

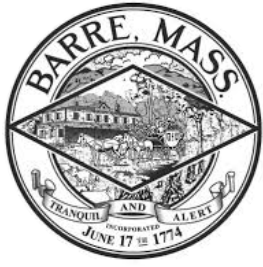
— TOWN OF —



BARRE *Massachusetts*

2026 MASTER PLAN





TOWN OF BARRE MASTER PLAN 2026

Adopted on April 21, 2026

A comprehensive Master Plan prepared with technical assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community Compact program and an Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Planning Grant.





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INTRODUCTION

What is a Master Plan?

A master plan is a long-range strategic plan for a community. 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 their communities. Master plans should be regularly updated to reflect community changes. The Town of Barre undertook its master plan process under these provisions.

This master plan was created by and for Barre residents. It is a statement of how the community would like to navigate development, economy, and society over the next 10-20 years. 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 crucial decisions regarding spending, infrastructure projects, and zoning bylaws are made.

This master plan presents an opportunity for Barre 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, preferences, and information at the time of plan publication. It is expected that the needs of Barre will evolve over the lifespan of this plan.

Thank you to the volunteers who contributed their valuable time and energy. Thank you to Town staff, boards, and committees for their input. Finally, thank you to the Barre Master Plan Steering Committee for guiding the process and shepherding the plan to completion.



*Residents participate in a workshop to identify community needs and preferences.
Photo Source: CMRPC*



PRIOR PLANNING

The 2025 Master Plan builds on prior planning efforts undertaken by the Town of Barre in recent years.

2022 Town of Barre Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

The Center for Living and Working, Inc., in partnership with James M. Mazik, AICP, prepared a self-evaluation and transition plan for the Town to determine its compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

2021 Town of Barre Rapid Recovery Plan

CMRPC assisted the Town with a Rapid Recovery Plan that assessed economic challenges and COVID-19- related impacts to commercial areas.

2020 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan

This plan uncovers the top hazards facing the Town of Barre based on climate predictions, the state of Town infrastructure, and projected trends.

2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

This plan identifies the natural hazards facing the Town of Barre. It assesses vulnerabilities of critical facilities, infrastructure, residents, and businesses, and presents recommendations on how to mitigate the negative effects of natural hazards.

2019 Economic Development Strategic Plan and 2021 South Barre Village Strategic Plan

In this two-part project, CMRPC identified economic development assets and opportunities with a special focus on South Barre.

2018 Quabbin Educational and Municipal Partnership Recommendations Report

This report reviews school strategies and building reuse scenarios. It explores cross-jurisdictional collaboration opportunities between the Quabbin Regional School District (QRSD) and

other school districts, opportunities for shared services and joint procurement, and avenues to support economic development.

2010 Barre Open Space & Recreation Plan

An Open Space and Recreation Committee identified opportunities to improve and enhance the Town's open space and recreation resources. The official plan was completed in 2021.

2008 Barre Reconnaissance Report

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, CMRPC, and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program to fifteen communities in Central Massachusetts. The program sought to help communities identify a wide range of landscape resources, particularly those that were significant and unprotected, and to provide communities with strategies for preserving heritage landscapes.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Town of Barre established this master plan using the American Planning Association Standards for Sustaining Places. These standards are foundational to the vision, goals, strategies, and action items that comprise the master plan. They informed all aspects of the master plan and should be used as guiding principles for implementation.¹

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

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 safety.

Responsible Regionalism

Ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the 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 and achieving desired outcomes.

Resilient Economy

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

¹ Godschalk, David; Rouse, David. "Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plans". American Planning Association (2001).



GLOSSARY

Policy

A statement of principles that underlies a plan's overall strategy and directs decision-making.²

Vision Statement

A statement that describes a community's long-term aspirations based on a 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.³

Goal

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

Strategy

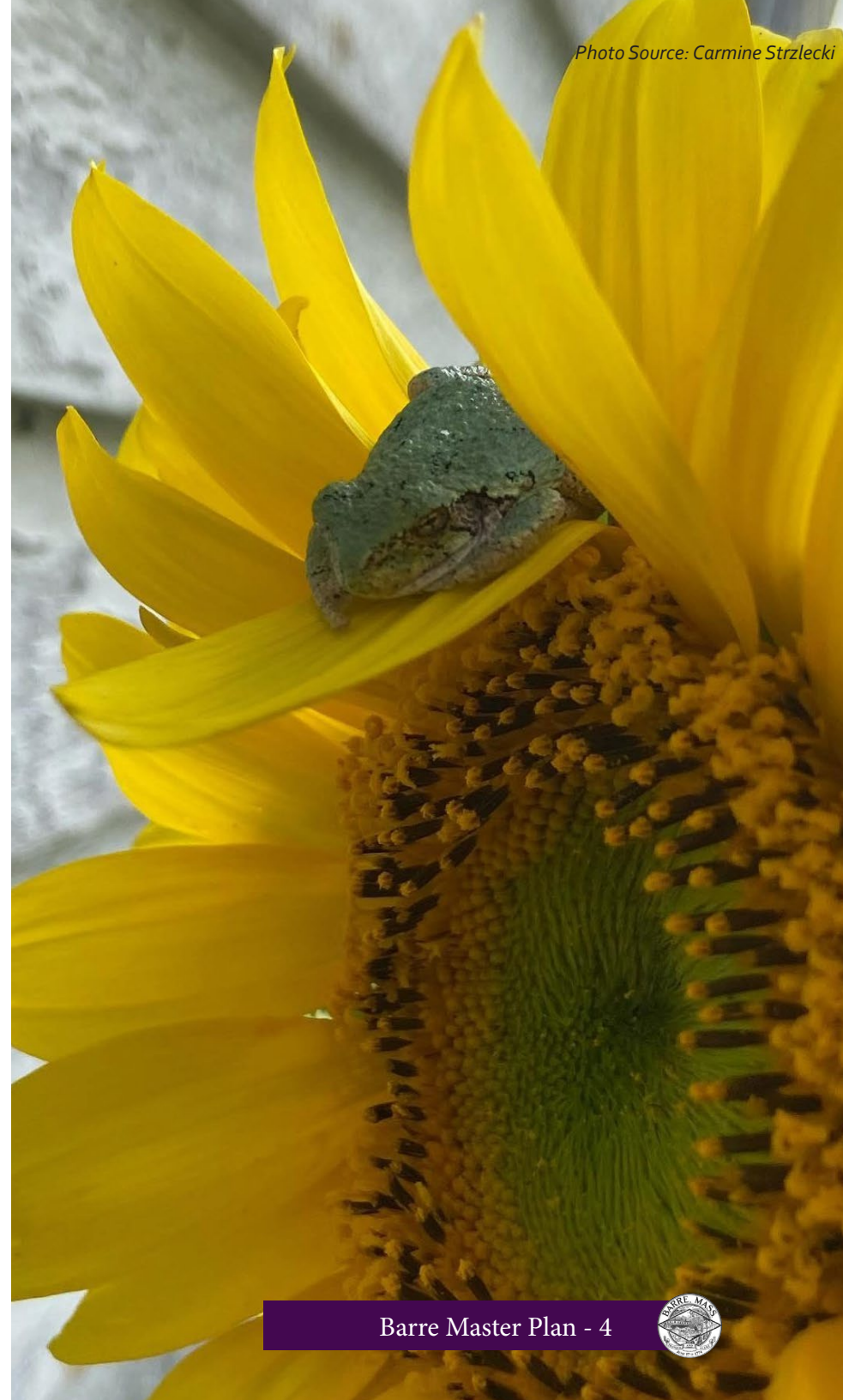
An approach designed to achieve or accomplish a goal.

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 strategies.

2 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.

3 Haines, Anna. "Using Visioning in a Comprehensive Planning Process." University of Wisconsin Extension (2001).



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful community engagement is at the heart of this plan. Resident ideas were collected through a master plan survey, a student survey, and a workshop. Nearly seven hundred people answered the Phase I surveys, and over one hundred people attended the visioning workshop. Input from survey results, workshop discussions, stakeholder interviews, and Master Plan Steering Committee meetings helped inform the vision and priorities in this plan. Survey and workshop results are in Appendix A. Secondary data such as census data and analysis is in Appendix B.



Residents participate in a workshop to identify community needs and preferences. Over 100 Barre residents participated in the event. Photo Source: CMRPC

Barre Community Visioning Night at Stone Cow Brewery

Help inform Barre's future!




What is this about?

Barre is in the process of updating its municipal master plan. This plan will serve as a future vision and policy guide for the town. This visioning workshop is a key opportunity for community members to voice their concerns and interests for Barre's future.

Benefits of visioning:

- + The master plan will be better aligned with the interests of the community
- + Barre residents will get an opportunity to learn more about the interests and needs of their neighbors



Who can attend?

This workshop is open to the public. Free pizza to the first 100 guests! Kids activities on site.



Where?

Stone Cow Brewery
500 West St. B, Barre,
MA 01005



When?

Wed, March 1st, 2023
Time: 5:00-7:30.

Registration is appreciated (but not mandatory). To register, visit townofbarremasterplan.com

WELCOME TO BARRE

The Town of Barre was named after Isaac Barré, a member of the British Parliament who opposed the taxation of America.⁴ It is a rural community of approximately 5,500 people.⁵ Located 61 miles from Boston and 22 miles northwest of Worcester, it is located in the center of Massachusetts.

Its 45 square miles include three villages: Barre (also known as Barre

Center), South Barre, and Barre Plains. It is located along the Lost Villages Scenic Byway, a picturesque stretch of Route 122 whose name nods to the relocation of various villages to make way for the Quabbin Reservoir. A bedroom community, Barre offers quiet living within reasonable commuting distance of the Worcester and Boston metro areas.

Barre is governed by a three-member Board of Selectmen and an Open Town Meeting form of government. It is part of the Quabbin Regional School District and home to the Quabbin Regional Middle High School.

Barre is known for its unspoiled landscapes and small-town character. Rolling fields, country lanes, and a slow pace are central to the local identity. The town is characterized by a historic town common surrounded by rural single-family housing and agricultural land. Pockets of commercial development dot major roadways, and limited denser housing development is found in certain villages.

Located in Barre Center, Barre Common is a focal point of the community. A weekly farmers' market and other events bring together residents and visitors for festive moments. Small shops and public buildings ring the Common, with the Town Hall located a few blocks up the street. The Barre



*A Barre firefighter participates in festivities on the Town Common.
Photo source: Town Common District Facebook.*

⁴ Town of Barre
<https://www.townofbarre.com/about>

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



Players Theater draws community theater patrons to the village center throughout the year. In South Barre, small pocket parks, pavilions, and playgrounds serve a somewhat denser residential neighborhood.

Those seeking spiritual or natural retreat are often drawn to Barre. The town has several spiritual centers, including a Buddhist monastery. The Barre Falls Recreation Area, Mohawk Trail, and the Quabbin Reservoir are popular among nature lovers. The largest inland water body in Massachusetts, the reservoir offers hiking, walking trails, bird watching, snowshoeing, and scenic views, within and beyond Barre. The town is also popular with ATV users and horse riders, who frequent the lesser-known paths that crisscross Barre's forests.

With 75% of the town forested, it is possible to travel miles under a quiet canopy. A rich industrial history also sets Barre apart. During the Industrial Revolution, Barre became known for producing farming equipment and palm leaf hats. During the Civil War, it supplied much of the gunpowder used by the Union Army.⁶ Vestiges of this history can be found in Barre Plains and South Barre, where immigrant families settled to work in the mills. Former

mill buildings, worker housing, and the historic Polish/Lithuanian and Italian neighborhoods speak to the recent past, memorialized by Nornay Park.

The town is also historically noteworthy for the case of Quock Walker, an enslaved person who, in 1781, fled his captors, sued for freedom, and won. Walker's escape from Worcester to his hometown near present-day Barre is celebrated across Massachusetts each July 8 ("Emancipation Day"). Walker's case abolished slavery in the State of Massachusetts, with the courts determining that slavery was contrary to the State Constitution and Bible. Barre residents are proud of their connection to this landmark case, which represents the earliest abolition of slavery in the United States.⁷

Barre is predominantly Caucasian, middle-class, and English-speaking. Approximately 90% of the residents identify as white alone, with bi-racial Black or African American and white residents representing the most sizeable minority (5.4%).⁸ English is spoken at home by 98% of residents. Compared to nearby communities and Massachusetts, the town has modest per-capita and median household incomes (\$37,463 and \$81,109, respectively).⁹



A rendering of Quock Walker, a formerly enslaved resident of present-day Barre who sued for his freedom in 1781 and won. Walker's lawsuit verdict resulted in the first abolition of slavery in the United States. Photo source: Barremahistory.com

6 Historic New England. "BARRE, Massachusetts" <https://newenglandtowns.org/massachusetts/barre>

7 Peddle, Meghan "Quock Walker" <https://barremahistory.wixsite.com/quockwalker/quock-and-elizabeth-walker>

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

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



By various metrics, South Barre is disadvantaged compared to the rest of Barre, with a younger and poorer population and a substantial portion of the population residing in older rental properties. Until recently, it was classified as an environmental justice area. In 2020, the median household income in South Barre was \$76,859, 75.8% of the statewide average, and 80.4% of Barre.¹⁰

Barre’s population has grown since the 1960s, with a boom between 1990 and 2010. However, growth slowed in recent decades, at just 5.4 percent between 2000 and 2010 and 2.6 percent between 2010 and 2020.¹¹ 2040 Population projections for the town vary. UMass Donahue Institute forecasts slight decline to about 5,000 residents, while CMRPC projections estimate significant growth to over 6,000 residents in 2040.¹²

Although Barre is one of the more affordable towns in the region with most homes valued between \$200,000 and \$499,999,¹³ there is still a disparity between housing needs and availability that needs to be addressed. Approximately 43.5% of renters and 19.1% of homeowners are housing cost-burdened, and a shortage of modestly priced units threatens the tenure of

retirees, early-career workers, young families, and those who grew up in Barre and wish to remain in or return to their hometown.¹⁴

10 United States Census Bureau, “American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates”, 2020.

11 United States Census Bureau, “Decennial Census” 2000, 2010, 2020.

12 UMass Donahue Institute Massachusetts Population Projections https://donahue.umass.edu/business-groups/economic-public-policy-research/massachusetts-population-estimates-program/population-projections#projections_dashboard
CMRPC Regional Projections <https://cmrpc.org/data-center/socio-economic-projections/>

13 United States Census Bureau, “American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates”, 2023.

14 United States Census Bureau, “American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates”, 2023.

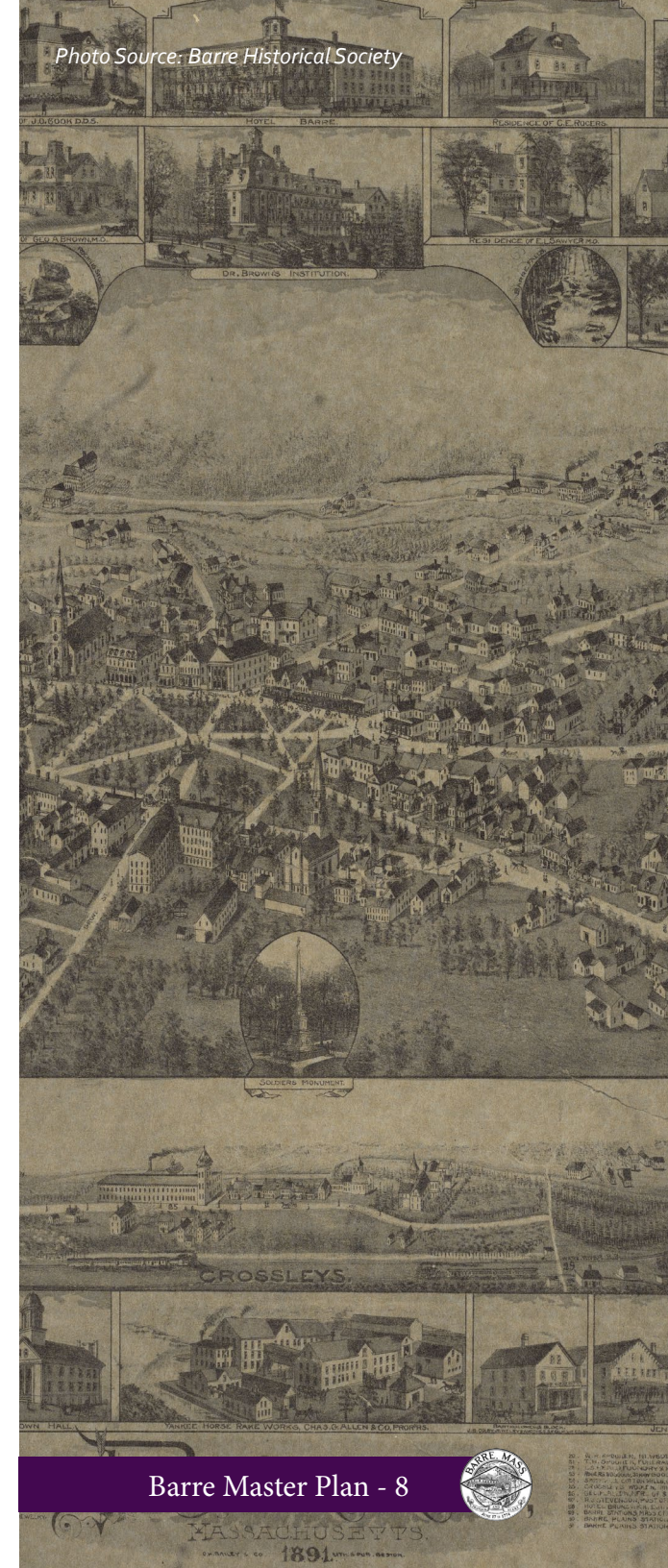


Photo Source: Barre Historical Society



VISION STATEMENT

“Barre is a tranquil and alert small town with a strong sense of community. We seek to honor our agricultural heritage and cherish the farms, open spaces, and small local businesses that define our community by balancing preservation and growth to maintain rural charm, vibrancy, and high quality education and public services.”

Creating the vision statement

Visioning is a process in which communities define the future they want. A vision statement lays out what the community should look like physically, socially, and environmentally in the next ten to twenty years.

This vision statement is based on input from hundreds of Barre residents. It guides the entire Master Plan, with all goals, strategies, and action items falling underneath.

“

“We love Barre because of the quiet, rural way of life. We love the farms and small businesses... But we are hoping that new development does not change the character and quietness of the town. That is what makes this place truly special and wonderful.”

“Barre is a great rural town. More can be done to make it more appealing. Center of town needs updating. Glad to see new planning in town government. Everyone needs change in their lives.”

“Cluster zoning around all villages rather than widespread roadside development.”

“We need to carefully preserve our rural character, while encouraging small businesses, locally owned.”

“Keep new construction to the ‘town centers’ and keep as much land for agriculture, recreation and preservation as possible.”

“Focus on quality and not quantity. There’s a reason Barre is pretty nice compared to other places. Don’t screw it up”

“We URGENTLY need better public transportation for seniors. The current senior van services are extremely inadequate”

(2023 Community Survey)



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Barre has a rich agricultural and industrial history. Farms dot the countryside and wool mills can still be found in South Barre, where the Ware River enabled industrial growth. Many residents have ties to Barre that go back generations. A close-knit community and connection to the land have helped Barre preserve its small-town character.

Contemporary Barre has a small but vibrant commercial sector. The town has great economic potential and can encourage and support entrepreneurial activity as well as existing businesses.

Through community engagement, the Master Plan team heard requests for more local businesses, a new fitness

facility, and improvements to South Barre Village. Such changes are realistic and well-suited to the town's existing character.

Compared to neighboring towns, Barre boasts a high commercial and residential levy. As of February 2026, Barre is home to approximately 250 businesses. The largest employers are the Seven Hills Foundation, the Quabbin Regional School District, and Camp Coldbrook. The top industries for residents are education services, health care, and construction.¹⁵

This chapter will highlight strategies to support existing businesses, employees, and budding entrepreneurs.

THEMES

- New locally-owned shops
- New fitness facility
- South Barre Village improvements
- Town Center improvements
- Maintain agricultural roots

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Massachusetts Department of Economic Research <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/lmi/CitiesAndTowns>

Barre Common. Photo Source: CMRPC



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEFINITIONS

Economic Development

Encompasses all community efforts to build a strong and resilient economy. On a local governance scale, economic development is the process of dividing a community's limited resources to support business growth, employment, and income distribution patterns.

Agritourism

Any farm activity that brings people onto the farm. Typically links agricultural production to entertaining visitors to make agricultural business activity more financially feasible.

Ecotourism

Any tourism activity that connects people with natural facets of the environment. Typically linked with conservation efforts to preserve the environment while improving quality of life and sustainable commercial activity.

Low Impact Development

Connects engineering and design with the natural flow of stormwater and other natural processes such as using

pavement with gaps designed for rainwater to permeate. It is important to consider when developing near bodies of water at risk of stormwater pollution.

Mixed-Use

The combination of residential and commercial uses on the same lot. Traditionally done through first-floor commercial space and dwelling units above.

Placemaking

Shapes public spaces to foster community and belonging by leveraging assets and connections between people and their community. Murals depicting community values, beautification projects, historical preservation and monuments, and events can all bring more meaning and connection to a town.

Smart Growth

Smart growth is an "approach to development that encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, development within existing

neighborhoods, and robust community engagement."¹⁶ The smart growth principles are useful in identifying best practices in contemporary community planning policy.

Streetscape Improvements

Any improvements to the road network that make people feel safe, or that beautify the space. Can include sidewalks, street crossings, benches, bike racks, and street lighting. Related to economic development through attracting foot traffic.

Walkability

Improving how welcome a person feels walking in an area, not just sidewalks. Includes vehicle speed, sidewalk grade and width, lighting, and building proximity.

Wayfinding

Signage that directs visitors and residents to local landmarks, shops, and trails. Can demarcate and create distinct senses of place for different areas of a town.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Town Center Improvements

Quality of life is the highest priority for Barre residents. This includes opportunities for job growth and youth jobs, equitable access to health care, food and goods, and commercial corridors that enable a strong and supportive community.

Barre has exceptional natural beauty, river access, and significant cultural assets. The preservation of Barre's small-town feel and landscapes emerged as a key priority during Master Plan community engagement. An effective way to meet the needs of residents while preserving land is to direct higher-density development to key locations in the village centers.

Like much of Central Massachusetts, commercial development emerged in mill centers around dense worker housing and a town common. Car-oriented travel may make this development pattern confusing to residents and visitors. To assist with wayfinding and placemaking, signage for attractions and clear paths for multi-modal transportation and parking can connect residents with brick-and-mortar experiences.

The first step toward revitalizing Barre's village centers is a comprehensive zoning review. Zoning bylaws with strict distinctions between commercial and residential areas provide limited flexibility for business owners and developers. Through the development

of new use and dimensional regulations that match the Master Plan vision, Barre can accommodate its aging population, new families, and young adults looking for housing. Village mixed-use zoning allows for access to goods and services in a walkable neighborhood. Allowing apartments in mixed-use buildings with first-floor commercial development will benefit property owners and lead to the construction of more cost-accessible units.

Once zoning is updated to create a business-friendly environment, the Town can engage in smaller economic development projects to support existing businesses and encourage local spending. Community groups



Cafe on the Common .Photo source: CMRPC

like the Barre Business Group, the South Barre Common Committee, the Cultural Council, the Parks and Recreation Committee, and the Council on Aging can take on the role of an Economic Development Commission by promoting existing businesses, installing placemaking and wayfinding infrastructure, and creating events to generate foot traffic.

Through these efforts, the Town can encourage the types of businesses residents in Barre desire: locally-owned restaurants and cafes, a new gas station, a fitness center, and recreation opportunities.

The Village of South Barre needs the most business support, zoning changes, and investment.

Zoning updates should encourage mixed-use buildings, walkable neighborhoods, and low-impact development to protect the Ware River.

Barre Plains Village Center has similar needs to South Barre. A project such as Nornay Park could enhance the Village Center and bring connectivity to the surrounding area.

Barre residents have immense pride in their town and the small businesses that

make it unique. Planning and investing in locally-owned businesses will bring revenue and jobs to the town and build a strong, accountable community.

PLACEMAKING IN BARRE
Programming is one way that people develop a connection to a place. Barre can continue hosting town events and activities that connect people and facilitate economic activity.



“Feet on the street” are also important to sense of place and economic development. Barre’s two-story commercial buildings with housing units can contribute to small-town community and aesthetic charm.



Wayfinding and branding are important to placemaking. Cost effective, attractive signage can draw in tourists and enhance community pride.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINDINGS

New Mom and Pop Shops

When asked which types of commercial development Barre needs more of, nearly eighty percent of respondents requested more family-operated businesses and mom-and-pop stores. When prompted to explain the challenges Barre faces concerning economic development, “not enough local jobs” was the top answer.

In part, commercial development has lagged in Barre due to limited available commercial land. This can be addressed. There is potential to modify zoning regulations in a way that clusters small businesses in existing commercial areas to increase the tax base while sustaining a unique small-town feel. Barre has the potential for growth in ecotourism and agritourism, historical tourism, lodging, restaurants, breweries, general merchandise, convenience stores, gas stations, and auto repair.

The Town can support businesses by underscoring its sense of place through historical preservation and programming. Key assets such as the historic town hall, library, and other town center buildings should

be preserved and complemented by aesthetic elements such as historic markers, design elements, and programming. The town’s connection to the Quock Walker cases is historically significant and presents opportunities for celebrations and activities that drive commercial activity.

South Barre Village Improvements

South Barre needs streetscape improvements, business support, and job opportunities. Placemaking and wayfinding tools crafted to enhance the area’s rich history and culture will build community pride and attract visitors.

Existing businesses in the area should be supported by the Town through straightforward permitting processes. New developments can be incentivized to conserve land, enable pedestrian and cyclist access, and preserve rural

“

Focus on South Barre. It really needs help!

(2023 Community Survey)

character. Re-envisioning the land around the Ware River and Mill Canal along Route 32 can be a catalyst for the area. Zoning changes will be needed to support the added density with housing and walkable services.

