

TOWN OF SEEKONK
SERVICES AND FACILITIES
MASTER PLAN ELEMENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2
Key Information	4
Goal 1: Make Public wastewater (sewer) system available in priority areas	7
Strategy 1-1: Reestablish the Seekonk Sewer Planning Committee.....	7
Strategy 1-2: Work with the City of Attleboro to secure wastewater for Seekonk residents along the Attleboro border as well as Baker's Corner.....	8
Strategy 1-3: Work with the State of Rhode Island and City of East Providence to secure wastewater service for the Route 6 Corridor	9
Goal 2: Continue to support the Fire and Police Departments	11
Strategy 2-1: Finalize the search to hire a new police and fire chief	11
Strategy 2-2: Reopen/relocate South End Fire Station.....	11
Strategy 2-3: Hire more fire department staff	12
Goal 3: Continue to develop and “maintain meaningful information that will help to prioritize investment in municipal facilities and services”.....	13
Strategy 3-1: Continue to advance the Capital Improvements Program	13
Strategy 3-2: Continue holding all Department Head staff meetings and providing that information to the community.....	14
Strategy 3-3: Continue to support the Town’s Human Services and Council on Aging Departments	16

KEY INFORMATION

Municipal Facilities & Facility Management

The Town of Seekonk is well served by municipal services and facilities. However, most facilities in town are older than 30 years old, indicating that some may need maintenance and improvement. The two newest facilities are the Public Safety Building and the Fire Station on Pine Street, which were built 2005 and 2013, respectively.

The Capital Improvement Plan actively tries to address all town facility needs. The Municipal Capital Improvement Committee meets regularly to review plans of improvement for all municipal facilities.

Seekonk's water supply is maintained and distributed by the Seekonk Water District, which is

an independent governmental entity.

Population

Seekonk's population is projected to keep growing. In 2017, the total population was 14,338, with a projected 2040 population of 15,038.¹ The town is expected to grow 5% between 2017 and 2040 (Figure 3).

School Enrollment

The Town of Seekonk's school enrollment dropped between the years 2012 and 2016, but has since been increasing steadily (Figure 1). With an increase in population and an increase in the number of student enrollments, municipal facilities such as schools need to be updated to accommodate this increase in population.

1 UMass Donahue Institute

Town Hall



Address: 100 Peck Street

Year Built: 1976

Area: 10,824 sq. ft.

Condition: Fair

Proposal/Plans: None

Age

The Town of Seekonk has an aging population. In 1990 the median age was 36.1 years old; in 2017 the median age increased 10.2 years to 46.3 years old (Figure 2). Since 2000, the “over 65 years old” population has grown by 50% .

Town of Seekonk Municipal Facilities Map

The map on the next page displays all the town-owned facilities including, open space and recreation areas. Most of the town-owned facilities are located in the center of town along Route 44.

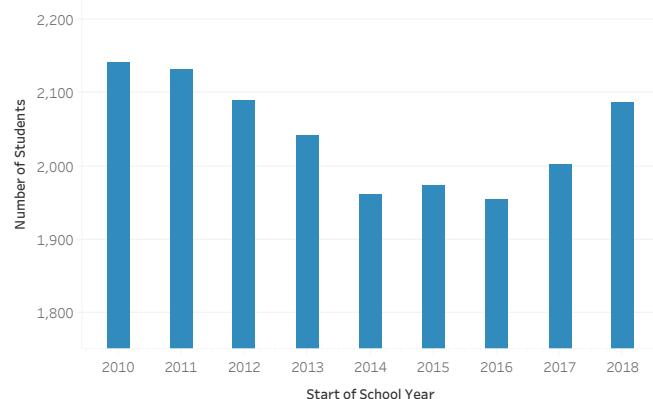
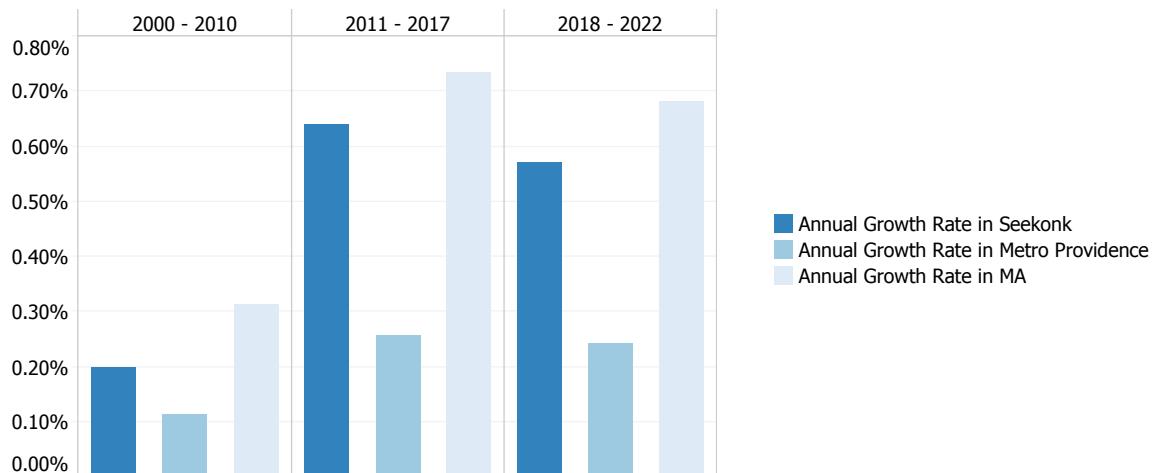


