

VII. Community Facilities and Services

A. Overview

Community facilities and services are a major contribution to the quality of life for Belchertown residents. Residents enjoy a high level of service, but should look to the future demands placed on the system by projected population growth. This chapter provides an inventory and analysis of existing services. The analysis measures the capacity and level of service of capital facilities such as water supply and distribution, waste management, health, public safety and education. All town-owned facilities, infrastructure, and equipment are included in this definition.

B. Goals and Policies

The following policies were developed to work toward the three overall goals for the town determined during the community vision phase of the community plan project.

Goal 1: To maintain Belchertown's rural New England look and feel.

Policies related to community facilities and services for Goal 1:

- Development of new infrastructure should occur only after an analysis of how it may affect the community
- Current and future facility needs of the community including the adequacy and location of facilities should be assessed periodically
- Municipal projects should be designed to be visually consistent with this goal
- The town should have a Capital Improvement Plan Program Committee to expend the town's money efficiently

Goal 2: Manage residential construction to increase benefits to the community while lessening potential negative effects.

Policies related to community facilities and services for Goal 2:

- Municipal infrastructure decisions should be analyzed as to how they will influence residential growth

Goal 3: Evaluate and achieve business development that contributes to town life and mitigate potential negative effects.

Policies related to community facilities and services for Goal 3:

- Infrastructure development should provide for the types of businesses identified as desirable by the town's residents
- Traffic patterns should be considered in conjunction with surrounding towns to avoid congestion, to discourage the use of small roads as through-streets, and to facilitate the flow of traffic to business sites

Goal 4: To plan capital improvements systematically to meet and anticipate community needs efficiently and responsibly.

Policies related to community facilities and services for Goal 4:

- All capital expenditure decisions should be reviewed by the Capital Improvement Program Committee recommended in Goal 1

C. Inventory

The Town of Belchertown provides certain basic services, including police, fire, and ambulance service. Town staff and boards are also responsible for administering various state and local regulations, such as wetlands regulations, building codes, and health codes. Additional services, such as road maintenance, water provision, and recreation programs are also the responsibility of town staff. An inventory of town services is discussed in the following sections.

Improvements to capital facilities are planned and scheduled according to the town's Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP is a moderately extensive estimate of the needs for capital expenditures that is used for budget planning. The CIP is developed by the Town Administrator with input from all town departments, and serves as a useful tool for the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and other boards. The recommendations contained in this plan are to be used in the development of the Capital Improvement Plan. By reference, the CIP is incorporated into this plan.

Similarly, improvements to capital facilities related to the School Department are planned and scheduled according to a Five-Year Schools Capital Improvement Plan (SCIP). The SCIP is a moderately extensive estimate of the needs for capital expenditures that is used for budget planning. The SCIP is developed by the School Superintendent with input from the School Committee, school principals, and maintenance staff, and serves as a useful tool for the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, and Finance Committee in planning the successive school budgets. The recommendations contained in this plan are to be used in the development of the Capital Improvement Plan. By reference, the CIP is incorporated into the community plan.

Town Administration and Services

Belchertown's government is categorized by function. The categories are General Government, Protection of Persons and Property, Education, Public Works, Human Services, and Culture and Recreation. The main departments under these categories are listed here. General government includes most of the offices managing the daily administration of the town's business. These are the Selectmen's Office, Town Accountant, Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Treasurer-Collector, Assessors, MIS, Conservation, EDIC, Board of Appeals, and Planning. Inspection Services, Police, Fire, EMS, and Dog Officer, are under Protection of Persons and Property. Education has both the town schools and the regional vocational school, Pathfinder. Human Services includes the Board of Health, the Quabbin Health District, and the Council on Aging. Under Culture and Recreation are Clapp Library and the Recreation Department.

Town Property and Facilities

The town owns and maintains numerous properties, buildings, and facilities necessary to the provision of services. These facilities provide for the range of public responsibilities, including public safety, health, administration, education, recreation, and more.

The following table shows the inventory of town-owned properties. Most properties have a specific purpose, such as a building, recreation field, or well. Some properties belong

to the town by default because they were abandoned. The town has foreclosed on some. The table identifies the purpose or common name of the parcels. Note that the Belchertown Economic Development and Industrial Corporation is a private entity established by the town to work on the town's behalf to redevelop the former state school.

