




FAIRHAVEN 2040

Town of Fairhaven Master Plan



FINAL

March 2018

Prepared by 

In association with





Town of Fairhaven, MA

Fairhaven 2040

Master Plan

FINAL

March 9, 2018

Version 3.0 - FINAL

Presented to: Town of Fairhaven Department of Planning and Economic Development
Town of Fairhaven Planning Board

Presented by:



101 Walnut Street

Watertown, MA 02472-4026

Engineers | Scientists | Planners | Designers

www.vhb.com

Acknowledgements

This Plan was prepared over a twelve-month period through a process of extensive public participation and review. Thanks for their special efforts, guidance and cooperation are due to Wayne Hayward, Planning Board Chairman, and Bill Roth, Director of Planning and Economic Development.

Planning Board members who are responsible for conceiving, administering, and monitoring, as well as participating in the public review process and evaluation of consultant work are:

Wayne Hayward, Chairman

Rene Fleurent, Vice-Chairman

Peter Nopper, Clerk

John Farrell

Jeffrey Lucas

Cathy Melanson

Ann Richard

Nicholas Carrigg

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2016, the Town of Fairhaven launched a year-long process to develop a new Comprehensive Master Plan for the community. Since the earliest settlement by the colonists in the 1650s, Fairhaven has seen the rise and decline of the whaling industry and its related maritime trades that contributed greatly to its growth in the 1800s, and later the textile mills, finishing, and ship maintenance industries that further boosted the Town's population increase. While today retail trade has shifted to become the leading segment of the economy of the town, these earlier industrial developments has left rich cultural and historic heritage that helped define the characters of this coastal community.

The Town of Fairhaven has a rich history of planning. The last town-wide Master Plan was developed in 1996 to help guide the Town into the first 10-15 years of the 21st century in the context of changing demographics and expected slow growth of Southeastern Massachusetts. Since the adoption of the 1996 Master Plan, the town has actively pursued a series of additional planning studies ranging from business and economic development study, harbor plan, housing plan, tourism study, and open space and recreation plan, etc. Findings from these planning studies not only have supported the Town in various policy and decision-making processes, but also provided valuable insights into the baseline socio-economic conditions and potential needs of the community. Building upon these prior plans and studies, this new Comprehensive Master Plan aims to function as a policy and action guide for Town's strategic growth and development through the next 10 to 20 years horizon.

Master Plan Process

What is a Master Plan?

A Comprehensive Master Plan is expected to be a living plan that documents and illustrates what a community looks like today and what direction it has decided to take for the future; it includes assessments of existing resources and issues, projections of future conditions and needs, and consideration of collective goals and desires. The Master Plan is a policy guide and provides a framework for future land use decision-making and the physical development of the municipality. It will not only address buildings and infrastructure, it will also include the important social, natural resource and economic values of the community. The Master Plan is a method of translating the community's values into specific actions.

Typically, a Master Plan covers an approximate time frame of 20 years. It is assumed that shorter-term evaluations will keep it current with the changing needs of the community. It is also closely integrated with other municipal documents and initiatives, for example, Fairhaven's ongoing Hazard Mitigation Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan. It's worth noting that a Master Plan is not a zoning ordinance, a subdivision regulation, a budget, a capital improvement program, or other regulatory document. Rather, it is meant to provide the framework for the development of these implementation tools.

In Massachusetts, a Master Plan is defined as a comprehensive town-wide plan that addresses the following elements: Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Public Facilities and Services Natural and Cultural Resources, Open Space and Recreation¹, Transportation, and Implementation. The Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan includes all these elements. In addition, a dedicated Sustainability element is incorporated in this Master Plan to help Fairhaven as a coastal community better understand challenges and potential solutions associated with climate change and long-term sustainability of the town.

Stakeholder and Public Engagement

The Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan represents an inclusive public process. A wide range of public outreach efforts went into the development of this Master Plan. Three public meetings were organized during different phases of the Master Plan process with a total of more than 80 town residents participating. The first public meeting, held on April 6, 2017 at the early stage of the Master Plan process, focused on discussing the major assets and issues within the community, as well as outlining the long-term vision and goals for Fairhaven. The second public meeting, held on June 13, 2017, offered the public an opportunity to share ideas about potential actions and implementation strategies that would help the Town move towards its vision. The final public meeting, held on October 4, 2017, allowed the public another opportunity to review and comment on the

¹ The Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources element of the Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan was incorporated from the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan that was developed by Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) concurrently with the Master Plan process.

implementation program and help refine the timeframe and priorities of various implementation actions.

In addition to the public meetings, two community surveys were made available, both online and in print, to the public to gather input on a series of targeted questions. The first survey aimed at soliciting public input on the vision and goals for Fairhaven's future. A total of 141 responses were collected and analyzed. The second survey, which received 32 responses, asked the public to comment on the draft Master Plan goals and recommendations that were developed with public input from the public meetings and the first community survey.

The Town also took extra efforts in publicizing the Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan, including:

- ▶ Fairhaven 2040 exhibit boards, placed in Town Hall, that showcased the Master Plan process and the basic demographic and socio-economic profiles of the community;
- ▶ "I Wish Fairhaven..." comment boards that were displayed at the Recreation Center;
- ▶ Exhibits at Fairhaven Farmers Market and Ocean State Job Lot Grand Opening that demonstrated the Master Plan vision, goals and recommendations developed through public and stakeholder engagements.

The development of the Master Plan was also guided closely by the Fairhaven Planning and Economic Development Department and the Planning Board who served as the Advisory Committee. The Town retained professional planning services from a local planning consultant, VHB, who facilitated the Master Plan process. Stakeholders from various town departments and agencies were also involved throughout to the planning process to provide local knowledge and expert insights that helped shape the vision, goals and recommendations of this Master Plan.

Planning Framework

The mission of the Planning Board is to produce a Master Plan in a manner that is transparent and open to all stakeholders in an effort to provide a public process that is collaborative, cooperative, and coordinated with the goal of achieving consensus and endorsement of the issues, goals and objectives, and implementation strategies. In synergy with the above mentioned public and stakeholder engagement process, the Master Plan took a four-step process that started with a comprehensive review of the existing baseline conditions of the community, then moved on to the establishment of collective vision and goals for the Town's future, and proceeded towards identifying more focused goals and recommendations. The final step was to develop an implementation program to support the town in achieving the vision and goals.

Conduct Baseline Inventory and Analysis

This early step of the Master Plan involved collecting and analyzing a variety of datasets related to different aspects of today's Fairhaven, such as demographic changes, land use patterns, housing trends, economic indexes, transportation statistics, public facilities conditions, open space and cultural resources inventories, sustainability measures, etc. It helps establish a baseline profile of Fairhaven as a community and identify where improvements are needed.

Define Long-term Vision and Goals

Based on a thorough analysis of Fairhaven's baseline conditions, issues, and needs, a future vision and a set of goals for the Town of Fairhaven were developed through a collaborative process where the public and key stakeholders engaged in open dialogs and exchanged thoughts on where they hope the Town would be in the next 10 to 20 years.

Identify Strategies and Recommendations

With the vision and goals defined as guiding principles, the Advisory Committee worked closely with various town departments and the planning experts at VHB to explore the latest and best planning practices and strategies that suit the unique characters and needs of Fairhaven towards achieving the long-term vision and goals. These strategies and recommendations were shared with and validated by the town residents at multiple public workshops and were used as the foundation for developing the Implementation Plan.

Develop an Implementation Plan

Developing the Implementation Plan was the last but greatly important step of the Master Plan as it represented a collective effort between the Town and its residents in detailing a plan of when each of the recommendations should come into action, based on priorities identified through public workshops, and who should be the leading and partnering entities. The Implementation Plan will act as a policy and action guide as the Town moves forward from the Master Plan planning phase into the implementation phase.

Fairhaven's Vision into the Future

Fairhaven is a rural/suburban coastal community located on the South Coast of Massachusetts. The Town has long been appreciated by its residents for its rich history, diverse natural resources, well-sustained local economies, and diverse housing stock. As Fairhaven plans for its future, this Master Plan outlines a collective vision for the next 10 to 20 years that is supplemented by a series of goals and recommendations towards achieving that vision.

The Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan is meant to serve as a guiding document as the Town plans for its future. It will be used by the Town and its departments to advance actions that will further enhance the prosperity, livability, and resiliency of the community. Fairhaven 2040 sets forth recommendations on all relevant master plan elements, including land use, housing, economic development, public facilities and services, open space, recreation, and natural resources, historic and cultural resources, and sustainability.



Master Plan Public Meeting at the Town Hall

One of the most significant outcomes of the public engagement process was the development of the collective Master Plan Vision Statement. Derived from extensive public and stakeholder input through the early phase of the Master Plan, this Vision Statement represents the most aspired state in all aspects of the community in the long run. It acts as the overarching theme that guides the establishment of specific goals for various Master Plan elements and the development of policy- or action-oriented implementation recommendations.

Below is the Vision Statement of the Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan:

"By 2040, Fairhaven will be regionally known as a rural/suburban coastal community where its unique history and built and natural characteristics are preserved and celebrated. The Town's sense of community will be enhanced by well-balanced land uses where strategic infill development rejuvenates existing residential neighborhoods, regional and local commercial nodes, and industrial areas while valuable farm lands, open spaces, natural habitats, and coastlines are protected. The Town supports its residents of all ages, abilities and income levels with a variety of housing choices and provides quality employment opportunities, education, recreation, and other town services to those living, working, and visiting here. The Town will stand on a strong financial footing while making essential investments to improve the quality, capacity, and sustainability of its facilities and services."

Key Findings, Goals, and Recommendations

Land Use

Key Findings:

There is a strong desire to preserve the coastal, suburban, and historic community characters of the Town by concentrating future commercial and residential growth in appropriate areas that are already supported by municipal infrastructure while continue protecting the Town's open space resources. Balancing the scale and character of future growth in various commercial centers and residential neighborhoods is a priority.

Consensus have been reached on revitalizing the Town's primary commercial area along the Route 6 corridor. This area has experienced increasing commercial vacancies over the past few years. While repurposing the vacant commercial buildings is important, it is equally critical to create a long-term vision for this commercial district, particularly the potential of mixed-use developments with a variety of land use types, scales and characters.

It's recognized that the Town's zoning bylaw is becoming outdated and needs modernization in order to support the current and future community development needs. The zoning bylaw should provide clearer provisions to regulate the proper types of business uses in the industrial zones and should also increase the flexibility to support smaller neighborhood businesses in mixed-use buildings.

Goals and Recommendations:

Goal 1: Balance growth and preservation.

Recommendations:

1. Preserve rural characteristics by protecting open spaces and supporting remaining working farms through continuous community preservation efforts, such as partnerships with the Buzzards Bay Coalition and Fairhaven Acushnet Land Preservation Trust.
2. Encourage infill commercial and residential development in existing, established areas where water and sewer services are provided.
3. Differentiate between industrial zones and business zones to encourage business and commercial developments in appropriate locations within the community, such as multiple commercial zones based on scale and characteristics, e.g. general commercial, highway commercial, and neighborhood commercial, etc.
4. Re-examine the purpose of the Nasketucket Overlay District (NRB), redefine the district boundaries, and amend zoning provisions to better balance the current needs for resource protection and property development.

Goal 2: Encourage strategic redevelopment in the Route 6 commercial area.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a detailed Route 6 commercial area revitalization plan to guide redevelopment. The plan should incorporate analysis of appropriate types of redevelopment, scale/dimension/design of such developments, as well as potential zoning changes and infrastructure and services needed to support such redevelopment.
2. Consider creating a Route 6 mixed-use overlay zoning district to stimulate mixed-use commercial and residential redevelopment appropriate to the characteristics of highway and automobile oriented mixed-use areas, as compared to smaller scale neighborhood mixed-use areas seen in Downtown and North Fairhaven.

Goal 3: Promote neighborhood commercial nodes and small local businesses.

Recommendations:

1. Amend the existing Mixed-use District provisions to include more effective mixed-use zoning to remedy non-conforming traditional uses for small neighborhood businesses, per the Benoit Square Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Study (2016) recommendations.
2. Establish a Mixed-use District in the Benoit Square area to encourage revitalization of the traditional neighborhood commercial center in North Fairhaven.
3. Review and update zoning to allow more flexibility that supports small business development, such as home-based business, residential commercial mixed-use, etc.

Housing

Key Findings:

There is a strong desire to preserve the coastal, suburban, and historic community characters of the Town by concentrating future commercial and residential growth in appropriate areas that are already developed and supported by municipal infrastructures. Infill development and reuse or conversion of existing public and private buildings for housing purposes are two approaches the Town could consider to foster more integrated housing growth.

In recent years, there have been increasing concerns regarding the limited housing options and housing affordability within the community, especially the lack of smaller ownership units and rental units for the Town's lower income populations as well as younger working generations of all income levels. The Town could explore several ways to increase affordable housing stock, including utilizing state and federal low income housing programs and enacting zoning tools such as inclusionary zoning, accessory dwelling units, and residential mixed-use to incentivize the creation of more affordable housing.

The Town will be faced with increasing pressure to provide adequate and appropriate senior housing options as the community is aging. Providing housing options will need to consider not only affordability, but also the age-specific needs of senior living. While the Town will continue making progress in developing affordable senior apartments, more opportunities could be explored in creating other types of smaller ownership units that would allow and encourage seniors to age at home.

Goals and Recommendations:

Goal 1: Keep future residential development in or near existing residential areas to maintain the village character.

Recommendations:

1. Encourage infill residential developments in existing residential neighborhoods that reflect the historic and cultural characters of various neighborhoods.
2. Explore possibilities of housing conversion and adaptive reuse of existing municipal and/or commercial buildings and housing rehabilitation of blighted properties.

Goal 2: Maintain and encourage a variety of housing that is affordable to non-elderly individuals and families of all income levels.

Recommendations:

1. Identify potential sites, possibility through municipal land assemblage or public/private partnership, for non-elderly affordable rental housing developments utilizing the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program.
2. Consider adopting an inclusionary zoning bylaw to require affordable housing in any residential development that requires a Special Permit.
3. Provide more flexibility and incentive in the Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw to encourage the creation of market rate or affordable rental units that support moderate to low income residents.
4. Consider allowing mixed-use residential and commercial developments in established service and employment centers as a means to expand market-rate housing stock.

Goal 3: Continue providing affordable and age-appropriate housing options for senior populations in the community.

Recommendations:

1. Pursue state and federal affordable housing programs and funding at the identified two-acre site off of Main Street adjacent to Oxford Terrace.
2. Provide more flexibility and incentive in the Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw to encourage the creation of smaller housing units that supports downsizing seniors to age in place.
3. Explore zoning tools, such as performance zoning and density bonuses, to encourage development of age-appropriate market-rate ownership units designed to serve the needs of an elderly population, e.g. attached or detached condominium units with first floor bedroom/bathroom suits, accessible grades, attached garages, and maintenance support, etc.

Economic Development

Key Findings:

Of key importance is the Route 6/Route 240/ Alden Road area, the largest employment center in Fairhaven, and where the majority of health care and service related jobs are located. These two industry segments make up approximately 40% of all employment in Fairhaven so ensuring that these critical commercial corridors remain healthy is a top priority for the Town. With the retail sector contracting and stores closing in recent years, the ability to retain the remaining retail jobs in Fairhaven as well as re-tenant or repurpose vacant shopping centers along Route 6 is a key goal emerging from the Comprehensive Plan.

The Town has a burgeoning health care driven job cluster along Route 240 with the Southcoast Urgent Care Center and the successfully re-tenanted AT&T property since 1996 (identified in the 1996 Master Plan as a critical redevelopment opportunity). Health care related jobs grew by 80% between 2010 and 2015 and now represent the largest employment sector and strongest job growth engine in Fairhaven. Building on this success continues to be important over the next 5 to 10 years and beyond.

It is also important to note that nearly 90% of businesses in Fairhaven can be considered “small business” with fewer than 20 employees, with many having only one employee. Nurturing existing businesses and incubating new ones is a critical task for the leadership in Fairhaven, as organically growing the amount of employment is one of the most sustainable ways for the Town to foster a healthy local economy.

Goals and Recommendations:

Goal 1: Preserve the commercial viability of the working waterfront and seek balance with neighboring land uses, while simultaneously exploring opportunities to make the waterfront more accessible to the community.

Recommendations:

1. Hire a planning firm specializing in waterfronts to create a plan for the working waterfront that would preserve key industrial zones, improve vehicular circulation, emphasize pedestrian access, and create a better tourist/public realm experience along the waterfront, when appropriate. Areas of exploration could include future tourism opportunities at Union Wharf and connection to Tin Can (Marsh) Island.
2. Evaluate streets along the working waterfront for a possible conversion to one-way to improve traffic movements and reduce conflicts.
3. Track and to the extent possible integrate with the Waterfront Redevelopment Plan being performed in 2017 on behalf of the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission.

4. Explore the needs of infrastructure upgrades to support the long-term viability of the working waterfront in light of the foreseeable sea level rise, in concert with the recommendation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan effort.
5. Work with the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission on Harbor Plan Update and coordinate closely with the Army Corps of Engineers on all waterfront permitting.

Goal 2: Maintain healthy commercial occupancies along Route 6 and in other commercial nodes and retain service related jobs wherever possible.

Recommendations:

1. Work with major commercial property owners to determine potential large-scale vacancies before they occur to initiate early strategic discussions for maintaining occupancies or redeveloping the site.
2. Work with large employers such as Acushnet Company and Southcoast Medical Center to identify strategies for retaining/growing employment base and meeting future space needs.
3. Consider introduction of tax credit/tax abatement programs for job creation.

Goal 3: Encourage mixed-use projects on key redevelopment parcels in support of a live, work, play environment.

Recommendations:

1. Consider a joint town/property study to engage a real estate advisory firm to create a redevelopment strategy for a key commercial property with an unhealthy level of vacancy.
2. Explore town related functions occupying spaces in vacant commercial buildings whenever appropriate.
3. Promote mixed-use development through land use, zoning, and development incentives.
4. Develop a detailed revitalization plan to guide redevelopment of commercial nodes in town. The plan should incorporate analysis of appropriate types of redevelopments, scale/dimension/design of such developments, as well as potential zoning changes and infrastructure and services needed to support these redevelopments.
5. Consider creating a Route 6 mixed-use overlay zoning district to stimulate mixed-use commercial and residential redevelopment. Making provisions for mid- to high-density residential will be important.
6. In North Fairhaven/Benoit Square, encourage projects that promote a mix of uses, including reuse of existing buildings with upper levels that are underutilized.

Goal 4: Revise business regulations and enhanced programs to continue to support the incubation and growth of small businesses.

Recommendations:

1. Plan and potentially fund a small-scale, low-cost business incubator to be housed in vacant commercial space along Route 6 or in a town-owned building (such as the Rogers School) that is not currently in use.
2. Adopt effective permitting procedures for small neighborhood businesses.
3. Review and update zoning to allow more flexibilities that support small business development, such as home-based business, residential commercial mixed-use, etc. This includes migrating to online forms where appropriate, including the ability to register complaints and respond to them online.
4. Revisit signage ordinance to allow for more flexibility for businesses.

Goal 5: Collaborate with New Bedford and other nearby towns on issues of workforce training/regional economic development to elevate the profile of the South Coast.

Recommendations:

1. Consider engagement of a market/branding firm to develop a targeted campaign for the South Coast.
2. Partner with New Bedford to develop a joint economic development strategy for the Harbor.
3. Join regional efforts to support the South Coast Rail extension.
4. Explore future economic development opportunities in and around the harbors including better leveraging existing trails, waterfront connections, and the future replacement of the Fairhaven-New Bedford bridge.

Public Facilities and Services

Key Findings:

There is a high level of satisfaction among residents with the Town's efforts in providing adequate and good quality public services to the people and businesses.

It's widely expected that the Town continues with proactive capital improvement planning to ensure that the quality of public facilities and services in the community can be maintained longtermly.

In the meantime, the public and the Town officials have reached consensus that the most needed public facility improvements in the near future is to expand the capacity of the Police Department and Fire Department, with a potential solution of a revitalized or new joint public safety complex to serve the growing demands of the community.

Goals and Recommendations:

Goal 1: Develop plans and funding to rebuild, expand, or replace key public facilities, and the staff needed to support the Town operations.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a Public Facilities Improvement Plan for all Town buildings that identifies near, mid, and long-term improvements (and costs), so that the Town will have a comprehensive inventory of the required maintenance and capital improvements needed for its public facilities.
2. Develop a plan to implement the recommendations identified in the Facilities Master Plan.
3. Assess the need to add staff and enhance necessary staff trainings to all departments to address anticipated growth and implement the recommendations included in the 2040 Master Plan so that the town can deliver its services effectively.

Goal 2: Ensure public safety officials have the facilities to handle today's needs as well as projected future needs of the community.

Recommendations:

1. Prioritize the relocation and/or expansion of the Police and Fire Department to address community safety needs, while considering potential reuse or new construction.
2. Allocate appropriate funds in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan to support necessary upgrades and improvements to the Police and Fire Departments.
3. Continue to invest in training and professional development for Fairhaven's Police and Fire Departments staff.

Goal 3: Enhance senior services in Fairhaven.

Recommendations:

1. Explore feasibility of expanding the current Senior Center to meet the space needs for programs serving the Town's senior population. Per hazard mitigation plan, upgrade the complex to a shelter.
2. Evaluate and enhance transportation services offered to seniors and residents with disabilities.
3. Provide additional recreation opportunities geared toward seniors through the Recreation Department.
4. Encourage collaboration among the Council on Aging (COA), Recreation Department and Fairhaven Public Schools to promote inter-generational activities.

Goal 4: Develop plans for key infrastructure elements that need improvement.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to fund annual improvements to roadways and seek opportunities to obtain state funding for long-term transportation enhancements as identified in the Transportation chapter.
2. Prepare an updated master plan for the Water Department to forecast future needs for investments in pump stations, wells, and the delivery of water to the Town.
3. Invest in an Automatic Reader System for water meters in Town to improve the Town's ability to collect meter reading data and billing procedures.
4. Prepare a long-term plan for the use of the Sludge Digester System to ascertain the cost benefit of the continued use of this facility.
5. Prepare a long-term plan for the Sewage Treatment Plant to ascertain the cost benefit of the continued use of this facility.
6. Invest in education programs and materials that provide residents and business owners information about solid waste and recycling programs to improve the Town's participation rate in these programs.

Goal 5: Continue to take advantage of opportunities for sustainable energy within the Town's facilities and services.

Recommendations:

1. Undertake an energy audit of municipal buildings and develop a plan to implement recommendations
2. Undertake a vehicle fleet assessment to ascertain opportunities to right size vehicles and increase fuel efficiency (See Sustainability goals for Green Fleets)
3. Incorporate cost-effective Green Infrastructure strategies into all municipal projects for stormwater management, drainage.
4. Seek ways to increase recycling and reduce solid waste disposal.
5. Educate Town residents about stormwater issues and proper management.

Goal 6: Invest in the Town's schools to provide state -of -the-art educational facilities

Recommendations:

1. Work closely with the School Department to identify capital improvements that are needed to support the schools, such as window and exterior renovations to

the High School, dedicated internet service, and other improvements needed to maintain and enhance the Town's schools.

2. Work with the School Committee to assess the ability to better utilize the public school facilities for other community uses.

Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources

Key Findings:

One of the recurring themes in the public/working meetings was the issue of wayfinding and improved access to recreational facilities. There is a need for improved visibility of and better access to many of the Town's recreational areas, including considerations for elder, younger, and physically challenged residents. ADA improvements and wayfinding signage in consistent format can help locals and visitors find and take advantage of the conservation and recreational opportunities afforded by the town.

Many of the Town's popular public recreational areas, such as Fort Phoenix, the Phoenix Bike Path, Cushman Park, Livesey Park, and West Island Beach, are heavily used and require enhanced maintenance and potential improvements. For example, people expressed desires for better canoe and kayak access at Fort Phoenix which is currently restricted by the state. It is suggested that Phoenix Bike Path could use some planting and beautification work to enhance the experience. Tennis courts at the Cushman Park are faced with repair and relocation issues. Improvements to parking and trash/recycling collections at public recreation facilities are also considered necessary.

Another issue identified by the town residents is the limited access to coastal open spaces in Fairhaven. Despite the Town's extensive coastline, only small segments of it are accessible to the public, such as Fort Phoenix State Beach and Town Beach on West Island. The eastern half of West Island is state-owned and kept in its natural state with limited public access. There are two town-owned boat ramps near Fairhaven Center and on Sconticut Neck respectively, with potential for a third one on the southern half of Long Island. Other semi-publicly owned coastal areas, such as the Audubon Society's nature reserve at Shaw's Cove and the South Shore Marshes Wildlife Management Area on Stony Cove, have limited public access.

Goals and Recommendations:

Goal 1: Preserve our farmland and working agricultural landscapes.

Recommendations:

1. Acquire specific critically located parcels of land to prevent development in inappropriate (e.g., coastal) areas in Fairhaven.
2. Encourage continued participation and enrollment in farmland and forestry preservation programs under MGL 61, 61A and 61B, and in the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR).

3. Preserve important agricultural soils/working agricultural landscapes in conjunction with state and local food systems security planning.
4. Work with the Agricultural Commission to develop an up-to-date Plan of Work that integrates appropriate conservation and open space goals and objectives, such as updating the Right to Farm bylaw.

Goal 2: Increase awareness and stewardship of our conservation, open space, and recreational assets.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a web-based map of conservation, recreation, and open space assets as part of an Open Space and Recreation web page.
2. Prepare information, including directional and on-site narrative and graphic signage and brochures, highlighting conservation and recreation areas, and encouraging stewardship and appropriate use.
3. Establish a permanent Open Space Committee to work with other boards and commissions to help promote the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Goal 3: Set aside more land for conservation, open space, and water supply protection.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to work with the Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Committee to protect the resources of the Mattapoissett River aquifer.
2. Revise and update the provisions of the Water Protection Overlay Zoning District in the Nasketucket River Watershed and continue appropriate administration of such provisions.
3. Encourage and educate the public on responsible land use management and planning practices within all water, marine, and critical habitat/natural resource areas.

Goal 4: Provide quality life-long recreational opportunities for all citizens regardless of age or ability.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to develop recreational and athletic facilities, including multi-purpose fields, pathways, and play areas, particularly in underserved parts of town.
2. Meet ADA required accessibility standards for access to all town-owned conservation, recreation, and athletic facilities, per the ADA Transition Plan.
3. Improve access and facilities at the Livesey Park and Town Beach on West Island.

4. Continue to work to develop bicycle facilities, enhancements, and connections from the existing Phoenix Bike Path to other parts of town and to existing regional pathways.
5. Work with the Wellness Committee to plan and develop the recommended Fitness Trail.
6. Find more administrative and storage space for the Recreation Department in order to retain adequate and efficient services.

Goal 5: Preserve/protect forests/woodlands, habitat, and native inland and coastal vegetative communities.

Recommendations:

1. Protect inland and coastal wetlands and wildlife habitat through enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act, floodplain regulations, and restrictions that apply to areas subject to coastal flooding.
2. Continue to work with conservation partners to acquire lands that are significant to state recognized Core Habitat, Critical Natural Landscapes, and climate change resilient land.
3. Hire a full-time Conservation Agent.

Goal 6: Preserve our cultural and historic places and landscapes.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to promote public awareness of the cultural and historical assets of the town and the accompanying stewardship needs.
2. Acquire lands that represent important cultural landscapes associated with the history and character of the town.

Goal 7: Increase access to the waterfront and water-based recreation activities.

Recommendations:

1. Identify, improve, and increase the points of access to the waterfront for canoes, kayaks, and other recreational users.
2. Improve ADA compliant opportunities for waterfront access.

Transportation

Key Findings:

Throughout development of this Plan, Fairhaven residents have noted an overall appreciation of the existing transportation network while providing input on potential action items to target specific needs. In general, the public considers the Town's transportation infrastructure to be in good overall condition with gaps in critical locations.

In the spirit of sustainability infused throughout the rest of the plan, the public and the Town officials have reached consensus that improvements should target pedestrians, bicycles and bus users. The most critical issues brought up by the public included closing gaps in the sidewalk system, increasing bicycle connections (both internally and externally), and improving transit service. By targeting these issues, opportunities for development may present themselves, as well as new funding opportunities that have not been tapped by the Town in the past.

Goals and Recommendations:

Goal 1: Become a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community by expanding existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a Town-wide Complete Streets Policy and apply for MassDOT Complete Streets grants
2. Focus new sidewalk construction in areas with missing segments and around attractions (e.g. Downtown, Schools and the Bike Path).
3. Use signage and pavement markings to define a Town-wide on-street bicycle network.
4. Work with MassDOT and the City of New Bedford to provide a safe bicycle connection between the municipalities.
5. Educate the community on bike rules and safety, including "Safe Routes to Schools" and other use of bike facilities.

Goal 2: Increase the use of public transit by Town residents and employees.

Recommendations:

1. Join regional efforts to support the South Coast Rail extension.
2. Educate residents on available existing and future public transit services (post schedules in public places, including public school, Town Hall and the library).
3. Work with the SRTA, neighboring communities and local businesses to enhance the existing local shuttle service including adding night service to Route 11.

4. Work with SRTA to add support facilities (benches, shelters, parking, etc.) at existing SRTA bus stops.
5. Work to expand door-to-door service for disabled and aging residents.

Goal 3: Improve Town-wide traffic flow and safety.

Recommendations:

1. Work with MassDOT to advance safety improvements at Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)-eligible locations, particularly the intersection of Route 6 and Bridge Street.
2. Evaluate streets surrounding the Downtown and waterfront for possible conversion to one-way to improve traffic movements and on-street parking.
3. Improve wayfinding signage through-out the Town.
4. Work with the Police Department to develop a strategic traffic enforcement plan.
5. Consider the implementation of interactive Speed Indication Signage at select locations.
6. Address safety issues related to heavy truck traffic in North Fairhaven, especially traffic associated with the quarry in Acushnet.

Goal 4: Improve maintenance of Town-wide transportation system.

Recommendations:

1. Prepare a sidewalk inventory and construction/maintenance plan.
2. Consider implementation of a 50/50 Sidewalk Match Program, where cost of maintaining sidewalks is shared by the municipality and property owners.
3. Review the current Town-wide pavement management plan annually and update as needed.
4. Work to upgrade existing pedestrian facilities to conform to current Americans with Disabilities Act/Architectural Access Board (ADA/AAB) standards.
5. Work with MassDOT to upgrade existing traffic signals along Route 6 and Route 240.
6. Upgrade existing pavement markings and signage Town-wide.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Key Findings:

In general, there are few measures in place to protect the Town's historic resources as the town develops and evolves, despite the Town's extensive heritage and active community. Fairhaven has very few resources listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and these listings are restricted to individual buildings rather than districts, which encompass streetscapes and/or landscapes as a whole. While state and federal protections for historic properties are usually limited to "consideration" of potential impacts during a state or federal undertaking, many communities in Massachusetts also have enacted protective historical regulations on the local level, including the establishment of local historic districts or neighborhood conservation districts, rolling preservation loans, and demolition review bylaws. These are some of the protection approaches Fairhaven can consider.

The Town is home to distinctive neighborhoods of early 20th century worker's cottages with craftsman style detailing, tree-lined streetscapes, and mid-20th century subdivisions of modestly scaled homes on West Island and Sconticut Neck. **These neighborhoods, though valued by the community as attractive and desirable resources that keep Fairhaven's visual landscape engaging, have not been properly inventoried as part of the Town's historic resources.** Identifying a neighborhood's historic roots and patterns of development is a valuable tool when undertaking a planning process that seeks to preserve neighborhood character while facilitating town-wide growth. Understanding these neighborhoods and resources that are poorly represented in the historic inventory can be an engaging way to expand the celebrated history of Fairhaven into the 21st century, and an important tool in maintaining the quality of life in the Town's various neighborhoods. New inventory serves as a valuable reference for future zoning, creating context for past development decisions, and a useful metric for determining successful community characteristics.

Fairhaven knows first-hand that being home to a variety of high-quality, highly-visible historic buildings is a significant benefit to the community, but brings an inherent set of challenges along with that benefit, particularly in terms of reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings such as the Rogers School. One of the key strategies outlined in the ongoing Rogers School feasibility study is the use of federal and state historic tax credits by developers to capitalize on the building's history. Use of these tax credits helps fill funding gaps that would otherwise prove insurmountable, while the restrictions and review process to receive tax credit allocations ensures that renovations proceed in a historically-sensitive way. Massachusetts has a particularly strong historic tax credit program and a number of developers and community development corporations that have extensive experience with these programs. There are measures that can be taken by the town to confirm their commitment to rehabilitation of historic properties and incentivize developers to undertake rehabilitation projects.

Goals and Recommendations:

Goal 1: Enact a Demolition Review Bylaw.

Recommendations:

1. Schedule one or more public meetings to introduce the topic and initiate community discussions.
2. Formulate bylaw components based on public input.
3. Consider production of publicly-available materials to accompany a new bylaw; i.e. a reference booklet that provides relevant information regarding the bylaw for property owners, realtors, and community members, and a communications program to inform and assist property owners subject to bylaw.

Goal 2: Expand Understanding of Historic Resources in the Town.

Recommendations:

1. Complete historic resource inventories of two neighborhoods or landscapes (farmsteads, culturally-significant open space, etc.) as part of a broader inventory.
2. Expand use of 20th century history in heritage programming.
3. Utilize historic development to guide planning and zoning efforts for mixed-use development.

Goal 3: Establish local historic district(s).

Recommendations:

1. Create a local historic district study committee, under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40C, General Laws.
2. Utilize historic resource inventory form (see Goal 2) to determine the historic significance of the local historic district and approximate boundaries.
3. Initiate public opinion surveys and gauge public interest. Use newspaper articles, newsletters, local access TV stations, and other forums to educate, inform, and answer questions.
4. Produce a preliminary study report including proposed local historic district methodology, significance, boundary justification, and potential design review guidelines.

Goal 4: Link Historic Preservation with Economic Development.

Recommendations:

1. Prepare/sponsor National Register nominations for threatened buildings and areas.
2. Advertise National Register status to realtors and developers, encouraging the use of tax credits and highlighting successful historic tax credit rehabilitation projects, such as the potential rehabilitation at Oxford School Residences when completed.
3. Use signage and wayfinding to advertise Fairhaven's historic resources and neighborhoods. Facilitate and encourage visitation to historic areas outside of

downtown by cross-promoting historic resources and amenities such as eateries and shops.

Sustainability

Key Findings:

The Town of Fairhaven does not currently have, but would benefit from, a formal and centralized method of managing and tracking its sustainability data such as energy and water consumption and costs. Such data management would enable the Town to determine areas of its sustainability where it is performing well, identify opportunities for performance improvement and potential cost savings, and benchmark its performance against similar municipalities. It would also afford the Town with the ability to assess the level of success of sustainability initiative implementation. Keeping this data management system open (available for public viewing) would increase municipal transparency, as well as serve to educate the public on the Town's sustainability priorities.

The Town has not incorporated green building principles and practices such as those associated with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system into its building standards. Such formal integration would ensure a reduction in the extensive environmental and human health impacts that result from the lifecycle of buildings and infrastructure, as well as create an awareness of such impacts (and related solutions) among the Town's residents and businesses. The codification of green building practices would promote an improvement in the economic and environmental performance of development within the Town.

In addition, the Town should re-pursue the Massachusetts Green Community designation. The Green Communities Designation and Grant Program, administered through the DOER's Green Communities Division, supports communities like Fairhaven in understanding and meeting the requirements of designation. Green Community designation qualifies communities for financial assistance from the state for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, as well as related assistance such as adopting the latest building codes.

Goals and Recommendations:

Goal 1: Establish systems for assessing, tracking, and reporting on the Town's sustainability performance.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct an energy baseline assessment for municipal operations and community-wide.
2. Complete a local government operations greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory.
3. Complete a community scale GHG inventory.

4. Develop or procure a data management system that tracks, at a minimum, municipal operations energy and water consumption, costs, and associated GHG emissions.

Goal 2: Lead by example through continuous improvement of the energy efficiency of resource use within government operations and promotion of community energy efficiency sustainability programs.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct energy audits at Town facilities and develop a plan for implementation of resulting Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs).
2. Expand the existing streetlight energy efficiency program.
3. Undertake a vehicle fleet assessment to ascertain opportunities to decrease fleet fuel consumption by right-sizing vehicles for their tasks and replacing older vehicles with more efficient ones.
4. Develop and implement a Green Fleet Policy to guide the future purchase and use of municipal fleet vehicles.
5. Incorporate sustainability and resiliency decision-making criteria into the Town's capital improvement program.
6. Seek ways to increase municipal operations and community-wide waste diversion rates to reduce solid waste disposal.
7. Provide information to the community about free and discounted energy audits, appliance rebates, and other energy improvement programs available to residents and businesses.
8. Educate Town residents about stormwater issues and proper management.
9. Work with Green Fairhaven to expand their mission of promoting sustainability among the community.
10. Seek opportunities to adaptively reuse existing buildings to meet Town as well as community needs, for example, the new or joint Public Safety, and identify pathways to ensure that the transfer of surplus municipal facilities to private entities include provisions for adaptive reuse, for example, the conversion of the Oxford School Building into a senior housing complex.

Goal 3: Enhance Fairhaven's resiliency to the likely impacts of a changing climate.

Recommendations:

1. Invest in infrastructure improvements that will protect the Town from the impacts of sea level rise, storm surge, and other flooding events, as well as other applicable natural hazards; refer to the Town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

2. Update the Town's stormwater regulations to emphasize low-impact development and green infrastructure, while considering projected precipitation/flooding conditions.
3. Incorporate future climate conditions into emergency response and evacuation plans.
4. Address the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)-identified conflict points along the community's evacuation routes.
5. Establish neighborhood networks of residents and businesses that are educated on sustainability and climate change resiliency and able to communicate effectively, especially to vulnerable citizens, during periods of emergency.
6. Enhance the Town's open space and unused sites with green infrastructure (for example, rain gardens and permeable pavers) to improve the Town's stormwater management capabilities and minimize its vulnerabilities to flooding.
7. Incorporate existing and projected future climate conditions into the Town's zoning bylaw to promote (re)development patterns that minimize exposure to known hazards.

Goal 4: Position Fairhaven to leverage state, regional, and national resources for sustainability and resiliency.

Recommendations:

1. After identifying municipal baseline energy consumption and improvement opportunities, evaluate the Town's potential for Green Community designation; establish a clear plan for the Town to pursue this designation and associated funding, if practicable.
2. Adopt the STAR Community Rating System as a framework for making Fairhaven a more sustainable and resilient community.

Goal 5: Adopt land use, zoning, and building code policies that support healthy, sustainable development

Recommendations:

1. Adopt green building standards to minimize the direct and indirect environmental impacts of major commercial and residential construction in the Town; refer to examples such as the International Green Construction Code and ANSI/ASHRAE/IES/USGBC Standard 189.1-2014, Standard for the Design of High Performance Green Buildings.
2. Consider enhancing the Town's zoning regulations and permitting procedures to identify opportunities to incentivize renewable energy installations (for example, waiving permitting fees for qualifying systems), and promoting such incentives.

3. Address in advance potential conflicts between renewable energy systems, particularly solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems, and the establishment of local historic districts.
4. Adopt a Complete Streets Policy to promote a balanced transportation system that enhances the safety, health, and well-being of Town residents and visitors.
5. Require that affordable housing be built to sustainable standards (such as LEED, the Well Building Standard, or Enterprise Green Communities) to ensure that such housing stock is healthy and promotes occupant well-being.
6. Adopt a comprehensive outdoor lighting ordinance to minimize light pollution such as glare, light trespass, and skyglow and to reduce community-scale energy consumption; refer to the International Dark-Sky Association's Model Lighting Ordinance.

Land Use

1

Introduction

Land use refers to the arrangement of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural and other human activities on the land, as well as the natural landscape of rivers and streams, wetlands and beaches, and forests and grasslands that sustain the ecological balance. The patterns of land uses in a community are the results of centuries of human social and economic activities in synergy with the continuous workings of the natural ecosystem.

Land use forms the basis for master planning and to a large extent determines a community's need to provide public facilities and infrastructure, transportation network services, mix of housing available to residents, and protection of environmental and historic resources. The Land Use element of the Master Plan encompasses all other elements as it provides guidance on how land resources in the community should be strategically used in order to facilitate decision-making and address related issues.



Spectacular landscape and view at the historic Fort Phoenix

Fairhaven is a New England coastal suburban community that's long been appreciated by its residents for rich history, diverse natural resources, well-sustained local economies, and modest housing stocks. As Fairhaven plans for its future, the Town has the ability to control land use and development patterns through a variety of mechanisms, including zoning and subdivision regulations and incentives, provision of public utilities and infrastructure, as well as acquisition and other open space conservation approaches. Built upon the past and present, Fairhaven aspires to take advantage of new development and preservation opportunities to revitalize the historic town Center and key commercial corridors, balance commercial, industrial, and residential growth, and enhance open space protection and public accessibility.

The Land Use element of the Master Plan offers an opportunity to refresh understandings of the Town's historical land use patterns and changes, identify key issues and challenges as related to how land resources should be best utilized or preserved towards achieving the overall vision of the community, and develop goals and policy recommendations to address these issues.

Baseline Conditions Analyses

Historical Land Use

Fairhaven is located on Buzzards Bay in the extreme southeastern corner of Bristol County. The Town of Acushnet is to the north, Mattapoisett to the east, and the City of New Bedford, New Bedford Harbor and Acushnet River to the west border of Fairhaven. Its coastal location and more than 29 miles of coastline are important determining factors in the Town's history, character, and the magnitude and distribution of its land uses. Closely linked to the nineteenth century whaling and fishing industries of New Bedford, Fairhaven's working waterfront today is an on-going reminder of days of shipbuilding, whaling, and fishing². The historic and picturesque 19th century Town Center is clustered around the waterfront on the Acushnet River.

Most of Fairhaven's residential development is located within one mile of New Bedford Harbor in the western part of Town, and extends to the east along Route 6, to the south along Sconticut Neck Road on the northern portion of Sconticut Neck, and on the western one-third of West Island. The Town's commercial and industrial development is located in several locations that include; development along U.S. Route 6, several neighborhood 'centers', such as the downtown Center on Main Street and North Fairhaven, as well as development at and surrounding Benoit Square. Additional commercial and industrial development is located east of the intersection of Route 6 and State Route 240, and adjacent to Fairhaven Center along the waterfront. The rest of Fairhaven is dominated by an "open" landscape of forests, farm and open lands, and wetlands or salt marshes.

