
Chapter 8: Land Use

Introduction

The past, present and future of a community is largely determined by its geographic location and physical characteristics. Communities have the ability to control land use and development patterns through a variety of mechanisms, including zoning and subdivision regulations, provision of public utilities and infrastructure, and protection of open space through direct acquisition and conservation restrictions and easements.

This chapter considers where and how Southampton will grow by reflecting on residential, commercial and industrial development trends, as well as public wishes for how Southampton can achieve the Community Vision expressed in this master plan.



Agricultural, commercial, residential and forest land uses in close proximity at the intersection of College Highway and Pomeroy Meadow Road *Photo: University of Massachusetts*

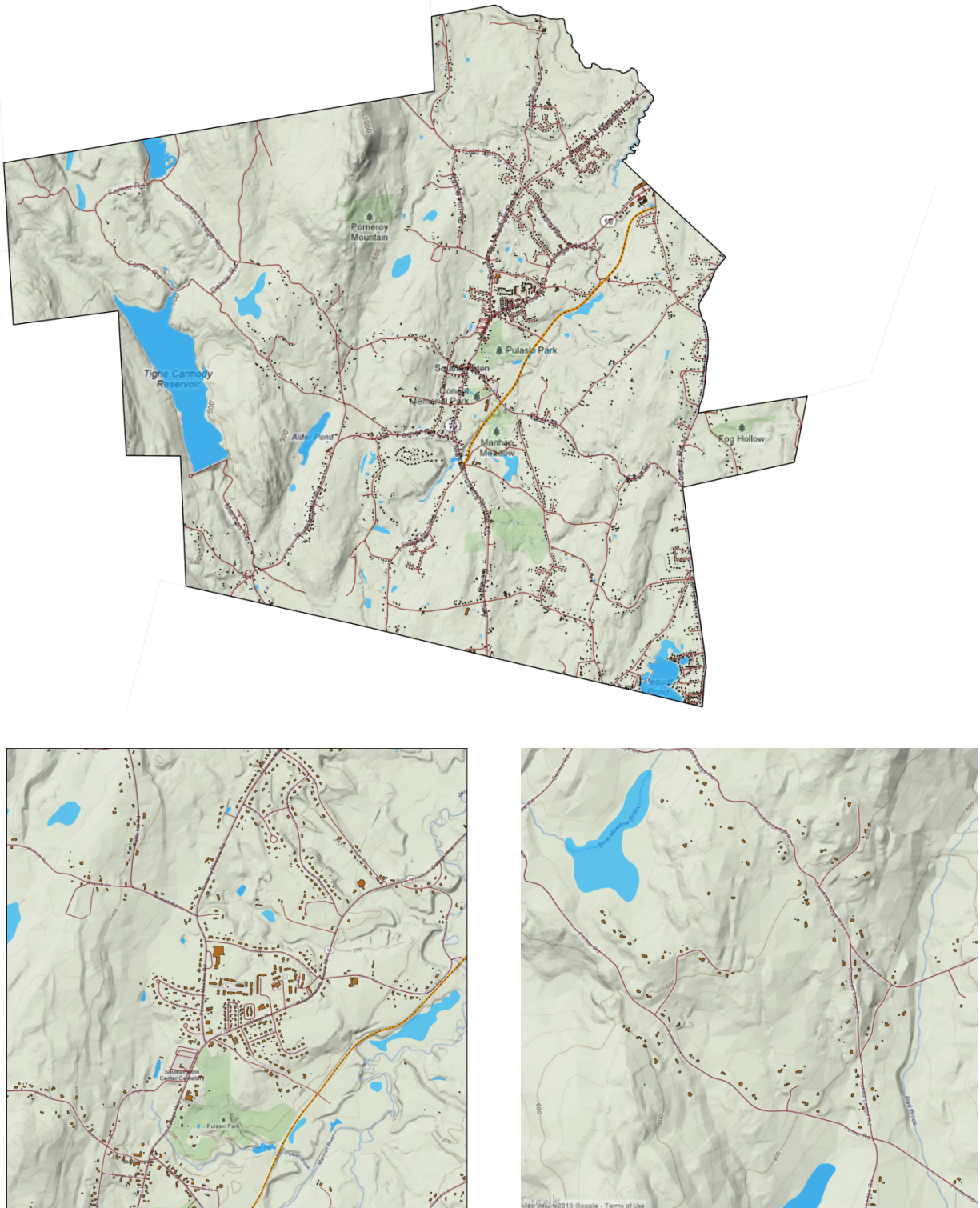
8.1 Trends and Data

8.1.1 Development Trends

Like many communities with a strong agricultural heritage, Southampton's early development consisted of farmsteads dispersed along the town's principal corridors, as well as settlements in and around the Village Center and Russellville. In the early 1900s, people began building summer cottages on small lots in the Pequot/Hampton Ponds area. Today, more than 100 years later, most of these vacation homes have been converted to year-round use. Two subdivisions that reflect the post-World War II housing boom are the Mountain View Circle subdivision (1950s) and the Helen/Lynn Drive subdivision (1960s)—both of which are small-lot subdivisions. Significantly, the majority of homes in these subdivisions could not be built today under existing zoning regulations. In the last 30 years, single-family houses have been built in outlying areas, either along existing roads or in new subdivisions. Southampton's developed land is mostly residential, and most undeveloped land is zoned as residential.

The development density of Southampton today is evident in the number of structures and their pattern of dispersal, as seen in Figure 8-1. The town's overall residential development density is .1 homes per acre, which includes undeveloped areas. The two inset maps at the bottom of the page show that development density varies widely in town, depending on the neighborhood—from as little as .2 homes per acre in rural areas, up to 10-12 homes per acre and greater in developed areas, such as the College Highway/Gunn Road area. A detailed study of residential density is shown in Figure 8-2.

