

COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION



Town of Rutland Master Plan 2023

Adopted 08.31.2023





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Town of Rutland **Master Plan** 2023

Executive Summary

Glossary

Policy

A statement of principles that underlies a plan's overall strategy and directs decision-making.¹

Vision Statement

A statement that describes a community's long-term aspirations based on shared purpose and values. Expresses uniqueness and standards of excellence, focusing on people and quality of life. Provides a framework or hook upon which to hang ideas or information. The foundation that supports more specific goals and objectives.²

Goal

A general statement about desirable future conditions the community seeks to achieve to realize its vision for the future.

Objective

A statement of specific and measurable outcomes in furtherance of a certain goal; a condition that must be attained to accomplish a goal.

Action Item

A task carried out within a specific time frame as part of the strategy to achieve an outcome; a directive intended to guide the implementation of objectives.

¹ For a discussion on developing policies, goals, objectives, and action items, see, Rouse, David, and Rocky Piro. *The comprehensive plan: Sustainable, resilient, and equitable communities for the 21st century*. Routledge, 2021, 41.

² Haines, Anna. "Using Visioning in a comprehensive planning process." University of Wisconsin Extension (2001).

Policy Statements

The Town of Rutland established this Master Plan using the American Planning Association standards for sustaining places. These eight standards are foundational to the vision, goals, objectives, and action items that comprise the Master Plan. They underlie the Plan's overall strategy and should be used as guiding principles for implementation.

Livable Built Environment: Ensure that all elements of the built environment—including land use, transportation, housing, energy, and infrastructure—work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreating, with a high quality of life.

Harmony with Nature: Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being are explicitly recognized and valued and that maintaining their health is a primary objective.

Resilient Economy: Ensure that the community is prepared to deal with both positive and negative changes in its economic health and to initiate sustainable urban development and redevelopment strategies that foster green business growth and build reliance on local assets.

Interwoven Equity: Ensure fairness and equity in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all citizens and groups.

Healthy Community: Ensure that public health needs are recognized and addressed through provisions for healthy foods, physical activity, access to recreation, health care, environmental justice, and safe neighborhoods.

Responsible Regionalism: Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region.

Authentic Participation: Ensure that the planning process actively involves all segments of the community in analyzing issues, generating visions, developing plans, and monitoring outcomes.

Accountable Implementation: Ensure that responsibilities for carrying out the plan are clearly stated, along with metrics for evaluating progress in achieving desired outcomes.

Master Plans

A Master Plan is a long-range strategic plan. It captures the vision of where the community wants to be in the future and identifies strategies the Town can undertake to advance that vision.

Massachusetts General Law 41, Section 81D requires planning boards to prepare Master Plans for the communities they serve. Master Plans should be regularly updated to reflect community changes and priorities. The Town of Rutland undertook its master planning process in accordance with these provisions.

This Master Plan was created by Rutland residents and is a statement of how the community plans to navigate development, economy, and social change. The plan was developed using accepted frameworks and best practices, but is a product of local effort and input. It summarizes community preferences and should be used to guide town leadership and voters when decisions on spending, infrastructure projects, and zoning are made.

This Master Plan presents an opportunity for Rutland residents to unite around a common vision for the community. Many of its recommendations are interdisciplinary and will “take a village” to implement. The implementation matrix at the end of this plan provides timelines, priorities, and required stakeholders for each recommendation.

It is important to note that in Massachusetts, Master Plans do not create, mandate, or implement anything. This plan is a roadmap based on conditions and priorities at the time of plan publication. It is expected that the needs of Rutland will evolve over the lifespan of this Plan.



Overview

Home to over 9,000 residents, the Town of Rutland is a friendly small-town community nestled in Central Massachusetts. Boasting a rich history and scenic, agricultural lands, Rutland offers charming village centers and close-knit neighborhoods.

As Rutland’s population continues to grow, this Master Plan aims to direct new development toward walkable village centers, while encouraging agriculture and managing growth within current public water and sewer capacity.

Rutland aims to be an inclusive community through affordable housing, increased senior housing, and mixed-use centers.

The Town continues to improve publicly owned facilities and services, including the Board of Health, Council on Aging, Fire Department, Recreation, Public Library, Police Department, Veterans’ Service, and Wachusett Area Schools.

Rutland is home to the Massachusetts Central Tree, the Old Burial Ground, a historic Prison Camp Site, and a “lost village” in West Rutland. Many historical and cultural commissions work to preserve Rutland’s history, including the Cultural Council, Historical Commission, Historical Society, Council on Aging, and the 300th Anniversary Committee.

The Town is home to major routes, such as MA-56, MA-68, MA-122, and MA-122A. Rutland is looking to provide accommodations for all transportation types to enable greater accessibility and mobility throughout the community.

This Master Plan, created by and for the community of Rutland, provides a step by step guide to improve quality of life for all Rutland residents while preserving the Town’s history and character.



Leading with the Community

Meaningful community engagement is at the heart of this Master Plan.

The 2023 Master Plan synthesizes community input, local data, best planning practices, and state and federal law to provide a custom blueprint for the next 10-20 years. It is the product of a robust community engagement process that ran for more than two years.

The Rutland Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) met monthly during the planning process to workshop components of the Master Plan. These meetings were open to the public. The MPSC conducted two public surveys, hosted a vision and goals workshop, and drew on the expertise of other boards, committees, and local subject matter experts. Using these inputs, the MPSC crafted a Vision Statement to guide the Master Plan, and goals, objectives, and action items to advance that vision.



Vision Statement



RUTLAND IS WHERE...

- We respect the past while being focused on the future.
- Everyone can enjoy the lush rural landscapes and natural beauty of our Town.
- We seek sustainable growth that protects our natural, historic, and agricultural resources while preserving our values, qualities, and culture.
- Life is more enjoyable, peaceful, serene, and a whole lot friendlier.



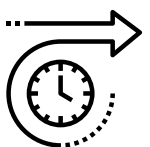
RUTLAND IS WHERE...

- The community is inclusive and is built on deep and lasting connections.
- We take pride in our schools, parks, and public places.
- We celebrate the traditions of our community and welcome new opportunities to draw residents and visitors together.
- We promote housing opportunities to meet the needs of all ages, incomes, and families.
- Local businesses provide goods, services, and jobs that help sustain the town.
- Movement around and through town is diverse, safe, and connected.



RUTLAND IS WHERE...

- We value our public services and infrastructure as part of a healthy and sustainable town.
- Municipal government embraces initiatives to help create a welcoming atmosphere for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Fiscal and environmental health are in balance and wisely stewarded.
- All residents take part in democratically and transparently governing our town.
- We work together making our long-range vision a reality for the next generation.



RUTLAND IS WHERE...

- We are ready for the future.

Focus Areas

Rutland's Vision Statement identifies the Town's core values and aspirations for the future. This vision is reflected in every chapter included in this Master Plan, and includes three foci:



Manage Growth

Rutland is assessing the amount of developable land available in town to determine what impact development could have on local resources. The town continues to discuss options to manage growth and mitigate the impacts of development.



Encourage Agriculture

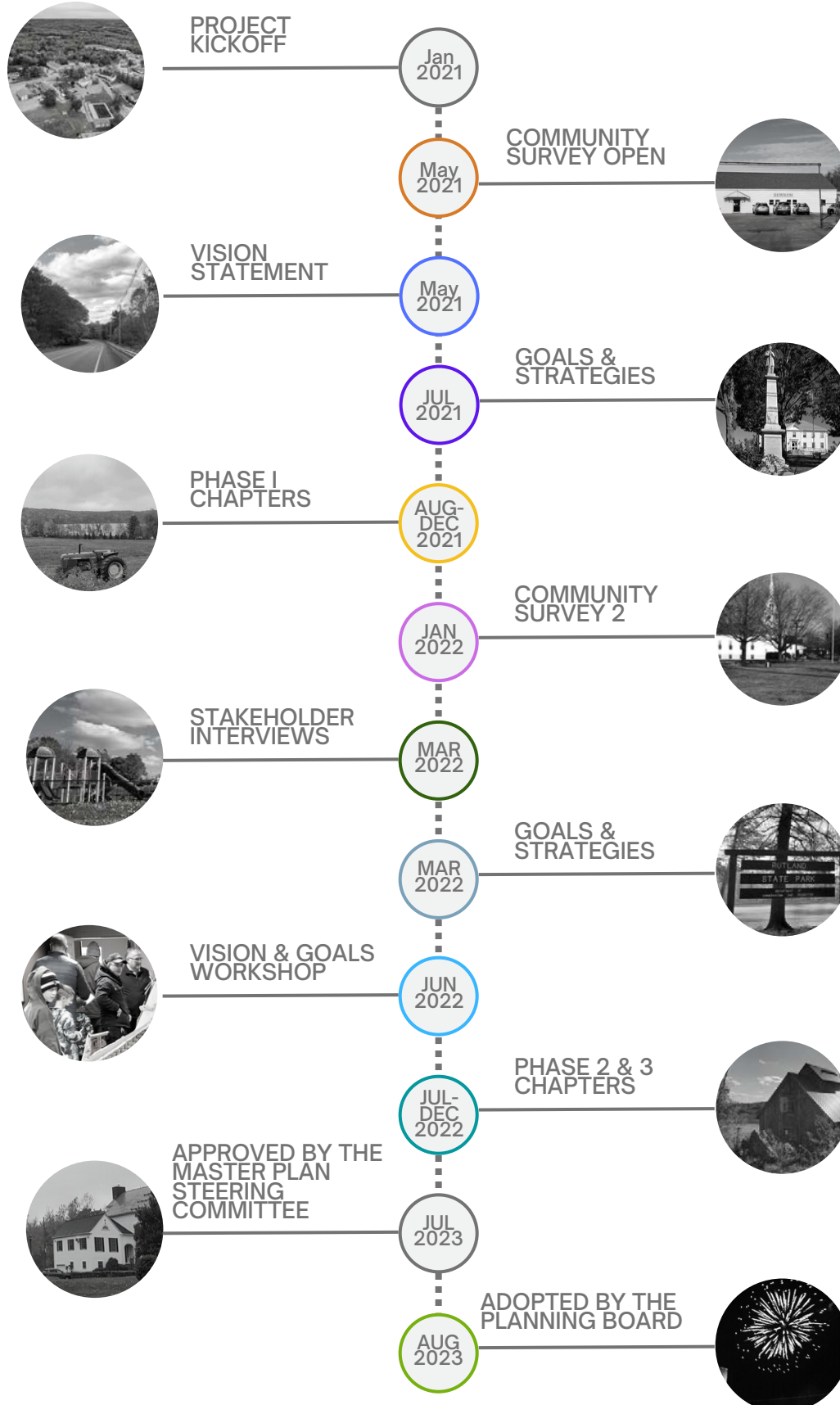
Rutland's legacy as a farming community is reflected in its strong informal network of farmers, who contribute to the town's economy and sense of place. With over 20 named farms and 110 parcels used for agriculture, Rutland farmland consists of more than 2,800 acres. Agriculture remains important to Rutland's identity and residents would like to encourage such uses.



Facilitate a Vibrant Town Center

Rutland residents realize that a vibrant town center will create a sense of community, social opportunities, and economic development. The Town prioritizes diversifying the tax base by attracting commercial development to Town Center, complementing recent housing growth.

Plan Development Timeline



Population and Housing

Rutland's population is expected to reach over 10,000 people by the year 2040. In 2021, the median sale price of a single-family home was \$418,000, an increase of \$161,000 since 2010. The median monthly rent in Rutland is \$1,046. School enrollment for the Wachusett School District has remained relatively stagnant over the past 10 years.

At only 3%, Rutland falls far below the State-mandated 10% affordable housing requirement and housing in Rutland is not affordable for all of its residents. To become inclusive and accessible to all residents in Rutland or desiring to move to Rutland, more affordable housing is necessary.

There is a tremendous need for senior housing units in Rutland and the Central Massachusetts region. By constructing more senior and accessible housing, Rutland residents will have the option to “age in place.”

Housing affordability is especially important to Rutland residents, as 44.7% of survey respondents noted housing cost as an influence toward the decision to live in Rutland.



About 41% of respondents also noted Rutland's residential neighborhoods as a determining factor in their decision to live in Rutland. Ensuring that Rutland residents can stay in Rutland through life, financial, and familial changes is crucial for maintaining a desired community structure.

■ Rutland can increase its housing stock while maintaining the small-town character of its neighborhoods by adopting low-impact development and cluster development bylaws; and increasing height limitations and reducing minimum lot sizes while requiring design guidelines.

■ Encouraging Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) through zoning will support aging residents looking to downsize. Community Preservation Act funds are one option to support new senior housing units.

■ To align with the Commonwealth's affordable housing goals, Rutland should maintain its status as a Housing Choice Community, develop an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and explore policy changes to incentivize affordable housing units within new developments.

■ Allowing for slightly increased densities and smaller lot sizes in targeted locations (e.g., those with mixed-use zoning) will help prevent sprawl and associated traffic.

Population & Housing Goals



Goal 1

Encourage housing developments that prioritize preservation of open space, utilize low-impact development methods, and are consistent with community location and dwelling unit preferences.



Goal 2

Pursue creative policies that support the sustainable development of new housing units and expand the diversity of housing options.



Goal 3

Pursue policies and partnerships that will support the development of truly affordable housing.



Goal 4

Improve streetscape and pedestrian infrastructure to support future housing development and its impacts on traffic volume.

Land Use

Rutland has historically consisted of rural residential housing and agricultural land. Rutland's developed land is focused in a few locations.

The Town Center area, centered on the intersection of Route 122A and Route 56, includes most of Rutland's municipal buildings, churches, mixed-use development, retail, and dining. There is limited housing, multi-family or single-family. Moving outward from Town Center, density decreases giving way to an exurban and rural landscape. One of the key features of Rutland is the amount of land taken up by Rutland State Park, and that natural resource's proximity to Rutland Town Center. Rutland retains a significant amount of agricultural land, with many named farms, and agricultural parcels.

Other developed areas include Four Corners, which is west of Town Center at the intersection of Route 122 and Pleasantdale Road, and North Rutland, which is south of Route 62 at the intersection of East County Road and Intervale Road. Both areas have limited retail and commercial development, alongside rural residential areas.

Rutland's population has grown by over 60 percent since the year 2000, alongside rapid housing development, primarily in former agricultural and open space areas. This has created concern about land conservation and the preservation of an agricultural economy in Rutland.

Focusing development in areas of town such as Town Center, Four Corners, and North Rutland, which already have residential and commercial development, will allow the Town to build housing for the future while reducing development pressure on Rutland's key natural and agricultural assets.

- Rutland should continue planning for Healthy Aging to service its aging population. This includes planning for affordability; inclusive mobility options; elderly and emergency response services; and multi-generational community spaces.
- Areas along Route 68 with existing commercial development could be targeted as Village Center zones for mixed-use commercial and residential development. The Village Center zone in the Four Corners area could be expanded south along Route 56 towards Paxton, or that major road frontage could be zoned as Business and Light Industrial, in line with existing districts along that area of Route 56.
- Implementation of updated Low Impact Development and stormwater bylaws, a reappraisal of the Open Space option for subdivision development, and implementation of conservation commission bylaws will continue land conservation efforts.

Land Use Goals

Goal 1

Encourage development that is in harmony with the community's rural New England character & heritage.



Goal 2

Identify key areas for specific types of land use within the Town and create mechanisms to encourage such uses in those areas.

Goal 3

Develop strategies to preserve agricultural land, support the existing agricultural community and encourage the growth of local agricultural and agro-business.



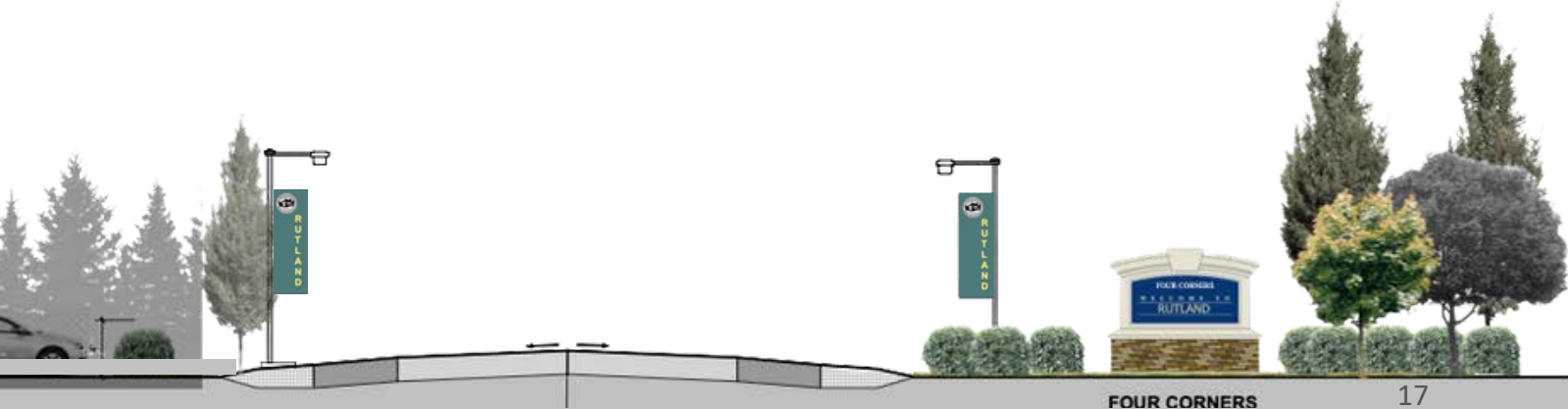
Goal 4

Concentrate new development around existing traffic infrastructure to protect natural resources and improve walkability.



Goal 5

Preserve open space & encourage use for active and passive recreation.



Economic Development

Rutland's median household (MHI) income is \$132,000, significantly higher than Worcester County's. The town's MHI has increased by twenty-eight percent since 2010. Rutland's 4,800 resident labor force has grown by 15.5% over the past decade, twice the speed of the Commonwealth's labor force growth rate.

Advantageous to commercial development, Rutland's single-rate tax rate is 15.68 per thousand valuation. Commercial uses are contained within five zoning districts, located along Route 122, Route 122A, Route 56, Route 68, Campbell Street, and Interval Road. Rutland residents desire additional commercial development along Route 68, but anticipate congestion concerns. The Town has a well-built identity as an agricultural community with a strong informal network of farmers.

Rutland is currently redeveloping Rutland Heights, led by the Rutland Industrial Development Corporation. The Town's recently formed Economic Development Committee operates to support Rutland's current and future economic development.

Water and sewer infrastructure is considered in fair condition and within capacity; however, reservoir draw limits may hinder future development opportunities.

■ Rutland should develop an agricultural tourism and ecotourism strategy through the Economic Development Committee and additional stakeholders.

■ As an essential gateway corridor, Route 68 should be prioritized through aesthetic improvements, landscaping, wayfinding, placemaking, and incentives for small businesses.

■ The Town should engage with Home-Based Occupations by creating an inventory of businesses, facilitating public/private dialogues, and promoting vacant commercial spaces.

■ The Town should engage in smart growth strategies to protect the natural environment and create more attractive neighborhoods, including low-impact design, cluster development, village-style development, and pedestrian infrastructure.



Economic Development Goals

Goal 1

Encourage the development of small business amenities including commercial and professional services.

Goal 2

Grow and diversify the commercial tax base to promote a fiscally sound future and allow the Town to provide and improve services, including recreational opportunities and pedestrian infrastructure.

Goal 3

Ensure that all economic development initiatives are considered in the context of residents' desire to maintain Rutland's natural beauty and small-town character.

Goal 4

Improve the Town's streetscape and sidewalks to allow and promote more pedestrians and bicycle access to the Town's businesses and public facilities.

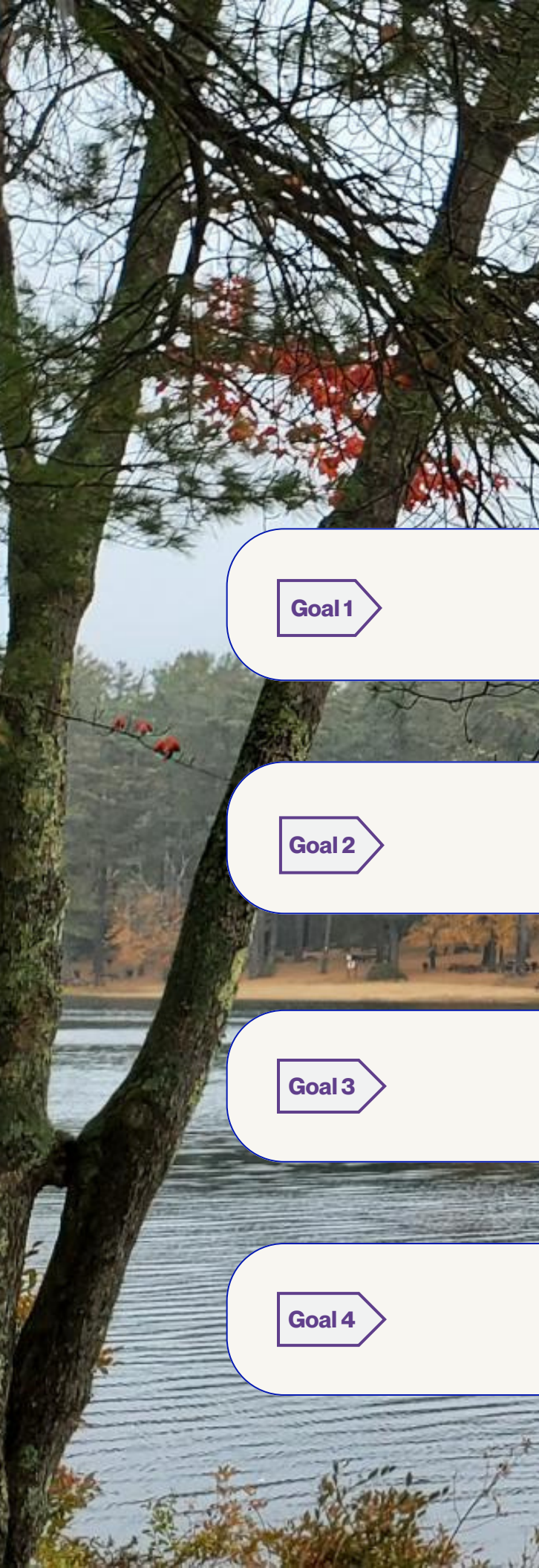




Open Space & Recreation

The Open Space Committee is in the process of drafting a new Open Space & Recreation Plan, which will serve as the Open Space & Recreation Chapter in the completed Town of Rutland Master Plan. This section is a placeholder pending the completion of the plan.

The Open Space & Recreation Plan is structured around four goals the Open Space Committee developed from a community survey and visioning sessions.



Open Space & Recreation Goals

Goal 1

Increase collaboration and communications with local stakeholders.

Goal 2

Provide appropriate resources and facilities to recreation and open space entities or opportunities.

Goal 3

Preserve prime farmlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

Goal 4

Increase connectivity and accessibility throughout town.

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.

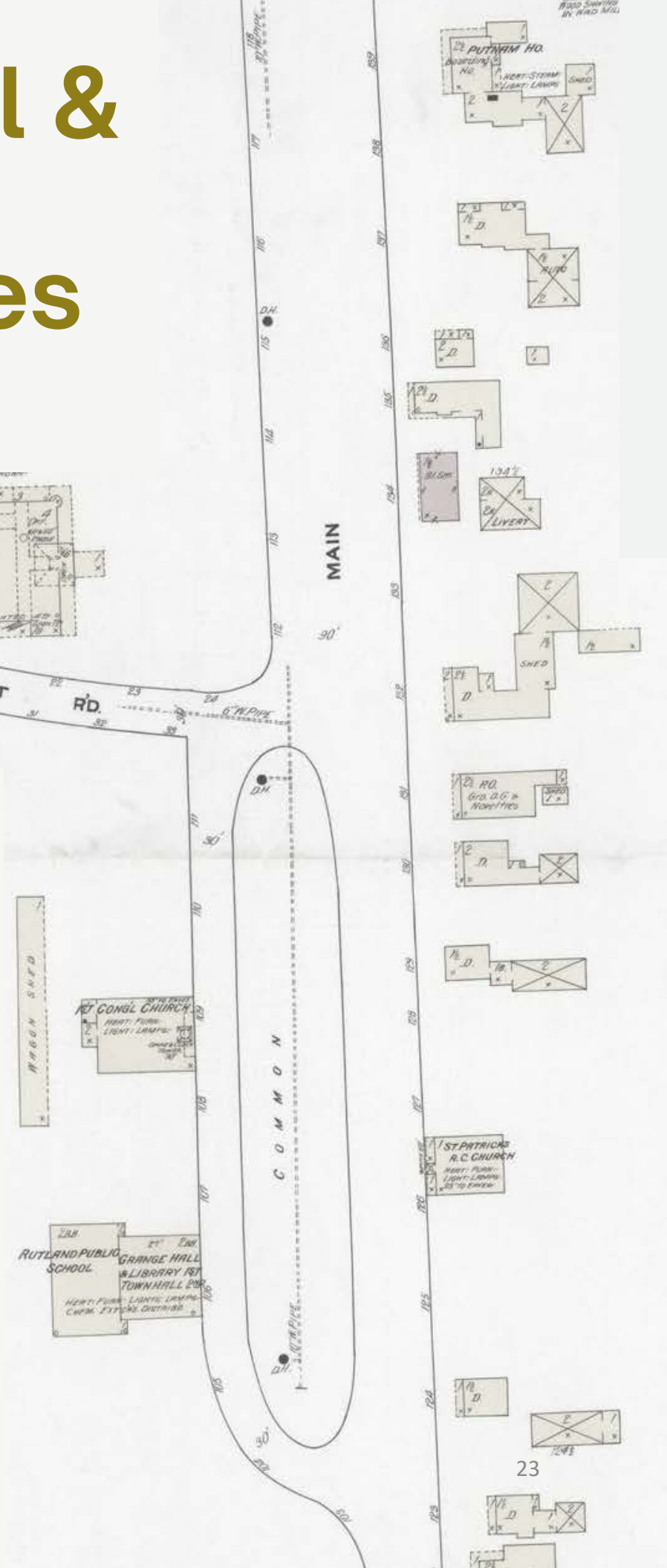
■ Awareness of the Lost Villages Scenic Byway should be strengthened by actions such as maintaining roadway signage, distributing print and online promotional materials, and collaborating with other Lost Villages towns.

■ 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.



Transportation

Rutland is home to major routes MA-56, MA-68, MA-122, and MA-122a. The Town has eight registered bridges, six of which were inspected by MassDOT in 2020 and 2021. Rutland does not provide public transportation other than an Elderbus for senior residents.

Rutland and surrounding communities (Holden, Hubbardston, Oakham, Paxton, Princeton) are not serviced by the WRTA. This means the area is very inaccessible to anyone lacking access to a car. The American Community Survey reports that 97.6% of working Rutland residents work in Massachusetts. A full 79.5% work in Worcester County.

The top transportation priority of Rutland residents is the condition of roads and bridges, rising gas prices, and speeding. According to MassDOT's Top Crash Locations database, there is one accident cluster at the intersection of Route 122 (Barre Paxton Road) and Pleasantdale Road.

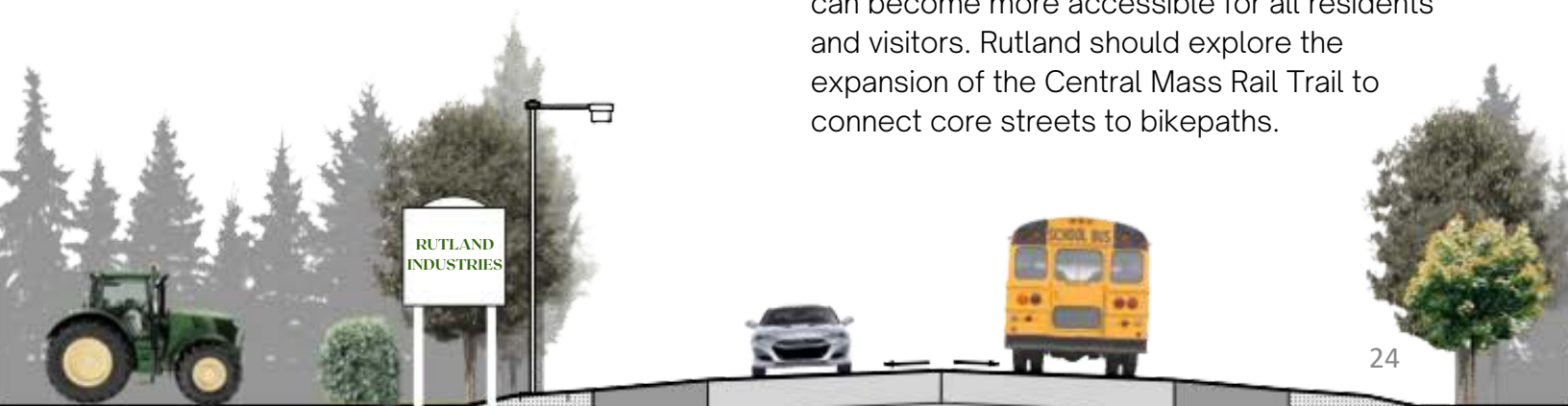
Providing accommodations for all transportation user types enables greater accessibility and mobility throughout the community. The top priorities for pedestrian facilities in Rutland are sidewalk conditions and crosswalk striping.

■ Roads that need improvement include Wachusett Street, Pleasantdale Road, and Pommogussett Road. Sidewalks should be improved on Main Street near the Elementary School, and on Pommogussett Road, Pleasantdale Road, and Glenwood Road. Traffic and Safety conditions should be improved at the intersection of East County Road and Wachusett Street.

■ The crash cluster on Route 122 and Pleasantdale Road should be improved through a Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The Town should prevent crash clusters and problematic areas by incorporating more speed limit signs, warning signs, and public awareness of the rules of the road.

■ The Town can encourage environmentally friendly transportation practices by installing no-idling signs in popular areas, installing electric vehicle charging stations at public buildings, and greening the municipal vehicle fleet.

■ By exploring alternative mobility options such as ride share and paratransit, Rutland can become more accessible for all residents and visitors. Rutland should explore the expansion of the Central Mass Rail Trail to connect core streets to bikepaths.



Transportation Goals

Goal 1

Maintain and improve the condition of Rutland's existing transportation network.

Goal 5

Improve the Town's streetscape and sidewalks to allow more pedestrians and bicycle access to businesses.

Goal 2

Increase the safety of Rutland's roads for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Goal 6

Take a proactive approach to emerging transportation technologies, trends, and issues.

Goal 3

Mitigate negative impacts resulting from the transportation system.

Goal 7

Better connect the Town's roads, streets & sidewalks to be consistent with the Town's small-town and environmental character.

Goal 4

Provide transportation alternatives to car travel.



Public Facilities & Services

Rutland has a five-member Select Board, a Town Administrator, and an open town meeting form of government. This style of government gives Rutland's 6,000 voters power to directly affect decision-making.

The Town funds services such as the Board of Health, Council on Aging, Fire Department, Recreation, Public Library, Police Department, Veterans' Service, and Wachusett Area Schools. The Town's Capital Planning Improvement Committee has identified several priorities that will be challenging for the Town to afford. Town departments will need additional support.

According to the Master Plan survey, Rutland residents are proud of the available services and facilities. Many are satisfied with services such as online resources, town events, water and sewer services, the Emergency Communications Center, the Rutland Public Library, and the fire and police departments. Similar results are seen for town facilities. Town services and facilities are broadly considered adequate for the needs of residents.

The majority of survey responders indicated satisfaction with town services. However, the survey also indicated that some services are underused. The Town's water and sewer, library, and online resources are the services that get the least use.

- The Town can experiment with involving more community members in the budgetary process.

- The Town should start an economic development strategic planning process to bring more tax dollars into Rutland.

- Rutland can expand services and programs by ensuring ADA accessibility, expanding the current Council on Aging shuttle, creating additional office space for the recreation department, expanding the public safety building, and hiring more Department of Public Works employees.

- Rutland should focus on buildings in poor and very poor conditions, including the Community Center, Fire Station, Town Pool, and Town Hall.



Public Facilities & Services Goals

Goal 1

Ensure town facilities are at their optimal state to serve Rutland residents.

Goal 2

Ensure all relevant plans and action items are implemented.

Goal 3

Ensure that all Rutland residents have access to quality town services.





Town of Rutland, Massachusetts
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Rutland, MA 01543
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Introduction

In 2021, the Town of Rutland set out to update the 2000 Rutland Master Plan to reflect contemporary challenges and opportunities. Led by Rutland’s Master Plan Steering Committee and facilitated by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, the Master Plan update kicked off in January 2021. A two-year, community-driven planning process yielded a unified vision for the town and strategies to advance that vision over the next 10-20 years. While very much a local product, the Master Plan was developed using accepted planning frameworks and designed in accordance with state and federal law.

This Master Plan includes nine core elements, as required by Massachusetts General Law:

- Goals and Policies Statement
- Housing
- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources
- Cultural & Historic Resources
- Circulation (i.e., Transportation)
- Services and Facilities
- Implementation Program

The elements of this Master Plan outline existing conditions and identify current and future opportunities for improvements. Policy and funding recommendations describe how to achieve the Town’s common vision based on resident preferences, needs, and hopes for the future of Rutland.

An Implementation Matrix is included at the end of the Plan. It includes step-by-step instructions for advancing each of the plan recommendations.





Community Engagement

A dedicated Master Plan project website served as a hub for project information. To reach a wide audience and drive participation, the project team also created additional social media pages and posts. Throughout the plan development process, town stakeholders were called on to provide insight into specific topics, read drafts, and shape the plan. Surveys supplemented these efforts.

Launched in May 2021, the first Master Plan survey focused on housing, land use, transportation, and economic development. Launched in January 2022, the second survey focused on community preferences for cultural and historical resources, municipal facilities and services, and schools.

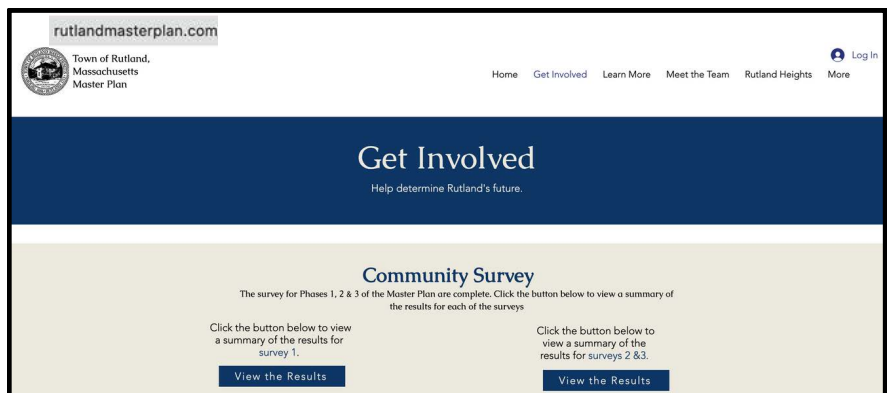
More than 850 people responded to the first survey, and over 550 responded to the second survey. The surveys were promoted through town networks, social media, and paper copies in town buildings.



Rutland Master Plan

@rutlandmasterplan · Not a business

Send message



Community Overview

Known as the geographical center of Massachusetts, the Town of Rutland offers historical significance, small-town charm, and recreational and agricultural tourism.



Originally coined as Naquag by the Nipmuc tribe, Rutland is nestled in Central Massachusetts, just twenty minutes northwest of Worcester. Rutland attracts new residents and visitors from near and far due to its relatively new housing stock, natural beauty, and proximity to economic and cultural centers. Rutland is known as a “bedroom community” based on the rate of commuters who leave Town limits for employment; however, there is much to get out of bed for in Rutland, including quaint village centers and excellent recreational opportunities.

Since the establishment of the official township of Rutland in 1713, the Town has grown to be the home of over 9,000 residents. Current Rutland residents enjoy access to the Town Common as a place of community gatherings and holiday celebrations. Rutland students attend the highly-rated Wachusett Regional School District. The Town owns and operates a Community Center, Public Library, and the Council on Aging for all to enjoy.

It is projected that Rutland will be home to 10,000 residents by the year 2040. This Master Plan aims to enforce smart growth strategies to ensure future residential and commercial demand works for the Town’s needs without sacrificing Rutland’s natural beauty.



In the future, commercial and residential developments may cluster in Four Corners and North Rutland, which are pre-existing village centers. The former Rutland Heights Hospital site presents tremendous value to the Town as an opportunity for rehabilitation and smart growth.

With strong agricultural roots, Rutland boasts attractions such as Buffalo Farm, Alta Vista Farm, and Jordan Dairy Farm. Over one-third of developed land in Rutland is pasture or cultivated land. A majority of the acreage in Rutland is composed of undeveloped natural land, including deciduous and evergreen forest and wetlands. Bikers and hikers enjoy the Lost Villages Scenic Byway and the Rutland State Forest.

Rutland connects to its neighboring towns of Princeton, Hubbardston, Barre, Oakham, Paxton, and Holden through Route 56, Route 68, Route 122, and Route 122A. Within Town, Rutland is creating more walkable neighborhoods and bikeable streets that allow for alternatives to car travel between residential blocks and commercial opportunities.

Between rising housing demand, increased need for environmental protection, and rising costs of town expenditures, Rutland will need to carefully adopt new policies that balance development tensions and align with the Town's vision for the future. These decisions will be made through Rutland's Select Board and Annual Town Meetings. Rutland's Town Meeting type government gives taxpayers and voters power to directly affect decision-making.

Prior Planning

This Master Plan references and aligns itself with the following plans, as well as prior planning at the regional and local level. The relevant application of each plan is explained at the beginning of each chapter:



- Rutland Heights Reuse Plan (1997)
- Master Plan (2000)
- Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017)
- Growth Management Studies (2017)
- Residential Development Impact Analysis (2017-2019)
- Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2019)
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Report (2020)
- Intersection Safety Improvements Report (2020)
- Agricultural Commission Study (2020)
- Town Center Strategic Plan (2021)
- Municipal Facilities Evaluation and Management Plan (2021)
- Pavement Management Study (2021)

Population and Housing



Introduction

This chapter examines historic and current trends of population growth, housing unit development, affordability, and additional demographic and market trends to better prepare for the future population of Rutland and its housing needs. All discussion in this Chapter supports four housing and population-related goals and their objectives, as outlined at the end of this chapter. The findings of this chapter also support the goals of other Rutland Master Plan chapters to further understand land use trends and necessary capital expenditures.

Summary of Key Population Trends

- The population of Rutland is expected to grow to over 10,000 people by the year 2040.
- The current median age of Rutland is approximately 40 years old, trending with the region and state’s median age.
- Forty-three percent of Rutland residents over 25 years of age hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, trending above regional and state averages.
- The median per capita income of Rutland is just above \$41,000.

Summary of Key Housing Trends

- As of 2020, Rutland has 3,192 housing units, 2,879 of which are occupied.
- Rutland has a relatively new housing stock, with only 11% built before World War 2, compared to the state percentage of 31%.

Summary of Key Market Trends

- In 2021, the median sale price of a single-family home was \$418,000, an increase of \$161,000 since 2010.
- The average home value of an occupied unit in Rutland is \$326,100.
- The median monthly rent in Rutland is \$1,046.
- Three percent of Rutland’s housing is registered as Subsidized Housing.

State Regional, and Local Trends

The Commonwealth has identified a need to aggressively pursue housing development to meet the demands of population growth. The recent Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Housing Choice program set a goal of producing 17,000 new housing units statewide per year between 2017 and 2025.¹ Recent analysis shows that the Commonwealth needs to produce around 500,000 new housing units by 2040 to “maintain the existing levels of employment without accommodating any

¹ Housing Choice Initiative, Mass.gov, accessed January 11, 2023, <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/housing-choice-initiative>.

significant job growth.”² This means that housing production will continue to be a key challenge facing Massachusetts and the Town of Rutland for the next several years. If people continue to work from home due to the impacts of COVID-19, their housing needs may change. Recent record increases in home values, supply chain issues, and construction costs are also impacting housing production. The following population and housing trends support the state’s housing needs and will inform this chapter’s recommendations.

Prior Planning and Engagement Efforts

Rutland Heights State Hospital Reuse Master Plan (1997)

This plan was prepared by the Land Planning Committee in consultation with the Massachusetts Division of Capital Planning (now Division of Capital Asset Management) and approved by a town meeting vote in May 1997. The Rutland Development and Industrial Commission (RDIC) used this plan to review proposals for the Heights Planned Development District. The plan proposes the site be split into three zones to support an industrial/business park, elderly housing, limited commercial development, and limited recreational/municipal uses.

Rutland Residential Development Impact Analysis (2017-2019)

The town conducted a Residential Development Impact Analysis due to pressure on natural and cultural resources of the town, including the loss of agricultural and forest lands, increased use of water and sewer systems, and alteration of the Town’s former rural-agricultural character. The build-out analysis found that in total, the Town still has 6,886 acres of developable land, 1,668 of which are within the water/sewer service area. This translates to the potential for 4,859 new homes town-wide of 1,409 new homes within the study area. The following strategies were outlined during Phase II as action items moving forward:

Strategy 1.1: Use community-driven planning tools to better identify and act upon the needs and priorities of Rutland residents.

- Update Master Plan
- Create Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Create Housing Production Plan
- Create Economic Development Strategic Plan
- Complete Municipal Vulnerability Plan

Strategy 1.2: Adopt zoning amendments which protect the vital natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Town of Rutland without unduly restricting property rights.

Strategy 1.3: Proactively identify market trends, opportunities and threats which may impact the Town’s ability to effectively manage growth.

Strategy 2.1: Identify areas of Rutland best suited for commercial development and work to mitigate regulatory barriers to new development.

Strategy 2.2: Consider options to diversify the housing stock to increase housing opportunities for a wider

² Massachusetts Housing Partnership, 2019.

range of potential residents.

Rutland Master Plan (2000)

The previous Rutland Master Plan found that the small-town, family-oriented, and rural atmosphere, as well as schools, law enforcement, and historic and scenic qualities, topped the list as the features that Rutland residents believed contributed to most of the Town’s sense of Place. Survey respondents indicated that the rate of residential growth was too slow in Rutland.

Existing Conditions

Population

Historic and Projected Population Growth

As of 2020, Rutland’s total population was 8,799 people. The population has increased more rapidly than Worcester County and the state since 1990. Between 1980 and 1990, Rutland’s population grew by thirty-five percent while Worcester County and Massachusetts’ populations grew by five percent. Some of the later growth in the early 2000s is due to the rapid production of mostly single-family residential units, high regional housing demand, easy access to greater Worcester and MetroWest economic sectors, and a high-quality regional school system.³ The population has grown by sixty-seven percent since 1930 and is projected to continue growing to nearly 10,000 people by 2040 (Table 1). These growth projections may be conservative due to unforeseen population shifts away from city centers due to the COVID-19 work-from-home culture shift for white-collar workers.

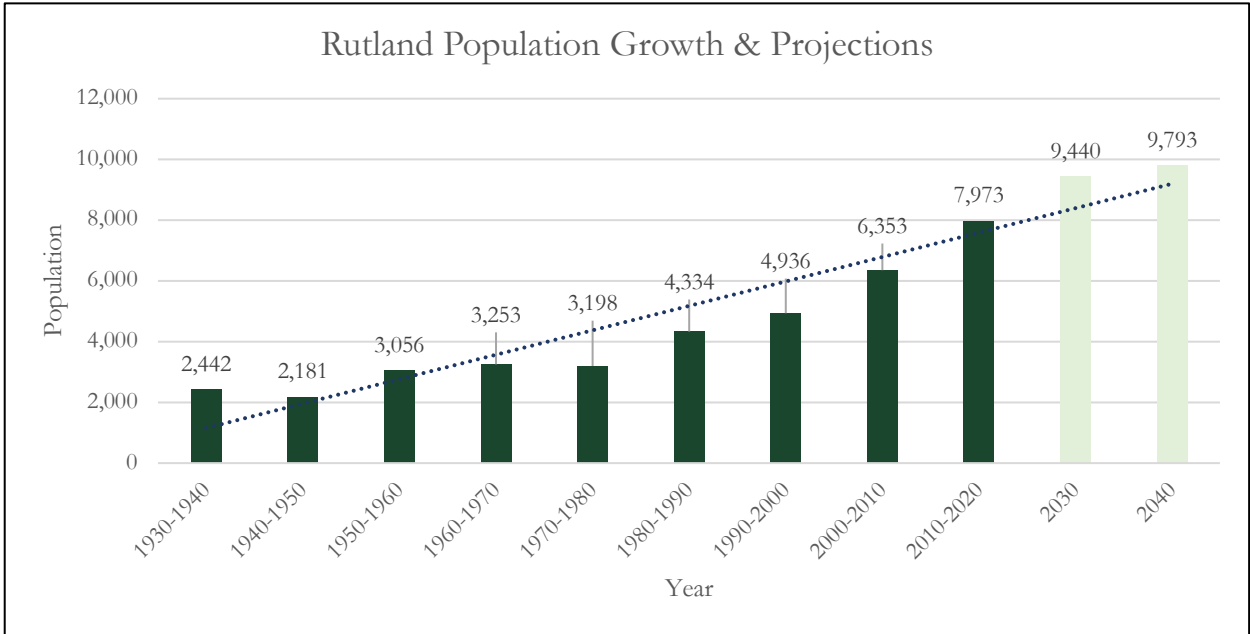


Figure 1: Population. Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census, CMRPC.

³ Residential Development Impact Analysis, Town of Rutland.

Decade	Rutland Population	Rutland Percent Change	Worcester County Population	Worcester County Percent Change	Massachusetts Population	Massachusetts Percent Change
1930-1940	2,442	40.10%	193,694	-0.80%	4,316,721	1.60%
1940-1950	2,181	-10.70%	203,486	5.10%	4,690,514	8.70%
1950-1960	3,056	40.10%	186,587	-8.30%	5,148,578	9.80%
1960-1970	3,253	6.40%	176,572	-5.40%	5,689,170	10.50%
1970-1980	3,198	-1.70%	161,799	-8.40%	5,737,037	0.80%
1980-1990	4,334	35.50%	169,759	4.90%	6,016,425	4.90%
1990-2000	4,936	13.90%	172,648	1.70%	6,349,097	5.50%
2000-2010	6,353	28.70%	181,045	4.90%	6,547,629	3.10%
2010-2020	7,973	25.50%	185,428	2.40%	6,892,503	5.30%

Table 1: Population Growth of Rutland, Worcester County, and Massachusetts. Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 1930-2010.

Median Age

As of 2020, Rutland’s median age is just over 40 years old (Table 2). The median age has increased slightly since 2010 but has fluctuated around 40 years old. Rutland’s median age does not differ significantly from Worcester County’s median age of 40.2 and Massachusetts’ median age of 39.6. It is important to examine age distribution in a community as different age groups may have various requirements and preferences for housing. Additionally, age is a protected class under State Law. Rutland’s population is about thirty-six percent “Middle Family” aged. The percentage of the Preschool population has declined from six percent in 2010 to three percent in 2020. The percentage of School Aged Children, Young Adults, and Young Family populations has been stagnant since 2010. Rutland experienced a significant increase in Seniors from eight percent of the population in 2010 to eleven percent of the population in 2020. The lifecycle population percentages show an increase in the Senior population with the anticipated continued growth of the Senior population due to the sizable percentage of Middle Family aged residents. Rutland is presently trending below the percentage of Seniors in Worcester County.

	2020		2010	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Pre-school (0-4 years)	278	3%	469.7	6%
School Ages (5-19 years)	2,338	27%	2,025	26%
Young Adult (20-24 years)	557	6%	462	6%
Young Family (25-34 years)	633	7%	485	6%
Middle Family (35-54 years)	3,130	36%	2,849	37%
Near Seniors (55-64 years)	901	10%	740	10%
Seniors (65-84 years)	931	11%	647	8%
Advanced Elderly (85+)	31	0%	30.8	0%
Total Population	8,799	x	7,707	X

Table 2: Rutland Lifecycle Stages. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016-2020.

Household Composition

Household composition can be a key indicator of potential future housing needs. Table 3 shows 78% of households in Rutland are “Family Households.” By the numbers, Rutland has 2,879 households, 2,248 of which are families. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a “Household” as all the people who occupy a housing unit, including the related family members and all the unrelated people. A “Family Household” includes the family householder and all other people in the living quarters who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.⁴ The average household size in Rutland is 3.05 people, while the average family size is 3.52 people.

		Number	Percent of Households
Family Households	Family Households Total	2,248	78%
	Family Households with Own Children under 18 Years Old	1,071	37%
Non-family Households	Householder Living Alone	489.43	17%
	Elderly Single-Person Households	166.98	6%
Total Households		2,879	--

Table 3: Households by Household Type. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020.

Race and Ethnicity

Rutland’s population is about 90% “white alone” according to American Community Survey estimates, in addition to 1.6% Black or African American alone and 1.7% Asian alone. Unfortunately, the methodology of the American Community Survey does not specify the race of 139 people who are “Some Other Race Alone.” Compared to 2010, the population of Black or African American Rutland residents has grown by nearly 60%. The Asian population has also grown at a rate of 25% in ten years. 7.6% of Rutland residents speak a language other than English. Of this group, 2.4% of residents speak Spanish, 2.2% speak an Asian or Pacific Island language, and 1.1% speak other Indo-European languages.

⁴ Same-sex couple households are included in the “family households” category if there is at least one additional person related to the householder by birth or adoption.

	2010	2020
Population of one race:	7,885	8561
White alone	7,625	8099
Black or African American alone	92	145
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	6	15
Asian alone	126	158
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	1	5
Some Other Race alone	35	139
Population of two or more races:	88	488
Population of two races:	81	477
White; Black or African American	30	42
White; American Indian and Alaska Native	16	83
White; Asian	32	55
White; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	1
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Some Other Race	0	0
Population of three races:	7	9
Total Population	7,973	9049

Table 4: Race of Population. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 & 2020.

Languages Spoken	Total	Percent
Speak only English	7876	92.40%
Speak a language other than English	645	7.60%
Spanish	204	2.40%
Other Indo-European Languages	93	1.10%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	190	2.20%
Other languages	158	1.90%
Population 5 years and over	8521	--

Table 5: Languages Spoken. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016- 2020.

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is one of the strongest factors in determining employment and wealth, particularly now that high school education is the minimum requirement to obtain a job in most industries. The American Community Survey estimates that 98% of Rutland residents hold a high school degree or higher. 43% of residents hold a bachelor’s degree or higher. This is competitive compared to Worcester County, where 37.1% of the population holds a bachelor’s degree or higher. Based on educational attainment rates, many Rutland residents are well-positioned to hold high-paying, professional jobs.

Educational Attainment	Total	Percentage
Less than 9th grade	44	0%
9th-12th grade no diploma	118	2%
High school graduate	1263	22%
Some college, no degree	1259	22%
Associates degree	519	9%
Bachelor's degree	1478	26%
Graduate or professional degree	945	17%
Population 25 years and older	5626	100%

Table 6: Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020.

School Enrollment

Rutland’s public school enrollment numbers are based on Wachusett Regional School District Schools that educate Rutland residents: Naqaug Elementary (Rutland), Glenwood Elementary (Rutland), Central Tree Middle (Rutland), and Wachusett Regional High School (Holden). Table 8 shows enrollment statistics for those four schools in the Wachusett

Grade	2021-2022 Rutland School Enrollment
Kindergarten	102
Elementary: grade 1 to grade 4	338
Elementary: grade 5 to grade 8	776
High school: grade 9 to grade 12	870

Table 7: School Enrollment. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2020.

Regional School District, which enrolled 3,004 students in 2022. Since the enrollment numbers from the Massachusetts Department of Education do not specify towns, Table 7 shows Rutland-specific enrollment for its residents. As shown in Figure 2, Rutland school enrollment has not fluctuated significantly in the past ten years.

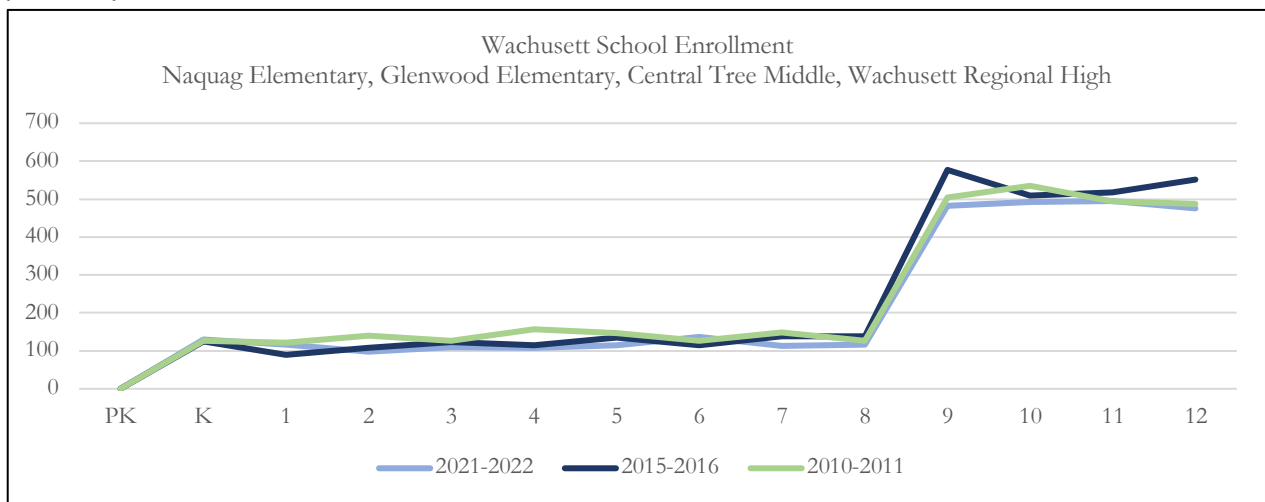


Figure 2: School Enrollment. Source: School and District Profiles, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Income

Household income is a factor that directly influences the ability of residents to pay for housing costs including rent, mortgage, utilities, condominium fees, homeowners’ association fees, property taxes, and interest. The widely accepted rule of thumb is that residents should not be paying more than thirty percent of their gross monthly income on housing costs to have enough money left over to afford everyday expenses like food, transportation, and healthcare. Household income also influences the capacity of residents to support their families, local businesses, and town services. Housing that is affordable for lower-income households is significant for creating household stability and economic self-sufficiency. To build and retain a strong and talented workforce to improve the region and state’s economic competitiveness, housing that is affordable to working-class and middle-class households needs to be readily available.

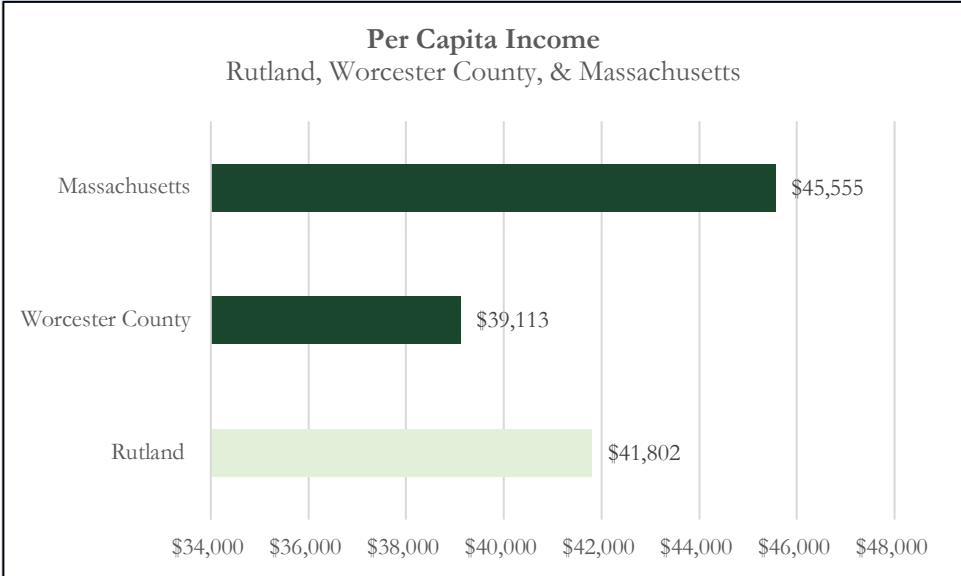


Figure 3: Per Capita Income. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020.

The per capita income in Rutland is \$41,802 (Figure 3). This is six percent higher than Worcester County’s per capita income and eight percent lower than Massachusetts’ per capita income (Figure 3). Rutland’s median income by household is \$124,890, which is higher than Worcester County, Massachusetts, and all surrounding communities except Princeton (\$129,097) (Figure 4). Rutland’s median family income is \$133,588, which is higher than Worcester County, Massachusetts, and all surrounding communities except Paxton (\$141,964) (Figure 4). Out of the 8,784 people for whom poverty status is determined by the American Community Survey, 119, or 1.4%, of Rutland residents are below the poverty line (Table 8). This is much lower than Worcester County’s poverty level of 9.7%. It is important to account for current and future low-income residents and their housing needs when planning for future developments.

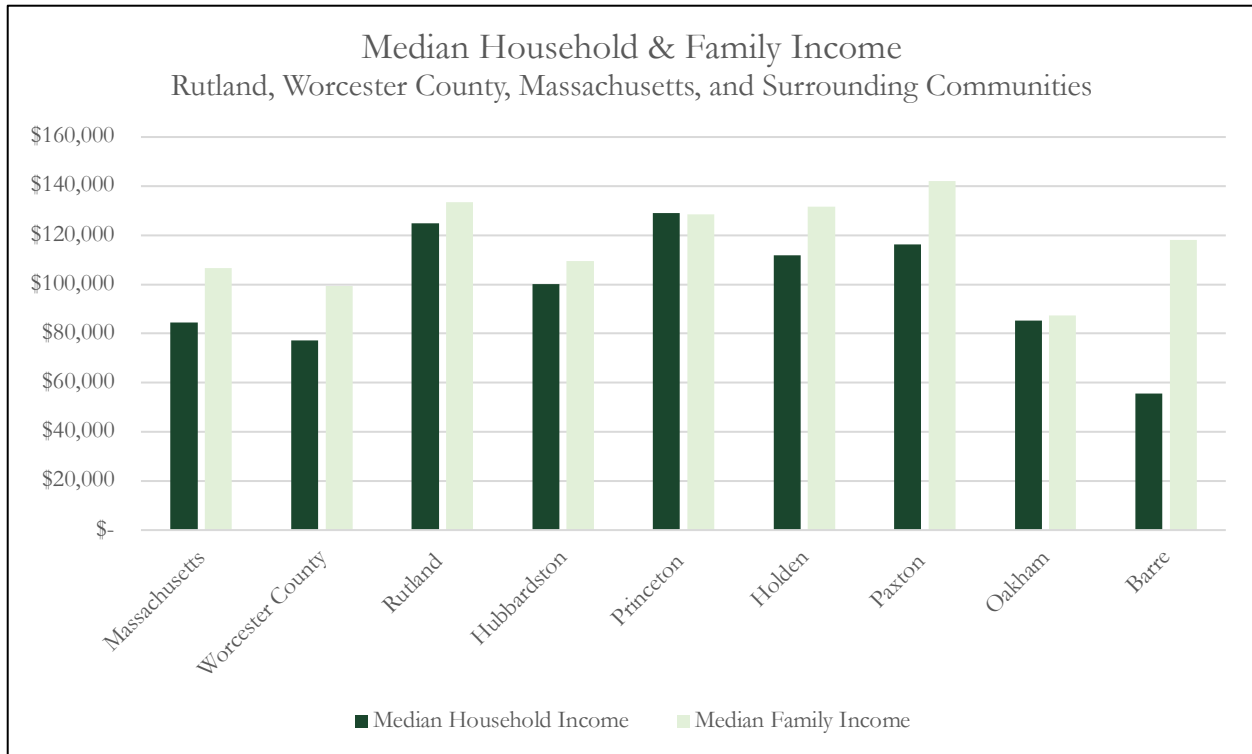


Figure 4: Median Household Income. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020.

	Population	% below poverty
Below poverty line	119	1.40%
Under 18	23	1%
18 to 64	95	1.70%
Population for whom poverty status is determined	8784	--

Table 8: Poverty Level. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020.

Housing

Housing Types and Tenure

Between 2010 and 2020, 560 new housing units were constructed, increasing the housing stock by 21% to reach 3,192 units (Table 9). The number of vacant housing units has tripled in ten years to 313 vacant housing units in 2020. Starting in 2018, Rutland has upheld a rental vacancy. Vacancy status is used as a basic indicator of the strength or weakness of a housing market and its stability. It shows the demand for housing, identifies turnover, and the quality of housing for certain areas. There are five reasons a house can be classified as vacant by the United States Census Bureau, including whether the house is for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use; for rent; for sale; rented or sold, but not occupied; or all other vacant units. Rental vacancy rates have steadily been declining across the U.S., in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Homeowner vacancy rates in Rutland have fluctuated over the past ten years but remained at zero percent in 2019 and 2020. Housing unit vacancies are necessary for a sustainable market and economy, and a vacancy rate between four and six percent is typically considered healthy in that supply

is close enough to demand to keep prices stable. A vacancy rate of zero percent suggests that demand is outpacing supply and results in rising costs. This presents a challenge when trying to establish greater affordability in the town, which can be offset by increased production of rental units and multi-family units.

	Total housing units	Occupied housing units	Vacant housing units	Homeowner vacancy rate	Rental vacancy rate
2010	2,632	2,540	92	0	0
2011	2,691	2,558	133	1.6	0
2012	2,819	2,639	180	2.7	0
2013	2,934	2,727	207	3	0
2014	3,060	2,843	217	4.5	0
2015	3,194	2,898	296	4.6	0
2016	3,125	2,873	252	3.3	0
2017	3,151	2,904	247	1.8	0
2018	3,241	2,956	285	1.6	6.4
2019	3,139	2,885	254	0	8
2020	3,192	2,879	313	0	8.3

Table 9: Housing Units and Vacancy Rates 2000-2019. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2016-2020.

The American Community Survey estimates that 86% of homes in Rutland are single-family detached homes, which far exceeds the ratios in Worcester County and Massachusetts, where single-family homes make up 60% of the housing stock. This type of housing is the least efficient at supplying homes to current and future residents in terms of infrastructure needs and land use.

Housing stock can be analyzed by the number of bedrooms to determine if there are housing deficiencies like the availability of one-to-two-bedroom units for smaller households, or three-bedroom units for larger families. Rutland has the least number of no-bedroom (such as studio apartments), one-bedroom, and 5 or more-bedroom housing options. Rutland has the greatest number of 3- and 4-bedroom housing units out of all bedroom options (Table 11). Communities need to offer a variety of bedroom options within their housing stock to accommodate individuals and families of all sizes and budgets.

1-unit, detached	2737
1-unit, attached	57
2 units	0
3 or 4 units	154
5 to 9 units	34
10 to 19 units	0
20 or more units	138
Mobile home	72
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0
Total housing units	3192

Table 10: Housing Stock. Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2016-2020.

No bedroom	41
1 bedroom	196
2 bedrooms	547
3 bedrooms	1243
4 bedrooms	1023
5 or more bedrooms	142
Total housing units	3192

Table 11: Housing by Number of Bedrooms. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020.

Age of Housing Stock

About half of Rutland’s housing stock was built between 1970-1979 and 1990-1999 (Figure 5). About 11% of Rutland’s housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier. This indicates a newer housing stock compared to the state rate of 31%. Homes built in the past two decades only make up 12% of the town’s existing housing stock. Older homes may be more affordable options but have implications for numerous structural, accessibility, safety, and energy issues. Examples of potential challenges include high demand for maintenance and repairs, home design that is inaccessible for people with disabilities and mobility impairments, inefficient heating/cooling/insulation systems, and outdated materials that present health risks such as lead paint, asbestos, and lead pipes.

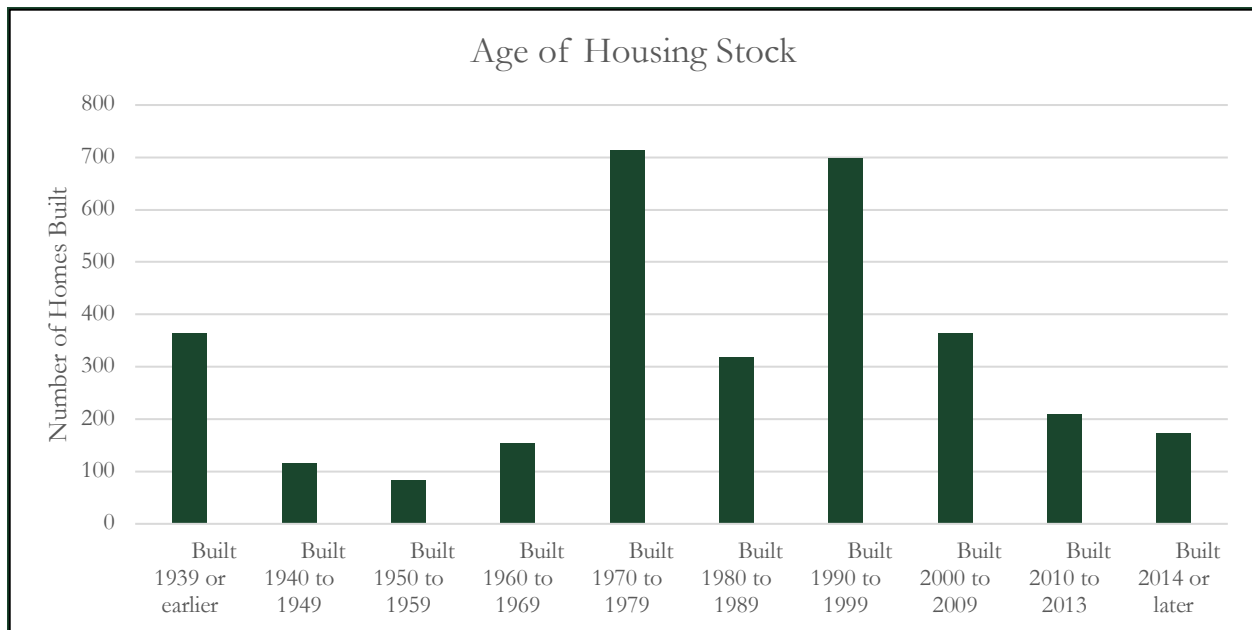


Figure 5: Age of Housing Stock. Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2016-2020.

Housing Market Trends

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic has had profound impacts on communities throughout the Commonwealth, and the road to recovery will not be easy for those who suffered great losses. The crisis has had various effects on the housing market and will continue to have lasting impacts in the coming years. The termination of federal financial assistance is expected to disproportionately affect renters, especially low-income households. The U.S. Department of Labor found that households earning an income of less than \$40,000 per year were more likely to suffer economic damage from the pandemic than other households. It may take many months or even years to sort out the accumulating debt some households are facing after the Biden Administration's eviction ban was lifted. At the same time, demand for housing in lower-density communities where social distancing is easier is expected to continue to rise. Work-from-home options will make suburban and village units more attractive to professional households. This is likely to further bolster demand and keep price inflation stable overall absent the creation of new units. Because of this confluence of factors, renting households with incomes of less than \$40,000 will likely be especially vulnerable to eviction and homelessness. Towns across the Commonwealth will need to continue to provide more relief, including creating additional subsidized housing units, to help support these vulnerable households.

