





IMAGINE SHARON

PRESERVE OUR PAST | FORGE OUR FUTURE

Fall Public Meeting

October 25, 2018

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Sharon Community Center Ballroom,
219 Massapoag Avenue

CivicMoxie™
experts in place

Tonight's Agenda

Welcome

Shannon McLaughlin and Pasqualino Pannone, Master
Plan Steering Committee Co-Chairs
Susan Price, DPW Planner

What We See... Sharon Today

Susan Silberberg, CivicMoxie

Questions + Discussion

Mobile Stations – A Deeper Dive

Report Back + Next Steps

Master Plan Steering Committee



Shannon McLaughlin, *Co-Chair*, Planning Board

Pasqualino Pannone, *Co-Chair*, Planning Board

Peg Arguimbau, Conservation Commission

David Crosby, Water Management Advisory Committee

Joseph Garber, Zoning Board of Appeals

Eli Hauser, Board of Selectmen

Chuck Levine, Board of Health

Mena Mesiha, School Committee

Keri Murray, Citizen-at-Large

Susan Olson Drisko, Citizen-at-Large

Signe Peterson Flieger, Citizen-at-Large

Ted Philips, Finance Committee

Susan Rich, Community Preservation Committee

Laura Smead, Citizen-at-Large

CivicMoxie Team



Susan Silberberg
CivicMoxie
Principal



Sue Kim
CivicMoxie
*Senior Project
Manager*



Marshall DeGarmo
CivicMoxie
Planner/Designer



Karl Seidman
Seidman Consulting



Jennifer Goldson
JM Goldson



Natalie Raffol
McMahon Associates



John Gelcich
Beals and Thomas



Elizabeth Ennis

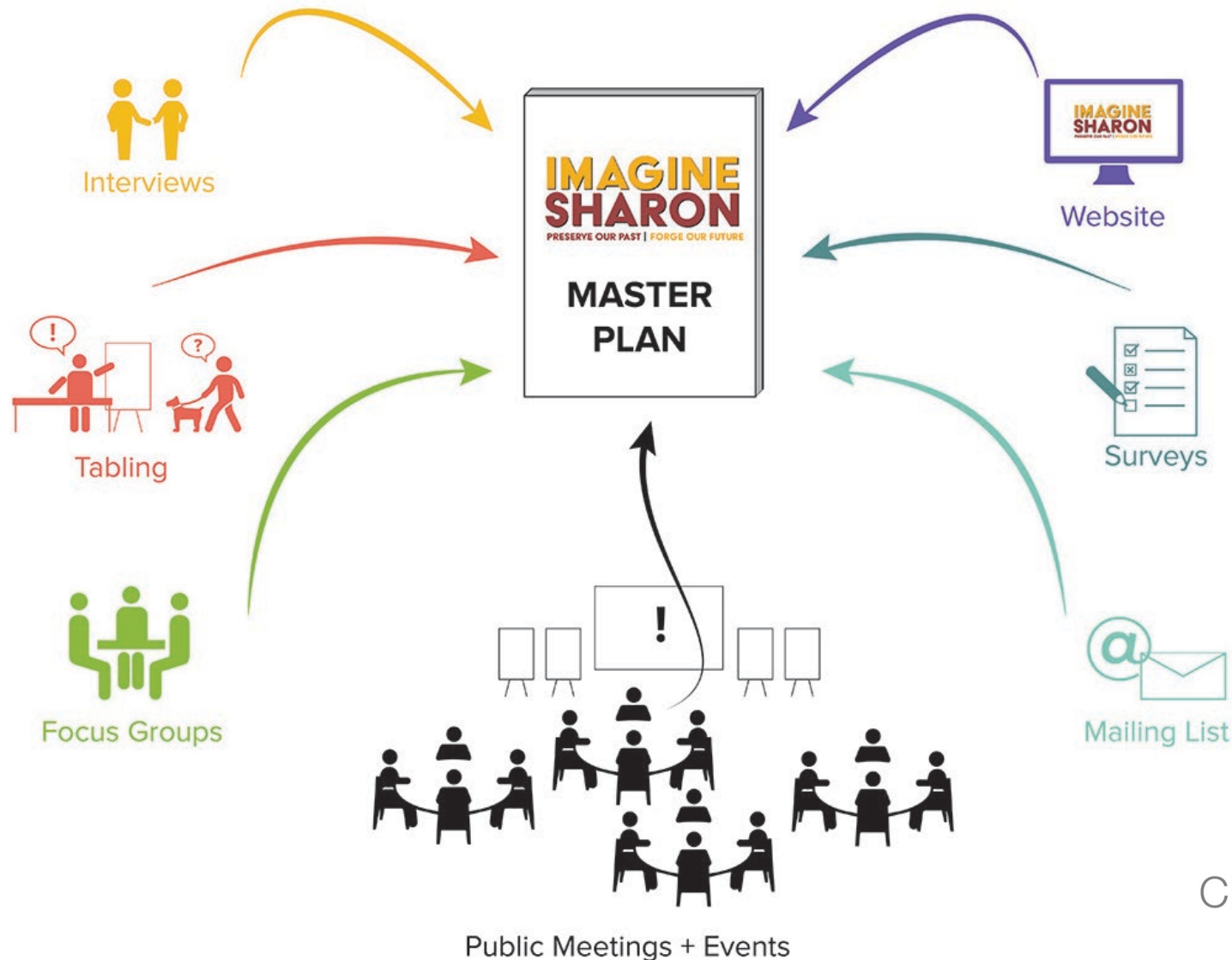
This Master Plan will Create...

A public policy framework with a solid foundation of community and political support that will shape the laws, regulations, investments and policies of Sharon for the next 10-20 years!



A Vision and an Investment in Sharon's Future!

Data Gathering from Many Different Sources...



