



## Mansfield Master Plan 2008 Update

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This Master Plan is dedicated  
to the memory of  
Bernard J. Dolan  
1946-2006

Planning Board	1995-2004
Board of Selectmen	2004-2006

*Aware of the Past,  
Concerned about the Present,  
Passionate about the Future*



## Mansfield Master Plan 2008 Update

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## Mansfield Master Plan 2008 Update

*Mansfield is a family-oriented community that values its neighborhoods and open spaces, embraces sustainable and green development, and celebrates its downtown. Residents enjoy quality education, cultural events and organized sports, and well-managed municipal services supported by a diverse tax base. Future development will reflect more intensive use of limited available land while respecting finite natural resources and the need to protect the quality of the sole source aquifer. Industrial and commercial development will be balanced with revitalization of Mansfield's downtown as a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented Town Center with a range of attractive and unique shops, services and small businesses. Housing in neighborhoods will meet the needs of residents at all life stages.*

- Mansfield's vision, 2008



## INTRODUCTION

The process of updating its master plan gives the Town of Mansfield an opportunity to reassess issues of the past decade and to determine what changes should be made to assure the Town has the tools necessary to achieve its vision, outlined above. The Town has routinely updated its master plans, beginning with an initial plan in 1979 and subsequent updates in 1988 and 1996. In the past, these plans have guided zoning amendments and enabled the Town to meet challenges of growth and subdivision construction.

The 2008 update gives the Town of Mansfield a policy framework for decision-making through the mid-2010s. This plan addresses many of the opportunities and challenges currently facing Mansfield:

- To grow through smart growth redevelopment, recognizing that Mansfield is approaching buildout and that there are limited opportunities for “greenfield” construction in wooded or agricultural land.
- To ensure that water resources are available, not just for current need and short-term demand, but are available for future generations.
- To reduce the community’s carbon footprint and assure that hydrocarbon resources are used wisely, while implementing a sustainable development approach. According to the UN Brundtland Commission in 1987, sustainability is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
- To meet the needs of this young, family-oriented community and maintain the high level of municipal services enjoyed by residents.
- To assure that Mansfield remains an attractive community for economic development in industrial parks, downtown, and in other commercial areas. These businesses not only provide jobs, goods, and services for Mansfield and regional residents, but also contribute substantial municipal tax revenue.

Mansfield aspires to be a *green community*, one that encourages a sustainable approach to development and to municipal operations. A strong relationship will be fostered between those who live and work in town and the environment. The impact of development on the natural environment will be reduced and a mix of housing, commercial and industrial uses will be created. A strong dependence on regionally interconnected public transportation systems, sidewalks and bikeways will be supported, both as a means of transportation and as a component of a healthy lifestyle. The aquifer will be protected through reduced water demand, open space preservation, and low impact stormwater management.

Decision-making will be guided by asking how actions affect future generations of Mansfield residents. Is a proposed development within walking distance (with attractive sidewalk connections) of public space, community facilities, and other destinations to reduce dependence on the automobile? Will the development contribute positively to the livability, aesthetics and appeal of our community? Is the development as energy efficient as possible and does it incorporate *green* design principals?

*Mansfield Green* will denote the winning “Go Green Hornets” sports motto as well as a *green* or sustainable ethic, one where the Town values its resources both within the community and in the



larger global economy. Our municipal buildings will be energy efficient with green roofs, low impact stormwater management, and appropriate siting. Municipal purchasing will consider energy needed for delivery as well as operations. To strengthen community ties, new buildings will be located downtown or in village centers, within walking distance of many residents. These *green* principals will guide our municipal decisions.

## **MASTER PLAN PROCESS**

In October 2007 the Town of Mansfield contracted with Pare Corporation, a planning and engineering firm with offices in Foxborough, MA and Lincoln RI, to provide consultant services for the update of the master plan. Representatives of Pare Corporation completed this update under the supervision of the Mansfield Planning and Development Department. Ninigret Partners directed the Economic Development Element. Public outreach and input from Mansfield municipal departments helped inform the master plan update process. The Mansfield Master Plan Committee guided the process, through initial input, refinement of community considerations discussed at workshops, and review of the draft plan elements.

- Master Plan Elements**
- I. Land Use
  - II. Transportation and Circulation
  - III. Natural / Cultural Resources
  - IV. Services and Facilities
  - V. Economic Development
  - VI. Housing
  - VII. Open Space and Recreation

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

A two-day public workshop was held in January 2008. On Thursday, January 10, Pare Corporation provided an overview of “Mansfield Today,” with information on demographic changes since 1996 and the status of goals and action items from the 1996 master plan. Status of the goals and action items from the 1996 Master Plan is presented in Appendix 1. This was followed with a day-long facilitated workshop on Saturday, January 12. The second session focused on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the Town of Mansfield. Participants drafted visions both for the Town as a whole (presented at the beginning of the Introduction) and for the seven master plan elements identified in the text box. A summary of workshop proceedings is presented in Appendix 2.

The following lists the top ten issues and opportunities (“Top Ten big ideas”) raised during the public workshops:

- Resolve train station traffic congestion
- Encourage more cultural events and destinations
- Provide housing for seniors, including affordable 55 and older communities
- Beautify downtown
- Revitalize downtown with anchors (grocery, post office)
- Upgrade/replace DPW building
- Provide support for arts space in addition to recreation (sports fields)
- Preserve water recharge areas
- Provide stronger site plan review (more teeth)
- Construct a community / teen center (indoor activity spaces)



## **FORMAT OF THE PLAN**

The 2008 Master Plan update has been prepared as a user-friendly planning tool for the community. Each element includes a brief introduction, a summary of accomplishments in implementing goals and policies of the 1996 master plan, trends regarding element issues over the past decade (including reference to major studies contracted by the Town), consensus of issues from the January 2008 public workshops, and the vision that evolved for each goal. This is followed with a list of policies and action items necessary to implement these policies.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 is the status, in 2008, of policies and action items presented in the 1996 Mansfield Master Plan. This information was presented at the January 10, 2008 public workshop.

Appendix 2 is a summary of findings for the January 2008 public workshops.

Appendix 3 includes implementation responsibilities for the 2008 Master Plan. Information is presented on the responsible party for implementation, priority for implementation, and anticipated time frame for implementation.

Appendix 4 is a list of references for the plan.

Appendix 5 is a Power Point presentation on Economic Indicators.



## I. LAND USE ELEMENT

The pattern of land use in Mansfield reflects the community's evolution from a farming and mill village, to a suburban community. The current challenge is to ensure that future development patterns reflect the community's concern with assuring sustainable use of resources. A careful balance between development and protection of resources is important to assure a diverse tax base while preserving the quality of life so important to residents. Future development will minimize the community's carbon footprint while reinforcing a dense and vibrant downtown, surrounded by neighborhoods of decreasing levels of density.

### 1996 - 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Mansfield has continued its actions as stewards of the land. The following are key land use accomplishments outlined as recommendations in the 1996 Master Plan:

- The zoning bylaw has been amended to ensure that the Cluster Residential Special Use Permit is consistent with state enabling legislation. The purpose of cluster development is to promote more efficient use of land in harmony with natural features, encourage preservation of open space, protect natural resources, and permit greater flexibility and more attractive, efficient, and economical design of subdivisions. Cluster developments are allowed by special use permit in the Natural Resource and Scenic Residential (R1) and Medium Residential Density (R2) districts.
- The Planned Business District (PBD) has been created in the zoning bylaw to limit retail development in the Cabot Business Park. Site plan review is required for developments over 100,000 square feet.
- Plans have been completed to address opportunities and constraints, especially in the downtown area. The Hatheway-Patterson study, Transit Oriented Development study, and efforts of the Downtown Committee to compile design guidelines have been conducted.
- Neighborhood Improvement Program objectives identified in the 1996 Master Plan are underway to preserve historic resources, limit truck routes in neighborhoods, and enhance aesthetics. The Historic Commission is back on track with a fully-staffed board appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Memorial Hall (the school administration building), the Fisher Richardson House on Willow Street, and Spring Brook Cemetery are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- The Planning Board has worked to restrict truck traffic from neighborhoods through the permit approval process. Design guidelines for the downtown area have been approved by the Board of Selectmen (the zoning ordinance has not yet been amended) and applicants are required to screen mechanical equipment in new developments.
- Sidewalks have been constructed along a section of Branch Street from Jakes Way to East Street. A crosswalk and pedestrian demand signal phase has been installed at the Route 140/West Street intersection. Sidewalks are required in new subdivisions. North Main Street sidewalk repairs were completed in 2003.
- The Town has initiated a housing cap, but development has never come close to reaching cap limits.



Additional accomplishments in the past decade include the following:

- Middle Common streetscape improvements were completed.
- Verizon wires were undergrounded in downtown.
- Several zoning amendments have been adopted to improve and strengthen the planning approval process:
  - Business or residential use may be combined in the same building but retail, office, bank, or restaurant use shall occupy the entire ground floor in the Central Business District (B1) and Downtown Mixed Use (B2) zone. (2004)
  - Inclusionary zoning was implemented for subdivisions with six or more lots, requiring that the sixth housing unit and every seventh unit thereafter be an affordable housing unit as defined in the bylaw. (2004)
  - Zoning for developments restricted to age 55 and older was implemented. (2006)
- The Town of Mansfield Wetland Protection Bylaw was implemented to provide more rigorous review and jurisdiction than the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (1999).
- The Stormwater Management Bylaw was implemented, requiring a stormwater permit for any disturbance over an acre, if not triggered by wetland regulations (2003).



*Middle Common, downtown.*

## POPULATION TRENDS

Demographic and housing trend information is most completely documented by the US Census once per decade. The most recent information is based on the US Census conducted in April 2000. The next US Census will be conducted in 2010. The Town of Mansfield compiles information on total town population annually. Information from the Town does not include information on age, sex, ethnicity, income, education or other demographic data compiled by the US Census. The basis for the 2008 Master Plan Update is the 2000 US Census, with supplemental data from the Town and the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD).

The rapid growth of the 1990s has moderated in Mansfield as developable land has become more limited. As indicated in Table I-1, the population of Mansfield has grown from 13,453 in 1980 to 22,558 in 2007. Between 1990 and 2000, the Town of Mansfield's population grew 35.2 percent, a significant increase from the 20 percent overall growth in the two decades from 1980 to 2000. As indicated in Figure I-1, between 2000 and 2005 this trend has moderated.

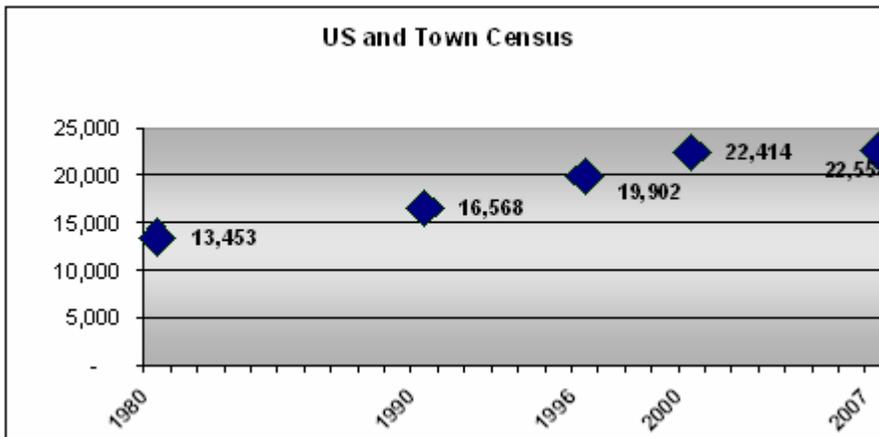
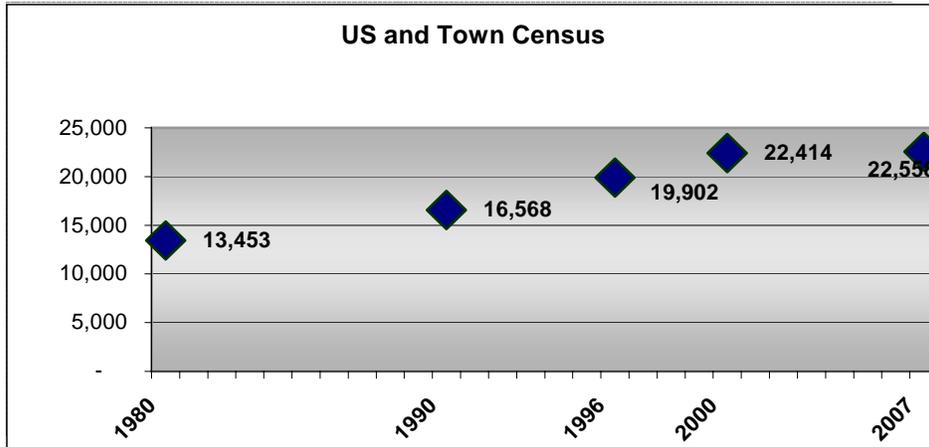


**Table I-1: Population Trends, 1980 to 2007**

Year	Persons	Change	Average Annual Change, Previous Period
1980	13,453		
1990	16,568	3,115	2.3%
2000	22,414	5,846	3.5%
2007	22,558	144	0.2%

Source: US Census; Mansfield 2005-2006 Annual Report and Town Clerk

**Figure I-1: Population, 1980 – 2007**



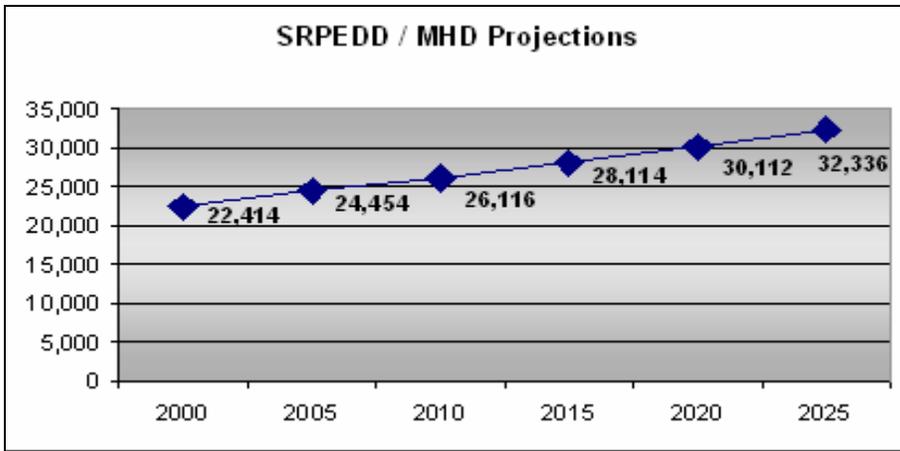
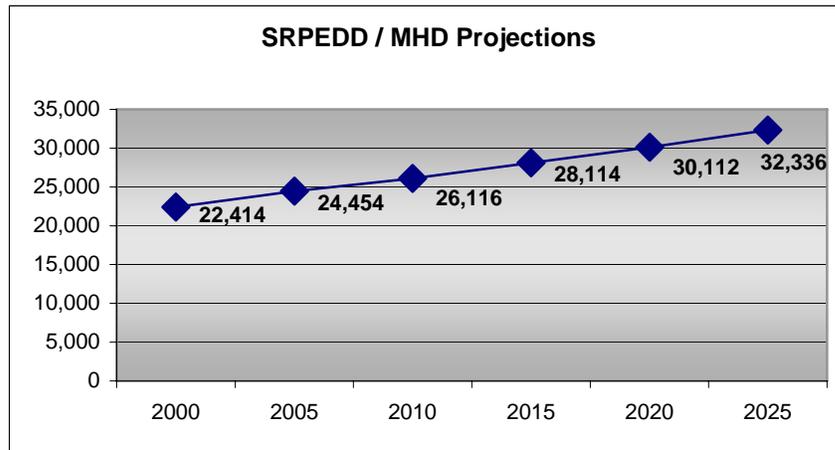
Source: Mansfield Town Census

SRPEDD and Massachusetts Highway Department have prepared population projections. As indicated in Figure I-2, the population of Mansfield is projected to increase nearly 10,000 in the 25-year period between 2000 to 2025, an overall 44 percent increase. Projected annual growth is 1.8 percent during this period. Note that the 2005 SRPEDD projection, 24,454 people, is above the 2007 Town of Mansfield census, 22,558.

3.1% / year



Figure I-2: Population Projections, 2005 – 2025

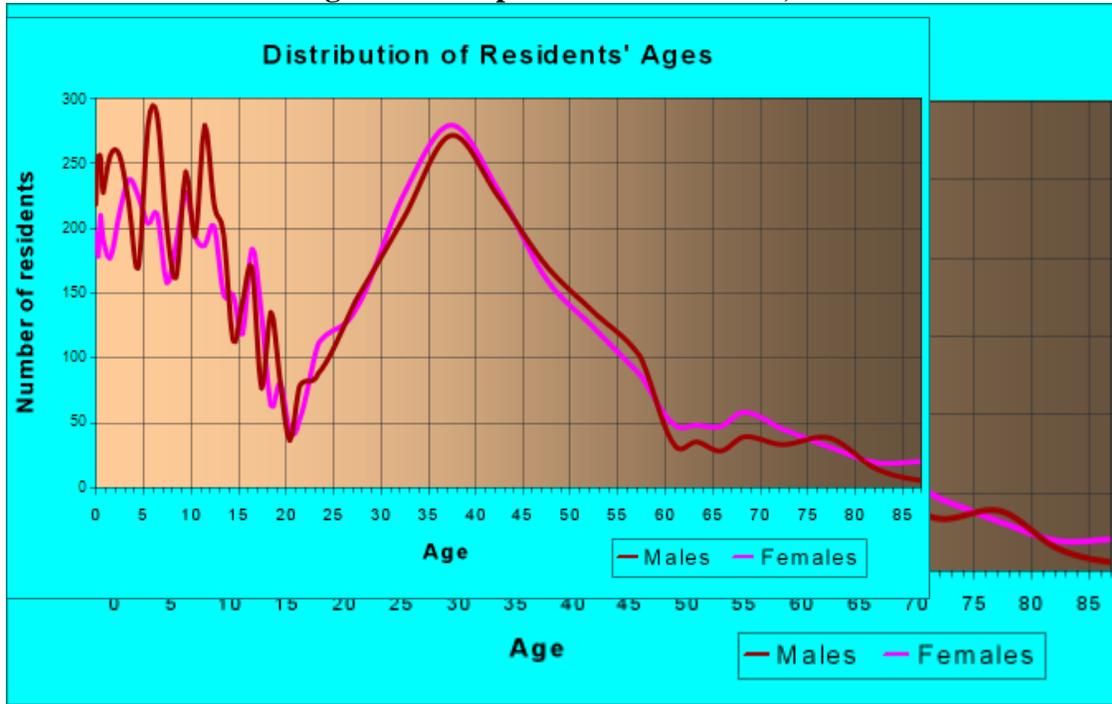


Source: SRPEDD



Locational and economic forces, and exceptional school programming continue to be catalysts for attracting younger families to Mansfield. Population distribution is indicative of such a community with young families. The school-aged population spike identified in Figure I-3 is now working its way through the middle and high schools. With a median age of 33.8 and nearly one-third of the population under the age of 18, Mansfield's population is significantly younger than that of the state as a whole. Figure I-4 compares Mansfield's population for school-aged and senior populations relative to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

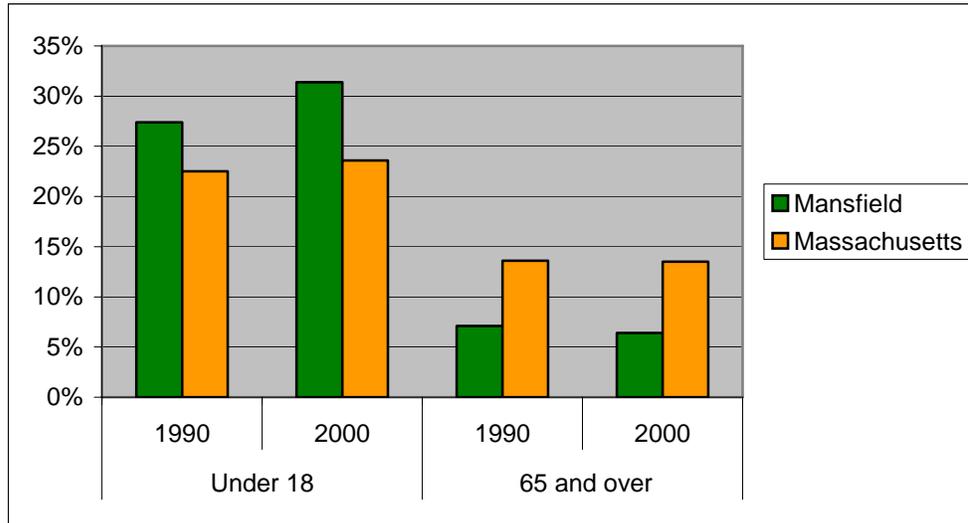
**Figure I-3: Population Distribution, 2000**



Source: City-data.com, U.S. Census 2000



**Figure I-4: Population Distribution, 1990 - 2000**



Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000



Age distribution for 1990 and 2000 is presented in Table I-2. Although the population below age 14 has increased relative to the total population over the past decade, the 15 to 44 year cohort, representative of the childbearing population, has begun to decrease. The 45 to 64 year cohort, generally representative of the baby-boom generation (born between 1947 and 1963) has increased. Based on the 2000 US Census, the senior population over age 64 has remained steady. The senior population may be expected to increase as baby-boomers reach retirement age.

**Table I-2: Age Distribution, 1990 and 2000**

Cohort	1990		2000	
	Persons	% Distribution	Persons	% Distribution
Under 5	1,466	9%	2,154	10%
5 - 14	2,422	15%	4,060	18%
15 - 44	8,934	54%	10,538	47%
45 - 64	2,564	15%	4,236	19%
65+	1,182	7%	1,426	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,568</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22,414</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: U.S. Census 2000

As indicated in Table I-3, residents of Mansfield are more likely to have a college education than surrounding SRPEDD communities, a trend which has continued from 1990 to 2000. Mansfield's population has become slightly more ethnically diverse over the same decade, as indicated in Table I-4.

**Table I-3: Educational Attainment within the Immediate Region, 1990 – 2000 Population Age 25 and Above**

Municipality	High School Education, Percent			College Education, Percent		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
Mansfield	87.5	93.2	5.7	31.6	42.1	10.5
North Attleborough	84.4	88.6	4.2	23.3	33.5	10.2
Norton	83.4	89.2	5.8	22.1	30.8	8.7
Plainville	85.8	87.3	1.5	19.7	28.3	8.6
SRPEDD	66.4	74.3	7.9	15.6	19.8	4.2

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000

**Table I-4: Race and Ethnicity, 1990 and 2000**

Ethnicity	Percent Distribution	
	1990	2000
White	96.1	95.1
Black	1.6	2.6
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aluet	0.1	0.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.9	2.2
Hispanic Origin	1.2	
Other	0.0	0.7
2 or More Races (2000 only)		0.9
Hispanic/Latino of Any Race (2000 only)		1.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Table I-5 compares household income for Mansfield and the Commonwealth for 1990 and 2000. Mansfield's household income continues to rise at a rate greater than the State. Although the percentage of people living below the poverty level also continues to rise, the rate remains below the State's average, as indicated in Table I-6. Figure I-5 presents median family incomes for Mansfield and adjacent communities for 2000.

**Table I-5: Median Household Income, 1990 and 2000**

	1990	2000
Mansfield	\$47,080.00	\$66,925.00
MA	\$36,952.00	\$50,502.00

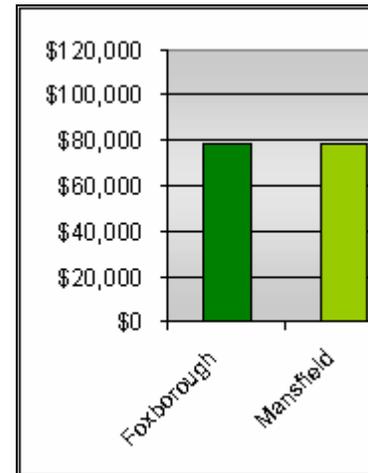
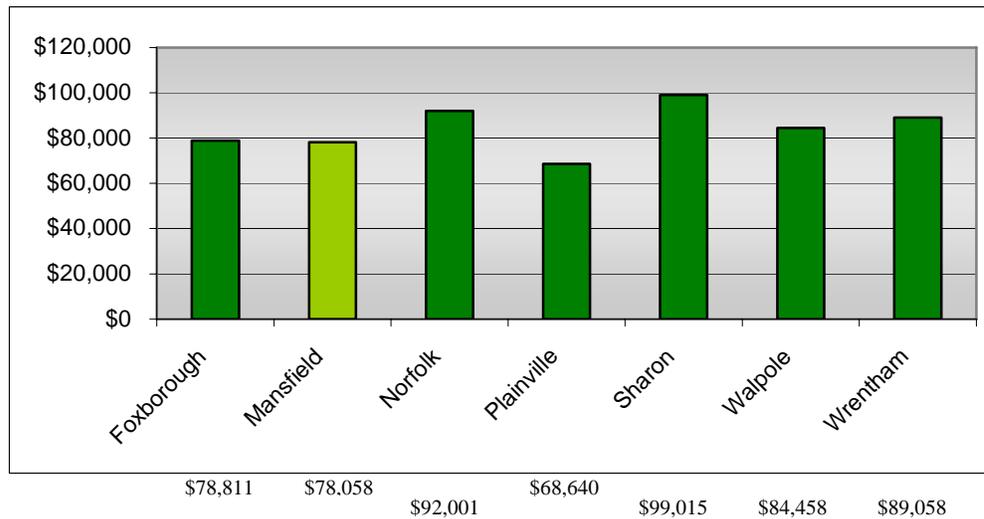
Source: U. S. Census, SRPEDD

**Table I-6: Poverty Status, 1990 and 2000**

	Below Poverty Level, Percent	
	1990	2000
Mansfield	3.7	4.5
MA	8.9	6.7

Source: U. S. Census, SRPEDD

**Figure I-5: Median Family Income, 2000**



Source:

CityTownInfo.com

According to US Census information, the rate of increase in the number of households (33.7 percent) was less than the population growth (35.2 percent) in the period from 1990 to 2000. Table I-7 indicates that there were 7,942 households in Mansfield in 2000. Despite national trends towards decreasing persons per household, the average household in Mansfield is larger in 2000 than in 1990. As indicated in Table I-8, there were 2.82 persons per household in 2000, an increase from 1990 when there were 2.79 persons per household. The percentage distribution of household types has remained fairly steady over the decade between 1990 and 2000 as indicated in Table I-9.



**Table I-7: Households, 1980 to 2000**

Year	Total	Percent Change
1980	4,508	
1990	5,940	31.8
2000	7,942	33.7

Source: U.S. Census

**Table I-8: Household Size, 1990 and 2000**

Year	Persons per Household
1990	2.79
2000	2.82

Source: U.S. Census

**Table I-9: Households by Type, 1990 and 2000**

Description	1990		2000		% Change
	Households	%	Households	%	
Married Couple/Family	3,709	62.4	4,937	62.2	-0.2
Male Household	132	2.2	219	2.8	0.6
Female Household	561	9.4	703	8.9	-0.5
Non-Family Household	1,538	25.9	2,083	26.2	0.3

Source: U.S. Census

## HOUSING GROWTH

Between 1997 and 2006, 28 definitive subdivisions have been approved in Mansfield, the majority of which are fully built with only a few units under construction. These subdivisions have included standard subdivisions, residential clusters, residential compounds, assisted care/retirement, and age-restricted (55 & older) as indicated in Table I-10.

**Table I-10: Definitive Subdivisions, 1996-2006**

Type Subdivision	Number	Total Units
Standard	8	49
Residential Cluster	7	55
Residential Compounds	11	40
Assisted Care/Retirement Community *	1	194
Age-Restricted (55 & Older)	2	109**

\* Village at Willow Crossings

\*\* The Village at the Pointe - 27 units; Village Landing (Heron Crest) – 82 units

As indicated in Table I-11, 460 building permits were issued in Mansfield between 2000 and 2006. As an indication of the diversity of new housing construction, 46.3 percent of units were in multifamily developments. In 2004 and 2005 building permits were issued for three Chapter 40B projects: Copeland Crossing on Chauncy Street, Fairfield Green on West Street, and Cedar Heights on Connors Avenue.



**Table I-11: Residential Permits Issued by Category, 2000 to 2006**

Year	Single-Family		Multi-Family		Total	
	Mansfield	SRPEDD Region	Mansfield	SRPEDD Region	Mansfield	SRPEDD Region
2000	59	1,961	18	148	77	2,109
2001	42	1,636	0	166	42	1,802
2002	44	1,880	35	213	79	2,093
2003	25	1,818	2	397	27	2,215
2004	33	1,893	56	434	89	2,327
2005	28	1,801	96	446	124	2,247
2006	16	1,099	6	173	22	1,272
TOTAL	247	12,088	213	1,977	460	14,065

Source: U. S. Census, SRPEDD

The US Census provides information on housing units and type of structure for 1990 and 2000. The percentage of occupied housing units increased during this period to 97.8 percent, as indicated in Table I-12. This figure represents a very high occupancy rate, indicating a very desirable community from a real estate perspective. Table I-13 presents information on the distribution of type of structures in Mansfield according to the US Census for 1990 and 2000 while Table I-14 includes information on housing distribution from 1990 to 2006 (including building permits issued 2000 to 2006). As indicated in Table I-14, the single family housing boom of the 1990s increased the portion of single-family units to 67.7 percent. Despite the boom in apartment construction since 2000, the percentage of multifamily residential units in Mansfield is lower in 2006 (33.1 percent) than in 1990 (38.2 percent).

**Table I-12: Housing Units, 1990 and 2000**

Description	1990		2000		% Change
	Units	%	Units	%	
Total Units	6,357		8,120		
Total Occupied	5,940	93	7,942	97.8	4.8
Owner Occupied	3,939	66.3	5,700	71.8	5.5
Renter Occupied	2,001	33.7	2,242	28.2	-5.5

Source: U.S. Census

**Table I-13: Type Housing Structure, 1990 and 2000**

Description	1990		2000		% Change
	Units	%	Units	%	
Single	3,930	62	5,496	68	6
2 - 4 Units	971	15.5	851	10	-5
5 or More	1,403	22	1,773	22	0
Other	53	0.5	0		

Source: U.S. Census



**Table I-14: Distribution of Housing Types, 1990 to 2006**

	1990		2000		2006	
	Units	% Distribution	Units	% Distribution	Units	% Distribution
Single- family	3,930	61.8	5,496	67.7	5,743	66.9
Multifamily	2,427	38.2	2,624	32.3	1,064	33.1
TOTAL	6,357		8,120		8,580	

Source: U.S. Census, SRPEDD: building permits (2000 to 2006)

## LAND USE TRENDS

### Cost of Services

In 2004, the Town of Mansfield prepared a *Cost of Services and a Fiscal Impact Analysis Model* for new development. Its intended purpose was to provide a baseline of current information to assist local officials in making informed land use and policy decisions. The analysis model is considered a reliable tool to measure direct fiscal relationships between the cost to deliver services and the tax revenue generated.

