

DRAFT



Avon 2040 Master Plan

Town of Avon, Massachusetts



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The **Center for Resilient Metro-Regions (CRM)** at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst was the project consultant. CRM believes that planning, sustainability, resilience, place-making and livable communities, public health, equity, and economic development can be synergistic goals and support our communities and our most vulnerable populations. CRM partners with communities to develop more resilient and sustainable planning and design solutions and bring research to communities, practice, and education. CRM team: Wayne Feiden, FAICP, Director, Amelia Lavallee, research assistant, and students Grace Kirkpatrick and Nicole Krantz.

The AIA Architects Foundation’s **Communities by Design (CxD)** supported the Strategic Outline for the Avon 2040 Master Plan, the first phase of the plan. CxD brought in a multidisciplinary expert team to engage Avon and create a strategic plan that forms the outline of the full master plan. Communities all over the world are struggling to build effective strategies to address their key challenges: from climate change and equity to housing and revitalization. Communities by Design (CxD) provides a ready, applicable model to overcome these challenges and provide communities with a path to success. Through decades of work in hundreds of communities with tens of thousands of volunteers and community members, CxD Design Assistance Teams have proven that communities are at the heart of solutions to the world’s most pressing issues. Every project is community-driven with meaningful public participation and an intensive process to match professional expertise with public values and aspirations for a place. Design Assistance Teams are made up of volunteer architects, planners, and other professionals with expertise customized to fit the local community context.

The Architects Foundation Communities by Design team experts volunteers: Wayne Feiden, Miquela Craytor, Troy Moon, and Jason Schrieber. CxD staff: Erin Simmons and Joel Mills.

Avon 2040 Master Plan adopted by:

- Avon Planning Board: Chair Charles P. Comeau, Robert Jones, Robert Pillarella, Tracy Self, and Jason L. Suzor Jr., (in accordance with M.G.L. C. 41, 81D): date _____
- Select Board: Chair Eric S. Bekerman, Jason L. Suzor, Sr., and Shannon M. Coffey: date _____

This plan would not have been possible without:

- Dozens of community members and other stakeholders participated in the planning process, at stakeholder and focus group meetings, public engagement forums, and interviews.
- Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic Commission, and Old Colony Planning Commission
- Town and School Department staff: Jonathan L. Beder, Town Administrator; Richard Jordan, Town Planner; Shanna M. Faro, Town Administrator Executive Assistant; William A. Fitzgerald, former DPW Director Bill Martin, Assistant DPW Director; Lynn McKenney, Planning Board Recording Secretary; Christine Godino, Superintendent of Schools; Jane Carthas, Director Council on Aging; and Elise LaForge, Director Avon Library.
- Massachusetts Rural and Small-Town Development Funds for the entire master plan cost.

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Part 2 - Appendices: Regulatory and Other Details and Avon Team and Strategic Planning

1. Executive Summary, Community Vision, & Community Values

The **Town of Avon** is 4.55 square miles with 4,777 people (2020 census). Avon is a small town (both geographically and in terms of population), the smallest in Norfolk County. It retains a small town feel with greater affordability than the overall Boston Metropolitan region and a greater sense of knowing one’s neighbors and shared landmarks, especially parks, than in many areas.

It has a modest population and development growth rate. Its population density (1,050 people per square mile) is typical of the area. Two-thirds of Avon’s housing units are detached single-family homes, with a median value lower than Norfolk County and the Commonwealth. The median age is 36.9, marginally younger than the county and the Commonwealth.

Avon is a median income community, with median household income slightly higher and the poverty rate slightly lower than Norfolk County and the Commonwealth. The entire community is mapped by the Commonwealth as an “Environmental Justice” area based on minority status (i.e., minority status greater than 25%). Higher education (bachelor’s degree and beyond) is significantly lower than the county and the Commonwealth.

Avon is less than 20 miles from Boston and part of the Boston metropolitan area. It borders Brockton to the south, Stoughton to the west, Randolph to the north, and Holbrook to the east. It is both a suburban commuter town and, with its industrial park and Merchants Park, a major regional employment center.

Avon has up-to-date plans (e.g., hazard mitigation plan and open space and recreation plan) that help guide its future. Avon’s last Master Plan (2001), however, is 23 years and often not relevant to today’s needs.

This plan is intended to document Avon’s shared vision, community values, and pathways to action to help guide Avon, its policies, investments, and regulatory system for the next couple of decades. *Avon 2040 Master Plan* has a long-term (20 years) planning horizon. At the same time, however, the plan seeks to provide a shorter-term implementation path for the next decade.

Opportunities, challenges, and community vision, however, will continue to evolve, and the plan should be revisited and updated as needed every five to ten years. At the same time, the path forward to implementing the plan should be tracked and adjusted on an annual or semi-annual basis.

In late 2023, Avon hired its first Town Planner to supplement the efforts of town volunteers, the Select Board, the Planning Board, other town boards, part-time board staff, the Town Administrator, and the DPW Director. The Town Planner, along with town staff and town boards, is charged with stewarding this plan and ensuring the community’s visions and this plan guide detailed plans and actions.

Six themes stood out as community priorities:

1. Broaden the tax base with more commercial and industrial properties and development.
2. Make transportation safer by slowing the speed of cars and providing safe places to walk, filling the gaps in the walking network and making road crossings and intersections safer.
3. Improve the key focal points that define both the kind of place Avon is and its economic opportunities (Industrial Park, Stockwell Drive, Downtown, the Walmart area, and, D.W. Field Park and other conservation and recreation areas).
4. Embrace the small town feel by ensuring that all residents feel welcome and can participate in community governance and civic life.

5. Modernize town facilities, including Town Hall, the Council on Aging, School Administration, and the Elementary School. With declining town debt, Avon is in a good position to invest in these properties.
6. Protect and expand Avon’s public water supply with watershed preservation and stormwater management.

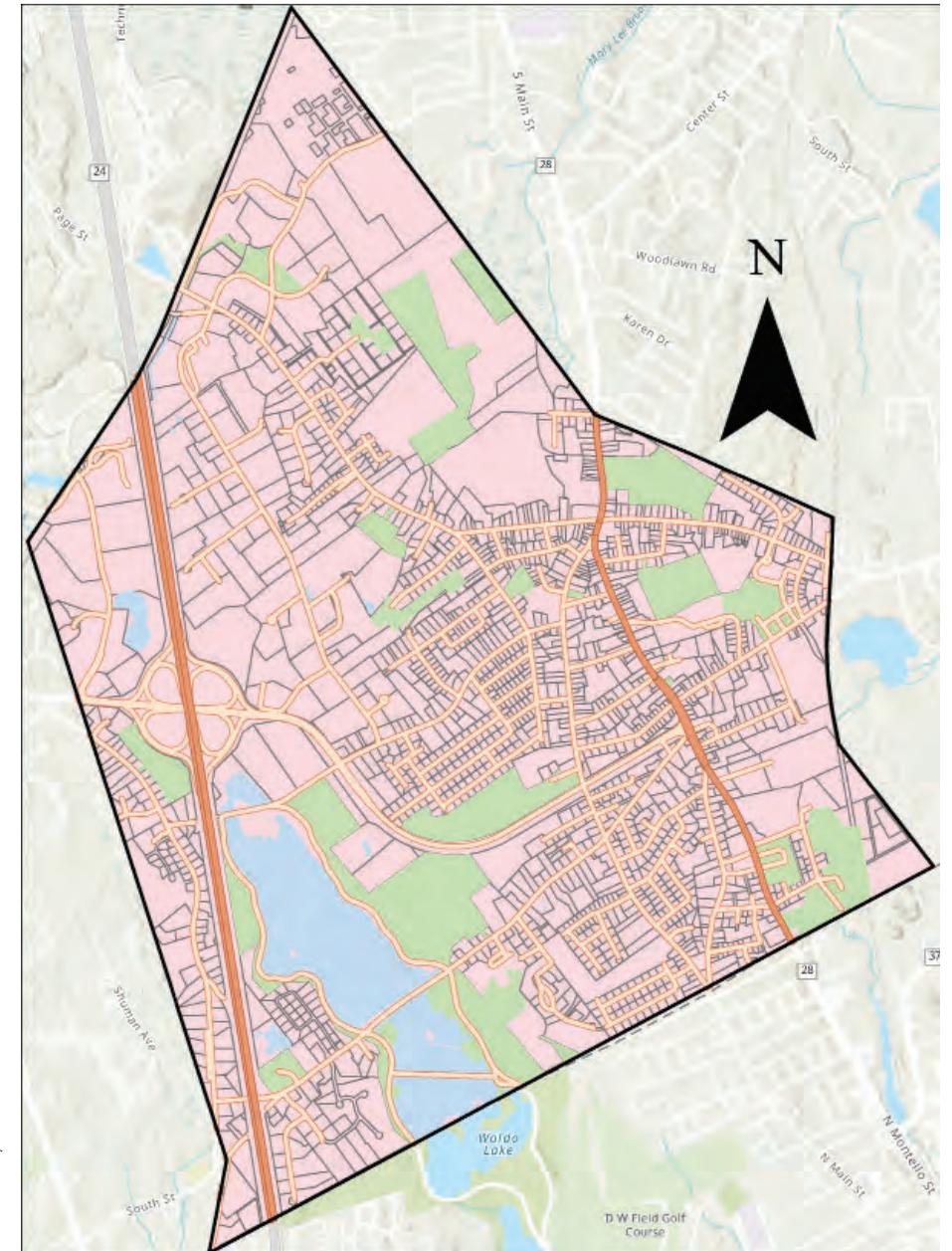


Figure 1-1. Avon is proud of its small-town feel.

Avon Community Vision

Avon residents want to preserve their **small-town feel**, a safe, comfortable, resilient small town with a strong identity, unique sense of place, community cohesion, sense of belonging, affordable living, and clean environment. The small-town feel is reflected in every aspect of the plan - helping knit the community together so it is strong economically with walkable neighborhoods and opportunities for chance contact, allowing new residents to be welcomed and embraced by those who have lived in Avon for their entire lives.

Identity and sense of place includes parks, recreation, open space, community facilities, downtown, and **other strong focal** points where all members of the community can come together and feel like they belong.

Community cohesion, diversity, inclusiveness, and belonging includes knowing one's neighbors, welcoming all residents, and involving all residents in the community. This includes accommodating, including, and celebrating residents with disabilities and new increasingly diverse residents so they can belong to and be welcomed by the Avon community.

Safety and feeling safe includes addressing safety from crime, improving traffic safety, and feeling part of the community. Traffic safety includes fewer crashes, ensuring all modes of transportation are safe and desirable, while still accommodating traffic needs. Slower speeds, not fewer vehicles.

Ensuring that community members can **afford to live** in the community requires that Avon maintains its robust tax base and funds the infrastructure and services residents want with a reasonable tax rate. It includes diversifying employment opportunities, education, and job skills training for its emerging workforce, and ensuring housing is affordable to all

residents.

A clean environment requires addressing climate change and other environmental challenges.

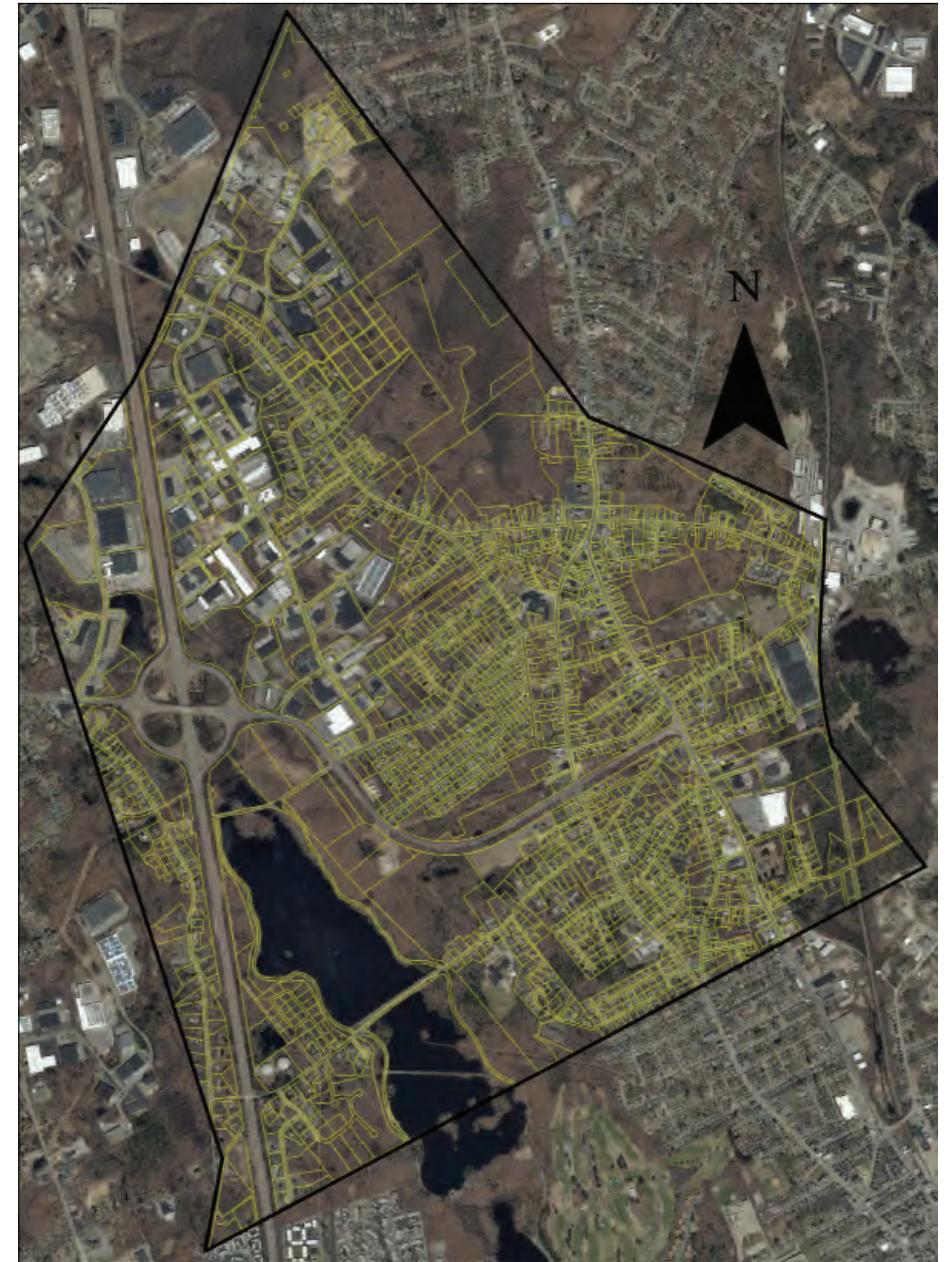
We understand that sharing a community vision and working together to achieve that vision helps us build momentum to protect and enhance our community. We acknowledge that external pressures will lead to change whether that change is guided or not. It is up to us, then, to select the future we want.

Let's get started.



Figure 1-2. Small-town flavor includes a small downtown, sharing the message of being open for business.

Figure 1-3. Orthophoto of Avon.



Community Values

Building on that vision and our small-town identity, we have identified our values for this plan.

- We value **Land Uses** that preserve our existing neighborhoods that we love, while allowing for more flexibility, encouraging new development in the Avon Industrial Park and at Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive, while improving our focus on environmental protection and reducing threats to our water and our property. A small-town feel requires that we have a strong sense of place with strong focal points that are uniquely Avon. A downtown, however small, provides a focal point that helps give Avon a sense of place and small-town flavor (Figure 1-2).
- We want to preserve our **Housing** patterns, while allowing the flexibility to house our increasingly small families, our aging populations, allow our children and youth to find housing as we did when we became Avon residents, and pay attention to the burdens that might otherwise force residents to move away. A small-town feel requires that we have choices in finding housing that serves our needs and our budgets. Avon housing prices are lower than many of our peer communities, but still rising and out of reach for many people.
- We want healthy **Economic Development** that continues to allow us to have more jobs than workers, white collar and blue-collar jobs that pay decent wages, development which keeps our tax base strong, and greater economic activity that builds a sense of place in the Avon Industrial Park, Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive, and downtown. A small-town feel requires that we maintain our economy and the benefit it provides to our town.
- We want **Open Space and Recreation** to serve as safe gathering, meeting, and play places for everyone in the community, regardless of who they are, places that serve the fundamental needs to reconnect to nature, and places that help us maintain a clean environment and help us thrive even with climate change. A small-town feel requires that our open spaces provide opportunities to enhance the feel of our community and promote social connections. Our parks, along with our schools, provide our most shared and used focal points that support our identity (Figure 1-3).
- We want to preserve our **Natural and Cultural Resources** for us and for future generations, in our parks, with our natural systems, with our nature-based solutions, through preserving the best of our history and architecture, while enhancing those features that clean our water and our air, mitigate the effects of climate change. A small-town feel is built on our natural systems.
- We need **Mobility and Circulation** for multiple travel modes, foot-travel, bicycle-travel, automobiles, trucks, and transit, slowing the speed of travel, making it safe, and adding to the quality of our community. A small-town feel demands safe streets, attractive streetscapes, and a transportation network that supports, not divides, our neighborhoods.
- We want public and non-governmental **Community Services and Facilities**, including public buildings, public health, and schools, which serve our needs and are designed to thrive with climate change and reduce our own climate change impacts, without adding undue tax burdens. A small-town feel requires that we serve our community and provide places to meet all our needs.
- We prioritize taking **Climate Action** and building our long-term **Sustainability and Resilience**, not only to address climate change but to let us thrive even with climate change and all the other social, economic, and environmental changes that are

inevitable. A small-town feel requires that we take a long view to ensure that we are meeting our needs and those of our children, our grandchildren, and future generations.

- We need to continue to promote **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**, in our community and in our schools. We need to respect all community members and enable all our residents to connect together and participate in Avon civic life and Avon social life. A small-town feel requires that we embrace, include, and welcome all of our residents and their needs, be it our youth, those who are aging in place, those with visible or invisible disabilities, those who are moving to our community, and those who, like us, want to build a place to live, work, and play.

One public forum participant said: “I grew up in a little village; I want to die in a little village.”

Let’s ensure that our residents can continue to know and care about their neighbors, all of their neighbors regardless of their backgrounds, continue to have a strong sense of place, of belonging, and of community.



Figure 1-4. Parks, along with our schools, provide our most heavily used and shared gathering space.

2. Community Engagement

For the initial public engagement forums, the Center for Resilient Metro-Regions partnered with the Architects Foundation’s Communities by Design program (the charitable arm of the American Institute of Architects) to engage the community to help scope the overall Master Plan; identify the community vision, values, and goals; and identify pathways to action. The engagement process included:

1. **Select Board and Planning Board engagement** (beginning with a joint Select Board/Planning Board kickoff on Wednesday June 26, 2023). The kickoff meetings created a framework for the plan and public engagement. The DPW director, and then the Town Planner once hired, met regularly with CRM staff and provided the conduit for information sharing. The Planning Board met regularly to discuss and give input on the process and liaison with the Select Board’s representative to the process.
2. **Review of all past plans and their community engagement.** In particular, because it was done so recently, the survey (sample size or N = 195 respondents) for the Open Space and Recreation Plan informed this process.
3. **Community outreach**, including postcards to every mailing address in Avon, social media and email to town boards, town department heads, and community and social organizations.
4. **Stakeholders focus groups** (September 26, 2023) with representatives of town and community board, appointed town and school staff, the Cape Verdean Association members, and the Metro South Chamber of Commerce (Figure 2-1).
5. **Public Engagement Forum** (Sept. 26, 2023) with community members with comments on any aspect of the future were welcomed (“blue-sky”), as summarized in **Public Engagement Forums** (Figure 2-2).



Figure 2-1. Stakeholder Focus Groups



Figure 2-2. Public Engagement Forum



Figure 2-3. Strategic Framework Forum

6. **Public Engagement Forum** (September 28, 2023) on proposed strategic framework, community vision, values, and goals, and pathways to action (Figure 2-3). The forum was broadcast live on public access TV and recorded for on-demand delivery.
7. **High School student focus group** (January 26, 2024) with 24 students, primarily student council members, to engage Avon students in their vision for Avon.
8. **Key stakeholder interviews and email exchanges** with town administration, planning, DPW, library, and schools leadership and other community members.
9. **Final Public Engagement Forum** to get input on the draft plan to make changes before final plan adoption.

Public Engagement and Stakeholder Forums

Participants stressed Avon’s strengths (with the most repeated ones shown in bold), including:

- **Small, quiet, family-friendly, and tight-knit community with a small town-feel.**
- **Well-used and loved open space, green space, recreation, and a clean environment, especially D.W. Field Park and DeMarco Park, walking trails, and various park programming.**
- **Avon Industrial Park, its opportunities, and the Avon Industrial Park Association.**
- Partnerships with cultural, civic, and faith-based organizations and the related festivals, markets, programming, and summer concerts.
- A vibrant business community, big-box retail, and a broad tax base.
- Central location and proximity to other towns.



Figure 2-4. Waldo Lake, D.W. Field Park



Figure 2-5. Geese, South Street dam, D.W. Field Park



Figure 2-6. Turkey at Avon Public Housing



Figure 2-7. Events at DeMarco Park



Figure 2.9. Mary Kay & Stephen Mills Memorial playground



Figure 2.11. African Market- diversity downtown



Figure 2.8. Avon Library



Figure 2.10. Green infrastructure at Town Hall



Figure 2.12. Sidewalk improvements underway

- Services, from the Senior Center to specialized automotive repair.
- Sidewalks and accessibility along with well-maintained streets and infrastructure.
- The new police and fire stations and well-maintained library and other buildings.
- Diverse environment and environmental protection, from increased interest and use of solar energy to free recycling and green infrastructure.
- Drinking water treatment facility, with no detectable PFAS for water leaving the facility.
- Access to highways (Route 24) and to nearby commuter rail access in adjacent communities.
- Support for open space preservation, beloved recreation areas, and often accessible sidewalks to recreation area.

Participants also identified weaknesses and challenges, including: (bold being repeated most often):

- **Lack of sanitary sewer and water supply growth opportunities at Avon Industrial Park and Merchants Park.**
- **Traffic and pedestrian safety, high traffic volume and speeds, aggressive driving, limited sidewalks, limited safe crosswalks, and traffic congestion, with Avon being a traffic cut-through (especially on Harrison Boulevard, Main, and Pond) that conflicts with walking and with a safe journey to school.**
- **Other infrastructure that needs investment and upgrades, including roads, sewerage, water supply, town offices, the senior center, and the elementary school, and related services.**
- **A weak town center without a sense of place,**

with some vacant and underutilized lots creating gaps downtown, and an unfriendly walking and parking environment.

- Not enough understanding and appreciation of diversity with a disconnect between Avon and increasingly diverse and often socially vulnerable residents. Diversity should not mean parallel lives and limited blending and shared experiences.
- Quality of life challenges (e.g., dumping, out-of-date town website, inadequate parking enforcement, inadequate maintenance of D.W. Field Park).
- Lack of business resilience support, and especially lack of resources to support small businesses, including on digital platforms.
- Limited commercial services, especially restaurants and small businesses to catch attention, retail, health services, and other services.



Figure 2-13. Downtown parking confusion and safety



Figure 2-14. Downtown accessibility challenges

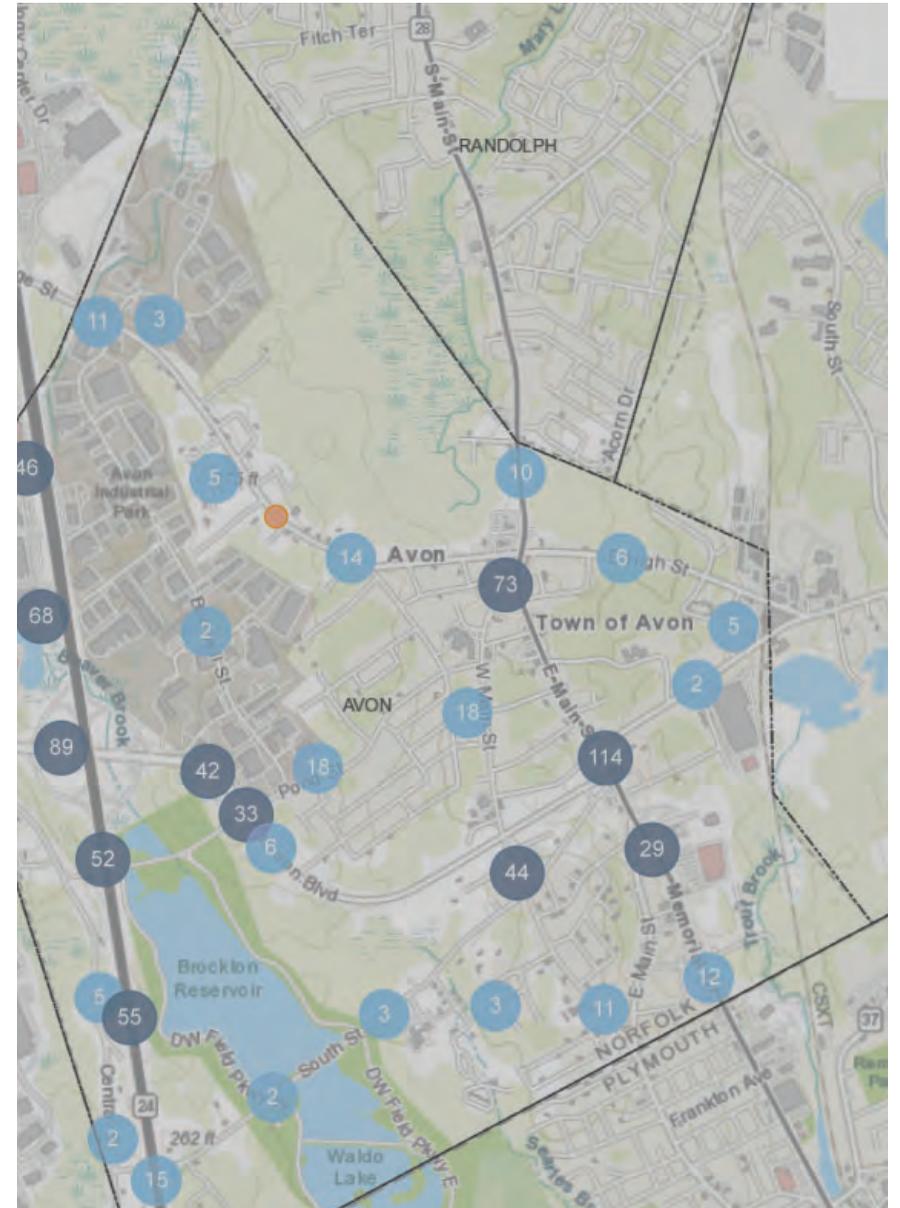


Figure 2-15. Crashes -- number for crashes 2023-2023 inclusive (MassDOT data)

- Limited bus and transit services in Avon.
- Limited building opportunities, with sewer and physical constraints and limited inventories of building potential.
- High commercial and industrial tax rates (from a split tax rate) and high municipal financial obligations.
- Opposition to change, mixed and unclear sense of priorities and limited capacity for managing public resources and facilities.
- Inadequate support and navigation for social needs to provide support during chronic and acute disaster and other adverse events.
- Inadequate multi-jurisdictional and regional cooperation, including no local control over D.W. Field Park.
- Difficulty as a small town to build collaborative partnerships (business, municipal).
- Lack of housing that is affordable.
- Inadequate places for children and youth to play and hangout and for adults to enjoy.
- Often poor condition of parks, recreation, and open space.