Single-Family Homes

In 2021, the median sale price for a single-family home in Rutland was \$418,000, an increase of \$161,000 over eleven years (Figure 6). The most recent sale prices of single-family homes in Rutland are average compared to its surrounding communities (Figure 7). Figure 8 shows the volume of sales in Rutland compared to the total number of home sales. Until 2021, the number of sales corresponded with the volume of sales. The peak volume of sales in 2021 compared to a stagnant total number of sales is a trend that Rutland should continue to monitor when discussing housing affordability in the future. Table 12 outlines the median value of occupied homes in Rutland, which was \$326,100 in 2020.

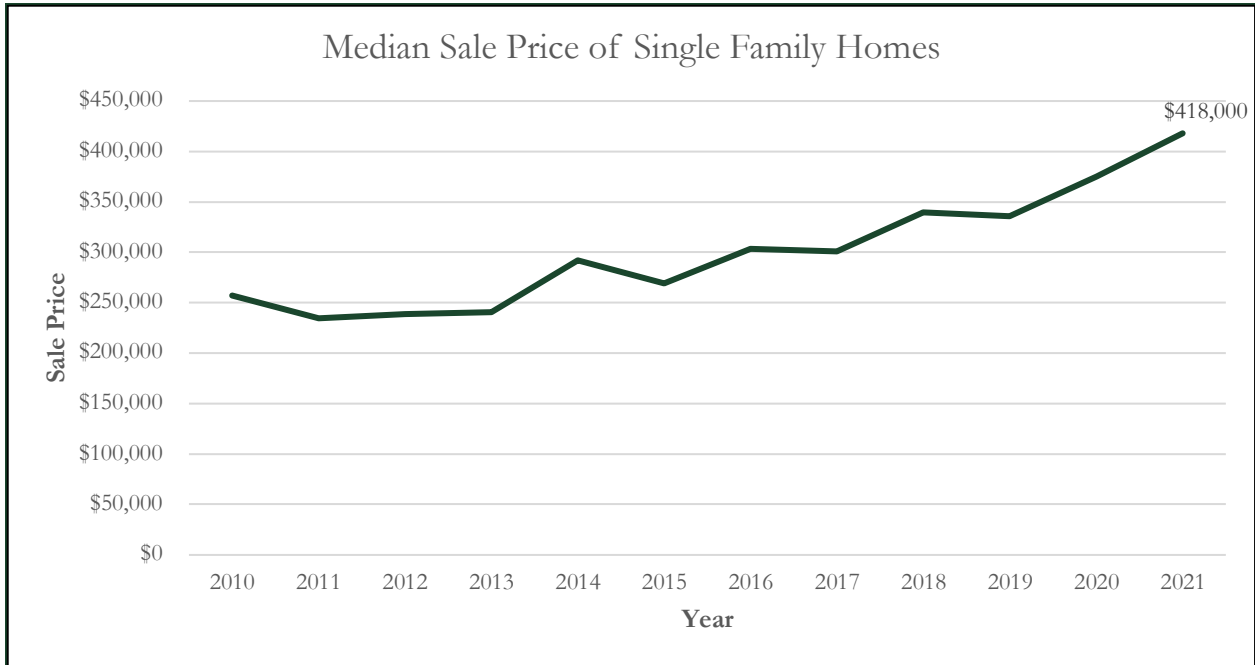


Figure 6: Rutland Single-Family Home Median Sales Price, 2006-2021. Source: The Warren Group, 2010-2021.

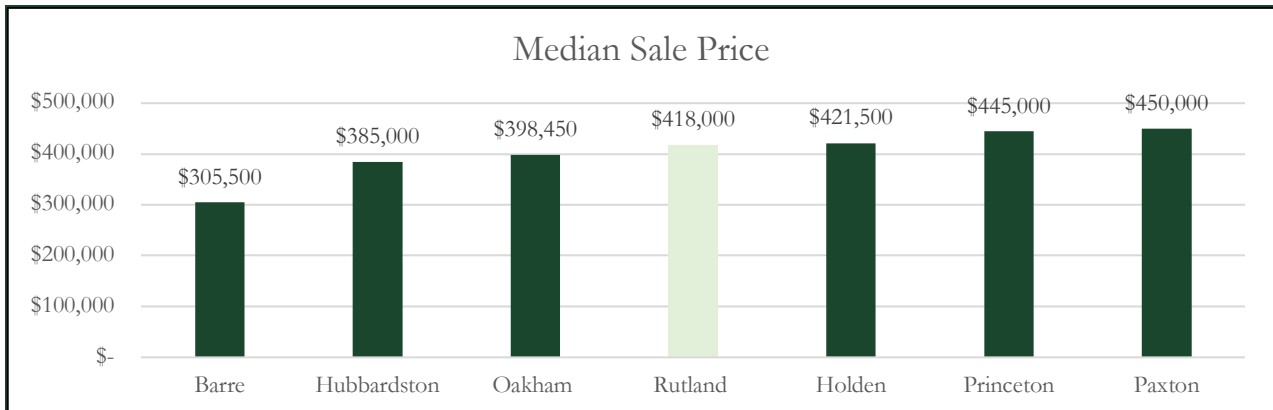


Figure 7: Median Sale Price of Rutland & Surrounding Communities Single Family Homes. Source: The Warren Group, 2010-2021.

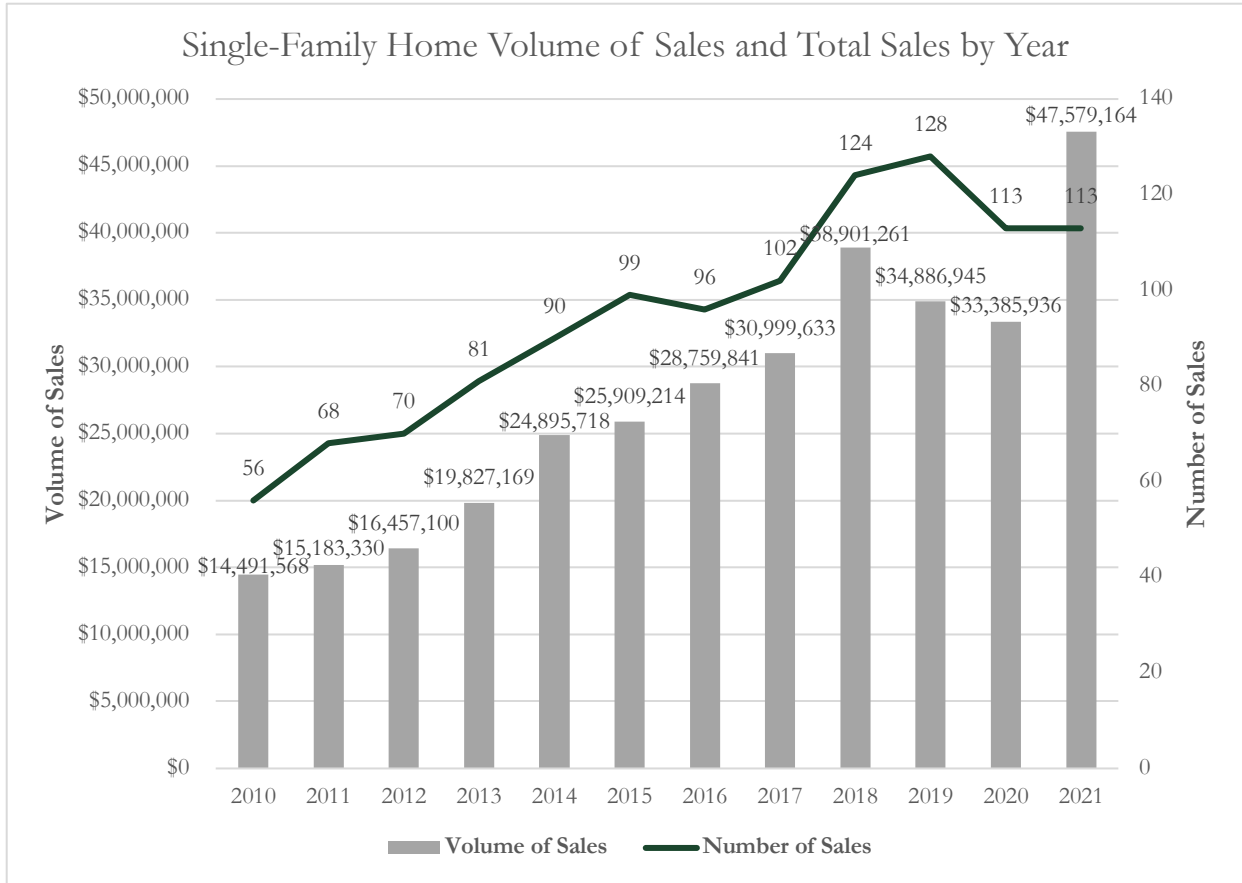


Figure 8: Volume of Single-Family Sales. Source: The Warren Group, 2010-2021.

Owner-occupied units	2461
Less than \$50,000	0
\$50,000 to \$99,999	77
\$100,000 to \$149,999	40
\$150,000 to \$199,999	170
\$200,000 to \$299,999	771
\$300,000 to \$499,999	1028
\$500,000 to \$999,999	330
\$1,000,000 or more	45
Median (dollars)	\$326,100

Table 12: Home Value of Owner-Occupied Units in Rutland. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2016-2020.

Condominiums

Condominiums are regarded as a middle ground between rental apartments and single-family home ownership and can help indicate demand from households in transition. A transitional household in this context would be one moving between rental housing and single-family housing. Some examples would be a young family purchasing a starter home or a senior long-time resident seeking to downsize. An elevated level of activity in the condominium market suggests that Rutland is attracting demand from a wider range of households than just traditional single-family households.

Figure 9 shows the median sale price of condominiums over eleven years. After a spike in 2014 and a plummet in 2015, the median sale price has been slowly increasing to \$127,500 in 2021. Figure 10 compares the volume of condominium sales to the number of sales per year. According to the Master Plan survey, 43% of respondents rated condominiums (defined as a group of detached or attached structures divided into several units that are each separately owned, surrounded by shared areas that are jointly owned and maintained by a community association) as either extremely desirable, very desirable, or somewhat desirable.

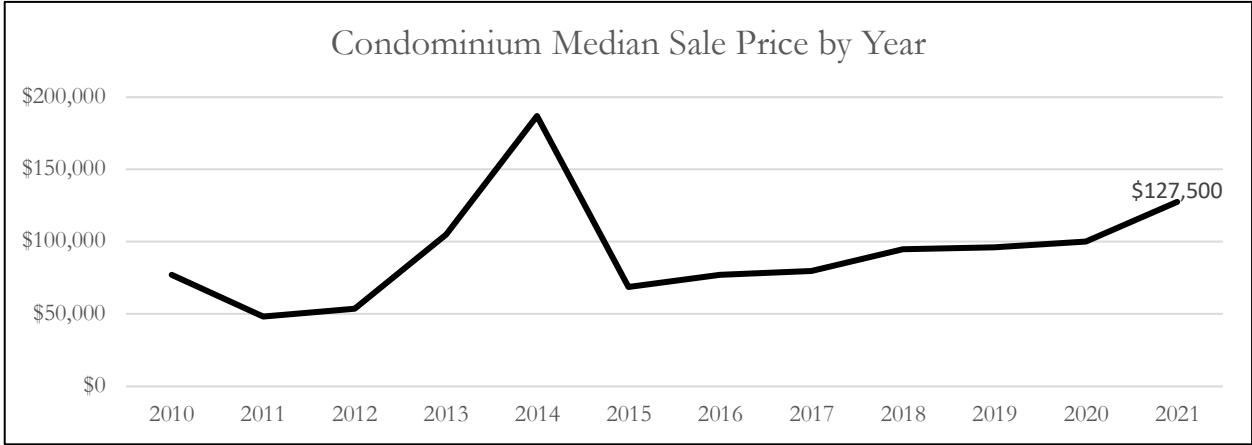


Figure 9: Rutland Condominium Median Sales Price, 2010-2021. Source: The Warren Group, 2010-2021.



Figure 10: Rutland Condominium Volume of Sales & Total Sales by Year, 2010-2021. Source: The Warren Group, 2010-2021.

Rental Housing

As of 2020, Rutland has an estimated 398 units of occupied rental housing, or around 14% of the occupied housing stock (Table 13). The 2016-2020 American Community Survey estimated the median gross rent

Occupied units paying rent	398
Less than \$500	18
\$500 to \$999	161
\$1,000 to \$1,499	122
\$1,500 to \$1,999	97
\$2,000 to \$2,499	0
\$2,500 to \$2,999	0
\$3,000 or more	0
Median (dollars)	\$1,046
No rent paid	20

Table 13: Rutland Monthly Rent. Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2016-2020.

for Rutland at \$1,046, which is lower than the statewide median rent (\$1,336) and similar to the median rent in Worcester County (\$1,074). From a search on Zillow, Trulia, and Craigslist in early 2022, rental options were limited to 2 one-bedroom options, one for \$1,400 and another for \$995 a month. Rental units for any other number of bedrooms were not listed. Handicapped accessible units were not listed. This minimal availability is indicative of the extremely low vacancy rate. Low vacancy rates and small units pose challenges for low-income families that participate in the Section 8 program. Once individuals and families are off the years-long waiting list for this program, eligible households are issued a Section 8/HCVF voucher and given only 120 days to locate their rental housing. If no rental housing options within their price range come on the market, the families lose the voucher opportunity.

The high initial cost of renting an apartment such as the first and last month of rent, security deposit, and broker fees, can preclude lower-income households from renting a home that meets their needs. Rents have risen in the region alongside home sale prices. Reasons for this increase may be attributed to an increase in demand due to the financial uncertainty of owning a home, an expensive housing market that excludes first-time homebuyers and forces them to rent for longer periods, or significant individual debt, such as student loans, preventing entrance into the homeownership market.

Residential Property Taxes

Rutland’s residential tax rates have historically been comparable to its surrounding communities, including Princeton and Barre (Figure 11). Property taxes are a key factor that shapes local housing markets as they influence the costs of buying, renting, or investing in homes. High property taxes may exclude many renters who aspire to purchase a home but are unable to afford the high tax bills along with a mortgage, utilities, and other associated costs. Assuming the average occupied home value in Rutland is \$326,100, the average annual property tax bill for a Rutland resident is around \$5,100.

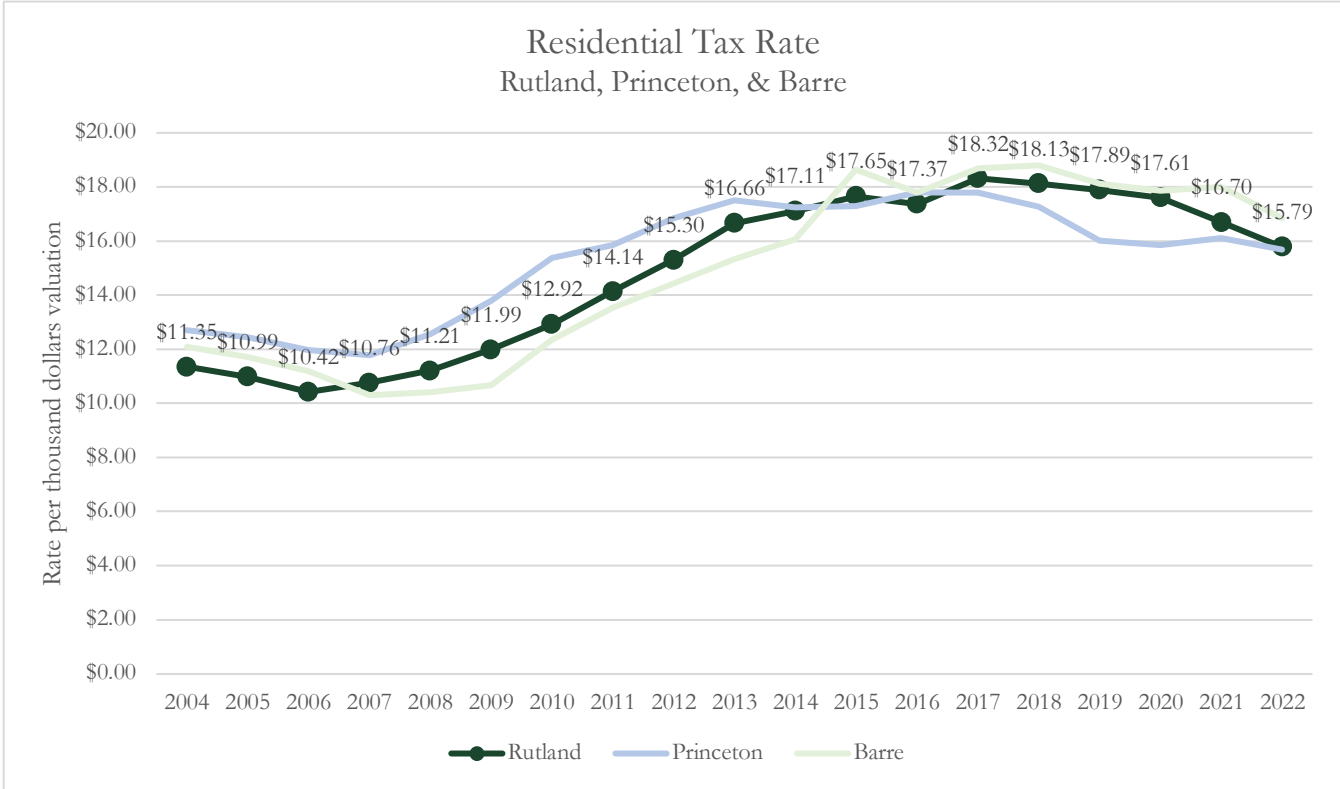


Figure 11: Residential Tax Rate. Source: Town Websites.

Affordability

In the United States, housing can be considered “affordable” if the household pays no more than 30% of its annual income on housing. Households that pay more than thirty percent of their income towards housing are considered “cost-burdened” and may have difficulties affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care, as well as saving for their future. This definition typically operates under the following assumptions: Housing costs for renters typically include gross rent plus utilities; a calculation of total housing costs for owner-occupied households includes a mortgage payment—consisting of principal, interest, taxes, and insurance. Households paying between thirty and fifty percent of their income on housing are considered moderately cost-burdened, while households paying greater than fifty percent of their income are considered severely cost-burdened.

This definition of housing affordability is used by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to calculate Area Median Income (AMI) and promote income-restricted housing. The AMI is the median family income for the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Rutland belongs to the Worcester, MA-CT MSA which includes communities in southern Worcester County. HUD calculates the AMI annually based on the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey’s (ACS) estimated median family income for the MSA. As of 2021, the AMI for the Worcester MSA is \$98,800.

		Persons in Family				
Area Median Family Income:	FY 21 Income Limit Category	1	2	3	4	5
\$98,800	Low (80%) Income Limits	\$55,350	\$63,250	\$71,150	\$79,050	\$85,400
	Very Low (50%) Income Limits	\$34,600	\$39,550	\$44,500	\$49,400	\$53,400
	Extremely Low-Income Limits	\$20,800	\$23,750	\$26,700	\$29,650	\$32,050

Table 14: Low & Very Low-Income Limits and Affordable Housing Costs. Source: 2020 Department of Housing and Community Development.

Affordable housing in Massachusetts refers to housing that is reserved for households with incomes at or below eighty percent of the area median income. DHCD maintains a Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) that lists all subsidized housing developments in a community. This inventory includes units reserved for households with incomes at or below 80% of the median under long-term, legally binding agreements and are subject to affirmative marketing requirements. In 2021, eighty percent of the area median income for the Worcester MSA was \$79,050 for a family of four (Table 14). Municipalities and/or developers are responsible for updating their inventory directly with DHCD. When new subsidized units are occupied or permitted within a municipality, the municipality (or the developer) must make a written request for units to be added to the municipality’s inventory. This task is accomplished through the SHI: Requesting New Units Form, available on the Massachusetts Subsidized Housing Inventory website, which must be submitted to DHCD.

At only three percent, Rutland falls far below the state-mandated ten percent affordable housing requirement and falls below the percentages of subsidized housing in Holden, Paxton, and Barre. Figure

12 shows where Rutland and its surrounding communities currently stand in terms of their Subsidized Housing Inventories (SHI).

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B requires cities and towns in the Commonwealth to work towards ensuring that a minimum of ten percent of their total housing stock qualifies as affordable to households earning at or below eighty percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). Communities that do not meet the goal of ten percent affordable housing are open to developers being granted comprehensive permits to forego existing zoning restrictions. In this case, permits must be granted to developers if they reserve at least twenty-five percent (or twenty percent in some cases) of proposed units as affordable.

While affordable housing is an important goal, these rules could implement higher-density housing in a part of town that is unsuitable for such developments. In a rural community like Rutland, this could put higher-density housing in less developed areas, instead of downtown or along major routes. To mitigate this risk, towns falling under the ten percent requirement must increase their housing stock by at least 0.5% each year, or 1% over two years, and have an approved Housing Production Plan, showing that the community is making strides to address its housing needs.

Affordability of housing is especially important to Rutland residents, as forty-four percent of survey respondents noted housing cost as an influence on the decision to live in Rutland. Forty-one percent of respondents also noted residential neighborhoods as an influence. Ensuring that Rutland residents can stay in Rutland through financial and familial changes is crucial for maintaining the desired community structure.

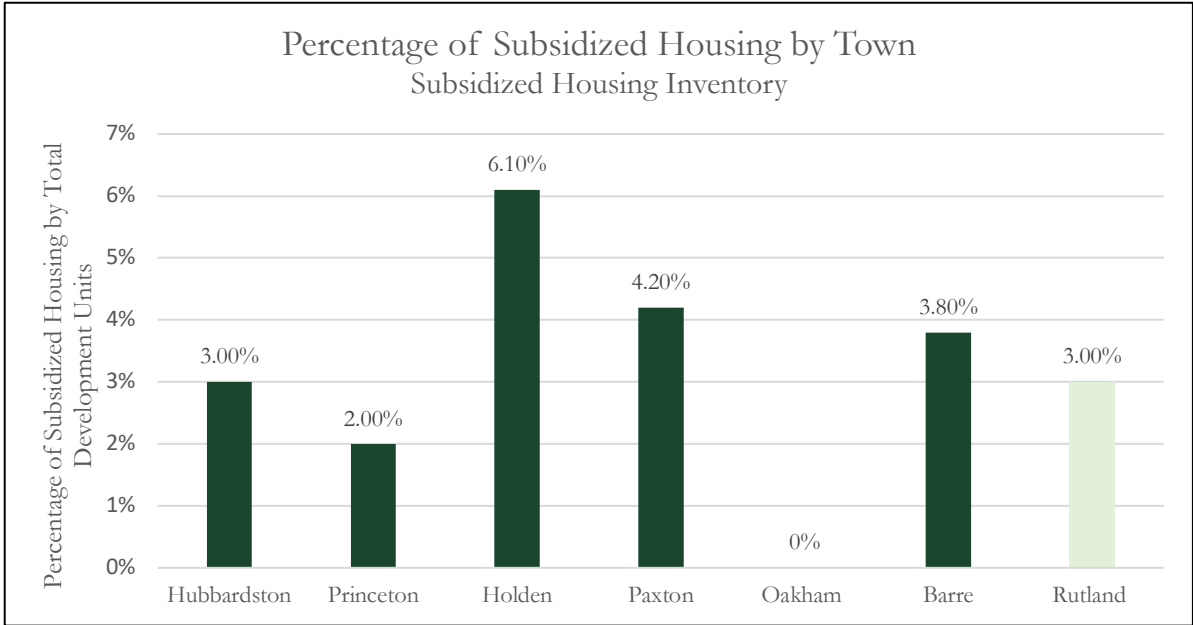


Figure 12: Subsidized Housing as of December 1st, 2020. Source: 2020 Department of Housing and Community Development.

Development and Construction Activity

Like other commodities, the value of a home is influenced by supply and demand. While there are many factors in play to determine home value, high demand intersecting with constrained supply will inevitably result in higher prices. Table 16 shows the number of building permits for new housing units issued annually between 2006 and 2020. The table shows a peak in single-family and multi-family structures built in 2006. Between 2007 and 2015, building permits fluctuated between 30 and 43 per year with a slight dip in 2011 and 2012. Building permits have been increasing again since 2016, averaging 53 per year. According to Rutland’s Residential Development Impact Analysis, the town experienced a surge of new housing units between 1997-2007, most of which were in the form of new subdivisions. This spike in turn inspired a moratorium on large amounts of building permit approvals, as discussed below in the Population and Housing Opportunities section.

Year	Total Building Permits	Single-Family Structures	2-Family Structures	All Multi-Family Structures
2006	133	97	0	36
2007	44	44	0	0
2008	33	29	0	4
2009	34	32	2	2
2010	43	36	0	7
2011	25	25	0	0
2012	24	22	2	2
2013	32	32	0	0
2014	39	31	2	8
2015	30	21	6	9
2016	55	55	0	0
2017	50	44	6	6
2018	50	46	4	4
2019	56	56	0	0
2020	54	54	0	0

Table 15: Building Permits. Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development Building Permit Database.

Issues and Opportunities

Population & Housing Issues

Housing Affordability

As is common in Massachusetts, there are concerns that the housing available in Rutland is not affordable to a wide variety of potential residents. There are numerous practices the Town could adopt to contribute to an increase in housing supply as well as the development of a wider variety of housing styles that would allow Rutland to maintain its rural residential and agricultural character while accommodating more residents.

Housing for Seniors

The development of more senior housing in Rutland would make it more accessible for an aging population and would allow seniors who live in existing single-family housing stock to free up those housing units for families and new residents. Programs such as the Community Preservation Act would allow the Town to finance such construction. Seniors are a growing sector of the Rutland population and housing should reflect their needs. A majority of survey respondents agreed with the statement that the Town should work to provide more opportunities for senior housing development so aging residents can stay in the community. Most seniors require smaller, affordable, and accessible housing, which the town is presently lacking. Currently, Hawthorn Hill Elderly Housing, forty-four units built in 1991, is the only housing specifically reserved for seniors. As of early 2022, there are no available units. There are plans to develop future senior housing, as outlined in the Population and Housing Opportunities section below.

Elderly residents require a range of options for levels of care, as some can age in place while others are more dependent and need assistance with daily tasks. As residents age, they may not be able to keep up with the maintenance requirements of a large, multi-level, single-family home. Retirees on a fixed income may not be able to afford their current homes. Empty-nesters, or those who have lost a spouse, may want to downsize. Homes may not be designed to accommodate older adults with mobility limitations who desire independent living. Often, residents want to remain in their community despite desiring a different home to meet their needs. Rutland does not currently have any options for assisted living. A lack of affordable and accessible senior housing creates housing insecurity for Rutland’s aging population.

Limited Housing Variety to Meet Demand

Rutland has experienced issues with housing variety. Mixed-use housing development, permitted in the Town Center, has not materialized at a desirable level. Much of new housing development is a specific type of single-family home not accessible at different income levels. Implementing a cottage housing bylaw or revisiting duplexes, two-family homes, and accessory dwelling units could allow more housing units for different circumstances to come online while keeping in line with the existing character of Rutland. Housing that is affordable to the local workforce is critical to the town’s economy and directly benefits businesses, school districts, government and public safety, and others who employ moderate-income workers. Housing that accommodates senior needs, lifestyle choices, and limitations are important for families with children. Large lot, single-family homes are not suitable for all members of the

community, and Rutland’s existing housing stock is restrictive towards certain populations who may want to move into town or relocate within the town.

From a search on Zillow, Trulia, and Realtor.com in early 2022, there are three homes for sale: one of which is an empty lot, and another has been listed for 270 days. As mentioned in the Rental Housing section, rental options are also extremely limited.

According to survey respondents, 19% of residents agreed the town needs a more diverse housing stock to increase housing opportunities for a wider range of potential residents. Interestingly, 30% of residents checked “neither agree nor disagree” for the same question. Similarly, when asked the question “should the Town work to promote the development of housing for all income levels?” 30% agreed, 43% disagreed, and 28% neither agreed nor disagreed. This points to a public outreach and education opportunity for Rutland residents to learn more about what housing options are available that meet the needs of potential residents while maintaining the town’s character and size.

When asked to consider a variety of new housing options, a majority of respondents noted the following as either extremely desirable, very desirable, or somewhat desirable: Mixed-use Residential/Commercial (small-to-medium-sized attached or detached structure consisting of two or more types of uses - residential, commercial, office, retail, medical, recreational, etc.—which are integrated vertically into a single building) (66.74%); Accessory Dwelling Units (smaller, independent residential dwelling units located in the same lot as stand-alone single-family homes) (62%); Cottage House Communities (group of small, single-family dwelling units clustered around a common area, often providing connected backyards and a pedestrian-friendly environment) (59%). Other housing options included Condominiums (groups of detached or attached structures divided into several units that are each separately owned, surrounded by common areas that are jointly owned and maintained by a community association) (43%); Pocket Neighborhoods (clustered group of neighboring houses or apartments gathered around a shared open space, all of which have a clear sense of territory and shared stewardship) (42%); Small-scale Apartments (small-to-medium-sized structure, with 2-6 rental units arranged side-by-side and/or stacked) (28.89%); Large Scale Apartments or Condos (one large structure or a group of multiple medium-to-large structures divided into numerous units that are each separately rented or owned, surrounded by common areas) (17.22%).

Limited Protection for Historic Housing Stock

Rutland has limited protection for historic buildings, including historic houses. Rutland’s Zoning Bylaws do not highlight any specific historic districts. The only zoning provision regarding historic buildings states that any personal wireless service facilities located on or within a historic structure shall not alter the character-defining features, distinctive construction methods, or original historic materials of the building. A “Historic Structure” is defined as any building within the Town Center Business District, any church, or any other structure built before 1940 unless the Special Permit Granting Authority finds that the structure in question is insignificant from a historic, architectural, or cultural perspective. Implementation of additional historic protections would contribute to a continuation of Rutland’s housing stock character, while maintaining buildings for historic preservation efforts, contributing to Rutland’s historical heritage.

Rutland’s rural and agricultural development pattern may limit available options, as a small number of historic buildings exist, and are not in a concentrated location.

Water and Sewer Capacity

All households connected to the Town water system draw from the Muschopauge Pond. The draw rates for this are set by a permit issued by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). In 2018, the Town of Rutland imposed a moratorium on new water/sewer hookups. Figure 13 shows an updated map of the current public water and sewer lines. The permit issued by the DEP allows for an average daily draw from the Muschopauge Pond of 370,000 gallons per day (GPD) for Rutland’s water supply. The Town’s average daily draw in 2017 was estimated to be more than 350,000 GPD, which was only 13,268 GPD below the state-permitted limits. Wastewater limits are capped at 489,000 GPD as of 2017 with an average daily use of 489,000 GPD in 2017. This assumption includes the wastewater usage necessary for the upcoming Rutland Heights Development (explained below). Additional studies on the capacity of public water and sewer lines could be beneficial for future residential growth and density.

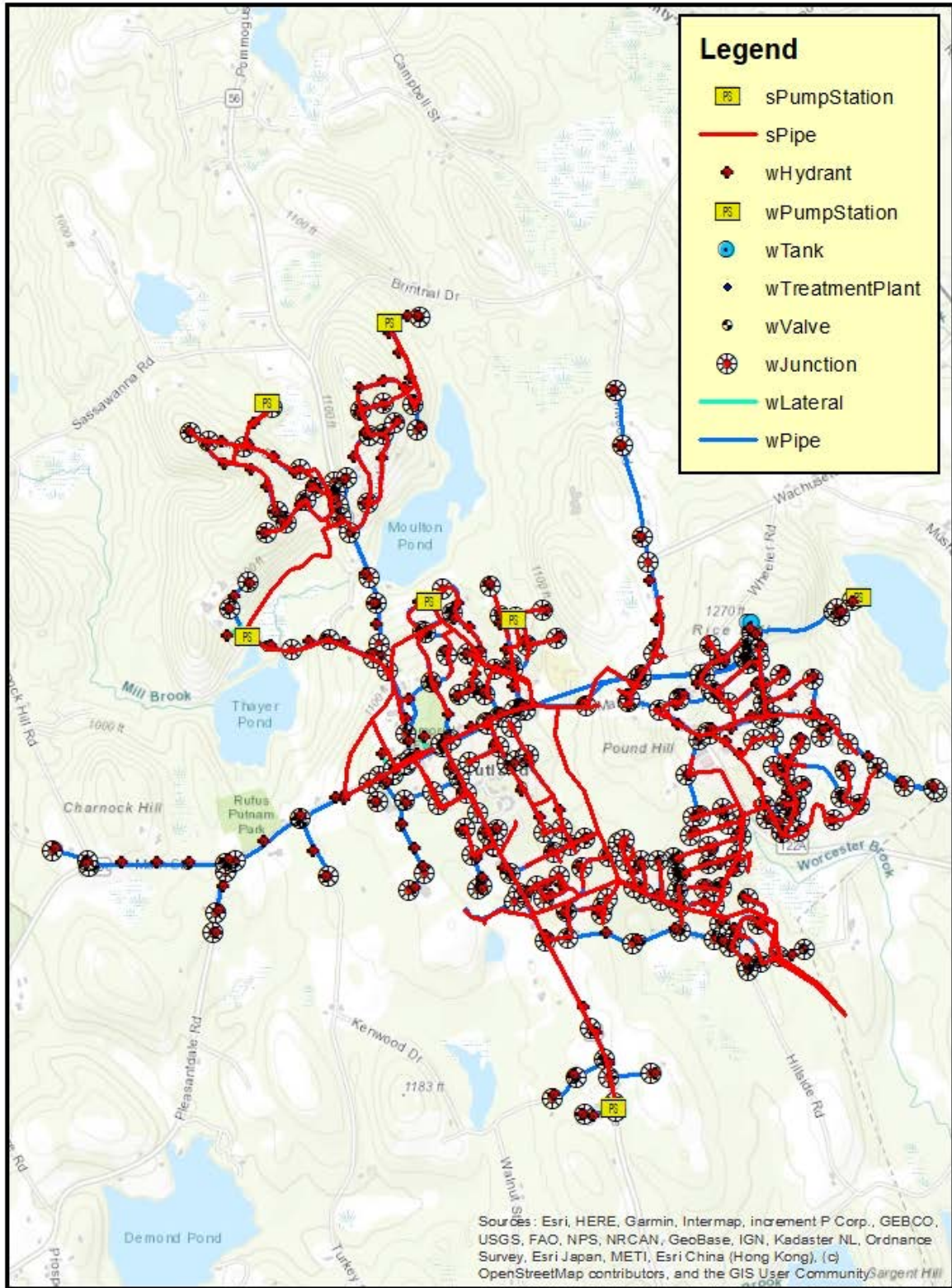


Figure 13: Rutland Sewer and Water Lines. Source: Town of Rutland, 2018.

Population & Housing Opportunities

Rutland Heights Planned Development District

The Heights Planned Development District (HPDD) is a flexible mixed-use district with Rutland Development and Industrial Commission (RDIC) as the developer. The purpose of the HPDD is to provide for the reuse and redevelopment of the former Rutland Heights Hospital property to create jobs and new economic opportunities in the Rutland area, promote a mix of uses of the site including but not limited to light industrial, manufacturing, offices, retail, senior housing, recreation, and municipal uses, and provide development and architecture in a setting that reflects the aesthetics and character of the Town of Rutland. Specifically, HPDD plans to prohibit single-family homes unless in conjunction with a senior housing project in the district.

Cottage Housing Bylaw

Cottage Home Developments are housing units (typically single-family) clustered with smaller than typical frontages along shared spaces, walkways, or other amenities. Infrastructure and parking are relegated away from lot frontages and amenities, usually towards the back of the lot. Cottage houses tend to be smaller in living area and are thus less expensive to produce. At the same time, their clustered design allows for more efficient placement of water, wastewater, utilities, and other infrastructure, further reducing development costs. The focus on shared common space allows the developer to offset some of the loss of private space by creating shared amenities in the shared area such as outdoor seating and grilling areas. Like condominiums, buyers must be comfortable with less private space for lower costs and a more communal atmosphere. Fifty-nine percent of Rutland residents noted Cottage Homes as desirable forms of new housing. Cottage homes would act as an excellent opportunity for residents looking for a first home or older residents in need of transitional homes. Rutland could adopt a Cottage Housing Bylaw, which would provide density bonuses in exchange for a common open space set-aside but focuses on houses on smaller lots with pedestrian-oriented layouts.

Existing Housing Resources

Rutland Development and Industrial Commission

The Rutland Development and Industrial Commission was created to conduct research into industrial conditions and investigate and assist in the establishment of educational or commercial projects, including projects involving private enterprise, to expand or strengthen the local economy. As of 2000, the RDIC is the established owner and developer of the HPDD. The RDIC continues to identify financially feasible research projects that will generate revenue, preserve the sensitivity of environmental lands, and enhance economic development in Rutland and the surrounding region.

Housing Choice Initiative

Rutland is designated as a Housing Choice Community. The Housing Choice Initiative rewards municipalities that have produced certain rates or amounts of new housing units in the last five years and that adopted best practices related to housing production that will sustain a 21st-century workforce and

increase access to opportunity for Massachusetts residents. Communities that achieve the Housing Choice designation have exclusive access to apply for the Housing Choice Grant Program (now expanded to the Rural and Small Town Grants program) and receive bonus points or other considerations to certain state grant programs.⁵

Growth Management Bylaw

Article XIII of the Rutland Zoning Bylaws, the Development Rate Limitation Bylaw, is effective through May 11, 2024, upon which the Town Administrator will review the bylaw for effectiveness before the request of Town Meeting to extend the bylaw. The purpose of the bylaw is to “ensure the issuance of building permits for the construction of new dwelling units will be consistent with the town’s capacity to accommodate the new development and provide the services needed to support that development.” Backed by the Town of Rutland’s Growth Management Study Phase I and Phase II and the New England School Development Council Enrollment Data, it is assumed that Rutland cannot sustain projected growth rates without detrimental impacts on the environment and needed Town services. The bylaw limits building permit construction for new residential dwelling units to no more than thirty-six dwelling units in a single calendar year. No more than twenty-five percent of the building permits authorized for new dwelling units shall be issued to any one applicant or single subdivision within a calendar year. Exceptions include dwelling units categorized as low- or moderate-income housing, age-restricted dwelling units for residents fifty-five or older, and any dwelling units located within the Heights Planned Development District.

Recommendations

Rutland, following the regional, state, and national trends, is experiencing a housing crisis. The Town’s housing stock is rising in demand and cost. To preserve Rutland’s community and become accessible to all who wish to live in Rutland, there are policies, zoning bylaw changes, and funding sources that can and should be used by the Town. These Goals and Recommendations were carefully crafted based on input from the community on housing affordability and desired new developments. More detailed action items about these goals can be found in the implementation chapter of this Master Plan.

Goal 1: Encourage housing developments that prioritize the preservation of open space, use low-impact development methods, and are consistent with community location and dwelling unit preferences.

Rutland has many options to increase housing stock while maintaining the small-town character of its neighborhoods. By adopting low-impact development and cluster development bylaws, town developers will have more options to create attractive housing. Rutland also has the option to increase height limitations and reduce minimum lot sizes while requiring design guidelines and standards for new multi-

⁵ Housing Choice Initiative, Mass.gov, accessed January 11, 2023, <https://www.mass.gov/housing-choice-designation-and-grants>.

family housing developments. These steps will ensure that Rutland will be able to maintain its current housing demand while supporting attractive architecture.

Goal 2: Pursue creative policies that support the sustainable development of new housing units and expand the diversity of housing options.

There is a great need for senior housing units in Rutland and the Central Massachusetts region. By constructing more senior housing units and advocating for higher inclusion of accessible units in proposed affordable housing developments, Rutland residents will have the option to “age in place.” Supporting Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) through zoning is also a helpful tactic to support aging populations in Rutland looking to downsize. Community Preservation Act funds are one option to support new senior housing units in the future.

Goal 3: Pursue policies and partnerships that will support the development of truly affordable housing.

Housing in Rutland is not affordable for all its residents. To become inclusive and accessible to all residents in Rutland or those desiring to move to Rutland, more affordable housing is necessary. To align with Massachusetts’ affordable housing goals, Rutland should:

- Complete a Housing Production Plan
- Maintain status as a Housing Choice Community
- Modify the Town’s zoning bylaw to mandate residential developments set aside a minimum percentage of the total number of dwelling units as affordable housing
- Develop a municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Explore the adoption of a Workforce Housing Special Tax Assessment (WH-STA) as an incentive for developers
- Explore the creation of a buy-down program whereby the town uses funds to buy down market-rate homes, deed restrict them as affordable in perpetuity, and sell them to income-qualified first-time homebuyers at below-market prices
- Seek out technical assistance and funding to implement housing goals

Goal 4: Improve streetscape and pedestrian infrastructure to support future housing development and its impacts on traffic volume.

By combining housing and transportation efforts, Rutland can develop safe streets for pedestrians accessing businesses and town services to and from housing developments. As detailed in the Land Use chapter (see Goal 4 of the Land Use, Recommendations section), Rutland needs to better provide for mixed-use development and increased density if it wants to preserve open space, meet the housing needs of its residents, and mitigate traffic. Simply put, driving across or out of town to access goods and services creates congestion. Innovative zoning that allows housing and businesses to coexist can reduce traffic

within and out of town. Similarly, allowing for slightly increased densities and smaller lot sizes in targeted locations (e.g., those with mixed-use zoning) will help prevent sprawl and associated traffic.

Land Use



Introduction

The Land Use chapter of a Master Plan synthesizes and builds upon the preceding chapters to provide a blueprint for development. An extensive community engagement process—committee meetings, workshops, and a community survey—made it clear that Rutland’s greatest task today is maintaining the Town’s rural and agricultural character while building the tax base, providing more services, and expanding housing options for residents.

Land use and zoning play a crucial role in facilitating these goals by removing obstacles to, and producing incentives for, development. The land use patterns that result from zoning policy influence various topics explored in other Master Plan chapters, including developing retail and other resources for residents and visitors (Economic Development), improved pedestrian infrastructure and traffic safety (Transportation), the need for accessible and affordable housing (Population and Housing), and expansion of social and recreational opportunities (Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources).

This chapter offers strategies for preservation and sustainable development with emphasis on five specific goals:

- Take a proactive approach to traditional and emerging land use issues.
- Encourage development that is in harmony with the community’s rural small-town character.
- Concentrate new development around existing infrastructure to preserve natural resources and limit service provision costs.
- Preserve and protect the Town’s natural landscapes and resources, open spaces, and history in a fiscally sound manner.
- Use the Town’s land holdings, open space, and vacant land for their highest and best purpose consistent with the Town’s vision.

This chapter will summarize prior land use planning, analyze current land use patterns, review existing zoning, identify issues and opportunities and their relation to land use, and provide recommendations toward achieving the Master Plan land use goals.

Prior Planning and Engagement Efforts

The Town of Rutland has pursued many planning efforts in recent years. Core to these projects is a desire to retain Rutland’s rural and agricultural character while expanding the Town’s tax base through commercial development. Economic development strategies pursued include outdoor recreational and agricultural tourism and expanded retail options for visitors and residents. A critical goal has been to make development concurrent and complementary with the substantial growth in housing stock that has occurred in Rutland in the twenty-first century. This concurrency approach encourages resilient services, preservation, and walkable connectivity.

Rutland Heights Reuse Plan (1997)

The RDIC (Rutland Development and Industrial Commission) uses this plan to review concepts for the Heights Planned Development District, directly south of Rutland Town Center on the western side of Maple Avenue. Prepared by the Land Planning Committee in consultation with the Massachusetts Division of Capital Planning (now Division of Capital Asset Management), the plan was approved by a town meeting vote in May 1997. The plan proposes splitting the site into three zones to support an industrial & business park, elderly housing, limited commercial development, and limited recreational and municipal uses.

Master Plan (2000)

The 2000 Master Plan included a land use chapter, which also incorporated housing information. This offers a view into the state of land use in Rutland, and the concerns of residents and planning professionals. The state of the Town and the concerns, despite increases in population and housing construction, are like those seen today.

In 2000, Rutland only had three zoning districts that were created in 1962. These were Residential, Business, and Industrial, with non-residential districts clustered along the main roads and village centers. Additionally, there was the Watershed Protection District, intended to protect the land surrounding the Muschopauge Reservoir. Much of the land in Rutland was under some form of protection or conservation, and most development was focused on the same areas we see today. Homebuilding trends were clear even then, with a notable rise in the 1990s. Opinions about land use and development two decades ago were similar to today's, with concerns about land conservation in rural areas clear, alongside a desire to see a growth of commercial development along major roads—including restaurants, health care facilities, professional offices, and retail.

“The community would like to see agriculture preserved, natural, historic, and scenic resources protected while also accommodating needs such as more convenient shopping and limited business development to help level the tax rate.”¹

Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017)

The 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) detailed a large amount of land under conservation in Rutland. Rutland has more than 17,000 acres of permanently protected land and more than 2,600 acres under temporary or limited protection. These included properties owned by the Town of Rutland, 14,000 acres owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as part of the Metropolitan District Commission (now Department of Conservation and Recreation), limited Federal and City of Worcester-owned lands, as well as private conservation and recreation properties.

Rutland Residential Development Impact Analysis (2017-2019)

The town conducted a Residential Development Impact Analysis due to pressure on natural and cultural resources of the town, including the loss of agricultural and forest lands, increased use of water and sewer systems, and alteration of the Town's former rural-agricultural character. The build-out analysis found

¹ Rutland Master Plan, 2000.

that Rutland still has 6,886 acres of developable land, 1,668 of which were within the water & sewer service area. This allows for the potential construction of 4,859 new homes town-wide and 1,409 new homes in the study area.

Agricultural Commission Study (2020)

The Rutland Agricultural Commission and CMRPC staff conducted a project in 2020 to assess Rutland’s agricultural economic development capacity and the status of its farmland through a working landscape inventory. The Working Landscape Inventory found that over 2,800 acres of land in Rutland are currently used for agricultural purposes, consisting of 110 parcels and twenty named farms. This agricultural land is found primarily in the R40 and R60 zoning districts, with most of that land in the larger and less dense R60 District. Focus group participants felt that the trend in Rutland is towards subdivision housing development, and away from agriculture, raising local land prices and hurting future access to that land.

Town Center Study (2021)

The Town Center Study began in early 2020, conducted by Rutland staff, CMRPC staff, and a Town Center Study Group made up of Rutland residents. The study focused on an area centered on the town-owned municipal administrative buildings and open space next to the intersection of Route 122A and Route 56. Recommendations were generated regarding marketing, place-making, & history; connectivity, complete streets, & traffic safety; and development and recreation. Especially relevant to Land Use were specific recommendations regarding Town acquisition of priority parcels, development of priority parcels, specific retail and mixed-use development sites, and assessment of municipal buildings to accommodate potential changes to the layout of the Town Center in the future.

Existing Conditions

Rutland is a residential bedroom community located 20 minutes northwest of Worcester and 30 minutes southwest of Leominster. The Town has historically consisted of rural residential housing and agriculture. The two greatest strengths chosen by residents in the Master Plan survey were its “natural beauty and open spaces,” and its “friendly small-town character.” Furthermore, 80 percent of respondents felt that Rutland should maintain its status as a rural suburban bedroom community. More broadly, respondents were skeptical of increased housing production outside of specific sectors, but want to see growth in the commercial sector, along with protection of existing natural land. The following sections will discuss the historical patterns of land use that inform Rutland’s current conditions and how Rutland can support the desired forms of future development.

Land Use Distribution

Rutland’s developed land is concentrated in a few locations. The Town Center area, located around the intersection of Route 122A and Route 56, includes most of Rutland’s municipal buildings, churches, mixed-use, retail, and dining. There is limited multi-family housing as well as single-family housing. In all directions along the major routes, the density reduces into a consistently exurban and rural landscape. One of the key features of Rutland is the amount of land taken up by Rutland State Park, and its proximity to Rutland Town Center. The Town retains a significant amount of agricultural land, with many named

farms and agricultural parcels.

Other developed areas include the Four Corners area, located west of Town Center at the intersection of Route 122 and Pleasantdale Road, and North Rutland, located south of Route 62 at the intersection of East County Road and Intervale Road. Both areas have limited retail and commercial development, alongside rural residential areas.

As discussed in the housing chapter, Rutland’s population has grown by over 60 percent since the year 2000, alongside rapid housing development, primarily in former agricultural and open space areas. This has created challenges for land conservation and the preservation of an agricultural economy in Rutland. The Massachusetts Audubon’s 2020 report, “Losing Ground,” named Rutland as a community affected by the sprawl of the Boston Metropolitan Area, with a faster rate of development compared to towns directly west of Rutland.

In 2000, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) produced a report titled “The 2020 Growth Strategy for Central Massachusetts,” which warned that “Most of the region’s development has used undeveloped open space, farmlands, and forest areas. Consumption of suburban and rural “green” areas is proceeding at an alarming rate.”

Land Use Patterns

Table 1 summarizes land use patterns in Rutland based on Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) land use code categories, with certain categories combined for ease of analysis. These are standardized codes for use in local property assessments and thus provide an excellent resource for trend analysis. As this table indicates, an analysis of Rutland’s parcels shows that a significant percentage of parcels are classified as Department of Conservation and Recreation land, or primarily residential land at nearly nine thousand acres in total.

DOR Code Use Description	Total Acres	Percentage Of Town Land
Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) – Division of Water Supply Protection	6465.39	28.61%
Single Family Residential	4856.13	21.49%
Developable Residential Land	1805.34	7.99%
Undevelopable Residential Land	1072.63	4.75%
Mixed Use (Primarily Residential, some Agriculture)	1068.84	4.73%
Other Mixed Uses (DOR Code 0)	695.58	3.08%
Other Educational Private or Charitable (DOR Codes 94 & 95)	645.74	2.86%
Dept. of Fish and Game (DFG)	639.40	2.83%
Pasture (Ch. 61A, not classified as Open Space)	599.25	2.65%
All land designated under Chapter 61 (not classified as Open Space)	581.23	2.57%
Field Crops (Ch. 61A, not classified as Open Space)	539.24	2.39%

Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of State Parks and Recreation	474.88	2.10%
Vacant, Selectmen or City Council (Municipal)	449.68	1.99%
Other Residence (DOR Code 1)	407.26	1.80%
Recreation, Active Use (Charitable Org.)	368.46	1.63%
Productive Woodland – woodlots (Ch. 61A, not classified as Open Space)	251.41	1.11%
Discount Stores, Junior Department Stores, Department Stores	217.08	0.96%
Mass. Highway Dept. (MHD) (non-reimbursable)	190.08	0.84%
Vacant, Conservation Organizations (Charitable Org.)	182.73	0.81%
Recreational Land (Ch. 61B, not classified as Open Space) (DOR Code 8)	155.53	0.69%
Town Education Improved	149.10	0.66%
United States Government	143.25	0.63%
Other Commercial (DOR Code 3)	141.99	0.63%
Town Improved	131.20	0.58%
Potentially Developable Residential Land	118.83	0.53%
Industrial (DOR Code 4)	93.15	0.41%
Other Agricultural/Horticultural (DOR Code 7)	86.69	0.38%
Other, Open Space	29.92	0.13%
Religious Groups (DOR Code 96)	24.78	0.11%
Town Public Safety Improved	5.49	0.02%
Vacant, Tax Title/Treasurer	4.10	0.02%
Improved, Tax Title/Treasurer	0.77	0.00%

Table 1. Land use patterns in Rutland based on Massachusetts DOR land use code categories. Source: Town of Rutland Assessor Office, CMRPC, MassGIS.

Table 2 summarizes a modified version of the 2016 Land Cover/Land Use imagery from MassGIS for Rutland. This imagery contains a combination of land cover mapping from 2016 aerial imagery and land use derived from standardized assessor parcel information. This has the advantage of identifying multiple land usage or coverage within a parcel—useful information in a town like Rutland where many residential lots are large and may be partially or mostly undeveloped.

Land Use/ Land Cover Category	Total Acres	Percentage of Town Land
Deciduous Forest	9,159.65	39.47%
Evergreen Forest	5,700.27	24.56%
Forested Wetland	2,364.80	10.19%
Developed Open Space	1,201.60	5.18%
Non-forested Wetland	1,089.33	4.69%
Pasture/Hay	789.86	3.40%
Water	640.50	2.76%
Grassland	461.36	1.99%
Scrub/Shrub	420.08	1.81%
Right-of-way	381.88	1.65%
Residential – Single Family	302.16	1.30%
Cultivated	289.22	1.25%
Aquatic Bed	144.42	0.62%

Other Impervious	100.15	0.43%
Bare Land	45.33	0.20%
Residential – Multi-Family	40.06	0.17%
Commercial	33.43	0.14%
Unconsolidated Shore	20.37	0.09%
Residential – Other	15.14	0.07%
Mixed Use – Primarily Residential	5.03	0.02%
Industrial	2.33	0.01%

Table 2: Land Cover/Land Use 2016. Source: MassGIS, CMRPC.

As this table shows, Rutland’s acreage is dominated by undeveloped natural land, including deciduous and evergreen forests, and wetlands. The largest developed land use category (besides Developed Open Space and Right-of-Way) is Single Family Residential, at 302 acres or 1.3% of land in Rutland. Multi-family residential, commercial, mixed-use, and industrial accounts for the least amount of developed acreage in Rutland. The following map shows the distribution of different land uses and coverage across Town. The following sections will discuss the history of these land use and land cover patterns and the issues and opportunities that result. In addition, it will provide recommendations that will help Rutland move toward achieving the vision for its future as expressed by its residents.

Agricultural Development

Agricultural development is widespread in Rutland, in line with its history as an agricultural community. Nearly 1,080 acres of land are identified as Pasture/Hay or Cultivated by the 2016 LULC imagery. That is a little over a third of developed land in Rutland. Most of this land is in the R60 residential zoning district, with some land in the R40 residential district, and a negligible amount in other zoning districts. This agricultural development, though generally widespread, tends to be clustered along major roads and concentrated in the southern half of Rutland. Assessor data identifies just under 1,500 acres as parcels designated for any agricultural or horticultural use. Route 68 from Holden to Hubbardston has been identified as an area with potential for future agricultural and related development, such as agricultural tourism and associated operations (dining, breweries, outdoor entertainment.)

Residential Development

According to 2016 LULC data, residential development consists of a little over 362 acres, or about eleven percent, of the developed land in Rutland. Single-family residential development is dominant and makes up about 300 acres of developed land. This development is clustered along major roads in every zoning district, though there are significant clusters along Routes 56 and 68, as well as Route 122 south of Rutland State Park. Town Center area, Four Corners, and North Rutland have significant residential development.

Along Route 56 in the Town Center area, and Route 122 south of Rutland State Park, there is less significant multi-family development. This consists of only forty acres of land and is clustered in the same areas as other residential developments. In addition, there is minimal mixed-use residential development clustered in two locations in the northern part of the Town Center area along Route 56.

Assessor's data designates over nine thousand total acres as residential parcels of various definitions, including undevelopable residential parcels and primarily residential, some agriculture parcels.

Rutland has grown steadily for the past century, with a substantial increase in population seen in the last 20 years. The population in Rutland is projected to continue growing to nearly 10,000 residents by 2040. Much of the land in Rutland is zoned for large lot residential use, with a minimum acreage of 1.5 acres (approximately 65,000 square feet). Like many other communities with large lot zoning, development in Rutland has spread outward from the Town Center, with low-density housing that is automobile dependent and requires extra miles of roadway. Such a trend is unsustainable as it requires higher costs to maintain roads and the amount of land available for development is limited. Protected lands further limit new development. This trend is intensified by local regulations which have long favored single-family housing. Single-family units tend to be the most expensive and use the most land resources with most of the land zoned for large-lot residential use.

Multifamily housing growth has been limited over the past several years. Data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development shows that only sixteen multi-family units have been constructed since 2017, with all of them in 2-family buildings. Over the same years, 254 single-family structures have been constructed, making multi-family units only 5.9 percent of housing construction in the past few years. Before a housing slump in 2015 and 2016, when zero units were constructed, from 2001 to 2014, out of 884 total housing units constructed, 138 units were multi-family, primarily found in 2 to 4-unit buildings. This accounted for over 15 percent of housing construction.²

Survey results show there is skepticism about multi-family housing in Rutland. At the same time, there is a strong desire to maintain Rutland's small-town character and agriculture. Focusing development in areas such as Town Center, Four Corners, and North Rutland, which already have residential and commercial development, will allow the Town to build housing for the future while maintaining the town's character. Concentrating development will also help mitigate sprawl, which has the potential to disrupt Rutland's key assets, such as open space. Careful planning for multiple styles of clustered development can support the need for growth while aiding in the preservation of open space. Rutland can look to residential densities at the center of Town, which conform to traditional land use patterns rather than the large-lot, low-density approach. Denser development typically follows sewer lines which are one of Rutland's primary development constraints. Developments of a more rural character, in turn, radiate outward from the Town Center along roadways. Given the relative weight of residential land use in Rutland, residential growth management will be the key to preserving the town character for future generations.

Commercial & Industrial Development

Commercial development in Rutland's populated areas makes up about thirty-three developed acres, or one percent of developed land, though around 360 acres are designated as commercial parcels. As would be expected, this development is clustered along major roads, including Route 56 and Route 122a in the Town Center and surrounding areas, along Route 122 south of Rutland State Park in the Four Corners area, and Northern Rutland along Route 56.

² SOCDs Building Permits Database.

Industrial development in Rutland is minimal. LULC imagery from 2016 shows it as the smallest classification, with only 2.33 acres, or less than a tenth of a percent of developed land in Rutland, with ninety-three acres designated as industrial parcels based on assessor data. This scattered, minimal development is in the Business District along Campbell Street, the Light Industrial/Office District along Intervale Road, the Light Industrial District, and in some locations in the R40, R60, and Town Center districts.

Commercial and Industrial uses are the focus of municipal growth strategies as discussed in the Economic Development chapter. The Town may not need to expand the Commercial and Industrial districts to promote economic development, but amend zoning regulations in the existing zones, or explore increased mixed-use provisions in some areas. Rutland may consider exploring redevelopment and reuse opportunities in existing Commercial and Industrial districts if parcels in those zones go on the market in years to come.

Commercial and residential development should be clustered together in existing developed areas, to make those areas more walkable, preventing trips to Worcester and elsewhere for basic goods and services, and building a vibrant commercial tax base in areas outside of Town Center. By concentrating new development around existing and potential infrastructure, service provision costs will be limited, and natural resources preserved. Within these clusters, the Town should improve the streetscape and sidewalks to allow and promote more pedestrian and bicycle access to businesses. Providing accessible areas that are at a neighborhood scale is a proactive approach to economic development that supports existing businesses and encourages new ones.

Another key factor in the success of mixed-use nodes is the visual aesthetics of the area. Of vital importance in achieving the desired uses is the need to conduct a comprehensive review of the Zoning Bylaws to ensure that zoning is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan and other strategic plans. Zoning that is tailored to each segment of the priority development areas will better serve the town’s development goals.

Undeveloped & Vacant Land

There are various categories of undeveloped and vacant land in Rutland. About 1,800 acres of land is classified by the assessor as Developable Residential Land. These parcels are throughout the R40 and R60 zones, outside of the DCR lands in the northeast of Town. There are approximately 1,072 acres of Undevelopable Residential Lands found in the same areas as the Developable Land.

According to the assessor data, there are about 450 acres of vacant, town-owned land throughout town. Significant parcels include the Heights Planned Development District, four parcels in the Light Industrial Zone along Route 68 near the border with Holden, and several parcels in the Town Center and R40 zones.

Vacant lands represent an opportunity for the Town to revive underused areas. They are distinct from open space or preservation lands as they fall within a given zoning district but remain unused. Some of this land may be appropriate for redevelopment, while other areas may be best suited for conservation.

The Town should focus on developing and preserving quality parcels; however, vacant lands may represent additional smaller-scale development opportunities. If left unmaintained, vacant land can contribute to poor aesthetics. A clear picture of ownership rights will be helpful when planning future uses of these lands.

Other Land Use Trends

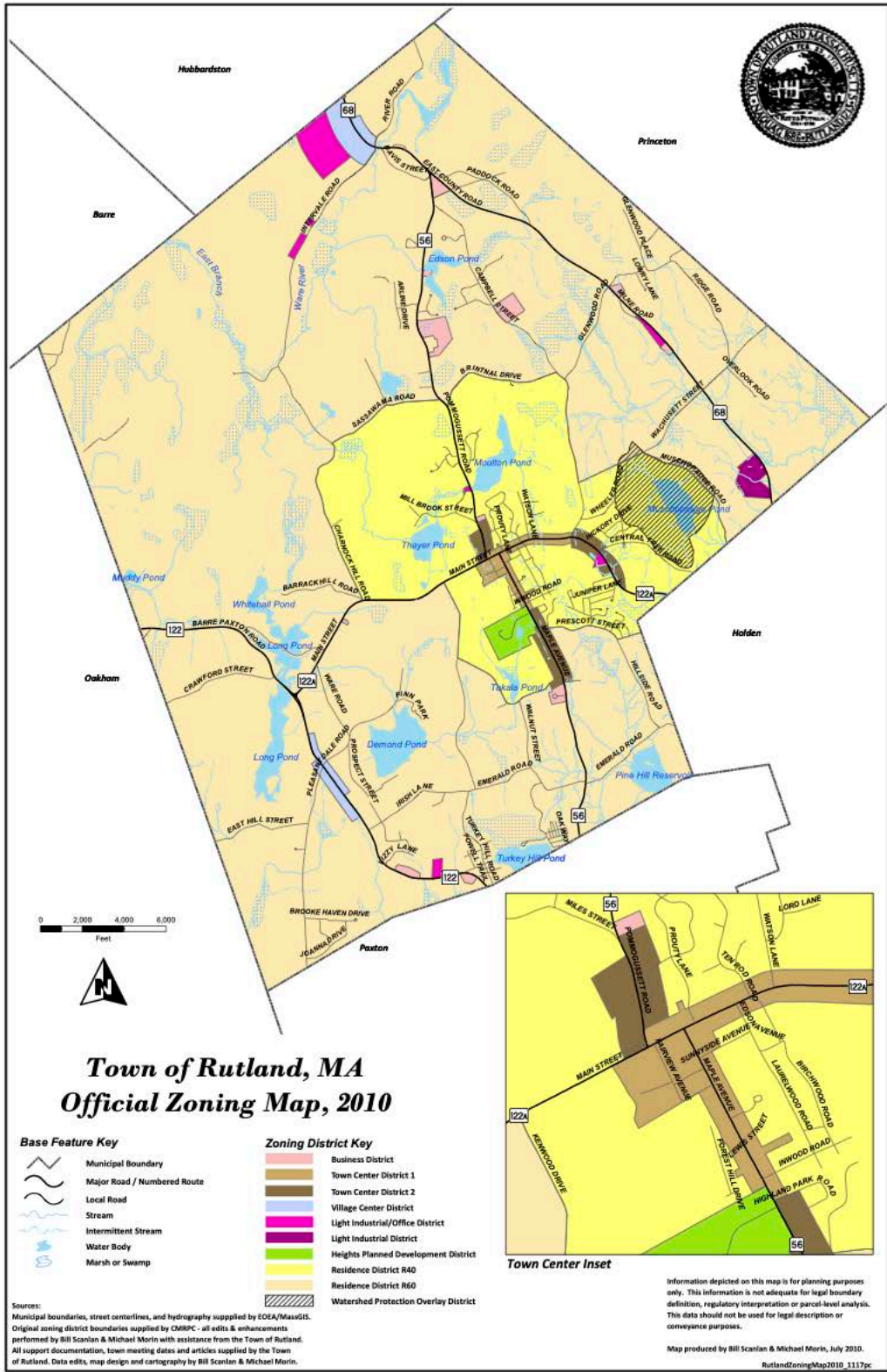
A significant land use presence in Rutland is the Rutland State Park located in the northeastern part of the town. In total, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns over 7500 acres of land in Rutland, much of it through the Department of Conservation and Recreation as a part of the 300-acre Rutland State Park and other land and water conservation areas. In addition to state lands, there are approximately 525 acres of land designated as charitable recreation land or Chapter 61B recreational land. Furthermore, 182 acres are designated as vacant land under the ownership of a charitable conservation organization.

There are several distinct types of land use and land cover which can, when successfully linked, create a resilient environmental network. Open space and recreation lands, non-built areas of large residential plots, surface water, and agricultural and forestry lands can interact to maintain the ecological integrity of Rutland's natural resources, environmental services, and idyllic character. These lands account for over 90 percent of Rutland's total land cover. The extent of non-developed land cover in town results from policies employed by the Town, State, and the broader region.

A substantial proportion of land in Rutland is critical to the natural environment and land preservation. The BioMap2 Project identifies twenty-two areas as core habitats or critical natural landscapes. 1,946 acres are identified as a BioMap2 Core Habitat, and 1,583 acres, or 81.4 percent, are protected in perpetuity. A total of 6,596 acres are identified as a BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape, and 5,056 acres, or 76.7 percent, are protected in perpetuity. In total, BioMap2 identifies 9,635 acres of Rutland, or 41.5 percent of the total area, as open space protected in perpetuity. These protected non-developed lands are crucial to buffering the effects of climate change.

Zoning

Rutland is divided into nine zoning districts, categorized broadly into Residential, Commercial, and Industrial districts, with one special district for the Heights Planned Development District. Much of the Town is zoned for Residence Districts R40 & R60, which encompass larger parcel neighborhoods with single-family homes. The remaining zoning districts amount to a minority of the land in Rutland, clustered along Routes 122A and 56 and other major roads. The existing zoning regulations are discussed in depth below along with potential and current opportunities for change. Map 1 depicts the Zoning Districts in Rutland.



Map 1: Rutland Zoning District Map: Source: Town of Rutland.

Category	Zoning District	Total Acres	Percentage of Town Land
Residential Districts		22,346.67	96.47%
	Residence District R40	3,691.77	15.94%
	Residence District R60	18,654.90	80.53%
Commercial Districts		539.40	2.33%
	Business District	129.19	0.56%
	Town Center District 1	106.32	0.46%
	Town Center District 2	155.88	0.67%
	Village Center District	148.01	0.64%
Industrial Districts		193.42	0.83%
	Light Industrial/Office District	139.08	0.60%
	Light Industrial District	54.34	0.23%
Other Districts and Overlays			
	Heights Planned Development District	85.92	0.37%

Table 3: Zoning Category by Acreage. Source: Town of Rutland.

Residential Districts

The Town of Rutland has two residential districts—R60 and R40—totaling over 22,000 acres in size, making up most of the Town—around 96 percent of town land. The primary difference between the two districts is in density—both districts have the same use restrictions and are intended primarily for residential and agricultural development.