² Fairhaven Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2009

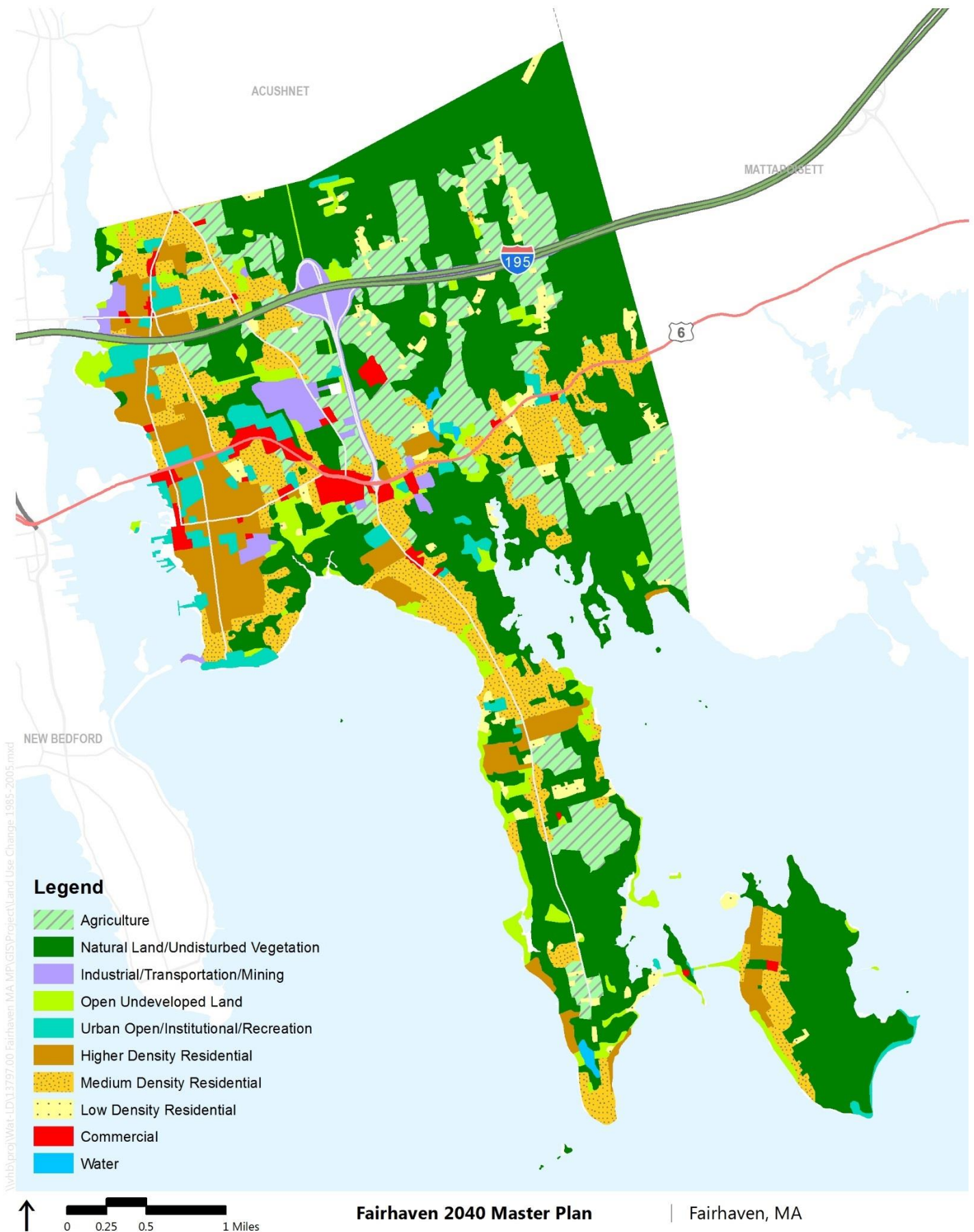
The Massachusetts Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS) has compiled digital statewide land use data developed from aerial photographs of 1985, 1999 and 2005. Comparing these datasets help understand pattern and change of the land use, or land cover, of Fairhaven over the intervening years (see **Table 1-1**). In 1985, about two thirds of Fairhaven were undeveloped land consisting of agricultural land, natural vegetated areas, and other open lands. The one third that was developed consisted mainly of residential land (25.6 percent), with commercial land accounting for 2.1 percent, industrial and transportation land 4.4 percent, and institutional/recreation land 3.4 percent.



Unitarian Memorial Church in the historic Town Center

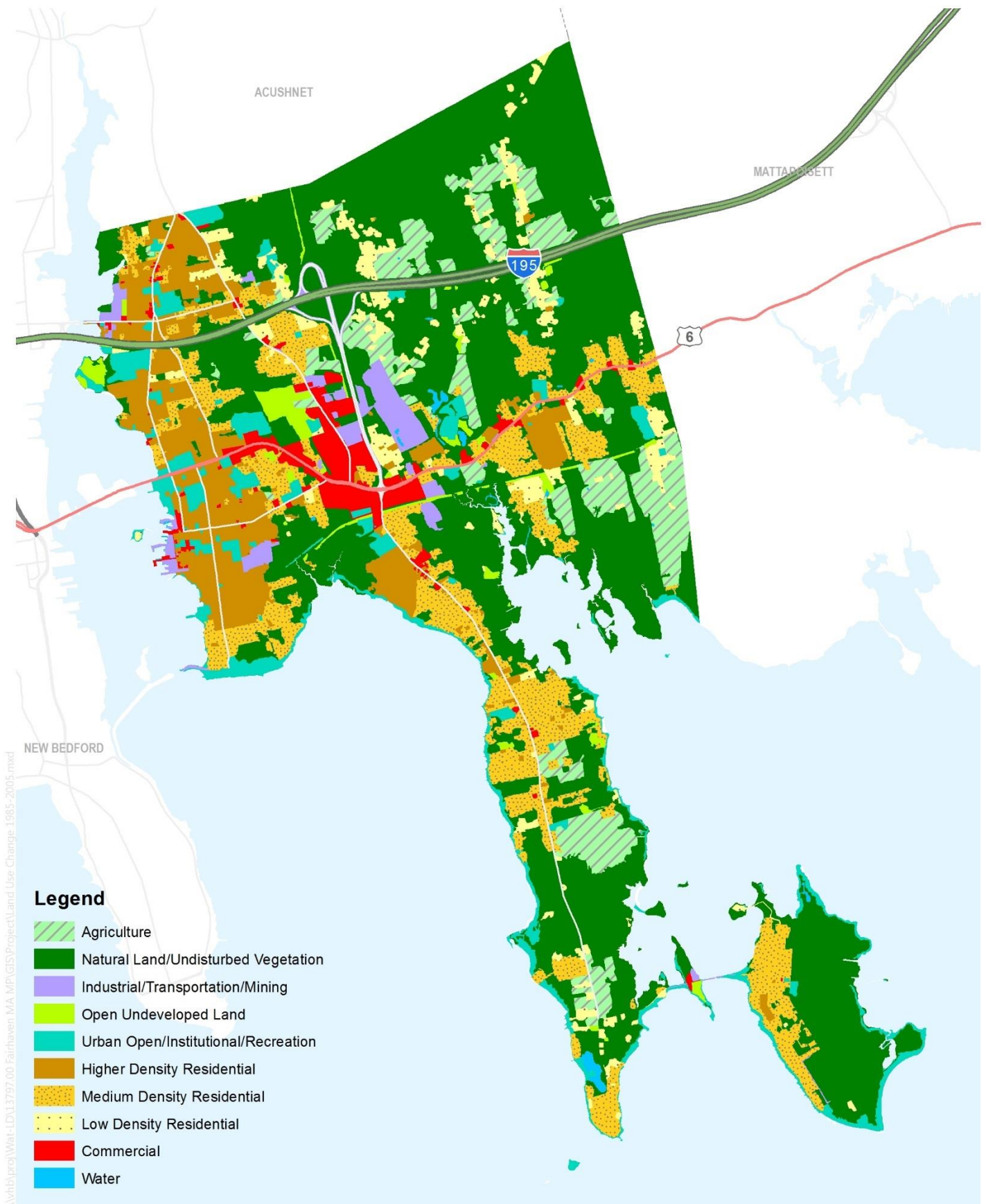


Fairhaven's working waterfront near Town Center



Source: Town of Fairhaven, MassGIS

Land Use 1985



↑ 0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan

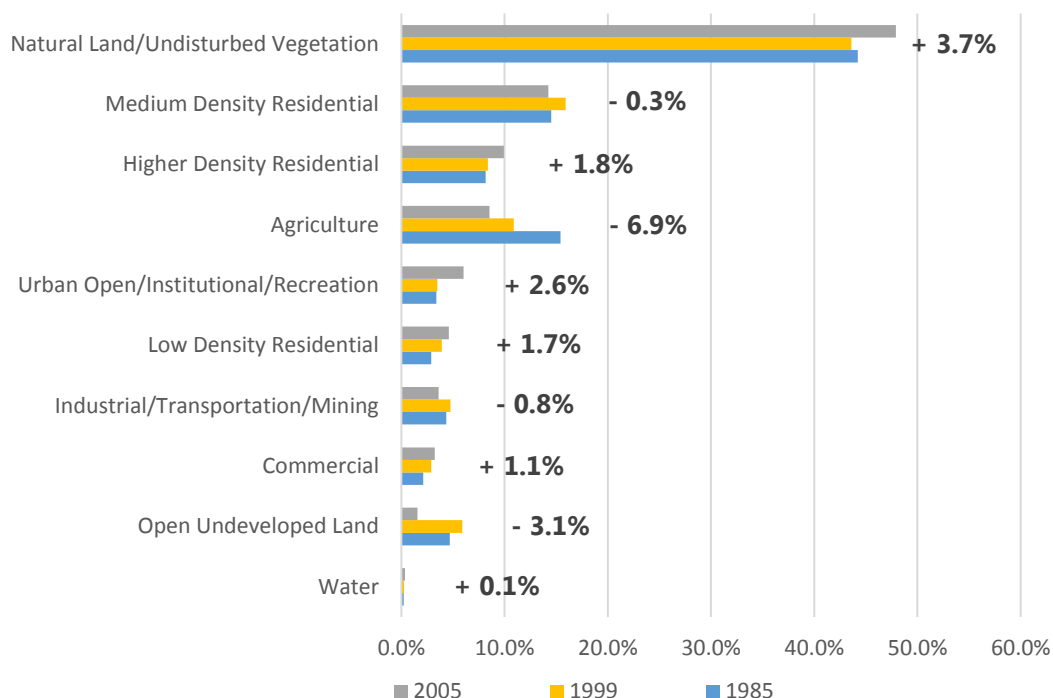
Fairhaven, MA

Source: Town of Fairhaven, MassGIS

Land Use 2005

Growth between 1985 and 2005 was relatively slow but steady with an overall 6.2 percent change from undeveloped land to developed land in Fairhaven (see **Table 1-2**). The most significant change occurred in agricultural land and open undeveloped land which decreased by nearly 7 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively, of the total town area. Commercial land grew by 1.1 percent with the majority of the growth occurring along Alden Road, expanding from the established Route 6 commercial corridor. Residential land increased by 3.1 percent where new developments were mainly distributed along major roads in existing residential neighborhoods, particularly in the northwestern and along Route 6 in the eastern portion of the Town (see **Figure 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3**).

Figure 1-3 Land Use Change in Fairhaven: 1985, 1999 and 2005



Source: MassGIS

The statistics also show a 2.6 percent increase in natural vegetated areas, which is likely due to succession of inactive agricultural and open undeveloped land and more detailed delineation of inland wetlands. Overall speaking, the bulk of the newly developed areas between 1985 and 2005 were clustered close to traditional centers and along major routes, where the historic rural character and landscape pattern of Fairhaven largely remained.

Table 1-1 Land Use Change in Fairhaven: 1985, 1999 and 2005

	1985	1985 Percent of Total	1999	1999 Percent of Total	2005	2005 Percent of Total	1985- 2005 Change
Agriculture	1,225.2	15.4%	865.4	10.9%	674.1	8.5%	-45.0%
Open Undeveloped Land	372.2	4.7%	468.1	5.9%	122.7	1.6%	-67.0%
Commercial	167.3	2.1%	230.8	2.9%	255.7	3.2%	52.8%
Industrial/Transportation/Mining	346.2	4.4%	377.8	4.8%	284.0	3.6%	-18.0%
Higher Density Residential	648.9	8.2%	665.1	8.4%	785.5	9.9%	21.1%
Medium Density Residential	1,152.4	14.5%	1,264.5	15.9%	1,126.0	14.2%	-2.3%
Low Density Residential	230.0	2.9%	310.7	3.9%	364.6	4.6%	58.5%
Urban Open/Institutional/Recreation	269.1	3.4%	275.7	3.5%	475.5	6.0%	76.7%
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	3,510.9	44.2%	3,462.5	43.6%	3,786.1	47.9%	7.8%
Water	17.9	0.2%	19.4	0.2%	28.3	0.4%	58.2%

Source: MassGIS

Table 1-2 Developed and Undeveloped Land in Fairhaven: 1985, 1999 and 2005

	1985	1985 Percent of Total	1999	1999 Percent of Total	2005	2005 Percent of Total
Developed Land	2,813.8	35.4%	3,124.6	39.4%	3,291.3	41.6%
Undeveloped Land	5,126.2	64.6%	4,815.5	60.6%	4,611.2	58.4%

Source: MassGIS

Existing Land Use Pattern

To help understand the existing land use patterns of Fairhaven, the Town's latest 2016 Assessors' database was spatially correlated with the 2016 parcel maps³. The consolidated parcel data layer was then interpreted to reveal approximate land use patterns by grouping individual parcels' Property Type Classification Codes⁴ into land use categories. The resulting map is shown as **Figure 1-4**. As displayed in the Existing Land Use Pattern map, Fairhaven is predominately a rural/suburban residential community with large tracks of open space and agricultural areas. Single family residential use takes up a third of total land area throughout all neighborhoods of the town. Route 6 and Main Street respectively act as the east-west and north-south spines of the Town that connects numerous smaller scale neighborhood commercial cores and higher density residential areas with the Town's primary commercial and industrial clusters located at Main Street/Waterfront and the Route 6/Route 240/Alden Road areas.



Open rural landscape



Single family residential neighborhood



Traditional neighborhood commercial area



Highway-oriented commercial area

It is clear from the land use pattern map that these two commercial clusters have distinctive characters. The Main Street/Waterfront commercial/industrial district is more marine oriented and locally focused with various boutique restaurants and mom and pop shops. Because of the smaller scale, the commercial fabric of the waterfront district has been almost seamlessly woven back into the historic residential neighborhoods and the Town Center, which, together, honor the Town's rich history and unique characters. The Route 6/Route 240/Alden Road commercial district, on the other hand, represents the

³ Due to lack of latest land use data from MassGIS, interpreting the Town's assessors' database represents an alternative approach to gain insights in the Town's land use pattern.

⁴ Property Type Classification Code, shown as "LUCODE" in assessors' records, is a three-digit code used by the Board of Assessors in determining the proper classification of properties according to their uses. Since the consolidated assessors' data layer is parcel based, this approach is only appropriate in understanding the land use patterns of a community, rather than interpreting the actual land use or land cover units that can vary within individual parcels or across multiple parcels.

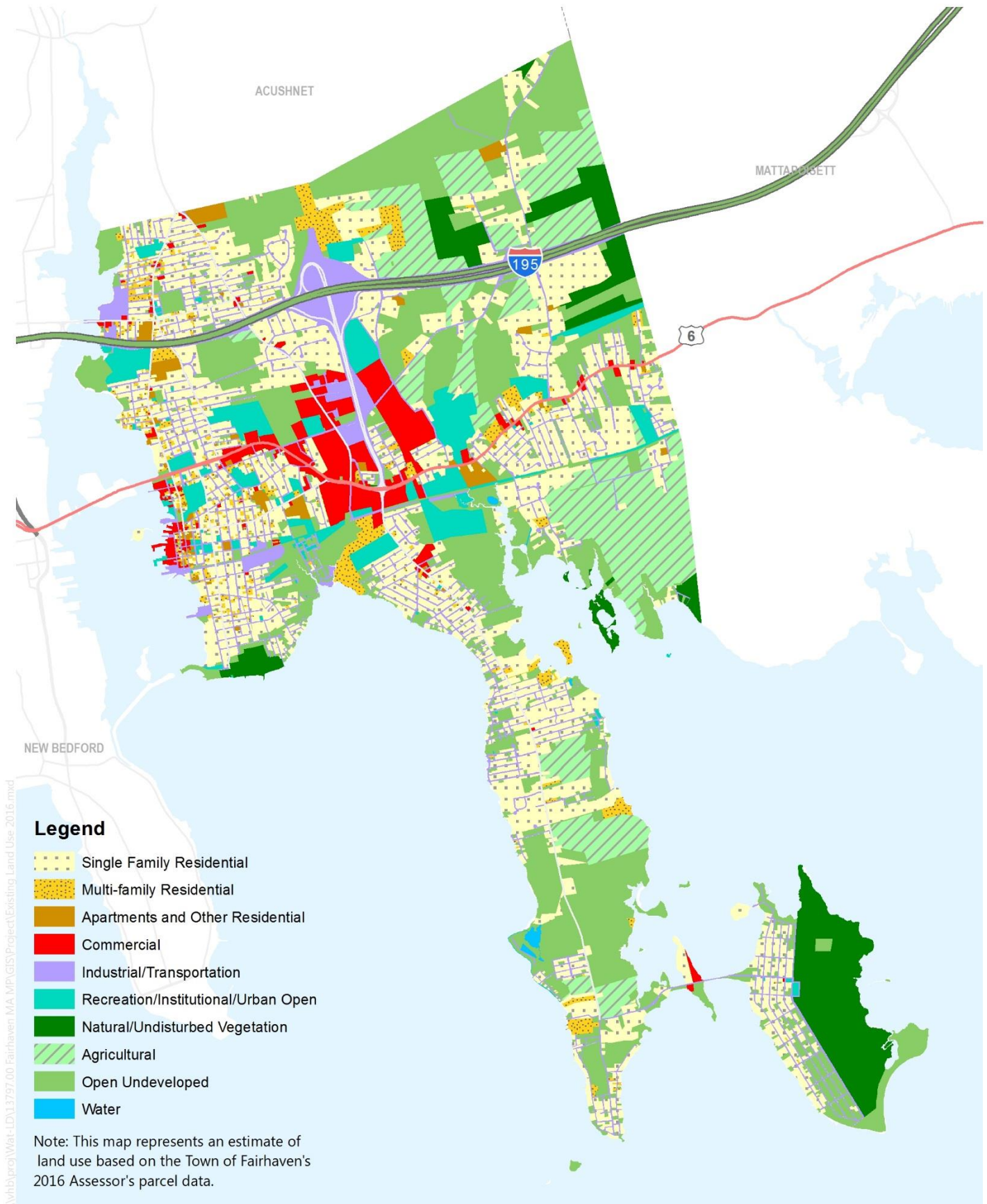
typical auto-oriented, strip-mall type of commercial developments that heavily rely on quick access to local and regional arterial roads. These are mostly seen as large scale big-box commercial developments with massive parking areas fronting the major access roads. The historical land use maps show the prior trend of expansion of these large scale commercial and business developments from Route 6 up north along Alden Road and Route 240 between 1985 and 2005. While it once represented growth and prosperity of the community, the Route 6 commercial district is now faced with increasing challenges in recent years with high turnover and vacancies. Significant opportunities lie within the strategic revitalization of this established commercial and business core.

The Benoit Square area in North Fairhaven represents a different type of commercial and residential neighborhood that is characterized by the traditional human scale development pattern with commercial and mixed-use buildings lining Main Street and Adams Street. These traditional mixed-uses are considered an economically resilient development type that is more and more in demand as Baby Boomers and Millennials choose walkable neighborhoods over car dependent suburbs⁵. However, the traditional commercial and residential mixed-use buildings are nonconforming in the current Business zoning district and much of the Benoit Square area is suffering from disinvestment and frequent vacancies. There are also two large potential redevelopment properties in this area, the Town-owned Oxford School site and the former Sacred Heart Church property. Non-conforming structures may not be repaired or altered such that the cost exceeds 50% of the structure's value, which poses an obstacle to renovation and reuse.



Benoit Square commercial area in North Fairhaven

⁵ Benoit Square Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Study, 2016



Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan

Fairhaven, MA

In 2016, the Town conducted a Benoit Square Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Study with support from Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) to assess neighborhood needs in the Benoit Square area and to examine zoning constraints to revitalization and quality of life. Based on zoning review and local input, the Study recommended several zoning changes to the Town's existing Mixed-use zoning provisions followed by rezoning lots with commercial and civic uses as well as others facing Main Street in Benoit to the Mixed-Use district in order to help remove obstacles to revitalization and preservation of the traditional commercial area. These recommendations include:

- ▶ Amend Mixed-Use (MU) dimensional requirements to match the existing historic structures and site plans in both the Town Center and Benoit Square to bring structures into conformity.
- ▶ Amend the use table to allow typical neighborhood center uses by right in the Mixed-Use district and to require or encourage non-residential uses facing the sidewalk on the first floor.
- ▶ Require Special Permit with site plan review in the MU district for new construction and expansions, but not for use changes or specifically for parking changes.
- ▶ Add design standards and an intent for the MU district to provide a basis for Special Permit decisions by the Planning Board. These specify the essential factors for buildings and sites to fit into a traditional human-scale area.

Long-term Development Patterns

Zoning

A community's long-term development patterns are to a large extent determined by its zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and other local development policies and priorities. Fairhaven's current zoning bylaw was first adopted in 1966 and has since went through numerous amendments. In general, the Town's zoning code defines the following zoning districts and uses:

Rural Residence Districts (RR)

With nearly half of the Town zoned for RR, the Rural Residence Districts are the predominate factor that defines the rural character of the Town, particularly in East Fairhaven, Sconticut Neck and West Island. The RR Districts primarily allow single family residential uses. Commercial and industrial uses are generally not allowed, while agricultural, institutional, and recreational uses are permitted on a limited base. A minimum lot area of 30,000 square feet is required in the RR districts.

Single Residence Districts (RA)

The Single Residence Districts, which account for over 30 percent of the Town, cover most of the western half of the Town and the Route 6 corridor in East Fairhaven. The RA Districts allow for the same types of uses as the RR Districts, but a minimum lot area of

15,000 square feet is required in the RA districts. An additional 50 percent increase in lot size is required for permitted semidetached and two-family dwellings in the RA Districts.

General Residence Districts (RB) and Apartment/Multifamily Districts (RC)

The RB and RC Districts only account for less than 1 percent of the Town's total area. These districts are mostly located in established residential neighborhoods along Main Street in the western and northern parts of the Town, and near the Route 6 corridor. The RB and RC Districts offer more flexibility in the types of permitted residential developments, such as two-families and multi-families, while having similar restrictions on other uses as with the RR and RA Districts. Residential density allowed in the RC zone is relatively low at 6-7 units per acre.

Park Districts (P)

The Park Districts are intended to promote recreation and preservation related activities. Certain agricultural and institutional uses, such as farms, public schools, cemeteries, etc. are also allowed, while most commercial, industrial, and residential uses are not permitted in the Park Districts.

Business Districts (B)

Business Districts account for nearly 4 percent of the Town and are generally clustered near Route 6/Route 20/Alden Road area, along Route 6 in East Fairhaven, and on northern Sconticut Neck Road. Many of the commercial uses, except sexually oriented businesses, are permitted by right in the Business Districts. Agricultural, institutional, and recreational uses are also generally allowed, while industrial and residential uses are not. The minimum lot size in Business Districts is 15,000 square feet. According to feedback from the business communities and town residents, the current provisions of the Business District don't necessarily account for or encourage smaller neighborhood commercial cores where small, locally oriented businesses, or mom and pop shops, can thrive.

Industrial Districts (I)

There are three major clusters of Industrial Districts, one located to the south of the I-195 ramps, and another two on the waterfront just north of I-195 and south of Route 6 respectively. Together, these Industrial Districts account for 3.6 percent of Fairhaven. Except residential uses, the Industrial Districts allow a wide variety of uses, including all types of industrial uses and agricultural uses, and most of the commercial and institutional uses. One of the concerns voiced during the public outreach process was that the Industrial District zoning provisions, which essentially allow most general businesses in the industrial zones, are too broad to be meaningful or effective.

Agricultural Districts(AG)

Agricultural Districts are primarily located in East Fairhaven and take up nearly 8 percent of the Town. All agricultural related uses are permitted by right in Agricultural Districts, while single families as well as certain institutional and recreational uses are also allowed. Commercial and industrial uses are generally not permitted.

Mixed-use District (MU)

The Town's Mixed-use Districts mainly covers the waterfront area along Middle Street. The MU Districts allow a variety of agricultural, residential, commercial, and institutional uses. Mixed-use buildings containing any combination of uses that are allowed by right or by Special Permit are allowed in the MU Districts. The MU Districts help preserve existing buildings within the districts by allowing lower-than-required parking standards if existing buildings are reused without adding square footages.

Wetland Resource Protection District (WRP)

The purpose of the Wetland Resource Protection District is to promote development that is compatible with the sensitive environmental features of the designated Wetland Resource Protection Areas on the Priest Cove. It generally allows similar types of uses as the Agricultural Districts, but offers slightly more flexibility in residential and recreational uses. Many of the uses allowed in the MU Districts are allowed by Special Permits in the WRP District. In addition, the WRP District basically includes the Atlas Tack site which was an EPA Superfund site that has been cleaned up to the industrial level with institutional controls now in place.

Floodplain Districts (FP)

The Floodplain District is an overlay district that include all special flood hazard areas as designated on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). All development within the overlay district must be in compliance with certain state general laws and regulations on building structures, wetland restrictions, and sewage requirements.

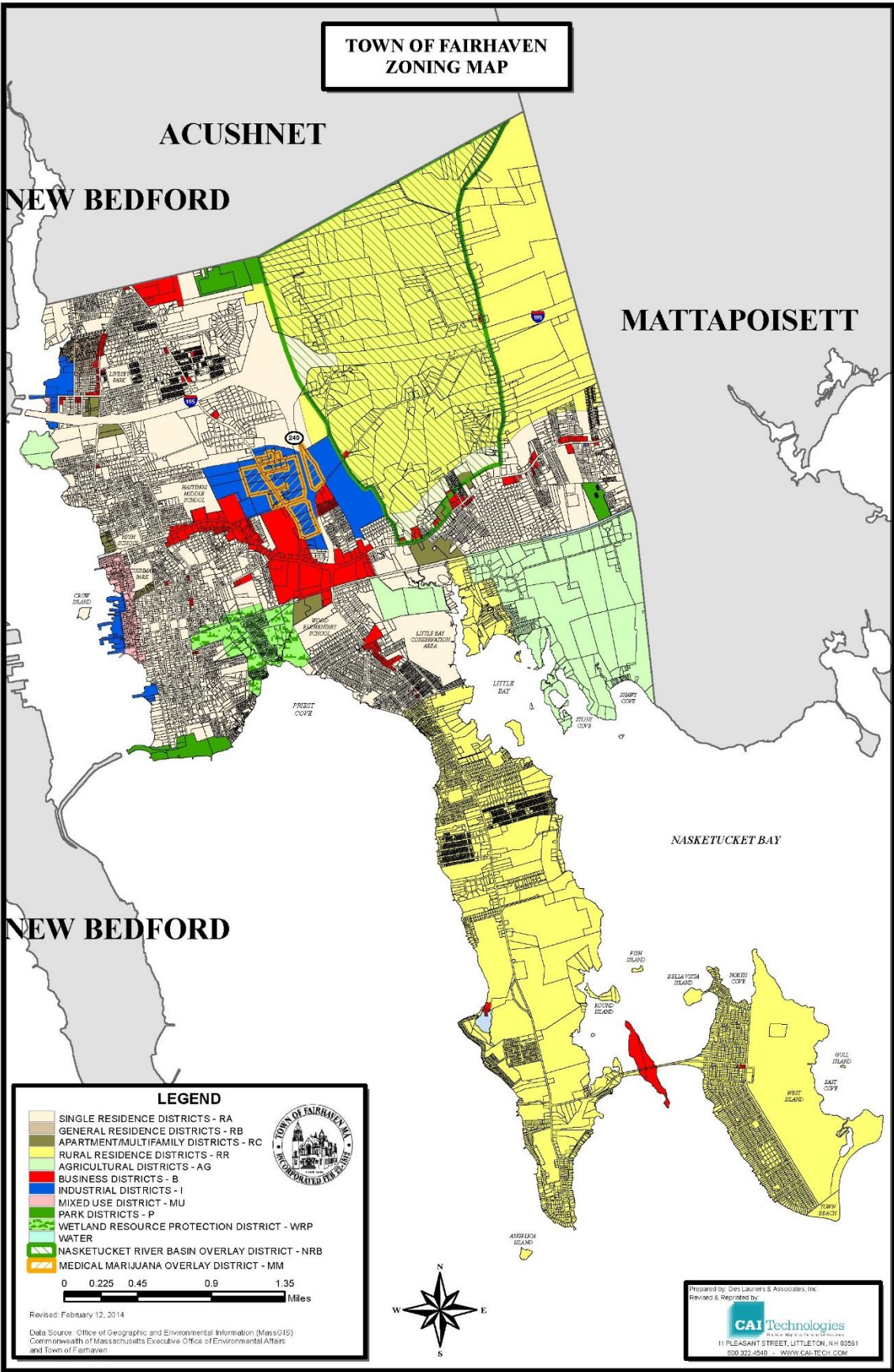
Nasketucket Overlay District (NRB)

The Nasketucket River Basin District is another overlay district aiming to preserve, protect and maintain the quantity and quality of the surface water and groundwater of a large portion of East Fairhaven that contribute to the existing and potential sources of water supply to the Town. A number of facilities or activities are restricted within this overlay districts, including fuel storage, commercial laundries, commercial parking, and fertilizer and pesticide applications, etc.

Medical Marijuana Overlay District

This is an overlay district on the existing Industrial District along Alden Road and Route 240. It allows Medical Marijuana Facilities that comply with Department of Public Health Regulations by Special Permit. A Special Permit for a Medical Marijuana Facility will be limited to uses such as cultivation, processing and packaging of Marijuana for Medical Use, and retail sale or distribution of Marijuana for Medical Use to qualifying patients.

Figure 1-5 Town of Fairhaven Zoning Map



Priority Development and Protection Areas

In 2008, three Regional Planning Agencies, Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD), Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC), worked alongside local residents, business owners, officials, and organizations to designate areas that were most important for development or preservation in all thirty-one communities in the South Coast Rail Corridor. These areas were designated as Priority Development Areas (PDAs), Priority Protection Areas (PPAs), and Combined Priority Development and Priority Protection Areas (Combined Areas). The Regional Planning Agencies revisited these communities in 2013 to review and update the 2008 designations in order to reflect the most current municipal priorities⁶.

Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are areas that are appropriate for increased development or redevelopment due to several factors including good transportation access, available infrastructure (primarily water and sewer), an absence of environmental constraints, and local support. PDAs can range in size from a single parcel to many acres. Potential development ranges from small scale infill to large commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use projects. Town and village centers, Chapter 40R Districts, industrial parks, and proposed commuter rail station sites are typical examples of PDAs.

Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) are areas that are important to protect due to the presence of significant natural or cultural resources, including endangered species habitats, areas critical to water supply, historic resources, scenic vistas, and farms. Like PDAs, the PPAs can vary greatly in size. Sites may be candidates for protection through acquisition or conservation restrictions.

In Combined Priority Development and Priority Protection Areas (Combined Areas), communities welcome development; however, the development is expected to be sensitive to its site and the surrounding area. This may include development that complements the older structures within a historic district or low impact development that protects nearby water resources or biodiversity.

The 2013 updated Community Priority Areas map shows ten PDAs, four PPAs, and one Combined Area in Fairhaven (see **Figure 1-6**). Four of the larger PDAs are centered around the intersections of Route 6, Route 240, and Alden Road which aim to primarily promote business and commercial expansion associated with the existing commercial areas. Four other PDAs are along the waterfront areas north of I-195 and south of Route 6. These PDAs mainly focus on promoting waterfront industrial vitality and mixed-use development.

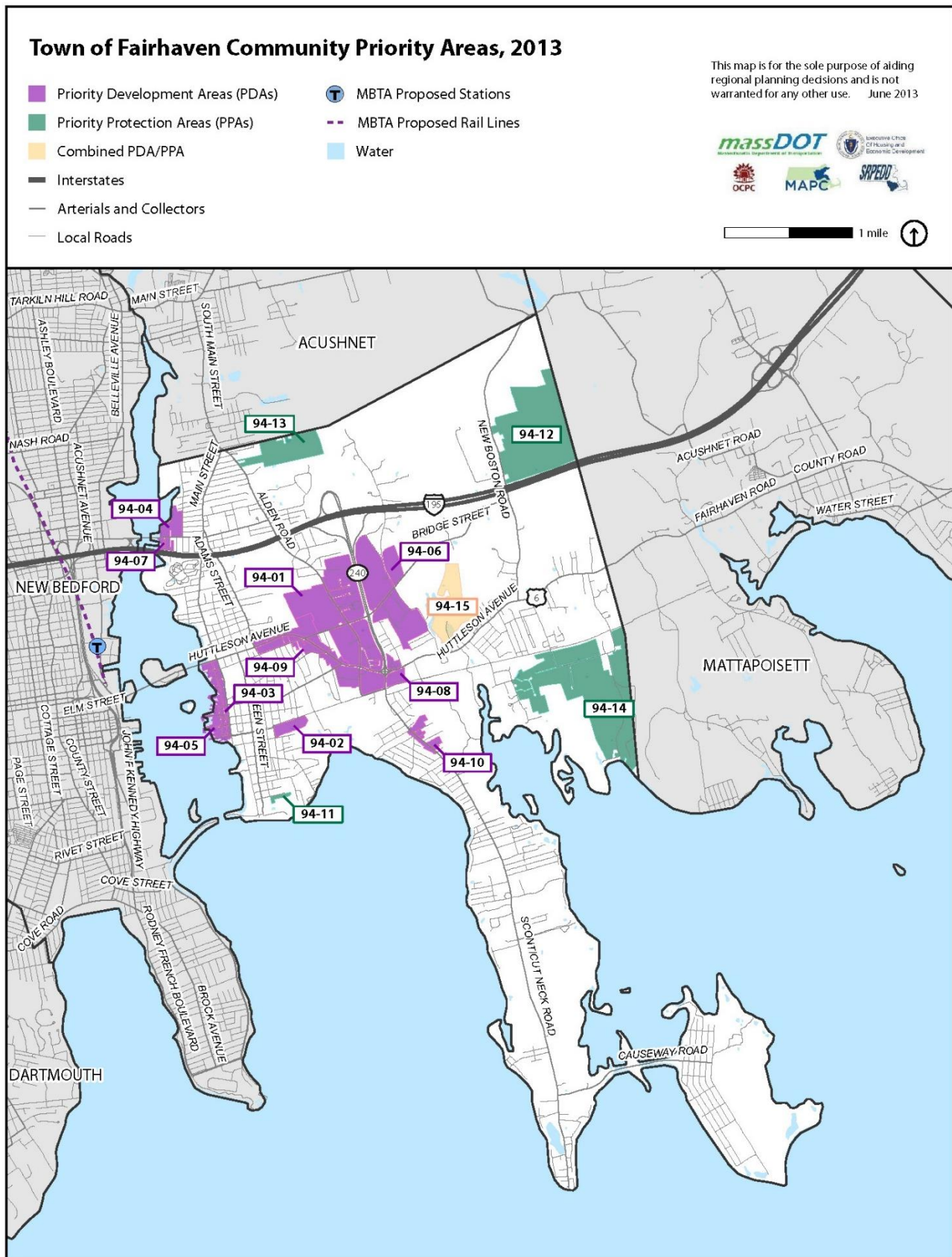
⁶ South Coast Rail Corridor Plan Five-Year Update of Community Priority Areas Fairhaven

Table 1-3 Town of Fairhaven Community Priority Areas, 2013

ID	Name	Type	Acres	Purpose
94-01	Alden Road Redevelopment Site	Development	124.93	Redevelopment opportunities associated with existing businesses, the landfill, and underutilized sites
94-02	Atlas Tack Redevelopment Site	Development	13.70	To develop a former industrial site
94-03	Central Waterfront Mixed-use Area	Development	20.78	To maintain and encourage mixed-use areas associated with waterfront industry
94-04	Howland Road Industrial Area	Development	20.56	Industrial and commercial redevelopment
94-05	Marine Industrial District and Working Waterfront	Development	18.92	To maintain and encourage waterfront industry
94-06	Mill Bridge Office Park	Development	137.03	Office park, medical, and research and development expansion and infill opportunities
94-07	North Waterfront Mixed-use Area	Development	1.62	To encourage a mixed-use node adjacent to job opportunities
94-08	Route 6 and Route 240 Business Area	Development	110.15	Commercial development associated with this major intersection
94-09	Route 6 Corridor	Development	56.14	To maintain the corridor as a business and commercial area
94-10	Scoticut Neck Limited Commercial	Development	15.14	Limited, neighborhood-scale commercial opportunities to serve the surrounding area
94-11	Doan Street Protection Area	Protection	3.18	To maintain passive recreation and education opportunities
94-12	New Boston Road Farmland	Protection	215.93	To protect active agriculture and farmland
94-13	North Fairhaven Conservation Area	Protection	61.59	To preserve open space
94-14	Shaw Road Farms	Protection	288.84	Protection of active agriculture and farmland, preservation of marine resources, floodplain buffers, and open space connectivity
94-15	Mariners' Fields	Combined	71.32	To maintain the current active recreation use and to encourage development associated with active recreation

Source: South Coast Rail Corridor Plan Five-Year Update of Community Priority Areas Fairhaven
Note: Please see Figure 1-6 for location of each Priority Area by their ID numbers.

Figure 1-6 Town of Fairhaven Community Priority Areas, 2013



Issues and Opportunities

Preserving Community Character

Fairhaven's residents value the Town's coastal characters greatly, which are mainly defined by large tracks of agricultural lands and open spaces, beautiful coastlines, and close knit residential neighborhoods. Throughout the public engagement process, residents expressed strong desire to maintain the open spaces of the Town while concentrating future growth in appropriate areas that are already supported by municipal infrastructure. By doing this, the Town will be able to continue community preservations and focus housing and economic development efforts in established but, more often seen, underutilized parts of the town where revitalizations are needed. With this concentration of growth, concerns were express about maintaining the scale and character of the Town's commercial centers that were identified as a great resource to the entire community.

Redevelopment of Route 6 Commercial Area

There was general consensus at the public meetings that the Town's primary commercial area along the Route 6 corridor is in need of revitalization. This area has experienced increasing commercial vacancies over the past few years when several large chain retail stores closed. While it is important to explore near-term options to repurpose the vacant commercial buildings, it is equally critical to create a long-term vision for this commercial district. Mixed-use, especially commercial and residential mixed-use, has been proven a successful tool throughout many New England communities to create or redevelop vibrant and walkable town commercial centers. The Town should explore ways to allow more flexibilities in terms of land use types and patterns in this commercial area so that future redevelopment efforts can become more capable of creating a commercial district supported by a mix of commercial, business, residential, and institutional uses. One approach the Town could consider is the creation a mixed-use overlay zoning district for the Route 6 area, that recognizes the need to allow for a variety of scales and character that relate to the western, middle and easterly sections of the Route 6 corridor.

Modernize the Zoning Bylaw

It is commonly seen in many historic communities that their zoning bylaws, though gradually amended over many decades, are becoming outdated and lack the cohesiveness that is conducive to present community development needs. Fairhaven's current zoning bylaw is faced with similar challenges. For example, there is lack clear provisions in the zoning bylaw to properly regulate the types of business uses in the Town's industrial zones, which result in numerous conflicting and incompatible business uses occurring in industrial zones. The zoning bylaw also lacks flexibility to support smaller neighborhood businesses, such as mom and pop retail stores in mixed-use buildings and/or home offices. This appears to be a concern of many town residents as they believe it is this type of smaller neighborhood businesses that will add to the vitality and character of the Town's historic neighborhoods. In addition, the large number of

zoning variances issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals may be an indicator that the current zoning does not meet or reflect today's development needs of the broader neighborhoods throughout the Town, particularly some of the older residential neighborhoods such as West Island. The Town should explore effective zoning changes to address these issues.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Balance growth and preservation.

Recommendations:

1. Preserve rural characteristics by protecting open spaces and supporting remaining working farms through continuous community preservation efforts, such as partnerships with the Buzzards Bay Coalition and Fairhaven Acushnet Land Preservation Trust.
2. Encourage infill commercial and residential development in existing, established areas where water and sewer services are provided.
3. Differentiate between industrial zones and business zones to encourage business and commercial developments in appropriate locations within the community, such as multiple commercial zones based on scale and characteristics, e.g. general commercial, highway commercial, and neighborhood commercial, etc.
4. Re-examine the purpose of the Nasketucket Overlay District (NRB), redefine the district boundaries, and amend zoning provisions to better balance the current needs for resource protection and property development.

Goal 2: Encourage strategic redevelopment in the Route 6 commercial area.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a detailed Route 6 commercial area revitalization plan to guide redevelopment. The plan should incorporate analysis of appropriate types of redevelopment, scale/dimension/design of such developments, as well as potential zoning changes and infrastructure and services needed to support such redevelopment.
2. Consider creating a Route 6 mixed-use overlay zoning district to stimulate mixed-use commercial and residential redevelopment appropriate to the characteristics of highway and automobile oriented mixed-use areas, as compared to smaller scale neighborhood mixed-use areas seen in Downtown and North Fairhaven.

Goal 3: Promote neighborhood commercial nodes and small local businesses.

Recommendations:

1. Amend the existing Mixed-use District provisions to include more effective mixed-use zoning to remedy non-conforming traditional uses for small neighborhood businesses, per the Benoit Square Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Study (2016) recommendations.
2. Establish a Mixed-use District in the Benoit Square area to encourage revitalization of the traditional neighborhood commercial center in North Fairhaven.
3. Review and update zoning to allow more flexibility that supports small business development, such as home-based business, residential commercial mixed-use, etc.

Housing

2

Introduction

Housing has evolved into a major issue in southeastern Massachusetts from about the mid 1990's when housing demand and high prices started being driven up by low mortgage rates and low availability. The national, state and regional housing crisis over the last decade which resulted in dramatic drops in home values, evaporated bank lending, and rise in home foreclosures, has created yet more challenges to many rural communities. The current regional housing market has tended to favor the construction of large, expensive single-family dwellings. This trend has been attributed, in part, to transit improvements (commuter rail), the expansion of high technology business in the region, limited land availability and cost, and the migration of more affluent families from the inner suburbs (Boston metro) to semi suburbs and more rural communities.



Typical suburban single family neighborhood in Fairhaven

This section of the Master Plan examines three important aspects of Fairhaven's housing, including the housing stock in terms of age, condition, cost and availability, the

population inhabiting the housing with considerations of the demographic trends as well as the specific needs of different population group, and housing affordability.

Baseline Conditions Analyses

Housing Stock

Fairhaven has been a stable rural community where single family homes predominate. According to the latest American Community Survey Five-year Estimate, Fairhaven's housing stock in 2015 consists of about 7,447 housing units, among which, 5,473 or 74 percent are detached single-family units, 228 or 3 percent are attached single family units. The second most common type of housing structures are two to four units and account for 14 percent of all units. Less than 10 percent of the Town's housing units are in five or more unit structures (see Table 2-1). Compared to year 2000, the Town's housing stock increased by 181 units or 2.5 percent in 2015, representing relatively slow or modest housing growth.

