

Town of Acushnet



Priority Development & Protection Areas November 2008

SOUTH COAST RAIL PROJECT
Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS PRIORITY PROTECTION AREAS

INTRODUCTION

Southeastern Massachusetts is growing rapidly. As a region, we are developing nearly 8 acres each and every day, or about 4½ square miles a year. This is equivalent to fully developing an area approximately the size of the Town of Somerset every 21 months.

Development is inevitable. Our region is a desirable place to live and work, and a certain amount of new growth is healthy. But in the past we have not always planned well for development, and the result has not always been an asset for our communities and region.

Good development should be on sites that are matched to their intended uses. Sites for more intensive development need good access, compatible abutting land uses, public water and sewer service nearby, and minimal environmental constraints. These areas need to be located, mapped and appropriately zoned.

Likewise, we need to plan to protect our most important natural areas. These are the areas that contribute to our water supply, contain threatened or endangered species or are special due to their scenic or historic features. These areas also need to be located, mapped and appropriately protected.

We must steer development toward the appropriate (priority development) areas and away from the critical (priority protection) areas in order to achieve the vision that we have for our communities.

In conjunction with the South Coast Rail project and the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force, SRPEDD will be working with municipal officials and citizens in southeastern Massachusetts' communities to identify **Priority Development Areas (PDAs)** and **Priority Protection Areas (PPAs)** in each of the region's twenty-seven cities and towns.

WHAT ARE PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS?

These are areas within a city or town that are capable of handling more development due to several factors, including good access, available infrastructure (primarily water and sewer), an absence of environmental constraints, and local support. PDAs can range in size from a single lot to many acres. Areas designated under state programs such as Chapter 43D (expedited permitting), Chapter 40R (smart growth zones) or Economic Opportunity Areas can be examples of PDAs. Included in these designations will be the local recommendations for how these sites should be developed.



WHAT ARE PRIORITY PROTECTION AREAS?

These are areas within a city or town that deserve special protection due to the presence of significant environmental factors and natural features, such as endangered species habitats, areas critical to water supply, scenic vistas, or areas of historic significance. Like PDAs, the protection areas can vary greatly in size. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), aquifer recharge areas, or designated priority habitats can be examples of PPAs.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PDA/PPA DESIGNATIONS?

This work is useful to all communities in making land use and zoning decisions. It may be helpful when considering potential mitigation for the commuter rail project, and may be utilized if a regional system of transfer of development rights is created. The PDA/PPA information that is developed will also be integrated into the corridor plan for the South Coast Rail project.

HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

SRPEDD assembled known data, local zoning bylaws, master plans and open space plans and worked with local planners, conservation agents, economic development officials, elected officials, interest groups, local organizations and citizens to review this information and refine it with local knowledge. This process took several months in each community. State officials will be consulted for their input and final recommendations will be brought before local officials and the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force.

HAS THIS BEEN DONE BEFORE?

Similar efforts undertaken by SRPEDD in 1997 and The Coalition for Buzzards Bay have completed pieces of this process, and that work will be incorporated into this effort.

The following pages reveal the work that members of the Town of Acushnet identified as Priority Protection and Priority Development Areas in the winter of 2008.

