



# MANCHESTER MASTER PLAN

A Stronger Manchester Starts With Us



December 2019

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## 1. Introduction

### A message from the Planning Board

The Manchester Planning Board is pleased to present this Comprehensive Master Plan for the Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea. The Master Plan serves as a guide for the Town as it manages and improves existing assets, preserves character and natural resources, and directs future growth. The Plan informs our priorities for how the Town spends taxpayer money to provide for facilities, services, and support for our community. The Master Plan will be integrated into the decision-making process to ensure all policy, project and budgeting decisions align with the priorities identified by the community.

This Master Plan is the result of a lengthy community engagement process that included residents, Town Department and Staff, Boards and Committees, business interests, community organizations and subject matter experts. While there was robust and enthusiastic participation, the engagement process itself revealed additional challenges in process and communication, leading to the commitment that the Master Plan be a tool that changes how the Town conducts business.

We thank everyone involved in this effort for their time and contributions and we encourage everyone to continue to be involved and to recruit friends and neighbors to also be involved. A stronger Manchester starts with us, ALL of us.

Now with a clear Vision and a detailed Master Plan, we are excited to move forward into Implementation to responsibly manage change and thoughtfully guide growth so that Manchester-by-the-Sea can thrive and remain a special place of character, spirit and beauty for generations to come.

### A message from the Master Plan Committee

The initial goal in developing this Master Plan was to engage in an open and interactive dialogue with as broad a segment of the community as possible to assess the current state of the community, to articulate a Community Vision of the future of MBTS, and to address important ideas and issues the Town will be confronting in the near future in the following specific areas:

1. Land Use
2. Housing
3. Economic Development
4. Transportation
5. Public Facilities and Services
6. Open Space and Recreation
7. Natural and Historic Resources
8. Resiliency
9. Governance

The next goal was to develop a Plan that provides specific and practical recommendations for how we as a community could collectively progress towards this Community Vision over the next ten to twenty years through regulatory changes, land use policies, budgetary and capital planning, and prioritizing initiatives including preservation, development and re-development opportunities within Manchester-by-the-Sea.

We appreciate the time and thought that a broad cross-section of our community put into providing insight and feedback into the current state and vision for the future, and feel confident that this Master Plan reflects this input and honors our shared values.

We begin in a great place. Manchester residents love where they live. Throughout the planning process they shared their appreciation for the beauty of Manchester, and for the quality of life that in part can be attributed to the town's beloved natural landscapes – its dramatic shoreline, beaches, and woodlands. The town's schools are also highly valued. As a focal point for students and their immediate and extended families, there is no other single public facility and service that can make as profound an impact on the town's families, economy and future. Manchester's Downtown is another highly valued asset. Not only is it the center of commerce and governance, it retains its original settlement pattern with businesses and public facilities knit tightly together with residential neighborhoods; it is rich with historic architecture and is framed by our beautiful harbor.

That said, we recognize our town is not without its challenges. Years of deferred maintenance has put our public infrastructure including water and sewer systems, roads, sidewalks, seawalls and public buildings at risk. In addition the lack of housing diversity in town creates real challenges for many of our residents. Older residents are struggling to find housing options that will allow them to remain in Manchester as they age while single householders and young families struggle to afford even a modest home.

This committee, and we believe our community as a whole, struggles to reconcile some of the elements of our Community Vision:

- To preserve the unique character of Manchester-by-the-Sea and protect our natural resources;
- To support more housing choices for varying income levels and to allow community members to 'age in place'; and
- To attract and retain diverse businesses in town.

The recommendations of this Master Plan are an attempt to recognize and reconcile these views, and focus on near and long term opportunities and strategies to bring about our Community Vision.

## 2. Community Vision

*A clear and compelling Vision for the future that comes from the hearts and minds of community members is the foundation of an effective Master Plan.*

Manchester's Community Vision is a picture that the town has painted of its future; it is an inspiration with a focus on what is possible. This picture comes from the shared values articulated by hundreds of residents and community stakeholders that took part in the Master Plan visioning process.

**In 2027, Manchester-by-the Sea embodies the character, beauty and resilience of a small New England town.**

- Our **fiscally responsible and transparent government** manages growth and development to honor the town's authentic character and **balances revenues to sustain public services and infrastructure**.
- Accessible open space and well-managed green spaces, harbor, shoreline, and beaches reflect the town's long-term commitment to its **natural resources**.
- Balanced and **diverse housing options**, a **strong local economy**, **walkable neighborhoods**, a **dynamic downtown**, and an **exceptional public school system** are the foundation that we have built for our **healthy community**.
- Respect for the ideas and contributions of residents, volunteers, and town employees is a fundamental principle for **working together** and sustaining **community spirit**.

### a) Guiding Principles

*Principles represent a broad philosophy intended as a guide in all circumstances.*

This Plan's Guiding Principles are the product of community input provided by over two years of public meetings, working groups, forums and surveys. These Principles require that recommendations:

- Responsibly balance the cost of necessary infrastructure and facilities improvements and maintenance and the provision of desired services with funding sources that exist or can be developed.
- Preserve Manchester's small town character and natural environment by recommending growth of a size, type and density compatible with the community and only in areas determined to be appropriate.
- Focus on change that will strengthen the local economy, improve community health, and increase inclusivity, resiliency, sense of place and community spirit.
- Support citizens of all ages and life stages by encouraging safe, assessable and appropriate housing, transportation and mobility choices, and other public and private services.

## **b) Recommendations**

*While the foundation of the 2018 Manchester Comprehensive Master Plan is the Community Vision that documents a desired future, the heart of the plan is the set of recommendations that creates an action plan designed to bring the Vision to reality.*

### **Summary**

This Master Plan attempts to reconcile continued protection of the town's unique character and natural resources with recommended departures from the status quo to achieve the town's Community Vision. Because change is more difficult than maintaining the status quo, we first present two priority recommendations of change that support the Master Plan's primary goals.

- Increasing Town revenue through planned development within the Limited Commercial District and through incremental growth Downtown; and
- Supporting a diversity of housing options throughout town.

Other recommendations focus on:

- Protecting and preserving the town's natural resources and community character;
- Caring for the town's public facilities and offering services consistent with needs and available funding;
- Improving transportation and circulation throughout the town for all modes of travel and all ages and abilities of travelers;
- Addressing the present and projected impacts of climate change to assure resiliency and sustainability; and
- Improving how we work together to fairly and effectively self-govern.

The full set of Master Plan recommendations is organized by the recommendation's relationship to the Community Vision. Each recommendation in this section is supported by a brief explanation of intent and further directions or information as needed.

These Master Plan goals and recommendations should be the focus of the Town's efforts going forward. Recommendations are intended to be addressed in the normal course of business by departments, boards, and committees, and by special initiatives that may require Town Meeting approval for funding, land regulation, disposition or other actions.

## Increase Town Revenue through Planned Development within the Limited Commercial District (LCD) and through incremental growth Downtown

### *Why is this recommendation a priority?*

- Greater Town revenues are needed to maintain public infrastructure and facilities
  - Over \$45 Million in public infrastructure and facilities (excluding school buildings) needs over the next 15 years have been identified
    - ~80% of water and sewer lines are 50 years or older
    - Current spending on capital improvements is approximately \$1.8million a year; a minimum of \$3 million a year is needed
- Around 95% of existing revenues are drawn from residential taxes and are not sufficient to maintain or replace as needed current infrastructure or achieve desired goals
  - Property taxes accounted for about 95% of Town Revenues in fiscal 2017
    - Of the \$26.5 Million collected in annual property taxes only 4.5% (\$1.2 M) come from industrial/commercial uses
- Over 30% of land in town is permanently protected, providing abundant passive recreational opportunities, preserving habitat, protecting ground and surface waters, and contributing to the town's character
- Less than 8% of land in the community is dedicated to commercial or industrial uses

### *What can we do?*

- There is an opportunity to increase commercial tax revenues through deliberate and carefully planned development
  - Several million dollars a year in new Town revenues could be possible from development in the Limited Commercial District and Downtown
    - Opportunity exists in the LCD for expanded commercial and new residential development to meet community needs
      - Town-owned Parcels
      - Large land-owners interested in developing in coordination with town goals and guidelines
    - Opportunity for incremental growth Downtown that would:
      - Maintain New England, coastal, small village character
      - Mix housing with retail/office/service uses
- We have a chance to PLAN FIRST
  - Agree on uses, density, and character that meets community and landowner needs
  - Ensure overall preservation and reinforcement of community character and natural resources
  - Allow for flexibility to respond to the town's changing needs
  - Utilize a development agreement to document agreed upon actions.
  - Create zoning and regulations to support development

## *Recommendations*

- ED – 1      Develop and implement a strategic plan for the Limited Commercial District (LCD) to allow commercial and residential opportunities capable of producing increased tax revenues. (see page #)
  
- ED – 2      Consider Revising zoning in the General District to permit more commercial and residential opportunities Downtown in a manner sympathetic to existing character. (see page #)
  
- LU – 1      Adopt a Town Character Statement and Design Guidelines to identify the town’s endearing and valued characteristics and offer strategies to ensure that new development is consistent with town character. (see page #)
  
- LU – 2      Adopt land use regulations that require new projects to mitigate development impacts on critical resources. (see page #)
  
- T&C – 5     Undertake a professionally led comprehensive Parking Study to identify and recommend preferred solutions to parking challenges . (see page #)
  
  
- PF&S – 1:   Develop a long term plan and identify funding opportunities for all public facilities (both Town and Regional School District) and infrastructure systems. Inventory, map, assess and create Operating and Capital Plans for all public assets. (see page #)

## Support a Diversity of Housing Options throughout Town

### Why is this recommendation a priority?

- Town population and housing supply have been generally stable since the 90's
  - Population has grown less than 1% in last 20 years. 1997 – 5,623; 2017 – 5,666
- Home size, number of rooms per home, and home prices are growing; with home prices among the highest in the State
  - 61% of all households in Manchester are 1 – 2 person , yet only 23% of all houses are small in size having less than 6 rooms
  - Less than 3% of households have more than 5 persons, yet over 45% of houses have 8 or more rooms
  - The median sale price of a single family home is \$900,000
  - Manchester's Housing Stock (2018)

• Single family	• 83.5%	• 1783
• 2-family	• 8.8%	• 188
• 3-4 units	• 3.8%	• 82
• 5+ units	• 3.8%	• 82

- Only 10 single family homes in Manchester are assessed for less than \$300,000
- 90% of all homes in Manchester are assessed at more than \$500,000, with 28% assessed at more than \$1,000,000
- Only one subsidized home ownership opportunity has been available since 2005; within 2 weeks of being announced as available, over 30 respondents indicated they were qualified and interested
  - Residents 65 and over are the fastest growing segment of the population
    - Close to 30% of residents are over the age of 65 and this number is growing
  - Affordable rental options are primarily 1 & 2 BR units with 0% vacancy
  - More housing options are needed for all life stages & household sizes
    - Affordable rentals and ownership options for beginning householders, elders and families
    - Market rate rental and ownership options for downsizing (smaller, designed for aging in place, lower maintenance)
    - Assisted and Supportive living units that provide services from independent to full care

### What can we do?

- We have an opportunity to help create diverse housing scaled to fit well into the town's varied neighborhoods.
- Adopt zoning bylaws that preserve and promote smaller scaled housing
- Redevelop existing MHA housing sites
- Build our municipal capacity to address housing issues

## *Recommendations*

- H – 1: Modify zoning to encourage housing of the size, style, and prices appropriate for downsizing households, elders, young families, singles, and couples (including as part of Downtown development). (see page #)
  
- H – 2: Increase and integrate housing that is affordable to households at or below 80% Area Medium Income (AMI) with mixed-income ownership and rental options. (see page #)

**The full set of Master Plan recommendations that follow are organized by their relationship to the Community Vision.**

## Character and Resiliency

**In 2027, Manchester-by-the-Sea embodies the character, beauty and resilience of a small New England town**

*Maintaining the character and beauty of Manchester-by-the-Sea and assuring resiliency in light of environmental, economic and other changes are top priorities for residents and must be primary considerations when undertaking any action.*

## Character and Resiliency

***Community members are clear that they love the character and beauty of the town they call home. Hundreds of comments shared at public forums and through the community surveys called for protection of the town's character. The following recommended actions are intended to protect both the built and natural characteristics of Manchester to assure it remains a beautiful small New England town.***

**LU – 1: Adopt a Town Character Statement and Design Guidelines to identify the town's endearing and valued characteristics and offer strategies to ensure that development is consistent with town character.**

The Manchester-by-the-Sea Town Character Statement (TCS) would describe the distinctive qualities and characteristics of the town's natural environment, the built form of our community and the land development patterns that are important to town character. These qualities and characteristics would be documented with images and text and provide the basis for a set of non-binding design guidelines that encourage renovation and development sensitive to Manchester's character. The goal is not to mandate uniformity or discourage diversity since diversity contributes significantly to the charm of the town we enjoy today, but rather provide guidelines that encourage development consistent with the town's character.

**LU – 2: Adopt land use regulations that require new projects to mitigate development impacts on critical resources.**

Low Impact Development (LID) or similar regulations are effective tools to help protect the town's natural resources and character while allowing a site to be developed. LID is an approach to land development that seeks to maintain hydrologic processes of infiltration, filtration, storage, evaporation and transpiration by emphasizing conservation, use of on-site natural features, site planning and distributed stormwater management practices that are

integrated into a project's design. Regulations would focus on key LID principles including:

- Conserving vegetation,
- Protecting healthy soils,
- Reducing and disconnecting impervious surfaces, and
- Infiltrating runoff on site.

**LU – 3: Create policies and procedures that assure town character is considered when proposing a physical change to public facilities, infrastructure, land and resources.**

Permitting regulations including the Town's Zoning Bylaws, Historic District Regulations and Wetland Bylaws and Regulations, among others are considered vital for helping our town maintain its historic, natural or community character. Some changes, however, that do not require permitting, may still have an impact on community character, such as changes to streets and sidewalks, conservation lands, parks and public facilities. It's important that community members have an opportunity to help identify and assess the potential impact of proposed changes to these assets and offer guidance to town decision makers. Departments, Boards and Committees should create policies and procedures to encourage community involvement in guiding decisions that may have an impact on the town's historic, natural and community character.

**LU – 4: Develop a framework for assessing Town-owned land.**

Land uses should be informed by the land's physical attributes including existing use and conditions, resources, location, surrounding uses, access, available utilities and other attributes. The Town of Manchester owns many land parcels, including some with existing facilities, some held for specific uses, and some without a current or proposed future use.

Recent and continuing research is finding that Manchester owns many properties in the western woods, historically referred to as The Commons that had not previously been identified in the Town's records as municipally owned. Given the town has multiple land needs including recreational fields, housing, public facilities, resource protection and potentially cemetery space, it is important to understand the potential for such uses.

A land assessment framework would identify a Policy and Procedure for assessing Town-owned land prior to making a decision on how land should be used. It would outline attributes to be assessed, a ranking procedure, and public communication and engagement recommendations. The assessment could be performed by an appointed committee with the needed expertise, or by a qualified consultant secured as needed.

