



# TOWN OF SEEKONK LAND USE MASTER PLAN ELEMENT



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	2
Key Information .....	5
Goal 1 : Encourage traditional economic development at key locations along Route 6, Route 44, and at the Attleboro Dyeworks site.....	8
Strategy 1-1: Secure sewer service along Route 6 through a direct intermunicipal agreement (IMA) with East Providence, RI. .....	8
Strategy 1-2: Retrofit and right-size key parcels, such as Showcase Cinema and Fantasy Land, to improve development outcomes.....	9
Strategy 1-3: Conduct coordinated planning efforts along Route 6 and Route 44 to create improvements to streetscape, intermodal transit, and other placemaking features (signage, sidewalks, etc.) in order to highlight the Seekonk as a retail destination and a gateway to Massachusetts.....	11
Strategy 1-4: Review residential setback and buffering requirements for commercial and industrial zoning districts (Highway Business, Local Business, and Industry districts). .....	12
Strategy 1-5: Continue to actively remediate the Attleboro Dyeworks brownfields and return the site to an active use.....	13
Goal 2: Focus efforts on developing “town centers” at Bakers Corner and Luther’s Corner to promote a mix of uses, to encourage a cluster of community services, and to create appropriately scaled business development.....	14
Strategy 2-1: Create a zoning district for Baker’s Corner that encourages mixed-use, village-style Development.....	14
Strategy 2-2: Pursue transportation and public realm investment strategies that complement village-style development, such as MassDOT Complete Streets.....	15
Strategy 2-3: Develop design guidelines to advocate for public realm improvements, such as building design, parking, public spaces, development scale, and ground floor experience. .....	16
Strategy 3-1: Produce updated or new Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning for general business areas to provide a strategy for infill development and to repurpose excess parking spaces. .....	17
Goal 3: Support infill residential and mixed-use development in other appropriate locations throughout town (including along Route 6 and Route 44). .....	17
Strategy 3-2: Review existing Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning District language to ensure adequate	

protections for residential uses within and abutting the overlay district. ....	18
Strategy 3-3: Review mixed-use and multifamily development zoning provisions and consider appropriate minimum density requirements.....	19
Strategy 4-1: Continue partnerships between private landowners, land conservation groups, and state and local governments to enable more open space acquisitions. ....	21
Strategy 4-2: Investigate a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) bylaw.....	21
Goal 4: Maintain Seekonk's rural character by preserving open space and encouraging growth that is sensitive to natural resources and climate resilience.....	21
Strategy 4-3: Create a list of properties of conservation and preservation interest that identify the potential methods of acquisitions and a funding source to maintain them. ....	23
Strategy 4-4: Continue to address the action items in the 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Plan. ....	24
Implementation Guide.....	25
Appendix A: Estimates of Future Grown in Seekonk.....	31
Build-out Estimates (Supply) .....	32
Suitability Scoring (Demand) .....	32
Allocation (How much and where) .....	32
Appendix B: Community Engagement .....	42

# KEY INFORMATION

Seekonk is a suburban Massachusetts Town on the border of Rhode Island. The town is primarily residential with commercials nodes such as Route 6 and Route 44.

Seekonk's population growth occurred this past decade between 2010 and 2020. There was a growth of 13.2% between the two decades. The previous two decade 1990-2000 and 2000-2010 had a steady growth of under 3% for each period.

One third (34.2%) of the town's industry is in the retail trades, followed by accommodation and food services (13.8%).<sup>1</sup>

## Land Use

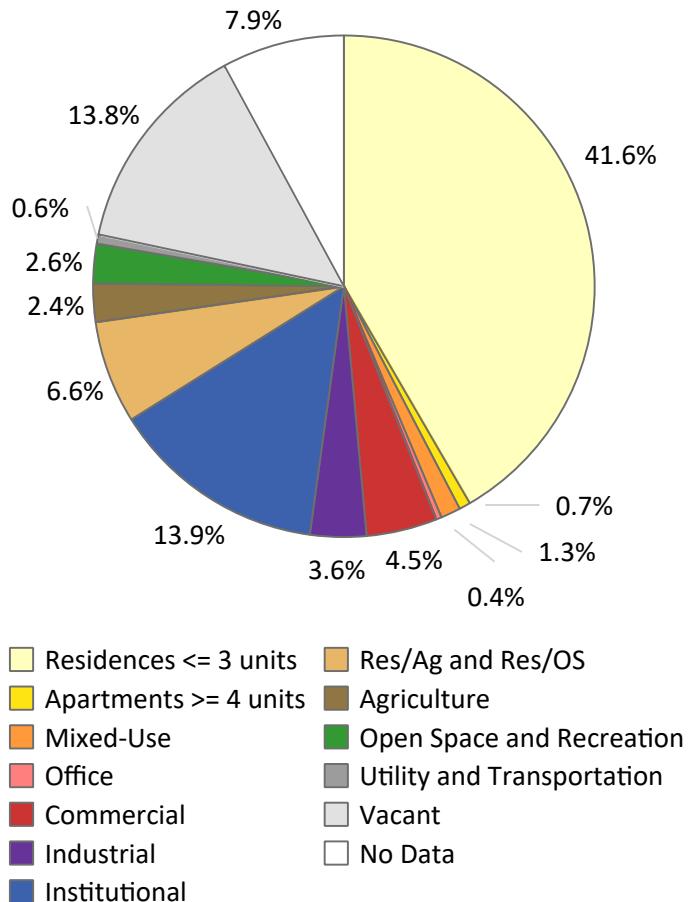
Seekonk has 11,932 acres within the town. The majority (41.6% or 4,982.5 acres) is categorized as residential, less than 3 units. The second highest category is institutional (13.9% or 1,665.6 acres). Institutional properties include town or state owned land, housing authorities, churches, and libraries. The chart on the right shows the percent of each land use category by size (acres).

## Zoning

Zoning regulates the use and development of land in Seekonk. The town first adopted the zoning bylaws in 1942 and have had revisions since with the most recent one approved in 2021. Currently, Seekonk's Zoning Bylaw includes larger lot sizes and larger setback that can hinder development in commercial and industrial areas. Changing the lot sizes and setbacks (proposed later in this chapter) could open up more opportunity for mixed-used development in town.

<sup>1</sup> Data comes from Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance Labor Market Information, 2020.

Seekonk Land Use Chart



# Land Uses in Seekonk

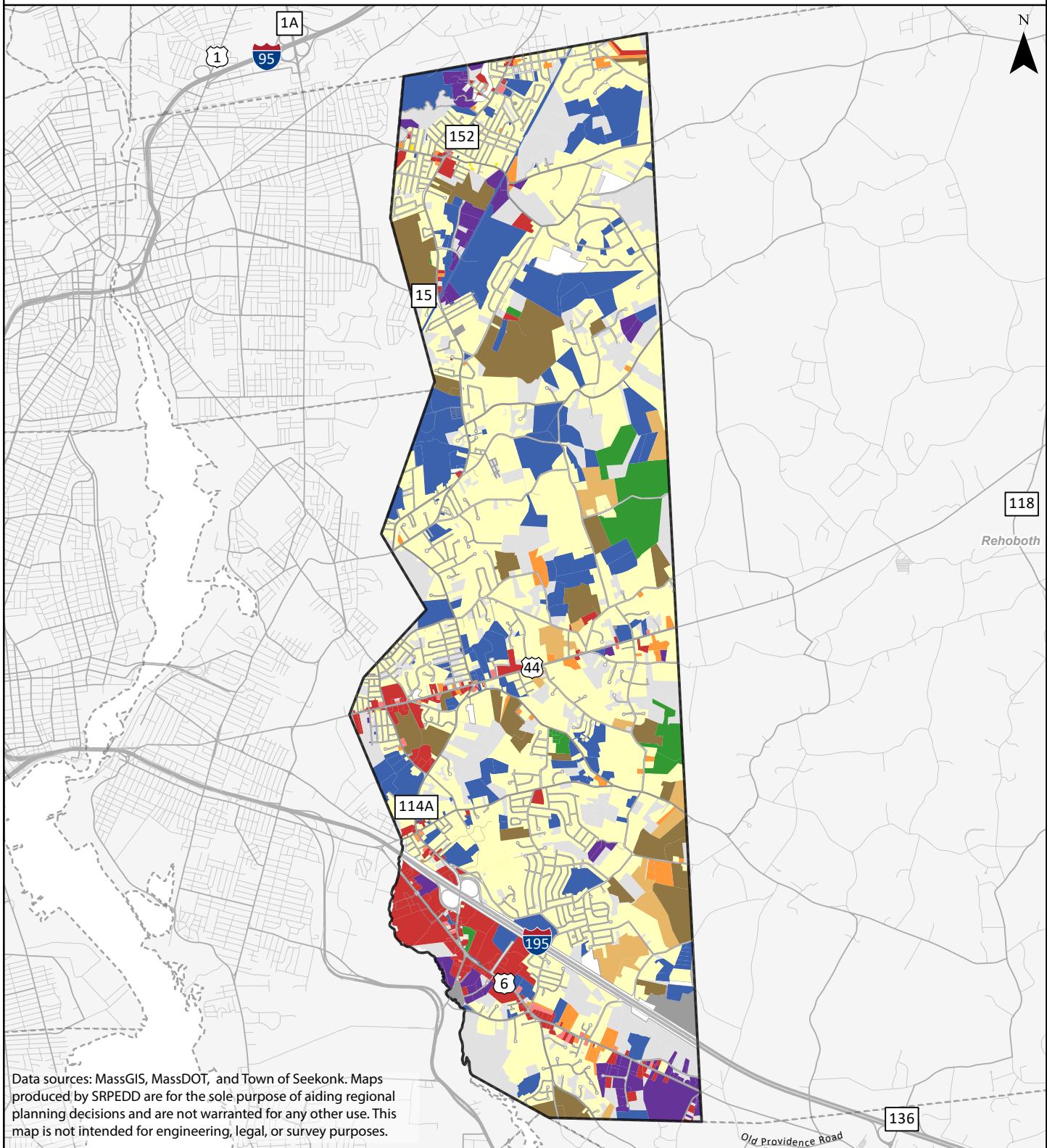
Residences <= 3 units  
 Apartments >= 4 units  
 Mixed-Use  
 Office  
 Commercial

Industrial  
 Institutional  
 Agriculture  
 Res/Ag and Res/OS  
 Open Space and Recreation

Utility and Transportation  
 Vacant  
 No Data



0 0.5 1 Miles

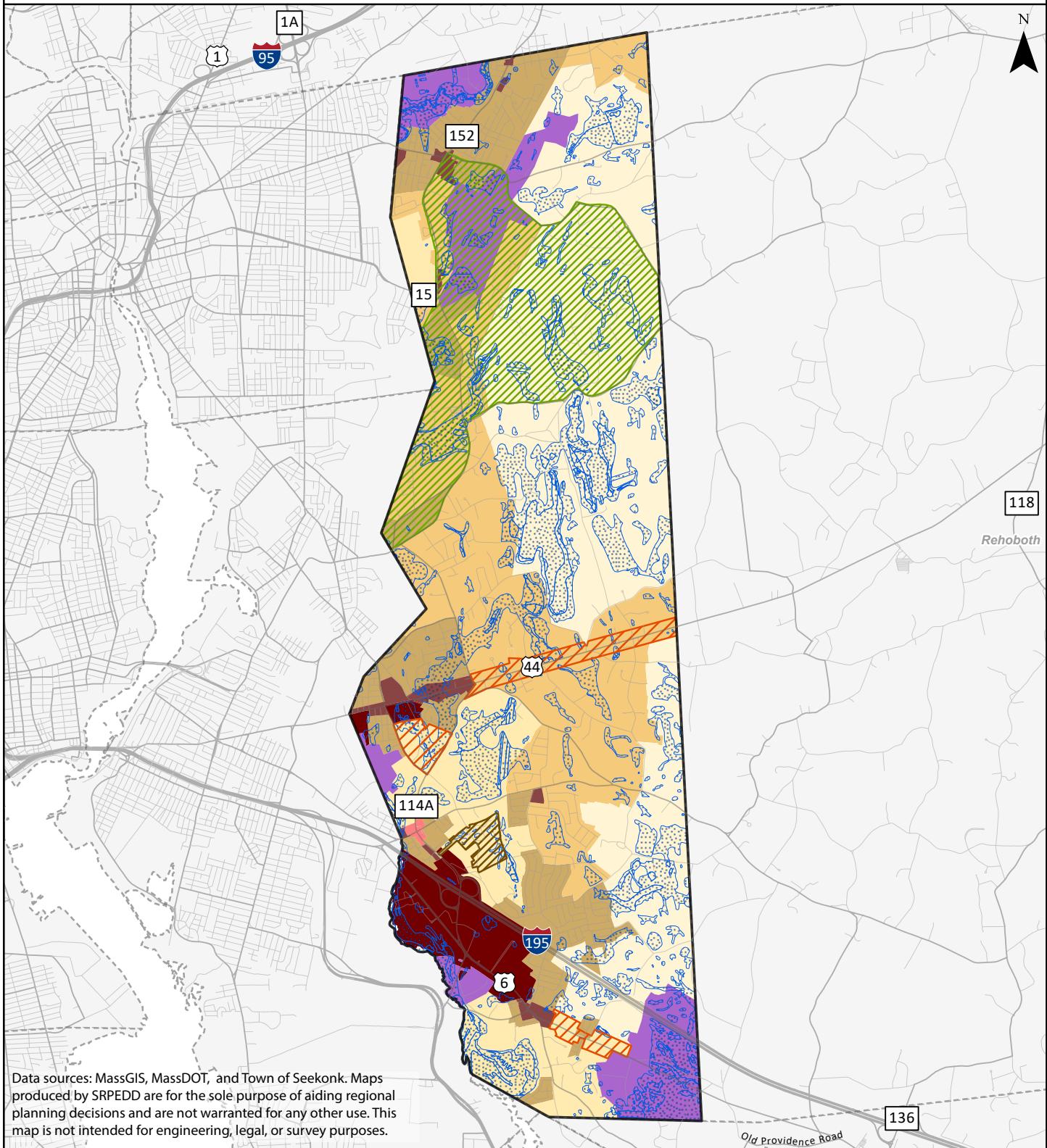


## Zoning in Seekonk



The legend is organized into two columns. The left column lists six land use overlay districts with corresponding colored squares: Multifamily Development Overlay District (light blue), Mixed Use (orange), Wetlands and Floodplain Protection District (dark blue), Groundwater Aquifer Protection District (green), Residential "R-1" District (tan), Residential "R-2" District (light orange), and Residential "R-3" District (yellow). The right column lists five business districts with corresponding colored squares: Residential "R-4" District (light yellow), Lither's Corner Village District (pink), Planned Unit Development (red), Highway Business (dark red), Industry (purple), and Local Business (brown).

