

**COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN 2007
NORTH BROOKFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

TRANSPORTATION CHAPTER



TRANSPORTATION

Roadway Network:

North Brookfield's transportation network consists of approximately 82 miles of paved roadways, both State and local roads. The Town contains two State numbered routes (Routes 67 and 148) that enter North Brookfield in the south as West Brookfield Road (Route 67) and Brookfield Road (Route 148) before they join together just south of the town center where they form South and North Main Street. They split up again just north of Town where Route 67 continues directly north as New Braintree Road and Route 148 extends in a northeasterly direction as Oakham Road. North Brookfield does not have direct access to any of the region's Interstate highways. The closest access to the interstate is the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90), which is twenty minutes south in Sturbridge.

Roadways – Maintenance Responsibilities:

North Brookfield's Highway Department is responsible for maintaining all of the roadways in Town, including the State roads that pass through town (Routes 67 & 148). The Department also maintains a handful of private roads, many of them being dirt roads in the rural areas of Town.

State Roads/Bridges – Planning for Improvements:

In most cases, major transportation projects are planned at the regional level. The Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) is the decision-making body responsible for planning, programming and funding for the Federal-aid transportation projects in the region. The 10-member CMMPO is made up of representatives from four organizations: MassHighway, the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and the Worcester Regional Transportation Authority (WRTA). The CMMPO membership also includes six locally elected officials, one from each of CMRPC's six subregions. CMRPC's transportation staff conducts advanced planning for the CMMPO. The CMMPO prepares an annual update to the region's Transportation Improvement Program (known as the "TIP"). Each annual TIP lists projects at least four years into the future. The highway-related improvement projects included in the TIP are paid for through Federal-aid funds provided to MassHighway by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Projects slated for non-Federal aid or State funding are also included in the TIP's project listing.

The most recent version of the CMMPO-endorsed TIP covers a four-year period (2007 through 2010) and *does not* list any projects in North Brookfield for the next four years. It should be noted that transportation projects often take a long time to come to fruition in Massachusetts. It is not uncommon for a decade to pass from the idea phase of a transportation project to its actual implementation. From formulating the idea, getting the project listed on the region's TIP, to the design stage, to the environmental review, to securing and obligating the funding, to bidding out the construction work, to the actual construction, transportation projects often take years to unfold. Due to the length of time to get projects started, initial cost estimates are typically revised upwards as the project moves closer to completion. This situation is a nationwide phenomenon and not peculiar to Massachusetts.

Structurally Deficient Bridges:

According to MassHighway, there are 649 bridges in the Central Massachusetts Region. All of the bridges have been evaluated for structural integrity according to the standards set forth by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). According to the AASHTO-based bridge evaluations, there are currently 56 bridges identified as “structurally deficient” in Central Massachusetts. MassHighway’s most recent inventory *does not* list any structurally deficient bridges in North Brookfield.

Functionally Obsolete Bridges:

The AASHTO bridge evaluations also identify those bridges considered to be “functionally obsolete”, that is, those bridges in need of modernization. In Central Massachusetts, there are currently 146 bridges identified as being functionally obsolete. Again, MassHighway’s most recent inventory *does not* list any functionally obsolete bridges in North Brookfield.

State Aid for Local Roads

MassHighway distributes funds for local roadway repair and maintenance to municipalities in Massachusetts on an annual basis through Chapter 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL). North Brookfield received \$195,641 in its initial Chapter 90 appropriation for Fiscal Year 2006, and an additional appropriation of \$86,669 towards the end of the Fiscal Year, for a grand total of \$282,310 in Chapter 90 funds for FY 2006. For the 2007 Fiscal Year, North Brookfield received \$194,891 in Chapter 90 funds.

