

HOUSING

As Barre has evolved from an agrarian community to a center of industry and now to its current form, challenges related to housing have emerged. Community input from the Community Survey and workshops revealed priorities including diversifying housing choices, rehabilitating existing housing, and increasing affordability. Residents expressed a strong desire to ensure that any development of new housing aligns with preservation goals and maintains Barre's rural charm.

This chapter will evaluate Barre's current and future housing needs through population and housing trends, the condition of existing housing stock, and affordability patterns. By understanding the

ways in which historic development patterns, zoning regulations, social and economic changes, and housing market conditions have impacted Barre, the town can effectively implement policies to address local concerns and build a future where residents can afford to remain in the community for generations.

Photo source: Miranda Prentiss



THEMES

- Affordability
- Preservation of open space
- Housing preservation and rehabilitation
- Housing diversity



HOUSING DEFINITIONS

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

An accessory dwelling unit is a small residential living space located on the same lot as another home. ADUs can be inside an existing home, like converting a basement into an apartment, attached to a primary residence as an addition, or completely detached, like a cottage or converted garage in a backyard.²⁴

Aging in Place

The ability to remain in one's home and community with access to the necessary support and services to maintain quality of life as one ages.²⁵

Cost Burdened

When a household spends over 30% of their income on rent or mortgage payments, and other housing costs.²⁶

Deed Restricted

When a property has specific limitations or conditions designed to ensure long-term affordability legally recorded on its deed.²⁷

Local Initiative Program (LIP)

A state program that encourages the creation of affordable housing by providing technical assistance to communities and developers who are working together to create affordable rental units. The program supplies technical assistance through the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.²⁸

M.G.L Chapter 40B

M.G.L Chapter 40B Sections 20-23 enables developers to request waivers

to local regulations, including the zoning bylaw, from the local Zoning Board of Appeals for affordable housing developments if less than 10% of year-round housing units in the municipality are counted on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. The state law was enacted in 1969 to address the shortage of affordable housing statewide by reducing barriers created by local building permit approval processes, local zoning, and other restrictions.

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- 24 Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, "Accessory Dwelling Units", n.d.
- 25 Brenda Owusu, Balkys Bivins, Beatrice Remy Marseille, and Diana-lyn Baptist, "Aging in place: Programs, challenges and opportunities for promoting healthy aging for older adults", 2023.
- 26 United States Census Bureau, "Nearly Half of Renter Households Are Cost-Burdened, Proportions Differ by Race", 2024.
- 27 Local Housing Solutions, "Deed-restricted homeownership", 2021.
- 28 Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, "Local Initiative Program". n.d.

Photo source: CMRPC



HOUSING CONDITIONS

Age and Population

Barre is a small community, with a population of 5,530.²⁹ Like many other communities in the region, Barre’s population is aging. The U.S. Decennial Census reports that the median age in Barre increased 13% from 2000 to 2020, from 37.1 to 41.8. However, this rate of aging is slower than that of surrounding communities, placing Barre in the position of having more time to anticipate and prepare for residents’ changing needs.

In 2020 the largest share of Barre’s population was Seniors (25.26%) with those considered Middle Age close behind at 24.61%. There were also over 1000 children age 5-19 (18.5%). Each of these groups has distinct housing needs. Older adults may want to downsize or find a low-maintenance option for housing such as an apartment. Middle-aged adults with children may need larger, family-friendly homes with several bedrooms. The diversity of age in Barre highlights the importance of offering a range of housing types to support residents at all stages of life.

²⁹ United States Census Bureau, “2020 Decennial Census”, 2020.

