

MILLBURY, MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Millbury is part of Worcester County and the Blackstone River Valley. Millbury is located 43 miles west of Boston, 37 miles north of Providence, Rhode Island, and adjacent to Worcester. It totals 15.73 square miles.

Millbury began as an 8 square-mile plantation sold to Boston proprietors by the Nipmuc tribe in 1704. Originally part of Sutton, the town was incorporated in 1813 and quickly became a prosperous community consisting of various industries and mills, commercial shops and farms. Millbury's economic success was largely due to the superior ability of the Singletary and Blackstone rivers to support water-powered mills, which mass produced flour, lumber, paper, textiles, guns, and other metal products. The Blackstone River also served as an important transportation corridor. Completed in 1828, the Blackstone Canal linked Worcester, Massachusetts to Providence, Rhode Island. By 1837, Millbury was connected via rail to the City of Boston; ten years later the Providence and Worcester railroad supplanted the Blackstone Canal as providing the key connection for the movement of goods and people between the cities of Worcester and Providence until the dawn of the automobile.

Millbury's history is evident in its infrastructure, villages, and in the rich open space located throughout town. With Route 90 connecting Worcester to Boston and Route 146 connecting Worcester to Providence, Millbury has become attractive to both commercial and residential developers or simply, a "hot town." With this increasing demand for development, especially residential, Millbury must be prepared for growth. That growth must meet the diverse needs of Millbury's various household types, sizes and incomes levels.

Millbury's Housing Plan first assesses and analyzes housing-related trends including population by age group, growth in population and housing units, average household size and type of households, number, age and condition of housing stock, and housing occupancy. The housing demand assessment and needs analysis documents the demand for housing in Millbury and the gap between housing demand/need and housing supply.

Results of the housing assessment and analysis informed Millbury's housing goals and objectives, as well as specific action steps designed to fulfill them over the next six years and beyond.

2. PLANNING PROCESS

Millbury's Housing Plan was prepared by the Millbury Housing Task Force, which was appointed by the Millbury Board of Selectmen. The Task Force was composed of Millbury residents and professionals, many of whom have expertise with housing-related issues. Members of the Task Force included the director of the Millbury Housing Authority (Janet Cassidy), director and chairman of the Millbury Improvement Initiative (Cynthia Burr and Tom Lee), director of the Council on Aging (Judy O'Connor), members of the Millbury Housing Partnership (Harold Proodian and Jim Fitzpatrick), a member of the Board of Selectmen (Kenneth Schold), a member of the Planning Board (William Borowski), a member of the Disabilities Commission (Michael Kennedy), a member of the School Committee (Leslie Vigneau), a local realtor (Erica Creamer), and a resident (Carol Burke). The Town Planner (Laurie Connors) coordinated the Task Force meetings and served as primary author of the Plan. An intern from Worcester State

College (John Currier) provided research assistance. Housing Task Force meetings, which were open to the public, were held monthly. Meeting minutes appear in Appendix A.

Public outreach for the Housing Plan was obtained during a facilitated exercise held as part of the Millbury Improvement Initiative's Annual Meeting. This event, which was attended by approximately 40 Millbury residents, was held at the Millbury Senior Center on March 6, 2006. During the Forum, workshop participants were asked to break out into four discussion groups- Young Workers Without Children, Families With Children At Home, Empty Nesters, Seniors/Special Needs- and answer seven questions regarding housing preferences, housing needs and housing goals and objectives. Participants were requested to answer questions from the perspective of their group. The results of the Housing Forum are included within Appendix B.

The Town's Open Space and Recreation Survey contained two housing-related questions that supplement the results of the Housing Forum and provide additional insight into resident thoughts about growth and housing options. The survey was distributed with property tax bills to 4,712 property owners in July 2006. Fourteen percent of those surveyed responded by August 18, 2006. With regards to the Town's residential growth policy, 53% of respondents favored spreading growth evenly throughout town, 34% favored concentrating growth in existing developed neighborhoods and village centers, and 11% favored concentrating growth in undeveloped areas. Most respondents recognize the need for assisted living establishments (70%). Respondents prefer small multi-family developments (3 or fewer units) (42%) to apartment or condo complexes (4 or more units) (28%). Interestingly, respondents favor single family residential development on 10 acre lots (70%), 1 to 2 acre lots (61%) and 1/4 to 1 acre lots (61%). Most respondents oppose single family development on lots smaller than 1/4 acre (72%).

The Housing Task Force used the information gathered during the Housing Forum and by the Open Space and Recreation Survey to help shape the goals and objectives. The Plan also incorporates information supplied by municipal departments, the Millbury Housing Authority, public agencies including the Department of Mental Health, and a variety of community reports.

3. DEMOGRAPHICS & HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

POPULATION TRENDS

The 2000 Census determined that 12,784 people resided within the Town of Millbury that year, an increase of 556 residents since the 1990 Census. Given Millbury's total land mass of 15.73 square miles, the Town has a population density of approximately 813 people per square mile. Table 1 presents Millbury's population growth over the past 80 years, as well as a 2004 estimate and the Town's projected population for the years 2010 and 2020.

Table 1 illustrates that Millbury experienced significant population growth in the years leading up to the Great Depression, and also during the 1960's. After a slight decrease in population during the 1970's, population growth moderately increased during the ensuing twenty year period. According to the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission's (CMRPC) population forecast, Millbury will experience slightly higher population growth over the next fifteen years (a 14.2% increase between 2000 and 2020). This trend is already apparent as Millbury's population is estimated to have increased more in the four year period from 2000 to 2004 than in the last decade.

**Table 1:
Millbury Population Growth**

Year	Number of People	Numerical Change	Percent Change
2020 Projection*	14,600	900	6.6%
2010 Projection*	13,700	324	2.4%
2004 Estimate*	13,376	592	4.6%
2000	12,784	556	4.6%
1990	12,228	420	3.6%
1980	11,808	(179)	-1.5%
1970	11,987	2,364	24.6%
1960	9,623	1,276	15.3%
1950	8,347	1,364	19.5%
1940	6,983	26	.4%
1930	6,957	1,304	23.1%
1920	5,653	-----	-----

Sources: US Census Bureau; *Forecasts provided by CMRPC

Table 2 indicates that neighboring communities, especially Grafton and Sutton, are also experiencing population growth and should expect that trend to continue. Regional growth is primarily due to persons migrating from Greater Boston, where housing costs are significantly higher. Interestingly, Worcester, the region's largest city, is expected to have the smallest percentage population growth between 1980 and 2020.

**Table 2:
Neighboring Communities Population Growth**

Community	1980 Population	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population Projection*	2020 Population Projection*
Auburn	14,845	15,005 1% increase	15,901 6% increase	16,500 4% increase	17,200 4% increase
Grafton	11,238	13,035 16% increase	14,894 14% increase	18,000 21% increase	20,100 12% increase
Millbury	11,808	12,228 4% increase	12,784 5% increase	13,700 7% increase	14,600 7% increase
Oxford	11,680	12,588 8% increase	13,352 6% increase	13,900 4% increase	14,500 4% increase
Sutton	5,855	6,824 17% increase	8,250 21% increase	9,600 16% increase	10,900 14% increase
Worcester	161,799	169,759 5% increase	172,648 2% increase	179,000 4% increase	182,700 2% increase

Sources: US Census Bureau; *Forecasts provided by CMRPC

According to the 2000 Census, the median age in Millbury is 38.7 years. The following is a breakdown of residents within various age groups in 2000:

- 750 or 6% of the population consisted of pre-school aged children (ages 0-5).

- 2,460 or 19% of the population consisted of school-aged children (ages 5-19).
- 2,314 or 18% of the population consisted of young adults (ages of 20 – 34).
- 3,973 or 31% of the population consisted of adults in their family formation years (ages 35 – 54).
- 1,238 or 10% of the population consisted of adults in their peak earning years (ages 55 – 64).
- 1,016 or 8% of the population consisted of adults in their retirement years (ages 65 – 74).
- 1,033 or 8% of the population consisted of adults 75 years and older. These adults tend to have increasing care requirements.

As each of these age groups typically desires a different housing style, it is essential to track this demographic trend. For example, young adults may desire apartments, condominiums, and townhouses; families with children at home may desire large (4 or more bedrooms) single family homes with yards; adults in their retirement years may desire 55 and older communities, condominiums and small houses; seniors 75 years and older and disabled persons may desire in-law apartments, handicap-accessible housing, and assisted living establishments. According to Millbury's 1998 Master Plan population projections, the largest positive change in population between the years 1990 and 2010 will be for adults between the ages of 50 to 64 years (increase of 944 persons). The largest negative change in population will be for young adults between the ages of 20 to 34 years (decrease of 800 persons). These projections indicate that the Town is getting older. It also reflects the fact that the population of people aged 20 to 34 years is small, perhaps due to Millbury's unpopularity as living quarters for recent college graduates and young adults.

The 2000 Census identified 3,368 residents (or 26% of the total population) in Millbury who are disabled in some way. Some of these disabilities include sensory, physical, and mental disabilities, as well as employment, self-care, and go-outside-home disability. Fifteen percent of those have a disability that affects their mobility. Sixty-five percent of disabled residents are between the ages of 16 and 64 years, thirty-two percent are 65 years or older, and three percent are between the ages of 5 and 15 years.

Millbury has a very small minority population. Ninety-seven percent of the population is Caucasian, 1% is Hispanic or Latino, 1% is Asian, .5% is Black or African American, .1% is American Indian and Alaskan Native, .2% is a combination of various races, and .8% is two or more races.

