enforcement. 	High - Immediate	Planning, Bylaw Review Committee, Building, and Zoning Board of Appeals	American Planning Association (APA), Legal Advisory Services for Local Governments, and Hire 3 rd party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a qualified consultant for the bylaw review process. • Host workshops to analyze outdated or conflicting provisions. • Revise bylaws based on review findings and community goals.
1.3.2: Develop a detailed use table that clearly outlines and organizes permitted uses for each district, ensuring alignment with the town’s goals of protecting rural character, supporting agriculture, and guiding responsible development.	High - Flexible	Planning, Bylaw Review Committee, Building, and Zoning Board of Appeals	State Planning and Zoning Advisory Committees, Local Zoning Committees, and Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review permitted and conditional land uses for all zoning districts. • Create a detailed, user-friendly table for public and municipal use. • Ensure regular updates and community review.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
1.3.3: Thoughtfully expand mixed use areas with open space and residential design bylaw standards that allow for desired growth while protecting rural character and natural resources.	Low - Immediate	Planning Board, Select Board, Building, Zoning Board of Appeals, Zoning Bylaw Review Committee, and Conservation Commission	Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, and Local Planning Boards and Conservation Trusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and map potential mixed-use districts. Develop design standards for integrating open space into mixed-use areas. Engage developers and stakeholders to pilot mixed-use projects.
Goal 2.1: Create more diverse housing options, such as single family, small multi-family, senior housing, and assisted living facilities.				
Complimentary Strategies: 1.3.5				
2.1.1: Encourage mixed-age housing developments that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include both senior-friendly units and options for young families. Create multigenerational communities that support diverse housing needs and foster neighborhood connections. 	High - Immediate	Planning Board, Select Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals	Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP), Aging-in-Place Programs, and Local Housing Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with housing developers to create mixed-age community plans. Provide incentives, such as reduced permitting fees, for developments meeting community needs. Develop public-private partnerships to implement multigenerational housing.
2.1.2: Create incentives for developers to include diverse housing types in their projects.	High - Flexible	Planning, Select Board, Town Administrator, and Assessors	State and Federal Tax Incentives, Affordable Housing Trust Funds, Community Preservation Act, and (CPA) Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing incentives and create targeted financial or zoning-based incentives. Promote new incentive programs through public outreach and developer engagement.
2.1.3: Explore zoning changes to allow a broader range of housing types where appropriate in Rochester.	High - Flexible	Planning and Building	SRPEDD Housing Studies and Zoning Initiatives, Municipal Zoning Review Boards, and Local Housing Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct zoning analyses to identify areas suitable for diverse housing. Host public meetings to discuss potential changes and address concerns.
2.1.4: Identify and share opportunities for housing production with potential speculators.	Low - Flexible	Planning, Town Administrator, and Select Board	Real Estate Development Partnerships and State Incentives for Affordable Housing Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with regional housing agencies and market potential sites to developers. Provide information sessions for potential speculators on local housing needs.
Goal 2.2: Support Aging-in-Community by creating housing options that fit the changing needs of the population.				
Complimentary Strategies: 5.2.1				
2.2.1: Incentivize senior housing and promote aging in community strategies, such as complementary services and programs.	High - Immediate	Planning Board, Town Administrator, Select Board, and Council on Aging	Massachusetts Council on Aging and Senior Housing Tax Credit Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and appoint members with relevant expertise. Develop a mission statement and initial goals for economic initiatives. Engage with local businesses to align committee objectives.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
2.2.2: Ensure adequate information is available regarding tax credits for seniors such as, but not limited to, the Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit.	High - Flexible	Council on Aging, Accounting, Treasurer, Tax Collector, and Board of Assessors	Massachusetts Department of Revenue Senior Circuit Breaker and Tax Credit Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with the Council on Aging (COA) and financial experts to develop informational materials. Host workshops and outreach events to inform seniors about tax benefits and credits. Continuously update and distribute information as state and federal programs evolve.
<p>Goal 2.3: Balance new housing development with natural features and open space.</p> <p>Complimentary Strategies: 1.2.2, 4.1.2 and 5.3.1</p>				
2.3.1: Review and amend the cluster development bylaw, as needed, to encourage open space preservation alongside housing development, ensuring water line infrastructure is strategically planned and integrated to support new growth.	High - Immediate	Planning, Zoning, Building, and Conservation	Local Open Space Preservation Initiatives and Regional Planning Commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the Planning Board and community stakeholders to review current regulations. Draft amendments to the cluster development bylaw that prioritize open space and natural resource protection. Seek input and approval from town residents through public meetings and hearings.