Thinking forward, participants identified opportunities including:

- **Safe Streets, traffic safety, with narrower streets, wider sidewalks, wider and better marked and lighted crosswalks, and slower traffic.**
- **Sewer Avon Industrial Park and Merchants Park with expansion at both sites (industrial, construction, biotechnology, warehousing).**
- **Recreational opportunities, improved**

infrastructure, especially at D.W. Field Park and more playgrounds.

- **Create a strong node, gathering space, and sense of place downtown (e.g., recreation center), with a stronger visual presence and activation.**
- Improved or new municipal and elementary school buildings.
- Create spaces for commercial connectivity.
- Accessible mobility.
- Improved transit if and when the demand is there to support it.
- Expanded housing affordability and housing type to allow our residents to continue to stay here and allow new generations to live here. Be age friendly to all ages.
- Micro-farming and community gardens.
- Improved flood management and education.
- Increased grants and town funding for infrastructure investments.
- Continued and increased focus on diversity, equity, inclusion in community involvement, partnerships, and social networks with schools and social resilience organizations (e.g., NAACP, Avon Schools).
- Business outreach to community members.
- Support and expand job apprentice and job training for construction and other trades in local schools and community colleges.
- Regional cooperation.
- Encourage supermarket, retail, movies, and health

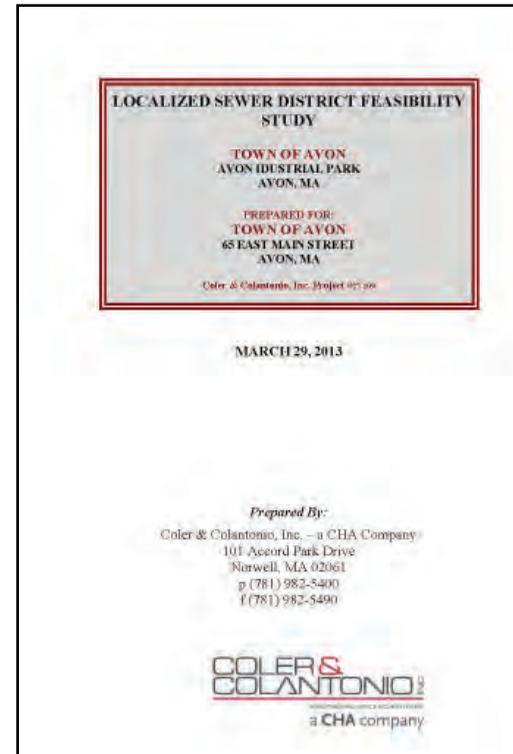


Figure 2-16. Sewer feasibility



Figure 2-17. Parking lots available for redevelopment



Figure 2-18. Development focus

care services.

- Restaurants and food-related gathering space, including coffee shop, family restaurant, and food trucks.
- Community and multi-generational gathering spaces (e.g., downtown tavern) and more events.
- Reuse Old Christmas Tree Shops for commercial condominiums and mixed-use development.
- Mobility for businesses, support in place.
- More business resilience and diversity, business development and stability, for more jobs, tax base, and retaining money within Avon.
- Stronger social networks, connections, relationships, and awareness of resources.
- Navigation between geography.
- Plan for continuity of public and private services when stressed (e.g., a major storm).
- Environmental action, such as regenerative material processes, more solar and geothermal development, and addressing stormwater and flooding challenges.
- Adaptive reuse of buildings and sites.
- Maintaining youth populations, with job opportunities, housing, and recreation and community center (e.g., expanded use of after-hours school facilities).
- Quality of technological services - reliability of services.
- Exploring education costs - limitations on programming for small class populations.
- Potential small business expansion vs. big box retailers.



Figure 2-19. Industrial Park oil slick



Figure 2-20. Catch basin draining to wetlands with no buffer

- Add practical civics and political critical thinking to student education, especially as related to local issues.
- Avoid making capital expenditures unless there is a maintenance and operational funding plan.
- Empower town administrative staff to reduce the need to get Select Board's approval.

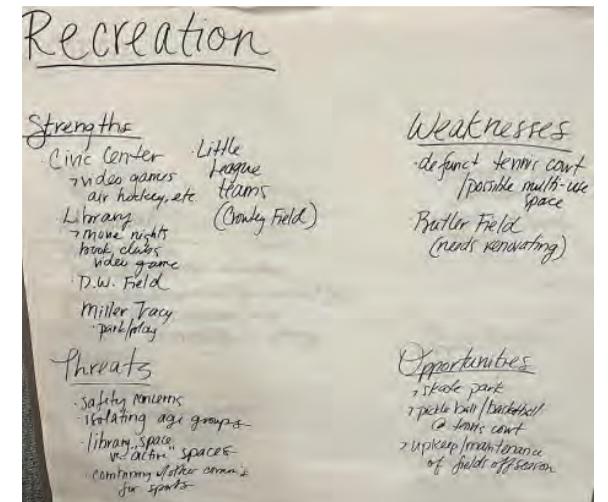
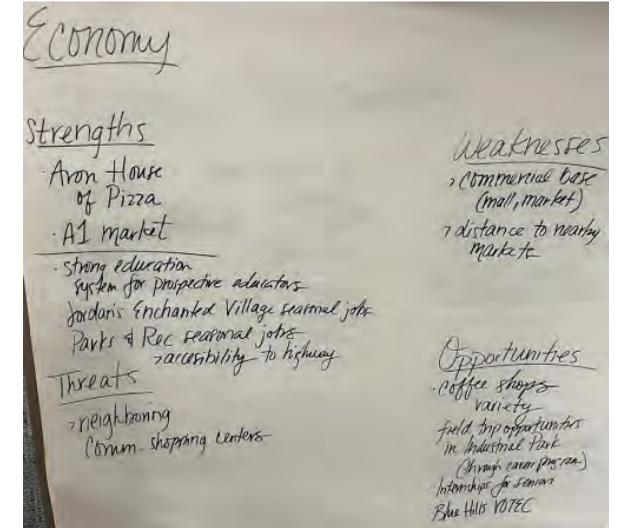
Participants also expressed concerns about external threats:

- Flooding, major storms, heat waves, and climate change.
- Increasing housing and other costs.
- Inability to connect to in-town or abutting community sewer.
- Drinking water quality risks, especially PFAS (forever chemicals, Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)
- Gentrification, displacement, and rising housing prices.
- Environmental and habitat damage.

We attempted to develop a focus group with traditionally underserved residents with the help of a minority resident, but were unable to attract significant participation. We did hear concerns about the town not being inclusive and minority voices not being heard or represented in town government.

Avon High School Student Focus Group

Recreation: Students expressed concern about the deterioration of existing recreational facilities, specifically the baseball and tennis courts and the outdoor field at Butler Elementary School. Students expressed interest in updating, renovating, and/or



maintaining existing fields in the off-season to utilize for different extracurricular activities or team sports. Students said that the Avon Civic Center and the Avon Library host a variety of activities and entertainment opportunities that students utilize throughout the year. One student mentioned that although these facilities and services are accessible, they are often attended by a myriad of different age groups, leaving older students without a separate space to recreate. Overall, they were interested in existing facilities being updated or renovated to fit their needs, as opposed to building new sites for recreation/entertainment.

Economy: Students focused on the lack of diversity in services in Avon and competition with surrounding communities' commercial base. A majority of meeting attendees stated that they travel to surrounding communities (i.e., Brockton, Braintree, Canton) for services and stores such as supermarkets, clothing stores, restaurants, and entertainment areas (namely bowling alleys, and movie theaters). Students explained that there were limited opportunities for part-time work in town (namely Jordans Enchanted Village and Park and Recreation for seasonal opportunities), and upon graduation many students feel that there are greater career opportunities in surrounding areas.

Community events: Students thought that there were not enough events (e.g., Christmas/Fall festivals, St. Michaels Fair, summer concerts) geared towards high school aged students. They were excited about the idea of food truck events with local businesses, potential opportunities for drive-in movie nights and the potential return of summer dances for middle and high school students.

Transportation: Students shared concerns about the safety of both drivers and pedestrians on busy roads with minimal speed mitigating infrastructure (ex. Harrison Boulevard and West Spring Street). Many students stated that they felt comfortable and safe walking around town or traveling by bicycle, but shared concerns about traveling via public transit. A few

students shared their experiences with the Brockton Area Transit (BAT) buses, stating that they are unsafe, unreliable, and largely inaccessible due to their limited routes. Furthermore, students shared that they would like to see bus shelters be constructed to protect students and other community members alike.

Overall, meeting attendees were thoughtful and pragmatic. They prioritized maintaining and renovating existing outdoor fields, adding public transportation routes and bus shelters, incentivizing local businesses to hold community events (e.g., food truck events, fairs, and local markets), expanding school events such as dances or student-led events for high school aged residents, and addressing the infrastructure constraints that limit industrial and commercial expansion

Final Public Forum and Public Hearing

To be completed after the final public forum.

3. Background & Past Plans

History

Avon was built upon the unceded homelands of the Pokanoket (Pauquonaukit) Wampanoag nation, the Neposet band of the Massachusett nation, and other indigenous and first Americans who inhabited this landscape since time immemorial. The European settlers believed that when they paid tribute to the indigenous peoples they were purchasing the land, while the tribal nations did not see co-existence as ceding land.

Avon has benefited from their extensive contributions, assistance, and traditional land stewardship. We commit to acknowledging and learning from its rich intertwined history.

Stoughton was incorporated, including what is now Avon, Stoughton, Sharon, Canton, and Foxborough, in 1726. Agriculture and then shoe manufacturing dominated then the local economy and non-farm job market.

In 1888, Avon succeeded from Stoughton and incorporated as a new town, named in honor of Avon, England, Shakespeare’s hometown. Even while shoe manufacturing declined in Avon in the early 1900s, it remained the most important economic engine, with residents commuting to shoe manufacturing jobs in Avon. By the end of World War II, shoe manufacturing virtually disappeared.

The completion of Route 128 in the 1950s and then the construction of Route 24 that followed transformed transportation in the region, allowing workers to commute further distances and allowed Avon to become a commuting suburb of the Boston metropolitan region. This continued the transformation from lower skilled factory blue collar workers to higher skilled

professionals, trades, and skilled blue collar employment.

After World War II, Avon’s population expanded to a peak of 5,295 in 1970. It then declined with the shrinking of average family and household size to 4,443 by 2000, and remaining remarkably stable since then.

The Avon Industrial Park was created in 1966 with Bodwell Street built by the town and accepted as a town street in 1967. The Industrial Park quickly dominated Avon’s tax base and generated far more jobs than there are Avon workers, creating a net in-migration of workers every business day. Its relatively low land prices, in comparison to the Boston metropolitan area to the north, and easy highway access on Route 24, continue to drive its success.

The development of the Industrial Park and the road network sparked the development of new subdivisions near the Industrial Park.

Limited water supply, lack of centralized and municipal



Figure 3-1. Goeres Square, with its monument dedicated in 2023, has been mentioned in past plans as a downtown focal point.

sanitary sewage, limited capacity for on-site sewage disposal systems, and wetlands became the primary limits to growth both in the Industrial Park and elsewhere in Avon.

The potential, discussed for many years, of municipal sewer serving the Avon Industrial Park and Stockwell Drive, and the addition of new water supplies for the Industrial Park provide the most likely opportunities for tax base development and potential housing growth. Regulatory limits, in addition to water and sewer, currently provide some limits to both housing and commercial and industrial growth.

In the early 1980s, the development of Stockwell Drive and Merchants Park sparked a successful big box retail area. Even with the decline of some big box developments in other areas, the area remains vibrant.

Demographics and Trends

Avon is a small town with an aging and relatively stable population. Detached owner-occupied single family homes are the most common housing.

Avon is part of the Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH Metropolitan Area (Metropolitan Statistical Area or MSA). The residential development pressures in the entire metro area have propelled housing prices upward in Avon.

Avon has a slightly older population (median age of 39.8 with fewer young people than the Commonwealth as a whole (median age of 39.6) which is already older than that of the United States (median age of 38.9) (using slightly different US Census datum).

The American Community Survey (see Figure 3.5, Population Pyramid), the standard census reference source, shows slightly fewer people over age 65 than under 18, while the Avon Town Census, which is probably slightly more accurate, shows slightly more

people over age 65 than under 18 (Figure 3.3). In any e,

Figure 3.3 Population Distribution

Age	Residents	Percent
95+	10	0.2%
90-94	31	0.7%
85-89	56	1.2%
80-84	96	2.1%
75-79	175	3.9%
70-74	229	5.1%
65-69	305	6.8%
60-64	364	8.1%
55-59	320	7.1%
50-54	311	6.9%
45-49	289	6.4%
40-44	302	6.7%
35-39	321	7.2%
30-34	353	7.9%
25-29	274	6.1%
20-24	282	6.3%
15-19	207	4.6%
10-14	187	4.2%
5-9	177	4.0%
0-4	192	4.3%
TOTAL	4,481	100%

Source: Town Census, 2023

In case, Avon has a rapidly aging population and will continue to have declining enrollments of Avon children attending Avon public schools.

Avon is 73.3% white alone (not Latino/Hispanic). The minority (primarily Black) population is large enough that all of Avon is classified as an Environmental Justice community.

Median income is slightly higher than the state’s but lower than the Boston metro region.

Avon has an increasing number of single older residents, many of whom are over-housed in larger homes than they need. The bulge in older residents and the increase in smaller and single-person households will continue to grow as the existing middle-aged residents age, almost certainly increasing the median age of Avon over the next two decades. This will continue to influence housing demand towards smaller and accessible units.

Avon has experienced a very slow but population growth in the 21st century (US Census). With only slightly more births than deaths in most years, however, Avon’s natural population trend would be virtually flat (Figure 3.3 Avon Natural Population Increase) if not for net migration. Avon has experienced its small population growth because of in-migration exceeds out-migration.

Sadly, from 2017-2021, 4.4% of Avon deaths were from opioid poisoning (e.g. Fentanyl), 11 out of 249, significantly higher than the statewide rate of 3.3% (10,304 out of 308,100).

Figure 3.3. Avon Natural Population Increase

Year	Births	Deaths	Net	Opioid Deaths
2021	58	59	-1	3
2020	44	52	-8	3
2019	57	36	21	1
2018	41	53	-12	2
2017	56	49	7	2
Total	256	249	7	11

Source: Massachusetts Vital Records

We project a small but steady population increase based on in-migration as part of the growth of the Boston metro-region and the demand for housing in lower cost housing markets, and the availability of new

housing. Absent new housing, however, with family and household size decreasing, requiring more housing units per capita, Avon’s population will decrease. Under most scenarios, the small population of youth, the aging population, and limited new housing development opportunities will make it highly unlikely that Avon will experience significant population growth over the next two decades. With the aging population and the decline in household and family size, in Avon and in most communities in Massachusetts, it will take more dwelling units to house the same number of people.

Figure 3.4 shows Avon Summary Demographics. Figure 3.5. Population Pyramid, shows population distribution by sex and age, and shows Avon’s aging population.

Avon has healthy municipal finances with an average debt burden, low pension liability, high median incomes, and a decent tax base (Moody’s reports www.moody.com/credit-ratings/Avon-Town-of-MA-credit-rating-800020593/). For aging residents on a fixed income and for households earning below the median income, however, Avon’s cost of living, especially for those who need new housing, can be a burden.

Avon has more industrial and commercial properties than many suburban communities, helping its tax base, but most of Avon’s tax base is residential, adding to property tax burdens for many households.

Avon has a split tax rate, with a lower rate for residential and a significantly higher rate for commercial and industrial uses. See FY24 Tax Rate, below.

FY24 tax rate	Residential	Commercial & Industrial
Avon	\$14.03	\$27.84
Holbrook	\$13.44	\$16.84
Randolph	\$11.45	\$22.17
Canton	\$9.97	\$20.80
Stoughton	\$12.73	\$21.29
Brockton	\$12.02	\$24.05
Easton	\$12.02	\$16.40
Abington	\$13.289	\$12.28

<i>Figure 3.4. Summary Demographics</i>		
	Avon	Massachusetts
Population (2022)	4,730	6,982,740
White alone, not Latino/Hispanic (in schools)	73.3 (37.2%)	76.6% (53%)
Black alone (in schools)	20.7% (37.2%)	7.5% (9.6%)
Hispanic/Latino of any race (in schools)	3.4% (14.5%)	12% (25.1%)
Median Age	39.8	38.8
Median household (family) size	2.76 (3.37)	2.46
Persons under 18 years of age	18.9%	21.7%
Persons 65 years and older	15.9%	17.3%
Owner-occupied dwellings	75.2%	62.4%
25+ age with bachelor’s degrees	21.1%	45.9%
25+ age with high school diploma	38%	91.2%
Foreign born	13.9%	13.7%
English Language Learners (Not speaking English very well)	15.7% (8.9%)	23.9%
Population density (2020) (persons/sq. mile)	1064.5	901.2
Median household income	\$97,353	\$96,505
Poverty rate	7.6%	10.4%
Area in square miles	4.28	3,533,038
Total employment in Avon	6,071	
Year-round housing units	1,830	2,913,009
Jobs/Housing Balance	3.3	1.94
Subsidized/Affordable Housing (7/1/23)	4.1%	9.68%
Total owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage that are cost burdened	250 (29.5%)	29.4%
Total owner-occupied housing units without a mortgage that are cost burdened	29 (7.6%)	18.8%
Total renter-occupied housing units that are cost burdened	169 (46.3%)	47.8%
Households with no vehicle available (not including those who cannot drive because of age, disability, or no license in a household that has at last a car)	1.6%	11.9%

Sources: US Census American Community Survey (2020), EOHLC Subsidized Housing Inventory, Implan data base, and Massachusetts Department of Education (2024) for school data. Avon school data does not include Blue Hills Regional Vocational Technical School.

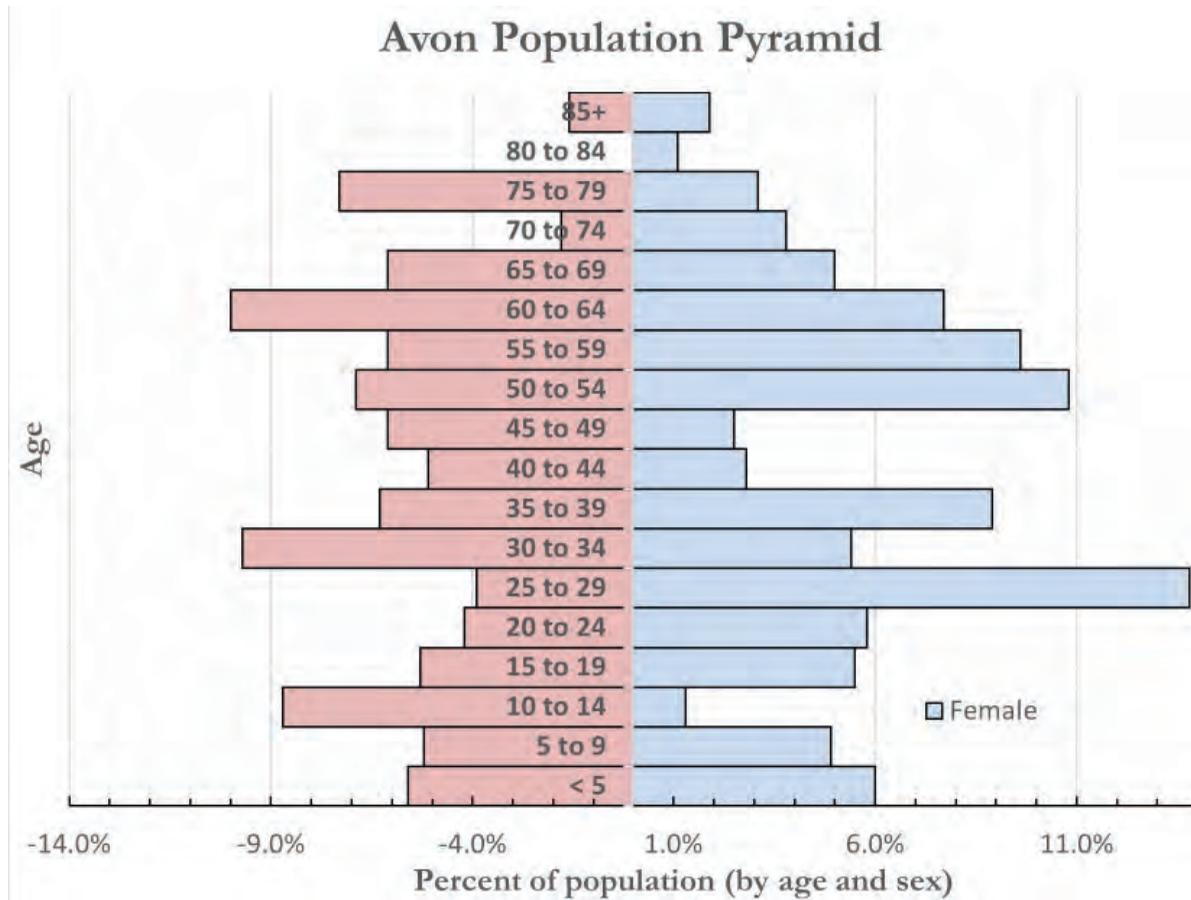


Figure 3.5. Population Pyramid, distribution by sex and age

Planning

Avon has a long history of collaborating with the community to adopt and implement plans. In the last four years, for example, Avon has created four significant town-wide plans, including the *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, the *Hazard Mitigation Plan and Municipal Vulnerability Report*, *Housing Production Plan*, and *ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan*. These plans have helped advance positive actions and attract state grant funding.

Both older plans (e.g., the *2001 Master Plan*) and current plans provide a vision, principles, and an action agenda that apply to this plan. These plans include, in chronological order:

Master Plan (Avon Planning Board with Old Colony Planning Council, 2001) was adopted in accordance with state master plan requirements (Mass. General

Laws Chapter 41, Section 81D). Avon adopted previous Master Plans in 1974 and 1964. The 2001 plan was a highly effective plan, but at 23 years old and never updated, it is now out-of-date.

The *2001 Master Plan* goals, excerpted below, and many of its objectives remain relevant to Avon:

1. Guide future development to meet the needs of diverse population groups, protect attractive neighborhoods, preserve natural resources, and open spaces, and continue to provide high-quality services.
2. Balance reasonable industrial and commercial growth with preservation and enhancement of the town’s amenities and residential character.
3. Protect and expand the town’s open space and recreation resources to serve the diverse needs of the community.
4. Protect watershed areas from direct and indirect impacts of development, to protect and enhance water resources including ponds, streams, wetlands, well sites and groundwater recharge areas, and to protect people and property from flood hazards.
5. Ensure the general health, safety, and welfare of residents by protecting water supplies in neighborhoods with small lots and potentially failing septic systems.
6. Provide sufficient land, facilities, and programs to accommodate a range of recreational activities to meet the diverse interests and abilities of Avon residents.
7. Work with the City of Brockton to expand D.W. Field Park, particularly along Harrison Blvd at Old Pond Street.
8. Protect and maintain the present housing stock while expanding opportunities for diverse housing types.
9. Modify the circulation system to meet and reconcile the local and inter-community needs of residential,

commercial, and industrial traffic.

10. Provide public facilities needed to serve the present and probable population.

Many of the objectives and actions in the *2001 Master Plan* have been accomplished or partially accomplished. These include developing the new Police and Fire Stations, maintaining the Avon Open Space and Recreation Plan, protecting surface and groundwater, improving access for those with disabilities, expanding D.W. Field Park, improving sidewalks, and providing an outlet from Stockwell Drive into Stoughton.

Other critical objectives and actions in the 2001 Master Plan remain a part of Avon’s focus:

- Provide municipal and other services that recognizes Avon’s changing and diverse population.
- Protect the open space and water supply value of undeveloped business zoned land surrounding D.W. Field Park, especially along Harrison Blvd.
- Protecting town drinking water supplies.
- Addressing sewage and water supply constraints at the Industrial Park and Merchants Park.
- Improving accessibility. Support the City of Brockton’s efforts to expand D.W. Field Park recreation, such as trails.
- Expand diverse housing types in appropriate areas.
- Improving the safety and pedestrian and bicycle friendliness of circulation routes.
- Better rationalizing where to encourage development through zoning.
- Continuing to work with Brockton to improve D.W. Field Park.

Key Recommendations from Avon Master Plan (2001)	
Recommendation	Action
Balance industrial/commercial growth with preservation	Intensify development of present industrial/commercial areas
	Modify and enforce land use regulations & zoning laws to minimize conflicts between zones
	Expand local and commercial office space in and around Goers Square
Protect and expand the town's open space and recreation	Maintain the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan to guide acquisitions/maintain state funding eligibility
	Provide public and semi-public open space town-wide
	Improve cluster development provisions
	Protect the open space and water supply value of undeveloped business-zoned land by D.W. Field Park
	Develop water facilities at Waldo Lake
Protect watershed areas. Enhance water resources	Reconcile potential uses of Lutheran Home property
	Cooperate with adjacent towns to enforce Wetlands Protection and Rivers Acts and Water Supply Protection zoning
	Establish a non-point source pollution control program for educational purposes
Protect water supplies	Identify and acquire land in aquifer recharge areas and zones of contribution to public water supply wells
	Meet sewage disposal needs of neighborhoods at risk
Provide land, facilities, and programs for a range of recreational activities	Resolve sewage disposal and water supply constraints in the Industrial and Merchants Parks
	Conduct needs analysis to assess the evolving recreation needs of Avon residents, especially those with disabilities
	Enhance the role of the Park and Recreation Commission
Work with City of Brockton to preserve D.W. Field Park	Provide adequate recreation facilities and maintain for safety and protection from vandalism/inappropriate uses
	Ensure that all facilities are fully accessible to, and adapted for use by persons with disabilities
	Acquire and map private holdings next to the park using private, government and non profit resources
Protect and maintain the present housing stock while expanding opportunities for diverse housing types	To develop bicycle and pedestrian trails for diverse users
	Establish a joint park commission to oversee park operations and set policies
Modify the circulation system to meet and reconcile the local and inter-community needs of traffic	Identify areas appropriate for moderate density housing and adopt appropriate regulatory changes
	Use of any public sewer system to allow selective higher densities in areas of high accessibility and amenities
	Connect Rte. 24/Harrison Boulevard to Rte. 24/Rte. 139 interchanges via the business/industrial parks
Provide public facilities needed to serve the present and probable population	Provide sidewalks where needed to protect the safety of pedestrians
	Establish pedestrian/bicycle routes between neighborhoods, public facilities, and employment concentrations
Provide public facilities needed to serve the present and probable population	Meet the long-term needs of the Police, and Fire Departments at suitable, central sites
	Meet long-term facilities needs of the Highway and Water Departments
	Rehabilitate and upgrade the library facilities

Community Development Plan (Avon Planning Board and Old Colony Planning Council, 2004)

This plan, written just three years after the previous Avon Master Plan and with a state grant (Executive Order 418), expands that plan to identify Avon assets and liabilities, analyze of open space and recreation, housing, and economic development, and identify strategic opportunities. Many of those opportunities remain relevant, including acquire land to protect Brockton Reservoir and Avon's portion of D.W. Field Park, improve joint Brockton/Avon planning for that park, improve water supply protection, advance recreational opportunities including trail systems, and improve accessibility.

Community Services (Karen Sunnarborg, 2011)

The social service needs assessment and recommendations were requested by the Select Board and funded with federal CDBG funds distributed by the Commonwealth. The analysis considered health care and mental health, life style, environmental issues, education and diversity, public safety, infrastructure, housing needs, town center/downtown, families and youth, seniors, veterans services, and community engagement. The Community Services plan informs the Services and Facilities chapter of this plan.

