
The Hingham Master Plan Update

Funding provided by the Metro Boston Consortium for
Sustainable Communities

Prepared for the Town of Hingham

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Executive Summary

This report documents the first stage of the Hingham Master Plan Update Initiative. This project was a joint effort between the Town of Hingham Department of Community Planning, the Hingham Planning Board, MAPC, various stakeholder organizations, and Hingham residents. The purpose of the project was to assist the Town of Hingham in updating its master plan goals in the context of the South Shore Coalition subregion and *MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region*, the regional plan for sustainable and equitable development and preservation in the MAPC region.

Master Plan Goals Update

- The goals update consolidated 57 goals into 24 goals, eliminating some level of duplication and creating a consistent hierarchy across all goals categories. The update also considered goals related to the required and optional elements of a master plan under House Bill 1859: The Zoning Reform Act.
- **Housing Goals:** The housing goals were updated to reflect statewide and regional emphasis on housing production and fair housing.
- **New goals:** New goals were written to reflect planning for reduced energy consumption.

Regional Plan Self-Assessment

- The Hingham Master Plan goals were found to be highly congruent with the MetroFuture goals.
- The alternative scenarios that were modeled varied with regards to how they contributed to housing growth and additional work should be done with CommunityViz to continue to explore potential development and redevelopment options.
- Of the four opt-in requirements, Hingham clearly meets the requirement for establishing an economic development district but would need to make changes to zoning and other regulations to meet the requirements related to housing and low impact development.

Public Participation

- The plan utilized an extensive public participation and outreach program including an on-line survey which received 380 responses, twelve public meetings and two scenario planning workshop.
- **Survey results:** The on-line survey helped to identify the top five strengths and challenges in Hingham.

Top Five Strengths

Location by the ocean
Schools
Open space/natural resources
Location in the region
Community pride

Top Five Challenges

High cost of living
Traffic
Lack of commercial tax base
Elected officials
Lack of arts/cultural offerings

Scenario Planning Workshops

- Modeling software (Community Viz) was used to analyze alternative development scenarios for the Hingham Shipyard, South Hingham, and Hingham Square.
- The two workshops attracted a total of 110 attendees who discussed the alternatives in small groups.

Master Plan Update Implementation Plan

The implementation plan consists of suggested actions for the town to undertake as it moves forward with reviewing and updating the master plan.

- Potential new master plan sections
 - Energy
 - Implementation
 - Water management
 - Public health
- Incorporate Low Impact Development stormwater regulations into site plan review.
- Discuss implications of zoning reform.
- Work with MAPC to use scenario modeling tool (CommunityViz) for future analysis of development options.
- Draft, adopt, and implement a housing production plan.
- Explore economic development options related to regional tourism.
- Continue with work on impacts of flood zone mapping changes.

Chapter One: Introduction

Project Funding: the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

In October of 2010, [MAPC](#) was awarded a \$4 million [Sustainable Communities Grant](#) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The grant supports the implementation of MetroFuture, the region's 30-year plan. MetroFuture is a smart growth plan that promotes efficient transportation systems; conserving land and natural resources; improving the health and education of residents; increasing economic development and equitable opportunities for prosperity.

To administer this grant, MAPC created the Metro Boston Consortium for Sustainable Communities, a coalition whose purpose is to implement the grant's planning work. Membership in the consortium was open to all municipalities as well as non-profit organizations. Hingham became a member of the consortium which enabled the town to submit a proposal to receive a place-based grant under the program. The town submitted a successful proposal for the Hingham Master Plan Update Initiative.

This report documents the Hingham Master Plan Update Initiative planning process. This project was a joint effort between the Town of Hingham Department of Community Planning, the Hingham Planning Board, MAPC, various stakeholder organizations, and Hingham residents. The purpose of the project was to assist the Town of Hingham in updating its master plan goals in the context of the South Shore Coalition subregion and MetroFuture, the regional development plan.

Project Introduction

The Metro Boston Consortium for Sustainable Communities' goals include promoting local planning and zoning for compact growth and promoting municipal or multi-municipal land use planning. A broader goal of the Consortium is the advancement of regional equity by encouraging regional connections and promoting access to high opportunity communities. As part of the Consortium's efforts to advance regional equity and MetroFuture through place-based planning efforts, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) will work with municipal planning staff and community stakeholders from the Town of Hingham and interested stakeholders from neighboring communities to develop a new Goals section of the Town's Master Plan. Creation of the new Goals section will involve three elements:

1. Implementation of a public participation process that will involve a local and regional network of stakeholders in the process of developing the Town's new Master Plan Goals
2. Local scenario planning to facilitate the understanding of potential impacts and benefits from the selection of new Master Plan Goals
3. Comparison of the new Master Plan Goals standards to MetroFuture Goals in order to identify challenges and opportunities relative to the implementation of regional goals at the municipal level.

Each of these tasks is described in more detail in later chapters of this report.

About Hingham and the South Shore

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council has created a classification system of municipalities in Massachusetts to support planning, analysis and policy development. MAPC has identified five basic community types and nine sub-types. Hingham is classified as a Maturing Suburb with a sub-type classification of Established Suburb. This community type is characterized by lower density development which is approaching buildout. These lower density suburbs are comprised primarily of owner-occupied single family homes on ¾-1 acre lots. Less than 20% of the land area is vacant and developable. New growth comes from teardowns, greenfield development and some redevelopment. The population is stable or growing moderately.

Figure 1 shows Hingham and the entire South Shore. Figure 2 shows Hingham.

Figure 1: The South Shore Coalition

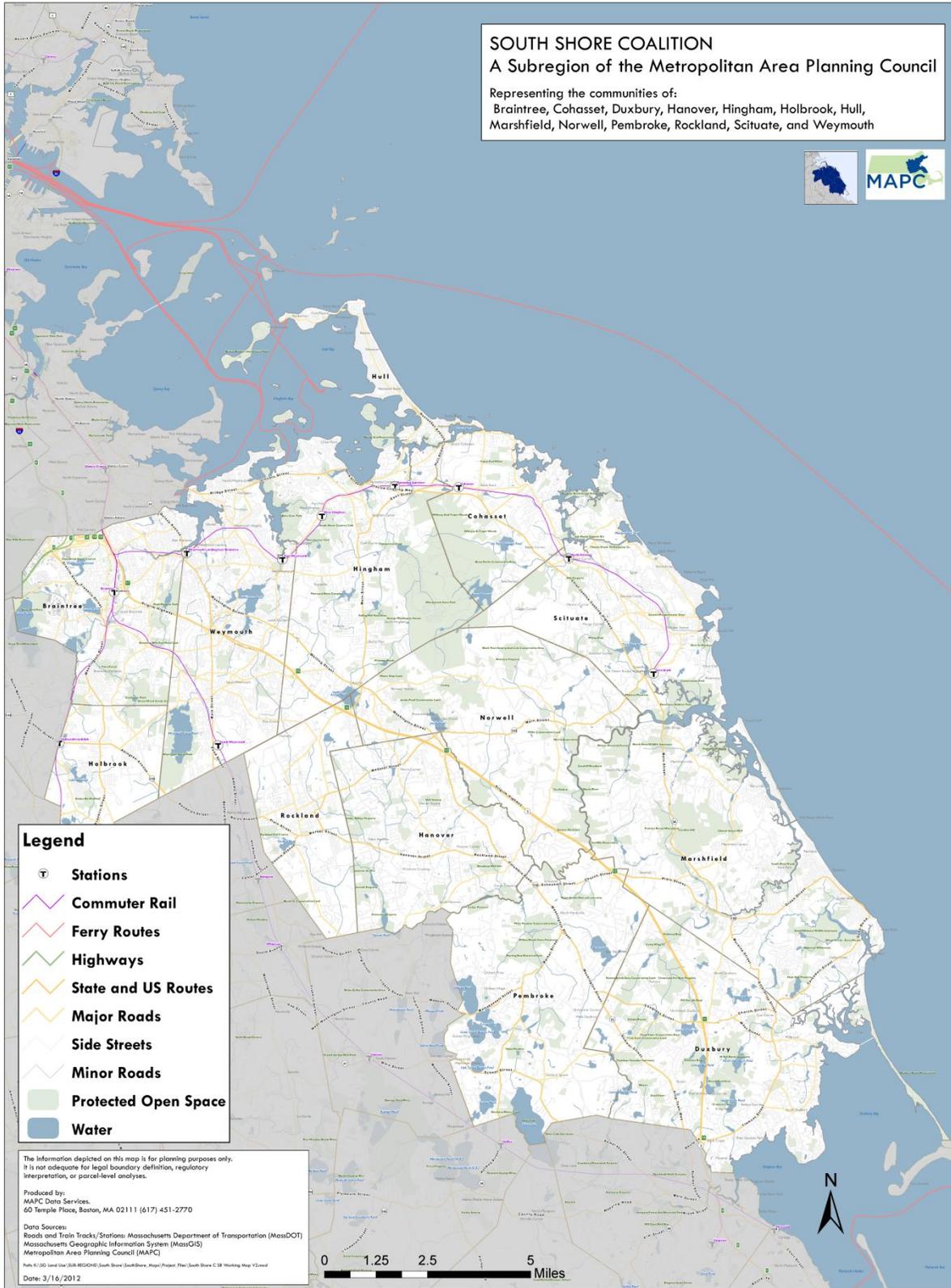
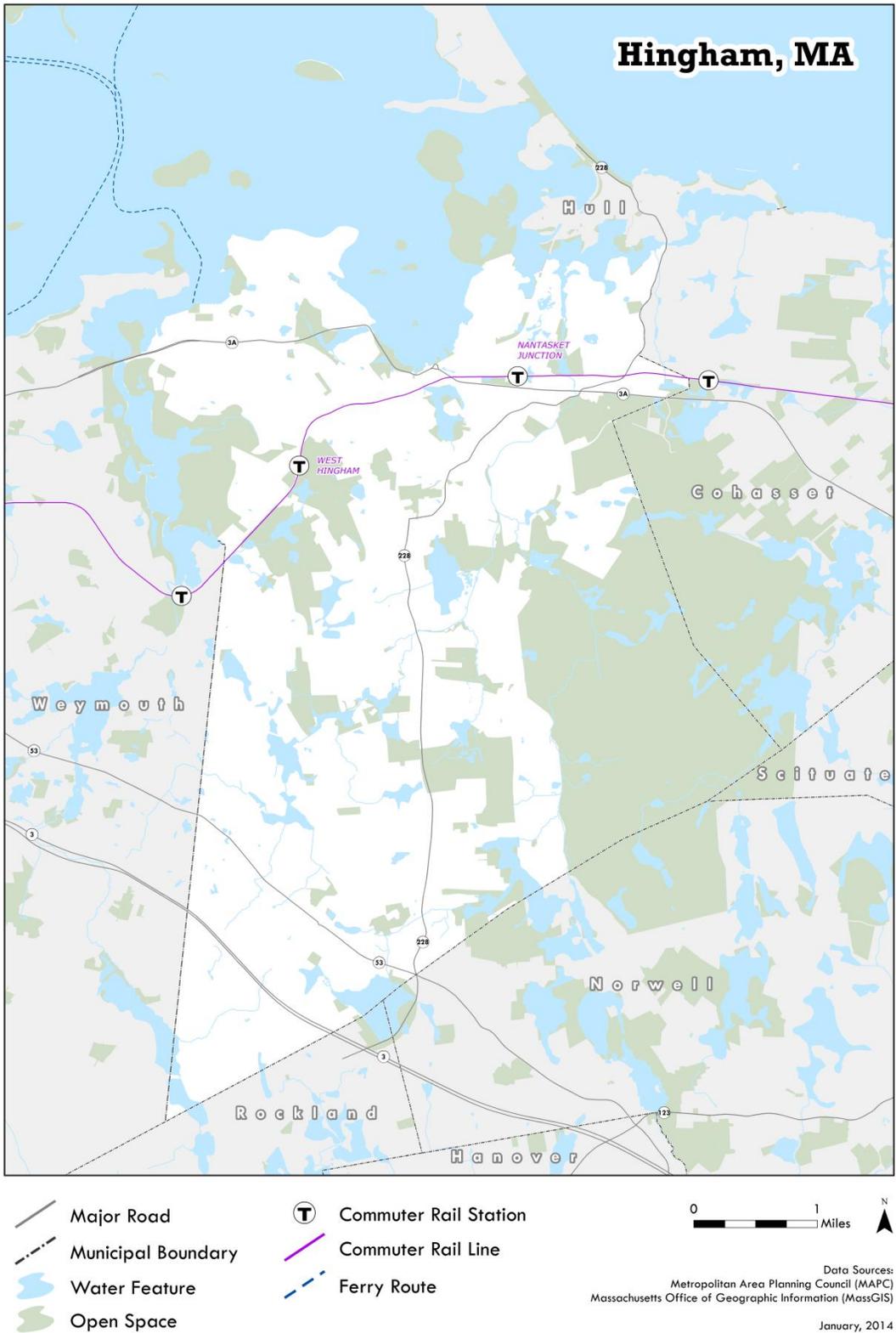