2.3.2: Collaborate with the Rochester Land Trust to protect critical open space and secure water infrastructure needs.	High - Flexible	Planning, Conservation, Rochester Land Trust, and Water Commission	Land Trust Networks, Massachusetts Conservation Programs, and All Local Land Trusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify priority areas for conservation and protection with the Land Trust. Establish formal partnerships to leverage grants and other funding sources for land acquisition. Develop management plans to ensure open space preservation aligns with housing development goals.
<p>Goal 3.1: Support farms and agricultural businesses.</p> <p>Complimentary Strategies: 3.1.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.4, 4.4.5 and 5.4.2</p>				
3.1.1: Form an Economic Development Committee to oversee economic initiatives, support local businesses, and guide policies for sustained economic growth.	High - Immediate	Select Board and Town Administrator	Local Chambers of Commerce, SRPEDD, and Economic Development Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define roles and responsibilities of the committee members. Develop a charter outlining goals and tasks for the committee. Engage with local business stakeholders to ensure alignment on priorities.
3.1.2: Explore an agricultural preservation zoning district and create a supporting farm map for Rochester agricultural properties.	High - Immediate	Planning, Building, Zoning, and Agricultural Commission	Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and Agricultural Zoning Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a feasibility study for agricultural preservation zoning. Gather data to identify and map agricultural properties. Collaborate with local land trusts and planning agencies to implement the zoning district.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
3.1.3: Energize the Agricultural Commission.	High - Flexible	Agricultural Commission, Select Board, and Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a needs assessment for farmers and agricultural businesses. • Develop initiatives and outreach programs to support agriculture. • Regularly engage with the farming community to identify emerging needs.
3.1.4: Strengthen the Town's involvement in, but not limited to, the SouthCoast Food Policy Council to engage in regional food policy discussions.	High - Flexible	Agricultural Commission, Planning, Select Board and Town Administrator	SouthCoast Food Policy Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate representatives to attend meetings and provide input on town priorities. • Develop local initiatives based on regional food policy strategies. • Foster partnerships with regional food organizations.
3.1.5: Promote state-funded soil quality programs to support farms and agricultural businesses by providing financial incentives for farmers with high-quality soil.	Low - Immediate	Conservation, Soil Board, and Agricultural Commission	State Agricultural Grants and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with state agencies to identify relevant soil quality programs. • Create informational materials to educate farmers about available resources. • Offer workshops or consultations to encourage program participation.
3.1.6: Establish a farmers' cooperative to support shared resources and marketing.	Low - Immediate	Agricultural Commission, Select Board, and Town Administrator	Cooperative Extension Services and USDA Cooperative Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage local farmers to gauge interest in cooperative membership. • Develop a business plan for cooperative operations. • Launch marketing and outreach efforts to attract members and promote cooperative benefits.
3.1.7: Provide partnerships and other incentives for farms that host community-related events to promote local agriculture and community engagement.	Low - Immediate	Agricultural Commission, Cultural Council, Select Board, Economic Development Committee, and Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop incentive structures (e.g., tax breaks, grants). • Coordinate with local event organizers and agricultural leaders. • Advertise and promote agricultural events to the public. • Maintain the Little Hundred Acre Wood as an educational and recreational resource to foster environmental and agricultural awareness among residents.
3.1.8: Ensure Rochester farms are featured on the state MassGrown Map.	Low - Immediate	Agricultural Commission, Cultural Council, Economic Development Committee, and Planning	MassGrown Map Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and verify data on local farms. • Submit farm information to the MassGrown Map administrators. • Regularly update entries to reflect changes and new listings.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
3.1.9: Offer educational opportunities and speakers on various topics related to farmland stewardship.	Low - Flexible	Agricultural Commission, Economic Development Committee, and Planning	Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify relevant topics and recruit expert speakers. Organize events and workshops for farmers and the community. Gather feedback to tailor future educational offerings.
