

[Section Description from MAPC Scope of Services:

Town staff will provide MAPC with information regarding local services and facilities such as municipal buildings and land, schools including the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, and emergency services for inclusion in the Master Plan Update. If feasible, additional data such as local or regional health facilities, daycares, grocery stores, gyms, and other facilities and services that residents and businesses would look for when making location decisions would be helpful for inclusion in this section. This information will help provide the context to evaluate quality of life in Boxborough and how well local services and facilities meet current and future needs of the Boxborough community.]

LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Those who participated in the Master Planning process indicated the people, the services, and the character of Boxborough are some of the elements that make the town so special. This section focuses on the role, current level of service, and existing programs of the local government, the Police and Fire Departments, public schools, the Department of Public Works, public library, the elder and youth services, and other entities that contribute to the safety and community fabric of Boxborough.

Town Hall

The Town Hall on Middle Road houses the general government operations in 8,300 square feet of space. The building has almost 2,100 square feet of meeting room space, 1,800 square feet of office space, and 335 square feet of storage/archive space. The remainder is circulation, bathroom, and common space. Town Hall contains the offices of the Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Building Department, Planning Department, Assessor, Treasurer, Accountant, Tax Collector, Community Services Coordinator, and the Council on Aging. Most of the Town's boards and committees including the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, and other civic groups use Town Hall as well.

In 1990, Town Hall was expanded to include more office and meeting room space and a storage vault. At the same time, a handicapped accessible lift was installed. Even with the 3,600 square foot addition in 1990 addition, Town Hall is cramped with inadequate space for storage, offices, and meeting rooms. The complexities of technology and requirements for reporting have also changed, increasing the need for more physical space, including record storage and staff office space.

Police Department

The Boxborough Police Department is located in a 5,000 square foot building on Massachusetts Avenue/Route 111, adjacent to the Fire Station. The Police Department consists of 11 full-time police officers, including three Sergeants and a Chief, nine part-time officers, and five dispatchers/administrative staffers. The Police Department owns eight vehicles, six marked and two others. Motor vehicle issues consistently comprise a majority of the total incidents handled by the Police Department. These issues are normally followed in frequency by responses to requests for officers and burglar alarms.

Table X-1: Ten Most Frequent Incidents Requiring Police Assistance in 2010	
Suspicious Activity	638
Assist Citizens	628
Motor Vehicle Issues*	587
Arrests/Summons'	311
Burglar Alarms	162
Animal Complaints	158
911 Hang Ups	125
Disturbances	65
Larcenies	43
Breaking & Entering	23
Other Police Related Calls	179
Total	2,919

* Includes: accidents with and without injury, and traffic complaints.
 Source: Boxborough Police Department

The need for police patrols increases proportionally with population increases. Boxborough’s current staffing is consistent with national standards for police protection. The Police Department keeps records on response time, and is keenly aware of new development and/or development patterns that cause a reduction in the level of service provided.

Fire Department

The 4,625 square foot Fire Station in Boxborough is located on Massachusetts Avenue/Route 111. Around the clock coverage is provided by a combination of full-time, part-time, and per diem firefighters. The Fire Department consists of a full time Fire Chief, a Call Deputy Chief, two Full-Time Lieutenants, two Call Lieutenants, two Full-Time Firefighters, 20 Per Diem Firefighters/EMTs, and four Call Firefighters. The major duties of the Fire Department include responding to fires and other emergency situations, fire prevention inspections, public safety education, safety code regulation enforcement, issuing permits, and plan review and safety inspection for new buildings. The Fire Department maintains and operates an ambulance service staffed with EMTs for basic life support, and works in conjunction with a regional collaborative for Advanced Life Support assistance.

Since Boxborough has no municipal water supply, firefighters must bring water to where there is a fire by laying a line from a water source and/or by tanking operations. The water supply comes from a pond located next to the firehouse and from 17 fire ponds and 22 underground cisterns distributed around town to handle fire safety needs. Fire protection needs fluctuate with population changes, number of households, type of structures, and their locations. Over the past four years, the number of calls for assistance increased by 30%. Medical emergencies account for approximately 50% of the calls. Alarm responses and motor vehicle responses represent a majority of the fire related calls. In 2010, Interstate 495 accounted for more than 80% of the motor vehicle accidents.