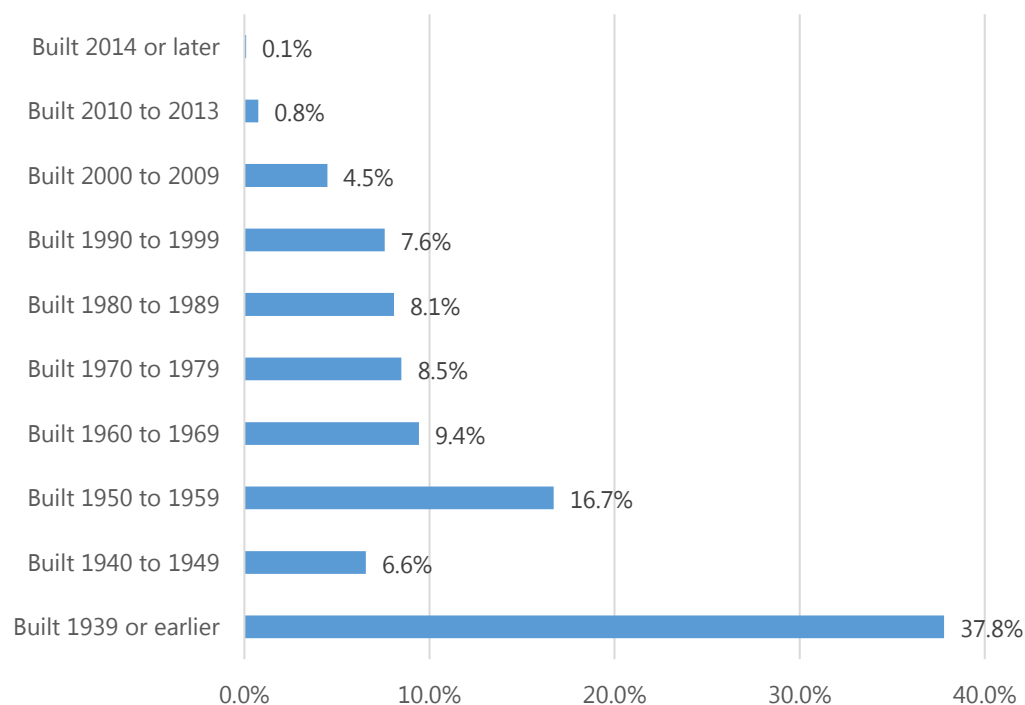
Table 2-1 Types of Housing Units, 2000 and 2015

Type of housing units	2015		2000	
Single Family (detached)	5,473	73.5%	5,307	73.0%
Single Family (attached)	228	3.1%	167	2.3%
Two-family units	630	8.5%	688	9.5%
Three or four units	391	5.3%	416	5.7%
Five to nine units	225	3.0%	184	2.5%
Ten or more units	500	6.7%	504	6.9%
Total	7,447		7,266	

Source: US Census, 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

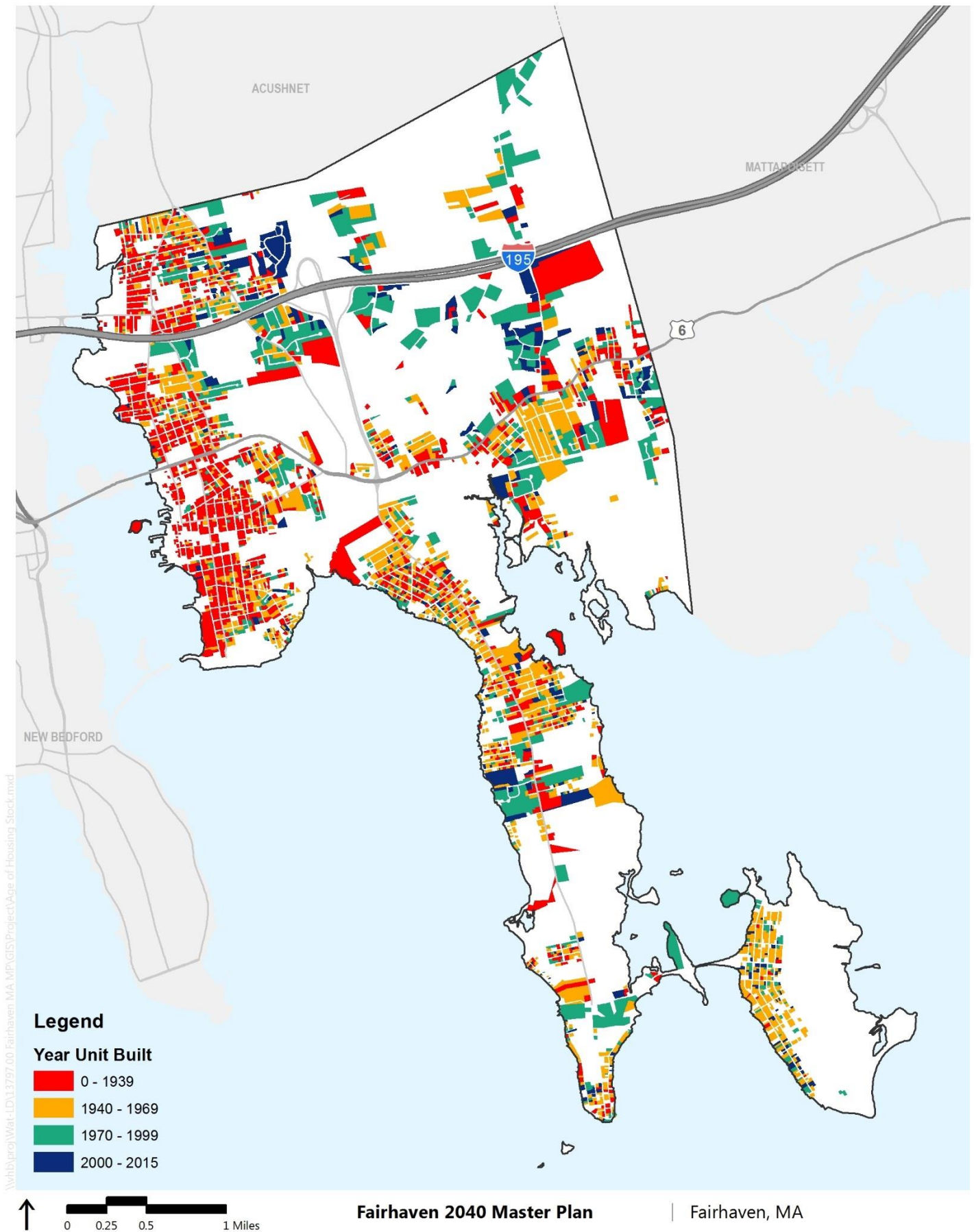
The age of the housing stock in Fairhaven is shown in **Figure 2-1**. Nearly 40 percent of the Town's homes were constructed before 1940. There appeared to be a local housing boom in Fairhaven post-World War II between 1950 and 1959, during which nearly 17 percent of the Town's homes were built. Growth since the 1950s housing boom has been modest but steady. More recently since 2000, the Town's housing market has shown signs of slowing down. Between 2000 and 2009, there were 334, or 4.5 percent of total, housing units created in the Town, with another 63 units built after year 2010, which account for less than 1 percent of Fairhaven's total housing stock.

Figure 2-1 Age of Housing Stock, 2015



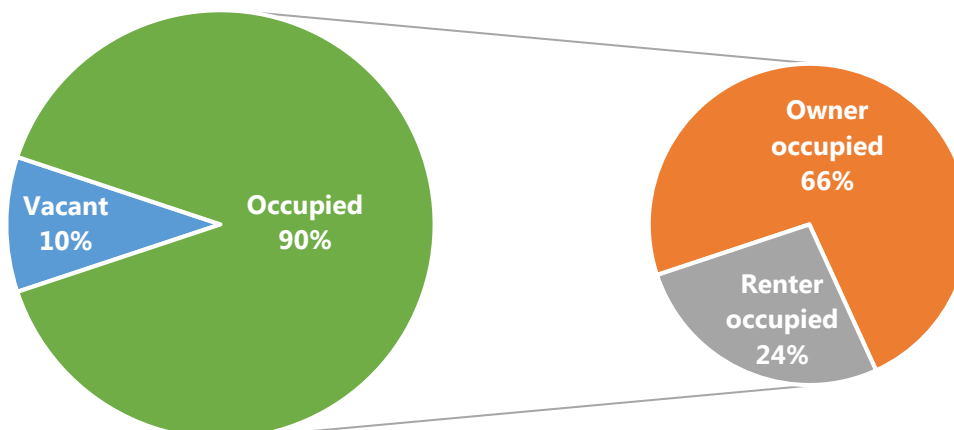
Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Figure 2-2 demonstrates the distribution pattern of Fairhaven's homes by their age using the Town's latest 2016 Assessors data base. It clearly shows that the majority of the Town's older homes built prior to 1940 are located along Main Street and in the historic Fairhaven Center area near the New Bedford Harbor. Older homes also spread on the Sconticut Neck along the main roads. Between 1940 and 1970 during the post-World War II housing boom, housing constructions continued to expand from these historic residential centers, while new housing clusters appeared in East Fairhaven off of Route 6 and on the West Island. Housing developments between 1970 and 1999 spread further away from the established residential neighborhoods into the more agricultural part of East Fairhaven and to south on the Neck. More recent housing construction since 2000 is characterized by infill development throughout various parts of the Town where infrastructures were available.



Source: Town of Fairhaven, MassGIS

Figure 2-3 Housing Units and Tenure, 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

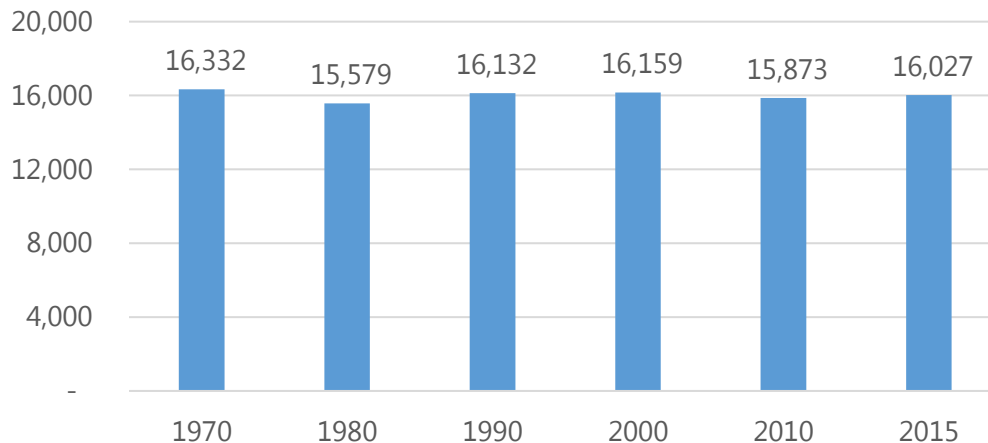
In terms of housing occupancy, Fairhaven has gradually transitioned into a year-round community with 90 percent of all housing units occupied for year-round living. Among the occupied households, 66 percent are owner occupied and 24 percent are renter occupied (see **Figure 2-3**). The average household size in Fairhaven has decreased slightly from 2.38 persons per household in 2000 to 2.33 persons per household in 2010, indicating that Fairhaven is largely a family-oriented community where household structures stayed relatively stable over the years.

Population Characteristics

According to the U.S. Census decimal population counts, Fairhaven has experienced very minimal population change since 1970. The total year-round population of Fairhaven has stayed around 16,000 between 1970 to 2015 (see **Figure 2-4**). This is another evidence that Fairhaven is a close-knit community where generations have chosen to stay and raise their families in the town.

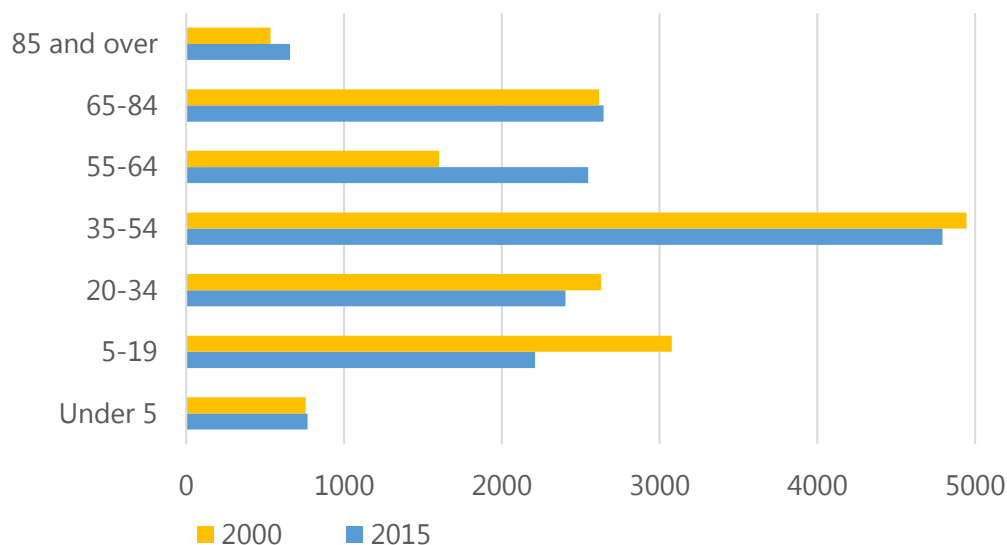
Despite the fact that the overall population hasn't changed much, the age structure of the Town's residents has shifted significantly. As shown in **Figure 2-5**, the senior population between the age of 55 and 64 increased by nearly 1,000 from 2000 to 2015, while the younger population between the age of 5 and 19 decreased by nearly 900 during the same time. Seniors over 65 years of age also increased slightly from 2000 to 2015. This phenomenon echoes with the aging demographic trends across the nation as the post-World War II baby boomer generation began to enter the 55 to 70 years age cohort.

Figure 2-4 Population Change, 1970-2015



Source: US Census, 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Figure 2-5 Population Change by Age Group, 2000 and 2015



Source: US Census, 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

The trend of an aging population, which is most likely to continue over the next few decades, poses a significant challenge to many New England communities like Fairhaven who strives to provide housing options that would support aging-in-place for their seniors. The Town of Fairhaven has been progressive in providing senior housings in the community. Most recently in 2016, the Town has approved the conversion of the historic Oxford School into age restricted (62+) affordable senior apartments. However, there are still concerns expressed through the public outreach process over long waiting lists for senior housings in town. In addition, many residents suggested that more support should be provided to seniors who wish to age independently in their own homes. One of the effective tools for creating affordable and integrated senior housings within a community is Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaws, which typically offers more zoning flexibilities to support the creation of a second smaller dwelling on the same lot of the primary dwelling

so that the additional unit can be integrated into existing single family neighborhoods with little or no negative impact on the character of the neighborhood. Fairhaven has adopted an Accessory Dwelling Units bylaw in 1998. However, the provisions, such as minimum lot size, minimum unit size, and possible configurations of the accessory dwelling unit in relationship to the primary unit, appear to be too restrictive to offer tangible flexibilities and incentives since few properties and buildings in the existing single family residential neighborhoods can actually meet these requirements. Many of the existing residential uses are in fact non-conforming under the current zoning provisions, which creates additional zoning variances challenges for property owners who wish to create accessory dwelling units on their lots.

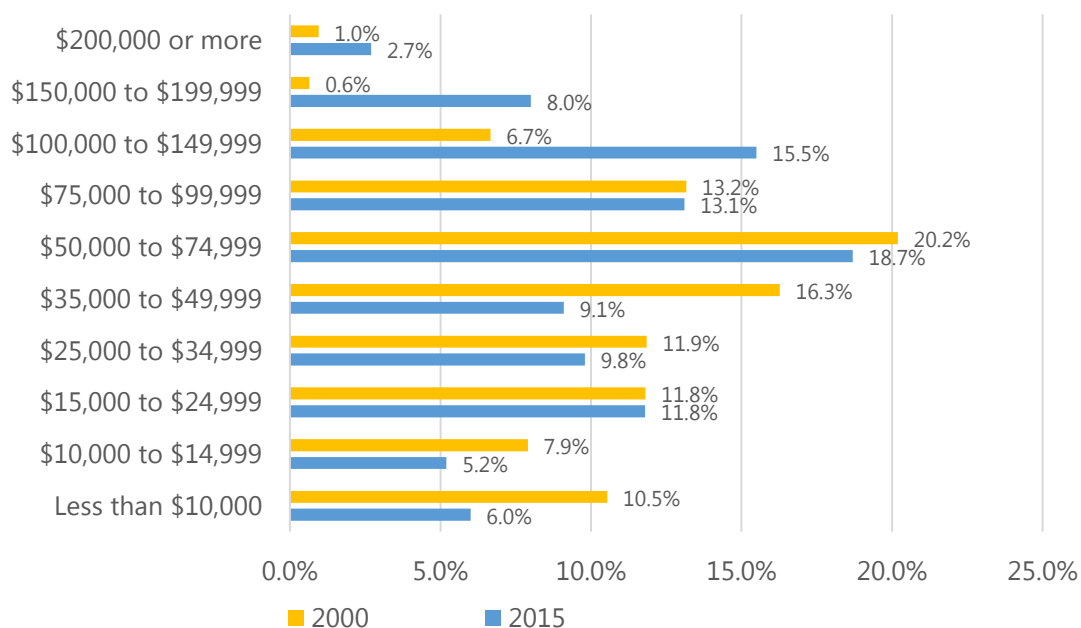
Housing Affordability

There are two ways of understanding housing affordability within Fairhaven. It could refer to federal and state definition of affordable housing (for purposes of housing subsidies) for individuals and households earning up to 80 percent of the area median income (AMI). Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) maintains a subsidized housing inventory (SHI) that tracks each community's affordable housing stock, including deed restricted and subsidized units. Under General Law Chapter 40B, in any community where less than 10 percent of total housing units are included in the SHI, a developer can build more densely than the zoning bylaw would permit, if at least 20 percent (or 20 percent in certain cases) of the new units are affordable to individuals or households earning less than 80 percent of AMI.

Statewide, 5 percent of housing units are on the SHI, and 12 percent of all Massachusetts communities meet their 10 percent requirement under Chapter 40B. According to the latest SHI as of December 2014, Fairhaven has a total of 473 subsidized housing units serving very low income residents, which account for 6.8 percent of the 2010 U.S. Census Year Round Housing Units of 7,003. These SHI units include elderly and disabled rental units, family rental units, and special needs housing units, managed and operated by the Fairhaven Housing Authority (FHA) or privately.

Housing affordability could also refer to the consideration of whether housing in Fairhaven is affordable for middle income households who don't otherwise qualify for state or federal housing programs and subsidies but are faced with increasing housing prices. In general, the financial situations of Fairhaven's households are improving over the years. From 2000 to 2015, household incomes of Fairhaven's residents have been on the rise with households earning more than \$100,000 increased by nearly 18 percent while households with lower than lower than \$15,000 annual income decreased by 7.1 percent (see **Figure 2-6**).

Figure 2-6 Household Income, 2000 and 2015



Source: US Census, 2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

Median household income in Fairhaven has increased from \$41,696 in 2000 to \$61,274 in 2015, an increase of around 47 percent. In comparison, the median gross monthly rent increased by 50 percent from \$576 in 2000 to \$864 in 2015, the median monthly owner cost with a mortgage increased by 44 percent from \$1,139 in 2000 to \$1,644 in 2015, and owner cost without mortgage by 61 percent from \$350 to \$563. According to the latest statistics from the American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, nearly 43 percent of all Fairhaven’s renters spend more than a third of their monthly income on housing and are therefore considered cost-burdened, while over 39 percent of all Fairhaven’s households with a mortgage as well as another 26 percent of households without mortgage are also cost-burdened.

General housing affordability, particularly the availability of more affordable housing types, has been identified as the key housing issue in Fairhaven throughout the stakeholder and public outreach of the Master Plan process. There is a strong desire to keep, attract and bring more young families into Fairhaven as the Town’s population is on the aging trend. The limited stock of condo units and market rate rental units in Fairhaven, evidenced by constant low vacancy rates in recent years, contributes to rising starter home prices and rental price and is becoming a challenge for younger generations with moderate incomes to stay in the community. In addition, being a coastal community, Fairhaven’s overall housing stock is largely considered modest by many of its residents, who also expressed desires of keeping such affordability long-termly.

Issues and Opportunities

Integrate Future Housing Growth in Established Neighborhoods

While Fairhaven's population has stayed relatively stable over the past few decades and no significant population growth is anticipated in the near future, the Town should be proactive in planning for potential housing growth within the community, especially given the strong interests of community members to preserve the village characters of the Town and protect valuable open spaces. The Town could explore development regulations that would encourage new housing growth within or near existing, established residential areas of the community. This would not only help control housing sprawl and preserve open spaces, but also utilize developed land and existing municipality infrastructures more efficiently. Infill housing development and reuse or conversion of existing municipal buildings for housing purposes are two of the approaches the Town should primarily consider to foster more integrated housing growth.

Diversify Housing Stock to Enhance Affordability

Fairhaven's overall housing stock is generally considered modest by many of the town residents. However, in recent years there have been increasing concerns regarding the limited housing options and housing affordability within the community, especially the lack of smaller ownership units and rental units for the Town's lower income populations as well as younger working generations of all income levels. The Town could explore several ways to increase affordable housing stock, including utilizing state and federal low income housing programs and enacting zoning tools such as inclusionary zoning, accessory dwelling units, and residential mixed-use to incentivize the creation of more affordable housing.

Continue to Support Senior Housing Needs

Like many New England towns and cities, Fairhaven is becoming an aging community where the senior population is expected to continue growing in the next ten to twenty years in the wake of the baby boomers reaching their retirement age. As a result, the Town will be faced with increasing pressure to provide adequate and appropriate senior housing options that are not only affordable to seniors of different income levels but also supportive to their age-specific needs. The Town has made significant efforts over the years in developing affordable senior apartments in the community, but the need for additional senior housing is evidenced by long waiting lists at many of these senior housing projects. While it is important to identify more opportunities for affordable senior apartments, it is also critical to explore ways to create other types of smaller ownership units that would allow and encourage seniors to age at home.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Keep future residential development in or near existing residential areas to maintain the village character.

Recommendations:

1. Encourage infill residential developments in existing residential neighborhoods that reflect the historic and cultural characters of various neighborhoods.
2. Explore possibilities of housing conversion and adaptive reuse of existing municipal and/or commercial buildings and housing rehabilitation of blighted properties.

Goal 2: Maintain and encourage a variety of housing that is affordable to non-elderly individuals and families of all income levels.

Recommendations:

1. Identify potential sites, possibility through municipal land assemblage or public/private partnership, for non-elderly affordable rental housing developments utilizing the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program.
2. Consider adopting an inclusionary zoning bylaw to require affordable housing in any residential development that requires a Special Permit.
3. Provide more flexibility and incentive in the Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw to encourage the creation of market rate or affordable rental units that support moderate to low income residents.
4. Consider allowing mixed-use residential and commercial developments in established service and employment centers as a means to expand market-rate housing stock.

Goal 3: Continue providing affordable and age-appropriate housing options for senior populations in the community.

Recommendations:

1. Pursue state and federal affordable housing programs and funding at the identified two-acre site off of Main Street adjacent to Oxford Terrace.
2. Provide more flexibility and incentive in the Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw to encourage the creation of smaller housing units that supports downsizing seniors to age in place.
3. Explore zoning tools, such as performance zoning and density bonuses, to encourage development of age-appropriate market-rate ownership units designed to serve the needs of an elderly population, e.g. attached or detached condominium units with first floor bedroom/bathroom suits, accessible grades, attached garages, and maintenance support, etc.

Economic Development

3

Introduction

Fairhaven's location within the South Coast of Massachusetts where the Acushnet River meets Buzzards Bay, offers a range of economic development opportunities and challenges. The town shares a harbor and a common cultural heritage with the city of New Bedford, a place well known for its whaling and fishing history. Because of the physical proximity Fairhaven's history, economy, and culture are intertwined with those of its larger neighbor.

It is well documented that New Bedford was the center of a whaling industry that was a key economic driver for many New England coastal communities for over two hundred years. Fairhaven was also a whaling port; in fact, in the year 1838, Fairhaven was the second-largest whaling port in the United States. Over time as New Bedford evolved into the predominant hub for whaling activities, Fairhaven's economy evolved into one that supplemented the New Bedford economy rather than competing directly with it. Fairhaven became a town of shipwrights, ship chandlers, ropemakers, coopers, and sailmakers. It also became a popular location for ship-owners and ship-captains to build their homes and raise their children. (*Source: World Heritage Encyclopedia*) That heritage is still very much alive and present as Fairhaven continues to provide ship repair and outfitting services for New Bedford's large fishing fleet.



Fairhaven's working waterfront

Today fishing related industries represent a small percentage of overall jobs in Fairhaven but the importance of these jobs to the identity of the town, in addition to the healthy wages they typically provide, speaks to the high priority of preserving them. Additionally, there may be potential to grow Fairhaven's share of fishing related industries as the port continues to lead the nation in landings per year and generate an enormous economic impact for the region.

As noted in the 1996 Master Plan: "The effort to save and rebuild the working waterfront on New Bedford Harbor is important objective in planning for Fairhaven's economic future. Working waterfronts are very hard to permit and build in today's economic and regulatory conditions. It is important to preserve and protect those that currently exist." This is as true in 2017 as it was in 1996.

The Master Plan for Fairhaven completed in 1996 outlined several key goals relating to the working water front and marine related economic activity. They are as follows:

- ▶ Preserve the working waterfront.
- ▶ Provide for new modern industrial and office space as required by marine sciences industries.
- ▶ Provide shoreline protection for aquaculture.
- ▶ Historic preservation where appropriate to encourage tourism.

It is interesting to note that these goals remain relevant today and while some progress as certainly been made toward achieving them, there are some components, such as the creation of a historic district to protect cultural and architecture heritage, which are yet to be completed. Perhaps what is even more interesting is the degree to which the goals, progress and challenges have broadened to include a wider array of employment sectors.

Of key importance is the Route 6/Route 240/ Alden Road area, the largest employment center in Fairhaven, and where the majority of health care and service related jobs are located. These two industry segments make up approximately 40% of all employment in Fairhaven so ensuring that these critical commercial corridors remain healthy is a top priority for the Town. One notable trend during the 1990's and 2000's was the growth of service related employment. By 2010 retail jobs had grown to nearly 20% of all employment with Fairhaven. Between 2010 and 2015, however, as the retail sector contracted and stores closed or moved to other towns, the sector shrunk to 13.5% of total employment. As a result, the ability to retain the remaining retail jobs in Fairhaven as well as re-tenant or repurpose vacant shopping centers along Route 6 is a key goal emerging from the Comprehensive Plan.

In the years since 1996 the AT&T property (identified in the 1996 Master Plan as a critical redevelopment opportunity) has been successfully re-tenanted and now represents, along with the Southcoast Urgent Care Center, a burgeoning health care driven job cluster along Route 240. Health care related jobs grew by 80% between 2010 and 2015 and now represent the largest employment sector and strongest job growth engine in Fairhaven. Building on this success continues to be important over the next 5 to 10 years and beyond.

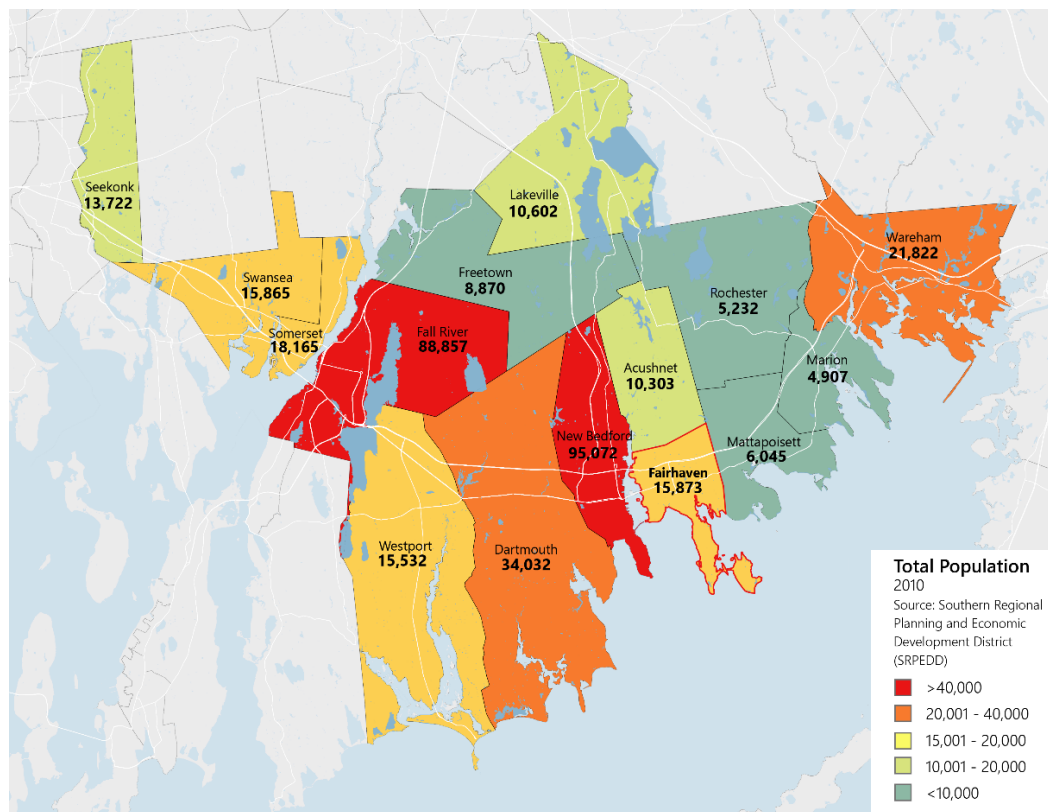
Finally, it is important to note that nearly 90% of businesses in Fairhaven can be considered “small business” with fewer than 20 employees, with many having only one employee. Nurturing existing businesses and incubating new ones is a critical task for the leadership in Fairhaven, as organically growing the amount of employment, is one of the most sustainable ways for the Town to foster a healthy local economy. Subsequent sections of this report focus on potential local approaches and tools that can be implemented in support of small businesses. Contemplated changes in tax and health care policy at the national level could offer additional boosts to Fairhaven small businesses depending on how and when they are implemented.

Baseline Conditions Analyses

Regional Context

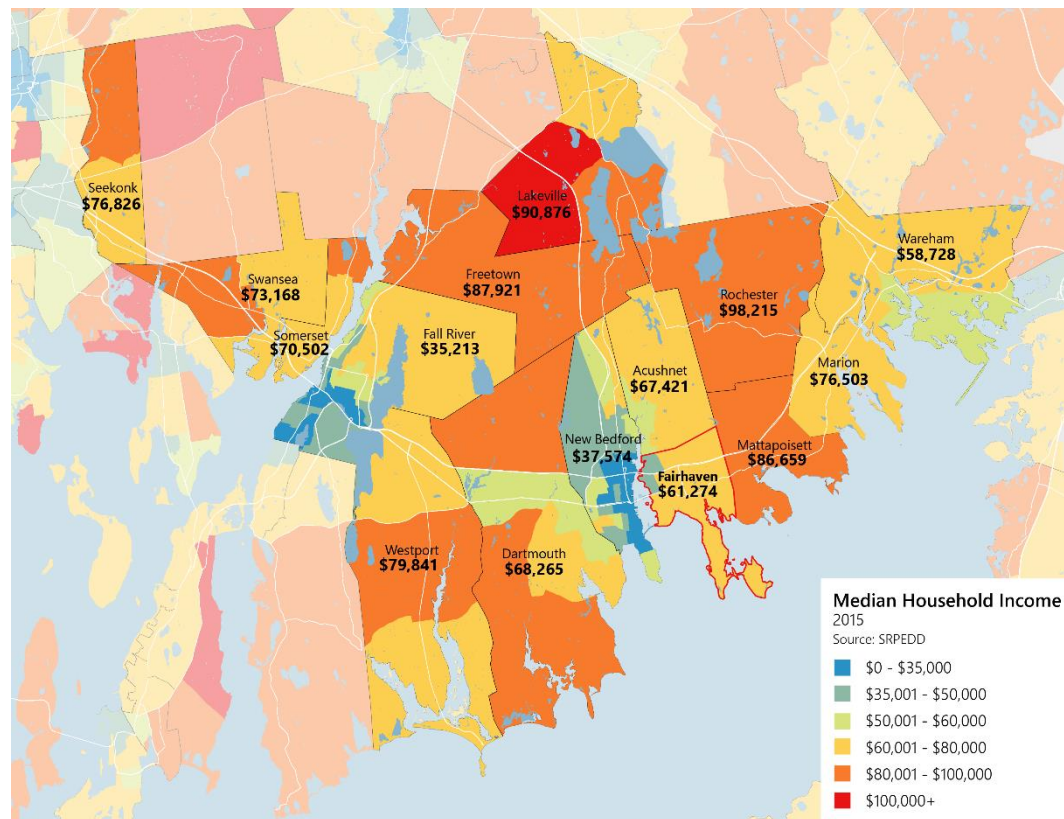
Fairhaven is located in the South Coast region of Massachusetts, an area rich in historic resources and with a strong maritime heritage. The region consists of eleven municipalities in the southern sections of Plymouth and Bristol counties. There are approximately 391,000 residents in the region with almost half of the population living in New Bedford and Fall River. With a population of 15,873, Fairhaven is one of the region’s smaller communities. The 2010 US Census indicates that the Town had 7,475 housing units, 472 of which were identified as units for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Those seasonal units represent about 6% of Fairhaven’s housing stock.

Figure 3-1 Total Population, South Coast Region (2010)



Although the region's towns and cities share a common cultural heritage, they vary in demographic and socioeconomic profile. New Bedford and Fall River, both of which are Gateway Cities, are the economic centers of the region, but have faced significant social and economic challenges, such as high unemployment rates and disinvestment. New Bedford and Fall River have the lowest median household incomes (~\$36,000), median household values (~\$200,00), and educational attainment rates (Less than 20% of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher) in the region.

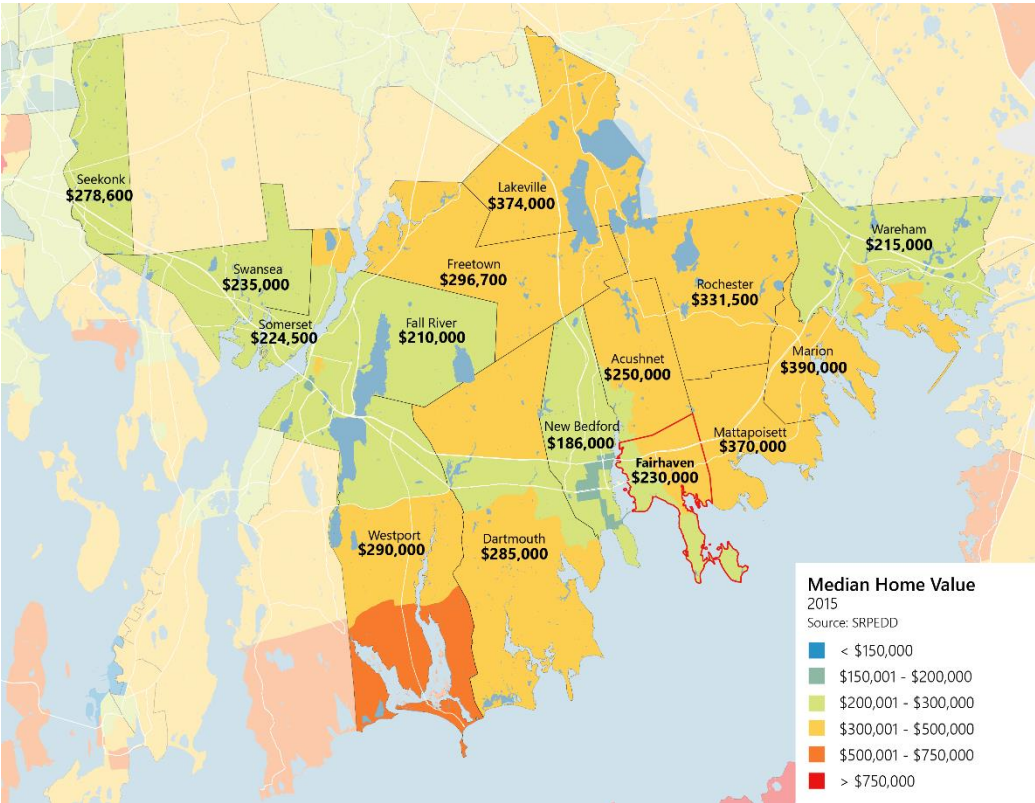
Figure 3-2 Median Family Income, South Coast Region (2015)



In contrast, municipalities such as Rochester, Marion, Lakeville and Mattapoisett are more affluent with residents of higher median household incomes of (\$80,000+), home values (\$330,000+) and significantly higher educational attainment rates.

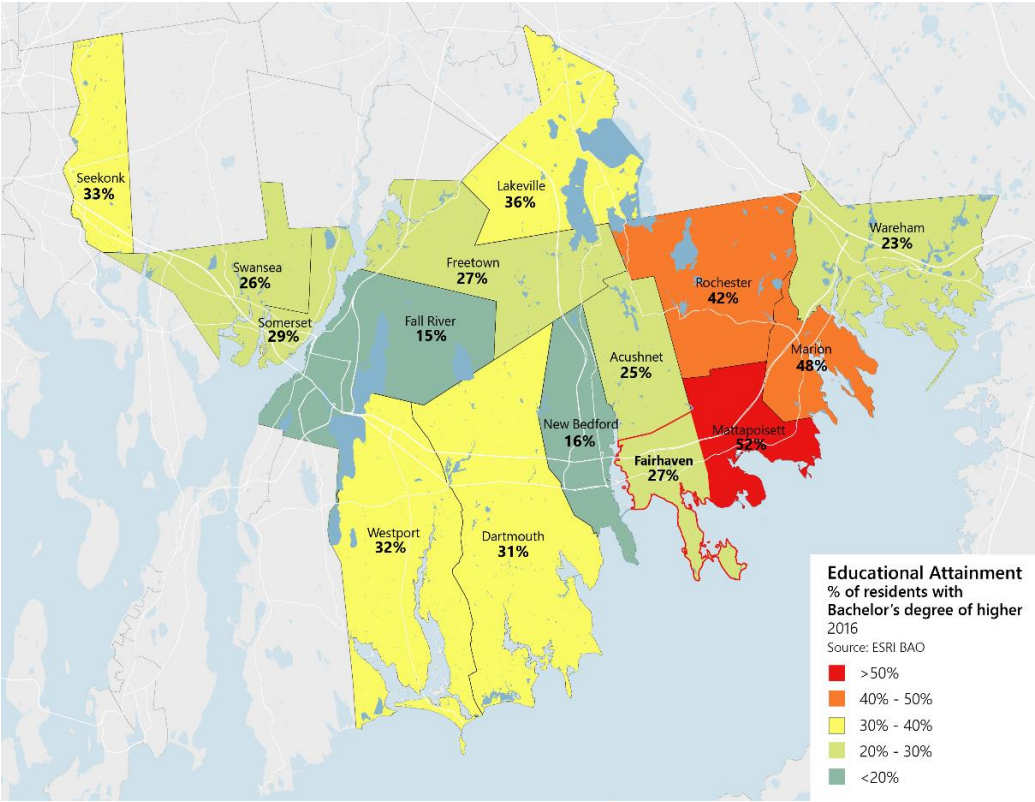
These communities also have an older population, reflecting the seasonal and 2nd home population that frequents the South Coast during the summer months.

Figure 3-3 Median Home Sales, South Coast Region (2015)



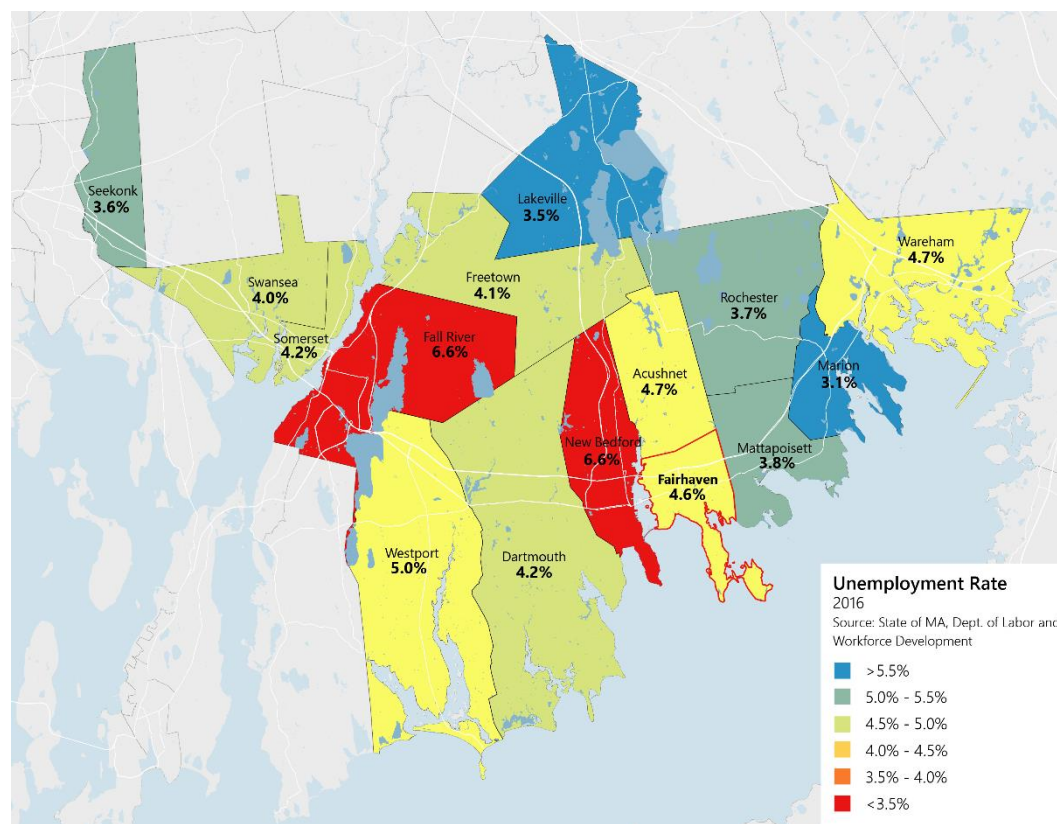
Fairhaven ranks towards the middle on socioeconomic metrics relative to the region. The Town has a slightly older population with lower income and home values. Fairhaven is a more affordable community, but equally desirable in terms of available cultural and natural amenities. Fairhaven has a unique profile with multiple economic centers: historic main street, commercial corridor, manufacturing plants, working waterfront, and agricultural lands.

Figure 3-4 Percentage of Residents with a Bachelor's degree or Higher, South Coast Region (2016)



The region is recovering from the recent economic crisis and the unemployment rates have improved, though they are still higher than the state average. Fairhaven's unemployment rate in 2016 was 4.6%, placing it close to the average in comparison to other municipalities in the region.

Figure 3-5 Unemployment Rates, South Coast Region (2016)



The population in Fairhaven has remained generally static and forecasts indicate that the Town will not experience significant growth in the next five years. However, the population is aging, as is the rest of the region, and the median age will increase to 48.2 in 2021 from 47.1. To accommodate an older population, the Town will need to incorporate a greater variety of housing options to meet the greater demand for smaller housing, rental housing and supportive housing. Forecasts also show that the Town will become wealthier, as median household incomes and median home values are expected to grow at more than 1.5% annually.

Table 3-1 Demographic Forecasts, Town of Fairhaven

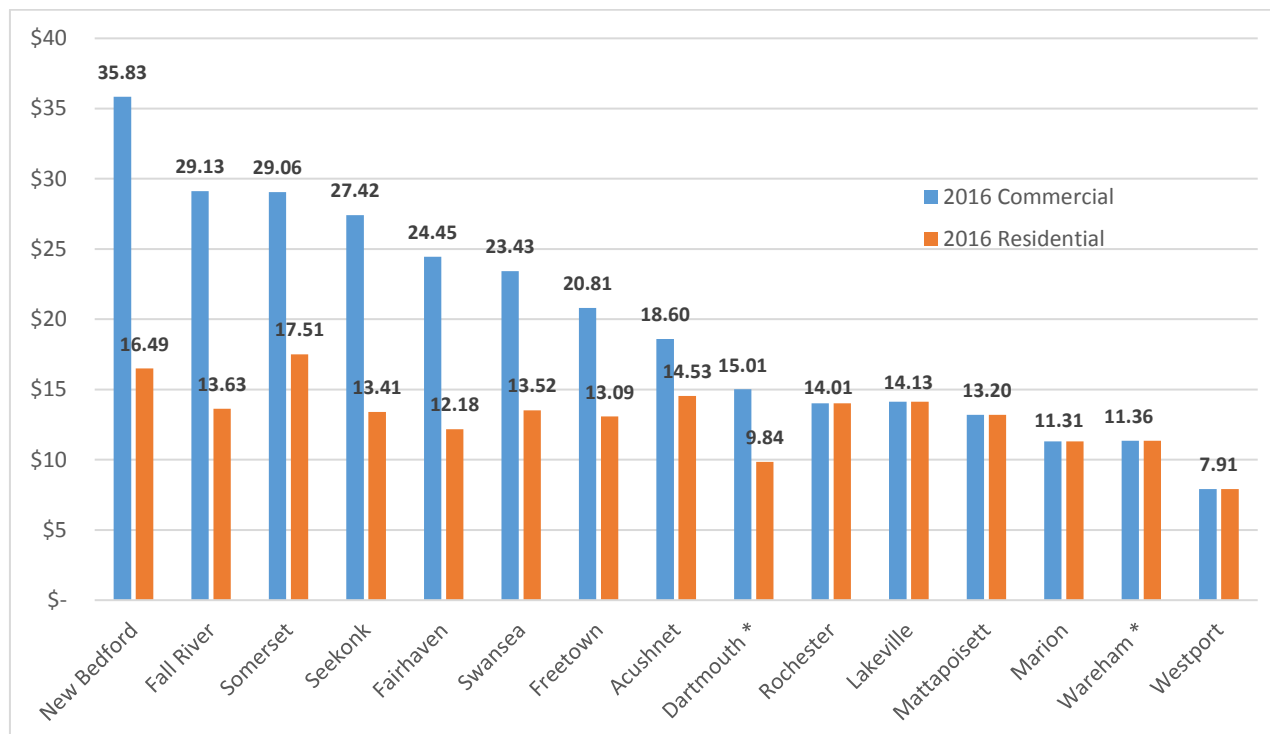
	2010 SRPEDD	2015 SRPEDD	2021 ESRI	2010-2021 Annual % Change	2015-2021 Annual % Change
Population	15,873	....	15,932	+0.04%	....
Median Age	....	46.6	48.2	....	+0.69%
Median Household Income	....	\$61,174	\$65,597	....	+1.45%
Median Home Value	....	\$230,000	\$306,121	....	+6.62%

Source: SRPEDD, ERSI BAO

As of 2016 in Fairhaven, the commercial tax rate is \$24.27 and residential tax rate is \$12.04. The commercial tax rate is slightly above the regional average. Notably, the rate in Wareham and Dartmouth are lower at \$11.25 and \$15.46, as those towns experience significant growth in commercial tenants. That being said, Wareham does not have a split

tax rate (placing a higher relative burden on homeowners) and both Wareham and Dartmouth have additional fees for services such as the fire department and trash pickup which means that the gap is narrower than appears from the Millage rate alone. Key for Fairhaven will be to foster vibrant mixed-use environment along Route 6 that will both attract and retain commercial users.