Figure 1: The Town of Seekonk's school enrollment. Source: Massachusetts Department of Education

Location	1990 Median Age	2010 Median Age	2017 Median Age	2022 Median Age
Seekonk	36.1	43.8	46.3	47.3
Metro Providence	-	39.5	40.8	41.5
Massachusetts	33.4	39	40	40.7

Figure 2: Town of Seekonk's median age compared to Metro Providence and Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



Year	Seekonk Population	Change	Years in Interval	Percent Change	Annual Rate for Interval in Seekonk	Annual Rate for Interval in Metro Providence	Annual Rate for Interval in MA	Source
1970	11,116	-	-	-	-	-	-	US Census
1980	12,269	1,153	10	10.4%	1.04%	-	-	US Census
1990	13,046	777	10	6.3%	0.63%	-	-	US Census
2000	13,456	410	10	3.1%	0.31%	-	-	ESRI
2010	13,724	268	10	2.0%	0.20%	0.11%	0.31%	ESRI
2017	14,338	614	7	4.5%	0.64%	0.26%	0.73%	ESRI
2022	14,747	409	5	2.9%	0.57%	0.24%	0.68%	ESRI
2040	15,038	291	18	2.0%	0.11%	-	-	UMDI

Figure 3: Town of Seekonk's population growth compared to Metro Providence and Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Town of Seekonk Municipal Facilities

