

AGENDA  
SELECT BOARD  
March 26, 2024  
7:00 p.m.  
Town Building & Zoom

**The public may attend the Select Board meetings in person or may participate via remote Zoom access.**

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83577779390?pwd=THFxZi8vZDU4V0ZzeU92MXhwLzNQZz09>

Meeting ID: 835 7777 9390  
Passcode: 55313397

1. Public Comment
2. Board Member Comments
3. Town Administrator's Report
4. Appointments
  - o Jason Rogers to the position of Patrol Officer through June 30, 2025
5. Discussion and Possible Vote
  - o Collings Foundation / American Heritage Museum 2024 Events
  - o Special Event Permit: Shakespeare Performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" – Saturday, May 4, 2024 from 3 to 6 p.m.- Stow TV & Friends of the Randall Library
  - o Accept Donation of a TV Monitor for Pompositicut Community Center from Boy Scout Troop 1
  - o Stow House of Pizza update and extension of Common Victualler license
  - o Police Chief Sallese to discuss:
    - New Policy – Military Integration
    - Presentation on new policy for Flock Cameras
  - o Comprehensive Plan Update and possible Meeting in a Box exercise
6. Meeting minutes
  - o March 12, 2024
7. Board Correspondence & Updates
8. Adjournment

Correspondence received:

3/19/24 from Planning Board; Planning Board Initiatives  
3/14/24 from Nashoba Regional School District; Fiscal Year 2025 Budget  
3/10/24 from Kelly Lawlor; Support Randall Library Renovation Project  
3/11/24 from Ellen Sturgis; About the Library Project and Town Meeting  
3/11/24 from Sunny Richardson; Comments Re: Randall Library Project  
3/13/24 from Michael Slagle; Comments for Stow Acres and Site Visit Opportunity  
Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing, April 2, 2024 at 7:45p – 18 Whitman Street  
Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing, April 2, 2024 at 8p – 0 Maple Street  
Board of Appeals Notice of Public Hearing April 8, 2024 at 7:15p – 114 Barton Road  
3/6/24 from GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc.; Private Drinking Water Well Analytical Results – Various Properties  
3/5/24 from MA Dept of Public Utilities; Notice of Filing, Public Hearing & Request for Comments DPU 23-147  
3/5/24 from MA Dept of Public Utilities; Notice of Filing, Public Hearing & Request for Comments DPU 23-153  
3/12/24 from Verizon; LFA Notice – Zee News  
3/15/24 from Xfinity; Changes to Xfinity channel line-up

Posted Friday, 3/22/2024, 12 p.m.

# **APPOINTMENTS**

**Jason Rogers**

**to the Position of Patrol Officer  
through June 30, 2025**



Town of Stow  
POLICE DEPARTMENT

305 Great Road  
Stow, Massachusetts 01775

(978) 897-4545  
FAX (978) 897-3692

Michael Sallese  
Chief of Police

March 13, 2024

Selectboard  
380 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775

RE: Recommendation for Hiring Jason Rogers to Full Time Patrol Officer

January of 2024 has caused some re-organization of the Stow Police Department. In January, Luke Dezago resigned to further a dream of becoming a professor and obtaining his PH.D. Also, Troy Paradise also followed his dream and resigned to transfer to the Worcester Police Department, the City he grew up in.

This created two vacancies within the Police Department. To fill these vacancies a 5-member hiring board was created. This 5-member hiring board consisted of three employees from the Stow Police Department, Lieutenant Kellie Barhight, Sergeant Cassandra Scott, and Dispatcher Gabriel Lopez. The other two members were Anna-Celestrya Carr, a resident and member of the Nashoba Area Social Justice Alliance, and Robert Frederick a resident of the over 55 Regency of Stow neighborhood.

The posting for two officers was placed at the Town Building, Police Station, Social Media, and on-line with a recruitment company called "Getbadged" The on-line posting produced 17 interested individuals, two of which are academy trained. The posting was also sent out to the Town of Stow subscriber lists as well as the job posting for officers on the Department of Criminal Justice Information System network. The posting required that all candidates submit two resumes and cover letters, one with personal identifying information and one without. The cover letter and resumes without personal information (blind resume and cover letters) were sent to the Chief's Advisory Hiring Board for further review and interviews.

This hiring board was able to interview 6 individuals and recommend the top two to continue in the hiring process. The top candidate that was recommended is Jason Rogers. Jason was then interviewed by the Town Administrator, Assistant Town Administrator, and me. Jason comes to us with 18 years a police officer, working the past 6 years a campus police officer for Holy Cross College in Worcester. Jason is a POST Certified, Full time Officer, with numerous specialty training adding to his value to the Stow Police Department. He also serves his community as an on-call Fire Fighter/EMT.



I request you to appoint Jason Rogers to the open position of Patrol Officer, pending final approval by the Town Administrator that the prerequisite physical, mental exams, and background check have been satisfactorily completed, with a start date of April 25, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Sallese', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Sallese, Chief of Police

# **DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE VOTE**

# Collings Foundation / American Heritage Museum 2024 Events

# **Collings Foundation 2024 Events**

## **Agreement Specifications:**

4 Major Events a year that can be Noise Generating

- 1 – on WWII with Pyrotechnics
- 1 – with pyrotechnics pre WWI
- 2 – Major Events without pyrotechnics

2 Demonstrations/Exhibitions per month over 6-month season

Gunfire & pyrotechnics prohibited

Maximum of 5 heavy armored vehicles (tanks) are permitted at each demo/exhibit

Can be noise generating, but must meet noise specifications

Flying for educational purposes may occur 4 weekends per year for a total of 8 days per season.

## **May 25th & 26th: WWII Tank Demo**

- Demonstration/Exhibition - Demo 1 of 12 allowed
- No Pyrotechnics
- No Gunfire
- No more than 5 tanks driving at one time
- No flying

## **June 15th & 16th: Tanks, Wings, and Wheels**

- Demonstration/Exhibition - Demo 2 of 12 allowed
- No Pyrotechnics
- No Gunfire
- No more than 5 tanks driving at one time
- No flying

### **July 13th & 14th: WWII Pacific War Re-Enactment**

- Major Event - 1 of 4 weekends allowed
- Gunfire
- No Pyrotechnics
- Re-enactor camps set up
- Flying – 1 of 4 weekends for flying allowed

### **August 17th & 18th: WWII Tank Demonstration Weekend**

- Demonstration/Exhibition - Demo 3 of 12 allowed
- No Pyrotechnics
- No Gunfire
- No more than 5 tanks running at one time
- No flying

### **September 14th & 15th: History Takes Flight / Historic Aircraft Exhibition**

- Major Event - 2 of 4 weekends allowed
- No Pyrotechnics
- Gunfire
- Flying – 2 of 4 weekends for flying allowed

### **October 12th & 13th: WWII – Re-Enactment Battle for the Airfield**

- Major Event - 1 of 1 WWII Pyrotechnic Major (3 of 4 weekends allowed)
  - Pyrotechnics
  - Gunfire
  - 5 tanks or more
  - Re-enactor camps set up
  - Flying \*\* – 3 of 4 weekends for flying
- \*\* Aircraft departing and landing to/from other location

Special Event Permit  
Shakespeare Performance  
“A Midsummers Night’s Dream”  
Saturday, May 4, 2024  
Stow TV & Friends of the Randall Library

Event to be held at Town Center Park with a rain location  
of Town Hall

The application was circulated to appropriate staff, with  
the following feedback received:

From Denise:

The TA recommends that for that day, the trails be blocked off by  
cones and horses from the highway department; if there is a larger  
crowd or children, they shouldn’t be running around the trails.

Pending:

Toilets – using facilities at the church or renting portable toilets?



# Town of Stow

## Special Event Permit

For: Saturday, May 4, 2024

Jonathan Daisy, as a representative of Stow TV, and Lisa Lavina, as a representative of the Friends of the Randall Library, are granted permission to hold the Shakespeare performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" on Saturday, May 4, 2024, beginning at 3 p.m. to approximately 6 p.m. as described in the application materials, and contingent upon the following:

- 1) That arrangements have been made with the Police and Fire Departments for the appropriate number of detail personnel;
- 2) In the event of rain, the performance will be held at Town Hall, 375 Great Road;
- 3) That any signs, tents, platforms, staging, structures, and electrical work be permitted and inspected by the Building Department prior to the event;
- 4) That if portable restroom facilities are used, the contract be provided to the Board of Health prior to the event and comply with Massachusetts Regulations Title 521 Sec 30.1.2;
- 5) That any snacks are prepackaged, or a permit has been obtained from the Board of Health, and;
- 6) That the organizers participate in any public safety meeting required for the event and all requirements discussed at the meeting are met;
- 7) These stipulations, made upon approval, have been met:
  - Trails are blocked off by cones and sawhorses.
  - Amplified sound is permitted from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, May 4, 2024.

**As approved by the Select Board on March 26, 2024:**

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Cortni Frecha, Chair

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Megan Birch-McMichael, Clerk

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Ingeborg Hegemann Clark

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Hector Constantzos

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John Toole



# TOWN OF STOW

## Special Event Permit Application

Permit fee is \$0 for non-profit organizations and \$50 for for-profit organizations.

### Applicant and Sponsoring Organization Information

Name of Organization / Sponsor: Stow TV & Friends of Randall library  Non-Profit  Profit

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: Stow State: MA Zip: 01775

Tax ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: 978 897 7732 Email: stowtv@stow-ma.gov

Web Site: stowtv.org

Event Manager: Jonathan Daisy Contact Info: stowtv@stow-ma.gov

Other Contact person/s: Lisa Lavina Contact Info: l.lavina34@gmail.com

### Event Information

Event Type:  Run/Walk\*  Rally  Parade  School Event  
 Concert  Festival  Political Event  Food Truck

Other (specify) Shakespeare performance

Event Title: Shakespeare & Co. perform A Midsummer Night's Dream

Start Date & Time: Saturday May 4th at 3pm End Date & Time: Saturday May 4th 6pm

Estimated Attendance: # 100 Admission Fee: none

Open to the Public:  Yes  No Rain Date & Time(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Requested Location:  Community Park  Center Park  Pompo Field

Check all that apply:  Pine Bluff  Pompositicut Community Center  Town Forest

Street (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Use of Town property requires a reservation via the MyRec system: [www.stow-ma.gov/recreation-department](http://www.stow-ma.gov/recreation-department)

Set Up Date/Time: Saturday May 4th- noon Break Down Date/Time: Saturday May 4th- 6pm

\* A route map is required at time of submission for a walk/run



## Event Details

Please indicate whether the following items pertain to your event.

YES	NO	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Food Concession and/or Food Preparation
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Please specify method: <input type="radio"/> Propane Gas <input type="radio"/> Electric <input type="radio"/> Charcoal <input type="radio"/> Catered Other: <u>none</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Alcohol served – <i>Requires approval from the Select Board</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	First Aid Facility(ies) and Ambulance (s)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Banner(s) and/or Sign(s)– <i>requires prior approval</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Street Closure(s) - <i>list streets:</i> <u>no</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Amplified Sound - <i>If yes please indicate Start Time</i> <u>3pm</u> <i>End Time</i> <u>6pm</u> <i>The Town of Stow will require additional information on this item and may require an Entertainment License be applied for and acquired.</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Will your event have Pyrotechnics? - <i>requires prior approval of the Fire Department</i>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Will your event have animals? <i>If yes, specify:</i> <u>no</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Will your event require lights? <i>If so, specify hours:</i> <u>no</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Will you set up table(s) and/or chair(s)? <i>Approximate number?</i> <u>no</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Fencing, Barrier(s) and/or Barricade(s), Traffic Cones
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Does your event require electricity? <i>Source:</i> <u>generator</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Booth(s) Exhibit(s), Display(s) and/or Enclosure(s)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Canopy (ies) and or Tent(s) - <i>describe dimensions:</i> <u>no</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Scaffolding, Bleacher(s), Platform(s), Grandstand(s) or related structure(s)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Container(s) and/or Dumpster(s)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Toilet(s) – <i>approximate number/vendor:</i> <u>we will ask to borrow the facilities at one of the two churches, or rent a porta-pot</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Will you be holding a raffle at your event? <i>Describe:</i> <u>no</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Vehicle(s) and/or Trailer(s) - <i>approximate number:</i> <u>no</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Sleeping Trailer(s) and/or other accommodations
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Stage(s) - <i>indicate dimension:</i> <u>no</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Entertainment - <i>describe:</i> <u>play performance</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Amusement Rides - <i>list and describe:</i> <u>no</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Inflatable Device(s) - <i>list and describe:</i> <u>no</u>

## Other Permits

Please note that all components of the event are subject to approval by the Select Board and may also require approval by and/or permit(s) from other Town departments. It is the responsibility of the applicant to secure all necessary Town of Stow permits, and to submit any payment required for permits.

## Insurance Requirements

Evidence of Insurance will be required before final permit approval. Please provide a Certificate of Insurance, which shows a minimum of \$1,000,000.00 in Commercial General Liability Insurance and a Policy Endorsement, which indemnifies and holds harmless the Town of Stow, and all of its agencies and departments. The Town of Stow shall be named as an additional insured for the date/event. Some events may require a higher limit of insurance. Permittee must list the aforementioned parties as additional insured on their Certificate of Insurance. Each event is evaluated on its risk exposure. Any and all damages resulting from the event are the responsibility of the permittee and the permittee will work through designated staff to determine the most appropriate means for repair. The Town of Stow is not responsible for any accidents or damages to persons or property resulting from the issuance of this permit.

## Affidavit of Applicant

My signature below indicates that everything I have stated in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I have read, understand and agree to abide by the policies, rules and regulations of the Town of Stow as they pertain to the requested usage. The permit, if granted is not transferable and is revocable at any time at the absolute discretion of the Select Board (or designee). All programs and facilities of the Town of Stow are open to all citizens regardless of race, sex, age, color, religion, national origin or disability.

Signature of Applicant: Jonathan Daisy Date: 2/29/24  
 Printed Name: Jonathan Daisy Fee Paid: \_\_\_\_\_



**Shakespeare Play Performance**  
Permit #: 3605  
Purpose: Shakespeare Play Performance

**Applicant:**  
Stow Tv  
Jonathan Daisy  
380 Great Road  
Town Building  
Stow MA 01775

**Created By:** Laura Greenough  
**Created On:** 2/29/2024 10:39:03 AM

**Applicant Phone:** (978) 897-7732

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Times</b>
Town Center Park - TCP-Gazebo	Sat, May 04, 2024	12:00 PM - 06:00 PM



**performance**

Permit #: 3627

Purpose: Stow TV Shakespeare Performance

**Applicant:**

Stow Tv  
Jonathan Daisy  
380 Great Road  
Town Building  
Stow MA 01775

Created By: Joyce Sampson  
Created On: 3/5/2024 8:25:34 AM

**Applicant Phone:** (978) 897-7732

**Location**

historic Town Hall - Great Hall

**Date**

Sat, May 04, 2024

**Times**

12:00 PM - 06:00 PM

Accept Donation of a TV Monitor  
for Pompositticut Community  
Center from Boy Scout Troop 1

## Joyce Sampson

---

**From:** Laura Greenough  
**Sent:** Monday, March 4, 2024 4:35 PM  
**To:** selectboard; Alyson Toole  
**Cc:** Denise Dembkoski; selectboard  
**Subject:** Re: Donating Monitor for Pompositicut Community Center

That's great!

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** selectboard <selectboard@stow-ma.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 4, 2024 1:01:09 PM  
**To:** Alyson Toole <coa@stow-ma.gov>  
**Cc:** Denise Dembkoski <townadministrator@stow-ma.gov>; selectboard <selectboard@stow-ma.gov>; Laura Greenough <recreation@stow-ma.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Donating Monitor for Pompositicut Community Center

Received – thanks, Alyson!

Best,

*Joyce*

TA & SB Office | 978-897-4515

[Read our monthly newsletter – the Stow Municipal Message](#)

**From:** Alyson Toole <coa@stow-ma.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 4, 2024 11:20 AM  
**To:** selectboard <selectboard@stow-ma.gov>; Laura Greenough <recreation@stow-ma.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Donating Monitor for Pompositicut Community Center

Wow! That's excellent news! Yes, we would greatly appreciate the donation. A month ago or so I had asked the Building Dept. to look into a protective shield for the wall tv's. I want to be proactive to prevent this from happening again. There are 3 tvs at Pompo. So let's make sure the Building Dept has a plan to protect them before it is installed. Thanks!

Alyson Toole  
Executive Director  
Office Hours: M–F 8 AM – 3:30 PM

Council on Aging  
509 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775

Tel. (978) 897-1880 X25

Fax (978) 897-0486

Website: [www.stow-ma.gov](http://www.stow-ma.gov)

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Please be advised that all email messages and attached contents sent from and to this email address are public records unless qualified as an exemption under the Massachusetts Public Records Law (MGLc.4,7(26)).

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**From:** selectboard <[selectboard@stow-ma.gov](mailto:selectboard@stow-ma.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, March 4, 2024 10:09:50 AM

**To:** Alyson Toole <[coa@stow-ma.gov](mailto:coa@stow-ma.gov)>; Laura Greenough <[recreation@stow-ma.gov](mailto:recreation@stow-ma.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: Donating Monitor for Pompositicut Community Center

Hello Alyson and Laura,

I am writing to ask if you have any questions or concerns regarding this donation if the Select Board votes to accept it, and also to make sure that you have no objections. Thank you!

Best regards,

Joyce

Joyce Sampson | Executive Assistant

Town Administrator & Select Board Office

Town of Stow | 380 Great Road | Stow, MA 01775

978-897-4515 | [www.stow-ma.gov](http://www.stow-ma.gov)

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**From:** [ceo@tosalumni.org](mailto:ceo@tosalumni.org) <[ceo@tosalumni.org](mailto:ceo@tosalumni.org)>

**Sent:** Monday, February 26, 2024 1:05 PM

**To:** selectboard <[selectboard@stow-ma.gov](mailto:selectboard@stow-ma.gov)>

**Cc:** 'Kyle Copeland' <[kyle@thepond.com](mailto:kyle@thepond.com)>; 'John Paul Benoit' <[scoutmaster1stow@gmail.com](mailto:scoutmaster1stow@gmail.com)>; [committee-troop1stow@googlegroups.com](mailto:committee-troop1stow@googlegroups.com)

**Subject:** Donating Monitor for Pompositicut Community Center

TO: Select Board, Town of Stow

Cc: Troop 1 Stow Committee

FROM: Gary Bernklow, CEO Troop One Stow Alumni, INC

DATE: February 26, 2024

RE: Audio/Visual Apparatus Donation

During the annual Cub Scout Pack 39 Pinewood Derby, held on January 19<sup>th</sup> at the Community Center, we noticed that the TV/monitor on the wall in the Community Center appears to have been damaged recently. The screen is interrupted by several vertical lines making images difficult to view.

Due to the generosity of one of our Scouting families, we have been given a used-but-in-perfect-condition monitor which we would like to donate to the Community Center as a replacement. The replacement monitor is larger than the damaged one but will still fit easily in the same wall space. The replacement monitor is currently being stored in the Fire Department training room.



The photo shows the damaged monitor.

Sincerely,



Gary M. Bernklow  
Chief Executive Officer  
Troop One Stow Alumni, Inc.  
<http://www.tosalumni.org/>

978-886-5650

Stow House of Pizza  
Update and Extension of  
Common Victualler License



## Denise Dembkoski

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**From:** Valerie Oorthuys  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 21, 2024 2:17 PM  
**To:** Denise Dembkoski  
**Subject:** Stow House of Pizza Update

Hi Denise,

The Board recently discussed progress made regarding the Stow House of Pizza Special Permit. The applicant and the applicant's engineer have made changes to the Site Plan, which have been reviewed by the Board's consulting engineer. From the peer review letter, there are a handful of landscaping items for the applicant's engineer to revise on the Site Plan. However, the existing Special Permit requires the construction of a fence in order to shield headlights from neighboring homes and the fence was not included in the Site Plan, meaning that the applicant either must add the fence to Plan or request a modification to the Special Permit and proceed through a public hearing process.

The Planning Board feels there is positive progress being made, though there is still a ways to go until achieving compliance. The Board acknowledged that the Select Board's decision to give the applicant a temporary common victualler license resulted in positive forward movement. Because of this, the Planning Board would ask that another temporary license is issued in order to continue that positive progress.

Please let me know if there are any questions or any further information I can provide ahead of the Select Board's meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you,

**Valerie Oorthuys, AICP**  
Planning Director | Town of Stow

Stow Planning Department  
380 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775  
P: 978-897-5098  
[www.stow-ma.gov](http://www.stow-ma.gov)

**[Stow Comprehensive Plan 2035](#)**  
[Provide your thoughts through our survey!](#)

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

**TOWN OF STOW SELECT BOARD**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
**DELTA EPSILON, INC. d/b/a STOW HOUSE OF PIZZA**  
IS HEREBY GRANTED

**A COMMON VICTUALLER'S LICENSE**

in the Town of Stow at 156 Great Road and at that place only and expires June 30, 2024, unless sooner suspended or revoked for violation of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts respecting the licensing of common victuallers. This license is issued in conformity with the authority granted to the licensing authorities by General Laws, Chapter 140, and amendments thereto.

Approved by the Select Board:

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Year: 2024  
Fee:  
Issued: 3/26/2024  
License # 14 (2)

**POST THIS LICENSE IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE  
THIS LICENSE MAY NOT BE SOLD, ASSIGNED, OR TRANSFERRED**

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

**TOWN OF STOW SELECT BOARD**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
**DELTA EPSILON, INC. d/b/a STOW HOUSE OF PIZZA**  
IS HEREBY GRANTED

**A COMMON VICTUALLER'S LICENSE**

in the Town of Stow at 156 Great Road and at that place only and expires December 31, 2024, unless sooner suspended or revoked for violation of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts respecting the licensing of common victuallers. This license is issued in conformity with the authority granted to the licensing authorities by General Laws, Chapter 140, and amendments thereto.

Approved by the Select Board:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Year: 2024  
Fee:  
Issued: 3/26/2024  
License # 14 (2)

**POST THIS LICENSE IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE  
THIS LICENSE MAY NOT BE SOLD, ASSIGNED, OR TRANSFERRED**

## Police Chief Sallese to Discuss:

- New Policy – Military Integration
- Presentation on New Policy for Flock Cameras



**Town of Stow  
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

305 Great Road  
Stow, Massachusetts 01775

(978) 897-4545  
FAX (978) 897-3692

Michael Sallese  
Chief of Police

March 13, 2024

Select Board  
380 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775

**RE: Addition of 6.12 Military Activation and Reintegration**

Continuing with meeting our accreditation goal and continuing the high standard we have at the Stow Police Department. I am requesting the Select Board approval the additional policy 6.12 Military Activation and Reintegration.

This policy establishes procedures for the handling of all department personnel who actively serve for the United States Armed Reserved Forces or National Guard and are deployed for military serviced during their time of employment. This policy also helps guide Officers who are returning from service, and to ensure that all department updates, qualifications, licenses, and essential job functions are provided to the officer.

I request the addition of this policy be approved by the Select Board. The local union has looked this policy over and has no concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Sallese, Chief of Police

In Effect:

Review Date:

## Military Activation and Reintegration

<p>STOW POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY &amp; PROCEDURE NO. <b>6.12</b></p>	<p>ISSUE DATE: _____</p>
<p>MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS <b>22.2.7</b></p>	<p>EFFECTIVE DATE: _____</p>
	<p>REVISION DATE: _____</p>

### POLICY

This policy establishes procedures for the handling of all department personnel who actively serve for the United States Armed Reserved Forces or National Guard and are deployed for military serviced during their time of employment.

### PROCEDURES

#### A. The Department's Point of Contact is the Chief of Police.

1. The Lieutenant will communicate with the deployed employee and his/her family members when necessary.
2. The Lieutenant will ensure that the deployed employee is periodically notified of agency news, significant events, and promotions.
3. The Lieutenant will notify the deployed employee of those promotional opportunities that are relevant to him/her.
4. The Lieutenant will forward all relative information to the Business Officer Manage and arrange for a point-of contact with Human Resources.

#### B. Processing Prior to Military Deployment

1. A department member, who is a member of the National Guard or reserves of the United States Armed Forces, who is deployed for a period exceeding 90 days will be placed in military active-duty status and granted a leave of absence.

- a. Reasonable advance notice of impending military leave should be provided by the employee and a copy of the orders should be submitted to his/her shift commander who will forward to the Lieutenant.
- b. The employee will have an out-processing interview prior to deployment with the Chief of Police or his/her designee, if the timing of the deployment permits.

