

Key Issues of Importance – Town of Belchertown



Working and Natural Lands



Housing



Transportation



Food Security



Energy Efficiency and Resilient/Renewable Energy



Land Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation



Equity and Environmental Justice








Master Plan								
#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>							
Land Use								
1	Draft a Phased Development Bylaw that provides incentives for developers to save open space, provide housing for preferred groups, avoid suburban landscapes and promote the rural look and feel of town by phasing the number of building permits. (pg. 30)	■						■
2	Draft zoning bylaw revisions that would increase lot size in areas of environmental concern including poor draining soils, steep slopes, active farm and forestry production and wellhead/watersheds. (pg. 30)	■						
3	Draft a “creative or flexible development” bylaw to provide incentives for subdivision developers and multiple ANR developers to enhance the use of natural resources and preserve the rural look and feel of town by offering flexible frontage requirements, varied lot sizes, road widths and use of common drives. (pg. 30)	■						
4	Consider prioritizing the use of sewer and water capacity to support and encourage desired types and locations of development. (pg. 31)	■						
5	Develop Education programs and materials to encourage residents to preserve elements of the towns rural look and feel – information on stone walls, preservation of trees, preserving land. (pg. 31)	■						■
6	Develop Educational programs to teach residents about protecting water resources through proper maintenance of private septic systems. (pg. 31)	■						
7	Revise performance standards for site plan review to include specific demonstration of protecting rural look and feel and natural resources. (pg. 31)	■						■

8	Create zoning for commercial properties to achieve village development rather than strip development. (pg. 31)			■				
Housing								
9	Develop planned growth strategy, making certain infrastructure is there to support the pace and type of growth that is considered desirable. (pg. 47)	■	■					
10	Address requirements of low-income housing. (pg. 47)		■					■
11	Form a local or regional affordable housing trust that can receive tax-deductible, charitable, and other donations that would be used to develop or rehab housing. (pg. 47)		■					■
12	Encourage development of assisted living facility by recruiting developers of such facilities and offering easy access to appropriate property. (pg. 47)		■					■
13	Identify available building structured for possible adaptation to provide housing for renters of low or moderate income, and find funding to assist in the work. (pg. 47)		■					■
Economic Development (updated section)								
14	Support agricultural enterprises through local regulations, positive messaging to consumers/residents, and business retention strategies. (pg. 19)	■			■			
15	Work with local farmers to assist them in creating a Farmers Coop, Farmers Market Alliance, or other type of business association. (pg. 19)	■			■			
16	Implement traffic calming and pedestrian friendly measures around the Belchertown Town Common in order to encourage patronizing adjacent businesses and greater use of the Common. (pg. 20)			■				
17	Develop pedestrian connections between the Town Common and Carriage Grove. (pg. 20)			■				
18	Explore the possibility of allowing smaller homes and lots near the Town Center to create a more vibrant town center and a stronger market for town center businesses. The availability of these homes in the Town Center area would reduce sprawl and provide greater access to the Town Common for residents. (pg. 20)	■						■
19	Expand the use of temporary attractions such as the Farmers Market and Food Truck Fridays to include other similar events and pop-up shops, on and around the Town Common. (pg. 20)							
20	Focus new commercial development in a central business area (the Town Center), rather than expanding or creating village commercial areas in outlying areas. (pg. 21)	■						■
Natural and Cultural Resources								
21	Work with Tri-Lakes Association on comprehensive Lakes Management Plan with emphasis on slowing nutrient run-off. (pg. 70)	■						■
22	Require wildlife habitat evaluation for all development (other than single family home) projects outside of village areas. (pg. 70)	■						
23	Research and develop incentives for landowners to keep their land in Chapter 61 (forestry, agriculture, and recreation). (pg. 71)	■						
24	Develop an education program on natural landscaping and lawn alternatives. Incorporate low-input landscaping into subdivision regulations and review of single-family home Con Com filings. (pg. 71)	■						

25	Work with sport organizations – rod and gun clubs, other fishing and hunting groups, trail riders – to develop land, water, and wildlife management plans, and to educate the public in the benefit of these organizations’ activities to preservation. (pg. 71)	■					■	
26	Work with state and federal agencies, local landscapers and builders to identify and control invasive species. (pg. 71)	■						
Open Space and Recreation (2013 plan)								
27	Study zoning options for protection of agriculture, forestry, scenic and cultural resources. (pg. 59)	■					■	
28	Determine where land use changes will occur and promote creative alternatives. (pg. 59)	■					■	
29	Promote greater participation in regional land trusts. (pg. 59)	■					■	
30	Study and evaluate options for open space preservation and protection; tax relief for open space, transfer of development rights, APR’s on agricultural lands, conservation restrictions and land acquisitions, Regional Forest Legacy designation. (pg. 59)	■					■	
31	Promote involvement of community organizations, schools, and businesses in natural resource and open space protection. (pg. 59)	■					■	
32	Conduct semi-annual public education programs about natural resource and open space issues and conservation areas. (pg. 59)						■	
33	Provide public information about [development] growth and its impacts. (pg. 60)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
34	Promote conservation restrictions and other land management tools along Jabish Brook corridor. (pg. 60)	■					■	
35	Study donor and expanded funding opportunities for conservation restrictions and/or purchase of aquifer lands. (pg. 60)	■					■	
36	Update Earth Removal Bylaw (pg. 60)	■						
37	Encourage Lake Residents to hook up to Town sewer (pg. 60)	■						
38	Conduct water quality studies at the Tri-lakes region. (pg. 60)	■						
39	Develop local tools for surface watershed protection. (pg. 60)	■						
40	Develop local bylaw for Lake Activities. (pg. 60)	■						
41	Develop emergency response measures for hazardous spills. (pg. 60)	■						
42	Develop program for hazardous waste management & disposal. (pg. 60)	■						
43	Develop strategies for solid waste management. (pg. 60)	■						
44	Maintain strategies for continued operation and increase user connections to the new sewage treatment plant. (pg. 60)	■						
45	Promote sustainable agriculture. (pg. 60)	■						
46	Promote participation in Stewardship Incentive Program on private forest lands. (pg. 60)	■						
47	Apply for funding to purchase Conservation Restrictions on priority forest lands. (pg. 60)	■					■	
48	Develop Forest Management Plans for Town Conservation Areas and other Town lands. (pg. 60)	■					■	








