

# MASTER PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Introduction**

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The Shutesbury Master Plan is a long-range planning document to guide development in Shutesbury in a way that supports its residents' vision for the future. The Master Plan is a comprehensive report that examines and evaluates many characteristics of Shutesbury, including natural resources and open space, community facilities and services, housing, historic and scenic resources, economic development, transportation, and land use and zoning.

The Master Plan was developed by Shutesbury residents over the past four years. During fall 2000, the Master Planning Committee conducted a survey of Shutesbury landowners and residents. The Committee mailed a total of 1,275 surveys, 331 of which were returned for a response rate of 26 percent. In spring 2001, the Master Planning Committee developed an analysis of the survey results. In spring 2002, the Committee developed a set of Master Plan Goals and Objectives from the results' analysis (*see the Appendix A*).

Beginning in fall 2002, the Master Planning Committee examined inventories and maps of Shutesbury's resources, potential issues and threats, and developed recommendations that will best support the town's goals and vision. The planning process involved the direct input of over forty residents and town officials. Between fall 2002 and spring 2004, the Master Planning Committee convened twenty public meetings to discuss draft chapters and geographic information systems (GIS) maps developed by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Planning Department as well as by town officials and volunteers. For example, David Ames, the Town Administrator and Leslie Bracebridge, the Town Clerk were responsible for the Transportation Chapter and the Historic and Scenic Resources Chapter, respectively. Shutesbury resident Janice Stone created up-to-date land use and open space GIS data layers for the Master Plan maps.

The purpose of this Executive Summary is to present highlights of the Shutesbury Master Plan. The Master Plan is organized into seven main chapters, each of which discusses one aspect of the community's resources and infrastructure. For each topic, the Executive Summary presents goals, key findings of the inventory and analysis, and recommendations.

It is important to note that the Shutesbury Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Committee was in the process of completing an ADA Transition Plan for the town as the Master Plan was being completed. Master Planning Committee members agreed that the

completed and Town Meeting-endorsed Transition Plan should be included in Appendix E in this Master Plan.

## **Natural Resources and Open Space**

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### **Goals:**

- To maintain and protect natural resources and ecosystems including clean drinking water supplies, clean air, lake and stream water quality, large forested areas, open fields, wildlife and their habitat areas, and wetlands including vernal pools.
- To preserve the rural character by protecting large blocks of contiguous forestland, fields, and other open space from development and by promoting sustainable forestry, agricultural, and other resource-based activities.

### **Key Findings:**

- Between 1971 and 2002, Shutesbury experienced a loss of 542 acres of forest and an increase of 533 acres of residential development.
- In 1999, the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) designated Lake Wyola as an area that contains rare wetlands wildlife and as a priority habitat area that includes unique habitat features.
- The Town of Shutesbury contains two Class A surface water sources: Atkins Reservoir and the Quabbin Reservoir.
- According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and MassGIS there are low-to medium yield aquifers located in the vicinity of the following water bodies: Lake Wyola and Ames Pond; Dudleyville marsh; West Branch of the Swift River; Roaring Brook; and, Dean Brook.
- According to the 2000-2001 Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Atlas, several rare species habitats are located within Shutesbury: along Atherton Brook and within the Quabbin Watershed; lands surrounding the Atkins Reservoir on the western border with the Town of Amherst; in the southwestern-most corner of Shutesbury on its border with Amherst and Pelham; and along Roaring Brook near Pratt Corner Rd.
- The NHESP's BioMap, which identifies the areas most in need of protection in order to protect the native biodiversity of the Commonwealth, shows Core Habitat areas covering approximately 7,315 acres or 42 percent of the town. Vegetation that is

considered by NHESP to support the biodiversity value of Core Habitats areas covers another 3,077 acres or 18 percent of the town. The largest Core Habitat area is located within the Quabbin Watershed (6,794 acres or 93% of all the Core Habitat area). The Core Habitat area in Shutesbury, other than that of the Quabbin sub-watershed, is located in the Roaring Brook sub-watershed, northwest of the intersection of Montague Road and Leverett Road. Conserving the long-term biodiversity of Shutesbury will likely require protecting the BioMap Core Habitat areas, the supporting natural landscapes, (plus any additional rare species habitats and special or unique communities and features not identified in the BioMap project), and the lands that link them across a regional landscape.