What We See... Sharon Today

- General Demographics
- Cultural + Historic Resources
- Economic Vitality
- Housing
- Land Use + Zoning
- Transportation/ Mobility
- Open Space + Natural Resources
- Public Facilities + Infrastructure
- Environmental Sustainability

General Demographics

Key trends and characteristics for Sharon's population*:

- 18,193 residents and growing 4.5% per year
- Growing more racially diverse: White 79%, Asian 16.3%, Hispanic 4%
- Sharon's median age ~ almost 43 years old
- 14.7% of town residents are 65 or older
- Approximately 30% of Sharon residents are children and teenagers 19 years or younger

**Source: 2016 American Community Survey Data*

General Demographics

Household and Resident Well-being Indicators: Sharon, Norfolk County and Massachusetts, 2016

Indicator	Sharon	Norfolk County	Massachusetts
Median Household Income, 2016	\$127,500	\$90,226	\$70,954
Unemployment Rate, 2017 Annual Average	3.7%	3.7%	4.3%
Poverty Rate-All Residents, 2016	1.9%	6.7%	11.4%
Percent of Population 25+ with Bachelors Degree or Higher, 2016	73.20%	51.20%	41.2%
Self-employment Rate, 2016	22.1%	11.2%	11.8%
Employed in management, business, science, or arts occupations	69.1%	51.9%	44.7%

**Source: 2016 American Community Survey Data*

General Demographics

Things to think about...

- What issues, challenges and opportunities accompany Sharon increased racial and ethnic diversity? Think about services, communication, economic base, etc.
- Are there special services or infrastructure needed to serve the town's large and growing elderly population?



Cultural + Historic Resources

Key trends and characteristics:

- 3 areas designated Local Historic Districts (LHD)
- Town Center is National Register Historic District
- 4 properties on the National Register
- Historic Resource Survey, 2008
- Local demolition delay bylaw
- 18% of the Town's total CPA funds since 2006



Cultural + Historic Resources

Key trends and characteristics:

- Diversity of religious organizations and institutions
- No unifying force (Arts Council exists only to administer State grants)
- Low visibility: desire for more marketing
- Eager for more collaboration
- Spaces for arts and culture



Cultural Organizations

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Sharon Cultural Council | • Temple Sinai |
| • Police & Fire Museum | • Sustainable Sharon Arts & Culture Committee |
| • Sharon Public Library | • Cultural Arts Committee at Temple Israel |
| • Creative Arts Association | • Sharon Public Schools |
| • Sharon Community Chamber Orchestra | • FAME (friends of art and music education) |
| • Sharon MA Concert Artist & Music Teachers Association | |

Cultural + Historic Resources

Things to think about...

- Few recommendations in 2008 Historic Resource Survey have been completed.
- Increase interest among residents in preservation, culture, history
- Foster greater organizational collaboration
- Coordinate cultural, historic, business assets and programming for greater impact



Economic Vitality

Key trends and characteristics:

- Employment base declined 2% from 2005 to 2016 (increases in Norfolk County (10.2%) and MA (10.5%))
- Employment grew at much higher rate than State/City in Trade, Transportation and Utilities – increasing 26% from 2005 to 2016
- Approx. 69% of town's working residents are in Management, Business, Science, and Arts occupations, (State (45%), County (52%)).
- Sharon's economic prosperity largely from residents' participation in the larger regional economy.



Economic Vitality

Property Tax Base

- FY2018 total assessed valuation = \$3.42 billion; one of the lowest among neighboring communities.
- Uniform property tax rate; commercial and industrial tax rate lower than all but two of its neighbors.
- FY2018 Commercial, Industrial and Personal Property (CIP) valuation far below other communities.
- Growth in assessed values from FY2006 to FY2018 increased by 33%—highest % growth among neighbors.
- CIP accounted for only 10% of growth in property value—the lowest share among adjacent communities.



Economic Vitality

Things to think about...

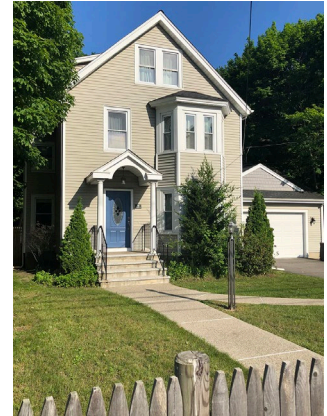
- Target what type of businesses and locations for economic development?
- What goals should drive this targeting: expanding the tax base, adding amenities and services for residents, other?
- How important is improving Post Office Square?
- How should the Town address its sizable number of self-employed residents? Could this be a driver of future economic development?



Housing

Key trends and characteristics:

- 2018 Housing Production Plan (HPP) completed by Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
- Meet 10% min. for affordable housing (MA Chapter 40B); majority are elderly and disabled rental
- Approx. 85% of town housing units are single-family
- 18% of units are renter-occupied
- 5% vacancy rate is one of lowest in state, owner-occupied properties even lower ~ 1%
- Since 2006, approx. 13% of the Town's CPA funds has gone towards housing projects



Housing

Things to think about...

In line with the 2018 HHP's goals and strategies, how should the Town...

