

Action Plan

HATFIELD 2040



A Vision to Protect, Prepare, and Prosper

This is the final Hatfield Comprehensive Plan
Adopted by the Planning Board on October 2, 2024.



Large cover photo: Hatfield Elementary School participating in the national “Walk to School Day” sponsored through the MassDOT Safe Routes to School Program. Image captured by Hatfield resident and PVPC staffer Jeff McCollough.

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Acknowledgements

This plan reflects the great love of many Hatfield residents for this place along the Connecticut River called, “home.” People from across Town came out to participate in the *Hatfield 2040* planning process, sharing thoughts and ideas through listening sessions, surveys, and both virtual and in-person events. The most involved, the 15 members of the *Hatfield 2040* Comprehensive Planning Committee participated in extensive conversations over a 19-month period, devoting many hours to learn together, hear what others in Town had to say, discuss the future, and help give shape to plan elements, goals, and actions. We recognize them here by name in gratitude for their service to the community with a special thanks to those who invested many additional hours to help further shepherd both this process and plan to its finish (denoted with an asterisk).

Comprehensive Plan Committee members

Co-chair Shawn Robinson* - Council on Aging

Co-chair Micki Sanderson *- Historical Commission

Garret Barry - Public Works

Mike Bartlett - Community Preservation Committee

Rebecca Bench - School Committee

Angelika Dewey - Open Space Committee

Julia Frisby - At Large

Jalil Johnson - At Large

David Keir - At Large

Jon Kostek - Recreation Committee

Luke Longstreeth - Conservation Commission

John Pease* - Agricultural Commission

Stephanie Slysz* - Planning Board

Christopher Smith - Redevelopment Committee

Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator

This great team of committee members was backed by others who devoted time to bringing additional voices and insights to the fold of this plan.

Council on Aging
Schools, Administration, Teachers and Staff
Fire Chief Robert Flaherty

Open Space Committee Chair Rich Abbott
Planning Board and Assistant Town Planner
Hatfield Farming Community

While Hatfield is fueled by the energy of devoted residents and Town staff, this project involved a Consulting team to help bring many elements together.

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Consensus Building Institute
Dpict

Regenerative Design Group
Woodard & Curran
Cooler Communities

Funding

The Town is especially grateful for the *Hatfield 2040* funding provided by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs through their Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Program.

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Introduction

Hatfield 2040 Vision

The many conversations among Hatfield residents involved in start to finish of this plan, and the ideas and thoughts contributed by many others along the way, have given rise to a clear vision. Articulated and approved by the members of the Hatfield 2040 Comprehensive Planning Committee, it reads as follows:

“Hatfield aspires to preserve its rural charm, strong community bonds, and exceptional quality of life, while embracing sustainable growth and inclusive practices to ensure a vibrant and resilient future for all.”

This vision is grounded in holding close all that residents treasure most about place and community while also tending to the key elements that will reduce vulnerability and increase strength for all who call this place along the Connecticut River “home.” Achieving this vision is guided by the 33 goals within this plan.

Plan Organization

Hatfield 2040 Comprehensive Plan: A Vision to Protect, Prepare, and Prosper is organized in two parts:

- Action Plan that in addition to this Introduction, includes seven elements, based on crosscutting themes from the content in plan chapters. These include:
 - Making Room for the River;
 - Together as Community – Welcoming and Supportive for All;
 - A Thriving Local Economy;
 - Affordable Homes and Vibrant Neighborhoods;
 - A Capable and Resilient Local Government;
 - Our Natural Resources;
 - Health and Wellness

The Action Plan also includes a full summary matrix of all *Hatfield 2040* goals and actions.

- Appendixes, which include a poster to be printed and displayed around Town to keep *Hatfield 2040* priorities front and center; all nine chapters that inform the Action Plan and which were developed as part of complying with MGL Chapter 41, Section 81D (requiring planning boards to develop such content); and summaries of all community engagement activities.

Planning Process and Engagement

The work of developing the *Hatfield 2040 Comprehensive Plan: A Vision to Protect, Prepare, and Prosper* occurred over a 19-month period, from December 2022 to June 2024 with a team of 14 passionate and devoted residents who together represent nearly every Town board and committee, and Town Administrator Marlene Michonski.

To help with planning, the Town hired a consulting team that included: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), Regenerative Design Group, Woodard & Curran, D-Pict, and the Consensus Building Institute. Cooler Communities, a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, collaborated to align their curriculum work in the schools with the *Hatfield 2040* process.



Hatfield 2040 Comprehensive Plan Committee members take a moment for a photo during their May 2024 meeting. Shown from left to right are: John Pease, Agricultural Commission; Co-chair Shawn Robinson, Council on Aging; Angelika Dewey, Open Space Committee; Christopher Smith, Redevelopment Committee; David Keir, At Large Member; Julia Frisby, At Large Member; Mike Bartlett, Community Preservation Committee; Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Micki Sanderson, Historical Commission; and Stephanie Slys, Planning Board. Committee members not appearing in photo are: Garret Barry, Public Works; Rebecca Bench, School Committee; Jalil Johnson, At Large Member; Jon Kostek, Recreation Committee; and Luke Longstreeth, Conservation Commission.

Generally, the project's first seven months involved data collection and a robust community engagement process around key planning topics. Of foremost importance in the data collection was work by consulting team members from Woodard & Curran to evaluate present and future flood risk to Hatfield from the Connecticut River. (See more in section below on Climate Change Risks). The community engagement process coordinated by the consulting team began in this period and continued throughout the course of the project to deeply inform the plan. This included a special effort to reach older residents, youth, and farmers. Engagement work entailed the following:

- Ongoing regular meetings of the Comprehensive Planning Committee with a total of 12 meetings to help direct plan development.
- A specialized climate curriculum program in the spring of 2023 for which teachers and students explored several Hatfield related topics, including a climate survey designed by students for students to gauge perceptions around climate change, degree of concern, and sense of agency in taking action.

Goals and objectives for Hatfield 2040 planning process

The overarching goal in developing a climate smart comprehensive plan has been to define a community vision and actions that can shape a resilient future for Hatfield. Seven objectives have been critical to realizing this goal:

- Get a better sense of how Connecticut River flows will impact Hatfield as climate changes
- Promote better understanding across Hatfield about the climate change impacts to be anticipated
- Engage more deeply with certain sectors in Town, especially seniors and farmers
- Create a forum for open dialogue within the community about how best to adapt
- Use both words and graphics to show major ideas and priorities from public engagement, as well actions identified in the final plan
- Advance dialogue on how best to advance adaption and mitigation within specific arenas (reflected by each chapter)
- Prioritize actions with estimated timeline and recommended resources so that Hatfield can immediately take next steps

Above list first appeared in Hatfield's 2022 proposal submitted to the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant program for funding to undertake planning for Hatfield 2040.

- A listening session and survey in spring of 2023, one-on-one interviews in fall of 2023, and a workshop in early spring of 2024 with Hatfield farmers to understand greatest concerns and shared experiences and to explore implementable pathways to overcoming challenges.
- A listening session and survey in the spring of 2023 with Hatfield's older adults to understand greatest assets and greatest challenges.
- Three town-wide opportunities to share thoughts about Hatfield's present and future. These included two events in the spring of 2023, one held virtually and the other held in-person at Black Birch Vineyard, and a community-wide survey during June 2023.
- 18 meetings of chapter working groups throughout the fall of 2023 where

Comprehensive Planning Committee members focused on areas of expertise and interest to help inform the content of each plan chapter: Land Use; Housing; Health and Social Environment, including an age and dementia friendly action plan; Farming; Economic Development; Historic and Cultural Resources; Natural Resources, Open Space, and Recreation; Transportation and Circulation; and Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience.

A project web page, and *Hatfield 2040* promotions at Town elections and Annual Town Meeting, local newspaper articles, and occasional Facebook posts also helped to keep the project in the public eye. Results from all public engagement is threaded throughout this plan. Reporting on outcomes of these efforts is included in the Appendixes.



Farmers gather at a March 2023 listening session to share in conversation about experiences and challenges.

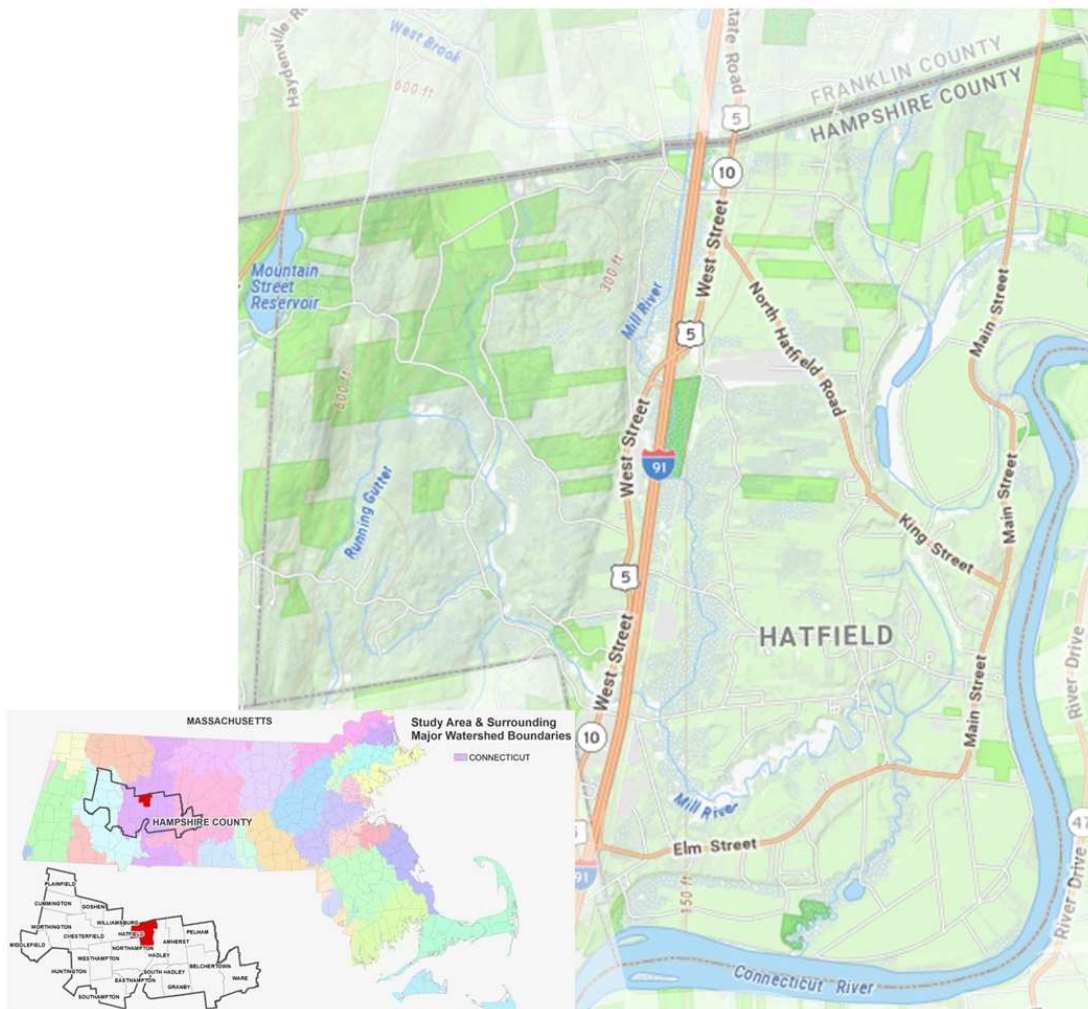
Community Setting

Geography

Located in Massachusetts' Hampshire County, Hatfield encompasses 16 square miles of land on the western side of the Connecticut River. While largely rural in character, Hatfield is located near the urbanized centers of neighboring Northampton and also Springfield, which is 25 miles to the south along Interstate 91.

The Town has a varied topography, from extensive floodplains along the Connecticut

River in the east that rise to rocky forested hills in the western part of Town. The Connecticut River forms the Town's 7.5 mile eastern and southeastern boundary, and the floodplain area includes Great Pond, a remnant of a former river oxbow. The Mill River follows a meandering course southward through Hatfield from the northwest border with Whately to its outlet at the Connecticut River.



Source: MassMapper

The rocky forested hills to the west, are characterized by a thin layer of topsoil. Horse Mountain near Hatfield's western border is the highest point with a summit rising approximately 830 feet above sea level.

Running Gutter Brook tumbles down these hillsides to feed the reservoir of the same name. This reservoir is the Town's primary drinking water source.

History

The Capawonk and Nonotuck or Norwottuck tribes, who were sometimes allied with the Nipmucks to the east or the Pocumtucks to the north, are said to have been the original land occupants around what would become Hatfield. They continued to fish, farm, and hunt in the area after Colonial settlers laid out their properties though many members of these tribes died after exposure to European illnesses such as smallpox introduced to the area by the Colonists.

Today's Hatfield was part of the original 1653 Nontuck grant for Northampton including the southwestern section to Capawonk meadows (Mill River). The Connecticut River meadowland was granted as part of Hadley Plantation in 1659 and described as Hadley West Side by 1660, "secured in three purchases" with the first on July 10, 1660, signed by the sachem Umpanchala and approved by his brother Etowonq, who "reserved for their use the "Chickons of planting Field"...and liberty to hunt and fish, to set wigwams on the common, and to cut trees for use."¹ The second purchase, the meadow called Capawonk, was deeded by Northampton settlers in 1663, and the third was a tract of land deeded from the heirs of Quonquont and signed by his widow Sarah Quanquan, his son Pocunohouse, his daughter Majessit, and Mattatabange and Momecuse for fifty fathoms of wampum."²

Colonial Hatfield was laid out as a linear street village parallel and close to the Connecticut River in eight- and four-acre homelots that extended east and west along what is now the southern end of Main Street. This settlement pattern is still evident in the layout of the Town center today. Colonial settlers traveled across the river to Hadley for church and town meetings from 1661 to 1668 until they built their own Meetinghouse by 1668 and laid out a burial ground in 1669. Hatfield became a separate Parish and town in 1670 with western and northern portions later defined as the towns of Williamsburg and Whately.

Tensions came to a head between the Norwottuck tribes and colonists when King Philip's War quickly spread to western communities, including Hatfield. The war lasted from 1675 to 1676 and involved widespread violence throughout southern New England, including several skirmishes in Hatfield. By the end of the conflict, the remaining local indigenous population had left or been pushed from Hatfield and the greater region and fear from future attacks led to a 1695 act prohibiting trading with Native Americans in Hampshire County and a 1697 General Court Order that any Natives found within 20 miles of the west side of the Connecticut River should be considered enemies and treated as such.³ Over time,

1 Daniel White Wells and Reuben Field Wells. A History of Hatfield, Massachusetts, 1660-1910. Springfield: F.C.H. Gibbons, 1910. Archive.org

<https://archive.org/details/ahistoryhatfiel00wellgoog/page/n8/mode/2up?view=theater>

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

much of the Norwottuck tribes history has been distorted and erased.

Colonial Hatfield grew into an important agricultural community. Major crops included corn, wheat, peas, and flax. The town also had small-scale mills that helped to process the agricultural output, including a cider mill, a grist mill, and the state's first linseed oil mill. By the early 19th century, Hatfield was also noted for its cattle, and for its "broom corn," a type of sorghum grass that was ideal for making brooms. This led to a prosperous broom making industry in Hatfield that lasted throughout the first half of the 19th century. This industry eventually declined due to changes in broom making technology, so by the late 19th century Hatfield's agricultural production had shifted to tobacco. This would

remain a major cash crop for Hatfield for decades, with the Town eventually becoming the state's leading producer of tobacco.

Hatfield's demographics also saw changes during the 19th century. The Town's population nearly doubled, going from 809 residents in 1800 to 1,500 in 1900. Hatfield also became more ethnically diverse as immigrant laborers moved to find work. Over the years, these included Irish immigrants who worked to build the railroad in the 1840s and later settled in Town, along with Germans and French Canadians who worked as farm laborers. Then, in the early 1900s, immigrants from Eastern Europe, including Polish, Slovakian, and Lithuanian immigrants, likewise sought and found work in Hatfield.



A grist mill on the Mill River owned by Daniel Riley was one of several enterprises that helped process agricultural output starting in the Colonial period.. (Photo from Gazette article dated March 23, 1955. Donated by Rachel Marsh to the Hatfield Historical Society)

Development patterns

Hatfield's early colonial development centered along Main Street in the eastern part of town. As the community grew, separate villages emerged, including North Hatfield near the Whately town line. The arrival of the railroad in 1846 helped to spur development along its corridor, including a village near the depot in the southwestern part of Hatfield. The rocky forested hills of West Hatfield remained largely undeveloped, with 19th century maps showing no houses and only a few roads in that part of town.

Just as the arrival of the railroad influenced the development patterns in 19th century Hatfield, so too did automobiles during the 20th century. In 1922, the six New England states established a system of numbered routes, which served as a precursor to the federal highway system. These New England routes included two main north-south routes through the Connecticut River Valley: Route 10 and Route 2 (modern-day US Route 5). In Hatfield, these two routes (5 and 10) run concurrently on the same roadway parallel to the railroad tracks in the central part of town.

With this route established as the main north-south automobile corridor through the valley, automobile-oriented development along the

roadway quickly followed. This pattern of development continued into the Interstate Highway era, when Interstate 91 was built parallel to Routes 5 and 10 in the 1960s. As a result, Routes 5 and 10 are now the main commercial section of town. Development in this area also includes warehouses and related businesses, which benefit from close proximity to the interstate highway exits.

Although automobile traffic and Interstate 91 have brought changes to this part of Hatfield, the highway bypasses the historic town center, which is located more than a mile to the east. Consequently, the Town center remains largely free of automobile-oriented development and has retained much of its historic character, with a Main Street that is lined with 18th and 19th century homes and surrounded by agricultural lands.

To the west of Interstate 91, the rocky hillsides of West Hatfield have remained sparsely developed. This part of the town remains primarily forested, and it includes large tracts of protected land, particularly in the northwestern corner of Hatfield, in the vicinity of Northampton's Mountain Street Reservoir.

Demographics

As of 2021, Hatfield had a population of 3,330 and the Town has seen only moderate population growth with an increase of 10% since 1980. Some of this may be due to constraints on development with large remaining developable areas located either within the 100-year floodplain or in the hilly and rocky terrain of West Hatfield.

There are 1,490 households in Hatfield, with an average of 2.19 people per household. There are approximately 198 people per square mile, which is considerably lower than the density of Northampton to the south, yet

much higher than the neighboring towns of Whately and Williamsburg to the north and west, respectively.

The racial composition of Hatfield is 89.8% white, 1.5% Asian, and 0.8% Native American. Approximately 4% of residents identify as another race and another 3.9% identify as two or more races.

Similar to most communities in the region, state, and nation, Hatfield's population is aging. Between 2015 and 2021, the sector of those 65 and older increased from 18.4% to

23.2%, while the sector under the age of 18 dropped slightly from 16.9% to 16.5% over the same time period. (See Figure 1 below.)

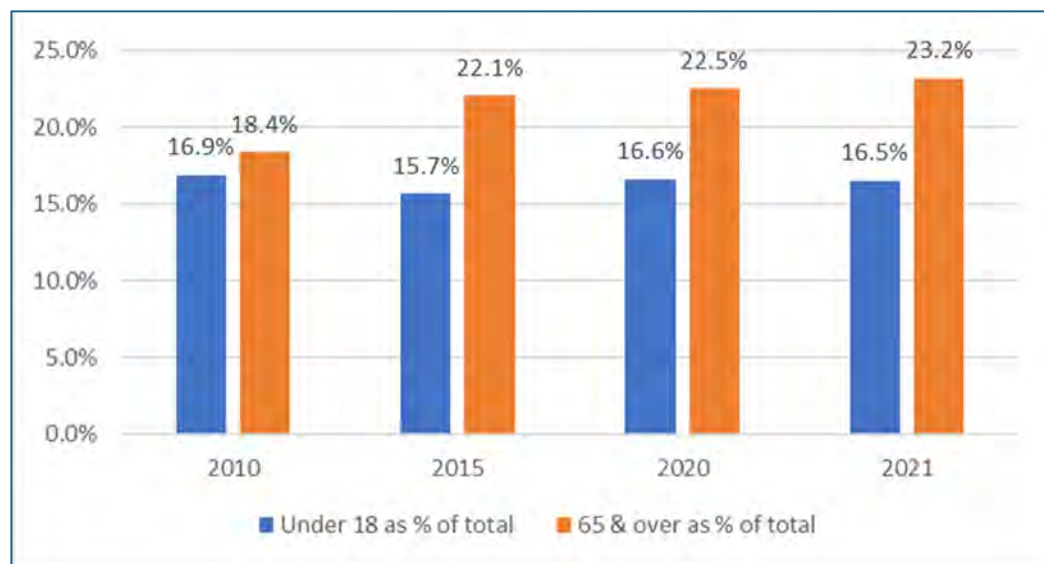
In 2021, the median household income in Hatfield was approximately \$76,688, which is lower than the Hampshire County median of \$76,959, and state-wide median of \$89,026. The existing housing stock in Hatfield is primarily single-family homes. A total of 69.3% of households live in owner-occupied housing units, compared to 30.7% of households that live in rental units.

Hatfield currently has 36 active farms, 21 of which sell commodities wholesale or direct to consumer.⁴ Today, the top three crops in broadacre annual production are potatoes, corn, and hay.⁵ Hatfield is also home to two major agricultural inputs service providers, Helena Agri-Enterprises, LLC (headquartered

in Tennessee) and TurfCare Supply, LLC (headquartered in Ohio). Black Birch Vineyard, a popular agritourism destination, and Good Stock Farm, an award-winning cooking school located on Main Street, draw visitors from across the state. Prospect Meadow Farm, a non-profit therapeutic farming social enterprise run by ServiceNet, Inc, also serves hundreds of families throughout the region.

Hatfield has several major employers. C & S Wholesale Grocers, which has a large warehouse in North Hatfield, employs more than 1,000 people. The vast majority of people employed in Hatfield do not reside in Town, and most Hatfield residents do not work in Town. As of 2021, 91.6% of the people who work in Hatfield live outside of Town, while 89.5% of employed Hatfield residents commute to work outside of Town.⁶

Figure 1 – Residents by Age Category – 2010-21



Source: US Census Table S0101: ACS 5-year estimates.

⁴ USDA/NASS 2017 Ag Census. <https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov>. Accessed March 2023. The 2022 Agricultural Census Data was not yet available by zip code at the time of this report.

⁵ USDA/NASS Cropland CROS 2016. <https://croplandcros.scinet.usda.gov>. Accessed March 2023.

⁶ All data in this section is pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Climate Change Risks

The increasing frequency of extreme summer heat, drought, and especially downpours and riverine flooding, have emerged as the greatest current climate impacts with the greatest consequences for Hatfield. The Town's extended shorelines along the Connecticut River and Mill River, a local economy based largely on farming, and historic settlement patterns that have many structures located in flood-prone areas make Hatfield particularly vulnerable.

Farmers, a population that seem to be on the "front lines" of climate change, spoke openly at *Hatfield 2040* engagement events about crop failures with flooding and drought, increasing difficulty of working fields with extreme summer heat, and growing pressures of plant disease, among other issues.

Hatfield does have its history with severe flooding. The years associated with these flood events in the early 20th century are well known: 1928, 1936, and 1938. During this period the loss and destruction of buildings and cropland led to construction of the 2.679-mile levee that runs along the banks of the Connecticut River.

During the *Hatfield 2040* planning process, participants pointed to more recent flooding, particularly in 1960 and 1984. They noted that during these events, like previous events, the Mill River's backwater floods the area inland behind the levee such that water gets trapped behind the levee until floodwaters subside.

The first several meetings of the Comprehensive Planning Committee involved engineering consultants Woodard & Curran showing the magnitude of historic flooding events based on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Connecticut River gauge at Montague City and existing "effective" Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) data from 1978/1980 in comparison to new preliminary updated FEMA data for the Connecticut River.⁷ (See Figures 2, 3 below.) Several important points were raised during these meetings:

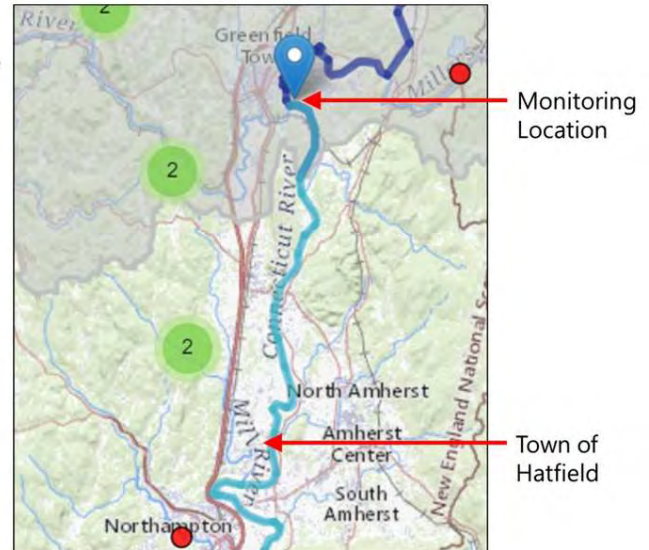
- Effective FEMA Federal Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for Hatfield and Hampshire County date to 1978/1980
- The FEMA Base Flood is commonly referred to as the "100-Year Floodplain" and is the basis for the National Flood Insurance Program
- The 1978/1980 Base Flood is tied to a Connecticut River flow of 180,000 cubic feet per second (CFS), with one CFS being equivalent to the size of a basketball
- FEMA is in the process of updating FIRM maps based on current data that includes re-evaluation of levees
- Re-evaluation of Hatfield's levee indicates it does not provide protection (though several Comprehensive Planning Committee members note it does help to delay flooding)

⁷ Because publicly available flood data for the Connecticut River in Hampshire County remains severely outdated and limited, the project team made best use of several resources in describing flood risk. These resources include the 1978-1980 FEMA effective Flood Insurance Rate Maps, preliminary updated FIRM map information obtained through unofficial channels, and a published 2019 UMass-MassDOT study that analyzes and recommends the use of a 15% increase in projected river flows out to the year 2100. Analysis for the Mill River, which also has flood implications for Hatfield, was not possible within the scope of this planning project, but is an important recommendation coming out of this plan.

- Preliminary updated FEMA mapping indicates that what was once the 500-year floodplain, is now essentially the 100-year floodplain
- While the preliminary updated FEMA mapping only changes the Base Flood from 180,000 to 182,000, there is more flooding occurring in these preliminary updated maps with 2 to 3-foot increase in the Base Flood Elevation
- Future flow scenarios based on assumptions from a UMass-MassDOT analysis put the Base Flood at 209,300 CFS

Figure 2: Highest flows from flooding

Year	Highest Flow (cfs)
1936	236,000
1938	195,000
1928	179,000
1913	144,000
1984	143,000
1960	142,000
1949	139,000



At the first meetings of the Comprehensive Planning Committee during 2023, engineering consultants Woodard & Curran showed the level of flow at the location of the USGS Montague City river gauge based on the highs associated with past flood events. Flow is measured in cubic feet per second, with one CFS equivalent to the size of a basketball.

At these early meetings, the Woodard & Curran team also provided a sense of changes in Base Flood Elevations to clarify potential impacts to infrastructure and critical facilities. They used maps showing depth of flooding and did a series of cross sections.

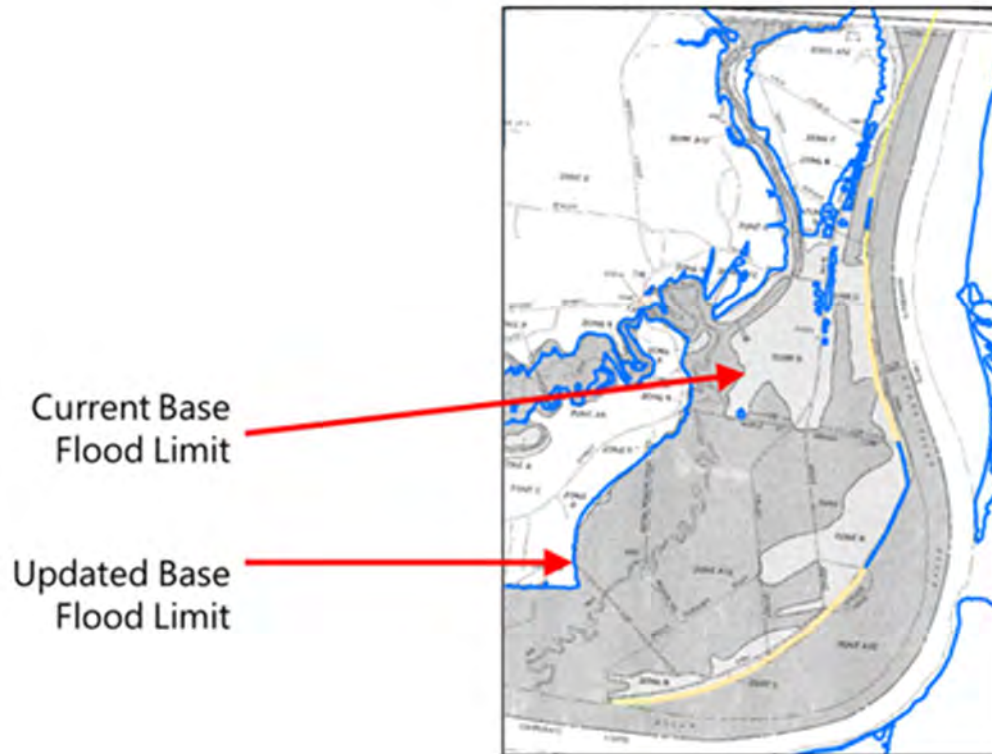
Maps show that depth of flooding in much of the Town Center could be around 3 to 4 feet based on the current updated preliminary base flood scenario and around 5 feet based on the future base flood scenario. (See Figures 4, 5.)

