



AGENDA

Public Hearing Forum

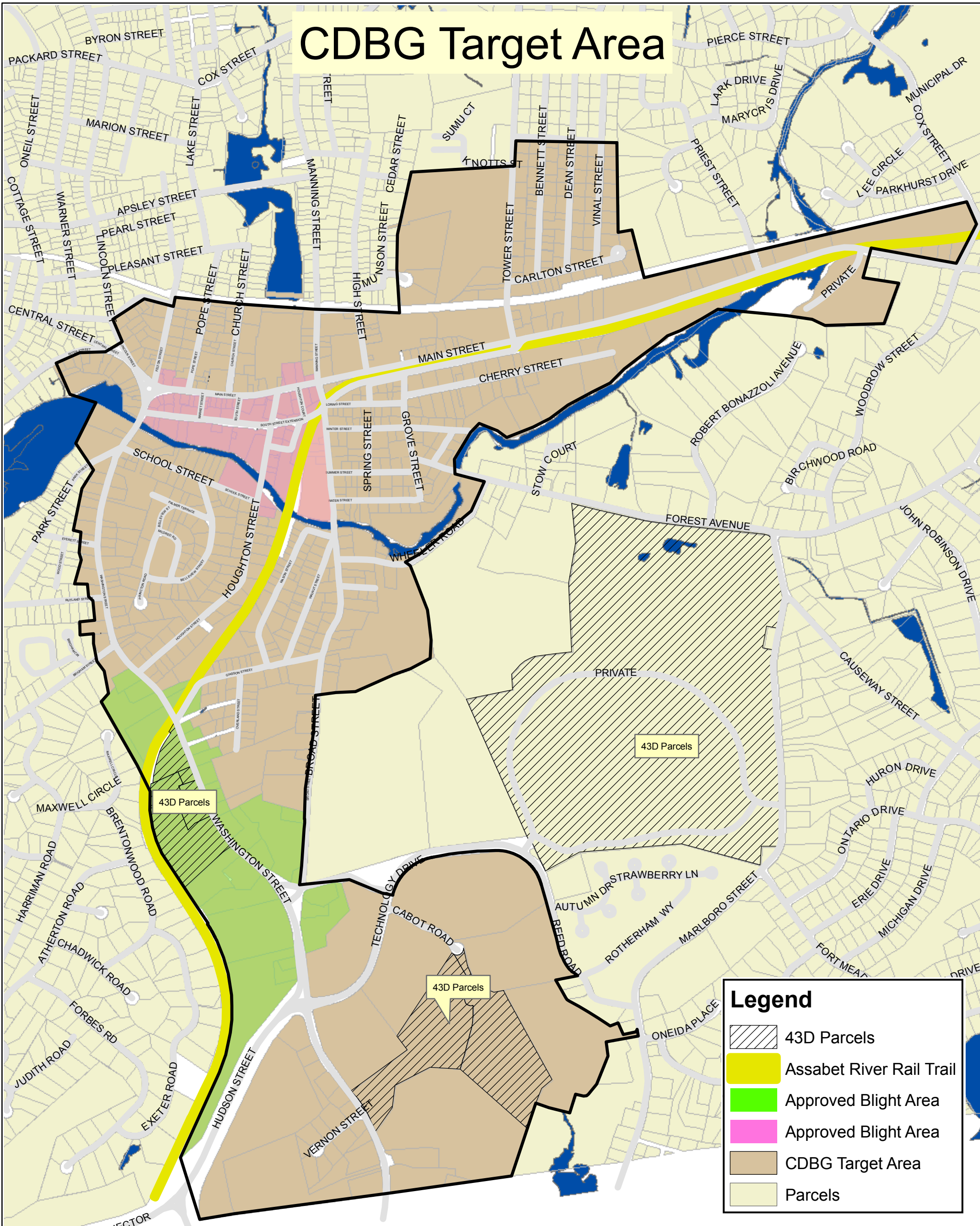
Community Development Strategy

September 22, 2010 – 7:00 PM – Town Hall Selectmen's Room







1. Overview of draft Community Development Strategy
 - What it does
 - Why we have one
 - How it was developed
2. Distribute printed document
 - Q&A
3. Distribute unranked list of priority projects
 - List of Priority Projects
 - Participants to offer suggestions for missing items
 - Participants to rank order priorities
4. Solicit feedback, ideas, and questions on the Town's Community Development program in general
5. Updates on CDBG projects
 - Senior Center
 - Façade Program
6. Next opportunities for public participation
 - Public Hearing for selection of FY11 block grant application projects
 - Time line
 - General Q&A and Public Feedback