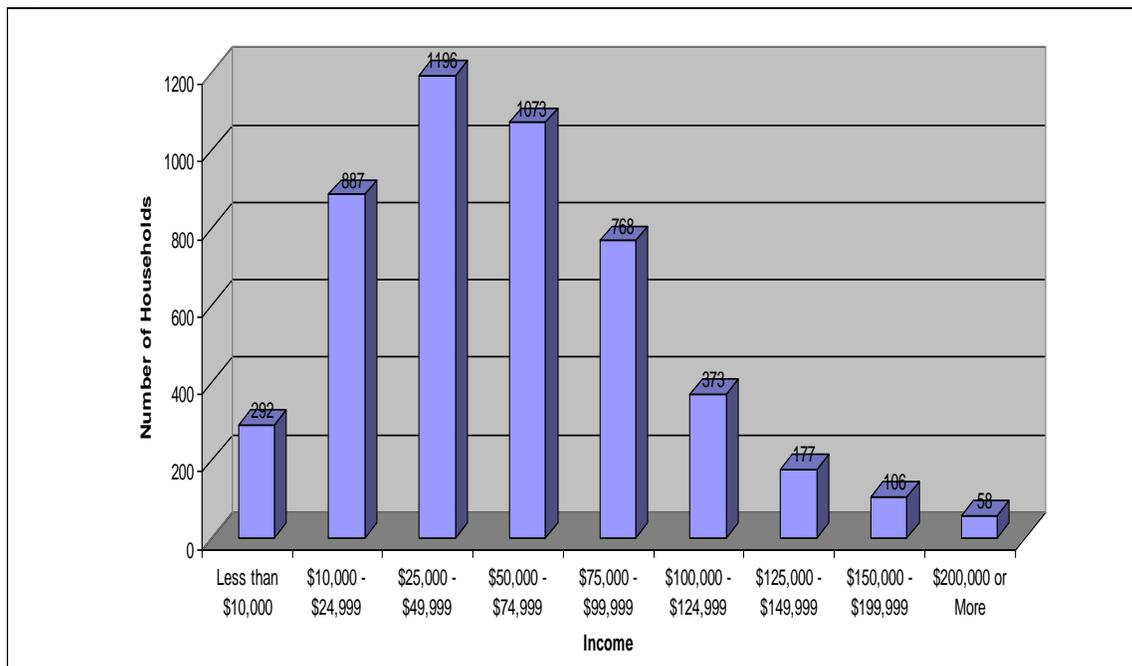
HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY INCOME

The 2005 fiscal year median family income for Worcester County PMSA was \$70,850. This represents a 72% increase over the 1989 Worcester County PMSA median family income. According to the 1990 Census, the median family income for Worcester County PMSA was \$41,186 and Millbury was \$45,131; the median household income for Millbury was \$37,438. According to the 2000 Census, the median family income for Worcester County PMSA was \$54,400 and Millbury was \$62,564; the median household income for Millbury was \$51,549. The median household income for people who owned their homes in 2000 was \$60,098 and the median household income for people who rented their homes in 2000 was \$31,731.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the largest number of households in Millbury in 2000 earned between \$25,000 and \$49,999 per year, which constituted 24% of all households. This is slightly below the median household income, and further below the median family income.

It is not surprising that household and family income varies significantly given householder ages and the presence of children. Householders between the ages of 35 to 44 years old had the highest median household income at \$67,917. Elderly householders earned significantly less on average. Householders between the ages of 65 and 74 earned a median household income of \$24,038; householders over the age of 75 earned a median household income of \$22,097. Families with children over the age of 18 earned a median family income of \$73,820. Single fathers with children under the age of 18 earned a median family income of \$43,000; single mothers earned a median family income of \$22,446.

Figure 1: Household Income in Millbury in Year 2000



Source: US Census Bureau

LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

One hundred forty-two out of a total of 3,471 families in Millbury lived below the poverty line in 2000. According to the MassCARES Community Wellness website, this is a 255% percent change since 1990 when there were 40 families living below the poverty line. Eighty-five percent of these families had children under the age of 18 years and 61% of these families were single mother families with children under the age of 18 years. Six percent of families below the poverty line earned supplemental security income or public assistance income.

Of all households, 135 householders who owned their homes, or 4%, lived below the poverty line according to the 2000 Census. Two hundred householders who rented or 14%, lived below the poverty line. A total of 91 households received public assistance income.

Extremely Low-Income (Less than \$19,999 Annually)

Of the 3,471 total families in Millbury, 319 were considered extremely low-income, according to the 2000 Census. This represents 9% of all families in town. Nearly one-third of all renters were considered extremely low-income. Of all the single mothers who live in town, 33% were considered extremely low-income. Of all elderly households (65 years and older), 40% were considered extremely low-income.

Very Low- Income (\$20,000 - \$34,999 Annually)

Of all families in Millbury, 477 or 14% were considered very low-income according to the 2000 Census. More than half of all renters were very low-income. Nearly 30% of single mothers in town were considered very low-income. Of all the single adults who live in town, 71% were single parents that were considered very low- income. Nearly 29% of elderly households were very low-income.

Low-Income (\$35,000 - \$49,999 Annually)

Of all families in Millbury, 509 or 15% were considered low-income according to the 2000 Census. Of all renters in town, 19% were low-income. A staggering 84% of elderly householders and 76% of single mothers living in town were considered low-income or poorer.

HOUSING STOCK

According to the Census, there were 5,109 total housing units in Millbury in 2000. Of the total housing units, 3,533 (69%) were single family detached dwellings, and 1,576 (31%) were townhouses or of the multi-family variety.

**Table 3:
Type of Housing Units in Millbury in Year 2000**

Type of Unit	Number of Units	Percentage of Total Units
One Unit Detached	3,533	69%
One Unit Attached	207	4%
Two Units	511	10%
Three or Four Units	485	10%
Five or More Units	373	7%
Mobile Homes	0	0%
TOTAL	5,109	100%

Source: US Census Bureau

As shown in Table 4, Millbury contained a higher percentage of multi-family homes than Sutton (10%) and Auburn (17%), an equal percentage as Oxford (27%), and a smaller percentage than Grafton (31%) and Worcester (63%).

**Table 4:
Type of Housing Units in Neighboring Communities in Year 2000**

Town	One Unit Detached	One Unit Attached	Two Units	3-4 Units	5+ Units
Auburn	4,823 73%	290 4%	319 5%	290 4%	496 8%
Grafton	3,535 61%	453 8%	579 10%	433 7%	822 14%
Millbury	3,533 69%	207 4%	511 10%	485 10%	373 7%
Oxford	3,580 69%	222 4%	479 9%	395 8%	524 10%
Sutton	2,571 87%	63 2%	154 5%	93 3%	61 2%
Worcester	23,101 33%	2,836 4%	7,426 11%	18,695 26%	18,658 26%

Source: US Census Bureau

Since 2000, Millbury experienced a significant increase in the number of dwelling units constructed, particularly those of the multi-family variety. This is largely due to the conversion of Cordis Mills into a 112-unit apartment complex and construction of Brierly Pond Village (Phase I), a fifty-five and older community consisting of 138 townhouse units. Table 5 identifies the number of new residential construction building permits issued by the Town of Millbury during the five and a half year period since the 2000 Census.

**Table 5:
New Construction Residential Building Permits Issued in Millbury: 2000 - 2006**

Year	Building Permits Issued	Number of Single Family Units Created	Number of Multi-Family Units Created	Total Dwelling Units Created
2000	73	73	0	73
2001	34	34	0	34
2002	43	31	150	181
2003	33	17	58	75
2004	44	33	36	69
2005	68	42	71	113
Jan – April 2006	8	6	4	10
TOTAL	303	236	319	555

Source: Millbury Building Department

Most of the new residential dwelling units constructed within the Town since 2000 are within subdivisions, open space communities or multi-family communities. The Planning Board approved the construction of 633 dwellings units within fifteen residential developments (See Table 6) since 2000. These projects are in various stages of development. Three projects are under appeal, four projects have been approved by the Planning Board but construction has not yet begun, seven projects are under construction, and one project is complete.

**Table 6:
Major Residential Developments Approved in Millbury: 2000 – April 2006**

Project Name	Year Approved	Number of Residential Structures	Number of Dwelling Units	Status
Allaire Farm Estates	2006	13	26	Approved
Autumn Gate Estates	2005	27	27	Under Construction
Brierly Pond Village	2001	38	138	Under Construction
Brierly Pond Village II	2004	17	61	Under Construction
Clearview Estates	2005	60	60	Under Appeal
Cordis Mills	2002	1	112	Complete
Cronin Brook Heights	2000	29	29	Under Construction
Eastview Acres	2005	19	19	Under Appeal
Jessica J. Extension	2004	28	28	Under Appeal
Longwood Farm Estates	2005	12	12	Approved
Moroski Estates	2004	8	8	Under Construction
Oakes Circle	2003	11	22	Under Construction
Overlook Estates	2004	23	23	Approved
Park Hill Village	2003	19	19	Under Construction
Stratford Village	2004	22	49	Approved
TOTAL:		327	633	