- Areas of contiguous forest, unbroken by paved roads, power lines, or development have a higher habitat value for wildlife populations, which require deep forest cover. There are portions of two, 10,000+-acre blocks of contiguous forest areas in town: One stretches north of Cooleyville Road and east of Wendell Road into southeastern Wendell and northwestern New Salem. Another lies southeast of Rte. 202 and runs into New Salem. This large southeastern forest block is also in the Quabbin Sub-watershed and is considered a Core Habitat area. Another large block of contiguous forest (5,000 –10,000 acres in size) lies west of Montague Road. This forest block includes Brushy Mountain, the area in Shutesbury known as the Plains, and the only Core Habitat Area in Shutesbury outside of the Quabbin Sub-watershed.
- Approximately 5,555 acres (32 percent of town) of woodlands in Shutesbury are privately owned, undeveloped and unprotected, and are managed for forest products (i.e., sawlogs and firewood).

### **Recommendations:**

- The Select Board and the Board of Assessors should support the Assessor's Clerk to continue to correct and update the Assessor's Geographic Information System (GIS) parcel information so that accurate maps can be created, which would help the town most effectively implement its natural resource protection and land conservation objectives.
- Explore working with a professional planner to support the Conservation Commission and Planning Board when a specific need has been identified.
- Determine the feasibility of acquiring town land and/or adopting an aquifer protection overlay district to conserve potential sources of community drinking water supplies in Shutesbury.
- The Board of Health should continue to map the locations of private wells in relation to road right-of-ways, leach fields, and other potential sources of water contamination as a means of drawing attention to the relative vulnerability of our private wells to pollutants.

- Encourage the Shutesbury Conservation Commission to work in cooperation with the Board of Health to ensure that rivers, streams, lakes and ponds not under the direct authority of the Amherst Public Works Department and the Metropolitan District Commission are monitored for water quality.
- Support the Conservation Commission to continue to proactively negotiate land protection in Shutesbury and to use the publicity of projects to promote and build the Conservation Trust Fund.
- The Recreation and Open Space Committee should continue to apply identified criteria/priorities of open space acquisition to opportunities that may arise, especially via the Chapter 61 right-of-first-refusal, so as to provide the town a rating of the parcel's relative desirability of protection.
- The Recreation and Open Space Committee should encourage private efforts and investment in land protection, especially when the land in question can be characterized as meeting the open space acquisition criteria.
- The Planning Board, in collaboration with the Conservation Commission, Recreation and Open Space Committee and the Board of Health, should establish a rural conservation overlay district for critical resource areas, which would have conservation development design as the preferred development option.
- The Shutesbury Recreation and Open Space Committee should continue to plan, develop, and maintain trail linkages over land and water to enhance the recreational experiences of residents.
- The Shutesbury Recreation and Open Space Committee should continue to provide information on Chapter 61, conservation restrictions, and other land protection methods to all landowners especially those with parcels in critical resource areas.
- The Shutesbury Recreation and Open Space Committee should continue to promote open fields for scenic and wildlife habitat purposes through educational offerings to landowners and residents.

## **Economic Development**

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### **Goal:**

- To explore and potentially promote small home business and commercial uses including arts and crafts, bed & breakfasts, professional offices and services, retail, forest/farm-based operations and light industrial development compatible with the Town's environment and rural character that will provide new employment opportunities and contribute tax revenues.