Figure 2: Hingham



About Hingham

Basic information on population, income, education and housing are provided below. At the start of this project, MAPC prepared an analysis of basic demographic data that showed Hingham in relationship to the South Shore subregion. This information can be found in Appendix A.

Total population – The total population according to the 2010 Census was 22,157. The increase from 2000 to 2010 was 2,275 people. Hingham is the fourth most populated community in the South Shore.

As is the trend across the region, average household size declined by 5%, from 2.72 in 2000 to 2.59 in 2010.

Age - Hingham has the highest percentage of people over 65 in the South Shore. Between 2000 and 2010 the number of Hingham residents aged 65 and over increased by 55% compared to 16% statewide. Much of this might be the result of Linden Ponds and other age-restricted developments in Hingham built during that interval, which attracted new seniors to the town. This trend is highlighted in the report “Aging in Hingham: A Community Affair” which has a wealth of statistics about the older population of Hingham.

Race and Ethnicity - 95% of Hingham’s population is White, Non-Hispanic. In contrast, the MAPC region is only 72% White, Non-Hispanic and 28% Black, Hispanic, Asian, or another non-White race. Only 5% of Hingham’s population is made of these groups. At 1.5%, Asians make up the second-largest group by race.

Future Population - In January 2014, MAPC released population and housing demand projections for Metro Boston out to the year 2040, and provisional forecasts for individual cities and towns out to the year 2030. Our projections include two scenarios for regional growth, each reflecting different assumptions about key trends. The “Status Quo” scenario is based on the continuation of existing rates of births, deaths, migration, and housing occupancy. Alternatively, the “Stronger Region” scenario explores how changing trends could result in higher population growth, greater housing demand, and a substantially larger workforce.

According to the Status Quo scenario, Hingham will add 1,562 residents, a 7% increase, between 2010 and 2030. According to Stronger Region, Hingham will add 1,085 residents, for a 5% increase over those two decades. The MetroFuture projections also show that Hingham will likely grow older over time. The population over 65 will grow by 69% between 2010 and 2030 under the Status Quo scenario, and by 67% under Stronger Region. Notably, the population under 15 will decrease by 18% under Status Quo and by 20% under Stronger Region, consistent with regional trends toward a smaller school-age population.

Income - Hingham is a community with relatively high levels of income and educational attainment. Half of Hingham households make more than \$100,000 per year but one in five Hingham households makes less than \$40,000 per year. An estimated 2.3% of Hingham households have incomes below the poverty line, the lowest poverty rate on the South Shore. In contrast, the poverty rate in the MAPC region was 10.3% in 2010.

Education - Over 60% of people 25 years and older have a bachelors degree or higher, third highest among South Shore communities.

Employment - Nearly one in four employed Hingham residents work in the Education/Health Care/Social Assistance industries. One in three employed Hingham residents work in finance or management-related industries. Between 4.5% and 7.7% of Hingham residents over 16 are unemployed, a rate similar to other South Shore communities.

Housing - While Hingham is primarily a community of owner-occupied single-family houses, one quarter of all units are in multifamily housing, either apartments, condominiums, townhouses, or attached dwellings. Multifamily housing is split evenly between units in structures with more than 20 units, and units in smaller buildings. 80% of Hingham housing units are owner-occupied.

When analyzing housing, it is important to look at a measure of *housing cost burden*. Households that spend more than 30% of income on housing are considered to be *housing cost burdened*. About 32% of Hingham homeowners are cost-burdened, a rate lower than all but one South Shore community. Households that spend more than 50% of income on housing are considered to be severely *housing cost burdened*. About 12.5% of Hingham homeowners are severely cost-burdened, a rate lower than most South Shore communities.

This measure can also be applied to renters. More than 55% of Hingham renters are cost-burdened, a rate higher than most South Shore communities. More than one in three Hingham renters is severely cost-burdened (spending 50% or more), the second-highest rate among South Shore communities.

Chapter Two: Updated Master Plan Goals, 2014

The Scope of Work: An Overview

The scope of work for this project included the writing of a set of draft goals that address the required elements of a Master Plan under the Comprehensive Land Use Reform and Partnership Act (CLURPA), a piece of legislation first introduced in 2011, intended to update antiquated planning and zoning laws to facilitate prompt and predictable permitting for jobs and housing, strong community planning, and natural resource and public health protection. The bill went through several iterations and the most recent version is House Bill 1859: An Act Promoting the Planning and Development of Sustainable Communities. It is this bill that the draft master plan goals are written to address. It will be referred to as the zoning reform bill in this report.

This streamlined zoning reform bill authorizes new zoning techniques for municipalities, provides more certainty to land owners and developers, and authorizes strong financial and regulatory incentives for creating walkable, vibrant centers, housing development, and protecting open space. Master planning requirements are modernized by giving communities the ability to tailor planning to local circumstances including linking public health and planning. Additionally, the bill grants cities and towns the option to substitute a minor subdivision process for Approval Not Required (ANR) developments, which are a primary driver of inefficient, low density growth.

The proposed zoning reform bill has five required elements and seven optional elements for a master plan. This review is for the purposes of helping guide any additional work that Hingham may undertake on their master plan in the future. Recommendations for future work are also included in Chapter Seven: Master Plan Update Implementation Plan.

The Required Elements of a Master Plan Under the Zoning Reform Bill

1. **Goals and Objectives** – The current master plan includes goals and objectives.
2. **Housing** – The current master plan contains a section on housing.
3. **Natural resources and energy management** - The current master plan includes a section on natural resources but does not include energy management. Energy goals have been drafted for consideration by the town but there should be a new section written on energy management.
4. **Land use and zoning** – The current master plan includes a section on land use and zoning.
5. **Implementation** – The current master plan does not have a section that specifically addresses implementation of the plan.

The Optional Elements of a Master Plan under the Zoning Reform Bill

1. **Economic Development** – The current master plan includes a section on economic development.
2. **Cultural resources** – The current master plan includes a section on cultural and historic resources.
3. **Open space protection and recreation** – The current master plan includes sections on open space protection and recreation.
4. **Infrastructure and capital facilities** – The current master plan includes a section on public facilities but does not address other types of infrastructure specifically.
5. **Transportation** – The current master plan includes a section on transportation.
6. **Water management** – The current master plan does not include a separate section on water management.
7. **Public health** – The current master plan does not include a section on public health.