<p>Goal 3.2: Support businesses in the town center.</p> <p>Complimentary Strategies: 1.3.3, 3.1.1 and 4.3.4</p>				
3.2.1: Foster a greater sense of place in the Rochester Village through wayfinding, coordinated façade and signage improvements, events, and local partnerships.	High - Immediate	Planning, Village Business Community, and Economic Development Committee	Downtown Revitalization Programs and Façade Improvement Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a wayfinding plan with consistent signage design. Identify businesses willing to participate in façade improvement programs. Organize and promote community events to increase engagement.
3.2.2: Expand the Limited Commercial Zoning District to allow for more businesses in the existing area.	High - Immediate	Planning Board	Local Planning Boards and State Economic Development Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct zoning analysis to identify potential areas for expansion. Engage the community through public hearings and workshops. Draft and propose zoning amendments for approval.
3.2.3: Develop a “Shop Local” campaign to support local businesses.	High - Flexible	Planning, Town Administrator, and Economic Development Committee	Local Business Associations and State and Regional Retail Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a branding and marketing strategy for the campaign. Partner with local businesses and civic organizations. Implement promotions, discounts, and events to encourage local shopping.
<p>Goal 4.1: Protect and preserve the quality of surface water and groundwater supplies and resources.</p> <p>Complimentary Strategies: 1.2.1 and 7.4.2</p>				
4.1.1: Continue to work on a comprehensive water flow analysis to assess and ensure the quality and quantity of availability of public water resources for residents.	High - Immediate	Planning and Water Commission	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct data collection on water flow and quality. Analyze findings to ensure adequate water availability for residents. Implement policies to address potential water quantity and quality issues.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
4.1.2: Implement a watershed management plan to protect water resources	High - Immediate	Conservation, Planning, Highway, and Water Commission	Watershed Associations, State-funded watershed grants, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with local, state, and regional stakeholders. Develop and finalize a watershed management plan. Execute strategies identified in the plan for long-term protection.
4.1.3: Continue to partner with state, regional, and non-profit environmental stewards to understand and improve groundwater and surface water.	Low - Flexible	Select Board, Planning, and Water Commission	Massachusetts Rivers Alliance, Buzzards Bay Coalition, Local conservation groups, and MassDEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships with state, regional, and non-profit organizations. Develop collaborative projects focusing on water quality improvement. Leverage partnerships to identify and reduce water pollutants.
4.1.4: Develop a public education campaign on water conservation practices that also highlights sustaining water quality.	Low - Flexible	Water Commission and Conservation	Massachusetts Environmental Trust, Local water commissions, and Community education organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop informative materials highlighting water conservation. Emphasize the role of water line infrastructure in public outreach. Conduct workshops and events to educate the community.
4.1.5: Apply for state and/or federal grant funding to implement stormwater management strategies identified by the Rochester Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan.	High - Flexible	Highway, Planning, and Town Administrator	Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program, FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants, and State Revolving Fund (SRF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify state and federal grant opportunities. Submit grant proposals based on the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan. Implement stormwater management projects once funded.
Goal 4.2: Conserve natural habitats, forested landscapes, and agricultural land with creative solutions to retain tax base.				
Complimentary Strategies: 5.3.1 and 5.3.2				
4.2.1: Promote sustainable forestry practices on public and private lands.	Low - Flexible	Tree Warden and Conservation	U.S. Forest Service programs, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and Local land trusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with private and public landowners to develop sustainable forestry plans. Offer workshops and materials to promote best practices.
4.2.2: Explore creative solutions to retain the tax base while protecting open spaces.	High - Immediate	Board of Assessors, Accounting, Treasurer, Planning and Conservation	Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition and Tax incentive programs for conservation lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with municipal and tax authorities to propose innovative tax incentives. Evaluate existing models and adapt them to local needs.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
4.2.3: Offer educational opportunities and speakers on various topics related to natural, forested and agricultural stewardship.	High - Flexible	Conservation and Planning	Local universities and cooperative extension programs and Conservation organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize events and invite experts to speak on sustainable land management. Offer workshops to promote natural, forested, and agricultural landscapes .
Goal 4.3: Protect and maintain historical preservation landscapes and architecture.				
4.3.1: Review and amend Historic Bylaw and restructure	High - Immediate	Historical Commission, Historic District Commission, and Planning	Massachusetts Historical Commission and Local Historic Districts and Commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a thorough review of the existing bylaw. Identify necessary changes to improve the effectiveness and consistency.