**LU – 5: Undertake a full Zoning Bylaw review and revision.**

Manchester's original Zoning Bylaw and map was adopted in the spring of 1945. In 1978, after 35 years of additions and revisions, the Bylaw was re-codified and reorganized to provide a more cohesive framework for the regulations. In the

forty years since this reorganization, over 80 changes have been made ranging from adding and changing definitions, dimensional requirements, and uses to adding entirely new sections to allow, prohibit or condition new development. Manchester's Zoning Bylaw today includes regulations based on past, present and sometimes conflicting goals. A full Zoning Bylaw review and revision would allow the Town an opportunity to make the regulations easier to understand, administer and enforce, and align zoning regulations with current land use goals, best practices and municipal capacity.

A full Zoning Bylaw review and revision is a multi-year endeavor involving the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Town staff, and technical advisors to audit and draft new or update existing bylaws. It would include a robust public process culminating in a Town Meeting vote. Because a full review and revision is a lengthy process, a number of zoning revisions are recommended for immediate action, beginning with recodification. These targeted revisions do not reduce the need for the complete review but would allow the Town to begin working on critical goals while taking the time needed for the full revision.

**R – 1: Review and update Town strategies, policies, Zoning and General Bylaws and capital plans for consistency with climate resiliency and climate change improvements on a five year basis to coincide with the renewal of the Town's federally mandated natural hazard mitigation planning process.**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires state, tribal, and local governments to develop and adopt hazard mitigation plans as a condition for receiving certain types of non-emergency disaster assistance, including funding for mitigation projects. Jurisdictions must update their hazard mitigation plans and re-submit them for FEMA approval every five years to maintain eligibility. The Town should use this opportunity to review and update all associated strategies, policies, bylaws and capital plans to reflect current climate change projections and up-to-date best practices.

**R – 2: Implement the recommended actions of the 2018 Manchester-by-the-Sea Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP).**

The goal of the HMP's recommended actions is to reduce the town's vulnerability to hazards including flooding, dam and culvert failure, coastal erosion, severe weather, wildfire and others. While many are equipment and education related, other key recommendations include:

- a) Design, permit and fund Central Street culvert replacement, tide gate removal and restoration of Central Street Pond and Sawmill Brook to School Street.
- b) Evaluate and implement flood proofing mitigation measures for Town Hall and Emergency Operations including the Fire Station and improve Fire Department parking drainage.

- c) Develop costs, prioritize and implement stormwater harbor outfall retrofits.
- d) Continue to discuss benefits of harbor surge barrier as an aggressive mitigation effort to prevent flooding in Downtown.
- e) Actively manage Town beaches in consideration of climate change impacts.
  - o Monitor shoreline changes, and evaluate shoreline restoration techniques including beach nourishment or off-shore breakwaters to reduce the wave energy impacting beaches (Sediment Transport Management Plan).
  - o Continue to monitor seawall conditions and if future repairs are needed include sea level rise in the design.
  - o Evaluate parking lot retrofit at Singing Beach to improve stormwater drainage such as a porous pavement design to promote infiltration and improve water quality.

- f) Implement Sawmill Brook improvement projects identified in the 2016 Sawmill Brook Culvert and Green Infrastructure Analysis.

Eight projects were identified by the 2016 Sawmill Brook study aimed at reducing flooding and improving water quality and habitat in and along Sawmill Brook. Because Sawmill Brook provides drainage for a majority of the land area in town, flooding of the Brook impacts many areas and resources from just south of Route 128 to Central Pond and the Central Street Tide Gate where it empties into Manchester Harbor. Most projects focus on widening culverts with others focusing on increasing flood storage capacity, improving habitat, improving water quality and minimizing wave impacts.

Project locations are Central Street, School Street, Norwood Avenue, Lincoln Street, Old School Street, Coach Field Parking Lot, Essex County Golf Course, and Manchester Harbor.

- g) Advocate for the State to conduct a comprehensive drainage survey and feasibility evaluation for roadway retrofits for flood risk locations along Route 127.

The 2016 Vulnerability and Risk Assessment undertaken to update the Town's FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plan identified five flood risk locations along Route 127: at Chubb Creek, Bennett Brook, Causeway Brook, Causeway Brook Branch and Raymond Street. Flooding of Route 127 could cause the road to become impassable and impact emergency service response times. In addition to the immediate impact of flood waters, there is also the risk that flooding will result in physical damage to roadway infrastructure, cause erosion and degrade waterways. Retrofit projects might include installation of duck bill valves on exposed outfalls, elevation of roadways, resized drainage components and increased inspection and maintenance of drainage systems and physical barriers.

The Town should look to communicate and coordinate with the MASS Department of Transportation as Route 127 is a state maintained roadway as well as the MBTA as the railroad tracks are also at risk.

**R – 3: Assess low lying areas and resources in light of rising sea level, to understand impacts to residential structures, roads, culverts and seawalls and create plans to mitigate.**

With the number of storm events due to climate change increasing and sea level projected to rise, it is important for the Town to understand the potential impact to low lying areas and resources and identify viable options for addressing the risks.

The Downtown business area is especially vulnerable to coastal storms, located almost exclusively within the 100 year floodplain.

**OS&R - 4: Create and fund Maintenance and Management Plans for all Town-owned open spaces and conservations lands.**

The Town should begin a process to assess open space and conservation lands on a regular basis to identify opportunities for improving management and maintenance. Following the assessment the Town should create a plan for improved management and maintenance including addressing such things as recreational uses, vegetation management, water quality, access, trails and cost of management and maintenance.

**N&CR – 1: Protect lands critical to water supply, biodiversity and community character.**

The Town should identify land parcels that are important for resource protection, biodiversity and community character and initiate steps to protect them. Steps could include purchase, deed restrictions, zoning regulations, management agreements, best management practices (including Low Impact Development regulations) and others. The interior lands of Essex County Club that provide flood storage and help protect water quality and lands of high resource value within the Gravelly Pond watershed are two such areas that have been identified as important to protect.

**N&CR – 2: Identify opportunities to increase accessible physical and visual access to the Harbor and shoreline.**

Manchester-by-the-Sea's shoreline, a combination of natural and cultural resources, is the town's defining characteristic. From its beaches to rocky perches, to its islands, aquatic habitat and the marine life it supports, to iconic parks and venues of grand estates, the shoreline appears ageless, yet it is vulnerable to the forces of man and nature. The Town must do all it can to protect, preserve and celebrate the natural and cultural value of its shoreline,

including increasing opportunities for public access and visual connectivity. Opportunities for increasing access include:

- a) A harborwalk wherever feasible on public land or via easements on private lands
- b) Park improvements at Tuck's Point, Masconomo Park and Reed Park to address climate change impacts and improve access and/or operations including increased and/or improved kayak, paddle board, and boat ramps
- c) Improved beach and shoreline infrastructure
- d) Design considerations to improve visual access wherever feasible

## **Governance and Balanced Spending**

*Our fiscally responsible and transparent Government manages growth and development to honor the town's authentic character and balance revenues to sustain public services and infrastructure.*

*It is important that Government (elected leaders, boards and committee members and Town staff) work with the community and come to agreement on strategies for balancing spending with revenues.*

### **Fiscally responsible and transparent Government**

*Throughout the Visioning and Master Plan processes, repeated input about "lack of transparency" has been received describing lack of knowledge about an issue or a failure to understand how decisions are being made, by whom, or what the final decision will be based on. In order to improve transparency, the Town should clarify the decision-making process, expand communications, improve the quality of information, and encourage thoughtful community engagement.*

*For each issue the Town should communicate:*

- *Why is an action being considered? (What's the issue?)*
- *How is the decision made? (Define the process)*
- *Who is responsible? (Who makes the decision, Who is responsible for implementation, enforcement, or maintenance?)*
- *What information is being reviewed or developed? (Technical research, data collection, community feedback)*
- *What are the costs (fiscal, social, environmental)?*
- *What is the timeline?*

#### **G – 1: Communicate Effectively**

Clear and open communication is essential to responsible and transparent government. In order to have confidence in Town government, the community must consistently have timely access to clear and accurate information for ongoing operations, as well as current issues or special projects. Clear and consistent internal communications between Departments, Boards, and Committees will increase efficiencies and minimize mistakes or delays. In order to increase effective internal and external communications, the Town could:

- a) Continue to support monthly communication from BOS to all households (e.g. monthly newsletter).
- b) Continue to explore alternative methods to engage the community, whether through flyers, message boards, e-notices, or social media.

- c) Consider quarterly notifications to remind residents of where to find information and encourage sign-ups for emergency alerts and personalized e-notices.
- d) Create a standardized internal process for Departments, Boards and Committees to distribute information to the community and each other specifying standards for content, format, and timing.
- e) Document standards for discussion of new agenda items, such as an Issue Summary, Fact Sheet, Alternatives Analysis, and Community Outreach.
- f) Whenever practical include plans, sketches and other images to provide information visually.
- g) Post as much information as feasible on the Town's website and assess regularly to assure it is easy to find.

**G – 2: Review and document Manchester's existing organizational structure**

Transparency requires that the community understand who's responsible for creating or implementing a process, who's responsible for administration and/or enforcement and who's accountable for problems or grievances.

- a) Create and share Organization Chart of Responsibilities (Elected and Appointed Officials, Paid Staff, Volunteers). Include job descriptions and mission. Note where Boards and Committees are state or federally mandated regulatory bodies, versus Committees that are advisory.
- b) Board of Selectmen should require that each Department, Board and Committee annually review and assess its mission, goals, staffing, policies, and budget and make recommendations for changes as needed. Consider including this information in the Town's Annual Report.

**G – 3: Review and document existing governance processes (By Department, Board and Committee)**

Transparency requires clarity, consistency and predictability around processes. Focus on clearly documenting existing processes. Review should note mandatory State or Federal requirements and call out redundancies or missing pieces. Documentation should also include who is responsible for creating or changing the process, and who is responsible for administration, maintenance, and enforcement.

- a) Document and diagram public processes (Step-by-Step from Permitting, Zoning Enforcement and Parking Tickets to Town Warrant Articles).
- b) Document and diagram internal processes and policies

## Balanced Spending

*Given the cost of needed capital improvements (water, sewer, seawalls, and other facilities) and the Town's strong dependence on residential taxes, a majority of the town's residents agree that the Town should support new commercial development that boosts tax revenues. This funding option was the top choice of Master Plan survey respondents with nearly double the support of other options considered.*

### **ED – 1: Develop and implement a strategic plan for the Limited Commercial District (LCD) to allow more commercial and residential opportunities capable of producing increased tax revenues.**

A strategic plan for the LCD would evaluate the development potential of buildable lands and identify the mix of land uses, scale, density and style of development determined desirable by the Town, while maintaining appropriate protection for the natural resources in the area. It would test market feasibility and revenue production potential, as well as assess anticipated impacts to traffic, housing, public facilities and services, and natural resources. The plan would also recommend appropriate zoning for the LCD. High value uses in the LCD that received community support during the master planning process included: health care, wellness, recreation and education facilities, a hotel, residential care and assisted living facilities.

- a) Convene meetings with landowners within LCD to discuss potential for synergistic/ supportive developments.
- b) Develop a Strategic Plan for LCD. Identify mix of uses, allowable square footage, cohesive site design (LID), and phasing plan
- c) Engage MassDevelopment, MassWorks and other state agencies to study utility and other infrastructure options to support development.
- d) Undertake a preliminary Community Impact Study to quantify anticipated impacts of development and identify appropriate mitigation strategies.
- e) Revise LCD Zoning to support Strategic Plan. (Requires approval by Town Meeting)
- f) If needed, adopt a Development Agreement that outlines actions the Developer and Town will take to make the project successful. (Requires approval by Town Meeting)

### **ED – 2: Consider revising zoning in the General District to generate more commercial and residential opportunities Downtown in a manner sympathetic to existing character.**

Revisions to consider for zoning in the General District should focus on encouraging appropriate development that will create a vibrant mixed-use Downtown and potentially expanding the District's boundaries. Height, mass and general scale of development would not be significantly different than what exists today. Additional Downtown uses that have received community support include Inns, Bed and Breakfast facilities, and residential uses over retail. Incremental growth consistent with existing character is desired.

- a) Convene meetings with landowners within Downtown to discuss potential and desire for change. Parking, circulation and residential options are key considerations.
- b) Consider potential climate change impacts and address in new regulations as needed.

- c) Engage Consultant to work with Planning Board, Town staff, land-owners and public to draft appropriate zoning. (Any zoning change requires approval by Town Meeting)
- d) Incorporate ADA accessibility into all opportunities.
- e) Complete Parking Study before making recommendations that would increase housing or commercial development.

**PF&S – 1: Develop a long term plan and funding opportunities for public facilities (both Town and Regional School District) and infrastructure systems. Inventory, map, assess and create Operating and Capital Plans for all public assets.**

A clear maintenance and management strategy for all public structures, systems and facilities should be in place to sustain the assets and to support operating and capital budget requests. They should include short and long term mitigation strategies to address climate change impacts and as appropriate include measures to improve energy efficiency. Identifying capital funding sources beyond municipal funds often requires applications well in advance of the anticipated date of capital improvement projects. Recent efforts to inventory and assess the Town's water and wastewater infrastructure and facilities have had positive impacts on maintenance and management and have allowed the Town to develop a credible long term operating and capital plan. Similar efforts and identification of funding sources are needed for:

- a) Transportation related infrastructure: streets, sidewalks, bridges, signage, guardrails, culvert and drainage components
- b) Stormwater infrastructure: drainage components, stormwater and flood storage areas
- c) Harbor related infrastructure: seawalls, docks, piers, landings, racks, public access
- d) Town-owned facilities: Water Treatment Facility, Wastewater Treatment Facility, Compost site, Transfer Station site on Upper Pine Street, DPW facilities, Library, Town Hall, Fire Station, Police Station, Recreation lands and facilities including, trails, Tuck's Point, and Masconomo Park.

*See Appendix C for a list of previously completed plans and studies that should be referenced when developing long term plans for facilities and infrastructure.*

*See Economic Approach to Implementation for a prioritized list of anticipated public facilities' needs.*

**PF&S – 2: Assess the need for new public facilities.**

In 2017 a Facilities Master Plan evaluated a number of Town-owned buildings to determine if they are meeting the current and near future needs of the community. The Plan found that the DPW facilities, Police Station, Town Hall and Library are in need of improvement or replacement within the next 20 years.

The Plan also indicated the COA and Harbormaster had unmet needs. A more thorough assessment of the needs and benefits of new or expanded facilities along with estimated costs is needed.

Households over the age of 60 make up over one third of Manchester's resident population. A Senior Center would allow for expanded services to the town's fastest growing age group. Private funding to build the new Center should be aggressively pursued.

Active management of Manchester's harbor and maritime environment has strong support from the community as these resources are at the core of the town's culture, image and quality of life. Providing a Harbormaster facility at the water's edge is a best practice intended to improve safety and public services and demonstrate the community's commitment to its multiple waterfront resources.

**PF&S – 3: Optimize opportunities for shared services to improve the provision of services and increase efficiency.**

The Town should explore how to increase collaboration across jurisdictions. Regionalization or sharing services or facilities may offer operational efficiencies and/or cost savings. The existing Manchester Essex Regional School District (MERSD), is an example of a shared critical community asset for both Manchester and Essex.

- a) Strengthen collaboration between the Town and MERSD and Essex.
- b) Strengthen communications with State and Federal agencies.
- c) Support ongoing information collaboration discussions with adjacent towns through existing or new regional organizations.
- d) Work with MassDOT to assess the feasibility of sharing MassDOT site on Pine Street for compatible Town DPW operations (Public Facilities and Services).

Preliminary discussions with MassDOT confirm that the State is open to discussing shared facilities on Pine Street. Next steps should include developing a proposal for sharing space to advance discussion with MassDOT. The Pine Street former burn site may also offer opportunities for shared offices.