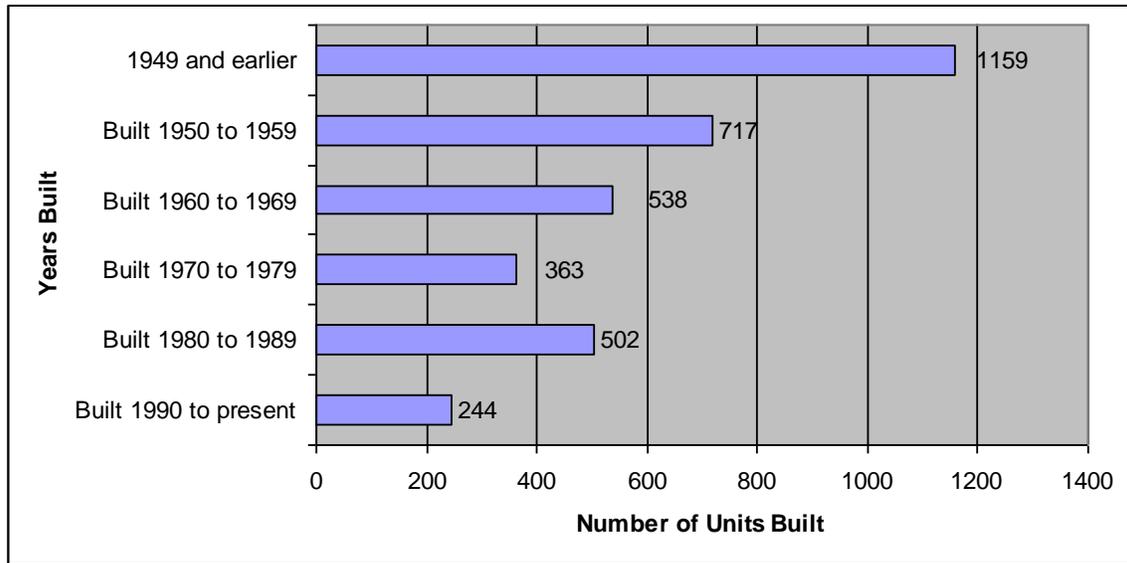
Source: Millbury Planning Office

AGE AND CONDITION OF HOUSING STOCK

As illustrated in Figure 2, of the 3,523 Owner Occupied Housing Units in Millbury, 53% were built prior to 1960. The median year owner occupied housing units were constructed is 1958.

- 33% of Owner Occupied Housing Units were built before 1950.
- 20% of Owner Occupied Housing Units were built between 1950 and 1959.
- 15% of Owner Occupied Housing Units were built between 1960 and 1969.
- 10% of Owner Occupied Housing Units were built between 1970 and 1979.
- 14% of Owner Occupied Housing Units were built between 1980 and 1989.
- 7% of Owner Occupied Housing Units were built after 1990.

Figure 2: Owner Occupied Housing Units in Millbury by Years Constructed

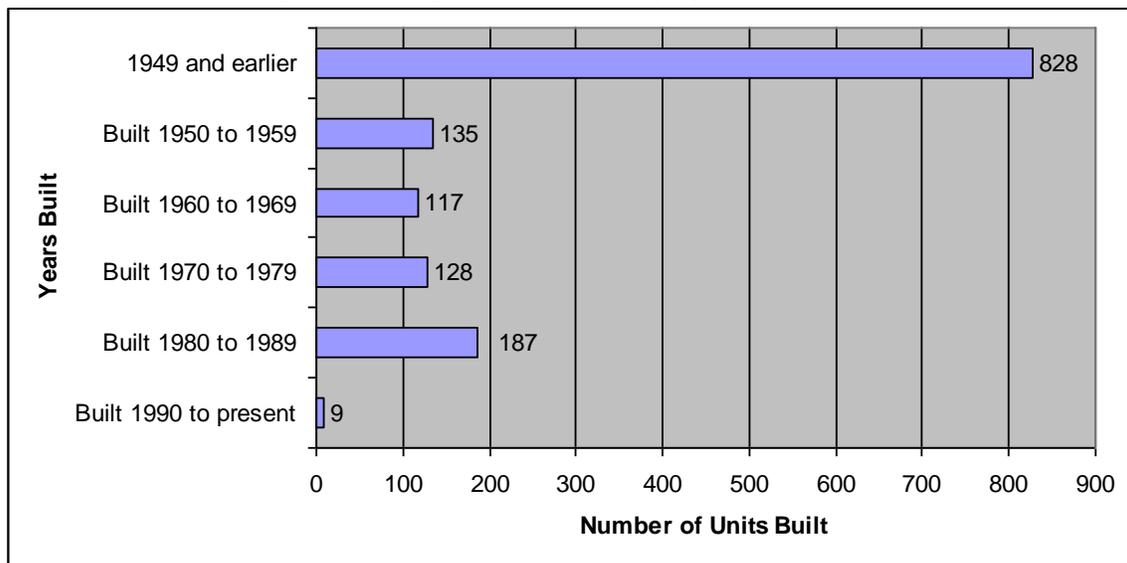


Source: US Census Bureau (2000)

As illustrated in Figure 3, of the 1,404 Renter Occupied Housing Units in Millbury, nearly 70% of Renter Occupied Housing Units were built prior to 1960. The median year renter occupied housing units were constructed is 1943.

- 59% of Renter Occupied Housing Units were built before 1950.
- 10% of Renter Occupied Housing Units were built between 1950 and 1959.
- 8% of Renter Occupied Housing Units were built between 1960 and 1969.
- 9% of Renter Occupied Housing Units were built between 1970 and 1979.
- 13% of Renter Occupied Housing Units were built between 1980 and 1989.
- 1% of Renter Occupied Housing Units were built after 1990.

Figure 3: Renter Occupied Housing Units in Millbury by Years Constructed



Source: US Census Bureau (2000)

Most of the single and multi-family homes built prior to 1960 are in higher density areas, particularly in Millbury Center, East Millbury, the Dorothy Pond area, and in the small historic villages. The fact that a large percentage of Millbury's housing stock was constructed prior to 1960 has significant financial and safety ramifications. An older stock is likely to need large financial investments in repairs and improvements. Many are likely to have lead paint as well as other code violations. Others may have substandard conditions such as the need for new septic systems, wells, bathrooms, kitchens, roofs, wiring, heat, and pipe upgrades. Of Millbury's total housing units, 18 units (13 owner occupied and five renter occupied) are without complete plumbing and kitchen facilities, as indicated by the 2000 Census. The Board of Health recently condemned two properties and is tracking ten properties with failing septic systems.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of people living in the Town of Millbury increased by 4.6%. During that same period, the number of year-round occupied housing units increased by 7.38%. Clearly, the housing stock is growing at a faster rate than the Town's population. This is not surprising given the national trend towards smaller household sizes. Couples in the United States today tend to have fewer children than they did decades ago, many households are of the single parent variety, and an expanding senior population means that many households consist of senior couples and individuals. In 2000, the average household size in the Town of Millbury was 2.53 persons. This is smaller than Millbury's 2.67 average person-per-household size in 1990.

HOUSING OCCUPANCY AND TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS

Of 4,758 housing units, 4,584 or 96% were occupied in 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of owner-occupied housing units increased by 267 units or 8.2%. During that same timeframe, the number of renter-occupied housing units increased by 76 units or 5.7%.

**Table 7:
Total Housing Units in Year 2000**

Type	Number
Total Housing Units	5,109
Total Occupied Units	4,927
Owner Occupied	3,523 or 72% of Total Occupied Units
Renter Occupied	1,404 or 28% of Total Occupied Units

Source: US Census Bureau

The 2000 Census indicates that the residential vacancy rate remained the same. Of 5,109 housing units, 4,927 or 96% were occupied in 2000. Millbury contained 182 vacant units that year. Of the total vacant units, 122 were single-family detached units, 4 were single-family attached units, and 56 were two to four family units. The homeowner vacancy rate was 1.4% and the rental vacancy rate was 3.2%.

Generally, rural communities tend to have substantially fewer rental units than urbanized areas. Compared to its neighbors, Millbury contains a large number of rental units. It has a much smaller percentage of rental units than the City of Worcester, but more than the neighboring communities of Auburn, Grafton, Oxford, and Sutton.

**Table 8:
Type of Occupancy in Neighboring Communities in Year 2000**

Community	Number of Owner Occupied Units	Number of Renter Occupied Units
Auburn	5,219 or 82%	1,127 or 18%
Grafton	4,116 or 72%	1,578 or 28%
Millbury	3,515 or 71%	1,412 or 29%
Oxford	3,801 or 75%	1,257 or 25%
Sutton	2,498 or 89%	313 or 11%
Worcester	29,054 or 43%	37,974 or 57%

Source: US Census Bureau

According to the 2000 Census, the largest percentage of owner occupied housing units contained 2-person households (36%). A total of 53% of owner-occupied housing units contained 1 or 2 person households. Household size figures were as follows:

- 17% of occupied housing units contained 1-person households.
- 36% of occupied housing units contained 2-person households.
- 19% of occupied housing units contained 3-person households.
- 18% of occupied housing units contained 4-person households.
- 7% of occupied housing units contained 5-person households.
- 3% of occupied housing units contained 6-or-more-person households.

As for renter occupied housing units, 44% contained 1-person households and 73% contained 1 or 2 person households. Household size figures were as follows:

- 44% of renter occupied housing units contained 1-person households.
- 29% of renter occupied housing units contained 2-person households.
- 15% of renter occupied housing units contained 3-person households.
- 8% of renter occupied housing units contained 4-person households.
- 3% of renter occupied housing units contained 5-person households.
- 1% of renter occupied housing units contained 6-or-more-person households.

More than 70% of the total households in Millbury were family households, which included married-couples, single mothers, and single fathers. Of all married-couple families, nearly 45% had children under the age of 18 living at home. Of all single females living in Millbury, nearly 70% had children under the age of 18 living at home. Almost 60% of single males had children under the age of 18 years living at home.