Figure 39:

Table: Parcels owned by town

Parcel ID	Street	Acres	Notes
243-178	STATE ST	145.06	EDIC – BSS main campus
250-22	TURKEY HILL RD	50.17	EDIC – parcel D
243-178.02	BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DR EAST	1.31	EDIC
243-178.10	BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DR WEST	3.61	EDIC
243-178.11	BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DR WEST	1.44	EDIC
243-178.12	BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DR WEST	1.61	EDIC
243-178.13	BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DR WEST	1.03	EDIC
243-178.14	BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DR WEST	1.84	EDIC
244-108	41 EVERETT AV	7.30	Housing Auth. – Everett Acres
202-2	GULF RD	3.60	Scarb. Brook Conserv. Area
202-5	NORTH GULF RD	2.80	Scarb. Brook Conserv. Area
202-19A	GULF RD	58.95	Scarb. Brook Conserv. Area
207-10	GOLD ST	27.00	Reed Conserv. Area
207-13	GOLD ST	52.00	Reed Conserv. Area
207-14	GOLD ST	13.90	Reed Conserv. Area
217-2	ORCHARD RD	2.00	Topping Farm Conserv. Area
228-83	ORCHARD RD	6.55	Topping Farm Conserv. Area
217-68	ORCHARD RD	45.00	Topping Farm Conserv. Area
217-46	WARREN WRIGHT ST	9.20	Topping Farm Conserv. Area
217-3.01	WARREN WRIGHT ST	22.00	Topping Farm Conserv. Area
217-45	ORCHARD RD	74.00	Topping Farm Conserv. Area
216-145	FEDERAL ST	1.30	Dwight Cemetery
216-122	GULF RD	0.34	Little insignificant tax taking
218-62	AMHERST RD	36.09	Wentworth Conserv. Area
218-39	FEDERAL ST	24.93	Wentworth Conserv. Area
218-2	763 FEDERAL ST	8.40	Daigle Well
217-37	GOODELL ST	39.00	Ex-Lashway parcel, watershed
217-49	ORCHARD RD (REAR)	7.68	Daigle Well
101-20	CHERYL CR	1.60	Detention basin - DPW
219-28	DANIEL SHAYS HY	35.00	Jabish Brook Conserv. Area
219-27	DANIEL SHAYS HY	11.10	Jabish Brook Conserv. Area
219-26	DANIEL SHAYS HY	17.00	Jabish Brook Conserv. Area
220-6	KIMBALL ST	0.04	Small old cemetery
214-5	MUNSELL ST	0.75	Munsell Cemetery
215.24	AMHERST RD (REAR)	11.60	Inholding – possible conservation
219-1	DANIEL SHAYS HY (REAR)	22.00	Inholding – possible conservation
230-7	STEBBINS ST	0.47	Little insignificant tax taking
102-3	FEDERAL ST	4.90	Tax taking – possible lot
102-80	LAKE DR	0.27	Next to town beach

