

Historical & Cultural Resources

Rutland is home to the Massachusetts Central Tree, the Old Burial Ground, a historic Prison Camp Site, and a “lost village” in West Rutland. It is vital to Rutland residents that the town’s historic assets are prioritized and protected, especially when new developments arise. Planning for historic and cultural preservation will allow the town to better protect the stories and heritage of Rutland for generations to come.

Many historical and cultural commissions shape Rutland, including the Cultural Council, Historical Commission, Historical Society, Council on Aging, and the 300th Anniversary Committee.

The Historical Society offers a range of activities to educate on the heritage of the area. The Rutland Town Common has been the place of community gatherings, holiday celebrations, fairs, concerts, protests, speeches, parades, and other events in Rutland for centuries. Each year, residents and visitors come together on and around July 4th to partake in road races, parades, concerts, bonfires, a strawberry festival, and fireworks.

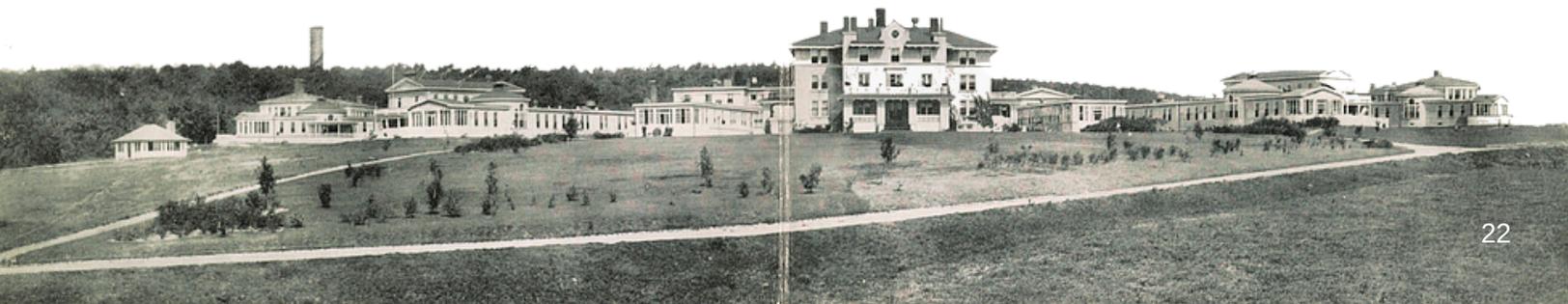
■ There are several bylaws and policies that Rutland should pursue to preserve the Town’s historic character, including Local Historic Districts, a Demolition Delay Bylaw, and nominations for the National Register of Historic Places.

■ To gain widespread support for preservation initiatives, the Town must actively engage with community members of all ages to instill local identity and a sense of pride in the town’s heritage and unique history. Field trips, tours, lectures, open houses, summer programs, celebrations, and concerts give residents and visitors the opportunity to engage with the town’s past.

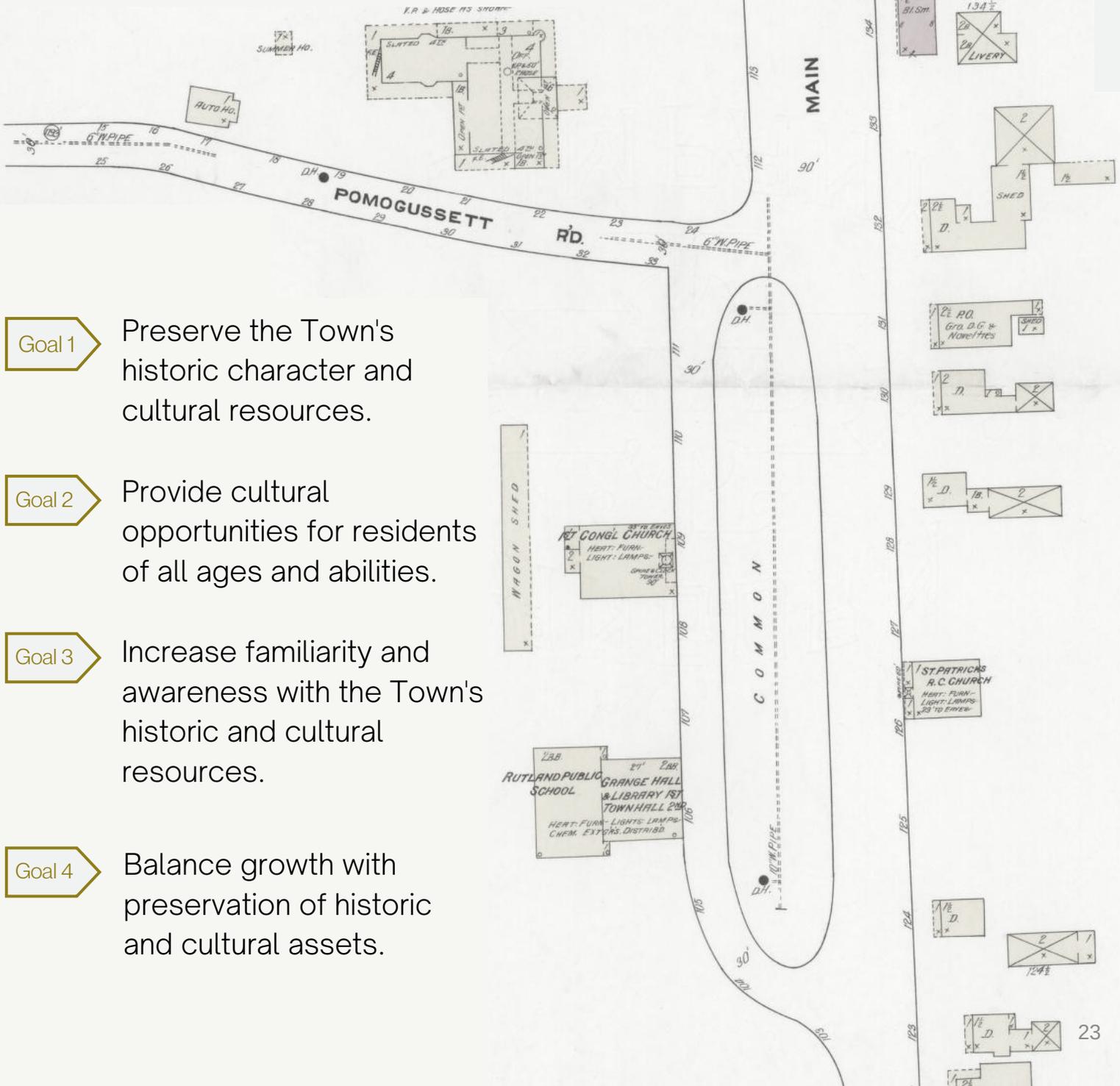
■ The Town should maintain a publicly accessible inventory of structures, artifacts, documents, and other historical resources that tell the story of Rutland.