Residence District R60

The R60 district is by far the largest in Rutland. The R60 district is intended for single-family homes without public water or sewer access and has a minimum lot size of one and one-half acres. The R60 district encompasses much of the town outside the Town Center and surrounding areas. The R60 district includes much of the town’s agricultural, conservation, and recreational land, including large swathes of forest and wetland.

Residence District R40

The R40 district is the second-largest district in Rutland. The R40 district is intended for single-family homes with public water and sewer access and has a minimum lot size of one acre. While not encompassing the literal Town Center districts, this district is centered on the Town Center area and indicates the primary density pattern of Rutland.

Commercial Districts

The Town of Rutland has four commercial districts, making up a little over two percent of the land in Rutland.

Business District

There are several business districts in Rutland, and this is a geographically generalized designation, often applying to only a couple of parcels at a time, usually along major roads in areas without a geographically specific commercial district. The same uses allowed in residential districts apply to business districts, along with small-scale commercial developments like retail, offices, dining, and hotels.

Town Center Districts 1 & 2

The Town Center districts are established in the zoning bylaws “as an area to establish a mixed-use style development.” These districts encompass the core of the Town Center area. Town Center District 1 is found at the intersection of Routes 122A and 56, and Town Center District 2 extends further down those roads. These districts are “intended to promote the development and re-development of the Town’s Center, to provide opportunities for business growth, and to provide a mix of uses and diversity of housing types.”

These are the primary areas in town intended for mixed-use development, and various residential and business uses are allowed, some with and some without a special permit. These zones also have many municipal and community buildings, including Town Hall, public safety buildings, the library, and churches.

In addition, “the intent of the TC-1 subdistrict is to preserve and enhance the historic qualities and scale of the traditional Town Center.” The Town Center District 1 is the denser of the two districts, requiring a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, smaller open space requirements, and allowing for mitigation of parking requirements with Planning Board approval. Per-floor square footage is also limited to 2,500 square feet without a special permit. “The intent of the TC-2 sub-district is to provide an area for larger scale development that complements the traditional Town Center, protects residential neighborhoods, and helps to meet the needs of the Town for goods and services.”³

Village Center District

There are Village Center Districts in two separate locations in Rutland. One district makes up the core of the Four Corners area of Rutland, found west of Town Center if you take Pleasantdale Road to Barre Paxton Road/Route 122. This district stretches along Route 122 on both sides and does not extend along other roads. The area makes up some retail and commercial development, including a convenience store with an attached liquor store, a drive-through Dunkin’ Donuts and gas station, a restaurant, a car dealership, and self-storage.

Another district is found along Route 68 in the northern part of Rutland along the border with

³ Zoning Bylaw of the Town of Rutland Massachusetts, accessed May 16, 2023, https://www.townofrutland.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf1156/f/uploads/zoning_updated_2021_atm.pdf.

Hubbardston. This district makes up a less developed part of Rutland and includes limited commercial development along with single-family residential development and portions of large vacant parcels.

This district is established in the bylaws to be “target areas for small neighborhood-scale businesses including services, retail, restaurants, and meeting places.” Further, the Village Center district is “intended to promote the development and re-development of the Town’s village centers, to provide opportunities for business growth to primarily serve the neighborhood, and to provide a mix of uses and diversity of housing types in Rutland.”⁴

A variety of retail and commercial uses are allowed by right with site plan approval, so long as the building’s gross floor area is under five thousand square feet, including personal services, professional offices, banking, dining, and more. The Village Center District is explicitly established to encourage mixed uses and multi-family residential uses are allowed “by special permit where such units are in addition to business uses proposed on the site or where they complement existing non-residential uses in the District.”

Industrial Districts

The Town of Rutland has two industrial districts, Light Industrial/Office and Light Industrial which make up 193 acres, or under one percent of town land. Both districts have similar purposes, both intended to “reserve an area for tax-generating non-residential uses that can be in Rutland without detrimental impact to the community or the surrounding neighborhood” and to accommodate “larger business and industry than in the other business districts” while maintaining “a quality of design through vegetative buffers to residential areas and other design standards.” Both districts require all development to go through Site Plan Approval. Use allowed by site plan approval or special permit in both districts include light industrial uses with no negative environmental or neighborhood impacts, research and development, lumber yards, warehouses, self-storage facilities, gas stations, car dealerships, and more.

The primary difference between these districts is that “Adult Entertainment Uses” are permitted in the Light Industrial district by special permit.

Light Industrial/Office District

There are Light Industrial/Office districts in eight locations throughout Rutland. Most of these districts consist of a single light industrial or other allowed use and may have single-family housing or vacant lots as well. A significant district is located along Route 122a east of Town Center between two Town Center 2 districts. This district is a significant commercial development in Rutland, including a shopping center featuring retail and dining, automobile repair services, and a laundromat. Another significant district borders the northern Village Center district. This district is approximately one hundred acres and makes

⁴ Ibid.

up a few vacant parcels with limited Bare Land⁵ and Right-of-way⁶ development as shown by the LULC imagery.

Light Industrial District

The only Light Industrial district is found on Route 68 near the border with Holden in the southeast of Town. It consists of two town-owned parcels and part of a parcel owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. This district makes up approximately fifty-four acres, and all three parcels are marked as vacant in the assessor's database, although there are small portions listed as single-family residential and industrial in the LULC imagery. The Town should hire a third party to conduct a market analysis for the highest and best uses for the property since there are existing site constraints that may limit its development.

Other Districts and Overlays

Heights Planned Development District

The Heights Planned Development District is found on the former Rutland Heights Hospital site, south of the Town Center and next to the Naquag Elementary School/Central Tree Middle School complex. The main frontage to the district is along Maple Avenue/Route 56. While the district only makes up approximately eighty-five acres (about the area of a large shopping mall), its location in the core of Rutland makes it a key development area that will have a strong impact on the rest of Rutland. The land is currently vacant and is under the oversight of the Rutland Development & Industrial Commission and the Heights Planned Development District Review Board.

The purpose of the district is to redevelop the former Hospital site to “create jobs and new economic opportunities in the Rutland area [...] promote a mix of uses of the site including but not limited to light industrial, manufacturing, offices, retail, senior housing, recreation, and municipal uses [...] and provide development and architecture in a setting that reflects the aesthetics and character of the Town of Rutland.” Further, “it is the specific intent to prohibit single-family homes, (unless in conjunction with a senior housing project) public schools, and hotel/inns in the HPDD.”⁷ This district requires a special site plan review process, and any open land on the site is intended to be kept as open land unless the oversight bodies consider it appropriate to be developed for senior housing or mixed-use commercial/light industrial uses.

Proposals for the site are being sought and reviewed by the Rutland Development and Industrial Commission, though a final plan is not determined at this time.

⁵ Bare Land refers to highly degraded land areas with little to no vegetation cover, primarily with typical gullies and exposed rocks.

⁶ Right-of-way refers to land intended for transportation, in the form of public land or an easement, such as highways, railways, electric transmission lines, or oil and gas pipelines.

⁷ Zoning Bylaw of the Town of Rutland Massachusetts, accessed May 16, 2023, https://www.townofrutland.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf1156/f/uploads/zoning_updated_2021_atm.pdf.

Watershed Protection Overlay District

The Watershed Protection Overlay District encompasses an area around Muschopauge Pond, primarily covering R40 land with some R60 land. To protect this public water supply, aside from preexisting uses, this area is limited to municipal uses and agricultural uses subject to conditions from the Rutland Board of Health.

Other Land Use Policies

Home Occupations *May be subject to change following Spring Town Meeting*

Home Occupations are allowed in Residence and Town Center Districts, either by right or special permit for a major home occupation. These Home Occupations must be subordinate to residential use, are limited to three employees, and may only have one sign, to minimize the impact on neighborhood character.

Accessory Dwelling Units

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw was passed at the Fall 2021 Town Meeting. The purpose of this bylaw is to develop additional housing units in single-family neighborhoods for various stages of life while preserving the single-family residential character of neighborhoods. These are allowed by special permit in the R-40 and R-60 residential zoning districts. Where constructed, the building will continue to be regulated as a single-family dwelling, not a two-family dwelling.

The bylaw allows for both “Basic” ADUs, built primarily in an existing structure, and “Expanded” ADUs, which allow for an addition to the building while maintaining the original single-family aesthetic. The ADU special permit requires three on-site parking spots, for the building’s owner to occupy one of the two units for at least 6 months of the year and prohibits the use of the ADU for short-term rentals (such as Airbnb or Vbro). ADUs may not exceed 1,000 square feet or 40% of the gross floor area of the existing building, excluding parking structures. Any stairways to the ADU must be enclosed within the building’s exterior walls, and any exterior entrances to the ADU must be on the side or rear of the building to preserve the single-family appearance.

Parking Requirements

There are minimal parking requirements in Rutland. The Heights Planned Development District is the only district with specific parking requirements. Other types of development, such as Home Occupations, require parking to have a minimal impact on residential areas through location and potential aesthetic requirements. The Village Center and Town Center districts allow for a special permit to reduce required parking by 25% if street parking and shared parking agreements with property owners within three hundred feet can supply the parking demands of the given development. Three on-site parking spaces are required for Accessory Dwelling Units.

Subdivision Regulations

The Town’s subdivision regulations influence how land in Rutland is developed given the predominance of residential land uses. These subdivision regulations are intended to guide the approval process of a subdivision plan and include general design standards, required improvements for an approved subdivision, and general administration.

The current subdivision regulations are in line with the Subdivision Control Law (MGL, Chapter 41, Sections 81K-81GG), and allow for an Open Space option to promote land conservation, which is typically not used by developers. Much of the land that is in open space through the bylaws would not be developable, as it falls under wetlands or another protected category. Updating the Open Space bylaw may make it more effective for land conservation and may make it a more popular choice for developers.

Utilizing Low-Impact Development (LID) techniques can aid in establishing a more environmentally friendly way of development that reduces stormwater runoff and allows rainwater to naturally percolate and recharge the groundwater aquifer.⁸ The Subdivision Regulations should be revised to incorporate LID standards. One way to minimize stormwater runoff is to reduce the impervious surface area. In some instances, it may be possible to consider shared parking as well as off-site parking, particularly in commercial nodes. Some properties include high acreage but limited road frontage. Rather than requiring a subdivision process for one single-family home, allowing flag lots with a reduced lot frontage requirement would allow these property owners to use the rear part of their property.

One concern highlighted with the Subdivision Control Law is that many developments in Rutland are allowed under state law as Approval Not Required (ANR) plans. These types of plans are unique under Massachusetts State Law in that the Planning Board's review is limited only to a determination that the proposal has the minimum amount of frontage required under the Zoning Bylaw. ANRs are a poor land use tool for development, and a change to state law to allow these developments to fall under the Subdivision regulations may be preferable.

Issues and Opportunities

Population Changes and Projections

Rutland's evolving land use policy will be driven by the population changes projected over the lifespan of this plan. As of 2020, Rutland's total population was 8,799 people. Between 1980 and 1990, the population in Rutland grew by 35 percent, outpacing population growth in the state and county of around five percent. Population growth can be attributed to the rapid production of mostly single-family residential units, high regional housing demand, access to the Worcester and MetroWest economic sectors, and high-quality regional public schools. Rutland's population has grown by 67 percent since 1930 and is projected to continue growing to 10,000 residents by 2040 (Figure 1). These projections may be conservative due to population shifts away from city centers due to the COVID-19 work-from-home culture shift for white-collar workers.

⁸ For more information, see, Low Impact Development, accessed May 2, 2023, [https://www.mass.gov/low-impact-development#:~:text=Low%20Impact%20Development%20\(LID\)%20is,a%20site%20to%20manage%20rainfall](https://www.mass.gov/low-impact-development#:~:text=Low%20Impact%20Development%20(LID)%20is,a%20site%20to%20manage%20rainfall).

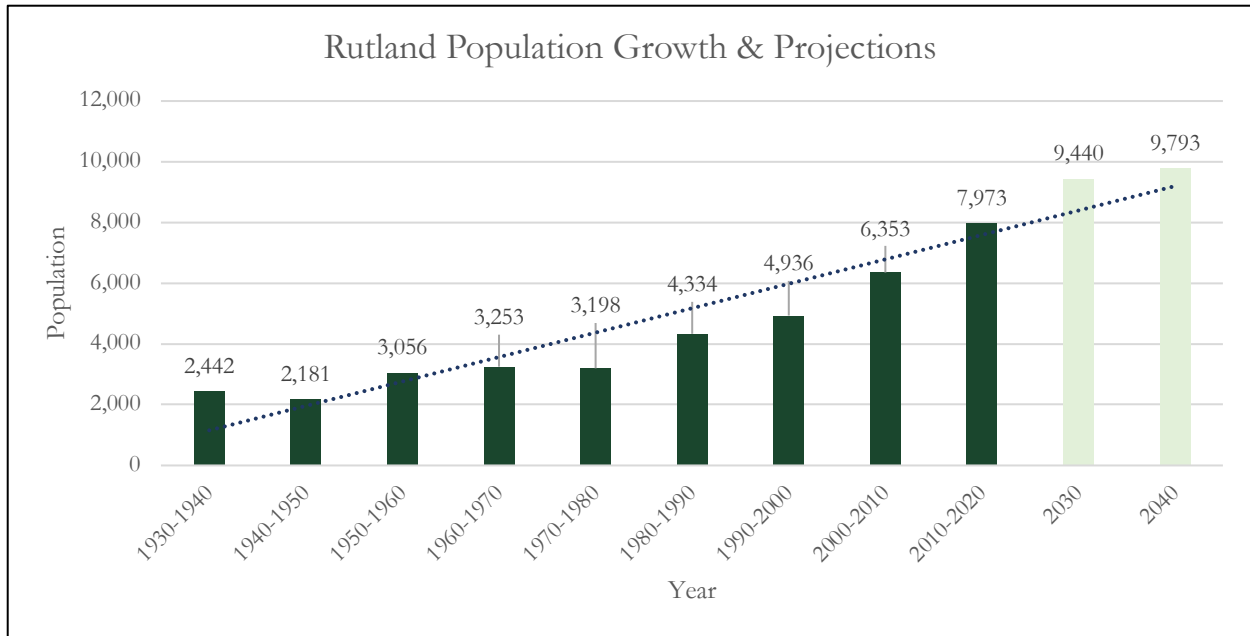


Figure 1: Rutland population growth and projections. Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census, CMRPC.

Decade	Rutland Population	Rutland Percent Change	Worcester County Population	Worcester County Percent Change	Massachusetts Population	Massachusetts Percent Change
1930-1940	2,442	40.10%	193,694	-0.80%	4,316,721	1.60%
1940-1950	2,181	-10.70%	203,486	5.10%	4,690,514	8.70%
1950-1960	3,056	40.10%	186,587	-8.30%	5,148,578	9.80%
1960-1970	3,253	6.40%	176,572	-5.40%	5,689,170	10.50%
1970-1980	3,198	-1.70%	161,799	-8.40%	5,737,037	0.80%
1980-1990	4,334	35.50%	169,759	4.90%	6,016,425	4.90%
1990-2000	4,936	13.90%	172,648	1.70%	6,349,097	5.50%
2000-2010	6,353	28.70%	181,045	4.90%	6,547,629	3.10%
2010-2020	7,973	25.50%	185,428	2.40%	6,892,503	5.30%

Table 4: Population Growth of Rutland, Worcester County, and Massachusetts. Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 1930-2010.

The American Community Survey (ACS) provides information on household growth. By considering the population growth and household growth, we can get a sense of what the housing need will be in Rutland. The above figure shows the household growth rate in Rutland from 2000 to 2020 (ACS Estimate) compared with Worcester County, and the State of Massachusetts. The rate of 25.5 percent shows that the household growth rate in Rutland is significantly high for the region. More discussion on population and housing projections and growth rates can be found in the Population and Housing chapter.

Estimates are conservative as they assume a stable rate of growth. Any major real-world fluctuation in these factors could significantly affect the accuracy of these estimates. Population increases will require expanded housing options (either single- or multifamily), expanded municipal services, more business and

service options, and greater school system capacity. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected jobs, housing, and the economy in general which may have skewed the actual versus projected population. The expected population increase can have quite different impacts on the town's nature based on the type of housing and commercial development the Town's zoning is designed to encourage. The Town should strive to proactively adopt zoning changes that provide opportunities for a diversity of housing types to be built for people of all ages.

Commercial and Industrial Development Potential

With such a large area of Rutland identified as conservation land and state-owned land, the areas in which commercial and industrial opportunities can expand are primarily confined to the core area of the town and along major roads such as Route 122, Route 122a, Route 56, and Route 68. Restrictions on infrastructure may limit opportunities for commercial and industrial development. Development opportunities can include redevelopment and reuse, and new commercial and mixed-use development.

Concerns have emerged about heavier uses in residential areas, such as contractor vehicle storage. Some uses have been identified as potentially inappropriate for Town Center—such as car washes and car dealerships. The Town should explore limiting these uses in Town Center and other residential areas while expanding the availability of land for commercial and light industrial uses.

Areas highlighted in discussions for development include Route 68, which already has several commercial and light industrial zones, and Route 56 from the Four Corners neighborhood south to the border with Paxton. Expanding commercial and mixed-use development opportunities along these major routes would allow the town to expand economic development opportunities while directing this development away from rural and conservation areas.

The existing Light Industrial district on Route 68 near the border with Holden consists of Town-Owned land and could be targeted for development as an industrial park. Rural areas along Route 68 could be targeted for agriculture, agricultural tourism, and associated dining, breweries, and live entertainment operations that would have a more minimal impact on the existing development character. There are examples throughout Central Massachusetts of similar successful operations, such as Stone Cow Brewery, Davis Farmland, and Indian Ranch. Where needed, vegetative screening buffers can be used to provide a visual separation between residential and light industrial uses and preserve the rural character of Route 68 (Figure 2).

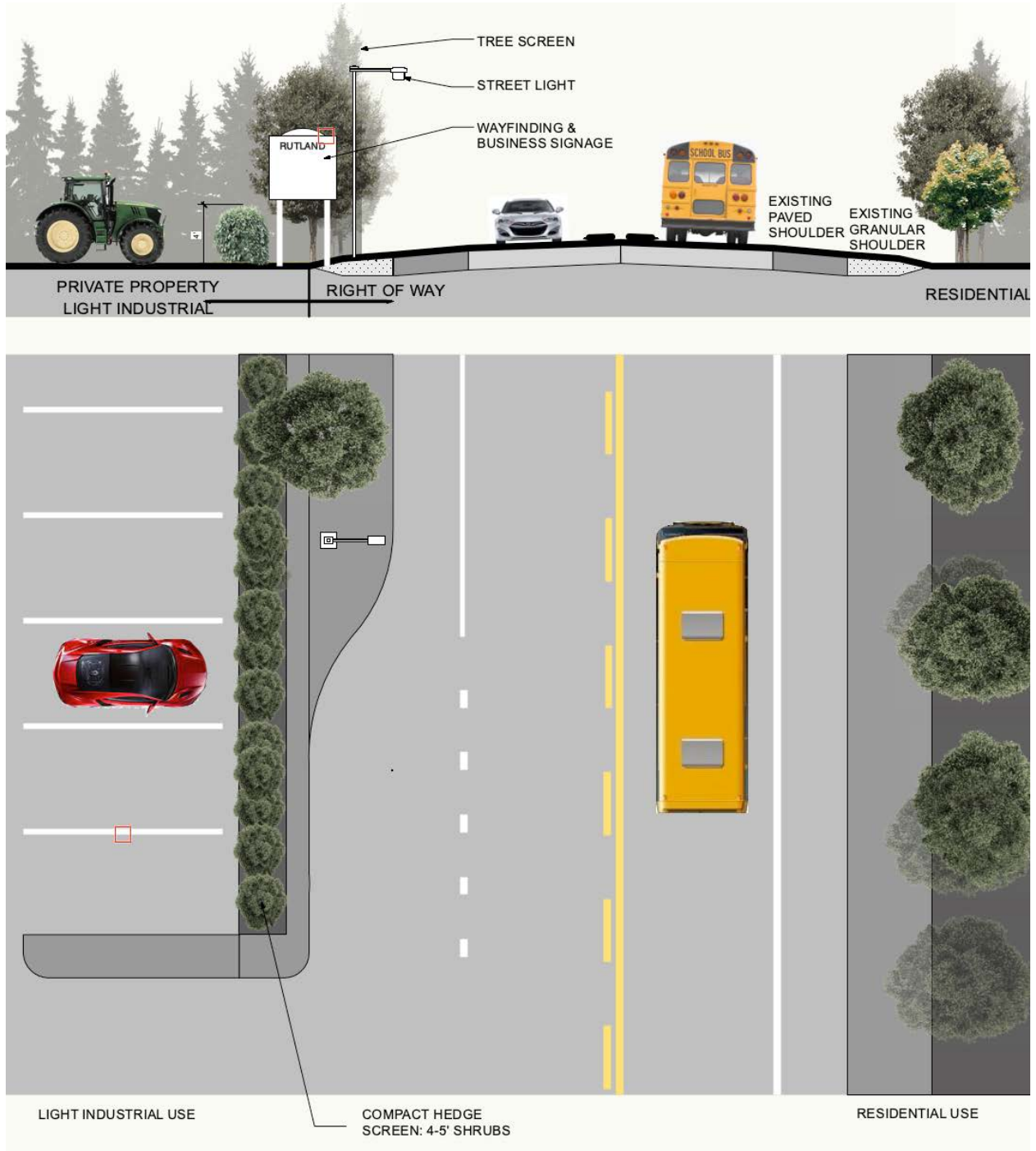


Figure 2. Proposed vegetation screening of industrial uses on Route 68. Source: CMRPC.

Areas along Route 68 with existing commercial development could be targeted as Village Center zones for mixed-use commercial and residential development. The Village Center zone in the Four Corners area could be expanded south along Route 56 towards Paxton, or that major road frontage could be zoned as Business and Light Industrial, in line with existing districts along that area of Route 56.



Figure 3. Proposed landscaping and signage at Four Corners. Source: CMRPC.

Factors that can aid in enhancing the approval process for new businesses include streamlining the permitting process and combined permitting. By coordinating permitting reviews between the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, and the Board of Selectmen, the timeline for processing can be reduced allowing businesses to open sooner. The Town may also want to consider shared staff or services with other nearby communities as part-time staffing is a barrier to the coordination of services between departments.

Emerging Issues in Land Use

Land use issues are evolving faster than ever. Towns are operating at the intersection of changing environmental and policy pressures. The Town of Rutland cannot predict every emerging land use issue, but the Town can commit to acting proactively and responsively to best serve the community. A variety of land use considerations have appeared as clear questions the Town must contend with moving into the future. With so many emerging issues in land use planning, it will be vital to enhance public awareness of traditional and emerging issues. The Town should ensure there is adequate funding in the Planning Board budget to include resources for technical and ongoing education. An affordable choice for this is to use land use training classes through the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC). Residents have a stake in how the community will grow, and it is important to include their needs and desires in any decision-making on planning-related issues. The Town should develop strategies on how best to solicit interest in these issues from the public.

Climate Change

Towns today must cope with rapid changes in environmental trends in addition to societal and demographic changes. Towns can no longer rely on the former climatic status quo but must actively plan for changes in rainfall quantity, storm severity, water supplies, droughts, invasive species, and other climate effects. These will affect the services residents require and the Town's ability to provide them. Rutland must prepare itself to be responsive to emergencies (Fire, EMT, Police) but can also offset climate change impacts by proactively planning for the Town to fit new environmental conditions. The promotion of Smart Growth planning principles which increase density and transportation options can help reduce carbon emissions and incorporate resilient infrastructure and service design. Proactive planning means less reactive recovery in the future. A local wetland bylaw could help preserve natural flood barriers through limitations on development in 100-year floodplains.

Conservation Commission bylaws are notably absent in Rutland. A Conservation Commission bylaw would allow the town to prohibit development within a specified distance of wetlands and incorporate other unique environmental as allowed under Massachusetts General Law. The lack of Conservation Commission bylaws, along with an abundance of Approval Not Required (ANR) plans, has allowed construction in Rutland within ten to twenty feet of wetlands without oversight from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and other local entities. Expanding town staff through the hiring of a Conservation Agent would allow the Conservation Commission to work with other town boards and commissions to target land conservation efforts. There is also concern that the current Stormwater Management Plan policy is in noncompliance with Environmental Protection Agency regulations.

Growth Management

A major subject of this Master Plan has been the Town's desire to strike a balance between development and preservation. Residents desire improvements in local amenities, and the quality of life in town continues to attract new residents, but this very growth in population can affect the characteristics that attracted residents in the first place. Rutland should encourage sustainable development and sustainable construction of new buildings. Rutland is projected to continue growing, but the community can shape that growth in the appropriate direction through the active use of land planning tools such as Open Space Residential Design, Cluster Development, LID, and Stormwater Bylaws. Rutland should re-evaluate the former large-lot, low-density zoning approach that has failed to reduce growth rates and instead should encourage clusters of denser, well-designed development that is climatically resilient and enjoyable to live in.

Survey respondents expressed a desire to maintain Rutland's small-town character and heritage. One way to guide development that maintains this character is by establishing design guidelines or standards that are consistent and complement the existing and desired character of the town and its neighborhoods. Another way is to preserve and support the historic Town Common and the character of the surrounding village/historic district. Leapfrog development that requires infrastructure to be extended is costly and unsustainable. It also results in a sprawl-type development that detracts from a community's distinctiveness and cohesiveness. The Town should concentrate new development around existing infrastructure to preserve natural resources and limit the service provision costs.

Rutland should consider zoning that incorporates Priority Development Areas (PDAs) that meet community needs. Zoning that allows for mixed use nodes can encourage areas that include businesses and residences. These can become gathering places that attract economic development, enhance the sense of community, and improve quality of life. The Town Center neighborhood already exists as a denser, walkable area. We should evaluate the feasibility and potential for expanded mixed-use development in that neighborhood.

Growth Management Bylaw

A Development Rate Limitation Bylaw is effective through Spring 2024 when the Town Administrator will review it for its effectiveness before a request of the Town Meeting to extend the bylaw. The purpose of the bylaw is to “ensure the issuance of building permits for the construction of new dwelling units will be consistent with the town’s capacity to accommodate the new development and provide the services needed to support that development.”

The bylaw assumes that Rutland cannot sustain projected growth rates without detrimental impacts on the environment and services. The bylaw limits building permit construction for new residential dwelling units to no more than thirty-six dwelling units in a single calendar year. No more than twenty-five percent of the building permits authorized for new dwelling units shall be issued to any one applicant or single subdivision within a calendar year. Exceptions include low- or moderate-income housing, age-restricted dwelling units for residents aged fifty-five or older, and any dwelling units in the Heights Planned Development District.

Affordable Housing

As is common in Massachusetts, there are concerns that the housing available in Rutland is not affordable to a wide variety of potential residents. There are many practices the Town could adopt to contribute to an increase in housing supply as well as the development of a wider variety of housing styles. A diversity of housing types would allow Rutland to maintain its rural, residential, and agricultural character while accommodating more residents.

At only 3%, Rutland falls far below the State-mandated 10% affordable housing requirement and falls below the percentages of subsidized housing in Holden (6.1%), Paxton (4.2%), and Barre (3.8%).

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B requires cities and towns in the Commonwealth to work toward ensuring that a minimum of 10% of their total housing stock qualifies as affordable to households earning at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Communities that do not meet the goal of 10% affordable housing risk losing control of the development review process, as developers are granted comprehensive permits to forego existing zoning restrictions if they reserve at least 25% (or 20% in some cases) of proposed units as affordable. To mitigate this risk, towns falling under the 10% requirement must increase their housing stock by at least 0.5% each year, or 1.0% over two years, and have an approved Housing Production Plan, showing that the community is making strides to address its housing needs.

Housing affordability is important to residents. Forty-four percent of survey respondents indicated that housing costs were a factor in their decision to live in Rutland. Forty-one percent of respondents noted that the presence of residential neighborhoods was a key factor. Maintaining community in Rutland means ensuring that residents can stay through life and financial changes.

The housing affordability crisis is deepening across the state. People are being pushed out of urban centers into growing suburban commuter zones. Escalating land prices, combined with the current large-lot requirements, encourage developers to build larger, more expensive houses to recoup their expenses.

Most employed residents of Rutland commute outside of Town for work. Rising housing prices in Worcester and Central Massachusetts are likely to affect where people choose to live.

Aging Population

Rutland needs to incorporate Healthy Aging to serve its residents, many of whom wish to age in Rutland. Housing affordability, transportation options, emergency service response, and multi-generational community spaces are all part of this approach. The right zoning can facilitate Healthy Aging while improving quality of life for all residents.

Green Energy

Rutland should develop the necessary regulatory infrastructure to facilitate green energy in a manner appropriate to the vision of the Town. A proactive approach to achieving this is to complete an assessment of available or suitable land that would help direct these new developments. Another step to realizing these goals is to identify desirable zoning options for clean energy that meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Green Communities program.

Airbnb

Airbnb and other new platforms for small-scale shared use (such as Uber and Lyft) require an innovative approach by Towns because they inhabit a legally ambiguous area under most current regulations, especially zoning. These platforms can provide flexible amenities in Town to address existing concerns such as the lack of lodging options or lack of transit options, but the Town would be well served by resolving zoning and other legal ambiguities.

Natural Landscapes and Resources, Open Spaces, History

Rutland’s natural landscapes and resources, open spaces, and history should be preserved and protected in a fiscally sound manner. The first step in achieving this is to identify and prioritize the areas that need to be protected from development. This may include sensitive habitats that should be conserved or significant historical structures or properties to be preserved. Rutland has the natural beauty of native New England mixed forest and open land that could be lost due to development pressures. The Town should seek protective measures to maintain these natural features.

Sign Bylaw

It is good practice to routinely review the Sign Bylaw and to consider any new or updated laws regarding signage. In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a case regarding a sign ordinance that was found to treat signs differently based on their content, thus, regulating speech that is protected under the First Amendment.⁹ Since this ruling, many communities across the country have been updating their sign code to ensure that it does not in any way impinge on free speech. The Town of Rutland should review its Sign Bylaw and update it as needed. Another area of the Sign Bylaw that the Town should clarify is what criteria the Town uses to review sign design. Without a clear description of what is needed, there is a concern

⁹ *Reed et al v. Town of Gilbert et al*, the U.S. Supreme Court, 135 S.Ct. 2218.

that a review of a sign design may be subjective.

Another concern is the size, brightness, and animation of electronic signs. Rutland should consider whether electronic signs will be allowed or not. Signage bylaws should reflect the desired limitations on these signs and provide clear definitions and aesthetic requirements.

Warehouse and Distribution Centers

Many Central Massachusetts communities are experiencing an increase in warehouse and distribution centers. The E-commerce industry has been growing in recent years, but in the aftermath of the pandemic, more people are shopping online. While each community must decide the best course of action for dealing with land use issues, such as the proximity of these uses to residential uses and increased truck traffic, it will also be beneficial to assess challenges and potential resolutions at a regional level. CMRPC is examining the prospect of researching and identifying best practices for the location of these facilities and minimizing any potential land use or traffic impacts at the regional level.

Water and Sewer Capacity

All households connected to the Town water system draw from the Muschopauge Pond. The draw rates for this are set by a permit issued by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). In 2018 the Town of Rutland imposed a moratorium on new water/sewer hookups. The permit issued by the DEP allows for an average daily draw from the Muschopauge Pond of 370,000 gallons per day (GPD) for Rutland's water supply. The Town's average daily draw in 2017 was estimated to be more than 350,000 GPD, which was only 13,268 GPD below the state-allowed limits. Wastewater limits are capped at 489,000 GPD as of 2017 with an average daily use of 489,000 GPD in 2017. This assumption includes the wastewater usage necessary for the upcoming Rutland Heights Development. More studies on the capacity of public water and sewer lines could be beneficial for future residential growth and density.

Land Conservation

As discussed above, much of the land in Rutland is classified as open space, either as state recreational and preservation land, private property regulated as Chapter Land, or as unprotected, undeveloped parcels. Implementation of updated Low Impact Development and stormwater bylaws, a reappraisal of the Open Space option for subdivision development, and implementation of conservation commission bylaws may be necessary to continue land conservation efforts. Town bodies such as the Planning Board, Agricultural Commission, and Conservation Commission can work together to see the implementation of these bylaws. Efforts can be made by town staff and boards to see the expansion of private chapter land design.

Rutland has a strong identity as a community with an agricultural and rural heritage, which is also willing to develop select areas as retail and tourism destinations for residents and the region while maintaining agricultural and rural land.

Town Center

The Town Center bylaw has been working well, and the setbacks and other physical regulations are in line with the type of development sought in this area of Rutland.

Unfortunately, much of the desired development allowed in the current bylaws, such as multi-family housing and mixed-use, has not materialized in Rutland. There has also been concern that certain uses currently allowed in Town Center – such as car washes and car dealerships, may be inappropriate for the area and may be better situated in commercial and light industrial areas on Route 68.

There are continual issues with traffic in Rutland Town Center, sitting at the intersection of Routes 56 and 122A. Traffic studies and safety measures may be necessary to alleviate these issues for the safety and convenience of residents and visitors.

Other areas highlighted for future commercial and residential development, such as the Heights Planned Development District, Four Corners, and North Rutland, require more pedestrian infrastructure to be more viable and accessible as residential areas.

Recommendations

The Land Use & Zoning chapter recognizes the residents' desire to maintain Rutland's rural and agricultural character and preserve open land while acknowledging the pressures of expected growth. Population growth is highly likely, and policies should be developed to manage this growth and foster a commercial tax base to support this population. The current approach to land use policy has not prevented unwanted housing development in rural areas and has not fostered the growth of a commercial tax base desired by all residents. To that end, these recommendations have been developed to direct unwanted development away from agricultural areas and open land, while accommodating housing production in currently developed areas, and direct commercial and light industrial development to appropriate areas next to existing development.

The following recommended tools, resources, and policy changes have been selected based on community input, committee discussions with CMRPC, and case studies in other communities. While innovative programs and policy changes can be effective, the Town should also focus on garnering community buy-in for necessary land use and zoning changes. The following recommendations have been devised to comprehensively achieve the town's goals, reinforcing Rutland's identity and a rural community, while accommodating future development. These goals and recommendations are restated in the Implementation Plan found at the end of the Master Plan with detailed action items that the Town can undertake to bring the projects to fruition.

Goal 1: Encourage development that is in harmony with the community's rural New England character and heritage.

Rutland should re-evaluate the large-lot low-density zoning approach, which has not been successful in mitigating unwanted housing construction and sprawl. Looking forward, the Town can prioritize higher densities in targeted locations to help mitigate the sprawl of expected future growth. Focusing development in areas of town such as Town Center, Four Corners, and North Rutland, which already have residential and commercial development, will allow the Town to build housing for the future while reducing development pressure on Rutland's key natural and agricultural assets.

Given the expected population growth in Rutland and concerns about housing development and sprawl, the Town should proactively adopt zoning changes that provide opportunities for a diversity of housing types to be built for people of all ages. Careful planning for multiple styles of clustered development can support this need while aiding in the preservation of open space in more rural areas. Rutland can look to residential densities in the center of Town which conform to traditional land use patterns rather than the large-lot, low-density approach seen in subdivisions in rural areas constructed in recent decades.

Some parcels include a large amount of acreage, but limited road frontage. Rather than requiring a subdivision process for one single-family home, allowing flag lots with a reduced frontage requirement by special permit would allow these property owners to use the rear part of their property.

Leapfrog development¹⁰ that requires infrastructure to be extended is costly and unsustainable. It also results in a sprawl-type development that detracts from a community's distinctiveness and cohesiveness. The Town should concentrate new development around existing infrastructure to preserve natural resources and limit the service provision costs. More studies on the capacity of public water and sewer lines could be beneficial for future residential growth and density.

Airbnb and other new platforms for small-scale shared use (such as Uber and Lyft) require an innovative approach by towns because they inhabit a legally ambiguous area under most current regulations, especially zoning. These platforms can provide flexible amenities in town to address existing concerns such as the lack of lodging options or lack of transit options, but the Town would be well served by resolving zoning and legal ambiguities.

The Town of Rutland should review its Sign Bylaw and update it as needed. Another area of the Sign Bylaw that the Town should clarify is what criteria the Town uses to review sign design. Without a clear description of what is needed, there is a concern that a review of a sign design may be subjective. An added topic of concern with signs in recent years is the size, brightness, and animation of electronic message centers (also known as reader board signs or LED signs). CMRPC staff recommends that the Town consider whether this type of sign will be allowed and if so, a definition should be drafted for this type of

¹⁰ Leapfrog development refers to the practice of developers building on land further away from population centers, due to lower land prices or more permissive zoning policy.

sign and the criteria used to regulate them established. If the Town does not support this type of sign, the sign bylaw should be amended to prohibit them.

Many Rutland residents are looking to age in place. Rutland will need to continue planning for Healthy Aging to serve its aging population; affordability; inclusive mobility options; elderly and emergency response services; multi-generational community spaces. Appropriate zoning can help facilitate Healthy Aging while simultaneously improving the quality of life for other generations of residents.

Goal 2: Identify key areas for specific types of land use within the Town and create mechanisms to encourage such uses in those areas.

Rutland should conduct a comprehensive review of the Zoning Bylaws to ensure that zoning is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan and other strategic plans. Zoning that is tailored to each segment of the priority development areas will better serve the Town's development goals.

Strategic assessment of existing non-residential development along major routes would allow the Town to expand existing economic development opportunities while directing unwanted development away from rural and conservation areas.

Major routes such as Massachusetts Route 68 and portions of Massachusetts Route 56 have existing commercial and light industrial zoning and development. Areas along Route 68 with existing commercial development could be targeted as Village Center zones for mixed-use commercial and residential development. The Village Center zone in the Four Corners area could be expanded south along Route 56 towards Paxton, or that major road frontage could be zoned as Business and Light Industrial, in line with existing districts along that area of Route 56.

Rural areas along Route 68 could be targeted for agriculture, agricultural tourism, and associated dining, breweries, and live entertainment operations that would have a more minimal impact on the existing development character.

There has been concern about the presence of industrial uses in residential areas, such as contractor vehicle storage, and the existence of provisions in the zoning bylaws that allow for car washes and car dealerships in residential areas. The Town should limit these uses in Town Center and other residential areas while expanding the availability of land for commercial and light industrial uses.

Rutland should develop the necessary regulatory infrastructure to facilitate green energy in a manner appropriate to the vision of the Town. A proactive approach to achieving this is to complete an assessment of available or suitable land that would help direct these new developments. Another step to realizing these goals is to identify desirable zoning options for clean energy that meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Green Communities program.

Goal 3: Develop strategies to preserve agricultural land, support the existing agricultural community, and encourage the growth of local agricultural and agri-business.

Massachusetts Route 68 runs south to north from Holden to Hubbardston in Rutland. The area surrounding this road is agricultural and residential. Further agricultural development along this road could complement the existing rural character while building Rutland's tax base. This could include farms and agricultural tourism such as dining, craft breweries, and outdoor entertainment venues.

Implementation of updated Low Impact Development and stormwater bylaws, a reappraisal of the Open Space option for subdivision development, and implementation of conservation commission bylaws may be necessary to continue land conservation efforts. Town bodies such as the Planning Board, Agricultural Commission, and Conservation Commission can work together to see the implementation of these bylaws. Efforts can be made by town staff and boards to see the expansion of private chapter land design.

Goal 4: Concentrate new development around existing traffic infrastructure to protect natural resources and improve walkability.

Future commercial and residential development should be clustered in existing, developed areas to make those areas more walkable. This could prevent trips to Worcester and other places out of town for basic goods and services and would build a commercial tax base outside of the Town Center.

The Town should consider innovative zoning that encourages the development of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) in a way that meets the needs of the community. By developing zoning that allows for nodes that include a mix of uses, these dense pockets can include businesses and homes and provide gathering places to enhance a sense of community and promote quality of life. Innovate zoning should be sought for the PDA and areas that include a residential overlay. The Town Center neighborhood already exists as a denser, walkable area. The Town should evaluate the feasibility and potential for expanded mixed-use development in that neighborhood.

Vacant lands represent an opportunity for the Town to revive underused areas. These lands are distinct from open space or preservation lands, with limited existing recreational or preservation value, but falling within an existing zoning district, with frontage on major roads. Some of this land may be appropriate for redevelopment, while other parcels may be best suited for conservation. The Town should focus on developing and preserving quality parcels. However, vacant lands may present additional smaller-scale opportunities. If left unmaintained, vacant land can contribute to blight. A clear picture of ownership rights will be helpful when planning future uses of these lands.

Rutland may consider amending zoning regulations in the existing zones and increasing mixed-use provisions in some areas. Infill, redevelopment, and reuse opportunities could be explored in Commercial and Industrial districts if parcels in those zones go on the market in coming years.

Goal 5: Preserve open space and encourage use for active and passive recreation.

The BioMap2 Project has identified twenty-two areas consisting of thousands of acres of land area in Rutland as core habitats or critical natural landscapes. Chapter 61B tax exemptions can be used to support private recreational land preservation. These non-developed lands are crucial for providing ecosystem services that make everyday life possible, but increasingly also help buffer the effects of climate change.

A notable absence from the bylaws of Rutland is the lack of bylaws for the Conservation Commission. Typically, such a bylaw would allow a municipality to prohibit development within a certain distance of wetlands and provide for other unique environmental concerns as allowed under Massachusetts General Law.

While Rutland is subject to wetlands regulations, there is concern among town officials and members of the Conservation Commission that these regulations do not adequately protect natural resources. Under current regulations, construction can occur up to the boundaries of wetlands. When combined with the abundance of Approval Not Required (ANR) plans, this has allowed construction in Rutland often within ten to twenty feet of wetlands, with limited oversight from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and other town entities. This can create a flooding risk for developments and risk the contamination of wetlands. It is recommended that regulations are expanded to include regulations for uplands, to create a buffer zone so that construction on non-wetlands is limited adjacent to protected wetlands.

The hiring of a Conservation Agent would allow the Conservation Commission to work with other town boards and commissions to target land conservation efforts.

Rutland may consider updating the Subdivision regulations to better promote land conservation and other environmental goals. The current subdivision regulations are in line with the Subdivision Control Law (MGL, Chapter 41, Sections 81K-81GG), but the Open Space option is typically not used by developers. There may be avenues for the Town to make the Open Space options more attractive to developers.

LID techniques can aid in establishing a more environmentally friendly way of managing stormwater runoff and recharging groundwater aquifers. The Subdivision regulations should be revised to incorporate LID standards. Shared parking and off-site parking in non-subdivision development could also contribute to a reduction in impervious surface area, improving stormwater runoff.

Part of preserving natural and agricultural landscapes in Rutland includes promoting “Smart Growth” policies which increase density and mobility options to reduce carbon impact, as well as designing

infrastructure and services for resilience. The more proactive planning Rutland completes, the less reactive recovery the Town will face. The Town could consider implementing a local wetland bylaw to sustain and preserve natural barriers to mitigate flooding. The Town could also increase limitations on development within the 100-year flood zones.

Rutland is projected to continue growing, but the community can shape that growth in appropriate directions through the active use of land planning tools such as Open Space Residential Design, Cluster Development, LID, and Stormwater Bylaws. Rutland should re-evaluate the former large-lot, low-density zoning approach which has failed to reduce growth rates and instead encourage clusters of denser, well-designed development that is resilient to climate change and enjoyable to live in.

Rutland's natural landscapes and resources, open spaces, and history should be preserved and protected in a fiscally sound manner. The first step in achieving this is to identify and prioritize the areas that need to be protected from development. This may include sensitive habitats that should be conserved or significant historical structures or properties to be preserved.

Economic Development



Introduction

Economic development is a process with two missions: the creation of economic growth along with the improvement of the social well-being of residents. It involves helping small businesses thrive and growing the tax base while preserving community. This chapter assesses the economic conditions in Rutland to identify opportunities and strategies intended to advance economic goals.

Residents have identified a few key priorities:

- Encourage small business development.
- Diversify the tax base.
- Improve the streetscape and public amenities.
- Leverage natural assets.
- Promote commercial development that is compatible with Rutland’s rural character.

These goals were established through a community engagement process that included two community surveys, a visioning workshop, and monthly steering committee meetings open to the public. Relevant community engagement information is included in the Issues and Opportunities section of this chapter. Findings include:

- Most survey respondents feel that the Town of Rutland should work to expand its tax base through controlled commercial development.
- Residents want more convenient shopping and limited business development to level the tax base.
- Respondents strongly favor establishing well-defined commercial and industrial areas in town and enacting the necessary regulations to achieve aesthetic compatibility to preserve town character.
- Respondents indicated that the Town of Rutland should work to encourage the growth of small businesses and retail services to meet the daily needs of residents as the town matures.
- Most respondents agree that the town should emphasize the promotion of local businesses that may appeal to residents and visitors.
- Respondents support the use of tax incentives to retain businesses and attract new businesses.
- Residents favor grocery stores, small retail & dining businesses, and agricultural businesses & services.

Residents want to balance growth with the preservation of small-town character and open space. To achieve this, we recommend that Rutland takes a three-pronged approach to economic development efforts: prioritize local growth; encourage development in commercial areas; and adopt conservation-development strategies.

Prioritizing local growth: Rutland residents expressed a desire for access to more goods and services without driving to neighboring towns. Addressing this need requires supporting local businesses to produce necessary goods and services. This is a strategy similar to *Economic Gardening*,¹ an established, low-cost program that creates local economic resilience by working with local companies instead of

¹ <https://economicgardening.org/backstory/>, accessed January 20, 2023.

relying on external business recruitment. However, Rutland does need to recruit select businesses such as grocery stores and small retail shops, to meet the need for specific goods & services.

Encouraging small business retention and attraction should include incentives to attract the type of small businesses that meet resident needs. The further development of home occupation regulations would contribute to diversifying the tax base.

Encouraging physical development in commercial areas: this intervention requires the expansion of infrastructure and the reassessment of zoning to facilitate development along ideal commercial corridors. Water & sewer infrastructure and pedestrian safety infrastructure would help remove the barriers to the creation of vibrant commercial corridors. The adoption of less restrictive zoning and design guidelines and the use of site plan review would help create predictability for developers.

Adopting conservation-development strategies will help Rutland **leverage natural resources and outdoor recreation activities** to grow its economy. Rutland State Park makes up a large part of the land area. Taking advantage of this asset should be central to the economic development plan. Conservation-development is a tool for controlling growth and a proven strategy that leverages natural assets for economic growth. This means the coupling of eco-compatible uses such as agritourism and ecotourism with recreational activities.

This chapter outlines an economic development strategy built upon resident preferences, needs, and goals. The chapter identifies commercial and industrial areas to guide development that preserves small-town charm. We will focus on the development of small commercial and agricultural businesses in areas of town with existing development, to preserve rural areas while providing residents with more services. We will review Rutland's economic history and prior planning efforts, summarize existing economic conditions, and identify issues and opportunities to inform its economic development strategy.

History and Prior Planning Efforts

Economic History and Overview

The Town of Rutland was established as an agricultural town on a 12-square-mile tract purchased from the indigenous Naquag in 1714. In the 19th century, the town underwent small-scale industrial development centered on basket factories wool mills in West Rutland, and shoe manufacturing in Rutland Center. Agriculture remained the dominant activity through the industrial period. Milk and butter were the major products from Rutland dairy farms. In the late 19th century, Rutland developed into a health resort town, with the establishment of tuberculosis treatment centers. Facilities included the first state-operated sanatorium in the country in 1898, a Veterans Administration hospital in 1923, and a state prison farm with hospital facilities that ran from 1903 to 1934.

The 20th-century conversion of western tracts to a state park and watershed management land removed much of the settlement fabric, including the West Rutland industrial center and prison camp facilities. The development of tuberculosis vaccines led to the abandonment and conversion of hospital complexes. The Veterans Administration buildings became part of Rutland Heights State Hospital.

Despite postwar suburban expansion, agricultural landscapes remain, including those with intact 18th and 19th-century structures. Rutland retains its rural character, and residents value farms and natural resources. Demand for commercial, light industrial, and residential development is expected to increase according to economic forecasts. What this growth looks like and the goals it serves must be defined by the community.

Prior planning efforts

Rutland Master Plan (2000)

Rutland completed its first comprehensive master plan in 2000. The plan identified multiple economic strategies, including the establishment of Village Center Zoning, the construction of an informational kiosk, the creation and implementation of a town center plan, the development of Rutland Heights, infrastructure improvements, and a selection of regulatory changes intended to promote economic development while retaining small-town character. Recommendations may be complete or ongoing, while others have yet to be implemented, such as the formation of a Village Improvement Association to assist in the implementation of the Town Center Plan and the development of additional village centers.

Rutland Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017)

The town completed an Open Space and Recreation plan in 2017. The plan called for increasing services for residents and visitors by encouraging small retail stores and recreation businesses in Rutland Center and Rutland Heights. An age-restricted 55+ residential community at Rutland Heights with 142 units is expected to begin construction by the Summer of 2023.

Rutland, Residential Development Impact Analysis (2020):

Rutland completed a Residential Development Impact Analysis in 2020 to address concerns with growth over the last thirty years. The analysis called for a Commercial Zoning Diagnostic to identify potential new business growth constraints. It also recommended reviewing existing Town Center districts and adopting a Mixed-Use Village Center Overlay District.

Rutland Agricultural Economic Development Strategy Summary Report (2020)

Recognizing the importance and economic potential of agriculture in Rutland, the town completed an Agricultural Economic Development Strategy Summary Report in 2020. The report encouraged the continuation and development of agritourism and farm-to-school programs, as an additional revenue source and a means of improving the incorporation of agriculture in Rutland's economy and culture.

Town Center Study (2021)

Rutland completed a Town Center Study in 2021 that called for additional infrastructure in Rutland Town Center. Along with the development of marketing materials and a Main Street organization, infrastructure upgrades would ensure that the town's identity is clear to visitors and residents. The study recommended improving the streetscape to ease traffic, improve safety and walkability, and develop stronger pedestrian connectivity. Outdoor recreation was identified as another priority. Improving various parcels in and near the Town Center would help residents take advantage of outdoor resources and develop Rutland as a destination for outdoor recreation.

Existing Conditions

An analysis of existing conditions provides a baseline to measure future growth. It can help to identify issues and opportunities and contextualize the needs identified through community outreach. The analysis here informed the economic development strategies identified in this chapter.

Income

Figure 1 shows that the median household income (MHI) in Rutland in 2021 is \$132,000, significantly higher than the Worcester County MHI of \$81,660 and the Massachusetts MHI of \$89,026. The median income for nonfamily Rutland households is \$59,833, while the MHI for family households is \$148,810. Married couple families have an MHI of \$156,136.

Median Household Income in Rutland has increased by twenty-eight percent since 2010, which is higher than Barre, Paxton, Spencer, and Oakham, but lower than Holden or Princeton. Figure 2 details the percentage of households by income bracket in Rutland, Worcester County, and Massachusetts. Rutland has a greater percentage of households earning over \$100,000 than Worcester County and Massachusetts. Rutland is wealthier on average than surrounding communities, the county, and the state. This difference in earnings has been increasing over the years.

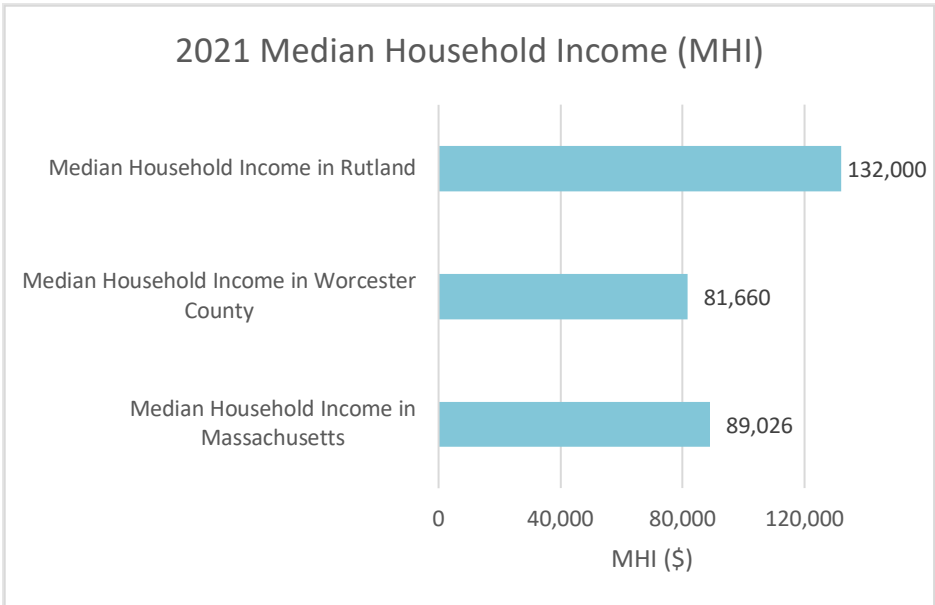


Figure 1: Median Income in 2021 (In 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars). Source: US Census Bureau 2021: ACS (American Community Survey) 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables.

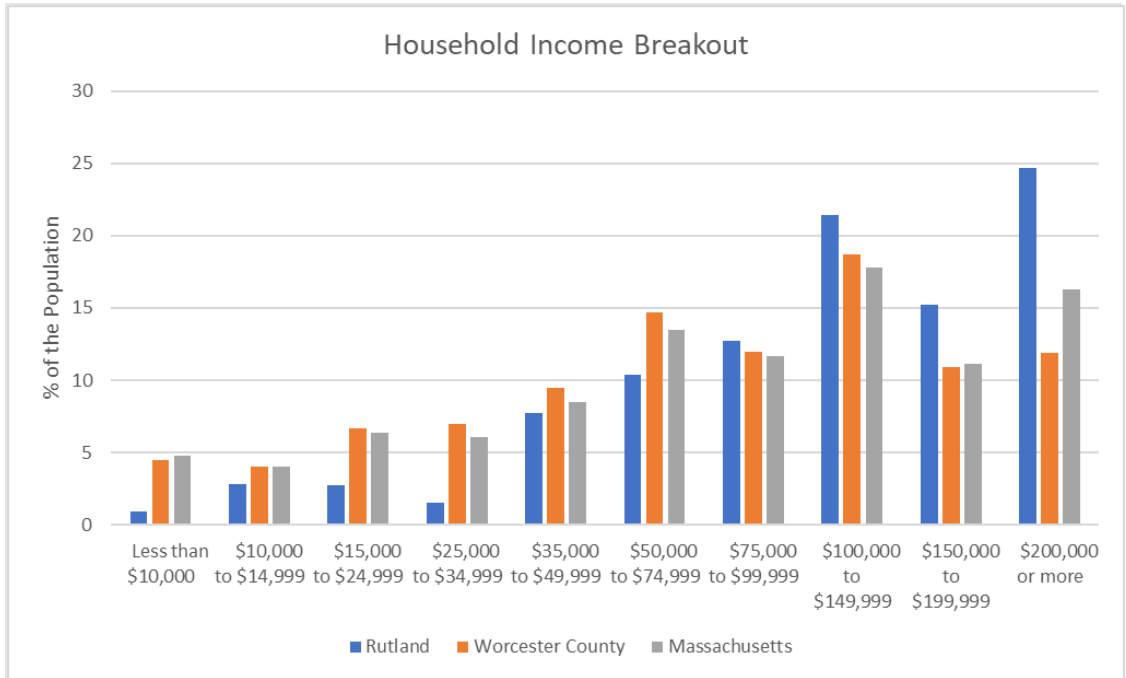


Figure 2: Income in 2021 (In 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars). Source: US Census Bureau 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables.

Employment

The labor force in Rutland comprised 4,843 residents as of October 2022. According to the Massachusetts Labor Force and Unemployment Data Reports, the unemployment rate in October 2022 was three percent, similar to the seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate in Massachusetts. The labor force in Rutland has increased by approximately 657 residents since 2010. This fifteen percent growth rate is nearly twice as high as the state.

The unemployment rate in Rutland has fluctuated since 1990 and has followed county and state trends. It is important to note the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the unemployment rate to rise to nearly eight percent in 2020 from three percent in 2019. The 10-month average 2022 rate of three percent shows significant improvement. Rutland has lower unemployment rates, though it has followed larger trends.

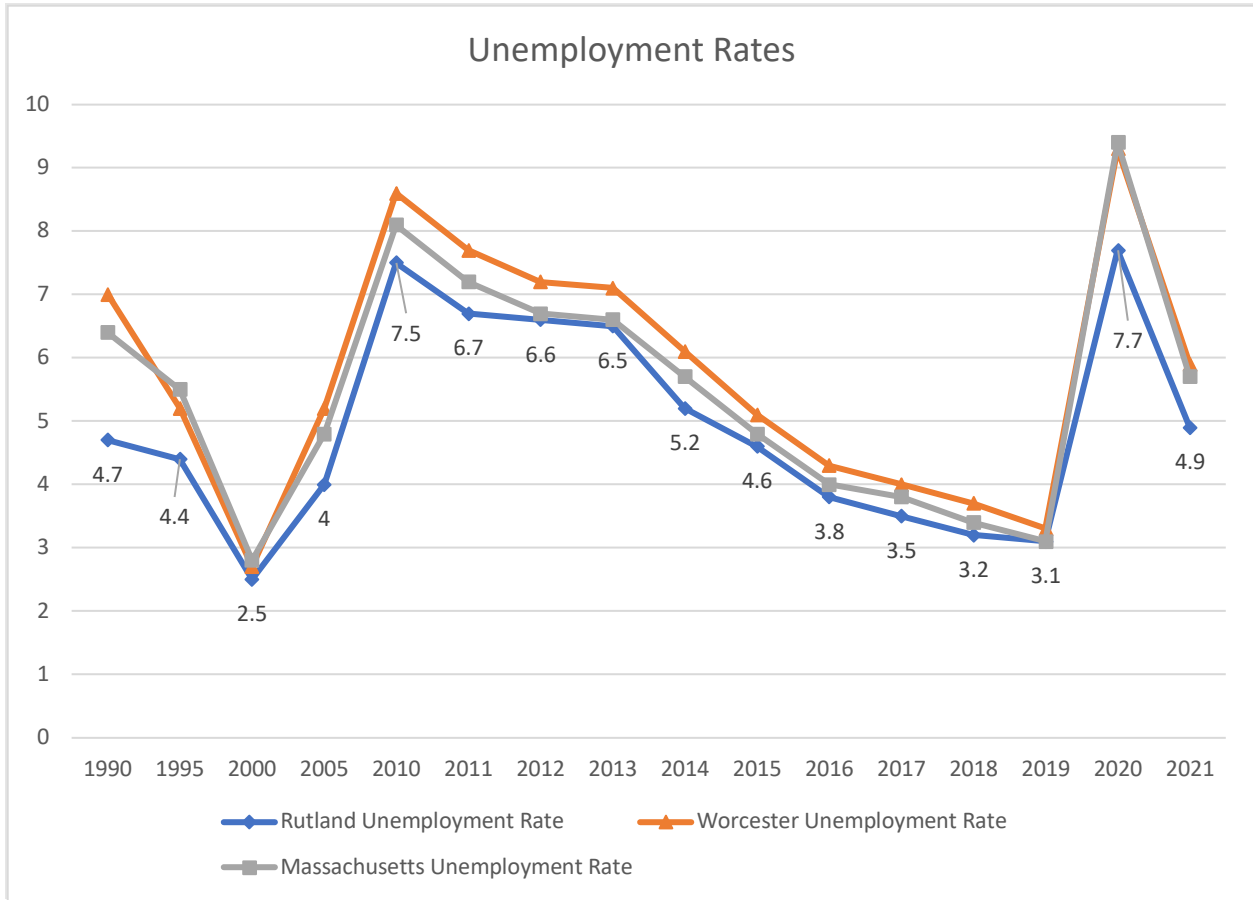


Figure 3: Unemployment rates. Source: Massachusetts Labor Force and Unemployment Data Reports, December 2022.

Table 1 shows the percentage of Rutland workers by occupation. Understanding the employed labor force’s division by occupation type is helpful when planning for job growth. Occupation data provides an added layer of insight into the makeup of the employment base and major employers. Most workers in Rutland are employed by private companies in the natural resources, construction, and maintenance industries. Figure 4 shows the working population in Rutland by industry and shows that most jobs are in the education, health care, and social assistance industries.

	Total Pop. Est.	Private company employees	Self- Employed, Own Inc Business	Private Nonprofit	Public Employee	Self- Employed Own Not Inc. Business & Unpaid Family Workers
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	4733	62.90%	1.40%	10.50%	21.40%	3.70%
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	2411	56.10%	0.70%	17.10%	23.80%	2.40%
Service occupations	754	59.70%	0.00%	7.30%	33%	0
Sales and office occupations	675	73.50%	1.60%	2.50%	16%	6.40%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	411	77.45%	2.20%	2.40%	8.30%	9.70%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	482	75.35%	6.60%	0.80%	10.40%	6.80%

Table 1: Occupation by Class of Worker for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over. Source: US Census Bureau 2021: ACS (American Community Survey) 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables.

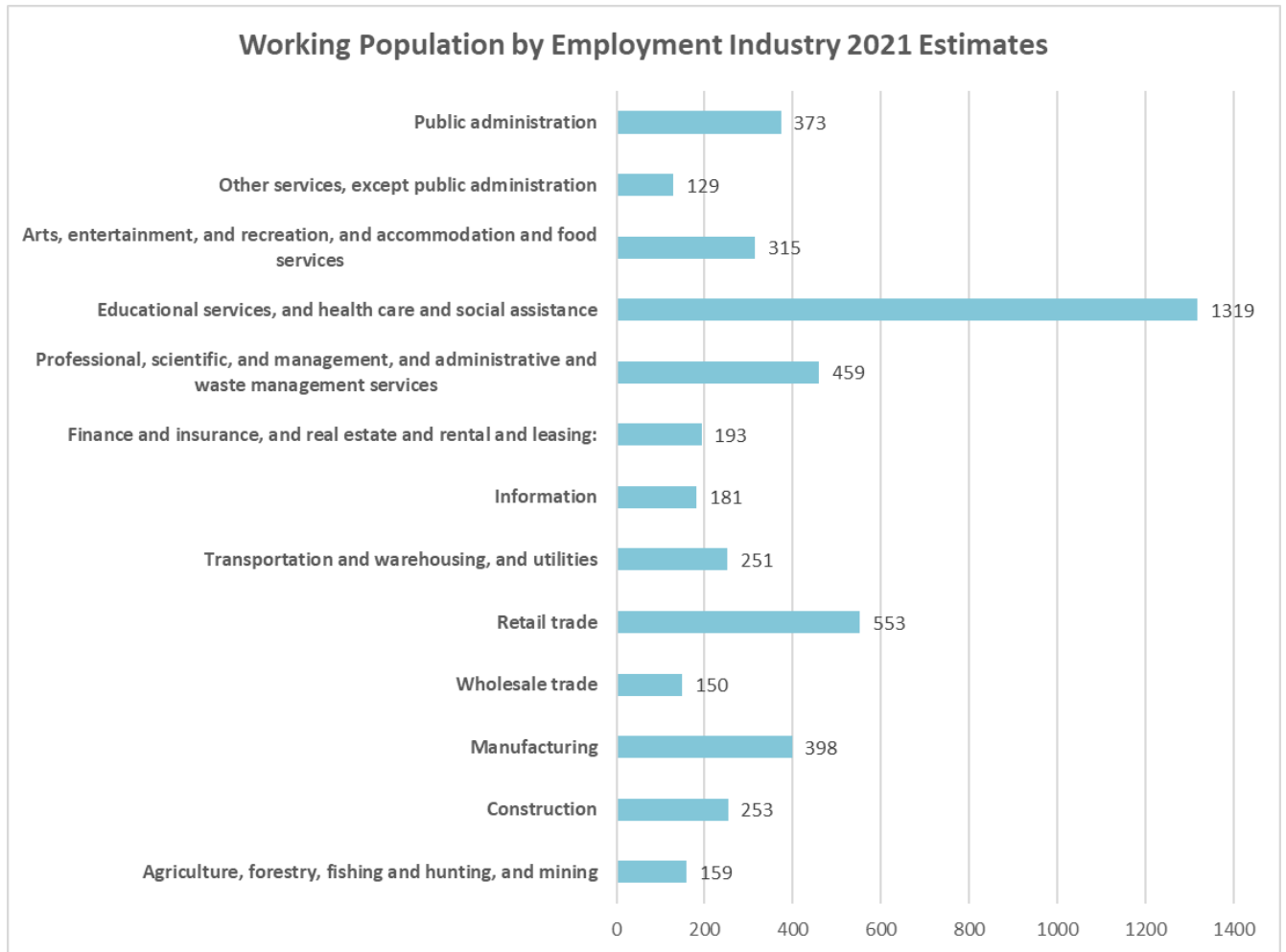


Figure 4: Working Population by Employment Industry 2021 Estimates. Source: US Census Bureau 2021: ACS (American Community Survey) 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables.

Where residents work and live

The average travel time to work in Rutland is thirty-five minutes, slightly higher than the shared county and state average time of twenty-nine minutes. Eighty-three percent of Rutland workers commute by car, truck, or van. Seventy-five percent of drivers traveled alone while eight percent carpoolled. Table 3 shows that less than one percent of Rutland workers used public transportation, a taxicab, or rideshare to commute, while no one walked or rode a bicycle to commute. Fifteen percent of Rutland workers worked from home in 2021. This indicates that residents rely on personal cars for their commute and travel to nearby towns for work.

	Count & %
How Rutland Residents get to Work	
Workers Age 16+	4632
Workers 16+ Took Public Transportation (%)	0.40%
Workers 16+ Took a Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means (%)	0.50%
Workers 16+ Bicycled (%)	0%
Workers 16+ Walked (%)	0%
Commute to Work: Less than 10 minutes (%)	7.10%
Commute to Work: 10-14 minutes (%)	6.70%
Commute to Work: 15-19 minutes (%)	6.50%
Commute to Work: 20-24 minutes (%)	14.80%
Commute to Work: 25-29 minutes (%)	5.90%
Commute to Work: 30-34 minutes (%)	20.60%
Commute to Work: 35-44 minutes (%)	10.40%
Commute to Work: 45-59 minutes (%)	16.20%
Commute to Work: 60 or more minutes (%)	11.80%

Table 2: Commuting Characteristics. Source: US Census Bureau 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables.

Tax Rates

Multiple factors inform how attractive a municipality is to developers and business owners. Tax rates are a key factor. Rutland has one tax rate regardless of the type of property. This is advantageous to business owners and developers—in a split-rate system, commercial and industrial property owners may pay a higher tax rate than residential property owners, which can discourage commercial and industrial development. Table 3 shows tax rates by class for Rutland and surrounding communities. Rutland’s tax rate for commercial and industrial property is consistent with other towns.

Municipality	Residential Tax Rate	Open Space Tax Rate	Commercial Tax Rate	Industrial Tax Rate	Personal Property Tax Rate
Barre	16.84	0	16.84	16.84	16.84
Holden	16.56	0	16.56	16.56	16.56
Oakham	12.72	0	12.72	12.72	12.72
Paxton	18.98	0	18.98	18.98	18.98
Princeton	15.68	0	15.68	15.68	15.68
Rutland	15.79	0	15.79	15.79	15.79
Spencer	13.16	0	13.16	13.16	13.16

Table 3: Tax rates by class. Source: Division of Local Services, Department of Revenue, Data Analytics and Resources Bureau. Community Comparison Report. 2022.