In 2004, Mansfield received 25 percent (\$14,660,091) of its overall operating budget from State Aid (with 85 percent or \$12,430,645 for education). Based on an analysis of revenues versus expenditures, residential land use costs the community 10 percent more than the revenues generated. Essentially, for every \$1 in revenue generated by residential development, \$1.10 in school costs and municipal services are incurred. Commercial land uses cost the community 31 percent less than the revenues they generate (for every \$1 in revenue, 69 cents in service costs are incurred). Industrial land uses cost a community 43 percent less than the revenue generated (for every \$1 in revenue, 57 cents in service costs are incurred).

Many of the same conclusions and recommendations of the 2004 study relative to the costs/benefits analysis of residential versus commercial/industrial development remain valid today:

- Mansfield is dependent on State Aid and commercial and industrial growth to ensure the residential sector does not become overburdened with tax increases
- Continue to monitor the rate of residential development
- Continue to promote high-quality commercial and industrial development



## Land Use Trends

Development patterns have changed since 1991, as indicated in Table I-15.

**Table I-15: Land Use Comparison, 1991, 1999 and 2007**

**Land Use Comparison 1991 - 1999 - 2007**

Category	1991	% of	1999	% of	91/99	2007	% of	99/07
	Acres	Total	Acres	Total	Change	Acres	Total	Change
Agriculture - crop	276.0	2.11%	212.9	1.63%	-63.1	201.46	1.64%	-11.44
Agriculture - pasture	153.0	1.17%	149.1	1.14%	-3.9	11.3	0.09%	-137.78
Agriculture - perennial	28.0	0.21%	20.8	0.16%	-7.2	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>AGRICULTURE TOTAL</b>	<b>457.0</b>		<b>382.8</b>		<b>-74.2</b>	<b>212.8</b>		<b>-170.02</b>
Forest TOTAL	6,751.0		6,083.4		-667.6	49.6		-6,033.83
Open TOTAL	400.0		424.7		24.7	N/A		N/A
Participation Recreation	36.0	0.28%	99.3	0.76%	63.3	71.61	0.58%	-27.69
Spectator Recreation	47.0	0.36%	0.0	0.00%	-47.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Water Based Recreation	0.0		0.0		0.0	N/A		N/A
<b>RECREATION TOTAL</b>	<b>83.0</b>		<b>99.3</b>		<b>16.3</b>	<b>71.61</b>		<b>-27.69</b>
Commercial	127.0	0.97%	142.3	1.09%	15.3	453.87	3.69%	311.57
Industrial	654.0	5.00%	554.9	4.24%	-99.1	921.1	7.48%	366.20
Mining	5.0	0.04%	8.9	0.07%	3.9	N/A	N/A	N/A
Urban Open/Public	341.0	0.63%	284.4	0.67%	-56.6	2,912.70	0.34%	2,628.30
Multi Family Resid.	82.0	0.63%	87.8	0.67%	5.8	42.23	0.34%	-45.57
High Density Resid.	0.0		0.8		0.8	151.4		150.60
Med. Density Resid.	918.0	7.02%	1,659.9	12.68%	741.9	447.6	3.63%	-1,212.30
Low Density Resid.	2,327.0	17.78%	2,360.8	18.04%	33.8	6,332.00	51.42%	3,971.20
Salt Wetland	0.0		0.0		0.0	N/A		N/A
Transportation	547.0	4.18%	616.3	4.71%	69.3	641.6	5.21%	25.30
Waste Disposal	39.0	0.30%	20.2	0.15%	-18.8	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>URBAN TOTAL</b>	<b>5,040.0</b>		<b>5,736.3</b>		<b>696.3</b>	<b>11,902.50</b>		<b>6,195.30</b>
Water - fresh wetland	184.0	1.41%	186.5	1.43%	2.5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Water - new ocean	N/A		N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Water - open water	171.0	1.31%	174.4	1.33%	3.4	77.5	0.63%	-96.90
Water - salt wetland	0.0		0.0		0.0	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>WATER TOTAL</b>	<b>355.0</b>		<b>360.9</b>		<b>5.9</b>	<b>77.5</b>		<b>-283.40</b>
<b>TOTAL AREA (acres)</b>	<b>13,086.0</b>		<b>13,087.4</b>			<b>12,314.0</b>		

*Notes:*

1. 1991 GIS data based on information obtained from the 1996 Mansfield Master Plan.
2. 1999 GIS data based on information obtained from MASSGIS website.
3. 2007 GIS data based on information received from the Town of Mansfield May 2008.
4. Property Type Classification Codes referenced from Massachusetts Department of Revenue Property Type Classification Codes, November/2006.



## Downtown Buildout Analysis

A *Buildout Analysis* for downtown Mansfield was completed in 2007 to provide projections of buildout conditions that could be used by the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department (MMED) to estimate energy demand and equipment needed to supply Main Street with power. The study area included all Business 1 and Business 2 (B1 and B2) parcels with general assumptions applied to estimate values at full buildout of downtown. Different outcomes were realized in the B1 district when applying maximum floor area ratios (2.5) to various use types (business v. business/residential) and in achieving minimum parking requirements. Based on recent trends, a more realistic and effective floor area ratio of 1.5 was assumed for buildings where the ground floor is dedicated to the main use of the building and parking is provided at grade. Similar assumptions were applied to parcels within the B2 district, resulting in approximately 500,000 square feet of new development potential at full buildout (over the next 20 – 30 years) in downtown.

Recent trends downtown include multi-story residential condominium development with retail and/or parking on the ground floor. This new interest in residential development downtown provides an opportunity for the Town of Mansfield to strategically plan commercial revitalization efforts to compliment residential development.



*Downtown Mansfield.*

## PUBLIC WORKSHOP FINDINGS

Several land use issues were discussed at the January 10 and 12, 2008 public workshop:

- Preserve water recharge areas (one of Top Ten workshop ideas)
- Control retail development especially in industrial zones
- Assure walkability from adjacent neighborhoods to downtown
- Provide more open space for passive recreation
- Assure that available water supply is sufficient for proposed development
- Provide more teeth in site plan approval process (another Top Ten workshop idea)

## LAND USE VISION

*Manage growth by planned development appropriate for Mansfield, through a revitalized/vibrant downtown, increased recreational opportunities/spaces, with a diverse housing, economic and cultural base.*



## I. LAND USE POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

### I-1. Enhance Downtown

Downtown Mansfield serves as the small business, cultural, and commuter rail hub for the community and for many surrounding towns and is the center of town government. With diverse residential options ranging from newer condominiums and apartments to older in-town neighborhoods, a truly walkable village center has evolved. Competing commercial development at Mansfield Crossing, Erin's Centre, and along Copeland Avenue, however, may adversely affect the viability of this business district. The 2008 Master Plan outlines opportunities to continue many of the initiatives undertaken to date in the village center and to identify new strategies to support and celebrate this important area of town.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Control the further sprawl or migration of downtown towards Route 106 by delineating the limits of downtown, and adopting a downtown map. The area generally extends along North Main Street from West Street – East Street at the south to Pratt Street immediately north of the station. Although Downtown includes the majority of areas zoned B1 (Central Business District), only sections zoned B2 (Downtown Mixed Use) north of West Street and west of Fuller Street are included, as indicated in Figure I-6. It excludes sections of the B2 district across South Main Street from Town Hall and along Chauncy and Pratt Street on Route 106.
2. Amend zoning bylaws to incorporate architectural guidelines established by the Downtown Committee. Although the Board of Selectmen has voted to approve these guidelines, formal codification is required to assure that all changes in use or new construction in downtown adhere to the design guidelines.
3. Reinforce 'sense of place' by encouraging development that will make the downtown a destination for residents and visitors.
  - Encourage the Downtown Business Association to work with the Board of Selectmen regarding best use of the \$30,000 received as a gift from the Mansfield Crossings development.
  - Implement the \$179,000 CDBG grant (Façade Improvement Program).
  - Consider incentives for business owners to rehabilitate/invest in their buildings as part of the revitalization efforts.
4. Revisit recommendations of the July 2005 *Mansfield Train Station Area Redevelopment Study*. This plan recommends allowing higher densities to facilitate the financial feasibility of mixed uses and necessary infrastructure improvements. It also encourages diverse housing stock in downtown to include affordable apartments and/or condominiums for Mansfield residents in transition and for first-time buyers. Providing affordable housing to single, young professionals generally won't burden the Town's resources.



Figure I-6: Downtown Mansfield



5. Draft smart growth zoning amendments to implement Transit Oriented Development (TOD) for the I-3 zone northwest of the station but do not implement until access issues are resolved. Draft language could be available for developers to consider prior to construction of improved access (draft language would be provided at risk prior to Town Meeting approval). (*see Transportation and Circulation Policy II-1, Improve Train Station Access*).
6. Revisit the proposed plan for the Hatheway-Patterson Superfund Site.
7. Support Circulation / Transportation policies and action items relating to downtown.
  - Improve commuter train station access (*see Policy II-1, Improve Train Station Access*)
  - Improve downtown traffic circulation (*see Policy II-4, Improve Downtown Traffic Circulation.*)
8. Support Economic Development policies and action items relating to downtown.
  - Revitalize downtown (*see Policy V-2, Revitalize Downtown*).

### **I-2. Continue Neighborhood Improvement Program**

The Town has conducted several neighborhood initiatives outlined in the 1996 Master Plan, as indicated in 1996-2008 Accomplishments, above. Many of these actions are ongoing and should continue.

The following action item(s) have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Preserve historic resources (*see Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-5, Identify and Protect Historic Resources*)
2. Preserve existing neighborhood integrity by limiting commercial and through traffic on collector streets. Continue to require special conditions (truck routing) for commercial and industrial permit applications.
3. Enhance aesthetics in all new development proposals.
  - Amend zoning bylaw to enable more rigorous site plan review (*see Policy I-4, 4*).
  - Require low-impact development practices of developers. Low impact stormwater management techniques encourage on-site infiltration of stormwater with vegetated swales, rain gardens and other non-structural solutions.
4. Support Dark Sky initiatives by requiring downward casting lighting fixtures (*see Policy I.5. Preserve Dark Skies*)

### **I-3. Implement Comprehensive Sidewalk Network**

The importance of sidewalks was repeatedly mentioned at the January 10 and 12, 2008 workshops. Residents enjoy the ability to walk to school, shops and other local destinations. Businesses depend on good sidewalk access, especially downtown. With a good sidewalk network, residents can reduce vehicle trips and walk for exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. Well-maintained sidewalks help residents reduce their carbon footprints.

The following action item has been identified to implement this policy:

Maintain and extend the sidewalk network (*see Transportation and Circulation Policy II.7. Action 3*)



**I-4. Provide Flexibility in Land Use Management Tools** (where appropriate based on natural constraints)

Sustainable development requires flexibility to avoid the sprawl pattern that evolved with an emphasis on single-use zoning. Flexibility also enables protection of resource areas and fosters creative design solutions.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Research and evaluate mixed-use overlay districts to facilitate construction of affordable and workforce housing.
2. Consider revising the zoning ordinance to include form-based codes that encourage infill and new development that reflects the character of the local neighborhood.
3. Continue to evaluate the need for transferable development rights and other land use management tools to preserve the character of Mansfield while promoting anti-sprawl “smart growth.” Work with developers to identify property for conservation (“sending area”). Development rights could be transferred from a “sending area” to a “receiving area” to enable denser development. This would enable construction of Transit Oriented Development in the downtown or housing of similar high density that is appropriately sited with pedestrian access to shops and local destinations and easy access to major roadways.
4. Amend zoning to require higher design standards. Providing more teeth in the site plan approval process was a priority discussed by those in attendance at the January 2008 workshops. Residents appreciated the comprehensive review that went into assuring that Mansfield Crossing was as attractive as possible and are concerned that smaller projects are not subject to the same review and high standards. Potential issues to be amended include landscaping, signage, and lighting. Other areas to be considered include developing commercial design standards for massing, rooflines, fenestration, articulation of building façade, overhangs/porticos, use of color, and building materials. Design standards are especially important in assuring that formula businesses reflect the character of Mansfield. A more predictable permitting process makes Mansfield an attractive community for economic development. Applicants appreciate a zoning bylaw that sets clear requirements for site plan and building design to minimize delay and expense involved in plan revisions. Many developers appreciate high design standards since it protects their investment by assuring that subsequent development will be held to the same requirements.
5. Consider design and height guidelines, especially in downtown area through performance standards, incentives, and an architectural review board.
6. Amend zoning bylaw to control retail development in Industrial zones.
7. Amend zoning bylaw to require that cluster zoning open space dedications provide contiguous open space corridors, as possible.
8. Amend zoning bylaw to enable wind turbines by special use permit in appropriate zoning districts. This would enable installation of “behind the meter” applications (generally one or two turbines) for residents, retail developments, industrial parks, and municipal facilities.



9. Evaluate zoning bylaw to consider co-locating cell towers on municipally owned land to enable lease agreements with wireless providers.
10. Amend subdivision regulations to protect limited drinking water resources (*see Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-3*).

#### **I-5. Preserve Dark Skies**

The impact of light pollution and diminished ability to view stars, planets, and other features in the night sky was raised during public outreach for the master plan.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Amend zoning bylaw to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies. Require that all exterior lighting fixtures comply with the requirements of the International Dark-Sky Association or similar organization.
2. Raise awareness about light pollution, its adverse effects, and its solutions.
  - Provide information on potential effects of light pollution including energy waste, and the air and water pollution caused by energy waste; harm to human health; harm to nocturnal wildlife and ecosystems; reduced safety and security; reduced visibility at night; and poor nighttime ambience.
  - Educate the public about the values of quality outdoor lighting.

#### **I-6. Preserve Scenic Roadways**

The character of rural sections of Mansfield may be maintained by assuring that many of the scenic roadways and vistas are protected.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to identify scenic roadways in Town.
2. Continue to enforce existing zoning and subdivision regulations for development along these roads.
3. Develop a policy with utility companies including Mansfield Municipal Electric Department to minimize impacts to scenic roadways from utility installation and maintenance.

#### **I-7. Encourage Smart Growth Principles and Sustainable Development**

Post World War II development patterns in Mansfield have encouraged sprawl. As indicated in Table I-15, the percentage of developed land in Mansfield has increased dramatically in past decades. By implementing smart growth principles, the Town of Mansfield will define itself as a “green” community with a commitment to sustainable principles.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Investigate sustainable development principles such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND Standards). To integrate the principles of smart growth and green building, recommend that new



- developments conform to 'LEED for Neighborhood Developments Rating System' or be recognized by the U.S. Green Building Council as 'LEED-ND Certified.'
2. Encourage sustainable land uses that support protection of aquifers and natural habitat.
    - Implement transfer of development rights.
    - Preserve vegetated buffers between land uses and roads, streams and wetlands.
    - Manage growth and development to reflect the natural characteristics (resources and constraints) of the land.
    - Ensure that town staff and the boards and commissions that review land development proposals have adequate GIS mapping to make well-considered land use decisions with information on zoning, property data, and resources/constraints.
  3. Encourage a mix of land uses.
    - Provide incentives (density bonuses, increased residential zoning, economic development) through State funds to encourage residents to live near where they work.
    - Adopt smart growth regulations to parallel and compliment existing conventional development codes.
    - Create opportunities to retrofit existing commercial/retail buildings into mixed uses, where appropriate.
    - Utilize mixed use overlay zones to facilitate diversity of housing and commercial uses while encouraging vibrant, walkable villages.
  4. Create a range of housing opportunities.
    - Investigate home buyer assistance through support of community land trusts.
    - Consider feasibility of cottage-style development for both age restricted and non-age restricted developments.
    - Implement a program to identify vacant/abandoned buildings, determine feasibility of reuse.
    - Streamline permitting process for developers implementing smart growth principles.
  5. Encourage pedestrian-oriented development.
    - Investigate funding opportunities to upgrade existing streets and sidewalks.
    - Investigate design standards for street design relative to safety and pedestrian mobility that make roadways more pedestrian-friendly (*see Policy II.7*).
    - Investigate traffic-calming techniques such as neck-downs and on-street parking.
    - Require ADA compliance.
    - Encourage pedestrian connections to walkways/sidewalks from parking lots. Encourage interconnections between adjacent parking lots.
  6. Strengthen and direct development towards existing development nodes.
    - Evaluate infill potential and prioritize infill and brownfield sites for redevelopment.



- Consider form-based codes to encourage infill development which reflects the context of existing development which was constructed prior to implementation of zoning.
- Support programs that encourage home renovation/rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods (Commonwealth Capital Program).
- Concentrate critical services near homes, jobs, and transit.
- Consider economic incentives for businesses/homeowners to locate in areas with existing infrastructure.
- Utilize transfer of development rights to conserve land in more rural areas of town while encouraging appropriate density of development in existing nodes of development.
- Support use of state and federal historic tax credits for building rehabilitation.

#### **I-8. Work with Adjacent Communities on Mutual Issues**

It is important to ensure that land uses along common borders and within the region are compatible. Mansfield shares several resources with local communities including a regional wastewater treatment facility, shared Great Woods, and common resource protection concerns along the Canoe River Sole Source Aquifer.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to work with adjacent communities to define the appropriate character of key resources and to cooperate in protecting the Canoe River Greenway and groundwater recharge areas.
2. Provide courtesy review of development projects on adjacent properties in bordering communities. Request that adjacent communities circulate Land Development projects located adjacent to Mansfield to the Town Planner for review and comment. Also, submit projects located on the Mansfield border to the planning departments in adjacent communities for courtesy review.
3. Execute regional agreements that reduce competition by sharing the benefits and impacts of development among communities, and that provide a means of alternative dispute resolution (SRPEDD Vision 2020).
  - Establish a means of bringing communities together to discuss and review development projects, and assist them in using tools that achieve better solutions by balancing needs and mitigating impacts.



### **I-9. Update Data for Informed Decision Making**

It is important that all town boards and commissions have adequate information to make informed decisions.

1. Regularly update the *Cost of Services and Fiscal Impact Analysis Model* (prepared in 2004) and include information on costs and revenues for 55 and older developments. Although public education services are not required, a higher number of emergency response calls may be generated from these developments, compared to other residential land uses. The breakdown should reflect insurance company reimbursements as well as tax revenue generated to understand the true cost of services for this land use.
2. Assess demographic trends when US Census data becomes available after the 2010 census.



## II. TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT

Mansfield is fortunate to have a multimodal range of transportation options. Although private vehicles and trucks dominate local traffic, as an historic railroad town, Mansfield has exceptional commuter rail service and an off-road bicycle facility on the former Old Colony rail line. Circulation in Mansfield is defined by a range of modes of transportation including the local roadway network of arterials and collector roads, state highways (Routes 106 and 140), interstate highways (I-95 and I-495), MBTA commuter rail and Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, the Old Colony bike path, and an extensive sidewalk grid. Both interstate highways and the rail corridor help define neighborhoods in Mansfield and constrain access to parts of town.

Continued residential and retail development, together with increased popularity of the Mansfield commuter rail station has lead to increased traffic congestion, especially on Route 106, Chauncy Street-Pratt Street.

### 1996 - 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Town of Mansfield has continued actions to improve traffic and circulation. The following are key traffic and circulation accomplishments outlined as recommendations in the 1996 Master Plan:

- Construction of a new commuter rail station was completed in February 2004, marking a culmination of planning which began in the mid-1950s. The former Town Hall clock was installed in the station belfry, symbolizing the link between Mansfield's past and its future. Phase II of the train station project included discussion of parking and Transit Oriented Development, with a plan submitted in 2004.
- The Town has conducted an engineering study for the reconstruction of the Route 106 underpass under the MBTA/Amtrak rail lines. The current underpass is a safety hazard as it is a boat section (the roadway is below the water table). Holes in the roadway surface allow water to bubble up from the underground section of the Rumford River that passes beneath. In addition to poor drainage and puddling, icing conditions contribute to safety problems. The engineering design has been completed to the 75 percent stage with a projected cost to complete of \$6.6 million. The Town of Mansfield has received Congressional Earmarks totaling \$2.86 million. The project is a top priority in the FFY 2008 draft Transportation



*New MBTA Station.*



Improvement Program but the remainder of project costs is unfunded (*The Work Undone, A Selection of Unfunded or Under-funded Projects to Maintain, Improve, and Expand the Commonwealth's Transportation Infrastructure*, compiled by the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies, October 2007).

- The Route 106/Route 140 intersection was reconstructed and signal improvements were conducted by Massachusetts Highway Department in 2004.
- Route 106/Copeland Drive intersection improvements are on the Transportation Improvement Program as SID #601850 for FY2009. Design is currently at the pre-25% stage. Signal timing adjustments were conducted for approval of Erin's Centre.
- The Old Colony Bike Path / World War II Veterans' Memorial Trail has been completed between the Mansfield station and the airport, along a former rail right of way and current sewer alignment. Trail dedication was on April 15, 2004, Armed Forces Day. A combination of federal, state and town funds was used to build this linear park/trail facility. This "Rails to Trails" alignment is used daily by joggers, walkers, and bicyclists for recreation and as a commuter route. The Town of Norton has not expressed interest in extending the bike path southward.
- The Town of Mansfield has continued to upgrade sidewalks, especially in downtown neighborhoods. Sidewalks along North Main Street were upgraded in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). New sidewalks were constructed along Branch Street.

Additional Accomplishments:

- School Street bridge over the MBTA was replaced west of Route 140.
- Mansfield station parking lots have been expanded to accommodate resident and non-resident parking. The number of parking spaces has increased from 600 in 1996 to 1,400 spaces designated for residents and non-residents on-street and at public and private lots. A police detail directs traffic at the Highland Avenue intersection on Route 106 when cars exit the station parking areas during the PM peak period. The Town parking enforcement officer holds weekly hearings for station parking lot violations. Issues related to traffic through the adjacent neighborhood and congestion on Route 106 have grown as ridership has increased.
- Several major commercial developments were approved by Town boards and constructed in the past decade:
  - Erin's Centre, including approximately 250,000 square feet of development as a home improvement store, supermarket, maintenance facility, and additional retail space, was opened in 2003 on Route 140 between West Street and Norfolk Street. Access to the shopping center is provided via site drives on West and Norfolk Streets (no curb cuts are provided on Route 140). The Norfolk Street intersection was signalized and the Route 140 median opened to provide full movements at this intersection. Existing Route 140 signals were coordinated and



modified to optimize traffic flow. Traffic signal and other improvements were also conducted at Route 106 at Copeland Drive.

- Mansfield Crossing, a 450,000-square foot community-style open air shopping center located on the west side of Route 140 between School Street and I-495, opened in the fall of 2007. Access to the site is limited to one site drive on School Street. The School Street / Route 140 interchange has been reconfigured and off-site intersection improvements have been made to mitigate traffic impacts.

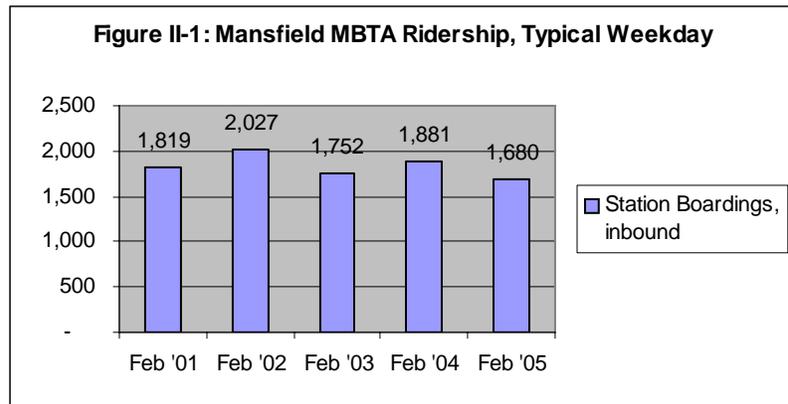


## TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

### Commuter Rail Service

MBTA commuter rail service to Boston and Providence has increased dramatically in the past decade. Service has increased from five trains inbound during the morning peak hours and six trains outbound in the evening peak to 17 weekday inbound and outbound trains (including eight in the AM peak and five in the PM peak). One AM train provides express service from Mansfield to Back Bay Station with a 27-minute travel time. Service now includes nine weekend inbound and outbound trains. Weekday service runs from 5:36 AM to 12:38 AM with weekend trains arriving / departing from 7 AM to 11:49 PM.

Weekday ridership counts conducted annually by the MBTA in February in 2001 through 2005 indicated peak ridership in 2002, as indicated in Figure 2-1. Daily ridership ranged from 1,680 to 2,027. Peak ridership could have been weather-related. According to MBTA audits, estimated daily ridership from Mansfield is 1,627. The 2007 daily fare was \$6.75 one way with \$223 for a monthly pass.



*Source: 2007 Transportation Plan. SRPEDD*

MBTA and SRPEDD have projected ridership from the Mansfield station, based on 2000 inbound boardings of 1,753. With unconstrained parking, daily ridership is projected to increase to 2,830 in 2010 and 3,210 in 2025. With constrained parking, projected daily ridership would be 2,390 in 2010 and 2,440 in 2025. Parking constraints are serving to limit ridership at the Mansfield station.

### Commuter Trends

The average commute for a Mansfield resident increased a dramatic 6.6 minutes between 1990 and 2000, with a mean travel time to work of 33.3 minutes in 2000 (US Census). These figures reflect an increase in commuter rail ridership by local residents (average 35-minute commute by train to Back Bay Station in Boston, as well as travel time to and from the Mansfield and Boston stations).

As indicated in Table II-1, 9.9 percent of town residents commuted via mass transit in 2000. This represents a significant increase from 1980 when only 2.2 percent used this mode and a steady increase from 1990 when 8.0 percent used transit, reflecting a continued increase in commuter rail ridership. In 2000, carpools remained an attractive option for 7.7 percent (in 1990 a 7.5 percent used this mode). The number of commuters driving alone continued to decline from 80.2 percent in 1990 to 77.4 percent in 2000, a healthy trend for sustainable transportation patterns. During this time, the percentage of residents who work at home increased from 2.4 to 3.7, reflecting, in part, the increased ability to telecommute.



**Table II-1: Means of Commuting to Work**

	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Drove Alone	7,346	80.2	8,764	77.4
Carpooled	685	7.5	868	7.7
Public Transportation	732	8.0	1125	9.9
Other Means	29	0.3	69	0.6
Walked	150	1.6	77	0.7
Work at Home	221	2.4	416	3.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,163</b>		<b>11,319</b>	

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000

Mansfield continues to be a major employment destination, with approximately the same number of in-town jobs (11,083) as residents in the workforce (11,260) in 2000. The Cabot Business Park alone accounts for 5,000 employees. As indicated in Table II-2, travel patterns for those commuting to and from Mansfield have changed dramatically between 1990 and 2000. Of the 11,083 jobs in 2000, 19.2 percent of these workers live in Mansfield and 18.8 percent are from nearby Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) communities including North Attleboro, Attleboro, Plainville, and Norton. A dramatic increase was observed in the number commuting from South Coast communities along I-195 and Rhode Island (up from 14.1 percent to 22.4 percent), while the number of people commuting from metro Boston communities declined.

**Table II-2: Journey to Work Data, 1990 and 2000**

	Place of Residence for Workers in Mansfield, Percent Distribution		Place of Work for Residents of Mansfield, Percent Distribution	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Mansfield	21.1	19.2	20.9	18.9
Attleboro, North Attleboro, Norton, and Plainville	21.6	18.8	6.6	5.2
South Coast / I-195 Communities	2.2	7.4	Not available	2.3
I-495 (south) and Routes 140/24 Communities	6.2	6.2	Not available	2.7
Other SRPEDD Communities	3.4	2.7	3.0	0.30
Metro Boston	6.5	4.5	27.4	30.4
Bristol County NEC	1.7	2.0	1.3	2.3
Cape Cod	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.3
Rhode Island	11.8	15.0	2.1	4.4
Plymouth County	4.4	5.6	4.1	4.4
Mass NEC	20.4	17.8	34.5	28.8
<b>TOTAL NUMBER</b>	<b>9,112</b>	<b>11,083</b>	<b>9,202</b>	<b>11,260</b>

NEC: Not Elsewhere Counted

Source: SRPEDD Fact Book, US Census 1990 and 2000

Town residents now commute farther than in the past, with 30.4 percent commuting to metropolitan Boston, and an increasing number commuting to Rhode Island and South



Coast communities along I-495. As information is based on SRPEDD data and Mansfield is on the northwestern extent of this regional planning district, it is not surprising to see that 28.8 percent commute to destinations “not otherwise counted” in Massachusetts, including communities along the I-495 corridor to the north.

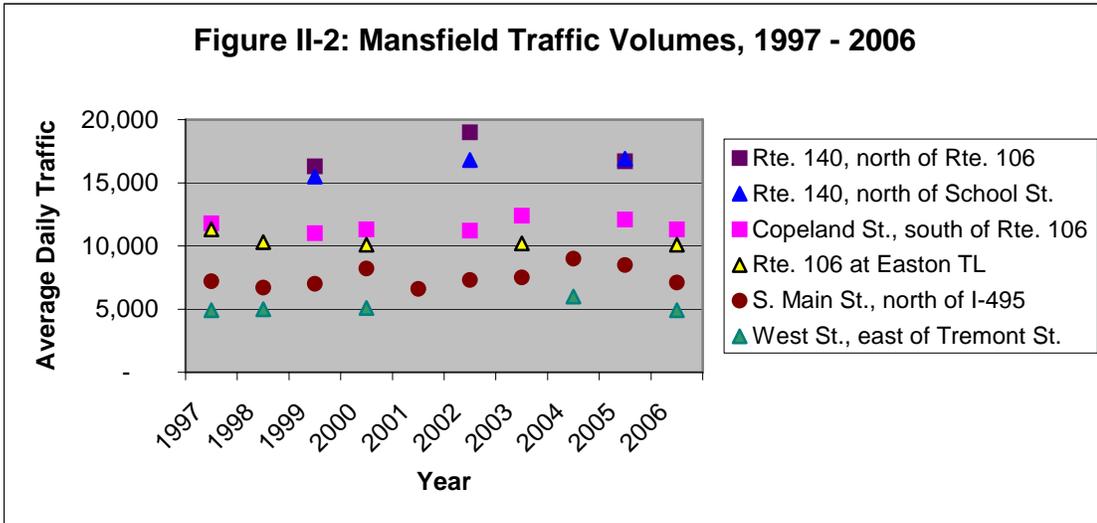
### **GATRA**

Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) does not provide fixed route service in Mansfield, although regularly scheduled service is provided between the Mansfield station and Wheaton College and Great Woods Plaza in Norton. The Board of Selectman has voted to not allow GATRA to make stops along North and South Main Street within the Town of Mansfield. GATRA’s Norton-Mansfield Route 140 Connection provides service for all peak hour commuter trains to Mansfield during service hours. GATRA has twenty weekday departures from the station (6:15 AM to 11:25 PM, Thursdays and Fridays to 1:00 AM), ten on Saturdays (8:30 AM to 12:10 AM), and six on Sundays (12:50 PM to 9:45 PM). GATRA has plans to provide shuttle service to the Mansfield station from Plainville and North Attleboro.