Road Classification and Eligibility:

MassHighway maintains an inventory of local roadways as reported by municipalities in Massachusetts, and the inventory is updated annually. MassHighway also maintains an inventory of those State-maintained roads that are considered to be part of the Federal-aid system. The Federal-aid system has a three-tier functional classification system for roads:

- Arterial Roads: Roads that serve through traffic. These roads should provide the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance. Arterial roads are the highways of the Interstate Highway System, such as I-90, I-84, etc.
- Collector Roads: Roads that link local roads to arterial roads. These roads provide a less highly developed level of service at a lower rate of speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterial roads. Collectors are heavily traveled local roads and those roads associated with the State highway network.
- Local Roads: Roads primarily used to access a community’s housing stock.

MassHighway classifies North Brookfield's roadways in the following manner:

- Principal Arterial Roads: None in North Brookfield.
- Rural Minor Arterial Roads: None in North Brookfield.
- Rural Major Collector Roads: East Brookfield Road, Gilbert Street, Route 67 (West Brookfield Road, South and North Main Street and New Braintree Road), Route 148 (Brookfield Road and Oakham Road).
- Rural Minor Collector Roads: Shore Road, Old East Brookfield Road, Elm Street, School Street, Hillsville and Spencer Road, Summer Street and Waite Corner Road.
- Local Roads: All other roads in North Brookfield. These roads are not eligible for Federal-aid.

North Brookfield can compete for limited Federal-aid funding to repair their eligible roads listed above through the annual TIP process. Roads classified as “rural minor collector roads” and “local roads” are not eligible for Federal-aid; however, these roads are eligible for funds under the State's Chapter 90 program.

Current Condition of Local Roads:

North Brookfield has never prepared a Local Pavement Management Study for the Town. Many Massachusetts communities have undertaken pavement management studies in order to assist local decision makers in determining the most cost effective strategies to address poor or failing roadway conditions. Many of North Brookfield's neighbors have prepared such studies including Brookfield, East Brookfield and Spencer.



In general, a successful Local Pavement Management Study defines a roadway network, identifies the condition of each roadway segment, develops a list of needed improvements and balances those needs with available resources (i.e., funding). Pavement condition information is collected in the field by noting the severity and extent of various pavement distresses, including potholes, distortions, rutting, surface wear and a number of different kinds of cracking. Based on observed distresses, a quantified rating of pavement condition can be objectively ascertained. Using the pavement ratings and nature of the distress, repair options can be

recommended, such as complete reconstruction or reclamation, rehabilitation, preventive

maintenance, routine maintenance or no immediate maintenance. Using the calculated pavement rating, the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume and the unit cost and estimated life of the repair option chosen, recommended improvement projects can be organized in a prioritized order. As more than half (55%) of the respondents to the Master Plan citizen survey rated North Brookfield's Highway Department as "fair" or "poor", the Town may want to undertake a Pavement Management Study for its local roadways.

Traffic Volume:

CMRPC conducts traffic counts throughout the region on an ongoing basis. Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) machines are placed along a roadway to record the number of vehicles traveling in each direction over a 48-period. The Daily Traffic Volume Map on the following page shows the total number of vehicles (i.e. traffic going in both directions) traveling on North Brookfield's primary roadways during a 48-hour period. The volumes shown on the map are taken from a series of traffic counts conducted during the summer of 2004, with the exception of Route 148 at the Brookfield town line (count date: summer 2001) and School Street (count date: 1998). While most of North Brookfield's local roads handle less than 1,000 cars a day, the more heavily traveled roads have the following ranges of daily traffic volume:

- 1,000 – 2,499 Vehicles Per Day: Elm Street (1,053 vehicles per day), Hillsville Road (1,425 vpd), Route 67 at New Braintree town line (1,855 vpd), Route 148 at Brookfield town line (1,504 vpd), School Street (1,784 vpd) and Summer Street (1,317 vpd).
- 2,500 – 4,999 Vehicles Per Day: Route 148 north of Route 67 (2,544 vpd), Route 67 at West Brookfield town line (2,748 vpd), Gilbert Street (4,646 vpd) and South Main Street (2,904 vpd).
- 5,000 or More Vehicles Per Day: None.

