

# Community Services Need Study

## Town of Avon, Massachusetts



Prepared by Karen Sunnarborg, Consultant

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# **Town of Avon, Massachusetts Community Services Need Study**

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# **Town of Avon, Massachusetts Community Services Need Study**

## **Table of Contents**

	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	1
I. Introduction to Avon	7
II. Community Services Need Assessment	8
A. Health/Mental Health	9
B. Education and Training	15
C. Public Safety and Infrastructure	17
D. Housing and Community Development	19
E. Recreation	26
F. Transportation	28
G. Veterans Services	29
H. Community Engagement	30
III. Community Services Action Plan	31
A. Health/Mental Health	32
B. Education and Training	33
C. Public Safety and Infrastructure	34
D. Housing and Community Development	35
E. Recreation	36
F. Transportation	37
G. Veterans Services	37
H. Community Engagement	37
Attachment 1 Community Services Resource Manual	
Attachment 2 Community Profile	
Attachment 3 Community Survey Report	



# Town of Avon, Massachusetts

## Community Services Need Study

### Executive Summary

The Avon Board of Selectmen applied and received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to introduce a housing rehabilitation program and to conduct a comprehensive and targeted study of the town's social service network to determine the extent of local needs for a wide range of community services. Key elements of this Community Services Need Study include 1) a Community Services Need Assessment that identifies and describes existing services, usage by Avon residents, and unmet needs; 2) a Community Services Action Plan that presents strategies for addressing unmet housing needs and existing gaps in the social service network; and 3) a Resource Manual that identifies housing, economic and social service resources and contact information.

This Need Assessment, Action Plan and Resource Manual were developed through several research strategies including the following:

- A Community Profile that details demographic, workforce and housing characteristics and trends that is included as Attachment 2.
- A Community Survey to learn more about what residents' social and community development needs are, where they go to meet these needs, and what needs are not being met. In addition to providing everyone in town with an opportunity to provide input into the project, the survey was an excellent vehicle for informing and educating the community about the project and its goals. It also clearly signaled Avon Town government's interest in this important issue. A report on the survey results is included as Attachment 3.
- Interviews with local leaders and service providers to obtain their insights on how Avon residents are using existing services and what actions might be taken to better meet local needs.
- Public forums held on October 26, 2010 and May 26, 2011 to present the results of the study and obtain additional community input.
- Additional research on the service delivery network including other studies, reports and agency materials.
- Presentation on May 26 to Board of Selectmen of the results of the Study.

A summary of the identified community needs and potential actions to address these needs is provided below, categorized by type of service and targeted to the key components of the Avon community – its long-term residents who settled during the building boom decades ago and comprise the growing population of seniors; newer arrivals who have been attracted to Avon's small town character, relatively affordable housing and well-regarded school system; and businesses that bring in workers and shoppers throughout the region and substantially bolster the town's tax base.

**The shaded areas in the tables below denote shorter-term actions as opposed to those that will take a longer time to implement.** Information on the sources used in this study is included at the end of this report. Also, the suggested entity responsible for each of the actions is noted in parentheses with the following abbreviations:

Board of Selectmen (BOS), Avon Public Schools (APS), Board of Health (BOH), Avon Police Department (APD), Fire Department (AFD), Avon Planning Board (APB), Council on Aging (COA), Avon Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC), Veteran's Agent (VA), Avon Coalition for Every Student (ACES), and Old Colony Elder Services (OCES).

Health/Mental Health	
Indicators of Community Needs	Potential Actions to Address Needs
<u>Access issues to health care</u> Limited public transportation Health providers located outside of the community Barriers to obtaining health insurance Increasing language barriers Children not receiving regular dental care Limited incomes	<u>Access issues to health care</u> Widely disseminate Resource Manual (BOS)  Encourage more community outreach through health service providers (BOH)  Hire a part-time social worker to conduct outreach to "at risk" families and seniors (BOS)
<u>Life style considerations</u> Increasing obesity Lack of exercise for both children and adults Parents with little time to be active or fix healthy meals Lack of a supermarket in Avon No gym in town Tobacco use higher than state average Children not engaging in unstructured play Sexually transmitted disease higher than state average Substance abuse higher than state level Budget cuts to health education programs Increasing population of older adults that require support to enable them to stay in their homes	<u>Life style considerations</u> Promote, maintain and expand important community resources such as community events and Town-supported activities, play grounds and athletic fields, BOH clinics, youth and senior activities, church activities and services, ACES, student and senior meal programs, and neighbors looking out for each other (BOS)  Expand efforts to fight hunger such the Food Pantry, establishing some open hours in partnership with the Avon Baptist Church  Make healthier food choices more readily available in schools (APS)  Continue speakers program at the COA (COA)  Provide sex education at lower grade levels (APS)  Enhance health education in schools (APS)  Bring OCES Meals on Wheels Program to Avon (BOS and COA)
<u>Environmental issues</u> Traffic congestion, noise and air and water pollution Lack of sidewalks or sidewalks in poor condition that limit walking Oral health problems and no fluoridation in the water system	<u>Environmental issues</u> Continue to improve sidewalks (BOS)  Explore fluoridation of water system (BOS)
<u>Mental health problems, particularly for adolescents</u> Increase in some chronic illnesses Childhood asthma and other chronic illnesses such as	<u>Mental health problems, particularly for adolescents</u> Encourage more community outreach through health service providers (BOH)



Type II diabetes, tuberculosis, Lyme disease and dementia or Alzheimer's disease in adults Life-threatening allergies in children	Hire a part-time social worker to conduct outreach to "at risk" families and seniors (BOS)
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Education and Training	
Indicators of Community Needs	Potential Actions to Address Needs
The student body of Avon Public Schools is becoming increasingly diverse including students with special needs given language barriers, learning challenges, disabilities and poverty. Such students often require individualized educational, nutritional and transportation services.	Continue special programs and activities that help low-income children and families (APS)
School programs are in place to help serve the needs of lower income children and their families.	Create a special program that links middle and high school students to seniors to help the frail elderly with small chores and errands, including shoveling, and provides a friendly visit for them as well. The students could obtain some useful life experience and receive credit for school or church-required community service. This program could be coordinated by the Avon Public Schools, local churches, or even the Council on Aging or Avon Housing Authority. (APS with other community partners)
The Avon Public Schools has identified students with unmet health-related needs including some mental health and substance abuse problems.	Provide sex and other health-related education at lower grade levels (APS)
	Secure necessary resources to have Fire Dept. provide info on wide range of safety issues (APS)
	Explore links with businesses and non-profit organizations regarding internships (APS)
	Follow-up on ACES action plans (APS)
Given the depressed economy, more households could benefit from counseling on financial matters, budgeting and credit counseling in particular.	Bring in services of an organization for credit counseling workshops such as American Credit Counseling Services (BOS)

Public Safety and Infrastructure	
Indicators of Community Needs	Potential Actions to Address Needs
<u>Police Department</u> Space deficiencies in existing facility	<u>Police and Fire Departments</u> Continue to work with COA and Norfolk County Sheriff's Dept. on special programs (APD)
<u>Fire Department</u> Space deficiencies in existing facility Some equipment has outlived its useful life Receives calls from seniors regarding snow removal	Continue to provide community education (AFD)
	Obtain funding to conduct education in the schools (APS and AFD)

<p><u>Infrastructure</u></p> <p>No sewer services that substantially reduces development including the Industrial Park and Town Center</p> <p>Lack or poor condition of sidewalks</p>	<p>Expand or relocate Police/Fire Station (BOS in tandem with APD and AFD)</p> <p>Need a mechanism to replace outdated equipment (AFD)</p> <p><u>Infrastructure</u></p> <p>Continue to improve and increase sidewalks (BOS)</p> <p>Explore feasibility of providing sewer services in the Industrial Park and perhaps in the Town Center (hook-up to system at Middle-High School) (BOS and APS)</p> <p>Identify areas for walking trails (BOS and APRC)</p>
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Housing, Community, and Economic Development	
Indicators of Community Needs	Potential Actions to Address Needs
<p><u>Older housing stock requires improvements</u></p>	<p><u>Older housing stock requires improvements</u></p> <p>Continue Housing Rehabilitation Program (BOS)</p> <p>Hire a part-time social worker to help families locate appropriate services (BOS)</p> <p>Establish a Handyman Program with support from local churches</p>
<p><u>Increasing fuel costs and other utility bills</u></p>	<p><u>Increasing fuel costs and other utility bills</u></p> <p>Refer residents to available programs that provide financial and technical assistance in paying these bills. (BOH/COA)</p>
<p><u>Limited availability of subsidized housing/ Little diversity in the housing stock</u></p>	<p><u>Limited availability of subsidized housing/ Little diversity in the housing stock</u></p> <p>Explore redevelopment of Crowley School property for affordable housing and select a qualified developer to obtain financing (BOS)</p> <p>Consider acquiring vacant properties to eliminate blight and provide affordable family housing or provide tax and/or zoning incentives for private entities to pursue (BOS)</p> <p>Amend the Zoning Bylaw to promote accessory apartments that are not restricted to occupancy by family members and can provide rental income to the owner (APB)</p>
<p><u>Foreclosure activity</u></p>	<p><u>Foreclosure activity</u></p> <p>Pursue counseling and preventive services through South Shore Housing (BOS)</p>



<u>Revitalize Town Center/be creative about townwide development opportunities</u>	<u>Revitalize Town Center/be creative about townwide development opportunities</u> Update 1964 Master Plan (APB)  Rezone to allow business development of up to 4 stories (APB)  Extend sewer services at Middle-High School to Town Center (BOS)  Provide sewer services in the Avon Industrial Park (BOS)
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Recreation	
Indicators of Community Needs	Potential Actions to Address Needs
<u>Needs of Families and Youth</u> Working families have unmet recreational and nutritional needs as they are challenged to balance jobs and family responsibilities  Children and adults are less active and more overweight  Town recreational facilities are being vandalized   <u>Needs of Seniors</u> Increasing population of older adults suggests an increasing demand for supportive services  Seniors need opportunities to get out in the community and socialize	<u>Needs of Families and Youth</u> Hold exercise classes as fundraisers, not just bake sales (APS)  Continue to pursue partnerships between schools and the YMCA (APS)  Offer additional recreational opportunities for kids during school vacations (APS, APRC)  Reestablish the recreational space in the Civic Center for youth and special activities  <u>Needs of Seniors</u> Expand and promote COA activities, finding new strategies to increase participation (COA)  Link up with other nearby COA on special programs and events (COA)  Start planning programming for younger seniors (COA)

Transportation	
Indicators of Community Needs	Potential Actions to Address Needs
High levels of vehicular traffic that causes congestion as well as pollution  Limited public transportation but past attempts to expand service to alternative routes did not attract sufficient ridership	Continue to apply for resources to improve roads and sidewalks (BOS)  Better marketing and expand COA van service to meet local needs (COA).

<p>More traffic accidents and traffic-related deaths</p> <p>Only a small number of children walk to school</p> <p>Seniors and the disabled need transportation assistance</p> <p>2008 survey results from the Area Agency on Aging suggest that transportation was the number one (1) service need of seniors</p>	<p>Secure replacement for existing COA van (BOS)</p>
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Veterans Services	
Indicators of Community Needs	Potential Actions to Address Needs
<p>There were 552 veterans counted as part of the 2000 census</p> <p>There is an increasing number of more recent veterans who are returning home following service in Iraq and Afghanistan</p>	<p>Explore regional Veteran's Agent with area towns (BOS)</p> <p>Reach out to young veterans and their families (VA)</p> <p>Link with regional and statewide veteran services (VA)</p>

Community Engagement	
Indicators of Community Needs	Potential Actions to Address Needs
<p>The Town and local organizations have found it increasingly challenging to promote resident participation in any number of activities given aging population and new families who have little free time</p> <p>Many seniors are reluctant to ask for help</p> <p>There is an ongoing need to promote greater civic engagement to keep seniors active and preserve Avon's local ethic of volunteerism that bolsters Town government and non-profit organizations</p> <p>Communication regarding community news is challenged by the lack of a local newspaper</p>	<p>Continue to hold popular community events (BOS, APRC, COA)</p> <p>Continue efforts to attract volunteers on Town boards and non-profit organizations (offer childcare, refreshments, special cable programming, etc.) (BOS)</p> <p>Promote greater involvement of area businesses in civic activities (BOS)</p> <p>Employ greater creativity in communications with residents on Town-sponsored activities and services (BOS, APRC, COA)</p> <p>Expand use of an enhanced Town website to promulgate community information (BOS)</p> <p>Prepare a Welcome Handbook for new residents (BOS)</p> <p>Expand special cable access programming (BOS)</p> <p>Provide acknowledgement for those you provide outstanding local service through special annual awards (BOS)</p>



# Town of Avon, Massachusetts

## Community Services Need Study

### I. In Introduction to Avon

During the course of this study, Avon was described in a number of ways including “an old fashioned small town”, “a suburb of Boston”, “a sleepy little bedroom community with too many pizza parlors”, “parochial”, “a small town where everyone looks out for everyone else”, “Hotel California of Massachusetts as families come and never leave”, “a place with great community spirit”, and “a small island squeezed between Brockton and Randolph”. Like other very small communities, residents are attracted to the close connections that develop between each other and the broader community, but more than typically have to go outside of town for many services including health facilities, entertainment, recreation centers, and social service programs in the case of Avon.

#### Sub-communities

Information from this study also indicates that Avon can best be considered a mix of several different communities including the following:

- Long-term residents, many who arrived as far back as Avon’s building boom in the 1950’s and 1960’s when the population more than doubled in size. This group of people purchased homes, raised their families, became engaged in civic life, and created the close, small town quality that has characterized Avon for decades. They are now aging, living on fixed incomes with increased needs for services, and struggling to remain independent in the community. At the same time, this generation is often unwilling to ask for help. The Town has begun to serve these seniors, introducing the first full-time director for the Council of Aging in 2009.

*Those 55 years of age or older were estimated to be 30.8% of the population in 2009, compared to approximately 27% for Norfolk County and 25% for the state. Population projections suggest that this age group could increase to up to 40% by 2020.*

- Younger families have been coming to Avon, purchasing homes sold by longer-term residents that are still affordable relative to other communities in the Boston area. These newcomers, many who are first-time homebuyers, were attracted to the fine reputation of Avon schools and represent increasingly diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

*Avon had more families than both the county and the state, almost 72% in 2009, versus approximately 66% and 64% for the county and state, respectively.*

*In 2000, 6.5% of Avon’s population included minority residents, up considerably from 0.5% or only 24 minority residents in 1980. This population has continued to grow and in 2009 comprised 10.3% of all residents, 6.2% who were Black or African-American.*

- Businesses  
Closely following the residential building boom, the Avon Industrial Park was developed, with the first businesses arriving in the late 1960’s. Many residents and local leaders initially resisted

this new business development, reluctant to see their town's character altered from its suburban, and in some places even rural, residential appeal. The arguments for creating the industrial area were compelling given the economic opportunities for businesses to support a substantial portion of the town's tax base and the area's relative geographic isolation from existing residential neighborhoods. The Town has been pro-business, and recently adopted Chapter 43D of the Massachusetts General Laws to expedite permitting for new businesses.

Avon's commercial park came a bit later, changing from an industrial area to a commercial one beginning in the early 1980's when Jordan's Furniture ventured into the community. Other major commercial enterprises now include Home Depot, BJ's, Cosco, Wal-Mart, and the Christmas Tree Shop.

*There are more people who work in Avon than actually live here as workers outnumber residents 5,077 to 4,234.*

*The combination of workers, shoppers, commuters and residents boosts Avon's population to as much as 18,000 to 20,000 a day according to information from the Old Colony Planning Council, placing enormous burdens on the community's infrastructure, particularly in terms of traffic congestion.*

*Most of Avon's workers commute from other places as only 344 Avon residents in the workforce, 15.6%, worked in the community as opposed to 31.3% in Brockton for example. This relatively low level is surprising given the number of employment opportunities locally, and suggests that local jobs largely do not match the local workforce. In fact, many of the retail jobs do not pay livable wages and a substantial portion of the other jobs requires specialized skills.*

*The industrial and commercial businesses now comprise about two-thirds of Avon's tax base, which is very high in comparison to most communities. For example, only 13% and 18% of Holbrook and Randolph's tax base, respectively, are supported by commercial and industrial uses.*

The social and community development needs of these key segments of the Avon community – long-term residents, young families and local businesses – are explored below based on the major components of the local and regional service network.

## **II. Community Services Need Assessment**

The following analysis comes from a number of sources including:

- Information collected as part of the Community Profile (see Attachment 2)
- Interviews conducted as part of this study
- The Community Survey results as reported in Attachment 3
- A Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by the Southeast Center for Healthy Communities, a program of Health Imperatives based in Brockton, for the Greater Brockton Community Health Network Area (CHNA). The goal of the report was to identify unmet community health needs, vulnerable populations, and gaps in community health services,



broadly identifying community health to include issues such as poverty, housing, community cohesion, neighborhood safety, nutrition, and physical fitness, for example. This report, completed in December 2010, divided its analysis between Brockton and the aggregated findings for the other nine (9) communities (including Avon, Abington, Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, Easton, Holbrook, Stoughton, West Bridgewater and Whitman) in the CHNA in recognition that Brockton's demographics and health outcomes were quite different from those of the other communities. CHNA's were established in 1992 by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to promote local coalitions of public, private and non-profit entities to build healthier communities through community-based prevention planning and health promotion. The Massachusetts Community Health Information Profile (MassCHIP) prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health

- Other data sources as noted.

Community needs are assessed according to a number of major categories of services that include the following:

- Health/Mental Health
- Education and Training
- Public Safety and Infrastructure
- Housing and Community Development
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Veterans Services
- Community Engagement

#### **A. Health/Mental Health**

The health of residents is critical to the vitality of any community, and the Town of Avon is fortunate to have many well-regarded hospitals and agencies in relatively close proximity to provide a wide range of health and mental health services. Nevertheless, challenges remain in regard to access to care, life style decisions, environmental issues, economic problems and increases in chronic illnesses that are discussed below.

##### ***Factors affecting access to health care***

- *Availability of health care providers*

With few exceptions, residents of Avon must go to Brockton or other communities to access health care

Lack of mental health providers overall but particularly lacking in response to the needs of adolescents

- *Language spoken*

5.3% of Avon residents spoke a language other than English, and 1.9% of residents (80 residents) stated that they spoke English less than "very well".

In 2007, Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center had the eighth highest number of interpreted medical appointments conducted in the state. Avon's increasing diversity, including those who speak another language than English as their first language, will increasingly challenge access to health care. The top

three (3) languages for which interpretative services were required through Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital include Cape Verdean, Portuguese, and Spanish.

- *Access to transportation, particularly for the disabled*

A total of 732 residents or 16.5% of the population claimed a disability in 2000, which includes any kind of disability. Of the 2000 population age 5 to 20 years old, 100 or 10.9% were disabled versus 8.6% statewide. Moreover, of the population age 21 to 64, 350 or 14.1% claimed a disability, but 65.1% of this group were employed leaving almost 35% who were unemployed, likely due to disability. In regard to the population 65 years of age or older, 282 or 36% claimed some type of disability, more than one-third of all seniors. This is about the same level as the state as a whole.

Public transportation is now limited to bus service, although the commuter rail station in Holbrook is relatively close. The Council on Aging has a van shuttle service, which provides important access to appointments and community activities for seniors who no longer drive.

- *Access to health insurance*

Some residents lack access to health care due to issues such as high co-payments, they need services that Medicare and Medicaid will not cover, or did not obtain insurance through MassHealth because the tax penalty was less expensive, or had difficulty navigating the health care system

Lack of dental insurance or dentists who accept MassHealth

Lack of community-based, well-care clinics

From 2007 to 2009, approximately 2% of those residing in the 10 CHNA communities did not have access to health care. One expects that health care reform under MassHealth is bringing this number of uninsured individuals down considerably.

- *Economic situation*

Some households have difficulty affording prescriptions and medical care

Incomes "falling between the cracks" in regard to eligibility for certain assistance programs

Households where incomes are stretched to such an extent as to jeopardize their purchase of healthy food or medications

***Lifestyle decisions and risky behaviors cause community health problems***

- The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) conducted a telephone survey concerning risky behaviors comparing the CHNA to that of the state. In regard to risky behaviors that can cause chronic illness, the survey found fairly comparable levels of such behaviors but still evidence of problems.

- *Budget cuts to health education and other preventive programs reduce a community's ability to promote good health.*

For example, the adequacy of prenatal care is a concern for the 15 to 19-age range of adolescents.



A significantly lower percentage (67%) of young women age 15 to 19 received prenatal care in the other CHNA<sup>1</sup> towns (not including Brockton) compared to women of all ages (87%).

- *Substance abuse is an increasing problem*

For young adults age 20 to 24, Avon had a higher rate of admissions for all substances, higher than that of the same age group in the state overall.

There were 68 admissions to state Department of Public Health funded substance abuse treatment programs in 2007 from Avon. These admissions translate into a “crude rate,” calculated per population of 100,000, of 1,564.9, which is only a bit lower than the statewide rate of 1,636.5.