Figure 3-6 Commercial and Residential Millage Rates, South Coast Region (2016)



Note: * denotes towns with additional special services districts and fees

Source: State of Massachusetts

Local Business in Fairhaven

As of 2016, there are 680 businesses and 8,839 employees working in Fairhaven. According to the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, approximately 16% of those employed in Fairhaven also live in the Town. Employees from out of Town predominantly live in New Bedford (25%) and Fall River (6%). Conversely, most of the employed residents in Fairhaven work out of town (85%) - 22% of those employees work in New Bedford, 6% in Fall River, 4% in Boston and 1% in Providence, RI.

The number of jobs in Fairhaven increased by 30% from 2010 to 2015. Most of that growth can be attributed to the 978 jobs added over that period in the health care industry. The health care industry is the largest business sector. The Town is home the Southcoast Center for Primary Care and Specialty Care, Centers for Cancer Care and Urgent Care Center. Though providing the region with wide range of services, some of the health care facilities specialize in long-term care and services for the elderly, such as the Alden Court Nursing Care and Community Nurse & Hospice Care centers.

Retail trade is the next largest business sector, but it has suffered a loss in the number of jobs and establishments over the past few years. The commercial activity is concentrated along the Route 6 Corridor, which has a more conventional auto-oriented commercial development pattern with shopping plaza and 'big box' retailers, such as Stop & Shop and Walmart. The job loss can be attributed to the recent turnovers along the corridor, which has created notable vacancies, such as the former Sears, Shaw's, and Benny's sites. Additionally, Kmart has recently closed its doors at the Fairhaven location in the spring of 2017.

Table 3-2 Fairhaven Employment by Sectors, 2010 compared to 2015

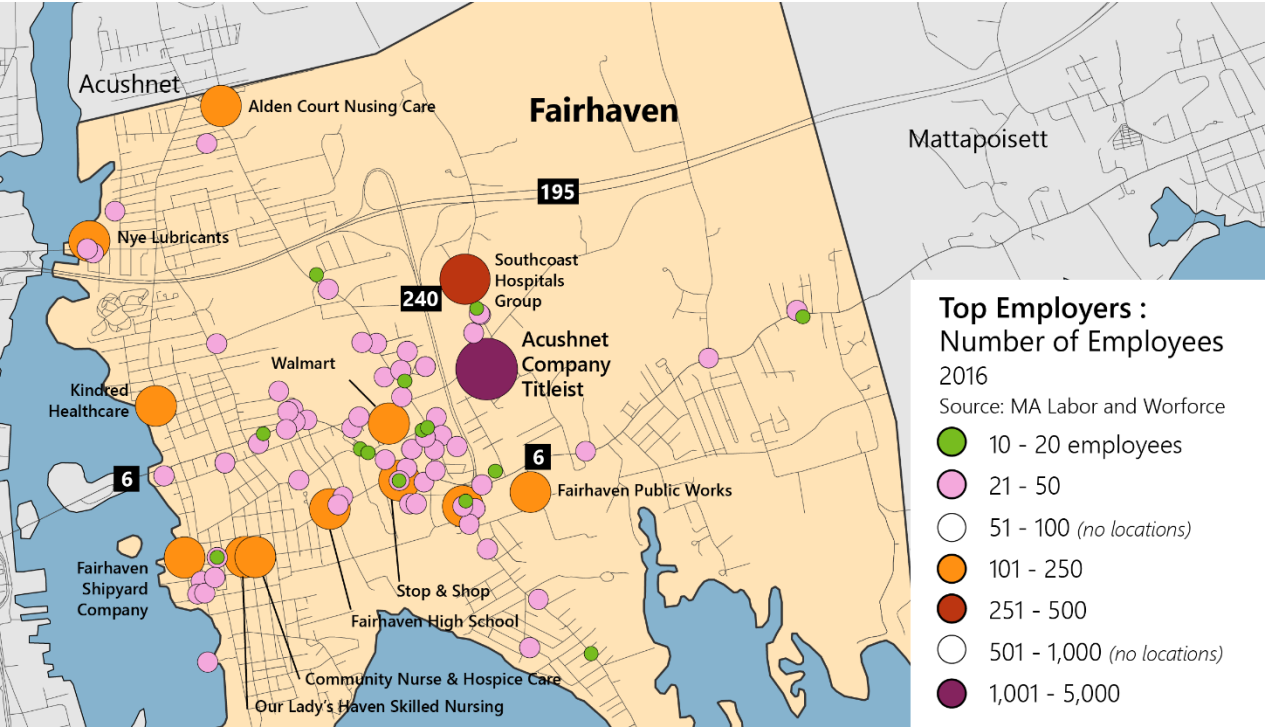
NAICS Code Industry	Average Employment			Number of Establishments		
	2010	2015	% Change	2010	2015	% Change
62- Health Care and Social Assistance	1,211	2,189	81%	39	116	197%
44-45 - Retail Trade	1,182	1,067	-10%	76	66	-13%
72 – Accommodation and Food Services	817	976	19%	56	57	2%
31-33 - Manufacturing	848	894	5%	15	9	-40%
23 - Construction	258	319	24%	63	52	-17%
56 – Administrative and Waste Services	97	303	212%	21	16	-24%
81 – Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	293	228	-22%	108	41	-62%
52 – Finance and Insurance	182	196	8%	19	24	26%
71 – Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	125	127	2%	7	8	14%
Other	1,111	1,632	47%	113	121	7%
Total, All Industries	6,124	7,931	30%	517	510	-1%

Source: State of Massachusetts Labor and Workforce Development Data & Statistics

Fairhaven's top employer is the Acushnet Company, the golf equipment and clothing manufacturing company that includes well-known brands such as Titleist and Footjoy. The company's headquarters and distribution center are in Fairhaven. The company plays an important role in the regional economy and employs approximately 1,800 people in all its facilities. The company has manufacturing plants and a R&D center in New Bedford and North Dartmouth. Nye Lubricants and Brahmin Leather Works are other manufacturing centers in Fairhaven that provide important employment opportunities.

The Southcoast Hospital Group, part of the Southcoast Health System, is another important employer in Fairhaven. The Southcoast Health System is a community based health delivery system with over 300 primary care physicians and with a workforce of approximately 1,900 employees throughout Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. In Fairhaven, the Southcoast Health System provides a variety of primary care and specialty care services, notably in the Southcoast Center for Primary & Specialty Care and Urgent Care Center. The facilities are located on Mill Road, close to the Acushnet Company headquarters.

Figure 3-7 Fairhaven’s Top Employers



Fairhaven has an important working waterfront along the Acushnet River. The industry is tied to New Bedford’s fishing industry and supports it by providing ship repair and outfitting services. Part of the waterfront belongs to the New Bedford-Fairhaven Designated Port Area (DPA), which is a state-designated area of concentrated industrial activities. Projects proposed in the DPA must be maritime industrial uses or supporting uses. The Fairhaven Shipyard Company is the largest business in the industry and employs more than 100 people. The Northeast Maritime Institute, located in the Town Center, is a private college that offers training and education for careers in the maritime industry. Although the maritime businesses in Fairhaven represent a smaller industry cluster, it is an important aspect of the Town’s legacy and identity and it offers wages much higher than retail or service jobs.



Examples of Fairhaven’s small businesses

Although home to some larger establishments, approximately 89% of the businesses in Fairhaven have fewer than 20 employees. They are several clusters of small businesses in Fairhaven, notably along the Route 6 corridor, along the working waterfront near the Town Center, and at the gateways to Fairhaven from New Bedford across the Acushnet River. These small businesses could benefit from being in mixed-use environments and being better integrated with surrounding residential communities, but there has not been any significant mixed-use development in Fairhaven.

Institutions supporting Local and Regional Economic Development

SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce

The SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce, established in 1885, serves ten communities in the South Coast Region: New Bedford, Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Freetown, Mattapoisett, Marion, Rochester, Wareham and Westport. The organization currently has approximately 1,000 business members and subscribers. The Chamber of Commerce supports its members by organizing networking events, educational programs and trade shows and by promoting policy initiatives at the local and state levels.

Northeast Maritime Institute

The Northeast Maritime Institute is a private co-educational college that provides degree programs and training for students interested in pursuing a career in the maritime industry. The courses and training offered are certified by the International Convention on Standards of Training & Certification of Watchkeepers and Seafarers (STCW) and United States Coast Guard. The Institute recently began offering a two-year associates degree in Applied Science in Nautical Science and plans to provide other degrees paired with appropriate Merchant Marine licenses in the near future. Founded in 1981, the Institute has three facilities located in Fairhaven and approximately 500 students.

SouthCoast Young Professionals Network

The SouthCoast Young Professionals Network is an affiliate of the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce comprised of young professionals between the ages of 21-39. The mission of the group is to work with local and regional leaders, Chamber members and other young professionals to attract and retain young talent in the region. Programs include a mix of social events and professional and business development events.

Fairhaven Business Association

The Fairhaven Business Association is a nonprofit organization established in 2011 by group of local businesses. The group's objective is to encourage local economic development through collaborative efforts and by providing a forum for discussion and information.

South Eastern Economic Development Corporation

The South Eastern Economic Development Corporation (SEED) is a regional non-profit organization that was established in 1982 and based in Taunton, MA. The organization

focuses on job creation by financing all types of small businesses in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. It provides businesses with loans ranging from \$1,000 to \$5.5 million. SEED also runs a business assistance program, which includes individual technical assistance, monthly educational events and a small business library. The group has over 200 members that represent community and business organizations, economic development agencies, local officials, lending institutions and small businesses.

UMASS Dartmouth

UMASS Dartmouth located approximately 9 miles from downtown Fairhaven is a major state university with 7,000 undergraduate students and 1,700 graduate students. UMASS offers 84 undergraduate programs and supports approximately \$27 million in annual research activity.

Issues and Opportunities

Strengthen the Route 6 Corridor

Of key importance is the Route 6/Route 240/ Alden Road area, the largest employment center in Fairhaven, and where the majority of health care and service related jobs are located. These two industry segments make up approximately 40% of all employment in Fairhaven so ensuring that these critical commercial corridors remain healthy is a top priority for the Town. One notable trend during the 1990's and 2000's was the growth of service related employment. By 2010 retail jobs had grown to nearly 20% of all employment with Fairhaven. Between 2010 and 2015, however, as the retail sector contracted and stores closed or moved to other towns, the sector shrunk to 13.5% of total employment. As a result, the ability to retain the remaining retail jobs in Fairhaven as well as re-tenant or repurpose vacant shopping centers along Route 6 is a key goal emerging from the Comprehensive Plan.

Continue to Grow Health Care Industry

In the positive column, in the years since 1996 the AT&T property (identified in the 1996 Master Plan as a critical redevelopment opportunity) has been successfully re-tenanted and now represents, along with the Southcoast Urgent Care Center, a burgeoning health care driven job cluster along Route 240. Health care related jobs grew by 80% between 2010 and 2015 and now represent the largest employment sector and strongest job growth engine in Fairhaven. Building on this success continues to be important over the next 5 to 10 years and beyond.

Support Small Business

It is important to note that nearly 90% of businesses in Fairhaven can be considered "small business" with fewer than 20 employees, with many having only one employee. Nurturing existing businesses and incubating new ones is a critical task for the leadership in Fairhaven, as organically growing the amount of employment, is one of the most

sustainable ways for the Town to foster a healthy local economy. Subsequent sections of this report focus on potential local approaches and tools that can be implemented in support of small businesses. Contemplated changes in tax and health care policy at the national level could offer additional boosts to Fairhaven small businesses depending on how and when they are implemented.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Preserve the commercial viability of the working waterfront and seek balance with neighboring land uses, while simultaneously exploring opportunities to make the waterfront more accessible to the community.

Recommendations:

1. Hire a planning firm specializing in waterfronts to create a plan for the working waterfront that would preserve key industrial zones, improve vehicular circulation, emphasize pedestrian access, and create a better tourist/public realm experience along the waterfront, when appropriate. Areas of exploration could include future tourism opportunities at Union Wharf and connection to Tin Can (Marsh) Island.
2. Evaluate streets along the working waterfront for a possible conversion to one-way to improve traffic movements and reduce conflicts.
3. Track and to the extent possible integrate with the Waterfront Redevelopment Plan being performed in 2017 on behalf of the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission.
4. Explore the needs of infrastructure upgrades to support the long-term viability of the working waterfront in light of the foreseeable sea level rise, in concert with the recommendation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan effort.
5. Work with the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission on Harbor Plan Update and coordinate closely with the Army Corps of Engineers on all waterfront permitting.

Goal 2: Maintain healthy commercial occupancies along Route 6 and in other commercial nodes and retain service related jobs wherever possible.

Recommendations:

1. Work with major commercial property owners to determine potential large-scale vacancies before they occur to initiate early strategic discussions for maintaining occupancies or redeveloping the site.
2. Work with large employers such as Acushnet Company and Southcoast Medical Center to identify strategies for retaining/growing employment base and meeting future space needs.

3. Consider introduction of tax credit/tax abatement programs for job creation.

Goal 3: Encourage mixed-use projects on key redevelopment parcels in support of a live, work, play environment.

Recommendations:

1. Consider a joint town/property study to engage a real estate advisory firm to create a redevelopment strategy for a key commercial property with an unhealthy level of vacancy.
2. Explore town related functions occupying spaces in vacant commercial buildings whenever appropriate.
3. Promote mixed-use development through land use, zoning, and development incentives.
4. Develop a detailed revitalization plan to guide redevelopment of commercial nodes in town. The plan should incorporate analysis of appropriate types of redevelopments, scale/dimension/design of such developments, as well as potential zoning changes and infrastructure and services needed to support these redevelopments.
5. Consider creating a Route 6 mixed-use overlay zoning district to stimulate mixed-use commercial and residential redevelopment. Making provisions for mid- to high-density residential will be important.
6. In North Fairhaven/Benoit Square, encourage projects that promote a mix of uses, including reuse of existing buildings with upper levels that are underutilized.

Goal 4: Revise business regulations and enhanced programs to continue to support the incubation and growth of small businesses.

Recommendations:

1. Plan and potentially fund a small-scale, low-cost business incubator to be housed in vacant commercial space along Route 6 or in a town-owned building (such as the Rogers School) that is not currently in use.
2. Adopt effective permitting procedures for small neighborhood businesses.
3. Review and update zoning to allow more flexibilities that support small business development, such as home-based business, residential commercial mixed-use, etc. This includes migrating to online forms where appropriate, including the ability to register complaints and respond to them online.
4. Revisit signage ordinance to allow for more flexibility for businesses.

Goal 5: Collaborate with New Bedford and other nearby towns on issues of workforce training/regional economic development to elevate the profile of the South Coast.

Recommendations:

1. Consider engagement of a market/branding firm to develop a targeted campaign for the South Coast.
2. Partner with New Bedford to develop a joint economic development strategy for the Harbor.
3. Join regional efforts to support the South Coast Rail extension.
4. Explore future economic development opportunities in and around the harbors including better leveraging existing trails, waterfront connections, and the future replacement of the Fairhaven-New Bedford bridge.

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Public Facilities and Services

4

Introduction

The public services and facilities element of a comprehensive plan should serve as a guide for decision-making about the public buildings, infrastructure, utilities and services provided by a local government. The adequacy of municipal facilities – which affects the ability of municipal employees to serve the community – is largely determined by four factors:

- ▶ The form, size and organization of the local government;
- ▶ Projected population and economic growth;
- ▶ The community's land use pattern; and
- ▶ The expectations of residents and businesses for the types and levels of services, and the ability of the Town to meet those expectations.



Fairhaven's historic Town Hall building

A town's ability to provide adequate services to the community requires both short- and long-term planning. Effective capital planning and asset management policies are often challenged by limited revenue for government operations, which can put long-term investment at risk. Prioritizing and setting goals for short- and long-term investment needs can help a Town ensure that it meets the community's expectations for municipal services, which Fairhaven has largely been able to do. Yet some of Fairhaven's facilities are inadequate to meet current and future needs in order to accommodate the personnel, equipment, technology and records storage that government organizations need to run efficiently.

Fairhaven receives limited funding from non-local sources and relies almost entirely on its residents and businesses for financial support. One of the key issues facing the Town is how to prioritize and pay for its many capital needs. Given the growing demands on public services and facilities, the Town is challenged in how it can meet and balance those needs. New growth and development opportunities, such as those discussed in the Economic Development chapters of this Plan, can provide a major source of funds to help to increase the Town's tax base and support improvements.

This section includes an analysis of the adequacy of the following public services and facilities in Fairhaven. The services and facilities listed below are among those that were identified by Town officials and residents through interviews and public meeting.

Baseline Conditions Analyses

The municipal services that Fairhaven provides are fairly typical of Massachusetts towns. Many local government services qualify as "essential" regardless of whether the state mandates them.

Table 4-1 Fairhaven's Public Services

Department	Location	Department	Location
Accountant	Town Hall, 40 Center St	Public Library	45 Center Street
Animal Officer	200 Bridge Street	Public Works Department	5 Arsene Street
Assessors	Town Hall, 40 Center St	Recreation Department	227 Huttleston Avenue
Board of Health	Town Hall, 40 Center St	Schools	128 Washington Street
Board of Selectmen	Town Hall, 40 Center St	Sewer/Wastewater Division, BPW	5 Arsene Street
Building	Town Hall, 40 Center St	State Reservation: Fort Phoenix	Green Street
Council on Aging	229 Huttleston Avenue	Tax Collector	Town Hall, 40 Center St
Emergency Management	Town Hall, 40 Center St	Town Administrator	Town Hall, 40 Center St
Fire Department	146 Washington Street	Town Clerk	Town Hall, 40 Center St

Department	Location	Department	Location
Government Access Channel	Town Hall, 40 Center St	Town Moderator	
Harbormaster & Shellfish Department	Town Hall, 40 Center St	Treasurer	Town Hall, 40 Center St
Highway Division, BPW	5 Arsene Street	Tree Department	Town Hall, 40 Center St
Housing Authority	275 Main Street	Veterans' Services	Town Hall, 40 Center St
Parks and Grounds Division, BPW	5 Arsene Street	Visitor's Center	141 Main Street
Planning and Economic Development	Town Hall, 40 Center St	Water Division, BPW	5 Arsene Street
Police Department	1 Bryant Lane		

Source: Town of Fairhaven official website

Police Department

The Fairhaven Police Department has 38 full time staff, including 1 chief, 7 sergeants, 24 patrolmen, 5 dispatchers, and 1 executive assistant, and 3 part-time staff including 2 patrolmen and 1 custodian. The Police Department currently includes the following units:

- ▶ Patrol
- ▶ Detective
- ▶ Domestic Violence
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Dive
- ▶ Motorcycle patrol
- ▶ Marine patrol
- ▶ Honor Guard
- ▶ School Resource Officers

The Police Department building is over than 50 years old with an addition that is reaching 25 years old. The roofs for the older building was redone less than 2 years ago. The building has windows that need replacing, the HVAC system is of poor design and several aspects of the building will pose a challenge to meet accreditation standards.

The Police Department manages 21 response vehicles, including marked units, under cover vehicles, one motorcycle and one pickup truck. In addition, the department controls a boat with trailer, a utility trailer, and a radar trailer. There is also a backup diesel powered generator which is maintained by the Fire Department. In the Town's latest capital needs plan, the Police Department requested \$80,000 for a pair of new police cruisers and sought \$250,000 for a major upgrade to the department's radio communication system.

Overall, the Police Department is able to meet the current need for services. Over the last year, the Police Department responded to 19,308 calls for service that involved all aspects of police services. As part of the community enhancement effort, the Department is currently in the process of training and equipping officers with narcan, which is a medicine used to reverse the effects of an opiate based overdose. To measure and assess department performances, the Police Department reviews employee production statistics and motor vehicle crash statistical data and keep Department policies and procedures current with the latest industry standards.

In terms of sustainability and energy efficiency measures, the Police Department installed low wattage, energy efficient fluorescent light bulbs in the building in 2016. Basic recycling of paper, cardboard, plastic products is also available. The police patrol vehicles are equipped with more fuel-efficient 6 cylinder engines, which have replaced the larger 8 cylinder engines. The Department also has better engine and drive train warranties for new vehicle purchases, which enhances the economic sustainability of the Police Department's budget. In addition, the Department continue to capitalize on grant funding that is available to fund training, new equipment purchases and overtime directed patrols as an effort to enhance financial sustainability.

Fire Department

Fairhaven's Fire Department currently has 24 career firefighters (full time), 1 civilian employee (full time), and 18 call firefighters (part time-on call).

There are two Fire Stations in Fairhaven. Station 1 the Headquarter was built in 1964 and has large space to accommodate apparatus built in the 1960's, communications center, administration offices, dormitories and a meeting hall/ Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The station was renovated in 2001 to incorporate handicap bathroom facilities, female dormitories and bathroom facilities, and additional administration space. A new roof was put on the building in 2014.



Fairhaven Fire Station

The current condition of Station 1 is fair, however, there are a number of issues:

- ▶ **Apparatus bay designed in 1964:** The bays were designed for apparatus that was manufactured back in 60's and 70's. Current apparatus is difficult to fit into station safely. Engine 2, a 1984 500 Gallon pumper is scheduled to be replaced in the very near future, however there is no place to house the new piece of equipment. Two ambulances are kept next door at the Police Department due to lack of space on the Fire Department side. This causes a brief delay in response.
- ▶ **Decontamination Room (Personnel):** It is required by OSHA to limit the amount of blood borne pathogens and carcinogens in firefighting gear. A separate room is required for firefighters to remove their equipment and shower removing the products of combustion and other hazards. Currently there is no decontamination room.
- ▶ **Decontamination Room (Equipment):** Equipment needs to be deconned and blood borne pathogens need to be contained. Currently there is no proper way to decontaminate equipment in house.
- ▶ **Laundry Areas:** No existing laundry areas for personnel to launder their apparel. There is currently an extractor washer for the firefighting gear, but no washer/dryer in the station for uniforms. Currently they bring home contaminated clothing to be cleaned.
- ▶ **EMS Supply Room:** EMS Equipment has to be kept in a locked room that is environmentally controlled. The fire department has no location that can house this equipment in their station and is currently using an equipment room over in the Police Department.
- ▶ **Apparatus front ramp:** The apparatus front ramp is slowly collapsing due to the weight of the trucks. Several repairs have been done and more will be done in summer 2017. The apparatus doors are over thirty years' old and showing signs of wear and tear.
- ▶ **Cellar/Sewer Drainage:** A main drain that travels out south from the building and under the apparatus ramp connects drainage pipe that has a partial blockage. Sewer department is recommending tearing up the apparatus ramp and replacing pipe.
- ▶ **Training:** The need to provide training to Fire Department personnel is of the utmost importance. Live fire training and equipment training is conducted almost daily ranging from 1 to 2 hours. The need for a modern training facility and tower that will not impact the neighborhood is recommended.
- ▶ **Trailer/Boat Storage:** Several trailers, including the hazmat trailer and Marine 68 are kept outside and Marine 68 is stored in a steel shed. This delays response exposes the trailers outside to the elements of the harsh winters.
- ▶ **Heating System:** Heating system is an old non-efficient boiler that is in need of replacement.
- ▶ **Cooling System:** Current communications and IT require environmental controls. Currently no central air exists and the Fire Department require to replace non-efficient window units in various locations to maintain temperatures.

- **Storage:** No room for records storage and equipment. All spaces are currently maxed out on availability.

Station 2 was built in 1950 and has a single bay and a toilet. This station is used during blizzards and hurricanes but currently houses the reserve piece Engine 2. Station 2 is in poor condition and missing essential functions including vehicle exhaust system, kitchen, decontamination rooms and sleeping quarters. Designed in the 1950's, Station 2 was built to hold apparatus of that generation. The current 1984 piece barely fits in this station which will not hold any larger piece of equipment either. This along with Headquarters (Station 1) will not accommodate another engine until renovations are made.

The Fire Department manages the following equipment:

A. Response Vehicles

a. Engines

- i. Engine 1: 1995 1250 GPM Pumper
- ii. Engine 2: 1984 1000 GPM Pumper (Scheduled to be replaced)
- iii. Engine 3: 2002 1250 GPM Pumper
- iv. Engine 4: 2008 1250 GPM Pumper

b. Ladder

- i. Ladder 1: 1985 110ft Aerial (Scheduled to be replaced. Town Meeting in May 2017 approved funding for the replacement)

c. Ambulances:

- i. Medic 1: 2013 International/Horton Class 1 Ambulance
- ii. Medic 2: 2008 GMC/Horton Class 1 Ambulance
- iii. Medic 3: 2003 Ford/Road Rescue Class 1 Ambulance (Scheduled to be replaced)

d. Other

- i. Car 1: 2016 Chevrolet Tahoe
- ii. Car 2: 2011 Chevrolet Tahoe
- iii. Car 3: 2005 Chevrolet Tahoe
- iv. Rescue 1: 1995 Heavy Rescue
- v. FPI: 2008 Ford F150 Utility Vehicle
- vi. Unit 5: 1995 Ford F350 with Skid Pump

B. Generator

- a. Fixed diesel generator at station. Automatic start to supply police and fire with power during outage. Currently the unit is 15 years old.
- b. 20KW generator on Rescue One for portable generator needs.

The Fire Department currently uses the following metrics to measure performance:

- A. ISO rating (Insurance Service Office)
- B. NFPA (National Fire Protection Agency)
- C. OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration)
- D. Internal: Internal QA/QI audits

In 2016, the department responded to 3,353 calls for service. This does not include mandatory inspections, fire safety inspections, oil burner inspections, propane inspections, fire detector/carbon monoxide inspections and various other inspections. While there is no major access issue in most of Fairhaven's neighborhoods, there are concerns regarding limited access in Poverty Point and southern part of Farmfield Street.

Currently the department is meeting the demand, however there is typically a 3 to 6 percent increase in volume each year. The Fire Department has currently maxed out on space for equipment, storage and personnel and will need new locations in order to expand in the future years. When the Fire Station was renovated in 2001, it was intended to be a two phase project to address some of the storage and space issues that have become more urgent today. Phase two was not completed due to other capital projects. As funding has been appropriated for a feasibility study to relocate the Fire Department, it is highly recommended that the Fire Department's issues be considered and prioritized.

Library

The Millicent Library of Fairhaven is one of the most iconic and historic buildings located in Fairhaven Center. The building was constructed and gifted to the Town in 1892 by the Henry Rogers family in memory of Millicent Gifford Rogers, the youngest daughter who died unexpectedly in 1890 at the age of seventeen. An addition was put on to the original library building in the 1960s.

The Library belongs to the SAILS Library Network and shares resources with other cities and towns. The library website was established since 1995 and some of the library holdings haven been digitized since. For Fiscal Year 2016 excluding digital subscriptions, downloadable books and databases, the Library has the following resources:

- ▶ Holdings – Printed Books 58,378; Printed magazines 178; CDs & DVDs 21,970
- ▶ Circulation – Printed Books 44,663; Printed magazines 5,257; CDs & DVDs 36,889

In addition to these holdings and circulation items, the Library also provides public access to computers and internet, and loans out internet hotspots. The library and its Friends group provide programming on various topics.

The Library has five full-time staff who work 37 hours each per week, three part-time staff who work 19 hours each per week, two part-time custodians alternating between 15 and 19 hours per week each, and several part-time staff filling in a total of 25 hours per week. The staff routinely attend workshops and training sessions. Statistical reports on all Massachusetts libraries are generated annually, while statistics are generated by the SAILS network as well on a monthly basis.



The historic Millicent Library of Fairhaven

The library building is in overall good condition. Over the past several years, the building has gone through phased repointing projects. There are several grant proposals in the wings to continue additional repointing and exterior repairs over the next two to three years. There have been a number of measures taken to improve the energy efficiency of the Library, including replacement of lighting fixtures per the recommendations of the electric company and replacement of inefficient windows with more efficient ones. Replacements of the air conditioning units that only regulate the workroom and Rogers Room are also more efficient.

The library is the only other free meeting place in the center of town besides the Town Hall and many organizations use it. Currently the Library provides adequate space and resources to meet today's community needs. As the population of the Town has been stable since the 1960s and there is no anticipated significant increase in the near future, the Library will likely be capable of meeting future community needs as well, although a number of improvements are expected in order to better serve the community, such as parking and universal air conditioning.

Council on Aging

The Fairhaven Council on Aging (COA)/Senior Center building, located at 229 Huttleston Avenue, was constructed in 2001 at the same time as the Fairhaven Recreation building, which is attached by an adjoining door. The building is located in an easily accessible area off of a main street and served by a generous numbers of parking spaces and an appropriate number of handicap parking spaces. The building is in good condition structurally as well as aesthetically. There is enough restroom space including a single handicap accessible restroom. The building is handicapped accessible at all 6 doorways leading from outside in. The outside of the building is well lit.



Fairhaven Senior Center and Antone “Hawk” Medeiros Recreation Center

The grounds of the Senior Center are landscaped with beautiful trees, a memorial flower garden, six raised vegetable gardens, picnic tables, bocce court and the Phoenix Rail Trail running behind the building. The facility space indoors and outdoors is being well maintained by a custodian (35 hours per week). Within a year, a senior friendly outdoor workout station will be constructed in the back yard (pending grant funding). The inside of the building has many big windows allowing lots of natural light. The walls are painted soft yellow and blues. The building has only a typical HVAC system which doesn't provide indoor air quality control. At times the odor from the sewer treatment plant flows into the building from vents on the outside of the building which is unpleasant. The odor also makes it impossible to sit outside in the summer sometimes.

The present space of the COA/Senior Center creates an hour to hour challenge for a number of reasons:

- A. The COA houses the Supportive Social Day Program where 20-25 people (with some level of cognitive disability) spend the day in a supervised setting. There is no designated space for this group and several times throughout the day the group is moved to a different area of the facility to be able to accommodate COA programming not related to the Social Day. The staff is creative and makes the space work for what is needed for that particular day.
- B. The COA programming has increased over the past 5 years which again creates space problems. Some programming has been moved to after hours to assist with this situation. Some programming has been denied for lack of space or has been moved to other town buildings (i.e. housing facilities). With the baby boomer population almost at full swing, this COA will not be large enough, within the next 5-8 years, to efficiently provide seniors of this town and surrounding towns with activities, education and programming.
- C. The HVAC system has been problematic for several years basically because of ongoing problems with computer chip placement on the Recreational Centers roof. Lightening causes the chips to become destroyed and traces over to the COA side and destroys the COA chips. Over the course of the fiscal year, 80% of the COA building repair/maintenance budget line goes toward HVAC repair. It

was approved by the Town Administer for the COA/Rec Center to receive a new HVAC system in FY2019.

The COA encourages health and wellness through many different types of programming, including Healthy Cooking Classes, guest speakers from the community providing advice and knowledge regarding the importance of health care, support groups (i.e. for those dealing with dementia, depression, grief, pet loss), wellness clinics, health fairs, exercise programming (Zumba Gold, Chair Yoga, Osteo, Tai Chi, Biking Group, Walking Group, dancing). To enhance social wellbeing, there is a Single Senior Supper Club for widowed and single folks who don't want to eat dinner alone, an LGBT Supper Club for the South Coast 60 and over LGBT population, weekly mall trips, congregate lunch program open to seniors 60 and over, and various card and board games weekly. If additional space becomes available, the number of times some of these groups meet could be increased and new activities can be added to better serve the seniors.

Programming and calculation of volunteers, seniors and social day participants are computed by a program called My Senior Center. Seniors who enter the building swipe their Fairhaven Senior Center card through the machine and select from the screen what event they are here for. All events that are offered at the senior center are listed in My Senior Center. This program allows staff to pull up reports needed to apply for grants and for statistics kept for record keeping. In April, a volunteer appreciation luncheon is held for all volunteers who assisted the COA in some capacity. This director calculates the hours each has spent and multiplies the hours at a hypothetical average hourly wage of \$12.00 per hour. In 2016, 70 volunteers spent over 19,000 hours of volunteerism, saving the town \$234,072. A 4'x3' "check" is written to the town and given to the selectmen making town residents aware of the importance of our volunteers.

Winter is always tough on the seniors. Census always decreases slightly as the more frail seniors tend to remain at home rather than risk a fall. In Snow event, the COA remains open if the Town Hall is open. At the discretion of the COA director, the COA may be open but all activities may be cancelled. If school is cancelled, the Supportive Social Day is cancelled. If school is open, it is of the discretion of the COA director whether or not to hold Social Day. At times, the Social Day may be open but with no transportation. The Fairhaven COA, in collaboration with the Fairhaven Commission on Disability, have created a program called Sand for Seniors. Seniors who wish to participate in the program receive a 5 gallon bucket filled with the sand /salt mix (same as used on the roads and obtained from the DPW). Students from the Northeast Maritime institute in Fairhaven volunteer to fill the buckets and deliver them to the senior's homes. A list of seniors who are alone or who are frail elders is kept and updated yearly.

The Fairhaven shelter is located at the Hastings Middle School but seniors are reluctant to leave their homes even for a short time. In summer months, the COA has used AC units that people have donated and the AC units are given to seniors who cannot afford one. It is in the planning to enhance the COA/REC Center to become the shelter for the town. A walk-in freezer has to be installed, a generator has to be installed and electrical has to be updated to accommodate the increased electrical needs.

School District

Good schools benefit a community's families and help to preserve property values for everyone. Fairhaven residents have traditionally supported their public schools and worked hard to ensure that children receive an excellent education.



The historic Fairhaven High School building

The Fairhaven Public School system is a local PK-12 school district. In the 2015-2016 School Year, the School District served approximately 2,000 students. All 140 teachers in the Public Schools are highly qualified and licensed in Teaching Assignment. The District and School Leadership includes the School Committee, the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, the Office of Student Services, and the building principals. The School Department operates four school buildings, including:

- ▶ East Fairhaven Elementary
- ▶ Wood Elementary
- ▶ Hastings Middle School
- ▶ Fairhaven High School

Fairhaven's Public Schools have been highly rated by parents of school aged children and future school aged children in the community. In the 2015-2016 School Year, there were a record total of students inducted into the National Honor Society at Fairhaven High School. The School District has received national recognition from the College Board. More recently, Fairhaven High School was shortlisted for inclusion in Newsweek's ranking of America's Best High Schools. Fairhaven High School also continues to be named a Level One School now for three consecutive years.



Wood Elementary School

Overall speaking, Fairhaven's Public Schools have the capacity to serve the current and foreseeable future needs of the community, as long as proper capital improvements are made as necessary. Currently, the Superintendent of Schools is a sitting member of the Town of Fairhaven Capital Planning Committee. The Fairhaven Public Schools has formally submitted multiple proposals as part of its five-year capital plan with the town specific to the school department, including:

- ▶ Fairhaven High School Wood Window Restoration Project
- ▶ Fairhaven High School Exterior Major Improvements
- ▶ Fairhaven Ethernet Dedicated Internet Service
- ▶ Fairhaven High School Gymnasium Dehumidification

Public Works

Public Works in Fairhaven is governed by a five-member, unpaid elected Board of Public Works Commissioners who set policy and establish the rules, regulations, fees and procedures of the public works in the town. The Public Works Department includes five divisions, namely Highway, Parks and Grounds, Sewer/Wastewater, Solid Waste, and Water Divisions, who manage and maintain the Town's roadway, park and utility infrastructure systems, including roads, parks, cemeteries, beach, bike paths, water, sewer, storm drainage, trash collection, vehicle maintenance, and recycling center. The Public Works have approximately 60 full time employees and 20 plus seasonal staff. The main building at 5 Arsene Street houses the Highway Division, Water Division, repair garage, and administration.

Fairhaven's drinking water supply comes from the Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply District operated by the Towns of Fairhaven, Marion and Mattapoissett. The District's water treatment facility is located in the Town of Mattapoissett, where water pumped from six wells is treated and redistributed to served towns. Fairhaven receives 2 to 3 million gallons of treated water from the water district per day, which is distributed throughout town by 4 water pump stations. The water district adequately serves the community. There is no foreseeable water supply capacity issue. Currently there is no automatic metering system in place. Residential water meters get read semiannually and

commercial meters get read quarterly, which takes considerable staff capacity to accomplish.

Fairhaven's sewage and wastewater treatment system consists of two wastewater collection/treatment plants, namely the Arsene Street facility and the West Island Treatment Plant, a water pollution control facility on Arsene Street, and 17 pump stations throughout the town. While some of the wastewater treatment facilities have been online for more than 50 years, the town manages to make upgrades when necessary to maintain the capacity.

The water pollution control facility is a conventional activated sludge digester designed for 5 million gallons a day (MGD) of wastewater flow, though it typically receives only 3 gallons daily which is not enough to feed the digester. The plant discharges to the inner harbor through an outfall located west of the intersection of Church and Main Streets. Prior to discharge the flow is treated to levels of biological oxygen demand (BOD) and total suspended solids (TSS) below those dictated to the town thru the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit which is issued jointly by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The Town is currently awaiting a new permit from these agencies that will likely require nitrogen elimination in treated discharge. This will have considerable impact on the operation and viability of the sludge digester as the discharge from the digester is loaded with nitrogen. The Town will need to weigh in these considerations when planning for any future rehab project. Overall, the Town's wastewater treatment capacity is adequate to serve the current and foreseeable future community needs.

The Town hires a third party vendor for curbside trash pickup and recycling services, which are offered to both residents and businesses. Trash is picked up weekly while recycling is provided on a biweekly basis. The Town does not charge separately for solid waste disposal, although the Town might consider a pay-as-you-throw program in the future in an effort to further encourage recycling and compost in the community.

In terms of stormwater management, the Town holds and complies with a Municipal Separate Stormwater Systems (MS4) General Permit that regulates water pollution by stormwater runoff. Stormwater catch basins are cleaned every year and digitized in GIS for better tracking and management. In addition to maintain compliance, the Town strives to provide public education on stormwater pollution and proper handling of hazardous materials.

The Public Works services are overall well-balanced. The primary needs in short and long-term as identified by the BPW Superintendent include:

- ▶ Install town wide automatic water metering system.
- ▶ Increase staff size, particularly seasonal staff and licensed water and wastewater staff.
- ▶ Continue enhancing proper staff training.

Issues and Opportunities

Throughout the public engagement process, Fairhaven residents have repeatedly applauded the Town's efforts in providing adequate and good quality public services to the Town's people and businesses. It is widely expected that the Town continues with the proactive capital improvement planning to ensure that the quality of public facilities and services in the community can be maintained longtermly.

In the meantime, the public and the Town officials have reached consensus that the most needed public facility improvements in the near future is to expand the capacity of the Police Department and Fire Department, with a potential solution of a revitalized or new joint public safety complex to serve the growing demands of the community. As described earlier, the Police Department building has substantial limitations that pose challenges to the day to day operations of the department. The Fire Department has already maxed out on space in the current facility and needs a new location to accommodate equipment, storage and personnel that are necessary to meet the forecasted service volume in the future. Funding has been set aside for the planning and construction of the public safety complex in the Town's latest Capital 5 Year Plan from 2016 to 2020. It will be determined during the planning process whether the new complex would be a combination of the Fire Department and Police Department.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Develop plans and funding to rebuild, expand, or replace key public facilities, and the staff needed to support the Town operations.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a Public Facilities Improvement Plan for all Town buildings that identifies near, mid, and long-term improvements (and costs), so that the Town will have a comprehensive inventory of the required maintenance and capital improvements needed for its public facilities.
2. Develop a plan to implement the recommendations identified in the Facilities Master Plan.
3. Assess the need to add staff and enhance necessary staff trainings to all departments to address anticipated growth and implement the recommendations included in the 2040 Master Plan so that the town can deliver its services effectively.

Goal 2: Ensure public safety officials have the facilities to handle today's needs as well as projected future needs of the community.

Recommendations:

1. Prioritize the relocation and/or expansion of the Police and Fire Department to address community safety needs, while considering potential reuse or new construction.
2. Allocate appropriate funds in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan to support necessary upgrades and improvements to the Police and Fire Departments.
3. Continue to invest in training and professional development for Fairhaven's Police and Fire Departments staff.

Goal 3: Enhance senior services in Fairhaven.

Recommendations:

1. Explore feasibility of expanding the current Senior Center to meet the space needs for programs serving the Town's senior population. Per hazard mitigation plan, upgrade the complex to a shelter.
2. Evaluate and enhance transportation services offered to seniors and residents with disabilities.
3. Provide additional recreation opportunities geared toward seniors through the Recreation Department.
4. Encourage collaboration among the Council on Aging (COA), Recreation Department and Fairhaven Public Schools to promote inter-generational activities.

Goal 4: Develop plans for key infrastructure elements that need improvement.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to fund annual improvements to roadways and seek opportunities to obtain state funding for long-term transportation enhancements as identified in the Transportation chapter.
2. Prepare an updated master plan for the Water Department to forecast future needs for investments in pump stations, wells, and the delivery of water to the Town.
3. Invest in an Automatic Reader System for water meters in Town to improve the Town's ability to collect meter reading data and billing procedures.
4. Prepare a long-term plan for the use of the Sludge Digester System to ascertain the cost benefit of the continued use of this facility.

5. Prepare a long-term plan for the Sewage Treatment Plant to ascertain the cost benefit of the continued use of this facility.
6. Invest in education programs and materials that provide residents and business owners information about solid waste and recycling programs to improve the Town's participation rate in these programs.

Goal 5: Continue to take advantage of opportunities for sustainable energy within the Town's facilities and services.

Recommendations:

1. Undertake an energy audit of municipal buildings and develop a plan to implement recommendations
2. Undertake a vehicle fleet assessment to ascertain opportunities to right size vehicles and increase fuel efficiency (See Sustainability goals for Green Fleets)
3. Incorporate cost-effective Green Infrastructure strategies into all municipal projects for stormwater management, drainage.
4. Seek ways to increase recycling and reduce solid waste disposal.
5. Educate Town residents about stormwater issues and proper management.

Goal 6: Invest in the Town's schools to provide state -of -the-art educational facilities

Recommendations:

1. Work closely with the School Department to identify capital improvements that are needed to support the schools, such as window and exterior renovations to the High School, dedicated internet service, and other improvements needed to maintain and enhance the Town's schools.
2. Work with the School Committee to assess the ability to better utilize the public school facilities for other community uses.

Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources

5

Introduction

Fairhaven's abundant natural and open space resources are largely defined by its unique geology, soils, and diverse natural communities of plants and animals, and include important coastal and inland water resources. The town and its residents reside in a mosaic of landscapes and rich bio-diversities formed by these valuable natural elements. This section of the Master Plan is developed upon the latest Open Space and Recreation Plan update undertaken by Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD). It intends to offer a high-level overview of the Town's natural and open space resources as detailed in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.



Scenic coastal view at West Island Town Beach

Baseline Conditions Analyses

Geology

The majority of Fairhaven is characterized by flat gently rolling plains, hardwood forests, wetlands, croplands/pasture and river drainages, typical landscape of the Narragansett-Bristol Lowlands eco-region. West Island, on the other hand, is part of the Cape Cod and the islands eco-region characterized by sandy beaches, bays, marshes, and oak-pine

forests. The Town's topography ranges in elevation from sea level to 90 feet. Its open land includes pasture and meadowland, fresh water wetland, low wooded hills and areas of tide flats, salt marsh and sandy beaches. The town has a total shoreline of approximately 29.4 linear miles according to the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program, consisting of intermittent bays and coves formed by the meltwater from last ice age.

Located on a coastal plain which was formed as outwash from the last glacier over 10,000 years ago, Fairhaven has soils that are the result of the geological and glacial history of the area, the underlying bedrock, surface and subsurface water, and the interaction of these factors with the flora and bacteria that live on or in the soil. Many of the soils found in Fairhaven have significant limitations for development such as large stones, wetness, slow perc rates, and frost action. However, many of these generalized soil types occur in very intricate patterns and many of the limitations can also be overcome by skillful design and added costs for construction. There are several areas in town that have good agricultural soils, some of which have been or are being developed (see **Figure 5-1**). The areas with moderate or moderate to slight limitations for development are more subjective to new developments and as such could be easily lost as open space.