49	Develop methods to maintain and protect existing agricultural lands. (pg. 61)	■						
50	Work with Agricultural Commission to update farmland Preservation Plan with possible land use/land management strategies. (pg. 61)	■						
51	Develop management plans for all conservation areas. (pg. 61)	■					■	
52	Identify and certify vernal pools. (pg. 61)	■						
53	Identify and protect habitats of rare and endangered species. (pg. 61)	■						
54	Establish review process for protection of trees in tree belt. (pg. 61)	■						
55	Implement a strategy for maintaining and improving existing field and facilities as well as developing additional playing fields. (pg. 61)	■					■	
56	Provide accessibility to trails for all populations groups (including handicapped and senior citizens) at Cold Spring Conservation Area, Topping Farm Conservation Area, and portions of Jabish Brook Conservation Areas, Reed Conservation Area, and Piper Farm. (pg. 61)						■	■
Community Facilities								
57	Evaluate aging assets and create an annual improvement schedule. (pg. 106)							
58	Review, revise and/or renegotiate water and sewer agreements with Amherst and Palmer. (pg. 106)							
59	Develop a program with water departments to preserve watershed and aquifer lands. (pg. 106)	■					■	
Transportation								
60	Commit necessary resources to manage tree and vegetation cutback work along all public roads. (pg. 119)	■						
61	Study alternate traffic, parking, and pedestrian patterns around the common. (pg. 119)			■				
62	Develop a systematic program for extending sidewalks and bikeways in areas of high pedestrian traffic and along main roads. (pg. 119)			■				
63	Work with state officials to re-evaluate speed limits on state roads. (pg. 119)			■				
64	Re-evaluate parking regulations in the zoning bylaws in order to assure that the location, number, size, and screening of parking lots is appropriate, and to promote shared driveways and internal connections between parking lots. (pg. 119)			■				
65	Consider methods to foster a viable public transportation system, possibly targeting key groups, such as the elderly and college students. (pg. 119)			■				■
Health and Human Services								
66	Evaluate readiness and capacity to respond to biohazard emergencies, disease outbreaks and other serious threats to public health and safety. (pg. 129)							■
67	Assess current transportation resources for residents to access health care and develop plan to improve access. (pg. 129)							■
68	Evaluate current availability of child care, recreational and health services for pre-school children and identify gaps in services. (pg. 129)							■
69	Evaluate service needs for seniors to identify gaps in health care access and underutilization of existing services. (pg. 129)							■
Agriculture								

70	Research and develop incentives for landowners to keep their land in Chapters 61, 61A and 61B (forestry, agriculture, and recreation). (pg. 133)	■					■	
71	Visit all owners and operators of agricultural and agriculture-related businesses. Ask and listen carefully for specific ways the community could help the continued viability of these enterprises. (pg. 133)	■						
72	Work with Quaboag Valley Business Assist. Corp., NESFI and others to encourage eco-tourism to local farms and other open space destinations in town. (pg. 133)	■					■	








								
Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings								
#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>							
1	Conduct field inventory of culverts and bridges to rank and prioritize projects for increased flooding resiliency and storm-hardening, followed by design and implementation of priority resizing or replacement projects. Green infrastructure, Low-Impact Design, and other nature-based solutions will be integrated with hard-infrastructure (pg. 9)	■	■	■				
2	Develop comprehensive plan for beaver management (pg. 10)	■					■	
3	Assess green infrastructure opportunities to develop a list of specific priorities, assess feasibility and cost, rank priority projects in terms of climate resilience potential, and develop concept designs for key projects (pg. 10)	■						
4	Replace drinking water storage tank for increased storage capacity (to counter drought) and decrease vulnerability of the water supply to wind and storms (pg. 10)							■
5	Assessment of mosquito/pest control options, including: viability study of joining existing mosquito control district versus options for the town to manage control independently, determination of future risks due to increase in type and quantity of pests/disease vectors due to climate change, and development of an education and outreach program (pg. 10)	■			■			
6	Build water conservation, collection, and irrigation resiliency: implement a cistern-based water collection system as demonstration project at the high school and coordinate an education and outreach program to encourage residential and agricultural best practices (pg. 10)	■			■			
7	Develop a comprehensive tree and forests management program to identify, remove, and replace problem trees, preserve intact forests and street tree cover, provide guidance and resources for gradually moving toward more climate-resilient trees and forest communities (e.g. species that will tolerate warmer temperatures), and develop guidelines to manage conversion of forest land (e.g. solar guidelines) (pg. 10)	■					■	■