There were 18 hospital discharges of Avon residents from alcohol and other drug related problems in 2007. These discharges reflect a “crude rate”, calculated per population of 100,000, of 414.3, which is higher than the statewide rate of 362.0.

- *Higher incidence of sexually transmitted diseases in the CHNA communities than the state overall.*

The incidence of Chlamydia was 352.7 new cases per 100,000 in the CHNA communities outside of Brockton compared to 268.3 for the state in 2008.

There were 45 new cases per 100,000 of sexually transmitted diseases in the CHNA communities outside of Brockton, higher than the state incidence rate of 31.9.

- *More smokers in Avon*

Data from the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program for 2008 indicates that 17.6% of Avon residents 18 years or older were smokers, compared to 16.1% for the state.

The percentage of mothers who reported smoking during pregnancy was 6.7% in the CHNA towns outside of Brockton, about the same as the state’s level.

- *Increasing obesity*

Meetings with key informants from communities outside of Brockton participating in the CHNA Community Health Needs Assessment identified increasing obesity in both adults and children to be a major problem contributed by a number of factors including the limited amount of unstructured play for children, no supermarket or gym located in Avon, parents with little time to be active or fix healthy meals, and lack of sidewalks or sidewalks in poor condition that limit walking.

The CHNA has approximately the same percentage of residents who reported being overweight (57.2% versus 58.2% for the state) and who reported engaging in any physical activity in the last month (75.8% versus 78.7% for the state).

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<sup>1</sup> Greater Brockton Community Health Network Area (CHNA) that includes Brockton and nine (9) other communities including Avon, Abington, Bridgewater, East Bridgewater, Easton, Holbrook, Stoughton, West Bridgewater and Whitman. CHNA’s were established in 1992 by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to promote local coalitions of public, private and non-profit entities to build healthier communities through community-based prevention planning and health promotion.

The CHNA area had a considerably lower percentage of those who reported that they ate at least five servings of fruits or vegetables per day in comparison to statewide figures (20.9% versus 26.9% for the state).

- *Problems associated in obtaining preventive care*

Approximately the same percentage of those 65 years of age or older reported that they obtained the flu vaccination in the CHNA as the state (70% for the CHNA and 75% for the state).

About the same percentage of CHNA residents who were 50 years or older reported that they had received a colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy in the past five years (61% for the CHNA versus 64% for the state).

Approximately the same percentage of women age 40 years or older reported receiving a mammogram during the past two years in the CHNA (83%) as the state (85%).

Approximately the same percentage of those ages 18 to 64 reported receiving HIV testing at some point in the past (47% for the CHNA versus 43% statewide).

About the same percentage of CHNA residents (88%) and state residents (84%) reported having their cholesterol checked during the past five years.

The infant mortality rate for the other CHNA towns was about the same as that for the state, 3.2 per 1,000.

- *Incidence of increases in some chronic illnesses*

The incidence of hospital discharges for asthma was higher than the statewide rate, with 18 discharges that translate into a rate of 368.8 for Avon versus 146.9 for the state. This translates into a rate for Avon that is 2.5 times that of the state's.

The prevalence of lifetime asthma among children in kindergarten through eight grade was somewhat less than the state level for Avon, 9.4% versus 10.8%, but still high (data for 2006-2007 through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Bureau of Environmental Health).

In addition to asthma, Type II diabetes in adults, life threatening allergies in children, tuberculosis, and dementia or Alzheimer's disease in older adults are major problems in Avon. (According to meetings with key informants from communities outside of Brockton participating in the CHNA Community Health Needs Assessment.)

### ***Environmental issues impact community health***

Over the past several decades, environmental issues have arisen with respect to traffic, noise, air and water pollution that have been caused by Avon's location along major highways, large number of vehicles coming in and out of town for work and shopping, and industrialization.

The rate of lead poisoning in CHNA towns other than Brockton is about the same as the state's, 0.4% of all children screened for 2006 to 2008.

None of the communities in the CHNA have water fluoridation, which has implications on dental health.



### ***Special health/mental needs of children***

Representatives from the Avon Public Schools cited the following health-related needs as having a major impact on their students:

- *Major mental health issues with some students*

Schools work closely with a number of agencies including Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc. (BAMSI) and South Bay Mental Health Center, particularly in regard to early intervention services. Agencies do not have enough caseworkers and there is considerable staff turnover, which lead to waits for services and disruptive services at times.

The schools are also seeing more cases of autism and anxiety in the student body, requiring specialized support, however rates remain lower than state averages.

- *Dental care* also represents a pressing health need as most dentists will not accept MassHealth and children are not receiving regular dental care.
- *An increase in chronic illnesses*, asthma in particular.
- *More sick children are being sent to school* as parents cannot afford staying home with their sick children and are sending them to school with the obvious results of spreading illnesses.
- *Some chronic school offenses*, particularly in regard to attendance or an unwillingness to follow rules, that result in court intervention from time to time.
- *Nutrition is an issue* and school staff acknowledge that for some children the lunch they receive at school may be the best meal they receive all day.
- Some families with limited income lack the money necessary to fill important *prescriptions*.
- In regard to *substance abuse problems*, which the CHNA documents as being a problem in Avon, Avon Public Schools received a federal three-year Drug Free Communities grant of \$625,000 to support a town-wide coalition (schools, parents, Fire Department, Police Department, clergy, health providers, business owners, students, etc.), the Avon Coalition for Every Student (ACES), to positively impact risk behaviors of students. Through a variety of approaches (surveys, public meetings, parent nights, monthly coalition meetings, information from students, etc.) ACES has conducted a sophisticated analysis of the social norms, community beliefs and risk factors involved in substance abuse in an effort to ultimately prevent such behavior. The grant enables Avon Public Schools, the grant's fiscal agent, to hire a program coordinator, and the Southeast Center for Healthy Communities (SCHC), the regional prevention center, has provided technical assistance.

The ACES survey data of students in 2009 indicated that alcohol, marijuana and cigarettes were the three most commonly used drugs. There was less alcohol use reported than state and national levels, but more use of marijuana as students perceived a higher risk of using alcohol or cigarettes than marijuana. Those who perceived a risk or harm and parental disapproval of substances were less likely to use them. In fact survey results suggest that students have easy access to alcohol and marijuana and Avon's community and parent norms favor such use.



- The ACES student survey data provided information on a number of *other risky behaviors*. Avon High School students' depression and suicide rates were lower than that of the state. Seven (7) students reported they had carried a gun in the past month and 24 had carried a gun, knife or club during the month. Most students reporting carrying a gun also stated that they used cigarettes or marijuana in the past 30 days. Nine (9) students reported being part of a gang in the past 12 months. Most high school students stated they had sexual intercourse and most used condoms.

### ***Special health/mental needs of seniors***

- *Increasing need for supportive services*  
As the Avon population is aging, there is also an increasing need for supportive services. For example, vital care is provided by Brockton Visiting Nurses Association and Old Colony Elder Services (Old Colony Elder Services is currently providing services directly to 58 seniors in Avon), to enable residents, particularly the elderly, to remain independent in their homes for as long as possible. The Old Colony Hospice also provides important support to those facing terminal illness and their families/loved ones.

It should also be noted that the Area Agency on Aging, which is under the purview of Old Colony Planning Council, conducted a survey of elder service providers and individuals in the 23 communities of their service area, which includes Avon.<sup>2</sup> Survey results suggest that health-related services ranked high among the service needs of seniors with the following top ten ranking:

<b>Table 1: Old Colony Planning Council Area Agency on Aging Elder Needs Assessment Survey Results, 2008</b>		
<b>Service Category</b>	<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Score<sup>3</sup></b>
Transportation	1	723
Affordable housing	2	560
Financial assistance	3	500
In-home personal care	4	351
Medication management	5	341
Mental health care	6	315
Homemaker services	7	295
Home repairs	8	291
Information and assistance	9	258
Adult day programs	10	229

- *Nutritional and recreational programs are important*  
Nutritional and recreational programs provided by the Avon Council on Aging, Avon Baptist Church, St. Michael's Parish, and Catholic Charities South, for example, help meet the needs of an increasingly aging population who require more supportive services to remain healthy, active and independent as well as lower income families. The Community Survey Results also confirmed a need for more recreational opportunities. The survey also indicated that food

<sup>2</sup> The survey, conducted in 2008, was mailed to 63 agencies and had a return rate of 59% (121 individuals from 37 agencies responded).

<sup>3</sup> The highest possible score that any service category could receive is 1,100 if every respondent (N=110) ranked the same service category as 1, this would equal 10 points for that service (110 x 10 = 1,100).

assistance from local food pantries and special programs, such as SNAP and WIC, are still very much needed in town. For example, information from Catholic Charities South indicated that 42 Avon households used its Food Pantry, yet only three (3) households participated in their Thanksgiving turkey distribution.

## **B. Education and Training**

### ***Avon Public Schools***

School enrollment has been fluctuating somewhat over the last decade but is up 6% in 2010 since 2002, from 730 students to 774.<sup>4</sup> Of the 2010 enrollment, 187 or almost one-quarter are Choice students, coming from outside of the community (most are from Brockton and Randolph), who pay to attend Avon schools, contributing approximately \$1 million per year in revenues to the school system. There is a large wait list for those interested in participating in the program and attending Avon schools.

Most of the Choice students come into the school system between the seventh and ninth grades. The Choice students bring some diversity to the student body, however, the racial and ethnic composition of town residents is also becoming more diverse with minorities increasing from about 6% to 10% of all residents during the last decade. Nevertheless, the 37% minority level in the school system suggests a fairly dramatic shift in demographics of the student body. School representatives have not noticed any significant problems arising in relationship to the assimilation of Choice students, however Avon resident students have easier access to each other for activities outside of school. The racial composition of the student body is as follows:

- 182 or 23.6% African-American
- 32 or 4.1% Asian
- 47 or 6.1% Hispanic
- 487 or 63.1% White
- 5 or 0.7% Native American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 18 or 2.3% of multiple races but not Hispanic

In regard to current enrollment, there are 62 students in preschool or kindergarten, another 355 in first through sixth grade, and 355 in seventh through twelfth grade. Additional information regarding the study body indicates some special needs given language barriers, learning challenges, disabilities, or economic situation as demonstrated below:

- 32 students' (4.1%) first language was not English (main languages are French, Haitian Creole and Portuguese). The school nurses noted that while children tend to pick-up languages relatively quickly through English immersion, specialized teacher training, new software, and cross-age tutoring; there were sometimes considerable problems communicating with parents and often the children in the family had to translate information. School representatives indicated that the system was picking up a few more non-English speaking students per year that is reflective of some changing demographics in the community as new residents tend to be more racially and ethnically diverse.
- 137 or 17.6% were enrolled in Special Education classes, about the same as the statewide percentage.

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<sup>4</sup> There is some disparity in total enrollment figures given the month of the year with 774 students in October and 772 or 777 students used in the calculation of various pieces of information.



- 227 or almost 30% were considered low income as they qualified for free or reduced cost lunches, received Transitional Aid to Families, or received food stamps
- 158 or 20.5% qualified for free lunches or breakfasts and 69 or 8.9% qualified for a reduced cost lunch

Other student body information suggests that most students are doing well in school, regularly attending school, encountering relatively few disciplinary problems, graduating, and attending college as indicated below.

- 8.8% of the student body transferred in or out of the school system last year
- 91.1% of the 56 high school graduates last year went on to post-secondary education – 53.7% matriculated to a four-year college, 28.5% to a two-year college, and 8.9% to a hospital, nursing program, or other special training program
- 7.1% of students dropped-out of school with another 3.6% of seniors who needed to spend extra time in school to graduate
- There were no cases of truancy for nine (9) days or more
- The daily attendance rate averaged 95.5%
- Suspension levels were relatively low with 38 total school suspensions and 67 total out of school suspensions last year

Representatives of the school system noted that there tends to be less than a handful of students who are homeless, however, sometimes the school system is unaware that a student is homeless if they are living with others. The costs associated with homelessness are not only high for the student given the disruption and stressful uncertainty in their lives, but also high for the School Department which must support the costs of transporting students to and from a homeless shelter (typically in Waltham, Brockton or Attleboro),<sup>5</sup> some requiring specialized vehicles given disabilities. These individualized services can cost as much as \$200 per day without a known ending and as a result are difficult to predict and budget from year to year. The costs are typically shared by the community that is temporarily housing the student.

The School Department must also arrange and pay for individualized services for its special education students, typically in partnership with another entity such as the North River Collaborative or Framingham School for the Deaf.

MCAS scores for 10<sup>th</sup> graders were also fairly comparable to statewide results for Math and English but lower on the Science section of the test as noted in Table 2.

<b>Table 2: 2010 MCAS Results for Avon and State</b>					
<b>Subject</b>	<b>% Advanced or Proficient Avon/State</b>	<b>% Proficient Avon/State</b>	<b>% Needs Improvement Avon/State</b>	<b>% Warning or Failing Avon/State</b>	<b>Composite Performance Index</b>
English	18/26	53/52	20/18	10/4	91.7/91.9
Math	36/50	30/25	18/17	16/7	88.0/88.8
Science	9/18	35/47	42/28	15/8	80.5/84.6
Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary School Education, 2010					

<sup>5</sup> Students can attend the last school where they were housed.



The School Department recognizes the importance of recreational activities and, in addition to school sports offerings, works with the Easton Branch of the Old Colony YMCA on Before and After School programs. Avon Public Schools will be introducing a special After School program for seventh graders four times per week as well as a summer camp.

The School Department has encountered a number of health problems that have resulted from unmet health-related needs that are summarized in Section II.A. Students with mental health problems, as well as any disability including substance abuse, are required to have free and appropriate education that typically includes individualized services that must be provided by the Avon Public Schools. Such cases are difficult to predict and cause significant challenges in departmental budgeting. Despite decreasing state and federal funding, the Avon Schools, with generous support from the Town, has been able to maintain its full range of programs.

The Avon Public Schools has also established a number of programs to help serve the needs of lower income families. For example, the Avon Community Christmas Program raises donations for low-income children. There are also special food drives for the Food Pantry located at the Avon Baptist Church, winter coat donations, and donated glasses for a special drive sponsored by the Lion's Club of Stoughton.

#### ***Financial Counseling***

American Credit Counseling Services (ACCS) is a 501(c)(3) organization that provides workshops and individual counseling on financial matters, budgeting and credit counseling in particular. Funded largely by the United Way of Greater Attleboro and Taunton, most of their work does not extend further north than Taunton, although they have done work in Brockton and advertise in the Brockton *Enterprise*. Research prepared for the United Way of Greater Attleboro and Taunton indicated that the number one area of need was for financial counseling. During the last year ACCS has experienced a substantial increase in those requesting service, including significant increases in the participation levels of their workshops. The organization is scheduled to start some programming on Avon's Community Access Channel.

### **C. Public Safety and Infrastructure**

#### ***Police Department***

The Avon Police Department has 15 officers, including the Police Chief. The current Police Station, which it shares with the Fire Department, lacks sufficient space for both departments. Plans were prepared a few years ago, but approximately \$1 million more is needed to fund final design, planning and project management.

As summarized in Table 3, Avon is a relatively safe community where both violent crimes and property-related crimes are well below state and national averages. According to the Police Department, a great deal of the crime activity has involved shoplifting or bad checks at area stores, particularly the larger stores like Wal-Mart and Home Depot.

**Table 3: Avon Crime Statistics, 2009**

Type of Crime	Avon Average	Massachusetts Average	National Average
Personal Crime Risk	14	100	100
Murder Risk	12	47	100
Rape Risk	22	89	100
Robbery Risk	6	91	100
Assault Risk	10	105	100
Property Crime Risk	7	73	100
Burglary Risk	7	74	100
Larceny Risk	6	70	100
Motor Vehicle Theft Risk	6	83	100
Total Crime Risk	9	76	100

Source: Onboard Informatics, 2010; Scores are compared to a national average of 100 such that a score of 50 would be half of the national average while a score of 200 would be twice the national average.  
 Personal Crime Risk: Index score that represents the combined risk of rape, murder, assault and robbery.  
 Property Crime Risk: Represents the combined risks of burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft.  
 Total Crime Risk: The different types of crimes are given equal weight in calculating this score.

The Police Department has been working in partnership with the Fire Department, Avon Council on Aging and Norfolk County Sheriff's Department to promote community safety through a number of special programs including:

- The "Are You OK" Program provides safety and security for those seniors who are living alone by placing a call to them each morning to check on their well-being. If they fail to answer, the officer immediately summons help.
- Project Lifesaver that in collaboration with LoJack Safety Net protects people with Alzheimer's disease, autism or other afflictions that may cause a person to wander and become lost. The program uses electronic bracelets that can be tracked with LoJack equipment. The key to the program's success is the quick response and "find time".
- The Triad Program puts seniors in touch with all pertinent public safety and social service organizations through regular meetings.
- The Files of Life Program involves the distribution of free kits that consist of a list of medications a person uses and associated special health conditions. This card can be posted in a visible place, such as on a refrigerator, and accessed in the event of an emergency for reference by paramedics and EMTs.

### ***Fire Department***

The Fire Department has eight (8) fulltime fire fighters and 14 on-call fire fighters who respond when needed. As the incidence of fires has decreased over time, the Department is becoming more of an ambulance service that also includes a fire service. There are typically about 60 to 70 fire-related calls per year, but most of all calls are related to medical not fire problems.<sup>6</sup> The Department has also done some community education including presentations to the Council on Aging on safety measures related to home oxygen use and cooking.

<sup>6</sup> There were 906 medical emergencies in 2010, with only 51 occurring on Route 24 in 2010.



While the Fire Department has its own staff, station and chief, effectively fire services are regionalized. Reciprocity (mutual aid) exists between Stoughton, Holbrook, Randolph and Avon in the case of almost all fire calls, each responding to each other's calls.

The Fire Department has the basic complement of equipment but needs a mechanism to replace equipment after it has passed its useful life. It currently has two engines that are due for replacement. For example, the reserve engine is 30 years old and another active engine is 23 years old. According to the Fire Department, engines that are used in front-line service should not be more than 15 years old, 20 years old in the case of reserve engines.

The Fire Department, like the Police Department, also needs more space. It not only has insufficient space to store all of its equipment, but also does not have adequate office and storage space.

The Fire Department receives numerous calls from older residents who need help with snow removal, but does not have the capacity to help everyone.

### ***Infrastructure***

As discussed below in Section II.D, the Town of Avon lacks sewer services. Years ago as the Oak Street area in Brockton was being developed and Brockton decided to add sewer services, Avon Town leaders rejected the notion of adding a sewer system, largely hoping to limit development. Over the next couple of decades, Avon made few investments in its infrastructure and is now attempting to refocus on these deferred needs. For example, there is some discussion regarding prospects for offering sewer service in the Avon Industrial Park that will allow existing businesses to expand and thus the Town's tax base.

The Town should also explore the possibility of extending sewer services in the Town Center from the current treatment facility at the Middle-High School.

The Community Health Needs Assessment for the Greater Brockton CHNA also identified that the lack or condition of sidewalks in Avon presents problems for residents who prefer to walk instead of use their cars or public transportation. This is a particular problem for children who walk to school.

Explore the feasibility of providing some walking trails.

### **D. Housing and Community Development**

There are a number of challenges that impact the viability of the housing stock and opportunities for new development that result in unmet community needs, which are summarized below.

#### ***Few remaining development opportunities***

Development in Avon has been constrained by a number of factors:

- Lack of sewer services except for Wal-Mart's private line involving an extension of Brockton's system and another system at the Avon Middle School/High School.
- The limited supply of water also constrained development, which was relieved somewhat with the building of another well and pumping station on Memorial Drive.
- Zoning changes in 1955 increased minimum lots sizes from 7,500 square feet to 15,000 square feet, increasing the required frontage as well from 75 feet to 120 feet.
- Lack of available land for development as a substantial amount of Avon's still undeveloped land, particularly east of Page Street, is within the flood plain and classified as wetlands.



- Prevalence of ledge that makes development more difficult and costly.

Avon is now predominantly built-out with about 50 house lots that might be available for development. The Route 28 corridor is about the only place available for growth, and is zoned solely for commercial development with restrictions of only 100-foot lot depths. Recent rezoning has allowed lot depths of 300 feet and mixed commercial and residential “above the shop” development along about one-third of the route, with about another third zoned for either single-family homes or businesses, and another third strictly for business development. Small lot sizes, particularly in the middle of town, have left little or no available land to support septic systems. These problems are exacerbated by a high water table in the center of town and wetlands and ledge only a few feet below the surface scattered in various locations throughout the community.

The Avon Industrial Park is also built-out based primarily on space needs for septic systems, but discussions are commencing about the prospects of adding sewer services to this area that would allow business expansion.

#### ***Older housing stock requires improvements***

Nearly one-third of the town’s rental housing, or 116 rental units, was built prior to 1940. As a result, much of the town’s housing stock is aging and requires updated systems and structural repairs. It is likely that there is also a need for lead-based paint remediation to make units safe for children. Because there is a reliance on septic systems, it is also likely that there are septic failures and systems that require repair or replacement. Although deteriorated properties are found at a higher incidence in older structures and in and around the town center, they are also dispersed throughout the community. Properties that have not been properly maintained, particularly those that require exterior paint, are eyesores that impact the local housing market.