Maintain Agricultural Roots

The Town of Barre has the potential to leverage nearly one hundred nearby farms to maintain its agricultural roots and innovate modern farming practices. Agriculture has been a pivotal part of Barre’s history. Supporting existing and new farms will preserve Barre’s culture and secure a resilient future for the Barre community. The Stone Cow Brewery is an excellent example of modernizing farming practices, in this case adding brewing, to make the preservation of farmland financially feasible. The Town can encourage similar practices, such as new growing technologies, farm stands, and utilizing farmland for event spaces.

Town Center Improvements

At the heart of Barre, the town common has an opportunity to



preserve and enhance the character of the town center. Surveyed residents supported more business opportunities in existing buildings, new mixed-use development, and more design guidelines to maintain character in the town common. The current commercial zoning areas on South Street and Common Street are saturated with active commercial properties. A zoning change for the area could incentivize targeted new developments that integrate with Barre’s small-town feel while activating the area. Zoning changes should prepare for future needs of the existing commercial buildings, including renovations, expansions, and opportunities for mixed-use.

Town Center businesses can be supported through soft economic development improvements, such as one-off, annual, and recurring events

that generate community engagement and attract day trip visitors. The farmers’ market is an example of an event that brings foot traffic to the businesses on South Street and Common Street.

New Town Fitness Facility

Master Plan workshop participants identified a new fitness facility as the top request for new businesses. The Master Plan survey found a similar pattern, with many requests for a gym, fitness center, and new recreation options. The Town of Barre can identify appropriate lots and developers to ensure potential new facilities are welcomed.

“

Improving both the center of Barre and the common in South Barre where many activities and festivals take place would be a great service for both residents and to attract more visitors. More retail and walkability in the two areas would be fantastic.

(2023 Community Survey)



GOAL 1: ENCOURAGE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION.

The Town of Barre has great potential to optimize its natural charm for residents and tourists alike. In a time of high inflation, traffic, and fees, free public access to natural amenities is crucial for quality of life.



Ware River. Photo source: CMRPC

STRATEGY 1.1. EXPAND PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE WARE RIVER.

Running through South Barre, the Ware River has untapped potential for increased waterfront commercial and recreational activities. A restoration and design of the riverfront and canal can function as a catalyst project for the village center, connecting residents and beautifying the area by highlighting natural assets.

- 1.1.1 Assess options for adding public launch access on the Ware River.
- 1.1.2. Consult with MassDEP about the contamination concerns at Powder Mill Pond, where there was formerly a public beach. Explore testing and possible remediation of the water body and the nearby dump.
- 1.1.3. Assess options for restoration

of the Mill Pond and Canal (formerly Rich's Pond). Study the feasibility of filling in the canal to create a new greenspace.

- 1.1.3. Explore opportunities for commercial development along the river and canal.

STRATEGY 1.2. EXPAND THE MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL.

According to the Mass Central Rail Trail Feasibility Study completed in March 2021 by MassDOT, Barre has options for potential expansion of the trail into South Barre Village through routes south of Route 32. A western expansion of the Rail Trail has the potential to link with waterfront access to Powder Mill Pond and potential projects described in Strategy 1.1.

- 1.2.1. Establish a committee to help foster the development of the Mass



Central Rail Trail in Barre.

- 1.2.2. Partner with Mass Trails to determine the best route for expansion and connections.
- 1.2.3. Install bicycle infrastructure, including bicycle stands, around the Rail Trail.
- 1.2.4. Explore opportunities to continue bicycle paths on nearby roads to encourage riders into commercial corridors.

STRATEGY 1.3
ASSESS THE CURRENT TRAIL SYSTEM AND PLAN FOR INCREASED MAINTENANCE AND EXPANSION.

To inspire a sense of pride and ownership in Barre’s trail system, a committee can be formed to oversee maintenance needs and expansion plans for any public trails not maintained by other entities. This committee can enhance wayfinding for visitors and promote trail accessibility around town and online. Well-marketed trails have the potential to drive foot traffic to existing businesses.

- 1.3.1. Establish a formal Trails Committee to volunteer for additional maintenance needs.
- 1.3.2. Assess wayfinding needs for

local trails near trailheads and in village centers.

- 1.3.3. Assess options for expanding trail access for hiking, biking, horse riding, and ATVs, especially near commercial corridors.
- 1.3.4. Create a comprehensive trail map and online resources for trail access.
- 1.3.5 Boost wayfinding on and around Mass Central Rail Trail for local services and restaurants.

“ ———

Barre is a great town with rich history and great agricultural value. Support the land owners and farmers and protect their land.

Preserve the woods and natural spaces and allow for more outdoor recreational vehicles as it is a growing hobby for lots residents in town

(2023 Community Survey)



GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE NEW SMALL BUSINESSES TO OPEN AND SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES.

The Town of Barre can re-evaluate town policies, regulations, and procedures to be more business friendly, especially for the growing sectors of agritourism and ecotourism. To support existing businesses, the Town can tap into community and region-wide assets.



Stone Cow Brewery and Farm. Photo source: CMRPC

STRATEGY 2.1. ADAPT THE ZONING BYLAWS TO REFLECT THE VISION OF THIS MASTER PLAN.

Barre's zoning regulations include patchwork commercial districts that reflect how land is currently used but do not inspire a vision for how land could be used in the coming years. Zoning regulations should follow Smart Growth Principles to ensure the town can meet the residential and commercial needs of its residents while preserving open land. Using mixed-use zoning in carefully designed village centers is an effective way to add density while maintaining the historical charm of Barre. To speak to the unique conditions and needs of Barre's commercial corridors, distinct zoning regulations should be created for Town Center, South Barre, and Barre Plains.

- 2.1.1. Complete a comprehensive review of Barre's Zoning Bylaws.
- 2.1.2. Assess current use and dimensional requirements for all commercial zones to follow Smart Growth Principles.
- 2.1.3. Enact village zoning in the Town Center to increase the potential for commercial and mixed-use development by-right onto streets abutting the Common, including School Street, Newton Street, Mechanic Street, and Barre Road.
- 2.1.4. Enact village zoning in South Barre to increase the potential for mixed-use and commercial development on Main Street and Vernon Ave, with special consideration for parcels abutting Ware River.
- 2.1.5. Enact village zoning in Barre Plains Village to incentivize more dense commercial strips.



STRATEGY 2.2. STREAMLINE PERMITTING PROCESSES.

Developers often decide whether to invest in a community based on perceptions of the town as “business-friendly.” Through transparent and efficient permitting processes, Barre may attract new businesses, including a gas station, a fitness center, and dining establishments. Ensuring a business-friendly environment will help incentivize developers to invest in Barre.

- 2.2.1. Assess Site Plan Review criteria for opportunities to eliminate subjectivity and make the process more predictable.
- 2.2.2. Where appropriate, streamline permitting processes for desired business types by replacing Special Permit with Site Plan Review. Site Plan Review is generally seen as more predictable and appealing by developers.
- 2.2.3. Consider implementing a tiered Site Plan Review process so that minor developments are not subject to the same level of review complexity as large-scale developments.
- 2.2.4. Create a Permitting Guidebook to clarify the permitting

process for developers and prospective business owners.

- 2.2.5. Designate a single point of contact to shepherd developers and prospective business owners through the permitting process.
- 2.2.6. Research and assess the utility of various permit tracking software for enhancing the issuance and enforcement of permits.

STRATEGY 2.3. ENCOURAGE AGRITOURISM AND ECOTOURISM VENTURES.

The emerging agritourism and ecotourism sectors are fantastic ways to bring visitors to Barre, increase local jobs, and celebrate the history and culture of the community. To tap into these growth markets, Barre can take the following actions:

- 2.3.1. Assess zoning to ensure flexibility for agritourism and ecotourism ventures (e.g., allowing on-farm events, overnight accommodation, and concerts).
- 2.3.2. Assess underutilized parcels for their potential to support ecotourism and agritourism ventures. Consider developing a conceptual site design for high-ranking lots and market the sites

to potential developers and businesses.

- 2.3.3. Collaborate with the Quabbin Regional School District and local farmers to create educational and mentoring opportunities for students interested in agriculture.
- 2.3.4. Incorporate agritourism and ecotourism strategies in the agenda of the Agricultural Commission.
- 2.3.5. Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) as a funding source for municipal agritourism and ecotourism strategies and other preservation measures.
- 2.3.6. Consider promoting the Lost Villages Scenic Byway as an ecotourism corridor in the town.
- 2.3.7. Consider adopting a scenic roads bylaw to restrict certain activities that could alter the appearance or character of specified roadways in town.
- 2.3.8. Consider the development of a municipal agritourism and ecotourism master plan.
- 2.3.9. Relaunch the “Quabbin Country” branding campaign, a previous effort among the Towns of Barre, Hardwick, Hubbardston, New Braintree, and Oakham to promote the region and its agritourism and ecotourism commercial bases.



STRATEGY 2.4.
ENCOURAGE THE
DEVELOPMENT OF TOWN-
OWNED, UNOCCUPIED, OR
VACANT LAND IN SOUTH BARRE
VILLAGE AND OTHER VILLAGE
CENTERS.

The 2021 South Barre Village Strategic Plan identified many town-owned, unoccupied, or vacant property parcels in South Barre Village. Developing these properties, some of which border the Ware River, presents an opportunity to introduce more small-scale commercial development to the town without compromising its small-town, rural character.

- 2.4.1. Create a vacant property inventory to ensure that underutilized properties are known and brought to the attention of Town staff and boards.
- 2.4.2. Create a Vacant Properties Action plan to help ensure that vacant properties are returned to productive use.
- 2.4.3. Investigate the need for assessment and cleanup of contamination at possible brownfield sites, such as the Barre Wool Mill property and the former Barre landfill on Town Farm Road.

STRATEGY 2.5.
FOSTER SUPPORT FOR EXISTING
BUSINESS AND POTENTIAL
BUSINESS OWNERS.

Fundamental to creating a friendly local business environment is providing business owners with tools and support to help them succeed. Barre can achieve this by embracing proven frameworks for downtown economic development and drawing on the resources and knowledge of local and regional business organizations.

- 2.5.1. Connect Barre business owners to the Worcester Business Resource Alliance and North Central Chamber of Commerce.
- 2.5.2. Support expansion of the Barre Business Alliance.
- 2.5.3. Create a “Discover Barre” page geared toward tourists.
- 2.5.4. Join the Main Street America Program. Main Street America offers various educational resources and services to advance preservation-based economic development in historic downtowns.
- 2.5.5. Consider creating a Facade and Storefront Improvement Program. Other nearby communities that have organized recent facade programs include the Town of

Ashburnham, the Town of Upton, and the City of Gardner.

- 2.5.6. Explore the possibility of forming an Economic Development Committee. Composed of local business owners, the committee would complement the Barre Business Alliance and provide guidance, support, and advocacy for the town’s economic development initiatives.



GOAL 3: PRESERVE BARRE'S SMALL-TOWN CHARM.

Small-town charm is part of what makes Barre so special. Enhancements to the Town Common, South Barre, and Barre Plains will underscore the Town's sense of place and drive business activity.



Photo source: Salvatore Strzelecki

STRATEGY 3.1. CREATE BRANDING FOR SOUTH BARRE, BARRE PLAINS, AND TOWN COMMON AREAS.

Consistent branding, including colors, fonts, and phrases can enhance the small-town charm of specific neighborhoods and commemorate history. Branding can be used in micro-infrastructure projects such as lamp-post banners and signage, as well as online marketing materials such as websites, Facebook events, and newspaper articles. The Nornay Park website is a notable example of effective marketing. Similar pages can be embedded into the Town website for commercial corridors, attractions, and recreation.

- 3.1.1. Create branding identities for village centers including logos, banners, landscaping, and signage.
- 3.1.2. Utilize branding identities to create "shop local" campaigns,

economic development events, and tourism.

- 3.1.3. Assess current wayfinding for local attractions and commercial corridors.
- 3.1.4. Install new wayfinding signage and maps for visitors.
- 3.1.5. Assess geo-tagging of amenities and attractions through Google Maps to ensure clarity.

STRATEGY 3.2. ENCOURAGE AND LEAD TOWN-WIDE EVENTS TO FACILITATE FOOT TRAFFIC AND COMMUNITY PRIDE.

Community events, including farmers' markets, craft fairs, festivals, movie nights, and themed events are an effective method for increasing foot traffic in rural towns. History themed events may present a unique draw. The Town should assess current barriers for groups and organizations to lead events at town-owned land and



buildings. Strategy 3.1 will assist visitors in making second and third stops in Barre corridors before and after large events.

- 3.2.1. Continue supporting the Barre Town Common Farmers' Market.
- 3.2.2. Assess current permitting procedures for one-off events at the Town Common, South Barre Common, Nornay Park, and Felton Field to encourage event planning efficiency.
- 3.2.3. Explore events that leverage Barre's unique history, including the Quock Walker cases. A race and celebration honoring the abolition of slavery and the Walkers would be unique.
- 3.2.3. Facilitate partnerships with local and regional communication outlets (such as Discover Central Mass) to promote local events.
- 3.2.4. Explore additional methods to promote town events (such as electronic signage, newsletters, social media).

STRATEGY 3.3: SUPPORT COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS THROUGH AESTHETIC IMPROVEMENTS.

To assist small businesses facing rising costs, the Town should assess the needs of business owners and explore options for financial support. These tasks are typically overlooked in smaller towns with less municipal capacity. To acknowledge this gap, the Barre Business Alliance can take responsibility for business support functions.

- 3.3.1. Assess needs through business owner surveys.
- 3.3.2. Explore options for facade improvements.
- 3.3.3. Explore options for landscaping improvements.
- 3.3.4. Designate or contract with a grant writer to acquire funding from state and federal grants.

“ ———

I really like what Vermont does—limits billboards, makes use of old buildings, lots of cute restaurants and shops.

(2023 Community Survey)



Barre Center. Photo source: CMRPC



LAND USE & ZONING

The Land Use chapter of this Master Plan is a blueprint for development. It offers a balanced approach to land use that preserves rural character while allowing desired and necessary growth. Barre residents value small-town charm but want to see more resource and business development and are concerned about affordability and sprawl. While these desires may seem in conflict, smart land use and zoning policies can ensure that Barre grows without losing what makes it special.

The Town of Barre is well positioned for a re-evaluation of its land use and zoning policies. Many of the needs

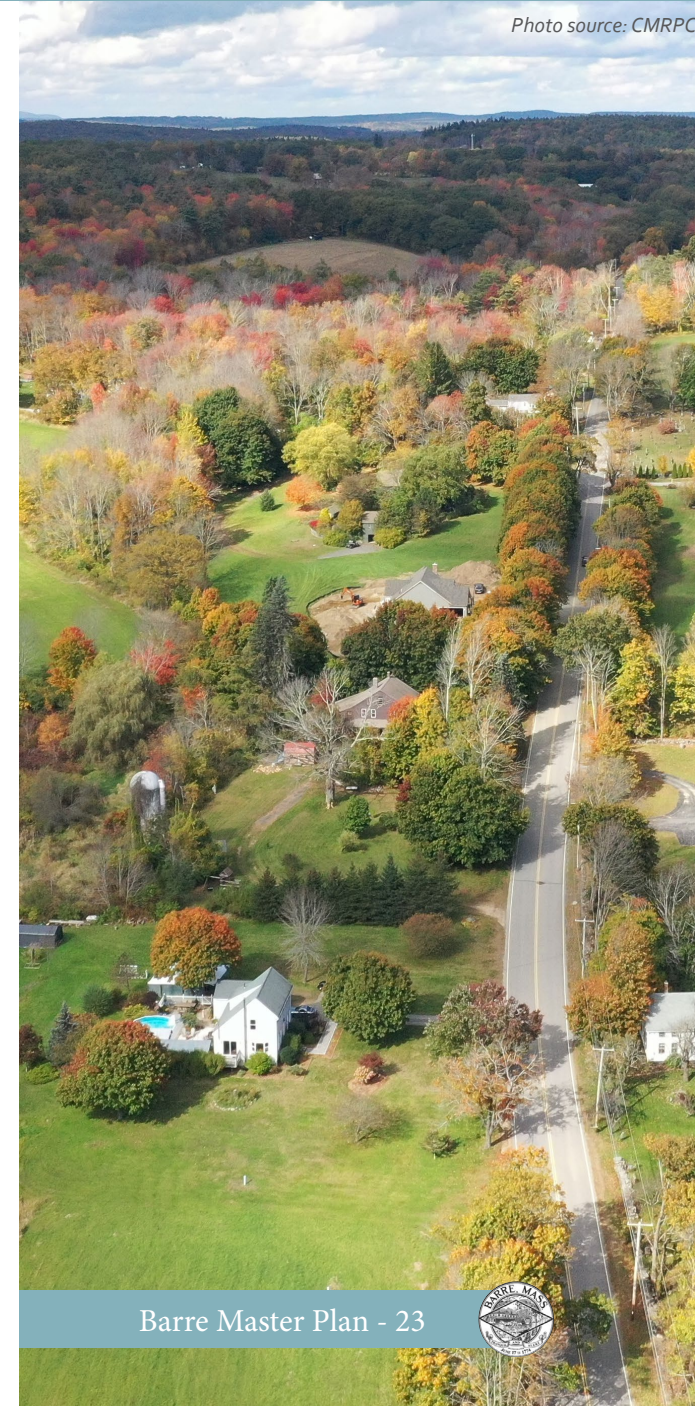
and desires of its residents can be furthered by changes to zoning that can help spur commercial and residential development while maintaining its small-town rural character.

Through the incorporation of Smart Growth development principles, mixed-use residential and commercial development, and low-impact regulations to protect water, Barre can concentrate development in the Town Center, South Barre, and Barre Plains in a way that increases access to services and improves walkability, while protecting open spaces and natural resources.

THEMES

- Rural small-town character.
- Small business development.
- Senior citizens and youth
- Focus development
- Small-scale mixed-use
- Higher-density single-family housing.

Photo source: CMRPC



LAND USE & ZONING DEFINITIONS

Mixed-Use

As noted in the Economic Development definitions, mixed-use is a form of development that allows for or encourages multiple uses in the same building or neighborhood. The typical form this would take in Central Massachusetts involves ground floor retail and office space, with one or two floors of housing built above.

Small-scale mixed-use development allows for an increase in housing stock in retail areas. Mixed-use development contributes to a more walkable community by allowing residents to live closer to where they work and shop, reducing the sprawl of development into natural areas.

Low-Impact Development

According to the United States Environmental Agency, low-impact development (LID) is “an approach and set of practices that can reduce runoff and pollutant loadings by managing runoff as close to its source as possible.”¹⁷ LID can include site design principles and stormwater management practices that promote natural water infiltration and the harvesting of rainwater. At the municipal levels, LID is typically incorporated into subdivision regulations, road and street design, and open space design.

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EPA <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-09/documents/bbfszterms.pdf>

Zoning and Overlay Districts

A zoning district is a geographically defined part of a municipality that allows and restricts uses, building and parcel dimensions, and defines the intended purpose of that area. Overlay districts are specialty zoning districts that overlap with underlying zoning districts and can be used for various policy purposes, including flood and water management, economic and housing development, and environmental protection.

Photo source: CMRPC



LAND USE & ZONING CONDITIONS

ZONING BYLAWS

Residence Districts

There are three Residence districts in Barre, each with similar uses, intended primarily for single-family zoning. Each Residence district is named for the minimum lot size in thousands of square feet.

R-80 Rural Residence district allows for a minimum lot size of 80,000 square feet or approximately 1.83 acres, with a minimum frontage of two hundred feet. The R-80 district makes up most of the land area in Barre, with all other districts found along major roads or towards the denser central and southern parts of Barre.

The R-20 Open Residence district allows for a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet or approximately 0.45 acres, with a minimum frontage of 120 feet. R-20 districts are the second most common zoning district in Barre, found throughout the central and southern parts of Barre.

The R-15 General Residence district allows for a minimum lot of size of

15,000 square feet or approximately 0.34 acres, with a minimum frontage of 110 feet. R-15 districts are the least common residential districts, with their higher density found in Barre Center, South Barre, and Barre Plains.

Permitted uses by right in Residence districts include:

- Single detached one-family dwellings
- Agriculture, with dimensional regulations on barns and stables.
- Limited accommodations for tourists, limited in similar ways to a Bedand Breakfast.
- Livestock and poultry for non-commercial uses with certain quantity and dimensional restrictions.

Several uses require a special permit in Residence districts:

- Conversion of a one-family dwelling, existing at the time of the bylaw's adoption, into a two-family dwelling.
- Small specialty retail businesses or retail sale of products of home occupation.
- Mobile homes under special circumstances.
- Livestock and poultry more than the

by-right restrictions.

- Wind-powered generators.
- Several uses are only allowed in the R-80 Rural Residence district, such as new construction duplexes, cemeteries, golf courses, riding stables, commercial boat rental, camps, dog kennels and veterinary hospitals, commercial slaughterhouses and commercial raising of swine, goats, or fur-bearing animals, commercial dirt and rock removal, and sawmills. Apartment houses with "adequate off-street parking" are allowed by special permits in all residence districts except R-80 Rural Residence.

Business Districts

The B-L Limited Business district allows for a minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet or approximately 0.68 acres, with a minimum frontage of 130 feet. There are only two Limited Business districts, found in South Barre and Barre Plains, on properties abutting the north side of Main Street.

Limited Business districts allow for any use as the Residence districts, except for commercial slaughterhouses and commercial raising of swine, goats, or





fur-bearing animals, commercial dirt and gravel removal, duplex conversions, and mobile homes.

Several uses are allowed by right, including professional and medical offices, retail and personal services, repair and service work that does not include vehicles and large farm equipment, hotels, and restaurants. There is several signage regulations included in the bylaws.

Several uses require a special permit, including gas stations, service or sales of vehicles or farm equipment, contractor's yards, sale or storage of feed, fuel, lumber and building supplies, place of amusement or assembly or club conducted for profit, trucking depots, dog kennels, veterinary hospitals, and wind-powered generators.

B-C Business and Commercial

The B-C Business and Commercial district is the only district with no minimum lot size and a minimum frontage of one hundred feet. This is the most common business district, found abutting Barre Common, in a large district around the intersection of Route 32 and Route 122, several districts throughout South Barre and Barre Plains, and along a few major roads.

Business and Commercial district zoning allows for almost all the same uses as the Limited Business district, with the addition of duplex conversion. Several other uses are allowed by right, including certain industrial uses, office uses, wholesale establishments, and car washes. Unique allowed by special permit uses include scientific research, development or related production, certain light manufacturing, screened storage of unregistered vehicles, and storage unit rentals.

Industrial Districts

There are several Industrial districts throughout Barre. Most are located around South Barre, encompassing former mill buildings. There are three Industrial districts east of Barre Common along Valley Road and Nourse Lane.

The Industrial Districts allow for similar uses as Business and Commercial Districts. The two uses unique to these districts are industrial uses where

Most of Barre's industrial-zoned areas are in South Barre, encompassing former mill buildings.



the product or process constitutes an explosion or fire hazard of sufficient magnitude to be subject to regulation, and where the product or process constitutes a chemical poison hazard of sufficient magnitude to be subject to regulation in Massachusetts.

Overlay Districts

The two overlay districts in Barre serve very practical purposes; they do not promote more specific planning and zoning policies.

Floodplain District

The Floodplain District is based on one-hundred-year floodplains from the Flood Insurance Rate Map. Development in this district requires various modifications to prevent damage and loss in a flood.

Wellhead Protection District

The purpose of the Wellhead Protection District is to protect drinking water sources in Barre. There are two different zones, each shown on the map with some overlap. Zone I encompasses a 400-foot protective radius around a public water supply or wellfield. There are three along Route 32 and near Barre Plains.

Zone II identifies the extent of an aquifer that contributes water to a well under severe pumping and recharge and is found along Route 32 and Route 122, and to the east of Barre Common.

Specific uses are prohibited in this overlay, including landfills, junkyards, most types of hazardous waste storage or disposal, and earth removal outside certain limits. A significant increase in impervious surfaces or any uses related to the handling of hazardous materials requires a special permit.

Dimensional Regulations

Dimensional regulations in Barre are typical for a small rural town. In many towns in Central Massachusetts, most of the land is zoned for single-family houses on large lots. As discussed above, denser districts, such as R-15 General Residence, R-20 Open Residence, and B-L Limited Business, are centered around major roads and commercial and civic centers.