Recommended Revisions to the Hingham Master Plan Goals

The 2002 Hingham Master Plan - MAPC began the process by reviewing the most recent Master Plan for Hingham from 2002. The 2002 Hingham Master Plan was an update of a plan prepared in 1986. The process of creating this updated version of the Master Plan began in 1996, with the creation of a Zoning By-Law Committee to evaluate and revise the Hingham Zoning By-Law. In 1998, the Zoning By-Law Committee received funding from the Executive Office of Communities and Development (now the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development) for a Community Survey which provided basic information for the master plan. The 1998 Town Meeting created the Master Planning Committee and funded a “Needs Analysis” to kick off the Master Planning Process.

The plan update was completed in several phases during 1999 -2001. It included a visioning session for the general public and significant input from all boards and departments. The Master Plan Committee also employed several consultants including John Brown Associates and the Bluestone Planning Group.

The 2002 Master Plan had a total of fifty-seven (57) goals in nine major categories, a wealth of background data and many recommendations. Since this planning process involved only an update of the master plan goals, only the 2002 goals are addressed in this report.

The *Metropolitan Area Planning Council representatives'* proposed revised master plan goals as follows:

- I. Articulate a Vision Statement for Hingham that supports who we are as a community and the proceeding general and specific goals: **Preserve and nurture community and Hingham's unique sense of place.**
- II. Retain the goals of the 2001 Master Plan in alignment with this vision statement.
- III. Retain any general and specific goals of the 2001 Master Plan in alignment with this vision statement and as articulated in town-wide surveys undertaken by Metropolitan Area Planning Council as part of the master plan goals update process and the 2013 Community Preservation Committee Town Survey.

A. Guiding Land Use Goals

A.1) Promote balanced growth while preserving Hingham's community character

- A.1.1: Maintain and preserve the unique characteristics of the communities, neighborhoods and districts in Hingham.
- A.1.2: Ensure that future planning initiatives and the commensurate land use planning and zoning regulations protect and enhance the aspects of Hingham's existing image and character that most citizens surveys indicate epitomize the positive physical character of the community, including the town's village character, attractive and vital residential areas, scenic vistas, protected open spaces, historic buildings, historic districts, streetscapes, and coastal resources.
- A.1.3: Increase the amount of protected open space at properties in the Accord Pond Aquifer Protection District, in which the percentage of impervious development over the aquifer is 25% or greater, to increase recharge of the aquifer and to mitigate the increased development risks.
- A.1.4: Increase the amount of protected open space in key locations to connect open spaces that encourage passive leisure use and protect iconic vistas, such as the waterfront and the meadows at Glad Tidings Plain.
- A.1.5: Encourage land use planning and zoning regulations that concentrates buildings on a parcel and maximizes any open space surrounding the built environment, similar to the 18th and 19th century system of plains and wide shoulders found along Main Street, in appropriate locations.

A.1.6: Encourage land use planning and zoning regulations that supports a diversity of housing types, mixed-use residential and commercial development, and concentrates development at transportation nodes such as train stations.

A.1.7: Ensure that zoning regulations and economic development initiatives promote development that balances growth and economic benefits with the need to protect the scenic and historic character of existing neighborhoods.

A.1.8: Encourage and support high-quality commercial, retail and residential development in South Hingham and the Hingham Shipyard while balancing the needs of abutting neighborhoods and protecting the environment with Hingham's long-term fiscal needs.

A.2) Promote quality design

A.2.1: Support and strengthen the design review process to maintain high standards in all development projects.

A.2.2: Develop design standards geared towards historic districts that will facilitate new energy technologies while maintaining historic character.

A.3) Improve the gateways to Hingham

A.3.1: Improve primary entrances to the town from major roadways to create gateways that are welcoming, consistent with the Town's sense of place, and enhance visitors' first impressions of the town.

A.3.2: Eliminate sprawl and minimize the number of new curb cuts along major roadways by amending zoning regulations to require clustering of commercial and residential uses.

A.4) Strengthen the town's capacity for planning and management

A.4.1: Establish and staff the position of professional Town Planner to assist the Planning Board in developing and facilitating planning initiatives and drafting zoning regulations to support the Town's Master Plan vision and goals.

A.4.2: Maintain adequate staffing of all key town departments to ensure a high level of planning, management, and oversight.

A.4.3: Utilize technology such as Geographic Information Systems, and other computer mapping software, to support planning board reviews and current and long-range planning.

A.4.4: Continually review and amend zoning regulations to ensure that they support current general land use goals as stated in the Master Plan.

B. Economic Development Goals

B.1) Facilitate and sustain the development of local businesses: Businesses that are owned and operated locally are an important component of the local economy; studies show that more of the money spent in a local business stays in the community. Local businesses also provide a unique destination for visitors and area shoppers.

B.1.1: Involve business owners and the Chamber of Commerce in a town-led review of current zoning, permitting, and licensing regulations and accompanying policies to ensure that the town is encouraging balanced business district(s) rather than hindering local business creation, siting, and activity.

B.1.2: Review zoning, permitting and licensing regulations in the Business B Districts to encourage mixed-use commercial, retail, and residential uses.

B.2) Capitalize on the unique strengths of each commercial district.

B.2.1: Enhance the tax base by encouraging a continued balance of commercial, industrial and residential development in South Hingham and the Hingham Shipyard to take advantage of their respective key locations and existing amenities and infrastructure. Develop a comprehensive master plan in each proposed commercial and industrial district to expand the areas' infrastructure to protect against detrimental environmental impact and mitigate future unintended consequences of these development initiatives such as congestion, reduced property values and higher municipal service costs at variance with the intended objective.

B.2.2: Evaluate each independent project and district/site master plan in the context of the lifecycle of the proposed facility assessing the constraints, opportunities and benefits derived from the adjacent projects and district/site master plans. Evaluate the infrastructure capacity, the detailed financial and cost analysis, municipal services financial cost impact analysis, environmental impact and social consequences. Address the projects collectively to mitigate greater costs, resolve potentially incompatible elements and greater congestion, construction and environmental impacts of longer duration.

B.2.3: Preserve the historic village character and walkability of Downtown Hingham and the harbor area while seeking ways to encourage appropriate retail and residential development and make connections between downtown and the waterfront.

B.2.4: Undertake a market analysis to inform future economic development initiatives.

C. Natural Resources and Energy Management Goals

C.1) Protect and enhance Hingham's natural environment for the benefit of all.

- C.1.1: Protect additional land and open space of all types to sustain viable populations of native plant and wildlife species.
- C.1.2: Develop land management plans for conservation properties to minimize human impact while encouraging passive recreational uses.
- C.1.3: Protect additional coastal land in consideration of the potential impacts of sea level rise, acquire properties as needed.

C.2) Protect water resources

- C.2.1: Protect groundwater aquifers and surface water supplies to ensure sufficient clean water for current and future users.
- C.2.2: Protect Hingham's freshwater and saltwater resources from pollution and incompatible development.

C.3) Reduce energy consumption in residential and municipally-owned buildings

- C.3.1: Educate residents about how to achieve energy savings at home and programs available to assist with weatherization.
- C.3.2: Undertake energy audits in municipal buildings.
- C.3.3: Develop a municipal energy reduction and action plan.
- C.3.4: Develop photovoltaic electric resources on commercial, industrial and institutional building roofs and wind energy sources at the landfill.

D. Historic and Cultural Resources Goals

D.1) Protect Hingham's historical and cultural resources

- D.1.1: Establish additional Historic Districts, connect existing Historic Districts, and establish Main Street as a Historic District listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places.
- D.1.2: Continue to update Hingham's historic property inventory, databases, and handbooks to help educate residential and commercial property owners about the historical significance and historic treatment techniques and resources for their properties.
- D.1.3: Provide adequate administrative staffing resources and support to the Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission.

D.1.4: Identify and add resources to Hingham's existing historic property inventory, including historical buildings and scenic thoroughfares.

D.1.5: Continue to leverage Community Preservation Act funds to preserve historic properties.

E. Open Space Goals

E.1) Expand Hingham's network of protected open spaces

E.1.1: Determine priority parcels for open space protection and develop criteria for identifying lands that meet multiple criteria.

E.1.2: Develop a land protection plan that preserves priority landscape types and provides a connected system of conservation open spaces and recreation areas throughout the town.

E.1.3: Expand the Open Space Map with updated open space parcels locations, access locations and pedestrian pathways connecting contiguous open space parcels.

E.2) Utilize a variety of methods to finance open space protection

E.2.1: Develop partnerships between the public and private sectors to support land protection efforts.

E.2.2: Review zoning and subdivision regulations to determine any necessary revisions in support of land protection efforts.

E.2.3: Improve public awareness and educational outreach initiatives on the benefits of open space protection.

E.2.4: Leverage Community Preservation Act funds to acquire additional open space.

F. Active Recreation Goals

F.1.1 Provide new recreational venues to expand the variety of athletic/sports options available to Hingham's citizens on a town-wide basis.

F.1.2 Adequately finance improvements to existing and previously planned recreational venues.

F.1.3 Seek new parks and playground sites in now underserved neighborhoods and densely populated neighborhoods.

F.1.4 Improve maintenance and coordination of recreation activities at Hingham's many recreational sites.

G. Housing Goals

G.1) Provide and maintain economically-diverse housing while continuing to meet State M.G.L. Chapter 40B requirements of 10% affordable units.

G.1.1: Develop and adopt a Department of Housing and Community Development-approved Housing Production plan to assess housing needs and housing demand, determine the constraints and opportunities of the existing housing inventory, and identify strategies to create and preserve new affordable housing units.

G.1.2 Identify locations to encourage the proactive development of diversified affordable housing opportunities similar to friendly 40Bs through the Local Initiative Program.

G.1.3 Ensure that existing deed-restricted housing is monitored for compliance with restrictions, including occupancy by income-eligible households.