### **Key Findings:**

- According to 1990 and 2000 Census data, Shutesbury has a significantly higher proportion of residents with a bachelor's degree or graduate/professional degree, than the County or the State.
- In 1999, the median household income for Shutesbury was \$60,437, which was higher than the County (\$40,768) and the State (\$50,502) figures. In fact, the Shutesbury median household income in 1999 was the second highest in the twenty-six towns in Franklin County, below only neighboring Leverett (\$73,333).
- In Shutesbury and neighboring towns, the percentage of workers who work at home has increased since 1990.
- Shutesbury has a high percentage of the labor force employed at home, and this rate is increasing. In 1990, there were fifty-one workers identified as working at home. The number grew to ninety-four in 2000, which represents 9 percent of the total workers in Shutesbury working out of the home. Also according to 2000 Census data, 16.6 percent of all workers were self-employed. This is a very high rate of self-employed compared to 9.8 percent in Franklin County and 6.4 percent in Massachusetts.
- Resources to assist entrepreneurs are vital to help home-based businesses and cottage industries become established and grow.

### **Recommendations:**

- Create a town committee to support the strengths, address the challenges, and execute the tasks necessary to encourage entrepreneurship and business development in Shutesbury (as outlined in this chapter).
- Implement strategies to support entrepreneurship and business development among home-based businesses including a business survey, small business network development, and business incubator space.
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine the potential to develop business ventures that would create revenue for the Town, by leasing municipally owned land, by municipal ownership and operation, or by private sector contribution to the tax base.
- Continue to advocate for advanced telecommunications broadband services to be made available in the community.
- Promote a campaign to encourage the buying of local goods and services.

## **Housing**

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### **Goals:**

- To encourage a mix of housing densities, ownership patterns, prices, and building types to serve diverse households consistent with the rural character of the community.
- To provide fair, decent, safe, affordable elderly housing that meets the needs of Shutesbury's seniors and which also contributes to the tax base.
- To provide financial assistance to homeowners for State regulations, and encourage compliance with Board of Health Code with respect to Title 5 septic system upgrades, the removal of lead paint, etc.

### **Key Findings:**

- Shutesbury has experienced tremendous growth during the past three decades. In 1970, the town had 489 residents. By 2000, its population had grown to 1,810 (U.S. Census), an increase of 270 percent in 30 years. The main factor behind Shutesbury's population growth has been a large in-migration of new residents seeking to experience the town's high quality of life, including its good schools, and nearby job opportunities. Shutesbury experienced much more housing growth than Franklin County and Massachusetts overall between 1980 and 2000. During the twenty-year period, the number of homes in both Franklin County and in Massachusetts overall increased by 19 percent, compared to 51 percent for Shutesbury.
- According to the 2000 U.S. Census, almost 60 percent (58%) of the homes in Shutesbury have been built since 1970, and only 15 percent of the town's homes were constructed before 1940.
- Shutesbury has a relatively large percentage of homes with seasonal or occasional residents; these homes represent 16 percent (131 units) of the town's total housing stock (2000 U.S. Census). In contrast, countywide, such units only account for 3 percent of all housing. It is estimated that approximately half the homes at Lake Wyola are now used as year-round residences, and that more will be converted to year-round use in the coming years.
- During the 1990s, the number of households in Shutesbury with children under 18 grew by 20 percent, while in Franklin County overall, the number of these households decreased by 3 percent.

