

# Public Services and Facilities

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## Introduction

The public services and facilities portion of a master plan helps to guide decisions and develop a plan relevant to public buildings, utilities, and infrastructure in order to meet future needs of the community. Community facilities make it possible for municipal employees and volunteers to provide services for the public good. The adequacy of municipal facilities for the functions they serve is largely determined by four factors:

- The form, size, and organization of the community's local government;
- Projected population and economic growth;
- The community's land use pattern; and,
- The expectations of the community's population.

A town's ability to provide adequate facilities depends on effective capital planning and a commitment to implementation, asset management policies, and the amount of revenue available for local government operations. Hudson, like many other municipalities, receives very little funding from non-local sources and relies almost entirely on its own residents and businesses for financial support. Although it has basic core facilities for local services, some of Hudson's

### ***What is a Public Facility?***

*A public facility is any municipal property that has been improved for public purposes, such as a town hall, library, police or fire station, parks and playgrounds, and schools.*

*It also includes municipal services and utilities such as water or sewer service, and solid waste facilities such as a transfer station or recycling center.*

facilities are insufficient to meet current or future needs in order to accommodate the personnel, equipment, technology and records storage that government organizations need in order to run efficiently.

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## Public Services and Facilities Goals

- Improve the comprehensive planning process for short- and long-term capital improvements for all town facilities and services.
- Given the often conflicting demands, establish priorities for building and facility upgrades and replacement.
- Establish new or improved/upgraded facilities and increase staffing for public safety to meet demands resulting from anticipated growth.
- Lead by example in community facilities and operations by establishing sustainability principles and initiatives.

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## Hudson's Local Government

The municipal services that Hudson provides are fairly typical of other Massachusetts communities. To residents and businesses in just about every city or town, many local government services qualify as “essential” regardless of whether the state mandates them. For example, municipalities do not have to provide solid waste disposal services, youth services, recreation programs, a senior center or a public library, but the towns that provide these services often consider them important to the quality of life and an indispensable part of what it means to be a community. The following are the municipal services that the Town of Hudson offers:



**Table 7-1 Hudson’s Municipal Agencies**

Department of Assessor’s	Geographic Information Systems
Board of Health	Information Technology
Building Department	Library
Department of Community Development	Light and Power Department
Executive Assistant	Police Department
Finance Department	Division of Recreation
Fire Department	School Department
Department of Public Works:	Board of Selectmen
Public Administration	Senior Center
Parks/Cemeteries/Forestry	Treasurer/Collector’s Office
Streets	Town Clerk
Water	Veteran’s Services
Sewer	

Source: Hudson Town website, [http://www.townofhudson.org/public\\_documents/index](http://www.townofhudson.org/public_documents/index)

In addition to its municipal services and departments, Hudson is home to a variety of boards, committees, and commissions working to advance and improve the community. The Town’s executive decisions are made by the Board of Selectmen, a board composed of five elected members who serve as the primary policy makers for the Town. The Board of Selectmen is responsible for approving all employment appointments, authorizing new licenses, and executing contracts for the Town, amongst other tasks.

However, other elected boards such as the Housing Authority, Hudson Light and Power and the School Committee are charged with setting and implementing policies related to the departments they oversee.

Aside from the Board of Selectmen, the Town’s other active elected and appointed boards, committees, and commissions are shown below.

**Table 7-2 Hudson Boards/Committees/Commissions**

Assabet Valley Technical School Committee*	Economic Development Commission
Board of Assessors*	Fence Viewers
Trustees of Benevolent Funds*	Finance Committee
Cemetery Commission*	Historic District Commission
Constables*	Historical Commission
Board of Health*	
Housing Authority*	Industrial Development & Finance Authority
Board of Library Trustees*	Internal Traffic Committee
Municipal Light Board*	Board of Registrars
Park Commission*	Tripps Pond Commission
Planning Board*	Veteran’s Graves
School Committee*	Community Preservation Committee
Master Plan Steering Committee	
Board of Appeals	JFK Building Committee
By-Law Committee	Fort Meadow Commission
Cable Television Committee	Lake Boon Commission
Conservation Commission	
Council on Aging	Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund
Hudson Cultural Council	

Source: Hudson Town website, [http://www.townofhudson.org/public\\_documents/index](http://www.townofhudson.org/public_documents/index). Those marked with \* are elected; all others are appointed.