- e) Identify other opportunities to share services, facilities and staff.

Manchester currently shares Veterans Agent services, Animal Control Officer services, and Zoning Enforcement Officer services. At the 2018 Spring Town Meeting via a non-binding vote, Town Meeting voted to support assessing the feasibility of additional shared services. The Board of Selectmen will work with Town staff to identify potential opportunities for further study.

**PF&S – 4: Undertake a Cemetery Assessment to determine existing and projected capacity.**

Burial space within Manchester’s cemeteries appears to be limited within existing designs. A redesign of existing cemeteries may provide considerable opportunities for burials, particularly in light of the increasing number of cremations that require less land. A cemetery assessment and conceptual redesign would determine additional capacity within Manchester’s cemeteries and project a date when they would reach capacity. The assessment should precede allocation of new land for burials.

**OS&R – 1: Identify recreation needs, including accessibility, and create plans to address.**

Demographic and social trends can create new demands for recreational programs and facilities. Developing a systematic approach to identify recreation needs on a regular basis will help the Town meet changing community needs.

**OS&R – 2: Undertake a Recreation Fields Master Plan.**

The need for improved and additional playing fields has been documented in a number of studies in the last decade. To address this need, preliminary evaluations have been performed on a number of Town-owned sites with two options showing promise for field use. Further evaluation is needed for: the water treatment facility site in Hamilton and the former burn site on Pine Street. Before additional lands are secured or developed existing facilities should be evaluated to ensure properties are well designed and operated to assure maximum efficiency of space and personnel. The evaluation should consider current unmet needs and projected future needs. If maximizing use of existing fields cannot overcome the field shortage, the Town should continue its evaluation of Town owned lands to support the creation of additional playing fields. Planning should also explore potential for partnerships with local institutions such as Brookwood School, Gordon College, MAC, and others that may be identified.

**OS&R – 3: Identify and protect lands that contribute to local and regional trail networks.**

Formal and informal trails traverse woodlands throughout Manchester and while most are on protected lands, some trails pass over or continue onto undeveloped private lands. The preservation and expansion of trails is important and should be considered when identifying land for possible protection.

*Accessible open space and well-managed green spaces, harbor, shoreline and beaches reflect the town's long-term commitment to its natural resources.*

*The Town should develop a strategic approach to resource protection and actively manage all publicly owned lands.*

## *Natural Resources*

### **Protect and Manage Parks, Open Spaces and Natural Resources**

*Community members are quick to share their appreciation for the beauty of Manchester, and for the quality of life that in part can be attributed to the town's beloved natural landscapes – its dramatic shoreline, beaches and woodlands. This is our legacy and it needs to be cared for and nurtured.*

**OS&R – 4: Create and fund Maintenance and Management Plans for all Town-owned open spaces and conservations lands . (see page #)**

**N&CR – 1: Protect lands critical to water supply, biodiversity and community character. (see page #)**

**OS&R – 5: Promote awareness, enjoyment and stewardship of conservation areas through outreach and education.**

Sharing information about the town's open spaces and recreation opportunities is important to generating use and support for these resources. Strategies include a web page with information and maps, paper and digital trail maps/aps, events and environmental education programs. Time should be invested in developing partnerships with schools, and other local and regional organizations.

**PF&S – 5: Support the Harbor Dredging Plan and other efforts to support a safe and healthy harbor.**

In 2016 the Board of Selectmen appointed a Harbor Dredging Committee to develop a Harbor Dredging Plan and provide advice on its implementation. The Harbor Dredging Plan was adopted in 2017 and the first of four or five phases of Harbor dredging was completed in 2018. Funding assistance from Mass

Development supported Town funds (budget and CPA funds). Continued support is needed to maintain a usable harbor.

**R - 5: Compare the cost, impacts, and sustainability of developing living shorelines and seawalls in areas where living shorelines could be constructed (estuaries, bays, tributaries, and other sheltered shorelines).**

Shorelines need protection from damage caused by intense storms, wave erosion, and sea level rise. Shoreline stabilization does not need to create a barrier between land and water, as happens with hard shoreline stabilization structures like seawalls and bulkheads. Living shorelines connect the land and water to stabilize the shoreline, reduce erosion, and provide ecosystem services, like valuable habitat, that enhances coastal resilience. A living shoreline has a footprint that is made up mostly of native material. It incorporates natural vegetation or other living, natural 'soft' elements alone or in combination with some type of harder shoreline structure, like oyster reefs, rock sills, or anchored large wood for added stability.

**N&CR-3: Continue to manage the health and increase the number of Street and Public Shade Trees in Manchester.**

Public street and shade trees are valuable resources that contribute to community character, help improve air quality, moderate temperatures, reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff, and provide shelter and habitat. The Town has enjoyed Tree City USA designation nearly continuously for 27 years. To receive this designation a community must:

1. Designate a tree board or department
2. Adopt a Public Tree Care ordinance
3. An annual tree care budget of at least \$2 per capita
4. Maintain an annual Arbor Day observance and proclamation

The Board of Selectmen, Department of Public Works, and the Town's volunteer Tree warden share responsibilities for the care of public trees; those within road rights-of-way and in parks and other public lands. The Conservation Commission is responsible for the care and custody of trees on Conservation lands.

Friends of Manchester Trees (FOMT) a non-profit community organization established in 1973, also plays an important role, working closely with the DPW and Tree Warden. In addition to their work t planting, caring for and advocating for trees, FOMT prepares the annual application for Tree City USA designation. FOMT and the Town are also working together on a Tree ordinance to codify rules and responsibilities.

Other actions to consider include:

- a) Increase funding for Tree Care as a strategy to improve the health and number of trees in town.
- b) Raise awareness about public trees including their locations and the process for planting, removing, and pruning public trees and the consequences for not complying.

c)

*Balanced and diverse housing options, a strong local economy, walkable neighborhoods, a dynamic downtown and an exceptional public school system are the foundation that we have built for our healthy community*

*Most of what creates health is lifestyle and behavior related, along with the socio-economic, cultural and physical environment.*

## *Healthy Community*

### **Support balanced and diverse housing options**

*Existing conditions, demographic trends, and anecdotal evidence show there is a need for a greater diversity of housing types to meet existing and future housing needs. Seniors, singles, young families, and households with limited incomes are among many that are struggling to find appropriate housing due to the lack of options other than large and expensive single family homes. Updating zoning regulations is the most direct strategy to encourage diversity in the town's housing stock.*

#### **H – 1: Modify zoning to encourage housing of the size, style, and prices appropriate for downsizing households, elders, young families, singles, and couples.**

A zoning review focused on providing clarity of purpose and promoting more diverse housing options should be the first step to assure a comprehensive, consistent and efficient approach to zoning changes.

- a) Engage Consultant to review Zoning Bylaw with aim to allow more diverse housing options.  
Consider modifications to allow residential above retail, more accessory apartments and innovative uses of existing houses, support small-scale infill development and allow detached unit conversion without the requirement of employee status, pursue mixed-use Transit Oriented Development.
- b) Consider a 40R Smart Growth Overlay Zoning District that encourages housing density within a planned neighborhood, expedites permitting and brings payments from the State based on the number of units created.

#### **H – 2: Increase and integrate housing that is affordable to households at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI) with mixed-income ownership and rental options.**

Given the substantial number of residents who are paying more than they can afford for their housing and the gaps between the need and supply of existing housing, there is a pressing need to produce more subsidized housing units in

Manchester. Both rental and ownership housing are needed to encourage a mix of housing types in response to diverse housing needs. It is the Town's intent to integrate subsidized and market rate housing whenever possible and practical.

- a) Increase municipal capacity to address housing needs by establishing biannual joint meetings with PB, ZBA, Manchester Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) and other interested Boards, seeking technical assistance for training and project assistance, supporting attendance at annual housing conference or other housing focused workshops and events.  
Increasing interactions and strengthening relationships between permitting boards and the MAHT will help ensure municipal boards and others are working together to develop the most effective zoning, programs and initiatives.
- b) Work with the State, MAHT, and other partners to redevelop MHA sites (The Plains, Newport Park and Loading Place Road) to increase the number, accessibility and quality of units, mix income levels, and create a sustainable operating model.
- c) Assess Town-owned property for partnership opportunities to create affordable housing. Specifically, examine the potential for a mixed income housing development on the seven-acre Pleasant Street site currently housing DPW facilities.
- d) Support MAHT programs to increase the number of affordable housing units in town and assist qualified householders in securing affordable housing.
- e) Conduct on-going community outreach (e.g. annual housing summit to share "where we are, existing properties and programs, goals, etc.")
- f) Work with neighboring communities to identify potential for regional efficiencies including Affordable Housing Marketing Plans/Lotteries and income qualifications (1st time and annual).

## **Strengthen the local economy**

*A town's local economy provides goods and services, offers job opportunities, creates tax revenues, adds to the social fabric with local meeting places, and contributes to the sense of place. Manchester's Downtown and the harbor are the heart of the local economy currently, though other areas offer new opportunities. Municipal actions to support and strengthen the local economy should become a part of the Town's long term strategy to create a healthy and resilient community with a strong financial base.*

**ED – 1: Develop and implement a strategic plan for the Limited Commercial District (LCD) to allow more commercial and residential opportunities capable of producing increased tax revenues. (see page #)**

**ED – 2: Consider revising zoning in the General District to generate more commercial and residential opportunities Downtown in manner sympathetic to existing character.** (see page #)

**ED – 3: Actively support the development and operation of a Business Group to foster long-term stability and growth for Downtown businesses and increase and diversify the business mix to include products and services important to community residents.**

A strong working partnership between elected officials and Town staff and businesses owners and managers can help create and sustain a positive business environment to give businesses the best possible chance for success. A Business Group in collaboration with the Town would be well positioned to address issues such as parking, waste management, beautification, accessibility, business attraction and retention, and marketing.

**ED – 4: Increase municipal involvement with regional economic development groups to take advantage of regional synergy and initiatives when appropriate.**

Cape Ann and the greater North Shore region are served by a large number of agencies, institutions and organizations devoted to economic development. By taking an active role in assessing needs and developing solutions to address them Manchester will be better positioned to advocate for and engage in initiatives that meet the town's needs.

**ED – 5: Develop a strategic plan to strengthen harbor and maritime industries.**

A strategic plan would include an examination of existing harbor businesses and recommendations for how the Town can support them. Aquaculture, maritime education, and recreation may offer additional economic development opportunities that should be investigated as well.

**R – 4: Provide tools and guidance to Downtown businesses to improve economic resiliency.**

Some Downtown businesses may be vulnerable to flooding from sea level rise and storm surge in the coming years. To help educate about and protect businesses from flooding, the Town should encourage and assist business owners in identifying specific location vulnerabilities. A self-awareness checklist could be developed for business owners to do a preliminary vulnerability screening based on site conditions, architecture, structural systems, utilities and emergency response. To support adaption projects for those at risk, the Town should help identify grant opportunities and/or other incentives to encourage implementing mitigation projects. Example mitigation projects include physical improvements such as elevating fuel tanks and other systems, stockpiling emergency flood protection, providing alternative emergency exits and developing emergency operation plans.

## **Support walkable neighborhoods and mobility options**

*Manchester's character is in part due to the size and scale of its neighborhoods, accessibility and connectivity. Maintaining and improving the culture and infrastructure*

*for walking and biking through and between neighborhoods and beyond takes advantage of Manchester's development patterns and promotes activities and interactions critical to a healthy community. Ensuring that residents have the infrastructure and program needed to remain mobile helps support health and wellness.*

**T&C – 1: Explore and implement ways to make the town more bike and pedestrian friendly and ADA compliant while ensuring the roadway network continues to work effectively for all modes of transportation.**

A bike and pedestrian friendly community requires alignment among a town's transportation infrastructure policies, regulations, maintenance and operating procedures and is supported by programs and initiatives. Multiple Departments, Boards and Committees should coordinate efforts on a regular basis to assure this recommendation moves forward. Actions already identified as important include:

- a) Improve maintenance and management of existing road shoulders, sidewalks and walking paths as the first step. In addition to improved municipal maintenance, consider requiring or encouraging maintenance by abutting land owners and encouraging corporate or other sponsorships.
- b) Annually assess walkability and circulation safety through neighborhood safety audits and identify solutions as needed. Consider accessible connections to transit, parks, schools and other public facilities. Look to improve conditions throughout various times of the day and seasons of the year.
- c) Identify and promote walking paths.
- d) Perform annual traffic and pedestrian counts at key locations to document use trends.
- e) Consider a pedestrian path from Town Hall parking area to Beach Street.
- f) Implement the Complete Street Prioritization Plan. Continue to request funding to support implementation on an annual basis as allowed. Submit Annual Complete Street Report to BOS. Update Complete Street Prioritization Plan every 5 years.
- g) Produce sidewalk and crosswalk assessment to identify gaps and plan to address as appropriate.
- h) Consider opportunities to improve bicycle access to Essex and other communities.
- i) Implement the Open Space and Recreation Plan's ADA Transition Plan and update as required.
- j) Work with the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program for support of school focused initiatives.

**T&C – 2: Assess opportunities for connecting LCD with Downtown.**

A strong transportation network between the LCD and the Downtown area should be considered with any increased development within the LCD. Bike and pedestrian paths, shuttles and other shared rides, and CATA are some options that should be explored to provide alternatives to the personal car.

**T&C – 3: Study the potential impacts of one-way streets to decrease congestion in the downtown and neighborhoods.**

Converting two-way streets to one-way streets may be a viable strategy for improving circulation, decreasing congestion on select local roads and increasing walkability and bikability. A professional study that models one way patterns would provide data needed to evaluate potential benefits. A strong public process must be central to the study.

**T&C – 4: Assess benefits of using CATA to improve transportation options in Manchester.**

The Cape Ann Transit Authority (CATA) is a non-profit public transit service that offers bus and van transportation across the Cape Ann area, including additional services to Danvers and Peabody Malls for those communities that chose to participate: Gloucester, Rockport, Ipswich and Essex. Participating communities work with CATA to develop fixed route bus services to meet local need for citizens of all ages and abilities. In addition to the fixed-route service, CATA offers seasonal service, school tripper service, ADA paratransit service and Dial-a-Ride service, with some services extending into Boston. To date Manchester-by-the-Sea has chosen not to be a participating community.

CATA membership would increase transportation options for Manchester’s residents and guests to circulate locally and regionally. Seniors, single vehicle householders, students and many others could benefit from expanded services, hours and reach that CATA could provide. The Town should assess the benefits of becoming a CATA community. CATA funding comes from diverting funds that the Town pays to the MBTA thus, unless special services are requested, the Town would not incur additional cost by joining CATA.

## **Sustain a dynamic downtown**

*Dynamic downtowns are a principal indicator of a healthy community. They provide goods and service, a variety of jobs, and places for chance and intentional encounters; they are safe and walkable and offer enough variety to invite walking and lingering; they appeal to visitors and are used regularly by residents. They are considerable revenue generators and are often the heart of a community. The mix of uses, condition of buildings and the public realm, and the ease and comfort of access are critical to a downtown’s success.*

*Manchester’s Downtown has changed over time, but has generally retained its essential character. There are a number of actions the Town and others can take to move Downtown from pleasant to vibrant.*

**T&C – 5: Undertake a professionally led comprehensive Parking Study to identify and recommend preferred solutions to parking challenges.**

A Comprehensive Parking Study would identify and address Downtown parking challenges, including alleviating beach parking in the downtown. The Parking Study would engage business owners and managers as well as residents to first

identify challenges. The Study would inventory and map off- and on-street parking, including Brook and Norwood Street lots, identify daily and seasonal needs, and offer solutions that could include metered, structured, shared, and, satellite parking, signage, and management practices. The study should be a first step in assessing Downtown for incremental growth.