0 0.5 1 Miles



Data sources: MassGIS, MassDOT, and Town of Seekonk. Maps produced by SRPEDD are for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and are not warranted for any other use. This map is not intended for engineering, legal, or survey purposes.

# GOAL 1 : ENCOURAGE TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT KEY LOCATIONS ALONG ROUTE 6, ROUTE 44, AND AT THE ATTLEBORO DYEWORKS SITE.

Like communities all across Massachusetts and the nation, Seekonk is seeking to create land use policies that balance growth and conservation in order to achieve the maximum possible prosperity and fiscal health in town. One of the main ways to achieve this balance is by pursuing strategic economic development<sup>2</sup> in key locations. Seekonk has several opportunities for this type of growth. While the Master Plan's Economic Development Plan/element discusses these opportunities in detail, this Land Use element Goal 1 highlights the key complementary and overlapping strategies that the town should pursue to achieve both its land use and economic development goals over the life of the Seekonk Master Plan.

## Strategy 1-1: Secure sewer service along Route 6 through a direct intermunicipal agreement (IMA) with East Providence, RI.

The addition of sewer service along Route 6 will be critical to producing the type of higher value and higher density economic development envisioned here and in the Master Plan's Economic Development Plan/element. Wastewater service is one of the most important public sector ingredients to any high value, higher density economic development. The Town has the opportunity to leverage connections to neighboring East Providence, Rhode Island, to secure sewer service along Route 6. These options are highlighted below and detailed in Goal 2 on page 22 of the Economic Development Plan/element.

<sup>2</sup> Economic development is defined here as the pursuit of high value business growth that expands the commercial tax base through public policies and investments.

**Priority:** High

**Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Commission, Planning Board

**Performance Measure:** By the end of calendar year 2023, the Board of Selectmen will investigate potential extension of existing East Providence sewer line, determine the format and details of an intermunicipal agreement (IMA), and identify the amount of sewer capacity available for purchase.

- Seek legislative support to assist in negotiations from both House and Senate representatives in MA and RI.
- Identify other existing IMAs that Seekonk has with East Providence that maybe used to inform the negotiations (water supply and/or storage, landfills, waste transfer station, open space, or other IMAs).
- Analyze and evaluate potential revenue sharing agreement with East Providence based on projections of incremental tax growth generated by extension of sewer.
- Secure support of existing businesses located in the Route 6 commercial corridor and from the East Providence Chamber of Commerce to lobby the City of East Providence for the proposed extension.

**Example Success Story:** An interstate IMA for wastewater service between Tiverton, RI and Fall River, MA . Recent IMA for wastewater between Somerset and Swansea, MA.

**Complimentary Action:** Goal 2 on page 22 of this Master Plan's Economic Development Plan/element; Goal 1 of Services and Facilities.

## Strategy 1-2: Retrofit and right-size key parcels, such as Showcase Cinema and Fantasy Land, to improve development outcomes.

Seekonk seeks to provide resources for existing residents and to draw visitors from nearby towns with revitalization along the Route 6 corridor at critical sites for economic development. The Town has identified a number of parcels that are currently underutilized, vacant, or have the potential to play a key role in the future of the Town's development. By conducting simple "site-by-site" scenario planning that imagines retrofitting and redeveloping these key parcels, Seekonk can capitalize on Route 6's current function as a regional commercial corridor while also meeting demand for multi-family housing, retail, and office space in town.

This type of targeted development complements Strategy 1-3, below. While overlay districts outline larger areas for development (and occur through zoning changes enabled by a town vote), redevelopment of individual parcels often occurs through collaboration between the Town and private land-owners/developers as they work together to identify and incentivize opportunities and explore mutually agreeable development outcomes.

Several key sites the Town has identified are included below; others are explored in more detail in Goal 2 of the Economic Development Plan/element on pages 12 through 22:

### *Development Site #1: 800 Fall River Avenue (Former Showcase Cinema)*



The 800 Fall River Avenue Site is a large lot site, formerly utilized as a Showcase Cinema movie theater, with substantial surface parking (approximately 7 acres) located behind the theater building. The site is located at the intersection of some of Seekonk's larger commercial and residential properties with Route 6 directly south and residential neighborhoods, including Greenbrier Village, to the north with a large buffer of trees, wetlands, and NHESP vernal pools, to the immediate northeast of the development site.

The site's large overall lot size presents an opportunity to develop a number of residential and/or mixed-use buildings on the previously disturbed parking lot. Development strategies should address the Showcase building itself and include low-impact development (LID) strategies that protect the remaining natural resources while also taking advantage of the opportunity to redevelop the site in a way that balances growth. The site contains a significant opportunity to improve the streetscape along Fall River Avenue; new projects should emphasize connection to the right of way and development at a pedestrian scale.

## Development Site #2: 1300 Fall River Avenue (Former Fantasyland)



1300 Fall River Avenue is the location of the former Fantasyland mini-golf and arcade center. This 5.5-acre parcel is part of a larger 23-acre holding. In 2021, these properties were listed for sale. The holding includes two large structures (that set back over 300 feet from Route 6) and two smaller structures located closer to roadway. The Cadence Academy Preschool abuts the Fantasyland property on three sides, while the north, west, and east portions of the site are buffered with vegetation. The mini-golf course on the western edge of the site remains, while the eastern portion of the site is undeveloped.

The parcel is located in the commercially zoned portion of Route 6, at the eastern edge of the large-scale, commercially developed portion of the road. The site's existing buildings contain indoor fields, as well as a restaurant, bar, and other facilities. In addition to the existing buildings, much of the site remains undeveloped and presents an opportunity for mixed-use, office, or multifamily residential structures. Potential development planning and/or enabling overlay zones should consider encouraging reduced setbacks, increasing density, and buildings designed at human scale.

## Development Site #3: 36 Maple Avenue (Former Attleboro Dye Works)



(Please see more information in Strategy 1-6, below.) 36 Maple Avenue, the location of the former Attleboro Dye Works building, is a 7.8-acre site, located at the north of Seekonk along the Ten-Mile River. The site is located on Maple Avenue – a small street, functioning primarily as an access drive for the Dye Works site and other nearby parcels located just off of Route 152, an arterial road that connects Seekonk to Attleboro (to the north) and Rhode Island (to the west). The Dye Works site is surrounded primarily by residential land uses, with industrial parcels in the Orion Industrial Park to its the north. A large buffer of trees borders the north, west, and northwest edges of the site. Despite significant brownfield issues<sup>3</sup>, the Dyeworks site remains a high-priority area for development in Town.

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<sup>3</sup> The Dyeworks site requires significant environmental remediation efforts prior to any redevelopment. Current chemical contaminations include petroleum soil contamination, heavy metals in on-site water, asbestos, lead based paint, and PCBs. Previous remediation efforts to remove below grade fuel storage, asbestos, and other chemicals have been successful. At the time of this writing, Seekonk also recently received \$750,000 in additional remediation funding to advance remediation. In addition to environmental concerns, the site suffered significant damage from a roof collapse and a fire and is currently condemned.

## Development Site #4: Seekonk Speedway



This well-established, family-owned Seekonk business is still operating. Should the approximately 50-acre site ever change hands or should the speedway cease operations it may present a significant opportunity for redevelopment. The Seekonk Speedway is a 1/3-mile asphalt racetrack located at the intersection of Route 6 “Fall River Road” and Old Fall River Road. Surface parking and staging for construction and racing machinery comprise the majority of the street frontage for the Speedway parcel, with the lone structure and racetrack portion of the parcel set back roughly 500 feet from the roadway. Although located on Route 6, the Speedway is surrounded primarily by light industrial land uses, with some residential developments to the west.

The Speedway property resides to the east of the commercial portions of Route 6, highlighting potential to serve as an anchor for future development along the road. However, unlike other priority development sites, the Seekonk Speedway currently operates under its intended use as a race track. The Speedway is a highly recognizable site in the area, and larger events have a regional draw. With this in mind, the large amount of surface parking is designed for intermittent events, and is often unoccupied during most hours of the day. Considering all of these factors, the Seekonk

Speedway should be included in a potential overlay zone to allow the racetrack to continue to run successfully, but to prepare options for a range of possible futures for the site.

**Priority:** High

**Responsible Party:** Planning Board

**Performance Measure:** Continue to collaborate with current and future property owners to explore redevelopment opportunities throughout the 10-year life of this plan.

**Strategy 1-3: Conduct coordinated planning efforts along Route 6 and Route 44 to create improvements to streetscape, intermodal transit, and other placemaking features (signage, sidewalks, etc.) in order to highlight the Seekonk as a retail destination and a gateway to Massachusetts.**

Routes 6 and 44 in Seekonk has developed gradually, over several decades – a process that took place in similar commercial corridors across the nation. And while local zoning enabled certain kinds of commercial growth, it did little to shape the form or style of that development. In that way, Seekonk – just like numerous communities throughout Massachusetts – ended up with development outcomes that do not necessarily match its goals for appearance, circulation, and sense of place. The town is therefore looking to make improvements to these main corridors that create a more pleasant and cohesive experience as visitors arrive in town from East Providence, RI and from points east (Fall River, Swansea, and eastern Seekonk).

It should be stated – this is a difficult task that would likely require partnerships with MassDOT

and a coordinated strategy of zoning changes, improvements to the public realm (such as MassDOT Complete Streets participation mentioned under Land Use Strategy 2-2, below), and design guidelines for future development (similar to those envisioned for mixed-use development by Land Use Strategy 3-1, below). In other words, the town should consider conducting a specialized study of the areas along both Route 6 and the Route 44 that serve as “gateways” to Seekonk. Many cities and towns have pursued similar approaches to invigorate existing retail corridors. Complementary strategies include modifying commercial zoning to allow infill housing, offices, and workspace uses that complement the existing service and retail businesses while also providing with clientele on-site.

**Priority:** Medium

**Responsible Party:** Planning Board

**Performance Measure:**

- Partner with MassDOT to conduct a comprehensive corridor planning exercise for the “gateway” portions of Routes 6 and 44 by the end of calendar year 2027.
- Coordinate these efforts with Complete Street’s planning and investments and Development of Design Guidelines envisioned for Bakers and Luther’s Corners in Strategy 2-2 and 2-3, below.

**Example Success Stories:** Norwood’s Route One Corridor Study and Rezoning Initiative; Dartmouth’s Route 6 Gateway Study; Brookline’s Gateway East Plan & Route 9 Corridor Improvements

**Complimentary Action:** Strategy 2-2: Pursue transportation and public realm investment strategies that complement village-style

development, such as MassDOT Complete Streets; Strategy 2-3: Develop design guidelines to advocate for public realm improvements, such as building design, parking, public spaces, development scale, and ground floor experience.

### **Strategy 1-4: Review residential setback and buffering requirements for commercial and industrial zoning districts (Highway Business, Local Business, and Industry districts).**

Despite the fact that some of Seekonk’s current higher-intensity uses (such as those in Industrial Districts) adhere to significant setbacks and benefit from well-established vegetative buffering, the Town of Seekonk should review setback requirements for single family residential properties that could become adjacent to conforming developments in areas zoned for commercial and industrial uses. In situations where a commercial or industrial zoning district abuts a residential district, the zoning code indicates that the commercial property should follow the setback regulations for the adjacent residential district. Should a new commercial or industrial property be built on the border of a single-family residential property in the Town’s R1 or R2 zoning districts, the zoning instructions require a 35-foot minimum side or rear setback. This requirement may not provide appropriate separation, depending on the intensity of the proposed commercial or industrial use. Seekonk should review this portion of the zoning code to consider expanding the size of rear and side setbacks in this circumstance and/or increasing the vegetative buffer requirements when a commercial or industrial zone interfaces R-1 or R-2 zoning districts.

**Priority:** High

**Responsible Party:** Planning Board

**Performance Measure:** The Planning Board should review the zoning code in order to amend setback requirements for instances where a commercial or industrial district interfaces R-1 and R-2 zones.

**Complimentary Action:** Strategy 3-2: Review existing Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning District Language to ensure adequate protections for residential uses within and abutting the overlay district.

### **Strategy 1-5: Continue to actively remediate the Attleboro Dyeworks brownfields and return the site to an active use.**

Seekonk has had significant recent success cleaning this potential redevelopment site. Over the last decade (since a 2012 fire led to a cessation of operations), the town has secured approximately \$1.2 M dollars from state and federal sources<sup>4</sup> to assess and remediate contamination from the Dyeworks' former activities. In 2019, fulfilling both long- and short-range planning (including this Master Plan's Economic Development Plan/element), the town pursued ownership of the site due to unpaid taxes.

Once Attleboro Dyeworks is fully remediated, Seekonk can work with local and regional partners to identify a range of development scenarios that meet its economic development goals and complement mixed-use development envisioned for nearby Baker's Corner. In turn, this feasibility study can help market the site, establish any infrastructure needs, identify any necessary zoning or policy changes to achieve a preferred redevelopment scenario, and – most importantly –

set the table for an RFP process that seeks private sector redevelopment of the site.

**Priority:** High

**Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Committee, Planning Board

**Performance Measure:** Fully remediate the site by 2025. Complete Feasibility Study by 2026. Issue RFPs for preferred redevelopment scenario by 2027.

**Example Success Story:** Lowell's Tanner Street Brownfields, Counting House Lofts; Worcester's Crompton Place; Fitchburg's Yarn Works; Burrillville (RI)'s Stillwater Mill; Wareham's Tremont Nail.

**Complimentary Action:** Goal 3 of the Economic Development Plan/element.

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<sup>4</sup> Seekonk received brownfield remediation grants from the U.S. EPA and MassDevelopment.