## Existing Facilities and Services

Hudson's municipal services operate from multiple facilities located in different areas of the Town. Below is a description of these facilities including their location, functions, size, year constructed or renovated, and current condition. Based on this summary the two buildings, the Police Station and the Department of Public Works (DPW) building are noted as being in poor condition, and possess the greatest need for upgrades. The Town should focus its attention on these specific facilities in order for them to remain in proper working order. The Town is in the process of seeking funding for the construction of a new combined Police and DPW building. This proposal will be brought before Town Meeting in 2014.

**Table 7-3 Hudson's Municipal Facilities**

Facility	Location	Functions	Acres/ SF	Year Built/Renovated	Condition
Town Hall	78 Main Street	Government Offices	0.85 acres	Built in 1872	Good
Library	3 Washington Street	Library	0.57 acres	1905; additions in 1929 and 1966, renovations in 2002 and 2010	Good
Police Station	62 Packard Street	Public Safety	1.91 acres	1920, renovation in 1980	Poor
Fire Headquarters	296 Cox Street	Public Safety	23,900 sq. ft.	October 2004	Excellent
Department of Public Works (DPW)	1 Municipal Drive	Administration Offices and Garage	3,600 sq. ft.	1969	Poor
Light and Power	Multiple locations	Building, power station, and power lines.	19.33 acres	Unknown	Good
Transfer Station	300 Cox Street	Solid waste		Unknown	Good
Gates Pond Water Treatment Facility	Gates Pond Road	Water treatment		1995	Good
Chestnut Street Water Filtration Facility	Chestnut Street	Water treatment		1995	Good
Wastewater Treatment Facility	1 Municipal Drive	Wastewater treatment		Major upgrade in 2007	Excellent
Senior Center	29 Church Street	Administration and community meeting rooms.	.74 acres	1859, major renovation in 2010	Excellent

## Education

The Hudson Public Schools system is comprised of six schools (Hudson High School, Quinn Middle School, Forest Avenue Elementary, Farley Elementary, Mulready Elementary, and Hubert



School), preschool programming, and the Hudson Maynard Adult Learning Center. Hudson’s school district facilities, along with grade levels and current condition, are listed in the following table. The new Quinn Middle School opened in September 2013 replacing the 50-year old JFK Middle School. The Hudson High School is also in excellent condition and was built in 2004. Aside from the new middle school, each school has some capital improvement needs, although some fall into the routine maintenance category. However, the total cost runs into millions of dollars. Planned upgrades at the schools include new roofs, asbestos abatement, additional science labs, and fire alarm replacements.

**Table 7-4 Hudson’s School District Facilities**

Facility	Grade Levels	Condition	Enrollment (10/13)
Hudson High School	8-12	Excellent	1,144
Quinn Middle School	5-7	Excellent	692
Forest Avenue Elementary	Pre K-4	Good	336
Farley Elementary	Pre K-4	Good	528
Mulready Elementary	Pre K-4	Fair	288
Hubert School	Pre-Kindergarten	Good	

According to the Hudson School there were 2,988 students attending Hudson public schools in the 2013-2014 academic year. There are 238 teachers in the system for a student/teacher ratio of 12.4 to 1 (2013-2014 academic year), which compares with 13.6 to 1 for Massachusetts. The four year graduation for all students in 2013 was 88.6 percent, which is slightly higher than the 85 percent rate for Massachusetts as a whole. The dropout rate of 5.9 percent is also better than the 6.5 percent statewide average. The four year graduation for all students in 2013 was 88.6 percent.<sup>81</sup>

In 2011, the Town spent \$12,551 per pupil, which rose to \$13,294 in 2012. The statewide average in 2012 was \$13,636.<sup>82</sup>

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## Library

The Hudson Public Library was originally established in 1867 with 720 volumes in circulation. Today the library contains about 65,000 volumes in