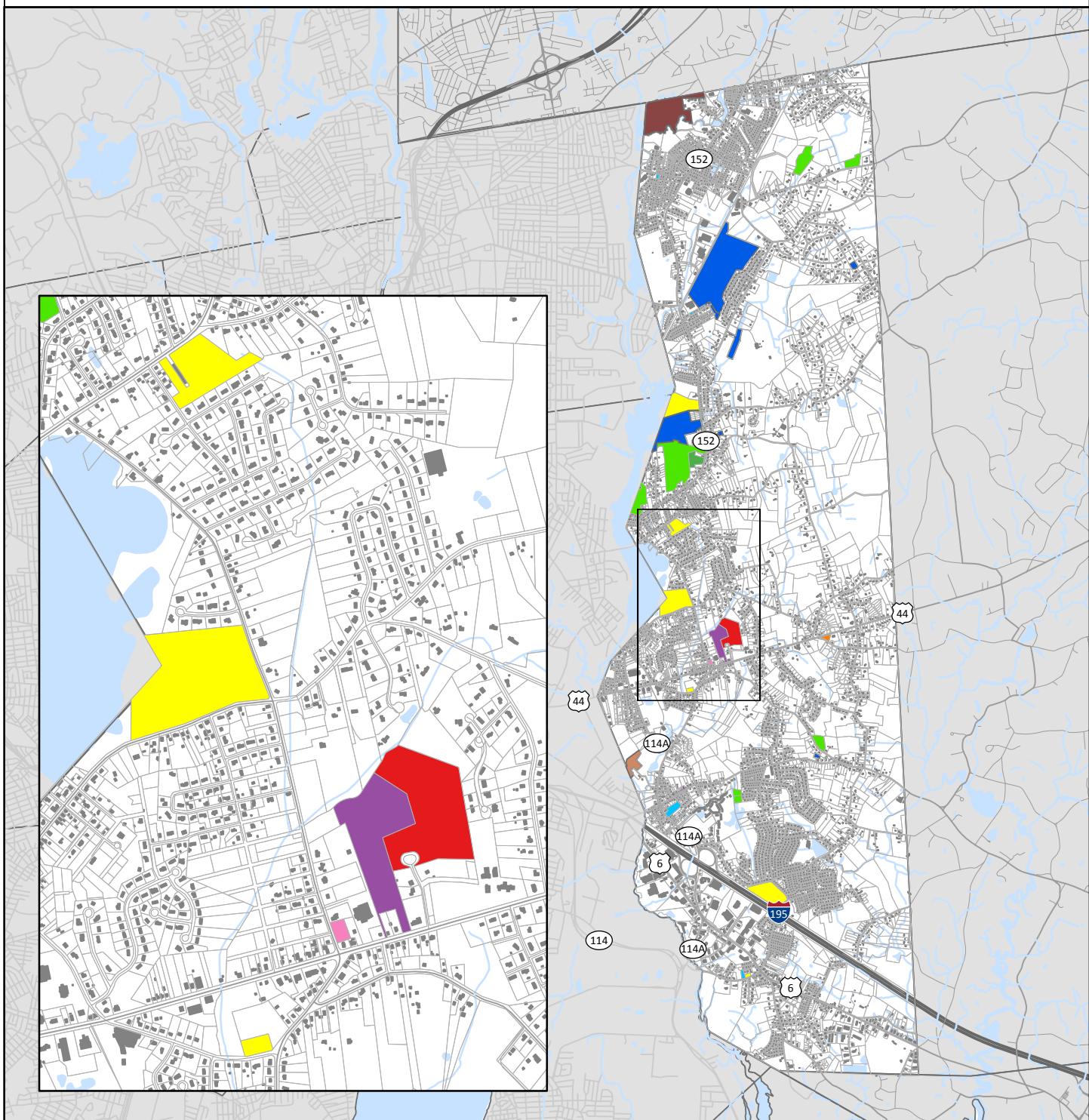
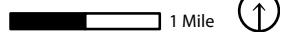
- Town Hall
- Seekonk Public Schools
- Seekonk Housing Authority
- Human Services and Council on Aging
- Seekonk Public Safety
- Department of Public Works
- Seekonk Public Library
- Open Space and Recreation

- Seekonk Water District
- Transfer Station
- Attleboro's Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Interstates
- Collectors and Arterials
- Local Roads



December 2019

Data sources: MassGIS, MassDOT, and the Town of Seekonk. This map is for the sole purpose of aiding regional decisions and is not warranted for any other use.



GOAL 1: MAKE PUBLIC WASTEWATER (SEWER) AVAILABLE IN PRIORITY AREAS

The Town of Seekonk has no public wastewater collection system; rather, all homes, businesses, and facilities in town use on-site septic systems and cesspools as their wastewater disposal system. As depicted on the map on page 6, the northwestern-most parcel in Seekonk belongs to the City of Attleboro for their wastewater treatment plant; it is one of the locations where the septage from individual septic systems is disposed of.² Seekonk has two possible paths to take when deciding to add a public wastewater system. The first path is to propose to work with the City of Attleboro again;³ the second route is to work with the City of East Providence. The following three strategies provide

2 2012 Seekonk Master Plan page 60

3 In 1996, the Seekonk Sewer Planning Committee created an Intermunicipal Agreement with the City of Attleboro to add sewer in Seekonk.

options for meeting the Town's goal relating to wastewater.