## GOAL 2: FOCUS EFFORTS ON DEVELOPING “TOWN CENTERS” AT BAKERS CORNER AND LUTHER’S CORNER TO PROMOTE A MIX OF USES, TO ENCOURAGE A CLUSTER OF COMMUNITY SERVICES, AND TO CREATE APPROPRIATELY SCALED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.

Throughout the Master Planning process, Seekonk has expressed the desire for more mixed-use development in appropriate locations in town – particularly in Luther’s Corner and Baker’s Corners, two existing clusters of more of these traditional development patterns. This “traditional development” is often characterized by building patterns that include small building setbacks, moderate building heights and lot coverages, traditional architecture, and clustering of amenities within a walkable area. By seeking to encourage a broader mix of uses, the town intends primarily to build on its strengths – in other words, it hopes to create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods that attract educated, relatively affluent people who want to work and live in town, benefiting from a diversity of amenities and from Seekonk’s relatively affordable home prices (compared to parts of Metro Providence and Metro Boston).<sup>5</sup> In that way, these more traditional land use patterns also complement economic and community development goals – they acknowledge that a diversity of development types can help expand the local tax base, support Seekonk businesses, and achieve a balance of growth and conservation for Seekonk.

### Strategy 2-1: Create a zoning district for Baker’s Corner that encourages mixed-use, village-style Development.

5 For more information, please see this Master Plan’s Economic Development Plan/element, including its data survey and Goal 3 “Encourage mixed-use development in Luther’s and Baker’s Corners.”

Seekonk has two existing “mixed-use” zoning bylaws – the Luther’s Corners Village District and the Mixed-Use Overlay District. The Luther’s Corner District includes the type of modest dimensional and use requirements that result in traditional village-style development that is envisioned in the district’s purpose statement<sup>6</sup> and in this Land Use Goal. The town’s zoning also has important “supplemental” features such as Section 8.11 (Additional Site Plan Standards for the Local Business District, Mixed Use Overlay District and Luther’s Corners Village District) and Section 8.6.1 (Architectural Guidelines). Moreover, these bylaws share many features of other mixed-use bylaws in nearby and neighboring communities.

In order to incentivize further mixed-use development in Baker’s Corner, the town should revisit and adapt its existing Luther’s Corner mixed-use zoning language and apply a new overlay. Further, Seekonk can consider making improvements envisioned in Goal 3 of this Master Plan’s Economic Development Plan/element. These include further incentives for producing desired mixed-use development outcomes. For example, in neighboring Barrington, RI, the zoning bylaw reduces requirements, including dimensional standards, in exchange for providing Low- and Moderate-Income Housing (including specific Mixed-Commercial provisions). Please note that Barrington’s Route 114/103 Corridor saw a true

6 “This district represents a pocket of traditional village style development, which provides a significant opportunity to bolster access for all residents to local goods and services.” - Section 4.1.2.3 of Seekonk’s Zoning Bylaw.

“mixed-use,” “village character” transformation in the late 1990s/early 2000s thanks to changes in the zoning ordinance, addition of design standards, and Complete Streets-style improvements.

**Priority:** Medium

**Responsible Party:** Planning Board

**Performance Measure:**

- By the end of calendar year 2022, create a simple retrospective report of permitting and development that has occurred in Seekonk under the town’s existing Luther’s Corners Village District.
- Conduct a literature review of village-style, mixed-use overlays in Massachusetts by the end of calendar year 2024.
- Adopt mixed-use zoning for Baker’s Corner by the end of calendar year 2025.
- Coordinate these efforts with Land Use Strategy 3-1, below, which envisions larger scale mixed-use infill development in general business areas.

**Example Success Story:** Numerous mixed-use, village-style bylaws have been adopted across MA.

**Complimentary Action:** Strategy 3-1: Produce updated or new Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning for general business areas to provide a strategy for infill development and to repurpose excess parking spaces.

## **Strategy 2-2: Pursue transportation and public realm investment strategies that complement village-style development, such as MassDOT Complete Streets.**

The Master Plan process has revealed a clear desire in Seekonk to improve the safety and appearance of the transportation network – particularly as a complement to land use and development

goals for key areas in town. In Massachusetts, the most common and popular tool for making these targeted infrastructure improvements is the MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program. A “Complete Street” seeks to create human-scale, safe, and accessible options for all modes of travel (walking, biking, transit, and vehicles) and for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes. Aspects of Complete Streets can also include signage and wayfinding, sidewalks, bike lanes, landscaping, and streetscaping – common goals for Route 6, Route 44, and Seekonk’s Villages. Complete Streets interventions may also be appropriate for neighborhoods, areas around schools, and other locations in town.

It is important to note that Complete Streets is not a one-size-fits all approach – some aspects may be appropriate for major corridors such as Route 44; while others would only be appropriate for neighborhoods. It should also be noted that the MassDOT program does not impose onerous requirements on communities; rather, it is about identifying those improvements that fit the character of – and improve circulation in – specific areas in town and working in partnership to make those improvements real. In short, by participating in MassDOT’s Complete Streets Funding Program to create a policy and prioritization plan, the Seekonk can utilize state grant funds to construct desired improvements in locations, such as Bakers Corner and Luther’s Corner.

**Priority:** High

**Responsible Party:** Highway Department, Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board

**Performance Measures:**

- Conduct investigation of and participate in the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding

Program by the end of calendar year 2025.

- Develop a webpage that includes information about the local initiative and ways the public can participate.
- Develop and adopt of a Complete Streets policy, followed by submission to MassDOT for approval
- Determine Complete Streets needs and develop a prioritized list of infrastructure projects. Technical assistance available (up to \$35,000 to develop the plan).
- Apply for construction funding to implement the Complete Streets infrastructure projects on the Prioritization Plan.

**Example Success Story:** As of early 2022, 216 of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns have a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, the vast majority of which lead to grant-funded construction projects.<sup>7</sup>

**Complimentary Action:** Economic Development Plan/element Goal 3; Land Use Strategy 1-4 and 4-1.

**Strategy 2-3: Develop design guidelines to advocate for public realm improvements, such as building design, parking, public spaces, development scale, and ground floor experience.**

Design guidelines are simple, illustrated documents. They use images and text to describe various site and building characteristics, including architecture and materials, signage, as well as site planning and stormwater management. In doing so, they provide clear, visually engaging, and predictable expectations for development in certain areas chosen by a community for more guidance and control. These areas can

include commercial corridors (e.g., the "edge conditions" between an existing neighborhood and developments on a major roadway) or village areas (such as Baker's Corner and Luther's Corner). In short, design guidelines ensure that new growth complements its surroundings.

Planning Boards typically embed design guidelines in their Rules and Regulations governing Site Plan Review. Boards can adopt and subsequently amend these documents at public hearings. In this case, no Town Meeting votes are required.

Numerous municipalities, such as nearby New Bedford,<sup>2</sup> Westport, and Carver, have example guidelines that can serve as a starting point for creating a document that meets Seekonk's unique needs. It is also important to note that Seekonk's zoning bylaw already considers some of the important "supplemental" features such as Section 8.11 (Additional Site Plan Standards for the Local Business District, Mixed Use Overlay District and Luther's Corners Village District) and Section 8.6.1 (Architectural Guidelines). Seekonk can reference these external and internal resources to further its village-style development goals.

**Priority:** Medium

**Responsible Party:** Planning Board

**Performance Measure:**

- The Planning Board will create and adopt design guidelines for Site Plan Review in the existing Luther's Corner and the proposed Baker's Corner zoning districts by the end of calendar year 2027.

**Example Success Story:** Millbury Town Center:  
<https://www.westonandsampson.com/town-center-revitalization/>

The Seekonk Master Plan's Economic Development

<sup>7</sup> <https://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/completestreets/Map/>

## **GOAL 3: SUPPORT INFILL RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT IN OTHER APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT TOWN (INCLUDING ALONG ROUTE 6 AND ROUTE 44).**

Plan/element includes a “literature review” of successful strategies that other cities and towns across the nation have deployed to reinvigorate commercial corridors. Some of these interventions highlight the need for “infill” development

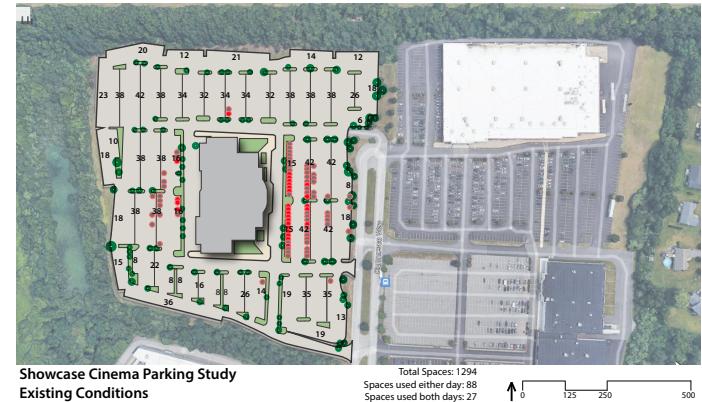
**Strategy 3-1: Produce updated or new Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning for general business areas to provide a strategy for infill development and to repurpose excess parking spaces.**

The future growth of Seekonk's commercial corridors depends on providing flexibility for a range of development types in these locations. This ranges from inclusion of smaller human-scaled structures, mixed-use building types (which include housing in addition to commercial uses), reduced parking requirements, and other flexible forms of development. Implementing overlay districts with design standards is a direct and impactful method to achieve this. Seekonk has two existing mixed-use districts<sup>8</sup> that can be amended or reworked to achieve some of the goals identified here and throughout the Master Planning process.

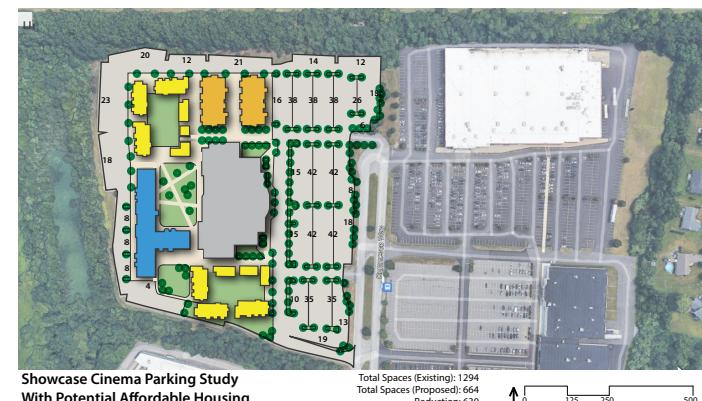
Overlay districts operate as a new set of zoning controls to enable alternative forms of possible development which function alongside the existing zoning for that area. For example, if the underlying zoning allows for single-family development, and the overlay zoning allows for mixed use development, a developer may build a mixed-use or single-family project, insofar as it

8 Mixed-Use Overlay District and Luther's Corners Village District; a retrospective reporting process can determine how much growth has taken place using these zoning mechanisms.

is compliant with the regulations for either set of zoning controls. The implementation of updated or new mixed-use overlay zoning can allow for development that can fill in some of Seekonk's underutilized commercial parking areas while also addressing parking created by new developments by reducing future parking requirements. New or amended mixed-use overlay zoning should include updated use tables to attract emerging and changing types of uses, such as creative-focused or cultural uses, co-working spaces, and small fabrication spaces. Mixed-use residential features, such as co-living style apartments or compact apartments could also be considered. Finally, dimensional and design features must be added in order to provide guidance and flexibility for new and emerging uses.



## Showcase Cinemas Parking Location Study



## Showcase Cinemas Infill Development Example

Additionally, Seekonk can pair design standards with the new or updated overlay zoning. (See Strategy 2-3, above.) Design standards use images and text to describe a variety of site and building characteristics, ranging from stormwater management to architecture and materials. Rather than impose strict dimensional requirements, design standards and performance standards balance flexibility with regulation to promote creative solutions and the best possible project outcome. These design standards would apply to projects of a certain size, in a specific area, or in a specific zone. Any design standards should promote walkable, compact developments; for example, the building's primary façade should front the street instead of a parking lot. Design standards can also address the public realm, including design, style, and materials for light poles, planters, benches and other public space infrastructure. Design standards integrate concepts and branding that can help new developments feel consistent with town-wide economic development efforts and wayfinding along Seekonk's major corridors and mixed-use areas.

Providing overlay districts synergizes with the other strategies in Goal 1, above, as well as Goal 3 of the Economic Development Plan/element; these strategies seek to provide walkable and human scaled development that can continue to grow the Town's tax base.

**Priority:** Medium

**Responsible Party:** Planning Board

**Performance Measure:**

- By the end of calendar year 2022, create a simple retrospective report of permitting and development that has occurred in Seekonk under the town's existing Mixed-Use Overlay District.

- Conduct a literature review of mixed-use overlays in Massachusetts by the end of calendar year 2024. Identify desirable zoning features to update existing Seekonk zoning or create new mixed-use overlays appropriate for Route 6, Route 44, and other locations.
- Coordinate these efforts with Land Use Strategy 2-1, above, which envisions smaller scale mixed-use infill development in general business areas.

**Example Success Story:** Numerous cities and towns across Massachusetts have combined mixed-use overlays and design guidelines to produce infill development in desired locations.

**Complimentary Actions:** Strategy 2-1: Create a zoning district for Baker's Corner that encourages mixed-use, village-style Development; Strategy 2-3: Develop design guidelines to advocate for public realm improvements, such as building design, parking, public spaces, development scale, and ground floor experience.

**Strategy 3-2: Review existing Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning District language to ensure adequate protections for residential uses within and abutting the overlay district.**

The Town's bylaw for mixed-use overlay zoning districts defers to the current underlying zoning controls regarding buffering and setbacks for the land on which the Overlay District is located. In some instances where a mixed-use development abuts single-family homes, the property's side and rear setbacks have a minimum of 35 feet. The current rules around setbacks require a 6-foot-high vegetative buffer for property lines to the rear of the setback line.

While these setbacks and screening requirements were determined with the original underlying

zoning in mind, they are often appropriate for a mixed-use development that is following the overlay zoning controls, as well. Because of this, the Town should consider a narrow set of revisions to the text governing current mixed-use overlay zones with the intention that the zoning controls continue to provide adequate density and flexibility for a mixed-use development to function as intended (by producing small building setbacks, moderate building heights and lot coverage, traditional architecture, and clustering of amenities within a walkable area) while also mitigating any potential impacts on nearby homes. Revisions can encourage additional screening or setbacks for portions of the mixed-use developments, such as parking or waste disposal, that might be particularly disruptive to nearby residential properties. Additionally, revisions to screening requirements can encourage layered planting containing perennials, shrubs, and trees to create a more gradual and appealing visual buffer between properties.

