

# *Southwick Master Plan*

**March, 1997**

**Prepared for the**

**TOWN OF SOUTHWICK**

**by the**

**PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION  
WEST SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

# ***Southwick Master Plan***

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## **Acknowledgments**

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The perseverance and dedication of the Southwick Master Plan Committee were an integral part of the this Master Plan:

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# *Southwick Master Plan*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Southwick Master Plan is a guide and a vision for future growth and development in Southwick for the next ten to fifteen years. The Master Plan distills the dreams and preferences of town residents into clear goals and objectives and provides strategies for their implementation. While the Master Plan itself is not the zoning bylaw changes or any other specific action needed for implementation, it defines and clarifies what needs to be done and who should carry out particular strategies.

Through the Master Plan, the town considers what measures it can take to achieve a desirable and balanced pattern of development in the next ten to twenty years. While the strategies below do not directly impact residential growth, the combination of these strategies and the town's existing phased growth bylaw will act in concert to allow reasonable residential growth without excessive negative impacts.

Five major areas of concern are examined in the Master Plan: growth management, capital needs and facilities planning, downtown revitalization, natural resources conservation, and recreational development. For each of these areas, the plan summarizes and analyzes relevant information and recommends a set of strategies which will move the town toward its stated goals.

### ◆ Growth Management

- ✓ 1. Concentrate commercial and industrial development on appropriate sites, reinforcing the town center and protecting resources.
- NO - 2. Adopt a Planned Business Development bylaw.
- NO - 3. Allow high traffic-volume generating uses only in Planned Business Developments.
- NO - 4. Adopt an Industrial Garden Park Development bylaw.
- NO - 5. Adopt improved commercial performance standards.

### ◆ Capital Needs and Facilities Planning

- YES -1. Establish a Capital Improvements Program Committee.
- YES -2. Establish a capital budget.

### ◆ Downtown Revitalization

- NO -1. Establish new zoning districts for existing and new commercial areas.
- NO -2. Create new development standards for each new zoning district.
- NO -3. Create a Business Improvement District along the College Highway corridor.
- NO -4. Seek multiple financial resources for town improvements.

### ◆ Natural Resources Protection

#### *Aquifer Protection*

- YES -1. Improve provisions of the Water Supply Protection District.
- ? -2. Adopt Underground Storage Tank regulations.
- ? -3. Join neighboring municipalities in protecting the aquifers.

#### *Open Space Protection*

- YES -1. Finish the Open Space and Recreation Plan update.
- YES -2. Create a town-wide map of protected land on the parcel level.

#### *Agricultural Preservation*

- YES -1. Require Flexible Residential Developments for major subdivisions on farmland.
- NO -2. Identify and prioritize Chapter 61A parcels for permanent protection.
- YES -3. Encourage farmers and owners of prime farmland to join the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program.
- NO -4. Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights bylaw.
- NO -5. Establish an Agricultural Incentive Area.

#### *Joint Protection of Open Space, Aquifers, and Agriculture*

- YES -1. Establish a dedicated town fund for open space, aquifer, and agricultural protection.
- NO -2. Establish a local land trust.
- YES -3. Hire a part-time conservation director.

### ◆ Recreational Development

- NO -1. Establish a dedicated town fund for future acquisition and improvement efforts.
- NO -2. Inventory Chapter 61A lands in readiness for eventual exercise of right of first refusal.
- YES -3. Apply for ISTEAA Enhancement funds to construct the Southwick Rail-Trail.
- NO -4. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to permit and improve private commercial recreational opportunities.
- YES -5. ~~Finish the updated Open Space and Recreation Plan.~~
- NO -6. Create connections between trail systems and sources of users.



# INTRODUCTION





## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Southwick has experienced considerable growth, with accompanying increases in property taxes, traffic hazards, environmental problems, and changes in the character of the town. If the town does not change where it is headed, the reasons why people live in Southwick--the natural beauty, the small-town atmosphere, the good schools--will disappear and the town will become just a suburb of the greater Springfield metropolitan area, with no character of its own. It is for this reason that the Town of Southwick decided in 1995 to undertake a Master Plan to guide development in the future.

This Master Plan concentrates on five major areas of concern for the town:

- Growth management;
- Capital facilities planning;
- Downtown revitalization;
- Natural resource conservation; and
- Commercial and non-commercial recreational development.

To plan for the town's future in these areas, the town appointed a Master Plan Committee. This committee met fifteen times between November 1995, and March 1997, and held two public forums on the Master Plan in February and March of 1997. With the aid of a consultant, this committee surveyed a sample of town residents and examined information and planning options compiled by the consultant. Goals and objectives for the town were generated by the committee after consideration of the survey results. The strategies for Southwick's future reported in this Master Plan are ways these goals and objectives can be achieved. They are recommendations for actions to be taken by the town or by organizations based in the town.

The next step in the Master Plan process is implementation of the strategies recommended in this plan. To accomplish implementation, all those involved in the town must pull together, to create a future Southwick with the natural beauty and rural charm it has today.





# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE SOUTHWICK MASTER PLAN

**Goal #1:** *To ensure that new development in Southwick is appropriate for a rural and suburban community.*

**Objectives:** To ensure that new development is designed to be attractive, well-planned and consistent with community character.

To provide a diversity of housing types to enable residents from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live in Southwick.

To identify areas of Southwick appropriate for different densities of residential development, for commercial development, and for industrial development and to direct growth toward those appropriate areas so as to minimize adverse effects on town services and the environment.

**Goal #2:** *To preserve the open spaces and scenic beauty of Southwick.*

**Objectives:** To promote innovative forms of development appropriate to Southwick's rural character.

To identify and protect from inappropriate development areas of important scenic and aesthetic beauty.

**Goal #3:** *To protect Southwick's natural resources.*

**Objectives:** ✓ To control non-point source pollution of waterbodies.

✓ To identify and protect from inappropriate development areas of important natural resources, such as floodplains, wetlands, rare species habitats, and drinking water aquifers.

**Goal #4:** *To conserve Southwick's farmland.*

**Objectives:** ✓ To ensure the viability of an agricultural community in Southwick.

✓ To promote development patterns which protect farmland.

**Goal #5:** *To provide appropriate and sufficient active and passive recreation opportunities for its citizens.*

**Objectives:** To identify areas for active and passive recreational opportunities and to plan for the protection or acquisition of those sites.

✓ To provide access for water-based recreation.

✓ To pursue acquisition or protection of suitable recreation and open space sites through grants, private funds, and town resources.

✓ To provide access to cultural experiences, especially art and music, for all residents.

**Goal #6:** *To encourage appropriate commercial and light industrial development in Southwick, while protecting environmental quality and town resources.*

**Objectives:** To minimize new commercial strip development along Routes 10/202 and 57 and to concentrate commercial development in the town center or other designated areas.

✓ To minimize effects of industrial development on the natural resources of the town, especially on the Great Brook Aquifer.

To control adverse impacts on traffic, signage, design and community character and encourage businesses to continue to be good neighbors to Southwick.

**Goal #7:** *To provide a safe, dependable, and efficient transportation system for the movement of people and goods.*

**Objectives:** ✓ To develop a network of pedestrian and bicycle paths and facilities throughout Southwick, connecting with facilities in neighboring municipalities.

To minimize traffic impacts of new development on existing transportation facilities.

**Goal #8:** *To guide the continued development of appropriate, efficient, and economical infrastructure for Southwick, including utilities, public safety, schools, and municipal water and sewer.*

**Objectives:** To ensure that the availability of town infrastructure is a key factor guiding the timing and location of new development.

To establish recognized growth areas, within which publicly-funded infrastructure expansions shall be confined.

✓ To assess and plan for town infrastructure needs so as to minimize the fiscal impacts of future improvements on taxpayers.

*New Town well; Phase 2 Sewer*

**Goal #9:** *To coordinate planning efforts among town boards, so as to ensure consistency with this master plan and with regional plans and policies.*

**Objectives:** To review the town zoning bylaw and subdivision regulations to ensure consistency with this master plan and compliance with state requirement.

To encourage broad public participation in town planning efforts.

✓ To set up a schedule of regular all-boards meetings to encourage communication within town government.

To ensure active town participation in planning efforts in neighboring municipalities and at the regional level, and to communicate those planning efforts to all town boards.







# **PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY**



## PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

In April of 1996, the Southwick Master Plan Committee, aided by its consultant, mailed out public opinion surveys to one out of every six households in the town. These 450 households were determined by picking every sixth household from the street lists prepared by the town. Of the 450 surveys mailed out, 198 (44%) were returned by July of 1996. These 198 returned surveys were compiled and the results reviewed by the committee in preparing the goals and objectives for the town. The survey and its results are reproduced in the Appendix.

Some of the major relevant findings of the survey were:

A preference for new residential housing to be single-family homes, rather than multi-family housing or condominiums.

A preference for new businesses to be professional offices, specialty shopping centers, or quality restaurants, rather than night clubs.

For new recreational development, a strong preference for a new multi-purpose teen recreation and social center, with lesser preferences for movie theaters, indoor pools, mountain bike facilities or bike trail systems, winter sports facilities, tennis courts, and expanded lake activities.

Services provided in or by the town were generally rated highly, except for roads, which were rated fair and trash removal, which was rated poor.

A preference for general tax revenues to be used for building improvements, except for water and sewer systems and public recreational facilities, where user fees were preferred.

Characteristics of the town center were rated as follows:

Good - convenience of shopping hours, pedestrian safety

Fair - quality of eating places, cleanliness of streets and sidewalks, cost of goods sold, quality of goods sold, the look of store exteriors and interiors, safety during the evening

Poor - availability of sidewalks, public transportation access, variety of goods sold, traffic flow

A preference for a limit on the number of building permits issued yearly.

A strong preference for improved water quality protection measures.

A preference for using various congestion management techniques along College Highway, except for consolidated driveways or mixed-use developments.





# **ANALYSIS OF GROWTH TRENDS**



## **□ SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT GROWTH TRENDS**

- Southwick is located within commuting distance of several regional employment centers with most Southwick residents working outside of town.
- Southwick is undergoing a period of residential growth, with new residential construction expanding the property tax base six times more than new commercial and industrial buildings.
- Housing prices have increased by 14% since 1990.
- The number of permits issued in 1995 is 196% greater than the number of building permits issued in 1991.
- The number of households in Southwick is increasing more rapidly than the size of the population.
- Between 1971 and 1985, 727 acres of open and forest lands have been lost to low density housing and related land uses.
- Increased residential growth is projected to significantly increase traffic on both major arterial roads as well as connector streets.

## **□ Population Trends, Density, and Age Characteristics**

The population of Southwick grew rapidly in the 1940s and 1950s, with much more moderate increases in the 1960s and 1970s. Over the 60-year period from 1930 to 1990, the population increased at an average rate of 35.4 % per year (Table 1). Table 2 compares the 60-year growth rate of Southwick with that of other Hampshire and Hampden County towns with similar populations. Southwick's growth during this period is similar to that experienced in Granby and Southampton. Southwick's 60-year growth rate is much greater than the communities of Monson and Ware. Southwick, Granby, and Southampton are closer to urbanized areas than Monson and Ware.



**Table 1**  
**SOUTHWICK'S POPULATION: 1930-1990**

YEAR	POPULATION	% CHANGE OVER PREVIOUS 10 YEAR PERIOD
1930	1,461	
1940	1,579	+ 8.1 %
1950	2,855	+ 80.8 %
1960	5,139	+ 80.0 %
1970	6,330	+ 23.2 %
1980	7,382	+ 16.6 %
1990	7,667	+ 3.9 %

2010 8,835 +15.2 %  
Est. 2006 9,603

**Table 2**  
**COMPARATIVE POPULATION GROWTH**

TOWN	1990 POPULATION	AVERAGE ANNUAL % INCREASE PER DECADE 1930-1990
Granby	5,565	41.9%
<b>Southwick</b>	<b>7,667</b>	<b>35.4 %</b>
Southampton	4,478	31.5 %
Monson	7,776	8.0 %
Ware	9,808	4.8%

Population projections for Southwick (Table 3) indicate that the town should expect a modest population increase by the year 2000. Projections prepared by PVPC suggest that Southwick's population should then decrease by 3.1 % between 2000 and 2010, and decrease again by 4% between 2010 and 2020. While there may be an decrease in the size of the population overall, certain age groups can be expected to increase in size. Projections suggest a modest increase in the 15-19 year old age group by 2000, and then a sharp significant decrease in the size of this age group through 2020. Between 1990 and 2010, the group from age 50 -59 is projected to increase by 110%, the greatest projected increase of all of the age groups.

EST.  
LOW

**Table 3**  
**POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR SOUTHWICK**

*Source: Regional Population Projections 2000-2020  
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (1992)*

Age Group	Census Population 1970	Census Population 1980	Census Population 1990	Projected Population 2000	Projected Population 2010	Projected Population 2020
00 - 04	605	582	539	457	430	395
05 - 09	695	627	615	518	441	413
10 - 14	763	710	589	575	479	454
15 - 19	616	701	559	572	475	407
20 - 24	509	634	481	429	409	343
25 - 29	447	726	587	532	523	440
30 - 34	326	691	778	611	539	515
35 - 39	363	487	726	605	542	535
40 - 44	445	371	652	785	603	536
45 - 49	405	326	469	683	573	513
50 - 54	360	403	322	574	687	529
55 - 59	248	353	305	429	630	527
60 - 64	186	277	311	248	443	530
65 - 69	117	213	253	233	321	475
70 - 74	117	124	207	224	181	322
75 - 79	60	78	140	166	153	211
80 - 84	47	48	87	145	157	127
85 - ...	21	31	47	82	118	128
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,330</b>	<b>7,382</b>	<b>7,667</b>	<b>7,868</b>	<b>7,705</b>	<b>7,399</b>

8,835

9,600 +

The present population of Southwick as of last year is 7,734 people (Table 4). This is an increase of 67 people in 5 years, and an average of 13.4 people per year. If the population were to continue to grow at this rate, the population in the year 2000 will be 7,801, 67 people fewer than the population projected for the year 2000.

**Table 4**  
**SOUTHWICK TOWN CENSUS**  
(September, 1995)

Age Group	Population	Percent of Population
0-24	2,415	31 %
25-39	1,724	22 %
40-59	2,147	28 %
60+	1,448	19 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,734</b>	<b>100 %</b>

While the number of people living in Southwick is projected to increase by a modest 0.5% between 1990 and 2010, the number of households can be expected to increase much more dramatically during the same period. Between 1970 and 1990, the population of Southwick increased by 21%, while the number of households increased by 50% (Table 5). This is consistent with a nationwide trend where parents move to smaller homes when their children reach adulthood and move out. The continuation of this practice, combined with significant projected increases in the 50-59 age group, and more modest increases in the 60-64 age group, should continue to increase the demand for new housing units in Southwick.

**Table 5**  
**CHANGES IN POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS\***

YEAR	POPULATION		HOUSEHOLDS	
	No. of People	Increase	No. of Households	Increase
1970	6330		1808	
1990	7667	21 %	2713	50 %

\* Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census of Population, 1970, 1980, 1990

1970 → 2000	8835	39.6 %	3318	83.5 %
1990 → 2000		15.2 %		22.3 %

## ☐ Housing Characteristics, Prices, and Building Permit Activity

For the one year period from April 1995, through March 1996, there were 70 single-family homes sold in Southwick. The average price of homes sold was \$130,786. Sales of three bedroom homes outnumbered all other home sizes by at least 100%. Most of the homes sold in this period had three bedrooms. Table 6 summarizes average prices for various house sizes and rental units.

**Table 6**  
**AVERAGE HOUSING PRICES, 1995-1996**

### **A. Housing Sales**

<b>Home Type</b>	<b>Average Price in 1995-1996*</b>	<b>Number of Sales</b>
Two Bedrooms	\$ 89,123	13
Three Bedrooms	\$ 124,446	34
Four Bedrooms	\$ 159,764	18
Five or more Bedrooms	\$ 179,700	5

\* Provided by the Greater Springfield Association of Realtors, who reported data compiled from the Baystate Multiple Listing Service.

### **B. Rents (1996)\*\*** **Single Family and Duplex Houses**

<b>Bedrooms/House Type</b>	<b>Monthly Rent</b>
Single Family House w/ 1 Bedroom	\$ 500
1 Bedroom in 2-family house	\$ 475-500
2 Bedrooms in 2-family house	\$ 550-575
Single Family House w/ 3 Bedrooms	\$ 700-925

\*\* Provided by Storey Real Estate

### **C. Rents (1996)\*\*\*** **Multi-Unit Complex**

<b>Unit Type</b>	<b>Monthly Rent</b>
Studio Efficiency	\$ 430 utilities included
One Bedroom	\$ 500 plus utilities
Two Bedrooms	\$ 620 utilities included
Two-Bedroom Townhome	\$ 555 plus utilities
Three Bedrooms	\$ 635 plus utilities

\*\*\*Information provided by Marie Cigal of Lakewood Village, a 128-Unit Complex in Southwick

Housing prices from 1989 through 1995 are shown in Table 7. The average price of a single-family home in Southwick was highest in 1989, and then leveled off between \$110,000 and \$120,000 between 1990 and 1995. The average price for condominiums decreased after 1989-1990, but have begun to show a trend toward higher prices in 1994-1995. 1994 was also a peak year for condominium sales, with 22 sales. In other years reported, there were fewer than 10 condominium sales in Southwick. The average prices of two-family homes rose significantly, to a price of \$148,000 in 1994, but then decreased to \$100,000 in 1995. There were fewer than five sales of two-family homes each year reported.

**Table 7**  
**AVERAGE HOUSING PRICES, 1989-1995**

	Single Family	Condominiums	Two-Family	Three Family
<b>1989</b>	\$139,293	\$144,640		
<b>1990</b>	\$103,895	\$147,075	\$36,101	\$90,000
<b>1991</b>	\$132,049	\$108,140	\$49,701	
<b>1992</b>	\$109,013	\$167,818	\$80,000	
<b>1994</b>	\$121,297	\$91,236	\$144,251	
<b>1995</b>	\$118,572	\$110,360	\$89,500	

### ***Building Permits***

The number of building permits issued annually increased sharply in 1992, and have continued to increase through 1995 (Table 8). The number of permits issued in 1995 represents a 196% increase over the number of permits issued in 1991. Most of the new buildings constructed in Southwick from 1981 through 1995 were residential structures. During that period, there were 689 building permits issued for residential structures, 24 permits issued for commercial, and 5 permits issued for industrial buildings. In the peak year of 1986, 119 permits were issued, 71 more than the yearly average for the period.

From 1981 to 1991, all of the new commercial activity for the Town of Southwick occurred along Route 10/202 and north of Feeding Hills Road. The importance of the Route 10/202 Corridor as a commercial center to the Town of Southwick can be illustrated by comparing the building permits issued in the corridor study area with those issued throughout Southwick. From 1981 to 1991 there were thirty-three new commercial structures built in the entire town of Southwick. All thirty-three structures or 100 percent of all commercial structures were located either along Route 10/202 or north of Feeding Hills Road.