An analysis of tax levies by property class reveals the extent to which non-residential properties contribute to the tax base. In Rutland, the Industrial tax levy is lower, and the Commercial tax levy is in the middle of the range across the surrounding towns. Table 4 shows the tax levy by property class and the percentage of the tax base each type contributes on a comparative basis. Rutland’s property tax base is over ninety-four percent residential. This is similar to nearby towns.

Municipality	Residential Levy	Open Space Levy	Commercial Levy	Industrial Levy	Personal Prop Levy	Total Tax Levy	R/O % of Total Levy	CIP as % of Total Levy
Barre	8,156,276	0	441,056	182,559	472,315	9,252,206	88.15	11.85
Holden	43,856,702	0	1,279,513	485,042	695,486	46,316,744	94.69	5.31
Oakham	2,993,604	0	73,065	16,601	165,735	3,249,004	92.14	7.86
Paxton	11,493,128	0	218,586	102,874	195,772	12,010,360	95.69	4.31
Princeton	9,236,241	0	123,683	29,801	222,612	9,612,338	96.09	3.91
Rutland	17,304,973	0	384,343	67,745	585,883	18,342,94	94.34	5.66
Spencer	15,573,944	0	815,923	576,956	783,778	17,750,602	87.74	12.26

Table 4: Tax levy by property class. Source: Division of Local Services, Department of Revenue, Data Analytics and Resources Bureau. Community Comparison Report, 2022.

Commercial Zoning

Rutland has five zoning districts that focus on commercial uses. These districts are mostly located along or adjacent to Route 122, Route 122A, Route 56, and Route 68. The Business District can be found on Campbell Street, and the Industrial/Office District can be found on Intervale Road.

Business District: The Business District consists of 129 acres scattered across the southern portion of Route 122, throughout Route 56, part of Route 68, and on a section of Campbell Street. The same uses allowed in residential districts apply to business districts, along with small-scale commercial developments like retail, offices, dining, and hotels.

Town Center Districts Town Center (TC) Districts 1 and 2 consist of 262 acres around the intersection of Route 122A and Route 56. The TC districts are zoned with the intent to promote opportunities for

commercial growth and the redevelopment of Town Center. Districts 1 and 2 are the primary areas in town intended for mixed-use development and diverse housing types.² Various residential and business uses are allowed with or without a special permit. These zones include community buildings, such as Town Hall, the public safety complex, the public library, and churches.

Both districts are intended to promote business growth, but they target different commercial development. Town Center 1 is intended to preserve and complement the historic character of the area. The traditional street pattern and parcel sizes are maintained through requirements such as a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, limited open space requirements, and allowing for mitigation of parking requirements with Planning Board approval. Per-floor square footage is limited to 2,500 square feet without a special permit.

The Town Center 2 district is zoned to attract large-scale development. Concentrating this development in TC-2 protects the architectural character of Town Center and residential neighborhoods. The development in TC-2 is intended to expand access to goods and services that residents need.

Village Center (VC) District: The Village Center district consists of 148 acres divided between one location along Route 122 in southern Rutland and another location along Route 68. These districts are established in the bylaws as “target areas for small neighborhood-scale businesses including services, retail, restaurants, and meeting places.” The Village Center district is “intended to promote the development and re-development of the Town’s village centers, to provide opportunities for business growth to primarily serve the neighborhood, and to provide a mix of uses and diversity of housing types in Rutland.”³

One district makes up the core of the **Four Corners** area of Rutland, found west of Town Center. The area includes retail and commercial development, including a convenience store with an attached liquor store and gas station, a restaurant, a car dealership, and a self-storage facility.

The portion on Route 68 is less developed and includes limited commercial development, single-family residential development, and the frontage of large vacant parcels.

Multiple retail and commercial uses are allowed by right with site plan approval if the gross floor area is under five thousand square feet, including personal services, professional offices, banking, dining, and more. The Village Center District was established to encourage mixed uses. Multi-family residential uses are allowed “by special permit where such units are in addition to business uses proposed on the site or where they complement existing non-residential uses in the district.”⁴

Industrial Zoning

Rutland has three districts zoned for Industrial and Light Industrial uses: Light Industrial/Office (LI/O) District, the Light Industrial District (LI), and the Heights Planned Development District. While there are differences between these districts—addressed below—the town intends these three zones primarily for

² Zoning Bylaw for the Town of Rutland Massachusetts, https://www.townofrutland.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif1156/f/uploads/zoning_updated_2021_atm.pdf, accessed January 24, 2023.

³ Ibid, p. 12.

⁴ Ibid, p. 12.

non-residential tax-generating uses. By concentrating larger businesses and industry in these districts, the town also intends to avoid the detrimental impact that such uses would have on residential or commercial areas.

The LI District spans fifty-four acres on Route 68. It consists of two town-owned parcels and part of a parcel owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The purpose of the LI district is to separate non-residential uses that may have a detrimental impact on the community or the surrounding neighborhoods. All three parcels are marked as vacant in the assessor’s database, although there are small portions listed as single-family residential and industrial in the Land Use and Land Cover imagery. The town should hire a third party to conduct a market analysis for the highest and best uses for the property and assess existing site constraints that may limit its development.

The LI/O District consists of 139 acres throughout Rutland. Like the LI District, the purpose of the LI/O district is to reserve an area for tax-generating non-residential uses and avoid their potential detrimental impact on the surrounding areas. It accommodates larger businesses and industries than the other business districts. Two significant LI/O districts in town include a commercial development along 122a, featuring a shopping center featuring retail and dining, automobile repair services, and a laundromat. Another district borders the northern Village Center district. This district is approximately one hundred acres and makes up multiple vacant parcels.

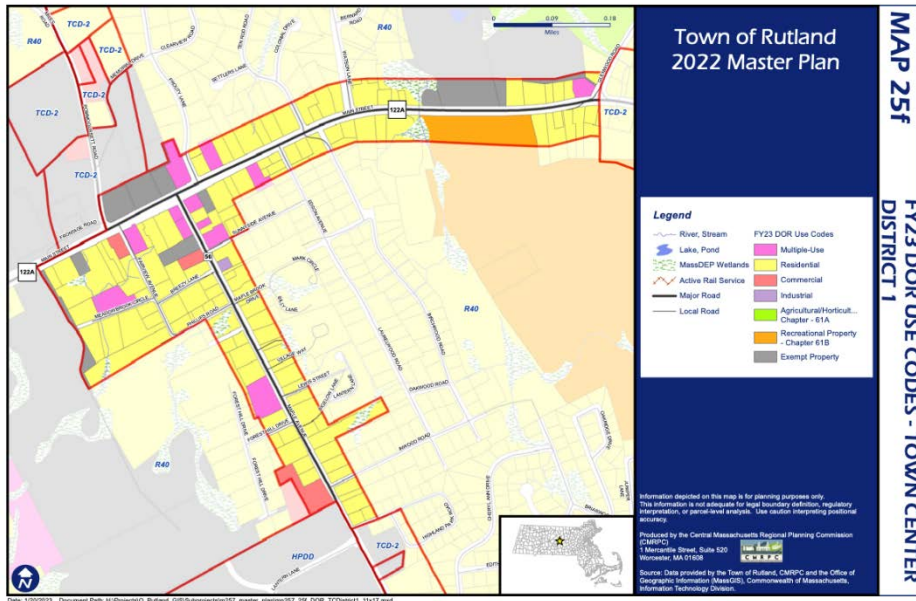
Heights Planned Development District: The District consists of 85.9 acres on Route 56. The purpose of the HPDD is to provide for the reuse and redevelopment of the former Rutland Heights Hospital property and to create new economic opportunities through uses such as light industrial, manufacturing, offices, retail, senior housing, recreation, and municipal uses. The land is currently vacant and is under the oversight of the Rutland Development & Industrial Commission and the Heights Planned Development District Review Board.

Within the industrial districts, vegetated screens are recommended not only for aesthetic considerations but also for providing a buffer between residential areas and any potential nuisance resulting from industrial uses. Both LI/O and LI districts require that all development goes through Site Plan Approval. Allowed uses are light industrial uses with no negative environmental or neighborhood impacts, research and development, lumber yards, warehouses, self-storage facilities, gas stations, car dealerships, and more.

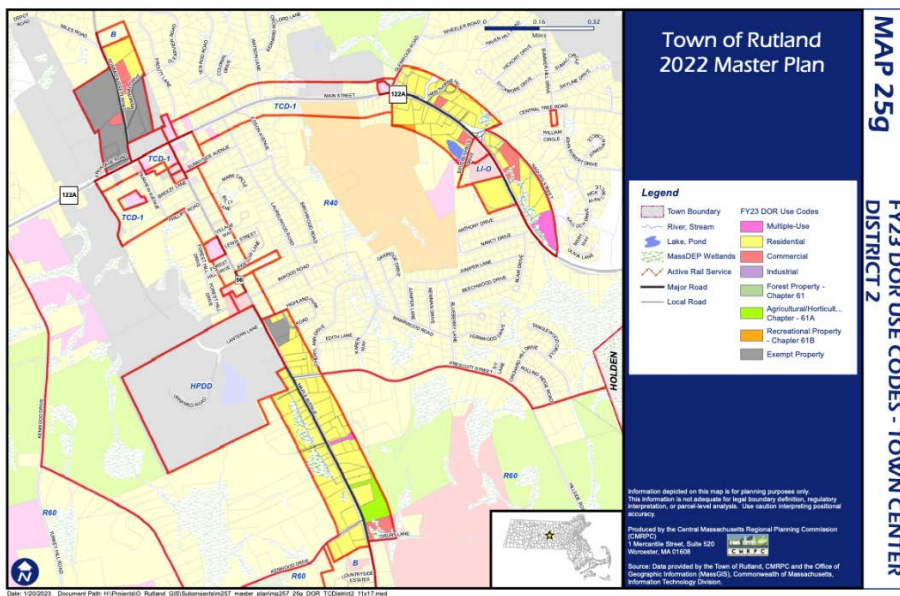
Priority Development Areas

As part of the Rural Eleven Prioritization Project in 2013, Rutland identified local priority development, preservation, and infrastructure improvement areas. The sites relevant to this chapter are:

Town Center Districts 1 & 2: This area is located near the intersection of Route 122 and Route 56/Maple Avenue. This is an often-congested downtown area with small commercial establishments, municipal services, a historic church, a school, and basic pedestrian infrastructure. The businesses and sites located here include automobile services, such as Bill’s Garage and a Citco gas station; personal services, such as a pharmacy and a salon; dining, which includes the Rutland House of Pizza, Heavy Evie’s Diner, and Dunkin’ Donuts; and public buildings, such as a school, the public safety complex, Town Hall, and other municipal offices.



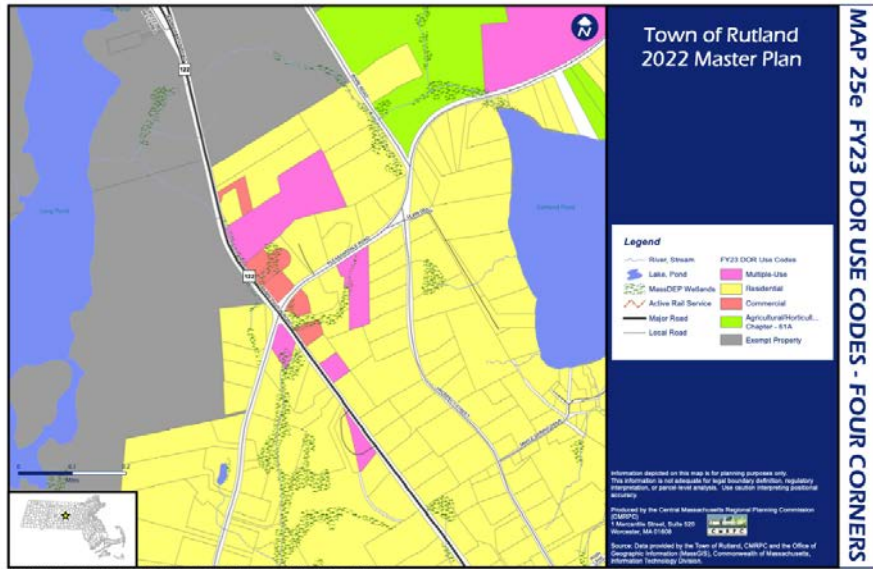
Map 1: Land use map, Town Center, District 1. Source: Town of Rutland; Mass GIS.



Map 2: Land use map, Town Center, District 2. Source: Town of Rutland; Mass GIS.

Heights Planned Development District: This is the site of the former Rutland Heights Hospital. This district uses flexible mixed-use zoning, which would allow for small-scale retail; recreation; open space, senior housing, and renewable energy.

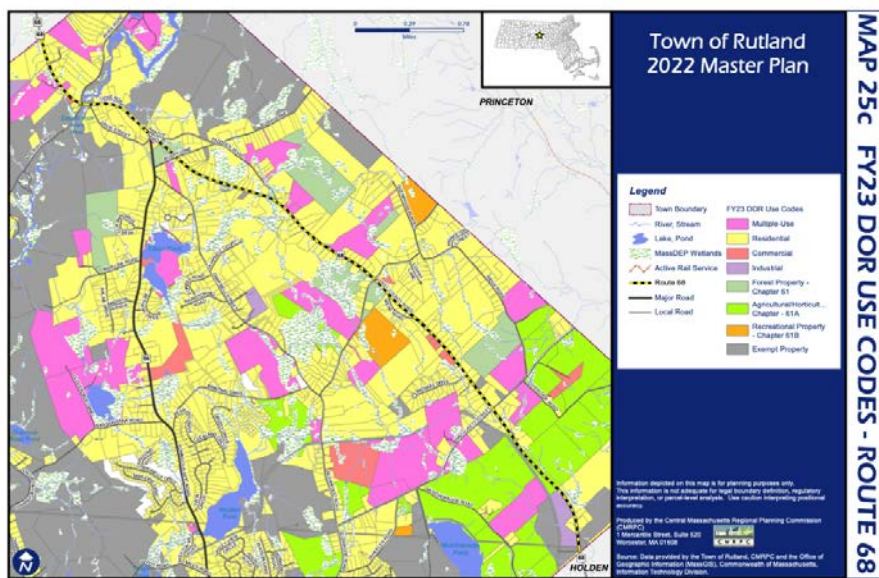
Four Corners: This area is located around the intersection of Route 122 and Pleasantdale Road. It is classified as a Village Center zoning district, which allows for a mix of uses. Businesses located here include a gas station with an attached convenience and liquor store, lots that include automobile dealerships, a food truck, a storage center, and two restaurants.



Map 3: Land use map, Four Corners. Source: Town of Rutland; Mass GIS.

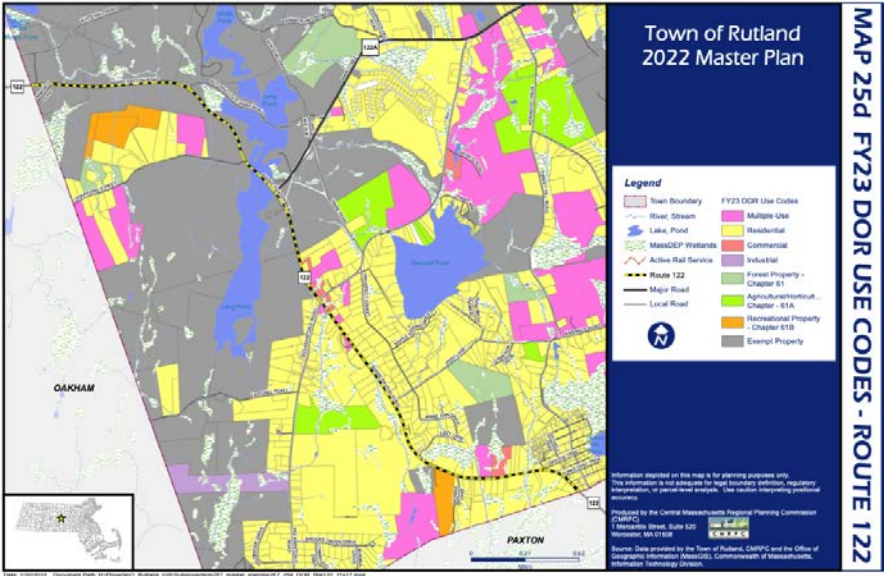
North Rutland: This area is classified as a Village Center zoning district. This area is not considered good for distribution and deliveries due to its lack of access to major roads. Businesses located here include a convenience store, a car dealership, and a Rural Residential zoning district with some business uses.

Route 68 Business Zone: This area encompasses the Route 68 corridor. This corridor is primarily zoned as residential, but there is a mix of zoning districts along the corridor, including a Light Industrial district along the southern end, a Light Industrial/Office district, and three separate business districts. Businesses located here include a trailer dealership, a tree service, self-storage, and a furniture and antique store.



Map 4: Land use map, Route 68. Source: Town of Rutland; Mass GIS.

Rutland Plaza: This site is at the intersection of Central Tree Road and Route 122A. It is zoned partially as Town Center District 1 and partially as a Light Industrial/Office district. This plaza contains service and retail businesses such as Toulas House of Pizza, Saliga Automotive Repair Services, Cornerstone Bank, Rutland Hardware & Home Center, Main Street Discount Liquors, Rutland Crossfit, Simply Orthodontics Rutland, Tresses Salon, and Central Tree Daycare.



Map 5: Land use map, Route 122. Source: Town of Rutland; Mass GIS.

Commercial and Retail Business

Residents indicated a desire for small commercial businesses. Drawing on survey responses and UC Census data, this section examines the retail sector in Rutland.

One way to assess retail sector health is by measuring the supply against the demand for retail goods. Estimates exist for what consumers typically spend on assorted items. If local stores are not selling an equivalent amount of such items, residents are purchasing those items from businesses outside of town. Such “leakage” out of the local economy is sometimes the result of goods not being available at stores within the Town. High levels of leakage can indicate that new businesses providing such goods within the trade area could be viable.

The highest leakage rates in Rutland are in industry groups that may not be desirable, or in declining industries that do not make appropriate targets, such as brick-and-mortar stores threatened by e-commerce and expanding delivery services. Examples include Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores, and Department Stores. Retail types consistent with the priorities of residents (and potentially appropriate for today’s online marketplace) have moderate to high leakage factors, including:

- Grocery Stores
- Building Materials, Garden Equipment, and Supply Stores
- Specialty Food Stores
- General Merchandise Stores

Such enterprises may be appropriate targets for business recruitment strategies. Table 6 shows the overall supply, demand, and leakage in Rutland, along with breakouts for retail trade and food & drink. Figure 5

depicts the leakage factor by subgroup in more detail. A leakage factor of 100 means total leakage, that all the supply for the given industry comes from outside of town. A leakage factor of -100 means that there is a complete surplus of supply in the town with no local shoppers. It should be noted that this data is no longer being updated because, with the proliferation of e-commerce, it has become increasingly difficult to model retail sales at the local level. However, this data can still serve as a decent approximation for local business opportunities.

Table 5 shows that, as of 2017, there are several industries with total leakage outside of Rutland. These industries notably include furniture and home furnishing stores, specialty food stores, clothing and clothing accessories, book, periodical, and music stores, and florists. There is also significant leakage seen with grocery, sporting goods, and building material, and garden supply stores. This data suggests a variety of opportunities for local industry development.

2017 Industry Summary	Retail Potential (millions)	Retail Sales (millions)	Retail Gap (millions)	Leakage/Surplus Factor
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$155.5	\$40.7	\$114.7	58.5
Total Retail Trade	\$139.8	\$36.6	\$103.2	58.5
Total Food & Drink	\$15.5	\$4.1	\$11.5	58.6
2017 Industry Group	Retail Potential (millions)	Retail Sales (millions)	Retail Gap (millions)	Leakage/Surplus Factor
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$28.7	\$8.8	\$19.9	53.00
Automobile Dealers	\$24.1	\$1.1	\$22.3	86.50
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$2.4	\$7.9	-\$4.6	-48.30
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$2.2	\$0.00	\$2.2	100.00
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$4.1	\$0.00	\$4.1	100.00
Furniture Stores	\$2.1	\$0.00	\$2.1	100.00
Home Furnishings Stores	\$1.9	\$0.00	\$1.9	100.00
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$5.9	\$1.05	\$4.8	69.70
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$9.4	\$1.1	\$8.3	78.60
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$8.7	\$1.04	\$7.7	78.70
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$0.7	\$0.1	\$0.6	76.50
Food & Beverage Stores	\$26.7	\$4.02	\$22.7	73.90
Grocery Stores	\$22.9	\$0.5	\$22.3	95.20
Specialty Food Stores	\$1	\$0.00	\$1	100.00
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$2.8	\$3.4	-\$0.6	-9.90
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$8.8	\$6.7	\$2.1	13.80
Gasoline Stations	\$12.4	\$13.6	-\$1.2	-4.80
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$10.1	\$0.00	\$10.1	100.00
Clothing Stores	\$7.1	\$0.00	\$7.1	100.00
Shoe Stores	\$1.2	\$0.00	\$1.2	100.00

Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$1.6	\$0.00	\$1.6	100.00
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$5.4	\$0.6	\$4.8	80.70
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	\$4.8	\$0.5	\$4.2	78.40
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$0.6	\$0.00	\$0.6	100.00
General Merchandise Stores	\$17.1	\$0.00	\$17.1	100.00
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$12.1	\$0.00	\$12.1	100.00
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$4.9	\$0.00	\$4.9	100.00
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$5.4	\$0.6	\$4.8	79.00
Florists	\$0.41	\$0.00	\$0.4	100.00
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$1.8	\$0.00	\$1.8	100.00
Used Merchandise Stores	\$0.4	\$0.00	\$0.4	100.00
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$2.7	\$0.6	\$2.1	62.50
Nonstore Retailers	\$5.4	\$0.00	\$5.4	100.00
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	\$4.7	\$0.00	\$4.7	100.00
Vending Machine Operators	\$71.3	\$0.00	\$71.3	100.00
Direct Selling Establishments	\$0.6	\$0.00	\$0.6	100.00
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$15.5	\$4.1	\$11.5	58.60
Special Food Services	\$0.5	\$0.00	\$0.5	100.00
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$0.8	\$0.00	\$0.8	100.00
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	\$14.2	\$4	\$10.1	55.40

Table 5: Supply, demand, and leakage in Rutland. Source: Esri and Data Axle. Esri 2022 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.



Figure 5: Leakage/Surplus Factor. Source: Esri and Data Axle. Esri 2021 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.

Consumer Profiles and Market Segmentation

In conjunction with retail leakage analysis, an examination of consumer profiles and market segmentation can provide insight into the types of businesses that have the potential to do well in an area. The following analysis looks at the consumer personas of Rutland residents across dominant demographic and socioeconomic groups. It is a summation of the local consumer base that can be used to frame marketing materials and inform discussions with site selectors. It can also be used by local businesses to target their advertising and understand their potential client base.

Market segmentation is calculated by dividing residential neighborhoods into distinct groups based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition. Neighborhoods with the most similar characteristics are grouped, and neighborhoods showing divergent characteristics are separated. ESRI Business Analytics and its Tapestry Segmentation divide America’s consumers into sixty-seven distinct groupings. There are three dominant consumer profiles in Rutland, as shown in Figure 6.

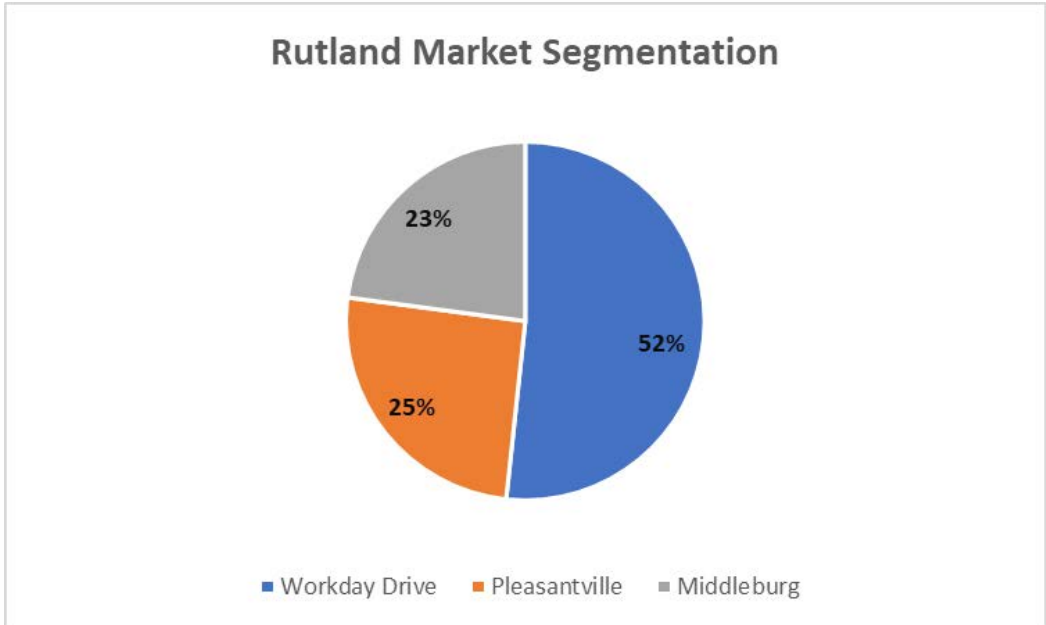


Figure 6: Market Segmentation. Source: ESRI Business Analyst. Tapestry Segmentation Report. 2022.

Each consumer group has distinct purchasing preferences and habits. These are as follows:

Workday Drive: Comprising half of Rutland residents, Workday Drive is an affluent, family-oriented market with a rural aesthetic. Residents are partial to new housing outside a busy city but close enough to commute to job centers. Life in a rural/suburban area offset the hectic pace of two working parents with growing children. They favor time-saving devices like online banking and housekeeping services, and family activities. This demographic uses wireless devices that enable online banking, bill payment, and shopping. They are financially stable, well-insured, and invested in a range of financial instruments, including savings accounts, bonds, and stocks. This consumer group carries a higher level of debt, including first and second mortgages and auto loans.

Pleasantville: Comprising a quarter of Rutland’s residents, prosperous domesticity best describes this group. These slightly older couples move less than any other market. Couples may already be empty nesters while others live with adult children. Families own older, single-family homes and maintain their standard of living with two incomes. These consumers have higher incomes and home values and much higher net worth. Older homes require upkeep; home improvement and remodeling projects are a priority—preferably done by contractors. Residents spend their spare time participating in sports or watching movies. They shop and bank online and shop at upscale and discount stores.

This group is affluent, with a median household income of \$90,500. Their income is drawn from salaries and investments, or Social Security and retirement income. Not cost-conscious, these consumers are willing to spend more on quality and brands they like. They prefer classic fashion over trendy fashion and use all types of media equally—newspapers, magazines, radio, the internet, and television.

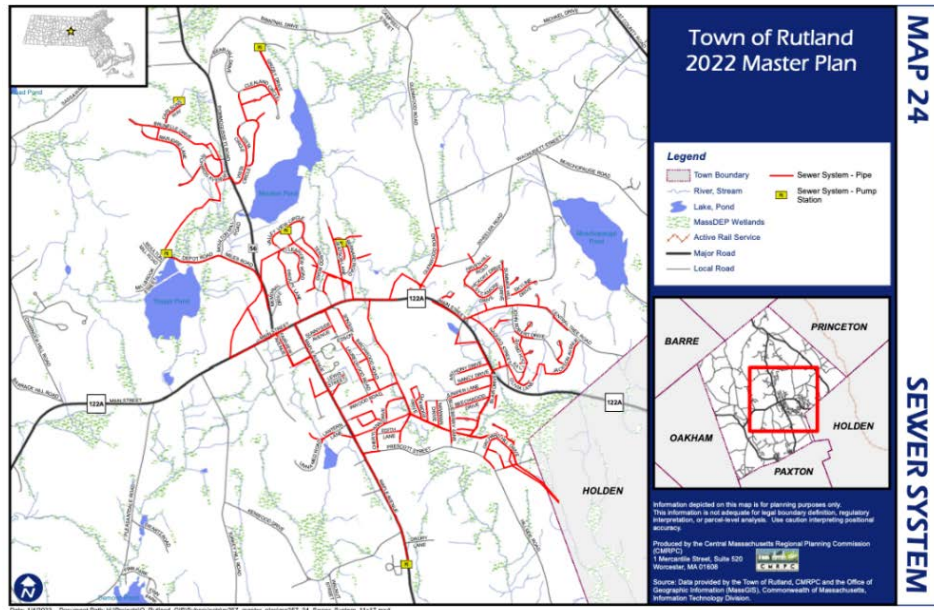
Middleburg: Comprising just under a quarter of Rutland’s residents, Middleburg neighborhoods transformed from the easy pace of rural living to semirural subdivisions in the last decade, as the housing boom spread beyond large cities. They are traditional, family-oriented consumers. They are thrifty but willing to carry debt and are investing in their futures. This group is comfortable with technology for convenience and entertainment, relying on mobile devices to stay in touch and priding themselves on their expertise. They prefer to buy American and travel in the United States. This market is younger but growing. Traditional values are the norm here—faith, country, and family. They prefer to buy American and for a competitive price.

Consumer profiles and leakage data are essential starting points for creating targeted economic development strategies. They provide valuable insights into the type of businesses the Town should incentivize and support.

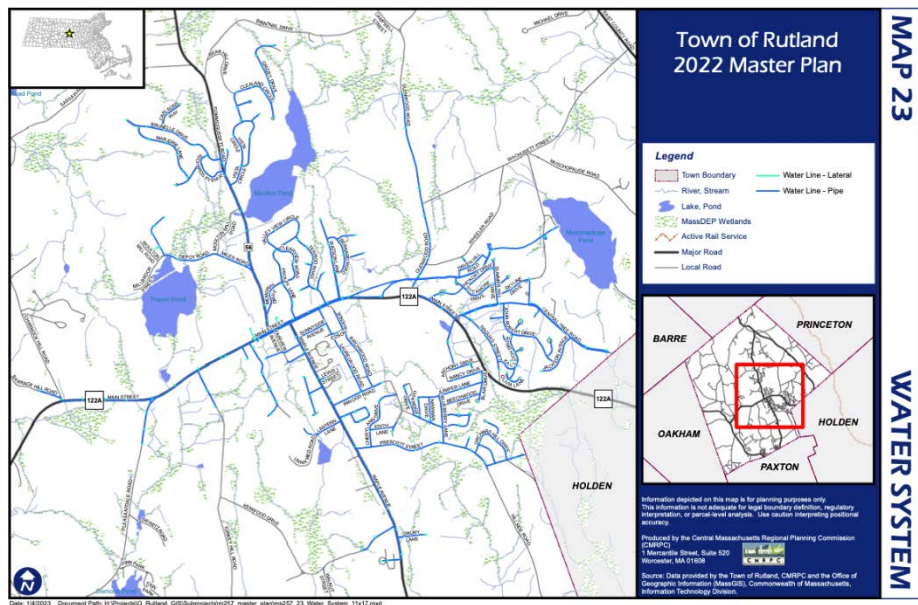
Infrastructure

Water & Sewer

Water and sewer capacity in Rutland is good, with available capacity for new connections, but the water supply limits development potential, as it only draws from one reservoir, with withdrawal limits set by the state.



Map 6: Rutland sewer system. Source: Town of Rutland; Mass GIS.



Map 7: Rutland water system. Source: Town of Rutland; Mass GIS.

Road Network

Rutland is a bedroom community of Worcester, located eleven miles northwest of the city and west of I-190. The town's poor highway access is unfavorable for economic development. The primary highways in town are State Routes 56, 68, 122, and 122A. The Economic Development Committee (EDC) emphasized the need for development along Route 68 to draw people into town.

Residents rely heavily on single-occupant vehicles for commuting. Transit and ride-sharing options are minimal. Survey respondents cited congestion as a top concern, stemming from the lack of transportation options. This has also led to Rutland having a slower average vehicle speed than surrounding towns. Route 56 toward Paxton experiences the fastest traffic, specifically in southern Rutland.

Survey respondents consider pavement conditions a top priority. According to Stantec's Pavement Management Study from 2021, Rutland's Pavement Condition Index is rated as Fair. According to the Master Plan Survey, the top priorities for pedestrian facilities in Rutland are sidewalk conditions and crosswalk striping. When asked to rate support for the extension of sidewalks in Rutland, most respondents noted their support or strong support.

Agricultural Business

Rutland has a strong identity as an agricultural community, with focus group participants citing a strong informal network of farmers. Rutland is situated between Western Massachusetts and the Boston Metropolitan Area, providing farmers with logistical and geographic advantages, providing both access to rural land and proximity to markets in the Boston Metropolitan Area.⁵

⁵ 2020 Rutland Agricultural Economic Development Strategy.

Issues and Opportunities

The following section examines Rutland’s economic issues and opportunities and draws from an extensive community engagement process. This section offers actionable strategies for mitigating challenges and leveraging resources for economic growth. These topics and recommendations were identified through a comprehensive process that included data analysis, stakeholder interviews, benchmarking, and best practices review.

The goals and objectives outlined here seek to strike a balance between promoting economic growth and preserving Rutland's rural and historic character. Meetings with the community and the Master Plan Steering Committee underscored the need to encourage the development of small businesses, expand the commercial tax base, and improve the town’s public services and facilities. These initiatives align with residents’ desire to preserve Rutland’s natural beauty and small-town character.

Accomplishing these goals requires economic stimulation at the local level through three tiers of interventions:

- Prioritize local growth.
- Adopt conservation-development strategies.
- Encourage physical development in commercial areas.

Prioritize Local Growth

Balancing new development and growth with preserving Rutland’s rural character requires interventions that prioritize local businesses and support existing economic activities in the community. This means connecting local business owners to resources and ensuring that vital infrastructure is in place. Encouraging small business retention and attraction should also include incentives for the type of small businesses that meet residents’ needs, such as grocery stores or small retail shops. Updating Rutland’s current home occupation bylaw will also contribute to diversifying the Town’s tax base.

Local Businesses

Exploring creative ways to encourage desirable small businesses in target areas would have a dual benefit for Rutland residents. It would help build a vibrant commercial tax base in areas around and outside of Town Center and prevent trips to Worcester and elsewhere for basic goods and services. The EDC has discussed a desire for a small or mid-sized grocery store.

The EDC—potentially working with the Holden Area Chamber of Commerce, CMRPC, or nearby higher education institutions—would benefit from conducting a comprehensive baseline study of Rutland’s business needs, assessing markets, labor force needs, potential startups, and sources of technical information. They can also work with specific businesses, providing resources such as technical assistance and feasibility studies. A unique strategy to complement this endeavor is to have select businesses list items purchased out of state and organize an auction for local businesses to bid on procurement contracts for the listed items. A database could also be developed to connect purchasers with suppliers.

The EDC can also work with the local Chamber of Commerce and nearby universities to develop additional resources for local businesses such as marketing databases and training programs.⁶

There are established methods of providing **tax incentives to prospective or existing small businesses** that Rutland can use as a model. These include the establishment of a tax abatement district for new businesses in target areas or having a gradual increase in taxes over a specified period to give developers and businesses time to afford gradually higher bills. Other strategies can include the identification of priority business types, issuance of requests for proposal, the establishment of tax breaks for startups for a prescribed period, and tax rebates based on private investments in aesthetic improvements. Local business patronage could also be incentivized by giving community members discounts to participating businesses in town.⁷ This can potentially contribute to the buildup of a lasting customer base for local businesses.

As noted in the Existing Conditions analysis, multiple business types have limited local supply and significant unmet demand. The Town can use the Retail Leakage Analysis and Market Segmentation Report included in this Plan to focus on the types of businesses that could do well in town and make the case for their viability based on the demographic and socioeconomic consumer profile information. The creation of a vacant properties registry can facilitate constructive dialogue between commercial property owners with vacant properties and town staff.

Rutland can benefit from a comprehensive **marketing and communications campaign** that includes a marketing plan, branding, and other strategies that let business owners know they are “open for business.”

An additional tactic for improving the town’s assistance to businesses is engaging in **joint marketing and development efforts**. The EDC can develop an inventory of specific buildings with information to encourage investment, such as physical characteristics, rental rates, and identification as a tax-delinquent property. The Town can explore subregional and multi-town opportunities for collaborative marketing and development. Rutland should leverage the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce, regional economic development organizations like the Central Mass Regional Tourism Council and CMRPC, and industry-specific groups like Central Mass Grown and the Massachusetts Restaurant Association.

Business Community

Engaging the private sector plays a key role in diversifying revenue sources, expanding the Town’s tax base, and enhancing government capacity. The business community represents an underused resource that can be mobilized and leveraged in support of economic development. Enhancing the relationship between town officials and local business owners would aid in business retention and expansion. The business community is also a resource that can assist in economic development initiatives. Business owners can supplement staff capacity and provide new skills and perspectives for policy development. In support of this objective, the Town can convene and mobilize the business community.

⁶ Sharon Barrios & David Barrios. “Reconsidering Economic Development: The Prospects for Economic Gardening.” In *Public Administration Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 1/2, pp. 70-101. 2004. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41288214>, accessed January 7, 2023.

⁷ Ibid.

The town does not proactively engage in business outreach due to limited financial resources and staffing. The provision of technical resources operates at a minimal level. An economic development liaison could pilot outreach programs to ensure the town capitalizes on business expertise and assists local businesses. The Town Center Study also suggested rebuilding a business association to accompany the EDC in support of place-making and marketing. The liaison could assist in rebuilding this group as part of the outreach strategy.

The EDC can hold frequent meetings with the business community to discuss challenges and desired resources. The EDC can create a business outreach strategy that formalizes outreach pipelines between the town and businesses, such as a regular EDC event that invites business owners to participate, coordinating monthly talks where businesses can connect and pitch ideas, maintain regular communications through a newsletter, and hosting guest speakers. The goal is to create new lines of communication and connect experienced businesses with newer ones. This process can also encourage the rekindling of the local business association.⁸

The EDC could also appoint business owners to a Business Roundtable that meets regularly and includes municipal leadership. Business Roundtables improve the relationship between municipal officials and the business community. In a successful case, a Town Manager consults the Business Roundtable and provides every member with their personal phone number. While such decisions are at the discretion of municipal staff, this demonstrates the importance of public-private relationships in economic development.

Another specific strategy the EDC could help to facilitate is a community business investment event. This strategy is inspired by a similar event organized by the Boston Ujima Project.⁹ Before, and during the event, residents and established businesses or community groups can donate to a pool of funding. At the event, participating local businesses or startups will then pitch project ideas and the local audience will get to vote on which project the funding should go towards.

Home Occupations

The number of people working and running their businesses from home is on the rise. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home has become the norm since 2020 for a large section of the US workforce. Enabled by technology, this trend has provided new opportunities for stay-at-home parents and those with mobility and health issues, improving access to the formal economy. Yet, given their lack of a brick-and-mortar building designated for commercial activities, home occupations or home-based businesses (HBBs) are often overlooked as municipalities convene business owners and conduct outreach.

As home occupations continue to increase, Rutland needs to consider how to better accommodate HBBs and remote workers. The Town has a home occupation zoning bylaw that is currently being updated. The intent of the bylaw is to better track home occupations for economic development reasons. Creating an economic development coordinator position would enable the development of a list of home occupations. The list would be used for outreach and business assistance and to assist with home businesses growth. This would allow the Town of Rutland to cultivate its relationship with, and work to, support new and existing home-based occupations. This includes engaging such business owners (and potentially their

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Boston Ujima Project, <https://www.ujimaboston.com/>. Accessed January 23, 2023

employees) in public-private activities like those for conventional business models. Convening public-private dialogues and networking will help support this sector of Rutland's economy.

Other targeted activities could include the **creation of an inventory of HBBs** that will help establish connectivity, business-to-business purchasing opportunities, and resident awareness. Home-based businesses are often disconnected from each other and residents. Facilitating awareness among businesses and other residents will support the economic viability of home occupations.

The Town should promote and incentivize the use of **vacant commercial spaces** for home-based businesses that may be in search of additional workspace. Home occupations often serve as incubators for large, mature businesses down the road. As home occupations succeed, they often scale up, requiring additional space. Home-based businesses should be a target of efforts to fill vacant commercial and industrial space.

Encouraging the development of **right-sized office space with resources can cater to residents running** their businesses from home. As interest in developing office space emerges, the town should encourage developers to include small office spaces with business resources (e.g., co-working spaces).

Capacity

Rutland's aging population will increase pressure on service provision. Without enhanced capacity, only a limited subset of the actions and strategies presented here will be realized. The town should work to increase its economic development capacity through volunteer, public/private hybrid, and staff positions. Such capacity is necessary to assess, customize, and implement various economic development initiatives.

Economic Development functions are handled by the Town Administrator, the Economic Development Committee (EDC), and the Rutland Industrial Development Corporation (RDIC). The Town Planner, Building Commissioner, and other staff and boards provide support as needed. The RDIC operates with a specific focus on the redevelopment of the Heights, while the EDC was formed in 2021 to provide a broader economic development focus. The EDC evolved from the now-disbanded Rutland Business Association. The town does not currently have a local business association, nor does it have a formal Economic Development Coordinator position.

Staffing

Rutland's community development and planning functions are constrained by low staffing levels. The presence of a Town Planner is a clear benefit at this time and will be beneficial during the lifespan of the Master Plan. Economic Development responsibilities currently falling on the Town Planner would ideally be the domain of a part-time economic development coordinator. Piloting a part-time and shared Economic Development Coordinator position using grant funds would ensure this position is created and filled. This role can undertake proactive and responsive economic development strategies, such as business lead tracking, outreach to existing businesses, marketing, EDC event planning, and promotion through a newsletter and social media. A funding opportunity for this position may exist through the Community Compact Efficiency and Regionalization Program.

Rutland would benefit from hiring a designated grant administrator responsible for identifying and applying for funding opportunities suitable for the town. Having a dedicated grant writer will ensure that applications are comprehensive and well-written and increase the likelihood of receiving funding. Establishing this role will also free up time for staff to focus on other duties.

Boards and Committees

Boards and committees can ease capacity challenges. The recent establishment of the EDC is a significant development in economic development capacity. The impact of the EDC can be strengthened through a strategic planning process that establishes a clear vision, roles, and implementation plan for the body, including how recommendations of the Master Plan can be tackled.

The plan should encourage collaboration with the Planning Board through joint strategic planning workshops, joint deliverables, and a structured approach to future collaboration and interaction with clear goals and performance measures. A well-structured strategic planning approach for future EDC activity establishes a mechanism for consistent feedback and refinement of policy decisions.

Coordination Between Departments and Boards

The Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen have a role in private-sector relationship management. Their leadership can be instrumental in making sure staff are helpful, accountable, and diligent towards the goals of economic development.

Rutland should identify strategies to enhance **communication between town departments** and their involvement in the development process, including positions such as the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator. This may entail the enhancement of the Interdepartmental Team Review concept the town currently uses for commercial and large-scale housing projects and for comments on Planning Board applications. The creation of a Code Team is another interdepartmental review strategy that brings together code officials, firefighters, engineers, and zoning staff to meet with applicants at the site to clarify requirements.¹⁰

Agritourism & Ecotourism

Given Rutland's rich agricultural traditions and natural resources, Rutland could benefit significantly from expanding its *agritourism and ecotourism opportunities*. There is no strict definition for either of these terms, but ecotourism is a strand of outdoor tourism that often involves education components. Agritourism is a similar feature that uses agricultural activities for leisure, entertainment, or education. Each aims to encourage an environmental ethic and can lead to tangible benefits for tourists, residents, and the local environment. Each tries to use hands-on and informative experiential learning. For the remainder of this section, the recommendations for both will be linked.^{11 12}

Why is Rutland a Potential Agritourism and Ecotourism Destination?

According to the 2020 Rutland Agricultural Economic Development Strategy, Rutland maintains a **strong sense of identity as an agricultural community** and a solid **informal network of farmers**, with over 110 parcels used for agriculture and twenty named farms in 2020, totaling over 2800 acres. Being located between Western Massachusetts and the Boston Metropolitan area provides Rutland with specific

¹⁰ EPA Office of Sustainable Communities. "How Small Towns and Cities can Use Local Assets to Rebuild their Economies: Lessons from Successful Places." 2015. Accessed January 7, 2023

¹¹ Dimitriou, Christina K. "From theory to practice of ecotourism: major obstacles that stand in the way and best practices that lead to success." *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation* 8, no. 1 (2017): 26-37. DOI: [10.1515/ejthr-2017-0004](https://doi.org/10.1515/ejthr-2017-0004), accessed Jan 4, 2022.

¹² MDPI, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/13/20/11360>, accessed Jan 4, 2022.

logistical and **geographic advantages** for agriculture. The Town Center Strategic Plan advocated for maintaining a small-town feeling and developing more parks and recreation. **Ecotourism and Agritourism can preserve and strengthen the existing community and open new possibilities for parks, recreation, and retail.**

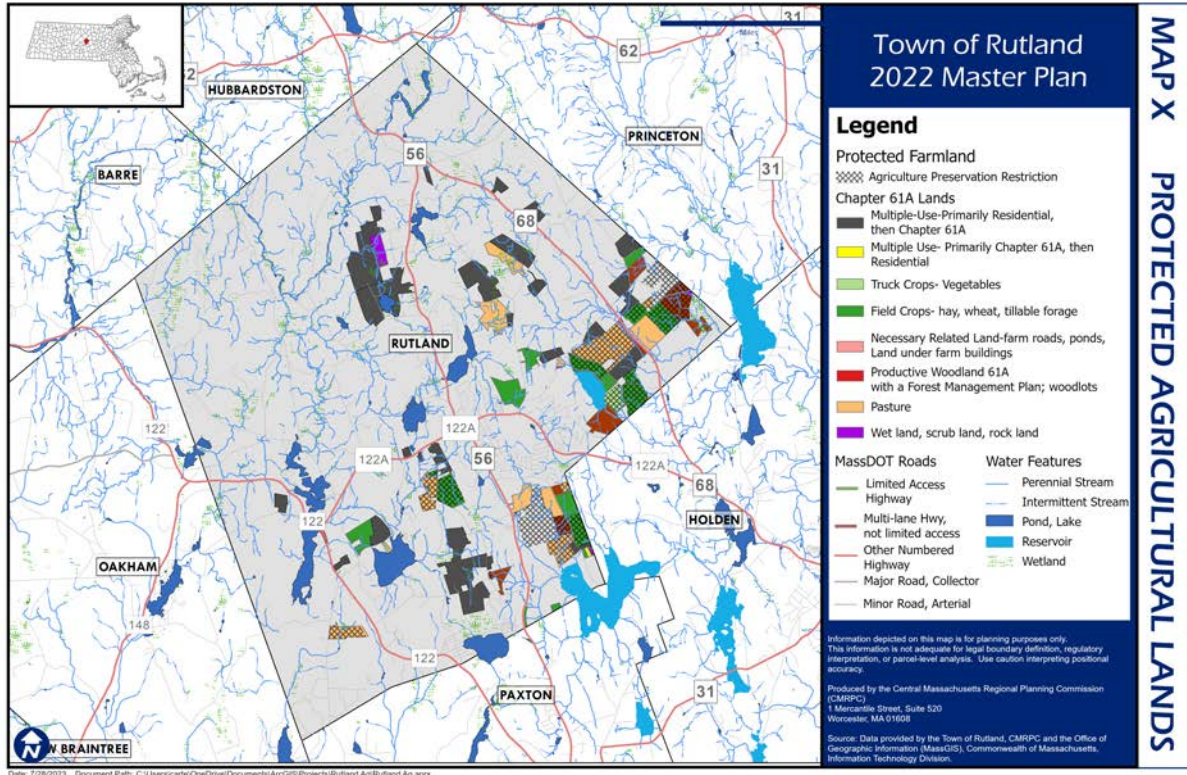
Rutland State Park is a valuable natural resource that consists of three hundred acres of land across town. It includes recreational activities such as hiking and cycling trails, kayaking, cross-country skiing, hunting, horseback riding, and more. These amenities are located close to other recreational destinations, such as Wachusett Mountain State Reservation, Leominster State Forest, and others. Promoting these natural and recreational assets could make Rutland a destination for outdoor recreation in the region. Investing in the development of trails, and improved cyclist and pedestrian connectivity with public transit and commercial areas would facilitate access to these resources. The organization of outdoor events and the development of indoor winter recreation spaces would enhance Rutland’s agricultural tourism and further land conservation. The **lack of outdoor recreation businesses** in the area may make Rutland an **attractive location for entrepreneurs** if outdoor recreation becomes a priority.¹³

Farmers in Rutland face physical and economic barriers. These barriers have led to anxieties in the agricultural business community about the future of farming in Rutland. The first barrier is a lack of access to quality agricultural land. These concerns are apparent in an analysis of Chapter 61a parcels. The number one classification of Chapter 61a land is woodlots, and eighteen percent of Chapter 61a land is classified as “non-productive,” including wetlands, Rockland, and scrubland. It was noted that acquiring a wooded lot to clear for field crops or pasture agriculture is cost prohibitive.

Another barrier is the threat of an increase in subdivision housing development that could raise land prices and hurt access to potential agricultural land. The Losing Ground report from the Massachusetts Audubon identifies Rutland among the communities affected by Boston Metropolitan Area sprawl, with Rutland experiencing a notably faster rate of development compared to communities to the west. There is an additional concern that future generations in Rutland will not have the knowledge and background to participate in farming and maintain the agricultural sector. Agritourism can be a solution to these issues as an additional revenue stream for farms, an educational tool to increase knowledge of agricultural practices, and a tool to improve the availability of land.¹⁴

¹³ 2021 Town Center Strategic Plan.

¹⁴ Rutland Agricultural Economic Development Strategy 2020.



Map 8: Protected Agricultural Lands in Rutland. Source: MassGIS.

It is important to identify why agritourism and ecotourism are beneficial to residents. A broad understanding of the outcomes that successful agritourism and ecotourism programs offer will make for more productive discussions and help find approaches that benefit all parties involved.

The benefits of agritourism include job creation, strengthening local farms, the generation of off-season income for farmers, the creation of a community-specific market niche, increased local sales, increased advocacy and support for the local farming industry, and direct sale marketing opportunities benefitting from economies of scale. The benefits of ecotourism include increased appreciation and support for the natural environment. Ecotourism encourages greater pedestrian and cyclist activity, which will yield economic and health benefits through environmental preservation, community building, and preservation.^{15 16 17}

Agritourism and ecotourism endeavors will not fall into place without guidance. Rutland faces challenges in attempts to bring a local tourism initiative to life. No two locations are the same, and development approaches effective elsewhere must be adapted to fit the specific needs of Rutland. Increased tourism

¹⁵ Lancaster County Planning, <https://lancastercountypanning.org/DocumentCenter/View/139/Agritourism-Guidelines>, accessed Jan 4, 2022.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Abadi, Alieh, and Mehdi Khakzand. "Extracting the qualitative dimensions of agritourism for the sustainable development of Charqoli village in Iran: The promotion of vernacular entrepreneurship and environment-oriented preservation perspectives." *Environment, Development and Sustainability* (2022): 1-63. (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10668-021-01958-0>), accessed January 11, 2023.

will impact municipal services and infrastructure. Careful planning can mitigate undesirable outcomes, but it is difficult to predict the number of visitors.

Implementation capacity presents another challenge. In a volunteer-driven community like Rutland, resident buy-in and participation is essential to implementation. The stakeholders required for implementation will have conflicting interests. The labor force presents another challenge. The tourism industry and nonprofits both rely on trained workers to deliver educational and entertainment value for visitors. For agritourism and ecotourism to be successful and effective, staff at all levels will need to know the environmental, historical, and cultural elements in their work, presenting a barrier for those looking to enter the field.¹⁸

Agritourism and Ecotourism Strategic Planning Process

Rutland has an Agricultural Accessory Use Bylaw that allows certain commercial, non-agriculturally exempt uses by site plan review. Four site plan reviews have been issued to date.

The town can build on this to develop an asset-driven agritourism and ecotourism strategy through a strategic planning process. The lack of a local business association means that the EDC is best equipped to convene the planning process. In preparation, the EDC and Agricultural Commission should work together to formalize agricultural connections and strengthen communication among farmers and between farmers and the town. These stakeholders are necessary for a well-conceived agritourism strategy and implementation. Key decision-makers should review the formal and informal mandates of their respective organizations.¹⁹

The strategic planning process needs to address several questions. How should Rutland define agritourism and ecotourism? Agreeing on a definition early may help prevent confusion or conflict among stakeholders that could pop up in the planning process. Another question should concern the community's assets. Identifying assets and resources and their value to tourism and sustainable development is an important early step in the planning process. During asset mapping and resource identification, it is important to keep in mind that most Rutland “assets” are people and businesses with finite capacities. They are stakeholders who need to derive benefits. Exploration of the desires, goals, needs, and benefits to agricultural and ecotourist stakeholders is essential.²⁰

The hiring of a shared economic development coordinator position would benefit the agritourism and ecotourism planning process and would lead to cooperation with neighboring communities. Rutland should collaborate with other communities with similar interests to prevent oversaturating the market with similar businesses. The towns can work together to determine a balance and focus based on each town's unique assets. The towns can investigate joint marketing strategies, tracking efforts, and capacity-building initiatives. Sharing an economic development coordinator between participant communities will ease coordination and communication challenges.

The following chart demonstrates a potential structure for regional collaboration, with inter-municipal engagement occurring through a Rural Region Agritourism & Ecotourism entity. Initially, the regional entity would constitute a working group of representatives from towns with common interests. Group

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ [Fields of Gold strategic plan \(cspdc.org\)](https://www.cspdc.org/), accessed Jan 4, 2023.

members may be involved in the planning process or have knowledge of the subject but be less involved in daily coordination. The appointment of specific champions to advance the agritourism and ecotourism industries in their communities is recommended. The group should perform stakeholder analysis to ensure an accurate representation of those affected by decision-making and the quality of those decisions. State-level agencies, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, the Central Mass Regional Tourism Council, and the Johnny Appleseed Regional Tourism Council, and chambers of commerce such as the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce, should also be members of the collaboration. Central Mass Grown and Worcester Regional Food Hub are notable examples of organizations that promote local agriculture and could be part of the collaboration.²¹ The process would benefit from support from environmental and food systems organizations and educational institutions.²²

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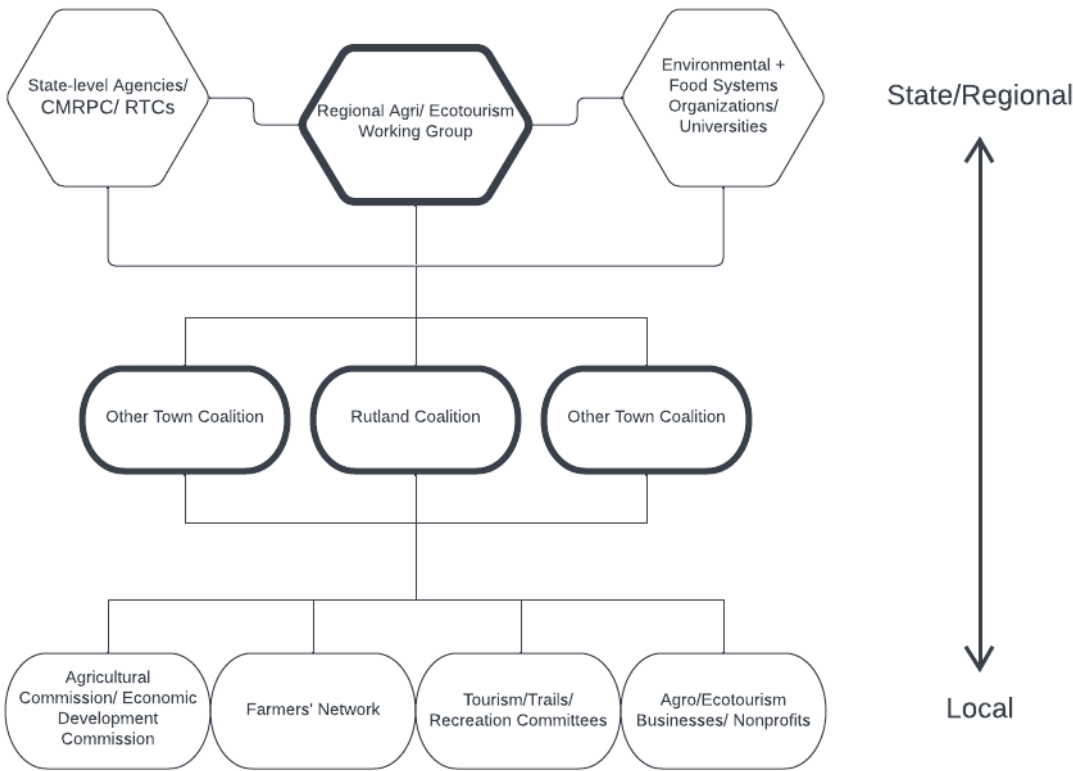


Figure 7: Agricultural and Ecotourism in Rutland. The bottom row represents local groups that make up an agricultural & ecotourism coalition for a given town. These municipal coalitions select representatives to report to the regional working group. Other regional and state organizations can also staff this working group. Source: Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.

²¹ Central Mass Grown, <https://www.centralmassgrown.org>; Worcester Regional Food Hub, <https://worcesterafoodhub.org/>, accessed February 3, 2023.
²² Lancaster County Planning, <https://lancastercountyplanning.org/DocumentCenter/View/139/Agritourism-Guidelines>, accessed Jan 4, 2022.
²³ Bryson, J. M. (2018). Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

The process should conclude with a strategic plan that includes an overview of the various mandates regarding tourism, agriculture, and the environment, and where they may need to be changed or improved. The strategic plan should consider how the tourism industry can help the town grow and develop, how the stakeholders can benefit from mutual support, and lay out a performance review system.²⁴

Drivers of Success

As previously noted, the identification of Rutland's unique assets serves as a crucial step in designing an agritourism and ecotourism strategy. These assets can be natural, historical, and cultural assets, and these are discussed throughout the Master Plan. These resources and strengths will shape the mission, goals, values, and vision for agritourism and ecotourism in town.²⁵

Implementation should occur throughout the strategic planning process. Certain activities can be executed with ease earlier in the process. The publicization of benefits and technical assistance resources for Agricultural Preservation Restriction and Chapter 61 programs is an example. Other strategies can be implemented continuously. Rutland needs to continuously update and map Chapter 61a and non-61a parcels. The Town should use its in-development parcel rating system to increase financial support to priority agricultural and natural resource areas.^{26 27}

Codes of practice should be established for all tourist businesses and relevant nonprofit entities. These codes will need to be closely abided by for the town to retain authenticity, instill beneficial values among staff, and ensure the fulfillment of missions and goals. The organizations must ensure that any rules established are followed by both staff and tourists and appropriate actions should be taken against those who will not abide. Anything that could potentially harm the character of the community, or the local natural environment must be kept in check early on or it risks losing control and the agritourism and ecotourism strategy could quickly lose support and favor among the stakeholders and funding sources.²⁸

Education should be paramount for tourist groups, such as knowledge of the farming practices around Rutland, the history of the community, the local ecology, the variety of tourist destinations around Rutland, and the potential long-term benefits that can come about through a successful tourism initiative. Education of the local community on the benefits of agritourism and ecotourism should be another priority. A positive and active relationship between locals and tourists is critical for sustainable development.²⁹

Complementary Strategies

In the Master Plan stakeholder engagement process, one group suggested encouraging new hotels in town. **Providing overnight accommodation** could help brand Rutland as a weekend getaway and encourage tourists to increase their length of stay. Beyond conventional lodging, **farms can offer bed and**

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Van Zyl, Christelle Charlien, and Peet Van der Merwe. "Critical success factors for developing and managing agritourism: A South African approach." In *International Conference on Tourism Research*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 536-545. 2022. DOI:[10.34190/ict.15.1.218](https://doi.org/10.34190/ict.15.1.218), accessed January 4, 2023.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ [Fields of Gold strategic plan \(cspdc.org\)](https://www.cspdc.org/), accessed January 4, 2023.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

breakfast, farm stays, or camping sites. It is important to keep in mind that tourists may choose their overnight lodging based on its proximity to other attractions.

Tactical urbanism was also suggested during stakeholder engagement. Defined as an *approach to neighborhood building that uses short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions and policies to catalyze long-term change*, such strategies and events could be effective at drawing attention to the town and promoting a community atmosphere, especially if it capitalizes on Rutland's farming culture. Examples include **pop-up community gardens or parklets, pop-up petting zoos, mini free libraries, murals, public art, green roofing, and countless other low-cost prototyping projects.** Tactical projects can also serve as a "Phase 0" implementation strategy to stand in until long-term investment in a permanent project is available. To implement this strategy, the town would identify specific streets or parcels where it would make the most sense to conduct tactical urbanism activities.³⁰

Focused group discussions revealed interest in specific agritourism and ecotourism activities including festivals, barn dance events, concerts, additional venues offering live music and alcohol, expansion of marketplaces, legal dirt bike trails, ice cream, a pool, breweries with open spaces and kid-friendly atmospheres, dairy farms with petting zoos, corn mazes, barbecue, pick-your-own-flower venues, food trucks and other vendors at farm locations, axe-throwing, disc golf, and town-wide events. Rutland and its partners could document whether these and other ideas could take place at existing locations in town, or if new sites or organizations to host them will be needed. Such projects could be well-suited to the tactical approaches. The town could crowdsource funding for permanent installation using higher-quality materials upon proof of concept.

Marketing local farms and helping them achieve economies of scale is essential to helping local agritourism businesses compete with chains. Part of this can be achieved through town-wide and regional collaboration. Encouraging the development of farm-to-school programs creates additional revenue sources and a means of improving the incorporation of agriculture in the town's economy and culture. Other well-tested strategies include collaborative marketing between local farms to raise awareness of their different activities. Using social media and local welcome centers, online sales options, websites, email lists, feature stories, word of mouth, flyers, and on-site and cross-promotions can also help publicize Rutland's local farms. The collaboration should try to use wayfinding strategies with improved signage and pathways across the town to make it easier to access the variety of sites.

There are other strategies that farms can undertake to **diversify and create new revenue streams.** These include adding more value-added food products, becoming a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm to allow locals to invest in local agriculture directly, creating pick-your-own services, farm stands, retail stores, educational programs, farm tours, farm-to-table restaurants, and other food services facilities. The town should explore farmers' market-type ideas. The breadth of products and services could include agricultural products, gardening or cooking courses, cookbooks, weekly events, camping, and catering. Businesses should also identify unique products they could sell that are not available in supermarkets or other stores. Encouraging new business models may require revision of certain permitting processes.³¹

³⁰ Hampton, Shane, *Tactical Urbanism as a Professional Tool*, (2015), <https://www.slideshare.net/OUIQC/tactical-urbanism-as-a-professional-tool>, accessed January 4, 2023.

³¹ Broccardo, Laura, Francesca Culasso, and Elisa Truant. "Unlocking value creation using an agritourism business model." *Sustainability* 9, no. 9 (2017): 1618., accessed January 4, 2023.

Rutland should identify any key businesses and nonprofits in the town actively engaged in agritourism and ecotourism and draw attention to their activity (e.g., the Milk Room Brewery, Alpaca-Llips Farm, and Wachusett Greenways).³² Existing businesses may benefit from the development of personalized business and marketing plans, with technical assistance provided by a grant-funded consultant. Similarly, the town could pursue grant funding to hire an environmental consultant to create Environmental Management Systems plans for specific agritourism and ecotourism organizations, enhancing the sustainability of the practices and environmental safeguards.³³



Figure 8: Alpaca-Llips Farm residents. Source: Alpaca-Llips Farm.

Adopt Conservation Development Strategies

Natural Resources as Economic Assets

The Master Plan survey highlighted the extent to which Rutland residents cherish their outdoor and natural spaces. These assets can be leveraged to support economic development and a way of life. The town can attract desirable forms of tourism by emphasizing the Town’s natural and outdoor resources. These unique assets include Rutland State Park, Mass Central Rail Trail, Savage Hill Wildlife Management Area, Pout & Trout Family Campground, Long Pond, Edson Pond, Whitehall Pond, and Sovittaja Park. As mentioned above, Rutland is also located close to Wachusett Mountain State Reservation, Leominster State Forest, Moore State Park, Spencer State Forest, and various destinations along the Lost Villages Scenic Byway.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

As highlighted above, Rutland has unique outdoor assets that can help support local businesses. In ecotourism and natural resources-based economic development strategies, the primary challenge is leveraging such assets into consumer spending. The town should work to increase local and regional utilization of Rutland's natural spaces to use those resources to generate spillover economic activity in local businesses. Mixed marketing (i.e., promoting natural resources alongside businesses that might appeal to visitors), self-guided Instagram tours that combine different ecological and business sites, and offering discounts to people coming from nature-based destinations can help keep people in town after visiting an outdoor destination. Any trail flyers or informational kiosks could also include a suggested donation for maintenance and improvements, along with easy payment options facilitated by a QR code visitors can scan to make their preferred form of type of electronic payment donation.

The investment in the protection of these natural assets may attract residents and tourists who value healthy ecosystems. A strategy useful for municipalities that cherish their outdoor space is the development of a list of sustainability principles to guide municipal operations and policymaking. These principles can help to shape a long-term vision for Rutland, and they can help in branding the town as an outdoor haven³⁴.

Encourage Physical Development in Commercial Areas

Permitting

Permitting can limit the extent to which a municipality can drive economic development. Permitting regulations and processes play a significant role in the development of a town, and whether a town is considered business-friendly by the development community. While there is a natural friction between developers and those charged with enforcing regulations, a thoughtfully developed permitting process can encourage appropriate and desired development and help a town overcome a reputation of being anti-business.

Permitting processes and procedures are one of the lowest-cost economic development measures and are directly within the control of a town. While a community cannot easily rebuild its manufacturing industry or attract an industrial giant that will provide jobs and tax revenue, streamlining and clarifying local processes and procedures is well within a municipality's capabilities. Rutland's municipal staff works to successfully meet applicable timelines and employ best practices in permitting that are appropriate for the town. While the community regards permitting in Rutland as fair and predictable, there may be opportunities to further improve.

Modernizing and standardizing permitting applications, such as ensuring consistency between permitting applications and providing clear application materials, encourages more complete applications and proposals. In turn, this minimizes surprises for applicants and staff, reducing demand for both. Detailed and clear applications can also assist on the back end. By ensuring that applications include all relevant information (e.g., where information is recorded), follow-up, follow-through, and enforcement capabilities are enhanced.

³⁴ Ibid.

The Town of Rutland has already implemented an online permitting application system that spans multiple departments. **Permit tracking software** would further help streamline the permitting processes. Software that tracks permit status, required staff, applicant actions, and enforcement requirements will help ensure that necessary actions are better matched with staff capacity.

The town convenes interdepartmental review meetings as needed. At these meetings, various departments and commissions get together to look at plans and coordinate follow-up. By meeting with the applicants as a team, these staff and departments help modify plans and proposals ahead of time to result in the best application possible. To reduce the burden on staff, these meetings are held as necessary, rather than on a standing basis.

