



# Sudbury Master Plan Update Community Conversation

## *Economic Resilience, Town Services, and Infrastructure*

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As part of its Master Plan update process, the Town of Sudbury hosted a series of **community conversations** throughout October 2019. These individual meetings allowed participants to dig deeper into issues that shape the quality of life in town. A total of five meetings were held at the Lower Meeting Room of Town Hall and focused on the following topics:

- Transportation, Mobility, and Connectivity (Including Complete Streets Projects): October 10
- Economic Resilience, Town Services, and Infrastructure: October 15
- Public Health, Housing, and Equity: October 24
- Historic and Cultural Assets: October 28
- Natural Environment, Open Space, and Recreation: October 29

The conversations were organized around small group discussions. After a brief presentation on the Master Plan update, overview of the topic, and what issues in Sudbury were heard to date from prior public input opportunities, participants dove into their conversations. The objectives of these discussions were to understand the full spectrum of issues and needs in Sudbury, gain a better understanding of what direction residents felt the town should be headed, and what types of projects, policies, or initiatives they supported moving forward.

At the tables were topic “primers,” highlighting facts and stats in Sudbury, maps, and other information to inform participants about the issues. Discussions were recorded on flipcharts and personal worksheets if participants chose to use them.

## **Economic Resilience, Town Services, & Infrastructure**

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Approximately 13 people attended the Economic Resilience, Town Services, and Infrastructure meeting. **The purpose of this summary is to document what was discussed at the Community Conversations meetings. Below are comments and discussion from those that attended the meetings and should not be taken as the opinions of the Town or new town policies or actions.**

### 1) What are the current and future issues around economic resilience, town services, and infrastructure in Sudbury?

**Increase in Taxes and Spending:** The Town needs long term financial planning for economic stability. It needs to balance the costs of current services and schools with the anticipated need for services for a growing older population. Property taxes are expected to increase, and there needs to be control and limit on town spending.

**Municipal Infrastructure:** The Town needs to ensure upkeep of existing infrastructure and plan for the maintenance of anticipated new infrastructure. Technology needs to improve for Town departments in order to provide better efficiency and response to residents. The Fairbank Community Center can be enhanced to better accommodate the Senior Center, School Administration offices, and Park and Recreation Department. Town buildings, facilities, and infrastructure need to be ADA accessible.

**Economic Development:** The Town needs to make better use of its assets and identify the kinds of businesses it wants to attract. The lack of a sewer system on Route 20 hinders business attraction. Future economic development needs to be balanced with managing existing traffic concerns. The Town has to figure out how to market and balance protection of natural resources and open space with economic development.

**Communication:** The Town needs to have better communication with residents through different methods, including online, print, and emails.

## 2) What local initiatives/projects (public and private) or policies are having a positive impact on economic resilience, town services, and infrastructure in Sudbury? What are the positive impacts?

**Municipal Services:** Overall there is satisfaction with the services offered, particularly those of Public Safety, the Goodnow Library, Senior Center, and School Department.

**Conservation/Open Space:** Non-profits and the Town have made good efforts in protecting open space and natural resources.

## 3. What initiatives/projects/policies have not had the outcome anticipated and need to be revisited? Why have they not been successful, and what could be changed?

**Town Committees:** There are many municipal committees and it would be beneficial to reexamine purposes and roles of these groups to identify efficiencies or link efforts together. Communication between committees as well as with residents can be improved to help raise awareness of committees' roles and their accomplishments.

**Municipal Services:** Many residents are unaware of municipal services and resources available to them. Communication between town government and residents could be improved to increase awareness.

**Economic Development:** The Town has not focused on economic development. It should find ways to maximize revenue sources and optimize opportunities in the Route 20 commercial area. Economic stability needs to balance growth with historic preservation and natural resource protection.

**Demographics/Older Residents:** As the population ages, the community needs to become more "age friendly." The recent "Livable Sudbury" has recommendations to improve transportation, communication, housing, and other quality of life indicators.

#### 4. To move forward, what are some new strategies/projects the town should consider to address current and future issues around economic resilience, town services, and infrastructure?

**Communication:** Participants suggested communication between town committees can be improved through an online dashboard to details a committee's current projects and agendas. The Town should examine other ways to communicate with residents, possibility creating a Welcome Committee for new residents or hire a communication director. The Town's website could be better organization and designed to be more accessible for those who are visually or hearing impaired.

**Economic Development:** Participants suggested hiring a grant manager to organize and be knowledgeable about grants that the Town can take advantage of to improve services. The Town should diversify its revenue base. This could be done by creating an economic development committee and create a strategic plan to improve the Town's long-term financial sustainability goals.

**Municipal Facilities:** Participants suggested the Town needs to examine overall space at municipal facilities and building to ensure departments have adequate space. Examples include creating better-equipped emergency shelters, develop or turn the Senior Center into a community center for residents to meet and socialize.

**Demographics/Older Residents:** Participants talked about improving transportation connections with housing developments, particularly those with older residents. Transportation services offered through the Senior Center are very popular, and more vans and/or drivers can help meeting growing demand.