Figure 8-1: Development Density in Southampton – Structures

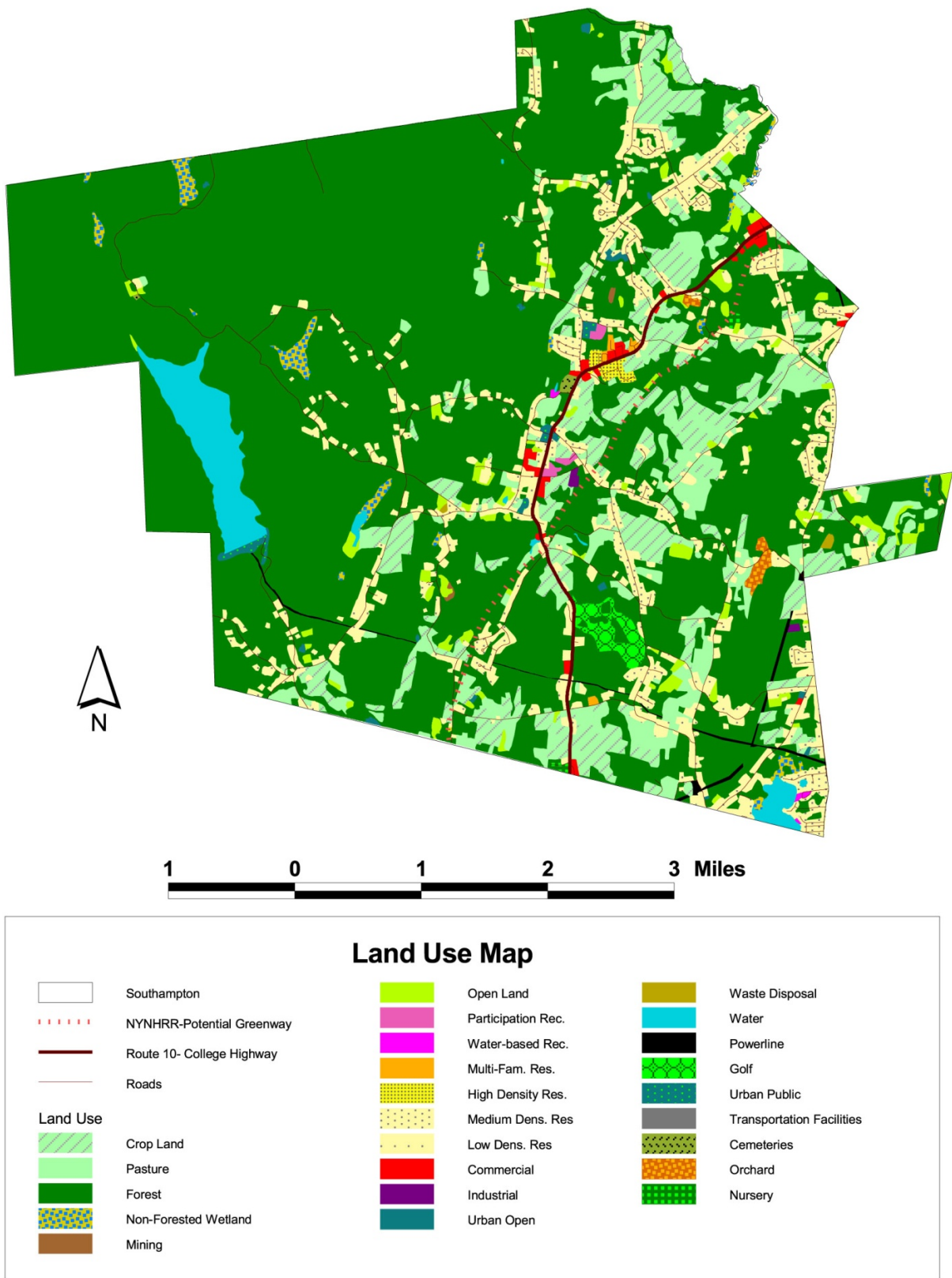


At left is the most densely developed area of Southampton near Gunn Road and College Highway. At right is one of the least densely developed neighborhoods, between Fomer and Crooked Ledge Roads east of Blue Meadow Brook.

Figure 8-2: Southampton Central District Residential Density: College Highway at Gunn Road



Figure 8-3: Southampton Land Use 2005



Aerial photography of Southampton taken in 1971, 1985, 1999, and 2005 as part of a state effort to document land use changes shows a loss of undeveloped land to developed land from 1971 to 2005 (Table 1).¹ The majority of the community remains in a natural state, such as forests, wetlands, water bodies, and active agricultural lands. It should be noted that the spatial accuracy of the 2005 data is substantially more accurate than data for the years 1971, 1985, and 1999 due to technological advances.² For this reason, the data for the year 1999 appears to be out-of-sync when viewing the data over the course of these four periods.

Table8-1: Comparison of Developed Land to Undeveloped Land in Southampton, 1971-2005

	1971	1985	1999	2005
<i>Total Acres</i>	18,524	18,524	18,524	18,524
Undeveloped land (in acres)	16,897	16,440	15,860	16,058
Developed land (in acres)	1,629	2,086	2,666	2,468
Percent Developed	8.8%	11.3%	14.4%	13.3%

Source: MassGIS MacConnell Land Use data 1971, 1985, 1999, 2005

Southampton experienced the greatest increase in developed land in the form of residential lots greater than ½ acre in size. Between the years 1971 and 2005, there was a 91% increase in large lot residential lands in town. This has resulted in approximately 700 acres of new large lot residential development in the community since 1971. This pattern of development is consistent with the Southampton zoning bylaw, which requires a minimum lot size of at least half an acre in all its zoning districts. The Residential Rural Zoning District, which covers 62% of town, requires a minimum lot size of 60,000 square feet, or approximately 1.3 acres, for any single family home. Southampton also experienced a loss of about two acres of residential parcels less than ¼ acre in size between the years 1971 and 2005 (Table 2). It is unclear on whether this loss is a result of conversion of residential lands to commercial and industrial uses, or consolidation of smaller parcels to larger residential lots.

Since 1971, 189 acres of forest and 771 acres of farmland and pasture have been lost to development (Table 2). While this is consistent with regional and state trends, the loss of farms and forests has altered the landscape and character of the community. The once rural agricultural lands in Southampton have become more suburban in character as shown by the fact that residential land increased by approximately 700 acres over this period. The roads where the most noticeable transformation has occurred include Line Street, County Road, Pomeroy Meadow Road, Glendale Road, Pleasant Street, Glendale Road, Gunn Road, Coleman Road, and Strong Road.

¹ William MacConnell, in conjunction with the University of Massachusetts, started documenting Land Use patterns in Massachusetts through aerial photography in the 1950s. The 2005 datasets were produced by the Sanborn Company. This ongoing project is funded by the State of Massachusetts.

² Prior to 2005, the state manually interpreted land cover and land use categories based on aerial photos. In 2005, the land use map was derived directly from an ortho image.

This same data set shows that Southampton saw a 38-acre increase in commercial land uses and an eight acre increase in industrial uses from 1971 to 2005. In total, MacConnell Land Use data for the year 2005 showed that Southampton had 67 acres of commercial land and 11 acres of industrial land. In comparison to the percentage of land zoned for commercial uses or industry in Southampton, 67 acres comprises almost 40% of commercially zoned land and 11 acres almost 5% of industrially zoned land.

Table 8-2: Land Use Change in Southampton by Category, 1971-2005

Category	1971	2005	Change (acres)	Change (percent)
Active Agriculture	1,961	1,284	-676	-34%
Pasture	949	853	-95	-10%
Woody Perennial, orchards, nurseries	23	55	32	143%
Forest	13,513	13,324	-189	-1%
Non-Forested Wetlands	164	300	136	83%
Mining, gravel pit	31	6	-24	-79%
Open land (powerlines, no vegetation)	230	182	-48	-21%
Recreation	124	129	5	4%
Multi-Family	8	31	23	298%
Residential less than 1/4 acre lot	33	31	-2	-6%
Residential 1/4 - 1/2 acre lot	188	216	28	15%
Residential Greater than 1/2 acre lot	771	1,472	701	91%
Commercial	29	67	38	130%
Industrial	4	11	8	215%
Urban Open, parks, institutional, cemeteries	58	59	0	0%
Water	428	491	63	15%
Other*	11	8	-4	-32%
Total Acres	18,524	18,524		

Source: MassGIS McConnell Land Use data 1971, 1985, 1999, 2005. Due to technological advances, the spatial accuracy of the 2005 data is substantially more accurate than data for the years 1971, 1985, and 1999. Prior to 2005, the state manually interpreted land cover and land use categories based on aerial photos. In 2005, the land use map was derived directly from an ortho image. This new method maintains much compatibility with the older system.

**Other: Transportation & Waste Disposal
- Negative numbers mean loss of land*

8.1.2 Parcel Inventory

Southampton's parcel inventory, which is maintained by the Southampton Assessor's Office, offers another method for reviewing land use in Town. Analysis of the town's parcel inventory (Table 4) shows that 72% of parcels in the community are assessed as residential, and account for 34% of the total acreage in Southampton. Less than 2% of all parcels and acres are assessed for commercial or industrial uses. This is consistent with the existing zoning bylaw, which dedicates 98% of the overall zoning districts to residential uses. Tax exempt lands account for 20% of the total acreage in Southampton, with a majority of these lands owned by municipal and state governments and currently under permanent protection. An example is the Holyoke Water Department, which owns 2,776 acres of land at the Tighe-Carmody Reservoir.