In 1996, the Town of Southwick adopted a phased growth zoning bylaw, which caps the number of building permits which may be issued at 100 in a consecutive two-year period.

**Table 8**  
**BUILDING PERMIT ACTIVITY, 1981-1995**

	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	TOTAL
1981	18	1	0	19
1982	11	1		11
1983	33	3	0	36
1984	35	1	0	36
1985	32	0	0	32
1986	119	3	1	123
1987	59	5	1	65
1988	50	5	1	56
1989	26	2	0	28
1990	24	3	0	27
1991	28	0	1	29
1992	51	0	0	51
1993	55	0	1	56
1994	65	1	0	66
1995	83 *	0	0	83
<b>Total</b>	689	26	5	718
<b>AVERAGE</b>	46	1.7	0.38	48

\* 17 of the 83 building permits issued in 1995 were issued for the American Inn elderly housing and assisted living facility on College Highway.

## ☐ Property Tax Rates

Residential and Open Space tax categories have historically constituted between 82% and 87% of Southwick's total property tax base, with the Commercial, Industrial and Personal property making up the remainder (see Table 9). As indicated in Tables 10 and 11, residential properties also account for 2 to 3 percent increases in the size of the tax base, whereas commercial and industrial properties account for less than one half percent increase in the tax base.

As the size of the tax base has increased from \$2.6 million in 1981 to \$5 million in 1995, the tax rate has decreased from \$24.27 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation in 1983 to \$14.66 per thousand in 1996 (Table 12).

Southwick has a uniform tax rate system where each property class of developed land is taxed at the same rate. Southwick would probably need a larger commercial and industrial tax base to support a differential system where tax rates vary according to property class.

**Table 9**  
**TAX LEVIES BY CLASS**

Fiscal Year	Residential	Open Space	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	Total	Columns 1-2: % of Total	Columns 3-5: % of Total
81						2,988,496		
82						2,988,496		
83	2,612,066	134,887	379,918	71,543	79,664	3,062,349	82.7	17.3
84	2,612,066	133,955	392,781	76,731	101,426	3,316,959	82.8	17.2
85	2,752,838	58,149	428,174	76,706	102,250	3,418,117	82.2	17.8
86	2,884,234	52,698	435,186	89,726	82,442	3,544,386	82.9	17.1
87	2,956,864	54,027	455,814	75,440	89,662	3,631,807	82.9	17.1
88	3,048,626	56,090	651,611	76,643	111,576	3,744,566	82.9	17.1
89	3,592,664		398,569	59,598	81,300	4,132,131	86.9	13.1
90	3,825,547		423,070	62,275	85,002	4,395,894	87.0	13.0
91	4,021,376		465,844	82,578	107,138	4,676,936	86.0	14.0
92	4,215,089		519,089	87,703	134,607	4,956,488	85.0	15.0
93	4,439,064		514,312	92,159	153,318	5,108,853	85.1	14.9
94	4,572,961		531,330	92,29	163,733	5,360,323	85.3	14.7
95	4,841,049		506,156	90,023	167,876	5,605,104	88.6	13.6
96	5,097,164		524,568	91,678	181,307	5,894,696	86.5	13.5

**Table 10**  
**INCREASE IN ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE**  
**ATTRIBUTABLE TO NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION- 1989-1996**

YEAR	VALUE INCREASE	PERCENT OF TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE
1993	\$ 6,476,908	2 %
1994	\$ 10,136,296	3 %
1995	\$ 11,049,328	3 %

**Table 11**  
**INCREASE IN ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE**  
**ATTRIBUTABLE TO NEW COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CONSTRUCTION-**  
**1989-1996**

YEAR	VALUE INCREASE	PERCENT OF TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE
1993	\$ 1,126,562	0.3 %
1994	\$ 730,542	0.19 %
1995	\$ 0	0 %

**Table 12**  
**TAX RATES BY CLASS**

Fiscal Year	Residential	Open Space	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	Unclassified
FY81						48.00
FY82						48.00
FY83	24.27	24.27	24.27	24.27	24.27	
FY84	26.28	26.28	26.28	26.28	26.28	
FY85	26.48	26.48	26.48	26.48	26.48	
FY86	20.70	20.70	20.70	20.70	20.70	
FY87	20.90	20.90	20.90	20.90	20.90	
FY88	20.80	20.80	20.80	20.80	20.80	
FY89	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	
FY90	12.17		12.17	12.17	12.17	
FY91	12.43		12.43	12.43	12.43	
FY92	12.93		12.93	12.93	12.93	
FY93	13.14		13.14	13.14	13.14	
FY94	13.47		13.47	13.47	13.47	
FY95	14.38		14.38	14.38	14.38	
FY96	14.66		14.66	14.66	14.66	



## ❑ Traffic Conditions

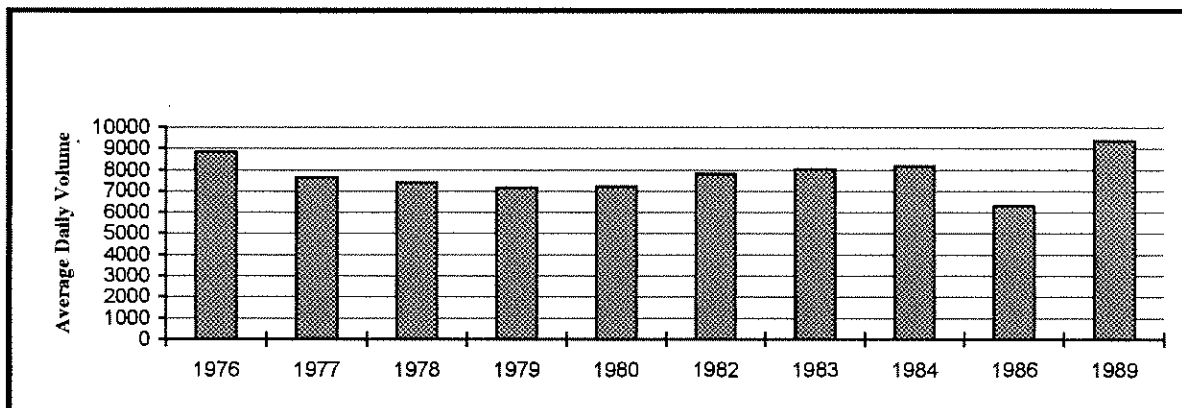
The Route 10/202 Corridor Study conducted by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in 1995-1996 provides a detailed evaluation of Southwick traffic conditions. The 10/202 corridor study area focuses on the College Highway and Feeding Hills Road, and also projects future traffic increases throughout the town.

### *Past and Present Traffic Conditions*

#### Daily Traffic Counts

Average Annual Daily Traffic counts (AADT) were measured at the Southwick-Westfield border. As shown in Figure 1, AADT counts reached their highest levels in 1976 and 1989. After the first year of counts in 1976-1977, the traffic level dropped significantly--approximately 13 percent. In the following two years, from 1977 to 1979, the volume decline continued at approximately 2 percent per year. From 1979 to 1984 the volumes on this section of the corridor continuously increased annually, at rates between one and four percent per year. Other counts at this location include an extremely low traffic level in 1986 and a record high count in 1989.

**Figure 1**  
**AADT VOLUMES AT SOUTHWICK/WESTFIELD LINE**



*Based on data collected at Permanent Count Station 281.*

#### Traffic Volume

The corridor study evaluated data on average monthly travel patterns from 1976 to 1984. During that period, monthly variations in traffic volumes were consistent with travel patterns of a rural route with typical business-related travel and more limited retail-related trips. Seasonal peak volumes occurred from May through September, suggesting heavy use for recreational trips. During this period, however, summer peaks in traffic volumes leveled off more and more each year, due to increases in non-summer commuter and business travel. The pattern which emerged in the later years is indicative of the transition of Route 10/202 from a rural route to a commuter route and commercial corridor.

## Accidents

Accident data (Table 13) shows that Segment 3, covering Route 10/202 between the two Route 57 approaches, experiences the highest accident rate along the corridor. This area is the most congested with respect to land use and is characterized by its many curb cuts. In reviewing the types of accidents, it is apparent that accidents occurring along Segment 3 may be directly related to vehicles accessing and egressing the adjacent land uses, the close proximity of curb cuts to one another, and the high travel speeds along the corridor.

**Table 13**  
**ACCIDENT HISTORY SUMMARY**

Segment #	Year	Number of Accidents
Segment 1 CT state line to Congamond Rd.	1989:	9
	1990:	10
	1991:	6
Segment 2 Congamond Road to Depot Rd.	1989:	9
	1990:	9
	1991:	17
Segment 3 Depot Rd. to Feeding Hills Rd.	1989:	20
	1990:	20
	1991:	18
Segment 4 Feeding Hills Rd to Westfield boundary	1989:	10
	1990:	4
	1991:	5

*Source: Southwick Police Department*

## ***Projections of Future Traffic Conditions***

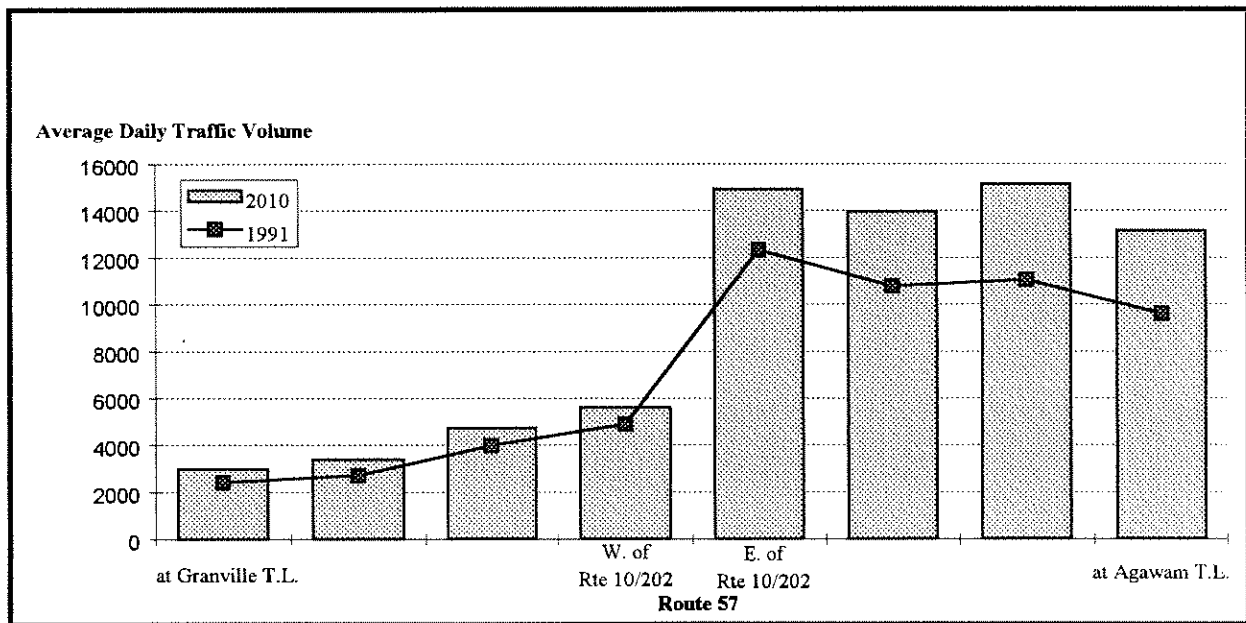
The Route 10/202 Corridor Study used a traffic simulation model to project future traffic conditions in the year 2010. The two arterial roadways in the study area, College Highway and Route 57, can be expected to have the largest increase in daily traffic as the intent of these facilities is to provide efficient mobility between major traffic generators and points of interest.

Traffic is projected to increase by approximately 20 to 25 percent between 1992 and 2010 along the corridor. Projected traffic increases in the vicinity of Congamond Road are due to the potential for future development along the corridor in this area. Proceeding northward, traffic increases linearly as it approaches Route 57 and the downtown area of Southwick. North of Route 57, traffic decreases slightly as a result of vehicles turning off of Route 10/202 to access the new Route 57 roadway. Traffic also fluctuates along the corridor in response to the layout of

the centroid connectors. Each centroid connector represents traffic entering and exiting the many driveways and local streets along the corridor. A “spiking” effect results from the model assigning large amounts of traffic to the Route 10/202 corridor at one single point because it is unrealistic to model every street and driveway along the corridor. In reality, traffic volumes on Route 10/202 would be expected to increase from 11,000 vehicles per day in 1992 to 16,000 vehicles per day at the Southwick/Westfield line.

As mentioned previously, the Route 57 corridor is expected to experience a significant increase in daily traffic as a result of the planned conversion of Route 57 to a limited access highway beginning at the Agawam town line. The potential effects of this project, and the projected increases along the corridor are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**  
**PROJECTED CHANGE IN DAILY TRAFFIC, 1991-2000**



As can be seen from the figure, very little growth is expected along the section of Route 57 west of Route 10/202. The eastern section of Route 57, however, is expected to increase by as much as 40 percent over 1992 volumes as a result of the improvements to this corridor in Agawam.

The projected 2010 daily traffic volumes for the entire study area are shown on Figure 3. Aside from the Route 10/202 and Route 57 corridors, several other roadways are expected to experience significant increases in daily traffic, as follows:

- Traffic on Foster Road and North Longyard Road is expected to increase by approximately 50 percent as result of their direct access to Route 57.

- Proposed water and sewer improvements for the Sam West Road area result in an average increase in traffic of nearly 85 percent along Tannery Road.
- Traffic along Vining Hill Road is expected double (100 percent increase) as a result of the potential for development in the vicinity of its intersection with Route 10/202 and Congamond Road.
- Noticeable increases in traffic were also observed on Loomis Street, Sackett Road, and Hillside Road as traffic begins to increase along the Route 10/202 corridor and motorists begin to seek alternate routes to escape congestion.



## ❑ Crime Rate Statistics

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission examined data on crimes and motor vehicle incidents reported by the Southwick Police Department for the years of 1984-1994 (Table 14). The year 1990 was the peak year for most categories. In 1990, 7814 total calls were reported. By 1994, total calls had decreased by 26% to 5762 calls. In 1995, however, the number of total calls rose again sharply, to 6,661 calls, which is only 15% less than the number of calls reported in the peak year of 1990 (statistics on the number of total calls were not compiled before 1990.) Total accidents went from a high of 414 in 1988, to the lowest figure reported--240 accidents, in 1994. Total citations were highest in 1990 at 1455, and steadily decreased by 70 percent over the next four years, to a low of 438 in 1994.

Most categories peaked in either 1989 or 1990, and then steadily decreased by 1994. Two categories show notable exceptions to this trend: incidents by juveniles, and assault and battery. Juvenile incidents peaked at 39 in 1989, with smaller peaks of 26 and 27 reported incidents in 1992 and 1993, respectively. This category then dropped significantly to 15 in 1994. Assault and Battery incidents rose steadily from one incident reported in 1984, to 29 incidents reported in 1994.

**Table 14**  
**SOUTHWICK CRIME STATISTICS, 1984-1995**

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
<b>Total Calls</b>							7814	7088	6640	6195	5762	6661
<b>Total Accidents</b>				390	414	396	363	268	307	264	240	218
Personal Injury	94	94	99	97	100	88	102	71	76	79	62	83
Property Damage	147	155	192	783	178	177	149	124	122	134	123	135
Fatalities	4	1	4	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	1	2
Citations	423	827	791	482	764	698	1455	750	975	59	438	
Arrests	201	269	183	202	360	491	546	467	334	276	235	372
Fraud										1	0	
Arson							1					
Assault & Battery	1	9	4	12	13	15	16	21	12	13	29	16
Larceny	8	11	7	31	13	26	46	51	27	23	5	25
B&E	7	14	26	9	24	12					2	16
Firearms Violation	0	2	2	0	4	0	2	1	0	1	0	1
Misc. Motor Vehicle	3	2	1	0	3	5	73	70	72	42	41	108
Larceny M/V									1	4	0	
Disorderly Person	2	7	4	9	15	10	13	9	5	1	4	
Narcotics Violation	0	4	4	6	52	68	23	18	15	16	15	61
Liquor Violation	1	8	10	4	22	62	53	21	21	10	7	23
Receiving Stolen Property	4	1	4	2	3	0	3	1	1	8	1	
Malicious Destruction of Property		0	8	7	8	17	6	6	4	16	3	5
Sex Offenses	3	1	0	2	1	0	1	4	1	0	3	12
Trespass			14	5	18	16	18	6	4	3	0	
Warrant	94	115	91	69	81	100	129	142	78	50	43	39
Operating Under the Influence	36	54			70	140	139	75	88	49	29	23
Violation 209A								18	12	24	6	3
Shoplifting	5	9					6	3	3	6	0	8
Criminal Complaint										5	48	
Possession of Fireworks											1	
Runaway											2	2
Minor Transport Alcohol											2	22
Unarmed Robbery	0	3			0	2					1	
Juvenile	16	26	31	16	25	39	13	20	26	27	15	
Protective Custody			41	24	43	26						
Kidnapping							2	0				

## **□ Employment Statistics**

Southwick residents are primarily employed in one of three job categories: wholesale and retail trade, services, and manufacturing/nondurable goods. These three categories combined represent 63% of the Southwick labor force (See Table 15). In two of these three categories, manufacturing/nondurable goods and services, fewer than one third of Southwick residents work in Southwick (Table 16).

The 1990 Census indicates that less than half (44 percent) of Southwick's labor force works within the town. Except for those people who work in agriculture/forestry/fisheries and those who work in wholesale and retail trade, a great majority of people work outside of Southwick. Finance, insurance and real estate is one service industry in which a considerable percentage of residents employed (37 percent) work in town. However, these residents constitute only 7 percent of the Southwick work force.

**Table 15**  
**EMPLOYMENT OF SOUTHWICK RESIDENTS**

<b>INDUSTRY</b>	<b>TOTAL EMPLOYED*</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	98	2.3%
Mining	8	0.2 %
Construction	321	7.6%
Manufacturing, nondurable goods	876	21 %
Transportation, Communication & Other Public Utilities	358	8.5 %
Wholesale & Retail Trade	1097	26.2 %
Finance, insurance, and real estate	288	7 %
Services	1080	26 %
Public Administration	62	1.5 %
Government	Not Available	--
Total (Approximate)	4,188	



**Table 16**  
**EMPLOYMENT OF SOUTHWICK RESIDENTS IN SOUTHWICK**

INDUSTRY	TOTAL EMPLOYED IN SOUTHWICK**	% EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTHWICK
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	87	89 %
Mining	Not Available	-
Construction	52	16 %
Manufacturing, nondurable goods	264	30 %
Transportation, Communication & Other Public Utilities	21	5.9 %
Wholesale & Retail Trade	773	71 %
Finance, insurance, and real estate	107	37 %
Services	213	20 %
Public Administration	Not Available	-
Government	341	-
Totals (Approximate)	1,858	44 %

\* Source: U.S. Department of Labor, 1990 Census of Massachusetts

\*\* Source: Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training, 1993, Average Annual Employment by Place of Work

## **□ Recent Land Use Changes**

In 1985, only twelve percent of the total land area in Southwick was devoted to urban land uses. The urban areas of town are located along Route 10/202, Route 57 and around the Congamond Ponds area. The most open area of town is the section of Southwick located to the west of Route 10/202.