GATRA Dial-A-Ride demand responsive service from Mansfield to Attleboro is limited to the first and third Wednesdays of the month.

### **Traffic Volumes**

Although residents perceive that traffic volume has increased dramatically over the past decade, in actuality, traffic counts at several locations have decreased or held relatively stable since 1997. As indicated by traffic count data from MassHighway presented in Figure II-2, peak average daily traffic volumes were observed in 2002 on Route 140 north of Route 106 at 19,000 vehicles per day. Average daily volume on Route 140 north of School Street was 16,900 in 2005. Volumes on other roadways demonstrated some yearly variation but overall from 1997 to 2006, volumes remained fairly consistent.





## Traffic Safety

Four of the 100 most dangerous intersections in Southeastern Massachusetts (2002 to 2004) are located in Mansfield. As indicated in Table II-3, three of the intersections are located on Route 106 and one is located at the Tweeter Center on Route 140.

**Table II-3: Mansfield's Most Dangerous Intersections**

SRPEDD Rank	Intersection		Total Crashes	Status / Issues / Needs
21	Route 106	Forbes Boulevard	39	Conflicting turning movements
29	Route 106	N. Main St.	53	Left-turn signal implemented in 2007
37	Route 106	Route 140	47	Improvements implemented in 2006
99	Route 140	Tweeter Center	31	Congestion-related

*Source: SRPEDD Fact Book, 2007, Town of Mansfield*

## PUBLIC WORKSHOP FINDINGS

Several key points were expressed regarding traffic and circulation at the January 12, 2008 public workshop:

- Resolve train station traffic congestion (one of Top Ten workshop ideas)
- Conduct a downtown circulation study to assess one-way circulation patterns, potential for diagonal parking and striping on Old Colony Way
- Improve problem intersections on Route 106
- Make Main Street 2-way with parking on Old Colony Way
- Improve pedestrian connections from the station to Downtown with a Green Promenade
- Take advantage of existing public transportation by adding GATRA stops in Mansfield



*GATRA service at the train station.*

## TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION VISION

*Transportation in Mansfield will include a range of modes utilizing pedestrian connections, bike paths, GATRA bus service, and commuter rail with shuttle service to the station from remote commuter rail parking, airport, and interstate connections. Traffic congestion will be managed to support economic development and to improve safety for pedestrians, motorists, and cyclists.*



## II. TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

### II-1. Improve Commuter Train Station Access

As the number of Town, MBTA, and private parking spaces at the train station has increased, several issues remain to be addressed. Of primary concern is the lack of multiple access points from parking lots northwest of the station to the arterial roadway network. With deactivation of an at-grade crossing on a rail spur through the former Hatheway-Patterson property, access is now limited to Route 106 via roads in the Highland Avenue neighborhood. With the majority of parking spaces located immediately west of the station, traffic volumes are especially high in the Highland Avenue neighborhood and at the Route 106 intersection. Although a police officer directs traffic at this intersection after arrival of peak hour trains, traffic is congested in the neighborhood and on Route 106 between Route 140 and Hope Street. This emerged as one of the primary concerns during the Public Workshop. Access through the Highland Avenue neighborhood and safety at the Highland Avenue/Route 106 intersection must be resolved for the Town to implement Transit Oriented Development and smart growth strategies for mixed use in this former industrial area.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Cap MBTA, town and private commuter rail parking at current number of parking spaces pending resolution of Route 106 access issues.
2. Conduct study to provide a minimum of two accesses from station parking lots northwest of the station. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) of this former industrial area would also increase traffic volumes.
3. Address intersection geometry and potential warrants for Highland Avenue/Route 106 signalization as part of the Route 106 Corridor Study.
  - Identify additional options for providing site access. Options could include a grade crossing on the CSX spur, connections through Mansfield neighborhoods, an alternative through Foxborough, or an alignment southwest along the Northeast Corridor to Copeland Drive or West Street.
  - Identify impacts to adjacent residential (and business) neighborhoods.
  - Estimate costs and permitting requirements.
  - Identify potential public and private funding sources including innovative strategies such as District Increment Financing which channels tax dollars into targeted redevelopment districts.
  - Identify potential phasing for design and construction.
4. Support transportation demand management techniques to reduce single occupancy vehicles in Town-owned parking lots.
  - Consider satellite parking from remote lots around Town, including locations on Route 140 or in the Cabot Business Park. Although this service may have



- been implemented in the past and discontinued, future conditions may warrant resumption of this service.
- Encourage residents to take advantage of GATRA demand responsive service to the station.
  - Consider preference for carpool parking in Town-owned lots to encourage high occupancy vehicle use.
  - Install bike lockers at the station to encourage bike ridership to the station.
  - Enable GATRA's Norton-Mansfield Route 140 bus service to make stops along the route in Mansfield (*see Policy II.5*).
  - Support GATRA efforts to provide shuttle service to the station from Plainville and North Attleboro.
5. Adequately control runoff from station parking lots. Consider low impact design for stormwater management in upgrade of existing lots, for proposed parking areas, or for new building construction. This is especially important in areas north of Route 106 where stormwater runoff may contribute to flooding of the subsurface section of the Rumford River (under the Route 106 rail underpass). Low impact design strategies include use of green roofs, permeable pavement, and design of landscaped swales to facilitate groundwater recharge and retention and remediation of pollutants in soil.
6. Consider longer-term solutions to parking congestion.
- Explore access via Foxborough or south across Route 106 along the railroad right of way to Copeland Drive. Alternatives may require construction of new bridges, acquisition of right of way, and mitigation of wetland impacts. Funding sources should include but not be limited to the Transportation Improvement Program, MBTA or Federal Transit Administration.
  - Require that property owners provide vehicular and pedestrian traffic mitigation as part of project approvals for any developments within 1,000 feet (comfortable walking distance) of the train station.
  - Provide structured station parking once traffic access issues are resolved.

## **II-2. Conduct Route 106 Corridor Study**

The Route 106 Corridor Study, an action item for the 1996 Master Plan, remains a priority for the Town of Mansfield. Limited intersection improvements have been conducted within the past decade as traffic mitigation for Erin's Centre and Mansfield Crossing development projects on Route 140. The corridor study project is now on the Transportation Improvement Program for State funding.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment in accordance with the Massachusetts Highway Department's *Project Development & Design Guide*. This guidebook



- features flexibility in design requirements to ensure that the road is compatible with community surroundings and reflects the latest methods for encouraging and supporting safe travel for pedestrian, bicyclists, and other modes of travel.
- Conduct traffic counts and project future volumes with existing and proposed development.
  - Develop strategies that balance context sensitive design with the need to reduce traffic congestion.
  - Identify impacts to adjacent commercial and residential uses.
2. Reduce curb cuts from existing development.
    - Consolidate access points by combining access between adjacent parcels (access management).
    - Encourage access to side streets to provide traffic options, if such access does not adversely affect traffic on neighborhood streets (including truck traffic).
  3. Improve pedestrian safety.
    - Include crosswalks and pedestrian signals, as warranted.
    - Incorporate traffic calming features such as neckdowns at crosswalks to reduce the length of pavement to be crossed. Neckdowns reduce the roadway pavement width (distance between curbs) by incorporating the roadway area typically included as the paved shoulder or used for parking away from the intersection, as part of the sidewalk. Neckdowns enhance pedestrian safety by increasing the visibility of pedestrians waiting to cross at the curb.
  4. Improve intersection safety and capacity.
    - Improve safety at Route 106 intersections with Route 140, Copeland Drive, and North Main Street, identified among the 100 most dangerous intersections in southeastern Massachusetts.
    - Provide adequate turning lanes. Consider the need for dedicated left turn lanes or right lanes that are not traffic-signal controlled. Assure that adequate pedestrian refuge is provided to enhance pedestrian safety if a free right lane is provided. Assure that pavement is adequately signed for bicyclist safety with right turning movements.
    - Consider roundabouts as options to signalized intersections. Roundabouts may improve traffic flow and air quality by maintaining continuous flow of traffic at reduced speeds. Roundabouts may be suitable where traffic volumes from all intersection approaches are balanced, there is available right of way, and pedestrian crossing safety can be adequately addressed without signalization.
  5. Improve site and architectural design of adjacent development in the B3 zone (Route 140 to Central Street) to create an attractive approach to Downtown, Mansfield's village center.
    - Reduce minimum front setback from 50 feet (which enables construction of a parking lot to the front of the building) to 15 feet to require that parking be provided to the side and rear.



- Require that developers of formula businesses provide architectural design features appropriate for a New England town including peaked roofs, siding such as cedar shingles or brick, porches and covered walkways.
  - Amend zoning to require native landscaping with reduced demand for irrigation, low impact stormwater management such as rain gardens, and downward casting lighting.
  - Consider mixed use/residential use by Special Permit of the Planning Board (currently prohibited).
  - Amend zoning to enable shared use of parking for properties with parking demands at different times. Multifamily residential uses and retail, or offices and churches may have opportunities to share parking without adversely affecting the supply for either use. Use agreements should be signed by both parties and recorded with both deeds. Changes in use of either property would require Town approval to assure that shared parking agreements are maintained.
6. Identify implementation strategies.
- Estimate costs and permitting requirements.
  - Identify potential funding sources.
  - Identify potential phasing for design and construction

### **II-3. Replace Route 106 Underpass**

Replacement of the underpass should continue as one of the highest traffic and circulation priorities in Mansfield.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Provide input on Massachusetts Highway Department design to assure that design reflects the needs of residents of the Town of Mansfield.
  - Protect traffic flow on Route 106.
  - Maintain sidewalks and stair connections from the track level to enhance pedestrian safety.
  - Minimize Town maintenance responsibilities for pumps, roadway surfacing and other operational requirements.
  - Provide attractive wingwall design through concrete stamping or other technique to avoid expansive concrete walls.
2. Provide Town oversight to the greatest degree possible, during construction to assure that construction disruption is minimized. Allow for Town input on local review of traffic detours and other measures to protect and maintain traffic for vehicles and pedestrians.



#### **II-4. Improve Downtown Traffic Circulation**

Public input in the master plan process repeatedly pointed out the need to improve traffic flow through downtown on North Main Street. The current one-way traffic pattern immediately south of Route 106 provides a circuitous “back door” route to the heart of Mansfield’s village center via Old Colony Way. Views of parking lots, loading zones, and dumpsters contribute to a negative image. The merge of one-way traffic at Middle Common near the Town Clock creates a confusing traffic pattern for access to North Main Street destinations. Pedestrian connections are not clearly marked. On-street parking is not delineated with pavement markings, leading to inefficient use of curb front parking. Sidewalk snow plowing and snow removal is ineffective in supporting a vital business district.

The following action item has been identified to implement this policy:

1. Reassess one-way circulation patterns (see Figure II-3).
  - Evaluate two-way traffic on Rumford Avenue and Old Colony Way. Old Colony Way has a wide right of way that reflects its past use as a railroad alignment and adjacent street.
    - Consider Old Colony Way as a two-way street with parallel parking on both sides or diagonal parking on one side.



Figure II-3



- Consider reducing pavement width with sidewalk widening and landscaping to improve a pedestrian connection between the station and North Main Street.
  - Evaluate the segment of North Main Street between Middle Common and Route 106 for two-way traffic. Two-way traffic could serve as a traffic-calming tool to slow northbound traffic, especially during the morning commute when traffic volumes are light.
    - Provide on-street parking on at least one side of roadway.
    - *Consider widening sidewalks if sufficient right of way is available. This would encourage creation of a vibrant, walkable sidewalk that could be suitable for outside dining, retail displays, or landscaping.*
  - Evaluate one-way patterns on side streets including West Church Street, High Street, and Samoset Avenue, three roads that provide access from North Main Street without comparable one-way pairs to bring traffic to the main street.
  - Evaluate one-way traffic pattern north of the train station on North Main Street - Oakland Street northbound and Mansfield Avenue southbound. These roads provide access not only to the train station, but to the industrial areas off Oakland Street. The circuitous truck route requires that rigs traveling southbound on Mansfield Avenue make an especially tight turn onto North Main Street adjacent to the North Common, and then make an immediate turn onto Route 106.
  - Evaluate pavement widths, lane markings, and on-street parking to improve safety for motorists and bicyclists on one-way streets, if retained.
2. Enhance pedestrian access to Downtown destinations from the train station.
- Redesign North Common to reflect current pedestrian traffic patterns and connections to North Main Street businesses both north and south of Route 106. Provide a focal point on North Common to reflect the heritage of the community. Through urban design and landscape architecture, create a common that not only links the station to the streets but also provides an attractive civic space for public gatherings and celebrations.
  - Work with MBTA and Amtrak to provide a safe and attractive pedestrian overpass over Route 106.
  - Widen sidewalks and improve streetscape on Old Colony Way to provide an attractive link from the rail overpass to North Main Street destinations including retail and services, restaurants, and new residential developments. This route could become an attractive green promenade from the station to North Main Street, local neighborhoods, and to Al-Noor School on Church Street.
  - Consider neckdowns at pedestrian crosswalks to reduce the crossing distance. This may be especially suitable for improving safety for students walking from the train station to local schools, or for seniors or those with disabilities



who may lack the mobility to quickly cross-expansive pavement widths. Neckdowns should be considered at all crosswalks where there is on-street parking along North Main Street.

- Identify potential GATRA bus stops.
3. Optimize available parking downtown. Conduct a parking study to document available parking in the downtown area extending north from South Common to Pratt Street on North Main Street, along Old Colony Way, Rumford Avenue, and the former Old Colony alignment parking area between Middle Common and Court Street.
- Inventory on-street parking. Recognize that on-street parking can serve as a traffic-calming tool to reduce speeds on roads such as North Main Street.
  - Stripe parking spaces on North Main Street to more efficiently use available curbside spaces. Parking marking would effectively slow traffic speeds on North Main Street even when cars are not parked by visually reducing the width of pavement available for through traffic.
  - Inventory off-street parking in municipal parking lots and in private lots of businesses fronting on the above streets.
  - Document existing parking restrictions and pavement marking for parking spaces both on-street and in off-street lots.
  - Coordinate with the Downtown Business Association to document parking demand.
  - Develop strategies to improve downtown parking.
    - Consider remote employee parking to free up North Main Street parking spaces for customers.
    - Consider shared parking agreements for off-street lots to more effectively utilize available paved lots (*see Policy II-2. 2, above*).
    - Consider low impact design for stormwater management in any proposed parking areas. This is especially important in areas north of Route 106 where stormwater runoff may contribute to flooding of the subsurface section of the Rumford River (under the Route 106 rail underpass).
    - Consider pre-paid parking with enforcement to assure that on-street and municipal parking appropriately benefits local businesses.
    - Consider posting signage with maps to available municipal lots. Prepare a leaflet for distribution through the Downtown Business Association with parking information. Include trivia facts on walking for a healthy heart, average length of walk from the middle of Erin's Centre or Mansfield Crossing parking lot to the store entrances, followed by the number of spaces within that distance of a typical downtown business.
4. Enhance bicycle safety between the station and the start of the Old Colony /WW II Memorial Bike Way south of Middle Common.



- Consider bicycle safety in any roadway improvements.
  - Encourage the Town to install bike racks at convenient locations along North Main Street to encourage patronage by bicyclists.
5. Prepare a circulation, parking, pedestrian and bicycle study for downtown including the following:
- Prepare schematic designs (10 percent design stage) of proposed traffic, parking, and circulation improvements.
  - Identify impacts to adjacent business and residential use.
  - Estimate costs and permitting requirements.
  - Identify potential funding sources.
  - Identify potential phasing for design and construction.
6. Establish, publicize and enforce a snow and ice policy (*see Services and Facilities, Policy IV-8. Develop snow removal policy*).

## **II-5. Initiate GATRA Fixed Route Service**

Public input in the master plan process documented the need to reconsider public bus service in Mansfield. High occupancy vehicle service in Mansfield would help define the Town's commitment as a Green Community by reducing hydrocarbon demand and reinforcing healthy lifestyles that may include walking to or from a bus stop. Bus service would also improve access to jobs and services for those who are transit-dependent. Current demand responsive GATRA service is limited to two days per month for Mansfield residents.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Implement agreements enabling GATRA buses to make stops along the existing North and South Main Street route with service to the train station and Norton.
  - Conduct surveys to identify potential bus stop locations.
    - Survey rail passengers at the Mansfield station to identify potential stops along the existing route. This could reduce parking demand at the station and reduce congestion along Route 106, especially during peak afternoon/evening traffic hours.
    - Survey Wheaton College employees living in Mansfield to document demand and identify Mansfield bus stops.
  - Consider providing GATRA service to Erin's Centre, Mansfield Crossing, downtown, and other employment destinations.
    - Increase access to retail positions that are attractive for students, seniors, and others with reduced access to private vehicles.
    - Work with Mansfield Crossing, Erin's Centre, and other suitable locations to designate attractive and safe bus stops.



- Develop agreements with Erin’s Centre and Mansfield Crossing property owners to provide parking for those taking the bus to other destinations, recognizing the benefit of increasing commuter business.
  - Once service is initiated, work with GATRA to routinely consider the need to expand service to high density residential areas in Mansfield.
2. Routinely reassess need to change GATRA demand responsive service for additional days of service per month.

## **II-6. Preserve and Expand Bikeway Network**

Mansfield is fortunate to have the start of an off-road non-vehicular network for cyclists, walkers, joggers and others that reinforce healthy activities for people of all ages. Expansion of this network will reinforce the commitment of the Town to provide transportation alternatives to the private vehicle.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Maintain and expand the Old Colony Bike Path
  - Continue to work with the Town of Norton to provide a southward link, to provide access to the emerging South Coast bikeway through Norton, Taunton, Dighton, and Somerset, and to provide access to the Blackstone River Bikeway and Ten Mile River Greenway in Rhode Island via Seekonk and Attleboro.
  - Preserve the Old Colony Bike Path for pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized recreational and commuter use. Prohibit conversion of this Town-owned “Rails to Trails” path, alignment of the former Old Colony line, to active rail use.
  - Provide well-marked “share the road” signage, as appropriate, for on-road bicycle connections from the Old Colony Bike Path to local neighborhoods and designations.
2. Support “Safe Routes to Schools” bicycle connections for students to reinforce healthy exercise habits among the young.
3. Consider additional off-road links between neighborhoods and local destinations as alignments become available.

## **II-7. Address Townwide Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety and Circulation Issues**

Safe vehicular access on local roadways continues to be a priority for the Town of Mansfield. The provision of safe and attractive pedestrian facilities is also important to serve the needs of residents.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Improve intersection safety and capacity.



- Improve safety at Route 106 intersection with Forbes Boulevard and at Route 140 intersection with the Tweeter Center, identified among the 100 most dangerous intersections in southeastern Massachusetts.
  - Improve safety at intersections identified by the police and highway departments.
  - Consider roundabouts as an alternative when new signals are proposed.
  - Include pedestrian activated signals and crosswalks at all signalized intersections.
2. Continue to consider the impact of proposed development on traffic safety and circulation.
- Consider composite impact of proposed development when assessing impact of development.
  - Include impacts to pedestrian and bicycle access in the project approval process. Provide continuous sidewalks to logical destinations or to other sidewalks. Recognize that sidewalk construction may be incremental but will, over time, provide a continuous network for pedestrian access.
  - Continue to assess the impact of potential truck traffic generated by proposed development on local neighborhoods. Require that applicants provide assurances that truck traffic will not adversely affect pedestrian and vehicular safety and the quality of life in residential neighborhoods.
  - Require access management or connections between adjacent commercial properties wherever feasible to minimize curb cuts on local and state roads.
  - Encourage strongly that Massachusetts Highway Department consider Town comments for curb cuts on state highways.
  - Require new development with over 100 employees to implement transportation demand management strategies to reduce traffic volumes. Such strategies may include: carpooling; assuring that amenities such as restaurants, banks and other services are within walking distance; staggered work hours to reduce traffic volumes during peak hours for AM and PM traffic; and telecommuting.
3. Maintain and extend the sidewalk network.
- Recognize the importance of providing safe and attractive sidewalks in all parts of town, especially along collector roads that provide access to and between neighborhoods.
    - Develop a sidewalk priority plan with identification of half a mile of sidewalk to be constructed or replaced yearly.
    - Identify small gaps or discontinuous segments in the existing sidewalk network for high-priority sidewalk construction. Assure accessibility for all sidewalks in accordance with the Americans with Disability Act.
  - Maintain sidewalks as necessary to assure these assets remain functional. The Town is responsible to maintain the sidewalk. Utilities are responsible for adequately patching sidewalks following utility installation. Abutters are responsible for assuring that adjacent vegetation is trimmed to avoid either hanging over the sidewalk or encroaching onto the sidewalk surface and



thereby obscuring and eventually reducing pavement. To assure access for pedestrians, vehicles must not be parked on sidewalks. This is a concern in downtown neighborhoods where the sidewalk is immediately adjacent to the roadway pavement and there may not be a curb to adequately define the roadway edge.

- Recognize the importance of providing interconnected trails and paths between neighborhoods. Such paths might not be adjacent to streets and may be accomplished by providing paths through dedicated open space in adjacent Cluster Residential developments. Safe interconnected paths and sidewalks would reduce dependence on cars for many activities in this family-oriented town with high numbers of school-aged children. Interconnections would build closer-knit neighborhoods, reduce vehicle miles traveled for carpools, and encourage walking as a healthy lifestyle.
  - Establish snow and ice policy for removal of snow on sidewalks to encourage safe pedestrian access in all seasons.
  - Enforce posted speed limits and pedestrian rights of way in crosswalks, especially in downtown.
4. Improve safety and access with events at the Tweeter Center.
- Encourage Massachusetts Highway Department and the Tweeter Center owners to post variable message signs along I-95 and I-495 providing information to motorists prior to events (similar to signage provided for Patriots Stadium). This would enable residents to select alternative routes without being caught in highway congestion.
  - Support Massachusetts Highway Department construction of a southbound I-495 on-ramp from Route 140 near the Tweeter Center.



## **II-8. Maintain Mansfield Airport as a Transportation Alternative**

Mansfield is fortunate to have a full complement of multimodal transportation options in town. Mansfield Airport is used not only for recreational aviation but provides a valuable asset for local businesses, especially corporate headquarters located at the Cabot Business Park. The airport is also recognized for its role in creating a feeling of open space or low development density in adjacent neighborhoods.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Utilize federal and state funding to maintain the runways, taxiways, and other facilities in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration and Mass Aeronautics Commission requirements to improve airport safety and operations (*see Policy IV-14, Maintain Mansfield Airport as a Town asset*).
2. Continue to work with the fixed base operator at the airport to ensure that the airport meets the economic development needs of the community.



### III. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

As an increasingly developed suburban community, Mansfield's natural and cultural resources provide an important background that helps define the sense of place. Even in the downtown, Fulton and Kingman Ponds provide welcome relief to moderate density residential, industrial, and commercial development. In more rural areas, the Canoe River and its watershed provide a distinctive identify to East Mansfield. In West Mansfield, tree lined streets, Wading River and Bungay Lake set a slower pace. Expansive resources such as the 2000-acre Great Woods with nearly 400 acres in Mansfield, providing valued habitat of regional and state significance while helping to define and confine development.

The cultural heritage of the Town of Mansfield is defined not only with a handful of listings on the National Register of Historic Places but with a rich history as a farming and railroad town prior to increased suburbanization pressures in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Information on many of the natural and cultural resources of the Town of Mansfield is well documented in the 1996 Mansfield Master Plan. Please see that plan for information on geology, soils, topography, natural resources, and the history of Mansfield. Documentation on the Great Woods included in the 1996 Master Plan continues to provide important information on water resources, trees and ecology, plants, birds, fish, wildlife, reptiles and amphibians that may continue to be representative of information throughout town.

#### 1996 - 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 1996 Mansfield Master Plan did not include goals, policies or action items for natural and cultural resources. It did, however, note significant ongoing activities to protect the Canoe River aquifer and other resource areas that have continued through the past decade.

#### Natural Resources

The Town of Mansfield has worked to protect water resources, habitat, and cultural resources, either through its own efforts, or as support for the initiatives of other organizations.

- In 1999, the Town of Mansfield Wetland Protection Bylaw was implemented to strengthen the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, as administered by the Mansfield Conservation Commission. The bylaw established a 25-foot "no disturb zone" adjacent to wetland resources areas, extended jurisdiction over land within 100 feet of certified Vernal Pools, and gave the Conservation Commission the discretion to require that the applicant place a Conservation Restriction / Easement upon the wetland resource areas and certain areas within the adjacent 100-foot buffer zone. The Conservation Commission has certified 41 vernal pools, a significant effort that protects these valuable habitats from development under the Town's wetland bylaw.
- In 2006, Town Meeting voted to accept the Stormwater Bylaw, recognizing that increased volume of stormwater and contaminated stormwater runoff are major causes of impairment of water quality and flow in lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, wetlands and groundwater; contamination of drinking water supplies; alteration or destruction of aquatic wildlife habitat; and flooding. The Department of Public Works is responsible



for implementing sections that address illicit discharges to the municipal storm drain system. The Conservation Commission is responsible for implementation of stormwater management and land disturbance during and after construction.

- Natural Resources Trust, a 501c(3) land trust, has continued its mission to acquire land to protect water supply, create the Canoe River Greenway, and protect habitat in Sharon, Mansfield, Foxboro, Mansfield, Easton and Norton. The Natural Resources Trust works closely with the Town and acts as the agent for the Town of Mansfield in open space acquisition.
- Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee (CRAAC) continues to work with the Conservation Commission, Natural Resources Trust, and municipal water departments to protect the Sole Source Aquifer.
- The Town of Mansfield implemented state requirements for inspections of Fulton Pond Dam and Kingman Pond Dam. Design and permitting for reconstruction of the Kingman Pond Dam are underway.
- Town of Mansfield Water Division has received several Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection / Massachusetts Water Works Association Public Drinking Water System Awards as one of the top 30 water systems in the state.
- The Town is implementing fifth year requirements of the 5-Year Stormwater Management Plan to improve water quality to rivers and streams. As part of this effort 7,000 copies of a homeowner education pamphlet “Protecting Water Quality in Mansfield’s Ponds and Streams” were distributed.
- Local support continues for state review of proposed activities in the Canoe River Area of Critical Environmental Concern.
- Local support continues for state review of proposed activities potentially affecting Species of Special Concern (Species not necessarily endangered or threatened, yet extremely uncommon, or with unique or highly specific habitat requirements).
- The Town supports preservation of open space in cluster development.

### **Cultural Resources**

- The Mansfield Historic Commission is active and now has a full board.
- Three properties have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Memorial Hall (the school administration building) and Fisher-Richardson House on Willow Street. Spring Brook Cemetery was listed on the National Register on December 6, 2007.
- The developer of Mansfield Crossing was required to maintain / rehabilitate the White farmhouse for use by the Tri-Town Chamber of Commerce.



*Fisher-Richardson House.*



- Discussion has continued about a downtown historic district along Rumford Avenue near Fulton Pond.
- Twelve roads have been designated as scenic roadways. Zoning requires enhanced setbacks and addresses breaks in stonewalls.

## **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES TRENDS**

### **Natural Resources Trends**

Many of the natural resource trends are integrally linked to initiatives of other Master Plan elements. The quality of groundwater, the source of the municipal drinking water supply, is protected by initiatives of the Mansfield Water Department (see Services and Facilities Element). Preservation of open space remains one of the primary means of protecting both ground water and surface water quality (see Open Space and Recreation Element).

The Town continues its role in the implementation of federal, state and local regulations and programs to protect and enhance natural resources.

- The Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II efforts address stormwater management for roads and developments.
- The Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program has identified one rare species, the Four-toed Salamander, a Species of Special Concern in Massachusetts. This vernal pool species is protected by the Town Wetlands Bylaw, but is subject to incremental habitat degradation. The habitat of two rare species of vegetation, Philadelphia Panic Grass and the Yellow Water-crowfoot, are found in areas under the control of the Conservation Commission.
- The Nature Conservancy has issued Habitat Protection Priorities in the Taunton River Watershed. Highest Priority Areas for habitat protection include one large area located primarily in Mansfield on the Norton, Attleborough and North Attleborough town lines and another area that includes the entire corridor of the Canoe, Snake and Mill rivers. Additional priority areas for Habitat Protection are identified as several separate areas in Mansfield.
- Designation of the Canoe River aquifer and watershed as a statewide Area of Critical Environmental Concern was a steppingstone to federal designation of the area as a Sole Source Aquifer. Both designations afford increased review of development projects in this area. Zone II overlay restrictions in the Mansfield Zoning Bylaw also serve to protect this important resource area. Although these programs were initiated prior to the 1996 Master Plan, continued implementation has been critical to protecting these resources.

Activities of local organizations such as Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee (CRAAC), Natural Resources Trust, and the Taunton River Watershed Association have continued to bring environmental awareness to residents of Mansfield. It is through efforts such as these, combined with continued emphasis on environmental issues in the public schools, that this master plan update has focused on sustainable and green principals as one its primary objectives. This



emphasis reflects the concern that residents be stewards of natural resources, to assure that future generations will benefit from clean water and diverse natural habitats.

Three of the top ten “big ideas” expressed during the public workshop include issues addressed by the Natural and Cultural Resources Element. Major support was expressed to preserve water recharge areas. This indicates a concern about the fragility of the sole source aquifer and the need to reduce out of basin transfers of water to protect the quality and quantity of water for current and future generations.

### **Cultural Resources Trends**

Equally important to participants in the public workshop was the second “big idea,” the need to provide a cultural arts center in downtown Mansfield, to broaden out the range of music, arts, and theater offerings to meet the needs of all ages. This also related to a third “big idea,” the need to balance arts as well as recreation in this family-oriented community.

Recent activities of the Historical Commission indicate that this group will be moving forward with efforts to preserve and protect cultural resources in Mansfield. The mural in Town Hall depicting the historic train station and design guidelines for downtown also help to support and celebrate the cultural resources of the community.