Projected Traffic Volume:

In November 2006, CMRPC ran its Travel Demand Model in an effort to project future increases in traffic for all six of its subregions. North Brookfield is located in CMRPC's West Subregion, which is expected to see its volume of traffic increase by 0.57% annually between now and 2025. It should be noted that the West Subregion's traffic volume projection is the second lowest of CMRPC's six subregions.

Roadway Volume Versus Roadway Capacity:

On an ongoing basis throughout the region, the CMRPC Transportation Department utilizes its Congestion Management System (CMP) and associated travel demand and forecasting computer model to identify those roadways where traffic volumes exceed or are projected to exceed the roadway's operational capacity. According to the 2000 Highway Capacity Manual, prepared by the Transportation Research Board (a division of the National Research Council), a roadway's capacity is defined as, "The maximum hourly rate at which persons or vehicles can reasonably be expected to traverse a point or uniform section of a lane or roadway during a given time period

under prevailing roadway, traffic and control conditions”. Utilizing the CMP for base year 2005, a volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio has been developed for the 2005 base year as well as the projected conditions in 2030. The CMP considers any roadway with a V/C ratio greater than 1.0 to be “congested”.

According to the CMP, none of North Brookfield’s roadways were identified as congested for the base year of 2005, although a small segment of South Main Street between its intersections with School Street and Gilbert Street (about an eighth of a mile) was near congestion (V/C ratio between 0.76 and 1.00) during the evening peak hours (4:00 PM to 6:00 PM). The V/C ratio for this particular portion of South Main Street during the evening peak hours will become even more congested by the year 2030, with a projected V/C ratio between 1.00 and 1.50. Two additional segments of Main Street (between its intersections with Gilbert Street and Brookfield Road to the south, and between its intersections with School Street and Oakham Road to the north) will become increasingly congested (V/C ratio between 0.76 and 1.00) during the evening peak hours by 2030.

Temporary congestion during evening peak hours is a typical condition for rural New England town centers and the current situation does not merit any changes to the circulation system within North Brookfield’s town center area.

Traffic Safety and Problem Intersections:

According to the North Brookfield Chief of Police, there are five problem roadways and intersections in Town:

- Ward Street – This is a winding road with many intersections. Poor visibility and traffic speed have been the primary factors for the accidents along this road.
- Intersection of North Main Street and Summer Street. A poorly marked crosswalk and poor lighting have resulted in a pedestrian safety issue.
- Intersection of West Brookfield Road and Cider Mill Road. Poor visibility has resulted in difficulty for vehicles wanting to make a left-hand turn.
- Gilbertville Street intersections with North Main Street and Ward Street. Poor visibility has resulted in difficulty for vehicles wanting to make a left-hand turn.
- Intersection of East Brookfield Road and Donovan Road and Con Warren Road. Poor visibility and traffic have made it difficult for vehicles wanting to make a left-hand turn.

In the fall of 2006, CMRPC’ Transportation Department conducted a survey of local Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and asked them to identify two items: most frequent locations for EMT response calls and locations that inhibit EMT response times. The table on the following page presents North Brookfield’s response to both items.

Table T-1
EMT Responder Survey

Most Frequent EMT Response Locations	
Intersection of Ward Street and Ryan Road	
Waite Corner Road	
Route 148	
North Main Street	
East Brookfield Road	
Locations that Inhibit EMT response times	Perceived Reason
Route 148 (Oakham Road)	Insufficient road width, sharp turns, blind spots.
Route 67 (West Brookfield Road)	Insufficient road width, sharp turns, blind spots.
Waite Corner Road	Insufficient road width, sharp turns, blind spots.
East Brookfield Road	Inattentive traffic.
South Main Street	Stop sign with blind corner.