**T&C – 6: Identify need and construct/install public infrastructure and amenities that support Downtown businesses and residents.**

Transportation and circulation are seen as important issues for Downtown businesses and for residents in general. Public infrastructure including sidewalks, public places, street trees and other plantings, lighting and street furniture are also elements that make a downtown comfortable to be in. The Downtown Improvement Project spearheaded roadway and public space improvements in 2010 and the Committee continues to bring proposals for further improvements to the Board of Selectmen. A number of Complete Street projects focus on the Downtown area, with four projects currently funded and being considered for construction in 2019. The Town should continue to identify opportunities to improve the Downtown environment.

- a) Consider a pedestrian connection from Town Hall parking lot to Beach Street.
- b) Identify and implement opportunities that improve the public realm including sidewalks, plazas, parks, street trees, lights and furniture.
- c) Work with business owners to identify opportunities for public private partnerships to enhance the Downtown environment.

**H – 3: Assess the opportunity to increase residential units Downtown through revised zoning aimed at generating more mixed-use commercial and residential opportunities (see page #).**

Increasing the number of residents in a mixed-use downtown has proven to be a successful strategy for increasing vibrancy. The Town should evaluate the feasibility and benefits of Smart Growth Zoning that offers incentives for denser residential development along with state payments, and/or modify zoning in the General District to encourage second and third floor residential development.

**ED – 3: Actively support the development and operation of a Business Group to foster long-term stability and growth for Downtown businesses and increase and diversify the business mix to include products and services important to community residents. (see page #)**

**Sustain an exceptional public school system**

*Manchester’s educational program is among the strongest in the state and residents recognize that it must be supported by qualified staff and up-to-date facilities. Building new elementary schools, first in Manchester and then in Essex, are important next steps in maintaining educational excellence in the Manchester Essex Regional School District system.*

**PF&S – 6: Support construction of new MERSD Elementary Schools.**

The town has consistently supported education in Manchester. Voters have approved the construction of a new elementary school that will replace the nearly 70 year old Memorial School with construction to be completed by the summer of 2021. In the future, the Town should also support efforts to improve or build a new Elementary School in Essex.

**PF&S – 7: Continue to support educational facilities, staff and programs.**

An exceptional school system is seen as essential to Manchester’s quality of life and economic vitality. The Manchester Essex Regional Schools are among the best in the State and are vitally important to students and their families as well as to the larger community and the local economy. In addition to the educational opportunities they provide, exceptional schools elevate and insulate home values, creating a strong revenue stream from real estate taxes.

**PF&S – 8: Explore with the Manchester Essex Regional School District and Town of Essex additional opportunities for sharing facilities, services and initiatives between the School District and the Towns.**

The Manchester Essex Regional School District owns and operates facilities and provides services within both Manchester and Essex. The Town wants to explore the potential for expanding services for residents and creating efficiencies and savings. The current partnership between the school district and the Manchester Department of Parks and Recreation that allows the Department to utilize school space to support youth programs for both towns is one example of sharing facilities and services. School gyms, fields, auditoriums, music rooms, busses, parking lots and other facilities may present similar opportunities for providing services that may not otherwise be supported. Continuing education classes provide another example of school based programs that serve the broader community. Similarly, services such as information technology, communications, facilities management, and grounds maintenance may be more effectively shared or contracted for jointly.

- a. Continue and strengthen existing initiatives.

Beyond facilities and programs, a school is part of the social fabric of a community and as such its interactions and integration with the communities it serves shapes both the communities and the school. The Town should work to strengthen bonds with the MERSD and Essex through shared initiatives.

- b. Consider identifying school liaisons from each town to meet with school representatives on a regular basis to improve integration of schools and towns.

*Respect for the ideas and contributions of residents, volunteers, and Town employees is a fundamental principle for working together and sustaining community harmony.*

*Effective self-governance requires that community members work together in good faith with each other and with Town employees.*

## *Community Harmony*

### **Work Together**

*Working together respectfully improves efficiency and effectiveness whether in a family, organization, or community. For a municipality it begins with civil discourse and the integration of thoughtful and well-informed public input into town planning and decision-making. Community spirit is centered in getting along and coming together.*

#### **G-4: Identify opportunities for increasing communication and cooperation among Boards, Committees and Departments.**

Boards Committees and Departments each have their own charge, mission and focus and can easily become isolated in their own tasks. It is important that all paid staff and volunteers recognize how their own roles contribute to the overall mission and goals of the Town. A few ideas have been identified to improve how staff and volunteers can work together.

- a. Consider aligning Boards and Committees with Departments for support and continuity of missions.
- b. Consider regular meetings that bring together members of various Departments with Boards and Committees.
- c. Identify tools and procedures that enhance coordination among boards, committees and departments that interact with each other. Such as the Clerk's office and Building Department with Planning Board and Board of Appeals.

#### **G – 5: Continue to support professional staff in Town operations.**

Professional staff is a key component of Town operations; this is equally true for staff that provides technical and administrative support to regulatory Boards and Committees, which are mandated permit-issuing authorities (Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission). While Manchester is fortunate to have a vibrant volunteer culture, Boards and Committees are challenged by an often burdensome workload and scheduling conflicts that impact efficiencies and

sometimes delay the permitting process. A predictable and consistent permitting process is essential to the ongoing business of residents, as well as for attracting new investment; professional staff are critical to managing and supporting the work of Boards and Committees.

**G – 6: Expand annual trainings for volunteers.**

The Town provides mandatory training for all elected and appointed volunteers to maintain compliance with Commonwealth of Massachusetts Conflict of Interest, and Open Meeting laws; however, there is no requirement for subject matter training specific to individual Boards and Committees. Expanded volunteer training workshops would help boards and committees in the execution of their charges.

- a) Sponsor Board and Committee members at state and other sponsored trainings (e.g. MA Association of Conservation Commissions, Citizens Housing and Planning Association, MA Municipal Planners Association, etc.)
- b) Each Board should conduct an annual review of its mission, relevant bylaws, and processes; identify current issues and challenges facing the Board or Committee; set goals for the coming year; and review basic how-to's for conducting business, including running a meeting, engaging with the public outside meetings, and administration.

**G – 7: Institute an annual multi-board and committee workshop to discuss land-use issues.**

At a minimum the Town should institute an annual multi-board and committee workshop to discuss and address issues that impact land use. The meeting would include discussions on the goals for the town as a whole and how each committee and board might participate in identifying the goals and ways to help implement them. With the many competing uses for land, it is important to work together to find opportunities to advance multiple goals. A tracking mechanism for resulting ideas/projects would help assure follow through.

**G – 8: Reward civic responsibility with appreciation events.**

Self-governance and community harmony are strengthened when more community members take part in discussions and decision making. Civic responsibility should also be recognized and rewarded on a regular basis. The Town identifies an outstanding volunteer each year to reward public service; this sentiment can be expanded to reward neighborhoods, clubs, or the general population with special events that reward civic responsibility in a more public and celebratory way.

## c) Implementation

*Implementation is the most critical step in the Master Plan. The Plan is designed to guide Town Boards, Committees and Departments. Each will work in concert with the other, coordinating and communicating to ensure alignment and oversight of the recommendations.*

### Best Practices

Town Boards, Committees, and Departments will be charged with monitoring progress and reporting the status of Master Plan recommendations.

The Board/Committee/Department Charge will:

- Align the Board, Committee and Department with relevant Master Plan goals and recommended actions. Each Board, Committee and Department will be responsible for the integration of these into the annual work plan and short and long term capital plans.
- Require bi-annual updates to the Board of Selectman on progress, projects and issues.
- Require continued public outreach and engagement.

The Board of Selectman, Planning Board and Town Administrator will deliver bi-annual reports of movement towards goals, a summary of which will be placed in the Board of Selectman's section of the Annual Manchester-by-the-Sea Town Report.

The Town Administrator will ensure that capital plans, budgets, and policies support the Master Plan and that the Master Plan goals are an integral part of the annual budget process.

The Finance Committee will make specific reference to the Master Plan's recommendations in its annual report to the Town.

Town Meeting will review updates as needed for overall approval and funding as appropriate.

Master Plan recommendations are listed on the following pages under:

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Open Space and Recreation
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Transportation and Circulation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Land Use
- Resiliency
- Governance

For each recommendation the lead and support staff, boards, or committees are identified as being primarily responsible for the implementation of the recommendation, and for including other staff and volunteers as needed. Timeframes represent the general order anticipated for implementation recognizing that many recommendations can be acted on simultaneously and that some recommendations are part of a sequence. Costs are estimates based on current knowledge and assumptions and potential funding sources provide one or more options to consider. Lead and support staff, time frames, cost and funding sources may change throughout the life of the Plan as conditions and opportunities change.

*This 2018 Comprehensive Master Plan articulates a Community Vision and outlines a long term plan for management of land, infrastructure and facilities, the provision of services, and operating policies and procedures for governance. It also estimates what it will cost to act on these recommendations and where funding will come from. The Plan is ambitious in its scope yet is grounded in sound fiscal management policies and strategies.*

### **Financial Approach**

By many indicators, the Town is on sound financial footing. We enjoy a Triple A rating from the bond agencies. We have a very healthy rainy day fund. We are embarked on an aggressive capital reinvestment plan as we aim to catch up on years of deferred infrastructure maintenance. And we benefit from a stable tax base with modest new growth annually. Town services are at a high level and are generally stable. Our multi-year operating projections reveal modest expenditure growth that can be handled by typical new growth rates and relatively modest property tax increases that are no higher than 2.5%. Finally, our recent success with securing grants (over \$4 million in the past five years) gives an important boost to our infrastructure projects and we anticipate this success to continue.

Despite this good news, there are challenges the Town must face. The Town has fallen behind in capital investments in our community facilities and infrastructure. In essence we have lived off the investments prior generations have made without contributing our fair share. This pattern is coming to an end as the useful life of the previous investments has come and gone. A strong game plan going forward is needed that is mindful of tax payer's ability to pay while reinvesting in our essential infrastructure.

- School Operating Costs are projected to grow beyond the revenue limits of Proposition 2 ½ and funding for the new Memorial School is expected to result in a 5-7% tax hike that will remain in place for 30 years.
- Each of the Town's infrastructure systems is experiencing fatigue and or failure due to years of deferred maintenance. Water, wastewater, stormwater, roads, sidewalks, and seawalls are all essential systems for a high quality of life. A new cash-based capital funding plan of \$3 million annually will put us on a solid road of needed reinvestment in Town infrastructure.
- In the short term DPW facilities must be improved or replaced and modest upgrades to Town Hall are required to extend its life expectancy and reduce the need for more extensive improvements later. A Senior and/or combined Senior and Community Center as well as playing fields are other potential capital projects that the Town may seek to undertake. Further out, upgrades to Public Safety facilities and the Library are anticipated and within 15 to 20 years the Wastewater Treatment Facility will need to be replaced.
- We will continue to face expensive and hard choices as we confront the impacts of sea level rise and more damaging storms.

The Finance Committee, working with the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator have identified five core financial policies to ensure the Town can manage escalating School District costs, catch up on a backlog of capital needs and address new climate change impacts without imposing large new tax burdens on property owners.

1. Staying within the limits of Proposition 2 ½ for operating needs.

2. Maintaining Reserves equal to 10% of total expenditures. (currently we are above this target and will use the extra funds to help with our capital and liability needs)
3. Keeping debt payments to a maximum of 10% of total expenditures. (We are currently at 8.5% but the new elementary school project will put us at the 10% mark.)
4. Remaining on course to fully fund our Retiree liabilities (should be fully funded by the early 2030s)
5. Moving to a cash basis (\$3 million annually) for non-school capital needs, and capping non-school exclusions at their current level - a significant change from the past 20 years of expanding exclusions.

The Master Plan identifies potential capital costs of around \$85 million over the next ten to fifteen years. Around \$1.5 million of these are currently considered in the Town's five-year capital plan. Over \$20million, are anticipated to come from grants primarily for resiliency efforts to mitigate the impacts of flooding, climate change and for harbor dredging. The balance of identified costs is to maintain, update or replace municipal buildings.

Based on current conditions, knowledge and assumptions, the following represents a prioritized list of anticipated major capital needs and estimated costs.

• Harbor Master Office and Rest Station	1-3 years	\$0.4 M
• Senior Center with COA Office (new)	1-3 years	\$2 - \$3.5 M
• DPW Facilities (new)	3-5 years	\$3.5 -\$6M
• Recreation Fields (new)	3-5 years	\$1-\$2M
• Cemetery Space ( if new land is needed)	3-5 years	\$1M
• Seawalls (repaired)	3-5 years	\$14M
• Dredging	3-10 years	\$5M
• Wastewater Treatment Plt (update or new)	5-10 years	\$0.5M -N/A
• MERSD Middle/High School (update)	5-10 years	\$5M
• Police Station (update or Comb Public Safety)	10+ years	\$2.5 - \$4M
• Library	10+ years	\$9M
• Town Hall (update)	10+ years	\$3 - \$5.5M
• Fire Station (update or Comb Public Safety)	10+ years	\$5M
• Essex Elementary School	15+ years	\$25M
• Water Treatment Plant	15+ years	\$1M

In keeping with the Town's new fiscal policies, the following strategies will set the stage for successfully funding implementation efforts.

- 1) **Slowly grow the amount of operating funds toward capital needs:** Currently we allocate \$1.8 million towards our annual capital needs. This base is slated to grow to \$2 million over the next five years as part of our assumed 2.5% annual growth in expenses.
- 2) **Increase capital project funding equivalent to debt service retired:** Debt service for Town projects totaled \$1.9 million annually in 2015. The payments are declining yearly and for FY18, dropped to \$1.6 million. Within 5 years, debt payments for Town projects will dip below \$1 million giving us the possibility of funding new projects without increasing tax burdens.
- 3) **Grow our commercial tax base:** Through the master planning process, residents have expressed support for allowing environmentally sensitive growth in the Limited Commercial District. New commercial development in this area (lands to the north of Route 128) along with incremental growth Downtown has the potential to add significantly to annual tax revenues which can be devoted to capital needs.
- 4) **Have utilities pay more of their own way:** The General Fund currently pays for the water enterprise debt and a portion of the sewer enterprise debt. While it would mean increasing the water and sewer rates, the enterprise funds could gradually pick up a larger share of the debt payments freeing up General Fund dollars for other capital needs.
- 5) **Seek operational savings:** New service delivery models, including possible new shared services, should be aggressively pursued. Savings in our operating budgets can be redirected toward capital expenses.
- 6) **Aggressively Pursue Grants and Technical Assistance:** Expanding grant writing capacity for small to large projects and taking full advantage of state, federal and regional technical assistance can accelerate and support capital projects and other initiatives. This approach will require the Town to be flexible in the timing of certain actions, but is an excellent opportunity to leverage Town funds.
- 7) **Redirect newly uncommitted funds:** By the early 2030's the Town will have retired all non-school debt and retiree liabilities (pension and OPEB) will be fully funded. Dollars that were going toward these needs can be redirected toward new capital investments.