- It is estimated that by 2025, Shutesbury’s population may grow to approximately 2,600, adding approximately 800 new, year-round residents over its current (2000) population of 1,810.
- It is estimated that 13 percent of Shutesbury households are low income, 15 percent are moderate income, 36 percent are middle income, and 36 percent are upper income.
- A household of moderate income earning \$30,000 annually (\$2,500 per month) can find homes that are affordable in Shutesbury, though they are less common. A household with a \$30,000 annual income can afford to spend approximately \$750 per month on housing costs. Such a household could afford to buy a home valued at \$83,000 or less. According to the 2000 Census, 4 percent of homes (20 homes) in Shutesbury have values below \$80,000 and 6 percent (32) have values below \$90,000.
- Overall, the available data shows that housing in Shutesbury is affordable for most residents. At the same time, however, it is also true that over one fourth (27%) of households have unaffordable housing costs when comparing median housing costs to gross income. Of this group, slightly more than a third are severely cost-burdened, using over half their incomes on housing.
- One major factor contributing to burdensome housing costs for low and moderate-income households are increasing property taxes. Between 1990 and 2002, the average annual property tax for a single-family home in Shutesbury increased almost \$1,700 (113%), from \$1,494 (1990) to \$3,184 (2002) as compared to a 71% increase statewide. For Shutesbury residents, an average annual property tax of \$3,184 is equivalent to \$265 per month. For low-income residents in Shutesbury and elsewhere, the increasing amount of incomes spent on property taxes, along with other rising housing costs, threatens the affordability of their current housing options.

### **Recommendations:**

- Promote the housing rehabilitation loan program among residents, especially seniors, with low and moderate-incomes who do not have the financial resources to fund home improvements and repairs on their own, including accessibility improvements, septic system upgrades, and radon, asbestos, and UFFI mitigation. Use the housing rehabilitation loan program to help maintain and preserve Shutesbury’s current affordable housing stock.
- Pursue public grants and other funding sources to encourage the development of affordable housing for seniors, at an appropriate scale for the community. Work with HRA to access these potential funds.

- Review the town’s zoning ordinances and consider changes that could encourage more housing options for seniors, including accessory apartments and senior housing.
- Continue to investigate which parts of town may be the most suitable for new housing development, such as senior housing or affordable housing combined with cluster housing. Encourage future growth to occur in those areas. Consider dividing the town’s one zoning district into different districts, which would allow different levels of housing development and density as appropriate.
- Consider revising the town’s zoning ordinances to include overlay districts that protect sensitive environmental, scenic, and historic areas from residential development patterns that could be detrimental to these assets.
- Work with legislators to encourage the State to continue revising Chapter 40B to provide additional flexibility and local control in the creation of long-term affordable housing, and to expand its definition of “affordable.”
- Develop additional ways to reduce the housing cost burdens for seniors and other residents on fixed incomes. Such strategies could include allowing residents to volunteer for the town in exchange for a partial abatement of property taxes.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

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### **Goals:**

- To continue to provide excellent police, fire, and ambulance service, solid and hazardous waste management, highway maintenance, library and recreational facilities, and elementary school education services.
- To plan and coordinate the provision of community facilities and services in an appropriate and cost efficient manner, which should be done in coordination with capital improvement planning.

### **Police and Emergency Fire and Medical Key Findings:**

- According to the Police Chief, office space and staffing are two long-term program needs that need to be addressed so that the Department can maintain the current level of service.
- According to the current Fire Chief, it has become more and more difficult to sustain a full cadre of experienced firefighters over time. This is in part due to the difficulty of recruiting and training volunteer firefighters, the burden of keeping up with



training needs, and other associated issues related to providing municipal emergency services via volunteers.

- According to the current Fire Chief, the Department has been able to deal with budget cuts due to their frugality with some types of equipment spending and because they have succeeded at attracting grant funding. For the short-term, the Department will be able to maintain a level of service expected by residents. Although equipment and space needs are adequate today (2003), the department may need a new brush truck, tanker, and a trailer for the HAZMAT equipment they currently have, which would likely require another garage bay or two.
- According to the Shutesbury Fire Chief, the Amherst Fire Department does a good job providing emergency medical services to Shutesbury residents. To shorten the response time to some locations in town, the Town of Shutesbury would have to fund local paramedic-level service, which would require two full-time personnel and at least one ambulance to guarantee service.

#### **Police and Emergency Fire and Medical Recommendations:**

- The community should develop a feasibility study that includes a comparison of needs versus services, which could also focus on determining appropriate solutions for any Police Department space and staffing issues.
- The community should resolve Shutesbury Fire Department training, recruitment, and retention issues with the help of a Select Board-appointed Ad hoc Committee.
- Establish a fund to help pay for ambulance services for people without health insurance.
- Review the Shutesbury Emergency Management Plan and use it as a tool to strengthen communication among town officials, boards, departments, and committees.