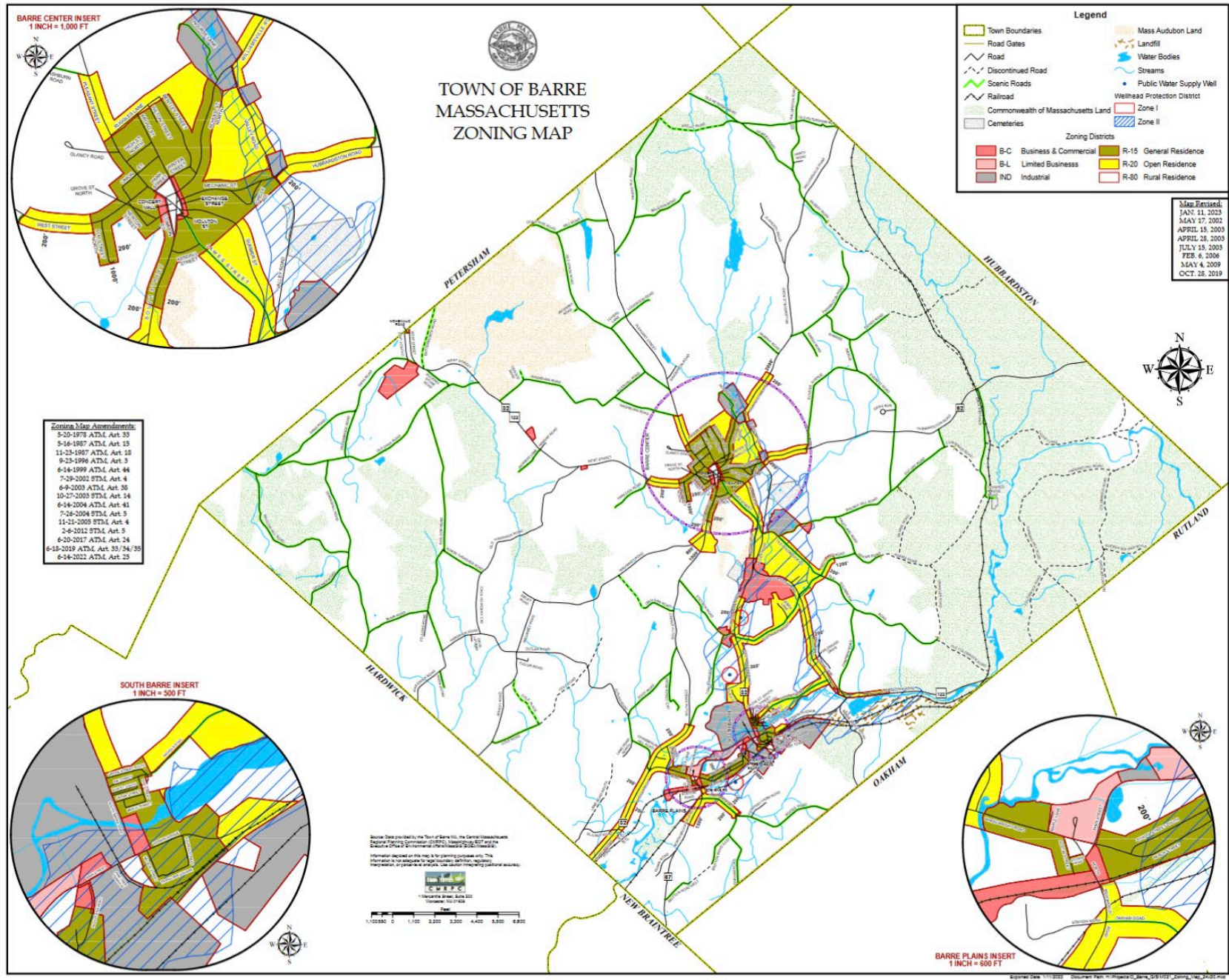
Subdivision Regulations

Barre’s Planning Board Regulations include a bylaw that governs the subdivision of land. Included are design standards, which apply to streets, easements, open space, protection

of natural features, sediment control, street drainage, curbing, utilities and municipal services, pedestrian and bicycle circulation services, pedestrian and bicycle circulation systems, and compliance. The bylaw also covers required improvements for an approved subdivision, including streets and roadways, sidewalks and grass plots, utilities, and monuments. The subdivision regulations are thorough and include numerous standards for developers.

	R-80	R-20	R-15	B-L	B-C	IND
Lot Area	80,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	15,000 sq. ft.	30,000 sq. ft.	n/a	40,000 sq. ft.
Frontage	200 ft.	120 ft.	110 ft.	130 ft.	100 ft.	130 ft.
Front & Rear	35 ft.	30 ft.	25 ft.	50 ft.	40 ft.	50 ft.
Side Yard	25 ft.	20 ft.	15 ft.	30 ft.	20 ft.	30 ft.
Stories	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3	3
Height	35 ft.	35 ft.	35 ft.	35 ft.	40 ft.	50 ft.
Max. Coverage	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	30%





LAND USE & ZONING PRIORITIES

Preserve Rural Character

There is a strong desire in Barre to preserve rural small-town character. This is typical of many towns in the region, and smart land use planning can facilitate this. Crafting zoning bylaws that allow for moderate levels of specific types of development in existing developed areas can help control how the town will look in the future.

Small Business Development

There is strong local support for small business development. Eighty percent of survey respondents wanted more family-owned businesses. Due to the existing land use patterns, population density, and available parcels in Barre, small business development is much more likely than national chains.

Amenities For Youth and Elderly

There is a strong desire for more activities for senior citizens and young people. Many rural communities lack amenities for these age cohorts. These groups may lack the disposable income or access to transportation that typical rural commercial development caters to, leading to commercial leakage

and difficulty maintaining populations as they age into adulthood or out of independent living.

Concentrate Development to Preserve Open Space

Residents would prefer that development concentrates on existing infrastructure and specific underutilized parcels. This is a key element of maintaining small-town rural communities while encouraging commercial development. Allowing for increased commercial and residential density in existing developed areas while continuing land preservation efforts can provide space for future generations while maintaining natural and agricultural assets that define a community.

Small-scale Mixed-use Development and Higher-density Single-family Housing

The aforementioned can be synthesized into a clear policy prescription. Small-scale retail lends itself to bringing the small, local businesses that residents desire. The mixed-use development would allow for a much-needed

increase in rental housing stock. Higher-density single-family housing would allow for more compact development that preserves open space while increasing the housing stock. It would also allow more sensible pedestrian and transportation planning to be synthesized into actionable strategies.

Crafting zoning bylaws that allow for moderate levels of specific types of development in existing developed areas can help control how the town will look in the future.



LAND USE & ZONING FINDINGS

Expand Commercial Zoning

Barre has six zoning districts, including three residential, two commercial, and an industrial district. These districts are spread around town, with an emphasis on higher density uses in Barre Center, South Barre, and Barre Plains. There is strong potential for the expansion of commercial and residential development. Focusing the expansion of appropriate commercial and residential zoning districts along major roads such as Route 122 and Route 67, and in existing commercial areas, can expand the availability of parcels for development while preserving the rural character of Barre.

Conversations with stakeholders identified several key areas for development. These include major roads, such as Route 67, Route 32, Route



Keep new construction to the 'town centers' and keep as much land for agriculture, recreation and preservation as possible.

(2023 Community Survey)

122, Barre Town Center, Quabbin Plaza at the intersection of Routes 32 and 122, and South Barre Village, where an underdeveloped secondary town center exists with a classic New England town center layout.

Several types of desired development were identified by residents in workshops and surveys. They include mixed-use developments, small-scale retail, restaurants and dining, and a fitness center or gym. These types of developments are inter-compatible and are uniquely in line with some of the constraints of a small town like Barre. In a meeting with stakeholders, the following locations were identified for their compatibility with these uses:

- Mixed Use: South Barre
- Small-scale retail: Main Street, South Barre, Episcopalian Church site
- Restaurants and Dining: Main Street, South Barre
- Fitness center or gym: Barre Plains fire station, School Street

In conversations with community members, a lack of available commercial land was identified as the primary barrier to development.



Keep Barre [a] small town and invest on growing what we have now.

(2023 Community Survey)

Several areas in Barre could benefit from additional commercial zoning, including Route 67 south of South Barre, various parcels along Route 122 west of Barre Common, and a parcel of land adjacent to the Barre Plains common.

Implement Innovative Housing Options

Most of the land in Barre is oriented around large lot single-family zoning. While this is a common approach in rural Central Massachusetts, this imposes limitations that interfere with the needs of residents and planning best practices. Such large lots limit the number of homes that can be produced, and trend towards subdivisions with large, expensive houses with limited walkability. This can lead to the acquisition of historic farmland or open space by developers





Photo source: CMRPC

for the construction of unaffordable, unwalkable subdivisions.

Allowing denser housing options in areas with existing residential and commercial development can allow the town to shape housing development to preserve open space and natural beauty while allowing more affordable options. This could look like the construction of small-scale, two to three-story mixed-use buildings in Barre Center and South Barre, in addition to cottage housing options in new housing subdivisions and infill construction, and accessory dwelling units in existing residential neighborhoods.

Massachusetts faces a housing crisis, and that crisis affects rural Worcester County as well. There are several reasons to encourage housing development in Barre, but there is always a concern that new housing construction will alter the character of

the town. Denser housing can reflect historic housing forms while allowing land to be set aside for preservation and preventing sprawl and the loss of historic agricultural land.

Modernize Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

The process of implementing various zoning policies should come alongside improvements to the usability of the zoning bylaws and their documentation. Modernizing the structure and format of these bylaws will make them easier for residents and developers to use and will allow public officials and voters to more effectively articulate limitations and possible improvements. These fixes should involve definitions, use regulations, use table formatting, and dimensional regulations. This will ensure that the expansion of zoning districts and changes to zoning policies are well understood and implemented holistically.

Notably, Barre’s use regulations are not organized in a table format, which makes it difficult for residents and developers to navigate. Any revision to Barre’s zoning should include reformatting the use of regulations into a more usable format. Distinctions between the different zoning districts

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We need zoning regulations for businesses that surround the commons that protect the beauty of the commons.

(2023 Community Survey)



and the allowed uses require navigating citations from prior sections, rather than being displayed in a straightforward table.

Definitions are a typical area of improvement for a municipality's zoning bylaws. The definitions in the Barre zoning bylaws are straightforward and cover the basics, though it is likely that a zoning diagnostic would identify areas for improvement. One notable deviation from best practices is the inclusion of various definitions and restrictions on specific uses in the Use Regulations section, rather than in the Definitions section. Including all the definitions in one section would make the document easier to navigate and would allow the Use Regulations to focus on uses.

Dimensional regulations in Barre are typical for a small rural town. As discussed above, denser districts, such as R-15 General Residence, R-20 Open Residence, and B-L Limited Business, are centered around major roads and commercial and civic centers. Frontage and setback requirements are reasonable for a town like Barre, though some of the values seem arbitrary and could be assessed for more consistency at the neighborhood level. The subdivision regulations were first adopted in 1987 and have not

been subject to major revisions in the intervening years. Reevaluation of the subdivision regulations to ensure they align with modern standards of smart growth and low-impact development should be part of a broader zoning diagnostic and rewrite process.

Preserve Open Space

Alongside the desire for increased development potential and reduced barriers to entry, open space, agricultural land, recreational opportunities, and natural beauty must be preserved in the coming decades. The efforts of bodies such as the Agricultural Commission and the Conservation Commission can be used to promote various land preservation schemes, including Chapter 61 programs, and an assessment of the Conservation Commission's bylaws can be used to establish new best practices. Concentrating new density in existing commercial and residential areas and preventing subdivision sprawl will help preserve open space.



GOAL 1: BALANCE PRESERVATION WITH DESIRED AND NECESSARY GROWTH.

Concentrating moderate density in existing commercial zones in Barre Town Center, South Barre, and Barre Plains will help promote development without encroaching open space and natural resources.



Photo source: CMRPC

STRATEGY 1.1. ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT IS IN HARMONY WITH BARRE'S SMALL-TOWN RURAL CHARACTER.

There are several strategies that will help ensure that new development does not come at the expense of Barre's history and charm. Maintaining this character helps to ensure Barre is a destination for visitors and continues to be desirable for residents.

- 1.1.1. Complete a comprehensive review of Barre's zoning bylaws.
- 1.1.2. Assess current uses and dimensional requirements for all commercial zones to ensure consistency with Smart Growth Principles.
- 1.1.3. Concentrate new development around existing infrastructure and vacant or underused parcels, in

areas such as Barre Common, South Barre, Barre Plains, and along major roads such as Route 122, Route 67, and Route 32.

- 1.1.4. Expand the boundaries of commercial zoning in/to Barre Common, South Barre, Barre Plains, and along major roads such as Route 122, Route 67, and Route 32 as appropriate.
- 1.1.5. Encourage the development of small businesses, especially in South Barre and Barre Plains, by streamlining zoning and permitting approval processes (e.g., desirable uses permitted by right).
- 1.1.6. Undertake Complete Streets and other bike/ pedestrian-friendly improvements to develop a more vibrant and walkable town center with connectivity to surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- 1.1.7. Enact village zoning in the Town Center that increases the



- potential for commercial and mixed-use by right onto streets abutting the Common, including School Street, Newton Street, Mechanic Street, and Barre Road.
- 1.1.8. Enact village zoning in South Barre to increase the potential for mixed-use and commercial activity on Main Street and Vernon Ave., with special consideration for parcels abutting Ware River.
 - 1.1.9. Enact village zoning in Barre Plains Village to incentivize more dense commercial strips.
 - 1.1.10. Streamline comprehensive permitting processes for new developments.
 - 1.1.11. Assess the site plan review process and criteria for tone (degree of business-friendliness) and clarity of expectations/ predictability.

**STRATEGY 1.2.
ENCOURAGE RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT THAT IS IN
HARMONY WITH BARRE'S
SMALL-TOWN RURAL
CHARACTER.**

- 1.2.1. Modernize the zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations to allow for small-scale mixed-use development, higher density single-family zoning in identified development

areas, and open space development for subdivisions.

- 1.2.2. Enable housing development to include new higher-density single-family housing and senior housing in and adjacent to developed parts of town.
- 1.2.3. Allow for smaller scale higher density single-family zoning that incorporates open space development policies.
- 1.2.4. Allow for accessory apartment/accessory dwelling unit development in existing residential neighborhoods to allow seniors to age in place and provide a more affordable housing option that aligns with single-family aesthetics.
- 1.2.5. Create a municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund to readily access funds for new housing opportunities.
- 1.2.6. Consider creating a buy-down program for market-rate homes and deed restricting them as affordable for income-qualified first-time homebuyers at below-market prices.



Cluster zoning near the three town “centers.

(2023 Community Survey)



GOAL 2: KEEP BARRE BEAUTIFUL.

Alongside smart zoning bylaw and land use policy changes, efforts should be made to further protect open spaces, promote the agricultural economy, and develop recreational resources.



Photo source: CMRPC

STRATEGY 2.1. PRESERVE FARMS AND ENCOURAGE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY.

The agricultural character of Central Massachusetts should not be understated. Farmland throughout the region faces risks from development, and efforts should be made if this historic aspect of life in Barre is to be preserved.

- 2.1.1. Enact policies that preserve agricultural lands such as the purchase of development rights and open space residential development bylaws.
- 2.1.2. Help existing agricultural operations thrive through a strengthening of civic avenues for the agricultural community, such as the agricultural commission.
- 2.1.3. Encourage new and expanded agricultural enterprises through the

expanded availability of commercial land along major roads and incorporation of agricultural needs through the zoning review process.

- 2.1.4. Assess zoning to ensure flexibility for agrotourism and ecotourism ventures.
- 2.1.5. Assess existing lots with potential for future agrotourism and ecotourism ventures.

STRATEGY 2.2. PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND ENCOURAGE ITS USE FOR ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL PURPOSES.

Barre's proximity to the Mass Central Rail Trail and Rutland State Park puts it in a unique location. Outdoor recreation and preserved open space can be a valuable economic development tool.

- 2.2.1. Develop a program to educate landowners about land pres-



ervation efforts to promote private land conservation in coordination with the Agricultural Commission and Conservation Commission.

- 2.2.2. Continue to strengthen collaborative efforts with regional land trusts and other groups to preserve open space and conservation of land.
- 2.2.3. Develop an Open Space Residential Development bylaw to encourage open space preservation in subdivisions.
- 2.2.4. Identify parcels for acquisition for recreational development and preservation.
- 2.2.5. Explore opportunities to continue bicycle paths on nearby roads to encourage riders into commercial corridors.

STRATEGY 2.3. PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES.

- 2.3.1. Review the Conservation Commission bylaws and modify if necessary to encourage more robust protection of natural resources and alignment with best practices.
- 2.3.2 Review and update the subdivision regulations to account for modern best practices and implement Low Impact Development standards.
- 2.3.3. Consider adopting scenic

roads bylaw to restrict certain activities that could alter the appearance or character of specified roadways in town. Similarly, explore the adoption of a scenic vista protection bylaw.

- 2.3.4. Assess the available or suitable land for green energy, with care taken to avoid detracting from the rural character of the town. Consider updating zoning regulations where appropriate.
- 2.3.5. Identify funding sources to hire a conservation agent to aid the conservation commission.
- 2.3.6. Ensure that development in proximity to natural resources does not infringe on areas in need of protection.
- 2.3.7. Prioritize development in existing commercial and residential areas.

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I think agriculture land preservation, bio habitat preservation and forest management are HIGHLY important.

(2023 Community Survey)



SERVICES & FACILITIES

The Services and Facilities chapter acts as the guiding compass for the Town's service delivery and the well-being of its residents. This chapter assesses current services, including those provided by police and fire departments, waste management, road infrastructure, and community services. It provides a blueprint that can be used to ensure the efficient delivery of essential government functions, thereby sustaining quality of life, and shaping Barre's future.

Barre residents' top services and facilities priority is the construction of a new Fire Department headquarters. There is also a strong desire for increased capacity in the Highway

Department and Town administrative services, and for the Town to offer more recreation opportunities. Looking to the future, the resiliency of Town services is a key concern. Strong water and sewer infrastructure, efficient emergency management, and effective communication are all key strategies to maintain Town operations in the face of climate change.

There is a need for social services and programs in addition to basic municipal services. Specifically, a designated youth space and additional senior services would improve quality of life and strengthen Barre's sense of community.

THEMES

- Fostering community
- Resilient infrastructure
- Quality facilities and equipment
- Government services and communication



SERVICES & FACILITIES CONDITIONS

Quabbin Regional Schools

Quabbin Regional Schools serve the Town of Barre and neighboring communities. Two Quabbin facilities are in Barre. Ruggles Lane Elementary School features a baseball diamond and a soccer field. Quabbin Regional Middle and High School boast a range of recreational facilities, including a football field with a quarter-mile track, multiple soccer fields, and three baseball fields of varying sizes, alongside indoor basketball and athletic courts. The quality of the regional school system was an important factor in choosing to live in Barre for a sizeable percentage of residents.

DID THE QUALITY OF THE BARRE AND QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS FACTOR INTO YOUR DECISION TO LIVE IN BARRE?	
Yes	30%
No	59%
Other	4%
None of the above	7%

Figure SF1: Survey Question Add Survey Reference "Did the quality of the Barre and Quabbin Regional School Districts factor into your decision to live in Barre?"

Woods Memorial Library

The library is a staple in the community of Barre. The building has undergone multiple renovations, doubling in size since its construction in 1886. The library staffs a library director, an adult and technology services librarian, a youth services librarian, a cataloging librarian, and three part-time library assistants. The library is owned and maintained by the Barre Library Association, composed of donors and volunteers. Ongoing facility maintenance is performed through a partnership between the Library Association and the Town. The library offers programs and events for all ages. Made possible through grants, local collaboration, and donations, the programs are always free and open to the public. The library also offers digital resources for recreation, education, and research.

Although the building was expanded in the past, the library is at capacity spatially. There is potential to renovate the foundation and drainage to repurpose space currently used for storage and convert it to public uses.

71% OF RESIDENTS SATISFIED WITH LIBRARY SERVICES

70% OF RESIDENTS SATISFIED WITH LIBRARY FACILITY

(2023 Community Survey)

The number of teenagers attending the library is rapidly increasing alongside additional programming geared towards youth. The library is looking to add a Teen Coordinator position to allow the Youth Services Librarian to shift focus to juvenile services. To accompany this focus, a teen space is also planned.

Open Space

The Town of Barre has a variety of open spaces and recreational areas. The recreational parks in Barre provide



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Would love to see a nice well kept community playground.

(2023 Community Survey)

playgrounds, sports facilities, walking and biking trails, picnic areas, and natural areas. Rice Park is home to basketball courts, a skateboard park, and a climbing wall and there is a baseball field located on the corner of Maple Lane and Wheelwright Road. Felton Field on Old Coldbrook Road was first established as fairgrounds in 1865. Barre has added three outdoor tennis courts, an outdoor basketball court, three soccer fields, and a baseball diamond. Felton Field is also used for horseback riding.

Thirty-four percent of survey respondents were dissatisfied with recreation facilities, and thirty percent were dissatisfied with parks. Maintaining and investing in open space and recreation aligns with residents' desires for outdoor recreational amenities.

The Town maintains the Common as the civic and cultural center of the community. The Barre Farmers' Market

has been in operation since 1985 and runs every year from May to October.

The Barre Player's Theatre is operated as a non-profit for summer youth productions and is located on the Town Common. The Town Common, its grass fields, and adjacent development offer potential for the town as a central meeting place.

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works encompasses the Highway, Sewer, and Water Divisions.

The Highway Division plays a crucial role in Barre's municipal services. It is responsible for the upkeep and repair of town-owned properties, maintenance of streets and roads including tasks like repaving, drainage, snow and ice removal, and street sweeping, as well as brush clearing along roadsides and rights-of-way. The division also oversees the maintenance of town parking lots, storm sewers, and sidewalks.

The Sewer Division includes a full-time Chief Operator, Assistant Chief Operator, and Assistant Operator. The treatment facility center is currently at sixty percent capacity. The Sewer Division needs a Vactor sewer cleaner

truck and upgrades to the facility. In the future, the system will need to be expanded to increase flow to reduce the financial bearing on ratepayers.

Police Department

Located at 655 South Street, the Police Department is committed to collaborating with residents, businesses, and community organizations to make Barre a safe, comfortable place to live, and a welcoming destination for visitors. The police facility was built in 2018. Eight police cruisers are used by ten full-time officers and one part-time officer. The facility could be improved with the addition of a carport for police vehicles and solar panels for the roof and carport to reduce utility costs. The Department expects to increase staffing to eleven members.

Henry Woods Municipal Building

The Town Hall building was built in the early 1900s and requires maintenance for continued use. The three-story building has an elevator for accessible use, but its fire escapes are not up to code. Bringing the third floor up to code so it can be used by the public offers potential new meeting or office spaces.





An adequate fire station needs to become top priority before any other facilities are considered...The existing fire station is inadequate and downright dangerous.

(2023 Community Survey)

Fire Department

The Barre Fire Department operates out of two stations. The department operates four engine companies, one ladder company, one heavy rescue company, two ALS ambulances, and various support equipment. The department has a total of fifty staff.

- The Department Headquarters is located at 61 North School St. Originally the highway department, the building was retrofitted to serve as a firehouse in 1995.
- Fire Station 2 is located at 50 Main St. in South Barre.
- Previously Fire Station 3 was located at 30 Wheelwright Rd. in Barre Plains; however, it has been condemned.

The two buildings currently housing the fire department were not designed to serve as fire stations and lack the essential features necessary for modern firefighting operations. The central headquarters lacks firefighter bunk rooms for around-the-clock service. Space constraints also limit storage for firefighting equipment. The station's size and age render it incapable of housing modern fire machinery without extensive and costly renovations tailored to each apparatus.

The two existing stations should be consolidated into one newly constructed station equipped for the staffing, vehicle, and safety needs of the department. Construction will reflect suggestions from the Fire Station Feasibility Study, completed in 2021, to ensure the new building meets modern firefighting standards and community needs.

Council on Aging

The Council on Aging (COA) serves 1,500 seniors by coordinating and creating services for the Barre's aging population, as well as advocating for the needs of older residents. Housed in the Barre Senior Center, the COA partners with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and

92% SAY SERVICES FOR SENIORS ARE IMPORTANT IN BARRE

(2023 Community Survey)

the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging.

The Senior Center is about twenty years old and is beginning to show signs of wear and tear. In particular, the bathrooms require updates. The building also requires an emergency generator to function as a cooling and warming center in crises. Regarding staffing, a full-time director and one part-time staff member perform all COA functions. Limited staffing hinders the program's ability to expand resources, classes, and assistance for senior residents.



SERVICES & FACILITIES PRIORITIES

Enhance Community Services and Facilities

The narratives collected from residents paint a vivid picture of a community that values its history and cherishes residents of all ages. Barre residents dream of a future where generations connect through the ongoing progress of the town. The desire for inclusivity and community spaces resonates strongly, manifesting in calls for dedicated youth centers, enriched recreational programs, and enhanced parks and public services.

Invest In Resilient Infrastructure

Specific mentions of South Barre and Barre Center reveal residents' deep interest in enhancing recreational opportunities within their neighborhoods and improving infrastructure, including better sidewalks and utility services. The proposal for a shuttle between the town center and the senior center reflects a thoughtful approach to enhancing connectivity and accessibility for all residents. Comments captured during this process also include discussions about extending sewer services to rural parts of the town.

Improve Quality Facilities and Equipment

Survey responses indicate a strong concern about emergency response, with eighty percent of respondents identifying this as a critical concern. Resident suggestions, spanning from the optimal locations of fire stations to the need for additional facilities, demonstrate a shared commitment to efficient and accessible emergency services. Concerns about infrastructure constraints, such as the steep driveway at the police station, underscore the community's attention to practicality and functionality in public facilities.

Photo source: Town of Barre Facebook page



SERVICES & FACILITIES FINDINGS

Resilient Infrastructure

Barre's infrastructure requires ongoing maintenance and upgrades. With Barre undergoing evolution and population growth, proactive and considerate planning and infrastructure improvements are indispensable to accommodate these changes. The goal is to ensure equitable access to essential services for all residents, fostering an environment that supports the well-being and prosperity of the diverse Barre population.

Community members desire improvements to the water and sewer systems. The Town should consider the expansion and modernization of water and sewer systems to prepare for resiliency and population changes. About half of Barre is covered by the public water supply. As the state government continues to monitor harmful chemicals, water quality, and contaminants, concerns should be sensitively responded to by the Water Division. Nonprofits such as Clean Water Action can partner with the Town to educate residents on safety measures and contaminant science.

For those served by private wells, education on groundwater preservation is necessary to prevent future contamination. If Barre's groundwater is not protected, the Town may need to provide costly public water mains to affected areas.

Fostering Community

Barre residents expressed a desire for additional community services to enhance their quality of life. Through community engagement, we heard the desire for additional parks, playgrounds, library space, and community centers. Specifically, the lack of space and services geared toward youth is a major concern. Most likely to come through

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Senior services are very important. The senior center is a lovely, yet underutilized building...I'd love to see that building used for youth programs and also be more welcoming to all.

(2023 Community Survey)

private investment, Barre residents also requested healthcare providers.

Feedback from residents underscores a collective aspiration for inclusive spaces and a robust sense of community. The envisioned future for Barre involves the creation of a dedicated youth center, enriched recreational programs, and enhanced parks and playgrounds. This not only aligns with the community's vision but also emphasizes the Town's commitment to improving the quality of life for all residents, ranging from the needs of children to the efficient provision of senior services.