# Appendix

- A. Existing Condition Profiles
  - a. Land Use
  - b. Housing
  - c. Economic Development
  - d. Transportation
  - e. Public Facilities and Services
  - f. Open Space and Recreation
  - g. Natural and Cultural Resources
  - h. Resiliency
  - i. Governance
  
- B. The Master Planning Process
  
- C. Supporting Plans, Studies and Reports

## a. Land Use

“Land use” is a term used to describe the primary use, or combination of uses, occurring on a parcel of land at any given time. Land uses have social, environmental and economic impacts that shape a town’s character, livability, and sustainability. Land use patterns are influenced by factors such as population, economic growth, infrastructure and transportation investments, environmental constraints, and more. It is not a fixed element of a community, rather it can and does change over time.

The primary land use in Manchester-by-the-Sea is housing, with over half of land in town dedicated to residential use. Approximately a third of land is protected open space, made possible by robust planning and land acquisitions on the part of the Town and the Manchester Essex Conservation Trust. Less than 8% of land in the community is dedicated to commercial or industrial uses. Other land uses in Manchester-by-the-Sea include municipal, institutional, and nonprofit uses. This combination of uses, along with the presence of scenic resources in town like the beaches and harbor, forested lands and open space, has created a sense of character for the community that residents want to see retained.

Depending on the impacts of climate change and sea level rise, and decisions regarding various new Town facilities (Senior Center, Public Safety building(s), Library expansion and the future of Town Hall) Manchester by the Sea is likely facing a major funding gap. Perhaps more critically, the need to build higher seawalls and elevate low-lying roads, and other critical but low-lying infrastructure may add significantly to our list of needed capital projects. Our multi-year budget projections, which are based on historical experiences as well as estimated future needs, reveal that our non-school operating expenses can be adequately met with an annual tax increase of 2 to 2.5%. Maintaining school operations within this growth range is more problematic. History shows a trend of needing a school override vote at least once every eight to ten years. A new capital funding plan takes advantage of retiring debt and puts the Town on a cash basis to the tune of \$3 million annually for capital projects – a healthy reinvestment plan that will go a long way toward cleaning up our backlog of capital repairs. However, new needs cannot be met without new exclusions, meaning tax hikes above the 2.5% annual limit imposed by Proposition 2 ½.

Allowing targeted development would enable the Town to more readily address the new capital needs we are likely to have. Of course, any new development must fit into the character of the community and adhere to smart growth principles. In general, there is limited good land available for development. However, there may be opportunities to redevelop existing sites in the community to generate additional tax revenue that is not being captured by their current use. Further, there is potentially developable land in the Limited Commercial District (LCD) north of Route 128, including six acres of Town-owned land and 64 acres on the east side of the district that are privately-held and undeveloped. There are about 174 acres of privately-held, undeveloped land on the west side of the LCD, though this land has some limitations due to wetland and other resources. There are also more than 60 acres of undeveloped Town-owned land in western Manchester south of the LCD and Route 128 that are currently being identified and assessed.

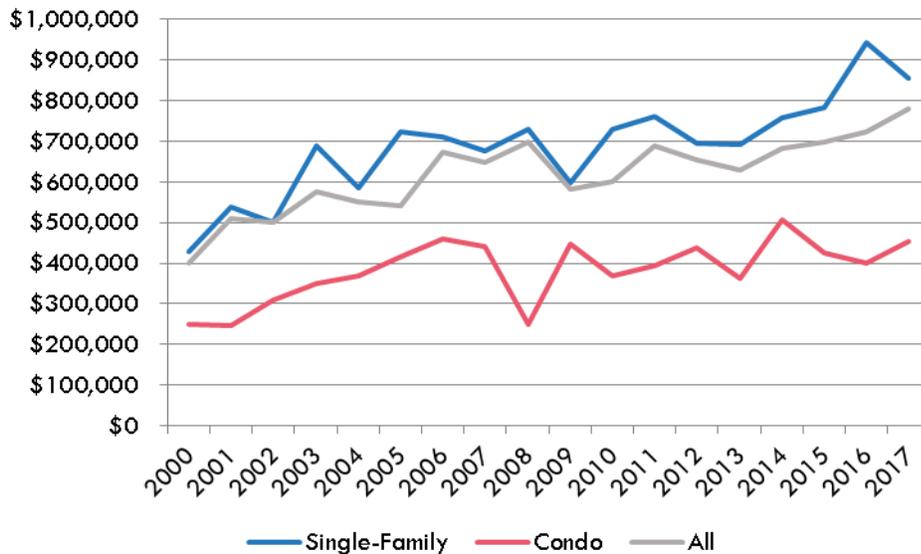
To meet the Community Vision developed during the Visioning Phase, Manchester-by-the-Sea needs to manage its land to preserve the town’s historic small town, coastal character and to protect and

celebrate the town's natural resources including harbor and beaches, uplands, and wetlands. Further, land must be managed to provide for economic development opportunities, a diversity of housing options in safe and livable neighborhoods, public facilities (buildings, parks & open spaces, cemeteries, infrastructure) and a vibrant town center.

## b. Housing

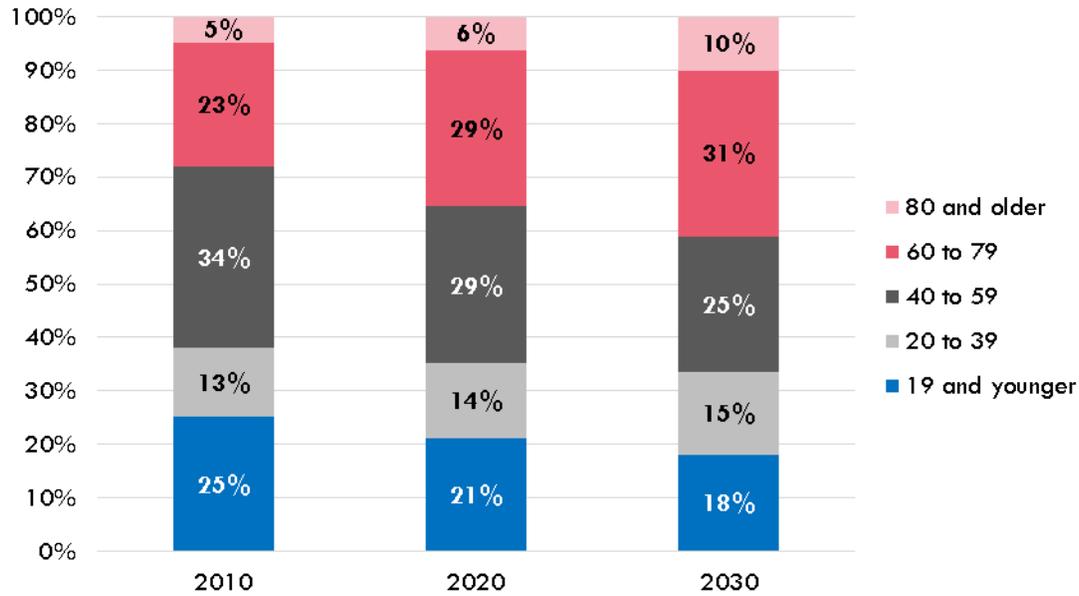
Manchester-by-the-Sea's population and housing supply have been generally stable since the 1990's; the population has grown less than 1% in the last 20 years, from 5,623 in 1997 to 5,666 in 2017. However, home sizes, number of rooms per home, and home prices in town are all growing, with prices for homes among the highest in the Commonwealth. The following chart shows how median sales prices have increased since 2000. According to Warren Group Data, the median sales price for a single family home in Manchester-by-the-Sea in 2017 was \$855,000 (for 61 sales), down slightly from the 2016 peak of \$942,000 (for 55 sales). At this writing only 10 single-family homes in town are assessed for less than \$300,000, while more than 90% of single family homes are assessed at over \$500,000 and 28% are assessed at over \$1,000,000.

**Median Sales Price (Source: The Warren Group)**



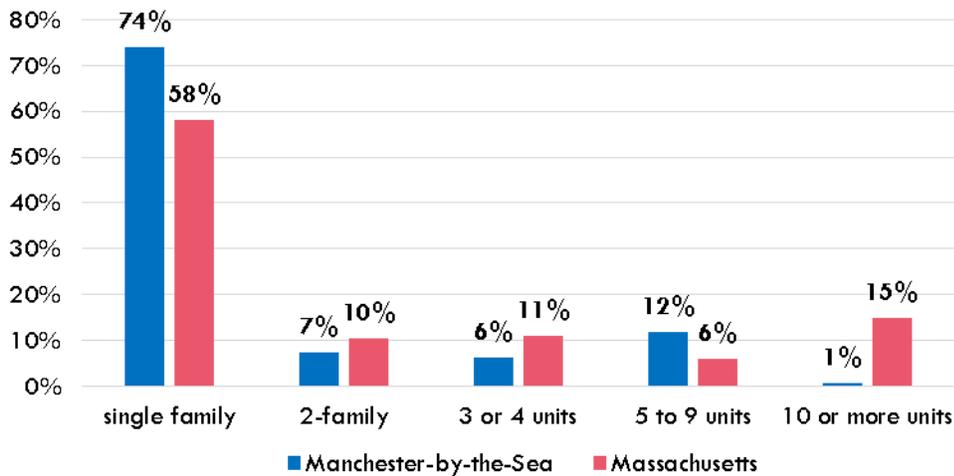
Individuals 60 and over are the fastest growing segment of Manchester-by-the-Sea's population, with close to 30% of town residents falling into this age group based on the 2010 U.S. Census. As shown in the following figure, this age cohort is expected to make up over 40% of the town's population by 2030, according to MAPC Stronger Region Projections. At the present time, limited options exist for a senior to remain in this community while downsizing into either a market rate or affordable unit that is smaller, designed for aging in place, and has lower maintenance. For older adults and people with disabilities that cannot receive the support they need in their homes, supportive living units along the continuum from independent to full care are needed.

**Population Projections by Age (Source: U.S. Census and MAPC Stronger Region Projections)**



Close to three quarters of homes in Manchester-by-the-Sea are single-family houses. As shown in the following figure, this typology makes up 74% (1,756 units) of the town’s total housing units (2,370 units), compared to 58% of units in the Commonwealth as a whole. Though 61% of all households in town consist of one or two people, only 23% of all houses have fewer than six rooms. Further, only 3% of households contain more than five persons yet over 45% of houses have eight or more rooms.

**Housing Units in Structure (Source: 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates)**



There is a need for more housing options for all life stages and household sizes in Manchester-by-the-Sea. In addition to options for seniors, affordable rentals for beginning householders and families are also needed. Affordable rental options that exist in town today are primarily one and limited two bedroom units with 0% vacancy. Only one subsidized ownership opportunity has been available since 2005; within two weeks of announcing availability, over 30 respondents indicated they were qualified and interested.

### c. Economic Development

Economic activity has greatly influenced the history of Manchester-by-the-Sea. Once known as Jeffries Creek, Manchester was primarily settled by fishermen upon its incorporation in 1645. A town of approximately nine square miles of land area, Manchester-by-the-Sea has grown to its current size as a primarily residential community. The town has two distinct commercial areas—the Limited Commercial District (LCD) north of Route 128 and Downtown Manchester—that serve both local and regional needs and are important contributors to the Town’s commercial tax base. Moreover, there is a Commuter Rail station located Downtown along the Rockport branch of the Newburyport/Rockport line.

Manchester-by-the-Sea is known for its grand estates, scenic beaches and vista points, residential character, gorgeous harbor, and its historic charm. When asked what they love most about Manchester, residents almost always reference the town’s coastal location, its beaches, open space, history, sense of place, and intimate community. These community values and physical attributes hold potential for future economic growth in Manchester; the vitality of the Manchester Harbor waterfront corridor, a charming and accessible Downtown, a strategically-developed LCD, and the integration of greenspace into a larger economic strategy will further diversify the Town’s commercial tax base, while reinforcing Manchester-by-the-Sea’s identity as a quiet, community-focused, seaside town.

Manchester’s workforce is primarily employed outside of town with nearly one in ten being self-employed. By occupation more than half are in management, business, science and arts, while around 30% are in sales and office occupations. Median household income in 2017 was \$92,604, significantly higher than the State at \$70,954 and Essex County at \$70,886. The per capita income of \$60,405 is also comparatively higher than other North Shore communities and above the state average of \$38,069, according to 2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates.<sup>1</sup>

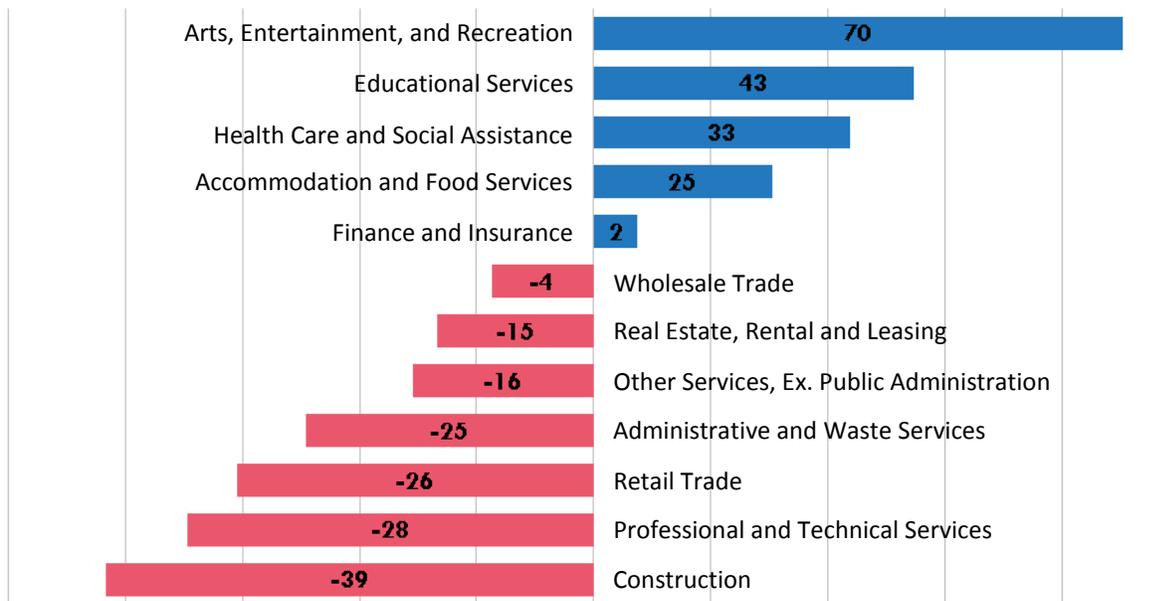
Manchester’s largest employers are the Real Estate firm of J. Barrett & Co, Crosby’s Marketplace, Essex Country Club, and the Manchester Athletic Club. Data from the Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development shows an average employment figure of 1599 in 2017, down from 1810 in 2013. The average weekly wage among those employed by Manchester’s businesses in 2017 was \$976 for an average annual income of \$50,769.

With regards to job growth in the last ten years, Manchester-by-the-Sea’s fastest growing industry was Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, which grew by 70 positions to 326. This was followed by Educational Services, which grew by 43 positions to 326 positions. Both Health Care & Social Assistance and Accommodation & Food Services saw double-digit growth within the ten-year period. Conversely, Construction saw a drop of 39 positions to 89, Professional and Technical Services fell 28 positions to 86, and Retail Trade, which has been experiencing declines throughout the country, fell 26 positions to 169.

