

TOWN OF HOPEDALE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Background

Hopedale's Community Development Strategy (CDS) provides a snapshot of the town's community development goals, which reflects the Town's unique history and housing stock, its position in the regional economy, demographic trends, and the community's vision for its future.

Hopedale is a predominately residential community of 5,911 people with a land area of 5.2 square miles located on the southeastern edge of Worcester County. The Town traces its history to 1669 when Benjamin Albee set up a grist mill on the Mill River to grind settlers' corn in the first recorded settlement. Until the mid-19th century, the town followed the pattern of many local communities, with a combination of agriculture and small-scale industry. Then, in 1842, Adin Ballou and his followers, idealists who wanted to combine biblical individualism with social responsibility and religious liberalism, purchased 600 acres in what is now downtown Hopedale to establish Fraternal Community Number One. Thirty houses, a chapel and workshops were built on an architectural plan for the 170 people who joined in the social experiment that combined farming with manufacturing, and took strong social stands on temperance, women's rights and abolition.

Unfortunately, disagreements over how to administer the community ended in its bankruptcy by 1856, when George and Ebenezer Draper, followers of Ballou, took over the property. The brothers made doors, window sashes and blinds and ran a printing office, but soon discovered that their most profitable business was making textile machinery. By 1880 there were 400 patents held in Hopedale for textile machinery, 800 Draper employees and \$1 million in annual sales. With the advent of the Northrop Loom in 1892, Draper became the largest producer of textile machinery in the nation. There were 78,000 Northrop looms sold in 1903 because they used less power and could be operated by untrained hands (which ultimately resulted in the textile industry's move from New England to the South). By World War I, the majority of the 400,000 looms in the United States had been made by Draper and the company was selling to China, Russia and Mexico. At its peak, the Draper Corporation employed more than 6,000 people.

The Drapers believed that good houses make good workers and created a model, self-contained company town with one of the best collections of (now) architecturally significant "double houses" in the country, built on hills and in valleys in garden settings which preserved the views. The company charged low rents, and provided high quality housing, impeccable maintenance and recreational opportunities. Workers left their handsomely designed duplexes to walk to work at Hopedale Machine, Northrop Loom or Hopedale Elastic. After work, they enjoyed recreation in company parks, or strolled along company streets. The Drapers donated the high school, playground and bandstand to the town and built roads, sidewalks, sewage systems, and water and gas lines to service their 250 buildings of worker housing. Only one strike, in 1913, was ever recorded in Hopedale, during what was one of the most turbulent eras of American labor unrest.

The Drapers' secular, paternalistic industrial complex was highly successful. It was an integrated, planned community with innovative 19th and early 20th Century employee housing, a central institutional complex and proprietors' estates, all of which remain essentially intact today.

During the mid-1900's the massive Draper plant employed as many as 6,000 people (more than the total current population of the Town) in 1.6 million square feet of space; it was the dominant force in the local economy. The Draper facility was acquired in the 1960's by Rockwell International but due to national and international economic competition, production at the facility gradually declined until it closed permanently at the end of 1979. The facility has remained a huge and vacant presence in the heart

of Hopedale for more than three decades.

Although the Draper facility has been shuttered, the area surrounding the plant retains the historic and aesthetic benefits of the Draper brothers' early vision. The housing stock is a rich mix of older estates of the plant owners and atypically large, well-built duplex structures that comprised the original workers' housing. Over the years, these duplexes have been converted from their original form of rental housing to a combination of ownership models, including condominium units, two family properties (both ownership and rental units), and attached single family homes. They are still the source of the most abundant, affordable housing in Town for lower income households. Hundreds of these properties are recognized as historically significant by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Scattered throughout the downtown and tucked in among the older and historic properties are a number of newer subdivisions of more expensive single-family homes.

Consistent with national trends, while the number of housing units in Hopedale has increased in recent decades, the population of the town has not grown significantly due to the decrease in the average household size. Between 2000 and 2010 the total population of the town, as captured by the decennial United States Census, remained essentially stagnant (increasing only from 5,907 in 2000 to 5,911 in 2010). Today, the majority of residents are employed elsewhere, commuting on average 28 minutes to reach jobs in other communities.