Table 8-3: Southampton 2010 Parcel Inventory Summary

Category	Parcels	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
Residential	2,049	72%	6,138	34%
Condominiums	78	3%	—	—
Commercial	33	1%	252	1%
Industrial	7	0.2%	39	0.2%
Mixed Use	37	1%	300	2%
Chapter 61/61A/61B	137	5%	4,411	24%
Agriculture Preservation Restriction lands*	6	0.2%	152	1%
Other Ag. Land not enrolled in the Chapter Program	1	0.03%	20	0.1%
Vacant Lands	416	15%	3,147	17%
Tax Exempt	83	3%	3,615	20%
Total	2,847	100%	18,074**	100%

Source: Southampton Assessor's Office 2010 Records. * This is not a full account of the number of APR properties in Southampton. Some APR land is assessed as Chapter Land by the Southampton Assessors. **

This number does not account for acreage associated with water or condominium developments.

According to the State of Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, there are also 825 acres with Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR's) in Southampton. The state's APR program permanently protects farmland from development and compensates the farmer for development rights to the land. Land enrolled in the APR program must remain in agricultural use. The state's record for the amount of APR land in Southampton is substantially higher than the 152 acres listed by the Southampton Assessor's Office. The Assessor noted that some APR's are classified as Chapter Land for town purposes.

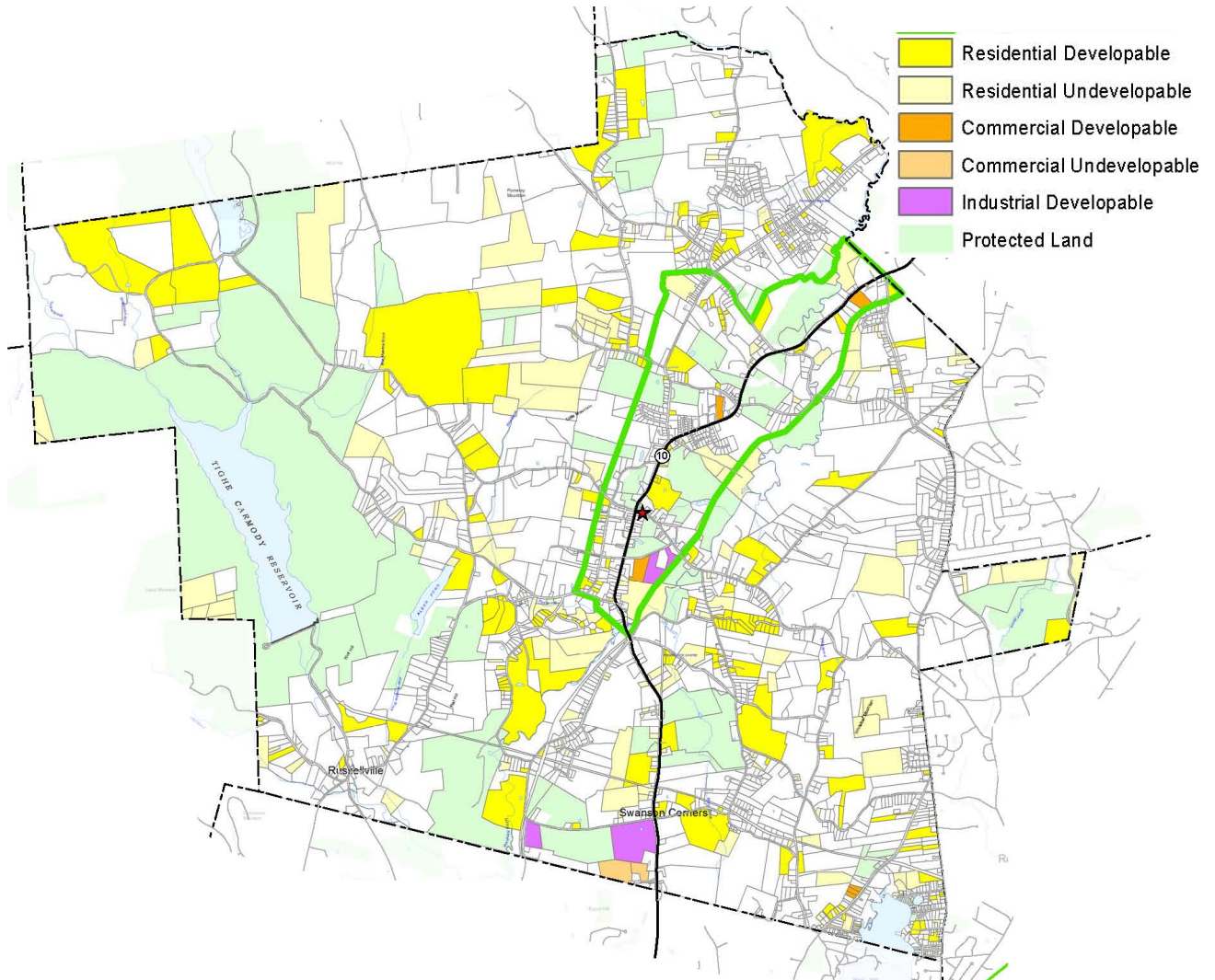
The Assessor's records show that Southampton also has a significant amount of unprotected vacant land. Approximately 1,757 acres of vacant lands could be developed as residential, commercial, or industrial uses in the future (Table 5). About 1,390 acres are assessed as undevelopable by the Assessors' office, which means that there are environmental constraints that currently make these lands unbuildable. The greatest concentrations of developable, vacant lands are assessed as residential, which is consistent with the local zoning districts. Around 1,600 acres of land in Southampton have the potential to be developed as new residential uses in the future. Based on the existing zoning regulations, if these vacant parcels were to be developed, Southampton could see a substantial influx of single family homes on a minimum of one acre lots. Developable residential land is located throughout town; however, it should be noted that some of these vacant lands are located next to sizable tracts of protected open space, such as on Gilbert and Leadmine Roads, which may support the formation of an open space network.

Table 8-4: Summary of Vacant Lands in Southampton

	Parcels	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
Residential				
- Developable	168	5.9%	1,088	6.0%
- Potentially developable	33	1.2%	582	3.2%
- Undevelopable	206	7.2%	1,390	7.7%
Commercial				
- Developable	6	0.2%	19	0.1%
Industrial				
- Developable	3	0.1%	68	0.4%
Total Vacant Lands	416	14.6%	3,147	17.4%
Total Assessed Lands in Southampton	2,847	100.0%	18,074	100.0%

Source: Southampton Assessors Office 2010 Records

Figure 8-1: Protected Lands, Developable Vacant Lands, and Undevelopable Lands



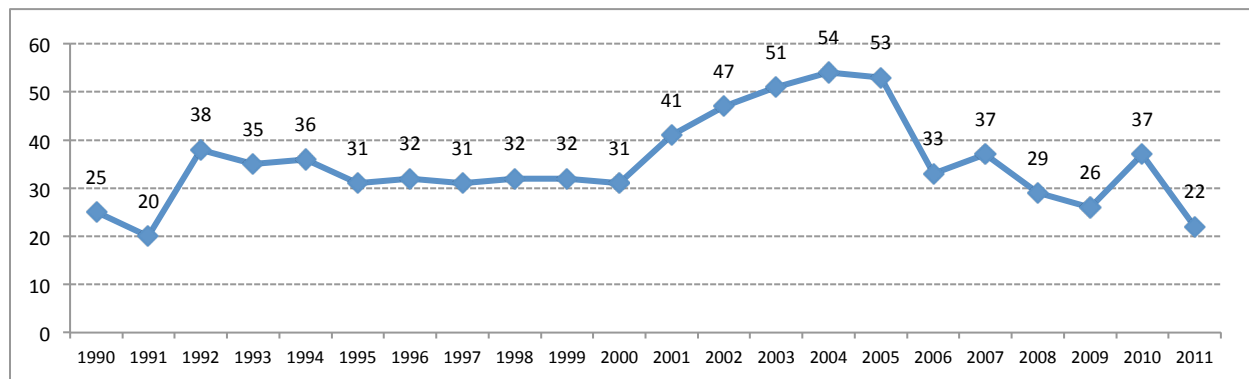
8.1.3 New Development

Building Permits

Southampton had about 770 building permits granted between the years 1990 and 2011, with the majority of these permits for single family homes (Table 5). The highest number of single family building permits was in the year 2004, with 54 permits. Recent regional, state, and national trends in the housing market are also evident, with only 22 residential permits in the year 2011, the lowest level since 1991.