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<sup>81</sup> MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education School/District Profiles, [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/grad/grad\\_report.aspx?orgcode=01410000&orgunitcode=52](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/grad/grad_report.aspx?orgcode=01410000&orgunitcode=52), accessed 4/26/14

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

circulation and a variety of programs/services. Since its original establishment, the library has grown significantly and as a result has relocated to various spots and undergone extensive renovations and expansions. At one point, the library was housed in Town Hall until it became evident that a larger space was needed. During this time the Town approved the development of an individual building for the Free Public Library and was opened to the public in 1905. Expansion of a second floor and new roof were added in 1929. In 1966-67, a two-story addition was added to the rear of the building. The original footprint of the building has remained since the 1967 expansion, but renovations have been made in more recent years. The parking lot has been reconfigured, public restrooms refurbished, sidewalks replaced with the addition of a ramp for handicapped access, etc. In 1997, the library transitioned from a paper card catalog to an automated circulating system. Recent work included a new roof and a \$500,000 renovation and expansion to the Children's Room in 2002. With this new construction, a craft area, playhouse, story hour room, and storage area were able to be added to the library, creating a warm and welcoming environment for children and families of the community. The Library won a "Leading by Example" award in part for the Library Window Project for the installation of 117 energy efficient double and triple glazed windows and shades with an anticipated 40 percent energy savings.

There is some concern regarding ADA accessibility to the library. The front door main entrance is not accessible, so patrons need to use the ramp to enter the building. There has been some discussion regarding the potential construction of a downtown garage which could establish a direct connection to the library that would enhance access to the building.

As mentioned earlier, the library offers various programs and services free to the general public. Book clubs targeted to all age groups, "One Book, One Hudson" reading events, children and teen summer reading programs, and a writers group are some of the free programs offered. The library also offers Zinio: Digital Magazine services, audiobooks, Freegal music downloads, and museum passes to library card holders.

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## Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works (DPW) provides residents with an extensive variety of services on a daily basis amongst eight separate divisions: Public Administration, Parks, Cemeteries, Forestry, Streets, Vehicle Maintenance, Water, and Sewer. Within each individual division are distinct responsibilities and services such as roadway maintenance, sweeping, street lights, traffic lines, drainage, grass mowing, burials, tree removal and plantings, roadside brush, water supply treatment and distribution, sewer collection and treatment, snow removal, and utility billing. DPW currently employs a total of 49 people within each of these divisions as follows: Public Administration (8), Parks (5), Cemeteries (3), Forestry (2), Streets (9), Vehicle Maintenance (4), Water (8.5), and Sewer (9.5).

The administration offices building for the DPW located at 1 Municipal Drive is in poor condition. Given the breadth of responsibilities of the DPW, enhanced facilities for DPW administrative staff is one of the most pressing concerns facing public services in the Town. The DPW is responsible for major town functions including operating the two water treatment facilities. This is described further below.

Most of the DPW buildings were constructed during the 1960's and consist of vehicle storage, vehicle maintenance, equipment and material storage, the administration building, and wastewater treatment facilities. As mentioned earlier, the administration building will be before Town Meeting again for replacement in conjunction with a new Police Station. All DPW buildings are rated as being in fair to poor condition except the wastewater treatment facilities.

DPW has a pavement management plan which identifies the need for the expenditure of \$4.25 million per year to get the Town's roadways into a condition of good repair and reduce project backlog so that the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) is improving. The current annual budget is approximately \$750,000 between Chapter 90<sup>83</sup> funding and Town appropriation.

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### Water Supply and Wastewater Management

The Town of Hudson owns and operates two treatment facilities that treat five of the six available water resources. They are the Gates Pond Water Treatment Facility and the Chestnut Street Water Filtration Facility. The Gates Pond Water Treatment Facility treats surface water from Gates Pond, the Town's sole water supply source located in Berlin, Massachusetts. The Chestnut Street Water Filtration Facility treats four groundwater well supplies (Chestnut Street wells 1, 2, and 3 and the Kane well). The remaining groundwater well supply (the Cranberry well) is currently only treated with chemical addition.

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<sup>83</sup> M.G.L. c. 90 provides funding for the state reimbursement of municipal road improvement projects such as resurfacing.