8	Acquire open space consistent with Town planning priorities and focused on areas that will create flood resiliency through increasing storage capacity in floodplains and/or infiltration capacity in uplands (pg. 10)	■					■	
9	Develop/implement emergency communications system with focus on expanding an already robust system with text alerts and/or finding other ways to reach homes and individuals that do not have access to land lines (pg. 10)							■
10	Improve resiliency of mobile home parks including improving water supply system to guard against drought and better anchoring of structures to prevent catastrophic damage due to wind and storm events (pg. 10)		■					■
11	Conduct transportation resiliency planning to ensure that access is maintained in and out of town during hazard events, with dual focuses on 1) facilitating emergency operations and 2) preventing a largely commuter-based population from becoming stranded, either unable to get home or unable to reach their jobs (pg. 10)			■				
12	Install wastewater treatment plant upgrades to establish cold weather protections and maintain operations during extreme temperatures. (Note that the wastewater treatment plant already benefits from a priority restoration agreement with National Grid to guard against the impacts of power outages) (pg. 10)					■		
13	Analyze hazardous materials risk to develop an understanding of how climate-change induced hazards could potentially increase the risk of accidents or spills involving the major freight railroad line that runs north-south through Town and quantify the potential risks to the Town that could result from accidents involving various classes and types of materials (pg. 11)							■
14	Conduct strategic planning to support agricultural community in the face of climate change. All the identified hazards (flooding, drought, extreme temperatures, storm events) have the potential to significantly impact agricultural production, with corresponding threats to livelihoods. Planning should address hazard resiliency as well as long-term plans to transition producers to new techniques and/or into new crops to replace crops/industries that may no longer be viable due to climate change (e.g. maple sugar industry) (pg. 11)	■			■			
15	Develop comprehensive invasive species management from inventory stage through management planning and implementation to address existing invasive populations that threaten features such as open space or forests, both of which contribute to resiliency, as well as anticipate new invasives that are likely to move into the area as climates shift (pg. 11)	■			■		■	
16	Build resiliency of town wells to protect water supply, particularly by purchasing additional land in adjacent areas and managing for infiltration, groundwater recharge, and water quality (pg. 11)	■						■
17	Assess public and private dams including town-wide survey to update information on which small dams still exist, establish an understanding of condition, and determine risks and priority projects (pg. 11)	■						

18	Explore funding and logistics for cooling stations and emergency shelters to develop expanded offerings, potentially at one of the local schools, that would address residents' needs during hazard events, including extreme temperature events, floods, or storms (pg. 11)					■		■
19	Plan for ongoing increases in population size. Belchertown is one of the fastest growing communities in Massachusetts; infrastructure and services must be not only robust but adaptable to growing population numbers, increasing density of development, and expansion into areas of new development. Belchertown may also experience population growth driven by climate change (pg. 11)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
20	Develop Quabbin Reservoir Emergency Response Plan specific to Belchertown to provide education and outreach about hazards, communications planning in case of an emergency situation that threatens the integrity of the reservoir, and recovery strategy for the Town in case of catastrophic failure. This plan would supplement the existing Emergency Action Plan required to be maintained by the Commonwealth as the dam owner (pg. 11)	■						
21	Develop communications and outreach strategy for vulnerable populations, particularly seniors, mobile home residents, and the homeless, that may be more vulnerable to climate-induced risks, such as extreme temperatures, may lack appropriate shelter during increasingly intense storms, or that may be unprepared if stranded or cut off from supplies due to flooding or storm events (pg. 11-12)							■
22	Expand support for senior center to build on existing strengths that serve a potentially vulnerable population (pg. 12)							■
23	Maintain small-town culture that supports communication and cooperation among neighbors and is an asset during hazard events (pg. 12)		■					
24	Address inappropriate land uses in floodplain through increased inspection and enforcement of existing regulations (pg. 12)	■					■	

								
Three Villages and A Farm: Belchertown Beyond (DART Plan) (2016)								
#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability</i>							
1	Adopt MassDOT Complete Streets Policy (pg. 58)			■				■
2	Review zoning regulations to protect agricultural land (pg. 56)	■			■		■	

3	Petition state to transfer Lampson Brook Farmland to the town or other mission-oriented organization (pg. 56)	■					■	
4	Include trails in open space plans to make them eligible for funding (pg. 56)						■	








								
Commercial Development Design Guidelines								
#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>							
1	Commercial development should be designed to human scale (pg. 1)			■				■
2	Commercial structures are encouraged to have large windows (pg. 3)					■		
3	Landscaped entrances are encouraged along building facades (pg. 5)	■						
4	Discouraged building materials include T1-11, which is highly susceptible to weather damage. (pg. 8)		■					
5	Discouraged building materials include E.I.F.S, which uses Styrofoam, an environmentally harmful material. (pg. 8)		■					
6	A minimum percentage of the site must be left as open space to provide buffers between properties and enhance the streetscape. (pg. 21)	■					■	
7	Existing vegetation should be kept if a building happens to fall under new usage. (pg. 21)	■					■	
8	With the benefit of having large lot sizes, Belchertown seeks to discourage excess asphalt whenever possible. (pg. 22)	■					■	
9	Five or more parking spaces must be bordered on all sides with a landscaped buffer of at least 10 Ft with trees at least 6 Ft in height and at least 2 inches in trunk diameter. (pg. 23)	■						
10	Parking areas should be well buffered from the street with vegetation. (pg. 23)	■						
11	Discouraged parking designs include expansive lots, weak street edges, and no sidewalk or buffer between the street and parking. (pg. 24)			■				■
12	Projects should be designed to provide efficient and safe pedestrian circulation within the site. (pg. 25)			■				
13	Landscaping should be composed of noninvasive, drought-resistant plantings that may include trees, flowers, shrubs, succulents, and ornamental grasses. (pg. 27)	■						
14	Where possible, landscape design should embrace natural site features such as rock outcroppings, topography, etc. (pg. 27)	■						
15	Energy Efficient lighting fixtures such as LEDs should complement the building's architecture and should be appropriately scaled to the building and site. (pg. 29)					■		