G.1.4 Leverage Community Preservation Act funds to create and preserve housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families.

G.2) Encourage and maintain a mix of housing types in various locations throughout the town by supporting development that provides for households at all income levels and encourages a diversity of age and families and housing types of a scale and character consistent with Hingham's character.

G.2.1: Enact an accessory unit bylaw in the Downtown Overlay District tailored to Hingham's specific needs that will allow secondary units while respecting this neighborhood character.

G.2.2: Research options for regulating "teardowns" and building appropriate replacement housing and enact dimensional controls in the residential zoning districts.

G.2.3: Promote mixed-use development in Downtown Hingham and the Hingham Shipyard to ensure a vibrant community.

G.2.4: Develop design guidelines that address, appropriate neighborhood-level densities.

G.3) Affirmatively further fair housing throughout the town.

G.3.1: Ensure use of affirmative fair marketing plans and processes for the rental or sale of affordable housing units.

G.3.2: Educate land use decision makers on fair housing requirements and their specific fair housing obligations

H. Transportation Goals

H.1) Accommodate all modes of transportation

H.1.1: Adopt a “Complete Streets” policy which focuses on accommodating all roadway users by creating a road network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes.

H.1.2: Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the commuter boat terminal and commuter rail stations.

H.1.3: Adopt measures to encourage or require new commercial developments to implement traffic demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce reliance on single-occupant vehicles.

H.1.4: Encourage the development of a local trolley bus system for local transportation needs that will mitigate the need for single vehicle trips to all Town locations.

H.2) Make capital improvement to Hingham’s roadways for the safety of all users

H.2.1: Prioritize roadway projects that provide safety improvements over those that expand roadway capacity. Participate in the historic roadway program that allows the reconstruction of streets within the existing minimum width right of way.

H.2.2: Address safety concerns at key locations, including the 3A rotary. Continue planning initiatives to replace the 3A rotary with an intersection.

H.3) Ensure that context-sensitive solutions are used to address transportation needs

H.3.1: Utilize design guidelines for roadway improvements to maintain the historic character of the community.

H.3.2: Make improvements to the gateways to the town.

H.3.3: Review parking at the commuter rail stations and commuter boat terminal to ensure that there is adequate capacity and to minimize impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.

H.3.4: Coordinate transportation improvements with municipalities that share transportation infrastructure.

I. Infrastructure and Capital Facilities Goals

I.1) Maintain a high standard of municipal services.

I.1.1 Ensure that adequate facilities and staffing are available to maintain a high standard of municipal services.

I.1.2: Continue to provide an excellent educational system.

I.1.3: Clarify maintenance responsibilities for town-owned facilities, properties and recreational sites to ensure timely and cost-effective maintenance.

I.2) Plan for future capital and human resource needs

I.2.1: Retain ownership of town-owned properties to provide sites for new municipal facilities that may become needed in the future.

I.2.2: Continue to plan for and anticipate future major capital facility construction needs.

I.2.3: Establish a Town Facilities Management Committee. Focus on Capital Renewal planning and limit Capital Projects to program required projects.

Chapter Three: Regional Plan Self Assessment

This section of the report evaluates the Hingham master plan and its goals in relationship to MetroFuture, the regional development plan. This is done at three levels:

- Comparing the recommended master plan goals to the MetroFuture goals.
- An assessment of the alternative scenarios with regards to the housing and jobs projections.
- An analysis of Hingham's regulations with regards to the opt-in provisions of the proposed zoning reform legislation.

Purpose of the task

The current version of the proposed (but not yet enacted) zoning reform legislation states that all elements of a master plan must be assessed against a regional plan. This Hingham Master Plan Update provides an opportunity for this assessment and to consider the relationship between Town goals and the Region-wide goals set forth in MetroFuture, the adopted regional plan for the Boston Metropolitan Region. The self assessment task of the project will serve to inform both the Town and MAPC about challenges and opportunities relative to the implementation of current regional goals at a municipal level.

The scope of work called for the self assessment to be performed by using the preferred scenario based on the draft goals for Hingham and a MetroFuture scenario for the town. The results of the assessment will be reviewed with the Hingham Planning Staff to determine where the draft master plan goals can be adjusted and where changes to the draft goals would be a greater challenge given public input and other information collected through the process.

The alternative scenarios planning process was very informative and engaged members of the public as well as the Planning Board. It did not formally result in the adoption of a preferred scenario but presented an opportunity to explore a variety of options for different parts of the town.

The following self-assessment begins with an analysis of the recommended Hingham master plan goals as they relate to the 65 MetroFuture goals. This analysis shows where the recommended Hingham goals are congruent with the MetroFuture goals, points to MetroFuture goals that are more appropriately addressed at a state-wide policy level rather than by municipalities and highlights areas where the town may want to do additional work to align the town's master plan more closely with MetroFuture.

Summary of the self-assessment

MetroFuture is built on 65 goals which describe a vision for the entire region whose implementation requires many actions by a wide array of stakeholders including municipalities,

regional entities, state agencies, institutions and non-profits. These goals also speak to a range of community types from the densest urban communities, regional urban centers, suburban and rural communities. Therefore, one would not expect a municipal master plan to cover all of the goals and one would expect that some goals would be more relevant to urban or suburban communities. This analysis focuses on highlighting the Hingham goals that are most congruent with MetroFuture goals and indicating areas where there may not be goals but where the town’s actions are congruent with the goals. There are also other MetroFuture goals that are not relevant at the municipal level.

In general, the Hingham Master Plan shows a high degree of congruence with the MetroFuture goals.

Regional self-assessment: goals

Metro Future Goals	Hingham Goals
The Region will Build on Sustainable Growth Patterns	
1. Population and job growth will be concentrated in municipalities already well served by infrastructure, with slower growth in less developed areas where infrastructure is more limited.	Goal A (1): Promote balanced growth and objective 1.2: Encourage high-quality mixed use development in South Hingham and the Hingham Shipyard.
2. Throughout the region, most new growth will occur through reuse of previously developed land and buildings.	Through the alternatives scenario planning process Hingham identified Hingham Square and the Hingham Shipyard as two areas for further development. The Shipyard is a re-use area and the Square would involve some re-use. The recent expansion of the South Hingham Overlay District promotes development on currently undeveloped parcels and is inconsistent with this regional goal.
3. Brownfields and other polluted sites will be cleaned up and re-used for development or parks.	Redevelopment of the Shipyard and Hingham Square may require remediation of contamination.
4. In suburban municipalities, most new growth will occur near town and village centers.	The proposed emphasis on redevelopment in Hingham Square and Hingham Shipyard is consistent with this regional goal.
5. Most new homes and jobs will be near train stops and bus routes, and new growth will be designed to promote transit use	The additional development anticipated for the Hingham Shipyard area will have access to the commuter ferry. Current zoning does not allow substantial new development near either train

Metro Future Goals	Hingham Goals
	station.
6. High-quality design will help compact development enhance the region's character and livability.	Goal A (2): Promote quality design.
7. Cities, towns and neighborhoods will retain their sense of uniqueness and community character.	Goal A (1): Promote balanced growth.
8. Historic resources will be preserved and enhanced.	Goal D (1): Protect Hingham's historical and cultural resources.
9. The region's landscape will retain its distinctive green spaces and working farms.	Goal E Objective 1.2: Develop a land protection plan that preserves priority landscape types and provides a connected system of conservation and recreation areas throughout the town.
10. Growth in the region will be guided by informed, inclusive and proactive planning.	There are no specific master plan goals in the Hingham plan that address this but the master plan update process involved extensive resident outreach and participation.
11. The region will be prepared for and resilient to natural disasters and climate change.	Goal C Objective 1.3: Acquire or protect additional coastal land in consideration of the potential impacts of sea level rise.
12. Communities will work together to plan for growth and share resources.	There are no specific master plan goals related to this but the town is a regular participant in the South Shore Coalition; one of 8 MAPC subregions.
Residents will Find Better Housing Choices	
13. Families looking for suburban single-family homes will have a greater choice of smaller homes in more traditional neighborhood settings.	Goal G (2): Encourage and maintain a mix of housing types in various locations throughout the town by supporting development that provides for households at all income levels.
14. An increasing share of the housing in each municipality will be affordable to working-class families and fixed-income seniors.	Goal G (2): Encourage and maintain a mix of housing types in various locations throughout the town by supporting development that provides for households at all income levels.
15. There will be less regional segregation as all municipalities increasingly reflect Metro Boston's growing diversity.	Goal g (3): Affirmatively further fair housing throughout the town.
16. Low-income households will be able to find affordable, adequate, conveniently located housing, in suburbs as well as cities, and they will be able to avoid displacement.	Goal G (1): Provide and maintain economically-diverse housing while meeting the State M.G.L. Chapter 40B requirements.
17. Homelessness will be effectively eliminated	This goal is more relevant at the state and

Metro Future Goals	Hingham Goals
from the region.	regional policy level than at the level of a local master plan.
18. The region’s seniors will have more housing choices and opportunities to downsize while staying in their own community.	Goal G (2): Encourage and maintain a mix of housing types in various locations throughout the town by supporting development that provides for households at all income levels.
19. Persons with physical or mental disabilities will be able to find housing that meets their needs in terms of design, services, and affordability.	The master plan goals address housing broadly with an emphasis on income diversity but do not specifically address housing for individuals with physical or mental disabilities.
20. Urban neighborhoods will boast more appealing housing options for young professionals and their families.	This goal is not relevant because Hingham is not an urban community.
People Will Live in Vital, Well-Education Communities	
21. All communities will be safe, including areas currently afflicted by high rates of crime.	No Hingham goals address public safety as this is usually not part of a master plan.
22. Urban and minority residents will not be disproportionately exposed to pollutants and poor air quality.	No Hingham goals address the issue of environmental equity. Due to the low percentage of minorities and the suburban nature of Hingham, concurrence with this goal is not relevant.
23. All neighborhoods will have access to safe and well-maintained parks, community gardens, and appropriate play spaces for children and youth.	Goal F (3): Seek new parks and playground sites in now underserved neighborhoods and densely populated neighborhoods.
24. Residents in all communities and of all incomes will have access to affordable healthy food.	No Hingham goals address access to food. During the course of this project, this issue was not raised.
25. More residents will build regular physical activity into their daily lives.	The Hingham master plan does not have a public health component and does not address this issue.
26. All residents will have access to affordable health care	This goal is more relevant at the state policy level than at the municipal level.
27. Children and youth will have access to a strong system of early education programs, after school programs, teen centers, and youth organizations.	Goal I Objective 1.2: Continue to provide an excellent educational system.
28. Public schools will provide a high-quality education for all students, not only in the fundamentals, but also in areas like health education, physical education, art, music, civics	Goal I Objective 1.2: Continue to provide an excellent educational system.