The Kane and Cranberry wells are subjects of remediation and reconditioning efforts to address elevated iron and manganese levels. The *Kane and Cranberry Wells Treatment Evaluations* report identified elevated levels of iron and manganese and studied various options for treatment of them. According to the report analysis, raw water iron concentrations for the Chestnut Street wells have also increased from 1.5 mg/L in 2005 to 4.8 mg/L in 2012, an increase of about three times over a 7-year time frame. Elevated levels of these naturally occurring elements in the water have can cause unpleasant color and issues in plumbing and laundry fixtures. At extreme levels manganese, in particular, can be of some health concern. Three main alternative solutions were analyzed in the report along with cost estimates, based on discussions with the Hudson DPW. Each of the three alternatives also include upgrading existing treatment methods at the Chestnut Street Water Filtration Facility in order to handle current and future projected concentrations of iron and manganese.

- Option 1 involved conveying raw water from the Kane and Cranberry wells to the Chestnut Street Water Filtration Facility (in addition to the three existing Chestnut Street wells). This option centered treatment of all Hudson's groundwater resources in one location, which would be beneficial for operations and maintenance costs. However, any failure at the plant could impact all five groundwater supply sources. This would be the cheapest option to implement.
- Option 2 involved conveying raw water from the Kane well to the existing Chestnut Street Water Filtration Facility, and constructing a new water treatment facility near the Cranberry well for its treatment. This option would provide redundancy in facilities during emergencies, but would add to maintenance and operations costs.
- Option 3 involved constructing a new water treatment facility near the Cranberry well for treatment of both the Kane and Cranberry wells. This option would also provide redundancy in facilities during emergencies, but would add to maintenance and operations costs. This would be the most expensive option to implement.

The Town chose to proceed with Option 1. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) ultimately approved Hudson's plan. Work has been completed at the Kane Well and is ongoing at the Cranberry well. Further improvements will be made at the Chestnut greensand filtration facility to handle the increased volume at the treatment site. On January 9, 2014, the MassDEP conducted a site visit of the Kane Well and approved it for operations returning it to service at the end of January 2014. The well is now operational and is regularly tested to ensure compliance with regulatory standards for iron and manganese.

Pending completion of the work on the Cranberry well, the three Chestnut wells, Kane and Gates Pond are providing water to Hudson's residents. Hudson is temporarily using approximately 500,000 gallons per day of water from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority through a connection with Marlborough.<sup>84</sup>

As mentioned in *Chapter 5, Natural Resources*, Hudson recently upgraded its wastewater treatment facility. The facility improves the quality of wastewater effluent discharged into the Assabet River by removing nutrients, such as phosphorus. In light of high levels of phosphorus, the Assabet River is a concern, especially in summer months. Consequently, dam removal is being considered as a potential means to improve water quality. The nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Assabet requires a reduction in the amount of phosphorus wastewater facilities are permitted to discharge into the River. Planned wastewater treatment facility improvements would result in a 60 percent reduction in phosphorus loading while potential dam removal would result in another 20 percent; these combined measures make up 80 percent of the 90 percent TMDL target.

The wastewater treatment facility has a design average flow of 3.05 MGD and a design peak flow of 9.2 MGD. The Town is operating under a new discharge permit requiring the facility to meet a stringent effluent limit of total phosphorus, total copper and other parameters within a specific deadline.

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## Stormwater

Most of Hudson's stormwater and groundwater drains into the Assabet River. Stormwater which flows over impervious surfaces collects pollutants, including phosphorus, which leads to lower water quality in Town waterbodies. As mentioned in *Chapter 6, Natural Resources*, Hudson is involved with several organizations to help with developing solutions and techniques to improve water quality. For example, the SuAsCo Watershed Community Council and the Organization for the Assabet River have developed materials to inform the public of the importance of clean stormwater. Informational materials provide the public with information regarding lawn, garden, and vehicle care and how they relate to stormwater issues. Continued Town collaboration with local groups will be necessary to address and improve water quality issues.