### **PUBLIC WORKSHOP FINDINGS**

Several key points were expressed regarding natural and cultural resources at the January 12, 2008 public workshop:

- Encourage more cultural events and destinations (one of Top Ten workshop ideas)
- Support Natural Resources Trust protection of open space
- Protect aquifer and drinking water
- Provide more interconnected trails in existing open space with connections to schools
- Support an arts center with parking lot near Mansfield Bank (another Top Ten workshop idea)
- Consider an historic district
- Readdress extension of bike path into Norton
- Protect wildlife corridors from contiguous areas
- Expand the Canoe River Greenbelt

### **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES VISION**

*Mansfield will be a green community. This will be accomplished through acquisition of open space, regulation of development practices, and protection of current conservation land. Mansfield will protect water and air quality and will guard against pollution from all sources (i.e., noise, light, etc.) Mansfield will enhance and maintain the historical character and feel of a small New England Town with support of artistic and cultural endeavors.*



### III. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

#### III-1. Protect Quality of Groundwater and Surface Water Resources

Protection of groundwater and surface waters was a priority of participants at the January 12, 2008 public workshop. Many of the action items are continuation of prior efforts but help to form an important policy framework for future municipal actions to preserve quantity and quality of groundwater and surface waters.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to enforce regulations such as the Zone II overlay district in the Zoning Bylaw to regulate appropriate uses, especially in the Canoe River Sole Source Aquifer.
2. Continue to enforce the Town's wetland bylaw to protect wetlands, surface waters, and groundwater.
3. Continue to implement EPA's Phase II stormwater management objectives.
4. Support efforts of the Natural Resources Trust and CRAAC to educate the public about the benefits of watershed and open space protection.
5. Require cluster development, as appropriate, for residential development in R-I zones to reduce the area of disturbance, and reduce the length of roads and other impervious surfaces.
6. Consider all options to minimize out of basin transfer of water.
  - Encourage use of on site septic systems.
  - Approve sewer line extensions only for areas not suitable for Title V on site systems.
7. Continue education efforts through publications such as LiveWire that address efforts that homeowners can take to protect the quality of groundwater and surface waters.
  - Remind homeowners of the importance of applying lawn care products such as fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides in accordance with instructions to avoid adversely impacting water quality.
  - Reduce stormwater runoff and watering demand by encouraging construction of rain gardens and other landscapes which facilitate groundwater infiltration while using drainage from impervious surfaces such as roofs.
8. Implement programs to protect water quality and quantity, recognizing that many of the private and public wells in town draw water from the shallow Canoe River Sole Source Aquifer (*see Services and Facilities Element*).
  - Consider establishing a surcharge on peak summer municipal water usage (May to October) over 150 percent of average winter water use (November to April) to limit water use (step-rate with increasing water cost based on usage). Use money collected through the surcharge to fund position to enforce water use limitations.
  - Prohibit Town-wide watering and irrigation between 10 AM and 4 PM when the potential for evaporation is the highest. A 60-day exception could be granted for newly established landscaping. To preserve groundwater quantity, this restriction would apply to customers served by municipal water as well as property owners with private wells.



- Encourage use of rainwater and reclaimed water for watering landscaping. This could include use of water from cisterns from roof drains or water generated by water-to-air heat pumps or dehumidifiers as well as domestic gray water.
- Locate road salt and de-icing chemicals in safe and environmentally sound locations and structures to prevent accidental pollution/contamination.
- Develop guidelines for installation and operation of underground irrigation systems. Require installation of backflow devices. Develop and distribute information regarding water-efficient landscaping and efficient operation of automatic systems.
- Require timers and water sensors on irrigation systems.

### **III-2. Protect Habitat**

As residential and commercial development continues in Mansfield, it becomes more important to preserve open space and protect plant and animal habitat. This is an ongoing effort of municipal commissions and not-for-profit organizations.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Support efforts of the local land trust to protect open space (see Open Space and Recreation Element), especially in the Canoe River corridor.
2. Encourage protection of contiguous parcels for open space (locate cluster development open space adjacent to previously-protected open space parcels) to maintain wildlife corridors.
3. Establish and implement policies to maintain the value of preserved open space for habitat and water quality protection, and to restrict conversion of open space use to other purposes.
  - Implement mowing policies to maintain the valuable habitat along the edge of forest and meadow. Schedule mowing to avoid impacting ground nesting birds.
  - Assure that open space is maintained in perpetuity to conserve natural resources and not be converted to other municipal purpose without adequate compensation and protection of habitat of greater or more value.

### **III-3. Amend Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to Protect Limited Drinking Water Resources**

One method to protect drinking water resources is to limit impacts of new development by strengthening zoning and subdivision bylaws.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Limit potential grading and clearing to not more than 70 percent of a lot not in a cluster subdivision. This area may be enhanced with landscaping but the topsoil may only be disturbed to dig each individual planting hole. This recognizes the value of undisturbed land for groundwater recharge and limits the area potentially developed as lawn. Lawn watering and irrigation are recognized as a major use of potable water resources.



2. Require that new construction include six inches of topsoil to encourage development of deep-rooted drought-tolerant vegetation, especially on lawns.
3. Require Low Impact Design for stormwater management to support groundwater infiltration and natural bioremediation of stormwater pollutants through use of rain gardens, vegetated swales, and use of pervious surfaces for parking and walkways.

### **III-4. Implement Sustainable Practices to Protect Mansfield's Natural Resources**

One of the most important objectives of the Master Plan Update is to define Mansfield as a Green Community. Marketing could build upon the Green Hornet identify for the Town of Mansfield. The following initiatives support this designation.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Encourage planting and maintaining street trees. Select native species that are salt tolerant. Street trees should be carefully placed to not block sight distances or street lighting and to avoid impacting above ground and below ground utilities. Recognize that street trees create a more attractive and inviting pedestrian environment, shade pavement and sidewalks to reduce greenhouse gas effects, provide wildlife habitat, reduce traffic speeds (traffic calming), absorb greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and emit oxygen.
2. Amend zoning to protect night skies and enable wind turbines.
  - Require downward casting lighting to protect the night sky in accordance with recommendations of the International Dark Sky Association or similar initiatives.
  - Enable wind turbine construction for personal, commercial or institutional use through special use permit.
3. Implement a green policy to purchase low emission vehicles and vehicles with high fuel economy for the Town fleet. Consider use of hybrid, biodiesel, or electric powered vehicles.
4. Consider utilizing the services of an energy services company (commonly referred to as an ESCO) to perform an energy audit. The goal of the audit would be to reduce the carbon footprint of Mansfield's municipal services by assuring that buildings, equipment, and purchasing policies emphasize sustainability and reduced demand on hydrocarbons.
5. Support initiatives by residents and businesses to Go Green with sustainable development practices.
  - Provide incentives for building development which meets U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) certification.
  - Amend zoning to reflect LEED-Neighborhood Design concepts (currently at pilot stage) for compact development, walkable streets, reduced automobile dependence, diversity of uses, diversity of housing types, and stormwater management (among others).



### **III-5. Identify and Protect Historic Resources**

Respect for and preservation of historic and other cultural resources helps define the character of a community. In Mansfield, there resources may be of local or state significance, as well as national significance. Remembrances of what the town was in the past are also important.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Document historic resources and encourage voluntary private stewardship of historic properties.
2. Reinforce the character of historic downtown.
  - Implement downtown façade program to reflect the heritage of this commercial area.
  - Utilize design guidelines to assure that new development reinforces the existing context along North Main Street. Consider use of brick to reflect historic structures.
  - Consider an historic district in downtown, including the Rumford Avenue neighborhood.
  - Consider amending zoning to require “demolition delay” for properties identified as historic. This may enable groups to identify resources to avoid building demolition as the only alternative to redevelopment. A demolition delay bylaw would acknowledge the importance of many of the older North Main Street commercial buildings to the character and fabric of downtown. With the increasing value of land, pressures may also increase to demolish smaller homes and construct larger homes in historic downtown neighborhoods.
3. Consider linking the Historic Commission with the Planning Board for consistency of permit approval.

### **III-6. Support Cultural Events and Destinations in Mansfield**

As indicated during the January 12, 2008 public workshop, it is important to balance cultural events with sports and recreational programs to assure that the diverse needs of the population are met. Music, theater, and arts afford residents a means of expression, provide downtown destinations (assuming a center for the arts is built in the downtown), and may provide after-school activities.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Encourage efforts of music and arts associations and other groups to provide cultural event programming.
2. Support the location of a music/arts center in a downtown location, within walking distance of schools for after-school programs, and with adequate parking (including possible shared use of parking).
  - Consider a possible cultural events location along North Main Street, potentially at the site of the former movie theater (current municipal parking lot), with relocation of municipal parking to a convenient location such as the former Fales Oil property.
  - Investigate public/private partnerships to utilize town-owned land/buildings to lessen the financial burden on the Town to provide some of these services.



### **III-7. Preserve Scenic Resources**

To date the Town has designated twelve scenic roadways. This is especially important to define the rural character of East and West Mansfield, especially given increasing development in bordering communities.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Provide oversight of public and private utility installation to assure that scenic character of roads so designated is not adversely affected. Require mitigation, as necessary, to restore vegetation, walls, and other features.
2. Encourage preservation of open fields and other smaller vistas that exist along certain roadways. These views contribute to a sense of solitude when standing on the bank of a pond or lake, or create a sense of arrival to Town along rural roads.



## IV. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The Town of Mansfield has worked hard to maintain a positive reputation in its ability to provide exemplary services and facilities to its residents. A benefit of residences and businesses paying property and other taxes is the provision of municipal services for public schools maintenance of infrastructure including the street network, playgrounds, water and sewer systems, and providing library and Town offices, among others.

As the availability of developable land decreases and municipal budgets increase, options for expanding the tax base to pay for increased costs of services has become more constrained. The quality, extent, and cost of municipal services, as well as the physical facilities through which Town services are provided are integral to the day to day functioning of the Town, are expected by its residents, and are critical to attracting and retaining economic development.

### 1996 - 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 1996 Master Plan identified five policies. The following summarizes status to date:

- The Town has prepared a sewage system strategy. Phase 1 of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) was completed in 2004. The Town is currently upgrading technology at the Mansfield Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) and is looking into future expansion with Foxboro and Norton.
- The following efforts are ongoing:
  - Expand the sewer system to protect water supply
  - Address most critical water supply problems
  - Continue advance approval of water supply sources
- The policy to microfilm documents to be retained has not been accomplished.

Additional Accomplishments:

- Sewer-related projects completed:
  - Canoe River Sewer/Water Project Route 106 (sewer extensions), 2001
  - Mill Street sewer project (extensions), 2001
  - Relining/resealing leaking manholes/pipes, 2001 to present
  - Home and business inspections, 2003 (over 3,000 customers inspected)
  - Update/revise 1998 Sewer Regulations, 2005
  - Repair of Town's sewer system (Inflow/Infiltration Program)
  - Plymouth Street sewer line improvements/wetland restoration, 2007 (access path through wetlands to service manholes).



- School St. extensions as part of Sewer Master Plan, Phase I installed by Mansfield Crossings development. Old School Street sewer extension into the Cabot Business Park, with removal of Plymouth Street pump station, is funded for 2008. Sewer extension to Hampden Road is under design with elimination of a second pump station planned for the end of 2008.
- Water-related projects and accomplishments:
  - Water Quality Analysis (on-going)
  - Several Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection / Massachusetts Water Works Association Public Drinking Water System Awards have been received by the Town of Mansfield as one of the top 30 water systems in the state.
  - Cleaning/rehabilitation of Dustin Well #7 and Prescott Well #8
  - Annual fire hydrant maintenance program
  - Phase III computerized GIS mapping of water system
  - Leak repairs (2006)
  - Educational programs (Water Wiz Program)
  - Construction of potassium/hydroxide corrosion control station at Cate Springs and Witch Pond well sites completed.
  - Prescott wells #8/#9 construction completed
  - Ash property and Walsh well site construction completed
  - Robert Walsh well field/treatment facility on line
  - Canoe River Sewer/Water Project Route 106 (extensions), 2001
- Drainage-related projects:
  - School, West, and Willow Street culverts replaced, 2000
  - Jewell Street (Balcom Street to Nelson Way), 2002
  - Angell Street, 2002
  - Stormwater Management By-law was implemented to require a permit from the Conservation Commission for any disturbance over an acre, if not triggered by wetland regulations, 2003.
  - Route 106 (Hope to Eastman Street) sewer, water and drainage improvements, 2005
  - On-site soil testing for groundwater/permeability to verify stormwater assumptions for all subdivisions and site plans.
  - Branch Street drainage, 2007
  - GIS mapping of Town drainage system and compliance with EPA/DEP NPDES 5-Yr Stormwater Management Permit 2003-2008.
- Dam projects:
  - Fulton Pond Dam construction, 1999
  - Mill Pond Dam replacement, 2001



- Kingman Pond Dam temporary repair, 2001 (bids for replacement received November 2007, awaiting funding and Town Meeting approval in Spring 2008).
- Canoe River campground bridge/dam repair to be completed in 2008
- Town facility projects:
  - Plymouth Street Fire Station opened in November 1996.
  - New Town Hall opened in January 1997
  - Expanded and renovated Police Station opened in 1997.
  - Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan completed, January 2006.
  - School Strategic Plan completed, 2001
  - Multi-purpose (bike) trail completed in 2003.
- Mansfield Municipal Airport
  - In 2006 an airport expansion plan was completed that created an additional 25 aircraft parking spaces or tiedowns. Hangars were constructed for twenty aircraft (including 18 T hangars, two large hangars).
  - A five-year vegetation management plan was completed in 2006 to address trees/vegetation within object fence areas of Runway 14-32.
  - In 2004, runway safety areas were completed at each end of Runway 14-32 to meet FAA design criteria.
  - An environmental study was completed in 2003.
  - Airport Master Plan was completed in 2001.
  - Main parking apron was reconstructed in 1999.



*Town Hall and School Administration Building.*

## **SERVICES AND FACILITIES TRENDS**

### **Sewer-Related Trends**

The Town of Mansfield owns and operates the Mansfield Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) located in the neighboring Town of Norton. The average day design capacity of the facility is 3.14 million gallons per day (mgd) with the treated effluent discharged to the Three Mile River. The Town currently shares the capacity of the WPCF with the Towns of Foxboro and Norton through a Memorandum of Agreement allocating average day wastewater flow capacities of 0.65 and 0.50 mgd, respectively. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has informed the Town of Mansfield that the discharge to the river cannot exceed the present 3.14 mgd design capacity; effluent over 3.14 mgd will need to be land applied.

The Town of Mansfield completed the update of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) in October 2004. Phase 1 of the CWMP remains on-going and includes modernization of facilities equipment only, with no process changes. Phase 2 anticipates a



change in the NPDES Permit with more strict nitrogen processing requirements as well as the replacement of equipment not addressed in Phase 1.

Additional CWMP recommendations include expanding the existing facility or constructing a satellite facility to meet future needs. Construction of a satellite facility will require building additional lines and investigating locations for additional in-ground discharge. The Tri-Town agreement with Norton and Foxboro requires coordination between all three Towns. Foxboro's CWMP is complete, and they have several options from which to choose. Norton's CWMP was not complete as of 2007.

Mansfield's sewer system must accommodate projected population-growth (over 7,000 people over the next 20 years, planning year 2025), additional industrial and commercial growth (1.99 mgd allocation/1.42 current flow). A comparison of current flows with the 2025 projected flows indicates that the Town will exceed its allocated capacity by approximately 400,000 gpd.

Protecting the quality of Mansfield's water supply continues as an ongoing program in the Town. One step to protect the Town's water supply is to sewer areas that could potentially contaminate the water source. Once Phase 4 of the CWMP is complete, the Cabot Business Park and portions of western Mansfield will be gravity sewered, with effluent flowing through pipes that can handle the capacities.

The Town of Mansfield is currently discussing WPCF ownership options with the Towns of Norton and Foxborough. Interbasin transfer issues are also under discussion.

As part of the CWMP process, the impacts of wastewater treatment and disposal on water quantity were analyzed to identify basin-wide concerns. According to the CWMP, the average day water demand projected for the planning year 2025 is approximately 3.0 mgd, with the maximum day water demand estimated at 7.15 mgd. The Town could meet this demand by operating all existing wells 24 hours per day. Although achievable, this is not realistic as standard practice suggests that the Town have the ability to meet maximum daily water demands with its largest well out of service. The Cate Springs Well No. 1 currently supplies 1.6 mgd. Without the Cate Springs Well No. 1 in operation, the Town can provide approximately 5.7 mgd in total, considerably short of the projected 7.15 mgd.

## **PUBLIC WORKSHOP FINDINGS**

Several key services and facilities issues were discussed at the January 10 and 12, 2008 public workshop:

- Upgrade/replace Department of Public Works (DPW) building (one of the Top Ten workshop ideas).
- Improve water quality in West Mansfield.
- Provide adequate management of Route 106 (and other) construction project(s).
- Assure adequacy and enhance schools.
- Perform Town management review, consider Town council/mayor structure.
- Construct a free standing youth center, *see Open Space and Recreation Element* (another Top Ten workshop idea).



## **SERVICES AND FACILITIES VISION**

Develop strategies to improve automobile, pedestrian, and bike traffic flow in Town, to consolidate and improve public safety services and facilities, and to improve and continually monitor water quality.

## **IV. SERVICES AND FACILITIES POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS**

### **IV-1. Implement Sewer System Strategy**

A long-term wastewater treatment and disposal plan has been developed based on both local and regional alternatives identified in Phase 1 of the CWMP.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Manage future flow connections to stay within existing limits at the Mansfield WPCF, while handling additional capacities above Town's allocation either with private treatment facilities, or by limiting development with changes in zoning.
2. Construct a new 400,000 gpd satellite wastewater treatment facility at the former Mansfield wastewater treatment facility site, at the adjacent Mansfield Municipal Airport site, or at a third potential site (identified as Site No. 3) in the CWMP. Effluent treated to reclaimed water standards could be reused at the Tournament Players Club golf course and other locations during the growing season and land applied via infiltration basins/subsurface leaching fields on airport property and other locations off-season.
3. Expand the existing WPCF to accommodate future additional flow recharged to groundwater via land application.
4. Expand the existing WPCF to accommodate future additional flow from Mansfield (400,000 gpd) and Norton (50,000 to 333,000 gpd), working with the Town of Norton to identify groundwater recharge sites to supplement those sited in Mansfield.
5. Expand the existing WPCF to accommodate future additional flow from Mansfield, Norton and Foxboro (500,000 gpd) for a total expansion of 1.23 mgd, working with Norton and Foxboro to identify groundwater recharge sites to supplement those sited in Mansfield.
6. Evaluate capacity buy-back from existing customers should Norton and/or Foxboro construct their own facilities.

### **IV-2. Expand Sewer System to Protect Water Supply**

One of the top ten ideas for the 2008 Master Plan Update is the importance of preserving groundwater recharge areas. This is an ongoing policy from the 1996 master plan.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Identify additional permitted capacity for projected needs beyond the year 2010.
2. Continue to evaluate environmental, fiscal, and land use impacts of sanitary sewer extensions.



3. Continue to support the efforts of the Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee (*see Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-1, Protect Quality of Groundwater and Surface Water Resources*).

#### **IV-3. Address Most Critical Water Supply Problems**

Maintenance of the public water supply to meet the needs of current and projected residential, commercial and industrial development is paramount for the community. This is an ongoing policy from the 1996 master plan.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Identify phased implementation/multi-year funding to address the following items:
  - Upgrade deteriorated pipelines.
  - Improve flow to meet International Standards Organization (ISO) fire flow requirements.
  - Treat water quality for iron and manganese.
  - Resolve water quality issues associated with “end of line” service in West Mansfield.
2. Limit pollution of groundwater aquifer and insure withdrawal for water supply remains within safe yield.
  - Conduct nitrate-loading analysis and take measures to insure water supply remains within state standards according to DEP guidelines.
  - Limit trucking of hazardous materials through the Town’s Zone II overlay district.
  - Continue to coordinate open space land acquisition and green belt acquisition along waterways with the Conservation Commission, Water Department, Board of Selectmen, and Natural Resources Trust.
  - Conduct land acquisition program within designated Zone II areas.
  - Encourage the regional Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee’s work on public education.

#### **IV-4. Continue Advance Approval of Water Supply Sources**

This is an ongoing policy from the 1996 master plan.

The following action item has been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to identify and seek approvals for new well sources before they are needed to maintain facilities and meet demand.

#### **IV-5. Provide High Quality Municipal Services in a Cost-Effective Manner**

Mansfield prides itself on the high level of services provided to residents. It is important to maintain these services with increased efficiency as revenues from the Commonwealth decline and more burden is placed on the property tax revenue. This is especially important with less favorable economic indicators than during the past decade.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:



1. Maintain the high level of expertise that currently exists among municipal employees.
  - Provide training.
  - Assure wages are competitive.
2. Continue implementation of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to identify and proactively plan for long-range implementation of municipal projects. The CIP clearly articulates the Town's fiscal policies by providing a 6-year outlook on capital expenses as mandated by Town Charter.
  - Consider revising the Town Charter to require a 10-year outlook on capital expenses.
3. Encourage regular communication/exchange of information between all Town Boards and Commissions.
4. Create a pamphlet explaining municipal/other public services that are available to Mansfield residents (made available to various parties for distribution to the public, particularly new or prospective residents through local realtors and the Chamber of Commerce).
5. Maintain and upgrade, when necessary, the level or amount of staff, facility space, and equipment required to maintain or improve the levels of service currently provided by the Town in order to meet the needs of the community.
  - Scan documents required to be retained to optimize storage space.
  - Continue the long-range capital improvement program to assure adequate facility spaces and equipment are available to meet community needs.
  - Provide adequate funding in the annual municipal budget for the operation of essential community services.
6. Provide periodic training by the Management Information System Department to enable town employees to use technology more efficiently, productively and confidently.
7. Perform Town management review to consider Town council/mayor structure.
8. Work with other regional communities to evaluate lower cost options for services.
  - Continue to purchase goods and services in bulk, at a lower cost.
  - Consider municipal "job-sharing" between local communities to increase efficiency. Job sharing may include animal control officer and various inspection positions.
9. Increase communication and public access through an upgraded Town website.
  - Post meeting agendas and minutes for all boards and committees.
  - Post Town regulations, documents, studies.
10. Support long range fiscal planning with 10-year capital and operations budgets.
  - Support expanding the CIP horizon to 10 years for capital projects (*see 2, above*).
  - Require that departments provide 10-year operating budgets to the Finance Committee to enable the Town to more realistically plan for major expenditures.



#### **IV-6. Reduce Carbon Footprint of Municipal Operations**

Both the Mansfield Master Plan committee and public input from the January 10 and 12, 2008 indicated support for implementing “green” strategies to reduce energy use and conserve resources in the Town of Mansfield.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Conduct an energy audit of municipal operations to determine areas to improve efficiency.
2. Consider working with organizations and projects such as ICLEI, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Project, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, and the New England Cities Project to identify strategies for clean energy installation.
3. Develop a municipal energy policy to guide municipal decision-making.
  - Consider fuel efficiency in purchases for municipal fleet vehicles.
  - Consider the carbon footprint of products procured by municipal and school operations when selecting vendors.
  - Consider renewable energy such as hydropower, geothermal, solar and wind energy sources for powering new and retrofitted municipal buildings.
  - Assure that all municipal and school buildings utilize Energy Star® efficient appliances and utilize water saving devices to the largest extent feasible.
4. Encourage filling municipal position with local residents. A strong community is created when people live and work in the same Town. “Working local” helps reduce the carbon footprint of the community by reducing commuting time and encouraging walking and bicycling to work as healthy alternatives to commuting by private vehicle.
5. Support efforts by the Municipal Electric Department for energy efficiency. Mansfield is fortunate to have a municipal department to provide very competitive electric rates. The department is also well positioned to receive grants through the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative for sustainable energy options.

#### **IV-7. Continue to Support a Professional Police Force**

The Police Department is dedicated to upholding the law, assuring the safety and best welfare of the residents, and respecting the rights of all citizens.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Support adequate facilities/safe environs for all users.
  - Replace cabinet facings located in the booking/holding area.
  - Investigate alternatives to separate adults/minors, males/females when passing through the booking/holding area.
  - Investigate alternatives for additional locker-room space for male personnel.
  - Establish an outdoor covered area for recovered bicycle storage.



- Investigate alternative workout space for personnel in the event the Department should need to retake the basement space allocated.
- 2. Continue to support additional personnel as deemed necessary.
  - Restore one new police officer position lost to the addition of a sixth sergeant.
  - Create one Captain's position.
- 3. Continue to encourage annual in-service and advanced training when practicable.
  - Support participation in FBI National Academy.
- 4. Continue to conduct annual analyses of existing Police Department needs in preparation of the Town Budget and Capital Improvement Program.
  - Identify an alternative strategy for maintenance and repairs by Public Works Department staff in times of heavy snowfall/weather events.
  - Replace cruiser video systems.
- 5. Continue to maintain the long-standing relationship with adjacent Town and State Police Troops, and the Metropolitan Law Enforcement Council.
- 6. Continue to maintain and update the call list for commercial enterprises and other facilities in Town.
  - Maintain the Town-wide reverse 911 system and coordination with the Attleboro Police Department.

#### **IV-8. Continue to Support a Professional Fire Department**

The Fire Department is instrumental in protecting the lives and property of citizens and visitors of Mansfield from fires, hazardous materials and other related incidents.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Support adequate facilities/safe environs for all facets of users.
  - Continue to support a replacement station on route 106 at East Street to balance the Town response time and provide the necessary space to accommodate staffing at future, full capacity.
  - Investigate the feasibility of repairs identified at the Plymouth Street Fire Station (replace siding and paving, and structural repairs associated with the air conditioning wall units).
  - Investigate an alternative procedure/location (additional/separate bay space) for repair of vehicles at the Plymouth St. station.
2. Continue to support additional personnel as deemed necessary.
  - Investigate the feasibility of additional personnel to meet minimum recommended levels described in the National Fire Protection Agencies Standards (50-percent increase).
3. Continue to conduct annual analyses of existing Fire Department needs in preparation of the Town Budget and Capital Improvement Program.



- Replace three (3) Class A Pumping Engines to meet minimum ISO recommendations.
  - Acquire a second ladder truck.
4. Continue to maintain participation with adjacent Towns in the Mutual Aid System and the grass root regional all hazards planning group.

#### **IV-9. Continue to Maintain an Effective Public Works Program**

The Public Works Department is critical to the maintenance and construction of safe and efficient roads, bridges, sidewalks, stormdrains, and parks and other infrastructure that serve Town residents.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue long-range programs for improvements to roads, bridges, sidewalks and stormdrains in conformance with the Master Plan and Capital Improvement Program (*see Traffic and Circulation Element Policy II-7*).
2. Continue to support an adequately staffed and equipped Public Works Department. Continue to evaluate the department's staffing and equipment needs required to accomplish proposed work programs, in preparation of the annual Town Budget and Capital Improvement Program.
3. Continue to implement effective trash collection program and educate residents regarding recycling programs/opportunities.
  - Support Hazardous Waste Collection Day annually.
  - Support Recycling Center.
4. Maintain compliance with all National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permit requirements.
  - Distribute NPDES materials for new homeowner education as warranted.
  - Continue to implement Catch Basin Stenciling Program.
  - Develop stormwater runoff control measures at construction sites.
  - Develop O & M Manual for BMP's relative to post-construction stormwater management in new development and redevelopment.
5. Establish, publicize and enforce a snow and ice policy:
  - Distribute snow and ice policy to all property owners. Document the priorities of the DPW before, during, and after a storm. Provide helpful hints for private driveway plowing/shoveling. Document policy for damage to personal property within the right of way (mailboxes, basketball hoops). Provide guidance on placement of trash and recycling receptacles for pickup when snow is on the ground.
  - Establish Town and property owner responsibilities for clearing snow from sidewalks throughout Town.
  - Establish policy for snow removal on downtown streets, sidewalks, and municipal lots to ensure that businesses have safe and attractive access for customers, patrons, and employees as soon as possible after a storm.



#### **IV-10. Continue to Support the Board of Health**

The Board of Health protects the public from "noxious influences affecting life and health," unhealthy personal behavior, communicable disease, poor housing, and other unsanitary and unsafe conditions.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to maintain Title 5, the Commonwealth's law governing the construction and maintenance of septic systems.
2. Support the annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day.
3. Continue to conduct a variety of clinics (flu, immunizations, cholesterol screening, blood pressure and pneumonia).

#### **IV-11. Continue to Support the Council on Aging**

The Council on Aging provides quality elder services and programs that enhance elders mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Implement recommendations of the Massachusetts Coalition for Senior Housing report '*Aging in Place Successfully with Affordable Housing and Services*' (March 2007). This report identified the following goal/objective: '*Municipalities to look at the service needs of elders in affordable, independent elderly housing which may or may not be service-enriched, and determine the impact of services on the ability of elders to age in place successfully*'.
2. Investigate opportunities for a new 30,000 square foot facility to meet existing programming needs, as well as additional space for expansion of services/programming:
  - Expand intergenerational programs
  - Enhance educational wellness programs
  - Provide office space for staff and storage
3. Investigate alternative development scenarios to facilitate aging in place by seniors.
4. Encourage additional programming to include 'Supportive Daycare Services' to provide structured daily activities, respite to families and maintain the health and well-being of elders.
5. Continue to aid in the support of all individuals to remain independent in their homes, assuring all elders of equality, dignity, and respect.

#### **IV-12. Continue to Maintain a System of Public Libraries**

Public libraries meet the diverse needs of residents through expanded and improved library services and facilities.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:



1. Continue to comply with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to increase hours and expand staffing to accommodate Mansfield's growing population.
2. Celebrate Town-wide identity through library programs such as the 'One Book, One Community Program' recently held (planned as an annual event).
3. Investigate opportunities for expansion/relocation to facilitate state minimum standards for collection and activity space.

#### **IV-13. Continue to Provide a High Level of Public Education**

Mansfield's public schools have a well-deserved reputation for excellence. Public schools provide residents with the opportunity for a quality education, and superior school facilities.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Ensure Mansfield's Public School facilities adequately serve the greater Mansfield Community.
  - Continue to review the Town's educational goals and their attainment.
  - Continue to monitor projected school enrollments using birth records, building permit records, and school department projections.
  - Consider strategic approach to downsizing of facilities as the current cohort bulge progresses through the system.
  - Investigate expansion of limited parking in/at the school complex, and improve overall vehicular and pedestrian safety.
2. To engage the students in a rigorous curriculum.
  - Expand the use of differentiated instructional activities.
    - Provide teachers with resources to enhance the use of differentiated instruction.
    - Provide teachers with professional development opportunities to review best practices.
    - Provide parents with information regarding differentiated instructional practices.
3. To improve communication between the Mansfield Public Schools and the greater Mansfield Community.
  - To enhance the current communication practices between the school and community.
    - Evaluate the current telephone communication system linking the schools and homes.
4. To provide opportunities for staff, parents and the community to learn.
  - To enhance the learning opportunities for the Mansfield Community.
    - Develop grade/subject level rubrics to align with state standards.

#### **IV-14. Maintain an Effective Emergency Management Response Program**

Residents nationwide have become increasingly aware of the importance of emergency management and emergency response in the years following the bombing of the World Trade



Center on September 11, 2001 and the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. The Mansfield Emergency Management Response Program recognizes the importance of providing protection to citizens and property through public education, municipal preparedness and adequate training of key personnel.

The following action item(s) have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to implement, maintain and periodically update the Hazard Mitigation Plan.
  - Incorporate Hazard Mitigation into Project Review.
  - Identify pre and post-disaster mitigation opportunities.
    - Consider adopting a recovery and reconstruction ordinance that will expedite the rebuilding of the Town and the recovery of Town services after a storm or other natural hazard event.
  - Identify, with signage, emergency evacuation routes and shelters, and publish in a Town directory.
  - Develop a Debris Management Plan for collecting and disposing of debris after a storm event.
    - Identify locations where debris can be collected, with different locations for potentially hazardous debris.
    - Actively seek multiple agreements with hazardous waste vendors to ensure a timely response at a reasonable price.
  - Develop strategies to help local businesses recover from the effects of a natural disaster.
    - Organize a collective clean up strategy of properties after a disaster.
    - Create a list of businesses and people connected to those businesses authorized to enter the business immediately following a disaster to aid the police Department in guarding properties after a disaster.
  - Maintain communication/coordination/compliance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and adjacent communities regarding natural hazards and man-made disasters.
    - Ensure that adequate emergency shelter capacity exists (locally and regionally) based on standard requirements as determined by the American Red Cross.
    - Designate a permanent Emergency Operations Center.