In addition to the instances described above, where this can currently occur, as the Town pursues additional zoning changes, overlay districts, and mixed-use initiatives, similar to those outlined in Goal 2, there exists potential for new and unexpected forms of interface between residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The Town of Seekonk should proactively plan for these future occurrences in accordance with new zoning changes.

**Priority:** Low

**Responsible Party:** Town of Seekonk

**Performance Measure:**

- As the town pursues the mixed-use zoning revisions envisioned in Strategies 2-1 and 3-1

it should also consider minor edits, such as these setback considerations, to determine all potential revisions by 2025.

**Complimentary Action:** Strategy 2-1: Create a zoning district for Baker's Corner that encourages mixed-use, village-style Development; Strategy 3-1: Produce updated or new Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning for general business areas to provide a strategy for infill development and to repurpose excess parking spaces.

### **Strategy 3-3: Review mixed-use and multifamily development zoning provisions and consider appropriate minimum density requirements.**

Seekonk's existing Mixed-Use Overlay District allows for a maximum of 8 above ground floor units per structure when above a commercial use under the zoning code use table; the Multi-Family Development sets a maximum of 48 units per structure. As Seekonk seeks to grow its mixed-use town center areas, such as Bakers Corner, and to promote mixed-use infill development in new areas of town (as suggested by this Goal 3), it will become increasingly important to plan for a variety of building types, sizes, and designs. The town can do this by developing more flexible density guidelines.

While the current 8-unit limit on mixed-use buildings helps establish an ideal target scale and density for these districts in Town, many similar districts in communities across Massachusetts have opted to govern building size and density by combining their dimensional guidelines with a units-per-square-feet or units-per-acre (UPA) of lot area requirement. By allowing densities to be a function of lot size, this zoning approach promotes greater flexibility and diversity of site planning and building types; in turn, this can help facilitate

more development in town, leading to increased demand for commercial space, such as restaurants and shopping; more housing options for those in town; and more compact, walkable development types – all community and economic development goals in this Master Plan.

**Priority:** High

**Responsible Party:** Planning Board

**Performance Measure:**

- As the town pursues the mixed-use zoning revisions envisioned in Strategies 2-1 and 3-1 it should also consider amendments to the current density limits set in its existing zoning provisions. The recommended edits include imposing a range of units-per-acre (UPA) density requirements by lot size (or similar measure); these more flexible requirements should govern residential densities wherever multi-family units are allowed, whether in the existing Multi-Family Residential Overlay or existing Luther's Corner Village District or in proposed zoning, such as future mixed-use districts.

**Example Success Story:** The Commonwealth's Chapter 40R Smart Growth Zoning Overlay uses a range of units per acre (UPA) measures to allow for more flexible site planning and architectural outcomes; these are 8 UPA for single family homes, 12 UPA for townhomes, and 20 UPA for condominiums and apartments.

**Complimentary Action:** Strategy 2-1: Create a zoning district for Baker's Corner that encourages mixed-use, village-style Development; Strategy 3-1: Produce updated or new Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning for general business areas to provide a strategy for infill development and to repurpose excess parking spaces.

# GOAL 4: MAINTAIN SEEKONK'S RURAL CHARACTER BY PRESERVING OPEN SPACE AND ENCOURAGING GROWTH THAT IS SENSITIVE TO NATURAL RESOURCES AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE.

Many of the preceding Goals and Strategies have focused on community and economic development. However, open space conservation is equally important when considering a community's land use policies. Moreover, Seekonk has an active and successful history of environmental planning and land stewardship – whether through official bodies such as the Conservation Commission or the Community Preservation Commission – or through partnerships with local and regional entities. This Land Use Goal 4 seeks to identify strategies that further this success while also balancing growth pressures in Seekonk.

## **Strategy 4-1: Continue partnerships between private landowners, land conservation groups, and state and local governments to enable more open space acquisitions.**

Partnerships with private landowners, land conservation groups, and state and local governments can support the protection of valuable resources and areas in Seekonk. These partnerships can inform the Town about important initiatives and potential funding opportunities. The Town must continue coalition building between these organizations in order to conserve tracts of open land in town with high conservation, habitat, water resource protection, and recreational value. Seekonk can guide its efforts with its current 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

In the past, the Town has used CPA funds for farm protection projects, some of them in partnership with the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction

(APR) Program. The Seekonk Land Conservation Trust and The Trustees of Reservations have also preserved several farms through donations of conservation restrictions.

**Priority:** Low

**Responsible Party:** Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

**Performance Measure:** Ongoing, the Town will continue to seek out partnerships for future open space acquisition.

**Example Success Story:** In 2021, the Community Preservation Committee received authorization to purchase 40 acres on Lincoln and Elm Streets for recreation, open space, and historic preservation.

**Complementary Strategies:** Seekonk's Open Space and Recreation Plan Goal 4, Objective 4A.2

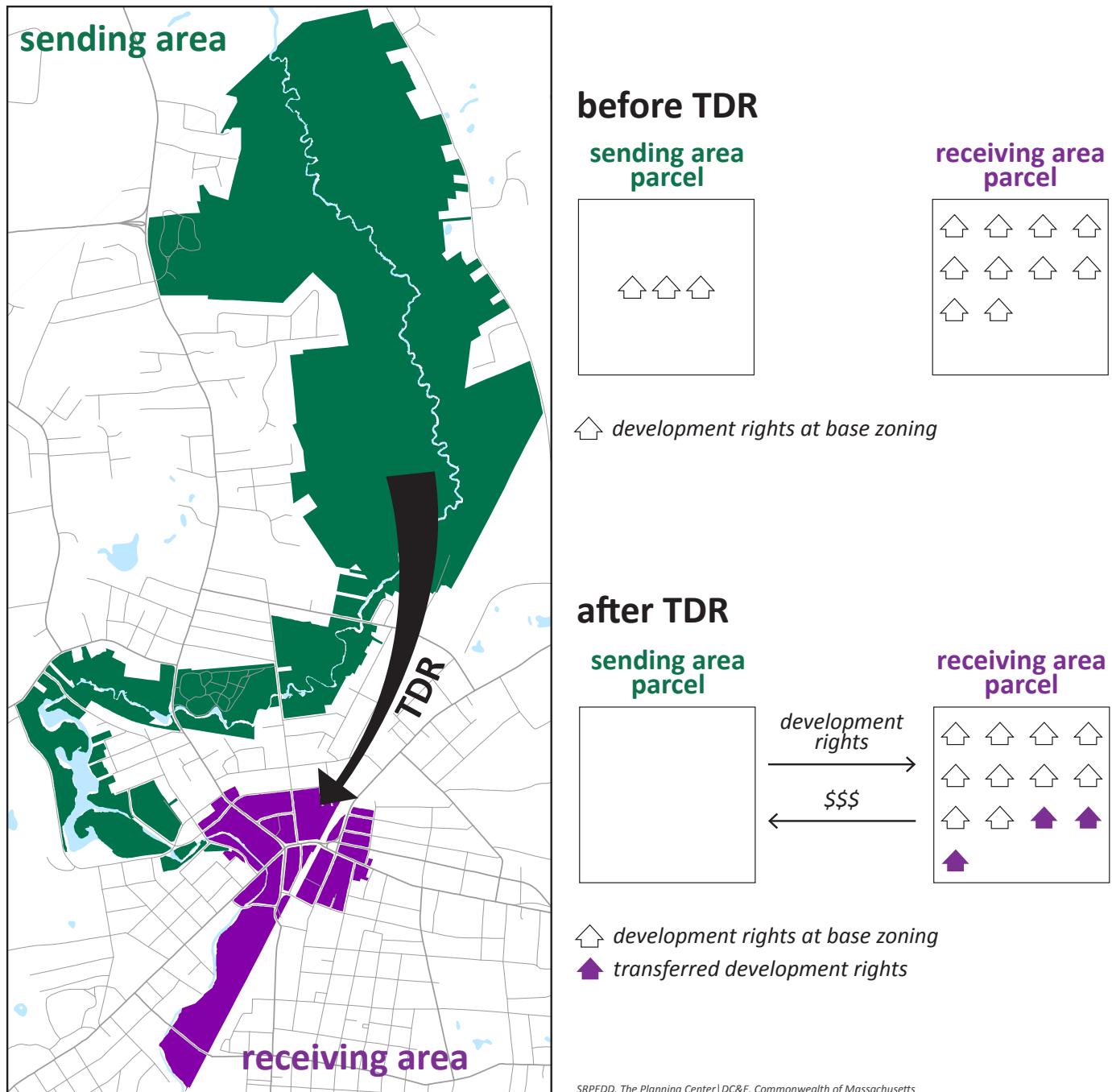
## **Strategy 4-2: Investigate a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) bylaw.**

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a zoning mechanism that uses real estate market forces to permanently protect land. It can be a confusing, complex concept when you get into the details – the main idea is that a community can encourage development where it wants by allowing property owners to trade the ability to build on their land.

Under TDR, "open space is permanently protected [through a conservation restriction] for water supply, agriculture, habitat, recreation, or other purposes via the transfer of some or all of the development that would otherwise have occurred in these sensitive places to more suitable

# Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

TDR is a regulatory strategy that harnesses private market forces to accomplish local goals for growth. First, open space is permanently protected for water supply, agricultural, habitat, recreational, or other purposes via the transfer of some or all of the development that would otherwise have occurred in these sensitive places to more suitable locations that are identified by the community. Second, other locations, such as city and town centers or vacant and underutilized properties, become more vibrant and successful as the development potential from the protected resource areas is transferred to them. In essence, development rights are "transferred" from one district (the "Sending Area") to another (the "Receiving Area"). Communities using TDR are generally shifting development densities within the community to achieve both open space and economic goals without changing their overall development potential. While less common, TDR can also be used for preservation of historic resources. - *Commonwealth of Massachusetts Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit*.



locations. [Then], other locations, such as city and town centers or vacant and underutilized properties, become more vibrant and successful as the development potential from the protected resource areas is transferred to them. In essence, development rights are 'transferred' from one district (the 'sending area') to another (the 'receiving area'). Communities using TDR are generally shifting development densities within the community to achieve both open space and economic goals without changing their overall development potential.<sup>9</sup>

**Priority:** Medium

**Responsible Party:** Planning Board and Conservation Commission

**Performance Measure:**

- By the end of calendar year 2027, the Planning Board will create a simple user guide that explains the TDR process in easy to-understand writing and clear diagrams. A simple and straightforward TDR user-guide can overcome confusion and help build support by clarifying TDR's goals and the fact that it is a voluntary, free-market tool. This civic engagement effort would greatly improve the bylaw's likelihood of passing Town Meeting vote.
- Second, by the end of calendar year 2028, the Planning Board will work with the public to map TDR sending and receiving areas. To aid in this selection process, the Board can consult GIS analysis, basic buildout estimates, and the Town's 2013 Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Protection Areas (PPAs). Build-out estimates can identify parcels containing remaining development potential and can also assist in identifying land in appropriate "receiving" areas that can accommodate transferred growth.
- Third, by the end of calendar year 2030, the TDR bylaw passes town meeting. In order

<sup>9</sup> Massachusetts Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit TDR Module.

to ensure use of the bylaw to the greatest extent possible, Seekonk should consider sophisticated TDR features. For example, the Town could consider allowing sending area owners to "bank" their development rights by selling them to a state entity or a non-profit conservation agency, which holds them for resale to owners in receiving areas; this removes the need for owners to buy and sell directly to each other and simplifies timing in the TDR market. Seekonk could also incentivize TDRs by increasing densities or reducing requirements in exchange for conservation goals (in the sending area) or for community development goals (in the receiving area).

**Example Success Stories:** Montgomery County, MD; Seattle, WA; Falmouth, MA.

**Complimentary Action:** Seekonk's Open Space and Recreation Plan Goal 5, Objective 5B

**Strategy 4-3: Create a list of properties of conservation and preservation interest that identify the potential methods of acquisitions and a funding source to maintain them.**

An objective of Seekonk's 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan is to create a list of properties of conservation and preservation interest for the town. The list should include properties that will provide wildlife habitat and connectivity, farms, open space in rural areas, and historic places, structures, and artifacts. For each property on the list, the Town should be a method of purchasing and maintaining the property. Methods of purchasing land can come from CPA funds, LAND and PARC Grants, and other private and public sources. Further, Seekonk can manage this inventory using GIS mapping and databases; in so doing, the Town can actively identify and edit not only implementation information, but also the main role a given open space asset plays – or

would play over time – in town. For example, a property originally acquired for passive recreation (walking paths or scenic value) may now be more valuable because of the role it plays in protecting drinking water resources or mitigating flooding.

**Priority:** High

**Responsible Party:** Conservation Commission and Planning Board

**Performance Measure:** By the end of 2022, the Town should have a list of properties they want to pursue in purchasing for conservation and preservation.

**Complimentary Action:** Seekonk's Open Space and Recreation Plan Goal 5, Objective 5B

#### **Strategy 4-4: Continue to address the action items in the 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Plan.**

A Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan requires communities to complete vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented resiliency plans. Communities that complete an MVP Plan become certified as an MVP community and are eligible for MVP Action grant funding and other opportunities.

The town of Seekonk is in the process of finalizing its 2020 Municipal Vulnerability and Hazard Mitigation Plans. In 2020, the Town held a series of workshops and listening sessions to characterize potential hazards, identify community vulnerabilities and strengths, and prioritize community actions. Based on feedback from this process, the Town identified strategies to address vulnerabilities that include considerations for town infrastructure, invasive plant species, extreme weather preparedness, open space in town, and more. Seekonk is in the process of finalizing

feedback from the public and key stakeholder groups, and incorporating this information into the final plans. Once finalized these goals will outline a series of priority actions that the Town can use to address and prepare for environmental hazards and address its vulnerabilities.

**Priority:** High

**Responsible Party:** Conservation Commission

**Performance Measure:**

- Finalize and submit MVP Plan by the end of 2022.
- Pursue high priority capital improvements and community actions on an ongoing basis thereafter.

