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Access



09

Government  
Services  
and  
Facilities



## Build Town capacity to improve facilities

### OVERVIEW

Brookfield's facilities accommodate the essential services for its residents, such as day-to-day administrative tasks crucial for the town's operation. However, there is limited availability for facilities to house the type of programming

that enhances quality of life in Brookfield. The Merrick Public Library is a space the residents cherish and use for events. But the town lacks a community center and a senior center that can serve as hubs for community engagement and events. Many seniors travel to West Brookfield to attend events and activities. It is evident that the lack of facilities hampers the potential for expanding programming.

In recent years, efforts led by volunteer committees have explored turning the Town Hall basement into a senior center. Many have proposed a space with a dual focus—a community and senior center—and

have voiced ideas of rehabilitating and reusing vacant buildings for that purpose. A concerted volunteer effort with the support of the Town will be needed to line up funding for building this facility.

This chapter explores possible options to build the Town's capacity to improve its facilities. It also explores options for regionalizing services with the goal of expanding and filling gaps in service provision.

## KEY FINDINGS

### More programming and events could engage the community and improve quality of life.

During the community forum discussions, residents expressed the need for more community events. The Cultural Council organizes many of the events throughout the year, with support from the Mass Cultural Council. But with only three people working to organize the events, they are short-staffed and could use volunteer support. Creating meaningful events that bring the residents together and foster a sense of community require participation and many volunteer hours. Some of the cultural events organized by the cultural Council include the Memorial Day Parade, Common concerts/ events including Pumpkin Fest, and the Annual Tree Lighting Event.

### Town Departments need additional support. Regionalization could help.

Brookfield funds services such as the Council on Aging, Fire Department, Recreation, Public Library, Police Department, the Tantasqua Regional School District, and others. The Town could fill service gaps, as well as maintain or improve the quality of its services, by forming partnerships with other communities to implement municipal service and cost sharing programs.

### Need for a Capital Improvements Plan

Reinstating the Town's Capital Planning Improvement Committee would help identify what needs and

priorities each department has in the next 10-20 years. The need for a senior center continues to be unmet since the publication of the 2011 Master Plan. Residents continue to ask for a dedicated space for the activities and programs of the Council on Aging.

### BROOKFIELD RESIDENTS, IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"We need a senior center/community center. We should appropriate money from the town to work on a senior center project."

"The Town Hall has a lot of maintenance and insulation issues."

"We would like more walking trails and bike paths. Need more access to natural areas."

"Update equipment for the highway dept. It's very old." (Community Workshop, February 2023)

### BROOKFIELD RESIDENTS, IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Use our town common and Lewis for events."

"Lack of meeting space is an issue."

"A lot of issues caused by not being able to use the upper floor of the town hall."

"Everybody has to volunteer here."

### BROOKFIELD RESIDENTS, IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"We could save a lot of money by regionalizing services. A lot of existing services in surrounding towns."

"Sharing resources would be more efficient." (Community Workshop, February 2023)

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

### Goal 1: Ensure the provision of quality services for all Brookfield residents and businesses.

- Objective: Streamline the process of obtaining permits and licenses to increase predictability and minimize costs to applicants.
- o Action Item 1.1: Implement online permitting.
- o Action Item 1.2: Create a permitting guidebook to clarify the procedures of obtaining a permit.
- Objective: Expand infrastructure south of the Quaboag River.
- o Action Item 1.3: Continue to seek resources for capital improvements needed to provide drinking water to Brookfield water customers.
- o Action Item 1.4: Raise awareness among residents about regular water quality testing of private water wells.
- Objective: Regionalize select services for improved efficiency and cost savings.
- o 1.5 Action Item: Explore the formation of service coalitions with neighboring towns.

### Goal 2: Improve the condition of municipal facilities to ensure the continuous operation of town services over the next 10-20 years.

- Objective: Create an updated Capital Improvements plan to provide resources for the ongoing maintenance of town buildings and properties.
- o Action Item 2.1: Re-activate the Capital Improvements Committee.
- o Action Item 2.2: Continue to renovate the upper level of the Town Hall building.
- Objective: Improve recreational facilities.
- o Action Item 2.3: Complete improvements, such as accessibility, parking, restrooms, concession facilities, security cameras, and general repairs at recreational facilities across town.

### Goal 3: Ensure that Emergency Services are accessible to residents South of the Quaboag River.

- Objective: Ensure that the provisions of the 2019 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) plan are implemented.
- o Action Item 3.1: Ensure that the Fiskdale Road Bridge is accessible in case of an emergency evacuation.
- o Action Item 3.2: Ensure that more town facilities can serve as emergency shelters.

## GOAL 1

### Ensure the provision of quality services for all Brookfield residents and businesses.

The 2023 Master Plan workshops residents expressed the need for improved facilities and services. These include having well-maintained and functional facilities, efficiency and sustainability, quality education for students, and wise allocation of money and resources to alleviate the burden on taxpayers.

As highlighted at the 2023 community workshops, the Town of Brookfield has a very limited staff capacity. Many of the town services are currently covered by volunteers, which are also in low numbers. Because of this limited capacity, many of the following recommendations should be considered as interdepartmental collaborative efforts, with meetings to plan, share resources, and coordinate tasks. This approach will not only help in managing the workload but also in breaking down silos for more integrated and effective service delivery.

### Objective: Streamline the process of obtaining permits and licenses to increase predictability and minimize costs to applicants.