Strategy 1-1: Reestablish the Seekonk Sewer Planning Committee

In 1996, the Seekonk Sewer Planning Committee was formed to create an agreement between the Town of Seekonk and the City of Attleboro to extend Attleboro's sewer lines into Seekonk. After conducting a feasibility study, the Committee found that most of the town would benefit economically and environmentally from adding a public wastewater system. Unfortunately, the agreement was turned down in a town ballot vote over cost concerns. After the unsuccessful vote, the Seekonk Sewer Planning Committee disbanded in

Seekonk Public Library



Address: 410 Newman Avenue

Year Built: 1978

Area: 14,519 sq. ft.

Condition: Fair

Proposal/Plans: Repairs or replacements to the library in FY2021-FY2022¹

1 FY2019-FY2023 Draft Capital Improvement Plan (pg. 26)

May 1997.

In order to renew efforts to add a sewer system in town, the Board of Selectmen should reestablish the Seekonk Sewer Planning Committee with local officials, business owners, and residents as active members. These advocates will help promote the advantages of adding a wastewater system in town and provide supportive information and data. The newly formed Committee should also conduct a new feasibility study to understand and update the benefits and cost of adding wastewater service. Finally, the Committee should host informational sessions that will describe the process with the public.

Responsible Parties: Town of Seekonk Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Department of Public Works, Board of Health, and Local Business Owners

Performance Measures:

- Board of Selectmen reestablishes Seekonk Sewer Planning Committee by the end of 2021.
- Conduct a new feasibility study within a year of the newly reestablished committee (by the end of 2022).

Strategy 1-2: Work with the City of Attleboro to secure wastewater for Seekonk residents along the Attleboro border as well as Baker's Corner

The to-be-re-established Sewer Committee should work with the City of Attleboro to create a regional wastewater treatment facility to service the northern part of Seekonk, including Baker's Corner.⁴

Once established, the Seekonk Sewer Planning Committee should review the notes from the 1996

⁴ Baker's Corner is featured as a potential mixed-use development in the Seekonk Economic Development Plan.

Department of Public Works



Address: 871 Taunton Avenue

Year Built: 1949

Area: 7,000 sq. ft.

Condition: Poor

Proposal/Plans: New DPW Facility in FY2021- FY2022¹

¹ FY2019-FY2023 Draft Capital Improvement Plan (pg. 28)

efforts to see if the documents can be updated or if these evaluations would need to start from scratch.

Responsible Parties: City of Attleboro Mayor's Office, Town of Seekonk Town Administrator, and Department of Public Works

Performance Measures:

- Hold an informational session for residents and business owners in the northern part of Seekonk to see if there is interest in adding wastewater.
- Meet with the City of Attleboro to discuss capacity in their wastewater treatment plant.

Strategy 1-3: Work with the State of Rhode Island and City of East Providence to secure wastewater service for the Route 6 Corridor

An Interstate wastewater treatment agreement between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Rhode Island would greatly benefit the Town of Seekonk - particularly in support of its Economic Development efforts.⁵ The City of East Providence has sewer lines that run up to the Town of Seekonk's border along Route 6. Extending that sewer line into town would catalyze new and higher value growth along that stretch of roadway.

Examples of this kind of agreement are available in New England. The New Hampshire-Vermont Interstate Sewage and Waste Disposal Facilities Compact of 1976 is successful interstate wastewater compact. In their agreement, the states created a wastewater facility to share, with the purpose of not duplicating the cost and effort of creating wastewater treatment facilities in border communities. Their agreement needed to become

a law in both states and get approval from the U.S. Congress.⁶

The Seekonk Sewer Planning Committee should review the New Hampshire-Vermont Interstate Sewage and Waste Disposal Facilities Compact to see if it would be a possibility along Route 6.

Responsible Parties: MA and RI State Representatives, City of East Providence Mayor's office, Town of Seekonk Town Administrator, Department of Public Health

Performance Measures:

- Review the New Hampshire-Vermont Interstate Waste Disposal Facilities Compact.
- Meet with officials from the State of Rhode Island and the City of East Providence to discuss connecting to their sewer line.
- Create a feasibility study for the City of East Providence's wastewater treatment facility to test the facilities capacity.

Complimentary Strategy: Economic Development Master Plan Element Goal 2: Secure wastewater service for Route 6 Commercial Corridor.

⁵ Please see the Town of Seekonk Economic Development Plan and Master Plan Economic Development Element Goal 2, page 22.