The Town of Hudson along with the Towns of Maynard, Stow, Sudbury, Wayland and the City of Marlborough, all contiguous members of the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord (SuAsCo) watershed, recently won a Sustainable Water Management Initiative (SWMI) Grant funded through MassDEP. The SWMI grant program is designed to assist eligible public water suppliers and municipalities with Water Management Act (WMA) permits by providing funds

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<sup>84</sup> Wicked Local – Hudson. *Hudson to keep Cranberry, Kane wells offline*. July 2, 2013.

for planning assistance, demand management, and withdrawal impact mitigation projects in local communities. The project has four objectives:

1. Provide information and methods to assist municipalities in complying with both SWMI and WMA requirements.
2. Provide watershed-scale analysis that supports both economic development and an improved water balance.
3. Identify practical recharge opportunities within and between the selected municipalities in the SuAsCo watershed.
4. Educate local decision-makers about the opportunities to increase groundwater recharge.

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## Solid Waste and Recycling

The Town of Hudson does not currently provide curbside trash and/or recycling removal. The Hudson Board of Health currently oversees the operation of a Transfer Station, located at 300 Cox Street, for use by town residents. The Transfer Station is currently run by BP Trucking of Ashland, MA. To dispose of trash at the transfer station, residents purchase a decal for \$10 to use through the year.

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## Public Safety

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### Fire Department

The Fire Department built a new state-of-the-art facility on Cox Street for its Fire Headquarters in 2004. The facility is 23,900 square feet with 9,100 square feet dedicated to the apparatus floor. It contains five double bays and 13,800 square feet for support space, personnel quarters, and administration. The first floor houses the Emergency Operations Center, a training classroom that converts during emergencies into an operations center for Town agencies. In order to train and prepare firefighters for real life scenarios, a training tower was also developed. This 3-story simulated tower contains



fire protection sprinklers, a fire suppression standpipe system, heavy-duty rope anchor points, a simulated manhole, and the availability to create theatrical smoke – all for the purposes of training and preparing the Town’s firefighters.

The development of the building was also created to take advantage of sustainable products to minimize harmful impacts to the environment. For example, the building is situated to make full use of the sun’s seasonal positions to minimize interior temperature changes, and materials such as linoleum were chosen for their lack of “off-gassing” (releases of gas that were trapped or absorbed in some materials). With the expanded spaces, a state-of-the-art training tower, and green products implemented into the design, the Hudson Fire Department Headquarters can better serve the community and keep the public safe.

The Town’s other fire station is located at 1 Washington Street and was originally built in 1895. There have been numerous renovations to the building since, with the installment of a new roof and windows in 2014 being the most recent upgrades. Interior improvements are scheduled for the next couple of years and the building needs a new floor. It is structurally sound and the Town has adequate capacity to meet its fire protection needs. There is one other fire station that is currently not staffed and is used for emergency management and storage.

In addition to the Chief and Deputy Chief, the Department has 32 firefighters working four shifts.

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## Police Department

The Police Department, located on 62 Packard Street, was originally a public elementary school located on a 1.9 acre site. The mission of the Hudson Police Department is “to work harmoniously with all citizens of the community to create a safe and secure environment with emphasis on racial equality, fairness, integrity, and professionalism”. The Department includes a Chief of Police, Captain, two Lieutenants, six Sergeants, four Specialists, 18 Patrol Officers, and two Reserve Officers. The Department also



includes a three person staff consisting of a secretary, two clerks, and nine full-time and three part-time dispatchers. Additionally, the Department maintains up to ten reserve officers. Community programs include a prescription drug take back kiosk, a safety net program to rescue individuals prone to wandering, a summer youth academy, child safety seat inspections, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE), Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) training, and radKIDS, which teaches children about personal safety.

The Police Station is deemed to be woefully inadequate to meet the Department's and the Town's current needs. The facilities are antiquated and do not meet public safety standards. Replacement of the Police Station is considered to be the top capital facilities priority. This will be brought before Town Meeting in conjunction with new administrative offices for DPW.