Commercial Solar Photovoltaic Bylaw

#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>						
1	Installation of commercial solar photovoltaic systems over parking lots is allowed by right. (pg. 1)	■				■	■
2	Installation of commercial solar photovoltaic systems over existing structures is allowed by right. (pg. 1)	■				■	■
3	Any commercial solar photovoltaic system requiring forest clearing greater than ten acres is not permitted (pg. 1)	■					■
4	Herbicides, rodenticides, or any other pesticides may not be used to control vegetation or animals at a CSPI. In a dual-use CSPI, the agricultural operator, but not the CSPI operator, is exempt from this restriction. (pg. 4)	■					
5	A CSPI shall be designed to minimize its visibility, including preserving natural vegetation to the maximum extent possible, blending in equipment with the surroundings, adding vegetative buffers to provide an effective visual barrier from adjacent roads and driveways, and to screen abutting dwellings. The owner of the CSPI shall not remove any naturally occurring vegetation such as trees and shrubs unless it adversely affects the performance and operation of the solar installation. A diversity of plant species native to New England shall be used for any screens and vegetative erosion controls. Use of exotic plants, as identified by the most recent version of the “Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List” maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, is prohibited. If deemed necessary by the Planning Board, the depth of the vegetative screen shall be 30 feet and will be composed of native trees and shrubs staggered for height and density that shall be properly maintained. Cultivars of native plants are acceptable. The open area of the site shall be seeded with a pollinator mix and maintained as bird and insect habitat. Mowing is to be done as little as possible to retain a natural functioning of the landscape. Plants shall be maintained and replaced as necessary by the owner of the CSPI for the life of the CSPI. (pg. 4)	■					■
6	Clearing of natural vegetation shall be limited to what is necessary for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the CSPI or otherwise prescribed by applicable laws, regulations, and bylaws. A CSPI may not be constructed on slopes exceeding 8% except as expressly authorized pursuant to §145-28B(3)(c), nor may cutting and filling be done to reduce natural slopes. Existing root structures and topsoil shall be maintained to the maximum extent practicable and provide for a minimum of 6” of topsoil on all exposed areas. (pg. 4)	■					
7	If forestland is proposed to be converted to a CSPI, the plans shall designate an area of unprotected land (that is, land that could otherwise be developed under current zoning) on the parcel or block of contiguous parcels under common ownership that comprise the project site, and of a size equal to four times the total area of such forest conversion. Such designated land shall remain in substantially its natural condition without alteration except for routine forestry practices until such time as the CSPI is decommissioned and the site restored to forest. (pg. 4-5)	■					■

8	If forestland is proposed to be converted to a CSPI, the plans shall show mitigation measures that create a wildflower meadow habitat within and immediately around the CSPI and a successional forest habitat in the surrounding areas managed to prevent shading until the installation is decommissioned and the site restored to forest. (pg. 5)	■						
9	The owner or operator of a CSPI shall submit an annual report demonstrating and certifying compliance with the Operation and Maintenance Plan, the requirements of this bylaw, and approvals granted hereunder, including but not limited to continued management and maintenance of vegetation. (pg. 5)	■						
10	When removing CSPI, removal shall consist of disposal of all solid and hazardous waste in accordance with local, state, and federal waste disposal regulations. (pg. 6)							
11	When removing CSPI, removal shall consist of stabilization or re-vegetation of the site as necessary to minimize erosion. (pg. 6)	■						
12	Any site that was deforested for the CSPI, per §145-28B(3)(b), shall be restored to encourage native tree growth, including the planting of seedlings, if necessary, to establish growth. (pg. 6)	■					■	

								
Wetlands Bylaw and Regulations								
#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>							
1	Except as permitted by the Conservation Commission or as provided for in this chapter, no person shall remove, fill, dredge, build upon or alter the following resource areas or within 100 feet of these resource areas, an area known as the "buffer zone to the resource areas": 1) Any freshwater wetland as determined by vegetational community, soil composition and/or hydrologic regime, including isolated wetlands, any marsh, wet meadow, bog or swamp. 2) Any pond, lake, river and any perennial or intermittent stream. 3) Any land under such waters. 4) Any bank or beach. 5) Any land subject to flooding or inundation by groundwater, water or storm flowage, including ephemeral ponds, vernal pools and kettle holes. (pg. 1)	■					■	

								
Stormwater Management Bylaw and Regulations								
#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>							
1	Submittal of a Stormwater Management Plan and a Stormwater Permit is required for construction activities that disturb land greater than or equal to 10,000 square feet. (pg. 7)	■						

2	Submittal of a Stormwater Management Plan and a Stormwater permit is required for construction activities that disturb land less than 10,000 square feet if part of a larger common or phased plan. (pg. 7)	■						
3	Submittal of a Stormwater Management Plan and a Stormwater permit is required for any alteration, redevelopment, or conversion of land use to a “hotspot” as defined in this bylaw, such as auto salvage yards, auto fueling facilities, fleet storage yards, commercial parking lots, and other potential water quality concerns, regardless of the amount of land altered. (pg. 7)	■						
4	Submittal of a Stormwater Management Plan and a Stormwater permit is required for any construction activities that are not part of a larger common plan and that result in the disturbance of less than 10,000 square feet of land, or are not located on a hotspot, are still required to minimize impervious surface, disconnect impervious area runoff from the public storm drainage system, wetlands, waterways, and adjacent off-site impervious areas; or otherwise treat, infiltrate or retain stormwater runoff by implementing stormwater management measures designed in accordance with best management practices as defined by the Stormwater Authority. The applicant shall submit evidence to the building inspector that the requirements of this paragraph and the grading and drainage requirements from the most recently issued edition of the Massachusetts Building Code have been met prior to issuance of a building permit. (pg. 7)	■						
5	Values protected by this bylaw include reducing the adverse water quality impacts from stormwater discharges to rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and streams. (pg. 3)	■						
6	Values protected by this bylaw include maintaining the natural hydrologic characteristics of the land and treating for water quality in order to: reduce flooding, stream bank erosion, siltation, nonpoint source pollution, and property damage, and to maintain the integrity of stream channels and aquatic habitats. (pg. 3)	■						
7	Values protected by this bylaw include preventing the discharge of pollutants, including hazardous chemicals, into stormwater runoff. (pg. 3)	■						
8	Values protected by this bylaw include minimizing the volume and rate of stormwater discharges to rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and streams during and following development. (pg. 3)	■						
9	Values protected by this bylaw include preventing erosion and sedimentation from during and following land development. (pg. 3)	■						
10	Values protected by this bylaw include providing for the recharge of groundwater aquifers and maintain the base flow of streams. (pg. 3)	■						
11	Values protected by this bylaw include promoting the use of LID practices such as limiting disturbance, reducing impervious cover, treating and infiltrating stormwater at the source, using environmentally sensitive site design, and the preservation of open space and other natural areas, to the maximum extent practicable. (pg. 3)	■					■	
12	Values protected by this bylaw include ensuring that stormwater treatment practices will be maintained and continue to function for the life of the design. (pg. 3)	■						