A **permitting guidebook** would further streamline permitting and help applicants navigate the process. Once the Town has implemented measures to enhance and further streamline its permitting process, a logical next step is the development of a Permitting Guidebook. Such products are a useful tool for helping prospective business owners and developers anticipate and navigate the permitting process. The guidebook can also be further developed to highlight local resources, tax policies, and steps to getting business loans.

Appointing a **Business Liaison** is another way in which the town can encourage economic activity. The town needs a designated point person to shepherd developers or prospective business owners through the pre-development and permitting process. Currently this role is on an as needed basis, under the purview of the Planning Office. Assigning this responsibility to a designated staffer will help the town take advantage of economic development opportunities, make for a smoother development process, and strengthen the town's image as being open to development.

The creation of an **Open for Business** page would help attract new businesses, as well as support existing businesses in Rutland. The town should have a dedicated website aimed at businesses and developers, which links from the town's website. It is advantageous to have an easily accessible (i.e., electronic) repository for marketing materials, information for site selectors, details about the permitting process, and tax incentive policies.

Zoning and Land Use Suggestions

As Rutland evolves, so too must its land use. As development goals advance and new patterns and issues emerge, the town must allow new land uses that are appropriate to contemporary needs. Multiple areas may be suitable for significant use changes in the lifespan of this plan. These include the priority development areas: Town Center Districts 1 & 2, Heights Planned Development District, Four Corners, North Rutland, and Rutland Plaza. The priority areas are also challenged by wetlands and a lack of existing infrastructure that necessitates careful consideration of future land use decisions.

As mentioned in the Land Use chapter, the town should continue to encourage zoning of priority development areas to function as nodes that include a mix of uses. These dense pockets can include businesses and residences and provide gathering places to enhance a sense of community and promote quality of life. Innovative zoning should be sought for priority development areas and areas with a residential overlay. The Town Center neighborhood already exists as a denser, walkable area. The town should evaluate the feasibility and potential for expanded mixed-use development in that neighborhood.

As a first step, the town should conduct a comprehensive zoning diagnostic to ensure zoning is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan. In terms of economic development, there are multiple opportunities to make the zoning more development-friendly and consistent with the economic development priorities highlighted by residents throughout the master planning process, including retaining Rutland's small-town character. The town should have a solid understanding of where new buildings or adaptive reuse of existing buildings should occur. A 3-D Build-out analysis could support the identification of development opportunities and areas suitable for economic development. This analysis could also assist in determining where residential properties might be suitable for non-residential uses. An analysis of existing commercial uses in R-zoned areas would also help the town in planning to support home-based businesses.

As mentioned by the EDC, the **Route 68** corridor is important as it is seen as essential to bringing in large-scale commercial development that is not compatible with the rest of town. The Route 68 Corridor acts as a gateway for people traveling to or through Rutland. There are opportunities for aesthetic improvements such as signage and landscape screening, specifically along the commercial lots adjacent to residential lots. Such plant screening would help maintain the country road character of Route 68, while also providing a visual buffer between the residential and light industrial buffer. Aesthetic improvements in both the public and private realms along the Route 68 Corridor can create a "gateway" into Rutland that better matches the small-town and natural character that residents value.

There are a variety of lower-cost aesthetic improvements the town could implement to encourage more visitors to Rutland Town Center. The town should seek to enhance and define the area's gateways and streetscape. Hanging banners and self-watering planters, adding painted road art, replacing dirt patches with paving stones, and making other low-cost aesthetic improvements will make the area more inviting.

Wayfinding and Signage is a low-cost option to enhance commercial areas. Developing uniform signage and wayfinding can convey information to visitors and encourage exploration. Existing private signage is inconsistent and unappealing. Adopting design guidelines for signage and distributing attractive, branded signage would help further define the target area. Select areas, such as Four Corners, present opportunities to add wayfinding and town branding signage that can serve as a gateway into town.

Landscaping can also improve the visual qualities of the Town Center. Islands between parking lots and travel lanes and other high-visibility areas should be improved through general landscaping. DIY, self-watering planters serve as attractive, movable, low-cost options for defining spaces, buffering unflattering views, and encouraging passive recreation. Longer-term, potential improvements can include the installation of brick paver stones instead of concrete sidewalks, decorative trash receptacles, benches, pedestrian information & location signs, decorative street and traffic signs, and uniform address signs.

Other lower cost placemaking strategies could include adding benches, bike paths, signage, planters, and lighting throughout these areas. Use of road shoulders, excess parking, and sidewalks in appropriate areas for outdoor dining, retail, and gathering spaces could be allowed and encouraged. The town should review the extent to which permitting encourages these strategies.

Placemaking is a proven tool for activating a place by encouraging social interactions. Engaging the community in creating and implementing cultural and social events can create a sense of place in previously underused areas. The 2021 Town Center Study recommended utilizing the Town Center for events such as fairs, festivals, and live music. The Town Common, land in front of St. Patrick's Church and the First Congregational Church, and land behind the Rutland Public Library were all noted as potential

sites for such events.³⁵ An events and cultural activation strategy should be guided by a dedicated staff member supported by an events committee. Implementing placemaking will require significant collaboration and coordination, particularly regarding partners and sponsors, marketing efforts (including an online events calendar and regional efforts), and business partnerships to ensure that goals are met. Activation of commercial corridors could bring increased revenues for businesses and attract new businesses.

Encouraging and enabling a variety of events to foster ongoing activity should be such that community members anticipate and seek out the area for new, recurring, and self-guided programming. Streamlined permitting can enable and help speed up the implementation of such events.

There may be a risk that events provide short-term vitality to commercial areas, but do not contribute to increased business revenue or new businesses. Careful planning of the location, type of events, and local business involvement can mitigate this risk. If events are held on privately-owned property, private owners may be concerned about liability and the town should consider if it can provide blanket liability protection for these situations or indemnification agreements.

Temporary placemaking serves as another creative, low-cost strategy to attract commercial growth in targeted areas. Gateways of targeted commercial areas can be marked and defined by using temporary placemaking installations such as overhead banners, painted sidewalks with temporary pedestrian safety infrastructure, and lighting during the winter holidays or warm weather evening events.

Incorporate Smart Growth design principles into commercial areas.

To preserve its declining open space, Rutland should use zoning and related mechanisms to incorporate Smart Growth principles into its existing and planned land uses. To limit the rate of new development, and keep development consistent with the town's infrastructure capacity, Rutland has adopted a moratorium on new building permits. While this moratorium can be a stop-gap solution to losing agricultural land, it can have unintended consequences, such as impacting Rutland's competitiveness and negatively affecting housing affordability.

By adopting a planning framework such as Smart Growth, Rutland can limit sprawl and protect its open space by concentrating development in compact areas. Smart Growth includes ten core principles, including taking advantage of compact building design; creating walkable neighborhoods; fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place; and preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.

Implementing **Low-impact Design (LID)** would be integral to a Smart Growth strategy. LID is an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. By implementing LID practices, water can be managed in a way that reduces the impact of built areas and promotes the natural movement of water within an ecosystem or watershed.

An effective zoning technique that gives towns the ability to conserve environmentally sensitive land is **the Purchase of Development Rights**. This can help conserve land through a voluntary program in which landowners are compensated by local governments for development restrictions placed on their land.

³⁵ Ibid.

Areas of Rutland, such as the Village Center Districts, can benefit from **Traditional Neighborhood Design** strategies. A Traditional Neighborhood Development, or TND, also known as a village-style development, includes a variety of housing types, a mixture of land uses, an active center, a walkable design, and often a transit option within a compact neighborhood scale area. TNDs can be developed either as infill in an existing developed area or as a new large-scale project.

Commercial development patterns in Rutland reflect design elements that date back to the mid-twentieth century and reflect that era's focus on the personal automobile and vehicle-centered design. Implementing **pedestrian-centered design** is a strategy that can revitalize commercial areas. More contemporary design trends focus on reestablishing traditional village centers and walkable, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes built for foot traffic over vehicle parking needs. The town should review frontage setbacks for business properties to facilitate a vibrant, walkable town center or commercial area. Creating a continuous edge of commercial amenities, with parking located to the rear or side, can encourage business patronage.

Design Guidelines

Rutland lacks design guidelines outside of those required by Site Plan Review. Design Guidelines are a tool communities use to articulate aesthetic preferences for architecture, landscaping, materials, and other design elements. Design Guidelines are a long-term mechanism for guiding development; over the years, they can significantly shape the overall feel of an area. The town should match residents' vision for new development and provide a menu of options for encouraging designs. Such a menu allows for a flexible response from projects of varying sizes, densities, and uses.

Façade Improvement Program

The 2021 Town Center study also called for an awning program for Town Center commercial buildings. A façade improvement program may be used to address components of the façade (including awnings and signs), a storefront system, accessibility, the entire façade, or façades visible from a public way, and components of the site (including signage, planters, restriping for outdoor dining or retail display, or adding more permanent landscaping). Within a target area such as a downtown corridor or other commercial area, buildings may have more extensive needs. Whatever form it takes, a Façade Improvement Program can help business owners access funds to renovate commercial buildings, foster public realm improvements, and increase accessibility. In one façade improvement strategy that targets priority, private property owners can also be offered to match small grants to scale up the resulting investment.

Replace Special Permit Requirements with Site Plan Review

In the Master Plan community engagement process, residents identified business types and commercial amenities they would like to see more of in town, including small retail shops (e.g., boutiques, art galleries, and restaurants) and other small businesses (e.g., bed and breakfasts, certified public accountants, and contractors). To attract these business types, the town should work to make the permitting process for these uses as clear and predictable as possible. This begins with identifying uses for which Special Permit

requirements can be replaced with Site Plan Review. Site Plan Review is much more attractive to developers: it simply establishes performance criteria for developments, ensuring that the project fits with the community.

By contrast, Planning Boards often prefer Special Permits for the discretionary power it provides. It is for this same reason that it is disliked by developers; it offers no assurances that their project will be approved, even if well-planned and thoughtfully designed. Rutland should review its Special Permit requirements on a district-by-district basis for opportunities to replace them with carefully developed Site Plan Review criteria wherever reasonable, especially desired uses such as restaurants and offices.

Infrastructure

Water & Sewer

The Water and Sewer infrastructure is considered in fair condition and well within capacity, but Rutland relies only on one reservoir as its water source, Muschopauge Pond, with withdrawal limits set by the state. This can impact economic development opportunities. The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness plan suggested that the town further assess the sewer system, review the risks of blockage, and provide recommendations for backup sources. As the town only draws water from the Reservoir, having a backup source is a top priority for the Water and Sewer Division.

Traffic

Despite a lack of major roadways, Rutland residents overwhelmingly rely on automobiles to access daily needs. The town should consider working with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority and CMRPC to study potential transit options or find opportunities to collaborate with nearby towns.

Pedestrian and bicycle activity have a proven impact on economic development. The number of “feet on the street” informs the success of nearby local businesses. Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure encourage people to get out and explore their communities. It can also help define an area as a destination. Such infrastructure includes adequate sidewalks, bike lanes, shared-use paths, bicycle racks, and strategically located “landing spots” that encourage walkers and bikers to stop at businesses.

According to the Master Plan Survey, the top priorities for pedestrian facilities in Rutland are sidewalk conditions at sixty-eight percent and crosswalk striping at forty-eight percent. When asked to rate support for the extension of sidewalks in Rutland, seventy-seven percent of respondents noted their support or strong support. Pedestrian and bicycle facility improvement and connectivity should be considered a priority. The 2021 Town Center Study recommended new sidewalks on Route 122A to connect the Town Center with Putnam Park. Reducing the speed limit along Main Street/Route 122A and installing transverse rumble strips are other safety measures that could protect pedestrian activity.³⁶

The Town Center study also recommended increasing trail connectivity throughout town, particularly connecting the Town Center to the Mass Central Rail Trail to encourage more visitor travel and patronage. Rail trail access was recommended north of the Rutland library and north of Putnam Park. Additional trails

³⁶ Ibid.

were recommended in the Rutland Heights Redevelopment District and the Blair Development subdivision on Main Street.

Funding for sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure is accessible through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Complete Streets Program. As detailed in the Transportation & Circulation chapter, the program provides technical grant assistance and project funding for communities to make local roadway improvements. Rutland adopted the Complete Streets policy in 2016. The town then developed a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan in 2018 and completed its application for project construction funding in 2021. The town should continue Complete Streets development in the town per the prioritization plan and can work with CMRPC to find solutions for traffic congestion mitigation.

Recommendations

The growing population of Rutland needs access to basic goods and services within the town. To achieve this, the town should foster the development of business amenities and make improvements to existing commercial areas. In turn, this would attract the type of small, consumer-oriented business that can serve Rutland residents' needs.

At the same time, to preserve Rutland's character and open space, the town should direct development away from agricultural areas and toward existing development and commercial areas. Clustering commercial and light industrial uses in appropriate corridors adjacent to existing development will require land use policy changes, improvements to existing infrastructure, and conservation strategies.

Ensuring residents have access to necessary services and goods requires economic stimulation at the local level through 3 tiers of interventions:

- Prioritize local growth.
- Adopt conservation-development strategies.
- Encourage physical development in commercial areas.

The following recommendations draw from extensive input from the community on how Rutland should tailor its economic development interventions to the specific needs of its residents. This resident input was summed up under four main goals.

Goal 1: Foster the development of small business amenities, including commercial and professional services.

Encourage small business attraction and access to services and goods within town limits: Rutland residents expressed a desire to support small businesses and have access to more goods and services without driving to neighboring towns. These goals go together, and several methods should be used to achieve this. These include incentives to attract and retain small businesses and business-friendly regulations.

Goal 2: Grow and diversify the commercial tax base to promote a fiscally sound future and allow the town to provide and improve services, including recreational opportunities and pedestrian infrastructure.

Zoning should be reassessed to **facilitate real estate development along natural commercial corridors**. Home occupation regulations should be updated to support a wider variety of small businesses, and the Town should promote an agritourism and ecotourism strategy to leverage its rural identity.

Goal 3: Ensure that all economic development initiatives are considered in the context of residents' desire to maintain Rutland's natural beauty and small-town character.

Leverage natural resources and outdoor recreation:

Rutland State Park makes up a large portion of the land area, consisting of three hundred acres of land across Rutland and neighboring towns. The main parking area adjacent to Whitehall Pond is near Rutland Town Center and the Four Corners area and is easily accessible by car or via the Mass Central Rail Trail for cyclists and pedestrians. The state park features hiking and cycling trails, canoeing & kayaking, cross-country skiing, fishing, horseback riding, hunting, and swimming. Rutland is also located close to the Wachusett Mountain State Reservation, Leominster State Forest, Moore State Park, Spencer State Forest, and various destinations along the Route 122 Lost Villages Scenic Byway.

A key part of Rutland's economic development plan should be to take advantage of these natural and recreational resources to **develop Rutland as a destination for outdoor recreation in Central Massachusetts**. The development of more hiking and cycling trails, and improved cyclist & pedestrian connectivity from commercial centers to the Mass Central Rail Trail and Rutland State Park would bolster Rutland's position in the region. The development of outdoor recreation events and businesses would align with the town's agricultural identity and goals of land conservation.

Goal 4: Improve the town's streetscape and sidewalks to allow and promote more pedestrian and bicycle access to the Town's businesses and public facilities.

Expand the infrastructure required to promote development in commercial centers:

More critical than direct incentives for small businesses are improvements to the infrastructure required for a small business to function. In rural towns like Rutland, the lack of widespread water and sewer infrastructure often creates a natural barrier to development. Pedestrian safety must be prioritized for a commercial corridor to thrive and retain customers for more than brief and occasional visits. Streetscape improvements include traffic calming measures along commercial corridors, bike lanes, and reduced lane width in commercial areas, sidewalk installation & expansion, and curb cut reduction.

Zoning creates another physical barrier to development, and there are several zoning strategies the town can pursue to promote development. A general zoning review with a focus on developing clearer and less

restrictive regulations, implementation of design guidelines for commercial areas, using site plan review instead of a special permit in select areas, and a review of housing policy to provide the workforce needed for these businesses to thrive.

Open Space and Recreation



The Open Space Committee is in the process of drafting a new Open Space & Recreation Plan, which will serve as the Open Space & Recreation Chapter in the completed Town of Rutland Master Plan. This section is a placeholder pending the completion of the plan.

The Open Space & Recreation Plan is structured around four goals the Open Space Committee developed from a community survey and visioning sessions.

Summary of Goals

Goal 1: Increase collaboration and communications with local stakeholders.

Goal 2: Provide appropriate resources and facilities to recreation and open space entities or opportunities.

Goal 3: Preserve prime farmlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

Goal 4: Increase connectivity and accessibility throughout town.

The final Open Space & Recreation Plan will include several sections, including relevant history, population characteristics, and growth and development patterns; an environmental inventory and analysis; an inventory of conservation and recreation lands; a needs analysis; and an implementation plan.

A key result of this process is a desire from the Open Space Committee to more actively protect open space and develop recreational opportunities in the coming years.

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/rutlandtownworchestercountymassachusetts>

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.

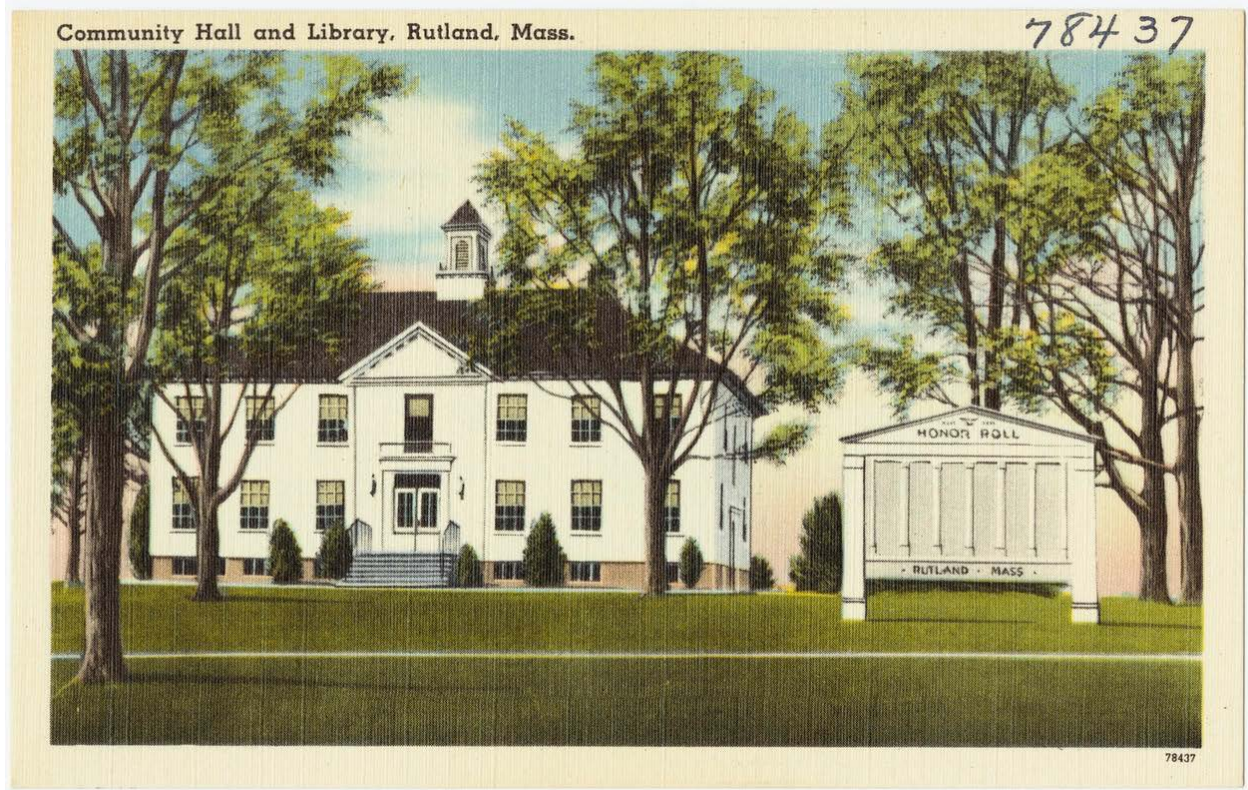


Figure 10: Rutland Community Hall. Source: Digital Commonwealth.

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.

Transportation & Circulation



Introduction

The chapter title “Transportation & Circulation” refers to the way that people and goods move through Rutland. This chapter will address vehicle traffic, public transportation, bicycle infrastructure, and pedestrian travel. The primary mode of transit in Rutland is private vehicle travel, with limited public transportation by bus and no rail service.

Summary of Goals

The following goals are derived from a survey of residents’ experience with transportation and circulation in Rutland.

- Goal 1:** Maintain and improve the condition of Rutland’s existing transportation network.
- Goal 2:** Increase the safety of Rutland’s roads for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.
- Goal 3:** Mitigate negative impacts resulting from the transportation system.
- Goal 4:** Provide transportation alternatives to car travel.
- Goal 5:** Improve the Town’s streetscape and sidewalks to allow more pedestrians and bicycle access to businesses.
- Goal 6:** Take a proactive approach to emerging transportation technologies, trends, and issues.
- Goal 7:** Better connect the Town’s roads, streets, and sidewalks to be consistent with Rutland’s small-town and environmental character.

Prior Planning Efforts

Regional Transportation Plan

Mobility 2040 is the current Long Range Regional Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (CMMPO) region with the purpose to “identify the multi-modal transportation needs of the region, the resources available to address the needs, and the initiatives and project investments planned for the next 25 years.” A Mobility 2040 project regarding Rutland is labeled a conceptual effort: *The Holden/Rutland/West Boylston I-190/Holden Connector Interchange/Holden Bypass*. As part of the LRTP 2020 update, staff compiled a detailed “Memorandum” concerning the idea of an I-190 connector and associated bypass of Holden’s Main Street corridor, Route 122A. When the Mobility 2040 staff asked, the affected towns declined the opportunity to update the improvement concept.

Although there are few Rutland-specific plans listed, this Master Plan Transportation Chapter will align with Mobility 2040’s Regional Transportation Plan Goals:

- **Goal I:** Reduce number and rate of fatal and serious injury crashes.
- **Goal II:** Maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair. Improve transportation accessibility for all modes by improving roadway infrastructure.
- **Goal III:** Achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System. Reduce travel delay through IT. Manage congestion with increases in population.

- **Goal IV:** Expand the bicycle, pedestrian, and transit network in the region. Implement Complete Streets Policies in the region.
- **Goal V:** Reduce on-road mobile source emissions b. Encourage compact mixed-use development.
- **Goal VI:** Achieve geographic and population equity across the region.
- **Goal VII:** Reduce the burden of transportation costs commuting to jobs and other essential services.
- **Goal VIII:** Create a transportation network that is resilient to the impacts of stormwater.
- **Goal IX:** Enhance the access, safety, and effectiveness of the region’s transportation network that serves places of touristic value.

WRTA Comprehensive Service Analysis

In 2015, the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) was tasked by the Massachusetts State Legislature to prepare a Comprehensive Service Analysis (CSA). The plan served as an opportunity to analyze the entire fixed-route network with the goals of improving local transit service operations, finding potential new transit service markets, and meeting the identified needs for transit service in the WRTA service area. The 2020 update builds on the work of the WRTA’s 2015 Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan (CRTP). The WRTA does not service Rutland.

CMMPO Transportation Improvement Program

CMMPO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a federally mandated program for all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). It serves as a prioritized list of all transportation investments within the MPO’s regions for the next five years concerning highways, bridges, transit, and intermodal projects in the region. Potential TIP projects are scored and selected by CMMPO staff and the CMMPO Advisory Committee before endorsement. Projects included in the TIP are programmed to receive federal-aid funding.

TIP projects currently scheduled in Rutland are as follows:

The Fiscal Year 2022 Roadway reconstruction for Route 56 (Pommogussett Road) funded by Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG):

- Total Programmed Funds: \$6,234,490, \$4,987,592 of which are federal funds.
- Construction/total project cost: \$6,234,490
- Goals: Improve pavement, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure, improve stormwater, with rehabilitated dam and culverts

2018 Regional Bicycle Plan

The 2018 Regional Bicycle Plan, created to be implemented by local communities and the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization, includes the following recommendations for Rutland’s bicycling infrastructure and regional priorities.

Recommended Bicycle Network Corridors- Regional Priority

- MA-122 Paxton Town Line to Oakham Town Line, Paved Road, 4.91 potential miles

- MA-122A Fisherman Road to MA-122, Paved Road, 0.52 potential miles
- MA-122A – MA-56 N to Fisherman Road, Paved Road, 1.79 Existing miles
- MA-122A- MA-56 N to Naquag Street, Paved Road, 1.52 Existing miles
- MA-122-A- Naquag Street to Holden Town Line, Paved Road, 0.41 Potential miles

Recommended Regional Multi-Use Corridors

- Mass Central Rail Trail Oakham Town Line to Whitehall Road, 0.5 existing miles
- Mass Central Rail Trail Whitehall Road to Barrack Hill Road, 1 existing mile
- Mass Central Rail Trail Barrack Hill Road to Miles Road, 2 existing miles
- Mass Central Rail Trail Miles Road to Pommogussett Road, 0.35 Existing miles
- Mass Central Rail Trail Pommogussett Road to Holden Town Line, 4 existing miles

Recommended Bicycle Network Corridors- Major Priority

- MA-56- Brunelle Drive to MA-68, paved road, 2.74 potential miles
- MA-56- MA-122A to Brunelle Drive, paved road, 0.98 programmed
- MA-56- MA-122A to Paxton Town Line, paved road, 2.76 potential miles
- MA-68- Holden Town Line to Hubbardston Town Line, paved road, 5.61 potential miles

Recommended Bicycle Network Corridors- Minor Priority

- Central Massachusetts Rail Trail- Library Access Area, Multi-Use Pathway, 0.66 Potential miles
- Glenwood Road- MA-122A to Wachusett Street, paved road, 0.56 potential miles
- Rutland Heights Way- MA-56 to MA-122, paved road, 0.81 potential miles
- Wachusett Street- Glenwood Road to Princeton Town Line, paved road, 2.27 potential miles

Priority Recommendations:

- Adopt the CMMPO Regional Bicycle Plan. Municipal staff should be aware of the recommendations in this plan. Bicycle network planning should be incorporated into a municipality’s planning process, with land use development and future transportation plans reflecting compliance with this plan.
- Work with MassDOT to ensure that arterial and collector streets with excess shoulder width are closely examined to determine how quickly they can be converted into Complete Streets with bicycle facilities in place.
- Work with MassDOT to implement the projects identified in the Town’s Tier II Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.
- Work with MassDOT and DCR (Department of Conservation and Recreation) to ensure that Regional Multi-Use Trails and Pathways are advanced to meet the needs of subregional and regional travel via alternative modes.
- Work with local, regional, and statewide advocacy groups and other stakeholders to expand public education campaigns that promote the rules of the road so that all transportation system users are aware of their responsibilities. Work to incorporate Safe Routes to School materials and practices into local education systems to increase active transportation participation and safety.

2018 Regional Pedestrian Plan

The CMMPO Regional Pedestrian Plan is intended to facilitate the expansion and upgrade of the pedestrian network in the region to encourage more walking trips and safely link important destinations to where people live. Additionally, this Plan is intended to document the extensive pedestrian-related planning and project development work being conducted in CMMPO's communities.

Priority Recommendations for Rutland are as follows:

- Adopt the CMMPO Regional Pedestrian Plan and the CMMPO Regional Bicycle Plan.
 - Pedestrian network planning should be incorporated into the municipality's planning process, with land use development and future transportation plans reflecting compliance with both plans.
- Continue Complete Streets development in town.
 - Select shovel-ready projects identified in the Town's Tier II Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and prepare Tier III construction application to implement projects.
 - Work with MassDOT to ensure that arterial and collector streets with excess shoulder width are examined to determine how quickly they can be converted into Complete Streets with pedestrian accommodations including compliance with ADA standards.
 - Partner eligible K-8 grade schools with the MassDOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program to increase safe biking and walking among students.
 - Pursue SRTS Infrastructure Funding Grant.
 - Work to incorporate SRTS materials and practices into local education systems to increase active transportation participation and safety.
- Work with MassDOT and DCR to ensure that Regional Multi-Use Trails and Pathways are advanced to meet the needs of subregional and regional travel via alternative modes.
- Work with local, regional, and statewide advocacy groups and other stakeholders to expand public education campaigns that promote the rules of the road so that all transportation system users are aware of their responsibilities.

2020 Regional Asset Management Report

This plan was created by the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) to assess conditions, funding requirements, and recommended repair strategies for roads in the region. Assets included in this report are pavement, sidewalks, curb ramps, culverts, bridges, and traffic signals. Data from the Asset Management System is scattered within this chapter.

2020 Rutland Intersection Safety Improvements Report

At the request of the Town of Rutland, Tighe & Bond analyzed traffic and safety conditions at the intersection of East County Road (Massachusetts State Route 68) at Wachusett Street. Based on the results of field operations, safety analysis, and input provided by the Town, Tighe & Bond recommended short-term improvements of pavement rehabilitation with stop bars on the Wachusett Street approaches and white edge lines and double yellow centerlines on all approaches, solar-powered LED stop sign with "CROSS TRAFFIC DOES NOT STOP" plaque, and vegetation trimming around the intersection. Long-term

improvement recommendations included an addition of surface islands on the Wachusett Street approaches and a strobe on the flashing red lens at the Wachusett Street approaches.

2021 Pavement Management Study

The Town of Rutland hired the firm Stantec to develop and implement a Pavement Management System (PMS) for its roadway system. The pavement management system has an extensive roadway database describing actual pavement conditions and roadway characteristics in Rutland to better understand future roadway conditions and needs at various funding levels.

Existing Conditions

The local road network is among the most expensive and important investments towns can make in transportation. The following section outlines the conditions of the roads in Rutland, including road jurisdictions, an inventory of the major roads in Rutland, pavement conditions, sidewalks and ramps, and traffic volume.

Road Jurisdictions

Table 1, Table 2, and Map 1 show the jurisdiction of roads in Rutland. Understanding road jurisdiction is crucial to understanding how road maintenance is managed and funded. The official database of public and private roadways in the Commonwealth is the MassDOT Road Inventory File (RIF). The RIF helps decide the amount of local aid municipalities receive to improve and maintain the road network.

The latest version of the RIF is the 2020 Massachusetts Road Inventory Year-End Report released in July 2021. Centerline miles refer to the linear length of a road segment. For divided highways, only the length of one side of the road is counted. Lane Miles refers to the linear length of lanes on a road segment. The number of lanes on both sides of the roadway is counted in the mileage calculation. Shoulders and auxiliary lanes are not included in the calculation of lane miles. Lane miles are helpful to know how many miles the Department of Public Works covers during extreme weather conditions.

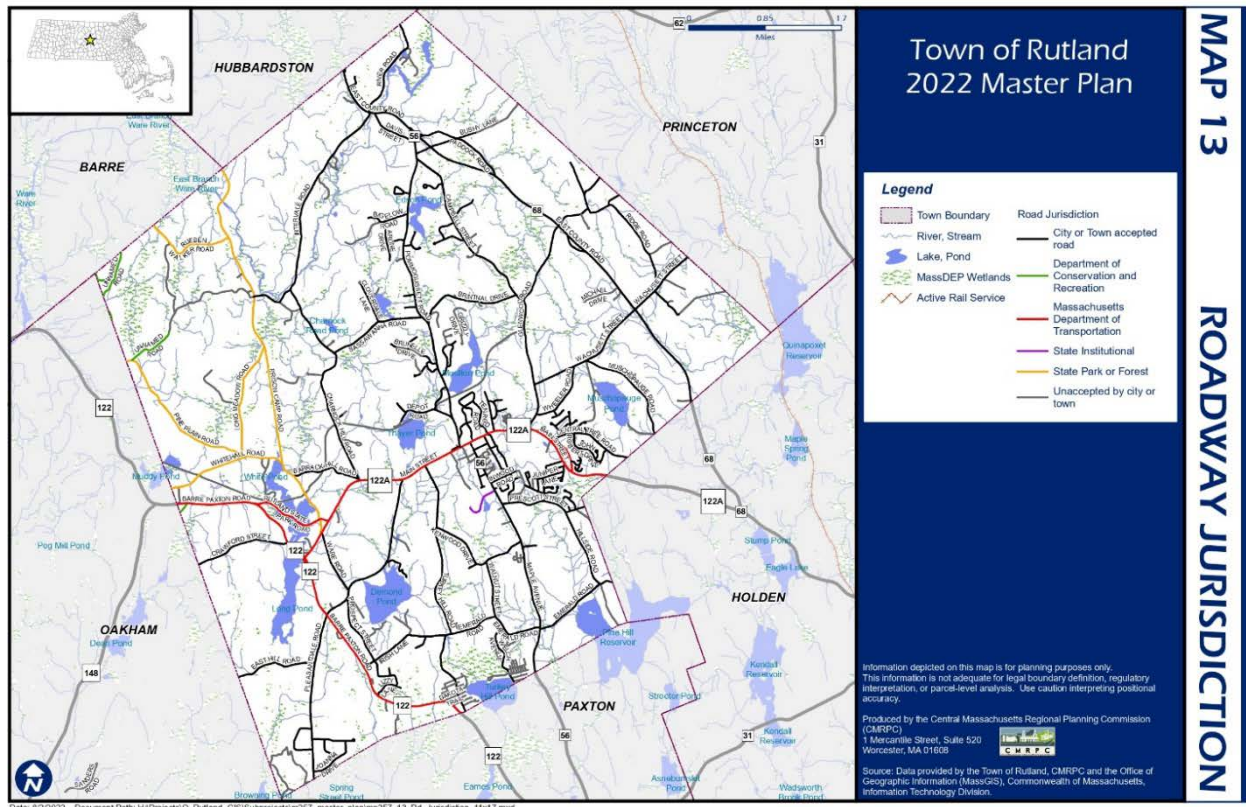
According to the current RIF, the Town of Rutland has 105 centerline miles of road. Ownership of road miles by the Town of Rutland is about 79.08 miles, while state-owned roads cover 21.7 miles. 4.52 miles are designated as “Unaccepted,” which includes roads that are open to public travel but are not formally accepted by a municipality, and some private roadways. If Rutland’s roads are measured by lane miles, Rutland owns 142.4 of the 182.97 miles of road in Rutland.

Jurisdiction	Mileage	Percentage
Unaccepted (private)	4.52	4%
MassDOT	10.20	10%
Town	79.08	75%
DCR	1.56	1%
State Park	9.94	9%
Total	105.75	--

Table 1: Road Jurisdictions by Centerline Miles.
Source: MassDOT RIF 2020.

Jurisdiction	Mileage	Percentage
Unaccepted (private)	5.38	3%
MassDOT	21.11	12%
Town	142.4	78%
DCR	1.86	1%
State Park	11.34	6%
State Institutional	.89	0%
Total	182.97	--

Table 2: Road Jurisdictions Lane Miles. Source: MassDOT RIF 2020.



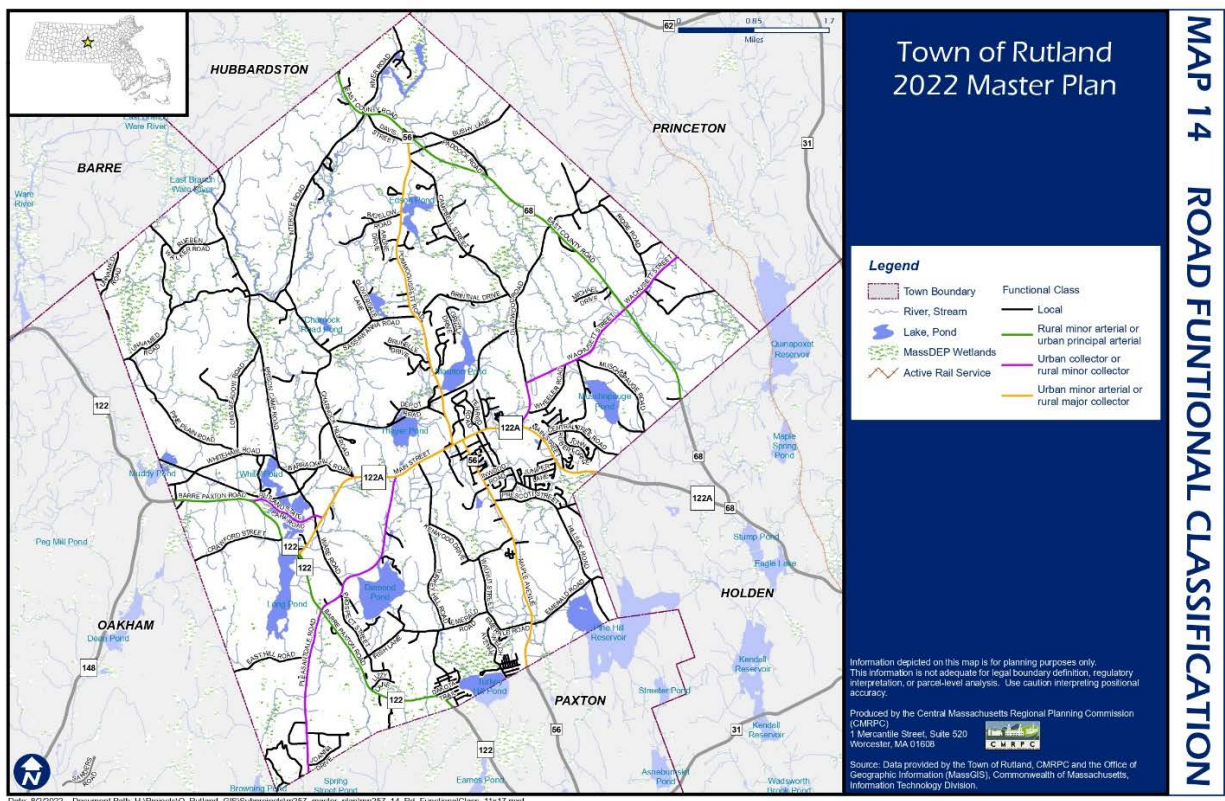
Map 1: Rutland Roadway Jurisdictions. Source: CMRPC, 2022.

Road Functional Classifications

Roads are categorized into different classification groups based on the function they provide. The Federal Highway Administration classifies roads into a hierarchy of four categories: Principal Arterials; Minor Arterials; Major & Minor Collectors; and Local Roads. Roads higher in the hierarchy, such as Principal Arterials or Minor Arterials, are designed to provide greater mobility and typically have higher design speeds. Roads lower in the hierarchy, such as Local Roads, provide local access and typically have lower design speeds. Collectors provide a less developed level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances. They collect traffic from local roads, connect them with arterials, and connect smaller cities and towns with them. Arterials and Collectors have further subclassifications of “Urban” or “Rural” and “Major” or “Minor” based on population density characteristics. Table 3 and Map 2 show road classifications in Rutland.

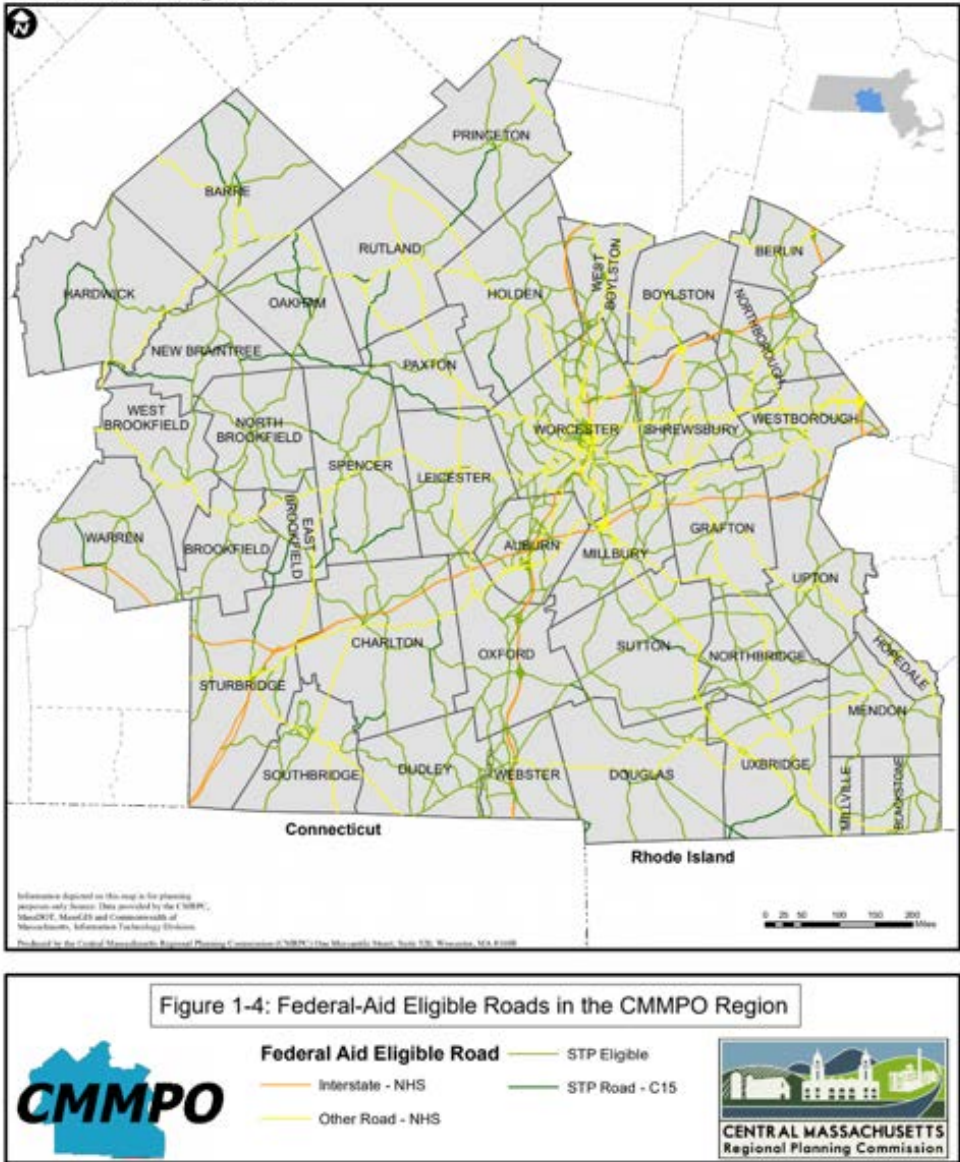
Classification	Total Miles
Collector – Urban	3.98
Collector – Rural	20.29
Collector – Total	24.27
Local – Urban	16.78
Local – Rural	78.94
Local – Total	125.71
Arterial – Urban	14.47
Arterial – Rural	18.52
Arterial – Total	32.99
Total	182.97

Table 3: Classification Group by Miles.
Source: MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, 2020 Road Inventory Year-End Report.



Map 2: Classification Groups. Source: CMRPC, 2022.

Federal-aid-eligible roads are roadways that are qualified to receive financing from federal government sources. Such funds are distributed from the federal government to state governments. Through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), those funds are then distributed for roadway improvement projects. Like the urban or rural classification, functional classification decides if a roadway can qualify for receipt of federal funds. All interstates, urban and rural arterials, urban collectors, and major rural collectors are eligible for these funds (highlighted in green, Map 3). Rural minor collectors and local roads are not eligible for these funds. However, a state may use up to fifteen percent of its rural sub-allocation from the Federal Highway Administration on minor collectors. The following figure displays a map of the Federal-aid eligible roads in Rutland.



Map 3: Rutland Federal-Aid Eligible Roads. Source: CMMPO.

Narrative of the Road Network

MA-56

MA-56 is a state highway with a southern end at Route 12 in Oxford and a northern end in Rutland at Route 68. As of 2022, MA-56 in Rutland is a Transportation Improvement Project through MassDOT for minor widening and highway reconstruction. Also known as Pommogussett Road and Maple Avenue, this street is typically 20-25 feet in surface width. MA-56 North begins as Maple Avenue, surrounded by a residential neighborhood with scattered commercial development. MA-56 then runs through the center of town and becomes Pommogussett Road, surrounded by residential development and tree cover.

MA-68

MA-68 is a state highway with a southern end at Route 122A in Holden and a northern end at Route 32 in Royalston. The 5.8 miles of road in Rutland pass through the northeastern part of town. Maintained by MassDOT, MA-68 recently completed a resurfacing project from Holden to Hubbardston.¹ Also known as East County Road, MA-68 is typically 20-25 feet in surface width. This road runs parallel to the Mass Central Rail Trail and is surrounded by forest.

MA-122A

MA 122A is a southeast-to-northwest state highway running 26.85 miles. This route acts as an auxiliary route and alternate route to Route 122 in Worcester. MA-122A Runs from Grafton to Rutland by meeting with MA-122 in Rutland State Park. Connects with MA-56. MA-122A features road widths of 30-40 feet wide but has larger paved shoulders that could easily be converted into bike lands or marked paved shoulders. Maintained by MassDOT, MA-122A recently completed resurfacing and related work from Rutland to Oakham and Barre.² Also known as “Main Street,” MA-122A South begins as a rural road, before briefly intersecting with MA-56 and serving as the east-to-west road for the Town of Rutland’s town center.

MA-122

MA-122 is a 67.15-mile-long southeast-northwest state highway, which acts as a continuation of Rhode Island Route 122. Maintained by MassDOT, the Massachusetts portion begins in Blackstone. The 39.1 miles in Rutland provide parking for the Mass Central Rail Trail, runs through Long Pond, and provides shoulders. The road becomes Barre Paxton Road south of intersecting with MA-122A.

MA-122 receives the highest traffic volume in every town that it travels through. The corridor meanders through Barre, Oakham, Paxton, and Rutland, with all segments scoring well on the BCI scale. Many of the segments feature road widths of 30-40 feet, and shoulder widths that are inconsistent due to oversized land widths. Bicycle facilities can be applied to the MA-122 corridor through road-dieting efforts, which will allow for conventional bike lanes or paved shoulders.

¹ MassDOT Project Information, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://hwy.massdot.state.ma.us/projectinfo/projectinfo.asp>.

² DOT Project Information, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://hwy.massdot.state.ma.us/projectinfo/projectinfo.asp>.

Network Conditions

Asset Management

On behalf of the CMMPO, CMRPC staff developed an Asset Management System (AMS) to assess conditions, funding needs, and recommended repair strategies. The goal of the AMS process is to keep roadways in the best possible conditions with the most efficient use of available funding. Assets that are checked as part of this process are road pavement, sidewalks and ramps, traffic signals, culverts, and bridges. CMRPC staff assess these assets using data from field surveys, statewide programs, and other available data sets as needed. CMRPC’s most recent road inspection was in 2018. This survey assessed Federal Aid Eligible roads, which are a subset of the roads in the Town.

CMRPC’s baseline assessment of sidewalk and ramp data is from 2019-2021. Typically, this data is updated every 3-5 years. In Rutland, 52% of the 2.9 miles of sidewalks assessed were rated “good.” The 0.1 mile of “poor” condition sidewalk is on Main Street from Naquag Elementary School to Rufus Putnam Lodge. This sidewalk is eligible for federal aid. The accompanying photo from the assessment shows significant cracking, crumbling, and missing sections. Overall, 32.1% of surveyed sidewalks were rated as “excellent” in Rutland.



Figure 1: Main Street Sidewalk in Poor Condition. Source: CMMPO.

CMRPC conducted a similar assessment for sidewalk ramps, which classifies ramps into two categories: “good” and “poor.” Of the forty-eight ramps in Rutland, forty-three are in “good” condition. CMRPC staff identified twelve locations lacking an ADA-accessible ramp in the town center of Rutland, as shown in Table 5, Table 6, and Map 4. CMRPC estimates a ramp backlog of \$46,400.

Condition	Miles	Percent
Excellent	0.9	32.1%
Fair	0.4	13.21%
Good	1.5	51.87%
Poor	0.1	2.82%

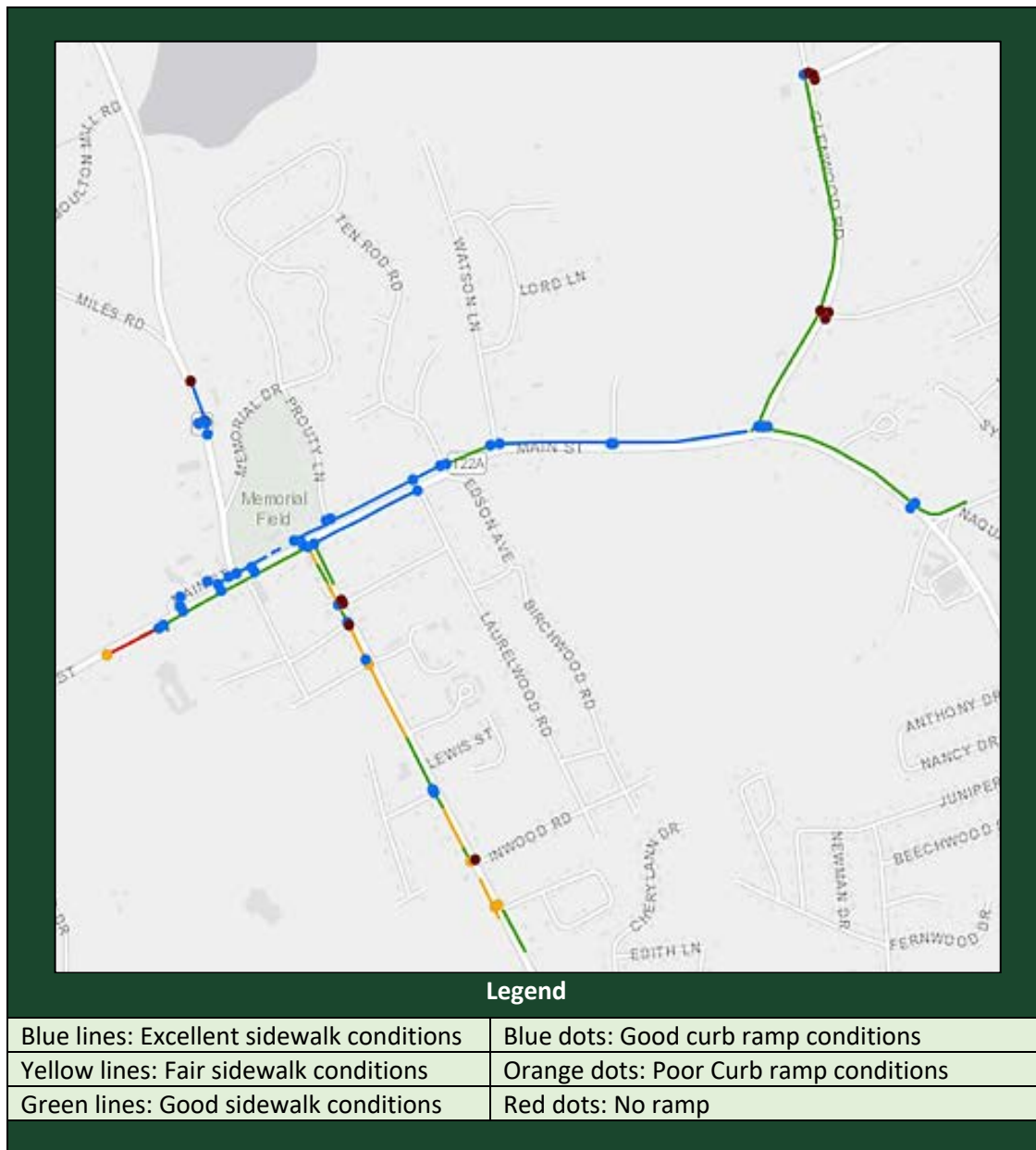
Table 4: Sidewalk Conditions. Source: CMRPC.

Condition	Number of Locations	Percent
Good	43	71.67%
Poor	5	8.33%
No Ramp	12	20%

Table 5: Ramp Conditions. Source: CMRPC.

No Ramp locations	Poor Ramp Locations
Glenwood Road & Wachusett Road (3 missing)	Maple Avenue & Highland Park Road (2 poor)
Glenwood Road & Wheeler Road (3 missing)	Maple Avenue & Inwood Road
32 Pommogussett Road	Maple Avenue & Philips Road
Pommogussett Road & Colonial Village Walkway	Main Street & Rufus Putnam Lodge
Maple Avenue & Quabbin Lumber	
Maple Avenue & Sunnyside Avenue	
Maple Avenue & Breezy Lane	
Maple Avenue & Inwood Road	

Table 6: No Ramp Locations & Poor Ramp Locations. Source: CMRPC.



Map 4: Sidewalk and Ramp Condition Survey, Rutland. Source: CMRPC Asset Management System.

Pavement Conditions

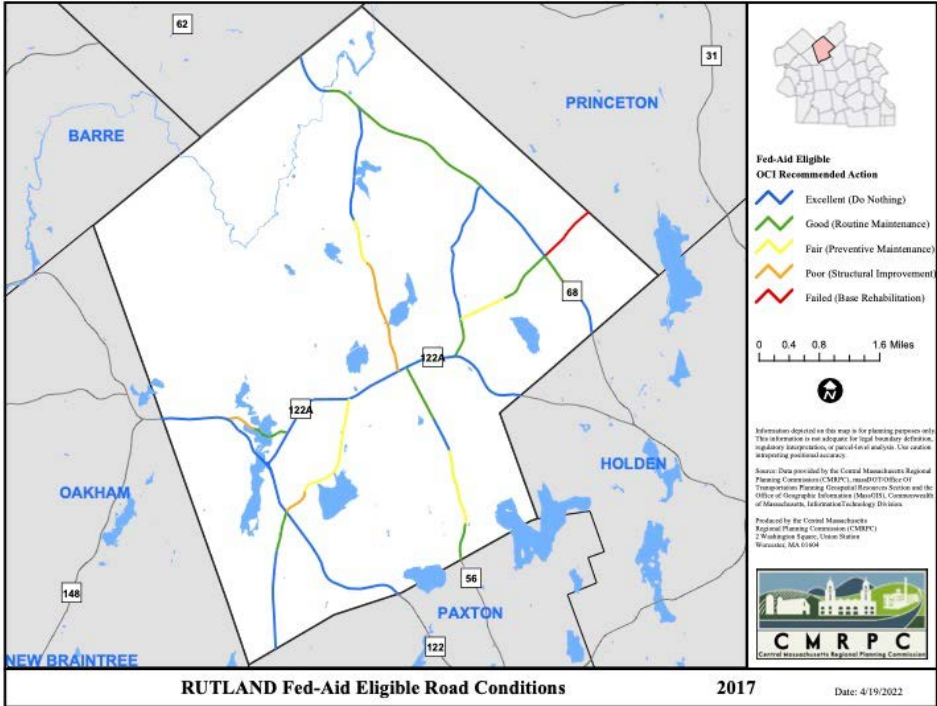
CMRPC’s Regional Asset Management System uses an Overall Condition Rating (OCI) to decide the type of repair that is more cost-effective based on the current condition of each asset. When first installed or built, the asset is in good condition. Typically, the condition slowly deteriorates in the first years of service from good to the lower end of the good range. The deterioration rate accelerates as the asset moves through the middle to the end of its service life, eventually requiring replacement. The Regional OCI is 72.75 out of 100 (Good Condition). The regional backlog for pavement rehabilitation, structural improvement, and preventative maintenance is \$163,000,000.

Table 7 breaks down Rutland roads by Overall Condition Rating. Wachusett Street is the only ‘Very Poor’ rated road with an OCI of 22. Rutland owns Wachusett Street. A “Very Poor” OCI triggers base rehabilitation, due to weakened pavement foundation base layers. Complete reconstruction and full-depth reclamation fall into this category. Four segments of Rutland roads fall under the “Poor” designation, which calls for structural improvement triggered by pavement deterioration beyond the need for surface maintenance applications. This could include structural overlays, shim and overlay, cold planning and overlay, and hot in-place recycling. Fair roads need preventative maintenance and a slightly greater response to more pronounced signs of age and wear. This includes crack sealing, full-depth patching, minor leveling, and surface treatments such as chip seals, micro-surfacing, and thin overlays. Roads in “Good” condition need routine maintenance to prevent deterioration from the normal effects of traffic and pavement age. This includes crack sealing, local repair, and minor localized leveling.

Condition	Route	From	To	Juris.
Very Poor (OCI 0-24) Recommended Action: Base Rehabilitation	WACHUSETT ST.	EAST COUNTY RD.	PRINCETON TOWN LINE	Town
Poor (OCI 25-47) Recommended Action: Structural Improvement	RUTLAND STATE PARK RD.	0.5 MILES FROM MAIN ST.	BARRE PAXTON RD.	State
	PLEASANTDALE RD.	0.5 MILES FROM MAIN ST.	BARRE PAXTON RD.	State
	POMMOGUSSETT RD.	MOULTON MILL RD.	MAIN ST.	Town
	POMMOGUSSETT RD.	SASSAWAMA RD.	MOULTON MILL RD.	Town
Fair (OCI 48-67) Recommended Action: Preventative Maintenance	PLEASANTDALE RD.	WARE RD.	FINN PARK RD.	Town
	MAPLE AVE.	KENWOOD DR.	#210 MAPLE AVE.	Town
	POMMOGUSSETT RD.	#219 POMMOGUSSETT RD.	SASSAWAMA RD.	Town
	MAPLE AVE.	#210 MAPLE AVE.	EMERALD RD.	Town
	PLEASANTDALE RD.	#60 PLEASANTDALE RD.	MAIN ST.	Town
	PLEASANTDALE RD.	FINN PARK RD.	#60 PLEASANTDALE RD.	Town
	WACHUSETT ST.	GLENWOOD RD.	MUSCHOPAUGE RD.	Town
	MAPLE AVE.	EMERALD RD.	PAXTON TOWN LINE	Town
Good (OCI 68-87) Recommended Action: Routine Maintenance	EAST COUNTY RD.	PADDOCK RD.	POMMOGUSSETT RD.	Town
	GLENWOOD RD.	MAIN ST.	WACHUSETT ST.	Town
	RUTLAND STATE PARK RD.	MAIN ST.	0.5 MILES FROM MAIN ST.	State
	EAST COUNTY RD.	POMMOGUSSETT RD.	DAVIS ST.	Town
	PLEASANTDALE RD.	EAST HILL ST.	BARRE PAXTON RD.	Town
	EAST COUNTY RD.	GLENWOOD RD.	PADDOCK RD.	Town

Table 7: Rutland Road Pavement Conditions. Source: CMRPC.

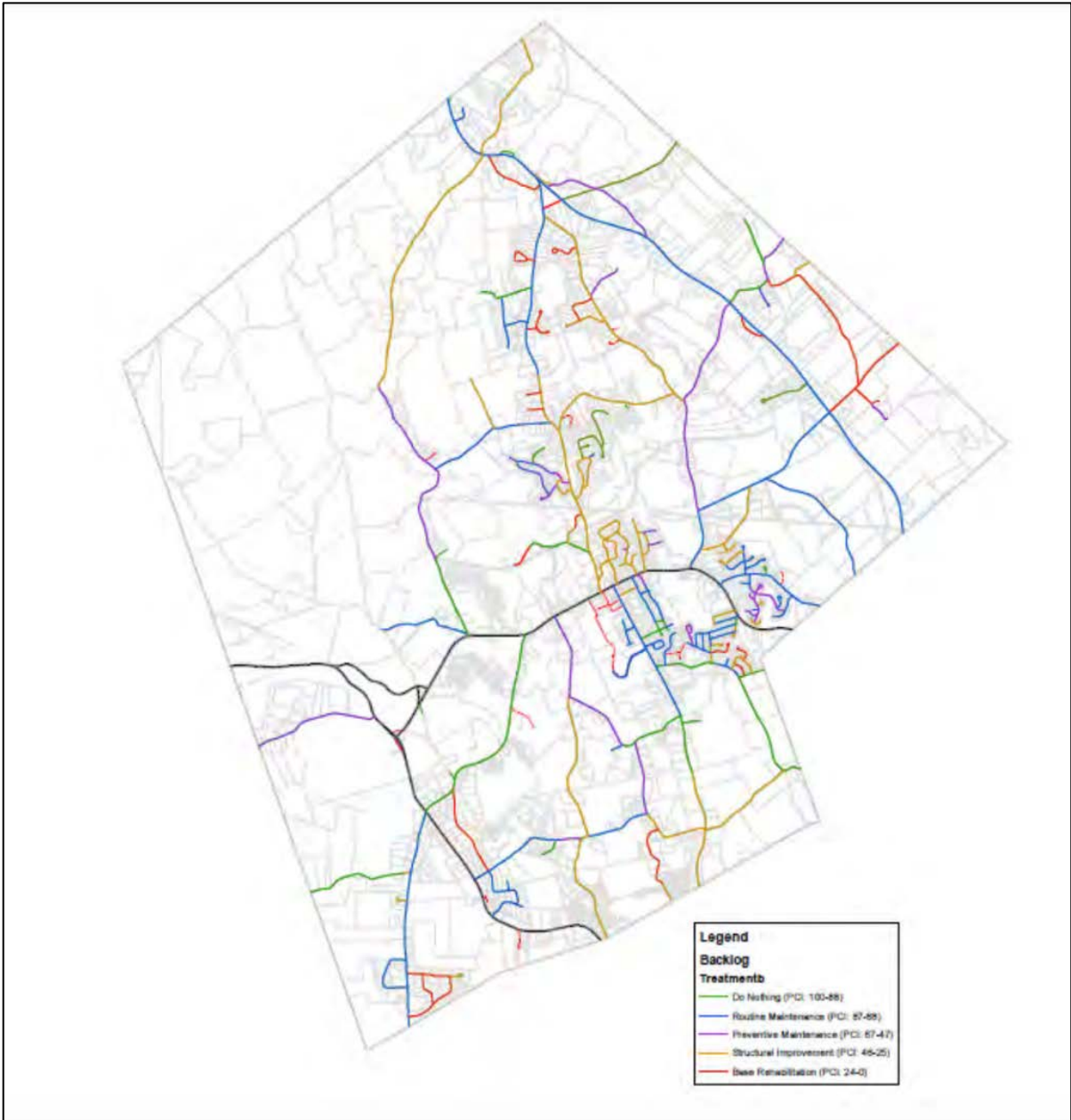
Map 5 shows the road conditions of federal-aid eligible road conditions as outlined in Table 7. Wachusett Street is categorized as the highest-need road in Rutland in both examples. According to the Master Plan Survey, over 50% of respondents noted that the overall road conditions in town are “adequate,” 25% noted “poor” conditions, and 25% noted “good” conditions.



Map 5: Rutland Federal-Aid Eligible Road Conditions. Source: CMRPC.

According to Stantec’s Pavement Management Study from 2021, Rutland’s Pavement Condition Index is 60.9 (Fair). 15% (12.5 miles) of the roads are classified as “Do Nothing” band; 34% (27 miles) of the roads are classified as “Routine Maintenance”; 13% (10.6 miles) of the roads are classified as “Preventative Maintenance”; 30% (25.1 miles) of the roads need “Structural Improvement”; and 27% (21.7 miles) of the roads need “Base Rehabilitation.” Map 6 shows this assessment of roads in Rutland.

As of November 2021, Rutland’s backlog of pavement repair work totaled \$14,803,996, including \$4,363,483 in base rehabilitation; \$7,848,623 in structural improvement work; \$1,966,272 in preventative maintenance; and \$625,618 in routine maintenance. Stantec predicts the current funding levels are low and will not prevent expected roadway deterioration unless more funding beyond Chapter 90 apportionment is budgeted.



Map 6: Stantec Pavement Condition Index. Source: Pavement Management Study, Stantec, 2021.

Bridges

The MassDOT bridge inspection management system (BIMS) is the statewide dataset for bridge structures and their inspection status. The database features information on MassDOT and municipality-owned bridges with spans greater than twenty feet. Inspections are completed bi-annually. Information on MassDOT and municipality-owned bridges with spans between 10 and 20 feet, and culverts with spans of 4 to 10 feet, are not available currently, but data collection efforts are underway. Rutland has eight registered bridges, six of which have been inspected by MassDOT in 2020 and 2021 (Table 8).

Feature Intersected	Facility Carried	Year Built	Year Reconstructed	Structurally Deficient	Bridge Inspection Date	Owner
Water Ware River	St 68 E Country Road	1947	1956	No	2/28/2021	MassDOT
Water E BR Ware River	Highway Intervale Road	1850	N/A	No	N/A	Rutland
Water E BR Ware River	Highway PRISN CMP RD	1937	1987	No	10/5/2020	MassDOT
Water E BR Ware River	Highway Intervale Road	2017	N/A	No	5/18/2021	Rutland
Water Mill Brook	HWY Charnock Hill	1938	N/A	No	12/13/2021	Rutland
Water Long Meadow	HWY Whitehall Road	1945	N/A	No	4/1/2021	MassDOT
Water Long Pond OTLT	ST122 A/County Street	1850	N/A	No	N/A	Rutland
Water Muschopauge Brook	ST 68 E County Road	1958	N/A	No	10/5/2020	Rutland

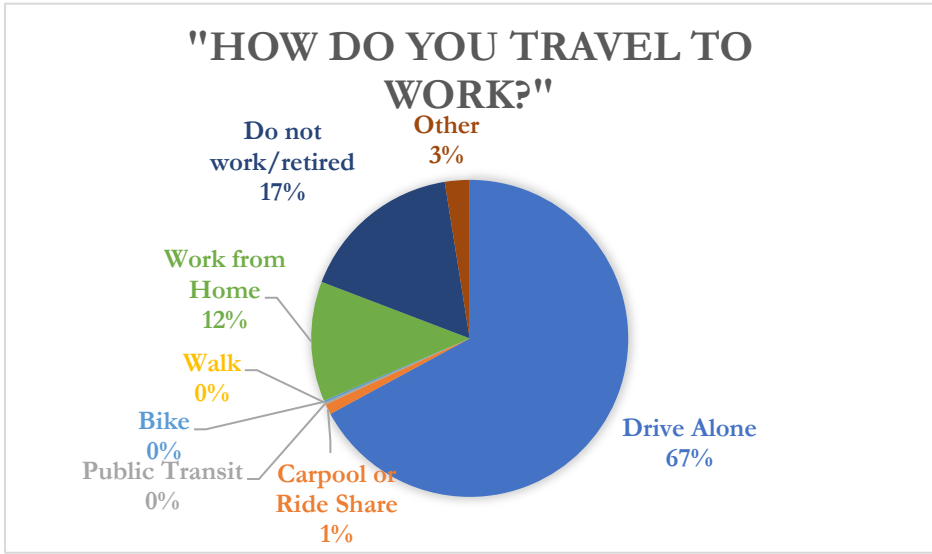
Table 8: Rutland Bridges. Source: MassDOT Bridge Inspection Management System (BIMS).

Journey to Work

According to 2020 American Community Survey data, 93.5% of Rutland residents commute to work by car. 85.5% of residents commute to work by car alone, while 7.9% reported carpooling. The remaining 6.5% of Rutland residents worked from home (Table 9). According to the Master Plan Survey, 67% of respondents reported traveling to work by car, with an increased number of residents working from home (12%). Our Master Plan Survey data reflects a post-COVID-19 Rutland workforce (Figure 2). The American Community Survey reports a mean travel time of 34 minutes among those who commute to work (Table 10). According to the Master Plan Survey, 30% of respondents have a one-way commute of 11-20 minutes.