■ Awareness of the Lost Villages Scenic Byway should be strengthened by actions such as maintaining roadway signage, distributing print and online promotional materials, and collaborating with other Lost Villages towns.

■ The Town should also take steps to ensure it is economically viable for agricultural land and businesses to remain operational.



Historical & Cultural Resources Goals



Goal 1

Preserve the Town's historic character and cultural resources.

Goal 2

Provide cultural opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

Goal 3

Increase familiarity and awareness with the Town's historic and cultural resources.

Goal 4

Balance growth with preservation of historic and cultural assets.

Cultural & Historic Resources



Introduction

Rutland is a town with numerous historical assets and a strong agricultural identity characteristic of rural New England. The protection and management of historic and cultural resources is key to maintaining what many residents love about Rutland.

Rutland is home to the Central Tree, a Revolutionary War-era prison camp site, the Rutland Heights Hospital site, and a “lost village” in West Rutland. More than seventy percent of respondents to the Master Plan Survey support the adoption of the Community Preservation Act, a smart growth tool that supports the preservation of historic assets and open spaces, and the creation of more housing. Close to seventy percent of the survey respondents recognize the historic resources in Rutland as an essential part of the town’s character. More than seventy percent of survey respondents agree that local regulations should protect historic resources, and the town should have cultural opportunities for Rutland residents of all ages and abilities.¹

In the face of new development and construction, Rutland's historic assets should be maintained, enhanced, and protected. Planning for historic and cultural preservation will allow the town to leverage its resources to protect the stories and heritage of Rutland for generations to come. This chapter of the Master Plan will focus on documenting the history of Rutland and its significant cultural and historical assets. The chapter will identify issues and opportunities, which will inform a set of recommendations intended to help preserve Rutland's cultural and historical resources.

Prior Planning and Engagement Efforts

Rutland Heights State Hospital Reuse Master Plan (1997)

The Rutland Heights State Hospital Reuse Master Plan identified redevelopment uses for the old state hospital in central Rutland. The 87-acre site sits in a residential area and is about a half mile away from the Town Center. The goals included preserving environmentally sensitive land, promoting long-term economic development, and preparing the area for possible mixed-use accommodations.²

The plan identified several potential uses, including residential living, elderly housing, a public school, industrial, a business park, a research development site, retail, recreation, lodging, and municipal. The long-term plan proposed that the site be divided among three main uses: an industrial/business park, elderly housing, and recreation and compatible municipal functions.³

The hospital was closed by the state government in 1991 to reduce costs amid an economic crisis. The historic structures remained until 2005 when the complex was demolished.⁴ The water and sewer systems

¹ Rutland Master Plan, Survey, 2022.

² Rutland Master Plan, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://www.rutlandmasterplan.com/copy-of-home>.

³ Rutland Master Plan, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://www.rutlandmasterplan.com/copy-of-home>.

⁴ Welker Grant, Worcester Business Journal, June 7, 2019, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://www.wbjournal.com/article/rutland-is-hoping-for-a-large-scale-development-at-the-former-state-hospital>.

were replaced, and roads were repaved to prepare the site for redevelopment. In 2012, the town bought the site for \$456,000. The Rutland Development and Industrial Commission (RDIC) is seeking and reviewing redevelopment proposals, and a final plan is not determined currently. The Central Tree Middle School was constructed next to the vacant portion of the site and opened in the fall of 1998.



STATE SANATORIUM AT RUTLAND.

Figure 1: State Sanatorium. Source: Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.

Rutland Master Plan (2000)

A Master Plan was adopted in 2000 as the result of several years of community engagement. The plan made recommendations regarding professional capacity, land use and zoning, design quality and community character, and economic development.

Maintaining Rutland’s rural New England character was a prime concern of the town’s residents. The preservation of farmland, natural resources, and other historic and scenic resources were identified as priorities by Rutland residents. The plan sought to achieve a balance between historical and natural preservation and commercial development, describing growth as difficult to achieve.⁵

The plan identified the opportunity for a Historic District Study Committee to determine the possibility of a local historic district in certain parts of town, such as the Town Center. The plan focused on the Town Center, identifying the space as the heart of the community. Residents voiced opposition to the area

⁵ Rutland Master Plan, 2000.

becoming a commercial strip featuring large businesses and favored the expansion of services within the Center to support local businesses and small-scale specialty shops. The Master Plan concluded that Town Center should be established as a gathering or social space, to complement the rural and historic character of the area.⁶

Rutland Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017)

The 2017 Rutland Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) was an effort to preserve natural and recreational resources for the enjoyment of Rutland residents. The town had two other plans in 1996 and 2011. The 2017 OSRP built on the previous plans, providing updated assessments and goals to help preserve Rutland’s natural and recreational resources.⁷

The 2017 OSRP surveyed residents to identify community priorities and visions. The community engagement process showed a particular emphasis on the need to preserve historic sites, farmlands, water quality, wildlife habitats, and open spaces for recreation.⁸

The primary goals of the Open Space and Recreation Plan were to preserve Rutland’s historic character and improve access to parks and other recreation facilities. It was recommended that the town continue to seek state and federal funding for the improvement of recreation facilities, improve walkability in Town Center, develop outreach capacity, and improve regional communication and collaboration.⁹

Rutland Town Center Strategic Plan (2021)

The 2021 Rutland Town Center Strategic Plan focused on strategies that supported a vibrant and walkable Town Center. Recommendations relevant to this chapter included the construction of a pavilion in Town Center for events, additional seating in the Town Common, developing an awning program for Town Center buildings, and implementing marketing strategies such as improved signage and the addition of an informational kiosk.