Metro Future Goals	Hingham Goals
and science.	
29. More students will graduate from high school and go on to college or career training opportunities.	Goal I Objective 1.2: Continue to provide an excellent educational system. Statistics show that educational attainment levels in Hingham are well above state levels.
30. Municipalities will operate efficiently and will have adequate funding with less reliance on the property tax.	Goal I (1): Maintain a high standard of municipal services. While operational efficiency is a municipal function, the role of the property tax is more of a state-wide policy concern.
31. The region's residents – including youth, seniors and immigrants – will be well informed and engaged in civic life and community planning.	The Hingham master plan does not specifically have a goal that addresses this issue but the master plan update process has included extensive community outreach. Although the immigrant population in Hingham is very low, there are many seniors in town and the master plan outreach included a presentation at the Senior Center.
32. Seniors will remain active members of their communities.	The Master Plan does not include a goal that specifically address this issue but the town contracted with UMASS Boston to prepare a report entitled “Aging in Hingham: A Community Affair”.
Everyone Will Benefit from Increasing Regional Prosperity	
33. Metro Boston will be globally competitive in the knowledge economy.	This goal is best addressed at the regional or state level rather than at the level of a municipal master plan.
34. The region will be a national leader in the green technology and clean energy sectors.	This goal is best addressed at the regional or state level rather than at the level of a municipal master plan.
35. Small business owners and entrepreneurs will play a major role in the region's economy and innovation.	Goal B (1): Facilitate the development of local businesses.
36. Businesses will grow expeditiously thanks to consistent and predictable economic development policies set by an informed public sector.	Hingham has adopted Chapter 43D which mandates expedited permitting for selected development sites.
37. A strong supply of educated and skilled workers – of all ages – will encourage businesses to locate and expand here.	Although this is not specifically a goal of the master plan, the Town is committed to maintaining a quality educational system and educational attainment levels for town residents are above average.

Metro Future Goals	Hingham Goals
38. More minority and immigrant workers will have opportunities to advance on the career ladder, acquire assets, and build wealth.	This is a goal more relevant at the state and regional level. Hingham does not currently have a high minority or immigrant population.
39. More workers will participate in the labor force, earning a living wage through secure employment.	This is a goal more relevant at the state and regional level.
40. Fewer of the region's residents will live in poverty.	While this is not a specific master plan goal the median family income in Hingham is well above the state average.
41. Corporations and institutions will see civic engagement and sustainability as central to their own success.	This is not specifically addressed in the master plan as it is not something that the town has control over.
42. The region's agricultural economy will grow through a focus on sustainable farming and by bringing more locally produced foods to the market.	Although there are no master plan goals specifically related to agriculture Hingham does have a farmers market.
43. More people will take advantage of the region's artistic and cultural resources.	The master plan does not have goals specific to artistic resources but does have goals related to cultural and historic resources.
People Will Have More Transportation Choices	
44. An expanded transit system will provide better service to both urban and suburban areas, linking more home and jobs.	Goal H (1): Accommodate all modes of transportation. Objective 1.2: Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the commuter boat terminal and commuter rail stations.
45. More people will use transit for work and personal services.	Goal H (1): Accommodate all modes of transportation. Objective 1.2: Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the commuter boat terminal and commuter rail stations.
46. Commuters will have more options to avoid congestion.	Goal H (1): Accommodate all modes of transportation. Objective 1.2: Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the commuter boat terminal and commuter rail stations.
47. Most people will choose to walk or bike for short trips.	There are no specific goals for mode choice. Objective 1.1: Adopt a Complete Streets policy which focuses on accommodating all roadway users by creating a road network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes.
48. The average person will drive fewer miles every day.	There are no specific goals for mode choice. Objective 1.1: Adopt a Complete Streets policy which focuses on accommodating all roadway

Metro Future Goals	Hingham Goals
	users by creating a road network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes. A Complete Streets policy could facilitate this goal.
49. Outlying areas will see little increase in traffic congestion.	It is difficult to address this issue at the municipal level because Hingham is part of a larger regional transportation network. Objective 3.4: Coordinate transportation improvements with municipalities that share transportation infrastructure.
50. People with disabilities will find it easier to get around the region.	There are no specific master plan goals related to this issue but the “Aging in Hingham” report addresses issues of transportation for seniors.
51. Regional transportation planning will be linked with sustainable land use planning.	Goal 3, Objective 3.4: Coordinate transportation improvements with municipalities that share transportation infrastructure.
52. The transportation system will be reliably funded and transportation agencies will demonstrate accountability to the public.	This is a regional goal which no one community can address alone. Therefore, it is not relevant to the Hingham master plan goals.
53. Transportation projects will be designed and built cost-effectively.	This issue is less a municipal one than a state issue because most larger projects are designed and constructed by state agencies over which municipalities have little leverage.
54. Roads, bridges, and railways will be safe and well-maintained.	This is a regional goal which no one community can address alone. Therefore, it is not relevant to the Hingham master plan goals.
55. The region’s businesses will access the global marketplace through an efficient freight transportation network.	Hingham does not have master plan goals related to freight transportation because this is rarely a municipal function.
Residents and wildlife will enjoy a healthy environment.	
56. The region will be a national leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.	This goal is less relevant at the local level than it is at the state and regional policy level. Hingham is addressing this issue through its Energy Committee.
57. The region will use progressively less energy for electricity, heating, cooling and transportation.	Goal C (3): Reduce energy consumption in residential and municipally-owned buildings.
58. The region will produce less solid waste, and more of that waste will be recycled or composted.	Solid waste is not addressed as a goal in the Hingham master plan.

Metro Future Goals	Hingham Goals
59. The region will produce more renewable energy and will obtain more of its energy from renewable sources.	This goal is less relevant at the local level than it is at the state and regional policy level.
60. The region will have better air quality, both indoors and out.	This goal is less relevant at the local level than it is at the state and regional policy level.
61. Water resources will be carefully budgeted and sustainably managed so that clean water is available for appropriate uses and development.	Goal C (2): Protect water resources. Objective 2.1: Protect groundwater aquifers and surface water supplies to ensure sufficient clean water for current and future users.
62. The region's rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds will have sufficient clean water to support healthy aquatic life and recreational uses.	Goal C (2): Protect water resources. Objective 2.1: Protect groundwater aquifers and surface water supplies to ensure sufficient clean water for current and future users.
63. The ecological condition of wetlands will improve, and fewer wetlands will be lost to development.	Goal C (1): Protect and enhance Hingham's natural environment for the benefit of all.
64. The regional will retain its biodiversity and will have healthy populations of native plants and animals, and fewer invasive species.	Goal C Objective 1.1: Protect additional land of all types to sustain viable populations of native plant and wildlife species.
65. A robust network of protected open spaces, farms, parks, and greenways will provide wildlife habitats, ecological benefits, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty.	Goal E (1): Expand Hingham's network of protected open spaces.

Regional self-assessment of the alternative scenarios

To help support comprehensive and integrated planning in Hingham, MAPC has prepared a parcel-level buildout model for the town and also created different scenarios of future development for three focus areas that are critical to the town's future: Hingham Shipyard, Hingham Square/Waterfront, and South Hingham. These scenarios, created using a computer model that allows for rapid refinement and review, are based on the characteristics of recent developments in Hingham and nearby communities and link together the land use, tax revenue, water demand, and other impacts of possible development into a comprehensive picture. MAPC will deliver the computer model used to develop these scenarios to the town for its continued use and will be available to assist with its application. Scenarios for two of the focus areas were refined and presented at the public workshop in November; these scenarios are described below.

South Hingham/Derby Street in 2030: Three Alternative Futures

MAPC developed three alternative scenarios for the South Hingham/Derby Street area for 2030. These were named Economic Engine, Commercial Expansion, and Derby Gateway, and were presented at the second public meeting in November.

The *Economic Engine* scenario anticipates a future in which South Hingham has become a major job center for the South Shore, attracting high-value corporate office, medical office, and advanced industrial development. The *Commercial Expansion* scenario describes the patterns of development that might occur if the sought-after office and advanced industrial development does not materialize, due to regional competition and changing employer location preferences. Eager to recoup the cost of infrastructure investments, the town is compelled to entertain less-desirable development proposals. The *Derby Gateway* scenario envisions what might occur if new zoning was enacted to focus new development into targeted areas along Derby Street, while leaving other areas undeveloped. Sewer service might only be needed north of Route 3. Details on the three alternative scenarios can be found in the South Hingham/Derby Street worksheet in Appendix D.