The CHNA Needs Assessment found that whether residents owned a home or rented, many feel the impact of the recent financial crisis. Some have faced foreclosure and others have fewer resources to properly maintain their properties. Additionally, while larger rental units in the private housing market tend to be relatively inexpensive, they are also typically old and deteriorated.

The Town undertook windshield surveys as well as sample property inspections in late 2008 and early 2009 that included “drive-by reconnaissance” surveys of 279 buildings on fourteen (14) streets, finding that overall 34% of the buildings were substandard. A survey of another 102 buildings on seven (7) additional streets found that about half of the buildings were substandard or seriously substandard. Surveys of small multi-family structures found an even higher prevalence of substandard conditions. The most common problems were the deterioration or failure of entry stairs and porches, chimneys and soffits/fascia. A large majority of structures were wrapped with vinyl or aluminum, very likely hiding other rehabilitation needs. These surveys only identified exterior problems but such conditions are typically indicative of worse ones inside.

To determine the level of need, interest and support for a possible housing rehabilitation program, the Town also initiated a resident interest survey in January 2009. Of the responses received, nearly 70% reported an income within 80% of area median income and most of these expressed a definite or possible interest in participating in such a program. As expected, most respondents indicated their homes were built in the 1950’s or prior to 1930 and more than one-quarter reported that they needed septic system repairs.

At least two to three times per month the Avon Board of Health agent has to respond to cases involving housing code violations, typically referred by the Police or Fire Department. Some of the occupants of these houses are confronting multiple social and economic problems, and the agent refers them to available assistance to the greatest extent possible. Some properties have been vacant and are occupied by squatters, who are difficult to remove and have few other living options available. In some cases it has been difficult if not impossible to locate the owners of vacant and abandoned structures. Now and then properties have to be ultimately condemned as they are no longer habitable.

In response to this aging housing stock, problem properties, and the limited ability of many lower-income Avon residents to make needed repairs, the Town of Avon applied for and received FY2009 Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to implement a Housing Rehabilitation Program (HRP). As of December 31, 2010, ten HRP projects were completed, six of which addressed emergency roof or furnace conditions and one project addressed health code violations, thereby preventing condemnation of a single-family home. The HRP will assist qualified applicants throughout 2011 until all of the CDBG funding is committed.

Results from the Survey on Community Needs (see Attachment 3) point to several areas of need including *handyman services for small home repairs*. This again is likely correlated with the relatively high number of older respondents as well as the prevalence of older, aging units. Nevertheless, most people who are not handy themselves are at a loss as to where to find help for small but necessary home repairs, and the costs of plumbers, electricians, and carpenters are outside of many Avon household budgets. The Area Agency on Aging's survey on elder service needs also identified home repairs as a high-ranking need of seniors (see Table 1).

A Community Needs Assessment conducted by Self Help, Inc. in 2008 confirmed the need for housing rehab, handyman services and support for other housing-related expenses, as shown in Table 4.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Problem Area</b>
1	50%	Home insulation and weatherproofing
2	49%	Help with gas and electric bills
3	49%	Help with rent
4	44%	Provide access to computer training
5	44%	Help with other home repairs
6	43%	Help with water bills
7	41%	Free income tax preparation
Source: 2008 Community Needs Assessment for the Town of Avon by Self Help, Inc.		

While Self Help operates a number of housing-related programs, such as the Healthy Homes Program that address the multiple safety and health hazards that are found in the home environment, there has been little participation of Avon residents to date.

#### ***Increasing fuel costs and other utility bills***

Fuel costs continue to increase, placing greater financial burdens on all households, but particularly those with limited financial means, including seniors on fixed incomes.



Information from Self Help, Inc., the area's community action agency, indicated a significant need for fuel assistance. From 2009 through April 2010, \$127,260 was spent through the agency's Fuel Assistance Program, serving one hundred and fifty (150) households in Avon. This level of participation in the program does not meet all of the need for discounted home heating fuel however. For example, of the eight (8) towns in closest proximity, Avon had the highest percentage of households (30.9%) paying too much of their income on housing expenses.

### ***Limited availability of subsidized housing***

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development's most recent data on the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) states that Avon had 1,737 year-round housing units<sup>7</sup>, of which seventy-four (74) units were counted as affordable (70 senior rental units at Fellowship Circle for low-income seniors 60 years or older and younger disabled individuals under age 60, managed by the Avon Housing Authority and four units in a group home), representing 4.26% of the year-round housing stock.

All of the Fellowship Circle units are one-bedroom apartments, six (6) with handicapped accessibility that have a very low turnover rate. Of the units that are not handicapped accessible, thirty-two (32) are on the first-floor, which is much preferred by residents and applicants, and another 32 on the second floor. Even these first-floor units have steps leading to them, which make them difficult to access for those who are frail or have disabilities. Nevertheless, there are a considerable number of requested transfers from second floor to first floor units as the second floor apartments involve as many as seventeen steps to access.

There were a substantial number of applicants on the Avon Housing Authority's wait list in February 2011 for the subsidized rental units at Fellowship Circle, under the following categories:<sup>8</sup>

- 43 elderly applicants
  - 5 local veterans (1 is an existing resident applying for a transfer to a first-floor unit)
  - 3 other local applicants (2 are existing residents applying for transfer to first-floor units)
  - 6 affirmative action applicants
  - 9 requesting handicapped accessible (wheelchair accessible) units
  - 17 requiring first-floor units
  - 17 with no special needs
- 39 non-elderly applicants (disabled individuals 60 years of age or under)
  - 1 local veteran
  - 4 local applicants
  - 6 affirmative action applicants
  - 4 requiring handicapped accessible (wheelchair accessible) units
  - 7 requiring first-floor units
  - 28 with no special needs

Avon residents over the age of 60 who apply for units at Fellowship Circle can expect a wait of a half-year to a year on average before a unit becomes available. Non-local applicants typically wait at least

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<sup>7</sup> The census calculates year-round units by subtracting seasonal units or second home as well as vacant units from the total unit count.

<sup>8</sup> Some applicants fit into more than one category within the elderly and non-elderly breakdown.

one year and up to two (2) years for a unit. Those who apply for the units directed to young (under 60 years), disabled occupants wait three (3) to five (5) years. Up to 13.5% of the units are targeted to this younger, disabled population but when this quota is filled, seniors receive priority for additional units that become available. The handicapped accessible (wheelchair accessible) units rarely become available and, more than typically, existing tenants maneuver for transfers to these units when they turnover.

In regard to Fellowship Circle residents, about 60% are female and an increasing number are minorities, particularly African-Americans and Haitians. Most of the tenants come from Brockton or Boston, and there are few Avon residents on the waitlist. Some of those on the waitlist have turned down units when offered as the units are so small and have little available storage.

Those who require substantial supportive services typically go to nursing homes in Brockton or Life Care in West Bridgewater as there are no nursing homes or assisted living options in Avon. Some residents rely on outside services from the Council on Aging's lunch program (twice per week), Brockton Visiting Nurses Association (temporary assistance mostly for those who have been discharged from the hospital), Old Colony Elder Services (home health, laundry and cleaning services, food shopping), Old Colony Hospice (serving one individual at present), etc. (see Resource Manual for more information on available services.)

While Fellowship Circle residents are encouraged to participate in special AHA activities and other special programs and services for their good health and well-being, few regularly participate. For example, relatively few residents access Council on Aging programs. Some use the Food Pantry at the Avon Baptist Church and attend monthly church luncheons and suppers. When the Housing Authority holds meetings or special events, it can count on the participation of about twenty to thirty residents. To encourage greater participation, the Housing Authority has held raffles or offered gift cards. Special events have included Holiday parties, weekly coffee hours, and visits from the Butler Elementary School students, Craft Fairs, cook-outs, Super Bowl parties, crafts activities, and Bingo. The AHA also sponsors a regular Fellowship Club that enables residents to plan and get together for various activities. Participation involves the usual 20 to 30 residents who are interested in social interaction.

There is not enough parking for all residents, but only about half own a car. Some additional parking was just recently added. Residents are responsible for their own vehicle. While the AHA maintenance staff does some plowing, school children have volunteered to help residents with shoveling their cars out of their parking spaces.

The AHA receives a substantial number of inquiries regarding the availability of subsidized housing for families in Avon, and receives at least five to ten (10) applications for such housing per week even though they do not have such units.

In regard to rental subsidies, AHA managed approximately 100 Section 8 vouchers in the past, but this responsibility was passed on to the Brockton Housing Authority a number of years ago.

The AHA does not receive operating funds from the state, but has been able to rely on its own rent revenue. The Housing Authority does need some funding to undertake some needed improvements to their buildings however.



### ***Need for affordable housing***

While an MIT Study identified Avon as among the most affordable places to live in the Boston region, the town is still experiencing housing affordability problems.<sup>9</sup> Of the eight (8) towns in closest proximity, Avon had the highest percentage of households (30.9%) paying 30% or more of their income on housing and, according to HUD,<sup>10</sup> are therefore living in housing that is unaffordable. In comparison, only 23.6% of all households were paying more than 30% of their income for housing in Holbrook, 27.5% in Randolph, and 30.8% in Brockton. The HUD CHAS report, based on the 2000 census, indicated that more than 85% of Avon's elderly owners paid too much for housing with nearly 28% of these households paying more than half their income on housing costs.

There are more than 500 households living on very low incomes. Moreover, nearly 40% of the town's population is lower income, earning at or below 80% of area median income, which is the highest percentage of the eight (8) towns surrounding Avon.<sup>11</sup> The Massachusetts Department of Public Health data further documents that there were 124 AFDC Medicaid recipients in Avon,<sup>12</sup> with 200 residents living below the poverty level and 901 living below 200% of the poverty level, based on 2000 census data.<sup>13</sup>

As of August 2010, Avon had a median single-family sales price of \$262,500 compared to \$382,000 for Norfolk County and \$300,000 for the state based on data from The Warren Group. Avon's median single-family home is down from a high of \$320,000 in 2005 but up a bit from 2009 when the median was \$236,000. To afford the \$262,500 median price, a household would have to earn approximately \$58,574<sup>14</sup> (\$70,100 with 95% financing), on par with the estimated 2009 median income of \$58,934<sup>15</sup> but assuming the purchaser could come up with the \$52,500 down payment and closing costs of about another \$4,000. Escalating housing costs are also reflected in property taxes, energy bills and insurance costs, which in combination with more stringent lending requirements (including down payments of 20% of the purchase price and closing costs that have doubled during the past year), have placed serious financial strains on long-term residents, particularly those with fixed incomes, and have posed additional challenges for first-time homebuyers. Moreover, the Town has an almost zero vacancy rate, demonstrating extremely tight market conditions.

The School Department reports that some students are bused from homeless shelters in other communities to Avon schools.

While some applicants for the one-bedroom units at Avon Housing Authority's Fellowship Circle development have ended up turning them down due to the very small size of the units and such limited storage, there still remains a high demand for the more accessible first-floor units as well as the wheelchair accessible units. More reasonably sized subsidized rental units for the elderly that are also accessible to those with disabilities are clearly needed in the community.

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<sup>9</sup> Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Real Estate, Housing Affordability Initiative, May 2006.

<sup>10</sup> State of the Cities Data Systems, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> DHCD's Community Wide Needs Indicators.

<sup>12</sup> The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program, otherwise referred to as the Welfare Program, has been replaced with the more restrictive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF).

<sup>13</sup> Poverty levels in 2009 were \$10,830 for a single individual and \$18,310 for a family of three (3).

<sup>14</sup> Figures based on 80% financing, interest of 5.5%, 30-year term, annual property tax rate of \$10.88 per thousand, insurance costs of \$1.25 per \$1,000 of combined valuation of dwelling value (value x 0.5), personal property (\$100,000 fixed), and personal liability (\$100,000 fixed), and private mortgage insurance estimated at 0.3125 of loan amount (only for 95% financing).

<sup>15</sup> Based on the Nielsen Claritas, Inc. 2009 estimate of median income for Avon.

Information from Catholic Charities South indicated that \$2,300 was allocated to Avon residents in the past year for emergency rental assistance.

It should be noted that the Area Agency on Aging, which is under the purview of Old Colony Planning Council, conducted a survey of elder service providers and individuals in the 23 communities of their service area, which includes Avon.<sup>16</sup> Survey results suggest that affordable housing was the number two (2) service need following transportation, and home repair was ranked as the eighth highest need of seniors (see Table 1). In fact, 76 out of the 110 respondents reported that this is one of the ten greatest unmet needs of seniors. Of these 76 respondents, 22 ranked this category as the number one unmet need and 44 ranked this category as one of the top three unmet needs.

#### ***Little diversification of the housing stock***

The 2000 census indicated that 73.8% of all units were single-family detached homes, much higher than the 59.4% level for the county and the 52.4% level for the state. Town Assessor data indicates that there were one hundred and thirty-eight (138) multi-unit properties that represented about 10% of all properties in Avon. Three-quarters of these properties were two-family homes or duplexes.

The Town promotes “temporary additional living quarters” in its Zoning Bylaw, and now has a total of twenty-seven (27) permitted units although it is likely that there are many more units in the community that have not secured permits. Such units are also referred to as in-law apartments or even more broadly as accessory apartments. Avon’s bylaw includes a number of restrictions including that the units be occupied by a family member, “not be used as an apartment for hire”, and contain not more than 770 square feet in gross living space.<sup>17</sup>

Most communities allow units that are accessory to the principal residence, typically referred to as accessory apartments, because they are helpful in meeting a number of public policy objectives including the following:

- They enable homeowners to capture additional income, which is particularly important for elderly homeowners or single parents where such income may be critical to remaining in their homes. Also, some young families or moderate-income households might be able to afford homeownership if they could count on income from an accessory apartment.
- They provide appropriately sized units for growing numbers of smaller households.
- They are inexpensive ways of increasing the rental housing stock at lower cost than new construction and without loss of open space, without significant impact on the surrounding neighborhood, and without additional Town services such as streets or utilities. There are, however, issues regarding the adequacy of the existing septic system when a new bedroom is added.

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<sup>16</sup> The survey, conducted in 2008, was mailed to 63 agencies and had a return rate of 59% (121 individuals from 37 agencies responded, but 110 responses are counted as part of the sample as 11 completed the survey incorrectly).

<sup>17</sup> The section of the Zoning Bylaw that deals with Temporary Additional Living Quarters states, “The Board of Appeals, as a Special Permit Granting Authority, may issue a Special Permit authorizing the conversion and use of a portion of a single-family dwelling into separate living quarters for a relative of the owner or owners. Said permit shall be valid only for the occupancy of the said premises by the person for whom it is issued; upon cessation of occupancy of such person, the permit shall lapse. If occupancy of the said additional living quarters is then desired by another relative of the owner or owners a new application for a Special Permit authorizing such occupancy shall be made. It is the intention of this provision that such additional living quarters shall not be used as an apartment for hire, but only as a convenience for a member of the owner’s family, under special circumstances and it shall not exceed 770 sq. feet in gross floor area. Special permits for temporary additional living quarters expire at the departure of the person for whom the permit is issued or after five years, whichever comes first.



- Tenants in accessory apartments can also provide companionship, security and services for the homeowner, from shoveling the sidewalk for an elderly owner to babysitting for a single parent.
- They offer good opportunities for keeping extended families in closer contact.
- New accessory units typically generate tax revenue in a locality because accessory units add value to existing homes.

It is also important to note that zoning is a powerful tool for not only directing future growth and development in a community, but for insuring that certain public benefits are met such as incentives for promoting greater housing choices and affordability. For example, the recent rezoning of the Town Center allows mixed commercial and residential development that should provide more housing options in town, although it is unlikely that new development will occur until housing market conditions improve.

### ***Foreclosure activity***

Foreclosure actions remained at about the same level from 2007 through 2010. There were 20 foreclosure petitions (for all properties, 17 for single-family homes) filed in both 2007 and 2010, the first step in the foreclosure process. Actual foreclosure deeds, representing the final stage of foreclosure, included seven (7) units in 2007 and up only to eight (8) in 2010 (six of the units were single-family homes).<sup>18</sup> There were 12 foreclosure petitions filed between April and September 2010, and relative to other municipalities in the state, Avon had more foreclosure petitions filed than 186 towns, the same amount as 22 towns, and less than 159 towns.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Depressed Town Center and Industrial Area at build-out***

It has been difficult to keep Avon's Town Center alive, particularly with a lack of sewer services. As noted above, until recently, zoning requirements greatly restricted new development or redevelopment activities. New zoning, through the mixed-use bylaw and the recently approved Chapter 43D expedited permitting for businesses, will hopefully begin to attract some redevelopment activity. Nevertheless, with a sluggish economy and a declining population, it is likely that the Town Center will continue to stagnate without good planning, substantially improved market conditions, and other interventions.

## **E. Recreation**

While Avon is a small town it has made considerable strides in providing a wide range of recreational opportunities for residents (see the Resource Manual). Nevertheless, there remain issues in residents' lifestyle decisions and ability to access these activities that affect their participation.

### ***Youth and Family Needs***

Working families confront unmet recreational and nutritional needs as parents are busy balancing jobs and family responsibilities, resulting in much stress and less time to prepare healthy meals or get regular exercise (CHNA).

Children and adults are becoming less active and increasingly overweight. There is no gym in town but the recreational opportunities offered by the Avon Park and Recreation Commission, Avon Public Schools, and Old Colony YMCA of Easton are important for keeping residents active in the community and healthy. However, because Avon is so small, many families have to go outside of Avon for various recreational activities such as

<sup>18</sup> Data from The Warren Group, February 10, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> ForeclosuresMass website, September 30, 2010.

dance classes, gyms, and the YMCA. The Community Survey on local needs further indicated the need for greater recreational opportunities.

Town recreational facilities such as the Crowley fields and Bartlett Street tennis courts were vandalized. The new shed was broken into as well and the bleachers stolen. Moreover, the Town's Parks and Recreation Commission used to have a pool table available for residents to use, including teens, but it is no longer available.

Local churches provide a number of important recreational programs that are well attended by Avon residents. For example, *Avon Baptist Church* has been a focus for community services that include the following activities:

- Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts meetings
- Alcoholics Anonymous and Gamblers Anonymous meetings
- Ham and Beans supper on the second Saturday of the month that costs \$6.50 and attracts 70 to 100 participants, many who are elderly. This supper is held right after the Mass at St. Michael's Church.
- Vacation Bible School during the mornings of the first week in July
- Home visits including some delivery of meals
- Transportation services for some seniors who cannot drive to important appointments
- Ecumenical Luncheon held on the third Wednesday of each month, open to all but particularly attractive to seniors.
- Avon Nursery School (expanding to afternoons and building a playground)
- Food Pantry, open Monday through Thursday, providing food for 20 to 30 families per month. Items are typically donated by the church's congregation or other organizations such as the Post Office, Girl Scouts and school groups. Donated money is used to purchase food for the pantry.

The congregation has been changing over the past decade, becoming more multi-ethnic and reflecting a greater mix of older, long-term members and newer families.

St. Michael's Parish Church also provides important community services, both recreational and nutritional, including:

- Dances for teens
- Country and western dance for adults
- Annual community picnic
- Annual community bazaar
- Supports Avon Baptist Church Food Pantry as well as My Brother's Keeper, located in Easton, that provides food and furniture to those in need
- A Youth Group that sponsors local trips

### ***Senior Needs***

Recreational programs are needed to keep seniors active, including opportunities to get out of their homes and socialize.

The increasing population of older adults suggests an increasing demand for supportive services to enable them to remain independent in their homes or to continue to live in the community in assisted



living facilities, which the town currently lacks. Those in the older age groups have increased significantly. For example, those aged 60 to 79 were only 12.5% of the population in 1980 but were 17.8% of all residents as of September 2010. Projections suggest further increases. Of particular note are the frail elderly over 80 years of age who were 1.8% of the population in 1980, 5.5% in 2010 and expected to increase to 6.0% by 2020.

Programs that provide nutritional support are well attended by seniors (COA lunch program, special events, Avon Church meals, St. Michael's Parish activities, etc.) and typically include a social component and thus provide recreational benefits by getting elders active and out of their homes.

#### **F. Transportation**

The Town of Avon is dissected by two major highways, Routes 24 and 28 as well as Harrison Boulevard and the more local Page, High and E. Spring Streets. This road system brings high levels of vehicular traffic through the community. All of the major roads run in a north to south direction, enhancing access between Boston and Brockton.

There is a substantial amount of commuter traffic in, out and through Avon given its location along Route 24. The Harrison Boulevard exit has the highest usage than any other exit on Route 24 north of Route 44. Traffic along Route 24 includes more than 100,000 vehicles per day, 28,000 vehicles per day along Route 28 and South of Harrison Boulevard, more than 18,000 at the Randolph town line. Average daily traffic counts are also high on Pond Street with more than 30,000 vehicles and about 8,300 vehicles per day on East Spring Street, the main access road from Holbrook, causing significant environmental impacts of traffic congestion, noise, and air pollution.<sup>20</sup> Route 28 has in fact served as a main thoroughfare, or what one official called a "runway" for vehicles going between Boston and Brockton. The mean travel time to work was actually about a half hour, suggesting that on average workers commute a fair distance to their jobs, about 84.7% who commute alone by car.