The series of cross sections, show that several critical facilities are at increased risk based on current updated FEMA base flood elevation

data and projected base flood elevations. Of the facilities within the cross sections, those that appear at greatest risk are Hatfield Police and Fire stations, Hatfield Elementary School, the Senior Center at Town Hall, Maple Street Pump Station, and Hatfield Historical Museum/Hatfield Public Library. (See Figure 6 and cross sections 1, 2, 3.)

Because a finished floor elevation for Capawonk Housing for Seniors was not available, Woodard & Curran could not include it in the cross sections. It is important to note there may be other at-risk critical facilities outside of the cross sections.

Figure 3: Updated base flood limits



Engineering consultants Woodard & Curran also compared the current 1978/1980 base flood limit to the updated “base flood” limit (also known as the “100-year floodplain” and “1 percent annual chance flood”). This updated boundary indicates much higher flood risk to the Town center and critical facilities.

All information relative to flooding presented by Woodard & Curran was shared beyond the membership of the Comprehensive Planning Committee through the *Hatfield 2040* website and through community engagement events on May 31 and June 10, 2023. Due to its importance to Hatfield’s future, considerations of flooding have also been threaded throughout this plan.

As if to underscore the considerations of flooding for Hatfield (and other communities along the Connecticut River), July 2023 brought nearly 14 inches of rain.⁸ This was

preceded by several saturating rainfall events in late June. Flows reached 99,300 CFS at the Montague City river gauge,⁹ causing widespread destruction of farm fields and crops. Smiarowski Farm for example, reported a loss of 200 acres of potatoes.¹⁰ At least nine Hatfield farms received emergency relief funds from the MA Natural Disaster Recovery (NDR) Program for Agriculture, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) named Hampshire County in its designation of Primary Natural Disaster Areas.

⁸ Based on NOAA rain gauge data at Sunderland, MA, (closest gauge to Hatfield) for July 2023 rainfall.

⁹ Based on USGS Water Year Summary for the Montague City gauge, which for July 11 recorded 99,300 cfs and July 12 recorded 85,400 cfs.

¹⁰ Bernie Smiarowski on New England Public Radio.

Figure 4: 182,000 cfs FEMA Base Flood Scenario

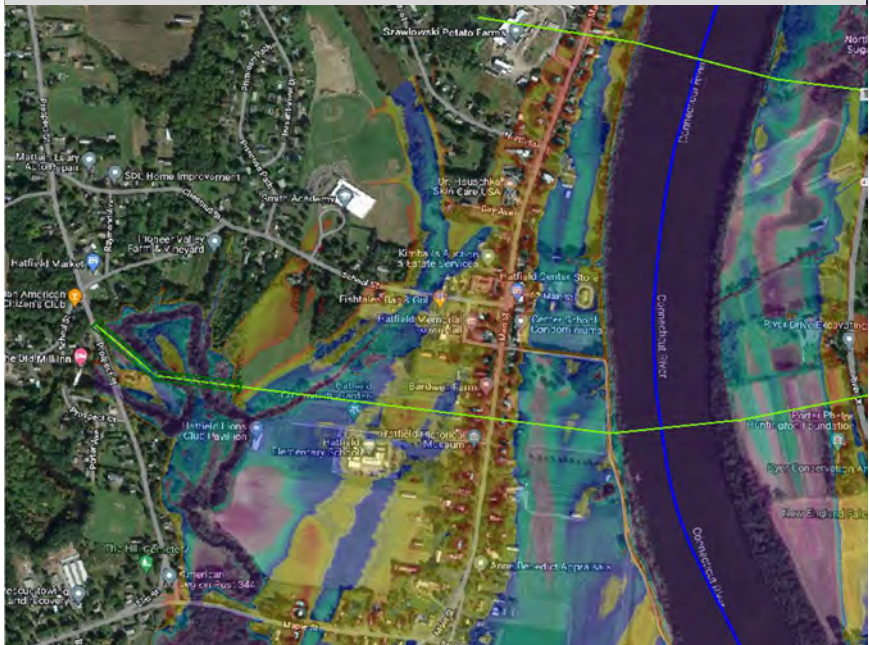
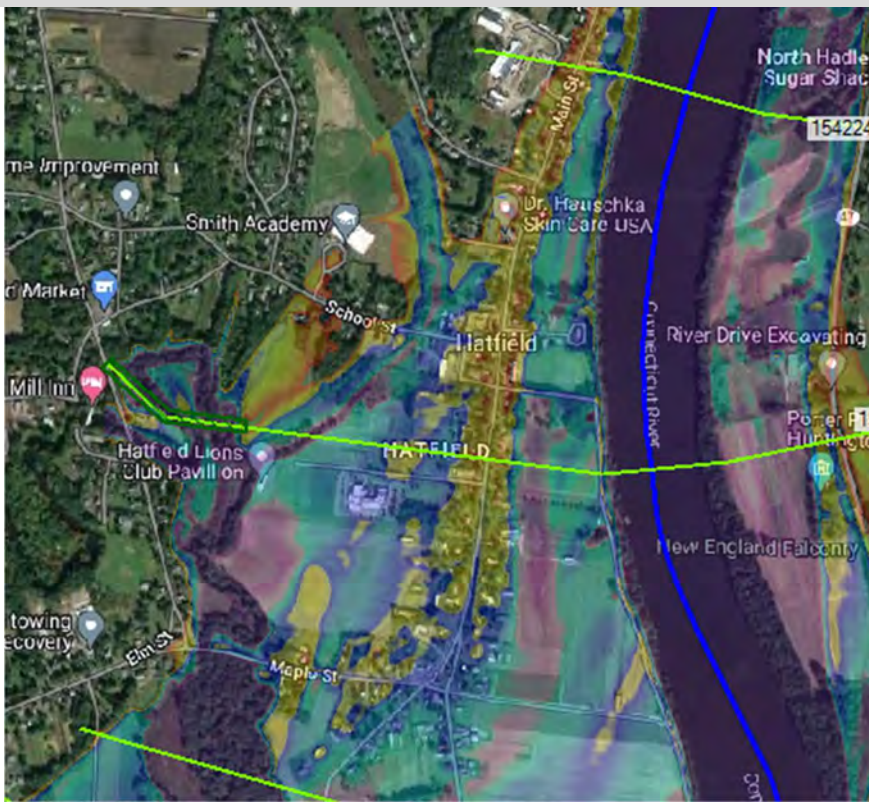


Figure 5: 209,300 cfs Future Base Flood Scenario



Feet

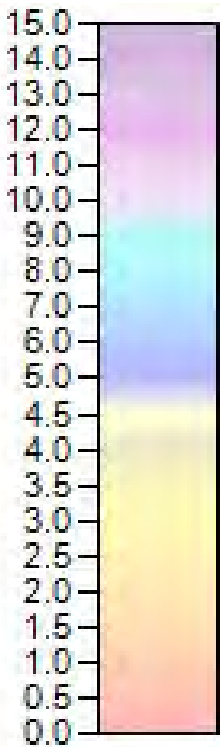
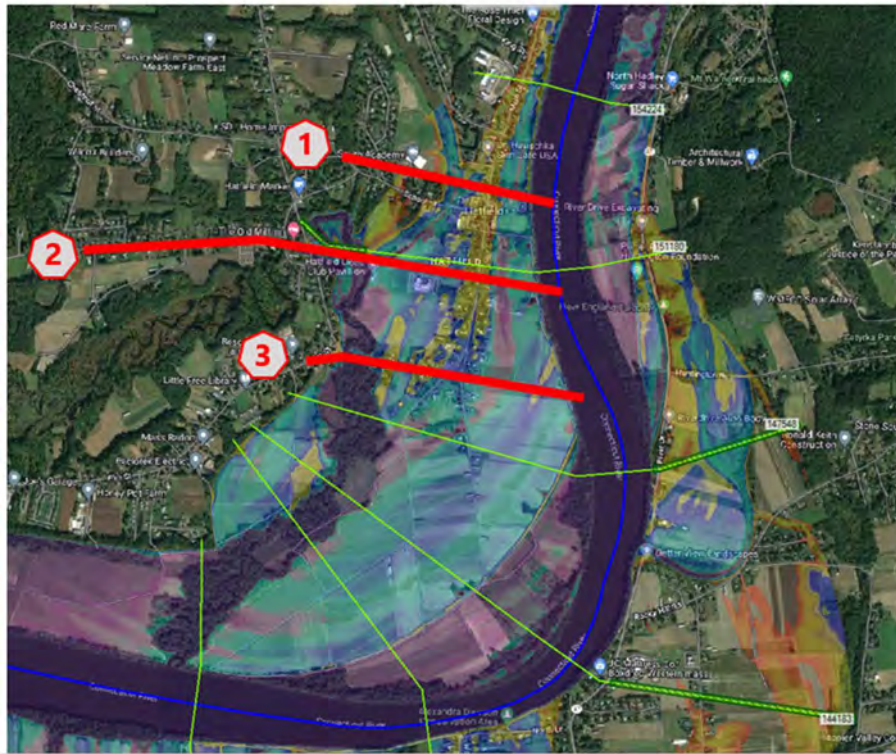
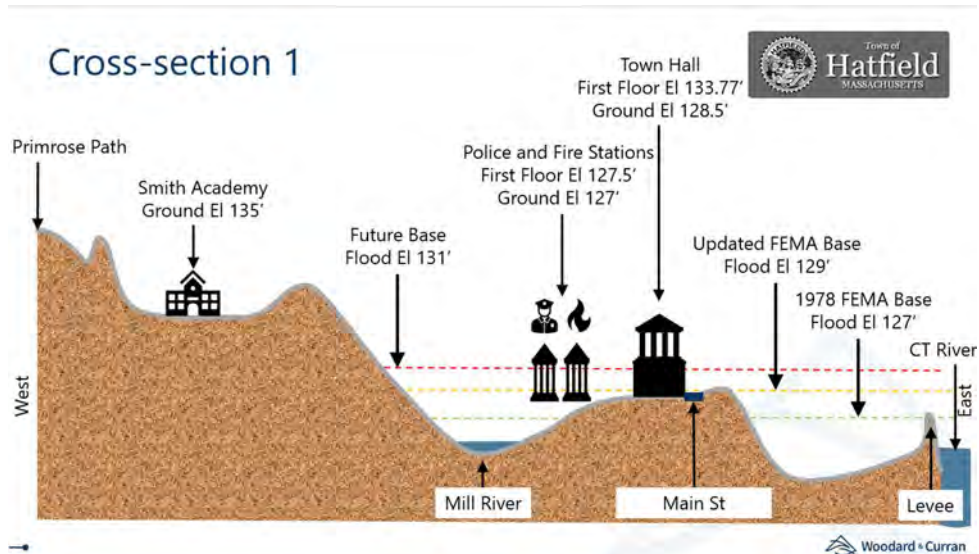


Figure 6: Locations of cross-sections

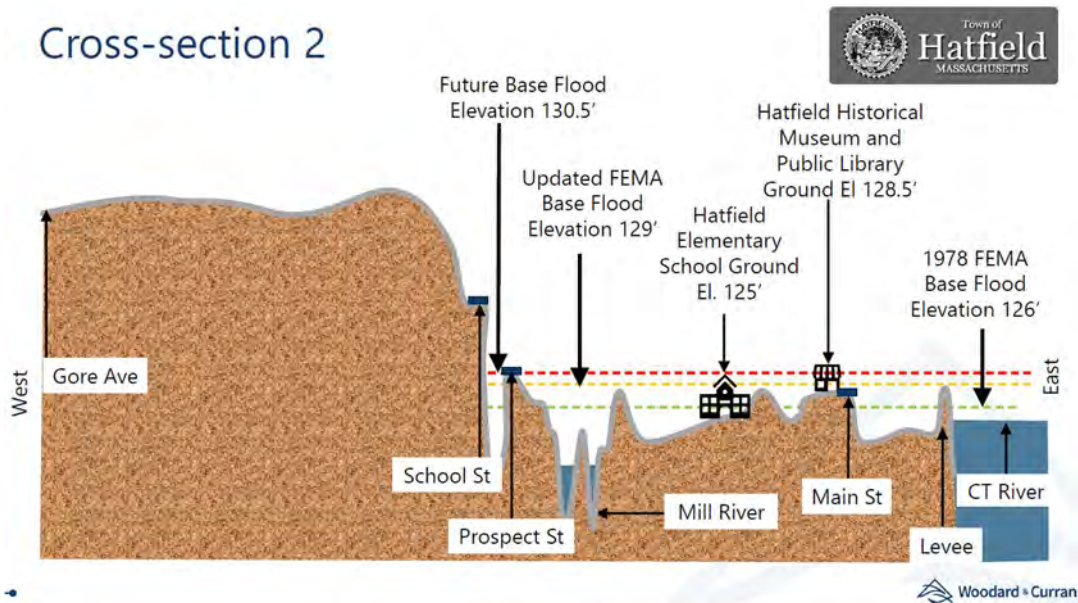


Based on recommendations from the Comprehensive Planning Committee, Woodard & Curran prepared a cross-section analysis to include the following critical areas within Hatfield: 1. Chestnut Street to School Street to Town Hall/Main Street to Levee to CT River; 2. Bridge Street to Elementary School to Main Street to Levee to CT River; and 3. Elm Street to Maple Street to Levee to CT River.



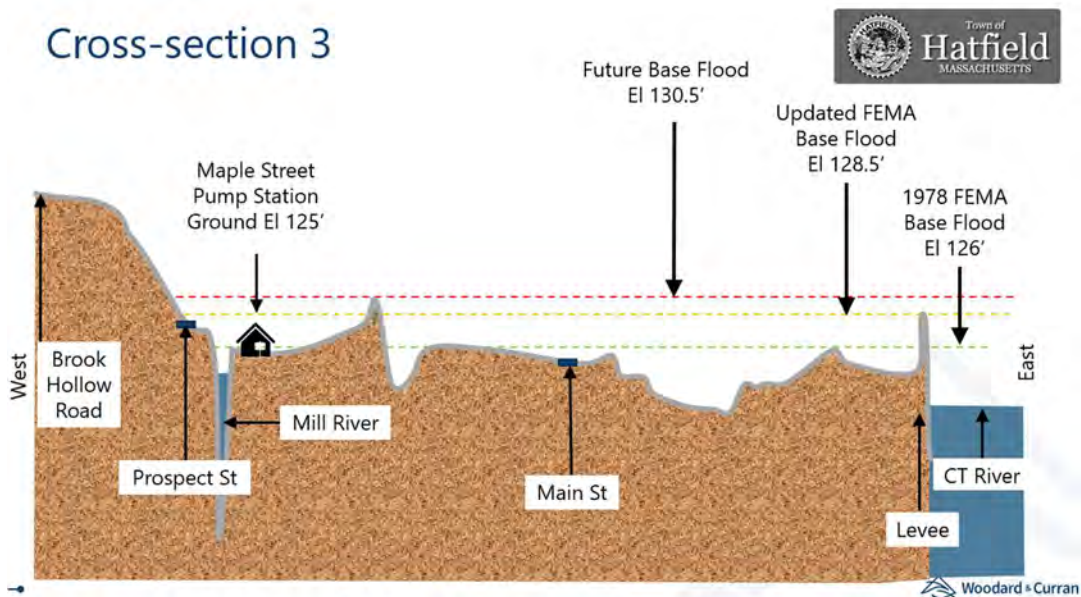
Cross section 1 shows that the Hatfield Police and Fire stations are the most at risk facilities in terms of current updated and projected base flood elevations, and that the levee provides limited protection. The Senior Center, located in the basement of Town Hall, is also at risk. Capawonk Housing for Seniors, also located in this area, is another critical facility. A finished floor elevation, however, was not available at the time of this analysis.

Cross-section 2



Cross section 2 shows that Hatfield Elementary School is the most at risk facility in terms of past, updated current, and projected base flood elevations. The Hatfield Historical Museum and Hatfield Public Library are also at risk in terms of the current updated and projected base flood elevations.

Cross-section 3



Cross section 3 shows that Main Street in this location and the Maple Street Pump Station are at risk in terms of past, updated current, and projected base flood elevations.

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Making Room for the River

Overview

Increased risk of flooding from the Connecticut River has been a major theme in nearly all *Hatfield 2040* conversations. Among those involved in the planning effort, farmers have an especially keen awareness of the trend toward greater extremes in weather, specifically downpours and higher flows in local streams and rivers, though drought and summer heat are also factors.

Comprehensive plan chapters highlight the significant flood risks for Hatfield with a large portion of the town center—including critical facilities, farmland, and historic resources—located within the 100 and 500-year floodplains of the Connecticut River. The growing frequency and severity of flooding due to climate change is a major concern. (For a full description of Hatfield’s climate-related risks, see section on *Community Setting* above.)

Strategies discussed to minimize risk are multi-fold, including maintaining and protecting the existing levee and devising barriers and maximizing resilience in other ways where it makes sense. The conversation, however, has centered on the idea of getting critical facilities out of harm’s way and preserving those areas best suited to absorbing and reducing flood flow impacts, essentially “making room for the river.”¹ Comprehensive Plan Committee members stressed that emphasis must be on prevention rather than reaction. This sensibility involves a proactive

¹ The concept of “making room for the river” originated with the Netherlands where the Dutch have embarked on a new solution following devastating floods in the 1990s. Their program has focused on creating the space rivers will need in coming decades due to higher discharges forecasted with changes in climate. Rather than continuing to invest in their age-old approach to raising the height of dikes, the government decided to enhance floodplain capacity. Major approaches include relocating dikes further from the river thus removing the “bottlenecks” created by dikes, lowering the levels of flood plains, increasing the depth of side channels, and constructing flood bypasses. For more information see: <https://www.dutchwatersector.com/news/room-for-the-river-programme>

approach to flood risk management. By strategically relocating certain facilities outside of the Connecticut River's floodplain and restoring—where possible—flood storage capacity, Hatfield can reduce its vulnerability.

Such an approach also involves restricting new floodplain development through zoning and judicious permitting, acquiring flood-prone properties to create a protective greenbelt, concentrating growth in compact village centers above the floodplain, evaluating the condition of infrastructure that could increase risk, such as poor condition dams, and deploying green infrastructure stormwater management strategies across Town where soils are best suited to help absorb rainfall. Making room for the river enables a better balance between human land use needs and natural flooding patterns, creating a more sustainable coexistence between Hatfield and its defining landscape feature.

Perhaps most importantly, those involved in the *Hatfield 2040* planning process recognize that rivers connect many communities. This is not a space where it makes sense to “go it alone.” Joining with other communities to address flooding is increasingly important. There may be upstream opportunities to better manage flood flows that mitigate flood impacts on downstream communities. At the same time, activities in one community seeking to protect itself from flood flows could have negative impacts on adjacent communities. Taking a complete view on a regional basis can get communities working on solutions together that are of mutual benefit. On the Mill River, collaboration with Conway, Deerfield, Whately, and Williamsburg might be possible.² And while the Connecticut River is a vast watershed, spanning 4 states, there may be opportunities for collaboration or even united action within the Massachusetts stretch to help reduce flood flow impacts and better protect Hatfield’s residents, economy, infrastructure, historic character and natural resources.

Key Points

Content that speaks to Making Room for the River is pulled primarily from chapters on: Farming; Historic and cultural resources; Natural resources, open space and recreation; Transportation and circulation; and Facilities, services, and social resilience.

Responding to the risks of flooding was also a key topic at the June 2023 public gathering and helped to inform chapter content that

raises three key points that pertain to flooding. A summary of these key points follows below with more detailed discussion included in the chapters themselves (see the Appendixes).³

These three key points discussed below include: Addressing climate change for farmers; reducing flood risk to Town-owned facilities; and planning for resiliency of Hatfield’s historic and cultural resources.

² One first step in a collaboration could involve river corridor mapping along the lines of what Vermont and river communities have done. See: https://www.nawm.org/pdf_lib/member_webinar/river_corridor_mapping_application_vermont_052621_alexander.pdf

³ More discussion about the threat of flooding is included in the above section entitled *Community Setting*.



Graphic depiction showing content of conversation around Hatfield's flood risk from the June 2023 public engagement event.

Addressing climate change for farmers

The threat of climate change impacts to crop yields and agricultural productivity is among the most “urgent impacts” identified by the *Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment* for the Greater Connecticut River Valley.⁴ For Hatfield, where farming is at the heart of the local economy and about 25% of the Town's area is devoted to agriculture, this issue cuts deep through the community.

More than one third (35%) of Hatfield's crop and pastureland is within the 100-year flood plain of the Connecticut and Mill rivers and an additional 30% is within the 500-year flood plain based on the 1980 FEMA effective

Federal Insurance Rate Maps. With the increasing frequency of downpours and flood flows in rivers, the risk to farms is only growing.

At the second *Hatfield 2040* workshop for farmers, those gathered ranked strategies that would most help individual farms to adapt and survive and also strategies that would help agriculture as a whole to thrive in Hatfield:

Farmer's top ranked priorities

1. improve drainage
2. improve soil health

⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2022-massachusetts-climate-change-assessment-december-2022-volume-iii-regional-reports/download>. See pages starting at RS15.

3. collaborate on funding opportunities

Top ranked priorities for all Hatfield agriculture

1. re-activate Agricultural Commission
2. encourage public support and advocacy
3. protect farmland
4. improve drainage
5. collaborate on funding opportunities

While several of these priorities are addressed under other action plan elements, namely *Our Natural Resources* and *A Capable and Resilient Local Government*, priorities associated with drainage, soil health, and funding are described further here as they tie most directly to challenges arising with the extremes of climate change and actions toward both mitigating and adapting to those challenges.



Ron and Bernie Smiarowski review potato field damages following July 2023's extreme downpours and Connecticut River flooding.
Photo by Suzanne Kreiter/Globe Staff

Drainage

Of utmost importance to farmers is the poor condition of the old and unmaintained network of agricultural drainage ditches. These ditches were constructed in the late 1800s and early 1900s all along the Connecticut River to turn Hatfield's wet, fertile floodplain into tillable farm fields. The ditches formed an extensive network of drainage channels throughout the "lowlands"

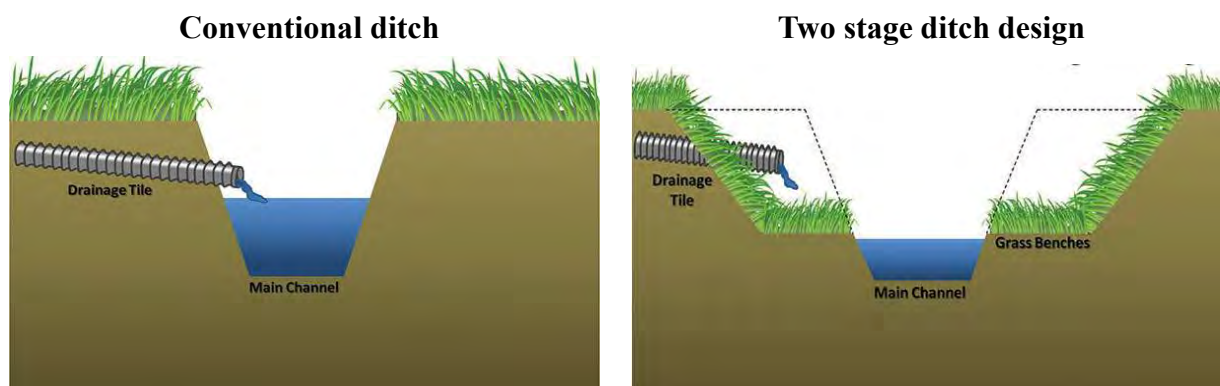
of Hatfield to enable rainfall and flooding to dissipate more quickly. While intended to accommodate the rapid expansion of the local agricultural industry, ditch construction also represented a massive shift in the ecological makeup of lands, including a large-scale removal of trees and other riparian wetland species to create bare open soil for tillage-based annual agriculture.

Over the years, as Hatfield farmland became developed in many places for more residential and commercial uses, many of these ditches became separated from their original farm, overgrown with vegetation and/or filled in with sediment. Where ditches have not been maintained, they provide little relief from the pressures of increased rain and flood events. Farmers have been left without the ability to cultivate some of their fields, suffering significant crop losses when they do attempt to plant them.

Furthermore, wetlands protection laws in Massachusetts can complicate matters when old ditches not on continuously farmed land are re-classified as wetlands, with costly penalties for disturbance.⁵ Farmers are unwilling to risk conflict with conservation

officials yet are left with few options to restore the drainage systems, especially when the ditches are no longer on their land. This conflict between conservation and agriculture over the maintenance of these ditches remains unresolved in many floodplain communities along the Connecticut River.

There may be innovative options to achieve multiple ends when it comes to the network of ditches. In some cases, it may make sense to support such ditches reverting back to wetlands given the values of wetlands in acting as “sponges” for flood flows.⁶ On the other hand, ditches deemed as priority for helping to drain agricultural lands could be restored in a way that reduces runoff and better controls erosion through use of what is known as a two-stage ditch. This type of



Source: Kobel, R. *Two-stage Ditch Design*. University of Notre Dame Environmental Change Initiative, 2015.⁷

⁵ Maintenance of agricultural ditches is exempt under 310 CMR 10.04 for “Land in Agricultural Use.” Where ditches are not part of land in agricultural use, however, maintenance requires permitting under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act.

⁶ The longest river in the state, Otter Creek swelled and flooded the City of Rutland causing heavy damages during Tropical Storm Irene. Middlebury, a town located 30 miles downstream from Rutland, was spared from such damages due to a vast network of floodplains and wetlands that served to slow and absorb Otter Creek’s extreme flows before reaching the town. While peak discharge for Otter Creek in Rutland was 15,700 cubic feet per second, peak discharge dissipated to 6,180 cubic feet per second by the time it reached Middlebury. See report at:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S092180091630595X>

⁷ <https://environmentalchange.nd.edu/news-events/news/farmers-reduce-pollution-after-ditching-old-way-of-handling-runoff/>

ditch consists of a wide “bench” of vegetation on each side of the channel to slow flows, reduce erosion, and improve water quality (see diagrams below). Going forward, a necessary first step will be careful assessment

Soil health

Hatfield’s greatest agricultural asset are its floodplain soils, of which 37% (4,001 acres) are classified as prime farmland. They consist of fine silt and sandy loam soils, the majority of which still flood either occasionally or frequently. These lands have been farmed continuously for over 350 years. The advent of broad acre mechanical cultivation and chemical use in the 20th century has caused widespread degradation to soil structure, biology, and carbon content.

After multiple generations of families farming Hatfield’s meadows and floodplain terraces, local farmers today cite soil fertility and soil health as a key issue impacting agricultural production. Due to the relative unavailability of land and slim profit margins, fields are rarely allowed any period of rest. The economic pressure to maximize yield each year discourages farmers from taking fields out of production or investing in what seem like expensive new strategies like cover cropping. Instead, land swapping is becoming a more common practice between farms to better rotate field crops. The vast majority of currently cultivated soils nevertheless show signs of degradation after centuries of regular disturbance.

Soil organic carbon (SOC) stocks, a measurable component of soil organic matter, are currently estimated to be medium or low in most areas of town. This means structural stability has been compromised so that soils are limited in their capacity to absorb rainfall and also highly erodible.