Subdivision Regulations

#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>						
1	In accordance with MGL c. 131, § 40, no person shall remove, fill, dredge, or alter any bank, fresh water wetland, beach, dune, flat marsh, or swamp bordering on any existing creek, river, stream, pond, lake, or any land under said waters without first filing written notice of intention to perform such work with the local Conservation Commission and state Department of Environmental Protection, and receiving an order of conditions. Any work, which includes building construction, removal of vegetation, grading, or excavation, that occurs within 100 feet of a wetland resource area or within 200 feet of a perennial stream or river requires that an application be filed with the local Conservation Commission for review. A permit is required from the Conservation Commission for work in these regulated areas, under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and Regulations 310 CMR, et seq., and the Belchertown Wetland Bylaw. (pg. 25)	■					
2	Due regard will be given by the Planning Board for the provision of adequate access to all of the lots in a subdivision by ways that will be safe and convenient for travel; for lessening congestion in such ways and in the adjacent public ways; for reducing danger to life and limb in the operation of motor vehicles; for securing safety in the case of fire, flood, panic and other emergencies; for insuring compliance with the applicable zoning by-laws; for securing adequate provision for water, sewerage, drainage, underground utility services, fire, police, and other similar municipal equipment, and street lighting and other requirements where necessary in a subdivision; (pg. 25-26)	■		■			
3	To ensure the protection of the general public against any possible harm to natural resources or other significant components of community welfare by development, an environmental analysis is required for every proposed subdivision. (pg. 27)	■					■
4	Any proposed subdivision shall be reviewed to determine whether such proposals will be reasonably safe from flooding. (pg. 28)	■	■				
5	All subdivision designs must meet the following nine stormwater management standards. When one or more of the standards cannot be met, an applicant may demonstrate that an equivalent level of environmental protection will be provided. 1) No new stormwater conveyances (e.g., outfalls) may discharge untreated stormwater directly to or cause erosion in wetlands or waters of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. 2) Stormwater management systems must be designed so that post-development peak discharge rates do not exceed pre-development peak discharge rates. 3) Loss of annual recharge to groundwater should be minimized through the use of infiltration measures to the maximum extent practicable. The annual recharge from the post-development site should approximate the annual recharge from the pre-development or existing site conditions, based on soil types. 4) For new development, stormwater management systems must be designed to remove 80% of the average annual load (post-development conditions) of total suspended solids. It is presumed that this standard is met when: A. Suitable nonstructural practices for source control and pollution prevention are implemented;	■					

	<p>B. Stormwater management best management practices (BMPs) are of adequate size to capture the prescribed runoff volume; and C. Stormwater management BMPs are maintained as designed. "To the extent practicable" means the applicant has made all reasonable efforts to meet the standards, including evaluation of alternative BMP designs and their locations.</p> <p>5) Stormwater discharges from areas with higher potential pollutant loads require the use of specific stormwater management BMPs. The use of infiltration practices without pretreatment is prohibited.</p> <p>6) Stormwater discharges to critical areas must use certain stormwater management BMPs approved for critical areas. Critical areas are Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs), shellfish beds, swimming beaches, cold water fisheries, and recharge areas for public water supplies.</p> <p>7) Redevelopment of previously developed sites must meet the stormwater management standards to the maximum extent practicable. If it is not practicable to meet all of these standards, new (retrofitted or expanded) stormwater management systems must be designed to improve existing conditions.</p> <p>8) Erosion and sediment controls must be implemented during construction.</p> <p>9) All stormwater management systems must have an operation and maintenance plan to ensure that systems function as designed.</p>						
6	Design Standards – Streets and Ways – Width – Lesser widths may be required by the Planning Board to discourage speeding traffic, and to achieve neighborhood designs that are sensitive to the landscape and that will promote community goals. (pg. 46)	■		■			
7	Natural and significant cultural features must be retained as much as possible. Major features of the land, such as existing walls, fences, wooded areas, orchards, agricultural fields, rock outcrops, culverts, large trees, and other notable features must be shown on the plan. (pg. 49)	■				■	
8	Where a storm water detention basin is required by an order of conditions issued by the Belchertown Conservation Commission, in order to replicate the flood-control value of undisturbed land and provide compensatory storage of storm water runoff, the Town of Belchertown shall allow the construction of storm water detention basins, provided that they comply with local ordinances, do not conflict with any other laws, rules and regulations, or standards set by any government agency which may have jurisdiction, their design includes a positive flow outlet from the basin, and their location is not in a location such that the sudden release of water due to failure would result in loss of life, injury to persons or damages to residences or buildings or cause interruptions of the use of services or public utilities. (pg. 49)	■					
9	Development shall be designed and constructed for as little disturbance as possible to the natural landform. Development shall demonstrate appropriate terrain-adaptive design and construction techniques. Extensive grading shall be avoided. An inability to design a particular development without significant disturbance to the natural landform indicates that the site should not accommodate the full amount of proposed development. Alternate site design and construction measures are encouraged to mitigate the effects of development on steep slopes. (pg. 53)	■					
10	The priority of a subdivision's drainage system is to prevent property damage from storm runoff. This includes erosion, flooding, surface water pollution, ground water pollution, and excessive alteration of the natural water flow. The Planning Board requires that natural waters, both surface water and ground water,	■					

