P
Place

Housing

Transportation

E
Economy

Businesses of the Today and the Future

Growth of Tax Base

Per capita income.

S
Social

Resident Experience

Student Experience

Elderly Experience

Recreation

Healthcare

T
Technology

What are the needs of tomorrow in technology

Where does tech impact jobs of tomorrow - prep our students, welcome these businesses

L
Land Use

Define the various uses of land and the rules about them

Include Urban Design

E
Environment

Climate change impact on life, jobs, safety

Pollution, clean air, water

Supported by Town Infrastructure and Services

P1: Electric Vehicle Accomodation

P Place

Housing

Transportation

Electric vehicles have become more and more common in the past decade. The number of electric vehicles continues to **grow yearly at an exponential rate.** Autonomous vehicles are farther on the horizon, but will be a major change once adopted by mainstream drivers.

Considerations:
- Southwick is not prepared; limited access to public charging ports
- Do we have proper infrastructure for at home charging?
- Increase in autonomous vehicles could transfer to town services (i.e. refuse - could add an autonomous vehicle and introduce curbside trash/recycle pickup)
- New skills will be needed at auto repair shops leaning more into electrical repairs

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Economy, social, technology, land use, environment

Place

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P2: Public Transportation Availability

Suburban & rural areas of Massachusetts, including Southwick, have **extremely limited access to public transportation** like buses and Uber drivers.

Considerations:
- This makes work/leisure travel difficult for adults who cannot afford personal vehicles; limits their work radius, ability to access services, and decreases social/economic interactions around town
- Younger populations are also affected in similar ways in younger teen years before able to obtain a license & vehicle (these are generally the workers who take the entry level jobs at stores & restaurants around town)

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Social, technology, environment

P3: Aging Population & Housing

In New England communities, the majority of the population are older people. Within the next few decades, this will result in a **substantial drop in population in Southwick** as the aging population passes or moves away. This will result in **significant amounts of housing inventory,** which opens the opportunity to **attract new residents** into town for population growth.

Considerations:
- Aging residents may look to downsize their houses; do we have real estate inventory in town or will they move out due to size & cost considerations?
- Does our Senior Center offer the transportation services needed by our aging population to be able to remain in town?
- Do existing bylaws allow for "tiny houses" on plots with homes for an alternative to permanent in-law apartments?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Social, economy, land use

P

Place

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P4: [Town or city](#)

As people continue to move out cities into suburbs (accelerated by work from home culture), our population could grow. At population 12,000, the **town could vote to change** from town government **to city government** (mayor/council or council/manager models).

Considerations:
- Right now Southwick population is declining, but this could reverse quickly as we build more single family / multi-family housing

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Social

EC1: [Cannabis](#)

Major tax revenue generator for states with recreational marijuana is legal. Cannabis is expected to be a **[$41.5 billion industry by 2025](#)**. First two fiscal years in MA = $122M in cannabis tax revenue and MA has now **collected more cannabis tax revenue than alcohol tax revenue**.

Considerations:
- Agriculture zoning vs cannabis overlay map for growing
- Retail sales were rejected by voters; missing out on 3% local tax option PLUS 3% "community impact fee" that can support schools, town departments, infrastructure improvements, etc.
- Other non-retail employment opportunities within the industry: converters, wholesalers, tax services, lawyers, advertisers, etc.
- Southwick is a right to farm community

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Land use, social

E

Economy

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EC2: Population decline

Mid-size cities in New England (around 5-9,000) saw a small average decline of 0.9% since 2010. Meanwhile, other regions, like the South and West have seen population growth. **Southwick's population of 9,506 in 2010 has decreased to 9,232 in 2020.**

Considerations:
- Less money spent in town hurts our small businesses & local farms (which eventually may sell their land instead of staying in business)
- Fewer homeowners means fewer real estate tax revenue
- Smaller families / later in life families impacts school funding
- How can attract more working-age/younger families to our area?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Social, technology, land use

Businesses of the Today and the Future

Growth of Tax Base

Per capita income.