4.3.2: Review the Historic District Zoning District and create accompanying design guidelines for development	High - Immediate	Historical Commission, Historic District Commission and Planning	Preservation Massachusetts and Community development organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear design standards for new and existing developments. Conduct community outreach to ensure public support and understanding.
4.3.3: Promote heritage tourism through the Historical Society, Library, and regional groups.	High - Flexible	Library, Cultural Council, Economic Development Committee, and Historical Commission	Local Historical Societies, State tourism boards, and Massachusetts Cultural Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with local organizations to highlight heritage assets. Create promotional materials and offer guided tours. Ensure library facilities and grounds align with the historical and cultural character of the district by maintaining outdoor spaces and replacing infrastructure, such as the book drop, to enhance aesthetic cohesion.
4.3.4: Foster a greater sense of place in the "Rochester Village" through wayfinding, coordinated façade and signage improvements, events, and local partnerships	Low - Immediate	Planning, and Economic Development Committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and install coordinated signage throughout Rochester Village. Collaborate with local partners for consistent messaging and maintenance.
Goal 4.4: Support the creation of more opportunities for community events throughout Town.				
Complimentary Strategies: 3.1.1 and 4.4.5				
4.4.1: Leverage key locations as venues for recurring community events	High - Flexible	Park Commission, Cultural Council, Council on Aging, Economic Development Committee, and Library	Local businesses and event spaces and Cultural and civic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and prepare key town locations for recurring events. Develop a calendar of recurring community activities.
4.4.2: Collaborate with local businesses, farmers, and civic groups to create events that highlight Rochester's cultural, historic, and natural resources	High - Flexible	Cultural Council, Historical Commission, Agricultural Commission, Economic Development Committee, Conservation and Planning	Chambers of Commerce and Farmers' associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with local businesses, farmers, and civic groups. Plan and execute events to celebrate Rochester's resources.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
4.4.3: Promote and share cultural and recreational events to boost community participation and provide benefits to all members of the community, young and old.	High - Flexible	Cultural Council, Council on Aging, Economic Development Committee, and Park Commission		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop marketing strategies to boost event awareness and participation. Utilize social media, posters, and local networks for event promotion.
4.4.4: Create an Events Committee with Economic Development Committee collaboration to advance and support community events throughout the Town, strengthening local engagement and economic growth.	High - Immediate	Select Board and Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and establish a committee dedicated to event planning. Work with the Economic Development Committee to maximize community engagement.
4.4.5: Strategically connect cultural spaces throughout town to enhance resident access and engagement, fostering a network of accessible, community-oriented locations for cultural events and gatherings.	Low - Flexible	Historical Commission, Agricultural Commission, Cultural Council, Planning, Economic Development Committee, and Select Board		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and link cultural spaces within the town. Create walking paths and guides to enhance accessibility and engagement.
Goal 5.1: Enhance public recreation opportunities by providing better information about recreational activities.				
5.1.1: Create, post, and frequently update an interactive online map of recreational facilities and trails on the town website.	High - Immediate	Conservation Commission, Land Trust, and Park Commission	Local GIS specialists, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Coordinate with Rochester Land Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and launch the interactive map. Regularly update content to reflect new and existing facilities. Coordinate updates with relevant town departments. Highlight recreational and cultural opportunities available at the library, including the Library of Things collection, Reading Garden, Gazebo, and Little Hundred Acre Wood.
5.1.2: Continue to apply for grants to upgrade park facilities and equipment.	High - Flexible	Planning, Facilities, Highway, and Park Commission	Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify relevant state, federal, or private grants. Prepare and submit grant applications. Coordinate with the town's finance and recreation departments.
5.1.3: Create a Recreation position with a keen eye to developing a department.	High - Immediate	Town Administrator and Select Board		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding and approval for a new Recreation position. Develop a job description, recruit, and hire Outline the role's responsibilities to build and develop recreation programs.
Goal 5.2: Maintain parks and recreational facilities to ensure they are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all.				
Complimentary Strategies: 5.1.2 and 5.1.3				

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
5.2.1: Partner with the COA and Park Commission to create inclusive playgrounds, senior-friendly fitness, and multigenerational activities that encourage benefits for old and young.	High - Immediate	Council on Aging Department and Park Commission		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate on facility design to ensure inclusivity. Incorporate feedback from seniors and other demographics. Develop activity schedules promoting multigenerational use.