**Table 9:
Millbury Households by Type (2000)**

Households/Families	Number
Total Households	4,930
Total Families	3,471
Married-Couple Families	2,796
With Children Under 18	1,227
Female Householder (No Husband)	506
With Children Under 18	341
Non-Family Households	1,459

Source: US Census Bureau

Since the majority of suburban communities consist of single-family homes, they tend to have a higher percentage of family households; non-family households, which refers to one person living alone in a private dwelling or a group of two or more people who share a private dwelling but do not constitute a census family, tend to rent. Compared to Worcester, a substantially larger percentage of Millbury's households constitute families. Millbury contains a similar percentage of family households to the suburban communities of Auburn, Grafton and Oxford, and a significantly smaller percentage of family households than rural Sutton.

**Table 10:
Type of Households by Type in Neighboring Communities: Year 2000**

Community	Family Household	Non-Family Household
Auburn	4,406 or 69%	1,940 or 31%
Grafton	3,952 or 69%	1,742 or 31%
Millbury	3,442 or 70%	1,485 or 30%
Oxford	3,598 or 71%	1,460 or 29%
Sutton	2,283 or 81%	528 or 19%
Worcester	39,228 or 59%	27,800 or 42%

Source: US Census Bureau

The median year owner occupied householders moved into their homes is 1985, according to the 2000 Census. Twenty-six percent of owner occupied households moved in prior to 1969. As for the remaining owner occupied households:

- 13% moved in between 1970 and 1979.
- 24% moved in between 1980 and 1989.
- 19% moved in between 1995 and 1998.
- 15% moved in between 1990 and 1994.
- 3% moved in between 1999 and March 2000.

These numbers indicate that half of owner occupied households have lived in town for more than 25 years.

The median year renter occupied households moved into their homes is 1996. Sixty-one percent of total renters moved into their unit between 1995 and March 2000. As for the remaining renter occupied households:

- 10% moved in prior to 1979 (5% between 1970 and 1979 and 5% prior to 1969).
- 14% moved in between 1980 and 1989.
- 15% moved in between 1990 and 1994.

These numbers indicate that of the total renter occupied households, more than half have been paying rent for as long as 15 years. Only 10% (144 total) have been paying rent for more than 25 years.

According to the 2000 Census, nearly half of Millbury's homeowners (49%) were between the ages of 35 and 54 years of age, and nearly a quarter (24%) were more than 65 years of age. Conversely, more than half (57%) of Millbury's renters were younger than 45 years of age, and nearly a quarter (23%) were more than 65 years of age. This age distribution indicates a need for housing for young renters before they enter the homeownership market, and a secondary need for senior rental housing.

4. DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS

HOUSING SALES

Between 1990 and 2005, 3,403 homes were sold in the Town of Millbury. Although the number of residential sales fluctuated over the past fifteen years, residential sales have increased as a whole. The smallest number of residential sales occurred in 1991 with only 159 sales, the largest number of residential sales occurred in 2004 with 287 sales. Two hundred sixty-four homes were sold in 2005. The increasing popularity of condominiums is evidenced in the sale figures between 1990 and 2005. During that time frame, 356 condominium units exchanged hands. The fewest number of condominium sales occurred in 1992 with 3 sales, the largest number of condominium sales occurred in 2005 with 64 sales.

As depicted in Table 11, the median sales price of Millbury homes fluctuated between 1990 and 2005. In 1990, the median sales price was \$115,000. The recession and subsequent housing crash drove Millbury housing prices down during the ensuing four years. They bottomed out in 1994 at \$95,000, increased by more than \$10,000 in 1995, dropped again in 1996, before steadily increasing over the next nine years. In 2000, the median sales price of a home in Millbury was \$140,000, a 22% increase over the median sales price of a home in 1990. Home prices more than doubled during the next five years, peaking in 2005 at \$302,925. The 2005 median sales price of a Millbury home is 163% higher than in was in 1990.

Of all Millbury housing types, condominiums enjoyed the most dramatic price increase in the Town of Millbury between 1990 and 2005. In 1990, the median sales price of a condominium was \$75,000. The median sales price increased slightly in 1991 before plummeting to a mere \$27,000 in 1993 (this is largely due to widespread septic system failures at Paul Revere Village). Sales prices increased steadily thereafter. In 2000, the median sales price of a condominium in Millbury was \$110,000, a 47% increase over the median sales price of a condominium in 1990. The sales price peaked at \$295,900 in 2005, a whopping 295% increase over the 1990 figure.

**Table 11:
Housing Sales in Millbury: 1990 – 2005**

Year	Median Single Family Sales Price	Median Condominium Sales Price	Median Residential Sales Price (All Sales)
2005	\$296,500	\$295,900	\$302,925
2004	\$254,500	\$200,000	\$270,000
2003	\$240,000	\$251,929	\$254,450
2002	\$196,250	\$164,000	\$192,300
2001	\$184,000	\$143,500	\$170,000
2000	\$149,900	\$110,000	\$140,000
1999	\$137,250	\$88,000	\$129,000
1998	\$122,750	\$75,000	\$113,500
1997	\$120,500	\$73,000	\$110,000
1996	\$115,000	\$71,500	\$97,850
1995	\$112,000	\$69,000	\$105,500
1994	\$108,000	\$39,750	\$95,000
1993	\$115,000	\$27,000	\$98,500
1992	\$108,000	\$45,000	\$100,000
1991	\$114,900	\$75,500	\$106,000
1990	\$115,000	75,000	\$115,000

Source: The Warren Group

As depicted in Table 12, Millbury’s notable home price increases over the past fifteen years are echoed in neighboring communities. Of the six communities studied, Grafton and Sutton maintained their historic pattern of the highest home values. Grafton, the Millbury neighbor closest geographically to jobs located in Boston and along Route 495, experienced a 177% increase in home values between 1990 and 2000. This represents the largest increase in home values during that timeframe. At 163%, Millbury experienced the second largest increase in home values. Of the communities studied, Auburn saw the smallest increase in home values, which was still a significant 117%.

**Table 12:
Housing Sales in Neighboring Communities: 1990 – 2005**

Town	Median Residential Sales Price (All Sales)	Percent Increase 1990 - 2005
Auburn	1990: \$110,000 2000: \$140,000 2005: \$258,100	117%
Grafton	1990: \$131,525 2000: \$184,900 2005: \$364,585	177%
Millbury	1990: \$115,000 2000: \$140,000 2005: \$302,925	163%
Grafton	1990: \$100,000 2000: \$117,500 2005: \$235,500	136%
Sutton	1990: \$128,000 2000: \$185,500 2005: \$330,900	158%
Worcester	1990: \$106,000 2000: \$119,000 2005: \$241,620	127%

Source: The Warren Group

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Owners

In 2000, the cost of homeownership in the Town of Millbury was affordable to the average local and Worcester County family. According to the Warren Group, the median sales price of a home in Millbury in 2000 was \$149,900. In order to afford a house that cost that much, a family had to earn an annual income of \$44,443, which was \$18,121 below the median family income in Millbury and \$9,957 below the median family income in Worcester County PMSA. The projected annual income needed to afford the median sales price of a Millbury home was derived by adding together various assumed costs: a 10% down payment (\$14,990), monthly principle and interest assuming a 30 year fixed rate mortgage at 6.5% (\$853), monthly real estate taxes assuming \$15.66/\$1,000 of property value (\$196), monthly homeowner’s insurance (\$62) assuming 5% of the home value. The total assumed monthly housing costs were \$1,111, which means a family must have earned \$3,704 per month, or \$44,443 annually, in order to afford a house costing \$149,900.

Table 13 demonstrates that in 2000, homeownership was within grasp of most generally considered able to afford to own their own home (those earning at least 65% of the median family income). The table illustrates the various homeownership income categories, the range of housing prices considered affordable to those within the various income categories, and the number of homes sold for that amount in 2000. Of 253 total real estate sales, 93% of Millbury

homes sold were affordable to low, moderate and middle income households and families. According to the 2000 Census, 502 households, of which 337 were families, earned between \$35,000 and \$44,999 annually; 1,290 households, of which 1,029 were families, earned between \$45,000 and \$74,999 annually; and 1,482 households, of which 1,315 were families, earned more than \$75,000 annually.

**Table 13:
Millbury Homeownership Unit Need/Demand Analysis: 2000**

Income Group	Range of Incomes	Range of Affordable Housing Prices	Number of Arms-Length Home Sales
Low to Moderate	\$35,360 - \$43,519	\$0 - \$168,999	162
Moderate to Middle	\$43,520 - \$81,599	\$169,000 - \$317,999	72
Upper	\$81,600 and above	\$318,000 and above	13

Sources: US Census Bureau; Millbury Assessor's Office

Year 2000 Worcester County Median Family Income: \$54,400
 Year 2000 Median Sales Price for Single Family Home: \$149,900 (145 sales in 2000)
 Year 2000 Median Sales Price for Condominium: \$110,000 (23 sales in 2000)

Since 2000, it has become increasingly difficult to purchase a home in the Town of Millbury. The median sales price of a home in Millbury in 2005 was \$296,500, which represents an increase of \$162,925 or 116% over the 2000 median home price. Meanwhile, the median family income for Worcester County PMSA increased by a mere \$16,450 or 30%. In order to afford a house that costs \$296,500, a family must earn an annual income of \$83,698¹, which is \$12,848 above the Worcester County median family income in 2005. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts estimates the 2005 Worcester County PMSA median family income at \$70,850. By taking into account the same cost assumptions described in footnote 1, a family earning \$70,850 can afford a home costing \$251,000.

Table 14 demonstrates that in 2005, homeownership was NOT within grasp of most low and moderate income households and families (those earning between 65% and 80% of the median family income). The percentage of Millbury homes sold in 2005 that were affordable to low, moderate and middle income households and families decreased to a mere 60% of the 264 total residential sales. According to the 2000 Census, 502 households, of which 337 were families, earned between \$35,000 and \$44,999 annually; 1,290 households, of which 1,029 of were families, earned between \$45,000 and \$74,999 annually; and 1,482 households, of which 1,315 were families, earned more than \$75,000 annually. According to www.realtor.com, of 115 homes and condominiums for sale on June 9, 2006, only 22 homes were for sale for less than \$251,000.