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works (DPW) primary responsibilities are maintaining the local roadways, town buildings and grounds, cemeteries, conservation land, and operation of the transfer station.

Roads

The DPW is responsible for maintaining the public roads (except for Massachusetts Avenue/Route 111), including patching, repairing and resurfacing through use of Boxborough and State (MGL Chapter 90) funds. The DPW maintains roadway guard rails and safety structures, drainage systems and signage. The DPW is responsible for snow removal and de-icing to maintain the public roads and public building access areas and parking lots in a safe condition.

In the 2010-2011 winter season, the DPW instituted an “all salt” winter road treatment process, using a mix of sodium chloride and magnesium chloride, with no sand, following best practices adopted elsewhere and in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) recommendations. The new treatment process resulted in eliminating sanding with its deleterious environmental consequences and added expense of spring cleanup. With increased melting power efficiency, the all-salt treatment is requiring lower net levels of salt application per unit of road surface, resulting in lower salt infiltration into groundwater. The DPW is working in cramped quarters and does not have enough space to comfortably support current needs, such as vehicle maintenance, a shop for small construction items, and administrative office space.

Municipal Solid Waste

Boxborough does not provide trash collection services for its residents, but there is a Town-operated Transfer Station with a permitted capacity of 25 tons per week. While many families make use of the Transfer Station, some have private pick-up including most apartments and condos. The usual operating capacity is normally below 25 tons per week and at the end of the fiscal year, if excess permitted capacity remains, Boxborough engages in trash swapping with other Northeast Solid Waste Committee (NESWC) communities. In fiscal year 2000, Boxborough used 1,138 tons of the permitted 1,299 tons, or roughly 22 tons per week of the permitted 25 tons per week. According to the NESWC Strategic Planning Community Survey, approximately 1,003 households are served by the municipal solid waste and recycling programs, while private subscription haulers serve about 768 households. Boxborough estimates that 98.5% of the municipal solid waste in the town comes from single-family residences and the remainder from the multi-family residences.

Approximately 1,400 transfer station stickers were purchased in FY 2015. Single stream recycling was implemented in 2009. The annual collection rates are averaging 1,553 total tons of both recyclables and solid waste. In 2015, the Town has contracts with Waste Management and Wheelabrator North Andover for the trucking and disposal of recyclables and solid waste.

Town Buildings and Grounds, Cemeteries, and Conservation Land

The DPW maintains the public buildings and grounds, and is responsible for the mowing, landscaping, and tree trimming for each public building. This includes the North and South Cemeteries. The DPW Director works with the Cemetery Superintendent to carry out interments

and to ensure the grounds and buildings are properly maintained. There are approximately 15 burials per year and in roughly 30 to 40 years, all of the plots will be sold.

For extensive, non-routine landscape work or building maintenance, the DPW may work with appropriate department heads to contract and manage work to be carried out by outside parties. The DPW also works with the Conservation Commission to ensure that lands and selected trails are mowed and maintained on a seasonal basis. In addition, the DPW is responsible for operating, maintaining, and monitoring the Hager Well serving the Blanchard School, Sargent Library, and Police and Fire Stations, which includes filing required reports to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). The DPW currently contracts well technical and monitoring services to a state-certified agent.

Water Supply

The majority of single-family homes in Boxborough are served by private domestic wells. In addition, there are approximately 28 small public water systems (PWSs) serving the Town's facilities, businesses, and residential developments. Water for fire protection comes from a series of fire ponds and underground cisterns owned and maintained by the Town.

Virtually all of Boxborough's water comes from approximately 43 inches of annual rainfall. Although Boxborough does not have any lakes or ponds serving as public water supply, there are a few ponds and six streams within its borders that provide public safety resources and wildlife habitat. About 17% of the total land in Boxborough is wetland. Boxborough has four significant sand and gravel aquifers. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) estimates current water use at 122,542 gallons per day (GPD), based on 75 GPD per person and 1,000 square feet of gross floor area of commercial/industrial space. A 1994 report on Boxborough's water resources indicates that Boxborough has a groundwater supply that is sufficient to support the community at buildout under the existing zoning regulations.