Community Engagement and Input

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission has successfully identified topics of concern related to historic and cultural resources through community engagement. The Community Survey conducted in 2021 showed that seventy-eight percent of survey respondents believe historic character should be preserved when historic buildings are facing renovation and new development takes place. Approximately seventy percent of respondents feel that regulations should aim to protect historic resources and that Rutland should take measures to ensure the adequacy of cultural opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Rutland Open Space and Recreation Plan 2017.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Rutland residents also took part in a workshop to express ideas and concerns. At the workshop, residents voiced their preference for prioritizing areas and projects that would enhance the town's historic and cultural features. Participants expressed that historical land, and its history, should be identified and inventoried due to local importance, and zoning efforts and other regulatory measures should ensure preservation. The community also looks to instill Rutland's heritage in educational programs for young residents. Participants felt that Rutland needs to find workable funding mechanisms to support current sites, and preservation thereafter.

Commissions and Active Groups

Rutland Cultural Council

The Rutland Cultural Council (RCC) is part of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The RCC aims to improve the quality of life for Rutland residents with access, education, and promotion of diversity within the arts, humanities, and sciences. These goals aid in the economic growth of the community. The Council achieves this by awarding grants to nonprofit organizations, communities, artists, and schools.

Rutland Historical Commission

The Historical Commission works alongside the Select Board on the preservation and protection of Rutland's historical and archaeological assets. The Massachusetts Historical Commission oversees the group to ensure that through historical preservation, towns such as Rutland can create a sense of place that helps to define and enhance the character of its community.

Rutland Historical Society

The Historical Society has served the town of Rutland for 28 years. The mission of the Historical Society is,

“To cultivate and encourage an interest in the history of Rutland and vicinity, especially of individuals and families identified with its early history; to establish and maintain a historical building, and to collect and preserve therein materials of historical value and interest.”¹⁰

The Historical Society has multiple publications related to the history and heritage of Rutland and hosts a variety of activities for families and those interested in the area's history.

Council on Aging

The Council's mission is to help older adults in Rutland connect socially and have access to the necessary resources they may need to continue their independence. The Council offers programs, resources, and services to residents. Featured services include pharmacy services, tax preparation, caregiver support, transportation, and educational programs.

¹⁰ Rutland Historical Society, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://rutlandmahistoricalsociety.org/about/>.

The 300th Anniversary Committee

The 300th Anniversary Committee is leading Rutland in a yearlong celebration. Rutland’s Tricentennial honors Rutland’s extensive history by engaging the community. The 300th Committee’s goals are to celebrate the strong local culture and integrate local youth with the help of schools to education and fun opportunities. At the same time, it recognizes the positive influence and contributions made by individuals in Rutland’s community. This committee is dedicated to increasing awareness about Rutland’s history and various attractions and highlighting the town’s key role in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.¹¹

Existing Conditions

Overview

Before European settlement, Rutland was called Naquag by the Nipmuc people, the Indigenous group who originally lived in present-day Rutland and Central Massachusetts. The first permanent European settlement was founded circa 1713. These settlers had armed conflicts with the original Indigenous inhabitants, with fatalities occurring through 1724. In the eighteenth century, the area became an agricultural settlement, and a meetinghouse was constructed in 1720. During the industrialization period, Rutland remained agricultural, although manufacturing industries appeared in the area. In 1898, Rutland became the home of the first state-operated sanatorium, a facility designed to treat tuberculosis patients. The sanatorium remained open until its permanent closure in 1991. Despite new development, many of the town’s historical sites are still a functional part of the landscape.¹²

Colonial Period (1675 – 1775)

The area once referred to as Naquag was bought from the Indigenous Nipmuc people in 1686. In 1714, the purchased land was divided into a settlement. Soon afterward, a town center, meetinghouse, burial ground, school, and training field were built. Earlier settlers in Rutland came from towns including Boston, Marlborough, Framingham, and Lexington. By 1720, fifty families were settled in what is now Rutland. Churches began to form thirteen years after Scots-Irish Presbyterians bought land in the “Rutland West Wing,” now known as Oakham. The Presbyterians sought to create a town with a Presbyterian government and bought the area in 1742.¹³ Notable events affecting Rutland’s population in the Colonial Period include an outbreak of throat distemper in 1749. The town lost sixty children to dysentery in 1756. Eight more children were lost to smallpox three years later. Toward the end of the Colonial Period,

¹¹ Town of Rutland, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.townofrutland.org/300th-anniversary-committee>.

¹² MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report RUTLAND, 1984, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/rut.pdf>.

¹³ History of Oakham, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.oakham-ma.gov/about-us/pages/history-oakham>.

¹⁴ MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report RUTLAND, 1984, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/rut.pdf>.

Rutland's population equaled 1,090 residents in 1765. Over the following decade, the population dropped to 1,006 residents.¹⁴

Federal Period (1775 – 1830)

In 1777, the Revolutionary War prison barracks were established on Barrack Hill. The soil in Rutland was well-adapted to agricultural uses, and raising livestock was a prevalent activity. Despite the population suffering from infectious disease outbreaks during the Colonial Period, Rutland remained resilient and experienced population growth of more than five-fold to 1,202 residents between 1790 and 1800.

Early Industrial Period (1830 – 1870)

Roads from the early 19th century are still being used today, including the first County Road running through North Rutland, and the second County Road traveling through Paxton, West Rutland, Coldbrook Springs, and finally Barre. The population gradually increased during the Early Industrial Period, but from 1830 to 1870, it fell from 1,276 to 1,024. Lastly, Irish immigrants began settling in Rutland beginning in 1855, arriving in small numbers.

In the 1830s, the Congregational church experienced divisions but did not report major disagreements. The Methodists established their own space within the community in 1840 and built a separate meeting house toward the center of Main Street but disbanded in 1860. Toward the end of the Early Industrial Period, the Catholic population began congregating in the southern part of town near the current intersection of Route 122 and Irish Lane. In 1866, the town established its first public library and maintained a hall for public lectures.¹⁵ Between the late 1830s and 1840s, shoemaking within Rutland was a prominent, but short-lived industry. Throughout the Industrial Revolution, Rutland remained primarily an agricultural community, notable for its palm leaf hat creation during the 1830s and 1840s, dairy and livestock raising, and milk, butter, and cheese production.¹⁶

Late Industrial Period (1870 – 1915)

In 1874, the Seventh Day Adventists built a church on North Rutland Street. Saint Patrick's Catholic Church moved to Town Center in 1881. Due to Rutland's natural beauty and air quality, the town became a renowned site for recreation and healthcare in the area. In the early 20th century, Rutland became home to a state tuberculosis sanitarium, a state prison camp, and an additional hospital for prisoners with tuberculosis. Although Rutland's textile industry thrived throughout the 1870s and 80s, shoe shops halted production in the 1880s, alongside basket shops in West Rutland. However, sawmills, blacksmith shops, a carriage shop, and two woodenware mills survived until the early 1990s.¹⁷

¹⁵ Rutland Library, History, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.rutlandlibrary.org/history>.