The slow but steady increase in population has been accompanied by a growing need for programming that brings residents together, fosters inclusivity, and creates meaningful shared experiences.

Quality Facilities and Equipment

The prevailing sentiment among survey respondents and workshop participants is that many government facilities in Barre are outdated or lack essential amenities and features. Such





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(We need) more emergency management education so that in emergencies citizens and surrounding communities understand what Barre provides for in such situations.

(2023 Community Survey)

conditions create challenges for service providers and residents. Upgraded fire stations, advanced EMS services, and modernized vehicles will enhance safety and convenience.

The Town of Barre is committed to providing high-quality physical and technological infrastructure. This includes maintaining and modernizing critical buildings to offer accessible and efficient facilities, and equipping emergency response and public works teams with state-of-the-art tools and machinery to enhance their work and ensure safety.

This commitment lays the groundwork for a community that not only addresses its current shortcomings, but also proactively prepares for a sustainable and prosperous future.

Government Services and Communication

The Town of Barre is committed to enhancing the efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness of government services. Improving communication between the Town and the community, such as broadening the dissemination of emergency management information, will improve confidence in local government. Modernizing and streamlining Town Hall services and extending existing capacity will help meet the community’s expressed desire for updated processes and responsive services.

The community survey results indicated a widespread desire for the local government to involve, and communicate with, its constituents more actively. Residents note opportunities to streamline billing services and to provide more accessible town hall hours. Upgrades to the town website and paths of communication for residents, such as social media, should be assessed.

GOAL 1: PROVIDE PUBLIC FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF BARRE'S CURRENT AND FUTURE POPULATIONS.

Barre residents rely upon town departments for access to many critical services. Providing these services requires sustained investments in town facilities and equipment. Barre can take the following steps to ensure it has the assets necessary to meet its population's current and future needs.

STRATEGY 1.1. STRENGTHEN THE CAPITAL AND FINANCIAL PLANNING PROCESS.

Barre's Capital Planning Committee has been inactive since 2017. The Committee should be reinstated to undertake capital planning, retooling mission, responsibilities, and engagement with other municipal bodies as necessary.

- 1.1.1. Appoint a Capital Planning Committee to hear capital expenditure requests from town boards and departments and help align spending with the Master Plan vision and goals.
- 1.1.2. Draft a new Capital Improvement Plan to guide the Town's

capital expenditures over five-year periods. Work closely with the Town Administrator, Town Accountant, and Finance Committee to create and maintain the plan.

- 1.1.3. Develop a dedicated finance team to integrate financial metrics, such as property assessments, town accounting, and tax collection, to inform budgeting, purchasing policy, and long-term planning.

STRATEGY 1.2. PROACTIVELY PLAN FOR AND UNDERTAKE MAINTENANCE, UPGRADES, AND REPLACEMENT OF TOWN FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT.

Planning for maintenance and repairs mitigates the need for most costly interventions down the line or service disruptions due to facilities or equipment failure. The following steps will help the Town bolster its planning process and create a strategy to stay ahead of routine maintenance and capital projects.

- 1.2.1. Hire a part-time or shared facilities director overseeing facility planning maintenance, repair, renovation, and construction for town-owned buildings and properties.
- 1.2.2. Conduct a facilities maintenance plan that includes all town-owned facilities and properties.
- 1.2.3. Undertake maintenance and upgrades necessary to preserve



and protect town assets, especially those of historical and cultural significance, such as the Town Hall.

- 1.2.4. Construct a new fire station that meets contemporary firefighting needs and standards.
- 1.2.5. Plan for the replacement of the Town's aging vehicle fleet.

STRATEGY 1.3. IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY OF TOWN-OWNED FACILITIES.

In 2022, Barre completed an ADA Accessibility Plan to determine its level of compliance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA Accessibility was also noted as a concern among residents in the Master Plan Survey.

- 1.3.1. Review the 2022 ADA Accessibility Plan and identify priority projects focusing on accessible approach and entrance violations, which were noted at nearly all town facilities.
- 1.3.2. Prioritize adding a water source and an accessible bathroom at Nornay Park, allowing the Town to expand the type and length of events held at this popular gathering area.
- 1.3.3. Incorporate priority ADA improvement projects into the Town's next Capital Improvement Plan.

STRATEGY 1.4. INVEST IN RESILIENCY UPGRADES TO TOWN FACILITIES.

In the event of natural or other disasters, the town will require buildings that can serve as command centers, emergency shelters, and storage locations for rescue and survival equipment. At present, the Quabbin Region High School is the town's only designated emergency shelter. The following steps can help the town weather significant events better.

- 1.4.1. Equip every municipal building with lightning rods to protect people and buildings from lightning strikes.
- 1.4.2. Invest in backup generators for Police, Fire/EMS, DPW, Senior Center, Housing Authority, and School District facilities, as identified in the 2020 Barre Municipal Vulnerability Plan, so these buildings can generate the necessary backup power to serve as potential emergency shelters.
- 1.4.3. Explore the feasibility of building a micro-grid for the Town Center, providing the town with a reliable capacity to sustain emergency communications and operations during power outages.



GOAL 2: PROVIDE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF BARRE'S CURRENT AND FUTURE POPULATIONS.

The Town of Barre should strategically plan for upgrades to town infrastructure. Modernized town infrastructure ensures Barre is prepared for climate events and anticipated population growth.

STRATEGY 2.1. IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE IN SOUTH BARRE.

South Barre's infrastructure needs repair and modernization. In 2024, the town undertook a South Barre infrastructure study to quantify and document public water, sewer, drainage systems, roadway surfaces, and sidewalk needs. The town should review and implement the study's findings and recommendations.

- 2.1.1. Review, prioritize, and implement the South Barre Infrastructure Study findings and recommendations.
- 2.1.2. Engage with the study authors, CMRPC, and the State to identify and apply for funding to address recommended projects.

STRATEGY 2.2. UPGRADE AND EXPAND BARRE'S WATER, SEWER, AND DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE.

Barre's water, sewer, and drainage systems require upgrades and maintenance to meet the challenges of climate change, population growth, and the desire for broader service coverage.

- 2.2.1. Conduct a comprehensive infrastructure assessment using GIS mapping and stakeholder insights to identify improvement areas, ensuring strategic upgrades align with community priorities for public services and facilities.
- 2.2.2. Upgrade the Wastewater Treatment Facility; build a new pump station and force main.
- 2.2.3. Outfit the town's water and

sewer pumping stations with alternate power sources as a resiliency measure.

- 2.2.4. Develop a policy to upsize culverts in expectation of climate-change-related precipitation increases.
- 2.2.5. Assess the feasibility of expanding sewer and water service to areas of town beyond the village centers.

STRATEGY 2.3. EXPAND PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE.

Enhancing streetscapes to allow walking and cycling in areas dominated by car travel can improve health, safety, and sustainability. Pedestrian infrastructure can also improve the quality of life for rural residents who





lack access to personal vehicles and boost the local economy by drawing in visitors and raising property values. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure needs are detailed in the 2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.

- 2.3.1 Review and continue implementing the 2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.
- 2.3.2. Adjust zoning regulations where appropriate to require sidewalks, connections to bike paths, bike parking, and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities in new developments.
- 2.3.3. Identify areas for bicycle rack placement around village centers.
- 2.3.4. Identify roads with excess shoulder capacity and consider how to use the space more effectively.

STRATEGY 2.4. PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY POWER SOURCES AT TOWN FACILITIES.

Investing in green power sources and charging infrastructure will position the Town to save money on energy costs and encourage EV use and decarbonization throughout the community.

- 2.4.1. Conduct a feasibility study to identify town facilities suited for installing solar panels on their roofs.
- 2.4.2. Upgrade or supplement existing level 1 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at Town facilities and public places with at least level 2 EV chargers.
- 2.4.3 Identify and promote new equipment, programs, and methods to decarbonize municipal operations.

GOAL 3: ENHANCE AND EXTEND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Barre residents value their access to services and programming; however, local government services are provided by a small staff and volunteers. Residents would like enhanced government services like extended Town Hall services, programming, and extended hours and access. The following strategies will enable Barre to expand services while minimizing financial outlays.

STRATEGY 3.1. LEVERAGE EXISTING RESOURCES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING.

Barre can draw on existing facilities and staff to enable more programming for residents, particularly youth and older adults.

- 3.1.1. Explore opportunities to use school district or community organization spaces for town-sponsored activities and events, such as library or recreational programming.
- 3.1.2. Expand the use of underutilized town properties. Address barriers to use, such as non-ADA compliance, aesthetics, or outdated uses (e.g., old storage).

- 3.1.3. Expand town services through regionalization and inter-municipal job shares. Revisit the 2018 Quabbin Educational and Municipal Partnership Recommendations Report to identify other areas of opportunity for regionalization between the Towns of Barre, Hardwick, Hubbardston, New Braintree, and Oakham.
- 3.1.4. Consider further regionalization, resource sharing, and joint events for the Town of Barre and Hardwick Senior Center and senior centers in neighboring communities.
- 3.1.5. Explore opportunities for inter-municipal agreements with neighboring communities to provide after-school or summer recreational programming for youth and teens.
- 3.1.6. Study the feasibility of hiring a

town planner to be shared with one or more neighboring municipalities.

- 3.1.7. Expand and continue using regional partners for grant writing and administration. This includes identifying opportunities for coalition applications with neighboring municipalities when practical.
- 3.1.8. Foster conversations among regional stakeholders around forming a community development corporation to serve the Quabbin region.

STRATEGY 3.2. EXPLORE NEW PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES.

As a rural community with a small



population, Barre does not have fixed public transit routes. This creates challenges for residents who cannot drive or cannot access a car. To better accommodate these individuals, the town can raise awareness about existing services and explore alternatives such as micromobility and microtransit.

- 3.2.1. Raise awareness of existing paratransit and demand response services, such as those run by the South-Central Massachusetts Elderbus (sponsored by the Worcester Regional Transit Authority) and the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART).
- 3.2.2. Explore the creation of more flexible demand response or microtransit models, such as the Quaboag Connector, to provide increased transit options for Barre residents to

travel within the region.

- 3.2.3. Introduce a volunteer program utilizing mutual aid to provide longer-distance, less frequent trips.

STRATEGY 3.3. IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS.

Robust communication between Town Departments, Boards, Committees, and Barre residents is critical to building and sustaining public trust and a sense of community. Town entities should seek to improve their communications in several areas.

- 3.3.1. Ensure that town departments have a presence on social media platforms and post content regularly to better disseminate information to residents.

- 3.3.2. Increase the availability of live-streamed and recorded board and committee meetings for the viewing of residents. Currently, only Select Board and Finance Committee meetings are livestreamed on YouTube.
- 3.3.3. Educate residents about Barre's SMART911 emergency alert system and how to subscribe to the service.

Photo source: CMRPC

QUABBIN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Barre's rich collection of forests, farmlands, waterways, and historic and cultural assets define its rural identity and quality of life. Residents have expressed strong support for preserving these resources while ensuring sustainable access and visibility for future generations. Over 60% of respondents to the 2023 Community Survey rated natural resources as extremely important, and more than half identified Barre's history and cultural identity as central to community character.

THEMES

- Green space protection
- Historic heritage preservation
- Sustainable and environmentally conscious growth
- Natural resource management



Photo source: Melissa Bonenfant



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES DEFINITIONS

Agricultural Preservation Restriction

A permanent legal agreement that prevents non-agricultural development on farmland while allowing continued farming and ensuring the land remains in agricultural use.

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

A type of energy storage system that

uses batteries to store electrical energy. Often sited alongside renewable energy production facilities (e.g., wind, solar).

Chapter Lands / MGL Chapter 61, 61a, and 61b

Three current use tax programs that reduce taxes on forested, agricultural, and open space/recreational lands. These programs allow landowners of contiguous acres of forested/agricultural/open lands the opportunity

to reduce their taxes by committing to keeping the land undeveloped for a specified period of time.

Community Preservation Act (CPA)

A smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. Towns create Community Preservation Funds that come from a

Photo source: Lisa Ouimette





surcharge of up to 3% of the tax levy against real property. These funds are matched from the statewide Community Preservation Trust.

Conservation Restriction

A legal right, granted either permanently or for a fixed amount of time, that is used to preserve land or water areas in their natural, scenic, open, agricultural, farming, or forested conditions. It may also allow for public recreational use.

Ecosystem Services

The direct and indirect contributions of an ecosystem to human life. Usually categorized in four types: provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting services. Provisioning services are products and resources that ecosystems provide to humans, like food, water, timber, and fiber. Regulating services represents vital functions provided by ecosystems that help maintain stability in the environment and support human well-being, such as pollination and climate regulation. Non-material benefits that people derive from ecosystems, like aesthetic enjoyment, recreation, spiritual enrichment, and educational opportunities, are classified as cultural services, and supporting

services represent the natural processes that sustain and maintain the health and functionality of ecosystems, like nutrient cycling and soil formation.

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

The systems that regulate temperature, humidity, and air quality of indoor spaces. A variety of components are used, such as furnaces, air conditioners, heat pumps, and ductwork to improve indoor comfort and air quality.

Preservation Restriction

A legal right that protects historically significant structures and limits any restoration or alteration of the property that does not align with its historic use or image.

Resilience

The ability of a community to recover from a disturbance and thrive in a world of uncertainty. Resiliency planning aims to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate catastrophic events and hazards. This can include generator upgrades in town buildings, developing emergency response plans, and investing in green, environmentally friendly infrastructure.



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES PRIORITIES

Preserve Historic and Cultural Heritage

There is strong local support for preserving Barre's historic buildings, districts, and landscapes. Protecting these resources helps maintain the town's identity and sense of place.

Conserve Natural Resources and Enhance Resilience

Safeguarding forests, wetlands, and water resources is essential to Barre's environmental health. The town can continue to protect these areas through land conservation and Low-Impact Development (LID) (defined in the Land Use and Economic Development chapters). Managing forestlands and wildlife corridors can support biodiversity and help the community adapt to climate change impacts.

Integrate Sustainability into Future Growth

Directing growth toward already developed or disturbed areas can protect scenic, cultural, and environmental resources. Encouraging green building design and renewable energy that complements the landscape will help maintain Barre's small-town character as it plans for the future.

Photo source: CMRPC



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES FINDINGS

Preservation of Woods and Green Spaces

In Barre, approximately 73% of the total land is forested, and preservation of the town’s natural character has been identified as a top priority in surveys and workshop-related communications. The amount of open space protected in Barre is about 11,500 acres, or 40% of the total area of the town, among a variety of conservation and preservation programs.¹⁸

Some programs, primarily Chapter 61 programs, serve as tax incentives for landowners rather than permanent conservation tools but do offer

landowners the opportunity to create steward management plans. The Land Use chapter describes Barre’s unique proximity to beautiful natural areas as an economic development benefit, whereas this chapter plans for green space preservation under a lens that focuses on ecosystem services.

Preservation and Protection of Historic and Cultural Assets

In the Community Survey, 52% of the respondents strongly agreed that Barre’s history defines its character. Barre has a vast inventory of historic buildings and areas, many of which are inventoried on the National Register of



Development without destruction of the environment or rural character of the town. Protection of forest and agricultural lands.

(2023 Community Survey)

Historic Places. Three sites, Barre Town Hall, Barre District #4 Schoolhouse, and the Barre Congregational Church, are under Preservation Restriction.¹⁹

Like many towns in this region, Barre’s industrial past was characterized by mill buildings and worker housing, all of which can still be found in Barre Plains and South Barre. Barre’s historical sites embody chapters of the town’s history whose influence still resonates today; the most notable being the

¹⁸ Barre at a Glance. BioMap Town Report, Mass.gov, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/biomap-town-report-barre>
¹⁹ Barre. Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System. Massachusetts Historical Commission. <https://mhc-macris.net/>

Program	Requirements	Acreage in Barre
Chapter 61	At least 10 contiguous acres of forestland	1,381
Chapter 61a	At least 5 contiguous acres of agricultural or horticultural land	3,490
Chapter 61b	At least 5 contiguous acres of recreation land	750
Agricultural Preservation Restriction	At least 5 contiguous acres of land that has been actively devoted to agriculture for two tax years and produces at least \$500 per year for the first five acres, plus \$5 for each additional acre.	925
Conservation Restriction	Public or private land , permanent restrictions (with some permits) that require approval from the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs.	At least 800 (Hawes Hill Conservation Corridor)

Figure NCR1: Preserved Lands in Barre





Photo source: Angela Finne

Prince Walker Burial Site, located just outside of the Ware River Watershed off Gilbert and Hubbardston Roads. Prince was the younger brother of Quock Walker, who in 1781 sued his enslavers for his freedom and won – a landmark case that was instrumental in the emancipation of enslaved peoples in Massachusetts. Prince’s life is well documented, as a man who was born enslaved, escaped slavery, and became a landowner and registered voter in Barre.²⁰

Barre is also the ancestral home of the Nipmuc people. The 2008 Barre Reconnaissance Report identified 35 archaeological sites that have provided Barre with significant archaeological potential both for Native American activity and early industrial history of the community. The report also identified five priority heritage landscapes, which are categorized as places where natural and cultural history intersect to define the town’s

“ **Don’t ruin our small town with loss of historical buildings and big retail etc.**

(2023 Community Survey)

“ **Barre Common is on the National Register of Historic Places and its character must be maintained.**

(2023 Community Survey)

character. These sites are the Barre Common, the South Barre Mill Village, the South Street Corridor, Felton Field, and the Prince River Corridor.

The adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) is supported by 63% of survey respondents. The CPA is a smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. The community preservation fund comes from a surcharge of between 1% and 3% of the tax levy against real property, and once adopted, the town may create a Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to administer the program. These funds are matched from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund.

²⁰ Email correspondence with Lucy Allen, Town Historian



NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Invasives Management

Like many other towns in the region, Barre's natural ecosystems have been affected by a variety of invasive plant, animal, insect, and aquatic species. The predominant invasives in Barre aggressively outcompete native flora, degrade wildlife habitat, and alter soil chemistry which makes it difficult for native ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands to survive and recover, thereby increasing wildfire and flood risks. They also may impact public health through increasing the number of disease-carrying pests (e.g., ticks and mosquitoes). Efforts to manage invasives are largely volunteer-driven with no formal town-wide strategy in place.

Water Resource Management

Water management emerged as a critical issue in Barre in terms of both infrastructure, recreation, and environmental health. Nearly half (47%) of Community Survey respondents considered the availability of public water to be extremely important, and 46% selected water quality and conservation as a top sustainability

priority. Town water comes from three groundwater gravel-packed wells, two at South Barre Road and one off Oakham Road.²¹ The town has a Wellhead Protection District bylaw in place that protects and promotes the health and quality of Barre's water supply through prohibitions on development within two zones. The first is a 400-foot radius around a public water supply, and the second is the area of an aquifer which contributes water to a well. This bylaw prohibits landfills, junkyards, storage and processing of hazardous waste, deicing chemicals, and any unsanitary works or treatment sites within the Wellhead Protection District.²²

A growing concern expressed by some Barre residents is the siting of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) in town. These systems have been sited and permitted in nearby towns and have garnered pushback from residents and environmental groups concerned about the negative effect the systems may have on water resource health. As reliance on renewable energy sources increases across the region, careful assessments of the potential impacts and site considerations of BESS are going to be crucial for environmental health and community safety.

“

I also wish there was more swimming access to natural bodies of water.

(2023 Community Survey)

Barre is located near the Quabbin Reservoir and houses a portion of the Quabbin Aqueduct which carries water from the Quabbin Reservoir to the Wachusett Reservoir. Additionally, the Ware River Watershed, which runs through the Eastern corner of Barre and covers neighboring Templeton, Hubbardston, Princeton, and Rutland, was identified as a vital natural resource to residents.

Miller's Beach, located on Powder Mill Pond, has been closed for years due to contamination from a nearby dump and transfer station. Responses to the Community Survey have pointed out that the beach is a place of missed recreation, and the closest nearby natural swimming area is over the town border in Rutland. Concern has also been raised across outreach efforts

21 Barre DPW Water Division. <https://www.townofbarre.com/water>

22 Town of Barre, MA Bylaws, Art V, § 140-13.



about stormwater runoff and erosion, particularly on town roads and areas with inadequate drainage. Undersized culverts are commonly identified as the cause of these flooding events, and flooding has been identified throughout Barre, particularly on Stetson Road due to poor stormwater drainage.²³

Agriculture

Agriculture and farms are of extreme importance to Barre as noted by 61% of Community Survey respondents. Barre's history of farming extends deep into the past and has roots long before its

incorporation as a town. The hills and streams were well suited for an early agricultural base, and farming remains important to the local economy and sense of place. With nearly one hundred farms in the area, Barre adopted a Right-To-Farm bylaw in 2008 that encourages the pursuit of agricultural activities in town. The bylaw allows that whatever impact farming has on abutters through the normal practice of agriculture is offset by its benefit to the community. The town is also home to the Barre Farmers Market, which brings in over 30 local craft and produce vendors from May through October,

and 43% of respondents said that Barre needs more agriculture-based businesses and services. Agritourism and the promotion of agricultural activity are laid out in the Economic Development and Land Use chapters, respectively.

²³ Barre Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Revised 2019. <https://cmrhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Barre-HMP-Final.pdf>

Photo source: Lisa Ouimette



GOAL 1: MAINTAIN BARRE'S HISTORIC CHARACTER.

Barre's historic and cultural assets are central to community identity. More than half (52%) of survey respondents strongly agreed, and 30% somewhat agreed, that Barre's history is an important part of its character.

STRATEGY 1.1. PRESERVE AND PROTECT BARRE'S HISTORIC BUILDING STOCK

Historic buildings in Barre add to the charm and character of the town, though many of them may require extensive care. The town should make efforts to fund preservation enhancements, so these structures do not run further risk of deterioration and disrepair.

- 1.1.1. Work with the Historical Commission to produce a conditions report to identify critical buildings and sites at risk of deterioration and in need of remediation.
- 1.1.2. Apply for a Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey & Planning Grant to create a community-wide historic preservation plan for Barre.
- 1.1.3. Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act, which

would allow the town to create a community preservation fund.

- 1.1.4. Consider expanding Preservation Restrictions on historic resources.
- 1.1.5. Develop an educational program in coordination with the Historical Commission and Historical Society for property owners of identified historic buildings on the significance of their properties and best practices for maintaining older buildings.

STRATEGY 1.2: IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE BARRE'S SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC AND CULTURAL SITES.

Not only does Barre boast an impressive stock of historic buildings and physical structures but also has a deep historical narrative and cultural artifacts that are worthy of protection and resident awareness.

- 1.2.1. Place the Prince Walker Burial Ground under a Preservation Restriction and transfer ownership to the Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- 1.2.2. Assist the Historical Commission in its work to register the Prince Walker Burial Ground under the National Register of Historic Places.
- 1.2.3: Create historical wayfinding signage throughout Barre and work with the Historical Society and Historical Commission to highlight Barre's past to contribute to a sense of town identity.
- 1.2.4. Identify funding sources to manage and care for veteran memorial sites in disrepair.
- 1.2.5. Adopt a scenic overlay district to protect the scenic vistas and stunning views on the identified scenic roads in town. See Strategy 2.3.7 in Economic Development.



GOAL 2: PRESERVE GREEN SPACES IN TOWN.

Protecting open undeveloped land in Barre will help ensure both residents and visitors enjoy the benefits of being in and around green space and will help to make Barre more resilient in the face of increasing weather events.



Photo source: Dennis Pariseau

STRATEGY 2.1: MAINTAIN AND PROTECT OPEN SPACE

- 2.1.1. Create open space prioritization criteria to identify and evaluate current land parcels with the Open Space Committee.
- 2.1.2. Assess whether conservation restrictions or DCR interventions are necessary for preservation purposes on identified priority areas.
- 2.1.3. Hire a town Conservation Agent. See strategy 2.3.5 in the Land Use chapter.
- 2.1.4. Host information sessions in coordination with Barre's DCR Service Forestry District representative to discuss the process of enrolling in the Chapter 61 tax program.
- 2.1.5. Work with community partners, like the East Quabbin Alliance for a Healthy Community, to publish walking trail guides for public use

and enjoyment of green space.

- 2.1.6. Find available funding to create a feasibility study on the impact of pollutants in the water at Powder Mill Pond.
- 2.1.7. If proven feasible, create and act on a plan for remediating Powder Mill Pond, opening Miller's Beach for public use and water recreation, and creating boat access for recreation and emergencies.
- 2.1.8. If pollutant remediation at Powder Mill Pond is not feasible, create beach area prioritization criteria to identify sites within Barre for future water recreation.



GOAL 3: PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY IN TOWN

In the face of a changing climate and increased intensity of weather events, the town can take the following steps to ensure it has undertaken necessary planning to weather future storms and hazards.

STRATEGY 3.1: ADDRESS WILDLIFE AND INVASIVE SPECIES CONCERNS

- 3.1.1. Conduct a town-wide invasive species survey to identify priority areas that need continued management and observation.
- 3.1.2: Develop a comprehensive invasive species management program, providing education and resources to landowners for invasives removal and management. Partner with state agencies such as the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Mass Audubon, and/or the East Quabbin Land Trust for coordinated eradication efforts.
- 3.1.3. Work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District to manage invasive vegetation outbreaks at the Barre Falls Dam.
- 3.1.4. Explore creating a pollinator-friendly policy or bylaw that can

limit or reduce dangerous pesticides that negatively impact bees or other pollinators.

STRATEGY 3.2: MOVE TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE AND GREEN ENERGY

- 3.2.1. Encourage energy efficiency for town-owned buildings; work with CMRPC liaisons for the Green Communities program to apply for grant funding for retrofits and HVAC optimization if necessary.
- 3.2.2. Conduct a feasibility assessment to evaluate energy impacts of installing rooftop and canopy solar panels on town buildings or over paved spaces, like parking lots.
- 3.2.3. Explore opportunities to advance Low Impact Development features, such as bioswales, permeable pavement, and rain gardens,

to areas that have been identified as flood-prone, particularly around the South Barre neighborhood and residences along Route 32 which is situated near existing wetlands. See strategy 2.3.2 in the Land Use chapter.