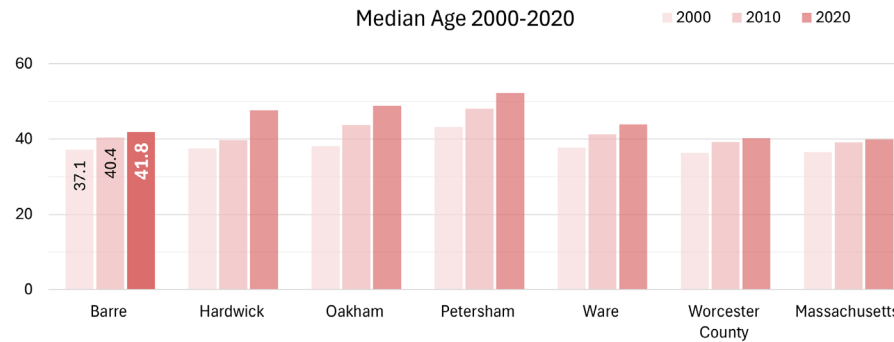


Figure H1: Median Age. Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020

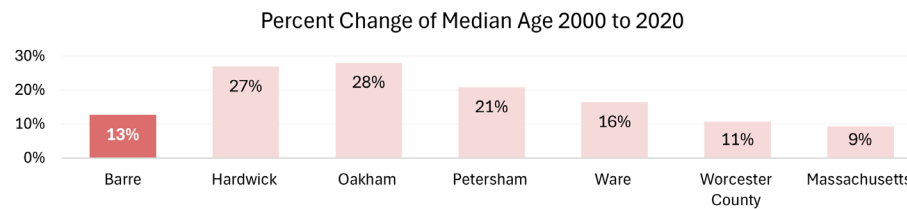


Figure H2: Median Age. Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000, 2020

Age by Lifecycle Groups						
	2000		2010		2020	
	Total	Percent of Total Population	Total	Percent of Total Population	Total	Percent of Total Population
Total Population	5113	100%	5398	100%	5,530	100%
Preschool (0-4)	320	6%	290	5%	293	5%
School Age (5-19)	1,226	24%	1,241	23%	1,023	18%
Young Adult (20-24)	195	4%	278	5%	315	6%
Young Family (25-34)	651	13%	513	10%	677	12%
Middle Age (35-54)	1,690	33%	1,679	31%	1,361	25%
Near Seniors (55-64)	284	6%	721	13%	898	16%
Seniors (65-84)	574	11%	560	10%	1397	25%
Advanced Elderly (85+)	73	1%	116	2%	89	2%

Figure H3: Barre Age by Lifecycle Groups. Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020



Income and Cost of Housing

The value of owner-occupied units in Barre is on the lower end of the scale with the surrounding area. The median value of an owner-occupied unit in Barre is \$329,300. This may seem affordable by comparison to neighboring communities like New Braintree where the median value is \$387,200 or Oakham where the median value is \$379,600; however, this price is still out of reach for many residents.

A common guideline given to homebuyers is not to purchase a home that is valued at more than 2.5 times their annual household income. In 2023, the median household income in Barre was \$95,607.³⁰ If following this guideline, a household making the median income in Barre would be able to spend about \$239,018 on a home. The median value of a home in Barre is almost \$100,000 more than what many residents can afford.

For some residents, renting may be more affordable or desirable than homeownership. Rental units can offer residents lower and more predictable upfront costs, as well as increased flexibility. However, the cost of rent in Barre is rising, and local incomes are unable to keep up. Household income

Value of Owner-Occupied Units in the Region

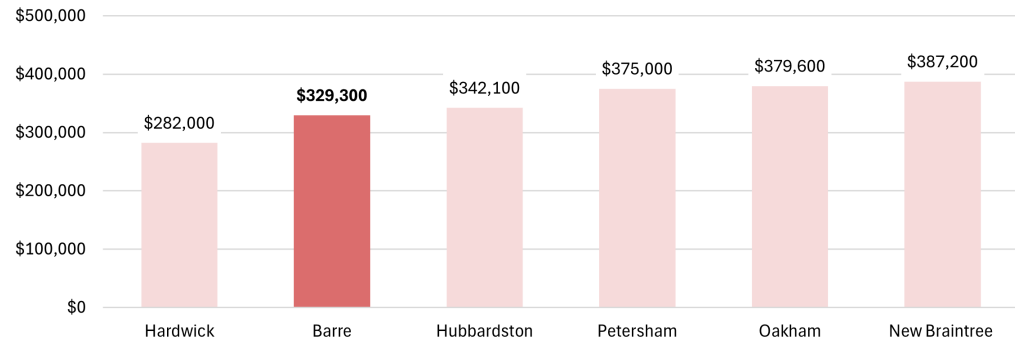


Figure H4: Value of Owner-Occupied Units in the Region.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