¹ The projected annual income needed to afford the median sales price of a Millbury home was derived by adding together various assumed costs: a 10% down payment, monthly principle and interest assuming a 30 year fixed rate mortgage at 6.5%, monthly real estate taxes assuming \$11.41/\$1,000 of property value, and monthly homeowner's insurance assuming 5% of the home value.

**Table 14:
Millbury Homeownership Unit Need/Demand Analysis: 2005**

Income Group	Range of Incomes	Range of Affordable Housing Prices	Number of Arms-Length Home Sales
Low to Moderate	\$46,053 - \$56,679	\$0 - \$200,999	23
Moderate to Middle	\$56,680 - \$106,274	\$201,000 - \$376,499	135
Upper	\$106,275 and above	\$376,500 and above	57

Sources: MA Department of Housing and Community Development; Millbury Assessor's Office

Year 2005 Worcester County Median Family Income: \$70,850
 Year 2005 Median Sales Price for Single Family Home: \$296,500 (115 total sales in 2005)
 Year 2000 Median Sales Price for Condominium: \$295,900 (64 total sales in 2005)

Renters

As for rental units, the median gross rent of a Millbury unit in 2000 was \$603 per month, or \$7,236 annually. This figure is lower than market rate rents for that year because it includes subsidized rents and rents paid by renters who have lived in the same rental unit long-term. In order to afford the median gross rent, including the average cost of monthly utilities (assumed to be \$300 per month- only 24% of units include utilities within their monthly rent), a family or household must earn an annual salary of \$36,120, or \$3,010 per month. This assumes that renters pay no more than 30% of their monthly income towards rent and utilities. Renters paying more than 30% of their monthly income towards these housing expenses are considered to be exceeding their affordability. According to the 2000 Census, 745 Millbury households, or 34% of all households, earn less than \$35,000 per year. Fifty-eight percent of those households pay 30% or more of their annual income towards rent. Four hundred thirty-three Millbury renters or 31% of all Millbury renters pay 30% or more of their annual income towards rent.

Table 15 provides an affordability analysis for Millbury rental units. The table outlines the various renter income categories (assumes two person household), range of affordable rents, the number of rental units in Millbury affordable to the various income categories and the need for such rental units. Table 15 demonstrates that in 2000, there was a significant need for additional rental units that are affordable to extremely low, very low and low income households. There was a slight surplus of rental units that are affordable to moderate income households.

**Table 15:
Millbury Rental Unit Need/Demand Analysis: 2000**

Income Group	Range of Incomes	Range of Affordable Rent	Number of Households	Number of Actual Units	Deficit
Extremely Low	\$19,999 and Below	\$299 and Below	864	139	-725
Very Low	\$20,000 - \$34,999	\$300 - \$499	792	244	-548
Low to Moderate	\$35,000 - \$49,999	\$500 - \$999	719	882	163

Sources: US Census Bureau

Despite the clear need for additional rental units, from a regional perspective Millbury ranked fairly well in terms of affordable rents. The 2000 DHCD Housing Certification Program listed an affordable monthly rent figure of \$1,360 (30% of area median family income) for Worcester County PMSA. According to the 2000 Census, of Millbury's 1,404 renter-occupied housing units, 56 of them grossed a monthly rent of \$1,000 or more. Thus, when considered within the regional context, Millbury's rental units were affordable in 2000.

Cross County Realty Inc. and the Dolben Company (Cordis Mills property manager) provided information on market-rate rents for various size units in Millbury in 2005. Although only a fraction (8%) of all market-rate Millbury rental units (approximately 1,293 units, including Cordis Mills), the information is valuable for determining apartment affordability in 2005. Most of the one and two bedroom units examined included heat, central air, public water and sewer. The three and four bedroom units examined included public water and sewer only. The average rents of rental units were as follows:

**Table 16:
Average Millbury Rents by Number of Bedrooms: Year 2005**

Unit Size	Average Rent
One Bedroom	\$1,103
Two Bedrooms	\$1,235
Three Bedrooms	\$1,345
Four Bedrooms	\$1,450

Source: Cross County Realty Inc., Dolben Company

According to the Department of Housing and Community Development, an affordable rent for a household earning 70% of the 2005 Worcester County PMSA median income was \$868 for a studio apartment, \$930 for a one bedroom unit, \$1,116 for a two bedroom unit, \$1,114 for a three bedroom unit, and \$1,438 for a four bedroom unit. It is clear that the average rents of the apartments available for rent in 2005 were higher than that which was considered affordable for moderate income residents.

Seniors

According to the 2000 Census, sixteen percent of Millbury's population is elderly (65 years old and over). Eight percent of these elderly residents live below the poverty line.

According to the 2000 Census, 72% of households consist of people over 65 years of age who own their own home. Of the 321 elderly citizens who pay rent, 42% pay more than 30% of their total income on rent. As a comparison, 27% of renters under the age of 64 years pay 30% or more of their income on rent. This means that 136 elderly households are paying too much of their income on rent. As stated earlier, in order to afford the median priced-rental unit in Millbury, a householder must earn an annual salary of \$36,120. With the median household income of householders aged 65 years and older being \$23,068, more than half of the elderly citizens in town have a difficult time paying their rent. Nineteen percent of all households receive retirement income and because most elderly incomes are fixed, it is difficult to keep up with the rising cost of housing. If the cost of housing continues to rise, the elderly will have to devote more of their income towards these costs or find more affordable alternatives.

SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

According to the Department of Housing and Community Development, of the total year round housing units, only 4.4%, or 223 units, were Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Units in 2000. At that time Millbury had a 288-unit gap between the number of affordable units mandated by the State (10% of the community’s total housing stock must be restricted to persons of low or moderate income) and the affordable stock existing within Millbury. Between 2000 and 2005, the Building Department issued 295 building permits for the construction of 545 new dwelling units. During that same timeframe, 25 new affordable units were created but those units did not qualify for inclusion on the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Unit Inventory. Because the number of new affordable units did not keep pace with the total new dwelling units created, the affordable housing gap widened to 342 units by January 1, 2006.

Chapter 40B is a state statute that enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals to approve affordable housing developments if at least 20-25% of the units are restricted to those qualifying as low or moderate income. Also known as the Comprehensive Permit Law, Chapter 40B was enacted in 1969 to address the shortage of affordable housing across the Commonwealth. Chapter 40B strives to encourage the production of affordable housing units by reducing barriers, such as zoning and other local regulations that make a project economically infeasible.

The Millbury Housing Authority provides 151 units of low income housing for 169 elderly and handicapped person households (see Table 17). The Housing Authority also oversees one congregate care facility. The facility opened in 1989, is owned by the Millbury Housing Authority and subsidized by the Commonwealth. The facility consists of five apartment/suites with 23 rooms. The maximum number of residents permitted to live in the facility is 23. As of this time, there are no vacant rooms.

**Table 17:
Millbury Housing Authority Subsidized Elderly/Handicapped Units**

Development	Address	Total Units	Number of Bedrooms	Type
Centerview Apartments	95 Elm Street	54	54	667-3 Program Elderly/Handicapped
Colonial Drive Apartments	Colonial Drive	60	60	667-2 Program Elderly/Handicapped
Congregate Housing	10 Colonial Drive	5	23	667-4 Program Elderly/Handicapped
Linden Apartments	2 Pearl Street	32	32	667-1 Program Elderly/Handicapped

Source: Millbury Housing Authority

In addition to providing for elderly and handicapped persons, the Millbury Housing Authority houses 38 low-income families in various small sites (see Table 18). Unfortunately, two of the Housing Authority’s family sites, an apartment located at 21 Forest Drive and a single family home located at 256 North Main Street, are vacant because the units require a significant amount of renovation and the Housing Authority lacks the money to do so.

The Millbury Housing Authority also assists two households through Mobile Massachusetts Rental Vouchers, and one household through the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program. The beneficiary of the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program is the Youth Opportunities Upheld Program, otherwise known as You, Inc. You, Inc. is a social service organization funded by the Department of Social Services. They own a home at 117 MacArthur Drive that houses troubled adolescent girls participating in their program. The Millbury Housing Authority dispenses the money to house the girls to You, Inc. The number of residents varies from month to month - usually three or four girls participating in any given month. If the girls are working, they pay a portion of the rent based on their income. The state pays the remainder.

**Table 18:
Millbury Housing Authority Subsidized Family Units**

Address	Total Units	Number of Bedrooms	Type
9, 11, 13 Burbank Street	6	4 Units: 2 2 Units: 3	705-1 Program Family
21 Forest Drive	2	Unit 1: 1 Unit 2: 3	705 Program Family
Memorial Drive	25	13 units: 2 12 units: 3	200-1 Program Family
256 North Main Street	1	4	705 Program Family
47 Riverlin Street	1	3	705 Program Family
7 Waters Street	1	4/5	705 Program Family
230 West Main Street	2	2 Units: 3	705 Program Family

Source: Millbury Housing Authority

The demand for additional subsidized units is great. The Millbury Housing Authority's waiting list contains the names of 156 families and 37 elderly individuals seeking subsidized housing.

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) owns a single-family home that provides housing for four low income individuals. The DMH provides support and access to services to individuals of all ages, enabling those suffering from mental health issues to live, work and participate in their communities.

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) also owns a single-family home that provides housing for four low income individuals. DMR provides assistance in job placement, transportation, housing, or intense levels of treatment, monitoring and care.

