South Coast Rail Corridor Plan
Five-Year Update of Community Priority Areas
Somerset
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- Steve Smith, Executive Director
- Sandy Conaty, Comprehensive Planning Manager
- Bill Napolitano, Environmental Program Director
- Don Sullivan, Economic Development/Community Development Director
- Grant King, Principal Comprehensive Planner/Information Specialist
- Katie Goodrum, Senior Comprehensive Planner
- Karen M. Porter, GIS Specialist/IT Manager

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### 2013 Somerset Community Priority Area List

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the updated Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) in the town of Somerset. This community-driven land use planning exercise first took place in 2008, when three Regional Planning Agencies, SRPEDD, MAPC, and OCPC, worked alongside local residents, business owners, officials, and organizations to designate the areas that were most important for development or preservation in each community. All thirty-one (31) South Coast Rail (SCR) Corridor communities participated in this project in 2008 and again in 2013.

In 2013, the three Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) revisited these 31 communities to review and update the 2008 designations. Updates took into account new data that became available over the last five years as well as new municipal priorities. The “Five-Year Update” process was an opportunity to confirm choices made during the 2008 process, to revise previous designations, and to make new choices that acknowledged new conditions. During this review process, the SRPEDD website provided current information to the public, including a calendar of SCR Five-Year Update meetings and a resource library of relevant information sheets and maps.

What are Priority Development Areas (PDAs)?

Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are areas that are appropriate for increased development or redevelopment due to several factors including good transportation access, available infrastructure (primarily water and sewer), an absence of environmental constraints, and local support. PDAs can range in size from a single parcel to many acres. Potential development ranges from small-scale infill to large commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use projects. Town and village centers, Chapter 40R Districts, industrial parks, and proposed commuter rail station sites are typical examples of PDAs.

What are Priority Protection Areas (PPAs)?

Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) are areas that are important to protect due to the presence of significant natural or cultural resources, including endangered species habitats, areas critical to water supply, historic resources, scenic vistas, and farms. Like PDAs, the PPAs can vary greatly in size. Sites may be candidates for protection through acquisition or conservation restrictions.
What are Combined Priority Development and Priority Protection Areas (Combined Areas)?

In Combined Priority Development and Priority Protection Areas, communities welcome development; however, the development is expected to be sensitive to its site and the surrounding area. This may include development that complements the older structures within a historic district or low impact development that protects nearby water resources or biodiversity.

What do PDAs and PPAs do for my city or town?

A community’s Priority Area designations can guide municipal decisions about zoning revisions, infrastructure investments, and conservation efforts. For example, some communities choose to incorporate these designations into their Master Plan. Also, municipalities are implementing these designations using technical assistance available through State funding programs such as the South Coast Rail Technical Assistance and District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA).

In addition, the Community Priority Areas serve as the foundation for developing Regional and State Priority Area designations. Lastly, through Executive Order 525 (see below), the Patrick Administration asked certain state agencies to consider priority areas when making funding commitments.

Regional and State Priority Areas

The Community Priority Areas are essential to the process of determining the Regional and State Priority Area Maps. Local designations determined to be of regional significance through a regional screening process, including public input received at regional public workshops, make up the Regional Priority Areas map. In turn, the Community and Regional Priority Areas are the basis for the State Priority Area Map.

Executive Order 525 (E.O. 525)

In fall 2010, Gov. Patrick issued Executive Order 525 (E.O. 525) providing for the implementation of the South Coast Rail Corridor Plan and Corridor Map (Corridor Plan) through state agency actions and investments. The Executive Order calls for state investments to be consistent with the Corridor Plan’s recommendations to the maximum extent feasible. These state actions have the potential to leverage local and private investments in the priority areas. The Executive Order also directs state agencies to conduct a retrospective analysis to determine how consistent their actions and investments in the region have been with the Corridor Plan goals.
PRIORiTY AREA REVIEW PROCESS

SRPEDD staff worked with cities and towns to review their Priority Areas identified in 2008. Amendments to Priority Areas included delineating more precise boundaries using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data. RPAs used interactive GIS maps to present over forty layers or information including, but not limited to orthophotography, parcel lines, zoning districts, state program areas (such as Growth District Initiative and Chapter 40R sites), and designated resource areas (such as high-yield aquifers, Zone II aquifers, BioMap 2 Core Habitats, and rivers and streams with their associated wetlands). Communities also worked to clarify the stated purpose for each Priority Area.

The process included a series of three meetings:

#1: Introductory Meeting: A Regional Planning Agency staff member visited with Boards of Selectmen and Mayors to reintroduce the land use planning process that took place in 2008 and the reasons for conducting the Five-Year Update of Priority Area designations.