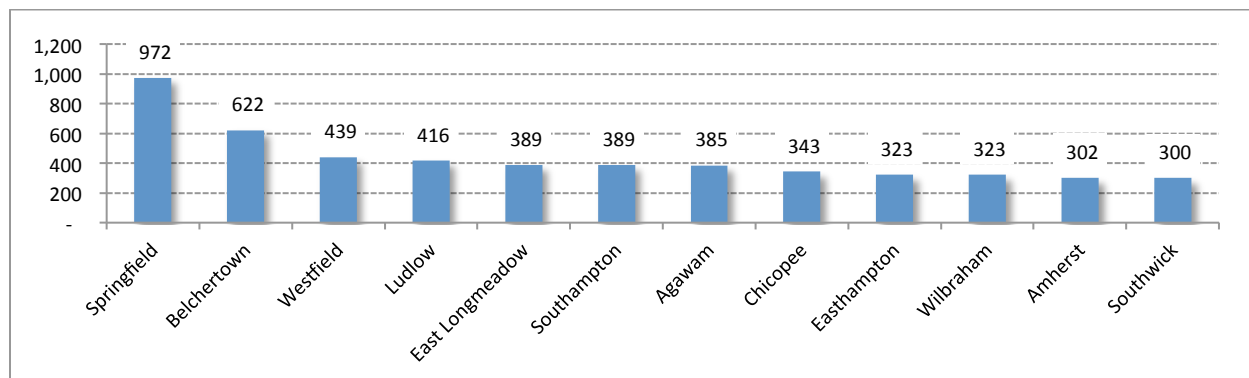
The drop in volume since 2005 was not as sharp as in most communities in the Pioneer Valley suggesting that, despite the downturn in the housing market nationwide, people still desire new homes in Southampton. Comparatively, building permit activity in Southampton has been voluminous over the last decade. The number of building permits issued for new single family homes over the course of a decade compares to towns whose populations are triple to quadruple the size of Southampton respectively as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 8-2: Southampton Residential Building Permits By Year: 1990-2011



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, State of the Cities Data Systems (SOCDS) Building Permit Database. Note: Statistics provided in these tabulations are based upon reports submitted by local building permit officials in response to a mail survey. HUD makes adjustments to account for missing annual reporters if an official fails to respond.

Figure 8-3: Total Number of Single Family Home Building Permits Issued: 2002 through 2011



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, State of the Cities Data Systems (SOCDS) Building Permit Database. Note: Top 12 Pioneer Valley Municipalities by total number of building permits issued from 2002 through 2011.

Subdivisions

Subdivision activity in Southampton was somewhat reflective of the housing market downturn in that no subdivisions were filed in 2005, 2008, or 2011 and only two subdivisions with more than 30 units have been submitted and approved since 2005. In total, the Southampton Planning Board approved just over 100 residential lots in five subdivisions from 2005 through 2011. At the time of this writing, the Planning Board is reviewing a four lot subdivision.

Red Brook Estates is located in the Residential Neighborhood Zoning District, which requires a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet. Bobcat Hollow is one of the newest subdivision in Southampton, with construction starting in 2009. This subdivision, located off County Road, is within the Residential Village Zoning District, which requires a minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet. The majority of houses in both of these larger subdivisions sold for over \$400,000 per home.

Table8-5: Southampton Subdivisions from 2005 through Present by Number of Approved Lots

Year Approved	Name of Project	Lots Approved
2005	None	—
2006	Red Brook Estates	39
2007	Sheldon Estates	7
2007	East Meadow	19*
2008	None	—
2009	Bobcat Hollow	33
2010	Halon	3
2011	None	—
2012	Deer Run Estates (under review)	4 (proposed)
Total		105 (including proposed)

Source: Southampton Building Department, 2010

Note: Only 11 of these units were built; remaining land acquired by town for Labrie athletic fields

Approval Not Required Lots

Approval Not Required (ANR) lots refers to the subdivision of single lots with frontage on a public way. Under Massachusetts state law, lots on a public way that meet local zoning's frontage and lot size requirements may be subdivided without substantive Planning Board review. Such subdivision plans are brought to the Planning Board and, after determination that they meet the town's zoning requirements, the Planning Board endorses the plans as "approval under the Subdivision Control Law is not required." At this time, the Planning Board estimates that they have approved 10 to 30 ANR lots a year since 2005. The Southampton Planning Board is working on maintaining an inventory of all approvals and hearings that come before the Board for future reporting purposes.

8.1.4 Zoning

The development patterns described above resulted from land use decisions codified by the community in the Southampton Zoning Bylaw, which has gone through several revisions since it was first adopted in 1956. The Town Zoning Bylaw establishes six zoning districts, three of which are specific to residential uses (Map 1: Zoning Map). There is also a Floodplain Overlay District and Water Supply Protection Overlay District. The three residential districts together cover almost 98% of the town.

Table8-6: Southampton Zoning Districts

Zone	Intended Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Residential Rural	Rural uses, low residential density	11,483	62.0%
Residential Neighborhood	Low residential density	4,581	24.7%
Residential Village	Higher residential density	2,016	10.9%
Commercial Village	Highest residential density & Consumer goods/services, office	33	0.2%
Commercial Highway	Consumer goods/services, office	145	0.8%
Industrial Park	Industrial Uses	220	1.2%
Water	Water	46	0.2%
Total		18,524	
Flood Plain Overlay District		1,199	6.5%
Water Supply Protection Overlay District		9,465	51.1%

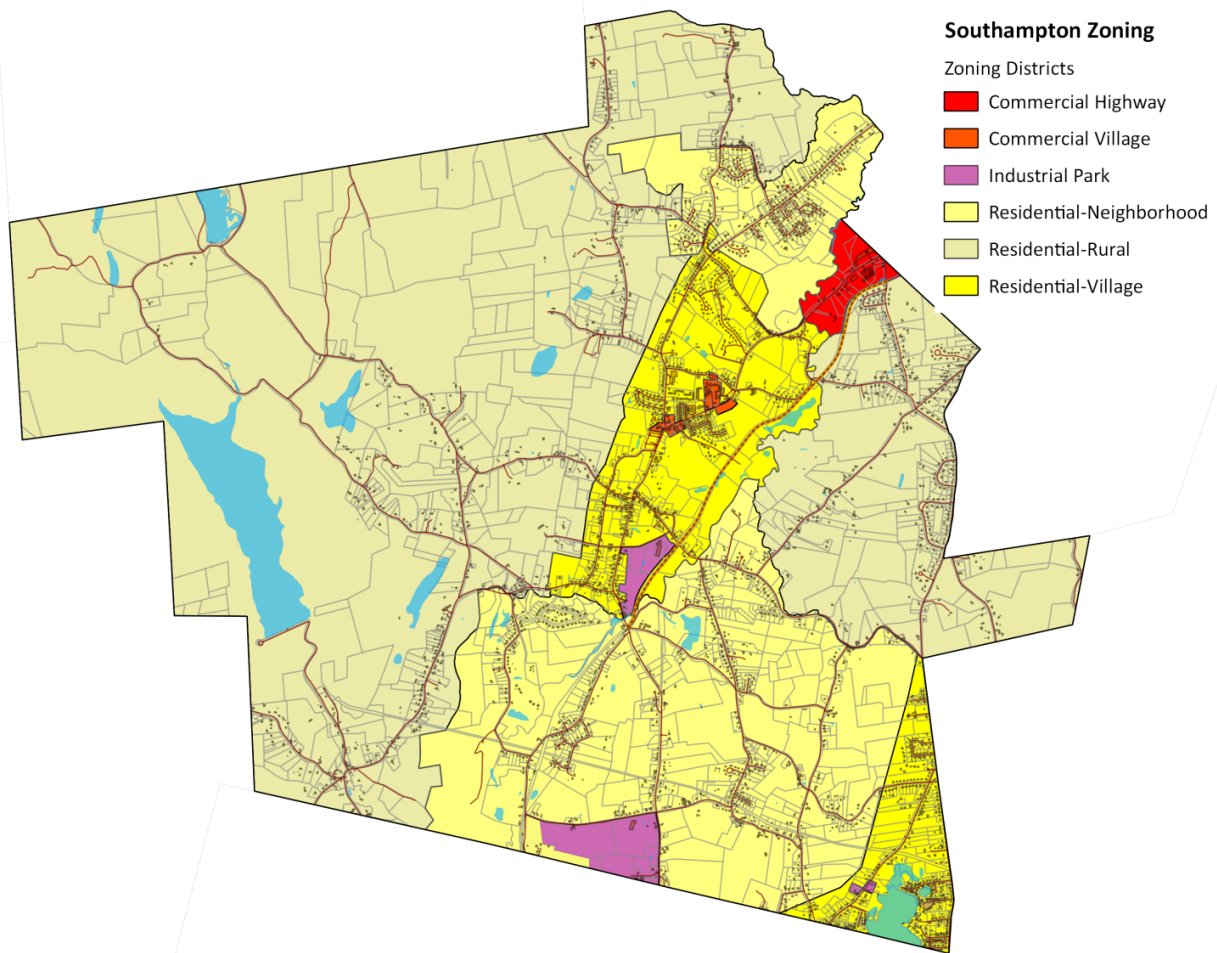
Source: Town of Southampton & Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Residential Zoning Districts (3 shades of yellows on zoning map)