From 1971 to 1985, a conversion of open, undeveloped land to developed land occurred in Southwick (Tables 17 and 18). Four percent of the total land area in Southwick was converted to urban land use from 1971 to 1985. Land devoted to residential development showed the greatest acreage increase in Southwick from 1971 to 1985, an increase of over 400 acres. Industrial land increased by 85 acres from 1971 to 1985. Industrial change occurred in two areas of town during this time. Some industrial land was developed north of Feeding Hills Road and some was developed near the intersection of Route 10/202 and Industrial Avenue. Commercial land increased by 45 acres from 1971 to 1985, a majority of it occurring near the intersection of Coes Hill Road and Route 10/202.

Between the years of 1971 and 1985, 650 acres of forest lands were converted to other land uses. Much of the converted forest land is now used for "low density" housing (one-half acre or larger). These new residential developments are concentrated in the western part of Southwick, along Ed Holcomb Road, Fred Jackson Road, and Loomis Street. Parcels between Charles Johnson Road and Granville Road were classified as "open" in 1971 and have been converted to low density housing. Approximately four acres of forest land has been converted to crop land in areas along Coes Hill Road, Tannery Road, along the abandoned railroad bed, and east of Foster Road. Other forest land has been converted to gravel and/or mining uses in the areas along Slab Brook, west of the confluence with Great Brook.

**Table 17**  
**LAND USE CHANGES 1971-1985**  
**Categories With the Most Acres Converted**

<b>OPEN</b>	<b>-77</b>	<b>-21%</b>
<b>FOREST</b>	<b>-650</b>	<b>-13%</b>
<b>RECREATION</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>SPARSE RESIDENTIAL</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>45%</b>

**Table 18**  
**LAND USE CHANGES 1971-1985**  
*Bold entries are those with the largest percentage change*

	Acres	% Change
INDUSTRIAL	0	0%
COMMERCIAL	+ 45	<b>50%</b>
MULTI-FAMILY	+ 19	<b>633%</b>
DENSE RESIDENTIAL	+ 8	<b>32%</b>
MEDIUM RESIDENTIAL	+ 45	6%
SPARSE RESIDENTIAL	+ 366	<b>45%</b>
TRANSPORTATION	+ 8	<b>266%</b>
OPEN & PUBLIC	+ 52	<b>55%</b>
URBAN WASTE	+ 37	<b>411%</b>
MINING	+ 47	<b>140%</b>
CROPLAND	+ 4	0%
PASTURE	- 8	-0%
PERENNIALS	-3	-7%
OPEN	- 77	<b>-21%</b>
WATER	0	0%
WETLAND	- 1	0%
RECREATION	-4	-1%
FOREST	- 536	-4.4%

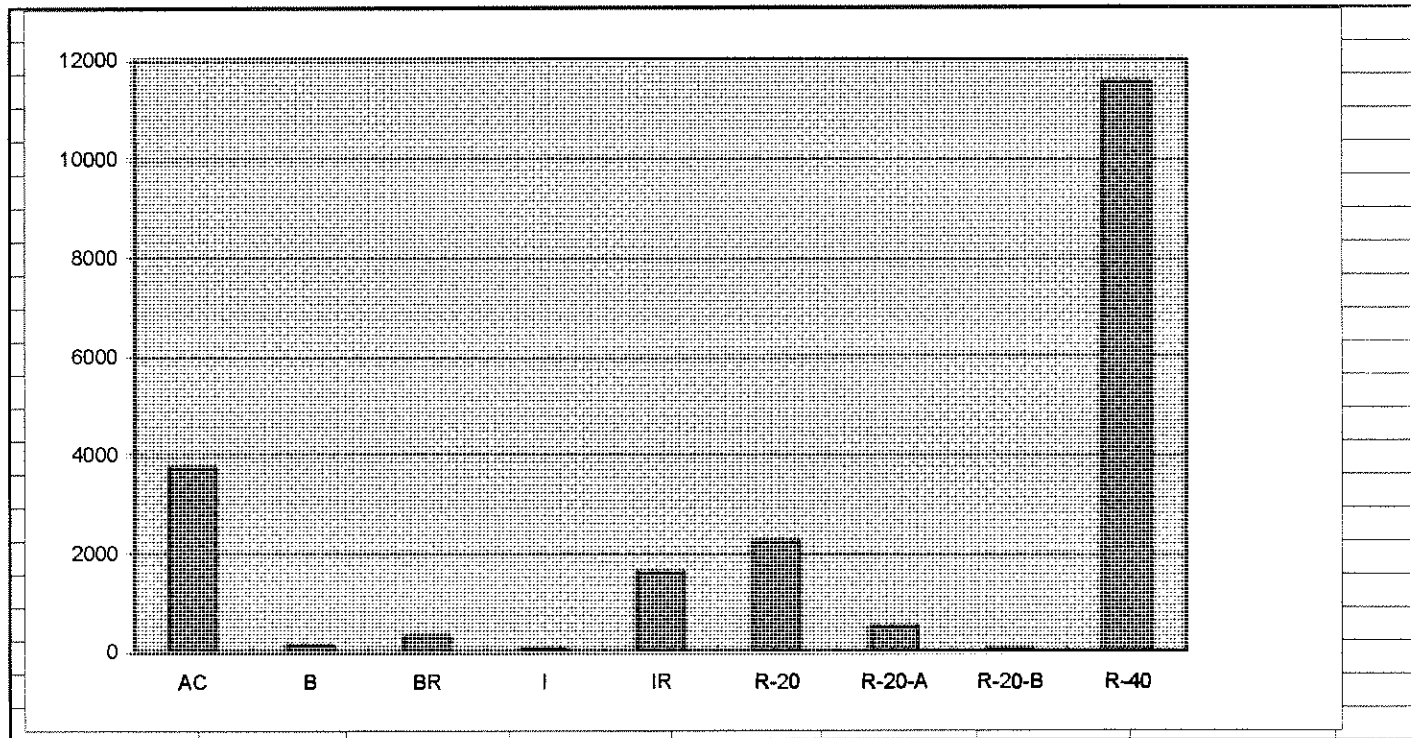
## ☐ Zoning

Fifty-seven percent of the land in Southwick is zoned as Residential R-40 (Table 19), requiring a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet, followed by Agriculture & Conservation (AC). Residential uses are allowed by special permit in the Agriculture and Conservation district. Ninety percent of the land in Southwick is zoned for residential uses, 8.3 percent for industrial uses, and 2.3 percent for business uses. Government uses are allowed in all zoning districts.

**Table 19**

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Number of Acres By Type of Zoning District</b>	<b>Percent of Total Land Area</b>
Residential (60,000 s.f. min.)	R-40	11,542	57 %
Agriculture & Conservation (60,000 s.f. min.)	AC	3,757	19 %
Residential (40,000 s.f. min.)	R-20	2,254	11.1 %
Industrial Restricted	IR	1,623	8 %
Residential (87,120 s.f. min.)	R-20-A	511	2.5 %
Business Restricted	BR	323	1.6 %
Business	B	130	0.6 %
Industrial	I	57	0.3 %
Residential (20,000 s.f. min.)	R-20-B	44	0.2 %

**Figure 4**  
**NUMBER OF ACRES BY ZONING DISTRICT**



## **□ Summary of Trends Analysis**

Southwick is a community which has attracted residents who work in other towns. Southwick is within daily commuting distance from regional employment nodes--Springfield and Holyoke in Massachusetts, and Windsor Locks, Enfield, and Hartford in Connecticut. Future expansion of Route 57 in Agawam and Southwick will significantly shorten commuting times to Springfield and Holyoke, making Southwick even more attractive to commuters.

As a result of its proximity to metropolitan employment centers, improvements in the road infrastructure, and the quality of its school system, the Town of Southwick is experiencing significant residential growth. Recent residential growth is reflected by the sharp increase in the number of residential building permits issued every year since 1991. New residential construction increased the taxable value of residential property by an average of 3% per year from 1989 to 1995. Residential growth is also reflected in the land use data for the years between 1971 and 1985, when the amount of open and forest lands decreased by 727 acres while low density housing increased by 366 acres, dense residential, medium residential and multi-family housing increased by 72 acres, and recreation land increased by 88 acres.

Housing prices decreased during the recession in 1990, but then increased steadily ever since. In 1990, the average price of a single family home in Southwick was \$103,895. Since then, the average price of a single family home rose to \$118,572 in 1995. Condominium prices have decreased steadily since 1989, with the average price in 1995 of \$ 110,000 per unit. New residential construction tends to increase as housing prices rise.

Residential growth is also reflected by the relative amount which new residential construction contributes to the overall property tax base. New residential construction has expanded the dollar value of the property tax base six times as much as new commercial and industrial construction. There has only been a modest amount of commercial growth in Southwick. However, as the number of households increases, the demand for retail goods and services will spur an increase in the number of new commercial establishments.

Residential growth is likely to continue as long as there is an increased demand for new housing units. Census data indicates that the number of households has increased at a much faster rate than the population of Southwick. This increase indicates that Southwick will probably experience significant residential growth even while the population is projected to increase by only a modest amount.

The allowable residential zoning coincides with this established profile of the community. Ninety-two percent of the housing units in Southwick are single-family homes, and 90 percent of the land in Southwick is zoned for residential use. The Zoning Bylaw requires a minimum lot size of 60,000 square feet for 76% of the land area in the community. New residential development at this low density growth pattern will continue to consume open areas and forest lands, significantly changing the character of the Southwick from a rural town to a suburban community.

Growth increases the amount of traffic on Southwick streets. The Route 10/202 Corridor Study projected that significant traffic increases will occur on the Route 10/202 and Route 57 corridors, as well as along Foster Road, North Longyard Road, Tannery Road, and Vining Hill Road will also experience overflow traffic volumes associated with travelers avoiding congestion on arterial roads.



# **STRATEGIES FOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT**





## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Southwick is facing the prospect of considerable growth, both residential and commercial, in the near future, as well as dealing with problems generated by already-completed development. To relieve such existing problems and to prevent future ones, the town needs to consider what measures it can take to ensure that it achieves a desirable and balanced pattern of development in the next ten to twenty years. This section outlines five strategies for managing growth, ranging from major changes such as changing zoning district boundaries and requirements, to relatively minor changes such as improving commercial performance standards. While the strategies below do not directly impact residential growth, the combination of these strategies, strategies in the natural resources section, and the town's existing phased growth bylaw will act in concert to allow reasonable residential growth without excessive negative impacts. The details of these options can easily be altered to fit Southwick's particular needs in the future, but the broad outlines of the choices are given below.

### **1. Strategy: Concentrate commercial and industrial development on appropriate sites, reinforcing the town center and protecting resources.**

- Objectives:*
- a. Encourage appropriate economic development in Southwick.
  - b. Protect important town resources such as the Great Brook Aquifer.
  - c. Relieve traffic congestion and safety problems.

#### *What Issues Does This Strategy Address?*

The existing business and industrial districts in Southwick do not clearly differentiate what kinds of businesses or industries are desirable in each district. Further, the business districts tend to lie along major highways, contributing to strip commercial growth. Certain districts are coincident with important natural resources, such as the Great Brook Aquifer. The business and industrial districts seem to be more an accident of history than a blueprint for the commercial growth of the town. All of these factors contribute to a pattern of commercial development which tends to cause traffic congestion and safety problems, place undue stress on town resources, and lead to degradation of Southwick's rural character. The location and requirements for all commercial districts should be examined to ensure that they have a positive contribution to the future of the town.

#### *How Does the Strategy Work?*

Clear objectives should be established for the types of business and industrial development Southwick would like to attract, as well as for where those developments should locate. These objectives can be translated into definitions of different kinds of zoning districts aimed at the objectives. For example, Southwick may wish to consider the following types of districts:

- Highway Business District, aimed especially at high traffic-volume uses;

- Town Center Business District, aimed at revitalizing and encouraging retail, service and office uses in close proximity to each other;
- Neighborhood Business District; in which residential uses are mixed with a small number of service and retail uses;
- Limited Business/Industrial District, which prohibits uses likely to have a detrimental effect on a natural resource.

Examining all of the business and industrial districts at one time will give a clear view of how uses undesirable in one part of town can be accommodated in another part, as well as giving an overall idea of how much commercial development is desirable for Southwick.

### *How would the Strategy be Implemented?*

Amending the location of a zoning district requires the same two-thirds majority vote at Town Meeting that any zoning bylaw change needs. In addition, a town-wide study of the business and industrial districts will require considerable time and commitment on the part of the town and its residents to ensure that the end result meets Southwick's desires.

## **2. Strategy: Adopt a Planned Business Development bylaw.**

- Objectives:*
- a. Promote well-planned business development.
  - b. Protect environmental and infrastructure resources of Southwick.

### *What Issues Does This Strategy Address?*

Planned Business Developments are projects which include several businesses, but are planned as a single, integrated development on a parcel under one ownership. Allowing Planned Business Developments in some business districts can encourage diversity in the town's tax base by promoting well-planned, clustered business or light industrial development, while minimizing adverse impacts on the town's natural resources and character. A common example of a Planned Business Development is a shopping center or mall, with a few large stores, several small stores, and one or two high traffic uses such as banks and fast food establishments. When all these uses are clustered together in a single development, there will be many fewer access driveways than if each business has its own lot along a highway. In addition, a Planned Business Development bylaw can specify appropriate signs, landscaping, pedestrian and bicycle access, and other requirements which boost the aesthetic appeal of the development and reduce its impact on its neighbors and the town. Planned Business Developments can be thought of as the commercial equivalent of residential subdivisions. Just as a town usually has a set of subdivision regulations, it can have a Planned Business Development zoning bylaw for commercial growth.

### *How Does the Strategy Work?*

The Planned Business Development bylaw would allow such developments by Special Permit with Site Plan Approval in certain business districts in the town. The bylaw would specify the minimum number of acres for the development; parking, lighting, landscaping standards; traffic access and safety; minimization of environmental impacts; and any other standards the town wished to include to meet the town's objectives. The bylaw could even include incentives to encourage developers to build Planned Business Developments instead of conventional commercial strip development.

### *How would the Strategy be Implemented?*

As with any zoning bylaw change, Southwick Town Meeting would have to approve the change by a two-thirds majority.

## **3. Strategy: Allow high traffic-volume generating uses only in Planned Business Developments.**

- Objectives:*
- a. Reduce traffic congestion and safety problems.
  - b. Promote pedestrian use of commercial development.

### *What Issues Does This Strategy Address?*

Commercial uses which generate a high traffic volume, especially businesses with drive-throughs such as banks or fast food restaurants, contribute significantly to increased automobile use, traffic congestion, and safety problems for pedestrians. They may also require more road frontage than other types of businesses, thus preventing pedestrian-scale development.

### *How Does the Strategy Work?*

If each high traffic-volume generating business has its own access driveway or driveways onto main roads, the large number of vehicles entering or leaving the business can contribute significantly to congestion and unsafe conditions on the roads. When such businesses are part of a Planned Business Development, the access to the development is usually better controlled and designed. Additionally, people visiting the high traffic business can park inside the planned development and walk to other businesses in the area cutting down on the total number of trips made along the main roads.

### *How would the Strategy be Implemented?*

A zoning bylaw amendment must be passed by Town Meeting with a two-thirds majority.

#### **4. Strategy: Adopt an Industrial Garden Park Development bylaw.**

- Objectives:*
- a. Encourage industrial development in Southwick.
  - b. Protect important natural resources and town infrastructure.

##### *What Issues Does This Strategy Address?*

An Industrial Garden Park Development bylaw would allow, by Special Permit with Site Plan Approval, light industrial uses and complementary businesses in certain industrial districts in Southwick. Much as with Planned Business Developments, Industrial Garden Park Developments would encourage the construction of well-planned industrial buildings on a parcel, with environmental protections and other performance standards ensuring little impact on the town's natural resources, character, and infrastructure. In Southwick, such a bylaw could be particularly useful in protecting the Great Brook Aquifer from industrial pollution.

##### *How Does the Strategy Work?*

An Industrial Garden Park Development bylaw would specify the minimum number of acres required (usually five); describe performance standards for landscaping, traffic, signs, environmental protection, and other issues; and provide incentives (if desired) to encourage developers to use this development option. These requirements and standards can be tailored to support the town's preferences as to desirable and undesirable types of industrial development. The bylaw would also include procedures for applying to build such a development.

##### *How would the Strategy be Implemented?*

As with any zoning bylaw change, Southwick Town Meeting would have to approve the change by a two-thirds majority.

#### **5. Strategy: Adopt improved commercial performance standards.**

- Objectives:*
- a. Promote economic growth consistent with the rural and historic character of Southwick.
  - b. Minimize the adverse effects of such development on community character, traffic safety, environmental quality, and neighboring properties.

##### *What Issues Does This Strategy Address?*

Well-designed commercial and industrial development can be a valuable addition to Southwick's tax base, a needed source of jobs, and an attractive component of the town's character. However, without proper rules governing the design and layout of business development, a haphazard mix of less desirable uses will almost certainly result. In many

towns, uncontrolled commercial strips have developed along highways, creating traffic and safety problems and degrading community character.

To control potential adverse impacts of commercial or industrial development on Southwick's residents, natural resources, traffic safety, and community character, the town needs to establish performance standards for commercial development. Although the likelihood of large-scale commercial or industrial development in Southwick may seem remote, if not planned for the negative impacts of such development can be wide-spread and can change the town's character rapidly and irretrievably. Uncontrolled commercial development can create traffic congestion problems on local roads, as well as traffic safety hazards due to poor layout of access or parking. Community character and the value of adjacent properties can be degraded by poor site design, lack of appropriate landscaping, uncontrolled signage, or excessive lighting. Environmental degradation, such as water pollution from toxic chemicals, soil erosion, and uncontrolled storm runoff, can also result from uncontrolled commercial development.

### *How Does the Strategy Work?*

A commercial performance standards bylaw establishes specific standards in several categories. These are essentially "good neighbor" standards, because they minimize adverse impacts on surrounding properties and on the town. While Southwick has some standards in place, these should be reviewed and expanded so as to fit with the town's vision for commercial and industrial development. Additionally, Southwick should review its site plan review and site plan approval bylaws to ensure that appropriate criteria for reviewing commercial developments are included in those processes.