The inefficiency of the current permitting process was cited as an issue by town staff. A slowed permitting process can be a major hindrance on the Town's economic development by driving away developers. Fortunately, the measures needed to improve this

system are low-cost and well within Brookfield's capabilities. Part of the process for streamlining permitting is to ensure application materials are clear and consistent. This will lower the workload for everyone involved and lead to more thorough submissions. It will also improve the efficiency of follow-ups and strengthen enforcement efforts. Interdepartmental review meetings with the applicants, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, and other relevant parties such as the Select Board, can ensure applications are in good shape before submittal, saving everyone time by reducing the back and forth caused by incomplete documentation.

### Action Item 1.1: Implement online permitting.

The permitting process in Brookfield

is slowed down by the fact that there is no online system to streamline the process. The current system is completely offline for building permitting. Switching to an online system can speed up and increase the accuracy of the review and approval process. It also increases accessibility and convenience for applicants, allowing them to access forms and utilize tracking software to track the application status at any time, without having to travel to the Town offices. Digital permits are also easier to store, search, and manage than paper records. For these reasons and more, it is highly recommended that the town explore options for implementing online permitting.

### Action item 1.2: Create a permitting guidebook to clarify the procedures of obtaining a permit.

A permitting guidebook details the specific requirements for obtaining various types of permits. It outlines the necessary steps, documentation, and standards that applicants must meet, making the process more transparent. By providing clear instructions and checklists, the guidebook helps applicants prepare complete and correct applications the first time, reducing the likelihood of delays due to incomplete or incorrect submissions. Supplementary information on local resources, tax policies, and steps for getting business loans can also be included.

### Objective: Expand infrastructure south of the Quaboag River.

Brookfield only has water and gas in the town center. Currently, all homes and businesses south of the Quaboag River are reliant on





individual or shared private wells. In a survey on water access distributed as part of the 2019 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) planning process, an even number of residents said they were and were not interested in joining the public water supply. The MVP also reports concerns over metals in the well water and a high risk of wells drying up during prolonged droughts. Given these issues, the MVP called for completing an engineering analysis and study of the existing water system to guide the development of a plan for expanding south of the Quaboag.

**Action item 1.3: Continue to seek resources for capital improvements needed to provide drinking water to Brookfield water customers.**

The water supply in Brookfield is vulnerable to contamination, especially due to the reliance on private wells South of the Quaboag River. Concerns over the safety of remaining on private wells will increase as climate change causes extended periods of drought which not only threaten to dry up wells, but could cause contaminants in the drinking water to become more concentrated.

The town has used CDBG funds to make extensive water system infrastructure improvements over the last few years. In 2022, funding through both CDBG and ARPA was used to fund water main replacements. The Town should remain proactive in seeking funding to improve water quality and availability.

**Action Item 1.4: Raise awareness among residents about regular water quality testing of private water wells.**

As part of the MVP planning process, well owners in Town were asked to report on the well's water chemistry. A notable percentage of respondents reported high levels of iron (39%) and manganese (13%), bad odor (12%), and bad taste (10%). Public water systems in Massachusetts are regulated by state and federal standards to ensure water safety and quality. However, unless requirements are set by mortgage lenders or the local board of health, private well testing is left up to the owner's discretion. Currently, the only regularly available information on water quality testing is a link to a MassDEP well testing guide on the Brookfield Board of Health webpage. The Board of Health, Water Department or other relevant town boards and committees may want to consider holding annual information sessions or distributing well testing guides in frequently visited locations in Town.

**Objective: Regionalize select services for improved efficiency and cost savings.**

Brookfield funds services such as the Highway Department, Council on Aging, Fire Department, Recreation, Public Library, Police Department, the Tantasqua Regional School District, and others. However, the Town lacks a planning office or a health department. Regionalization could help fill this gap. Sharing existing and new services with other towns could

improve efficiency and expand the delivery of essential public services.

**Action Item 1.5: Explore the formation of service coalitions with neighboring towns.**

Planning for municipal service and cost sharing opportunities would start with pursuing funding assistance, such as the grant program offered through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for inter-municipal shared service agreements. In 2021, the program funded the Leicester Regional Public Health Coalition (LRPHC), which could serve as model for Brookfield and other municipal coalitions. Serving the Towns of Leicester, Barre, Brookfield, Holden, New Braintree, North Brookfield, and Oakham, LRPHC provides comprehensive public health services. The impetus for forming this coalition was addressing the gaps in service that each of the municipalities faced when operating independently. Forming this type of alliance with neighboring towns would allow Brookfield to provide comprehensive services that it could not afford to fund otherwise.

**GOAL 2**

**Improve the condition of municipal facilities to ensure the continuous operation of town services over the next 10-20 years.**

Brookfield has an aging stock of municipal properties, some of which are historic structures with deferred maintenance. With the exception of the Police Station, built in 2016, most town-owned facilities are older than 50 years. The community has

been making great strides toward rehabilitating the Town Hall and the Merrick Library. Both of these structures have a preservation restriction designation that prevents major alterations, such as ADA upgrades, without Massachusetts Historical Commission review.

ADA compliance continues to be a priority, as the town works toward addressing obstructions to mobility in facilities that provide services to the general public. Participants in community engagement events and survey respondents have highlighted safety, accessibility, and maintenance issues with various town and recreational facilities.