Capital Improvement Plan FY2021-FY2025 (Avon, 2020, periodically updated)

The CIP creates a plan for capital investments, using funding sources such as Chapter 90 Roadway Funds (state aid), ambulance fees, motor vehicle excise revenue, cash, and bond-funded general tax revenue. Future projects could include revenue sources from the Massachusetts School Building Authority and other grants and revenue sources. Future CIPs can incorporate a stronger connection to this Master Plan. Standard and Poor's rates Avon's debt worthiness as AA+ and stable, their second highest rating, which allows Avon to sell tax-exempt municipal bonds while paying at a low interest rate.

Housing Production Plan (Old Colony Planning Council 2020) provides a plan for increasing the production of affordable housing in Avon and a comprehensive housing needs analysis. The plan sets four relevant housing goals.

1. Create and maintain affordable housing that meets Avon's needs and equals 10% of housing stock.
2. Ensure new affordable housing is harmonious with the community vision of maintaining Avon's rural character and zoning.
3. Create affordable units through adaptive reuse of existing buildings and town owned properties.
4. Promote a diversity of housing options to meet the needs of a changing and aging population and promote a socio-economically diverse population.

Many of the strategies outlined remain relevant and will be discussed in the housing chapter of this plan.

ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan (KMA Architecture + Accessibility 2020)

Provides a detailed evaluation of Avon's serving the need of residents and visitors with disabilities and a plan for improvement. The recommendations are referenced in four sections of this plan:

- Open Space and Recreation - as relates to facilities.
- Mobility and Circulation – as relates to transit and transportation facilities.
- Mobility and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) – since accessibility is a key aspect of DEI.
- Services and Facilities – as relates to most of the ADA recommendations.

Avon Public Schools, District Improvement Plan: 2021-2026 (2021)

The two most relevant sections of the strategic District Improvement Plan to the master plan relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion and facilities. The youngest generation of Avon is more diverse than the oldest generation, so the schools have a greater diversity than the Town of Avon as whole. Although not specifically called out by name, Avon Schools have begun the process of addressing the aging physical plant at the Butler Elementary School.

Complete Streets Prioritization (CG Associates, Inc. 2022)

Complete Streets Policy (Select Board 2020)

In 2020, the Avon Select Board adopted a Complete Streets Policy, committing the town to consider the needs of all users, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, users of wheelchairs and power-driven mobility devices, and commercial and emergency vehicles in the design, construction, maintenance, and operation of transit systems. In 2022, MassDOT approved Avon's revised Prioritization list, prioritizing streets for all users, with a strong focus on sidewalk and sidewalk protection gaps. These principles have been incorporated in both the scoping/strategic plan and the circulation/mobility sections of this plan.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (Old Colony Planning Council, 2022, valid to 4/2029) was adopted with extensive analysis and community participation. With the plan in place, Avon is eligible to apply for grants administered by the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services through April 2029. Because the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is so recent, the Open Space and Recreation section of this plan simply excerpts and references the relevant sections of the OSRP. In addition, the plan informs the Natural Resources section of the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter of this plan.

Hazard Mitigation Plan and Municipal Vulnerability Report (2022, valid to 1/10/2027)

The plan ensures that Avon remains eligible for pre-

disaster mitigation grants and is positioned to minimize future natural and climate-change induced or impacted disasters. Climate change will lead to larger storm events, more frequent storm events, and increased periods of extreme heat and related peak electric demand, as well as significant risk of droughts and new disease carrying insect vectors. The Hazard Mitigation Plan informs the climate action and land use chapters of this plan.

Community-Wide Historic Properties Survey (Stacy E. Spies, Historic Preservation Consultant, 2023)

First community-wide historic resource survey of all buildings more than 50 years old. The plan identified one building, the Nathan and Almira Tucker House at 215 West Main Street, eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic places, created inventory forms of historic buildings and properties, and recommended several properties for future study. The Historic Properties Survey plan informs the cultural resources section of the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter of this plan.

Smart Avon Industrial Park (Center for Resilient Metro-Regions 2023)

This plan identifies opportunities for Avon Industrial Park expansion, within its existing footprint, from both sewerage the industrial park and zoning regulatory changes. It identifies easy short-term actions (primarily regulatory) that can provide immediate benefits even before the industrial park is sewerage. The plan informs the Land Use and Economic Development chapters of this plan, with much of the language lifted directly from that plan.

Technical plans

Avon also has narrower technical plans that are relevant to specific aspects of this plan. These include:

Avon Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024 (2019)

As part of its vision of serving every segment of the Avon population, the library aspires to expand on its success as a “go-to-place” and help serve community needs for more accessible-to-all and gathering spaces and expand community involvement.

Avon's Capital Improvement Plan and Financial Policies (Collins Center, 2020)

Detailed assessment of Avon's CIP and financial policies with specific recommendations to improve policies and take advantage of state programs and opportunities.

Localized Sewer District Feasibility Study, Avon Industrial Park (Color & Colantonio, 2013)

The plan identified one approach to sewerage the industrial park, with a soil absorption system in Avon receiving the final wastewater. The plan demonstrates that there is a viable solution to allow planning to advance.

Water System Infrastructure Inventory and Assessment (Tata & Howard, 2020)

This is a capital planning assessment of water system needs to allow for long-term water system planning.

4. Community Goals & Pathways

Avon's strategic goals and pathways to action build on the community vision and values. Many goals overlap subject areas. Objectives and proposed policies are in the subject area elements that follow this section.

Land Use Goals

Help Avon retain its small-town flavor, while serving all its residents' needs. This includes:

1. Preserve our beloved neighborhoods while allowing greater flexibility to meet changing demographics and housing needs.
2. Expand affordable housing in appropriate places and get local control for comprehensive permits.
3. Encourage resilient development in the Industrial Park, expanding the tax-base and providing jobs.
4. Encourage mixed-use development at Stockwell Drive, expanding the tax-base and providing new growth, countering the national decline in retail, and providing mixed-income housing.
5. Improve Avon's sense of place, identity, and community gathering spaces, especially downtown and at D.W. Field Park.
6. Improve water supply protection.

Housing Goals

Ensure quality housing is available to serve Avon residents' needs. This includes:

1. Preserve Avon's small-town feel with safe, comfortable, and welcoming neighborhoods.
2. Allow housing that serves our needs, including smaller households, aging populations, and new

families, with housing that meets their budgets.

3. Encourage affordable housing that helps the community achieve all of its land use and community goals are met.

Economic Development Goals

Keep a strong economy and tax base that serves Avon residents' needs. This includes:

1. Provide opportunities for job and tax base expansion at the Avon Industrial Park.
2. Provide opportunities for job and tax base expansion at Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive.
3. Increase Avon's focus on economic development.

Open Space & Recreation Goals

Provide safe gathering, meeting, and play places for everyone in Avon. This includes:

1. Connect and improve existing recreational facilities and opportunities to provide a range of recreational opportunities accessible to meet the needs of all residents, in or close to every neighborhood.
2. Expand recreational facilities and programs to provide universal access that meet the needs of underserved populations.
3. Protect and steward lands of natural resources, scenic, and recreation value and connect with each other and with neighborhoods to accommodate the needs of all residents and future generations.

Natural and Cultural Resources Goals

Preserve and celebrate Avon's natural and cultural resources for now and the future. This includes:

1. Protect our natural systems.
2. Expand nature-based solutions to clean stormwater, maintain comfortable temperatures, adapt to climate change, and build quality of life.
3. Preserve and celebrate the best of our history and architecture (especially downtown).
4. Implement the Stormwater Management Program in compliance with MS4 permit requirements and town regulations to protect groundwater and surface water, potable water supply, wildlife, and natural resources.

Mobility & Circulation Goals

Ensure that our residents and businesses can travel safely by any mode of travel. This includes:

1. Ensure that all modes of travel, by foot, bicycle, motor vehicles, freight, and transit are safe.
2. Maintain the small-town feel that demands safe streets, attractive streetscapes, and a transportation network that supports, not divides, our neighborhoods.

Community Services & Facilities Goals

Ensure public and non-profit sector buildings, facilities, and services meet our residents' needs. This includes:

1. Improve or replace public buildings and schools to serve the community and to create resilient energy efficient buildings.
2. Support facilities and services providing public health and social services to Avon residents.
3. Avoid adding undue tax burdens, now and in the future, calculating costs of projects based on total life cycle costs.

Climate Action Goals

Take climate actions to build resilience to a changing climate and improve energy conservation. This includes:

1. Improve the resilience of public and private buildings to foster energy conservation and prepare for climate change. Improve energy conservation and mechanical systems for new and rehabilitated public buildings to protect the environment and reduce life cycle costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Explore opportunities to decarbonize buildings when feasible, especially when state grants are available for this work.
2. Develop landscape nature-based and other resilience solutions to the impacts of climate change.
3. Focus on thriving with climate change and not waiting for respond to chronic and acute stress.
4. Address the long terms needs of our children, our grandchildren, and future generations, with a focus on climate justice for those residents who are most at risk from climate hazards and climate change.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Goals

Continue to improve equity, embrace diversity, ensure opportunities for all. This includes:

1. Reach across cultural boundaries or differences as a community, to foster inclusiveness in town government, to foster equal opportunity (to town services in particular) and enable affordable options to live in Avon. Understand the changing community and celebrate those changes and our collective community.
2. Identify and address barriers to equity.

5. Land Use (per MGL c. 41, s. 81D)

Avon residents are understandably proud of Avon’s land use patterns as part of reinforcing Avon’s small-town feel.

Avon boasts a number of parks, from the regional City of Brockton owned and maintained D.W. Field Park to small parks and recreation areas that dot Avon, an industrial park that is the envy of many communities, the Merchants Park retail complex, smaller economic activity on the east side of town, Walmart on the south, a small downtown on the north, and easy highway connections to the north and the south. Scattered between these facilities are neighborhoods that provide comfortable and safe living.

There are four focal areas with the greatest opportunity for commercial, industrial, or mixed use development:

1. **The Avon Industrial Park**- the best opportunity for industrial and some limited commercial (e.g., a hotel) to expand Avon’s tax base.
2. **Stockwell Drive**, the best opportunity for commercial and mixed-use (commercial and residential) and the second best opportunity to expand the tax base.
3. **Downtown**, the best opportunity to improve the sense of place and create some additional commercial and mixed-use (commercial/residential) development.
4. **The Village Overlay District**, across Memorial Drive from Walmart, has significant potential for housing and mixed/use if it can be tied to Brockton’s sewerage system.



Figure 5-1
Density
(residential)
Units/Acre

Table 5-1 Land Use and Housing Density

Land Use	Residential Units	Acres	Density DU/A
One-family	1,262	655	1.93
Two-family	228	66	3.46
Housing Authority	83	8	10.31
Apartments (4-8 units)	66	6	11.17
Condominium	58	17	3.81
1-family w/ADU	46	38	1.21
Apartments (>8 units)	37	13	2.78
Three-family	34	4	8.44
Mixed use	3	2	1.34
Other residential	40		0.63
Vacant residential	0	406	0
Tax exempt uses	0	25	0
Industrial	0	402	0
Commercial	0	282	0
Exempt commercial	0	9	0
Exempt industrial	0	5	0
TOTAL	1,857	2,847	0.65

(Mass Housing Partnership, 2024)



Figure 5-2 The reliance on septic systems for wastewater disposal is the largest limit to growth.

Sanitary Sewers

Residents want to protect their neighborhoods, enhance their downtown and parks, and extend sewers to the Avon Industrial Park and Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive to create new economic development opportunities.

The lack of sewer is the most significant limit to growth:

- The town has done extensive analysis to provide sewer service to the Avon Industrial Park, either with treatment at a town site east of the Industrial Park or potentially connecting to Stoughton. Because sewers could allow for more water intensive uses, the town is exploring getting Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water service for the industrial park. This kind of investment in the Campanelli Business Park in Stoughton has paid off, expanding development, tax base, and jobs.
- The town has done an analysis to provide sewer service to Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive, potentially connecting to Stoughton. Because sewers could allow for more water intensive uses, the town is exploring getting MWRA water service for the industrial park.
- Walmart is served by a private sewer line draining to Brockton. Avon has created a Village Overlay District across the road from Walmart with great density allowed if users connect to the Walmart sewer or develop a new sewer to Brockton.
- Avon Middle/High School is served by a Bio-Clear Packaged Sewage Treatment Plant. The town has explored connecting the municipal complex (town hall, senior center, library) to the plant.
- Most of Avon is served by on-site sewage disposal (“septic system”). Many homes and businesses require sewage upgrades at point of sale, reducing market liquidity. It is highly unlikely that these areas

will be sewerred within the foreseeable future.

Industrial Park Growth

There are two significant opportunities to expand what today is a largely built-out industrial park. First, on-site sewage treatment and disposal (“septic”) systems can be replaced by a sanitary sewer collection system (sewerage). This would allow an expansion in the footprint of businesses, increasing the square footage of buildings and businesses, and an expansion in the kinds of uses that can be accommodated to include businesses and uses with greater sewage disposal demand.

Second, regulatory changes that can allow infill development and expansion, with many of these changes possible even before any sewerage capacity is added. These changes can improve the resiliency of the industrial park, both by concentrating development in areas with infrastructure and by reducing the climate and stormwater impacts of businesses.

Recommendations

Preserve our existing beloved neighborhoods while allowing greater flexibility to meet changing demographics and housing needs.

1. Generally, minimize zoning map changes to honor the existing neighborhood development patterns.
2. Identify those neighborhoods that might be appropriate for higher density patterns, especially adjacent to future areas to be sewerred where sewer might be accessed, and rezone for higher density. For example, development is allowed
3. Explore removing some of the discretionary special permits that can provide unexpectedly dense development in areas of the medium and low-density (R-25 and R-40 zoning districts). If those uses are appropriate in a given neighborhood, it

would be better to simply up-zone that area, and otherwise eliminate the Special Permit option.

4. Consider a change from a minimum area per unit approach, which requires large expensive homes to provide a developer with a reasonable return, to a floor area ratio approach, which specifies the amount of square footage in relationship to the lot area and leaves it to the developer whether the build multiple smaller units at a lower cost per unit (of course, subject to on-site sewage disposal limitations).
5. Explore changing some uses from special permit, which can be an unpredictable process, to by-right, with site plan approval only. Site Plan Approval cannot prevent a use, but it can condition it, if the zoning has strong site plan standards and environmental performance standards. For example, industrial uses can be allowed but no chemicals are allowed unless site plan standards are met (fire and human safety).
6. Create a new parks and open space zoning district, for all parks and recreation areas, that only allows park and recreation uses. Because those uses are all that area allowed anyway, the zoning is not critical and would not result in any changes, but it is a truth in advertising so that zoning is consistent with reality, which is always a good thing.
7. Rezone commercial and industrial districts where wetlands and other severe site constraints make commercial and industrial development impossible to low density zoning districts.
8. Provide more detailed site plan approval review standards.
9. Consider whether the Planning Board or Zoning Board should be the Special Permit Granting Authority or whether to petition the General Court to allow Avon to merge the two boards together. A

small town like Avon may have a challenge getting enough board members, and there is a great deal of overlap on the expertise required by the two boards, so merging, with state approval, could be an option.

10. Revise the subdivision regulations with clearer traditional neighborhood improvement requirements to create quality subdivisions, if any more are developed.

Ensure local control for comprehensive permits.

Consider creating a Smart Growth Overlay (M.G.L. c. 40R) at Merchants Park allowing mixed use, with housing above the first floor or behind the commercial buildings. This provides the necessary mixed-income housing to support businesses, meet housing demand without going into existing residential neighborhoods, and provide the density necessary to eventually attract transit.

11. Create a local Comprehensive Permit equivalent that would authorize greater density for affordable housing with site plan approval and/or special permit, with the town being able to waive some standards but not all of the waivers that are currently possible and often undesirable with state authorized Comprehensive Permits. This can encourage affordable housing, which Avon could use, without getting projects that are out of conformance with this plan and town goals and objectives.

12. While still encouraging affordable housing, explore whether Avon is eligible for “safe harbor” from appeals of local comprehensive permit denials and conditions to the Housing Appeals Committee because of the percentage of land in Avon already dedicated to affordable housing.

Encourage resilient development in the Avon Industrial Park, expanding the tax-base and providing jobs.

Bring sewer to the Avon Industrial Park.

13. Rezone the Avon Industrial Park, even before sewer arrives, to increase allowable height, reduce required setback requirements, eliminate parking requirements, and add green infrastructure requirements for stormwater, vegetation, and trees. Many redevelopment projects are not possible without sewer, but even without sewer there is room for significant incremental growth.

Consider allowing mixed-use development at Stockwell Drive, expanding the tax-base, countering the national decline in retail, and providing mixed-income housing.

Consider zoning Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive to Smart Growth Overlay (M.G.L 40R) to allow mixed-use and mixed-income housing above the first floor and behind commercial buildings. This change is unlikely to happen so long as the current commercial uses remain vibrant in their current pattern, but with changing economic trends and the decline of retail it would provide more options for the property owners, options that could help meet Avon housing demand and reduce housing pressures in residential neighborhoods. The conversation of commercial areas to mixed use areas is a fast growing and successful trend in Massachusetts and around the country. Examples that are often cited in the literature include:

- Woburn Village, Woburn, MA (see MAPC 2022 report).
- Burlington Mall, Burlington, MA (see MassDevelopment 2021 and VHB 2021 reports).
- Capital East District, Madison (see CNU 2023 report).
- McCall, Idaho; Taos, NM; College Park, MD; Denver, CO; Las Cruces, NM (see US EPA, 2010).
- BrandsMart, Broward County, FL (see Capital Analytics Associates report 2020). Extend sewer to Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive. The sewer

would allow both denser commercial development, including a potential hotel, and the possibility of housing.

Improve Avon's sense of place, identity, and community gathering spaces, especially downtown and at Brockton's D.W. Field Park.

1. If the flyway bypass between Main and West Main is eliminated, making West Main intersection with Main at a right angle, use that available real estate for something that helps define downtown (e.g., a splash park).
2. As part of the D.W. Field Park master planning, consider uses that will become a community gathering place with more mixing between users. Swimming in Waldo Lake was suggested for swimming in the 2001 Master Plan and the 2004 Community Development Plan, but that may not be feasible or appropriate. Brockton owns the park and would need to coordinate any improvements.

Improve water supply protection.

Avon should purchase any parts of its aquifer Zone I it doesn't own if anything. (Zone I is the wellhead protection area immediately adjacent to drinking water wells which should be in Town site control.) In Avon's Zoning (255-5.4), Zone I is part of the water supply protection area, but it is not treated differently in the zoning than the entire district.

3. The town should examine zoning for Zone II and ensure it is sufficient to minimize risks to the wells. (Zone II is the area where groundwater is drawn down, and therefore creates the greatest risk of contamination entering wells.) Zone II is part of the water supply protection area, but it is not treated differently in the zoning than the entire district.
4. The areas between Harrison Blvd and D.W. Field Park that is either Brockton owned and maintained D.W. Field Park or is wetlands and that drains to

the Brockton Reservoir should be rezoned to a new park zoning district allowing only park, recreation, and resilient-related uses.

Regulatory Analysis

Avon has a regulatory and development review approach that serves many town needs. The strategic objectives of those regulations, however, are not always clear nor always consistent with the goals of maximizing economic potential and sustainable development.

There are five regulatory design principles applicable to selecting the preferred zoning, bylaw, regulation, and regulatory management approach for Avon,

First, the regulatory system needs to align with available professional and support staff.

Any regulations require both professional and support staff to complement the work of volunteers. The more complex the regulations and the development issues, the greater the need for such professional and staff time. Overly complex regulations can waste town and investor resources. At the same time, over simplification can create uncertainty, legal and reputational risks, and discourage investment.

Avon will benefit from their new planner position:

- **Before this staff addition, Avon had limited professional positions** who could coordinate planning efforts and regulatory reviews. For example, the DPW Director provided support for grant-funded planning projects, such as the Avon Industrial Park redevelopment project, but not for broader day-to-day regulatory review or management of private consultants. The Building Inspector did zoning enforcement but does not always have enough time to consult closely with the regulatory boards (Planning, Zoning, and Conservation), even though they were able to attend many of these board meetings. The new planning

position will help address these issues, but time is still limited.

- **Land use and regulatory have dedicated members and chairs** to do the daily work, but as volunteer board members they do not have the time or training for in-depth regulatory reviews or to streamline the process while improving the long-term investment and sustainability.
- **Board staff time, before the new staffer, was limited to staff support** (e.g., to prepare minutes), with limited time and expertise for new projects.
- **Consultants and the Old Colony Regional Planning Commission (RPA)**, usually grant funded, can support specific projects, but not provide day-to-day regulatory support.
- **There was no single point of contact** to facilitate the permit and coordination process. That still does not exist even with the planner position, but is critical for large economic development projects.

Avon's new investment in a planning, land use and regulatory professional position will pay off in terms of reduced legal and reputational risk, increased investment, productive use of grant funds, improved sustainability, and an improved quality of life.

Second, the "right path," the route that best aligns with town goals, should be the easy regulatory path.

In some areas, town regulations should create a floor, a minimum requirement, for development (e.g., one shade tree for every 20 parking spaces or a maximum paved area equal to twice the size of distribution building). The outcome that is most desirable from the town's perspective should always be the easiest regulatory path (e.g., allow a hotel by right, with only a site plan approval, in the areas where a hotel would benefit Avon). Projects that create more investment, more jobs, more tax base, and increased sustainability should be allowed-by-right, with only a site plan approval required.

Projects that provide less of those things should require a special permit or not be allowed. For example, a hotel is pure gold in terms of taxes (property tax plus hotel tax), co-benefits from visitor spending, and employment. Currently, because it only makes sense in some areas of the industrial park, this use is by special permit. Making the right path the easy path could mean identifying the area of the industrial park where a hotel makes sense (as discussed in the regulatory options chapter) and zoning that area to allow a hotel with only a site plan approval.

Third, uncertainty should be avoided because it is the enemy of sound investments and increases Avon’s legal exposure.

As discussed above, Avon relies heavily on zoning special permits and regulatory waivers. While this can appear to make the town flexible, with most special permit applications approved and unnecessary standards waived, it creates uncertainty. Avon will never know the investments that didn’t happen because investors or their attorneys and consultant teams did not pursue a project due to uncertainty. Every special permit or waiver issued or denied creates legal and reputational risk from property owners (for permits denied) and abutters or other interests (for permits approved). Creating more certainty, for example a site plan approval process that creates a guaranteed path to approval when clear conditions are met, avoids this uncertainty.

Fourth, a robust sustainability focus, with clear rules and minimum interpretation, does not add significant cost. It can add to Avon’s cachet or prestige.

Currently, there are environmental regulatory requirements in wetlands and stormwater regulations, with the practice being tying special permits and waivers to better performance. Instead, the town could simply require environmental standards be met, but with multiple compliance paths for the regulated community.

Finally, all regulatory requirements need articulate reasons.

Most, but not all, of Avon’s regulatory requirements have obvious rational reasons. Sometimes, however, the regulations seem arbitrary. There is nothing wrong with a tight regulatory structure that serves the town, but there should always be a reason for each standard. The example cited and illustrated earlier in this report is the 40-foot setback requirement in the industrial district. 40 feet does not create more attractive development than 30 or 20 feet, and, arguably, because it incentivizes parking in front of buildings to maximize available space, it could be making industrial development less attractive.

There are options for regulatory revisions specifically to improve the build-out potential of the Avon Industrial Park for both economic development and sustainability. Many changes can be adopted without extending sanitary sewers to the industrial park. Some changes, however, will need to await a definite date for when sewerage will be available.

The relevant regulatory system includes:

- Zoning Bylaws (Code, Div. 1: Bylaws, Chap. 255)
- Wetlands Bylaws (Code, Div. 1: Bylaws, Chap. 239)
- Wetlands Rules and Regulations (Conservation Commission, not codified in Code)
- Construction and Post-Construction Stormwater Management Bylaw (Code, Div. 1: Bylaws, Chap. 120)
- Stormwater Regulations (Planning Board, not codified in Code)
- Subdivision of Land Regulations (Code, Division 2: Regulations, Chapter 350)

Many of the potential changes would involve only minor tweaks, while some would require more substantive changes in vision and approach. Zoning, wetlands, and stormwater bylaw changes require Town Meeting approval. Subdivision regulations and Stormwater

regulations only require Planning Board approval. Wetlands Regulations only require Conservation Commission approval. In many cases, the current zoning does not always reflect town aspirations or the realities on the ground.

Table 5-1 shows zoning map mismatches that could be corrected without having adverse impacts on any property.

Chapter 14. Five-Year Action Plan, includes more detailed bylaw and regulations changes that are recommended for consideration and/or action.