**Example Success Story:** City of New Bedford, Town of Lakeville, and Town of Mattapoisett

**Complimentary Action:** Seekonk's Open Space and Recreation Goal 7, Objective 7A

# IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

STRATEGY	COMPLEMENTARY ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	EXAMPLE SUCCESS STORIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
<b>Goal 1: Encourage traditional economic development at key locations along Route 6, Route 44, and at the Attleboro Dyeworks site.</b>					
1.1: Secure sewer service along Route 6 through a direct intermunicipal agreement (IMA) with East Providence, Rhode Island.	Goal 2 on page 22 of this Master Plan's Economic Development Plan/element; Goal 1 of Services and Facilities.	High	Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Commission, Planning Board	An interstate IMA for wastewater service between Tiverton, RI and Fall River, MA . Recent IMA for wastewater between Somerset and Swansea, MA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek legislative support to assist in negotiations from both House and Senate representatives in MA and RI.</li> <li>Identify other existing IMAs that Seekonk has with East Providence that maybe used to inform the negotiations (water supply and/or storage, landfills, waste transfer station, open space, or other IMAs).</li> <li>Analyze and evaluate potential revenue sharing agreement with East Providence based on projections of incremental tax growth generated by extension of sewer.</li> <li>Secure support of existing businesses located in the Route 6 commercial corridor and from the East Providence Chamber of Commerce to lobby the City of East Providence for the proposed extension.</li> </ul>
1.2: Retrofit and right-size key parcels, such as Showcase Cinema and Fantasy Land, to improve development outcomes.		High	Planning Board		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to collaborate with current and future property owners to explore redevelopment opportunities throughout the 10-year life of this plan.</li> </ul>
1.3: Conduct coordinated planning efforts along Route 6 and Route 44 to create improvements to streetscape, intermodal transit, and other placemaking features (signage, sidewalks, etc.) in order to highlight the Seekonk as a retail destination and a gateway to Massachusetts.	Strategy 2-2: Pursue transportation and public realm investment strategies that complement village-style development, such as MassDOT Complete Streets; Strategy 2-3: Develop design guidelines to advocate for public realm improvements, such as building design, parking, public spaces, development scale, and ground floor experience.	Medium	Planning Board	Norwood's Route One Corridor Study and Rezoning Initiative; Dartmouth's Route 6 Gateway Study; Brookline's Gateway East Plan & Route 9 Corridor Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with MassDOT to conduct a comprehensive corridor planning exercise for the "gateway" portions of Routes 6 and 44 by the end of calendar year 2027.</li> <li>Coordinate these efforts with Complete Street's planning and investments and Development of Design Guidelines envisioned for Bakers and Luther's Corners in Strategy 2-2 and 2-3, below.</li> </ul>

STRATEGY	COMPLEMENTARY ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	EXAMPLE SUCCESS STORIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
1.4: Review residential setback and buffering requirements for commercial and industrial zoning districts (Highway Business, Local Business, and Industry districts).	Strategy 3-2: Review existing Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning District Language to ensure adequate protections for residential uses within and abutting the overlay district.	High	Planning Board	Norwood's Route One Corridor Study and Rezoning Initiative; Dartmouth's Route 6 Gateway Study; Brookline's Gateway East Plan & Route 9 Corridor Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Planning Board should review the zoning code in order to amend setback requirements for instances where a commercial or industrial district interfaces R-1 and R-2 zones.</li> </ul>
1.5: Continue to actively remediate the Attleboro Dyeworks brownfields and return the site to an active use.	Goal 3 of the Economic Development Plan/element.	High	Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Committee, Planning Board	Lowell's Tanner Street Brownfields, Counting House Lofts; Worcester's Crompton Place; Fitchburg's Yarn Works; Burrillville (RI)'s Stillwater Mill; Wareham's Tremont Nail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully remediate the site by 2025.</li> <li>Complete Feasibility Study by 2026.</li> <li>Issue RFPs for preferred redevelopment scenario by 2027.</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: Focus efforts on developing “town centers” at Bakers Corner and Luther’s Corner to promote a mix of uses, to encourage a cluster of community services, and to create appropriately scaled business development.</b>					
2.1: Create a zoning district for Baker’s Corner that encourages mixed-use, village-style Development.	Strategy 3-1: Produce updated or new Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning for general business areas to provide a strategy for infill development and to repurpose excess parking spaces.	Medium	Planning Board		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of calendar year 2022, create a simple retrospective report of permitting and development that has occurred in Seekonk under the town’s existing Luther’s Corners Village District.</li> <li>Conduct a literature review of village-style, mixed-use overlays in Massachusetts by the end of calendar year 2024.</li> <li>Adopt mixed-use zoning for Baker’s Corner by the end of calendar year 2025.</li> <li>Coordinate these efforts with Land Use Strategy 3-1, below, which envisions larger scale mixed-use infill development in general business areas.</li> </ul>

STRATEGY	COMPLEMENTARY ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	EXAMPLE SUCCESS STORIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
2.2: Pursue transportation and public realm investment strategies that complement village-style development, such as MassDOT Complete Streets.	Economic Development Plan/element Goal 3; Land Use Strategy 1-4 and 4-1.	High	Highway Department, Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board	As of early 2022, 216 of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns have a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, the vast majority of which lead to grant-funded construction projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct investigation of and participate in the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program by the end of calendar year 2025.</li> <li>Develop a webpage that includes information about the local initiative and ways the public can participate.</li> <li>Develop and adopt of a Complete Streets policy, followed by submission to MassDOT for approval</li> <li>Determine Complete Streets needs and develop a prioritized list of infrastructure projects. Technical assistance available (up to \$35,000 to develop the plan).</li> <li>Apply for construction funding to implement the Complete Streets infrastructure projects on the Prioritization Plan.</li> </ul>
2.3: Develop design guidelines to advocate for public realm improvements, such as building design, parking, public spaces, development scale, and ground floor experience.		Medium	Planning Board	Millbury Town Center: <a href="https://www.westonandsampson.com/town-center-revitalization/">https://www.westonandsampson.com/town-center-revitalization/</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Planning Board will create and adopt design guidelines for Site Plan Review in the existing Luther's Corner and the proposed Baker's Corner zoning districts by the end of calendar year 2027.</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 3: Support infill residential and mixed-use development in other appropriate locations throughout town (including along Route 6 and Route 44).</b>					
3.1: Produce updated or new Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning for general business areas to provide a strategy for infill development and to repurpose excess parking spaces.	Strategy 2-1: Create a zoning district for Baker's Corner that encourages mixed-use, village-style Development; Strategy 2-3: Develop design guidelines to advocate for public realm improvements, such as building design, parking, public spaces, development scale, and ground floor experience.	Medium	Planning Board	Numerous cities and towns across Massachusetts have combined mixed-use overlays and design guidelines to produce infill development in desired locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of calendar year 2022, create a simple retrospective report of permitting and development that has occurred in Seekonk under the town's existing Mixed-Use Overlay District.</li> <li>Conduct a literature review of mixed-use overlays in Massachusetts by the end of calendar year 2024. Identify desirable zoning features to update existing Seekonk zoning or create new mixed-use overlays appropriate for Route 6, Route 44, and other locations.</li> <li>Coordinate these efforts with Land Use Strategy 2-1, above, which envisions smaller scale mixed-use infill development in general business areas.</li> </ul>

STRATEGY	COMPLEMENTARY ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	EXAMPLE SUCCESS STORIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
3.2: Review existing Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning District language to ensure adequate protections for residential uses within and abutting the overlay district.	Strategy 2-1: Create a zoning district for Baker's Corner that encourages mixed-use, village-style Development; Strategy 3-1: Produce updated or new Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning for general business areas to provide a strategy for infill development and to repurpose excess parking spaces.	Low	Planning Board		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the town pursues the mixed-use zoning revisions envisioned in Strategies 2-1 and 3-1 it should also consider minor edits, such as these setback considerations, to determine all potential revisions by 2025.</li> </ul>
3.3: Review mixed-use and multifamily development zoning provisions and consider appropriate minimum density requirements	Strategy 2-1: Create a zoning district for Baker's Corner that encourages mixed-use, village-style Development; Strategy 3-1: Produce updated or new Mixed-Use Overlay Zoning for general business areas to provide a strategy for infill development and to repurpose excess parking spaces.	High	Planning Board	The Commonwealth's Chapter 40R Smart Growth Zoning Overlay uses a range of units per acre (UPA) measures to allow for more flexible site planning and architectural outcomes; these are 8 UPA for single family homes, 12 UPA for townhomes, and 20 UPA for condominiums and apartments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the town pursues the mixed-use zoning revisions envisioned in Strategies 2-1 and 3-1 it should also consider amendments to the current density limits set in its existing zoning provisions. The recommended edits include imposing a range of units-per-acre (UPA) density requirements by lot size (or similar measure); these more flexible requirements should govern residential densities wherever multi-family units are allowed, whether in the existing Multi-Family Residential Overlay or existing Luther's Corner Village District or in proposed zoning, such as future mixed-use districts.</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 4: Maintain Seekonk's rural character by preserving open space and encouraging growth that is sensitive to natural resources and climate resilience.</b>					
4.1: Continue partnerships between private landowners, land conservation groups, and state and local governments to enable more open space acquisitions.	Seekonk's Open Space and Recreation Plan Goal 4, Objective 4A.2	Low	Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission	In 2021, the Community Preservation Committee received authorization to purchase 40 acres on Lincoln and Elm Streets for recreation, open space, and historic preservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing, the Town will continue to seek out partnerships for future open space acquisition.</li> </ul>

STRATEGY	COMPLEMENTARY ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	EXAMPLE SUCCESS STORIES	PERFORMANCE MEASURES
4.2: Investigate a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) bylaw.	Seekonk's Open Space and Recreation Plan Goal 5, Objective 5B	Medium	Planning Board, Conservation Commission	Montgomery County, MD; Seattle, WA; Falmouth, MA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of calendar year 2027, the Planning Board will create a simple user guide that explains the TDR process in easy to-understand writing and clear diagrams. A simple and straightforward TDR user-guide can overcome confusion and help build support by clarifying TDR's goals and the fact that it is a voluntary, free-market tool. This civic engagement effort would greatly improve the bylaw's likelihood of passing Town Meeting vote.</li> <li>Second, by the end of calendar year 2028, the Planning Board will work with the public to map TDR sending and receiving areas. To aid in this selection process, the Board can consult GIS analysis, basic buildout estimates, and the Town's 2013 Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Protection Areas (PPAs). Build-out estimates can identify parcels containing remaining development potential and can also assist in identifying land in appropriate "receiving" areas that can accommodate transferred growth.</li> <li>Third, by the end of calendar year 2030, the TDR bylaw passes town meeting. In order to ensure use of the bylaw to the greatest extent possible, Seekonk should consider sophisticated TDR features. For example, the Town could consider allowing sending area owners to "bank" their development rights by selling them to a state entity or a non-profit conservation agency, which holds them for resale to owners in receiving areas; this removes the need for owners to buy and sell directly to each other and simplifies timing in the TDR market. Seekonk could also incentivize TDRs by increasing densities or reducing requirements in exchange for conservation goals (in the sending area) or for community development goals (in the receiving area).</li> </ul>
4.3: Create a list of properties of conservation and preservation interest that identify the potential methods of acquisitions and a funding source to maintain them.	Seekonk's Open Space and Recreation Plan Goal 5, Objective 5B	High	Conservation Commission, Planning Board		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of 2022, the Town should have a list of properties they want to pursue in purchasing for conservation and preservation.</li> </ul>
4.4: Continue to address the action items in the 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Plan.	Seekonk's Open Space and Recreation Goal 7, Objective 7A	High	Conservation Commission		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize and submit MVP Plan by the end of 2022.</li> <li>Pursue high priority capital improvements and community actions on an ongoing basis thereafter.</li> </ul>

## Appendices

## APPENDIX A: ESTIMATES OF FUTURE GROWTH IN SEEKONK

### ***The following is a conversational description of the technical, GIS-based land use modeling that appears in the Appendix.***

What could development in Seekonk look like over the next 20 years? Let's explore possible futures to help inform our Land Use.

But, first, let's back up... how do you "estimate growth?" Great question. You make educated guesses using the best available data. And you follow three main steps.

The first step is called a "Build-out;" this is a GIS modeling process that, in essence, estimates the supply of remaining development potential in Seekonk. A build-out considers all sorts of factors that may affect this future development. It looks at what you're allowed to build under local zoning. It also looks at the existing built and natural environments to establish "what's already there." It also captures common concepts such as "is there a wetland or a permanent deed restriction on this parcel?"

The next step is called "Suitability scoring" – this basically estimates demand for growth using a diverse set of data to "rank" the desirability of every imagined future building from the Build-out. In this way, Suitability scoring serves as a stand-in for market demand (and considers some straightforward market factors).

The third and final step is "Allocation" – this combines the first two steps with population and job projections to estimate when, where, and how much growth might take place in Seekonk.

Throw in some town planning expertise, a dash of

randomness (yes, there's a setting for randomness), and a lot of humility ("All models are wrong, but some are useful" – George E. P. Box) – and you have yourself an estimate for future growth in town.

Let's dig deeper. If you're curious, you can also click [here](#) to view more detailed descriptions of the process that SRPEDD based the current Seekonk modeling on:

- [A presentation SRPEDD made to sister RPAs and the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Office.](#)
- [Documentation from Appendix B of SRPEDD's 2020 Regional Transportation Plan\(beginning on page B-20\).](#)

So what data and concepts did we consider in our estimate?

We considered the following factors in deciding where and how development may take shape in the coming years:

- Town zoning and permitting
- Land characteristics, such as ownership, recent development, and valuations
- Wetlands and permanently protected open spaces
- Geological constraints, such as slope, soil types, and bedrock location
- Important water resources, such as aquifers and cold-water fisheries
- Agricultural considerations, such as areas of prime farmland
- Environmental factors, such as core habitats
- Local preferences, including priority development and conservation areas

- Hazards, such as FEMA flood plains
- Civic amenities such as schools, hospitals, sewers, regional transit, and measures of walkability
- The presence of nearby recent development
- Population and market projections

Let's review the main steps in detail.