In general, the groundwater supply in Boxborough often has high levels of iron, manganese, and sodium. Selected areas in town have experienced problems with nitrates, pathogens, MTBE, perchlorates, and radiological contaminants. Some homes and PWSs provide treatment for these contaminants. However, for some PWSs, compliance with MassDEP drinking water regulations is an ongoing issue. Of concern to the Town, private well owners, PWSs, and businesses are the issues of area-wide groundwater quality, potential contaminant sources, and fire protection. Among other concerns, businesses may have additional needs for processed water. Water supply is likely to play an important part in helping the town achieve its goals for economic development.

Continued reliance on watershed protection and numerous small water supply systems may not provide adequate protection for the public. In 2008, the Boxborough Water Resources Committee (WRC) completed a series of reports evaluating strategies for the town's water supply. The evaluation included identification of new water sources, recommendations for their long term protection, and a conceptual design of a new municipal water supply system serving the western part of Boxborough. Water quality problems have been documented in this particular area and it appears to be at greater risk for water issues due to the MassDOT salt storage silo in this area, zoning, land use patterns, and a concentration of industrial, commercial, and high

density residential uses. The WRC evaluation also included input from existing industrial and commercial interests.

Wastewater Treatment

Boxborough does not currently have a public sewer system and all residents and businesses are served by private septic systems. There are some larger wastewater treatment facilities that are regulated by MassDEP. These larger facilities include the Holiday Inn, Brook Village condominiums, Codman Hill Road condominiums, Harvard Ridge condominiums, Boxborough Meadows housing development, and Cisco Systems. In the last few years, a septic system was installed on the Hager land to serve the Blanchard Elementary School and Library with the potential for serving future needs of the Fire Station, Police Station, and DPW.

Education

The high quality of education in Boxborough is one of the many attributes that attracts residents to the town and keeps them invested in the community. In 2010, 97% of the children in Boxborough attended public schools, a rate higher than the state average. Boxborough is home to the Blanchard Memorial School, which houses grades K-6. The Blanchard Memorial School contains a library that coordinates with the Boxborough Town Library to provide services to students. In fiscal year 2010, education comprised 59.8% of the total general fund expenditures, according to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services. Boxborough sends its junior high students to R. J. Grey Junior High School and high school students to the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School and the Minuteman Regional High School.

Although the overall number of school-aged children was relatively steady for many years, it began to rise and fluctuate in 1992. In 1999 there were 644 students in grades K-6 but in 2000 that number fell to 631. At that time there were 46 teachers and 36 support staff at the Blanchard Memorial School, making the ratio of teachers to children close to 1:14. The average elementary classroom size was about 20 students while kindergarten classroom sizes ranged between 14 and 17 students.

Grade	<i>K</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	Total
# of Students	50	54	67	67	70	82	76	466

Source: Boxborough School Department

Race	Percent of District	Percent of State
Native American	0	.2
African American	1.6	8.2
Asian	27.6	5.5
Hispanic	2.3	15.4
White	68.5	68
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic		2.4
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander		

Source: Boxborough School Department
 Source: http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/enrollmentbyracegender.aspx

School	Grades	Boxborough Enrollment (2010)
Blanchard Memorial School	K - 6	466
R. J. Grey Junior High School	7 - 8	146
Acton-Boxborough Regional High School	9 - 12	420
Minuteman Regional High School	9-12	11
Total		1043

Source: Mass. Department of Education Website

Source: District database

Source: Minuteman Regional High School

Library

The Sargent Memorial Library opened in March of 2005 and since then circulation and building usage have increased enormously. Library cards are currently held by 4,476 residents. A ‘people counter’ installed at the front door recorded in Fiscal Year 2009 that 81,454 people passed through. Circulation of materials that year totaled 111,232, and 719 museum passes were given out. The meeting rooms were used 409 times that year by groups such as the school, the Town government, and numerous community groups proving that the rooms are a wonderful resource for the community. The large meeting room has also become a popular art gallery with constantly changing exhibits, adding to and displaying to the public the culture of Boxborough.