	be recharged. Drainage structures and artificial wetlands shall be designed to remove pollutants, such as road salt, sand, oil, gasoline, and other automotive residues, from runoff. (pg. 55)						
11	Catch basins. Where feasible, storm water should be directed away from the roadway. Storm water shall not be permitted to cross any roadway upon the surface but must be piped underground. Storm water runoff shall not be permitted to flow upon the road surface for a longer distance than 400 feet before it enters the underground system or is diverted off the roadway to ditches or swales. Where used, catch basins shall be located on both sides of the roadway or on continuous grades at intervals of no more than 400 feet, at all sags in the roadway at intersecting streets, to prevent surface water from crossing the intersection. (pg. 56)	■					
12	Grass areas shall be provided on each side of the roadway as indicated in Appendix B and between the curb and the sidewalks, where sidewalks are required. (pg. 59)	■					
13	Where, in the opinion of the Planning Board, the existing trees to remain are not adequate, provisions for two street trees per lot may be required for each lot. Species, size and planting procedures shall be approved, in writing, by the Planning Board. Street trees shall be planted at an interval of 50 feet separating individual trees or at an interval required by the Planning Board. (See Appendix C, Street and Lawn Trees.) The Planning Board may also require shrubs or other vegetation for aesthetic benefits, and to stabilize slopes and absorb excess water. (pg. 60)	■			■		
14	All proposed utilities must be under ground. (pg. 61)				■		
15	The Planning Board encourages that a portion of land being subdivided be set aside as open space pursuant to MGL c. 41, § 81U. (pg. 63)	■				■	
16	Bank plantings - Erosion control. All cut and filled banks, or portions thereof, that are susceptible to erosion shall be planted with low or very low growing plantings or mulch, six inches minimum, herbaceous plants or sod grass. All plantings shall be of native, non-invasive species.	■					

								
Zoning Bylaw								
#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>							
1	Wetland Protection District – overlay applies to all lands within 100 feet of a wetland resource area – to protect citizens from flooding, poor drainage, reduced property values, impaired water supplies and threats to health and safety in wetlands and along streams and other watercourses. (pg. 145:19)	■						
2	Floodplain District – Purpose – Lands subject to seasonal or periodic flooding as described hereinafter shall not be used for residence or other purposes in such a manner as to endanger the health or safety of the occupants; To protect the persons and property from the hazards of flood inundation by assuring the continuation of natural flow patterns and the maintenance of adequate and safe floodwater storage capacity;	■						

	To protect the community against pollution and costs which may be incurred when unsuitable uses occur along watercourses, wetlands, ponds and reservoirs or in areas subject to flooding. (pg. 145:20)							
3	[Within the Floodplain District] All improvements to existing residential structures must have their lowest floor (including basement) elevated to or above the base flood level. (pg. 145:21)	■	■					
4	[Within the Floodplain District] All new nonresidential structures and substantial improvements to existing structures must have the lowest floor (including basement) elevated or floodproofed to or above the base flood level. (pg. 145:21)	■						
5	Extension, restoration or reconstruction to a preexisting mobile home shall provide that: Stands or lots are elevated on compacted fill or on pilings so that the lowest floor of the mobile home will be at or above the base flood level; Adequate surface drainage and access for a hauler are provided; In the instance of elevation on pilings, lots are large enough to permit steps; piling foundations are placed in stable soil no more than 10 feet apart; and reinforcement is provided for piers more than six feet above the ground level; The mobile home is anchored to resist flotation, collapse or lateral movement; The placement of mobile homes, except in an existing mobile home residential park, is prohibited in the floodway. (pg. 145:22)	■	■					
6	Aquifer Protection District (APD) – Purpose - to promote the health, safety and welfare of the community by protecting and preserving groundwater resources from any use of land or structures which reduce the quality or quantity of its water resources. (pg. 145:22)	■						
7	Within the APD – prohibited uses - Commercial uses which manufacture, process, store or dispose of hazardous wastes in amounts exceeding the minimum threshold amounts requiring compliance with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Hazardous Waste Regulation 310 CMR 30; The rendering impervious by any means of more than 15% of the area of any single lot. (pg. 145:23)	■						
8	Within the APD – restricted uses - Excavation for removal of earth, sand, gravel and other soils shall not extend closer than five feet above the annual high groundwater table; The use of sodium chloride for ice control shall be minimized; Commercial fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or other leachable materials shall not be used in amounts which result in groundwater contamination; Manure shall be stored in a structure which prevents leachable elements from contaminating groundwater; Individual septic systems may not exceed design standards set in accordance with 310 CMR 15.00 to receive more than 110 gallons of sewage per 1/4 acre under one ownership per day or 440 gallons of sewage on any one acre under one ownership, whichever is greater, except the replacement or repair of an existing system that will not result in an increase in design capacity above the original design. (pg. 145:23-24)	■						
9	Within the APD - All runoff from impervious surfaces shall be recharged in the site by being diverted toward areas covered with vegetation for surface infiltration to the extent possible. Dry wells shall be used only where other methods are infeasible and shall be preceded by oil, grease and sediment traps to facilitate removal of contamination. (pg. 145:24)	■						
10	Parking areas that abut public ways or residentially zoned property must be separated from the public way or property line by a minimum ten-foot-wide landscaped strip, for all uses except single-dwelling units. (pg. 145:49)	■		■				