C. To ensure proper storage, safekeeping & maintenance for the duration of deployment, department property must be turned into the administrative lieutenant, including:

1. firearm, taser, magazines, portable radio and batteries, etc.
2. If the employee has other items or assigned resources that for the benefit of the department need to be temporarily reassigned, the Lieutenant will identify such items with the employee and reassign such items after consulting with his/her chain of command.
3. Technology items, such as laptops, tablets and phones, unless otherwise authorized by the Chief or designee.

D. Members returning from military deployment, particularly those having been involved in combat operations, may need support.

1. Traditional Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) may not sufficiently meet the needs of returning military members/police officers.
2. The department will consider all locally available and feasible resources to meet the returning employee's needs.
3. The returning employee has access to Human Resources benefits specialists.
4. The returning employee will have an in-processing interview with the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

E. Initial and/or Refresher Training, Weapons Requalification, and Steps for Reintegration as Appropriate

1. Any sworn member returning to duty after an absence exceeding six months will receive refresher training with issued weapons and successfully complete an MPTC approved qualification course prior to being permitted to return to full duty. Mandatory training will be provided for any and all missed training and qualifications no matter how long the absence.
2. The Lieutenant in conjunction with the Records/Training Bureau Commander will determine the training needs of the returning employee and establish a plan to provide the training.

3. The Lieutenant with the Chief or designee's approval may make arrangements with the field training coordinator to assign a field training officer to the returning employee after prolonged deployments if deemed appropriate.

4. Update Post Certification if necessary.

5. Confirm License to operate motor vehicles and license to carry are active.

6. Reassign equipment.

7. Confirm CJIS security training, background, and user status is up to date.





**Town of Stow**  
**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

305 Great Road  
Stow, Massachusetts 01775

(978) 897-4545  
FAX (978) 897-3692

**Michael Sallese**  
Chief of Police

**March 15, 2024**

Select Board  
380 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775

**RE: Addition of 9.07 ALPRs and Camera Installation**

As the Chief of Police in Stow, it is my responsibility to ensure the safety and security of our community and to provide our officers with the necessary tools to fulfill their duties in accordance with the expectations set by the Town. I am writing to respectfully request the approval of attached Policy 9.07 ALPR, which will provide guidance to officers on the use of information obtained through Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology. Additionally, I seek approval for the installation of three pre-determined locations within Town for the deployment of still photo ALPR cameras. The availability and use of the ALPR System provides opportunities for the enhancement of law enforcement agencies' productivity, effectiveness, and protection of public and officer safety. It's crucial to emphasize that the Stow Police Department will employ this technology solely for official and legitimate law enforcement operations and public safety, as outlined in the policy.

I would like to specifically address the Flock Camera System which we plan to install. This system was procured through a statewide grant aimed at enhancing school safety. The Flock cameras capture still images of the rear of vehicles as they pass by. These images are securely stored, with access restricted to law enforcement personnel only. In the event of an incident or investigation involving a vehicle, the Stow Police will be able to utilize the camera data to track the vehicle's movements.

Traditionally, when a crime occurs, officers conduct canvassing of the area and gather video and photographic evidence from private residents and businesses to aid in investigations. The Flock Camera System will serve as a force multiplier in our efforts to solve and prevent crimes.

I recognize the importance to balance privacy and security. Not only does the Flock Camera system have safeguards in place, the policy I am presenting imposes limitations on the use of the system by the Stow Police Department. The system has extensive audit capabilities, which will allow Command Staff and Senior Elected Officials to request an audit of the system. Additionally, a public-facing website will provide transparency to the community, offering insight into various aspects such as detected activities, acceptable use policies, data retention policies, and more.

The proposed policy prohibits officers from conducting searches without reasonable suspicion. Searches must be conducted as part of an ongoing investigation with an attached case number. Furthermore, the contractual agreement between Flock and the Town of Stow mandates that data be retained for only 15 days before deletion.

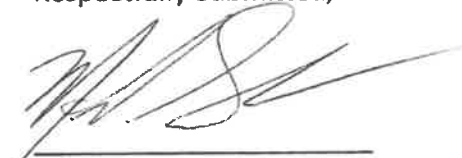
It's important to note that the system does not support facial recognition, aligning with the current policy of the Stow Police Department. Additionally, the system can be linked to the National Crime and Information Center, which will alert the Stow Police Department to felony wanted individuals, Amber Alerts, and Silver Alerts associated with vehicles. However, it is important to emphasize that alerts for immigration warrants and Massachusetts license and registration statuses are prohibited.

ALPR cameras are already in use across the state and in other communities. By integrating this valuable investigative tool with a robust privacy policy, we aim to not only solve crimes but also protect the constitutional rights of individuals.

As mentioned earlier, I am requesting approval for the installation of solar cameras on three town-owned properties. The first location would face east in the vicinity of 612 Great Road. The second location would face south on West Acton Road at the entrance to the conservation area. The third location would face west on the upper common near the intersection of Common Road, adjacent to the existing telephone pole, just west of the pole.

I also respectfully request the approval of the addition of this policy by the Select Board. The local union has reviewed this policy and raised no objections.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Sallèse', written over a horizontal line.

Michael Sallèse, Chief of Police

# Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)

POLICY & PROCEDURE NO. <b>9.07</b>	DATE: _
	EFFECTIVE DATE: _____
MASSACHUSETTS POLICE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCED:	REVISION DATE: ____

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the capture, storage and use of digital data obtained through the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology.

## POLICY

The availability and use of the ALPR System provides opportunities for the enhancement of law enforcement agencies' productivity, effectiveness, and protection of public and officer safety. The Stow Police Department shall only utilize this technology in furtherance of official and legitimate law enforcement operations and public safety. All Department Employees shall abide by the guidelines set forth herein when using the ALPR System.

## DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

**Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR):** Automatic license plate recognition technology uses high-speed cameras combined with sophisticated computer algorithms capable of converting the images of license plates to electronically readable data. The ALPR System captures an image of a license plate and converts it to a text file using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. The technology also compares the digital images of license plates to the CJIS-NCIC Hot file database. The ALPR System is configured as either fixed, mobile or portable.

**Alert:** A visual and/or auditory notice that is triggered when the ALPR System receives a potential hit on a license plate.

**Alert Data:** Information captured by an ALPR relating to a license plate that matches the license plate on a hot list.

**ALPR Data:** Scan files, alert data, and any other documents or data generated by, or obtained through, utilization of the ALPR System.

ALPR Data Query Logs: A record of a search or query of ALPR data.

Hit: An alert that a license plate matches a record maintained in the ALPR database related to stolen vehicles, wanted vehicles, or other alert type files that support investigation or which have been manually registered by a user for further investigation.

Hot List: License plate numbers of vehicles of interest, such as stolen vehicles, unregistered vehicles, vehicles owned by persons of interest, and vehicles associated with AMBER Alerts, Missing Child Alerts, Missing College Student Bulletins, Silver Alerts, Be On Look Out (BOLO), Attempt To Locate (ATL), and Wanted or Missing Person broadcasts or bulletins in which a license plate number is included, or other license plate numbers of interest entered by the Department or an authorized officer.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR): The technology that supports the automated reading and digitizing of images of license plates that are captured by the ALPR System.

## **ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT**

The Lieutenant, under the authority and supervision of the Chief of Police shall be designated as the ALPR Administrator. The Chief of Police shall ensure the ALPR Administrator has oversight for the ALPR System deployment, operations, and maintenance.

The ALPR Administrator shall be responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring the proper selection of the personnel approved to operate the ALPR System and maintaining an adequate number of trained and authorized users.
2. Authorizing any requests for ALPR System use or data access according to Department policy
3. Ensuring that designated, trained personnel check equipment on a regular basis to ensure functionality, camera alignment, and removing from service any equipment that falls outside expected functionality until deficiencies are corrected.
4. Designating users who have been properly trained in the use and operational protocols of the ALPR system
5. Allowing access to the ALPR System for those users with an approved login and password.
6. Ensuring that any changes in hardware, software, policy, or law are the subject of continuing in-service training or bulletins.

## **PROCEDURES AND USE**

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates.

It is used by the Stow Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active Felony Warrants, homeland security, and past criminal activity associated with reasonable suspicion or probable cause. Emergency uses, such as active crimes also permit the use.

The Stow Police LPR will be set up NOT to alert officers on immigration warrants.

The use of ALPR technology shall be approved by the Chief of Police or designee. ALPR System and information shall be:

1. Accessed and used only for official and legitimate law enforcement purposes;
2. Used for searches of historical ALPR data, in accordance with this policy and other Department policies or regulations where applicable; and
3. Used for searches of ALPR data by members of this Department
4. Queries made through the ALPR System shall be conducted by authorized Stow Police Department users only.
5. The list of authorized users shall be maintained and updated, as required, by the ALPR Administrator.

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Stow Police Department. The Chief of Police or their designee will assign members under their command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

## **OPERATIONS**

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department members shall not use, or allow others to use the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose

1. An ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement business.
2. An ALPR may be used in conjunction with criminal investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is required before using an ALPR, and must have a case number assigned.
3. Emergency use such as missing person, silver alert, amber alert are permitted and still must be documented.
4. No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department-approved training.
5. No ALPR operator may access department, state or federal data unless otherwise authorized to do so.
6. Officer should verify an ALPR response through the DCJIS before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert.

## **ALPR ALERTS/HITS**

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Stow Police Department to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes.

ALPR will create alerts/hits which include

1. Identifying stolen or wanted vehicles,
2. Missing persons
3. Amber Alerts
4. Silver Alerts

The Stow Police LPR will be set up NOT to alert officers on immigration warrants.

Prior to initiation of a stop, based on an ALPR Hit or Alert, the initiating Officer(s) shall:

1. Visually verify that the vehicle plate number matches the plate number run by the ALPR System, including both:
  - a. Alphanumeric characters of the license plate; and
  - b. The state of issue.
2. Verify the current status of the plate through:
  - a. The Commonwealth's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), or
  - b. National Crime Information Center (NCIC), or
  - c. Department's Records Management System (RMS), or
  - d. Other appropriate source of data, when circumstances allow, or as soon as practicable.

## **DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION**

The Chief of Police or designee is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data.

All ALPR data downloaded from devices will be entered into as part of the case record and those cases will be stored in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

ALPR photo or data, captured by Stow Police Department's LPR's, will be deleted and destroyed 15 days after capture, unless downloaded and attached to an investigation.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means.

1. All ALPR data downloaded to the Stow Police Records Management System and in storage shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time
2. Members approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relate to a specific criminal investigation or department-related civil or administrative action and must have a case number assigned with narrative describing the reasonable suspicion or probable cause, or emergency situation
3. ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis.
4. The public will have access to statistical information of the Stow Police use of ALPR

## **RELEASING ALPR DATA**

The ALPR data may be shared only with other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for official law enforcement purposes or as otherwise permitted by law, using the following procedures:

1. The agency makes a written request for the ALPR data that includes:
  - a. The name of the agency.

Policy & Procedure # 9.07 ALPRs

- b. The name of the person requesting.
  - c. The intended purpose of obtaining the information.
  - d. Officers who assist other agencies, must follow mutual aid agreements, and have documents any access to the system with a case number.
2. The approved request is retained on file.

## **TRAINING**

The Chief of Police or designee should ensure that members receive department-approved training for those authorized to use or access the ALPR system

## **POLICY REVIEW**

The ALPR Administrator shall be responsible for:

1. Annual review of this policy and the procedures contained herein; and making recommendations through appropriate channels to the Chief of Police, for any necessary amendments.
2. As use of this technology progresses, the Department shall continue to monitor and assess the appropriateness of this policy, as new technology may raise both legal and technological issues.

## **SUMMARY**

The above stated policy and procedure is meant to provide general guidelines for the use of the Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) System for members of the Stow Police Department. Particular facts or circumstances may necessitate an officer or supervisor taking action other than the procedures listed above.

This policy and procedure is for Stow Police Department use only and is not meant to enlarge an officer's criminal or civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in an administrative proceeding.

# Comprehensive Plan Update and possible Meeting in a Box exercise

Please review and come with ideas on  
which activity you would like to  
participate in if time allows.





# STOW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2035

## ENVISION STOW FOR ALL OF US

### SUMMARY PROFILE OF TRENDS & ISSUES

This report is a summary profile of trends and issues in Stow, Massachusetts, written in Phase I of the comprehensive planning process. This summary profile addresses each of the Commonwealth's required elements as described in M.G.L. c.41, Section 81D.

**Draft for Discussion Purposes Only**

J M G O L D S O N



# THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

**P**hase I of the comprehensive planning process focuses on understanding the community’s physical, environmental, cultural, and demographic characteristics – how has the community developed and changed over time? What are the community’s key issues and opportunities?

This Summary Profile is intended to summarize the trends and issues affecting Stow. It summarizes the project team’s due diligence performed in Phase I of the comprehensive planning project.

(Cover photo)  
Lake Boon  
Photo Credit: Kathy Sferra

**Project Timeline**  
The Stow Comprehensive Plan will be created in four phases over an 18-month period. Robust community engagement will shape the plan’s priorities.

- 1

**September 2023 – March 2024**  
**STOW YESTERDAY & TODAY**
- 2

**January 2024 – July 2024**  
**STOW TOMORROW**
- 3

**July 2024 – December 2024**  
**ACHIEVING STOW TOMORROW**
- 4

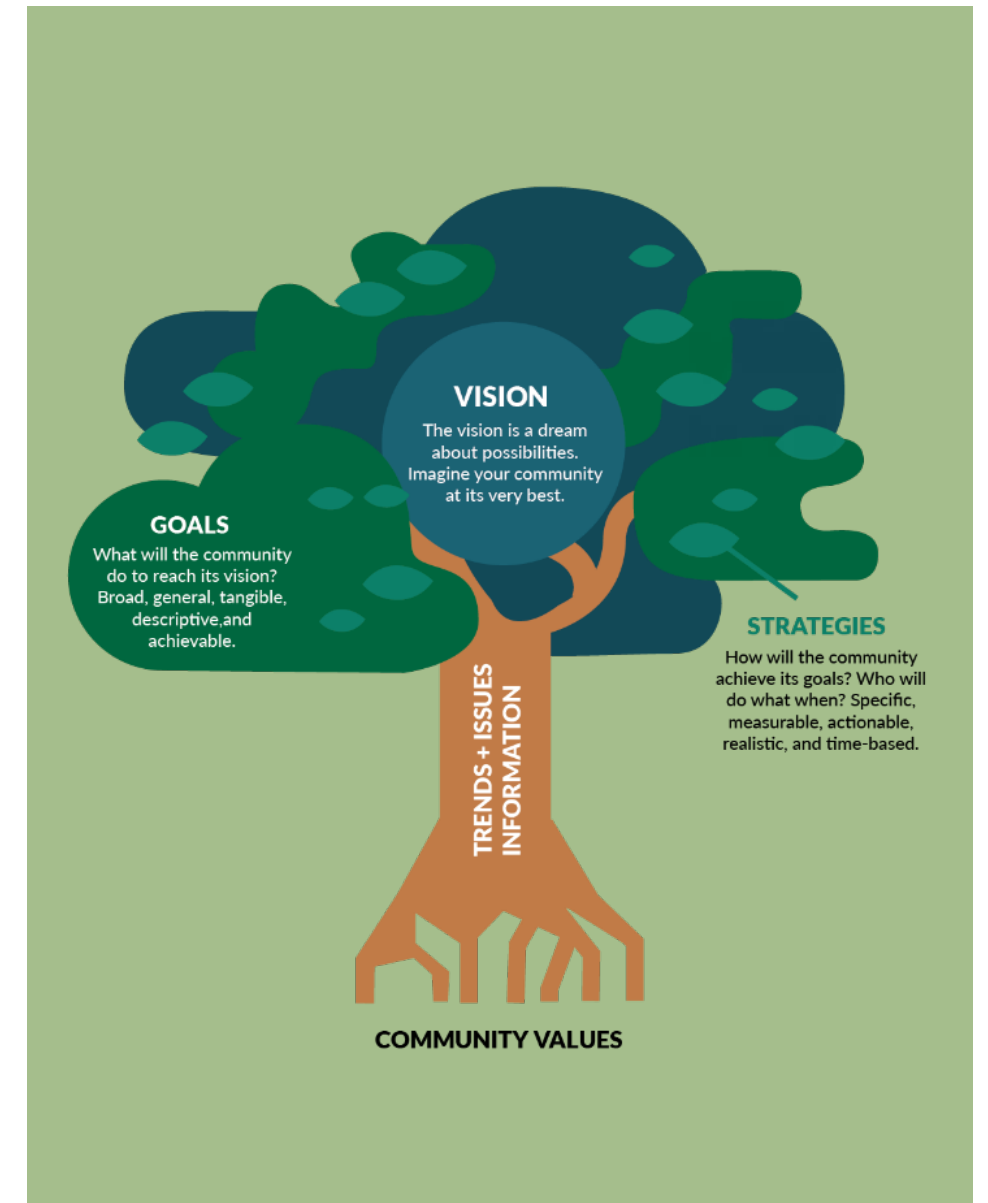
**December 2024 – May 2025**  
**PLAN FINALIZATION AND ADOPTION**

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A local comprehensive plan helps communities anticipate, shape, and respond to change over time. Comprehensive plans are long-range visionary plans primarily focusing on a community’s physical evolution. Ultimately, a comprehensive plan helps the community imagine—and create—a better and more intentional future.

## Components Of A Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan consists of various components – an understanding of **trends and issues**, a community **vision** for the future, **goals** to help measure progress toward achieving the vision, and **strategies** that can help the community proactively and collaboratively work to achieve the vision. A comprehensive plan sets the stage for the Town’s next steps and supports future policy and resource allocation decisions. To encourage progress, a comprehensive plan includes an implementation plan that assigns specific responsibilities and an oversight structure. As demonstrated in JM Goldson’s tree diagram, the trends and issues provide a foundation for the plan, like the tree trunk provides stability for the canopy of branches and leaves. The tree canopy represents the community vision, the branches represent broad but tactile goals to achieve the vision, and the leaves symbolize the community’s strategies to manifest the vision.





# STOW, AN OVERVIEW

*“The Town of Stow hosts a bucolic blend of natural beauty and community spirit, making it an appealing place to live and visit.”*

Stow, located in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, is a charming and historic community known for its picturesque landscapes and small-town atmosphere. With a population of just over 7,000 residents, Stow retains a sense of tranquility. The Town retains a country feel, with working and historic farmlands and expansive conservation areas.

Stow was formally incorporated in 1683 after 20 years and at least two marked waves of colonial settlement of Indigenous Nipmuc homelands. Historic remnants from this early period and after Stow’s incorporation are evident in the well-preserved buildings and landmarks scattered throughout the Town. The Town Center, for example, showcases Colonial-era and early Federal architecture, providing a glimpse into the Town’s colonial past.

Residents and visitors alike can explore the scenic beauty of Stow through its numerous hiking trails, parks, and outdoor recreational areas, such as Lake Boon, which offers opportunities for boating and fishing.

The Stow community has prioritized the conservation of natural places and carefully integrating development. Open spaces are valued in Stow, and the Town has implemented measures to protect these environmental assets. Stow also nurtures a sense of community through various events, local farm stands, and community gatherings, creating opportunities for social cohesion for residents. Stow’s agricultural resources, including four orchards, are a regional agritourism draw, with thousands of visitors each year to pick apples, enjoy cider, see New England fall foliage, and more.

Stow is a member of the Nashoba Regional School District. The elementary Center School and Hale Middle School serve Stow residents, while the Nashoba Regional High School in Bolton serves all three member towns. Stow’s commitment to education is reflected in the support for these schools and the involvement of parents and community members in the educational process. The Town of Stow hosts a bucolic blend of natural beauty and community spirit, making it an appealing place to live and visit.



Stow Community Gardens  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

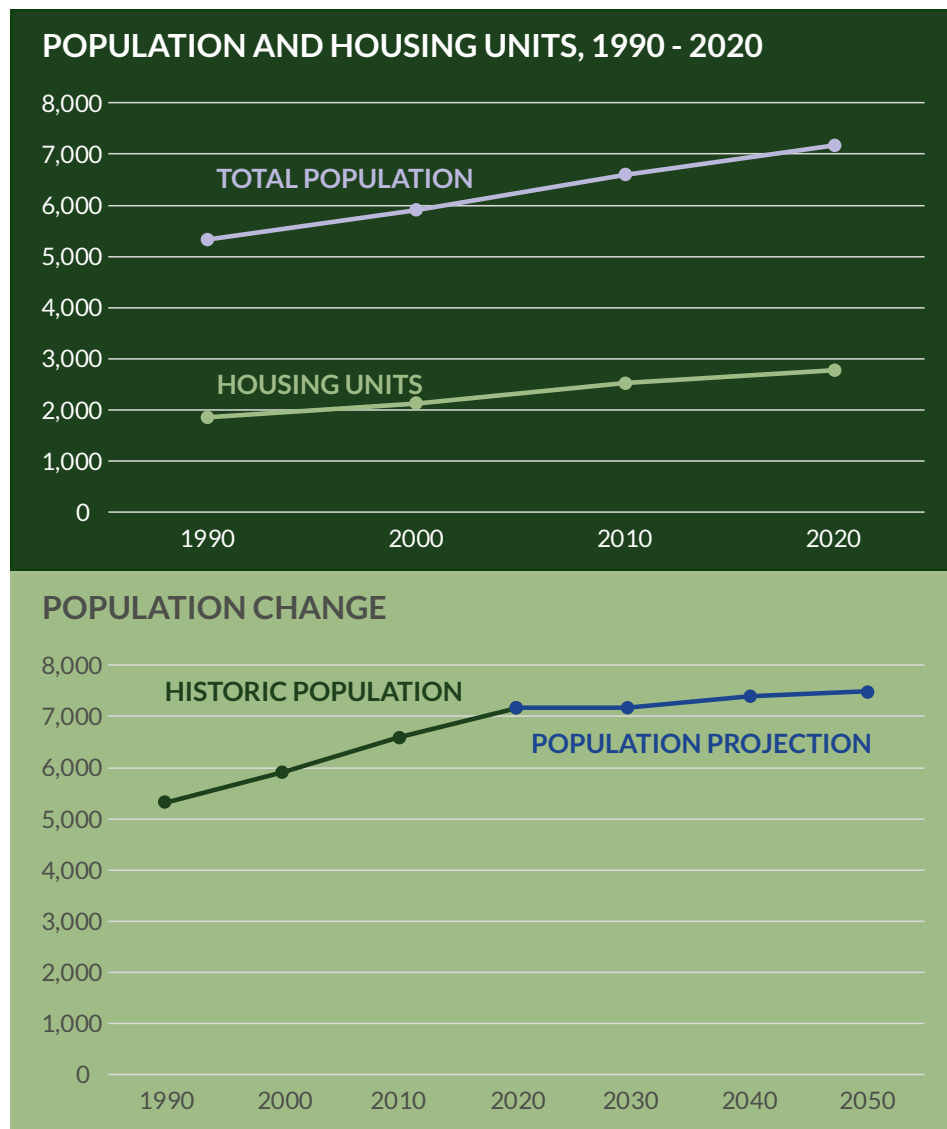


# POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

Over the next three decades, the population in Stow is projected to remain relatively steady.<sup>1</sup> However, there is a notable shift in the age distribution, with the middle-aged population (35 to 64) expected to experience growth from 40 percent of the population in 2022 to 50 percent by 2050.<sup>2</sup> The number of households has increased from 2,429 in 2010 to 2,679 in 2020<sup>3</sup>, while the average household size has remained consistent at 2.7 people<sup>4</sup>. Most households (83 percent) consist of married couples,<sup>5</sup> showing a five percent increase from 2010.