#### **Recycling and Solid Waste Disposal Key Finding:**

- Because Shutesbury's curbside recycling rate slipped from 37 percent in 2002 to 34 percent in 2003, town officials may want to work more with the Recycling and Solid Waste Committee to encourage residents to recycle and compost more of their household solid wastes.

### **Recycling and Solid Waste Disposal Recommendations:**

- Promote environmentally proper composting more aggressively to reduce the amount of curbside solid waste to be hauled.
- Educate students about hazardous wastes in school or via the website more effectively.
- Encourage participation in the hazardous material days each year.
- Promote the use of non-hazardous alternative products.
- Encourage source reduction through articles in the *Our Town* newsletter and the town's website.
- Review the bylaws to consider ways of prohibiting the storing of more than two, non-registered vehicles on land under one ownership.
- Increase the unit cost for residents' purchase of trash bags beyond the fifty-count provided to encourage composting and recycling.

### **Recreational and Cultural Facilities and Services Key Findings:**

- The Town of Shutesbury contains over twenty recreational resources or recreational areas including Shutesbury State Forest, Carroll Holmes Recreation Area, Lake Wyola, Town launch area, the South Brook Conservation Area, Town Common, Town soccer field behind the Fire Station, Town playfield behind the Town Hall, Town Elementary School field and woods, Town of Amherst watershed lands, Quabbin Watershed lands, Shutesbury Athletic Club, Morse Hill, Robert Frost Trail and Metacomet and Monadnock Trail, Garbiel Gift, Lake Wyola Island, Temenos, Sirius community, Snowmobile Trails, and Lake Wyola Association Beaches and Pavilion.
- According to the 2002 Annual Report, the Library is used by over half the households in town at least once per month, which places it within the top ten of all libraries in Massachusetts towns of 2000 people or less in terms of circulation, patron visits, and attendance at events.
- Though some retirees use the library frequently, older and disabled seniors have difficulty negotiating the parking area and the stairs.
- With a 2000 population (U.S. Census) of 1,810, Shutesbury should have a library with a minimum of 3,600 square feet. The present building has 900 square feet.

### **Recreational and Cultural Facilities and Services Recommendations:**

- The Recreation and Open Space Committee could form a Trails Subcommittee.
- Develop the Fire Station soccer field as the town's main sports field facility.
- Promote afternoon and weekend use of the Shutesbury Elementary School Playground.
- Build a new library.
- Support the Council on Aging to survey seniors in town to determine which recreational and cultural services would be most desirable.
- Investigate potential alternative meeting spaces for seniors including the Elementary School and the Shutesbury Athletic Club.

### **Highway Department Key Findings:**

- The approximate space needs equal, at a minimum, 150 percent of the Highway Department's current lot, or 3.5 acres.
- Expanding the garage to the south towards Leverett Road is constrained by the front yard setback, to the north by wetland, and the land to the west and east of the garage is currently used for storage, while the salt shed out front may already be within the twenty-five foot side yard setback.
- The Highway Department is currently in need of three pieces of equipment: a flatbed trailer, a flail or rotary mower attachment for the tractor, and a brush chipper.

### **Highway Department Recommendations:**

- The community should develop a plan to address the Highway Department's space needs with the assistance of a Select Board-appointed Ad hoc Committee.

### **Community Facilities and Services Expansion Key Findings:**

- Community wastewater treatment is presently being considered by the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee (LWAC), which is a town committee created by the Select Board), and is an idea that has been endorsed in principle by the Lake Wyola Association (the homeowners' association). LWAC has created a subcommittee to investigate potential wastewater solutions for the area.