## Build-out Estimates (Supply)

This step creates a "parcel-by-parcel" estimate of potential buildings based on existing zoning regulations and permanent constraints. Each parcel receives a "build-out estimate," or how much total growth (measured in building area and dwelling units) could occur given zoning requirements and usable land. We then go back and refine these estimates (by, for example, removing buildings placed on school ball fields or land-locked parcels) using common sense town planning knowledge.

## Suitability Scoring (Demand)

This step examines each parcel using the much of the GIS data described above and "scores" each building's likelihood of being developed based on its proximity to (or distance from!) those factors. For example, a building placed within a FEMA flood plain may be less likely to be developed than one that is farther away, and therefore receives a lower score – especially when looking at future growth through the lens of climate change (which we do, below!).

Each suitability group (for example, water resources are one group, open space is another, and so on) is scored, and then a "final score" is calculated based on all of the group scores. We can customize these weights to model growth scenarios, such as "Business as Usual" or "Sensitivity to Climate

Change." We'll refine these scenarios as we gather more input from the Master Plan process.

## Allocation (How much and where)

This last step, "Allocation," combines current statistics about population and employment in Seekonk with growth projections and our "supply" and "demand" steps. We combine all this information to estimate how much growth might happen and where it might physically take place in town.

What makes a potential building "more likely" or "less likely" to be built?

Certain factors may make a building "more suitable," such as being in a walkable area or close to town facilities. The more amenities and fewer constraints, the more "ripe" an area is for development.

The following factors make a building or an area "more suitable" for development:

- Being within one of the town's priority development areas
- Being near a major road, commuter rail station, or interchange (for businesses)
- Being near a school, hospital, or fire station
- Being on the town sewer network
- Having more walkable areas nearby
- Having other recent development nearby

The following factors make a building or an area "less suitable" for development:

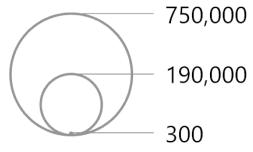
- Being within one of the town's priority protection area
- Being on a steep slope, poorly drained soil, or bedrock
- Being within a flood zone

# Seekonk Supply

## Total Potential Capacity



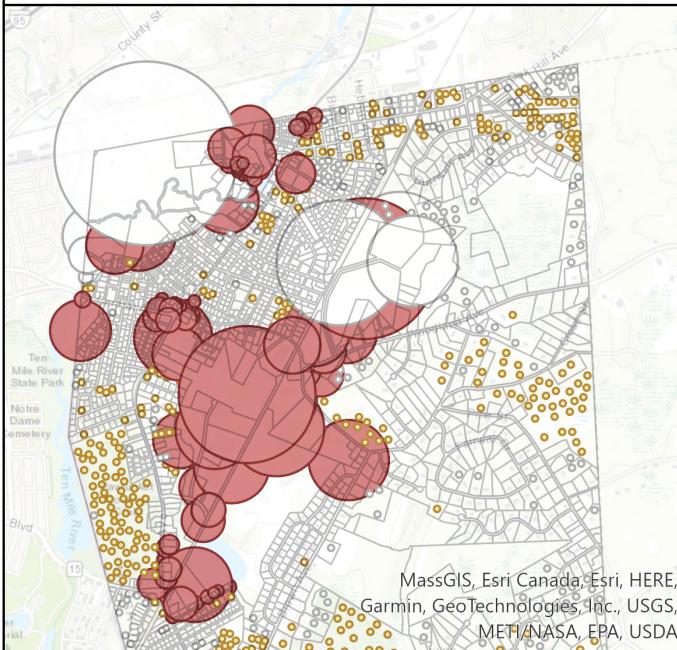
- Adjusted Floor Area Capacity
- Adjusted Dwelling Unit Capacity
- Deleted Capacity



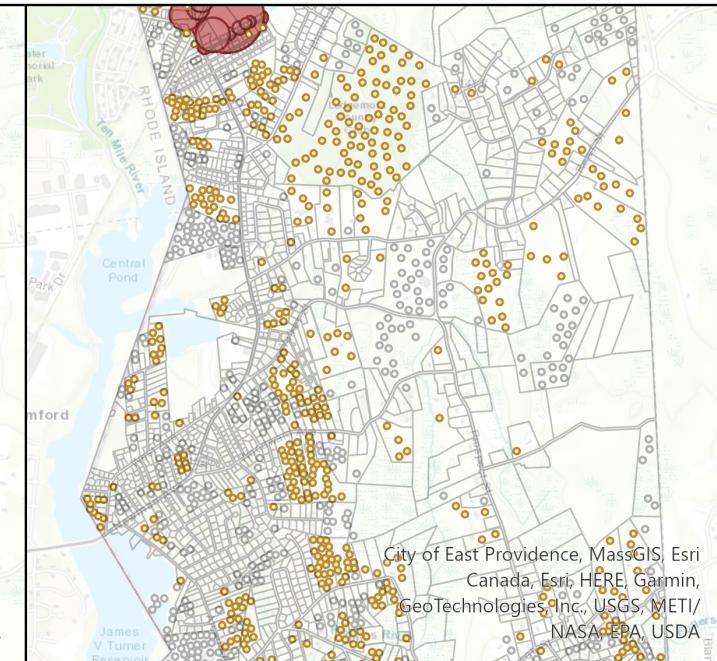
Data sources: Town of Seekonk, MassGIS, SRPEDD. This map is for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and is not warranted for any other use.



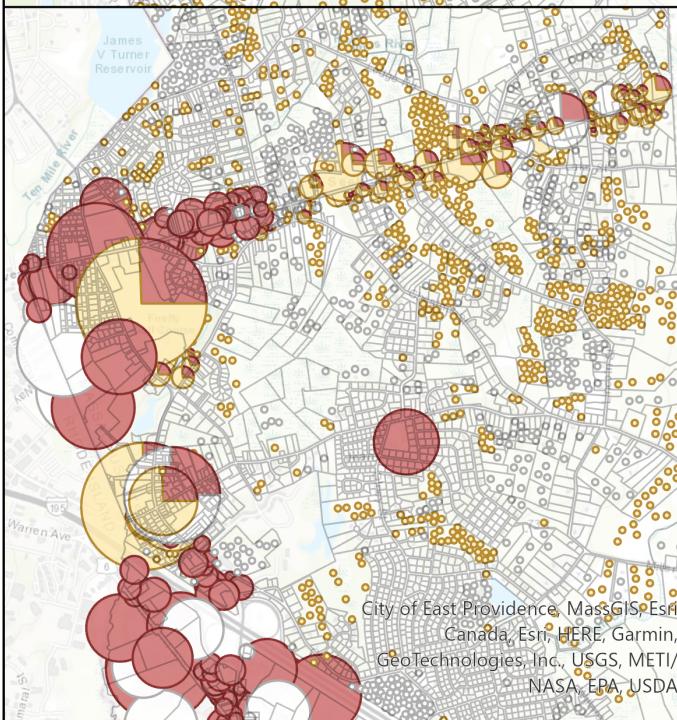
0 0.5 1 Miles



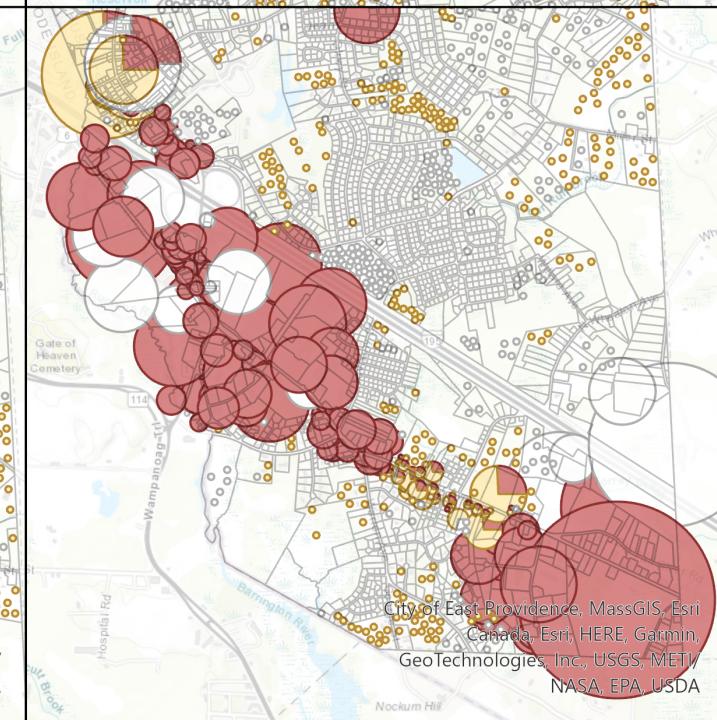
MassGIS, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, METI/NASA, EPA, USDA



City of East Providence, MassGIS, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, METI/NASA, EPA, USDA



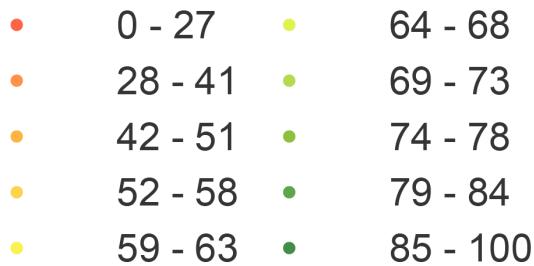
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# Seekonk Non-Industrial Suitability

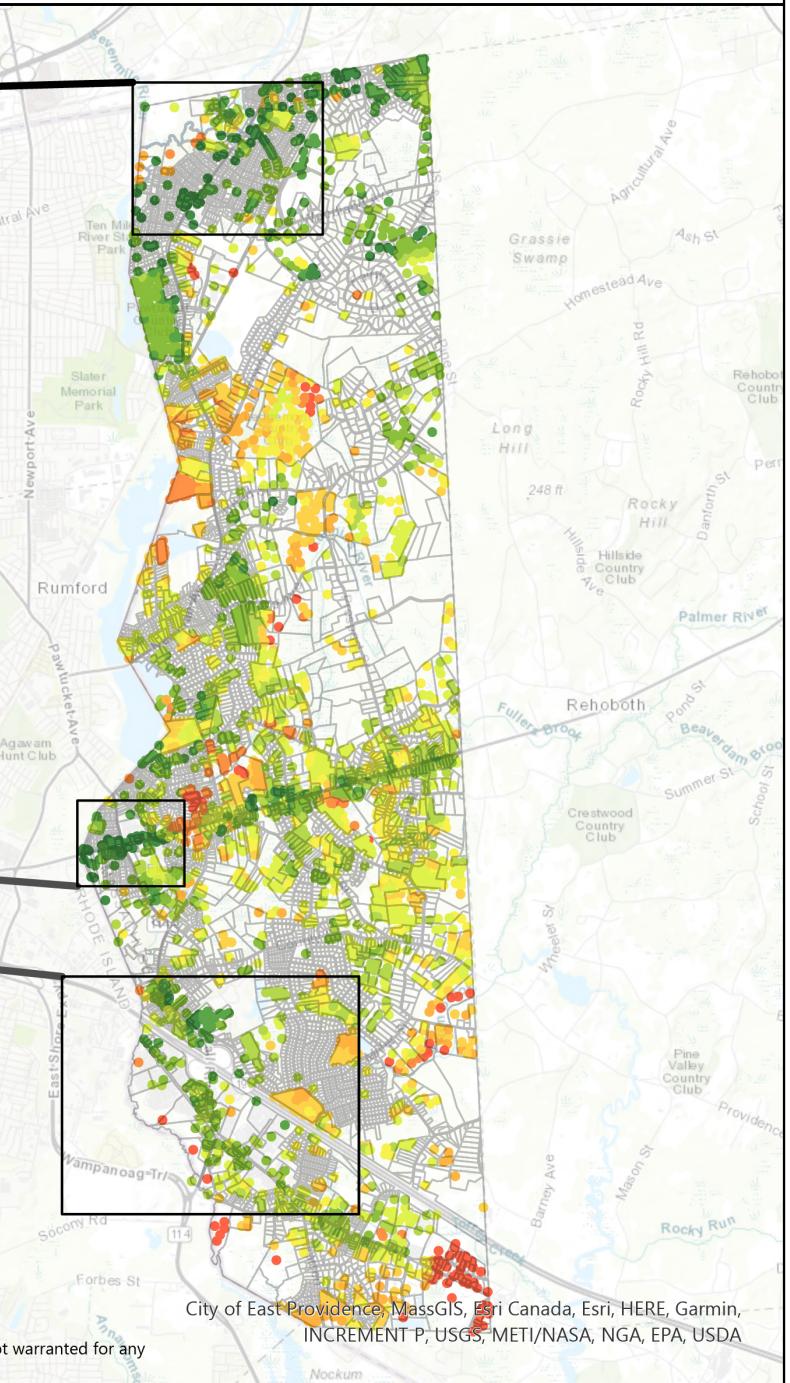
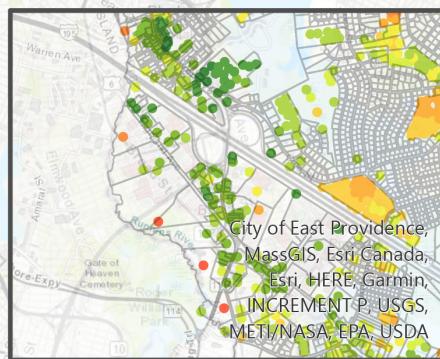
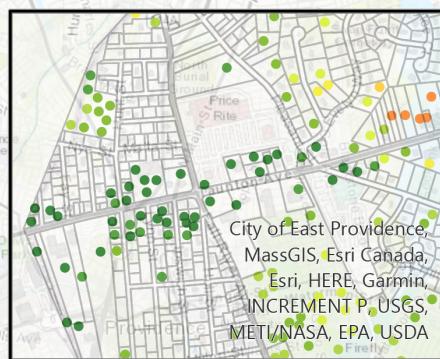
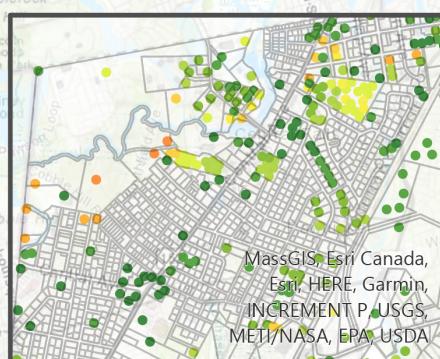
## Non-Industrial Suitability Scores



**SRPEDD**  
Southeastern Regional Planning  
& Economic Development District



0 1 Miles



Data sources: Town of Seekonk, MassGIS, SRPEDD.