A Comprehensive Planning Process – Community Outreach and Participation

Hopedale has engaged in a community-based planning process over the last decade that has included all segments of the community, as well as the Town's regional and statewide partners. During this process, community needs have been identified and priorities determined in a comprehensive manner. This Community Development Strategy includes major strategies and priorities that were initially drawn from the Town's E.O. 418 Community Development Plan (2004). The Hopedale Master Plan (2007) has been updated over time and The Draper Complex Re-use Committee conducted an extensive Community Survey in 2007 to elicit ideas from residents for how best to transform and reuse that important complex. State officials have been working with Hopedale, as part of a new compact between state agencies to revitalize communities surrounding Interstate 495. These agencies include the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, Department of Transportation and M.B.T.A. These agencies and elected representatives are working with the Town to explore options for re-use of the Draper Complex and the Grafton and Upton Railroad line which passes by the complex and the heart of the Town.

In late 2016 the Town began the process of updating its Community Development Strategy, initially adopted in 2013. The 2013 document was circulated among elected and appointed officials of the town, posted on the town website and discussed at a Community Development Forum held on February 6, 2017 as part of the Board of Selectmen's meeting on that date. Residents were presented with an opportunity to comment upon the CDS and the priority projects list either by responding in writing or by speaking at the CDS Forum. The February 6th meeting was publicly advertised and attended by residents and elected and appointed officials. The meeting was also broadcast live over cable access television. At the meeting, the selectmen asked for residents to comment on the strategy and community priorities. The meeting was subsequently available to residents on the internet where they could live-stream the meeting at any time convenient to them

The Community Development Strategy

Hopedale has invested considerable time and effort into translating the thoughts and ideas of its citizens and public officials into a Community Development Strategy that reflects the character of the

community and the goals of its residents. Its community development objectives, goals and priorities, as identified and developed by its residents, are summarized in this document.

Community Development Target Area

In 2013 Hopedale designated the North Hopedale Target Area. Bordered on the south by Mendon Street from the Milford town line running west to Hopedale Street, then south on Hopedale Street to Thwing Street, the target area's southern border then continues west along an imaginary boundary (roughly parallel to Mendon Street) to the Mendon town line.

Relaxation of Target Area Designation - One Year Waiver of Target Area Requirement:

Previously, the Massachusetts Community Development Program (MCDBG) required towns applying for funding for physical activities such as housing rehabilitation must select a specific "target area" in which to focus their efforts. Hopedale has focused its efforts in the North Hopedale Target Area. ***This year, for the first time in many years, there is no target area requirement for MCDBG funding applications.*** Hopedale will again partner with Bellingham on a FY 2017 MCDBG application and, if successful, will take the opportunity to run the program on a town-wide basis in order to serve all eligible low- and moderate-income households.

Goals and Objectives

Hopedale has outlined its community development goals and objectives below in major categories, together with an explanation of how they consistent with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles. They are followed by a list of prioritized actions needed to achieve them.

Goals and objectives for **Housing:**

Goals: Increase housing opportunities for a broad range of income levels
Promote housing affordability
Improve the condition of Hopedale's housing stock

Objectives:

- Promote housing affordability
- Increase the supply of affordable rental units and subsidized units
- Improve the condition of Hopedale's housing stock
- Foster the historic and architectural importance of the housing stock
- Promote homeownership

Goals and objectives for **Economic Development:**

Goals: Maintain stability and manage commercial and industrial growth
Expand the local tax base
Increase employment opportunities for Hopedale residents.

Objectives:

- Increase employment opportunities for Hopedale residents – including low and moderate income residents
- Promote controlled commercial and industrial development in appropriate areas to increase the local tax base
- Provide infrastructure needed to attract business and industry
- Provide high quality educational system that prepares residents for emerging regional employment opportunities

- Capitalize on Hopedale’s rich history, community character and physical development patterns
- Develop adequate database of space and land for business location.
- Market “Hopedale” as open and receptive to business.