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## Hudson Light and Power

The Town of Hudson Light and Power Department services all of Hudson and Stow and parts of surrounding communities, delivering reliable, efficient and cost effective power. It is a tremendous asset to the Town, providing a dependable source of electricity for residents and businesses and keeping electric rates low for its customers. In addition to supplying affordable electricity, Hudson Light and Power also offers free or discounted energy audits and energy conservation incentives and rebates for Hudson residents. A detailed description of the services provided by Hudson Light and Power is provided in *Chapter 10, Energy*.

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## Division of Recreation

The Division of Recreation's goal is to provide the residents of Hudson with a comprehensive leisure program for all ages while continually expanding and enhancing recreation facilities and opportunities. The Division also seeks to preserve open space and natural features within the Town that defines its character, identity, and link to the past.<sup>85</sup> Park and recreation property consists of 16 sites throughout the Town for a total of 126 acres. Hudson parks are classified into four categories:



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<sup>85</sup> Town of Hudson. *Division of Recreation*. [http://www.townofhudson.org/Public\\_Documents/HudsonMA\\_Recreation/index](http://www.townofhudson.org/Public_Documents/HudsonMA_Recreation/index). Accessed January 30, 2014.

- Athletic complexes comprised of over 20 acres with heavy use;
- Community parks that are both active and passive areas of under 10 acres that preserve unique landscapes;
- Neighborhood parks that serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood; and
- Mini parks, which consist of one or two acres of parkland offering unique, limited, or isolated recreation opportunities.<sup>86</sup>

There are dozens of different programs and leagues using the facilities including youth baseball, softball, and soccer. Hudson’s two athletic complexes afford residents a variety of recreational opportunities in both the eastern and western ends of the Town with baseball, soccer, and football fields, as well as playground and picnic areas. Hudson’s community parks include a public beach and a pristine passive park area along the shores of the Assabet River offering an annual summer concert series for residents of all ages. Neighborhood and mini parks consist of more than 45 acres scattered throughout the Town.<sup>87</sup>

Public schools also play a vital role in providing recreation opportunities. The three elementary schools have playground systems and ball fields that are used by the public after school hours, on weekends, and during the summer. There are nearly 120 acres of school property within the Town.<sup>88</sup>



The completion of the Assabet River Rail Trail in Hudson is one of the most important recreational resources. It is used heavily for hiking, biking, walking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. The Town is working with the River’s Edge Arts Alliance, ARRT, Inc., Hudson Police, Hudson Historic Society, and Hudson Public Schools on a Pathways Project that adds art along the trail. The Town envisions the Trail to be a transportation corridor, recreational resource, and a cultural and historic path going forward.<sup>89</sup>

The Division of Recreation operates from Town Hall and has open office hours Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Staffing consists of a Director and Assistant Director of Recreation. Seasonal employees are also hired each summer to assist in running the recreational programs. Detailed information on

<sup>86</sup> Town of Hudson. 2011. *Hudson Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Town of Hudson. 2011. *Hudson Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

recreation land and facilities can be found in Chapter 6, Open Space and Recreation.

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## Capital Planning

A capital improvements plan (CIP) is a road map for planning and funding public facilities and infrastructure. It typically incorporates both the construction of new facilities and the rehabilitation or replacement of existing capital. Typically, a CIP covers a period of three to six years and serves as a declaration of intent by a locality to make capital expenditures on the schedule indicated. A CIP may or may not consider multiple forms of funding. Hudson has a five year Capital Plan. Table 7-5 depicts the amount of capital improvements listed by department from Fiscal Year 2015 (FY2015) through FY2019. Submissions for this period include: police cruisers, roadway resurfacing, water main extensions, fire department protective clothing, recreational renovations, and building updates (e.g., school, library). If approved by Town Meeting, and at an election in FY2015, the Town has plans to borrow money to expand the police station and construct a new combination Police Station/DPW headquarters. Both buildings are currently in poor condition.