Source: CMRPC Transportation Department EMT Responder Study, October 2006.

Scenic Roads:



Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 15C authorizes municipalities to designate certain roads as “Scenic Roads”. Any local road, other than a state numbered route, is eligible for such designation. The purpose of the statute is to provide for Planning Board review of the cutting or removal of trees or the alteration of stonewalls incidental to work on a Scenic Road. After a road receives a “Scenic” designation, the Planning Board is delegated certain limited powers by the

statute. Any repair, maintenance, reconstruction or paving work done with respect to a Scenic Road that entails cutting or removal of trees, or alteration of stone walls is subject to Planning Board review. A public hearing must be held, and strict notice requirements must be met. While many of North Brookfield’s roadways would qualify as being “scenic” in the broad sense of the term, the Town has not formally designated any roads as scenic at this time.

New Subdivision Roads:

The North Brookfield Subdivision Regulations outline a tiered approach for new subdivision roads, one that is based on expected traffic volume. The roadway categories within the subdivision regulations are presented below, along with their definitions, and dimensional requirements for right-of-way width, pavement width and radius of curves.

- Primary Streets: Streets that handle or are expected to handle a considerable volume of traffic and provides inter-town access between North Brookfield and adjoining communities. Right-of-way width: 70 feet. Pavement width: 46 feet. Radius of curves: 1,150 feet.
- Secondary Streets: Streets that serve or may eventually serve any of the following purposes: provide for internal traffic movement within an area of the town, such as a subdivision; provide for through traffic movements within a local area; connect such areas with the major arterial system, or other subdivision, or industrial/commercial centers. A secondary street is intended to supply abutting property with the same degree of land services as a local street while, at the same time, serving local traffic movement. Right-of-way width: 50 - 60 feet. Pavement width: 30 feet. Radius of curves: 570 - 800 feet.
- Residential Streets: Streets that generally serve only those residents living on the street and that can be considered to permanently serve the exclusive function of being a residential street. Right-of-way width: 50 feet. Pavement width: 24 feet. Radius of curves: 380 feet.
- Limited Residential Streets: The same definition as Residential Streets above. Right-of-way width: 40 feet. Pavement width: 22 feet. Radius of curves: 290 feet.

Since the above roadway standards are requirements found within the Subdivision Regulations and not the Zoning Bylaw, the Planning Board does have the authority to waive or modify these requirements based on individual circumstances. Several nationwide transportation-planning organizations have begun promoting variable road width standards where the required paved road width is dependent on the amount of traffic volume expected. The International Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) recommends the following paved road width standards:

- 20-28 feet of paved road width for low density roads (1-2 dwellings per acre)
- 28-34 feet of paved road width for medium density roads (3-6 dwellings per acre)
- 36 feet of paved road width for high density roads (over 6 dwellings per acre)

The ITE cites several reasons for having variable road width standards. Having large swaths of pavement encourages increased travel speeds (speeding). A large amount of natural vegetation must be removed to create these large paved areas, which in turn hampers groundwater recharge and creates a high volume of stormwater runoff that must be accommodated by down-slope

drainage structures. Laying down large swaths of pavement is expensive for developers and adds to the cost of development (which in turn adds to the cost of housing). Lastly, wide swaths of pavement can increase maintenance costs for a municipality, especially in those cases where the way is intended to become a town road.

North Brookfield's new subdivision roadway standards share a similar philosophy with the ITE new roadway standards, in that they are based on anticipated traffic volume instead of the "one size fits all" approach that many rural communities use for new roads. The vast majority of new roads built in North Brookfield during the past 25 years have been of the residential variety.

Mass Transit Alternatives:

Mass transit can be loosely defined as a public transportation service designed to move groups of people from one place to another. Such services include busses, trains, and for some areas of our nation, boats. Typically in the Central Massachusetts region, mass transit serves persons who would find it difficult to make their trip by any other mode. Such persons include the elderly, people with disabilities, young people and people living on limited incomes. Mass transit opportunities are very limited in North Brookfield; however, such opportunities can be found at the regional level.