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<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey 2012-2016 , 5-year estimate

**Change in Employment by Industry, 2006 to 2016 (Source: MA EOLWD)**



Residential property taxes comprise the main source of revenue for the Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea, with 93% of the tax base for Fiscal Year 2017 coming from residential properties. In 2016, the average single family home was assessed at \$1 million and had an average tax bill of \$11,700 based on a single tax rate of \$11.07.

Given the cost of needed capital improvements (water, sewer, seawalls, and other facilities) and the Town’s strong dependence on residential taxes, respondents to the fall 2017 Master Plan Survey indicated that the Town should support new commercial development that boosts tax revenues. This funding option was the top choice and received nearly double the support of other funding options presented.

According to Manchester-by-the-Sea’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for 2016, the Town has gone through “a slow but positive change in commercial property value with some sales in the Downtown area.” The report describes the desire to increase and improve commercial development in Manchester-by-the-Sea and to review the need for rezoning within the district’s commercial areas. This was echoed through the Master Planning process. Some zoning changes in the commercial areas would allow for more targeted growth, which in turn would increase tax revenue and employment without a substantial cost to the Town.

## d. Transportation

Manchester-by-the-Sea's transportation and circulation system includes a variety of road types, a commuter rail, the harbor and coast, and bike and pedestrian trails. State Route 128, the regional connector that cuts through the northern quarter of town provides two highway exits /entrances. Pine Street and School Street connect Route 128 to the local roadways and to Route 127 the principal east west corridor from Beverly to Gloucester along the southern edge of town. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is responsible for both Route 128 and Route 127, except for Route 127 through the town center where it is under local jurisdiction. Pine Street, School Street and Route 127 at each end are considered the town's gateway corridors.

The balance of the town's roadway system is made up of local roads, a combination of public, private and semi-private ways. Of the 53 miles of roadway in Manchester, 24 miles are Town roads, 14 are state owned and 14 are private or semi-private with DPW providing snow removal services and roadway owners responsible for maintenance and repairs. There are no marked bicycle lanes or shared lanes in Manchester, though Route 127, Pine Street and School Street are frequently used by local and regional cyclists.

The town's transportation system also includes the MBTA commuter rail providing service south to North Station in Boston and North to Rockport. Trains arrive at and depart from the Downtown station nearly hourly during the week between 5 AM and 10 PM. Weekend service is half as frequent generally between 7:30 AM and 12:30 AM. Parking at the MBTA is free for commuters with 71 reserved spaces available weekdays. The spaces are open to the public at large on weekends and during the summer they are used extensively by beach goers. There are four MBTA crossings in town and three MBTA bridges. Based on the most current census data 12% of Manchester's workforce commutes using the train.

The Council on Aging provides transportation services to seniors at no charge weekdays from 8:30 AM to 3 or 4 PM within Manchester and from Gloucester to Peabody. In addition to privately scheduled trips, the COA vans provide weekly trips to the Market Basket supermarket, monthly trips to the North Shore Mall, Trader Joe's and other retailers and monthly outings typically to North Shore venues. Van services serve an average of 8 to 16 riders a day.

Manchester's sidewalk system runs along most major local roads including Route 127, Pine Street, Pleasant Street, School Street, Norwood Avenue and Beach Street and many roads that connect these roads to each other. Roads into subdivisions and local non-connecting roads away from town center generally lack sidewalks. A 2017 sidewalk and crosswalk inventory completed as part of the Compete Streets Prioritization Plan process provides a comprehensive overview of the sidewalk network.

Off road trails in Manchester provide access to open spaces and are primarily used for recreation.

The principal transportation challenges in Manchester-by the-Sea are parking, seasonal congestion Downtown due to beach related traffic and parking, and congestion around the schools during pick up and drop off. Reducing travel speed throughout the town is also a priority. The Town has identified a number of strategies for improving transportation and circulation throughout town including increasing

options for public transit, increasing walkability and bikeability through improved infrastructure including sidewalks, bike and walking paths and safer intersections, and decreasing areas of congestion possibly by establishing truck routes and one way streets, and improving parking options and management.

## e. Public Facilities and Services

Manchester-by-the-Sea’s public facilities represent a substantial public investment and are critical to the operations of the Town and to the quality of life of Manchester’s residents. High standards of maintenance will help assure that the facilities support municipal services and meet community needs for the longest period of time. However, even well maintained buildings can fail to meet new or expanded program needs, become obsolete due to technological advances or become worn to the extent that replacement is more economically feasible than repair.

In 2016, the Town began an initial assessment of its public facilities to help identify current and future needs. The assessment did not include schools since they are the responsibility of the Manchester Essex Regional School District. The study identified DPW facilities as most in need of immediate repair or replacement and offered recommendations and approximate costs for repair and replacement options for other facilities with short term needs as well.

New DPW facilities	\$3.5-\$6 M	Upgrades to Town Hall	\$3.0 – \$5.5 M
Upgrades or new Police Station	\$2.5 -\$4.0 M	Upgrades to Library	\$9.0 M
Upgrades, new WWTF within 10 yrs	\$13 M – N/A	Maintenance on WTF	N/A
Maintenance on FD	N/A	Harbor Master facility	\$0.5 M
Senior Center	\$2.5 M		

### Town Hall & Seaside I

Built in 1970, the 2 ½ story masonry building offers 6,000 square feet of space for offices and two public meeting rooms. Departments in Town Hall include:

Administration	Assessing and Building
Accounting and Treasurer	Town Clerk
Department of Public Works office	Health
Parks and Recreation	Council on Aging
Harbormaster	Police

Seaside No. 1 is a 2 story wood frame building constructed in 1885 to house Manchester-by-the-Sea's first horse-drawn fire engine. It also served as the Town’s Police Station until 1970. Following renovations through the 1970s, the first floor became a limited access museum displaying two antique fire engines and memorabilia about the fire and police department. The space is also used for small group meetings. The second floor of Seaside I currently houses the departments of Land Planning and Conservation.

The Town is looking at options for optimizing services in Town Hall and meeting departmental needs. Options being considered include moving departments including Police, Council on Aging and Harbor Master from Town Hall to other locations. Each move would be dependent on a new facility for that department.

While Town Hall is less than 50 years old, its interior design and outdated system elements create challenges that should be addressed to improve functionality and efficiency. Town Hall also faces

environmental challenges. The Town Hall site lies partially within the FEMA flood plain and currently experiences some level of flooding during exceptionally high tides, particularly when coupled with storm surge. Rising sea level will require that the Town raise barriers to the rising waters, raise the buildings on the site, or move facilities to other sites. Each improvement to Town Hall should be considered in light of these environmental challenges.

Upgrades with relocation of Police Station off site - \$3.0 M

Upgrades and expansion of Police Station at Town Hall - \$5.5 M

## **Police**

Manchester's Police Department is located in Town Hall primarily within the western wing. The 3,800 square feet of space is considered significantly undersized for the existing staff and services provided. A number of privacy and security issues also exist due to building constraints. The 2017 Public Facilities Master Plan estimates another 4,000 square feet of space is needed to bring the Police Station in line with needs.

Expansion of Police Station at Town Hall - \$2.5 M

New Police Station at other Town-owned site - \$4.0 M

## **Fire**

Manchester's Fire Station built in 1974 is meeting current needs and is projected to meet future needs through at least 2030 with the continuation of strategic improvements and on-going maintenance. While the station is in good repair, the site lacks adequate public and private parking. The site also experiences flooding during unusually high tides when coupled with a heavy rain event.

There is some discussion about a combined fire and police (public safety ) facility. If a new Police Station is the preferred option prior to the need for any major upgrades to the Fire Station, it may make sense to develop a new public safety facility in phases, completing the police station first and adding on the fire station when needed.

## **Library**

Manchester's beautiful ashlar stone library building designed by Charles P. McKim was gifted to the Town by summer resident, Thomas Jefferson Coolidge in 1887. The only addition to the building has been the children's room that was added in 1965, funded by Friends of the Library.

Improvements have been on-going since 1988 with lighting upgrades, the addition of air conditioning, masonry restorations, interior restorations, and most recently utility upgrades. Funding has typically come from capital campaigns, gifts, and Community Preservation Funds.

While ongoing upgrades and attention to maintenance have positioned the Library to meet current needs, growing programs and an expanding user base indicate that expanding the Library in ten to twenty years should be considered. The Town should exercise its right of first refusal on the property to the rear of the Library should the property come on the market.

Long term expansion \$9 million

### **Department of Public Works (DPW)**

Department of Public Works operation facilities at 85 R Pleasant Street include a vehicle garage, salt shed, and another small utility building, along with a disconnected gas pumping station. The DPW administrative office is in Town Hall. The old cinder block and wood frame buildings at the Pleasant Street site have received minimum maintenance and upgrades and are at the end of their useful lives.

The cost of upgrading the existing DPW garage with 40% more space and building a new salt shed at its existing site is similar in cost to building a new facility at another Town-owned site. Building a new facility would also create the opportunity to remove this intrusive municipal use out of a densely developed residential neighborhood. If it is decided to re-locate the DPW facilities, the sale or lease of the land will cover the cost of building a new facility on other Town-owned land.

Upgrade \$3.5 M

New \$6.0 M

### **Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF)**

Manchester's Waste Water Treatment Facility on the waterfront behind Town Hall was built in 1972 and was last upgraded in 1999. A 2015 Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan concluded that existing wastewater treatment facilities would be able to provide the required treatment over the twenty year planning period provided a number of equipment improvements are made.

As the Town looks ahead to the end of the useful life of the WWTF, it has the opportunity to evaluate new options for wastewater treatment including changing over to a flood-proof pump station to pipe sewage for processing to a new treatment center elsewhere in town or to Beverly. Removing the treatment operations from its current location provides an exciting opportunity for redevelopment on the Downtown waterfront.

Upgrades within next ten years \$13M

### **Water Treatment Facility (WTF)**

The Town's Water Treatment Facility located in Hamilton is in excellent condition. It also has about 2,500 square feet of excess office space that could be considered for other Town functions. The site itself may also offer options for additional public facilities. The 2017 Public Facilities Master Plan included a conceptual study of youth athletic fields and parking on the undeveloped portion of the site.

### **Schools**

The MERSD has three schools that serve the needs of the district. The Middle High School is the newest of the buildings and is in very good condition as it enters its second decade of service. Various mechanical systems however, will be needing upgrades soon. The Essex Elementary School is some 60 years old but it is in good condition. However, it will need extensive renovation or replacement in 10 years or so. The third school, the Memorial Elementary School in Manchester, is nearly 70 years old and is in poor condition. The MSBA program noted that the building was one of the worst shape school

buildings in the state. Voters have approved replacing the school with completion scheduled for 2021. The District maintains a synthetic turf field at the high school that will need to be replaced soon.

## f. Open Space and Recreation

Manchester-by-the-Sea is blessed with abundant open space from the public parks and beaches along its scenic coast to hundreds of acres of connected and undeveloped uplands and wetlands along its northern border to open pastures and pockets of woodlands throughout town with varied topography, vegetation and water resources. Thanks to a history of benevolence and private and public actions over 1,600 acres representing 32% of the town's total land area are partially or fully protected. These natural landscapes along with the town's managed parks are central to Manchester's rural character, provide for a great variety of recreational pursuits and contribute to the environmental health of the town and the region. Ownership and management of these lands vary and include the Town of Manchester, The Manchester Essex Conservation Trust, and The Trustees of Reservation.

### *Public Open Spaces*

Manchester's open spaces are critical for preserving the town's environmental resources including water supplies, flood storage, varying habitats and the creatures they serve. As well, many of the open spaces contribute to the expansive network of trails for hiking, bicycling, dog walking, winter trekking, snow-shoeing and cross country skiing that stretch across hundreds of acres. Some key open spaces include the following.

**The Wilderness Conservation Area**, owned by Manchester Essex Conservation Trust (MECT) and the Town of Manchester includes 3400 acres of undisturbed woodland (Over 300 acres in Manchester) stretching from western Gloucester through northern Manchester and southern Essex into Hamilton and Wenham. This unique woodland is registered with the Commonwealth's Natural Heritage Program that keeps track of natural environments of particular worth and includes areas recognized as Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape.<sup>2</sup> **Cedar Swamp, Millstone Hill, Cheever Commons, and Cathedral Pines Conservation Areas** are all part of this expanse of protected open space north of Route 128 between School and Pine Streets. The Area's trail system traversing over varied terrain is well used throughout the year.

**Agassiz Rock** offers 124 acres north of Route 128 and east of School Street. The popular destination features trails among its natural woodlands, and includes uplands, swampland, vernal pools and dramatic examples of large boulders plucked from bedrock and carried by the glaciers.

**Cranberry Pond and Rattlesnake Den**, south of Route 128 and east of school Street, includes around 40 acres of woodlands with a pond, rocky outcrops and glacial erratic boulders. A trail system runs throughout, connecting to path systems in Dexter Pond, Agassiz Rock and water department lands in Gloucester.

**Dexter Pond Conservation Area** includes around 30 acres of forested uplands, bordering wetlands and a nearly 3-acre pond with a perimeter trail. The Pond offers recreation opportunities for skaters when it freezes.

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<sup>2</sup> Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape are designations given to natural areas of particular ecological value as identified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

**Long Hill Conservation Area** is a 118-acre woodland with areas designated as Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape. It offers paths, cart paths and local roads providing access to Dexter Pond, Long Hill, the Hooper-Trask Pasture and out to Kettle Cove.

**Kettle Cove Marsh** is a 26 acre salt-water marshland with tidal estuaries, appreciated for kayaking, fishing, birdwatching and nature study.

**Coolidge Reservation** showcases an unusual variety of natural settings and a notable collection of diverse habitats within its 66 acres on Coolidge Point. Trails expose travelers to ocean vistas, rocky outcrops, woodlands, wetlands, a sandy beach, and the expanse of the Ocean Lawn.

**Eagle Head Wildlife Study Area**, a 27-acre open space abutting Sweeney Park near the geographical center of town, is wooded and hilly and historically offered trails and a high overlook to the ocean.

**Wyman Hill, Christian Hill, Great Hill, Owl's Nest and Brookwood Conservation Areas** are part of the greenway corridor of predominantly hilly woodlands in western Manchester south of Route 128. Cart paths and trails crisscross the area.

**Winthrop Field**, off Bridge Street just west of town center, is 12 acres of a beautiful wet meadow, stream, and upland field. It is primarily managed for bird habitat, a viewshed, and passive recreation.

For a full list of public and privately protected parcels see the Manchester-by-the-Sea Open Space and Recreation Plan.

#### *Public Facilities for Active Recreation*

The town's active recreational facilities include athletic fields and courts, playgrounds, parks and beaches. They support a variety of athletic and recreation programs and opportunities.

**Masconomo Park** and **Reed Park** are located near Downtown on the water's edge. At over 7 acres, they include a baseball/softball field, a playground, docks, a commercial fishing pier and a bandstand as well as parking. The parks host a variety of community events and are popular with visitors of all ages.

**Sweeney Park** at 12.6 acres is the town's largest recreational site. It includes two ball diamonds and two basketball courts as well as parking. The diamonds' outfields are also used for youth soccer and other field sports.

**Coaches Field** is a nearly 5 acre park that abuts the Memorial Elementary School. The artificial turf field is used for a variety of field sports. The park also includes two tennis courts and a parking lot.

**Tuck's Point** at 5.4 acres is primarily used for access to the harbor and parking, though it has both a small playground and beach. It is a principal launching site for car-top watercrafts and has over 250 feet of dock space. The historic Chowder House is rented throughout the summer and fall for small to medium size events, while the iconic rotunda, in addition to providing a beautiful over the water experience is often a prop for wedding and other pictures.