According to Town officials, there are more traffic accidents and traffic-related deaths along Route 24 within Avon town limits than the other parts of the highway. These accidents typically involve commuters, not Avon residents. While the state police are responsible for policing Route 24, they contact the Avon Police and Fire Department when they require back-up support.

Public transportation is limited in Avon. The nearest commuter rail stops are in Brockton (Montello), Holbrook and Stoughton (Middleborough line to Back Bay station). Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT) provides fixed route service through two lines. Route 1 runs from the BAT Center in Brockton to Wal-Mart on the Avon line from 6:00 am to 5:35 pm during weekdays, from 7:20 am to 6:00 pm on Saturdays (fares are \$1.00 for adults; \$.50 for seniors, children under twelve, and the disabled; and free for children under 5).<sup>21</sup> Route 12 provides service from the BAT Center in Brockton to the Ashmont MBTA station in Dorchester from 5:12 am until almost 11:00 pm on weekdays, stopping in Avon Center (fares are \$1.75 for adults; \$.85 for seniors, children under twelve, and the disabled; and free for children under 5). The MBTA also provides bus service from Ashmont Station that terminates in Avon Center.

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<sup>20</sup> Source is the Old Colony Traffic Volumes Report, 1979 – 2009 prepared by Old Colony Planning Council and the Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization, August 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Local rider club card allows passengers to ride local buses all month for \$30 and there are special programs for those with valid Medicare cards (can ride half-fare) or with disabilities.

Brockton Area Transit (BAT) has tested some additional service routes through the years but has found that there was insufficient ridership to sustain the routes economically. For example, BAT tested a shuttle from Avon Center to the Avon Industrial Park that did not attract sufficient use. Service from Avon Center to the IKEA store was also tried with funding provided by IKEA. This service was terminated within several months given that it involved an average of only nineteen (19) riders with a cost of \$1,300 per day. Additional studies regarding alternative routes have continued to indicate that substantial subsidies of at least \$30 per ride would be required to sustain such service.

The Avon Council on Aging's van service is available to seniors who must call in for service, which is available from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on weekdays for a small roundtrip fee of \$2.00. One of the COA's vans was provided by BAT, and BAT makes its own Dial-A-Bat van service available with regular routes through Avon. A second, newer van is anticipated for delivery in the summer of 2011, which will increase the COA's capacity to provide transportation services.

In regard to students, only a small number walk or drive themselves to school as most are bused to school by the Avon Public Schools. The costs and logistics of any specialized transportation for homeless or special education students are also the responsibility of the School Department. On the other hand, Avon Public Schools has no obligation to bus Choice students and most are driven by their parents with some relying on public transportation.

It should be noted that the Area Agency on Aging, which is under the purview of Old Colony Planning Council, conducted a survey of elder service providers and individuals in the twenty-three (23) communities of their service area, which includes Avon.<sup>22</sup> Survey results suggest that transportation was ranked as the highest service need (see Table 1). In fact, 88 of the 110 respondents (80%) reported this as one of the ten greatest unmet needs. Of these 88 respondents, 36 ranked this service as the number one unmet need (score of 10), and of these, 66 ranked this service as one of the top three unmet needs.

#### **G. Veterans Services**

The Town is looking to regionalize the services of a Veteran's Agent. The former Agent retired in 2010 after working part-time for ten (10) years but remains available on an as needed basis while replacement services are sought.

The 2000 census reported that 552 of Avon's residents were veterans representing 13% of the population.

Most of the recent inquiries through the Town involve assisting widows of deceased veterans in obtaining necessary assistance, although questions related to how they can access elderly housing or medical/dental benefits often arise. The former Agent was also very involved in the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) organization, providing support for area veterans. The VFW provides a range of services to veterans including recreational opportunities, small amounts of cash for emergency purposes, and help with government paperwork.

The former Veteran's Agent indicated that he had limited interaction with more recently discharged veterans, who are increasing in numbers following service in Iraq and Afghanistan. All vets receive a

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<sup>22</sup> The survey, conducted in 2008, was mailed to 63 agencies and had a return rate of 59% (121 individuals from 37 agencies responded, but 110 respondents followed all instructions and their responses were used as the sample base).



welcome home package from the state that lists the full range of resources that are available to help them with their transition to civilian life.

#### **H. Community Engagement**

Through interviews as part of this project, several trends surfaced with respect to community engagement. One repeatedly acknowledged community characteristic was a community ethic of residents looking out for each other whether it be plowing or shoveling out an elderly neighbor, borrowing something, or simply watching out for a neighbor. This community spirit is not only exhibited by neighbors, but also by attentive public servants who go the extra distance to help residents. For example, the Highway Department and Fire Department help shovel out the elderly who cannot do this work on their own, have little or no family support, or limited money to hire help.

Nevertheless, it was repeatedly pointed out that it is extremely challenging to get residents to participate in various community activities and many seniors are reluctant to ask for help. For example, the Public Schools has announced new programs in the past in response to ongoing calls for more after school activities, only to find that it could not obtain the requisite level of interest to implement them. Both the Avon Housing Authority and Council on Aging are hard-pressed at times to attract interest in various activities beyond the “usual suspects” who typically turn up, and must continue to work creatively to build participation. Also, during the course of this project we advertised a public forum through a number of means, including a town-wide community survey, to get resident input into this project. Unfortunately, no one came.

This perceived lack of civic interest has been explained in an historical context. During the prime building years of the 1950's and 1960's, those who arrived in Avon became actively involved in the civic life of the community, initiating and sustaining a wide range of activities. As these residents have aged, they have correspondingly become less involved in community affairs, some leaving the community entirely and others passing on. They also are challenged to understand how much the costs of Town services have increased over the years and have difficulty accepting new budget recommendations.

Those who moved have been replaced by younger families who typically have no previous connection to the town and have increasingly diverse backgrounds, some with language barriers. These new households are pressed for time as they balance jobs and children. Often both parents are working, sometimes with two jobs given the tough economy. Children also have become increasingly busy with numerous extracurricular activities, many located outside of Avon that require parents to chauffeur them to and from dance classes, football practice and baseball games. Typically family comes first, which leaves little time for parents to participate in meetings and activities outside the home. Nevertheless, it has been pointed out that many of the activities that keep families so busy do in fact involve residents engaged in the community whether it be a local soccer match, a summer concert, a school event, or even a visit to the local pizza parlor.

There is an ongoing need to promote greater civic engagement. Community activities contribute to individual health as folks are pulled off their couches and into social activities, feeling less isolated and more a part of a greater whole. The Town of Avon also relies on community residents to support Town government as volunteers on its boards and committees. Non-profit and other civic organizations also require volunteers to support their missions in enhancing community life. It is not unusual to have appointed and even elected boards or committees go wanting for volunteers.

There are several community-wide events that have become Avon rituals, attracting popular support and participation such as the Fourth of July parade, summer concerts and block parties. These activities have enabled residents to socialize with their families and neighbors, meet new people, and generally feel a part of the community. The Avon Civic Association has supported some of these activities and has been active during the past 20 years as a member-based organization that promotes opportunities to bring the Avon community together. Support from Avon's Cultural Commission and state grant funding have enabled the organization to provide the summer concert series, the Teddy Bear picnic at the Butler School, the annual Santa Claus event, among others.

It should be noted that there are some local business owners, those who live in town in particular, who have been generous in supporting the community through donations or even summer job opportunities for youth. Nevertheless, unlike other municipalities, there are limited business organizations that serve the Avon community. The Randolph/Avon Rotary Club involves representatives who own businesses, are directors of non-profit organizations, employees of businesses and retirees who owned businesses or were active in non-profit and religious organizations in Randolph or Avon before retirement. The club's main objective is service in the community, the workplace and the world. The club holds fundraisers, the largest one in December to raise scholarship funds for about five (5) graduating seniors with typically at least one going to a graduate of Avon High School. There is no local Chamber of Commerce, but businesses can join the Metro South Chamber of Commerce, based in Brockton and serving businesses in eighteen (18) communities, including Avon. A new business organization has established in the Avon Industrial Park.

Another issue related to community engagement and cohesion involves communication – Avon has no local newspaper. Consequently, it is more challenging to get the word out on important local events, and activities. The Council on Aging has its own newsletter, but there is a substantial lag-time between when the printer gets the draft and distribution. Also, the Brockton Enterprise does not effectively cover Avon. The *Money Saver* is the only publication with some news that is delivered to all residents.

The town does have Avon Cable Access that provides running news and some special programming on local issues. For example, a local resident has organized several community interest programs that are both informative and entertaining. Such programs have highlighted the summer concerts, local gardening, recycling,<sup>23</sup> etc. Local Town meetings are also presented via cable.

### **III. Community Service Action Plan**

As a very small town, Avon has limited financial resources and often relies on volunteers to support varied activities. Town government includes only twelve (12) full-time and three (3) part-time employees with hopes of avoiding additional lay-offs. Not only are existing staff taking on more responsibilities, but also efforts have been underway to share resources with other nearby towns, particularly Holbrook, regionalizing services such as animal control, health agent activities, and some sports activities. Discussions about regionalizing additional services, including schools and veteran services have commenced. Also, because Avon has been feeling the affects of the economic downturn, service providers are experiencing greater demands for assistance.

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<sup>23</sup> It is interesting to note that while recycling is a mandatory activity, only 17% of Avon households tend to participate. Avon is fortunate to have a free recycling program through the Recycle America Program, part of Waste Management's operations located in the Avon Industrial Park.



Within this context of limited resources, this study and action plan recommend a series of actions to address many of the needs identified in Section II above. It is proposed that Avon fill some of the gaps between outstanding needs and existing resources through a combination of approaches including:

- Continued grantmaking. There are precedents for the Town boosting local resources through grant awards such as:
  - In 2010, \$650,000 received through a Community Development Block Grant from the state to support a Housing Rehab Program and this study.
  - In 2009, the Avon Public Schools received a total of \$343,186 in state and federal grant funding in addition to a federal grant of \$625,000 to support the town-wide coalition, Avon Coalition for Every Student (ACES), to positively impact risk behaviors of students.
  - A recent grant for a three-year after school recreational program sponsored in tandem by the Avon Public Schools and Old Colony YMCA in Easton in collaboration with the North River Collaborative.
  - A recent \$500,000 grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to support reconstruction, drainage improvements, and new sidewalks on Pond Street to address neighborhood flooding caused by insufficient drainage.
  - In 1984, \$700,000 received through a Community Development Action Grant from the state to run a second water main under Route 24 to the standpipe on Central Street.
- Expand tax base. For example, providing sewer services in the Avon Industrial Park will enable local businesses to expand and correspondingly raise more taxes.
- Promote greater local investment of the business community in community activities.
- Increase links between seniors who need services (snow shoveling, leaf removal, minor errands) and teens that need some spending money.
- Improve access to information on existing services (Resource Manual).
- Improve access to actual services through improved transportation.
- Invite area service providers to bring in additional services to Avon (South Shore Housing, American Credit Counseling Services, Old Colony Elder Services' Meals on Wheels Program, and area hospitals).

The Town will have to rely on continued partnerships with local service providers, other communities, and additional state and federal resources to pursue the following strategies for improving the community as presented by the following service categories.

#### **A. Health/Mental Health**

Through information provided in interviews with Avon leaders and participants in the Community Health Needs Assessment for the Greater Brockton Community Health Network Area (CHNA), the following Avon community resources were identified as key to helping residents stay healthy, *which Town officials should promote, maintain and expand where appropriate and feasible*:

- Miller Tracy playground and Town athletic fields
- Apple Festival
- Holiday parades
- Community concerts in the summer
- Block parties
- Collaboration with the Board of Health and schools; for example the H1N1 clinics

- Avon Park and Recreation Programs for children during the summer
- Council on Aging trips for seniors
- School breakfast and lunch programs
- Avon Coalition for Every Student (ACES)
- Collaboration with Holbrook for blood pressure clinics
- Collaboration with Holbrook for school sports
- Council on Aging exercise classes
- COA lunch program
- Church activities
- Looking out for neighbors

*Other strategies the Town could explore to promote a healthier community:*

- Increase activities that pull residents out of their homes and engage them in the wider community whether for the entire community or various segments (children, seniors, parents).
- Provide sex education at lower grade levels (Avon Public Schools).
- Encourage more community outreach through area hospitals and health and mental health providers (Town Officials).
- Hire a part-time social worker to conduct outreach to seniors and families who need intervention and support.
- Expand and improve sidewalks to encourage more walking.
- Council on Aging continue sponsoring speakers at the Senior Center to help educate seniors on a wide range of topics including home safety, staying well, and the benefits of various special programs and services. Of particular note is outreach that is conducted by Old Colony Hospice on how hospice services are beneficial not only to those facing a terminal illness but also to caregivers who are more likely to be participating in COA activities, clinics by Brockton Visiting Nurses Association or the Board of Health, or presentations by the Fire Department.
- Pursue designation and funding for Avon's participation in Old Colony Elder Services' Meals on Wheels Program, which would enable the community to obtain meals for seniors on a five-day per week basis, instead of the current two days, as well as throughout the summer. The Town has made initial inquiries regarding participation, but sufficient funding has not yet been secured. In other communities, lunches are typically provided by OCES at Senior Centers and Councils on Aging obtain volunteers to deliver the meals for the housebound.
- Continue to fight hunger by supporting the Food Pantry at the Avon Baptist Church. Explore option of open hours during particular time of the week, avoiding the necessity of making appointments.
- Promote healthy eating and make healthier choices more available in schools - vending machines, lunch and breakfast programs (Avon Public Schools).
- Distribute widely Resource Manual prepared as part of this Community Needs Study.

#### **B. Education and Training**

The Avon Public Schools to continue promoting and participating in special programs and activities that help low-income children and families in Avon including Christmas in Avon, and food drives for the Food Pantry.

The Avon Public Schools, local churches, or even the Council on Aging or Avon Housing Authority



to formalize a program that links middle and high school students to seniors to help the frail elderly with small chores and errands, including shoveling, and provides a friendly visit for them as well. The students will obtain some useful life experience and should receive some special award or acknowledgement for this work, perhaps even credit for school or church-required community service.

The Schools to provide sex and other important health-related education at lower grade levels.

Avon Schools to work with the Fire Department to obtain sufficient resources so they can provide information in the schools on a wide range of safety issues.

Schools to explore links with local businesses and non-profit organizations to provide students with internships.

Coalition members to follow-up on the Action Plans that will be prepared by the Avon Coalition for Every Student (ACES). The Town of Avon has limited financial ability to support substance abuse prevention plans, and will need to rely on the coalition members to pursue implementation.

The Town to contact American Credit Counseling Services (ACCS) to request that they provide financial counseling workshops in Avon.<sup>24</sup> The Town has already engaged ACCS to provide some counseling through Avon's cable access channel.

### **C. Public Safety and Infrastructure**

#### ***Police Department***

Expand the Police/Fire Station on its existing site, per preliminary plans that were prepared a number of years ago, or move the station to another location.

Continue work in partnership with the Fire Department, Avon Council on Aging and Norfolk County Sheriff's Department to promote community safety through a number of special programs including the "Are You OK" Program, Project Lifesaver, Triad and Files of Life.

#### ***Fire Department***

The Fire Department has the basic complement of equipment but needs a financial mechanism to replace equipment after it has passed its useful life. It should explore writing grants from Home Land Security or FEMA.

Continue to conduct community education on home safety measures to the Council on Aging.

Obtain funding, perhaps through the business community and in cooperation with Avon Public Schools, to conduct education in the schools on a range of safety issues.

As noted above, expand facility on existing site or move it to another location.

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<sup>24</sup> American Credit Counseling Services (ACCS) is a 501(c)(3) organization that provides workshops and individual counseling on financial matters, budgeting and credit counseling in particular. Funded largely by the United Way of Greater Attleboro and Taunton, most of their work does not extend further north than Taunton, although upon request the organization will conduct a workshop on credit counseling, budgeting and/or other financial matters for some remuneration for travel costs. They typically provide workshops at Senior Centers or public libraries. As noted above, the organization will provide some counseling via Avon's cable access channel.

### ***Infrastructure***

The Town to explore the feasibility of providing sewer services to the Avon Industrial Park that will allow businesses to expand and increase the Town's tax base. Increased tax revenues would enable the Town to improve its infrastructure and initiate new programs. The Town could potentially apply for state financing to assist in this effort, such as a Public Works Economic Development (PWED) grant,

The Town to provide more sidewalks that will promote safer and expanded pedestrian travel. Some of this work is occurring through a special state grant on Pond Street through the Mass. DOT.

Appropriate areas for walking trails.

### **D. Housing and Community Development**

#### ***Improve existing housing stock/Assist residents with fuel and utility bills***

The Town recently applied for and was awarded Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the Avon Housing Rehabilitation Program (AHRP), which will correct code violations in substandard housing units through financial and technical assistance to qualifying property owners. The Board of Selectmen should apply for additional funding from the state once the initial allocation is spent.

The Town to hire a part-time social worker to intervene and help families locate appropriate services to resolve problems that are likely to include substandard housing conditions.

The Town, through the Council on Aging and Board of Health, should continue to make referrals to appropriate technical and financial assistance programs to help qualifying residents cope with rising energy costs.

The Town to look into establishing a local Handyman Program where volunteers who can do small home repairs are available to those who have limited means and small repair needs. Such a program might be coordinated through local churches.

#### ***Increase subsidized housing options and diversity of housing stock***

Town officials to explore the redevelopment of the Crowley School property for subsidized family housing or other public purpose. The site includes 16.1 acres but is complicated by wetlands. The Town would select a qualified developer through a Request for Proposals process after it had received Town Meeting approval to convey the school property for a nominal amount for some amount of affordable housing. The Town through the RFP and regulatory agreements, would exert local control over the terms and conditions of the development, insuring that it meet local needs and priorities. The selected developer, experienced in affordable housing development, would be responsible for obtaining the necessary permitting and financing to make the affordable housing project feasible.

The Town to consider acquiring a number of vacant buildings in town to eliminate blight and provide affordable, subsidized family housing. For example, if the property was owned by the Town (currently or through tax taking) it could select a non-profit entity through a Request for Proposals process to make the necessary improvements, the Town conveying the property to the developer for a nominal price. The developer in turn would work with the Town to obtain essential state and/or federal



financing to make the development feasible. The Town could also extend special tax breaks or zoning incentives to attract the necessary investment in these distressed properties.<sup>25</sup>

The Avon Planning Board, with ultimate approval from Town Meeting, to amend the Zoning Bylaw to promote accessory apartments that are not restricted to use by family members and can provide rental income to the owner.

#### ***Link with Foreclosure Prevention Services***

The Town to pursue services through South Shore Housing. Avon currently falls between the cracks of the existing regional non-profit housing organizations as it is not listed in the service areas of either South Shore Housing or the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership. These organizations provide a range of programs and services related to housing. For example, South Shore Housing provides rental assistance, new housing development, property management, homeless assistance, housing rehabilitation, as well as counseling and education (such as first-time homebuyer workshops, landlord-tenant relations and foreclosure prevention). While targeting services to communities in Plymouth and Bristol Counties, South Shore Housing did operate the Family Self Sufficiency Program some years ago in Avon so there is a precedent for extending services to Avon. Also, the organization is currently serving Avon's neighbors including Randolph, Holbrook, Brockton and Easton.

#### ***Limited development opportunities/Depressed Town Center/Industrial Area at Buildout***

The Avon Planning Board to amend zoning to allow business development or redevelopment to go up to four (4) stories instead of the existing 35 feet.

Town to obtain funding to update the Town's Master Plan that was prepared in 1964.

Town officials to explore a number of redevelopment opportunities to improve Town facilities including moving the Police and Fire stations to a more appropriate site, selling the current Town offices, and relocating them to the current Wheeler Building. There are some opportunities to expand on the existing site somewhat if the gazebo on the adjacent parcel is relocated.<sup>26</sup>

Town to sewer Avon Center to enable it to be redeveloped into a mixed-use center, including "above the shop" residential spaces that are now eligible by relatively recent rezoning of the area via hooking into the existing sewer system at the Middle School/High School.

Town to pursue providing sewer services in the Avon Industrial Park.

### **E. Recreation**

#### ***Youth and Family Services***

Town's Recreation and Parks Commission to offer additional recreational activities for kids during school vacations.

Avon Public Schools to hold exercise classes as fundraisers not just bake sales.

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<sup>25</sup> Tax-related changes would require state legislative approval, which has been secured by other communities interested in promoting affordable housing through the tax code.

<sup>26</sup> The additional taxes that would accrue through zoning changes proposed in the Avon Industrial Park could support such public projects.

Avon Public Schools to continue to pursue partnerships with the Old Colony YMCA of Easton on recreational activities for students.