In such a bylaw, standards for access and traffic impacts are designed to minimize traffic and safety impacts on highways and roads by minimizing curb cuts, encouraging shared access driveways, requiring all driveways to have safe sight distances for exiting motorists, and providing safe internal circulation plans. Parking standards encourage parking areas located to the side or rear of buildings, and sharing of parking areas between businesses. Landscaping standards require a fifteen-foot landscaped buffer strip along all public road frontage, landscaped islands in large parking lots, and screening of storage, machinery, and service areas.

Appearance and architectural design standards require that commercial building designs be compatible with the rural and historic character of Southwick and with the scale of existing buildings in the neighborhood and town. Stormwater runoff controls and erosion control standards ensure that runoff from commercial properties will not result in water pollution or flooding. Water quality standards are established for outdoor storage of hazardous materials. Safety standards are also established for storage of explosive materials. Lighting standards limit the height of light poles and require shielding of outdoor light fixtures.

### *How would the Strategy be Implemented?*

As with any zoning bylaw, the Planning Board would hold a public hearing on the proposed bylaw. Assuming that the Planning Board recommended that the bylaw be included on the town meeting warrant, town meeting would have an opportunity to vote on the vote. Passage requires a two-thirds majority vote.



# **STRATEGIES FOR CAPITAL FACILITIES PLANNING**





## INTRODUCTION

A capital improvement program is instrumental in planning the town's capital expenditures. It coordinates planning, financial capacity and physical development. The main purpose of the capital improvement program is to prioritize capital needs and address them in a systematic way, which enables the town to link capital planning and budgeting to the town's annual budget cycle and long-term planning. Capital improvement programming and budgeting involves the development of a long-term expenditure plan for capital items. Typical capital expenditures include construction or major alteration to buildings; land acquisition or improvement; major capital equipment; and other commodities that are of significant value and have a useful life of at least five years.

A capital improvement program lists all known capital expenditures that should be programmed for implementation over a five-year period. It should not be confused with the capital budget which provides the funding mechanisms for the first year of the capital improvement program. These two tools combine to provide Southwick with a fiscal vision of the future.

## Benefits of a Capital Improvement Program

It is important to include a capital improvement program in the Master Plan to broaden the level of understanding with regard to the town fiscal well-being. A capital improvement plan is very familiar to most finance committee members, but members of other town boards, committees, and the general public may not be as aware of the town's financial obligations. Linking the land use visions described elsewhere in this document to the budget process is essential in bringing these concepts and ideas to fruition. A capital improvement program can assist the town by:

- Promoting coordination between capital needs and the operating budgets;
- Enhancing credit rating and control of the tax rate;
- Relating public facilities to other public and private development and redevelopment policies and plans;
- Focusing attention on community objectives and fiscal capacity;
- Keeping the town informed about future needs and projects; and
- Encouraging careful project planning and design to help the town reach its goals.

The Town of Southwick is currently experiencing a period of residential growth where construction of new homes is outpacing commercial development by a factor of six. Between April of 1995 and March of 1996, there were 70 single-family homes sold in Southwick. We can surmise that the majority of these sales were newly-constructed homes given that in 1995, the town issued 83 permits for residential construction. This residential boom is apt to put a much greater demand on town services, namely fire and police protection, public works and the school

system. As the level of town services increases, so too will the need for equipment and facilities. The town should be in a position to address these growing needs in a rational and systematic way. The capital improvement program is an invaluable tool to accomplish this task.

Southwick has not ignored the importance of a capital plan. The town drafted a five year capital plan in 1993, which addressed needs as small as \$75 for the replacement of a calculator to needs as large as \$1.7 million for the renovation of the fire station. Town officials are currently working to update that plan. When addressing capital needs, it is recommended that the town focus its plan on expenditures of at least \$5000.

## **☐ Recommendations**

### **1. Strategy: Establish a Capital Improvement Program Committee.**

It is not within the purview of a Master Plan to actually program capital projects. What we have attempted to document here are the growing fiscal needs of the town. The prioritization of these projects must be done by the Board of Selectmen in concert with the Finance Committee. The town may want to consider establishing a Capital Improvement Program Committee which would deal exclusively with the maintenance and updates to the Capital Program. Chapter 41 Section 106B of the Massachusetts General Laws enables a town to establish a capital planning committee. The committee would be responsible for the annual review of the capital improvement program and proposals for the construction of municipal buildings, acquisition of land or personal property and to make recommendations to the appropriate officer, board agency or department.

The process, as it is outlined by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue in its publication titled Developing A Capital Improvements Program, lists the following steps that a Capital Improvement Program Committee should follow. While the manual doesn't mention establishing a capital budget, the committee may want to determine how much should be spent in any given year before soliciting and evaluating projects. This could either be a fixed dollar amount, or some percentage of the overall budget. The committee should then meet with all town departments, boards and committees to solicit, compile and evaluate project requests. Once the list has been confirmed, the committee should rank the projects in terms of the importance of each proposal to the community, keeping the project costs in mind.

The next step is to establish how each of the recommended improvements will be funded, either by town funds, private funds, state aid, federal aid or a grant program. This step should include every year of the proposed plan. The finished plan should then be adopted by the town. A presentation to the selectmen with all interested parties invited. Once approved, it is important to monitor approved projects to assure that they are constructed/purchased within the time specified. In the event that a project cannot go forward, the committee should have a process for advancing other projects. Finally, the capital program must be updated on at least an annual basis.

While the state recommends that the town adopt the provisions of Chapter 41, Section 106B, it is not mandatory. In fact, the Finance Committee, or possibly a capital needs subcommittee could assume that role as part of the annual budget cycle. The process outlined here is really the critical factor in creating a viable capital improvement program.

**2. Strategy: Establish a capital budget.**

Finally, in the last two independent audits which the town has had performed by Thomas Scanlon, CPA; the auditor has recommended that the town establish a capital budget to fund capital expenditures. This would be an annual amount each year to be used for capital expenditures. If a balance in the capital budget line item remains at the end of the fiscal year, that balance would be transferred into the stabilization fund to be used in future years. If the capital planning budget is short of funds, transfers from the stabilization fund could be voted to fund the unanticipated or excess needed. This is a very sound recommendation which the town should pursue.





# **STRATEGIES FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**



## INTRODUCTION

“The business district has grown over the years in a strip fashion primarily along the College Highway. This growth has occurred without a plan and has thus resulted in creating an area that is over dominated by the automobile, has traffic problems, confusing access points, poor aesthetics and no safe spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists.”

*The Southwick Town Center Study,*  
by Paine & Company, Landscape Architects, April, 1991

“Spending money on the present center of town is a poor investment. Whenever Route 57 comes through, they should play a part in developing a center of town in a new location.”

“We are strongly opposed to building a new town complex. Would encourage raising consolidated school and therefore expanding Prifti Park - too much money has been spent on this old building.”

“Some small steps need to be taken to start initiating changes, for example: put in some decent sidewalks in the town center and plant a few trees - it’s not much, but it can get things going and give people the sense that something is happening...”

Comments from Southwick residents in the 1996 Master Plan Survey

“Town and village centers are powerful elements for their communities. They convey the character of the town to the natives and the visitors. They can act as celebrated arrivals to the communities. Centers provide places for people to work, shop and to enjoy the outdoors...If town and village centers are planned appropriately, they will anticipate development of the future and make provisions for preservation of public open space and maintain the integrity of (a) town’s character.”

*Future Through a Resurgent Past*  
a landscape plan for the town of Southwick  
by the University of Mass. BSLA Studio, 1990



The Southwick Master Plan Committee identified following through on the recommendations of the *Southwick Town Center Study: Proposed Planning and Design Recommendations*, created in April 1991 by Paine & Company, as a top priority component of the 1997 Master Plan. The Paine Study, along with the 1990 University of Massachusetts B.S.L.A. student group report, *Future Through a Resurgent Past*, and the 1995 PVPC *Route 10/202 Corridor Study*, discussed the need and provided recommendations for a new, more cohesive town center as well as improvements to the existing commercial areas along College Highway. The PVPC Corridor Study addressed the fact that “the dual use of (College Highway) for a commuter thoroughway and commercial district has intensified an inherent conflict between these uses.” The Master Plan Committee’s recent town-wide survey results also provide recommendations as to what a sampling of Southwick’s residents would like as a town center.

This section revisits the recommendations of these previous studies and provides action steps for the “reinvention” of a Southwick town center and the “revitalization” of a central business district that is situated along a highway commercial strip. It will be a challenge for the town to find a solution that the majority of its residents and businesses will support. Therefore, before Southwick tackles this important component of its community, there are several key issues that should be addressed:

- Where is the town center -- or where should it be?
- What would make it more identifiable?
- What specific design and development standards should be created for a town center?
- How can the town government work with the business community to retrofit existing developments and encourage new businesses and economic development in the existing central business district?

A coordination of all efforts, public and private, will help facilitate the improvement of existing commercial areas and development of a new town center area. This paper will provide examples of zoning techniques such as density bonuses, specific site plan and design requirements, and new districts, to improve the town’s commercial areas and potential new town center. This paper will also discuss techniques that must go hand in hand with zoning, such as special town programs, an active town merchants organization, creative financing, and especially, follow through on previous plans and recommendations.

## **1. Strategy: Establish new zoning districts for existing and new commercial areas.**

- Objectives:*
- a. Create a Town Center Zoning District.
  - b. Rename the existing commercial corridor along College Highway a Highway Business District and amend the Zoning Bylaw appropriately.
  - c. Rename the rural sections of College Highway as Rural Highway Business Districts and amend the Zoning Bylaw appropriately.
  - d. Create Village/Hamlet Business Districts for other small business areas in the town and amend the Zoning Bylaw appropriately.

### *What Issues Does this Strategy Address?*

The current zoning districts do not differentiate between the variety of business areas that exist in the town. If the town center is to be revitalized, there is no existing district that the area could be zoned to achieve the desired development patterns. There are a multitude of issues that will need to be addressed by new zoning language, including the following:

- The town center, commercial corridor and village/hamlet areas will have specific requirements for site design, parking, set backs, and entrances and exits.
- Facade design and building size should be varied depending on whether a business is located on a highway or within a small cluster of businesses.
- A rural highway setting will probably be a less densely developed pattern than will be found in a regular highway business district.
- Some amount of open space may be required in different districts.

These issues can only be addressed by creating the appropriate zoning requirements.

### *How Does the Strategy Work?*

Creating new zoning districts would allow the town to stipulate the content, site design, and general appearance within each area. The town can address traffic safety issues along College Highway by creating development standards within the highway business district specifically through controls on high trip generators and planned business developments. The town center will be much more appealing if themes for signage, building design and site design are established within the town center district. Distinct boundaries can be determined and an improved atmosphere throughout town can be achieved with appropriate zoning districts. The *PVPC Route 10/202 Corridor Study* supplies some of the needed information and recommendations that should be used to determine the new zones and some of their boundaries.

If the town needs more land for a town center district in the future, because of environmental constraints on the existing town center, the area northeast of the Feeding Hills Road and College Highway intersection should be used, as discussed in the Paine Study of the town center.

### *How Would the Strategy be Implemented?*

The working committee would determine the specific locations for each new district and would help to draft the purposes and goals for each district. The delineations of the new districts should be discussed within public forums and any disputes about boundaries should be worked through. The final district delineations would have to be approved by a 2/3 majority at Town Meeting.

## **2. Strategy: Create new development standards for each new zoning district.**

- Objectives:*
- a. Establish standards for new development in each new district.
  - b. Establish criteria for site plan review.
  - c. Establish design guidelines for different zoning districts.
  - d. Provide density bonuses and other incentives for added public amenities.

### *What Issues Does this Strategy Address?*

As referred to in the previous strategy, the new zoning districts will need to have requirements for new developments. Each new district will need to have specific design criteria for buildings, site plan review requirements, landscaping, lighting, parking, setbacks, open space requirements, building size and envelope and lot coverage requirements. The new town center will have complicated layout issues that will have to be “mapped out” in the zoning bylaw.

In addition, there will be a need for private initiatives to add some of the public amenities to the new and existing commercial areas within the town. Each new district should have a mechanism in place for developers to get a density bonus, reduced fees, waivers for less crucial requirements, and other incentives if some of those amenities are provided by the developer.

### *How Does the Strategy Work?*

Development standards will guide new development and, in some cases, change the layout or general design of existing developments depending on how the zoning is written and what incentives are provided to the developer. The Paine Study supplies some of the basic components needed to create the development standards in each new district. The working committee will have to review and discuss many of the details, and the public will need to have some input as well, to fine tune the zoning language.

### *How Would the Strategy be Implemented?*

With the help of a consultant, the working committee should meet and discuss the different elements, site design, and general design needs of each district. The consultant would provide sample zoning language and slide presentations to illustrate the outcome of some development standards and incentives. The committee would then determine the standards that should be required and incentives to put in place, and the consultant would prepare them. The new zoning districts and language would have to go before Town Meeting for a 2/3 majority vote to go into effect.

### **3. Strategy: Create a Business Improvement District (BID) along the College Highway corridor.**

- Objectives:*
- a. Develop a Business Improvement District along College Highway to address some of the current revitalization needs.
  - b. Recruit businesses to participate in the BID Program.
  - c. Improve the appearance, traffic conditions and shopping atmosphere along College Highway.
  - d. Attract and retain businesses that are suitable for College Highway.

#### *What Issues Does this Strategy Address?*

As discussed in the studies, the lack of sidewalks, trees and lighting along College Highway, particularly in the more congested areas, is one of the factors that prevents people from spending time and money there. The site designs found along College Highway have accommodated parking spaces in the front of the buildings to the exclusion of pedestrian access and aesthetics. The many curb cuts also contribute to a feeling of chaos and lack of safety along much of College Highway in Southwick. The appearance of the “commercial strip” does not attract customers and does not represent the town’s character.

#### *How Does the Strategy Work?*

In a BID, each member business pays a fee into an account that is used for activities agreed upon by the membership in a long-term improvement plan. The plan is established by the business association and is approved by the town. A board of directors, a managing entity, and close work with the town government is required.

The establishment of a business improvement district along much of College Highway in Southwick could provide sidewalks and some of the other amenities needed. Many communities find that the municipal services alone can not provide the kinds of services and improvements that are needed to enhance the business climate. Some communities work with local business groups to establish a network of businesses that pool resources and provide an array of services and amenities that would otherwise happen either haphazardly or not at all. An example of an area that has a BID is part of Main Street in downtown Springfield.

#### *How Would the Strategy be Implemented?*

The town would work together with the local business community to establish a business partnership organization such as an extension of the Southwick Association of Merchants, if appropriate. The business association would then need to either work on its own or hire a consultant to identify the area that the BID would encompass, seek to get 60% of the real property owners to join, and coordinate the process. A petition must be filed to the town asking for the BID. The business association would then form a board of directors, develop a long-term plan and begin to establish the BID. Public hearings are required for public

comments on the improvement plan. The Massachusetts Office of Business Development can provide support in the BID development process.

#### **4. Strategy: Seek multiple financial resources for town improvements.**

- Objectives:*
- a. Seek funding from multiple sources to cover some of the costs of improvements to existing commercial areas.
  - b. Seek state and federal funding for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and other recreational or open space amenities.
  - c. Create special town-wide fundraising events and programs for specific projects.

#### *What Issues Does this Strategy Address?*

The town of Southwick like other towns has limited funds and can not always use town funding to make needed improvements. While some amount of town funding should be used in some cases, the need for obtaining outside funding sources is paramount.

#### *How Does the Strategy Work?*

Most of the strategies described in this paper will not cost the town much if done wisely. For instance, the new town center can be done primarily through private and state and federal government funding. Each parcel in the new town center would be purchased and developed privately, guided by zoning. Many of the amenities could be provided by developers through incentives and voluntary donations. Parks and recreational areas could be funded through state or federal funds. In the existing commercial areas, again much of the costs could be paid by the businesses in the areas in question. The town could use some of its own resources to supplement the activities of the business community. The following are examples of funding sources that the town may seek:

##### **a. State Funds:**

- Self Help and Urban Self Help grants to fund open space acquisition and recreational facilities (requires approved and current open space plan).
- Municipal Incentive Grant to fund the development of new zoning or strategic planning.
- Chapter 90 highway funds for sidewalk development.

##### **b. Federal Funds:**

- Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA):  
Categories of funding include:
  - Enhancements grants for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program grants for traffic management, reducing the number of vehicles using the roadways, and improving pedestrian facilities.

c. Private Donations and Special Fund Raisers:

- Donations from local residents and businesses for specific projects such as small parks, benches, planters, trees, and other smaller amenities.
- Donations from utilities companies to assist with improvements to town services such as lighting or underground utilities.

*How Would the Strategy be Implemented?*

The town must take on the role of facilitator of fund raising. For grant writing, the town could hire a consultant or work with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Private donations and special fund-raisers could be added to the BID improvement plan. There should be a town committee that works to coordinate small fund raising projects for such items as benches, trees, and planters.





# **STRATEGIES FOR NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION**





## INTRODUCTION

From its mountains on the east and west, to its rolling, productive farmland, to its striking chain of lakes, Southwick is rich in natural beauty and resources. Southwick residents value these resources highly. The results of the Master Plan Survey show very high majorities of those responding thought it was important to extremely important to protect environmental quality in the town (91%), to protect open space (83%), to protect the water supply (95%), and to preserve working farms (69%). These numbers indicate a very strong mandate for the town of Southwick to act to preserve and protect its aquifers, open space and agriculture.

At the same time Southwick's natural resources are becoming more and more threatened. Particularly once the Route 57 upgrade is completed, Southwick will be within easy commuting distance of the Springfield/Hartford metropolitan areas. Southwick recently adopted a Phased Growth Bylaw in response to a surge in residential building permits. Southwick's pastoral views, Congamond Lakes, good schools, and small-town atmosphere make it very appealing to prospective new residents. Southwick's median household income is a third higher than the median for Hampden County. All of these factors point to a probable building boom in Southwick in the next decade or so.

This briefing paper examines protective strategies for Southwick's aquifers, open space, and agriculture. Southwick may choose to adopt any or all of these recommendations, but it is important that Southwick begin now to plan for and protect its natural resources.

## STRATEGIES FOR AQUIFER PROTECTION

Much of Southwick is underlain by important high- and medium-yield drinking water aquifers. Southwick's own drinking water comes from a well in the Great Brook Aquifer in the eastern half of the town, and from the City of Springfield's surface water reservoir. The Town of West Springfield has four wells in the same aquifer, but these have been closed due to contamination by a toxic chemical, and West Springfield has turned to other sources.