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# Seekonk Industrial Suitability

## Industrial Suitability Scores

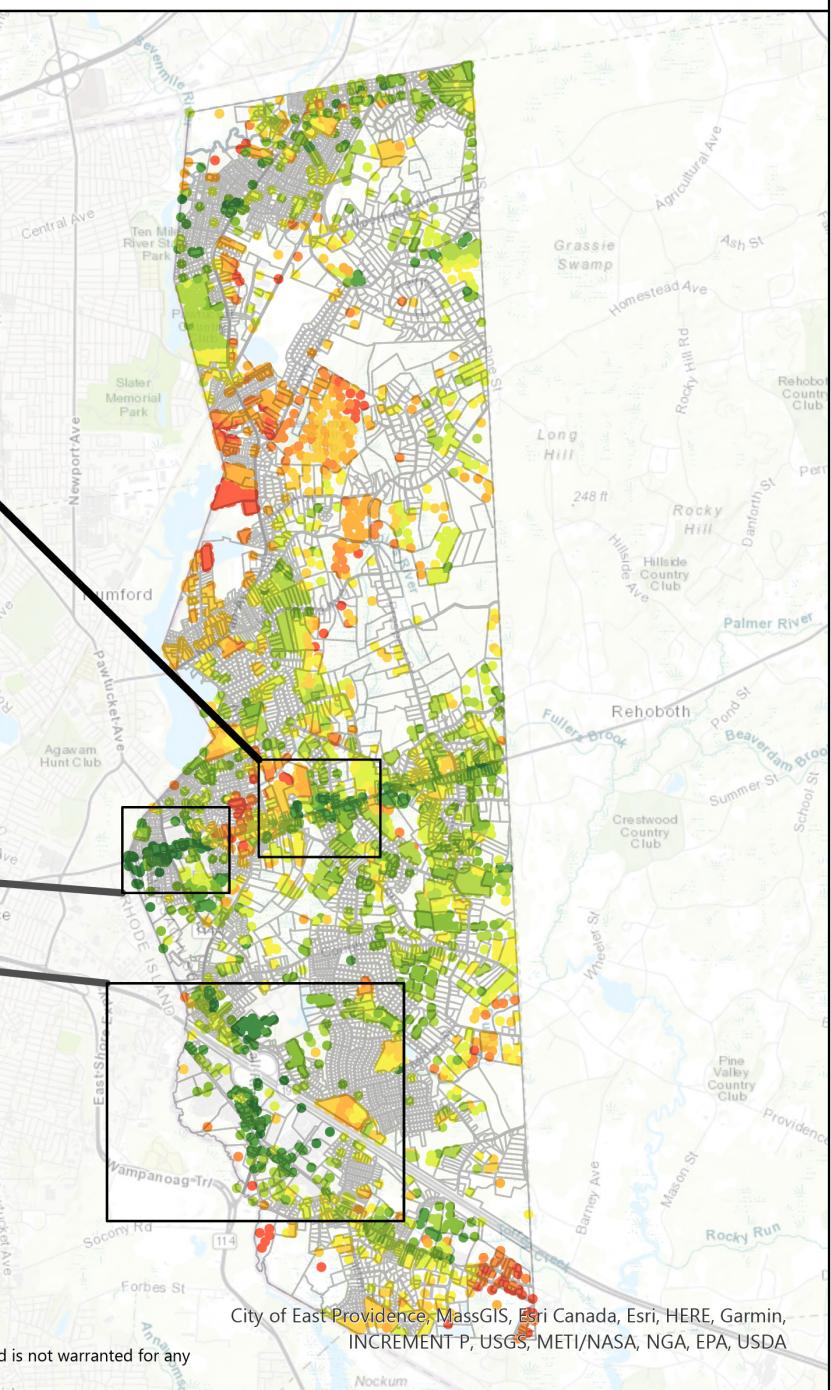
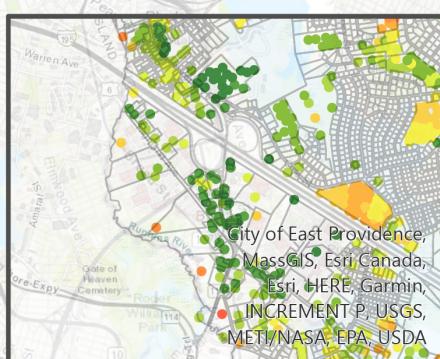
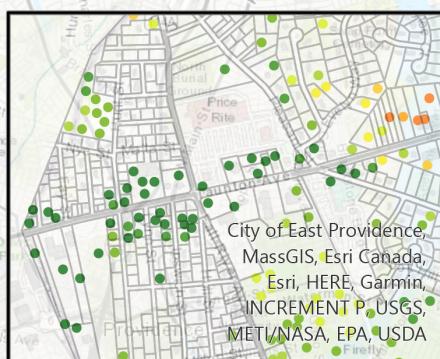
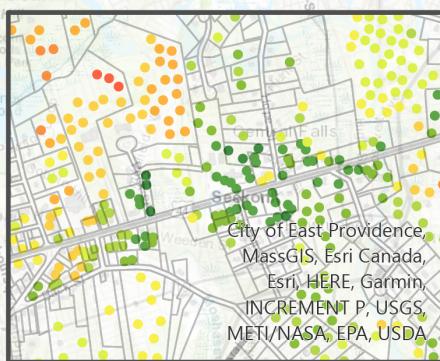
- 0 - 25
- 26 - 39
- 40 - 50
- 51 - 58
- 59 - 66
- 67 - 72
- 73 - 78
- 79 - 83
- 84 - 90
- 91 - 100



SRPEDD  
Southeastern Regional Planning  
& Economic Development District



Miles  
0 1 2



Data sources: Town of Seekonk, MassGIS, SRPEDD.

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City of East Providence, MassGIS, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin,  
INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, NGA, EPA, USDA

- Being within an aquifer, habitat area, or prime farmland
- Having existing recent and high-value development on that parcel

The model begins with the supply phase. Here we ask the question, "How much growth is technically possible in town?" This step figures out how much growth is technically possible (meaning "could occur given the all the physical constraints and zoning requirements"). Here, the model places buildings given these constraints and calculates how much commercial (seen here in red) and residential square footage (seen here in yellow) is possible. We then go back and remove square footage in areas of town we know growth is unlikely (e.g., on land-locked parcels) or impossible (both seen here in gray).

Under Seekonk's current zoning its technically possible for 3,510 new dwelling units and 28,867,458 square feet of new commercial developments to be built. This is what's possible but not what's probable, so we use suitability to better estimate how much growth may actually occur on the ground.

During the suitability phase, each potential building now receives a score of 0-100 based on our suitability factors. Now that we know where growth is technically possible, we can ask the question, "Is this area in high demand (and therefore likely to attract growth)?" Our suitability factors described above help carve out exactly what "high demand" means, but in essence it is measured using an aggregate of all the important town-wide amenities, environmental considerations, and development constraints.

Most of Seekonk is suitable for new development, but there are areas most likely to attract growth

first. These areas appear on the map in the deepest green – Baker's Corner, Luther's Corner, and areas along major roadways, including the northern portion of Route 152 and most of Route 44 and Route 6.

Finally, we use these supply and demand estimates to predict growth. The last step, "Allocation," combines current statistics about population and employment in Seekonk with growth projections and our "supply" and "demand" steps. The result is an estimate of how much growth (measured by the number of dwelling units for residential and jobs for commercial) may occur in town and where.

In Seekonk, we allocated 1,249 dwelling units and 19 jobs for the "business as usual" scenario. These projections are based on estimates from UMass Donahue and MassDOT and may not represent what occurs in the next 20 years.

We also ran three "scenarios" describing how outcomes may shift given different futures in Town, for example, if new zoning regulations are put in place or more growth occurs. The scenarios are:

1. **Route 6 Mixed-Use Scenario:** What if the western part of Route 6 allowed mixed-use (where 75% of potential commercial floor area was converted to dwelling units)? This adjusts the Build-Out (Supply side) by shifting the amount and mix of available growth. This does not explore the Allocation of growth.
2. **Baker's Corner New Zoning Scenario:** What if Baker's Corner (currently zoned "LB – Local Business") was re-zoned with the same parameters as the Luther's Corner Village District? This adjusts the Build-Out (Supply side) by shifting the amount and mix of available growth. This does not explore the Allocation of growth.

3. High Residential Growth Scenario: What if we allocated an additional 332 dwelling units (representing the 14% growth/decade observed via the Census housing unit counts; +26.5% from the BAU residential allocation)? This Scenario leaves the Supply side unchanged; rather, it imagines where development might occur if Seekonk grows more than expected.

Base Model (BAU, Townwide) Scenario		
	Technically Feasible	Allocated
Dwelling Units (Adjusted)	3,510	1,249
Commercial Square Footage (Adjusted)	28,867,458	19 jobs
Route 6 Scenario		
	Technically Feasible	Allocated
<b>BAU</b>		
Dwelling Units (Adjusted)	4	-
Commercial Square Footage (Adjusted)	2,446,294	-
<b>Scenario</b>		
Dwelling Units (Adjusted)	2,982	-
Commercial Square Footage (Adjusted)	2,258,153	-
Baker's Corner Scenario		
	Technically Feasible	Allocated
<b>BAU</b>		
Dwelling Units (Adjusted)	0	-
Commercial Square Footage (Adjusted)	666,549	-
<b>Scenario</b>		
Dwelling Units (Adjusted)	2,369	-
Commercial Square Footage (Adjusted)	1,595,322	-
High Residential Growth Scenario		
	Technically Feasible	Allocated
<b>BAU</b>		
Dwelling Units (Adjusted)	-	1,249
<b>Scenario</b>		
Dwelling Units (Adjusted)	-	1,591

\*Note - there's a high UPA in this district of 4.3 UPA and a min lot size of 10,000 sqft. Some combination of this is likely contributing to the similar amount of commercial sqftge as seen in the BAU scenario.

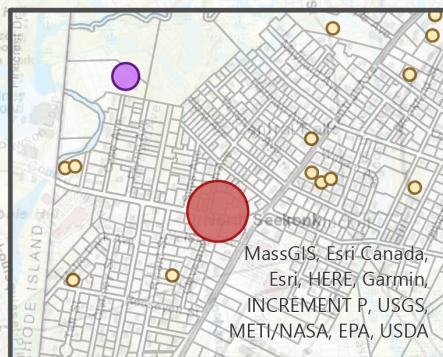
# Seekonk Residential and Commercial Growth



- 1 dwelling unit
- 10 dwelling units
- 50 dwelling units
- 100 dwelling units

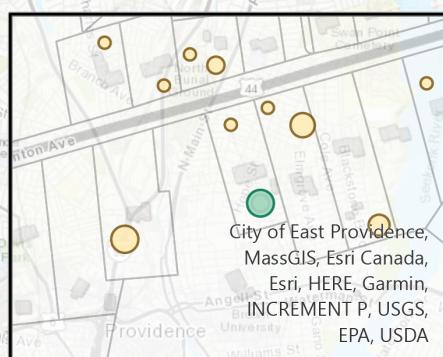


0 1 Miles

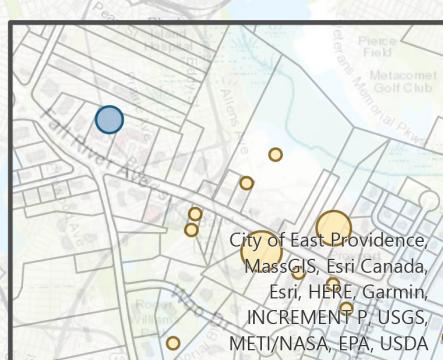


3 Industrial Jobs

9 Retail Jobs



3 Service Jobs



3 Office Jobs

Data sources: Town of Seekonk, MassGIS, UMass Donahue, SRPEDD.

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City of East Providence, MassGIS, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, NGA, EPA, USDA