5.2.2: Create a field fee structure for the use of all Rochester parks and recreational spaces.	High - Immediate	Accounting, Town Administrator, Select Board, and Park Commission		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a needs assessment for park usage. Develop and approve a fee schedule. Establish a system for fee collection and enforcement.
Goal 5.3: Actively seek and acquire additional open spaces and expand community access to natural areas for recreation and conservation, while also finding avenues for creative tax incentives.				
Complimentary Strategies: 1.2.2				
5.3.1: Encourage land donations and use state and federal grants for open space acquisition.	High - Flexible	Planning, Assessors, Town Administrator, and Conservation	Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Local land trusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential land for donation or acquisition. Engage in outreach with property owners. Apply for applicable grants to secure funds for acquisition.
5.3.2: Thoroughly review all financial impacts of open space acquisition efforts on the community.	High - Flexible	Assessors, Accounting, Conservation, and Planning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct cost-benefit analyses of proposed acquisitions. Host community forums for feedback on fiscal impacts. Collaborate with financial planners and relevant committees.
5.3.3: Find strategic solutions for creating tax incentives.	High - Flexible	Select Board, Town Administrator, Planning, Accounting, Assessors, and Land Trust	Land Trusts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local government and legal teams to explore tax incentive options. Develop and propose programs to encourage participation. Promote and educate landowners on available incentives.
Goal 5.4: Commit to the protection and preservation of farm and forested lands.				
Complimentary Strategies: 3.1.1 and 5.1.3				
5.4.1: Enforce Chapter 61 plans.	High - Immediate	Conservation, Assessors, Select Board, Agricultural Commission, and Planning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review and monitor enrolled lands. Ensure compliance with Chapter 61 requirements. Engage with landowners to maintain program participation.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
5.4.2: Continue to partner with the Rochester Land Trust, local farmers, and regional entities to actively conserve land.	Low - Flexible	Conservation, Historical Commission, Land Trust, and Agricultural Commission	Land Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain partnerships with relevant groups. • Engage in regular meetings to assess conservation opportunities. • Implement cooperative strategies for land preservation.
5.4.3: Explore a Community Wood Bank Program and other innovative approaches, such as opportunities to utilize wood as secondary products, with local and regional forestry partners.	Low - Flexible	Conservation, Tree Warden, Highway, Land Trust, Select Board, and Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess feasibility and community interest in a Wood Bank. • Collaborate with forestry experts and regional partners. • Launch and monitor program effectiveness.
5.4.4: Offer educational opportunities and speakers to inform the public on various topics related to forestry and land stewardship. Create listening sessions for property owners to better understand their challenges and to create solutions	High - Flexible	Conservation, Tree Warden, Planning, Agricultural Commission, and Town Administrator	DCR, Mass Bureau of Forest Fire Control, Urban + Community Forestry, Forest Legacy Program, Climate Forestry, USDA, and Ch. 61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule workshops and speaker events. • Promote awareness through outreach and community sessions. • Gather feedback to address owner challenges and craft solutions.
Goal 6.1: Enhance and sustain town infrastructure with strategic financial management.				
Complimentary Strategies: 6.4.2, 7.4.1, and 7.4.3				
6.1.1: Develop a capital improvement plan to prioritize infrastructure projects and growing needs of the community.	High - Immediate	Select Board, Town Administrator, Capital Planning Committee, Accounting, and All Department Heads		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritize infrastructure projects based on community needs and fiscal capacity. • Engage relevant committees to oversee plan development and secure necessary approvals. • Allocate budgetary resources through phased investments for identified projects.
6.1.2: Establish a reserve fund for emergency infrastructure repairs	High - Immediate	Select Board, Town Administrator, Accounting, Facilities, and Highway	FEMA Assistance Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review historical data on infrastructure failures to estimate reserve fund requirements. • Seek approval from town leadership and allocate funds for emergency use. • Set fund replenishment guidelines and annual reviews to ensure readiness.