To translate these community needs into practice, the Town should work with the Grant Writer to identify sources of funding that will lower capital expenditures. Moreover, a long-range capital plan would allow the town to anticipate capital expenses and debt service over the next 5 years.

**Objective: Create an updated Capital Improvements Plan to plan resource allocation for the ongoing maintenance of town buildings and properties.**

Town facilities would benefit from an updated Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). However, several factors have made the development of a CIP difficult, among which are the COVID-19 pandemic, staff turnover, and the inability of the Town to get Free Cash certified for several years, which has led the Town to fund expenditures from Stabilization.

Importantly, inventorying capital assets and intervening with repairs in time, would prevent cost overruns caused by deferred maintenance. A case in point is the conclusion of the 2018 Town Report, which noted that the Town had been "deferring capital needs for our Library, Town Hall, Senior Citizens, Highways, Historical Commission, Open Space and Recreation and other areas." A CIP will be essential in spreading out these expenditures and working within the Town's debt service limit of 6% of the Annual Operating Budget. (Figure 37, 38, Appendix)

**Action Item 2.1: Re-activate the Capital Improvements Planning Committee.**

Brookfield's Capital Improvements Planning Committee has been inactive since 2017. A re-activated advisory committee would oversee Brookfield's capital program, act as liaisons with department heads, help create a timetable and an inventory of capital assets and make recommendations on capital requests in a given fiscal year. Having the advisory committee plan how the Town spreads out these expenditures over 5 years would prevent large capital projects from occurring simultaneously, and thus becoming costly and unmanageable.

**Action Item 2.2: Continue to renovate the upper level of the Town Hall building.**

The importance of providing services to Brookfield's aging population was a recurring topic during community engagement. Approximately one third of Brookfield's population is



over 65. The lack of accessibility and the need for a senior center to accommodate this population were among the top concerns cited by workshop participants. CDBG funded a study that explored design options for placing the Senior Center in the Town Hall basement. The project did not progress to the bid and construction phase.

Another concern was the renovation of the upper floor of the Town Hall where, according to residents, numerous community activities used to take place. With upstairs access restricted by the lack of

ADA-compliant access, public activities and senior programming have moved elsewhere, to places such as the Public Library, or the Congregational Church. Feedback from the community has clearly shown that the lack of available—and ADA compliant—town facilities have impacted not only the residents' quality of life, but the Town's ability to provide programming to a community that relies on public facilities to gather.

**Objective: Improve recreational facilities.**

**Action Item 2.3: complete general improvements, such as accessibility, parking, restrooms, concession facilities, security cameras and general repairs at recreational facilities across town.**

Brookfield has numerous natural and historic assets that can generate economic development. They can be a draw for visitors across the region, and they can also have consumer spending spillover effects when visitors patronize local businesses. Investment in physical upgrades and maintenance would increase local and regional utilization of Brookfield's

recreational sites. Marketing these sites along with local businesses would brand Brookfield as an outdoor recreation and eco-tourism destination. Some strategies used successfully by other communities include self-guided Instagram tours, offering discounts to visitors. Trail interpretive sites and QR codes could include a suggested donation for maintenance and improvements.

**Goal 3**  
**Ensure that Emergency Services are accessible to residents South of the Quaboag River.**

In 2022, the Brookfield Emergency Squad reported that their calls have been longer in duration. This is partially due to the fact that the closest hospital to Brookfield, Mary Lane Hospital, was closed in 2021. Additionally, the increase in EMS calls in the last year meant that there were extraordinarily long wait times in Worcester hospital emergency rooms with crews frequently waiting over 30 minutes for a room assignment.

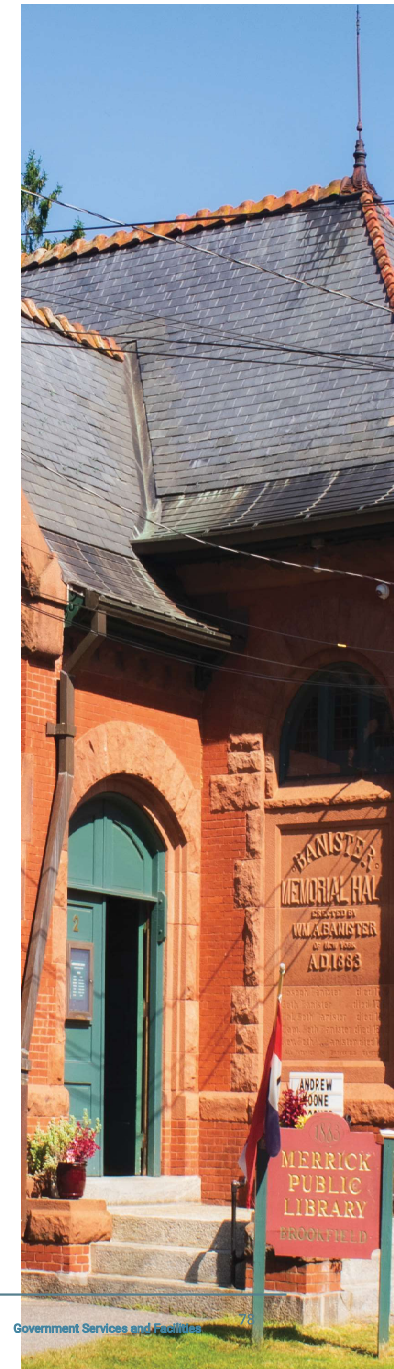
Emergency services in Brookfield are considered to be in good condition and are able to reach the entire town with the help of mutual aid. They use various methods to communicate information to the public. The local emergency services are all located north of the Quaboag River, and must utilize Fiskdale Road in order to access the southern half of the Town. Elderly residents living at home will need a targeted plan for assistance in case of an emergency, and the Brookfield emergency services may wish to partner with agencies for

assistance with developing a strategy for this group. The elderly residents living in Brookfield's mobile home parks are particularly vulnerable.