Many farmers in the Connecticut River Valley are beginning to explore novel cultivation techniques such as low-till farming and cover

of the ditch and drainage network to sort out which ditches remain vital for agricultural production and which could potentially serve as restored wetland.

cropping that reduce the negative impact of industrial farming and help to conserve and rebuild the rich agricultural soils. These practices are also becoming vital measures to both mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. Not only do such practices help to enhance crop yields, but they also increase the capacity of soils both to sequester carbon (an important role in reducing climate impacts) and to hold and infiltrate more rainfall (which reduces stormwater runoff and better controls erosion of soils). Some of the strategies discussed during the *Hatfield 2040* planning process and the two farmers workshops have been:

- using cover crops and intercropping to keep living roots in the soil year round that in turn reduces erosion, cycles nutrients, and can fix nitrogen in soils;
- limiting soil disturbance and the use of heavy equipment;
- using contour or keyline plowing to enhance infiltration of water;
- increasing soil organic matter with compost and mulch;
- integrating annual crop, livestock, and tree crop systems; and
- improving pasture forage with perennial crops

To integrate these strategies into current work, farmers will need technical support and funding. Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) is involved in a program with several partner organizations along the eastern U.S. to provide farmers up to \$20,000 worth of technical assistance toward

implementing climate-smart practices. See: <https://climatesmart.org/>

At the same time, CISA hosts local workshops that share out farmer experience on improving

practice. Local incentives could encourage farmers to take advantage of such training opportunities toward improved practice.

Funding

In terms of funding, local farmers involved with the *Hatfield 2040* process talk about the growing availability of resources to address challenges. They emphasize, however, their lack of time and capacity to access resources. At the same time several issues—such as drainage ditch maintenance—might be more effectively addressed through a larger grant that brings in professional assistance to help

with planning and implementation across several farms.

Participating farmers agreed that hiring an agricultural grants manager, perhaps shared between Hatfield and other local farm communities, could be an important pathway to access funds.

CISA's Climate Change and Farming Resource Hub

Key among the resources for farmers is Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), a nonprofit organization that is focused on strengthening farms and engaging community to build the local food economy. At the second *Hatfield 2040* Farm Workshop in March 2024, Stephen Taranto from CISA described the resource hub developed for the region's farmers. The web space draws together a range of useful resources for farms seeking to transition to more climate resilient production, processing, storage and distribution practices. As part of this, CISA has also curated a You Tube page with a Massachusetts and New England-focused collection of playlists that highlight on-farm climate resiliency practices, experiences and case studies.

See: <https://www.buylocalfood.org/resources-for-farmers/climate/> and <https://www.youtube.com/@localhero3685/playlists>

Reducing flood risk to Town-owned facilities

Damage to buildings from both heavy rainfall, when drainage systems are overwhelmed, and flooding, when local rivers overtop their banks, is another most urgent impact identified by the *Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment* for the Greater Connecticut River Valley.⁸

This urgency has particular relevance for Hatfield given the location of the town center within the 1980 FEMA mapped 500-year flood zone. As noted above in the section entitled *Community Setting*, an updated flood risk assessment conducted by consulting engineers at Woodard & Curran shows that the flood zone delineations have shifted to envelope much of the town center now in the 100-year flood zone (also articulated as the 1-percent annual chance flood). It is important to run a similar analysis for the Mill River to further understand risk.

Information to date, indicates increased risk for several critical facilities, including:

- Emergency management, involving the police and fire stations, associated vehicles, and equipment needed for emergency response;
- Town Hall, and particularly the Council on Aging Senior Center located in the basement;

- Hatfield Elementary School, which serves the youngest students in town, from pre-Kindergarten through grade 6;
- Capawonk Housing for the Elderly, a complex of 44 publicly subsidized, single-story housing units managed by the Hatfield Housing Authority;
- Hatfield Historical Museum/Hatfield Public Library;
- Wastewater treatment facility and multiple pump stations in operation, including the Maple Street Pump Station

As the risk of flooding increases with climate change, town-owned facilities in the floodplain are at increased risk of damage that could cause disruption to the functioning of town government and public services. With so many critical resources located in the town center and all facing heightened risk, participants in the *Hatfield 2040* planning process agree that upgrades to increase flood resilience or relocation of critical services to new, consolidated facilities is essential. It has been expressed as both a daunting challenge and exciting opportunity.

⁸ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2022-massachusetts-climate-change-assessment-december-2022-volume-iii-regional-reports/download>. See pages starting at RS15.

Upgrades

For upgrades to increase flood resilience, project consulting engineers Woodard & Curran outlined a suite of four strategies that include:

- Erecting barriers to redirect water from entering a facility
- Wetproofing that allows water to flow through a facility
- Dry proofing to block water from entering a building
- Raising the elevation of a facility to be above projected flood depths

See images on following page.

Hatfield's wastewater treatment plant is in the northeast part of town close to the Connecticut River. The Wastewater Management Plan Report from 2022 confirmed that the finished floor elevation is not compliant with either the 100- or the 500-year flood elevation. It is essential that planned upgrades equipment and facility at the Plant result in a more flood resilient operation. Toward this end, the Town is in the process of finalizing the contract for the long awaited improvements that also take into account addressing risks to flood flows.⁹

Relocation

To begin the conversation about relocating essential services, a thorough examination of existing town-owned properties, and adequate, undeveloped parcels outside of the 500-year floodplain will be needed. The issue of funding such an extensive project is also a significant challenge though the focus on planning for the impacts of climate change means that several funding sources might be leveraged to support such an initiative.



Participants in the Hatfield 2040 planning process expressed interest in developing a high-water marker to elevate the story of flooding in Hatfield. The above photo is an example from Hadley.

⁹ As of April 2024.

Erecting barriers



Wetproofing



Dry proofing



Raising elevation



As part of next steps, participants in the *Hatfield 2040* process emphasized the importance of thinking about how municipal facilities and services might be consolidated to save on costs, making better use of underutilized buildings, and even energizing

the community for greater social resilience. One idea that emerged was to consider the feasibility of consolidating a new intergenerational community center with Smith Academy (the middle and high school) and the Council on Aging Senior Center.

Bridges, culverts, and dams

Bridges and culverts are key components of the roadway network. While critical to getting people safely across rivers and streams, culverts and bridges can also become impediments during floods if not properly designed and sized to pass flows occurring with extreme events. Such extreme flows can erode and scour material at the bottom and sides of bridges and culverts and/or become dammed so that they flow over rather than under a roadway, both of which threaten structural integrity.

The majority of bridges located on high-volume roadways such as Route 5 (West Street) fall under the domain of the State and are inspected by MassDOT. The

state uses a 100-point scale system that measures the Bridge Health Index (BHI). BHI is a weighted average of the health indices of all bridge elements (e.g., trusses, decks, bridge rails, etc.) to provide a comprehensive overview of the condition of bridges. A value of zero indicates that all the bridge elements are in the worst condition, and a score of 85 or greater indicates that the bridge elements are in good condition. In the Pioneer Valley Region, approximately 9% of bridges are structurally deficient. Structurally deficient bridges are not categorically unsafe for use, but posted weight limits may be necessary to ensure safety on some bridges.

Chemical Facilities

Though not Town owned, there are at least two facilities in Hatfield that handle hazardous materials and where flooding would have serious consequences. Both facilities are located just upgradient of the FEMA 1980 mapped 500-year floodplain, but forthcoming updated flood delineations may put these facilities at greater risk. These include Helena Agri Enterprises, a wholesaler of chemicals and fertilizers, located on Elm Street, and Turf Care Supply on Dwight Street. Precautions should be taken at both chemical facilities to prevent flooding from causing a chemical spill. For more information including a map of toxics users, see the state's website on "Chemical Safety and Climate Change Preparedness Resources for Local Governments" at: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/chemical-safety-and-climate-change-preparedness-resources-for-local-governments#-sample-emergency-planning-and-continuity-planning-%20tools->

In 2024, the only structurally deficient bridge in Hatfield is on Elm Street over the railroad. MassDOT is replacing the bridge with a structure meeting current design standards. This project will also evaluate, and address needed improvements for the intersection of Elm Street with the Interstate 91 Northbound ramps. The project is in the preliminary design phase with an estimated cost of \$21.3 million.

To assist municipalities with the repair or replacement of bridges that are not eligible for federal aid funding programs, Massachusetts implemented the Small Bridge Program in 2016. The program provides reimbursable assistance of up to \$500,000 per year for work on bridges with spans of 10 to 20 feet.

As for culverts, there are 11 known problem culverts in Hatfield identified in the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021). These are:

- Depot Road (near #73)
- North Hatfield Road (near #115)
- Main Street (near #435)
- King Street (near #19)
- North Street (near #21)
- Pantry Road (near #155)
- Old Stage Road (Dirt section) #53
Plain Road (Dirt section)
- No houses Plain Road, #54
- Prospect Street (near #131)
- School Street (near #12-#27)



Swollen by July 2023's extreme downpours, the Mill River backs up behind the Prospect Street bridge, inundating a portion of the Old Mill Inn property.

Evaluating culverts and small bridges and devising design updates that will serve the Town in withstanding larger storm events is an important activity. Cross-checking these structures with primary evacuation routes can help in setting priorities. The Town of Belchertown is among several communities in Massachusetts that have used Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action grant funding to assess and analyze local culverts and bridges. Such an analysis identifies existing and future vulnerabilities and enumerates high-priority projects for culvert/bridge replacement.¹⁰

There are several dams of note within Hatfield and outside of town boundaries.

- Two dams are part of Northampton's reservoir system in West Whately and both dams have hazard index ratings of high.¹¹ These are known as the Francis P. Ryan Reservoir Dam and the West Whately Reservoir Dam, both of which are located within the watershed of the Mill River. In the event of a failure at

these structures, Routes 5 and 10 would be impacted.

- The D.F. Riley Grist Mill Dam is on the Mill River just above Prospect Street, which has a hazard index rating of significant.¹² The Office of Dam Safety has reported that this dam is in "unsafe" condition and that they have issued a letter of non-compliance to the owner.
- The Hatfield Reservoir Dam (aka the Running Gutter Reservoir Dam) is "non jurisdictional," meaning that the dam is of a low enough height and impounds a low enough volume of water that it does not require regulatory oversight by the Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety.

Understanding and following status and condition of the high and significant dams structures that could impact Hatfield is critically important. Most dam structures in the region were built long ago and not necessarily designed to manage the challenges of increased frequency of downpours with associated flood flows.

Connecticut River levee

Hatfield's most significant flood control structure is the 2.67-mile levee along the banks of the Connecticut River (see map of levee below). Since its construction in 1938 this earthen levee has provided some protection from Connecticut River flooding. It

was noted during *Hatfield 2040* discussions that the levee serves more to delay flood waters than prevent flood waters from reaching the town and that waters that get in behind the levee can take time to drain after a flood. The Federal Emergency Management

¹⁰ See Belchertown study at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/road-stream-crossing-assessment-technical-memorandum/download>

See also recent state report at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-culverts-and-small-bridges-working-group-report/download>

¹¹ Dams with a hazard index rating of high are dams located where failure will likely cause loss of life and serious damage to home(s), industrial or commercial facilities, important public utilities, main highway(s) or railroad(s). Source: 302 CMR 10.06.

¹² Dams with a hazard index rating of significant are dams located where failure may cause loss of life and damage to home(s), industrial or commercial facilities, secondary highway(s) or railroad(s) or cause interruption of use or service of relatively important facilities. Source: 302 CMR 10.06.

Agency has indicated that with the updated flood insurance rate maps (in process currently), the levee will not be credited with reducing the hazard from flooding. At the same time, the Army Corps of Engineers National Levee Database indicates that the

Town is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the levee. An operation and maintenance manual prepared by engineering consultant Woodard & Curran provides guidance for the Town in supporting the levee's performance.

Silver Jackets

Participants in the Hatfield 2040 planning process have expressed interest in getting help from the Silver Jackets, a program managed under the US Army Corps of Engineers National Flood Risk Management Program.



The Massachusetts Team of the Silver Jackets involves representatives from Federal and State agencies that engage in a collaborative process of strategic and integrated mitigation and adaptation actions to reduce the threat, vulnerability and consequences of flooding. Each year, the Silver Jackets program offers technical assistance opportunities to address a range of “nonstructural” flood resilience activities, including: developing flood education toolkits; establishing high water marks on publicly visible and publicly owned property; integrating existing and new data to assess vulnerabilities and develop a flood risk action plan; and developing a historical structure flood hazard vulnerability assessment.

Community Rating System

As a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program with 34 properties enrolled for federal insurance coverage, Hatfield could also join in the Community Rating System, which qualifies communities to receive a classification rating that corresponds to insurance discounts. The program essentially provides flood insurance premium discounts for communities that go “above and beyond” the National Flood Insurance Program minimum standards. There are 19 creditable activities, which involve minimizing flood risk for new development, including preserving open space, protecting natural floodplain functions, promoting higher

regulatory standards and regulating new development in the floodplain, and regulating development in the watershed.

CRS activities are organized into four categories: Public Information; Mapping and Regulations; Flood Damage Reduction; and Warning and Response.

Twenty-five Massachusetts communities participate and have discounts between 5 and 20%. Northampton is currently the only Western MA community enrolled in the CRS program, getting insurers a 10% discount.

Planning for resiliency of Hatfield's historic and cultural resources

A History of Hatfield published in 1910 notes, "The history of a town is the story of the lives of its inhabitants, the rearing of the structure upon the foundations laid by its first settlers." This story extends from the earliest known human inhabitants, Capawonk and Nonotuck, or Norwottuck tribes, who fished, hunted, and farmed the waters and lands around what came to be known as Hatfield to the Colonial settlers who laid out a linear street village in

eight and four acre homelots that extended east - west along what is now the southern end of Main Street to the community of people who today call Hatfield "home."

Many of Hatfield's historic streetscapes and landscapes, built resources, and collections that are indeed records of this story, are vulnerable to damage or loss due to extreme weather conditions, particularly flooding.

Vulnerability

Back in time, it was imagined that the Connecticut River "was probably much the same in appearance then as now, with its banks fringed with trees and bushes, its sand bars and stretches of sandy beach, its every shifting channel and its destructive tendencies in time of flood."¹³

As noted previously, flood risk has increased with the greater frequency of downpours occurring due to climate change. Many of Hatfield's historic and cultural resources are located in flood zone areas. See the map on following page. These include:

- Four out of Hatfield's eight districts on the National Register of Historic Places, involving hundreds of properties, including the:
 - Old Mill Site Historic District
 - Upper Main Street Historic District
 - Hatfield Center Historic District
 - Bradstreet Historic District¹⁴
- Dickinson Memorial Hall, which houses the Hatfield Historical Museum on second

floor, including an extensive collection of archives and material culture from the 17th to 20th centuries that help to tell the story of Hatfield.¹⁵

- The Hatfield Farm Museum, located in a tobacco shed, which has a collection of farm tools primarily from the 19th and early 20th centuries as well as other items related to the Town's history.

Based on known presence of Native Americans, there may also be other important archaeological sites in the flood zone, but access to this information is restricted on the state data base and only available in permitting processes. The 1982 *Massachusetts Historical Commission Reconnaissance Report* speculates that there was probably extensive Native American settlement in what would become Hatfield, with the fertile lowlands likely attractive due to agricultural potential.¹⁶

¹³ Daniel White Wells and Reuben Field Wells. *A History of Hatfield, 1660-1910*, (Springfield: F.C.H. Gibbons, 1910), 129. *Archive.org*, <https://archive.org/details/ahistoryhatfiel00wellgoog/page/n10/mode/2up?view>

¹⁴ The following districts appear to be located largely outside of the floodplain: North Hatfield Historic District, Elm Street Historic District, Mill-Prospect Street Historic District, and West Hatfield Historic District.

¹⁶ <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcupdf/townreports/CT-Valley/htf.pdf>

Resiliency planning

Hatfield 2040 conversations about the Town's historic and cultural resources have focused on the need to explore retrofitting existing buildings and facilities as a way to withstand flood risk and identifying optimal locations for storage of valuable records and artifacts to ensure long-term protection for current and future generations.

Retrofitting historic buildings and facilities would include many of the strategies suggested above under consideration for municipal facilities in the Town Center: erecting barriers, wet proofing, dry proofing, and raising elevation where it makes sense. First steps would entail exploring best floodproofing options suitable for specific building types and locations, as well as obtaining cost estimates for the work. At the same time, there may be possibilities to redesign hardscapes so that they can absorb water and help to mitigate flood impacts. While this work would be directed at

strategies for publicly owned historic properties, information could also help other historic property owners in Hatfield.

It may be possible to collaborate regionally, joining with communities that have similar flood risks to historic and cultural resources. Identifying state or federal planning and funding support could be an important part of this joint effort. One such program identified in the course of *Hatfield 2040* planning efforts is the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Massachusetts Silver Jackets team. On Cape Cod, the Cape Cod Commission is working with the Silver Jackets team to evaluate historic structures in flood areas and develop guidelines for historic protection and preservation. The aim is to reduce immediate and long-term flood risk for historic and culturally prized structures with recommended strategies for floodproofing that are consistent with historic resource protection.¹⁷

Emergency preparedness

Given the threats posed to cultural and historic resources, the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) developed a framework that serves as an action plan for building alliances between cultural institutions and emergency management agencies as they prepare for area-wide disasters. The NEDCC website notes, "Every state has standard emergency management systems already in place on multiple levels—federal, state, tribal, and local—to protect and preserve life and property. COSTEP helps integrate cultural resources into existing state-

level emergency management structures and protocols."¹⁸

Hatfield 2040 participants involved in the conversation about historical and cultural resources are interested in learning more about engaging in COSTEP to build relationships among key organizations; mitigate hazards to cultural resources through integration with existing mitigation plans; prepare for emergency response and recovery for cultural resources; and sustain COSTEP by maintaining relationships and adapting to changing circumstances over time.

¹⁷ <https://www.capecodcommission.org/about-us/newsroom/flood-protection-guidelines-to-preserve-cape-cods-historic-structures/>

¹⁸ <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/costep>

Goals and Actions

Address climate challenges for farmers with strong collaborations and partnerships

Farming chapter

Primary responsibility: Agricultural Commission (lead); Selectboard; Conservation Commission

Possible resources for assistance and/or funding: Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA); American Farmland Trust; MA Department of Agricultural Resources; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Land Use Planning Grant

Time to achieve: Long term - next 15 years

- Resolve ditch maintenance and wetlands permitting issues
 - Assess the current drainage ditch network, mapping as to location, drainage areas, problems, and evaluating where appropriate whether possible to restore wetlands, which might in turn help reduce impacts of flood waters
 - Develop a town-wide plan for improvement and restoration
 - Institute bylaw changes (perhaps drawing from Hadley example) that authorizes the Department of Public Works to perform necessary drainage ditch maintenance on private land to prevent undesired water and/or ice from accumulating on roads, ways, and public or private property in the Town
 - Promote innovative management techniques
 - Engage and inform adjacent land owners about the impacts on agriculture when they regrade ditches or fill them with brush and debris
 - Explore incentives for private landowners to maintain high priority drainage ditches, possibly including easements and/or tax breaks
- Seek out opportunities to collaborate and partner with surrounding towns in supporting farmers
 - Support the hiring of an Agricultural Grants Manager to be shared among a group of surrounding towns to help farmers apply for individual grants and coordinate larger multi-farm/collaborative grant opportunities
 - Apply for and/or administer larger USDA grant opportunities to address regional challenges such as flooding, soil compaction, wetland restoration, water quality improvement, etc.
 - Pursue new funding opportunities through MDAR, NRCS, and the Conservation District
- Address soil health improvement and cover crop challenges by facilitating and encouraging improved practice

- Explore the possibility of: tax incentives for farmers who develop and implement a soil health and cover crop plan for 5 consecutive years; paid farmer education and mentorships that build relationships among farmers; and an Agricultural Climate Adaptation Zone that helps to energize and incentivize climate-smart farming practices with a focal point for future adaptation grant funding.

Reduce flood risk to Town-owned facilities

Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience; Transportation and Mobility; and Housing chapters

Primary responsibility: Selectboard (lead); Capital Improvement Plan Committee; Public Works; Finance Committee; Emergency Management Director

Possible resources for assistance and/or funding: Capital Improvement Plan; Army Corps of Engineers – Silver Jackets program; Federal Emergency Management Agency; FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants; MA Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Program Grants; MVP Action Grant; MA Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant

Time to achieve: Medium Term - next 10 years

- Analyze and prioritize relocation or flood resilience upgrades needed for public facilities (i.e., Police and Fire stations, Elementary School, Senior Center, Maple Street Pump Station, Capawonk Senior Housing, and Hatfield Historical Museum/Hatfield Public Library) and other facilities and services most at risk in the flood plain, with an eye toward possibilities to consolidate resources and centralize services.
 - Clarify relocation and flood resilience upgrade efforts needed and identify funding resources and procedures for obtaining aid, and inform residents and local business owners who may also be interested.
 - In exploring relocation of Capawonk Senior Housing, consider possibilities to expand capacity.
 - In exploring relocation of Senior Center, keep in mind possibilities to expand programming to encourage greater use of the facility by the Town's older adult population and the wider community of Hatfield residents. This could possibly connect to actions and strategies related to schools and creating an intergenerational community center.
- Ensure that the new wastewater treatment facility is designed to minimize future flood risk.
- Evaluate (and monitor) the condition of short-span bridges, culverts, and dams, especially where such infrastructure can impact evacuation routes from Town Center, and prioritize updates to deficient structures to ensure they can withstand severe weather events.

- Conduct a flood risk analysis of the Mill River to better understand how current and future flows could impact the Town.
- Create an interactive on-line map so that residents and businesses can upload comments and photos related to flooding for documentation purposes.
- Evaluate elements of National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System to determine whether there are activities Hatfield can pursue that go “above and beyond” the National Flood Insurance Program minimum standards. This could help reduce risk and obtain discounts in federal flood insurance rates.
- Explore potential to work with Army Corps Silver Jackets program on waterproofing of public buildings and potential for improved landscaping to help in flood protection, perhaps in collaboration with other towns.
- Elevate the visibility of flood risk by installing flood marker posts in key locations in Town.
- Work with Helena Chemical Company, Turf Care Supply, and other facilities with toxic or hazardous chemicals to ensure they have safeguards against flooding and other climate-driven hazards. Also ensure that local emergency responders are aware of emergency response plans at these facilities.

**Plan for Resiliency of Hatfield’s
Historic and Cultural Resources**

Historic and Cultural Resources chapter

Primary responsibility: Historical Commission (lead); Historical Society; Selectboard (support)

Possible resources for assistance and/or funding: Historical Society, Community Preservation Act funding; Army Corps of Engineers – Silver Jackets program

Time to achieve: Short term - next 5 years

- Pursue planning for resiliency in place and appropriate retrofitting of at-risk historic resources to sustain flooding impacts, collaborating with other Connecticut River communities with similar flood risks and identifying if there is a potential for state or federal planning and funding support.
- Activate Institutional and Residential Emergency Preparedness Planning for municipal-owned historic resources and collections (and provide information for locally significant privately owned resources and collections) using tools from Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness the emergency management partner for Massachusetts Cultural Resources. For this work, there is an emergency management framework for cultural resources available at:
https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/COSTEP_framework_1.pdf
- Identify the best location for Hatfield’s Museum and archival materials for longevity, resiliency, and public access, possibly upstairs at Town Hall, and investigate archival grant programs to fund organizing and safeguarding of collections.



Together as Community - Welcoming and Supportive for All

Overview

Fostering an inclusive community that values and supports all of Hatfield’s residents is central to this action plan element of *Together as Community – Welcoming and Supportive for All*. This involves proactively addressing the diverse needs of Hatfield’s population, including older adults, families with school-aged children, and residents of various backgrounds, both those who have been in town for a lifetime and those recently arrived. Such aims are essential to creating a welcoming spirit, a deep sense of belonging, and a shared sense of purpose for all who live, work, and play in Hatfield.

For older adults, critical needs include a range of housing choices and services, including transportation, that make viable the option to stay in Hatfield during later years in life. For families with school-aged children, a range of housing choices is also important, but so too is retaining access to quality local education.

For everyone, meaningful social connection is paramount. Opportunities for social connection can draw on some of Hatfield’s greatest assets—its farm culture, historic resources, and open spaces. In *Hatfield 2040* planning conversations, residents noted the importance of expanding the social calendar for social events, but they also called for creating an intergenerational community gathering space or hub to promote social interactions and strengthen ties across the community. Additionally, the conversations around *Hatfield 2040* emphasized the importance of effective communication across Town through a variety of approaches, including social media platforms, but also traditional print products, such as newsletters so that everyone can stay informed about community happenings.

In planning for the future, this inclusive social fabric is seen as essential in Hatfield’s capacity to recover after hardship or disaster more quickly and to become better positioned prior to the next hardship. This capability is referred to as “resilience,” where proactive measures can support thoughtful and effective responses through an ongoing and dynamic process.

Cultivating resilience is contingent on many factors in the community, from housing and economic development to transportation and infrastructure, to the services the town can provide. At the heart of it though is the collective spirit to engage with one another fully.

Key Points

Content that speaks to being a welcoming and supportive community is pulled primarily from five of the Hatfield 2040 comprehensive plan chapters: *Health and Social Environment, Farming, Historic and Cultural Resources, Transportation and Mobility, and Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience.*

Enhancing community and social connections was also a key topic at the June 2023 public gathering and helped to inform chapter content that raises seven key points that pertain to community. A summary of these key points follows below with more detailed discussion included in the chapters themselves

(see the Appendixes). Note that topics related to housing, which are certainly threaded with community, are addressed in the action plan element entitled, *Affordable Homes and Vibrant Neighborhoods.*

Key points below include: Keeping Hatfield's schools; Celebrating local agriculture; Ensuring access to all town-owned properties and facilities; Creating a community-based social center and improving communications across the Town; Improving and adapting transportation infrastructure and services; and Enhancing support for historic and cultural assets.



Graphic depiction showing content of conversation around enhancing community and social connections from the June 2023 public engagement event.

Keeping Hatfield's schools

The Hatfield School District is composed of two schools, Smith Academy (middle and high school), and Hatfield Elementary, enrolling approximately 391 students in the 2022 school year. Enrollment has declined in the past two decades, presenting significant challenges to the district, which is now one of the smallest in the state. Moreover, fully 117 of the students enrolled in 2022 were “school of choice,” students who choose to attend Hatfield schools though they reside in other municipalities.

The Town's most recent Master Plan (from 2001) intentionally deferred discussion on the topic of schools to the relevant committees and boards. The strength and stability of the school system emerged as a primary concern in the process for this 2024 Comprehensive Plan.

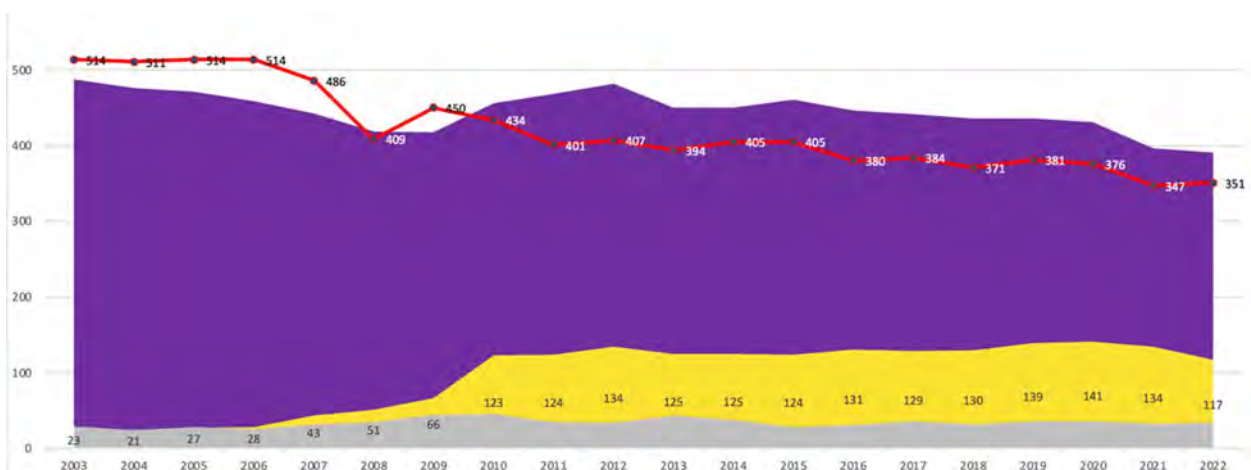
Based on the Community-wide Survey issued as part of the planning process, 35% of respondents indicated that their top priority for the Town budget is “Public Schools,” with a total of 55% of respondents indicating that

“Public Schools” is one of their top 3 priorities for the Town budget.

Hatfield's schools are valued by residents for their small class sizes and tight-knit communities. Many see the local school system as critically important to retaining and attracting young families and supporting a life for youth in Town. Without growing local enrollment with more school-aged residents, State and Federal funding is likely to remain flat. As such the naturally increasing costs of education will fall to the Town to support, or face decreasing services to students. In keeping with state averages, the Town consistently spends 51% of the municipal budget on schooling.