11	Large parking areas providing more than 75 parking spaces shall be subdivided with landscaped islands such that no paved surface shall extend more than 80 feet in width. At least one tree (minimum two-inch caliper at chest height) per 35 spaces shall be provided. (pg. 145:49)	■		■				
12	Estate lots - purpose - to allow for the creation of lots for single-dwelling units by right and two-, three- and four-dwelling units by special permit with less than the required frontage in exchange for increased square footage, for the purposes of preservation of open space and decreasing density in given areas. (pg. 145:52)						■	
13	Site plan approval criteria guidelines - The development shall be integrated into the existing terrain and surrounding landscape and shall be designed to protect abutting properties and community amenities - Minimize use of wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains and hilltops; Preserve unique natural or historic features; Minimize tree, vegetation and soil removal and grade changes; Maximize open space retention. (pg. 145:56)	■				■	■	
14	Site plan approval criteria guidelines - The development shall be served with adequate water supply and waste disposal systems. "Adequate" means the development shall not place an excessive demand on public infrastructure and resources. (pg. 145:56)	■						
15	Site plan approval criteria guidelines - prevent pollution of surface water or groundwater, to minimize erosion and sedimentation and to prevent changes in groundwater levels, increased runoff and potential for flooding. Drainage shall be designed so that runoff shall not be increased, groundwater recharge is maximized and neighboring properties will not be adversely affected. (pg. 145:56)	■						
16	Accessory apartments – purpose – provide diverse housing options, provide source of income and security, encourages energy-efficiency, provide housing units for persons with disabilities, provide moderately priced rental units. Procedure – The Planning Board may issue a special permit for one apartment accessory to the use of a single-unit dwelling, provided each of the following conditions is met: There shall be no more than one accessory apartment on an individual parcel of land, regardless of the parcel's area; Owner-occupancy of either the primary or accessory unit; Up to 33% of the gross floor area of the dwelling, not to exceed 600 square feet maximum gross floor area, may be permitted for the accessory apartment; to provide for development of housing units for disabled individuals, the Planning Board may allow reasonable deviation from the stated conditions when necessary to install features that facilitate access and mobility for disabled persons; The accessory apartment shall have only one bedroom; There is no outward evidence that the premises are being used for more than one residential unit. Accessory apartments are allowed only in the AG-A, AG-B, LR, and VR Zones, and only with a special permit from the Planning Board. (pg. 145:67-68)		■			■		■
17	Industrial regulations – Standards – lighting; no direct or sky-reflected glare. (pg. 145:72)	■						
18	Industrial regulations – Stormwater runoff - The rate of surface water runoff from a site shall not be increased after construction. If needed to meet this requirement and to maximize groundwater recharge, increased runoff from impervious surfaces shall be recharged on site by being diverted to vegetated surfaces for infiltration or through the use of detention or retention ponds. Dry wells shall be used only where other methods are infeasible and shall require oil, grease and sediment traps to facilitate removal of contaminants. (pg. 145:73)	■						

19	Industrial regulations – Water quality. All outdoor storage facilities for fuel, hazardous materials or wastes and potentially harmful raw materials shall be located within an impervious diked containment area adequate to hold the total volume of liquid kept within the storage area. (pg. 145:73)	■						
20	Business regulations – Commercial developments – Access - The proposed development shall assure safe interior circulation within its site by separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic. (pg. 145:75)			■				
21	Business regulations – Commercial developments – Landscaping and screening - A landscaped buffer strip at least 10 feet wide, continuous except for approved driveways, shall be established adjacent to any public road. The buffer strip shall be mulched or planted with ground cover, medium height shrubs and shade trees (minimum two-inch caliper, planted at least every 50 feet along the road frontage). (pg. 145:76)	■		■				
22	Business regulations – Commercial developments – Landscaping and screening - Large parking areas providing more than 75 parking spaces shall be subdivided with landscaped islands such that no paved surface shall extend more than 80 feet in width. At least one tree (minimum two-inch caliper at chest height) per 35 spaces shall be provided. (pg. 145:76)	■		■				
23	Business regulations – Commercial developments – Landscaping and screening - Any commercial use shall be screened from view from any neighboring residence in a residential district by dense, hardy evergreen plantings or by earthen berms, wall or tight fence, complemented by evergreen plantings. Natural wooded stands on the subject property shall be incorporated into the screening and landscaping. (pg. 145:76)	■						
24	Business regulations – Commercial developments – Stormwater runoff - The rate of surface water runoff from a site shall not be increased after construction. If needed to meet this requirement and to maximize groundwater recharge, increased runoff from impervious surfaces shall be recharged on site by being diverted to vegetated surfaces for infiltration or through the use of detention or retention ponds. Oil, grease and sediment traps shall be used to facilitate removal of contaminants. Dry wells shall be used only where other methods are infeasible. (pg. 145:76-77)	■						
25	Common Drive Development – Intent - to allow for a minor residential development alternative to conventional subdivision development. The purpose of a common drive development is to result in less environmental damage than a conventional subdivision or separate curb cuts for each lot would cause. (pg. 145:79)	■						
26	Common Drive Development – Site and Earthwork – Development shall demonstrate appropriate terrain-adaptive design and construction techniques; avoid extensive grading; erosion control and bank stabilization during construction; special permit required for earth removal beyond the amount necessary to construct the driveway (pg. 145:82-83)	■						
27	Common Drive Development - Drainage. The drainage design shall consist of an open drainage system consisting of grassed swales and waterways or overland sheet flow, if appropriate, or a closed drainage system meeting Mass DEP stormwater standards. Vegetation shall be retained to assist in water absorption and soil retention. When vegetation must be cleared for construction, the soil must be revegetated immediately with native species per approval by the conservation commission. Outlets from the drainage swales should be properly engineered and avoid damage to wetland resource areas. Stormwater shall not be permitted to cross over the common drive. (pg. 145:83-84)	■						