Table 7-5 Hudson's Capital Plan

Fiscal Year	Department	Capital Plan (dollar amount)
FY2015	DPW	638,462
	Fire	230,567
	Town Clerk	56,000
	Library	9,400
	Police	103,923
	Recreation	31,000
	Borrowing	16,569,482
FY2016	DPW	649,925
	Library	5,500
	Police	99,797
	School	167,000
	Borrowing	1,857,450
FY2017	DPW	935,000
	Fire	47,000
	Library	60,000
	Police	106,059
	Recreation	162,000
	School	195,000
	Borrowing	3,981,500
FY2018	DPW	539,637
	Fire	465,000
	Police	106,059
	Recreation	230,000
	School	110,000
	Borrowing	3,093,250
FY2019	DPW	496,615
	Fire	48,000
	Police	108,819
	Recreation	340,368
	School	115,000
	Borrowing	12,750,000

Source: Town of Hudson

## Public Services and Facilities Public Forum

The Town of Hudson hosted a public forum to discuss community services in June 2013. The focus of the forum was to examine the various municipal service functions performed by the Town and the facilities in which the various Town departments operate.

Recreational facilities that residents would like to see more of in the Town include large, multi-purpose fields, basketball



courts, swimming pools, and a dog park. Residents thought that the biggest issues facing recreation facilities in Hudson were, in order of importance, maintenance, insufficient parks/fields, lack of lighting for evening use, parking, safety, and the condition of fields and equipment. Residents also would like to see boat ramps; a community center with a gym; parks with mature trees and benches; a performance and rehearsal space; a community pool; and kayak tours on the Assabet. There is growing demand for recreational opportunities with adult and youth programs due to increased development over recent years. Additional land surrounding existing fields and schools is important and necessary; vacant school land should be investigated for sports field development.<sup>90</sup>

Regarding the Town library, residents felt that expanding parking was the highest priority followed by improved access to the building, and expanded/Sunday hours. Many residents also thought that a new police headquarters was very important or somewhat important; similar sentiments were shared regarding the DPW facility. Major issues with the DPW facilities include replacement of the administrative offices and garage facility.

Hudson will also face Town Hall capacity issues as the demand for town services increases with population growth. Top priorities identified for improving Town Hall include creating additional space for document storage, providing more office space, maintenance, and providing additional meeting spaces.

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## Public Services and Facilities Recommendations

Hudson, like many other communities in Massachusetts, is facing an uphill battle in trying to meet the needs of residents and businesses to provide cost effective services and to maintain and improve its public facilities. The Town, through its Capital Improvement Planning process, recognizes the need to plan, schedule, and budget for its capital investments.

The funding situation is exacerbated by two primary factors that were out of the Town's control. First, the nation faced a significant economic downturn during the 2008 recession, which stressed municipal budgets across the country. Second and somewhat related, the State of Massachusetts was not in a position to assist through grant programs or other initiatives.

- PSF-1. The Town should improve its systematic process for developing, maintaining and implementing a CIP. The Town should continue its capital

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<sup>90</sup> Town of Hudson. 2011. *Hudson Open Space and Recreation Plan*.

improvement planning process and update it on a regular basis. However, much of that planning is done by the individual departments, as well as by the School District. While that helps to establish priorities for each department, the plans need to be looked at in a coordinated and comprehensive manner so that the Town can better prioritize needs on a town-wide basis across all departments. The Town has a five-year CIP that list departmental requests and levels of priority. Some items are recurring requests for maintenance and repairs or vehicle replacement.

Projects anticipated to extend beyond the plan's window should be memorialized in an appendix or future projects list, and revisited as the plan is updated each year. Developing a CIP is not difficult, but developing a long-range CIP that a community can actually implement requires all of the following:

- A complete, descriptive inventory of existing assets – real estate, equipment, vehicles, infrastructure, and other items defined as a capital project under local policy;
- An assessment of the lifespan of existing assets;
- Criteria for evaluating and ranking capital project requests;
- A roster of current and anticipated near-term capital funding requests from town departments and the schools, including a description of each request, the time required to start, carry out and complete each request, and the estimated capital and operating costs associated with each request;
- An analysis of potential funding sources on a project-by-project basis, i.e., a determination of each project's eligibility for general fund, enterprise fund, recreation fees, grants, developer contributions, bonds, proceeds from sale of existing assets, and so forth, and the approximate amounts that should be contributed from each source;
- Six-year financial goals for the Town;
- Debt evaluation standards;
- Local revenue projections, and a transparent methodology for preparing them;
- An analysis of the CIP's impacts on the tax rate, cash reserves, enterprise reserves, and bonding capacity; and
- A financing plan for all projects included within the CIP.<sup>91</sup>

Years of deferred maintenance will aggravate the condition of facilities that need to be renovated, replaced or expanded. Substantial funds are needed to meet these needs and with all these pressing requirements, it is necessary to address the long-term priorities for making improvements, recognizing that continued deferral of these expenses will result in ever increasing expenses over time.