It is clear that in order to preserve the quality of schools, retain full enrollment of local students, and attract new “school of choice” students, the town must explore innovative strategies to keep its schools in the community. Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.

20 Years of Hatfield Public Schools District Enrollment



Purple = total enrollment numbers for Hatfield Public Schools

Red line = Number of school- aged kids who live in Hatfield

Yellow = tuition paying school of choice students coming into Hatfield

Grey = residents who choose out to districts outside of Hatfield

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Celebrating local agriculture

Given its location along the Connecticut River, Hatfield is home to some of the richest and most productive soils in the world.¹ Multiple generations of farm families have cultivated Hatfield's meadows and floodplain terraces, some of which are still in farming today.² Two farms still operating today were established in the 17th century and several have been passed down through three generations or more.

Although the number of farms and acres in production in Hatfield has declined significantly over the last 50 years, agricultural activities remain a prominent feature of the town. There are currently 36 active farms with harvested cropland, 21 of which sell commodities wholesale or direct to consumers.³ The top three crops in annual production now are potatoes, corn, and hay.⁴ Strawberries, pumpkins, gourds and decorative corn are additional prominent specialty crops, attracting local customers to roadside farm stands around town throughout the year. Hatfield agriculture has been diversifying in recent years in response to consumer demand for more locally grown products to include cut flowers, maple syrup, mushrooms, vineyards, and cannabis. Two local farms also offer vegetable CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) shares to local residents, although growing memberships and maintaining profitability through this model has proven challenging for both of these farms in recent years.

Hatfield is also home to two major agricultural inputs service providers, Helena Agri-Enterprises, LLC (headquartered in Tennessee) and TurfCare Supply, LLC (headquartered in Ohio). Black Birch Vineyard, a popular agritourism destination, and Good Stock Farm, an award-winning cooking school located on Main Street, draw visitors from across the state. Prospect Meadow Farm, a non-profit therapeutic farming social enterprise run by ServiceNet, Inc, also serves hundreds of families throughout the region.

While 37% of Hatfield's 10,767 total acres is classified as prime farmland (4,001 acres) and 27% is classified as farmland of statewide (1,601 acres) or local (1,333 acres) importance, only 26% of the total land in town (2,755 acres) is currently cultivated as cropland or pasture. Of this cultivated land, 965 acres (35%) is located in the 100-year floodplain.⁵

When asked what they value most about Hatfield, respondents to the recent Community-wide Survey put at the top of their list the rural, small-town atmosphere and working farms. This is consistent with surveys from past planning efforts in 2001 and 2014, where protection of working farmland and the town's agricultural economy was consistently named a top priority by residents concerned about the pace and impact of development.

1 Hatfield Reconnaissance Report, Connecticut River Valley Reconnaissance Survey, Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. June 2009. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/hatfield/download>. Accessed March 2023.

2 Hatfield Historical Society. May 2022. <https://hatfieldfamilyfarms.weebly.com>. Accessed March 2023.

3 USDA/NASS 2017 Ag Census. <https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov>. Accessed March 2023. The 2022 Agricultural Census Data was not yet available by zip code at the time of this report.

4 USDA/NASS Cropland CROS 2016. <https://croplandcros.scinet.usda.gov>. Accessed March 2023.

⁵ Based on 1980 effective Federal Emergency Management Agency flood insurance rate map for Hatfield.



Hatfield's working farms are highly valued by residents given the rural, small-town feel they engender.

Despite these values that are held so dear, farmers report that the last several years have been some of the most difficult, and many producers talk about the toll uncertain farm futures is taking on their mental health. In addition to navigating broad economic, technological, and social changes, farms today face major challenges around shifting seasons, heavier precipitation, increased summer heat, prolonged droughts, and higher intensity storm systems due to climate change. Hatfield farmers report that extreme weather is threatening already slim margins and further increasing the risks of being financially dependent on agriculture as a source of income.

While farmers have long been the leaders in researching and developing innovative solutions to complex land management

challenges, and they are often the ones on the forefront of understanding and implementing adaptation and resilience strategies,⁶ there is a deep sense among residents involved in the Hatfield 2040 planning process that there is far more to be done by the broader community in supporting the farming way of life in Hatfield. Major ideas are threaded into other action plan elements, including: protecting more land for food production (in balance with addressing the Town's housing needs); providing greater local governmental support through re-activating the town Agricultural Commission and helping to resolve conflicts around drainage ditches.

Fostering a culture of active support through celebration includes greater engagement across both the farm community and across the Town more broadly. The idea of

6 Chambers, R., Ghildyal, B.P. Agricultural research for resource-poor farmers: The farmer-first-and-last model, *Agricultural Administration*, 20:1, 1985.

celebrating local agriculture offers important pathways to bringing people together around farming and creating opportunities for greater connection and understanding. This is critical to both preserving the character of Hatfield held so dear and creating a sense of

partnership between farmers and the broader community in which they operate.

Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.

Ensuring access to all town-owned properties and facilities

People over the age of 65 are the fastest growing age group in Hatfield as well as in cities and towns throughout the state due to the fact that people are living longer and having fewer children.

Hatfield's public spaces provide opportunities for social interaction and civic engagement across all abilities. Supporting older adults and people with disabilities with facilities that provide access enables all residents to be full and active participants in community life. This is especially important as Hatfield plans for an aging population and for attracting younger families to town who may have mobility challenged members. Removing barriers to make public properties and facilities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities is also at the heart of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) for which the U.S. Department of Justice has developed standards for newly designed and constructed or altered State and local government facilities and public accommodations.

For Hatfield, many point to the upgrades at the recently renovated Council on Aging's Senior Center as a successful example of accessibility upgrades in a historic town-owned building. At the same time, survey respondents and participants at the Age-Friendly Listening Session commented that the Hatfield Public Library is currently not accessible. The library is also home to the Hatfield Historical Museum and town archives. The barriers to access were noted too in the 2001 Master Plan, when survey respondents indicated a new, expanded or

renovated structure is needed to support the needs of Hatfield residents (and to protect the collection). Given that libraries can be valuable gathering places, and hosts for important community programming, the need for an upgrade seems important.

Outdoor facilities is also an important part of the accessibility conversation. Hatfield has an accessible walking loop around the athletic fields at Smith Academy, where the addition of benches would better serve those who need to rest during walks. There may also be opportunities to link recreational or open space areas with in-town trails or better sidewalk networks, as walking/jogging on sidewalks is the activity in which most (more than 90%, according to the OSRP survey) residents participate. Better pedestrian linkages among recreational and open space resources in the village center and other areas of town also serve as opportunities to improve accessibility for Hatfield's senior and disabled residents. The addition of accessible portable restrooms or signs to public restrooms (and the hours that they are open) would also be welcome resources.

It has also been noted that there is not currently a playground that people with young children can use while school is in session. A public space that includes accessible playground equipment, benches and tables that can also accommodate people with wheelchairs could serve as a gathering place for all ages and abilities.

Looking forward, participants in the planning process say that the Town's future facility

construction activities should be informed by design, policies, and products that enhance access for all users. An associated action is included in the action plan element entitled, *A Capable and Resilient Local Government*, along with direction to ensure such future activity is also informed by flood risk. Along these lines, the recommended action in the *Affordable Homes and Vibrant Neighborhoods* element to identify gaps in Hatfield's

sidewalk network must give primary consideration to meeting ADA standards.

While important ideas like these related to accessibility are threaded into other action plan elements, important ideas for action put forward during the planning process related specifically to ensuring access to all public properties and facilities are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.

Creating a community-based social center and improving communications across the Town

The work to strengthen social connection in Hatfield is ongoing and continues in the form of a variety of community events, focused on connecting residents across generations and backgrounds. These events take the form of school functions, Friday concerts, and more.

Participants in the Hatfield 2040 planning process, however, acknowledge a certain social disconnectedness from support systems and social spaces in Town. It was noted that some residents rarely enter the town center unless to pay a bill. Others stressed concerns for new residents feeling welcome or aware of opportunities to become involved. Moreover, participants expressed a great desire for stronger community and identified the following as critical to building social ties: a greater variety and frequency of community events, better use of public spaces and facilities, and a more effective communications approach to provide news about cultural and community programming. On the one hand, participants noted the need for a "one-stop" community calendar listing all programming, while on the other hand observed that residents have diverse communications preferences, including a variety of digital tools and platforms as well

as more traditional methods including printed materials.

The move toward improving communications and creating a community based social center comes at a meaningful time as the Town considers moving certain facilities and operations out of flood-risk areas and consolidating operations and functions, both addressed under *Making Room for the River* and *A Capable and Resilient Local Government* action plan elements.

Decision making must involve a holistic view in order to capture all the many considerations that are important to Hatfield, including strengthening social connections. For example, in the course of Hatfield 2040 planning, several have suggested that a community center could be located near the schools and could integrate with the need for a re-located senior center along with indoor space for kids to play, and a playground for smaller children with benches and access to restrooms.

Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.

Improving and adapting transportation infrastructure and services

While most adults in Hatfield commute to work using private automobiles, younger residents and the growing aging population make greater use of other transportation options. Transit options, such as the senior center van and the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) are typically used by older adults. Many younger residents make use of the sidewalk network or buses to get to school if not getting dropped off by automobile. The sidewalk network is also used by many adult residents to get to nearby destinations or for recreational enjoyment.

Hatfield is fortunate to have a low rate of vehicle crashes, well documented in the *Transportation and Mobility* chapter in the appendixes. Speeding, however, remains an issue in certain locations and those using sidewalks and crosswalks are at risk. The Safe Routes to School Program and the Complete Streets program offer important opportunities to make Hatfield's roadways safer for everyone.



Hatfield DPW installed Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons pedestrian actuated signals on the Main Street intersection with North Street in 2023 as an effective safety initiative.

The concept of complete streets advances the idea that streets can serve everyone. Beyond drivers, this includes pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, older people, children, and mobility challenged people. MassDOT offers technical assistance and funding incentives for communities to undertake Complete Street activities, starting with development and passing of a Complete Streets policy and a MassDOT Complete Streets training for a Town representative. For more information, see:

<https://madothway.my.site.com/GrantCentral/s/completestreets-public-overview>

The Safe Routes to School Program is a free, federally funded program administered by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation that works to increase safe walking, biking, and rolling among public elementary, middle, and high school students. Participating schools use a collaborative, community-focused approach that bridges the gap between health and transportation. SRTS provides funding for infrastructure projects that are located within a quarter mile of a school. To be eligible, the community must apply along with a participating school. For example, a new SRTS Signs and Lines Program provides funding up to \$6,000 for the construction and installation of signage and pavement markings. Six schools in five communities (Agawam, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Northampton, and Southamptton) have received Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects.

At the same time, continued monitoring of the performance of pedestrian crosswalks, and evaluating speed limits and passing lanes is important. Crosswalks in Hatfield are well-delineated and repainted regularly. In 2022 and 2023 the Town installed Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) at marked crosswalks at four locations. RRFBs have been an effective safety initiative in school zones, near housing for older residents, and as

part of streetscape projects, increasing rates at which vehicles yield at crosswalks by more than 90%. Recent sidewalk improvements have also included “pedestrian crossing” warning signs and ADA-compliant detectable warning panels on ramps. Many crossings in Town have street lighting that heightens visibility for pedestrians during low-light hours.

The regional shared use path along the Connecticut River and the Valley Bike share program would offer additional ways for people to get around Hatfield and to destinations beyond the town’s boundaries. Valley Bike, an electric bike sharing program is active in eight communities currently.

The Hatfield Open Space Committee has been working with the community and with officials from both Hatfield and Northampton to advance a shared-use path along the Connecticut River, which would connect south to a regional bikeway network. Shared-use paths also called trails, multi-use paths, greenways, or bike paths can bring many benefits to communities. By providing safe and accessible transportation and recreation opportunities separated from motor vehicle traffic, shared use paths benefit the individuals using them and can also contribute to economic development and sustainability goals of the community.

This project has been ongoing since the late 1990s, but progress in the design phase has been halted recently given major costs to overcome insufficient set-back distances from railroad tracks in a few locations. While the Open Space Committee has not yet had the opportunity to explore alternatives, there is tremendous local support for finding a way to connect to this important regional trail network.

For adults who are 60 years of age and older, including those who are wheelchair-bound, the Hatfield Council on Aging (COA) provides van transportation services.

Wheelchair clients are required to have someone assist them to and from their appointments. The van service continues to be an asset. For many, this is the only reliable means of transportation to the daily lunch program, medical appointments, physical therapy, grocery shopping, and miscellaneous trips.

There are currently two vans, a 2015 Ford Eldorado-Aero eight-passenger van which was donated to the Hatfield Senior Center in 2020 with 100,000 miles. The Senior Center received its new van, a 2023 Ford Econoline 8-passenger van in February of 2023.

With Hatfield's aging population comes increasing need for transportation and it is anticipated that ridership for this popular service will grow and that meeting demand will require additional resources. The chart

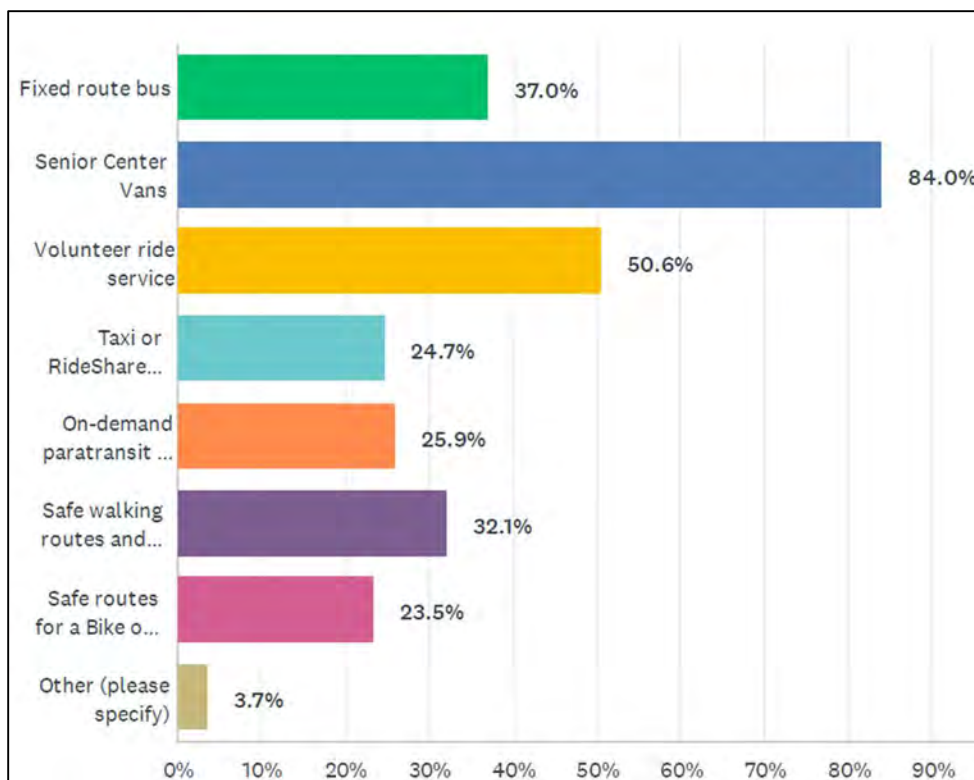
below indicates people's preferences for van service when they can no longer drive.

While there are potential alternatives to purchasing and operating the senior van, none match the personalized and convenient service provided by the Council on Aging. These other options include: the Franklin Regional Transit Authority, which has established successful paratransit programs in neighboring communities; and MassHealth, which provides non-emergency medical transportation to appointments at no cost to MassHealth members.

Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process toward improving and adapting transportation infrastructure and services are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.

Responses to Age Friendly Community Survey question

When driving yourself is no longer an option, what transportation methods would you like to have in place? (check all that apply)



Enhancing support for historic and cultural assets

Hatfield remains rich with built resources and historic streetscapes and landscapes that provide a variety of cultural experiences enjoyed by residents and visitors. A recurring theme across planning efforts is the importance of preserving Hatfield's small-town atmosphere, unique historical character, and distinct identity. As in many places, local historic and cultural resources are integral to community life.

The extent of historic records and listings achieved in Hatfield – based on the state's Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) database – underscore just how much this matters. Hatfield, with a total area of 16.8 square miles, has eight National Register Districts with a 2020 population of 3,352. This compares to Northampton, at 35.8 square miles, with eight National Register Districts and a population of 29,311. Local work to document and achieve listing in the National Register spans from the early 1980s with the Old Mill Street Historic District through the early 2000s with the West Hatfield Historic Districts and periods of significance spanning the 1650s through the 1950s.

The Hatfield Historical Commission (HHC) is a five-member board that is responsible for ensuring that local historic preservation concerns will be considered in community planning. The HHC presence on the Town web site lists Commission members, contact information, past agendas, a 2015 hearing video, and links to Hatfield Historical Museum and Hatfield Historical Society collections and resources. The HHC does not currently oversee any local historic districts but it is authorized with advising the Hatfield Building Inspector with respect to demolition

permit applications for significant buildings which the HHC determines to be preferably preserved.^{7 8}

There is not currently a MACRIS-type database to document and identify cultural resources. The *Historic and Cultural Resources* chapter in the appendixes notes that there are an abundance of cultural sites and programmatic offerings in Hatfield including many which relate to and utilize historic buildings, sites, and landscapes and highlight the town's heritage and culture. Documented archaeological sites are also not shown on MACRIS and information is only available through a permitting process. Past reports have noted the likelihood of remaining archaeological resources in Hatfield due to the known presence of Native Americans, community development beginning in the seventeenth century, and areas of undeveloped land, and recommendations have been made for greater protections of these resources.⁹ The 1982 Massachusetts Historic Commission Reconnaissance Report speculated that there was probably extensive Native American settlement in what would become Hatfield, with the fertile lowlands likely attractive due to agricultural potential.

The Hatfield Cultural Council (HCC), currently made up of five members, supports programs that promote excellence in the arts, humanities, and the interpretive sciences by administering small grants from funds awarded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The HCC members are appointed by the Select Board, to allocate grants funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Funding is based on the town census.¹⁰ A 2020 HCC Community Survey identified as priorities projects celebrating

⁷ <https://www.townofhatfield.org/historical-commission>

⁸ https://www.townofhatfield.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif3246/f/uploads/town_bylaws_may_14_2019_approved.pdf

⁹ <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/CT-Valley/htf.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.townofhatfield.org/cultural-council>

local history and cultural diversity; revitalization projects within the community; and community-wide gatherings such as concerts and sing-alongs. In 2022, the HCC funded local cultural programs which were Smith Academy Park, the Hatfield Senior Center, the Hatfield Public Library, and First Church Hatfield.

Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process to enhance support for Hatfield's historic and cultural assets are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.



Goals and Actions

Ensure that Hatfield keeps its schools, retaining full enrollment of local students, and attracting new school-choice students

Facilities and Services chapter

Primary responsibility: School Department; School Committee; Selectboard

Possible resources: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years) and ongoing

- Support a third-party study that provides a complete understanding of existing costs, needs over the longer term, and strategies toward a more sustainable school district in Hatfield.
- Work with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to explore various cost-saving and alternative funding programs. Strategies such as education collaboratives, which have operated in Massachusetts for more than 50 years, and Hatfield is currently a part of, could offer different mechanisms to supplement or strengthen regular school programs, to share resources and/or to provide cost-effective services for Hatfield and other participating districts. Other programs offered through DESE, such as the Innovative Schools program, could offer a means for the Hatfield School District to enhance its curriculum while finding supplemental funding to ease the burden on the Town budget.
- Continue the before and after-care programming hosted by the schools and extend its operation to occur beyond the school year.
- Explore greater uses for school buildings and facilities, including for summer camp activities, local recreation leagues, and partnering with such organizations as the Council on Aging to offer broader and intergenerational community programming.

Celebrate local agriculture

Farming chapter

Primary responsibility: Celebration Committee (lead); Cultural Council; Schools; Agricultural Commission

Possible resources: CISA; Community Garden

Time to achieve: Medium term (next 10 years)

- Undertake a “Pride in Hatfield Grown” program that starts locally, perhaps drawing on the New England Food Vision, whereby 50% of food comes from local sources by 2060. This can include locally sourcing school meals, connecting farms with older adults through the Senior Center, community building and/or fundraising events on local farms to celebrate agricultural identity (potato potluck, local ingredient chili cook off, concerts, film and lecture series, farm to table dinners, 5k race, art events, etc.) This local program ties to a larger scale element beyond Hatfield's boundaries, in the *Thriving Local Economy* action plan element.

- Increase public education, so residents can understand how they can support and advocate for farms, including hands-on approaches like pollinator habitat, climate smart forestry, and ditch maintenance, etc.
- Organize and/or promote local educational events and workshops on topics including: farm succession planning, soil health, pollinator health, regenerative farming practices, agroforestry, etc.
- Elevate visibility of local farms using best practices, particularly “regenerative practices” toward greater climate resiliency such as low till and cover cropping. This could include a Conservation Farmer of the Year Award.

Ensure that all public buildings, parks, and sidewalks meet American with Disabilities Act standards

Health and Social Environment, Transportation and Mobility, and Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation chapters

Primary responsibility: DPW (lead); Building Inspector (support)

Possible resources: Municipal Americans with Disabilities Act Improvement Grants (for both planning and projects)

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years)

- Conduct an assessment of all town-owned properties and facilities for American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and develop a transition plan.
- Pursue grants for priority projects on town-owned properties to remove architectural barriers.
- Install (and replace where worn) ADA tactile ground-level panels on ramps at marked crosswalks.

Create a community-based social center and improve communications across the Town

Health and Social Environment chapter

Primary responsibility: Selectboard; School; Council on Aging; Recreation; All Town boards, committees

Possible resources: MA Rural Development Fund; MassWorks grant program; MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grants

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years) and ongoing

- Identify an appropriate location and pursue development of a welcoming community space in the form of an indoor center where residents of all ages and backgrounds can gather to socialize, support, recreate, and celebrate one another
- Expand the social calendar for community events throughout the town in various spaces, such as the Community Gardens or school buildings.
- Share social calendar information and Town efforts more broadly via newsletters, post cards, and digital media.

- Support a town staff member or small body of people who can devote time to direct this effort and coordinate across municipal departments and bodies.

Improve and adapt transportation infrastructure and services to support an aging population while also meeting the needs of a diverse, younger demographic
Transportation and Mobility chapter

Primary responsibility: Selectboard; Council on Aging; Schools; DPW; Open Space and Recreation Committee

Possible resources: Complete Streets; Safe Routes to School

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years) and ongoing

- Undertake a complete streets plan to create connections for walking and biking and to win designation as a complete streets community so that Hatfield can qualify for state funds.
- Update the current sidewalk network to meet ADA standards. (See related action in Affordable Homes and Vibrant Neighborhoods.)
- Continue to support and prioritize access to senior van service through Council on Aging. Explore outside funding opportunities and resources for expanding service or replacing fleet if needed in the future.
- Partner with MassDOT's Safe Routes to School program to improve drop-off and dismissal protocols, encourage safe walking, and provide incentives for riding the bus.
- Consider adding a school zone in front of Smith Academy.
- Explore alternatives to access the regional shared-use-path network, as well as feasibility of joining the regional bike-share program.
- Investigate need, feasibility, and opportunities of expanding transit options, including expanding Franklin Regional Transit Authority fixed routes, joining the FRTA's micro transit program, and volunteer ride program for transportation on weekends, evenings.

Enhance support for Hatfield's historic and cultural assets

Historic and Cultural Resources chapter

Primary responsibility: Cultural Council; Celebration Committee; Historic Commission; Library

Possible resources: Mass Cultural Council Grants

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years)

- Work with the Hatfield Cultural Council, Massachusetts Cultural Council, and other stakeholders to conduct Cultural Asset Mapping and determine the feasibility of pursuing a Local Cultural District. This will also identify and bring together community cultural stakeholders and possibly enable combining meetings and boards.

- Plan for greater public access to historic collections and programming related to Hatfield history.
- Investigate the potential to establish a non-profit for community cultural events.
- Establish one or more annual festivals related to Hatfield History for residents and guests. For example, a Harvest Festival related to the Lions Club Potato Run, a Winter Festival tied to Luminarium, or a summer festival related to Hatfield's agricultural history.
- Continue support of Hatfield's Celebration Committee to plan and coordinate funding and volunteers or support the development of this committee into a collaborative non-profit to support community programming.



A Thriving Local Economy

Overview

In order to have a thriving local economy, Hatfield’s government, local businesses, and residents need to work together to build on current strengths and assets, while strategically diversifying in ways that align with the Town’s character and goals. Workforce development, accessible housing, and transportation investments should be aligned to support the evolving agricultural and service-based economy.

Initiatives to increase resilience, like protecting areas prone to increased flooding, are also vital for long-term economic stability and growth. Exploring infrastructure capacity for water and sewer, especially along the Route 5 and 10 corridor, and additional areas for “village centers” throughout town would provide small businesses with those opportunities to serve the local community and industries looking to find a home in Hatfield. Maintaining Hatfield’s sense of self requires protecting substantial agricultural land and supporting farmers which could be accomplished through agri-tourism, value-added products, and regenerative farming practices in addition to the strategic use of regulatory tools to identify new development opportunities that would fit into the fabric of existing neighborhoods.

Conversations during the community survey and in meetings have emphasized residents’ desires to support local small businesses and ensure they thrive, especially those that contribute to Hatfield’s uniqueness, like farms. The interest in attracting and retaining businesses for tax revenue is tempered by the strong desire to maintain the small-town atmosphere which has led to focusing business and industrial development along Route 5/10 and in existing industrial areas accessible to I-91 to boost jobs and the tax base.

A strong local economy is essential to Hatfield’s sustainable future and can only be achieved with a balance of preserving productive lands, while also building and diversifying the business environment to accommodate the new technologies and services Hatfield residents demand.

Key Points

The key points of this theme are pulled primarily from four of the Hatfield 2040 comprehensive plan chapters: *Land Use*, *Economic Development*, *Farming*, and *Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience*.

A summary of these key points follows below with more detailed discussion included in the Comprehensive Plan

chapters themselves (see the Appendices).

Key points below include Village Centers development; Business and industrial development along Route 5 and 10; the role of agriculture as a part of Hatfield's economy; and creating a business-friendly environment in town.

Village centers development

Hatfield's current Town Center would ideally be a location where small business activity serves local residents, but the historic Town Center, which boasts the Town Hall, Library, Post Office, and Capawonk Housing, among other amenities that would add to the diversity of uses typically found in a Town Center, lacks significant small-town businesses such as a hardware store or coffee shop. This lack of businesses combined with the vulnerable location in an area prone to flooding supports the idea of creating additional village centers in other parts of the Town. The theme *Making Room for the River* contemplates future conversations about flooding in town and what other factors should be considered for moving important amenities out of the way of the Connecticut River.

Village or town center zoning regulations typically include a set of guidelines and requirements designed to create a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, and community-oriented environment. The benefits can positively impact the Town, providing a focal point for town activities and interactions, including a mix of residential, commercial and retail

spaces to boost economic activity, promoting higher-density development to preserve open spaces and natural resources, offering walkable and pedestrian friendly spaces, revitalizing new areas that are underdeveloped or neglected, and creating a more resilient local economy.

While Hatfield already has a bylaw, it can be reviewed to see which standards are difficult to address for developers seeking to establish a business in Hatfield. As the town has ensured these town center standards through a vote of Town Meeting, developers would need to continue showing that the development can fit within the context of the neighborhood it is in, but its standards can be reviewed. The town can even explore identifying more than one area where they could foresee this type of development.

It is clear that in order to preserve the small Hatfield's features and rural qualities, the Town must explore innovative strategies to build and maintain the local economy. Luckily, Hatfield has a head start with the current historical Town Center, understanding the qualities of their established neighborhood and what can be replicated elsewhere.

Business and industrial development along routes 5 & 10

As Hatfield is home to some of the most productive soils in the region, given its location along the Connecticut River, and as many parcels in town were zoned according to their existing uses at the time of establishing zoning and the town's Zoning Map, notwithstanding the town's geography, the area has not attracted appropriate development. However, as the town's zoning has evolved, some uses have changed, and others have not, but exist as "islands," particularly commercial and industrial uses within the Rural Residential area. This may be an issue of non-conformity to the State's Zoning Act, Chapter 40A, Section 4 that should be addressed through zoning map amendments.

The zoning along Route 5/10 has continued to evolve in a piecemeal fashion over the past several years, and the corridor is now a patchwork of Residential, Business, Light Industrial, Industrial, and areas with Mixed Use Overlay Districts. Various rezoning requests have come before the Town from individual owners, primarily applications to rezone Rural Residential land to Light Industrial. The Town is now extending water and sewer north along Route 5/10, and the pressure for development will increase on these properties. An essential element of

sustainable economic development is assuring the Town has the right zoning in place to achieve the kind of economic development residents want to see.