# 7,174

POPULATION OF STOW IN 2020



Source: US Census (T80, T72, T155, T68, H1)

Source: US Census (T1, P1, H1), MassDOT

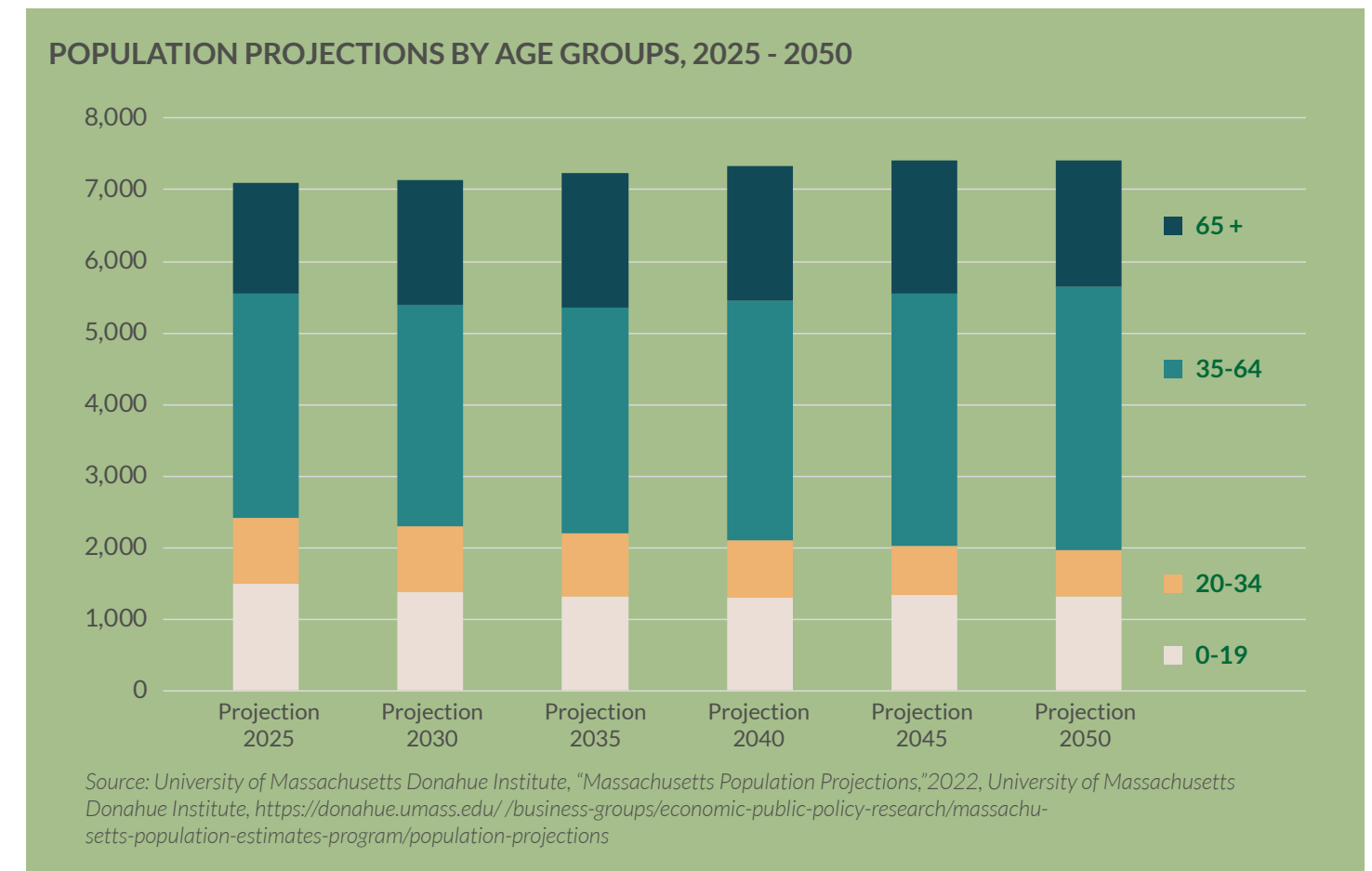
Stow has witnessed some demographic changes, with the population identifying as “White Alone” falling from 92 to 86 percent between 2010 and 2020.<sup>6</sup> The largest population increases were seen in people who identified as two or more races (which more than tripled), Hispanic or Latino (which more than doubled), or Asian (which increased by 50 percent). The Town’s foreign-born population, at just over nine percent of all residents, is half represented by immigrants from Asia. The Black population in Stow remains below one percent of residents.

These racial settlement patterns can be understood in the context of settler-colonialism as well as deep racism in federal and local housing policy. These land use

laws, including large lot sizes, forbidding apartments, growth management policies, or racial covenants, were crafted during the twentieth century with explicitly segregationist intent.

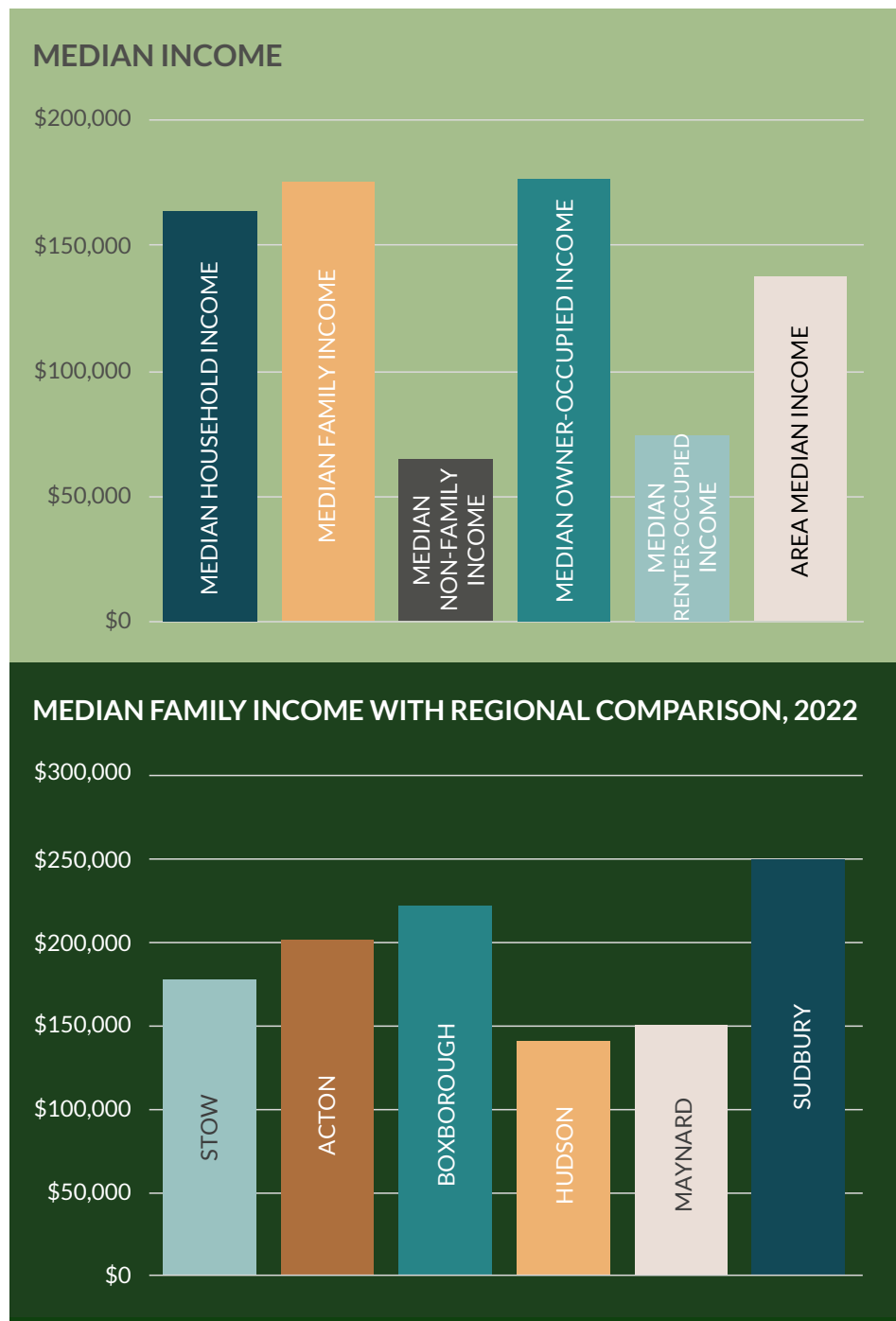
In the mid-twentieth century when many African-Americans were leaving the South for northern cities, suburbs in Greater Boston responded by passing such exclusionary zoning bylaws that functioned to exclude non-white residents by using class as a proxy.<sup>7</sup> Primarily white suburbs are a visible effect of systemic inequities in access to housing and resources. These policies reflect a deep legacy that can be traced back to enslavement, underscoring the ongoing struggle for racial justice and equity in land use policy.

*Education levels in Stow are high, with nearly 75 percent of residents holding a bachelor’s degree or higher, well above state and county averages.*



The median household income in Stow was \$166,833 in 2022, surpassing that of the Boston metropolitan area. There is a stark contrast between homeowners and renters, with median incomes at \$179,467 and \$75,439, respectively.<sup>8</sup> The share of households earning \$150,000 or more annually is double the state average, highlighting the affluence of many homeowning residents in Stow.

*Stow faces challenges related to an aging population, limited racial diversity, and concerns about housing options and mansionization.*



Source: US Census (T93, T95, T98, T100), ACS (A14006, A14010, A14012, A14015), HUD

Source: ACS (B19113)



Stow Open House  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The community is exploring ways to become more welcoming and address intergenerational opportunities. The Council on Aging is actively engaged in connecting younger and older residents through skill-sharing initiatives. The Town grapples with regional housing pressure and there are challenges in accommodating creative solutions due to zoning restrictions and high land costs. The issue of mansionization, particularly around Lake Boon, is a concern, emphasizing the need for thoughtful affordability and development strategies.



# HOUSING

Stow has witnessed parallel growth in housing units and households, with a 29 percent increase in households and a 30 percent growth in homes between 2000 and 2020. Adding nearly 250 homes to its housing inventory between 2010 and 2020, Stow has experienced development dispersed around the Town's geography.

*A notable 70 percent (or 1,817)<sup>9</sup> of homes in Stow were constructed in the past sixty years, a result of suburbanizing development patterns.*

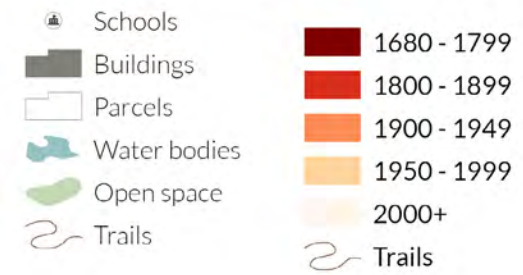
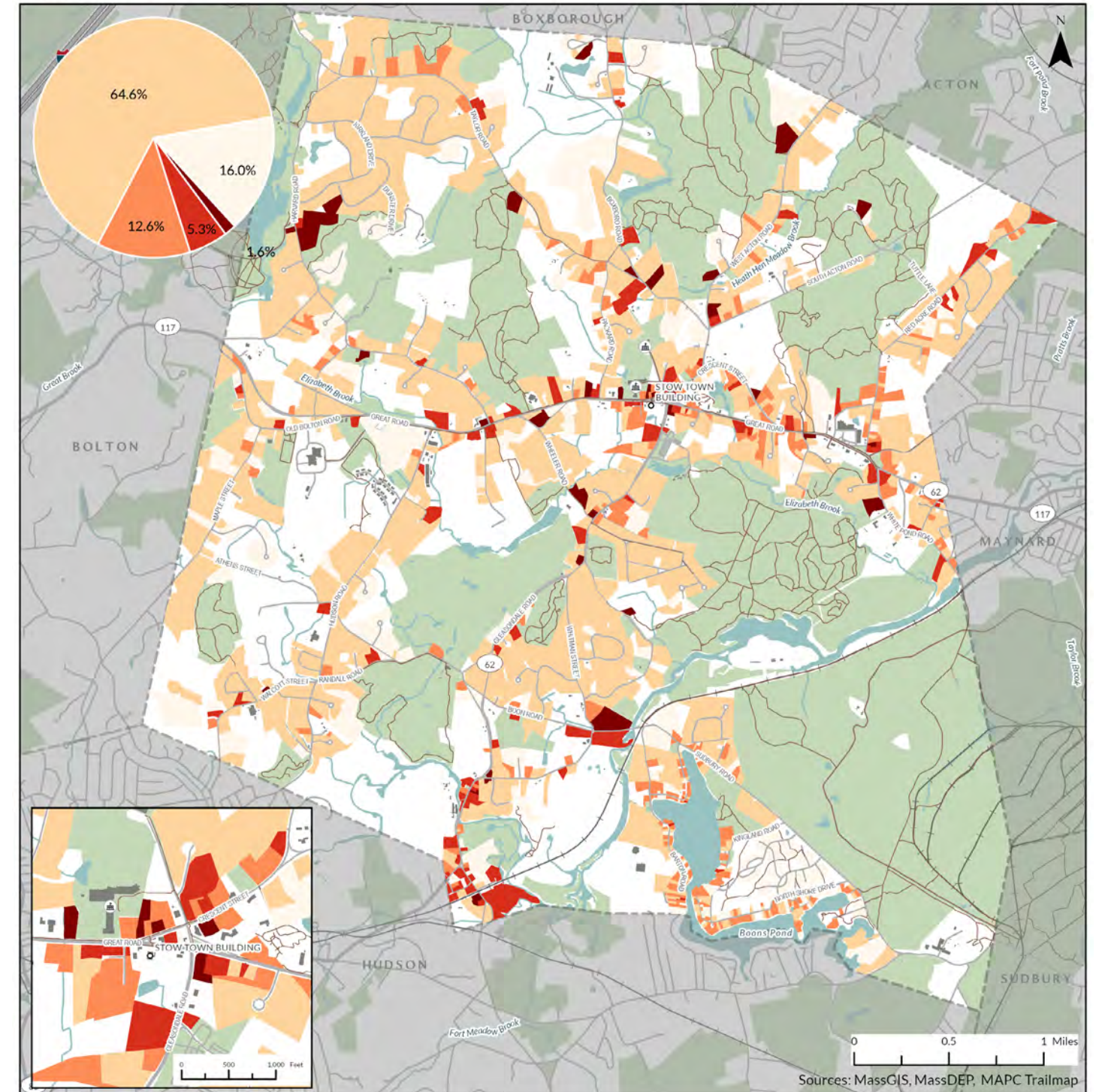


The Villages at Stow  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

## TOWN OF STOW - AGE OF HOUSING STRUCTURES

Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

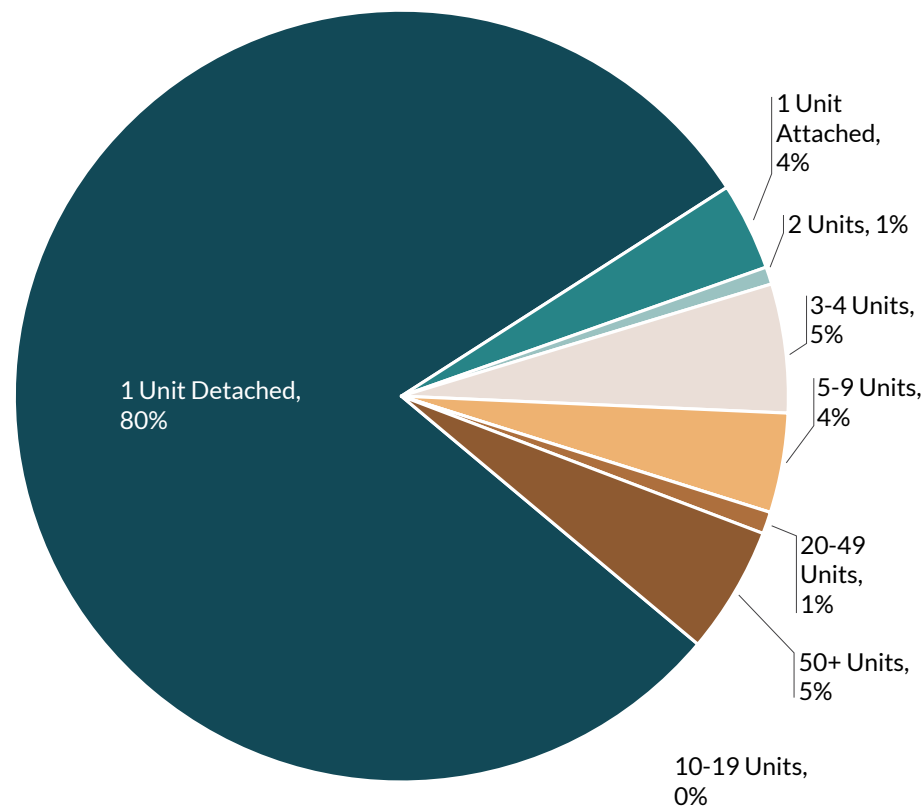
J M GOLDSON





There was notable growth in single-family attached and three to four-unit structures between 2010 to 2022.<sup>10</sup> The number of townhouses doubled from 47 to 96, and clustered units saw a remarkable sevenfold increase, rising from 24 to 141 homes. While most residents in Stow are owner-occupants (90 percent), distinguishing the Town from nearby communities with a more balanced renter-owner split, there has been a slight increase in owner-occupants over the last decade. However, this high level is not unique to Stow, as Sudbury maintains a similar owner-occupancy rate at 88 percent.

HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE, 2022



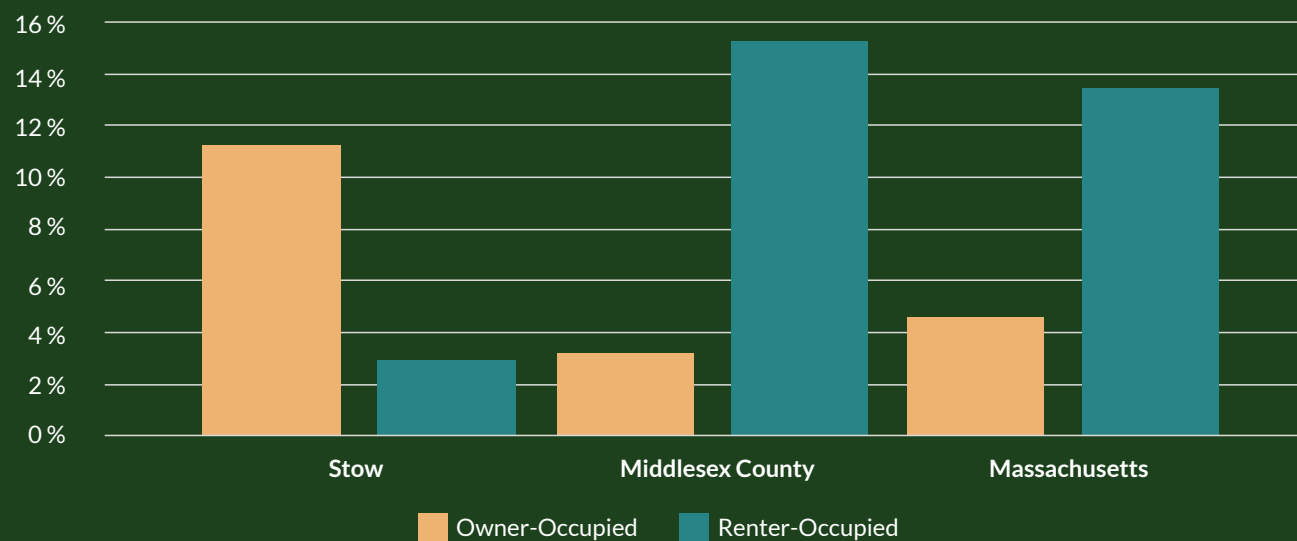
Source: ACS (B25024)

Housing costs in Stow have experienced a significant upswing over the past decade, posing affordability challenges. The median sales price of a single-family home surged by 73 percent between 2016 and 2022, reaching an average of over \$880,000 by the last quarter of 2023.<sup>11</sup> This escalation in costs significantly challenges the affordability of housing for median-income families. The monthly costs of average-sales-price homes are estimated at over \$7,000, while the income of existing residents suggests an affordable monthly payment of slightly over \$4,000. Stow's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of July 2023 sat at 6.53 percent, and there is a concerted effort of several planned projects aimed at achieving the ten percent compliance under M.G.L. 40B.

Chapter 40B Housing is a program created by the State of Massachusetts that allows developers to override local zoning bylaws to increase the number of affordable homes in municipalities where less than 10% of the housing is defined as affordable. Communities above the 10% threshold have "safe harbor" and can reject 40B proposals, although they can still accept them at their choice. The municipality's SHI (Subsidized Housing Inventory) and compliance with approved Housing Production Plans are used to determine "safe harbor" status.

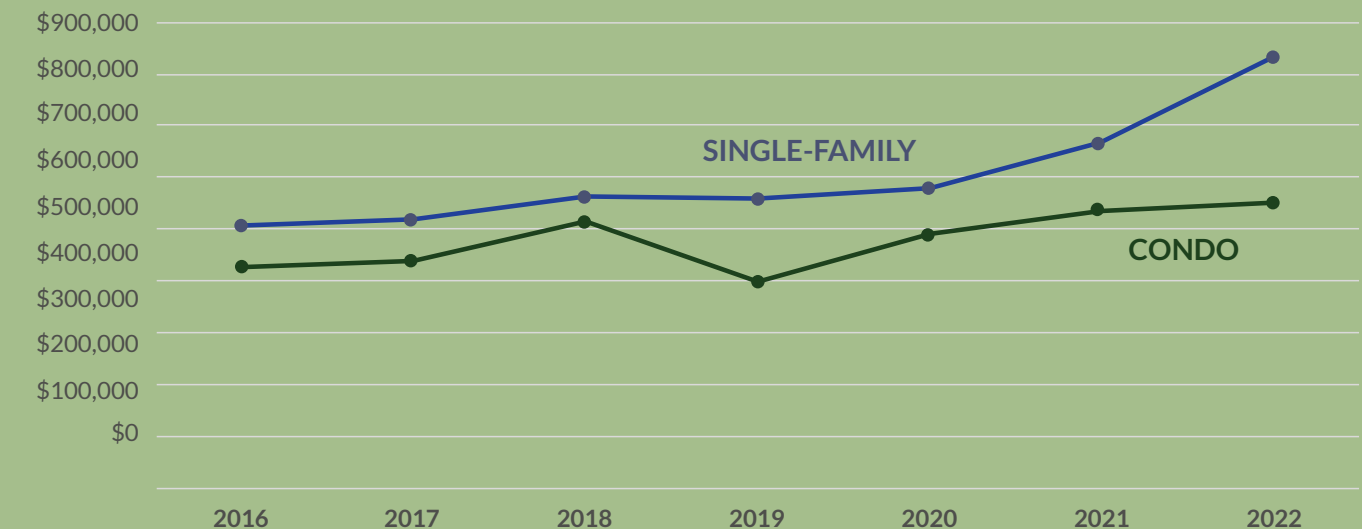
The Town of Stow is a member of the Assabet Regional Housing Consortium. This allows staff to participate in a community of practice and in shared housing services, such as monitoring the affordability status of deed-restricted housing units.