Town to access community services provided by inmates under the jurisdiction of the Norfolk County Sheriff's Department for the cleaning and grooming of athletic fields, cemeteries, and municipal facilities. The Town Offices were painted in February 2011 and the Crowley School was secured in 2008. Some of the work related to dealing with vandalism at Town facilities might be handled by this service.

Recreate the space that was located in the Civic Center in the past that provided recreational opportunities for youth including a pool table, ping pong table, TV, etc. This space was also available to rent out for birthday parties and family events, providing some income stream.

### ***Senior Services***

The Council on Aging to continue to promote its programs, finding new strategies such as the Avon Community Access & Media channel to get the word out on activities beyond the COA newsletter, which has a significant lag time between when it is written and released.

Council on Aging to pursue opportunities to link up with other nearby Councils on Aging to provide special programs and activities. For example, this has been accomplished in the past through a Health Fair held in May with support from Jewish Family and Children's Services.

Council on Aging to start programming for younger seniors, which will become an increasingly more important challenge as the baby boomers age. Such programming might include exploring alternative living arrangements.

### **F. Transportation**

Town to continue to apply for resources to improve roads and sidewalks.

Town to secure the replacement of current but aging Council on Aging van.

Council on Aging to better market and expand van service to meet local needs.

### **G. Veterans Services**

Town to hire a part-time Veteran's Agent or enter into a cooperative arrangement with another town or towns in the area.

- Reach out to young veterans and their families.
- Establish links with regional and statewide veteran services.

### **H. Community Engagement**

Town to continue to support popular community-wide events such as the Fourth of July parade and community concerts. Continue to support the Avon Civic Association's efforts in this area.

Town to continue efforts to attract residents as volunteers on Town boards and committees as well as to non-profit and civic organizations such as providing childcare through a high school student for community service credit, and offering refreshments. Additionally, the Town might better promote this participation through a special cable series on how local government works, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of various boards and committees as well as local officials.



The Town should provide annual awards for those who have contributed outstanding service to the community, acknowledging their work and drawing attention, and perhaps greater participation, to the importance of serving in the important work of local government.

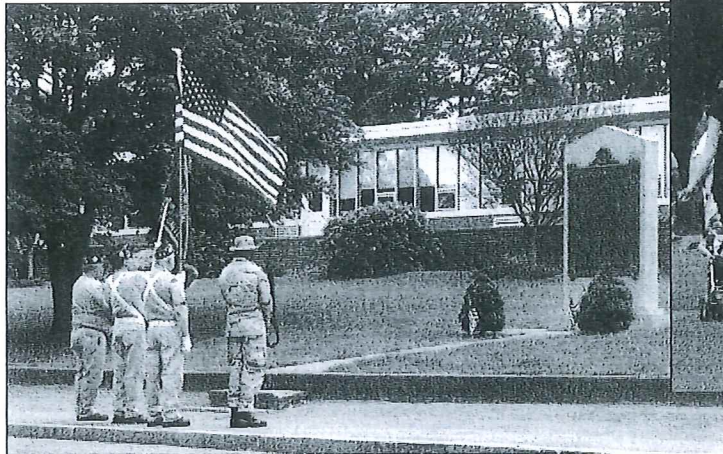
Town to promote greater involvement of area businesses in civic activities. While some businesses have been generous in supporting community needs, the big box stores or business owners who live in Avon in particular, others have not been involved and should be coaxed to become more invested in the community. Town officials should actively reach out to local businesses, particularly those in the Industrial Park, to obtain their more active involvement in local affairs and contributions to town projects and activities. This process should be somewhat simplified by the addition of a new business organization in the Industrial Park.

Given a lack of a community newspaper, Avon leaders must employ greater creativity in getting the word out to residents about important activities, events, needs for assistance, and an enhanced website (include Annual Town Report and other important links for example). Some options are to rely more on the Globe weekly section, the cable access channel, and church bulletins.

The Town should develop a Welcome Handbook for new residents that includes the Community Service Resource Manual developed through this project, as well as information on important local events, how to recycle, how government works (description of boards and committees), etc.

ATTACHMENT 1

# Town of Avon, Massachusetts Community Services Resource Manual



Prepared by Karen Sunnarborg, Consultant

Funded through the Massachusetts Community  
Development Block Grant Program from the  
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Development

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## ATTACHMENT 2

# Town of Avon, Massachusetts Community Needs Study

## Community Profile

Located in Eastern Massachusetts, Avon is the smallest community in the greater Brockton area both in terms of population and area and among the smallest in the Boston metropolitan area. With a population of 4,234 as of September 2010 based on Town records,<sup>28</sup> it is bordered by Brockton on the south (population: 92,665), Stoughton on the west (population: 26,986), Randolph on the northeast (population: 29,983), and Holbrook on the east (population: 10,614)<sup>29</sup>. With a land area of only 4.38 square miles, it has a population density of over 1,000 residents per square mile, which is not atypical for a suburban community.

Avon was originally part of Stoughton, known as East Stoughton, and was not incorporated until 1888. Like its neighbors, its major economic base was manufacturing, largely focused on the boot and shoe industries. The combination of good highway access along the Route 24; relative close proximity to Boston, only 17 miles to the north; and local efforts to promote economic growth and development have enabled the town to become one of the major employment centers of the South Shore.

The expanded highway system promoted a population explosion in what became known as “The Golden Semi-Circle”, as the communities in the Routes 24 and 128 area experienced rapid industrialization and population growth, including Avon. Between 1950 and 1970, Avon’s population nearly doubled in size, from 2,666 residents to 5,295. This growth spurred a remarkable period of building as new single-family subdivisions and numerous building permit applications for single house lots. While a Boston consulting firm projected that Avon would have 7,500 residents by 1970, the building boom was effectively over by 1963, and the population has been on the decline since then.

Just as residential building was slackening in the early 1960’s, industrial construction picked-up with approval of the Avon Industrial Park, often referred to as the most successful complex of its kind in the Brockton area. The Avon Industrial Park now has approximately 127 firms that employ more than 3,600 workers. Nevertheless, as noted in the Town’s 2009 Annual Report, “the economic and social impact of the financial crisis affecting our country has presented challenges of epoch proportion. Our community has seen the impact of this crisis first hand as many of our residents are suffering with unemployment or under-employment. Considerable numbers of our fellow residents have faced foreclosure and homelessness. The Federal Stimulus program has yet to impact the local level in these areas.” Like most communities in Massachusetts, the national economic crisis has only exacerbated the community’s ongoing social and economic challenges, particularly for Avon’s most vulnerable residents. In 2000, about one-quarter of all Avon’s households had annual incomes below \$25,000, 33% below

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<sup>28</sup> The Town Clerk’s office indicates that this figure is likely to miss some residents and is probably higher. Nielsen Claritas estimates suggest that the total 2009 population was 4,275, which may be closer to the actual total.

<sup>29</sup> Population figures from Nielsen Claritas, Inc. data base, 2009. It should be noted that Avon is not alone in losing population, as all four (4) of these neighboring communities have lost population since 2000. For example, in 2000 Brockton’s population was 94,304, Holbrook’s was 10,785, Randolph’s was 30,963 and Stoughton’s was 27,149.

\$35,000, estimated have to declined to 20% and 29%, respectively, by 2009. This means that more than 500 households were living on very low incomes, which conflicts with general perception of Avon being an affluent suburban enclave. Additionally, Avon is a small town with limited resources.

Table 1 presents HUD income levels by household size for the Brockton area and indicates that those earning below \$35,000 are in line with the 50% of area median income limits or what HUD refers to as “very low” income.

<b>Table 1: 2010 Income Levels for Affordable Housing in the Brockton Area</b>			
<b>Household Size</b>	<b>30% of Median Income</b>	<b>50% of Median Income</b>	<b>80% of Median Income</b>
<b>1</b>	\$16,800	\$27,950	\$44,700
<b>2</b>	\$19,200	\$31,950	\$51,100
<b>3</b>	\$21,600	\$35,950	\$57,500
<b>4</b>	\$23,950	\$39,900	\$63,850
<b>5</b>	\$25,900	\$43,100	\$69,000
<b>6</b>	\$27,800	\$46,300	\$74,100
<b>7</b>	\$29,700	\$49,500	\$79,200
<b>8+</b>	\$31,650	\$52,700	\$84,300

**2010 Median Household Income for the Brockton PMSA = \$79,800**

## I. Demographic Characteristics and Trends

Table 2 summarizes demographic characteristics in Avon from the 2000 census and 2009 estimates, comparing this information to that of Norfolk County and the state. This information shows some sizable differences and similarities from the county and the state such as:

- **Declining Population**

While Avon experienced rapid growth in the 1950's and 1960's, between 1980 and 2000, Avon's population decreased by 583 residents or 11.6%, from 5,026 to 4,443 residents. Since then, Town records show some additional loss of residents, bringing the total population count down to 4,234, a decrease of almost 5%, although the Town Clerk's Office indicates that this count probably misses some residents. Population projections suggest further future population decreases to 3,569 residents by 2020, down almost 20% from 2000. A combination of Avon's lack of sewer services, aging and outmoded housing stock, challenges in keeping local businesses viable, and few remaining developable parcels have all contributed to this decline. Neighboring towns have also experienced population decreases.

- **Small but Growing Minority Population**

In 2000, 6.5% of Avon's population was minority residents, up considerably from 0.5% or only 24 minority residents in 1980. This population has continued to grow and in 2009 comprised 10.3% of all residents, 6.2% who were Black or African-American. The percentage of minority residents grew for the county and state as well between 2000 and 2009.



**Table 2: Summary of Demographic Characteristics for Avon, Norfolk County and the State**

	Avon		Norfolk County		Massachusetts	
Demographic Characteristics	2000 Census	2009 Estimate*	2000 Census	2009 Estimate*	2000 Census	2009 Estimate*
Total population	4,443	4,275	650,308	659,909/ 655,914	6,349,097	6,497,967/ 6,459,022
Population density (per square mile)	1,014	976	1,626	1,640	810	829
% Minority residents	6.5%	10.3%	11.0%	16.3%	15.5%	17.6%
% Less than 18 years	22.5%	20.3%	23.4%	22.4/22.6%	23.6%	22.0%/22.1%
% 18 to 20 years	3.2%	3.6%	3.0%	2.8 (18-19) /3.5%	4.1%	3.1% (18-19)/4.3%
% 21 to 34 years	16.1%	15.4%	18.2%	17.4% (20-34)	21.0%	19.8% (20-34)/ 18.2%
% 35 to 44 years	16.5%	13.8%	17.5%	15%/14.6%	16.7%	14.7%/14.5%
% 45 to 54 years	14.3%	16.0%	14.5%	16.5/16.5%	13.8%	15.4%/15.4%
% 55 to 64 years	9.9%	13.0%	9.1%	12.3/12.6%	8.6%	11.6%/11.8%
% 65 years or more	17.6%	17.8%	14.4%	13.9/14.3%	13.5%	13.4%/13.7%
Median age	40.2 years	42.9 years	38.1 years	40.4/ 40.8 years	36.5 years	38.7/39 years
Total households	1,705	1,675	248,827	254,478/ 254,521	2,443,580	2,467,323/ 2,540,234
% Family households	71.6%	71.6%	66.7%	66.1/66.7%	64%	63.6%/64.5%
% Non-family households	28.4%	28.4%	33.3%	33.9/33.3%	36%	36.4%/35.5%
% Single-person households	23.5%	--	26.8%	--	28.0%	28.5% (Nielsen Claritas data)
Average household size	2.61 persons	2.55 persons	2.54 persons	2.52/2.51 persons	2.51 persons	2.53/2.49 persons
Median household income	\$50,767	\$58,934	\$64,398	\$81,444/ \$80,311	\$50,502	\$65,401/\$63,381
Per capita income	\$24,410	\$27,956	\$32,484	\$43,473/ \$41,418	\$25,952	\$34,452/\$32,738
Residents in poverty	6.6%	--	4.6%	6.0%	9%	9.7%
% Earning less than \$25,000/\$35,000	24.9%/33%	20.3%/29.2%	17.1%/25.6%	14.7/13.3%/20.9/19.5%	24.6%/33.3%	19.8%/19.6% 27.5%/27.8%
% Earning more than \$100,000	15.6%	23.8%	26.3%	40.9/38.4%	17.7%	30.2%/27.6%
% Earning at least high school diploma	90.6%	--	91.3%	83.7% (ACS)	84.8%	88.7% (ACS)
% Earning at least Bachelor's degree	21.2%		42.9%	48.1% (ACS)	33.2%	38.1% (ACS)

Sources: Data for the above table is derived from the 2000 census, and updated estimates have been incorporated. The 2009 estimates for Avon are from the Nielsen Claritas, Inc. data source, 2009. The 2009 figures for the County and state are from the Census Bureau's 2009 American Community Survey (ACS)/and Nielsen Claritas data for comparative purposes.

- **Somewhat Older Population**

In comparison to Norfolk County and the state in general, Avon's population tends to be on average a bit older, with a median age of 42.9 years as opposed to about 40 years for the county and 39 years for the state based on 2009 estimates.

The town has a somewhat lower proportion of school-age children with about 20% of the population less than 18 years of age versus approximately 22% for both the county and state in 2009. As Table 3 indicates, those under 20 decreased from 33.2% in 1980 to 24.5% in 2000 and are comprise less than 20% of the 2010 population according to Town records. This age group is projected to decline further to only about 18.6% of the population by 2020. Even those younger residents age 20 through 29 have been decreasing in proportion to all residents, from 15.8% in 1980, to 11.9% according to 2010 Town records and then 11.2% by 2020.

<b>Table 3: Avon Age Distribution, 1980 Through 2020</b>						
<b>Age Range</b>	<b>1980 Census #/%</b>	<b>1990 Census #/%</b>	<b>2000 Census #/%</b>	<b>2010 Town Records #/%</b>	<b>2010 Projections #/%</b>	<b>2020 Projections #/%</b>
Less than 10	612/12.2%	542/11.9%	535/12.0%	414/9.8%	368/9.1%	306/8.6%
10 to 19	1,055/21.0%	555/12.2%	555/12.5%	474/11.2%	518/12.9%	358/10.0%
20 to 29	795/15.8%	745/16.3%	454/10.2%	505/11.9%	427/10.6%	400/11.2%
30 to 39	600/11.9%	727/15.9%	659/14.8%	518/12.2%	414/10.3%	388/10.9%
40 to 49	575/11.4%	573/12.6%	713/16.0%	673/15.9%	640/15.9%	403/11.3%
50 to 59	671/13.4%	496/10.9%	526/11.8%	665/15.7%	642/16.0%	577/16.2%
60 to 69	407/8.1%	537/11.8%	441/9.9%	441/10.4%	458/11.4%	566/15.9%
70 to 79	219/4.4%	281/6.2%	402/9.0%	313/7.4%	336/8.3%	358/10.0%
80 to 89	77/1.5%	91/2.0%	139/3.1%	195/4.6%	198/4.9%	174/4.9%
90 plus	15/0.3%	11/0.2%	19/0.4%	36/0.9%	24/0.6%	39/1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,026/100.0</b>	<b>4,558/100.0</b>	<b>4,443/100.0</b>	<b>4,234/100.0</b>	<b>4,025/100.0</b>	<b>3,569/100.0</b>
Sources: 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census Bureau figures, 2010 Town records and 2010 and 2020 projected data from the Massachusetts Institute of Social and Economic Research (MISER) of the University of Massachusetts.						

On the other hand, those in the older age groups have increased significantly. For example, those age 60 to 79 were only 12.5% of the population in 1980 but are 17.8% of all residents as of September 2010. Projections suggest further increases, going up to 25.9% by 2020. Of particular note are the frail elderly over 80 years of age who were 1.8% of the population in 1980, 5.5% in 2010 and expected to increase to 6.0% by 2020. The increasing population of older adults suggests an increasing demand for supportive services to enable them to remain independent in their homes or to continue to live in the community in assisted living facilities, which the town currently lacks.

Residents in the 30 to 59 age range represented 36.7% of all residents in 1980, increased to 43.8% according to 2010 Town records, and are projected to decline to 38.4% by 2020. These residents comprise the heads of families in a community that is dominated by family households as noted below.

- **More Family Households**

Avon had more families than both the county and the state, expected to be almost 72% in 2009, versus approximately 66% and 64% for the county and state, respectively. This correlates to the relatively



higher, albeit declining, proportion of children in Avon and higher average household size of 2.55 persons as opposed to about 2.50 persons per household in Norfolk County and the state.

- **Lower Income Levels**

Median household income levels per the 2009 estimates indicate significantly lower median income levels than those of the county or state, \$58,934 in Avon as opposed to \$80,311 and \$63,381 for the county and state, respectively. Additionally, the percentage of those earning less than \$25,000 annually was 20.3% in Avon, while those earning below \$35,000 was almost 30% according to 2009 estimates, in comparison to 13.3% and 19.5% for Norfolk County, respectively. This means that more than 500 households are living on very low incomes. Moreover, nearly 40% of the town's population is lower income, earning at or below 80% of area median income, which is the highest percentage of the eight (8) towns surrounding Avon.<sup>30</sup> There were also lower proportions of Avon residents earning more than \$100,000 in 2009, 23.8% as opposed to 38.4% for the county and 27.6% for the state. Per capita income levels also confirm the relatively lower incomes of Avon residents, with estimated 2009 per capita incomes of \$27,956 in Avon, \$41,418 in Norfolk County and \$32,738 statewide.

State Department of Public Health data further document that there were 124 AFDC Medicaid recipients in Avon,<sup>31</sup> with 200 residents living below the poverty level and 901 living below 200% of the poverty level, based on 2000 census data. Poverty levels in 2009 were \$10,830 for a single individual and \$18,310 for a family of three (3).

- **Lower College Attainment**

While Avon residents who have earned a high school degree or its equivalency were comparable to the countywide level of about 91%, this level was a bit higher than that for the state at 88.7%. On the other hand, those with at least a Bachelor's degree included only 21.2% of Avon residents in 2000 as opposed to 42.9% for the county and 33.2% for the state.

The 2000 census data also indicated the following:

- There were 552 veterans;
- 3.5% of all residents were born outside of the United States, only 58 or 1.3% who were not yet citizens; and
- 5.3% spoke a language other than English, and 1.9% of residents (80 residents) stated that they spoke English less than "very well".

## **II. Workforce Characteristics and Trends**

The 2000 census indicated that of the 3,558 residents who were 16 years and older, almost two-thirds, or 2,319 residents, were in the labor force, 82 or 2.3% of whom were unemployed. The 2000 census also showed that 36.1% of Avon's workers were involved in management or professional occupations and most of the rest were employed in more retail and service oriented jobs including construction and maintenance occupations (8.4%), sales and office occupations (30.4%), service occupations (11.0%) and production, transportation and material moving occupations (14.1%). While 82.5% were salaried workers, another 12.3% were government workers, and 5.2% were self-employed.

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<sup>30</sup> DHCD's Community Wide Needs Indicators.

<sup>31</sup> The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program, otherwise referred to as the Welfare Program, has been replaced with the more restrictive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF).

Table 4 summarizes workforce and unemployment information for Avon and neighboring communities, indicating the following trends:

- **Slowly Growing Workforce**

While the workforce included 2,319 residents in 2000, it has grown only about 2.2% over the years to 2,371 by August 2010. The labor forces of all the other surrounding communities increased somewhat as well.

- **Relatively High Unemployment, Starting to Decline**

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, in 2000 the unemployment rate was very low, at 2.9%, and then rose steadily throughout the decade to 6.0% in 2008, to 10.8% by July 2009, and then as high as 12.0% in January 2010. Since then it decreased to 9.6% as of August 2010. This rate is higher than the state's rate of 8.8%, the same as the national rate, and lower than those of neighboring communities with the exception of Stoughton at 8.0%.

<b>Table 4: Workforce Characteristics of Avon and Neighboring Communities, 2009 Estimates</b>					
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Avon</b>	<b>Brockton</b>	<b>Holbrook</b>	<b>Randolph</b>	<b>Stoughton</b>
Aug. 2010 Labor Force	2,371	47,142	5,947	17,279	15,503
Aug. 2009 Labor Force	2,348	45,827	5,885	16,995	15,337
Aug. 2010 Unemployment Rate	9.6%	11.8%	9.8%	9.9%	8.0%
July 2009 Unemployment Rate	10.8%	11.4%	10.0%	9.6%	8.2%
Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, as of August 2010, and 2000 census.					

- **More Workers than Residents**

More recent labor and workforce data, from 2009, is presented in Table 5, which shows an average employment of 5,077 workers, which is almost 20% higher than the 4,275 residents in 2009.

- **Higher Average Wages Than Its Neighbors**

The data indicates that those industries with the most workers included wholesale trade (41 business establishments with an average employment of 1,111 workers), construction (30 businesses with an average of 273 workers), manufacturing (28 businesses with an average employment of 1,198 workers), and retail trade (35 establishments with an average of 1,020 workers). Wholesale trade, construction, and manufacturing all had average weekly wages over \$1,000. Retail trade and the other two industries with more than 20 business establishments in town – transportation/warehousing as well as other services – had much lower wages of \$395, \$651 and \$235, respectively. As a point of comparison, the average weekly wage for Boston was \$1,466, significantly higher than the average weekly wage in Avon of \$1,059. On the other hand, Avon's average wage level was higher than its neighbors as Brockton had an average weekly wage of \$823, Holbrook of \$809, Randolph of \$825, and



Stoughton of \$938.