Table 5-2. Zoning Map mismatches	
Area of Avon	Mismatch or Opportunity
D.W. Field Park/Brockton Reservoir	Zoned for development
Wetlands	Large wetlands zoned for development
Drinking Water Aquifer Zone, I	Stricter zoning possible
Drinking Water Aquifer Zone II	Stricter zoning possible
Stockwell Drive	Unnecessary limits on mixed use

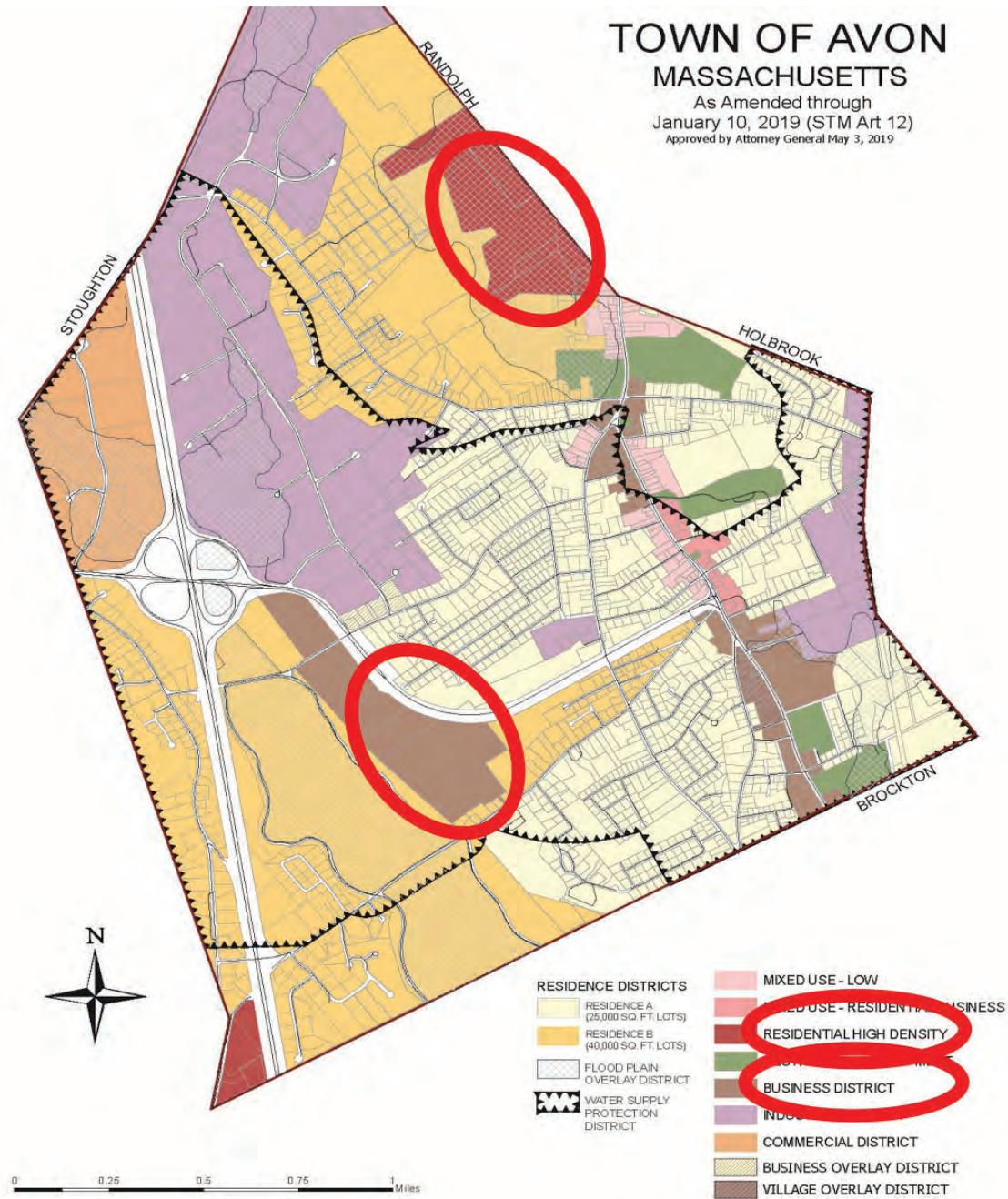
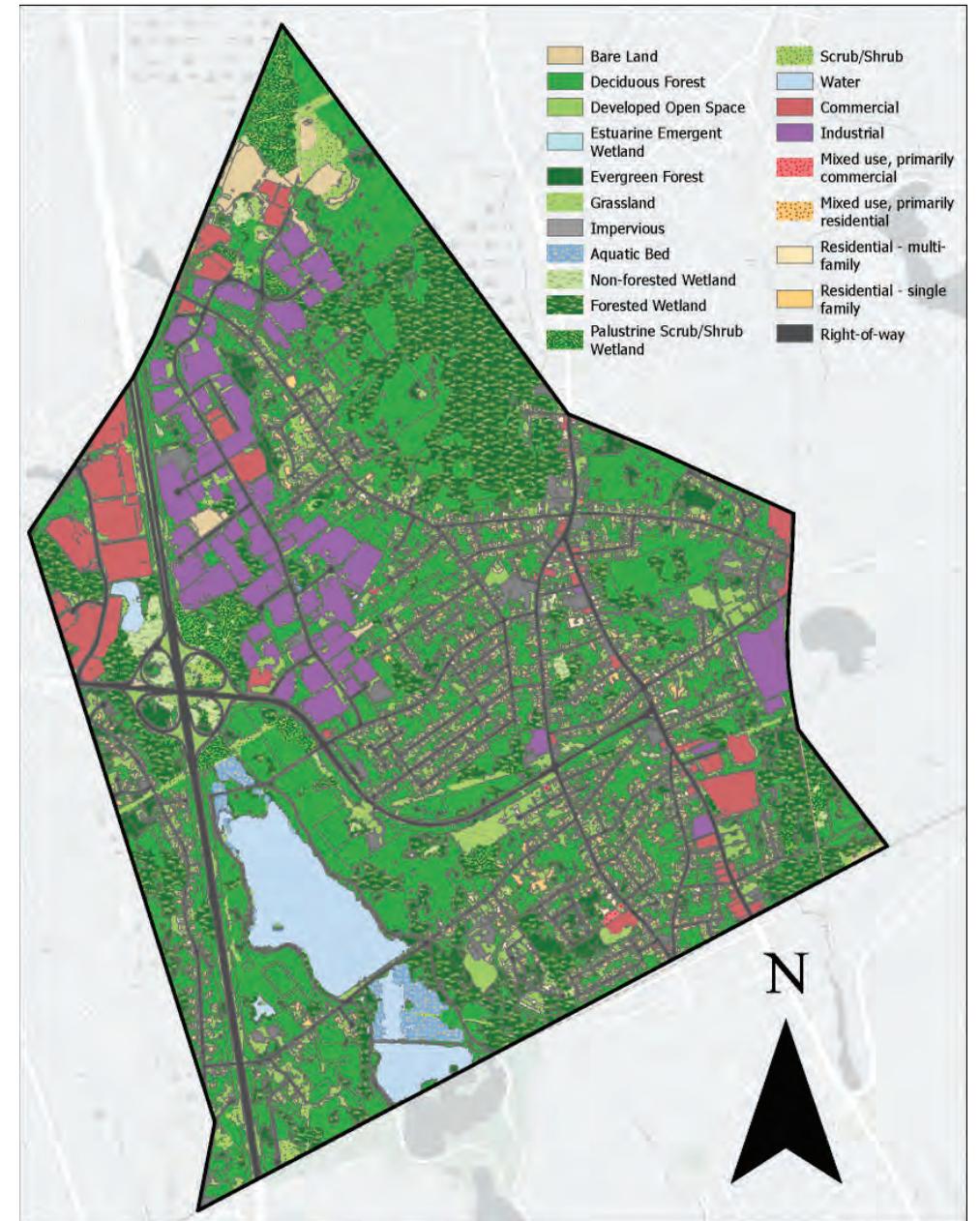


Figure 5-3. Zoning discrepancies (left)

Figure 5-4. Existing Land Use Map (right)



6. Housing (per MGL c. 41, s. 81D)

Avon’s population has been stable with a slow growth rate. At the same time, however, Avon is becoming far more diverse, with an increasing number of households and especially youth other than white alone. This is most dramatic in the schools, but diversity is increasing in all age groups. Despite this diversity, however, a greater percentage of Avon’s population was native United States born than the equivalent percentage nationwide.

Avon’s housing costs are significantly lower than many other communities in the region, but they have been escalating in recent years and many residents could not afford their own home if they were moving to Avon without equity in a home.

Because housing inflation has been so much higher than overall inflation, residents moving into Avon much have substantially higher incomes than in the past, making Avon unaffordable to many, including many of Avon’s children when they are ready to buy a home.

Table 6-1. Single-Family Home Assessed Values



Figure 6-1 Avon Public Housing senior housing, the only property listed on the state’s Subsidized Housing Inventory.

Year	Actual Mean Single-Family Home Value	Value IF home value went up at the same rate of inflation
FY2024	\$449,552	\$350,519
FY2023	\$445,240	\$340,009
FY2022	\$391,703	\$319,527
FY2021	\$338,411	\$297,290
FY2020	\$330,727	\$293,186
FY2019	\$307,040	\$286,073
FY2018	\$302,772	\$281,703
FY2017	\$276,197	\$275,989
FY2016	\$280,932	\$269,257
FY2015	\$265,610	\$265,610

Source: MA. Department of Revenue

28.1% of all households in Avon are housing cost-burdened, meaning that they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. (See raw figures in the background/demographics section of this plan.)

The average household and average family size has decreased in Avon but are still larger sized than the average in the Commonwealth and the nation and a significant number of grandparents living with grandchildren, with more than one third of those holding primary responsibility for children.

Even with the larger household size, however, over 10% of households are single person households, the majority of those being seniors, driving the need for elder housing and smaller dwelling units.

While single-family housing remains the dominant housing type, the development of new models of housing, such as the Village at Curtis Estates, shows an increased demand for condominium and multi-family housing at all ends of the market.

Most homes are owner-occupied. Avon rental dwelling units have a smaller average household size than owner-occupied units. The proportion of owner-occupied units explains, in part, Avon’s relatively large household size.

Avon has 70 units of subsidized affordable housing units for the elderly, owned by the Avon Housing Authority. As of 2023, these are the only subsidized housing units.

Table 6-2. Subsidized Housing Inventory

2020 Census Year Round Housing Units	Housing Units in a SHI project	Subsidized Housing Units (SHI)	SHI %
1,830	75	75	4.10%

Source: Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (June 29, 2023)

There are, however, several Comprehensive Permit (M.G.L c. 40B) projects are advancing that will result in more subsidized housing affordable units. The state goal is that 10% of housing stock should be affordable.

Subsidized housing is housing that is deed restricted to those earning at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). People in this income include many of the service workers who work at Stockwell Drive/Merchants Park, laborers who work in the Avon Industrial Park,

paraprofessionals who work in the schools, support staff of all kinds, and professional and trades people who are starting their careers.

The Income Limits chart below shows these limits for common household sizes. The most common source of funding for this housing in many communities is the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC).

The Avon Housing Production Plan, cited and briefly summarized in the background section of this plan, identifies many of the challenges. Many of those challenges are not unique to Avon. As the production plan reports, statewide “wage inequity, racial inequities, and a severe shortage of affordable rental homes leading to many vulnerable people unable to afford their housing.”

Recommendations

Preserve Avon’s small-town feel with safe comfortable neighborhoods, housing that serves our needs, including smaller households, aging populations, new families that want to stay in Avon, and housing that meets their budgets.

As discussed previously under land use, no large-scale zoning map changes in residential neighborhoods are recommended. There are, however, regulatory opportunities to encourage smaller dwelling units to meet demographic and budget needs.

Brockton HUD Metro FMR Area	Unit mix with Federal LIHTC	FY23 Income Limits by Household Size			
		1-person	2-person	3-person	4-person
Low-income (80% AMI)	Maximum 80% of units	\$66,250	\$75,700	\$85,150	\$94,600
60% of AMI	Minimum of 40% or	\$49,740	\$58,820	\$63,900	\$70,980
Very low income (50% AMI)	Minimum of 20%	\$41,450	\$47,350	\$53,520	\$59,150
Extremely low income (30% AMI)		\$24,850	\$28,400	\$31,950	\$35,500

US Department of Housing and Urban Development/Commonwealth of Massachusetts Income and Rent Limits, 2023

To this end:

- Avon should consider allowing attached and detached accessory dwelling units by right.
- Avon should consider allowing two family homes or two one family homes on the same lot by site plan approval.
- Avon should consider allowing backyard cottages on a new lot without frontage with a deeded right-of-way to the street.
- Avon should consider changing from a minimum lot size per dwelling unit to a floor area ratio system that would allow larger units or more units based on the ratio of dwelling square footage to the size of the lot (discussed in the Land Use element).
- Reduce the availability of special permit options for larger apartments that fit in the neighborhood.

Address the need for affordable housing, with local control over comprehensive permits.

The comprehensive permit law (M.G.L Chapter 40B, Sections 20-23) sets a goal of 10% of all year-round housing in each municipalities being affordable for those at 80% of Area Median Income or below. Avon needs 106 additional affordable units to meet this goal (per the Avon Housing Production Plan, OCPC, 2020).

Applicants can apply for comprehensive permits to create housing with at least 20 to 25% of the housing being affordable. The Zoning Board Appeals (ZBA) can then waive any and all local zoning, bylaws, and regulations if those requirements make affordable housing uneconomical.

Applicants can appeal any ZBA denial or conditions to the Housing Appeals Committee, who will often overturn the local decision, unless the community meets one of four “safe-haven” thresholds:

1. Ten percent of the community’s housing is listed as affordable on the Subsidized Housing Inventory.
2. The community has a current approved housing production plan and is annually creating new affordable housing units that meet 0.5% of the affordable housing gap.
3. 1.5% of the town’s developable land is used for affordable housing listed in the Subsidized Housing Inventory. The Town Planner reports that this threshold has been met.
4. Construction has started that year of affordable housing on the larger of a ten acre lot or 0.3% of the municipality.

Avon is receiving a record number of comprehensive permits that will increase the number of affordable units. It is possible that this will eventually bring Avon to the state’s 10% affordable housing goal.

Recommended actions for consideration include:

- Update the Avon Housing Production Plan (2020) in 2025 to create their own agenda for how to meet the housing demand and keep Avon housing affordable. Housing Production Plans must be updated every five years for EOHLC approval if they are part of a MGL 40B Comprehensive Permit safe haven.
- As discussed in the Land Use element, consider adopting a zoning Smart Growth Overlay district (M.G.L 40R) for mixed use with mixed-income housing at Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive and downtown, with 25% of those units as affordable and, for rental projects, 100% of the units counting towards the 10% affordable housing goal. This approach also provides for one-time payments from the Commonwealth when the zoning passes and again when the units are built, to be used for any town identified capital improvements. At both

locations, such mixed-income housing will add to the critical mass to support further commercial development and eventually better transit services, as well as reduce pressure on residential neighborhoods where new growth may be less desirable.

- Consider adopting a Smart Growth Overlay (40R) zone to replace the Village Overlay.
- Any Smart Growth Overlay (40R) at Stockwell Drive and/or Village Overlay should be written to allow commercial and residential mixed use, with residential including a small percentage of affordable housing.
- Consider inclusionary housing requirements with a payment in-lieu of option, requiring some affordable housing be included in larger multifamily and condominium projects, as recommended in the Avon Housing Production Plan.

Consider a local Comprehensive Permit option (see also Land Use element of this plan)

- Avon Zoning for Affordable Housing (“local-control” Chapter 40B equivalent) – The Chapter 40B, Comprehensive Permit process introduces uncertainty for Avon since it is not always possible to predict where large projects will be located and at what density, but they are providing affordable units. At the same time, the cost of entry into the 40B process (EOHLC eligibility letter and architectural drawings), makes small affordable housing projects harder. Some communities have adopted zoning giving them the right to provide regulatory incentives to provide a more viable path to affordable housing without needing a 40B comprehensive permit. This allows the community to decide what incentives work and what incentives they don’t want to offer.

This approach creates a local equivalent of Comprehensive Permit, with more town control

and incentives to developers, especially of smaller projects, to use the town process instead of the more cumbersome state process.

Encourage smaller residential units, both as standalone units and as part of multi-family housing.

Avon has lower percentage of small residential dwelling units, studio and one bedroom, than Norfolk County and Massachusetts (Figure 6-2 and Table . Smaller units are less expensive, serve the growing demographic trends of small single-person households at all ages, but especially pre-family formation households, single adults, and aging seniors. In addition, studios and one-bedroom dwelling units are less likely to generate school children, and therefore provide more property tax benefits.

Unit size	Avon	Norfolk Co.	Mass.
Studio	0.5%	3%	3.0%
1-bedroom	5.1%	13.1%	13.9%
2-bedroom	23.8%	25.4%	27.8%
3-bedroom	42.7%	31.0%	34.1%
4-bedroom	20.6%	21.3%	16.6%
5+ bedroom	7.2%	6.2%	4.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

American Community Survey

- Consider changing zoning to encourage smaller dwelling units by removing incentives for developers to build larger lot (e.g, allowing small lot size, less frontage, and other approaches.
- As recommended in the Avon Housing Production Plan (OCPC, 2020), streamline the permitting process for multi-family dwellings.
- As recommended generally in the land use element

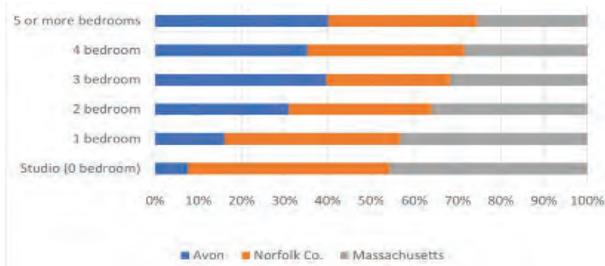


Figure 6-2. Bedroom Composition. Avon’s relatively few studios and 1-bedroom units increases housing costs, especially for elderly and young residents without children.

of this plan, improve the clarity and guidance to assist in the permitting of small units and multifamily units.

Explore options to allow a unit mix of housing that can provide less expensive housing.

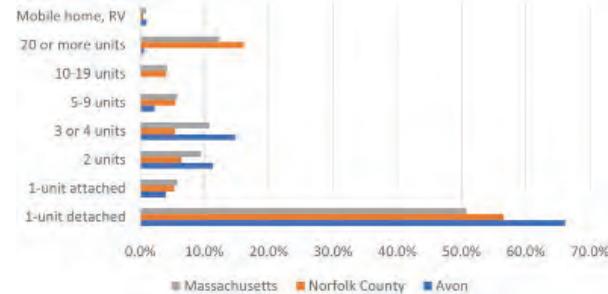
Avon has a slightly lower mix of 1-unit attached housing (e.g., row-housing) than Norfolk County, even those these units tend to be less expensive. Avon does, however, all ready have a higher mix of 2-, 3-, and 4-unit buildings than Norfolk County and the state, which may be one reason Avon’s housing is more affordable than that of many of its neighbors.

- Consider zoning changes (zero lot line development and reduced frontage requirements) that can allow and encourage one-unit attached housing.

Explore other resources that Avon can offer.

- Review the list of properties in tax title once a year and determine if any small property, presumably with a comprehensive permit or other zoning relief, could be used for affordable housing. The town can accept a deed in lieu of foreclosure for tax title properties.

Figure 6-3. Housing Unit Composition. Avon has relatively low mix of 1-unit attached units, which are typically less expensive than detached 1-unit buildings.



	Avon	Norfolk Co.	Mass.
1-unit detached	66.2%	56.6%	50.7%
1-unit attached	4.0%	5.4%	5.8%
2-units	11.3%	6.5%	9.5%
3-4 units	14.8%	5.5%	10.8%
5-9 units	2.2%	5.5%	5.8%
10-19 units	0%	4.0%	4.2%
20+ units	0.5%	16.2%	12.3%
Mobile home, RV	1.0%	0.5%	0.9%
Total units	100%	100%	100%

- Consider the state grant programs that can support affordable housing. These include:
 - Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) Housing Choice grant
 - Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) MassWorks Grant
 - EOHLC 40R overlay districts incentive and density payments

Improve the accessibility of housing, especially

housing aimed at seniors and those with disabilities.

The Avon Housing Production Plan (OCPC, 2020) reports that seniors are the largest age demographic, an demographic that will be rapidly growing at least through 2060 as the Baby Boomer generation ages.

Between the aging population and 15.4% of residents reporting having a disability, there is a rapidly growing need for accessible housing.

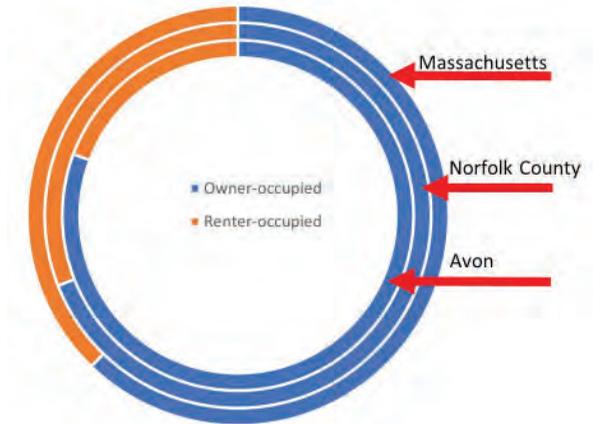
- Work with partners (e.g., Old Colony Planning Council) to apply for CDBG Small Cities funding for accessibility improvements for eligible populations, especially seniors.
- As recommended in the adopted Avon Housing Production plan, work with state agencies to develop group homes to provided supported living arrangements for people with disabilities.

Encourage a healthy mix of owner-occupied and renter-occupied tenancy.

Avon has a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing than both Norfolk County and Massachusetts. This can has a benefit of encouraging longer-term tenancy and allow residents to build equity in their home and more stability against housing inflation. At the same time, it is much for difficult or new households, young residents, and those who can’t afford to purchase their home to find housing.

- Encourage a healthy mix of both rental and homeownership options, providing encouragement for units underrepresented in the market.

Figure 6-4. Housing Tenancy



	Avon	Norfolk Co.	Mass.
Owner-Occupied	80.7%	69.1%	62.2%
Renter-Occupied	19.3%	30.9%	37.8%

7. Economic Development (per MGL c. 41, s. 81D)

Avon is a major regional employment and business center. The 435-acre Avon Industrial Park (AIP) has approximately 100 buildings with 3.3 million square feet of building space. 127 companies employ over 3,600 people in manufacturing, construction, research, distribution, retail, technology, and non-profit organizations. Avon's Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive provides a major retail, primarily big box, center.

Avon's commercial and industrial areas, however, are nearly built out under current regulations. The Town of Avon is facing a critical opportunity when considering its future, to learn from its past. Choices made by the town have proven to be helpful in the short term in terms of minimizing the financial burden put upon the town members, and yet, have undermined the economic opportunities that the town now needs for its future sustainability. The choice to not invest in sewer systems across the community over 50 years ago, today, limits the economic revenues that can support town services. To address the future revenue potential, the community of Avon has a variety of options, all of which depend on a fundamental choice of moving forward with linking the industrial and commercial sections of Avon to a sewage system.

While Avon has a strong tax base from the Avon Industrial Park and Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive, the lack of sewer has not only limited investment but led to significant spending by Avon residents to leak out of Avon to surrounding communities in such areas as hotels, restaurants, health services, other services, and non-big box retail.

There are, however, opportunities in the industrial park and significant commercial redevelopment opportunities throughout town.

Industrial Park Recommendations

Provide opportunities for job and tax base expansion at the Avon Industrial Park

The Avon Industrial Park (AIP) is an incredible resource, serving as a fundamental revenue generator for the town's needs. The AIP creates jobs for a wide variety of the workforce (e.g., services, distribution, and manufacturing), from high end jobs requiring advanced training (e.g., Cuming Microwave) to jobs available to those with lower educational attainment. Its proximity to the Boston Metropolitan market and regional highways, coupled with lower land rents, have provided unique opportunities.

The Avon's Industrial Park's is a success, despite the limitations created by the lack of sewer systems which inhibit businesses' abilities to grow. The primary industrial segments of light manufacturing and construction materials/suppliers provide strong foundations to build upon.

Development of sewerage capacity in the industrial park will immediately increase redevelopment potential. As a result, this will add significant value to industrial park parcels, even if current businesses have no immediate plans to use that capacity beyond discontinuing their septic systems and hooking into the sewer.

The ability of sewerage to catalyze development, however, will vary significantly on market demand and the potential for redevelopment to create a higher return on investment than current uses.

A sizable portion of the Avon Industrial Park is occupied by low water and sewage users, such as truck storage, lay-down and contractors' yards, warehousing, recycling, and truck storage areas. While these uses provide lower tax base than other uses, they provide an excellent return to the property owner. Given the shortage of such affordable space adjacent to limited access highways in the Boston metropolitan region, the demand for such space remains high. As a result,

only a small portion of sewerage capital costs can be passed onto owners in the form of betterment or special assessments. On some parcels it will take a long time for the redevelopment potential made possible by centralized wastewater to be fully realized, requiring the longer-time horizon that economic development investments can provide.

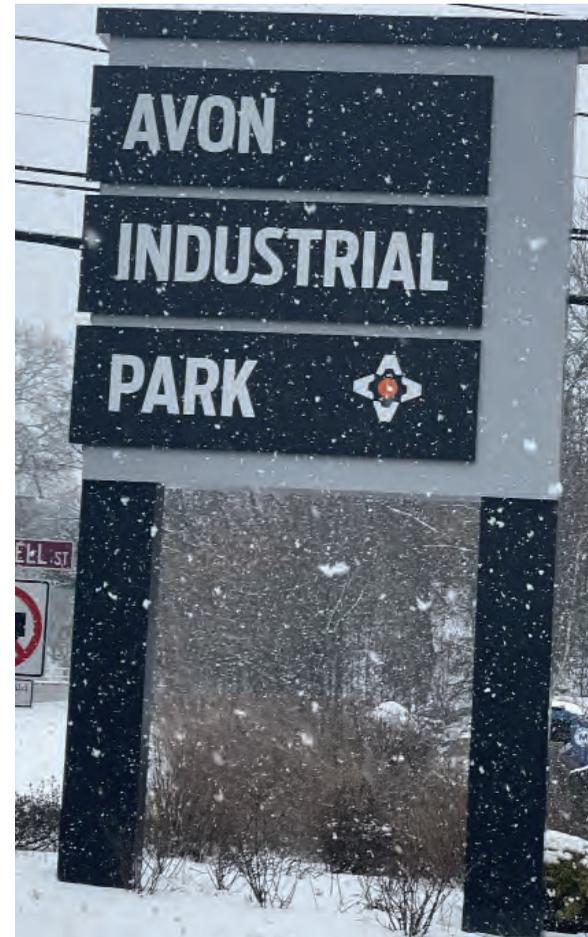


Figure 7-1 Avon Industrial Park is Avon's economic and job engine

Other higher property value, but still relatively low jobs generators, are in warehouse and distribution facilities, services, non-water intensive manufacturing, and certain offices. These uses, except the few that involve washing or processing, are also low water and sewage users. Again, given the need in the Boston metropolitan area for these facilities, warehousing, with its low water demands, is going to remain a significant component of the industrial park even with wastewater collection (Figure 7-2 and 7-3).

Property owners with low wastewater demand, predictable income and expenses, and low sewage demand are not going to change their short to medium term plans even with sewerage services (Figure 7-4). Over the longer term, however, as demands shift, many of these property owners will eventually want to redevelop their properties and take advantage of increased sewage disposal capacities.

The Avon Industrial Park is not a good site for highly water intensive manufacturing uses, given the long term limits of both water and sewer, even with new water and sewer infrastructure opportunities. The future, however, should be designed to accommodate increased sewer and water demand for light manufacturing, office uses, and perhaps a hotel.

Perform an Industrial Park Survey

- Work with the Industrial Park Association, local non-profits and/or the community college to design and distribute a survey to identify the current state of business health for the Industrial Park.
- Key questions to include should uncover the rent and lease data, growth needs, business clusters, and willingness to pay for increased infrastructure (sewer).
- Other key questions should uncover interest in additional services desired (e.g., marketing assistance, workforce needs, technical support) and in skills needed to allow business expansion.

Table 7-1: Possible Industrial Park Development Opportunities

Development Opportunity	Limiting factor
Replacing one- and two-story buildings with taller buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited market demand. Development is likely as buildings become physically and functionally obsolete and/or when the market demand is high enough to drive new development that can pencil out. Limited sewage disposal capacity and limited water supply.
Expansion, usually with small offices, between buildings and wetlands and property lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited space without zoning changes. Limited sewage disposal capacity and water supply.
Land extensive businesses (e.g., truck storage and dispatch, contractors processing yard) could be redeveloped as buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited demand, especially given that easy access to Boston Metro's drives demand for such business. As market demand rises, however, that will drive new market demands for redevelopment. Limited sewage disposal capacity and water supply.
More water intensive uses (e.g., redevelopment of warehouses for manufacturing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited market demand. Limited sewage disposal capacity and water supply.
Conversion of current low occupancy surplus parking areas and snow storage to new uses development. (Surplus parking is primarily car and small truck parking. Truck parking and loading areas are currently much more heavily utilized.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited market demand, especially for low water use development. Zoning limits. Limited sewage disposal capacity and water supply.



Figure 7-2 and 7-3. Many successful uses currently have little incentive to redevelop even if sewers were available.

Stockwell Drive Recommendations

Provide opportunities for job and tax base expansion at Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive

Changes in shopping habits, with on-line shopping competing with big-box retail, are undermining the previous big-box retail strategies. The vacancy found in Merchants Park illustrates these changing shopping patterns. Avon can build on its proximity to highways and densely populated areas in the region and begin to mitigate the spending leakage from the town. Avon must first address the lack of sewage infrastructure to ensure any strategy. Additionally, Avon, to raise revenue and economic vitality by allowing Stockwell Drive's uses to evolve the current single use area to one that serves multiple needs.