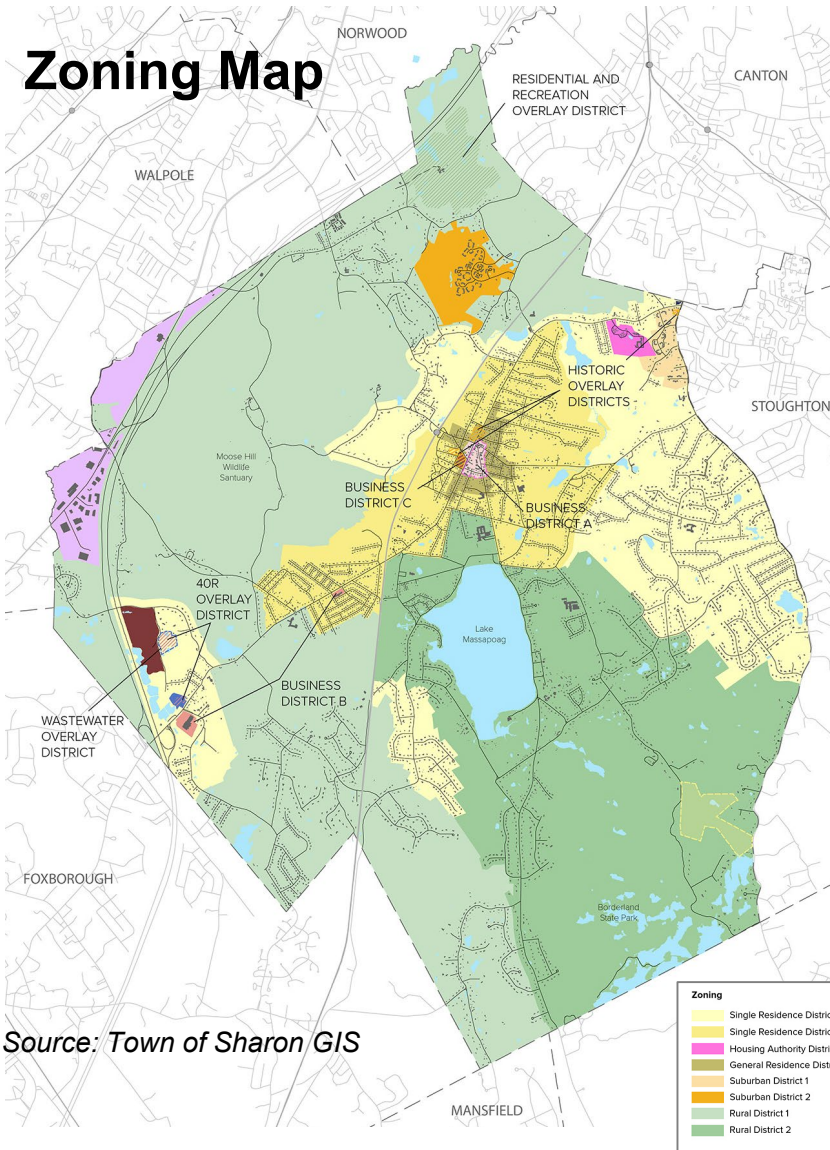
- Consider managing residential growth to preserve community character?
- Diversify housing options to meet residents' needs?
- Explore zoning and other regulatory tools to incentivize desired housing?
- Encourage affordable housing development to maintain and exceed Chapter 40B 10% goal throughout town?
- Provide additional Town support (staffing, land, etc.) to guide future development?



Land Use + Zoning

Key trends and characteristics:

Zoning Map



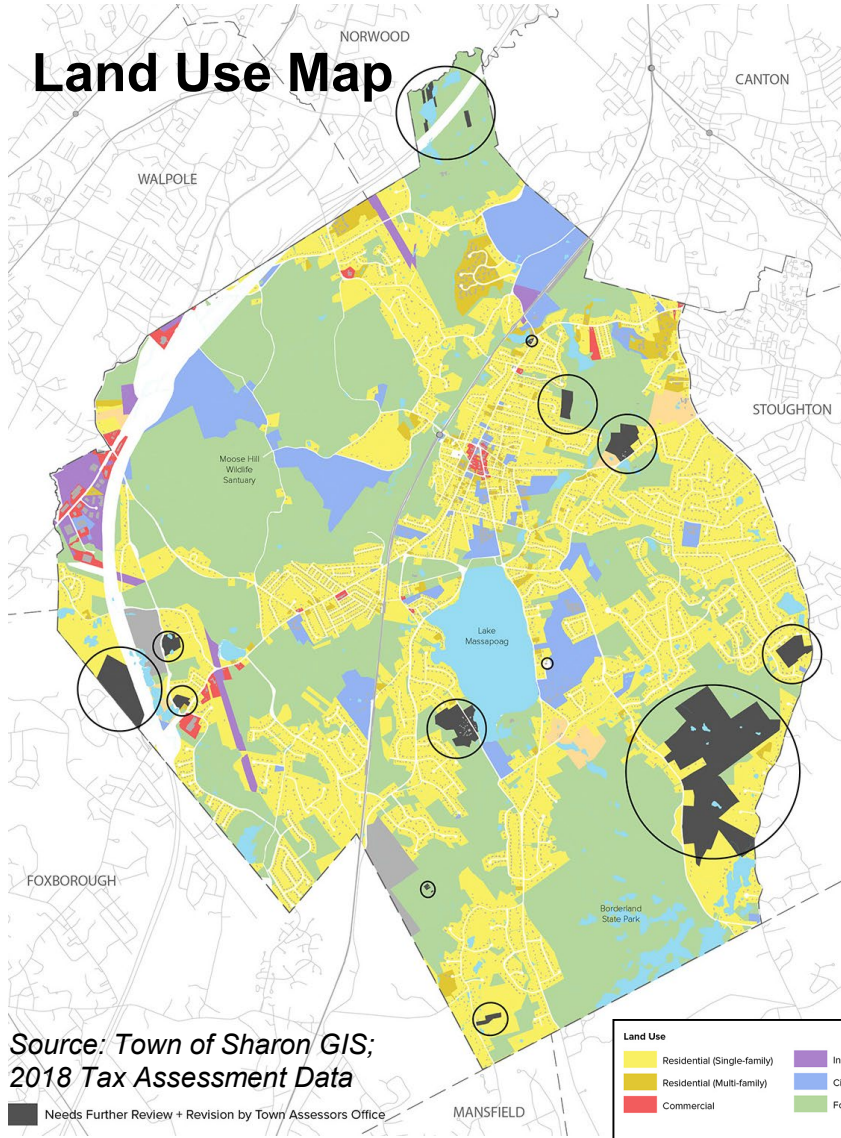
- Town covers about 24.3 square miles
- About 97% of land in Residential zones
- Approximately 3% zoned Business and Light Industrial

Source: Town of Sharon GIS; MAPC Data Services

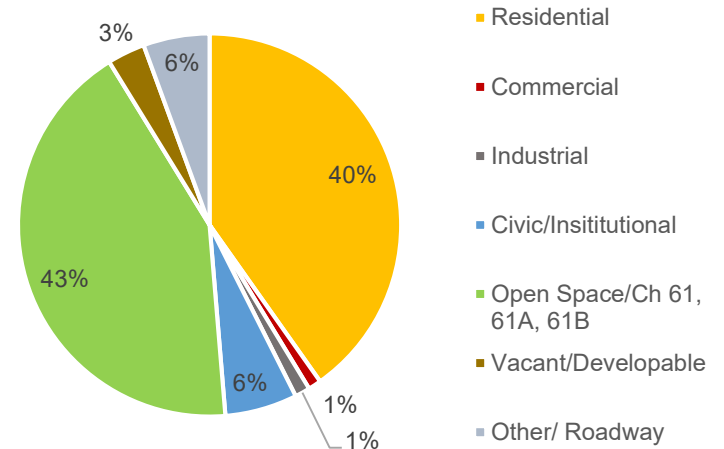
Land Use + Zoning

Key trends and characteristics:

Land Use Map



Existing Land Uses by Tax Assessment Category*



*Source: Town of Sharon GIS; 2018 Tax Assessment Data

Land Use + Zoning

Things to think about...