¹⁶ MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report RUTLAND, 1984 accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/rut.pdf>.

¹⁷ Ibid. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/rutlandtownworcestercountymassachusetts>

In addition to being recognized as a center of treatment hospitals, Rutland was a town that catered to summer visitors due to its vast natural resources. In 1883, a hotel named the Muschopague House was built in the town center and operated until 1929. Although industrialized, dairy and agriculture remained prominent sectors of the local economy through the Late Industrial Period. Rutland was home to the Rutland Cooperative Creamery Association, which built a creamery that processed butter in 1886. With the opening of the Central Massachusetts Railroad in 1887, Rutland increased its whole milk sales.

Early Modern Period (1915 – 1940)

Through the early twentieth century, Rutland was an important location for government health facilities. In 1923, the Veterans Administration Hospital opened on an eighty-acre location south of Rutland’s town center. In 1934, a hospital administration building was added to the campus. Due to the hospital's placement, additional residential development happened along Maple Street and in the town center. Agriculture prevailed throughout the early twentieth century. Gardening, dairying, raising poultry, and orcharding continued to grow in Rutland. Following World War I, Finnish families moved from Worcester to Rutland, buying and redeveloping the town’s older farms, bringing the farms back into the lives of the town.

Contemporary Period (1940 – Present Day)

During the Contemporary Period, industries that once thrived fell apart and had to make way for new developments. As farmlands receded for housing, Rutland began accommodating new residents. Between 1980 and 1990, Rutland’s population increased from 4,334 to 4,936. In the early 2000s, the population increased to approximately 6,000. Today, Rutland has a population of 9,169, the highest of any time during its long history.¹⁸ New housing developments were further introduced, and the funding served the community.

Rutland built key community amenities during this time. Behind the Community Hall is a little league field, a basketball court, and the town swimming pool. The pool was reconstructed alongside the new development of a pool house. Today, Rutland is a quaint, 21st-century small town with agricultural businesses that still thrive. This includes its buffalo farm, Alta Vista, and the Jordan Dairy Farm.^{19 20} Overlook Farm, Mesa Farm, and Lilac Hedge Farm.

¹⁸ U.S. Census, QuickFacts Rutland town, Worcester County, Massachusetts, accessed December 29, 2022.

¹⁹ Jordan Dairy Farms, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://jordandairyfarms.com/>.

²⁰ Good, Karen. "Preservation of small town character in the town center of Rutland, Massachusetts." (2002), Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning Masters Projects, accessed December 29, 2022, https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=larp_ms_projects; accessed December 29, 2022, <https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/bitstream/handle/2452/838006/ocm53815280.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> Rutland Historical Society, Inc, accessed December 29, 2022, "Foundations of a Town: Early Rutland Homes & Families," accessed December 29, 2022, <https://lilachedgefarm.com/>.

Historic Resources Inventory

An inventory of the town’s historic resources is available online using the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), a research website managed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. A copy of Rutland’s historic resource inventory, listing the historic structures, monuments, statues, objects, burial grounds, and historical buildings, is included in the Appendix, and notable historic resources are included in the following map and tables.

Historic Period	Structure/Landscape	Location	Year
Colonial Period (1675-1775)	Rutland Old Burial Ground	Main St.	1717
	Putnam Gen. Rufus House	344 Main St.	1760
	Henry, Lt. David House	11 Barrack Hill Rd	C 1770
Federal Period (1775-1830)	Barrack Hill Farm	8 Barrack Hill Rd	1784
	Goose Hill Cemetery	Charnock Hill Rd	1812
	West Rutland Cemetery - Rural Cemetery #2	Rt 122	1829
Early Industrial Period (1830-1870)	Hunt, Frederick House	12 Barrack Hill Rd	R 1850
	Rutland Post Office and General Store	259 Main St	R 1850
	Forbes, Lyman House	261 Main St	R 1850
	Bigelow, Hon. J. Warren House	255 Main St	C 1860
Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)	Rutland Fire Station	286 Main St	C 1897
	Wood, Franklin Tyler - Morris, Lewis F. House	232 Main St	C 1908
Early Modern and Modern Periods (1915-present)	Rutland World War I Monument	Main St	1921
	Rutland First Congregational Church	264 Main St	1928
	Continental Army Barracks Marker	Charnock Hill Rd	C 1930
	Hessian Well and Marker	Charnock Hill Rd	1930
	Quabbin Aqueduct - Ventilation Shaft 4	Rt 68	1931
	Burgoyne's Wooden Barracks Marker	Charnock Hill Rd	1932
	Rutland Center School	278 Main St	1938
	Saint Patrick's Roman Catholic Church	258 Main St	1958
	Naquag Elementary School	285 Main St	1965

Table 1: Major Historic Resources in Rutland. Source: MACRIS 2022. Note: Structures and places with no date, Town Common, Barrack Hill, Quabbin Aqueduct, Central Tree, 1st Meeting House site marker.

National Register of Historic Places

Authorized in 1966 by the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Register of Historic Places is an official list of places that are significant to American history, culture, architecture, or archeology. The National Register is a program that supports efforts to identify, evaluate, and preserve American history

and archeological assets. Rutland’s Rufus Putnam House is a designated National Register of Historic Places Individual Property and a National Historic Landmark. The Putnam House was built by John Murray, a poor immigrant whose mother died on board their ship to America, between 1760 – 65. Murray later became a wealthy landowner in Rutland and Athol, Massachusetts, and served as the selectman of Rutland and as the representative of the Great and General Court for 20 years before the Revolution.²¹ Murray’s daughter married Daniel Bliss; the Blisses lived in the home before the Revolution. The home was however seized by the state of Massachusetts when the Blisses became Tories during the War for Independence and was used by the officers.²²

On May 24, 1781, Rufus Putnam paid 993 pounds for the house and 150 acres of land. Putnam lived in the home until 1788. Rufus Putnam was a military officer during the French and Indian War and served as a general during the Revolutionary War. Before serving, he worked on his farm, practiced surveying, and built mills. During the few years Putnam lived in the house, he took part in the local government as the selectman, constable, tax collector, and Justice for the General Court. He later started the Ohio settlement in this house. Between the years 1896 to 1950, the Putnam House was open to visitors serving as a museum, maintained by the Rufus Putnam Memorial Association, until 1950 when the group disbanded.²³



Figure 2: Rufus Putnam House. Source: Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System.