When asked in at the June 2023 engagement event, residents were interested in focusing business and industrial development along Route 5/10 and in existing industrial areas accessible to I-91 to boost jobs and the tax base. Additionally, at a focus group meeting on business and the economy, the role of technology in employment and the importance of infrastructure development on Route 5/10 were discussed.

With any update to infrastructure capacity to support major development, related ideas are threaded into other action plan elements, including extending and upgrading infrastructure in and around the corridor, preserve quality of life and community's vitality through transportation choices that would explore impacts to the corridor when new development arrives, and assessing opportunities for renewable and alternative energy production in the commercial and industrial zones. Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.



The role of agriculture as a part of Hatfield's economy

As is well noted in the *Farming* chapter of this Comprehensive Plan, as Hatfield and other small, agriculturally inclined communities plan for the future, valuing the importance of healthy local farm ecosystems will help to drive innovation and bolster the local agricultural economy, while protecting the lasting rural character of the town.

Although the number of farms and acres in production in Hatfield has significantly declined over the last 50 years, agricultural activities remain a prominent feature of the town, and protection of working farmland and the town's agricultural economy is consistently named a top priority by residents concerned about the pace and impact of development.¹ According to the 2017 USDA Agricultural Census, of Hatfield's total 36 farms, most are under 50 acres, with just two farms harvesting more than 500 acres of cropland. The majority (21 farms) also generate less than \$50,000 annually in sales, though 7 farms report sales between \$50,000-\$249,999 and 8 farms generate more than \$250,000. There are just 17 full-time farm owners in Hatfield, and 23 part-time owners. 32 individuals list farming as their primary occupation, and 83 individuals count themselves as producers engaged in farming at least part-time.

As agriculture is an industry of its own in Hatfield, it also underlies many of the other businesses in town. A recent example of this is a fruit and vegetable distributor relocating from Hadley (Myers Produce). These kinds of uses may well continue to grow in this area,

as it sits on the edge of rural Western Massachusetts. Farm-based businesses may grow, with additional on-farm sales and agriculture-related industry as has been an identified trend. The continued health of this sector will require support.

Larger, highly mechanized operations exist alongside smaller farms, and wholesale activities next to local farmstands. The larger farms will need state-level assistance as well as local support regarding access, local bylaws, and other factors. Smaller farms may need help with setting up a farmers' market and/or community-supported agriculture activities.

A relatively newer trend is for farming operations to broaden their revenue sources, agricultural-related activities, like farm-to-table food supply and tourism. Prospect Meadow Farm has a farm store, café, catering business, CSA farm share, and a vocational services program, among other initiatives. Black Birch Vineyard grows a variety of grapes, makes wine, and raises sheep, while also hosting tours, tastings, and retail operations. These kinds of activities benefit the farmers but also create jobs, generate more revenue for the community, and draw outside visitors.

With climate change risking viability of development in the Town Center, along with affecting other aspects of life in town, agriculture is not protected either. Lost production for corn, soy, hay, and potatoes in the Connecticut River Valley due to climate

¹ Priorities identified through surveys and communities meetings as reported in the Hatfield Master Plan (2001), <https://www.townofhatfield.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3246/f/uploads/masterplan.pdf> and Open Space Plan (2014), <https://www.townofhatfield.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3246/f/uploads/2014openspaceplan.pdf>

change is projected to reach \$1.6 million annually by 2030, \$2.7 million annually by 2050 and \$3.7 million annually by 2090, relative to \$21 million in current production for these crops. Increasing the resiliency and adaptive capacity of Hatfield's farms will

require major community support and public investment to help farmers adapt their farming practices if the local agricultural economy is going to continue to be a part of Hatfield's future.

Creating a business-friendly environment

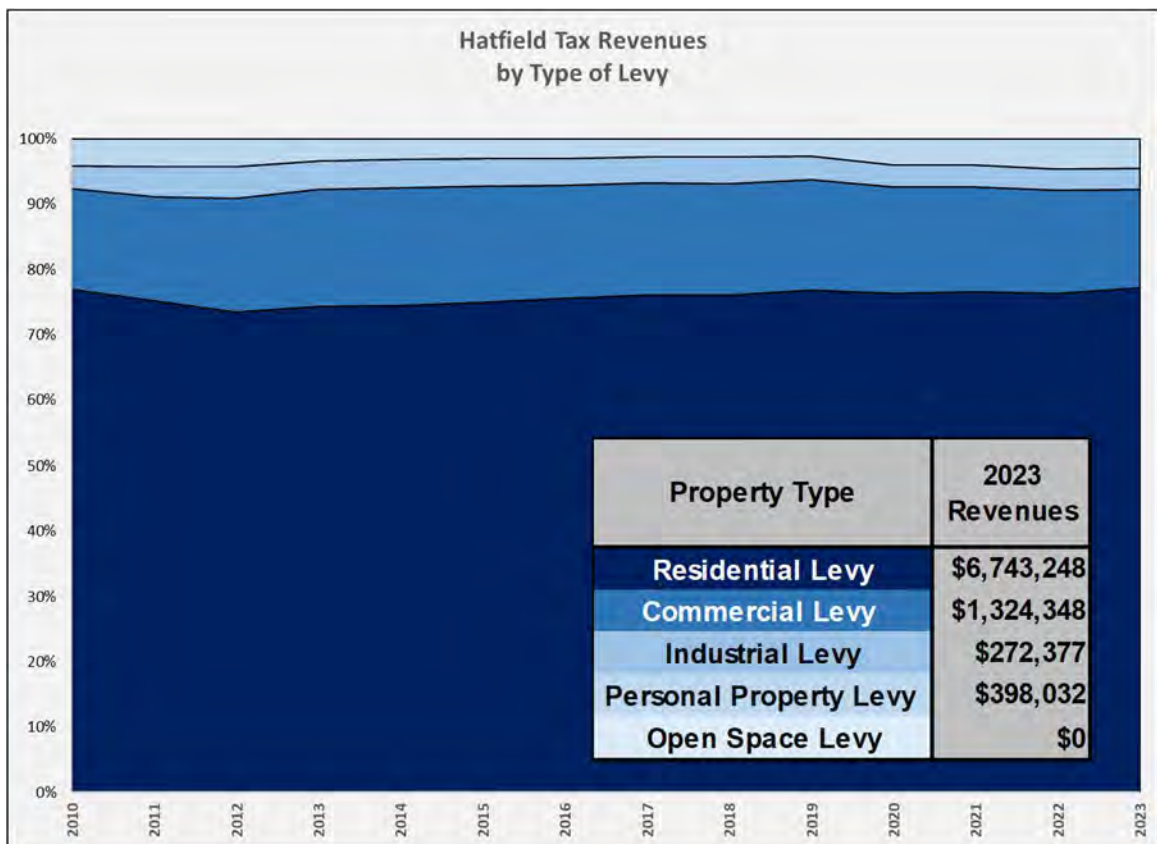
Hatfield's tax revenues are primarily derived from residential properties. Commercial properties contribute about 15% of the town's tax revenues, while industrial uses contribute about 3%. The proportion of business-related revenues has fluctuated slightly over time, but in general is less than it was in the mid-2010s. The town has 742 acres of municipally owned land and nearly 3,000 acres of land under Chapter 61. Thus, over one-third of Hatfield's total acreage (10,767 acres.) is tax exempt. It has been shown that the town can benefit from ensuring that businesses are supported and have every opportunity to succeed in Hatfield.

The work to strengthen business-friendly practices in Hatfield is ongoing and continues in the form of changes to zoning and permitting regulations, along with the Hatfield Business Association that continues to have an online presence. Although, there is no town administration engagement with local business and/or outreach or business retention activities a clear idea of the kinds of businesses the community wants did emerge: small, local businesses that meet residents needs and maintain the small-town atmosphere.

There is still strong sentiment to prevent Route 5/10 from developing into a commercial strip without any local character; at the same time, there is a need for tax revenues to support existing municipal infrastructure. Much of the remaining commercial and industrial land elsewhere in Hatfield is subject to environmental constraints, limiting potential in those locations, but it may be an opportunity for business programs and incentives be available to those who seek them.

Participants in the Hatfield 2040 planning process suggested creating promotional materials so people know what kind of goods and services they can buy locally and talking to small businesses to find out what they need. The move toward improving communications and creating resources for businesses shows how the town is building economic development opportunities in town. The town also oversees assistance to farmers and is seeking opportunities to administer grants in support of improving infrastructure for farmers.

Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.



Goals and Actions

Give greater shape to commercial development along Route 5/10 corridor.

Economic Development chapter

Primary responsibility: Planning Board (lead); Selectboard; DPW; Capital Improvement (support)

Possible resources: MassWorks

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Rezone along full extent of Route 5/10 corridor
- Consider extending mixed use overlay district or at least provide performance and design guidelines.
- Add sewer line from Prospect north to the bridge over I-91.
- Upgrade municipal water delivery.

Support continued viability of Hatfield's farms.

Health and Social Environment, Farming chapters

Primary responsibility: Agricultural Commission (lead); Selectboard

Possible resources: Hampden/Hampshire Conservation District; Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources grants; CISA; NOFA

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years and ongoing

- Complete a comprehensive survey of producers to assess the total economic impact to the town; build relationships with existing and beginning farmers in town.
- Promote the leasing of town-owned conservation land to small and beginning farmers; set up a market garden/farm incubator.
- Update the Hatfield Ag Brochure and regularly promote on-farm agricultural events and agritourism opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to aggregate and also market Hatfield-grown products at events/fairs/festivals in surrounding towns. This can involve other farm promotion elements and tie to local "Pride in Hatfield Grown" program within the *Together as Community* theme.

Maintain and create opportunities for development within the context of the Town's distinctive New England characteristics.

Land Use chapter

Primary responsibility: Planning Board (lead); Historical Commission (support); Conservation Commission (support)

Possible resources: PVPC; Land Use Planning Grants

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Perform a zoning diagnostic and refine where necessary to ease difficulties in developing appropriately in designated zones, including review of zoning map to reduce spot zoning and make sure local zoning meets intent of state law.
- Encourage new commercial and industrial development in appropriate parts of Town, focusing development around town infrastructure where environmental conditions accommodate growth and limit development in environmentally sensitive areas with design guidelines and district center planning.
- Review lands in current industrial zoning inventory to determine what is actually developable. Consider purchasing lands currently zoned industrial because they are located in wetlands and floodplains. Where can industrial zoning be moved that is more practical?
- Review zoning bylaws for clarity making sure criteria, standards, and conditions of approval are enforceable before and after permitting new development or redevelopment.
- Review and revise Subdivision Regulations to cluster development to better protect natural resources where 50% of parcel gets protected. Provide disincentives for traditional development.
- Examine Chapter 40R opportunity to get affordability in housing development and payments from the state.
- Require operation and maintenance plans for stormwater infrastructure on commercial facilities.
- Continue to fund Planning Board staff position and consider increased support to attract qualified person.

Enhance economic vitality through a well-maintained transportation network.

Transportation and Mobility chapter

Primary responsibility: Selectboard (lead); DPW; Council on Aging (support); FRTA

Possible resources: PVPC; Complete Streets Program

Time to achieve: Medium term – next 10 years

- Perform regular traffic data collection on roads to assess existing travel speeds, vehicle volume truck volume, and crash history at key locations in the Town. Traffic data is useful to identify growth trends, assess the potential impact of new developments, and ensure the safe and efficient use of the community transportation network by all users.

- Complete traffic studies at high crash locations, including Elm Street at I-91 ramps, Maple Street at Valley Street, Depot at Main Street, and Bridge Street at Prospect Street. (Sites identified through in-depth analysis of existing data)
- Utilize the Pavement Management System to prioritize roadway improvements to ensure the roadway network is resilient. Continue to support investments in roadway maintenance including crack sealing and grading of unpaved municipal roadways.
- Install additional speed feedback signs.
- Identify rest areas for freight vehicles with overnight layovers.
- Ensure that roadside vegetation management can remain a priority for good sightlines and visibility around blind corners in locations such as Main Street north of the municipal wastewater treatment facility.

Assess potential for renewable and alternative energy production, associated manufacturing, and services.

Economic Development chapter

Primary responsibility: Selectboard (lead); School Committee (support); Planning Board (support)

Possible resources: Massachusetts Clean Energy Center; USDA grants for solar

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Determine appropriate locations, siting requirements, and regulations to encourage green industry and jobs.
- Identify how Town can set example with investments in renewables, particularly electric vehicles and charging stations, and solar on public buildings.

Encourage temporary commercial uses in Town Center with pop up and mobile commercial offerings.

Economic Development chapter

Primary responsibility: Celebration Committee; Cultural Council

Possible resources: PVPC for regulatory tools, Community One Stop for Growth

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Utilize existing buildings, including accessory buildings, and existing spaces, such as parking lots, to host pop-up and mobile commercial offerings.

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Overview

Residents who spoke out and participated in Hatfield’s 2040 planning process affirmed they want their town to be known as a community that offers a diverse range of housing options available at various prices and accommodating to residents of all income levels, ages, and stages of life, all while ensuring the character of the community remains intact. Additionally, they want vibrant neighborhoods which are characterized by their walkability, with well-maintained sidewalks, bike lanes, and connections to amenities.

At the same time, residents have expressed concerns about affordability in Hatfield pointing to rising costs of living and increasing taxes as factors threatening the Town’s housing affordability. Residents who participated in the Comprehensive planning process want the Town to examine where opportunity is available for development and provide recommendations for land use regulation changes, including exploring increased density through infill zoning, accessory apartments, and promoting mixed use-development that includes condominiums and apartments which would be accessible to both older and younger residents. The town is encouraged explore Chapter 40R Smart Growth Zoning as a means to achieve more affordable housing.

Thoughtful design of public spaces can create neighborhoods that foster social interaction and community engagement. By prioritizing housing that is affordable and designing neighborhoods that promote social connectedness, Hatfield can create an inclusive, thriving community that attracts and retains residents, supports small, local businesses, and enhances the overall quality of life for all its residents. Attendees at the June 10, 2023 community drop-in event discussed the challenge of finding a balance between the need for housing that is affordable and the preservation of farmland, also identifying zoning strategies that could achieve that outcome. The community survey also revealed residents’ frustration at the lack of diversity in town showing

how they understand that expanding housing options can be the key to increasing diversity in the town's demographics. To create affordable homes and vibrant neighborhoods, Hatfield should focus on proactive planning, updating zoning regulations, fostering partnerships to provide a range of housing options, and investing in infrastructure that promotes walkability and connectivity.

Key Points

The key points of this theme are pulled primarily from six of the Hatfield 2040 comprehensive plan chapters: Land Use, Housing, Health and Social Environment, Transportation and Mobility, Historic and Cultural Resources, and Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience.

A summary of these key points follows below with more detailed discussion included in the chapters themselves (see the Appendices).

Key points below include Smart Growth Zoning opportunities; Increasing affordable housing inventory; Protecting Hatfield's community character through preservation; and Resiliency in town transportation infrastructure.

Smart growth zoning opportunities

The Village Center discussion in the *A Thriving Local Economy* theme explores additional approaches to achieve denser, walkable, pedestrian-friendly development in town. Exploring the development of Village Centers in other parts of town is an application of Smart Growth principles to achieve the Town's goal of improving affordability of housing.

The Smart Growth principles include:

- Mix land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas

- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

The Commonwealth has identified a tool that will provide benefits to the towns and cities in the form of payments from a Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund, as well as other financial incentives. Towns and Cities need to adopt Chapter 40R, the Smart Growth Overlay, which would create dense residential or mixed-use smart growth zoning districts, including a high percentage of affordable housing units, in areas of concentrated development such as existing town centers, and in other highly suitable locations. Development would either be as-of-right or permitted through a plan review process. To take advantage of recently

adopted Design Guidelines for development, the Planning Board can incorporate appropriate guidelines for commercial or mixed-use development in a new 40R Smart Growth Zoning District.

With the recently adopted Open Space Residential Development bylaw, the town is

on the right track advancing smart growth principles that allow the preservation of specific parcels as part of an overall preservation strategy. Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.



Increasing affordable housing inventory

Chapter 40B authorizes a housing agency or developer to obtain a single comprehensive permit for the construction of subsidized low- or moderate-income housing if less than 10% of a community's total year-round housing is subsidized low- or moderate-income housing. Hatfield's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) is 2.7 percent, making the town vulnerable to a Comprehensive Permit application. A Comprehensive Permit puts local permitting in the hands of the Zoning Board of Appeals. One of the primary purposes of

M.G.L Chapter 40B is to ensure that no city or town shoulders a disproportionate amount of low- and moderate-income housing in any region of the state. To this end, a 10% statutory minimum was established as an indicator that suburbs and small towns were providing their "fair share" of subsidized Affordable Housing. Hatfield does not currently meet this statutory minimum, and residents have lifted up the need for affordable housing, especially for seniors and young families. This is an area where the Town could focus energy to meet

residents needs while also improving compliance with the State's affordable housing goals.

If a community does not meet the 10% threshold, a 40B proposal may take the community by surprise requiring the town to navigate the Comprehensive Permit. There are technical resources to assist the town with a Comprehensive Permit provided by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, and in some cases towns do work with developers in a friendly 40B scenario where the town will have considered and addressed the proposed development and work towards ensuring its passage at the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Hatfield's 2015 Housing Production Plan called for a goal to create 8 units of Affordable Housing each year. This goal has not been realized to date, and allowing for additional housing types in town could be achieved via mixed use development, or through the use of 40R, or 40B development. Mixed uses can include condominium or apartment units that may be more appropriate for younger adults and families looking to reside in Hatfield. With 37 percent of the housing stock being built before 1939, challenges including energy inefficiency, design impediments for households with limited mobility individuals, and outdated materials and products may be areas for focused attention, especially for older adults who may be living on fixed incomes.

Protecting Hatfield's community character through preservation

Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.

As identified in the *Land Use* chapter, the town could maintain the potential benefits of balancing growth and conservation by becoming more proactive in planning, exploring targeted plans for key nodes and corridors, and implementing the recommended policies and regulations. The town has been successful in being proactive when it comes to managing historic and cultural assets. Hatfield has a large number of historic resources which have retained their characteristics over time, particularly in the historic town center. Credit goes to the property owners who have maintained these historic buildings and resources to assure they are not impacted negatively by development, despite minimal protection measures in place to control exterior alterations. The *Historic and Cultural Resources* chapter examines how the town is

currently preserving history and planning cultural activities – both integral elements of what makes a neighborhood vibrant and livable. There is a high value placed by residents on Hatfield's historic and natural setting and it remains a common theme in this Comprehensive Plan. Aside from the Preservation of Historically Significant Buildings 12-month demolition delay bylaw, which was attributed with saving the town's historic Center School in 2015¹, Hatfield does not have any local regulations which would provide a process for reviewing proposed exterior alterations to designated buildings such as inclusion within a local historic district. Multiple past planning efforts have recommended the creation of local historic districts or architectural conservation districts, but there has been no appetite for a regulatory approach to restrict exterior alterations to historic resources. While there are developers who are willing to challenge the current systems for approval

¹ <https://centerschoolcondominiums.com/>

of impacting historical resources, there are some landlords who are neglecting their properties. This leads to blighted conditions and often, unsafe, dirty overgrowing properties that the town may end up being responsible for. Where it was discussed previously that design guidelines are imperative for non-residential housing throughout the town, these criteria and guidelines can also be codified in zoning as a way to combat blight.

With a growing emphasis on energy efficiency and utilizing renewable energy sources to power one's home, the Commonwealth has provided opportunities for homeowners to take advantage of audits to identify ways to make their homes more energy efficient. Some energy efficiencies can be found in insulation, airtightness, and ventilation throughout a home, the use of eco-friendly building materials, energy-efficient appliances, insulation, and renewable energy systems. Getting a green

building certification, such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), has become a way for a homeowner to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and energy efficiency. There are ways that new development and/or redevelopment in Hatfield can account for maintaining and preserving the exterior of buildings while also making them resilient, energy efficient homes. Hatfield could look to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where the Strawberry Banke Museum is looking to redesign hardscapes to absorb water and increasing business pressures to build energy efficient campus resiliency.

As there are other actions and strategies identified and threaded into action plan elements, important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.



Resiliency in transportation infrastructure

Vibrant neighborhoods benefit from efficient transportation infrastructure that promote walkability, facilitating residents' ability to socialize and stay active. Implementing complete streets policies, expanding the sidewalks, and improving access to shared-use paths are ways Hatfield can take advantage of innovative funding from the Commonwealth such as Complete Streets funding to build the kind of transportation network that residents desire while at the same time making strategic use of Chapter 90 funds. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements can be realized if the town adopts a Complete Streets policy, and more funds start flowing to the Town Highway Department for the upkeep of town assets.

Freight transport is vital to the Hatfield economy. Trucks serve local businesses, the village center, farms, and other facilities but at the same time, truck traffic represents a significant concern in many neighborhoods. North Hatfield Street and Plain Road have reported truck traffic through neighborhoods and residents have expressed concerns about the noise resulting from the use of engine compression brakes. The Town has worked

to address these concerns in the past by providing effective wayfinding and signage and designing local streets to discourage cut-through traffic. The town should continue to support investments in roadway maintenance including crack sealing and grading of unpaved municipal roadways to assure a resilient transportation system that meets all road users' needs.

Significant progress has been made over the last decade in integrating resilience criteria into transportation decision-making especially when large capital plans rely on federal funding. If the town can invest in making transportation projects more resilient in the face of increasing and intensifying storms, floods, droughts, and other natural hazards that are combining with new temperature and precipitation norms, this will make the community more resilient. Collaborative implementation of the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan is a good place to start.

Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.

Goals and Actions

Explore where there may be options for other village centers in Town with livable, workable, and walkable neighborhoods.

Land Use chapter

Primary responsibility: Planning Board (lead); Open Space Committee (support); DPW

Possible resources: MassHousing; Complete Streets program; PVPC

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Promote the newly adopted Hatfield Design Guidelines Handbook and ensure that new development or redevelopment considers standards and criteria for approval.
- Improve and/or create pedestrian pathways around village centers with attention to ADA compliance, including curb cuts, and parking spaces for vans with lifts.
- Create and/or implement standards for consistent signs, streetscapes, and architecture.

Provide housing stock that protects and maintains the scenic, natural and historic resources of the Town. This includes ensuring open space protection when building new housing, as well as adopting low impact development standards for all development

Housing chapters

Primary responsibility: Planning Board (lead); Open Space Committee (co-lead)

Possible resources: Mass Housing Partnership; Community Preservation Act; Wayfinders; Valley Community Development Corporation

Time to achieve: Long term – next 15 years and ongoing

- Develop an Action Plan

Promote housing that is financially attainable for all ages and housing configurations.

Housing and Health and Social Environment chapters

Primary responsibility: Planning Board (lead)

Possible resources: Mass Housing Partnership; Community Preservation Act; PVPC

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Explore use of two special zoning overlay districts to increase density in certain places, including the 40R Smart growth Overlay District and/or 40Y Starter Home Districts to increase density in certain places.
- Provide opportunities for Hatfield residents to live in Town in their later years by ensuring the availability of affordable and accessible housing that enables downsizing and social connection.
- Identify a location for additional public housing and seek project approval and funding.

- Assist homeowners in getting MassSave assessments and implementing conservation measures on their homes to decrease the cost of heating and cooling.
- Monitor the impact of short-term rental use in Hatfield.
- Allow permitting of alternative home design and clarify definitions.
- Establish relationship with local housing nonprofits.

Increase affordability and add affordable housing units to make progress toward the MGL Chapter 40b affordability goal of 10%.

Housing chapter

Primary responsibility: Planning Board (lead)

Possible resources: Mass Housing Partnership; Community Preservation Act; PVPC; Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Prepare a housing production plan and submit it to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities for approval with updates every 5 years.
- Establish a public housing trust fund to receive, manage, and administer Community Preservation Act funds for housing projects, including rental properties.
- Apply for a community development block grant funds to rehabilitate existing housing to support low- to moderate-income residents.
- Review potential use of inclusionary housing programs.

Protect Hatfield's community character.

Historic and Cultural Resources chapter

Primary responsibility: Historical Committee; Open Space; Planning; School

Possible resources: Community Preservation Act; PVPC

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Develop a Native American presence statement and eliminate outdated signage.
- Redefine Hatfield's Priority Heritage Landscapes.
- Pursue a local historic district study for the Hatfield Town Center with updated MA Historical Commission documentation of related buildings.
- Develop regulatory and non-regulatory community-wide Design Guidelines and Standards and a review process, as appropriate.
- Explore the use of CPA grants for historic housing rehabilitation tied to income eligibility. (See examples from Springfield and Cambridge.)
- Strengthen the current Demolition Delay Bylaw to cover buildings 75 years or older.
- Explore additional bylaws that can be protective of certain community qualities, including a scenic roads bylaw for the protection of trees and stone walls, an archaeological protection bylaw, and a minimum maintenance bylaw (sometimes placed within a nuisance bylaw) to protect buildings owned by absentee landlords from demolition by neglect.

Encourage stewardship of Hatfield's historic resources and landscapes.

Historic and Cultural Resources chapter

Primary responsibility: Historical Committee; Open Space Committee; Schools; Selectboard; DPW

Possible resources: Historical Society; Cemetery Commission; Community Preservation Act

Time to achieve: Long term – next 15 years and ongoing

- Pursue Certified Local Government status with the National Park Service, which provides a direct pathway for increased state and federal support and funding. Benefits of becoming a CLG include access to survey and planning grant funds, local involvement in the National Register of Historic Places nomination process, and local involvement in review and compliance. Currently, Holyoke is the only community in Western Massachusetts only community in Western Massachusetts that participates in the Certified Local Government program.
- Add information to the Hatfield Historical Commission town page to provide additional information, resources, and facilitate understanding of the HHC's purpose and why it provides a community benefit.
- Provide design guidelines and best practices to Hatfield building owners for preventative maintenance.
- Update documentation of Hatfield's historic resources to meet current standards, including the stories of underrepresented populations. Inventory undocumented natural and built historic resources to include trees, barns, and stone walls. Amherst has a good example of a tree inventory using GIS: <http://gis.amherstma.gov/apps/TreeInv.aspx>
- Through collaboration of the Historical Commission and Historical Society, develop a Historic Home Plaque Program, an annual Preservation Award program, and interactive ways for the community and visitors to experience Hatfield's built history.
- Pursue interpretive signage such as a heritage trail throughout the community, perhaps working with the schools.

Continue to advance pedestrian safety within the Town's transportation network.

Transportation and Mobility chapter

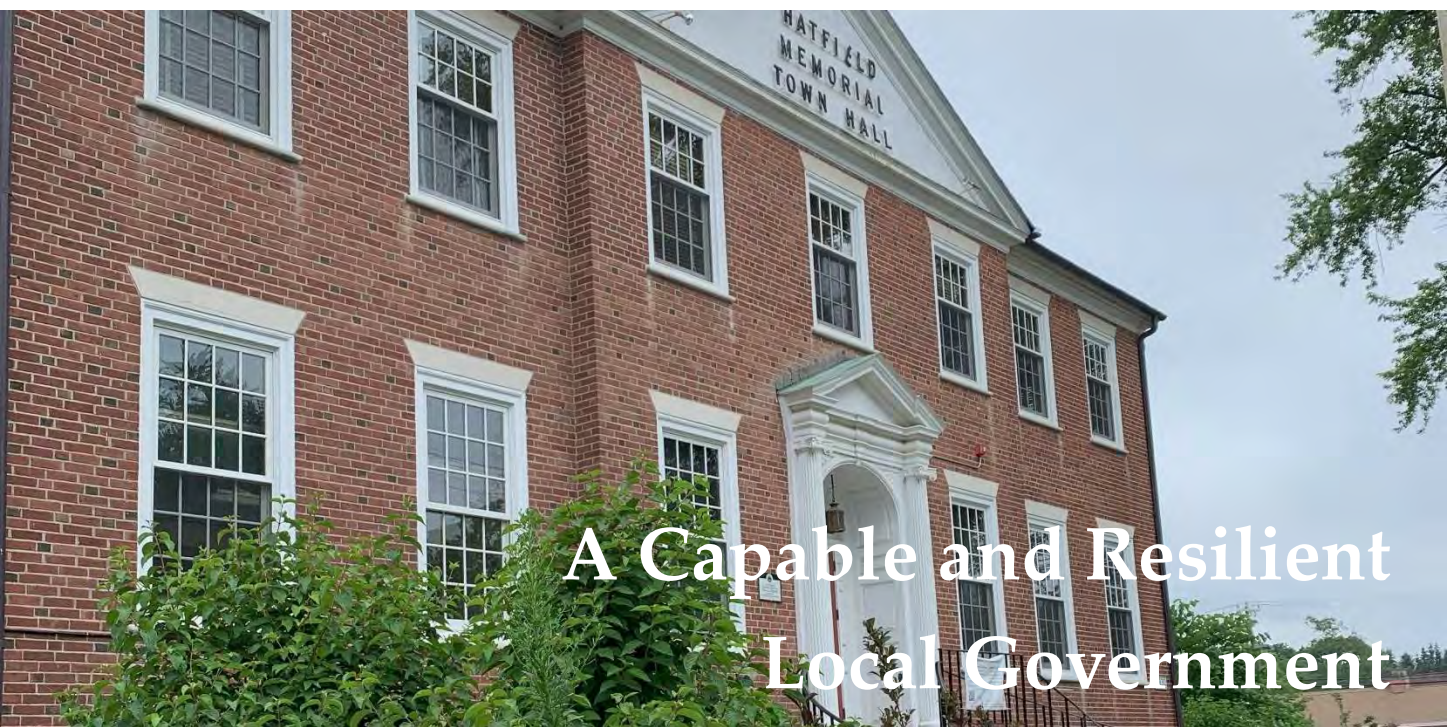
Primary responsibility: Selectboard; DPW; Police/Fire; School

Possible resources: Chapter 90

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Identify gaps in the sidewalk network and prioritize projects to fill gaps, potentially starting with Main Street, Bridge Street, Gore Avenue, Prospect Street, King Street, Chestnut Street, and Elm Street. (See related action in Together as Community - Welcoming & Supportive for All)
- Evaluate the location of vehicle passing lanes on Elm Street and identify crosswalk conflicts.