#### **IV-15. Maintain Mansfield Municipal Airport as a Town Asset**

The Mansfield Municipal Airport supports corporate and business flight activities, law enforcement, emergency medical services, charter flights, flight school, and recreation flying. The airport is publicly owned by the Town of Mansfield under the care and control of the Mansfield Airport Commission and operated under contract by a privately by a fixed base operator. The Mansfield Airport Plan Update was completed in August 2001 and is scheduled to be updated in 2009.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:



1. Improve/expand existing facilities to meet current design standards and future demands.
  - Improve airport safety with the addition of runway end lighting and removal of airspace incursions.
  - Improve airport security with additional fencing along Route 495 and other measures.
  - Maintain and upgrade existing infrastructure with the replacement of quadrant one hangars and administration building, and taxiway repaving.
2. Complete Gap Analysis
  - Evaluate need for additional airport security as a part of the 2009 Airport Master Plan Update.
  - Evaluate future airport growth estimates.

#### **IV-16. Continue to Support the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department Residential Home Energy Loss Prevention Programs**

One of the means to ensure that Mansfield is known as a ‘green community’ is to assure that residential properties are as energy efficient as possible.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to support the Energy Star Appliance Rebate Incentive.
2. Continue to support home energy audits.
3. Investigate if municipal cost-savings measures should be pursued based on the School and Town Building Lighting Energy Audits, completed by Citizens Energy in 2007.

#### **IV-17. Support Long Range Fiscal Planning**

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) clearly articulates the Town’s fiscal policies by providing a 6-year outlook on capital expenses as mandated by Town Charter. The Finance Committee has requested that a 10-year projection be provided for both capital and operating expenses to enable the Town to more realistically plan for major expenditures.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Amend Town Charter to require that the CIP include 10-year projections for capital expenses.
2. Provide 10-year operating budget projections.

#### **IV-18. Assess Master Plan Implementation**

It is important to periodically assess/update the significant work effort of this Master Plan Update. Complementary to the Town’s need to reassess the goals and action items identified in the Master Plan as priorities and conditions change, periodic updates provide the Town, municipal departments, and citizens with a glimpse of the current status of this guidance document

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Conduct an annual review of the Master Plan implementation status.



## V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The 2008 master plan update recognizes the importance of both the Cabot Business Park and the downtown to the economic vitality of Mansfield. The community has been successful in capitalizing on its prime location in the Boston to Providence corridor. Historic development as a railroad Town helped the downtown emerge as a regional center, and excellent interstate highway access via I-95 and I-495 spurred the development of the Cabot Business Park in the 1970s.

The Economic Development Element of the master plan focuses on two primary objectives:

- Full development and utilization of the Cabot Business Park, recognizing that the park is a major source of employment and tax revenue. The Town recognizes the importance of keeping the Cabot Business Park competitive with industrial development in the region, and that the park must be flexible to respond to changing markets and business demands.
- Revitalization of the downtown to capitalize on the regional importance of the commuter rail station and to bolster the downtown with renewed competition from Route 140 retail developments including Mansfield Crossing and Erin's Centre.

Master planning in Mansfield must address issues related to continued revitalization of underutilized retail, mill, and residential neighborhoods in the downtown area as well as outlying areas. Reinforcing a 'sense of place' is important in maintaining the unique character of Mansfield as an active, vibrant downtown with supporting satellite nodes of development.

### 1996 - 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 1996 Mansfield Master Plan included seven goals for economic development. The Town has proceeded with the implementation of all, with varying success.

- Development in the Cabot Business Park has continued. In 1996, 75 percent of the park was built out. Only limited parcels remain undeveloped in 2008.
- Business retention in Cabot Business Park has remained a #1 priority. The Town Manager has direct responsibility for outreach to existing and potential businesses. A handsome marketing package has been developed for prospective tenants outlining the Town's assets, opportunities, and permitting process.
- The Town of Mansfield has been recognized with the Tri-town Chamber of Commerce business award in 2006 for business attraction and retention.
- The I-495/95 South Regional Technology Economic Target Area, created in 2003 by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, includes Mansfield. This economic development tool allows municipalities to enhance and preserve the economic vitality of the region by offering tax incentives to companies either looking to locate or expand in the area.
- The Town has proceeded with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to attract and retain businesses in the Cabot Business Park with a five- to 20-year property tax exemption



based on the increased value of the project property due to new construction or significant improvements. A TIF committee has been formed with representatives of the Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Financial Committee, Assessor, and Town Manager. TIFs are issued based on the number of jobs created. To date five TIFs have been implemented:

- Innovative Spinal Technologies, Inc. (IST), biotechnology manufacturers, relocated from Texas.
- MEDCO, distributors/wholesale automotive tools and supplies
- Medline Industries, Inc., a medical supply manufacturing firm.
- Rolf C. Hagen (USA) Corporation, wholesale pet supplies. The Town offered this firm its first TIF package to stay and expand when it expressed interest in relocating to the Route 3 area. The firm expanded from 30 to 70 employees.
- Spherics, a former Rhode Island biotechnology firm attracted with incentives
- A Special Tax Assessment, another economic development tool enabled through the I-495/95 Economic Target Area, was used to attract Samsonite to relocate its world headquarters from Rhode Island. The Special Tax Assessment is a phased-in assessment of the total value of the project property.

- Major Cabot Business Park tenants attracted to the park or with major expansion in the past decade include world headquarters of Covidien, a \$10 billion global healthcare products firm, IST, Samsonite, Spherics, and Medline.



*Mansfield Crossing lifestyle mall.*

- The Golden Triangle bounded on the east by Route 140, School Street, and I-495, has been developed as Mansfield Crossing, a 450,000-square foot community-style open-air shopping center.

- The west side of Route 140 between the MBTA tracks and West Street has been developed for retail as Erin's Centre.

- Downtown revitalization efforts have proceeded. Undergrounding Verizon wires has helped improve the image of the center of Town. Middle Common has been landscaped and a Town clock has been installed.



*Residential above commercial at the Roosevelt downtown from Old Colony Way.*

- The Downtown Committee has developed design guidelines, and a façade program has been initiated with federal funding. The committee also developed draft concepts for North Main Street circulation.



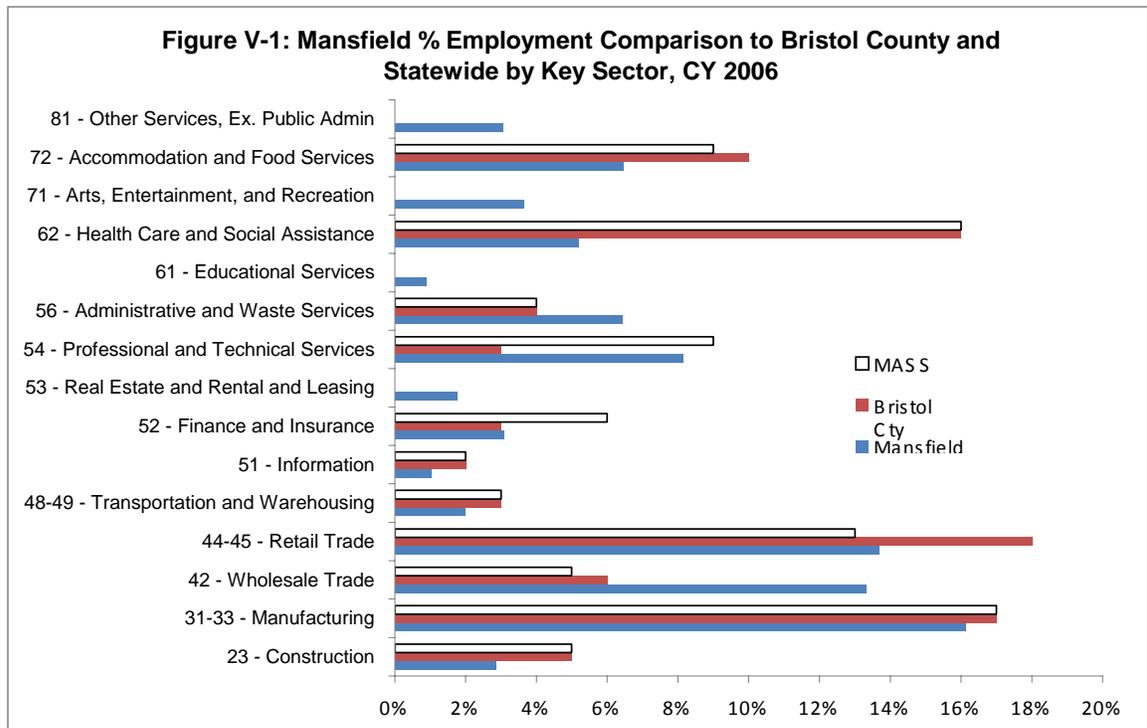
- Zoning was amended to prohibit residential use on the first floor in the B-1 zone. Upper floors along Main Street in the B-1 district are increasingly being converted to residential use.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

### Summary of Selected Economic Trends

Economic trends are presented in Appendix 5. While Mansfield experienced a net decline of 2.0 percent in total employment from 2002 to 2006, employment growth in Massachusetts remained essentially flat and Bristol County experienced a 2.0 percent increase. The majority of Mansfield’s employees are Bristol County residents, with the next largest group living east and west of Mansfield.

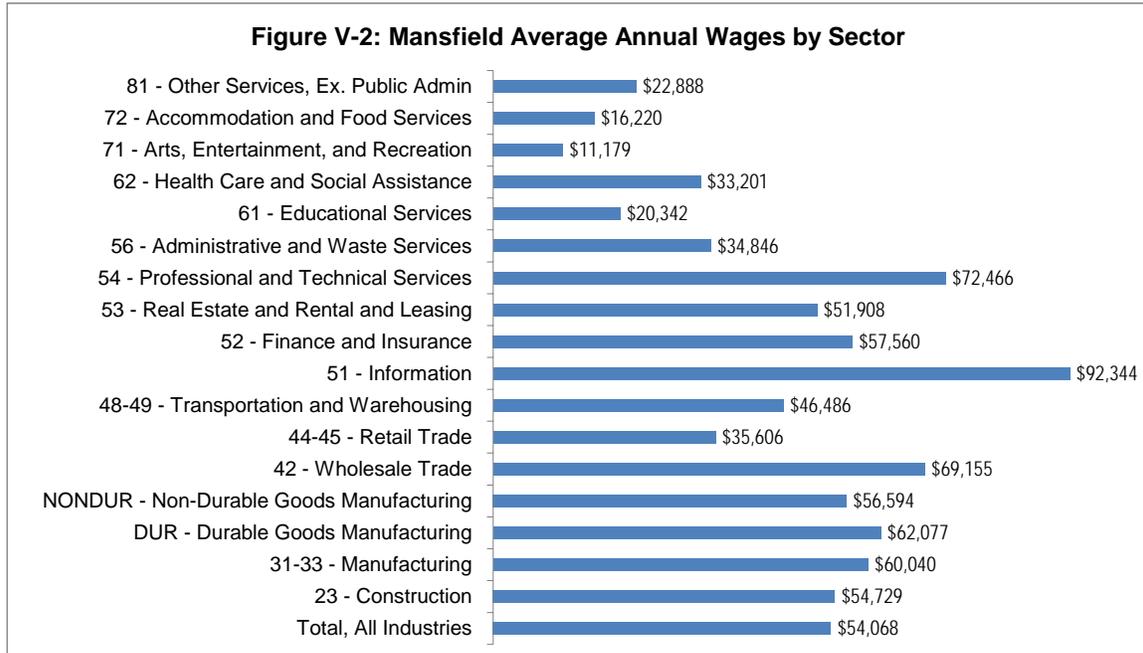
Manufacturing employment represents 16 percent of Mansfield’s total employment in calendar year (CY) 2006, as indicated in Figure V-1. It is estimated that approximately 57 percent of Mansfield’s manufacturing jobs are tied to the life sciences and biomedical device industries. Based on location quotient analysis, Mansfield excels in the life science sector compared to the State as a whole. Mansfield’s location quotient of 10.68 clearly outpaces the State as a whole. There are also strengths in logistics and wholesale trade, with wholesale and retail trade combining for nearly 27 percent of the Town’s total employment. Mansfield’s location quotient for wholesale trade (2.06) also outpaces the State as a whole. *Note: location quotient is a calculated ratio between the local economy and the economy of a reference unit such as the state. A location quotient above 1.0 indicates that the local economy has more of that industry than the reference unit.*



Source: MASS LMI ES 202 data  
\* Last full year available



Average annual wages by sector are presented in Figure V-2. Mansfield’s average wage in CY 2006 of \$54,068 was nearly 50 percent higher than Bristol County (\$36,324) and 2.2 percent higher than the State as a whole. While Mansfield has higher wages, average annual wage growth since 2002 has been at 2.0 percent, while the State average growth rate is 17.0 percent and Bristol County has enjoyed a 14.0 percent average annual growth rate in wages.



Source: MASS LMI ES 202 data  
\* Last full year available

### **Competitive Real Estate**

Mansfield currently has an estimated 671,700 square feet of available commercial space, representing approximately 5.0 percent of the available space in the Greater Boston region. There is opportunity to subdivide or combine certain properties to change available footprint. Mansfield has the authority, tools and ability to address most of the search needs from a real estate perspective. Mansfield has sufficient space and type of space to offer opportunities for a wide range of use, such as flex/R&D, office and manufacturing uses. It should also be noted that Mansfield’s price point for available real estate is competitive in the region.

However, there are a number of considerations. A major relocation to Mansfield would deplete much of its available real estate, and because of the increased interest in flex space/industrial real estate, much of the future growth in this market will be key to Mansfield’s development.

Industrial demands for space indicate that there has been interest in nearly 7.6 million square feet of space in the Greater Boston Region. Approximately one third (31 percent) of the searches have been for locations offering between 10,000 and 25,000 square feet of space and 28 percent of the searches have been for space in excess of 50,000 square feet. However, what is noteworthy is that software and biotechnology searches represent 32 percent of the demand for 2.4 million square feet of space.



Similar in scope is the demand for office/commercial space. With over 6.8 million in space sought in the Region, nearly 68 percent of those looking for space pursued space of 100,000 square feet or less. Nearly half of the space was for biomedical and technology related pursuits.

However, there is considerable disparity in the availability of office space in the region, which can present an interesting opportunity to Mansfield. Based on two different market reports, Boston has somewhere between 2.4 and 7.1 million square feet available (4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2007). This compares to between 16.0 and 19.8 million square feet of space estimated to be available in the suburbs of Boston. The I-495 corridor (a subset of the suburban market) is estimated to currently offer between 5.4 and 6.4 million square feet of office space.

Given that there is considerable space available in the market place, price points become important. Industrial space price points range from \$6.00 per square foot along I-495 South to \$11.08 in Boston. It should be noted that the suburbs offer a price point of approximately \$6.02 for industrial space.

Regional asking price points for office and research vary widely throughout the area. For example, price points range from \$19.39 per square foot for office space along I-495 South to \$54.80 in Boston proper. It should be noted that the suburbs offer a price point of approximately \$23.49 for office space. When looking at research and development (R&D) and laboratory space, the price point ranges from \$8.51 along 495 South to \$35.92 in the Cambridge market. The suburbs again remain competitive, with an offering of approximately \$10.68 for research and development and lab space.

### **Employment Opportunities**

Massachusetts development efforts have focused on the life sciences, with a \$1.0 billion, 10-year initiative to focus on retaining downstream manufacturing of research developed in the State. This recognizes the substantial entrepreneurial activity in the life sciences within the Bay State's borders. For example, life science/biomedical device employment trends show that the industry represents nearly 24,000 jobs in Massachusetts, and has shown a recent resurgence in the State. In vitro diagnostic substance manufacturing and electromedical and Irradiation apparatus employment, while small, are climbing quickly in their respective industries.

Because of Mansfield's strengths in the life sciences sector as well as having appropriate and competitively priced space, there appears to be an opportunity to build and attempt to access State efforts to capture a greater share of employment in this sector. Mansfield offers an established life sciences sector, access to a desirable workforce, and offers a number of competitive advantages to developing activity in Providence, Rhode Island.

In addition to life sciences, there may be opportunities in professional and technical services (including but is not limited to accounting, management consulting legal, computer services) given the tendency of these firms, particularly the larger firms, to locate in lower-cost suburban locations. These firms have shown growth in overall employment since 2003. As I-95 South and the I-495 South corridors continue to gain residences, this may serve as an opportunity to locate offices in Mansfield. Location near the Rhode Island border may also provide an opportunity for these firms as they look to establish a greater Massachusetts presence while tapping into the Rhode Island labor market.



## Downtown

While Mansfield has considerable real estate opportunities to address most of the needs of current location searches, the development challenges facing the downtown are substantial. Yet only minimal public investment could yield immediate tax base enhancement as this area does not require many of the public investments, private expenses and delays typically encountered with redevelopment projects. Most of the public infrastructure is in place, minimal property acquisition and site development would be anticipated, and financing for major project development would not be anticipated. In short, with relatively little public support, dramatic results could be anticipated. Although these would be positive tax developments, however, they would not be on the scale of attracting headquarter offices of a major international firm to the industrial park.

Mansfield's downtown represents the classic downtown circumstances many other communities face. New retail has reoriented activity away from downtown, further limiting foot traffic to existing establishments. Mansfield's downtown has had new retail develop in close proximity, within a 1-mile radius. Substantial new retail capacity has been developed in the last few years, with major retail location in the downtown unlikely. In addition, property reinvestment has been limited due to uncertain returns, and there continues to be a perception of limited parking.

The transit station location does not necessarily lend itself well to generating pedestrian and car traffic to support remaining downtown retail. While this still remains an opportunity for Mansfield, traffic flow generated from the transit station is generally destined towards the Route 140 retail corridor and not toward or through downtown. Pedestrian pathways from the station to the Town center are not very inviting or appealing.

## Potential Strategies

**Commercial and Industrial Retention and Attraction** - Mansfield is in a fairly good position to compete in the current environment to attract and retain commercial and industrial investment in the community. Mansfield has been willing and able to effectively use a range of development tools that are attractive to those seeking to locate in the region. In addition, Mansfield offers diverse real estate options at competitive prices and has begun to secure a greater share of key employment sectors that will likely attract similar investment. Mansfield's location also offers access to appropriate labor and talent pools that will be necessary to feed additional growth.

Mansfield has a number of competitive advantages compared to Rhode Island communities. However, one should note that neighboring Massachusetts communities (especially those within the I-495/95 South Regional Technology Economic Target Area) also share these advantages. For example, locating in Massachusetts gives access to better financing programs for business creation and support, a deeper and wider talent pool, and access to searchable property locating technology. The one disadvantage the region continues to have compared to Rhode Island is the housing price point.

Regardless of all incentives and advantages, the decision to locate or expand a firm remains a private business decision subject to larger economic forces. State and municipal government can have considerable difficulty in affecting change on the local level. Therefore, one should note that industry targeting has its limits at the local level. There is a substantial difference between



what you might want to have and where and what investment is willing to occur, and there is a substantial difference between planning and site control.

**Reorient Downtown** - Small Town downtowns need to provide destinations to generate and pull activity toward the center, especially from nearby neighborhoods. This is called “place-making.” Downtowns need to provide attractive streetscapes to encourage strolling and green areas that encourage gatherings. Transit oriented residential centers need these green spaces to lure residents out of apartments on weekends, and provide attractive live/work space opportunities and an environment that offers the ability to work, shop, live, play. Mansfield’s downtown offers a significant advantage that many other classic downtowns cannot build on – Mansfield’s significant downtown residential population. This can open up a great deal of opportunity to generate work, play and purchasing activity downtown.

**Regional Branding and Positioning** – While there are several opportunities for branding and positioning Mansfield, given the potential in the life sciences and medical device employment sectors and the availability of competitively priced flex space, attention should be given to developing and protecting Mansfield as a viable option to these industries.

**Joint Marketing** – Given the need to look beyond one’s borders to ensure success, consideration should be given to developing marketing relationships with neighboring communities. These communities may enhance Mansfield’s relative attractiveness. Many adjacent communities lack the “complete” downtown that Mansfield has historically offered and neighboring residents routinely seek goods and services along North Main Street.

**Managing an Emerging “Edge City”** - As residential development follows the I-95 and I-495 corridors, professional and technical services may seek to relocate into the “edge communities” between Boston and Providence, potentially positioning Mansfield as an attractive market. The availability of competitively priced real estate, access to diverse labor and talent pools and transportation access all provide the tools necessary to grow. But preserving what Mansfield is while encouraging growth will take resources and long-term commitment.

## **PUBLIC WORKSHOP FINDINGS**

Several key points were expressed regarding economic development at the January 12, 2008 public workshop:

- Beautify downtown (one of the Top Ten workshop ideas)
- Revitalize downtown with anchors such as a grocery store, post office (another Top Ten workshop idea)
- Provide diverse shops and unique restaurants
- Resolve train station congestion on Route 106 (first of the Top Ten workshop ideas)
- Provide pedestrian connections between train station and downtown
- Market downtown as a destination
- Create strong partnership between downtown businesses and Town
- Provide more parking downtown
- Conduct a marketing study for downtown
- Provide attractions downtown for pedestrians and visitors



The March 26 and April 30, 2008 meetings of the master plan committee addressed economic development initiatives in Mansfield. Ninigret Partners LLC provided information on the current status of the Cabot Business Park. Information presented at that meeting is shown in Appendix 5.

At the April 30 meeting, 18 potential action items for Town implementation (or encouragement for implementation for others) were presented for consideration. Initiatives were ranked according to the impact and the resources required for implementation. Resources could be broadly interpreted to include financing or manpower required for implementation. An initiative which ranked “high” on the impact spectrum and “low” on the resources spectrum would be identified as potentially generating the highest return on investment (more bang for the buck). Town administration may be party to several of these initiatives, through funding, through collaboration with other organizations such as the Downtown Business Association and the Tri-Town Chamber of Commerce, or through encouragement of actions by others. The following action items received support by the master plan committee and a representative of the Downtown Business Association:

**High Impact/Low Resources**

- Improve look and feel of North Main Street through better lighting and increased trash collection and graffiti removal.
- Improve communication between the Downtown Business Association and Town Hall.
- Improve signage from Route 140 and other parts of Town to downtown.
- Encourage downtown businesses to extend hours to capture two markets: PM peak hour trains and after dinner crowd (say 9 PM on a Friday or Saturday night).

**High Impact / Medium Resources**

- Market downtown as a place for people to stroll, bike, shop and eat.
- Attract new business through tax incentives specific to the downtown.
- Create a downtown village marketing brochure for distribution at Comcast (formerly Tweeter) Center, Gillette Stadium, rail station, Mansfield Airport and regional hotels. Create an after hours attraction in the downtown for stadium events.

**High Impact/High Resources**

- Encourage Downtown Business Association to form better business-to-business relationships with each other. Encourage a “buy local, cross marketing” agenda.
- Develop a targeted business list for potential new company expansions into Cabot Business Park.
- Market downtown destinations to those who come for the bike path. Install bike racks at downtown businesses. Highlight bike related destinations such as bike shops, hardware stores, ice cream shops, and restrooms with signage and a bike map.
- Create a green image for economic development, realizing its value to attract a high caliber workforce.

**Medium Impact / Low Resources**

- Enhance joint marketing efforts through Tri-town Chamber of Commerce to market area real estate (including downtown as well as Cabot Business Park).



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

*Mansfield will contribute to the long-term prosperity of Massachusetts through transit-oriented development near the rail station and having one of the best business parks in the region. Mansfield will patiently pursue quality development, giving preference to industrial and high wage office uses over retail in areas outside downtown.*

*Mansfield North Main Street will be an attractive center of cultural, and commercial activities. Mansfield will actively work to make the downtown a more attractive, vibrant, and diverse center with essential services, and unique restaurants and retail.*

## VI. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

### V-1. Continue to Focus on Business Retention and Attraction Efforts

Cabot Business Park remains as one of the key sources of non-residential property tax revenues for the Town. It is also emerging as a center for life science and biomedical companies as well as corporate headquarters center. Industrial development, however, is not limited to the Cabot Business Park and includes the industrial area on Maple Street as well as other areas with manufacturing use. Given the overall condition of the economy and the large amount of industrial and office space available in the Greater Boston region, significantly increasing space absorption and additional build-out at the various industrial parks in the area may be difficult.

The following action items have been identified to continue implementation of this policy:

1. Continue Town activities to provide one-stop contact points within the Town administration.
2. Recognize the importance of strong community relations with all park businesses.
  - Continue to use the local press and municipal publications to profile successful businesses.
  - Establish a program to recognize the philanthropy and community spirit of park firms.
  - Recommend that the Tri-town Chamber of Commerce or similar organizations establish a business mentoring program between park tenants and smaller businesses in Mansfield. Program should be flexible to respond to the needs of participants.
3. Recognize that CEOs of local firms are one of the best ways to market the park to prospective tenants.
  - Work to resolve any municipal issues with park tenants to assure that businesses have a positive attitude regarding the community.
  - Consider enlisting the support of local major employers as part of a “spread the word” campaign about Cabot and living and working in Mansfield.
  - Encourage business representatives to pass the good word about benefits of living and working in Mansfield. Referrals are one of the most effective business tools.
4. Increase efforts for joint marketing of the Tri-town region to raise the profile of the Cabot Business Park and surrounding area to companies where easier access to Providence and Boston may be desirable:



- Generate marketing materials that demonstrate Tri-town's ease of access to highly skilled workforces in Providence and Greater Boston, competitive real estate offerings and signature companies in the region.
  - Identify life science companies in Phase II trials that may be considering expansion into facilities required for Phase III and scale-up manufacturing.
5. Maintain close relationships with local colleges and universities.
- Demonstrate the need for high tech and liberal arts education to meet the skills needed for the future job market.
  - Work with local chambers of commerce and other organizations to support biotechnology and life sciences curriculum and explore opportunities to attract research and development spin-offs.
  - Provide information to local college students on quality of life issues to encourage them to remain in the area after graduation.
  - Support the need for diverse workforce housing to meet a range of housing needs for all life stages (*See Housing Policy VI-2, Expand Housing Opportunities*).
6. Develop a targeted business list for potential new company expansions into Cabot Business Park.
7. Create a "green" image for economic development, realizing its value to attract a high caliber workforce.

## V-2. Revitalize Downtown

Revitalization of Mansfield was one of the Top Ten ideas at the public workshops held in January 2008 and is integral to many if not all of the Master Plan elements. The downtown, as the core or heart of the community, is critical to assuring that Mansfield is a complete Town, one that provides places to live, work, and play for a diverse population.

The following action items have been identified to continue implementation of this policy:

1. Improve commuter train station access. Transit Oriented Development and other smart growth development that is integral to revitalization of the train station section of downtown cannot occur until access issues are resolved to the station. *See Traffic and Circulation, Policy II-1 Improve Commuter Train Station Access.*
2. Improve Downtown traffic circulation, reassess one-way traffic pattern, enhance pedestrian access to Downtown destinations from the train station, and optimize available parking downtown. *See Traffic and Circulation Policy II-4, Improve Downtown Traffic Circulation.*
  - Improve the pedestrian connection between the train station and downtown, south of Route 106 to create a more attractive link (see Traffic and Circulation Element, Policy II-4, *Improve Downtown Traffic Circulation*, Action 2, Enhance pedestrian access to Downtown destinations from the train station).
  - Consider District Improvement Financing as a tool to improve infrastructure.
3. Conduct a Downtown Focused Master Plan and Design Study
  - Consider ways to increase usable green space within the downtown area



- Determine the viability of converting surface parking into green space that is usable for passive recreation and enjoyment
- Determine the viability of creating plazas that may promote outdoor dining, facilitate festivals and community gatherings
- Evaluate the feasibility of creating different design standards and requirements for two distinct sections of downtown
  - The Train Station District: The area directly across from the Train Station as well as the “gateway” area of downtown
  - North Main Street: Running from Middle Commons to the Town Hall
- 4. Launch a clean up program to complement the building façade improvement program. Improve look and feel of Main Street through better lighting and increased trash collection and graffiti removal.
- 5. Consider establishing density/square footage bonus incentives for all retail businesses, including those located downtown. Consider linking incentive programs for retail outside the downtown to downtown revitalization activities.
- 6. Consider use of Tax Increment Financing to encourage downtown businesses to expand and renovate.
- 7. Consider strategic parcel acquisition by the Town (at fair market value) to control the redevelopment of downtown.
  - Identify public/private partnerships for future redevelopment initiatives.
  - Consider sale of other Town assets or properties not necessarily within the downtown to fund purchase.
  - Consider using District Increment Financing (DIF) for purchase (using the Baltimore example of a city purchasing and redeveloping property to control its own destiny).
  - Consider a capital line item for building acquisition.
- 8. Encourage marketing and business development activities by other organizations through public/private partnerships.
  - Encourage downtown businesses to form better business-to-business relationships by supporting a “buy local, cross marketing” agenda.
  - Support data collection requirements of the Downtown Business Association by providing publicly available municipal information on downtown businesses.
  - Enhance joint marketing efforts through Tri-town Chamber to market area real estate (including downtown as well as Cabot Business Park).
- 9. Facilitate improved downtown signage from Route 140 and other parts of Town to downtown.
- 10. Encourage downtown businesses to extend hours to capture two markets: PM peak hour trains and after dinner crowd (say 9 PM on a Friday or Saturday night).
- 11. Improve downtown marketing initiatives.
  - Market downtown as a place for people to stroll, bike, and shop and eat.



- Create a downtown village marketing brochure for distribution at Mansfield Airport, Gillette Stadium, Comcast (formerly Tweeter) Center, rail station, and hotels. Create an after hours attraction in the downtown for stadium events.
  - Market downtown destinations to those who come for the bike path. Install bike racks. Highlight bike related destinations such as bike shops, hardware stores, ice cream shops, and restrooms with signage and a bike map.
12. Utilize innovative financing techniques to improve the business climate of downtown.
- Consider Tax Increment Financing to attract and retain downtown businesses.



## VI. HOUSING ELEMENT

Housing in Mansfield reflects the community's population, providing a range of family-oriented housing as well as housing to meet diverse lifestyles. Mature in-town neighborhoods such as Back Bay and neighborhoods along Rumford Avenue represent a tightly-knit community with one- and two-family homes on small lots. Apartments and condominiums supplement housing in and adjacent to downtown. Newer single-family homes in subdivisions and along more rural roadways are dominant housing types outside of the Town center. Zoning for age-restricted housing has enabled construction that meets the needs of the growing senior population. Recent Comprehensive Permit developments have enabled the Town of Mansfield to exceed the State-mandated goal of 10 percent affordable housing. Many of the multifamily developments constructed over the past decades in response to Mansfield's convenient location and employment opportunities have enabled the Town to assure that 11.7 percent of housing stock is affordable to households of low and moderate income.