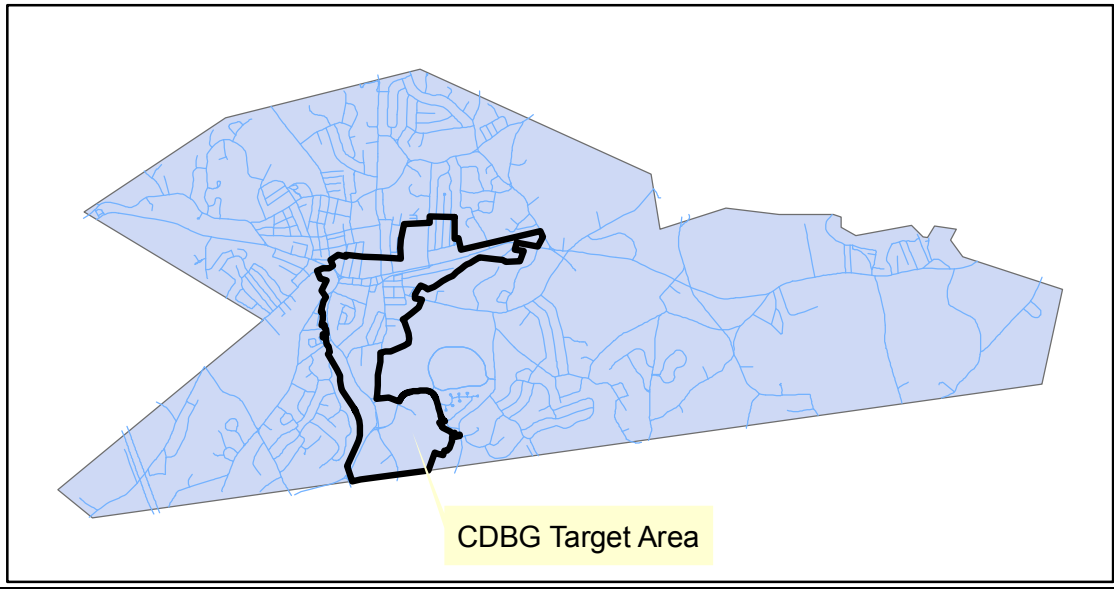
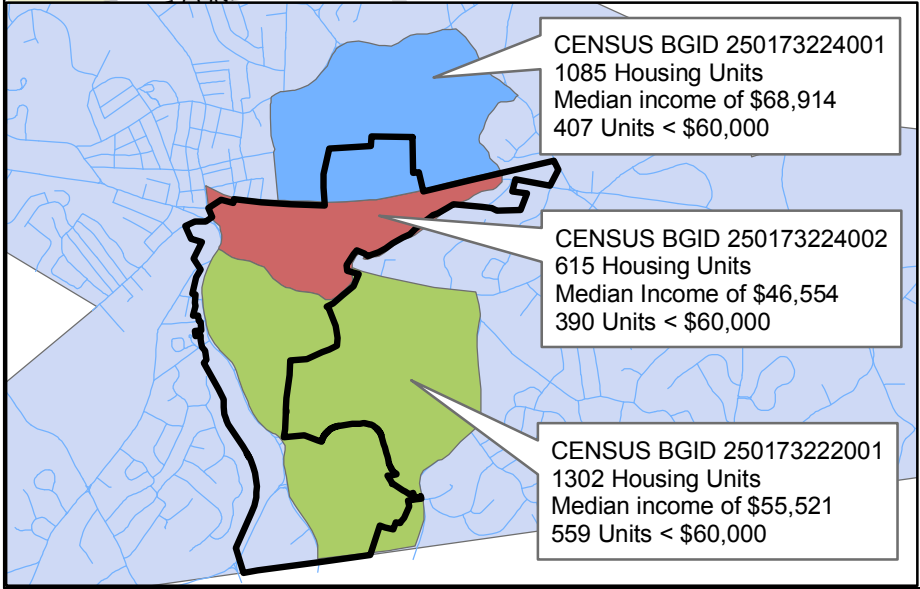
Submit written comments on the Community Development Strategy by October 8, 2010 to Kerin Shea, Community Development Department, 78 Main Street, Hudson, MA 01749. Comments may be emailed to kshea@townofhudson.org or phone comments in to: 978-562-2989.