**Objective: Ensure that the provisions of the 2019 MVP plan are implemented**

The 2019 MVP features the recommendations listed above, and generally recommends that emergency services in Brookfield continue to provide adequate services. In particular, they stress that communication will need to be strengthened as climate change continues to worsen. The Town should upgrade its cell phone towers and maintain a working relationship with cellular providers and Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. The plan recommends that evacuation procedures are reviewed, particularly for vulnerable populations with limited means of evacuation, such as the Quaboag Street and Pine Lane Neighborhood and the Nanatomqua Mobile Home Park. The plan calls for expanded outreach to these vulnerable groups. Reverse 911 and other communication systems need to expand usage for evacuation planning.

**Action Item 3.1: Ensure that the Fiskdale Road Bridge is accessible in case of an emergency evacuation.** Emergency services in Brookfield are all based north of the Quaboag River and can only access the southern half of the town using Fiskdale Road. This means the Fiskdale Road Bridge needs to be well maintained and





accessible. Despite this, some storm events could cause the Quaboag to flood to a level that would make the bridge impassible. The Town should ensure that there are emergency plans in place in case this happens and that emergency shelters are available south of the Quaboag.

**Action Item 3.2: Ensure that more town facilities can serve as emergency shelters.**

Currently, Brookfield Elementary School is the only designated emergency shelter. The Town Hall, Fire Department, Police Department, and other municipal buildings could all potentially serve as additional shelters. However, some of these buildings do not have adequate backup power, including Brookfield Elementary School. Any building serving as a designated shelter will need to be ADA-compliant and have the proper equipment and food supplies to respond to any severe weather emergency.

There are also no municipal buildings south of the Quaboag River. With Fiskdale Road being the only means of accessing the northern half of the town, additional shelters may need to be set up in the South.



## TOWN FACILITIES



### Brookfield Police Department

The Brookfield Police Department is a new building, completed in 2016. There are not any pressing maintenance or repair issues.



### Merrick Public Library

The library saw significant repairs made between 2021 and 2022 following the detection of water damage in the foyer, the north wall, and the eastern walls of the building. By July 2022, the library had received repairs to the carpeting, plaster walls, and roofing and a local mason repointed the brick joints, as needed.



### Brookfield Town Hall

The Town Hall has recently had a lot of maintenance issues, especially with insulation. The building needs an elevator to the upper floor. The lack of an elevator is preventing the upstairs from being used due to ADA compliance. The upstairs used to be a meeting space for various activities. Restoring access to this floor is a top priority.



### Brookfield EMS, Fire, and Emergency Management facility

In 2022, the fire and emergency services facility received a new gas generator. A new roof was also installed for the second-floor portion of the building and they completely renovated the kitchen and meeting/training room.



### Brookfield Elementary

Brookfield Elementary is a newer building so there are not any pressing maintenance or repair issues. The Tantasqua schools are considered high-quality regionally, so they do get a lot of students transferring into their schools from surrounding communities and there is a risk of schools becoming overcrowded.



### Tantasqua Regional High School

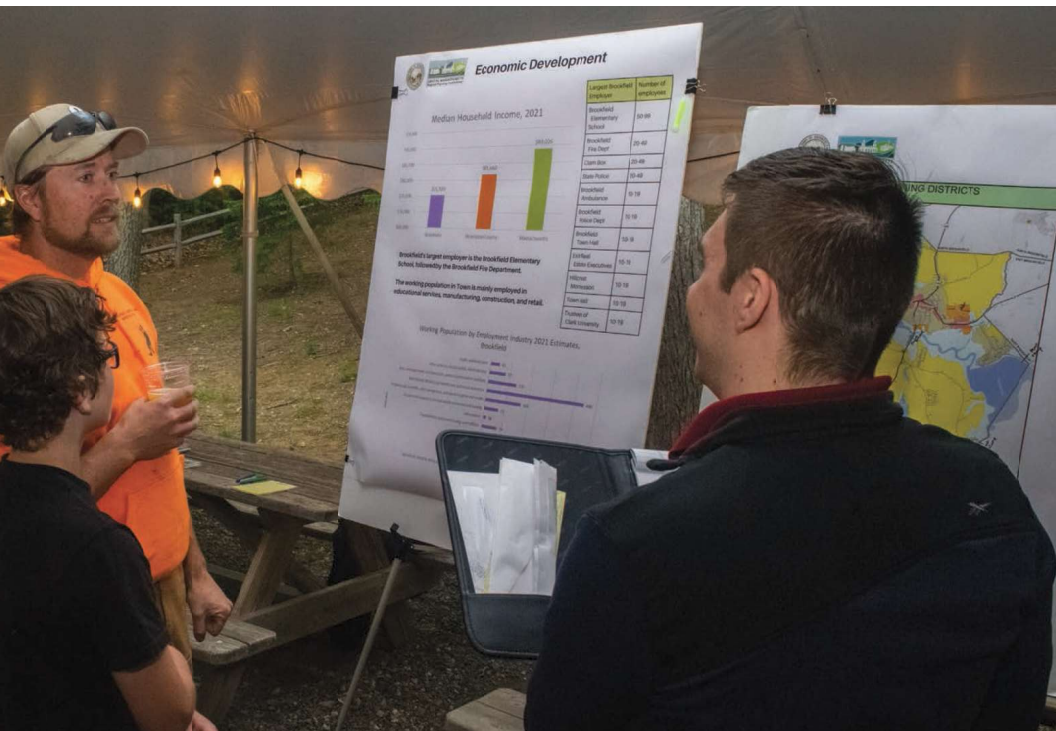
The school is comprised of grades 9-12 for Brookfield and four other nearby towns. It also functions as a vocational school within its technical division. No pressing maintenance or capital needs were cited during community engagement.