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<sup>91</sup> Terry Holzheimer, FAICP, Capital Improvement Programming, PAS QuickNotes No. 25, a publication of the American Planning Association's Planning Advisory Service (PAS), April 2010.

Essentially, the Town should ensure that a coordinated CIP process takes a holistic and comprehensive view of all the Town's capital needs. The process needs to allow for the integration of recommendations from various plans and studies with other capital needs. The goal is for all departments to continue to work closely together to obtain the funding necessary to provide the best services and support to all Hudson residents.

An effort should be made to share information and resources between different departments. The Town should encourage opportunities to break down the "silos" between municipal functions and enhance more efficient resource allocation to limited resources go further. The Town needs to develop a program for comprehensive capital planning to look at the "big picture" in setting budget priorities.

- PSF-2. To that end, the Town should establish a working group of key administrators with responsibility for preparing the CIP; to conduct a consensus process for ranking capital project requests, with staff support from the Community Development Department; identify potential sites for municipal facilities; and monitor progress toward implementation. The group would start with the planning efforts that have already been undertaken by each department as referred to in this chapter. A new or updated capital plan should be prepared and updated on an annual basis. The Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and general public should be given ample time to annually review and comment on the product.
- PSF-3. With growing fiscal constraints, it has become more difficult for municipalities in Massachusetts to provide services in a cost-effective manner. As an alternative, municipalities around the country have considered ways in which supplies can be purchased and services provided across municipal boundaries. Examples include inter-municipal agreements to provide public safety, solid waste disposal, library (the Town is already part of a large regional system), and public works services and shared facilities.

Although there are some challenges to implementation of a regional approach to the sharing of municipal responsibilities, such as funding disparities between small and large municipalities, control of budgets and services, and potential resistance among employees, the Town should attempt to work with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and neighboring communities to begin a dialog on options for shared services and facilities.

- PSF-4. Continue to explore how to meet the space and staffing needs of municipal services. As Hudson grows and changes in how it provides municipal services throughout the Town, it will need to continue to consider

how to meet space and staffing needs of its municipal services. In particular, the Town should move forward with the funding, planning and design for new Police Headquarters/administration building for DPW. It is important to use the completed space studies, site identification and design to move this potential project forward in a timely manner. A continued assessment of similar municipal services and their facilities will enable the Town to plan for where it needs to grow and reduce future space needs.

- PSF-5. The Town should take a leadership role in “greening” Hudson through its operations, governance, and management. This is particularly true with respect to municipal buildings and facilities. Additionally, the Town should continue to advance employee and occupant health in municipal buildings through lighting and ventilation improvements. As an example, the Town has been upgrading energy efficiency in some municipal buildings and seeking ways to reduce energy costs across all municipal operations. These are substantial projects that can serve as models for making cost-effective, sustainable planning and building practices part of project design, planning, construction, and operations.
- PSF-6. The Town should seek ways to reduce the cost of municipal energy use and its carbon footprint. This strategy could advance efforts to develop public and private partnerships and to also reduce residential and business energy use.
- PSF-7. Develop a long-range energy reduction plan for municipal operations.
- PSF-8. Develop sustainability principles or guidelines for Town projects, operations, policies and regulations including new or renovated municipal facilities.
- PSF-9. Incorporate cost-effective Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Design (LID) strategies into all municipal projects and work with developers and residents on what they can do. This strategy will enable the Town to move forward with implementing green infrastructure best practices into projects.
- PSF-10. Consider expanding solid waste management options to include curbside pickup. This may help to encourage more recycling among Hudson residents and businesses.
- PSF-11. Options for document storage include storage facilities in any new buildings constructed by the Town and digitizing documents wherever possible to reduce need for storage of paper copies.





Skate park, Hudson, MA