CDBG Target Area



Legend

-  43D Parcels
-  Assabet River Rail Trail
-  Approved Blight Area
-  Approved Blight Area
-  CDBG Target Area
-  Parcels



Hudson Community Development Strategy – 2011 – Draft for Public Review

The Town of Hudson strongly encourages citizen involvement. We continually strive to provide opportunities for stakeholders to give input into the public process. Regular strategic planning public meetings are held to discuss proactive opportunities for the Town to direct and manage a multitude of future planning options and projects. Prior to these meetings, considerable effort is made to reach out to citizens through a variety of means including: bulletin board postings, newspaper advertising and media alerts, direct mail, e-mail distribution lists, publishing on cable television, website notices, and translation of notices into Portuguese to reach the Town's largest ethnic constituency.

In the recent past, Hudson completed a Comprehensive Community Development Plan (CDP). To guide that planning effort, the Hudson Board of Selectmen appointed a broad-based steering committee to ensure that a diverse set of interests were heard and represented at the table. CDP planning efforts occurred over a two-year period. Numerous highly successful public forums were conducted during this process to give citizens opportunities to express their views. At critical plan development stages, progress meetings were held, complete with power-point presentations and distribution of preliminary reports. A draft of the CDP was released to the public in advance of its completion date to provide yet another opportunity for the public to give feedback. The final Community Development Plan is a lengthy document that addresses Transportation and Natural Resources /Open Space and delves deeply into the core issues of Housing and Economic Development.

Early in the process, based on public input and community goals, it became clear to the CDP Steering Committee that the principals of *Smart Growth and Sustainable Development* needed to guide the direction of all of the Town's written plans. Thus, Hudson begins its Community Development Plan by affirming its own customized set of Sustainable Development principles. Quoting directly from Hudson's CDP, this was done "*to guide the selection of new projects and activities to undertake that can meet the Town's goals, and to inform the day to day decision-making of Town committees and boards on projects not included in the CD Plan. These Principles have incorporated the thinking of State and regional planning institutions and agencies involved in growth and development, and of the Steering Committee. The Smart Growth principals presented below have also been tailored to Hudson in order to reflect the unique realities of the community relative to its present capacity, development state, and available water and sewer resources.*" The principals, as they appear in the CDP, are provided below:

1. **Provide a range of housing opportunities** for residents of all levels of income and abilities. Support the construction and rehabilitation of housing to meet the needs of people of all abilities and income levels. Concentrate the development of housing in infill development and rehabilitation of existing buildings or developed sites.
2. **Provide a variety of transportation choices.** Support non-motorized transportation options for recreation and travel purposes through development of the Assabet River Rail Trail; encourage cost effective transportation alternatives such as increased ride-sharing programs, improved connection of existing trails, expanded bus transportation options, and *general infrastructure improvements.*
3. **Concentrate development.** *Support development that is compact, conserves land, integrates uses, and utilizes existing infrastructure for sewer and water.* Avoid excessive new roads and other public infrastructure, or residential properties spread out on existing roads. *Enhance walkable districts mixing commercial, civic, cultural, educational and recreational activities.*
4. **Protect the village character and strong "sense of place" of downtown Hudson** *with its locally-owned businesses, healthy economy, pedestrian environment, access to the Assabet River, built features and landmarks, historical resources, and role in community life. Consideration of the interaction of all these positive qualities on downtown Hudson should be factored into consideration of development proposals, and to proposed changes in by-laws and regulations.*