10

Prior  
Planning  
Efforts



Several planning efforts have identified ways in which Brookfield can expand its economy, protect its open space, and prepare for unforeseen structural changes that can impact its safety and quality of life.

#### 2011 Master Plan

Captured in Brookfield's 2011 Master Plan, the community vision aspires to cultivate a thriving economy marked by diverse commercial activities, sustainable practices, and the promotion of "buy local" programs. The Town was facing limited employment opportunities; hence the community's focus on establishing an Economic Development Committee in hopes of fostering a sustainable local economy. The Master Plan allowed the community to identify challenges and proposed goals on the following topics: housing, land use and zoning, transportation, open space and cultural resources, and government

services and facilities.

Brookfield seeks to provide housing catering to diverse income levels and age groups while preserving the town's unique character. Challenges are highlighted as the Town is coping with an aging housing stock and grappling with high taxes. To tackle these issues, the proposed goals concentrate on controlled residential development, aiding homeowners in housing rehabilitation, and ensuring a balanced housing mix.

Regarding land use and zoning, the community envisions preserving the town's rural character, enhancing the town center, and implementing a Geographic Information System

(GIS) for improved planning. Challenges, however, include weak zoning by-laws that can be vague and contradict each other at times. The proposed goals within land use and zoning matters involve creating a local historic district, rezoning to concentrate businesses, and enhancing zoning by-laws and standards.

The transportation vision places importance on fostering pedestrian-friendly areas within the community and ensuring efficient public transportation. Challenges identified include limited pedestrian spaces and established connectivity on roads for non-motorized street users. To address these issues, proposed goals include implementing traffic calming measures, enhancing non-motorized connectivity, and improving both mass transit and communication.

Concerning open space, recreation, natural, and cultural resources, the community envisions protected open spaces, an agricultural revival, and vibrant recreational opportunities. Challenges in this realm include poorly marked trails and insufficient support for ecotourism. Proposed goals center on maintaining the rural character, preserving water quality, and offering diverse recreational opportunities.

In terms of government services and facilities, the vision encompasses well-maintained town facilities, efficient services, and a seamlessly connected website. Challenges arise from the poor conditions of town buildings and confusing permitting

procedures. Proposed goals in this area involve upgrading the website, creating a permit manual, exploring regionalization, and improving municipal buildings.

#### 2019 OSRP

The 2019 Brookfield Open Space and Recreation Plan, developed with public input, coordinates efforts among town departments, private entities, and citizens to manage and acquire recreational lands. The Plan discusses the town's desire for preservation, recreation, improved open space connectivity, and enhanced facilities. The goals identified include maintaining the town's rural, agricultural, and historic character. Preserving the town's unique habitats and water quality, working towards sustainability practices and self-sufficiency, as well as providing diverse and well-maintained open spaces and recreation opportunities and facilities. Lastly, the plan suggests educating and supporting awareness about the open space opportunities that lie within Brookfield's borders.

#### 2018 ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan

The Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan, or Accessibility Plan, aims to identify non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) related to services, programs, and activities. It includes an assessment of policies, procedures, and facilities, offering recommendations and sample documents for compliance. This plan, prepared for the Town of Brookfield, encompasses model policies, procedures, and solutions

for barrier removal in public buildings and facilities to achieve ADA compliance.

Assessments took place in several different locations in Brookfield, ranging from public facilities to recreation facilities and parks.

#### Municipal Vulnerability Report (2019 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan)

In 2019, the Town of Brookfield held a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) workshop. The goal of the workshop was to identify and address climate change-related hazards. CMRPC delivered presentations on the workshop overview, climate change projections, impacts, and mitigation strategies, as well as a detailed profile of natural hazards in Brookfield. For the environment, the recommendation identified is to develop a detailed plan to monitor and assess the water quality and flooding risks posed on the Quaboag River. For societal risks, the plan recommended assessing evacuation procedures, ongoing educational efforts, and outreach, developing a plan for flood water pumping. It also recommended working toward grant opportunities that aim to protect homes in the Quaboag Street and Pine Lane Neighborhood bordering the Quaboag Pond. The homes in this area are vulnerable to flooding, contained by two sides of water, and only have one road to access for evacuation purposes. If flooding occurs and the single street becomes blocked on either end, it puts the residents at risk. The southern half

of Brookfield currently relies on private wells, while the northern half of the Town is connected to a public water system (Page 1). Regarding infrastructure, Brookfield will seek to complete an engineering study and analysis of the current water system infrastructure. This will include finalizing a plan to expand and update access to public water south of the Quaboag River and seek other ways to potentially expand water resources.