EC3: Automation

The automation of jobs has significantly **increased** and will **continue to increase** over the next few decades. It is estimated that 8.5% of the global manufacturing workforce will be replaced by automation.

Considerations:
- Negatively impacts availability of work for unskilled workforce (traditionally people of color, young adults, less educated people)
- Opens opportunities for new types of jobs such as coding, maintenance, and repairing of the machines

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Technology

EC4: eCommerce

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to eCommerce purchases. Consumers are now highly skilled online shoppers, and the **expectation for instantaneous service + highly automated experiences** will only continue.

Considerations:
- Local business need to adapt (i.e. buy online pick up in store and/or delivery services) to keep up with consumer expectations; matters to town to protect tax revenue
- More deliveries in town means heavier vehicle wear and tear on roads, increased traffic, and rural roads that may not be ideal for trucks/vans
- How to attract eComm sellers to town for new tax revenue?
- Drone deliveries on the not too distant horizon
- Smaller, local distribution centers are becoming a popular method for last mile delivery (more like Amazon Holyoke; not Amazon Windsor)

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Social, technology, land use, environment

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S1: <u>Ongoing opioid epidemic</u>

"The nation's **drug overdose epidemic continues to change and become worse**". Nowhere is immune; it is happening around us.

Considerations:
- Emergency medical & police services
  - Lawmakers/communities looking to make Narcan available OTC
- Access to and costs of emergent healthcare
- Access to and costs of rehabilitation services
- Access to and costs of continued sobriety services
- Drug paraphernalia adds to town's litter

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Environment

S2: [Income disparities](#)

In 2019, Southwick's median household income was $73,776, yet 6.6% of households live in poverty. The gap between earning groups **is expected to widen.**

Considerations:
- Do we adequately support households from all income brackets?
  - Food bank, local EBT acceptance, transportation, etc.
- Ukraine/Russia conflict - can we support increased immigration of those fleeing war?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Place, economy, technology

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S3: Diversity in Southwick schools

The US census projects that the nation will become "minority white" due to increases in minority populations. This trickles down to school populations as families settle around the country. Southwick is currently **below the MA average public school diversity percentage of 0.59, sitting at 0.15.**

Considerations:
- What would attract a more diverse population to Southwick?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Place, economy, land use

S4: [Remote Work](#)

Over the past two decades there has been a significant increase in remote working. **Between 2005 and 2015 the number of U.S. employees who telecommute increased by 155%**. In January 2020, 54% of office workers said they would be willing to quit their job for one that allowed remote work. And these are *PRE-PANDEMIC FIGURES!*

Considerations:
- Increased loneliness and social isolation / limited interactions; how to pull people out into the community?
- Homes to include offices instead of / in addition to guest bedrooms
- Technology driven smart houses to become mainstream
- Expectations for *affordable* high-speed internet access

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Place, economy, technology, land use

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S5: Increased pet ownership

Forecasted **14% increase in pet ownership**, especially with Gen Z and Millenials, and mostly but not exclusively around dogs. Many pet owners have more than one pet.

Considerations:
- Potential for recreation outlet in a dog park / other pet services
- More missing dogs around town
- Increased dog bites / attacks
- Young adults are moving from the city to suburbs for bigger yards
- Increased dog traffic on bike trail
- Pet owners spend more via eCommerce than brick and mortar stores, so an expected increase in delivery vehicles around town

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Place, economy, land use

S6: Government automation

Residents will expect more streamlined experiences with their local governments while caring about their data security; eCommerce experiences are training people to be **tech-reliant and impatient, which will bleed over into government services**

Considerations:
- Online voting
- Electronic bill pay for town bills (no more paper copies in the mail)
- Web-based permit applications and AI pre-screens to speed up government red tape
- Attending town meetings via augmented reality (AR)

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Technology

S7: **Policing**

There will be a shift to have different types of officers report to different types of calls (i.e. armed officers to violent calls; social work officers to noncriminal, nonviolent calls).