Attract a broader tenant mix, including grocery, medical, and entertainment uses.

- Build out a grocer, medical clinic, and regional entertainment and recreation attraction strategy to draw uses. Interview potential users in these categories to understand their location and space requirements.
- Publish a demographic and regional context 1-pager to explain market needs and service demand.



Figure 7-4. Warehouses pay good taxes and generate little sewage.

- Work with landlords with the vacant spaces to help market the units.

Create pop-up events for under-utilized assets to test the market and scale of demand.

- Encourage others to hold temporary events, e.g., food trucks, at Merchants Park parking lots to test interest and demand for food services.
- Build up local entrepreneurs and attraction to the area, by using vacant stores for craft business fairs.
- Partner with local organizations to tie events to non-profit and community causes to align interests and expand awareness to events.

Expand Mixed-Use Development

- Look at existing live-work examples in the region (e.g., Old Colony Square in Cohasset) to understand what zoning implications must be reviewed.
- Understand traffic impacts and sewage needs.
- Perform zoning analysis to identify the changes required to convert zoning to serve mixed use, potentially with apartments over commercial uses.
- Perform feasibility assessment to confirm market demand and uncover the impacts of the potential development along with revenue projections.

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

Strengthen Partnerships and Support

- Meet with regional economic development partners to encourage and coordinate robust activities (e.g., Old Colony Planning Council, Metro South Chamber of Commerce, Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network Southeast Regional Office, the UMass MassHire Brockton Career Center, Massasoit Community College, Avon schools). Align efforts to build out talent pipeline resources from direct placement, internships, or

apprenticeships and connect employers to public school career day events.

- Use the Industrial Park survey findings to identify needed technical support resources and partners to support industrial park businesses (e.g., growth, HR, financing, website, and technology support), connect with the MASSMEP to grow the Industrial Park manufacturing sector, identify market existing clusters, and outline future priorities.
- Encourage regional economic development partners to partner with a local college's real estate & marketing program to perform an assessment of the current efforts for business attraction and reputational payoff.
- Work with regional partners and the Avon Industrial Park Association, obtain a planning grant, or hire an intern to build out a marketing plan to attract additional businesses to the Industrial Park building on the strengths identified through the survey.
- Improve the presence of the Avon Industrial Park with signage at the Route 24 Avon exits and improved signage at the Pond and Page Streets industrial park gateways.
- Expand information on Avon's Business Resources web landing page to support businesses, including Avon's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) policy.
- Implement a business calling program to visit town businesses and ask them what their needs are.
- Connect town services (e.g., library, education, senior programs, residential support) to support the business environment and increase business awareness. This will help improve the sense of identity and quality of life that is critical for "footloose" businesses, defined as businesses that can locate wherever their CEO wants to live, and locational decisions.

- Expand successful local events to include food trucks and other activities to raise funds for local services and needs. Explore sponsored concerts and food trucks to test demand and raise Avon's profile.
- Build off current park events to extend the time visitors stay. Explore recreational tourism (walk/run races) on natural assets to increase awareness and connectivity.

Improve Civic Services at existing and planned facilities (library, schools, Council on Aging)

- Host a visioning session with residents, students, service stakeholders to uncover how to connect resources and physical spaces. Identify programmatic needs and short term opportunities that can fit existing and planned facilities.
- Conduct surveys to uncover demand/interest for small business incubation support services.

Explore Tax and Water Rate Structures

- Taxes, fees, and other policies are very important to business investment decisions, but they are only a relatively small percentage of total business costs are not typically determinative. It is extremely unlikely that Avon will switch away from a split tax rate, because of the enormous impacts that would have on the residential tax rate, but it does mean that Avon should be sensitive to other costs.
- Avon's split property tax rate, with commercial and industrial properties taxed (\$27 per \$1,000 of assessed value for FY23) at over twice the rate of residential properties (\$13.62 per \$1,000 of value). This gives Avon the 21st highest industrial tax rate in Massachusetts, while allowing its residential rate to be only the 171st highest. Some nearby communities (e.g., Brockton, Taunton, and West Bridgewater) have similar rates while some (e.g., Foxborough and Stoughton) have somewhat lower rates. This can discourage some investment but

it is highly unlikely that these differences in tax rate, however, is going to be a primary or even a secondary reason in keeping businesses away. It is difficult to change a split rate since it would lead to significant increases in residential tax rates.

- It is important, however, to acknowledge the high tax rate when it comes to decisions about how to pay for sewer cost to ensure that Industrial Park property owners are not overburdened.
- Avon's water rates are increasing block rates, the more you use the higher your rate. This encourages conservation and reflects Avon's costs in needing to have large volumes of water available on demand, regardless of actual use. This approach can discourage large water processing manufacturers (e.g., bottling plants, manufacturing enterprises with high volume water use) while they encourage warehouses and distribution, offices, contractors' yards, and other lower water users. With expanded water supply and sewage disposal availability, Avon could reexamine its rate structure.

Develop Tax Increment Financing (TIF) policy

- Ask Town Meeting to adopt a Tax Increment Financing policy, where some proportion of new investments are not fully taxed for some grace period. Absent changing the split tax rate, which would be exceedingly difficult because of the effect on residential taxes, a TIF policy will send a clear message to investors. Currently TIFs require individual votes from Town Meeting (e.g., Karas Glass, Figure 7-5) without clear guidelines.
- TIFs can be appropriate for industrial uses and footloose businesses that can locate wherever they want. They are not appropriate for site-dependent uses like restaurants and retailers who develop where the market is and not based on tax rates. While a TIF can attract investment in what is otherwise a high industrial and commercial rate,

they should not undercut existing businesses who have been supporting jobs and taxes for years. TIFs are more important in leveraging Commonwealth industrial and commercial incentives by showing that the Town has skin in the game than the actual small savings they provide an investor.



Figure 7-5. Karas received tax increment financing without a comprehensive TIF policy.

8. Open Space & Recreation (per MGL c. 41, S. 81D)

Avon recently adopted, after an extensive public process, the [Avon Open Space and Recreation Plan \(2022-2029\)](#), or OSRP, (Old Colony Planning Council 2022). Because that plan is so recent, this plan simply excerpts the most relevant and important recommendations in the OSRP. Other aspects of the OSRP have informed the Natural and Cultural Resources section of this plan.

“This [OSRP] continues the ongoing efforts by the Town of Avon to protect natural resources, conserve open space, develop community gathering spaces, and provide a variety of well-maintained recreational opportunities.

In 2024, Avon purchased the 29.97 acre “Edwards property” (Figure 9-1, with the new purchase outlined in orange). This is a major expansion of the D.W. Field Park, with the purchase to be owned by the Town of Avon, in partnership with Wildlands Trust. Except for this purchase, D.W. Field Park in Brockton and Avon is owned and managed by the City of Brockton. This purchase is one of the first significant outcomes of the joint Avon, Brockton, Wildlands Trust, Old Colony Planning Council D.W. Field initiative. That effort aims to improve the shared D.W. Field Park planning. There are other key land preservation possibilities that can expand open space in Avon.

D.W. Field Park has a unique arrangement since, except for that 29.97 acres, the entire park, even those sections in Avon, is owned, managed, and maintained by the City of Brockton. Avon can work to improve its new purchase and the quality of the Town-owned section of Old Pond Street, and potentially add additional parking by the gate off Harrison Boulevard, but otherwise Avon’s role is limited to supporting Brockton work and potentially be a co-applicant for grant requests.

Major OSRP Goals

- **Connect and improve recreational facilities and opportunities to provide a range of recreational opportunities accessible to meet the needs of all residents, in or close to every neighborhood.**
- **Provide universal access to recreational facilities and programs to meet the needs of underserved populations.**
- **Protect and steward lands of natural resources, scenic, and recreation value, connecting with each other and with neighborhoods to accommodate the needs of all residents and be enjoyed by future generations.**
- **Implement the Stormwater Management Program in compliance with Stormwater Management Regulations to ensure groundwater and surface water are protected as clean and abundant resources to preserve and protect the town’s water supply, wildlife, and other natural resources.**
- **Manage and protect natural and recreational resources through planning, coordinating, and advocacy that provides adequate, dedicated funding sources for open space and recreational facility acquisition and maintenance to protect natural resources while encouraging appropriate public use.**

See the full open space and recreation plan for all recommendations, incorporated hereto by reference.



Figure 8-1. D.W. Field 2024 expansion



Figure 8-2. D.W. Field Park trails

9. Natural & Cultural Resources (per MGL c. 41, s. 81D)

Avon has a rich human history and cultural resources that deserve to be celebrated. First used as a Native American or First American hunting ground and early settlements for thousands of years, European settlers arrived in 1630, when the English obtained the rights from the Native American or First Americans to settle. Originally chartered as Stoughton (1726), what is now Avon eventually succeeded (1888). Figure 9-1 shows the historic sites mapped within the MassGIS system.

Historic and Cultural Resources

The Historic Commission recently sponsored Avon's first comprehensive historic inventory, Community-Wide Historic Properties Survey (Stace E. Spies, 2023). That inventory:

- Found that the Nathan and Almira Tucker House, 215 West Main Street, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic places (Figure 9-2).
- Created inventory forms of historic buildings and properties that can be used for future project review.
- Recommended several properties for future study

Celebrate Avon's architecture and history

- Continue to expand inventory (Form Bs) for remaining historic properties.
- Sponsor plaques to honor history.
- Sponsor yearly awards to historic or architecturally significant work of special value.
- Provide more information on the web on history and architecture of Avon.

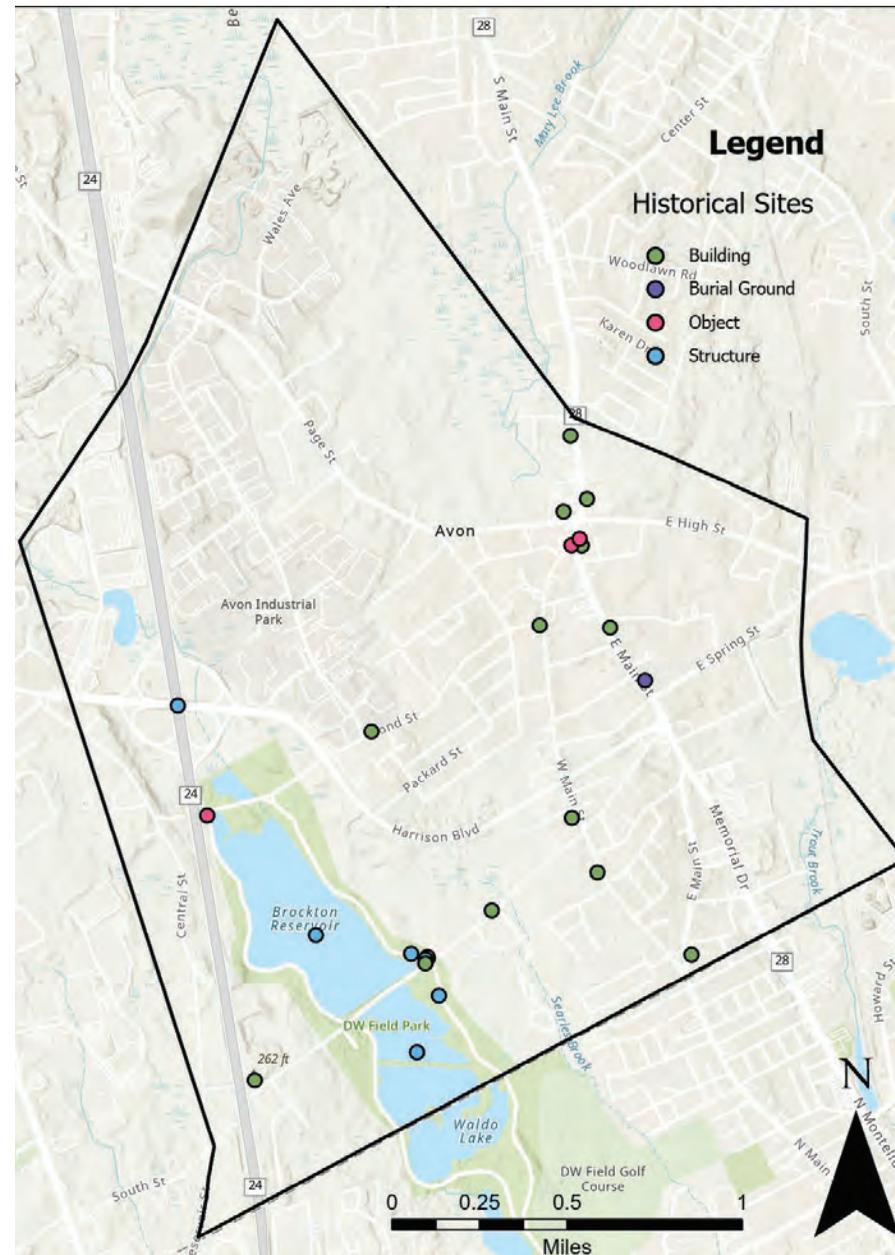


Figure 9-1 Avon Historic Sites



Figure 9-2. Nathan and Almira Tucker House, 215 West Main St. (Historic Commission inventory)

- Celebrate the Native American history of Avon, with links to external websites on that history.
- Apply for Mass Historic Commission's grants for historic preservation and celebration.
- Provide information on historic Avon cemeteries (e.g., Avon Cemetery (1888), Memorial Drive, 80 Memorial Drive; Curtis Family Cemetery (1812-1856), Page Street; East Main Street Cemetery (1755-1888); St. Michael Cemetery, East Spring Street; and Dunbar Martrick Cemetery, Wales Ave.

Natural Resources

Natural resources provide ecosystem services, cleaning the air and the water, cooling temperatures, mitigating stormwater, major storms, and climate change, all for a fraction of the cost of human-built systems.

See also

- 5. Land Use and 14. Five-Year Action Plan for recommendations on regulatory changes to Site Plan Review and Environmental Performance Standards that would improve stormwater and address development environmental issues.
- 8. Open Space & Recreation for recommendations on open space preservation and walking trails within protected open space.
- 12. Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resilience recommendations on addressing stormwater and climate change impacts on natural resources.

Review all new town projects to determine if nature based solutions and ecosystem services can reduce life cycle costs.

- Discharging stormwater into drainage swales, rain gardens, and similar systems is typically cheaper in the long run than running pipes and “gray infrastructure,” even with often higher maintenance costs. These systems also increase groundwater recharge, maintaining groundwater drinking water supplies and reducing downstream flooding.
- In spite of higher initial costs and on-going cleaning costs, pervious pavement has lower life cycle costs, far less icing problems, and far higher groundwater recharge than traditional pavement on relatively flat sites with pervious soils and some separation to groundwater.
- Solar photovoltaic, even with initial installation cost included, has far lower life cycle costs than

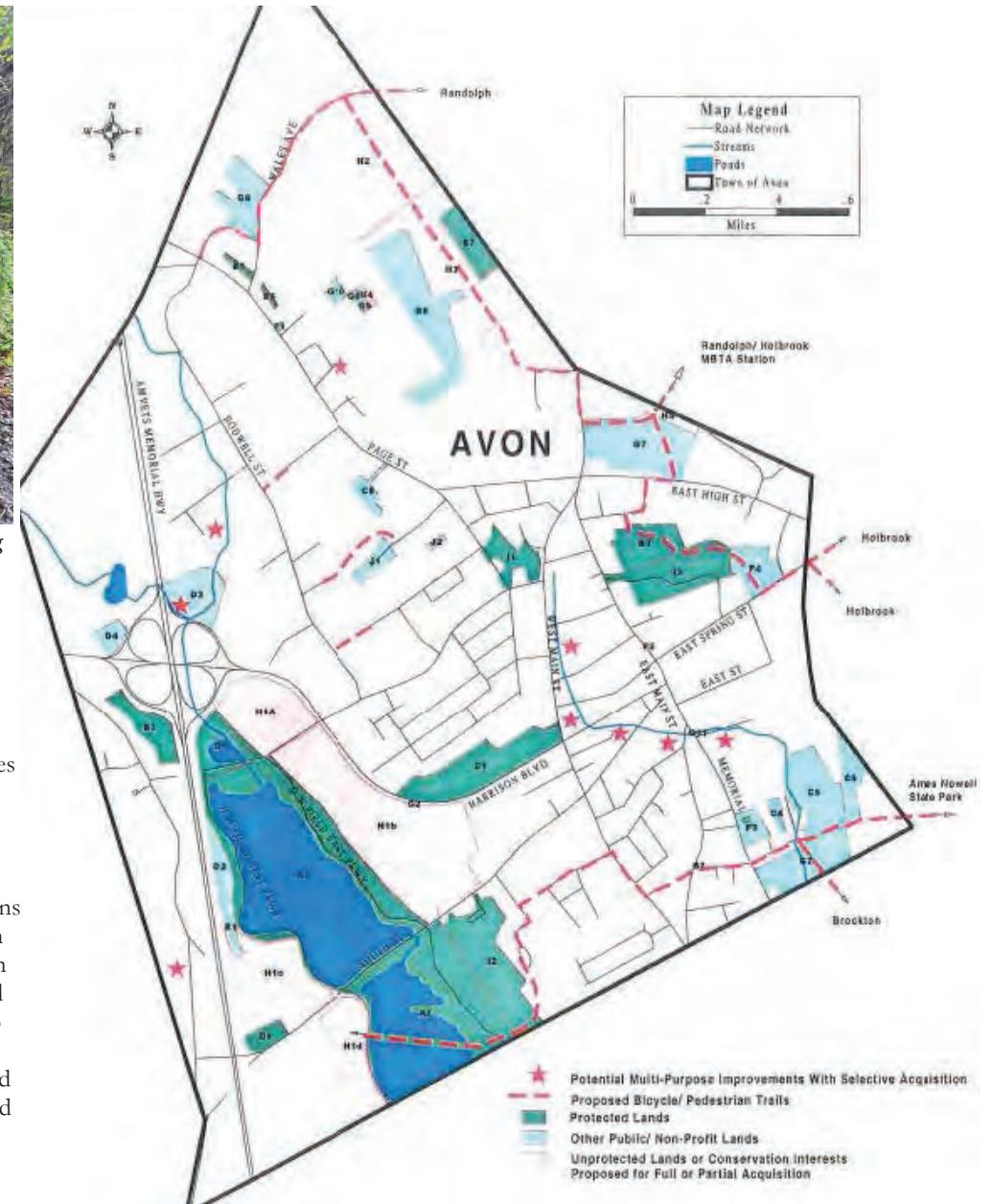


Figure 9-3. Wetlands in the Industrial Park provide ecosystem services, cleaning and storing stormwater.

- purchasing electricity on the grid.
- Street trees reduce summer heat island (heat of pavement), reducing air conditioning costs and increasing the distances that residents are willing to walk.
- Ground and air heat pumps, even with higher installation costs, have lower maintenance costs and use far less energy, especially in the summer but increasingly in the winter with more efficient heat pumps, than alternative space and water heating and cooling.
- Walking and bicycling routes provide the lowest cost of travel per person mile traveled, promote healthy lifestyles and reduce diseases such as diabetes, heart attacks, and strokes, a reduce traffic congestion on roads, and can lower town transportation costs (especially if fewer school buses are needed).

Develop walking and bicycling trails.

8. Open Space & Recreation Avon’s Open Space & Recreation Plan detail opportunities for trails on conservation and recreation properties. Other trails to destinations provide recreation and transportation opportunities, and sometimes lead to mode shift from motor vehicles and reduce the demand for parking.



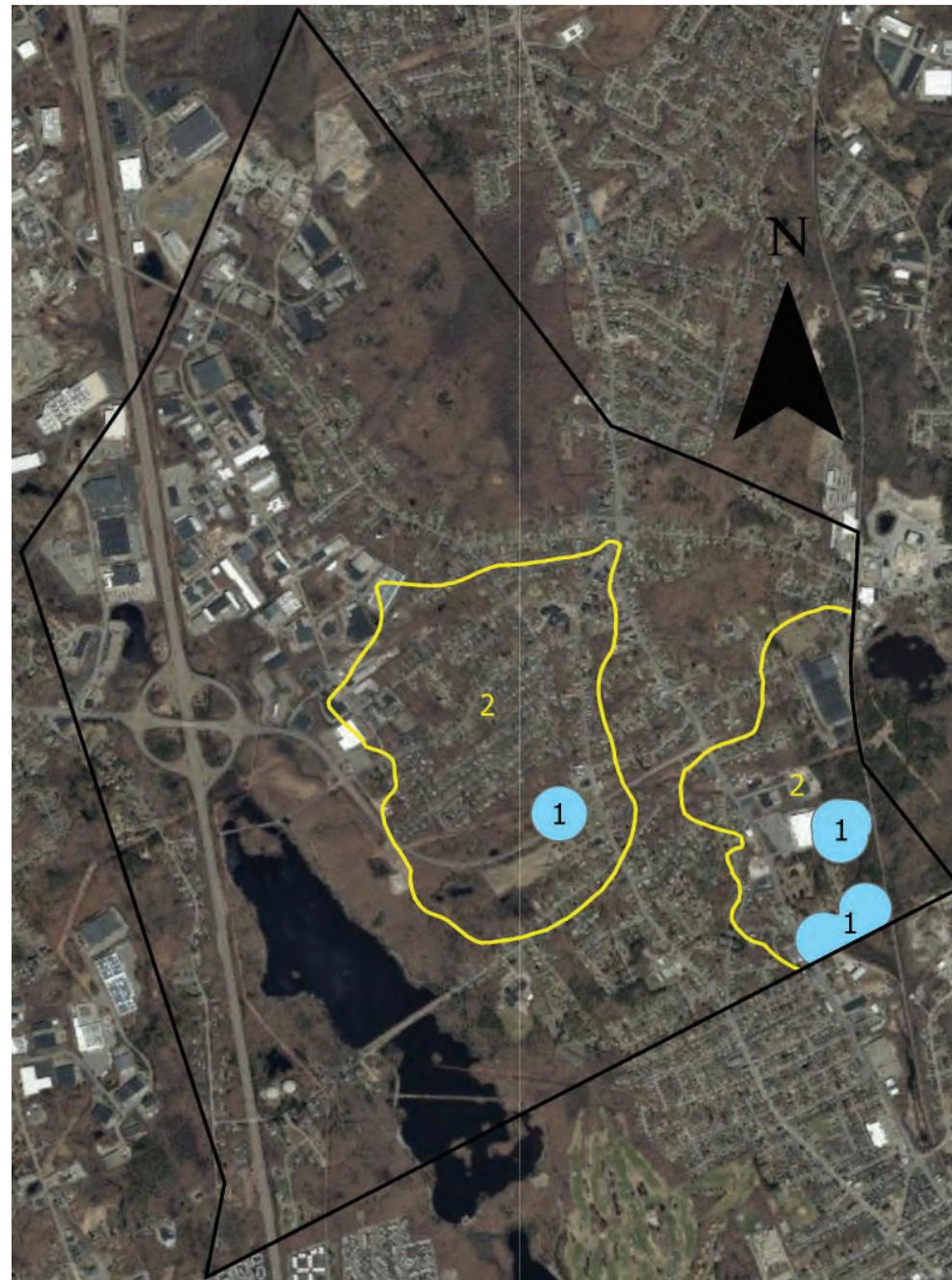
- The Butler Elementary School has large seas of unused parking during the summer and weekends, the very times when D.W. Field Park parking is in the greatest demand. A trail from the school to the park would provide recreation opportunities for children, for the adjacent neighborhoods, and could allow visitors to park in the vacant school parking lot when school is not in session and walk to the park.

Improve drinking water protection for Avon’s aquifer Zone 1 and Zone 2.

Avon has robust water supply protection regulations, codified in *Zoning Section 255-5.4 Water Supply Protection District*. The rules, however, treat the entire drinking water aquifer the same, without different regulations for the far more sensitive Zone I and Zone II. Zone I is the wellhead protection area that should be permanently protected open space. Zone II is the area of influence above the cone of depression, the area where groundwater levels drop when the well is working at its maximum safe yield capacity.

The Board of Health regulations requires a greater horizontal separation between a leach field and a tributary to a public well, but they do not require a greater vertical separation to groundwater or set a standard for increased residency time for sewage disposal and treatment.

- Create a new zoning district for Water Supply Aquifer Zone I and Zone II where virtually no new use is permitted and where lot size is 80,000 square feet or more.
- Increase town water supply purchase efforts to purchase any part of Zone I that is not already town owned and to purchase any vacant property in Zone II that comes on the market.
- Improve stormwater facilities in Zone I and II to ensure greater treatment of nutrients (especially



nitrogen) and increase the rate of retention of stormwater above the groundwater level.

- Amend the Board of Health regulations to ban on-site sewage disposal within Zone I and to increase the required depth to groundwater below a leach field within Zone II. Add a performance standard that there should be a minimum of retention time for a septic system, new or existing, in Zone II (calculated using soil permeability and Darcy’s Law) between the leach field and groundwater feeding Avon’s town wells.

10. Mobility and Circulation (per MGL c. 41, s. 81D)

Avon's circulation system can be characterized as primary suburban, focused mostly on automobile and light truck access and circulation. However, historically as a streetcar suburb of Boston, the downtown and nearby neighborhoods west along High and Pond Streets and south along West and East Main Streets have a more urban structure of smaller blocks and multiple connections that once supported a more walkable tradition. Residents speak of a time in the middle of the last century when walking in downtown or to elementary school was typical and safe. Unfortunately, deference to automobile travel has made other modes of travel unappealing or unsafe, compromising the small-town character of Avon and leaving many of its small community streets feeling like vehicular arterials.

While the historic advantage of Avon's convenient highway access helped it grow in the years after World War II, this convenience has made the town a cut-through for nearby communities seeking to get to Route 24. Traffic to and from Hollbrook and especially Brockton uses Rt. 28 and Harrison Boulevard to access the highway, putting much burden on streets like High, Pond and East and West Main (Figure 10-1). Meanwhile Avon's success leveraging its convenient highway access for industrial development along Bodwell Street has also promoted heavy truck traffic, which impacts intersections and access on High and especially Pond Streets.

Roadway System

The predominant roadway corridors of Avon are: Route 24, a six lane (changing to four lanes south of Avon), north-south, limited-access highway on the western edge of town; and Route 28, a two-four lane, north-south, surface-level principal arterial on the eastern



Figure 10-1. The downtown intersection of Main Street (Rt. 28) and High Street is characterized by ample vehicle capacity and traffic, with minimal accommodation for people walking.

edge of town. High Street is a collector cutting between and beyond these highways along the northerly edge of town, and Harrison Boulevard—a limited-access, two-lane arterial—along with East Spring Street form a southerly connection between and beyond these highways in the southerly part of town. The only other designated arterials are the industrial Bodwell and its Pond Street connection to Harrison Boulevard, as well as West and East Main Streets near Route 28—though the remainder of Pond Street acts much like a minor arterial. Nearly every other street in town is a small residential street connecting into one of these arterials.



Figure 10-2. Avon's highway, arterial and street network with predominant cut-through routes shown.

The limited arterial network is more than sufficient to accommodate Avon's own traffic demands, but its ample capacity has been a benefit to cut-through travelers (Figure 10-2). A notable effect is high speeds, especially on Route 28 and Harrison Boulevard, the latter of which has recently had a large safety median wall installed to mitigate recurrent lane departure crashes at its bend near the Brockton Reservoir. The combination of higher volumes and speeds make the use of other modes of travel along Avon's arterials feel uncomfortable and unsafe.