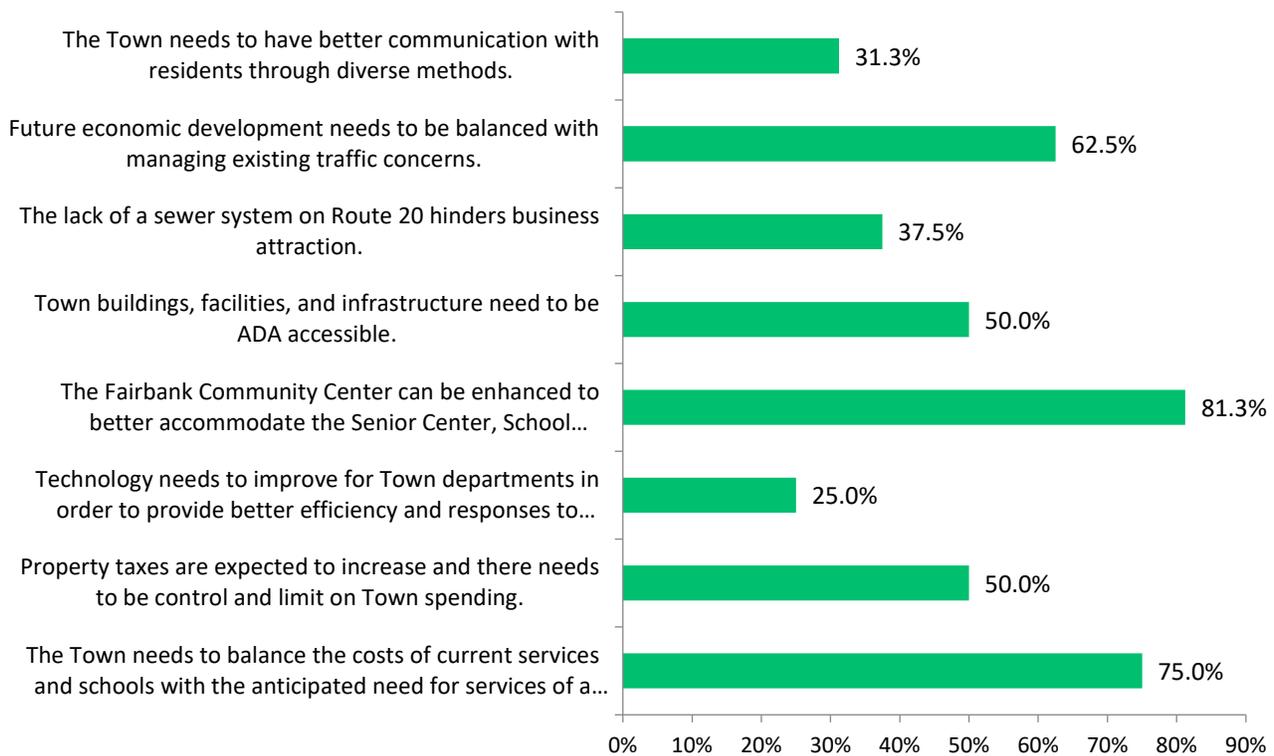
## Follow-up Survey

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Following the Economic Resilience, Town Services, and Infrastructure community conversation on October 15, 2019, the Town administered an online survey to provide an opportunity for those who could not attend the meeting to give input on the questions asked during small group discussions. Similar to the community conversation, the goal of the survey is to understand issues that are important to residents, what is working to address the issues and ideas on how the Town should move forward. The survey was available from October 31-November 7, 2019, and 17 people responded.

**The purpose of this summary is to document comments and feedback through the survey. Below are comments and discussion from those that took the survey and should not be taken as the opinions of the Town and new town policies or actions.**

1.) The following issues were identified at the public meeting on October 15th. Please select issues with which you agree. (Answered: 16, Skipped: 1)



Other issues are we missing? (Answered: 6, Skipped: 11)

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| social media policy  | Help develop local businesses like coffee shops and cafes         |
| Create spaces for people to interact   | Consider financial burdens like maintenance when purchasing lands |
| Space for young adults, young parents, etc<br>Improve historic Town Center to maximize its potential | Reconsider the Supervisor association                             |

2.) What is the Town doing that is working and/or what could be better?

(Answered: 8, Skipped: 9)

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| Taxes are too high                           | Communication  |
| Need to be more thoughtful about development | Schools are great. Need to improve town services and Senior Center |
| Goodnow Library                              | Reduce bureaucratic cost and reduce the number of police officers  |
| Department of Public Works                   | Need more business to decrease property taxes                      |

Need more transparency. The BOS needs to be cohesive

Improve accommodation for special needs students in town, so they don't have to travel so far, which costs taxpayers more.

Improve infrastructures like bridges, pathways for pedestrians and cyclists, and nature trails.

Sudbury TV is a great source of information for residents.