Median Household Income 2010-2023

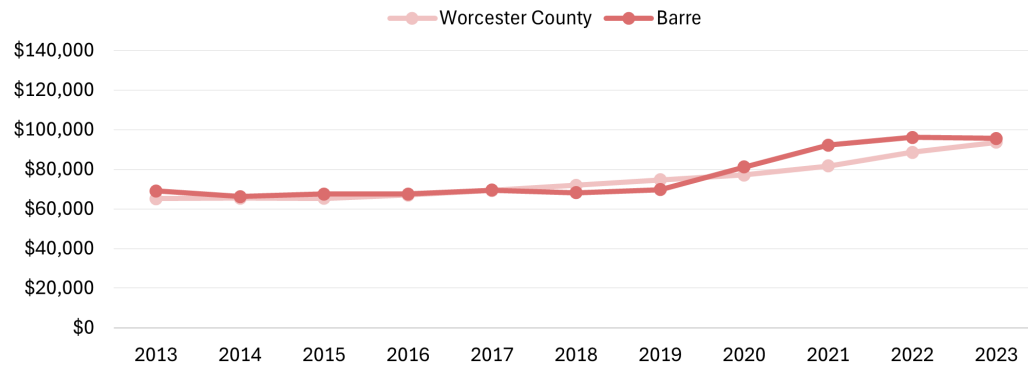


Figure H5: Median Household Income 2010 to 2023.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2010-2023

in Barre increased 39% from 2013 to 2023.³¹ In this same period, the median rent in Barre increased by 49%, from \$856 in 2013 to \$1,272 in 2023.³²

Increasing rents can result in more

30 United States Census Bureau, "American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates", 2023.

31 United States Census Bureau, "American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates", 2013-2023.

32 United States Census Bureau, "American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates", 2013-2023.



households becoming cost burdened. In Barre, 44% of renters and 19% of homeowners are cost burdened, with housing costs exceeding 30% of the household's income. High housing costs result in material trade-offs, meaning that as residents put much of their money towards housing, they are left with less money to spend on necessities like groceries and healthcare, or on investments like higher education.³³

These trade-offs can have negative long-term impacts on overall health, educational attainment, and financial wellbeing.

Age of Housing in Barre

Housing units in Barre are generally older. Over 50% of the housing units in the town were built before 1970. Barre's older homes provide the town with great historic character.

However, these units are also prone to disrepair and inefficiency and were often built using lead and asbestos, materials that are now considered hazardous to human health. The high cost of maintenance and rehabilitation can create further financial difficulties for homeowners, particularly those who are cost burdened. In 2020, the cost of many building materials increased

Age of Housing in Barre

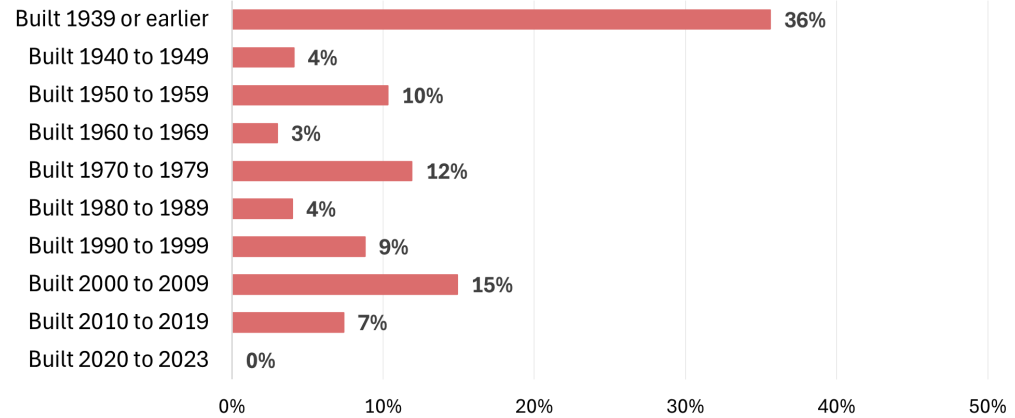


Figure H6: Age of Housing in Barre. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