In particular, the library has benefited from the activities of two non-profit organizations. The Sargent Memorial Library Foundation, founded in 2003, which is responsible for an annual fund drive to benefit the development of the library’s materials collection. The other organization, the Friends of the Library, supports various programs at the library including a business campaign that funds many of the library’s popular museum passes.

The library strives to respond successfully to and remain flexible to the changing demographics of Boxborough’s population. As Boxborough’s population has aged, the collection of large-print books has expanded. Indian and Chinese books, newspapers, and weeklies have been added to ensure that all of Boxborough’s residents are welcome at the library. In the recent difficult economic times, the library has been especially important to residents who use the public access computers and who enjoy free access to books, newspapers, magazines, CDs, DVDs, and museum passes.

Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space

The Town owns over 1,250 acres of conservation and municipal land for recreation and open space purposes, accounting for roughly 20% of its 10.4 square miles. The Conservation Commission manages approximately 934 acres of this town property as conservation land. Many of these parcels have trails on them and the Boxborough Land Stewardship Committee (a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission) publishes a trail guide with trail maps and information about each parcel. Well-marked trails in town provide a variety of opportunities for recreation, from hiking and mountain biking, to cross-country skiing and horseback riding. The crown jewel of the conservation lands is Flerra Meadows on Stow Road which consists of 35

acres with ponds, a brook, hayfields, meadows, and wooded areas along with soccer fields and a ball field. Another valuable open space resource is Steele Farm on Middle Road managed by the Steele Farm Advisory Committee and the Conservation Commission. The view from Steele Farm is one of the town's most beautiful scenic vistas and the site includes a large open hay field, two small ponds, a historic farmhouse and barn, and remnants of an old apple orchard. In terms of recreation areas, there are three key properties that have been developed as parks with recreational facilities which are Flerra Meadows (as discussed above); Liberty Field with multiple soccer fields, a ball field, and bocce courts; and Fifer's Field which contains a soccer field.

There is also an active Conservation Trust in town which works to preserve undeveloped land in the community, coordinates with local land owners to explore opportunities for land conservation, and sponsors educational programs for town residents on the resources and benefits of land protection. Furthermore, almost 670 acres of land in Boxborough are enrolled in Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B, representing approximately 10% of the town's land area. These MGL Chapters restrict the use of land in exchange for reduced tax assessments for the property owners. Chapter 61 refers to managed forest land, Chapter 61A refers to agricultural land, and Chapter 61B refers to private recreation land. These are not permanent restrictions and must be applied for each year and for most sales of these properties, the Town holds a right of first refusal.

Senior Services

The Council on Aging (COA), a department in Town government, functions mainly in an advisory and social planning capacity and is charged with overseeing, monitoring, and advising the town's seniors, working in conjunction with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. In 2000, the percentage of seniors in Boxborough made up about 6.43% of the population. That number grew to 13.4% of the population in 2009. The rapid increase in the percentage of seniors in town is due in part to the increase in life expectancy, a drop in the number of families with children, and the availability of world class health care.

Significant improvements have been made in town during recent years to assist the growing senior population. A senior bus that makes regular daily runs to stores, medical and dental appointments, and other venues has been added at no expense to the Town. Sidewalks constructed along Massachusetts Avenue and road improvements on Swanson Road provide a safer walking experience. The Bocce Ball courts constructed at Liberty Fields and the walking paths on the Cisco Systems campus provide recreational opportunity for seniors.