#### 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Hazard Mitigation Plan for Brookfield identifies natural hazards, assesses vulnerabilities in critical facilities, infrastructure, and the community, and provides realistic recommendations to mitigate negative effects. The goal is to implement actions that will result in savings, including less property destruction, and reduced disruption to essential services. The HMP allowed Brookfield to identify high-priority spaces to protect from natural and man-made hazards. Emergency Response Facilities are the highest priority. These spaces include the Emergency Operations Center/Fire Station/EMS, Highway Department/Backup EOC/ Emergency Dispensing Site/Supplies Distribution Site, Life Flight Landing Zones, the Police Station, and Primary Evacuation Routes. Non-emergency facilities have been identified as well, as they are important to the everyday operations of Brookfield. The Town's Water Supply, Town Facilities, and Utilities. Dams, Special Needs

Population/Elderly Housing/Assisted Living are also a high priority. This is followed by Schools and Daycares, as well as Historic Buildings and Sites. Employment Centers, Environmental Justice, & Vulnerable Populations, and future developments are limited in hazardous areas utilizing Brookfield's Zoning Bylaws and the Wetlands Policy (Page 53-55).

#### Complete Streets

A Complete Street accommodates all road users by creating a network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes, including but not limited to, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, and emergency vehicles. In 2017, Brookfield adopted the Complete Streets policy, recognizing that all roadway projects are potential opportunities to implement Complete Streets design principles.

In 2019, Brookfield developed a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, in which 22 potential projects were outlined that would improve traffic & safety, bicycle facilities, pedestrian facilities, or transit facilities. In 2022, MassDOT approved and awarded the maximum funding amount to one project: Central Street upgrades. This project included bicycle and pedestrian improvements, as well as geometric upgrades at the Route 9 intersection to improve safety.

#### 2008 Brookfield Reconnaissance Report

Recognizing the vulnerability of heritage landscapes that can define

a community's character and preserve its past, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, along with regional partners, initiated the Heritage Landscape Inventory program. The program aims to identify and protect valued landscapes, address land planning issues, highlight priority heritage landscapes, and offer preservation recommendations. Amidst significant growth pressure in Brookfield, the community is confronted with the challenge of determining how this expansion will impact its rural character and cherished heritage landscapes. In a public meeting, participants identified key landscapes that play a defining role in the town's heritage. Priority Heritage Landscapes identified include the Quaboag River & Lake Road Context, Old Boston Post Road Corridor, Elm Hill Farm Complex, Brookfield Common Historic District, and Wolf Swamp.

#### Brookfield Community Development Block Grant FY17 – FY23

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program aids community development activities. The CDBG Program can address needs related to housing rehabilitation, public services, infrastructure, and economic development to name a few uses for the grant program. The Town of Brookfield has engaged in many CDBG projects with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, and some CDBG projects are ongoing.

#### FY17 CDBG

- Activity: 6K Public Facilities/Infrastructure Design only (architectural and engineering)
  - o Project 1: Hayden-Hyde & Draper-High (H3D) Engineering Design Project
  - o Project 2: Senior Center Architectural Design (SCAD)

- Activity: 7 Planning
  - o Project 1: 15 Post Road Environmental Assessment and Reuse Plan
  - o Project 2: ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan

#### FY18 CDBG

- Activity: 4 Housing Rehabilitation
  - o Project 1: Housing Rehabilitation Loans

- Activity: 6H Public Facilities/Infrastructure Drainage
  - o Project 1: Hayden-Hyde Construction Project (Draper-High remains unbuilt due to significant drainage connection issue)

#### FY21 CDBG

- Activity: 6H Public Facilities/Infrastructure Drainage
  - o Project 1: Green Street Improvements Design & Construction Project

#### FY22-23 CDBG

- Activity: 6B Public Facilities/Infrastructure Streets and Sidewalks
  - o Project 1: Kimball Street Improvements Design & Construction Project

Note: Brookfield has also undertaken Housing Rehabilitation projects in various years through regional CDBG grants with North Brookfield.





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Spencer Cable Access

11

# Implementa- tion



**Establish clear roles, priorities, and timelines to measure progress toward achieving the intended results.**

Implementation plans are essential for bringing Master Plans from concepts to reality. The first step is to establish clear roles, priorities, and timelines to measure progress toward achieving the intended results,

The Master Plan was designed to facilitate informed decision-making. The measure of success in implementing this plan should not solely depend on the completion of every task listed. Instead, any progress that furthers the Master Plan's policies, vision, or objectives should be viewed as a success.

**IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

The Town could consider creating a Committee dedicated to the Master Plan's effective Implementation. This Committee would include a dedicated group charged with the following tasks for the successful execution of the plan:

- Develop clear metrics, benchmarks, and objectives for implementation.
- Monitor and communicate the status of implementation to both officials and the community.
- Regularly update the implementation matrix
- Coordinate efforts across departments and share updates with regional groups to leverage external resources and funding.
- Link the execution of the plan to financial planning and capital improvement plans, ensuring those involved in drafting these documents are well-versed with the Master Plan's implementation plan and that these documents are in alignment.

These strategies will enable the Implementation Committee to effectively inform the town about ongoing progress and needs, ensuring that future planning efforts are consistent with the Master Plan's recommendations.