**Table 5: Average Employment and Wages By Industry in Avon, 2009**

Industry	# Establishments	Total Wages	Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
Construction	30	\$18,419,817	273	\$1,298
Manufacturing	28	\$77,775,428	1,198	\$1,248
Wholesale trade	41	\$78,359,261	1,111	\$1,356
Retail trade	35	\$34,503,660	1,020	\$395
Transportation and warehousing	20	\$20,781,901	412	\$651
Information	5	\$6,354,388	124	\$970
Finance & insurance	6	\$1,438,413	35	\$985
Real estate, rental and leasing	5	\$1,505,561	31	\$790
Professional and technical services	13	\$3,122,356	82	\$934
Administrative and waste services	14	\$6,459,452	144	\$732
Health care and social assistance	9	\$9,066,557	183	\$863
Accommodation and food services	10	\$963,372	79	\$953
Other services, Exec., Public administration	23	\$6,430,491	99	\$235
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>\$279,613,547</b>	<b>5,077</b>	<b>\$1,059</b>

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2009

Shaded areas are those industries with the most establishments and highest average employment.

- **Fewer Than Expected Residents Working in Avon**

Additional information on employment patterns from the 2000 census indicated that of those Avon residents who were employed over the age of 16, or 2,319 workers based on census sample data, 344 or only 15.6% worked in the community as opposed to 31.3% in Brockton for example. This relatively low level is surprising given the number of employment opportunities locally, and suggests that local jobs largely do not match the local workforce. The mean travel time to work for Avon residents was actually about a half hour, suggesting that on average workers commuted a fair distance to their jobs, about 84.7% who commuted alone by car. It also suggests that most of the 5,077 who work in Avon commute from outside of the community, contributing to the high traffic flows through town, particularly on the major roadways. This traffic flow does not include the number of shoppers who travel to area stores such as Jordan Furniture, BJ's, Cosco and Walmart, for example.

- **Significant Numbers of Residents with Disabilities**

A total of 732 residents or 16.5% of the population claimed a disability in 2000, which includes any kind of physical disability. Of the 2000 population age 5 to 20 years old, 100 or 10.9% were disabled. Moreover, of the population age 21 to 64, 350 or 14.1% claimed a disability, but 65.1% of this group were employed leaving almost 35% who were unemployed, likely due to disability. In regard to the population 65 years of age or older, 282 or 36% claimed some type of

disability, more than one-third of all seniors. Unfortunately, updated information on the numbers of residents with disabilities, including types of disabilities, is not available.

### **III. Housing Characteristics and Trends**

Despite a declining population, Avon gained 37 housing units since 2000, bringing the total to 1,777. These new units include 33 single-family homes, one (1) two-family house, one (1) multiple use property (coded both residential and industrial), and two (2) accessory apartments. More information on Avon's housing stock is summarized in Table 6.

Key housing characteristics and trends, beyond a small gain in housing units mentioned above, include the following:

- **High Level of Homeownership**

The 2000 census states that 98.0% of Avon's 1,740 housing units were occupied, of which 1,305 or 76.5% were owner-occupied while the remaining 400 units, or 23.5%, were rental units. These figures represent a higher level of owner-occupancy than that for Norfolk County with 69.7%, the Boston region at 57%, and the state at 61.7%. Updated estimates suggest a comparable level of owner-occupancy in 2009.

- **Very Low Vacancy Rates**

The vacancy rates for homeownership and rentals have been very low, at 0.7% and 1.2%, respectively, in 2000. Any rate below 5% represents very tight market conditions.

- **Single-family Homes Predominate**

The 2000 census indicated that 73.8% of all units were single-family detached homes, much higher than the 59.4% level for the county and the 52.4% level for the state. Only 89 owner-occupied units were in single-family attached units or small multi-family properties. About half of the total 401 rental units were in two- to four-unit properties with only 102, or about one-quarter of all rental units, in larger multi-family structures. Almost 20% of all rentals were in single-family properties. There has been little change in this distribution of structure types and tenancy since 2000 given limited new development.

There is a great demand for rental housing as reflected in extremely low vacancy rates as well as long wait lists for the subsidized units for seniors at Fellowship Circle, built in 1970 and owned by the Avon Housing Authority. Avon has no subsidized housing for families; and while larger rental units in the private housing market tend to be relatively inexpensive, they are also typically old and deteriorated.

- **Older Housing Stock**

There has been very little residential development since 1970 as about 83% of Avon's units were built prior to that time with another 10.7% built between 1970 and 1980. Significantly, nearly one-third of the town's rental housing (116 units) was built prior to 1940. As a result, much of the town's housing stock is aging and requires updated systems and structural repairs. It is likely that there is also a need for lead-based paint remediation to make units safe for children. Because there is a reliance on septic systems, it is also likely that there are septic failures and some systems require repair or replacement.

Although deteriorated properties are found at a higher incidence in older structures and in and around the town center, they are also dispersed throughout the community. The Town recently applied and was awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the Avon Housing Rehabilitation



Program (AHRP), which will correct code violations in substandard housing units through financial and technical assistance to qualifying property owners.

**Table 6: Summary of Housing Characteristics for Avon, Norfolk County and the State**

	<i>Avon</i>		<b>Norfolk County</b>		<b>Massachusetts</b>	
<b>Housing Characteristics</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2009 Estimate</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2008/2009 Estimates</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2008/2009 Estimates</b>
Total units	1,740	1,777	255,154	266,301/ 264,135	2,621,989	2,735,645/ 2,748,211
% Occupied housing units	98.0%	--	97.5%	95.6%	93.2%	90.2%
% Owner-occupied units	76.5%	76.5%	69.7%	69.6/69.6%	61.7%	64.5%/62.1%
% Renter-occupied units	23.5%	23.5%	30.3%	30.4/30.4%	38.3%	35.5%/37.9%
% Single-family, detached structures	73.8%	73.9%	59.4%	57.7/59.3%	52.4%	52.9%/53.2%
% Units in structures of 3 or more units	16.3%	16.3%	28.0%	29.2/28.1%	31.0%	?/30.6%
Median single-family sales price/As of 8/10	\$160,100	\$263,855 *262,500	\$230,267	\$416,500/ \$370,325 *\$382,000	\$185,000	\$264,900/\$308,752 *\$300,000
Housing growth 2000 to 2009	2.1%		4.4%/3.5%		4.3%/4.8%	
Housing density 2000 to 2009	397.3 to 394.3 units per square mile		638.9 to 665.8/660.3 units per square mile		334.5 to 349/350.6 units per square mile	

Sources: Data for the above table is derived from the 2000 census, and updated estimates have been incorporated. The 2009 estimates for Avon are from the Nielsen Claritas, Inc. data source, 2009. The 2009 figures for the county and state are from the Census Bureau's 2008 American Community Survey (ACS)/and Nielsen Claritas data for comparative purposes. \*Indicates figures from Banker & Tradesman/The Warren Group as of September 27, 2010.

- **Lower Housing Market Values**

As of August 2010, Avon had a median single-family sales price of \$262,500 compared to \$382,000 for Norfolk County and \$300,000 for the state based on data from The Warren Group. Avon's median single-family home is down somewhat from a high of \$320,000 in 2005 but up a bit from 2009 when the median was \$236,000. To afford the \$262,500 median price, a household would have to earn approximately \$58,574<sup>32</sup> (\$70,100 with 95% financing), on par with the estimated 2009 median income of \$58,934<sup>33</sup> but assuming the purchaser could come up with the \$52,500 down payment and closing costs of about another \$4,000. Escalating housing costs are also reflected in property taxes, energy bills and insurance costs, which in combination with more stringent lending requirements (including down payments of 20% of the purchase price and closing costs that have doubled during the past year), have

<sup>32</sup> Figures based on 80% financing, interest of 5.5%, 30-year term, annual property tax rate of \$10.88 per thousand, insurance costs of \$1.25 per \$1,000 of combined valuation of dwelling value (value x 0.5), personal property (\$100,000 fixed), and personal liability (\$100,000 fixed), and private mortgage insurance estimated at 0.3125 of loan amount (only for 95% financing).

<sup>33</sup> Based on the Nielsen Claritas, Inc. (a proprietary data source) 2009 estimate of median income for Avon.

placed serious financial strains on long-term residents, particularly those with fixed incomes, and have posed additional challenges for first-time homebuyers.

<b>Table 7: Assessed Values of Residential Properties</b>						
<b>Total Assessment</b>	<b>Single-family Dwellings</b>		<b>Multi-unit Dwellings*</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
0-\$149,999	3	0.2	0	0.0	3	0.2
\$150,000-199,999	57	4.5	0	0.0	57	4.0
\$200,000-249,999	619 (3)	48.5	7	5.1	626	44.3
\$250,000-299,999	356 (5)	27.9	51	37.0	407	28.8
\$300,000-349,999	130 (11)	10.2	42	30.4	172	12.2
\$350,000-399,999	46 (4)	3.6	25	18.1	71	5.0
\$400,000-449,999	25 (1)	2.0	8	5.8	33	2.3
\$450,000-499,999	12	0.9	3	2.2	15	1.1
\$500,000-549,999	6 (1)	0.5	0	0.0	6	0.4
\$550,000-599,999	6	0.6	0	0.0	6	0.4
\$600,000-649,999	4	0.3	0	0.0	4	0.3
\$650,000-699,999	6 (1)	0.5	1	0.7	7	0.5
Over \$700,000	6 (1)	0.5	1	0.7	7	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,276 (27)</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Source: Avon Town Assessor, fiscal year 2010.						
* Includes multiple dwellings on one lot/two-family, three-family, and 4-8 unit structures.						
Numbers in parentheses ( ) indicate numbers of in-law apartments included in the column totals.						

Town Assessor's data for 2010, summarized in Table 7, documents that 90.2 of all Avon properties are single-family homes. More than 80% of these homes are assessed below \$300,000, suggesting that most of the housing in Avon is relatively modest in size and affordable. There are also 138 multi-unit properties, almost half of which are assessed in the \$300,000 to \$400,000 range. Residential properties in Avon also include one mobile home valued at \$147,300 and three (3) mixed residential and commercial properties assessed between \$247,400 and \$334,600.

In regard to rentals, of the thousands of apartment listings in the popular Craigslist website for the month of September 2010, there were no listings for Avon. Given such low vacancy rates, it is likely that few units, if listed at all, remain vacant for long, and finding tenants by "word of mouth" or on wait lists is the norm. To offer some insights into rental values, HUD's Fair Market Rents (FMRs) for the Brockton area include rents as high as \$1,014 for one-bedroom apartments, \$1,277 for two-bedrooms, and \$1,537 for three-bedroom units. It should also be noted that rents in combination with increasing utility costs as well as up-front cash requirements (first and last months rent and a security deposit) make renting particularly challenging in Avon and throughout the region.

- **Almost at Build-out**

At this point, almost all of Avon's buildable lots, either for residential or industrial/commercial use, have been developed leaving little land available for future development.



- **Limited Subsidized Housing**

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development's most recent data on the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory states that Avon had 1,737 year-round housing units<sup>34</sup>, of which 74 were counted as affordable (70 senior rental units at Fellowship Circle apartments and four units in a group home), representing 4.26% of the year-round housing stock. This level of affordability is substantially lower in comparison to neighboring Brockton with 12.9%, Holbrook with 10.6%, Randolph with 11.0% and Stoughton at 12.0%, all beyond the 10% affordability goal under the state's Chapter 40B regulations. Opportunities to significantly increase the supply of state-defined affordable housing are constrained by little remaining developable property and lack of sewer services.

- **Substantial Housing Cost Burdens**

Of the eight (8) towns in closest proximity, Avon had the highest percentage of households (30.9%) paying 30% or more of their income on housing and according to HUD, are therefore living in housing that is unaffordable. According to a HUD report based on the 2000 census, more than 85% of elderly owners paid too much for housing with nearly 28% of these households paying more than half their income on housing costs.

- **Increasing Foreclosures**

Foreclosure actions remained at about the same level from 2007 through 2010. There were 20 foreclosure petitions (for all properties, 17 for single-family homes) filed in both 2007 and 2010, the first step in the foreclosure process. Actual foreclosure deeds, representing the final stage of foreclosure, included seven (7) units in 2007 and up only to eight (8) in 2010 (six of the units were single-family homes).<sup>35</sup> There were 12 foreclosure petitions filed between April and September 2010, and relative to other municipalities in the state, Avon had more foreclosure petitions filed than 186 towns, the same amount as 22 towns, and less than 159 towns.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The census calculates year-round units by subtracting seasonal units or second home as well as vacant units from the total unit count.

<sup>35</sup> Data from The Warren Group, February 10, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> ForeclosuresMass website, September 30, 2010.

**ATTACHMENT 3**  
**Town of Avon, Massachusetts**  
**Community Needs Study**

**Community Survey Results**

**I. Introduction and Survey Methodology**

In the early fall of 2010, the Town of Avon conducted a community survey as part of a comprehensive effort to learn more about what residents' social and community development needs are, where they go to meet these needs, and what needs are not being met. In addition to providing everyone in town with an opportunity to provide input into the project, the survey was an excellent vehicle for informing and educating the community about the project and its goals and clearly signaled Avon Town government's interest in this important issue.

The survey was attached to the *MoneySaver* paper that was delivered to every residential address in Avon on October 6, 2010. Residents completed and returned the survey by October 28, 2010. The Business Reply Mail feature from the Post Office was used to facilitate the survey's return but more than half of the respondents chose to drop their completed surveys off at Town Offices.

A total of 105 surveys were received, representing 6.3% of the 1,675 estimated Avon households. Because this survey was not conducted in a random, scientific manner, the results cannot be attributed as an accurate or reliable reflection of the entire community. Nevertheless, the results, as summarized below, present some trends that are helpful in assessing local social needs and addressing issues related to existing gaps in the social service network. It should also be noted that most respondents did not complete all questions included in the survey so the number of responses is often less than the total number of surveys submitted.

**II. Background Information of Respondents**

As noted in the summary below, survey respondents had the following characteristics in comparison to the Avon community overall:

- More single-person households (see Table 1)
- Tended to be older (see Figure 1)
- Somewhat better educated (see Table 3)
- Predominantly White in the same proportion of the larger community (see Section II.H)
- Spoke almost exclusively English as is the case with Avon as a whole (see Section II.I)
- Had somewhat lower incomes (see Table 4)
- Included more homeowners (see Section II.L)
- Higher level of persons with disabilities (see Section II.N)

**A. Contact Information**

Contact information was optional and was provided by 50 or almost half of all respondents.

**B. Length of Residency in Avon**

Most of the respondents have lived in Avon for a very long period of time, ranging from just 2 months to 91 years. Of the 102 who answered this question, 32 or 31.4% reported they have lived in the



community for less than 10 years, but half have lived in Avon for 30 years or more. In fact, 25% have lived in Avon for 47 years or more. One respondent made an extra effort to point out that "Avon is a nice little town."

### C. Size of Households

More single-person households responded to the survey, 33.7% as opposed to 25% for the Town of Avon as a whole based on 2009 estimates as shown in Table 1. The reverse was the case for two-person households, which were under-represented in the respondents in about the same proportions, 26.7% versus 33.7%. Respondents were fairly comparable in proportion to total population data for the other household size categories.

**Table 1**  
**Household Size of Survey Respondents Compared to 2009 Estimates for Avon**

Size of Household	Survey Results		Avon 2009 Estimates	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1 person	34	33.7	418	25.0
2 persons	27	26.7	564	33.7
3 persons	19	18.8	296	17.7
4 persons	15	14.9	225	13.4
5 persons	5	5.0	121	7.2
6 persons	1	1.0	38	2.3
7+ persons	0	0.0	13	0.8
Total	101	100.0	1,675	100.0

### D. Household Structure

Table 2 compares the types of households of those who responded to the survey to Avon households as a whole.

**Table 2**  
**Household Types of Survey Respondents Compared to 2009 Estimates for Avon**

Type of Household	Survey Results		Avon 2009 Estimates	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Single individual	34	29.8	418	25.6
Married with children	30	26.3	354	21.1
Married without children	13	11.4	575	34.3
Single parent with children	3	2.6	93	5.6
Widowed	24	21.1		
Separated with children	1	0.9		
Married with adult children	5	4.4		
Divorced	2	1.8		
Unmarried with children	2	1.8		
Total	114	100.0	1,440	86.0

Shaded area indicates that data was not available for these household types.

This data suggests that there were more single individuals and married couples with children who submitted a survey in comparison to the entire Avon community. Since the question asked respondents to indicate all household characteristics that applied to them, the survey percentages are off somewhat. For example, those who claimed they are widows are also likely to be single individuals. Also, available data for the entire community did not include exactly the same categories as the survey and a complete comparison is not possible.

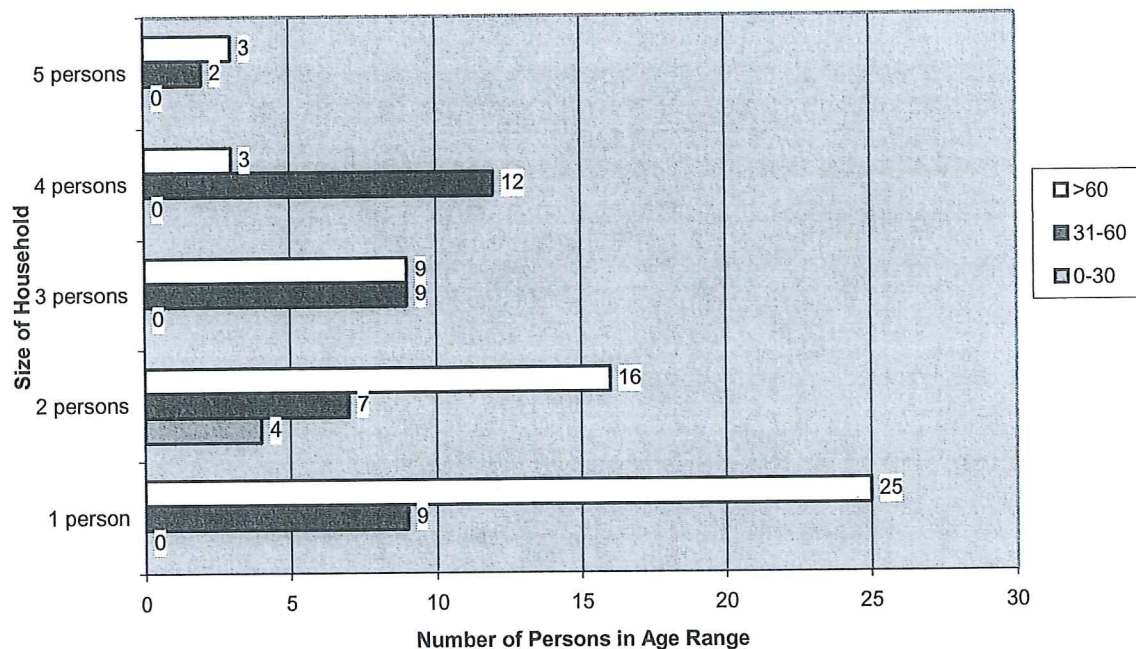
Seven (7) surveys included households where at least 3 generations were living together for a combination of reasons – 1 for financial reasons and convenience, 3 for financial and health reasons, 1 just for financial reasons, and another just for health reasons.

#### E. Age of Household Members

As Figure 1 demonstrates, those older adults in single-person households outnumbered respondents in the other categories. Particularly under-represented in the survey respondents were younger adults as there were only 4 respondents who answered this particular question and were below the age of 30, although there was a combined 39 children 18 years or younger living in the households which submitted a survey. The high level of older respondents is likely linked to the efforts of the Council on Aging in promoting the survey through its Senior Center.

**Figure 1**

**Age of Household Members by Household Size**



#### F. Educational Attainment

Table 3 summarizes the educational attainment of the household members of the survey respondents, indicating that respondents on a whole were better educated than the general Avon community. About 41% of the household members had earned a college degree or higher compared to a little more than 20% of those living in Avon according to 2000 census data. About the same level, 35%, of respondents and residents had completed high school. The survey indicated that these households included an additional 39 school-age children 18 years of age or under as also noted in Section E above.



**Table 3**  
**Level of Educational Attainment for Survey Respondents Compared to 2000 Data for Avon**

Level of Educational Attainment	Survey Results		Avon 2000	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Masters or professional degree	15	8.2	206	6.6
College degree	61	33.2	454	14.6
Some college*	41	22.3	1,066	34.2
High School degree or equivalency	63	34.2	1,097	35.2
Adults with less than high school degree	4	2.2	293	9.4
Total	184	100.0	3,116	100.0

\* Includes associates or technical degrees

Of those households with a member having a college degree or higher, more than half, 55.5%, involved graduates between the ages of 31 to 60, 36.7% were 60 years of age or older some of whom were retired, and 8.2% were 30 years or younger in the early stages of their careers and earning potential.<sup>37</sup>

#### **G. Avon School Attendance**

There were 75 respondents who indicated that no one in their household was currently attending Avon schools. Another 18 respondents had children who were currently enrolled in Avon schools, representing 19.4% of all respondents to this question (9 households who had 1 child attending, 8 with 2 children attending, and 1 with 3 children in Avon schools). A couple of others noted that their children attended private schools.