- Currently, the Town Center represents the highest concentration spatially of community infrastructure in Shutesbury and includes the Post Office, Library, Town Offices, and Police Department. If a new expanded library gets built in back of the Town Hall, as is proposed in the Conway School of Landscape Design's Town Center Plan, and the existing Spear Library building becomes re-used as meeting space for example, this area could play an even stronger role as the town's cultural and social hub.
- According to Tari N. Thomas, Principal, there are no short-term space needs at the Elementary School. The school's enrollment dropped from 203 to 152 students, not including pre-school children between fiscal year 2002 and 2004. However, over the past decade school enrollment in Shutesbury has increased from 166 students in 1990 to 204 in the year 2000. It is not expected that a new school will be needed in the next 10 years. However, when the time comes for needed expansion, building on the current lot may be constrained by the fact that almost the entire property is located within the school's drinking water supply's wellhead protection area.
- The town contains several recreational fields of varying conditions: Fire Station, Elementary School, and to a much lesser degree, in back of the Town Hall. The Elementary School field, while adequate for some sports would require renovations that are constrained by the field's proximity to the school's water supply. The Fire Station field appears to be the best choice for investment as a sports field complex.

#### **Community Facilities and Services Expansion Recommendations:**

- Support the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee (LWAC) in its investigation of potential wastewater solutions for the Lake Wyola area.
- Actively maintain and manage the town-owned parcels in and around Lake Wyola in their current undeveloped states.
- The Recreation and Open Space Committee may want to consider potential future water supply areas as a criterion for open space protection.
- The Select Board should survey the existing and potential future space needs of all existing boards, committees, departments and commissions.
- The community could explore the potential for the Shutesbury Elementary School to have an expanded role in support of town activities and functions.

## **Transportation**

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### **Goals:**

- To maintain the condition of the road system in a manner that is compatible with Shutesbury's rural character.
- To maintain the pedestrian infrastructure.
- To maintain traffic patterns at key locations.
- To expand transportation choices for Shutesbury residents.

### **Key Findings:**

- The town is responsible for the maintenance of 31.15 roadway miles, the majority of which are classified as Rural Local.
- Currently the town maintains these roads with three full-time crewmembers and uses part-time help for winter maintenance.
- Of the 31.15 road miles maintained by the Shutesbury highway department, 15.7 miles (just over half) are gravel roads. Although the town spends only about \$30,000 per year in materials for these roads, they are very resource intensive to maintain. Gravel road issues will need to be addressed using maximum participation from the town in order to balance the many competing demands on town resources and to address concerns about the nature of Shutesbury.
- Based on accident analysis data, there are no sections of road that seem to be more dangerous than others.
- As part of the Footprint Road Program Application for the Leverett/Cooleyville/Prescott Roads reconstruction, a Level of Service (LOS) analysis was conducted. There are six LOS definitions, assigned letters A through F, where A represents the best operating conditions and F the worst. Leverett Road was assigned a LOS B rating and Cooleyville/Prescott Roads assigned a LOS A rating.
- Shutesbury currently has only one sidewalk, which is located along the elementary school driveway stretching from the school to West Pelham Road (approximately 400 feet). There are some heavy pedestrian traffic areas in the town center, however the roads do have wider gravel shoulders to allow for pedestrian traffic near the post office and town hall.

- Based on the results of a survey in 2001, town officials could not justify the costs of a public transit service at this time though the bus and rail passenger service from Amherst seems to be the most convenient for people living in Shutesbury.