- Overlay districts have been added for specific purposes, but should the Town consider using zoning tools to support but not lead change?
 - Are there competing use priorities for under-developed and vacant (not conserved) land?
 - Should zoning language be added to encourage or require sustainable design, construction, and energy efficiency?
- Increase housing types/size choices and affordability options
 - Tax revenue (commercial) generation
 - Open space conservation
 - Wildlife protection
 - Agricultural uses
 - Update infrastructure (water system and wastewater issues)
 - Ecosystems (clean air/ clean water)
 - Improved public facilities (Town offices, library, schools)

Transportation/ Mobility

Key trends and characteristics:

- 86% of residents drive to work alone (1/3 highest in Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC) sub-region)
- ~160 miles of roadway, 55 miles of sidewalk; prioritizing roadway and sidewalk work using the Town's digital pavement management system
- MBTA commuter rail station providing service to Boston and Providence; residents use public transportation less often than the TRIC average
- In the Master Plan Spring Kickoff survey, about 26% of residents said traffic/transportation is the most challenging issue facing the town

Transportation/ Mobility

Key trends and characteristics:

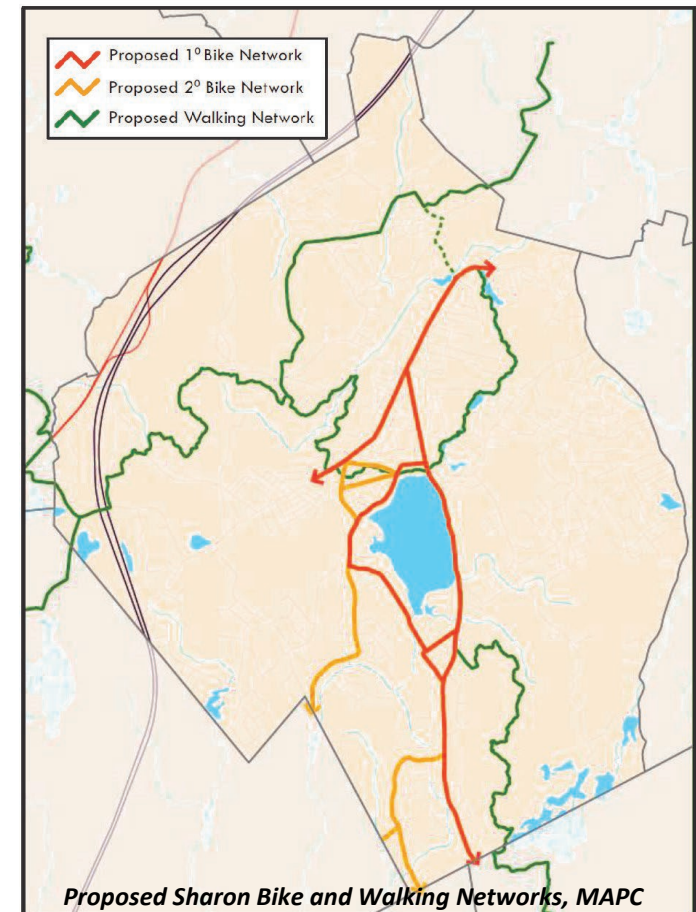
- Traffic and parking issues: peak-hours near main roads, schools, and commuter rail
- Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and Safe Routes to School program
- Aging population needs enhanced transportation options
- Residents want: bike paths/lanes and trails
- Town has a new Transportation Advisory Board



Transportation/ Mobility

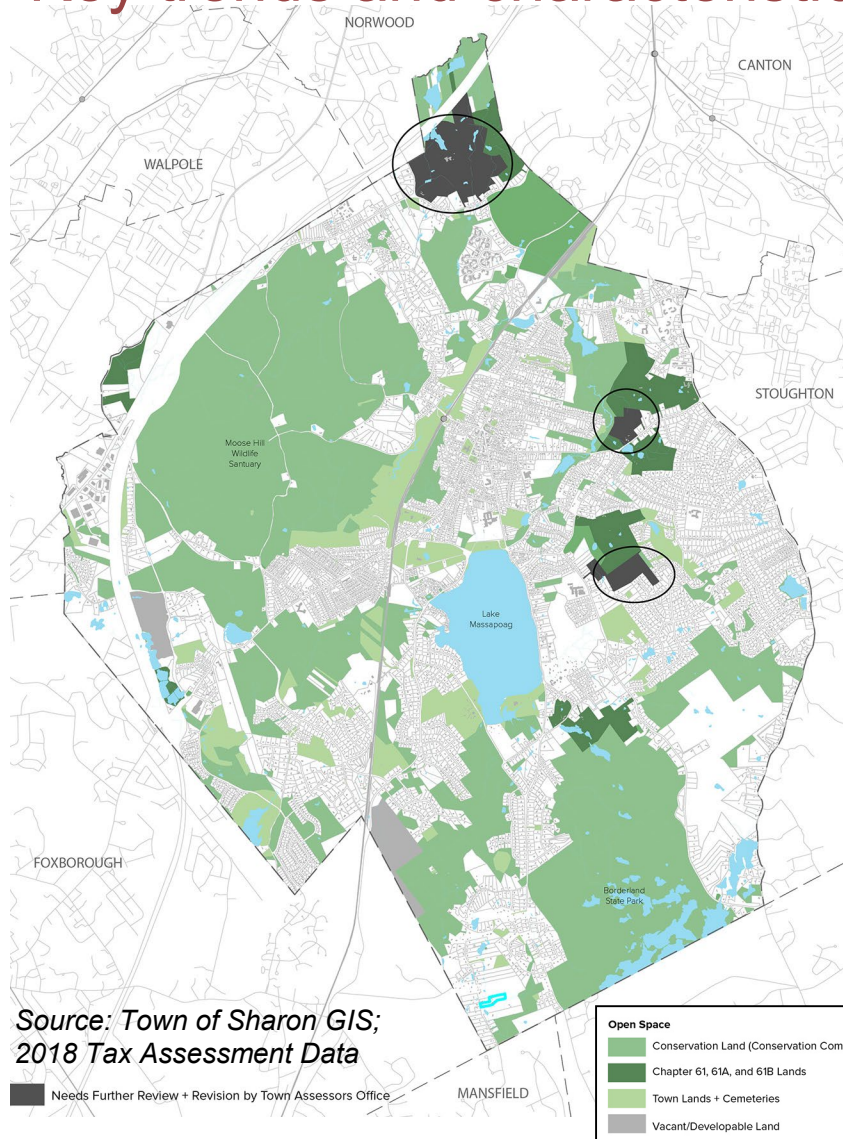
Things to think about...