⁶ In 1976, this law was passed in both the House and Senate to become Public Law 94-403.

Public Safety Building



Address: 500 Taunton Avenue

Year Built: 2005

Area: 39,800 sq. ft.

Includes the Fire Station and Police Station

Condition: Good

Proposal/Plans: None

North Fire Station



Address: 30 Pine Street

Year Built: 2013

Area: 2,774 sq. ft.

Condition: Good

Proposal/Plans: None

GOAL 2: CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE FIRE AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS

The Town of Seekonk's Fire and Police Department share a facility in the center of town next to Town Hall. The Fire Department also has an additional station in the north side of town on Pine Street.

The following strategies will help guide the town in supporting the public safety department.

Strategy 2-1: Finalize the search to hire a new police and fire chief

The Seekonk Fire and Police Departments are currently operating under interim chiefs.⁷ In August 2019, a search committee made their recommendation for the next fire chief upon the board's approval. Unfortunately, in October 2019, the Board of Selectmen was unsuccessful in negotiating a contract with the proposed new fire chief and agreed to continue the search.

Similarly, in 2019, the search committee for the police chiefs position narrowed the list of candidates from 27 down to 1. They presented their recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, but the board had a 2-3 vote against extending a conditional offer of employment to the candidate.⁸

John Aubin: What strategies could we suggest they do differently to achieve a different outcome? Is it enough to just state it?

Responsible Parties: Hiring Search Committee and Board of Selectmen

Performance Measure:

- Continue the search for both Fire and Police Chiefs

⁷ The former Fire Chief retired in April 2019 and the former police chief resigned in July 2019.

⁸ Board of Selectmen meeting on October 16, 2019

- Hire new Police and Fire Chiefs by the end of 2020

Strategy 2-2: Reopen/relocate South End Fire Station

The County Street Fire Station was built in 1946 and is no longer manned. However, most of the fire department calls come from the south end of town. The town conducted a study of fire call volumes between 2009 and 2014. The study showed that the south end of Seekonk received more than 60% of all fire calls between 2011 and 2014. The study also showed that over 56% of all motor vehicle accidents also happen in the south end of town.⁹

In September 2017, the fire chief went in front of the Board of Selectmen to ask for a new south fire station. He reported that, since 2014, there had been 10,788 calls and, of those calls, 5,388 (50%) came from the south end of town.¹⁰ Given these facts and the stated opinions of public safety officials, the town should support the ongoing feasibility study.

Responsible Parties: Board of Selectmen and Fire Department

Performance Measures:

- Confirm a location for the new station by end of 2021; complete the ongoing Feasibility Study.

⁹ South End Fire Station Study (https://www.seekonk-ma.gov/sites/seekonkma/files/uploads/south_end_fire_station_study.pdf)

¹⁰ The Sun Chronicle article "Seekonk officials say fire station needed on south end of town" on September 9, 2017 and Board of Selectmen minutes from September 6, 2017.

- Start construction on the new fire station by end of 2022

Strategy 2-3: Hire more fire department staff

With the addition of a new fire station in the south end of town, the Seekonk Fire Department will need additional staff to man all three fire stations.

In the Chiefs' presentation to the Board of Selectmen in September 2017, he discussed the need to hire more firefighters to reduce the overtime spending. "His goal for the future is to have eleven per group."¹¹ This would allow proper staffing at the Banna Fire Station in the north, the Public Safety Complex, and at the new fire station in the south end.

Currently, the Seekonk fire department has nine firefighters per group.

¹¹ September 6, 2017 Board of Selectmen Minutes

Responsible Parties: Fire Chief, Town Administrator, and Board of Selectmen

Performance Measures:

- Start the hiring and budgeting process before the opening of the new South End Fire Station.

Animal Control



Address: 100 Peck Street

Year Built: Currently being built

Area:

Condition: Brand new in 2020

Proposal/Plans: None

GOAL 3: CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND “MAINTAIN MEANINGFUL INFORMATION THAT WILL HELP TO PRIORITIZE INVESTMENT IN MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES”

In the 2012 Seekonk Master Plan, Seekonk’s second objective was to develop and “maintain meaningful information”¹² that will help to prioritize investment in municipal facilities and services. Some of these strategies are still ongoing and should be continued as part of this updated Master Plan.