Office development was preferred by 65% of residents who “voted” at the first public meeting. The Economic Engine scenario has the potential to generate the maximum amount of new office development (605,000 sf), but would require the creation of a new sewer treatment facility and collection system at a cost of \$21 million dollars, at least one third of which would be borne by Hingham taxpayers, according to the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan. Estimates of new tax revenue based on recent developments in Hingham and nearby indicate that the Economic Engine scenario might generate \$1 million of tax revenue annually, thereby reducing the average single family tax bill by \$117 per year. However, it would also generate more than 14,000 new auto trips per day and would require a quarter-million gallons of water per year—a volume not possible given the water utility’s current withdrawal limits. If the anticipated level of economic development did not materialize, the town might also be required to finance a larger portion of the sewer treatment facility planned for South Hingham, thereby eroding any tax benefits.

The Derby Gateway scenario has the potential for 200 units of new housing which would contribute to the projected 2020 target for Hingham of 667 new housing units. This scenario would generate 25% less tax revenue than the Economic Engine scenario, and would likely add 54 school-age children to the town’s population, helping to mitigate the projected enrollment declines and resulting surplus capacity.

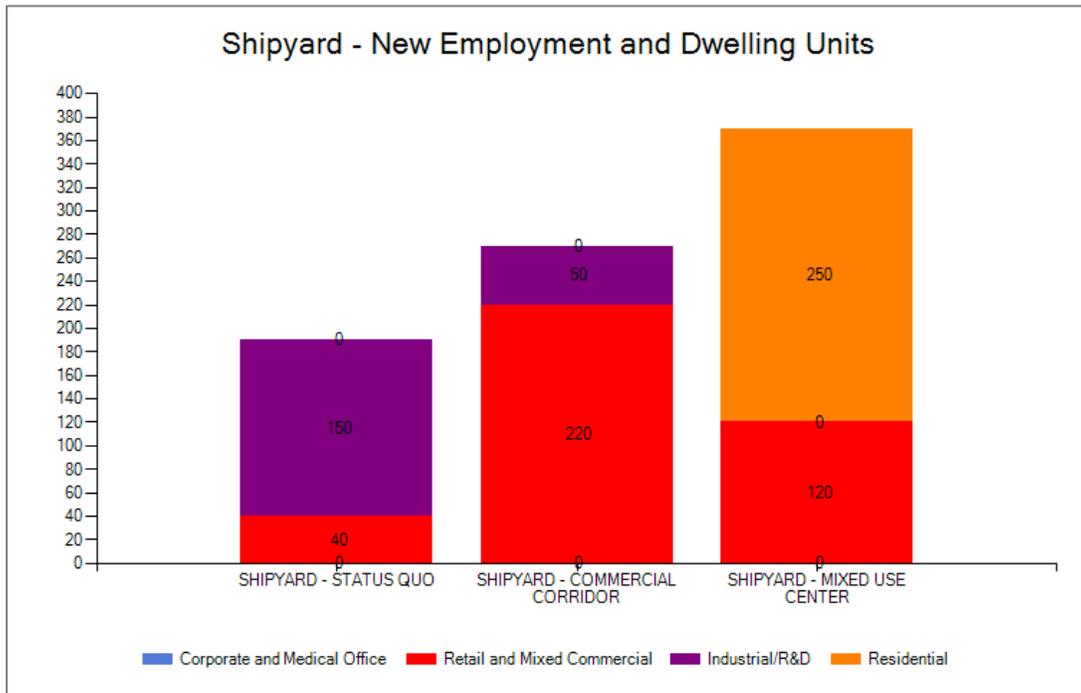
Shipyard Area

At the second public meeting MAPC presented three alternative futures for the Hingham Shipyard area for 2030. These were named *Status Quo*, *Commercial Corridor*, and *Mixed-Use Gateway*.

The *Status Quo* scenario involves no major changes in the land uses, community character, or circulation patterns around the Shipyard area and Lincoln Street. New growth would be limited to small-scale reuse of vacant parcels. The *Commercial Corridor* scenario involves the reuse of vacant and underutilized parcels on Lincoln Street for retail and commercial uses attracted to the large amount of auto traffic moving through the area. The *Mixed-Use Gateway* scenario extends the concept of the Hingham Shipyard development with creation of additional multifamily

development, compact commercial growth, and limited office development on vacant or underutilized area

The figure below depicts new jobs and dwelling units. Only the Mixed-Use scenario would include additional housing.



The Mixed-Use Center scenario would entail the largest amount of development, including residential uses, and would also generate \$550,000 in tax revenue per year—more than three times the amount of either of the alternative scenarios. This scenario would also create much-needed housing opportunities for seniors, younger adults, and families, in a location where new or relocated residents would be close to supermarkets, entertainment, and transit directly to Boston, thereby reducing the amount of new traffic and reliance on automobiles.

Overview of the opt-in provisions of Chapter 40Y: the Planning Ahead for Growth Act.

The proposed zoning reform bill includes Chapter 40Y also known as the “Planning Ahead for Growth Act”. It would provide communities with additional tools for smart-growth planning on a voluntary basis to communities who choose to opt-in. Chapter 40Y has been written because current zoning codes are not resulting in smart-growth development that creates adequate new housing and jobs across the Commonwealth, while protecting environmental resources and community character. The “town and country” landscape of Massachusetts is being lost to sprawl development patterns. The new chapter 40Y provides strong incentives for communities to allow

prompt and predictable by-right housing and commercial development, focused in appropriate smart-growth locations, coupled with environmental and open space protections. Participating municipalities will get access to additional regulatory and fiscal resources and tools to realize their plans for sustainable development.

To obtain “opt-in” status under Chapter 40Y, a community must take the following actions, and demonstrate to the regional planning agency (RPA) that it has conformed. \$2 million is budgeted to communities for preparation of implementing regulations and RPAs for their reviews. Oversight, implementing regulations, and resolution of disputes would be through the Secretary of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.

The following regulatory and financial tools would be authorized and available for a community’s use after it has opted in:

- Reduction of the vested rights period for subdivisions from 8 to 5 years.
- Enhanced use of impact fees to support public schools, libraries, municipal offices, affordable housing, and public safety facilities.
- Authorization to enter into development agreements.
- Adoption of rate of development measures (annual caps on building permit issuance) in areas inside and outside of housing development districts.
- Adoption of natural resource protection zoning (NRPZ) at area densities of 10 acres or more per dwelling unit to protect identified lands of high natural resource value.
- Preference for state discretionary funds and grants; priority for state infrastructure investments, such as water and sewer infrastructure, school building funds, and biking and walking facilities; and requirements that the state take into consideration regional plans and local master plans in its capital spending.
- Eligibility to receive state planning funds to reimburse for costs of developing and reviewing implementing regulations.

Analysis of Hingham’s regulations relative to the four opt-in requirements

Requirement One:

- Establishing a housing development district(s) in a smart-growth location(s) that can accommodate, through by-right development, a 5% increase over the community’s total number of existing housing units by-right. Minimum densities are set for single-family, duplex-triplex, or multi-family housing.

Hingham analysis: Hingham does not currently allow any significant multi-family housing by right. Some multi-family housing is allowed in certain districts by special permit and the Residence D district allows townhomes by right. In order to meet this opt-in requirement, Hingham would have to change its zoning.

Requirement Two:

- Establishing an economic development district in smart-growth locations that permits prompt and predictable permitting of commercial / industrial development.

The proposed bill states that any area that has been designated as a priority development site under chapter 43D shall automatically qualify as an “eligible location” for an economic development district.

Hingham analysis - At Town Meeting in 2010 Hingham approved the designation of the South Shore Industrial Park as a 43D priority development site. The designation is pending state review and approval but if approved, this will satisfy the opt-in requirement. However, major economic development in South Hingham may negatively impact achievement of many local and regional goals—it would entail the loss of substantial amounts of open space, major developments near the town’s gateway, a 50% increase in traffic on Derby Street, and major sewer investments that would need to be funded by the taxpayers if the desired economic development does not materialize. An expedited permitting designation in the Shipyard area to promote mixed use development would be far more consistent with *MetroFuture* and would likely result in far fewer negative impacts and far less risk for the town.

Requirement Three:

- Mandatory use of open space residential design (OSRD) for developments of 5 units or more on land zoned for a minimum lot-size of 40,000 s.f. per unit.

Hingham analysis: Hingham has a flexible residential development regulation which requires a special permit but does not appear to be mandatory. It is applicable to sites with a minimum of three acres and therefore, does not appear to satisfy this opt-in requirement.

Requirement Four:

- Mandatory use of low impact development (LID) techniques for developments that disturb over one acre of land.

Low impact development techniques means stormwater management techniques appropriate to the size, scale, and location of the development proposal that limit off-site stormwater runoff (both peak and non-peak flows) to levels substantially similar to natural hydrology (or in the case of a redevelopment site, that reduces such flows from pre-existing conditions), by emphasizing decentralized management practices and the protection of on-site natural features.

Hingham analysis – Hingham’s Planning Board Rules and Regulations under the Subdivision Control Law requires developments to be in compliance with the most current version of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection stormwater management policy and standards as well as the MA Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines. These policies and standards encourage communities to implement LID techniques but do not require them. Hingham would probably need to review and update a variety of regulations to bring its stormwater regulations into full compliance.

Chapter Four: Plan Engagement

Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement Strategy

Early on in the process, MAPC, in conjunction with the Director of Community Planning, developed a draft list of stakeholders who should be involved in the project. The project was put on hold for a number of months while Hingham transitioned to a new Director of Community Planning. The Director of Community Planning took responsibility for the majority of the outreach and worked with MAPC to develop a schedule of meetings for MAPC. She also attended numerous other meetings without MAPC and relayed critical information back to the project team. Outreach included distribution of a card listing the link to the on-line survey, information displayed on the Department of Community Planning's web page, e-mail blasts to town boards and departments as well as press releases.