28	Common Drive Development – Drainage – Vegetation - Waterways and outlets shall be protected against erosion by vegetation as soon after construction as is practicable and before diversions or other channels are directed into them. Consideration should be given to jute matting, excelsior matting, or sodding of the channel to provide erosion protection as soon after construction as possible. (pg. 145:83-84)	■						
29	Open Space Community Development (OSCD) – Purpose – To set aside and preserve large tracts of land as open space as specified in this section; To allow the relatively intensive use of land in an alternative pattern of development while maintaining existing character; To provide a variety of housing opportunities for Belchertown residents of all income levels and social groups; specifically, to provide opportunities for smaller households, older residents, and first-time owners; To maintain and preserve a landscape that is biologically diverse and ecologically stable through creating and/or maintaining wildlife corridors and critical habitat. (pg. 145:89)	■	■					■
30	OSCD – Permitted uses and standards - A detached single-unit dwelling, an attached single-unit dwelling, or a detached double-unit dwelling, any with an accessory building, may be constructed on certain lots in an OSCD development although such lots have less area, frontage and front, rear and side yard dimensions than required for standard single- and double-unit lots; The Planning Board may allow no more than 20% of the total number of principal structures to be double-unit dwellings. (pg. 145:91)	■	■					
31	Business Neighborhood Center District (BNCD) – Objectives - Improved business, employment and residential opportunities; Economical and efficient street, utility and public facility installation, construction and maintenance through creative design; Provision of open and civic spaces; Efficient use of land in harmony with its natural features; A cohesive sense of community character achieved through mixed uses and design; Continuation of Belchertown's leadership in implementing improved energy and infrastructure technologies. (pg. 145:107)		■			■	■	
32	BNCD – Development Design – Overall district design requirements - Pedestrian accommodations shall take precedence over vehicular accommodations; Parking should be shared as much as possible to minimize curb cuts; Solar canopies should be considered for parking lots; Public transit accommodations, such as bus stops, must be integrated; Landscaping must use only plants native to this region. All reasonable attempts must be made to preserve healthy specimen trees. (pg. 145:109-110)	■		■		■		
33	BNCD - Building design requirements - Buildings should meet or exceed LEED or comparable "green" building standards for energy efficiency to the greatest extent possible and economically feasible. (pg. 145:110)					■		
34	BNCD - Residential requirements - Ten percent of all dwelling units must be permanently affordable and eligible to be listed on the Belchertown subsidized housing inventory ("SHI"); No detached single-unit dwelling is permitted. (pg. 145:110)		■					
35	BNCD - Open space land - Parcels on the district's external boundary must have a buffer of at least 30 feet wide on such external zone boundary; Open space buffers may be naturally forested. Invasive species shall not be permitted to remain; Buffers may be landscaped with native shrubs, trees and perennial plants. (pg. 145:113)	■						■



Belchertown Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan (2009)

#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>						
1	The town should consider concentrating housing density along the well-traveled routes in town through amendments to the town's zoning. The state's Chapter 40R Smart Growth program promotes these options and should be studied for adoption by the town. (pg. 4)	■					
2	Adopt an Accessory Apartments By-law to increase housing options in Belchertown. (pg. 5)	■			■	■	■
3	Adopt an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw to increase affordable housing opportunities in Belchertown. (pg. 5)	■					■
4	Amend use and dimensional requirements to expand housing options in Belchertown. (pg. 5)	■					
5	Create Affordable Housing Design Guidelines to ensure that the housing is indistinguishable from market-rate housing. (pg. 5)	■					■
6	Bolster use of existing public transit lines in Belchertown. (pg. 5)			■			■
7	Identify Park and Ride locations throughout Belchertown. (pg. 5)			■			
8	Develop a relationship with a local land trust or support the creation of a new local land trust to assist with acquiring land for future affordable housing. (pg. 5)	■					
9	Purchase existing homes for affordable housing & create deed restriction program. (pg. 5)	■					
10	Acquire land suitable for affordable housing development. (pg. 5)	■					
11	Subsidize affordable units in future mixed-use and/or mixed-income housing developments. (pg. 6)	■					■
12	Add affordable housing units to existing Belchertown Housing Authority developments and existing apartment complexes in town. (pg. 6)	■					■
13	Start a Senior Property Tax Work-Off Program to help senior citizens lower their annual property tax payments. (pg. 6)						■
14	Fund a Housing Rehabilitation Program to assist income eligible households make necessary repairs to their homes. (pg. 6)	■					■



Town of Belchertown FY13 Community Development Strategy (CDS)

#	<i>Existing Resilience & Sustainability Language</i>						
1	Land use priority - Draft a phased development bylaw providing incentives for developers to save open space, providing housing for preferred groups, avoid suburban landscapes, and promote the rural look and feel of the town by phasing the number of building permits. (pg. 6)	■				■	
2	Land use priority - Draft zoning bylaw revisions to increase lot size in areas of environmental concern including poorly drained soils, steep slopes, active farm and forestry production, and wellheads and watersheds. (pg. 6)	■				■	
3	Land use priority - Draft a creative or flexible development bylaw providing incentives for subdivisions and multiple ANR developers to enhance the use of natural resources and preserve the rural look and feel of the town by offering flexible frontage requirements, varied lot sizes, road widths, and use of common drives. (pg. 6)	■					
4	Natural Resource/Agriculture priority - Develop incentives for landowners to keep their land in forestry, agriculture, and recreation. (pg. 6)	■				■	
5	Natural Resource/Agriculture priority - Develop comprehensive Lakes Management Plan with the Tri-Lakes Association with emphasis on nutrient run-off. (pg. 6)	■					
6	Natural Resource/Agriculture priority - Require wildlife habitat evaluation for all development projects (other than single family homes) outside village areas. (pg. 6)	■					
7	Housing priority - Address requirement of low-income housing and maintenance of Housing Authority infrastructure. (pg. 6)		■				
8	Housing priority - Develop planned growth strategy ensuring infrastructure exists to support the desired pace and type of growth.		■				
9	Housing priority - Support and seek funding as necessary for housing across a broad range of incomes, age groups and demographics including, but not limited to, housing rehabilitation (including septic system repair) and the construction or conversion of units as "affordable" for low and moderate income persons. (pg. 6-7)		■				
10	Open Space and Recreation priority - Develop review process for proposed developments adjacent to preserved conservation land and agricultural land to prevent damage to that land and maximize the overall area of continuous open space. (pg. 7)					■	
11	Open Space and Recreation priority - Establish a system of bikeways and hiking trails (separate from roadways if possible) connecting the far ends of town to recreation areas and other public facilities. (pg. 7)			■		■	
12	Open Space and Recreation priority - Develop a plan for targeting parcels, portions of parcels, development rights, and easements for acquisition. (pg. 7)					■	
13	Community Facilities and Services priority - Evaluate aging assets and create an annual improvement schedule. (pg. 7)	■		■	■		