Residential Rural is Southampton's largest zoning district with over 11,400 acres and covering 62% of the town. This district allows single family detached dwellings by-right and cluster developments and accessory dwelling units by Special Permit from the Planning Board. All other residential uses are prohibited from being developed within this zoning district.

Residential Neighborhood is the second largest zoning district in Southampton covering almost 25% of the town. It provides a transition area from the village residential zones to primary agriculture areas. This zoning district accommodates smaller lots (minimum 30,000 square feet) than the other residential districts. It allows single family detached dwellings by-right, two-family dwellings by Special Permit by Board of Appeals and accessory dwelling units and cluster developments by Special Permit by Planning Board. All other residential uses are prohibited from being developed within this zoning district.

Figure 8-6: Southampton Zoning Districts



Note: Water Supply Protection Overlay District and Floodplain Overlay District not shown. See Figure 8-7.

The Residential Village District encompasses a large percentage of the land along Route 10 as well as the area along County Road and Line Street, Hampton Pond/Pequot Pond. It is entirely served by town water and includes the village center. This district allows single family detached dwellings by right, two-family dwellings, multifamily dwellings, and elderly housing by Special Permit by Board of Appeals, and accessory dwelling units and cluster developments by Special Permit by Planning Board. All other residential uses are prohibited from being developed within this zoning district. The town allows “elderly housing” in the Residential Village zone, but the town does not define what elderly housing is in its bylaw. According to the building inspector, elderly housing is loosely interpreted to mean 55+ housing, but the Zoning Bylaw does not identify whether elderly housing is an apartment building or a small development of single-family homes.

Commercial Zoning Districts (Orange on Zoning Map)

The Town of Southampton permits commercial uses in three areas along the northern half of College Highway. Collectively, land zoned for commercial uses represents 1% of land in Southampton. The first

commercial area is located around the intersection of College Highway and Pomeroy Meadow Road and the second is slightly north of this area at the intersection of College Highway and Gunn Road. Both areas are zoned Commercial Village District, which is primarily for small retail and professional activities, but does allow for multifamily dwellings and elderly housing by special permit by Board of Appeals. This zoning district conforms to the boundaries of existing commercial uses and apartments and for this reason there is little vacant developable land left in this zoning district. Located at the border with Easthampton along College Highway, the Commercial Highway Zoning District comprises the third commercial area in Southampton. It allows more intense commercial uses and light industrial uses. Big Y grocery store, Harley Davidson dealership, Peebles department store, and the Tractor Supply Company are all located in this district. New residential uses are prohibited in this zoning district.

Mixed Use Regulations

The Southampton Zoning Bylaw makes brief mention of mixed use buildings by stating “In cases regarding mixed occupancy, the regulation for each use shall apply to the portion of the building or land so used.” A mixed use building can be located wherever both commercial and residential were allowed. The town has several mixed use buildings and has permitted a mixed use building with six apartments in the last five years.

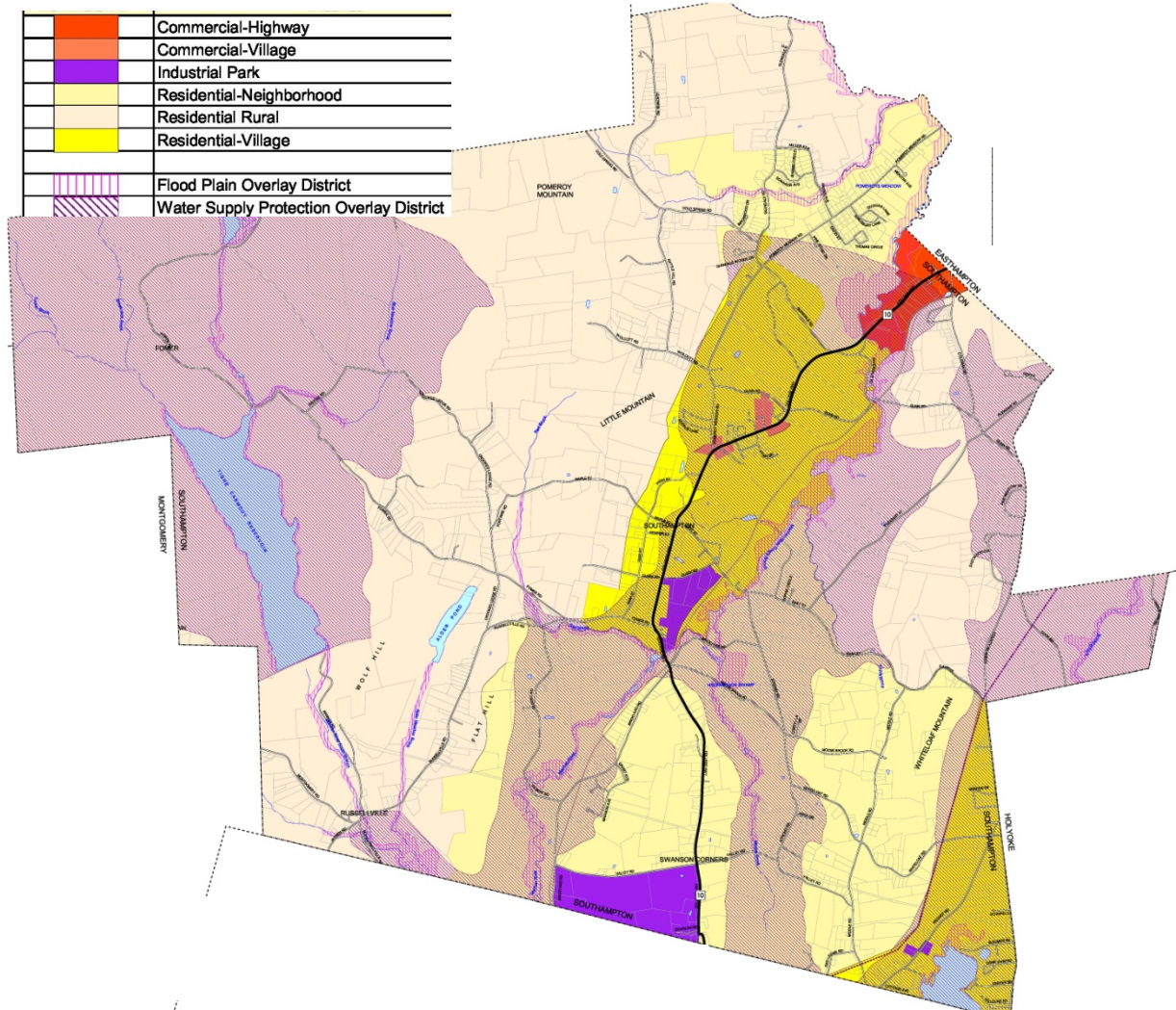
Commercial and Industrial Development Regulations