Goals and objectives for **Community Facilities, Programs and Services:**

Goals: Provide and maintain adequate community facilities, programs and services
 Provide recreational programs and facilities that reflect contemporary needs
 Ensure adequacy of services to seniors
 Maintain town’s high educational standards
 Provide adequate and coordinated development and regulatory resources and policies

Objectives:

- Ensure that community facilities, services and programs are accessible to all residents
- Preserve historic buildings and small-town character of Town center
- Maintain and improve recreational programs and facilities
- Complete planning and acquire land needed for facilities
- Assess and provide needed programs and services to elderly residents
- Maintain adequate public infrastructure
- Improve capacity to plan for and manage growth and change

Goals and objectives for **Resource Protection and Open Space:**

Goals: Sustain and restore water resources
 Retain habitats, open spaces and scenic/unique resources
 Enhance recreational opportunities and facilities

Objectives:

- Continue enforcement of Wetlands Protection Act, preserve riverfront buffers through Rivers Protection Act reviews and encourage conservation restrictions as part of riverfront projects
- Protect Hopedale well fields using Zone II regulations
- Develop a watershed management plan for Hopedale Pond
- Mitigate pollution from storm water discharges to rivers and ponds
- Expand parklands and protect rare habitats in north Hopedale
- Encourage partnerships with community groups to manage Town resources
- Improve and protect recreational resources, including parkland trails, riverfront areas, and public open spaces

Goals and objectives for **Transportation:**

Goals: Increase availability of public transportation
 Maintain availability of community services within walking distance
 Maintain quality of existing public roadways
 Restore and Improve use of Grafton-Upton railway

Objectives:

- Restore use of Grafton-Upton railroad for freight use
- Explore rail corridor’s potential for commuter rail

- Maintain a pedestrian-friendly downtown
- Encourage use of public transportation, where and when available
- Explore ways to improve regional transportation options for Hopedale residents
- Support continued quality of Highway Department operations

Goals and objectives for **Public Social Services:**

Goals: Provide necessary services to low and moderate income, elderly and disabled residents
Increase economic self sufficiency
Educate and assist first time homebuyers

Objectives:

- Provide services to elders and the disabled in locations that are accessible
- Provide services that enhance economic self sufficiency (including financial literacy, child care, job training, etc.)
- Provide first time homebuyer training
- Provide information and referral services to connect residents to local and regional services for elderly, disabled and low income residents

Consistency with Sustainable Development Principles

The goals and objectives listed above are consistent with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles as shown on the chart below:

Sustainable Development Principles	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY				
	Housing	Economic Development	Resource Protection, Open Space and Community Facilities	Transportation	Public Social Services
Concentrate Development and Mix Uses	X	X	X		
Advance Equity	X	X			X
Make Efficient Decisions		X	X	X	
Protect Land and Ecosystems			X		
Use Natural Resources Wisely			X		
Expand Housing Opportunities	X				
Provide Transportation Choice			X	X	
Increase Job and Business Opportunities	X	X		X	
Promote Clean Energy			X		
Plan Regionally	X	X	X	X	

Actions and Planned Activities

In order to achieve the Goals and Objectives outlined above, a number of actions will be required. As can be seen, these include both policy and regulatory actions in addition to “bricks and mortar” projects. These are listed below, with responsible parties, anticipated resources and actions to date *in italics* shown in parenthesis after the action item:

- Update the Hopedale Master Plan (*Planning Board/CMRPC, ongoing*)
- Complete needed road and sidewalk improvements throughout town (*Highway Dept, ongoing, local funds, c. 90 funds*):ongoing
- Redevelop the Draper Mill Complex (*Board of Selectmen, Draper Re-use Committee, State EOHEd, DOT, MBTA, Property Owner(s) – Planning efforts ongoing in cooperation with property owner, state agencies and other potential development partners – funding sources to be determined*).
- Improve housing quality, conditions and affordability, especially for elderly and lower income residents through creation of a regional housing rehabilitation program. (*MCDBG Grant Application with the Town of Bellingham, 2017 - 2018*);
- Complete ADA Transition Plan (*MCDBG Grant Application 2013 with Town of Bellingham, Procure Consultant 2013-2014, Complete Inventory and Transition Plan, 2013-2014*).
- Re-activate Grafton-Upton Railway for freight and possible passenger/commuter rail uses. (*Town, railway owner(s), state transportation and economic development agencies*). *Railway crossing repairs/upgrades initiated with \$1 million state grant and freight trips initiated late 2012, review of expanded freight use and potential passenger use options underway 2013 forward*)
- Increase affordable housing options (both rental and home-ownership units) through adaptive re-use of existing properties. (*Explore housing as a component of Draper Facility Re-use plan, assess options for additional affordable housing development opportunities – Private developers, non-profit developers, state and/or federal grant funding*)(*ongoing*)
- Strengthen a local capacity to assess development proposals to ensure that they contribute to sought-after solutions consistent with the Master Plan and Community Development Strategy (*Planning Board/Conservation Commission/Board of Selectmen and other land use regulatory bodies – Town Budget and potential grant funding ongoing*)
- Increase grant writing and grant management capacity (*Town Budget, Regional Planning Agency, private consulting firms* in order to maximize resources for CDS priorities; *ongoing*)
- Develop plan to match water and sewer system capacity with planned and potential new development (e.g., impact of redevelopment of Draper Mill facility);
- Provide financial assistance to individual homeowners to upgrade/replace septic systems in areas not served by town sewer (*CDBG, DEP SRLF*); (2017-2018)
- Research potential grant applications and strengthen town regulations relating to water resource protection (Conservation Commission, Charles River Watershed Association, Mass Watershed Association, etc.); *ongoing*
- Implement EnergyStar requirements for all town-managed projects, including a town-sponsored housing rehabilitation program (*various funding sources*); *ongoing*
- Complete restoration/renovation of historic Town Hall (Town Meeting, *warrant article for funding planned for 2017 Annual Town Meeting*)
- Complete and maintain an inventory of buildings, rental spaces, and vacant land available for business and residential development and a system for matching interested developers or businesses with appropriate opportunities within the Town. *ongoing*

- Work with regional chambers of commerce and business trade groups to promote Hopedale to new and emerging businesses. *ongoing*

Community Development Strategy Priority Project List:

1. Continue the regional housing rehabilitation program in conjunction with the Town of Bellingham with funds to be made available to assist low- and moderate-income (LMI) households expanding the program town-wide. (MCDBG Grant) Estimated Timeframe: 2017-2018.
2. Continue to make infrastructure improvements to roads, sidewalks, water and sewers in the target area using local funds and to seek additional funding through other available resources, including Chapter 90. Estimated Timeframe: Ongoing
3. Continue to implement recommendations of ADA Transition Plan to increase accessibility of Town programs and facilities. Currently the town is considering whether to do a complete renovation to town hall (where heating systems have been replaced and converted to gas in the past year) in order to make the building more accessible, or alternately to purchase another building and move the town offices. . Estimated Timeframe: 2017 and ongoing
4. Complete restoration/renovation of Town Hall. Estimated Timeframe: ongoing
5. Continue to work with state agencies, private owners and developers and potential funders to complete a redevelopment plan for the Draper Mill Complex. Estimated Timeframe: 2013 - forward
6. Work with State and Regional Transportation Agencies to complete a feasibility study regarding how to improve transportation options for Hopedale residents. Estimated Timeframe: 2014 – forward
7. Develop a marketing strategy to draw small to moderate sized businesses to the town center. In 2015-2016, the town re-zoned certain parcels of land along Routes 16 and 140 as well as South Main Street from residential to commercial in support of this effort. Estimated Timeframe: *Final phase will be done in May 2017.*
8. Secure funding for and develop additional multi-use paths for recreational use such as bike paths, hiking trails, etc. The Parks Department is working to improve the trail system through a complete maintenance program. Funds have been allocated for a comprehensive cleanup of the Hopedale Pond to increase its use. Funding has also been secured to place 6 bike racks at locations within Town park and trail areas. Estimated Timeframe: *ongoing*
9. Increase public services available to the Town's low income, elderly, and disabled populations with emphasis on regional programs. Estimated Timeframe: continuing
10. Develop a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that fosters and promotes appropriate new commercial and industrial development opportunities to increase the local tax base and provide more local jobs. The town has made great strides encouraging renewable energy projects with 3 new solar projects on line and a landfill capping project in place to add a fourth. Recent progress also includes a pending renovation expansion Cumberland Farms. Estimated Timeframe: ongoing