### **Recommendations:**

- Investigate and implement ways to improve pedestrian safety crossing Cooleyville, Leverett and the south side of Wendell roads. Investigate measures or devices to slow vehicle speeds through Town center and along the Prescott/Cooleyville/Leverett roads.
- Investigate using the existing paved and gravel roads as a link for pedestrian and bicycle traffic between Shutesbury Town Center and the Franklin County Bikeway.
- Investigate ways to connect trails that have hiking and bicycling opportunities.
- Maintain a PMS program to help maintain paved roads.
- Develop a Gravel Road Maintenance System.
- Continue support for the G-Link transit service and continue to investigate expanding service to Shutesbury.
- Continue to monitor the shared bridge and seek funding to maintain it. Explore an appropriate means of repair or replacement.
- Encourage the adoption of best management practices in all Town departments, especially for the use of road sand and salt by the highway department.
- Identify the level of road maintenance sought by Shutesbury residents and ensure that any roadway upgrades balance safety considerations with neighboring rural character and town-wide network needs.
- Identify and address the long-term needs of the Highway Department including facilities, equipment and space.
- Identify and implement means to encourage drivers to obey the speed limits posted along all Shutesbury roads.
- Address the issue of paved versus gravel from all aspects including cost analysis, labor, quality of life, town character and traffic load through a means that provides maximum participation of the citizens of Shutesbury. Investigate new methods of gravel road maintenance to determine if there are any better methods.

## Historic and Scenic Resources

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### Goal:

- Identify and protect historical and scenic resources including buildings, sites, and landscapes.

### Key Findings:

- Shutesbury’s historical and scenic resources should be regarded as “heirlooms.” They are fragile and non-renewable. Once destroyed, historical and scenic resources are gone forever; they cannot be re-grown, rebuilt, repaired or otherwise brought back to health like many of our natural systems. The fragility of these resources places a value on them that is difficult to calculate.
- Shutesbury would benefit from a comprehensive factual written history of its years following Louis Everet’s 1879 treatment of Shutesbury’s early history, in his History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts.
- The 2001 *Community Documentation Plan* by William Carroll and the 2002 *Historic Resources Survey* are two valuable resources available to aid in the preservation of Shutesbury’s history.
- Some key historical and natural scenic features of Shutesbury are:
  - The Town Common
  - Lake Wyola
  - Mt. Mineral & Ames Pond
  - Baker Reservoir
  - Atkins Reservoir
  - Hearthstone Hill
  - Quabbin Reservoir and Watershed
- Existing archaeological evidence suggests that Paleo Indian hunters and gatherers, the first human inhabitants of the New World, reached the Swift River drainage sometime between 9,500 to 12,000 years ago. According to The Major Tribes of New England ca. 1635 map, at the time of colonial settlement, the Pocumtucks and Nipmucs inhabited the area of Shutesbury.
- Unique primary source records document the people of Shutesbury and the municipal history from 1735 to the present. They have permanent and enduring value to the local and regional history and genealogy.

- The Shutesbury Historical Commission has identified over 20 local Historical Preservation Resource Groups with whom to collaborate on local historical preservation matters.

### **Recommendations:**

- Review and follow-up on the documentation and preservation goals presented in the 2000/2001 William Carroll *Community Documentation Plan* and the companion *Long-Range Historical Records Strategic Plan*.
- Review and follow-up on the recommendations of the August 2002 *Shutesbury Historic Resources Survey* by independent preservation consultant Margaret Hepler.
- Collaboration with local and neighboring preservation groups as listed.
- Seek permanent town ownership of the Old Town Hall, the West Schoolhouse, the Town Hall, and the Spear Memorial Building.
- Promotion of a historic curatorship of the Lodge at Lake Wyola. Ensure preservation of the associated barn by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- Compilation of Shutesbury's late 19<sup>th</sup> and complete 20<sup>th</sup> century history into a book.
- Collection and preservation of Shutesbury's historic artifacts and documents.
- Collection and preservation of oral interviews.
- Purchase of Franklin County reel #36 of the Corbin Collection that contains a 1931 inventory of cemeteries of Shutesbury.
- Continue to offer public education and activities that promote long-term appreciation and protection of Shutesbury's historical resources.

## **Land Use and Zoning**

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### **Goals:**

- To protect the rural character and working landscapes of Shutesbury, while allowing landowners to develop suitable portions of their land.
- To protect the Town's natural resources and open space through appropriate zoning and subdivision measures.