103-22	TOWN BEACH RD	4.50	Arcadia Bog Conserv. Area
103-23	FEDERAL ST	52.00	Arcadia Bog Conserv. Area
105-40	BAY RD	0.88	Lake Vale Cemetery
105-41	BAY RD	0.98	Lake Vale Cemetery
105-45	METACOMET ST (REAR)	0.86	Little insignificant tax taking
102-103	AMHERST RD	4.40	Tax taking – possible conserv.
232-176	ALLEN ST	0.92	Tax taking – possible lot
232-175	ALLEN ST	0.92	Tax taking – possible lot
232-154	ALLEN ST (REAR)	45.00	Tax taking – possible conserv.
107-26	ALLEN ST	0.90	Tax taking – end of ex-Capen St
242-36	GEORGE HANNUM ST	3.24	Sewer Plant
238-2	GEORGE HANNUM ST	6.71	Austin-Gaughan Field – Rec Dept
238-285	GEORGE HANNUM ST	3.52	Next to Austin-Gaughan Field
238-287	290 JACKSON ST	13.45	Next to highway barn
241-15	GEORGE HANNUM ST	17.00	Tax taking – inholding
241-33	RURAL ST	1.00	Rural Cemetery
242-37	175 GEORGE HANNUM ST	12.33	Sewer Plant
230-35	135 HAMILTON ST	98.94	Town Dump – closed
237-5	SARGENT ST	18.03	Constantino Field – Rec Dept
237-67	WARNER ST	11.98	Warner Brook Conserv. Area
237-68	WARNER ST (REAR)	16.00	Warner Brook Conserv. Area
243-45	10 NORTH MAIN ST	0.90	Fire Station
243-56	9 EAST WALNUT ST	0.23	EMS Station
244-19	41 JABISH ST	0.51	Old highway barn – for sale
244-30	EAST WALNUT ST	5.60	Mount Hope Cemetery
244-31	PARK ST (REAR)	0.33	Front of Mount Hope Cemetery
243-66	28 PARK ST	0.16	Old town hall – Rec Dept
243-68	PARK ST	3.50	Town Common
243-71	14 MAPLE ST	3.10	School Dept Central Office
243-139	MAPLE ST	0.76	Piper Farm
244-131	SOUTH MAIN ST	1.01	Cold Spring School
244-120	19 SOUTH MAIN ST	1.40	Clapp Memorial Library
244-119	1 SOUTH MAIN ST	0.48	Finnerty House – town offices
244-115	10 EVERETT AV	0.72	Ex-machine shop, vacant
244-118	2 JABISH ST	0.89	Town Hall
244-97	JENSEN ST	5.50	Parsons Field – Rec Dept
244-129	57 SOUTH MAIN ST	10.20	Cold Spring Sch. and Cons. Area
244-73	JOHNSON RD	12.17	Wells
251-125	STATE ST	0.32	Intersection at Barton Ave.
251-125.01	STATE ST	0.35	Intersection at Barton Ave.
254-79	BARTON AV	1.01	Tax taking – possible lot
255-97, 98	CHAUNCEY WALKER ST	6.40	Conservation – donated land
263-153	MOUNTAIN VIEW DR	4.00	Tax taking – possible lot
254-23.2	LAUREL RIDGE DR	1.13	Tax taking – possible DPW
250-46	SPRINGFIELD RD	69.10	Piper Farm
249-25	MILL VALLEY RD	9.33	South Cemetery
249-24.04	JENSEN ST	3.754	South Cemetery
250-43	142 SPRINGFIELD RD	46.03	High School
249-126	62 NORTH WASHINGTON ST	14.98	Middle School (old high school)
255-121	FOREST RD (REAR)	60.00	Tax taking – future town use

261-64	NORTH WASHINGTON ST (REAR	3.44	Tax taking – possible conserv.
250-11.2	STATE ST	7.68	School Dept
250-14	59 STATE ST	12.65	Chestnut Hill School
250-17	STATE ST	3.89	Chestnut Hill Rec Area – Sch Dpt
250-13	STATE ST	3.21	Chestnut Hill Rec Area – Sch Dpt
250-16	STATE ST	9.33	Chestnut Hill Rec Area – Sch Dpt
250-15	57 STATE ST	13.88	Swift River School
250-12	51 STATE ST	0.88	Chestnut Hill Rec Area – Sch Dpt
245-51	SABIN ST	1.26	Tax taking – wet, possible DPW
267-29	GRANBY RD	1.22	Tax taking – wet, possible DPW
267-52	PHEASANT RUN (REAR)	3.66	Open Space - conservation
261-95	NORTH LIBERTY ST (REAR)	57.00	Inholding – possible conserv.
261-96	NORTH LIBERTY ST (REAR)	23.00	Inholding – possible conserv.
268-26	BARDWELL ST (REAR)	12.00	Tax taking – Inholding
267-45	CHAUNCEY WALKER ST	4.20	Tax taking – wet, possible DPW
268-23	NORTH WASHINGTON ST (REAR)	17.00	Tax taking – Inholding
261-62	NORTH WASHINGTON ST (REAR)	34.00	Tax taking – possible conserv.
261-62.01	NORTH WASHINGTON ST (REAR)	4.20	Tax taking – possible conserv.
261-63	NORTH WASHINGTON ST (REAR)	13.10	Tax taking – possible conserv.
269-109	FRANKLIN ST	20.62	Old RR - possible conserv.
272-11	BARDWELL ST	0.19	Little insignificant tax taking
276-66	PINE ST	1.80	Hillcrest Cemetery
276-67	BARDWELL ST	1.82	Hillcrest Cemetery
271-31	SHEA AV	0.23	Narrow right-of-way
109-51	720 FRANKLIN ST	1.60	Franklin Bldg – ex school
110-39	195 RIVER ST	0.11	Pump station?
110-45	RIVER ST	0.53	Little insignificant tax taking
281-25	SOUTH LIBERTY ST	2.30	Old railbed
281-8	SOUTH LIBERTY ST	4.90	Old railbed
278-63	SOUTH ST	5.91	Tax taking – lot
278-62	SOUTH ST	1.10	Tax taking – lot
280-49	SOUTH ST	0.46	Cemetery
102-77	21 TOWN BEACH RD	1.60	Town Beach
261-94	NORTH LIBERTY ST	0.05	Tiny right-of-way
250-55	70 STATE ST	20.00	Police, Senior, Rec – ex.BSS
214-6.01	MUNSELL ST	0.06	Munsell Cemetery
250-48	SPRINGFIELD RD	14.25	Protected Parkland, middle sch.
110-43.01	RIVER ST (REAR)	0.93	Little insignificant tax taking
105-34.01	METACOMET ST	0.08	Sewer pump station
240-33	EMILY LN	53.14	Range End Conservation Area
231-43	ALLEN ST (REAR)	0.57	Water Tank
244-60	206 JABISH ST	6.76	Water District office and well