With the absence of a business district, the junction of Middle Road and Massachusetts Avenue/Route 111 is considered the default town center. Many seniors must travel to this heavily trafficked area in order to enjoy the activities sponsored by the COA, the Friends of the COA, the United Church of Christ, the Sargent Memorial Library, and other organizations. Keeping this area as a likely place for senior recreational activities highlights a problem that will continue to grow as a greater number of the oldest, more vulnerable citizens in town are going to be further isolated due to a lack of transportation options. In 2011 the Town began leasing space for a Senior/Community Center in the UCC Fellowship Hall. Although this arrangement satisfactorily addresses the near term need for space for COA activities, providing a place for

seniors to congregate and socialize; in the future, it may be desirable to acquire suitable land near the town center for the construction of a Town-owned facility to provide these services.

Boxborough Emergency Reserve Corps

The Boxborough Emergency Reserve Corps (BERC) is a subcommittee of the Massachusetts Board of Health and a member of the Massachusetts Region 4a Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), a group of volunteers from 34 communities around Boston. The general purpose of the MRC is to create volunteer capacity to supplement the capacity of first responders in the event of local, regional, and national emergencies.

The BERC continues to work towards educating the public in an effort to raise awareness in the community. Exhibits at Fifer's Day, the Public Safety Open House, and at Council on Aging luncheons have already been presented, and there are future plans to present Emergency Preparedness lectures to various community groups. In conjunction with the Council on Aging, a database of seniors who desire well being checks in the event of disaster or extended periods of excessive heat or cold, has been developed. The efficiency of the first responder communication structure has also been strengthened. Two-way radios have been purchased using emergency preparedness funds for use by the Fire Department and BERC volunteers in the event of a disaster and a repeater has been purchased for the Police Department to supplement radio coverage in town.

At this time, the BERC requires additional volunteers, both medical and non-medical. Their goal is for about 10% of the population to be able to serve the various needs of the community in a local emergency. Current and any additional volunteers require up to date training in the Incident Command System (ICS), CPR, first aid, sheltering, and other emergency response techniques. A database of volunteers who have had Criminal Offense Record Investigation (CORI) checks, ICS training, and who have obtained medical credentials has been created in an effort to use volunteers as effectively as possible.

Technology Infrastructure

The Town is attempting to stay current with technological infrastructure. Electronic networks have been present for several years in Town Hall, the Police Department (with a small extension to the Public Works Department), the Fire Department, the Library, and the School. These "Local Area Networks" (LANs) have been linked together into a Town-wide "Wide Area Network" (WAN) allowing for the sharing of electronic resources and information between Departments and buildings.

Created in 2002, the Boxborough Information Technology (IT) Committee is responsible for advising the Town on all aspects of information technology and in developing and implementing technology strategies for the town. Comcast and Verizon both currently supply their services to the town, and Verizon is in the process of completing further coverage. The long standing lack of reliable cell phone coverage in parts of town remains an issue but there are no complaints or plans noted at this time, other than an action from the previous Master Plan to review and improve the Town's bylaws regarding cell tower siting.

The Wide Area Network (WAN) provides connectivity and bandwidth sufficient to allow live television transmission of committee meetings and Town Meeting, and has allowed for all Town computer systems to be made accessible by each other. Plans to identify and implement additional computer applications for the WAN continue to be developed and the committee continues to extend budget lowering strategies for the future. Live cable broadcasts are made regularly from the Grange Room in Town Hall and expanded service announcements and other information on Town government events have been added to the PEG channels in an effort to ensure important information is made available to the public.

Miscellaneous Amenities

In terms of private businesses that service the day to day needs of residents, there are limited options within the town. There is one gas station, one dry cleaning business, one bank, and one hair salon, but no post office or grocery store. However, there are two convenient stores in town, both of which are located Massachusetts Avenue/Route 111 near Interstate 495. The only sit-down restaurant is located in Boxborough's only hotel, the Holiday Inn. The other options for food are a pizza parlor, a short order Mexican restaurant, and a coffee shop located in the town's only gas station. There is also a day care center located on Codman Hill Road and a skating center with three rinks near the Acton Town line. Many of the other service industries in town, most of which are located along Massachusetts Avenue/Route 111, are landscaping companies, auto repair shops, or veterinary clinics. Many Boxborough residents travel to one of the surrounding communities to fulfill their day to day service needs.