While Southwick has enacted a Water Supply Protection Bylaw to protect its aquifers, the town will need to develop another water source in the future, or face increasing dependence on purchases of Springfield's water. Given the past contamination of West Springfield's wells and the likelihood of increased costs of Springfield water, Southwick should do everything possible now to protect its future water supplies.

### **1. Strategy: Improve provisions of Water Supply Protection District.**

In 1991 Southwick added a Water Supply Protection District to its Zoning Bylaw. This special district seeks to protect surface and ground water resources in Southwick from potentially harmful land uses. While this bylaw offers considerable protection to the town's

aquifers, several changes, as outlined below, could improve the level of protection. These changes are incorporated into the October 1995, model Water Supply Protection Zoning Bylaw, prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and approved by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. This model bylaw is appended to this report and the differences between the model and Southwick's existing bylaw are bold-faced there.

- Additional business and industrial uses which occasionally generate accidental spills of contaminants should be prohibited in the district. One recommendation in the model is for prohibition of new gas stations and repair shops. Adding this provision is likely to be very controversial; however, these uses are perhaps the most likely to be sources of contamination for the aquifers, because of underground storage tank leaks or spills of common boat and car fluids such as engine oil, brake fluid and transmission fluid.
- Landfills and storage of sludge or septage should be prohibited in the district.
- Storage of liquid petroleum products should be prohibited, with certain exceptions for household storage, among others, and replacement of existing storage tanks, if certain precautions are taken.
- Performance standards for uses in the district should specify extra safeguards for storage of animal manure, commercial fertilizers, and hazardous materials, as well as details on safe infiltration of stormwater.

## **2. Strategy: Adopt Underground Storage Tank regulations.**

Underground storage tanks, such as those for commercial storage of gasoline or heating oil, are frequent sources of serious, hazardous, and expensive contamination of aquifers and other groundwater due to undetected leaks. Since tanks installed more than 20 years ago are especially likely to leak, Southwick should adopt a town bylaw with the following provisions:

- Establishment of an Underground Storage Tank inventory of all known or suspected tanks;
- Requirement for tank owners to register new and existing tanks with the town (probably with the Fire Department); and
- Requirement for regular testing of all tanks over 15 years old.

## **3. Strategy: Join neighboring municipalities in protecting the aquifers.**

Aquifers do not respect town boundaries. Southwick's Great Brook Aquifer extends north into Westfield and south into Connecticut. If Southwick wants to ensure the purity of the aquifers within its boundaries, it must ensure the purity of the water within its neighbors' boundaries as well. An example of this process is the protective cooperation towards the Barnes Aquifer among Westfield, Holyoke, and Easthampton. Bound together by a memorandum of agreement, the Barnes Aquifer Protection Advisory Committee works to protect the aquifer through zoning amendments, public education, and review of developments of regional impact on the aquifer. Southwick may wish to join this committee,

as the Great Brook Aquifer is in all likelihood connected to the Barnes Aquifer, or may wish to form a new regional cooperative with Westfield, Suffield, and possibly West Springfield.

## STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING OPEN SPACE

“Open space” is a phrase which describes many different kinds of outdoor, undeveloped or mostly-undeveloped lands which afford some amenities to people. Open space can range from very large wilderness areas, to quarter-acre pocket parks in cities, to bicycle and pedestrian paths, to active cropland allowing scenic views. Open space can be publicly- or privately-owned land, or some combination, as when a state owns the development rights to farmland which is actively cultivated by a private individual or corporation.

Without forethought and planning, open spaces and, especially, the rural and scenic beauty important to Southwick residents are very likely to disappear under the random and piecemeal growth of residential and commercial development. Adding parks, bike paths, or water access retroactively to developed areas is considerably more expensive and much less successful than creating such open space early on. If Southwick wishes to retain its natural beauty, its access to recreation in natural areas, and its considerable natural resources, it must begin now to plan for and implement a coherent system of open spaces.

The best way to plan for future open space is on a local level: involving Southwick residents, asking for their preferences and needs, and using their local knowledge and commitment to carry out any plan. This process is formalized in an Open Space and Recreation Plan, as described below. In addition, Southwick should consider the strategies suggested in the final section of this paper: establishing a town fund for conservation and open space purposes, encouraging the formation of a local land trust, and hiring a part-time conservation director.

### **1. Strategy: Finish the Open Space and Recreation Plan update.**

An official Open Space and Recreation Plan summarizes the important natural and recreational resources of a town, identifies the town's goals with regard to those resources, and recommends specific actions for protection or preservation of important parcels of land which will fulfill the town's goals. Having an approved Open Space and Recreation Plan makes a town eligible for certain state grants for land acquisition or recreational facilities.

Southwick last completed an Open Space and Recreation Plan in 1979. As considerable changes have occurred since then, this plan is now out of date, although still invaluable for beginning an updated plan. Southwick should finish the process of updating its plan. As part of the plan, Southwick should investigate increased communication and cooperation with state agencies such as the Department of Food and Agriculture and the Department of Environmental Management, which can assist the town in meeting jointly-held goals.

Often the “sticking point” for towns trying to finish Open Space and Recreation Plans is simply the actual writing. Southwick may wish to enlist the services of its new town planner, hire a part-time conservation director (see the last strategy, below), or look into using a graduate student team from the University of Massachusetts or Conway School of Landscape Design to help finish the writing of the plan.

## **2. Strategy: Create a town-wide map of protected land on the parcel level.**

To plan for future open space protection, a town must know what parcels in the town are already protected from future development. This protection can include state- and town-owned conservation lands, parcels with conservation restrictions, and parcels owned by private non-profit agencies such as The Nature Conservancy or Massachusetts Audubon. The best way to accomplish this task is to create one composite tax map with the protected parcels shown on it, along with a database compiling all the information known about the protected parcels.

A protected lands map can serve as a valuable graphic tool for the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and concerned citizens. Adding wetlands, 100-year floodplains, and rare species habitat areas to the map will make obvious what important natural resources are not yet protected. The map will also make planning greenways and wildlife corridors easier.

As with the strategy above, Southwick can have town staff carry out the mapping, or can arrange for a studio from the University or the Conway School do the mapping.

## **STRATEGIES FOR PRESERVING AGRICULTURE**

Agricultural land is an important asset in Southwick, providing open space, affording scenic views, contributing to the town’s character, and providing a supply of fresh, locally-grown food. Many of Southwick’s residents stayed in or moved to the town because of its rural and pastoral character. The Master Plan Survey found that 58 percent of Southwick residents responding to the survey were willing to pay increased property taxes to support farmland preservation. Similarly, 57 percent of those responding favored forming a Southwick “land bank,” like the one on Nantucket, which would fund town purchases of land to protect drinking water supplies and preserve farmland and open space.

Unfortunately, Southwick’s agricultural land base has been declining since at least World War II. Aerial photography in 1952, 1972, and 1985 shows a loss of almost half (47%) of the agricultural land between 1952 and 1985. Much of this land has been converted to residential subdivisions. With the imminent completion of the Route 57 upgrade through Agawam, Southwick is likely to lose even more of its farmland to residential development. To prevent continued conversion of Southwick to costly residential development, Southwick must take decisive and immediate actions to protect its agricultural areas.

## **1. Strategy: Require Flexible Residential Developments for Major Subdivisions on Farmland**

Southwick already has a Flexible Residential Development District Bylaw, which allows voluntary clustering of residential dwellings on part of a parcel being subdivided, to preserve permanently the rest of the parcel as open space. One of the types of open space which this bylaw seeks to preserve is prime farmland soils. This bylaw has been reasonably successful in the town and has been used for a number of developments. However, because the developer has the option of building a conventional subdivision, it is likely that many parcels of active farmland are likely to be 'lost' to residential growth over the next twenty years. Mandating that developers use the Flexible Residential Development bylaw in areas of prime farmland will ensure that at least 40% (under the current bylaw) of that farmland is permanently protected from development.

For such a mandate to be legal under Massachusetts law and practical given Southwick's particular situation, certain details should be included in a revised bylaw:

- Only areas which are currently in agricultural use and possess prime agricultural soils should be included in a mandatory program.
- Only major residential subdivisions, as defined in the existing FRD bylaw, would be included. Thus, smaller subdivisions and ANR lots would be allowed by right.
- FRD subdivisions should only be required in districts with lot sizes of 1.5 acres or more, or where sewers are available (or will become available). Without such a provision, providing on-site sewage disposal may prove difficult.

One way to accomplish this is to establish a Farmland Preservation District. In Hampshire County, the towns of Amherst and Granby have required cluster development in their farmland or agricultural districts. Southwick may wish to modify the boundaries of its Agriculture and Conservation District, or establish a Farmland Preservation Overlay District, which would overlap a number of other districts in town.

## **2. Strategy: Identify and prioritize Chapter 61A parcels for permanent protection.**

Chapter 61A is a state tax assessment program in which owners of agriculture land are assessed on the current agriculture use of their land, rather than on the development potential, which is very likely to be of higher value. Thus, landowners enrolled in Chapter 61A pay less in taxes and, therefore, their farmland is less likely to be converted to other, non-agricultural uses. Almost all of Southwick's active farmland is in Chapter 61A.

In return for the tax break, the town receives a right of first refusal on any enrolled parcel, which can be exercised if the current owner or a prospective buyer intends to change the land from agricultural use. Thus, land in Chapter 61A is only temporarily protected from development. In fact, if the town is not prepared in some way to use or assign elsewhere the town's right of first refusal, Chapter 61A land is just as likely as any other parcel in town to be developed. Only if the town has decided that a 61A parcel is important to the town's goals,

and if the town is prepared to buy the parcel or to assign the right of first refusal to an already-prepared conservation organization, then will Chapter 61A act as a mechanism to protect agriculture in Southwick.

Through its Open Space and Recreation Plan or through a separate farmland preservation project, Southwick must inventory its Chapter 61A lands, decide on goals for the preservation of agriculture in the town, and set priorities as to which parcels are critical to these town goals. A similar process can identify and prioritize parcels (whether in Chapter 61A or not) for aquifer and open space protection as well. Having decided, through a public process, which parcels are truly important to the character, economy, and environmental health of the town, Southwick must then find funds with which to purchase properties when they come on the market. The issue of funding is covered below, under strategies for joint protection of open space, aquifers and agriculture.

With a mechanism in place to evaluate, prioritize and purchase properties in the Chapter 61A program, the town is simply offering its farmers an easy tax break. Such a tax break may well be deserved by landowners who keep Southwick beautifully rural and who employ many Southwick residents, but the town should evaluate how best to ensure this continued beauty and economic benefit.

### **3. Strategy: Encourage farmers and owners of prime farmland soils to join the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program.**

The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program of the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture purchases the development rights of farmland from willing owners, thus providing a monetary return to a farmer for his or her investment in land, while permanently preserving the use of the land for agriculture. There are various criteria which the land must meet for the state to be interested in purchasing the development rights; as well, the state must have appropriated funds with which to buy these rights.

Almost all of Southwick's farmland is in the Chapter 61A program, but only a very few farmland parcels are in the APR program. Southwick should encourage participation in the APR program in several ways:

- Identify landowners with large holdings of active, prime farmland who have yet to enroll in the APR program.
- Invite these landowners, as well as the public in general, to a meeting to learn about the APR program. The state Department of Food and Agriculture is very willing to come to towns and explain the APR program.
- Investigate the specific reasons why landowners have not applied to the program and investigate ways to accommodate these concerns. For example, a farmer may not have the time to investigate exactly how selling development rights may affect his or her taxes and cash flow. Southwick could do this legwork for the farmer, both on an individual case basis and for a sample farm in the town.

To accomplish these tasks, Southwick may wish to establish a Farmland Preservation Committee, perhaps as a subcommittee of the Planning Board or Conservation Commission.

#### **4. Strategy: Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights bylaw.**

Ownership of a parcel of land can be thought of as ownership of several rights to various actions (or lack of action) on that land--the right to develop the land, the right to mine mineral resources, the right to farm the parcel. A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program takes advantage of these separable land rights to decrease the density of development in one or more designated areas or a town or region (say, in prime farmland) and simultaneously increase the density of building in another area (a town center, for example). The area which is designated for decreased development is sometimes called the "sending zone" and the area targeted for increased density is called the "receiving zone." A landowner in the sending zone who wishes to sell his or her property can sell all of his property rights at once, in a conventional sale, or has the option of selling the development rights alone to a developer who then uses them to build housing in the receiving at a higher density than normally allowed. The sending zone landowner can then continue to farm the parcel from which the development rights were sold, or can sell the parcel to another farmer.

Obviously, this is a somewhat complicated system. There are several factors which contribute to a successful TDR program:

- The town carries out a thorough informational campaign for its residents, so that voters understand the TDR concept before voting on it at Town Meeting;
- The town has professional staff, such as a planner or conservation director, who can work with developers and prospective sellers to coordinate the program;
- Incentives to encourage sending higher density to the receiving zone are built into the bylaw. These incentives can range from smaller lot size to greater building heights to shorter frontages, or whatever suits the purposes of the town.
- There is a strong demand for new housing or commercial development in the town.
- There are obvious sending and receiving zones which are agreed to by residents.

Southwick has many of these factors already and a TDR program would probably work for the town, if the town decides to try the program. TDR programs are reasonably common throughout the country; locally, the town of Sunderland has had a TDR program for about 15 years.

#### **5. Strategy: Establish an agricultural incentive area.**

Agricultural Incentive Areas can be established under the Massachusetts Right to Farm Law, Ch. 40L, to protect farmers from rising property taxes, betterment assessments, and nuisance law suits. All of these problems are common to farmers located in the middle of rapidly suburbanizing areas, such as Southwick, and can easily lead to the demise of farms.



In order to establish an Incentive Area, a local committee of farmers and town officials must develop a plan which delineates a proposed area and evaluates the characteristics of the farms within it. The Incentive Area is made official by the approval of the Department of Food and Agriculture and by a two-thirds majority vote of Town Meeting. The proposed Incentive Area must be consistent with M.G.L. Chapter 40L, Agricultural Incentive Areas, known as the Right to Farm Law.

Participation by individual landowners and farmers in a town-designated Agricultural Incentive Area is completely voluntary. Once the town and state designate the Incentive Area, each landowner has the option of joining the program. Farmers who do join are eligible for certain benefits in return for agreeing to place minor restrictions on the sale of their property. Benefits for participating farmers include:

- assessment under Chapter 61A for reduced property taxes;
- exemption from special or betterment assessments, such as for sewers, while the land is being farmed;
- higher priority eligibility for Agricultural Preservation Restriction monies; and
- increased protection from nuisance suits resulting from any normal farm operation.

However, no enrolled land within the Incentive Area may be sold without notifying the town and the Department of Food and Agriculture. The town and the department have a right of first refusal to buy the property at the asking price. As with any Chapter 61A parcels, if the town or the state is not prepared to act on short notice when a property is up for sale, this right of first refusal is essentially non-existent. See the comments under Agricultural Preservation Strategy 2, above.

## STRATEGIES FOR JOINT PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE, AQUIFERS, AND AGRICULTURE

### **1. Strategy: Establish a dedicated town fund for open space, aquifer, and agricultural protection.**

Southwick's rural and natural beauty is one of the town's greatest resources. By acquiring the development rights to important parcels of land or by enabling conservation organizations or programs to acquire such rights, Southwick will ensure itself unpolluted drinking water, beautiful scenic views, viable agriculture, and access to outdoor recreation sites. Many of the strategies above depend on the town's ability to provide a local match to a grants program or to buy parcels of particular importance to the town's goals.

To participate in any land acquisition strategy, Southwick needs a regular and consistent source of funding. Often a desired parcel must be acted on quickly when it comes on the market; having a dedicated fund available allows timeliness and flexibility in decision-making.

Usually it is easiest for a small town like Southwick to appropriate small amounts of money on a regular basis, at every annual town meeting, for example, than to approve a large amount for a one-time project.

One way to accomplish this establishment of a dedicated fund is to create a local land bank, as has been done for Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. A local land bank is funded by a small tax on real estate transfers and thus works best (in terms of funds generated) in locations and markets in which much real estate is changing hands. On Nantucket and the Vineyard the transfer tax underwrites bond issues directed at land conservation purposes. To set up a land bank, the town should pass, by a simple majority at Town Meeting, a Home Rule petition, declaring the town's decision to tax itself for land banking purposes. Then the town must ask the state legislature to pass an act enabling the town to impose a real estate transfer tax.

## **2. Strategy: Establish a local land trust.**

Even with good intentions, good planning, and a dedicated local fund, often a small town government like Southwick's cannot act quickly enough when a desirable piece of property comes on the market. Town meetings cannot be called on a moment's notice, volunteer town officials are already giving more time and energy than they really have, and long-range plans are often difficult for volunteer staff to carry out. One way to deal with these problems is to establish a non-profit land trust, either for Southwick alone or with neighboring communities. A conservation land trust can fundraise, carry out public education campaigns, buy parcels quickly to "hold" for the town or the state, and perform many other functions which a town has neither the time or money to do. The Valley Land Fund is a land trust based in the Massachusetts Connecticut River Valley and dedicated to preserving open space, agricultural land, and water supply areas. Nationally, the American Farmland Trust works to preserve agricultural land and the economic viability of farming. Both of these can be helpful in Southwick, but a locally-based trust is more likely to understand local conditions, the needs of local residents, and local fundraising possibilities.

A land trust can be set up as a cooperative venture between the town of Southwick and the private non-profit trust itself. Certainly, close cooperation and communication among the Southwick Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and officers and board of the land trust is more likely to result in results satisfactory to all.

## **3. Strategy: Hire a part-time conservation director.**

While choosing strategies and setting goals for land protection may seem a difficult and lengthy task, implementing targeted actions will definitely be protracted and is often frustrating and complex. Southwick should consider hiring a part-time conservation director to oversee the day-to-day tasks necessary to protect its wetlands, aquifers, open space, and agricultural lands. Another option may be to combine the jobs of town planner and conservation director in one, full-time position. The expense of paying and equipping such a

position may seem steep and unnecessary now, but the costs of delaying action on these important goals may well ruin Southwick's natural beauty in the future.



# **STRATEGIES FOR RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**



## INTRODUCTION

Southwick has a wealth of recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors. From the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail and the planned Southwick Rail-Trail to the boating, swimming and fishing of the Congamond Lakes to the commercial golf courses, Southwick provides great variety in recreation choices amid beautiful natural scenery.

But with increased use of these facilities and projected population increases, Southwick needs to consider how it can continue to provide public and private recreation for its citizens and tourists without straining municipal budgets or endangering the lovely rural atmosphere which attracts so many visitors. This working paper will examine recreational needs and opportunities in the Town of Southwick.

## Survey Results

The Southwick Master Plan Committee, with the help of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, conducted a random mail survey of Southwick households to uncover residents' opinions and preferences on many issues in town. One of those issues was the availability and quality of recreational facilities in town. Of the 198 households responding to the survey, 40% rate the recreational facilities in Southwick as good. Forty percent rated them as fair, with 20% rating them poor, not important, no opinion, or not responding to the question at all.