- Why is use of commuter rail less than regional average? Train schedule? Parking? Getting to/from station?
- Should Town work with Mass. Audubon Society and State to explore opportunities to build town-wide connections for bike/ped? Include plan to support ecotourism?
- Open to more sustainable transportation options, e.g. more ride-sharing, carpooling, autonomous vehicles, shared parking management, etc.? The previous shuttle system did not succeed but is there a version that could work today?



Open Space + Natural Resources

Key trends and characteristics:



Source: Town of Sharon GIS;
2018 Tax Assessment Data

- Town currently updating 2009-2016 Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Historically known for its “healing air” and “exceptional water”
- Approximately 40% of town is open space
- Significant water resources, wetlands, and agricultural land
- Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary and Borderland State Park
- Strong recreational interests

Open Space + Natural Resources

Things to think about...

- How can Sharon sustain its open space and agricultural land commitment in face of changing demographics and economics?
- Does the Town have the resources for specific acquisition of priority lands for open space, agriculture, and conservation?
- Can ecotourism play a part in increasing outreach, education, and conservation?
- Is there an appetite to create stronger links from PO Square to the Lake and to enhance the Lake as a destination?



Public Facilities + Infrastructure

Key trends and characteristics:

- New Town Hall Project underway
- Sharon High School feasibility study underway
- Desire for Library expansion/modernization
- Towns' existing Water System, while dated, is in good condition and continues to sufficiently supply quality water
- Wastewater treatment is a major factor in all residential and non-residential development and redevelopment/renovations.



Rendering of new Town Hall project

Public Facilities + Infrastructure

Key trends and characteristics:

Social Services

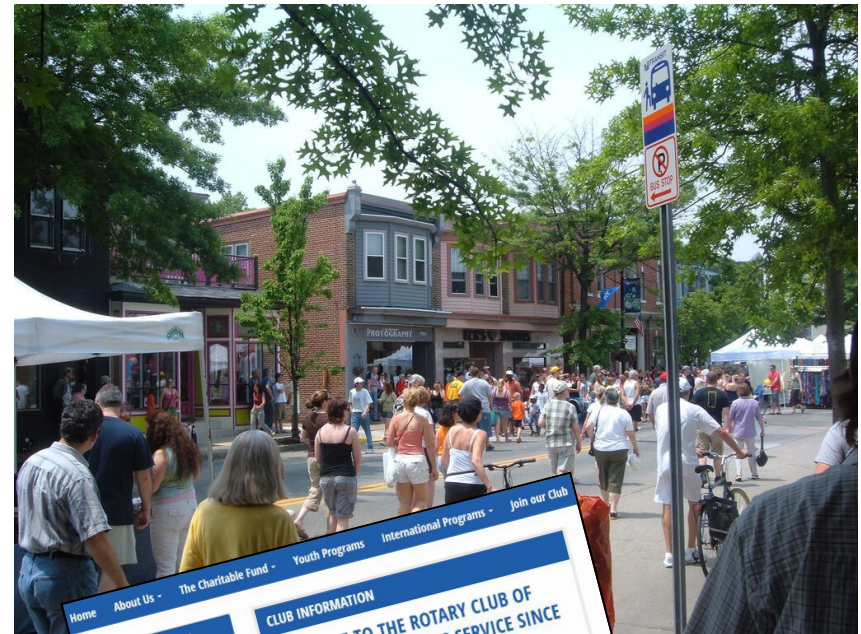
- Town provides programs/referral services thru Sharon Adult Center/ Council on Aging, Commission on Disability, Library, Health Department, Housing Authority, Recreation Department, and Schools
- Informal network of community and religious organizations provide some of their own programs, coordinate efforts with service providers, fundraise, and support local community efforts
- Many services and programs are provided by agencies and organizations in neighboring towns



Public Facilities + Infrastructure

Things to think about...

- Should the Town prepare a wastewater management plan to support desirable development in prioritized locations? Consider incentives for private property owners or seek land for a community septic system?
- Would a Town service coordinator help discern changing needs of community? How could there be better coordination between program and service providers?



Environmental Sustainability

Key trends and characteristics:

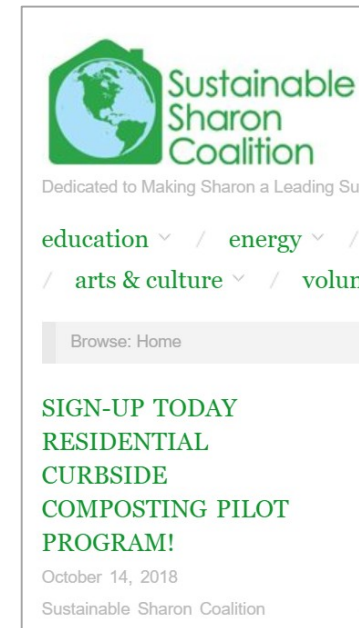
- Town's existing programs and policies – such as, recycling programs, water management, land conservation
- Department of Public Works' Complete Streets Prioritization Program; MassDOT's Safe Routes to School Program – Cottage Street School's Exemplary School of the Year Award, 2018
- Local Organizations – Sustainable Sharon Coalition, Sharon Saves, Sharon Friends of Conservation, No Sharon Gas Pipeline