The Town of Millbury Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee was established through enabling legislation passed in the mid 1980's. The purpose of the Partnership is to identify the need for affordable housing in Millbury and the Commonwealth, and create opportunities to increase affordable housing supplies, both ownership and rental. At the June 8, 2004 Annual Town Meeting, the care, custody, control and management of a parcel of land located at 42 MacArthur Drive was transferred to the Millbury Housing Partnership for the purpose of constructing a single family home for sale to a buyer qualifying as low or moderate income. The

Housing Partnership hopes that the house will be completed by the end of 2007 and sold shortly thereafter. To ensure that the home remains affordable to a low or moderate income family, the property will be subject to a twenty-five year deed restriction. In 2002 two single family homes were constructed under the direction of the Millbury Housing Partnership. The homes were purchased by low income families in May and August of 2003, and were subject to a ten-year deed restriction to ensure long-term affordability. In 1991/1992, two affordable units were constructed in the Salo Heights development and sold to low income residents under the direction of the Millbury Housing Partnership.

In the past, the Millbury Housing Partnership worked with the Millbury Savings Bank to provide “soft second loan” funds to help low and moderate income buyers qualify for the mortgages necessary to purchase the homes constructed through the Partnership. The Partnership obtained a \$40,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Development to assist with this endeavor.

In 2002, the Planning Board approved a 112-unit adaptive reuse project within Cordis Mills, a historic textile mill originally constructed in the 1870’s. The developer obtained low income housing tax credits from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for the creation of 23 units that are affordable to low income households for a period of fifteen years (from 2004 to 2019). Approximately half of the affordable units are one bedroom units, and the other half are two bedroom units. Under the Low Income Housing Tax Credits Program, investors who fund affordable housing development are entitled to take either a 4% or 9% tax credit, depending on the project, for a period of ten years. At least 20% of the total units must be affordable to households earning 50% or less of the area median income.

HOUSING UNIT GROWTH

With its charming historic neighborhoods, attractive open spaces, proximity to jobs in Worcester, Boston and along the high-tech I-495 corridor, and direct access to Route I-90, which links Boston to Albany, and Route I-146, which links Worcester to Providence, it is no surprise that Millbury has become a “hot” town. The Town’s infrastructure is poised for growth, with excess capacity available in the Millbury school system and Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District treatment facility. An aggressive sewer expansion project is underway, eventually providing sewer service to approximately 697 existing Millbury homes. Millbury’s water supply and distribution system, currently managed by the Aquarion Water Company, has sufficient capacity to meet existing needs. After taking into account anticipated future development, it is not expected that the system will exceed its permitted withdrawal volume until 2022. The transportation network is undergoing growing pains with some historic country roadways experiencing significant increases in traffic volume, especially McCracken Road, which provides direct access to a new Route 146 interchange and The Shoppes at Blackstone Valley, a big box retail shopping center nearing full build-out.

According to the Millbury Build-Out Analysis prepared by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) in 2001, 5,148 developable acres remained in the Town of Millbury at that time. Given existing minimum lot size requirements and environmental constraints, vacant residentially zoned land could yield 3,068 new residential lots. If all of these lots were developed for single family homes, Millbury could expect 7,882 new residents, 1,296 of whom would be students, and 51 additional miles of roadway.

The buildout analysis produced by CMRPC is conservative for three primary reasons. First, multi-family homes are permitted in most residential and suburban zoning districts via special permit and the current trend in Millbury calls for the construction of new multi-family homes. In fact, multi-family homes constituted 82% of new construction residential building permits issued in 2002, 77% in 2003, 52% in 2004, and 63% in 2005. Given this reality, the CMRPC assumption that all residentially zoned land will yield single family homes is unrealistic. Second, Town Meeting recently approved the expansion of the sewer system to the Laurel Heights and Lake Singletary area (affecting 11 roadways and approximately 222 homes), Greenwood Street area (affecting the Massachusetts Turnpike Pump Station, 6 roadways and approximately 115 homes), East Millbury area (affecting 22 roadways and approximately 267 homes) and Park Hill Avenue and Martin Street area (affecting 4 roadways and approximately 93 homes). The buildout analysis assumed that sewer would NOT extend to the Laurel Heights, Lake Singletary, Greenwood Street, and Park Hill areas. Sewer was assumed for the East Millbury and Martin Street areas, but the lot sizes used in the buildout analysis calculations did not take into account municipal water service. Minimum lot size requirements decrease in all residential and suburban districts, except the Suburban 1 District, if lots are served by municipal water, municipal sewer, or both municipal water and sewer. Many of the lots in the East Millbury area and Martin Street area are located within the Residential 1 District and are served by municipal water. The minimum lot size in the Residential 1 District for lots served by both municipal water and sewer is 12,500 square feet. The buildout analysis assumed a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet in this area, however. Third, the buildout analysis does not take into account infill development on small to medium-sized lots. The consequence of these assumptions is that Millbury should expect many more than the 3,068 new dwelling units and 7,882 new residents forecast in the buildout analysis.

ZONING BYLAWS

Zoning is the principal tool that municipalities use to control the type, appearance, location, and density of new development. Millbury's Zoning Bylaw divides the town into three residential districts, four suburban districts, two business districts, and two industrial districts. Housing is allowed in the residential districts on lots that vary in size from 12,500 square feet for lots served by both municipal water and sewer to 40,000 square feet for lots that are not served by municipal utilities. Within the suburban districts, housing lots vary in size from 15,000 square feet for lots in the Suburban II District that are served by municipal water and sewer to 60,000 square feet for lots in the Suburban I District. Within the business districts, housing is allowed on 12,500 square foot lots.

The Zoning Bylaw also refers to four overlay districts, whose boundaries and regulations are superimposed on the residential, suburban, business and industrial districts. The overlay districts include the Aquifer and Watershed Protection Overlay District, Floodplain District, Residential Office Overlay District, Route 146 Highway Corridor Overlay District,

The Millbury Zoning Bylaws have a number of provisions that are conducive to affordable housing development including the following:

Multifamily Special Permit

Multifamily uses are allowed by Special Permit in Residential, Residential (Office), Suburban and Business I Districts. Multifamily dwellings are defined as premises containing two or more

dwelling units, irrespective of ownership or tenure. Special permit eligibility criteria include service by municipal water and sewer in residential and suburban districts. Access to eligible lots in the suburban districts must also be via a major street or NOT via a minor street substantially developed for single family homes. Minimum lot size requirements increase by 10,000 square feet per additional dwelling unit plus 5,000 square feet per additional bedroom in suburban districts. Minimum lot size requirements increase by 1,250 square feet per dwelling unit plus 500 square feet per bedroom in the Business 1 District. Site Plan Review pursuant to Section 12.4 of the Zoning Bylaw is required.

Open Space Community Bylaw

Section 44 of the Zoning Bylaw pertains to Open Space Communities, which cluster dwelling units on a fraction of the site at a density higher than is typically allowed in the district if at least fifty percent of the tract is set aside as permanently protected open space. Open Space Communities are intended to permit the advancement of the goals and policies of Millbury's Master Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan, to allow for greater flexibility and creativity in the design of residential developments, to facilitate the permanent protection of open space and natural, historic and scenic resources and to encourage a more economical and efficient form of development that is less sprawling, consumes less open land, does not tax community services unduly, and respects a site's physical characteristics, minimizing the total amount of disturbance to the site. Open Space Communities are allowed by-right in Residential and Suburban Districts subject to site plan approval by the Planning Board. Eligible sites must contain at least ten (10) contiguous acres. The number of units permitted in an Open Space Community is identical to the number that would be permitted within a conventional subdivision. Applicants can obtain density bonuses for Open Space Communities that benefit the Town in identified ways, including the designation of units that are affordable to low and moderate income households. Single family and multi-family dwelling units (up to 3 units per structure) are allowed.

Adaptive Reuse Overlay Bylaw

The Adaptive Reuse Overlay District is established as an overlay district, and is allowed by Special Permit of the Planning Board. The boundaries of the district may be applied to any property containing two (2) or more acres of land, and containing a building of at least 5,000 square feet of gross floor area that was constructed before 1940, and originally used for manufacturing or associated uses. The overlay districts are shown on the Zoning Map of the Town. The purpose of the Adaptive Reuse Overlay Bylaw is to encourage the redevelopment of abandoned, vacant or underutilized mill buildings, to encourage flexibility in site and architectural design and to allow for a mix of new land uses that are appropriate to both the needs of the community and the scale of surrounding neighborhoods. The Adaptive Reuse Overlay Bylaw requires a Master Plan for the development or redevelopment of any property in the overlay district. A variety of uses are permitted within an Adaptive Reuse Overlay District, including multi-family dwellings, commercial uses that include offices, restaurants and service establishments, recreation uses, and institutional or philanthropic uses. Ten percent of all dwelling units must be restricted to persons qualifying as low or moderate income.

Route 146 Highway Corridor Overlay District

The purposes of the Route 146 Highway Corridor Overlay District are to provide for orderly development that is conducive at highway interchanges, that encourages economic growth while avoiding serious negative effects locally and in the region, maintain the scenic, natural and historical features of the area, and maintain the safe, efficient movement of traffic throughout the corridor by the orderly development of the land, in order to promote the health, safety and general welfare of present and future generations of Millbury citizens. The exact location of the overlay district is depicted on the Town's Zoning Map. The Bylaw governs permitted uses, open space requirements, buffers, parking, landscaping, grading and topography, dimensional and performance standards, signage, and tree protection. A variety of uses are permitted within the Highway Corridor Overlay District, including multi-family dwellings, commercial uses that include offices, hotels and convention centers, retail and service establishments, research and development uses, and indoor and outdoor recreation/entertainment uses. Site Plan review and approval are required.