Meetings and Public Forums

Date	Who With	Purpose	Approximate number of attendees
May 1, 2013	Mary Savage-Dunham, Joan Blaustein, Emily Torres, Jenny Raitt	Review project scope and schedule	4
May 21, 2013	Senior Men's Breakfast, Mary Savage-Dunham, Joan Blaustein	Overview of project, resident input	15
June 3, 2013	Planning Board	Introduction and demographics	9
June 7, 2013	Mary Savage-Dunham with the Hingham Downtown Association.	Introduce the project and feedback on master plan goals.	10
June 10, 2013	Planning Board Housing Forum	Discuss housing issues.	5
June 11, 2013	Harbor Development Committee	Discuss master plan and waterfront issues.	7
June 19, 2013	Weir River Environmental Forum	Discuss Weir River watershed issues	NA
June 19, 2013	South Shore Business Committee	Discuss economic development issues.	21

**Table 1
List of Meetings**

Date	Who With	Purpose	Approximate number of attendees
June 24, 2013	Planning Board forum	To discuss historic preservation, economic development and open space issues.	4
October 17, 2013	South Shore Coalition	To brief the SSC on the project and to discuss regional housing issues.	10
October 22, 2013	Public forum	To discuss potential and future land use in Hingham.	80
November 13, 2013	Public forum	Follow-up to October 22 to consider alternative futures.	30
January 27, 2014	Planning Board	To review the recommended goals	

The On-Line Survey

MAPC created and administered an on-line survey which was available from May through July 2013. A summary of the survey results are provided here. A complete copy of the survey responses can be found in Appendix B.

- Approximately 380 respondents: 84% were homeowners, 3.7% renters and 8% business owners.
- Of 317 homeowner respondents, 20.5% have lived in Hingham less than 5 years, 17.3% 6-10 years, 24% 11-20 years and 37% more than 20 years.
- When asked about the rate of development, 47.4% said it was about right; 37.2% said it was too much; 13.8% said it was far too much and 1.5% said it was too little.
- Top five strengths:
 - Location by the ocean (89.3%)
 - Schools (78.2%)

- Open space/natural resources (75.4%)
- Location in the region (73%)
- Community pride (69.2%)
- Top five challenges:
 - High cost of living (78.6%)
 - Traffic (49.8%)
 - Lack of commercial tax base (19.6%)
 - Schools (15.9%)
 - Elected officials (15.9%)
 - Lack of arts/cultural offerings (9.6%)
- Familiarity with land use regulations:
 - 6.4% very familiar
 - 26.4% moderately familiar
 - 41.6% slightly familiar
 - 25.5% not familiar
- Preferred locations for future development:
 - Affordable housing: Hingham Shipyard
 - Market rate residential: Hingham Shipyard
 - Mixed use: Hingham Shipyard
 - Industrial: South Shore Industrial Park
 - Retail/office: Derby Street/Route 3, Shipyard, Queen Anne's Corner.
- Locations not desired for future development: Hingham Center, Hingham Harbor, Queen Anne's Corner.
- Very important to the success of Hingham's future:

Schools	233
Town services	178
Parks and recreation	149
Traffic	145
Zoning enforcement	134
Youth activities	132
Planning for the aging population	121
Clean energy	110
Downtown development	100
Sea level rise	92
Arts and culture	68
Parking in commercial areas	43

Outreach Outcomes

This section of the report summarizes what we heard from residents, town staff and representatives of community organizations at the various meetings attended, as outlined above. The verbatim comments are grouped under the headings that represent the nine goal categories of the 2002 Master Plan and, to the extent it was possible, informed the updated goals in Chapter 2. Further details can be found in Appendix C.

A. Land Use

Land Use – Future development in Hingham Square needs to be in harmony with the existing development. The area has potential and the town should look at under-utilized parcels, ways to increase second-story residential development and new models of zoning such as 40R and the compact neighborhood zoning model. Some of the challenges faced in the downtown include lack of parking and the age of the buildings with the attendant cost of bringing older buildings up to code. This is an area that could benefit from mixed-use development. There are specific challenges due to the number of historic buildings in downtown. It can be difficult for owners to imagine how to work with a historic building and still have a viable business. It is also important to find a way to link the downtown and the water and overcome the barrier created by Route 3A.

B. Economic Development - Taxes are high and have a major economic impact on the senior population. Seniors are being forced out of their homes due to high taxes. There is some concern that there are abandoned properties in town that are not paying taxes and that the new development is not truly offsetting the tax burden but runs the risk of substantially changing the character of Hingham through over-development. There are good reasons to concentrate future development in South Hingham on Derby Street because it will minimize the impacts on the rest of the town. The Route 3A rotary is an economic development issue because it makes it difficult for pedestrians to get to the waterfront and patronize businesses.

C. Natural Resources - Water supply, particularly summertime water usage, is a key issue in Hingham and somewhat of a limiting factor for future development. Throughout the Weir River watershed, there are many dams that are no longer needed that prevent fish migration and degrade river habitats. Water quality is also impacted by stormwater runoff. There is a great need for ongoing education about stormwater and water quality issues.

D. Open Space - One on-going concern is the number of different town departments and commissions that have jurisdiction over different aspects of open space and recreation maintenance, protection, conservation, and management. There may be a need to better communicate roles and responsibilities. Land management plans would be helpful for overseeing and achieving land conservation and management goals. Access to conservation lands could be improved with the provision of a few parking spaces at each site. There is also a need for better connectivity between hiking trails.

E. Recreation- There is a need to provide more recreation for seniors with more opportunities for passive recreation. Walking paths for seniors need to be safe and inviting.

F. Historic and Cultural Resources - The town needs to look at what other towns are doing as far as providing tax incentives for preservation. Because historic districts are a stabilizing force the town should extend the following historic districts:

- Main Street to finish Liberty Plain district
- Phase III East Street
- Going up Summer Street

More needs to be done to keep the town beautiful and maintain its historic character. This includes the preservation of trees and scenic vistas. It is important to look at the whole picture of historic streetscapes rather than individual properties. Hingham is historically unique because of its history as a day-to-day, working New England Town. The town may want to look at extending the demolition delay bylaw from 6 months to 12 months but should also look at whether communities with 12 month delays have significantly different outcomes.

G. Housing - There needs to be more affordable options for seniors because many are forced to leave town. Tear-downs are a major problem and they are causing the town to lose its stock of relatively affordable starter homes. Furthermore, the new homes are significantly larger and this has a major impact on the character of the town. The town needs to re-visit the issue of in-law/accessory units as a way for seniors to stay in town and for younger residents. The discussion of in-law/accessory units needs to consider the best location for these units, how to incorporate these units into historic structures or smaller lots and how to regulate them. There is a lot of debate over how much more growth the town can handle and whether the push to affordability in Hingham is realistic. Higher density around the train stations would be desirable. There is also concern that the residential neighborhood near Derby Street is relatively affordable but could be impacted by the rise in property values if more commercial development takes place.

H. Transportation - The Route 3A rotary is viewed as dangerous and cuts off the town from the waterfront. There is a parking problem at Town Hall. Traffic through Hingham is heavy and much of it is from other towns (regional traffic). The bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in town is inadequate and does not encourage walking and biking. Sidewalks are too narrow and close to the road to be make walking safe and enjoyable for seniors.

I. Public Facilities - Parking is a problem at Town Hall and this is a problem for seniors who are visiting the Senior Center.

Scenario Planning Workshops: Envisioning the Future

This task of the Master Plan project focused on evaluating alternative development futures for Hingham based on resident input. In a two part process, residents were invited to weigh in on where future development should go and then to further evaluate several scenarios.

Hingham Master Plan Workshop #1

The scenario planning process began with a workshop on October 22, 2013. This workshop was open to the general public and focused on housing and economic development trends. A copy of the agenda for this meeting as well as the PowerPoint presentation can be found in Appendix D.

The first part of the meeting was an introduction to the project as well as a presentation of basic demographic data. A few of the key trends that were reviewed included:

- The doubling of the over 65 population from 2000-2010 and the decline of the population under 15.
- Net migration of 1,400 people into Hingham in the 2000s.
- The trend towards more households over the age of 65; a 47% increase by 2030.
- Hingham may need 330 apartments or condos and 450 single family homes by 2020.
- Hingham is a growing job center but many of those jobs are in the lower-wage categories such as retail, arts and entertainment, accommodations and food services.
- Hingham may add 1,000 jobs by 2020 but these will increasingly be in retail and services.

Another aspect of the workshop was to present an overview of the amount and type of development that could occur under existing zoning. This is generally termed a buildout analysis. Buildout takes into consideration zoning requirements such as minimum lot area, setbacks and frontage as well as land that is permanently protected open space, floodplain and watershed protection districts and current development. For residential development, the buildout analysis showed that Hingham has the capacity for **950 single family homes by-right**. On the commercial side of buildout, there is a potential for **5 million square feet of non-residential development and 12,000 new jobs**.

Small Group Discussions

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants broke up into small groups and were asked to address two key questions:

1. Where should the town facilitate the following types of housing development?
 - Apartments, condominiums, age-restricted, single family, accessory units.
 - Discuss the pros and cons of different types and locations of housing development.
2. Where should the town promote economic development?

- Consider locations most accessible to residents, shoppers from elsewhere, commuters, and transit riders.
- Discuss what can be done to maximize economic benefits.

A summary of the comments from the small group discussions can be found in Appendix D.

The final part of the meeting including key pad polling to determine what attendees felt were the best development options for specific areas in town.

Shipyard Area	52% favored mixed use infill/reuse (multi-family and retail).
Hingham Square/Waterfront	77% favored mixed use (housing & retail) infill and redevelopment.
South Hingham	65% favored office development.