6.1.3: Implement energy efficiency upgrades in town buildings to reduce costs	High - Immediate	Select Board and Facilities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct energy audits of all town-owned buildings to identify potential improvements. • Develop an energy upgrade implementation plan and seek available grants. • Monitor and evaluate energy savings post-implementation to ensure benefits.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
6.1.4: Create a funding source for waterline improvements when the time comes to accept the responsibility of maintenance on the Wareham waterline.	High - Immediate	Select Board, Accounting, and Water Commission		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the future waterline maintenance needs in collaboration with relevant departments. • Research possible funding mechanisms, including user fees, grants, and capital allocations. • Implement a strategy for sustainable waterline maintenance and improvements.
<p>Goal 6.2: Improve service efficiency and accessibility.</p> <p>Complimentary Strategies: 6.4.2, 7.4.1 and 7.4.3</p>				
6.2.1: Conduct a comprehensive service delivery audit involving all town departments and staff to identify areas for improvement.	High - Immediate	Select Board, Town Administrator, and All Departments	Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve town departments and staff to assess areas for process improvements. • Identify service gaps, redundancies, and potential enhancements. • Develop a plan for implementing audit recommendations.
6.2.2: Implement a customer feedback system to gather input on service quality.	High - Immediate	Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish methods for collecting feedback from residents regarding service quality. • Regularly review and act on feedback to improve service delivery and accessibility. • Share feedback summaries and improvements with the public to demonstrate responsiveness.
6.2.3: Improve the development and permitting process, then create a user-friendly Development and Permitting Guide to encourage new businesses and existing business growth.	High - Immediate	Economic Development Committee, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Building, Fire, Police, and Highway		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with stakeholders to create a streamlined Development and Permitting Guide. • Digitize application and review processes for greater transparency and efficiency. • Provide workshops or resources to educate applicants on process improvements.
6.2.4: Implement the recommendations of the ongoing regional broadband infrastructure plan to ensure reliable highspeed internet access for all residents and businesses.	High - Immediate	Select Board and Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with regional entities to assess gaps and needs for broadband services. • Identify and pursue funding opportunities for broadband expansion. • Ensure reliable high-speed internet is accessible to all town residents and businesses. • Upgrade the library's technology infrastructure, including internet and wireless speeds, to enhance accessibility for all residents.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
6.2.5: Improve and enhance internal communications and relationships with all staff.	High - Immediate	Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate regular inter-departmental meetings to foster collaboration and alignment. Develop initiatives to improve communication channels and recognize staff contributions. Evaluate and refine internal communications through staff feedback mechanisms.
Goal 6.3: Continue to foster a safe, engaged, and informed community.				
Complimentary Strategies: 6.3.2 and 6.3.6				
6.3.1: Improve communication methods between the Town and its residents	High - Immediate	Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand communication channels such as newsletters, social media, and public meetings. Develop clear communication protocols and engage community input on preferred methods. Evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies periodically.
6.3.2: Enhance communication and collaboration between town employees and boards to improve coordination and streamline decision-making processes.	High - Immediate	Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize joint meetings to discuss cross-departmental initiatives and goals. Implement collaborative tools and platforms for improved coordination. Foster a culture of open communication and teamwork among all town entities.
6.3.3: Create a community engagement plan to involve residents in decision-making.	High - Immediate	Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage residents in shaping the plan through public meetings and workshops. Develop targeted engagement strategies for diverse community groups. Implement measures and track progress to gauge community participation and feedback.
6.3.4: Review organizational structures and create a visual flowchart to improve understanding of the roles and responsibilities of town staff.	High - Immediate	Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map existing roles and responsibilities within the town's organizational structure. Identify areas for potential streamlining or clarity improvements. Publish the visual flowchart and provide training on its application.
6.3.5: Host regular town hall meetings and public forums to keep residents informed, such as a Citizens Academy	High - Immediate	Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule and publicize regular meetings for resident engagement on key issues. Incorporate interactive elements to encourage resident participation. Document and act on feedback provided during these sessions.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
6.3.6: Encourage youth participation in local government.	High - Flexible	Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop programs or internships aimed at engaging youth in governance. • Partner with schools to promote awareness and interest in civic activities. • Create youth-specific committees or roles to involve younger residents.
6.3.7: Develop a community engagement program to enhance public safety.	High - Immediate	Town Administrator and Police		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with public safety departments to identify key areas of focus. • Host public safety workshops and demonstrations to foster community awareness. • Evaluate program success and adjust based on community needs and feedback.