5. **Redevelop first.** *Identify existing built resources that are unused or underutilized and give preference to their reuse. Promote redevelopment of brownfields, preservation and reuse of historic structures, and rehabilitation of existing housing, industrial buildings, and schools.*
6. **Recognize the Town's unique role as guardian of important natural and cultural resources.** Hudson will enforce high standards in design review and decision-making regarding development projects in sensitive areas. This will be particularly important for projects affecting its remaining open lands, in areas abutting the Assabet River, for those areas still in agricultural use, for sites of known historical and archeological value, and in other sensitive environmental areas...
7. **Increase the Town's ability to influence and direct development consistent with these principles by strengthening the planning and review processes.** Make regulatory and permitting processes for development clear, transparent, cost-effective, and oriented to encourage smart growth.
8. **Increase job opportunities.** *Use rehabilitation and infill development to encourage the location of new business development near housing, infrastructure, water, and transportation options. Support the growth of new and existing local businesses.*
9. **Foster sustainable businesses.** Strengthen sustainable natural resource-based businesses, primarily agricultural activities. Support economic development in industry clusters consistent with regional and local character. Maintain reliable and affordable energy sources to reduce dependence gasoline.
10. **Prevent the population of Hudson from exceeding the carrying capacity of its various infrastructure** and services, including sewer, water, and schools, by anticipating pressures and actively deciding to reduce growth or plan for increased services where possible or appropriate.
11. **Work towards making Hudson a more "sustainable" community** through education and incentives to reduce water and electric use, and better management of septic systems and wastewater. Since Hudson provides many of these services now, the Town can have a big influence on the preservation of resources and the prevention of pollution...
12. **Encourage "green" buildings.** Work with developers on new construction projects to reduce stormwater through "green" roofs, permeable parking surfaces, and other options, and to reduce energy consumption of new construction and rehabilitation through active and passive energy saving building options.
13. **Plan and Coordinate Regionally.** When addressing housing, transportation, and economic development projects, consider the impacts on neighbors and the needs for such projects that are already being filled by neighboring communities. Share review of plans and projects.

Community Based Planning Efforts and Documents:

For this year's Community Development Strategy, the Town has broadly distributed its "List of Town Projects" through a variety of channels electronically, by handing it out at the Town Hall, Library, Senior Center, and sharing it at several public hearings. It was also posted on the Town's Web Site and passed out at key civic meetings of the Chamber of Commerce and Hudson Business Association, and published in a newspaper distributed to ALL households in Hudson.

This has enabled us to gather feedback from numerous individuals who responded by returning the list with their priority preferences noted.

Moreover, in addition to the planning work done for the CDP and Community Development Strategy, Hudson has also participated in a number of other public forums and produced other critical planning documents. In recent years, the Town of Hudson has commissioned numerous studies and undergone a tremendous amount of planning on a variety of topics involved in municipal management. One clear example is the Comprehensive Waste Water Management Plan for which the Town has appropriated and expended more than \$500,000 to study its wastewater needs, and another \$270,000 toward researching alternative water sources. Hudson was the lead community overseeing the Assabet Wastewater Consortium, a group of six municipalities working together to develop wastewater solutions to reduce total phosphorous discharge into the Assabet River. Hudson also applied for and received District Local

Technical Assistance money to fund the recently completed Route 85 Corridor Technical Assistance study conducted by MAPC in conjunction with the City of Marlborough. The Town has also cooperated on numerous transportation studies that have been prepared by various state, regional, and local agencies. During the Fall of 2007, Hudson hosted a “Walkable Communities” forum where representatives from the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) came out and guided walking tours to analyze how Hudson can make its community more pedestrian-friendly.

Several years ago, an extensive visioning process was also conducted in Hudson, focusing on the Downtown as part of the “Urban River Visions” effort initiated by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) with the consulting assistance of Goody Clancy and Associates. Four public meetings and a walking tour were held in conjunction with the Urban River Visions process and countless staff and volunteer hours went into the planning and follow-up for this project. The end result was the creation of a graphic display of the “ideal” Hudson Downtown with specific action steps needed. This graphic depiction neatly captured goals and sentiments expressed by the community in current and past planning efforts. In 2006, Hudson participated in the Heritage Landscapes program funded and overseen by DCR. This project produced an excellent report, complete with visuals which focused on the key heritage and historic areas unique to Hudson which are worthy of preservation.

While there are too many plans and studies to cite all of them in this Community Development Strategy, a few more plans are particularly worthy of mention. The Town of Hudson has a comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan, previously approved by Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, which is currently being revised and updated. The Sudbury Valley Trustees, a non-profit organization, produced a Greenways plan for the SuAsCo Watershed area (Sudbury, Assabet, & Concord Rivers). The Organization for the Assabet River (OAR), in a collaborative effort among non-profit agencies and public entities, recently released the “Upper Assabet Riverway Plan.” The Town was also the lead recipient of a \$350,000 Federal grant program to monitor water quality and habitat vitality in the Assabet River and its tributaries and received a \$500,000 state grant to conduct a sediment study.