**Time required for completion** - Projects that are faster to implement, either due to short work duration, current or near-term availability of funds, and/or ease of permitting or other regulatory procedures, are given higher priority.

**Political and public support** - Strategies that have demonstrated political and/or public support through positive involvement by the public or prioritization in previous regional and local plans and initiatives that were locally initiated or adopted are given higher priority.

**Administrative burden** - Strategies that are realistically within the administrative capacity of the town and its available support network (CMRPC, etc.) are prioritized. Considerations include grant application requirements, grant administrative requirements (including audit requirements), procurement, and staff time to oversee projects.



	Land Use	Priority (L, M, H)	Time to completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low- 0-50K Low- 50-100K Med- 100-250K High 250K- 500K Major capital item: 500K+	Responsible Parties	Resources/ funding sources	Progress
<b>Goal 1: Preserve and enhance Brookfield's cultural heritage and small-town character while incorporating new growth.</b>							
Objective	Encourage new development strategies and standards within the Town Common and business districts to ensure that alterations of existing structures fit with the community's small-town and historic character.						
Action Item 1.1	Create Design Guidelines to ensure that New Development maintains alignment with Brookfield's small-town characteristics.			Very Low	Pg. ZBA, SB	Community One Stop, EEA PAG, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 1.2	Implement a bylaw for historic preservation within the Town Common to provide a robust framework for preservation of Brookfield's historical assets.			Very Low	HC, Pg. ZBA, SB	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Preservation Mass	
Action Item 1.3	Promote adaptive reuse to put historic structures back into productive use within the town center.			Very Low	HC, Pg. ZBA, SB	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Preservation Mass	
<b>Goal 2: Diversify allowed uses to support various commercial services within business and mixed-use areas.</b>							
Objective	Expand allowed uses in Brookfield's BA, BB, and Village districts to encourage a diverse mixture of businesses that provide essential goods and services for residents.				SB, TA	Town Staff, Town Meeting	
Action Item 2.1	Hire a Town Planner who can provide technical expertise and implement land use goals through the Zoning Bylaws.			Medium to Major Capital Item	Pg. ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 2.2	Conduct a community-led retail needs assessment to identify demand for specific essential goods and services in Brookfield.			Low	Pg. ZBA, SB	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 2.3	Encourage diverse commercial uses in Brookfield's BA, BB, and Village districts by reviewing and revising the current Zoning Bylaw to allow certain uses that are currently restricted.			Very Low	Pg. ZBA, SB	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
<b>Goal 3: Encourage utilizing Smart Growth strategies, such as compact development, for new housing developments, to preserve open space and community character.</b>							
Objective	Review and amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for compact development within the RR district by using Smart Growth principles to ensure that new housing development design and location prioritize the preservation of open space and farmland.						
Action Item 3.1	Support cluster development where applicable.			Very Low	Pg. ZBA, SB	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 3.2	Reduce dimensional requirements for duplexes and other small-scale multifamily housing forms.			Very Low	Pg. ZBA, SB	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
	<b>Economic Development</b>	Priority (L, M, H)	Time to completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low- 0-50K Low- 50-100K Med- 100-250K High 250K- 500K Major capital item: 500K+	Responsible Parties	Resources/ funding sources	Progress
<b>Goal 1: Create a long-range economic development strategy.</b>							
Objective	Reconcile investment needs!						
Action Item 1.1	Attract and retain businesses that contribute to diversifying Brookfield's tax base and increasing employment opportunities.			Very Low	TA, Pg. Potential Partner: EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Quabong Hills Chamber of Commerce	
Action Item 1.2	Improve and extend municipal infrastructure to enable the town to attract new businesses.			Medium to Major Capital Item	TA, Pg. HWY, Water Dept	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 1.3	Establish an Economic Development Committee and a business association.			Low to Medium	TA, SB	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Quabong Hills Chamber of Commerce	
Action Item 1.4	Explore the possibility of creating a TR and a UCR-TRF program.			Very Low	TA, Pg. Potential Partner: EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Develop a pipeline of fundable projects and strengthen local policies and practices, that will help the town absorb available funding and grants.				TA, Pg. CIPC Potential Partner: EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 1.5	Continue to pursue opportunities for grant funding for capital improvements.			Low to Medium	TA, Potential Partner: EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 1.6	Address Town capacity and staffing needs to assist the w/b applying for funding and technical assistance.			Major Capital Item			
<b>Goal 2: Revitalize the Town Center and Support Small Businesses</b>							
Objective	Encourage commercial activity in the town center to support services that meet the daily needs of Brookfield's residents.						
Action Item 2.1	Bring business opportunities to existing commercial and mixed-use buildings.			Very Low	TA, Pg. Potential Partner: EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Quabong Hills Chamber of Commerce	
Objective	Enhance the aesthetic qualities of the town center by completing physical improvements.						
Action Item 2.2	Implement placemarking strategies to improve/revitalize commercial areas. Draw foot traffic to the town center by encouraging and organizing events in outdoor gathering areas.			Low to Medium	Pg. HWY, Potential Partner: EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 2.3	Create a vacant properties action plan help return underutilized properties to productive use.			Low	Pg. Potential Partners: Housing Committee, EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 2.4	Create a vacant property inventory to more accurately understand the causes and extent of vacancy in Brookfield.			Very Low	Pg	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
<b>Goal 3: Encourage the development of a robust Tourism Industry.</b>							
Objective	Capitalize on Brookfield's recreation and nature areas, such as trails and ponds.						
Action Item 3.1	Incorporate ecotourism strategies in the agenda of the Agricultural Commission.			Very Low to Low			
Action Item 3.2	Attract and encourage hospitality industry establishments.			Very Low	AC, CC, Pg. BC, Cultural Council, Potential Partner: EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
	<b>Town Services and Facilities</b>	Priority (L, M, H)	Time to completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low- 0-50K Low- 50-100K Med- 100-250K High 250K- 500K Major capital item: 500K+	Responsible Parties	Resources/ funding sources	Progress
<b>Goal 1: Ensure the provision of quality services for all Brookfield residents and businesses.</b>							
Objective	Streamline the process of obtaining permits and licenses to increase predictability and minimize costs to applicants.						
Action Item 1.1	Implement online permitting.			Very Low to Low	Pg. ZBA, Potential Partner: EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 1.2	Create a permitting guideline to clarify the procedures of obtaining a permit.			Very Low	Pg. ZBA, Potential Partner: EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Expand infrastructure south of the Quabog River.						
Action Item 1.3	Continue to seek resources for capital improvements needed to provide drinking water to Brookfield water customers.			Low to Medium	Water Dept, CIPC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 1.4	Raise awareness among residents about regular water quality testing of private water wells.			Very Low	Water Dept	Town Staff	
Objective	Regionalize select services for improved efficiency and cost savings.			Very Low	TA and relevant departments	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
<b>Goal 2: Improve the condition of municipal facilities to ensure the continuous operation of town services over the next 10-20 years.</b>							
Objective	Create an updated Capital Improvements plan to provide resources for the ongoing maintenance of town buildings and properties.				SB, TA	Town Staff	
Action Item 2.1	Re-activate the Capital Improvements Committee.			Medium to Major Capital Item	All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action Item 2.2	Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2018 Town of Brookfield Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan.			Major Capital Item	All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action Item 2.3	Continue to renovate the upper level of the Town Hall building.			Major Capital Item	All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Objective	Improve recreational facilities.						
Action Item 2.4	Complete improvements, such as accessibility, parking, restrooms, concession facilities, security cameras, and general repairs at recreational facilities across town.			Major Capital Item	All Town Departments	Town Staff	
<b>Goal 3: Ensure that Emergency Services are accessible to residents south of the Quabog River.</b>							