Car, truck, or van	93.5%
Drove alone	85.5%
Carpooled (workers per car/truck/van=1.06)	7.9%
Public Transportation	0%
Walked	0%
Bicycle	0%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	0%
Worked from Home	6.5%

Table 9: Means of Transportation to Work. Source: 2020 ACS.



Less than 10 min	9.8%
10-14	6.6%
15-19	5%
20-24	11.3%
25-29	7.8%
30-34	18.6%
35-44	13.1%
45-59	16.4%
>60	11.5%
Mean	34

Table 10: Travel Time to Work. Source: ACS 2020.

Figure 2: Travel to work. Source: CMRPC, Master Plan Survey.

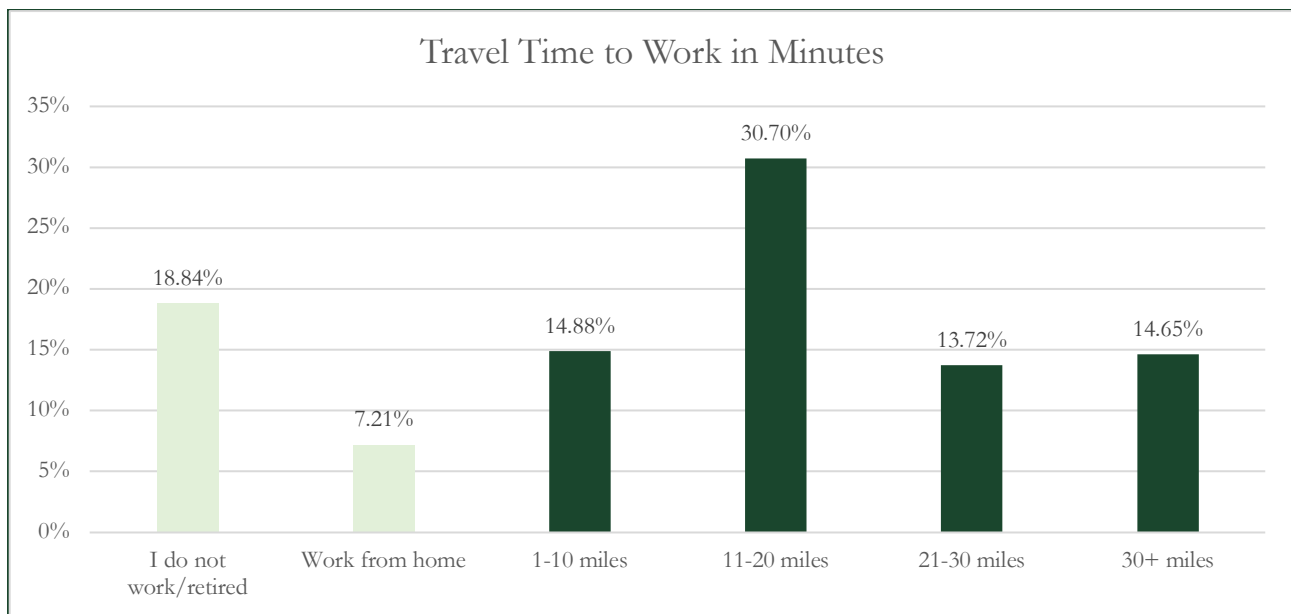


Figure 3: Travel Time to Work. Source: CMRPC, Master Plan Survey.

Rutland residents rely on cars as a primary method of transportation. The American Community Survey reports that fifty percent of workers 16 years and older have access to two or more vehicles in their household (Table 11). Out of all working residents in Rutland, the American Community Survey reports that 97.6% work in Massachusetts, and 79.5% work in Worcester County (Table 12).

Vehicles Available (for workers 16 years and over in households)	
No vehicles	4.4%
1 vehicle available	7.9%
2 vehicles available	48.5%
3 or more vehicles available	39.2%

Table 11: Vehicles Available. Source: 2020 ACS.

Place of Work	
Worked in State of residence	97.6%
Worked in the county of residence	79.5%
Worked outside the county of residence	18.1%
Worked outside the state of residence	2.4%

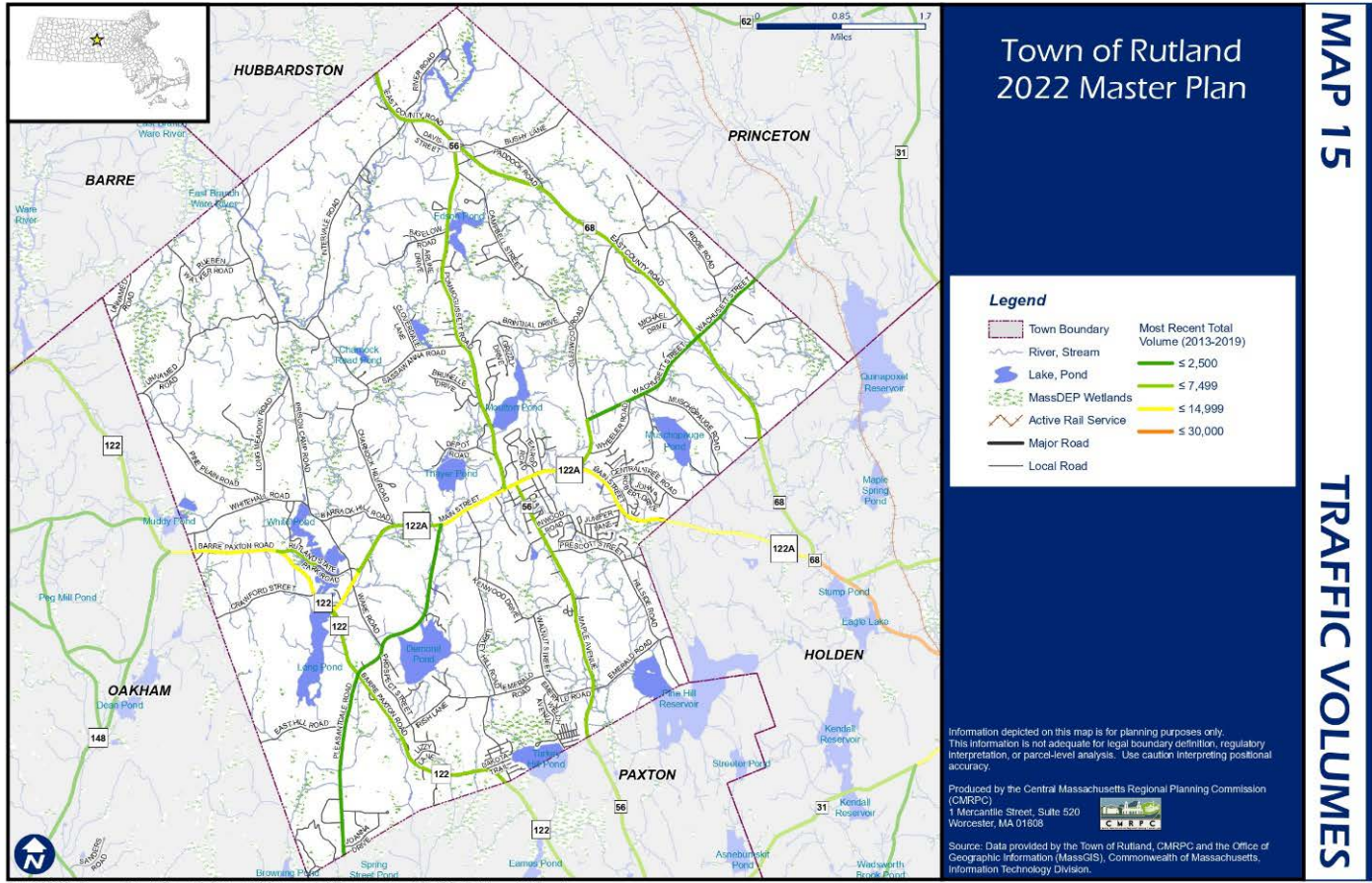
Table 12: Place of Work. Source: 2020 ACS.

Traffic Volumes

Pommogussett Road (Route 56) carries the highest traffic volume in Rutland (Table 13). More current traffic flow counts by CMRPC in 2021 are shown in Map 7, which indicates that portions of 122A have the largest volume of traffic, at between 7,499 and 14,999 vehicles per day.

Route	Location	Volume/day
Glenwood Street	N of Main Street (Rt122A)	3,364
Maple Ave (Rt 56)	S of Main Street (Rt122A)	4,575
Pommogussett Rd (Rt56)	N of Main Street (Rt122A)	6,073
Pommogussett Rd (Rt56)	S of East County Rd (Rt68)	2,444
Wachusett St	S of East County Rd (Rt68)	1,740
Maple Ave (Rt56)	At Paxton TL	3,977
Maple Ave (Rt56)	At Paxton TL	3,055

Table 13: Traffic Volume, 2019. Source: CMRPC.



Map 7: Traffic Volumes. Source: CMRPC, 2022.

Congestion costs the traveling public time and money. Although slower travel speeds tend to decrease fatalities and serious injuries, congestion also inhibits the efficient movement of emergency vehicles.

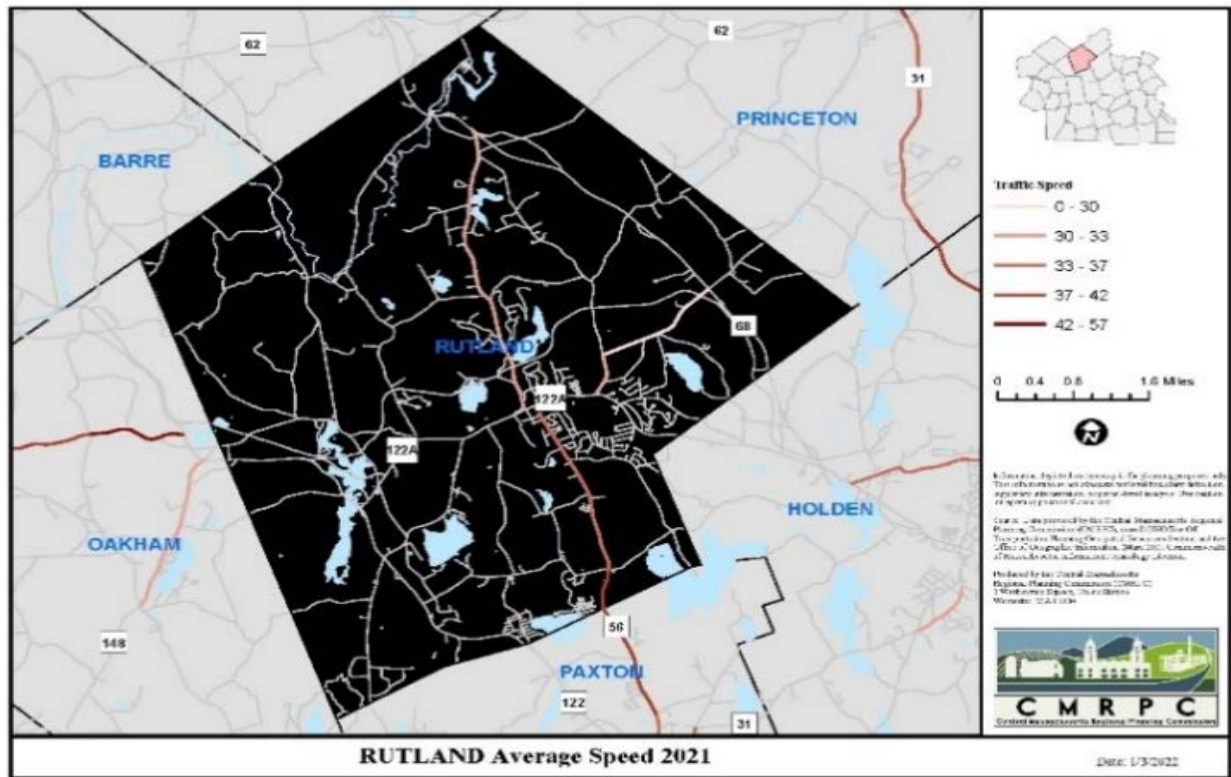
Congestion Management Processes

CMRPC is responsible for maintaining the region’s Congestion Management Process which includes the following tasks:

- Development of congestion management objectives.
- Establishment of measures of multimodal transportation system performance.
- Collection of data and system performance monitoring to define the extent, duration, and causes of congestion.
- Identification of congestion management strategies.
- Implementation activities, including identification of an implementation schedule and funding sources for each strategy.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies.

To complete this process, CMRPC conducts extensive data collection throughout the region including the Town of Rutland. CMRPC uses various methods to collect this information, such as Traffic Volume (above), Average Speed, Encountered Peak Hour Delay, and Heavy Traffic Volume (Trucking).

The average speed in Rutland is slower than in surrounding towns due to a lack of highways. Route 56 experiences the fastest traffic, especially in southern Rutland (Map 8).



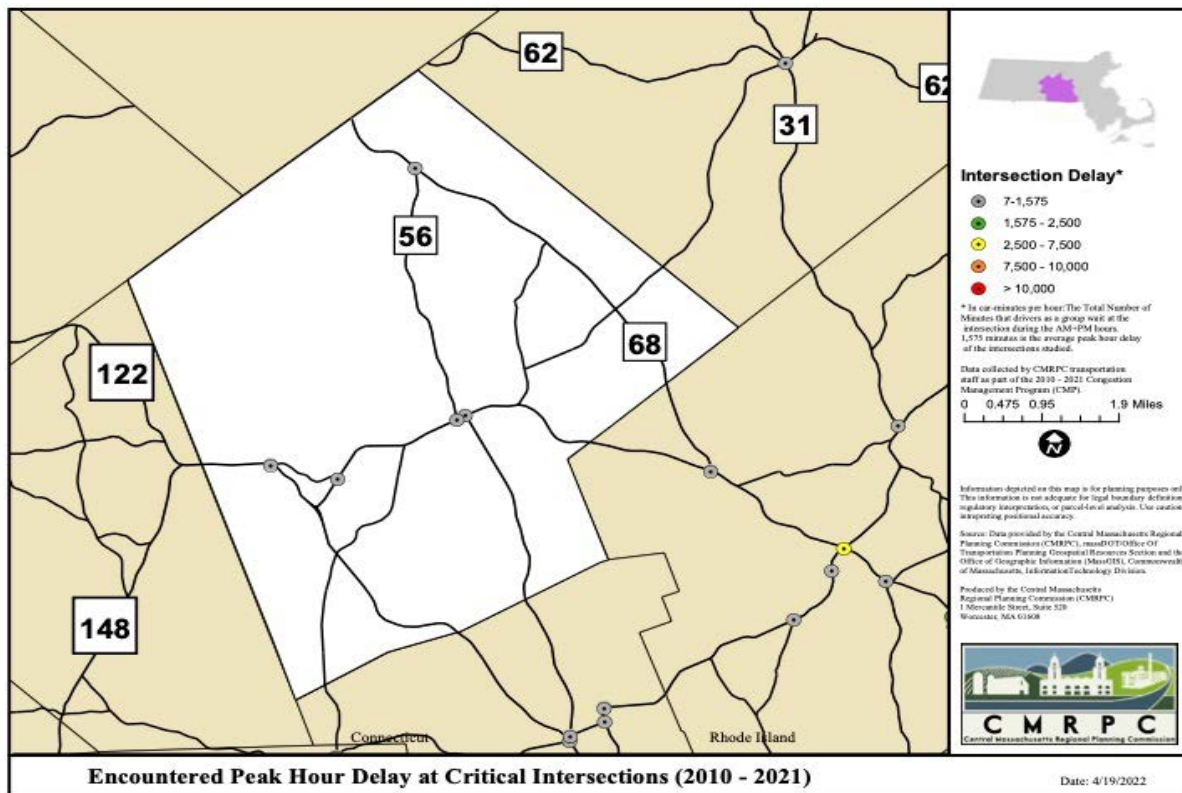
Map 8: Rutland Average Speed. Source: CMRPC 2021.

Turning Movement Count (TMC) Intersections Encountered Delay

Turning Movement Counts measure the number of vehicles at a specific intersection and their speed. For all intersections where Turning Movement Counts are obtained, it is possible to analyze the total delay encountered during peak hour periods. Net delay is calculated from “average delay encountered for entering vehicles” byproduct data collected during intersection Line of Sight (LOS) research. Signalized intersections have delays of varying levels in all directions factored into the calculation. “Stop” sign-controlled intersections have delay calculated only for those vehicles arriving on the minor approaches required to stop and vehicles on the major approaches waiting to make a left turn. Signalized intersections often show more total delay. However, a busy stop-controlled location that may not presently meet the criteria for signalization can face substantial delays if volumes on the minor approaches seek to cross the major approaches. Traffic signals establish orderly traffic flows and increase safety by providing the opportunity for traffic volumes to proceed on both the major and minor intersection approaches, thus balancing encountered vehicle delays. When two heavily traveled streets cross at a major signalized

intersection, significant delays are often generated due to the high traffic volumes. Once signal operations are optimized, geometric improvements can then be considered, such as the construction of widened or additional travel lanes.

Map 9 features selected intersections in Rutland with their observed delay in minutes. These values represent the total number of minutes that drivers, as a group, wait at the intersection during the peak morning or afternoon travel periods. Each of the five studied intersections have delays of 7-1,575 minutes for the full group of drivers at peak times.



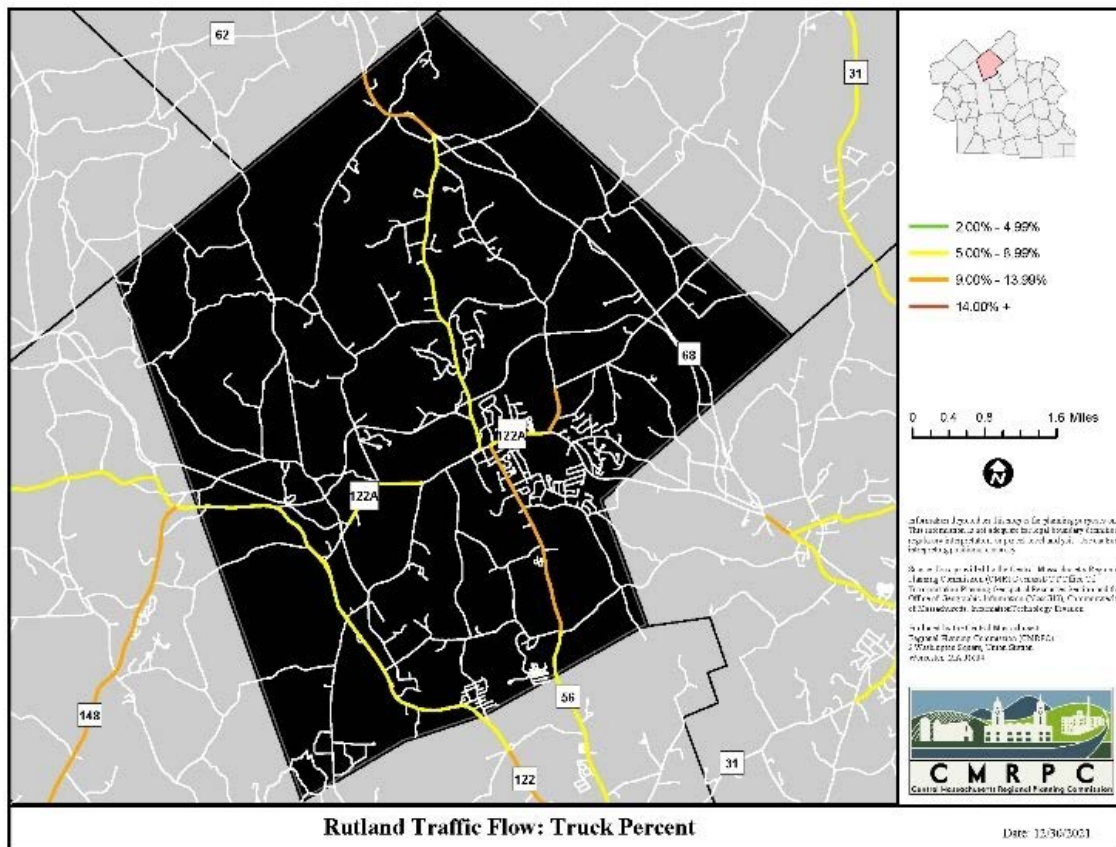
Map 9: Encountered Peak Hour Delay at Critical Intersections (2010-2021). Source: CMRPC.

Freight Rail and Trucking

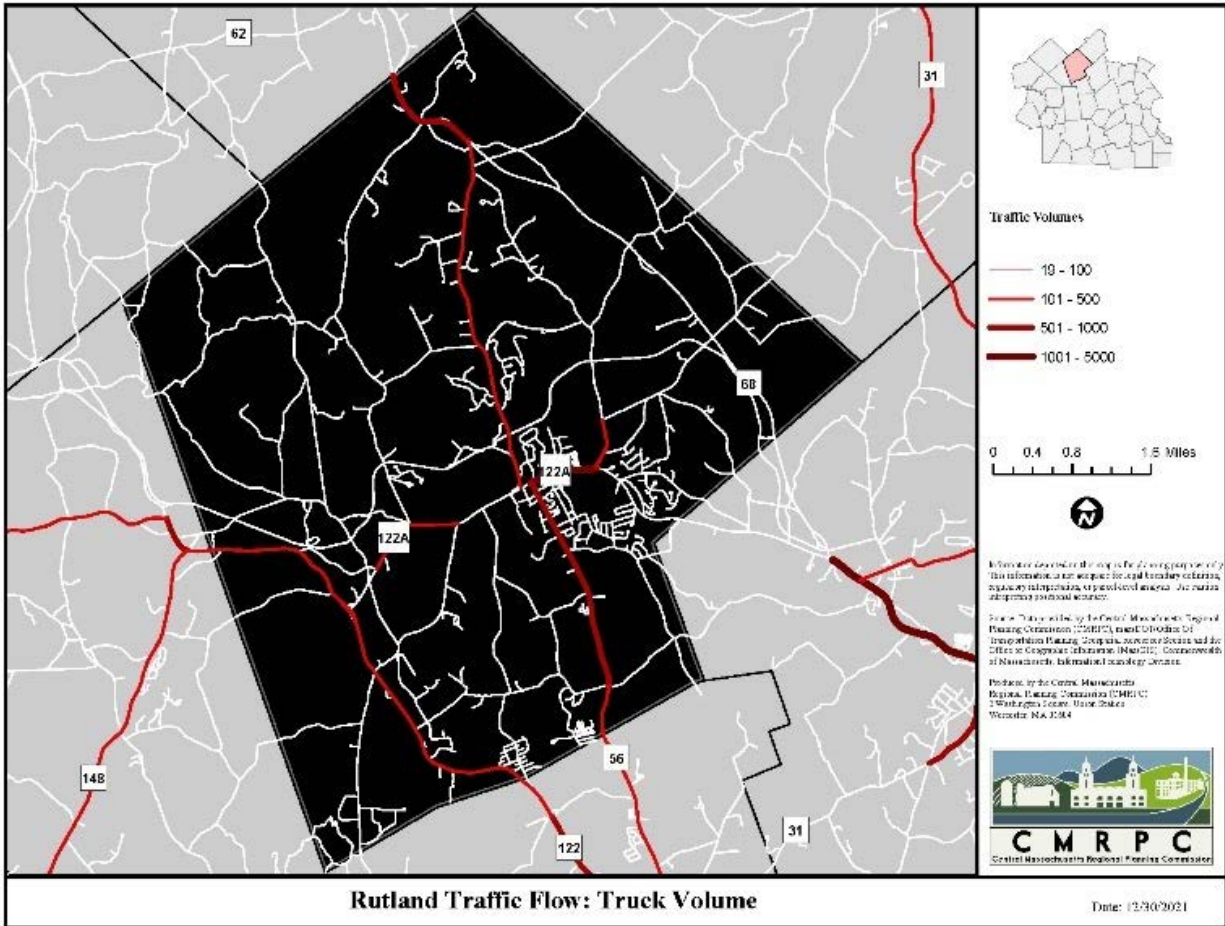
The following traffic counts, conducted by CMRPC between 2016 and 2019, reflect the number of heavy vehicles at specific locations and the percentage of heavy vehicles compared to the total traffic volume. Map 10 and Map 11 show these traffic flows. The most popular streets for heavy vehicles are Main Street (Route 122A), Maple Avenue (Route 56), and Pomugussett Road (Route 56). We should note that increased deterioration and pollution can be caused by a high number of heavy vehicles.

Date	Street/Highway	Location	Heavy Vehicles Combined	Heavy Vehicle Percent Combined
5/19/2016	Glenwood Rd	North of Main St (Rt 122A)	376	11.15%
5/19/2016	Main St (Rt 122A)	East of Maple Ave (Rt 56)	1132	8.73%
5/19/2016	Maple Ave (Rt 56)	South of Main St (Rt 122A)	627	13.01%
5/19/2016	Pommogussett Rd (Rt 56)	North of Main St (Rt 122A)	409	6.54%
5/19/2016	Pommogussett Rd (Rt 56)	South of East County Rd (Rt 68)	216	10.27%
6/7/2016	East County Rd (Rt 68)	At Hubbardston Town Line	505	13.82%
6/7/2016	Main St (Rt 122A)	East of Fishermans Rd	309	6.27%
7/30/2019	Glenwood Road	North of Main St (Rt 122A)	264	7.85%
7/30/2019	Maple St (Rt 56)	South of Main Street	290	6.34%
7/30/2019	Pomugussett Road (Rt 56)	North of Main St (Rt 122A)	527	8.68%
7/30/2019	Route 56	South of Route 68	181	7.44%
7/16/2020	Route 56	At Paxton Town Line	178	5.83%

Table 14: Freight Rail and Trucking Volume. Source: CMRPC.



Map 10: Rutland Traffic Flow: Truck Percent. Source: CMRPC.



Map 11: Rutland Traffic Flow: Truck Volume. Source: CMRPC.

2021 CMMPO Regional Bicycle Compatibility Index (BCI)

Derived from the 2018 Regional Bicycle Plan, CMRPC staff have begun looking more closely into the region’s road infrastructure and its ability to support bicycle accommodations. The BCI, formulated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), provides a comfort level analysis of roadways in terms of their compatibility to easily integrate bicycle infrastructure, while also determining the perceived safety of bicyclists. The BCI is intended to support stakeholder decision-making in prioritizing segments to build upon the region’s multi-modal network.

The main concern with roadways in the North subregion is the lack of shoulders. Roads in these communities are often narrow at less than twenty-four feet wide, and cannot support shoulders of three feet or wider. Many inter-town state highways were found to be wider, with existing shoulder spaces that could accommodate bicycle infrastructure.

Issues and Opportunities

The following issues and opportunities are informed by the data outlined above and community input from the Master Plan survey. The issues described in this section are summarized below in the Objectives and Goals section of this chapter. The top priorities of Rutland residents are the condition of roads and bridges (70.95%), rising gas prices (62.5%), and speeding.

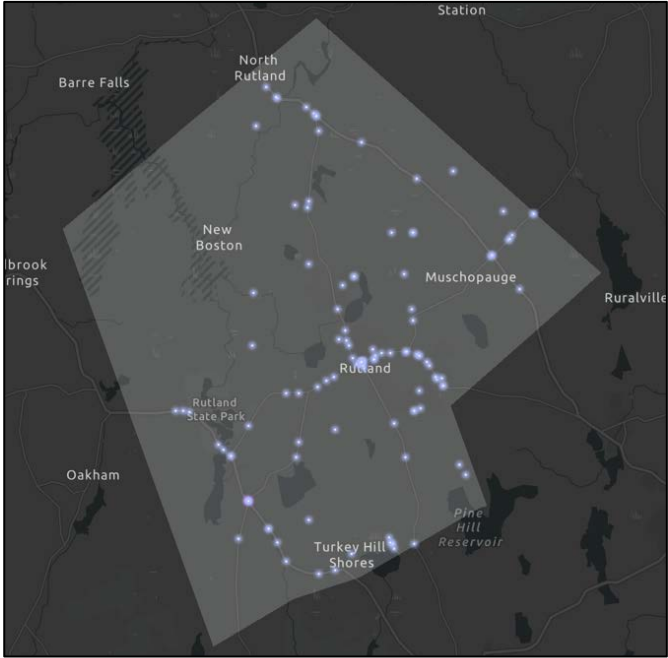
“What transportation issues would you consider to be most important in Rutland?”					
	Priority	Non-Priority	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
Condition of Roads/Bridges	70.95%	24.16%	4.89%	389	2.49
Congestion	55.86%	37.91%	6.23%	401	2.19
Rising gas prices	62.5%	29.59%	7.91%	392	2.36
New vehicle technologies (electric cars, automated vehicles)	22.68%	64.95%	12.37%	388	1.52
Access to transportation for Aging Populations	60.56%	30.03%	9.41%	393	2.34
Air Quality	42.97%	48.85%	8.18%	391	1.94
Speeding	62.09%	33.17%	4.74%	401	2.30

Table 15: Community Survey Results, Transportation Priorities Ranked. Source: Master Plan Survey.

Transportation Safety

Transportation planning in the CMMPO region is rooted in encouraging an efficient, economical, and safe multimodal transportation system. Thus, improving safety on all public roads is one of many considerations in the transportation planning process.

According to the MassDOT Top Crash Locations database, there is one accident cluster at the intersection of Route 122 (Barre Paxton Road) and Pleasantdale Road³. This intersection is categorized as a “Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Eligible Cluster” which occurs when the total number of “equivalent property damage only” crashes is within the top five percent of the region. An HSIP-eligible project is any strategy, activity, or project that corrects or improves a hazardous public road location or feature.



Map 12: Top Rutland Crash Locations. Source: MassDOT, 2018.

³ MassDOT, Top Crash Locations, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/topcrashlocations/>.

To receive HSIP funds, a State must:

- Produce a program of projects or strategies to reduce identified safety problems.
- Develop, implement, and update a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).
- Evaluate the SHSP regularly.

Table 16 shows car accidents that occurred in the Town of Rutland in 2018 by Motorist Type and Crash Severity, which are mapped in Map 12. As the table shows, 95 of the 122 car accidents resulted in property damage, while twenty-seven car accidents resulted in non-fatal injuries.

Non-Motorist Type		
Motorist only	Cyclist Involved	Pedestrian-Involved
122	0	0
Crash Severity		
Fatal	Non-Fatal Injury	Property Damage
0	27	95

Table 16: 2018 Rutland Car Crashes. Source: MassDOT Top Crash Locations.

Road Network Funding

Chapter 90 is a state funding program directed by MassDOT that reimburses towns for “maintaining, repairing, improving and constructing town and county ways and bridges which qualify under the State Aid Highways Guidelines adopted by the Public Works Commission.” The funds may be used for construction and preservation work to extend the life of capital facilities, bikeways, salt sheds, road-building equipment, and garages for the storage of road-building equipment. Chapter 90 funds are distributed annually and based on a formula developed by the Legislative Rural Caucus of the Transportation Committee. This formula uses three weighted categories to decide the percentage of the total allocation each town will receive. The categories include Roadway mileage (58.33%), Population (20.83%), and Employment (20.83%). Figure 4 shows that Chapter 90 funding allocation has remained consistent in the past ten years.

Town	Miles 2020	Amount
Holden	119.83	\$622,490
Hubbardston	82.37	\$354,012
Oakham	42.72	\$180,633
Paxton	38.76	\$192,512
Princeton	79.23	\$340,363
Rutland	79.08	376,458

Figure 10: Rutland Chapter 90 Funding. Source: Mass.gov Chapter 90 Apportionment.

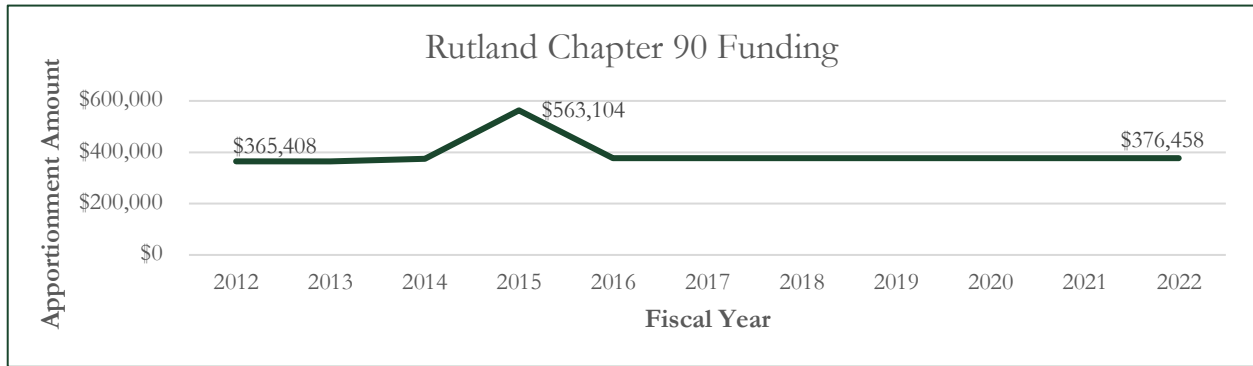


Figure 4: Chapter 90 Funding over time. Source: Mass.gov Chapter 90 Past Apportionment.

Table 17 compares Rutland’s Chapter 90 allocation to neighboring communities. Since Rutland has fewer roads than its neighbors, the Town receives less funding from Chapter 90. Rutland distributed \$72,271 towards highway construction and maintenance, and additional funds for snow and ice control, streetlights, the highway administrator, and traffic control.

	2020 Budget	2022 Budget
Highway Construction/Maintenance	\$72,753.52	\$72,271.00
Snow and Ice Control	\$195,910.97	\$194,548.00
Streetlights	\$42,000.00	37,000.00
Highway Administrator	767,622.55	706,823.00
Traffic Control	\$129.00	\$130.00

Table 17: Transportation Budget Allocation, 2020 & 2022. Source: Town of Rutland

Public Transportation

Rutland does not provide public transportation other than the Elderbus. As described in the Journey to Work section above, most residents commute to work by car. When prompted with the question “Would you use public transit if it were available in Rutland?” 10.5% indicated “yes.” We should note, that 30.61% said they were “unsure,” and would need more information. A community outreach campaign to distinguish the most requested routes and times would be necessary if the town is to pursue any public transportation in Rutland with the WRTA or other agencies.

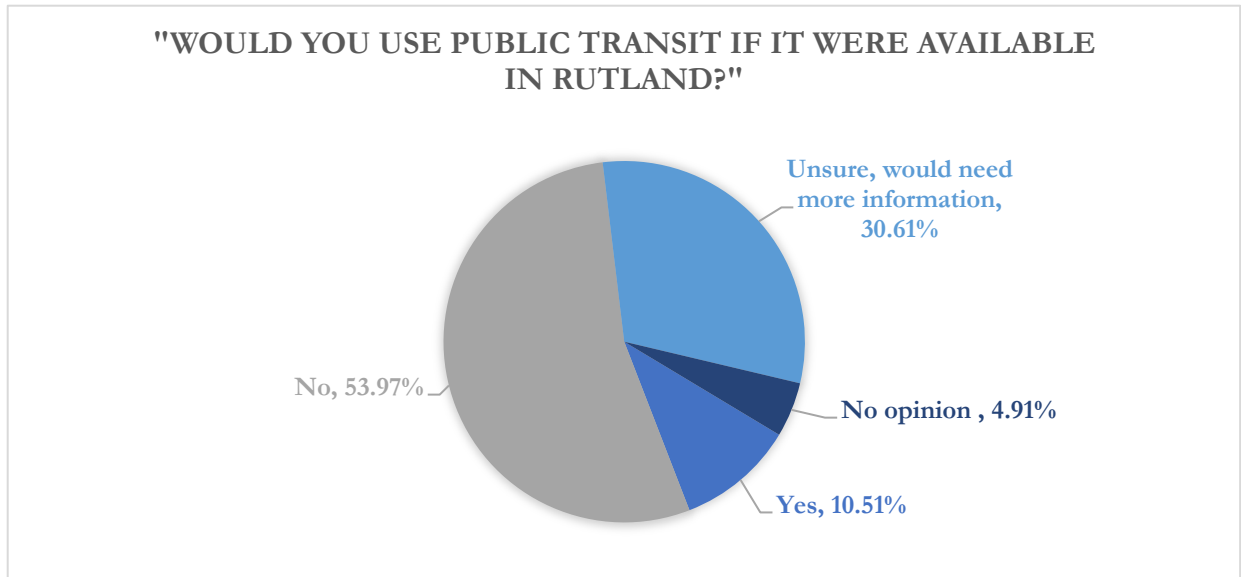


Figure 5: Interest in Public Transit. Source: Master Plan Survey.

The neighboring towns of Holden, Hubbardston, Oakham, Paxton, and Princeton are also not currently serviced by the WRTA. This means the area is inaccessible to anyone lacking access to a private vehicle.

Rideshare

Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as “Uber” or “Lyft” must obtain a permit from the TNC Division of the Department of Public Utilities. According to the Department of Public Utilities, Rutland rideshare services took 1,149 rides in 2020, a decline from 2,089 rides in 2019. This -45% change in rides is on trend with the impact of COVID-19 on neighboring towns. 1,149 rides started in Rutland, and 1,768 rides ended in Rutland in 2020. The most popular starting points were Worcester (984), Holden (166), and Spencer (92). 202 rides or 17.58% of total rides started and ended in Rutland. The Commonwealth collects a \$0.20 per-ride fee from ride-share programs in Massachusetts. Cities and towns receive half of this amount based on the number of rides that start in their communities. In 2020, Rutland collected \$114.90.⁴ According to the Master Plan Survey, only 0.7% of respondents frequently use ridesharing apps like “Uber” or “Lyft”. Fifteen percent of respondents said they would consider it if more were available.

⁴ Rideshare Data Report, 2020, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/2020-rideshare-data-report>.

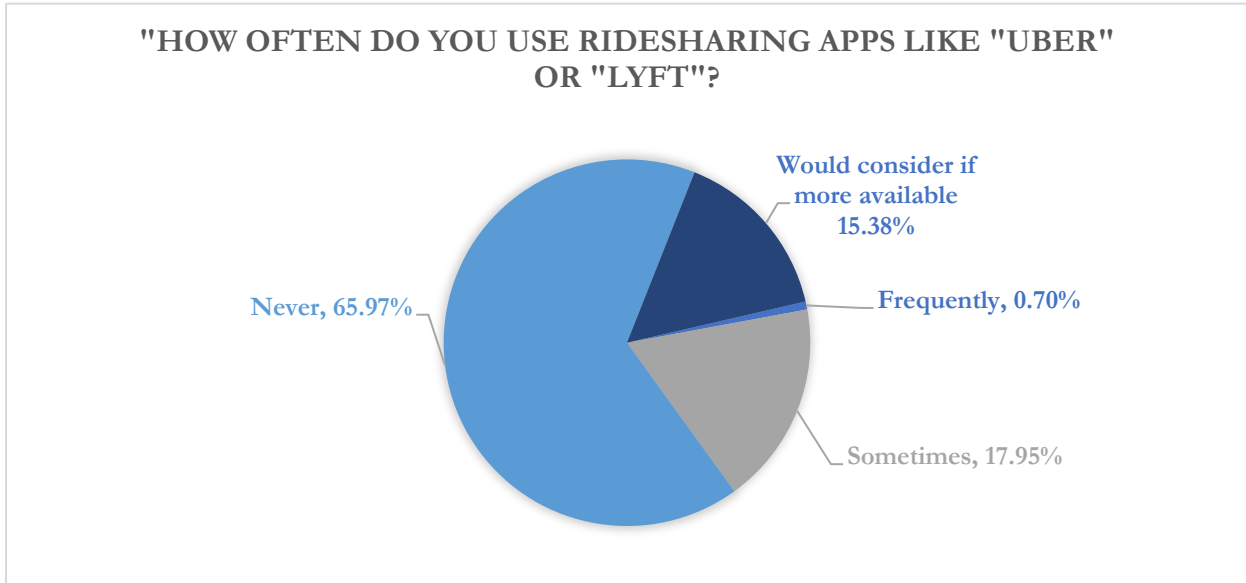


Figure 6: Use of Ridesharing Apps. Source: Master Plan Survey.

Elderbus

The Friends of Rutland Council on Aging (COA) provides Rutland seniors with “Elderbus,” which provides service in-town, for out-of-town medical services, medical trips to Worcester and Auburn, and out-of-town grocery shopping. Seniors who make reservations forty-eight business hours in advance may schedule a free trip for in-town services sponsored by Friends of Rutland COA, or a trip out of town for the fare of \$1.50 with an added \$0.25 per each town each way.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility

Providing accommodations for all transportation user types enables greater accessibility and mobility throughout the community. According to the Master Plan Survey, the top priorities for pedestrian facilities in Rutland are sidewalk conditions (68%) and crosswalk striping (48%). Additionally, when asked to rate support for the extension of sidewalks in Rutland, 77% of respondents noted their support or strong support.

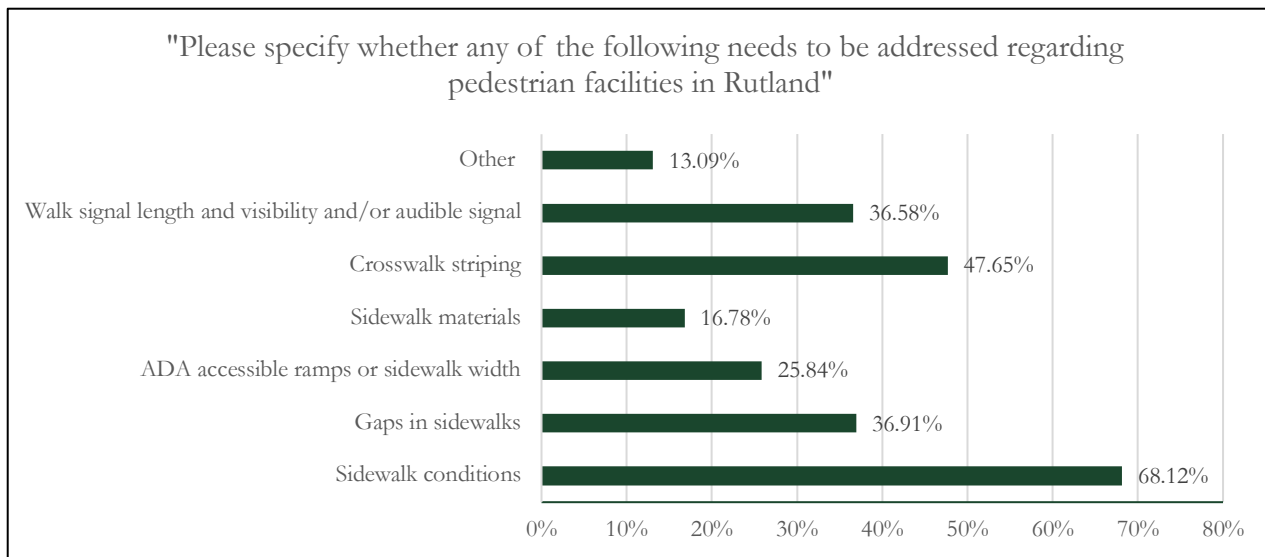


Figure 7: Perceived Need for Improvements to Pedestrian Facilities. Source: Master Plan Survey.

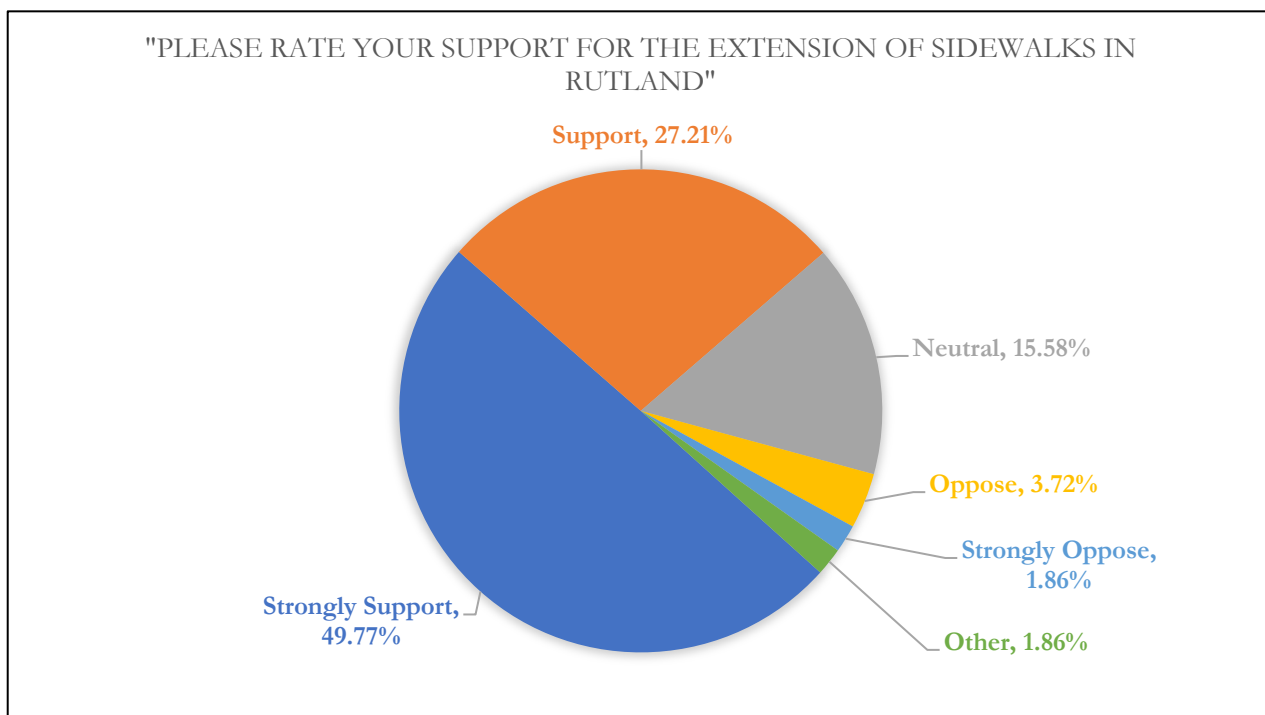


Figure 8: Support for Sidewalk Extensions. Source: Master Plan Survey.

When asked "What types of transportation options should Rutland explore," a majority (66.35%) of respondents selected sidewalks as a priority. Five commented to raise sidewalks as a concern, at Pommogussett Road, Pleasantdale Road, and the "extremely unsafe" Glenwood Road sidewalks. Two commented about expanding the trail system, one for cycling and walking and another for snowmobiles, ATVs, and cyclists. Traffic lights were raised three times on Main Street intersections and at Maple Avenue and Pommogussett Road to reduce congestion during rush hour. Similarly, road alterations to improve safety and reduce congestion were suggested four times, including adding more turning lanes, adding speed bumps on Prescott Street to slow down drivers who cannot see over the hill near Cherylann Drive, a traffic circle at the intersection of Route 56 and Route 122A near Dunkin Donuts, and lower speed limits

on Main Street. The need for improved lighting conditions on crosswalks downtown was raised twice. Public transportation options were suggested three times, one highlighting handicap-accessible rides, and another looking for easy transportation to Logan Airport.

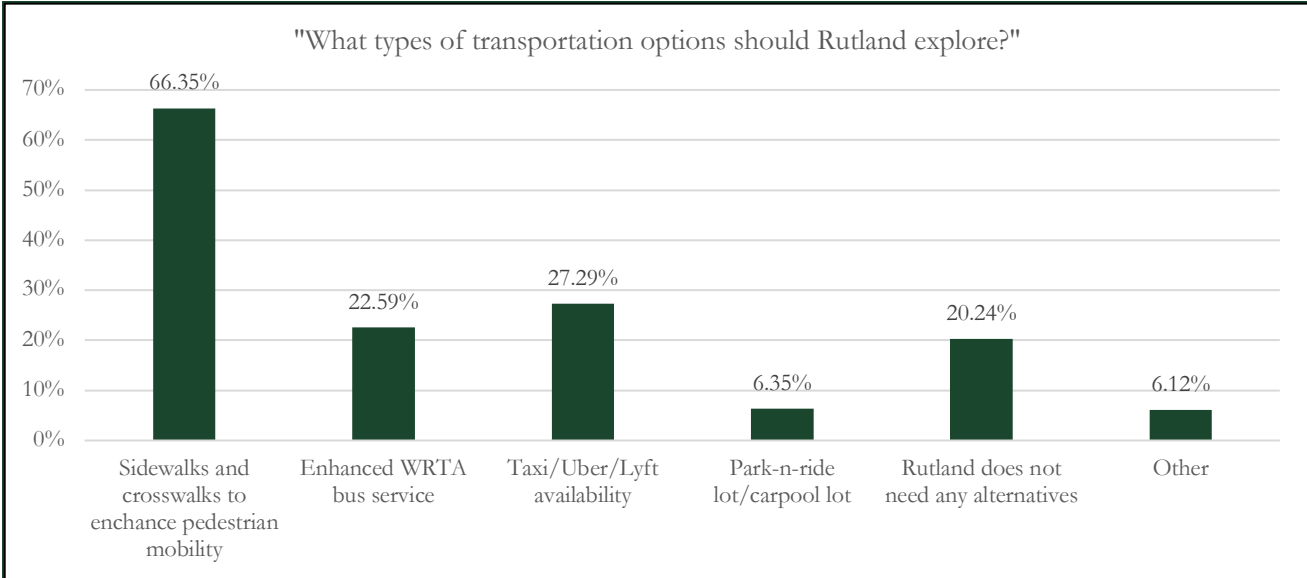


Figure 9: Preferences for Enhanced Transportation Options. Source: Master Plan Survey.

MassDOT conducts Potential for Walkable Trips analysis, which predicts where people would walk regardless of existing infrastructure along or across a MassDOT-owned roadway. The analysis determines potential demand for pedestrian activity on the roadway based on access to destinations such as schools, parks, shopping, or transit, and proximity to reported pedestrian crashes. According to this analysis, Route 122A (Main Street) and a connection on Naquag Street are in high demand for pedestrians.⁵

MassDOT Potential for Everyday Biking analysis predicts where people are expected to bike for everyday travel if safe, comfortable, and convenient bikeways are available. MassDOT highlights the Mass Central Rail Trail near Route 56 (Pommogussett Road) and Moulton Pond as a place with high biking activity.⁶

Most Master Plan survey respondents felt unsafe or very unsafe riding a bicycle in Four Corners and the Rutland Plaza Area. A slight majority (54.12%) of respondents felt safe or very safe biking around Rutland’s Town Center. 96% of respondents felt safe or very safe riding a bicycle on Recreational Trails.

⁵ MassDOT, Potential for Walkable Trips analysis, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://geo-massdot.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/MassDOT::potential-for-walkable-trips/about>.

⁶ MassDOT, Potential for Everyday Biking analysis, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://massdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=371274be470c4f9db0543943398eb3d3>.

"How safe would you feel riding your bicycle in the following areas of Rutland?"						
	Very Safe	Safe	Unsafe	Very Unsafe	Total Responses	Weighted Average
Rutland Town Center	12.37%	41.75%	35.57%	10.31%	388	2.44
Recreational Trails	45.62%	50.26%	3.35%	0.77%	388	1.59
Four Corners	5.57%	24.14%	48.81%	21.49%	377	2.86
North Rutland	7.65%	46.45%	36.89%	9.02%	366	2.47
Rutland Plaza Area	6.86%	31.66%	49.08%	12.40%	379	2.67
Residential Areas	28.13%	59.64%	9.38%	2.86%	384	1.87
Other	12.14%	65.05%	16.02%	6.80%	206	2.17

Table 18: Perceived Safety While Biking. Source: Master Plan Survey.



Figure 10: Locations Where Rutland Residents Bike. Source: Master Plan Survey.

Added comments to the question above “If you bike locally in Rutland, where do you bike?” included eleven respondents who enjoy biking around local neighborhoods and rural roads and three respondents who favored rail trails. Five respondents noted the current safety concerns of riding in Rutland, two of which requested bike lanes, one of which faulted the width of the roads, and one of which cited poor road infrastructure as the issue behind unsafe roads.

Currently, there is one registered bike lane on either side of Route 122A (Main Street).⁷ When asked to list new locations for bicycle infrastructure, the top suggested areas were Route 56 (Pommogussett Road) and Maple Avenue. Many respondents suggested an extension of the Rail Trail to neighboring towns and safer connections to the town center, including Glenwood Road and Wachusett Street. One respondent suggested adding bicycle parking racks in strategic places, such as Memorial Field or near Dunkin Donuts.

⁷ MassDOT, Bicycle Facility Inventory, accessed January 7, 2023, <https://massdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=76fc33869d534c6ba0b16803d25ee990>.

A few respondents suggested bike lanes near schools and around the new Rutland Heights development. Finally, nine respondents requested bike infrastructure for all main roads near the town center.

Mass Central Rail Trail

The Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) extends horizontally across the North sub-region between MA-31 in Holden and Oakdale Village in West Boylston, and just north of the Rutland town center to near the Powder Mill Pond in Barre. Besides the CMRPC region, the trail extends westward to North Hampton and eastward to Boston, creating a diverse east-to-west multi-modal transportation route. A MassDOT feasibility study was published in October 2020 to complete the construction of portions within and just outside the CMRPC region. As part of Mobility 2040, the Long Range Transportation Plan, a trail priority is the central 30-mile section of the Mass Central Rail Trail, which includes West Boylston, Holden, Oakham, Barre, and Rutland. Master Plan Survey findings found popularity in expanding the Rail Trail and connecting the existing Mass Central Rail Trail to the town center (as explained above).

Complete Streets

Complete Streets provide safe and accessible options for all travel modes, including walking, biking, transit, and vehicles, for people of all ages and abilities. The MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program provides technical assistance and construction funding to eligible municipalities. Qualifying municipalities must pass a Complete Streets Policy and develop a Prioritization Plan.

Rutland prioritized the MA-56 (Maple Avenue) sidewalk and crosswalk work to improve access in the downtown network, provide safety improvements for pedestrians, and provide ADA accommodations. Shared-use pavement markings with signage and bicycle racks will provide safety improvements for bicyclists and bicycle parking. The project is structured into phases, with Phase 1 covering Maple Avenue from Main Street (MA-122A) to Phillips Road, Sunnyside Avenue, and Edson Ave; Phase 2 from Phillips Road to Bigelow Lane; and Phase 3 from Bigelow Lane to Rutland State Hospital Road.⁸

Mitigating Negative Impacts and Proactive Approaches to Emerging Trends and Technology

Rutland residents rely primarily on personal vehicles for commuting instead of transit or rideshare. Ninety-six percent of survey respondents who commute to work said that they drive alone. Given this overwhelming reliance on automobiles, the Town should consider working with the WRTA and CMRPC to study potential transit options or find opportunities to collaborate with nearby towns. Additionally, a survey can be conducted to understand current commuting behaviors and preferences, such as the current carpooling that takes place or the desire for more carpooling. Central Massachusetts has seen a recent influx of distribution centers and logistics businesses. Steps should be taken to ensure that existing and incoming businesses (especially, but not limited to distribution & logistics businesses) are limiting emissions, limiting noise pollution, implementing appropriate truck routes, and limiting their negative

⁸ Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program Participation accessed January 7, 2023, <https://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/completestreets/Map/>.

impacts on the Town’s transportation system and environment. Such steps could include commercial development standards and host agreements.

Given an expected increase in the use of electric vehicles, the Town can assess the capacity of its electrical infrastructure to meet the needs of electrical vehicles in the future. A survey can be conducted to understand the current use of electric vehicles by Rutland residents and expected future use. In addition to promoting environmentally friendly transportation practices among its residents, the Town should adopt such practices for municipally owned vehicles and infrastructure. Steps can be taken to green the municipal vehicle fleet where appropriate and possible, such as prioritizing the purchase of fuel-efficient replacement vehicles and enacting non-idling policies.

Recommendations

The Master Plan recognizes that a strong transportation network is critical to support all other aspects of the Town of Rutland, including housing, economic development, and town services. The following recommended tools, resources, and focus areas have been selected based on community input, committee discussions with the consultant, and transportation best practices. The following goals and recommendations have been devised to comprehensively achieve the town’s vision that movement around and through the town is diverse, safe, and connected. 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. The Rutland community should be offered many opportunities to engage in activities, information, and decision-making as these goals are implemented by the Town.

Goal 1: Maintain and improve the condition of Rutland’s existing transportation network.

There are several roads and key areas in Rutland that need improvements:

- Wachusett Street (East County Road to Princeton Town Line).
- Pleasantdale Road (Barre Paxton Road to Ware Road).
- Pommogussett Road (Sassawanna Road to Moulton Mill Road).
- Poor sidewalk conditions on Main Street (Naquag Elementary School to Rufus Putnam Lodge).
- Poor sidewalk conditions on Pommogussett Road, Pleasantdale Road, and Glenwood Road.
- Traffic and Safety conditions at the intersection of East County Road & Wachusett Street.
- Poor sidewalk ramp conditions at Maple Avenue & Highland Park Road; Maple Avenue & Inwood Road; Maple Avenue & Phillips Road.
- New sidewalk ramps for Glenwood Road & Wachusett Road; Glenwood Road & Wheeler Road; Pommogussett Road & Colonial Village Walkway; Maple Avenue & Breezy Lane; Maple Avenue & Inwood Road.

There are several funding sources that Rutland should pursue to achieve this goal:

- Work with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission to place projects on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), for which all state roads are eligible.

- Complete subsequent Complete Streets Prioritization Projects.

Rutland needs to continually invest in the maintenance of roads and bridges to keep up with the ever-growing backlog of road improvements. Improvement and enhancement of the crosswalks, sidewalks, and signals in Rutland should be prioritized to ensure Rutland is accessible and inviting to all pedestrians and bikers.

Goal 2: Increase the safety of Rutland’s roads for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Sidewalk and crosswalk maintenance can be used to enhance the walking and biking experience in Rutland. Methods that have been known to calm traffic and reduce speeds include narrowing travel lanes, increasing sidewalk widths, adding on-street parking, landscaping, and speed bumps. These efforts can begin with low-cost installations such as painted curb extensions and planters.

Safety should be the number one priority for improving road infrastructure in Rutland. The crash cluster on Route 122 and Pleasantdale Road should be improved through a Strategic Highway Safety Plan to receive funds through the Highway Safety Improvement Program. The town should prevent more crash clusters and problematic areas by incorporating more speed limit signs, warning signs, and public awareness of the rules of the road.

All crosswalks in Rutland should be analyzed for their safety by ensuring that on-street parking spaces do not block the line of sight and that crosswalk infrastructure (including alert flashers, textured pavement treatments, streetlights, and white paint) is effective. Areas that lack crosswalks should also be identified and implemented.

Areas of congestion (such as Pommogussett Road & Main Street) should be assessed for peak hour delays and improved through signalized traffic control, signage, pavement markings, and intersection sight line improvements.

Goal 3: Mitigate negative impacts resulting from the transportation system.

Rutland must acknowledge the impact that its transportation network has on the environment. The Town can encourage widespread use of environmentally friendly transportation practices by installing no-idling signs in areas such as schools, convenience stations, and municipal facilities, installing electric vehicle charging stations at public buildings, and working towards greening the municipal vehicle fleet.

Goal 4: Providing transportation alternatives to car travel.

The Town of Rutland should acknowledge that not all town residents own or have access to vehicular travel. By exploring alternative mobility options for Rutland residents such as ride share, paratransit, and Elderbus, Rutland can become more accessible for all residents and visitors. Car travel is not a universal possibility for those with driving impairments, cost burdens, or disabilities. Therefore, transportation alternatives are crucial for those who lack access to a car. Additionally, Rutland should explore the expansion of the Central Mass Rail Trail to connect core streets to bike paths.

Goal 5: Improve the Town’s streetscape and sidewalks to allow more pedestrians and bicycle access to businesses.

The Town can create inviting and accessible sidewalk areas around businesses to attract more pedestrian and bicyclist patronage. The Town should revise zoning in appropriate areas to require sidewalks, bike path connectors, and bike racks. The town has requested bike racks around Memorial Field and the Dunkin Donuts downtown. Rutland should also analyze how bike infrastructure and safety can be incorporated into Four Corners and the Rutland Plaza; two areas identified as “least safe” for bicyclists during community outreach efforts.

Goal 6: Take a proactive approach to emerging transportation technologies, trends, and issues.

Emerging transportation technologies will save Rutland time, energy, and costs when improving its transportation network. Monitoring trends with distribution centers, drones, and autonomous vehicles is crucial to properly regulate their use within town boundaries.

Goal 7: Better connect the Town’s roads, streets, and sidewalks to be consistent with the Town’s small-town and environmental character.

Rutland can improve the small-town charm of its town center by expanding the existing Mass Central Rail Trail to connect Glenwood Road and Wachusett Street. The Town can also identify areas in need of aesthetic improvements such as planting trees or shrubs, plant planters, and landscaping improvements that do not affect the line of sight for oncoming traffic. By adding landscaping to town roads, Rutland can improve the charm of the town while preserving its environmental character. Shade trees are also helpful for lowering street temperatures on hot summer days.

Public Facilities & Services



Introduction

The Town Services and Facilities chapter of the Rutland Master Plan examines the current state of Rutland's town services and facilities and offers a plan to improve service delivery.

According to the Master Plan survey, Rutland residents are proud of the available services and facilities. Many are satisfied with services such as online resources, town events, water and sewer services, the Emergency Communications Center, the Rutland Public Library, and the Fire and Police Departments. Comparable results are seen for other town facilities. Town services and facilities are broadly considered adequate for the needs of residents.

Among the services the Town provides, the Police and Fire Departments are well-regarded by residents. More than half of the survey respondents report being very satisfied with the two departments, and around forty percent are satisfied. Only one percent and three percent of respondents reported being dissatisfied with the Fire and Police departments, respectively. The Emergency Communications Center and the Library received similar ratings; close to eighty percent of those who responded to the survey said they are at least satisfied with the services the center provides.

Most survey responders indicated their satisfaction with town services. However, survey results also show that some town services may be underused. The Town's water and sewer, library, and online resources are the least used services. Water and sewer services are not universally accessible, with many residents utilizing on-site well water and septic systems.

The Rutland Public Library, recreational facilities, parks and open spaces, and Rutland Town Hall are well-liked. Despite this, some residents think that Rutland's recreational facilities and parks need improvement, with ten percent of residents expressing dissatisfaction with both.

Prior Planning and Community Engagement Efforts

Rutland Heights Reuse Plan (1997)

The Rutland Heights Reuse Plan was created to explore opportunities for the town to reuse the land previously occupied by the old state hospital. In 1991, the hospital was closed to contain costs during an economic crisis, and the property was left vacant. In 2005, the buildings were demolished, roadways were repaved, and water and sewer pipes were upgraded to accommodate potential development.

The plan explored several potential options for reuse. This included residential use, a public school, an industrial or office park, research & development use, or a commercial site consisting of retail, recreation, and a hotel. After the reuse plan was introduced, a school was built and opened for the 1998-1999 school year. The remainder of the land sits empty awaiting development.

Rutland Master Plan (2000)

The previous Master Plan provided insights into the town services and facilities in Rutland. When the Master Plan was published, about half of Rutland's buildings were connected to the town water, with approximately 1,100 water connections, serving an estimated 1,500 dwelling units. Water quality had consistently met or exceeded state and federal standards and requirements. However, the outer reaches of the system showed low fire protection flow, and the Master Plan recommended the replacement of some water mains to prepare for future development.¹

Rutland's wastewater treatment is connected to the Upper Blackstone Treatment Plant in Millbury through Holden and Worcester. The plan recorded two Town-owned and one privately-owned sewer pumping station. The Town planned to own another station in two years. Rutland was allowed 0.6 million gallons per day, and flow allowance was scheduled to be increased to 0.63 million gallons per day following approval of a new contract by the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA). Efforts were made to prevent infiltration and inflow of water into the sewers in 1995 and 1996. In 1998, an Inflow & Infiltration Evaluation was published by Weston and Sampson Engineers, Inc. The Evaluation was conducted to ensure that Rutland's sewer system was properly rehabilitated to prevent groundwater infiltration. The report showed infiltration levels were acceptable following the sewer system rehabilitation two years prior, though engineers did find twenty-nine utility access holes with visible infiltration as well as seventy-two other utility access holes with defects.² Many households in Rutland used private septic systems, and there had not been many failures. Problems were notable in the Cool Sandy Beach area of the town, with lots established before zoning codes. As Sandy Beach turned into a year-round residential area, the septic system and water supply that was once sufficient for a summer camp failed to support the increase in wastewater. The 2000 Master Plan had three alternatives to help alleviate the issue in that area. Overall, the capacity was sufficient to serve the town but insufficient to sustain future development.³

Rutland had a small police department with a Police Chief, a Sergeant, and three patrol officers. Forty percent of police activities were motor vehicle stops, followed by responding to residential and business alarms, motor vehicle accidents, and arrests. The department responded to over four hundred calls each month, totaling over 4,800 calls each year, according to data from 1997 and 1998. The Master Plan identified police capacity as a problem as the town continued to grow. The police station was inadequate since it was built for residential use with no prison cells and insufficient storage space. Prisoners were often transported to Holden or Worcester for holding.⁴

The fire department was made up of approximately fifty-five firefighters and fifteen emergency medical personnel. The fire department had three engines, one ambulance, one tanker, one forestry truck, one rescue vehicle, and the chief's vehicle.⁵ The 2000 Master Plan did not record data regarding the number of calls the department responded to. The Town sought to create a public safety complex with a newly

¹ 2000 Rutland Master Plan.

² 2000 Rutland Master Plan. Chapter 5, p. 107-108.

³ 2000 Rutland Master Plan. Chapter 5, p. 113.

⁴ Ibid, p. 124.

⁵ Ibid, p. 125.

constructed police station and a fire headquarters. Construction was slated to begin in the first half of 2000.⁶

The Department of Public Works had ten employees and owned four dump trucks, one grader, two front-end loaders, a tractor backhoe, two pick-up trucks, a van, a municipal tractor, a brush chipper, and numerous hand tools. The town acquired a street sweeper in 1999. The Water Department shared three employees with the DPW.⁷ The town approved the construction of a DPW building of approximately 10,000 square feet, and all employees will move out of the Community Hall.⁸

Rutland schools were considered great assets for the town due to their ability to draw people to live in Rutland. Three schools served the town, with an elementary and middle school in town. The new Central Tree Middle School opened for the 1998-1999 school year and won two design awards. The Wachusett School District served students from Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Sterling, and Rutland. The school district had 4.3 students per computer, compared to the statewide average of 6.3 per computer. Students did significantly better in Rutland and the Wachusett School District than the state average. Eighty-five percent obtained proficient or advanced reader status, while the state average was sixty-eight percent. SAT and ACT scores were both higher in the region than the state average.⁹ In 1999, the town voted to join the Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational School District for the 2000 school year. Rutland schools faced limited capacity with the increasing population. The Central Tree Middle School was new in 1998, and the Naquag Elementary School expanded to accommodate a new kindergarten and special education addition. The school district also renovated facilities such as art, music, a library, and a gym. The school district was considering the reconstruction of the Wachusett High School but pushed it due to cost. The estimate was the schools would need double sessions as early as 2003-2004. Accreditation would be at risk.