Hingham Master Plan Workshop #2

This workshop was a follow-up to the workshop held on **November 13, 2013**. A copy of the agenda for this meeting as well as the PowerPoint presentation can be found in Appendix D.

The workshop began with a brief recap of the demographic trends first presented in October. This was followed by a presentation of alternative scenarios for Hingham Square/Hingham Harbor in order to demonstrate the data available and the scenario planning process that would be used in the small group discussions. Following a brief question and answer session, attendees broke up into two discussion groups. One group discussed South Hingham and the other group discussed the Hingham Shipyard area. The participants were asked to respond to three discussion questions:

1. Which scenario is most preferable? Which is most likely to occur?
2. In what ways would each scenario advance or hinder the goals above?
3. What new goals or policies should be adopted to help achieve your preferred scenario?

South Hingham- The following is a summary of the discussion concerning South Hingham.

- Water supply is a concern but it can be solved over the long term.
- South Hingham provides a good tax base for the town but development has been exploding.
- Traffic is a concern from Queen Anne's Corner to Derby Street.
- There needs to be more attention paid to gateways.

- Further retail is not realistic.
- The area needs a balance of commercial and residential development.
- It is possible to develop the area as an economic engine and as a gateway.
- We need to figure out where people are going to live.
- Route 53 should be zoned for commercial and residential.

The Shipyard Area – The following is a summary of the discussion of the Shipyard area.

- There is a cost to providing services for new residents.
- Historic preservation is a big factor in this town, maybe more so than in other towns.
- The commuter ferry, the train and the school system are important to the economic health of Hingham.
- Traffic on 3A is a major concern.
- Some commercial development is struggling; we need to be careful about over-building commercial space.
- There is a great need for housing for aging residents and the Shipyard area might be a good location for affordable senior housing. Senior residents would provide more customers for local retail.
- Building 19 is a big opportunity.
- It would be desirable to seek out a high-end corporate replacement for Talbots.
- The status quo is not a desirable option.
- Be cautious about recommending multi-family development.
- Restaurants in the shipyard are doing well but the retail is not the type that was originally envisioned.
- The Shipyard needs to be better connected with the neighborhood.
- Open space is a huge asset – need to connect commercial to Bear Cove and other spaces.

Chapter Five: Master Plan Update Implementation Plan

Scope of Work

The scope of work for this project calls for MAPC to work with the Hingham planning staff to develop an implementation plan to assist in guiding the rest of the Master Plan Update process. The plan will focus on identifying a schedule, anticipated tasks and associated milestones for the update of the remainder of the Master Plan, such as additional goal setting and completion of subsequent sections of the plan. This task will also look to identify additional technical assistance and/or funding resources to support the Hingham planning staff in implementing the rest of the update process.

Recommended Actions for a Master Plan Update Meeting the Requirements for a Master Plan under the Zoning Reform Bill

The scope of work for this project included the writing of a set of draft goals that address the required elements of a Master Plan under CLURPA. CLURPA is an acronym for a piece of legislation first introduced in 2011 known as the Comprehensive Land Use Reform and Partnership Act. The purpose of the legislation was to update antiquated planning and zoning laws to facilitate prompt and predictable permitting for jobs and housing, strong community planning, and natural resource and public health protection. The bill went through several iterations and the most recent version is House Bill 1859: An Act Promoting the Planning and Development of Sustainable Communities.

Currently the legal basis for master planning in Massachusetts remains Chapter 41, Section 81D of the General Laws. MAPC recommends bringing the master plan up to the standards of the proposed Zoning Reform Bill because the sections that the Hingham Master Plan lacks are all important and valuable additions to how municipalities plan and newer issues that have arisen over the years.

Develop an energy chapter – MAPC recommends that the town develop a chapter devoted to energy savings as per the requirements of the proposed zoning reform bill which are outlined below.

- (a) A general overview of the significant natural and energy resources of the municipality.
- (b) Identification of protected and unprotected wetlands and water resources, lands critical to sustaining surface and groundwater quality and quantity, environmentally sensitive lands, critical wildlife habitat and biodiversity, agricultural lands and forests. Priorities for protection of wildlife habitat, water resources, vistas and key landscapes, outdoor recreation facilities, and farm and forestry land shall be identified.
- (c) An outline of local

laws, regulations, policies, and strategies to address needs for the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of these resources and to promote development that respects and enhances the state's natural resources. (d) An energy component that explores locally feasible land use strategies to: maximize energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities; support land, energy, water, and materials conservation strategies, local clean power generation, distributed generation technologies, and innovative industries; and address global climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the consumption of fossil fuels.

Develop an implementation chapter - The proposed zoning reform bill also requires that a master plan contain a chapter devoted solely to how the master plan will be implemented. The requirements of this chapter are outlined below.

Implementation: An implementation program that defines and prioritizes the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the master plan in accordance with the policies outline therein. This program may be separately written or integrated into the required and selected subject matter. This implementation program shall specify the recommended course of action by which the municipality's regulatory structures, including zoning and subdivision control regulations, may need to be amended in order to be consistent with the master plan. This section may examine the current land use permitting process in a community and, if necessary, make recommendations for the development of clear, predictable, coordinated, and timely procedures thereunder, including an assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing structure of and roles and responsibilities of elected and appointed boards, officers, and personnel to implement the master plan through land use ordinances, by-laws, regulations, and procedures.

Update the chapter on public facilities to include non-public infrastructure needs – The current master plan only addresses public facilities when discussing infrastructure needs. This chapter should be expanded to include other infrastructure needs.

Develop a water management chapter – The proposed zoning reform bill suggests that communities include a section on water management. This is defined as follows:

(a) An inventory of current and potential municipal sources of water supply, including capacity and safe yield, and an assessment of water demand including types of water users, changes in water consumption over time, and water billing rate structure. (b) An assessment of the adequacy of existing and proposed water supplies to meet projected demands, water quality and treatment issues, existing measures for water supply protection, water conservation, drought management and emergency interconnections. (c) An assessment of the ability of stormwater regulations and practices to limit off-site stormwater runoff to levels substantially similar to natural hydrology through decentralized management practices and the protection of on-site natural features. (d) An analysis of municipal need and capacity for wastewater disposal, including the suitability of sites and

water bodies for the discharge of treated wastewater. (e) Recommended strategies for water supply provisions and protection, water conservation, wastewater disposal, stormwater management, drought management and emergency interconnections, and needed improvements to meet future water resource needs.

Develop a public health chapter – Public health can mean different things in different contexts. The draft zoning reform bill defines public health (for the purposes of the elements of a master plan) as follows:

Public Health: (a) An inventory of conditions and assets in the natural and built environment which contribute to or constitute a barrier to health. These conditions may include parks and recreational facilities; local agriculture; walking, bicycling and public transit options, including the safety and walkability of streets and public spaces; access to affordable housing, economic opportunities, and medical and other services; environmental quality; and sustainable development. The inventory should describe conditions with a disproportionate impact on residents based on geography, ethnicity, income, immigration status, or other characteristics. Where applicable, this inventory may reference other sections of the master plan. (b) An assessment of opportunities and barriers to increasing access to conditions and assets in the natural or built environment that contribute to health. (c) Recommendations of available implementation policies and strategies, including zoning and other local laws and regulations, affecting health needs related to the natural or built environment.

MAPC's Public Health Department integrates public health perspectives into our planning and policy work. Our team helps to ensure that residents throughout our region have access to open space and healthy food, that they utilize modes of transportation that encourage healthy lifestyles, live in violence-free communities with safe and clean housing, have equal access to health care services, and have limited exposure to environmental contaminants and pollution. The public health work at MAPC is guided by our regional plan, [MetroFuture](#), recognizing the growing importance of linking health and planning. For more information on public health planning at MAPC please click [here](#).

Additional Implementation Steps

Many of these additional implementation steps were suggested by survey responses or other feedback received from a variety of sources. These steps are offered to the town to help inform future work on updating the master plan.

1. **Tax rate:** The Town should identify ways to offset tax increases or mitigate the current tax rate.

2. **Zoning reform:** This report includes many references to House Bill 1859: An Act Promoting the Planning and Development of Sustainable Communities. While this legislation has not yet been enacted, it embodies many of the concepts and reforms that have been under discussion for many years. The town should educate itself about this proposed bill and consider how it might proceed if the bill is enacted.
3. **Work with MAPC on how to use Community Viz** - This modeling software was used to develop and analyze the alternative scenarios presented at the workshops. It is very powerful software that can provide the town with guidance when evaluating development proposals. MAPC will provide the tool and all of the data and analysis to the town and could offer training to the planning staff on how to utilize this tool.
4. **Prepare a housing production plan** - The Commonwealth has made housing production a major goal that is considered vital to the economic health of the state. MAPC has a great deal of expertise in this area and frequently works with communities to undertake analyses and prepare housing production plans. For more information on MAPC's housing work, click on [housing](#).
5. **Consider formation of a Master Plan committee** - If the town is interested in substantial additional work on the master plan it should consider re-convening a master plan committee to oversee this work.
6. **Sewer expansion** - The Town should continue to work on sewer policy, expansion of system and betterments.
7. **Marketing and regional tourism** - The Town should work on improved marketing and branding as a coastal tourist destination. As part of this effort, the town should examine regulations and zoning relating to accommodations for tourists such as boutique hotels.
8. **Incorporate [LID](#) guidelines into SP review** - This effort will have environmental benefits and help the town achieve greater compliance with the opt-in provisions of the zoning reform bill.
9. **The Town should continue working on model erosion and sediment control regulations.**
10. **The Town should continue to assist owners of properties in flood zones** - The town has taken a first step by hiring the consulting firm of GZA to re-review flood mapping. The issue of higher flood insurance premiums creates housing insecurity for owners of smaller, affordable homes who previously did not have to purchase flood insurance.