### 1996 - 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 1996 Mansfield Master Plan included several housing goals with policies that have been implemented with varying levels of success: provide a more diverse supply of housing, adopt additional provisions to cluster zoning, adopt an inclusionary housing policy for moderate income households, and provide subsidiary apartments above commercial.

The following are housing accomplishments during the 12-year period:

- Zoning was amended to accommodate age-restricted housing for 55 and older by Special Use Permit.
- Over 300 units have been permitted in accordance with Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit requirements.
- Congregate care units operated by Kennedy-Donovan Center were upgraded.
- *Mansfield Affordable Housing Production Plan* was prepared in 2004. The following recommendations of the study have been initiated to date:
  - Build local development capacity by forming a local non-profit development corporation. The Mansfield Housing Corporation has been formed to facilitate construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing. To date, a full board has not been appointed by the Board of Selectmen.
  - Inclusionary housing amendments have been incorporated into the zoning bylaw to require construction of housing affordable to low and moderate income in the construction of market-rate subdivisions. Affordable housing may be constructed as part of the subdivision or payment may be made to the Mansfield Housing Corporation in lieu of construction.
  - Provide town-owned land that could be sold to the local development corporation or other non-profit groups to scattered site single-family or two-family dwellings. The Housing Corporation is considering potential development of town-owned property (including tax title property) for affordable housing.



- The zoning bylaw was amended to prohibit residential use on the first floor of new development in the B-1 zone downtown.

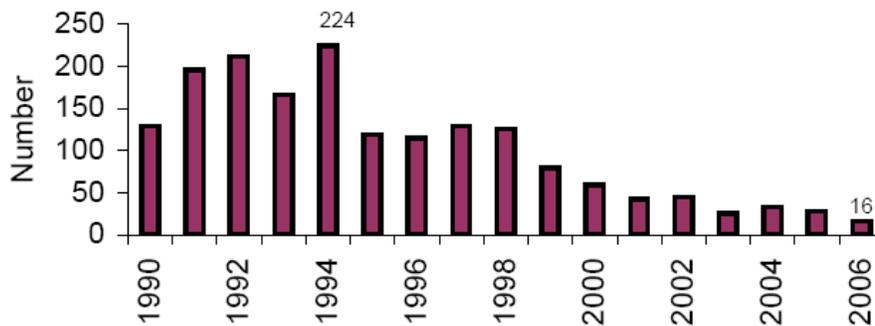
In January 2000 the Governor of Massachusetts enacted Executive Order 418 in response to an increasing shortage of housing across the Commonwealth, both for individuals and for families with a broad range of incomes, especially those of low-, moderate-, and middle-income. Chapter 40B is a state statute which enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve affordable housing developments under flexible rules if at least 20 to 25 percent of the units have long-term affordability restrictions. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates that 10 percent of all units be affordable to residents with low or moderate income. The Town of Mansfield has continued to comply with the requirements of both the Executive Order and Chapter 40B, as indicated below:

- The Town of Mansfield achieved Housing Certification under Executive Order 418 for the period ending June 30, 2004. This certification is issued in recognition of the Town's efforts to increase housing opportunities for households with a broad range of incomes and taking proactive steps to encourage housing production.
- As of March 14, 2008, the Department of Housing and Community Development has determined that in the Town of Mansfield, 11.7 percent of the 8,083 year round housing units identified in the 2000 US Census or 947 units are included in the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory.

## HOUSING TRENDS

The boom in housing construction has leveled off in recent years as indicated in Figure VI-1. After issuing a peak of 224 building permits for single-family residential development in 1994, the trend changed dramatically. Less than 100 permits have been issued annually since 1999 and only 16 permits were issued in 2006 for single-family units. The Town has approached buildout with only limited parcels available for large-scale development. To date many of the parcels that are easily developed have already been constructed; remaining parcels are more challenging for permitting or design or have less appeal for development.

**Figure VI-1: Mansfield Building Permits for Single Residential Units, 1990-2006**



Source: SRPEDD (data provided by city/town building inspectors)

The *Affordable Housing Production Plan*, prepared by Community Opportunities Group, Inc., describes housing trends through 2004:

Low-density development became the norm as vacant land around Eastman, Franklin and Maple Streets in the eastern end of Town and areas west of I-495 was cleared for new homes. Comparatively larger house lots such as those found in subdivisions off Essex



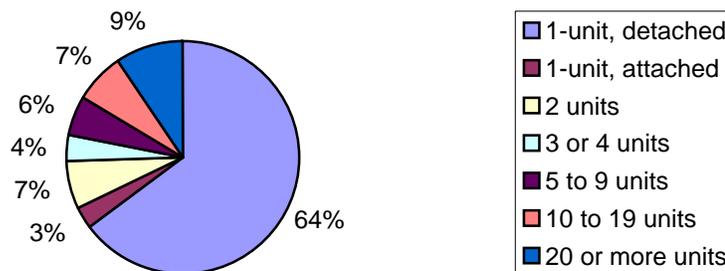
Street, Stearns Avenue, Tremont and Gilbert Streets are indicative of the ways that regulations and market preferences work together as agents of sprawl on one hand, and high-cost development on the other. Not surprisingly, home prices in Mansfield increased significantly after the mid-1980s – a measure of demand for homes from the youngest baby-boomers and a depleting supply of land. When Census 2000 data were released for Massachusetts, Mansfield ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the state for rate of population growth and 19<sup>th</sup> for housing growth.

Mansfield’s robust market and very high rates of population growth suggest that the Town is a desirable place to live. Housing developers invest there because Mansfield is such a marketable community – marketable mainly to families. Along with its high population growth rate during the 1990s came a dramatic 64 percent increase in school enrollments, and pressure on taxpayers new and old to finance the cost of growth. Not surprisingly, Mansfield has felt many of the same tensions about new development that exist in communities throughout the I-495 corridor.

Today, the Town is challenged to maintain its traditional mix of homes and people. Market production of high-cost housing and new commercial and industrial development have strengthened and enhanced Mansfield’s tax base, but the Town has become increasingly unaffordable to senior and young citizens. Regionally Mansfield has the highest percentages of housing cost burdened homeowners and elderly renters. Its home sale prices and tax bills are second only to Sharon’s, but as for median family income, Mansfield is at the regional midpoint.

Figure VI-2 presents the distribution of housing units in Mansfield, based on 2000 US Census data. A wide variety of housing types is found in Town including 67 percent in single-family detached or attached units, 11 percent in buildings with two to five units that are more typical of in-town neighborhoods, 7 percent with five to nine units, and 16 percent in buildings with 10 or more units.

**Figure VI-2: Mansfield Residential Units in Structure Type,  
2000 US Census**



As indicated in Table 1-11 in the Land Use Element, 460 building permits were issued in Mansfield between 2000 and 2006. Of these permits, 46.3 percent of units were in multifamily developments. In 2004 and 2005 building permits were issued for three Chapter 40B projects: 42 units at Copeland Crossing on Chauncy Street, 200 units at Fairfield Green on West Street, and 66 units at Cedar Heights on Connors Avenue.



The Mansfield Housing Authority (MHA) is an agency that provides safe and sanitary housing for low- and moderate-income families. The MHA manages 131 units of elderly housing with 29 units at Cedar Court, 42 units at Park Court, and 60 units at Bicentennial Court. The MHA provides 23 family housing units in single-family and duplex homes and manages special needs housing for eight handicapped people. The MHA presently has 64 Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers under lease and hosts approximately 80 mobility Housing Choice Vouchers from other Housing Authorities that lease up in the area (Mansfield Housing Authority 2006 Annual Report). The MHA conducts affordable housing lotteries and will work with the Mansfield Housing Corporation to manage affordable housing constructed or rehabilitated by that corporation.

With the recent subprime mortgage crisis, the Town of Mansfield has seen an increase in the number of residential foreclosures. According to [www.foreclosuresMass.com](http://www.foreclosuresMass.com), relative to other Towns and cities in the state in the last 60 days (prior to April 15, 2008), Mansfield had more foreclosed properties than 263 towns, the same as 11 towns, and fewer foreclosure properties than 93 towns. In the past 180 days, 35 properties were foreclosed. According to [www foreclosure.com](http://www foreclosure.com), on April 15, 2008, Mansfield has had 293 foreclosures and 929 preforeclosures. Statewide in 2007, banks initiated foreclosure proceedings on 31,516 homes, up 45.6 percent over the prior year. This information is provided as background on housing considerations in the current economic downturn.

## PUBLIC WORKSHOP FINDINGS

Several key points were expressed regarding housing at the January 12, 2008 public workshop. Many of these issues are addressed in other Master Plan elements.

- Provide housing for seniors, including affordable 55 and older communities (one of Top Ten workshop ideas)
- Provide stronger site plan review with more teeth (another one of the Top Ten workshop ideas). *See Land Use Policy I-4, Provide Flexibility in Land Use Management Tools*
- Reduce development density in aquifer. *See Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-3, Amend Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to Protect Limited Drinking Water Resources.*



*Still Brook Lane residence.*

## HOUSING VISION

*Preserve and enhance the Town's available housing stock and promote future development of a diverse variety of housing opportunities to be available to persons of all ages and income levels while preserving the Town's natural resources and encouraging green construction*



## VI. HOUSING POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

### VI-1. Support initiatives of the Mansfield Housing Corporation

The *Affordable Housing Production Plan* recommended that the Town build local development capacity to reduce housing barriers. To date the Mansfield Housing Corporation (MHC) has been formed although several appointments are still to be made by the Board of Selectmen. The MHC will work with non-profit developers to construct or rehabilitate affordable housing on available town-owned parcels. The MHC utilizes funding generated from inclusionary zoning (developer payments in lieu of constructing affordable housing).

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Appoint a full board.
2. Hire an affordable housing consultant to provide guidance on implementation of affordable housing objectives, provide training for the board, and facilitate hiring a non-profit developer.
3. Facilitate transfer of town-owned properties appropriate for affordable housing to the MHC for development under Chapter 40B. Evaluate tax title parcels for suitability as affordable housing sites.
4. Capitalize on market opportunities by developing a short list of older and/or obsolete residential and non-residential buildings with redevelopment potential.
5. Construct new single or multifamily housing affordable for low and moderate income for rental or sale.
6. Assure the Mansfield Housing Authority manages rental housing constructed by the MHC.
7. The MHC to work in partnership with the MHA to construct single or multifamily housing affordable for low and moderate income for rental or sale.

### VI-2. Expand Housing Opportunities to Assure a Diverse Supply of Housing

One of the ten sustainable development principals developed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts addresses expanding housing opportunities. The Town of Mansfield has been very successful in achieving a diverse supply of housing since the 1996 Master Plan was completed. The challenge is to maintain this diversity as residential development continues and to assure that this development meets sustainable development principals.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Support the construction and rehabilitation of homes to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels, and household types.
2. Build homes near jobs, transit, and where services are available.
3. Foster the development of housing, particularly multifamily and smaller single-family homes, in a way that is compatible with Mansfield's character and vision and with providing new housing choices for people of all means.



4. Facilitate live-work opportunities to provide greater flexibility where appropriate, as such opportunities support the arts as a vital component of economic development.



### VI-3. Consider Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development has a tool-kit of techniques for communities to implement smart growth. Smart growth initiatives help control effects of a sprawling pattern of development and preserve open space. Under Chapter 40R, cities and Towns may establish special zoning overlay districts that allow eight units per acre for single family homes, 12 units per acre for townhouses, and 20 units per acre for condominiums and apartments. The zoning must require that 20 percent of the district be affordable homes, and it should allow mixed use, the combination of residential, office and retail within close proximity. The location of these districts helps consolidate growth and cut down on dispersal: in Town centers, downtowns, near a transit station, on unused industrial lands or in other locations municipalities have deemed appropriate for higher density housing. Transit Oriented Development overlay district is another smart growth tool to consolidate growth in appropriate locations.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Following resolution of traffic access issues to the train station area, implement a Transit Oriented Development smart growth overlay district to encourage high-density residential and mixed-use development. This was also identified as a step to implement the *Affordable Housing Production Plan* (see *Land Use Policy I-1, Enhance Downtown, Action 5, and Traffic and Circulation Policy II-1, Improve Train Station Access*).
2. Consider an overlay district for underutilized commercial or industrial land, offering density and mixed-use incentives to stimulate new investment and affordable housing production. This is identified as a step to implement the *Affordable Housing Production Plan* through effective use of zoning.
3. Establish a Chapter 40R district and amend zoning bylaw, utilizing state assistance for planning and design.
4. Utilize chapter 40S state funding upon establishment of a Chapter 40R district, to cover the costs of educating any school-age children who move into the district.



*The Village at Willow Crossings.*

### VI-4. Encourage Intergenerational Housing to Meet Senior Needs

Although Mansfield has a reputation as a young family community, the *Affordable Housing Production Plan* pointed out the need to provide senior housing in the future. Public workshop participants indicated that many of the Town's seniors move from Mansfield when they retire. Other participants indicated that seniors want to be able to stay in the community, especially in the downtown area where they can walk to shops, services, municipal offices, and religious services. With increasing numbers of baby-boomers retiring in the next decade, the Town may



be challenged to provide the housing and services needed to retain this vital component of the community.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Encourage accessory apartments for seniors, especially in walkable neighborhoods in and adjacent to downtown through the special permit process.
2. Facilitate housing that includes senior housing as a percentage of residents, to mimic naturally occurring retirement communities.

#### **VI-5. Adopt Additional Provisions to Cluster Zoning**

This policy was included in the 1996 Master Plan and has not been implemented to date. The current cluster bylaw only applies to single family detached units. Although its use provides reservation and permanent protection of open space, it does not meet the goal to expand diverse housing types or sufficiently encourage the private sector to build affordable housing or housing age restricted to 55 or older.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Permit alternatives to the detached single family dwelling in cluster residential development. Allow residential structures with more than one unit (potentially up to four dwelling units) where mass and use of materials is like a large single-family house in scale with the neighborhood and all units have a ground floor entrance. To achieve the mix of housing types and prevent monolithic development, require minimum/maximum percentage for various housing types under appropriate circumstances.
2. Consider a multi-family cluster special permit as a mechanism for approval.

#### **VI-6. Support Foreclosure Prevention**

With the 2007-2008 downturn in the economy and the subprime mortgage crisis, an increasing number of residential property owners in Mansfield are facing loss of their property. In addition to causing personal distress and anxiety that are beyond the scope of a master plan, foreclosures also adversely affect the stability of the community and the fabric of neighborhoods.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Support state initiatives for foreclosure education centers. These centers perform outreach programs and assistance to individuals going through the foreclosure process, as well as to those who have already lost their homes.
2. Support state initiatives to provide counseling for first-time homeowners



## VII. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Primary components of the natural landscape which give Mansfield its most significant visual character include the diversity of open space and conservation lands, comprising a mix of farm/fields and open areas, forest, riverine areas, and water bodies. The regional context of the Cabot Business Park, commuter rail station, and the Comcast (formerly Tweeter) Center, has driven the development pattern for Mansfield. The number of new families with young children currently living in Mansfield has generated increased needs for additional open space, conservation land and recreation opportunities/facilities.

The protection of open space/conservation lands and provision of recreational opportunities is critical to maintaining the unique sense of place important to Mansfield residents. Access to open space and provision of organized recreational programs, activities and events are integral in serving the needs of local residents. Mansfield continues to collaborate with private and non-profit organizations and State and Federal agencies in acquisition efforts.

### 1996 - 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### Land Protection

The Town of Mansfield continues to work with the Conservation Commission, Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee (CRAAC), and Natural Resources Trust (NRT) to actively acquire additional open space and conservation lands. Most recently, the Town secured a conservation restriction on a 61.40-acre parcel in West Mansfield, adjacent to existing conservation land. The parcel includes ten vernal pools, open fields, wetlands, second growth forests, and wildlife habitat areas. The short timeframe of this latest acquisition serves as a testament to the goal of the Town and State to protect Mansfield's important resources. Additional accomplishments include:

- Through local funds and grants from the State's Self-Help Program, the Conservation Commission purchased nine parcels in the Great Woods totaling 106 acres.
- 19 acres in the western portion of the Canoe River watershed were purchased by the Town under Chapter 61A in 2001.
- The NRT received several parcels of land as donation, totaling 136.21 acres. Eight parcels (94.53 acres) are located in the Great Woods area, two parcels (31.8 acres) are located in the Canoe River watershed, and three parcels (9.88 acres) are located in the Hodges Brook watershed.
- The Conservation Commission received a 6.5-acre gift of land adjacent to the Hodges Brook.
- The Conservation Commission was deeded three parcels of land in the Canoe River watershed totaling 76 acres, two of which front directly on the river. The NRT was deeded one 23.77-acre parcel, also in the Canoe River watershed. All four parcels are protected open space created through cluster subdivisions. An additional 20 acres in gifts of land were achieved through two subdivision projects.



- The Town of Mansfield acquired an additional 38 acres in the Witch Pond area for the development and protection of a new drinking water well.
- The Town purchased a 12.5-acre parcel adjacent to the School complex on East Street.
- Gilbert Street conservation restriction of 64 acres
- Educational efforts for landowners on the tax benefits of preserving land, conducted by the Natural Resources Trust.

### **Recreation**

The Town has diligently worked to balance the growing demand for programs with the availability of facilities, as evidenced in the following summary of accomplishments:

- The Hutchason Property and Fields opened in 2000/01 with two new multi-purpose game/practice fields and one practice softball field.
- Memorial Park buildings were refurbished and handicapped accessible bathrooms were installed. Renovations to the baseball and football fields, including improved lighting, have been completed. Six new tennis courts (with lighting) were installed in 2000, and three new basketball courts were installed in 2001. The practice field reopened in 2001 with new sod and a protective membrane (inspected by State EPA for condition and contamination, and evaluated for use each year). A sand volleyball court was constructed in 1996 through gifts to the Town. The sandlot area received new equipment in 2001. The skate park was constructed in 2004 and the press box was upgraded in 2001. The park's parking lot was paved in 2001.
- The Plymouth Street facility improvements included handicapped-accessible bathrooms, expanded fields, four new tennis courts, and an underground sprinkler systems.
- The access road to the Otis Street recreation field was paved in 2005.
- The World War II Veteran's Memorial Trail (Old Colony Bikeway/Multi-Use Trail) was dedicated on April 15, 2004.
- Jordan/Jackson School complex improvements included upgrades to the athletic fields.
- Qualters Middle School field improvements were accomplished by relocating the river.



*World War II Veteran's Memorial Trail.*

### **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION TRENDS**

Two public forum meetings and a public workshop were held by the Conservation Commission for the update of the *Open Space and Recreation Plan* in January 2008. Outreach efforts focused on an inventory of existing land holdings and recreation facilities, an analysis of needs, and the drafting of goals and objectives to carry the town into the future. The *Open Space and Recreation Plan* includes the following:



- The NRT, a 501c(3) land trust, has continued its mission to acquire land to protect water supply, create the Canoe River Greenway, and protect habitat in Sharon, Mansfield, Foxboro, Mansfield, Easton and Norton. The NRT works closely with the Town and acts as the agent for the Town of Mansfield in open space acquisition.
- Ongoing coordination between the Conservation Commission, CRAAC, and NRT has resulted in the protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).
- The Town continues to support the preservation of open space through cluster developments in subdivisions.

The continued protection of natural resources, coupled with the collaborative efforts of the Conservation Commission, CRAAC, and NRT in open space protection will facilitate the Town of Mansfield in becoming a sustainable, green community for the enjoyment of future generations.

The Town of Mansfield has been active in planning for programs and facilities to meet the needs of local residents:

- In 2001, Mansfield citizens and businesses were part of a two-day conference entitled “The Destiny of Our Youth Future Search Committee”, which was held following the Columbine High School incident.
- In 2002, the Board of Selectmen appointed volunteers for the Town of Mansfield YMCA Strategic Planning Committee. This Committee met numerous times between October 2002 and June 2004 to discuss several issues facing the Town. As a result, the Town opened a skatepark in Memorial Park in October 2004.

These two committees separately drew the same overall conclusion: The Town of Mansfield needs a community center facility that can be used by all citizens, young and old, and that this facility include an indoor swimming pool.

## **CONSERVATION INVENTORY**

Mansfield’s open space and conservation land holdings continue to grow through coordinated efforts by the Town, the Conservation Commission, the Water Department, the CRAAC, and NRT. The Town currently owns 52 parcels totaling 1,753 acres, which protect wetland and watershed areas, facilitate a diversity of wildlife habitat areas, and provide both passive and active recreational opportunities for the residents.

The NRT has been a champion for the Town of Mansfield in acquiring land for wildlife, wetland protection, water quality protection, and passive recreation since 1971. A primary goal of the NRT has been to assist in the protection of the quality of the water supply and to create the Canoe River Greenbelt. The NRT has also been instrumental in protecting Chapter 61 parcels and assisting the Town in receipt of State (Self Help grants) and private funding.

### **Protected Parcels - Public**

Public access for hiking, photography, and nature study is permitted and encouraged on the over 1,1,700 publicly owned acres. The *Open Space and Recreation Plan* provides more detailed information relative to location, zoning, acquisition, and use of the open space and conservation lands. The Open Space and Recreation Land Map shows the locations of the parcels identified in Table VII-1.



**Table VII-1: Protected Parcels – Public**

Conservation Area	Acreage
Wading River/Forest Park	6.00
Sweet and Kalins Conservation Area	80.58
Great Woods (includes Fisher-Hallett)	507.96
Fulton Pond Park	12.00+
Kingman Pond	2.90
Maple Park/Canoe River Watershed	273.12
Marie Strese Memorial	49.00
Canoe River Greenbelt	192.85
Essex Street Property	19.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,143.41</b>



*Sweet Pond (Photo courtesy of Mansfield Town Website).*

### Protected Parcels – Private

NRT holdings of two private parcels in the Great Woods area and a group of private parcels off of Plymouth Street, School Street, Elm Street, West Street and Ware Street, contribute to the overall protection of significant resource areas. Protected private parcels are identified in Table VII-2.

**Table VII-2: Protected Parcels - Private**

Conservation Area	Acreage
Great Woods (includes Fisher-Hallett)	16.00
Plymouth and School Streets	89.52
Parcel adjacent to Maple Park	6.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>107.59</b>

### Unprotected Parcels

A number of unprotected open space and conservation parcels, located throughout the Town, provide the benefits of a diversity of uses and habitats and contribute to the character of the Town.

### Chapter 61 Parcels

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 61 provides a tax relief mechanism for the preservation, or incentive to preserve, important privately held forest, agricultural, and open space lands. Under Chapter 61, land is classified for use as Forest (Chapter 61), Agricultural (Chapter 61A), or Open Space and Recreation (Chapter 61B). Mansfield has 24 parcels totaling 513.24 acres classified under Chapter 61, and three parcels totaling 109 acres classified under Chapter 61B. Classifications are identified in Table VII-3.



**Table VII-3: Chapter 61 Parcels**

<b>Chapter 61 Parcels</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Forest (Chapter 61)	513.24
Open Space and Recreational (Chapter 61B)	109.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>622.24</b>

### **State Parcels**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns many small corner or side lots associated with land taken for the construction of I-495 and the relocation of Route 140. Several larger parcels abut existing Town-owned conservation land. The Commonwealth also retains a 25-acre parcel on the easterly edge of the Great Woods, just west of I-495. Although the Town has permission for trail development on this parcel, the long-term use of the parcel remains undetermined.

### **Other Parcels**

Two additional parcels with conservation benefit include the Mansfield Fish and Game Club, off Route 106, and the Canoe River Campground located off Mill Street. While no change in use of either privately owned facility is anticipated, these parcels are desirable for Town ownership or conservation based on their proximity to the river.

## **RECREATION INVENTORY**

### **Town-Owned Property**

Recreational facilities for the Town of Mansfield are located on Hope and Plymouth Streets. Both active and passive facilities are available at Memorial Park, Hutchason Property, Plymouth Street and Pine Street.

The 21-acre Memorial Park includes:

- 1 football/soccer/baseball/softball field with lights (refurbished annually)
- 1 multi-purpose field with lights
- 6 tennis courts
- 1 sand volleyball court
- 3 full-court/6 half-court basketball courts
- Skate park
- 1 play area with multiple-age structures, picnic space and grill area
- Park office, refreshment stand, and maintenance building

Memorial Park is used by the Park and Recreation Department programs, youth sport associations, Mansfield High School sports programs, and residents for a range of activities including: Mansfield Little League, Mansfield Youth Soccer, Pop Warner Football and Mansfield Flag Football, Recreation adult/youth tennis lessons, basketball league, softball program, skate park, summer camp, archery, and entertainment performances. Family and business parties/celebrations are also held at the park.



The Hutchason Property and Fields includes:

- 2 to 3 multiple size, multi-purpose game/practice fields
- 1 practice softball field

Reopened in 2000/01, the Hutchason Property is used by youth softball and soccer programs, and for Mansfield High School sports programs practices (soccer/ field hockey/ football/ softball).

The 58.2-acre Plymouth Street Recreational Facility includes a 13.5-acre parcel added through Tax Title in 2006:

- 3 to 5 multi-purpose fields
- refreshment stand with ADA-accessible restrooms, kitchen and storage area
- storage sheds for DPW equipment
- 4 tennis courts
- tot lot

The Plymouth Street facility is used by a State archery tournament and youth/adult sports leagues, tournaments, and clinics.

The Pine Street Recreation Area covers 6.2 acres of heavily wooded, pine forest and includes a small playground area. The Pine Street Recreation Area is used predominantly by neighbors, as it is land-locked with no roadway access.

The World War II Veteran's Memorial Trail, originally acquired in 1980 as the Town of Mansfield Sewer Line, was converted in 2004 as a 'Rails to Trails' linear park/trail facility. This sewer line extends approximately 1.9 miles from the Mansfield Train Station to Mansfield Municipal Airport and is used by joggers, walkers, bicyclist, commuters, and residents of all ages.

### **Other Facilities and Areas**

The Mansfield Little League developed and maintains a portion of the Sweet Conservation Area. These fields are also scheduled for use by other non-league teams.

The Town has several public commons used for both passive and active recreational uses. These areas are all ADA accessible, adjacent to parking, and maintained by the DPW, and include:

- East Mansfield Common, East Street
- South Common, West and South Streets
- North Common, North Main Street
- West Mansfield Common, Otis Street
- Middle Common, North Main Street
- Pine Needle Park, Franklin and Pine Needle Lane



## Other Recreation Opportunities

Recreational facilities available at the public schools include:

### High School

- 1 Field Hockey/Lacrosse Field
- 1 Softball Field
- 1 Track
- 1 Synthetic Turf Field

### East Street Fields

- 1 Soccer Field
- 1 Varsity Baseball Field
- 1 Jr. Varsity Baseball Field
- 1 Jr. Varsity Softball Field

### Roland Green Elementary School

- 1 Play Area

### Qualters Middle School

- 1 Varsity Softball Field

### Jordan/Jackson School

- 1 Play Area

### Robinson Elementary School

- 1 Baseball Field
- 1 Playground Area

The Willowdale Golf Course, located on Willow Street, is a privately owned and operated nine-hole golf course open to the public.

The Hockomock area YMCA offers an Arts and Education Program at the Balcom Street location.

The Mansfield Holiday Inn offers a full service fitness club with an indoor swimming pool, on Hampshire Road in the Industrial Park.

Velocity Sports Performance located on Green Street in Foxboro, in the Industrial Park, is a premier athletic performance-enhancement training center.

## PUBLIC WORKSHOP FINDINGS

Several key points were expressed regarding open space and recreation at the January 12, 2008 public workshop:

- Provide support for arts space in addition to recreation and sports fields (one of Top Ten workshop ideas)
- Construct a community / teen center with indoor activity spaces (another Top Ten workshop idea)
- Construct a community pool in Maple Park
- Provide incentives to increase protection of open space
- Develop a multi-purpose field complex



## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION VISION

*Mansfield shall maintain and enhance open space and recreational opportunities through programming, education and municipal support of Mansfield's resources.*

## VII. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

### VII-1. Continue to Acquire Open Space and Conservation Lands

Identified as strengths at the January 12, 2008 public workshop, Mansfield's parks/recreation facilities, open space, and green space remain important to families living, or considering relocating to Mansfield. Several of the action items are a continuation of prior efforts of the 1996 plan, while others form an important policy framework for future municipal decisions.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to work with the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and Capital Improvements Committee to develop support for appropriations for land acquisition.
  - Consider establishing an Open Space Trust Fund through direct annual appropriation or through a real estate tax transfer.
  - Form a pro-active task force to deal effectively with the political and financial issues relating to land acquisition.
  - Establish process and protocols for Town participation in open space protection.
    - Collaborate among town departments and commissions to assure that use of open space property respects the intent of the seller, protects natural resources, and is accessible by the public for passive and active recreation (as appropriate).
    - Identify priorities for open space preservation to serve as a guide in assessing opportunities (criteria ranking).
2. Implement Transfer of Development Rights to protect open space while encouraging development in areas with existing infrastructure (*see Land Use Policy I-7, Actions 2, 6*).
3. Continue to work with developers and landowners to acquire gifts, easements, or restrictions for conservation purposes.
  - Consider requiring land dedications/gifts to the Town (as part of the subdivision process) be located adjacent/contiguous to other existing protected parcels, when applicable (*see Land Use Policy I-4, Action 7*).
  - Consider requiring land dedications/gifts to the Town (as part of the subdivision process) meet criteria for wetlands or habitat protection, when applicable (*see Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-2, Action 2*).
  - Conservation Commission, NRT and the Town to assume an active role in negotiating with landowners and developers on preserving key parcels.
  - Continue tracking Chapter 41B property to complete the Canoe River Greenbelt or otherwise preserve agricultural land.



4. Continue to support the NRT's efforts to preserve open space (*see Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-3, Action 1*). The Town supports the following NRT activities:

- Collaborate with NRT in the preparation of applications for Self Help grants or other funding sources.
  - Support the Town's Right of First Refusal for Chapter 61 parcels by notifying the Town immediately when opportunities become available.
  - Continue open discussions with the remaining five property owners necessary to complete the Canoe River Greenbelt in Mansfield.
  - Continue to pursue Chapter 61 designation of the few remaining actively farmed parcels in Mansfield.
  - Establish a long-term maintenance plan for parcels acquired under Self Help grants and other funding.
5. Determine suitability of future tax sale lots or other municipally managed property for open space preservation or recreation. Conduct a resource evaluation to identify areas appropriate for open space preservation or active recreation use.

## **VII-2. Protect Aquifers and Groundwater Recharge Areas**

The importance of protecting the public drinking water supply, recognized as a finite resource, has become a primary concern for municipal leaders and residents. Open space protection has evolved as a complement to water-protection-related acquisitions.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to coordinate land acquisition activities of the Conservation Commission, the Water Department and the Board of Selectmen, and conduct acquisition programs in concert with the findings of the Zone II Study.
2. Encourage the acquisition of several undeveloped parcels adjacent to the Great Woods area, along the border with Norton (*see Land Use Policy I-8*).
3. Continue to support the CRAAC. Work with this group on issues such as public awareness on the issue of land use in relationship to drinking water protection (*see Land Use Policy I-8, Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-1, Action 4*).
  - Encourage the acquisition/protection of several undeveloped parcels along the Canoe River to limit development.