²¹ Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Building Survey.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Historic Districts

The creation of local historic districts is an effective measure that prevents alterations to historically significant buildings. If a property owner wishes to make alterations, a local Historic District Commission oversees reviewing the proposed changes, alongside a public hearing to determine its suitability. Rutland currently does not have a historic district in town.

Cultural and Historical Resources

Massachusetts Central Tree

Located on Central Tree Road, the Central Tree may appear to be an ordinary maple tree, but its position is significant to Rutland and Massachusetts. The maple is surrounded by a modest split-rail fence and has a wooden plaque proclaiming it the center of the state.²⁴ An elm tree once stood in its place and died of Dutch Elm disease in 1969. The red maple stands in as the replacement.²⁵ ²⁶ Although the center of Massachusetts has been determined to be in various locations based on differing methodologies, the Central Tree in Rutland carries sentimental value to residents. Located on private grounds, the tree is a symbol of the character of old Rutland.²⁷

²⁴ Cobb Nathan, “Town is rooted in tree’s history,” accessed December 29, 2022, http://archive.boston.com/news/globe/living/articles/2004/03/15/town_is_rooted_in_trees_history/.

²⁵ New England Nomad, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://newenglandnomad2015.com/2017/01/02/geographical-center-of-massachusetts-rutland-ma/>.

²⁶ Roadside America, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.roadsideamerica.com/tip/570>.

²⁷ Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Building Survey.



Figure 3: Massachusetts Central Tree. Source: Town of Rutland.

The Old Burial Ground

The Old Burial Ground is a final resting place for Rutland's earliest settlers, families, and those who perished in the French Indian War, Colonial Wars, and the American Revolution. The cemetery was formed in June 1717. Two-thirds of the space was used for burial purposes, with a stone wall surrounding the space. A meeting house was also found in the area. The number of interments is currently unknown as the records were either not kept or were lost in a fire that destroyed the meeting house. Due to this, many unmarked graves remain. In 1842, the Rural Cemetery was built. From there on, most burials were in the Rural Cemetery rather than the Old Burial Ground. The known burials on the grounds are two veterans that served in the French and Indian War, 32 veterans of the Revolutionary War, ten members of the Militia, the first ministers that settled in Rutland, one State Senator, seven representatives from the General Court, and seven Justices of Peace; to name a few significant figures within Rutland's history that have been laid to rest in the Old Burial Ground.^{28 29}

²⁸ accessed December 29, 2022, <https://archive.org/details/oldburialgroundr00duan/page/31/mode/2up>.

²⁹ Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System, Massachusetts Historical Commission.



Figure 4: Old Burial Ground. Source: Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System.

Prison Camp Site

The Prison Camp Site was built in 1903 to imprison minor offenders. The Prison was equipped with a functioning farm to keep prisoners busy. The farm was located on 150 acres of a 914-acre parcel. The farm grew potatoes and kept chicken and dairy cows. The milk produced was enough to sell to Worcester. A farm facility was in place, and there was also housing staff and a water tower. A tuberculosis hospital was also added to treat patients in 1907. The prison grounds were built on a drainage site for the local water supply, causing the abandonment of the grounds in 1934. Today, the public may visit the grounds and hike through to explore. The remains are now covered in graffiti but remain important to Rutland's history.³⁰

³⁰ Atlas Obscura, Rutland Prison Camp, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/rutland-prison-camp>.



Figure 5. Prison Camp Site. Source: Only in Your State.

Route 122 Lost Villages Scenic Byway

The Lost Villages Scenic Byway received its name due to the areas that were once settled by Europeans becoming “lost” as human settlement patterns changed through history. The Byway has “lost villages” and historic sites to see, including the West Rutland Village. The Village was once a thriving site of homes, a school, stores, and other essentials for a small town. The housing that once was present in the West Village was replaced in the 1930s due to the area being a watershed for the Quabbin Reservoir. Locations to visit within Rutland include Rutland State Park, Civil War, WWI & WWII monuments, and the site of the first Catholic Church.³¹

Rutland Historical Society

The Historical Society house, located at the Wood House, at 232 Main Street in Rutland Town Center, has served the town for 28 years. Built in 1908, the Morris-Wood House is the earliest example of a Bungalow style residence in Rutland. The house is the only residence along Main Street in Rutland Town Center that was built in a distinctively early twentieth-century style.³² The structure was built by Sadie Morris and willed to the Town of Rutland in 1975. The Rutland Historical Society was established in the 1800s to restore and preserve Rutland’s history by maintaining artifacts. The Historical Society has remained active, despite having to close due to wars and the tuberculosis outbreak. The Historical Society has prevailed through challenging times, ensuring that the community's history is passed down for generations to come.

³¹ CMRPC, Route 122, Lost Villages Scenic Byway, accessed December 29, 2022, <http://cmrpc.org/sites/default/files/Documents/RegServices/4.%20RUTLAND-Rte%20122%20Scenic%20Byway-1.pdf>

³² Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Today, the Historical Society has a range of activities for individuals and families to educate Rutland residents and visitors about the history and heritage of the area.³³



Figure 6: Morris-Wood House. Source: Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System.³⁴

Fourth of July Festival

Rutland’s Independence Day festivities are recognized throughout the region. Each year, residents and visitors come together on and around July 4th to partake in road races, parades, concerts, bonfires, a strawberry festival, and fireworks. In 2022, Rutland celebrated the 300th anniversary of its founding (its “Tricentennial”). To commemorate the Town’s birthday on the Fourth of July, Rutland hosted an even greater number of events.³⁵

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report RUTLAND, 1984, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Cent-Mass/rut.pdf>.

³⁵ Rutland MA, 4th of July, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.rutlandma-4thofjuly.org/>.