### 3.) What are some new ideas the Town should be thinking about? (include specific locations, if applicable.) (Answered: 7, Skipped: 10)

More locally owned businesses

Improve town budget to reduce costs

Improve walkability and gather spaces for people

Expand the Senior Center for more space.

Develop the Historic Town Center

Add more playgrounds near fields where older kids play like Feeley and Featherland.

Think about the Community at Fairbank

Consider another alternative to overhead power/fiber cable.

A real, local public transportation system with daily services

Use the railroad corridor parallel to Route 20 as a commuter bus artery.

### Respondents' Profile

Comparing the demographics of survey respondents to the overall town population can help understand if responses are representative of the community and if we are reaching all residents.

### How long have you lived in Sudbury? (Answered: 16, Skipped: 1)

Less than 2 years	6.3%
2-5 years	12.5%
6-10 years	6.3%
More than 10 years	75.0%
Not a resident	0.0%

### Which geographic area in Sudbury most closely represents the area you reside?

(Answered: 16, Skipped: 1)

North Sudbury	43.6%
Central Sudbury	25.0%
South Sudbury	25.0%
Other (please specify)	6.3%
• West	

### What is your race/ethnicity? (Answered: 16, Skipped: 1)

American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%
Asian	0.0%
Black or African American	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	0.0%

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.0%
White	62.5%
I prefer not to answer.	37.5%
Other (please specify)	0.0%

How old are you? (Answered: 16, Skipped: 1)

Under 18	0.0%	36-45	18.8%
18-25	6.3%	46-65	31.3%
26-35	0.0%	Over 65	43.8%

# ATTACHMENT

## Participant Worksheets from Community Conversation Meeting

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During the Community Conversation meeting, participants were encouraged to answer the questions on the Participant Worksheets. **The following are transcribed from the worksheets and should not be taken as the opinions of the Town or new town policies or actions.**

1. What current and future issues around Economic Resilience, Town Services, & Infrastructure were missing from the opening presentation?

- Presentation to BOS
- EEE/ Tick-borne illness/ climate change
- Space
- Livable Sudbury
- Route 20 needs focus for economic development. Too many vacancies. Retaining business
- Communication to residents needs improvement
- Lack of effective easy to read and understand community infrastructure from town government to use with community. (T2)
- Very limited connectivity
- No clear vision for the town. "Sustainability" from 2001 is vague and has many interpretations. It is purely environment or also economic?
- Physical connectivity in town hard to get around
- Better use of assets. What kinds of businesses to attract?
- Long term financial planning and economic sustainability
- It would be good to have a detailed economic model
- Upkeep infrastructure and planning for new
- Comprehensive economic planning encompassing all factors
- Is there a widespread feeling that Sudbury is economically vulnerable?
- Climate resilience
  - o Is water supply secure? Any improvement necessary?
  - o Should we work on food security? (community supported agriculture, school involvement)
  - o Should we update zoning to reduce? (more housing density? Neighborhood businesses?)
- Public space: anywhere to gather who buying stuff?
- Department personnel needs and master plans workforce master plan.
- Consolidation of service across departments to function more efficiently
- Services for emergencies and disasters
- Inventory of town infrastructure and condition and how to find solutions

2. What local initiatives/projects (public and private) or policies are having a positive impact on Economic Resilience, Town Services, & Infrastructure in Sudbury? What are the positive impacts?

- Town bus newsletter, mailing, website, ADA
- More IT staff

- Safety- police and fire
- School
- Improve communication
- Improve plan for what kind of development where
- Improve public transportation options within Sudbury. Bus for all age groups
- Create and improve oversight of local-term financial sustainability in town.
- Goodnow library, transfer station, flowing, zoning, Fairbank Center
- Expanded town department programing
- Good effort by non-profits to save open space/ natural resources
- The Senior Center should become community center. Need place to gather that is not a?
- Focus on the issue itself

3. What initiatives/projects/policies have not had the outcome anticipated and need to be revisited? Why have they not been successful, and what could be changed?

- Our committees are set up to understand priorities. Look at the structure. Do we need all these committee's implementation? Can we link them together?
  - o What could change is creating communication between committee dashboard
- Age-friendly/ livability
- Economic development
  - o Revenue diversification
  - o Are we maximizing all revue sources?
  - o What could change is having a grant manager, create more commercial opportunity. Enterprise funds.
- Economic redevelopment. Route 20 needs to be optimized
- Lots of design companies
- Address shelter and community center
- A new vision for Town= economic sustainability while honoring historic nature and preserving open space/ environment focus on highlight assets, enhance communication connecting find our way to grown, and shine and honor all age groups.
- Communication about town department/ services, resources of the town, and organizations
- Poor communication is what Sudbury has to offer. Poor communication on Town services.

4. To move forward, what are some new strategies/projects the town should consider to address current and future issues around Economic Resilience, Town Services, & Infrastructure?

- Spaces for town departments and staff areas need to be upgraded
- Improve vans at the Senior Center
- Need to be linked to transportation service with 55+ housing development