



Sudbury Master Plan Update Public Forum #1 Follow-Up Survey Summary

Following the first public forum on May 22, 2019, the Town administered an online survey to provide an opportunity for those who could not attend the forum to provide input on the questions asked during small group discussions. It was available from May 22 to June 24, 2019, and more than 200 people responded.

As with the first public forum, to understand issues that are important to residents and get a snapshot of how they see Sudbury 10 to 20 years from now, the survey posted the following questions:

1. What is Sudbury's biggest challenge in the next 10 to 20 years? What are strategies to meet this challenge in the future?
2. Provide examples of Sudbury's assets, something important to the community. Are they at risk? If so, how or why?
3. What is the biggest change (good and not so good) you've seen in Sudbury in the last 10 years? How is this change impacting the community?

Themes

Respondents highlighted a wide range of topics and ideas. For the purposes of this summary, they are organized under the following themes (presented in no particular order):

Mobility: Responses that focused on traffic, congestion, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and overall driving and commuting in Sudbury.

Natural Resources and Open Space: Responses that focused on conservation land, open spaces, natural resources, wildlife, and recreation fields.

Town Services: Responses that focused on services in town such as schools, residential needs, police, fire, EMS, Senior Center, Fairbank Community Center, and the library.

Community: Responses that focused on the social aspect of life in Sudbury, including community events, diversity of people, divisions, and safety.

Housing: Responses that focused on housing affordability, housing development, and options.

Land Uses and Development: Responses that focused on overall development in Town, where it might be appropriate, what it looks like, and how it impacts the town as a whole.

Economic Development: Responses that focused on town finances such as taxes, budget, funding services, and spending as well as local businesses and overall commercial activity.

Responses Summary

Question 1: What is the biggest change (good and not so good) you've seen in Sudbury in the last 10 years? How is this change impacting the community?

(209 answered, 5 skipped)

Mobility: Respondents mentioned traffic congestions has gotten worse over the years, especially on Routes 20 and 117. Traffic makes it difficult to maneuver around town, takes away from the local character, makes commute times longer, and has negative impacts on the environment. Road safety has changed as well with more aggressive drivers, people speeding, and disregard for crosswalks. These safety concerns make it difficult to walk in the community, especially for children. Lack of sidewalks and public transportation were also noted.

Town Services: While responses touched on several aspects of services and operations of the Town, such as infrastructure maintenance and town staff leadership, a majority of respondents talking about town services noted that they saw the biggest change in schools in the last 10 years. While they are still highly regarded, many felt that school rankings, real or perceived, have declined in recent years, and this is a result of the Town's lack of investment.

Natural Resources and Open Space: Respondents felt that in the past 10 years there was a loss of open space to development, which, in turn, is impacting the Town's scenic beauty and changing its character from rural to more suburban.

Housing: Respondents highlighted different changes in housing. There has been an increase in home prices and larger housing developments, citing Quarry North as an example. Equally, it was also noted that more housing allows new families to enjoy life in Sudbury, and the townhomes allow people to downsize. Conversely, large scale housing developments bring more people to town, which overcrowds schools and increases traffic.

Economic Development: Over the years residential property taxes have increased to a point that Sudbury is becoming unaffordable, impacting lower income families and seniors and deterring long-term residency. There is a lack of commercial development to bring in additional revenue. Respondents also suggest that there is a lack of responsible spending by the Town.

Community: Respondents have noticed a change in civic engagement; some have seen an increase while others have seen a decrease. Additionally, a small portion of respondents felt that the town has become more divided over the years on topics such as town investments and spending as well as the public dialogue around local development projects such as Quarry North, particularly through social media.

Land Uses and Development: Respondents have noticed an increase in development over the years, both residential and commercial development on Route 20. People have also noticed an increase in stores closing in town. While most people noted dissatisfaction with the increase of development in town because it changes the face of the town and increases traffic, some are satisfied with commercial development in that it increases local tax revenue. Respondents were mostly satisfied with the Meadow Walk development due to the increase in restaurant and shopping options.

Question 2: Provide examples of Sudbury’s assets, something important to the community. Are they at risk? If so, how or why?

(206 answered, 8 skipped)

Town Character: Sudbury’s character is its asset. Examples cited were its rural quality, small commercial areas, and low-density. Respondents also highlighted the Town’s historical features and properties, the Town Center, the people, and safety of the community as assets.

Risks: Respondents suggested high-density development and overbuilding, which increase traffic, impacts scenic landscapes, and brings more people into town, put the Town’s rural character at risk.

Respondents mentioned the lack of funding and maintenance put historical features and properties at risk.

Natural Resources: The Town’s natural resources are assets, including open space and conservation lands, recreation areas, and trails.