GROWTH IN HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE WITH REGIONAL COMPARISON, 2010 - 2020



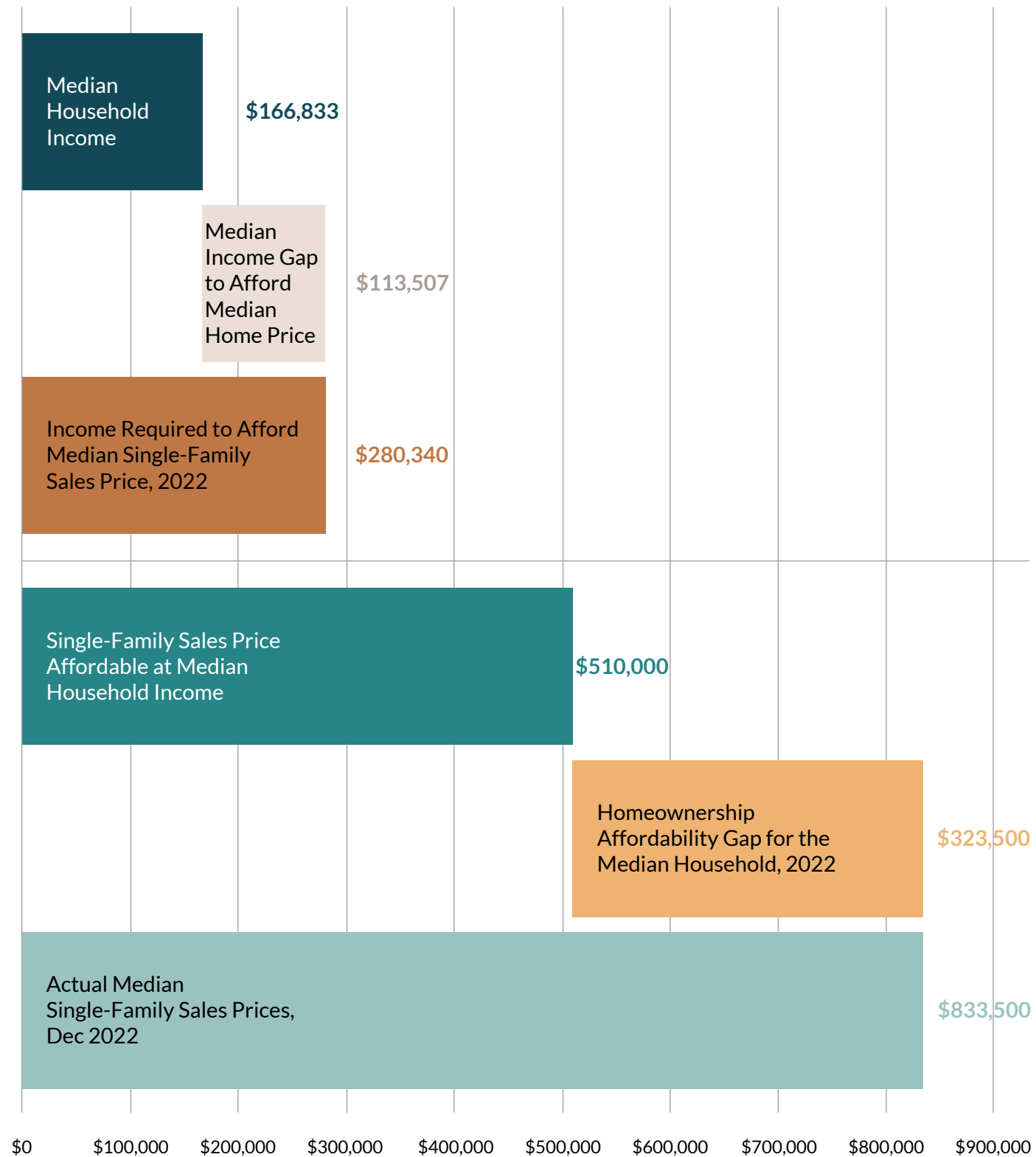
Source: US Census (T69, H4)

MEDIAN SINGLE-FAMILY AND CONDO SALES PRICES, 2016 - 2022



Source: Massachusetts Association of Realtors Town Data

HOMEOWNERSHIP AFFORDABILITY



Note: Calculations assume 30% of income allocated to direct housing costs.  
 Source: ACS (A14015), Massachusetts Association of Realtors Town Data, DHCD Affordability Calculator Tool

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Stow faces critical issues and opportunities in its housing landscape. First and foremost, there is a pressing need to diversify housing opportunities and focus on affordability. While the Town excels in discussing both moderately affordable and affordable housing, the continued shortage of more affordable, dense housing options emerges as a significant and persistent issue. In interviews with Town staff, it was suggested that elevated housing prices in Stow are affecting the Town's ability to operate programs, affordability being a significant barrier to hiring and maintaining staff that can live nearby.

These pressures also add to the lack of representation of socio-economic diverse populations in Stow and are representative of historical patterns of exclusion made possible through restrictive zoning that elevates housing costs. The challenge of affordability underscores the pressing need to reduce barriers to entry for individuals of all ages and backgrounds, and foster a more equitable and inclusive community environment.

Addressing this gap presents both challenges and opportunities for Stow. Exploring zoning adjustments to facilitate the development of smaller homes of greater density and diverse typologies can be an avenue toward building affordability for new neighbors as well as empty nesters looking to downsize. Investment in water and sewer infrastructure in Lower Village could open opportunities for Stow to see more diversity and affordability in housing options, particularly given new allowances for mixed-use development. Strict Board of Health regulations on extensive septic leaching areas also limits development potential to large lots and raises costs.

The potential for Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) permissions at the state level indicates a step toward opening greater possibilities, although historical challenges in getting initiatives like ADUs approved persist. Reaching for consensus is crucial, as the Town looks toward meeting current and future needs. Many factors are at play in housing policy, requiring a cohesive approach to implementation in Stow.

As the Town grapples with regional housing pressures, historically restrictive zoning, and high land costs, exploring novel approaches to connect Stow's experience in conservation land trusts with community land trusts for housing is a key opportunity to grow permanently affordable housing under community control.



# ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

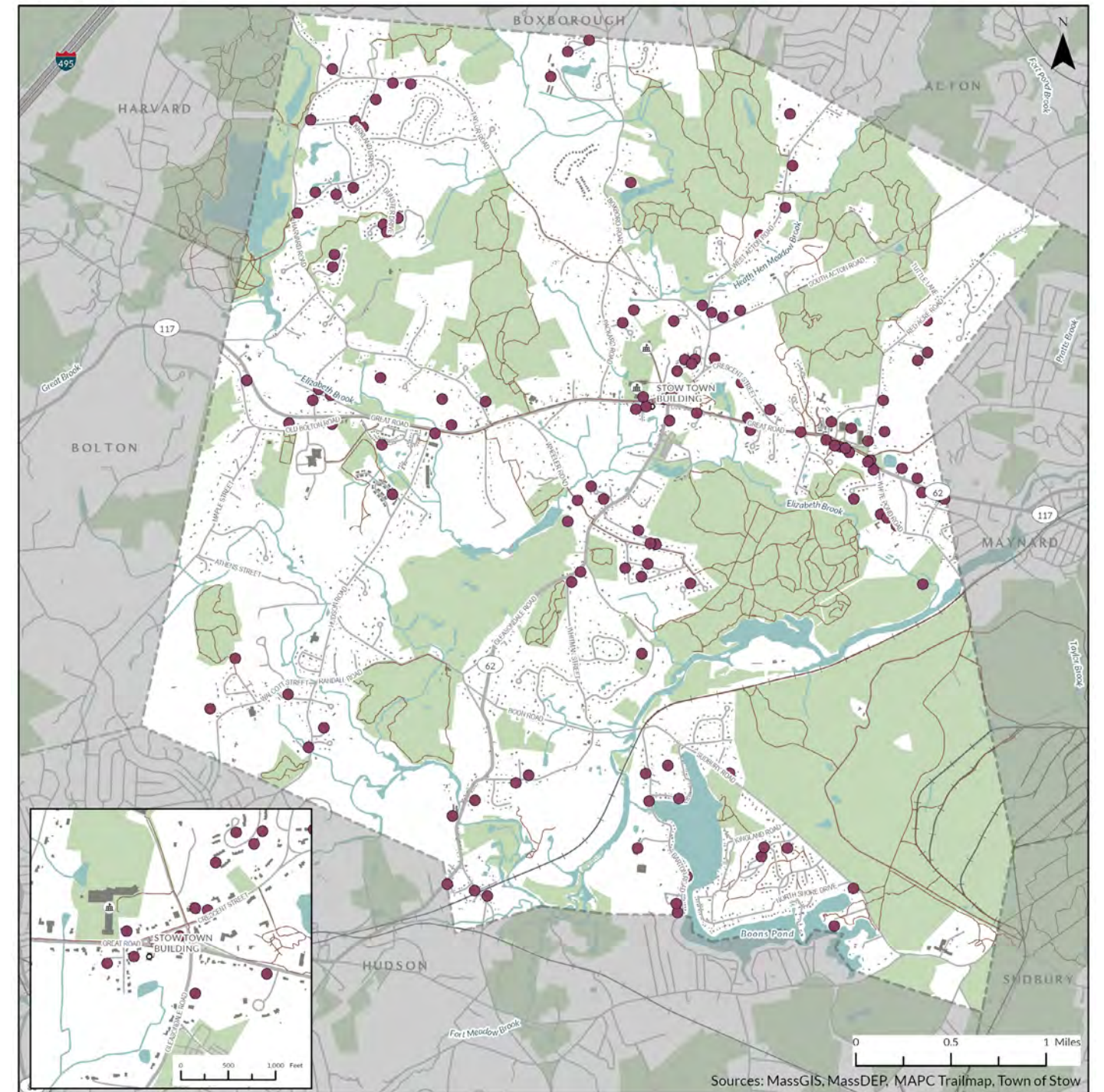
Stow's economic landscape reflects a well-educated exurban population. Aligned with peer communities, 74.3 percent of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The Town has a low unemployment rate of 3.7 percent, below the rates in Middlesex County (4.4 percent) and the Commonwealth (5.3 percent). Employment in Stow grew by ten percent between 2012 and 2022, mirroring the growth in Middlesex County. The 2020 Census identified 1,953 jobs in Stow, with manufacturing and public administration being the dominant sectors, comprising 25 percent and 23.5 percent of jobs, respectively.



Stow Shopping Center in Lower Village  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

TOWN OF STOW - REGISTERED BUSINESSES  
Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON

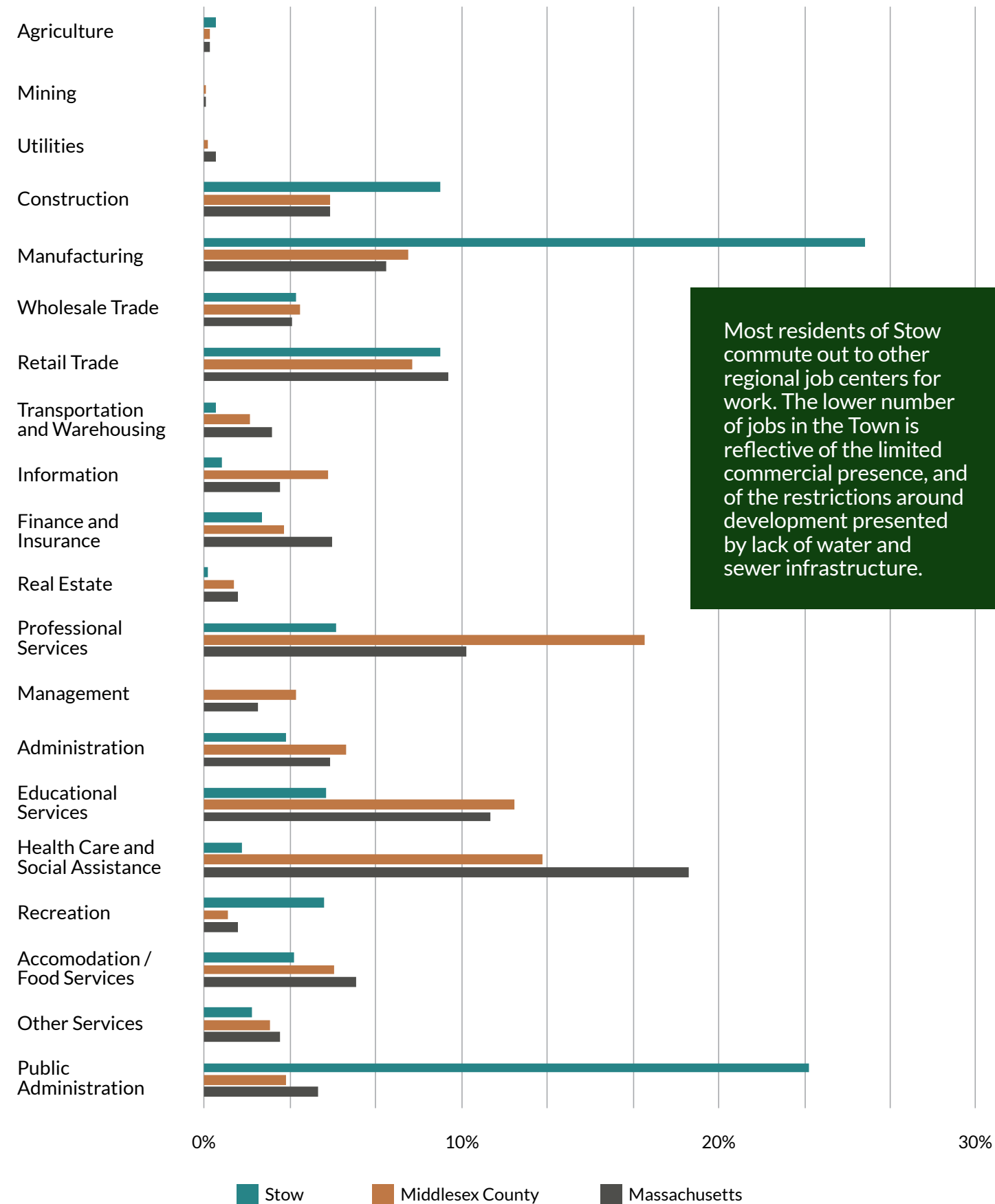


The concentration of businesses in the Lower Village and historic Town Center reflects historical land use trends, showcasing both the slow growth development of an agricultural community center and the postwar suburban shopping center.

Stow's farms and orchards also serve as a significant draw for agritourism, attracting visitors with the promise of scenic landscapes, fresh produce, and immersive agricultural experiences.



SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR, 2020



Tax Revenue

Despite its economic strengths, Stow faces challenges. The Town has a higher residential tax rate than most neighboring communities, though Maynard's remains greater. In 2023, Stow levied \$31,160,991 in property taxes, with a minimal 5 percent coming from commercial and industrial properties.<sup>12</sup>

Communities that diversify their tax base by developing more commercial properties have increased opportunities to target property tax rates between the two uses. The Town of Hudson

sees nearly a quarter of their tax revenues come from higher rates on commercial and industrial properties, allowing for the lowest residential tax rate and lowest average single-family tax bill of nearby communities surveyed.<sup>13</sup>

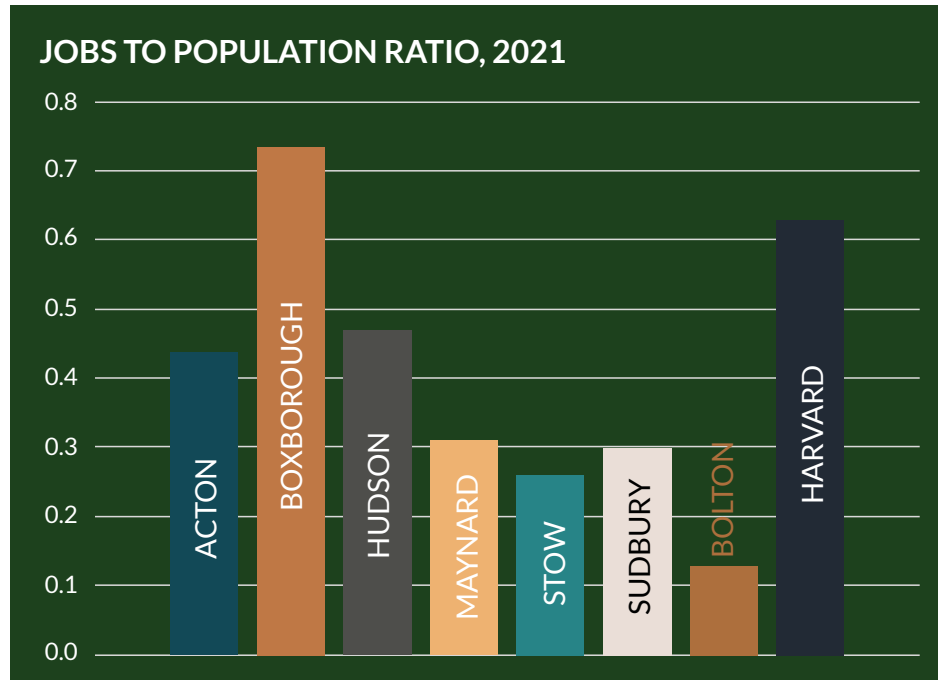
In 2023, Hudson's residential tax rate was \$14.60, while the commercial rate was \$28.88. Stow's average single-family tax bill in 2023 was \$11,617, well below Sudbury's \$15,036, but significantly above Hudson's \$7,274.



Retail Space for Lease in Stow Shopping Center  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

*The jobs-to-population ratio in Stow is lower compared to adjacent communities, with only Bolton having a lower ratio.<sup>14</sup>*

Water and sewer infrastructure, along with high land and housing costs, emerge as significant barriers to economic development, particularly in the Lower Village. Interviewees underscored these challenges, noting the impact on business startup costs and hindrance to employee relocation to Stow.



Source: US Census OnTheMap



Source: Massachusetts Department of Economic Research

At Town Meeting in 2023, Stow created a new zoning district for Lower Village, allowing businesses and landowners greater flexibility in site design and allowed uses. It was designed to foster a walkable village center.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Stow faces several challenges and opportunities in its economic development efforts. A key issue lies in the insufficiency of water infrastructure in Lower Village. In an ongoing feasibility study, the Town is grappling with questions about responsibility and maintenance of a potential water supply for the business district. Due to a perception that there isn't sufficient community desire to establish a public water system, the result may rely on business owners. However, the small size of parcels poses challenges, limiting the potential uses to small establishments.

Financial constraints resulting from municipal investments and open space initiatives emphasize the need for economic diversification. Greater opportunities may be opened by continuing to foster the agritourism market, with the potential for more local businesses that can broaden the market for visitors coming to spend money in Stow.

Another challenge lies in the difficulty of opening new businesses in Stow. The Town lacks a dedicated Chamber of Commerce or Town department, and a previous economic development commission was recently disbanded. To address this, there is a need for a clear economic development plan outlining roles and responsibilities for attracting businesses, improving the Lower Village Business District, and fostering ongoing dialogue. Clarifying these aspects, possibly through the addition of dedicated Town staff, will be crucial for effective economic development in Stow.



# TRANSPORTATION

Over the past decade (2012-2022), Stow has witnessed a notable shift in commuting patterns, with a 24 percent decrease in residents driving or carpooling to work. Most of this change (23 percent) may be attributed to an increase in remote work, while those indicating public transportation (including taxi) ridership also saw a modest increase.<sup>15</sup>

*The Town faces transportation challenges, including an increase in “super commuters” (residents living at least one hour away from their workplace) from seven to twelve percent.<sup>16</sup> The lack of public transit options impacts multiple facets of the Town.*

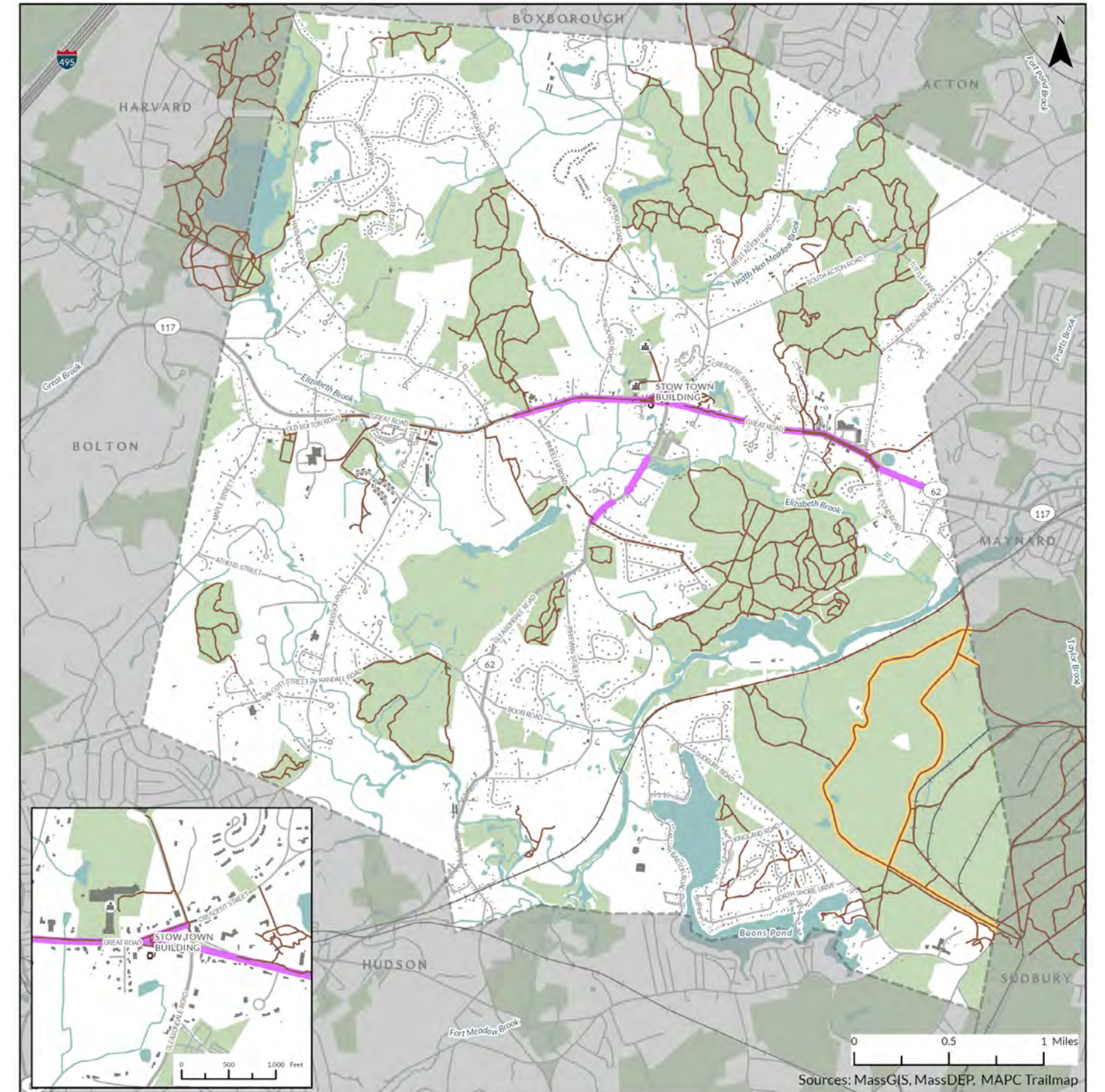


Great Road Traffic Signal  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

## TOWN OF STOW - BIKE PATHS AND PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



- Schools
- Buildings
- Parcels
- Trails
- Water bodies
- Open space
- Hiking Trails
- Contemplated Cycling Improvements
- Existing Cycling Facilities



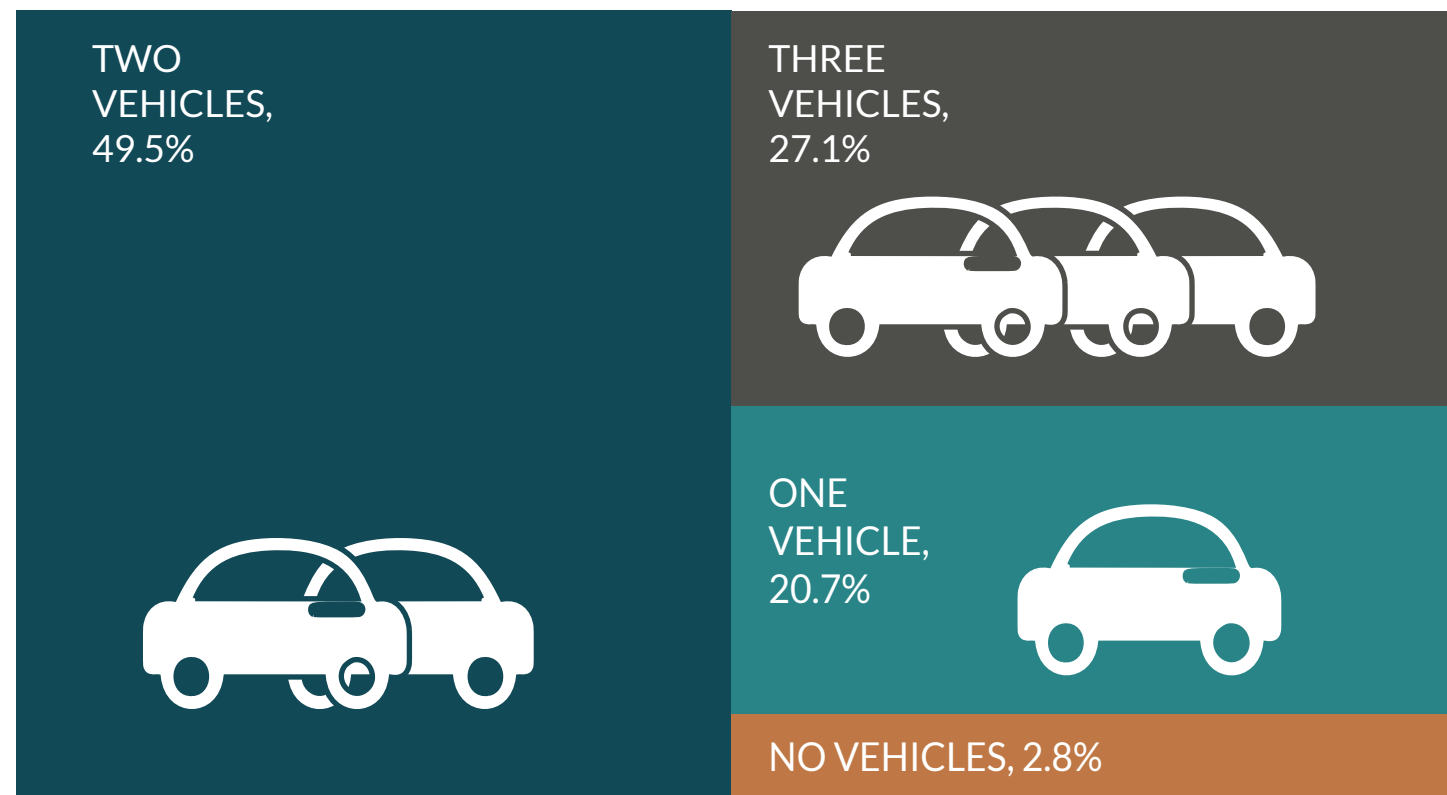
**Stow residents own more cars than they have in the past.**

Nearly half of households in Stow (49.5 percent) own two vehicles, while the proportion with three vehicles or more increased by seven percent between 2012 and 2022. Interestingly, those without a vehicle also saw an increase to 72 households.