## **VII-3. Provide Public Access to, and Management of Open Space and Conservation Lands in Accordance with Community Needs**

The importance of this goal was identified in both the *Master Plan* Public Workshop held January 12, 2008 and the Public Forums held for the update of the *2007 Open Space Plan* also held in January 2008.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Develop small-scale access ways to the Canoe River Greenbelt and other water access points. Incorporate handicapped accessibility into the discussion and consideration process for open space/conservation land acquisition.



2. Investigate the potential for small boat ‘put-ins’ (including kayak and canoes) to facilitate designation as a “blue trail” with destinations along the Canoe River Greenbelt.
3. Assure good stewardship and use of municipally controlled open space and conservation parcels (*see Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-2, Action 3*).
  - Promote and manage open space and conservation lands so that residents are familiar with/understand the benefits of, and can easily access these parcels. Periodically update the guide to conservation lands.
  - Continue to work with volunteers, organizations and agencies, and other individuals to undertake trail development/maintenance and other field activities.
  - Establish a management plan for currently controlled open space parcels prior to open space acquisition. Management plan to address the following, as applicable:
    - Forestry management
    - Management of open fields and meadows to preserve views and vistas and protect habitat
    - Trail and parking construction and maintenance
    - Potential active recreation use
    - Identify allowable uses followed with public safety alerts

#### **VII-4. Expand and Improve Recreational Facilities/Opportunities**

Changes in Mansfield’s population composition will likely impact the demand for new and expanded facilities, programming, and maintenance plans.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Continue to work with the NRT and local scouting groups to develop a marked trail system throughout the Great Woods.
2. Complete the buildout of the Plymouth Street recreational facilities.
  - Determine costs and identify funding opportunities (public/private partnerships) to resolve drainage problems at the athletic fields.
  - Facilitate the construction of the access bridge to the back seven acres of the site.
3. Investigate opportunities for additional recreational facilities in East Mansfield to meet the need with future residential development.
4. Investigate the feasibility of a freestanding multi-generational community center (public-private partnership) within walking distance of the school complex/downtown.
  - Determine programming demand.
  - Investigate funding opportunities.
  - Identify potential sites.
5. Determine feasibility and costs, and identify funding opportunities (public/private partnerships) for improvements at Memorial Park and the Hutchason Property.
  - Explore the feasibility of expanding and upgrading the equipment at the sandlot.



- Investigate the alternative of offering a positive graffiti program through the school art departments.
- Consider upgrading the softball field to achieve full utilization.

#### **VII-5. Investigate Regional Conservation and Recreational Planning Opportunities**

Current fiscal constraints for limited town funds and increased competition for State or federal matching grants, increase the need for regionalization in the areas of conservation space and recreational facilities.

The following action items have been identified to implement this policy:

1. Investigate the expansion of the World War II Veteran's Memorial Trail into adjacent towns (*see Land Use Policy I-8, Transportation and Circulation Policy II-6, Action 1*).
2. Coordinate on broader financial and public safety issues relative to the Canoe River Greenbelt to identify additional resource protection opportunities (*see Land Use Policy I-8*)
3. Identify connections and facility sharing opportunities between the conservation lands in the Great Woods area of Mansfield and Norton (*see Land Use Policy I-8*).



**Appendix 1:  
1996 Mansfield Master Plan  
Implementation Status – 2008**

Ref.	Element/Action Item	Priority	Responsibility	2008 Status
<b>II. Land Use Element</b>				
<b>II - 1</b>	<b>Amend Cluster Bylaw</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>PB</b>	
	Amend the Zoning Bylaw to eliminate the density bonus in the cluster bylaw without a special permit, consistent with enabling legislation. Establish a bonus system according to state enabling legislation where bonuses may be allowed by special permit for a specific purpose such as gaining additional open space, recreation facilities, or providing moderate income housing.			Zoning amended consistent with state enabling legislation. Cluster permitted by special permit in R1 and R2 districts to protect open space.
<b>II - 2</b>	<b>Increase Cluster Provision Use</b>	<b>OG</b>	<b>PB</b>	
	Encourage development in the R1 zone district utilizing cluster provisions through reduced fees to provide open space for park, recreation, conservation or agriculture purposes for resident use or as part of the town's program depending on its location and appropriateness.			Cluster development is encouraged in Zone II areas in the R1 and R2 zone, especially in the Canoe River aquifer. No reduction in fees has been implemented to increase cluster provision.
<b>II - 3</b>	<b>Uses in Non-Residential Zones</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>PB</b>	
	Reevaluate permitted uses in the industrial and business zone districts to confirm the intended character for each of these districts with particular emphasis on: removing islands of incompatibly zoned uses; reducing the amount of retail square footage allowed in industrial zones; and evaluating the potential impact of multi-family residential in I-2.			Zoning bylaw has been amended with the Planned Business District zone in the Cabot Business Park to restrict limited associated retail development.
<b>II - 4</b>	<b>Planned Commercial and Industrial Development</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>PB</b>	
	In business and industrial zone districts encourage the use of Planned Commercial and Industrial Development provisions using site plan review for large areas whenever possible through reduced fees.			Planned Business District zone requires site plan review. Fees are not reduced.
<b>II - 5</b>	<b>Subarea Master Plan</b>			
	Use subarea master plans developed by the town as proactive tools to indicate to landowners what the town would like to see and how it will integrate with other parts of the town.			Hatheway-Patterson Study, Transit Oriented Development study, and Downtown Committee activities have been conducted. Proposed Route 106 Corridor Study meets this criteria.
<b>II - 6</b>	<b>Neighborhood Improvement Program</b>			
	Strengthen all residential neighborhoods through an improvement program containing the following policies and actions:	<b>OG</b>	<b>PB</b>	
<b>(a)</b>	Preserve historic resources.			Historic Commission now fully operational after several years without appointment of a full board.
<b>(b)</b>	Strengthen neighborhood integrity by protecting from intrusion of commercial uses and through traffic.			Erin's Center project included special provisions to limit truck traffic on local roads.



(c)	Reinforce or establish neighborhood centers than provide convenience retail services and small parks.			Retail activity in village centers has been declining.
(d)	Enhance aesthetics through programs such as promoting street trees and controlling signs.			Focus is Downtown.
<b>II - 7</b>	<b>Sidewalks</b>	<b>OG</b>	<b>DPW</b>	
	Provide pedestrian improvements to encourage walking, such as installation and repair of sidewalks in the more densely developed areas and along busy collector streets.			Branch St. sidewalks completed from Jakes Way to East Street. A crosswalk and demand light has been installed at the 140/West St intersection. Sidewalks are required in new subdivisions. Main Street sidewalk repairs completed in 2003.
<b>II - 8</b>	<b>Public Access to Stream Corridors</b>	<b>OG</b>	<b>CC</b>	
	Find ways to make stream corridors more accessible to the public for leisure time activities and part of a more visible open space system in the town, creating a more beautiful town.			Ongoing
<b>II - 9</b>	<b>Manage Residential Development Rate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>PB</b>	
	Manage the rate of residential development consistent with the towns Master Plan and Capital Improvements Plan.			The Town has initiated a housing cap but development has never come close to reaching caps. The Town is approaching buildout.
<b>III. Housing Element</b>				
<b>III - 1</b>	<b>Provide a More Diverse Supply of Housing</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>PB</b>	
	Amend the zoning bylaw to allow a broader range of housing uses within residential districts as part of a new "Planned Residential District" overlay zone district when designated for a specific area. Permit or in some areas require more diverse new residential development, including housing types such as congregates, cooperatives, and other shared living units.			Planned Residential District zoning has not been implemented. Overlay zones are permitted in Zone II groundwater protection zones and 100-year flood zones only. Developments for age 55 and older are permitted by Special Permit. Kennedy-Donovan Center operates several sites for congregate care. Three Chapter 40B developments (affordable housing) with a total of 308 units have been constructed. 200 units are under construction on West Street, 42 units were constructed at Route 106/Chauncy Street near the Post Office, and 66 units were constructed at Connors Avenue/Maple Avenue.
<b>III - 2</b>	<b>Adopt Additional Provisions to Cluster Zoning.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>PB</b>	
	Add additional housing types permitted in cluster residential development.			Recent presentations for cottage style development was not well received in Town due to the anticipated density of development.
<b>III - 3</b>	<b>Adopt an Inclusionary Housing for Moderate Income Households</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>PB</b>	



	The detailed Housing Policy for Moderate Income Householders would become part of this Housing element of the master plan. The policy would apply to developers/property owners whenever there is a request for added density bonuses for any subdivision or special project approval.				Affordable Housing Production Plan has been conducted by Town. Affordable Housing amendments have been incorporated into the zoning bylaw.
<b>III - 4</b>	<b>Subsidiary Apartments Above Commercial</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>PB</b>	
	Allow adaptive reuse of older public and private buildings in commercial areas, particularly in downtown, to have subsidiary apartments above commercial. New construction in downtown could also have apartments above commercial.				Zoning prohibits residential use on the first floor of new development in the B-1 zone (residential use is permitted above the ground floor).
	Establish a new zoning bylaw provision to allow a mix of uses where apartments can be established on the upper floors of commercial buildings if certain design and other regulatory requirements are met.				
<b>IV. Economic Development Element</b>					
<b>IV - 1</b>	<b>Business Retention Program in Cabot Business Park</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>IDC</b>	
	This is the #1 Priority.				
	· On-going Communication with Business Owners and Tenants.				Through the Business Ambassador Program, IDC members are assigned to coordinate with new, prospective, and existing businesses.
	· Advertise "Ombudsman" services which is a single point of contact in the town for business leaders to make contact with town government for solution of their problems or need to interact with the town.				Town Manager continues to coordinate with prospective businesses.
	· Staff available to IDC - Town Employees and Consultant.				Town Manger assures that Town departments expedite the permitting process.
	· Newsletter; Semi-Annual plus Frequency.				All business and residential customers receive Live Wire, a newsletter, with the quarterly electric bill. This newsletter frequently includes a focus on businesses.
	· Become known for "Business-Friendly" Town Attitude.				The Town received the Tri-town Chamber of Commerce business award in 2006 for business attraction and retention. Town continues to capitalize on its location and skilled labor force, and reputation as an affordable and attractive family-oriented community.
	· Complete Survey of Businesses; Compile Results; Take Action on Identified Needs; Thank You Letters; Newsletter Stories.				Survey was conducted. The Town works closely with prospective and existing tenants and offers public recognition of community involvement.
<b>IV - 2</b>	<b>Facilitate Full Lease-Up, Resale and Buildout of Cabot Business Park</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>IDC</b>	
	· On-going Communication with Cabot Partners.				Although three large entities are the primary property owners in the park, the primary point of contact is leasing agents.



	· Advertise "Ombudsman" services of the Town Manager's office.				Town Manager handles this responsibility.
	· Staff Available to IDC - Town Employees and Consultant.				See above
	· Prepare Town Materials for Cabot Partners Marketing of the Property e.g. Contacts in Town, Permitting Process, Welcome Letter.				Town has prepared an information brochure for prospective tenants.
<b>IV - 3</b>	<b>Proactive Focus on Prime Industrial/Commercial Development Areas</b>				
(a)	Golden Triangle.	<b>1</b>		<b>IDC, PB</b>	Developed as Mansfield Crossing
(b)	Route 140 - West side; MBTA tracks north to West Street.	<b>2</b>		<b>IDC, PB</b>	Developed as Erin's Center, Shaws, Home Depot
(c)	Routes 106 & 140/Copeland Drive Highway Business.	<b>2</b>		<b>IDC, PB</b>	Developed as Chapter 40B housing
<b>IV - 4</b>	<b>Economic Development of Golden Triangle</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>BOS, IDC, WA</b>	
	· Preparation of Subarea Master Plan.				Completed by developer as part of approval process for Mansfield Crossing, not by Town.
	· Extension of Sewer to Golden Triangle.				Sewer extended by developer, not by Town.
	· Zone Changes and Development Guidelines as Needed.				No zone changes required by developer
	· Collaboration or Assembly of Land.				Limited assembly of property required along School Street, conducted by developer.
<b>IV - 5</b>	<b>Downtown Revitalization and Design Plan</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>PB, DRC</b>	
	Encourage downtown revitalization beginning with the preparation of a design plan. The town, working cooperatively with downtown business leaders and other interests, needs an overall design plan for the revitalization of Downtown Mansfield. The study must be multi-disciplinary, including an assessment of market realities resulting in a strategy to achieve the defined market niche for downtown, i.e. what should and can downtown be?				Town has received \$179,000 grant for façade improvements and \$30,000 from Mansfield Crossing. The Downtown Business Association has developed informal design guidelines. An overall design plan for revitalization of Downtown has not been conducted. Gateway, circulation and parking improvements have been discussed at the concept level but have not been implemented.
<b>IV - 6</b>	<b>Subsidiary Apartments Above Retail</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>PB</b>	
	Encourage through responsible zoning provisions for subsidiary apartments on the upper floors of commercial buildings in downtown in order to enhance the economics for revitalization, to provide additional housing options for the changing needs of residents, and to facilitate a more active and populated downtown around the clock.				Upstairs residential use is encouraged but some businesses aren't interested. Zoning has been amended so that new apartment construction must include first floor retail use. The Roosevelt has 3 stories of residential use above first floor retail with frontage on South Main Street.
<b>IV - 7</b>	<b>Active Downtown Business Organization</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>TM</b>	
	Encourage downtown business leaders to remain active.				Downtown Business Association members represent the majority of 110 downtown businesses. Events include Cleanup Day in May, Family Night in July, Safe Trick or Treat, Christmas Parade.



<b>V. Natural and Cultural Resources Element</b>					
	No Proposals and Recommendations				
<b>VI. Open Space/Recreation Element</b>					
<b>VI - 1</b>	<b>Acquire More Open Space Lands</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>CC</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and Capital Improvements Committee to develop support for appropriations for land acquisition funding.</li> </ul>				The last Town open space acquisition was the purchase of a 19-acre parcel on Essex Street in 2001. This \$980,000 acquisition was funded with \$150,000 from the Land Acquisition Fund and \$830,000 under a general obligation bond. Self Help funding was sought to reimburse the Land Acquisition Fund.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with developers and land owners to acquire gifts, easements, or restrictions for conservation purposes.</li> </ul>				Cluster developments require open space dedications. Natural Resources Trust works to acquire property meeting their criteria of preservation of open space for wildlife, wetlands protection, and passive recreation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate, when available, Self-Help applications for acquisition monies.</li> </ul>				Former Con. Comm. agent secured funds in the past.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct on-going reviews on the availability of land to purchase, especially Chapter 61 property.</li> </ul>				Few Chapter 61 parcels (farms) are left in Mansfield. Natural Resources Trust maintains communication with owners of remaining Chapter 61 property as well as major private landowners in the Canoe River Greenbelt.
<b>VI - 2</b>	<b>Establish an Open Space Network Plan for Mansfield</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>PB, CC</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop consensus on the open space network for Mansfield between the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and Conservation Commission.</li> </ul>				On-going.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm the strategy for its implementation; specifically the suggestion that the Old Colony rail-to-trail bikeway/multi-use trail is the project for initial implementation concentration.</li> </ul>				On-going.
<b>VI - 3</b>	<b>Construct the Old Colony Bikeway/Multi-Use Trail</b>	<b>1-2</b>		<b>PB, DPW</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a strategy and a timetable with milestones for getting this project from its idea stage into construction.</li> </ul>				Completed from train station to municipal airport in 2003 Norton did not want to participate in the full proposed plan. No further actions planned.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with potential funding sources to put together a package of financial participation by federal, state, and local sources. Look to participation by the Town of Norton and Wheaton College. Use new sources such as an open space trust fund supported by a real estate transfer tax should this become a possibility.</li> </ul>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase planning and design services as necessary to move the project forward to the next level of commitment toward construction.</li> </ul>				
<b>VI - 4</b>	<b>Protect Aquifers and Groundwater Recharge Areas</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>BOS, CC</b>	



	· Coordinate land acquisition activities of the Conservation Commission, the Water Department and the Board of Selectmen, and conduct acquisition programs in concert with the findings of the Zone II study.				On-going.
	· Continue involvement with the regional Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee. Work with this group on issues such as public education and awareness on the issue of land use in relationship to drinking water protection.				Conservation Commission, Natural Resource Trust, Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee, and the Water Department coordinate regarding open space acquisition. The Town supports Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee efforts for public education and awareness.
<b>VI - 5</b>	<b>Provide Public Access to Conservation Lands and Management</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>CC, DPW</b>	
	· Establish management guidelines for conservation lands.				Contact The Natural Resources Trust (NRT) – private, non-profit.
	· Work with volunteers, organizations and agencies, and other individuals to undertake trail development and other field activities.				The Conservation Commission works routinely with both the Boy/Girl Scouts on this effort. Open Space acquisitions primarily a function of the NRT. Open space dedications encouraged of developers, particularly along sensitive areas (ACEC).
	· Develop guide to conservation lands.				The Conservation Commission maintains guides for conservation lands.
<b>VI - 6</b>	<b>Expand and Improve Recreational Facilities</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>DPW</b>	
	· Complete build-out of the Plymouth Street Facility.				Two additional fields constructed. Facility now fully developed
	· Evaluate need for, and possible location(s) of new play field facility in East Mansfield.				East Mansfield recreation improvements included construction of a new play field on the former Hutchinson property, construction of a walking path to Hope Street from the Hutchinson property, upgrade of fields at the Jordan-Jackson School complex, and relocation of the river for ball field improvements at the Middle School.
	· Continue to seek out funding sources for expansion and management projects.				Ongoing
<b>VI - 7</b>	<b>Establish Local Financial Resources to Carry Out Open Space Programs</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>BOS, CC</b>	
	Establish a local Open Space Trust Fund through direct annual appropriation or through a real estate transfer tax.				Town does not collect impact fees from development for open space acquisition.
<b>VII. Services and Facilities Element</b>					
<b>VII - 1</b>	<b>Preparation of Sewage System Strategy</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>BOS, TE, PB</b>	
	When the Sewer Master Plan is completed and the plant requirements to sewer the entire town are known, develop a strategy for what parts of the town should be sewered. Also determine what capacity is available for Foxborough and Norton and under what conditions it would be reserved.				Strategy complete with Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan, Phase 1 in 2004



<b>VII - 2</b>	<b>Expand Sewer to Protect Water Supply</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>BOS, CC</b>	
	Consider the provision of sewers to developable areas in the Canoe River watershed that are not to be purchased by the Town as part of the Green Belt along the river from Sharon to Norton.				On-going.
<b>VII - 3</b>	<b>Address the Most Critical Water Supply Problems</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>BOS, WD</b>	
	The work that needs to be done should be broken down and phased where possible so that it can be addressed incrementally over a number of years. Commit to multi-year funding as a mechanism to get started on the following items:				
	· Upgrading old pipe lines				On-going.
	· Improve flow to meet ISO fire flow requirements				On-going.
	· Water quality treatment for iron and manganese.				On-going.
<b>VII - 4</b>	<b>Continue Advance Approval of Water Supply Sources</b>	<b>1-2</b>		<b>BOS, WD</b>	
	Continue to obtain approvals for new well sources before wells are needed in order to maintain facilities to meet demand.				On-going.
<b>VII - 5</b>	<b>Microfilm Documents Required to be Retained</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>BOS, TM</b>	
	Certain documents are required to be retained on file by the Town such as building plans, tax records and financial records.				Limited implementation
<b>VIII. Transportation Element</b>					
<b>VIII-1</b>	<b>Access to Commuter Train Station</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>PB, BOS</b>	
	Commuter traffic to the train station should be rerouted in some manner, including alternative locations for access to parking areas, to prevent commuter traffic from traveling on Highland Avenue, Draper Avenue, and Howe Street.				Not completed.
<b>VIII - 2</b>	<b>Route 106 Corridor Study</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>PB, TE</b>	
	The Route 106 corridor study area is suggested to extend from Forbes Boulevard to East Street including all properties fronting on or having access to Route 106. going to be supported by the town and state?				Project Need Form (PNF) submitted 8/16/07 to Mass Highway from North Main St. to Route 140 for reconstruction and improvements.
<b>VIII - 3</b>	<b>Route 106/Highland Avenue Intersection Improvements</b>	<b>1-2</b>		<b>TE</b>	
	Route 106 (Chauncy Street) and Highland Avenue intersection is in need of improvements now for safety reasons and to handle proposed increases in parking at the train station.				The Route 106 Railroad Underpass Reconstruction Project (SID #60407B) is designed, and on the TIP for advertising in 2008, doesn't include improvements at Highland.
<b>VIII - 4</b>	<b>Route 106/Route 140 Intersection</b>	<b>OG</b>		<b>TE, PD</b>	
	Route 106 (Chauncy Street) and Route 140 intersection experiences congestion during P.M. peak hours when it's level of service E.				Reconstructed by Mass Highway with signal improvements, 2004



<b>VIII - 5</b>	<b>Route 106/Copeland Drive Intersection Improvements</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>TE</b>		
	Route 106 (Chauncy Street) and Copeland Drive intersection presents safety problems, has congestion and operates at LOS F during P.M. peak hour. Physical improvements have been suggested by SRPEDD.				On TIP as SID #601850 for FY2009, current status is pre-25% stage. Signal timing adjustments were conducted for approval of Erin's Center.
<b>VIII - 6</b>	<b>Resolve New Train Station with MBTA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>BOS, PB</b>		
	The Town and MBTA need to get together on a resolution of the train station downtown because it is hindering both parties; the town in its revitalization of downtown, and the MBTA in expanding its ridership in the Mansfield area.				Although the MBTA constructed a station and leased it to Town of Mansfield, access improvements at Highland Avenue/Route 106 have not been resolved. This has delayed implementation of smart growth zoning initiatives proposed for Transit Oriented Development.
<b>VIII - 7</b>	<b>Control Commercial Corridor Traffic</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>TE, PB</b>		
	Consider the options outlined by SRPEDD in controlling the amount of traffic build-up over future years along commercial corridors. In Mansfield this could apply to portions of Route 106, Copeland Avenue, and Route 140. They include:				Access management between adjacent parcels is encouraged by Planning Board but zoning bylaw has not been amended. Town reviews Mass Highway curbcut applications.
	· Reduce traffic generated by limiting the type of development to those which generate fewer trips.				Ongoing
	· Encourage clustering of businesses to minimize the number of curb cuts.				Although the Planning Board encourages access management (interconnections between adjacent developments), zoning has not been amended to require that curb cuts are reduced.
	· Encourage developers and landowners to set aside sufficient land area to accommodate green space and sidewalks.				Sidewalks are required in subdivisions.
	· Implementation of a comprehensive access control policy by the MHD which includes minimum spacing requirements, limits on the number of curb cuts, encouraging the use of shared curb cuts by adjoining businesses, etc.				Although the Town provides comments on developer requests for MHD curb cut approval, local comment has not necessarily been regarded in the final decision.
<b>VIII - 8</b>	<b>Old Colony Bikeway</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>PB, DPW</b>		
	Turn the Old Colony Railroad right-of-way into a paved trail.				Old Colony Bikeway completed from Train Station to Mansfield Airport. Town of Norton is not interested in extending the bikeway southward.
<b>VIII - 9</b>	<b>South Main Street Commuter Bikeway</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>PB, DPW</b>		
	Consider a Commuter Class II Bikeway along South Main Street from the South Common in Mansfield to the center of Norton accessing Wheaton College.				Not implemented.
<b>VIII - 10</b>	<b>Sidewalk Construction Downtown</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>DPW</b>		
	Construct or repair sidewalks along both sides of streets in downtown and along the main streets from schools to downtown.				Repairs and ADA-accessibility improvements conducted Downtown.



Priority

1: 1997-1999  
Commission  
2: 2000-2005  
3: After 2005  
OG: Ongoing activity

Responsibility

BOS: Board of Selectman	CC: Conservation
PB: Planning Board	IDC: Industrial Development Commission
TM: Town Manager	DCR: Downtown Revitalization Committee
TE: Town Engineer	DPW: Department of Public Works



## Appendix 2: Planning Workshop Summary Report

### January 10 and January 12, 2008

Pare Corporation held two workshops to facilitate public input into the master plan update process:

- January 10, 2008. A two-hour meeting focused on Mansfield Today and reflected on population changes and accomplishments in implementing action items from the 1996 Master Plan. This Town Hall meeting was attended by approximately 40 people and was televised on cable TV. Following the presentation, the floor was opened for public comment regarding issues that residents and business owners would like to see addressed in the coming master plan.
- January 12, 2008. An all-day (9 AM to 2 PM) facilitated workshop was held at the High School cafeteria to focus on Mansfield Tomorrow. Approximately 50 people joined in one of four workgroups for four exercises:
  - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
  - Mapping Favorite and Endangered Places
  - Town-wide Visioning
  - Vision by Element

The following summarizes key points raised for each of the seven elements. Consensus of the group is presented in italics.

#### **Master Plan Elements**

- Land Use
- Circulation and Transportation
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Services and Facilities
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Open Space and Recreation

#### **Land Use Element**

##### **Strengths**

- Planned Business Development zoning has effectively limited conversion of industrial park property to major retail development.
- Zoning enables a density of residential development that supports downtown retail.
- Canoe River Greenbelt and other open space acquisition have helped protect water quality.

##### **Weaknesses**

- New development continues to place demands on finite water resources and has the potential to affect groundwater quality.
- A weakness is east and west identity in Town.

##### **Opportunities**

- *Amend site plan regulations to provide more teeth, especially for developments under 100,000 sf. Consider design and height guidelines, especially in downtown area. (performance standards, incentives, and an architectural review board).*
- *Amend bylaws to control retail development in Industrial zones (especially on School Street).*



- Town can “go green” to support sustainable development and other efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the Town to assure that resources are available for future generations.
- State and federal historic tax credits should be considered for building rehabilitation.
- Require that cluster zoning open space dedications provide contiguous open space corridors (need to codify).

## **Circulation / Transportation Element**

### **Strengths**

- Interstate access, commuter rail service, Old Colony Bike Path, downtown sidewalk network, airport.
- Downtown neighborhoods are walkable, especially to downtown destinations.

### **Weaknesses**

- Route 106 congestion at Route 140, Copeland Avenue, Highland Avenue, North Main Street, and Hope Street has increased steadily. People are seeking alternate routes or timing trips to avoid this roadway.
- Downtown traffic patterns are confusing and do not adequately support economic development initiatives. There is a perception that adequate parking is not available.
- Downtown lacks a gateway from Route 106. Old Colony Way creates a “back door” image of parking lots, delivery access and dumpsters.
- Pedestrian connections between the train station and downtown are not attractive, direct, or safe, especially for crossing Route 106.
- Sidewalks are not adequately maintained or do not provide adequate connections.
- Snow removal is not adequately conducted downtown or in adjacent neighborhoods
- Commuter rail parking access from Highland Avenue to Route 106 creates congestion and safety issues.
- Local roads are not adequately maintained.
- Route 106 construction projects lack Town oversight.
- Old Colony Bike Path lacks logical connection to Norton.

### **Opportunities**

- Conduct a downtown traffic circulation study to address one-way street patterns, posted speed limits, availability of parking, pedestrian connections from the train station and adjacent neighborhoods, and streetscape initiatives to support economic development.
- Conduct the Route 106 corridor study to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Resolve commuter parking lot access issues through development of alternative access/egress.
- Enforce posted speed limits and pedestrian rights of way in crosswalks on North Main Street.
- Establish snow removal policy and distribute to residents and businesses.
- Consider extension of the Old Colony Bike Path to Norton. As an option, the path should be extended to include connections to local destinations to make the path more usable as an alternative transportation route.
- Expand GATRA service to the train station with connections to Mansfield Crossing, Foxboro, Comcast (formerly Tweeter) Center, East Mansfield.



## **Natural / Cultural Resources Element**

### **Strengths**

- Canoe River Greenbelt, Fulton's Pond (especially Duck Race) are strengths.

### **Weaknesses**

- Loss of habitat is an increasing concern since wildlife is forced into smaller areas with increased development.
- Big old dying street trees need replacement.

### **Opportunities**

- *Protection of aquifer and drinking water is a priority. There should be a limitation on lawn sprinklers – they draw down too much of the aquifer.*
- Continue to preserve historic property. Control what is constructed in historic areas. Some new development does not tie in to historic areas. New downtown development should reflect older buildings (brick).
- Identify and preserve historical places.
- Consider designation of a downtown Historic District.
- Encourage development of more cultural destinations and attractions in Town.
- Support MMAS construction of an Arts Center in downtown.

## **Services and Facilities Element**

### **Strengths**

- Town has excellent fire and police departments, infrastructure (sewer, water, electric) and schools.

### **Weaknesses**

- *Water quality in West Mansfield needs to be improved*
- *Route 106 construction projects appear to have poor state and local oversight.*
- Although there are many police per capita, they aren't visible.
- Memorial Park needs to be better patrolled.
- Train overpass flooding is a major issue.
- Town management structure lacks accountability to the general public.

### **Opportunities**

- *Establish a protocol to better manage Route 106 construction projects.*
- Continue to improve and enhance public schools.
- Seek increased funding through Homeland Security.
- Initiate construction of Route 106 underpass in 2008 with available federal funding.
- Consider a Town Council/Mayor structure of government.
- Investigate reuse of municipal buildings.
- Address West Mansfield water quality issues.



## **Economic Development Element**

### **Strengths**

- Cabot Business Park is a regional and even statewide resource and model. Park is well designed.
- Planned Business Development zoning in the business park has restricted conversion of industrial to retail use. This zoning protects and increases high paying jobs, keeps the region prosperous, and protects industrial land use.
- Mansfield's downtown is a regional attraction since many adjacent towns (Foxboro, Easton and Norton) do not have downtowns.
- Train station is an economic development engine for the downtown.

### **Weaknesses**

- Downtown lacks a range of retail uses and anchor businesses, many buildings are not attractive, traffic patterns and signage are confusing.
- High rents downtown don't correlate with foot traffic.
- Route 106 congestion hurts economic development downtown.
- Downtown businesses feel a lack of support from the town administration.

### **Opportunities**

#### **Downtown:**

- *Revitalize downtown. Make downtown more attractive. Need more unique restaurants and diverse retail. Need to be patient about the development we want.*
- Market downtown as a destination.
- Provide Town support to attract and retain downtown businesses similar to efforts to retain and attract industrial development.
- Provide improved coordination between the Downtown Business Association and Town departments.
- Conduct a downtown market study. Such a study could identify market demand for new businesses, identify supports necessary to retain existing businesses, develop strategy to increase patronage by local residents and visitors, and identify infrastructure improvements necessary to support a vibrant downtown.
- Conduct downtown circulation study to address traffic pattern, signage, parking, delivery location, sidewalk/crosswalks, and streetscape (see Transportation and Circulation Element).

#### **Train Station:**

- Provide connections from the train station to downtown.
- Support zoning amendments needed to implement Transit Oriented Development.

## **Housing Element**

### **Strengths**

- *The town exceeds the state goal of 10% affordable housing.*
- One of Mansfield's strengths is its diversity of housing types.