Strategy 3-1: Continue to advance the Capital Improvements Program

Another action from the previous Master Plan that is still relevant today is to “support the Capital Improvements Committee in their efforts to study individual facilities in a detailed manner and on a

regular basis to inform the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).”¹³ The Town still uses a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to evaluate municipal facilities. The CIP currently coordinates community capital project planning with financial analysis and physical development. It is a rigorous document, that includes evaluation criteria, timelines, and other procedures that aid in these critical investment decisions.

The Municipal Capital Improvements Committee meets on a regular basis to review applications for Capital Improvement projects. Every year, the Committee updates the Five Year Capital Plan.

12 2012 Seekonk Master Plan, page 34

13 2012 Seekonk Master Plan, page 34

Seekonk High School



Address: 261 Arcade Avenue

Year Built: 1966

Area: 171,290 sq. ft.

Condition: Fair

Proposal/Plans: None

Capacity: 700 students

Enrolled (2018): 594 students

Nine years ago, the Town of Seekonk hired outside consultants to evaluate town-owned buildings to determine the types of improvements for a Capital Improvement Study. In the study, the team came up with priorities across all the town-owned buildings. Some of the priorities have been addressed, while others still need maintenance. Updating this study can eliminate what has already been accomplished and add new projects that have been identified since the original study.

Supporting the current CIP will help get facility projects onto the Capital Improvement Plan. For example, in FY2021 the town will start to work on building a new DPW facility. The DPW is currently working in a building that is over 60 years old and needs some major repairs.

Responsible Parties: Municipal Capital Improvements Committee, Town Administrator,

and Board of Selectmen

Performance Measures:

- Continue annual department updating needed for the Five Year Capital Plan
- Conduct an updated Capital Improvement Study by the end of 2021

Strategy 3-2: Continue holding all Department Head staff meetings and provide that information to the community

In the 2012 Seekonk Master Plan, one of the objectives was to improve inter-departmental communication and to provide a transparent decision-making process under an efficient government structure that meets community needs. Another objective was to develop a system of regular face-to-face communication in which all departments can report important facility-

Dr. Kevin Hurley Middle School



Address: 650 Newman Avenue

Year Built: 1956

Area: 101,598 sq. ft.

Condition: Fair

Proposal/Plans: None

Capacity: 700 students

Enrolled (2018): 506 students

George Martin Elementary School



Address: 445 Cole Street

Year Built: 1956

Area: 101,598 sq. ft.

Condition: Fair

Proposal/Plans: None

Capacity: 700 students

Enrolled (2018): 506 students

Mildred Aiken Elementary School



Address: 165 Newman Avenue

Year Built: 1959

Area: 51,847 sq. ft.

Condition:

Proposal/Plans: School expansion to add 10 classrooms

Capacity: 600 students

Enrolled (2018): 431 students

and service-related information to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator.

Seekonk started having a Department Head staff meeting that includes all the department heads to discuss what was going on in each department. This type of meeting is helpful for each department to know what is going on in town within the other busy departments in Town. In addition to holding these regular meetings, the town should distribute information that comes from the Department Heads directly to the community so that the public is aware of what is going on within Town Departments and in town, in general. Creating a short news announcement on the website that consists of public information coming out of these department head meetings would get the community involved. It would also build support for necessary Town-meeting votes and avoid conflict created when residents are “surprised” by

new initiatives.

Responsible Parties: Town Administrator and Department Heads

Performance Measures:

- Newsletter after Department Head meetings
- Update the webpage
- Invite residents of the town to participate in Department Head meetings once every quarter

Council on Aging/Senior Center



Address: 540 Arcade Avenue

Year Built: 1974

Area: 8,982 sq. ft.

Condition: Fair

Proposal/Plans: Phase II of Senior Center Renovations¹

¹ Fall town meeting vote to appropriate \$1,477,938 to pay for Phase II of the renovations November 18, 2019.

Seekonk Commons - Seekonk Housing Authority



Address: 25 Chappell Street

Year Built: 1976

Area: 42,110 sq. ft.

Condition: Fair

Proposal/Plans:

Number of Units: 72 Units