**Singing Beach**, just over a mile from Downtown, includes 12 acres of beach and dunes, an acre of parking and a snack bar. It is one of the most beautiful beaches on the North Shore drawing up to 4,000 visitors a weekend day during the height of the season.

Other public beaches in town include: **Black Beach, White Beach, Magnolia Beach and West Manchester Beach.**

In addition to Town owned sites, the Manchester Essex Regional School District controls a large artificial turf multi-purpose field at the High School and three tennis courts at the Elementary School.

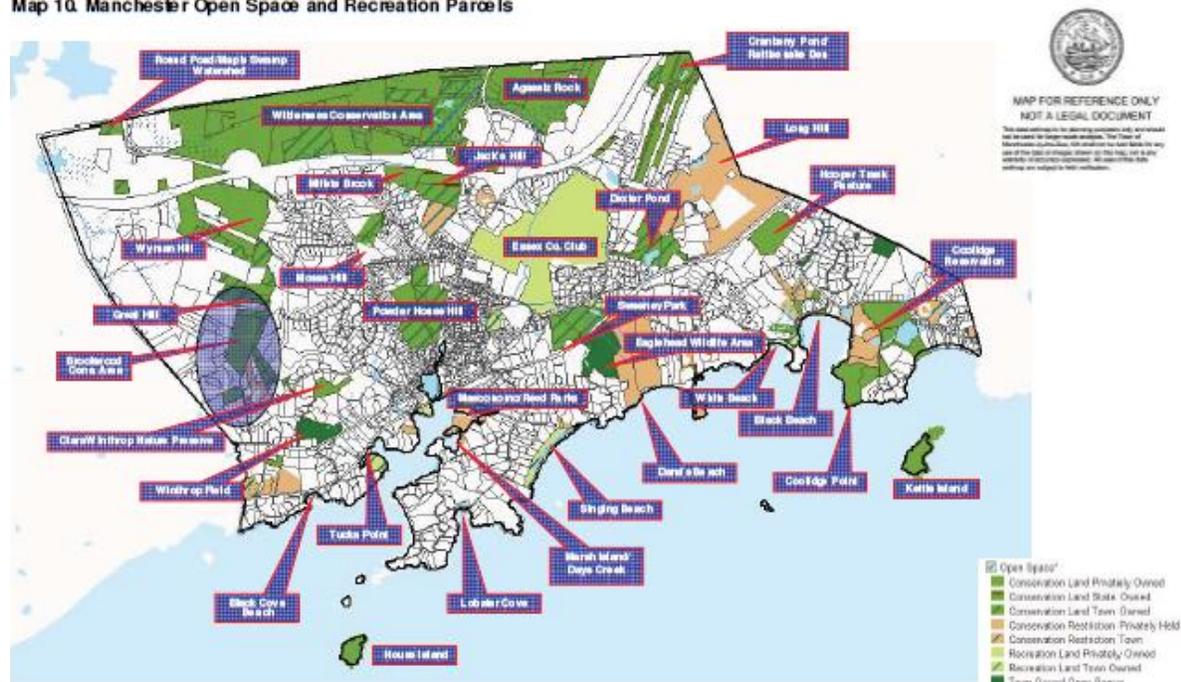
### Public Recreational Programs

The Manchester-by-the-Sea Parks and Recreation Department prides itself on offering programs and services to serve all ages and abilities. Programs range from adult programs such as Zumba for Senior Citizens to pre-school programs and after school childcare. Some of the Department's most popular programs include the long running Summer Playground program that serves over 200 children, the Winter Basketball program with over 250 participants and the Licensed After School Program that registers about 70 children. The Department also offers programs that have fewer participants but are equally important such as adult programs including Yoga on the Beach, archery and first aid and smaller youth programs such as voice lessons, sewing and coding.

The Parks and Recreation Department's biggest challenge is space. For example, the Department rents space from The Manchester-Essex Regional School District, but building the rental fees into the price of the program can sometimes make the program cost prohibitive.

The Parks and Recreation Department also oversees all field use in the town and has documented that there is not enough field space to meet existing or projected needs. Youth leagues continue to grow and the Department would expand its offerings if space allowed.

Map 10. Manchester Open Space and Recreation Parcels



e: 2014 Manchester-by-the-Sea Open Space and Recreation Plan

## **g. Natural and Cultural Resources**

Natural Resources when considered separately from open space include water and the landforms that constrain it, soils and topography, vegetation, and wildlife. Cultural resources include buildings, sites, infrastructure and items that provide information about the activities of residents of an earlier time. Protecting, preserving and honoring the town's natural and cultural resources remain a top priority and will be considered as policies and regulations are developed and initiatives undertaken.

### *Water*

Manchester contains a wide variety of surface and ground water resources, including streams, ponds, aquifers, wells, wetlands, vernal pools and coastal resources. These water resources provide distinct, though often overlapping functions — providing public and private drinking water supplies, flood control, wildlife habitat, nature study opportunities and passive recreational opportunities.

Manchester's public drinking water comes from two sources — a deep well located in the area near Lincoln Street and two surface-water ponds located in the Town of Hamilton: Round Pond and Gravelly Pond. Both sources draw on extensive watersheds that include parts of neighboring communities. Manchester has in reserve a large aquifer under Cedar Swamp, which lies north of Route 128 and is shared with the Town of Essex. Control of surficial sources of potential contamination, such as road runoff, and sedimentation due to erosion is essential to protect water quality in Manchester.

Manchester benefits from floodplain swamps in wooded areas that provide a large, though incomplete, measure of flood control for homes during most rainfall events. Maintaining fully functioning floodplains, in coordination with improving stormwater infrastructure will help control and reduce the danger of future flooding.

Brooks and streams drain lands within Manchester and beyond and are not only beautiful landscape features and exceptional habitats, but also critical components of the Town's drainage network. Waters within the bounds of the brooks and streams, gradually release water into underlying aquifers, and other water bodies, including swamps, ponds and the ocean. Maintaining vegetation and the integrity of brook and stream banks, and taking measures to help control the intensity of water flow are important to protect these critical assets.

Manchester Harbor is a large tidal estuary around which the town is situated, and it forms the town's geographic center. Two major streams, Sawmill Brook and Bennett's Brook, as well as a few intermittent streams flow into the harbor. To assure that Manchester Harbor is a healthy ecosystem and a vibrant boatable harbor, the Town must be vigilant in preserving water quality and existing plant and animal communities and continue to maintain harbor depth through a strategic dredging program. See the Maintaining Manchester Harbor Recommendations from the Harbor Dredging Advisory Committee revised in June 2017 for more information.

### *Soils and Topography*

Manchester's varied topography is a distinctive landscape feature accounting for beautiful backdrops, overlooks, and perches. In the town's valleys, along brooks and other wetlands the soils are generally

marine silts and clays. Shallow-to-bedrock and rocky soils, however, account for most of the town's soils. These soils tend toward fast runoff, a characteristic that must be considered as the Town looks to protect and manage its resources.

### *Vegetation*

Manchester's vegetative communities are a mixture of forestlands and fresh and saltwater wetlands that along with, rocky open summits, water-bodies, and a network of streams and tributaries support specialized communities of plants. The town's varied forms of vegetation are important as habitat, and to support water infiltration, water quality and flow, and to cool and clean the air.

According to Patricia Swain, Ecologist with the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Manchester has areas of possible Primary Forest. These are not "Old Growth" forests, as they have been harvested and pastured, but the ground may never have been tilled. The importance of primary forest sites is that they retain more native biodiversity than sites that have been tilled. The areas of possible primary forest are in the western hilly area, lands north of 128 and generally north and east of Forest Street to Long Hill. Surveys of the soil structure in the individual sites are necessary to determine whether those sites are primary forest.

### *Wildlife*

With widespread forestlands, wetlands and coastal areas, Manchester supports large populations of wildlife and aquatic life. While any size pocket of natural habitat will benefit some species, continuous or connected habitats that allow wildlife to move over a larger area are beneficial to a much larger population. Efforts to increase the size of wildlife corridors, to allow for a diversity of habitats, and to preserve buffers along streams to maintain shade and filter inflowing sediments are important for maintaining and improving wildlife habitat.

Much of the information pertaining to Natural Resources is excerpted from the 2014 Manchester-by-the-Sea Open Space and Recreation Plan. See the full Plan for a more comprehensive discussion of environmental resources in Manchester-by-the-Sea.

### *Historic Buildings and Landscapes that contribute to Community Character*

The Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea established a historic district encompassing most of Downtown area in 1975 to highlight the importance of these resources. The buildings in the District represent vernacular architecture from the 17th to the early 20th Century, and include commercial, residential and institutional properties. Of particular note is the Trask House that today is home to the Manchester Historical Museum and Seaside No. 1 that was constructed in 1885 to house Manchester-by-the-Sea's first horse-drawn fire engine. Forster Cemetery, Tappan Cemetery, the 1661 Cemetery, and the Manchester Common are also some of the District's main sites.

While the historic district focuses attention on the historic architecture and development patterns in the town's core, there are also numerous historic and cultural resources outside the district including the Crowell Chapel, coastal parks, estates from the Gilded Era, and the Harbor's boatyards to name a few. Whether these resources continue to serve their original purpose or have been adapted to serve a new use, they continue to provide insight into the town's past and contribute to the visual qualities that make Manchester unique.

The Crowell Chapel, a gothic looking stone structure surrounded by the Rosedale Cemetery was built in 1903 and donated to the Town to be used for many years for funeral and mortuary services. In the early 1980s the Town petitioned the Commonwealth to modify the trust to include weddings, recitals and readings or similar uses. The Chapel was restored and updated with fire safety equipment with Community Preservation Act Funding from 2009 through 2017 and today is available for rent for events with up to 150 people.

Following the Civil War, Manchester began a new chapter with the development of coastal parks and the start of grand summer estates. During what came to be called the Gilded Era, the Town purchased land at Tuck's Point creating its first harbor park. The Rotunda built in 1896 is perhaps the harbor's most distinct landmark. It extends into the harbor providing an excellent view of the channel and Misery Islands. Improved in 2008, and 2011 and repaired in 2018 with funding from the Community Preservation Act Fund, the Rotunda is open to the public and is frequently used for wedding, graduation and family portraits. Tucks Chowder House preceded the park, built first in 1880. It has been moved and updated over the years, most recently in 2018 with Community Preservation Act funding. The Chowder House today includes a small kitchen, and is rented for events large and small throughout the summer and fall seasons.

Masconomo Park was another public celebration of the waterfront during this era. The Town purchased the area in 1903 and hired the famed Olmstead firm to design a beautiful park. While the design was never fully implemented, the park has continued to evolve to serve the town's needs and is a well-used and loved community park.

Grand ocean-side estates also started to be prominent in the late 1800's and continued at an aggressive pace through the First World War. These grandiose summer homes and luxurious grounds offer a glimpse into the era when the wealthy sought out scenic coastal towns where they could spend summers in grand style to escape the hot industrial cities. Many of these homes continue today as single family homes, though generally with far fewer employees.

Boatyards were also a product of the Gilded Era, arriving after the Harbor's first dredging and catering to the new yachting public. Today the town's boatyards anchor the inner harbor and are principal contributors to the commercial tax base and to community character.

Preserving and celebrating the town's natural and cultural resources remains a high priority.

## h. Resiliency

*Resilience refers to the capacity of a system to withstand and respond to an event or trend in ways that allow that system to maintain its essential function while also maintaining the capacity for adaption. In this Master Plan, we have looked at the town's resilience to the impacts of climate change.*

As a coastal community, Manchester-by-the-Sea is particularly attuned to the impacts of climate change. Rising sea levels and the effects of extreme weather events have created and will continue to create challenges that must be met. To strengthen its resiliency to climate change, the Town has looked to both mitigation measures that address the causes of climate change and adaption measures that address the impacts of climate change.

Manchester's municipal mitigation measures may be considered to have started in earnest with the appointment of the Manchester Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee that focuses directly on measures that can be taken to avoid the increase of pollutant emissions. Their efforts have included:

- Greater energy efficiency in municipal buildings – upgraded systems, windows, and lighting
- Greater energy efficiency through conversion of street lights to LED
- Support for efficient means of transportation through installation of electric charging stations
- Efforts to increase use of renewable energy by looking for sites for photo-voltaic installations

The Town's Bike and Pedestrian Committee also supports mitigation measures by working to create a network of streets, sidewalks, paths and trails that promote walking and biking and reducing citizens' dependence on their cars.

The Town is also focusing on adaptation measures aimed at reducing the town's vulnerability to the effects of climate change in particular flooding, but also other weather related hazards including drought, storms and rising sea level.

Many of the Town's adaption projects have been initiated through studies funded by grants. In the past five years the Town has received over \$400,000 in grant funding for studies and for advancing projects that have resulted from the studies:

**2014 Climate Change Impacts Study** funded by a Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This was the first Town study to identify impacts of climate change on the Town and recommend actions.

**2015 Downtown Low Impact Development Feasibility Study** funded by a Coastal Pollutant Remediation Grant from Coastal Zone Management (CZM). The focus of the feasibility study was on identifying and defining LID BMP solutions that reduce flooding, improve water quality and are workable within the Town's urbanized Downtown setting.

**2015 Sawmill Brook Culvert and Green Infrastructure Assessment** funded by CZM's Coastal Community Resilience Grant Program . The Assessment documents existing conditions within the Sawmill Brook watershed, and identifies opportunities for flood reduction including flood storage, culvert

improvements, and green stormwater infrastructure to mitigate current and potential future flooding, while simultaneously providing water quality and habitat benefits.

**2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and 2016 Enhancement** funded by FEMA through its PDM grant program . This project identifies risks and vulnerabilities in Manchester associated with natural disasters, and offers long-term strategies for protecting people and property from future hazard events. Climate change impacts determined by the 2014 FEMA funded study were incorporated in the updated HMP. Examples of mitigation include raising seawalls to protect against more intense storms; resizing culverts to reduce flooding, developing reliable warning systems, evaluating and implementing flood proofing measures for municipal facilities.

**2018 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan** funded by Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant through FEMA. This Plan identifies a series of actions the Town should take to address natural and climate related hazards. Examples include evaluating long term options for the Wasterwater Treatment Plant, enhancing emergency preparedness, protecting drinking water supplies, examining options for a more resilient Downtown and commuter rail, flood-proofing municipal facilities, and protecting parks, undeveloped land and conservation areas.

**2018 Sawmill Brook Feasibility Study** funded by Mass Environmental Trust (MET). This project monitored and evaluated conditions of Sawmill Brook at Central Street culvert to determine options for removing culvert to reduce flooding, improve habitat and improve water quality emptying into the harbor. The study showed removing the culvert would provide multiple benefits. The Town is implementing the study's recommendations.

As a coastal community with much at risk based on the current and future projections, Manchester must continue to take a proactive position to increase its understanding of the risks and opportunities and continue the process of discussing, developing, and implementing adaptive strategies to strengthen the town's resiliency to climate change.

## **i. Governance**

### **Open Town Meeting**

The Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea is governed by Open Town Meeting. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, this is the basic form of governance for most small municipalities. The town is the basic unit, and Town Meeting is the method provided by the Constitution and the State Legislature for the governance of towns. Town Meetings often are called the purest and most democratic form of government -- direct democracy where the town's business is discussed, debated and voted on by members of the community.