The Zoning Bylaw also includes provisions to streamline commercial and industrial development that meets specific dimensional and siting criteria by requiring a Special Permit from the Planning Board as opposed to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Planned Business Developments require a minimum of five acres of land. Planned Industrial Developments require a minimum of fifteen acres of land and necessitate the dedication of 10% of the property as protected open space to the Town of Southampton.

Industrial Zoning Districts *(Purple on zoning map)*

Three areas in Southampton are zoned for industry, representing 1.4% of the total land in town. Only industrial and intensive commercial uses are allowed in these areas. The first area is located along Clark Street between College Highway and East Street. The second area is located along Pequot Road near the town border with Westfield and conforms to four small parcels with pre-existing industrial uses. The third area is the largest area zoned for industry and includes all lands between Brickyard Road and College Highway from Valley Road to the town border with Westfield. At the May 2010 Town Meeting, Southampton residents voted to change the zoning of three parcels located in this third industrial area (Parcels 24, 27A and 27B) from the current designation of Industrial Park (IP) to Residential Neighborhood (RN), which reduced the industrially zoned land in this area by one-third. Of the remaining land zoned for industry in this area, over half is protected open space.

Figure 8-7: Southampton Zoning Districts with Aquifer and Flood Zone Overlay Districts



Overlay Zoning Districts *(Purple cross-hatch stripes and Pink vertical stripes on zoning map)*

Southampton also has two overlay zoning districts. These overlay districts are used to modify allowable uses in the underlying zone, but do not change the underlying lot size requirements.

The town of Southampton is situated in an environmentally sensitive area in the Pioneer Valley due to the presence of the Barnes Aquifer beneath much of the town. To protect and preserve the surface and groundwater resources of the Town and the region, a Water Supply Protection District was adopted. This overlay district covers 51% of the town and includes all lands lying within the primary recharge areas of groundwater aquifers and watershed area of the Manhan Reservoir, which now or in the future may provide public water supply. This bylaw does not place additional restrictions on residential development other than requiring a Special Permit for making 20% or more of a lot impervious.

The second zoning overlay district, the Floodplain Overlay District, requires compliance with Chapter 131, Section 40 of the Massachusetts General Laws (Wetlands Protection Act) for all development.

Southampton are primarily those lands adjacent to and including the open water areas. Not including open water areas, there are approximately 1,200 acres of 100-year floodplain in town, totaling 6.5% of the town's area. These floodplains include: Manhan River (South and North Branches), Moose Brook, Red Brook, Pequot Pond, Broad Brook, Alder Meadow Brook, and Blue Meadow Brook.

Zoning Issues

The following items have been identified by the Planning Board and/or Master Plan Committee as zoning issues.

Format and Accessibility of Zoning Bylaw

The Southampton Zoning Bylaw was adopted in 1956 and completely revised in 1979. New regulations have been added to the Zoning Bylaw since this time, but have been formatted inconsistently. This makes the Zoning Bylaw hard to understand. In addition, some items or areas of the regulations are not adequately described and should be clearly defined in the definitions section of the Bylaw. Finally, there is the case where regulations establishing an Agricultural Preservation District was adopted but never physically inserted into the Zoning Bylaw. The town should consider a complete update to its Zoning Bylaw to make the development process clearer and more transparent for all.

Cluster Development Regulations

Regulations for local cluster developments, also known as open space developments, encourage the protection of open space by providing developers with another, more compact option for the layout of residential development. Southampton's Cluster Development Bylaw (Section XI Table 6) allows single family homes to be built on smaller lots than existing zoning allows (see Section VI table of dimensional requirements), provided that the total number of proposed lots in the development does not exceed what could be developed under the existing dimensional requirements of the underlying zoning district. It also requires that at least 20% of the total tract area of the development be permanently protected as open space under one of several of ownership options.

Despite the fact that Southampton has had a strong housing market over the last 20 years, there have been no cluster developments proposed or approved during this period. One likely reason is that the Southampton's Cluster Development Bylaw requires a minimum tract size of 30 acres of land. In addition, it also requires a developer to obtain a special permit. Southampton should consider updating its Cluster Zoning Regulations (Section XI) to eliminate this substantial minimum tract size requirement and allow cluster developments by right, just as conventional subdivisions are allowed today.

Agricultural Preservation Regulations

The town adopted regulations in 1990 that established the ability for lands to be designated as Agricultural Preservation Districts and required residential subdivision within these districts to be in the form of a "farmland cluster development." The existing zoning map does not show that any Agricultural Preservation Districts have been established, although the Geryk Court Subdivision off of Line Street reportedly resulted from implementation of this bylaw. This may be due to the fact that under the 1986 regulation, agricultural land can only be designated as an Agricultural Preservation District upon prior written approval of the property owner and adoption by Town Meeting vote. The other issue with this

regulation is that, although lawfully adopted, it is absent from the publically available Zoning Bylaw. Few people in general seem to know about these regulations. This may be the reason why there are farmland cluster development standards that are different from the cluster development standards mentioned in the above section.

Special Permit Granting Authority

In communities that see residential and commercial development activity, the Planning Board is typically the board that issues permits for the development process and the Zoning Board of Appeals functions as the board that arbiter of any appeals of decisions made by the Zoning Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector. However, the Southampton Zoning bylaw assigns most special permitting authority to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) with the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board granting special permits for a few uses. While most newly adopted zoning regulations over the last twenty years have placed special permit granting authority with the Planning Board (cluster developments, planned business developments, accessory dwellings units, etc.), the Planning Board still does not review most major development projects in town, such as a shopping center. The town should consider moving most special permit granting authority to the Planning Board because they routinely deal with permitting submittals involving complex engineering plans. This would free the ZBA to be the exclusive body for hearing requests for variances and appeals of decisions made by the Zoning Enforcement Officer/Building Inspector.

Local Administrative Capacity to Amend, Develop and Implement Zoning

The Planning Board lacks professional staffing and relies on an elected citizen board. As noted in earlier sections, Southampton has been confronted with a significant amount of development for a community of its size. The Southampton Planning Board meets two times a month, but often lacks the time to work on zoning amendments because their meetings are spent reviewing subdivision proposals, some special permit requests and ANR plans. The town should consider hiring a planning or utilizing contract planning assistance.

Subdivision Regulations

Southampton's Subdivision Regulations specify the location, construction, width, and grades of proposed ways and the installation of municipal services so that a prospective subdivider will know in advance what will be required of him in the way of street construction and public utilities. The Planning Board noted that the town's existing regulations are outdated.

8.2 Planning Focus Areas

There are four key areas of Southampton that have consistently been a source of discussion and comment during the master plan process. Therefore, this plan identifies the follow four “Planning Focus Areas” where it may be most productive to concentrate future planning efforts and resources.