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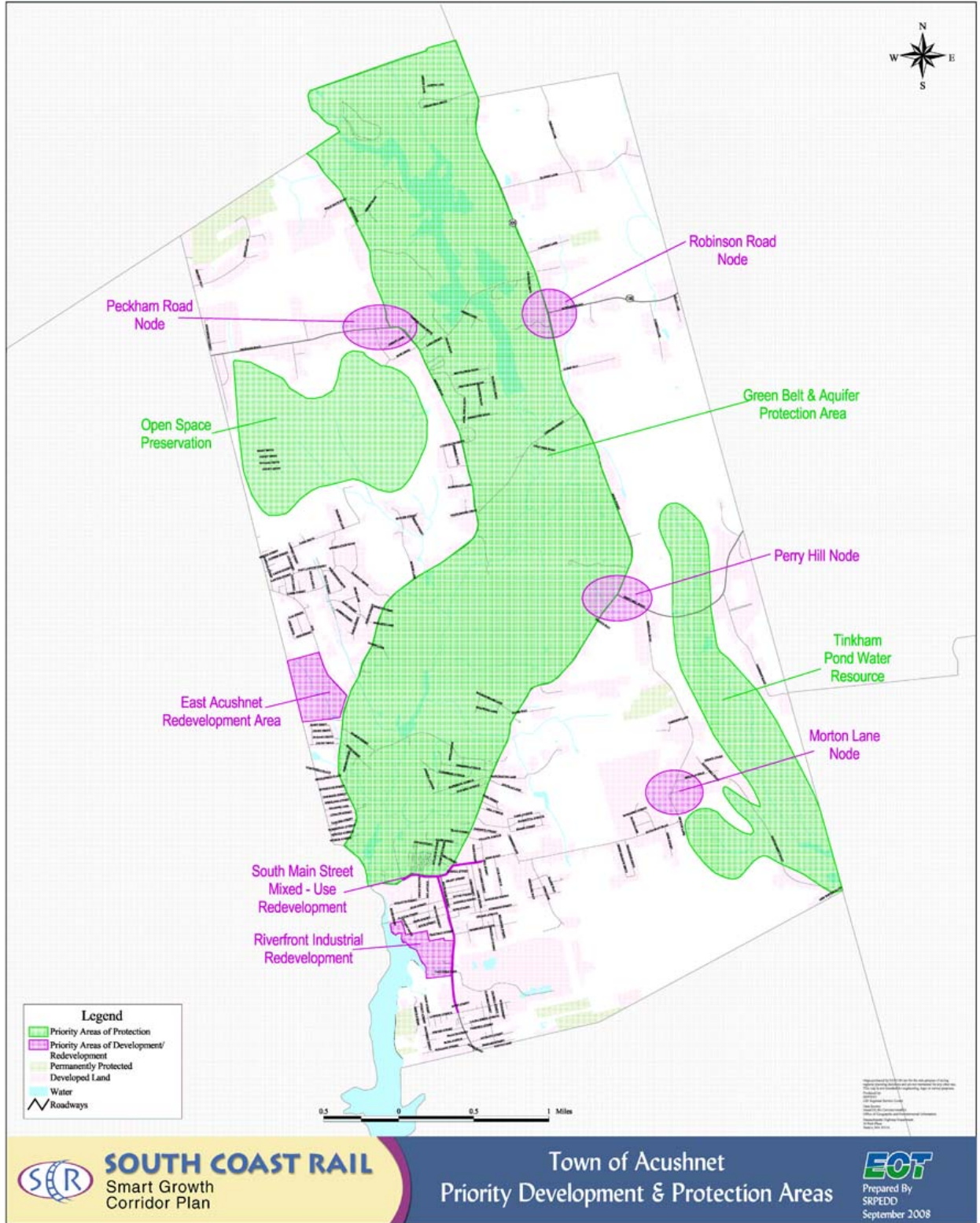
Community Summary

Acushnet was founded on June 8, 1664, as the community of Acushnea in the township of Dartmouth. The area later became the towns of Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Westport, and New Bedford. Acushnet Village became the chief old Dartmouth maritime port on the river. Shipbuilding began, first with small vessels, and later with whaling vessels. The village had the reputation of having more whaling masters than any other town in the United States.



Originally an agricultural community embracing the headwaters of the Acushnet River, the residential town of Acushnet has retained its rural atmosphere, while also providing a home for various industries. Through the 1800s, the town was the site of water-powered factories and boat yards; in the 1990s, the town hosted construction, manufacturing and agriculture and aquaculture industries. It is the original home of the Titleist golf ball. Acushnet is a quiet, friendly community with a population of 10,607 people, with many miles of winding, country roads. Residents take great pride in the town's schools, openness, and feeling of family. Each Fall, during the well-known Apple/Peach Festival, Acushnet's growers, artisans, and Historical Society welcome visitors from far and wide. (Town of Acushnet, web-site)

Acushnet Priority Protection & Development Areas



Town of Acushnet Priority Development/Redevelopment and Protection Areas

II. Priority Development/Redevelopment

1. *Riverfront Industrial Redevelopment Area*

This area is located in the southwest portion of Acushnet extending north from Lawson Avenue along the Acushnet River. This area includes the Titleist Ball Plant #II, other industrial activity, and vacant and underutilized sites. Acushnet has identified this area for redevelopment and proposes infrastructure improvement allowing for an industrial access road (River Street Extension) to encourage private investment and redevelopment. Acushnet is in the Greater New Bedford Economic Target Area (ETA) and can offer development incentives. It is anticipated that redevelopment will require zoning changes and the area may have 21E issues. The area offers limited access and, water and sewer are available.