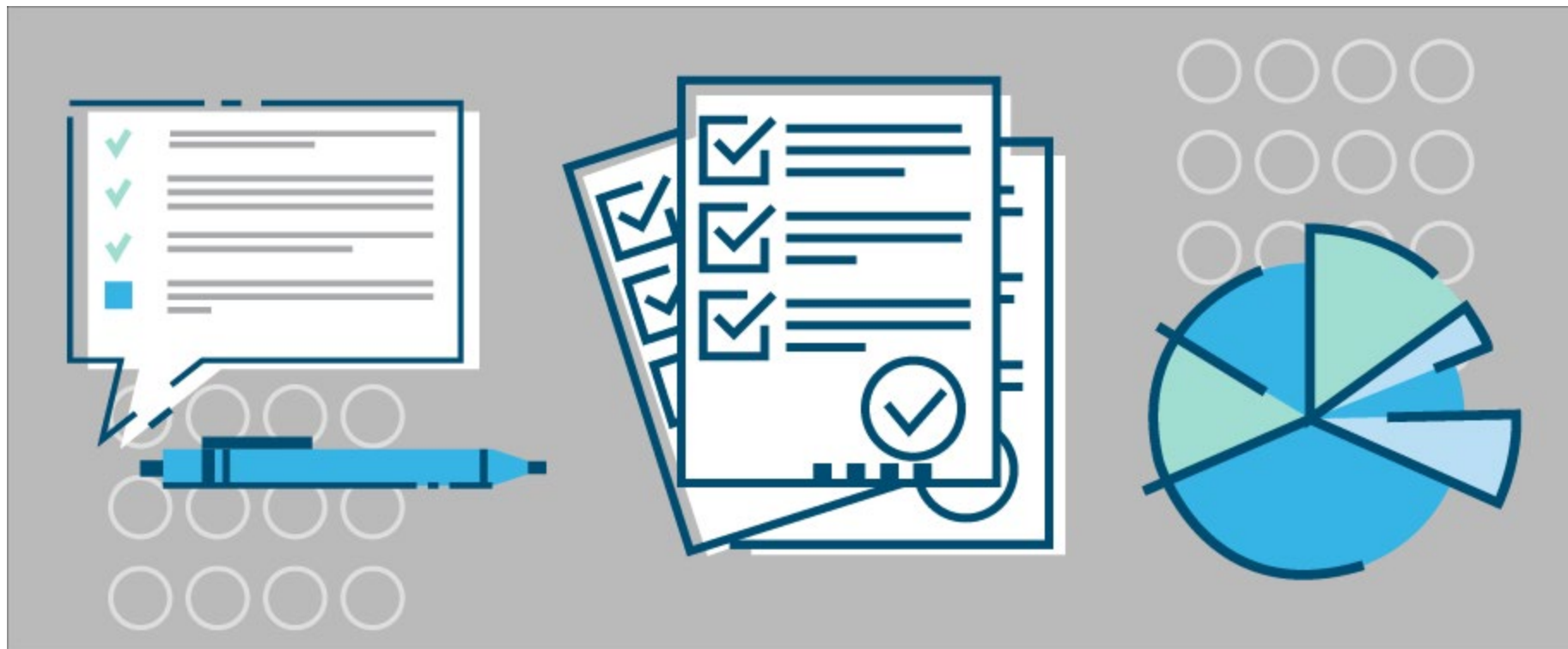


Environmental Sustainability

Things to think about...

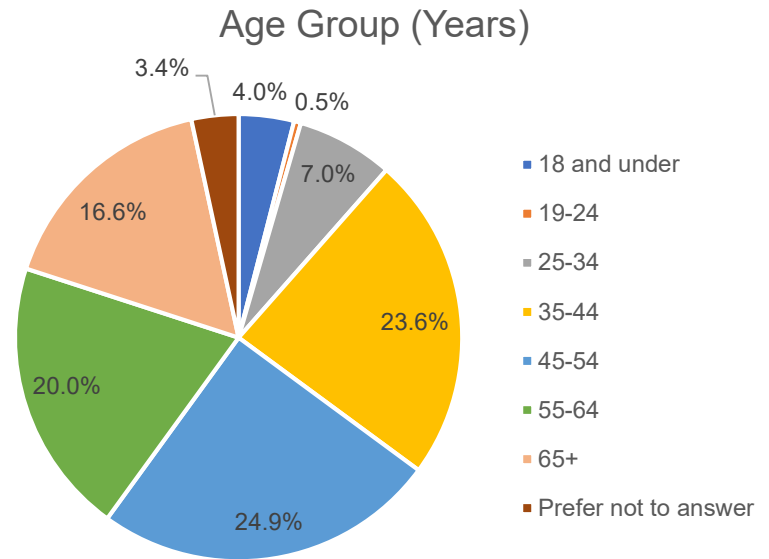
- Should sustainability principles be incorporated into existing Town policies, services, and programs as a larger town-wide goal?
- How can the Town and existing organizations, e.g., Sustainable Sharon Coalition, collaborate more to increase the awareness and success of sustainability programs?





Fall Survey Results*

- 840 responses (7% of approx. 12,000 adults in town)
- Approx. 97% are residents
- Over 31% have lived in Sharon 25+ years; about 33% from 0-9 years
- 194 respondents work in Sharon (including working from home)
- 48 respondents are business owners
- 55% of respondents have children under 18 at home



Fall Survey Results

Words you think best describe Sharon...



Fall Survey Results

Top 3 places you take visitors:

- Lake Massapoag
- Moose Hill Farm Wildlife Sanctuary, Borderland State Park, and other parks
- Wards Berry Farm, Moose Hill Farm, Crescent Ridge Dairy

Top 4 reasons you chose Sharon to live/work:

- High quality schools
- Open space, including lakes, ponds, trails, and parks
- Good location relative to work, shopping, dining, and recreation
- Overall senses of community and character of the town

Fall Survey Results

Top 4 characteristics listed by importance for Sharon's future as a desirable community:

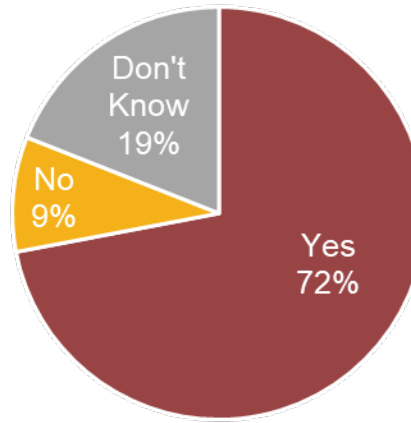
- Quality of schools
- Open space, Lake Massapoag, parks, farms, trails, and other natural resources
- Community safety
- Infrastructure quality

Top 3 types of new stores or businesses that would attract you to visit and shop in Sharon more often:

- Full service restaurant
- Coffee shop/ café
- Specialty food store

Fall Survey Results

Do you plan to stay in your current housing for the next 5-10 years?