Walk Safety

Downtown Avon and the nearby Pond Street neighborhood retain a rather extensive sidewalk network, and all arterials plus South and Central Streets have sidewalks for most of their length. However, the majority of streets in Avon lack a sidewalk, and none of these streets have marked crosswalks. Even where there are sidewalks, crosswalks are mostly across side streets with very few arterial crossings in town.

The Town has recently conducted extensive upgrades

to its walking network with new ADA-compliant curb ramps, new concrete, and newly-painted continental standard or “ladder-style” crosswalks throughout its sidewalk network. Unfortunately much of this network is not accessible for the majority of homes without first crossing and walking along streets without crosswalks and sidewalks (Figures 10-3 and 10-4). As a result of the unsafe arterial crossings, schools need to bus some students who in other communities with safer crossings would not require busing. Residents also noted their lack of comfort letting children walk in town, thereby contributing to many extra automobile trips for school drop-off and pick-up.

Transit Access

Compared to many other bedroom suburbs in metro-



Figure 10-3. A typical crossing in the Pond Street neighborhood only carries across the minor side street with no crosswalk for the higher volume arterial. West Main Street has only six crosswalks on its entire length of nearly 1.5 miles through some of Avon’s densest neighborhoods.

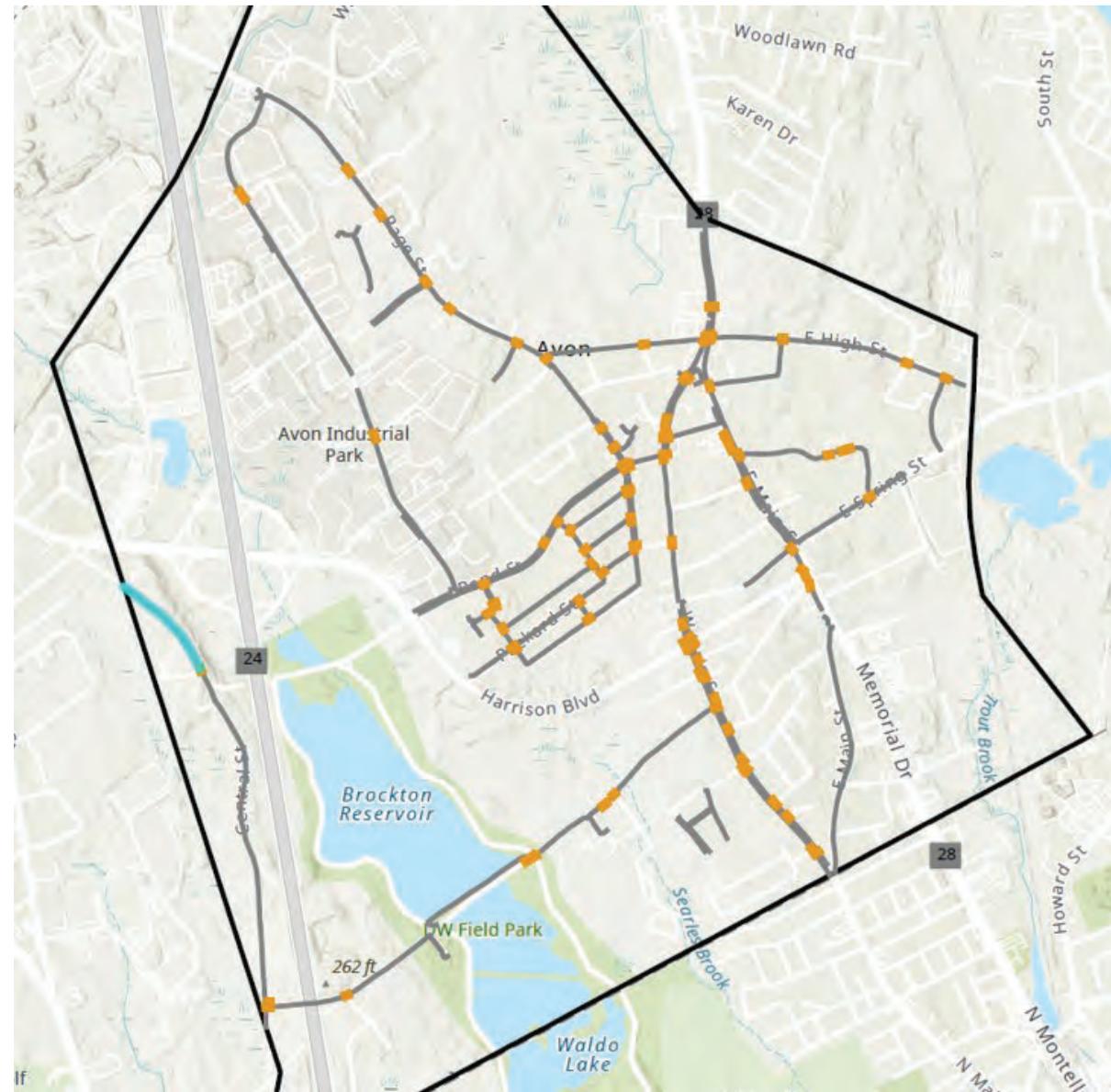


Figure 10-4. Avon’s sidewalk network is rich in certain parts of town, but most streets lack sidewalks and few marked crosswalks cross arterials. (Crosswalks are shown on the map with orange circles.)

Boston communities, Avon has robust transit access. Two MBTA routes connect downtown to Boston and several commuter rail and subway stations, Brockton Area Transit runs buses through Avon to its downtown transit center, and the Avon Council on Aging operates a well-used dial-a-ride service in town. While people are regularly observed using public transit in downtown, overall ridership is low. Passenger amenities are mostly absent, and there is no pedestrian-scale lighting for safety at bus stops (Figure 10-5).

Crashes

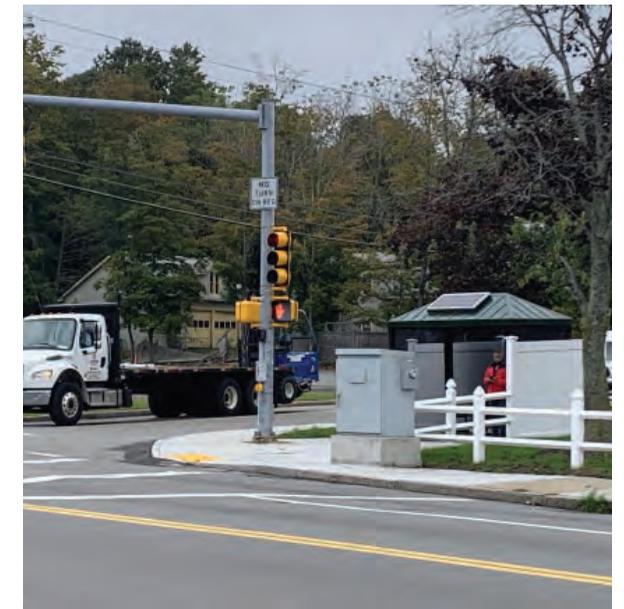


Figure 10-5. One of Avon’s only bus shelters is in downtown, set back from the roadway behind signal equipment and fencing.

For the ten period from 2014 to 2023 Avon had 2,493 crashes. Approximately half the crashes are on state controlled Route 24 and Harrison Boulevard. Top crash locations are East Main Street at East Spring Street and East Main Street at Harrison Blvd.

Avon Crashes (2014-2023)	
Total crashes	2,493
Fatal injury crashes	12
Serious injury crashes	40
Minor injury crashes	335
Possible injury crashes	403
No injury crashes	1,588
Other/unknown	115
Pedestrian related crash	20
Pedestrian fatality	1
Pedestrian serious injury	1
Bicyclist related crash	7
Source: MassDOT Impact	

Figure 10-6, shows crash clusters at key intersections. Figure 10-7 shows crashes

Harrison Blvd at East Main Street and Harrison Blvd at the Route 24 access ramps are high crash intersections. Most of other intersections have significantly lower crash rates.

There are however significant crash clusters, areas where no one location is high crash but along a segment of road there are numerous crashes. For example, East Main Street and High Street and East Main Street and West Main Street do not have unusually high crash rates, but the segment from East Main immediately north of High Street to immediately south of West Main Street is a crash cluster, with a crash rate of approximately

Figure 10-6. Vehicle, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Crash Clusters.

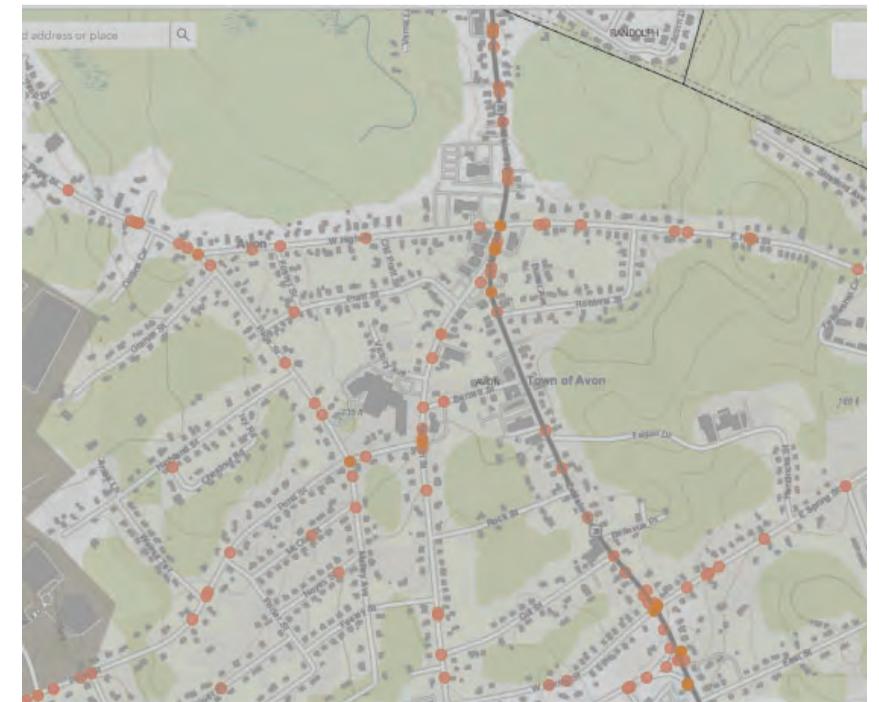
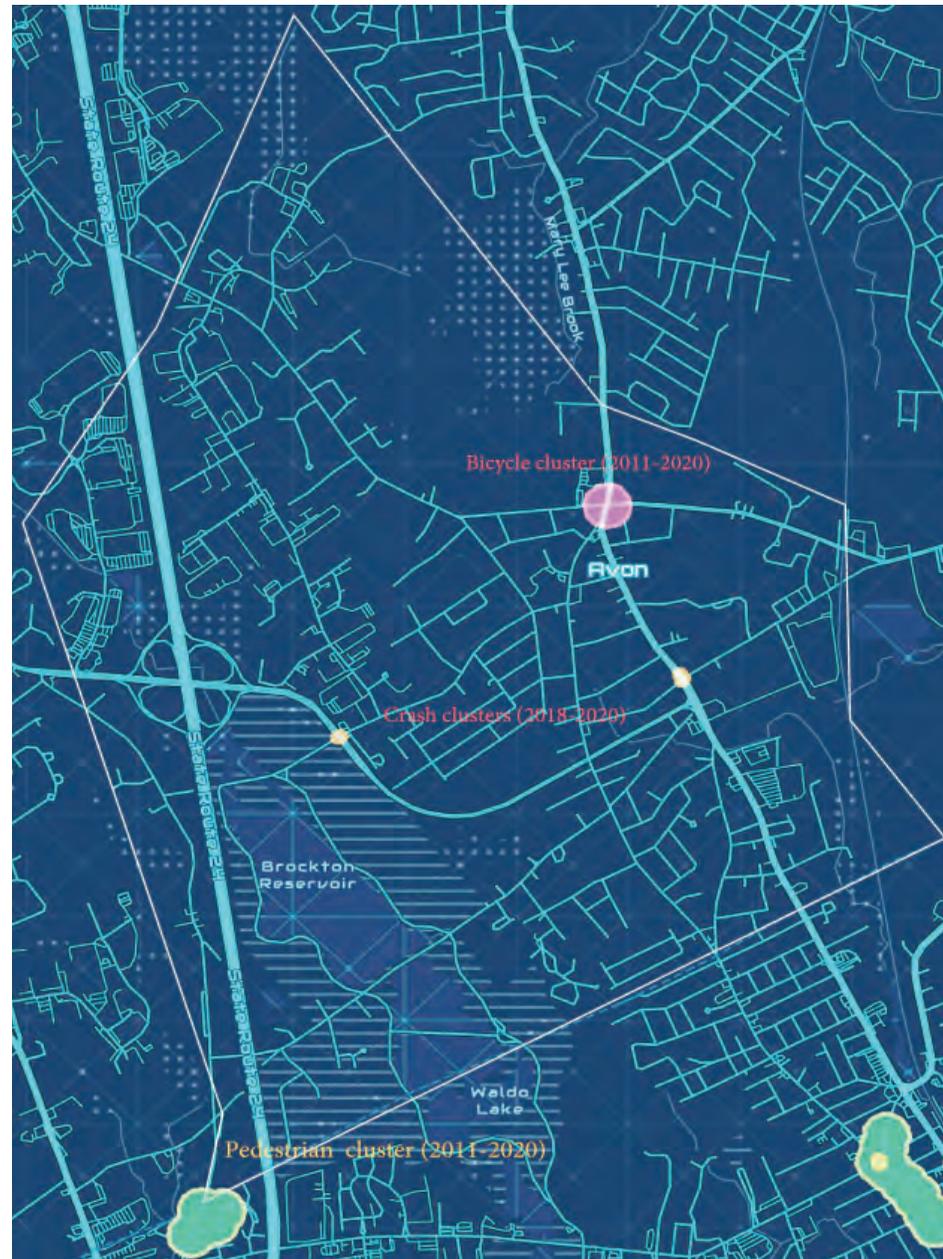


Figure 10-7. Main Street and nearby crashes 2013-2023 inclusive.

3.5 crashes per million miles, as compared to a state average of 3.05 for urban principle arterials. (15 crashes over ten years, or 1.5 crashes a year for a 0.08 mile road segment with 14,500 average daily two-way vehicle counts.)

Recommendations

Focusing future infrastructure programs on improving safety and accommodation for non-auto modes can support healthier lifestyles and improve community resilience by making Avon an attractive place to live, work, recreate and raise a family.

With community preservation top-of-mind in Avon, a rational approach to cut-through traffic and speeding should be taken that acknowledges traffic will exist but aims to accommodate it on the community's terms and reverses past mistakes that have let negative impacts grow unabated.

- Avon should **explore** whether they want to adopt **Massachusetts' community-wide opt-in to Sections 193 and 194 of M.G.L. c.90§17C**, enabling the Town to **have 25 mph speed limits** on town roads, not state highways like Route 24 and Route 28, except where it chooses to post higher speeds. Given that pedestrian fatality chances exceed 1 in 3 when hit by cars at only 25 mph, this regulation is a simple beginning to embracing safer streets and lays the groundwork for walking network and place-making improvements in Avon.
- Avon should launch a **traffic calming program** that is focused on improving safety and reducing vehicle speeds on **corridors and intersections of concern**. Beginning with detailed speed studies conducted wherever speeding is noted to be a concern, locations with average or frequently severe speeds above 25 mph or the posted speed limit can be targeted for simple countermeasures that include warning signs, cautionary pavement markings, lane width changes, or targeted geometric changes like bump-outs, crossing islands, traffic circles and raised devices. Many improvements can be designed economically and installed quickly. Funding from MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces or similar grant programs can be pursued with nominal effort.

- The **Safe Routes to School program** provides funding for safer walking routes near schools. Avon's local schools have seen some extra safety counter-measures installed in recent years (Figure 10-8), but additional funding is available to expand these improvements to other sidewalks, paths and crossings within walking distance of each school

Avon should focus on creating safer, quality, neighborly streets town-wide by making its streets easier to enjoy on foot, employing measures to reduce vehicle speeds, and making walking trips to nearby destinations and neighborhoods a common practice for residents of all ages and abilities. Launch a multi-year walking improvement program



Figure 10-8. Some crosswalks, particularly near schools and along Central Street, have been improved in Avon to include flashing safety beacons and other countermeasures to make crossing the street safer.

with annual targets such as numbers of new crosswalks added and improved, feet of sidewalk constructed and repaired, and percentage of surveyed trips conducted on foot or bicycle. Setting aside dedicated Town funding—supplemented by periodic grant funding—can make walk network expansion and on-going maintenance a regular function of Town administration. The focus on pedestrian safety will be an identifiable brand for the town, helping to attract and retain residents.

- Conduct a town-wide **audit of pedestrian and bicycle safety** to analyze non-auto comfort and threats, identify priority locations for counter-measures and network improvements, and develop preliminary designs for the walking improvement program.
- Launch a **road-diet program** (also known as right-sizing roads) to re-evaluate lane width and excess lanes with the goal of slowing vehicles and

improving safety through the addition of on-street parking, planted sidewalk buffers, additional crosswalks, protected bike facilities, improved transit stops, and other features that slow cars and make streets more “complete” and accommodating of other modes of travel (Figure 10-9). Explore whether West Main, just behind its intersection with Main Street, could accommodate some on-street parking spaces if Avon is not going to install bike lanes on West Main.

- Approach MassDOT to carefully reconsider its **designs for the Route 28 and Harrison Boulevard intersection** with a focus on pedestrian safety instead of vehicle throughput. The current alternatives expand capacity on cut-through corridors that already have excess capacity and speed, while retaining lengthy pedestrian crossings of each roadway. A modern focus on safety



Figure 10-9. Rantoul Street in Beverly was successfully dieted for most of its length with a variety of tools, including new on-street parking, bike lanes and removal of excess lanes.

rather than an antiquated focus on preserving best-possible level-of-service can result in a better design, such as a single-lane roundabout or more compact signal.

- Consider lessons learned from other communities undertaking such work. For example, Figure 10-14 shows concept drawings from Urban, Rural, and Suburban Complete Streets Design. Design is always context sensitive.

Avon’s local destinations and neighborhoods can be better connected through new and improved on- and off-street connections that create recreational opportunities, introduce new place-making opportunities and offer identifiable gateways, which will improve access to local resources and help to improve community cohesion.

- Coordinated with a road-diet program, the Town should explore **place-making opportunities**—

especially in downtown—where excess road width can be converted to green space, **pocket parks, sprinkler/splash pads**, etc (Figure 10-10 is an early concept approach). Early pilots using temporary barriers can demonstrate the viability of solutions and offer interim benefits while funding for permanent changes is sought. Programs such as MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces grant offer funding for qualifying projects.

- Building upon Avon’s trail network planning, a **town-wide recreational path system** should be developed to help interconnect neighborhoods with destinations like downtown (Figure 10-11), Walmart, the reservoir and the Stockwell Drive shopping district. Harrison Boulevard’s wide right-of-way as well as watershed parcels near the reservoir offer easy options for multi-use paths. Developed in partnership with private landowners benefiting from site improvements, a continuous network between Stockwell Drive, the reservoir, and



Figure 10-10. Utilizing wasted pavement in downtown, Avon can re-envision its heart, making it more walkable, supportive of retail and restaurants, and a renewed destination within walking distance of many neighborhoods. This is a concept only sketch.

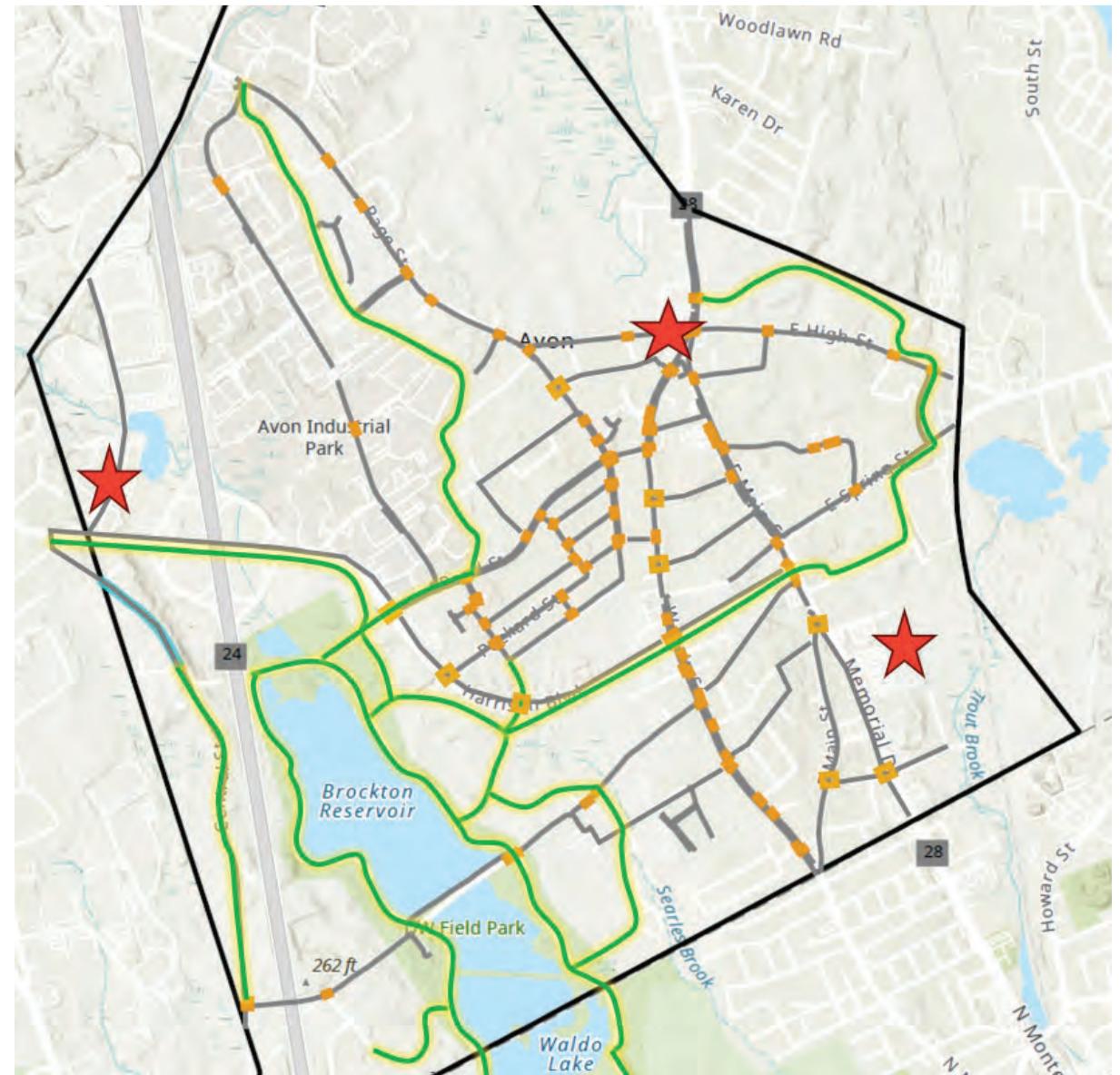


Figure 10-11. Several opportunities exist throughout Avon to create a complete off-road path system that interconnects neighborhoods with recreational, retail and civic destinations.

the Town's planned DeMarco Park improvements can connect jogging, biking and rolling residents with downtown. Other connections such as along the eastern industrial parcels of Bodwell Street can be developed as offsets for new development.

To help make Avon resilient to further negative impacts on its quality of life while preparing for a future of continued regional growth, the Town should begin instituting plans and programs that promote walkable development, anticipate future transit access when the demand is there, and anticipate future travel demands that go beyond traditional auto patterns.

- To help overcome that negative impacts that auto orientation have had on the quality of life, comfort and safety of Avon and its streets and sidewalks, Town leadership should resolve to adopt plans and policies that encourage more sustainable travel patterns. This includes **resisting large-scale single-family development** and instead encouraging mix-use, compact development close to services and community destinations, which can greatly reduce the vehicle trip-making impact of any new residents or businesses; and developing capital improvement programs that **focus on safety and non-auto improvements**, as opposed to status quo primarily auto-focused facilities only.
- MBTA services in Avon terminate in downtown away from most destinations in town. Long term, Avon should begin discussions with the MBTA to **extend one or both of their routes** through town to Stockwell Drive **if** the demand, especially mixed use and residential demand, grows, providing proximate transit connections into Boston for the majority of Avon's residents, as well as a jobs connection for employees of Bodwell Street and Stockwell Drive businesses (Figure 10-12). Future redevelopment of Stockwell Drive parcels as multi-family housing can create a mixed-use community

served by transit, while easily meeting housing growth expectations of the MBTA and State government in a part of Avon that doesn't impact its community character.

- Continued aging in place of Avon's population will likely outstrip the ability of the Council on Aging's shuttle to serve the needs of people who can no longer drive. In partnership with BAT or the MBTA, Avon should explore a **sub-regional micro-transit network at least for elderly and disabled populations** that may require less subsidy to provide a more robust, on-demand service akin to ride-share (i.e. Uber) but operating only within the areas that Avon's residents need trips.
- The popularity of **emerging mobility technologies** are changing local travel options, especially for younger households. Electric bikes, e-scooters, other "micro-mobility" devices, and eventually automated vehicles are making it easier for people to travel beyond a short walk quickly and cost-effectively without a car. Avon should plan to embrace these low-polluting, traffic-free mobility options in the future by planning to install the right infrastructure now (Figure 10-13, following page). This includes, for example, bike/micro-mobility lanes, scooter parking, device charging stations, and covered bike parking that can be in both the public realm as well as part of new developments.
- Town leadership should outline specific steps within one year to **begin implementing all mobility recommendations within five years**. A phased implementation program can see low-hanging early actions supported by new Town and grant funding completed within a year and more significant infrastructure programs accomplished over as many as ten years.

To manage streets and sidewalks rationally, Avon should adopt a pavement management system.