- Bus Service: The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) is the region's primary provider for bus service. The WRTA plays a small but vital role in providing mass transit options in Central Massachusetts. The WRTA currently has 29 bus routes, all of which radiate from downtown Worcester. Overall, the WRTA serves approximately 1.0% of all person travel trips in the region. The WRTA estimates that on any given business day, there are 1,345,000 person travel trips in the region by all modes of transportation, with the WRTA bus service providing 12,800 of those trips, or slightly less than 1% of the total person travel trips per day.

The WRTA's #33 bus route travels out to the Brookfields four times a day. Outside of the City of Worcester, all routes operate under a "flag down" system, meaning there are no fixed stops and bus patrons need to flag down the bus as it approaches. The #33 bus goes as far as the Town Common on Central Street in Brookfield before turning around and heading back to the City. There are several pickup spots along Route 9, including one in East Brookfield's town center area. The City of Worcester's paratransit service did provide bus service to North Brookfield's town center for a while, but this service was discontinued in the early 1980s. North Brookfield residents wishing to utilize the WRTA's bus service now have to travel to either Brookfield or East Brookfield.

North Brookfield is still a dues-paying member of the WRTA, but the services received are limited to the Elderbus service for the Town's elderly and disabled populations. The WRTA contracts with South Central Massachusetts (SCM) Elderbus Inc. to provide paratransit services four times a week into Worcester for medical appointments, education services, employment and social activities. This Elderbus also provides transportation to local service providers as well. The Elderbus service is made available to the residents of Herald Lane Estates and Grove Street School Apartments.

In terms of interstate bus service, there are two such providers operating out of downtown Worcester: Peter Pan and Greyhound. These carriers provide transportation to Boston, Springfield and various points out of state.

The lack of direct bus service may be a limiting factor for North Brookfield's future economic development. New businesses and industries can only pull so many employees from the immediate area that have their own vehicles and that portion of the local labor force without access to a vehicle will need to utilize public transportation. This would require new businesses and industries to run private shuttles from the WRTA stops in Brookfield and East Brookfield to and from the center of North Brookfield. This would be an expensive proposition, one that many new businesses and industries are unlikely to offer on their own. If North Brookfield town planners can work with local business owners to demonstrate a demand for bus service, it can petition the WRTA to resume bus service to the town center.

- Train Service: Worcester's historic Union Station now serves as the region's primary rail passenger hub. The station currently provides inter-city train service through Amtrak, and commuter rail service through the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). Amtrak, the national passenger railroad, provides limited service, with Worcester being the only stop in the region along Amtrak's Boston-to-New York route. Due to Amtrak's ongoing budget difficulties, the future of this service is unknown.



There is an extensive freight rail network in Central Massachusetts that is currently utilized by five freight rail providers. The CSX rail line runs east to west from Boston to Springfield via Worcester and carries a significant volume of freight. This rail line passes through Charlton Depot and South Spencer before passing through East Brookfield just south of Route 9 and then continuing westward. There is an abandoned rail spur that extends from the active CSX railroad in a northerly direction through East Brookfield and into North Brookfield for a length of four miles before it concludes at the former Aztec property. This was the North Brookfield Branch of the Boston & Albany Railroad. Bought by the Penn Central Railroad in 1968, the North Brookfield Branch was abandoned in 1972. The tracks have been pulled up and all that remains is the railroad

right-of-way. The Town of North Brookfield bought the right-of-way in the late 70s and set up a corporation to manage this resource. This corporation is known as the North Brookfield Railroad Company and the Town's Board of Selectmen acts as the Corporation's Board of Directors. The Company files corporate income tax on an annual basis. Currently there are no plans under consideration for either reviving the railroad or using its right-of-way for other purposes. It should be noted that East Brookfield owns its portion of the railroad right-of-way and the Town's 2006 Open Space & Recreation Plan has targeted the right-of-way for future use as a rail-trail, bike path or roadside trail.