Structural Types of Occupied Housing Units

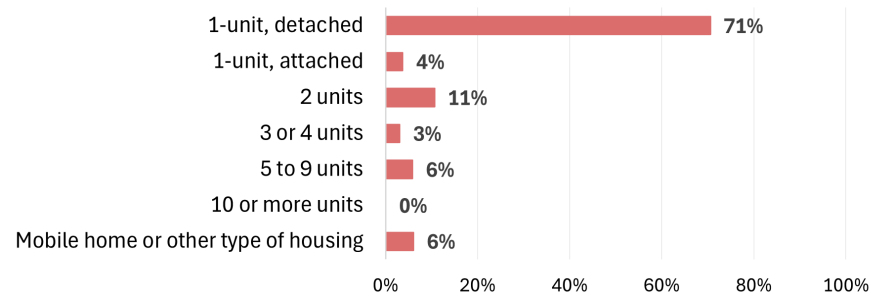


Figure H7: Structural Types of Occupied Housing Units
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

rapidly, and remain above their pre-2020 levels. Materials such as lumber, insulation, and tiles have all increased in cost by over 20%.³⁴ Older homes may also lack modern amenities and accessibility features, making them less suitable for aging residents and those with disabilities.

33 Shoman Shamsuddin & Colin Campbell, "Housing Cost Burden, Material Hardship, and Well-Being", 2021.
34 Joint Center for Housing Studies, "Improving America's Housing", 2025.



Building Permits 2004-2024	
Total Building Permits	250
Single-Family Structures	246
Units in 2-Family Structures	4
3+ Unit Multi-Family Structures	0

Figure H8: Total Building Permits 2004 to 2024
 Source: Department of Housing and Urban
 Development SOCDs Building Permit Database

Types of Housing in Barre

Households in Barre vary in composition. Of the 1,919 households in town, 19% are single residents, 25% include one or more children, and 32% have one or more people age 65 and older.³⁵ 46% of households have one or more people age 60 and older, indicating the number of households with seniors will likely increase in the coming years. The range of ages and household composition in Barre points to a need for a variety of housing types that meet the needs of seniors, families with children, and individuals.

While Barre’s household composition is diverse, the housing in town is quite uniform. Approximately 71% of the housing in Barre is made up of one-unit detached homes, also known as single-family homes. Out of the 250 building permits issued for residential structures between 2004 and 2024, 246 (98.4%) of

them were for single-family homes. The dominance of single-family homes may pose challenges for seniors seeking low-maintenance, affordable living and for young adults hoping to stay in the area.

Housing Support in Barre

Barre’s existing low-income housing support is limited to the Barre Housing Authority. The Barre Housing Authority was established to provide “safe, decent, and affordable” housing opportunities in town.³⁶ The primary goal of the housing authority is to provide housing for low-income households while improving housing and economic opportunities for residents and maintaining high standards of property management, fiscal management, and service delivery. The Barre Housing Authority currently has five staff members and five commissioners. The Housing Authority manages three properties including senior and family housing. Some of these units, such as the Bradford Apartments, need repair and rehabilitation, however, there are many financial and regulatory barriers to upgrading them. Planning for their future is necessary. If built today, these units would not meet current zoning requirements and their replacement would be expensive.

At this time, the town does not have any boards or committees dedicated solely to housing. Creating a dedicated town position, such as a Housing Coordinator, could enhance communication between the Housing Authority, relevant town committees and boards, landlords and affordable housing developers. The position could also assist with identifying vacant properties where housing units could be built, coordinating grant and funding opportunities, managing a rehabilitation program, and matching residents with available grant and loan resources.

35 United States Census Bureau, “American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates”, 2023.
 36 Barre Housing Authority, “Welcome to Barre Housing Authority”, n.d.



HOUSING PRIORITIES

The priorities for this chapter were determined through an evaluation of the survey responses, stakeholder discussions, feedback from the workshop, and the analysis of relevant data. Three clear priorities emerged from this information: preserving the affordability and quality of housing, increasing the diversity of housing available, and ensuring that any housing-related development does not negatively impact the town's open space and rural character.

Maintain the Affordability and Quality of Housing in Barre

Keeping Barre an affordable place to live is a priority for Barre residents. Throughout the community engagement process, residents have expressed that the preservation of affordable housing of all varieties and increasing the number of affordable units should be prioritized in the plan. Although the costs to buy a home are lower than in surrounding communities and local landlords have self-reported charging market rate or less for rent, Barre still falls short of the state's subsidized housing requirement. Expanding the supply of officially

designated affordable units will be essential to ensure that Barre remains an inclusive community where residents of all income levels can continue to live and thrive.