Considerations:
- Police force based social workers are most effective when they live in the community in which they serve, but are often very low paid positions. As a small town, how do we attract the right applicants to live & work in Southwick?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- ?

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Technology
What are the
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T1: <u>Solar Energy</u>

Traditional oil, gas & electric energy prices are constantly increasing, and will continue to grow over the next few decades. However, usage of solar power in suburban & rural areas like Southwick is **significantly cheaper and has renewable availability,** and is not dependent on the electric grid. Solar energy is an alternative energy source and does not deplete natural resources or damage the environment.

Considerations:
- High upfront costs that are the burden of homeowner
- Residential solar panel ground installations currently not allowed with existing bylaw language (?)
- Are there other alternative energies we can utilize? Wind, hydro, etc.
- Will alternative energies be managed municipally vs residentially?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Environment, economy, land use

T2: **Technology in Schools and in Jobs**

Technology continually evolves in education and in a variety of jobs. As technology's reach widens, the user traditionally is younger as they grow up knowing nothing else. **Students need to be exposed to all types of technology**, because no matter what they do after graduation, they will have to **interact with some type of technology in their chosen career**.

Considerations:
- Are our schools fully utilizing technology for teaching purposes?
- Are our schools properly developing curriculum around technology of the future?
- And are we equitably preparing students for trade schools, military, direct to workforce, or college?
- Do we properly provide continuing education / retraining opportunities for adults already out of school?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Economy, social

Land Use

Define the
various uses
of land and
the rules
about them

**Include Urban
Design**

L1: Loss of Farmland

In the last 15 years, over **11 million acres of farmland** were paved-over, fragmented, or converted to new uses that jeopardize farming. Rising development pressures limit what farmers can accomplish, and **New England's food production has been lowered to just 12%**.

Considerations:
- Food security, both locally and from other areas in the US/world
- Farm lands are often sold to developers that build it up and encroach on ecologically relevant areas, like wetlands
- Farm lands are part of the town's aesthetic; losing them results in the town having an identity crisis
- How do we support our existing farms so they can afford to continue to farm and not be forced to sell land?
- Are there new types of farming the town can support?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Place, economy, social, technology, environment

Land Use

.Define the various uses of land and the rules about them

Include Urban Design

L2: Impervious Surfaces

These are created through the construction of roads, buildings, houses, and other structures. Impervious surfaces lead to **heightened erosion, flooding, polluted water, and increased stormwater runoff**.

Considerations:
- Impacts lake recreation and drinking water
- How do we utilize more pervious surfaces such as permeable pavers, pervious concrete, or rain gardens?
- Do we have proper stormwater management policies in place?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Technology, environment

ENV1: [Global Warming](#)

New England is warming faster than rest of planet with Massachusetts taking 1st place. Global warming will force Southwick to adapt to new conditions over the next few decades to ensure that it can still access its necessities to survive as a town.

Considerations:
- Increases of invasive species killing native plants & trees (less trees = less shade = warmer surface temps = vicious cycle)
- Ticks thriving / living longer life cycles = more Lyme disease
- Altered farming seasons for both commerce and food availability reasons; "in season" will become shorter, earlier/later, or no longer able to be grown in our area; rising costs to farmers & consumers
- Drought-like conditions leads to annual water restrictions

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Economy, social, land use

E

Environment

Climate change impact on life, jobs, safety

Pollution, clean air, water

ENV2: Lake Congamond & Invasive Aquatic Vegetation

20 years ago, all 420 acres of the Congamond Lakes had to be treated for invasive aquatic vegetation. Now, only 15-20 acres of it have to be treated to prevent the growth of the invasive plants. However, **algae blooms in recent years suggest not enough is being done to prevent the spread of these invasive plants.**

Considerations:
- Are we properly investing in the prevention of invasive aquatic vegetation to ensure the Congamond Lakes remain safe?
- Congamond Lakes are a key water supplier for Southwick. How does the treatment of the lake affect the water and how we use it in our daily lives?

Other related PESTLE categories:
- Social