- Off-Road Trail Development: North Brookfield joined with its neighbors and CMRPC to investigate new trail possibilities in the western subregion. This 2004 study entitled, West Subregion Inter-Community Trail Connection Feasibility Study evaluated six new trail possibilities including the Quaboag Plantation Path trail concept that would link Brookfield, North Brookfield and West Brookfield together. This trail concept would utilize a series of proposed and existing trails within the Mass Audubon property that straddles the Brookfield and North Brookfield town line and eventually link to a trail system within the nearby Richardson Wildlife Management Area in West Brookfield.
- Air Travel: Worcester Regional Airport represents the only interstate air travel provider located in Central Massachusetts. However, as Worcester currently provides no commercial airline service, area residents are more likely to utilize Bradley International Airport (in Hartford), Logan International Airport (in Boston) and the T.F. Green Airport (in Providence) for their cross-country and international travel needs. There are five local airports that are designed to accommodate smaller, lighter, general aviation aircraft. These local airports include the Spencer Airport (small paved runway for small planes), the Oxford Airport (located in east Oxford near the Millbury town line), the Southbridge Municipal Airport (located in the northwest corner of town), the Hopedale Industrial Park Airport and the Tanner-Hiller Airport in New Braintree.

Transportation - Goal

Provide an efficient, safe and well-maintained circulation that adequately provides for North Brookfield's transportation needs and is in keeping with the Town's rural character.

Transportation – Objectives

- Create a safe and pedestrian-friendly town center that allows for centralized parking and where foot traffic is encouraged.
- Promote regional mass transit options whenever possible.
- Establish a multi-year, prioritized roadway improvement plan with cost estimates and integrate each year's plan into the Town's annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

- Establish minimum safety standards for private dirt roads and ensure that new development taking place along these roads contribute their fair share of the cost necessary to bring these roads up to the minimum safety standards.
- Initiate a sign installation/replacement program for the various safety-related signs and roadway name signs.
- Maintain the scenic quality of North Brookfield's rural roadways.

Transportation – Recommendations

1. Create a Walkable Town Center: As part of the Town's strategy for revitalizing the town center area (Housing Recommendation #9 and Economic Development Recommendation #3), the Town should endeavor to create a walkable town center area that encourages pedestrian foot traffic for local businesses and shops. This strategy should include safety mechanisms such as crosswalk locations, sidewalk upgrades for connectivity and handicapped accessibility, centralized parking, bicycle racks and street lighting, among other considerations. Responsible Municipal Entities: The Planning Board in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen and the Highway Department.

2. Mass Transit: With both the Town's population and local roadway traffic volume projected to increase over the next decade, it would serve North Brookfield well to encourage mass transit alternatives where possible. According to the 2000 US Census, North Brookfield had 51 families and 250 individuals at or below the poverty level. Furthermore, North Brookfield's median household income is substantially lower than the State average. Low-income households often have a greater need for public transportation options as car ownership may be beyond their means. In an effort to address this situation, it is recommended that the Town continue its membership in the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) and start a dialogue with them regarding the possibility of extending its bus service into North Brookfield's town center. If the WRTA is unreceptive to this idea, then the Town should explore other options for providing this service. Responsible Municipal Entities: The Board of Selectmen and North Brookfield's representatives to the WRTA.