The survey asked respondents to indicate which of thirteen types of public or private recreational facilities they would like to see developed or expanded in Southwick. Of those thirteen choices, a multi-purpose teen recreation and social center and a mountain bike facility or bike trail system were the top two choices. The teen center choice received a combined total of 85% of the respondents rating it a very important or important facility for the town. Bicycling facilities received a combined total of 81% rating them very important or important.

The next most important group of recreational choices were expanded lake activities, a winter sports facility, movie theaters, and indoor pools. Between 60% and 66% of the respondents rated these facilities as very important or important. Tennis courts, a skateboarding park, a Discovery Zone type of family recreation facility, a bowling alley, and a roller skating rink were rated very important to important by 37% to 56% of respondents. Finally, billiard halls and gaming arcades were rated as very important or important by only 21% and 17% of respondents, respectively.

Another survey question asked how public recreational facilities should be funded. Forty-six percent of those responding thought user fees should pay for improvements. Twenty-eight percent preferred using general tax revenues, 3% preferred a Proposition 2 1/2 override, and 8% thought minimal or no town fees should be used.

A final survey question asked each respondent to "indicate how important you think it is for the Town of Southwick to focus on each of the following goals in the next 10-20 years." Providing

improved recreational opportunities was rated extremely important by 33% of respondents, as important by 52%, and not important by 13%. A total of 9% had no opinion or did not answer the question.

The results of the survey indicate that improving recreational opportunities is important to Southwick residents. In particular, providing recreation for teens and bicycling opportunities for all ages appear to be the most important needs identified by residents.

## ☐ **Assessment of Southwick Zoning for Recreation Uses**

### ***Current Zoning***

Southwick's Zoning Bylaw covers commercial and nonprofit recreational uses in considerable detail, allowing the following uses, often by Special Permit, in town:

#### Agriculture and Conservation District AC

Stables.

Municipal parks, playgrounds and recreational and community buildings, grounds for games and sports and country clubs, the chief activity of which is not conducted for profit.

#### Residence Zone R-40

Any use permitted in Agriculture and Conservation District.

Commercial recreation (as defined in Article VI) by Special Permit

#### Residence Zone R-20

Any use permitted in Residence Zone R-40 (therefore allowing stables, municipal and nonprofit parks, country clubs, etc., and commercial recreation as defined in Article VI).

Public boathouse for rental of boats and canoes, public bathhouses, and commercial uses of buildings, structures and land for recreation - by Special Permit

#### Residence Zone R-20-A

Any use permitted in Residence R-20 (therefore allowing stables, municipal and nonprofit parks, country clubs, etc., commercial recreation as defined in Article VI, public boathouse for rental of boats and canoes, public bathhouses, and commercial uses of buildings, structures and land for recreation).

#### Residence Zone R-20-B

Any use permitted in Residence R-20 (therefore allowing stables, municipal and nonprofit parks, country clubs, etc., commercial recreation as defined in Article VI, public boathouse for rental of boats and canoes, public bathhouses, and commercial uses of buildings, structures and land for recreation).

### Business Zone B

Hotel, motel or inn.

Indoor theater, hall, or club.

Restaurants, taverns or other eating places.

Miniature golf course, batting cage and related activities - by Special Permit

### Business Restricted Zone BR

All uses permitted in Business Zone B - by Special Permit

### Industrial Zone I

Any use permitted in Business B Zone, except residential uses and retail personal service stores.

### Industrial Restricted Zone IR

All uses permitted in Industrial Zone I - by Special Permit

Examination of the Southwick Zoning Bylaw reveals two general areas in which changes or improvements could be made to the bylaw: 1) clarification of inconsistencies or unclear sections and 2) possible additional uses to be permitted or prohibited.

### *Clarifications*

#### Section 185-34: Commercial Recreation

There is a requirement for open space areas in all commercial recreational areas (paragraph G.10); however, there is no specification of how much open space is required, what areas can count toward an open space requirement, what activities are permitted in an open space area, or how the open space is to be permanently protected. Southwick may wish to use the open space requirements it already has in place for Flexible Residential Subdivisions (FRD), but with modifications to fit the situation of a commercial recreation development. For example, a commercial recreation development will have unbuilt-upon areas which may be used intensively for horseback riding, cross-country skiing, or some other outdoor activity that does not require built structures. The town may want to exclude these from officially-designated open space which is protected by a deed restriction, as in a Flexible Residential Development. Southwick currently requires 40% of a parcel (minus certain environmentally-constrained land) to be common open space in a FRD; this requirement may be high for a commercial recreation development if the town decides to exclude intensive recreation lands (trails, playing fields) from designated open space.

Camping is permitted in commercial recreation developments on a temporary basis, but "temporary" is not clearly defined. Often towns only allow occupancy of a campsite by an individual for no more than 15 or 30 days continuously.

Commercial recreation developments, under this section of the bylaw, are currently allowed in all four residential zoning districts. The town should consider whether such developments are



appropriate for Residence Zones R-20-A and R-20-B, as the apparent intent of these zones may not be appropriate for all types of commercial recreation developments.

### **Tourist Cabins**

“Tourist cabins” are currently prohibited in all zoning districts in Southwick (Section 185-18. B.2). Since tourist cabins are not defined in the zoning bylaws, this prohibition could conflict with permitted uses, such as the “motel, lodge or inn furnishing lodging and/or meals to transients as accessory to a recreational use, but not as a principal use” allowed in commercial recreation developments, or the hotel, motel or inn allowed in Business zones. If the town wants to prohibit short-term rental units which are built as individual structures, the bylaw should define those clearly. The town should also consider whether it wants to allow short-term rental cottages along the lakes and how they are different from tourist cabins or motel or lodge units.

### ***Additional Recreational Uses***

A number of possible recreational uses are not explicitly considered in the Southwick Zoning Bylaw. Each of the uses on the following list should be examined for possible inclusion in the bylaw.

- Commercial hunting clubs or shooting ranges: Nonprofit hunting clubs and shooting ranges are currently permitted in the Agriculture and Conservation District, but commercial versions are not addressed. These uses have the attendant issues of noise and safety to be considered.
- Commercial car and dirt bike racing: As with hunting clubs and shooting ranges, nonprofit race tracks may be permitted as part of sports and country clubs in the Agriculture and Conservation District. Racetracks with pari-mutuel betting are prohibited throughout the town.
- Indoor commercial recreation uses such as indoor pools, roller skating rinks, family recreation facilities, bowling alleys, gaming arcades, and billiard halls: Many other towns permit these uses with appropriate controls.
- Mountain biking, Roller-blading, and skateboarding: These may be able to be permitted as “related activities” under the Commercial Recreation bylaw, but the town may wish to permit them on smaller parcels than the 50 acres required for Commercial Recreation developments.
- Bed and breakfasts: Permitting these everywhere in town except the Industrial districts and the Agriculture/Conservation District (because of possible septic disposal problems) would allow tourists greater diversity in lodging choices.
- Amusement park: While the Commercial Recreation bylaw might be stretched to permit a use such as Riverside Park in Agawam, the town might be better served to address this issue directly and specify exactly how and where such a use would be permitted (or not).

## **❑ Recreational Needs in the Town of Southwick**

To plan adequately for the recreational needs of its residents and visitors, Southwick must look five to twenty years ahead and begin now to acquire and construct facilities needed in the future. At the same time, the town must weigh the costs of recreational facilities against those of other desirable projects, such as sewers or road reconstruction. The suggestions below are an ideal, which should be balanced with other planned projects to construct a realistic plan for recreation facilities in Southwick.

### **Parks**

These include areas with multiple functions such as children's playgrounds, picnicking, informal sports, and occasional events such as band concerts. In general, a town needs one small neighborhood park of five to ten acres with walking distance of each densely-settled area, plus one or more community parks of twenty-five acres or so. For a small town like Southwick, a reasonable goal would be one community park located in the town center and one small neighborhood park near the Congamond Lakes. The park behind the former Consolidated School can serve as the community park. The small size of the town beach precludes it serving as a neighborhood park, so the town should consider acquiring land for a small park somewhere near the lakes. The neighborhoods along Feeding Hills Road can be served by the facilities available on the school grounds, especially if some provision can be made for picnicking and informal play on those grounds or immediately nearby.

### **Playing Fields**

These include fields for organized sports such as softball, soccer, and basketball. While Southwick has many of these fields available on school grounds, the demand for organized sports has apparently outgrown the school facilities. While constructing sports fields can be extremely expensive, Southwick needs to consider how it can provide more fields, or more access to existing fields, at reasonable expense. Often these expenses can be borne by user fees or by private fundraising. Another option is the Urban Self-Help grants available from the state Division of Conservation Services. These fund the acquisition of park and recreation land and the development of outdoor recreation facilities. The grants are available to communities with more than 35,000 year-round residents (for which Southwick obviously does not qualify) or to proposals for regional or statewide facilities. Regional or statewide facilities are defined as projects serving a regional population of 35,000 which resides within a radius of 25 miles (for regional projects) or projects serving one or more urban areas and/or the residents living within a one-hour driving radius (for a statewide project). Thus, Southwick would have to band together with Agawam (population 27,300) or Westfield (population 38,400) to plan facilities serving more than one community.

### **Trails**

Southwick already has the Metacomet-Monadnock hiking trail and the (almost-forgotten) Bicentennial Bike Route, as well as the planned Southwick Rail-Trail. Assuming the Rail-Trail is

built and the Bicentennial trail is resurrected, Southwick will have a good basic trail framework criss-crossing the town. Provisions should be made to connect these trails with each other, with the neighborhoods, schools and town center, and with trails in the surrounding communities. Suggestions for connections are made below, under strategies.

## **Natural Areas**

As Southwick grows over the next ten to twenty years, the natural beauty of the town is likely to disappear into subdivisions and behind “No Trespassing” signs. While Southwick does have some protected natural areas such as the Goose Pond Conservation Area and the Granville Gorge, it should act now to protect natural areas for such passive recreation as birdwatching, nature photography, and hiking. The working paper on agricultural and open space protection covered several strategies which will help protect natural areas; for recreational needs the town should concentrate on acquiring land (or access to land) near densely-populated sections of town.

### **1. Strategy: Establish a dedicated town fund for future acquisition and improvement efforts.**

In order for Southwick to acquire land or build facilities for recreation, a regular, consistent source of funding must be available. Usually it is easier for a small town like Southwick to appropriate small amounts on a regular basis to a dedicated fund, at every annual town meeting, for example, than to approve a large amount for a one-time project. Often a desired parcel must be acted on quickly when it comes on the market and having a dedicated fund available allows timeliness and flexibility in decision-making. It may also prove useful to set aside a portion of local boat license fees, sales of timber from town-owned land, or current user fees into such a dedicated fund to allow the fund to grow.

### **2. Strategy: Inventory Chapter 61 lands in readiness for eventual exercise of right of first refusal.**

Massachusetts General Law chapters 61, 61A, and 61B authorize Massachusetts tax assessment programs which value land meeting specified forest, agricultural, or recreational use criteria on the use of the land rather than on its development potential. In return for lower tax assessments on lands enrolled in these programs, landowners grant to the city or town where the land is located a right of first refusal to acquire the land if the land is to be converted or sold to residential, commercial, or industrial use. The right of first refusal to acquire lands enrolled in these tax assessment programs is an important tool for acquisition of land by a municipality for open space protection, water supply protection, or recreational needs.

Landowners of parcels enrolled in this program must notify the Selectmen, Assessors, Planning Board and Conservation Commission by certified mail if the use of the parcel by the landowner or by a prospective buyer is to be changed. The town then has 120 days to decide

whether to exercise its option to buy the land. The town also has the option of assigning its right of first refusal to a non-profit conservation group. The town must inform the landowner of the town's intentions, regardless of whether the town decides to buy the land, assign its right to a non-profit conservation group, or not to exercise its right at all.

For this process to benefit recreational needs, Southwick must be aware of which parcels in the town are enrolled in the Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B programs. Those parcels should then be assessed to determine their potential usefulness for recreation, such as flat land for playing fields, access to water bodies for swimming or fishing, or proximity to existing or planned trails for expansion or access to those trails. This assessment process should involve the Parks and Recreation Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, and the Selectmen. Parcels with real usefulness to the town for recreation or other purposes should be "flagged," so that all of the town bodies involved know what is planned for the property. This list of desired properties should be reviewed and updated yearly. The town may also wish to initiate talks with landowners of "flagged" parcels so that the landowners understand the town's intentions. Obviously, the town must be quite sure of the need for a particular parcel and have the resources available for purchase if this process is not to create misunderstandings and hard feelings in town.

Because Southwick can either buy desired parcels itself or assign its right of first refusal to a non-profit conservation group, often a local land trust or other conservation group can act as intermediary between the town and the landowner. This assignment of rights can be useful in cases where the town wants to buy a parcel but does not have the cash on hand to pay the landowner immediately. In this scenario, Southwick would transfer its right of first refusal to the land trust. The land trust would then buy the land, with the understanding that Southwick would buy the land from the land trust as soon as funds are available from a town meeting, a grant, or other sources. For this scenario to work the town must be certain that the anticipated funds will in fact become available.

### **3. Strategy: Apply for ISTEA Enhancement funds to construct the Southwick Rail-Trail.**

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) provides that a percentage of each state's federal highway funds be used to design and construct enhancements to the nation's transportation system, particularly to those parts of the system which allow different modes of transportation than conventional automobiles. These Enhancement funds have been used locally for such projects as the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway, along the riverfront in Springfield, Agawam, and other communities along the river. Southwick's planned Rail-Trail is a classic candidate for Enhancement funds and every effort should be made to apply successfully to the program. The deadline for the next round of ISTEA Enhancement funding is March of 1997. Because funding for the Enhancement program is uncertain after the next year or two, Southwick should make every effort to receive Enhancement funds for the Rail-Trail in the next round of funding.

#### **4. Strategy: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to permit and improve private commercial recreational opportunities.**

As discussed above in the assessment of Southwick zoning, there are certain improvements and changes which could be made in the bylaw to improve recreational opportunities in the town. Recommended changes include:

- Defining open space requirements for Commercial Recreation developments. The town could include or exclude unbuilt-on lands that are intensively used for recreation in protected open space. For example, the greens and fairways of a golf course or the ski runs of a ski resort do not have structures or pavement, but they are definitely not in a natural state and the town should decide whether such areas count open space, either wholly or in part.
- Permitting explicitly many kinds of commercial indoor recreation. This includes such activities as bowling alleys, movie theaters, family recreation centers, fitness centers, and gaming arcades. Explicitly allowing such uses in the Zoning Bylaw can encourage their construction. These activities can serve the recreational needs of the town's teenagers.
- Permitting bed and breakfasts in some districts in town. Small bed and breakfast lodging places, with one to three guest bedrooms, can cater to tourists interested in Southwick's pastoral beauty. Restrictions on parking, landscaping, signs, lighting, and other issues will protect neighbors from possible undesirable aspects of B & Bs.
- Expanding the uses allowed on a Commercial Recreation development to include mountain biking. While mountain biking may currently be implicitly allowed under the bylaw, allowing it explicitly will encourage such facilities to be built. Again, this is an activity which will appeal to Southwick's teenagers.

#### **5. Strategy: Finish the updated Open Space and Recreation Plan.**

Southwick last completed an Open Space and Recreation Plan in 1979. A few years ago, the town attempted to update its plan, but work on the update stopped short of completion. The conservation commission is currently restarting the process of finishing the update.

A completed and approved Open Space and Recreation Plan spells out in detail a town's needs and opportunities for recreational facilities. It provides a prioritized action program aimed at providing land, facilities and programs to unserved segments of a town's population. It also makes a town eligible for state Self-Help Grants, which fund acquisition of land for recreational purposes. Perhaps most importantly, the process of writing an Open Space and Recreation Plan can create a coalition of townspeople informed about recreation needs in town and willing to carry out the steps towards satisfying those needs.

## **6. Strategy: Create connections between trail systems and sources of users.**

Southwick has three major trail systems:

- the Metacomet-Monadnock (M & M) Trail, which is a footpath along Provin Mountain between Southwick and Agawam;
- the Bicentennial Bike Route, which follows town roads in a double loop east and west of Routes 10/202; and
- the planned Southwick Rail-Trail, which follows the abandoned railroad track north from the Congamond Lakes east of the town center and past the school complexes.

Because the Rail-Trail is still in the planning stages and the Bicentennial Bike Route has been virtually forgotten, the only active trail in town is the M & M Trail.

Southwick should plan for and begin acquiring access and extensions to these trails to connect each with each other and with trails in other communities, with neighborhoods and schools, with the lakes, and with the town center.

Connections from the following locations to the planned Rail-Trail should be considered:

- Between Rail-Trail and schools - For safety, connections between all of the schools and the Rail-Trail should be along Powder Mill Road, rather than the more heavily traveled Feeding Hills Road.
- Between Rail-Trail and lakes - For lakeside residents and visitors, there should be access to the trail at Congamond Road, South Longyard Road, and Grove Road, preferably with small parking areas at each intersection.
- Between Rail-Trail and existing town center - To facilitate bicycle access to the town center, there should be marked bike lanes on both sides of Routes 10/202 from Feeding Hills Road south to Vining Hill Road. These lanes would connect to the Rail-Trail via marked bike lanes along Depot Street and Congamond Road.
- Between Rail-Trail and M&M Trail - The connection here could be along South Longyard Road, with a possible alternative being along the pipeline right-of-way which runs south of the schools and under Foster Road to Agawam.
- Between Rail-Trail and Bicentennial Bike Route - The possible connections outlined above would connect the Bicentennial Route to the Rail-Trail at Congamond Road, Grove Road, and the Depot Street/South Longyard intersection.

To make these trails even more attractive to residents and visitors, Southwick should actively pursue coordination of connections with Agawam and Westfield in Massachusetts in Massachusetts and with Granby and Suffield in Connecticut. The town may also wish to consider offering tax breaks or other incentives to private landowners who provide rights-of-way across their properties to the Rail-Trail.