The town approved the construction of a new library for \$2.69 million. The new building would be one and a half stories and approximately 15,000 square feet. The proposed new library would include a children's area, study room, conference and meeting rooms, and computer facilities. Library staff included a Director, Assistant Librarian, and a Children's Librarian.¹⁰

Recreational facilities were summarized by the 1996 Rutland Open Space and Recreation Plan. Recreational facilities included Memorial Field, Babe Ruth Field, Town pool, Rufus Putnam Park, Naquag Elementary School, Central Tree Middle School, Charles D. Marsh Field, Community Center, and Rutland State Park.¹¹ The Rutland Conservation Commission surveyed the community in 1993. It was reported that residents wanted to see a children's play area, followed by more swimming pools, athletic fields, hiking & cycling trails, tennis & basketball courts, and a recreation center. Eighty-three percent of survey respondents said they were willing to pay a fee for recreational programs. Senior needs found through the plan were affordable housing and sidewalk surfaces and accessibility issues.¹²

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, p. 126.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, p. 128.

¹⁰ Ibid, g. 131.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 133-134.

¹² Ibid.

The build-out analysis confirmed many of these needs. With a quickly growing population, Rutland would soon need more municipal services.

Rutland Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017)

One of the goals laid out in the 2017 Rutland Open Space and Recreation Plan was to provide recreation programs and facilities for all demographic groups. Objectives included:

- Maintain town-owned recreational areas
- Increase awareness and enjoyment of recreational facilities
- Provide additional recreation programs and facilities for all demographic groups
- Develop a financial plan to support recreation improvements

Past surveys showed that over eighty percent of survey respondents considered recreation important or very important. The Open Space and Recreation Plan further showed that some recreational resources are used more often than others. Memorial Playground and Recreation Fields, the Mass Central Rail Trail, Rutland State Forest, the Community Center, and the pool were used more often than Putnam Park and the Hope Ridge Conservation Area. The plan suggested raising awareness of the existence of these resources.

Rutland Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (Last Revised 2019)

The plan focuses on measures that can reduce damage to life and property brought on by natural disasters and hazards. The plan identified a very high risk for severe snowstorms, ice storms, Nor'easters, a high risk of wildfire and brushfire, and a moderate risk for severe thunderstorms, lightning, and extreme temperatures. The plan indicated that these potential disasters and hazards require robust municipal services, facilities, and utilities, especially emergency response and communication and utility infrastructure.

The plan made many recommendations that are related to town services and facilities. These recommendations include:

- Expand the capacity of the water department.
- Purchase a Utility Vehicle (UTV) to monitor forested areas with limited accessibility.
- Reinforce the Water Tower/Communications infrastructure on Wheeler Rd.
- Continue to utilize hazard warning systems and notifications.

Town Facilities/Services	Town Hall	
	Senior Center	
	Rutland Public Library	
	Town Pool	
	Cemetery	Main Street
	Cemetery	Barre Paxton Road
	Capped Landfill	
	Rutland Regional Animal Control	
Utilities	Water Towers	Wheeler Road
	Drinking Water Supply & Filtration Plant	State Hospital Road
	Electricity Williams Power Corp	Pommogussett Road
	Anaerobic Digester	Miles Road, Moulton Mill Road
	Verizon Central Access Point	
	AA Transportation	Muschopauge Road
	Bus Depot	27 Maple Ave 175 East Co. Road Route 68 East Co. Road
Sewer Pumping Stations	Miles Road	
	11 Bernard Road	
	8 Millbrook Street	
	65 Glenwood Road	
	281 Main Street	
	12 Valley View Circle	
	Charnock Hill Road	
Quabbin Aqueduct Vents	Pine Plain Road	
	Charnock Hill Road	
	Watson Lane	
	Near East co. Road, near Holden border	
Schools	Naquag Elementary/Daycare	285 Main Street
	Glenwood Elementary/Daycare	65 Glenwood Road
	Devereux	60 Miles Road
	Central Tree Middle School	281 Main
	Little Wonders Learning and Child Care Center	100 Maple Ave
	Small Steps	264 Main Street
	Daycare	Birchwood Road
	Daycare	Edith Lane
	Daycare	Valley View Circle
	Daycare	Orchard Hill Drive
	Daycare	Brintnal Drive
	Daycare	Edson Ave
	Daycare	Nancy Drive
	Daycare	Juniper Lane
	Daycare	Central Tree Road
Daycare	Wildbrook Drive	
Daycare	Grizzly Drive	
Daycare	East County Road	

Figure 1: Town Facilities. Source: Rutland Hazard Mitigation plan, 2019.

Rutland Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Report (2020)

The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan report indicated that there are concerns about Rutland’s infrastructure, including roadways, drinking water, dams, municipal buildings, town storage for tree waste, and new development. The report also named societal concerns, including communications between emergency personnel, communication between town departments and committees, communication between the town and community, the commuting population, shelters, and other vulnerable populations, as well as a growing population.¹³

The community also found many strengths during the MVP process. These strengths included good infrastructure such as transportation, road network, water supply, wastewater treatment storage, and sewer system. Societal strengths included good education and healthcare systems, an abundance of faith-based institutions, emergency response personnel, adequate communication between town departments and between the town and the community, and a shelter.¹⁴

The MVP process recommended that municipal personnel review and ensure that communications are in place among municipal personnel and community caregivers or networks and ensure that transportation is available for personnel in emergencies. The report also made recommendations to ensure various water management facilities meet the needs of residents. Specifically, the plan recommended that Rutland create a comprehensive water supply, treatment, and storage plan to ensure the availability and quality of public drinking water. The plan suggested that the town assess the sewer system, review the risks of blockage, and provide recommendations for backup power.¹⁵

The plan recommended more coordination and improved communications with parents and public and private schools to ensure the safety of children during emergencies and to prepare for future climate change impacts. Coordination should focus on aspects such as accessibility of schools, alternative power, and water sources, and building condition.¹⁶

The report recommended developing a plan that addresses the needs of vulnerable populations and ensures transportation to and from facilities in case of emergencies.¹⁷

Rutland Growth Management Study

Rutland conducted the first phase of its growth management study in 2017. The population of Rutland has grown steadily since 2010. The Census Bureau estimated that the population of Rutland has grown to more than 9,000 individuals.¹⁸ At the same time, data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) confirms that the amount of building permit applications has increased in Rutland, and the amount in recent years has averaged five to ten times those of other towns in the Rural 11

¹³ Rutland Municipal Vulnerability Plan Report.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ U.S. Census, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/rutlandtownworcestercountymassachusetts>, accessed February 27, 2023.

planning region.^{19 20} The Rural 11 region was brought together by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. The eleven communities have similar housing and economic development patterns, making them a good group for trend analysis. The eleven communities comprise Rutland, Barre, Brookfield, Oakham, Hardwick, Warren, West Brookfield, East Brookfield, New Braintree, North Brookfield, and Princeton.

The second phase of the study showed that residential growth had averaged 27 percent per decade since 1990. Housing units grew by 29 percent from 1990 to 2000 and 35 percent from 2000 to 2010. Water facilities are both reaching capacity. Over one hundred parcels have been created but not built. This data all points to the need for municipal services to expand rapidly to handle municipal population growth.²¹

Rutland Town Center Strategic Plan

The Rutland Town Center Strategic Plan showed that increasing parks, recreation, and retail spaces are a key priority for residents.²² More than half of survey respondents consider parks and open spaces most needed in town. More than 40 percent of respondents want to see more outdoor recreational facilities in the town center.²³

The plan made various recommendations regarding place-making (a community's ability to work together to shape public spaces), history, connectivity, and development and recreation. These recommendations require more municipal capacity.²⁴

Municipal Facilities Evaluation and Management Plan (2021)

The Town conducted a Municipal Facilities Evaluation and Management Plan to understand the conditions of municipal facilities. The plan specified that although many municipal facility buildings are still functional, many interior and exterior elements are in poor condition. Upgrades were done over the years to address the immediate needs of facilities, but needs have exceeded temporary upgrades. Many Town departments cannot routinely maintain facilities, requiring a more sophisticated approach to repair, replace, and upgrade buildings.

The report included the Town Hall, the Town Hall Annex, the public safety facility, the Woods Historical Building, the Public Library, the Public Works Garage, the Community Center, the Water Department, the Wood Studio, and the Pool Building & Deck House. The report found items that require immediate repair totaling about half a million dollars. Over the next five years, the plan recommended spending approximately twenty-one million dollars on maintaining and repairing municipal facilities.

The study found the following:

- Many of the Town's municipal facilities are aging, and systems are at or near the end of their life cycles. A variety of deferred repairs should be addressed in the short-term.

¹⁹ Rutland Growth Management Study Phase I.

²⁰ Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.

²¹ Rutland Growth Management Study Phase II.

²² Rutland Town Center Strategic Plan.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

- Many Town buildings have space that is unused or under-utilized. Need for a comprehensive Master Plan & Use Study for all municipal buildings.
- Currently, each department in Rutland manages their facilities.
- The Town needs to address the need to repair municipal buildings, and the Town does not have a comprehensive building capital replacement & repair plan established.
- Site upgrades are needed, especially the pavement of several locations.
- Two staff custodians are serving most of the municipal facilities. Custodial and maintenance staffing is not adequate.²⁵

2021 Pavement Management Study

Rutland conducted a Pavement Management Study in 2021 aimed at improving the quality of roadways in Rutland. In conjunction with the Capital Improvement Plan of 2021, the Pavement Management Study sought to understand roadway conditions, predict & prepare for future repairs, and better manage roadways going forward.²⁶

The study found that 15 percent of roadways in Town do not need repairs; 34 percent of roadways need routine maintenance; 30 percent need structural improvement, and 27 percent need base rehabilitation.

The study recommended pre-emptive actions to prevent roadways from deteriorating and causing further financial burden on the Town. These actions include²⁷

- Form a Pavement Management Committee.
- Post all annual pavement management segment improvements into the database as well as repair history.
- Re-inspect Arterial and Collector roadways annually; local roads every two years; dead end and cul-de-sacs every three years.
- Add any new roadways to the database as soon as the Town accepts them.
- Implement a sound departmental quality control/assurance program.
- Explore low-cost base rehabilitation treatments.

Community Input Summary

In the spring of 2021, the Rutland Master Plan team conducted a community survey to understand residents' priorities, needs, and preferences across the topics addressed in the Plan. The survey results offered relevant insights into the state of Rutland's facilities and services. Community input is a valuable resource that not only helps assess existing conditions, but also shapes the plan's focus, goals, and actionable items.

²⁵ Town of Rutland, Municipal Facilities Evaluation and Management Plan.

²⁶ Rutland Pavement Management Study.

²⁷ Ibid.

How would you rate the overall road conditions in Rutland?	Response
Good	24.18%
Adequate	50%
Poor	25.85%
Total	550 responses

Table 1: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

When it comes to road conditions in Rutland, most respondents—approximately 75%—recognize conditions as either “Good” or “Adequate.” However, slightly more than a quarter of survey respondents consider the roads in Rutland to be in “Poor” condition.

How often do you or your household use the following services and facilities?	Frequently (daily or weekly)	Occasionally (once a month)	Very rarely (once every few months)	Never	Total Responses	Usage Score
Parks and Open Spaces	33.94%	35.74%	20.68%	9.64%	498	31.83%
Town Events	12.80%	45.00%	36.00%	6.20%	500	27.10%
Town Website	11.47%	41.85%	36.42%	10.26%	497	25.57%
Library	19.39%	27.07%	33.54%	20.00%	495	24.52%
Online Bill Pay	16.27%	29.12%	23.69%	30.92%	498	21.61%
Recreational Facilities	14.31%	29.84%	25.00%	30.85%	496	21.11%
Town Hall	3.21%	20.64%	48.70%	27.45%	499	17.54%
Wachusett Regional High School	19.60%	4.60%	11.00%	64.80%	500	13.38%
Central Tree Middle School	15.29%	9.05%	9.05%	66.60%	497	12.17%
Naquag Elementary School	16.84%	5.27%	10.75%	67.14%	493	12.15%
Glenwood Elementary School	15.49%	5.03%	10.87%	68.61%	497	11.43%
Senior Center	3.60%	8.00%	14.20%	74.20%	500	7.04%
Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical School	3.02%	0.60%	3.63%	92.74%	496	2.42%

Table 2: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

Survey responses show that the most often used facilities and services are Rutland’s parks and open spaces, and the Rutland Public Library. The least used facilities and services are the senior center and the schools in the area. Although this result may change depending on the demographic of the survey respondents, the parks and open spaces are the most valued in Rutland. The usage scores, calculated by weighing “frequently,” “occasionally,” and “very rarely” as 50%, 30%, and 20%, show that the parks and open spaces received a score of 31.83%, the highest among all town facilities and services, followed by town events, the Rutland Public Library, recreational facilities, online bill pay, and the town hall.

How satisfied are you with the following town services	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	I Do Not Use These Services	Total Responses	Satisfaction Score
Town Website	12.85%	64.86%	10.84%	11.45%	498	28.05%
Town Events	27.91%	60.04%	5.62%	6.43%	498	33.09%
Online Services (bill pay and permitting)	14.43%	48.10%	9.42%	28.06%	499	23.53%
Rutland Fire Department	50.80%	39.20%	1.00%	9.00%	500	37.36%
Rutland Police Department	51.50%	38.28%	3.01%	7.21%	499	37.84%
Water and Sewer	11.22%	33.67%	20.44%	34.67%	499	19.80%
Emergency Communications Center	37.02%	42.66%	2.21%	18.11%	497	31.75%
Library Services	32.67%	42.48%	2.81%	22.04%	499	29.64%

Table 3: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

Rutland’s Fire and Police Departments are considered the most valuable town services, scoring the highest satisfaction scores. Notably, well over 80% of survey respondents are either very satisfied or satisfied with the services of the Fire and Police Departments. Together with town events, these services are also the most used in Rutland. The Rutland Public Library and the Emergency Communications Center also scored high, although many responded that they do not use these services as much. Rutland Water and Sewer received the lowest satisfaction score, even though more than 30%

of survey respondents do not use town water and sewer. Only about 45% of survey respondents are either very satisfied or satisfied with Rutland’s town water and sewer, with more than 20% of survey respondents not satisfied. Online services and the town website scored well. A small number of respondents were not satisfied with these services.

How satisfied are you with the following town facilities	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	I Do Not Use These Services	Total Responses	Satisfaction Score
Library	35.54%	42.97%	3.82%	17.67%	498	31.43%
Recreational Facilities	10.93%	56.07%	11.74%	21.26%	494	24.63%
Parks and Open Spaces	17.84%	62.12%	12.22%	7.82%	499	30.00%
Town Hall	10.48%	61.49%	5.65%	22.38%	496	24.82%
Recycling Center	9.78%	25.46%	9.16%	55.60%	491	14.36%
Senior Center	5.03%	18.31%	5.43%	71.23%	497	9.09%
Wachusett Regional High School	8.28%	24.65%	3.43%	63.64%	495	12.22%
Central Tree Middle School	8.67%	24.60%	2.62%	64.11%	496	12.24%
Bay Path Regional Vocational Tech School	3.85%	8.72%	0.20%	87.22%	493	4.58%
Glenwood Elementary School	9.11%	22.06%	2.63%	66.19%	494	11.70%
Naquag Elementary School	8.50%	24.49%	3.85%	63.16%	494	12.37%

Table 4: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

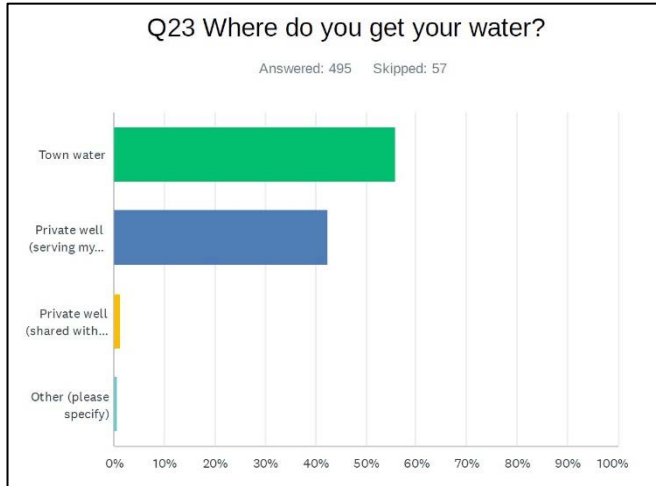
When it comes to town facilities, many survey respondents indicated that they do not use many of the facilities offered. The Rutland Public Library is well-liked among all the town facilities, with close to 90% of survey respondents indicating that they are either very satisfied or satisfied with it. Parks and open spaces in town also have a lot of support, with approximately 80% of survey respondents either very

satisfied or satisfied. However, it is also notable that 12% of respondents are not satisfied with the parks and open spaces in Rutland. An overwhelming percentage of respondents do not use the Senior Center and area schools.

Please rate your familiarity with what the following Boards and Committees’ purposes and functions area	Do not know anything about it	I have a good understanding	I talk with other residents about this frequently	Total Responses	Familiarity Score
300th Anniversary Committee	39.88%	43.56%	16.56%	489	36.32%
Ad Hoc By-law Committee	80.08%	14.17%	5.75%	487	45.44%
Agricultural Committee	63.37%	30.04%	6.58%	486	42.01%
Board of Appeals	65.98%	28.45%	5.57%	485	42.64%
Board of Assessors	51.03%	42.80%	6.17%	486	39.59%
Board of Health	38.88%	51.35%	9.77%	481	36.80%
Cable Advisory Committee	77.21%	17.86%	4.93%	487	44.95%
Capital Improvement Planning Committee	72.26%	21.74%	6.00%	483	43.85%
Conservation Commission	52.36%	38.60%	9.03%	487	39.57%
Council on Aging	55.76%	37.04%	7.20%	486	40.43%
Cultural Council	74.48%	20.33%	5.19%	482	44.38%
Earthworks Board	86.60%	8.45%	4.95%	485	46.83%
Economic Development Commission	73.91%	19.88%	6.21%	483	44.16%
Finance Committee	54.94%	39.89%	6.17%	486	40.67%
Fourth of July Committee	25.72%	56.17%	18.11%	486	33.33%
Growth Management Steering Committee	70.60%	23.81%	5.59%	483	43.56%
Historical Commission	50.82%	40.95%	8.23%	486	39.34%
Library Board of Trustees	60.04%	32.71%	7.25%	483	41.28%
Master Plan Steering Committee	58.64%	34.98%	6.38%	486	41.09%
Planning Board	50.41%	39.67%	9.92%	484	39.09%
Rutland Development & Industrial Commission	72.52%	20.04%	7.44%	484	43.76%
Select Board	46.74%	40.63%	12.63%	475	38.09%

Table 5: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

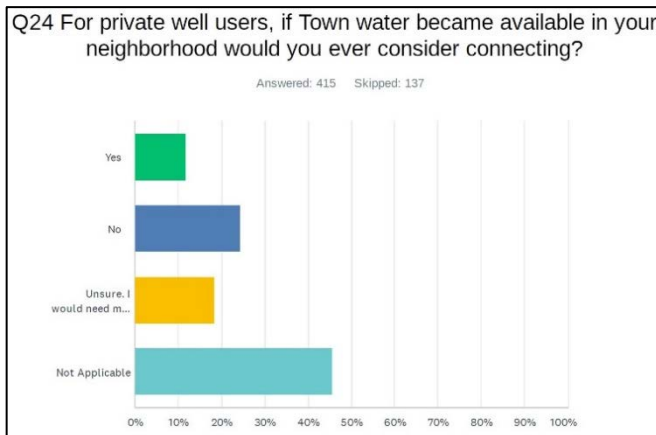
When asked about where residents get their water, more than half reported that their properties are connected to the Town water, while around 42% of respondents reported that they use their private wells that only serve their own property. Only about one percent of survey respondents reported sharing wells with others in the area. There are 495 survey respondents.



Where do you get your water?	Responses
Town Water	55.76%
Private Well (serving my property only)	42.42%
Private Well (shared with others)	1.21%
Other	0.61%

Table 6: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

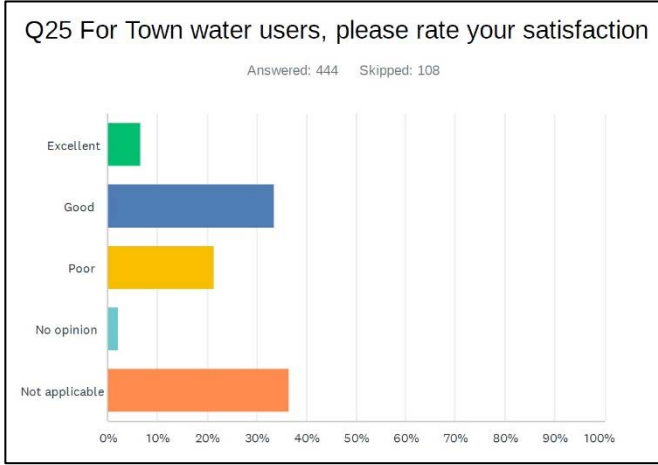
While 45% of survey respondents reported that town water connection does not apply to them, almost 12% of survey respondents indicated that they would connect to the town water should it become available to them. However, close to a quarter of the respondents said they would not consider connecting to the town water even if it is available to them. Finally, around 20% of survey respondents are unsure about whether they would consider the town water and would need more information.



For private well users, if Town water became available in your neighborhood, would you ever consider connecting?	Responses
Yes	11.81%
No	24.34%
Unsure. I would need more information first	18.31%
Not Applicable	45.54%

Table 7: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

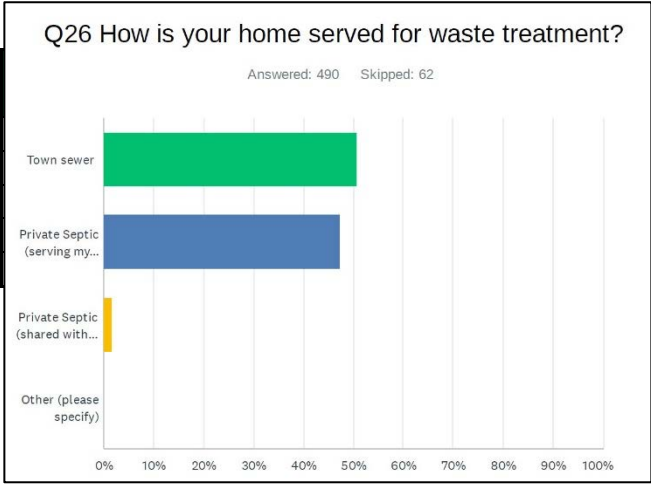
About 44.24% of survey respondents do not use Town water. Of those who are connected to town water, most are satisfied with the service, with most selected either “excellent” or “good,” while more than 30% are dissatisfied with the service. This question received 444 responses.



For Town water users, please rate your satisfaction	Responses
Excellent	6.53%
Good	33.56%
Poor	21.40%
No opinion	2.03%
Not applicable	36.49%

Table 8: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

While slightly over half of all survey respondents are connected to the Town sewer, close to half use private septic systems that serve their own properties. Only about 1.6% of individuals share their private septic systems with other properties. This question received 490 responses.



How is your home served for waste treatment	Responses
Town sewer	50.82%
Private Septic (serving my home only)	47.35%
Private Septic (shared with others)	1.63%
Other	0.20%

Table 9: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

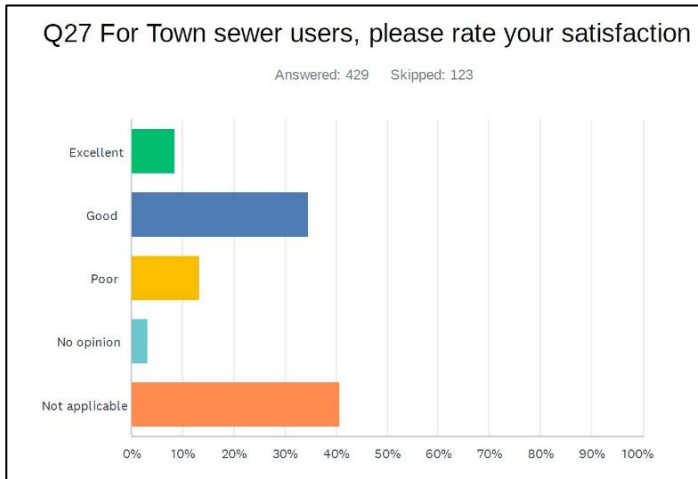
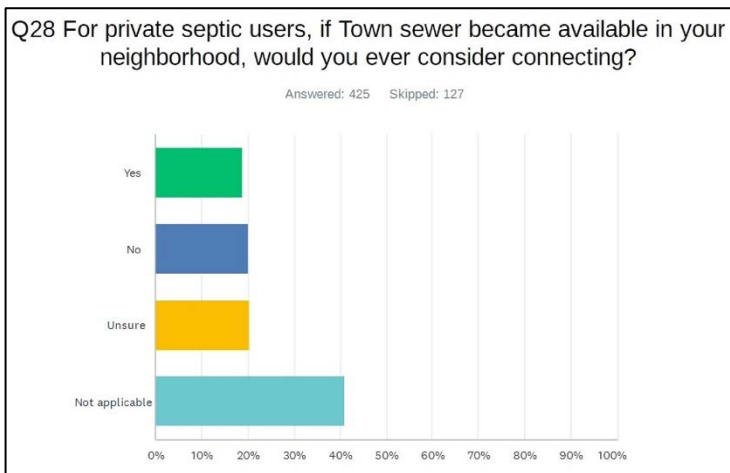


Table 10: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

Most of those who use Town sewer responded that the Town sewer services are either excellent or good. However, more than a quarter of individuals are dissatisfied with the Town sewer services. This question received 429 responses.

When asked about whether individuals would consider connecting to the town sewer should it become available, close to 41% of survey respondents indicated that it is not applicable, while only close to 20% answered affirmatively. About 40% of respondents either indicated that they would not consider it, or that they were unsure. This question received 425 responses.



For private septic users, if Town sewer became available in your neighborhood, would you ever consider connecting?	Responses
Yes	18.82%
No	20.00%
Unsure	20.24%
Not applicable	40.94%

Table 11: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

Did the quality of the school district and local schools factor into your decision to live in Rutland?	Responses
Yes	65.64%
No	25.31%
No opinion	9.05%

Schools are crucial in Rutland as more than 65% of survey respondents indicated that the school district and quality of local schools are important. A quarter responded that schools are not important. This question received 486 responses.

Table 12: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

When considering elementary school programs, academic programs are considered the most important among all the programs, followed by special education programs, and arts programs. The least important programs, according to this survey, are athletic programs and language immersion programs.

How important do you think the following Elementary School programs are?	Very important	Important	Not important	Not Applicable	Total Responses	Importance Score
Academic programs	80.43%	9.46%	0.43%	9.68%	465	43.14%
Athletic programs	47.53%	33.76%	8.39%	10.32%	465	35.57%
Special education programs	63.36%	24.57%	1.29%	10.78%	464	39.31%
Arts programs	54.53%	31.68%	3.66%	10.13%	464	37.50%
Music programs	53.90%	31.82%	4.11%	10.17%	462	37.32%
Bus transportation	53.90%	31.82%	3.68%	10.61%	462	37.23%
Language Immersion Programs	33.84%	40.13%	13.67%	12.36%	461	31.69%

Table 13: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

When considering middle school programs, academic programs are again considered as the most important, followed by special education, and arts programs. The least important programs are athletic programs and language immersion programs.

How important do you think the following Middle School programs are?	Very important	Important	Not important	Not Applicable	Total Responses	Importance Score
Academic programs	79.65%	7.79%	0.22%	12.34%	462	42.21%
Athletic programs	48.71%	33.62%	5.60%	12.07%	464	35.56%
Special education programs	62.07%	23.92%	1.29%	12.72%	464	38.47%
Arts programs	52.92%	31.53%	3.24%	12.31%	463	36.57%
Music programs	52.59%	31.90%	3.02%	12.50%	464	36.47%
Bus transportation	52.16%	30.52%	4.76%	12.55%	462	36.19%
Language Immersion Programs	36.38%	40.09%	9.80%	13.73%	459	32.18%

Table 14: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

When considering high school programs, survey respondents again indicated that academic programs are the most important, followed by vocation training programs, scoring a forty-one percent importance score. Other programs considered important are special education and athletic programs, which were slightly different from responses for middle school and elementary school. The least important programs are language immersion programs.

How important do you think the following High School programs are?	Very important	Important	Not important	Not Applicable	Total Responses	Importance Score
Academic programs	82.15%	6.45%	0.22%	11.18%	465	43.05%
Athletic programs	56.56%	27.31%	4.95%	11.18%	465	37.46%
Vocational programs	71.18%	17.42%	0.65%	10.75%	465	40.95%
Special education programs	62.63%	24.41%	1.51%	11.45%	463	38.94%
Arts programs	51.84%	33.05%	3.67%	11.45%	463	36.57%
Music programs	52.16%	33.19%	3.45%	11.21%	464	36.73%
Bus transportation	53.68%	29.22%	6.28%	10.82%	462	36.86%
Language Immersion Programs	40.79%	38.38%	8.77%	12.06%	456	33.66%

Table 15: Survey analysis. Source: Rutland Community Survey, CMRPC, 2022.

Existing Conditions

The Town of Rutland has approximately 83,635 square feet of municipal facilities, and the overall condition of the Town’s municipal facilities ranges from Good to Fair.²⁸ The following section details existing conditions in Rutland town services and facilities. It presents a point-in-time snapshot of governance, staffing, facilities, utilities, and infrastructure.

Governance and Administration

Rutland became a township on February 23, 1713, and it was incorporated in 1722. The town has a five-member Select Board, a Town Administrator, and an open town meeting form of government, a form of the historic form of democratic governance system retained by many small New England towns.²⁹ This style of government gives taxpayers and voters the power to directly affect decision-making in their communities. The Select Board is Rutland’s executive branch and handles making and implementing policies and procedures. A Town Administrator is appointed by the Select Board to manage many departments that serve the town and advise on other matters. In 2020, according to United States Decennial Census, the Town of Rutland is home to 9,049 individuals and more than 6,000 voters.³⁰

Town Processes and Procedures

Rutland has a Capital Improvement Planning Committee, whose mission is to provide the Town with recommendations that will enable the Town to make planned and consistent decisions for its capital needs now and into the future. The framework will allow the recommendation and scheduling of funding sources to keep the tax rate stable, balance debt service and operating expenditures, find the available debt capacity and acceptable debt service levels, and maximize intergovernmental aid for capital expenditures. The Rutland Capital Improvement Planning Committee consists of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and three members.

²⁸ Town of Rutland, Municipal Facilities Evaluation and Management Plan.

²⁹ Town of Rutland, www.townofrutland.org, accessed February 27, 2023.

³⁰ U.S. Census, <https://data.census.gov/>, accessed February 27, 2023.

In 2021, the Town conducted the FY22 Capital Project Requests and Funding Sources. The requests over the next five years totaled more than sixteen million dollars.

The Rutland Fire Department has requested the most amount of funding over the next five years, totaling more than ten million dollars, followed by Public Safety Dispatch and the Highway Administration. Many departments are requesting facility upgrades and replacements. These include vehicles, building elements, equipment, building repairs, and construction of new facilities.³¹

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Grand Total
Town Administrator			\$25,000			\$25,000
Information Technology	\$28,000	\$16,200	\$10,400	\$44,200	\$69,400	\$168,200
Town Clerk						
Police Department				\$26,849.68		\$26,849.68
Fire Department	\$2,250,000	\$65,000	\$8,050,000	\$60,000		\$10,425,000
Ambulance		\$300,000			\$90,000	\$390,000
Animal Control	\$45,000					\$45,000
Public Safety Dispatch	\$406,351.09	\$477,601.09		\$766,351.09	\$396,351.09	\$2,046,654.36
Highway Administration	\$140,000	\$373,000	\$125,000	\$310,000	\$140,000	\$1,088,000
Library	\$110,000	\$110,000	\$52,000	\$45,000	\$55,000	\$372,000
Community Center	\$132,500	\$237,250	\$151,168.55	\$146,078.51	\$50,000	\$716,997.06
Recreation	\$25,000	\$20,000				\$45,000
Cable Studio	\$72,700	\$64,000	\$78,000		\$150,000	\$364,700
Sewer	\$10,000		\$150,000			\$160,000
Water	\$10,000	\$40,000		\$50,000	\$150,000	\$250,000
Grand Total	\$3,229,551.09	\$1,703,051.09	\$8,641,568.55	\$1,448,479.28	\$1,100,751.09	\$16,123,401.10

Table 16. Town of Rutland. Five-year Capital Improvement Plan, 2021.

Community Preservation Act (CPA)

Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.³² Many communities in the CMRPC region have adopted CPA. These communities include West Boylston, Shrewsbury, Grafton, Northborough, Upton, Hopedale, Northbridge, Mendon, and Sturbridge. Many communities in Western Massachusetts have adopted the CPA. In Massachusetts, 189 cities and towns have joined in adopting CPA. Rutland has not adopted the CPA.

³¹ Town of Rutland, Five-year Capital Improvement Requests and Funding Sources, 2021.

³² Community Preservation Act, <https://www.communitypreservation.org/about>, accessed February 27, 2023.

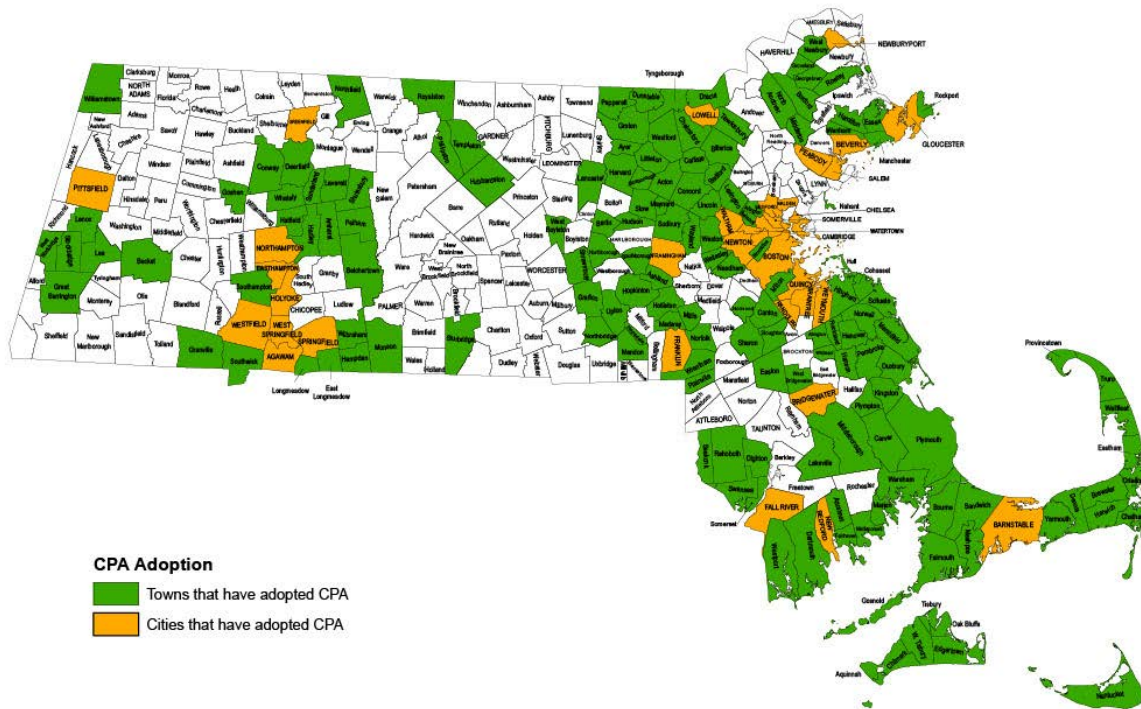


Figure 1: Community Preservation Act Adoption. Source: CPA Adoption Coalition.

Fiscal Overview

The Town of Rutland suffered during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Many departments in Rutland had to cut their budget for the Fiscal Year 2022. The Selectboard budget was cut by more than four thousand dollars, representing about twenty percent of its budget. Other departments, divisions, boards, and committees that experienced budget cuts in FY22 are the Town Administrator, Board of Assessors, Tax Title Foreclosure, Town Clerk, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Agriculture, Development & Industrial Commission, Public Building Maintenance, Town Report, Rutland Police Department, Rutland Fire Department, Ambulance, Building Inspector, Plumbing Inspector, Animal Control Officer, Education, Highway Administrator, Highway Construction/Maintenance, Snow and Ice Control, Parks and Recreation, Board of Health, Council on Aging, Rutland Public Library, Historical Commission, Retirement of Debt Principal, Health Insurance. In total, the budget cuts amount to more than nine hundred thousand dollars.

Departments, Boards, and Committees

The below information was obtained from the Town of Rutland:

Board of Assessors
Board of Health
Building Department
Council on Aging
Department of Public Works
Rutland Fire Department
Planning and Community Department
Recreation
Rutland Free Public Library
Rutland Heights
Rutland Police Department
Rutland Regional Emergency Communication Center
Town Accountant
Town Administrator
Town Clerk
Town Treasurer/Collector
Veterans Service
Wachusett Area Schools

300th Anniversary Committee	The 300th Anniversary Committee has ten members and is charged with planning activities that celebrate Rutland's tercentennial.
Ad Hoc By-law Committee	The Ad Hoc By-law Committee has five members. The Committee handles reviewing any ad-hoc by-laws.
Agricultural Commission	The Agricultural Commission was established in 2006. The Commission strives to increase public awareness of local agriculture and the positive impact it has on Rutland, assists farmers with programs that will help designate their land as farmland, as well as mediate issues that may arise between a farm and neighbors.
Board of Appeals	The Board of Appeals shall have the power provided for under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40A, Section 14, to hear and decide appeals for individuals seeking an exception, Variance, or Special Permit in which any person aggrieved because of their inability to obtain a permit from any administrative official, board, or building inspector of the Town of Rutland, or any ordinance or by-law adopted there under.
Cable Advisory Committee	The Cable Advisory Committee (CAC), a permanent committee created by the Select Board, consists of five members appointed to staggered 3-year terms, beginning with the 2021 appointments.

Capital Improvement Planning Committee	The mission of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee is to provide the Town of Rutland with recommendations that will enable the Town to make planned and consistent decisions for the capital projects and improvements of its capital needs now and into the future. This framework will allow the recommendation and scheduling of funding sources to keep the tax rate stable, balance debt service and operating expenditures, determine the available debt capacity and acceptable debt service levels, and maximize intergovernmental aid for capital expenditures.
Council on Aging	Providing programming, services, and resources to older adults and the elderly. Our mission is to help all mature adults socially connect in their community and be linked to all the resources they need to maintain independence and age in place.
Conservation Commission	As the municipal focal point for environmental protection, Conservation Commissions were given responsibility in 1972 for administering the Wetlands Protection Act (G.L. Ch. 131 §40). Thus, the Commission serves the community in a regulatory and conservation capacity.
Cultural Council	The Rutland Cultural Council (RCC) promotes excellence, access, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences to improve the quality of life for all Rutland residents and contributes to the economic vitality of our community.
Earthworks Board	The Earthworks Board writes and enforces by-laws and regulations that ensure the safe and effective movement of earth that is imported into the Town, exported from the Town, and moved within the Town's borders.
Economic Development Commission	The Economic Development Commission is charged with enhancing economic development in Rutland and pursuing economic development opportunities, investments, employment opportunities, state, and federal assistance.
Finance Committee	The mission of the Finance Committee is to effectively and efficiently safeguard and account for the Town's resources, to provide financial-based services that offer all Town departments the ability to deliver their programs and offer financial support to the organization and community.
Fourth of July Committee	The Fourth of July Committee is a ten-member committee charged with planning events to celebrate July 4th.
Growth Management Steering Committee	The Committee is responsible for managing growth activities in Rutland.
Historical Commission	The Historical Commission is a seven-member entity charged with preserving the historic resources and heritage of Rutland.
Library Board of Trustees	The Rutland Free Public Library provides information and related services to the people of Rutland and other towns.
Master Plan Steering Committee	A Master Plan for communities is a document required by the Commonwealth. Each Plan must have a Goals and Policies Statement which names the goals and policies of the municipality for its future growth and development. Each community shall conduct an interactive public process to determine community values & goals, and identify development patterns consistent with these goals.
Planning Board	The Planning Board is responsible for managing long-range community planning, and for reviewing, deciding, and making recommendations on development proposals.
Rutland Development & Industrial Commission	Charged with reviewing development and industrial activities

Select Board

The Select Board serves as a town's chief executive body. They are responsible for the town government's general operations. They are authorized to enter contracts on behalf of the municipality. Select Board members develop policies as directed by town meetings, and the relevant department head, board, or officer within the community is responsible for administering those policies.

Table 17: Rutland Boards & Committees. Source: Town of Rutland.

Municipal Facilities and Services

Rutland Fire Department

The Rutland Fire Department has thirteen full-time employees as of the Fall of 2022. They include a Fire Chief, Fire Captain, two Lieutenants, seven firefighters/paramedics, and two firefighters/EMTs. The department has nineteen on-call employees. These include an on-call Fire Captain, a Lieutenant, five firefighter/paramedics, seven firefighter/EMTs, three on-call firefighters, and two on-call EMTs. The Deputy Chief position in the department has been vacant.

Staff	Full-time (FT), Part-time (PT), or On-call
Chief	1 FT
Deputy Chief	Vacant as of Fall 2022
Captain	1 FT, 1 On-call
Lieutenant	2 FT, 1 On-call
Firefighter	3 On-call
Firefighter/Paramedic	7 FT, 5 On-call
Firefighter/EMT	2 FT, 7 On-call
EMT	2 On-call

Table 28. Rutland Fire Department. Source: Town of Rutland.

The below table summarizes the vehicles, equipment, and facilities owned by the Rutland Fire Department. The Department owns two Fire Engines, a Ladder, a Tanker, three Ambulances, and other firefighting and rescue vehicles and equipment. The table also shows the conditions they are currently in, their target rebuilding or expansion date, and the cost for replacement or expansion. The Rutland Fire Department has an ISO rating of 4/4³³ and provides Advanced Life Support 24/7.

Most vehicles are in either Excellent or Good condition. However, the Department found five vehicles or equipment in fair condition, including a Fire Engine, a Ladder, an Ambulance, a Breathing Air Compressor, and the fire station. The Ladder dates to 1999, and the fire station dates to 1975, with the last major improvement occurring in 2003.

³³ The first number refers to the classification of properties within five road miles of a fire station and within 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply. The second number, with either the X or Y designation, applies to properties within five road miles of a fire station but beyond 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply.

The Fire Station located at 240 Main Street is in poor condition. The 5,824 square feet building includes 4,200 square feet of apparatus spaces and 1,624 square feet of office and meeting spaces. The building is not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Built in 1975, the structure had an addition of a police station in 2003, but the main building was not improved in the process. The building was then sold to the public as a new public safety building, which currently services five towns within the region. While the department has grown tremendously and has constant staffing, there is no space for sleeping quarters, nor are there separate gender bathrooms and showers, with staff currently sharing these spaces. The department has found that the apparatus space is too small for modern equipment and there is a need to keep items separated to avoid contamination and to reduce the risk of cancer.³⁴

The department found that all subdivisions built outside the hydrant system were done without any rural water supply plan, with no fire ponds or cisterns. As Rutland continues to grow, and with the sale of the Rutland Heights property, the Town needs more firefighting capabilities and is planning to increase the number of full-time employees from twelve to eighteen by 2025.

Equipment or Facilities	Year Built Or acquired	Last Major Improvement	Condition (1)	Extent of Use (2)	Target Date Rebuilding Expansion	Replacement Cost
ENGINE 1	2008	2021	Fair	Moderate	2033	\$750,000
ENGINE 2	2012	n/a	Good	Moderate	2037	\$850,000
LADDER	1999	2020	Fair	Moderate	2023	\$1,450,000
TANKER	2006	2017	Excellent	Light	2036	\$475,000
AMBULANCE 1	2013	2018	Fair	Moderate	2027	\$360,000
AMBULANCE 2	2018	n/a	Good	Heavy	2031	\$390,000
AMBULANCE 3	2022	n/a	Excellent	Moderate	2035	\$420,000
SQUAD 1	2019	n/a	Excellent	Moderate	2039	\$280,000
CAR 1	2019	n/a	Excellent	Heavy	2025	\$85,000
SCBA UNITS – 28	2013	n/a	Good	Moderate	2028	\$280,000
LP-15 CARDIAC MONITORS – 3	2016	n/a	Good	Heavy	2026	\$90,000
BREATHING AIR COMPRESSOR	1999	n/a	Fair	Moderate	2023	\$95,000
HYDRAULIC RESCUE TOOLS	2021	n/a	Excellent	Moderate	2036	\$80,000
RESCUE BOAT	2019	n/a	Excellent	Light	2039	\$30,000
LUCAS CPR MACHINE	2020	n/a	Excellent	Moderate	2026	\$60,000
STATION	1975	2003	Fair	Heavy	2023	\$1,000,000
RANGER UTV	2017	n/a	Excellent	Moderate	2037	TBD
CAR 2	2018	n/a	Excellent	Heavy	2028	95,000

Table 39. Rutland Fire Department Equipment. Source: Town of Rutland.

Rutland Police Department

The Rutland Police Department employs fifteen full-time, and five part-time, employees. Two employees are shared with other towns or departments. Full-time and part-time employees include the Chief of

³⁴ The information in the section is obtained from Fire Chief, Seth Knipe, of the Rutland Fire Department.

Police, a Sergeant, thirteen Patrol Officers, a Detective, an Administrative Assistant that is shared with the Rutland Fire Department, and an Animal Control Officer that is shared with the Towns of Barre, New Braintree, and Princeton. Of the thirteen full-time and part-time Patrol Officers, one officer is assigned as a K-9 officer, and another is assigned as School Resource Officer.

Staff	Full-time (FT), Part-time (PT), or On-call
Chief of Police	1 FT
Sergeant	3 FT
Patrol Officer	8 FT, 5 PT (1 assigned as K-9 Officer, 1 assigned as School Resource Office)
Detective	1 FT
Administrative Assistant	1 FT (32 hours per week, other 8 hours shared with the Rutland Fire Department)
Animal Control Officer	1 FT (Shared with Barre, New Braintree, and Princeton)

Table 49. Rutland Police Department. Source: Town of Rutland.

The Rutland Police Department owns two facilities. The Rutland Public Safety Complex and the Rutland Animal Control Facility. The Rutland Public Safety Complex, built in 2001 and located at 242 Main Street, is shared with the Rutland Fire Department and Emergency Dispatch. The building is in fair condition and ADA-compliant. However, the space provided by this building is insufficient as it is shared by three departments that have grown over the past two decades. With the expected growth, there is not sufficient space for working and storage. There exist security and confidentiality concerns regarding police records, evidence, and prisoner safety since the space is shared.

Rutland Animal Control is at 17 Pommogussett Road and was built in 2010. The building is in the back of the Department of Public Works yard, is four hundred square feet in size, and is categorized as fair condition.

The Rutland Police Department owns thirteen vehicles, with three vehicles currently being replaced. The table summarizes Police vehicles and equipment. The Department considers itself underfunded and understaffed compared to similar towns.

Vehicles	Number of said vehicles	Replacement Notes
2021 Ford Explorer	1	None
2017 Ford Explorer	3	Currently In Progress of Replacing two
2019 Ford Taurus	1	None
2019 Ford Explorer	2	None
2012 Ford Fusion	1	None
2013 Ford Fusion	1	None
2022 Harley Davidson Motorcycle	1	None
2011 Ford Transit Connect Van	1	Currently In Progress of Replacement
2013 Kristi Trailer	1	None
2020 Matrix Trailer	1	None

Table 20. Rutland Police Department Equipment. Source: Town of Rutland.

Council on Aging

The Council on Aging provides programs, services, and resources for older adults. The Council currently has two part-time employees. The Director works twenty-three hours per week, and a part-time outreach worker works sixteen hours per week. The Council does not own any vehicles. The Town contracts a van company to take older adults to Worcester for medical appointments. The van is only available five days a week with limited capacity.

The Council uses one facility located at 53 Glenwood Road. The building is in very poor condition. Over the years, temporary improvements have been made, but the building requires major improvements such as the roof, siding, plumbing, and windows. The community center has a main room for major programs, a kitchen, a salon, and two additional rooms.

The Council offers services that include a podiatry nurse visit once a month, a haircut service once a month, and an audiologist visit each month. The Council offers activities such as card games, watercolor classes, presentations, yoga classes, and musical programs. The Council offers resources to those who need insurance, brokers, and other resources. The Council has expressed interest in expanding programs, but staffing is a significant issue. The Council would benefit from having full-time employees instead of part-time.

The Council on Aging was appropriated \$58,646 in 2022, of which more than \$51,000 is salary. This only leaves the Council with about \$7,000 to manage its programs. The Council is significantly underfunded and understaffed. Over the years, the Council on Aging and the staff have become the lifeline of the older adult community in Rutland. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Council called every older adult in town to check in and build vaccine awareness.

The short-term goals of the Council are:

1. Improving the staffing issue of the Council.
2. Establish reliable transportation programs for older adults.
3. Bolster current programs and expand programs, services, and resources for older adults, such as health fairs (four annually), floral classes, boutique fairs, and exercise classes.

The long-term goals of the Council are:

1. Having a nice facility, indicating major improvements to the current facility.

Recreation Department

The Recreation Department has twenty-nine part-time employees. Most of the employees work in the summer when the pool and summer camps are in operation. The table below summarizes all Rutland Recreation Department employees.

The Department does not own any vehicles. It owns filtration and sanitation systems for 130,000- and 7,000-gallon pools. The large pool chemical control system was replaced, and the sand filtered serviced in 2018. The large pool pump is at least 15 years of age and is beyond its expected useful life.

Staff	Full-time (FT), Part-time (PT), or On-call
Recreation Director	1 PT (25 hours per week)
Activity Coordinators & Leaders	4 PT (10 – 20 hours per week during school years)
Aquatic Director, Lifeguards, Water Safety Instructors	8 PT (20 – 40 hours per week during summers)
Pool House Staff	4 PT (20 – 40 hours per week during summers)
Camp Director	1 PT (40 hours per week during summers)
Assistant Director	1 PT (40 hours per week during summers)
Camp Counselor	10 PT (40 hours per week during summers)

Table 21. Rutland Recreation Department. Source: Town of Rutland.

The Recreation Department owns the Town pool located at 250 Main Street. The facility is in poor condition. It has been shown that there are no outdoor showers that would encourage people to shower before using the pool. There are no changing areas other than limited shower stalls inside the bathrooms. There is no storage room for equipment such as umbrellas, pool vacuums, extension poles, rakes, and buckets.

The drainage is also very poor at the pool house, resulting in runoff from the parking lot, including sand, silt, and debris collecting on the pool deck and apron around the building, breaching the doors, and causing interior and exterior damage on a year-round basis. The electrical service is insufficient, forcing the use of extension cords and power strips. There is no internet service, so no credit card payment can be accepted. Registration and membership sales cannot be managed at the pool, nor can pool staff perform basic administrative tasks such as making check-in sheets or lesson plans.

The Recreation Department also owns an office located at 250 Main Street. The office is in fair condition but does not have enough space for employees. The Department indicated that there is no storage space for paperwork generated by the programs the Department runs or sufficient storage space for equipment.

The Recreation Department has been asked to expand programs for all ages, interests, and abilities, as well as summer camps, after-school programs, and snow days. The programs hosted by the Recreation Department fill up quickly. With limited spaces and staffing capacity, the department is at the limit of what it can offer. The goals of the Recreation Department would be holistic programming focused on community connections and personal well-being for all. With an increasing demand from families and a growing older adult population, the Recreation Department wants to provide more programs such as:

1. Activities and events for people of multiple generations.
2. Early childhood programs such as parent and children music, and exercise programs.
3. Safe places and spaces for youths and teens, such as interest-based clubs.
4. Programs for school-age children during school vacations and snow days.
5. Spaces for other community-based organizations that enrich the fabric of the Rutland community, such as Scouts and sports organizations to come together.

Rutland Public Library

The Rutland Public Library has one full-time Library Director and nine part-time staff members. The part-time employees include an Assistant Director, a Children’s Librarian, and seven Library Aides. The below table summarizes all the staff and their status.

Staff	Full-time (FT), Part-time (PT), or On-call
Library Director	1 FT
Assistant Director	1 PT
Children’s Librarian	1 PT
Library Aides	7 PT (approximately 35 hours per week)

Table 22. Rutland Public Library. Source: Town of Rutland.

The Rutland Public Library, located at 280 Main Street, is in good condition. The building is 16,000 square feet, was built in 2000, is ADA-compliant, and has sufficient capacity. The library reported that servers in the library need to be replaced every four to five years. The library owns seventeen computers, and these should be upgraded every one to three years. Furniture in the meeting spaces is worn and should be replaced, which include about one hundred chairs and eight tables. Additionally, the furniture in the library should be replaced.

The library hosts a variety of activities for residents of Rutland.

- Storytime for children twice a week.
- Book discussion groups monthly.
- Knitting groups weekly.
- Other events throughout the year.

The library's priority in 2022 is to repair the rooftop units and the existing structure holding the HVAC units. The library hopes to repaint the exterior of the building and redo the carpets. In 2023, the library hopes to replace the gutters, a heating unit, and to have a new door into the large meeting space. In 2024, the library is scheduled to replace another heating unit, redo the floor of the book return room, and redo the ceiling tiles on the main floor. In 2025, the library hopes to replace the last heating unit and the front and rear entry doors. Lastly, in 2026, the library wishes to prioritize replacing the heating unit on the lower level of the library, repairing the entryway walk at the lower level, and replacing the outdoor lighting.

As the town continues to grow, the library expects to grow its services to better serve the residents of Rutland.

Rutland Emergency Communications Center (RECC)

The Rutland Emergency Communications Center’s mission is to provide the communities it serves with exceptional emergency services. The RECC conducts quarterly Operations Meetings with police and fire chiefs from its five communities. Each year over the past five years, the Center has received an average of 65,000 to 78,000 calls.

The Rutland Emergency Communications Center has seven full-time employees and nine part-time employees. Rutland has one full-time Communications Director, one Deputy Communications Director,

two Communications Supervisors, and three Communications Dispatchers. The department has nine part-time Communications Dispatchers. Additionally, this staff holds Communication Training Officers and Public Education Liaison positions. The below table summarizes RECC’s staff and statuses.

Staff	Full-time (FT), Part-time (PT), or On-call
Communications Director	1 FT
Deputy Communications Director	1 FT
Communications Supervisor	2 FT
Communications Dispatchers	3 FT, 9 PT
Communications Training Officer	3 (secondary roles above personnel hold)
Public Education Liaison	2 (secondary roles above personnel hold)

Table 23. Rutland Emergency Communications Center. Source: Town of Rutland.

RECC owns a 2010 Ford Explorer, serving as a take-home vehicle for the Communications Director to respond to emergencies. The vehicle is also used to reach the Center’s multiple communications towers that are found deep in the woods. The Center currently has plans to replace the vehicle in 2023. Additionally, the Center owns a wide array of equipment in Rutland, which is summarized in the below table. RECC also owns equipment in other towns it serves.

RECC owns two facilities in Rutland located at 242 Main Street. The building is in good condition and was built in 2002. It is not ADA compliant and does not have sufficient capacity due to the Center outgrowing the spaces provided. RECC indicated that its growth is limited until more space can be provided. The department also owns the Rutland Wheeler Rd Communications Tower located at 45 Wheeler Road. The tower is in good condition and was built in 2021.

RECC has eight EMS units serving the five communities, and four out of five communities provide Advanced Life Support services, with the other providing Basic Life Support services. The Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA) does not expire and is renewed every July. RECC has expressed interest in expanding the IMA. However, the center needs more space to support more communities.

Common Name	Quantity	Value
19” Relay Rack	2	\$800.00
Power Supply	2	\$1,400.00
Battery	5	\$2,750.00
Fuse Panel / PMU	2	\$1,800.00
Police Repeater W/ TM	1	\$27,500.00
Fire Repeater W/ TM	1	\$27,500.00
TAC1 Repeater	1	\$18,500.00
Switch / Router	2	\$1,598.00
IP Console Gateway (Fire)	1	\$8,900.00
IP Console Gateway (PD)	1	\$8,900.00
IP Console Gateway (TAC1)	1	\$950.00
Pull-out KVM tray	1	\$1,000.00
System Server	1	\$2,250.00
Site Monitor	1	\$900.00
COMBINER/MULTICOUPLER	1	\$15,000.00
MW LINK 1 (OAKHAM)	1	\$12,500.00

MW LINK 2 (BARRE)	1	\$15,000.00
UPS	1	\$200.00
UHF TO LB X-BAND REPEATER	1	\$10,250.00
BACKUP RADIOS	3	\$3,750.00
ZETRON 4010	3	\$36,000.00
LOGGING CALL RECORDER	1	\$12,000.00
DISTRICT 6 RADIO	1	\$7,500.00
LPS7 RADIO	1	\$9,250.00
RADIO TOWER	1	\$170,000.00
Tier 2 Scout Plus Hardware Audio Package Console	3	\$47,250.15
PC mini tower with dual NICs	3	\$5,201.25
23" LED touch screen for PC console - 16x9 format - Full HD	3	\$5,893.80
Dual Speaker Kit, Scout Media Workstation Plus	3	\$2,302.80
PTT Desk Microphone, Scout Media Workstation Plus	3	\$1,758.45
Single PTT footswitch, Scout Media Workstation Plus	3	\$353.40
Redundant VPGate Software License	1	\$15,750.05
Industrial 1U Computer with Windows including Solid State hard	2	\$9,581.70
1U LCD Folding Display, for Relay Rack. Includes Keyboard	1	\$2,919.35
Radio Controller, VoIP, 2 Ports, 12VDC input	8	\$17,290.00
Connector for OUTPOST Radio port that supports RJ45 cable for 2/4W tone	10	\$494.00
License to add MDC1200 ANI capability to an OUTPOST	14	\$6,822.90
Input-Output Package for Scout and DSPatchNET	1	\$4,145.00
24 Port Gigabit Switch with 4 SFP Ports	2	\$4,715.80
Interface Existing TM9100 base to Avtec Outpost	4	\$3,917.80
Complete 6W Headset, Plantronics Supra Model H251 Noise Canceling Microphone	3	\$886.35
Headset top, Plantronics Supra HW251N monaural with noise canceling microphone	4	\$414.20
Headset/handset jack box (single jack), Scout Media Workstation Plug	3	\$1,462.05
4 port Mini SIP Console for use with ScoutLink. Comes with a DC power adapter	2	\$2,604.00
Scout EX Console - Tier 2 Scout Enterprise Console	1	\$15,765.25
PTT Desk Microphone, Scout Media Workstation USB	1	\$586.15

Table 24. Emergency Communications Center Equipment. Source: Five-year Capital Improvement Plan, 2021.

Rutland Building Department

The Rutland Building Department has two part-time employees and two on-call employees. The Building Inspector and Assistant are part-time employees, and there are two on-call inspectors. The Department does not own any vehicle or equipment. The building inspector currently uses his personal vehicle for inspections. The Department owns one facility at 246 Main Street in the Annex Building. The facility is in fair condition and is sufficient.

Department of Public Works (Highway Division, Water and Sewer)

The Rutland Highway Division has around three full-time field workers, two full-time mechanics, two full-time workers who clean the building, a full-time clerk, and a full-time Director of Public Works. The below table summarizes Rutland Highway Division employees and statuses. In the Water and Sewer Division, there is a Chief Water Operator, three Water and Equipment Operator, and two Sewer, and Equipment Operator.

Staff	Full-time (FT), Part-time (PT), or On-call
Director of Public Works	1 FT
Operations Supervisor	1 FT
Chief Water Operator	1 FT
Highway Fieldworkers	3 FT
Mechanics	2 FT
Custodial	2 FT
Water and Equipment Operator	3 FT
Sewer and Equipment Operator	2 FT
Administrative Assistant	1 PT (22 hours per week)
Clerk	1 PT (12 hours per week)
DPW Administration	1 PT (18 hours per week)

Table 25. Department of Public Works. Source: Town of Rutland.

The Department of Public Works owns a garage in fair condition with sufficient capacity. The Department also owns a landfill. Current unmet needs are for two unfunded positions that would respectively oversee the day-to-day buildings and grounds maintenance, and park management.

The Water and Sewer Division owns approximately twenty-five miles of pipes and four pump stations, all in fair condition. Both water and sewer are well within capacity. However, Rutland only draws water from one reservoir. Not having a backup source increases the risk of disruption of services should anything happen to the reservoir. Finding a backup source is one of the most urgent goals of the department. The Department expressed interest in having more budget to expand the Department, better manage town buildings and roads, and meet stormwater management requirements.

Assignment (W/S = water and sewer, HW = Highway Division)	Veh. Num ber	Veh. Make/Model	Year	Description	Condition	Fully depreciated? yes/no	Planned years of service	Estimated Remaining years of service
W/S & HW	HG	F-250	2020	SUV/ staff vehicle	good	yes	10	5
HW	1	*International/7400	2003	5 Ton dump W/sander & Plow	good	yes	20	5
HW	2	International/7400	2004	5 Ton dump W/sander & Plow	good	yes	20	4-6
HW	3	*International/2554	1998	5 Ton dump W/sander & Plow	fair	yes	20	1-5
HW	4	*International/2554	2000	5 Ton dump W/sander & Plow	fair	yes	20	2
HW	5	International/2554	2002	5 Ton dump W/sander & Plow	good	yes	20	5
HW & W/S	6	Volvo/L70B	1995	Front end Loader	fair	yes	25	3
RR&F	7	Ford/F-350	2017	PU W/Plow	excellent	no	15	10
ST&W/S	8	John Deere/410E	1998	4WD Backhoe	fair	yes	20	0-1
HW&F	9	Volvo/L70E	2005	Front-end Loader with Plow	good	yes	20	5-8
HW	10	Ford/F-550	2005	Large PU with sander & Plow	good	yes	15	5-8
HW&W/S	11	John Deere/544	2015	Front-end Loader with Plow	excellent	no	20	15-18
HW	12	Ford/F-450	2015	Large PU with sander & Plow	excellent	no	15	10-12
ST & HW	13	Elgin/Pelican SE	1999	Street Sweeper	fair	yes	20	1-5
HW& W/S	14	Mack/CV713	2006	Ten-Wheeler W/ Sander and Plow	good	yes	20	8-10
	15	Trackless/MT	1998	Sidewalk Maintenance Unit	surplus	kept on as spare		0-1
ST & HW	16	Champion/730A	1989	Road Grader	good	yes	25	2-5
W/S	17	International/7400	2012	5 Ton dump W/sander & Plow	excellent	no	20	10-12
HW	18	Ford/F-550	2005	Large PU with sander & Plow	good	yes	15	3-5
Build	20	GMC/G2500 - Van	2004	Service Van buildings	good	yes	12	1-5
F	22	Freightliner Bucket	2015	Bucket Truck/ Shared	excellent	no	15	15-18
F	23	Vemeer Chipper	2014	chipper trailer/shared	excellent	no	20	15-20
HWFC	24	John Deere/Tractor	2000	tractor	good	yes	20	3-5
HW	25	Ford/F-350	2006	1 ton P/U with plow	good	yes	15	3-5
	Water r 1	Ford/E-250 - Van	2006	service van	surplus			0
W/S	Water r	Water Pick up		3/4 Ton PU w/ plow	future	n/a	n/a	n/a
W/S		Skid Steer	2011	Bobcat style unit	excellent	yes	20	12-15
HWFC	Tract or	Ford/3000	1974	tractor/ lawn cutting	fair	yes	20	1-5
F	BrBan	Brush Bandit	1998	trailer mounted chipper	fair	yes	20	1-5
HW& W/S		Utility Trailer	2012	trailer	good	yes	12	10-15
HW& W/S		Utility Trailer	2012	trailer	good	yes	12	10-15
HW& W/S		Utility Trailer	2012	trailer	good	yes	12	10-15
HW& W/S		Construction Mixer	2003	mixer	good	yes	20	5-8

HW& W/S		Construction Trailer	2002	trailer	good	yes	12	10-15
HW& W/S		Homemade Trailer	2013	trailer	good	no	15	12-15
W/S	Sewer 21	GMC/2500 - Van	2004	Service Van	good	yes	12	1-5
ST&W/S	Sewer	Sewer Jet Utility Trailer	2000	Trailer mounted Sewer flusher	good	yes	20	3-5
ST&W/S	Sewer 19	Ford/R82	1995	vacuum flusher	fair	yes	25	3-5
HW		Holder tractor	2010	Sidewalk Maintenance Unit	excellent	yes	20	10-15
W/S	Water	Ford 550 P/U	2018	4x4 utility body with plow	excellent	no	15	15-18
W/S	Water	Box Trailer	2019	equipment trailer	excellent	no	20	15-20

Table 26. Department of Public Works Equipment. Source: Town of Rutland.

Town Hall Services

Rutland Town Hall is located at 250 Main Street. Built in 1939, the building is in poor condition. The space is insufficient since only the main floor is open to the public due to ADA compliance issues. The Town cannot afford to install an elevator, which could provide access to more space. The Recreation Department does not have any dedicated space for programming, and employees are forced to go to various locations.

The Town also owns the Town Hall Annex at 246 Main Street. The building is in poor condition and is not ADA-compliant. Although the space is sufficient for the offices it currently holds, the configuration is not ideal for the public, and the building is cluttered and disorganized.

The Town Hall does not have any vehicles specific to its departments. The equipment used is standard office equipment such as printers, computers, and postage machines. The copiers and postage machine were recently replaced, but there are desktop computers that should be upgraded. Town Hall plans to purchase a plotter for use by the planning department. The below table summarizes Town Hall services, staff statuses, and their duties.

Staff	Full-time (FT), Part-time (PT), or On-call	Duties
Town Administrator	FT	Management of staff, budget oversight, attending to all town matters.
Executive Assistant	FT	Assists Town Administrator and other staff with daily tasks, engage with residents and vendors, process payroll & bills.
Town Planner	FT	Serves as Community Development Coordinator, assists residents and the Planning Board.
Inspectional Services	PT	Process building and related permits, zoning enforcement, conduct inspections.
Assessor and Assistant Assessor	FT	Assess properties for tax value, maintain tax records, and assist residents with abatements and exemptions.

Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk	FT	Assist residents with general inquiries, process vital records, manage local and state elections, maintain town and resident records.
Recreation Department	PT	Runs programming for adults and children, oversees town pool, coordinates holiday and other town events for the public.
Safe Place Director	PT	Runs the town's before and after school care program and assists the Recreation Director as needed.
Treasurer/Collector and Assistant Treasurer/Collector	FT	Process payroll & insurance benefits for employees, process payments received for taxes and bills, manage & oversee town borrowing, manage tax title properties.
Health Agent	PT	Conducts inspections on behalf of the Board of Health for food establishments, local businesses, health concerns or complaints, and issues proper permitting as needed.