If you plan to move, why? (63 responses)

- 46% "Other": taxes too high, graduating, and retiring
- 40% Children will be done with Sharon public schools
- 30% Housing cost
- 27% Need smaller-sized housing (fewer rooms or SF)

Fall Survey Results

Employment

- 79% of respondents are employed at least part-time
- Approx. 34% of those employed work in Sharon (including working from home)

Fall Survey Results

Transportation

- 5 days/week, 63% typically drive a car; 16% walk; 2% take commuter rail
- Even with improvements, respondents mostly would not change their current modes of transportation

Transportation priorities for improvements

- Top 4 most important improvements would be:
 - 44% Options for getting to/from commuter rail station
 - 37% Increased accessibility throughout town
 - 27% More bike lanes/ bike racks and wayfinding
 - 26% More parking at local destinations

Fall Survey Results

Satisfaction with Town/public services

- Mostly satisfied with Town services, particularly Public safety and Sharon Public Schools
- Top 3 services Town should expand:
 - Sharon Public Schools
 - Roadways and sidewalk maintenance/improvements
 - Recreational, social, and cultural activities

How often local destinations are visited

- Top 4 most visited “last week”: Post Office Square, School, Local beach, playground/ ball field, park, or trails, and Library
- Top 3 not visited in past year: Local museum or historic building, Town facility besides Town Hall, and Cultural or arts program or event

Fall Survey Results

What you would miss most in Sharon if it were lost...



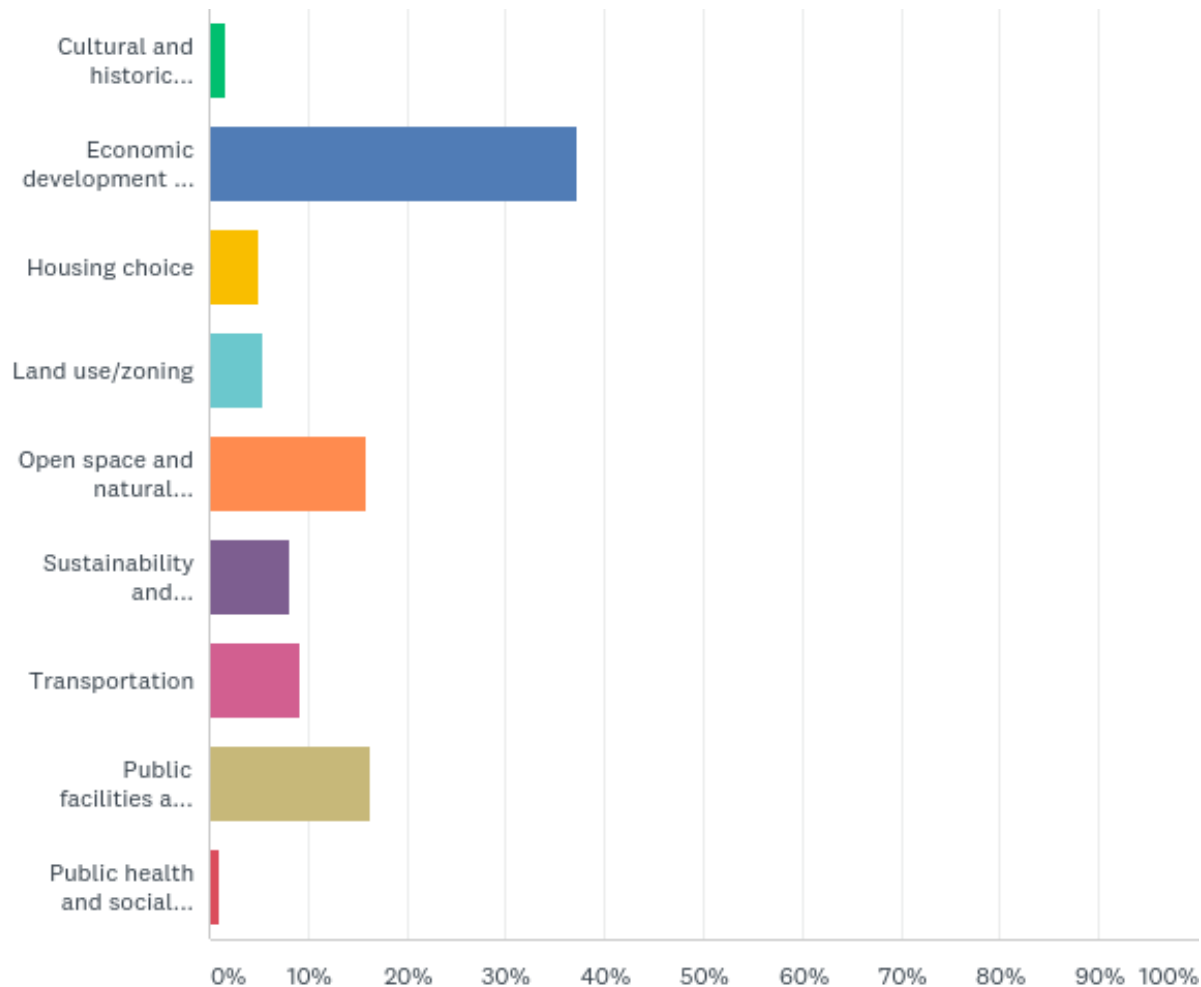
Fall Survey Results

Top 3 types of open spaces used most often:

- Lake Massapoag, beaches, ponds, rivers, and streams
- Trails, paths, and forestland
- Community parks and playgrounds