Risks: Development, particularly large projects, puts open space and conservation lands at risk. The Eversource power line plan was also noted to be a threat to trails in town.

Town Services: Library and its programing, public school system, and Police and Fire departments are all assets to the community. Equally mentioned as assets were the Fairbank Community Center, including the Senior Center and recreation activities at the center.

Risks: Respondents felt the Fairbank Community Center is at risk because the facility needs a lot of maintenance, including the pool. Renovation costs can be expensive and residents may not be willing to pay for upgrades or construction of a new facility.

The school system is at risk due to inadequate budget management, decreased enrollment, and drop in ratings.

Question 3: What is Sudbury’s biggest challenge in the next 10 to 20 years? What are strategies the town should consider to meet this challenge? Who should be involved?

(208 answered, 6 skipped)

Economic Development

Future economic development challenges include keeping residential taxes down, controlling and limiting town spending, managing the town budget, and keeping the town an affordable place to live as well as growing local businesses to increase the commercial tax base.

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|--|--|
| Strategically expand the corporate tax base | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State and local officials ▪ Financial planners ▪ Developers ▪ Business community ▪ Everyone ▪ Community organizations ▪ Town departments |
| Develop a robust tax base to keep residential taxes down | |
| Improve sewer in town, specifically along Rt 20 and Union Rd. to attract more business | |
| Find alternative tax revenue | |
| Require developers to give back to the community | |
| Understand what businesses need to thrive in the town | |

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|--|--|
| Consider adopting a zero-based budgeting model to be able to have flexibility in budgeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance Committee ▪ Board of Selectmen ▪ The business community, Rt 20 business owners |
| Financial incentive for business, especially local businesses, to open | |
| Clear information before town meetings votes | |
| Connect shopping areas | |
| Tax break for businesses | |
| Sewer on Route 20 to attract and retain businesses. | |
| Identify areas where low impact business development can happen to attract businesses like software companies. | |

Town Services

Future challenges for town services include supporting and maintaining high-quality school system, addressing natural disasters, supporting town departments such as fire and police, maintaining town facilities like the community center and recreation fields, and addressing residential needs for seniors.

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|---|---|
| Avoid investing in things that do not benefit the community. Needs verses wants. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everyone ▪ Town departments ▪ Department of Education, School Committees ▪ Mass Association of Regional Schools ▪ State and local officials ▪ Regional stakeholders ▪ Town committees and boards ▪ Parents ▪ Volunteers ▪ A committee of professionals in construction and engineering |
| More realistic plans for the renovation of town structures. Renovate do not replace. | |
| Invest in schools wisely without overspending. Divert funding to Curtis School for more staff. | |
| Change the structure of the school system in town to improve education for the decreasing school-age population. Possibly consolidate SPS/LS. | |
| Invest in Emergency Management System (EMS) | |
| Increase accessible/affordable transportation | |
| Compile resources for seniors like low-cost and traveling resources (i.e., doctors, specialist home visits) | |
| Develop support for those with mental health issues, hoarding disorder. | |
| Increase financial literacy program for the community. | |
| Educate residents about what is happening in town by improving communications, ensure inclusive voting process, provide voting options online, and offer evening Town meetings for working residents. | |

Mobility

Future challenges associated with mobility include managing transportation infrastructure, making roads safer, making the town more walkable and bike-friendly, addressing traffic and congestion, and finding ways for people to drive less.

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|---|--|
| Create green trails and bike and pedestrian paths that connect the entire town and lead to shopping and activity areas with proper signage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State and local officials ▪ Everyone ▪ Regional stakeholders |

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|---|---|
| More buses to Boston, Cambridge, and Waltham, shuttle to local train stations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighboring towns ▪ Mass DOT ▪ Town departments ▪ Residents ▪ State Highway Authorities ▪ Town transportation committees ▪ First Parish |
| Expand MBTA to Sudbury. Bus along Rt. 20 and 117. | |
| Synchronize traffic lights in town. | |
| Increase traffic enforcement and add traffic dampening like speed bumps. | |
| Local and state departments to study traffic flows and make improvements. | |
| Negotiate with First Parish to enable a turn lane on Concord Rd south. | |
| Increase highway capacity to accommodate the traffic (private vehicles, trucks, and buses). | |

Community

Future challenges for the more social aspects of the community include retaining residents in the face of high taxes and affordability, welcoming new residents, age and racial diversity, keeping the sense of community, overcoming divisive thinking, and encouraging younger residents to volunteer on local committees.