Rutland Town Common

The Rutland Town Common has been the place of community gatherings, holiday celebrations, fairs, concerts, protests, speeches, parades, and other events for centuries. On June 6, 1717, the proprietors of the town decided that the town's first meeting house be built, and the plan set aside the land for a training field, and that land became Rutland Town Common. The Common has been one of the sources of community pride.³⁶



Figure 7: Rutland Town Common. Source: Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System.

³⁶ Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Rutland First Congregational Church

This Colonial Revival-style church was designed by Oscar Thayer and constructed in 1928. The church is the fifth to be built on this site, replacing an earlier building built in 1830.³⁷ The church is a significant cultural resource for the community, and it continues to serve Rutland.



Figure 8: Rutland First Congregational Church. Source: Rutland UCC.

Rutland Public Library

Rutland’s library is in Rutland Town Center. The Library was founded following the end of the Civil War. The Library has moved several times. Originally, the Library was founded at the home of the first Rutland librarian, George A. Putnam, found at 237 Main Street. The Library was first opened for the loaning of books in the spring of 1866. In 1879, the Library was moved to the house of the third librarian of Rutland at 228 Main Street. The original house is no longer standing. In 1885, the Library had over 1,300 books and was signed out over 1,600 times that year. As the population of the town grew, the Library moved to 280 Main Street, close to the town hall in 1899. However, in 1939, the Library was moved again to the newly constructed Community Hall in the center of Rutland. In 1970, the Library, dealing with increasing demand, moved to a newly constructed Library at 246 Main Street. Finally, in 2000, the Library was moved again to 280 Main Street where the “Red School” was located. Today, the Library hosts activities for the residents of Rutland, and it is a great resource for residents with a prolific collection, research materials, and computer equipment.³⁸

³⁷ Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, Massachusetts Historical Commission.

³⁸ Rutland Free Public Library, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.rutlandlibrary.org/history>.



Figure 9: Rutland Public Library. Source: Rutland Public Library.

Rutland Community Hall

The Rutland Community Hall is located at 250 Main Street in Rutland Town Center. Among all the services the Town provides, the Board of Assessors, the Board of Health, the Department of Recreation, the Town Clerk, the Treasurer, and the Collector are in the Town Hall. The town hall has served other purposes over the years including a library at one point and hosting other community activities.

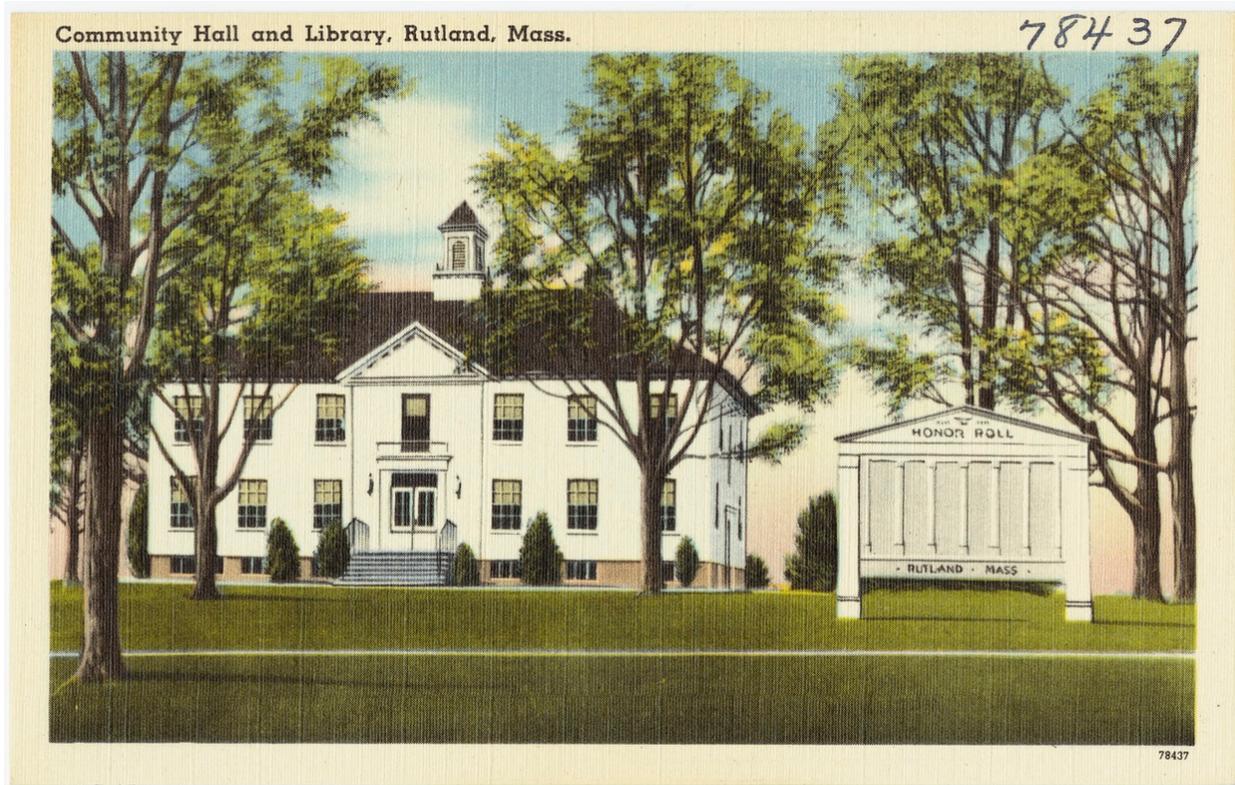


Figure 10: Rutland Community Hall. Source: Digital Commonwealth.

Issues and Opportunities

Overview

Preserving and maintaining Rutland’s identity has been an ongoing challenge for the community. Despite this, the Town must have the resources available to fund such measures and the opportunities that exist for Rutland’s historical treasures. There are some tools Rutland’s municipality can use to aid in ensuring its historical and cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. Rutland is home to an active and engaged community, which will undoubtedly help evaluate areas of concern that are vital in preserving Rutland’s character. The Issues and Opportunities section of the Master Plan offers multiple options to consider moving forward when planning the revitalization or restoration of spaces.

Local, Regional, and National Resources

Rutland faces issues preserving spaces and acquiring the funding needed to ensure the maintenance of historical and cultural sites. Rutland’s historic State Prison is currently covered in graffiti, devaluing its historical heritage. Rutland’s farmlands and barns are also threatened by development. To ensure these spaces and others alike are maintained in the future, challenges in funding should also be communicated alongside concerns that may be holding the community back from moving forward.