The Community Survey also revealed that many residents have an interest in housing rehabilitation. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents responded that they "extremely agree" that the town should encourage and support housing rehabilitation, energy efficiency, and home repairs.

Increase the Diversity of Housing Options Available to Residents

There are low vacancy rates in Barre, suggesting that additional housing units are needed. The predominance of single-family homes restricts opportunities for residents who wish to downsize, rent, or live in shared or assisted living communities. Zoning bylaw amendments, such as aligning with state accessory dwelling unit laws, may be a method for increasing the number and diversity of housing units in town, which would help meet the needs of residents and allow people to remain

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The current town bylaws on housing are too restrictive and discourage affordable housing.

(2023 Community Survey)

“

Barre should maximize any program that rehabilitates existing housing, including multiple family units, and make their current locations more attractive and habitable, rather than create new multi-unit housing units.

(2023 Community Survey)

“

As a younger person looking at starting a family the housing options are very limited in Barre. Apartments are very hard to find.

(2023 Community Survey)





Photo source: CMRPC

in the community throughout different stages of life.

Ensure That Necessary Development Occurs in a Manner That Preserves Open Space and the Town's Character

Community Survey responses and stakeholder interviews emphasized Barre's natural beauty. The Community Survey indicated that open space is a priority for land use, and concerns about overdevelopment and the protection of open space were noted in the comments. Residents expressed interest in supporting housing policies and bylaws that preserve Barre's open space and maintain the character of the town.

In contradiction, sixty percent of respondents note that additional housing development should happen on currently vacant parcels in Barre. To ensure that any additional development on vacant parcels does not contradict efforts to preserve open space, regulations will need to be created to direct development to desirable areas.

“

I think you need to keep construction to the “town centers” and keep as much land for agriculture, recreation and preservation as possible.

(2023 Community Survey)

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Maintaining the small town character above all else.

(2023 Community Survey)



HOUSING FINDINGS

Diversity In Housing Is Needed, In Both Cost and Structure

A diverse housing stock refers to a variety of housing forms available within a community. Made up of mostly single family homes, the uniformity of housing options in Barre results in a lack of options for residents. Older residents are unable to downsize or move into more communal living situations, and younger residents hoping to start families are priced out of buying homes. Diversifying housing structures in Barre by amending zoning to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), single-family homes on smaller lots, multi-family units, cottage-style housing, and senior housing can build a community in which young families can grow, middle-aged residents can downsize and seniors can age in place.

As the cost of housing in Barre has increased, the need for affordable housing has increased as well. Housing affordability is determined using the Area Median Income (AMI), also sometimes referred to as the median family income. Family income is the total income of all members of a household who are related, including

through marriage. The AMI is the midpoint of all family incomes in a designated area and is the benchmark that housing agencies use to classify households into income groups. Households earning 80% of the AMI are considered low-income. Barre is one of thirty-three municipalities included in the Worcester MA HUD Fair Market Area. The AMI for all households in this area is \$122,200. AMI is further broken out by number of family members; the AMI for a family of one is \$87,312, and 80% of that is \$69,850. Over 25% of Barre residents make less than \$69,850, and many jobs that are vital to the wellbeing of a community fall under the low-income limit. For example, in 2024 the average starting salary for teachers in Massachusetts was about \$51,000.³⁷

If a family of four makes 80% of the Area Median Income (\$99,750) and seeks to avoid spending more than

2.5 times their salary on a home, they would be able to spend \$249,375 or less. As discussed previously, the median value of a home in Barre is \$329,300, placing home ownership in town far out of reach for low-income families.

In Massachusetts, there are two types of affordable housing. The first is affordable housing that is eligible for listing on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). To be included on this list, the following requirements must be met: the unit is subsidized or approved by a recognized housing agency, has occupants with incomes at or below 80% of the AMI and is under a long-term or perpetual deed restriction.³⁸

37 CBS News, "Teachers would be paid a minimum salary of \$70,000 in Massachusetts if bill becomes law", 2025.

38 Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, "Subsidized Housing Inventory", 2025.