Action Item 2.2	Explore zoning and policy changes, and streamline the permitting process, to encourage home conversions, accessory dwelling units, and redevelopment on nonconforming lots.			Very Low		PP, Potential Partner: Housing Committee	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
<b>Goal 3: Provide housing opportunities that meet the needs of special populations, including the senior population.</b>								
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Expand options to age in place for Brookfield's senior population.</b>							
Action Item 3.1	Encourage creative senior living opportunities, such as accessory dwelling units, intergenerational cohousing, or home sharing.			Very Low		PP, Potential Partner: Housing Committee	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 3.2	Connect residents with existing programs and resources that assist qualifying households with repairs and improvements, energy efficiency upgrades, and accessibility modifications.			Very Low		PP, Potential Partner: Housing Committee	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 3.3	Actively seek partnerships to fund supportive services for special populations within the community.			Very Low		PP, Potential Partner: Housing Committee	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
<b>Transportation</b>								
		Priority (L, M, H)	Time to Completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low - 0-50K Low - 50-150K High - 250K-500K Major capital item: 500K+		Responsible Parties	Resources/funding sources	Progress
<b>Goal 1: Enhance transportation infrastructure throughout Brookfield at key identified locations for all users.</b>								
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Provide multimodal transportation options.</b>							
Action Item 1.1	Construct pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Quabog Street. This street connects to Route 9 at The Claim Box, a highly traveled location. Currently, there are no pedestrian or bicycle accommodations to provide safe access to this location.			High to Major Capital Item		TA, HWY	MassDOT Complete Streets, MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces, Town Meeting	
Action Item 1.2	Provide infrastructure and accessibility improvements along trails throughout Brookfield. This includes maintenance and upkeep as well as mapping and awareness improvements.			Very Low to High		TA, HWY, CC	MassTrails, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item 1.3	Provide improved transportation options for the aging population of Brookfield. This includes improvements to and increased awareness of transportation to the West Brookfield senior center.			Major Capital Item		TA, HWY	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, DOE's Green Communities, MDEC, MassStip Grant Program	
Action Item 1.4	Develop a strategy for electric vehicle charging inclusive of residents, employees, and visitors.			Very Low		TA, HWY		
<b>Goal 2: Establish and commit to policies and programs that plan for the future needs of all users of Brookfield's transportation network.</b>								
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Access state and federal aid for improving Brookfield's transportation infrastructure.</b>							
Action Item 2.1	Continue and expand Brookfield's participation in state transportation funding programs, especially those that aim to prioritize the safety of all roadway users. Such programs include, but are not limited to, Complete Streets, Safe Routes to School, Transportation Improvement Program, and MassTrails.			Low to Medium		TA, HWY	CMRPC Technical Assistance, Town Staff, MassDOT	
Action Item 2.2	Update Brookfield's policies and bylaws to prioritize the implementation of pedestrian, bicycle, and electric vehicle friendly facilities as the town commits to various (re)developments.			Very Low		TA, HWY	CMRPC Technical Assistance, Town Staff	