### **Weaknesses**

- *There is a concern that the next generation (kids) will not be able to afford to live in Mansfield.*
- *Need to provide housing and services to seniors.*
- There should be more “over 55” developments that are affordable to working class retirees.
- More community-based housing development is needed.

### **Opportunities**

- Continue to diversify housing choice and price.
- Continue to support construction of apartments and condominiums downtown.



## **Open Space / Recreation Element**

### **Strengths**

- Mansfield's open space is a strength.
- Canoe and Wading Rivers provide natural resource corridors.
- Parks, recreation, open space and greenspace are especially important to young families in Mansfield.

### **Weaknesses**

- *Connectivity is needed between open space/recreation areas with continuous trails from parcel to parcel and to the schools.*
- *There is a demand for open space for passive recreation with accessible and interconnected parcels, water quality protection, and aquifer recharge.*
- *Town should support Arts spaces as well as sports.*
- Access to Greenbelt and Fulton's Pond are a weakness.
- Freestanding youth center is needed. Should be accessible to schools, within walking and biking distance.
- School properties should be better used for community activities.
- Not all municipal recreation fields are available to the public.
- Insufficient ball fields are available to meet demand.

### **Opportunities**

- Provide incentives to secure remaining open space.
- Purchase property with NRT support.
- Consider the feasibility of restoring the community swimming area at Maple Park.
- Provide oversight and planning in fields development to assure there are no problems with drainage.
- Consider opportunities to expand recreation fields or develop an additional multi-use field complex





**Appendix 3:  
2008 Mansfield Master Plan – Implementation Matrix**

Policies and Action Items (see Master Plan elements for further detail)	Suggested Responsible Department/Commission (lead in <b>BOLD</b> )	Priority	Time Frame Short Term (ST), Long Term (LT), Ongoing (OG)
<b>I. LAND USE ELEMENT</b>			
<b>I-1. Enhance Downtown</b>			
1. Control the further sprawl or migration of downtown towards Route 106 by delineating the limits of downtown, and adopting a downtown map.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board	High	ST
2. Amend zoning bylaws to incorporate architectural guidelines established by the Downtown Committee.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	High	ST
3. Reinforce ‘sense of place’ by encouraging development that will make the downtown a destination for residents and visitors.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	Medium	LT
4. Revisit recommendations of the July 2005 Mansfield Train Station Area Redevelopment Study.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	Medium	LT



5. Draft smart growth zoning amendments to implement Transit Oriented Development (TOD) for the I-3 zone northwest of the station but do not implement until access issues are resolved. Draft language could be available for developers to consider prior to construction of improved access (draft language would be provided at risk prior to Town Meeting approval) (see Transportation and Circulation Policy II-1, Action 2).	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	High	LT
6. Revisit the proposed plan for the Hatheway - Patterson Superfund Site.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	Medium	LT
7. Support Circulation / Transportation policies and action items relating to downtown.	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	LT
8. Support Economic Development policies and action items relating to downtown.	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
<b>I-2. Continue Neighborhood Improvement Program</b>			
1. Preserve historic resources (see Policy III-5. Identify and Protect Historic Resources).	<b>Historic Commission</b>	Medium	OG
2. Preserve existing neighborhood integrity by limiting commercial and through traffic on collector streets.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board	High	OG
3. Enhance aesthetics in all new development proposals.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board	High	ST
4. Support Dark Sky initiatives by requiring downward casting lighting fixtures (see Policy I.5. Preserve dark skies).	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	Medium	OG
<b>I-3. Implement Comprehensive Sidewalk Network</b>			
1. Maintain and extend the sidewalk network (see Policy II.7. Action 3).	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	OG
<b>I-4. Provide Flexibility in Land Use Management Tools</b>			



1. Research and evaluate mixed-use overlay districts to facilitate construction of affordable and workforce housing.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Medium	LT
2. Consider revising the zoning ordinance to include form-based codes that encourage infill and new development that reflects the character of the local neighborhood.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Medium	ST
3. Continue to evaluate the need for transferable development rights and other land use management tools to preserve the character of Mansfield while promoting anti-sprawl “smart growth.”	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting	Low	LT
4. Amend zoning to require higher design standards.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	Medium	LT
5. Consider design and height guidelines, especially in downtown area through performance standards, incentives, and an architectural review board.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	Medium	ST
6. Amend zoning bylaws to control retail development in appropriate Industrial zones.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	High	ST
7. Amend zoning bylaw to require that cluster zoning open space dedications provide contiguous open space corridors, as possible.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	Medium	LT
8. Amend zoning bylaw to enable wind turbines by special use permit in all appropriate zoning districts.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	Medium	LT
9. Evaluate zoning bylaw to consider co-locating cell towers on municipally owned land to enable lease agreements with wireless providers.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board	Medium	LT
10. Amend subdivision regulations to protect limited drinking water resources (see Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-3).	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	Medium	LT



<b>I-5. Preserve Dark Skies</b>			
1. Amend zoning bylaw to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	Medium	ST
2. Raise awareness about light pollution, its adverse effects, and its solutions.	<b>Planning Department</b>	Medium	ST
<b>I-6. Preserve Scenic Roadways</b>			
1. Continue to identify scenic roadways in Town.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board	High	OG
2. Continue to enforce existing zoning and subdivision regulations for development along these roads.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board	High	OG
3. Develop a policy with utility companies including Mansfield Municipal Electric Department to minimize impacts to scenic roadways from utility installation and maintenance.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Department of Public Works, Mansfield Electric Department	Medium	
<b>I-7. Encourage Smart Growth Principles and Sustainable Development</b>			
1. Investigate sustainable development principles such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND Standards).	<b>Planning Department</b>	Medium	LT
2. Encourage sustainable land uses that support protection of the aquifers and natural habitat.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Conservation Commission	High	ST
3. Encourage a mix of land uses.	<b>Planning Department</b>	Medium	OG
4. Create a range of housing opportunities.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Housing Rehabilitation Program	Medium	OG



5. Encourage pedestrian-oriented development.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board	High	ST
6. Strengthen and direct development towards existing development nodes.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board	High	ST
<b>I-8. Work with neighboring and regional communities to ensure that land uses along common borders and within the region are compatible.</b>			
1. Continue to work with adjacent communities to define the appropriate character of key resources and to cooperate in protecting them.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Conservation Commission	Medium	OG
2. Provide courtesy review of development projects on adjacent properties in bordering communities.	<b>Planning Department</b>	Medium	LT
3. Execute regional agreements that reduce competition by sharing the benefits and impacts of development among communities, and that provide a means of alternative dispute resolution (SRPEDD Vision 2020).	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	Low	LT
<b>I-9. Update Data for Informed Decision Making</b>			
1. Regularly update the Cost of Services and Fiscal Impact Analysis Model with information on costs and revenues for 55 and older developments.	<b>Town Manager</b>	High	ST
2. Assess demographic trends when US Census data becomes available after the 2010 census.	<b>Planning Department</b>	Medium	LT
<b>II. CIRCULATION and TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT</b>			
<b>II-1. Improve Commuter Train Station Access</b>			
1. Cap MBTA, town and private commuter rail parking at current number of parking spaces pending resolution of Route 106 access issues.	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST



2. Conduct study to provide a minimum of two accesses from station parking lots northwest of the station.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	ST
3. Address intersection geometry and potential warrants for Highland Avenue/Route 106 signalization as part of the Route 106 Corridor Study.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	ST
4. Support transportation demand management techniques to reduce single occupancy vehicles in Town-owned parking lots.	<b>Planning Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	Medium	LT
5. Adequately control runoff from station parking lots.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	Medium	ST
6. Consider longer-term solutions to parking congestion.	<b>Planning Department, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen</b>	Low	LT
<b>II-2. Conduct Route 106 Corridor Study</b>			
1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment in accordance with the Massachusetts Highway Department's Project Development & Design Guide.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	ST
2. Reduce curb cuts from existing development.	<b>Planning Department, Planning Board</b>	Medium	OG
3. Improve pedestrian safety.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	OG
4. Improve intersection safety and capacity.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	LT
5. Improve site and architectural design of adjacent development in the B3 zone (Route 140 to Central Street) to create an attractive approach to Downtown, Mansfield's village center.	<b>Planning Department, Planning Board</b>	Medium	LT
6. Identify implementation strategies.			
<b>II-3. Replace Route 106 Underpass</b>			



1. Provide input on Mass Highway Department design to assure that design reflects the needs of residents of the Town of Mansfield.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	ST
2. Provide Town oversight to the greatest degree possible during construction to assure that construction disruption is minimized.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	LT
<b>II-4. Improve Downtown Traffic Circulation</b>			
1. Reassess one-way circulation patterns.	<b>Engineering Department, Planning Department</b>	High	ST
2. Enhance pedestrian access from the train station to Downtown destinations.	<b>Engineering Department, Planning Department</b>	High	LT
3. Optimize available parking downtown.	<b>Engineering Department, Planning Department</b>	High	ST
4. Enhance bicycle safety between the station and the start of the Old Colony /WW II Memorial Bike Way south of Middle Common.	<b>Engineering Department, Planning Department</b>	High	OG
5. Prepare a circulation, parking, pedestrian and bicycle study for downtown	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	LT
6. Establish, publicize and enforce a snow and ice policy.	<b>Engineering Department, Town Manager, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
<b>II-5. Initiate GATRA Fixed Route Service</b>			
1. Implement agreements enabling GATRA buses to make stops along the existing North and South Main Street route with service to the train station and Norton. GATRA fixed route service could be an attractive means of reducing the carbon footprint of Mansfield residents by providing an alternative to the private vehicle.	<b>Planning Department, Town Manager, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
2. Routinely reassess need to change GATRA demand responsive service for additional days of service per month.	<b>Planning Department, Town Manager, Board of Selectmen</b>	Medium	OG



<b>II-6. Preserve and Expand Bikeway Network</b>			
1. Maintain and expand the Old Colony Bike Path	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	Medium	OG
2. Support “Safe Routes to Schools” bicycle connections for students to reinforce healthy exercise habits among the young.	<b>School Department, Police Department</b>	High	ST
3. Consider additional off-road links between neighborhoods and local destinations as alignments become available.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	Medium	OG
<b>II-7. Address Townwide Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety and Circulation Issues</b>			
1. Improve intersection safety and capacity.	<b>Engineering Department</b>	High	LT
2. Continue to consider the impact of proposed development on traffic safety and circulation.	<b>Planning Department, Planning Board, Engineering Department</b>	High	ST
3. Maintain and extend the sidewalk network.	<b>Engineering Department, Planning Department</b>	High	OG
4. Improve safety and access with events at the Tweeter Center.			
<b>II-8. Maintain Mansfield Airport as a Town Asset</b>			
1. Utilize federal and state funding to maintain the runways, taxiways, and other facilities in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration requirements.	<b>Airport Commission</b>	High	LT
2. Continue to work with the fixed base operator at the airport to ensure that the airport meets the economic development needs of the community.	<b>Airport Commission</b>	High	OG
<b>III. NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT</b>			
<b>III-1. Protect Quality of Groundwater and Surface Water Resources</b>			



1. Continue to enforce regulations such as the Zone II overlay district in the Zoning Bylaw to regulate appropriate uses, especially in the Canoe River Sole Source Aquifer.	<b>Planning Board</b>	High	OG
2. Continue to enforce the Town's wetland bylaw to protect wetlands, surface waters, and groundwater.	<b>Conservation Commission</b>	High	OG
3. Continue to implement EPA's Phase II stormwater management objectives.	<b>Engineering Department</b>	High	OG
4. Support efforts of the Natural Resources Trust and Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee to educate the public about the benefits of watershed and open space protection.	<b>Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	OG
5. Require cluster development, as appropriate, for residential development in R-I zones to reduce the area of disturbance, and reduce the length of roads and other impervious surfaces.	<b>Planning Board</b>	High	ST
6. Consider all options to minimize out of basin transfer of water.	<b>Department of Public Works, Town Manager</b>	Medium	LT
7. Continue education efforts through publications such as LiveWire that address efforts that homeowners can take to protect the quality of groundwater and surface waters.	<b>Engineering Department, Conservation Commission, Planning Department</b>	High	OG
8. Implement programs to protect water quality and quantity, recognizing that many of the private and public wells in town draw water from the shallow Canoe River Sole Source Aquifer.	<b>Department of Public Works, Planning Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	OG
<b>III-2. Protect Habitat</b>			
1. Support efforts of the local land trust to protect open space (see Open Space and Recreation Element), especially in the Canoe River corridor.	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	OG



2. Encourage protection of contiguous parcels for open space (locate cluster development open space adjacent to previously-protected open space parcels) to maintain wildlife corridors.	<b>Conservation Commission</b> , Planning Department, Planning Board	Medium	OG
3. Establish and implement policies to maintain the value of preserved open space for habitat and water quality protection, and to restrict conversion of open space use to other purposes.	<b>Conservation Commission</b> , Board of Selectmen	Medium	ST
<b>III-3. Amend Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to Protect Limited Drinking Water Resources</b>			
1. Limit potential grading and clearing to not more than 70 percent of a lot not in a cluster subdivision.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Conservation Commission	Medium	LT
2. Require that new construction include six inches of topsoil to encourage development of deep-rooted drought-tolerant vegetation, especially on lawns.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Conservation Commission	Medium	LT
3. Require Low Impact Design for stormwater management to support groundwater infiltration and natural bioremediation of stormwater pollutants through use of rain gardens, vegetated swales, and use of pervious surfaces for parking and walkways.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Conservation Commission	Medium	LT
<b>III-4. Implement Sustainable Practices to Protect Mansfield's Natural Resources</b>			
1. Encourage planting and maintaining street trees.	<b>Engineering Department</b>	High	ST
2. Amend zoning to protect night skies and enable wind turbines.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Planning Board, Town Meeting	Medium	ST
3. Implement a green policy to purchase low emission vehicles and vehicles with high fuel economy for the Town fleet.	<b>Town Manager</b> , Board of Selectmen	High	ST



3. Consider utilizing the services of an energy services company to perform an energy audit.	<b>Building Department</b> , Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	High	ST
4. Support initiatives by residents and businesses to Go Green with sustainable development practices.	<b>Building Inspector</b> , Planning Department, Planning Board, Town Meeting	High	ST
<b>III-5. Identify and Protect Historic Resources</b>			
1. Document historic resources and encourage voluntary private stewardship of historic properties.	<b>Historic Commission</b>	Medium	OG
2. Reinforce the character of historic downtown.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Historic Commission	High	OG
3. Consider linking the Historic Commission with the Planning Board for consistency of permit approval.	<b>Historic Commission</b> , Planning Department, Board of Selectmen	Medium	ST
<b>III-6. Support Cultural Events and Destinations in Mansfield</b>			
1. Encourage efforts of music and arts associations and other groups to provide cultural event programming.	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
2. Support the location of a music/arts center in a downtown location, within walking distance of schools for after-school programs, and with adequate parking (including possible shared use of parking).	<b>Planning Board</b>	High	ST
<b>III-7. Preserve Scenic Resources</b>			
1. Provide oversight of public and private utility installation to assure that scenic character of roads so designated is not adversely affected.	<b>Planning Department</b> , Department of Public Works, Mansfield Municipal Electric Department,	Medium	ST
2. Encourage preservation of open fields and other smaller vistas that exist along certain roadways.	<b>Planning Board</b> , Conservation Commission	Medium	LT
<b>IV. SERVICES and FACILITIES ELEMENT</b>			



IV-1. Implement sewer system strategy			
1. Manage future flow connections to stay within existing limits at the Mansfield WPCF, while handling additional capacities above town's allocation either with private treatment facilities, or prohibiting development with changes in zoning.	<b>Water Pollution Control Division, Planning Department</b>	High	ST
2. Construct a new 400,000 gpd satellite wastewater treatment facility at the former Mansfield wastewater treatment facility site, at the adjacent Mansfield Municipal Airport site, or at a third potential site (identified as Site No. 3) in the CWMP.	<b>Water Pollution Control Division, Department of Public Works</b>	Medium	LT
3. Expand the existing WPCF to accommodate future additional flow recharged to groundwater via land application.	<b>Water Pollution Control Division, Department of Public Works</b>	Medium	LT
4. Expand the existing WPCF to accommodate future additional flow from Mansfield (400,000 gpd) and Norton (50,000 to 333,000), working with the Town of Norton to identify groundwater recharge sites to supplement those sited in Mansfield.	<b>Water Pollution Control Division, Department of Public Works</b>	Medium	LT
5. Expand the existing WPCF to accommodate future additional flow from Mansfield, Norton and Foxboro (500,000 gpd) for a total expansion of 1.23 mgd, working with Norton and Foxboro to identify groundwater recharge sites to supplement those sited in Mansfield.	<b>Water Pollution Control Division, Department of Public Works</b>	Low	LT
6. Evaluate capacity buy-back from existing customers should Norton and/or Foxboro construct their own facilities.	<b>Water Pollution Control Division, Department of Public Works</b>	High	ST
IV-2. Expand Sewer System to Protect Water Supply			
1. Identify additional permitted capacity for projected needs beyond the year 2010.	<b>Water Pollution Control Division</b>	High	LT
2. Continue to evaluate environmental, fiscal, and land use impacts of sanitary sewer extensions.	<b>Planning Department</b>	High	OG



3. Continue to support the efforts of the Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee. (see Natural and Cultural Resources Policy III-1, Protect Quality of Groundwater and Surface Water Resources).	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	OG
<b>IV-3. Address the Most Critical Water Supply Problems</b>			
1. Identify phased implementation/multi-year funding to upgrade deteriorated pipelines, improve flow to meet ISO fire flow requirements, treat water quality for iron and manganese, and resolve water quality issues associated with “end of line” service in West Mansfield.	<b>Water Division</b>	High	ST
2. Limit pollution of groundwater aquifer and insure withdrawal for water supply remains within safe yield.	<b>Parks and Recreation Commission, Town Council</b>	High	OG
<b>IV-4. Continue Advance Approval of Water Supply Sources</b>			
1. Continue to identify and seek approvals for new well sources before they are needed to maintain facilities and meet demand.	<b>Water Division</b>	Medium	LT
<b>IV-5. Provide High Quality Municipal Services in a Cost-effective Manner</b>			
1. Maintain the high level of expertise that currently exists among municipal employees.	<b>Town Manger</b>	High	OG
2. Continue implementation of the Capital Improvement Program to identify and proactively plan for long-range implementation of municipal projects (see Policy IV-17)	<b>Town Manager, Capital Improvement Program Committee, Department Heads</b>	High	OG
3. Encourage regular communication/exchange of information between all Town Boards and Commissions.	<b>Town Manager, Department Heads</b>	High	OG



4. Create a pamphlet explaining municipal/other public services that are available to Mansfield residents (made available to various parties for distribution to the public, particularly new or prospective residents through local realtors and the Chamber of Commerce).	<b>Planning Department, Town Manager</b>	Medium	ST
5. Maintain and upgrade, when necessary, the level or amount of staff, facility space, and equipment required to maintain or improve the levels of service currently provided by the Town in order to meet the needs of the community.	<b>Town Manager</b>	High	ST
6. Provide periodic training by the Management Information System Department to enable town employees to use technology more efficiently, productively and confidently.	<b>Geographic Information System Department</b>	High	OG
7. Perform town management review to consider town council/mayor structure.	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	Medium	LT
8. Work with regional communities to evaluate lower costs for services.	<b>Town Manager, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
9. Increase communication and public access through an upgraded Town website.	<b>Town Manager, Management Information Specialist</b>	Medium	LT
10. Support long range fiscal planning with 10-year capital and operations budgets.	<b>Department Heads</b>	High	ST
<b>IV-6. Reduce Carbon Footprint of Municipal Operations</b>			
1. Conduct an energy audit of municipal operations to determine areas to improve efficiency.	<b>Town Manager, Public Works Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
2. Consider working with organizations and projects such as ICLEI, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Project, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, and the New England Cities Project to identify strategies for clean energy installation.	<b>Town Manager, Public Works Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
3. Develop a municipal energy policy to guide municipal decision-making.	<b>Town Manager, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST



4. Encourage filling municipal position with local residents.	<b>Town Manager, Department Heads</b>	High	ST
5. Support efforts by the Municipal Electric Department for energy efficiency.	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
<b>IV-7. Continue to Support a Professional Police Force</b>			
1. Support adequate facilities/safe environs for all users.	<b>Police Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
2. Continue to support additional personnel as deemed necessary.	<b>Police Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	OG
3. Continue to encourage annual in-service and advanced training when practicable.	<b>Police Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	OG
4. Continue to conduct annual analyses of existing Police Department needs in preparation of the Town Budget and Capital Improvement Program.	<b>Police Department, Town Manager, Capital Improvements Committee</b>	High	OG
5. Continue to maintain the long-standing relationship with adjacent Town and State Police Troops, and the Metropolitan Law Enforcement Council.	<b>Police Department</b>	High	OG
6. Continue to maintain and update the call list for commercial enterprises and other facilities in town.	<b>Police Department</b>	High	ST
<b>IV-8. Continue to Support a Professional Fire Department</b>			
1. Support adequate facilities/safe environs for all facets of users.	<b>Fire Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
2. Continue to support additional personnel as deemed necessary	<b>Fire Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	OG
3. Continue to conduct annual analyses of existing Fire Department needs in preparation of the Town Budget and Capital Improvement Program.	<b>Police Department, Town Manager, Capital Improvements Committee</b>	High	OG
4. Continue to maintain participation with adjacent towns in the Mutual Aid System and grass roots regional all-hazards planning group.	<b>Fire Department</b>	High	OG



<b>IV-9. Continue to Maintain an Effective Public Works Program</b>			
1. Continue long-range programs for improvements to roads, bridges, sidewalks and storm drains in conformance with the Master Plan and Capital Improvement Program (see Traffic and Circulation Element)	<b>Public Works Department</b>	High	OG
2. Continue to support an adequately staffed and equipped Public Works Department.	<b>Public Works Department, Town Manager, Capital Improvements Committee</b>	High	OG
3. Continue to implement effective trash collection program and educate residents regarding recycling programs/opportunities.	<b>Public Works Department</b>	Medium	OG
4. Maintain compliance with all National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permit requirements.	<b>Public Works Department</b>	Medium	OG
5. Establish, publicize and enforce a snow and ice policy.	<b>Public Works Department, Board of Selectmen</b>	Medium	ST
<b>IV-10. Continue to Support the Board of Health</b>			
1. Continue to maintain Title 5, the Commonwealth's law governing the construction and maintenance of septic systems.	<b>Board of Health</b>	High	OG
2. Support the annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day.	<b>Board of Health, Town Manager, Board of Selectmen</b>	High	OG
3. Continue to conduct a variety of clinics (flu, immunizations, cholesterol screening, blood pressure and pneumonia).	<b>Board of Health</b>	High	OG
<b>IV-11. Continue to Support the Council on Aging</b>			
1. Implement recommendations of the Massachusetts Coalition for Senior Housing report, 'Aging in Place Successfully with Affordable Housing and Services' (March 2007).	<b>Council on Aging, Housing Authority</b>	High	ST
2. Investigate opportunities for a new 30,000 square foot facility to meet existing programming needs, as well as additional space for expansion of services/programming:	<b>Council on Aging, Fair Housing Committee/Mansfield Housing Partnership, Housing Authority</b>	Medium	LT



3. Investigate alternative development scenarios to facilitate aging in place by seniors.	<b>Council on Aging</b> , Town Manager	High	ST
4. Encourage additional programming to include ‘Supportive Daycare Services’ to provide structured daily activities, respite to families and maintain the health and well-being of elders.	<b>Council on Aging</b>	Medium	ST
5. Continue to aid in the support of all individuals to remain independent in their homes, assuring all elders of equality, dignity, and respect	<b>Council on Aging</b> , Board of Selectmen	High	OG
<b>IV-12. Continue to Maintain a System of Public Libraries</b>			
1. Continue to comply with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to increase hours and expand staffing to accommodate Mansfield’s growing population	<b>Public Library</b>	High	OG
2. Celebrate Town-wide identity through library programs such as the ‘One Book, One Community Program’ recently held	<b>Public Library</b>	Medium	OG
3. Investigate opportunities for expansion/relocation to facilitate state minimum standards for collection and activity space.	<b>Public Library</b>	Medium	OG
<b>IV-13. Continue to Provide a High Level of Public Education</b>			
1. Ensure Mansfield’s Public School facilities adequately serve the greater Mansfield Community.	<b>School Department</b>	High	OG
2. To engage the students in a rigorous curriculum.	<b>School Department</b>	High	OG
3. To improve communication between the Mansfield Public Schools and the greater Mansfield Community.	<b>School Department</b>	High	OG
4. To provide opportunities for staff, parents and the community to learn.	<b>School Department</b>	High	LT



<b>IV-14. Maintain an Effective Emergency Management Response Program</b>			
1. Continue to implement, maintain and periodically update the Hazard Mitigation Plan.	<b>Emergency Management Agency</b>	High	OG
<b>IV-15. Maintain Mansfield Municipal Airport as a Town Asset</b>			
1. Improve/expand existing facilities to meet current design standards and future demands.	<b>Airport Commission</b>	Medium	LT
2. Complete Gap Analysis.	<b>Airport Commission</b>	High	ST
<b>IV-16. Continue to Support the Mansfield Municipal Electric Department Residential Home Energy Loss Prevention Programs</b>			
1. Continue to support the Energy Star Appliance Rebate Incentive.	<b>Mansfield Municipal Electric Department</b>	High	OG
2. Continue to support home energy audits.	<b>Mansfield Municipal Electric Department</b>	High	OG
3. Investigate if municipal cost-saving measures should be pursued based on the School and Town Building Lighting Energy Audits, completed by Citizens Energy in 2007.	<b>Town Manager, School Department, Mansfield Municipal Electric Department</b>	Medium	LT
<b>IV-17. Support Long Range Fiscal Planning</b>			
1. Amend Town Charter to require that the CIP include 10-year projections for capital expenses.	<b>Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting</b>	High	ST
2. Provide 10-year operating budget projections	<b>Town Manager, Town Treasurer, Accountant, Assessor, Department Heads, School Superintendent</b>	High	ST
<b>IV-18. Assess Master Plan Implementation</b>	<b>Planning Board, Master Plan Committee</b>	High	OG
1. Conduct an annual review of the Master Plan implementation status.			

**V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**



<b>V-1. Continue to Focus on Business Retention and Attraction Efforts at Cabot Industrial Park</b>			
1. Continue town activities as they relate to the Park, such as provide one-stop contact points within the town administration.	<b>Town Manger</b>	High	OG
2. Recognize the importance of strong community relations with all park businesses.	<b>Town Manager, Industrial Development Commission</b>	Medium	ST
3. Recognize that CEOs of local firms are one of the best ways to market the park to prospective tenants.	<b>Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Industrial Development Commission</b>	Medium	ST
4. Increase efforts for joint marketing of the Tri-town region to raise the profile of the Cabot Industrial Park and surrounding area to companies where easier access to Providence and Boston may be desirable.	<b>Town Manager</b>	Medium	LT
5. Maintain close relationships with local colleges and universities.	<b>Town Manager, Town Planner</b>	Medium	LT
6. Develop a targeted business list for potential new company expansions into Cabot Business Park.	<b>Town Manager, Industrial Development Commission</b>	High	LT
7. Create a “green” image for economic development, realizing its value to attract a high caliber workforce.	<b>Town Manager, Industrial Development Commission</b>	High	LT
<b>V-2. Revitalize Downtown</b>			
1. Improve commuter train station access. See Traffic and Circulation, Policy II-1 Improve Commuter Train Station Access.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	ST
2. Improve Downtown traffic circulation, reassess one-way traffic pattern, enhance pedestrian access to Downtown destinations from the train station, and optimize available parking downtown. See Traffic and Circulation Policy II-4, Improve Downtown Traffic Circulation.	<b>Planning Department, Engineering Department</b>	High	LT



3. Conduct a Downtown Focused Master Plan and Design Study	<b>Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Town Planner</b>	High	LT
4. Launch a clean up program to complement the building façade improvement program. Improve look and feel of Main Street through better lighting and increased trash collection and graffiti removal.	<b>Engineering Department, Planning Department</b>	High	ST
5. Consider establishing density/square footage bonus incentives for all retail businesses, including those located downtown. Consider linking incentive programs for retail outside the downtown to downtown revitalization activities.	<b>Planning Board, Town Planner</b>	Medium	ST
6. Consider use of Tax Increment Financing to encourage downtown businesses to expand and renovate.	<b>Town Manger, Town Planner</b>	High	ST
7. Consider strategic parcel acquisition by the Town (at fair market value) to control the redevelopment of downtown.	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	Medium	LT
8. Encourage marketing and business development activities by other organizations through public/private partnerships.	<b>Town Manager, Town Planner</b>	High	LT
9. Facilitate improved downtown signage from Route 140 and other parts of town to downtown.	<b>Engineering Department, Planning Department</b>	High	ST
10. Encourage downtown businesses to extend hours to capture two markets: PM peak hour trains and after dinner crowd (say 9 PM on a Friday or Saturday night).	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST
11. Improve downtown marketing initiatives.	<b>Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Town Planner</b>	High	ST
12. Utilize innovative financing techniques to improve the business climate of downtown.	<b>Tax Increment Financing Committee, Town Manager, Town Planner</b>	High	LT
<b>VI. HOUSING ELEMENT</b>			
<b>VI-1. Support Initiatives of the Mansfield Housing Corporation</b>			
1. Appoint a full board.	<b>Board of Selectmen</b>	High	ST



2. Hire an affordable housing consultant to provide guidance on implementation of affordable housing objectives, provide training for the board, and facilitate hiring a non-profit developer.	<b>Mansfield Housing Corporation, Town Manager</b>	High	ST
3. Facilitate transfer of town-owned properties appropriate for affordable housing to the MHC for development under Chapter 40B. Evaluate tax title parcels for suitability as affordable housing sites.	<b>Mansfield Housing Corporation Local Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee</b>	Medium	ST
4. Capitalize on market opportunities by developing a short list of older and/or obsolete residential and non-residential buildings with redevelopment potential.	<b>Mansfield Housing Corporation Local Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee</b>	Medium	ST
5. Construct new single or multifamily housing affordable for low and moderate income for rental or sale.	<b>Mansfield Housing Corporation Local Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee</b>	Medium	ST
6. Work with the Mansfield Housing Authority to manage rental housing constructed by the MHC.	<b>Mansfield Housing Corporation, Mansfield Housing Authority Local Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee</b>	Medium	ST
7. The MHC to work in partnership with the MHA to construct single or multifamily housing affordable for low and moderate income for rental or sale.	<b>Mansfield Housing Corporation, Mansfield Housing Authority Local Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee</b>	Medium	ST
<b>VI-2. Expand Housing Opportunities to Assure a Diverse Supply of Housing</b>			
1. Support the construction and rehabilitation of homes to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels, and household types.	<b>Board of Selectmen, Planning Board</b>	Medium	ST
2. Build homes near jobs, transit, and where services are available.	<b>Planning Board, Town Planner</b>	Medium	LT
3. Foster the development of housing, particularly multifamily and smaller single-family homes, in a way that is compatible with Mansfield's character and vision and with providing new housing choices for people of all means.	<b>Planning Board, Town Planner</b>	Low	LT