# **APPENDIX: SURVEY RESULTS**





# SOUTHWICK MASTER PLAN SURVEY

## Summary of Results

**1. How many years have you lived in Southwick?**

RESPONSE CHOICES	1-2	3-5	5-10	10 +	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	17	20	31	125	4	197
% OF TOTAL	8.6 %	10.2%	15.7 %	63.5 %	2%	

**2. Have you attended a Southwick Town Meeting in the last 18 months?**

RESPONSE CHOICES	Yes	No	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	87	105	6	198
% OF TOTAL	44%	53%	3%	

**3. If you indicated no to the last question, please use the space below to let us know if there things which Southwick officials can do to make it easier for you to attend town meetings.**

- Put major issues at beginning of meeting. Start on time
- George will be 85 years young in July and I will be 81 in August - a good reason?
- I am 85 years old and hard of hearing. I also don't believe that there's much you can do
- Shorter (annual meetings)
- Have childcare available
- Better notices/advertisement of when and where they will be held
- Eliminate Special Sessions and Emergency Sessions
- I work one hour away and just don't have the energy or time to attend
- I am 93 years old and slowing down!
- Repair the building
- Political agenda's and infighting are a turn off. I do not have much respect for politicians
- Not necessarily - I'm just beginning to participate in town functions, problems, etc.
- We frequently don't know about them. A banner over College Highway works - also notices in grocery stores and gas stations
- Better advance notice - mailings or notices in Southwoods or Penny Saver
- Not really, we just have very full lives at this time
- Having a meeting or town on the weekend
- Vote during the course of the day - I often have another commitment the same evening. We should have voting on issues the same time as regular elections
- The last notice arrived the day prior and the family had already made plans to do something else
- Nothing really, I work an awful lot and my free time is valuable to me
- Schedule them on weekends
- I don't feel a need to attend the town meetings
- We have a very busy schedule & we don't get a paper. Post the dates on a signboard downtown
- Work long hours
- Put on TV
- We need a representative town meeting system. Schedule them weekend or during the day

- My schedule has always interfered
- Provide better parking, it's nonsense
- Early on a Friday evening or Saturday are the only times I can attend. I'm on the road all week
- None
- We should be willing to take a bigger interest. It is up to individuals to make an effort to attend. We will make that effort
- I work in the evening
- Change time and day or repeat the meeting on a second date
- Advertise them more
- Even though yes is checked, could we try any other night than Tuesday
- Better notification communicated well in advance. I don't want to find out about a town meeting on the day of the meeting

4. Do you rent or own your home?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Own	Rent	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	174	20	4	198
% OF TOTAL	88%	10.1%	2%	

5. Do you own land in Southwick?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Own	Rent	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	103	84	11	198
% OF TOTAL	52 %	42 %	5.6%	

If yes, how many acres ? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you or anyone in your household own a business in Southwick?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Yes	No	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	29	164	5	198
% OF TOTAL	14.7%	83%	2.5%	

7. Do you or anyone in your household work in Southwick?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Yes	No	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	53	140	5	198
% OF TOTAL	27%	71%	2.5%	

8. Do any of the children in your household attend private elementary or high schools?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Yes	No	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	17	168	13	198
% OF TOTAL	8.6%	85 %	6.6 %	

9. Please indicate your opinion regarding the quality of life in Southwick by rating each of the categories listed below and check the appropriate box.

Availability of Rental Housing

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	30	28	18	37	76	9	198
% OF TOTAL	15%	14%	9%	19%	38%	5%	

Housing Costs

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	50	98	4	6	30	10	198
% OF TOTAL	25%	50%	2%	3%	15%	5%	

Public Schools

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	112	48	9	2	22	5	198
% OF TOTAL	57%	24%	5%	1%	11%	3%	

Entertainment

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	24	54	79	16	19	6	198
% OF TOTAL	12%	27%	40%	8%	10%	3%	

Cultural Activities

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	12	70	77	9	25	5	198
% OF TOTAL	6%	35%	39%	5%	13%	3%	

#### Recreational Facilities

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	78	78	23	3	10	6	198
% OF TOTAL	40%	40%	12%	2%	5%	3%	

#### Shopping

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	49	94	45	3	2	5	198
% OF TOTAL	25%	48%	23%	2%	1%	3%	

#### Employment Opportunity

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	2	49	84	11	46	6	198
% OF TOTAL	1%	25%	42%	6%	23%	3%	

10. Please indicate the types of housing you think should be constructed in Southwick and check the appropriate box.

#### Single Family Homes

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	92	76	8	12	10	198
% OF TOTAL	47%	39%	4%	6%	5%	

#### Multi-Family Home

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	4	31	135	16	12	198
% OF TOTAL	2%	16%	68%	8%	6%	

#### Affordable Housing

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	39	80	54	12	13	198
% OF TOTAL	20%	40%	27%	6%	7%	

### Condominiums

<b>RESPONSE CHOICES</b>	<b>Extremely Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	7	40	113	23	15	198
<b>% OF TOTAL</b>	4%	20%	57%	12%	8%	

### Retirement Communities

<b>RESPONSE CHOICES</b>	<b>Extremely Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>No Response</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	33	95	35	16	19	198
<b>% OF TOTAL</b>	17%	48%	18%	8%	10%	

### Other

- No apartment blocks
- Single family homes that young people just starting out can afford
- Public transportation to Westfield and surrounding areas
- Please do not turn Southwick into a housing community!
- Duplex type homes and affordable condominiums
- We need more farms and less homes which will attract children. Our schools are bursting!
- More affordable homes for elderly
- No more condo's
- We do not want anymore housing developments
- Poorly worded question - what's the point
- Nursing Home
- The town can zone, but they can't dictate what land owners do with their property
- Upscale homes
- If there is development, I would rather see single family homes then apartment buildings
- Businesses
- New housing should be extremely curtailed to slow the growth of this town.
- I did not list any of the above as 'extremely important' because I would like to see the volume of new housing reduced overall. We should try and improve some of the existing residential areas
- High end executive housing
- Not interested in any low income or apartments

11. Please indicate the types of businesses which you would like to see developed or expanded in Southwick and check the appropriate box.

Professional Office

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	48	96	30	11	13	198
% OF TOTAL	24%	49%	15%	6%	7%	

Specialty Shopping Centers  
(i.e., Yankee Candle Company)

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	48	87	44	9	10	198
% OF TOTAL	24%	44%	22%	5%	5%	

Light Industry & Warehousing

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	54	81	37	13	13	198
% OF TOTAL	27%	41%	19%	7%	7%	

Quality Restaurants

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	46	101	38	3	10	198
% OF TOTAL	23%	51%	19%	2%	5%	

Night Clubs

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	9	20	145	8	16	198
% OF TOTAL	5%	10%	73%	4%	8%	

College Satellite Campus

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	40	72	57	18	11	198
% OF TOTAL	20%	36%	29%	9%	6%	

Other

- Keep Southwick a desired area to live
- None
- Southwick is over populated with taverns/bars
- If we want to go to the city, we can drive to the city
- We want Southwick to stay a farming & bedroom town
- Anything that will increase tax base/another poorly worded question
- Public Transportation (taxi or bus services)
- Cultural & entertainment facilities that would save the Pioneer Valley
- Ground Round, Wendy's, Chi Chi's (no more pizza places though!)
- General retail and grocery stores
- No more bars/night clubs

**12. Please indicate the types of recreational facilities (public or privately owned) which you would like to see developed or expanded in Southwick and check the appropriate box.**

Multi-purpose teen recreation and social center

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	96	72	11	5	14	198
% OF TOTAL	49%	36%	6%	3%	7%	

Bowling Alley

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	17	72	82	13	14	198
% OF TOTAL	9%	36%	41%	7%	7%	

Gaming Arcade

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	7	25	134	16	16	198
% OF TOTAL	4%	13%	68%	8%	8%	

Billiard Hall

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	6	36	125	13	18	198
% OF TOTAL	3%	18%	63%	7%	9%	



Movie Theater

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	33	86	57	9	12	198
% OF TOTAL	17%	43%	29%	5%	6%	

Indoor Pool

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	34	86	57	9	12	198
% OF TOTAL	17%	43%	29%		5%	

Skateboarding Park

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	19	66	81	19	13	198
% OF TOTAL	10%	33%	41%	10%	7%	

Mountain Bike Facility or Bicycle Trail System

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	66	95	17	9	11	198
% OF TOTAL	33%	48%	9%	5%	6%	

Discovery Zone Type of Family Recreation Facility

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	31	60	67	26	14	198
% OF TOTAL	16%	30%	34%	13%	7%	

Winter Sports Facility

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	39	91	43	9	16	198
% OF TOTAL	20%	46%	22%	5%	8%	

#### Roller Skating Rink

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	14	60	93	18	13	198
% OF TOTAL	7%	30%	47%	9%	7%	

#### Expanded Lake Activities

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	45	82	45	13	13	198
% OF TOTAL	23%	41%	23%	13%	13%	

#### Tennis Courts

RESPONSE CHOICES	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	26	85	60	11	16	198
% OF TOTAL	13%	43%	30%	6%	8%	

#### Other

- Dance Hall
- Clean up the lake first!
- I feel strongly about an indoor pool. It is an excellent way to exercise you body, especially for the elderly and to teach children how to swim
- Open land for hunting, hiking, picnics, park, etc.
- Need more information on gaming arcades
- Outdoor public pool
- Privately owned endeavors that are economically successful
- High School football and youth football
- Roller hockey facility & outdoor ice-skating-hockey rink
- YMCA facility like Westfield
- Hiking and outdoor recreation
- Rollerblade/hockey rink
- Proper swimming place for town residents
- Well maintenance park picnic facilities
- Rails to trails connection to other towns & Southwick businesses. PGA golf course

13. The following is a list of services in Southwick. Please indicate whether you think that they are good, fair or poor by checking the appropriate box.

Fire Department

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	160	21	2	9	6	198
% OF TOTAL	81%	11%	1%	5%	3%	

Ambulance

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	156	19	1	17	5	198
% OF TOTAL	79%	10%	0.5%	9%	3%	

Schools

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	125	45	8	15	5	198
% OF TOTAL	63%	23%	4%	8%	3%	

Roads

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	59	98	32	2	7	198
% OF TOTAL	30%	50%	16%	1%	4%	

Water

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	105	50	8	27	8	198
% OF TOTAL	53%	25%	4%	14%	4%	

Police Department

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	153	27	8	4	6	198
% OF TOTAL	77%	14%	4%	2%	3%	

### Trash Removal

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	38	24	65	57	14	198
% OF TOTAL	19%	12%	33%	29%	7%	

### Other

- We do not have children in school and we have well water.
- We should have trash removal provided by the town - included in our tax dollars
- Drive-in movie theater
- The roads are terrible, especially in the spring on Rte's 57 & 202. The winter plowing on Rte 57 is extremely poor compared to other roads in the area
- Recreational activities are good
- Snowplowing
- Trash pickup is needed
- Water on west side of town
- Affordable trash pick up by town employed personnel
- I didn't realize my taxes offered trash removal
- What trash removal?
- No need for trash pick up at the curb
- Police Department quotas are to be checked and Post Office is understaffed
- Please keep the transfer station

14. Please indicate how town government should pay for improvements of the buildings and equipment of each of the following by checking the appropriate box:

### School Buildings

RESPONSE CHOICES	General Tax Revenues	Proposition 2½ Override	User Fees	Minimal or No Town Funds Should be Used	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	135	12	12	7	14	18	198
% OF TOTAL	68%	6%	6%	4%	7%	9%	

### Police Equipment

RESPONSE CHOICES	General Tax Revenues	Proposition 2½ Override	User Fees	Minimal or No Town Funds Should be Used	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	139	14	7	7	12	19	198
% OF TOTAL	70%	7%	4%	4%	6%	10%	

### Fire Equipment

RESPONSE CHOICES	General Tax Revenues	Propo- sition 2½ Override	User Fees	Minimal or No Town Funds Should be Used	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	142	11	7	5	12	21	198
% OF TOTAL	72%	6%	4%	3%	6%	11%	

### Roads

RESPONSE CHOICES	General Tax Revenues	Propo- sition 2½ Override	User Fees	Minimal or No Town Funds Should be Used	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	146	7	7	8	10	20	198
% OF TOTAL	74%	4%	4%	4%	5%	10%	

### Water and Sewer Systems

RESPONSE CHOICES	General Tax Revenues	Propo- sition 2½ Override	User Fees	Minimal or No Town Funds Should be Used	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	68	8	86	16	13	17	198
% OF TOTAL	34%	4%	43%	8%	7%	9%	

### Highway Department Buildings

RESPONSE CHOICES	General Tax Revenues	Propo- sition 2½ Override	User Fees	Minimal or No Town Funds Should be Used	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	125	8	8	17	17	23	198
% OF TOTAL	63%	4%	4%	9%	9%	12%	

### Public Works Equipment

RESPONSE CHOICES	General Tax Revenues	Propo- sition 2½ Override	User Fees	Minimal or No Town Funds Should be Used	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	131	6	12	12	17	20	198
% OF TOTAL	66%	3%	6%	6%	9%	10%	

### Public Recreational Facilities

RESPONSE CHOICES	General Tax Revenues	Propo- sition 2½ Override	User Fees	Minimal or No Town Funds Should be Used	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	56	6	90	16	12	18	198
% OF TOTAL	28%	3%	46%	8%	6%	9%	

### Public Safety Complex

RESPONSE CHOICES	General Tax Revenues	Propo- sition 2½ Override	User Fees	Minimal or No Town Funds Should be Used	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	91	11	24	24	23	23	196
% OF TOTAL	46%	6%	12%	12%	12%	12%	

### Other

- I believe that it should be up to the people to pay for they public Recreational Facilities and Public Safety Complex
- No Proposition 2 1/2 override!!!
- Who came up with these questions
- I don't know what Proposition 2 1/2 is, but use everyone who lives in Southwick. Taxes for all!
- If improving school buildings (general revenues). If erecting new buildings (2 1/2 override)
- Keep taxes stable, a town budget, keep taxes the same
- What about State and Federal Funding - Grants etc.

15. Check all of the things you do in the Southwick "Town Center". By "Town Center", the Master Plan Committee means the commercial area between Gristmill Plaza and Depot Street.

Response Choices	No. of Responses	% of Total
Work	15	8%
Do Quick Errands	179	90%
Eat in a Restaurant or Take-out Food Place	166	84%
Visit a Professional Office (doctor, lawyer, accountant, etc.)	77	39%
Shop or Browse for Major Purchases	34	17%
Stroll or Window Shop	19	10%
Meet Friends, Socialize	50	25%
Bank	148	75%
Nothing. I do not go to the "Town Center"	5	3%

#### Other

- Post Office (8)
- Grocery stores, plants, vegetables stands & drug stores
- Post Office - getting stuck in the traffic
- Haircut, photo copies
- This area is much too cluttered and the parking is not suitable for a mall. Most of my shopping is in West Springfield or Westfield. Also, Why have a specific area called the "Town Center" when the library is to be located on Feeding Hills Rd. Libraries in all towns are usually in the center of town
- Getting stuck in traffic
- Gas station (4)
- Dunkin Donuts
- Mrs. Murphy's
- Grocery store, car repair, pet & fish supplies, hardware lumber & building supplies, rent video's, landscaping plants, veterinarian
- I love the lake
- We go to the library often
- Hair salon (2)
- Library (3)
- Playground
- Veterinarian
- I end up going out of town to do most of my shopping

16. Following is a list of things about the "Town Center". Please indicate whether you think they are good, fair or poor, by checking the appropriate box.

Quality of Eating Places

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	83	92	10	0	2	10	197
% OF TOTAL	42%	47%	5%	0%	1%	5%	

Cleanliness of Street and Sidewalks

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	59	94	31	0	5	9	198
% OF TOTAL	30%	48%	16%	0%	3%	5%	

Availability of Sidewalks

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	14	60	106	1	9	7	197
% OF TOTAL	7%	30%	54%	0.5%	5%	4%	

Public Transportation Access

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	8	13	107	18	37	15	198
% OF TOTAL	4%	7%	54%	9%	19%	8%	

Convenience of Shopping Hours

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	94	73	8	3	9	11	198
% OF TOTAL	48%	37%	4%	2%	5%	6%	

Pedestrian Safety

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	121	54	11	1	2	9	198
% OF TOTAL	61%	27%	6%	0.5%	1%	5%	



#### Variety of Goods Sold

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	38	66	74	1	8	11	198
% OF TOTAL	19%	33%	37%	0.5%	4%	6%	

#### Cost of Goods Sold

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	26	107	43	5	7	10	198
% OF TOTAL	13%	54%	22%	3%	4%	5%	

#### Quality of Goods Sold

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	31	130	10	5	11	11	198
% OF TOTAL	16%	66%	5%	3%	6%	6%	

#### The Look of Store Exteriors

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	23	86	77	1	2	9	198
% OF TOTAL	12%	43%	39%	0.5%	1%	5%	

#### The Look of Store Interiors

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	37	119	28	1	4	9	198
% OF TOTAL	19%	60%		14%	2%	5%	

#### Traffic Flow

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	37	69	81	1	1	9	198
% OF TOTAL	19%	35%	41%	0.5%	0.5%	5%	

### Safety During the Evening

RESPONSE CHOICES	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	74	83	22	1	9	9	198
% OF TOTAL	37%	42%	11%	0.5%	5%	5%	

### Other

- More lighting in parking lots
- Sidewalks are desperately needed on Congamond Road. Several people especially children walk to McDonalds - Ames & Big Y
- Lack of choices for quality eating places, Roma's is the only one. And the store exteriors are dump looking
- Lack of crosswalks
- Town center is pedestrian "unfriendly." Major overhaul needed if you intend to ever attract new businesses to area
- Difficulty of entering/exiting main roads
- Overall everything I like about the town
- Why is there no "right turn on red" from 202 South onto 57 West
- More or better lighting could be used at night
- There is nothing at the center to attract you other than necessary purchases
- Increase road in center to 3 lanes

17. Who should pay for improvements in the "Town Center" such as tree plantings, new sidewalks, lighting, etc.? Check all of the choices below which, in your opinion, should be used as funding sources.

Response Choices	No. of Responses	% of Total
Town Funds	141	71 %
Downtown Business Owner Funds	2	1%
Use Neither Public nor Private Funds	1	0.5 %
No Opinion	0	0 %

18. Please indicate whether or not you think that each of the following types of businesses should be developed in the "Town Center" by checking the appropriate box.

Tourist Oriented Specialty Shops  
(Like Yankee Candle Company, Antique Stores, etc.)