Source: Town of Belchertown, Assessors' Records, July 2008

Library Services

The Clapp Memorial Library is on South Main Street in the town center. Dedicated on September 1, 1887, the building was designed in the shape of a Latin cross and is constructed of Longmeadow brownstone. (See Chapter V. Natural and Cultural

Resources for more information). While the structure itself is very important to the community, the library is important for the function it serves, and the demand for this function is ever increasing with the population of the town.

This growth in the demand for the library's service has brought the community to the library's most important challenge since the opening of the original structure in 1887. The need now is to expand the library facility to satisfy the current user demand while not sacrificing the architectural and aesthetic quality of the structure and its site.

The need for a new library facility has been apparent for several years — the current facility is too small to support the level of public library service that a town the size of Belchertown needs and desires. Throughout the coming years the library will be working to implement the programs and services included in its Planning For Results: The Clapp Memorial Library Long-Range Plan 2001-2005.

Water

There are five important public water supplies with sources in Belchertown (Belchertown Water District, Quabbin Reservoir, Springfield, Amherst, and Bondsville). Three of these, Amherst, Bondsville, and the Belchertown Water District, provide water to customers within Belchertown. Amherst town water is available in a very small area in the far northwest corner of Belchertown, in Dwight. There is potential commercial development in this area along Federal Street, Route 9, which a municipal water supply would help. Bondsville water serves Bondsville village, but not much beyond it. There is potential for expanding this. The Belchertown Water District is a separate entity and is not part of the town government, but it is integral to the growth and functioning of the town. It serves the center of town, through the lakes, in the north, to the new high school in the south. Much of the town's imminent growth will be served by this system, most notably the former state school campus.

Growth in Belchertown is dependent on available water and for that water to be clean. Public infrastructure improvements include protecting water supplies – both ground water and surface water. The Belchertown Water District, the four other public water suppliers with their resources in Belchertown, the regional health district (Quabbin Health District, serving Belchertown, Pelham, and Ware) and the town should cooperate to protect water supplies within Belchertown.

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works is located in the town highway garage at 290 Jackson Street. Here, equipment is stored, equipment and town vehicles are maintained and repaired, and fuel for town vehicles is kept. The DPW offices are here and the work crews check in. The town's dog pound is at the same location, under the supervision of the dog officer. The following functions come under the Department of Public Works:

Highway Department

The Highway Department is responsible for maintaining about 180 miles of public streets and all public parking areas. As new subdivisions are completed, more miles of town roads are accepted. Work of this department includes the

annual paving program, pothole filling, line painting, street sweeping, drainage maintenance, sign maintenance, right-of-way clearance, and the occasional road reconstruction.

Wastewater Treatment

Belchertown relies mostly upon septic systems for the disposal of wastewater. A new wastewater treatment plant was completed in 2001. This plant is on George Hannum Road, near the DPW headquarters. Originally built in the 1930s to serve the Belchertown State School, the town took it over in 1992 when the state school closed. The plant then was obsolete and violated many federal and state regulations. The town built the new plant to double the capacity of the old one. This plant is at about forty percent of its capacity. Sewer lines currently exist through the center of town south to the end of Springfield Road at Pine Valley Plantation and the proposed golf course on Chauncey Walker Road. The system is expanding north along Bay Road and Metacomet Street to the lakes and back along Federal Street. This is an urgent project as the lakes have suffered from the many seasonal camps having been converted to year-round residences.