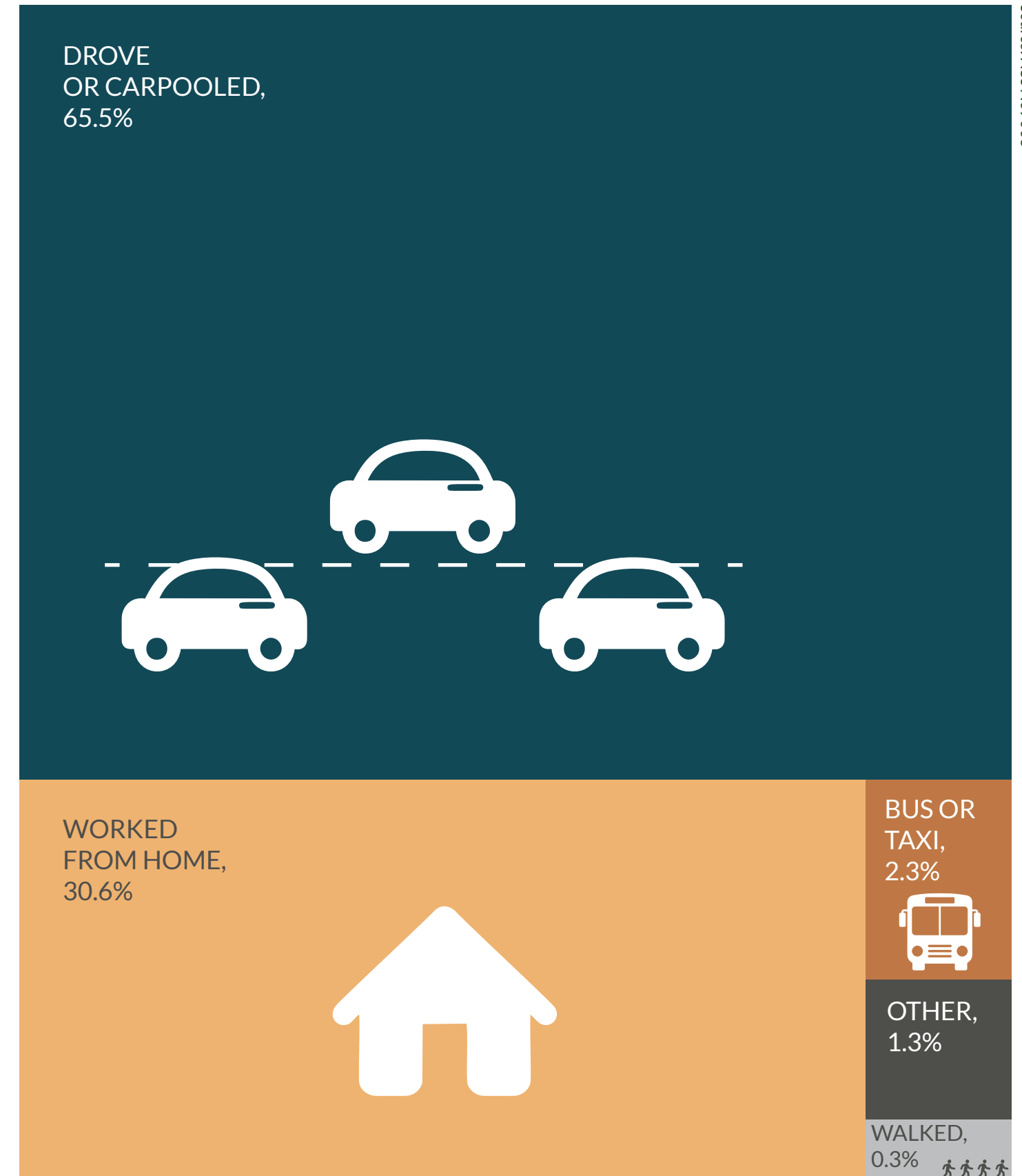
Stow Shopping Center Parking Lot  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

**HOUSING UNITS BY VEHICLES AVAILABLE, 2022**



Source: ACS A10030

**MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK, 2022**

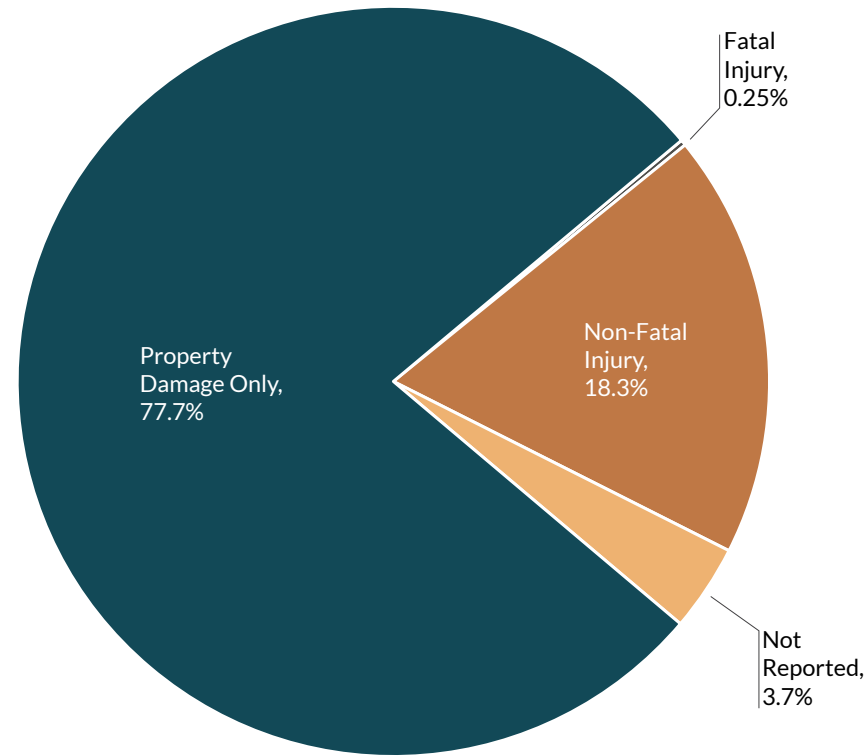


Source: ACS A09005

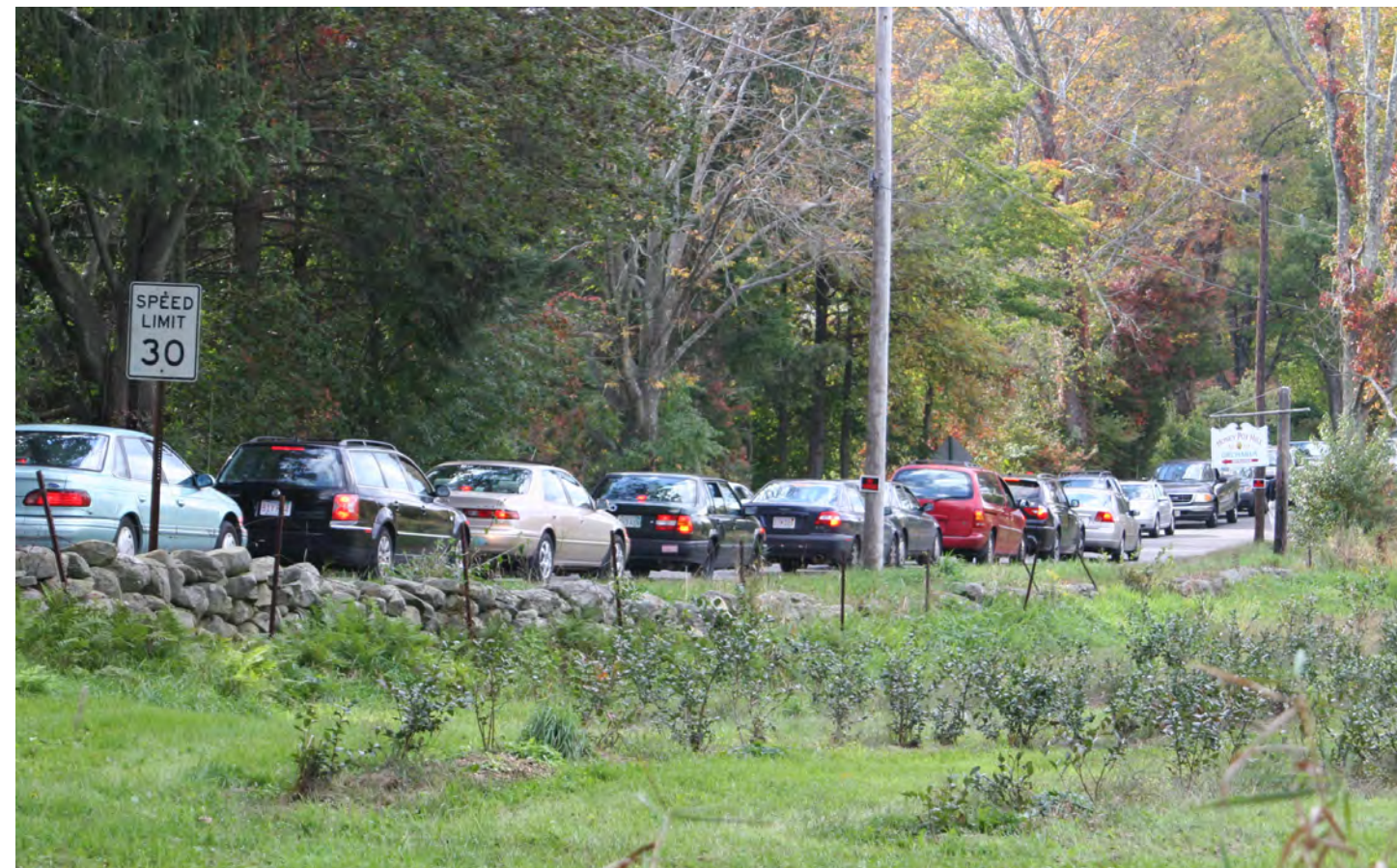


The Town has experienced traffic-related incidents,<sup>17</sup> with MassDOT recording one fatal crash between 2018 and 2022 at the intersection of West Acton, South Acton, and Boxboro Roads. Another problematic intersection lies at Route 117 and Hudson Road, known for non-fatal and property damage-related crashes, is slated to receive a traffic signal. Stow's Great Road stands out as the busiest thoroughfare, with MassDOT reporting 13,206 average daily vehicles in 2022.

CRASH SEVERITY, 2018 - 2022



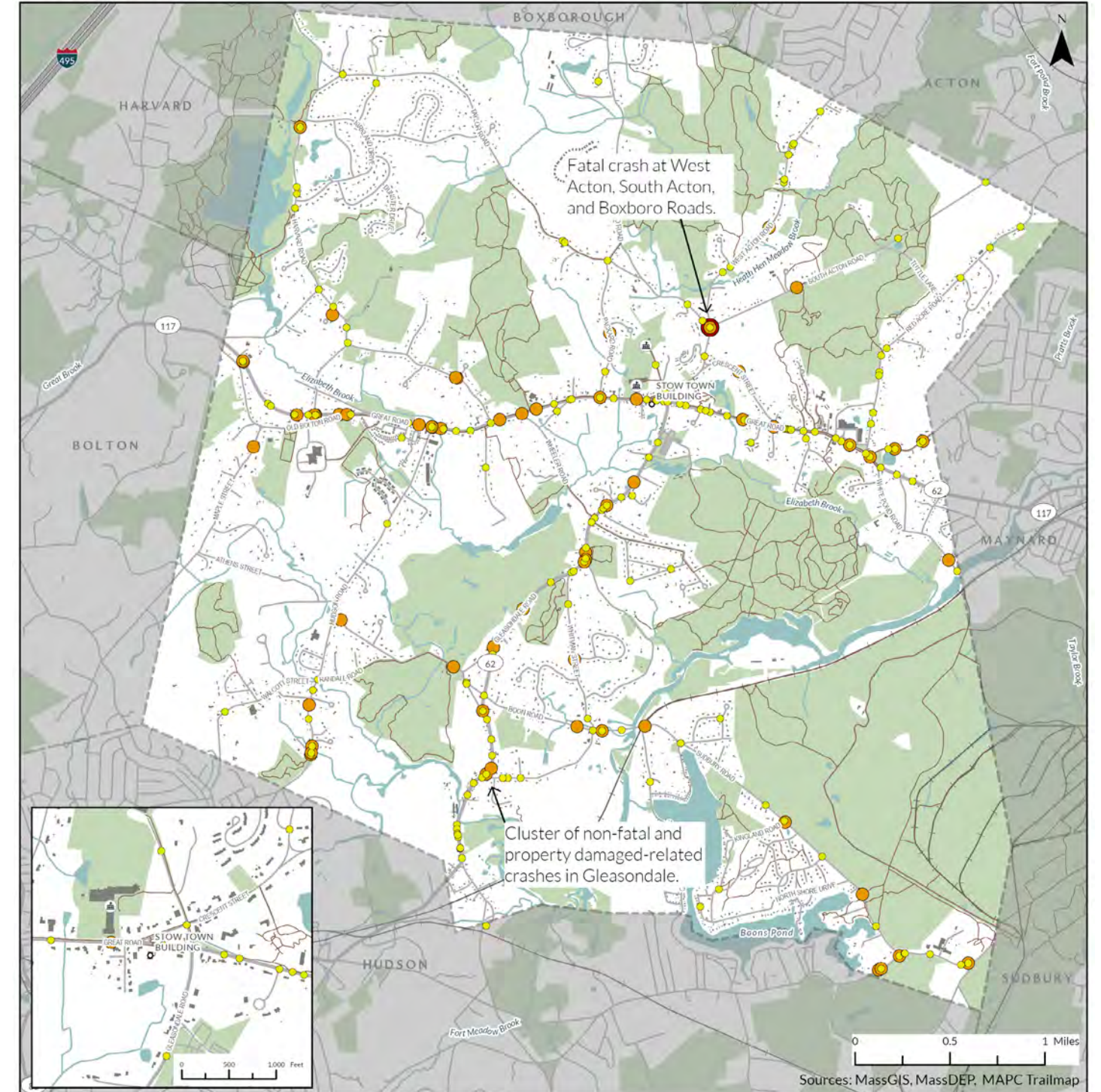
Source: MassDOT IMPACT Crash Data



Honey Pot Traffic  
Photo Credit: Kathy Sierra

TOWN OF STOW - CRASH MAP 2018 - 2022  
Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



**Crash Severity**

- Fatal injury
- Non-fatal injury
- Property damage only (none injured)

Year	Number of Crashes
2018	84
2019	102
2020	63
2021	73
2022	82



**The community is considering the impact of transportation gaps, as well as possible responses.**

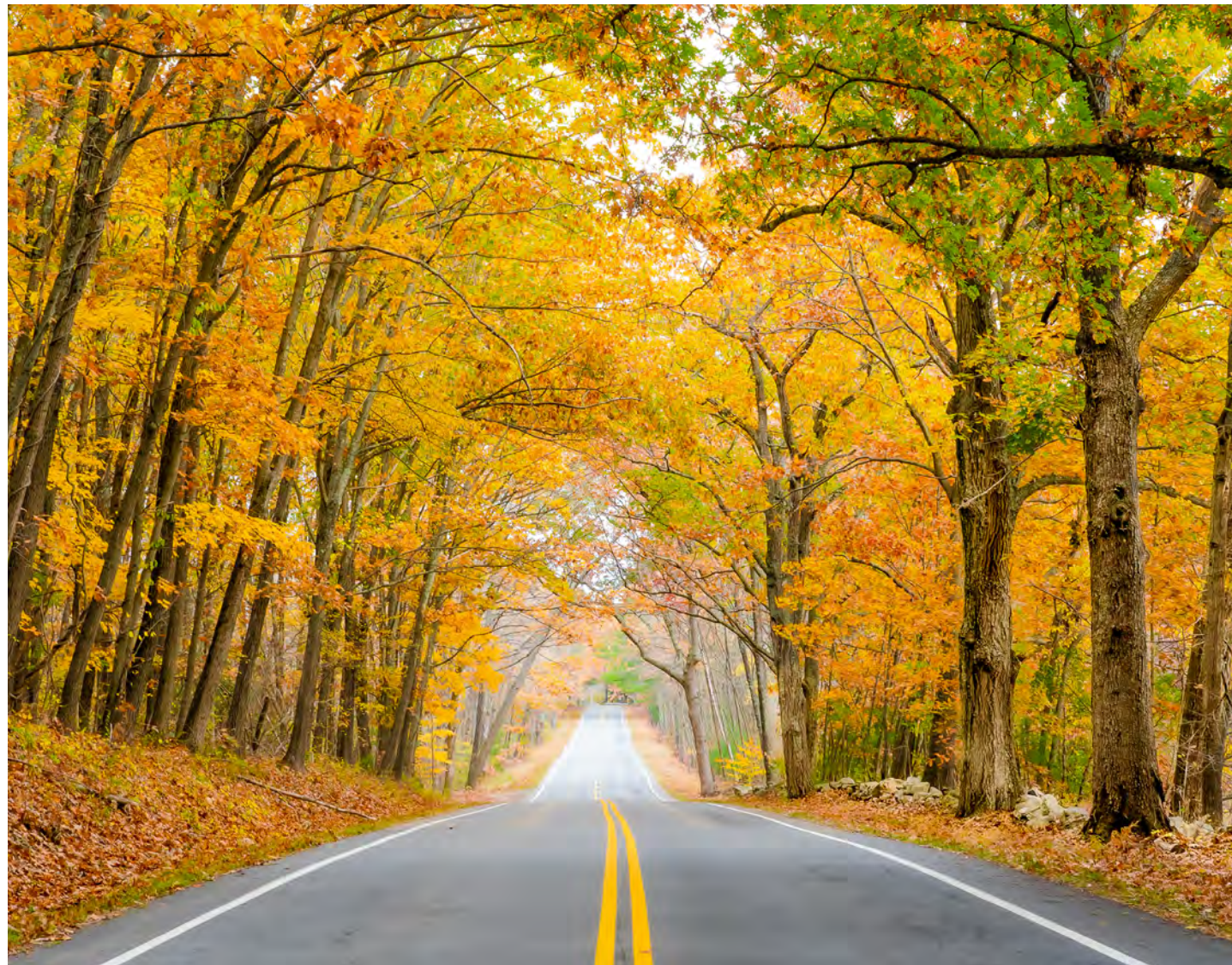
Stow has participated in a handful of pilot projects in order to understand the transportation needs of residents. One such program is the GoStow program, which provided 181 taxi rides to Stow residents through the Council on Aging in 2023. Grant funding for this program supported a

shorter-term exploration and free fares for residents over 50, and long-term options are being considered.<sup>18</sup>

Transportation options like this can open doors for residents that don't own a car or don't wish to drive. Maintaining these programs can present challenges, however. Interviews with Town staff suggested that staffing the Council on Aging's van service has been difficult, potentially threatening this key transportation service for Stow's senior residents.

The Town also launched routes on the MART shuttle to the South Acton Commuter Rail station on weekdays and shopping destinations twice per week. The MART shuttle began service in February 2024, with free fares planned until the first of May, 2024.<sup>19</sup>

The Town actively participates in the MassDOT Complete Streets program, with the 2018 plan outlining projects focused on traffic calming, safety enhancements, and improved facilities for cycling and walking.



South Acton Road  
Photo Credit: Kathy Sferra

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Stow faces both challenges and opportunities in transportation, many of which are tied to a spread out exurban land use pattern that often requires automobiles for mobility. Aiming to enhance regional connectivity, the Town is exploring new regional transit options like GoStow and the MART shuttle. These programs have used grant funding to improve connections with neighboring towns and facilitate travel to South Acton and commercial destinations.

Recognizing the significance of rail trails for economic development and regional connectivity, Stow has pursued and received federal earmarks for design of potential improvements to a two-mile stretch of Track Road. These potential design options will be something for the neighbors and wider community to consider.

Key transportation projects include addressing the urgent need for Complete Streets improvements in the Gleasondale neighborhood, which is characterized by a lack of sidewalks and high traffic density. Connectivity to the Assabet Rail Trail is a potential enhancement in this area.

Additionally, the Town emphasizes the necessity for more traffic controls, citing the intersection of Hudson Road and Route 117 as a specific example. The concept phase for Complete Streets in The Town Center is also on the agenda.

However, Stow faces challenges in transportation, particularly among seniors who no longer wish to drive, commuters seeking easier access to regional transit, and opening up transportation options to those that commute to Stow for work. Programs like GoStow and the MART shuttle service are strong steps toward opportunity, connectivity, and sustainability for residents, visitors, and commuters alike. Balancing these issues and opportunities, Stow is actively working towards a more connected and accessible transportation infrastructure.



# CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Stow boasts a tapestry of cultural and historic resources that reflect the area's evolution. The Town is dotted by well-preserved landmarks and architectural gems, some of which originated earlier than the Town's formal incorporation. From early colonial agrarian roots to its role in the industrial era and later suburbanization, Stow's evolution has been woven into its cultural fabric.

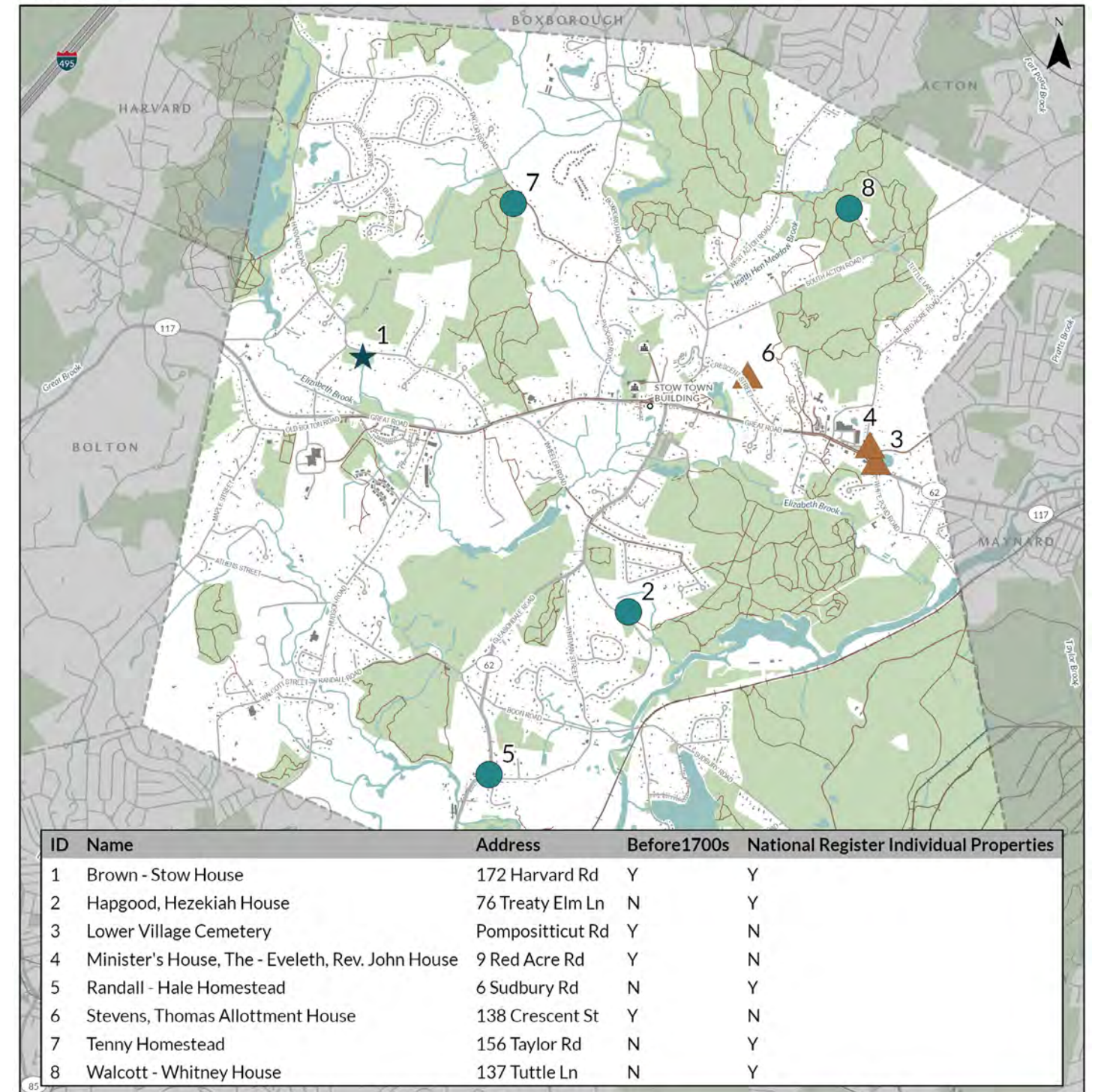
The land that is now called Stow lies on the historic homelands of the Indigenous Nipmuc people. The Nipmuc has the distinction of maintaining stewardship over a 3.5 acre reversion at Hassanamesit in Grafton that was never owned or occupied by non-Indigenous people.<sup>20</sup> The Nipmuc people were denied federal recognition in the 2000s, but are formally recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Nipmuc Indian Development Corporation, created in 1999, aims to support the community through cultural, economic, and educational services, as well as self-determination through food sovereignty and relationships with their homeland.<sup>21</sup>

*Nearly 90 percent of the historic resources in Stow that are listed on the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) are buildings.*

Four MACRIS-listed historic resources originated before 1700 in the early phases of colonization; three of these are buildings, only one of which is registered as a National Register Individual Property. Only one historic resource in Stow is listed as having a Preservation Restriction. Overall, 98.7 percent of the MACRIS-listed historic resources in Stow have no official designation or protections.<sup>22</sup> There are many houses in Stow originating from before 1800.