Water Resources

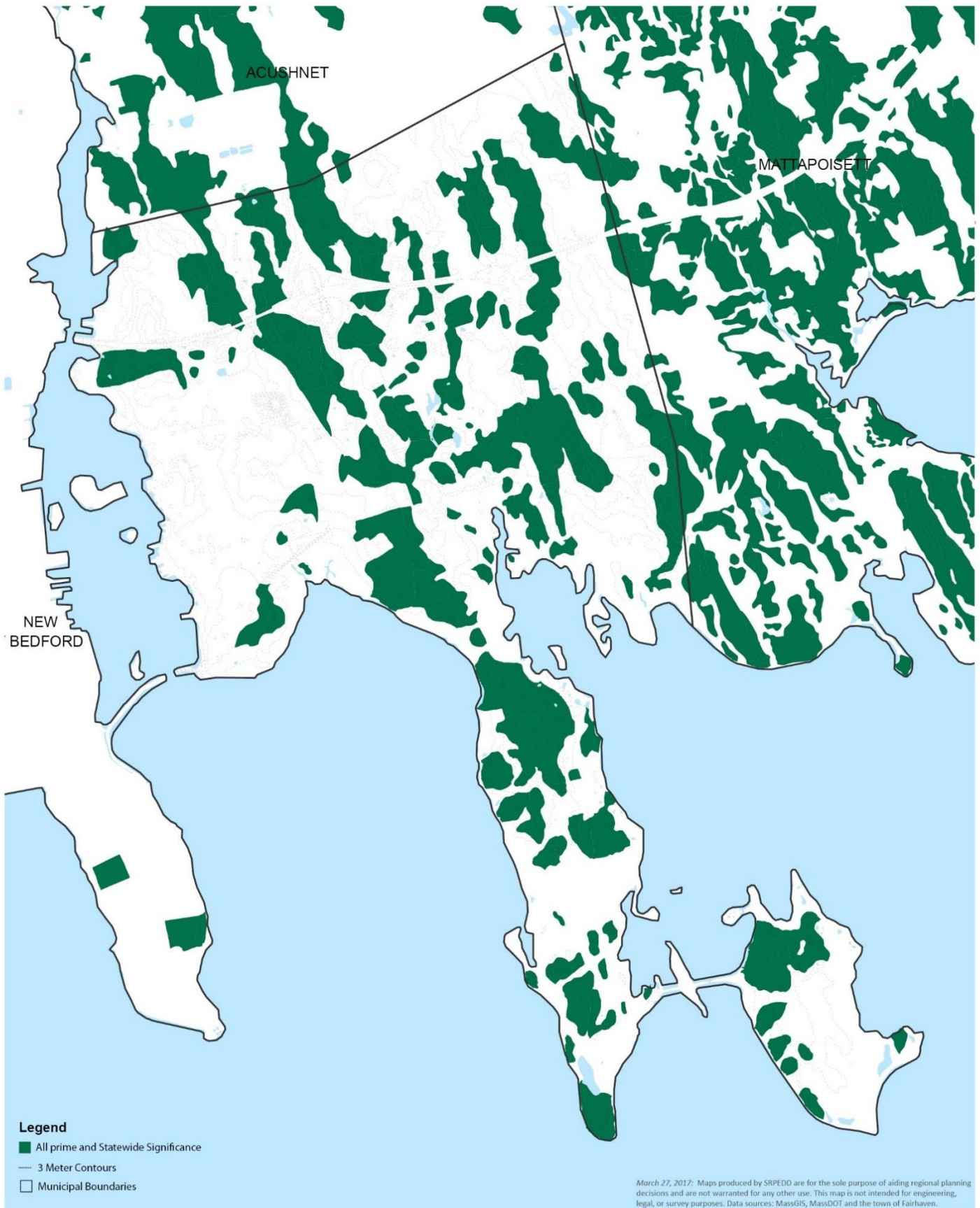
The most notable water resource in Fairhaven is its 29.4 miles of coast on Buzzards Bay, New Bedford Harbor and the Acushnet River. Sconticut Neck and West Island, which juts 4.5 miles from the mainland into Buzzards Bay, form most of the coast along this area. Localized water bodies have been formed by the interplay of land and water. These are Shaw's Cove, Stony Cove, Little Bay, Nasketucket Bay, and Priests Cove. (See **Figure 5-2**)

Freshwater resources consist of the Nasketucket River, which rises in northeast Fairhaven and flows south through several small ponds into an estuary in Little Bay. Its watershed is important as a reserve source of groundwater for drinking. A water resource protection overlay zoning district has been established in the watershed. The Swift Brook watershed, which lies east of New Boston Road, feeding southeastward into the Mattapoisett River Estuary in Mattapoisett is important as a drainage feature.

Table 5-1 Coastal Land Form Types of Fairhaven

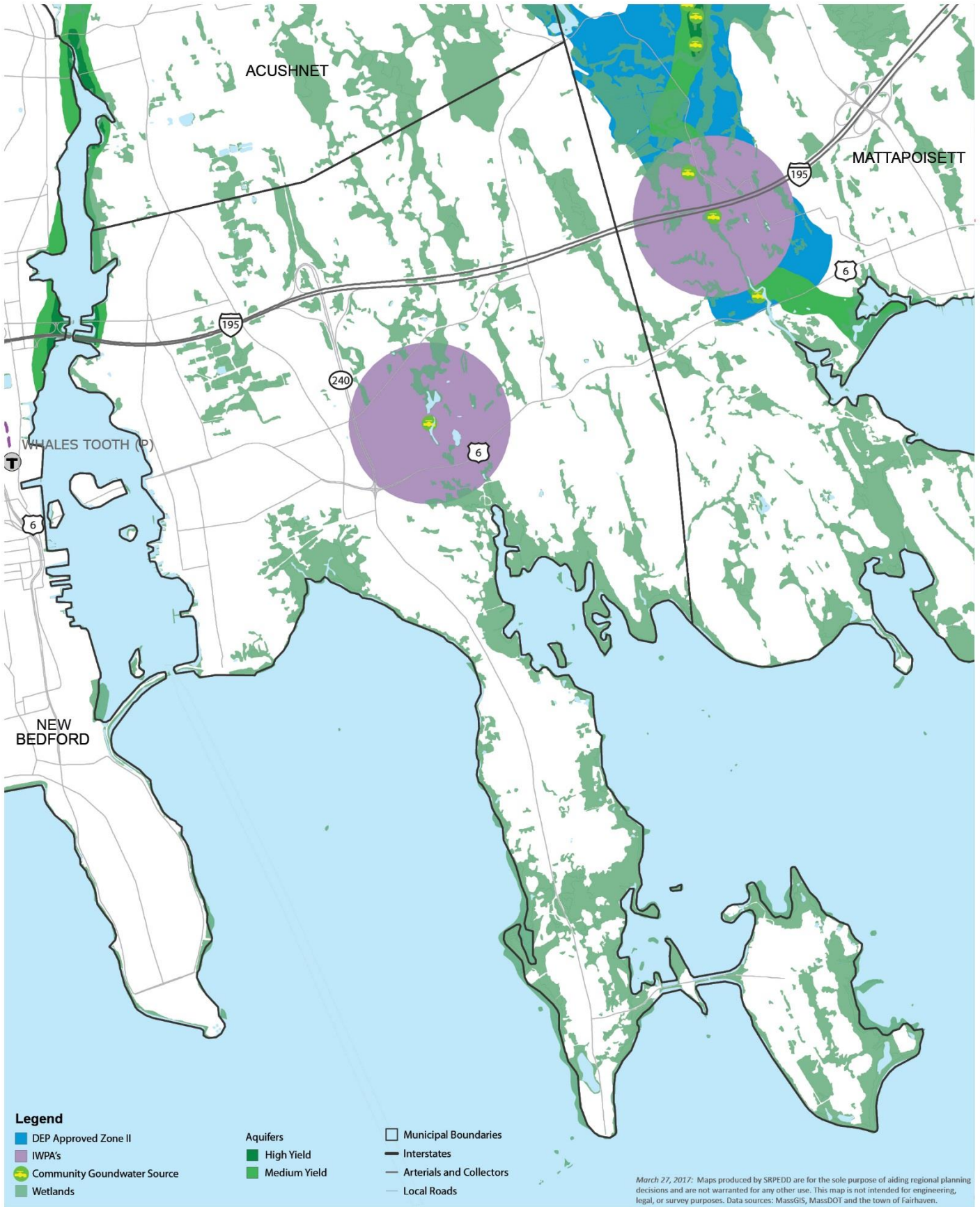
Type	Acres
Salt Marsh	607.5
Tidal Flats	582.1
Marine Flats	442.0
Estuarine Flats	140.1
Barrier Beach	86.3
Total	1,858.0

Source: Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies and the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, 1985



Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan

Fairhaven, MA



↑
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan

Fairhaven, MA

Source: Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District

Water Resources

Fairhaven's coastal area consists of the following landform types, shown in **Table 5-1**, according to a 1985 report issued by the Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies and the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management. Storms and natural beach building activities have resulted in several more barrier beaches being created since 1985. Coastal lands are quite extensive, accounting for about 23% of total acreage in Fairhaven. These coastal lands serve a number of important functions including recreation, shell fishing, provision of habitats for wildlife, storm impact abatement, filtering of contaminants, nutrient storage, supplying beach building materials and erosion control. Barrier beaches, of which there are 23 segments in Fairhaven, abate storm waves, lessen flooding, ease erosion of other coastal areas, provide materials for beach-building, and provide feeding and breeding grounds for coastal and migratory birds.

Fairhaven has three drainage areas; coastal, estuarine and inland. The coastal area includes Shaw's Cove, Little Bay, Sconticut Neck, West Island, and the area from Sconticut Neck to Fort Phoenix. Runoff in this area flows into small coastal streams or directly into the coastal waters. The estuarine area includes lands draining westward into New Bedford Harbor and the Acushnet River. The river begins north of the route 6 (Huttleston Avenue) Bridge. Most of the natural drainage of this area has been altered by development over a 300-year period. Several small ponds and streams in the area have been filled and captured in drainage pipes that flow into New Bedford Harbor or the Acushnet River. The inland areas of Fairhaven, including East Fairhaven and the interior wetland areas are drained primarily by the Nasketucket River system, which flows into Little Bay. A small portion of the northeast section of Fairhaven is drained by Swift Brook flowing into Mattapoissett and the Mattapoissett River Estuary. Floodplain development, where it has occurred in Fairhaven, is primarily residential and recreational.



Coastal flooding at Edgewater Street during king tide

The major flooding threat in Fairhaven occurs on low-lying coastal lands. These are subject to periodic flooding and wave damage resulting from coastal storms. The northern portion of Sconticut Neck Road (between Morton Street and Grape Street), a part of the Southern portion of Sconticut Neck Road (south of Camel Street) and the causeway to West Island are all about 15 feet above mean sea level. High stormwaters have flooded these road segments and surrounding residential areas. Storms that pushed

water levels to between 12 and 13 feet above mean sea level were recorded in 1938 and 1954. Waters pushed by high winds, large waves and tidal action can regularly exceed the 15-foot level, resulting in coastal flooding of these areas. A hurricane barrier has been constructed across the mouth of the New Bedford Harbor. Another barrier has been extended in the form of a dike across the tidal marshes at the head of Priest's Cove. These structures provide protection from coastal storms to the developed areas in Fairhaven Center. Other protective structures exist that have been built by the Town and by private parties, but they are smaller and provide only localized protection.

Fairhaven's aquifer recharge area is located in the Nasketucket River Basin in the northeast quadrant of Fairhaven. The zoning that protects it runs from U.S. Route 6 (or just 200 feet north of it) for part of the southern boundary, to the Acushnet Town Line. As noted, this area is largely undeveloped and contains large areas of forested swampland. This aquifer provides water for a Town well that is currently unused. It is an emergency water supply, and was the Town water supply until wells were developed in the Mattapoissett River watershed in Mattapoissett.

Natural Habitats

Fairhaven's wetlands occur in a variety of settings, from coastal to wooded swamp. These wetlands are home to a variety of natural communities of native plants and animals, including some vulnerable natural coastal communities, such as maritime shrublands, salt marsh, and maritime forests, as well as communities that are uncommon but not rare (yet) such as coastal forests and riverine wetlands. Salt marshes are extremely important for they provide a diverse habitat and nursery for two-thirds of shellfish and commercial or sport fish during their early life stages. These economically important juvenile species use the marsh for feeding, shelter and protective covering. They also filter out nutrients and sediments from runoff. Nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen are taken up by plants and converted into plant biomass. And a variety of other pollutants can be taken up by the plants or held in the marsh soil. Fairhaven has 607 acres of salt marsh according to CZM's 1985 statistics. Some of these salt marshes can be seen surrounding Little Bay, Nasketucket Bay, east and west Sconticut Neck and West Island, and the bay to the south of Egypt Lane.



Coastal wetlands in Fairhaven

Barrier beaches are narrow low-lying strips of beach (and dunes) that are roughly parallel to the main coast. They are often attached to the mainland at one or both ends often separated by a wetland or body of water. Barrier beaches are extremely important in absorbing energy from nor'easters and other weather events. According to the 1982 Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management's website, Fairhaven has approximately 23 segments of barrier beaches, consisting of 86.3 acres. These figures are subject to change with increasing erosion, sea level rising, and continued storm surge activity. Examples of barrier beach include West Island Town Beach, Hoppy's Landing, and many locations along Sconticut Neck, Shaw's Cove and Fort Phoenix.

Tidal flats are defined as those nearly level parts of coastal beaches, which usually extend from the mean low water line landward to the more steeply sloping face of the beach, or may be separated from the beach by an area of deeper water. They are also important during storm surges acting as a barrier to the area behind it, while providing sediment to down current beaches. Tidal flats can be seen in Fairhaven at the Winsegansett marshes on Sconticut Neck, on the east side of West Island, and Shaw's Cove.

An estuary is a partially enclosed body of water formed where freshwater from rivers and streams flows into the ocean, mixing with the salty seawater. Estuaries and the lands surrounding them are places of transition from land to sea, and from fresh to salt water. Although influenced by the tides, estuaries are protected from the full force of ocean waves, winds, and storms by the reefs, barrier islands, or fingers of land, mud, or sand that define an estuary's seaward boundary. The productivity and variety of estuarine habitats foster a wonderful abundance and diversity of wildlife. Shore birds, fish, crabs and lobsters, marine mammals, clams and other shellfish, marine worms, and sea birds are just some of the animals that make their homes in and around estuaries. These animals are linked to one another through a complex food web. Fairhaven has estuaries on West Island, Nasketucket, and Sconticut Neck. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) identified natural communities in Fairhaven associated with estuaries include Brackish Tidal Marsh (S2 – Imperiled) and Coastal Salt Pond (S2 – imperiled). These can be found on West Island, Nasketucket, and Sconticut Neck.



West Island State Reservation of coastal forests, wetlands and beaches

Maritime Forests/Woodlands are mixed deciduous evergreen forests within the coastal salt spray zone. Vegetation growth is stunted by winds and salt spray resulting in shorter trees. (<30 ft.) Maritime Forests usually occur in a mosaic with other maritime and coastal communities. Specific examples in Fairhaven include Nulands Neck, several locations on Sconticut Neck, and West Island. This natural community is considered imperiled in Massachusetts.

Coastal Forests are mixed deciduous communities at or below 60 ft. elevation, that occur within several miles of the coast but out of the daily salt spray zone, although they are subject to wind and spray during storms. They receive more moisture, warmer winters, and cooler summers than inland forests. Away from the coast, upland forests grade into mixed oak forest /woodlands. Specific examples of Coastal Forest in Fairhaven are located on West Island, Sconticut Neck, Little Bay Conservation Area, and in protected parcels along Nasketucket Bay. Many private lands also contain and support fragments of Coastal Forest.

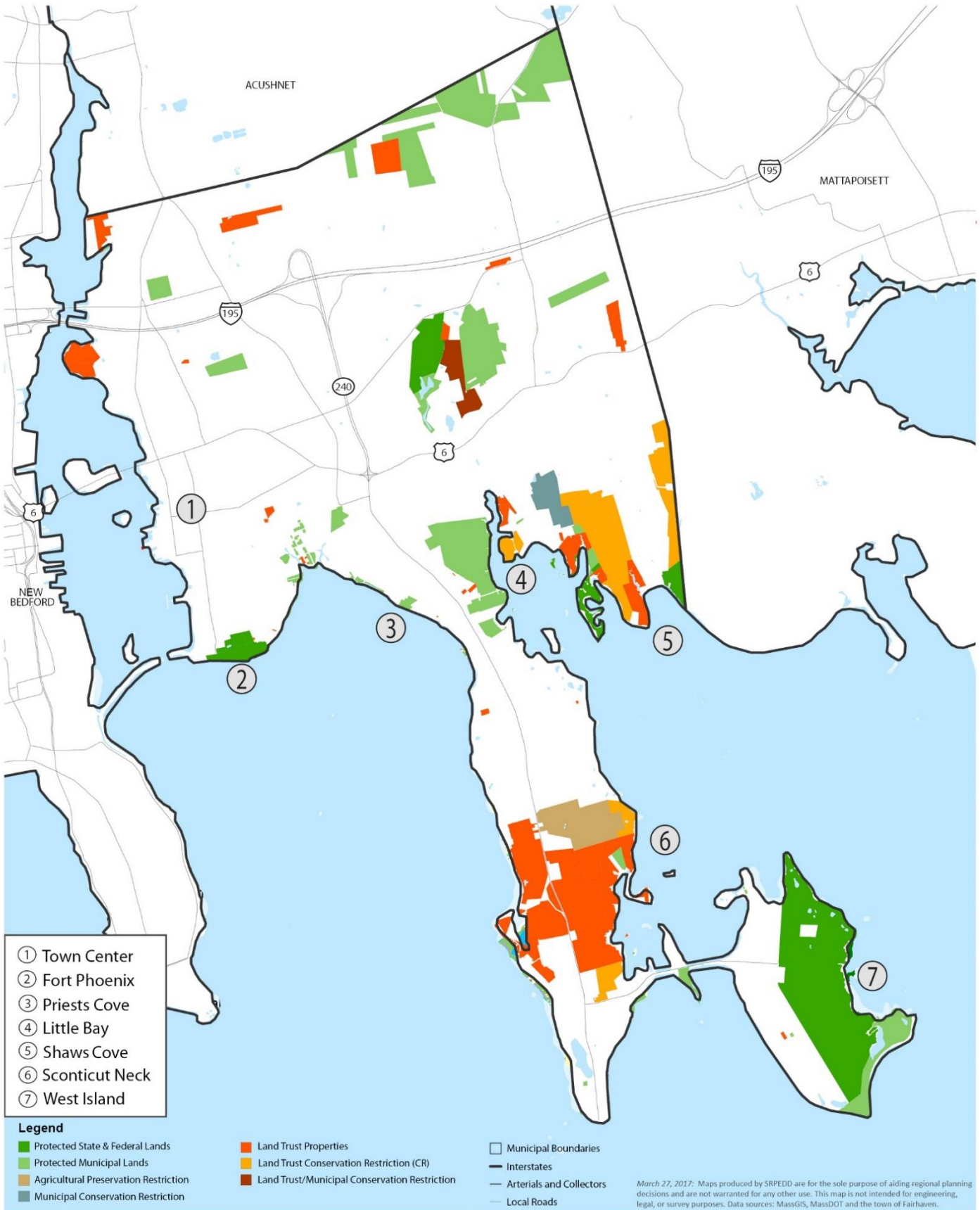
There are several species of shorebirds, reptiles, and vascular plants found in Fairhaven that are considered threatened, endangered or listed as “species of special concern” according to NHESP. These classifications specify native species which have been determined to be suffering a decline in numbers and are subject to different levels of special efforts to assure that their numbers are maintained (see **Table 5-2**).

Table 5-2 NHESP Rare and Endangered Species List for Fairhaven

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	State Rank*	Most Recent Observation
Reptile	<i>Malaclemys terrapin</i>	Diamondback Terripan	T	1988
Reptile	<i>Terrapene Carolina</i>	Eastern Box Turtle	SC	1990
Bird	<i>Botaurus Lentiginosus</i>	American Bittern	E	1993
Bird	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Piping Plover	T	1996
Bird	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	Least Tern	SC	1998
Bird	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Common Tern	SC	1995
Vascular Plant	<i>Dichanthelium mattamuskeetense</i>	Mattamuskeet Panic-Grass	E	1990
Vascular Plant	<i>Polygonum glaucum</i>	Sea-Beach Knotweed	SC	1989
Priority Natural Community		Sea-Level Fen	S1	
Priority Natural Community		Coastal Forest/ Woodland	S3	
Priority Natural Community		Maritime Shrubland Community	S3	

Source: Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)

*Note: E = Endangered; T = Threatened; SC = Special Concern; S1 = Critically Imperiled; S3 = Vulnerable in MA



NHESP's BioMap 2 identifies those areas of Massachusetts most in need of protection in order to conserve biodiversity for generations to come. Core Habitat consists of the most viable habitat for rare plants, rare animals and natural communities. The entire east coast of Sconticut Neck and West Island in Fairhaven plus Nasketucket Bay are included on the BioMap 2 "Core Habitat". The Priority Habitats are areas with unique habitats and species considered to be priorities for conservation and management. Priority habitats found in Fairhaven are located in the vicinity of Round Cove, Shaws Cove, barrier beach near Winsegansett Heights, Rocky Point and the area along the eastern shore of West Island. These areas should be considered a priority in planning for the future of Fairhaven.

Vernal pools are ephemeral bodies of water that do not support predatory fish and provide essential spring breeding habitat for various amphibian species, including wood frogs and blue-spotted salamanders. Vernal pools are protected by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, but must be certified as vernal pools before falling under this protection. Fairhaven has a number of potential vernal pools and a few are certified with the NHESP.

Open Spaces and Scenic Resources

According to the latest 2014 Losing Ground - Planning for Resilience Report by Mass Audubon⁷, out of Fairhaven's total land area of 7,942 acres, 3,183 acres are developed land, 2,894 acres are natural land (as of 2013) consisting of forest, wetland, and water, and 1,686 acres are open land (as of 2013) consisting of agricultural areas, bare soil, and low vegetation. Among all land areas, 1,529 acres are protected open spaces (as of 2013).



Scenic view from Phoenix Rail-trail looking at Little Bay

⁷ http://www.massaudubon.org/content/download/12560/197561/file/MassAudubon_LosingGround5_FINAL_medres.pdf

Fairhaven's historic harbor, views of Buzzards Bay, stony shores, salt marshes, and forested rolling hills, interspersed with pastures and agricultural fields create a rich mosaic of visual experience and opportunities to explore for its residents and visitors (See **Figure 5-3**). Fairhaven's residents take great pride in the valuable natural resources and recreational opportunities the town offers. Through the public engagement process of the open space plan update, the town residents identified the following community assets that they believe make their town unique:

- ▶ Conservation partnerships and the interest of our partners in our community
- ▶ Unique and valuable natural resources
- ▶ Our plants and trees - the retention of our native stock
- ▶ History, landscape, and architecture
- ▶ Coastline and public access to it
- ▶ The Recreation Center
- ▶ Wetlands, birds, and diversity of habitat



Scenic vista at Fort Phoenix

These resources offer town residents a variety of recreation opportunities throughout different parts of the community, such as walking and biking, playgrounds, wildlife viewing, swimming and various other water-based activities. Some of the residents' favorite spots in Fairhaven, such as the Fort Phoenix State Reservation, Phoenix Bike Path, Cushman Park, Livesey Park, West Island State Reservation and Town Beach, are iconic community assets known to the region and enjoyed by many visitors as well.

Issues and Opportunities

Limited Coastal Access

Despite Fairhaven's extensive coastline, only small segments of it are accessible to the public. Fort Phoenix State Beach is a small, public beach, located at the southern end of Fairhaven Center. There are three paved parking areas there, with spaces for about 200 cars. The Town Beach on West Island is also open to the general public, for a daily fee (in season) of \$10.00 (\$20.00, non-resident) and \$3.00 (\$10.00, non-resident) for walk-ins. Town property owners pay a seasonal fee of \$30.00 for a parking sticker at this beach (\$100.00, non-resident), which has about 200 parking spaces in an unpaved lot. Hoppy's Landing, which is owned by the Town of Fairhaven, and offers parking for approximately 100 spaces, is open for public use for \$7.00 per day and a seasonal fee of \$30.00 for a parking sticker.

The eastern half of West Island is state owned, under the control of the Department of Conservation and Recreation. It is kept in its natural state and there are not public access facilities such as parking or walking trails there. There are two Town-owned boat ramps, one at Pease Park in Fairhaven Center, on New Bedford Harbor (with 25 parking spaces) and one on Sconticut Neck at the end of Seaview Avenue, on Nasketucket Bay, with about 55 parking spaces. There is the potential for a third boat ramp with other recreational uses on the southern half of Long Island, which the Town should look at acquiring. There are some semi-publicly owned coastal areas. The Audubon Society owns a nature reserve at Shaw's Cove and there is a South Shore Marshes Wildlife Management Area on Stony Cove, both of which are served by limited access.

Wayfinding/Improved Access to Town Recreational Facilities

One of the recurring themes in the public/working meetings, and in the responses in the "additional comments" section of the public survey, was the issue of wayfinding/improved access. There is a need for improved visibility of and better access to many of the Town's recreational facilities and open space (including considerations for elder, younger, and physically challenged residents). These concerns can be addressed by the Town's continued efforts to address its ADA Transition Plan for conservation and recreation facilities. Site visibility involves "wayfinding" signage to indicate location and public access. Visibility can also involve the installation of consistent format (color/logo/symbol) of signage at town-owned, publicly accessible facilities. These facilities can also be put on a web-based map (Rochester and the Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust are good local examples) to help locals and visitors find and take advantage of the conservation and recreational opportunities afforded by the town.

Improvements to Popular Recreational Areas

The public assessment of needs at particular facilities was fairly consistent. A list of the public's favorite, and most used facilities, included: Fort Phoenix, the Phoenix Bike Path, Cushman Park, Livesey Park, and West Island Beach. As is often the case with popular and heavily used facilities, many people commented on the potential for improvement of

each one. Issues at Fort Phoenix involve allowing canoe and kayak access which is currently restricted by the state. The town will have to work with local legislators to explore the removal of such restrictions (if possible). It was suggested that the Phoenix Bike Path could use some plantings and beautification work to enhance the experience. It was also suggested that the town work with Mattapoisett to install mile-markers along the regional bike path.

Cushman Park is a mixed-jurisdiction facility (shared with the School Department) whose tennis courts are facing “end of life” issues, and will need to be relocated/rebuilt in approximately seven (7) years. The courts are also in need of protective netting to keep tennis balls on site. The Fairhaven Tennis Association has put 50% of the cost in on the court resurfacing project. The town may want to use Community Preservation funds to address repair and relocation issues (which would probably have to be resolved by 2021 in order to allow for a seamless transition of the tennis facility).

Most of the comments on Livesey Park had to do with maintenance, trash, and parking issues. Many people felt that there should be trash and recycling receptacles at Livesey (and at every park) as part of a maintenance plan. The Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee further analyzed public comments and suggested that a feasibility study to repurpose available land in and around the park, for parking purposes, be considered.

The concerns expressed over West Island Town Beach centered largely around parking (particularly the condition of the parking lot) and traffic flow during the busy summer months. The parking lot issue will require a thorough look as it is large and in an environmentally sensitive area. While paving would improve the condition of the lot, it would not necessarily be the most environmentally friendly solution. Porous pavement with swales and infiltration may be too expensive in terms of application and maintenance. As for summer traffic flows, it has been suggested that a second parking lot attendant is needed for management purposes.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Preserve our farmland and working agricultural landscapes.

Recommendations:

1. Acquire specific critically located parcels of land to prevent development in inappropriate (e.g., coastal) areas in Fairhaven.
2. Encourage continued participation and enrollment in farmland and forestry preservation programs under MGL 61, 61A and 61B, and in the state’s Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR).
3. Preserve important agricultural soils/working agricultural landscapes in conjunction with state and local food systems security planning.

4. Work with the Agricultural Commission to develop an up-to-date Plan of Work that integrates appropriate conservation and open space goals and objectives, such as updating the Right to Farm bylaw.

Goal 2: Increase awareness and stewardship of our conservation, open space, and recreational assets.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a web-based map of conservation, recreation, and open space assets as part of an Open Space and Recreation web page.
2. Prepare information, including directional and on-site narrative and graphic signage and brochures, highlighting conservation and recreation areas, and encouraging stewardship and appropriate use.
3. Establish a permanent Open Space Committee to work with other boards and commissions to help promote the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Goal 3: Set aside more land for conservation, open space, and water supply protection.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to work with the Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Committee to protect the resources of the Mattapoissett River aquifer.
2. Revise and update the provisions of the Water Protection Overlay Zoning District in the Nasketucket River Watershed and continue appropriate administration of such provisions.
3. Encourage and educate the public on responsible land use management and planning practices within all water, marine, and critical habitat/natural resource areas.

Goal 4: Provide quality life-long recreational opportunities for all citizens regardless of age or ability.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to develop recreational and athletic facilities, including multi-purpose fields, pathways, and play areas, particularly in underserved parts of town.
2. Meet ADA required accessibility standards for access to all town-owned conservation, recreation, and athletic facilities, per the ADA Transition Plan.
3. Improve access and facilities at the Livesey Park and Town Beach on West Island.
4. Continue to work to develop bicycle facilities, enhancements, and connections from the existing Phoenix Bike Path to other parts of town and to existing regional pathways.

5. Work with the Wellness Committee to plan and develop the recommended Fitness Trail.
6. Find more administrative and storage space for the Recreation Department in order to retain adequate and efficient services.

Goal 5: Preserve/protect forests/woodlands, habitat, and native inland and coastal vegetative communities.

Recommendations:

1. Protect inland and coastal wetlands and wildlife habitat through enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act, floodplain regulations, and restrictions that apply to areas subject to coastal flooding.
2. Continue to work with conservation partners to acquire lands that are significant to state recognized Core Habitat, Critical Natural Landscapes, and climate change resilient land.
3. Hire a full-time Conservation Agent.

Goal 6: Preserve our cultural and historic places and landscapes.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to promote public awareness of the cultural and historical assets of the town and the accompanying stewardship needs.
2. Acquire lands that represent important cultural landscapes associated with the history and character of the town.

Goal 7: Increase access to the waterfront and water-based recreation activities.

Recommendations:

1. Identify, improve, and increase the points of access to the waterfront for canoes, kayaks, and other recreational users.
2. Improve ADA compliant opportunities for waterfront access.

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Transportation

6

Introduction

Transportation infrastructure serves as the backbone of a community, connecting a Town's residents to its businesses, cultural resources and neighboring communities. The Transportation element of the Master Plan provides an overview of the existing transportation network as well as providing a strategy on how to enhance the existing infrastructure to provide a more cohesive community.



Fairhaven Town Center with brick sidewalks

Fairhaven's existing transportation network is typical of many coastal New England towns, with a main corridor through its center, a spur to the beach/recreational areas, a service road along the harbor, and numerous narrow spokes that provide access to the residential neighborhoods located off the mainline. This is a typical roadway layout for a Town that began as a sea-based industrial community before converting to a suburban commuter-based society. As Fairhaven plans for its future, the Town has the ability to focus enhancements to its transportation network in a way that takes advantage of the existing infrastructure, as well as providing new and improved connections to the Town's numerous natural, cultural and economic resources. By building around these resources, Fairhaven aspires to develop a modern transportation system that fits within the existing infrastructure and serves the needs of all of its residents.

Baseline Conditions Analyses

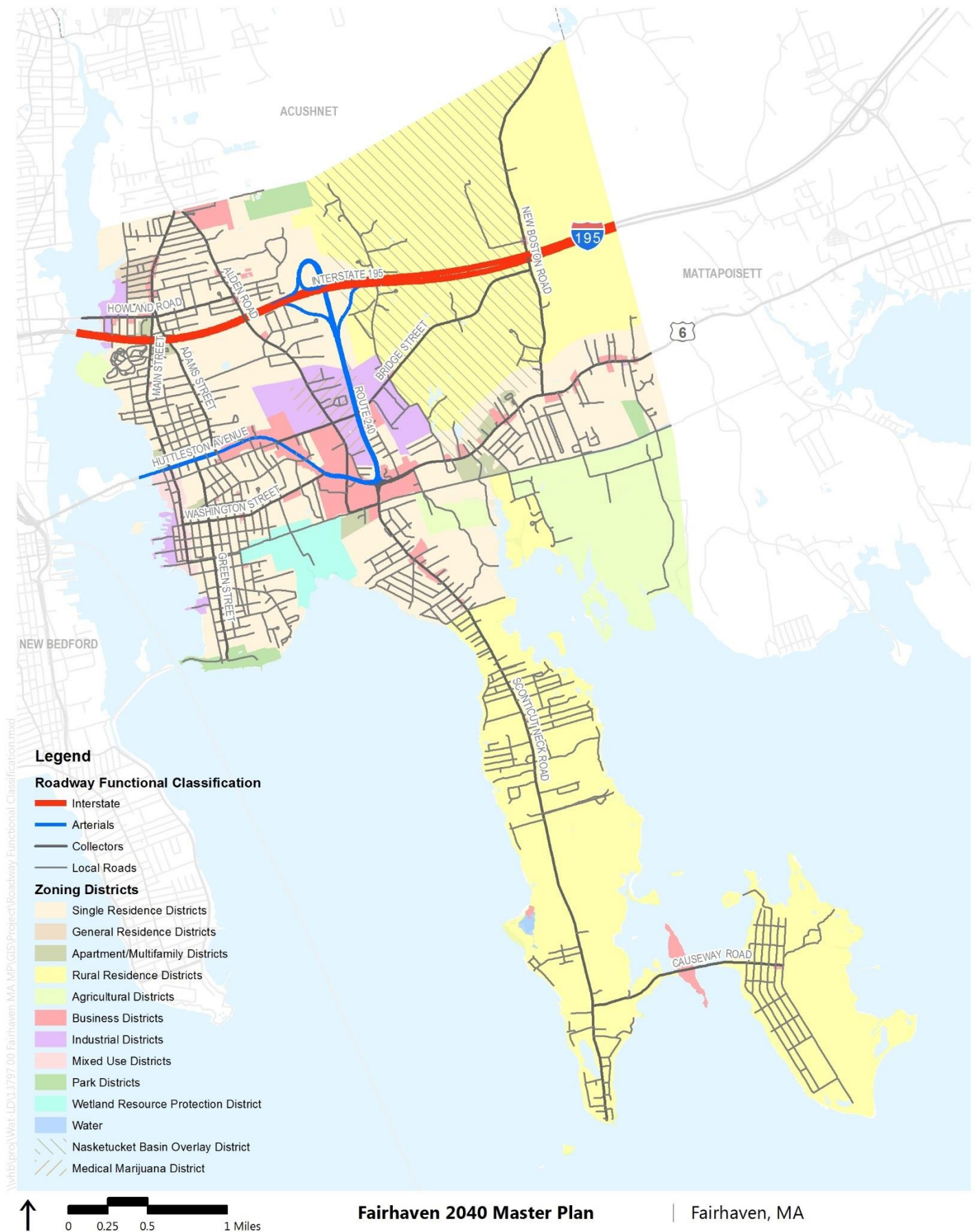
The Town of Fairhaven is located in Bristol County in southeastern Massachusetts. The southeastern region has a healthy mix of cities, suburbs, and rural areas. The community is bordered by Acushnet to the north, Mattapoisett to the east, and the Acushnet River to the west. The City of New Bedford lies on the opposite shore of the Acushnet River. Fairhaven is approximately 50-miles south of Boston and 35 miles southeast of Providence, Rhode Island.

Existing Transportation System

The transportation system within Fairhaven varies dramatically from tight-knit streets that make up the downtown and residential areas, to the roads that provide access to some of the more rural portions of the community, and to the corridors that provide regional connections to other communities and regions. These roadways can be referred to as interstates, arterials, collectors, and local roadways. Each contributes toward creating a street "hierarchy", whereby each type of street should promote a combination of access and/or mobility. **Figure 6-1** provides a graphical view of the Fairhaven roadway network and how it interacts with the various zoning districts within the Town.



Route 6 in Fairhaven



As previously noted, Fairhaven is within driving distance of Boston (50 miles), Cape Cod (26 miles), and Providence, RI (35 miles). The Town also has central access to many of the regional highways, with I-195 and Route 6 traversing the Town, I-495 located to the east, and Route 140 located to the west. The highways in the community offer good regional transportation access and mobility including:

- ▶ Interstate 195: is a limited access highway that provides east-west regional access between Providence, Fall River and New Bedford to the west and Interstate 495 to the east. Interchange 18 is located within Fairhaven and provides access to Route 240, which connects directly to Route 6 and Sconticut Neck Road.
- ▶ Route 6: is a principal arterial that bisects the Town and provides east-west mobility within the Town and the region. This roadway serves as the principal access to the Town's retail and commercial areas.
- ▶ Sconticut Neck Road: a minor arterial located on the south side of Town that provides north-south mobility and access to many residential neighborhoods, as well as serving as the main access to two of the Town's public beaches (Pope and West Island).
- ▶ Main Street: a minor arterial roadway on the westerly side of Town that provides north-south mobility between Acushnet to the north and the historic downtown area and Fairhaven harbor to the south.
- ▶ Alden Road: a minor arterial roadway that provides north-south mobility between Acushnet to the north and the big-box commercial areas at its intersections with Route 6 and Bridge Street to the south. At its southernmost point Alden Road also provides access to the Phoenix Rail Trail.

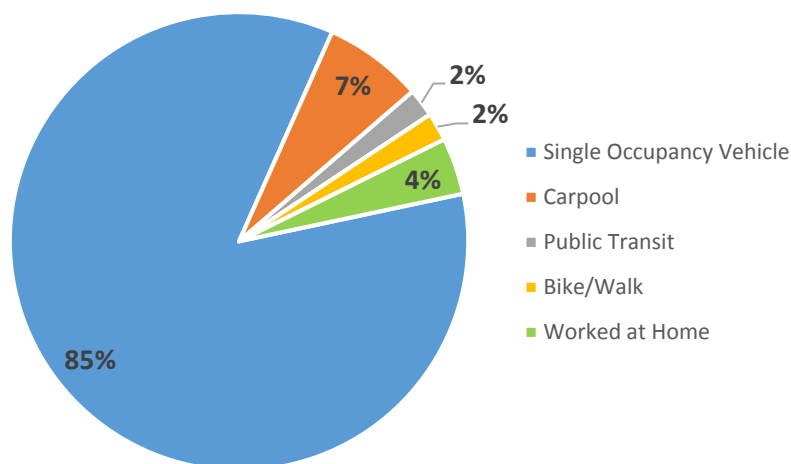
Overall, there are 135 miles of roadway within the Town, of which 82 are maintained by the Town, 19 are maintained by MassDOT, with the remaining mileage consisting of private ways.

Modes of Travel

To gain a better understanding of how people move within and through Fairhaven, the mode share for commuters (or workers) was reviewed. **Figure 6-2** provides a breakdown of the mode split data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau⁸. Based on the available information the overwhelming majority of Fairhaven's working age population (92-percent) relies predominantly on the automobile, be it driving alone or carpooling, to get to and from work. Public transit makes up the next most popular means of commuting (2-percent combined). Commuters that walked or biked to work made up a combined 1 ½-percent of the working population. Approximately 4-percent of Fairhaven residents work from home.

⁸ Mode share data based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey (<http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>)

Figure 6-2 Means of Transportation



Source: MassDOT Crash Portal

Since the mode share heavily favors the automobile, it is important to also get an understanding of the commuting patterns for both residents of Fairhaven and for workers of Fairhaven-based employers. **Table 6-1** presents the information collected as part of the 2010 U.S. Census; which in summary:

Table 6-1 Census Journey-to-Work Data for Fairhaven Residents and Employees

Location of Employment ¹	Percent of Residents	Percent of Workers	Location of Residence
New Bedford	27.1%	29.5%	Fairhaven
Fairhaven	24.2%	28.5%	New Bedford
Dartmouth	11.3%	10.3%	Dartmouth
Fall River	4.2%	5.8%	Acushnet
Taunton	3.4%	3.3%	Mattapoisett
Acushnet	3.2%	3.0%	Fall River
57 other Towns/Cities (combined)	26.7%	19.6%	42 other Towns/Cities (combined)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Journey-to-Work Data

¹ Other Towns and Cities not listed comprise less than three percent or less each

Approximately 24 percent of Fairhaven residents surveyed work in Fairhaven, while 30-percent of people who work in Fairhaven, also live within the Town. Given the substantial portion of individuals that both live and work in the Town of Fairhaven, the potential exists to substantially reduce the number of commuting trips made via automobile. While the existing mode share within the town leans heavily towards the automobile, targeted transportation improvements could be made that would promote travel by other modes.

Improvements could range from better educating residents on available means of transportation to constructing new sidewalks bicycle accommodations.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations

Pedestrian and bicycle mobility are an important part of any transportation plan, as providing better access for non-motorized alternatives and encouraging these modes will help reduce congestion and the overall number of vehicle miles traveled. In return environmental benefits can be realized as the number of automobiles on the road is reduced. Figure 6.3 displays the existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the Town.

Pedestrian Access

The Town has approximately 65-miles of sidewalks, as illustrated in **Figure 6.3**. Most of these sidewalks are located downtown and along Route 6 with others scattered through the various residential roadways throughout the Town. The ability of Fairhaven residents to commute and accomplish other errands via walking is limited once one leaves the downtown area. It should also be noted, that while sidewalks may be present, they are not necessarily in walkable condition as many are extremely narrow and show signs of significant wear.



Lack of sidewalk on Sconticut Neck Road

It was previously stated that slightly more than 1-percent of residents in Fairhaven walk to work; therefore, it is important to maintain and provide new sidewalks so that this number can increase. Maintaining sidewalks is also important to provide increased independence for populations less likely to have access to personal vehicles including the

elderly and at-risk populations. Just as important as sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks and handicap accessible ramps need to be reviewed.

What is VMT or Vehicle Miles Traveled?

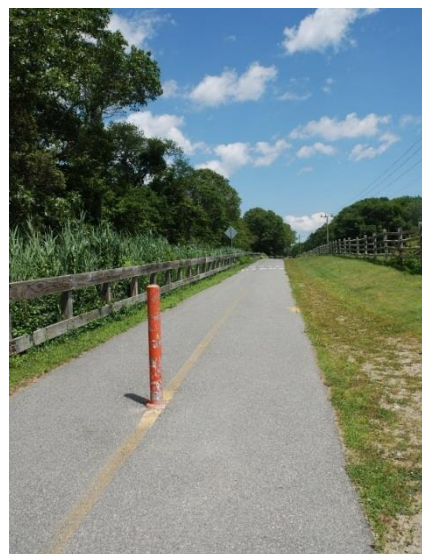
A central goal of most sustainable transportation plans is to reduce overall Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in a community or region; this refers to the total number of miles traveled in a vehicle in an area over a certain period of time. VMT is correlated with household density, access to transit, distance to shops/services, proximity to employment, land use and income.

A collection of methods and strategies for reducing vehicle congestion and VMT is called a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program. There are many strategies that can be considered as part of a TDM program; including but not limited to: improved transportation options, incentives to use alternative modes of transportation, parking management, and policy and institutional reforms.