Solid Waste Management

There is no municipal rubbish collection in Belchertown. Residents either hire a private collector or bring their rubbish and recyclables to the transfer station. The solid waste management facility is located on Hamilton Street and consists of the closed landfill and the transfer station with all its components: recycling containers and structures for plastics, paper, cardboard, tin and glass; trash compactors, white goods (appliances) areas, motor oil disposal, and demolition and composting areas. To use the transfer station, residents pay a \$50 annual fee. Approximately 1,650 permits were sold in 2002.

Recycling and Composting

Under town bylaw, residents and businesses disposing of waste at the transfer station are required to separate recyclable items from other trash. Items that are currently recycled include paper, bottles, and cans.

Hazardous Waste Collection

Hazardous waste is collected on the designated annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day each June.

Grounds Maintenance

The Grounds Maintenance Division was created in 2000 because of the Maintenance Division's separation into separate buildings and grounds divisions. With over 165 acres, responsibilities include mowing, trimming, ball field construction and maintenance, seasonal decorations, and equipment maintenance. This division is responsible for the town common and for assisting the fair committee. This division also maintains the grounds and fields for the school department.

Building Maintenance

The building Maintenance Division was created in 2000 because of the Maintenance Division's separation into separate buildings and grounds divisions. Its responsibilities include all aspects of maintenance of town-owned buildings. This includes custodial duties, repairs, renovations, and general upkeep.

Cemetery Division

The Department of Public Works maintains and develops the town's cemeteries. Lot sales and development, ground maintenance, and headstone repair are the main activities.

Public Safety

Police Department

A new police station was opened in 2000 in the William Gerry Whitlock Municipal Complex at 70 State Street. The 11,000 square foot building is adequate to meet the needs of the residents.

Fire Department

A new fire station was opened in 1999 on the north end of the town common. Plans include satellite stations in both the south and north ends of town. The mostly volunteer fire department works on fire prevention and safety inspections as well as suppression.

Emergency Medical Services

The EMS department is currently located in the former police station on the town common. This facility is barely adequate for the existing operation. A 3-bay garage is proposed to house ambulances. The service is attempting to upgrade the service offered to the Paramedic Level.

Animal Control Officer

This position was created in 2006, replacing the part-time dog officer. Impounded dogs are kept in cages at the DPW garage.

Council on Aging

The Council on Aging runs the senior center and provides nutrition, transportation, and social services for the increasing elder population in town. The council relies heavily on volunteers to conduct its programs. Its FY 01 operating expenses were about \$499,000, with the town's appropriation being about \$290,000.

Education

Education in Massachusetts is regulated largely by the legislature, which delegates local authority to the school committee. Since school curricula and spending are dictated by the state, this plan does not attempt to engage in a discussion of the merits of the education system or its operating budget. In addition, most local school related issues are under the jurisdiction of the school committee. However, schools dominate the financial

structure of the community, and influence the town’s growth; resultantly, they should be addressed to some degree by the community plan. The current school arrangement is:

Figure 40: Schools and enrollment

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>School</u>
Pre-K, Kindergarten	Cold Spring School
Grades 1,2,3	Swift River Elementary School
Grades 4,5,6	Chestnut Hill Community School
Grades 7,8	Jabish Brook Middle School (Former BHS)
Grades 9,10,11,12	Belchertown High School

(From the Belchertown School Department)

Public School Enrollment

Year	Enrollment	Change	% Change
1991	1,847		
2001	2,395	548	29.7

(Data from the Belchertown School Department)

D. Analysis

Town Administration and Facilities

The following sections discuss anticipated town departmental facility and staffing needs to address ongoing and anticipated services. Several facilities are currently in need of expansion, or are expected to require expansion in the future.

Town Hall and Finnerty House

Administrative and regulatory services of the town are provided at Lawrence Memorial Hall at 2 Jabish Street and at the Finnerty House, next door, at 1 South Main Street.