- 3.2.4. Keep informed about evolving policies and legislation related to Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and take timely, practical steps to minimize and mitigate any risks these developments may pose to the town.
- 3.2.5. Revisit the 2019 Barre Hazard Mitigation Plan and assess the status of proposed projects to boost environmental resilience.
- 3.2.6. Revisit the 2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan to ensure high priority action items are completed.
- 3.2.7. Revisit the 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Plan (MVP) to ensure high priority action items are completed.



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.

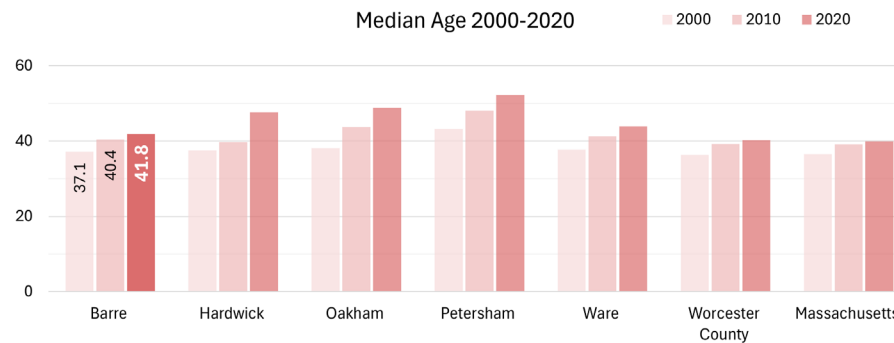


Figure H1: Median Age. Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020

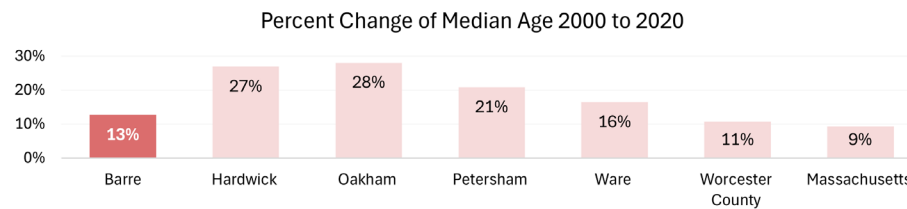


Figure H2: Median Age. Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000, 2020

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

²⁹ United States Census Bureau, "2020 Decennial Census", 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

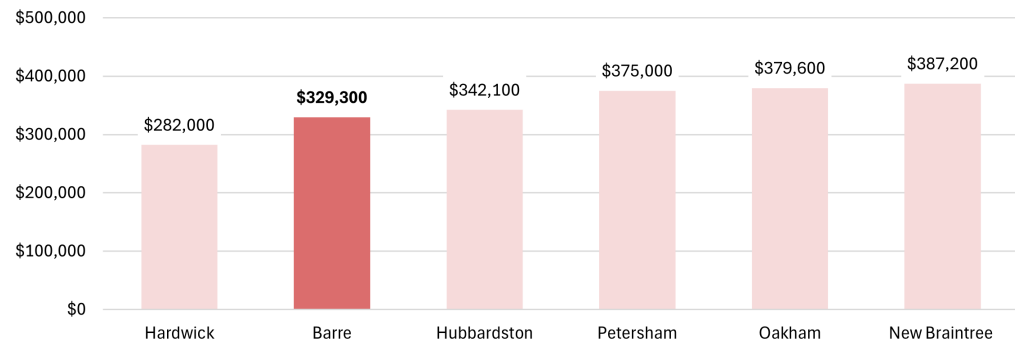


Figure H4: Value of Owner-Occupied Units in the Region.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

Median Household Income 2010-2023

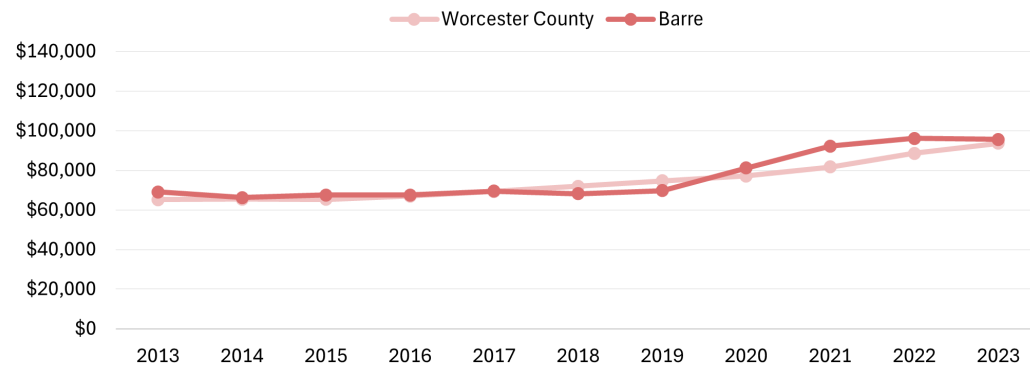


Figure H5: Median Household Income 2010 to 2023.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2010-2023

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

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.

Age of Housing in Barre

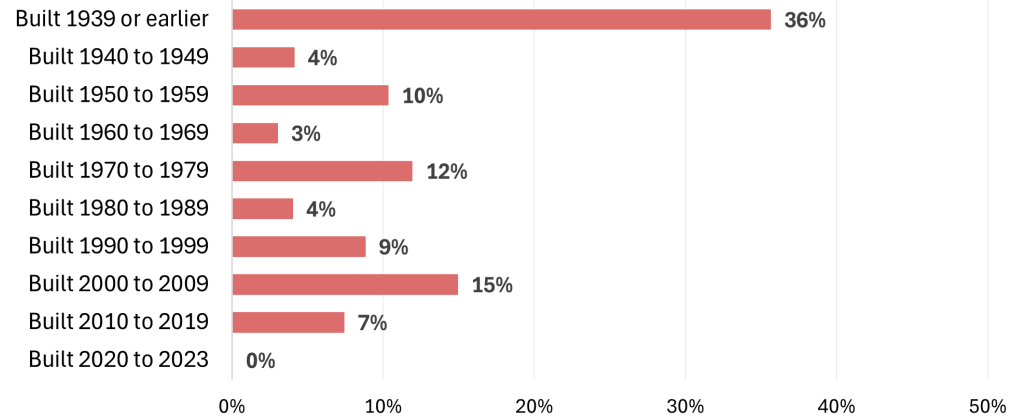


Figure H6: Age of Housing in Barre. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

Structural Types of Occupied Housing Units

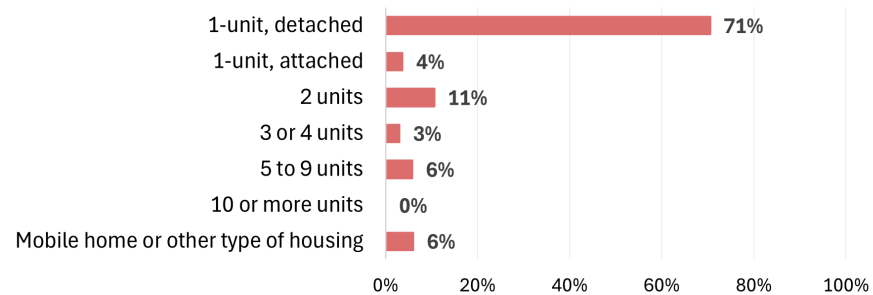


Figure H7: Structural Types of Occupied Housing Units
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2023

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

“**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)

“

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

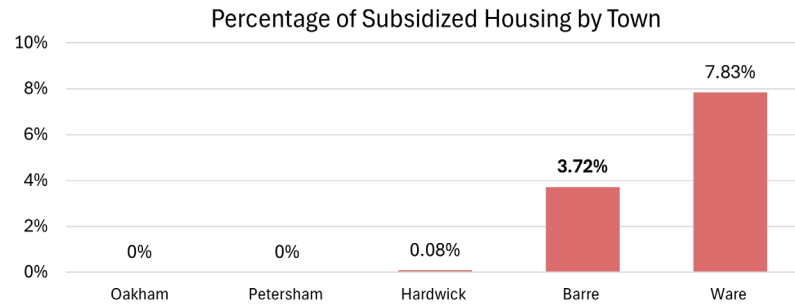


Figure H10: Percentage of Subsidized Housing by Town
 Source: Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Subsidized Housing Inventory 2025

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.





Photo source: CMRPC

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.



OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

In Barre, open space and recreation assets are a substantial part of the town's identity. Barre residents value opportunities to interact with the natural environment, some citing open space as the reason why they moved to town.

The following chapter provides key findings and recommendations related to human interaction with the natural environment, including trails, waterways, fields, and parks. All recommendations align with the vision for Barre's recreation offerings in the town's 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

This chapter recommends focusing resources on improvements to existing assets and coordinating volunteer and partner energy towards priority projects.

THEMES

- Maintaining recreation assets
- Expanding trail connections
- Increasing capacity for open space programming and communications



Photo source: Melissa Bonefant



OPEN SPACE & RECREATION DEFINITIONS

Active Recreation

Active recreation refers to activities that require physical exertion or team organization. Examples include recreation occurring on sports fields and playgrounds.

CMMPO

The Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization is responsible for preparing and updating the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Public Outreach Program (POP) for the Central Massachusetts region.

LAND

The Local Acquisition for Natural Diversity (LAND) grant program is facilitated by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The grant program helps municipalities acquire land for conservation and passive recreation purposes.

Open Space

Open space refers to undeveloped land, typically owned by the local, state, or federal government, a non-profit such as a land trust, or a publicly accessible parcel of land under a development restriction used for passive and/or active recreation.

PARC

The Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant program is facilitated by the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services to assist municipalities in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. Grant funding can be used to acquire parkland, build a new park, or renovate an existing park.

Passive Recreation

Passive recreation refers to low-intensity activities that require little to no development. Examples include hiking, picnicking, and bird watching.

Photo source: Michelle Biron



OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PRIORITIES

Invest in open space and recreation assets to improve quality of life

Playgrounds, fields, trails, and water access all shape Barre's rural charm and pace of life. Investments in these offerings can have ripple effects for local business, community, and resident satisfaction.

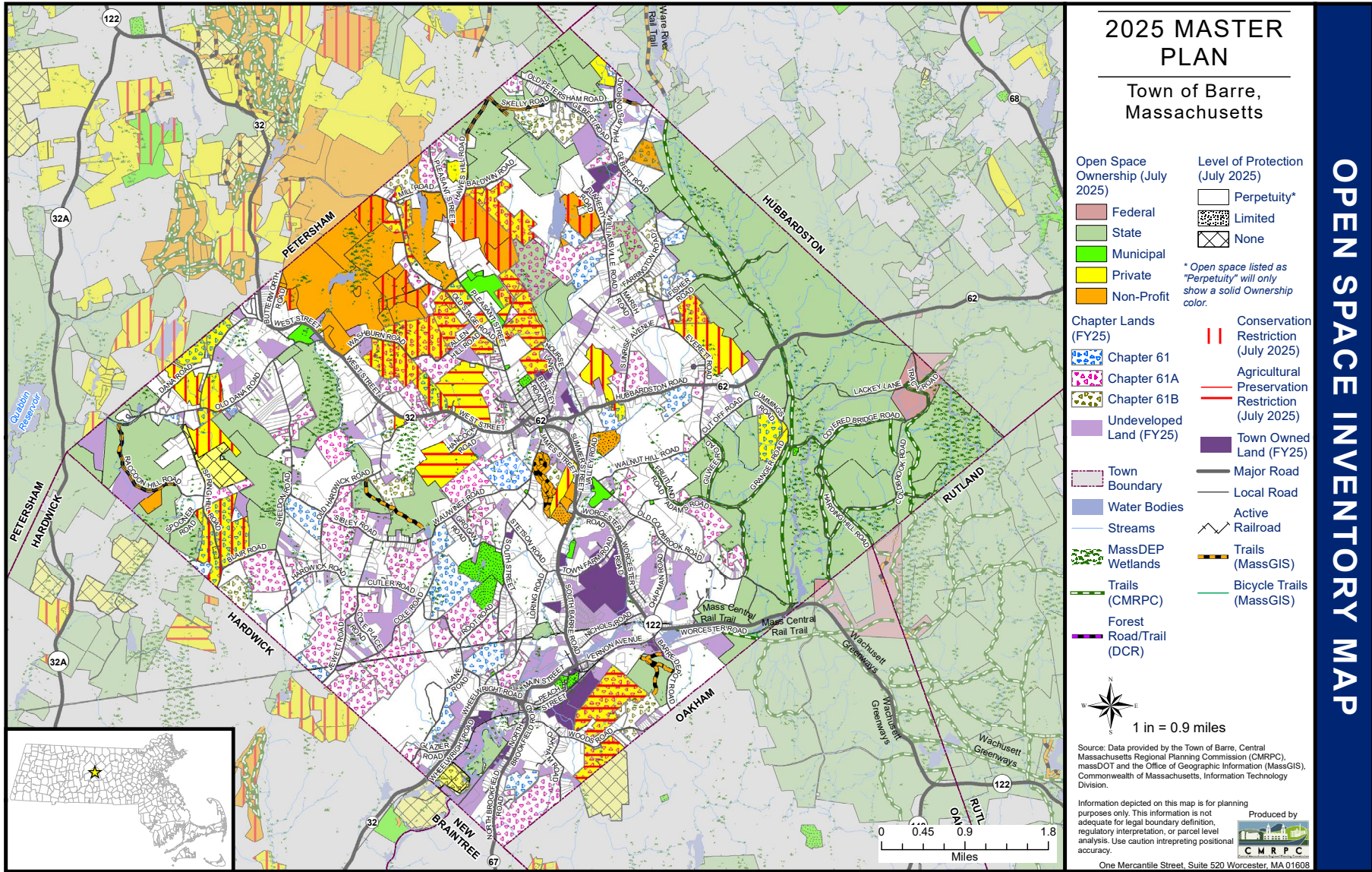
Expand current open space offerings for residents and visitors

Barre residents value current open space offerings and desire more formal opportunities to engage in active and passive recreation. An expansion of offerings, including organized programming and maintenance of public areas is highly desired.



Photo source: Hai Vy Nguyen





OPEN SPACE INVENTORY MAP

Date: 10/24/2025 Document Path: H:\Projects\01_Barre_GIS\Subprojects\m21_master_plan\m21_11_OpenSpace_11x17.mxd

Figure OS1: Open Space Inventory

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION FINDINGS

Barre's Top Strength is Natural Beauty and Open Space

As emphasized in the Economic Development chapter, Barre's assets in natural beauty and open space attract residents and tourists alike to the area. While the Economic Development chapter focuses on indirect returns from tourists to small businesses, this chapter focuses on quality of life for residents. Barre is home to numerous treasured assets, including the Ware River, Barre State Forest, Cooks Canyon, and three wildlife management areas.

Figure OS1 displays acres protected in perpetuity through deed restrictions and limited protection through Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B. Some land is designated under both conservation restriction and a Chapter program.

Barre's Built Amenities for Recreation Require Restoration

Open-ended survey responses and anecdotal data show a common desire to better manage upkeep and restoration of playgrounds, fields, and publicly accessible open space. Specifically, Miller's Beach and Felton

Name	Managing Agency	Current Use
Barre Plains Common	Parks and Recreation Committee	Monument, green space
Nornay Park	South Barre Common Committee	Bandstand, monument, green space
Town Common	Town Common Committee	Bandstand, monument, green space
Felton Field	Felton Field Committee	A historic fairground with 19th-century exhibition hall, tennis courts, basketball court, baseball diamond, recreation fields, horseback riding ring, and a pavilion
Powder Mill Pond/Miller's Beach	Parks and Recreation Committee	Green space, picnicking
Rice Park	Parks and Recreation Committee	Basketball courts, play equipment
Rockingstone Park	Parks and Recreation Committee	A historic spot offering hiking and mountain biking, among other recreational activities. Unmarked and indistinguishable from nearby residential properties.
Unnamed Barre Plains Baseball Field	Parks and Recreation Committee	Baseball diamond
Thorng Field/High Plains playground	Parks and Recreation Committee	Soccer field and playground

Figure OS2: Open Space Assets. Source: 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan

	Extremely Important	Somewhat Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Unimportant
Open space and passive recreation (e.g., fields, trails)	63%	26%	6%	2%	2%
Active recreation (e.g., sports fields, playgrounds)	49%	37%	12%	2%	2%

Figure OS3: Survey Question: "To what extent do you think the following issues are important to Barre?"
Source: 2023 Community Survey (some answer options not shown for clarity)

Field were mentioned as priority areas. Figure OS2 shows a longer list of open space assets enjoyed by Barre residents and managed by town committees.

Residents View Open Space and Recreation as a Cultural Identity and a Path Forward

Figure OS3 from the 2023 Community Survey shows 63% of residents listed "open space and passive recreation" as an extremely important issue in Barre. Many residents stated anecdotally during the 2023 Community Workshop and open-ended survey responses that the recreational offerings in town were



a significant factor in the choice to settle down in Barre.

Figure OS4 from the 2023 Community Workshop outlines community priorities for open space and recreation spending. Improving existing town-owned recreation facilities and open space was ranked more favorably than expanding town-owned resources and preserving more land. This finding heavily affects the recommendations of this chapter.

In addition to locations, community members were also asked to rank their preferred activities in the 2023 Community Survey. Hiking trails, canoe/kayak locations, and playgrounds were ranked most favorable for future support and expansion. Barre residents tended to be more in favor of passive recreation offerings rather than more guided active recreation, such as tennis or pickleball courts.

	Extremely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Extremely Disagree
Barre should focus on improving existing town-owned recreation facilities and open space.	57%	33%	8%	1%	0%
Barre should focus on expanding connections for walking and bike trails as well as sidewalks.	42%	37%	14%	4%	3%
More land in Barre should be protected (by non-profits, the state, the federal government, or the town) and preserved for open space.	37%	30%	18%	5%	10%
Barre should dedicate more land to passive recreational uses (e.g., trails or picnic areas).	35%	37%	18%	6%	4%
Loss of protected open spaces and biohabitats is a significant concern in Barre.	34%	29%	23%	7%	7%
Barre should dedicate more land to active recreational uses (e.g., playgrounds or ballfields).	26%	35%	24%	9%	6%

Figure OS4: Workshop Poll: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about natural resources and open space and recreation?" Source: 2023 Community Workshop

Recreational Opportunities	Response
Hiking Trails	62%
Canoe/Kayak Locations	52%
Playgrounds	46%
Public Swimming Pool	40%
Dedicated Bike Routes	40%
Winter Activities	37%
Public Fishing Access	36%
Picnic Areas	34%
Dog Parks	34%
Indoor Sports Facilities	30%
Ice Skating	28%
Hunting	28%
Athletic Fields	22%
Skateboarding	22%
Pickleball Courts	16%
Tennis Courts	15%
Equestrian Amenities	12%
Other	12%

Figure OS5: Survey Question: "Which of the following recreational opportunities would you like to see more of in Barre?" Source: 2023 Community Workshop



GOAL 1: PRIORITIZE PLAYGROUND AND FIELD QUALITY.

Community engagement for the Master Plan initiative ranks prioritizing playground and field quality above other open space and recreation opportunities (Figure OS4). Recent renovation of the High Plains playground has been widely appreciated, becoming a site of local pride. The following five recommended action items are derived from the top areas for improvement from the Master Plan workshop and survey. Similar to the High Plains playground renovation, there are numerous grant programs available to support playground and open space improvements.



Photo source: CMRPC

STRATEGY 1.1: UPDATE PLAYGROUND AND RECREATIONAL FIELD INFRASTRUCTURE.

Felton Field has tremendous opportunity as a historic fairground to share local history. Efforts can continue to maintain the available baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and basketball court. There is opportunity to expand offerings and potentially reinvigorate the fairground.

Rice Park's positioning next to town-owned parking and central to many residential homes sets this location as a prime area to re-imagine the playground and reboot local maintenance. There is also

the opportunity to host historical information signage at this location. Residents recommend re-installing the climbing wall and adding a swing set.

Located on Wheelwright Road near the old fire station, Barre Plains Ballfield is popular with local sport leagues. Additional grass and fertilizer for the field, bleachers, dugouts, lighting, and options for soccer are popular suggestions for amenities. Parents voiced concerns with traffic speeds when walking to parking across the street. A crosswalk, paired with traffic calming measures such as road narrowing, sidewalks, and bump-outs, can support safety. Additional parking could also be created on the fire station parcel.





- 1.1.1. Renovate and expand Felton Field.
- 1.1.2. Overhaul Rice Park.
- 1.1.3. Explore additional amenities at Barre Plains Ballfield.

- 1.2.1. Improve Miller's Beach access.
- 1.2.2. Explore additional amenities at Nornay Park. See 1.3.2 in Services and Facilities.

STRATEGY 1.2: INCREASE AMENITIES AT WELL- USED RECREATION SITES.

The 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan lists concerns with Miller's Beach water quality as the reason for closure, yet no water quality tests have been completed. Next steps to evaluate if the pond could be reopened for public swimming are recommended in the Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter (Strategy 2.1). In the short term, improvements to the beach area are desired. Increased trash management, signage, maintenance, and amenities can improve the use of the beach.

The 2021 Local Rapid Recovery Plan recommends continuing recent momentum at Nornay Park. Suggestions include portable comfort stations and additional amenities like a snack stand to make concert series and public events more enjoyable. The South Barre Common Committee has been integral in supporting this area and increasing neighborhood pride.



GOAL 2: SUPPORT ACCESS TO TRAILS.

There is some potential for formal trail expansion in Barre, especially in the South Barre neighborhood. However, there is tremendous opportunity to improve the existing trails network (Figure OS6) through low-cost, low-labor improvements, including marketing, signage, and parking area amenities. In addition to supporting quality of life for residents, trails are a great draw for day visitors who can in turn support local businesses.



Photo source: Zachary Finne

STRATEGY 2.1: FORMALIZE TRAIL EXPANSION AND ACCESS TO WATERWAYS.

The Commonwealth published a state-wide feasibility plan to extend the Mass Central Rail Trail west to east.⁴⁴ The Barre portion is proposed to run south of the Ware River. The proposed section includes some existing trail, some public property, and some private property. Expansion through Barre would require technical assistance from the CMMPO to align regional efforts.

The South Barre Village Plan suggests building formal canoe/kayak launches along the Ware River, including parking amenities.

- 2.1.1. Seek technical assistance to expand the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) through Barre.
- 2.1.2. Commission a study to under-

stand river flow, level, culverts or road impediments, and protected areas for canoe/kayak launches and paths through the Ware River.

Existing Trails
Mid-State Trail (Barre Falls Dam)
Wachusett Greenway
Prince River Preserve
Cook's Canyon Wildlife Sanctuary
Rutland Brook Wildlife Sanctuary
Town Farm Hill
Barre State Forest
Ware River Trails (Granger Road)
Potential Trails
Mass Central Rail Trail

Figure OS6: Trails

44

Massachusetts Department of Transportation <https://www.mass.gov/lists/mass-central-rail-trail-feasibility>



STRATEGY 2.2: OPTIMIZE TRAILS AS A CULTURAL IDENTITY.

There is interest to expand programming and maintenance of the Prince Walker Burial Ground. However, due to historical importance, wider public access should be explored with caution. More information can be found in the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter under Strategy 1.2.

Trail mapping in Barre can be pieced together from state and private sources, including TrailForks and the Mass Trail Tracker. A town-led volunteer effort to map all local trails and create marketing brochures and online resources would encourage visitation to local trails and avoid confusion on-site. All trail mapping should consider trail ownership, parcel rules, and emergency service connections.

- 2.2.1. Connect trail expansions to historical connections, such as the Prince Walker Burial Ground.
- 2.2.2. Create a comprehensive trails map and market trails through paper and online resources. See 1.3.4 in Economic Development.



GOAL 3: REIGNITE CAPACITY IN BARRE FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION VOLUNTEER WORK.

The Town of Barre relies heavily on volunteer efforts to supplement staff resources for maintenance, ongoing management, and event planning. Effective volunteer coordination requires strong communication to and from staff, board, and committee members to ensure volunteer time is used appropriately. In addition to local volunteer resources, Barre can continue to utilize regional and state partners and grant programs to augment the town budget.

STRATEGY 3.1: ALIGN PARTNERS AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPLEMENT RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS.

Barre has numerous local, regional, and statewide partners to fill gaps in town staff capacity. The following list includes some options for implementing this chapter and sustaining good parks and ongoing programming:

- East Quabbin Land Trust
- Mass Audubon
- New England Mountain Bike Association
- Central Mass Rail Trail
- Wachusett Greenways
- Chicopee Four Rivers
- MassWildlife

- South Barre Common Committee
- Felton Field Commission
- Friends of the Ware River Advisory Committee
- Department of Conservation and Recreation

CMRPC has assisted the Town of Barre in previous years for open space and recreation grant administration, such as the PARC grant for the High Plains playground. Continuing to utilize grant opportunities at the federal and state level will assist with implementation of this chapter.

- 3.1.1. Strengthen partnerships with local and regional resources such as Land Trusts and State agencies for maintenance and funding.

- 3.1.2. Activate partners and recurring grant opportunities like the PARC grant.

STRATEGY 3.2: INCREASE VOLUNTEER CAPACITY FOR OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROGRAMMING.

The Open Space Committee is currently inactive in the Town of Barre. If reactivated, this committee could assist in implementation of the 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan as well as this Master Plan initiative. Recruitment of new members may be needed. Parks and recreation committees can become self-sustaining through careful



planning and paid programming. Although this is a large undertaking for a volunteer force, this strategy suggests an increase in recreational programming does not need to come from the town budget. Barre Youth Soccer and Quabbin Youth Soccer are local examples.

- 3.2.1. Activate the Open Space Committee (2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan).
- 3.2.2. Assess options for self-sufficient recreational programming, such as sport leagues.