8.2.1 Planning Focus Area 1: Easthampton-Southampton Town line

This commercial area is the gateway into Southampton, drawing visitors from surrounding towns and residents alike. The Big Y Grocery Store, Peebles department store, Harley Davidson dealership, Red Rock Plaza, Tractor Supply Company Store, Rite Aid Pharmacy as well as smaller retail stores and services are all located here. There are no sidewalks in this area that would connect these uses to one another. The PVTA operates flex van service to the Big Y Plaza six times daily Monday through Saturday. This area is mostly captured by the Commercial Highway District, which allows only commercial and industrial uses. For this reason, there are few residential uses in this area. Many of the property owners in this area have tied into the City of Easthampton’s sewer system at their own expense.

During the master plan process, town residents expressed appreciation that commercial services such as grocery were within their own town; however, many residents also felt that this area lacked character. The town may want to consider enhancing this area as an attractive gateway into Southampton by allowing residential uses to encourage infill residential and mixed use development; reducing dimensional requirements and promoting landscaping to encourage an attractive streetscape.

Figure 8-4: Planning Focus Area 1 - Easthampton-Southampton Town Line



8.2.2 Planning Focus Area 2: College Highway from Pomeroy Meadow Road to Gunn Road

This area hosts a mix of civic, commercial and residential uses. The William Norris Elementary School and Post Office are located along Pomeroy Meadow Road within walking distance of College Highway. Commercial uses include Opa Opa Steakhouse and Brewery, Subway, Dunkin Donuts, Paisanos Restaurant, Cumberland Farms Convenience Store, and Easthampton Savings Bank, as well as small offices and retail stores. Nine multifamily developments—the earliest constructed in 1965 and the latest in 2007—are in this area. Single family homes within the Mountainview and Helen Drive/Lynn Drive subdivisions are generally small to medium in size (800 to 1,700 square feet) and sit on lots that range in size from a quarter to a half acre. These uses are generally connected to each other through a limited sidewalk network, which extends southward along College Highway to the Village Center.

This area is regulated by two zoning districts: the Residential Village District and Commercial Village District. PVPC's 2010 land use analysis of this area identified some parcels with vacant developable land and some existing properties that may be able to accommodate further development if sewer service or other septic technology were installed.

Pedestrian safety has been identified as a concern in this area. Residents expressed support for a more expansive sidewalk network here to better serve the elementary school. The area between Pomeroy Meadow Road and Lynn Drive also has the highest number of auto crashes in town. For both these reasons, the town should consider implementing a series of streetscape improvements along College Highway from Pomeroy Meadow Road to Gunn Road to slow down traffic and create a safe and friendly pedestrian environment. These actions will also help to give this area of town a village-like character.

Fig 8-5: Planning Focus Area 2 – College Highway from Pomeroy Meadow Road to Gunn Road



8.2.3 Planning Focus Area 3: Village Center

The historic Southampton Village Center features a mix of civic, commercial and residential uses. The Town Hall, Police Station and Congregational Church are all located at the intersection of East Street and College Highway. The library is less than a half a mile east on East Street and Conant Park is less than a half a mile south on College Highway. There are a few retail and commercial uses within or in close range to this area such as a book store, a photography studio, and a bicycle shop. A sidewalk network extends from this area to Conant Park and northward to the commercial village area at Pomeroy Meadow Road. Interspersed with these civic and commercial uses are single family homes that range in lot size from a quarter of an acre to ten acres. There are also four historic homes that have been converted into two to or three family dwellings along College Highway and Maple Streets. Much of this area is also within the Southampton Center National Register Historic District.

During the master planning process, town residents expressed support for increasing the vitality of this area by enhancing pedestrian connections between existing civic or community spaces as well as with the commercial district to the north. In addition, Town residents seemed to favor the aesthetic of existing small business located in mixed use buildings. The town may want to consider allowing select commercial uses only in conjunction with an existing residential use, such as the model set by several buildings in this area, to encourage vitality while preserving the historic character of this area.

Figure 8-6: Planning Focus Area 3 - Village Center (Facing Northeast)



8.2.4 Planning Focus Area 4: Lockville—Brickyard Road to Fomer Road

The Lockville area along College Highway is an important cultural area in town and retains features associated with the town’s commercial, industrial history, and agricultural history. Dominant features include Lyman Pond, the Manhan River, former railroad bed, historic mill buildings, open pastures and wooded areas. Most of this planning focus area is included within Lockville National Register Historic District. This area is zoned Industrial, Residential Neighborhood and Residential Village. Land in this area is also regulated by the Flood Plain Overlay District and Water Supply Protection District requirements. Several retail and commercial businesses call this area home, with Sheldon’s Ice Cream being a popular destination. However, there are no sidewalks in this area that would connect these uses to one another. A major opportunity to enhance the cultural features of this area and improve pedestrian connectivity would come with the proposed multi-use trail along the former railroad bed that will run right through the center of this planning area.

Figure 8-7: Planning Focus Area 4 – Lockville - Brickyard Road to Fomer Road



8.2.5 Other Important Planning Focus Areas

Natural, Open Space, and Agricultural Resources

The Open Space and Natural Resources Chapter of this Master Plan noted the location of several priority protection areas, including areas for agricultural protection. These areas are:

Open Space Area 1: Glendale Road in the northern area of town(Agriculture Preservation Area)

Open Space Area 2: Tighe-Carmody Reservoir area (Natural Resource Protection Area)

Open Space Area 3: Middle Road area (Agriculture Preservation Area)

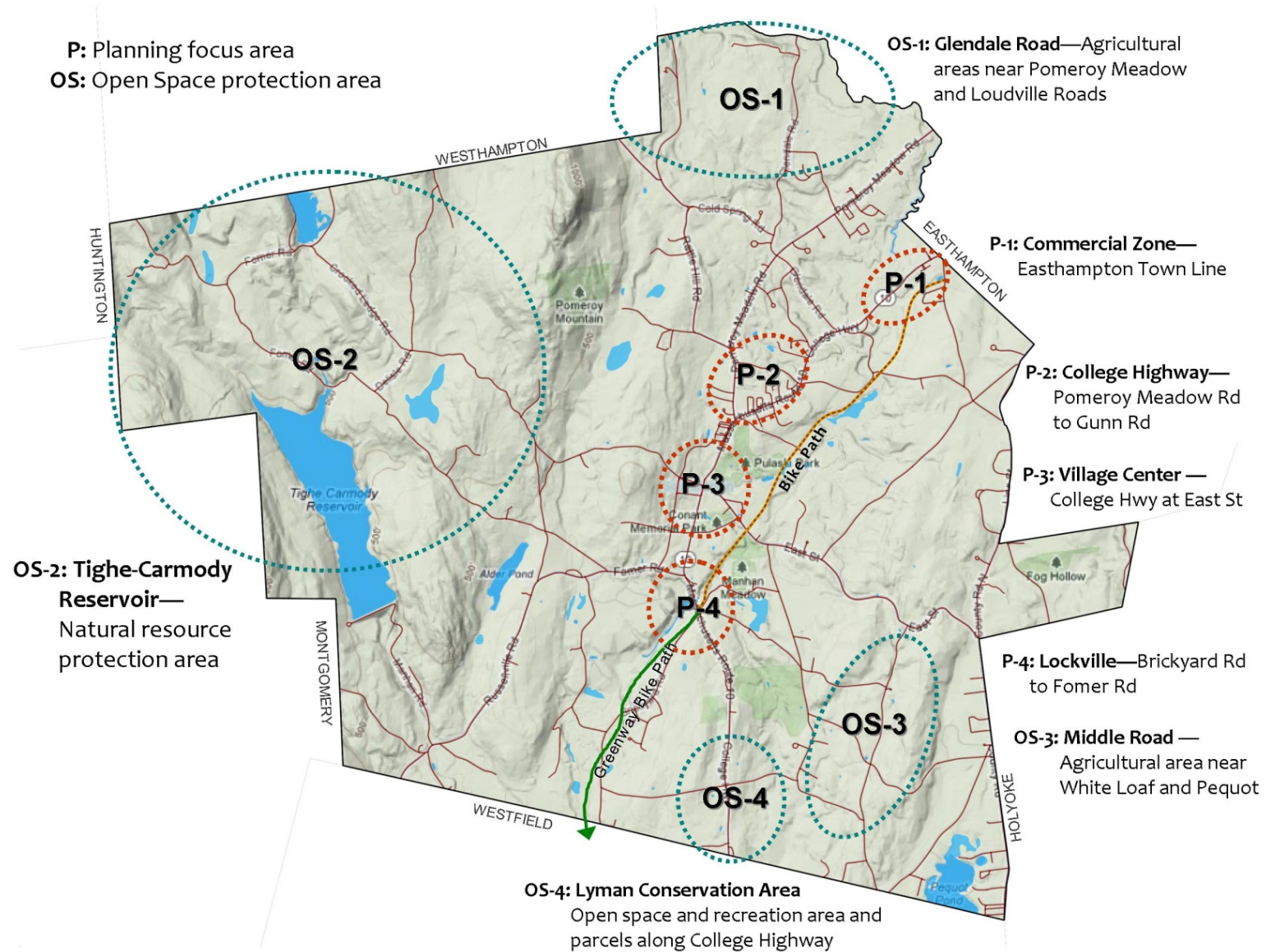
Open Space Area 4: Lyman Conservation Area