- To encourage small business development in a manner that does not reduce residents' quality of life.
- To develop a system of land-use controls, which will best manage the acceptance of new development in the community.

### **Key Findings:**

- The dominant development pattern in town is single-family homes on approval-not-required (ANR) frontage lots. Overall, 93 percent of Shutesbury's housing is in single-family homes.
- Growth over the next twenty-five years is projected to be 44 percent. Shutesbury's population is projected (by FRCOG) to increase by 44 percent between 2000 and 2025 adding approximately 800 people in up to 320 new dwelling units assuming household size remains constant.
- The development patterns that should be promoted via zoning and non-zoning strategies to be consistent with the Master Plan recommendations and Goals and Objectives include:
  - The retention of large blocks of contiguous (undeveloped) forests;
  - Slow and steady growth in appropriate areas;
  - Clusters of small lots potentially near protected forestland;
  - Roadside development of single-family and two-family dwellings on lots 2 acres in size with 250 feet of frontage;
  - Concentrations of higher density lots in an expanded Town Center;
  - An expanded Town Center area with municipal/civic, small-lot residential, and small commercial business uses along Leverett/Cooleyville Road from Town Center to Pratt Corner Road;
  - Small scale 5-7 unit senior housing development around Lake Wyola, the Town Center area, or other suitable areas;
  - Accessory apartments associated with owner-occupied single-family detached dwellings, allowed in all areas; and,
  - Small home business uses with expanded allowances in all areas.
  - Low density development with appropriate safe guards in the watershed protection and forest conservation overlay districts.

### **Recommendations:**

- The Shutesbury Planning Board develops and seeks to have Town Meeting adopt:
  - *A Phased Growth By-law* to ensure that growth occurs in an orderly and planned manner that allows the town time for preparation to maintain high quality

municipal services for an expanded residential population while allowing a reasonable amount of additional residential growth during those preparations.

- A *Town Center District* promotes residential development at a higher density than is currently allowed in the Rural Residential District and the concentration of existing and future civic uses including police, fire, highway, senior housing, and library uses.
- A *Water Supply Protection Overlay District* for the Atkins Reservoir, Dean Brook and Nurse Brook Sub-watersheds to regulate land uses that threaten surface and groundwater quality.
- A *Forest Conservation Overlay District* for large unprotected blocks of forest in town, which would have conservation subdivision design as the by-right or easiest development option.
- A *Lake Wyola Sub-watershed Overlay District* to address both the need to protect the quality of surface and groundwater within the sub-watershed and Lake Wyola itself, as well as the potential need for establishing equitable land use regulations for the developed portion of the basin.
- A *Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) By-law* to encourage new development in some areas while being discouraged in others.
- A *Conservation Subdivision Design (CSD) By-law* to encourage housing to be grouped on smaller lots, which would result in a large share of the total parcel being protected from development.
- An amendment that promotes the development of accessory apartments.
- A *Major Home Occupations By-law* to encourage the expansion of home business operations in town while regulating utility areas, the number of employees, parking, signage, lighting, and the level of retail activities.
- The Conservation Commission adopts amendments to the local wetlands protection by-laws and regulations that would specifically prohibit the storing outside of more than two, non-registered vehicles.
- The Town directs its Conservation Commission and Recreation and Open Space Committee to adopt a more aggressive and comprehensive approach to the use of land protection as a growth management tool.
- The Shutesbury Select Board appoints a Senior Housing Subcommittee to plan for the development of senior housing in the Town Center, in the vicinity of the new library, near Amherst, near Lake Wyola, or other suitable locations.

- The Planning Board should develop a Fence By-law to protect scenic roadside views and the pastoral nature of our country roads.
- The Town adopts the Community Preservation Act, which allows cities and towns to raise funds for open space protection, historic preservation, and affordable housing by adopting up to a 3 percent surcharge of the real estate tax levy. Monies raised via the surcharge would also receive a state match.