TRANSPORTATION

From the state-owned Routes 32 and 122, to the winding roads which connect Barre's three villages, to the historic bridges that greet travelers as they cross the Ware River, the roads of Barre ensure safe and efficient transit through the town and help to establish its rural character. Barre has a unique transportation history despite its current rural and agricultural character.

In 1849 a freight rail company was established to connect Barre to Worcester and Boston, named appropriately the Boston, Barre and Gardner Railroad. Unfortunately, this project was abandoned, and though later the company did connect Gardner to Worcester by rail, this route bypassed tranquil Barre completely.⁴⁵ Other railroad companies succeeded in connecting Barre to its neighboring communities, eventually leading to the

Massachusetts Central Railroad Line which operates freight service between Palmer and South Barre on 24 miles of track owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.⁴⁶

A proposed link of the Mass Central Rail Trail passes near the southeastern border of town, next to the Massachusetts Central Railroad line. Despite the lack of infrastructure for biking, cyclists are also present on the roads of Barre whose winding rural roads and pastoral scenes offer pleasant views of the New England countryside. For older residents who may have difficulty getting around, the Council on Aging offers para-transit vans which provide affordable trips to ten towns across the region for senior residents.

Key findings and goals in this chapter were informed by the Master Plan Survey, the CMMPO Pedestrian and Bike Plan (2018), the Barre Economic Strategic Development Plan, the Town of Barre Rapid Recovery Plan, data from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and other studies of transportation behaviors and roadway conditions. Residents and stakeholders shared satisfaction with the priorities

of the Highway Department and the progress being made to improve transportation conditions across town but expressed concern for the accessibility of transit services, the maintenance of town roads, and the safety of several intersections. The goals and action items aim to address these concerns and build positive momentum to improve transportation for all residents and travelers.

45 Karr, Ronald Dale (2017). *The Rail Lines of Southern New England* (2nd ed.). Pepperell, MA: Branch Line Press. pp. 229–231. ISBN 978-0-942147-12-4. OCLC 1038017689

46 Andrew Grahl; Steve Carlson; Zachary Carlson (February 2021). "Railfanning the Massachusetts Central Railroad". *Railpace* Newsmagazine. White River Productions. Retrieved 30 November 2022.

THEMES

- Accessibility
- Safety
- Exploring Alternatives



TRANSPORTATION DEFINITIONS

Desire Paths

An unplanned route or path, such as one worn into a grassy surface by repeated foot traffic, that is used by pedestrians in preference to or in the absence of a designated alternative such as a paved pathway.

Federal Aid Eligible Roadway

All roads that have some type of eligibility to federal funds, including federal-aid highways, limited federal-aid eligible rural minor collectors and the National Highway System routes.



Photo source: Dennis Pariseau



TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

Improving Roadway Infrastructure

Town residents strongly support repairing and maintaining the roadways of Barre. According to the Community Survey, respondents ranked roadway infrastructure as the highest transportation priority, with 61% saying that it was extremely important, and 33% saying it was somewhat important.

Improving Pedestrian Infrastructure

The residents of Barre have a strong interest in improving overall walkability in town. According to the Community

Survey, respondents ranked walkability as a transportation priority, with 39% saying that it was extremely important, and 36% saying it was somewhat important. Additionally, 62% of community survey respondents indicated that they would like to see more hiking trails in and around Barre.

Creating Cycling Infrastructure

Currently no cycling infrastructure exists within Barre, however, there is a desire among residents for this infrastructure to be put in place. According to the community survey, respondents ranked bikeability as a priority, with 30% saying that it was

extremely important, and 37% saying it was somewhat important.

Developing Public Transit Options

There are currently no public transit options in Barre, however there is an interest from the town in exploring options for providing public transit to nearby cities and towns. According to the community survey, respondents ranked public transit options as a priority, with 21% saying that it was extremely important, and 34% saying it was somewhat important.



TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS

Conditions

The Town of Barre contains approximately 117 miles of road⁴⁷ and CMRPC’s Pedestrian Network inventory catalogues approximately 3.1 miles of sidewalk, primarily within Barre Town Center.⁴⁸ There is no bicycle infrastructure in Barre. Travel to and from destinations in and around Barre for residents is defined more by the lack of alternatives to personal automobiles than any strong affinity for automobile use.

Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) shown in Figure T2 presents three five-year ACS estimates covering the periods 2009-2013, 2014-2018, and 2019-2023. Over this

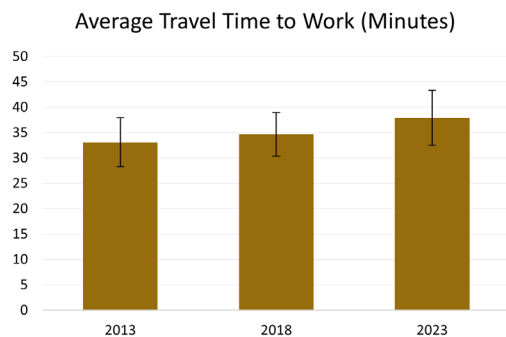


Figure T2: Average Travel Time to Work.
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates

What types of transportation options would you like to see more of in Barre?	Percent
Roadway conditions	60%
Improved sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrian	54%
Van program for older adults	45%
Improved walking trails and cycling trails	44%
More public transit options	35%
Street furniture such as bench, lighting etc.	28%
Taxi or rideshare	26%
More street trees	21%
Improved signage	21%
More kiosks on rest areas to highlight the Lost Village Scenic Byway	20%
ADA Accessible transportation assets (e.g., accessible sidewalks, ramps, parking spaces, etc.)	18%
Electric Vehicle charging stations	15%
Dedicated and protected bike lanes	15%
Parking	12%
More travelers services	9%
Park-n-ride parking lot	8%
Car-sharing services such as Zipcar	8%
Other (please specify)	7%

Figure T1: Community Survey Question 17: “What types of transportation options would you like to see more of in Barre?”

timeframe, the estimated average commute increased from 33.1 minutes to 37.9 minutes. While this change points to an increase in commuting time, it is not statistically significant, meaning the difference may reflect normal variation in survey data rather than a clear, measurable change in travel behavior.

Consistent with longer commute times, a growing share of Barre residents travel outside the town for work.

Data from the US Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program shows that the share of residents working outside of Barre increased from 84% in 2011 to 89% in 2023.

47 Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services “Town of Barre Community Snapshot” <https://dls-gw.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=CommunityPage>

48 CMRPC Pedestrian Network Inventory <https://cmrpc.org/data-center/community-snapshots/barre/#T-T>



Share of Barre Residents Working in Barre and Elsewhere, 2011–2023

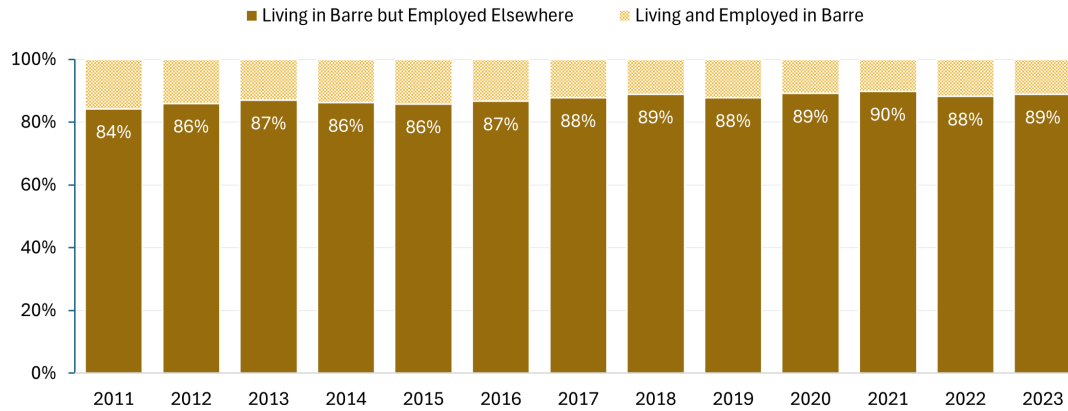


Figure T3: Share of Barre Residents Working in Barre and Elsewhere, 2011–2023.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)

Condition	Miles of Roadway	Percent of Total
Excellent	5	15%
Good	8	25%
Fair	13	38%
Poor	4	14%
Very Poor	3	9%
Total	33	100%

Figure T4: Pavement Condition on Federal Aid Eligible Roadways

eligible roadways may qualify for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding through the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization application process. The town’s Highway Department is responsible for the maintenance of public roads and town owned properties in Barre and faces budgetary shortfalls that prevent much needed repairs and improvements. This includes the repair of roads and associated drainage, snow and ice removal, sanding, street sweeping, as well as roadside and right-of-way brush clearing. This department is also responsible for all town highway work scheduling and coordinating with other town departments and local public utilities.

According to town reports, the Highway Department budget has largely remained the same year over year for the past decade. Not accounting for snow removal costs, the annual budget that the town has appropriated ranged from a low of \$623,205.60 in 2021 to a high of \$749,433.64 in 2020, a change of approximately 20%.⁴⁹ During that same decade the cumulative rate of inflation has decreased the buying power of the dollar by over 50% for construction materials, leaving the Highway

Among Barre residents who commute outside the town for work, Worcester is the most common destination. As of 2023, just over 14% of out-commuting residents work in Worcester, followed by Boston at approximately 6%. The remaining commuters are spread across a wide range of cities and towns throughout the region.

condition of federally eligible roadways in Barre shows a wide range of conditions, from very poor to excellent (Figure T4). This dataset does not include locally owned roads. Of the approximately 33 miles of roadway included in CMRPC’s inventory, 61% were rated in fair, poor, or very poor condition, indicating that a significant portion of the town’s roadway network requires repair. These federally

Data collected by CMRPC on the



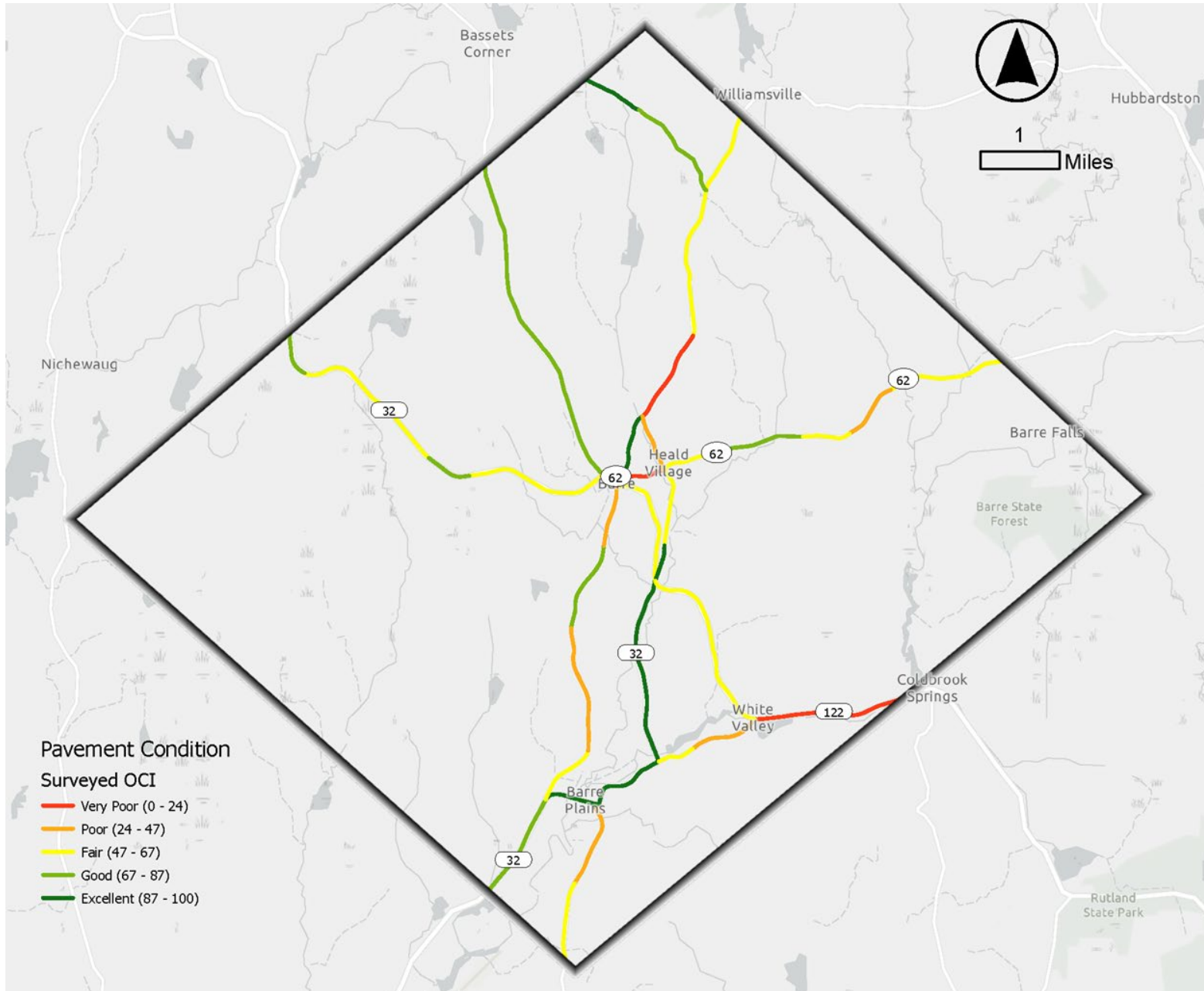


Figure T5: Pavement Conditions on Federal Aid Eligible Roadways



Department to do more with less. Figure T6 identifies the actual buying power of that budget adjusted for inflation, comparing the Public Works Budget from 2014 to 2024 against the General Construction Producer Price Index and the USDOT National Highway Construction Costs Index, using 2014 as the base year.

Chapter 90

One of the most important sources of funding for roadway maintenance in Barre is the state’s Chapter 90 Program, which provides annual formula-based funding to cities and towns for transportation infrastructure improvements. Each year, the Massachusetts Legislature establishes the overall funding level for the program, and those funds are then distributed among the Commonwealth’s 351 municipalities based on the formula. Chapter 90 funds

are allocated by state fiscal year, which runs from July 1 through June 30. Between 2013 and 2025, Barre’s annual Chapter 90 apportionment changed very little in nominal dollar terms. However, when accounting for inflation, particularly the sharp

increases in construction costs in recent years, the purchasing power of this funding has declined substantially. As shown in Figure T7, both the actual amounts and inflation-adjusted amounts (expressed in constant 2013 dollars using construction materials

“

Highway department does a great job with snow removal and sanding/salting. They need more funding to properly fix poor road conditions.

(2023 Community Survey)

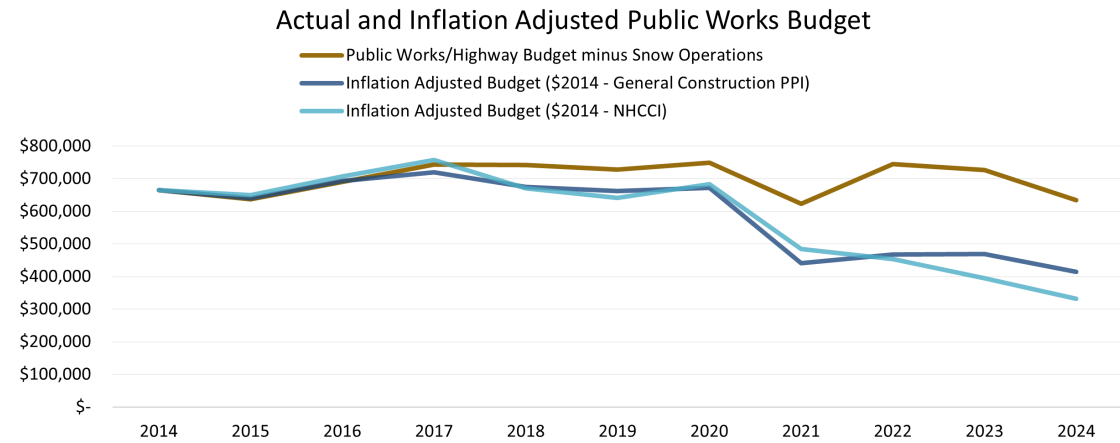


Figure T6: Actual and Inflation Adjusted Public Works Budget

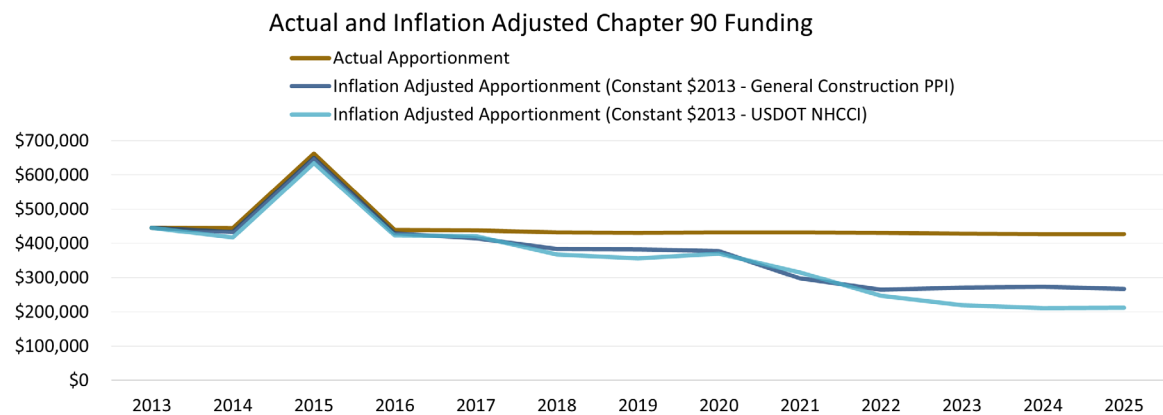


Figure T7: Actual and Inflation Adjusted Chapter 90 Funding

Producer Price Index and the USDOT NHCCI) are presented.⁵⁰ While the nominal apportionment changed little from \$445,158 in 2013 to \$426,910 in 2025, the inflation-adjusted value fell to between \$211,984 and \$272,369, depending on the measure of inflation.

The most recent Chapter 90 funding authorization included an additional \$180 million statewide, resulting in a substantial increase in Barre’s annual apportionment to \$964,891. When adjusted for inflation using the first half of 2025 construction materials Producer Price Index, this increase represents an approximately 35% gain in purchasing power compared to 2013 levels.

One way that communities can better manage the long-term costs of maintaining roads and utilities is by making more productive use of the infrastructure they have already built.

“

Some of the roads are pretty damaged and collect water that turns to ice very quick. Especially the roads the school buses drive on.

(2023 Community Survey)

Town	Local Road Miles	Population	Housing Units	Miles of Road / 1000 Residents	Miles of Road / 1000 Housing Units
Rutland	80.87	9,049	3,257	8.9	24.8
West Brookfield	50.64	3,833	1,831	13.2	27.7
North Brookfield	68.91	4,735	2,163	14.6	31.9
Barre	97.7	5,530	2,157	17.7	45.3
Oakham	44.06	1,851	697	23.8	63.2
Hardwick	85.64	2,667	1,181	32.1	72.5
New Braintree	49.9	996	396	50.1	126.0

Figure T8: Miles of Local Road per 1000 People and Housing Units

This can include land use strategies such as allowing more housing, mixed uses, or small-scale commercial activity along roads that already have public infrastructure. When more residents and businesses are served by the same miles of roadway, the cost of maintaining that infrastructure can be spread across a broader tax base, improving the town’s overall fiscal sustainability.

Compared to nearby communities, Barre’s roadway network is neither unusually extensive nor unusually compact relative to its population and housing base. As shown in Figure T8, Barre falls near the middle when comparing miles of roadway per 1,000 residents and housing units across six neighboring towns. This suggests that while Barre does not face an outsized infrastructure burden relative

to its peers, future land use decisions, particularly those that concentrate growth along existing roads, could play an important role in managing maintenance costs over time.

Safety for Drivers, Pedestrians, and Cyclists is an ongoing concern.

There are several factors that shape day-to-day travel conditions and influence how comfortable residents feel walking, biking, or driving in Barre. Community feedback and data point to common themes, including vehicle speeds, roadway design, and the visibility and condition of signs and pavement markings. Limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure,

⁵⁰ As of this writing, the annual PPI measure had not been released for 2025, therefore the PPI for the first half of 2025 was used.



such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and shoulders, can also affect how safely people move through town, particularly along busier roads and in village areas. Beyond the physical conditions of roadways, some roadway designs have been noted to be difficult to navigate, and even dangerous by residents. Survey respondents indicated that the intersection of Pleasant Street and South Street in Barre Town Center, and the intersection of Valley Road were the most difficult (i.e. hazardous, congested, or hard to navigate) areas or intersections in Barre.⁵¹

Crash data for Barre, available through the MassDOT Impact Portal, dates back to 2002. Total crashes peaked at around 90 incidents in 2008 and have generally declined since that time. Since 2019 crashes have averaged approximately 37 per year. While this overall downward trend is encouraging, the number of fatal and serious injury crashes has remained relatively steady, with eight such crashes occurring over the past five years. Less severe injury crashes have declined alongside overall crash totals. Figure T9 illustrates five-year crash density on Barre's roadways, with locations of fatal and serious injury crashes highlighted. Barre Center experiences a relatively high concentration of crashes, with

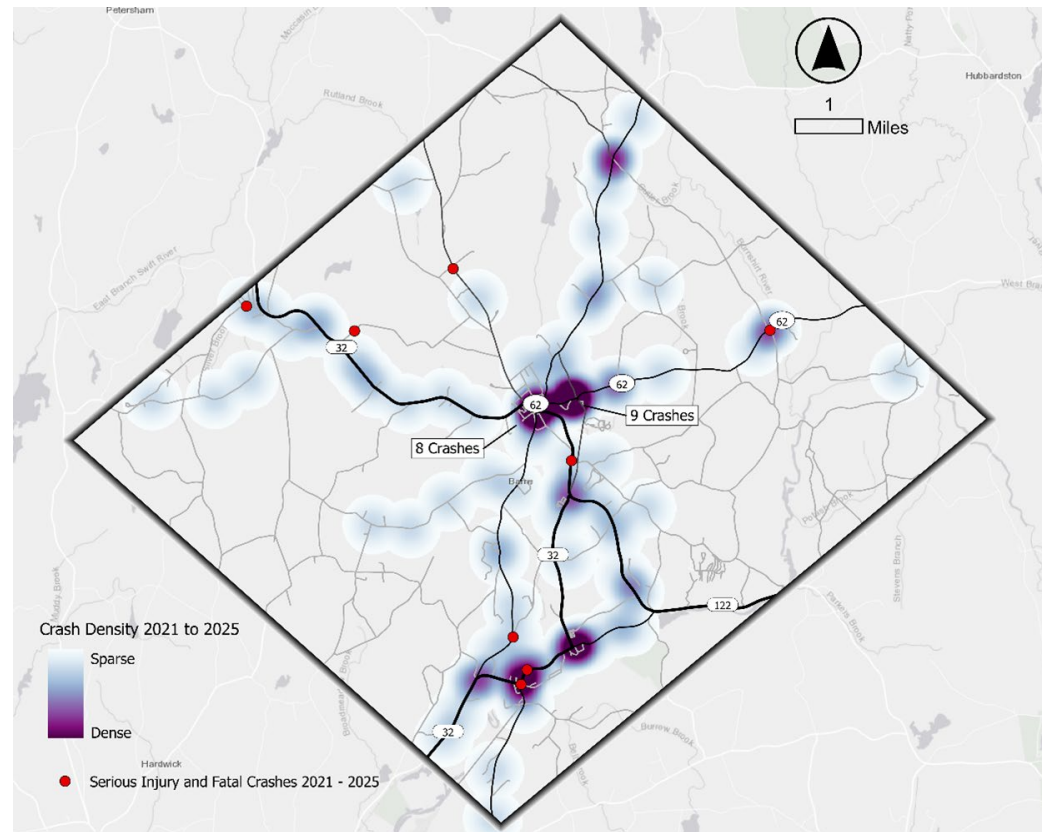


Figure T9: Crash Density 2021-2025. Source MassDOT Impact Portal

22 occurring over the past five years; however, none of these incidents resulted in a fatality or serious injury. The intersection of Pleasant Street and South Street, located within Barre's Town Center which has the highest number of crashes has a confusing traffic pattern: three state routes converge on or near this intersection (Route 122/32 and Route 62) as well as

South Street/Mechanic Street, James Street, Moulton Street, Exchange Street (which exists more as a parking lot around the common with a one way street running through the middle), Cat Alley, School Street and Common Street all have intersections around this area. This confusion has consequences:

51 Community Survey 2023, Q19



According to MassDOT, 44 of the crashes that have occurred in the years of 2019-2021 have occurred in or near this intersection.⁵² Another area of elevated crash density is South Barre, where several crashes involving serious injuries and fatalities have occurred.

Vehicle speed is an important indicator of both actual and perceived safety. It is especially critical in areas where drivers interact with pedestrians and cyclists. As vehicle speeds increase, the risk of serious injury or death in a crash rises sharply. For example, a pedestrian struck by a vehicle traveling at 20 miles per hour has an estimated 18% chance of being seriously injured or killed. At 30 miles per hour, that risk increases to approximately 50%, underscoring the importance of speed management in areas with pedestrian and bicycle activity.

Figure T11 shows 85th percentile vehicle speeds on a subset of roadways in Barre; speed data is not available for all roads in town. It represents the speed at or below which 85% of drivers travel when the road is uncongested and conditions are favorable.