There are presently limited statewide tools to preserve Rutland’s cultural and historical heritage without private money and volunteers. The expansion of available state programs to help rural communities without concentrated historical neighborhoods would be beneficial to Rutland.

Lost Villages Scenic Byway

The Lost Villages Scenic Byway runs through Worcester County in Central Massachusetts. The byway is twenty-nine miles long and runs through several towns, including Rutland. The Lost Villages Scenic Byway allows individuals to travel past historic town centers, farms, rivers, and forest areas. The byway’s name is from the places that were once settled by Europeans and abandoned due to changes to human settlement patterns and the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir. The byway allows for recreational activity spots for trails, hiking, river access points, state forests, and other cultural features to engage with. West Rutland Village is a “lost” town on the byway. In the 1930s, all buildings within the village were removed due to the watershed from the Quabbin Reservoir. Other notable spots on the byway include the scenic Muddy Pond and Long Pond SV on Route 122.³⁹

Community Preservation Act

Codified as Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B, the Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a tool that allows communities to protect their natural resources, open space, and historic sites, develop affordable housing possibilities, and create outdoor recreational facilities. CPA funds come from two sources: voter-approved surcharge of up to 3% on annual real estate taxes and an annual disbursement from the Community Preservation Trust Fund operated by the Department of Revenue that distributes funds each year to communities that have adopted the CPA. At most, 10% of the annual revenues must be used for each of the three core areas: 1. historic resources, 2. open space, and 3. affordable housing. The remaining 70% can be used for any combination of the above uses, as well as recreational purposes.

Hubbardston, Massachusetts, is a town within Worcester County that has used the CPA to protect historical, recreational, and open spaces. Hubbardston’s Community Preservation Committee was established in 2007 and has been an ongoing asset to the community since. In June 2020, the Town was approved for several CPA articles. Hubbardston pursued a restoration project on the roof of Jonas Clark Library; a portable ice rink was installed at Curtis Field and an initiative to conserve a 245-acre corridor of forest and field on Fieldstone Farm. Through the CPA, Hubbardston has been able to preserve its past, secure its present, and conserve open spaces for future generations.⁴⁰

Local Historic District

A town has the option under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40C to create historic districts, a zoning option intended to prevent inappropriate changes to historically significant structures. To prevent

³⁹ America’s Scenic Byway, Lost Villages Scenic Byway, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://scenicbyways.info/byway/81478.html>.

⁴⁰ Community Preservation Committee, Annual Town Report 2020 accessed December 29, 2022, https://www.hubbardstonma.us/sites/g/files/vyhliif3276/f/pages/cpc_town_report_2020.pdf.

uncharacteristic exterior architectural changes, a Historic District Commission would be established to review proposed changes to buildings in a historical district. Property owners would be provided with guidelines to aid in the process, and the review would include a public hearing.

Local Historic Districts provide several advantages. These districts would allow the town to preserve historic sites and architecture, preventing unwanted remodeling or demolition without a review. The presence of a Historic District Commission would give the town a body that could facilitate historic preservation, and work with applicants to ensure changes satisfy their needs and the goals of historic preservation. Several types of internal and external changes would be exempt from commission reviews, such as paint color, storm doors & windows, heating & air conditioning units, and temporary structures. The presence of a historic district can lead to higher property values for a neighborhood.

A Local Historic District would differ from a National Register District. A National Register District is a federal identification that aids in national recognition of a historic place. If a property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it does not provide any restrictions on the way an owner manages the property, though it provides access to preservation grants and tax incentives.

Demolition Delay Bylaw

The Demolition Delay bylaws or ordinances can be used within communities to protect historic buildings and structures. Enacted by a majority vote during town meetings, a demolition delay provides a review procedure requiring a delay in the possible demolition of a site that is historically significant. The process allows towns to consider alternatives regarding the demolition of such historical structures and buildings. To develop a bylaw that suits the town's needs, a local historical commission or group may collaborate with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and may organize with other local groups for public education and outreach measures to ensure the advantages of delaying demolition are effectively communicated. Demolition bylaws typically apply to structures that were built more than fifty years ago. Commonly, a delay of demolition is six months. However, many communities have found that a one-year delay is more effective. With the Bylaw, structures with historical value can be temporarily protected without impeding development options that arise. Rutland may want to explore the possibility of adopting the Demolition Delay Bylaw that would extend the time for concerned parties seeking alternative options for demolition.

Barn Preservation

Rutland's history as an agricultural community means there are several historic barns. Unlike older homes, there is often less incentive to preserve these historic, utilitarian structures, though they are a critical part of an agricultural landscape. Historic barns, when well-preserved, can be used for farming or new uses. Any efforts to implement historic districts or other preservation measures should include historic barns. The town should also consider pursuing an inventory of local historic barns to inform policy decisions. Preservation Massachusetts launched the Preserve Mass Barns program in 2004 to aid in the preservation of these buildings, and Preservation Massachusetts may be a resource for barn preservation policy.

Preservation Restrictions

The Preservation Restriction (PR) Within Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 184, Section 31 is defined as a voluntary legal agreement that protects valuable historical, archeological, or cultural resources from modifications that may be inappropriate. It guarantees that a culturally or historically significant property's intrinsic value is well preserved by present and future owners; the PR restricts the demolition or alteration of its historic features. The PR must be registered at the Registry of Deeds and run with the property. Although Preservation Restrictions usually focus on exterior features, they may also apply to interior spaces.

Recommendations

The Master Plan recognizes the significance of Rutland's cultural and historic resources and seeks to preserve these irreplaceable assets. The following recommended tools, resources, and policy changes have been selected based on community input, committee discussions with the consultant, and case studies in other communities like Rutland. While innovative programs and policy changes can be effective, the Town should simultaneously focus on garnering community buy-in for preservation initiatives as widespread support can be equally valuable. The Rutland community should be offered opportunities to engage in activities, information, and decision-making related to cultural and historic resources. The following recommendations have been devised to comprehensively achieve the Town's goals. These goals and recommendations are restated in the Implementation Plan (found at the end of the Master Plan) with detailed action items the Town can undertake to bring the projects to fruition.

Goal 1: Preserve the Town's historic character and cultural resources.

There are several bylaws and policies that Rutland should pursue to achieve this goal.