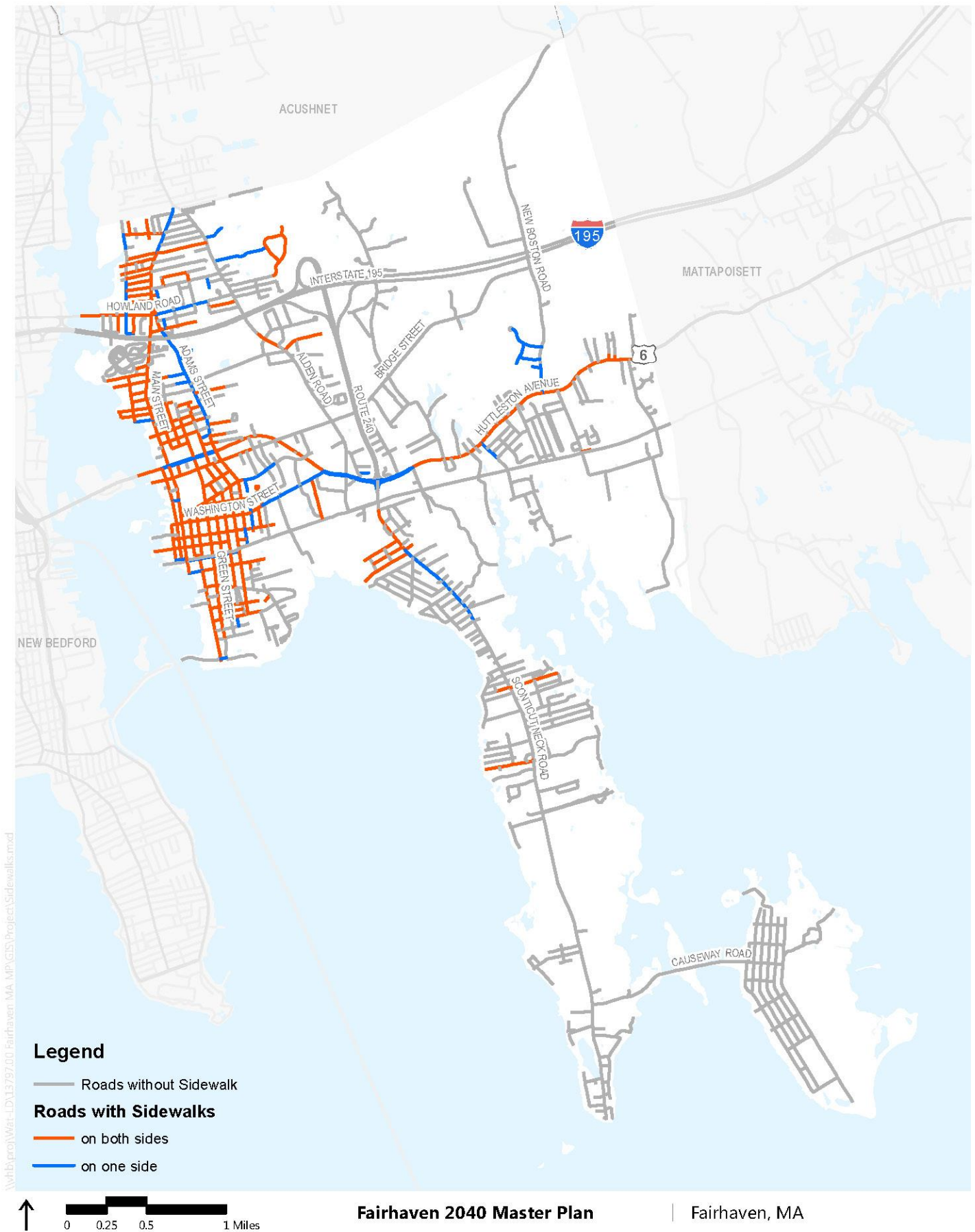
According to a 2010 study prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the average household in the Commonwealth drive more than 75-miles per day; which is based on data from over 149 cities and towns. This study identified Fairhaven as a town where residents travel less daily than the average community surveyed. The average daily vehicles miles traveled (VMT) for residents of Fairhaven was between 50- and 75-miles per day. Per the same study, residents of Fairhaven have a round-trip commute of between 20 and 25 miles, on average. Non-commuting trips (errands, pleasure trips, etc.) made by Fairhaven residents range, on average, from 1 to 8 miles, with the low end of the range focused around the Harbor and the longer trips from residents that live on the south or east edges of the Town.

Bicycling

Bicycle facilities can generally be classified as on-road (bicycle accommodating shoulders, bike lanes, etc.) or off-road (bike and/or mixed-use paths). Fairhaven is home to the Phoenix Bike Trail, which is an off-road 3.2-mile segment of the South Coast Bikeway that runs from the intersection of South Street and Main Street east to the Matapoisett town line where it continues easterly as the Mattapoisett Rail Trail. The approximately 1-mile long Little Bay spur departs the main trail at its intersection with Arsene Street and travels south connecting to Orchard Street just east of Sconticut Neck Road.



Phoenix Rail Trail bike path



The on-road bicycle facilities are primarily limited to isolated roadway segments with wide shoulders, such as Alden Street between Staples and David Drown Boulevard. The Town's Bicycle Committee was able to secure funding for sharrows and "Share the Road" signage on Sconticut Neck Road, New Boston Road and Main Street. There are currently no other signed bikeways within Fairhaven and limited on-road facilities within the Town that accommodate bicycles. The limited on-road facilities forces bicyclists to travel in the road or on the sidewalk, increasing the potential for conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians, respectively. The limited on-road facilities may also affect the use of the Phoenix Bike Trail by limiting the ability for cyclists to access the trail without a car.

Roadway Safety

Providing a safe transportation network is critical for multiple reasons beyond limiting injuries and damage to personal property. Unsafe roadways and intersections can result in dividing lines within a community as well as keeping outside travelers from using town roadways and thus limiting potential tourism and business growth.

Why Do Crashes Happen?

Rear-end collisions are often a result of congestion or vehicles stopping to allow vehicles to enter the mainline of traffic from a street or a driveway; also called "courtesy crashes".

Angle type collisions typically occur when there are high side-street volumes trying to enter the mainline traffic stream.

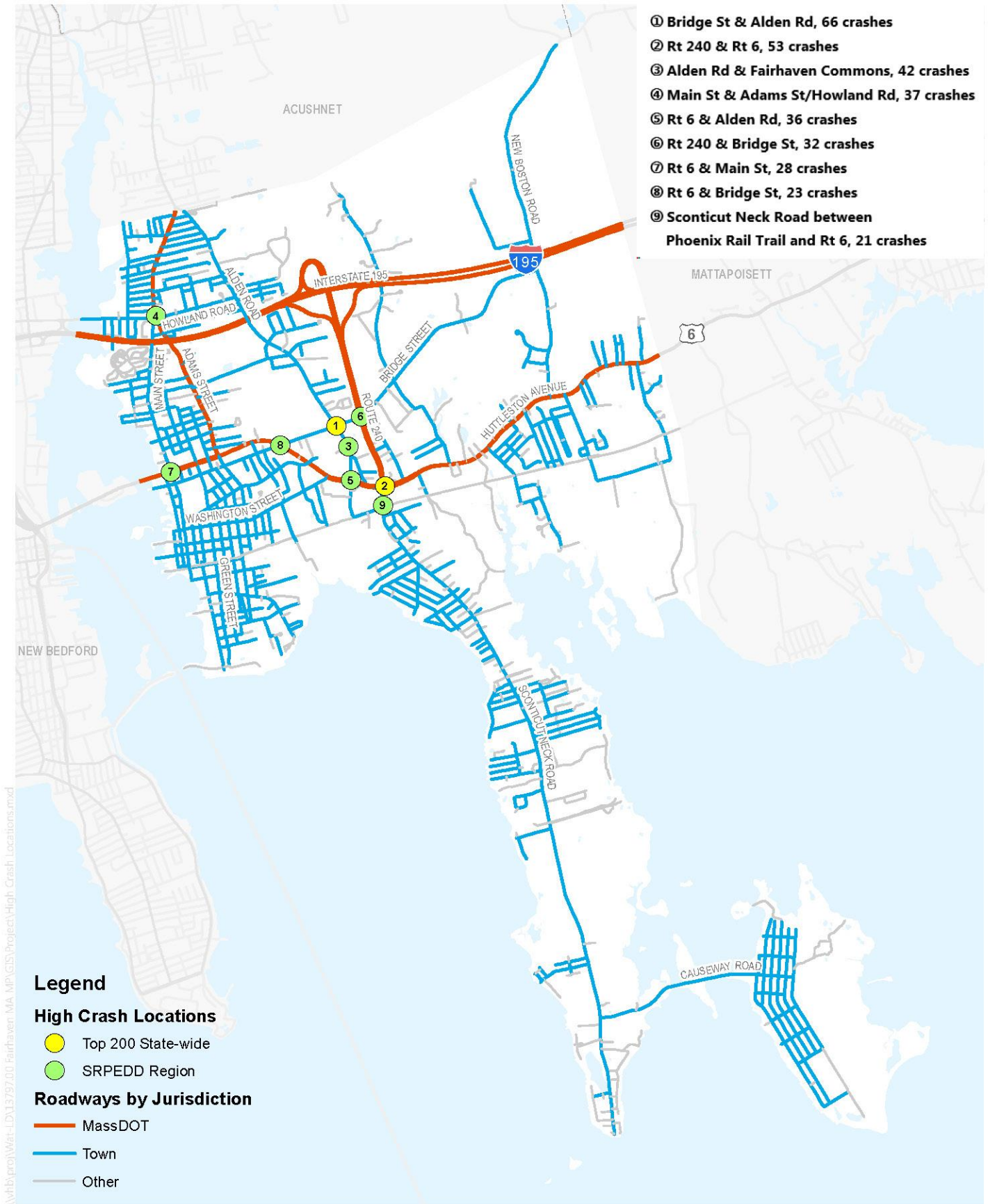
Sideswipe collisions are often a result of on-street parking or vehicles attempting to pass vehicles attempting to turn into side streets or driveways

Numerous studies, conducted by both public and private entities, have looked at existing safety concerns at various locations within the town. Most recently MassDOT has identified areas in Fairhaven that are high crash cluster locations using data from 2012 through 2014.⁹ These clusters have been identified as part of MassDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)¹⁰ in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The following nine locations were identified; which were illustrated in **Figure 6-4**:

- ▶ Route 240 and Bridge Street
- ▶ Huttleston Avenue (Route 6) and Route 240/Sconticut Neck Road
- ▶ Huttleston Avenue (Route 6) and Alden Road
- ▶ Huttleston Avenue (Route 6) and Bridge Street
- ▶ Huttleston Avenue (Route 6) and Main Street
- ▶ Sconticut Neck Road and David A Drown Boulevard/Phoenix Rail Trail
- ▶ Alden Road and Bridge Street
- ▶ Alden Road and Fairhaven Commons

⁹ MassDOT Top Crash Locations map application www.services.massdot.state.ma.us/maptemplate/TopCrashLocations/

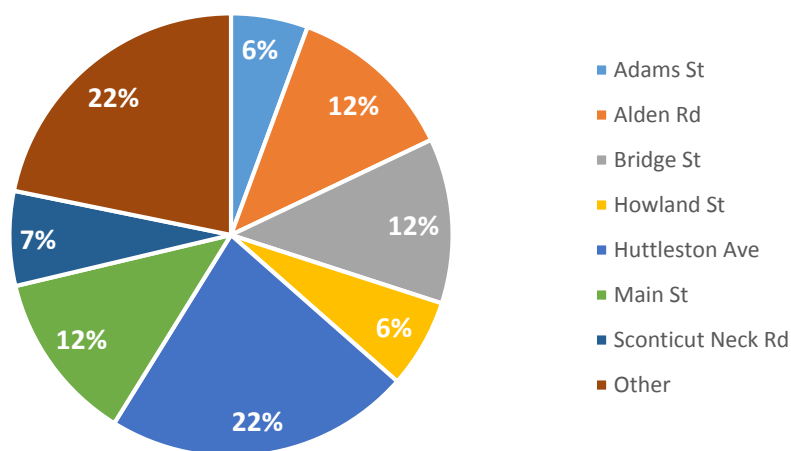
¹⁰ Massachusetts Strategic Highway Safety Plan (<http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/default.asp?pgid=content/traffic/shsp&sid=level2>)



Additional locations of concern pointed out by the Fairhaven Police Department included the unsignalized intersections of Bridge Street at Adams Street and Cottage Street at Pleasant Street.

In addition to providing a summary of the high crash locations in Town identified by MassDOT, VHB developed a Town Wide Crash Chart (**Figure 6.5**) to summarize the number of crashes along major corridors. This data was prepared by VHB using the MassDOT database for the most recent three years (2012 through 2014) available. Per the MassDOT database approximately 1,500 crashes occurred on roads within the Town of Fairhaven between the years of 2012 and 2014. This suggests an average of approximately 500 crashes per year that occur within Fairhaven (483 crashes occurred in 2016 based on data provided by the Fairhaven Police Department). Approximately 76% of all crashes within the Town over this period occurred on seven roadways: Adams Road, Alden Road, Bridge Street, Howland Street, Huttleston Avenue, Main Street, and Sconticut Neck Road. Bridge and Adams, Bridge and Alden, Adams and Route 6, Cottage & Pleasant

Figure 6-5 Town Wide Crash Chart



Source: MassDOT Crash Portal

Some information taken from the review of the available crash data includes:

- ▶ There were 5 fatal crashes during the three years reviewed, all of which occurred during non-daylight hours.
 - Of the 5 fatalities, 3 involved pedestrians and 2 were single-vehicle crashes.
- ▶ There were 23 crashes involving pedestrians and bicycles Town-wide, including 3 fatalities (all pedestrians).
 - Of the 3 pedestrian fatalities, one occurred at each of the following locations: on Francis Street south of Route 6, the intersection of Adams Street at Plymouth Avenue, and the intersection of Sconticut Neck Road at Gilbert Street.
 - From the available data, it was unclear why the pedestrians were in the roadway. While sidewalks are provided on each of the roadways where the crashes occurred, not all the sidewalks are ADA-compliant and there are no ADA-

compliant crosswalks at any of these locations, which may contribute to the pedestrians being in the roadway.

- The remaining 2 fatal crashes were single vehicle crashes where the vehicle left the traveled way.

Public Transportation

Passenger Rail Service

There is no direct passenger rail service to Fairhaven. The closest MBTA Commuter Rail station is located on the Middleborough/Lakeville town line, off I-495 interchange 4, which is an approximately 30-minute drive from Fairhaven. The Middleborough/Lakeville Station is the last stop on the MBTA's Middleborough/Lakeville Line, which provides service to South Station in Boston, with stops in Brockton, Braintree and Quincy along the way.

MassDOT and the MBTA are currently in the process of restoring commuter rail service to the region, which was discontinued in 1958, via the South Coast Rail Commuter Rail Extension project. Based on a recent Notice of Project Change filed by MassDOT, the project is expected to be phased, with service being restored to the region under Phase I by upgrading the existing rail infrastructure in the area to meet current standards. As part of Phase II of this project, the MBTA's Stoughton Line will be extended to the city of New Bedford via a new electric-powered rail service. As part of the project the new Whale's Tooth multiuse, multimodal terminal will be constructed on New Bedford harbor, located opposite Fairhaven harbor.

Bus and Para Transit Service

The SRTA operates one (1) primary bus route (Route 11) through the Town, which runs between the SRTA Terminal in New Bedford and Stop & Shop on Sconticut Neck Road while making stops at Market Basket, the Southcoast Health System and Wal-Mart. In February 1, 2017 the SRTA and GATRA announced a new bus route that will run between Wareham and New Bedford, making a stop at the Southcoast Health System. The SRTA also operates demand response service for its member communities as well as a Boston Hospital Shuttle, which runs between the SRTA Terminal in New Bedford and eleven (11) Boston hospitals. The Town and its residents have regularly expressed a desire to increase/improve the bus service throughout the Town. The SRTA regularly conducts Comprehensive Service Assessments to evaluate its service and consider various options for improving operations and service, of which the most recent was published in 2014. As part of that assessment, the SRTA evaluated the cost of adding night service to Route 11 and estimated the annual cost at \$126,595.50.

Issues and Opportunities

Throughout development of this Plan, Fairhaven residents have noted an overall appreciation of the existing transportation network while providing input on potential

action items to target specific needs. In general, the public considers the Town's transportation infrastructure to be in good overall condition with gaps in critical locations.

In the spirit of sustainability infused throughout the rest of the plan, the public and the Town officials have reached consensus that improvements should target pedestrians, bicycles and bus users. The most critical issues brought up by the public included closing gaps in the sidewalk system, increasing bicycle connections (both internally and externally), and improving transit service. By targeting these issues, opportunities for development may present themselves, as well as new funding opportunities that have not been tapped by the Town in the past.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Become a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community by expanding existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a Town-wide Complete Streets Policy and apply for MassDOT Complete Streets grants
2. Focus new sidewalk construction in areas with missing segments and around attractions (e.g. Downtown, Schools and the Bike Path).
3. Use signage and pavement markings to define a Town-wide on-street bicycle network.
4. Work with MassDOT and the City of New Bedford to provide a safe bicycle connection between the municipalities.
5. Educate the community on bike rules and safety, including "Safe Routes to Schools" and other use of bike facilities.

Goal 2: Increase the use of public transit by Town residents and employees.

Recommendations:

1. Join regional efforts to support the South Coast Rail extension.
2. Educate residents on available existing and future public transit services (post schedules in public places, including public school, Town Hall and the library).
3. Work with the SRTA, neighboring communities and local businesses to enhance the existing local shuttle service including adding night service to Route 11.
4. Work with SRTA to add support facilities (benches, shelters, parking, etc.) at existing SRTA bus stops.
5. Work to expand door-to-door service for disabled and aging residents.

Goal 3: Improve Town-wide traffic flow and safety.

Recommendations:

1. Work with MassDOT to advance safety improvements at Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)-eligible locations, particularly the intersection of Route 6 and Bridge Street.
2. Evaluate streets surrounding the Downtown and waterfront for possible conversion to one-way to improve traffic movements and on-street parking.
3. Improve wayfinding signage through-out the Town.
4. Work with the Police Department to develop a strategic traffic enforcement plan.
5. Consider the implementation of interactive Speed Indication Signage at select locations.
6. Address safety issues related to heavy truck traffic in North Fairhaven, especially traffic associated with the quarry in Acushnet.

Goal 4: Improve maintenance of Town-wide transportation system.

Recommendations:

1. Prepare a sidewalk inventory and construction/maintenance plan.
2. Consider implementation of a 50/50 Sidewalk Match Program, where cost of maintaining sidewalks is shared by the municipality and property owners.
3. Review the current Town-wide pavement management plan annually and update as needed.
4. Work to upgrade existing pedestrian facilities to conform to current Americans with Disabilities Act/Architectural Access Board (ADA/AAB) standards.
5. Work with MassDOT to upgrade existing traffic signals along Route 6 and Route 240.
6. Upgrade existing pavement markings and signage Town-wide.

Historic and Cultural Resources

7

Introduction

Historic resources serve many roles, including creating a tangible link to a Town's heritage, providing distinctive characteristics to a Town's many neighborhoods, and serving as an economic stimulus for local business owners. They inspire pride in a Town's history, provide solid building stock, and serve as a catalyst for economic development. Maintaining a balance between the preservation of these resources while encouraging necessary growth and evolution of the built environment is one of the biggest challenges faced by towns that have centuries of history, such as Fairhaven.

The streetscapes, buildings, and landscapes that distinguish Fairhaven's neighborhoods are integral to their character, encouraging both long-time, multi-generational families to stay, and attracting new residents over time. Activities such as demolition or unsympathetic construction can result in a cumulative and irreversible impact on an entire neighborhood. At the same time, owners of older buildings often lack access to experts and information necessary to understand their options regarding the continued maintenance of these resources, and alleviate financial concerns.



Fort Phoenix overlooking Buzzard's Bay

Fairhaven has an unusually strong connection to its history, and is reliant upon the Town's heritage to maintain its current role as a tourist destination. Self-billed as "A Small Town with a Big History," Fairhaven tells the story of the first wave of New England settlers in the 17th century; the maritime industries of whaling and ship building in the 17th and 18th centuries; and the Gilded Age-era philanthropy responsible for the high-style architectural displayed by many of the Town's municipal and institutional buildings. As a result of the community's well-developed historic pride, Fairhaven has a strong track record of preservation advocacy and reuse of historic buildings, actively promoting rehabilitation of buildings to reflect modern needs while respecting historic features of the buildings and the neighborhoods surrounding them.

Vacant, high-profile buildings such as the Rogers School afford the opportunity to turn an unused property into a true public gem, continuing to serve Fairhaven's residents through their evolving use. For example, a planned rehabilitation by a private developer of the Oxford School into Chapter 40B affordable senior housing is utilizing historic tax credit incentives, demonstrating a direct relationship between historic resources, economic development, and social benefits. Projects such as this require detailed planning for both construction and ongoing operations, with the cooperation and support of the community, town officials and committees, architects, and developers. Studies to explore the future plans for the Rogers School, including the utilization of tax credits, were completed in early 2017.

Baseline Conditions Analyses

The several miles of waterfront that give Fairhaven its unique natural landscape shaped the Town's cultural landscape as well. First settled in 1653 by one of the original Pilgrims, the town was recognized as a key strategic holding by the colonists as early as the American Revolution, when the first Fort Phoenix was constructed. The Town's early economy reflected its Colonial Era agricultural origins, centered in the Oxford Village area upstream on the Acushnet River. When the first bridge linking Fairhaven and New Bedford near the mouth of the river near Buzzards Bay was constructed in 1802, a new maritime economy, centered on the new bridge and wharves, defined the next century of economic and land development. The two downtown areas associated with the wharves, the "20-Acre Purchase" and Fairhaven Center, contain architectural examples spanning the entire post-Revolutionary War spectrum, from Federal to Queen Anne styles. In the early 20th century, when many Massachusetts towns were beginning to feel the effects of declining traditional industries, Fairhaven's hometown benefactor Henry Huttleston Rogers used his Standard Oil wealth to donate stellar examples of municipal, institutional, and commercial buildings in his hometown, including the Town Hall, Millicent Library, the Unitarian Church and Parish House, Fairhaven High School, and the Tabitha Inn (a.k.a. Our Lady's Haven). Neighborhoods of modest Craftsman-style bungalows grew up along the

river, while small-scale, cozy subdivisions developed along Sconticut Neck and West Island later in the 20th century.¹¹

Historic Resources - By the numbers

Fairhaven has hundreds of documented archaeological sites and historic resources, several of which have received state and national recognition for their importance. The documentation for these resources have been researched, prepared, and filed by a number of people and organizations over time. The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) serves as the central repository for these files, which can be found online in a searchable public database called the Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS) at <http://www.mhc-macris.net>, and its companion GIS viewer at <http://maps.mhc-macris.net>. These resources link the history of Fairhaven to its built environment; its community heritage to its community character.

Archaeological Sites

Nearly two dozen archaeological sites have been recorded in Fairhaven, and likely dozens more remain to be discovered and documented.¹² The natural resources of the area that made it desirable to Colonial Era settlers – the waterfront, valuable river inlet, salt marshes, and woodland – benefitted several centuries of Native American populations as well, and Fairhaven boasts a variety of pre-Contact and post-Contact archaeological sites.

Although documented archaeological sites tend to be clustered along the coastline and at battlefield sites, much of the inland area of the town has not been subject to archaeological survey or excavation. The Town's agricultural heritage, while not as well-studied as its maritime history, was its first primary occupation and is inseparable from Fairhaven's nearly four centuries of development. These unsurveyed inland areas present an opportunity to better document and understand Fairhaven's original and longest-running industry. Development of an archaeological sensitivity report can serve as a proactive strategy in areas identified for future growth and development as well, benefitting both the Town and potential developers.

Above-Ground Historic Resources

This large category includes a variety of historic resource types:

- ▶ Buildings;
- ▶ Structures (such as bridges);
- ▶ Objects (such as monuments and memorials);
- ▶ Sites (such as battlefields); and

¹¹ The rich and extensive history of Fairhaven has been documented in several sources. The Fairhaven Office of Tourism website (<http://fairhaventours.com/historical-sources>) has an exhaustive list of books, articles, documents, and maps that illustrate the Town's history, as well as a series of videos highlighting historical moments and artifacts.

¹² The locations and content of archaeological sites is considered confidential information. While MHC maintains information pertaining to recorded sites, it is not accessible to the public. MHC provides input regarding the archaeological potential of an area for research and planning purposes on a case-by-case basis.

- Landscapes (such as groups of farms and scenic vistas).

These resources can be documented on an individual property basis, such as a building or farm, or grouped into areas that collectively tell a broader cultural story. Some resources have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), which is the national list of significant places considered especially worthy of preservation, while others have received similar recognition at the state level (State Register). Most historic resources in Fairhaven have been documented on MHC inventory forms, which summarize the history and description of the resource for research and planning purposes, but the resources have not been evaluated for designation in the National or State Registers. As of March 2017, MACRIS includes 388 recorded individual historic resources and five recorded historic areas in Fairhaven (**Figure 7-1**).



Farming in eastern Fairhaven



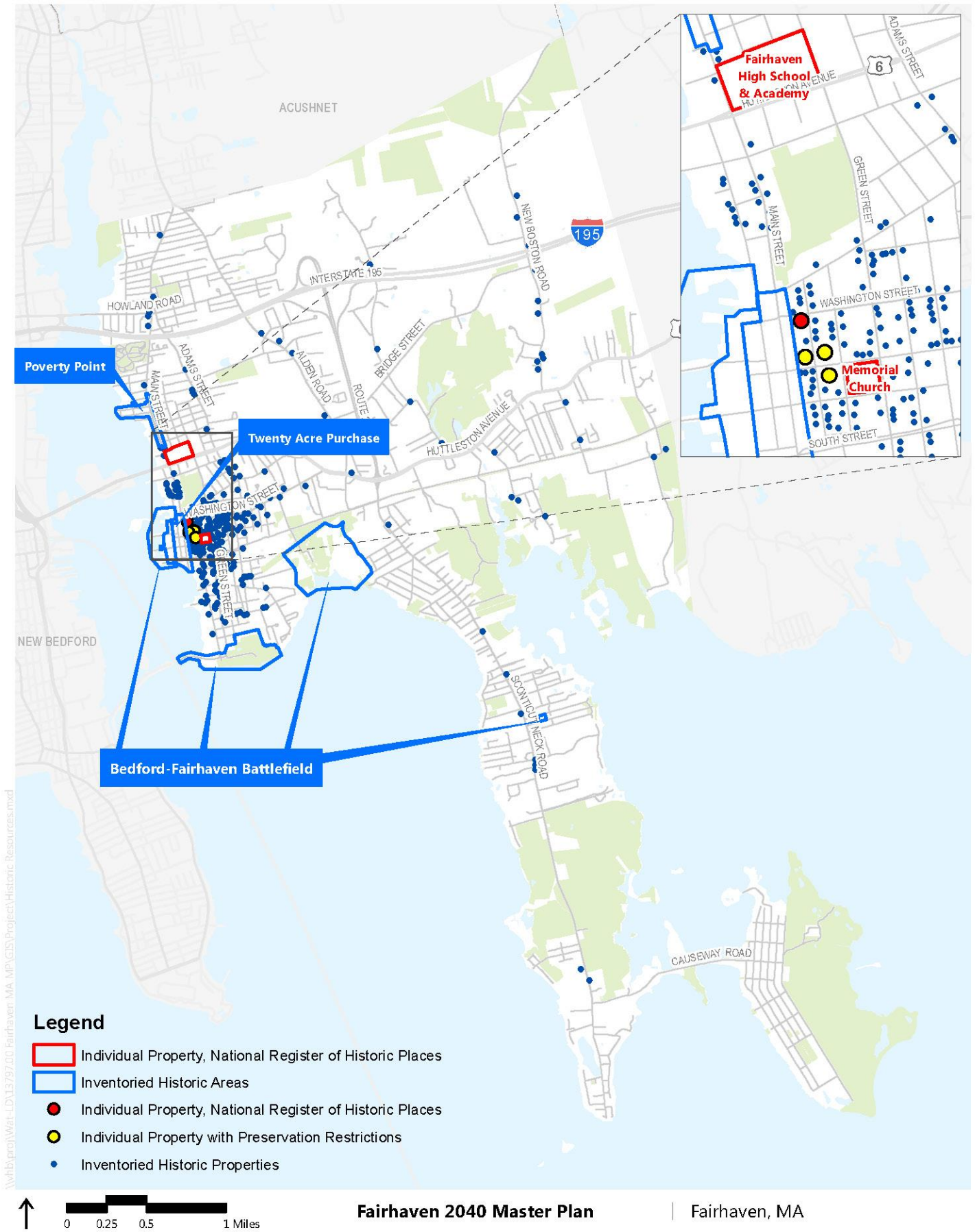
Bungalows lined up along sidewalk



Mixed-uses in a residential area



Mid-century houses on Sconticut Neck



National Register

Fairhaven has five historic resources listed in the National Register, representing some of its most prominent landmarks:

- ▶ Fairhaven Town Hall (1894)
- ▶ Millicent Library (1881)
- ▶ Fairhaven High School and Academy (1906, includes Rogers Monument)
- ▶ Memorial Church (1903, includes Parsonage and Parish House)
- ▶ Ezekiel Sawin House (c. 1840)

In addition, the Fairhaven-New Bedford Bridge carrying Route 6 across the Acushnet River has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register. This means that the MHC has declared the bridge a significant historic resource, meeting the strict requirements for the National Register, but no formal nomination and listing has yet occurred.

Preservation Restriction

Fairhaven has four historic resources subject to a state-held Preservation Restriction. Preservation Restrictions are easements voluntarily placed on a property to prevent historically inappropriate alterations. These may be donated or purchased by a government body or private preservation organization, and in Massachusetts, several Preservation Restrictions are associated with the receipt of grant funding from the MHC through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF).

- ▶ Fairhaven Town Hall (also National Register-listed)
- ▶ Millicent Library (also National Register-listed)
- ▶ Fairhaven High School (also National Register-listed)
- ▶ First Congregational Church (State Register-listed)

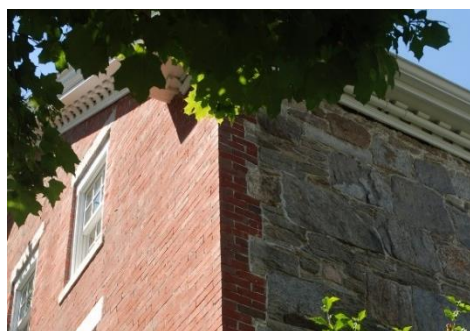
Inventoried Properties

As noted above, these properties have been recorded on MHC inventory forms, which serve as important historical records and useful reference documents, but do not carry an official designation. Fairhaven has both individually inventoried properties and inventoried areas representing groups of properties linked by historical theme or development.

- ▶ Three inventoried areas
- ▶ Oxford Village – Poverty Point
- ▶ Twenty-Acre Purchase
- ▶ Bedford-Fairhaven Battlefield
- ▶ 377 individually inventoried properties

- ▶ 114 of these properties are located within one of the three inventoried areas listed above
- ▶ Eight individually inventoried properties are known to have been demolished since being recorded, including buildings such as the Captain Bunker House on Main Street (c. 1790) and the American (Atlas) Tack Company complex on Reynolds Drive (c. 1880).¹³

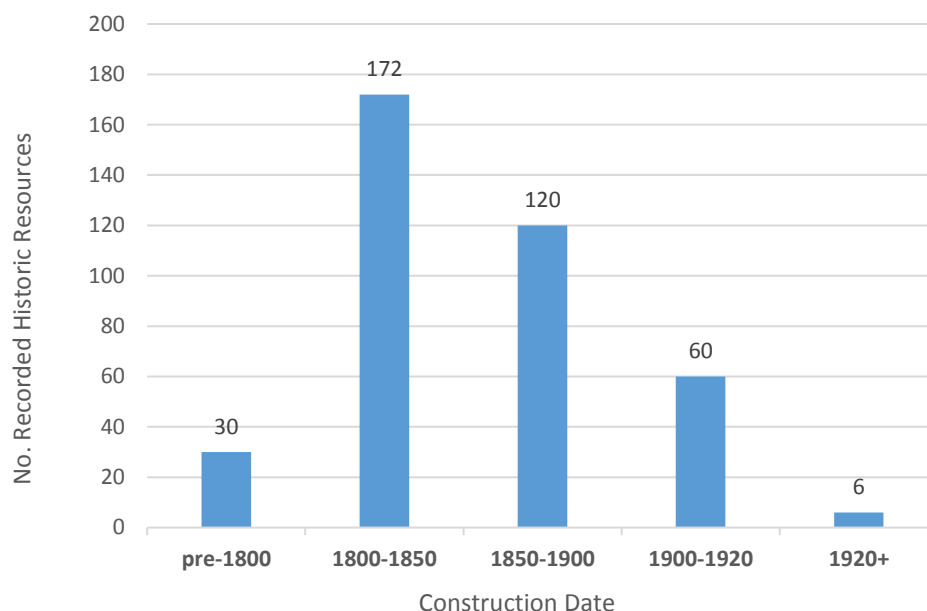
The availability of geographical and informational data through MACRIS makes it possible to identify patterns in the recording of the Town's historic resources, including areas which are far less represented in the inventory. A breakdown of Fairhaven's recorded historic resources indicates a concentration of pre-1920 resources, and dense geographic clustering of recorded resources in the Town Center and Oxford Village areas compared with the rest of the town. These patterns may indicate a lack of surviving resource types, under-reported categories of historic resources, or resource groups that have not been identified or studied to the same extent earlier, better-documented time periods. Often, these patterns do not result from a lack of interest, but instead reflect the documentation priorities of the town and MHC at the time of the last comprehensive historic survey (c. 1980). Understanding these patterns presents a unique opportunity for Fairhaven, where many of the small-scale, community-oriented residential subdivisions that continue to attract long-time and new residents developed during the 20th century. These neighborhoods, and the Town's extant farms and agricultural land, are largely located outside Fairhaven's village centers.



Historic details in Fairhaven: top left carved teak at the Harrop Center, top right mosaic floors at Town Hall, bottom left multiple layers of carving on a front porch, bottom right brick, stone and wood meet at the corner

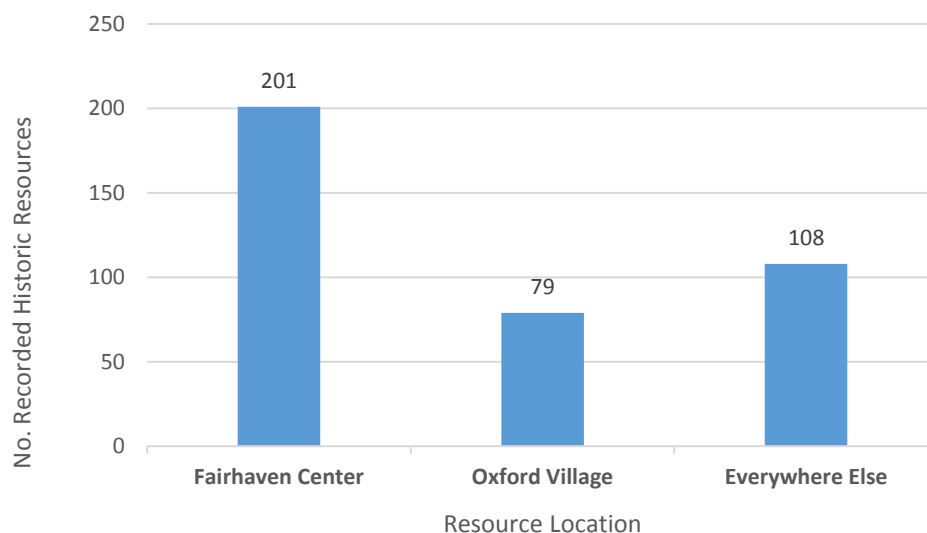
¹³ Information Gaps and Opportunities for Further Study

Figure 7-2 Distribution of Recorded Historic Resources by Time Period



Examining Fairhaven’s recorded historic resources by construction date indicates that more than 90% of all documented resources were constructed between 1800 and 1920, at the height of the Town’s maritime industrial history. The smaller number of resources estimated to date to the Colonial and American Revolution eras (8%) is likely due the loss of these earliest resources over time. However, the distribution also indicates a notable decrease in recorded properties that were constructed after 1920 (2%). As these resources are more than 50 years old, and form some of Fairhaven’s most distinctive residential neighborhoods and streetscapes, greater efforts to understand them may help preserve the unique physical character of these communities.

Figure 7-3 Distribution of Recorded Historic Resources by Geographic Area



A similar analysis of recorded properties by general location indicates that more than half of Fairhaven's documented historic resources (52%) are located in the Town Center, clustered around the wharves at the mouth of the Acushnet River that have been the foundation of the Town's industrial economy for centuries. A somewhat smaller number (20%) of recorded resources are concentrated in the Oxford Village neighborhood, further upstream. These two areas are the earliest and most densely developed hubs in Fairhaven, and the Town's tourism industry and level of historical awareness can be traced directly to focused efforts to understand these neighborhoods. Documented resources outside of these two areas, however, make up just 28% of Fairhaven's recorded historic resources despite distinct pockets of development throughout the town. These other areas host some of the Town's most cohesive residential areas, largest expanses of agricultural resources, and scenic rural and seaside viewsheds valued by the community. Preservation of these resources and understanding the qualities that make them significant are firmly linked to balancing desirable characteristics (such as neighborhood scale and layout, appreciation of and access to natural resources, coastal views, and property values) with future land usage and development needs.

Historic Resources Entities and Stakeholders

Fairhaven's historic resources and heritage are promoted and protected primarily by local commissions, the Office of Tourism, the Millicent Library archives, and private local organizations.

Historical Commission

The Fairhaven Historical Commission is responsible for community-wide preservation planning. It comprises seven members and up to five alternates. The Commission oversees a portfolio of town-owned historic properties, including the Old Stone Schoolhouse, Fort Phoenix, the Academy Building, and the Fire Museum, which houses old engines used for special events. The Commission also administers the House Plaque Program, an active initiative to recognize and honor Fairhaven's older homes with outdoor plaques commemorating their construction dates.

Community Preservation Committee

The Fairhaven Community Preservation Committee (CPC) administers the Town's Community Preservation Act program, and includes at least one member of the Town's Historical Commission along with representatives from the Conservation Commission, Housing Authority, Planning Board, and the Board of Public Works. In recent years, the Historical Commission has applied for and utilized CPC grants to conduct repairs of town-owned historic properties. The duties of the CPC include:

- ▶ Study the needs, possibilities, and resources of the Town regarding community preservation,
- ▶ Make recommendations to the Town Meeting regarding:
 - the acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space,
 - the acquisition, rehabilitation, restoration, and preservation historic resources,

- the acquisition, creation, and preservation of land for recreational use,
 - the creation, preservation, and support of community housing, including the reuse of existing buildings, and
 - the rehabilitation or restoration of open space, historic resources, recreational land, and community housing acquired or created via the above duties.
- Make recommendations regarding setting aside funds for larger community preservation projects for which sufficient funds are not currently available.

Office of Tourism

A direct result of the last master planning effort undertaken by Fairhaven, the office of tourism serves as a welcome center and events hub, creating and leading tours, lectures, and family programming. Its goal is to provide visitors with “The New England Experience,” providing information, history, and activities for tourists and residents. The office also maintains an extensive website with details about local accommodations, recreation, restaurants, and businesses. Fairhaven’s history is one of its primary attractions, and the Town’s architectural and maritime heritage form the basis for the office’s roster of tours. To accompany its programming, the office’s website provides short articles and videos about some of the Town’s most famous historical figures and places.

Fairhaven Historical Society

The Fairhaven Historical Society is a volunteer-driven non-profit group established in 1968, which sponsors events and lectures throughout the year, including a popular holiday tour. In 1992, the Historical Society began operation of a local history museum, located in a Federal-style former schoolhouse known as the “Academy.” The museum features a 19th century school room, a room displaying a collection of antique furnishings, a detailed model of 19th century sloop “Spray,” and object collections that include photographs, art, and artifacts.

Whitfield-Manjiro Friendship House

One of Fairhaven’s most enduring and endearing stories is that of Manjiro, a shipwrecked young Japanese sailor, and Captain William Whitfield of the *John Howland*, who Manjiro accompanied back to Fairhaven after being rescued by the whaling ship. Captain Whitfield and Manjiro arrived in 1843 and settled into Whitfield’s Poverty Point home, making Manjiro the first Japanese resident in the United States. He attended the Old Stone Schoolhouse and the Bartlett School in Fairhaven, and although he returned to Japan in 1851, the friendship forged between Manjiro and Captain Whitfield continues to this day as a Sister City Agreement between Fairhaven and Manjiro’s hometown of Tosashimizu, Japan. Captain Whitfield’s home on Cherry Street is preserved as a museum and cultural center, with programming and a heritage trail dedicated to this unique relationship and the cultural exchange it fostered.

Northeast Maritime Institute, College of Maritime Science (NMI-CMS)

This private maritime education institution was founded in 1981 and continues to serve as one of the foremost training programs for students interested in maritime careers,

such as with the United States Coast Guard and Merchant Marines. Based in the c. 1825 former Washington Street Christian Meeting House and Unitarian Church, which was purchased by Henry Rogers and donated to the town for use as a school, NMI-CMS exemplifies the connections between Fairhaven's past and future, and the ways education can serve as that important link. Building upon, and learning from, the area's long tradition in whaling and shipbuilding, NMI-CMS combines modern technologies and practice with historic know-how to educate the country's newest maritime professionals. The school recently received approval from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education for an Associate in Applied Science in Nautical Science program.

Issues and Opportunities

Enact Demolition Review Bylaw

Despite the Town's extensive heritage and active community, there are very few measures in place to protect these resources as the town develops and evolves. Fairhaven has very few resources listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and these listings are restricted to individual buildings rather than districts, which encompass streetscapes and/or landscapes as a whole. Although it is a well-known honorific device, National Register listing does not convey any protections for historic properties, nor any limitations on how the properties can be altered or demolished. There are some limited protections introduced when a property is threatened by a development project with state or federal agency permitting, funding, or approvals, but even these measures are fairly restricted. As such, many communities in Massachusetts have enacted protective historical regulations on the local level, including the establishment of local historic districts or neighborhood conservation districts, rolling preservation loans, and demolition review bylaws.

While state and federal protections for historic properties are usually limited to "consideration" of potential impacts during a state or federal undertaking, local-level regulation has the ability to stop or alter a project, if authored to do so. These regulations must strike a careful balance between protection of community character and individual property rights, and must be written and executed in an open, concise, and consistent way to maintain a level of fairness while achieving the goals that inspired the local regulations at the outset. Despite the numerous challenges inherent in local-level historic regulations, municipalities in Massachusetts still establish new local historic districts and new demolition review bylaws on a regular basis; in addition, other towns which have decades-long cultural resources bylaws continue to evaluate and update them with strong input from the communities that share in them.

Items to consider in drafting such a regulation include length of delay; identification of which buildings are subject to review and potential delay of demolition; transferability to a new property owner; making any imposed demolition delay period meaningful with a real opportunity to identify alternatives, rather than just creating an obstacle; maintaining a transparent process with strict time periods that allows imposed delays to be lifted early

once property owners demonstrate that demolition is the only prudent and feasible alternative.

Expand the Current Historic Resources Survey

As shown in Figure 7-2, only a handful of Fairhaven's inventoried historic resources post-date the Henry Huttleston Rogers time period, although the town is home to distinctive neighborhoods of early 20th century workers' cottages with Craftsman style detailing, tree-lined streetscapes, and mid-20th century subdivisions of modestly-scaled homes on West Island and Sconticut Neck. Vast rural and agricultural landscapes line the Town's eastern boundary. Though valued by the community as attractive and desirable resources that keep Fairhaven's visual landscape engaging, these neighborhoods embody distinctive characteristics that are most tangible when moving from one neighborhood to another.

Historic resources are often considered and valued on an individual, building-by-building basis. However, identifying a neighborhood's historic roots and patterns of development – similar to the research and analysis associated with a National Register district or an inventoried area – is a valuable tool when undertaking a planning process that seeks to preserve neighborhood character while facilitating town-wide growth. This holistic view shifts the focus of preservation from individual buildings to entire communities and the people who live there. One bungalow may not seem historically significant; a residential neighborhood of similarly scaled houses, full-width front porches, rear garages, and mature trees tells the story of the mill workers who lived there, and the streetscapes that keep property values high. Far from being a purely academic undertaking, understanding these neighborhoods and resources that are poorly represented in the historic inventory can be an engaging way to expand the celebrated history of Fairhaven into the 21st century, and an important tool in maintaining the quality of life in the Town's various neighborhoods. Far from being just a tool to understand the past, new inventory serves as a valuable reference for future zoning, creating context for past development decisions, and a useful metric for determining successful community characteristics.

Encourage and Incentivize Usage of Historic Tax Credits

Fairhaven knows first-hand that being home to a variety of high-quality, highly-visible historic buildings is a significant benefit to the community, but brings an inherent set of challenges along with that benefit. Rogers School, an 1885 elementary school funded by Henry Huttleston Rogers, is an example of that relationship. This beautiful, 2 ½ story brick school features a grand bell tower, extensive brick detailing, and a raised rusticated stone base. After nearly 130 years of use the school became vacant in 2013, and while the town struggles to identify an alternate use, the bell has been removed from the tower to protect it from potential damage. Request for Proposals (RFPs) to develop the property have been unsuccessful thus far.

A reuse feasibility study for Rogers School has been commissioned by the town to help identify potential uses and collect data supporting the financial viability of the School's redevelopment. One of the key strategies outlined in early drafts of the study (which is in progress as of the compilation of this plan) is the use of federal and state historic tax

credits by developers to capitalize on the building's history. Use of these tax credits helps fill funding gaps that would otherwise prove insurmountable, while the restrictions and review process to receive tax credit allocations ensures that renovations proceed in a historically-sensitive way. Massachusetts has a particularly strong historic tax credit program and a number of developers and community development corporations that have extensive experience with these programs. There are measures that can be taken by the town to confirm their commitment to rehabilitation of historic properties and incentivize developers to undertake rehabilitation projects.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Enact a Demolition Review Bylaw.