Median Family Income \$122,200	Persons in Family								
	FY 2025 Income Limit Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Extremely Low (30% AMI)	26,200	29,950	33,700	37,400	40,400	43,400	48,650	54,150
	Very Low (50% AMI)	43,650	49,900	56,150	62,350	67,350	72,350	77,350	82,350
	Low (80% AMI)	69,850	79,800	89,800	99,750	107,750	115,750	123,700	131,700

Figure H9: Income Categories by Persons in Family
Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Fiscal Year 2025 Income Limits



This type of affordable housing will be discussed using the term “SHI-eligible affordable housing.” The second type of affordable housing is not listed on the SHI and is sometimes referred to as “naturally occurring” affordable housing. This type of affordable housing does not have a long-term affordability restriction and is not usually subsidized or approved by a recognized housing agency, but the cost is currently affordable to those at or below 80% of the AMI. Non-SHI affordable housing, or naturally affordable housing, exists in Barre. However, these units are not considered when evaluating if Barre meets state affordable housing goals.

A provision of M.G.L. Chapter 40B seeks to increase units on the Subsidized Housing Inventory to at least 10% of the year-round housing units. It allows for a streamlined permitting process for affordable housing developments and for the approval of projects under flexible rules if 20-25% of the units have long-term affordability restrictions.³⁹ If a community has fewer than 10% of its year-round housing units listed on the SHI, the law enables developers to override the provisions of a town’s zoning bylaw, which can result in housing developments that are denser and out of character with the surrounding areas. It is important for

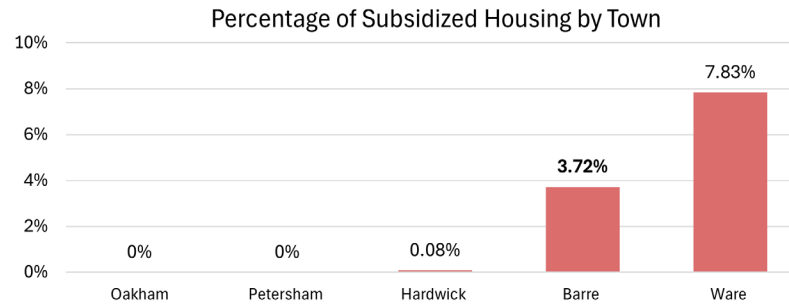


Figure H10: Percentage of Subsidized Housing by Town
 Source: Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Subsidized Housing Inventory 2025

Barre to work towards meeting the 10% SHI threshold to avoid the possibility of housing development that does not align with the town’s vision for the future.

Under Chapter 40B, towns can also participate in the Local Initiative Program (LIP) and partner with developers to create affordable housing. This program, also known as a “Friendly 40B,” encourages the creation of affordable housing by providing technical assistance to communities and developers who are working together to create affordable rental units. The program provides municipalities with a role in decision making and supplies technical assistance through the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.⁴⁰ Using the LIP option would give Barre more control over the type and location

of affordable rental units. Barre currently has 79 units of affordable housing listed on the SHI, which equates to 3.72% of the town’s total 2020 census year-round housing units (2,234); 66 of the units are managed by the Barre Housing Authority. The units include senior housing, housing for individuals with disabilities, and family units. Regionally, there is very little SHI-eligible affordable housing, as Barre and Ware are the only communities in the area with a substantial number of units on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. As of 2025, Barre needs 144 more units of affordable housing to reach the 10% minimum.

39 The 194th General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, “General Laws Part I Title VII Chapter 40B”, 2025.

40 Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, “Local Initiative Program”. n.d.



Residents Are Interested in Housing Rehabilitation

The results of the Community Survey reveal that housing rehabilitation and preservation are of interest to residents. Forty-five percent of respondents noted that additional resources for housing rehabilitation would be beneficial for Barre. Comments on the survey noted concerns about properties falling into disrepair and the costs of repairing these units.

One barrier to housing rehabilitation is cost. As the cost of materials continues to increase, some residents are not able to afford necessary upgrades and repairs but there are numerous grant and loan programs available to help mitigate the expense. Programs like the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP) can provide no interest loans to homeowners to increase the accessibility of homes for older adults and people with disabilities.⁴¹ Other programs, such as the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities' Heating System Repair & Replacement Program provides emergency heating system repair and replacement services to low-income households.⁴² To inform and connect residents to these and

other programs, the town could create a webpage on the town site and give presentations at public board and committee meetings.