Table 27. Town Hall Services. Source: Town of Rutland.

Wachusett Regional School District

The School District has sixteen classroom teachers, three specialists, a nurse, a counselor, three cafeteria workers, four special education teachers, four custodians, a school psychologist, an SLP, and sixteen support staff. The staff is shared throughout the school district. The School District does not own any vehicles.

The School District owns two facilities in Rutland. The playground was built in 2006 and is in poor condition. Glenwood Elementary School, located on Glenwood Road, was built in 2006, is in good condition, and is ADA-compliant. The District reported that the schools are not near capacity. The District is having issues with transportation due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Recommendations

Goal 1: Ensure town facilities are at their optimal state to serve Rutland residents.

Objective: Ensure town buildings' needs are addressed promptly.

Action Item: Identify and prioritize immediate needs.

The Town of Rutland took the initiative to create a Capital Improvement Plan in 2021. The document has been used to identify the needs that are a priority so that a means of funding can be found. The Town has a Capital Planning Improvement Committee that works with the Town Administrator on Capital needs. The plan has identified more items and priorities than the Town could afford. Town departments need a significant amount of help to secure funding for the identified projects. In surveys distributed and returned by departments across the Town, many facilities and buildings are identified as in fair or even good condition, but have items in need of repair. Given the financial situation of the Town, Rutland can benefit from continuing to prioritize and fund items that need immediate attention. These items include

identifying buildings that are in poor and very poor condition and services that need immediate expansion or help.

The buildings and facilities in poor and very poor conditions are summarized in the table below.

Buildings and facilities	Conditions (poor, very poor)	Location
Fire Station	Poor	240 Main Street
Community Center	Very Poor	53 Glenwood Rd
Animal Control (Dog Pound)	Poor	Back of Department of Public Works Yard
Town Pool	Poor	250 Main Street
Town Hall	Poor	250 Main Street

Table 28. Condition of Town facilities. Source: Town of Rutland.

Objective: Ensure the Town budget reflects the needs of Rutland residents.

Action Item: Experiment with participatory budgeting and planning.

A planning process to identify how Rutland’s money is allocated could help Rutland establish a purview of its fiscal situation. While the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan of 2021 established items and needs across Town departments, it did not identify funding sources. Involving citizens in a Participatory Budgeting and Planning process can help further identify resident needs. While departmental needs are important, resident needs and priorities will dictate where and how the tax dollars could be spent. Citizens may also bring more ideas to fund capital improvement projects to the table in this process.

The Participatory Budgeting and Planning process typically involves five stages over the course of a year.³⁵ These stages are

- a) Designing the process
- b) Brainstorming ideas
- c) Develop proposals
- d) Vote
- e) And funding the winning projects

Action Item: Identify Town departments that are currently severely underfunded through inter-departmental communication.

Several departments in Rutland are severely underfunded. Rutland will benefit from identifying departments that need more support. There are many ways to prioritize which departments need it. Roundtable discussions and focus groups are the simplest yet most effective ways of discussing budgets, priorities, and needs. Surveys could serve as another tool to help identify departmental needs. These meetings, focus groups, or workshops will also promote inter-departmental communication and are a crucial part of building consensus.

³⁵ Participatory Budgeting Project, <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-is-pb/>, accessed February 27, 2023.

Objective: Improve Rutland’s financial situation.

Action Item: Develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan.³⁶

The Town could start an economic development strategic planning process. Economic development is vital to bringing more tax dollars and wealth into Rutland. An economic development plan typically includes an economic vision, mission, goals of the community, strategies to obtain more economic development opportunities, and actionable items. The community should be at the center of this plan. Economic development cannot happen without the support of the community. Many economic development opportunities slip away because municipalities do not identify and plan for them.

This collaborative planning process brings together town departments, councils, and services, as well as the community, to envision the future of Rutland. An economic development plan can identify opportunities for Rutland to bring more economic development to the Town, be it more commercial land use and development, supporting existing businesses, growing the city’s industrial or agricultural cluster, eco-tourism, or state and federal grants to bolster economic development programs.³⁷

Rutland could also be innovative and more collaborative by inviting other nearby towns such as Holden, Paxton, Oakham, Hubbardston, and Princeton to take part in a regional economic development strategic planning process that can benefit more in the region and complement each other’s disadvantages.

Objective: Ensure all Town buildings and facilities are used to their full potential.

Action Item: Address ADA issues in the Town Hall.

The Town Hall is currently not used to its full potential. All public-facing functions are found only on the first floor of the Town Hall due to ADA concerns. Addressing ADA can potentially free up much-needed spaces for town departments such, as the Recreation Department, which currently does not have its own space and is forced to use various other locations.

Goal 2: Ensure all relevant plans and action items are implemented.

Objective: Plan implementation and benchmark review.

Action Item: Identify action items that are still relevant but not completed.

Rutland has undertaken several planning processes recently. These include:

- Rutland Heights Reuse Plan (1997)
- Rutland Master Plan (2000)
- Rutland Open Space and Recreation Plan (2017)
- Rutland Hazard Mitigation Plan (Last revised 2019)
- Rutland Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (2020)
- Rutland Growth Management Study

³⁶ The Municipal Research and Services Center, <https://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Economic-Development/Economic-Development-Basics/Planning-for-Economic-Development.aspx#:~:text=The%20economic%20development%20plan%20provides,projects%20to%20improve%20the%20economy>, accessed February 27, 2023.

³⁷ City of Tumwater Economic Development Plan 2010, <https://www.ci.tumwater.wa.us/home/showdocument?id=384>, accessed February 27, 2023.

- Rutland Town Center Strategic Plan
- Rutland Facilities Evaluation and Management Plan (2021)
- Rutland Capital Improvement Plan (2021)
- Rutland Pavement Management Study (2021)

While the Town has completed and partially completed many action items identified in earlier plans, such as the 2000 Master Plan, many other action items have not been completed. A Benchmark Review to identify actions that are still relevant to Rutland and their completion status will help implement the plans Rutland has already done. It is important to note that the completion of many action items may be relevant to the completion of other action items, and thus it is crucial to identify which should be prioritized.

Action Item: Ensure Town departments are on course to repair and upgrade their buildings.

While many Town departments have plans to repair and upgrade their buildings and facilities, numerous projects have been delayed due to contractor or funding issues. Rutland should set up a process to track project statuses to ensure that Rutland buildings and facilities are at their optimal state to serve Rutland residents, and to see that these projects are done promptly.

Goal 3: Ensure and expand access to quality town services for all Rutland residents.

Objective: Improve and expand programs for all.

Action Item: Expand the current shuttle program.

The shuttle program for Rutland’s older adults only runs from 10 AM to 2 PM. Access is limited, and the Council on Aging has expressed interest in improving the shuttle program. With Rutland’s large older adult population, the Town will significantly benefit from an expanded shuttle program that can provide additional services to older adults in Rutland.

Action Item: Engage in conversations with other nearby towns to have a collaborative shuttle program.

Rutland should consider a shared-van program with adjacent communities if the budget cannot support an individual van program in Rutland. The van program should have expanded hours and the capacity to bring older adults to more locations.

Action Item: Find additional funding for Council on Aging to expand programs and services.

The Council on Aging provides excellent programs and services to Rutland’s older adult population. The Council on Aging needs to secure more support while it continues to improve services and programs for Rutland’s population. This includes repairing and upgrading buildings and expanding its recreational and transportation programs.

Action Item: Support the Recreation Department with its program expansion.

The Recreation Department has expressed interest in expanding children’s programming, such as music, sports, and after-school programs. These programs are crucial to improving the mental and physical health of Rutland’s youths. A successful Recreation Department may also attract more residents to Rutland, which would improve Rutland’s financial situation.

Objective: Ensure all Town departments have adequate spaces.

Action Item: Find additional office space for the Recreation Department.

Rutland reported that the Recreation Department currently does not have its own working space and is often moving between several locations. The Recreation Department will benefit from having its own permanent working space. The Town could consider clearing up spaces in the Town Hall for the Department working space, although the public-facing functions should remain on the first floor.

Objective: Ensure public safety remains a priority for the Town.

Action Item: Start planning for the expansion of the public safety building.

The public safety complex is insufficient given continued population growth. The Police Department is interested in hiring more staff over the next few years. The RECC also reported that the agency could not grow until more spaces can be added.

Objective: Ensure Rutland Roadways are properly maintained.

Action Item: Support the Department of Public Works to hire more staff members.

The Department of Public Works has expressed interest in hiring more staff members to maintain buildings and roadways in Rutland. The Town should look toward the Pavement Management Study to identify needs and add more personnel to ensure that the roadways do not continue to deteriorate and incur more hefty costs. Many Town buildings, facilities, and grounds need more maintenance. The Town will benefit from having more personnel to work on supporting Rutland's buildings, so they continue to provide services to Rutland residents.



Implementation

Implementation Plans determine whether Master Plans are put into action. Accountable Implementation— defining responsibilities for carrying out the plan, along with metrics for evaluating progress in achieving desired outcomes— will ensure that the 2023 Rutland Master is an effective tool for policymaking and investments.

Recognizing that this Master Plan was developed as a guide to aid decision-making, implementation progress should not be evaluated based on the simple accomplishment of all action items in the Implementation Plan; any efforts that advance the policies, vision, or goals of the Master Plan should be considered a success.

In service of effective and accountable implementation, the Town should consider establishing a Master Plan Implementation Committee. Consisting of a dedicated group of stakeholders, the Committee should work to ensure the following best practices in implementing comprehensive Master Plans:

- Establish implementation indicators, benchmarks, and targets.
- Regularly evaluate and report on implementation, keeping officials and the community apprised of progress.
- Routinely update the Implementation Matrix.
- Work across departments to coordinate efforts; communicate updates to regional organizations to tap into external capacity and funding.
- Connect plan implementation to budgeting and capital improvement plans. Ensure that those who prepare such documents are familiar with the Master Plan Implementation Plan; align the documents.

The above recommendations will help the Implementation Committee keep the town up-to-date on progress and needs, and ensure that future town planning aligns with this Master Plan.

The following representatives are typically present on the Implementation Committees:

- Select Board Member
- Planning Board Member
- Capital Planning Committee Member
- Finance Committee Member
- Town Official
- Conservation, Recreation, Historical Commission, et al.

The Committee should be a manageable size in order to support quorum. It should meet regularly and be connected to decision-making bodies such as the Select Board and/or Finance Committee. It should consider establishing a series of initial goals over the first one to two years. One approach would be to identify, in consultation with other Town officials and boards, at least one goal/action item in the plan to be pursued by each of the relevant existing Boards and Committees in Town. This type of program would allow for multiple actions to be explored simultaneously, especially where staff is limited.

Representation

The Select Board, Capital Planning Committee, Planning Board and other boards and committees will need to work together with Town staff and residents to use this Master Plan as a guidance and policy document.

Education

It will be important for Town Meeting members, municipal staff, and leaders to be aware of the Master Plan, and understand that many future actions and funding requests may be generated out of its goals and actions.

Accountability

A mechanism for reporting progress should be established. The Town should track progress, continue to identify funding sources, and identify barriers to implementation. Coordinating and grouping actions will support effectiveness. The Town should benchmark regularly and provide a report on progress to the Select Board and/or Town Meeting.

Adaptability

Planning is a dynamic process, and priorities shift over time. The Town's capacity to implement the Plan may be change with financial status, economy, and other factors. The implementation matrix is not intended to be "set in stone." The Plan offers background and guidance but requires interpretation, investigation, and subsequent action.

Transportation		Priority (L, M, H)	Time to Completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low- 0-50k Low- 50-100k Med- 100-250k High: 250k- 500k Major capital item: 500k+	Responsible Parties	Resources/ funding sources	Progress
Goal 1: Maintain and improve the condition of Rutland's existing transportation network.							
Objective	Continue to invest in maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges.						
Action item	Proactively seek federal and state aid funding and other sources of transportation funding for improvements on eligible roadways, especially for Wachusett Street (East County Road to Princeton Town Line), Pleasantdale Road (Barre Paxton Road to Ware Road), Pommogussett Road (Sassawanna Road to Moulton Mill Road).	H	5 years	High	TA, HWY	MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces; Town Meeting	
Action item	Work with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission to develop a list of transportation projects to be placed on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). At a minimum, this list should include corridor intersection upgrades, safety improvements and intersection re-alignment.	M	1 year	Very Low	TA, HWY	CMRPC technical assistance via DLTA; Town Staff	
Action item	Develop a town-wide mechanism for the creation of an off-site infrastructure fund that would be used to assist the Department of Public Works with selecting and funding off-site improvements at Town owned intersections, roadways, and corridors.	M	Ongoing	Medium	TA, DPW, HWY	Town Staff, Town Meeting	
Objective	Continue to invest in maintenance, improvement, and construction of sidewalks, crosswalks, and signals.						
Action item	Complete subsequent Complete Streets Prioritization Projects.	M	5 years	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces	
Action item	Evaluate the need to conduct a sidewalk, crosswalk, and signals survey program to identify areas of needed improvement and funding needs.	M	1 year	Very Low	TA, HWY, DPW	CMRPC technical assistance via DLTA; Town Staff	
Action item	Continue communication with Massachusetts Department of Transportation to fix poor condition sidewalk on Main Street between Naquag Elementary School and Rufus Putnam Lodge(State Road).	M	Ongoing	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, Town Staff	
Action item	Evaluate sidewalk conditions on Pommogussett Road, Pleasantdale Road, and Glenwood Road.	M	1 year	Very Low	TA, HWY, DPW	CMRPC technical assistance via DLTA; MassDOT, Town Staff	
Action item	Implement recommendations from Tighe & Bond's analyzed traffic and safety conditions at the intersection of East County Road at Wachusett Street.	M	5 years	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, Town Staff	
Objective	Ensure that sidewalks, crosswalks, and signals are accessible to all of Rutland's residents.						
Action item	Evaluate the need to conduct a sidewalk and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramp survey program to help determine sidewalk/ramp maintenance funding needs.	M	1 year	Low	TA, HWY, DPW	ADA Improvement Grant; AARP grants; MA Healthy Aging Collaborative grants; MA Council on Aging Grants	
Action item	Fix poor ramps at Maple Avenue & Highland Park Road, Maple Avenue & Inwood Road, Maple Avenue & Philips Road.	H	2 years	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	ADA Improvement Grant; AARP grants; MA Healthy Aging Collaborative grants; MA Council on Aging Grants	
Action item	Design ramps at sidewalks with no ramp: Glenwood Road & Wachusett Road, Glenwood Road & Wheeler Road, Pommogussett Road & Colonial Village Walkway, Maple Avenue & Breezy Lane, Maple Avenue & Inwood Road.	H	2 years	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	ADA Improvement Grant; AARP grants; MA Healthy Aging Collaborative grants; MA Council on Aging Grants	
Objective	Establish a long-term decision-making framework for transportation investments.						
Action item	Implement a comprehensive Transportation Asset Management System.		Ongoing	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	CMRPC technical assistance via DLTA	
Goal 2: Increase the safety of Rutland's roads for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.							
Objective	Continue communication with Massachusetts Department of Transportation to remedy accident cluster at intersection of Route 122 (Barre Paxton Road) and Pleasantdale Road through HSIP funds.						

Action item	Produce a program of projects or strategies to reduce identified safety problems.	M	Ongoing	Low	TA, HWY, DPW	Town Staff	
Action item	Develop, implement, and update an SHSP.	H	2 years	Low	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, Town Staff	
Action item	Evaluate the SHSP on a regular basis to receive HSIP funds.	H	Ongoing	Low	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, Town Staff	
Objective	Identify additional crash clusters and problematic areas for opportunities to improve motor vehicle, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety.						
Action item	Incorporate additional signage for safety purposes, such as specific yellow diamond warning signs.	H	2 years	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Assess and implement as warranted the use of reflectorized pavement markings and/or reflectors embedded in road pavement.	H	2 years	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Utilize traffic calming measures (e.g., narrowing travel lanes, increasing sidewalk widths, adding on-street parking, adding landscaping, speed bumps (especially on Prescott Street and near schools), curb extensions, roadway curves, and other measures. Measure can be piloted through use of jersey barriers, painted curb extensions, planters, and other removable/low-cost installations.	H	5 years	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces	
Action item	Improve public awareness of the rules of the road for all transportation modes through public education efforts and improved signage.	H	2 years	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Increase the number and prominence of speed limit signs in appropriate areas.	H	2 years	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Objective	Facilitate safe use of crosswalks, especially at pedestrian vehicle crash clusters and in areas frequented by children.						
Action item	Ensure that on-street parking spaces do not block the line of sight from crosswalks or for turning vehicles, especially proximate to crosswalks.	L	Ongoing	Low	TA, PB, HWY	MassDOT, MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Review signage at crosswalks and consider solar-powered pedestrian-activated alert flashers.	L	2 years	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Install textured pavement treatments in crosswalks to better identify and differentiate pedestrian crosswalks from the travel way.	M	2 years	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Assess the need for additional crosswalks. Where determined necessary, explore the utility of permanent or temporary raised crosswalks and/or inverse cuts that create a slight change in elevation of the travel way to reduce excessive speeds.	M	2 years	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces	
Action item	Improve street lighting, especially over crosswalks.	M	Ongoing	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Objective	Continue communication with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to relieve congestion in other heavily trafficked areas on state owned roads.						
Action item	Assess congestion on Pommogussett Road & Main Street.	H	Ongoing	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Assess critical intersections and their encountered peak hour delay.	H	Ongoing	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Maintain/improve all signalized traffic control, signage, and pavement markings.	M	Ongoing	Medium	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Selectively trim any overgrown vegetation that is hindering sight lines to vehicles, signs, or traffic signals.	L	Ongoing	Low	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT, MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Consider enhancing bicycle and pedestrian safety where needed.	H	Ongoing	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Reconfigured travel lanes at intersections where appropriate and feasible.	H	Ongoing	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Goal 3: Mitigate negative impacts resulting from the transportation system.							
Objective	Encourage widespread use of environmentally friendly transportation practices.						
Action item	Install no-idling signs in areas where vehicles frequently idle, such as schools, convenience stations, and municipal facilities.	L	2 years	Medium	TA	Town Staff; MassDOT and CMRPC for technical assistance	
Action item	Install electric vehicle charging stations at public buildings.	M	5 years	Major Capital Item	TA, DPW	DOER Green Communities, MDEP, MassEVIP Grant Program, MassEVIP Public	

Objective	Work towards greening the municipal vehicle fleet and vehicle practices.						
Action item	Adopt a fuel-efficient vehicle policy for town-owned vehicles so that replacement vehicles are more energy efficient.	M	2 years	Major Capital Item	TA	Town Staff; MassDOT and CMRPC for technical assistance	
Action item	Adopt an anti-idling vehicle policy for town-owned vehicles.	H	1 year	Low	TA	Town Staff; MassDOT and CMRPC for technical assistance	
Action item	Assess and upgrade electrical infrastructure to meet growing need of electric vehicles.	M	5 years	Major Capital Item	HWY, PB, TP	DOER Green Communities, MDEP, MassEVIP Grant Program, MassEVIP Public	
Goal 4: Providing transportation alternatives to car travel.							
Objective	Identify and explore alternative mobility options for Rutland residents.						
Action item	Explore alternatives to car travel such as ride share, paratransit, and carpool.	L	Ongoing	Low	HWY, PB, TP	CMRPC; MassDOT	
Action item	Explore expansion of Elderbus service and additional transportation options for handicapped residents.	M	5 years	High/Major Capital Item	TA, COA	CMRPC; MassDOT, WRTA, ARP grants; MA Healthy Aging Collaborative grants; MA	
Action item	Explore expansion of Mass Central Rail Trail to connect to more core streets.	M	Ongoing	High/Major Capital Item	P&R, LUC, TP;	Town Staff; MassTrails; CMRPC for technical assistance	
Goal 5: Improve the Town's streetscape and sidewalks to allow more pedestrians and bicycle access to businesses.							
Objective	Identify and close sidewalk gaps in pedestrian access to businesses and amenities						
Action item	Identify arterial and collector streets with excess shoulder to determine how excess space could be better utilized.	M	2 years	Low	TA, HWY, TP	CMRPC; MassDOT	
Action item	Revise zoning in appropriate areas to require sidewalks, bike path connectors, bicycle parking and bike amenities in new developments.	H	1 year	Low	PB, TP	CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Analyze where bicycle racks can be placed around Rutland's town center, namely around Memorial Field and the Dunkin Donuts.	M	1 year	Low	PB, TP	CMRPC; MassDOT	
Action item	Analyze cycling infrastructure potential around Four Corners and the Rutland Plaza Area.	M	2 years	Low	TA, HWY, TP	CMRPC; MassDOT	
Objective	Review the recommendations from the 2018 Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) Regional Bicycle Plan and adopt the plan.						
Action item	Ensure that municipal staff are aware of the recommendations outlined in this plan.	H	Ongoing	Low	TA	Town Staff	
Action item	Include bicycle network planning into the Town's planning process, particularly land use development and transportation plans.	H	Ongoing	Low	TA, PB, TP, HWY	CMRPC Technical Assistance, Town Staff	
Goal 6: Take a proactive approach to emerging transportation technologies, trends, and issues.							
Objective	Stay apprised of transportation trends and plan accordingly.						
Action item	Work with state and regional organizations to approach emergent issues in a collective manner.	M	Ongoing	Low		MassDOT, CMRPC, WRTA	
Action item	Consider and assess the impact of distribution facilities from a regional or subregional perspective.	M	1 year	Low	PB, TP	CMRPC	
Action item	Partner with National Grid as the electric provider to accommodate anticipated increase of demand on the electrical grid as a result of home and vehicle electrification.	M	Ongoing	High/Major Capital Item	TA, DPW	National Grid	
Action item	Work with businesses and other organizations to identify areas of potential collaboration for developing and funding electric vehicle infrastructure.	M	Ongoing	High/Major Capital Item	TA, DPW, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC	
Action item	Anticipate changes in parking requirements resulting from autonomous vehicles. Evaluate the potential infrastructure needed to accommodate such changes.	M	5 years	Low	PB, TP	CMRPC	
Action item	Monitor trends in drone usage for delivery and other services.	L	Ongoing	Low	TA	CMRPC	
Action item	Pursue a study to analyze additional parking opportunities in the town center area.	H	1 year	Low	TA, HWY, DPW, TP, PB	CMRPC, MassDOT	

Goal 7: Better connect the Town's roads, streets, and sidewalks to be consistent with the Town's small-town and environmental character.

Objective	Improve and expand upon existing recreational trail systems in Rutland, namely by the Central Mass Rail Trail.						
Action item	Explore expanding the Mass Central Rail Trail to connect to downtown businesses and Glenwood Road & Wachusett Street.	M	Ongoing	High/Major Capital Item	P&R, LUC, TP;	Town Staff, Neighboring Towns, MassTrails; CMRPC for technical assistance	
Objective	Through public input, identify areas of roadways particularly in need of aesthetic improvements.						
Action item	Determine methods, funding, and timeline for visual improvements, such as planting trees or shrubs, plant planters, or other landscaping improvements that do not affect line of sight for oncoming traffic.	M	2 years	Medium	TA, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces	
Action item	Focus visual improvement efforts on "gateway" intersections or entry points.	M	2 years	Medium	TA, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Objective	Coordinate with Town Departments to incorporate green infrastructure into planned road improvements.						
Action item	Implement recommendations from Tighe & Bond's analyzed traffic and safety conditions at the intersection of East County Road & Wachusett Street.	M	5 years	High	TA, HWY, DPW	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared	
Action item	Pursue study to analyze additional parking opportunities in the town center area.	M	1 year	Very Low	TA, PB	CMRPC, MassDOT	
Land Use		Priority (L, M, H)	Time to Completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low- 0-50k Low- 50-100k Med- 100-250k High: 250k- 500k Major capital item: 500k+	Responsible Parties	Resources	Progress

Goal 1: Encourage development that is in harmony with the community's rural New England character and heritage.

Objective	Prioritize higher densities in targeted locations to help mitigate the sprawl of expected future growth						
Action Item	Proactively adopt zoning changes that provide opportunities for a diversity of housing types to be built for people of all ages	H	Ongoing	Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Allow flag lots with a reduced frontage requirement by special permit to allow these property owners to use the rear part of their property, rather than requiring a subdivision process for one single-family home	M	6-12 Months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Concentrate new development around existing infrastructure to preserve natural resources and limit the service provision costs.	H	Ongoing	Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Consider conducting more studies on the capacity of public water and sewer lines.	H	1 year	Low	water Commission, SB, PB	Community One Stop for Growth	
Action Item	Resolve legal ambiguities with new platforms for small-scale shared use such as Airbnb, Uber, and Lyft to safely benefit from their use.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Review the Sign Bylaw and update it as needed, such as clarifying what criteria the Town uses to review sign design.	M	6-12 Months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Consider whether electronic message centers should be allowed and, if so, how they should be defined and what criteria should be used to regulate them.	M	6-12 Months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Establish zoning to facilitate Healthy Aging while simultaneously improving the quality of life for other generations of residents.	M	1 year	Low	PB, TP, ZBA, COA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Retain and expand access to agricultural and recreational land in Rutland.						
Action Item	Incentivize LID and Open Space bylaws.	H	6-12 Months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	assess potential changes to LID and Open Space to achieve these goals.	H	6-12 Months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	

Goal 2: Identify key areas for specific types of land use within the Town and create mechanisms to encourage such uses in those areas.

Objective	Focus future commercial development in the Four Corners, Rutland Town Center, North Rutland, and Rutland Heights areas to maintain Rutland's rural and suburban character outside those areas.						
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Action item	Conduct a comprehensive Zoning Bylaw review to ensure that zoning is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan and other strategic plans	H	1 year	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Community One Stop, EEA PAG, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Explore opportunities to expand The Village Center zone in the Four Corners area south along Route 56 towards Paxton or explore opportunities for major road frontage to be zoned as business and light industrial, in line with existing districts along that area of Route 56	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, Community One Stop, EEA PAG, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Investigate the possibility of establishing small-scale commercial or mixed-use zoning overlay along designated portions of route 68, while preserving residential options.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Complete an assessment of available or suitable land to facilitate green energy in a manner appropriate to the vision of the Town.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, DOER	
Action item	Identify desirable zoning options for clean energy that meets the requirements of the Massachusetts Green Communities program.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, DOER	
Objective	Preserve historic structures and historic areas of Town.						
Action item	Implement zoning to preserve historic structures and historic areas of Town.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Preservation Mass	
Goal 3: Develop strategies to preserve agricultural land, support the existing agricultural community and encourage the growth of local agricultural and agro-business.							
Objective	Promote development in commercial cores to focus development outside agricultural areas.						
Action item	Acquire undeveloped land for preservation or priority land development.	M	Ongoing	High to Major Capital Item	PB, TP, ZBA, AC	Town Staff, Community Preservation Act	
Objective	Preserve undeveloped land for agriculture and low impact outdoor recreation inside the R-60 district.						
Action item	Assess the utility of utilizing Community Preservation Act funds to preserve undeveloped land for agriculture and low-impact outdoor recreation in the R-60 District.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	SB, TM, TP	Town Staff	
Objective	Promote agricultural development along Route 68.						
Action item	Revisit the implementation of LID, Stormwater, and Open Space options for subdivision development, and Conservation Commission bylaw updates/ reappraisals to continue land conservation efforts	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA, CC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Goal 4: Concentrate new development around existing traffic infrastructure to protect natural resources and improve walkability.							
Objective	Manage traffic in Town Center area through physical and policy changes.						
Action item	Implement transverse rumble strips, reduced speed limits, traffic lights, and/or eventual new layout of the intersection of Routes 122A and 56.	M	2 or more years	Medium to Major Capital Item	TA, HWY, DPW, TP, PB	MassDOT; MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces	
Objective	Improve pedestrian infrastructure in both commercial areas and neighborhoods and subdivisions with existing suburban housing, where density permits.						
Action item	Up-zone identified neighborhoods while maintaining desired housing forms.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Identify vacant lands suitable for redevelopment.						
Goal 5: Preserve open space and encourage use for active and passive recreation.							
Objective	Protect open space and other land uses through zoning and proactive land use policies.						
Action item	Conduct outreach to identify opportunities and barriers to bringing more active and passive recreation to Rutland.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	TM, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Adopt new bylaws for the Conservation Commission, such as a local wetland bylaw.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	CC, TP	Town Staff, EEA PAG, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Hire a Conservation Agent to allow the Conservation Commission to work with other town boards and commissions to target land conservation efforts.	H	Ongoing	Low, recurring cost	CC	Town Staff, Town Meeting	
Action Item	Update the Subdivision regulations to better promote land conservation and other environmental goals, such as by incorporating LID standards, shared parking, and off site parking in non-subdivision development	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, EEA PAG, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Identify and prioritize the areas that need to be protected from development. This may include sensitive habitats that should be conserved or significant historical structures or properties to be preserved.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA, CC, AC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	

Housing and Population		Priority	Time to Completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low- 0-50k Low- 50-100k Med- 100-250k High: 250k- 500k Major capital item: 500k+	Responsible Parties	Resources	Progress
Goal 1: Encourage housing developments that prioritize preservation of open space, utilize low impact development methods, and are consistent with community location and dwelling unit preferences.							
Objective	Maintain Rutland's existing character as a suburban residential community.						
Action item	Revise or implement low impact development bylaw or cluster development bylaw.	M	6-12 Months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance via DLTA or LPA	
Objective	Allow and promote housing styles which will allow Rutland to achieve its housing goals while maintaining its desired development character.						
Action item	Up-zone identified neighborhoods - reduce minimum lot sizes and increase height limitations while maintaining desired housing forms. Reduce dimensional requirements for duplexes and other small-scale multifamily housing forms.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance via LPA	
Action item	Consider establishing agricultural zoning to limit future housing development in historic agricultural areas.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance via DLTA or LPA	
Action item	Consider modifying the existing Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw to allow for more flexible options for seniors and renters.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance via LPA	
Action item	Explore adoption of a Cottage Housing Bylaw – a variation of an open space bylaw that provides density bonuses in exchange for common open areas but focuses on homes on smaller lots with a pedestrian oriented layout.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, EEA PAG, CMRPC Technical Assistance via DLTA or LPA	
Action item	Prepare design guidelines or standards for new multi-family housing developments. design guidelines can be prepared and included in the Town Zoning Bylaws which inform the proposals of multi-family housing proposals. Design guidelines encourage the existing housing stock to be used as a reference point for the character and architecture of new housing development.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance via DLTA, EEA PAG	
Goal 2: Pursue creative policies that support the sustainable development of new housing units and expand the diversity of housing options.							
Objective	Construct senior housing units to accommodate an aging population and make existing housing available to families.						
Action item	Create an inventory of town-owned land suitable for new housing development.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Advocate for a higher inclusion of accessible units in proposed affordable housing developments.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Goal 3: Pursue policies and partnerships that will support the development of truly affordable housing.							
Objective	Construct and retain affordable housing units to support Rutland's future population growth and align State affordable housing goals.						
Action item	Develop a Housing Production Plan.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	CMRPC Technical Assistance, EEA PAG Grant, Housing Choice Grant via Community One Stop	
Action item	Maintain status as Housing Choice community.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Research the utility of Community Preservation Act funds.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	SB, TM, TP	Town Staff, Community Preservation Coalition, www.housingtoolbox.org/local-tools/community-	
Action item	Modify the Town's zoning bylaw to mandate residential developments set aside a specific minimum percent of total number of dwelling units as affordable housing for very-low-income, low-income, or moderate income residents.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance (LPA)	
Action item	Actively seek out and apply for funding and technical assistance to implement Rutland's housing goals.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, EEA PAG, Housing Choice Grants via Community One Stop	

Action item	Develop a municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund to have readily accessible funds available to respond efficiently to housing opportunities as needed.	M	Ongoing	Medium to Major Capital Item	TM, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, EEA PAG Grant, Housing Choice Grants via Community Dev	
Action item	Explore adoption of a workforce housing special tax assessment (WH-STA) area in which developers can be offered a property tax incentive to build housing affordable for low to middle-income residents.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, EEA PAG Grant, Housing Choice Grants via Community Dev	
Action item	Explore the creation of a buy-down program whereby the town uses funds to buy-down market-rate homes, deed restrict them as affordable in perpetuity, and sell them to income-qualified first-time homebuyers at below-market prices.	M	Ongoing	Medium to Major Capital Item	TM, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, EEA PAG Grant, Housing Choice Grants via Community Dev	
Goal 4: Improve streetscape and pedestrian infrastructure to support future housing development and its impacts on traffic volume.							
Objective	Develop safe streets for pedestrians that can accommodate traffic from housing development, commercial development, and population growth.						
Action item	Conduct study to determine changes to traffic patterns in Town Center and other identified neighborhoods.	M	2 or more years	Medium to Major Capital Item	TA, HWY, DPW, TP, PB	MassDOT, MassDOT Complete Streets; MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces	
Cultural and Historical Resources		Priority	Time to Completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low- 0-50k Low- 50-100k Med- 100-250k High: 250k- 500k Major capital item: 500k+	Responsible Parties	Resources	Progress
Goal 1: Preserve the Town's historic character and cultural resources							
Objective	Prioritize the protection and preservation of historical assets, ensuring new development and redevelopment adequately protects the town's historic character. redevelopment adequately protects the town's historic character.						
Action item	Priority projects that can be recognized as vital spaces include the Town Center, Town Hall, Prison Camp ruin sites, Wood House, Central Tree project, Putnam Park & Rufus Putnam House, the Old Firehouse, Historic Burial Grounds, Sanatorium (tuberculosis hospital), Central Massachusetts Rail Trail & Railroad, and the Quabbin Aqueduct.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, TM	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Preservation Massachusetts, CPA,	
Action item	Explore the option of adopting a Demolition Delay Bylaw to protect historically significant spaces.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC via DLTA or LPA, Preservation	
Action item	Explore the option of adopting a Local Historic District and continue the identification of historical buildings to be designated properly.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC via DLTA or LPA, EEA PAG, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Allow space for nonconforming lot/parcel creation, to ensure historical components are not lost, even if the whole parcel cannot be preserved.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC via LPA, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Utilize Zoning to section off areas of historic land/properties, not conforming to the surrounding land use.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC via LPA, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Continue to pursue the restoration and renewal of the Old Burial Grounds.	M	Ongoing	Medium	HC, TM	Town Staff, Preservation	
Action item	Create a singular archive to document Rutland's historic assets and heritage.	M	Ongoing	Medium to High	HC, TM	Town Staff, Preservation Massachusetts	
Objective	Maintain financial resources to ensure historic resources are supported by the town's local government.						
Action item	Pursue the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA).	H	6-12 months	Very Low	SB, TM, TP	Town Staff and Boards	
Action item	Develop a maintenance fund for historic preservation that is separate from CPA funding. This could materialize as establishing a nonprofit organization to aid in crowdsource funding.	M	Ongoing	Medium to Major Capital Item	HC	Town Staff and Boards	
Action item	Channel CPA funds to purchase preservation easements of historic properties.	M	Ongoing	Medium to Major Capital Item	HC	Town Staff and Boards	
Action item	Utilize preservation easements to protect the architectural integrity of historic properties, while restricting potential alterations/uses in the future.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	HC, TP, PB, ZBA	Town Staff and Boards, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Preservation	

Objective	Enroll property owners and other associates in the preservation of historic and culturally important properties.						
Action item	Educate Town leaders on the value of historic preservation and ways to address preservation issues.	H	Ongoing	Very Low	HC	Town Staff and Boards, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Encourage collaboration among Town boards and committees, staff and volunteers, and local historic preservation organizations to educate the Rutland community on historical preservation, ensuring individuals are kept up to date on historical sites and ongoing initiatives.	H	Ongoing	Very Low	All Boards and Commissions	Town Staff and Boards, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Connect property owners with organizations focused on historical preservation measures and professional assistance for application processes.	H	Ongoing	Very Low	HC, TP, TM	Town Staff and Boards, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Educate property owners about Preservation Restrictions (PR) benefits.	H	Ongoing	Very Low	HC, AC, TP	Town Staff and Boards, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Take advantage of resources within the program Preserve Mass Barns.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	HC, AC, TM	Town Staff and Boards, Preservation Massachusetts	
Objective	Maintain sustainable sources of funding that directly supports the maintenance and acquisition of historical buildings and properties.						
Action item	Apply for the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund to support the preservation of Rutland's historically important properties and sites.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, TM	Town Staff and Boards, Preservation Massachusetts	
Goal 2: Provide cultural opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.							
Objective	Boost the public's access to historic resources and information.						
Action item	Design cultural opportunities that educate all of Rutland's residents about the town's unique heritage and history. This initiative could include maintaining and updating a publicly accessible inventory of the town's historic resources whether it be: properties, structures, districts, artifacts, burial grounds, and other notable attributes of Rutland's history.	H	Ongoing	Low	HC	Town Staff, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Maintain digitized historical records relevant to Rutland and provide access to such records online.	M	Ongoing	Low	HC	Town Staff, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Encourage community involvement in research to fill in gaps regarding Rutland's history, such as identifying unknown individuals in photographs.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	HC	Town Staff, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Update Rutland's Historic Resources Survey with new inventory forms.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	HC	Town Staff, CIVICPC via DLT, Preservation Massachusetts	
Objective	Broaden community outreach initiatives linked to the town's cultural and historical resources.						
Action item	Encourage activities such as self guided working tours, guided community tours, history days, concerts, craft fairs, farmer's markets, community theater, etc. to continue building appreciation for local history and culture among locals and visitors.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	HC	Town Staff	
Action item	Introduce a "How to Get Involved" section on Rutland's town website that provides details for volunteer opportunities and contact information.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	HC	Town Staff	
Objective	Develop the community's local identity and foster a sense of place.						
Action item	Construct new wayfinding signage, strengthen gateway features, and explore alternative modes of place-making projects and beautification.	H	1 to 2 years	Low to Major Capital Item	HC, TP, PB, HWY, DPW	Town Staff, MassDOT, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Enhance Rutland's presence and promotion on social media to ensure the communication of upcoming events, news, and provide updates information to residents.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	All Boards and Commissions	Town Staff	
Action item	Continue to welcome traveling exhibits that celebrate the rural American community, and themes relevant to Rutland's character.	M	Ongoing	Low	HC	Town Staff, Preservation Massachusetts	
Goal 3: Increase familiarity and awareness with the Town's historic and cultural resources.							
Objective	Instill cultural values, heritage, and awareness in young residents.						

Action item	Partner with schools to host historical and cultural education programs targeted towards youth. Examples include field trips, site tours, outdoor exploration activities, and community members speaking about their heritage and connection to Rutland.	M	Ongoing	Low to Medium	HC	Town Staff, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Establish a historic asset as a regional field trip destination.	H	1 to 2 years	Medium to Major Capital Item	HC	Town Staff, Preservation Massachusetts	
Objective	Increase resident engagement with historic and cultural resources.						
Action item	Create educational initiatives targeting young adults such as Instagram scavenger hunts, and geotagging.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	HC	Town Staff	
Action item	Create self guided walking tours and scavenger hunts that are accessible for all individuals regardless of age or ability.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	HC	Town Staff	
Action item	Implement events, tours, interactive programs, presentations, and educational activities geared towards the Town's historical values.	M	Ongoing	Low	HC	Town Staff	
Action item	Historic lectures/talks relevant to historic assets, and educational events.	M	Ongoing	Low	HC	Town Staff	
Action item	Engage with the Recreation Department regarding the introduction of historical classes within summer programming.	M	1-2 years	Low to Medium	HC	Town Staff, Recreation Department	
Action item	Begin the revival of the Historic Society summer camp.	M	1-2 years	Medium to High	HC	Town Staff, Recreation Department	
Action item	Organize community engagement that allows residents to give personal feedback on the usage/designing of revitalized spaces.	H	Ongoing	Very Low	HC	Town Staff	
Objective	Promote historic and cultural resources to visitors from outside of town.						
Action item	Incorporate the Town's historic and cultural background into forthcoming ecotourism policies.	M	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, TP, PB	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Promote the celebration of Rutland traditions such as the Fourth of July and establish new traditions/opportunities to draw residents and visitors together. Introducing a food truck festival, Friday night concerts, or a 5k event.	H	Ongoing	Low to High	TM	Town Staff	
Action item	Host open houses on historical properties to promote the space, develop familiarity within the community, and build relationships with property owners.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	HC	Town Staff	
Goal 4: balance growth with preservation of historic and cultural assets.							
Objective	Designate and identify historic and culturally significant sites and buildings.						
Action item	Inventory historic homes and sites and submit an updated list to the Mass Historical Commission, and other eligible properties on National Register of Historic Places.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, TP, PB, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Begin with designating a small Historic District consisting of the Woodhouse, Town Hall, St. Patrick's Parish Church, and the First Congregational Church of Rutland.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, TP, PB, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Preservation Massachusetts	
Action item	Utilize funding designated for historic Prison Camp site to develop interpretive signage and other modes of revitalization to beautify the space.	H	6-12 months	Medium	HC, TM	Town Staff, DCR	
Action item	Improve trail access points surrounding the Prison Camp to encourage hikers, horseback riders, and vehicle parking accessibility.	H	1 to 2 years	Medium to Major Capital Item	HC, TM, DPW	Town Staff, DCR	
Objective	Preserve the Town's agricultural character and farmlands.						
Action item	Encourage qualified landowners to enroll their land in Chapter 61A program to preserve the agricultural landscape.	H	Ongoing	Very Low	AC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Ensure agricultural businesses remain economically feasible.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	AC, PB, TP, EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Protect the Town's Cultural and Scenic character.						
Action item	Utilize updated zoning and development strategies to avoid/limit the building on farmland, forestland, Greenfield's, and other culturally important lands.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, AC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Continue to develop awareness for the Lost Villages Scenic Byway by maintaining roadway signage, and potentially collaborating with other Lost Villages towns regarding education efforts.	M	Ongoing	Low	TM, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	

Action item	Update the Scenic Road Bylaw within Rutland to include new roads such as Davis Street, Cloverdale Road, and Irish Lane.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Create separate funding for maintaining historically owned buildings, public spots, and properties in town.						
Action item	Develop a committee that is dedicated but not limited to community funded opportunities such as fundraisers targeted towards community involvement, historical education, and raising awareness for the preservation of important historical assets.	L	Ongoing	Very Low	TM, HC	Town Staff	
Action item	Pursue Preservation Restrictions to ensure the altering of entire buildings or portions of a structure is not pursued without approval.	H	6-12 months	Very Low	HC, AC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Economic Development		Priority	Time to Completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low- 0-50k Low- 50-100k Med- 100-250k High: 250k- 500k Major capital item: 500k and up	Responsible Parties	Resources	Progress
Goal 1: Encourage the development of small business amenities including commercial and professional services.							
Objective	Increase economic development capacity:						
Action item	Undertake a strategic planning process as an Economic Development Commission to empower and guide their efforts to bring businesses to Rutland.	H	Ongoing	Low	EDC, TP, TM	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Foster development of a local business or merchants association, or Main Street group; alternatively, appoint business owners to Business Roundtable that meets regularly and includes municipal leadership.	H	Ongoing	Low to Medium	EDC, TM	Town Staff, Chambers of Commerce, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Pilot a part-time /shared Economic Development Coordinator position using grant funds. This person can undertake proactive and responsive economic development strategies (such as business lead tracking, outreach to existing businesses, marketing, planning EDC events, promotion of local businesses and EDC activities via newsletter and social media, bringing in guest speakers, grant writing, etc.).	H	1 to 2 years	Medium to Major capital item	EDC, TM, TP	Town Staff, Town Meeting	
Action Item	Establish a grant administrator/ manager position to identify and apply for funding opportunities.	H	1 to 2 years	Medium to Major capital item	EDC, TM, TP	Town Staff, Town Meeting	
Action item	Identify strategies to enhance communication between town departments and their involvement in the development process, including leadership positions such as the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator. This could include the enhancement of interdepartmental review initiatives, the establishment of ex officio positions on committees, the formalization of lead tracking and status reports, or other mechanisms.	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, TM	Town Staff, Town Meeting	
Action item	Explore subregional and multi-town opportunities for collaborative marketing and development and stay apprised of efforts by other towns and organizations to do the same	M	Ongoing	Low	EDC, TM, TP	Town Staff, Town Committees, Chambers of Commerce, Neighboring Towns	
Action item	Locate a backup source for the town's water supply to improve economic development potential	M	1 to 2 years	High to Major Capital Item	TM, TP, DPW	Town Staff	
Action item	Designate an economic development liaison that can pilot outreach programs to ensure the town capitalizes on business expertise and provides assistance to local businesses.	L	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	EDC, TM	Town Staff, Town Committees	
Action item	Rebuild a business association to accompany the EDC in support of place-making and marketing	H	1 to 2 years	Low to Medium	EDC, TM	Town Staff, Chambers of Commerce, CMRPC Technical Assistance	

Action item	Create a business outreach strategy that formalizes outreach pipelines between the town and businesses, such as a regular EDC event that invites business owners to participate, coordinating monthly talks where businesses can connect and pitch ideas, maintain regular communications through a newsletter, and host guest speakers.	M	6 to 12 months	Low	EDC, TM	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Improve the ease of doing business in Rutland.						
Action Item	Conduct a baseline study of Rutland's business needs , assessing markets, labor force needs, potential startups, and sources of technical information.	H	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, TM, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Facilitate collaboration between the Planning Board and EDC by developing an action plan for a joint strategic planning workshop, joint deliverables, and a structured approach to future collaboration and interaction.	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, PB, TP, TM	Town Staff	
Action Item	Work with Holden Area Chamber of Commerce, CMRPC or nearby higher education institutions to provide resources such as technical assistance and feasibility studies to specific businesses.	L	Ongoing	Low to Medium	EDC	Chambers of Commerce, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Town Staff	
Action Item	Have selected businesses list items purchased out of state and organize an auction for local businesses to bid on procurement contracts for the listed items.	L	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC	Town Staff	
Action Item	Work with Holden Area Chamber of Commerce and nearby universities to develop additional resources for local businesses such as marketing databases and training programs.	L	Ongoing	Low to Medium	EDC	Town Staff, Chambers of Commerce	
Action Item	Work with Holden Area Chamber of Commerce to develop a database for connecting purchasers with suppliers.	L	Ongoing	Low	EDC	Town Staff, Chambers of Commerce	
Action item	Review Special Permit Granting Authorities for potential friction points and roadblocks.	H	6 to 12 months	Very Low	PB, ZBA, TP, EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Ease the workload of the Planning Department by establishing the proposed Economic Development Coordinator as a point of contact to shepherd developers and prospective business owners through the permitting process in collaboration with the Planning Department where needed.	M	Ongoing	Medium to Major Capital Item	EDC, PB, TP, TM	Town Staff	
Action item	Facilitate the establishment of formal farming connections with clear lines of communication developed from the current informal network	H	6 to 12 months	Very Low	AC, TP, TM, EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Continue to publicize the benefits and support applications for Agricultural Preservation Restriction and Chapter 61 programs, as well as other relevant grant opportunities from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	H	Ongoing	Very Low	AC, TP, PB	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Facilitate frequent meetings with the business community to discuss challenges and desired resources	M	Ongoing	Very Low	EDC, AC	Town Staff	
Objective	Improve permitting processes and procedures where applicable						
Action item	Create a Permitting Guidebook to help clarify the permitting process with developers and prospective business owners.	H	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Explore opportunities to modernize and standardize permitting	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Use permitting software that tracks permit status and required staff or applicant actions and enforcement requirements that will help ensure that necessary actions do not fall through the cracks of the limited staff coverage.	H	Ongoing	Low to Medium	EDC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, Community One Stop	
Action item	Designate a business liaison to shepherd developers or prospective business owners through the pre-development and permitting process.	M	Ongoing	Medium to High	EDC, TM, TP	Town Staff	
Action item	Create an Open for Business Page as a dedicated website aimed at businesses and developers, which links from the Town's website	M	Ongoing	Very Low to Low	EDC, TM	Town Staff, Community One Stop	
Objective	Increase business development desired by Rutland residents, including small retail, grocery stores, agricultural businesses, indoor and outdoor recreation, medical services.						
Action item	Conduct outreach to identify opportunities and barriers to bringing a small or mid-sized grocery store to Rutland.	H	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, TM	Town Staff, Community One Stop	

Action item	Create a Business Attraction Brochure or marketing materials geared toward either developers or retail/restaurant businesses.	M	6 to 12 months	Low to Medium	EDC	Town Staff, Community One Stop	
Action item	Regularly reviewing zoning to ensure the uses and definitions do not preclude and specifically address desirable and appropriate cultural and commercial uses.	H	Ongoing	Very Low	EDC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Support restaurant and retail establishments through permitting that encourages outdoor dining and displays; work with businesses to facilitate the same.	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Increase the number of community events hosted in Rutland that will draw visitors and customers from around the region.	M	Ongoing	Low to Medium	All Boards and Commissions	Town Staff	
Action item	Review regional market data to identify economic development sectors and opportunities for growth in Rutland	H	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Proactively engage identified market sectors to bring them to Rutland	M	Ongoing	Very Low	EDC	Town Staff	
Action item	Use wayfinding strategies with improved signage and pathways across the town to make it easier to access the variety of sites.	H	1 to 2 years	Low to Major Capital Item	EDC, PB, TP, TM	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Use customer profiling to know the variety of reasons customers and tourists may visit	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Conduct a comprehensive marketing and communications campaign that includes a marketing plan, branding, and other strategies	M	Ongoing	Very Low	EDC	Town Staff	
Action item	Organize a business investment event where residents and established businesses or community groups can donate to a pool of funding. At the event, participating local businesses or startups will then pitch project ideas and the local audience will get to vote on which project the funding should go towards.	L	6 to 12 months	Low	EDC	Town Staff, Chambers of Commerce	
Goal 2: Grow and diversify the commercial tax base to promote a fiscally sound future and allow the Town to provide and improve services, including recreational opportunities and pedestrian infrastructure.							
Objective	Identify local capacity for new or adaptive reuse of existing buildings.						
Action item	Conduct a comprehensive zoning diagnostic to ensure zoning is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan	H	8-12 months	Very Low/ Low	PB, BLDG, ZBA, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Conduct a 3-D Build-out analysis to identify potential opportunities for expanded development.	M	6-12 months	Very Low/ Low	PB, BLDG, ZBA, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Identify residentially zoned building properties that could be suitable for non-residential use	M	6-12 months	Very Low/ Low	PB, BLDG, ZBA, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Conduct an analysis of commercial uses in existing R-zoned properties	L	6-12 months	Very Low/ Low	PB, BLDG, ZBA, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Identify areas of town potentially suitable for economic development	L	6-12 months	Very Low/ Low	PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Consider whether specific agricultural tourism and ecotourism ideas could take place at existing locations in town, or if new sites or organizations to host them will be needed.	M	6-12 months	Very Low/ Low	EDC, AC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Explore opportunities for aesthetic improvements along Rt. 68, such as signage and landscape screening, in particular along the commercial lots adjacent to residential lots to help maintain the country road character.	M	6-12 months	Medium to Major capital item	PB, TP, HWY, DPW	Town Staff, MassDOT, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Evaluate the feasibility and potential for expanded mixed-use development in the Town Center neighborhood.	M	6-12 months	Very Low/ Low	PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Bring business opportunities to existing buildings, to reduce storefront retail vacancy rates.						
Action item	Create a Vacancy Registry process to facilitate constructive dialogue between commercial property owners with vacant properties and town staff.	M	6-12 months	Low	PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Inventory specific buildings with information to encourage investment, such as physical characteristics, rental rates, and identification as a tax-delinquent property	M	6-12 months	Low	PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Develop and install new wayfinding signage for economic development target areas that highlight businesses, landmarks, parking, and other features.	M	1 to 2 years	Medium to Major capital item	PB, DPW, TP	Town Staff, MassDOT	
Action item	Encourage more events and public programs in economic development target areas through pop-up retail ordinances, event permitting, etc.	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff	

Action item	Explore overnight accommodation for tourists and other visitors including hotels, bed & breakfast, etc.	M	6 to 12 months	Low	EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Consider events to sponsor or plan	M	Ongoing	Low to Medium	EDC	Town Staff	
Objective	Make Rutland a more attractive place to locate a business in the region.						
Action Item	Utilize tax incentives to incentivize commercial and light industrial business development.	M	Ongoing	Low to Medium	EDC	Town Staff	
Action Item	Identify priority business types	H	6 to 12 months	Very low	EDC, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Review Site Plan Review Criteria to ensure it is sufficiently robust to protect the town from undesirable development; identify uses for which Special Permit can be replaced with Site Plan Review.	H	6 to 12 months	Very low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Establish clear design guidelines to assist future development in conforming with the community's character.	H	7 to 12 months	Very low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Use zoning and related mechanisms to incorporate Smart Growth principles into Rutland's existing and planned land uses.	H	8 to 12 months	Very low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Explore strategies for providing tax incentives to encourage business growth and infrastructure improvements.	M	9 to 12 months	Very low	EDC	Town Staff	
Action Item	Explore strategies for incentivizing local business patronage, such as giving community members discounts to participating businesses in town.	M	10 to 12 months	Very low	EDC	Town Staff	
Action Item	Explore the possibility of initiating a façade improvement program to address components of the façade (including awnings and signs), a storefront system, accessibility, the entire façade, or façades visible from a public way, and/or components of the site (including signage, planters, restriping for outdoor dining or retail display, or adding more permanent landscaping).	H	11 to 12 months	Very low	PB, TP, ZBA	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	explore subregional and multi-town opportunities for collaborative marketing and development.	H	12 to 12 months	Very low	EDC	Town Staff, Neighboring Towns, Chambers of Commerce, CMRPC	
Objective	Purposely cultivate its relationship with and work to support new and existing home-based occupations.						
Action Item	Convene public-private dialogues and network to help support this sector of Rutland's economy.	M	Ongoing	Very low	EDC	Town Staff	
Action Item	Inventory home-based businesses to help establish connectivity, business-to-business purchasing opportunities, and resident awareness.	H	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Facilitate awareness among businesses and other residents to support the economic viability of home occupations.	M	Ongoing	Very low	EDC	Town Staff	
Action Item	Make home-based businesses a target of efforts to fill vacant commercial and industrial space.	H	Ongoing	Very low	EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action Item	Encourage developers to focus on or include small office spaces with business resources (e.g., co-working spaces) to provide commercial space for existing home occupations.	M	6 to 12 months	Very low	EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Goal 3: Ensure that all economic development initiatives are considered in the context of residents' desire to maintain Rutland's natural beauty and small-town character.							
Objective	Connect and leverage the town's natural and unique assets						
Action item	Identify and inventory Rutland's unique assets	H	6-12 months	Very low	EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Explore low-cost regional social media marketing strategies such as a self-guided Instagram tour.	M	Ongoing	Very low	EDC	Town Staff	
Action item	encourage the development of farm-to-school programs as an additional means of incorporating agriculture into the Town of Rutland's economy and culture	M	Ongoing	Low to medium	AC, EDC, HC	Town Staff, USDA Grants	
Action item	continuously update the identified, mapped, and detailed Chapter 61a and non-61a parcels.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	PB, AC, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Utilize a rating system for parcels to increase financial support to priority agricultural and natural resource areas.	H	6-12 months	Very low	PB, AC, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	

Action item	Investigate how tourism could benefit the resources, through stewardship activities or first-hand farming experience.	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	AC, EDC	Town Staff	
Action item	Seek out research grants for location-specific scientific endeavors where community science could play a role.	M	Ongoing	Low to medium	EDC	Town Staff	
Action item	Explore ideas for expanding activities and events at the local farmer's market.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	AC, EDC	Town Staff	
Objective	Increase commercial development in existing commercial centers such as Four Corners, North Rutland, and Rutland Town Center.						
Action item	Use pop-up events installations to activate and draw visitors to underutilized commercial areas.	H	Ongoing	Very low	EDC	Town Staff, Chambers of Commerce	
Action item	Define the gateways of commercial centers using temporary placemaking installations such as overhead banners, painted sidewalks with temporary pedestrian safety infrastructure, and lighting during the winter holidays or warm weather evening events.	H	Ongoing	Low	EDC, PB, TP, DPW	Town Staff	
Action item	Undertake lower cost placemaking strategies such as benches, sidewalks, bike paths, signage, planters, and lighting throughout commercial target areas.	H	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	EDC, PB, TP, DPW	Town Staff	
Action item	Allow and encourage use of road shoulders, excess parking, and sidewalks in appropriate areas for outdoor dining, retail, and gathering spaces	M	Ongoing	Low to Major capital item	EDC, PB, TP, DPW, HWY	Town Staff, MassDOT	
Action item	Explore opportunities to develop indoor winter recreation spaces	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Identify certain streets in town that could be utilized to carry out tactical urbanism events	L	6 to 12 months	Low	EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Collaborate with stakeholders on an agricultural tourism and ecotourism initiative						
Action item	Complete an Ecotourism and Agritourism Economic Development Strategic Plan to identify strategies to leverage and connect the Town's natural, agricultural, and open space assets for economic development.	H	6 to 12 months	Very Low	AC, EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	explore opportunities to regionalize the collaboration with representatives from other rural communities	M	Ongoing	Very Low	AC, EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, North Shore, Towns	
Action item	Seek outside support from the breadth of environmental and food systems organizations across various scales as well as universities	M	Ongoing	Very Low	AC, EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Central Mass Grown, Regional Environmental	
Action item	Raise awareness of the agricultural tourism and ecotourism initiative among locals.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	AC, EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Central Mass Grown, Regional Environmental	
Action item	Identify any key businesses and nonprofits in the town actively engaged in agritourism/ ecotourism activity and draw attention to their activity.	M	5 to 12 months	Very Low	AC, EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Central Mass Grown, Regional Environmental	
Action item	Explore opportunities to engage farmers and other local businesses in coordinating agritourism and ecotourism projects and events.	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	AC, EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Central Mass Grown, Regional Environmental	
Action item	Explore more funding opportunities for agricultural tourism and ecotourism	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	AC, EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, Central Mass Grown, Regional Environmental	
Action item	Create and implement cultural and events strategy guided by a dedicated staff member supported by an events committee.	L	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	AC, EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff	
Action item	Consider the linking of agritourism and ecotourism sites when developing trails and signage.	M	Ongoing	Low	AC, EDC, PB, TP	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, MassTrails	
Objective	Encourage physical improvements that better match the small-town and natural character that residents value.						
Action item	Explore opportunities for lower-cost aesthetic improvements such as hanging banners and baskets from gooseneck streetlights, self-watering planters, painted road art, replacement of dirt patches with paving stones, and other low-cost aesthetic improvements will make the area more inviting to visitors.	H	Ongoing	Low to Medium	EDC, PB, TP, DPW	Town Staff	

Action item	Develop uniform signage and wayfinding to clearly convey information to visitors and encourage exploration.	H	Ongoing	Low to Medium	EDC, PB, TP, DPW	Town Staff	
Action item	Improve islands between parking lots and travel lanes and other high visibility areas through general landscaping.	M	Ongoing	Low to Medium	EDC, PB, TP, DPW	Town Staff, MassDOT	
Action item	Develop a list of sustainability principles to guide municipal operations and policymaking	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low		Town Staff, Green Communities	
Goal 3: Ensure that all economic development initiatives are considered in the context of residents' desire to maintain Rutland's natural beauty and small-town character.							
Objective	Improve pedestrian access and connectivity within Four Corners, Rutland Town Center, and Rutland Heights areas, to retain visitors and customers and reduce in-town car travel.						
Action item	Continue implementing Complete Streets Prioritization Plan to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities.	H	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	PB, TP, HWY, DPW	MassDOT Complete Streets, MassDOT Shared Streets and	
Action item	Conduct study to determine long-term changes to traffic patterns in and between Town Center and other identified neighborhoods	H	6 to 12 months	Low	PB, TP, HWY, DPW	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, MassDOT	
Action item	Increase trail connectivity throughout town, particularly connecting the Town Center to the Mass Central Rail Trail to encourage more visitor travel and patronage	H	ongoing	Low to Major capital item	PB, TP, HWY, DPW	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, MassTrails	
Action Item	Consider working with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority and CMRPC to study potential transit options or find opportunities to collaborate with nearby towns.	M	ongoing	Low	PB, TP, HWY, DPW	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance, MassDOT, WRTA	
Town Services & Facilities		Priority	Time to Completion	Magnitude of cost: Very Low- 0-50k Low- 50-100k Med- 100-250k High: 250k- 500k Major capital item: 500k and up	Responsible Parties	Resources	Progress
Goal 1: Ensure town facilities are at their optimal state to serve Rutland residents.							
Objective	Ensure that the needs of town-owned buildings are addressed promptly and properly.						
Action item	Continue to identify and prioritize the immediate needs identified in the Municipal Facilities Evaluation Plan conducted in 2021.	H	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff, MVP Action Grant, Community One Step for Growth	
Action item	Conduct a municipal space needs study that will assess the adequacy of buildings to serve their departmental function, and which will identify physical inefficiency, changes, and new building construction which can address current and future needs.	H	6 to 12 months	Very low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Action item	Identify funding sources for the action items listed above and the background work necessary to access those funds	H	6 to 12 months	Very low	Town Manager	Town Staff, MVP Action Grant, Community One Step for Growth	
Objective	Ensure town budget reflects the needs of Rutland residents.						
Action item	Establish a Long-Term Financial Planning Committee to identify and resolve historic severe underfunding of Town Departments	H	Ongoing	Very low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action item	Encourage town leadership and staff to attend training from organizations such as the Massachusetts Municipal Association to update best practices for municipal financial planning.	M	Ongoing	Low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff, MMA	
Action item	Host public information sessions and joint meetings to inform residents on policy developments and educate them on the fiscal health of Rutland. This can expand resident participation in the review of town budget priorities and identify community priorities on an ongoing basis.	M	Ongoing	Very low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Objective	Improve Rutland's financial health						
Action Item	Work with the newly formed Economic Development Commission to conduct and implement an Economic Development Strategic Plan	H	Ongoing	Low	EDC, TM	Town Staff, MVP Action Grant, Community One Step for Growth	

Action Item	Encourage town leadership to advocate for the town at the state and regional level to resolve under-funded mandates such as regional school transportation, stormwater management, and elections administration	H	Ongoing	Very Low	TM, All Town Departments, Select Board	Town Staff	
Action Item	Hire a grant manager to identify grant opportunities and develop the background information for grant applications.	H	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	TM	Town Staff	
Action Item	Develop a dedicated finance team that can incorporate property assessments, town accounting, and tax collection to inform budgeting, purchasing policy, and long-term planning.	H	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	TM	Town Staff	
Action Item	Improve the Town of Rutland's bond rating to better access financing.	H	2 to 5 years	???	TM	Town Staff	
Objective	Ensure all town buildings and facilities are used to their potential.						
Action item	Address accessibility issues at Town Hall, the Community Center, and other municipal buildings to bring these buildings in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act	H	2 to 5 years	Medium to Major capital item	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action item	Update the town's Americans with Disabilities Act Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan to reflect current deficiencies with municipal buildings	H	6 to 12 months	Very Low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action item	Identify funding sources for the action items listed above and the background work necessary to access those funds	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff, MVP Action Grant, Community One Stop for Growth	
Action item	Conduct a municipal space needs study that assesses the adequacy of buildings to serve their departmental function, and which will identify physical inefficiency, changes, and new building construction which can address current and future needs.	M	6 to 12 months	Very Low	TM, DPW All Town Departments	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Goal 2: Ensure all relevant plans and action items are implemented.							
Objective	Plan implementation and benchmark review.						
Action item	Regularly consult the implementation matrices found in the Master Plan to identify action items that are relevant but not completed	H	Ongoing	Very low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action item	Identify the barriers to implementing incomplete action items. Identify which action items are obsolete or redundant	H	Ongoing	Very low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action item	Ensure that departments are on course to repair and upgrade their buildings.	H	Ongoing	Low to Major capital item	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action item	Explore the hiring of a professional facilities manager to supervise the maintenance and administration of municipal buildings and grounds.	M	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	TM	Town Staff	
Action item	Identify the barriers to municipal building upgrades.	H	Ongoing	Very low	TM	Town Staff	
Action item	Publicize the action items developed in the Master Plan and host them on the town website so residents are informed of town needs and future funding requirements	M	6 to 12 months	Very low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Goal 3: Ensure and expand quality town services to all Rutland residents.							
Objective	Improve and expand programs for all.						
Action item	Explore the development of a shuttle program with the WRTA for seniors and other residents who lack transportation options, with the option of collaborating with neighboring towns for better public transportation for rural areas	M	Ongoing	Low to Major capital item	TM, COA	Town Staff, MVP Action Grant, Community One Stop for Growth, WRTA	
Action item	Find additional funding for town agencies that provide direct services to support marginal groups such as the elderly and young people, including the Council on Aging, the Recreation Department, the Veterans' Agent, and the Public Library.	H	Ongoing	Low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff, MVP Action Grant, Community One Stop for Growth	
Action item	Conduct regular program and department evaluations to determine ongoing and future staffing and funding needs and the funding opportunities necessary to improve services.	H	Ongoing	Very Low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	

Action item	Promote board and committee membership and broader knowledge of available public services through events such as a citizen's academy and a town government open house.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action item	Improve inter-board and inter-department communication.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Objective	Ensure all town departments have proper spaces.						
Action item	Conduct a municipal space needs study that assesses the adequacy of buildings to serve their departmental function, and which will identify changes and new building construction which can address current and future needs.	H	6 to 12 months	Very low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff, CMRPC Technical Assistance	
Objective	Ensure public safety remains a priority for Rutland.						
Action item	Find additional funding for public safety departments such as the Department of Public Works, the Fire Department, and the Police Department to hire more staff, acquire new and updated equipment, and improve facilities.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	TM, All Town Departments	Town Staff	
Action item	Ensure that in discussions of budget priorities, the Department of Public Works is recognized as a critical part of public safety.	M	Ongoing	Very Low	DPW, TM	Town Staff	
Action item	Create an infrastructure fund that would assist the Department of Public Works with improvements throughout the town at municipal intersections, roadways, and corridors.	M	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	DPW, TM	Town Staff	
Objective	Ensure town infrastructure in Rutland is maintained and prepared for future growth						
Action item	Support the Department of Public Works to hire more staff members.	M	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	DPW, TM	Town Staff	
Action item	Find additional funding for the Department of Public Works to hire more staff.	M	Ongoing	Medium to Major capital item	DPW, TM	Town Staff	
Action item	Identify and develop alternative water sources to expand town water access.	H	Ongoing	High to Major capital item	TM, DPW	Town Staff, MVP Action Grant, Community One	
Action item	Study sewage management options to increase sewer capacity.	H	Ongoing	High to Major capital item	TM, DPW	Town Staff, MVP Action Grant, Community One	
Action item	Update stormwater management policies to come into compliance with state and federal regulations and research ways to fund policy revisions and stormwater management.	H		Very low	PB, TP, ZBA	MVP Action Grant, CMRPC Technical Assistance	



Town of Rutland, MA
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