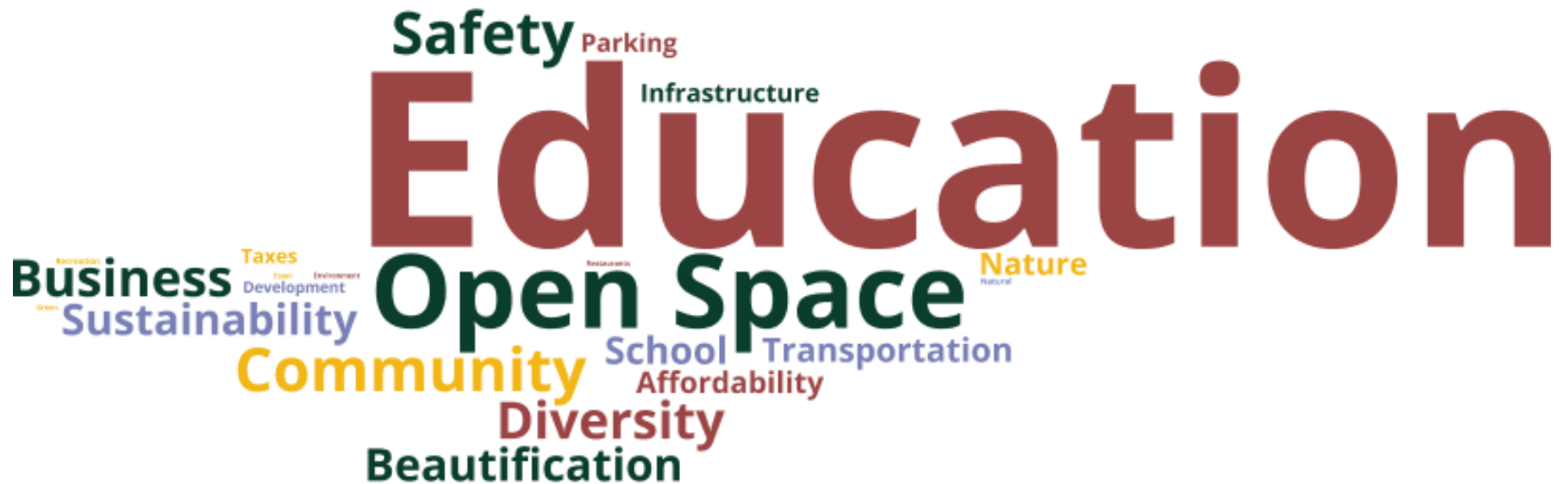
Fall Survey Results

Your TOP plan priority for town improvement



Fall Survey Results

Words to include in a community Vision Statement



Mobile Stations - Overview

Three Stations with different topics and corresponding “possibilities” for discussion:

- A. Economic Development and Financial Stability
- B. Environmental Sustainability and Housing
- C. Community Connections

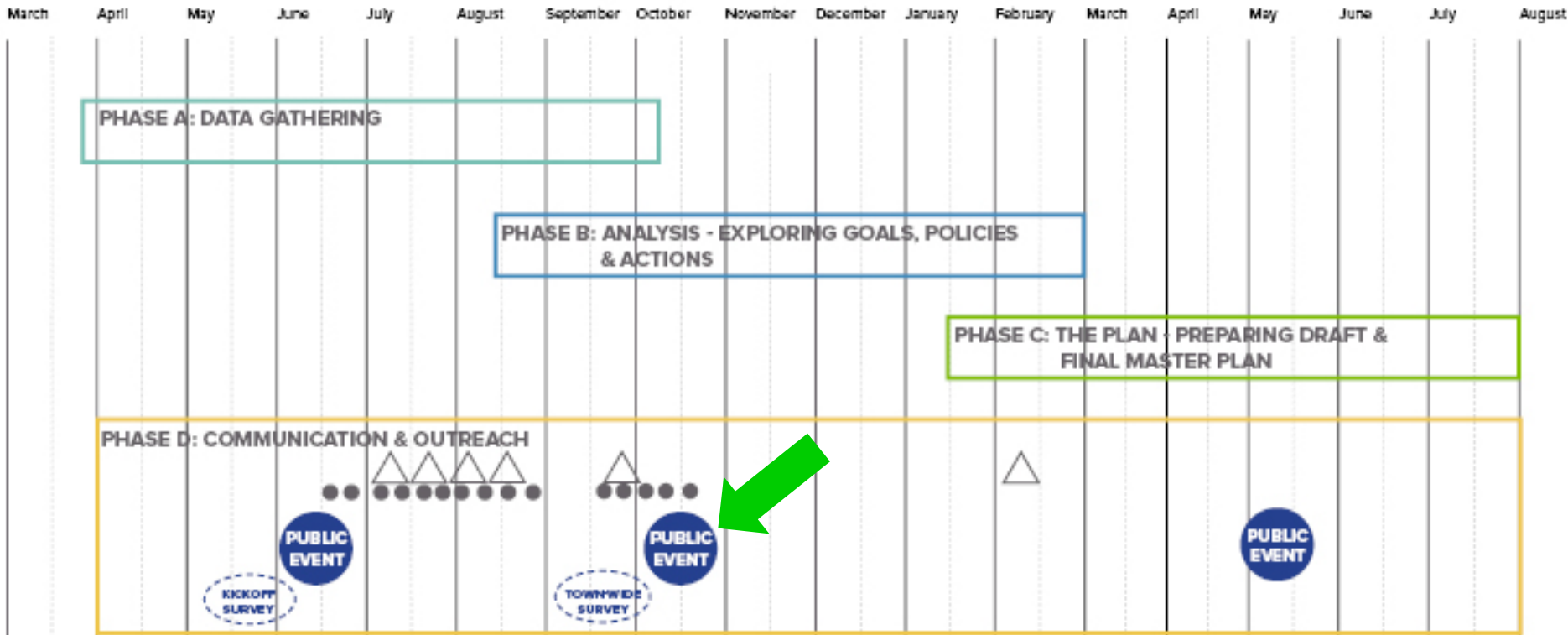
Mobile Stations - Instructions

- 1) There are 3 stations with different topics
- 2) You will have the chance visit any two stations for 30 minutes each
- 3) We will have a quick debrief from each station after one hour
- 4) You will have an opportunity to talk about the third topic as part of a DIY Meeting.

Next Steps

2018

2019



THANK YOU!

To receive updates and future event notices, please sign up at:
www.townofsharon.net/master-plan-steering-committee

Questions? Comments? You can contact the Committee at:
ImagineSharon@townofsharon.org