In some cases, zoning regulations make housing rehabilitation difficult or even impossible. For example, certain apartment buildings are located in areas where current zoning does not permit multifamily housing. As a result, these properties are considered nonconforming, which can create significant challenges for owners seeking to renovate or rebuild. Although special permits can sometimes be used to address these issues, revising the zoning bylaws to reduce or eliminate such nonconformities would simplify the process, lower costs for homeowners, and make investment in existing housing more attractive to developers.

Open Space Preservation Is Important to Residents

The responses to the Community Survey point to an interest in open space protection, sustainability, and maintaining the rural character of the town. When asked if they agree with the statement "Barre should create housing policies and bylaws that protect the town's rural character and scenery,

"38% of respondents "Extremely agree" and 34% "Somewhat agree." Maintaining Barre's rural character is a key priority for many residents, and this is reflected in the town's zoning bylaws, which require large minimum lot sizes in residential districts. While large lot sizes allow for less residential density, they contribute to inefficient land use patterns by utilizing more undeveloped land for residential development and result in residential sprawl. This pattern of development can increase municipal costs by requiring the extension of roads and utilities to serve new homes and can also lead to greater traffic, vehicle emissions, and environmental impacts over time.

Utilizing development strategies that promote efficient land use, such as cluster development or infill in developed areas, can better protect the open space. Exploring the opportunities to develop a Transfer of Development Rights or cluster development bylaw could preserve valuable open space while making efforts to meet housing goals.

41 Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, "Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP)". n.d.
42 Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, "Heating System Repair & Replacement Program (HEARTWAP)", n.d.





Transfer of Development Rights is a land use planning tool that enables the transfer of development potential from areas designated for conservation or agriculture (sending areas) to areas identified for growth (receiving areas).⁴³ It allows landowners to sell the development rights of their land to developers, who can then use these rights to increase development beyond what is typically allowed under existing zoning regulations. Cluster development is a residential development concept in which individual homes are grouped together in clusters while sharing common open spaces and amenities. Cluster development allows for more homes in a smaller amount of space, making it a more efficient form of development. These practices are usually not used in tandem, so further research and discussion to determine which may be more well-suited for Barre will be necessary.

A Village Plan Can Help Guide Future Development

In the Community Survey, residents identified currently vacant parcels as the priority locations for housing development; however, not all housing types are suitable for all parcels. A strategy for matching new housing

development types to suitable vacant parcels is the creation of a Village Plan. A Village Plan identifies opportunities, challenges, and priorities for each village within a community to determine strategies and guidelines for future development.

The plan(s) would include an analysis of the conditions of each village, including physical conditions such as topography and soils, existing land use and zoning regulations, municipal sewer and water services, transportation infrastructure, market conditions, the location of vacant and underutilized lots, and any other conditions that may impact the potential residential development. The plan(s) can also outline landscaping and design guidelines to ensure that new development is consistent and compatible with the surrounding area. In 2021, a Village Plan was completed for South Barre as part of the Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program. This project aimed to provide the town with actionable, project-based recovery plans for key economic areas. The plan identified locations in South Barre that may be suitable for housing and suggested the implementation of programs such as a housing rehabilitation program.

⁴³ Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, "Transfer of Development Rights", 2023.

GOAL 1: ENCOURAGE THE REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION OF EXISTING HOUSING

Barre has a number of affordable housing units that are in need of renovation and long-term preservation. Investing in the homes that already provide affordable options will strengthen the community's overall housing stability.

STRATEGY 1.1: INCREASE TOWN STAFF'S CAPACITY TO ASSIST IN THE REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION OF HOUSING IN TOWN.

Establishing a dedicated town housing position would enhance coordination among the Housing Authority, residents, developers, landlords, and town boards. This role could also identify suitable land for new housing, support rehabilitation programs, connect residents to resources, coordinate grants and funding, and help advance the town's efforts to meet state affordable housing goals.

- 1.1.1: Seek funding to hire a Housing Coordinator or other specialized housing role.

- 1.1.2: Identify areas where new Housing Authority units could be built through collaboration between the Housing Authority and Planning Board.

STRATEGY 1.2: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO RESIDENTS LOOKING TO REHABILITATE OR UPDATE THEIR HOMES.

This program would minimize the financial cost of rehabilitation for homeowners, resulting in a housing stock that is safer, more efficient, and more accessible for residents.