#### **H. Race or Ethnicity**

As about 90% of all Avon residents were White based on 2009 estimates,<sup>38</sup> likewise 90% of all respondents indicated that they were White, while 7 were African American or Black, 4 Caribbean Black, 1 Cape Verdean, 1 Asian, and 1 Native American. Several of the respondents claimed more than a single race or ethnicity.

#### **I. Languages Spoken**

Ninety-five (95) respondents, or 95% of those who answered this question, indicated that they only spoke English in their home, which is comparable to the 2000 census data that suggests 94.7% of all residents 5 years of age and older spoke only English at home. A few others claimed that they spoke another language as well (2 who speak French – one Russian too – and 2 speaking Haitian Creole as well as one each who spoke Spanish, Cape Verdean and Hebrew).

#### **J. Household Income**

As noted in Table 4, those who completed the survey tended to have somewhat lower income levels than the community at-large. For example, those earning below \$25,000 comprised 29 or 29% of the survey respondents but were only about 20% of all households in Avon based on 2009 estimates.<sup>39</sup> Those survey respondents earning in the middle-income ranges of between \$25,000 and \$75,000, totaled 32 respondents or 32% of all who responded to this question but were 42% of all Avon households. The proportion of those with incomes above \$75,000 was fairly comparable, 39% for the survey respondents compared to about 38% for all residents.

<sup>37</sup> This data is for the oldest household member with a college degree or higher.

<sup>38</sup> Nielsen Claritas, Inc. database, 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Results may have been somewhat skewed by the higher number of elderly respondents.

**Table 4**  
**Income Distribution of Survey Respondents vs. Avon Households**

Total Household Income	Number		Percentage	
	Survey results	Avon 2009 estimates	Survey results	Avon 2009 estimates
Less than \$10,000	3	172	3.0	10.3
\$10,000 to \$14,999	14		14.0	
\$15,000 to \$24,999	12	168	12.0	10.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9	149	9.0	8.9
\$35,000 to \$49,999	6	232	6.0	13.8
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17	326	17.0	19.5
\$75,000 to \$99,999	15	230	15.0	13.7
\$100,000 to \$149,999	13	281	13.0	16.8
\$150,000 to \$199,999	9	117	9.0	7.0
\$200,000 or more	2		2.0	
Total	100	1,675	100.0	100.0

Not surprisingly, there was a significant correlation between income and educational attainment with 36 respondents or 80% of those earning \$50,000 or more having a college degree or higher.<sup>40</sup> Only 10 respondents indicated that they had a college degree but earned less than \$50,000 annually and these were mostly young graduates or retirees.

#### **K. Housing Payments**

The largest number of respondents, 27.8%, was paying less than \$500 per month on their housing expenses, whether for rent or ownership, and a number of these households indicated that they had paid off their mortgages. Almost 40% of respondents were paying between \$500 and \$1,300 for their housing, and the remaining third of respondents was paying more than \$1,300 per month on housing costs. The \$1,300 per month payment level requires an income of at least \$52,000 to be affordable based on spending no more than 30% of one's income on housing.

**Table 5**  
**Monthly Housing Payments**

Monthly Housing Payment	Number	Percentage
Less than \$500	22	27.8
\$500 -- \$700	5	6.3
\$700 -- \$900	5	6.3
\$900 -- \$1,100	8	10.1
\$1,100 -- \$1,300	13	16.5
\$1,300 -- \$1,500	6	7.6
\$1,500 -- \$1,700	6	7.6
\$1,700 -- \$1,900	7	8.9
More than \$2,000	3	3.8
More than \$2,500	4	5.1
Total	79	100.0

<sup>40</sup> Data only available from those who reported both income and educational attainment.



In regard to utilities, there were 68 respondents who provided information and costs ranged from zero to \$1,500 per month. The average monthly cost was \$654 and the median was \$500.<sup>41</sup> This means that on an annual basis, residents in Avon are paying on average \$7,848 on utility expenses, with a median annual payment of \$6,000, a great deal to spend for anyone much less those with limited incomes.

**L. Tenure**

Those who responded to the survey represented a higher level of homeowners than renters when compared to the community at large. For example, 86 respondents, or 82% of all respondents, indicated that they owned their home versus a 76.5% owner-occupancy rate for Avon overall based on updated census estimates.<sup>42</sup>

**M. Military Service**

There were 30 respondents that indicated that members of their household, or themselves in the case of single individuals, were serving in the military or were veterans, representing 28.6% of all surveys submitted. Seven (7) of these respondents stated that there were two (2) members of their household serving in the military and/or were veterans for a total of 37 individuals who have or are serving in the military.

**N. Disability Status**

A total of 23 respondents claimed a disability, representing 21.9% of all surveys submitted and compared to 16.5% of the population indicating a disability in the 2000 census. All of these survey respondents were adults over the age of 60 with the exception of a 42-year old diabetic and a child with highly functioning autism. The reasons for their disabilities primarily resulted in reduced mobility (i.e., disc and back problems, arthritis, foot problems, knee replacements, confined to a wheelchair, dizziness, reliance on a walker, legally blind), and a couple of respondents mentioned problems related to the onset of Alzheimer's disease or mental health issues. Twelve (12), or about half of these respondents, provided information on problems they encounter related to their disability that included the following:

- Getting out of the bathtub without help
- Using stairs
- Doing housework
- Difficulty walking and driving
- Food allergies (claimed that the food pantry had few snacks available that did not include eggs or nuts)
- Entering stores that did not have automatic doors
- Getting to doctor appointments
- Making necessary home repairs
- Frequent absences from work
- Run out of food
- Get behind in paying bills
- Reading

**O. Computer Availability**

Of the 103 respondents to this question, 65 claimed that they had a home computer with Internet access (38 did not), and of these 33 have used their computer to search for available services.

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<sup>41</sup> The average, or mean, is calculated as the sum of all responses divided by the number of responses. The median is the midpoint where half of the responses fall below and half are higher.

<sup>42</sup> Nielsen Claritas, Inc. database, 2009.

### III. Community Service Needs and Usage

The survey included a series of questions related to what service providers were familiar to respondents, whether they were being accessed and what needs were not being addressed. The results are summarized below.

#### A. Familiarity and Use of Existing Service Providers

Table 6 shows how many of the survey respondents were aware of service providers in Avon and the vicinity and how many had actually used or were using these services. More than half of all respondents answering this question claimed that they had heard of the Avon Council on Aging, Self Help, Inc., Brockton Visiting Nurses Association, Avon Nursery School, the Avon Housing Authority and Brockton Transit Authority (BAT). The Council on Aging, Housing Authority and BAT were by far the most recognized service providers with more than two-thirds of respondents indicating that they were familiar with the agencies. The Council on Aging, Brockton Visiting Nurses Association and the Avon Housing Authority were the most utilized of the agencies listed with at least 10% of respondents claiming that they used their services.

**Table 6**  
**Familiarity with Existing Organizations/Agencies**

Organization/Agency	Heard of Organization/Agency		Used Organization/Agency	
	Number	Percentage*	Number	Percentage*
Avon Council on Aging	90	85.7	18	17.1
Old Colony Elder Services	49	46.7	9	8.6
Old Colony Hospice	38	36.2	6	5.7
Self Help, Inc.	62	59.0	9	8.6
Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc.	44	41.9	1	1.0
Brockton Visiting Nurses Assoc.	65	61.9	13	12.4
Avon Housing Authority	72	68.6	11	10.5
Avon Coalition for Every Student	21	20.0	2	1.9
Avon Nursery School	60	57.1	7	6.7
Avon Children's Center	47	44.8	2	1.9
South Shore Housing Corp.	12	11.4	0	0.0
Jewish Family & Children's Services	14	13.3	0	0.0
American Credit Counseling Services	15	14.3	0	0.0
Brockton Area Transit (BAT)	78	74.3	9	8.6

\* Percentage based on the total number of surveys or 105, although it should be mentioned that not all responded to this question.

The substantial response to the Council on Aging may in part be due to the agency's promotion of the survey. This is also likely to be correlated to the large number of older adults and single individuals who completed the survey in general. Many of these same individuals have likely accessed services from Brockton Visiting Nurses and some live in the Avon Housing Authority's senior complex, Fellowship Circle. In regard to knowledge of the Town's Housing Rehabilitation Program, 20 of the respondents were aware of the Program, while 76 stated they were not.

#### B. Need for Services

Despite the relatively good response to questions discussed above on the familiarity with existing service providers, many of the survey respondents surprisingly chose not to answer question #17 that asks them to indicate the types of services they need, those they are using, and the agencies they have accessed. A summary of these responses is included in Table 7.



**Table 7**  
**Type of Service Needs and Uses**

<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Number Needing Services</b>	<b>Number Using Services</b>	<b>Organization/Agency Used</b>
Health	4	20	Private practices, Brockton VA, flu shot from Town Hall
Mental health/social services	2	1	Brockton Hospital
Education/GED	1	5	Public schools
After school programs/teens	5	1	--
Job training skills	4	0	Career Training Ctr./Brockton
English Language Learner	0	0	--
Housing	5	4	Avon Housing Authority
Household budgeting	7	0	--
Handyman/small repairs	18	2	Brothers Handyman Services
Homemaker/personal care attendant	2	1	Brockton Veterans Admin.
Adult daycare	0	0	--
Emergency shelter	1	0	--
Substance abuse/addiction	0	0	--
Food assistance	8	3	Avon Food Pantry, Catholic Charities, food stamps
Childcare/nursery school/daycare	1	6	Avon Children's Center, Stoughton YMCA, private home care
Transportation	6	13	Avon Senior Van, taxi, Taz Transportation, commuter rail
Elder services	6	3	SHINE
Visiting nurses	4	8	Brockton Visiting Nurses Assoc., Partners Health Care
Hospice	0	0	--
Recreation	9	6	Stoughton YMCA, Avon Parks and Rec, Avon baseball and softball, DW Field Park,
Domestic violence shelter/ counseling	0	1	Brockton Family Counseling
Veterans services	4	4	Brockton Veterans Admin.
Other	3		Preteen programs, clean heating system, home repairs

Results do point to several areas of need including handyman services for small home repairs. This again is likely correlated with the relatively high number of older respondents. Recreational opportunities also appear to be needed in town in addition to food assistance from local food pantries and special programs such as SNAP and WIC.

In regard to which services residents are accessing, there was a large response to health services with residents generally obtaining health related services from private practices. One respondent mentioned the flu shots that were provided by the Town. It also appears that residents are using public transportation in addition to taxi service as well as the Council on Aging's van. Other service providers that were identified by at least a few of the respondents included the Avon Housing Authority, Brockton VA, Brockton Visiting Nurses, Avon School Department, Stoughton YMCA, and locally sponsored sports teams.

The survey also asked respondents to indicate if there were any services that they could not locate in Avon or the general vicinity that might be helpful to them. Most of the 74 respondents answered no or not sure to this question but 9 answered yes and listed the following types of assistance:

- Small home repairs and maintenance
- Mortgage modification
- Access to Verizon Fios
- Affordable housing for the younger generation
- A skating rink or other community park or facility for teens to congregate
- Evening activities for adults including art, exercise, knitting, crochet, flower arranging, etc. (one respondent mentioned their use of Braintree High School)
- Veterans' services
- Career counseling and jobs
- Community policing

The final question of the survey asked respondents to indicate any other issues that they would like the Town to know as input into the Community Needs Assessment and 51 provided feedback, largely oriented to additional needs for specific services including the following:

- Need for home repairs or some tax breaks on such repairs
- Low interest funding for septic system repairs
- More information on veterans services
- Nutritional counseling
- Verizon Fios service
- Fuel assistance
- More up-to-date and friendly Town website
- Municipal information that is updated and sent quarterly
- More affordable housing opportunities including special needs housing
- Better up-keep and maintenance of Housing Authority units
- Spraying for bugs
- Five-day availability of Meals on Wheels instead of the existing 2 days and service throughout the summer
- Adult activities through the library such as a book or knitting club
- Diversity training for the Police and Fire Department
- Information on free program offerings
- Recreational opportunities, including access to an exercise room, that all citizens can use for free
- More information on the Housing Rehabilitation Program

Other comments included:

- My only wish in these desperate times is that there would be some type of help getting good housing and paying rent and utilities
- Keep our library
- Town needs a stronger community resources such as a civic association to plan and implement community events
- Poor drainage conditions are causing flooding in the basement despite constant pumping
- Developable land is limited and too costly
- Avon Center is becoming sadder with few new businesses



In regard to housing services, 7 suggested that they needed fuel assistance, 5 applied for such assistance (1 was denied) and 4 were already receiving this help. Two (2) respondents indicated that they needed rental assistance and another had applied for such assistance, and another 2 indicated a need for "other" subsidized housing without any clarification. Three (3) respondents claimed a need for public housing managed by the Avon Housing Authority, another had submitted an application, and 3 stated that they lived at Fellowship Circle, the 70-unit senior housing development managed by the Avon Housing Authority.

**C. Interest in a Handbook**

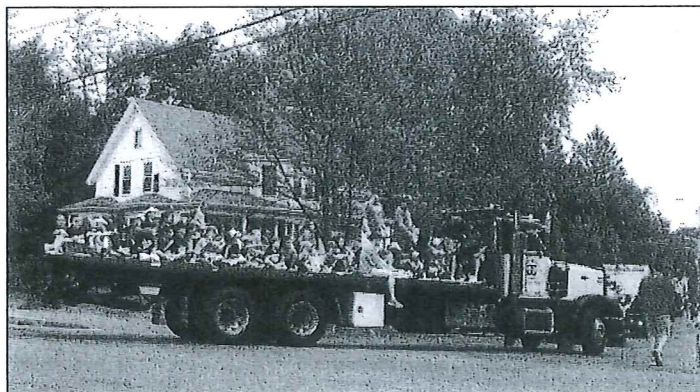
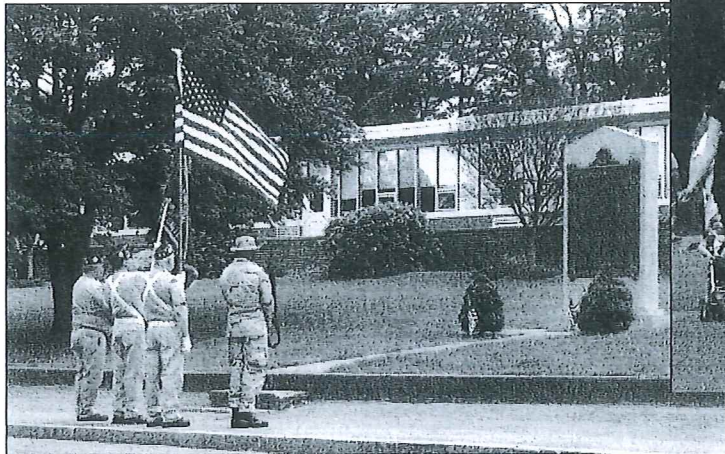
Of the 101 respondents who answered this question, a significant majority, 72 or 71.3%, claimed that a handbook with descriptions of existing programs and services in Avon and the region would be helpful (one mentioned that including census information would also be helpful). Another 17 (16.8%) answering no, and 12 (11.9%) indicated that they were not sure about how useful such a handbook would be. As shown in Section III.B, there were numbers of respondents who indicated that they could not locate needed services nearby that are actually available, providing some hint that such a handbook might be useful.

**IV. Conclusion**

As mentioned above, the results of this survey cannot be interpreted as accurately reflecting the entire Avon community given the small sample size as well as the method of distribution. Moreover, unfortunately not every respondent chose to answer all of the questions. Nevertheless, the survey provides some anecdotal evidence on how some residents are obtaining important social and community services and what thoughts they have on how the Town of Avon might help residents better access existing services and help attract the necessary resources to fill the gaps where services are limited, not readily accessible, or unavailable.

ATTACHMENT 1

# Town of Avon, Massachusetts Community Services Resource Manual



Prepared by Karen Sunnarborg, Consultant

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## Guide to Services

This Community Services Resource Manual is a list of local, regional and state agencies, organized alphabetically by agency name. The Guide below groups the agencies by categories of community service needs. You will notice that many agencies are listed under more than one need category. Find the full description and contact information of each agency by turning to the page number that follows the agency's name.

<b>Domestic Violence</b>	<b>Page</b>
Brockton Family and Community Resources.....	3
Southeast Center for Healthy Communities .....	9
See hotlines on page 9	
 <b>Education and Training</b>	
Avon Children's Center .....	1
Avon Nursery School (Avon Baptist Church) .....	1
Avon Public Schools .....	2
Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc.....	3
Cape Verdean Association of Brockton .....	4
Catholic Charities South .....	4
Health Imperatives .....	5
Self Help Inc .....	8
Southeast Center for Healthy Communities .....	9
 <b>Financial Assistance and Counseling</b>	
American Credit Counseling Services.....	1
Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc.....	3
Cape Verdean Association of Brockton .....	4
Catholic Charities South .....	4
Salvation Army – Brockton Corp .....	8
Self Help Inc .....	8
 <b>Health/Mental health</b>	
Alcoholics/Gamblers Anonymous (Avon Baptist Church).....	1
Avon Coalition for Every Student .....	1
Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc.....	3
Brockton Family Planning .....	3
Brockton Neighborhood Health Center .....	3
Brockton Visiting Nurses Association .....	4
Cape Verdean Association of Brockton .....	4
Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center – Brockton .....	4
Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Family Support Center For Brockton Area .....	5
Health Imperatives .....	5
Latin American Health Institute .....	5
New England Sinai Hospital Rehabilitation Center – Stoughton.....	6
Old Colony Elder Services .....	6
Old Colony Hospice .....	7

Signature Healthcare Hospital – Brockton .....	9
South Bay Mental Health Center .....	9
Southeast Center for Healthy Communities .....	9
<b>Housing, Community &amp; Economic Development</b>	
Avon Housing Authority.....	2
Avon Office of Community Development .....	2
Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc.....	3
Cape Verdean Association of Brockton .....	4
Catholic Charities South .....	4
Metro South Chamber of Commerce .....	6
Old Colony Planning Council.....	7
Randolph-Avon Rotary Club .....	8
Salvation Army – Brockton Corps .....	8
Self Help, Inc. ....	8
<b>Immigrant Services</b>	
Cape Verdean Association of Brockton .....	4
Catholic Charities South .....	4
Latin American Health Institute .....	5
<b>Public Safety</b>	
Avon Fire Department .....	2
Avon Police Department .....	2
Brockton Family and Community Resources .....	3
Norfolk County Sheriff's Department.....	6
Old Colony Elder Services .....	6
<b>Recreation</b>	
Avon Baptist Church .....	1
Avon Council on Aging .....	1
Avon Park and Recreation Commission .....	2
Avon Public Schools .....	2
Old Colony Elder Services .....	6
Old Colony YMCA .....	7
St. Michael's Parish .....	8
<b>Seniors</b>	
Avon Baptist Church.....	1
Avon Council on Aging .....	1
Brockton Visiting Nurses .....	4
Cape Verdean Association of Brockton .....	4
Catholic Charities South .....	4
Old Colony Elder Services .....	6
<b>Transportation</b>	
Avon Baptist Church.....	1
Avon Council on Aging .....	1
Brockton Area Transit Authority .....	3



Old Colony Elder Services .....	6
<b>Youth/Families</b>	
Avon Baptist Church.....	1
Avon Children’s Center and Avon Nursery School .....	1
Avon Coalition for Every Student .....	1
Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc.....	3
Cape Verdean Association of Brockton .....	4
Catholic Charities South .....	4
Old Colony Hospice .....	7
St. Michael’s Parish Church .....	8
Self Help Inc .....	8
South Bay Mental Health Center .....	9
<b>Veterans Services</b>	
Avon Veterans Agent .....	3
Veterans of Foreign Wars .....	9

**Dial 2-1-1** for phone access to statewide community resources or visit **[www.mass211.org](http://www.mass211.org)** for an online directory of information on emergency food, rent, help paying heating and utility bills, mental health counseling, health programs, public health and safety services, child care referrals, job resources, and other help for individuals, parents and families.