An area of potential concern in town

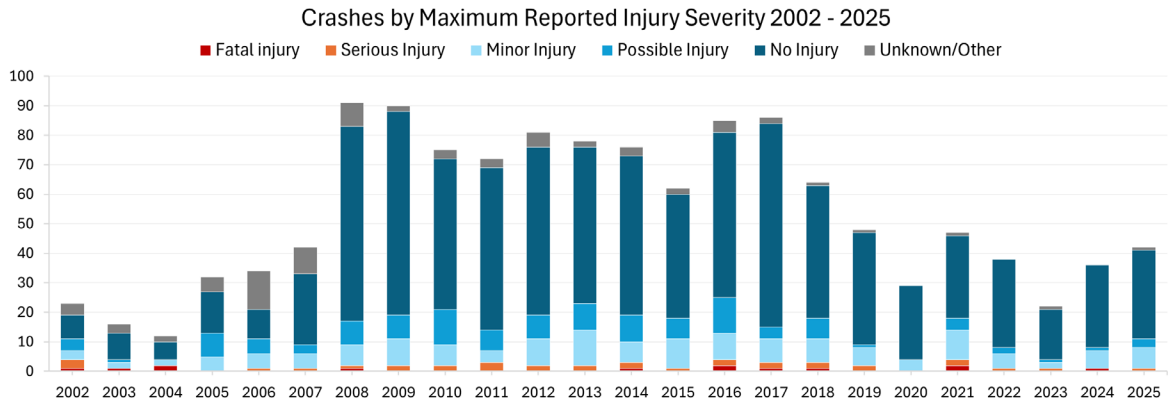


Figure T10: Crashes by Maximum Reported Injury Severity 2002 - 2025

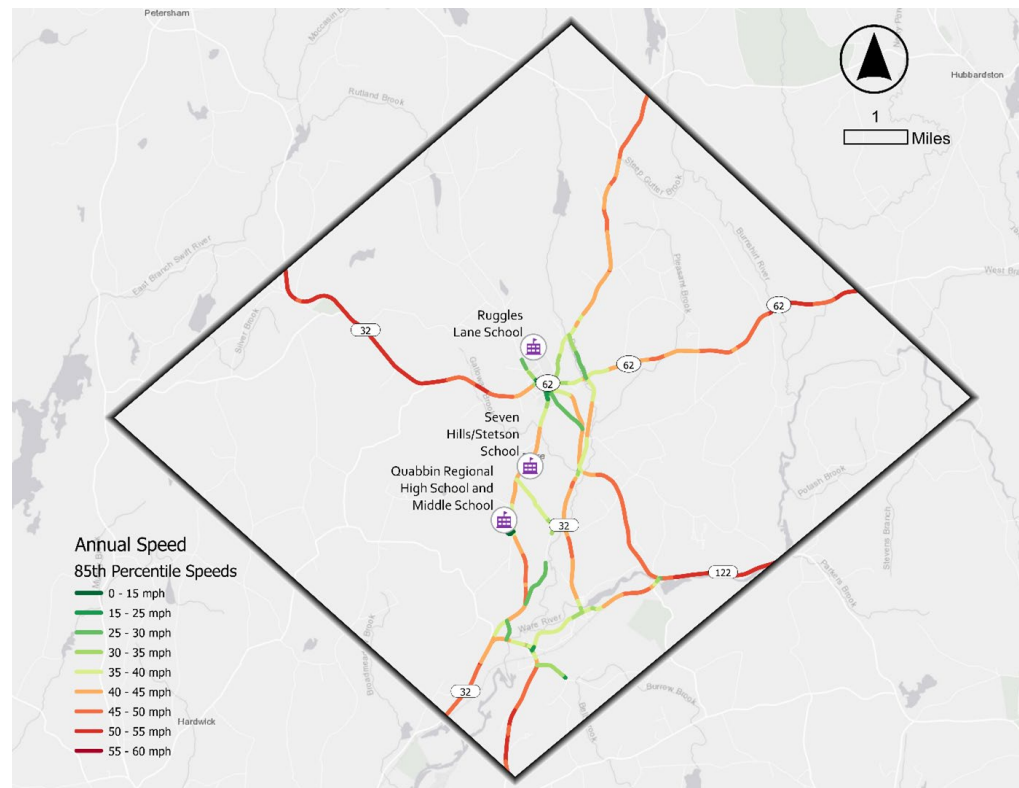


Figure T11: Vehicle Speeds in Barre



“

Sidewalks in Barre Plains and A sidewalk to Quabbin. It is very dangerous that the track team runs on South Street - BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD!!

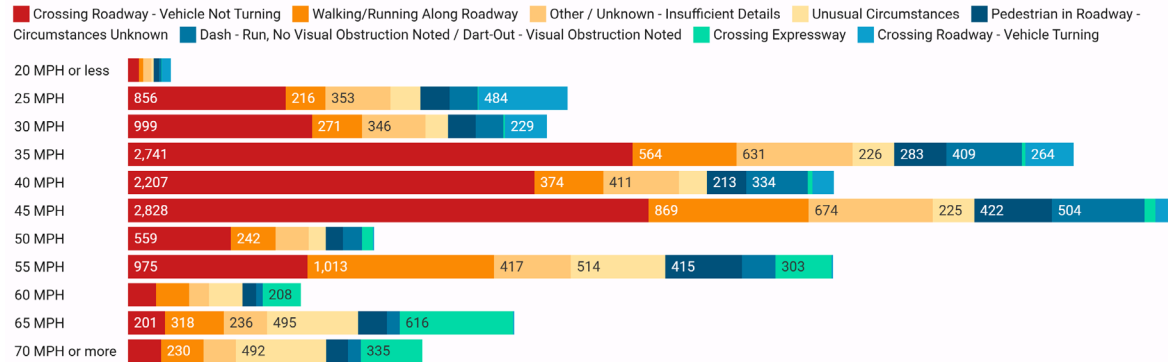
(2023 Community Survey)

is South Street. Community members noted that school sports teams, such as the cross country team, often use South Street for running. The design of this roadway, and the vast majority of roadways in Barre, creates conditions where the potential for fatal interactions between pedestrians and automobiles is increased.

While reductions in speed limits increase the overall survivability for crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists, what is lost in the dataset is that an overall reduction in interactions between pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles would save the most lives. For pedestrians, the most common fatal interactions occur during street crossings, with the second most being walking or running along the roadway. This data is similar for cyclists, who are at an even greater risk of death from cycling in the roadway with drivers

Grouped Pedestrian Fatal Crash Types by Speed Limit

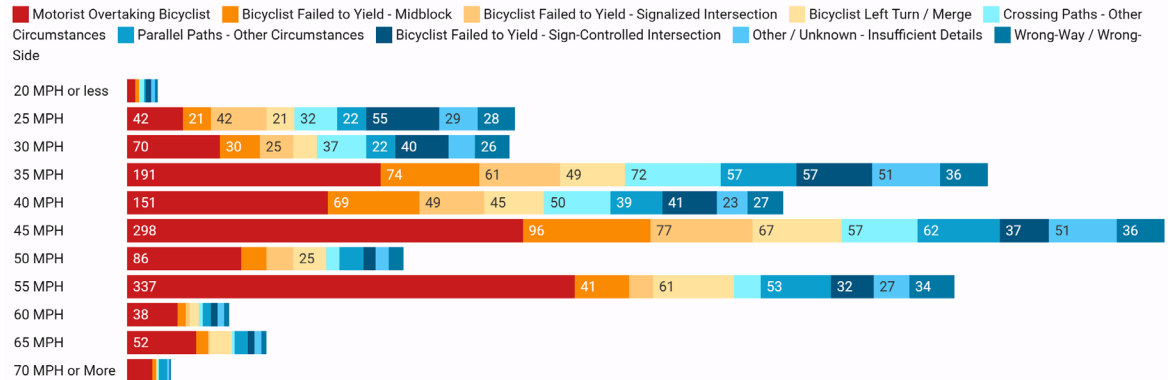
For roads with speed limits below 55 mph, the most common fatal crash type for people walking occurs when a driver is proceeding straight and hits a person walking across the roadway. At speed limits above 55 mph, other crash types become more common, with "unusual circumstances" and "crossing expressway" being two of the most common types.



Only "Pedestrian Crash Group" types with more than 1,000 pedestrian deaths recorded between 2017-2021, including those with unknown speed limits, shown. Chart: The League of American Bicyclists • Source: NHTSA • Get the data • Download image • Created with Datawrapper

Grouped Bicyclist Fatal Crash Types by Speed Limit

For most speed limits, the most common fatal crash type for people biking occurs when a driver is proceeding straight and hits a person biking while overtaking them. This crash type is especially prominent at higher speed limits.



Only "Bicyclist Crash Group" types with more than 200 bicyclists deaths recorded between 2017-2021, including those with unknown speed limits, shown. Chart: The League of American Bicyclists • Source: NHTSA • Get the data • Download image • Created with Datawrapper

Figure T12: Grouped Pedestrian and Cyclist Fatal Crash Types by Speed Limit
Source: The League of American Bicyclists, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



attempting to overtake them. In both cases, the pedestrians and cyclists are in or immediately adjacent to the roadway at the same level as the car and not on a grade separated side or cross walk.

Removing pedestrians and cyclists from the roadway removes the potential of fatal interactions between pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles from occurring and increases the safety and enjoyability of transportation pathways for all users. Importantly, the creation of safer pathways for cyclists and pedestrians increases the usage and the adoption of alternative modes of transportation. Adding buffered bike lanes in high-speed areas, and conventional bike lanes in lower speed town centers will induce demand for these modes of transportation. Cyclists generally prefer separated bicycle infrastructure as it is safer;

“

I don't drive so like I mentioned a crosswalk between the pharmacy and the plaza would be extremely helpful, there's no crosswalks or sidewalks in the area I live.

(2023 Community Survey)

consequently is more likely to be used by even the most risk-averse cyclists.⁵³

The Community is interested in expanding the accessibility and reach of existing public transportation options.

Rural communities face unique challenges in providing transportation alternatives. A smaller population base for ridership, and longer distances between destinations lead to an intractable problem: less economic demand for a more expensive service. This tends to result in defaulting to individualized transportation centered on automobile usage. However, these challenges are not insurmountable if there is popular support for alternatives. The desire to expand transportation services was identified as a high priority in Barre's 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan.⁵⁴ According to the Community Survey, 55% of respondents ranked public transit options as either extremely important or somewhat important. Over one third of respondents indicated that they wanted more public transit options in Barre. Additionally, 45% of respondents indicated that they wanted to see more support for the Elder Services Van Program The Montachusett Regional

“

What about a Barre to Worcester bus like there used to be?

(2023 Community Survey)

“

It would be great to have public transportation to Amherst.

(2023 Community Survey)

Transit Authority (MART) supports this on-demand transit program through the Barre-Hardwick Council On Aging, which provides fare-free rides to Barre's elderly (60+) and disabled residents. These services require 48-hour advance warning to book a trip but are adaptable to the needs of those it services with a wide range of destinations. Greater outreach is required to inform and assist residents on how to access to these services.

For residents under age 60 there are few options for transit to destinations

53 de Freitas, L.M., Axhausen, K.W. What influences cycling infrastructure preferences? A stated-preference survey. *Transportation* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11116-025-10624-7>

54 Barre MVP Summary of Findings 2020



as Barre finds itself outside of nearby regional transit authorities' service areas for Worcester and Montachusett. Commuting patterns in Barre have remained largely unchanged over the past decade. American Community Survey data on commute mode share, shown in Figure T13, indicates that most residents continue to rely on single-occupancy vehicles as their primary way of getting to work. Although there have been modest increases in public transportation use, carpooling, walking, and bicycling, driving alone still accounts for 70% of work trips. This suggests that structural factors, such as job locations, travel distances, and limited transportation alternatives, continue to shape travel behavior, even as interest in other modes grows.

American Community Survey data indicates that vehicle availability is high in Barre, with nearly 90% of households having access to at least one vehicle and approximately 65%

Commute Mode	Mode Share		
	2013	2018	2023
Drove Alone	76%	73%	70%
Carpooled	11%	12%	13%
Public Transportation	0%	0%	4%
Walked	1%	0%	2%
Bike, Taxi, Motorcycle or Other	0%	0%	3%
Worked from home	12%	15%	9%

Figure T13: Commute Mode Share to Work 2013-2023
Source: ACS 5-year estimates

having access to two or more vehicles. At the same time, an estimated 204 households depend on alternatives for everyday needs such as grocery shopping, medical appointments, and other essential trips as they do not have access to a vehicle. This includes approximately 72 workers who must rely on other transportation options to reach their jobs. Ensuring that safe, reliable, and convenient transportation options are available for these residents is an important consideration for the town's transportation system. As noted in the Conditions section, of those who commute outside the town for work, Worcester is the most common destination with 14% followed by Boston with 6%. A transportation service to Worcester could service the needs of both Worcester and Boston commuters through connections to public transit, as well as provide opportunities to access work for the approximately 35% of households in Barre with access to one vehicle or fewer.

The Community has an interest in low impact alternatives to car usage such as cycling and pedestrian access to nearby communities and regional trail networks.

“

I think making the town more walkable overall would be valuable.

(2023 Community Survey)

“

There are no sidewalks in the majority of Barre, which makes it unsafe for the young and old.

(2023 Community Survey)

Looking at transportation holistically, an overwhelming majority of those surveyed view increasing other modes of transit, such as walking and biking very highly. According to the Community Survey 77% of respondents ranked walkability as either extremely or somewhat important, and 67% of respondents ranked bikeability as either extremely or somewhat important. As noted previously in the Conditions section, CMRPC's Pedestrian Network inventory catalogues approximately 3.1 miles of sidewalk in Barre, primarily within Barre Town Center.⁵⁵ The

55 CMRPC Data Center, Barre Community Snapshot





town has taken steps in supporting walkability in the pedestrian friendly center, with excellent curbing and ADA accessible curb cuts. However, this support is not distributed equally among the residents of Barre, with less affluent areas having substandard sidewalks or no sidewalks at all, which reduces the ability of residents to safely get from place to place. What sidewalks do exist outside of the town center are overwhelmingly in poor to fair condition, and many of them are at grade with the street. This is especially true in the neighborhood of South Barre. Sidewalk conditions were the most highly ranked pedestrian transportation issue in the community survey, along with gaps in sidewalks and ADA accessibility. Residents noted the

“ ———

South Barre’s sidewalks are horrible!

(2023 Community Survey)

“ ———

Lack of sidewalks, especially on South Street

(2023 Community Survey)

following roadways and neighborhoods as particular areas of concern:

- Route 122
- Kendal Street to Quabbin Regional High School
- Barre Plains
- South Barre
- South Street
- West Street
- Grogan Road

None of these roads have pedestrian infrastructure. The survey also notes that there is concern about the maintenance of sidewalks in the winter, as well as interest in a proposed pedestrian path to the Quabbin reservoir.

According to the community survey, 79% of respondents agreed that “expanding connections for walking and bike trails as well as sidewalks” was either important or extremely important. The CMMPO 2018 Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan noted a number of opportunities for the town of Barre to increase connectivity in town, with nearly 20 miles of roadways and trails identified that could have a high potential for bikeway and pedestrian improvements.⁵⁶ Nowhere is the need

⁵⁶

CMMPO Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plans, 2018, Barre Recommendations



for improved pedestrian access more apparent than in the desire paths leading to and from Quabbin Regional High School. The South Street entrance to Quabbin Regional High School (QRHS) is only accessible by motor vehicle, however it is clear from the wear along the shoulder of South Street that it is being used by pedestrians to get to the school. In discussion with the master planning committee as well as in the community survey, South Street was identified as being a route used by the QRHS Cross Country Team.

Figure T14 shows the MassDOT Bike Level of Stress Index for Barre. Level of traffic stress (LTS) is an approach that quantifies the amount of discomfort people feel when they ride a bicycle close to traffic. The LTS methodology applies a numeric value to roadway segments and trails to quantify stress level based on attributes such as traffic speed, traffic volume, number of lanes, presence of bicycle facilities, type of bicycle facilities, frequency of parking turnover, ease of intersection crossings, presence and number of conflict points, and more. The LTS methodology relies on a “weakest link” logic; even if many attributes of a roadway indicate low stress, if one attribute indicates high stress, that segment will be categorized as high stress. In other words, the LTS

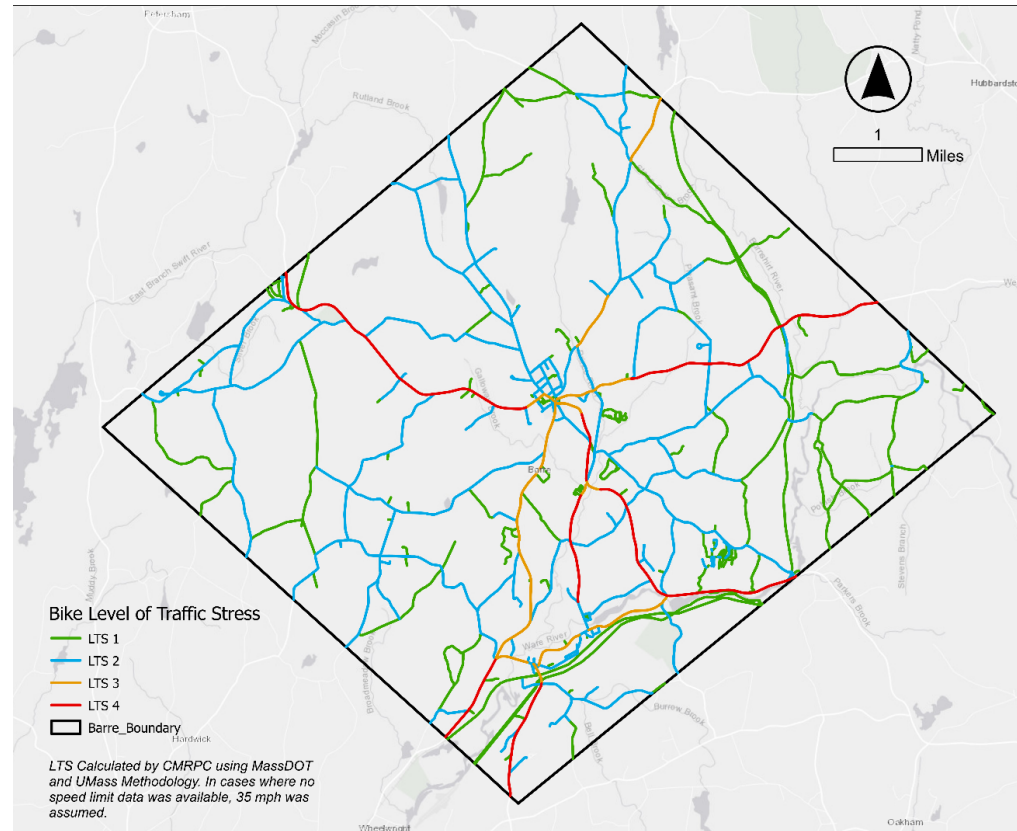


Figure T14: Map of MassDOT Bike Level of Stress Index for Barre

rating assigned to a roadway segment is determined by its most stressful link. The level of traffic stress of a roadway segment is quantified 1 through 4, broadly defined as follows:

- LTS 1: Very low stress, suitable for most children.
- LTS 2: Low traffic stress, suitable for the those interested but cautious.
- LTS 3: Moderate traffic stress, suitable for confident cyclists.
- LTS 4: High stress, suitable for only strong and confident cyclists.

Many of the road segments in Barre meet the criteria for LTS 1 and 2. Some of those that fall in the LTS 1 category are unpaved gravel roads with limited traffic or function primarily as trails. Most of the roads classified as LTS 2 are due to low traffic levels and posted speed limits of 35 mph or less.

GOAL 1: MAINTAIN A SAFE, RELIABLE, AND FISCALLY SUSTAINABLE ROADWAY NETWORK THAT REFLECTS COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND LOCAL TRAVEL NEEDS.

Barre's roadway system is critical to daily life and economic activity. Improving the maintenance and safety of the system while managing long-term costs is a central transportation priority for the town. volunteer resources, Barre can continue to utilize regional and state partners and grant programs to augment the town budget.

STRATEGY 1.1: IMPROVE ROADS AND INTERSECTIONS BY USING BOTH A TRANSPARENT, DATA- DRIVEN PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.

- 1.1.1. Develop and adopt a roadway improvement and maintenance prioritization framework that considers pavement condition, functional classification, traffic volumes, safety history, drainage conditions, and proximity to key destinations (schools, village centers, emergency routes).
- 1.1.2. Establish a standardized, publicly accessible system for residents to report roadway maintenance and safety concerns, such as potholes,

drainage issues, signage visibility, and sidewalk conditions, through an online form or similar platform, and integrate this input into the town's data-driven roadway prioritization and maintenance framework.

- 1.1.3. Maintain a roadway capital improvement and deferred maintenance plan that outlines known roadway needs.

STRATEGY 1.2: PROACTIVELY PURSUE AND LEVERAGE STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT ROADWAY MAINTENANCE, SAFETY, AND RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.

- 1.2.1. Maintain a prioritized list of roadway, drainage, and safety proj-

ects with preliminary scopes, cost estimates, and readiness status to support timely application to programs such as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and other MassDOT funding opportunities.

- 1.2.2. Coordinate with CMRPC and MassDOT to monitor upcoming state and federal transportation funding programs, application timelines, and eligibility criteria, and identify projects that are well positioned to advance.
- 1.2.3. Actively pursue applicable MassDOT Grant Central funding opportunities, such as the Municipal Pavement Program, Complete Streets Funding Program, Shared Streets and Spaces Program, and Safe Routes to School.





Photo source: Melissa Bonenfant

STRATEGY 1.3: IMPROVE SAFETY AT COMPLEX OR HIGH-RISK INTERSECTIONS AND ROADWAY SEGMENTS.

- 1.3.1. Conduct Road Safety Audits (RSAs) for Barre Town Center and other priority locations identified by residents, including the Pleasant Street, South Street area, and routes 32, 122, and 62.
- 1.3.2. Implement low-cost safety improvements following RSAs, such as improved signage, pavement markings, curb extensions, visibility improvements, or traffic calming measures.
- 1.3.3. Work with MassDOT to evaluate potential changes to traffic control, lane configuration, or speed management on state-owned roadways passing through village areas.
- 1.3.4. Maintain a list of safety priority locations. Regularly review MassDOT Impact Portal data to update and monitor the list.

STRATEGY 1.4: IMPROVE WAYFINDING AND TRAVELER INFORMATION THROUGHOUT BARRE.

- 1.4.1. Assess townwide wayfinding needs, including signage for the

town center/common, public parking, civic buildings, recreational areas, and trail access points.

- 1.4.2. Assess signage geared toward pedestrians and cyclists, particularly in Barre Town Center and South Barre.
- 1.4.3. Coordinate wayfinding improvements with economic development efforts, including the Lost Villages Scenic Byway and Town Center revitalization initiatives.



GOAL 2: EXPAND AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

While Barre's rural context presents challenges for fixed-route transit, expanding access to flexible, demand-responsive, and regional transportation options is important for seniors, residents without vehicles, and those traveling to work or services outside town.



Photo source: CMRPC

STRATEGY 2.1: IMPROVE AWARENESS AND USABILITY OF EXISTING TRANSIT AND MOBILITY SERVICES.

- 2.1.1. Create a centralized, easy-to-understand transportation information page on the town website that outlines available services, eligibility, booking procedures, and contact information.
- 2.1.2. Develop printed and digital outreach materials on Council on Aging transportation services and MART on-demand options, distributed through town buildings, libraries, senior housing, and community events.

STRATEGY 2.2: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH REGIONAL AND NEIGHBORING TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS.

- 2.2.1. Work with regional transit authorities and neighboring municipalities to explore shared or pilot expanded demand-responsive services.
- 2.2.2. Evaluate the feasibility of a town-owned or shared community van to supplement existing services and fill gaps for working-age residents and non-traditional trip needs.
- 2.2.3. Monitor regional transit planning efforts to advocate for Barre's inclusion in future service expansions or pilot programs.



**STRATEGY 2.3:
EXPLORE LONG-TERM
OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIXED-
ROUTE, TOURISM- AND
RECREATION-ORIENTED
PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION.**

- 2.3.1. Conduct a high-level feasibility and needs assessment of seasonal or special-event bus or shuttle service tied to eco-tourism, agriculture, and regional trail networks.
- 2.3.2. Work with state agencies and regional partners, such as CMRPC, to assess market demand, costs, and potential funding sources to pursue more detailed studies.

**STRATEGY 2.4:
SUPPORT LAND USE CHANGES
AND DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY
IN VILLAGE CENTERS AND
ALONG KEY CORRIDORS THAT
MAINTAIN RURAL CHARACTER
BUT COULD ENABLE MORE
EFFICIENT AND VIABLE FIXED-
ROUTE OR SCHEDULED TRANSIT
SERVICE IN THE FUTURE.**

- 2.4.1. As outlined in the land use and housing chapters, evaluate and, where appropriate, update zoning and development regulations to

allow rural-scale housing typologies, such as cottage courts, small multifamily buildings, and clustered housing, within village centers and along priority corridors, as it reflects documented community interest and support for walkable, transit-supportive development patterns.

- 2.4.2. Identify village centers and corridors where modest increases in housing density and mixed-use development could improve the long-term feasibility of scheduled or fixed-route transit, and consider these areas for infrastructure investments, pedestrian improvements, and future transit planning initiatives.

Grants opportunities could include:

- Community Transit Grant Program
- Mobility Assistance Program
- AARP Community Challenge
- Eco-One Stop Grant Program
- Transit Connectivity Grant
- Helping Hand Mini Grant



GOAL 3: STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT TO MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS.

Residents consistently expressed appreciation for the work of Barre's Highway Department and recognized the essential role it plays in maintaining roads, sidewalks, and public infrastructure. Community input and funding trends also point to growing challenges in keeping pace with rising construction costs, increasing maintenance needs, and expanding expectations around safety and accessibility. Strengthening the capacity of the Highway Department reflects a shared understanding that well-maintained infrastructure underpins public safety, economic vitality, and quality of life in Barre.

STRATEGY 3.1: IMPROVE LONG-TERM FUNDING STABILITY FOR ROADWAY AND INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE.

- 3.1.1. Regularly evaluate Highway Department funding needs relative to inflation, material costs, and infrastructure conditions.
- 3.1.2. Consider maintenance priorities alongside land use and development decisions to support fiscally sustainable development patterns.
- 3.1.3. Use data on roadway conditions and costs to clearly communicate funding needs to residents and

in decision making situations such as town meeting.