The community should also consider prioritizing large parcels for acquisition and preservation that: are currently enrolled in Chapter 61/61A/61B status, but may be susceptible to residential development; would connect into a town-wide greenway network; or would offer locally important agricultural soils.

Southampton Greenway

Community interest and support for developing a multi-use trail along the old rail bed continues. Town Meeting in 2012 appropriated funding for the next phase of development. This trail would connect to the Manhan Rail trail in Easthampton at the town line and could potentially offer further opportunities to link with the Farmington-Southwick-Westfield Rail Trail to the south.

Figure 8-8: Southampton Planning Focus Areas Map



8.3 Goals and Strategies for Land Use

Target Dates for Completion are organized into four categories: Short-term (1-5 years); Mid-term (6-10 years); Long-term (11-15 years); and Ongoing.

Goal 8-1: Enhance the unique characteristics and assets of planning focus areas in town.

Strategy 8-1A: Encourage streetscape improvements in the planning focus areas along College Highway.

Responsible Party: Zoning Board of Appeals, Highway Department, Planning Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 8-1B: Adopt more flexible dimensional standards in the area along College Highway between Pomeroy Meadow and Gunn Road to encourage creative site design and foster a vibrant mixed use district. This could involve creating a new zoning district for this area.

Responsible Party: Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeal

Resources Needed: Volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Mid-term (6-10 yrs)

Strategy 8-1C: Allow select commercial uses in the Village Center only in conjunction with an existing residential uses and allow select residential uses such as two family, three and four family buildings that mimic the character of a large single family home to encourage vitality within and preservation of the historic character of this area.

Responsible Party: Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals

Resources Needed: Volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Long-term (11-15 yrs)

Strategy 8-1D: Adopt a Chapter 40R Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District at the Easthampton-Southampton town line along College Highway to encourage an attractive gateway into Southampton. The Chapter 40R Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District could allow residential and mixed use development, require dimensional requirements, and entail landscaping requirements.

Responsible Party: Planning Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Short-term (1-5 yrs)

Strategy 8-1E: Develop design guidelines to be incorporated into the zoning bylaw for new development in the four planning focus areas with an emphasis on creating a safe and friendly pedestrian environment. These guidelines could include provisions for pedestrian circulation

and amenities, streetscape and landscape improvements, parking, lighting, building massing and placement, and façade enhancements.

Responsible Party: Planning Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time, funding for consultant

Target Date for Completion: Long-term (also listed in Ch.2 Economic Development)

Goal 8-2: Promote land use development patterns that protect the town’s natural resources and rural community character

Strategy 8-2A: Update the existing Cluster Zoning Regulations (Section XI) to make the regulations more user-friendly, specifically eliminate minimum tract size requirements and consider allowing cluster developments by right, just as conventional subdivisions are allowed today.

Responsible Party: Planning Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time, municipal funding or grant funding for consultant work.

Target Date for Completion: Mid-term (6-10 yrs)

Strategy 8-2B: Insert adopted regulations for Agricultural Preservation Districts into the Zoning Bylaw and revise regulations to clarify its intent and make consistent with regulations in other areas of the zoning bylaw such as the cluster development provisions.

Responsible Party: Planning Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time, municipal funding or grant funding for consultant work

Target Date for Completion: Mid-term (6-10 yrs)

Strategy 8-2C: Consider revising minimum lot size requirements in the Rural Residential zoning district from 60,000 square feet to 87,120 square feet (2 acres).

Responsible Party: Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals

Resources Needed: Volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Long-term (11-15 yrs)

Strategy 8-2D: Consider revising and updating the town’s existing sign bylaw.

Responsible Party: Planning Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time, funding for consultant

Target Date for Completion: Long-term (11-15 yrs)

Goal 8-3: Consider connection between existing and planned developments to open space and community facilities as part of the planning process.

Strategy 8-3A: Develop a town-wide a mobility map to show potential connections between existing and planned development to open space and community facilities. Use the sidewalk map developed by PVPC as a starting point.

Responsible Party: Park Commission, Recreational Needs Committee, Planning Board, Conservation Commission

Resources Needed: Volunteer Time and/or consultant funding

Target Date for Completion: Mid-term (6-10 yrs)

Strategy 8-3B: Encourage pedestrian connections that link existing open space and planned open space such as the Southampton Greenway to all new development.

Responsible Party: Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Park Commission, Recreational Needs Committee

Resources Needed: Volunteer Time

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 8-3C: Encourage pedestrian connections from existing community facilities such as the William Norris School, the library, and town hall to major residential developments and commercial businesses.

Responsible Party: Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Park Commission, Recreational Needs Committee

Resources Needed: Volunteer Time

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Goal 8-4: Improve ease of permitting in town and land use administration.

Strategy 8-4A: Update the Zoning Bylaw with a new format, modern terminology, and definitions that fully describe items discussed within the bylaw to make the development and permitting process clearer and more transparent for all.

Responsible Party: Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals

Resources Needed: Municipal funding for contract planning work, volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Short-term (1-5 yrs)

Strategy 8-4B: Establish Site Plan Review process and grant review authority to the Planning Board

Responsible Party: Planning Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time, funding for consultant

Target Date for Completion: Mid-term (6-10 yrs)

Strategy 8-4C: Consolidate most special permit granting authority and site plan approval authority with the Planning Board because they routinely deal with permitting submittals involving complex engineering plans.

Responsible Party: Planning Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Mid-term (6-10 yrs)

Strategy 8-4D: Consider appropriating town funds to hire planning staff or contract planning assistance to help the town achieve the goals of this master planning effort.

Responsible Party: Planning Board

Resources Needed: Municipal funding for contract planning work, volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Short-term (1-5 yrs)

Strategy 8-4E: Update the Southampton Subdivision Regulations to make consistent with modern practices and terminology as well as to include low impact development principles and new state stormwater standards.

Responsible Party: Planning Board

Resources Needed: Municipal funding for contract planning work, volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Short-term (1-5 yrs)

Strategy 8-4F: Rectify inconsistencies with the Assessor's office land-use coding methodology to allow the town to better track development and preservation trends over time.

Responsible Party: Assessor's Office, Board of Selectmen

Resources Needed: Staff time

Target Date for Completion: Short-term (1-5 yrs)

Strategy 8-4G: Establish annual reporting requirements for the Planning Board, such as the number of ANR's approved and subdivisions approved each year, and include these figures in the Annual Town Report.

Responsible Party: Board of Selectmen, Planning Board

Resources Needed: Volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Short-term (1-5 yrs)