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|---|---|
| Create more community events for all ages to bring people together, like holiday lighting and Sudbury Day in the fall. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everyone/ residents ▪ Community organizations ▪ Town departments ▪ All stakeholders ▪ State and local officials ▪ Regional stakeholder |
| Develop a diversity task force and more support for non-white and non-traditional families. | |
| Create a community common space for people to congregate, shop, and do activities. | |
| Increase town spirit. | |
| Educate residents about what is happening in town by improving communications, ensure inclusive voting process, provide voting options online, and offer evening Town meetings for working residents. | |
| Recruit younger people to shadow. | |

Land Uses and Development

Future challenges associated with land uses and development include managing reasonable growth and development (commercial and residential) without sprawl and increasing traffic.

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|--|--|
| Reduce the incentive for developers and limit development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning Board ▪ State and local officials ▪ Community organizations ▪ Town departments ▪ Regional stakeholders ▪ Everyone, residents |
| Create a commercial and residential development plan. | |
| Zoning to target and regulate areas of growth | |
| Zoning restrictions for some areas to limit size and require a certain look. | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Be strategic about location and types of growth (commercial/residential). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoning board ▪ Town Manager ▪ Town lawyers ▪ Everyone, residents ▪ Board of Selectmen |
|---|---|

Town Character

Future challenges to retain the Town’s character include preserving the historic character and protecting current assets.

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|---|--|
| Keep the rural character by limiting further development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State and local officials ▪ Everyone, residents ▪ Community organization ▪ Town departments ▪ Regional stakeholders ▪ Town committees |
| Zone out all other housing development not mandated by state or federal law. | |
| Financial incentives for local business so we can have more stores with more character. | |
| Appreciate and improve what the town currently has. | |
| Create and focus on a long-term preservation plan. | |

Natural Resources

Future challenges associated with natural resources include ensuring a sustainable clean water supply for a growing population, preserving open space, keeping natural spaces to serve wildlife, and balancing natural resources with development and population growth.

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|---|--|
| Acquire land to prevent them from being built on. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board of Selectmen ▪ Town committees ▪ Everyone, residents ▪ Town departments ▪ Conservation Commission ▪ Historic commission ▪ State and local officials ▪ Regional stakeholders |
| Allow development in undesirable abandon areas. | |
| Adopt natural resources protection bylaw. | |
| Focus on a long-term preservation plan. | |
| Increase recreation and outdoor spaces. | |
| Build out a limited water treatment system and secure water treatment facilities. | |

Housing

Future challenges for housing include providing affordable housing options, maintaining the 10% subsidized housing inventory goal, keeping property values stable, and controlling large housing developments.

| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|--|--|
| More mixed-used developments like Meadows Walk. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community organizations ▪ Town departments and committees ▪ State and local officials ▪ Regional stakeholders ▪ Zoning Board ▪ Board of Selectmen |
| Planned affordable housing policy to meet or exceed the 10% 40B. | |
| Diversify housing stock. | |
| Limit large scales housing developments like Quarry North. | |

Others

Future challenges that fell outside of the general themes were related to the Eversource transmission line, climate change, and natural disasters.

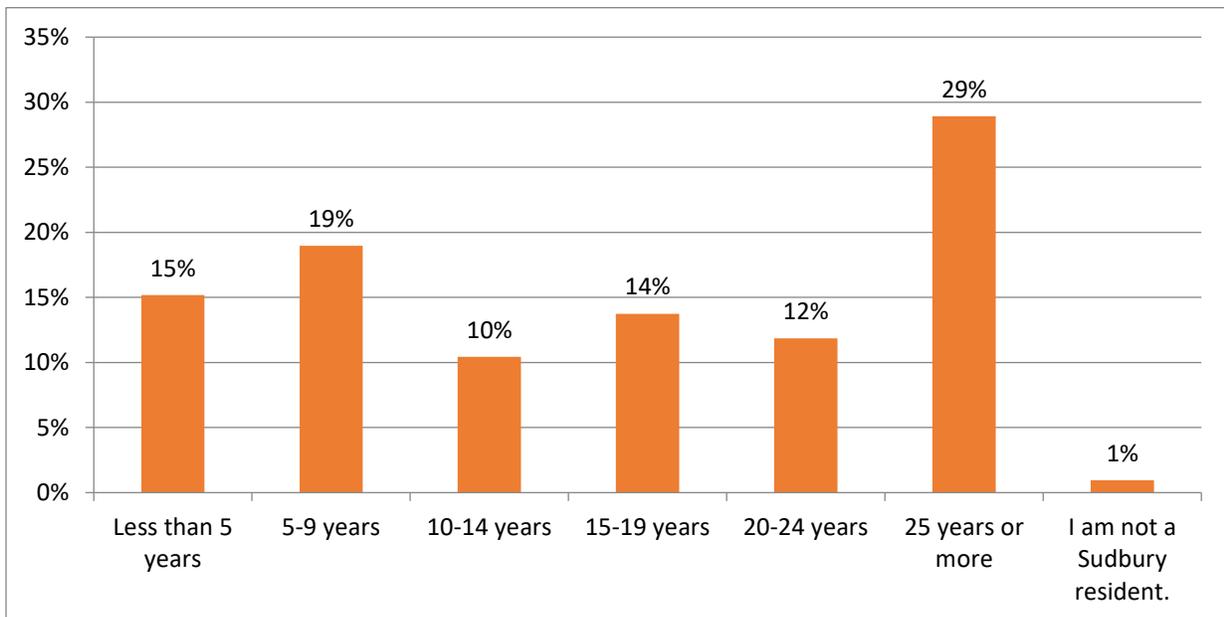
| Suggested Strategies | Who should be involved? |
|--|---|
| Bury powerline | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Town departmentsUtility companiesEveryone, residentsState and local officialsCommunity organizationRegional stakeholders |
| Move towards underground utility lines to prevent outages and danger during storms | |
| Renewable energy and efficiency and limiting growth. | |
| Continue to invest in solutions. | |
| Continue fighting Eversource. | |