#2: Preliminary Meeting: SRPEDD staff facilitated a 2-3 hour working session with municipal staff and/or board and committee/commission members to review each priority area. Staff incorporated interactive GIS maps depicting various data layers (see Appendix) to inform discussions and decision-making. This preliminary process of updating the 2008 Priority Area designations had the following general guiding principles in mind:

- Incorporating changes in municipal priorities, needs, and desires
- Understanding updated state policies such as Executive Order 525
- Refining priority area boundaries to be exact and “rational” (coterminous with other map layers such as roadways, zoning boundaries, designated resource areas, etc.)
- Making clear and strategic statements about the stated purpose for and desired character of priority areas

For the few SRPEDD communities without town staff, SRPEDD did this preliminary review at a public meeting in the community; then, using the criteria outlined by meeting participants, SRPEDD made the remaining changes and returned revised maps and a narrative description of the revisions to the municipality for their review prior to the workshop with the general public. SRPEDD staff used the input from the preliminary meetings to generate a “before” and “after” map to present to the public for their feedback and input.

#3: Public Meeting Review: Each community held a public meeting, at which time RPAs and local meeting participants reviewed each community's priority areas and identified desired changes. Some communities incorporated this into a Board of Selectmen meeting, others
during a Planning Board meeting, and some communities held a public meeting held specifically for this purpose.

**TOWN OF SOMERSET RESULTS**

On January 9, 2013, SRPEDD staff met with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to re-introduce the Priority Area planning exercise. The BOS designated the Town Administrator, Dennis F. Luttrell, as the contact person for this work. The preliminary municipal meeting was held on April 25, 2013 at the Somerset Public Library. Participants reviewed the purpose and the boundaries of each 2008 Priority Area. In discussions, they clarified the purpose of each and adjusted the respective boundaries to coincide with the stated purpose.

The town of Somerset held a public meeting to seek input from town residents on the revisions recommended by the municipal representatives on May 23, 2013 at the Somerset Public Library. No revisions were requested for the priority areas. The consensus of the meeting attendees was that the 2013 Priority Area map depicts the boundaries of areas deemed to be priorities for development and for preservation. The result of this work is the 2013 Somerset Community Identified Priority Area Map, which can be found on page 2 of this document.

**PRIORITY AREA ADJUSTMENTS**

As stated above, the 2013 Priority Areas (PAs) are based upon the PA designations identified in 2008. Many of these PAs still represent municipal growth priorities today. In most cases, revisions made to the PAs simply transition them from the “general designations” of the 2008 process to more “exact designations” (both in terms of their boundaries and their stated purposes) using current Geographic Information Systems data and updated local input. In some cases, communities added new PAs or removed previous designations because (1) municipal priorities changed over time, (2) the purposes for designations were achieved or new ones arose, or (3) designations were incorporated into other PAs identified for the same purpose. The text below lists the updated 2013 PAs along with their related 2008 designations, describes their boundaries, and details their stated purposes in both 2008 (where applicable) and 2013.
PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Downtown Business Corridor [273-01]

Purpose: Business development.

Boundaries: Boundaries correspond to the Business Zoning District along Route 138.

Changes from 2008: In 2008, this PA was called Buffington Center. Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose. Community representatives also altered its boundaries to more clearly follow zoning districts.

Future Action: Development in accordance with existing zoning.

Indian Springs Plaza Redevelopment [273-02]

Purpose: Commercial redevelopment.

Boundaries: Boundaries correspond to parcels containing the underutilized plaza. The area is within both Business and Light Industrial Zoning Districts.

Changes from 2008: Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.


Montaup Redevelopment [273-03]

Purpose: Industrial, office, and business redevelopment.

Boundaries: Boundaries correspond to parcels containing the former Montaup facility. All parcels are either wholly or partially zoned Industrial. The site contains an Economic Opportunity Area (EOA).

Changes from 2008: In 2008, this PA was called Montaup Business Opportunity District. Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose. Community representatives also altered its boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

Future Action: Development in accordance with existing zoning and continued use of the existing deep water port.
National Grid Property [273-04]

*Purpose:* Business development

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the partially-developed parcel within the Business Zoning District.

*Changes from 2008:* In 2008, this PA was part of The Gateway PDA. Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose and location. Community representatives also altered its boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

*Future Action:* Development in accordance with existing zoning.

Route 6 Limited Business District [273-05]

*Purpose:* Business development.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to an undeveloped, Town-owned parcel within the Limited Business District.

*Changes from 2008:* In 2008, this PA was part of The Gateway PDA. Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose and location. Community representatives also altered its boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

*Future Action:* Development in accordance with existing zoning.

Slade’s Ferry Crossing [273-06]

*Purpose:* Mixed-use redevelopment.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to the Slade’s Ferry Crossing Mixed-Use Overlay District.

*Changes from 2008:* Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow the zoning district.

*Future Action:* Development in accordance with the recently adopted (2013) Slade’s Ferry Crossing Mixed-Use Overlay District.
PRIORITY PROTECTION AREAS

Broad Cove Passive Recreation [273-07]

Purpose: Protection of this resource area and future development of a public boardwalk.