Lawrence Memorial Hall was built about 1920 as the town’s high school. It was used as a school into the 1980s. In 1988, the building was renovated as an office building. While still in good condition, it is becoming inadequate to meet the needs of the town for public offices and meeting space. The offices are crowded and storage space is limited. The old auditorium is large enough for meetings, but the acoustics are terrible, so meetings there are frustrating for all involved. Because the building was retrofitted, the design of the building is inefficient, handicapped access is incomplete, and the heating and cooling system is not reliable. All town departments are equipped with personal computers and are linked to the town network. In early 2008, the town planner received a grant for improvements to the town’s geographic information system, and is seeking more funds to improve the town’s sad and neglected web site.

The Finnerty House is next to town hall. In 2003, it was renovated and now contains the town administrator’s offices.

In 2006, the town bought an abutting property with frontage on Everett Avenue. The building on it is presently not being used. It had been a machine shop, then a church. No defined plan has been made for the site, though it could serve as parking if the library expands, or the building could be adapted to more office space.

Library

The library has begun its expansion project. The architect has presented plans for an addition to the building. This will be a long-term project as funds become available, mostly through grants. The expansion will allow the library to double the book capacity, and use the older structure for reading rooms, galleries, meeting space, and other non-storage functions. The library will have to increase its level of service beyond the structure to meet the demand. Additional staff, volunteers, and materials will all be needed as the facility grows to fulfill its purpose. Computer terminals and servers are likely to be high on the list of necessary improvements by 2010.

Recreation

Programs

The demand for recreation programs is great. Youth soccer and basketball leagues are full, and there is difficulty in finding places to play. Other activities could be expanded with the increased population in town. Some leisure activities can be pursued through other towns, such as Amherst Youth Hockey and Amherst Leisure Services, but as those fill, non-residents may be excluded. Belchertown will need to expand its own provision of leisure services, but this will require facilities and administrative staff to coordinate the offerings and hire the instructors, coaches, referees, etc.

Parks and Beaches

Maintenance of these facilities presently comes under the Department of Public Works. The town beach requires cleaning and weed control. The conservation commission, board of health, and the Tri-lakes Association work to control the weed growth and monitor the water quality. The sewer line extension through the lakes neighborhood should reduce the vigor of aquatic growth that is clogging the lakes. As the number of facilities increases and the demands increase, restructuring with the recreation department into a Parks and Recreation Department may be considered. Such a department might have responsibility for its own facility maintenance, relieving the DPW of those duties.

Water District

The Belchertown Water District will need to plan for an expanded water line system and future wells. Areas of high priority will be the development of the state school property, down Turkey Hill Road, Springfield Road, and Mill Valley Road. While the system is presently adequate, with growth, demand will require more volume and pressure to serve customers and provide ample force for fire suppression. All of the district's water is supplied by wells. The protection of the aquifers feeding these wells is paramount. Land uses around the wells should be controlled to prevent contaminated leaching, and the draw-down of the aquifers from private wells should be monitored. Land purchases, conservation easements, and other methods of securing the development rights of property in the aquifers should be aggressively pursued in partnership with the town, state, and other organizations.

Public Works

Highway Department

Staff and equipment are the main areas this department will need to expand over the next few years. Residents expect the streets to be maintained with smooth surfaces, and clean rights-of-way. This requires staff to do the work, and equipment for the staff to use. The annual amount of state highway funding is unreliable, but the town is dependent on this for road projects. Other funding sources may need to be found, including local revenues.

Solid Waste Management

Meeting various legal mandates will be a challenge to solid waste disposal. Rubbish removal is increasing in cost because of the difficulty in finding places to put our trash. Fees need to be raised, but doing so always increases the threat of illegal dumping. The town should seek ways to make recycling and legal disposal convenient, even if other revenues have to cover this.

Wastewater

Two main sewer line expansions have been completed in the early 2000s. The first was through the lakes, which was urgently needed to save the lakes from rapid eutrophication. A second expansion, undertaken by developers, brought a sewer line to Turkey Hill Road to serve the new business site. Meantime, the town will need to identify other areas of high priority for future expansions. Treatment plant capacity will suffice for the next projected phases. Expansions will include improving the system through the state school, and perhaps continuing up Federal Street to Dwight. No commitment has been made to such an expansion yet. The plant still has over fifty percent of its capacity available.

Public Safety

Police Department

The police department has 180 miles of roads to patrol in a town with over 15,000 residents. Staff, training, vehicles, and equipment need to be kept current. Speed patrols are requested by residents, but there is no way to conduct them while patrolling the rest of town and responding to calls. There will be a continual need for patrol officers and training. Improving and replacing equipment, mainly cars, is continual.