5. HOUSING CHALLENGES

The Town of Millbury is plagued by a variety of housing-related challenges, including:

- Millbury's population and housing stock will continue to expand. According to the Demographics and Housing Characteristics Section, Millbury's population expanded at a moderate pace during the past ten years and that trend is expected to continue. Millbury's housing stock grew at a faster pace than its population during that same time period, largely owing to smaller household sizes. Because the community cannot legally stop development and the negative consequences of growth can be significant, Millbury should concentrate on managing growth so that it does not degrade the community's character or economic and environmental resources.
- Housing prices are rising at a faster pace than income levels. Between 1990 and 2005, the median sales price of a Millbury home increased 163% and the median sales price of a Millbury condominium increased 295%. Meanwhile, the median family income increased by a mere 72% during that same timeframe. In 2005, homeownership was not within grasp of most low and moderate income households and families. First-time homebuyers are particularly stymied by housing prices because of the large disparity between monthly homeownership costs and monthly rental costs. Those purchasing condominiums or homes in private developments are also burdened with steep condominium or homeowner association fees.
- The high cost of developing land in Millbury is an obstacle to creating affordable housing. Like many eastern and central Massachusetts communities, Millbury has a scarcity of small, affordable, buildable, residential lots. Most of the available, buildable, residential land is within large parcels that must be subdivided through the costly and lengthy definitive plan approval process. In order to ensure that Millbury's new residential developments are attractive, safe and sensitive to the resources and character of the Town, the federal, state and

local governments have adopted regulations that have driven up the costs of designing and developing residential projects. Given land, design and development costs, developers seem to find it economically undesirable to build starter homes in Millbury.

- Millbury does not have an adequate supply of affordable rental units. In 2000, 58% of Millbury's renters who earned less than \$35,000 annually paid 30% or more of their annual income towards rent; 42% of seniors paid 30% or more of their annual income towards rent; and 31% of all renters paid 30% or more of their annual income towards rent. Millbury does not have an adequate supply of subsidized units to house those that cannot afford the market rent. The Millbury Housing Authority provides 176 units of low income housing for elderly and handicapped persons and houses 11 low-income families in various small sites. The Housing Authority maintains a waiting list containing the names of 156 families and 37 elderly individuals seeking subsidized housing.
- The Millbury Housing Authority does not have the funding necessary to maintain their current supply of subsidized units. Two of the Housing Authority's family sites, an apartment located at 21 Forest Drive and a single family home located at 256 North Main Street, are vacant because the units require a significant amount of renovation and the Housing Authority lacks the money to do so.
- Millbury has a shortage of dwelling units meeting the definition of affordable under Chapter-40B. Massachusetts' Chapter 40B statute mandates that 10% of a community's total year round housing units qualify as Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Units. According to the Department of Housing and Community Development, only 4.4% of Millbury's units, or 223 units, are on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. With the number of year round units increasing every year, the percentage of affordable units decrease every year if a proportional number of new affordable units are not created. Municipalities who do not meet the 10% threshold are at risk for Comprehensive Permit applications. Developments constructed through the Comprehensive Permit process are exempt from local zoning and subdivision requirements; the development can be built in any zoning district, regardless of suitability or the community's capacity to absorb the project.
- Millbury's population is aging. Population projections estimate that the 50 to 64 year age group will experience the largest positive change between 1990 and 2010. At a housing workshop sponsored by the Millbury Improvement Initiative and Town Planner, attendees participating in the "senior" group stated that they thought Millbury needs additional handicap-accessible housing, assisted living establishments, mill housing, and 55 and older communities. Millbury currently does not have any assisted living establishments and the Zoning Bylaws do not specifically provide for them. Millbury has one mill housing complex- Cordis Mills, a 112-unit luxury apartment complex located on Canal Street. Millbury has one fully-constructed 55 and older community consisting of 138 multi-family condominium units, and anticipates construction of 136 additional multi-family condominium units within three permitted 55 and older communities. Units in Brierly Pond Village, the only 55 and older community built in Millbury, are currently retailing for \$300,000 to \$370,000. This is out of the affordable range

for many seniors interested in downsizing, especially considering that 84% of elderly householders are considered low income or poorer.

- Millbury does not have an adequate supply of handicap-accessible housing. The desire to construct new handicap-accessible units is frustrated by the high cost of land and dearth of small (15,000 square feet and less) buildable lots. Those needing accessible housing are forced to make older, more affordable homes handicap-accessible at considerable expense.
- Millbury's housing stock is aging. The median year owner occupied housing units were constructed is 1958; the median year renter occupied housing units were constructed is 1943. An older housing stock is likely in need of large financial investments in repairs and improvements.

6. GOALS AND STRATEGIES

A. Manage growth so that it does not degrade the community's character or economic and environmental resources.

- Ensure that new affordable housing units and developments are harmonious with existing neighborhoods - they should consist of a few units in scattered locations, and the architectural style and density of affordable housing developments should compliment that of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Encourage residential developers to utilize the Town's new Open Space Community Bylaw for parcels of 10 acres or more. This will help ensure that the portion of a parcel most able to accommodate density is built upon, whereas sensitive environmental and scenic resources are preserved in perpetuity.
- Allow increased density in Millbury Center and Bramanville where adequate roadways, public water and public sewer can accommodate additional development, and proximity to goods and services will minimize congestion. The Town may wish to consider adoption of Chapter 40-R for this purpose.
- Allow increased density in the Grass Hill area of West Millbury where existing commercial, institutional and residential uses coexist. The Town may wish to consider adoption of a village overlay district and development of private sewer treatment facilities to enable increased density in this area.

B. Provide affordable housing for Millbury's various household incomes and types, including young adults, families, seniors, and people with special needs.

- Revise the zoning bylaws to allow a zero lot line provision to minimize the cost of ownership of attached single family units (three-unit-per-structure maximum).
- Produce an accessory dwelling unit bylaw that allows construction of in-law apartments on single family lots within all residential and suburban districts upon receipt of a special permit from the Planning Board. Accessory apartments provide an opportunity for homeowners who can no longer physically or financially maintain their single-family home to remain in homes they might otherwise be forced to leave; provide housing units in single-family neighborhoods that are appropriate for persons at various stages of their life cycle; provide housing units for persons with disabilities; and add moderately priced rental units to the housing stock to meet the needs of smaller households; and make

housing units available to moderate income households who might otherwise have difficulty finding housing.

- Produce an assisted living bylaw that allows construction of assisted living establishments within residential, suburban and business districts upon the receipt of a special permit from the Planning Board. At least 15% of units should be allocated to low and moderate income persons in perpetuity.
- Revise the Adaptive Reuse Overlay District Bylaw so that residential uses can coexist with compatible industrial uses when located in separate buildings on the same parcel. This may encourage the use of vacant and underutilized mill buildings that are located on parcels with active industries.
- Work with local realtors, banks, the Millbury Improvement Initiative, and regional Community Development Corporations to design and launch a homebuyer counseling and education program. The program should provide “soup to nuts” information about the homebuying process, proper maintenance once a home is purchased and homeowner finances (make homeowners aware of potential financial pitfalls). The Millbury Housing Partnership should require potential buyers of their affordable units to attend this homebuyer counseling or education program.
- Display informational brochures about upcoming homebuyer counseling and education programs at the Municipal Office Building and public library.
- Continue to help low-income seniors maintain their homes through the Senior Work-Off Abatement Program. This successful program reduces the local property tax liability of seniors in exchange for volunteer service to the municipality. During the 2005 and 2006 calendar years, many municipal departments including the Selectmen’s Office, Building Department, Conservation Commission, Council on Aging, Planning Department, Sewer Department, and Town Clerk benefited from the program.

C. Increase the supply of dwelling units meeting the definition of affordable under Chapter-40B. The Town of Millbury should strive to produce at least 38 units per year during the next six years (for a total of 228 units in 6 years). See Appendix E for Affordable Housing Production Chart and Statement. This should be accomplished through use of a variety of strategies, including the following:

- Produce an inclusionary zoning bylaw that entices developers to designate at least 20% of total units within a proposed project for low and moderate income households. The Bylaw should encourage the development of single-family homes, condominiums and apartments of

various sizes. At least 20% of affordable units should be ADA-accessible.

- Produce a bylaw enabling the development of affordable housing and/or ADA-adaptable units on lots having less than the prescribed basic minimum area and/or minimum frontage requirements upon receipt of a special permit from the Board of Appeals.
- Consider adoption of a demolition delay bylaw, which would impose a waiting period before a permit can be granted to demolish a structure. In addition to preserving historic homes, a demolition delay bylaw could be used to preserve small, inexpensive, structurally-sound homes that are planned for demolition. The home can then be relocated to another site and converted into affordable housing.
- Produce an inventory of publicly-owned land and publicly and privately-owned vacant or underutilized buildings that might be suitable for subsidized housing. The following guiding principles will assist in selecting project sites and determining appropriate development configurations:
 - Target development projects, especially those serving special needs populations, to areas of town within walking distance to goods and services.
 - Target development projects to areas of town served by municipal water and sewer to enable increased density and minimize degradation to ecological resources.
 - Target development projects to underutilized or vacant commercial, industrial or institutional buildings.
 - Ensure that development projects are well designed and harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood.
 - Avoid situating development projects on ecologically sensitive sites, including those with slopes exceeding 15%.
 - Pursue development projects that accommodate a mixture of age groups and income levels.
 - Pursue development projects that combine amenities, such as recreation facilities and small-scale retail, with housing.
 - Produce both rental and homeownership opportunities.
 - Develop a number of low density, scattered site projects.
 - Pursue opportunities to obtain land or other resources for free or at below market values.
 - Pursue opportunities to obtain existing, inexpensive units, make any repairs that may be required and resell the units with affordability restrictions.
- Give the Millbury Housing Partnership the right-of-first refusal on property acquired via the tax title process. The Millbury Housing Partnership should then evaluate the property's suitability for affordable housing and report its findings to the Board of Selectmen. If the Housing Partnership deems the property suitable, it should request that the Town

transfer ownership of the property to the Millbury Housing Partnership at Town Meeting.