***Riverfront Industrial Redevelopment Area
Summary of Characteristics***

<p><i>Protected Parcels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Municipally owned property</i> <p><i>Historical Significance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Barrows Tavern</i> • <i>Toll House</i> 	<p><i>Water Resource</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Medium/High yield aquifer</i> • <i>100 /500 year floodplain</i> • <i>Wetlands</i> • <i>Acushnet River</i>
<p><i>Natural Resource Protection Areas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None</i> 	<p><i>Soils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Till or Bedrock</i> • <i>Sand and Gravel</i> • <i>Floodplain Alluvium</i>
<p><i>Zoning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Business Village</i> • <i>Residential</i> <p><i>Municipal Water/ Sewer</i></p>	<p><i>Possible Use/Reuse</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Commercial/Manufacturing</i> • <i>Mixed-use</i>
<p><i>Development Area</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>South Main Street</i> 	<p><i>21E Site/Brownfield</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Potential</i> <p><i>Chapter 61 property</i></p>

2. *South Main Street Mixed-use Redevelopment Area*

The area extends from the intersection of Main and South Main Streets heading south along South Main Street to the New Bedford line. This area represents Acushnet’s Central Business Village (CB District) or downtown, which contains a mix of neighborhood business uses and residential properties. This area is

proposed for revitalization, including mixed-use redevelopment and infill development.

Town centers are hot in today’s development world. Interesting, pedestrian-friendly, and dynamic mixed-uses are increasingly preferred locations for working, living and playing. The Civic Center District located near the old Town Hall and Police/Fire Station would allow for public and institutional uses and possibly small scale businesses to serve the area employees and residents.

***South Main Street Mixed-use Redevelopment Area
Summary of Characteristics***

<p><i>Protected Parcels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Municipally owned property</i> <p><i>Historical Significance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Historic structures</i> 	<p><i>Water Resource</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Medium/High yield aquifer</i> • <i>100/500 year floodplain</i>
<p><i>Natural Resource Protection Areas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None</i> 	<p><i>Soils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Till or Bedrock</i> • <i>Sand and Gravel</i> • <i>Floodplain Alluvium</i>
<p><i>Zoning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Business Village</i> <p><i>Municipal Water/ Sewer</i></p>	<p><i>Possible Use/Reuse</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mixed-use</i> • <i>Residential</i> • <i>Civic</i>
<p><i>Development Area</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>South Main Street</i> • <i>Main Street</i> 	<p><i>21E Site/Brownfield</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yes</i>

3. *East Acushnet Redevelopment Area*

This area is located at the intersection of Middle Road and Nye’s Lane. Extending generally north and west, the area is bordered by Pine Street on the north, the New Bedford line to the west, Mary Street to the south, and Middle Street and Nye’s Lane to the east. The area has existing commercial uses, and underutilized and vacant sites. It offers continual mixed-use redevelopment opportunities. Area access is limited. Water is available but not sewer.



***East Acushnet Redevelopment Area
Summary of Characteristics***

<p><i>Protected Parcels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Municipally owned property</i> <p><i>Historical Significance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None</i> 	<p><i>Water Resource</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Minimal wetlands</i> • <i>Stream</i>
<p><i>Natural Resource Protection Areas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None</i> 	<p><i>Soils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Till or Bedrock</i>
<p><i>Zoning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Residential</i> <p><i>Municipal Water/ Sewer</i></p>	<p><i>Possible Use/Reuse</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Commercial/Manufacturing</i> • <i>Mixed-use</i>
<p><i>Development Area</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nye’s Lane</i> 	<p><i>21E Site/Brownfield</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Potential</i>

4. Neighborhood Village Nodes

A neighborhood village node is an active gathering place within a neighborhood that provides essential goods and services within walking distance. Locating these uses close to residential neighborhoods reduces the need to drive, puts more eyes on the street, offers greater opportunity for social interaction, and contributes to the overall neighborhood quality. The village nodes represent small-scaled neighborhood retail and service activities. Acushnet has identified a number of potential areas for small-scale, low impact mixed-use redevelopment potential.



- A. Intersection at Peckham and Keene Roads;
- B. Intersection at Main Street and Robinson Road (Rte 105);
- C. Intersection at Main Street and Perry Hill Road;
- D. Intersection at Mendall Road, Morton Lane and Mattapoissett Road.

III. Priority Protection Areas

1. *Green-belt & Aquifer Protection Area*

The Green Belt and Aquifer Protection area encompasses the Acushnet River. The Acushnet River is the largest river feeding into the Buzzards Bay. The name “Acushnet” has native Wampanoag origins meaning “as far as the waters”; “*Cushnea*” in the native language. The river is fed by Long Pond in Lakeville, flowing through Freetown before it enters the New Bedford Reservoir in the northern portion of Acushnet. From the reservoir, the river travels through the town until it becomes the border with the City of New Bedford and empties into the New Bedford Harbor and Buzzards Bay.

The Acushnet River provides drainage for nearly the entire town, with the exception of the eastern portion of town, which drains to the Mattapoisett Harbor through the Mattapoisett River.



A large aquifer of medium and high yield is closely associated with the Acushnet River due to the geological composition within the basin. In the late 1990s the Town of Acushnet began to investigate potential municipal well sites for drinking



water resources. The community purchased the former Rivet property, which is now under the jurisdiction of the Water and Sewer Department and the Conservation Commission. Currently Acushnet purchases drinking water from the City of New Bedford for approximately 75% of its population.