- Local Historic Districts are some of the most powerful tools for preserving historic structures from unsuitable alterations. Designating one or more Local Historic Districts in town can help prevent historically significant buildings with exterior architectural features visible from a public way from being altered or demolished.
- National Register of Historic Places nominations for qualifying properties should be sought by the town and preservation groups. Listing in the National Register signifies that the site is important to the history of the community, state, or country; allows the owners of income-producing

properties certain federal tax incentives for rehabilitation; and provides limited protection from adverse effects by federal or state-involved projects.

- A Demolition Delay Bylaw gives the community a window of opportunity to develop preservation solutions for historically significant resources threatened with demolition.
- The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a dedicated fund that can be used to preserve historic buildings and resources. The small surcharge on local property taxes combined with matching funds from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund is one of the most reliable sources of funding for preserving and improving the town's historic character and quality of life.

Rutland needs to facilitate collaborations among community members and local groups to coordinate a unified approach to historic preservation. Using this Master Plan as a foundation, Town leaders, staff, committees, boards, volunteers, property owners, and historic preservation organizations should take an open and ongoing approach to historic and cultural resource preservation. Hosting educational initiatives and regular meetings to review the status of projects, address issues of concern, and determine the appropriate course of action are recommended steps to ensure active engagement.

The Town must maintain sustainable sources of funding to ensure historical buildings and structures receive proper upkeep and management. Without routine maintenance, historic structures can fall into disrepair and are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events. Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, CPA, and a town maintenance fund dedicated to historic preservation are all recommended funding strategies for the Town to pursue.

Goal 2: Provide cultural opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

Public education is essential to long-term cultural and historic resource protection. Several approaches could allow the community to learn about Rutland's heritage and become involved through volunteer opportunities. The Town should maintain and regularly update a publicly accessible inventory of structures, artifacts, documents, and other historical resources that tell the story of Rutland. In Massachusetts, historic resources were documented by volunteers on inventory forms developed by MHC, all of which have been digitized and made available on the MACRIS database. However, these forms were prepared decades ago, and so many communities are now taking the initiative to update their town's records. It is critical to take proactive measures that show a community's readiness to respond to "preservation emergencies" and show widespread community support. Plus, many community planning initiatives, development projects, and roadwork projects also relate to historic resources. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that Rutland pursue funding and a partnership with a consultant that can effectively update the town's historic resources survey.

Providing research and involvement opportunities for residents will be a beneficial step for the Town. Rutland is a town with limited staff capacity that is heavily reliant on its volunteer base. There are countless opportunities for volunteers to aid with cultural and historic resource preservation, such as identification of unknown individuals in old photographs, serving on the Historical Commission or Cultural Council, creating a photographic inventory of headstones in the town's historic burial grounds, or interviewing the community's older adults about their experiences in Rutland. Ways to get involved or take part in activities should be widely advertised and communicated through outlets including the Town website, social media, and local newsletters. Sponsored activities that inspire an appreciation for the

town, its history, and the community, such as history days, craft fairs, or community concerts, are highly encouraged.

Goal 3: Increase familiarity and awareness with the Town’s historic and cultural resources.

Bylaw and policy changes cannot alone achieve the community’s vision. To gain widespread support for preservation initiatives, which is needed to pass bylaw changes at Town Meeting, the Town must actively engage with community members of all ages to instill local identity and a sense of pride in the town’s heritage and unique history. There exist simple yet effective tools that Rutland should pursue, such as field trips, tours, lectures, open houses, summer programs, celebrations, concerts, or other events that allow residents and visitors to engage with the town’s past. Promoting traditional and new celebrations to both residents and visitors from outside of town will support Rutland and Central Massachusetts.

An understanding of local history helps the community appreciate the ongoing story of Rutland and the region. The Town needs to not only preserve historical assets but truly engage residents and visitors with the town’s past. Existing entities such as the school system, Recreation Department, and Historical Society sponsor educational initiatives in which the Town should further enhance programming.

Goal 4: Balance growth with the preservation of historic and cultural assets.

There are concerns that historic preservation efforts will impede necessary growth in the community; however, Rutland’s leaders should strive to sustain a balance between adding new development and services for community members and preserving historic structures, farms, and artifacts. Ensuring that historical sites stay relevant and well-maintained will be a crucial step to achieving this. For example, Rutland can use the funding to beautify the Prison Camp site and produce interpretive signage as it is already a popular trail destination for both residents and visitors. The Town should also take steps to ensure it is economically viable for agricultural land and businesses to remain operational. The agricultural landscape of Rutland is part of the town’s unique history and a major element that residents take pride in, so the impending threat of more profitable land uses like residential and commercial development is a critical concern that calls for measurable actions.

Programs and policies that the Town can pursue to balance public and private interests sustainably include the following.

- The existing Scenic Road Bylaw is an effective tool to prevent resources like trees and stone walls in the public right-of-way from being unnecessarily removed or altered. There are more streets, including Davis Street, Cloverdale Road, and Irish Lane that could be designated as Scenic Roads to gain this type of protection.
- Enrollment of agricultural land into the Chapter 61A program allows landowners to access preferential tax treatment to help with the cost of maintaining farms and natural areas. Landowners can withdraw from the program if they wish to convert to a non-Chapter use, and the town is given a first-refusal option. Qualifying landowners should be encouraged to enroll in this program as a step to preserving the agricultural landscape.

- A Preservation Restriction, a form of easement, is a legal agreement designed to protect the intrinsic value of historic properties, restricting future changes in the appearance or use of the property. This measure should be used on applicable properties to ensure that historical elements will be preserved even under a change of ownership.
- The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program offers to pay farmland owners the difference between the “fair market value” and the “agricultural value” of their farmland in exchange for a permanent deed restriction, protecting the farmland for future agricultural uses. The Town should encourage qualifying landowners to enroll in this voluntary program.

Misinformation can be detrimental to a town’s preservation goals. Therefore, education and building awareness of the various programs previously described should be prioritized. Awareness of the Lost Villages Scenic Byway should be strengthened by actions such as maintaining roadway signage, distributing print and online promotional materials, and collaborating with other Lost Villages towns. A committee should be created that, among other responsibilities, is tasked with educating the community and raising awareness of important historical assets. Volunteers or preservation groups should enhance outreach to property owners of historic buildings or farms to inform them of the benefits of opportunities such as Chapter 61A, APR, or Preservation Restrictions.