- 1.2.1: Identify and apply for state

and federal grants, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), to fund the creation of a housing rehabilitation program.

- 1.2.2: Develop a priority list for housing rehabilitation projects including public housing, owner-occupied low and moderate-income homes, and rental properties serving low and moderate-income residents.

STRATEGY 1.3: CONNECT RESIDENTS TO AVAILABLE REHABILITATION RESOURCES.

State and nonprofit programs can assist residents with weatherization efforts, repairing septic systems, removing lead paint, and adding accessibility upgrades through grants or low interest loans.



- 1.3.1: Update the town website to connect residents with a list of assistance opportunities for household repairs, accessibility updates, and rental assistance.
- 1.3.2: Create a community outreach program to inform residents about available rehabilitation resources and incentives.



GOAL 2: INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF HOUSING IN BARRE.

Having a diverse housing stock is crucial to residents being able to thrive in all stages of life, from raising a family to being able to age in place. The majority of housing units in Barre are single-family housing units, which affects affordability and limits housing choices.

STRATEGY 2.1: CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF MEETING STATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS.

Barre can enhance its capacity to create and sustain affordable housing opportunities for current and future residents.

- 2.1.1: Seek funding for and complete a Housing Production Plan.
- 2.1.2: Utilize the Local Initiative Program (LIP) to collaborate with developers via comprehensive permits (“Friendly 40B”).
- 2.1.3: Strategically leverage state incentives for affordable housing such as the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and the Affordable Homes Act. See Strategy 1.1.5 in Land Use.
- 2.1.4: Identify opportunities to support the conversion of market rate homes into affordable housing,

such as a buydown program. See Strategy 1.2.6 in Land Use.

STRATEGY 2.2: MAKE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO TOWN ZONING BYLAWS TO INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF HOUSING.

Updating and refining zoning provisions would help expand the range of housing options available in Barre, supporting greater affordability and accommodating the needs of residents across different income levels and life stages.

- 2.2.1: Amend zoning bylaws to limit the number of special permits required for housing-related development.
- 2.2.2: Amend zoning bylaws to align with state Accessory Dwelling Unit guidelines.

- 2.2.3: Amend zoning bylaws to allow for apartment housing and mixed-use development in Business and Commercial Districts.
- 2.2.4: Amend zoning bylaws to allow for cottage developments.
- 2.2.5: Amend zoning requirements for setbacks, lot coverage, parking requirements, and height restrictions to make the rehabilitation of older, non-conforming units easier.
- 2.2.6: Identify opportunities to adopt bylaws that incentivize senior and affordable housing development.

STRATEGY 2.3: EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH LANDLORDS TO CREATE MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN BARRE.

Landlords play an important role in the creation and maintenance of affordable





housing and can provide important insight to town leaders and developers on housing needs in the area. Creating opportunities to share these insights with municipal officials, interested residents, and developers can create a more comprehensive dialogue around the state of housing in town.

- 2.3.1: Establish a committee to foster a dialogue between municipal officials, interested residents, local landlords, and developers on the creation of affordable housing in town.
- 2.3.2: Explore opportunities to incentivize landlords to deed restrict existing “naturally affordable” housing units and get them listed on the Subsidized Housing Inventory.



GOAL 3: OPTIMIZE OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION WHILE MEETING HOUSING-RELATED GOALS.

By developing land use regulations that prioritize open space protection, housing goals can be met without negatively impacting the character of the town, allowing both Barre's residents and the environment to flourish.



STRATEGY 3.1: UTILIZE LAND USE PRACTICES THAT PRIORITIZE THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE.

Land use planning tools can be impactful in encouraging density in appropriate locations, while at the same time preserving rural lands.

- 3.1.1: Explore the potential for a Transfer of Development Rights bylaw.
- 3.1.2: Consider utilizing zoning incentives like density bonuses to encourage affordable housing in appropriate areas and enhance open-space protection.
- 3.1.3: Explore the potential for a cluster development bylaw.

STRATEGY 3.2: TAILOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TO EACH VILLAGE AREA IN BARRE.

Each village area in Barre is unique, with its own history of land use and development. When developing new housing, or rehabilitating older housing, it is important to ensure that these developments meet the specific needs of each area.

- 3.2.1: Seek funding and develop Village Plans for the villages of Barre Center and Barre Plains.