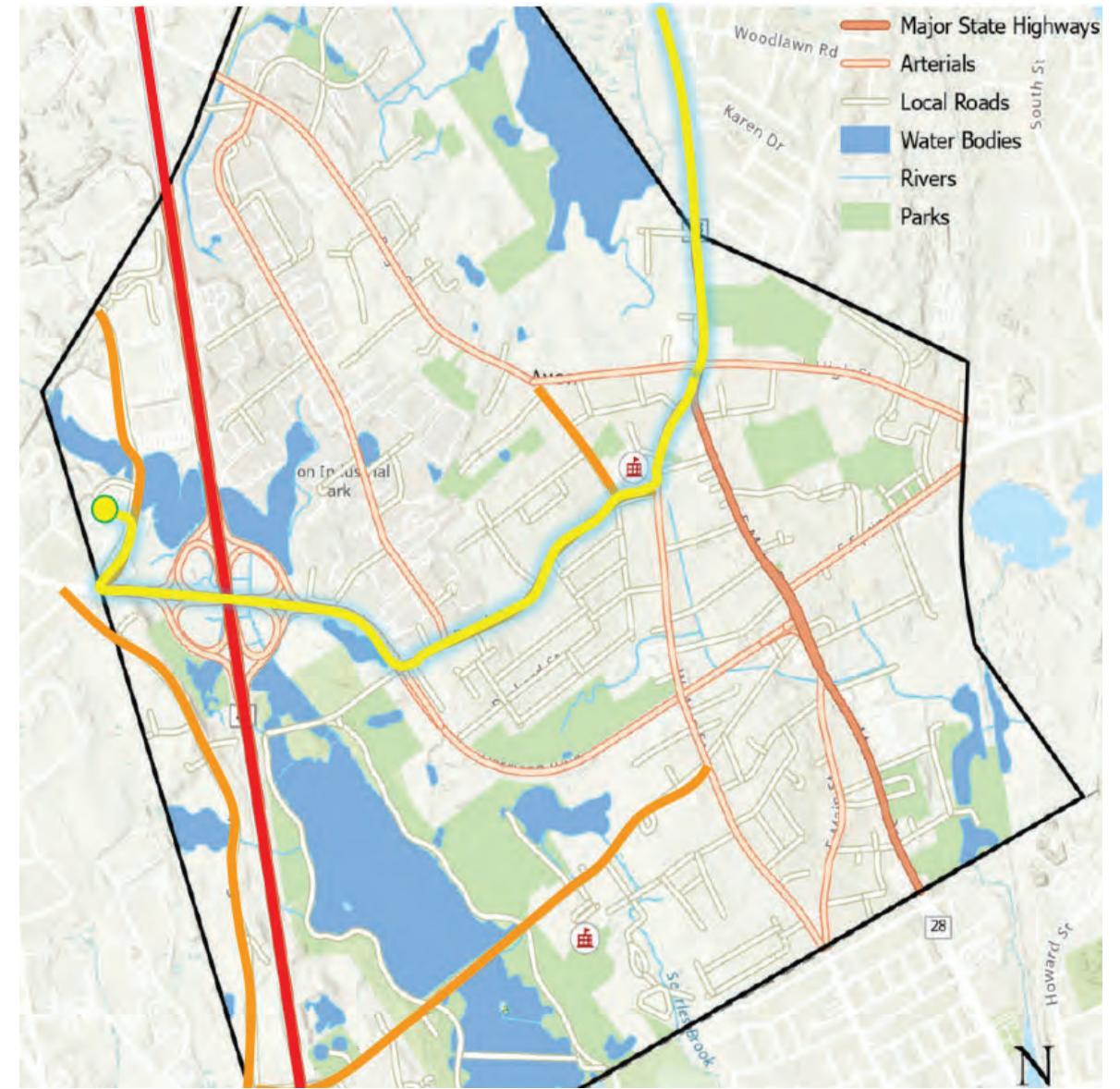


Figure 10-12. In the future, if demand grows, MBTA's route 238 and/or 240 can be extended along Pond Street and Harrison Boulevard to Stockwell Drive, providing residents and employees direction transit connections to Boston.

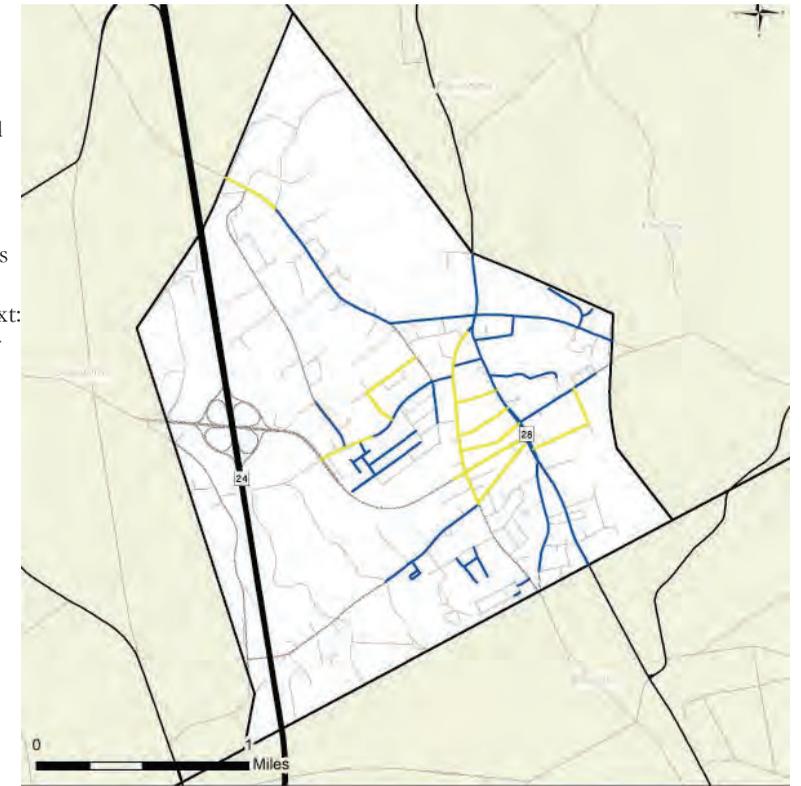


Figure 10-12. A two-way on-street cycle track installed in Jersey City NJ has not only provided space for micro-mobility device users, it has also helped diet a busy arterial to reduce speeds and improve walk safety.

- Adopt a Pavement Management System (PMS) to examine all roadway surfaces. Evaluate roadways for specific deterioration and hazard criteria and using these field evaluations to calculate a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) score using pavement management software. The PCI score determines the overall condition of the roadway: Excellent (PCI 95 or higher), Good (PCI 94-85), Fair (PCI 84-65), and Poor (PCI 64 or lower). Based on the PCI, pavement management system derives recommended levels of repair for the roadway, along with the estimated cost for repair.
- Adopt a Pavement Management System (PMS) to evaluate all sidewalks, adding an assessment of gaps and pavement conditions which do not meet ADA and AAB standards.

The Appendix includes concept drawings for what traffic calming and complete streets could look like in the Avon context: *Urban, Rural, and Suburban Complete Streets Manual*.

Figure 10-13. Sidewalk Gap Analysis (Old Colony Planning Council, 2021)



— Existing Sidewalk
 — Potential Sidewalk Expansion



Old Colony Planning Council
 70 School Street, Brockton, MA 02301
 www.ocpcrpa.org
 Created October 2021
 GIS Data Sources: Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), OCPC

11. Services & Facilities (per MGL c. 41, s. 81D)

Avon generally has good public services and facilities. Some of these facilities, however, are nearing the end of their useful life without major rehabilitation, especially the **town offices** and **Ralph Butler Elementary School**. Some of the services could be enhanced.

All service and facility improvements are resource limited. As in most communities, residents often want improvements but are resistant to new taxes and fees to fund them.

Avon’s average property taxes on single family homes has consistently been lower than about half of all Massachusetts municipalities.

Single-Family Home Property Taxes (averages)

Fiscal Year	Mean Single-Family		State rank	Tax % of per capita income
	Value	Property Tax		
2024	\$449,552	\$6,307	N/a	15.8%
2023	\$445,240	\$6,064	169	16.6%
2022	\$391,703	\$6,193	150	16.2%
2021	\$338,411	\$5,679	148	16.0%
2020	\$330,727	\$5,854	133	17.2%
Source: MA. Department of Revenue				

Many of those higher tax communities, however, are very wealthy communities. When ranked based on property tax as a percentage of income, the 68% of municipalities collect property taxes that are a higher percent of single-family home owners’ per capita incomes than Avon does.

Avon currently spends 6.18% of its budget as debt service on outstanding bonds (See Figure 11-1 Avon

Debt). This is midway between communities who spend 0% of their budget on debt service and, for the highest municipality, 14.91% of their budget on debt service. It is slightly higher than the state average of all municipalities of 4.42%.

Avon’s Finance Director reports that long term debt is going to decline significantly over the next few years as older long-term bonds are being paid off. This will free up significant debt capacity for new capital facilities such as a new municipal campus (town hall and senior center) and a new or rehabilitated elementary school).

Avon’s bond rating (Moody’s, 2023) of Aa2, a high-grade investment bond, is consistent with a medium income community with a well-managed municipal portfolio. Very roughly half the communities in the Commonwealth have higher bond ratings (Aaa, Aa1) and half have lower bond ratings (Aa3, A1 A2, A3, B_).

New growth that is not subject to the Prop 2 1/2 levy limit, and especially commercial, industrial, and one-bedroom units that are unlikely to generate school children, and the most effective way to grow the town budget without tax increases. Such growth can support the services and facilities and facility related debt that residents often request. Growth at the Avon Industrial Park (enabled by zoning changes, adding sewer, and increasing water supply discussed earlier) and at Stockwell Drive/Merchants Park (enabled by zoning changes and increasing water supply discussed earlier), and from a few other commercial and industrial sites scattered across Avon (especially downtown and Walmart area), provide the best opportunities for such new growth.

Buildings

Table 11-1 shows the significant buildings owned by Avon, managed directly or through the Schools.



Figure 11-1. The bridge connecting from the library to the town hall campus.

Buildings	Status
William T. Wheeler Fire Station, 150 Main St.	Built 2021 – excellent condition
Police Department, 86 Fagan Dr,	Built 2019 – excellent condition
Department of Public Works	Eventually needs work or replacement
Town Offices, 65 East Main St.	Feasibility study to determine potential replacement and enhancement of downtown Avon is underway.
Senior Center, 65 East Main St.	
Water Filtration Plan	Updated 2008 --excellent condition
Avon Middle-High School, 285 West Main St	Excellent condition
Ralph Butler Elementary School, Patrick Clark Dr.	Discussions about need for replacement/upgrade underway
Avon Library, 280 West Main St.	Fair condition could use improvements

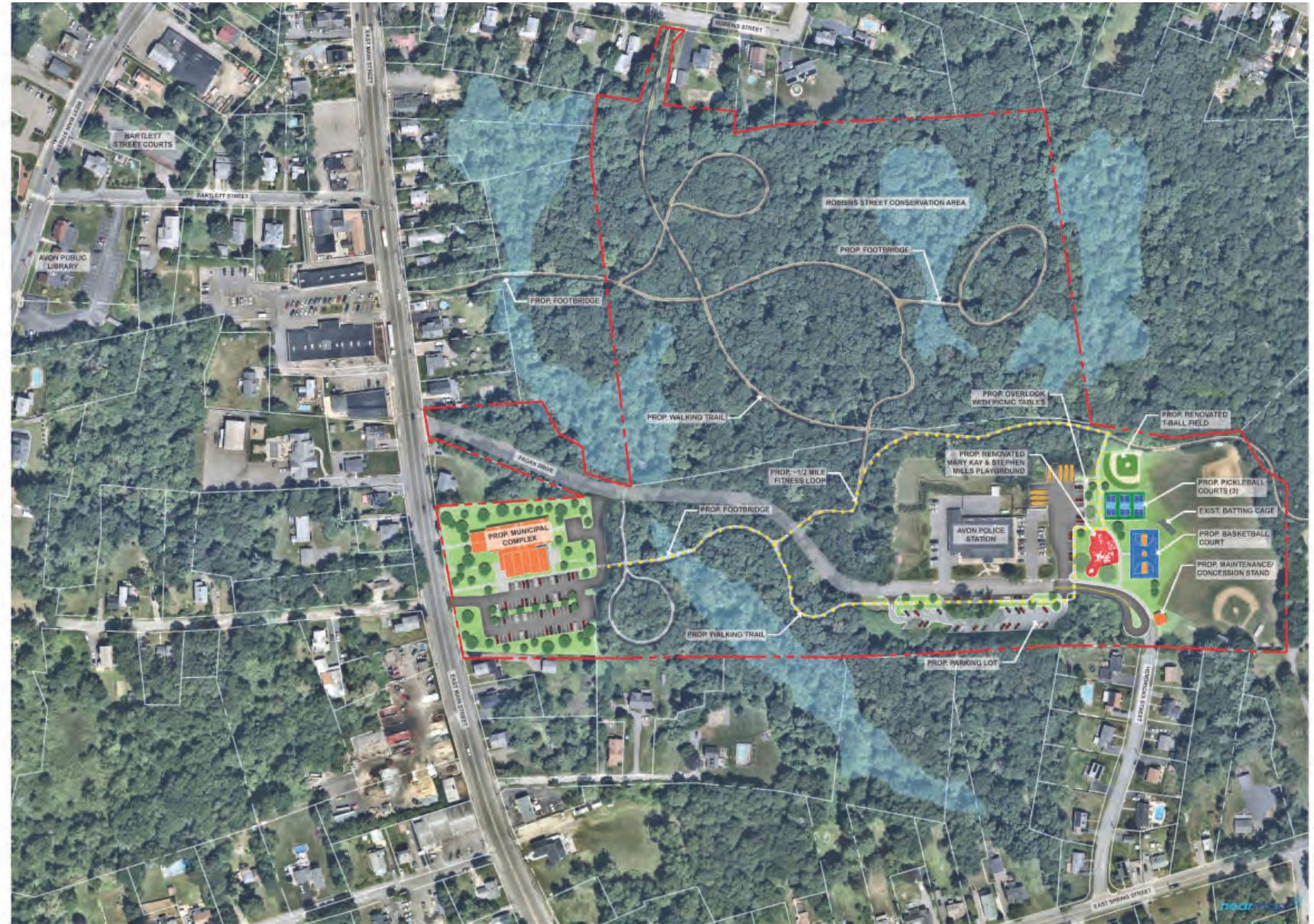
Figure 11-2. Avon's municipal campus concept. This would replace the obsolete municipal campus, free up the current campus for redevelopment, and create a stronger downtown anchor.

Accessibility

Community members have been clear on the need for accessibility for all, an especially important objective in Avon with its older median age and large over age 65 population.

The ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan (KMA Architecture + Accessibility 2020) is included in the Avon Open Space and Recreation Plan (Old Colony Planning Commission, 2022). Those recommendations in incorporated by reference to this plan. These include:

- Avon Public Library - Architectural barriers
- Sidewalks - Missing wheelchair ramps
- Middle/High School Playing Fields- accessible parking and routes
- Bartlett Street courts - accessible parking and routes
- Butler Elementary School - accessible parking and routes
- D.W. Field Park, which is the City of Brockton's responsibility, accessible parking and routes
- Fagen Drive/Crowly Park - accessible parking and routes
- Moses Curtis Memorial Park- accessible route to benches and gazebo
- Tracy-Miller Playground- accessible route to playground and benches



Town Municipal Campus Concept
 AVON, MA

SCALE: 1" = 60'-0"
 MARCH 2024



Sewer

The most significant facility improvement, discussed in the land use and economic development elements of this plan, is the need for municipal sewers to serve the Avon Industrial Park and Stockwell Drive, with disposal either in Avon (soil absorption system for the Avon Industrial Park) or contracting with an abutting community for sewage disposal. Capital costs for such a system should be some combination of:

1. State economic development grants.
2. District Improvement Financing (DIF) where a portion of the increased property taxes that will result from sewer availability to dedicated to paying off a portion of the bond that funds the sewer improvements.
3. A portion of the user fees from sewer service is dedicated to paying off a portion of the bond that funds the sewer improvements.
4. A special assessment (special assessment district) is charged, with a majority vote of the affected property owners, as a property tax surcharge to the property owners who will benefit directly from the sewer. Because the sewer will bring in more property taxes that will benefit the entire community and the costs of a special assessment would increase the opposition to the project from property owners who don't plan any water and sewer expansions, this is bar far the least desirable option.

Even with a portion of increased taxes as a result of sewerage and the resulting development going to pay off a DIF bond, Avon's overall tax base will grow with relatively few new costs and for services, even with the potential for some students from mixed use at Stockwell Drive.

Water

Avon's municipal water system is fed by seven groundwater wells. Eight pump stations, two water tanks, 42 miles of water lines with hydrants distribute the water. The water filtration plant, three water treatment plants, an equipment garage facility complete the system. It is generally in good shape with several water main replacement projects in process.

Avon's water withdrawal permit allows a sustained yield of 0.88 million gallons per day (or 117,640 cubic feet).

If the Industrial Park is sewerage, and assuming high water users are allowed (e.g., industrial processing and a hotel), the existing safe water yield may not be sufficient and the availability of water will become the limiting factor to growth. Increasing the water supply to Avon, from MWRA or abutting communities, will allow more benefits. The mixing of different water sources complicates water treatment and the required chemicals, adding cost and complexity per gallon of water yield. All of these water capital costs are likely to be paid by a combination of grants and user fees, with on-going maintenance and operations likely to be paid for exclusively by user fees, and most likely leading to some increase in water charges per cubic feet of consumption.

Water fees are typically made up of a combination of a fee for fixed costs (water treatment facilities, pipes, the availability of high volumes of water for building fires and seasonal uses) and variable costs (electric, chemicals, payments to other water providers) that are based on the volume of water used. Avon may want to tinker with their current formula as the system changes to keep the system fair. Higher fees based on fixed costs, for example, increase fees for those with high volume pipes for sprinkler systems. Currently water users pay mostly or exclusively charged based on water usage.

While sewerage the industrial park has the potential to remove potential containments, especially Nitrogen which is poorly treated in septic systems, it would also

remove a small but significant amount of water from the town water supply drinking water aquifer.

Currently, Avon collects water user fees into its general fund and funds water-related projects and staff from the general fund. A much fairer approach for ratepayers is to create a water enterprise fund where all water user fees are deposited and all water system expenses are paid. When state loans are not available, Avon may still choose to use general obligation (GO) bonds, since the pledge to put Avon's full faith and credit creates lower interest rates than revenue bonds, but the actual bond payments would be made from water revenue.

Roads, bridges, drainage, and sidewalks

While highways are owned and operated by MassDOT, local roads are Avon facilities. The circulation and mobility section of this report details recommended actions.

The Massachusetts Culvert Replacement Program can be used to fund culvert replacements that will also restore valuable ecological functions.

Parks and Open Space

The Open Space and Recreation Plan (2022) includes an up-to-date list of parks, recreation areas, and conservation areas. Avon purchased 29.97 acres of additional open space ("Edwards" property) in 2024 to add to D.W. Fields Park, the first Avon-owned section of the park.

Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

The five year CIP is Avon's plan for prioritizing and funding durable capital investments with property tax and non-tax levy (e.g., Chapter 90 aid to roadways) funding sources.

Most capital projects are listed in the CIP. Not included are special opportunities such an unanticipated grant (e.g., the 2024 purchase of the 29.97 acre Edwards property to add to D.W. Field Park using MVP grant funds and Wildlands Trust donation).

Evaluations of CIP proposed projects includes **advancement of adopted plans, studies, or goals** in project scoring:

- State/Federal mandate, legal obligation, or liability
- Threat to public and/or employee health or safety
- Advancement of adopted plans, studies, or goals
- Department priority
- Impact on service to residents/businesses
- Distribution of benefit
- Economic benefits
- Environmental benefits
- Impact on operating budget
- Availability and likelihood of external funding
- Risk and impact of failure
- Impact on internal effectiveness and/or efficiency

Project requests and then project scoring should formally incorporate the Avon 2040 Master Plan and resilience and sustainability goals. In addition to helping achieve town goals, such measures, along with all the existing evaluation methods used, has the potential to help in future bond rating assessments.

Bond rating services did not traditionally focus on climate risk, but they do have a heavy focus on

climate risk, but they do have a heavy focus on intangibles of what makes communities safe risks for bond holders. Hurricane Sandy and more recent natural disasters have highlighted the climate risks to bond holders that is beginning to reverberate in the bond market and among bond rating agencies. The rise in green municipal bonds has further accelerated this trend.

Proving that Avon is working to be climate resilient provides some comfort to the bond market that Avon is a good investment in the long-term, which can result in an improved bond rating and lower borrowing costs.



Capital Improvement Plan FY2021 – FY2025 Town of Avon



Updated December 9, 2020

Avon 2040 CIP Proposal Scoring

Many Capital Improvement projects serve immediate needs that can't be delayed. The CIP process, however, also includes a deliberate planning process. Avon should formalize its scoring system to include consideration of the master plan. For example:

1. Does the proposed capital investment expand services or maintain current level of services? How?
2. Does investment improve energy conservation and reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions? How and by how much? What alternatives would further improve energy conservation? Are those alternatives viable?
3. List any policy, study, action, or documentation that explains why and how energy conservation will increase and GHG will decrease.
4. Specify the *Avon 2040* GHG emission reduction pathway (see climate action element).
5. Does the capital investment increase physical and/or social resilience? How (e.g., pipes will accommodate a larger storm event)?
6. List any policy, study, action, or documentation that explains why and how resilience increases.
7. Include a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) documenting upfront costs and operational savings. Would a longer projected life (i.e., the full life of the improvement and not bond payback period) justify greater investment in GHG or resilience?
8. List how the plan advances *Avon 2040* goals, objectives, and recommendations.
9. Could any of the investments be eligible for state grants to reduce Avon's costs, including Green Communities, MVP, PARC, Small Cities? If so, have those grant funds been pursued?

Public Health and Medical Services

Avon and Avon's schools role in providing public health and medical services is very limited:

1. Avon Schools provide health services for the school community, with public nurses at the Avon Middle/High School and at Butler Elementary School.
2. The Avon Board of Health coordinates the Avon Coalition for Everyone's Success (A.C.E.S), focused on harm reduction from substance abuse disorder and promoting healthy lifestyles. With 2 to 3% of all Avon deaths being premature deaths due to opioid addiction, this is especially important.
3. The Avon Board of Health supports other regional public health initiatives, from distributing vaccines to supporting health providers, acting on infection disease reports, and coordinating with VNA's public health nurse. The Avon Council on Aging Van already provides transportation to medical appointments for seniors and residents with disabilities.
4. To further encourage medical uses, Avon can add minimum criteria for medical uses in the Business and Village Overlay Districts and then allow the uses there with Site Plan Approval only, not Special Permit.
5. An active Avon Wellness Committee to promote healthy lifestyles.

There are no hospitals in Avon and Avon residents are served by hospitals and medical facilities in nearby communities. Good Samaritan Hospital in Brockton provides the nearest emergency room to Avon. Although it is part of financially troubled Steward Health Care it is

likely to stay open. Brockton Hospital, part of Signature Health Care, is temporarily closed after its fire but is expected to reopen in late spring 2024.

Beth Israel Deaconess, in Milton, the affiliated Jordan Hospital in Plymouth, and the independent South Shore Hospital in Weymouth all serve Avon residents. New England Sinai Hospital in Stoughton, part of Steward Health Care, is closing.

Avon does not provide other health services, which are provided by others, mostly serving Avon residents from outside of the community. The Town does advocate, however, for such services. During the public forums, residents highlighted the benefit of medical services in Avon or closer to Avon residents.

Avon's zoning already allows medical offices by right in General Business, Industrial, Commercial, and Mixed Use Low Density and by Special Permit in the Business and Village Overlay Districts.

To further encourage medical uses, Avon can add minimum criteria for medical uses in the Business and Village Overlay Districts and then allow the uses there with Site Plan Approval only, not Special Permit.

12. Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resilience

Avon will experience a rapidly changing climate over the life of this plan. The [Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment](#) (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2023) details specific vulnerabilities for local governments. For Eastern Inland communities, like Avon, impacts include:

- Changes in precipitation patterns with more extreme rainfall events and extended periods of drought.
- More intense storms and storm damage
- More days of intense heat
- Increase in diseases from disease vectors (e.g., ticks)
- The need to house more people as climate change adds to climate-driven migration.

These anticipated impacts will exacerbate vulnerabilities that town officials have already identified including impaired water resources, threats to environmentally sensitive open spaces, and housing. This underscores the importance of incorporating climate change in the current planning process.

Climate considerations falls into three overlapping categories:

- **Mitigation:** Prevent the worst impacts of climate change by reducing carbon emissions that contribute to global heating. Avon, its residents, and businesses will eventually have to meet the [State's statutory target](#) that requires at least 50% emissions reduction by 2030, at least 75% emissions reduction by 2040, and at least net zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2050.
- **Resilience or adaptation for Avon's physical**

infrastructure: Prepare for the impacts of climate change that are likely to occur because of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions already in the atmosphere and that will continue being added as vehicles, industry, and buildings burn fossil fuels.

- **Social resilience:** Build community partnerships and trust to prepare for acute and chronic stress, including climate change and other stress, with a special focus on the most vulnerable populations. Avon prides itself on being a small community where residents know each other and get involved in community activities. The Avon 2040 workshops had strong participation. The participants, however, did not fully represent the growing diversity present in the community (e.g., youth and people of color) other than at the Avon High School focus group despite town efforts.

Town officials have identified water resources as a critical issue for Avon. They have commissioned relevant reports including the Stormwater Asset Management report (2016), SNEP report (2018), the Avon Stormwater Report (Weston and Sampson, 2021), and other stormwater inventories and mapping exercises.

These reports indicate that a quarter of the town's surface area is covered by pavement or other impervious surfaces, which places it in the top 15% of all Massachusetts communities. Rainwater flows off these off roads, driveways, construction sites, roofs, and compacted gravel surfaces into Trout Brook, carrying a wide variety of pollutants and excess nutrients. As a result, Trout Brook is classified as a significantly impaired waterway that the Massachusetts DEP has placed on its 303 (d) list of Category 5 waters. Consequently, Avon must undertake significant action to meet the requirements of EPA Region 1's Phase II Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System General Permit (MS4 Permit).

The studies further indicate that the quality of Avon's

drinking water is tied to the quality of the stormwater flowing into local waterways. About 65% of the water supply comes from groundwater wells in the Trout Brook Aquifer, which is recharged by surface waters, including Trout Brook. The town lacks sewer infrastructure, so most town residents and businesses rely on septic systems. Old and failing systems discharge untreated sewage, which contributes to surface water and groundwater contamination that can affect the water supply. The Porter well has tested positive for fecal coliform and the town has installed filtration systems to ensure the safety of the water supply. As noted in the 2018 SNEP Report, Identification and Assessment of Causes of Impairment: Trout Brook, "reduction of pollutants in stormwater runoff are necessary given the critical importance of water quality to the Town's vital drinking water resources." (Section 1.1)

Climate Mitigation and Resilience Pathways

Pathways to Action provide a policy framework. The recommendations that follow are more specific.

1. **Reduce energy demand through efficiency and conservation.** This includes encouraging energy-efficient buildings, better space planning for more efficient use of building space, conserving building energy with better air sealing and insulation, and better building mechanical systems. These measures all reduce energy costs, saving communities and taxpayers money. Conservation is almost always the least expensive way to reduce energy use and energy bills. Build, retrofit, and upgrade buildings to improve resistance to heat waves, deep freezes, extreme storms, and power interruptions. The smaller the energy load the longer a building can passively survive electric or other utility failures.
2. **Increase the sourcing of energy from renewable and low carbon sources.** This includes increased use of heat pumps for space and water heating and cooling, expanding electricity aggregation program's

efforts to support new renewable energy sources, use of natural gas instead of other fossil fuels, expanding renewable energy sources (e.g., solar photovoltaic), and building incentive structures into regulatory and electricity aggregation programs. The aim is to create stable and reliable energy sources with less reliance on imports that are more sensitive to disruptions.

3. **Expand use of electric vehicles and bicycles.** This includes town vehicle fleets, potentially E-bikes for town staff use, deployment of EV chargers, embracing any private sector or regional E-bike program, and building incentives into regulatory and electricity aggregation programs. These measures reduce vehicle maintenance costs and, over time, more than pay for themselves.
4. **Transportation Mode Shift.** This includes encouraging transit, electric bicycles, other bicycling, walking, and increased remote work. Even small shifts (less than 10%) would have a positive impact. The best opportunities for mode shift for trips to work is remote working. The best opportunity for actual travel mode shift is in improving walking and bicycling opportunities to Avon parks and schools.
5. **Land Use.** Encouraging land use patterns that reduce trips (e.g., promoting remote working, living in a mixed-use complex, or walking to eat out downtown) can be the least expensive way to reduce vehicle trips, especially vehicle trips during congested rush hour periods (see Land Use element).
6. **Carbon sequestration.** Storing carbon in trees and soils can absorb carbon that would otherwise be released and offset Avon's carbon footprint. Protecting land as open space, reforesting degraded sites, preserving and restoring wetlands all advance this pathway.
7. **State and federal actions.** These actions are

beyond the control of Avon, but are worth tracking since they are a critical part of the solution. It includes federal and state vehicle fuel economy (CAFE) and Electric Vehicle requirements, state base building code, and federal and state investments in climate change mitigation (e.g., Green Communities Act, EV-chargers, and expanding transit funding).