Fire Department

The fire department has to respond to emergencies throughout the town, including some car wrecks, fuel spills, and fires. The department has to be ready for chemical spills and other problems with hazardous materials. The department also reviews building plans, site plans, and subdivision plans. Routine inspections of public buildings and inspections of new houses and houses that are changing ownership also must be conducted by the fire department. The department has only two full-time employees and relies on an extensive volunteer force. Many

volunteers are unavailable during the day as they work out of town. The town will need to consider dedicating more money to the department for full-time firefighters to provide constant coverage. The department will need further resources to reduce response times and to provide coverage if more than one problem is happening at once. The chief has indicated his desire for substations at the far ends of town, somewhere north and somewhere south. To build, equip, and staff these stations will require a long-term capital plan. This is a worthy goal, and it should be planned now so to raise the necessary money over the next ten years to begin implementing this.

Emergency Medical Services

The EMS department is currently located in the former police station on the town common. This facility is barely adequate for the existing operation. A 3-bay garage is proposed to house ambulances. The service is attempting to upgrade the service offered to the Paramedic Level. This will require increased staffing and supplies.

Animal Control Officer

With increasing population, there is an increase in the number of dogs and other domestic animals, and therefore conflicts with dogs and other domestic animals. It is impossible for a one-person department to handle all the complaints, pick up strays, and enforce the laws. At some point, the town may have to consider expanding this office and provide more impoundment and care facilities.

Council on Aging

Senior services will need to be maintained, and will need some expansion over ten years. The elder population of Belchertown will increase. The main needs will be in transportation and basic health care, mostly nutrition. There will also be a need and demand for programming of the “Wellness Type” model. This would require more specialized staff such as on sight nurse to properly monitor and provide services. There currently is and there will be more demand and need for senior housing of all types including supportive housing, and assisted living.

Education

The school department will continue to have the greatest total demand of all town departments. Much of what is prompting Belchertown’s growth is the reputation of the town’s schools; to maintain high quality while accommodating the pupil growth is the school department’s challenge. The town’s role is to support the schools. The schools provide for the town’s leaders, thus to be a better town, we must support our schools.

There is no formal study being done for added building space. The new high school opened in 2002. For the next several years, school space should be adequate. When the new high school was finished, the old high school was renovated and turned into the Jabish Brook Middle School. The school department has developed its own capital improvement program, incorporating its five and ten-year capital needs.

E. Implementation Actions

Recommended Actions

I.D. & Priority	Action	When Initiate	Remarks	*Leadership [and others who should be involved]
CFS-1	Complete GIS implementation. Establish maintenance program and improvements.		Some incremental implementations are done.	*BoS, [MIS Dept., Planning, Assessors]
CFS-2	Develop a five-year and ten-year plan for Fire Department needs. Include staff and facility needs analysis. Identify possible sites for north and south satellite stations.		An initial study into the potential merger of EMS and Fire departments has been completed	Fire Dept. [BoS, FinCom]
CFS-3	Evaluate aging assets and create an annual improvement schedule		School dept and town have created capital plans that address the replacement of aging equipment. Plans need to be updated annually.	* School Dept.; DPW; [BoS, School Comm., FinCom]
CFS-4	Conduct a town office space needs analysis		Formal analysis of space needs has not occurred, but expansion into the Finnerty House as well as the former MEMA space at Tadgell school is in response to increased space needs.	*BoS, [Dept. Heads, DPW]
CFS-5	Review, revise and/or renegotiate water and sewer agreements with Amherst and Palmer		Negotiate for Amherst sewer to cross the town line.	*BoS
CFS-6	Develop a program with water departments to preserve watershed and aquifer lands			*ConCom [Water Depts, Health, Planning Board]
CFS-7	Hire a grant writer/administrator			*BoS
CFS-8	Evaluate the need of a Human Services department (addressing aging, youth, health, housing, etc...)			*BoS [Council on Aging, Bd of Health, Housing Auth.]
CFS-9	Build new recreational complex and additional sport fields.		More fields have been created (Little Fenway, Constantino field)	Rec. Dept.

Completed Actions

I.D. [Old]	Action	Date Completed	Remarks
CFS- 12	Improve ambulance service to paramedic level with full-time 24 hour coverage	2006	