Recommendations:

1. Schedule one or more public meetings to introduce the topic and initiate community discussions.
2. Formulate bylaw components based on public input.
3. Consider production of publicly-available materials to accompany a new bylaw; i.e. a reference booklet that provides relevant information regarding the bylaw for property owners, realtors, and community members, and a communications program to inform and assist property owners subject to bylaw.

Goal 2: Expand Understanding of Historic Resources in the Town.

Recommendations:

1. Complete historic resource inventories of two neighborhoods or landscapes (farmsteads, culturally-significant open space, etc.) as part of a broader inventory.
2. Expand use of 20th century history in heritage programming.
3. Utilize historic development to guide planning and zoning efforts for mixed-use development.

Goal 3: Establish local historic district(s).

Recommendations:

1. Create a local historic district study committee, under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40C, General Laws.
2. Utilize historic resource inventory form (see Goal 2) to determine the historic significance of the local historic district and approximate boundaries.
3. Initiate public opinion surveys and gauge public interest. Use newspaper articles, newsletters, local access TV stations, and other forums to educate, inform, and answer questions.

4. Produce a preliminary study report including proposed local historic district methodology, significance, boundary justification, and potential design review guidelines.

Goal 4: Link Historic Preservation with Economic Development.

Recommendations:

1. Prepare/sponsor National Register nominations for threatened buildings and areas.
2. Advertise National Register status to realtors and developers, encouraging the use of tax credits and highlighting successful historic tax credit rehabilitation projects, such as the potential rehabilitation at Oxford School Residences when completed.
3. Use signage and wayfinding to advertise Fairhaven's historic resources and neighborhoods. Facilitate and encourage visitation to historic areas outside of downtown by cross-promoting historic resources and amenities such as eateries and shops.

Sustainability

8

Introduction

Sustainability is becoming an increasingly vital component of municipal comprehensive planning efforts, as it is widely recognized that it supports communities in their pursuits to provide healthy environments; build strong, diversified economies; and promote resident well-being in the long-term. To that end, sustainability provides a holistic, integrated approach to understanding a community in the context of its environmental setting and related impacts - including its use and management of finite natural resources, as well as its social and economic stressors. A comprehensive planning approach that integrates sustainability can also build awareness around how a community can better prepare and respond to issues such as climate change and resiliency in infrastructure to enable environmental, social, and economic prosperity well into the future.



Hurricane barrier at Fort Phoenix

This section of the Master Plan examines existing conditions related to Fairhaven's efforts toward a sustainable future through a review of related activities, as well as existing and projected climate conditions. In the process, it identifies the issues and opportunities the Town faces in this endeavor, as well as the goals and recommendations that will support its achievement.

Baseline Conditions Analyses

The following discussions highlight the Town's operations and activities (municipal and community-based) related to energy, waste management and recycling, water quality and consumption, and the generation and mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A review of existing and projected climate conditions specific to sea level rise, flooding and floodplain expansion, and coastal storms offer a planning basis for other elements within this Plan.

Energy

This baseline conditions analysis reviews the Town of Fairhaven's energy consumption, as well as looks at the ways by which the Town has sought to reduce such consumption, purchase and generate clean energy, and stabilize energy prices for its residents and businesses. It also provides a high-level assessment of how the Town's zoning ordinance promotes and/or deters renewable energy generation projects.

Consumption and Efficiency

The Town is committed to reducing the energy consumption associated with its operations. This is demonstrated by the implementation of several building system upgrades at its facilities and a street light energy efficiency program. Examples of building system upgrades include the conversion of the boiler at Town Hall from oil to natural gas, the replacement of inefficient lighting fixtures/lamps with more efficient alternatives (e.g., LEDs and low wattage fluorescents) at Town Hall, Millicent Library and the Police Station, upgrades to the window air conditioning units at Town Hall and Millicent Library, and the installation of energy-efficient window replacements at Millicent Library.

The streetlight energy efficiency program included the conversion of over 1,400 high-pressure sodium streetlights to more efficient LED lamps that have a life expectancy of 17 years. The Town chose to tackle main thoroughfares first, and plans to use the resulting savings for future conversions elsewhere. This project also includes two sets of traffic lights and warning lights at school crossings.

All of the Town's facilities, as well as its schools, have undergone energy audits. These studies are outdated, however, as they are at least five years old.

Renewable Energy Generation

There are several renewable energy generation projects in the Town, including two wind turbines and three solar power systems. Since May 2012, Fairhaven Wind LLC has

operated two 1.5 MW wind turbines near the Waste Water Treatment Plant on Arsene Street. Under a 20-year agreement, the Town receives lease payments and property taxes, and purchases 100 percent of the power generated. Since monitoring began, the 3.0 MW system has generated approximately 13,500 MWh of clean energy, the equivalent of over 8,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents or over 19 million miles' worth of carbon dioxide emissions generated by the average American car.¹⁴



Wind turbines visible on the Phoenix Rail Trail

In March 2013, Dynamic Energy (developer along with Blue Sky Power and Heliosage) and Revolution Energy (financer) completed the installation of a 487-kW solar array on the site of the Town's former municipal landfill. Under a power purchase agreement (PPA), the Town of Fairhaven purchases the electricity generated from the project's more than 2,000 solar panels at a cost less than it would otherwise pay to the local utility provider; the Town does not incur expenses associated with system ownership such as maintenance costs. Over a 30-year period, the PPA is expected to save the Town approximately \$1.5 million¹⁵.

Fairhaven is also home to a community solar project at 211 Mill Road. Developed by BlueWave Solar in partnership with Morgan Stanley, this 1.1 MW facility was commissioned in May 2016. The power output is shared among residents and small businesses in Fairhaven and the surrounding area, as well as by Winn Development affordable housing in the Greater New Bedford area. Other community solar projects in the Town, as proposed by Clean Energy Collective, include a 1.7 MW solar array that is currently under construction at 197 New Boston Road and a 2 MW solar array at 279 Mill Road. Clean Energy Collective is presently pursuing a Special Permit from the Town's Planning Board for its proposed project on Mill Road.

¹⁴ Fairhaven Wind, 2017

¹⁵ Dynamic Energy, 2017

In addition to large-scale commercial renewable energy projects, the Town has a solar installation at its Public Works facility, as well as many residential solar installations. Relatedly, the South Coast Energy Challenge sponsored the 2013 Fairhaven Solar Challenge that, in addition to 300 residents seeking information on optimizing home energy efficiency and solar photovoltaic (PV) energy systems, saw the installation of nine new residential solar PV systems at a negotiated 20 percent discount¹⁶. The program was also responsible for the first “solar tour” in the region (held November 2013), an educational activity that has been replicated elsewhere in Massachusetts.

Town Zoning for Renewable Energy Facilities

In May 2013, the Town of Fairhaven added provisions for wind and solar PV energy facilities into its Zoning Ordinance; other forms of renewable energy (e.g., solar thermal, biofuel, geothermal, and wave and tidal) are not specifically regulated. These provisions address utility-scale, as well as on-site, small, and building integrated wind projects and large-scale and on-site ground-mounted, as well as roof-mounted solar PV systems. They are meant to encourage such development, while providing standards that protect public safety and minimize environmental impacts, as well ensure adequate funding for decommissioning.

Table 8-1 provides a summarization of these provisions. As a condition of the Special Permit, operators of wind energy facilities are required to submit annual operations and maintenance reports to the Planning Board.

Table 8-1 Renewable Energy Zoning in the Town of Fairhaven

Facility Type	Provisions
Wind Facilities	
Utility-Scale	Excluded in Mixed-Use Districts; require Special Permit in all other districts.
On-Site	Excluded in Rural Residence, Single Residence, and Mixed-use Districts; requires Special Permit in all other districts.
Small Wind Energy System	Permitted in all districts
Building Integrated	Requires a Special Permit in all districts
Solar PV Energy Facilities	
Large Scale Ground-Mounted	Excluded in General Residence, Apartment/Multifamily, Park, and Mixed-use Districts; requires a Special Permit in all other districts
On-Site Ground -Mounted	Permitted in all districts
Roof-Mounted	Permitted in all districts when connected behind the meter

Source: Town of Fairhaven, 2014

Unless determined not applicable, the Town’s Zoning Ordinance requires conformance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection’s (MassDEP’s) Division of Air Quality Noise Regulations (310 CMR 7.10) and the 10-dbA threshold contained in the

¹⁶ South Coast Energy Challenge, 2017

MassDEP Noise Policy. At the request of the Fairhaven Board of Health, MassDEP conducted sound sampling of the Fairhaven Wind LLC wind turbines project in 2013. Among 24 sampling events, five exceedances at three locations were recorded.

Noise from the existing wind turbines in the Town has been a concern among some residents with 962 complaints filed since project commissioning. Such complaints have decreased in quantity since the project began operations; over 80 percent of all noise complaints that the Town received were filed prior to 2015. The majority of noise complaints originate from John Street, Timothy Street, and Teal Circle. Complaints related to the wind turbines, including noise concerns, can be filed by completing the Wind Turbine Impact Complaint Form, which is available on the Board of Health's webpage on the Town's website.

Community Electricity Aggregation

In December 2014, the Town of Fairhaven voted to join the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District Community Electricity Aggregation Program, which is authorized under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 164, Section 134. This is an opt-out program, as is standard in the Commonwealth, where customers are automatically included unless they otherwise object to participation; leaving the program does not incur a financial penalty.

Through leveraging the collective purchasing power of residents and businesses, community electricity aggregation programs generally offer the following benefits:

- ▶ Competitive choice of electric supplier;
- ▶ Longer term rate stability;
- ▶ Lower cost power; and
- ▶ More options with regards to renewable energy products and programs.

Further study of the implementation of Community Electricity Aggregation Program in Fairhaven is necessary to determine the benefits the town has realized to-date and is projected to see in the future through this program.

Waste Management and Recycling

The Town of Fairhaven no longer operates the landfill just west of Alden Road on Bridge Street. Municipal solid waste (MSW) collection is contracted by a waste hauler and transferred to the Southeastern Massachusetts (SEMASS) Resource Recovery Facility, a waste-to-energy plant in Rochester, MA. The SEMASS facility can process one million tons of solid waste each year – more than one-fifth of all MSW generated in the state annually – and produces enough electricity to serve nearly 75,000 homes (Covanta, 2017).

The Town offers curbside collection of recyclables to its residents. This program is mostly single-stream (i.e., crushed plastics [numbers 1 through 7], glass, and metal containers can be commingled); however, residents are asked to separate paper/cardboard. A recycling center at 5 Arsene Street offers residents additional waste diversion opportunities by providing for the collection of the following waste types:

- ▶ Appliances and white goods such as dryers and ovens
- ▶ Tires
- ▶ Oil filters
- ▶ Computers and TVs
- ▶ Mercury containing items such as lamps/light-bulbs and thermostats
- ▶ Scrap metal
- ▶ Used oil
- ▶ Lead and acid batteries
- ▶ Freon-containing items such as air conditioners and refrigerators
- ▶ Organic waste such as leaves and yard clippings

The organic waste collected at the recycling center is converted to loam, a fertile soil, that is available for use by the public. The Town of Mattapoisett Transfer Station, where bulky items such as cars, furniture, and mattresses and box springs are accepted, is also open to Fairhaven residents.

The Town's Board of Health has a waste management education initiative where department representatives go into local schools to promote recycling. Within the Town's own operations, all municipal buildings have separate recycling bins and solid waste bins.

Wastewater

Wastewater management in the Town is guided by its Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (February 2013). Major wastewater management infrastructure includes the Water Pollution Control Facility on Arsene Street and the West Island Treatment Plant, as well as a wastewater collection system that encompasses 15 pump stations and approximately 75 miles of gravity/pressure sewer lines distributed throughout the Town.

On average, the Water Pollution Control Facility collects approximately 2.7 million gallons per day (mgd) of wastewater flow, 10 percent of which derives from the Town of Mattapoisett; design flow is 5 mgd. Maximum hourly wet weather flow at this facility is 16 mgd. After treatment, in accordance with the Town's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), the Water Pollution Control Facility discharges to the New Bedford Harbor through an outfall located just west of the intersection of Church and Main Streets. The West Island Treatment Plant processes an average flow of 18,000 gallons (not accounting for summer residency variations), and discharges to a well-field on the conservation area of West Island that is deeded to the Town.

In 2011, the Town added an anaerobic digester and combined heat and power system to its Water Pollution Control Facility. Waste activated sludge and scum are pumped to two mesophilic digesters where microorganisms reduce their volume and stabilize them. This process produces methane gas, which is stored and used to power a 100-kilowatt generator that produces heat for the digestion process, provides hot water for the plant, and generates all the electricity that the facility needs to operate. This system saves the

Town money by reducing the plant's energy costs and by reducing costs associated with shipping sludge offsite to an incinerator in Cranston, Rhode Island.

In 2015, the Town won a grant from the Southeastern New England Coastal Watershed Restoration Nutrient Management Grants Program to finance a nitrogen reduction pilot study at the Water Pollution Control Facility. This study will explore opportunities to reduce the amount of nitrogen being released into the inner harbor by 80 percent.

Water Quality and Consumption

The Mattapoissett River Valley Water District (MRVWD) Treatment Facility supplies all potable water for the Town of Fairhaven. The Town is the site of four of the District's eight ground water wells, which pump water to the treatment facility where it undergoes a PH adjustment followed by filtration. Completed in June 2008, the MRVWD Treatment Facility has the capacity to treat 6 million gallons per day (mgd), 2.7 mgd of which derive from the wells in Fairhaven. This project resulted from the planning and financial coordination of the Towns of Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoissett, and Rochester after elevated levels of iron and manganese were found in each of the Town's water wells. Instead of constructing and operating independent water treatment facilities, one advanced facility was developed. This teaming decision saved the towns a collective \$4.9 million.

The Town's source water quality is monitored on a regular basis in order to ensure compliance with state and federal standards for quality and safety. Meeting these standards is supported through investments in water treatment, as demonstrated by the Town's investment in the MRVWD Treatment Facility, and maintenance of the water distribution system that includes raw and finished water transmission mains. Per the Town's 2016 Water Quality Report, no violations of any regulated contaminants were detected as part of the associated water quality analysis; average detected manganese levels were 6 parts-per-billion, which is well below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's health advisory level of 300 parts-per-billion.

Two connections that allow for the purchase of water from the City of New Bedford are maintained for redundancy and emergency purposes.

The Town offers water conservation tips on its website, including information on testing for water leaks and other measures such as putting filled plastic bottles in toilet tanks, taking shorter showers, and watering house plants with leftover drinking water.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change

Increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O) in the atmosphere are known to cause global warming - the rise in global average temperatures at the Earth's surface. Increasing global temperatures are transforming climate patterns and elevating sea levels, which can result in potentially dangerous effects to life and property, particularly for coastal communities such as the Town of Fairhaven. To mitigate the potential effects of climate change, many communities are looking to lead by example and measuring their GHG emissions to

enable the management of such emissions and to identify mitigation strategies and reduction targets.

The Town of Fairhaven has not conducted a GHG emissions inventory; therefore, a baseline level of GHG emissions does not exist. In general, however, GHG emissions generated within the town come from local government operations (emissions that are the direct result of running the government) and community activities (emissions from all other activities occurring within the Town's geographic boundaries no matter the originator). Sources of local government and communitywide GHG emissions include:

- ▶ The combustion of fossil fuels for building heating and cooling and electricity consumption (e.g., lighting fixtures, street lights, equipment plug load);
- ▶ Energy use in vehicles and equipment (e.g., back-up generators);
- ▶ Solid waste disposal;
- ▶ Wastewater treatment process; and
- ▶ Accidental leaks of refrigerants and other gases categorized as GHGs.

Climate Change Mitigation

Although the Town has not completed a GHG emissions inventory, it has nevertheless taken significant steps to reduce GHG emissions from its own operations and other community activities. As previously noted, the Town has implemented efficiency projects (e.g., window replacements, HVAC upgrades, and lighting fixture/lamp conversions) to reduce energy consumption at its facilities; purchased, generated, and promoted renewable energy; and closed its landfill to instead send its MSW to a waste-to-energy plant where it is burned to generate electricity, which prevents landfill methane emissions associated with decomposing organic waste.

In addition to the previously referenced efforts, the Town and its various departments have made targeted efforts to improve the efficiency of their vehicles. Examples of this include:

- ▶ The Fire Department is in the process of replacing Ladder #1 and, in the process, identified an opportunity to consolidate two pieces of equipment (Ladder 1 and Rescue 1). The replacement of Ladder 1 (dated 1985) with a newer, more efficient model would reduce GHG emissions and other air pollutants. The consolidation of Ladder 1 and Rescue 1 would see further air quality benefits due to the removal of Rescue 1 from Town roads.
- ▶ The Police Department improved the efficiency of its fleet by replacing its vehicles with 8-cylinder engines with more fuel-efficient 6-cylinder engine alternatives.

Climate Change Adaptation

The Town of Fairhaven is vulnerable to the potential effects of climate change, and with 29.4 miles of coastline, and much property and economic value along this coastline, it is particularly vulnerable to sea level rise, increased flooding, and more frequent and intense storm surge. Planning for related expected conditions in the short- and long-terms will be crucial to supporting the health and wellbeing of the Town's residents, as

well as the Town's natural resources, infrastructure, economy, and identity/sense of place. Such planning will enable the Town to increase its resilience and ability to adapt to changing climactic conditions, and related decisions will help limit the cost of rebuilding if damage to property were to occur.



Coastal flooding at Edgewater Street during king tide

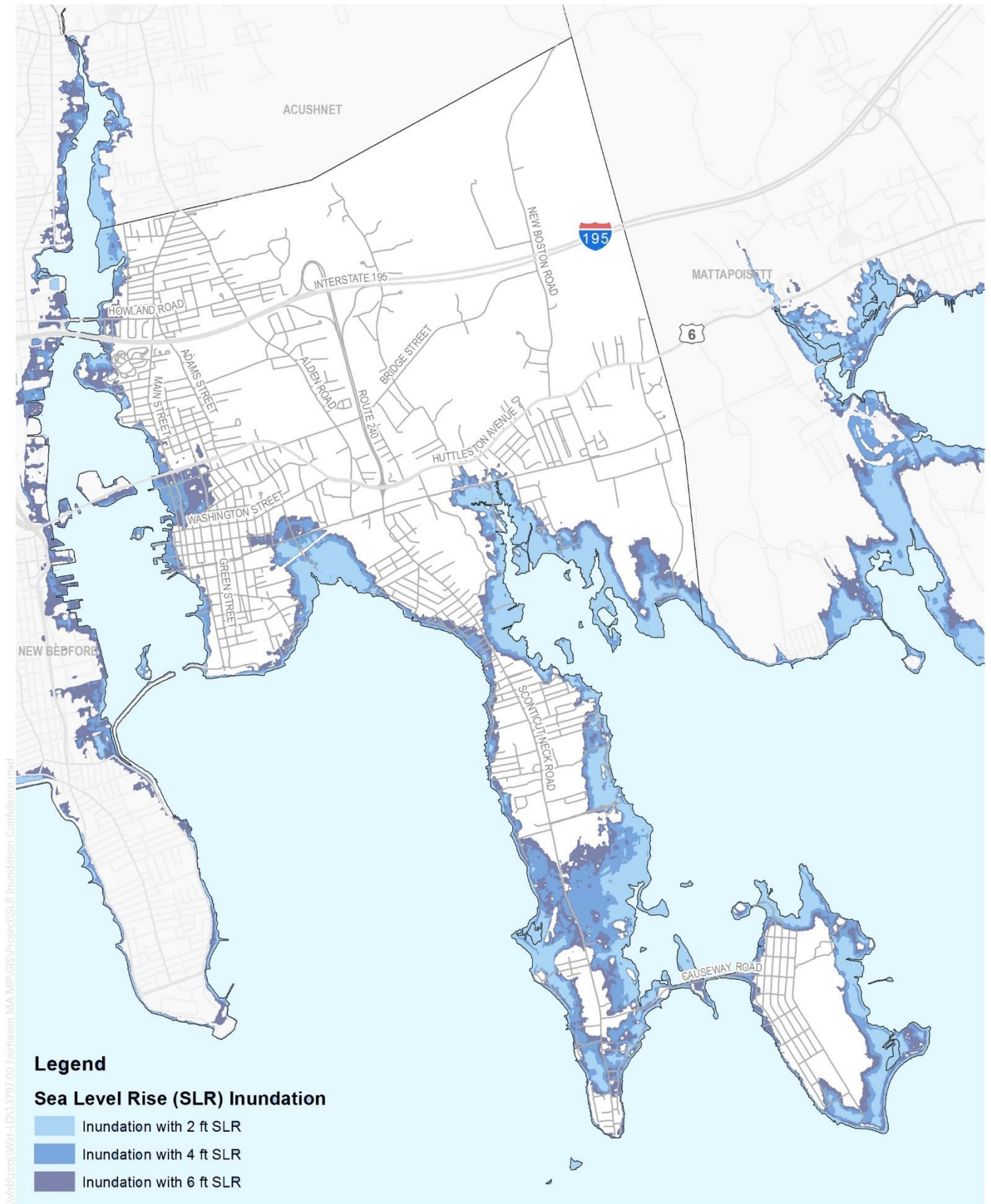
The following discussions offer a high-level review of the Town relative to projected sea level rise, flood, and coastal storms – three hazards the Town identified as having the potential to have an effect on its people, economy, and built and natural environments. The Town, enabled by the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program by way of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), is in the process of creating its first ever Hazard Mitigation Plan, which is anticipated to be complete in 2018. The plan will provide more information on these and other applicable natural hazards, as well as detailed mitigation actions in the context of the Town's current vulnerabilities and current capacities for mitigation (i.e., capabilities).

Sea Level Rise

Relative sea level rise in the vicinity of Fairhaven was approximately 2.81 millimeters per year between 1932 to 2015, which represents a total increase of approximately 0.92 feet in 100 years (NOAA, 2013). This trend does not account for ocean expansion, ocean warming, and contributions from ice sheets. As this Comprehensive Plan is looking toward the future, planning for projects that will have a long lifespan (e.g., infrastructure, public facilities), and includes elements with factors that have a low tolerance for risk (e.g., population, housing, economic assets), this document considers additional sea level rise scenarios that account for these changing climatic conditions.

Current sea level rise projections from the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), based on data from the Woods Hole tide gauge, estimate a relative change of 0.5 to 4.9 feet by 2100 across all scenarios (i.e., low, intermediate, and high) (USACE, 2017). As discussed further in the Town of Fairhaven Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, for planning purposes the Town will use the median of intermediate-to-high scenarios, which includes a rise of 0.9 feet by 2050, 1.65 feet by 2070, and 3.25 feet by 2100.

Figure 8-1 illustrates sea level rise elevation increases of 2, 4, and 6 feet above the current Mean Higher High Water throughout the Town in the context of NOAA's reported high confidence level (above 80 percent). Confidence levels represent known errors in elevation data and tidal corrections (NOAA, 2017).



Source: NOAA Coastal Services Center, MassGIS

**Sea Level Rise Inundation
(High Confidence)**

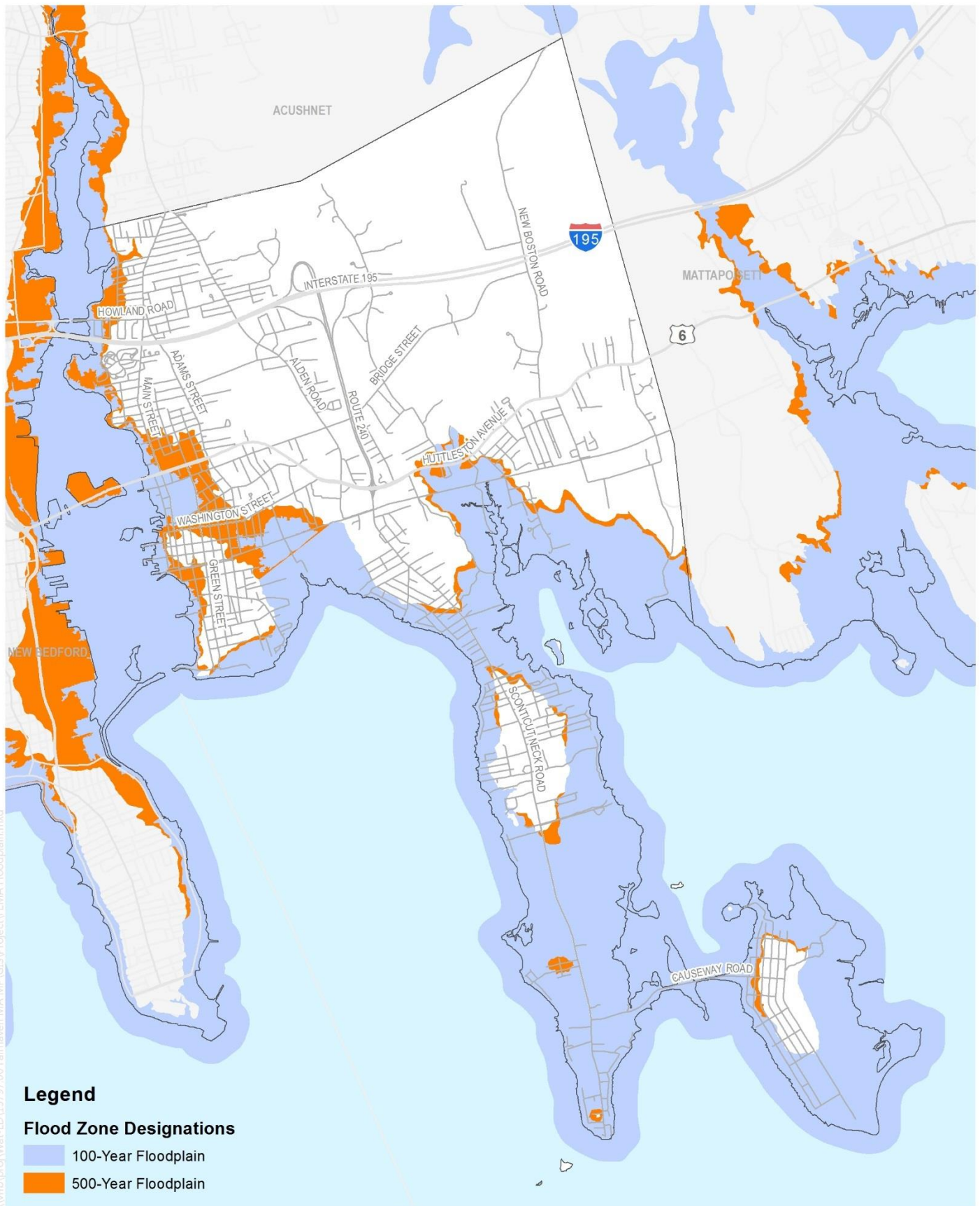
Flood

The Town experiences periodic flooding of three types: riverine, coastal, and urban. Riverine flooding involves overbank flooding from a river or stream channel onto adjacent floodplains; coastal flooding occurs along the shorelines of large water bodies and is primarily caused by wave action and heavy rainfall due to low-pressure coastal storms with cyclonic flows; and urban flooding occurs when natural groundcover can no longer absorb and retain surface water runoff or when existing drainage systems capacities are exceeded.

Coordination with the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee, as part of the development of the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan, revealed that extant flooding concerns of the riverine variety affect parking lots and shipyards at the Town's waterfront, including the Seaview Avenue Boat Ramp. Such flooding occurs when the Acushnet River is ponded behind the New Bedford-Fairhaven hurricane barrier during periods of concurrent high runoff and surge activity. In addition, the Nash Riverway floods during every "100-year" storm event. **Figure 8-2** illustrates the Town's 1.0 percent (100-year) and 0.2 percent (500-year) floodplain boundaries derived from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).

The West Island Causeway represents a major infrastructure vulnerability related to coastal flooding. The Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee reported that past storms have damaged this piece of transportation infrastructure multiple times, and it routinely floods during king tides (i.e., higher than average tides caused by the close proximity of the moon to the earth) and coastal storms. Such flooding restricts access to and from West Island, which has the potential to impede emergency response services. Other examples of coastal flooding in Fairhaven involve Egypt Lane and a dyke/culvert near 267 Huttleston Avenue. **Figure 8-3** illustrates the Town's hurricane storm surge inundation areas.

A notable example of urban flooding in Fairhaven occurs in the Cushman Park Area, between Bridge and Spring Streets. This is primarily due to infrastructure deficiencies; however, recent drainage improvements have improved flooding conditions. Based on historical data provided by the 2014 National Climate Assessment, increases in the frequency and severity of very heavy rainfall events occurred in the Northeast over the last several decades (e.g., a 71 percent recorded increase between 1958 and 2012), and this trend is projected to continue and perhaps worsen due to climate change. These projections suggest additional investments in the Town's stormwater infrastructure will be required to protect against worsening inland flooding conditions.



Legend

Flood Zone Designations

- 100-Year Floodplain
- 500-Year Floodplain

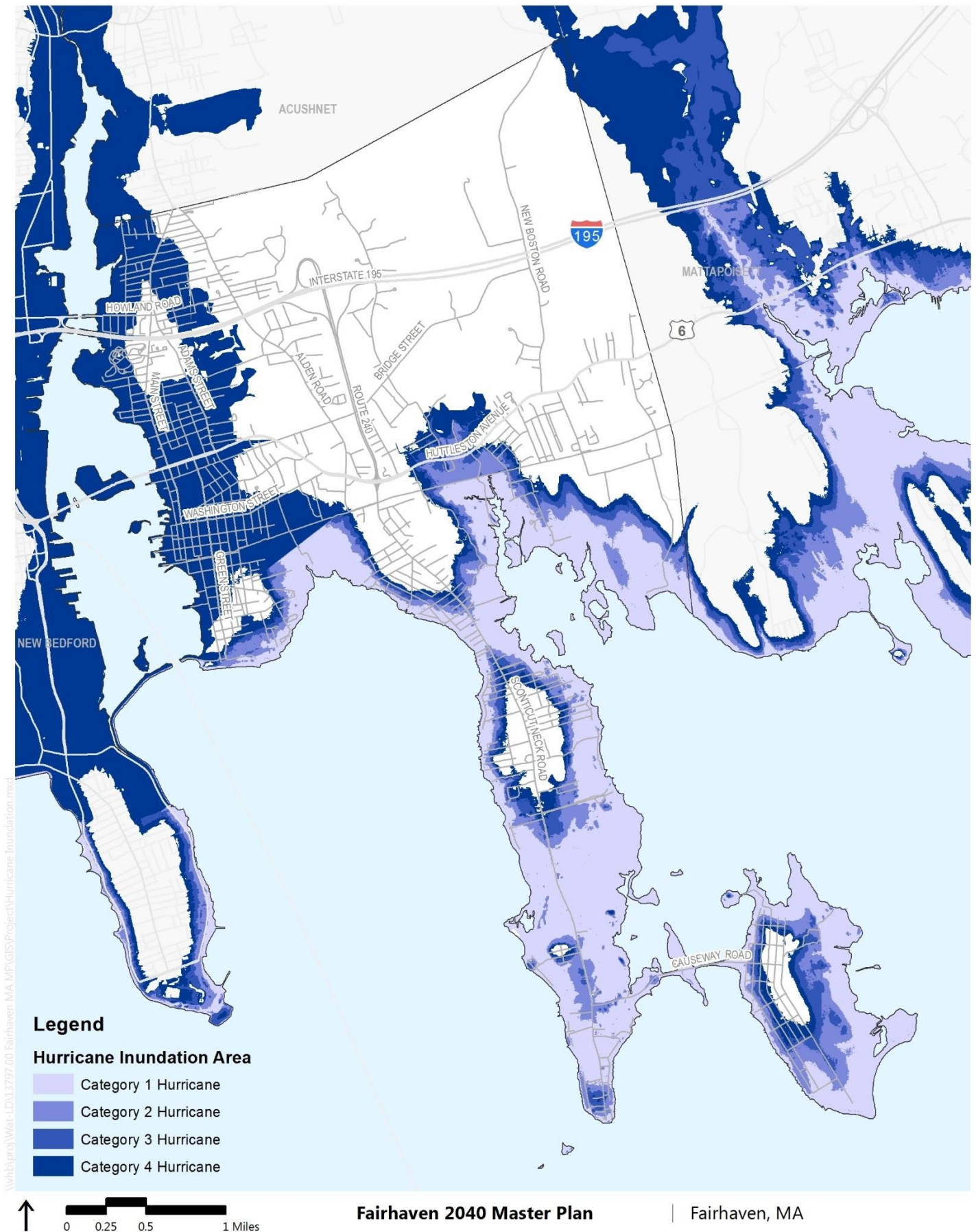


Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan

Fairhaven, MA

Source: MassGIS

FEMA Floodplains



Floodplain Expansion

Published in 2012, *Projected Expansion of the Floodplain with Sea Level Rise in Fairhaven, Massachusetts* prepared by the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program and Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, evaluated the potential expansion of the rare storm event floodplain in Fairhaven, Massachusetts from sea level rise. This study based its analysis on a baseline flood zone – the most landward extent of the 100-year floodplain identified in FEMA’s FIRMs - that it modified using a highly detailed elevation set. It then expanded this baseline to account for 1-foot, 2-foot, and 4-foot rises in sea level using the same highly detailed elevation data. **Figure 8-4** illustrates the published baseline and expanded floodplains from this study.

This floodplain expansion study compared the baseline floodplain and floodplain expansions to Town assessor data from 2009 to quantify the number of homes and total structure value within these areas. The results of the analysis revealed an increase of about 4 percent from baseline in the number of parcels with structures and total structure value under the 1-foot sea level rise scenario and an added 4 percent increase under the 2-foot sea level rise scenario. Under the 4-foot sea level rise scenario, the study demonstrated an approximately 137 percent increase from baseline in the number of parcels with structures and an approximately 180 percent increase from baseline in total structure value. Under the 4-foot sea level rise scenario, the study estimated an additional 1,637 parcels and \$264 million in assessed value would be located in the floodplain. This study assumes that the hurricane barrier would be overtopped under the 4-foot sea level rise scenario, which would result in flooding effects to Town Hall, several public schools, and the Millicent Library.

Coastal Storms

The Town of Fairhaven’s location on Buzzards Bay and its extensive coastline make it vulnerable to coastal storms such as hurricanes and nor’easters. A hurricane barrier constructed in 1966 across the mouth of the New Bedford Harbor and another barrier in the form of a dike that extends across the tidal marshes at the head of Priest’s Cove have provided the Town with limited protection from such storms. Coastal storms have resulted in wave damage, mostly to boats, low coastal roads, beaches, and seawalls. Portions of Sconticut Neck Road (between North Street and Grape Street and south of Camel Street) and the West Island causeway, as well as surrounding residential areas have experienced flooding by high stormwaters. Coastal flooding in these areas are the result of waters regularly exceeding the 15-foot level because of high winds, large waves, and tidal action.

As the Town of Fairhaven Local Hazard Mitigation Plan describes, coastal storms such as hurricanes and nor’easters have and will continue to be a likely occurrence. The annual probability of a hurricane or tropical storm coming within 75 miles of the town is 18 percent; however, the chance of a Category 3 or greater hurricane at landfall is much lower. Though scientific evidence is insufficient to firmly determine the impact of climate change on future storms, large events are increasing in frequency and current research indicates that a warming climate will increase the frequency of major hurricanes. Further, storm surge and the potential for related impacts will presumably increase with sea level

rise because of the increase in quantity of available water and related decrease in the height of stormwater barriers.



Hurricane barriers in Fairhaven. Top photo: hurricane barriers across New Bedford Harbor,
Bottom photo: hurricane barriers at the Dike

Figure 8-3 illustrates worst-case hurricane surge inundation area for Category 1 through 4 hurricanes, as prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District. As shown, much of Sconticut Neck and West Island are expected to be inundated during a Category 1 hurricane, while coastal areas beyond the hurricane barrier, including Fairhaven Center, are expected to be inundated during a Category 4 storm. Evacuation routes in the Town of Fairhaven include:

- ▶ Causeway Road,
- ▶ Sconticut Neck Road,
- ▶ Route 6,
- ▶ Route 240,
- ▶ Main Street,
- ▶ Adams Street, and
- ▶ Interstate 195.

The Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) conducted a review of regional and community evacuation routes in 2006 (SRPEDD, 2006). In this report, SRPEDD identified three evacuation routes within the Town that would be affected by a storm surge, including: Causeway Road, Sconticut Neck Road, and

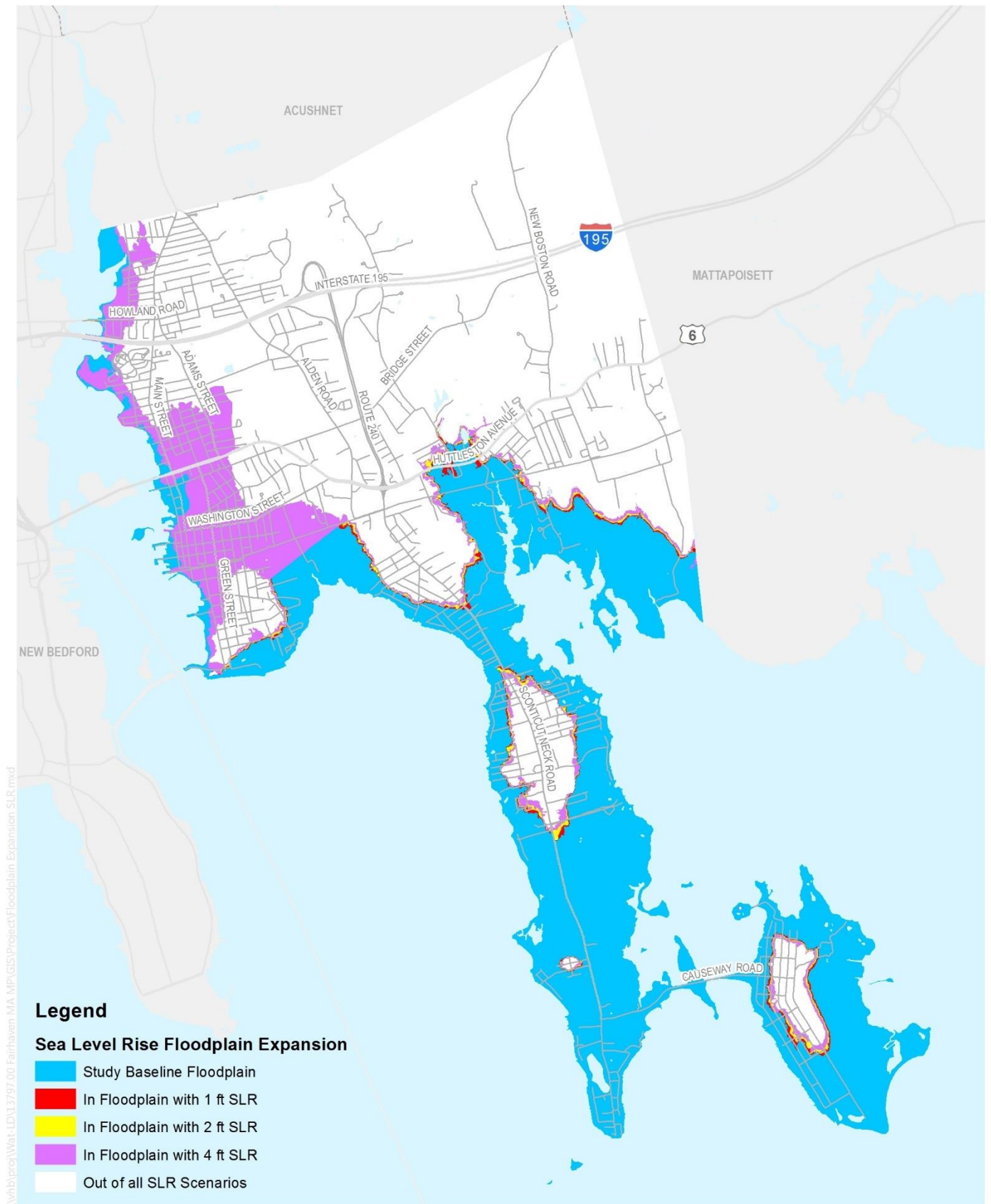
Route 6. Community evacuation route conflict points in the Town include the Rogers School, a designated evacuation shelter that is not located on an evacuation route, and the practice of sending evacuation traffic into neighboring communities (i.e., Acushnet, Mattapoisett, and New Bedford), while those communities are sending traffic into Fairhaven.

Evacuation orders for Sconticut Neck Road and West Island, along with other low-lying areas in the Town, are possible. Before such an order is issued, Public Works would switch off its water and wastewater service to these areas with the intention of preventing damage to the system and contamination. The Town requires residents in these areas to obtain an annual hurricane permit. These permits allow owners to return to their properties after an evacuation, and are intended to protect their properties from non-residents. **Figure 8-5** depicts the existing Massachusetts Evacuation Zones in the Town of Fairhaven. As shown, all of Sconticut Neck and West Island are all within Zone A, which represents areas that would flood first from storm surge during a tropical storm or hurricane.

Community-based Sustainability Initiatives

The Town has an active sustainability committee, Green Fairhaven, that primarily supports buy local campaigns. This includes the promotion of the Fairhaven Farmers' Market, which is typically held on Sundays between June and October at the Fairhaven High School Lawn. Market vendors originate from Southeastern Massachusetts.

Green Fairhaven also maintains an online blog (<http://greenfairhaven.blogspot.com/>) that promotes sustainability education through the provision of links covering topics such as energy conservation. The committee also solicits comments and suggestions from the public concerning opportunities for it to investigate and potentially implement to make the town more sustainable.



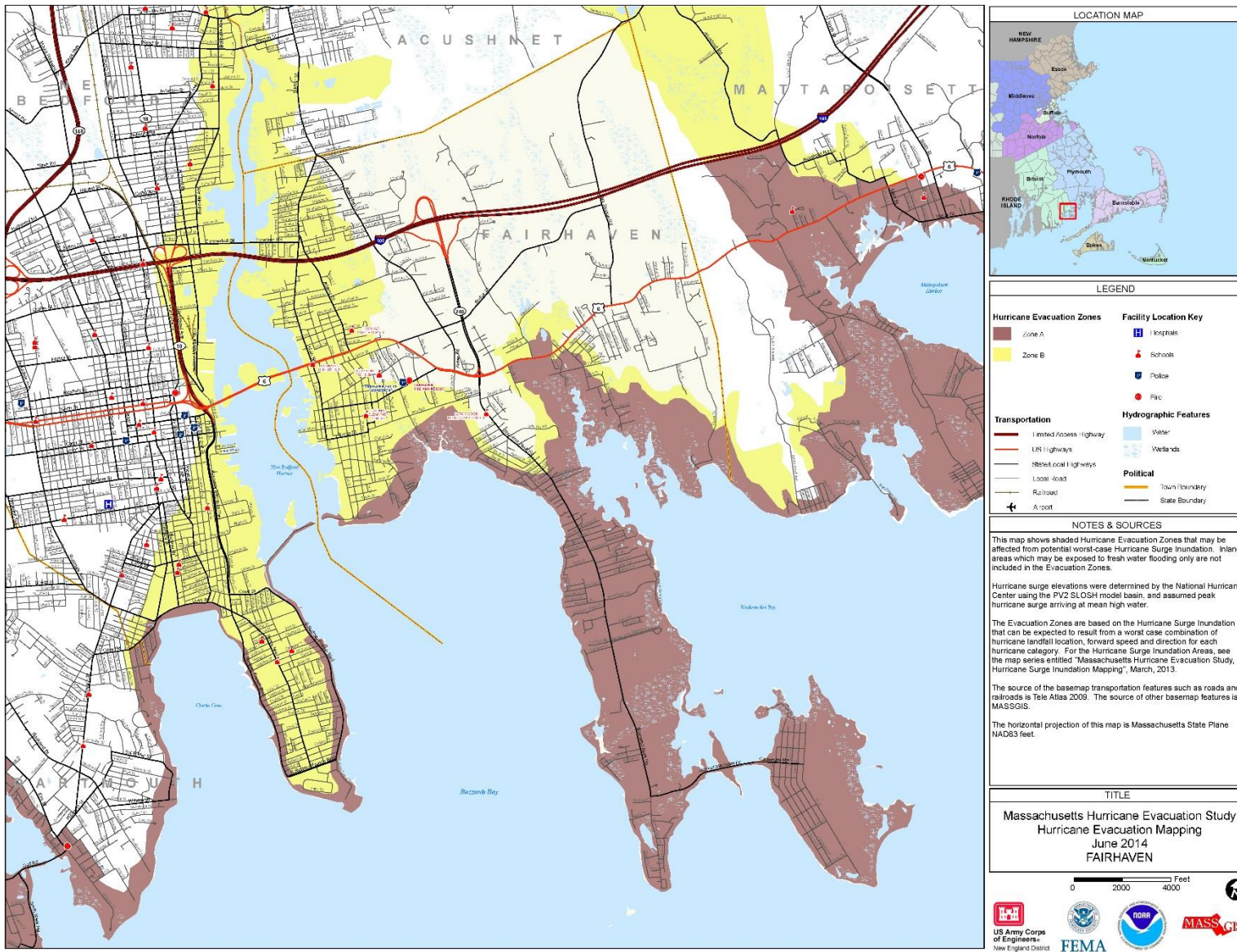
Fairhaven 2040 Master Plan

Fairhaven, MA

Source: Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program, MassGIS

**Sea Level Rise
Floodplain Expansion**

Figure 8-5 Massachusetts Evacuation Zones in Fairhaven



Issues and Opportunities

Data Management and Tracking

No organization can manage what it does not measure, nor can they demonstrate an improvement in sustainability performance without understanding their baseline performance. The Town of Fairhaven does not currently have, but would benefit from, a formal and centralized method of managing and tracking its sustainability data such as, but not limited to, energy and water consumption and costs. Such data management would enable the Town to determine areas of its sustainability where it is performing well, identify opportunities for performance improvement and potential cost savings, and benchmark its performance against similar municipalities. It would also afford the Town with the ability to assess the level of success of sustainability initiative implementation; for example, the reduction in energy consumption after implementing an energy conservation initiative or the reduction in instances of urban flooding after conducting drainage improvements. Keeping this data management system open (available for public viewing) would increase municipal transparency, as well as serve to educate the public on the Town's sustainability priorities.