- Identify opportunities for improved signage including the Massachusetts Safe Passing sign at roadway locations where bicycle use is frequent, especially Elm Street, Main Street, and School Street.
- Ensure optimal functioning and locations of crosswalks.
 - Monitor the performance of pedestrian crosswalks (including Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon installations).
 - Consider additional locations for crosswalks based on performance.
 - Identify opportunities to consolidate crosswalk locations in the Town Center.
 - Install additional crosswalk signage if needed, potentially at Main Street at intersection with King Street, and School Street at intersection with Prospect Street.
 - “Daylight” crosswalks and intersections by identifying curbside parking that restricts visibility.
- Assess the need for pedestrian scale lighting at crosswalk locations.



Overview

“A Capable and Resilient Local Government” refers to a municipal administration that is well-equipped and prepared to effectively serve its community, both under normal circumstances and in times of crisis. For Hatfield, this means having adequate staffing, resources, and infrastructure to provide essential services, maintain public facilities, and support the needs of residents and local businesses.

Conversations relative to governance were threaded throughout the *Hatfield 2040* process. On the capability side, discussions have centered on maximizing use of existing assets, adding staffing to address key needs, exploring opportunities for regional collaboration, and strategically investing in infrastructure to align with housing, economic development, and land use goals. On the resilience side, the *Hatfield 2040* conversations have centered on proactive planning for potential disruptions, namely flooding, by consolidating critical facilities outside of flood-prone areas and fostering a strong sense of community.

The challenges, however, are significant and include: rising costs and revenue that remains relatively static; the location of many critical facilities and services within the floodplain, including the Town Hall, Police and Fire Departments, Hatfield Housing Authority, Hatfield Elementary School, and Wastewater Treatment Plant; and tremendous desire to keep schools local at a time when housing choices are limited for younger families and the Town’s population is aging with 23.2% of residents aged 65 or older.

The *Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment* section for the Greater Connecticut River Valley underscores the challenges for governance, which is identified as among the most at risk sectors.¹ These challenges include not only an increasing demand for government services, and

¹ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2022-massachusetts-climate-change-assessment-december-2022-volume-iii-regional-reports/download>. See pages starting at RS15.

diminishing state and municipal revenues, but also the rising costs of responding to climate migration (an emerging risk from within and outside Massachusetts).²

By proactively addressing these challenges and seizing opportunities as they emerge, Hatfield's local government can enhance its ability to serve the community effectively, both under normal circumstances and in times of crisis.

Key Points

Content that speaks to *A Capable and Resilient Local Government* is pulled primarily from chapters on: *Farming; Transportation and mobility; and Facilities, services, and social resilience*. These chapters and *Hatfield 2040* public engagement around the topic of governance raise four key points: promoting capacity in local governance;

managing Town infrastructure efficiently; maximizing use of existing facilities and services; and supporting farmers more actively. A summary of these key points follows below with more detailed discussion included in the chapters themselves (see the Appendixes).

Promoting capacity in local governance

Like most small towns in the region, Hatfield struggles between offering high quality municipal services and minimizing burden on local tax payers. Most participating in *Hatfield 2040* seem to understand that revenue is limited and they also appreciate the low municipal tax rate. In fact, maintaining a low municipal tax rate was the number 6 goal out of 15 for those completing the *Hatfield 2040* Community-wide Survey when asked, “What goals are most important for the Town of Hatfield to focus on in the next 10 to 20 years?”³

This suggests little appetite for increasing the municipal tax rate. As such, addressing resources and staffing needs will be measured against capacity to pay through existing

revenue. It may be that alternative means identified by many in the *Hatfield 2040* process will be critically important. These include finding efficiencies by adjusting duties among existing staff, hiring new staff on a regional basis with communities that have similar needs in order to share costs, and even engaging a wider set of resident volunteers in Town to take on key roles.

It may also be that, as many hope, in pivoting toward a more active program of economic development as described in the Economic Development chapter in the Appendixes and the action plan element entitled *A Thriving Local Economy*, Hatfield could grow revenue

² The *Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment* notes: Hauer et al. (2020) predict that Massachusetts is home to anywhere between 300 to 500 thousand individuals vulnerable to displacement due to sea level rising, either because they reside in low elevation coastal zones or in the 100-year projected floodplain. Hauer reports that most American households displaced due to environmental phenomena migrate to nearby urban job-growth centers. Within Massachusetts, this outcome may be observed as a growth of small cities in the Greater Connecticut River Valley region.

³ Goals ranked above this were in order as follows: 1. maintaining working farms; 2. preserving the character of the Town; 3. improving the quality of education; 4. protecting open space, natural resources and environmental quality; and 5. providing a variety of housing.

to cover additional municipal resources and staffing.

Resources and staffing are nevertheless critical to meeting community needs. Through the *Hatfield 2040* planning process, participants identified the importance of

evaluating current and projected service demands of the community and whether Town departments have necessary resources. This includes staffing generally, and public safety departments, and the Town's vehicle fleet specifically.

Staffing

For staffing, there are several needs already identified:

- Increasing hours and scope of duties for the Town planning position
- Grants writing for the Town, duties for which could also include helping local farmers apply for grants;
- Directing the work of creating a community-based social center and managing communications across Town via newsletters, postcards, and digital media;
- Pursuing economic development initiatives by leading relationship building with local businesses

Public safety

Public safety emerged as a priority given the value of such services in responding to and mitigating impacts of crises such as fires, but also natural hazard events such as flooding. Quoting from the Massachusetts State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Action Plan, the Town's recent Hazard Mitigation Plan notes, "...in most natural hazard events, the vulnerability of a population is largely dependent on local preparedness and

availability of human resources for social services staffing and supplies distribution...." As a smaller community, Hatfield may not have as many public and professional responders to a natural disaster, but ensuring the existing team is properly equipped, keeping the community informed about emergency preparedness, and enabling community networks can reduce the impacts on the most vulnerable residents.



Vehicle fleet

The Town's vehicle fleet, which includes police cruisers, fire trucks, inter-department vehicles, and DPW machinery, is a critical asset for emergency preparedness and public safety. The need for specialized equipment to effectively deliver public services presents a significant cost to the Town, including both the initial cost of vehicles and their regular maintenance. Many vehicles are purchased

through a lease-to-own model that requires annual budget allocations, and any unforeseen need for repair or replacement can impact resources intended elsewhere. The collective value of the vehicle fleet represents an important investment from the Town. Keeping the Town's vehicle fleet up-to-date and limited to essential equipment represents effective use of funds and fiscal responsibility.

Regionalization

“Regionalization,” “municipal cost sharing,” “cross-jurisdictional sharing,” and “inter-local cooperation” are all terms that describe a collaborative process that results in the sharing or consolidation of the purchasing of goods or provision of services between two or more entities. Cooperation and collaboration at the local and regional level can result in opportunities to maintain or improve services, and to save or enhance revenue. Such efforts can take a variety of forms, from the joint purchasing of goods or sharing of services to hiring and sharing staff, to the full consolidation of a municipal service, and creation of a regional department. Both the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and Franklin Regional Council of Governments can be helpful in exploring such possibilities.

While Hatfield has historically opted-out of the regionalization of municipal services, current financial constraints are encouraging a re-thinking (though this does not include the school district). Some of the following municipal services were identified as potential opportunities for regionalization during *Hatfield 2040* conversations:

- Dispatch for police, fire, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs)
- Certified wastewater treatment technician
- Superintendent of schools
- Food services for schools

Managing Town infrastructure efficiently

Public buildings

As a small town with finite resources, the continued maintenance and operation of public buildings can be a strain. Moreover, timely maintenance of facilities and infrastructure is essential to avoiding major upgrades and keeping costs down.

Hatfield’s Capital Improvement Planning Committee reviews priority needs from various municipal departments for

maintaining facilities and any ongoing or expanded municipal services. Looking ahead through fiscal year 2030, the Capital Improvement Planning Committee has reviewed over 50 projects across various Town departments and annually establishes a program to address highest priorities. There may be important ways that the Hatfield 2040

process and plan ultimately influences several priorities.

For example, recently the idea of a new Public Works building has been added to the Capital plan. This may also trigger some other changes that are responsive to new understanding about flood risk and get essential services out of the Town Center.

Recently, improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant has received significant attention due to essential equipment and components reaching the end of their useful lives, and the need for a more flood resilient facility. With design work complete,

construction began July 1, 2024. Total cost for upgrades is \$12,029,000, an amount that will be covered through a USDA Grant for \$2,406,000, a USDA Loan for \$9,491,000, and Town borrowing of an additional \$132,000.

While the two school buildings are not yet old, both facilities are beginning to need more than regular maintenance such as upgrading mechanical systems and repairing/replacing the roofs. Recent priorities have included roof and heating upgrades at Hatfield Elementary School, as well as heating, ventilation and air conditioning upgrades at Smith Academy.

Roads

Hatfield has a total of 63 roadway miles. Of these roads,

- 23 miles are “federal aid eligible,” and include functional classifications of *Interstate*, *Arterial* and *Collector*. The costs for work on these roadways is typically covered by MassDOT and completed by the Local Highway Department. It should be noted that for MassDOT to cover the maintenance cost, the maintenance activity must be programed and included in the Region’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- the other 40 miles are “local roads,” and include functional classifications

of *Residential Local Through* and *Residential Dead Ends*. Funding to cover work on these roadways comes from annual Chapter 90 allocations made available by MassDOT and work is typically completed by Hatfield Public Works staff or local contractors.

Hatfield has been efficient in managing the Town’s roadway infrastructure. By leveraging allocations of Chapter 90 funds (\$238,386 in 2024), municipal budgets, federal highway funds, and state grant programs, the Town continues to maintain the roadway network and has also been resourceful in improving pedestrian crossing and upgrades to sidewalks.

Energy

In 2010, the Town of Hatfield was designated a Green Community for its commitment to reducing municipal energy consumption and costs. The Town has received three rounds of funding (in 2010, 2014, and 2017) from the Commonwealth’s Green Communities

Division to prioritize conservation measures, such as weatherization and window replacements at Town Hall, Smith Academy, Hatfield Elementary School, the Wastewater Treatment Plant offices, DPW’s highway garage, the Public Library, and the Fire

Department. Additionally, funds granted by the Green Communities Division also helped secure an electric light duty truck for multiple department use. Continued participation in the Green Communities program means that

Communication

Communication is an ongoing and important responsibility for the Town. The challenge of public outreach, especially regarding important public health and safety information, can be fraught with challenge as there is such a range in how communication could occur based on capability with use of technologies and frequency of visits to such places as Town Hall. For older residents, the Council on Aging has found a successful model in their regular newsletter, which includes a community calendar, contact information for town and regional resources, and updates from the COA. The physical newsletter seems to work well with Hatfield's senior residents, which may hold true to other resident groups. Responses to the Community-wide Survey emphasize the value of traditional media such as local newspapers,

funds for climate smart renovations of Town facilities are available to help the Town further minimize its carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.

the postal service, and town billboard as preferred means for sharing information.

For the more digitally oriented residents, the Town website is the starting point to find public notices and important Town information. The capacity for a town employee or consultant to maintain the Town website is an important consideration, as is the ability of town staff, volunteer boards, and elected officials to promptly share important information through the resource. Clear and effective policies and procedures for communicating Town business, either past decisions or upcoming deliberations, are an integral part of improving communications within the Town government and amongst the community.

Maximizing use of existing facilities and services

Many involved in *Hatfield 2040* indicate there are important opportunities to maximize use of existing facilities and services by consolidating operations into fewer and more efficient buildings. Supportive of this priority action are Community-wide Survey responses, which rank the goal of improvements or expansion of municipal services near bottom, 14th out of 15 goals, for the Town in the next 10 to 20 years.

Timing of this action is important too in that so many critical facilities are located in the floodplain and have associated risk with the extremes of climate change that could result in damages and significant disruption to the functioning of public services and town

government. Responding to this challenge itself presents certain opportunity to consolidate facilities and services out of flood-prone areas, while also maximizing use of existing facilities and services and potentially reducing costs in the longer term.

Such ideas include moving the Council on Aging's Senior Center out of the basement of Memorial Town Hall to co-locate with Smith Academy, enabling ripe opportunities for intergenerational community building. It also includes adaptive reuse of town-owned properties to encourage business, investment, and additional property tax revenue.

A thorough examination of adequate, undeveloped parcels outside of the 500-year

floodplain is essential to the conversation about relocating these critical facilities and services. The issue of funding such an extensive project is also a significant challenge, yet there are current and evolving sources, such as the Federal Emergency

Management Agency's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and the Commonwealth's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program that could be leveraged to support such initiatives.

Exploring strategic expansion of the community's sanitary sewer infrastructure

Public infrastructure—typically roads and water service—tend to drive where development occurs in most communities. For Hatfield, public drinking water lines have been extended to most properties, but sanitary sewer/wastewater service is limited to the eastern parts of Town.

Extension of sewer service to those areas best suited for development safely outside of the floodplain is an important economic development strategy for Hatfield. This involves costly investment that the Town struggles to cover. Since 2020, sewer service connections to both residential and commercial customers have been limited largely to the Route 5 corridor.

At the same time, most of the existing sewer infrastructure in Hatfield lies within flood prone areas, including the wastewater treatment facility and multiple pump stations. In *Hatfield 2040* discussions, participants pointed to expansion of sewer service as a difficult, but important initiative. They expressed how this will advance economic development and also help generate increased revenue for the Town. Major ideas include exploring partnerships with Whately for the development of regional wastewater services and evaluating the possibility of impact fees to fund a revolving account for Town-wide wastewater infrastructure improvements (among other infrastructure improvements).

Supporting farmers more actively

Many identify deeply with Hatfield's agricultural landscape and heritage. Maintaining working farms was the number 1 of 15 goals for those completing the *Hatfield 2040* Community-wide Survey when asked, "What goals are most important for the Town of Hatfield to focus on in the next 10 to 20 years?"

While the Town has indeed taken several important steps to support farms over the past decades, *Hatfield 2040* planning conversations elevated other essential measures that tie to helping farmers grapple with numerous emerging challenges. These challenges include those related to climate change (both extremes in heat and downpours), restricted land access for new

farmers, decreased soil fertility, and limited labor supply. Active support of farmers by the Town includes allocating staff time to help access grants, connect to technical assistance and service providers, as well as ongoing communication to share town-specific information that concerns farmers. Most importantly though, it involves improving the representation of farmers in Town government through reactivation of the Hatfield Agricultural Commission.

Agricultural commissions were created in towns throughout Massachusetts in the early 2000s to help farmers engage more effectively with local town governments. Members typically have worked together with town officials to promote agricultural economic

development, protect farmlands and farm businesses, and preserve, revitalize and sustain agricultural businesses and land. Hatfield has benefited enormously from the activities of its agricultural commission since its charter in 2002.

The activities of many local Agricultural Commissions have waned in recent years, however, and Hatfield has recently lost three of its longest serving members in the last 18-months. In part, this is due to the more extreme demands on farmers' time today, but also the older age of many Hatfield farmers. With fewer available farmers from which to recruit new members, Hatfield's Agricultural Commission may need to recruit new membership from informed residents, who are deeply invested in promoting and protecting the interests of a thriving local food system.

The importance of re-activating Hatfield's Agricultural Commission (along with others in the state) with funding and resources must be brought to the attention of local legislators. Increasing capacity for the Commission to engage on a strategic level, will provide

agency in addressing those most urgent challenges through new initiatives. It will also enable other activities, such as engaging with the wider community and schools to help unite the town around its agricultural identity and promoting farm products and agritourism.

Hatfield's Agricultural Commission could once again serve to raise the profile and representation of farmers' interests. The current and next generation of farmers need major public support and investment to sustain their operations and to adapt their farming practices so that local agriculture continues to give shape to life in Hatfield.

Additional recommended actions include: protecting working farms through adoption of an agricultural protection overlay district and incentivizing best practices; and providing financial relief/assistance to farmers through evaluating how agricultural structures are assessed in the local tax code and determining whether there may be potential for lease agreements on municipally-owned land with young and beginning farmers who struggle in affording places to farm.



Goals and Actions

Promote capacity in local governance, ensuring the Town's departments are appropriately staffed and equipped *Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience chapter*

Primary responsibility: Selectboard (lead); Finance; DPW

Possible resources: MA Efficiency and Regionalization Grant program; PVPC - District Local Technical Assistance; MA Green Communities Program

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years) and ongoing

- Evaluate whether Town departments have the human resources necessary (i.e., staff, training, good management, appropriate pay, etc.) to meet the current and projected service demands of the community.
 - Explore approaches to including additional staff or reassigning duties to cover the following: expanded hours and duties for the Town planner position; grants writing for the Town (to be combined possibly with the Agricultural Grants Manager in the *Room for the River* action plan element); directing the work of creating a community-based social center and managing communications across Town via newsletters, postcards, and digital media; and pursuing economic development initiatives by leading relationship building with local businesses.
- Assess whether the Town's public safety departments (i.e., police, fire, etc.) have the necessary resources to meet the current and projected service needs of the community.
- Perform a fleet vehicle assessment to understand if the Town's departments have the correct number, types, and sizes of vehicles in their inventories, and plan for optimizing fleet efficiency while also ensuring that new and replacement vehicle purchases meet the Town's Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy.
- Identify opportunities to leverage joint resources with other Towns, including grants, but also shared services, possibly including: dispatch for police, fire, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs); certified wastewater treatment technician; superintendent of schools; and food services for schools.

Manage Town infrastructure efficiently *Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience chapter*

Primary responsibility: DPW; Selectboard; Capital Improvement Committee; Finance Committee

Possible resources: MassWorks grants; MA Green Communities Program

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years) and ongoing

- Invest in routine and capital maintenance/improvement activities at local roads, bridges, water supply and resources, etc. to minimize long-term reconstruction costs and to ensure the ongoing effective use of these assets.

- Continue to pursue federal and state grants and other advantageous financing for the maintenance/ improvement and, as necessary, replacement of the Town’s existing infrastructure, including stormwater and wastewater infrastructure. This includes continued participation in the Massachusetts Green Communities program for climate smart renovations to Town facilities that also minimize carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Evaluate the impact of, and opportunities associated with, current and next-generation communications technologies, including Town-wide wifi, on the Town’s infrastructure and services.

Maximize use of the Town’s existing facilities and services to promote financial resilience

Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience chapter

Primary responsibility: Selectboard (lead); All town boards/committees

Possible resources: Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC); and the Commonwealth’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program

Time to achieve: Short term

- Inventory and develop an integrated use and re-use plan for Town-owned properties to promote their highest and best use in consideration of community needs/benefits, and in consideration of flood/potential climate change impacts.
 - Ensure existing facilities and services are being utilized to their greatest potential.
 - Evaluate the feasibility of consolidating certain town departments to potentially minimize excessive personnel and capital assets, as measured against the Town’s needs and regulatory standards.
- Ensure incorporation of design, policies, and products that are responsive to future flood risk and accessibility for all users in all of the Town’s future facility construction projects.
- Get more residents involved in Town as one way to do more with less.

Explore the strategic expansion of the community’s wastewater infrastructure *Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience chapter*

Primary responsibility: Board of Health and DPW (co-leads); Capital Improvement (support); Finance; Selectboard

Possible resources: MA Efficiency and Regionalization Grant program; MassWorks

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years)

- Explore potential partnerships with adjacent communities like Whately for the development of regional wastewater services.
- Evaluate the imposition of limited impact fees to fund a revolving account for Town-wide wastewater infrastructure among other infrastructure improvements.

Support Hatfield's farmers more actively

Farm chapter

Primary responsibility: Selectboard;
Agricultural Commission; Planning Board

Possible resources: Hampden/Hampshire
Conservation District; MA Department of
Agricultural Resources grants; CISA; NOFA;
Land Trusts; PVPC; Grinspoon Foundation

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years) and
ongoing

- Activate the Agricultural Commission to have better representation of farmers in Town government and recruit new members that include students, backyard farmers, and informed and passionate non-farmer residents.
- Regularly connect with growers to ensure they are accessing appropriate technical assistance, current grant opportunities, and service providers.
- Create and maintain a farmer e-mail list serve to facilitate the sharing of town-specific information that concerns farmers; could also be used between farms to share resources, equipment, peer learning, etc.
- Protect working farms.
 - Adopt an agriculture protection overlay district to promote optimal combination on a given parcel for clustering of development and conservation of soils best suited for growing food (PVPC has model bylaw for this).
 - Identify strategies to incentivize best practices, including prevention of fertilizer runoff.
- Provide financial relief/assistance to farmers.
 - Evaluate tax code on how agricultural structures are assessed.
 - Examine Town-owned land and determine where there may be potential for lease agreements with young and beginning farmers.

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Our Natural Resources

Overview

Our Natural Resources refers to the valuable natural assets that lie within Hatfield, including fertile farmland soils, forests, rivers, streams, wetlands, aquifers, and scenic landscapes. These contribute to both ecological health and quality of life for Hatfield's residents. Major features include:

- 35 miles of stream and river channel within the town boundaries, consisting of the Connecticut River, which forms the Town's 7.5-mile eastern and southeastern boundary, the Mill River, Running Gutter Brook, Mountain Brook, and Broad Brook.
- 4,001 acres of prime farmland soils in the fertile lowlands on the eastern side of Town.
- 4,800 acres of forests and woodlands, including Horse Mountain and the Rocks, located in the western side of town.
- Three drinking water sources along the forested slopes in the west: the Running Gutter Brook Reservoir, which serves as the primary source, and the Omasta Well and West Hatfield Well, which provide back-up supply as needed.

Residents highly value these resources and put a high priority on protecting them. As part of the planning processes for both *Hatfield 2040* and the recently completed Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) residents identified their top concerns and priorities regarding open space, natural resources, and recreation in Hatfield. More than 80% of OSRP survey respondents felt that it is "very important" to conserve surface waters, groundwater and aquifers, wildlife habitat, and working farms and farmland. More than 75% of respondents also rank farmland, forestland, and floodplains as very important to conserve in order to help the Town prepare for and be more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Hatfield's natural resources have important ties to supporting production of local food and filtration of clean and fresh drinking water, storage of carbon and mitigation of climate impacts, and landscapes that provide recreational enjoyment and give shape to the Town's rural character. These are collectively known as the "ecosystem services" provided by natural resources.¹ Consideration of these values is integral to ongoing thinking about other *Hatfield 2040* priorities, specifically how Hatfield best responds to flood risks and considers opportunities to advance economic development and affordable housing initiatives. Balancing these at times competing priorities may be difficult. In weighing considerations with care and then thoughtfully guiding growth to conserve and steward its natural wealth, however, Hatfield can ensure that these resources continue to provide benefits for generations to come.

Key Points

Content that speaks to *Our Natural Resources* is pulled primarily from chapters on: Economic development; Farming; Natural resources, and Open space, and recreation. This Action Plan element is also informed by participants at the June 10, 2023, public engagement event who advocated for protecting more farmland, forests, and drinking water supply areas, and respondents to the *Hatfield 2040* Community-wide Survey, who affirmed the importance of natural resources as a priority with the following:

- "Protecting open space, natural resources, & environmental quality" were selected as 2 of the top 5 most important goals for Hatfield to focus on in the next 10-20 years.

- The connection between sustainability and climate resilience is articulated as a common theme in the open-ended survey responses about hopes and concerns for Hatfield's future.

A summary of key points follows below with more detailed discussion included in the chapters themselves (see the Appendixes). Key points discussed below are: conserving farmland; protecting drinking water supply; supporting sustainable forestry practices; and exploring strategic expansion of Hatfield's wastewater infrastructure.

Conserving farmlands

Loss of farmland and challenges

While the number of farms and acres in production in Hatfield has significantly declined over the last 50 years, agricultural activities remain a prominent feature of the town, and protection of working farmland and

the town's agricultural economy is consistently named a top priority by residents concerned about the pace and impact of development.²

¹ For more on ecosystem services, see The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), a major UN-sponsored effort to analyze the impact of human actions on ecosystems and human well-being at: www.millenniumassessment.org/documents/document.300.aspx.pdf

² Priorities identified through surveys and communities meetings as reported in the Hatfield Master Plan (2001), <https://www.townofhatfield.org/sites/g/files/vyhli3246/f/uploads/masterplan.pdf> and Open Space Plan (2014)

Currently only 2,756 acres in Hatfield are cultivated for crops or hay. This is merely 29% of the total lands classified in Town as prime farmland soils (4,001 acres), farmland of statewide importance (1,601 acres) and farmland of local importance (1,334 acres).³

Of these cultivated lands, only 19% are permanently protected through Agricultural Preservation Restriction or Conservation Restriction easements.

A number of issues are impacting farming, including long-term ongoing issues that involve the financial pressures to convert to other uses, but also emerging vulnerabilities with one-third of the Town's most productive farmlands located in the 100-year floodplain.

- American Farmland Trust's 2022 report entitled, *Farms Under Threat*, ranks Massachusetts sixth in the United States in farmland loss from 2001–2016, and

ninth in terms of continued threats to farmland into the future.

- Current land use in Hatfield shows that 35% of cultivated crop and pastureland is within the 100-year floodplain, and an additional 30% is within the 500-year floodplain.⁴

Based on conversations with farmers through the *Hatfield 2040* process, most farms in Town are currently profitable and the owners have little interest in selling. Many however noted that this could change in the future, even abruptly, as farmers age with no identified successors and climate impacts compound the challenges and economic viability of farming.

This seems a critical point in time for Hatfield to push strategies that promote farmland protection, keeping land most suited to growing food in agricultural use and conserving the Town's highly valued rural scenic quality.

Prioritization and acquisition options

Given Hatfield's firm roots in agriculture, it is important that the Town take a leadership role in conserving more farmland. During the development of the 2023 Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan, the state discussed setting a state-wide goal of protecting 50% of its farmland by 2050. Currently Hatfield has a total of 521 acres of protected farmland. To reach the 50% goal of protected farmland, Hatfield would need to conserve an additional 857 acres for a total of 1,378 protected acres by 2050. These farmland protection goals are conservative in that they apply only to land currently in cultivation and not all classified farmland soils in town. Taking an incremental approach, this goal could be achieved over the

coming decades by preserving about 35 acres of farmland per year.