8. Nature-based solutions and ecosystem services.

Use natural systems (e.g., wetlands and forests) and green infrastructure (e.g., grassed swales, rain gardens, infiltration ponds, pervious materials, green roofs, green parks, and street trees), to catch and treat stormwater and lower heat island surface temperatures.

9. Resilient ecosystems and preserved open space networks.

Preserving, enhancing, and protecting natural ecosystems can reduce surface temperatures during heat waves, encourage recharge of groundwater systems, reduce invasive plant and animal species and insect disease vectors, and store and treat rainwater.

10. Hazard Mitigation.

Addressing natural hazards and hazards influenced by climate change. (See the Avon Hazard Mitigation Plan.)

Recommendations

Consider joining Green Communities Program

Avon has not joined the Massachusetts Green Communities program because of concerns about the costs to property owners to comply with the Energy Stretch Code, a pre-condition to the program. Avon should monitor and consider its options, costs, and benefits related to the Green Communities program.

Most Massachusetts municipalities have already joined the Green Communities program, showing their commitment to climate mitigation and energy

conservation, and earning their communities significant state grants to further this work.

Figure 12.1. 291 of the Commonwealth's 351 municipalities with >90% of the state's population are Green Communities



Support efforts to transition to energy efficient homes, buildings, and appliances

- Building on the *Avon Community Electricity Aggregation* program, Avon should actively promote financial incentives available to help residents and businesses fund energy efficiency projects that will reduce their energy costs while reducing their individual carbon emissions. [Mass Save](#) provides generous assistance for a variety of energy saving technologies and covers between 75% - 100% of the cost for home insulation. In addition, the Inflation Reduction Act provides 30% tax credits for a wide range of electric appliances, renewable energy, and electric heating/cooling systems. Agencies such as Self Help provide income residents access to free or low-cost weatherization and heating programs, including energy system retrofits and upgrades.
- Avon should consider creating an [Energy Committee](#) to help guide the town's climate action and organize education and outreach efforts.

Small towns and cities around New England have found such committees can support residents to take advantage of energy efficiency and renewable energy programs with the assistance of organizations such as the [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](#).

- Avon should lead by example and ensure that any new public buildings (e.g., new, or rehabilitated elementary school, town hall, and senior center) achieve high standards of efficiency and potentially decarbonization. This will offset rising energy costs.

Plan for alternative sources of drinking water

Surface water pollution has a negative impact on the town's drinking water supply. This is "due to the presence of at least one high threat land use within the water supply protection area and due to the types of soil in the area, which do not contain hydro-geological barriers, such as clay, to prevent the movement of contaminants through groundwater."

Filtration and treatment are currently able to ensure the safety of the water supply, but the wells are vulnerable to contamination by future illicit discharges or from accidental spill of petroleum or other hazardous material that could enter the groundwater. The MA DEP notes that "potential contaminant sources for the Avon's drinking water wells are related to spills, leaks, or improper handling or storage of chemicals, solvents, metals, hazardous materials, and process wastes (e.g., automotive fluids, vehicle paints, batteries, fuel oil, septic systems, pesticides or herbicides)." See Avon Source Water Assessment and Protection Report, 2003 (in the 2018 SNEP report as Appendix B).

The Environmental Protection Agency is [proposing rules](#) that would dramatically reduce the amount of PFAS allowed in drinking water supplies. If PFAS were to be detected in the wells in amounts that exceed these limits, treatment could be difficult and costly.

- Town officials should work to develop contingency

plans to source drinking water from other sources. [The MWRA recently conducted a study](#) indicating that it could supply water to South Shore communities including Avon.

Consider, in the very long term, establishing a stormwater utility/enterprise fund to fund stormwater management activities.

Communities around the country have established stormwater enterprises or utilities to fund the growing costs of stormwater management and compliance with stormwater regulations, including more than 20 in Massachusetts. Avon is not ready for this now.

- In a stormwater utility, Avon would assess a fee to property owners based on the amount of their impervious surface. Residential properties with just a roof and driveway pay a modest fee while industrial and commercial properties with large roofs and large paved areas for parking and other uses pay a higher fee. This distributes stormwater management costs proportionately based on the volume of stormwater runoff.
- Most stormwater enterprises offer discounts or credits for verifiable actions to better manage stormwater (e.g., eliminating unnecessary pavement and installing green infrastructure to store and treat stormwater). This also incentivizes property owners to address the quality and quantity of their stormwater runoff, improving local waterways.
- A stormwater enterprise fund can fund the town's stormwater compliance and flood control programs. This includes staff time, community engagement programs, relevant studies and consulting fees, construction of BMPs and maintenance of existing infrastructure, inspection and compliance programs, asset identification and management, cleaning catch basins, street sweeping, illicit discharge, detection, and elimination efforts (IDDE), and other relevant program costs.

[Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#) and the [Metropolitan Area Planning Council](#) offer materials to assist in creating a stormwater utility.

Assign adequate staffing to oversee MS4 stormwater discharge permit compliance

Managing and complying with MS4 permit requirements is technical and demands significant staff resources.

- Dedicating a part of a staff member's time to oversee the program and coordinate compliance efforts will facilitate compliance and improve the quality of Avon's stormwater. Staff can enforce permit requirements including detection and elimination of illicit discharges and maintenance of BMPs and construction site maintenance practices.
- This staff time could be funded from a stormwater utility enterprise fund.

Strategically add sewers to replace aging septic systems

As noted, aging and failing septic systems contribute to diminished water quality in the Trout Brook aquifer and threaten the town's drinking water. The Stormwater Asset Management Report of 2016 and more recent studies discussed the option for adding sanitary sewers. The top priority is sewers at the Avon Industrial Park and Merchants Park/Stockwell Drive. In addition, more Avon town facilities could be tied to an expanded package treatment plant at the Avon Middle/High School. Private properties near Walmart could potentially tie into Walmart's private sewer forcemain or a new sewer line to Brockton.

Conserve environmentally sensitive parcels

Preserving open space can help maintain important wildlife habitats and protect water quality. For example, Avon's 2024 MVP grant, partnership with the Wildlands Trust to purchase 29.97 acres of land abutting D.W. Field Park, and other MVP work products have advanced this work.

- The Avon Conservation Commission, Avon Parks and Recreation Commission, a new Avon Open Space Committee, with staff support from the Town Administrator, DPW Director, and Town Planner, should be charged with working for the acquisition and conservation of open space within the town. This work can include expanded their partnerships with existing land trusts (e.g., Wildlands Trust) and others to acquire more open space, expand trail networks, and raise funds to acquire property and conservation restrictions.

Plan for housing density in strategic locations

Massachusetts has a severe and growing housing shortage. This will be exacerbated in the future because of demographic changes and as people leave homes threatened by the impacts of climate change for places with a more hospitable climate, such as Avon.

- Establishing a plan to add multi-family housing will allow Avon to build out thoughtfully and strategically. This can ensure that future development is built where residents can easily access jobs, goods and services, recreation, and other amenities to mitigate impacts on existing transportation infrastructure. New development should align with existing and future infrastructure.

Expand the Avon Community Electric Aggregation (CEA) program

The Avon Community Electricity Aggregation Program (CEA) is the default electric supply provider within Avon, with a green energy option, even as National Grid provides electricity distribution. The current contract expires at the end of 2024, providing an opportunity to renew the contract with more renewable energy.

Many electric aggregation programs (also known as community choice aggregation) include a focus on community solar and other local renewable energy generation and storage to increase the supply and demand for renewable energy beyond simply

purchasing renewable energy credits that may already exist and may not be local. For example, Avon CCA could offer to sign long-term power purchase agreements for a certain percentage of their expected future load from industrial park warehouses who install solar photo-voltaic or even potentially offer a lower rate for renewable distributed energy production and storage and for buildings that do not burn fossil fuels for space and water heating. The capacity is limited, however, because if CCA rates are not competitive with National Grid, the CCA can lose those customers.

Municipal building energy performance

Avon has looked at building energy performance for new buildings (e.g., the recent police and fire stations) and major rehabilitation projects. Avon will be examining energy performance for any new projects (e.g., town hall and Butler School).

Avon should also do a detailed assessment to explore a path to improving building envelope efficiency, mechanical and control systems effectiveness, and identify a path to reduce carbon emissions decarbonization of all Avon municipal and school buildings and processes. Funds are potentially available for such work from the Municipal Vulnerability Program, the Green Communities program (if the town joins), and other sources. A plan will allow Avon to move when funds are available, to obtain bonds to be paid back by energy savings, and lower energy costs.

13. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Avon seeks to involve its diverse population in the community's life. This involves recognizing Avon's diverse population in terms of youth, elderly, renters, those with disabilities, English language learners, and Black and Latino/Hispanic population who are sometimes under-represented in civic life. Addressing diversity requires that Avon's increasingly diverse residents are involved in various aspects of governance, services, and civic life. Avon's workforce will be increasingly Black and Hispanic/Latino (e.g., see the Background chapter of this plan).

The Town seeks to avoid barriers to participation in town governance and services. It will seek to recognize and minimize or remove barriers to full participation by all members of the Avon community. The library, for example, addresses one of those barriers, providing free



Figure 13-1. Thrive, even under stress.

menstrual products to their patrons (Figure 13.2).

Inclusion goes beyond diversity to ensure that all the differences in the community result in a stronger community. There is value when the residents come together for shared experiences, governance, and civic life, not simply living, working, and playing in parallel but apart, with no blending and no shared experiences.

The schools, town government, library, and senior center already embrace diversity, inclusion, and equitable service delivery. For instance, Avon partnered with Avon's Coalition for Everyone's Success (ACES) to advance diversity, inclusion and equity training.

Equity and Inclusion in Government

Avon recognizes that the delivery of municipal services and benefits can have varying effects in terms of equity



Figure 13-2. Equity in no-cost menstrual products at the Avon Library

across its service population. Town services may lead to differing outcomes depending on capacities and limitations such as physical, historical, and resource capacities and limitations. Avon embraces the American Planning Association's definition of equity as the "just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential" (*Planning and Equity Policy Guide*). Avon has historically implemented efforts to accommodate the needs of its citizens in its service delivery approaches and will continue to do so.

Avon residents have much to be proud of regarding governance. Avon has avoided the debilitating conflicts and acrimony that play out in many communities. Avon has been making positive changes to maintain a healthy local democracy. For instance, in recent years the Town Meeting changed the name of the Select Board (from Selectmen), instituted Standards of Conduct



Figure 13-3. Avon is partnering for training.

for town meetings, and maintained an open mind about considerations for the future. The ingredients are in place for Avon to have a robust, participatory democratic tradition in which a broad segment of the community contributes to the life of the town and actively shapes its future. Avon's key assets include:

- A Civic Association that has demonstrated an ability to convene the public for important dialogues about the future. AVON 2000, though decades old now, demonstrated that the organization can bring together citizens to help build understanding of key community issues.
- The Town Meeting tradition of direct democracy.
- A professional Town Administrator who also serves as Avon's Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

Challenges

Avon's challenges are not unique but reflect general issues facing many communities. Town Meeting is the predominant form of local town government, with almost 300 towns across Massachusetts using it today. While Town Meeting offers to engage every resident in direct democracy and decision-making, it has its limitations. As the oldest form of democracy in the United States, Town Meeting predates the American Revolution by a century. It was built for a different time and small towns across New England are challenged by declining participation rates. As communities grow and become more diverse, Town Meetings are struggling to represent all residents, which can lead to negative outcomes as we seek to build equitable communities that serve everyone.

Avon needs intentional interventions to improve civic participation rates, feelings of investment in the town's future, and to create accessible opportunities for underrepresented groups to contribute to the town. There is a need to mobilize residents in a shared vision for the future and catalyze collective contributions to build the community that Avon wants.

Recommendations to Increase Participation

30 years ago, the Avon Civic Association launched Avon 2000 as a series of public forums to discuss important town issues. The Avon 2040 process provided new generational opportunity to engage Avon's residents in a shared dialogue with their friends and neighbors about the community they want to work toward.



Figure 13-4. Avon wants new board members.

Expand Town Meeting Engagement

Avon's small size and modest growth allow Town Meeting to serve Avon well, rather than follow the path of communities who have moved away from Town Meeting. Like many small towns, however, Avon has had lower Town Meeting participation than would be ideal. Avon should set a goal to increase Town Meeting participation expand its reach with engagement tools such as surveys and direct engagement that open the door to more robust participation. One example of this type of activity is 'Pop-Up Town Halls' at farmers markets and community events, which host booths with interactive tools to collect citizen input on current issues (Figure 13-5). Another simple intervention would be posters and signage that are put up in key places around town asking a question for citizen input and using QR codes so that residents can input thoughts digitally. These passive community engagement mechanisms can raise awareness and interest levels in more robust participation while collecting additional data on community sentiment or creative ideas. Engaging in temporary 'tactical' projects, like weekend demonstration projects that show what a different street design would feel like downtown, can be important mechanisms to begin a broader community dialogue about change.

Cooperate with any future Citizens Academy

Over the past 20 years, Neighborhood College or Citizens Academies have become commonplace in both large and small communities. These are a several week program where a couple of dozen residents are given the opportunity to meet with various local government staff and elected leaders and gain insight into local government services and operations. These programs have been utilized as civic engagement tools and mechanisms to build civic leadership, particularly for engaging new citizens in the life of the community. Easton, MA began a program in 2023. Brockton has a narrow model focused on a Citizen's Police Academy. If a local civic group offered such a program, Avon community members can learn from these and other

models to inform an Avon local approach (Figure 13-6).

Build Town-Wide Participation Infrastructure

Avon can dramatically increase participation in town by building the requisite infrastructure to mobilize residents toward collaboration. During Avon 2040, one resident pointed out the limitations in town engagement, including communication messaging, the need to use multiple languages to reach English language learners, and cultural barriers. Avon can improve its outreach by partnering with residents across the community in developing a diverse set of engagement tools and methods. Avon should explore whether volunteers are interested in mobilizing diverse groups of neighborhoods and communities across the town to help create culturally appropriate and effective communication vehicles and lead in-person mobilization and engagement efforts at the neighborhood level.

Consider a Youth/Inclusive Council

Avon boasts many of committees but could benefit from more diverse volunteers who are typically underrepresented in many communities. Avon can sunset inactive committees and consider a Youth or Inclusive Community Council to add new voices and broader participation, supplementing the voice that the Council on Aging already supplies.

This could be organized by the Avon Schools or the Town, with a commitment from the Town Administrator or Town Planner to review council recommendations. Such councils are in widespread use across the country and often have a dramatically positive impact on participation rates and town decision making by bringing new voices into the public dialogue. For instance, Hampton, Virginia successfully rejuvenated participation in the city by creating a Youth Council and requiring youth representatives on every city body, including a group of youth planners in the planning office.

Expand Regional Cooperation

Avon is surrounded by larger municipalities and benefits

from regional access to those communities, including Brockton (pop. 105,643), Randolph (pop. 34,984), Holbrook (pop. 12,284), and Stoughton (pop. 29,281). The opportunity for greater public sector collaboration is low-hanging fruit. Avon already has mutual aid agreements and is building important inter-jurisdictional relationships on water supply issues. Expanding shared service agreements where appropriate and exploring how residents of the region utilize amenities in each town will help conceptualize ways to produce co-benefits and invest or share resources where it is most needed. It is particularly important to have regional conversations about land use, housing, and transit to connect assets across the region to maximize how the public interest is served to the benefit of all. Avon residents are transit riders in Randolph and Brockton. Brockton residents are park users in Avon.

Consider Expanding the Select Board size (Long-Term)

The Select Board has three elected members. A potential option is to expand the size of the Select Board to five members. This change would be consistent with what other towns have done as they grew, and it would allow for a modest increase in representation, expanded elected board capacity, and an expanded town governance dialogue without significant new burdens.

Consider Moving Spring Elections to Even Year Fall Elections (Long-Term)

Like most small towns with spring local elections, Avon suffers from significantly lower turnout for local races. Fall elections for state and national offices experience exponentially higher voter participation. For example, in 2022, 1,665 people voted in the fall state and federal election while only 6% of that number, 103 people, voted in the spring local election. Avon should study moving elections to a even numbered year fall schedule to maximize voter participation.

This action would require state enabling legislation, but it would dramatically increase resident turnout in local

racers. It would provide four clear benefits:

- Exponentially larger voter participation
- Greater credibility for local elected representatives
- Saving money from a combined election process
- Help more residents to feel empowered and expand their participation in governance



Figure 13-5. Pop-up town hall meetings can reach a broader swathe of community members.

Participate in the Municipal Vulnerability Program 2.0 Planning

At some point, Avon will be required to undertake the MVP 2.0 planning to remain eligible for MVP Action Grant. The MVP 2.0 planning provides funding to identify underrepresented members of the community, bring representatives to the table, provide training on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to plan for resilience and oversee a state funded pilot seed program.

Avon can apply for a MVP 2.0 planning grant, which includes DEI training focused on MVP planning, and use that funding to include DEI training for all town staff and officials. ICMA notes that local government professionals are called upon to integrate equitable public service to rapidly diversifying communities. Local governments must consider issues of equity and inclusion that go beyond race, ethnicity, and gender and include variations in age, sexual orientation, ability, economic status, educational attainment, immigration levels, and community size. Providing town officials with this training and resources will help them better serve their community and ensure equitable outcomes for residents. The Massachusetts Municipal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coalition’s DEI Guide (2022) recommends that communities think about all the needs in municipal government and who is the responsible town official (usually Town Administrator or Human Resources Director).

Expand Avon’s ADA transition efforts

The new Open Space and Recreation Plan included the required ADA Transition and Self-Assessment Plan. Implementing plan recommendations serve equity goals, and attract CDBG Small Cities, Massachusetts Office of Disabilities, and Land and Water Conservation Fund funding for implementation.



Figure 13-6. Create a Neighborhood College program to build understanding and support for local government amongst the community members.

14. Five-Year Action Plan

Avon's 5 year action plan is to modernize our town offices, replace the elementary school, foster economic development, protect our public water supply, and continue to enable safe transportation and recreation. Avon should pursue this in a way that fosters community access and inclusion while constraining costs, energy consumption, and climate impacts.

Avon 2040 Master Plan outlines the community vision, goals and values, and needs, in the short and long term. This Action Plan identifies those policies and actions that can potentially be done within five years.

For accountability and effectiveness, lead staff should be assigned for all actions (see samples on the following pages). Tracking of each project, what is advancing and why other projects are not advancing, should be part of Avon's yearly reporting to the Planning Board and should be included in each year's Annual Report.

All plans should be dynamic vehicles. It should regularly be revisited to ensure it is relevant and to disclose to the community which actions are moving forward, which are amended, and which are no longer relevant.

Land Use

The land use element aims to preserve neighborhood character, expand affordable housing opportunities, encourage resilient and mixed-use development, and foster a sense of place and community. Several policies could potentially be implemented within five-years. These include: revise special permit restrictions; consider safe harbor from appeals to the Housing Appeals Committee from Zoning Board of Appeals comprehensive permit denials and condition: zoning map changes; and regulatory amendments. Most of these would require collaboration between the town boards, the Town Planner, the Town Administrator, and the DPW Director. Regulatory changes are low-cost initiatives that can be implemented in a relatively short

time period to advance contemporary land use practices. There are plentiful examples from other municipalities to guide regulatory changes such as site plan approval standards and checklists, updated subdivision regulations, and drafting local permits that enable affordable housing production in-line with community needs and values.

Economic Development

Some economic development initiatives can be explored or implemented in the short-term, besides advancing sewerage and improved water supply improvements. As mentioned in the vision statement, town identity includes parks, recreation, open space, communal areas, and other focal points that foster a sense of community. It is worth exploring physical and social connectivity paths between community spaces to promote engagement with town happenings, events, culture, and the diverse residents that live, work and socialize in Avon. Community can also be enriched through events that can be held at low, to no cost venues. One recommendation that may be met in the short-term is to hold events such as sponsored concerts, community walks/races, or food-related gatherings at underutilized areas, especially downtown. As for stabilizing green electricity costs for Avon residents, planning and planning-adjacent bodies in the town could generate educational and informational notices regarding Community Choice Aggregation opportunities to expand access to greener energy. Additionally, in the suggested five-year time frame, Avon can conduct a town-wide business calling program and a Business and Vacancy Inventory of the Avon Industrial Park as part of assessments of Avon's commercial and industrial tax revenue streams and data on business attraction, job creation and loss, and/or skills required to staff industrial/commercial businesses. Finally, Blue Hills Regional Technical High School could further expand their career/trade program to include skills and interest surveys and additional internship opportunities in growing career fields in Avon. To strengthen Avon's

economic status, businesses, organizations, government institutions, and local governmental bodies need to be engaged to educate, inform, and involve the town in these programs.

Mobility & Circulation

Avon 2040 recommends to expand multi-modal accessibility, improve physical transportation infrastructure, and respond to traffic and safety concerns. Within a five-year period, Avon partially mitigate the most dangerous transportation conditions. The Police, Department of Public Works, Planning Department, and Planning Board can collaborate on technical reviews of safe, sensible parking schemes that includes on-street parking to slow vehicular traffic and improve pedestrian mobility and protection; employ tactical urbanism strategies to test and evaluate temporary low-cost traffic calming solutions; and developing outreach materials to a segment of the population to educate and inform seniors on ride-share opportunities to combat capacity issues in shuttle services as Avon's population continues to age in place. Lastly, municipal staff and relevant boards can draft bylaws requiring electric vehicle charging stations, scooter parking, and covered bicycle parking in all future development. The Town can also explore new opportunities for these facilities in existing in community spaces, such as Avon schools, the library, and local businesses.

Open Space and Recreation

Implement the open space and recreation plan, especially trail assessments, trails, and new open space parcels.

Natural and Cultural Resources

To preserve and protect existing natural resources in the community, municipal staff and relevant boards can expand conservation initiatives, The approach to preserving natural and cultural resources in Avon mainly depends on building a secure foundation of

individuals with specific interests, skills, and aptitude for safeguarding natural and cultural resources. Expand natural and human history interpretation.

Services and Facilities

Implement climate change and master plan analysis for all capital improvements plan requests. Consider resilience in current building project assessments (Town Hall and Elementary School) and all road drainage and stormwater designs.

Climate Action

Implement capital improvement plan analysis of climate impacts for all CIP items. Consider climate in current building project assessments (Town Hall and Elementary School). Consider joining the Green Communities program. Consider creating an Energy or Climate Action Committee to help with discussions on climate action. This committee could make recommendations to relevant decision-making bodies, for example establishing a land trust with a dedicated funding stream/source, or joining the Massachusetts Green Communities Division, which supplies municipalities with grants, technical assistance, and local support for green initiatives.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Avon can look to local and regional communities for guidance on process and application of principles and practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Town Planner and planning-related boards (e.g., Planning and Zoning Boards) can adopt rules of procedure directing that all their meetings be live streamed to expand public access, with the Zoom or other virtual meeting link and all meeting materials accessible on the web, ideally with on-line public meeting participation. Finally, Avon can take advantage of state resources to provide diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

Table 14-1. Five Year Action Plan Summary

Five Year Action Plan (2024-2029)	Time Frame	Lead
1. Land Use-Explore regulatory reforms in the Land Use Action Plan	2024-2027	Town Planner
2. Land Use-Consider changing some permits from Special Permit to Site Plan Approval only	2025-2027	Town Planner
3. Land Use-Provide more specific Site Plan Approval and Performance Standards	2025-2027	Town Planner
4. Land Use-Foster affordable and attainable housing with the ability to deny poorly planned projects	2024-2027	Town Planner
5. Land Use-Create a Parks and Open Space Zoning District	2025-2027	Town Planner
6. Land Use-Consider creating 40R Smart Growth Overlay districts to promote mixed-use development	2026-2029	Town Planner
7. Land Use-Revise commercial zoning districts with physical site constraints	2025-2028	Town Planner
8. Land Use-Revise subdivision regulations	2024-2025	Town Planner
9. Land Use-Revise wetlands and stormwater regulations	2024-2025	Town Planner
10. Land Use-Consider creating locally designed Avon Comprehensive Permit equivalent for affordable housing	2025-2029	Town Planner
11. Economic Development-Paths and Landscaping between public spaces	2026-2029	Director Public Works
12. Economic Development-Improve special events programming downtown	2025-2029	Avon Civic Association
13. Economic Development-Test demand for food trucks and sponsored concerts	2025-2029	Town Planner
14. Economic Development-Promote recreational tourism (including D.W. Field Park)	2025-2029	Avon Parks and Recreation
15. Economic Development-Review opportunities for greener energy and predicable energy rates through CCA	2025-2029	Town Administrator
16. Economic Development-Conduct business and inventory survey of Avon Industrial Park	2025-2027	Town Planner and Town Administrator
17. Economic Development-Collaborate with schools for career development to serve Avon needs	2027-2029	Schools Superintendent
18. Economic Development-Create a town-wide business calling program to assess business needs	2025-2028	Town Administrator
19. Mobility-Remark and better standardize parking downtown	2025-2026	Director of Public Works
20. Mobility Explore micro-mobility initiative	2026-2029	Old Colony Planning Commission with Town Planner
21. Mobility-Plan and implement traffic calming program	2026-2029	Town Planner
22. Mobility-Plan and implement walking improvement program	2026-2029	Town Planner
23. Mobility-Evaluate right-sizing of roads opportunities	2026-2029	Director of Public Works with Town Planner
24. Mobility-Create phase-in plan for multi-modal and accessibility improvements	2026-2029-	Director of Public Works with Town Planner

Five Year Action Plan (2024-2029)	Time Frame	Lead
25. Open Space and Recreation-Create action agenda for all recommendations in the plan	2024-2025	Conservation Agent and Parks & Recreation
26. Open Space and Recreation-Create trail feasibility study for D.W. Field Park	2024	Town Planner with Brockton Parks
27. Open Space and Recreation-Implement trail feasibility for D.W. Field Park Avon section	2025-2027	City Brockton, Conservation Agent, Parks & Recreation
28. Open Space and Recreation-Reach out for possible parcels to purchase for open space	2025-2027	Town Planner
29. Natural and Cultural Resources- Pursue collaborations to preserve open space with partners	2025-2027	Town Planner
30. Natural and Cultural Resources-Expand natural and human history interpretation and wayfinding	2026-2029	Conservation Agent and Historical Commission
31. Services and Facilities-Implement a climate change and Avon 2040 assessment as part of every CIP request	2025-2028	Town Planner
32. Services and Facilities-Consider climate and resilience in every building, road, and stormwater assessment	2024-2025	Town Administrator and Director of Public Works
33. Services and Facilities-Advance sewer and water supply planning	2024-2029	Town Administrator and Director of Public Works
34. Climate Action- Consider creating energy committee	2025-2029	Town Administrator
35. Climate Action- Consider joining Green Communities	2025-2029	Town Administrator
36. Climate Action-Include climate and resilience in all town policies and actions	2025-2029	Town Administrator
37. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion-Expand participation in town government and explore moving elections	2025-2029	Town Administrator
38. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion-Recruit underrepresented community members	2025-2029	Town Administrator
39. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion-Provide DEI training that is meaningful to municipal staff	2025-2027	Human Resources Coordinator