In addition to the plans and studies noted above, certain key planning documents and brainstorming sessions have provided guidance and direction in our efforts to develop a shared community vision strategy. Although the oldest of these plans, the “Center Revitalization Project,” dates back to 1981, it is amazing how relevant the observations and recommendations from that project are today. That plan emphasized the importance of investing in the Downtown and in addressing building facades, infrastructure, and parking downtown. Hudson frequently works with the various state and regional agencies to ensure that its planning efforts are well thought-out and comprehensive. Several other studies and planning documents also have retained their relevancy and validity to today’s conditions. Specifically of note is the 1994 strategic planning Southwest Sector report focusing on the Downtown.

When looking at existing Municipal facilities and infrastructure, the Long-Range Capital Plan is produced annually by the Town’s Executive Assistant with input from all Department Heads, the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, as well as the public. At least five years worth of capital projects are outlined and the 20 year borrowing and debt retirement schedule is incorporated. This important document is a compilation of all major capital obligations. Sources of funding are targeted in a strategic way to enable the community to balance fiscal needs and to prepare feasibility studies far enough in advance in order to properly manage the identified construction projects. This element is critical as the community must stay within its allowable debt and levy ceilings. In considering appropriate overall spending levels for all municipal services, the Executive Assistant forecasts several years of anticipated municipal revenues, expenditures, and likely tax rates. This document known as the “Financial Control Plan,” is an invaluable tool in helping to maintain prudent overall municipal spending limits. A Public Meeting is held annually on the Capital Plan and provides a further opportunity for community input. The Annual Capital Outlay is also discussed extensively at Finance Committee meetings and voted upon

by the Legislative body of the community (Town Meeting). High on the priority list of needed municipal facility upgrades include upgrades to Fire Station 1, the Police Station, and DPW headquarter improvements.

As noted above, the Town has recently engaged in a comprehensive planning process to identify, examine, and protect “Heritage Landscape Areas.” Offered competitively by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) as a program for municipalities within the geographical area known as the Freedom’s Way Heritage Area, Hudson was pleased to be selected to participate in this project. DCR hired a consultant to assist the chosen municipalities. Four public meetings were held in Hudson regarding this effort. Site visits were conducted and heritage areas of critical concern were identified. The final report is a comprehensive tool the Town has to assist it in setting priorities for the protection of key heritage areas. That plan also feeds input into our overall goals and strategies.

Community Development Priorities and Strategies:

Through all of these planning efforts, certain clear community priorities have been articulated and developed. Based on public input and professional staff expertise, the **Town has developed a CDBG Target Area to direct our CDBG spending focus. That target area was chosen to reflect the needs of the community and was heavily influenced by the Town’s Low and Moderate Income neighborhoods, combined with the 2 DHCD approved Blight Target Areas. Finally, we factored in 43D priority development sites and known areas of concern relative to the need for redevelopment or infrastructure spending. The CDBG Target Area is vetted routinely at our public hearings** and copies of the target area map are handed out and displayed in large format. The Town’s priorities, as they are expressed in this document, are further guided and informed by the Town’s Sustainable Development Principals to ensure consistency in planning. These selected priorities broadly fall under the following subject areas. Strategies to implement goals for each of the categories are also detailed below.

1. Expand *economic development* to support business
2. Foster *recreational opportunities* and enhance *environmental resources*
3. Upgrade and enhance existing *infrastructure*
4. Maintain municipal *fiscal stability*
5. Increase availability of *affordable housing*
6. Augment existing *Social Services*

Economic Development - will be fostered through a number of different approaches beginning with an involved, proactive Economic Development Commission (EDC). The EDC will be involved in seeking out attractive business and industry for location in Hudson, while simultaneously advocating for and supporting those already located in Town. As the equivalent of a local “ombudsman” for business and industry, the EDC helps create the friendly atmosphere necessary to retain valuable jobs in Town. As a part of a regional Economic Target Area, Hudson will also seek to utilize its ability to create Economic Opportunity Areas (EOA’s) in order to be able to offer Tax Increment Financing and Special Assessments, where appropriate, in order to further encourage the location and expansion of job-producing enterprises in town and the creation or rehabilitation of commercial facilities. Moreover, the Town will look for opportunities to provide assistance to Small Businesses when funding is available for business support services.