Such land conservation requires a multipronged approach to increase participation in existing state land protection programs, specifically the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR), augmented with either federal funding through the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and/or local funding through Hatfield's Community Preservation Act program. Land trusts will be important partners in this work as their staff are skilled at understanding how to best work

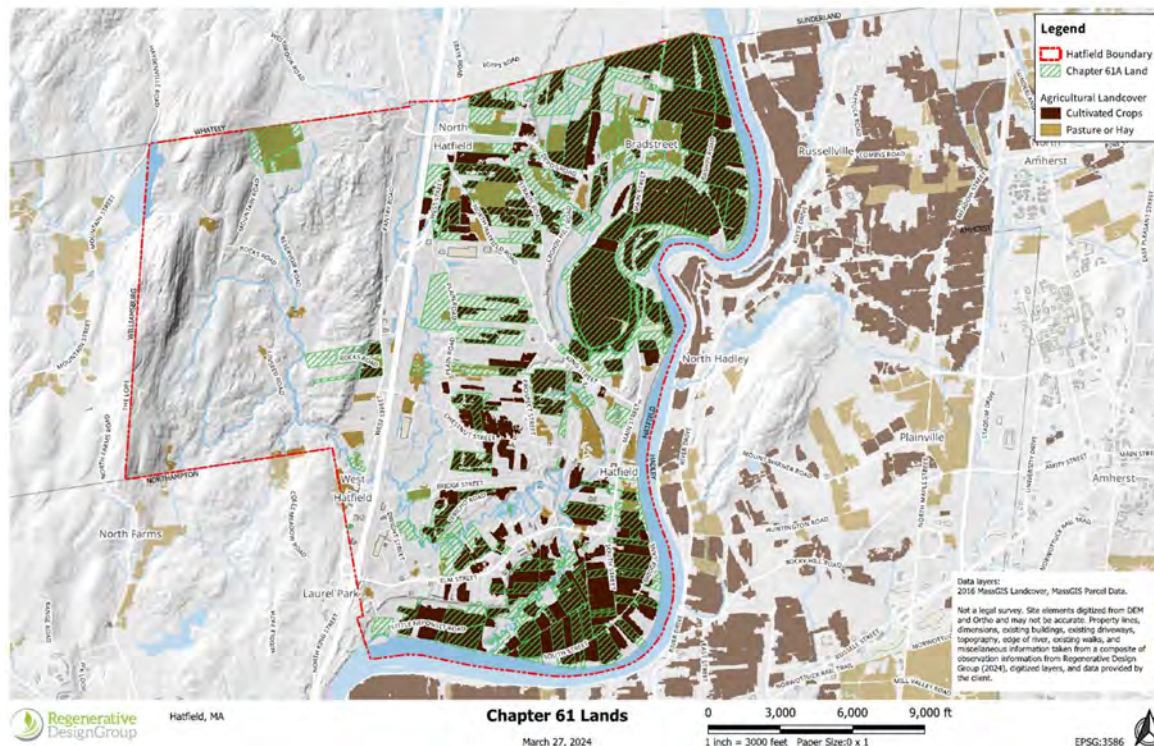
³ Note that this last category of farmland of local importance is a new soil category that has not previously been reported for Hatfield.

⁴ This is based on the currently effective FEMA FIRM maps dated 1980. With new maps, it is anticipated that a far higher ratio of such land will be in the floodplain.

with multiple funding sources for such initiatives.

Lands enrolled in Chapter 61A, a special tax relief program, present an important opportunity when it comes to conservation of agricultural lands. There are currently 2,309 acres enrolled in 61A in Hatfield based on their active management for agriculture (see

map below). With these lands, the Town has the “right of first refusal” if such lands are sold for a different use (residential, commercial, or industrial purposes). The “right of first refusal” is a legal interest in the property that grants the town the right to match a bona fide offer for conversion of the property from its agricultural use.



Green cross hatching in above map shows land in Hatfield that is enrolled in the Chapter 61A tax relief program. In exchange for this tax relief, the Town obtains “right of first refusal” if such lands ever come out of Chapter 61A for conversion to other uses.

Housing

Protecting farmland and creating more affordable housing are not mutually exclusive; they can serve as complementary objectives. Updated zoning just adopted at May 2024 Town Meeting provides full evidence of this in that these new measures promote a wider mix of housing to attract younger families and enable more of Hatfield’s older adults to stay in Town while also reversing sprawl

development approaches and incentivizing land protection.

The Accessory Dwelling Units bylaw allows for additional housing that is attached or adjacent to an existing home, increasing housing options through increased density rather than building on undeveloped land. The Open Space Residential Development bylaw incentivizes multi-unit residential

projects to reduce the development footprint by clustering homes and conserving 50% of the site as open space.

In Amherst, a clustered residential development with 17 homes protected more than 20 acres of land as open space some two decades ago. According to Amherst

Conservation Director Dave Ziomek, this protected open space created a “big back yard for residents” and became part of the land cultivated for many years by Simple Gifts Farm.^{5,6} With most Hatfield farms less than 50 acres in size, it is possible that Hatfield’s new zoning incentives could result in similar beneficial arrangements.

Protecting drinking water supply

In the densely wooded terrain of West Hatfield, outcroppings of bedrock alternate with pockets of wetlands that drain into Running Gutter Brook, a cold-water stream flowing down these hillsides. Running Gutter Brook feeds the reservoir that serves as Hatfield’s primary drinking water supply. Reservoir water is piped to a filtration plant that provides treatment before distribution across Town. The water distribution system includes a total 37 miles of water main that ranges from 2 to 16 inches in diameter.

While the vast majority of residents are connected to this public drinking water system, some residents draw supply from their private wells. The Board of Health oversees relevant state and local regulations toward keeping safe these private sources.

Challenges

Reliance on a surface water supply as the primary source however presents several challenges. Human-made changes that remove natural cover, such as forest, to replace it with buildings, driveways, parking lots, and roads lead to an increased threat of contamination via stormwater runoff that may now carry lawn chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers), pet waste, motor oil and gasoline, and other wastes associated

West Hatfield’s forested hills also serve as the primary aquifer recharge area for the Town’s two groundwater sources, the West Hatfield Well located along Running Gutter Brook and the Omasta Well located along the Mill River.

These wells are also connected to the distribution system, but cost has dictated that supply come primarily from the Running Gutter Brook Reservoir. Operation of the filtration plant remains less expensive than the electrical power needed to operate the two wells. The wells, from which water does not require treatment, are used primarily in two situations: 1) to provide adequate water supply during peak demand hours (summer months), and 2) to bypass the reservoir supply during times of high turbidity (primarily after heavy rainstorms).

with residential land uses. This can result in contamination of supply especially if such uses are located within water supply protection zones.

At the same time, the increasing frequency of larger downpours translates to storm flows of greater volume and velocities that now carry more natural organic material into reservoirs. In some communities, including Hatfield, this

⁵ Based on 6-8-22 PVPC interview of Dave Ziomek as part of creating model farmland protection regulatory tools with a MA Land Use Planning Grant.

⁶ The owners of Simple Gifts Farm are now selling their operation after 18 growing seasons in order to move to new related careers.

presents certain treatment challenges as disinfection processes can produce Haloacetic Acids (HAAs), a byproduct linked to causing certain cancers over years of exposure. Recent Annual Water Quality Reports for

Hatfield show that testing indicates levels of HAAs below the Maximum Contaminant Level (the highest level allowed in drinking water) of 60 parts per billion (ppb).⁷

Ensuring continued quality of supply

Having a mix of surface (reservoir) and groundwater (well) sources is already proving invaluable toward greater resilience for Hatfield. As such, ensuring long-term integrity of supply is critically important. The Town has made significant strides to protect drinking water quality by acquiring land in the north-west corner of town since the beginning of the 20th century. Recently, two forested

parcels in the watershed have been permanently protected.

For both surface and groundwater sources, the *Hatfield 2040* process highlighted the importance of continued work. This includes evaluating land conservation needs in water supply protection zones and updating the zoning bylaw to ensure land use is consistent with drinking water supply protection.

Supporting sustainable forestry practices

The forest resources and woodlands in Hatfield lie primarily west of the I-91 corridor. This area encompasses approximately 4,800 acres, nearly 45 percent of the total land area in Town. In Hatfield, there are approximately 135 species of trees and woody shrubs naturally occurring in what is considered an ecological “transition zone.” Primary forest types are a mix of *southern* oak-hickory and the *northern* maple-birch climax forests. Over time as the climate warms, the forests will likely evolve to support more of the southern species and fewer of the northern species.

Healthy forests provide numerous benefits with a long list that includes serving as natural filters to preserve water quality for drinking and recreation; generating better air quality, producing both oxygen and cooler summer temperatures; and soaking up rainfall through infiltration into soils and uptake by trees thus mitigating for the intensity of storm flows.

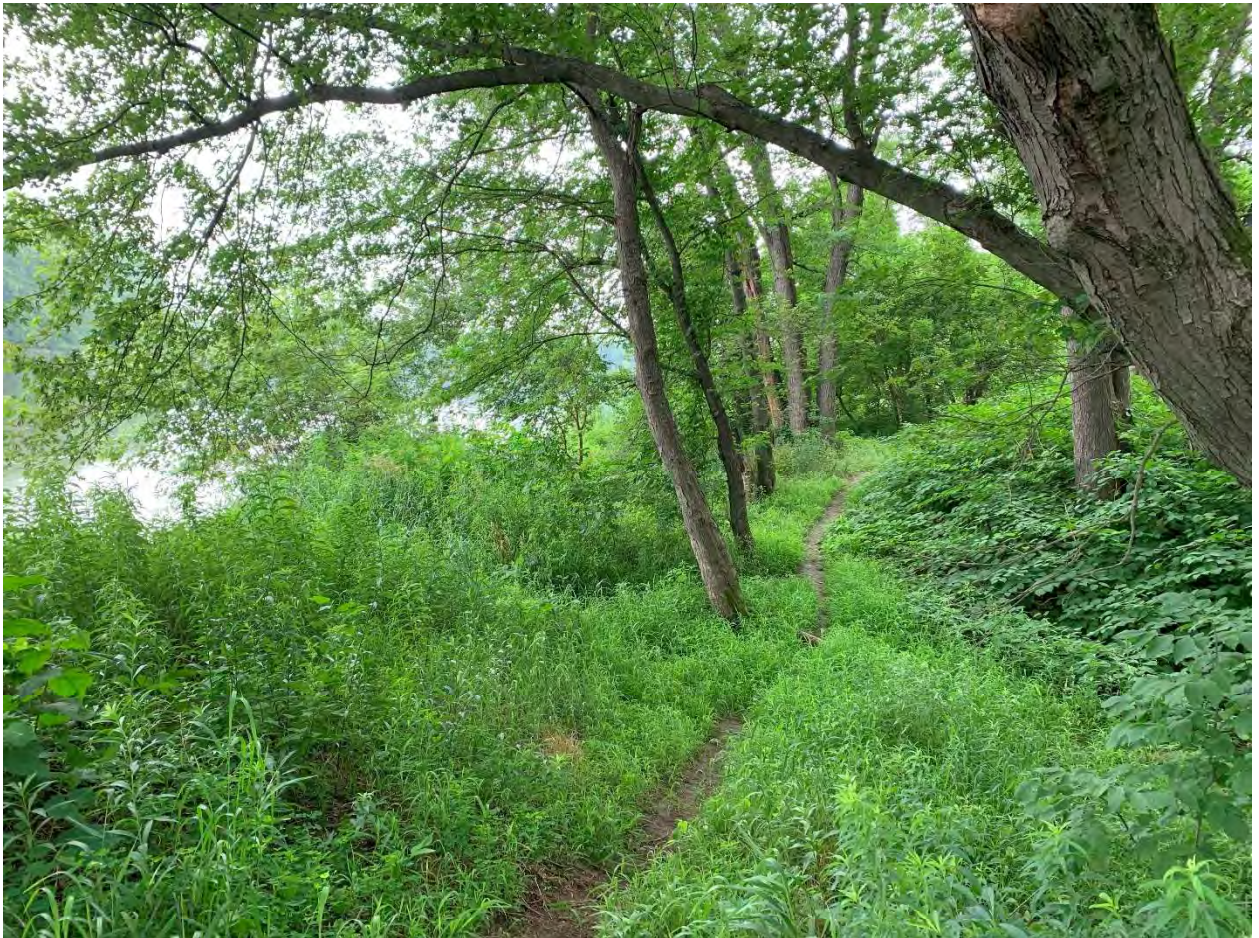
The large tracts of forest in Hatfield, Western Massachusetts, and across New England also have an especially important role in helping to regulate climate extremes given their role in storing carbon and reducing greenhouse gas concentrations.

To ensure healthy forest ecosystems, *Hatfield 2040* participants and those involved in preparing the Open Space and Recreation Plan stressed the importance of the Town’s work with a forest management consultant. This work would result in an implementable forest management plan for the large, forested areas in West Hatfield that are publicly owned. Massachusetts DCR has a community forest stewardship program that may be helpful in this regard. Information the Town obtains can then be shared with owners of private forestland in Hatfield to promote understanding of forest dynamics and best practice in forest care and management.

⁷ HAA amounts reported for Hatfield have been: 47 ppb for 2021, 58.4 ppb for 2020, and 52.4 ppb for 2019.

Hatfield 2040 participants and those involved in preparing the Open Space and Recreation Plan also noted that of particular threat to forest health in Hatfield is the proliferation of invasive plant species. While the Horse Mountain area is the most problematic, this issue needs to be addressed in other areas of Town as well. Participants recommend the Town work with a consultant to document

areas with significant invasive plant growth and develop a treatment and management plan. It is also important to advance understanding about the threat of invasive species and the benefits of planting native species among residents with demonstrations of native plantings in both municipal and commercial projects.



The Connecticut River forms 7.5 miles of Hatfield's eastern and southeastern boundary, including DCR's Bashin Beach property with its small trail along river's edge.

Goals and Actions

Conserve farmlands (where soils are best suited to growing food)

Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation, Farming, and Economic Development chapters

Primary responsibility: Agricultural Commission; Open Space; Selectboard; Recreation

Possible resources: Land Trusts; MA Department of Agricultural Resources; Community Preservation Act funds; PVPC

Time to achieve: Long term (next 15 years) and ongoing

- Identify where agricultural lands are most threatened by development and explore approaches that might allow these areas to stay in production, including use of Community Preservation Act funds to purchase “development rights” on more farmland where there is good alignment with landowner interests.
- Embark on a program of farmland protection with a goal of protecting 50% of currently cultivated lands, which entails adding an additional 857 acres (about 35 acres a year until 2050) to the 521 acres already conserved for agriculture.
- Develop internal procedures for the Town regarding “right of first refusal” of farmlands being converted from agricultural use under Chapter 61A so that important farmland protection opportunities are not missed.
- Promote a thoughtful balance in meeting needs for both farmland preservation and a greater mix of housing options.

Protect drinking water supply

Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation chapter

Primary responsibility: DPW (lead); Open Space; Planning Board (support); Conservation Commission (support)

Possible resources: MassDEP Drinking Water Supply Protection grants; MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grants

Time to achieve: Short term (next 5 years) and ongoing

- Evaluate drinking water supply protection vulnerabilities through an analysis of existing protected land and needed land protection in the Zones A and B for the Running Gutter Brook Reservoir, and the Zones I and II for Hatfield’s public wells (West Hatfield, and Omasta wells).
- Review provisions in the Zoning Bylaw on drinking water supply protection and update where more control and guidance are needed to ensure continued integrity of sources.
- Acquire or purchase development rights for lands identified as priority in protecting Running Gutter Brook Reservoir, and the West Hatfield, and Omasta drinking water supply wells.

- Develop program to inform and incentivize landowners (residential and commercial) on best practices for land care and septic system care as both can impact drinking water quality.

Support sustainable forestry practices to ensure healthy forest ecosystems and prevent erosion

Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation chapter

Primary responsibility: Conservation Comm (lead); Open Space (support)

Possible resources: MA DCR Forest Health Program; Kestrel Land Trust; Forest Legacy; PVPC

Time to achieve: Long term (next 15 years) and ongoing

- Develop a forest management plan for large blocks of forested land, working with a forest management consultant on publicly owned lands.
- Encourage and inform private landowners with large blocks of forested land to do forest management plan with forest management consultant.
- Control invasive plant species, especially Japanese knotweed, bittersweet, and begin by developing and implementing a plan for Horse Mountain, working with a forest management consultant.

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Overview

Healthy and livable communities include places to gather both indoors and outside. The pandemic temporarily halted programming in public buildings, lifting up the importance of outdoor spaces for gathering and recreational activities and programs. A theme emerged with the overlap of conversations regarding investments in the town’s passive and recreational opportunities identified in the recently adopted Open Space and Recreation Plan and by older adults in the Comprehensive planning sessions who desire to remain in Hatfield and age in place. This theme focuses on creating an environment in Hatfield that promotes healthy lifestyles, encourages social interaction, and ensures access to essential services for people of all ages and abilities.

As this section has actions and strategies to address the ability of older adults to “age in place,” the “nine domains” of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community are defined. These nine domains include aspects of the social and built environments, public safety, communication, and community services that support livability and the health of all residents. People over the age of 65 are the fastest growing age group in Hatfield, consistent with trends across the world. This population is also identified as highly vulnerable to extreme weather events caused by climate change, and to pandemics due to immune systems that tend to grow weaker with age. Seeing through the lens of an Age and Dementia Friendly Community, it becomes clear that addressing the needs of older residents has positive impacts on younger residents as well.

In the context of the Hatfield Comprehensive Plan, health and wellness are crucial as they encompass a broad spectrum of factors that contribute to the physical, mental, and social well-being of the community's residents, including how land is used, access to a balanced transportation system, safe and affordable appropriately sized housing, and places to recreate and

be out of doors. Ensuring access and encouraging systems that perpetuate healthy lifestyles, facilitates social interaction, and access to essential services for people of all ages and abilities to create a happy and healthy Hatfield.

Key Points

The key points of this theme are taken primarily from three of the Hatfield 2040 comprehensive plan chapters: *Natural Resources*, *Open Space and Recreation* and *Health and Social Environment*.

A summary of these key points follows with more detailed discussion included in the chapters themselves (see the Appendices).

Key points include Improving Town-Wide Open Spaces and Recreation Opportunities; Improving Trail Connections; and Age-Friendly Planning.

Improving Town-wide open spaces and recreation opportunities

The Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook, a tool for open space planning, prepared by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, identifies open space as several types of land such as conservation areas, forests, recreational sites, agricultural fields, corridor parks, and amenities like small parks and green buffers along roadways. The category 'recreation' involves activities done primarily for enjoyment and it includes both passive recreation, which demands minimal physical effort and resources, as well as active recreation, which requires significant physical exertion and often specialized facilities, fields, or equipment. These areas and facilities can be owned and operated by the town, state agencies, and by both non-profit and for profit organizations.

In the Comprehensive Plan survey, access to open spaces was ranked as fifth important, out of twelve features that residents value the most, with rural, small-town atmosphere, working farms, school district, and residential neighborhoods being ranked as more important than recreation. Respondents also ranked spending on recreation as less important than spending, on public schools,

farm viability, environmental resources, and public facilities and infrastructure.

Hatfield residents care about recreation but other matters are more pressing. The town has identified assets to maintain and expand to

offer healthy opportunities for outdoor recreation, on the Mill River and throughout the town. The town owns 742 acres of open and recreational spaces, and ensuring the expansion and maintenance of these facilities will enable residents to continue enjoying them. Among these amenities are Smith Academy Park, sports and recreational fields at Hatfield Elementary School, Smith Academy, and the former Center School, basketball courts and play structures at the Town Hall, as well as watershed and conservation areas available for public use. Additionally, there are state and other public recreation lands that provide the town with natural resources for residents.

Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.

Improving trail connections

Trails are vital to a community for health and wellness, a communal place to engage that fosters a sense of community, an opportunity for economic benefits as a way to attract visitors and increase property values, help to connect and preserve open spaces and wildlife habitats, and a way to get one place to another especially if connected to surrounding communities and neighborhoods. Two of the main goals that came out of the Hatfield open space planning process in 2022 and 2023 were to build additional trails and to provide more information online and in print about the trails, including trails maps. Almost fifty percent of respondents on the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) survey said that nature trails needed to be added or expanded in Hatfield; this was also one of the top three responses for recreational opportunities identified to be prioritized preceded by bike paths and public swimming access. Ensuring the town residents' usage of the existing trails will ensure that the town will have access to this active recreational amenity.

The town's Open Space Committee (OSC) has been working with the City of Northampton to design and install a multi-use path. This path would connect Elm Court in Hatfield to a new path along Damon Road in Northampton,

intersecting with the Mass Central Rail Trail. This project aims to provide Hatfield residents with safe walking and biking routes and regional path connections. Additionally, the OSC has made considerable progress on new hiking trails in West Hatfield since the last OSRP. New trails include the Three Bridges Trail, the Horse Mountain Trail (completed with the Williamsburg Trail Committee), the White Rock Trail, which connects to the Horse Mountain Trail spur, and the first phase of the Chestnut Mountain Trail. While the survey showed strong interest in more hiking trails, these new additional trails and amenities may not be known to a non-trail user in Hatfield; however, with any amenity, particularly ones that provide a free, healthy option to get around and utilize non-motorized transportation, like a bicycle, should be informed of those opportunities by means of a map showing trails and/or a repository where a listing of all recreational facilities and opportunities may be in Hatfield.

More information regarding the possibilities of a bicycle path are included in *Together as Community - Welcoming and Supportive for All*. Important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.





Age-friendly planning

As identified in the *Health and Social Environment* chapter, like most communities in the region, Hatfield's population is getting older, where the share of the population 65 and older increased to 23.2 percent in 2021, from 18.4 percent in 2015. Intuitively, people are living longer, with life expectancies rising into the 80s, while at the same time younger generations are having fewer children.

With the fact that residents are getting older, and said older residents are seeking to age-in-place and not leave Hatfield, expression of concerns at the May 31, 2023 Community Meeting included access to facilities like Capawonk and options for the senior center. These perspectives show the importance of

planning for the needs of Hatfield's aging population, including accessible housing and services.

The AARP Livable Communities initiative works and engages with municipalities with the belief that the places "where we live are more livable, and better able to support people of all ages, when local leaders commit to improving the quality of life for the very young, the very old, and everyone in between." Well-designed age-friendly communities can foster economic growth and make for a happier, healthier community. This complements work done by the American Planning Association to engage planners in thinking about how to focus creating communities not only for

older adults, but all ages alike. Some of the aspects of “age-friendly planning” include:

- *Inclusive Design:* Age-friendly planning encourages inclusive design that considers variations in age, ability, and behaviors. When the built environment is designed with everyone in mind, it benefits people of all ages. For instance, accessible sidewalks, well-lit streets, and safe public spaces are essential for both older adults and younger residents.
- *Shared Infrastructure:* Planning for an aging population often involves improving public transportation, healthcare facilities, and recreational spaces. These enhancements benefit everyone, including younger individuals. For example, accessible public transit and well-maintained parks benefit people of all ages, not just seniors.
- *Intergenerational Engagement:* Age-friendly planning emphasizes opportunities for different generations to engage with each other. This can lead to stronger communities and an improved quality of life. Activities, programs, and policies that promote intergenerational interaction benefit both older and younger residents.

Housing, transportation, and social connections are the major components of ensuring that the community is age-friendly. Regulatory tools and policies can be explored at various levels of government, often aided by the Council on Aging that have systems in place to communicate access. Age-friendly policies examined in this plan require changes to zoning to allow for more development of specific housing types or offering of programs to maintain a home that allows ease of livability.

The *Health and Social Environment* chapter reports that when asked whether people living independently are facing any barriers,

55 percent of respondents said that they had difficulty finding reliable and affordable contractors for home modifications or repairs, 47 percent said they have difficulty finding help with yard work or snow shoveling, and 35 percent have difficulty finding personal care or housekeeping services. The survey responses offer insight to how people if not living in assisted living or other long-term care facilities, which can be unaffordable or unavailable, which creates the context for ensuring that housing opportunities be more available and accessible to older adults. More than 32 percent of households in Hatfield are people who live alone, and 46.7 percent of single person households are people over the age of 65. With the increase in the percentage of the total population being over the age of 65 comes the need for smaller housing units that are more affordable and easier to maintain. Capawonk, located in the Town Center, offers smaller affordable housing units for older adults, but is in the floodplain along with the Town Hall and Senior Center, which poses an additional problem of reliance on said facilities in the context of the changing climate and contemplated elsewhere in the Plan.

The current Senior Center in Hatfield is in the basement of the Town Hall. While it has recently been renovated, participants at the listening session for older adults commented that it could benefit from a fitness room and bathrooms that are updated to improve safety and accessibility. Almost half of the survey respondents said that the Town needs a new Senior Center. Additional needs being identified for spaces to connect rely on infrastructure that is sustainable over time and the fact that the many of the town’s most important services are housed and located in the Connecticut River’s Floodplain, make them unreliable in the future when seniors may need them most.

Interest in a new Senior Center as well as the need for a new school, improving accessibility of library, and general discussions about relocating public buildings outside of the floodplain could open an opportunity for buildings that allow for multiple uses and community connections.

Ensuring that older adults can feel heard and receive communication from the town and service providers has been identified at the community engagement event at the schools. Suggestions included developing newsletters or using the Hatfield website to reach diverse audiences, but the more creative discussion revolved around establishing “community hubs” where there would be intentional places to gather for specific populations or neighborhoods. Additionally,

having access to high-speed internet and similar equipment with training on how to use technology was identified as a resource that would be useful to ensure consistent communication with the families and service providers. Altogether, making sure that older adults can age in place with assurances for housing that meets their needs, transportation that is available to them, and offering ways to stay connected are pillars of a community that is age-friendly.

As there are other actions and strategies identified and threaded into action plan elements, important ideas for action put forward during the planning process are listed in the Actions and Strategies section that follows.

Goals and Actions

Expand opportunities for passive and active recreation in Hatfield, including walking, jogging, bicycling, racquet sports, and non-motorized boating.

Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation chapter

Primary responsibility: Recreation Committee; DPW; Open Space Committee; Schools

Possible resources: Community Preservation Act funding

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Provide access for non-motorized boats to Mill River above the dam.
- Expand sidewalk network throughout Town to increase walkability.
- Construct tennis and pickleball courts.
- Restore Day Pond for access to fishing and walking and year-round use, including skating and swimming.
- Complete construction of both a recreational walkway at Smith Academy and pavilion at Smith Academy Park.

Expand the trail system.

Health and Social Environment, Farming chapters

Primary responsibility: Recreation Committee; DPW; Open Space Committee; Schools

Possible resources: Community Preservation Act funding

Time to achieve: Short term – next 5 years

- Build additional trails for hiking/passive recreation.
 - Connect Three Bridges to Chestnut Mountain Trail to dovetail with historic and cultural elements
 - Expand trail system to other woodland areas (example of Williamsburg Woodland Trails)
- Create a map of trails that includes difficulty rating and accessibility notes, parking, etc.
- Post trail maps on Town website and make available paper trail maps at Town Hall.
- Improve signage at trail parking and along trails.
- Add benches along walking routes.

Ensure older adults in Hatfield can age in place.

Health and Social Environment chapter

Primary responsibility: CoA (lead); Housing Authority; Redevelopment; Schools; Planning Board

Possible resources: Community Preservation Act funding; Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities grants; Community Development Block Grants

Time to achieve: Short term - next 5 years and ongoing

- Allow accessory apartments by right, both attached and detached and provide information to residents so that more in Town understand the value of this approach.
- Look at zoning for additional rental housing opportunities within walking distance to amenities and services.
- Redevelop existing properties for small congregate homes and update zoning to allow.
- Consider locations for temporary supported housing so that renters who lose housing have a place to go.
- Connect residents with resources for energy upgrades, including information on audits (MassSave) for home improvements; and how to convert to solar power or join community solar programs.
- Explore the possibility of "nearby neighbor networks" for help with basic tasks, which could be volunteer run and provide help for people who want to age in their homes while also promoting social interaction, perhaps partnering with Smith Academy.

Summary Matrix of Goals & Actions

This matrix is organized according to the seven themes of the Action Plan: Making Room for the River; Together as Community – Welcoming and Supportive for All; A Thriving Local Economy; Affordable Homes and Vibrant Neighborhoods; A Capable and Resilient Local Government; Our Natural Resources; and Health and Wellness. Goals under each theme are listed in priority order based on work by the members of the Comprehensive Planning Committee.

Making Room for the River		Who responsible?	What are possible resources?	Time to achieve
Goal	Address climate challenges for farmers with strong collaborations and partnerships <i>Farming</i> chapter	Agricultural Commission (Lead); Selectboard; Conservation Commission	Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA); American Farmland Trust; MA Department of Agricultural Resources; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Land Use Planning Grant program	Long term - next 15 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve ditch maintenance and wetlands permitting issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the current drainage ditch network, mapping as to location, drainage areas, problems, and evaluating where appropriate whether possible to restore wetlands, which might in turn help reduce impacts of flood waters. Develop a town-wide plan for improvement and restoration. Institute bylaw changes (perhaps drawing from Hadley example) that authorizes the Department of Public Works to perform necessary drainage ditch maintenance on private land to prevent undesired water and/or ice from accumulating on roads, ways, and public or private property in the Town . Promote innovative management techniques. Engage and inform adjacent land owners about the impacts on agriculture when they regrade ditches or fill them with brush and debris. Explore incentives for private landowners to maintain high priority drainage ditches, possibly including easements and/or tax breaks. Seek out opportunities to collaborate and partner with surrounding towns in supporting farmers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the hiring of an Agricultural Grants Manager to be shared among a group of surrounding towns to help farmers apply for individual grants and coordinate larger multi-farm/collaborative grant opportunities. Apply for and/or administer larger USDA grant opportunities to address regional challenges such as flooding, soil compaction, wetland restoration, water quality improvement, etc. Pursue new funding opportunities through MDAR, NRCS, and the Conservation District. Address soil health improvement and cover crop challenges by facilitating and encouraging improved practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility of: tax incentives for farmers who develop and implement a soil health and cover crop plan for 5 consecutive years; paid farmer education and mentorships that build relationships among farmers; and an Agricultural Climate Adaptation Zone that helps to energize and incentivize climate-smart farming practices with a focal point for future adaptation grant funding. 			