- Consider adopting a program that would provide property-tax relief to existing homeowners in return for long-term deed restrictions on their properties.
- Identify existing housing development agencies, such as the Millbury Improvement Initiative or a regional Community Development Corporation, who may have the interest and capacity to produce affordable housing in Millbury. If one is identified, develop a partnership with that organization to create affordable housing. If an existing housing development agency cannot be recruited to help produce affordable housing in Millbury, the Millbury Housing Partnership should establish or become a Housing Trust. Housing Trusts are able to receive funding, buy real estate, and in some cases initiate housing development.
- Continue to work with area banks and builders to produce affordable units on suitable municipal land and privately-owned land.
- Work with Habitat for Humanity to produce affordable units on suitable private parcels.
- Solicit money from individuals, businesses, foundations, and local, state and federal governments in an effort to fund a range of activities, such as acquisition of appraisals, purchase of land, construction costs, that increase the supply of subsidized housing (both rental and ownership).
- Consider hiring a grant administrator to investigate, pursue and administer housing-related grant programs.
- Attempt to negotiate an extension of the affordability restriction expiration date (it will expire in 2019) for the Cordis Mills development and other Partnership properties.
- Continue obtaining the training necessary to adequately review comprehensive permit applications.
- Negotiate the following with developers of comprehensive permit (Chapter 40B) or local initiative projects:
 - a. Millbury households should be afforded preference for affordable units;
 - b. At least 25% of affordable units should be handicapped accessible.
- Educate the public about current and future housing needs, and the social and economic benefits associated with providing housing for all income levels.
- Require that all new subsidized units, whether created through comprehensive permit, local initiative projects, special permits, or by the

Town itself, contain provisions that ensure that they remain affordable in perpetuity. The Town should also require annual monitoring to ensure that units are maintained properly.

D. Improve the condition of Millbury's older housing stock.

- Pursue grants, creative fund-raising strategies and volunteer labor to accomplish big-ticket maintenance projects, including renovations, of affordable units.
- Investigate various state and federal grant opportunities that exist for establishing a housing rehabilitation program.

7. ACTION PLAN

The following Action Plan designates the organizations, town employees, town boards and committees responsible for implementing the strategies identified in Section 6, and lists the recommended timeframe for accomplishing those strategies (ongoing (1-6 years); short-term (1-2 years); mid-term (2-4 years); and long-term (4-6 years)). Given that previously unforeseen obstacles and opportunities may arise, the timetable is flexible. The value of the action plan is to serve as a guide for directing the energy necessary to create safe housing that is appropriate for the full range of Millbury households and their income levels. It is not meant to be a rigid scheme.

Ongoing Strategies (Years 1-6):

- Ensure that new affordable housing units and developments are harmonious with existing neighborhoods - they should consist of a few units in scattered locations, and the architectural style and density of affordable housing developments should compliment that of the surrounding neighborhood. (*Millbury Housing Partnership, Planning Board and Board of Appeals*)
- Encourage residential developers to utilize the Town's new Open Space Community Bylaw for parcels of 10 acres or more. (*Town Planner and Planning Board*)
- Display informational brochures about upcoming homebuyer counseling and education programs at the Municipal Office Building and public library. (*Millbury Housing Partnership*)
- Require potential buyers of their affordable units to obtain certification through a homebuyer counseling or education program. (*Millbury Housing Partnership*)
- Help low-income seniors maintain their homes through the Senior Work-Off Abatement Program. (*Board of Selectmen, Council on Aging*)

- Continue to work with area banks and builders to produce affordable units on suitable municipal land and privately-owned land. (*Millbury Housing Partnership/Trust*)
- Work with Habitat for Humanity to produce affordable units on suitable private parcels. (*Millbury Housing Partnership/Trust*)
- Solicit money from individuals, businesses, foundations, and local, state and federal governments in an effort to fund a range of activities, such as acquisition of appraisals, purchase of land and construction costs, that will increase the supply of subsidized housing (both rental and ownership). (*Millbury Housing Partnership/Trust, Millbury Housing Authority*)
- Continue obtaining the training necessary to adequately review comprehensive permit applications. (*Board of Appeals*)
- Negotiate the following with developers of comprehensive permit (Chapter 40B) or local initiative projects:
 - a. Millbury households should be afforded preference for affordable units;
 - b. At least 25% of affordable units should be handicapped accessible. (*Board of Appeals, Planning Board*)
- Educate the public about current and future housing needs, and the social and economic benefits associated with providing housing for all income levels. (*Millbury Housing Authority, Millbury Housing Partnership*)
- Require that all new subsidized units, whether created through comprehensive permit, local initiative projects, special permits, or by the Town itself, contain provisions that ensure that they remain affordable in perpetuity. The Town should also require annual monitoring to ensure that units are maintained properly. (*Millbury Housing Partnership, Board of Appeals, Planning Board*)
- Pursue grants, creative fund-raising strategies and volunteer labor to accomplish big-ticket maintenance projects, including renovations, of affordable units. (*Millbury Housing Authority*)
- Investigate and pursue various non-profit, private, state and federal grant opportunities that exist for establishing a housing rehabilitation program and creating affordable housing (See Appendix C). (*Millbury Housing Partnership/Trust, Millbury Improvement Initiative*)

Short-term Strategies (Years 1-2):

- Revise the zoning bylaw to allow a zero lot line provision. (*Town Planner and Planning Board*)

- Produce an accessory dwelling unit bylaw that allows construction of in-law apartments on single family lots within all residential and suburban districts upon receipt of a special permit by the Planning Board. *(Town Planner and Planning Board)*
- Produce an assisted living bylaw that allows the construction of assisted living establishments within residential, suburban and business districts upon the receipt of a special permit from the Planning Board. At least 15% of units should be allocated to low and moderate income persons in perpetuity. *(Town Planner and Planning Board)*
- Revise the Adaptive Reuse Overlay District Bylaw so that residential uses can coexist with compatible industrial uses when located in separate buildings on the same parcel. *(Town Planner and Planning Board)*
- Work with local realtors, banks, the Millbury Improvement Initiative, and regional Community Development Corporations to design and launch a homebuyer counseling and education program. The Millbury Housing Partnership should require potential buyers of their affordable units to attend their homebuyer counseling or education program. *(Millbury Housing Partnership)*
- Produce an inventory of publicly-owned land and publicly and privately-owned vacant or underutilized buildings that might be suitable for subsidized housing. See Section 6, Goals and Objectives, for guiding principles that will assist in selecting project sites and determining appropriate development configurations. *(Millbury Housing Partnership)*
- Give the Millbury Housing Partnership the right-of-first refusal on property acquired via the tax title process. The Millbury Housing Partnership should then evaluate the property's suitability for affordable housing and report its findings to the Board of Selectmen. If the Housing Partnership deems the property suitable, it should request that the Town transfer ownership of the property to the Millbury Housing Partnership at Town Meeting. *(Treasurer/Collector, Board of Selectmen, Millbury Housing Partnership)*
- Identify existing housing development agencies, such as the Millbury Improvement Initiative or a regional Community Development Corporation, who may have the interest and capacity to produce affordable housing in Millbury. If one is identified, develop a partnership with that organization to create affordable housing. If an existing housing development agency cannot be recruited to help produce affordable housing in Millbury, the Millbury Housing Partnership should establish or become a Housing Trust. Housing Trusts are able to receive funding, buy real estate, and in some cases initiate housing development. *(Millbury Housing Partnership)*

Mid-term Strategies (Years 3-4):

- Revise the Zoning Bylaws to allow increased density in Millbury Center and Bramanville. The Town may wish to consider adoption of Chapter 40-R for this purpose. *(Town Planner and Planning Board)*
- Produce an inclusionary zoning bylaw that entices developers to designate at least 20% of total units within a proposed project for low and moderate income households. At least 20% of affordable units should be ADA-accessible. *(Town Planner and Planning Board)*
- Produce a bylaw that enables the development of affordable housing and/or ADA-adaptable units on lots having less than the prescribed basic minimum area and/or minimum frontage requirements upon receipt of a special permit from the Board of Appeals. *(Town Planner, Planning Board and Board of Appeals)*
- Consider adopting a program that would provide property-tax relief to existing homeowners in return for long-term deed restrictions on their properties. *(Board of Selectmen, Board of Assessors, Millbury Housing Partnership)*
- Consider hiring a grant administrator to investigate, pursue and administer housing-related grant programs. *(Millbury Housing Partnership/Trust, Millbury Improvement Initiative)*

Long-term Strategies (Years 5-6):

- Allow increased density in the Grass Hill area of West Millbury where existing commercial, institutional and residential uses coexist. The Town may wish to consider adoption of a village overlay district and development of private sewer treatment facilities to enable increased density in this area. *(Town Planner, Planning Board)*
- Consider adoption of a demolition delay bylaw, which would impose a waiting period before a permit can be granted to demolish a structure. *(Town Planner, Planning Board, Historical Commission, Millbury Housing Partnership)*
- Attempt to negotiate an extension of the affordability restriction expiration date (it will expire in 2019) for the Cordis Mills development and other Partnership properties. *(Millbury Housing Partnership)*