**Green Belt & Aquifer Protection Area
Summary of Characteristics**

<p>Protected Parcels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Golf Course</i> • <i>City of New Bedford</i> • <i>Municipally owned parcels</i> • <i>Fairhaven Acushnet Land Trust</i> <p>Historical Significance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Potential historical significance</i> 	<p>Water Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Acushnet River</i> • <i>Medium/High yield aquifer</i> • <i>100/500 year floodplain</i> • <i>Wetlands</i> • <i>New Bedford Reservoir</i> • <i>East Lake</i> • <i>South Lake</i> • <i>Squinn Brook</i> • <i>Keene River</i> • <i>IWPA</i>
<p>Natural Resource Protection Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Priority Habitat</i> • <i>Estimated Habitat</i> 	<p>Soils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Till or Bedrock</i> • <i>Sand and Gravel</i> • <i>Floodplain Alluvium</i>
<p>Zoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Residential</i> <p><i>Some areas have City Water/No Sewer</i></p>	<p>21E Site/Brownfield</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None</i> <p><i>Chapter 61 properties</i></p>

2. Open Space Preservation

We cannot ignore the values and benefits of open spaces to property owners, to society, and to the ecosystem itself. From the potential for flooding, to the loss of natural habitats and wetlands, to threats to the quality of drinking water, it is apparent that not every piece of land in the community is best suited for urban uses. Some land has its greatest overall value to our communities as open space. The Open Space Preservation area in Acushnet is known locally as Hatahaway Swamp. The swamp is currently under Chapter 61 and is owned by the Acushnet Saw Mill.

In the early 1970's, rising property values forced many farmers and forestland owners to sell their land because the tax burden was so great. Farmers, conservationists, and landowners formed a coalition to promote an amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution allowing preferential



assessment of property. The constitutional referendum passed in 1973 and Massachusetts’s voters approved legislation known as Chapter 61...the Forestland Act, Chapter 61A...The Farmland Assessment Act, and Chapter 61B...The Open Space Act.

These new laws required cities and towns to reduce assessments on farm, forest, and open space lands, provided the owners made a commitment to keep their land in one or more of those uses. It is a voluntary form of conservation.

A provision of these statutes grants cities and towns right of first refusal on lands classified under Chapter 61 if such lands are sold for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. The right of first refusal is a legal interest in the property that grants the city or town the right to match a *bona fide* offer for conversion of the property from its forest, agricultural or recreational use. There are three farms in the north end of town that are currently under the Chapter 61A Farmland Assessment Act. Should the landowners wish to sell their properties, the Town of Acushnet would like to preserve this area due to its natural resource value.

***Open Space Preservation
Summary of Characteristics***

<p><i>Protected Parcels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Municipally owned property</i> <p><i>Historical Significance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agricultural</i> • <i>Native</i> 	<p><i>Water Resource</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wetlands</i> • <i>Deep Brook</i>
<p><i>Natural Resource Protection Areas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None</i> 	<p><i>Soils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Till or Bedrock</i> • <i>Floodplain Alluvium</i>
<p><i>Zoning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Residential</i> 	<p><i>No Municipal Water/ Sewer Chapter 61 properties</i></p>

3. *Tinkham Pond Water Resource*

Tinkham Brook drains into the Tinkham Pond, together creating the framework of the Pond Water Resource area. The Tinkham family is well known in Acushnet and Mattapoisett and recently contributed over 100-acres of preserved drinking water supply and wetlands to the communities. In Mattapoisett, 78-acres of forest and wetlands were conveyed to the Mattapoisett Water Department for protection of their water supply. The family also bequeathed 34-acres of woodlands bordering Tinkham Pond to the Fairhaven-Acushnet Land Preservation Trust. The Town of Acushnet would like to continue protecting the land and water resources in this area for future generations to enjoy.

***Tinkham Pond Water Resource
Summary of Characteristics***

<p><i>Protected Parcels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fairhaven-Acushnet Land Preservation Trust</i> • <i>Conservation Commission</i> <p><i>Historical Significance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None</i> 	<p><i>Water Resource</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>100/500 year floodplain</i> • <i>Tinkham Brook</i> • <i>Tinkham Pond</i> • <i>Wetlands</i>
<p><i>Natural Resource Protection Areas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Priority Habitat</i> • <i>Estimated Habitat</i> 	<p><i>Soils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Till or Bedrock</i>
<p><i>Zoning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Residential</i> 	<p><i>No Municipal Water/ Sewer Chapter 61 properties</i></p>





Acushnet Priority Protection & Development Areas