TOWN OF STOW - KEY HISTORIC SITES  
Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



- Schools
- Before 1700s and in the National Register Individual Properties
- Parcels
- In the National Register Individual Properties
- Buildings
- Before 1700s
- Trails
- Water bodies
- Open space

0 0.5 1 Miles



Stow approved the Community Preservation Act in 2001 with a property tax surcharge of 3 percent. This funding is supplemented by a variable funding match from the Commonwealth and can be dedicated to projects that meet certain criteria.

**To date, 18 percent (\$2,603,662) of CPA funding has been allocated to Historic projects in Stow.**<sup>23</sup>

The Stow Acres Country Club is coming to be understood as a key historic resource in Stow. Due to its history as Mapledale Country Club – perhaps the first African-American-owned and operated Country Club in the country – the Country Club building and grounds are a notable site of African-American history in the United States.<sup>24</sup> The \$1.5 million in CPA funding allocated to the Stow Acres South Course Conservation Restriction in 2021 did not include funding for historic preservation at this site, but there are ongoing efforts to uplift this history.



Stow Acres Country Club  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

**Stow has diverse cultural resources of varying ages.**

Some resources available to the community have long-standing cultural roots, like the First Parish Church and Stow’s active farms and orchards. Others, like Stow’s noted golf courses and the Minuteman Airfield, have shorter histories but are key cultural sites for the community.



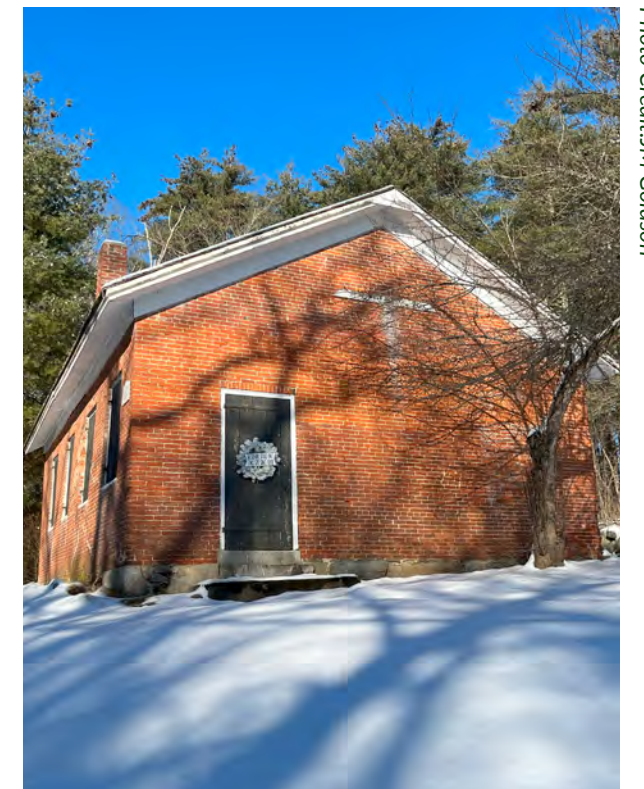
Home in Stow Center  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson



First Parish Church of Stow and Acton  
Photo Credit: Town of Stow



Historical Direction Marker  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson



West School  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson





An image from the Gleasondale Village Revitalization Plan Phase I Inventory and Finding Report

In 2015, the Town completed the Gleasondale Village Revitalization Plan. With a focus on adaptive reuse of the historic Gleasondale Woolen Mill building and improvements to the surrounding streetscape and public realm, this process was designed to envision new possibilities in the historic neighborhood.

**Gleasondale is a key historic neighborhood and cultural opportunity hub.**

The 2015 Gleasondale Village Revitalization Plan is a detailed study of the potential for this historic site and the surrounding area. Affectionately called Rock Bottom by residents and neighbors, this neighborhood hosts historic multifamily workers’ housing, and is adjacent to the Assabet River. Opportunities to see new use of the historic mill building and cultural activity in the neighborhood abound.



An historic church building in Gleasondale  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Stow has a strong history of preservation of historic landscapes, but a limited pattern of historic preservation overall. In interviews with Town staff and committee members, the perception that Stow allocated more money to conservation and open space than might be their fair share became a theme. This has historically meant less funding was available for historic and cultural uses, from renovating historic municipal buildings like the Old Town Hall and the Randall Library, to potentially funding historic and cultural wayfinding in historic areas like Gleasondale.

In addition to historic funding for restoration, a desire to support equitable and inclusive historic education was communicated during interviews. Limited private sources of funding and private organizing for these initiatives have meant that it has come to Town Meetings to allocate funding.

Whether relying on public or private funding, the continued uplifting of African-American history and culture at Stow Acres is a key opportunity for the Town. The community also has important opportunities to engage with and support the Indigenous Nipmuc people, such as through land transfers or cultural use easements like those promoted by the Nativa Land Conservancy<sup>25</sup>. Honoring their cultural and historic resources that are foundational to the area’s pre-colonization history is a key opportunity for reconciliation and learning.



# OPEN SPACES, NATURAL PLACES, & SUSTAINABILITY

To preserve ecosystem health and biodiversity, as well as prevent further environmental degradation due to sprawl, many jurisdictions and the Biden administration have set the goal of conserving 30 percent of their area by 2030. Stow has set a similar goal of maintaining one third of its area conserved,<sup>26</sup> showing that conservation is a deep and consistent community value.

*Twenty-eight percent of Stow is protected in perpetuity. Most of the protected open spaces are federally-owned, municipally-owned, or under an Agricultural Preservation Restriction.*

Preserving prime agricultural soil is an essential means of providing regional food security in the future. Though the agricultural sector has seen drastic changes over the past half-century on this continent, there may be widespread economic shifts in the future that redirect the world back toward regionalized food production. Preventing development that would degrade prime agricultural soils can help make sure that these parts of the ecosystem retain their quality.

Stow has also forged a working relationship between the Town, the Stow Conservation Trust, a housing developer, and the owners of Stow Acres Country Club to develop a community vision for the future of the golf course. In 2021, Town Meeting voted to purchase a conservation restriction on the 151-acre South Course and buy outright 115 acres of the North Course. Located between the

Assabet River and Elizabeth Brook, this land was identified as a key conservation area.

*Of all the open space in Stow,*

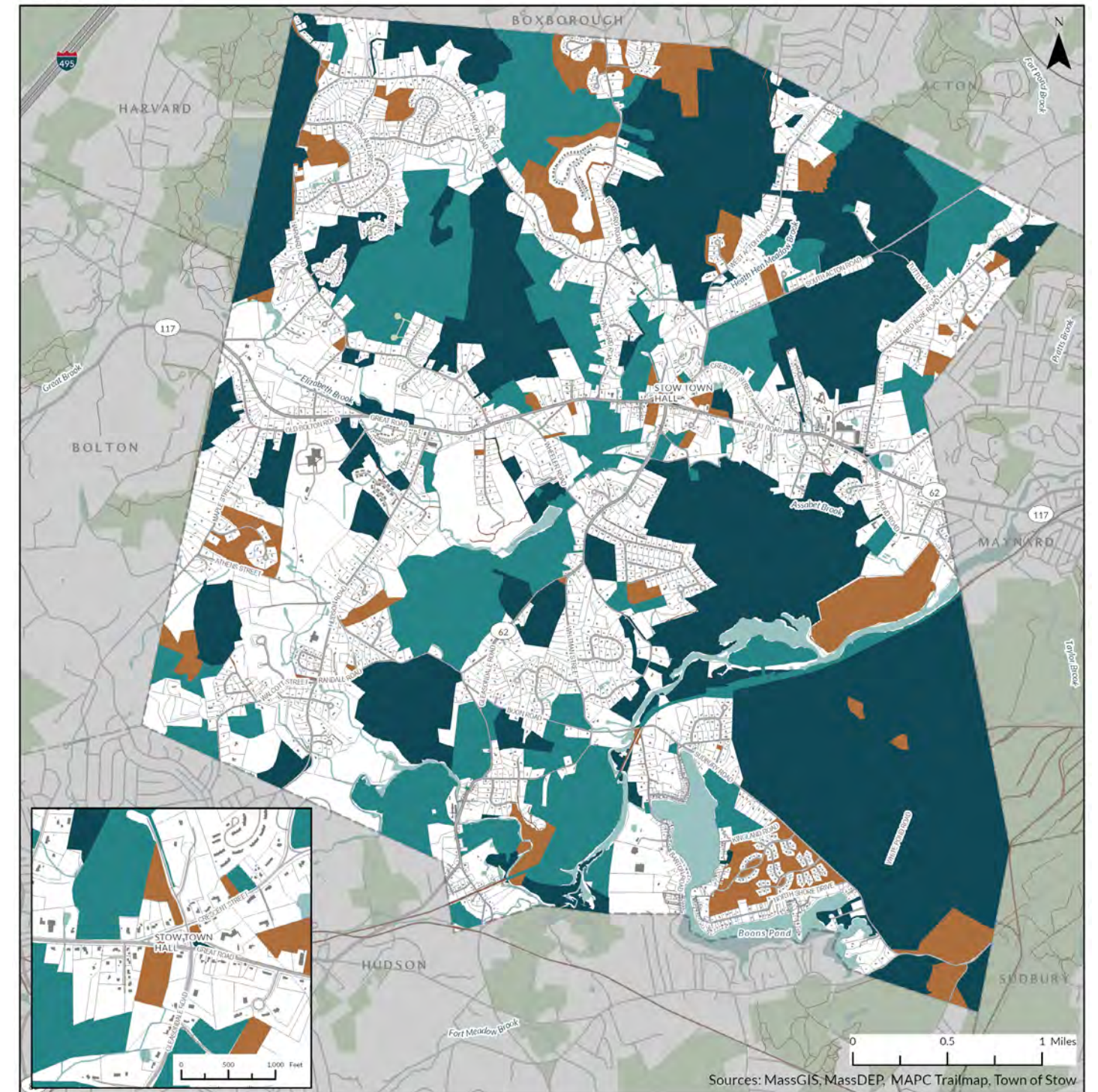
**62.8%**  
*is conserved in perpetuity,*

**29.4%**  
*is open space with limited protection, and*

**7.8%**  
*is unprotected.*

TOWN OF STOW - OPEN SPACE PROTECTION  
Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



- Schools
- Parcels
- Buildings
- Trails
- Water bodies
- Open space
- Protected Open Space
- Limited Protected Open Space
- Unprotected Open Space

Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap, Town of Stow



# The Assabet River

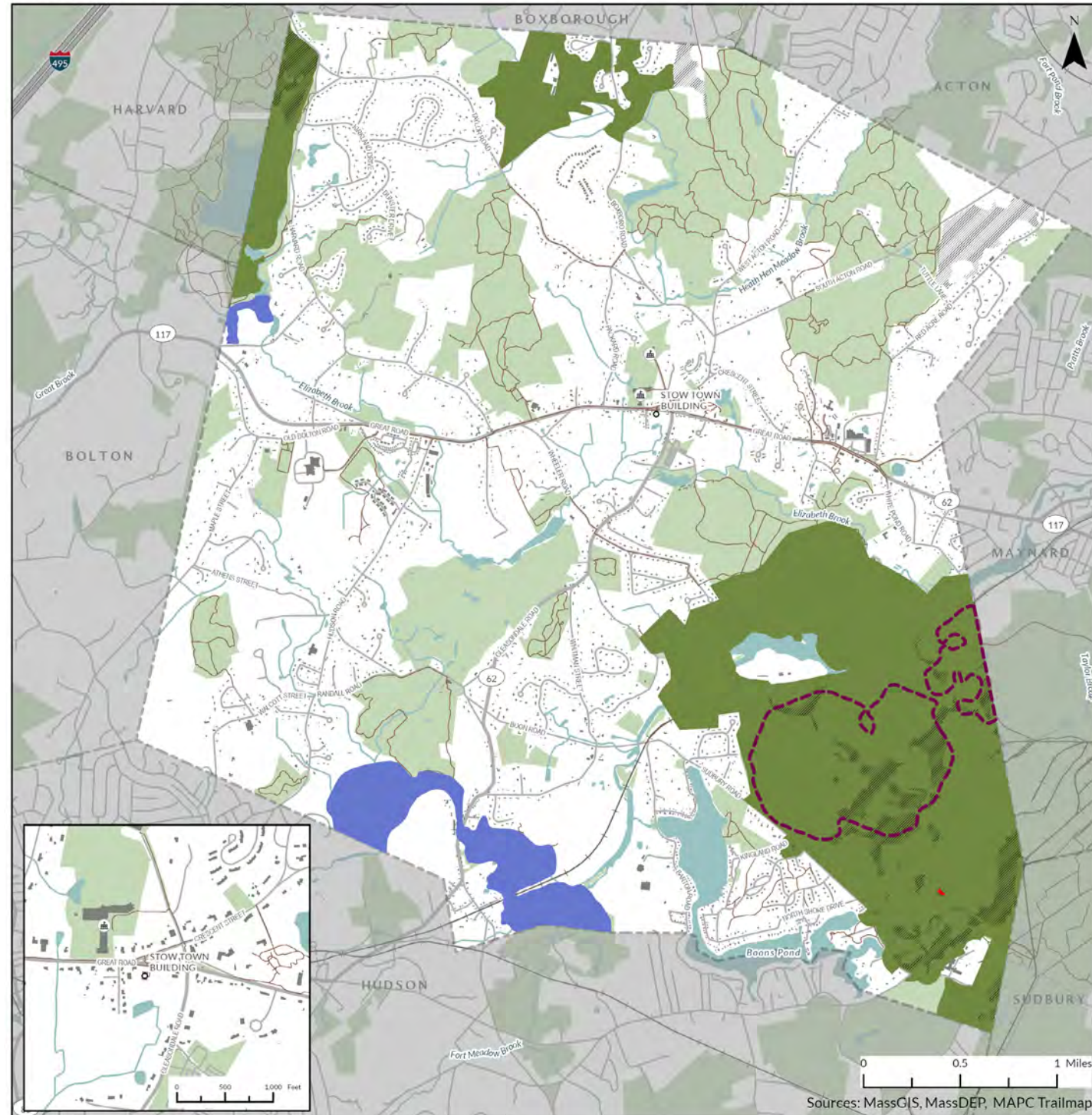
Photo Credit: Town of Stow





TOWN OF STOW - BIOMAP CORE HABITATS  
Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON

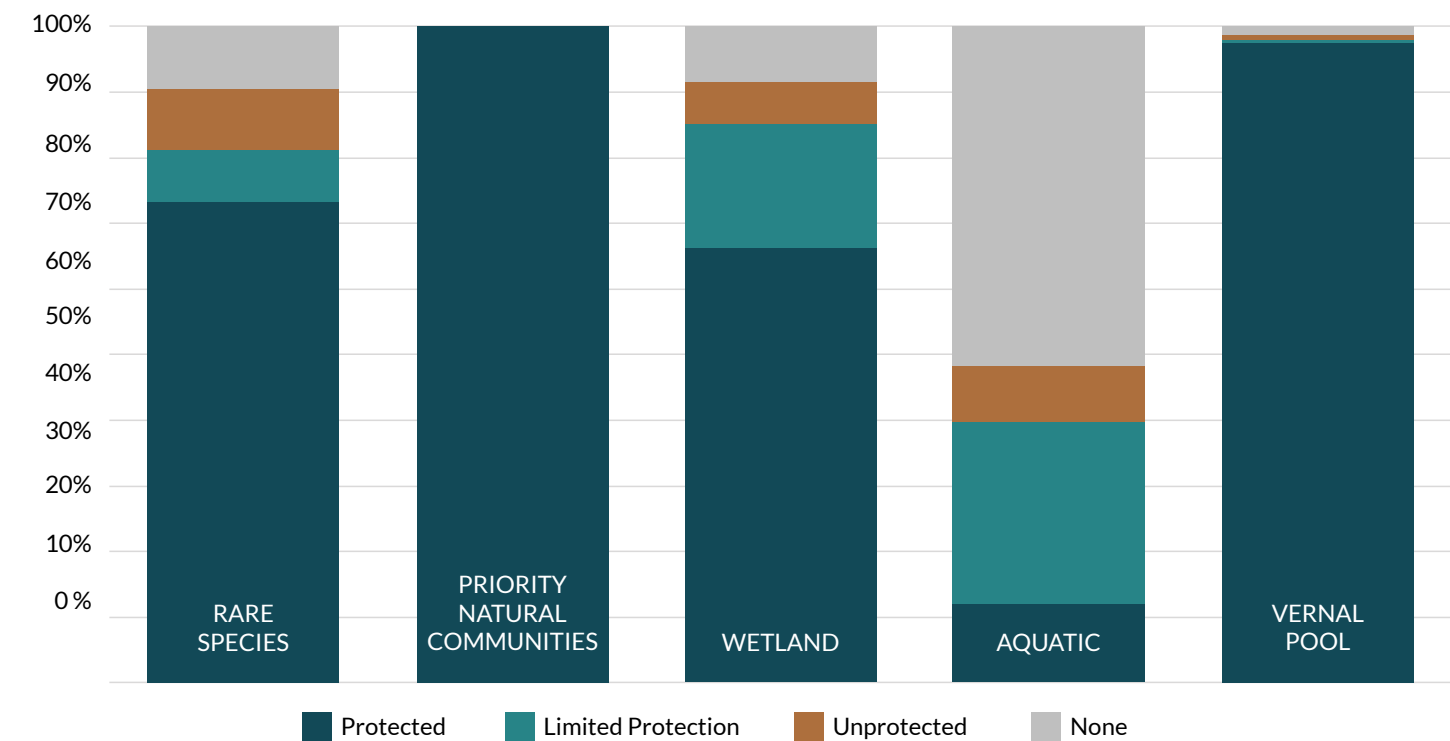


- Schools
- Buildings
- Parcels
- Trails
- Water bodies
- Open space
- BioMap Rare Species Core Habitat
- BioMap Priority Natural Communities Core Habitat
- BioMap Wetland Core Habitat
- BioMap Aquatic Core Habitat
- BioMap Vernal Pool Core Habitat

*Two-thirds of the BioMap Core Habitat areas in Stow are in protected open spaces.<sup>27</sup>*

BioMap Core Habitats are defined as areas that are critical for the long-term survival of rare species, natural communities, and resilient ecosystems. While two-thirds of these areas in Stow are protected, 10 percent of these areas lack protection, and 20 percent are not considered remaining open space.

BIOMAP CORE HABITATS BY PROTECTION STATUS



Source: MassGIS Data: BioMap; The Future of Conservation, MassGIS Data: Property Tax Parcel



**Relevant Municipal Boards and Committees:**

- Conservation Department
- Recreation Department
- Agricultural Commission
- Conservation Commission
- Green Advisory Committee
- Lake Boon Commission
- Open Space Committee
- Recreation Commission

*Ten percent of the Residential District and 20 percent of the Industrial District are overlaid by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood hazard zones.<sup>28</sup>*

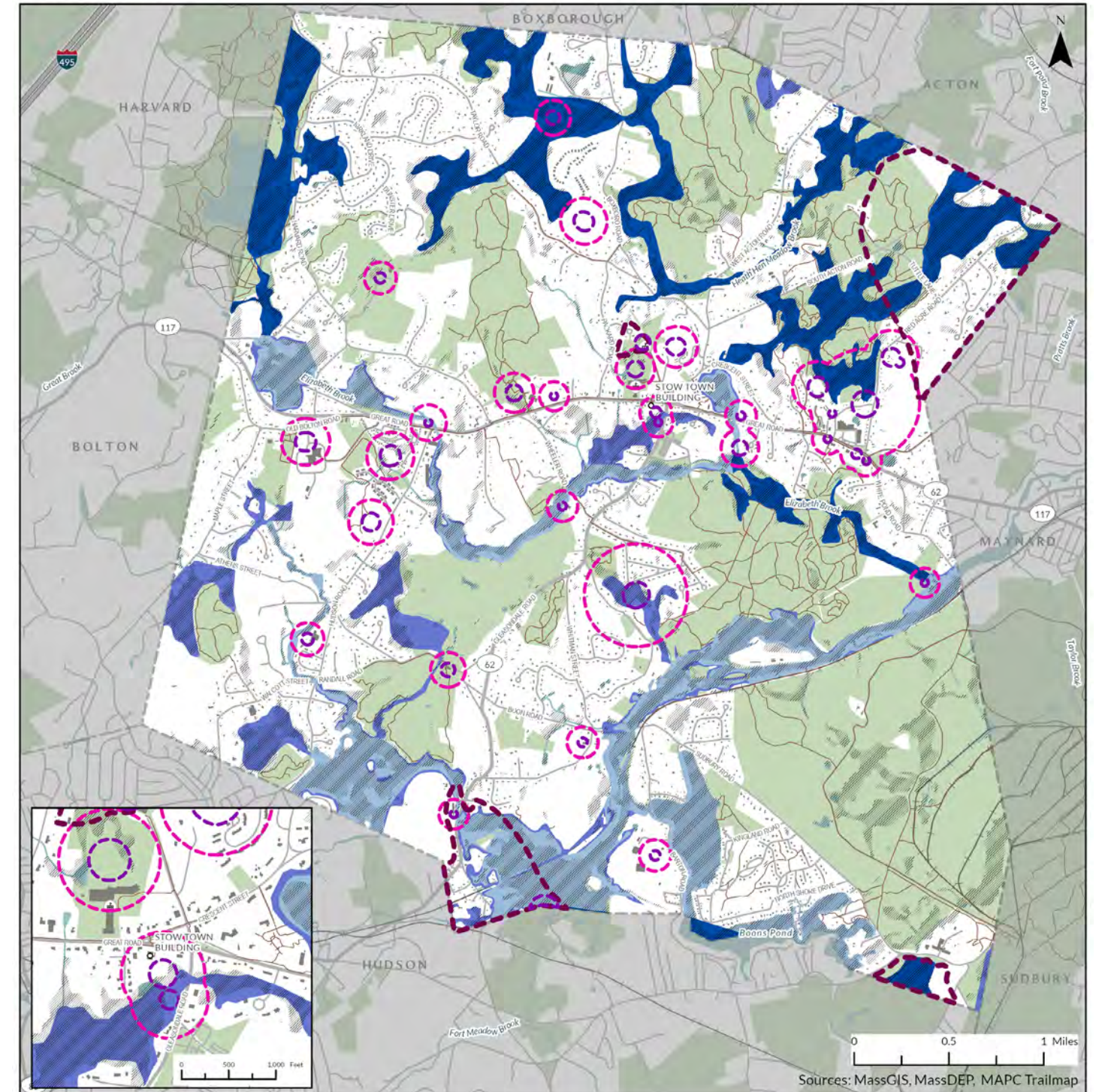
Almost half of the Refuse Disposal District intersects with FEMA flood hazard zones, which could potentially create a public health hazard if the historic disposal facilities flood and contaminate groundwater.