<p>Goal 6.4: Secure financial support for community projects, i.e. Fire Station.</p> <p>Complimentary Strategies: 4.1.5, 6.1.4, 7.2.1 and 7.4.3</p>				
6.4.1: Establish clear communication strategies for funders to ensure they understand the project's impact and value.	Low - Flexible	Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop materials that outline the impact and value of key projects. • Engage with potential funders through presentations, workshops, and proposals. • Track communications to build and maintain strong relationships with funders.
6.4.2: Apply for state and federal grants to fund community projects.	High - Flexible	Town Administrator, Facilities, Fire, Highway, Planning Board, and Conservation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify suitable grant opportunities aligned with town projects. • Assemble cross-departmental teams to write and submit comprehensive grant applications. • Manage the grants awarded responsibly, adhering to reporting and compliance requirements.
6.4.3: Develop a public-private partnership program to leverage private investment.	High - Flexible	Town Administrator and Select Board		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential private sector partners with mutual interests in community development. • Draft partnership agreements that clarify roles, expectations, and benefits. • Foster ongoing collaboration to advance project goals and community benefits.
6.4.4: Create a crowdfunding platform for community led projects.	High - Flexible	Town Administrator, Select Board, and Events Committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and launch a crowdfunding platform to support grassroots projects. • Provide training and guidelines to ensure successful campaigns. • Engage community members and businesses to contribute to campaign successes.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
Goal 7.1: Explore the creation of a bike path network through dedicated protected properties.				
Complimentary Strategies: 6.4.2 and 6.4.4				
7.1.1: Conduct a feasibility study for potential bike path routes.	High - Flexible	Planning, Town Administrator, Land Trust, and Highway	SRPEDD and South Coast Bikeway Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess viable paths and connectivity options based on land ownership, topography, and community needs
7.1.2: Explore partnerships with regional organizations, such as SRPEDD and the South Coast Bikeway Alliance, to conduct a feasibility study for potential bike path routes	Low - Flexible	Planning and Highway	Federal and state transportation grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate to identify potential alignments, share best practices, and leverage regional planning resources.
7.1.3: Apply for state and federal funding to develop bike paths.	High - Flexible	Planning, Highway, and Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and submit grant applications that align with local and regional planning objectives.
Goal 7.2: Explore the creation of a bike path network through dedicated protected properties.				
Complimentary Strategies: 7.4.1				
7.2.1: Seek state and federal funding to support roadway improvement projects.	High - Flexible	Highway Department		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and pursue grants to enhance existing transit options and improve accessibility for seniors and disabled residents.
7.2.2: Continue to support and circulate COA transportation options and explore partnerships with regional transit authorities.	Low - Flexible	Council on Aging and Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and circulate information on COA transportation services; seek to expand partnerships with regional transit authorities.
7.2.3: Ensure accessible transportation options are available for all residents to reach essential destinations, including voting locations, to promote civic engagement and equitable access.	High - Immediate	Town Administrator and Council on Aging		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plans that provide transport options to essential destinations, including voting locations.
Goal 7.3: Improve the awareness of existing transit options.				
Complimentary Strategies:				
7.3.1: Coordinate a program of standardized signage and wayfinding throughout town.	Low - Immediate	Planning, Highway, and Town Administrator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key locations for clear, accessible signage across the town.
7.3.2: Investigate the creation of a Traffic Safety Committee that would regularly meet to review documented safety issues, certain types of proposed developments and other transportation related issues	High - Immediate	Town Administrator, Police, and Highway		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review safety issues, traffic flow, and development impacts to ensure community safety.
Goal 7.4: Improve existing overall transportation-related infrastructure, with a focus on enhancing safety at dangerous intersections.				
Complimentary Strategies: 6.1.1				

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS	MAIN STEPS
7.4.1: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and public transit facilities.	High - Flexible	Highway		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review roads, bridges, and public transit facilities for safety and efficiency.
7.4.2: Continue to prioritize and implement necessary repairs and upgrades to maintain safe roadways.	Low - Flexible	Highway		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule and execute the necessary repairs to maintain safety and mobility.
7.4.3: Seek state and federal funding to support infrastructure improvement projects.	High - Flexible	Highway		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage state and federal resources for identified priorities



SRPEDD
Southeastern Regional Planning
& Economic Development District