3. Prepare a Roadway Improvement Plan: The Town should obligate the funding necessary to prepare a multi-year prioritized improvement plan for the roadways under its maintenance jurisdiction. For this effort, the Town will need to create a baseline of information regarding the condition of its local roadway network. This information is best documented through a Local Pavement Management Study (LPMS). For such a study, the Town's chosen consultant would work with MassHighway and the Town's Highway Superintendent to define North Brookfield's entire road network, then drive along each segment of the network collecting detail pavement condition information using a specialized computer program that documents the severity and extent of the following types of pavement distress:

- ◆ potholes
- ◆ cracking (block, alligator, transverse and longitudinal cracking)
- ◆ rutting
- ◆ surface wear and raveling
- ◆ corrugations, shoving and slippage

The collected data would then allow the Town's consultant to evaluate each roadway's pavement condition segment-by-segment, and determine an estimated repair cost. A pavement condition index (PCI) would be calculated for each roadway segment. The PCI rates each road on a scale from one (extreme distress – reconstruction likely needed) to 100 (new roads in no need of repair). Having detailed assessments and PCI ratings for each roadway segment would allow the Town to prioritize its repair and maintenance needs, which is a necessary first step to preparing a multi-year prioritized roadway improvement plan. Responsible Municipal Entity: The Highway Department.

4. Utility Work: The Town should develop a formal policy which ensures that utility companies who dig up town-maintained roads for the placement of their utility lines incur the full cost of repairing the roadway to its previous condition. Responsible Municipal Entity: The Highway Department.

5. Utilize the Abandoned Railroad Right-of-Way for a Rail Trail: As mentioned previously, the Town owns an abandoned railroad right-of-way that extends south from the town center and into East Brookfield before it connects to the active CSX railroad line. This four-mile rail spur is all that remains from the old North Brookfield Branch of the Boston & Albany Railroad. It is highly unlikely that this right-of-way will ever be used for an active railroad again. Installing new tracks could cost in excess of a million dollars and receiving State and Federal approval to do so could take up to ten years. Even if the railroad could be put back on-line, the annual operating costs would likely be cost prohibitive. The Town would be better served by turning the old railroad right-of-way into a rail trail for recreational use. Within the 2006 Master Plan citizen survey, North Brookfield residents indicated strong support for new hiking and biking opportunities, and creating a rail trail would address this desire. It should be noted that East Brookfield owns its portion of the railroad right-of-way and the Town's 2006 Open Space & Recreation Plan has targeted the right-of-way for use as a rail trail. North and East Brookfield should work together on this endeavor and seek technical assistance from MassHighway, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMPRC) and the regional office of the Rails to Trails Conservancy. Paving the entire length of the rail trail may be cost prohibitive, with similar projects coming in at a cost of one million dollars per mile; however, the towns do have the option of using stone dust for the trail's surface, which costs considerably less than the paving option (typically \$105,000 to \$110,000 per mile). Responsible Municipal Entity: The Board of Selectmen.

6. Use Local Funds to Supplement the State Roadway Maintenance and Repair Funds: It is recommended that the Town investigate its options for incrementally supplementing the State funds used for roadway maintenance and repair. As mentioned previously, the Highway Department does not receive any local funding for road maintenance and repair and instead uses the entire amount of its State Chapter 90 highway aid for these purposes. The Town's annual

Chapter 90 allotment may not be enough to maintain the Town's roadway system into the future, especially if new subdivision roads continue to get added to the inventory of local roads every year. It is anticipated that Town funds will be needed to supplement the annual Chapter 90 allotments at some point during the next decade. Responsible Municipal Entities: The Highway Department with assistance from the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee.

7. Local Scenic Roads Bylaw: Many of North Brookfield's rural roadways are lined with stone walls and shaded by tall trees, making them valuable scenic resources for the Town. In an effort to protect these resources, the Town should consider adopting a local Scenic Roads Bylaw in accordance with MGL Chapter 40, Section 15C. Such bylaws set forth procedures for altering scenic roadways including their realignment and reconstruction, as well as procedures for removal of trees and altering stonewalls. Such work cannot be performed without a public hearing and input from the Town's Tree Warden. Responsible Municipal Entities: The Planning Board in consultation with the Highway Department, Tree Warden, Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen.