In the Open Town Meeting form of government, any registered voter may attend, speak, and vote; property ownership is not a requirement. State law requires the town to hold at least one Town Meeting each year in the early spring. This is an Annual Town Meeting, and the principal business of the Meeting is to appropriate money to fund the Town's expenses for the fiscal year which begins the following July 1st. The Annual Town Meeting allows for action on other subjects also. If additional matters come up following the Annual Town Meeting, they may become the subject of a Special Town Meeting which may be called by the Select Board or by citizen's petition.

### **Warrant**

The Warrant is the official agenda for an Annual or Special Town Meeting. It provides notice to the voters of matters to be considered and acted on. Articles (each item or issue to be acted on) in the Warrant can be quite general or very detailed and specific. Town departments and officials may request the Select Board to insert articles in the Warrant and citizens may also petition to place articles on a "Town Meeting" Warrant. Petitions require 10 signatures of registered voters for an Annual Town Meeting Warrant, 100 signatures for a Special Town Meeting. Copies of the Warrant are posted in the Town Hall (other places?) and on its website. Manchester also hand delivers Warrants(?) to each household in the community ?? weeks prior to Town Meeting by the Boy Scouts, a tradition of ?? years.

The elected Town Moderator serves as the presiding officer of Town Meeting, regulating the proceedings, deciding all questions of order and making public declaration of all votes. The Moderator's goal is to conduct the Town Meeting in a fair, yet expeditious manner, allowing all points of view and a fair hearing while still keeping the process moving.

### **Board of Selectmen**

Jointly, the five member Select Board serves as Chief Executive of the Town. As Manchester's principal elective officers, and in addition to their responsibilities under state and local law, the Select Board has general supervision over all matters that are not specifically delegated by law or by vote of the Town Meeting to some other officer or board. They are the only officers empowered to enter into contracts on behalf of the town.

The Select Board has the authority and responsibility to:

- provide general policy direction
- appoint and serve as hiring authority for the Town Administrator, Town boards and committees

- issue Annual and Special Town Meeting Warrants
- engage and supervise Town Legal Counsel and approve actions in litigation
- authorize all borrowing and all expenditures, including payroll
- act as the Town licensing board, issuing alcohol, and other licenses and permits
- adjudicate dog complaints not resolved by the Animal Control Officer
- permit public tree removals considering the advice of the Town’s Tree Warden
- publish the Annual Town Report
- oversee municipal property and risk management for the Town

**Town Administrator**

Manchester-by-the-Sea’s Town Administrator is appointed by the Board of Selectmen to serve as the town's chief administrative officer.

The town administrator has the responsibility to:

- act as the agent for the Board in the operation of town affairs
- appoint department heads, subject to confirmation by the Board
- appoint subordinates and employees in consultation with the department head, board, commission or committee
- supervise, direct and be responsible for the efficient administration of all departments and employees under the jurisdiction of the Board

**Town Departments**

Manchester-by-the-Sea is served by seventeen departments with 70 full-time and around 120 part-time or seasonal employees that provide basic governing, social, health and safety services consistent with most other small towns in Massachusetts. Town Departments include:

- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Accounting       | Parks and Recreation    |
| Assessing        | Planning                |
| Building         | Police                  |
| Conservation     | Public Works            |
| Council on Aging | School District         |
| Fire Department  | Tax Collector/Treasurer |
| Harbor Master    | Town Clerk              |
| Health           | Veterans’ Services      |
| Library          |                         |

**Boards and Committees**

There are currently over 45 Boards, Committees and Advisors appointed by the Board of Selectmen with over 300 members that help with the vital work of the Town.

**Elected**

- Planning Board
- School Committee
- Manchester Housing Authority Board

- Town Moderator
- Town Constable
- Library Board of Trustees

**Appointed**

- 375th Committee
- ADA Committee
- Affordable Housing Trust
- Animal Control Board
- Board of Assessors
- Bike and Pedestrian Committee
- Cable TV Representative
- Chebacco Woods Land Management
- Coastal Stream Team
- Community Preservation Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Council on Aging
- Cultural Council
- Downtown Improvement Project Committee
- Dredging Committee
- Emergency Response Coordinator
- Emergency Management Director
- Finance Committee
- Harbor Advisory Committee

- Board of Health
- Historic District / Historic Commission
- July 4th Committee
- Library Trustee
- MBTA Advisory Committee
- Manchester Energy Efficiency Program
- North Shore Home Consortium Representative
- North Shore Regional Vocational Technical School Committee
- North Shore Task Force Rep.
- Open Space and Recreation
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Board of Registrars
- Seaside One Committee
- Sustainability Committee
- Welcoming Committee
- Winthrop Field Committee
- Tree Warden
- Shellfish Warden

With around 500 individuals working to govern, serve and support the Town, coordination, communication and transparency are vitally important. They are also challenging. Following are some identified challenges the Town is looking to overcome.

- Diversity of issues
- Overlap of interest/issues
- Competing interests

Town officials, staff and volunteers are responsible for a diversity of issues that sometimes are handled or influenced by multiple departments, boards, and committees. Often the departments, boards and committees have aligned interests, and challenges are limited to communications, coordination and scheduling. But sometimes interests seem to be or are in fact at odds. Working together to identify and resolve competing interests is important. When competing interests are identified, those involved may best serve the community by seeking common ground, compromise and a win/win solution.

- Lack of information
- Incomplete information
- Misinformation
- Difficulty sharing information

When officials, staff, volunteers and residents do not have the information required to fully consider an issue, fragmented or misinformation sometimes fills the void. The result can be discussions, deliberations and conclusions that are less than effective. It is vitally important that accurate and complete information is available to all interested in a timely fashion. The Town is challenged by this because individuals seek information from such a large array of sources, each with their own limitations: newspapers, websites, social media, mailings, community meetings and other information sharing opportunities.

- Staff capacity
- Lack of familiarity with policies and procedures

Other obstacles that the Town is looking to overcome include staff capacity, and lack of familiarity with policies and procedures. Sharing information and engaging the community can add many staff hours to projects at any stage. However, the downsides of not taking the time to do so can be confusion, distrust and disruption. Creating an effective and efficient framework for sharing information and engaging community members is important for supporting the community discussion and decisions that move projects forward.

Policies and procedures have been instituted over the years to establish consistency and predictability. Yet many new to a position or a process are unfamiliar with these operating principles and find it difficult to understand how and why decisions are made and who is responsible for making them. Creating a policy and procedures database that can be easily accessed should be part of larger plan to improve community access to government.

i.

## B. The Master Planning Process

The 2019 Manchester Comprehensive Master Plan is the result of a four year planning process that engaged community members to

- build consensus around the future direction of Manchester-by-the-Sea (Phase I – Visioning)
- identify preferred opportunities for preservation and change, (Phase II: Study of Options)
- develop a set of recommendations to guide Town leaders, staff and volunteers in directing future growth, preserving and managing natural resources, and developing and maintaining public infrastructure and facilities in support of the community vision. (Phase II: Recommendations)

<b>Phase I Visioning</b>	March 2015	Master Plan Committee Formed
	February – October 2016	Internal Visioning: Boards, Committees & Department Stakeholder Interviews
	July – November 2016	Community Visioning: Focus Groups, Survey and Open House
	December 2016	Community Vision and Report Adopted
<b>Phase II Options Recommendations</b>	January – September 2017	Land Use, Housing, Economic Development Options: Work Groups and Community Forums
	October 2017 – March 2018	Land Use, Housing, Economic Development Recommendations and Report: Board and Committee Meetings, Work Group, Community Forum and Survey
	April – December 2018	Draft Master Plan: Board and Committee Meetings, Community Forum
	January 2019	Comprehensive Master Plan Adopted
<b>Phase III Implementation</b>	On-going	Align Town Policies, Budgets, Regulations and Initiatives to Master Plan Implement Recommendations Annually Assess Progress and Report Update Master Plan by 2028 or Before

### Phase I – Visioning

Community Visioning is the critical first phase of the Master Plan process. Its purpose is to engage community members to think about and share ideas about the town’s future. Helping residents identify what they like about the community and what they think should change brings awareness to core values that are shared. Differences and concerns also become apparent and are part of the community’s dialogue. But what residents overwhelmingly have in common, what they value, and what they collectively support is what is captured in the Community Vision. This Community Vision then becomes the foundation for the Master Plan. It is the community directive that all resulting recommendations must support.

## **Phase II –Options and Recommendations**

Phase II of the Master Plan process identifies and assesses options the community has or can create and identifies, tests, and prioritizes recommendations to address issues of housing, economic development, circulation, natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation, public facilities and services, land use, sustainability and resiliency, and governance. Phase II continues to engage the public in this study of options and in the development of recommendations that will support the Community Vision.

### **Implementation**

The 2019 Comprehensive Master Plan will serve as a guide for decision making by elected officials, Town staff, board and committee members. Capital plans, department budgets, policies, regulations and initiatives should all be aligned with the Community Vision. Master Plan recommendations form a series of action plans that can be implemented over time. Progress should be evaluated and reported on annually at Town Meeting at a minimum, and more regularly in a variety of ways to the community.

The Town should plan for a Master Plan update by 2030 or sooner if conditions or opportunities change or if the current Plan no longer provides effective guidance.

## C. Contributing Plans, Studies, and Reports

Recently completed plans, studies and reports undertaken as part of or outside the master planning process provided the necessary information, analysis and recommendation on a number of the elements to be addressed in the Master Plan. In some cases, recommendations only needed to be tested or reconfirmed to assure alignment with the community vision and responsiveness to this Plan's guiding principles.

### **2019 Pavement Management Plan and Summary**

Database of roadway surface conditions that identifies improvements needed by section, prioritizes projects and provides cost estimates by road section based on recommended repair.

[http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2594/Pavement\\_Management\\_Report\\_2019](http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2594/Pavement_Management_Report_2019)

### **2019 Sidewalk Inventory Report (Draft)**

Inventory and assessment of sidewalk conditions that identifies improvements needed and provides cost estimates based on recommended repair.

[http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2592/Sidewalk\\_Report\\_2019](http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2592/Sidewalk_Report_2019)

### **2018 Capital Efficiency Plan (Municipal Water)**

Identifies those elements of the water system needing rehabilitation, repair, or replacement that make the most efficient use of infrastructure dollars. The Plan provides a database and Geographic Information System (GIS) representation for each pipe segment within the town's underground piping system, prioritizes water distribution system piping improvements and provides estimated costs for water main replacement and rehabilitation.

[http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2600/Water\\_System\\_Report\\_2018](http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2600/Water_System_Report_2018)

### **2018 Wastewater Treatment Plan Evaluation**

Provides a comprehensive review of the WWTP and a recommended plan for improvements. It includes an outline of conceptual improvement projects, budgetary costs and an implementation schedule.

[http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2596/Waste\\_Water\\_Treatment\\_Plant\\_Report\\_2018](http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2596/Waste_Water_Treatment_Plant_Report_2018)

### **2018 Housing, Economic Development and Land Use Study**

Identifies and evaluates a number of smart growth development scenarios and offers recommendations to support housing, economic development and land use goals. The study

documents the planning process and outlines the approach used to evaluate and change the different scenarios.

[http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2476/Manchester-Final-Hs\\_EcDev\\_Land-Use\\_Report\\_Nov-14\\_2018](http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2476/Manchester-Final-Hs_EcDev_Land-Use_Report_Nov-14_2018)

### **2018 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan**

Identifies a series of actions the Town should take to address natural and climate related hazards. Community workshops were central to the planning process.

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/10/19/2017-2018-mvp-planning-grant-report-manchester.pdf>

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/10/19/manchester-mvp-2017-2018-attachment-a.pdf>

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/10/19/manchester-mvp-2017-2018-attachment-c.pdf>  
<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/10/19/manchester-mvp-2017-2018-attachment-c.pdf>

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/10/19/manchester-mvp-2017-2018-attachment-d.pdf>

### **2017 Water Treatment Plant Evaluation**

Includes asset inventory, condition of assets, prioritization of recommendations and cost estimates.

### **2017 Town Facilities Master Plan**

Evaluates the buildings that serve Town Government, the Department of Public Works, Fire, Police and Council on Aging to determine if they are meeting the current and near future needs of the community. The Plan identifies a program for each building, identifies and assesses potential development sites and provides options with conceptual budgets, site plans and evaluation criteria.

### **2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan**

Documents and maps existing road, sidewalk, trails and infrastructure and identifies gaps in the town's accessible transportation network. Offers a master list of potential complete street projects and ranks them based on safety, mobility, accessibility, and system continuity criteria. Provides concept designs with cost estimate and construction timeline for each.

[http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2595/Complete\\_Streets\\_Report\\_2017](http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2595/Complete_Streets_Report_2017)

### **2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan and 2016 Enhancement**

Identifies risks and vulnerabilities in Manchester associated with natural disasters, and offers long-term strategies for protecting people and property from future hazard events. Implementing the recommendations of the HMP is key to breaking the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage.

[http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2274/Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-Volume-I\\_FINAL-2018](http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2274/Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-Volume-I_FINAL-2018)

### **2016 Manchester-by-the-Sea Wastewater Management Plan**

Builds upon the findings of earlier studies that identified and evaluated wastewater needs to identify possible alternatives to accommodate those needs, evaluate the cost effectiveness, feasibility and environmental impact of the alternatives, demonstrate that the final plan is achievable from legal, institutional, financial, and management perspectives, and provide the basis for subsequent design and construction.

[http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2598/Comprehensive\\_Waste\\_Water\\_Management\\_Plan\\_2016](http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/2598/Comprehensive_Waste_Water_Management_Plan_2016)

### **2016 Sawmill Brook Culvert and Green Infrastructure Analysis**

Documents existing conditions within the Sawmill Brook watershed, and identifies opportunities for flood reduction including flood storage, culvert improvements, and green stormwater infrastructure to mitigate current and potential future flooding, while simultaneously providing water quality and habitat benefits.

<http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/1145/Wastewater-Management-Plan>

### **2015 Town of Manchester Community Preservation Plan**

Identifies the Community Preservation Committees (CPC) mission, guiding principles, and target allocation goals.

<http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/1184/Town-of-Manchester-Community-Preservation-Plan>

### **2015 Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea Housing Production Plan**

Identifies demographic, economic and housing characteristics and trends, assesses housing needs, and offers strategies to help meet affordable housing goals.

<http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/1146/Manchester-by-the-Sea-Housing-Production-Plan>

### **2015 Downtown Low Impact Development (LID) Feasibility Study**

Identifies, defines, and assesses Low Impact Development (LID) Best Management Practice (BMP) solutions that reduce flooding, improve water quality and are feasible in the urbanized Downtown defined as along Center Street from Pine Street to Beach Street including the municipal parking area behind Town Hall. Recommended options assessed by suitability for site conditions and targeting pollutants, and cost.

<http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/1142/Downtown-Low-Impact-Development-Feasibility-Study>

**2014 Manchester-by-the-Sea Open Space and Recreation Plan**

Provides an assessment of Manchester's open space and recreational lands and programs and recommends a series of actions for managing and improving existing lands and enhancing and promoting their use. It also identifies additional resource protection opportunities.

<http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/1148/Manchester-by-the-Sea-Open-Space-and-Recreation-Plan>

**2014 Downtown Improvement Plan Phase II Concept Designs**

A series of concept designs that continue the work of Phase I street, sidewalk and other right-of-way improvements in Downtown Manchester.

<http://www.manchester.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/1143/Downtown-Improvement-Project---Phase-II-Concept-Plans>