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	51	75	43	6	23	198
% OF TOTAL	26%	38%	22%	3%	12%	

Arcade

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	7	22	135	14	20	198
% OF TOTAL	4%	11%	68%	7%	10%	

Factory Outlets

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	34	83	58	10	13	198
% OF TOTAL	17%	42%	29%	5%	7%	

Art Gallery/Music Center

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	41	66	60	19	12	198
% OF TOTAL	21%	35%	30%	10%	6%	

Book Store

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	50	100	28	9	10	197
% OF TOTAL	25%	51%	14%	5%	5%	

Dance Club/Juice Bar (for Youths)

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	30	78	57	16	17	198
% OF TOTAL	15%	40%	29%	8%	9%	

Other

- Skate boarding area
- Quaint shops, quilt shops, more Putnam Farm quality country shops
- Improve the appearance of Walts Texaco
- These should be localized in the shopping district of Big Y & Ames or McDonalds area
- Please do not commercialize this town
- If these were good ideas, we would already have them
- Clothing store/shoe store (These are things we have to leave the area to get)
- What ever is economically feasible and/or successful
- A clothing and shoe store are badly needed
- More affordable entertainment for youths
- General Shops, clothing stores, food stores, etc.
- We are getting a new library so books can be gotten there. Stores for clothes and appliances are good for business
- Center has to be cleaned up. Small businesses has to be welcomed
- Some of above are important, but not in center of town

19. Please indicate whether or not you think that each of the following types of new developments should be in the "Town Center" and check the appropriate box:

Village Development (include residential and retail/services, like South Hadley Village Commons)

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	51	68	46	17	16	198
% OF TOTAL	26%	34%	2.3%	9%	8%	

Strip Mall Development (Grist Mill Plaza, Powder Mill Plaza)

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	13	51	106	8	20	198
% OF TOTAL	7%	26%	54%	4%	10%	

Free Standing Individual Buildings

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	48	78	49	8	15	198
% OF TOTAL	24%	39%	25%	4%	8%	

Other

- Grist Mill and Powder Mill are much too small for a Strip Mall
- Improve what we have before adding more
- Automobile new/used
- Please as little development as possible

- Need a laundry place to wash our clothes
- Strip malls are good only if they have good upscale stores
- Center of town is very poor location - not enough land

20. The existing "Town Center" business district is severely limited for future growth due to topography, wetlands and other natural features. Are you in favor of expanding the business district in another area of town if a suitable location were identified?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Yes	No	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	123	51	14	9	197
% OF TOTAL	62%	26%	7%	5%	

21. Would you support the use of town funds to clean up and maintain water quality at the Congamond Lakes?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Yes	No	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	102	64	17	15	198
% OF TOTAL	52%	32%	9%	8%	

**Other Comments: -**

- There should also be a user fee's collected from out of towners for boating and swimming
- Don't you think we've spent enough money on the lake!!
- Crosswalks should be added at Summer House and Big E's Store!

22. Please indicate below the amount you would be willing for your property tax bill to increase to support farmland preservation.

RESPONSE CHOICES	Between \$0.01 and \$0.10	Between \$0.11 and \$0.20	Between \$0.21 and \$0.50	No Public Funds Should be Spent on Farmland Preservation	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	59	43	12	62	19	195
% OF TOTAL	30%	22%	6%	32%	10%	

**Other Comments: -** The farmers in this town have caused many problems because they wanted to keep the area a country town. When they had the opportunities to have sewers and different businesses come in they vetoed it. Progress is here to stay and the natives here should accept it. I would like to see Southwick a city and do away with Selectmen that play politics

23. Several years ago, the Town of Agawam purchased the Tuckahoe Turf Farm in order to preserve the land as open space. If you favor spending town funds to preserve land in Southwick for open space, indicate below the amount you would be willing for your property tax bill to increase to support open space preservation.

RESPONSE CHOICES	Between \$0.01 and \$0.10	Between \$0.11 and \$0.20	Between \$0.21 and \$0.50	No Public Funds Should be Spent on Farmland Preservation	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	59	43	12	62	21	197
% OF TOTAL	30%	22%	6%	31%	11%	

24. Nantucket Island has established a land bank to fund town purchases of land for farmland and/or open space preservation. The Nantucket land bank is funded by a tax on real estate sales on the island. Are you in favor of forming a Southwick land bank to fund town purchases of land to protect drinking water supplies, and to preserve farmland and open space?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Yes	No	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	112	39	31	14	196
% OF TOTAL	57%	20%	16%	7%	

25. There has been an average of 55 new dwelling units constructed per year for the past twelve years in Southwick. However, growth has been accelerating in the last several years. In 1994 there were 62 new single family units constructed and in 1995, 83 new single family units constructed. An additional 148 lots were approved by the Planning Board in 1995 and are eligible to apply for building permits. Do you agree that town officials should be able to limit the number of building permits which can be issued each year in order to provide for town government to plan for new growth and development?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Agree Strongly	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	105	46	12	16	10	9	198
% OF TOTAL	53%	23%	6%	8%	5%	5%	

26. Do you agree that town government should acquire land for an industrial park to encourage location of light manufacturing and warehousing in our town?

RESPONSE CHOICES	Agree Strongly	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	51	59	31	38	10	9	198
% OF TOTAL	26%	30%	16%	19%	5%	5%	

27. Please indicate if you approve or disapprove of each of the following water quality protection measures by checking the appropriate box:

Improved surface and groundwater protection standards for new development

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	154	10	22	11	
% OF TOTAL	78%	5%	11%	6%	

Increase septic system monitoring and management by Board of Health

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	117	45	22	13	197
% OF TOTAL	59%	23%	11%	7%	

Controls on use of fertilizers and pesticides

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	146	28	15	9	198
% OF TOTAL	74%	14%	8%	5%	

Limiting use of hazardous materials

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	169	7	12	10	198
% OF TOTAL	85%	4%	6%	5%	

Wetlands and stream protection

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	164	10	13	11	198
% OF TOTAL	83%	5%	7%	6%	

28. The extension of Route 57 to the Southwick town line may bring increased traffic congestion, particularly along College Highway. Please indicate if you approve or disapprove of each of the following congestion management measures by checking the appropriate box.

New bypass roads

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	113	47	24	14	198
% OF TOTAL	57%	24%	12%	7%	

Downtown redevelopment

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	126	29	28	15	198
% OF TOTAL	64%	15%	14%	8%	

Improved Traffic Signals

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	147	15	21	15	198
% OF TOTAL	74%	8%	11%	8%	

Consolidation of driveways

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	54	69	60	15	198
% OF TOTAL	27%	35%	30%	8%	

Stronger sign control bylaws

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	106	32	46	14	198
% OF TOTAL	54%	16%	23%	7%	

Mixed use development (with commercial, office, retail and residential on the same lots)

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	56	90	38	14	198
% OF TOTAL	28%	45%	19%	7%	



Consolidation of parking lots

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	107	34	43	14	198
% OF TOTAL	54%	17%	22%	7%	

Zoning regulation of high traffic volume commercial establishments

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	124	22	38	14	198
% OF TOTAL	63%	11%	19%	7%	

Installation of pedestrian and bicycle trails and amenities

RESPONSE CHOICES	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	164	6	17	11	198
% OF TOTAL	83%	3%	9%	6%	

29. Please indicate how important you think it is for the Town Of Southwick to focus on each of the following goals in the next 10-20 years.

To improve or expand municipal services

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	51	110	20	6	11	198
% OF TOTAL	26%	56%	10%	3%	6%	

To improve or expand social services

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	42	95	38	11	12	198
% OF TOTAL	21%	48%	19%	6%	6%	

To improve the quality of education

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	120	65	4	1	8	198
% OF TOTAL	61%	33%	2%	1%	4%	

To maintain a low municipal tax base

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	97	79	10	2	10	198
% OF TOTAL	49%	40%	5%	1%	5%	

To preserve historic properties and qualities

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	51	110	20	6	11	198
% OF TOTAL	26%	56%	10%	3%	6%	

To preserve working farms

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	42	95	38	11	12	198
% OF TOTAL	21%	48%	19%	6%	6%	

To promote commercial development

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	44	99	47	1	7	198
% OF TOTAL	22%	50%	24%	1%	4%	

To promote industrial development and job growth

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	62	78	48	4	6	198
% OF TOTAL	31%	39%	24%	2%	3%	

To control the quantity of new residential development

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	94	73	20	4	7	198
% OF TOTAL	47%	37%	10%	2%	4%	

To minimize traffic congestion and promote traffic safety

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	101	82	8	0	7	198
% OF TOTAL	51%	41%	4%	0%	4%	

To provide housing for the elderly and handicapped

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	61	93	33	4	7	198
% OF TOTAL	31%	47%	17%	2%	4%	

To improve the quality of new commercial development

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	55	105	25	8	5	198
% OF TOTAL	28%	53%	13%	4%	3%	

To protect environmental quality (i.e., air, streams and lakes)

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	107	73	7	5	6	198
% OF TOTAL	54%	37%	4%	3%	3%	

To protect open space

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	79	82	17	10	7	195
% OF TOTAL	41%	42%	9%	5%	4%	

To protect the water supply

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	124	63	4	2	5	198
% OF TOTAL	63%	32%	2%	1%	3%	

To provide a variety of housing options including housing which is affordable to middle income families

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	41	98	46	5	8	198
% OF TOTAL	21%	49%	23%	3%	4%	

To provide improved recreational opportunities

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	65	102	13	10	8	198
% OF TOTAL	33%	52%	7%	5%	4%	

To regulate the quality and appearance of commercial development

RESPONSE CHOICES	Extremely Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion	No Response	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONSES	78	93	12	7	8	198
% OF TOTAL	40 %	47%	6.1%	3.5%	4 %	

## Other

- Keep Southwick small and the cost of property high. This would force owners of small shacks to sell and the new owners to renovate and upgrade the existing homes. No more building of Homes! Save the fields and wooded land!
- Brooks are in dire need of being dredged vegetation is incredible. Water run-off does not flow properly, it seems as though they are more concerned about the beavers than the tax payers!
- Expand tax base and improve roads, sewers & water systems
- Don't turn Southwick into another dirty and unsightly city
- This survey is biased and or dumb. Let Southwick be Southwick and Deerfield be Deerfield and South Hadley be South Hadley or MOVE!
- Control or better yet, stem the rowdy atmosphere that more or less prevails. Loud music, keg parties, some gang related activities
- The town's at a crossroads - I think it is important to balance the obvious need for expanded commercial growth (esp. downtown area) and still maintain the rural character of the town. Light industrial/warehousing businesses are also needed to provide jobs that local people can perform and supplement the tax base
- Sidewalks around the lake area and a quicker solution to sewer systems in this area
- Avoid low Income housing
- To control the quality of new residential development to only upscale homes
- I would like to see a rollerblade/hockey rink (outdoors) built. I have seen these in other parts of the country. The self made leagues, will be created instantly. They are low maintenance and can be put in the area of baseball fields
- We should have travel communication for those who need to get to stores. Like buses to Springfield & Westfield stores or to doctor appointments
- Spending money on the present center of Town is a poor investment. Wherever Rte 57 comes through should play a part in developing a center of town in a new location
- To Whom it May Concern, I am seventy years of age - I have lived in Southwick all of these seventy years. It is sad for me to see Southwick, which used to be a nice country town, turning into a city. I'm against anything that increases taxes - since I have to live very frugally to pay my taxes. Therefore, please send these forms to someone who will give you the answers you want to hear. Thank you.

## SELECTED COMPARISONS OF INDIVIDUAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

### Comparison:

**Question # 4--Do you own or rent your house? with**

**Question #10--What types of housing should be constructed in Southwick ?**

Of the 20 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **rent** their living spaces, 45% said that the construction of single family homes is "extremely important, " and 75% said that the construction of **single family** homes is either "extremely important " or "important."

Of the 174 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **own** their living spaces, 48% said that the construction of single family homes is "extremely important, " and 88% said that the construction of **single family** homes is either "extremely important " or "important."

Of the 20 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **rent** their living spaces, 45% said that the construction of multi- family dwellings is "not important, " and 30% said that the construction of **multi- family dwellings** is either "extremely important " or "important."

Of the 174 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **own** their living spaces, 72% said that the construction of multi- family dwellings is "not important, " and 17% said that the construction of **multi- family dwellings** is either "extremely important " or "important."

Of the 20 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **rent** their living spaces, 60% said that the **construction of affordable housing** is either "extremely important " or "important, and 25% said that the **construction of affordable housing** is "not important."

Of the 174 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **own** their living spaces, 62% said that the **construction of affordable housing** is either "extremely important " or "important, and 28% said that the **construction of affordable housing** is "not important."

Of the 20 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **rent** their living spaces, 45% said that the construction of **condominiums** is "not important," and 15% said that the construction of **condominiums** is either "extremely important " or "important."

Of the 174 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **own** their living spaces, 60% said that the construction of **condominiums** is "not important," and 25% said that the construction of **condominiums** is either "extremely important " or "important."

Of the 20 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **rent** their living spaces, 35% said that the construction of **retirement communities** is "not important," and 25% said that the construction of **retirement communities** is either "extremely important " or "important."

Of the 174 respondents who said on Q. # 4 that they **own** their living spaces, 71% said that the construction of **retirement communities** is either “extremely important ” or “important” and 16% said that the construction of **retirement communities** is “not important.”

**Comparison:**

**Question # 1--How many years have you lived in Southwick? with**

**Question #29--Please indicate how important you think it is for the Town of Southwick to focus on each of the following goals in the next 10-20 years.**

Of the 17 respondents who have lived in Southwick **1-2 years**, 77% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to improve or expand municipal services**, and 24% said that it is “not important” to improve or expand municipal services.

Of the 20 respondents who have lived in Southwick **3-5 years**, 75% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to improve or expand municipal services**, and 10% said that it is “not important” to improve or expand municipal services.

Of the 31 respondents who have lived in Southwick **5-10 years**, 87% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” to improve or expand municipal services, and 10% said that it is “not important” **to improve or expand municipal services**.

Of the 125 respondents who have lived in Southwick **10 or more years**, 24% said that it is “extremely important” **to improve or expand municipal services**, or 59% said that it is “important” to improve or expand municipal services, and 9% said that it is “not important” to improve or expand municipal services.

Of the 17 respondents who have lived in Southwick **1-2 years**, 65% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to improve or expand social services**, and 29% said that it is “not important” to improve or expand social services.

Of the 20 respondents who have lived in Southwick **3-5 years**, 70% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to improve or expand social services**, and 20% said that it is “not important” to improve or expand social services.

Of the 31 respondents who have lived in Southwick **5-10 years**, 74% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to improve or expand social services**, and 20% said that it is “not important” to improve or expand social services.

Of the 125 respondents who have lived in Southwick **10 or more years**, 22% said that it is “extremely important” **to improve or expand social services**, 47 % said that it is “important” to improve or expand social services, and 18% said that it is “not important” to improve or expand social services.

Of the 17 respondents who have lived in Southwick **1-2 years**, 88% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to improve the quality of education**, and 12% said that it is “not important” to improve the quality of education.

Of the 20 respondents who have lived in Southwick **3-5 years**, 100% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to improve the quality of education**.

Of the 31 respondents who have lived in Southwick **5-10 years**, 97% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to improve the quality of education**. 70% said that it is “extremely important” and 17% said that it is “important.”

Of the 125 respondents who have lived in Southwick **10 or more years**, 58% said that it is “extremely important” **to improve the quality of education**, 37 % said that it is “important,” and 2% said that it is “not important.”

Of the 17 respondents who have lived in Southwick **1-2 years**, 82% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to preserve working farms**, and 18% said that it is “not important” to preserve working farms.

Of the 20 respondents who have lived in Southwick **3-5 years**, 80% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to preserve working farms**, and 10% said that it was “not important.”

Of the 31 respondents who have lived in Southwick **5-10 years**, 81% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to preserve working farms**.

Of the 125 respondents who have lived in Southwick **10 or more years**, 42% said that it is “extremely important” **to preserve working farms**, 42 % said that it is “important,” and 12% said that it is “not important.”

Of the 17 respondents who have lived in Southwick **1-2 years**, 100% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to protect the water supply**, and 18% said that it is “not important” to protect the water supply.

Of the 20 respondents who have lived in Southwick **3-5 years**, 95% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to protect the water supply**.

Of the 31 respondents who have lived in Southwick **5-10 years**, 97% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” **to protect the water supply**.

Of the 125 respondents who have lived in Southwick **10 or more years**, 63% said that it is “extremely important” **to protect the water supply**, 32% said that it is “important,” and 3% said that it is “not important.”



**Comparison:**

**Question # 1--How many years have you lived in Southwick? with**

**Question # 19--Indicate whether or not you think that each of the following types of new developments should be in the Town Center and check the appropriate box.**

Of the 17 respondents who have lived in Southwick **1-2 years**, 59% said that it is either "extremely important" or "important" that **village development should be in the Town Center**, and 18% said that it is "not important."

Of the 20 respondents who have lived in Southwick **3-5 years**, 60% said that it is either "extremely important" or "important" that **village development should be in the Town Center**, and 20% said that it is "not important."

Of the 31 respondents who have lived in Southwick **5-10 years**, 65% said that it is either "extremely important" or "important" that **village development should be in the Town Center**, and 19% said that it is "not important."

Of the 125 respondents who have lived in Southwick **10 or more years**, 24% said that it is "extremely important" **village development should be in the Town Center**, 36 % said that it is "important," 26% said that it is "not important, 8% said "no opinion," and 6 % did not respond.

Of the 17 respondents who have lived in Southwick **1-2 years**, 41% said that it is either "extremely important" or "important" that **strip mall development should be in the Town Center**, and 47% said that it is "not important."

Of the 20 respondents who have lived in Southwick **3-5 years**, 40% said that it is either "extremely important" or "important" that **strip mall development should be in the Town Center**, and 40% said that it is "not important."

Of the 31 respondents who have lived in Southwick **5-10 years**, 29% said that it is either "extremely important" or "important" that **strip mall development should be in the Town Center**, and 61% said that it is "not important."

Of the 125 respondents who have lived in Southwick **10 or more years**, 6% said that it is "extremely important" **strip mall development should be in the Town Center**, 26 % said that it is "important," 56% said that it is "not important, 3% said "no opinion," and 9 % did not respond.

Of the 17 respondents who have lived in Southwick **1-2 years**, 77% said that it is either "extremely important" or "important" that **strip mall development with aesthetic standards should be in the Town Center**, and 12% said that it is "not important."

Of the 20 respondents who have lived in Southwick **3-5 years**, 60% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” that **strip mall development with aesthetic standards should be in the Town Center**, and 25% said that it is “not important.”

Of the 31 respondents who have lived in Southwick **5-10 years**, 65% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” that **strip mall development with aesthetic standards should be in the Town Center**, and 26% said that it is “not important.”

Of the 125 respondents who have lived in Southwick **10 or more years**, 26% said that it is “extremely important” **strip mall development with aesthetic standards should be in the Town Center**, 38 % said that it is “important,” 27% said that it is “not important,” 3% said “no opinion,” and 6% did not respond.

Of the 17 respondents who have lived in Southwick **1-2 years**, 24% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” that **free standing buildings should be in the Town Center**, and 47% said that it is “not important.”

Of the 20 respondents who have lived in Southwick **3-5 years**, 35% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” that **free standing buildings should be in the Town Center**, and 40% said that it is “not important.”

Of the 31 respondents who have lived in Southwick **5-10 years**, 35% said that it is either “extremely important” or “important” that **free standing buildings should be in the Town Center**, and 48% said that it is “not important.”

Of the 125 respondents who have lived in Southwick **10 or more years**, 8% said that it is “extremely important” **free standing buildings should be in the Town Center**, 32% said that it is “important,” 42% said that it is “not important,” 10% said “no opinion,” and 8% did not respond.