Hallock Point in Lake Boon  
Photo Credit: Kathy Sferna

**TOWN OF STOW - WETLANDS AND FLOODING AREAS**  
Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



Schools	<b>Wellhead Protection Areas</b>	Wetlands
Buildings	Zone I	<b>FEMA National Flood Hazard</b>
Parcels	Zone II	1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
Trails	Interim Wellhead Protection Areas	0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
Water bodies		Regulatory Floodway
Open space		Trails





Arbor Day Tree Planting in Stow Common  
Photo Credit: Kathy Sferri

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Town has dedicated significant resources toward conservation over the years, and that effort shows in the broad areas of protected land in the Town. To date, just over 28 percent of Stow is protected in perpetuity, coming close to meeting the 30 percent goal set for 2030. As these lands are conserved, ensuring an understanding of the significance of ecosystems in southeastern Stow, as well as the future potential for regionally-significant agricultural land in Stow, is crucial.

The Town has a significant opportunity here to engage with the Indigenous people of the area regarding their millennia of expertise in ecosystem stewardship and sustainable agriculture, as well as their desires for cultural use of Stow's conservation lands. Conservation that doesn't yield to the rights and desires of Indigenous people can continue the ongoing legacy of colonialism through deed restrictions that don't explicitly permit traditional cultural practices; working with Indigenous-led land trusts like the Native Land Conservancy is a key opportunity for the Stow community to lead in giving back.

The absence of a Recreation Needs Assessment raises uncertainties about infrastructure needs and department capacity. Despite these challenges, the Town boasts strengths such as the Pompositticut Community Center, the Pine Bluff Recreation Area and beach, and plentiful access to conservation areas. Opportunities exist in increasing pedestrian and bicycle access to outdoor recreation areas, which would particularly benefit younger and older residents not relying on cars.

The upcoming turnover with at least four retirements in the next few years raises concerns about preserving institutional knowledge. According to interviews with Town staff, there have been increasing conflicts between long-standing and newer residents over recreational space, emphasizing the need for strategic management of these spaces in Stow.



# PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES

Stow faces multifaceted challenges and opportunities across waste management, water infrastructure, recreation, budgeting, and school district participation. The absence of a municipal solid waste program limits waste reduction initiatives, while the lack of public water and sewer impedes growth, especially in the Lower Village. Budget constraints, renovation funding challenges, and staff retention issues further contribute to the complex municipal landscape in Stow.

Stow does not operate a Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) collection program. Private waste hauling is operated through an individual contract with Waste Management. The neighboring towns of Maynard and Hudson operate municipal collection programs with differing fee structures, while Bolton and Boxborough operate municipal transfer stations. Hudson's Department of Public Works notes on their website

that the monthly fees for their MSW collection program are significantly lower than rates available through private haulers.

Stow has no municipal water or sewer service. The 2022 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP) Action Update<sup>29</sup> highlighted this lack, particularly concerning reports of residents' wells running dry in the past and the emerging understanding of PFAS infiltration in groundwater supply. The lack of public water and sewer has also been a long-standing challenge for growth in Lower Village, with the 2019 Lower Village Revitalization Subcommittee Final Report noting that limited capacities on private systems have been a significant hindrance to economic development and other community goals for the area.

*The Town allocated \$100,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funding to a feasibility study for creating a privately managed Public Water Supply in Lower Village; this study is ongoing.*

The ongoing Stow Acres North Course Climate Resilience Master Planning, scheduled through mid-2024, is exploring the possibility of public recreation facilities being added to climate resilience goals. It has been noted during this process that capital and operating expenses, as well as staffing requirements, will be increased if larger recreational facilities are included in the project.<sup>30</sup> This may result in greater fiscal and operation responsibilities for Town facilities and services.

Stow's recreation facilities fall under multiple landholders. Some are Town-owned parks, some are under conservation restrictions, and along the Assabet River is the National Wildlife Refuge. Key sites under the Town's direct purview are the Stow Community Park, the Town Center Park, the Town Forest, and the Pine Bluff Recreation Area.



Pompo Community Center  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson



CPA Funds allocated to the Randall Library Renovation Project  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson



Pine Bluff Recreation Area  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson



The Town has a long-standing history of running a lean budget, which has necessitated funding requests at Town Meetings for department budget items. The Town took advantage of ARPA money during the pandemic, but that funding is now ending. This will likely require returning to the practice of going to Town Meetings with more funding requests.

Some Town staff mentioned in interviews the possibility of increasing staffing to transfer some of the responsibilities of Town Committees and Commissions into the hands of Town staff. This potential increase in staffing would require more substantial department budgets and may involve building upgrades.

**The Pompositticut Community Center has been noted as a key municipal asset in emergency preparedness.**

The facility, reused from a former elementary school, is equipped to serve as a warming center during snowstorms, cooling center during heat waves, water distribution center during drought, and is centrally located near other Town services. As climate change may impact Stow's groundwater stores and increase the frequency of heat waves, residents may rely on the Pompositticut Community Center more in the future.

**The Randall Library, a key public asset, is currently undergoing renovation.**

Due to rising construction and materials costs, the project has been met with bids millions of dollars higher than the Library Building Committee had expected.<sup>31</sup> Plans for this project include a community meeting space with a separate entrance, which will provide a brand-new public space once the renovations are completed. With cost estimates coming in much higher than expected, the project's future is subject to change.

**Municipal staff believe that proactive facilities maintenance has been a long-term issue for the Town.**

The hiked prices of labor and materials coming out of the pandemic have exacerbated these issues and challenged multiple Town renovation projects, including the Randall Library and the Old Town Hall. Beyond the projects already started, Town staff see more facilities that could benefit from renovation or replacement and recommend a comprehensive study of the renovation needs and potential future uses of municipal buildings. Securing funding for these efforts may require a community-wide reallocation of priorities toward municipal services.

**Town staff are proud of their team. Their local experience and expertise allow them to punch above their weight, taking on big projects with limited staff.**

Supporting and maintaining the level of expertise of Town staff was held up as a priority during interviews. Hiring new staff is perceived as a challenge in the coming years, due to shifting patterns in the labor market and education. Further, the lack of public transportation is another barrier to hiring.

**Stow is a member town of the Nashoba Regional School District, which serves Stow, Bolton, and Lancaster.**

After a rise in enrollment between 2002 and 2012, enrollment has been slowly dropping, from a high of 3501 in 2012 to 3031 in the 2023-2024 academic year.<sup>32</sup> The Nashoba Regional School District is in the funding stages on a new school building project to replace the Nashoba Regional High School. As approved, the cost of this project for Nashoba Region towns is almost \$162 million, of which Stow's estimated responsibility will be roughly 35 percent.



Stow Community Gardens  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson



Stow Town Forest  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson



Assabet River Wild Refuge  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson





The Old Town Hall  
Photo Credit: JM Goldson

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Stow faces challenges and opportunities across several areas related to facilities and services. In municipal solid waste management, the Town's reliance on private hauling limits its ability to set its waste reduction targets. The absence of public water and sewer infrastructure poses challenges for economic development and growth in the Lower Village, prompting a Public Water Feasibility Study to address this issue. Water resilience is a long-term concern, with vulnerabilities noted in the absence of a municipal water system.

The Town's lean budgeting history may lead to increased funding requests at Town Meetings as pandemic relief funding dries up. This will apply pressure on the Town to come up with revised funding structures to support Town services and staff. There is an opportunity to increase staffing to relieve some responsibility from committees and commissions, as well as to increase the capacity of departments to offer greater services in recreation, elder transportation, planning, and more. The Town staff's expertise is recognized as an asset, but the lack of public transportation and the shifting labor market will likely continue to pose challenges to municipal staffing.

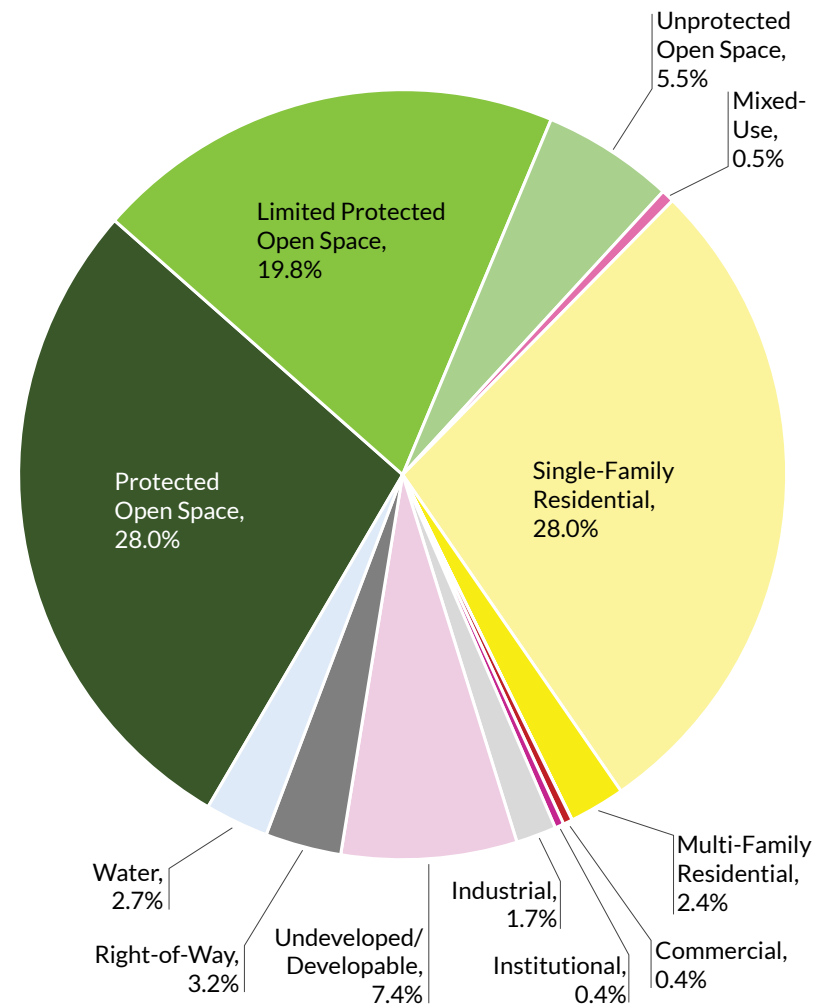
Stow also faces growing needs for facility maintenance. These challenges, exemplified by the Randall Library project's higher-than-expected costs, emphasize the need for comprehensive studies and community-wide prioritization of municipal facilities projects. Stow's participation in the Nashoba Regional School District involves significant funding for a much-needed new high school building, even amidst declining enrollments. In addition to maintenance needs, there are opportunities for more recreation facilities in Stow, including family-friendly bike infrastructure, pickleball courts, a gym, and a swimming pool. Increases or additions in these facilities will likely require greater municipal staffing as well.



# LAND USE & ZONING

The Town of Stow aims to maintain a One-Third Land Use Pattern by maintaining one-third of its land as protected open space, one-third as developed areas, and one-third as undeveloped areas. So far, this goal has been met since these ratios are reflected in the Town's land use.

## LAND USE

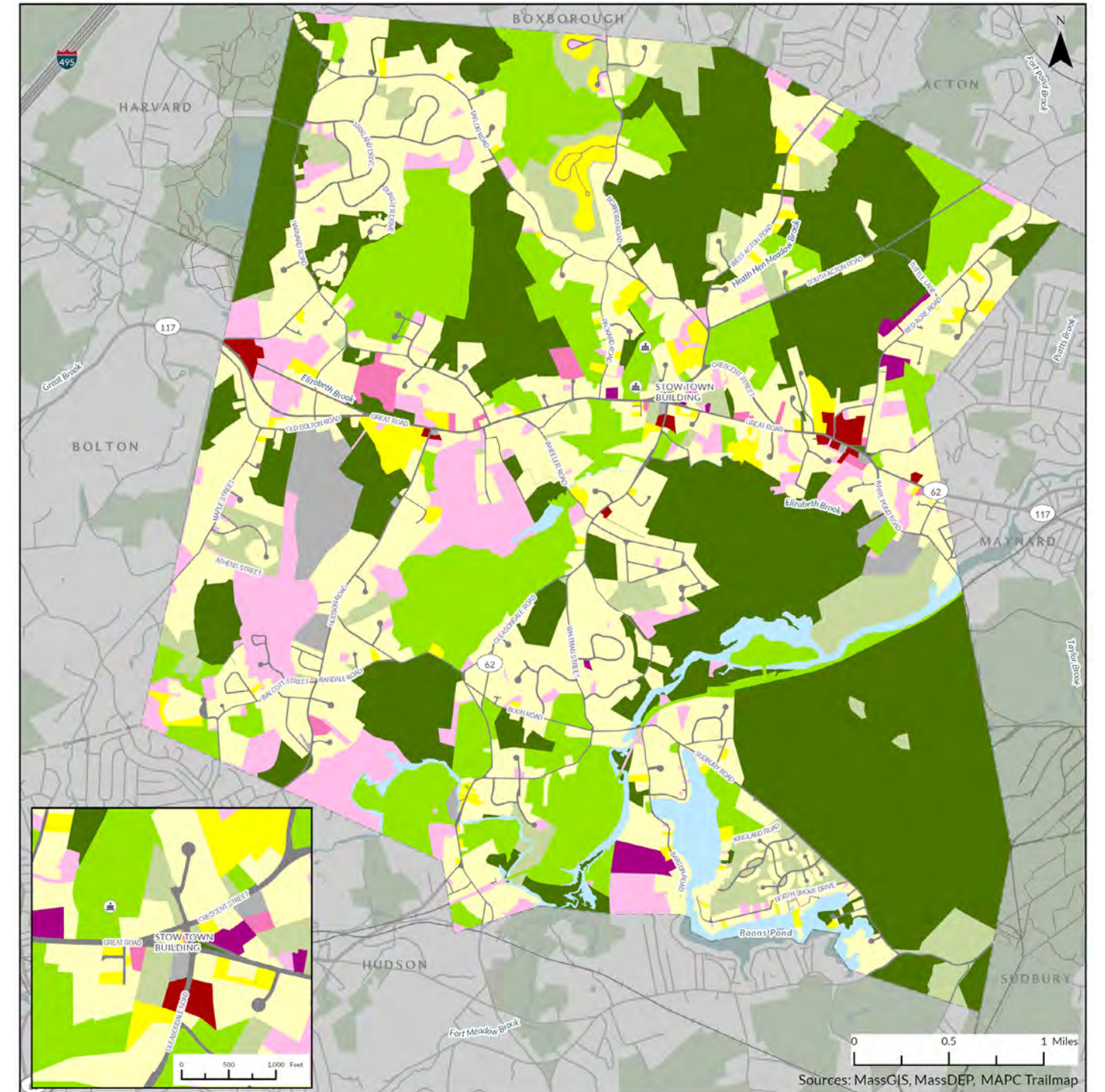


Source: MassGIS Data: Property Tax Parcel

## TOWN OF STOW - LAND USE

Prepared by JM Goldson LLC

J M GOLDSON



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap



Nearly all of the development since 2001 has happened in the single-family-oriented Residential district.<sup>34</sup>

Stow has seven zoning districts and five overlay zoning districts. Almost 60 percent of Stow's total area is zoned as Residential, which permits mainly land- and transportation-intensive single-family housing.

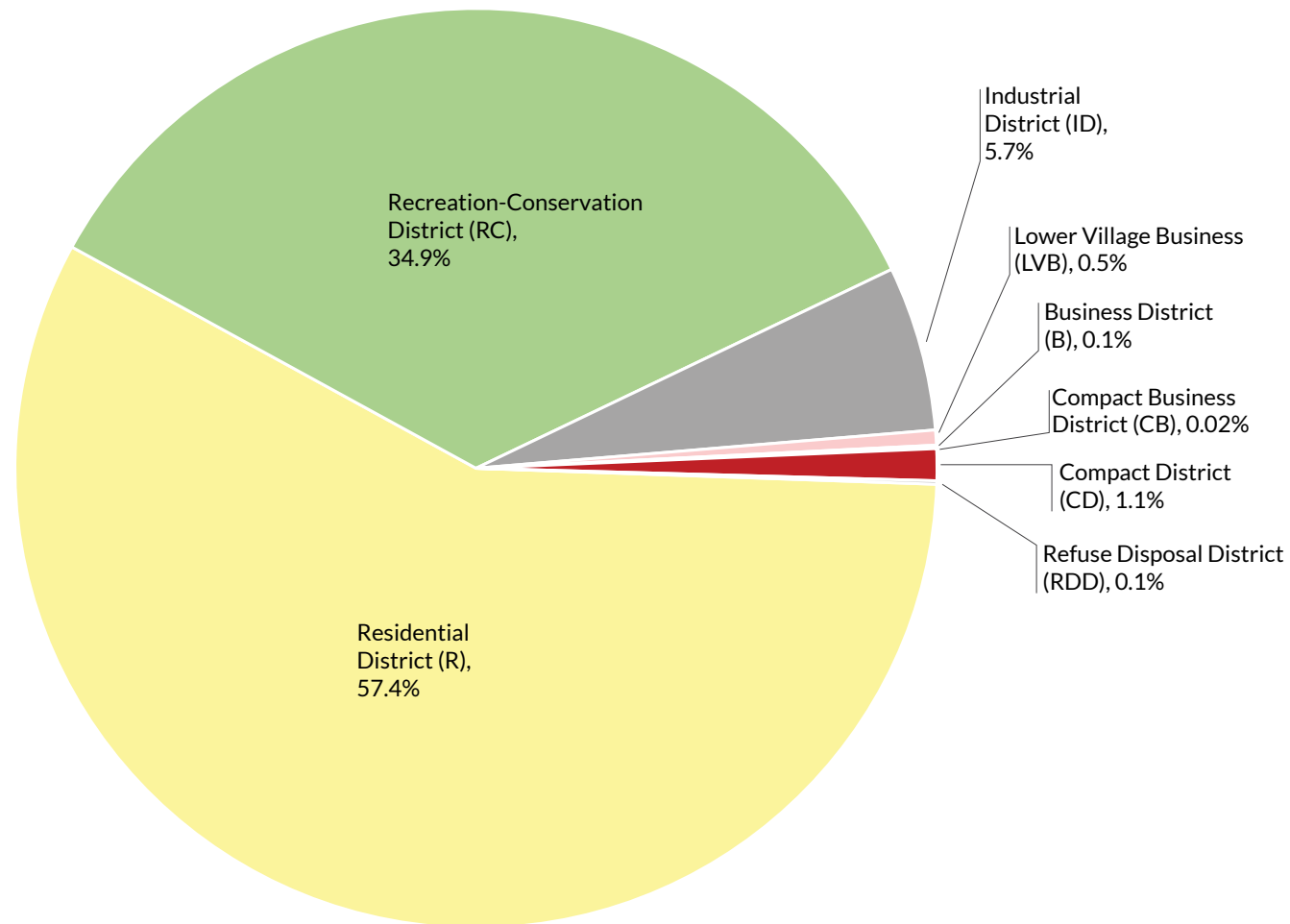
The Town is anticipating the addition of nearly 190 housing units through the Residences at Stow Acres development project. The vast majority of these would be single-family homes, with around 40 rental cottages and 25 age-restricted rental units.<sup>33</sup>

In The Cottages at Wandering Pond, the Town is expecting to see the development of 140 age-targeted homes.

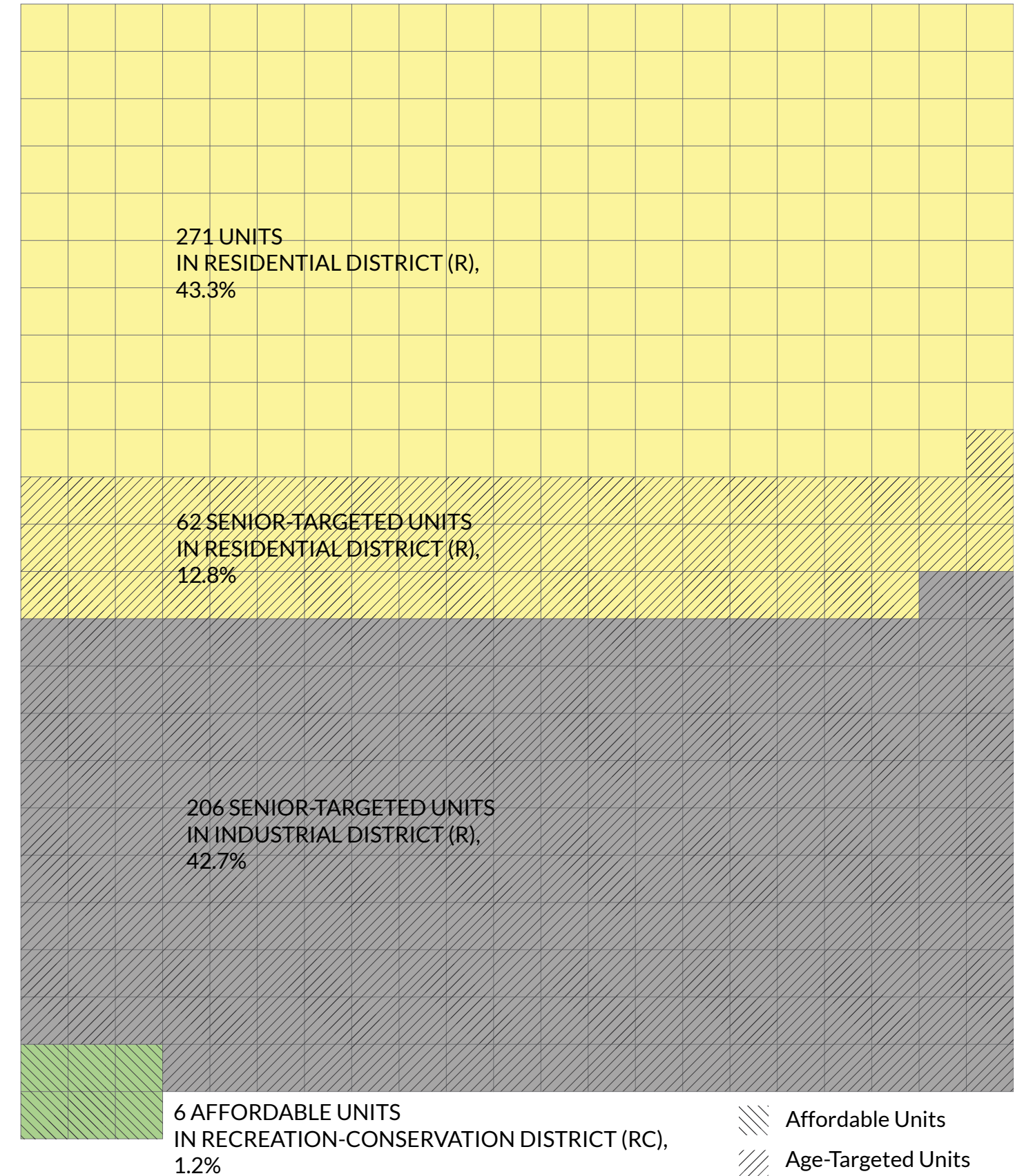
**Stow has seen slow, careful zoning reform in recent years.**

In addition to creating the Lower Village Business District, which provides opportunities for mixed-use development, the Town has worked to revise the Active Adult Neighborhood bylaw in order to better meet Town goals for housing diversity and protected open space.

ZONING



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PER ZONING DISTRICT SINCE 2010



Source: MassGIS Data: Property Tax Parcel





Constructions in Derby Woods  
Photo Credit: Kathy Sferia

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Stow grapples with the delicate balance between land conservation and economic development, navigating the identification of target growth areas while striving for the 1/3 Land Use Pattern goal. The absence of public water or sewer infrastructure hinders sustainable development and housing opportunities, urging the exploration of solutions to foster equitable and ecological growth. Engaging residents in planning conversations is a strength of the community, and leveraging this community engagement is pivotal for effective land use and zoning strategies. The Town's Planning Staff overseeing transportation projects presents an advantage in aligning these projects with land use planning, though adds to the small department's workload.