Respondents' Profile

Question 4: How long have you lived in Sudbury?

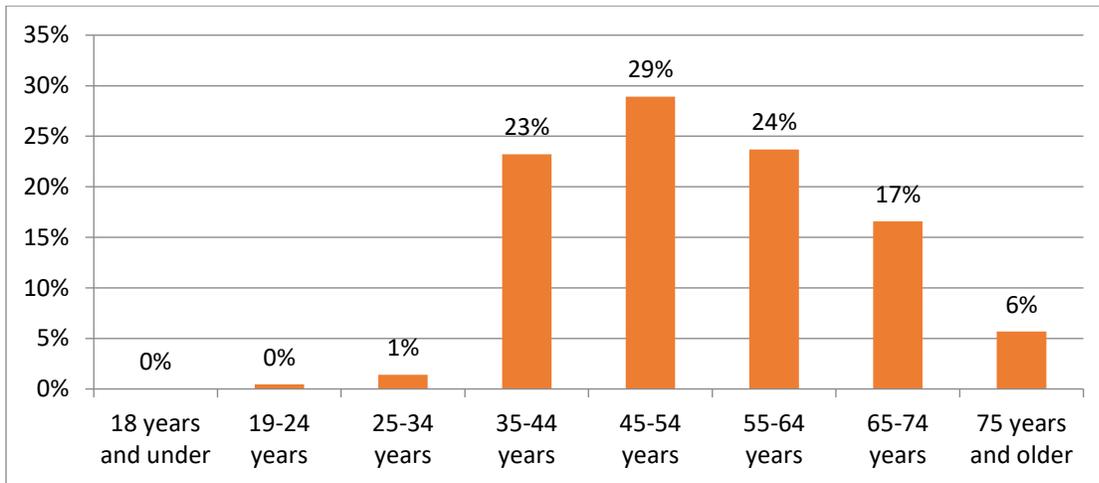
(211 answered, 3 skipped)

Most of the respondents are long-time residents who have been living in town for 25 years or more, followed by people who have been in town for 5-9 years.



Question 5: What is your age?

(211 answered, 3 skipped)



Question 6: What is your race/ethnicity?

(210 answered, 4 skipped)

Majority of the respondents are white, followed by people who prefer not to answer.

| | |
|---|------------|
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0% |
| Asian | 5% |
| Black or African American | 0% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 1% |
| Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander | 0% |
| White | 80% |
| I prefer not to answer. | 13% |
| Other (please specify) | 3% |

Other:

- not sure why this matters?
- French, Jewish, Lithuanian
- Why do you ask?
- This question is completely irrelevant!
- Indian
- Mixed Race
- Seems strange to segment feedback according to race

Questions 7: How would you like to stay involved in the master planning process (select all that apply).

(209 answered, 5 skipped)

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Attend public events/meetings | 60% | Receive regular email updates | 57% |
| Fill out surveys like this one | 76% | Read articles in the local newspaper | 41% |
| Read newsletters | 53% | Other (please specify) | 10% |
| Through the Master Planning website | 49% | | |

Other:

- be involved as a senior stakeholder
 - Social Media (Facebook 4x)
 - an Alexa skill that I can ask "Alexa, update me on the Sudbury Master Plan"
 - Be able to monitor, vote and contribute electronically
 - Email comments to committee members. I cannot attend meetings due to work travel
 - I am willing to work on this project in some capacity.
 - I have been a town board member since 1999, by saying that, it means I am not trying to be anonymous in this survey
- Updates on the web, Town Forum
 - Give power to town meeting
 - Willing to serve on interest committees
-
- cross-communication of issues across town departments and committees
 - I'm presently mobility-impaired, so an online forum is helpful
 - Meet with planners in small groups to provide face to face input.
 - As a member of a Sudbury Board