*To redevelop first and to concentrate development, a special area of focus within our overall economic development strategy will be our **Downtown commercial district** and more specifically our **designated Blight Target Area in the Downtown** and our **Washington Street Blight Target area**. We will attempt to take advantage of the synergy developed through the use of different state, local, and federal monies and initiatives to enhance and market this vital area within the Town. **The Town will continue to offer a***

commercial façade rehabilitation program to assist its efforts to create and retain low and moderate income retail and service jobs predominant in the Downtown and Washington Street target areas. Key to these revitalization efforts is the ongoing efforts to upgrade the infrastructure and make the area more pedestrian friendly. *Augmenting walk-ability to and from the new Argeo R. Cellucci park* recently opened along the Assabet River & funded in part with CDBG monies, is essential. This park is in close proximity to the Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT) and will draw new activity and increase foot traffic in the Downtown. To optimize our Historic District and blight target areas, we will *seek funds to reconstruct our downtown roads and key parking areas, while adding trees and period street-lighting to help nurture a special identity for this area.* Among other sources, this effort should be eligible for Mass. Transportation Enhancement Funds, Chapter 90 Funds, and CDBG. The Town is considering submitting an Enhancement application for the period lighting and street furnishings and will seek the remainder of funds from other CDBG, state, private, and local sources.

The **Washington Street Blight Target Area** encompasses a significant portion of the Route 85 corridor where a concentration of older retail businesses are located. The Town is engaged in an ongoing effort, working with the Highway Division at MassDOT and MassDevelopment, to advance the expansion of Route 85 and the clean up of several contaminated properties. Safety upgrades including sidewalks, ADA ramps, bike shoulders, cross walks, traffic lights, landscaping, and other pedestrian amenities are a key component of the larger expansion project. The Route 85 project is scheduled on the FY11 Boston MPO TIP and is presently anticipated to cost around \$11 million. It will also directly address road congestion to make economic activity more viable along the corridor. The Town will continue to work closely with MassDOT to ready this project for advertising.

Recreation & Environment – Citizens often express the desire for increased recreational facilities. The Town sees a benefit in continuing to acquire land for recreational purposes including for the development of additional playing fields for soccer and baseball. The Town also intends to augment the new Assabet River Rail Trail by pursuing short access linkages from residential and commercial areas to the trail. Additional river-front trails have been proposed to allow for more public access and enjoyment of the river. Obtaining land along the river and in sensitive environmental areas for passive recreation and conservation is also a priority to assist the Town in protecting its natural resources and water supply. The Mass. Central Railroad is another rail bed that could be converted to a recreation and transportation corridor. **Existing recreational resources need to be augmented with adequate parking facilities** and some park areas such as Cherry Street need expanded equipment and amenities.

Infrastructure - Consistent with the goal of economic development, but necessary in its own right, is the *upgrade of the various components of infrastructure within the Town.* With some dilapidated and outdated public buildings, to crumbling roads, bridges, and parking lots, to an aging water distribution system, the infrastructure of the Town needs to be addressed. Through increasing use of local funds as well as state and federal funds available through the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and other grant programs, the Town intends to focus on roads, sidewalks, parking lots, utilities, and bridge repair. Also, as mentioned above, the Town details its municipal and school building needs in the Long Range Capital Plan. Prior to funding a project, Department Heads are expected to prepare detailed research and/or feasibility studies to support spending items. Some of the highlights outlined in this plan include an expanded Police Station, a new DPW headquarters, a sixteen (16) million dollar middle school expansion, and upgrades to the original Fire Station # 1. Water and sewer replacements, extensions and filtration are also prominent on the plan. **Downtown continues to be plagued with traffic congestion, parking deficiencies, and vehicular circulation problems, and other infrastructure issues. The rotary at Routes 62 and 85 needs to be upgraded to accommodate traffic from a nearby retail expansion and the Town must address the loss of parking that this might create. A parking garage will likely be the remedy the Town must**

pursue as land in downtown is tight. Engineering studies of the rotary traffic flow options along with parking improvements should be conducted in order to help the Town evaluate and select the best means of proceeding.