While community outreach efforts are a strength, an opportunity lies in the potential for collaboration with neighboring municipalities to plan for Stow's regional economic position. Securing funding for housing projects remains a challenge. Trends highlight increasing tension between older and newer residents, coupled with an ongoing shift from volunteer boards to professional staff over the past 15 years. Recognizing the opportunity to professionalize boards, Stow faces the task of navigating these issues and capitalizing on its strengths to guide future planning processes effectively.



# LOCAL PLANNING STUDIES & PLANS

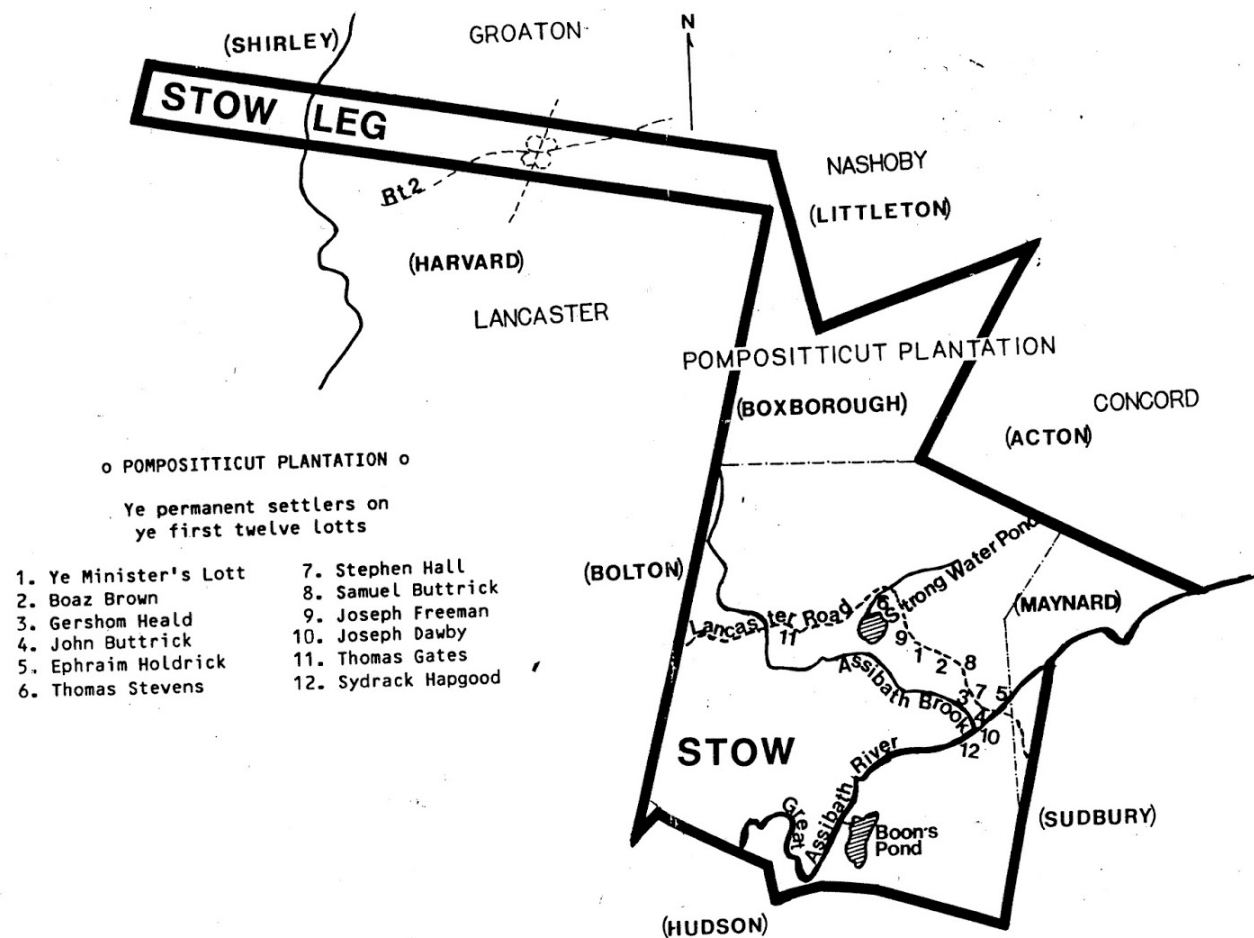


Photo Credit: Jessamyn

2015 Town of Stow, "Energy Reduction Plan"

2016 Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust, Metro West Collaborative Development, "2016 Housing Production Plan Town of Stow"

2017 Metropolitan Area Planning Council, "MAGIC Climate Change Resiliency Plan", Part 1, Part 2

2018 Geosyntec Consultants, "Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings"

2019 Town of Stow, "Stow Acres", (Ongoing)

2021 Town of Stow, "Master Academy Proposal at former Bose Site"

2022 Town of Stow, "Draft Action Plan for MBTA Communities"

2022 Town of Stow, "Hazard Mitigation Plan Update"

2022 Brown and Caldwell, "Lake Boon Evaluation"

2022 Town of Stow, "Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Action Update"

2023 Town of Stow, "Development Constraints and Limitations Draft"

2023 Town of Stow, "Draft Stow Climate Action Plan"

2023 Town of Stow, "Draft Stow Open Space and Recreation Plan Update", Part 1, Part 2, Part 3

2023 Town of Stow, "Stow Housing Needs Assessment Draft"



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## Comprehensive Plan Committee

Charles Hartford, At-Large, Chair

Cortni Frecha, Conservation Commission

Dan Petersen, Finance Committee

Hector Constantzos, Select Board

Lori Clark, Planning Board

Marcia Rising, Board of Health

Laurie Burnett, At-Large

## Planning Board

Lori Clark, Chair

Margaret Costello

Nancy Arsenault

Karen Kelleher

John Colonna-Romano

Debbie Woods

## Select Board

Cortni Frecha, Chair

Megan Birch-McMichael

Ingeborg Hegemann Clark

Hector Constantzos

John "JT" Toole

## Planning Department

Valerie Oorthuys, AICP, Planning Director

Michael Slagle, Land Use Planner/GIS Administrator

## Prepared by the Consultant Team at JM Goldson, LLC

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Noah Harper, MCP

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Maya Kansky

# ENDNOTES

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**4** United States Census Bureau, "American Community Survey 2018-2022 Table B25010," 2023, United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov>

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**6** United States Census Bureau, "Decennial Census Table T003," 2020, United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov>

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**8** United States Census Bureau, "American Community Survey 2018-2022 Table A14015," 2023, United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov>

**9** United States Census Bureau, "American Community Survey 2018-2022 Table B25034," 2023, United States Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov>

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**29** Town of Stow, "2022 MVP Summary," [https://www.stow-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1286/f/uploads/2022\\_05\\_12\\_mvp\\_summary.pdf](https://www.stow-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1286/f/uploads/2022_05_12_mvp_summary.pdf), accessed December 2023.

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## STOW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# MEETING IN A BOX

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Meeting in a Box is a civic engagement tool designed for use by community groups, associations, or friends to gather at a convenient time and location to share their ideas for the Stow Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan will be a 10-year vision and roadmap for the future. It will serve as the foundational policy document for the Town – guiding local decisions about future growth, preservation, and change. It is critical that community members engage to give their input and help shape the focus and priorities of the Comprehensive Plan.

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**WINTER 2024**  
**DUE: APRIL 30, 2024**



J M GOLDSON





# MEETING IN A BOX

*Thank you for hosting a meeting about the Stow Comprehensive Plan. We appreciate your time and participation in organizing and facilitating this discussion and exercise. Community input is vital to this process!*

## INSTRUCTIONS

**Whom should I invite?** Any community member who is interested in the future of Stow. You could host the meeting with your family around the dinner table, with your local community or neighborhood organization, or with your coworkers during your lunch hour. There are no age limits.

**How many people should I invite?** Aim for a group of 4 to 8 people. If you have more than four people, please break the discussion into smaller groups of no more than four people each.

**How long will the meeting take?** You likely need about two hours to complete all the activities, depending on the group's level of interest and engagement. Use a timer to keep the discussion flowing.

**Can I customize my meeting for my group?** Absolutely! We encourage you to pick and choose which activities your group is interested in participating in. Read the "During the Meeting" list to the right to see each of the activities. All activities are optional, except for the sign-in sheet. We recommend all groups participate in Activities 1, 2, and 7.

**Where should we meet?** Anywhere! Just make sure it is comfortable and convenient. It could be in your living room, a local restaurant, the Pompo Community Center, or even the Town Center Park. You'll want enough seats for all participants, some writing utensils, and a hard surface to write on.

### Helpful Tips for the Host

1. It's a good idea to send out a reminder the day before the meeting.
2. If possible, provide some refreshments and encourage participants to relax and enjoy the conversation.
3. At the meeting, your job is to keep the conversation on-topic. Please ask someone else to take notes so you can focus on the group's discussion. (If you have more than one group, designate a facilitator and note taker for each group.)
4. It's always nice to send a thank-you message to your guests afterwards. Please inform them of the other ways to participant in this process.

### Questions?

Scan the QR code provided here to visit the project website and learn more!



## CONTENTS

### BEFORE THE MEETING

Review this packet and instructions and send out your invitations! You can also contact Austin (austin@jmgoldson.com) with any questions.

### DURING THE MEETING

- 03 — Introductions
- 04 — Activity 1: Special Places
- 05 — Activity 2: A Vision for Stow
- 07 — Activity 3: Living & Working in Stow
- 09 — Activity 4: Operations & Transportation in Stow
- 11 — Activity 5: Protecting & Adapting in Stow
- 13 — Activity 6: Ways to Play in & Experience Stow
- 15 — Activity 7: Reflection
- 16 — WAIT! A few things before you go!

### AFTER THE MEETING

Return all materials to Austin Smith by email (see above) or in person at the Stow Planning Department.

***Must be returned no later than 04/30/24.***



ACTIVITY 1

# SPECIAL PLACES



Please list your community’s special places below. This could include any special natural landscape features or built places. What places would, if lost or damaged, significantly change a characteristic of your community that you love?

List the special places below.

A \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

E \_\_\_\_\_

F \_\_\_\_\_

G \_\_\_\_\_

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V \_\_\_\_\_

W \_\_\_\_\_

X \_\_\_\_\_

Y \_\_\_\_\_

Z \_\_\_\_\_



## ACTIVITY 2

# A VISION FOR STOW IN 2034

**READ THIS ALOUD:**

*A community vision describes what community members want their community to look and feel like in the next decade. It is meant to be hopeful and aspirational. It paints a mental image of what the ideal Stow will be like in 10 years. A vision helps the community reach for goals above and beyond what may be expected and discover possibilities that may not have been apparent before.*

**The following questions are offered to guide your conversation, you may choose to answer some or all of them. Please use the space below and on the following page to write notes from your conversation.**

*Imagine the ideal future for Stow in 10 years...*

- 2.1 What does the Town look and feel like?*
  - 2.2 What do you hope would be the same or different? What has been added, improved, or reimaged?*
  - 2.3 What might support feelings of community connection over the next 10 years?*
  - 2.4 What do residents value the most about the community?*
-





## ACTIVITY 3

# LIVING & WORKING IN STOW



*The following questions are offered to guide your conversation, you may choose to answer some or all of them. Please use the space below and on the following page to write notes from your conversation.*

*Imagine the ideal future for Stow's residents, housing, and businesses.*

3.1 Who lives in Stow?

3.2 What different types of housing are available (e.g., multi-family housing, smaller homes, rental housing, affordable housing, "missing middle" housing, etc.)?

3.3 What kinds of jobs are available in the Town?

3.4 What types of businesses would you like to see? Where are they located? (e.g., Co-working spaces, light industrial, restaurants, small businesses)

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## ACTIVITY 4

# OPERATIONS & TRANSPORTATION IN STOW



*The following questions are offered to guide your conversation, you may choose to answer some or all of them. Please use the space below and on the following page to write notes from your conversation.*

*Imagine the ideal future for Stow's Town buildings and operations, public services, and transportation options.*

- 4.1 *What would you like to change? What would you like to stay the same?*
  - 4.2 *What do public buildings and properties look like? Who has access to public spaces?*
  - 4.3 *What does the day-to-day running of the Town and public schools look like?*
  - 4.4 *How is car travel, biking, walking, or public transit made easier, safer, or more widely accessible?*
  - 4.5 *What type of transportation options exist?*
-





## ACTIVITY 5

# PROTECTING & ADAPTING STOW



*The following questions are offered to guide your conversation, you may choose to answer some or all of them. Please use the space below and on the following page to write notes from your conversation.*

*Imagine the ideal future for Stow's historic and natural systems as well as the Town's ability to adapt to climate change.*

- 5.1 What would you like to change? What would you like to stay the same?*
  - 5.2 Which historic resources are restored or have greater protection?*
  - 5.3 What role does the Town play in educating the public about its history and climate change?*
  - 5.4 What types of natural places and ecosystems are protected, restored, and strengthened?*
  - 5.5 What types of environmental sustainability programs does the Town offer?*
  - 5.6 How has the Town prepared for storms, flooding, and droughts related to climate change?*
  - 5.7 How can natural open spaces be improved upon to increase community use and enjoyment for people of all ages and abilities?*
-





## ACTIVITY 6

# WAYS TO PLAY IN & EXPERIENCE STOW

A circular icon with a green border and a white background. Inside the circle, the text "15 MIN." is written in a bold, sans-serif font. The circle is partially filled with a green arc at the top left.

*The following questions are offered to guide your conversation, you may choose to answer some or all of them. Please use the space below and on the following page to write notes from your conversation.*

*Imagine the ideal future for Stow's recreational offerings and cultural spaces/events.*

- 6.1 What would you like to change? What would you like to stay the same?*
  - 6.2 What recreational events, programs, and places does the Town offer?*
  - 6.3 How do arts and cultural programs enrich the Stow community?*
  - 6.4 What types of gathering places exist in the Town? What amenities do these spaces have?*
  - 6.5 How is information about community events/programs shared with residents?*
-





## ACTIVITY 7

# REFLECTION: IDENTIFY TENSIONS & SYNERGIES

A circular icon with a green arc at the top left, containing the text "15 MIN." in a bold, sans-serif font.**READ THIS ALOUD:**

*Comprehensive plans contain many different elements (for example: housing, transportation, open space); There can be tensions between elements as well as synergies – or ways they work together. It is important to recognize where hopes for one element conflict, or work against, hopes for another element, in order to brainstorm solutions to balance competing goals.*

*Reflect on your discussion today about your community vision and goals.*

*7.1 What are some potential tension points or conflicts between elements of your vision and goals?*

*7.2 What are some potential synergies or ways that elements of your vision and goals can work together?*

*7.3 What else do you hope will be included in this Comprehensive Plan?*

---

# WAIT! A FEW THINGS BEFORE YOU GO...

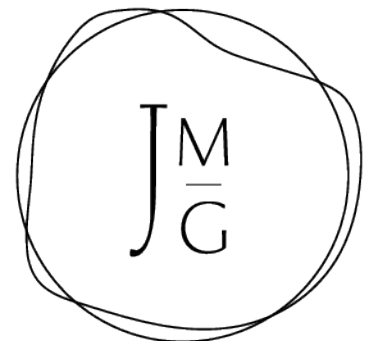


1. We hope that each person who participated today will continue to engage in the Envision Stow Comprehensive Plan process. Please visit our project website to learn about more ways you can get involved, including:

- Taking our Community Survey.
- Hosting your own Meeting-in-a-Box! Visit our website to download a copy of the packet.
- Adding your comments to our Crowdmap.

Scan the QR code below or visit [WEBSITE](#) to see more ways to participate.

2. Take a group photo! Then send your picture to Austin with the host's name and date of your meeting via email to [austin@jmgoldson.com](mailto:austin@jmgoldson.com).



**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING TODAY!  
WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR TIME, IDEAS, AND  
COMMITMENT TO THE STOW COMMUNITY.**



# MINUTES

Select Board Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, March 12, 2024  
Stow Town Building & Zoom

Present in the Warren Room: Cortni Frecha, Megan Birch-McMichael, Ingeborg Hegemann Clark, Hector Constantzos, John "JT" Toole, Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski, and Assistant Town Administrator Erin Mulcahy.

Chair Frecha called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**Public Comment**

Chair Frecha stated that comments are limited to items not on the agenda.

Town Clerk Linda Hathaway said nomination papers are available for the election; the last day to take out papers is March 27 until 5 p.m. and the nomination papers need to be returned by March 29. More information is on the town's website.

**Board Member Comments**

Mr. Constantzos acknowledged that March is Women's History Month.

**Appointments**

Appointment of Veterans Services Officer

*Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to reappoint Joseph Jacobs as the Town's Veterans Services Officer, to fill a one-year term from April 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025.*

*Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

After experiencing some technical difficulties, the Chair called for a 5-minute break to make necessary adjustments and the meeting resumed shortly thereafter.

Appointments to Town Hall Building Reuse Committee

Maureen Crawford was present via Zoom, Richard Fishman was present in the Warren Room, and William Roop was unavailable.

Ms. Crawford has been a resident for 25 years and is currently serving on other committees in town. She can bring experience from projects at work to apply here. She said we need to look at the building as a whole; what is the end goal of the building and how do we get there.

Mr. Fishman has been in town for three years and is a member of the Library Building Exterior Design Committee. He likes buildings and in addition to having a background in graphic design, he is a painter. He has no preconceived notions about the Town Hall and would like to help determine the next steps.

*Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to appoint Maureen Crawford to the Town Hall Building Reuse Committee for a term ending June 30, 2025.*

*Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

*Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to appoint William Roop to the Town Hall Building Reuse Committee for a term ending June 30, 2025.*

*Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*



*Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to appoint Richard Fishman to the Town Hall Building Reuse Committee for a term ending June 30, 2025.*

*Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

#### Reappointment to Stow Cultural Council

*Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to reappoint Rebecca Lynch to the Stow Cultural Council for a term ending June 30, 2027.*

*Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

#### **Town Administrator (TA) Report**

- The TA encouraged everyone, on behalf of the planning department, to participate in the Comprehensive Plan survey. The link is on the website and social media sites. There is also a Crowdfunder which is an interactive way to collect and organize data in a visual format, or people can participate in a Meeting in a Box which is a meeting with exercises.
- There is a virtual meeting on Monday, March 18 between the Comprehensive Plan Committee and members of the Select Board and Planning Board in which the consultant will provide a presentation of Existing Conditions Inventory. This will conclude phase one of four of their work.
- Per the Town Clerk, the last day to take out nomination papers is Wednesday, March 27, and the last day to return the nomination papers is Friday, March 29.

#### **Town Administrator's Presentation on the FY 2025 Financial State of the Town**

Ms. Dembkoski began her presentation with town demographics showing population growth over the years. With a total population of 7,111 Stow is placed at 242 out of 351 municipalities for growth rank. Stow's primary age group is 45-54 and the town has 2,613 households. The presentation detailed where we are in FY24 and what to expect for FY25. The full report can be found on the Town's website on the Town Administrator's webpage. Highlights included:

- Certified free cash for FY24 was \$3,276,056 (this includes the \$1M settlement for the Lower Village lawsuit). The goal is to be at or above 5% of the annual budget. FY24 is at 9.89%.
- Available Funds (the total of the stabilization accounts combined with free cash) is 13.89% of the budget. The target range is 10%-15% and this is at the high end due to the Lower Village settlement.
- The OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Trust Fund is for future health insurance for current employees. It is built up every year and is 17.88% funded with \$1.6M as of January 2023.
- In response to a question from a resident, the TA said that business property owners pay real estate tax on buildings whether vacant or occupied.
- FY25 department requested budgets total an estimated \$35,510,903, which is up \$2.4M, and does not include a final number from the Nashoba Regional School District (NRSD). The TA gave an overview of Minuteman High School enrollment and the FY25 preliminary assessments, and of the NRSD estimated assessment. Proposed increases from the schools are currently \$1.5M.
- FY25 capital requests total approximately \$2,628,305.
- FY25 health insurance has a 0% increase due to rebidding insurance and joining MIIA.
- The Municipal General Fund Budget increase is within Prop 2 ½. There are no additional positions requested and vacant positions are re-evaluated in an effort to streamline operations.

## **Library Annual Update and Renovation Project Update**

Library Director Tina McAndrew was present in the Warren Room.

### Library Annual Update

An updated strategic plan was submitted to the MA Board of Library Commissioners for FY23-FY28. This is required in order to be eligible for grants. An overview of FY23 was given; highlights included:

- There were 34,483 visitors to the library, with 4,983 reference questions answered, and 1,951 items added to the collections.
- Programming increased by 31%. There were 3,841 program attendees across all 274 events. The staff are very inventive with programs.
- 350 museum passes were used across 16 institutions, which is a 75% increase from FY22.
- The seed lending library gave out a total of 605 envelopes (485 vegetables, 67 herbs, 53 flowers).

Ms. McAndrew mentioned the financial support from the Town (salaries and operation expenses), the Randall Library Trust (supplements to the materials budget), the Hale High School Fund (online and print reference resources), the Second Century Fund (special requests such as the Library of Things, which has grown tremendously since FY17), and the Randall Library Friends (museum passes, adult and children programming materials, and special materials and activities). Ms. McAndrew concluded by highlighting two important bills in MA: House Bill 3239 - An Act Empowering Library Access to Electronic Books and Digital Audiobooks, and House Bill 4229 – An Act Regarding Free Expression.

### Randall Library Building Project

Ms. McAndrew gave a history of the Library Building Project, beginning with the 2012 Annual Town Meeting and ballot, and the 2012 Special Town Meeting. That project did not pass. A new building committee was formed in October of 2020. Plans for a new library based on preliminary information were presented at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting and ballot. (The presentation is available on the town's website.) Town meeting did not vote on a design, on square footage, or on program space; town meeting did vote to renovate the historic portion of the building and to remove and rebuild the 1970s addition. At the September 2023 Special Town Meeting the voters supported appropriation of additional funds to complete the project. The maximum taxpayer cost has remained at \$6.7M throughout.

Ms. McAndrew said library staff have been heavily committed to this project and were instrumental in moving the library. They and volunteers packed up 35,000 items in 4 days.

Children's Librarian Chris Morrison spoke in favor of the renovation and said there had been many opportunities to get feedback and input on the design.

After the presentation Chair Frecha opened the meeting to comments from library staff and trustees, then to residents who participated in person and via Zoom. All but two who spoke were in support of the library project and shared their many positive experiences over the years. The two not in favor spoke about the exterior design, and the change in scope and bringing this back to town meeting.

Members of the Select Board spoke in favor of the project and did not want it delayed or have it go back to Town Meeting, with the majority stating that no further public forums or comment periods are necessary. Ms. Demboski said the voters approved the ballot question to support and fund this project and town meeting cannot overrule a ballot question. Town meeting could only rescind the



funding but we would still pay for what has been contracted. Chair Frecha gave people the chance to speak, and said she was disappointed with the weight of the conversation. She would have been interested in having more people on both sides of the discussion. Chair Frecha agreed that it is not the time anymore to continue this conversation.

### **Public Hearing on 2024 Election Options**

Town Clerk Linda Hathaway was present in the Warren Room.

Ms. Hathaway said that Vote by Mail is a huge undertaking and a costly project. She is strongly in favor of In Person Early Voting, but not of Vote by Mail. There is also the option of an absentee ballot, which has these qualifiers: being absent from town on election day during poll hours, having a disability that prevents you from going to the polls, a religious belief, or being incarcerated but not for a felony.

Kate West, 8 High Street (via Zoom), is an election volunteer and spoke in favor of Vote by Mail. She feels everyone's needs and voting preferences are unique and Vote by Mail allows another option.

*Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to approve the option of In Person Early Voting in Stow for the 2024 Annual Town Election on Monday, May 13 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday, May 14 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Wednesday, May 15 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.*

*Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

*Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to opt-out of Vote by Mail in Stow for the 2024 Annual Town Election.*

*Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### Minutes of the February 13, 2024 meeting

*Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to accept the meeting minutes of the February 13, 2024 meeting as drafted. Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed 4-0-1 with Ms. Birch-McMichael abstaining.*

#### Minutes of the February 27, 2024 meeting

*Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to accept the meeting minutes of the February 27, 2024 meeting as drafted. Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

### **Board Correspondence & Updates**

The Board did not move any correspondence received to an upcoming agenda.

### **Adjournment**

*At 9:53 p.m. Ms. Birch-McMichael moved to adjourn. Mr. Constantzos seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

*Joyce Sampson*, Executive Assistant

*Documents used at this meeting can be found in the Select Board Office in the meeting folder.*