**See other Hotlines/Helplines as well as other resources and links on page 9.**

## Community Services and Agencies

### ***American Credit Counseling Services (ACCS)***

4 Taunton Street, Plainville MA 02762

[www.accs.org](http://www.accs.org)/508-643-4445 or 888-729-0551

*Services:*

- Workshops
- Individual counseling on financial matters, budgeting and credit counseling

### ***Avon Baptist Church***

119 North Main Street, Avon 02322

[www.avonbaptistchurch.org](http://www.avonbaptistchurch.org)/508-588-0414

*Services:*

- Food Pantry open Monday through Thursday
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Gamblers Anonymous
- A Ham and Beans supper on the second Saturday of the month that costs \$6.00
- Ecumenical service and luncheon held on the third Wednesday of each month
- Avon Nursery School

### ***Avon Children's Center***

152 Highland Street, Avon 02322

508-580-2572

*Services:* Preschool education

### ***Avon Coalition for Every Student (ACES)***

Avon Middle-High School

285 West Main Street, Avon 02322

[www.avonk12.ma.us](http://www.avonk12.ma.us)/508-588-0230

*Services:* Town-wide coalition that through a variety of approaches is conducting an analysis of the social norms, community beliefs and risk factors involved in substance abuse in an effort to ultimately prevent such behavior.

### ***Avon Council on Aging (COA)***

Town Hall at 65 East Main Street, Avon 02322

[www.avonmass.org/coa](http://www.avonmass.org/coa)/508-559-0060

Town agency that promotes the health and well-being of Avon seniors.

*Services:*

- Lunch Program two (2) days per week, also delivered to home-bound seniors
- Senior van available to take seniors to special events, Saturday mass at St. Michaels Church, Senior Center, appointments, etc. (a fee of \$2.00 is charged except for trips to church or lunch at the Senior Center)
- Lunch-time speakers
- Dance classes
- Special activities
- Informal socializing



- Special activities
- Informal socializing
- Special meals, such as pizza day and parties
- SHINE Program that provides information on health insurance
- Information and referrals

#### ***Avon Fire Department***

150 Main Street, Avon MA 02322

[www.avonmass.org/fire/508-583-5361/911](http://www.avonmass.org/fire/508-583-5361/911)

*Services:* Fire and emergency medical services

#### ***Avon Housing Authority (AHA)***

One Fellowship Circle, Avon MA 02322

[www.avonmass.org/housing/508-588-1847](http://www.avonmass.org/housing/508-588-1847)

*Services:* Owns and manages subsidized rental units at Fellowship Circle for seniors and disabled residents and provides special activities.

#### ***Avon Office of Community Development***

Town Hall at 65 East Main Street, Avon 02322

[www.avonmass.org/508-588-0414](http://www.avonmass.org/508-588-0414)

*Services:* Housing Rehabilitation Program to assist qualifying homeowners in making necessary home improvements.

#### ***Avon Park and Recreation Commission***

Town Hall at 65 East Main Street, Avon 02322

[www.avonmass.org/rec/508-588-0414](http://www.avonmass.org/rec/508-588-0414)

*Services:*

- Sponsors a wide range of local recreational programs and services including special trips (ski trips, cultural events, festivals, Atlantic City, Great Smokey Mountains, Baltimore/Washington DC, circus, New York City)
- Activities in the Avon Civic Center (sewing and quilting every Wednesday evening, scouts, birthday parties)
- Team sports (Avon Youth Baseball, Softball and Babe Ruth, adult kickball, tennis, Stoyak Basketball program,)
- Summer programs (daily summer program, field trips, Theater Camp, etc.) and special annual events (Christmas in Avon)
- The Town's baseball, soccer and basketball teams are jointly sponsored by Avon and the Town of Holbrook.

#### ***Avon Police Department***

150 Main Street, Avon MA 02322

[www.avonmass.org/police/508-583-6677/911](http://www.avonmass.org/police/508-583-6677/911)

*Services:* Community safety

#### ***Avon Public Schools***

Butler Elementary School (Patrick Clark Drive, Avon 02322) – 508-587-7009

Avon Middle-High School (285 West Main Street, Avon 02322) – 508-583-4822

Administration (Patrick Clark Drive, Avon 02322) – 508-588-0230

[www.avon.k12.ma.us](http://www.avon.k12.ma.us)

*Services:* Enrolls 777 students in preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the Butler Elementary School and Avon Middle-High School, providing public education, special education, transportation, and recreational services (sports teams and clubs).

***Avon Veterans Agent***

Town Hall at 65 East Main Street, Avon 02322

[www.avonmass.org/508-588-0414](http://www.avonmass.org/508-588-0414)

*Services:* Information and referrals to veterans.

***Brockton Area Multi-Services, Inc. (BAMSI)***

Administration at 10 Christy's Drive, Brockton MA 02301

[www.bamsi.org/508-580-8700](http://www.bamsi.org/508-580-8700)

*Services:*

- Child and family services
- Outpatient mental health services
- Public health and community services
- Alternative educational services
- Residential services
- Rehabilitation services
- Developmental disabilities services
- Strategies to Independence (STI)
- Community resources and outreach
- Housing assistance

***Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT)***

155 Court Street, Brockton MA 02302

[www.ridebat.com/508-588-1000](http://www.ridebat.com/508-588-1000)

Call the Avon Council on Aging for dial-a-bat service at 508-559-0600

*Services:*

- Fixed route bus service that connects Brockton and neighboring communities, including Avon, to Boston as well as major industrial parks, three colleges, medical facilities, shopping centers and area commuter rail stations
- Dial-a-bat special bus service available to anyone 65 years of age or older or with a physical or developmental disability who is unable to ride a regular BAT bus

***Brockton Family and Community Resources***

18 Newton Street, Brockton MA 02301

[www.fcr-ma.org/508-583-6498](http://www.fcr-ma.org/508-583-6498)

*Services:* Counseling and free legal advocacy to victims of domestic violence or other crimes.

***Brockton Family Planning***

111 Torrey Street, Brockton MA 02301

[www.hcsm.org/drhs/brocktonfamilyplanning.php/508-586-3800](http://www.hcsm.org/drhs/brocktonfamilyplanning.php/508-586-3800)

*Services:* Confidential, affordable and accessible reproductive health services.

***Brockton Neighborhood Health Center***

63 Main Street, Brockton

[www.bnhc.org](http://www.bnhc.org)

*Services:* Adult medicine, pediatrics, social services, teen clinic, teen theatre, and OB/GYN,



508-559-6699

- Dental services, 508-559-1158

***Brockton Visiting Nurses Association (BVNA)***

500 Belmont Street, Brockton MA 02301

[www.brocktonvna.org](http://www.brocktonvna.org)/800-295-6341 or 508-587-2121

Non-profit home health care agency providing home health services, community education and health promotion through registered nurses, home health aids, and therapists with goal to return patients to their normal daily routines as quickly as possible.

*Services:*

- In-home nursing (adult, maternal child health, and disease management)
- Adult and pediatric rehabilitation therapy (occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech language pathology)
- Health care team services (dietician and nutritional counseling, home health aides, interpreter services, and medical social workers)
- Caring for Kids Program (home care for medically fragile children and their families)

***Cape Verdean Association of Brockton, Inc.***

575 N. Montello Street, Brockton MA 02301

<http://cvassociation.webs.com>/508-559-0056

Provides education, health, civic, as well as social and human services to Cape Verdeans residing in the Greater Brockton area.

*Services:*

- Citizenship preparation classes
- Assistance in accessing health care services
- Help in obtaining employment (job bulletin board, collaboration with employment agencies, Summer Work and Learning Program for youths)
- Consular services (passport renewals, INS forms, declarations)
- Counseling services
- Onsite After School Program including tutoring and connections to other extracurricular activities
- Assistance to the elderly (interpreting, advocacy, letter writing, outreach, and referrals to social service agencies)
- Advocacy
- Cultural events (such as the annual Cape Verdean Day)

***Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center – Brockton***

235 North Pearl Street, Brockton MA 02301

[www.caritaschristi.org/Good\\_Samaritan](http://www.caritaschristi.org/Good_Samaritan)/508-427-3000

*Services:* Comprehensive health and medical care.

***Catholic Charities South***

157 Centre Street, Brockton, MA 02302

[www.ccab.org/cc\\_brockton](http://www.ccab.org/cc_brockton)/508-587-0815

Community service component of the Archdiocese of Boston, established to meet the emerging and changing needs of children and families in the Brockton area.

*Services:*

- Basic needs emergency services such as food, fuel, rental and utility assistance
- Youth mentoring
- Search Out Another Road (SOAR) involving reintegration services for those recently released from prison
- Nursing assistance/home health aide training
- Parent Aide Program
- Elder Outreach Program
- Mental health and substance abuse counseling
- Adult Education ESOL classes
- GED classes

***Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Family Support Center for the Brockton Area (formerly called the Boston Area ARC)***

1250 West Chestnut Street, Brockton MA 02301

[www.brocktonareaarc.org](http://www.brocktonareaarc.org)/508-583-8030

*Services:* Advocacy and information pertaining to the needs and interests of individuals with disabilities and their families.

***Health Imperatives***

942 West Chestnut Street, Brockton MA 02301

[www.hcsm.org](http://www.hcsm.org)/508-583-3005

Non-profit health and human service organization whose mission is to improve the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities by promoting positive decision-making skills, providing preventive health and social services, and encouraging supportive community institutions.

*Services:*

- Reproductive health services (Brockton Family Planning)
- Family health services (Adolescent Health Services, Healthy Families Home Visiting Programs for teen parents)
- Womansplace Crisis Center and Woman, Infants and Children (WIC) Program
- Preventive and community services (Area Health Education Center; Brockton Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program; Communities Mobilizing for Change; Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth Support Project; OutHealth; HIV/AIDS Service Coordination Collaborative; Statewide Homeless/HIV Integration Project; David H. Mulligan Center for Health Promotion; Southeast Center for Healthy Communities; Statewide Partnership for HIV Education in Recovery Environments).

***Latin American Health Institute***

142 Crescent Street, Brockton MA 02302

[www.lhi.org](http://www.lhi.org)/508-941-0005

Agency directed to serving the needs of the Latino community in and near Brockton.

*Services:*

- Health promotion
- HIV prevention
- Case management
- Counseling and testing
- Interpretation and advocacy
- Client accompaniment to medical and social service appointments
- Substance abuse treatment
- Family-based interventions for individuals involved with the Department of Social Services



**Metro South Chamber of Commerce**

60 School Street, Brockton MA 02301

[www.metroouthchamber.com/508-586-0500](http://www.metroouthchamber.com/508-586-0500)

Services: Supports member businesses through a number of services including

- Networking opportunities
- Professional development
- Legislative advocacy
- Marketing exposure
- Access to business resources
- Economic development
- Community betterment
- Access to health and dental resources for small businesses

**New England Sinai Hospital Rehabilitation Center – Stoughton**

150 York Street, Stoughton MA 02072

[www.newenglandsinai.org/781-344-0600](http://www.newenglandsinai.org/781-344-0600)

Long-term acute care hospital

Services:

- Medical care
- Comprehensive pulmonary and physical rehabilitation
- Specialized ambulatory services

**Norfolk County Sheriff's Department**

200 West Street, P.O. Box 149, Dedham, MA 02027

<http://norfolksheriff.com/programs/781-751-3516>

Services: The Police Department, Fire Department, and Avon Council on Aging have been working with the Norfolk County Sheriff's Department to promote community safety through a number of special programs including:

- The "Are You OK" Program provides safety and security for those seniors who are living alone by placing a call to them each morning to check on their well-being.
- Project Lifesaver that in collaboration with LoJack Safety Net protects people with Alzheimer's disease, autism or other afflictions that may cause a person to wander and become lost.
- The Triad Program puts seniors in touch with all public pertinent public safety and social service organizations through regular meetings.
- The Files of Life Program involves the distribution of free kits that consist of a list of medications a person uses and associated special health conditions to be posted in a visible place, such as on a refrigerator, and accessed in the event of an emergency for reference by paramedics and EMTs.

**Old Colony Elder Services (OCES)**

144 Main Street, Brockton MA 02301

[www.oldcolonyelderservices.org/508-584-1561](http://www.oldcolonyelderservices.org/508-584-1561)

Services:

- Information and referrals
- Case management (assessment and coordination of services such as homemaker, personal care, home health, chores, transportation,
- social day care, adult day health, respite, etc.)
- Clinical assessment and eligibility determination
- Adult family care (links seniors to caregiver families)

- Congregate housing (in several communities outside of Avon)
- Family caregiver support
- Money management
- Personal care attendants for the disabled
- Protective services for those who have experienced some type of abuse or neglect from a caregiver whether it is physical, emotional or involves financial exploitation

### ***Old Colony Hospice***

One Credit Union Way, Randolph, MA 02368

[www.oldcolonyhospice.org](http://www.oldcolonyhospice.org)/800-370-1322

*Services:* Interdisciplinary services to meet the physical, spiritual and psychosocial needs of patients with advanced disease and their families/loved ones.

### ***Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC)***

70 School Street, Brockton 02301

[www.ocpcrpa.org](http://www.ocpcrpa.org)/508-583-1833

Regional planning agency

*Services:*

- Wide range of planning services for communities in the region
- As the Area Agency on Aging that is charged with the responsibility of helping to identify and address the needs of elders in Southeastern Massachusetts, including Avon
- Planning support for the elderly service delivery system in the region and channels federal and state grant funding to service providers

### ***Old Colony YMCA***

*Old Colony YMCA, 320 Main Street, Brockton MA 02301, 508-583-2155; Easton Branch is 25 Elm Street, North Easton MA 02356, 508-238-9758*

[www.oldcolonyymca.org](http://www.oldcolonyymca.org)

Provides services to promote healthy lifestyles, strengthen family life, develop leadership in youth, build international understanding and assist in community development. Southeastern Massachusetts' largest human service provider and provider of childcare services. Y Services Corporation, based in Brockton, has been a major community resource for troubled youth.

*Services:*

The Old Colony YMCA in Easton has been working closely with the Avon Public Schools on a number of activities.

- Before and after school childcare at the Butler Elementary School and some after school activities at the Middle School/High School.
- Physical activities for disabled children after school in both schools that will be available for one hour each day of the week, funded through a three-year grant in collaboration with the North River Collaborative.<sup>27</sup>
- A summer program in the planning phase to provide full-day childcare in a camp like setting at the Butler School for most of the summer.

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<sup>27</sup> The North River Collaborative is a multi-purpose educational organization that includes member school districts, including Avon. It provides high-quality, cost-effective educational programs and services to students with disabilities.



**Randolph/Avon Rotary Club**

[www.wickedlocal.com/avon](http://www.wickedlocal.com/avon)

*Services:* Brings together representatives from the business and non-profit community provide community services, including scholarships.

**St. Michael's Parish (Catholic Church)**

87 North Main Street, Avon 02322

508-586-7280

*Services:*

- Help with the Food Pantry located at the Avon Baptist Church as well as My Brother's Keeper, located in Easton, which provides food and furniture to those in need
- HEAT Assistance Program that provides needy parishioners with emergency assistance in paying heating bills
- Recreational activities such as dances for teens and adults, a youth group, and annual community events

**Salvation Army – Brockton Corps**

216 Centre Street, Brockton MA 02403

[www.use.salvationarmy.org/508-583-1896](http://www.use.salvationarmy.org/508-583-1896)

*Services:*

- Emergency services including utility assistance (Good Neighbor Energy Fund), clothing and furnishings, and mortgage assistance (FEMA Program)
- Counseling
- Help with Mass Health applications and Food Stamp applications
- Referrals and case management
- Disaster relief services

**Self Help, Inc.**

780 West Main Street, Avon 02322

[www.selfhelpinc.org/508-588-0447](http://www.selfhelpinc.org/508-588-0447) or 508-588-4049

508-588-5440 for Fuel Assistance (1362 Main Street, Brockton MA)

508-588-4049 for the Lead Paint Program and Healthy Homes Program (142 Crescent Street, Brockton MA)

The area's community action agency established to serve a wide range of education, housing, health and service needs of low-income and disadvantaged residents.

*Services:*

- Family Based Services to prevent child abuse and out-of-home placements through a variety of supportive counseling and emergency services.
- Healthy Homes Program addresses the multiple safety and health hazards that are found in the home environment.
- Head Start Program, a preschool program for eligible children with support services for their families.
- Community Partnerships for Children provides services to support child care providers.
- MELD Parenting Program to support the needs of teenage moms, single moms and young parents.
- Lead Paint Abatement Program provides financing for property owners where at least one child under age six (6) resides.

- Fuel Assistance Program helps limited income households pay for their primary source of heat, makes referrals to other sources of energy assistance, and provides advocacy with utility companies.

***Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital – Brockton***

680 Centre Street, Brockton MA 02302

[www.signature-healthcare.org/508-941-7000](http://www.signature-healthcare.org/508-941-7000)

Services: Comprehensive health and medical care

***South Bay Mental Health Center***

Brockton location – 1115 West Chestnut Street, Brockton MA 0230

[www.southbaymentalhealth.com/508-580-4691](http://www.southbaymentalhealth.com/508-580-4691)

Services:

- Community-based services to children, adults and families
- Outpatient mental health and substance abuse counseling
- Day treatment and partial hospital programs
- Early intervention services

***Southeast Center for Healthy Communities (SCHC) – Health Imperatives, Inc.***

942 West Chestnut Street, Brockton MA 02301

[www.hcsm.org/508-583-3005](http://www.hcsm.org/508-583-3005); 508-588-2045

The region's center for preventing abusive behaviors.

Services: Education, research and support groups as well as technical assistance to communities. For example, it is providing technical support for Avon's ACES Program, was the convener for the Greater Brockton Community Health Network Area (CHNA), undertakes research, manages the HIV Integration Program, helps low-income domestic violence/sexual assault victims begin to develop some economic independence, etc.

***Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)***

VFW Avon Post 8892, Inc. at 263 Main Street, Avon 02322

[www.manta.com/c/mmstxs/vfw-avon-post-8892-inc/508-583-9699](http://www.manta.com/c/mmstxs/vfw-avon-post-8892-inc/508-583-9699)

Services: Supports the needs of veterans through

- Social opportunities
- Advocacy
- Other interventions on behalf of veterans, the military, and communities.

## **Sources and Links**

### **Hotlines and Helplines**

Dial 2-1-1 for phone access to statewide community resources or [www.mass211help.org](http://www.mass211help.org).

This online directory is an information resource for emergency food, rent, help paying heating and utility bills, mental health counseling, health programs, public health and safety services, child care referrals, job resources, and other help for individuals, parents and families. Other hotlines and helplines are provided in the following table:



<b>Hotline/Helpline</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>
AIDS Hotline	1-800-235-2331
Alcohol and Drug Helpline	1-800-327-5050/617-455-1500 for the Boston area
Child At Risk Hotline (for child abuse issues)	1-800-792-5200
Elder services in Massachusetts including 24-hour Elder Abuse Hotline	800-AGE-INFO
Long-term care facilities in Massachusetts	<a href="http://www.MassachusettsLongTermCare.org">www.MassachusettsLongTermCare.org</a>
Massachusetts Poison Control Center	1-800-682-9211
Massachusetts Suicide and Crisis Hotlines	1-800-SUICIDE/1-800-784-2433 1-800-273-TALK/1-800-273-8255
National Domestic Violence/Abuse Hotline	1-800-799-SAFE
SafeLink (Massachusetts Domestic Violence Hotline)	1-877-785-2020
Parental Stress Line	1-800 632-8188
Rape Crisis Hotline	1-800-656-HOPE
Teen Helpline	1-800-252-TEEN (8336)

There are many public and private resources that provide assistance regarding a wide range of community needs including the following:

<b>Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
<b><i>Massachusetts Government</i></b>	
MassCHIP	888-MAS-CHIP
Massachusetts Department of Public Health	<a href="mailto:MassCHIP.Support@state.ma.us">MassCHIP.Support@state.ma.us</a>
Summary of Health Risks and Preventive Behaviors in Community Health Network Areas (CHNA's) 2007-2009.	<a href="http://www.mass.gov/dph/hsp">www.mass.gov/dph/hsp</a>
Massachusetts Citizen Information Service	1-800-392-6090
Massachusetts Department of Children and Families	1-800-792-5200
Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care	617-988-6600
Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	617-573-1100 <a href="http://www.mass.gov/dhcd">www.mass.gov/dhcd</a>
Massachusetts Department of Public Health	617-573-1600 <a href="http://www.mass.gov/dph">www.mass.gov/dph</a>
Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance	617-348-8500 <a href="http://www.mass.gov/dta">www.mass.gov/dta</a>
Mass Health Services	1-888-665-9993
MassHousing (Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency)	800-882-1154 or 617-854-1000 <a href="http://www.masshousing.com">www.masshousing.com</a>
Massachusetts Housing Partnership	<a href="http://www.mhp.net">www.mhp.net</a> 877-MHP-FUND or 617-330-9955
Other state agencies	<a href="http://www.mass.gov">www.mass.gov</a>

<b><i>Federal Government</i></b>	
U.S. Census Bureau data	<a href="http://www.census.gov">www.census.gov</a>
Federal Consumer Information Center	1-800-688-9889
<b><i>Other Sources</i></b>	
Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)	617-742-0820 <a href="http://www.chapa.org">www.chapa.org</a>
Greater Boston Legal Services	617-371-1234
Health Imperatives Southeast Center for Healthy Communities The Greater Brockton Community Health Network Area (CHNA)	<a href="http://www.preventionworks.org">www.preventionworks.org</a>
Parents Helping Parents (Parental Support)	617-926-5008