Providing Water and Sewer consistent with current EPA and DEP guidelines is an ongoing area of critical concern. Without sufficient capacity in these areas, the Town will be unable to meet future expansion needs for affordable housing, commercial, and industrial developments. The Town chairs the Assabet Wastewater Consortium, a cooperative effort of the six Communities which discharge wastewater into the Assabet River. The Consortium was organized around the effort to renew existing NPDES sewer discharge permits to promote a cleaner, healthier river while still supporting appropriate development. It is towards this end that the Town appropriated extensive funds to upgrade its treatment plant. The Town also has a Permanent Sewer Area to allow for infill development in locations with existing infrastructure while prohibiting hook ups in those areas not presently served by municipal sewer. **Funds for ongoing water and sewer main replacements of aging and failing infrastructure are needed.**

Fiscal Stability – Hudson has identified maintaining fiscal stability as a necessary precondition of meeting its complementary goals of supporting economic development and attending to environmental, recreational, and infrastructure needs. The constraints imposed by Proposition 2^{1/2} coupled with a constantly changing economy make local governmental budgets highly susceptible to swings in external revenue sources such as local aid. Hudson leaders have sought to maintain a stable fiscal environment by coupling prudent spending with the maintenance of adequate levels of reserves. By providing a predictable level of services and capital expenditures, the Town is able to avoid the boom and bust spending cycle that acts as a disincentive for the development of business, industry, and housing. Additionally, in order to maintain its consistent service delivery while also providing for necessary expansion in services, Hudson has followed a strategy of being aggressive in seeking federal, state, and private grant funding for a variety of its initiatives including: the TIP, Mass. Transportation Enhancement Funds, CMAQ funds, CDBG, the Land and Water Conservation Funds, and from DEP, EOT, SBAB, and EOEEA. We recently received EECBG funds for the Library and will continue to seek energy grants to help offset utility costs and reduce consumption. To help bolster opportunities to fund key municipal projects and to leverage additional state funding, the Town has passed the Community Preservation Act (CPA), helping the Town leverage other funding. These funds are being spent in accordance with the CPA guidelines and have already enabled the Town to undertake innovative projects such as cemetery restoration, historic rehab of municipal facilities, new initiatives in affordable housing creation, land conservation, and the creation of soccer fields.

Housing – Although Hudson is presently at the 10% subsidized affordable housing benchmark, fostering appropriate affordable housing continues to be a priority of the town. Going forward, this will continue to be important, especially in the context of the present foreclosure crisis and the likelihood that after the 2010 census, Hudson will no longer be at 10% on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Various initiatives over the past few years including Local Initiative Programs, housing rehabilitation funds (obtained in partnership with the City of Marlborough and funded by CDBG grants), and collaboration with advantageous 40B project developers have all helped to address housing to a certain degree, but continuing efforts are needed. In its CDP, the Town details a series of zoning modifications and other initiatives aimed at producing the desirable type of housing needed in Hudson. At its Town Meeting in May of 2007, the Town, through its Planning Board, submitted to the Town Meeting several by-laws addressing housing needs. These include an “Adaptive Re-use Overlay District” to help convert mills and other underutilized existing structures to higher density housing mixed with commercial, an “Open Space Residential Design” subdivision by-law, and an “Accessory Use by-law” with housing density bonuses for developers who provide more than the required 20% affordable housing. The Town

Planner and Community Development Director held a very well attended hearing in the fall of 2006 to discuss these by-laws and seek feedback. It also distributed the drafts extensively, posted them on the web, and solicited feedback at a variety of other public forums. In this arena, the Town hopes to undertake a Housing Production Plan and to initiate new affordable housing programs in collaboration with Hudson's Affordable Housing Trust.

Social Services

Hudson has an extensive network of social services mostly run by local non-profit institutions. These include an active Food Pantry, a Boys and Girls Club, Friends of the Hudson Senior Center, Friends of the Hudson Public Library, VNA, CHAPS early childhood services, VFW, AmVets, Benevolent Fund, local Habitat for Humanities chapter, Arts Alliance, etc. Working through and with these charitable organizations, the Town will seek ways to assist those most needy in our community.