Goal	Reduce flood risk to Town-owned facilities <i>Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience; Transportation and Mobility; and Housing chapters</i>	Select Board (lead); Capital Improvement Plan Committee; Public Works; Finance Committee	Capital Improvement Plan; Army Corps of Engineers – Silver Jackets program; Federal Emergency Management Agency; FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants; MA Dam and Seawall Repair or Removal Program Grants; MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant; MA Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant	Medium Term - next 10 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze and prioritize relocation or flood resilience upgrades needed for public facilities (i.e., Police and Fire stations, Elementary School, Senior Center, Maple Street Pump Station, Capawonk Senior Housing, and Hatfield Historical Museum/Hatfield Public Library) and other facilities and services most at risk in the flood plain, with an eye toward possibilities to consolidate resources and centralize services. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify relocation and flood resilience upgrade efforts needed and identify funding resources and procedures for obtaining aid, and inform residents and local business owners who may also be interested. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In exploring relocation of Capawonk Senior Housing, consider possibilities to expand capacity. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In exploring relocation of Senior Center, keep in mind possibilities to expand programming to encourage greater use of the facility by the Town's older adult population and the wider community of Hatfield residents. This could possibly connect to actions and strategies related to schools and creating an intergenerational community center. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the new wastewater treatment facility is designed to minimize future flood risk. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate (and monitor) the condition of short-span bridges, culverts, and dams, especially where such infrastructure can impact evacuation routes from Town Center, and prioritize updates to deficient structures to ensure they can withstand severe weather events. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a flood risk analysis of the Mill River to better understand how current and future flows could impact the Town. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an interactive on-line map so that residents and businesses can upload comments and photos related to flooding for documentation purposes 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate elements of National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System to determine whether there are activities Hatfield can pursue that go "above and beyond" the National Flood Insurance Program minimum standards. This could help reduce risk and obtain discounts in federal flood insurance rates. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential to work with Army Corps Silver Jackets program on waterproofing of public buildings and potential for improved landscaping to help in flood protection, perhaps in collaboration with other towns. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevate the visibility of flood risk by installing flood marker posts in key locations in Town. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Helena Chemical Company, Turf Care Supply, and other facilities with toxic or hazardous chemicals to ensure they have safeguards against flooding and other climate-driven hazards. Also ensure that local emergency responders are aware of emergency response plans at these facilities. 			

Goal	Plan for Resiliency of Hatfield's Historic and Cultural Resources <i>Historic and Cultural Resources</i> chapter	Historical Commission (lead); Historical Society; Selectboard (support)	Historical Society, Community Preservation Act funding; Army Corps of Engineers – Silver Jackets program	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue planning for resiliency in place and appropriate retrofitting of at-risk historic resources to sustain flooding impacts, collaborating with other Connecticut River communities with similar flood risks and identifying if there is a potential for state or federal planning and funding support. Activate Institutional and Residential Emergency Preparedness Planning for municipal-owned historic resources and collections (and provide information for locally significant privately owned resources and collections) using tools from Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness the emergency management partner for Massachusetts Cultural Resources. For this work, there is an emergency management framework for cultural resources available at: https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/COSTEP_framework_1.pdf Identify the best location for Hatfield's Museum and archival materials for longevity, resiliency, and public access, possibly upstairs at Town Hall, and investigate archival grant programs to fund organizing and safeguarding of collections. 			
Together as Community - Welcoming & Supportive for All		Who responsible?	What are possible resources?	Time to achieve
Goal	Ensure that Hatfield keeps its schools, retaining full enrollment of local students, and attracting new school-choice students <i>Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience</i> chapter	School Department; School Committee; Selectboard	Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)	Short term - next 5 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a third-party study that provides a complete understanding of existing costs, needs over the longer term, and strategies toward a more sustainable school district in Hatfield. Work with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to explore various cost-saving and alternative funding programs. Strategies such as education collaboratives, which have operated in Massachusetts for more than 50 years, and Hatfield is currently a part of, could offer different mechanisms to supplement or strengthen regular school programs, to share resources and/or to provide cost-effective services for Hatfield and other participating districts. Other programs offered through DESE, such as the Innovative Schools program, could offer a means for the Hatfield School District to enhance its curriculum while finding supplemental funding to ease the burden on the Town budget. Continue the before and after-care programming hosted by the schools and extend its operation to occur beyond the school year. Explore greater uses for school buildings and facilities, including for summer camp activities, local recreation leagues, and partnering with such organizations as the Council on Aging to offer broader and intergenerational community programming. 			

Goal	Celebrate local agriculture <i>Farming chapter</i>	Celebration Committee (lead); Cultural Council; Schools; Agricultural Commission	CISA; Community Garden	Medium Term - next 10 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a “Pride in Hatfield Grown” program that starts locally, perhaps drawing on the New England Food Vision, whereby 50% of food comes from local sources by 2060. This can include locally sourcing school meals, connecting farms with older adults through the Senior Center, community building and/or fundraising events on local farms to celebrate agricultural identity (potato potluck, local ingredient chili cook off, concerts, film and lecture series, farm to table dinners, 5k race, art events, etc.) This local program ties to a larger scale element beyond Hatfield's boundaries, in the <i>Thriving Local Economy</i> action plan element. Increase public education, so residents can understand how they can support and advocate for farms, including hands-on approaches like pollinator habitat, climate smart forestry, and ditch maintenance. Organize and/or promote local educational events and workshops on topics, including farm succession planning, soil health, pollinator health, regenerative farming practices, and agroforestry. Elevate visibility of local farms using best practices, particularly “regenerative practices” toward greater climate resiliency such as low till and cover cropping. This could include a Conservation Farmer of the Year Award. 			
Goal	Ensure that all public buildings, parks, and sidewalks meet American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards <i>Health and Social Environment, and Transportation and Mobility chapters</i>	DPW (lead); Building Inspector (support)	MA Municipal ADA Grants (for both planning and implementation projects)	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an assessment of all town-owned properties and facilities for American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and develop a transition plan. Pursue grants for priority projects on town-owned properties to remove architectural barriers. Install/replace ADA tactile warning panels at marked crosswalks. 			
Goal	Create a community-based social center and improve communications across Town <i>Health and Social Environment; and Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience chapters</i>	Selectboard; School; Council on Aging; Open Space and Recreation Committee; All Town boards, committees	MA Rural Development Fund; MassWorks grant program; MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grants	Short term - next 5 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an appropriate location and pursue development of a welcoming community space in the form of an indoor center where residents of all ages and backgrounds can gather to socialize, support, recreate, and celebrate one another. Expand the social calendar for community events throughout the town in various spaces, such as the Community Gardens or school buildings. Share social calendar information and Town efforts more broadly via newsletters, post cards, and digital media. Support a town staff member or small body of people who can devote time to direct this effort and coordinate across municipal departments and bodies. 			

Goal	Improve and adapt transportation infrastructure and services to support an aging population while also meeting the needs of a diverse, younger demographic <i>Transportation and Mobility</i> chapter	Selectboard; Council on Aging; Schools; DPW; Open Space and Recreation Committee	Complete Streets; Safe Routes to School	Short term - next 5 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a complete streets plan to create connections for walking and biking and to win designation as a complete streets community so that Hatfield can qualify for state funds. Update the current sidewalk network to meet ADA standards. (See related action in <i>Affordable Homes and Vibrant Neighborhoods</i>.) Continue to support and prioritize access to senior van service through Council on Aging. Explore outside funding opportunities and resources for expanding service are replacing fleet if needed in the future. Partner with MassDOT's Safe Routes to School program to improve drop-off and dismissal protocols, encourage safe walking, and provide incentives for riding the bus. Consider adding a school zone in front of Smith Academy. Explore alternatives to access the regional shared-use-path network, as well as feasibility of joining the regional bike-share program. Investigate need, feasibility, and opportunities of expanding transit options, including expanding Franklin Regional Transit Authority fixed routes, joining the FRTA's micro transit program, and volunteer ride program for transportation on weekends, evenings. 			
Goal	Enhance support for Hatfield's historic and cultural assets <i>Historic and Cultural Resources</i> chapter	Cultural Council; Celebration Committee; Historic Commission; Library	MA Cultural Council Grants	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Hatfield Cultural Council, Massachusetts Cultural Council, and other stakeholders to conduct Cultural Asset Mapping and determine the feasibility of pursuing a Local Cultural District. This will also identify and bring together community cultural stakeholders and possibly enable combining meetings and boards. Plan for greater public access to historic collections and programming related to Hatfield history. Investigate the potential to establish a non-profit for community cultural events. Establish one or more annual festivals related to Hatfield History for residents and guests. For example, a Harvest Festival related to the Lions Club Potato Run, a Winter Festival tied to Luminarium, or a summer festival related to Hatfield's agricultural history. Continue support of Hatfield's Celebration Committee to plan and coordinate funding and volunteers or support the development of this committee into a collaborative non-profit to support community programming. 			
Thriving Local Economy		Who responsible?	What are possible resources?	Time to achieve
Goal	Give greater shape to commercial development along Route 5/10 corridor <i>Economic Development</i> chapter	Planning Board (lead); Selectboard; DPW; Capital Improvement (support)	MassWorks	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rezone along full extent of Route 5/10 corridor Consider extending mixed use overlay district or at least provide performance and design guidelines Add sewer line from Prospect Street north to the bridge over I-91. Upgrade municipal water delivery. 			

Goal	Support continued viability of Hatfield's farms <i>Health and Social Environment and Farm chapters</i>	Agricultural Commission; Selectboard	Hampden/Hampshire Conservation District; MA Department of Agricultural Resources grants; CISA; NOFA	Short term - next 5 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a comprehensive survey of producers to assess the total economic impact to the town; build relationships with existing and beginning farmers in town. • Promote the leasing of town-owned conservation land to small and beginning farmers; set up a market garden/farm incubator. • Update the Hatfield Agricultural Brochure and regularly promote on-farm agricultural events and agritourism opportunities. • Explore opportunities to aggregate and also market Hatfield-grown products at events/fairs/festivals in surrounding towns. This can involve other farm promotion elements and tie to local "Pride in Hatfield Grown" program within the <i>Together as Community</i> action plan element. 			
Goal	Maintain and create opportunities for development within the context of the Town's distinctive New England character <i>Land Use chapter</i>	Planning Board (lead); Historical Commission (support); Conservation Commission (support)	PVPC; Land Use Planning Grants	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a zoning diagnostic and refine where necessary to ease difficulties in developing appropriately in designated zones, including review of zoning map to reduce spot zoning and make sure meets intent of state law. • Encourage new commercial and industrial development in appropriate parts of Town, focusing development around town infrastructure and environmental conditions to accommodate growth and limit development in environmentally sensitive areas with design guidelines and district center planning. • Review lands in current industrial zoning inventory to determine what actually developable. Consider purchasing lands currently zoned industrial because located in wetlands and floodplains. Where can industrial zoning be moved that is more practical? • Review zoning bylaws for clarity making sure criteria, standards, and conditions of approval are enforceable before and after permitting new development or redevelopment. • Review and revise Subdivision Regulations to cluster development to better protect natural resources where 50% of parcel gets protected. Provide disincentives for traditional development. • Examine Chapter 40R opportunity to get affordability in housing development and payments from the state. • Require operation and maintenance plans for stormwater infrastructure on commercial facilities. • Continue to fund Planning Board staff position and consider increased support to attract qualified person. 			

Goal	Enhance economic vitality through a well-maintained transportation network <i>Transportation and Mobility chapter</i>	Selectboard (lead); DPW; Council on Aging (support); PVTA and FRTA	PVPC; Complete Streets Program	Medium Term - next 10 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform regular traffic data collection on roads to assess existing travel speeds, vehicle volume truck volume, and crash history at key locations in the Town. Traffic data is useful to identify growth trends, assess the potential impact of new development, and ensure the safe and efficient use of the community transportation network by all users. Complete traffic studies at high crash locations, including Elm Street at I-91 ramps, Maple Street at Valley Street, Depot at Main Street, and Bridge Street at Prospect Street. (Sites identified through in-depth analysis of existing data.) Utilize the Pavement Management System to prioritize roadway improvements to ensure the roadway network is resilient. Continue to support investments in roadway maintenance including crack sealing and grading of unpaved municipal roadways. Install additional speed feedback signs. Identify rest areas for freight vehicles with overnight layovers. Ensure that roadside vegetation management can remain a priority for good sightlines and visibility around blind corners in locations such as Main Street north of the municipal wastewater treatment facility. 			
Goal	Assess potential for renewable and alternative energy production, associated manufacturing, and services <i>Economic Development chapter</i>	Selectboard (lead); School Committee (support); Planning Board (support)	Massachusetts Clean Energy Center; USDA grants for solar; MA Green Communities Program	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine appropriate locations, siting requirements, and regulations to encourage green industry and jobs. Identify how Town can set example with investments in renewables, particularly electric vehicles and charging stations, and solar on public buildings. 			
Goal	Encourage temporary commercial uses in Town Center with pop up and mobile commercial offerings <i>Economic Development chapter</i>	Celebration Committee; Cultural Council		Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize existing buildings, including accessory buildings, and existing spaces, such as parking lots, to host pop-up and mobile commercial offerings. 			
Affordable Homes and Vibrant Neighborhoods		Who responsible?	What are possible resources?	Time to achieve
Goal	Explore where there may be options for other village centers in Town with livable, workable, and walkable neighborhoods <i>Land Use chapter</i>	Planning Board (lead); Open Space Committee (support); DPW	MassHousing; Complete Streets program; PVPC	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the newly adopted Hatfield Design Guidelines Handbook and ensure that new development or redevelopment considers standards and criteria for approval. Improve and/or create pedestrian pathways around village centers with attention to ADA compliance, including curb cuts, and parking spaces for vans with lifts. Create and/or implement standards for consistent signs, streetscapes, and architecture. 			

Goal	Provide housing stock that protects and maintains the scenic, natural and historic resources of the Town. This includes ensuring open space protection when building new housing, as well as adopting low impact development standards for all development <i>Housing chapter</i>	Planning Board (lead); Open Space Committee (co-lead)	Mass Housing Partnership; Community Preservation Act; Wayfinders; Valley Community Development Corporation	Long term - next 15 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an action plan. 			
Goal	Promote housing that is financially attainable for all ages and housing configurations <i>Housing and Health and Social Environment chapters</i>	Planning Board (lead)	Mass Housing Partnership; Community Preservation Act; PVPC	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore use of two special zoning overlay districts to increase density in certain places, including the 40R Smart growth Overlay District and/or 40Y Starter Home Districts to increase density in certain places. Provide opportunities for Hatfield residents to live in Town in their later years by ensuring the availability of affordable and accessible housing that enables downsizing and social connection. Identify a location for additional public housing and seek project approval and funding. Assist homeowners in getting MassSave assessments and implementing conservation measures on their homes to decrease the cost of heating and cooling. Monitor the impact of short-term rental use in Hatfield. Allow permitting of alternative home design and clarify definitions. Establish relationship with local housing nonprofits. 			
Goal	Increase affordability and add affordable housing units to make progress toward the goal of 10% affordable housing in MGL Chapter 40b <i>Housing chapter</i>	Planning Board (lead)	Mass Housing Partnership; Community Preservation Act; PVPC; Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a housing production plan and submit to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities for approval with updates every 5 years. Establish a public housing trust fund to receive, manage, and administer Community Preservation Act funds for housing projects, including rental properties. Apply for community development block grant funds to rehabilitate existing housing to support low- to moderate-income residents. Review potential use of inclusionary housing programs. 			

Goal	Protect Hatfield's community character <i>Historic and Cultural Resources chapter</i>	Historical Committee; Open Space Committee; Planning Board; School Committee	Community Preservation Act; PVPC	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Native American presence statement and eliminate outdated signage. • Redefine Hatfield's Priority Heritage Landscapes. • Pursue a local historic district study for the Hatfield Town Center with updated MA Historical Commission documentation of related buildings. • Develop regulatory and non-regulatory community-wide design guidelines and standards and a review process, as appropriate. • Explore the use of Community Preservation Act grants for historic housing rehabilitation tied to income eligibility. (See examples from Springfield and Cambridge.) • Strengthen the current Demolition Delay Bylaw to cover buildings 75 years or older. • Explore additional bylaws that can be protective of certain community qualities, including a scenic roads bylaw for the protection of trees and stone walls, an archaeological protection bylaw, and a minimum maintenance bylaw (sometimes placed within a nuisance bylaw) to protect buildings owned by absentee landlords from demolition by neglect. 			
Goal	Encourage stewardship of Hatfield's historic resources and landscapes <i>Historic and Cultural Resources chapter</i>	Historical Committee; Open Space Committee; Schools; Selectboard; DPW	Historical Society; Cemetary Commission; Community Preservation Act	Long term - next 15 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue Certified Local Government status with the National Park Service, which provides a direct pathway for increased state and federal support and funding. Benefits of becoming a CLG include access to survey and planning grant funds, local involvement in the National Register of Historic Places nomination process, and local involvement in review and compliance. Currently, Holyoke is the only community in Western Massachusetts only community in Western Massachusetts that participates in the Certified Local Government program. • Add information to the Hatfield Historical Commission town page to provide additional information, resources, and facilitate understanding of the HHC's purpose and why it provides a community benefit. • Provide design guidelines and best practices to Hatfield building owners for preventative maintenance. • Update documentation of Hatfield's historic resources to meet current standards, including the stories of underrepresented populations. Inventory undocumented natural and built historic resources to include trees, barns, and stone walls. Amherst has a good example of a tree inventory using GIS: http://gis.amherstma.gov/apps/TreelInv.aspx • Through collaboration of the Historical Commission and Historical Society, develop a Historic Home Plaque Program, an annual Preservation Award program, and interactive ways for the community and visitors to experience Hatfield's built history. • Pursue interpretive signage such as a heritage trail throughout the community, perhaps working with the schools. 			

Goal	Continue to advance pedestrian safety within the Town's transportation network <i>Transportation and Mobility chapter</i>	Selectboard; DPW; Police/Fire; School	Chapter 90	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify gaps in the sidewalk network and prioritize projects to fill gaps, potentially starting with Main Street, Bridge Street, Gore Avenue, Prospect Street, King Street, Chestnut Street, and Elm Street. (See related action in <i>Together as Community - Welcoming & Supportive for All</i>) Evaluate the location of vehicle passing lanes on Elm Street and identify crosswalk conflicts. Identify opportunities for improved signage including the Massachusetts Safe Passing sign at roadway locations where bicycle use is frequent, especially Elm Street, Main Street, and School Street. Ensure optimal functioning and locations of crosswalks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the performance of pedestrian crosswalks (including Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon installations). Consider additional locations for crosswalks based on performance. Identify opportunities to consolidate crosswalk locations in the Town Center. Install additional crosswalk signage if needed, potentially at Main Street at intersection with King Street, and School Street at intersection with Prospect Street. "Daylight" crosswalks and intersections by identifying curbside parking that restricts visibility. Assess the need for pedestrian scale lighting at crosswalk locations. 			
A Capable and Resilient Local Government		Who responsible?	What are possible resources?	Time to achieve
Goal	Promote capacity in local governance, ensuring the Town's departments are appropriately staffed and equipped <i>Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience chapter</i>	Selectboard (lead); Finance; DPW	MA Efficiency and Regionalization Grant program; PVPC - District Local Technical Assistance; MA Green Communities Program	Short term - next 5 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate whether Town departments have the human resources necessary (i.e., staff, training, good management, appropriate pay, etc.) to meet the current and projected service demands of the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore approaches to including additional staff or reassigning duties to cover the following: expanded hours and duties for the Town planner position; grants writing for the Town (to be combined possibly with the Agricultural Grants Manager in the Room for the River action plan element); directing the work of creating a community-based social center and managing communications across Town via newsletters, postcards, and digital media; and pursuing economic development initiatives by leading relationship building with local businesses. Assess whether the Town's public safety departments (i.e., police, fire, etc.) have the necessary resources to meet the current and projected service needs of the community. Perform a fleet vehicle assessment to understand if the Town's departments have the correct number, types, and sizes of vehicles in their inventories, and plan for optimizing fleet efficiency while also ensuring that new and replacement vehicle purchases meet the Town's Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy. Identify opportunities to leverage joint resources with other Towns, including grants, but also shared services, possibly including: dispatch for police, fire, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs); certified wastewater treatment technician; superintendent of schools; and food services for schools. 			

Goal	Manage Town infrastructure efficiently <i>Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience</i> chapter	DPW; Selectboard; Capital Improvement Committee; Finance Committee	MassWorks; MA Green Communities Program	Short term - next 5 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in routine and capital maintenance/improvement activities at local roads, bridges, water supply and resources, etc. to minimize long-term reconstruction costs and to ensure the ongoing effective use of these assets. Continue to pursue federal and state grants and other advantageous financing for the maintenance/improvement and, as necessary, replacement of the Town's existing infrastructure, including stormwater and wastewater infrastructure. This includes continued participation in the Massachusetts Green Communities program for climate smart renovations to Town facilities that also minimize carbon and greenhouse gas emissions. Evaluate the impact of, and opportunities associated with, current and next-generation communications technologies, including Town-wide wifi, on the Town's infrastructure and services. 			
Goal	Maximize use of the Town's existing facilities and services to promote financial resilience <i>Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience</i> chapter	Selectboard (lead); All town boards/committees	Federal Emergency Management Agency's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) and the Commonwealth's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory and develop an integrated use and re-use plan for Town-owned properties to promote their highest and best use in consideration of community needs/benefits, and in consideration of flood/potential climate change impacts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure existing facilities and services are being utilized to their greatest potential. Evaluate the feasibility of consolidating certain town departments to potentially minimize excessive personnel and capital assets, as measured against the Town's needs and regulatory standards. Ensure incorporation of design, policies, and products that are responsive to future flood risk and accessibility for all users in all of the Town's future facility construction projects. Get more residents involved in Town as one way to do more with less. 			
Goal	Explore the strategic expansion of the community's waste water infrastructure <i>Facilities, Services, and Social Resilience</i> chapter	Board of Health and DPW (co-leads); Capital Improvement (support); Finance Committee; Selectboard	MA Efficiency and Regionalization Grant program; MassWorks	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential partnerships with adjacent communities like Whately for the development of regional wastewater services. Evaluate the imposition of limited impact fees to fund a revolving account for Town-wide wastewater infrastructure among other infrastructure improvements. 			

Goal	Support Hatfield's farmers more actively <i>Farm chapter</i>	Selectboard; Agricultural Commission	Hampden/Hampshire Conservation Distric; MA Department of Agricultural Resources grants; CISA; NOFA	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate the Agricultural Commission to have better representation of farmers in Town government and recruit new members that include students, backyard farmers, and informed and passionate non-farmer residents. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly connect with growers to ensure they are accessing appropriate technical assistance, current grant opportunities, and service providers. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and maintain a farmer e-mail list serve to facilitate the sharing of town-specific information that concerns farmers; could also be used between farms to share resources, equipment, peer learning, etc. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect working farms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Adopt an agriculture protection overlay district to promote optimal combination on a given parcel for clustering of development and conservation of soils best suited for growing food (PVPC has model bylaw for this). o Identify strategies to incentivize good practices, including prevention of fertilizer runoff. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial relief/assistance to farmers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Evaluate tax code on how agricultural structures are assessed. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Examine Town-owned land and determine where there may be potential for lease agreements with young and beginning farmers. 			
Our Natural Resources		Who responsible?	What are possible resources?	Time to achieve
Goal	Conserve farmlands (where soils are best suited to growing food) <i>Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation; Economic Development ; and Farming chapters</i>	Agricultural Commission; Open Space Committee; Selectboard; Recreation Committee	Land Trusts; MA Department of Agricultural Resources; Community Preservation Act funds; PVPC	Long term - next 15 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify where agricultural lands are most threatened by development and explore approaches that might allow these areas to stay in production, including use of Community Preservation Act funds to purchase “development rights” on more farmland where there is good alignment with landowner interests. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embark on a program of farmland protection with a goal of protecting 50% of currently cultivated lands, which entails adding an additional 857 acres (about 35 acres a year until 2050) to the 521 acres already conserved for agriculture. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop internal procedures for the Town regarding “right of first refusal” of farmlands being converted from agricultural use under Chapter 61A so that important farmland protection opportunities are not missed. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a thoughtful balance in meeting needs for both farmland preservation and a greater mix of housing options. 			

Goal	Protect drinking water supply <i>Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation chapter</i>	DPW (lead); Open Space Committee; Planning Board (support); Conservation Commission (support)	MassDEP Drinking Water Supply Protection grants; MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grants	Short term - next 5 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate drinking water supply protection vulnerabilities through an analysis of existing protected land and needed land protection in the Zones A and B for the Running Gutter Brook Reservoir, and the Zones I and II for Hatfield's public wells (West Hatfield, and Omasta wells). Review provisions in the Zoning Bylaw on drinking water supply protection and update where more control and guidance are needed to ensure continued integrity of sources. Acquire or purchase development rights for lands identified as priority in protecting Running Gutter Brook Reservoir, and the West Hatfield, and Omasta drinking water supply wells. Develop program to inform and incentivize landowners (residential and commercial) on best practices for land care and septic system care as both can impact drinking water quality. 			
Goal	Support sustainable forestry practices to ensure healthy forest ecosystems and prevent erosion <i>Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation chapter</i>	Conservation Commission (lead); Open Space Committee (support)	MA DCR Forest Health Program; Kestrel Land Trust; Forest Legacy; PVPC	Long term - next 15 yrs. and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a forest management plan for large blocks of forested land, working with a forest management consultant on publicly owned lands. Encourage and inform private landowners with large blocks of forested land to do forest management plan with forest management consultant. Control invasive plant species, especially Japanese knotweed, bittersweet and begin by developing and implementing a plan for Horse Mountain, working with a forest management consultant. 			
Health and Wellness		Who responsible?	What are possible resources?	Time to achieve
Goal	Expand opportunities for passive and active recreation in Hatfield, including walking, jogging, bicycling, racquet sports, and non-motorized boating <i>Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation chapter</i>	Recreation Committee; DPW; Open Space Committee; Schools	Community Preservation Act funding	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access for non-motorized boats to Mill River above the dam. Expand sidewalk network throughout Town to increase walkability. Construct tennis and pickleball courts. Restore Day Pond for access to fishing and walking and year-round use, including skating and swimming. Complete construction of both a recreational walkway at Smith Academy and pavilion at Smith Academy Park. 			

Goal	Expand the trail system <i>Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation</i> chapter	Recreation Committee; DPW; Open Space Committee; Schools	Community Preservation Act funding	Short term - next 5 yrs.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build additional trails for hiking/passive recreation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Connect Three Bridges to Chestnut Mountain Trail to dovetail with historic and cultural elements o Expand trail system to other woodland areas (example of Williamsburg Woodland Trails) • Create map of trails that includes difficulty rating and accessibility notes, parking, etc. • Post trail maps on Town website and make available paper trail maps at Town Hall • Improve signage at trail parking and along trails. • Add benches along walking routes. 			
Goal	Ensure older adults in Hatfield can age in place <i>Health and Social Environment</i> chapter	CoA (lead); Housing Authority; Redevelopment; Schools; Planning Board	Community Preservation Act funding; Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities grants; Community Development Block Grants	Short term - next 5 yrs.and ongoing
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow accessory apartments by right, both attached and detached and provide information to residents so that more in Town understand the value of this approach. • Look at zoning for additional rental housing opportunities within walking distance to amenities and services. • Redevelop existing properties for small congregate homes and update zoning to allow. • Consider locations for temporary supported housing so that renters who lose housing have a place to go. • Connect residents with resources for energy upgrades, including information on audits (MassSave) for home improvements; and how to convert to solar power or join community solar programs. • Explore the possibility of "nearby neighbor networks" for help with basic tasks, which could be volunteer run and provide help for people who want to age in their homes while also promoting social interaction, perhaps partnering with Smith Academy. 			