The Town has not conducted an energy baseline assessment or either municipal operations or community-level greenhouse gas emissions inventories. Such deep dives would provide the Town with a comprehensive understanding of its related impacts in these topic areas, in addition to serving as the basis of the development and implementation of tailored recommendations to achieve informed and realistic goals, objectives, and targets.

Programs and Processes

The Town has not incorporated green building principles and practices such as those associated with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system into its building standards. Such formal integration would ensure a reduction in the extensive environmental and human health impacts that result from the lifecycle of buildings and infrastructure, as well as create an awareness of such impacts (and related solutions) among the Town's residents and businesses. The codification of green building practices would promote an improvement in the economic and environmental performance of development within the Town.

Although the Town has incorporated renewable energy systems into its zoning bylaw, it could benefit from a formal review of this bylaw, as well as the Town's permitting procedures, to ensure that it is not unintentionally limiting the potential growth of renewable energy systems within its jurisdiction. In a potential update to its zoning bylaw and permitting procedures, the Town can refer to Department of Energy Resources (DOER)-developed policy guidance and model solar zoning bylaws for regulating and facilitating the development of solar energy systems: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities-clean-tech/renewable-energy/solar/model-solar-zoning-documents.html>.

Sustainability has not yet been formalized within the Town's administration. To make sustainability part of the way the Town conducts its day-to-day business, rather than addressing it as an afterthought, the Town could integrate it as criteria into key decision-making processes. Examples of applicable decision-making include procurement and capital programming. Formalization of sustainability within the Town's operations could also come from the adoption of a sustainability framework such as STAR Communities (<http://www.starcommunities.org/>).

Funding Opportunities

The Town should re-pursue the Massachusetts Green Community designation. The Green Communities Designation and Grant Program, administered through the DOER's Green Communities Division, supports communities like Fairhaven in understanding and meeting the requirements of designation. Green Community designation qualifies communities for financial assistance from the state for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, as well as related assistance such as adopting the latest building codes.

Resource Conservation

The last energy audits to take place at Town facilities occurred at least five years ago; these studies are outdated and the Town should plan to conduct a new round of audits. To develop a list of no or low-cost measures and potential capital improvements for further study, these new energy audits should at a minimum (i.e., ASHRAE [American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers] Level 1) include interviews with site operating personnel, a review of facility utility bills and operating data, and facility walkthroughs. These audits should be accompanied by a high-level analysis of implementation costs and savings, as well as a discussion of simple payback to aid in the prioritization of energy efficiency projects, and will help determine whether audits of greater detail (i.e., ASHRAE Levels 2 and 3) are necessary.

The Town has several new and renovated facilities planned as part of its capital improvement program, including a new Public Safety Complex. There are opportunities to lead by example by using these projects as models/case studies for green building in Fairhaven. Additionally, the incorporation of green building practices into the planning, design, and operation of these projects will enable the Town to improve resource use within its own operations.

Community Education

There are a limited number of education initiatives coming out of the Town that attempt to create a greater understanding of sustainability and resiliency among Fairhaven's public. Such initiatives could improve the community's overall sustainability performance, while having the associated benefits of reducing municipal expenditures, supporting local economic development, and promoting a resilient and livable built environment with a high quality of life. Community-based organizations such as Green Fairhaven and the Fairhaven Business Association represent ideal partners in disseminating information to Fairhaven's residents and businesses.

Climate Adaptation

The Town, particularly as a coastal community, will need to address the threat of natural hazards and the likely impacts of climate change. Limited work has been done concerning hazard mitigation to-date; however, the Town has embarked on the development of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan that will outline current and projected natural hazards pertinent to its assets and operations, assess associated vulnerabilities and capabilities, and develop a set of recommendations for performance improvement. Following through on the associated mitigation action plan, as well as taking the plan's findings into consideration in future public facility and service investments, will increase the Town's resilience against natural hazards.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1: Establish systems for assessing, tracking, and reporting on the Town's sustainability performance.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct an energy baseline assessment for municipal operations and community-wide.
2. Complete a local government operations greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory.
3. Complete a community scale GHG inventory.
4. Develop or procure a data management system that tracks, at a minimum, municipal operations energy and water consumption, costs, and associated GHG emissions.

Goal 2: Lead by example through continuous improvement of the energy efficiency of resource use within government operations and promotion of community energy efficiency sustainability programs.

Recommendations:

1. Conduct energy audits at Town facilities and develop a plan for implementation of resulting Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs).
2. Expand the existing streetlight energy efficiency program.
3. Undertake a vehicle fleet assessment to ascertain opportunities to decrease fleet fuel consumption by right-sizing vehicles for their tasks and replacing older vehicles with more efficient ones.
4. Develop and implement a Green Fleet Policy to guide the future purchase and use of municipal fleet vehicles.
5. Incorporate sustainability and resiliency decision-making criteria into the Town's capital improvement program.

6. Seek ways to increase municipal operations and community-wide waste diversion rates to reduce solid waste disposal.
7. Provide information to the community about free and discounted energy audits, appliance rebates, and other energy improvement programs available to residents and businesses.
8. Educate Town residents about stormwater issues and proper management.
9. Work with Green Fairhaven to expand their mission of promoting sustainability among the community.
10. Seek opportunities to adaptively reuse existing buildings to meet Town as well as community needs, for example, the new or joint Public Safety, and identify pathways to ensure that the transfer of surplus municipal facilities to private entities include provisions for adaptive reuse, for example, the conversion of the Oxford School Building into a senior housing complex.

Goal 3: Enhance Fairhaven's resiliency to the likely impacts of a changing climate.

Recommendations:

1. Invest in infrastructure improvements that will protect the Town from the impacts of sea level rise, storm surge, and other flooding events, as well as other applicable natural hazards; refer to the Town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
2. Update the Town's stormwater regulations to emphasize low-impact development and green infrastructure, while considering projected precipitation/flooding conditions.
3. Incorporate future climate conditions into emergency response and evacuation plans.
4. Address the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)-identified conflict points along the community's evacuation routes.
5. Establish neighborhood networks of residents and businesses that are educated on sustainability and climate change resiliency and able to communicate effectively, especially to vulnerable citizens, during periods of emergency.
6. Enhance the Town's open space and unused sites with green infrastructure (for example, rain gardens and permeable pavers) to improve the Town's stormwater management capabilities and minimize its vulnerabilities to flooding.
7. Incorporate existing and projected future climate conditions into the Town's zoning bylaw to promote (re)development patterns that minimize exposure to known hazards.

Goal 4: Position Fairhaven to leverage state, regional, and national resources for sustainability and resiliency.

Recommendations:

1. After identifying municipal baseline energy consumption and improvement opportunities, evaluate the Town's potential for Green Community designation; establish a clear plan for the Town to pursue this designation and associated funding, if practicable.
2. Adopt the STAR Community Rating System as a framework for making Fairhaven a more sustainable and resilient community.

Goal 5: Adopt land use, zoning, and building code policies that support healthy, sustainable development

Recommendations:

1. Adopt green building standards to minimize the direct and indirect environmental impacts of major commercial and residential construction in the Town; refer to examples such as the International Green Construction Code and ANSI/ASHRAE/IES/USGBC Standard 189.1-2014, Standard for the Design of High Performance Green Buildings.
2. Consider enhancing the Town's zoning regulations and permitting procedures to identify opportunities to incentivize renewable energy installations (for example, waiving permitting fees for qualifying systems), and promoting such incentives.
3. Address in advance potential conflicts between renewable energy systems, particularly solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems, and the establishment of local historic districts.
4. Adopt a Complete Streets Policy to promote a balanced transportation system that enhances the safety, health, and well-being of Town residents and visitors.
5. Require that affordable housing be built to sustainable standards (such as LEED, the Well Building Standard, or Enterprise Green Communities) to ensure that such housing stock is healthy and promotes occupant well-being.
6. Adopt a comprehensive outdoor lighting ordinance to minimize light pollution such as glare, light trespass, and skyglow and to reduce community-scale energy consumption; refer to the International Dark-Sky Association's Model Lighting Ordinance.

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Implementation



Introduction

This section is arguably the most important in the Master Plan. The implementation actions are based on the goals and recommendations from each chapter. It is important to note that planning is a dynamic process and priorities can shift over time. A consistent review process allows for these issues to be acknowledged while keeping each specific recommendation on the table unless a situation dictates that it is no longer relevant. In addition to implementing the Master Plan, it is recommended that the Town consider some mechanism for reporting on progress and on barriers to implementation, on a regular basis. Some communities provide this information in their annual reports. Others have developed a follow-up evaluation form that specifically lists each action item and asks for updates.

The Implementation Matrix below summarizes the specific recommendations found at the end of each of the plan’s chapters. The timing for implementation of the recommendations are assigned for Short-term (1-5 years), Mid-term (6-10 years), and Long-term (10-20 years), to assist in suggesting a timeframe for each item to be considered. Some actions are ongoing in nature. The responsible parties are listed, as well as implementation partners. A list of acronyms used for responsible parties is provided below.

Acronyms List:

AC	Agricultural Commission
BBC	Buzzards Bay Coalition
BD	Building Department
BOS	Board of Selectmen
BPW	Board of Public Works
CapPC	Capital Planning Committee

Implementation

COA	Council on Aging
COD	Commission on Disability
ConCom	Conservation Commission
CPC	Community Preservation Committee
EDC	Economic Development Committee
EM	Emergency Management
FALPT	Fairhaven Acushnet Land Preservation Trust
FBA	Fairhaven Business Association
FC	Finance Committee
FD	Fire Department
GF	Green Fairhaven
HA	Housing Authority
HC	Historical Commission
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
LHDSC	Local Historic District Study Committee
NBACC	New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce
NBHDC	New Bedford Harbor Development Commission
OT	Office of Tourism
PB	Planning Board
PD	Police Department
PED	Planning and Economic Development Department
RD	Recreation Department
ROSC	Rogers-Oxford Study Committee
Schools	Fairhaven School Committee
SCYPN	SouthCoast Young Professionals Network
SEEDC	South Eastern Economic Development Corporation
SRPEDD	Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District
SRTA	Southeastern Regional Transit Authority
TA	Town Administrator
WC	Wellness Committee

Implementation Matrix

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
Land Use (LU)							
Goal 1: Balance growth and preservation.							
1-1	Preserve rural characteristics by protecting open spaces and supporting remaining working farms through continuous community preservation efforts, such as partnerships with the Buzzards Bay Coalition and Fairhaven Acushnet Land Preservation Trust.	OSRN, ED	PB, PED	CPC, ConCom, BBC, FALPT	Ongoing	Moderate	High
1-2	<p>Encourage infill commercial and residential development in existing, established areas where water and sewer services are provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify infill development priority areas in town. Identify potential barriers to infill development, such as regulatory restrictions, inadequate public facilities, accessibility, development cost etc. Develop strategies to encourage infill development, such as increasing zoning flexibility, streamlined permitting, public-private land assembly, tax abatement, community improvement district, etc. 	ED, H	PB, PED	EDC	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	Medium
1-3	Differentiate between industrial zones and business zones to encourage business and commercial developments in appropriate locations within the community, such as multiple commercial zones based on scale and characteristics, e.g. general commercial, highway commercial, and neighborhood commercial, etc.	ED	PB, PED	BOS, EDC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Difficult	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
1-4	Re-examine the purpose of the Nasketucket Overlay District (NRB), redefine the district boundaries, and amend zoning provisions to better balance the current needs for resource protection and property developments.	OSRN	PB, PED	BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
Goal 2: Encourage strategic redevelopment in the Route 6 commercial area.							
2-1	Develop a detailed Route 6 commercial area revitalization plan to guide redevelopment. The plan should incorporate analysis of appropriate types of redevelopment, scale/dimension/design of such developments, as well as potential zoning changes and infrastructure and services needed to support such redevelopment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, propose design language to prohibit industrial looking chain link fence and corrugated metal buildings along Route 6. 	ED	PB, PED	EDC, BOS	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	High
2-2	Consider creating Route 6 mixed-use overlay zoning district to stimulate mixed-use commercial and residential redevelopment appropriate to the characteristics of highway and automobile oriented mixed-use areas, as compared to smaller scale neighborhood mixed-use areas seen in Downtown and North Fairhaven.	ED, H	PB, PED	EDC, BOS	Long-term (10-20 years)	Moderate	High
Goal 3: Promote neighborhood commercial nodes and small local businesses.							
3-1	Amend the existing Mixed-use District provisions to include more effective mixed-use zoning to remedy non-conforming traditional uses for small neighborhood businesses, per the Benoit Square Neighborhood Planning and Zoning Study (2016) recommendations.	ED	PB, PED	EDC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
3-2	Establish a Mixed-use District in the Benoit Square area to encourage revitalization of the traditional neighborhood commercial center in North Fairhaven.	ED	PB, PED	EDC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
3-3	Review and update zoning to allow more flexibility that supports small business development, such as home-based business, residential commercial mixed-use, etc.	ED, H	PB, PED	EDC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
Housing (H)							
Goal 1: Keep future residential development in or near existing residential areas to maintain the village character.							
1-1	Encourage infill residential developments in existing residential neighborhoods that reflect the historic and cultural characters of various neighborhoods.	LU, ED, HCR	PB, PED	HC	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
1-2	Explore possibilities of housing conversion and adaptive reuse of existing municipal and/or commercial buildings and housing rehabilitation of blighted properties.	LU, ED, HCR, PFS	PB, PED	BOS, TA, HA, HC	Ongoing, Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
Goal 2: Maintain and encourage a variety of housing that is affordable to non-elderly individuals and families of all income levels.							
2-1	Identify potential sites, possibility through municipal land assemblage or public/private partnership, for non-elderly affordable rental housing developments utilizing the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program.	LU, ED	PB, PED	BOS, HA, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
2-2	Consider adopting an inclusionary zoning bylaw to require affordable housing in any residential development that requires a Special Permit.	LU	PB, PED	BOS	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
2-3	<p>Provide more flexibility and incentive in the Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw to encourage the creation of market rate or affordable rental units that support moderate to low income residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw to identify unnecessary restrictions Update the bylaw accordingly to enhance viability 	LU	PB, PED	BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
2-4	<p>Consider allowing more flexible and higher density mixed-use residential and commercial developments in established service and employment centers as a means to expand market-rate housing stock.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, consider adjusting mixed-use building height restrictions in targeted density allowance areas to match traditional building heights in those areas. 	LU, ED	PB, PED	TA, BOS, EDC	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
Goal 3: Continue providing affordable and age-appropriate housing options for senior populations in the community.							
3-1	Pursue state and federal affordable housing programs and funding at the identified two-acre site off of Main Street adjacent to Oxford Terrace.	LU	HA, COA	PB, PED	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
3-2	Provide more flexibility and incentive in the Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw to encourage the creation of smaller housing units that supports downsizing seniors to age in place.	LU	PB, PED	COA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
3-3	Explore zoning tools, such as performance zoning and density bonuses, to encourage development of age-appropriate market-rate ownership units designed to serve the needs of an elderly population, e.g. attached or detached condominium units with first floor bedroom/bathroom suits, accessible grades, attached garages, and maintenance support, etc.	LU, ED	PB, PED	HA, COA	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	Medium

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
Economic Development (ED)							
Goal 1: Preserve the commercial viability of the working waterfront and seek balance with neighboring land uses, while simultaneously exploring opportunities to make the waterfront more accessible to the community.							
1-1	Hire a planning firm specializing in waterfronts to create a plan for the working waterfront that would preserve key industrial zones, improve vehicular circulation, emphasize pedestrian access, and create a better tourist/public realm experience along the waterfront, when appropriate. Areas of exploration could include future tourism opportunities at Union Wharf and connection to Tin Can (Marsh) Island.	LU, OSR, HC, S	PED, TA	EDC, BPW, RD, Waterfront stakeholders	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
1-2	Evaluate streets along the working waterfront for a possible conversion to one-way to improve traffic movements and reduce conflicts.	T	BPW, PED	BOS, FD, PD	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
1-3	Track and to the extent possible integrate with the Waterfront Redevelopment Plan being performed in 2017 on behalf of the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission.		PED	NBHDC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	Medium
1-4	Explore the needs of infrastructure upgrades to support the long-term viability of the working waterfront in light of the foreseeable sea level rise, in concert with the recommendation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan effort.	T, S	BPW	PED	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
1-5	Work with the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission on Harbor Plan Update and coordinate closely with the Army Corps of Engineers on all waterfront permitting.	LU, T, S	PB, PED, BPW	Army Corps	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
Goal 2: Maintain healthy commercial occupancies along Route 6 and in other commercial nodes and retain service related jobs wherever possible.							
2-1	Work with major commercial property owners to determine potential large-scale vacancies before they occur to initiate early strategic discussions for maintaining occupancies or redeveloping the site.	-	PED	Property Owners, EDC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
2-2	Work with large employers such as Acushnet Company and Southcoast Medical Center to identify strategies for retaining/growing employment base and meeting future space needs.	-	PED	Large Employers, EDC	Ongoing	Moderate	Medium
2-3	Consider introduction of tax credit/tax abatement programs for job creation.	-	PED, TA	EDC, BOS	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	Low
Goal 3: Encourage mixed-use projects on key redevelopment parcels in support of a live, work, play environment.							
3-1	Consider a joint town/property study to engage a real estate advisory firm to create a redevelopment strategy for a key commercial property with an unhealthy level of vacancy	-	PED, TA	Property Owners, EDC, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Difficult	High
3-2	Explore town related functions occupying spaces in vacant commercial buildings whenever appropriate.	B	PED, TA	BD, BOS	Ongoing	Minimal	High
3-3	Promote mixed-use development through land use, zoning, and development incentives.	LU, S	PED, PB	Business community	Ongoing	Moderate	High
3-4	Develop a detailed revitalization plan to guide redevelopment of commercial nodes in town. The plan should incorporate analysis of appropriate types of redevelopments, scale/dimension/design of such developments, as well as potential zoning changes and infrastructure and services needed to support these redevelopments.	LU, S	PED, TA, PB	EDC, FBA, BPW, Business Community	Short-term (1-5 years)	Difficult	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
3-5	Consider creating a Route 6 mixed-use overlay zoning district to stimulate mixed-use commercial and residential redevelopment. Making provisions for mid-to high-density residential will be important	LU, S	PED	Property Owners, Business Community	Short-term (1-5 years)	Difficult	High
3-6	In North Fairhaven/Benoit Square, encourage projects that promote a mix of uses, including reuse of existing buildings with upper levels that are underutilized.	LU, S	PED, PB	EDC, Business community	Ongoing	Moderate	Medium
Goal 4: Revise business regulations and enhanced programs to continue to support the incubation and growth of small businesses.							
4-1	Plan and potentially fund a small-scale, low-cost business incubator to be housed in vacant commercial space along Route 6 or in a town-owned building (such as the Rogers School) that is not currently in use.	-	PED	FBA, NBACC, SCYPN, EDC, TA	Long-term (10-20 years)	Difficult	Low
4-2	Adopt effective permitting procedures for small neighborhood businesses	-	PED, BD	FBA, EDC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
4-3	Review and update zoning to allow more flexibilities that support small business development, such as home-based business, residential commercial mixed-use, etc. This includes migrating to online forms where appropriate, including the ability to register complaints and respond to them online.	LU	PED, BD	FBA, EDC	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	High
4-4	Revisit signage ordinance to allow for more flexibility for businesses	-	PED, BD	FBA, EDC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	Medium

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
Goal 5: Collaborate with New Bedford and other nearby towns on issues of workforce training/regional economic development to elevate the profile of the South Coast.							
5-1	Consider engagement of a market/branding firm to develop a targeted campaign for the South Coast.	-	PED, TA	SouthCoast communities, SEEDC, NBACC	Long-term (10-20 years)	Difficult	Low
5-2	Partner with New Bedford to develop a joint economic development strategy for the Harbor.	-	PED	NBACC, TA, BOS	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
5-3	Join regional efforts to support the South Coast Rail extension.	-	PED	SouthCoast communities, SRPEDD, SEEDC, NBACC, TA, BOS	Ongoing	Moderate	High
5-4	Explore future economic development opportunities in and around the harbors including better leveraging existing trails, waterfront connections, and the future replacement of the Fairhaven-New Bedford bridge.	-	PED	New Bedford, EDC, TA, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
Public Facilities and Services (PFS)							
Goal 1: Develop plans and funding to rebuild, expand, or replace key public facilities, and the staff needed to support the Town operations							
1-1	Develop a Public Facilities Improvement Plan for all Town buildings that identifies near, mid, and long-term improvements (and costs), so that the Town will have a comprehensive inventory of the required maintenance and capital improvements needed for its public facilities.	LU	TA, BD	BOS, CapPC, PED	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	Medium

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
1-2	Develop a plan to implement the recommendations identified in the Facilities Master Plan.	-	TA, BD	CapPC, PED	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	Medium
1-3	Assess the need to add staff and enhance necessary staff trainings to all departments to address anticipated growth and implement the recommendations included in the 2040 Master Plan so that the town can deliver its services effectively.	-	TA	BOS, CapPC	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Minimal	Medium
Goal 2: Ensure public safety officials have the facilities to handle today's needs as well as projected future needs of the community.							
2-1	Prioritize the relocation and/or expansion of the Police and Fire Department to address community safety needs, while considering potential reuse or new construction.	LU	PD, FD	BOS, TA, CapPC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
2-2	Allocate appropriate funds in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan to support necessary upgrades and improvements to the Police and Fire Departments.	LU	CapPC, PD, FD	BOS, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High
2-3	Continue to invest in training and professional development for Fairhaven's Police and Fire Departments staff.	-	PD, FD	CapPC, TA	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Minimal	Medium
Goal 3: Enhance senior services in Fairhaven.							
3-1	Explore feasibility of expanding the current Senior Center to meet the space needs for programs serving the Town's senior population. Per hazard mitigation plan, upgrade the complex to a shelter.	-	COA, PED	TA, PB, BOS, CapPC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
3-2	Evaluate and enhance transportation services offered to seniors and residents with disabilities.	T	COA	COD	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	Low
3-3	Provide additional recreation opportunities geared toward seniors through the Recreation Department.	OSRN	COA	RD	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Minimal	Medium
3-4	Encourage collaboration among the Council on Aging (COA), Recreation Department and Fairhaven Public Schools to promote inter-generational activities.	-	COA	RD, Schools	Long-term (10-20 years)	Minimal	Low

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
Goal 4: Develop plans for key infrastructure elements that need improvement.							
4-1	Continue to fund annual improvements to roadways and seek opportunities to obtain state funding for long-term transportation enhancements as identified in the Transportation chapter.	T	BPW	BOS, TA, CapPC	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
4-2	Prepare an updated master plan for the Water Department to forecast future needs for investments in pump stations, wells, and the delivery of water to the Town.	-	BPW	BOS	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	Medium
4-3	Invest in an Automatic Reader System for water meters in Town to improve the Town's ability to collect meter reading data and billing procedures.	-	BPW	BOS, TA, CapPC	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	High
4-4	Prepare a long-term plan for the use of the Sludge Digester System to ascertain the cost benefit of the continued use of this facility.	-	BPW	BOS, TA	Long-term (10-20 years)	Moderate	Medium
4-5	Prepare a long-term plan for the Sewage Treatment Plant to ascertain the cost benefit of the continued use of this facility.	-	BPW	BOS, TA	Long-term (10-20 years)	Moderate	Medium
4-6	Invest in education programs and materials that provide residents and business owners information about solid waste and recycling programs to improve the Town's participation rate in these programs.	-	BPW, BOH	BOS, TA	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Minimal	High
Goal 5: Continue to take advantage of opportunities for sustainable energy within the Town's facilities and services.							
5-1	Undertake an energy audit of municipal buildings and develop a plan to implement recommendations.	S	BD, TA	BOS	Long-term (10-20 years)	Moderate	Low
5-2	Undertake a vehicle fleet assessment to ascertain opportunities to right size vehicles and increase fuel efficiency (See Sustainability goals for Green Fleets).	S	BPW	TA, BOS	Long-term (10-20 years)	Moderate	Low

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
5-3	Incorporate cost-effective Green Infrastructure strategies into all municipal projects for stormwater management, drainage.	S	BPW	PED, PB, BOS, GF	Long-term (10-20 years)	Moderate	Medium
5-4	Seek ways to increase recycling and reduce solid waste disposal.	S	BPW, BOH	GF	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Minimal	Medium
5-5	Educate Town residents about stormwater issues and proper management.	S	BPW	GF	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Minimal	Medium
Goal 6: Invest in the Town's schools to provide state-of-the-art educational facilities.							
6-1	Work closely with the School Department to identify capital improvements that are needed to support the schools, such as window and exterior renovations to the High School, dedicated internet service, and other improvements needed to maintain and enhance the Town's schools.	-	Schools, CapPC	TA, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
6-2	Work with the School Committee to assess the ability to better utilize the public school facilities for other community uses.	OSR	Schools	TA, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High

Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources (OSR)

Goal 1: Preserve our farmland and working agricultural landscapes.							
1-1	Acquire specific critically located parcels of land to prevent development in inappropriate (e.g., coastal) areas in Fairhaven. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Buzzards Bay Coalition to acquire the Carvalho Farm property 	LU	ConCom, BOS	PED, CPC, TA, BBC, FALPT	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
1-2	Encourage continued participation and enrollment in farmland and forestry preservation programs under MGL 61, 61A and 61B, and in the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR).	LU, ED	PED, AC	PB, BOS, ConCom, TA	Ongoing	Minimal	Medium

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
1-3	<p>Preserve important agricultural soils/working agricultural landscapes in conjunction with state and local food systems security planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage small scale backyard farming 	LU, ED	ConCom, AC	PB, PED, CPC, BBC, FALPT	Long-term (10-20 years)	Moderate	Medium
1-4	Work with the Agricultural Commission to develop an up-to-date Plan of Work that integrates appropriate conservation and open space goals and objectives, such as updating the Right to Farm bylaw.	LU	AC, PED	ConCom	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	Medium
Goal 2: Increase awareness and stewardship of our conservation, open space, and recreational assets.							
2-1	Develop a web-based map of conservation, recreation, and open space assets as part of an Open Space and Recreation web page.	LU	RD, ConCom	PED, CPC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	Medium
2-2	Prepare information, including directional and on-site narrative and graphic signage and brochures, highlighting conservation and recreation areas, and encouraging stewardship and appropriate use.	-	RD, ConCom	PED, BPW	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
2-3	Establish a permanent Open Space Committee to work with other boards and commissions to help promote the Open Space and Recreation Plan.	LU	BOS	PED, RD, ConCom	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	Medium
Goal 3: Set aside more land for conservation, open space, and water supply protection.							
3-1	Continue to work with the Mattapoisett River Valley Water Supply Protection Committee to protect the resources of the Mattapoisett River aquifer.	S	BPW	TA, PED, BOS	Ongoing	Moderate	High
3-2	Revise and update the provisions of the Water Protection Overlay Zoning District in the Nasketucket River Watershed and continue appropriate administration of such provisions.	LU	PED, PB	BPW, ConCom	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	Medium

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
3-3	Encourage and educate the public on responsible land use management and planning practices within all water, marine, and critical habitat/natural resource areas.	LU	PED, PB	ConCom	Ongoing	Moderate	High
Goal 4: Provide quality life-long recreational opportunities for all citizens regardless of age or ability.							
4-1	Enhance capacity of the Recreation Department and continue to develop recreational and athletic facilities, including multi-purpose fields, pathways, and play areas, particularly in underserved parts of town. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a feasibility study for the relocation and reconstruction of the tennis courts at Cushman Park Address maintenance, trash, recycling, and parking issues at all Town Park facilities (particularly Livesey Park and West Island Town Beach) 	-	RD	BPW, PED	Ongoing, Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
4-2	Meet ADA required accessibility standards for access to all town-owned conservation, recreation, and athletic facilities, per the ADA Transition Plan.	-	RD	BPW, PED	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	Medium
4-3	Improve access and facilities at the Livesey Park and Town Beach on West Island.	PFS	RD, BPW	PED, COD	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
4-4	Continue to work to enhance and develop bicycle facilities, enhancements, and connections from the existing Phoenix Bike Path to other parts of town and to existing regional pathways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Mattapoissett to develop a system of mile markers for the connected bike paths Plantings and beautification for the Phoenix Bike Path 	T	PED	CPC, BOS, BPW	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
4-5	Work with the Wellness Committee to plan and develop the recommended Fitness Trail.	T, S	WC, PED	PB, BOS	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
4-6	Find more administrative and storage space for the Recreation Department in order to retain adequate and efficient services.	-	RD	BPW, PED	Ongoing, Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
Goal 5: Preserve/protect forests/woodlands, habitat, and native inland and coastal vegetative communities.							
5-1	Protect inland and coastal wetlands and wildlife habitat through enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act, floodplain regulations, and restrictions that apply to areas subject to coastal flooding.	LU	ConCom	PED, PB	Ongoing	Moderate	High
5-2	Continue to work with conservation partners to acquire lands that are significant to state recognized Core Habitat, Critical Natural Landscapes, and climate change resilient land.	LU	ConCom	BOS, TA	Ongoing	Moderate	Medium
5-3	Hire a full-time Conservation Agent.	-	ConCom	BOS, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High
Goal 6: Preserve our cultural and historic places and landscapes.							
6-1	Continue to promote public awareness of the cultural and historical assets of the town and the accompanying stewardship needs.	HC	FHC	PED, EDC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
6-2	Acquire lands that represent important cultural landscapes associated with the history and character of the town.	LU, HC	FHC, CPC	BOS, TA, PED	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	Medium
Goal 7: Increase access to the waterfront and water-based recreation activities.							
7-1	Identify, improve, and increase the points of access to the waterfront for canoes, kayaks, and other recreational users.	LU	BPW	PED, BOS, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
7-2	Improve ADA compliant opportunities for waterfront access.	LU	BPW	BOS, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
Transportation (T)							
Goal 1: Become a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community by expanding existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities.							
1-1	Develop a Town-wide Complete Streets Policy and apply for MassDOT Complete Streets grants	S	BPW	PB, BOS, PED, BWC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
1-2	Focus new sidewalk construction in areas with missing segments and around attractions (e.g. Downtown, Schools and the Bike Path).	S	BPW	PB, BOS, BWC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
1-3	Use signage and pavement markings to define a Town-wide on-street bicycle network.	S	BPW	PB, BOS, BWC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High
1-4	Work with MassDOT and the City of New Bedford to provide a safe bicycle connection to the proposed New Bedford Transportation Center between the municipalities.	S	BPW	PB, BOS	Planning: Short-term (1-5 years) Construction: Long-term (10-20 years)	High	High
1-5	Educate the community on bike rules and safety, including "Safe Routes to Schools" and other use of bike facilities.	S	BPW	BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High
Goal 2: Increase the use of public transit by Town residents and employees.							
2-1	Join regional efforts to support the South Coast Rail extension.	S	BOS	PED, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	High	High
2-2	Educate residents on available existing and future public transit services (post schedules in public places, including public school, Town Hall and the library).	S	BPW	SRTA, PB, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Low	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
2-3	Work with the SRTA, neighboring communities and local businesses to enhance the existing local shuttle service including providing night service on Route 11..	S	BOS	SRTA, PB, TA	Mid-term (5-10 years)	High	Medium
2-4	Work with SRTA to add support facilities (benches, shelters, parking, etc.) at existing SRTA bus stops.	S	BPW	SRTA, TA, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Low	Low
2-5	Work to expand door-to-door service for disabled and aging residents.	S	BOS	SRTA, PB, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Medium	High
Goal 3: Improve Town-wide traffic flow and safety.							
3-1	Work with MassDOT to advance safety improvements at Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)-eligible locations, particularly the intersection of Route 6 and Bridge Street.	-	BPW	PB, BOS, PD, TA	Mid-term (5-10 years)	High	High
3-2	Evaluate streets surrounding the Downtown and waterfront for possible conversion to one-way to improve traffic movements and on-street parking.	LU	BPW	PB, BOS, PED, TA	Mid-term (5-10 years)	High	High
3-3	Improve wayfinding signage through-out the Town.	-	BPW	PB, PED, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Low	Medium
3-4	Work with the Police Department to develop a strategic traffic enforcement plan.	-	PD	BPW, BOS, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Low	Medium
3-5	Consider the implementation of interactive Speed Indication Signage at select locations	-	PD	BPW, BOS, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Low	Medium
3-6	Address safety issues related to heavy truck traffic in North Fairhaven, especially traffic associated with the quarry in Acushnet.	LU	BPW	PD, BOS, PB, PED, TA, NFTA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Medium	Medium
Goal 4: Improve maintenance of Town-wide transportation system.							
4-1	Prepare a sidewalk inventory and construction/maintenance plan.	S, LU	BPW	PB, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Low	Medium
4-2	Consider implementation of a 50/50 Sidewalk Match Program, where cost of maintaining sidewalks is shared by the municipality and property owners.	S	BOS	BPW	Short-term (1-5 years)	Low	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
4-3	Prepare a Town-wide pavement management plan.	-	BPW	PB	Short-term (1-5 years)	Low	Medium
4-4	Work to upgrade existing pedestrian facilities to conform to current Americans with Disabilities Act/Architectural Access Board (ADA/AAB) standards.	S	BPW	COD	Short-term (1-5 years)	Medium	High
4-5	Work with MassDOT to upgrade existing traffic signals along Route 6 and Route 240.	-	BPW	PB, BOS	Mid-term (5-10 years)	High	High
4-6	Upgrade existing pavement markings and signage Town-wide.	-	BPW	BOS	Mid-term (5-10 years)	Medium	Medium

Historic and Cultural Resources (HC)

Goal 1: Enact a Demolition Review Bylaw.

1-1	Schedule one or more public meetings to introduce the topic and initiate community discussions.	LU	FHC	PB	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High
1-2	Formulate bylaw components based on public input.	LU	FHC	BD, PED	Short-term (1-5 years)	Difficult	High
1-3	Consider production of publicly-available materials to accompany a new bylaw; i.e. a reference booklet that provides relevant information regarding the bylaw for property owners, realtors, and community members, and a communications program to inform and assist property owners subject to bylaw.	LU	FHC	BD, PED	Short-term (1-5 years)	Difficult	High

Goal 2: Expand Understanding of Historic Resources in the Town.

2-1	Complete historic resource inventories of two neighborhoods or landscapes (farmsteads, culturally-significant open space, etc.) as part of a broader inventory.	-	FHC	FHS, PL, WMFH	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
2-2	Expand use of 20th century history in heritage programming.	-	OT	FHS, NMI-CMS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
2-3	Utilize historic development to guide planning and zoning efforts for mixed-use development.	ED	FHC	PED, EDC	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	Medium
Goal 3: Establish local historic district(s).							
3-1	Create a local historic district study committee, under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 40C, General Laws.	-	FHC	-	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High
3-2	Utilize historic resource inventory form (see Goal 2) to determine the historic significance of the local historic district and approximate boundaries.	LU	LHDSC	FHC, PB, BD	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High
3-3	Initiate public opinion surveys and gauge public interest. Use newspaper articles, newsletters, local access TV stations, and other forums to educate, inform, and answer questions.	ED, LU	LHDSC	FHC, PB, BD	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
3-4	Produce a preliminary study report including proposed local historic district methodology, significance, boundary justification, and potential design review guidelines.	LU	LHDSC	PB, BD	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	Medium
Goal 4: Link Historic Preservation with Economic Development.							
4-1	Prepare/sponsor National Register nominations for threatened buildings and areas.	ED, PSF	FHC	ROSC, PED	Ongoing	Moderate	Low/Medium
4-2	Advertise National Register status to realtors and developers, encouraging the use of tax credits and highlighting successful historic tax credit rehabilitation projects, such as the potential rehabilitation at Oxford School Residences when completed.	H, ED	FHC	PED, EDC	Ongoing	Minimal	Low/Medium

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
4-3	Use signage and wayfinding to advertise Fairhaven's historic resources and neighborhoods. Facilitate and encourage visitation to historic areas outside of downtown by cross-promoting historic resources and amenities such as eateries and shops.	ED	FHC	OT, BPW	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	Medium

Sustainability (S)

Goal 1: Establish systems for assessing, tracking, and reporting on the Town's sustainability performance.							
1-1	Conduct an energy baseline assessment for municipal operations and community-wide.	H, PFS, T	BPW, Schools, TA	Local Utilities, GF	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	Medium
1-2	Complete a local government operations greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory.	PFS	BPW, Schools, TA	GF	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
1-3	Complete a community-scale GHG inventory.	LU, H, PFS, T	PED, GF	Local Utilities	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Difficult	Medium
1-4	Develop or procure a data management system that tracks, at a minimum, municipal operations energy and water consumption, costs, and associated GHG emissions.	PFS	TA	All other Town departments	Short-term (1-5 years)	Difficult	High
Goal 2: Lead by example through continuous improvement of the energy efficiency of resource use within government operations and promotion of community energy efficiency sustainability programs.							
2-1	Conduct energy audits at Town facilities and develop a plan for the implementation of resulting Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs).	PFS	BPW, Schools, GF	TA, FC, CapPC	Long-term (10-20 years)	Difficult	Low
2-2	Expand the existing streetlight energy efficiency program.	PFS, T	BPW	TA, FC, CapPC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
2-3	Undertake a vehicle fleet assessment to ascertain opportunities to decrease fleet fuel consumption by right-sizing vehicles for their tasks and replacing older vehicles with more efficient ones.	PFS	BPW, TA	All other Town departments, FC, CapPC, GF	Long-term (10-20 years)	Moderate	Medium
2-4	Develop and implement a Green Fleet Policy to guide the future purchase and use of municipal fleet vehicles.	PFS	BPW, TA, GF	All other Town departments	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
2-5	Incorporate sustainability and resiliency decision-making criteria into the Town's capital improvement program.	LU, H, ED, PFS, T, OSR, HC	TA, PED, BPW	CapPC, GF	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
2-6	Seek ways to increase municipal operations and community-wide waste diversion rates to reduce solid waste disposal.	PFS	BoH, BPW	GF, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Difficult	Low
2-7	Provide information to the community about free and discounted energy audits, appliance rebates, and other energy improvement programs available to residents and businesses.	H, ED, HC	BPW, GF	BD	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
2-8	Educate Town residents about stormwater issues and proper management.	LU, OSR	BPW	ConCom, GF	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
2-9	Work with Green Fairhaven to expand their mission of promoting sustainability among the community.	LU, ED, PFS, T, OSR, HC	PED	GF	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High
2-10	Seek opportunities to adaptively reuse existing buildings to meet Town as well as community needs, for example, the new or joint Public Safety, and identify pathways to ensure that the transfer of surplus municipal facilities to private entities include provisions for adaptive reuse, for example, the conversion of the Oxford School Building into a senior housing complex.	LU, H, ED, PFS, HC	BOS, BPW, CapPC	PB, BD, FC, CPC, PD, FD, HA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
Goal 3: Enhance Fairhaven's resiliency to the likely impacts of a changing climate.							
3-1	Invest in infrastructure improvements that will protect the Town from the impacts of sea level rise, storm surge, and other flooding events, as well as other applicable natural hazards refer to the Town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.	LU, ED, PFS, T, OSR, HC	EM, BPW, PED	TA, FC, CapPC, LEPC	Long-term (10-20 years)	Difficult	High
3-2	Update the Town's stormwater regulations to emphasize low-impact development and green infrastructure, while considering projected precipitation/flooding conditions.	LU, OSR	BPW, PED, PB	ConCom	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
3-3	Incorporate projected climate conditions into emergency response and evacuation plans.	PFS, T	EM, FD, PD	LEPC	Long-term (10-20 years)	Moderate	Medium
3-4	Address the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)-identified conflict points along the community's evacuation routes.	T	EM, FD, PD	LEPC, Schools	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
3-5	Establish neighborhood networks of residents and businesses that are educated on sustainability and climate change resiliency and able to communicate effectively, especially to vulnerable citizens, during periods of emergency.	LU, ED, PFS, T, OSR, HC	BOH, EM, FD, PD, PED	COA, COD, LEPC, GF	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
3-6	Enhance the Town's open space and unused sites with green infrastructure (for example, rain gardens and permeable pavers) to improve the Town's stormwater management capabilities and minimize its vulnerabilities to flooding.	PFS, OSR	BPW, RD	TA, FC, CapPC, GF	Mid-term (6-10 years)	Moderate	High
3-7	Incorporate existing and projected future climate conditions into the Town's zoning bylaw to promote (re)development patterns that minimize exposure to known hazards.	LU, ED	PED, PB	--	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
Goal 4: Position Fairhaven to leverage state, regional, and national resources for sustainability and resiliency.							
4-1	After identifying municipal baseline energy consumption and improvement opportunities, evaluate the Town's potential for Green Community designation; establish a clear plan for the Town to pursue this designation and associated funding, if practicable.	LU, ED, PFS, T, OSR, HC	PED, PB, BPW, GF	TA, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Difficult	Medium
4-2	Adopt the STAR Community Rating System as a framework for making Fairhaven a more sustainable and resilient community.	LU, ED, PFS, T, OSR, HC	PED, GF, BD	TA, BOS	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	High
Goal 5: Adopt land use, zoning, and building code policies that support healthy, sustainable development.							
5-1	Adopt green building standards to minimize the direct and indirect environmental impacts of major commercial and residential construction in the Town; refer to examples such as the International Green Construction Code and ANSI/ASHRAE/IES/USGBC Standard 189.1-2014, <i>Standard for the Design of High Performance Green Buildings</i> .	H, ED, HC	PED, PB, BD, GF	WC, BOS, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
5-2	Consider enhancing the Town's zoning regulations and permitting procedures to identify opportunities to incentivize renewable energy installations (for example, waiving permitting fees for qualifying systems), and promoting such incentives.	LU, ED	PED, PB, BD	GF	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High
5-3	Address in advance potential conflicts between renewable energy systems, particularly solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems, and the establishment of local historic districts.	LU, HC	PED, PB	HC, LHDSC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	High

Implementation

#	Recommendation	Related Elements	Implementation Leadership	Implementation Partners	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Priority
5-4	Adopt a Complete Streets Policy to promote a balanced transportation system that enhances the safety, health, and well-being of Town residents and visitors.	T	BPW	PB, BOS, TA	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
5-5	Require that affordable housing be built to sustainable standards (such as LEED, the Well Building Standard, or Enterprise Green Communities) to ensure that such housing stock is healthy and promotes occupant well-being.	LU, H	PED, PB, BD, HA	COA, COD, WC	Short-term (1-5 years)	Moderate	Medium
5-6	Adopt a comprehensive outdoor lighting ordinance to minimize light pollution such as glare, light trespass, and skyglow and to reduce community-scale energy consumption; refer to the International Dark-Sky Association's Model Lighting Ordinance.	LU, OSR	PED, PB	RD	Short-term (1-5 years)	Minimal	Medium

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- ▶ Fairhaven Wastewater Management Plan, 2013
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