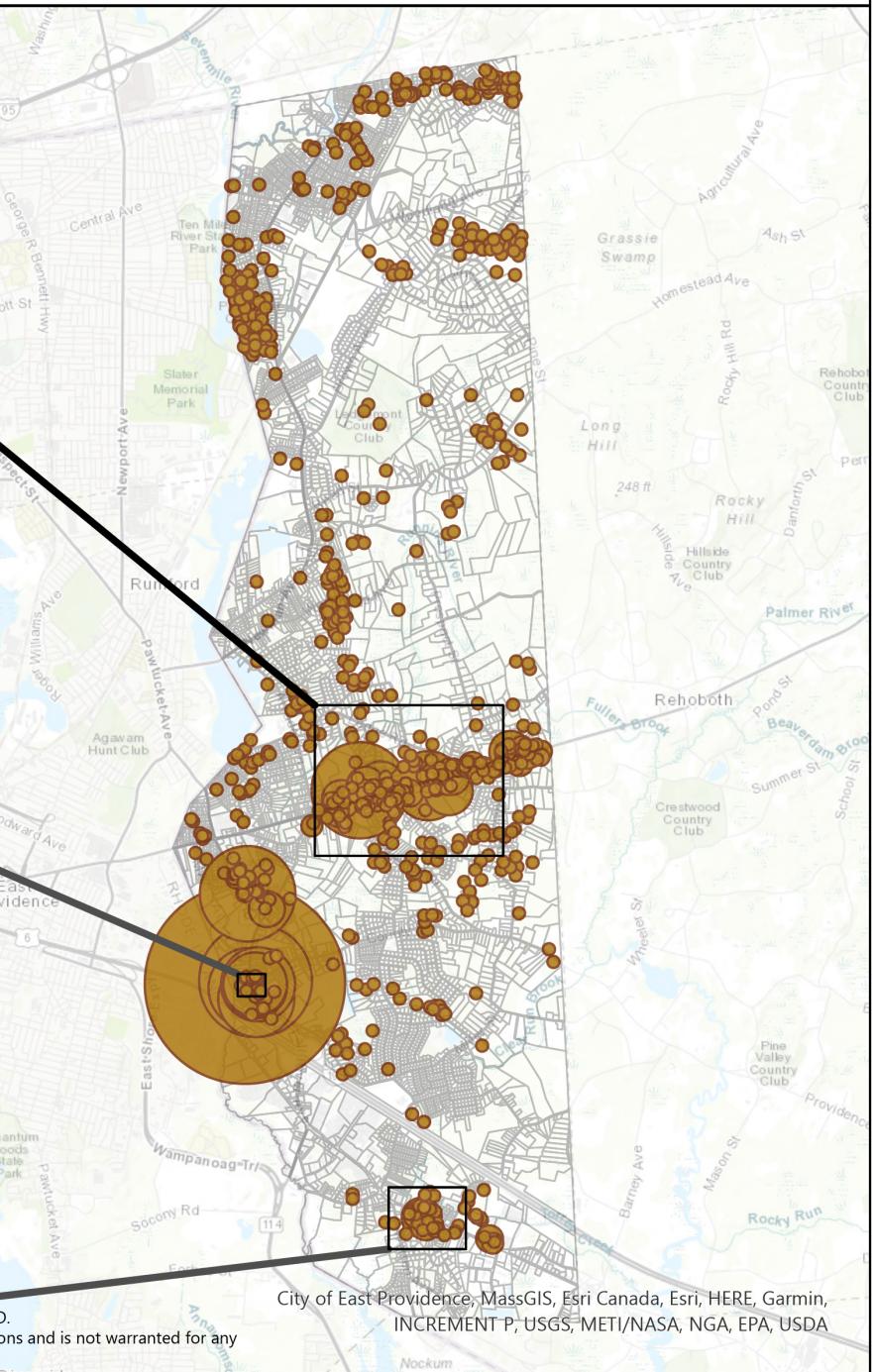
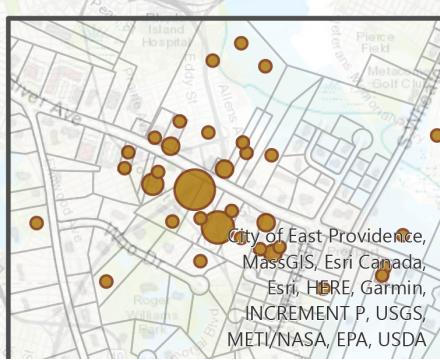
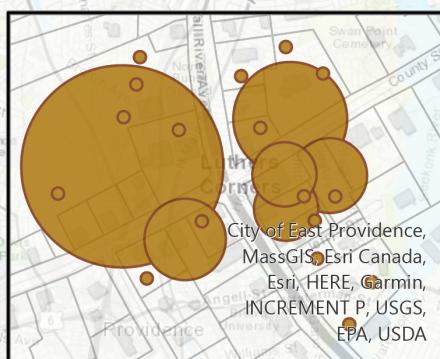
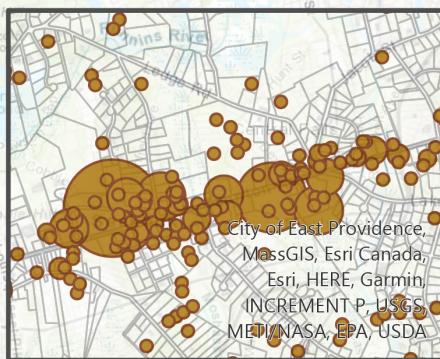
# Seekonk High Residential Growth Scenario



- 1 dwelling unit
- 10 dwelling units
- 50 dwelling units
- 100 dwelling units



0 1 Miles



Data sources: Town of Seekonk, MassGIS, UMass Donahue, SRPEDD.

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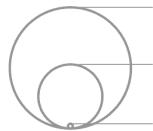
# Seekonk Mixed-Use Route 6 Scenario



## Total Potential Capacity



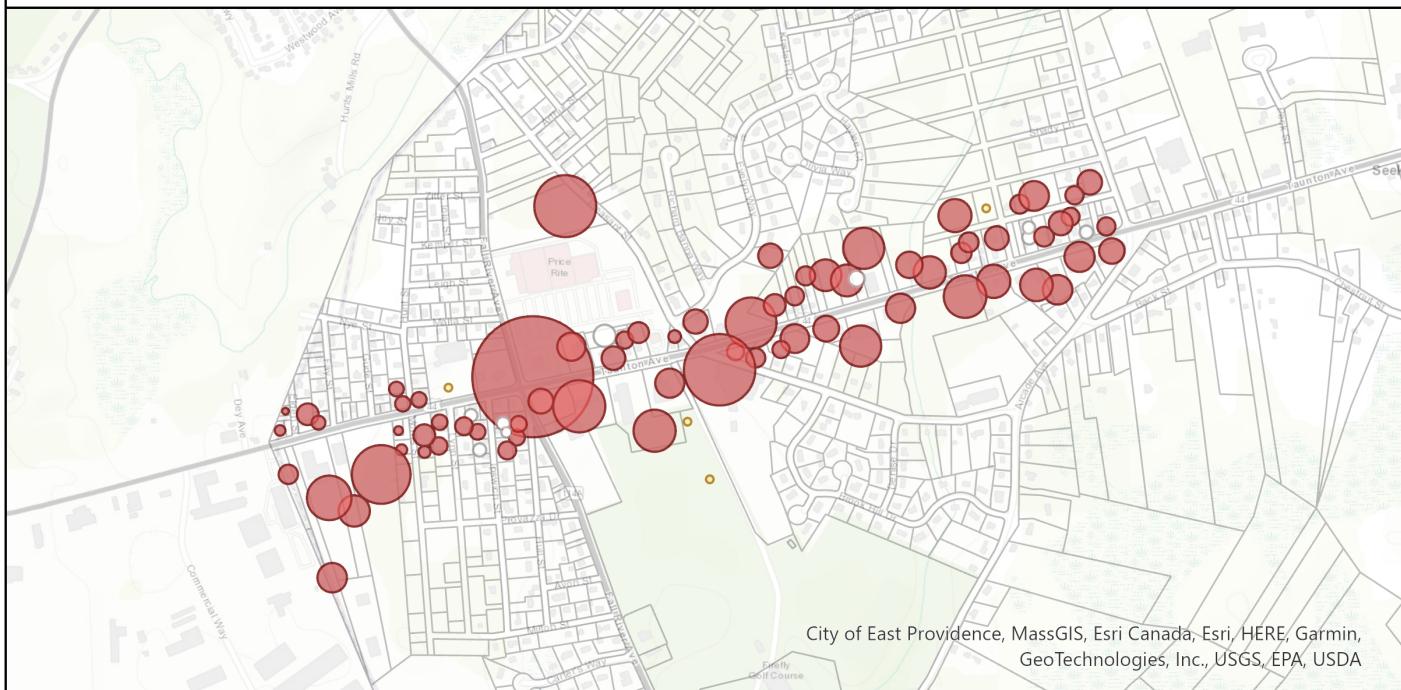
Commercial Capacity  
Residential Capacity  
Removed Capacity



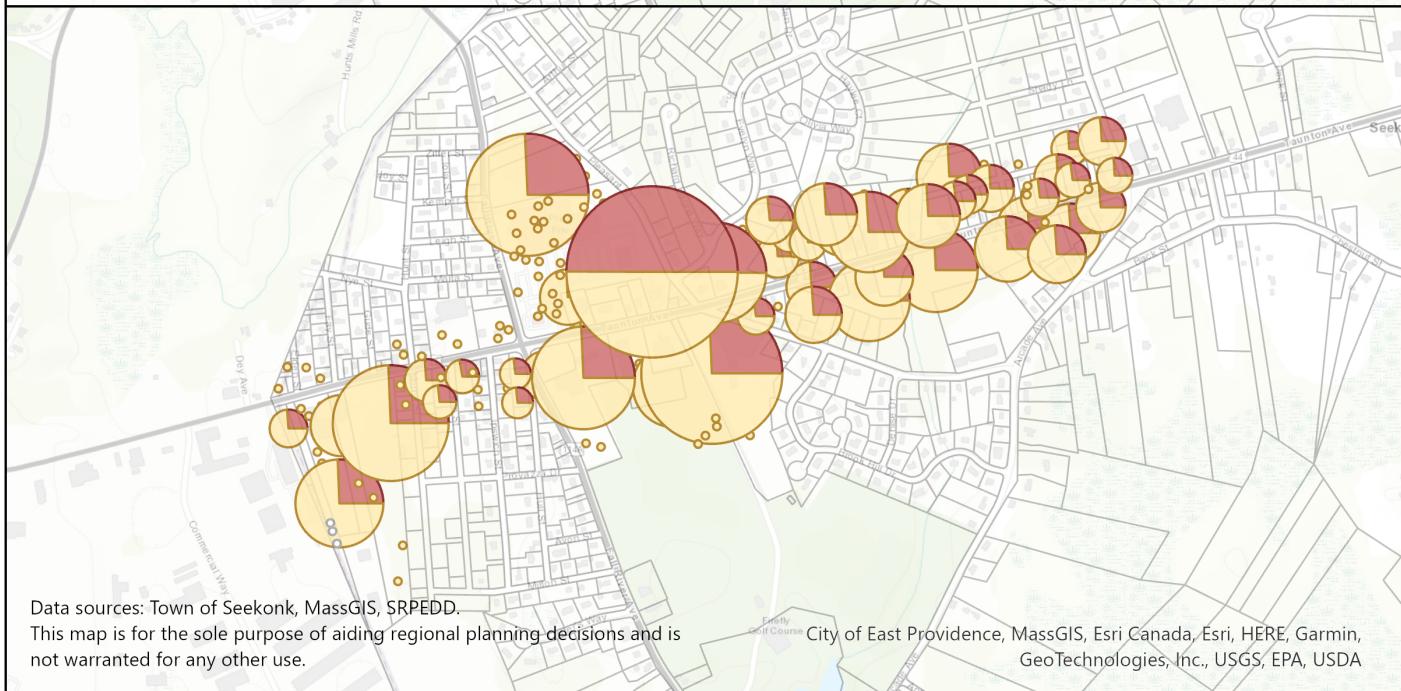
500,000  
140,000  
800



0 Miles  
0.17 Miles  
0.35 Miles



City of East Providence, MassGIS, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, EPA, USDA



# Seekonk Baker's Corner Re-zoning to LCVD



## Total Potential Capacity

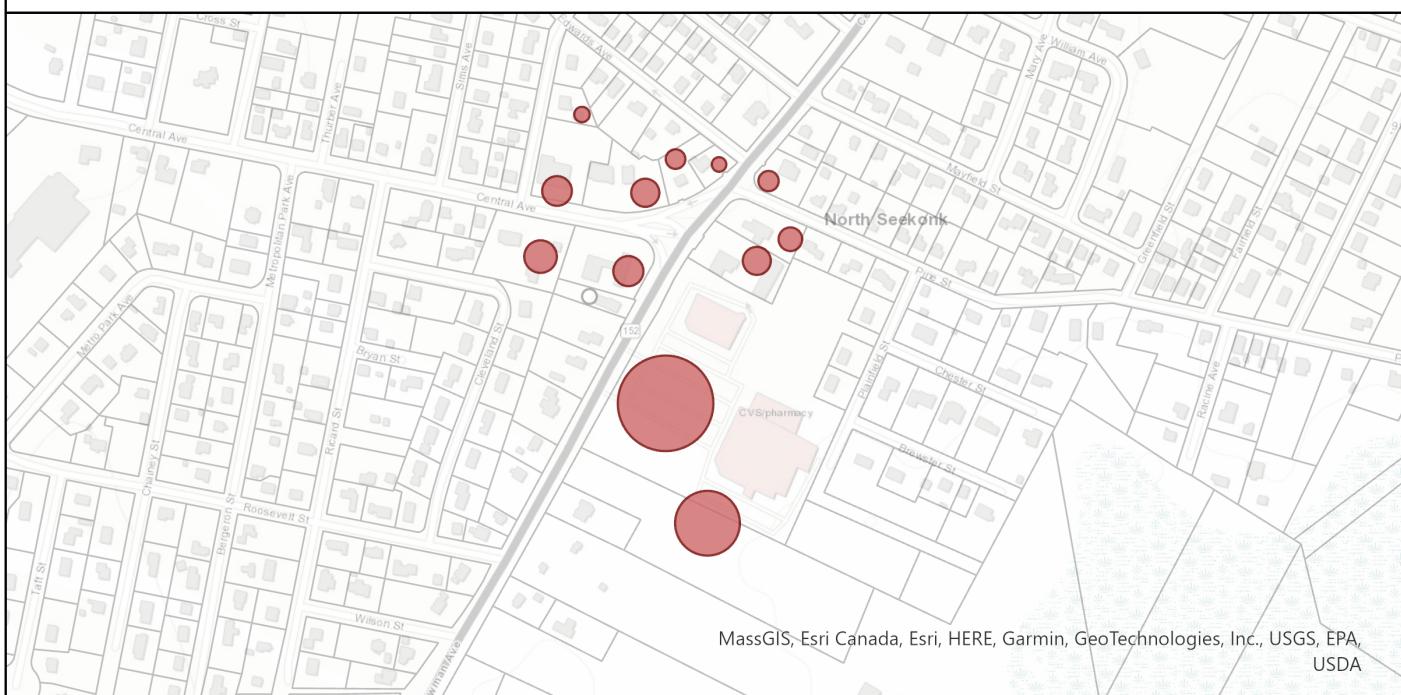


- Commercial Capacity
- Residential Capacity
- Removed Capacity

500,000  
140,000  
800



0 0.07 0.15 Miles



## APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the process of writing this Master Plan element, SRPEDD has kept the community involved in the process. The project team attended two planning board meetings that were broadcast on the cable access channels in Seekonk.

The first meeting was on September 28, 2021 at the Planning Board meeting, where the project team introduced the project and asked for feedback from the public in the form of comment cards or participation in an online mapping activity. We received 20 comments between the two methods. The image below shows the online mapping activity.

The second meeting was on November 23, 2021, at the Planning Board Meeting. During the meeting, the project team went over the goals and strategies

for the plan; the goals and strategies came from conversations with the Planning Board, the Town Planner, the public input, and previous plans. After going over the outline of the plan, with the Planning Board's help we prioritized each of the goals and strategies as seen in this plan.