Boundaries: Boundaries correspond to selected parcels adjacent to Broad Cove where the proposed boardwalk would be constructed.

Changes from 2008: In 2008, this PA was called Broad Cove. Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose, which originates from a 1997 plan. Community representatives also altered its boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

Future Action: Continue to investigate and encourage land protection measures and pursue funding for and development of the boardwalk.

Quaker Meeting Historic Register [273-08]

Purpose: To protect this historic property and to reinforce efforts to include it on both State and National Historic Registers.

Boundaries: Boundaries correspond to a selected parcel.

Changes from 2008: This priority area is new in 2013.

Future Action: Continue the process of listing this property on State and Federal Historic Registers.

Water Resource Protection [273-09]

Purpose: To protect water resources, including DEP Outstanding Resource Waters and High- and Medium-Yield Aquifers.

Boundaries: Boundaries correspond to a combination of DEP Outstanding Resource Water designations, High- and Medium-Yield Aquifers, the Town’s Water Resource Protection District, and two selected parcels.

Changes from 2008: Community representatives altered boundaries to more clearly follow designated resource areas and zoning districts.

Future Action: Continue to investigate and encourage land protection measures.
**Waterfront Multi-Use Path [273-10]**

*Purpose:* Use of waterfront parcels for a multi-use path.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to selected parcels along the Taunton River.

*Changes from 2008:* In 2008, this PA was part of Waterfront Industrial Area (deleted, see below). Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose as a recreational area and changed this designation from PDA to PPA due to the site’s proximity to the Taunton River. Community representatives also altered its boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

*Future Action:* Pursue funding for and development of the boardwalk.

**COMBINED PRIORITY AREAS**

**Town-Owned Wilbur Avenue Solar Potential [273-11]**

*Purpose:* Solar field development.

*Boundaries:* Boundaries correspond to a selected, Town-owned parcel.

*Changes from 2008:* In 2008, this PA was called Rte. 103 Town Owned Property. Community representatives renamed this area in order to more clearly describe its purpose and location. Community representatives also altered its boundaries to more clearly follow parcel lines.

*Future Action:* Continue to pursue and encourage alternative energy development.

**DELETED PRIORITY AREAS**

**Marble Street Neighborhood Node PDA, Rte. 6 West End Corridor PDA, National Grid Combined PDA/PPA, and Fox Hill Cove PPA:** Town representatives removed these PAs because they no longer represented first-tier growth or preservation priorities.
### SOUTH COAST RAIL CORRIDOR LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**FIVE-YEAR COMMUNITY PRIORITY AREA UPDATE COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

**06/30/2013**

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South Coast Rail Priority Area 5-Year Update

Subregion 4: Fall River, Freetown, Somerset

Map 1: Community Priority Area Designations, 2008-09

- Priority Development Areas (PDAs)
- Priority Protection Areas (PPAs)
- Combined PDA/PPA
- Overlapping Priority Areas
- Water
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
- Arterials and Collectors
- Local Roads
- MBTA Proposed Stations
- MBTA Proposed Rail Lines

This map is for the sole purpose of aiding regional planning decisions and is not warranted for any other use.

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South Coast Rail Priority Area 5-Year Update

Subregion 4: Fall River, Freetown, Somerset

Map 2: Open Space & Developed Land

- Developed Land
- Open Space (Protected In Perpetuity)
- Open Space (Limited Protection)
- Open Space (Term-Limited or Unknown)
- Open Space (No Protection)
- Active Agriculture
- Water
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
  - Arterials and Collectors
  - Local Roads
- MBTA Proposed Stations
  - MBTA Proposed Rail Lines

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Subregion 4: Fall River, Freetown, Somerset

Map 4: Water Resources

- DEP Approved Zone II Aquifers
- High-Yield Aquifers
- Medium-Yield Aquifers
- Interim Wellhead Protection Areas (IWPAs)
- DEP Outstanding Resource Waters - Public Water Supply Watershed
- DEP Wetland Bodies
- DF&G Coldwater Streams/Fisheries
- Water
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
  - Arterials and Collectors
  - Local Roads
- MBTA Proposed Stations
- MBTA Proposed Rail Lines

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South Coast Rail Priority Area 5-Year Update

Subregion 4: Fall River, Freetown, Somerset

Map 5: Biodiversity & Natural Resources

- NHESP Certified Vernal Pool
- All Areas Prime Farmland (NRCS SSURGO-Certified Soils)
- NHESP Priority Habitats
- BioMap2 Core Habitat
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscapes
- Water
- Municipal Boundaries
- Interstates
  - Arterials and Collectors
  - Local Roads
- MBTA Proposed Stations
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February 2013
Percent of a community’s total housing units that are affordable to households with incomes ≤ 80% the area median income (AMI). Note: 35% of all housing units in the South Coast Rail region are affordable to these households.