STRATEGY 3.2: LEVERAGE GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPLEMENT LOCAL RESOURCES.

- 3.2.1. As outlined under Goal 1, pursue state and federal grants for equipment purchases, safety improvements, and multimodal projects that reduce long-term maintenance burdens.
- 3.2.2. Coordinate with partners, such as CMRPC, to identify and apply for planning and implementa-

tion grants that support early-stage project development.

- 3.2.3. Explore opportunities for shared services or equipment with neighboring towns where feasible.



GOAL 4: IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND CONNECTIVITY WITHIN BARRE AND TO REGIONAL NETWORKS.

Residents of Barre expressed a desire for safer, more comfortable options to walk and bike, both for everyday trips and for recreation. Community feedback highlighted concerns about vehicle speeds, sidewalk conditions, and the lack of safe separation between pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles, particularly along key corridors and near schools. Improving pedestrian and cycling safety and accessibility reflects both a practical need and a shared aspiration to make Barre a town where people of all ages feel comfortable moving around without relying solely on a car.

STRATEGY 4.1: ADDRESS SIDEWALK GAPS, CONDITIONS, AND ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS.

- 4.1.1. Implement priority sidewalk improvements identified through community input, focusing on South Barre and other areas with documented deficiencies and maintenance needs.
- 4.1.2. Upgrade existing sidewalks and curb ramps to improve ADA accessibility, drainage, and separation from vehicular traffic where feasible.

STRATEGY 4.2: IMPROVE SAFETY FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS ALONG HIGH-SPEED AND HIGH- USE CORRIDORS.

- 4.2.1. Work with regional partners and the Quabbin Regional School District to pursue Safe Routes to School funding for improvements, along South Street and routes serving Quabbin Regional High School, as well as routes serving other schools.
- 4.2.2. Evaluate opportunities for shared-use paths, buffered shoulders,

or other physical separation between vehicles and non-motorized users along corridors that could serve as prime opportunities for alternate modes of transportation.

- 4.2.3. Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle safety considerations into all roadway reconstruction and resurfacing projects.

STRATEGY 4.3: EXPAND CONNECTIONS TO RECREATIONAL AND REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORKS.

- 4.3.1. Improve trail access, signage,



and connections between key trails, such as the Mass Central Rail Trail and Ware River Trail, and the Barre village centers.

- 4.3.2. Pursue federal, state, and regional trail funding to close gaps in existing trail systems and enhance connectivity between the trails and communities.

Grant opportunities could include:

- Mass Trails Grants
- Complete Streets Funding Program
- Shared Streets and Spaces Program
- Safe Routes to School Program



IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

Because of their comprehensive nature, Master Plans are often seen as overwhelming or difficult to implement. To address this concern, the Implementation Tracker for the Town of Barre serves as a practical tool for measuring progress toward meeting the goals within the plan. It organizes all recommended action items by priority level and anticipated timeframe, and identifies a proposed lead entity, key partners, and potential resources, including grant opportunities, where applicable, to support effective implementation.

It is the hope that future leaders of

Barre will rely on the Implementation Tracker as a source of guidance and inspiration, building on the efforts of current leadership to inform long-term investment and land use decisions.

Implementation Committee

Successful and sustained implementation of the Master Plan relies on a trusted Implementation Committee that will be charged with delegating responsibilities and monitoring progress. This committee can provide valuable input during budget discussions, capital improvement planning, and preparation of grant applications. Additionally, the committee can support ongoing plan

maintenance by updating outdated recommendations and adjusting priorities to reflect emerging needs and opportunities, ensuring the plan remains relevant over time.

Plans

When the Master Plan recommends additional planning studies, the intent is to allow for a more detailed examination of specific neighborhoods or issues, such as a Housing Production Plan, Village Plan, or similar focused effort. These subsequent studies often position the town to pursue grant opportunities that require a more in-depth level of analysis. They also create valuable opportunities for ongoing

Photo source: CMRPC



engagement with residents, fostering stronger communication, collaboration, and long-term partnerships.

Policies

Policy changes, such as updates to zoning bylaws or permitting processes, are recommended to help guide growth in a manner consistent with the community vision that was established during the Master Plan process. These policy tools are among the most effective means available to local governments for shaping private land use in ways that protect public health, safety, and overall quality of life.

Projects

Recommended projects are typically shorter-term discrete initiatives that deliver visible, tangible improvements, such as installing new park amenities or constructing sidewalks. Each project requires a motivated leader responsible for coordinating stakeholder communication, securing funding, and overseeing implementation. In some cases, this leadership may come from the Select Board or Town Administrator. However, Barre has also benefited from strong resident-driven efforts, and such community leadership should continue to be encouraged. The Implementation

Committee should play an active role in supporting project leaders, whether they serve in formal municipal roles or contribute as engaged volunteer community members.

Resources

The Town of Barre does not anticipate being able to fund the full implementation of this Master Plan solely through the municipal budget. Many recommended initiatives are expected to rely on grants, loans, and other external funding sources and partnerships. Alternative potential funding sources and external partners are noted in the Implementation Tracker for many of the action items.

As with the Master Plan as a whole, the Implementation Tracker represents a snapshot in time and may evolve in response to shifting local, state, and federal priorities. Additionally, action items that currently lack dedicated funding may emerge as priorities in the future, positioning Barre to take advantage of grants or other funding opportunities.



Title	Action Item	Priority	Project Timeline	Project Lead	Project Team	Potential Funding and External Partners
Economic Development	ED 2.4.2. Create a Vacant Properties Action Plan to help ensure that vacant properties are returned to productive use.	High	Ongoing	Select Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.4.3. Investigate the need for assessment and cleanup of contamination at possible brownfield sites, such as the Barre Wool Mill property and the former landfill on Town Farm Road.	High	1 Year	Board of Health		
Economic Development	ED 2.5.1. Connect Barre business owners to the Worcester Business Resource Alliance and North Central Chamber of Commerce.	High	1 Year	Planning Board		Possible addition of other Chambers of Commerce
Economic Development	ED 2.5.2. Support Expansion of the Barre Business Alliance.	High	1 Year	Implementation Committee		Chris Higgins, Business Community
Economic Development	ED 2.5.3. Create a "Discover Barre" page geared towards tourists.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator		
Economic Development	ED 3.2.1. Continue supporting the Barre Town Common Farmer's Market.	High	Ongoing	Parks & Rec Commission		
Economic Development	ED 3.2.2. Assess current permitting procedures for one-off events at the Town Common, South Barre Common, Nornay Park, and Fulton Field to encourage event planning and efficiency.	High	1 Year	Select Board		
Economic Development	ED 3.2.3. Explore events that leverage Barre's unique history, including the Quock Walker cases. A race and celebration honoring the abolition of slavery and the Walkers would be unique.	High	1 Year	Historical Commission		
Economic Development	ED 3.2.4. Facilitate partnerships with local and regional communication outlets (such as Discover Central Mass) to promote local events.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	Historical Commission, Business Alliance	
Economic Development	ED 3.2.5. Explore additional methods to promote town events (such as electronic signage, newsletters, social media).	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	Town Clerk, Senior Center, Business Alliance	
Economic Development	ED 3.3.4. Designate or contract with a grant writer to acquire funding from state and federal grants.	High	1 Year	Select Board		
Economic Development	ED 3.1.4. Install new wayfinding signage and maps for visitors.	Low	5-7 Years	Historical Commission	Business Alliance, DPW	
Economic Development	ED 2.5.4. Join the Main Street America Program.	Medium	2-4 Years	Business Alliance		
Economic Development	ED 2.5.5. Consider creating a Facade and Storefront Improvement Program.	Medium	2-4 Years	Business Alliance		
Economic Development	ED 2.5.6. Explore the possibility of forming an Economic Development Committee comprised of local business owners to complement the Barre Business Alliance.	Medium	2-4 Years	Select Board	Business Alliance	
Economic Development	ED 3.1.5. Assess geo-tagging of amenities and attractions through Google Maps to ensure clarity.	Medium	2-4 Years	Town Administrator		
Economic Development	ED 3.3.2. Explore options for facade improvements.	Medium	2-4 Years	Town Administrator	Building Dept.	Business Alliance
Economic Development	ED 3.3.3. Explore options for landscaping improvements.	Medium	2-4 Years	Town Administrator	Building Dept.	Business Alliance
Economic Development	ED 3.1.2. Utilize branding identities to create "shop local" campaigns, economic development events, and tourism.	Medium	2-4 Years	Business Alliance	Historical Commission	
Economic Development	ED 1.1.2. Consult with MassDEP about Powder Mill Pond contamination concerns. Explore testing and possible remediation opportunities.	High	1 Year	Board of Health		
Economic Development	ED 1.1.4. Explore opportunities for commercial development along the river and canal.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 1.2.1. Establish a committee to help foster development of the Mass Central Rail Trail in Barre.	High	1 Year	OS Committee	Parks & Rec Commission	Cycling Organization
Economic Development	ED 1.2.2. Partner with Mass Trails to determine the best route for expansion and connections.	High	1 Year	OS Committee	Parks & Rec Commission	Cycling Organization

Economic Development	ED 1.3.1. Establish a formal Trails Committee to volunteer for additional maintenance needs.	High	1 Year	Select Board	OS Committee, Parks & Rec Commission	Cycling Organization
Economic Development	ED 2.1.1. Complete a comprehensive review of Barre's Zoning Bylaws.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.1.2. Assess current use and dimensional requirements for all commercial zones to follow Smart Growth Principles.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.1.3. Enact village zoning in the Town Center to increase the potential for commercial and mixed-use development by right onto streets abutting the Common.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.1.4. Enact village zoning in South Barre to increase the potential for mixed-use and commercial development on Main St. and Vernon Ave., with special consideration for parcels abutting Ware River.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.1.5. Enact village zoning in Barre Plains Village to incentivize more dense commercial strips.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.2.1. Assess Site Plan Review criteria for opportunities to eliminate subjectivity and make the process more predictable.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.2.2. Where appropriate, streamline permitting processes for desired business types by replacing Special Permit requirements with Site Plan Review.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.2.3. Consider implementing tiered Site Plan Review so that minor developments are not subject to the same level of review as large-scale developments.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.3.1. Assess zoning to ensure flexibility for agritourism and ecotourism ventures.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.3.5. Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) as a funding source for municipal eco/agritourism strategies and other preservation measures.	High	1 Year	Finance Committee		
Economic Development	ED 2.3.6. Consider promoting the Lost Villages Scenic Byway as an ecotourism corridor in the Town.	High	1 Year	OS Committee	Parks & Rec Committee	
Economic Development	ED 2.4.1. Create a vacant property inventory to ensure underutilized properties are known and brought to the attention of town staff and boards.	High	1 Year	Assessor's Office	Building Dept.	
Economic Development	ED 1.1.1. Assess options for adding public launch access on the Ware River	Low	5-7 Years	OS Committee	DPW	
Economic Development	ED 1.3.5. Boost wayfinding on and around the Mass Central Rail Trail for local services and restaurants.	Low	5-7 Years	OS Committee	Parks & Rec Commission	Cycling Organization
Economic Development	ED 1.2.3. Install bicycle infrastructure, including bicycle stands, around the Rail Trail.	Low	5-7 Years	OS Committee	Parks & Rec Commission	Cycling Organization
Economic Development	ED 1.2.4. Explore opportunities to continue bicycle paths on nearby roads to encourage riders into commercial corridors.	Low	5-7 Years	OS Committee	Parks & Rec Commission	Cycling Organization
Economic Development	ED 1.3.2. Assess wayfinding needs for local trails near trailheads and in village centers.	Low	5-7 Years	OS Committee	Parks & Rec Commission, DPW	Cycling Organization
Economic Development	ED 2.3.8. Consider the development of a municipal agri/ecotourism master plan.	Low	5-7 Years	Select Board		Business Community (e.g. Stone Cow Brewery)
Economic Development	ED 2.3.9. Relaunch the "Quabbin Country" branding campaign.	Low	5-7 Years	Select Board		
Economic Development	ED 1.1.3. Assess options for restoration of the Mill Pond and Canal. Study the feasibility of filling in the canal to create new greenspace.	Medium	2-4 Years	OS Committee		
Economic Development	ED 1.3.3. Assess options for expanding trail access for hiking, biking, horse riding and ATVs, especially near commercial corridors.	Medium	2-4 Years	OS Committee	Parks & Rec Commission	Cycling Organization
Economic Development	ED 1.3.4. Create a comprehensive trail map and online resources for trail access.	Medium	2-4 Years	OS Committee	Parks & Rec Commission	Cycling Organization
Economic Development	ED 2.2.4. Create a Permitting Guidebook to clarify the permitting process for developers and prospective business owners.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.2.5. Designate a single point of contact to shepherd developers and business owners through the permitting process.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board		
Economic Development	ED 2.2.6. Research and assess the utility of various permit tracking software for enhancing the issuance and enforcement of permits.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board		

Economic Development	ED 2.3.2 Assess underutilized parcels for their potential to support ecotourism and agritourism ventures. Consider developing a conceptual site plan for high-ranking lots and market the sites to potential developers and businesses.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board	Select Board
Economic Development	ED 2.3.3. Collaborate with the Quabbin Regional School District and local farmers to create educational and mentoring opportunities for students interested in agriculture.	Medium	2-4 Years	Select Board	School District, Agricultural Commission
Economic Development	ED 2.3.4. Incorporate agri/ecotourism strategies in the agenda of the Agricultural Commission.	Medium	2-4 Years	Implementation Committee	Agricultural Commission, Select Board
Economic Development	ED 2.3.7. Consider adopting a scenic roads bylaw to restrict certain activities that could alter the appearance or character of specified roadways in town.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board	
Economic Development	ED 3.1.1. Create branding identities for village centers including logos, banners, landscaping and signage.	Medium	2-4 Years	Historical Commission	
Economic Development	ED 3.1.3. Assess current wayfinding for local attractions and commercial corridors.	Medium	2-4 Years	Historical Commission	DPW, Business Alliance Cycling Organization
Economic Development	ED 3.3.1. Assess needs through business owner surveys.	Medium	2-4 Years	Business Alliance	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.1. Complete a comprehensive review of Barre's zoning bylaws.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.2 Assess current uses and dimensional requirements for all commercial zones to ensure consistency with Smart Growth Principles.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.3. Concentrate new development around existing infrastructure and on vacant or underutilized parcels, in areas such as Barre Commons, South Barre, Barre Plains, and along major roads such as Rte. 122, Rte. 67 and Rte. 32.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.4. Expand the boundaries of commercial zoning into Barre Common, Soth Barre, Barre Plans and along major roads such as Rte. 122, Rte. 67 and Rte. 32, as appropriate.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.5. Encourage the development of small businesses, especially in South Barre and Barre Plains, by streamlining zoning and permitting approval processes (e.g. desirable uses permitted by right).	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.7. Enact village zoning in the Town Center that increases the potential for commercial and mixed-use by right onto streets abutting the Common.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.8. Enact village zoning in South Barre to increase the potential for mixed-use and commercial activity on Main St. and Vernon Ave., with special consideration for parcels abutting Ware River.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.10 Streamline comprehensive permitting processes for new developments.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.11. Assess the site plan review process and criteria for tone (degree of business-friendliness) and clarity of expectations/predictability.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.2.1. Modernize the zoning bylaws and subdivision regulations to allow for small-scale mixed-use development, higher density single-family zoning in identified development areas, and open space development for subdivisions.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.2.2. Enable housing development to include new higher density single-family housing and senior housing in and adjacent to developed parts of town.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.2.3. Allow for smaller scale higher density single-family zoning that incorporates open space development policies.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.2.4. Allow for accessory apartment/accessory dwelling unit development in existing residential neighborhoods to allow seniors to age in place and provide a more affordable housing option that aligns with single-family aesthetics.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.1.1. Enact policies that preserve agricultural lands such as the purchase of development rights and open space residential development bylaws.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.1.2. Help existing agricultural operations thrive through a strengthening of civic avenues for the agricultural community, such as the agricultural commission.	High	1 Year	Select Board	Agricultural Commission

Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.1.3. Encourage new and expanded agricultural enterprises through the expanded availability of commercial land along major roads and incorporation of agricultural needs through the zoning review process.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.1.4. Assess zoning to ensure flexibility for agri-and ecotourism ventures.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.2.1. Develop a program to educate landowners about land preservation efforts to promote private land conservation in coordination with the Agricultural Commission and Conservation Commission.	High	1 Year	Conservation Commission	Agricultural Commission
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.2.2. Continue to strengthen collaborative efforts with regional land trusts and other groups to preserve open space and conservation land.	High	1 Year	OS Committee	Conservation Commission
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.2.3. Develop and Open Space Residential Development bylaw to encourage open space preservation in subdivisions.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.3.1. Review the Conservation Commission bylaws and modify if necessary to encourage more robust protection of natural resources and alignment with best practices.	High	1 Year	Conservation Commission	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.3.2. Review and update the subdivision regulations to account for modern best practices and implement Low Impact Development standards.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.3.6. Ensure that development in proximity to natural resources does not infringe on areas in need of protection.	High	Ongoing	Conservation Commission	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.3.7. Prioritize development in existing commercial and residential areas.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.3.5. Identify funding sources to hire a conservation agent to aid the conservation commission.	Low	5-7 Years	Conservation Commission	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.6. Undertake Complete Streets and other bike/pedestrian-friendly improvements to develop a more vibrant and walkable town center with connectivity to surrounding residential neighborhoods.	Medium	2-4 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	DPW
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.2.5. Create a municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund to readily access funds for new housing opportunities.	Medium	2-4 Years	Housing Authority	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.2.6. Consider creating a buy-down program for market-rate homes and deed restricting them as affordable for income-qualified first time homebuyers at below-market prices.	Medium	2-4 Years	Housing Authority	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.1.5. Assess existing lots with potential for future eco- and agri-tourism ventures.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board	Select Board
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.2.4. Identify parcels for acquisition for recreational development and preservation.	Medium	2-4 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	Open Space Committee, Finance Committee
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.2.5. Explore opportunities to continue bicycle paths on nearby roads to encourage riders into commercial corridors.	Medium	2-4 Years	OS Committee	Cycling Organization
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.3.3. Consider adopting a scenic roads bylaw to restrict certain activities that could alter the appearance or character of specified roadways in town. Similarly, explore the adoption of a scenic vista protection bylaw.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 2.3.4. Assess the available or suitable land for green energy with care taken to avoid detracting from the rural character of the town. Consider updating zoning regulations where appropriate.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board	
Land Use & Zoning	LU 1.1.9. Enact village zoning in Barre Plains Village to incentivize more dense commercial strips.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.1.1. Appoint a Capital Planning Committee to hear capital expenditure requests from town boards and departments and to align spending with the Master Plan vision and goals.	High	1 Year	Select Board	Town Administrator, Finance Committee
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.1.2. Draft a new Capital Improvement Plan to guide the town's capital expenditures over five-year periods. Work closely with the Town Administrator, Town Accountant, and Finance Committee to create and maintain the plan.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	Select Board, Town Accountant, Finance Committee
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.2.2. Conduct a facilities maintenance plan that includes all town-owned facilities and properties.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	DPW, Building Department
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.2.4. Construct a new fire station that meets contemporary firefighting needs and standards.	High	Ongoing	Select Board	Town Administrator, Fire Dept. Finance Committee

Services & Facilities	S&F 1.2.5. Plan for the replacement of the town's aging vehicle fleet.	High	Ongoing	Select Board	Town Administrator, DPW, Emergency Services
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.3.3. Incorporate priority ADA improvement projects into the town's next Capital Improvement Plan.	High	1 Year	Select Board	Town Administrator, DPW, Parks & Rec Committee
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.4.1. Equip every municipal building with lightning rods to protect people and buildings from lightning strikes.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.4.2. Invest in backup generators for Police, Fire/EMS., DPW, Senior Center, Housing Authority, and School District facilities, so these buildings can serve as potential emergency shelters.	High	1 Year	Capital Planning Committee	Select Board, Finance Committee
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.4.3. Explore the feasibility of building a micro-grid for the Town Center, providing the town with reliable capacity to sustain emergency communications and operations during power outages.	High	1 Year	Capital Planning Committee	Select Board, Finance Committee, DPW, Parks & Rec Committee
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.1.1. Review, prioritize, and implement the South Barre Infrastructure Study findings and recommendations.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	DPW, Parks & Rec Committee
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.2.1. Conduct a comprehensive infrastructure assessment using GIS mapping and stakeholder insights to identify improvement areas, ensuring upgrades align with community priorities for public services and facilities.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	DPW
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.2.5. Assess the feasibility of expanding sewer and water service to areas of town beyond the village centers.	High	1 Year	DPW	
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.3.2. Adjust zoning regulations where appropriate to require sidewalks, connections to bike paths, bike parking and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities in new developments.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.3.3. Identify roads with excess shoulder capacity and consider how to use the space more effectively.	High	1 Year	DPW	
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.4.1. Conduct a feasibility study to identify town facilities suited for installing solar panels on their roofs.	High	1 Year	Select Board	Town Administrator, Building Department
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.1.3. Expand town services through regionalization and intermunicipal job shares. Identify areas of opportunity for regionalization between the Towns of Barre, Hardwick, Hubbardston, New Braintree and Oakham.	High	Ongoing	Select Board	
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.1.4. Consider further regionalization, resource sharing and joint events for the Town of Barre and Hardwick Senior Center and senior centers in neighboring communities.	High	1 Year	Council On Aging	
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.1.5. Explore opportunities for intermunicipal agreements with neighboring communities to provide after-school or summer recreational programming for youth and teens.	High	1 Year	Select Board	Barre Youth Commission
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.1.6. Study the feasibility of hiring a town planner to be shared with one or more neighboring municipalities.	High	1 Year	Select Board	Town Administrator, Finance Committee
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.1.7. Expand and continue using regional partners for grant writing and administration. This includes identifying opportunities for coalition applications with neighboring municipalities when practical.	High	1 Year	Select Board	Town Administrator, Finance Committee
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.2.3 Introduce a volunteer program utilizing mutual aid to provide longer distance, less frequent trips.	High	1 Year	Council On Aging	
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.3.1. Ensure that town departments have a presence on social media platforms and post content regularly to better disseminate information to residents.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.3.2. Increase the availability of livestreamed and recorded board and committee meetings for the viewing of residents. Currently, only Select Board and Finance Committee meetings are livestreamed on YouTube.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.3.3. Educate residents about Barre's SMART 911 emergency alert system and how to subscribe to the service.	High	1 Year	Select Board	Town Administrator

Services & Facilities	S&F 1.2.1. Hire a part-time or shared facilities director overseeing facility planning, maintenance, repair, renovation, and construction for town-owned buildings and properties.	Low	5-7 Years	Town Administrator	DPW	
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.4.2. Upgrade or supplement existing level 1 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at town facilities and public places with a minimum of level 2 chargers.	Low	5-7 Years	Select Board	Finance Committee	
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.4.3. Identify and promote new equipment, programs, and methods to decarbonize municipal operations.	Low	5-7 Years	Select Board	DPW, Town Administrator, Finance Committee	
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.2.2. Explore the creation of more flexible demand response or microtransit models, such as the Quaboag Connector, to provide increased transit options.	Low	5-7 Years	Town Administrator	CMMPO	
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.2.2. Upgrade the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF), build a new pump station and force main.	Medium	2-4 Years	DPW		
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.2.3. Outfit the town's water and sewer pumping stations with alternate power sources as a resiliency measure.	Medium	2-4 Years	DPW		
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.2.4. Develop a policy to upsize culverts in expectation of climate change-related precipitation increases.	Medium	2-4 Years	DPW		
Services & Facilities	S&F 2.3.1. Review and continue implementing the 2017 Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.	Medium	2-4 Years	DPW		
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.1.1. Explore opportunities to use school district or community organization spaces for town-sponsored activities and events, such as library or recreational programming.	Medium	2-4 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	Select Board	
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.1.3. Develop a dedicated finance team to integrate financial metrics, such as property assessments, town accounting, and tax collection, to inform budgeting, purchasing policy and long-term planning.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	Select Board, Assessors, Tax Collector, Finance Committee	
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.2.3. Undertake maintenance and upgrades necessary to preserve and protect town assets, especially those of historical and cultural significance, such as the Town Hall.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	DPW, Building Department, Finance Committee	
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.3.1. Review the 2022 ADA Accessibility Plan and identify priority projects focusing on accessible approach and entrance violations, which were noted at nearly all town facilities.	High	1 Year	Select Board	Parks & Rec Committee, Town Administrator	
Services & Facilities	S&F 1.3.2. Prioritize adding a water source and an accessible bathroom at Nornay Park, allowing the town to expand the type and length of events held at this popular gathering area.	High	1 Year	Parks & Rec Commission	DPW, Finance Committee	
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.2.1. Raise awareness of existing paratransit and demand response services, such as those run by the South-Central Massachusetts Elderbus (sponsored by WRTA) and the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART).	High	1 Year	Housing Authority	Council On Aging, Town Administrator	
Services & Facilities	S&F 3.1.2. Expand the use of underutilized town properties. Address barriers to use such as ADA non-compliance, aesthetics, or outdated uses (e.g., old storage).	Low	5-7 Years	Town Administrator	Select Board	
Services & facilities	S&F 3.1.8. Foster conversations among regional stakeholders around forming a community development corporation to serve the Quabbin region.	Low	5-7 Years	Town Administrator		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.1.4. Consider expanding Preservation Restrictions on historic resources.	High	1 Year	Historical Commission	Historical Commission, Community Preservation Act Committee	Community Preservation Coalition, Massachusetts Historical Commission
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.1.5. Develop an educational program in coordination with the Historical Commission and Society for property owners of identified historic buildings on the significance of their properties and best practices for maintaining older buildings.	High	1 Year	Historical Commission	Historical Commission and Historical Society	Massachusetts Historical Commission

Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.2.1. Place the Prince Walker Burial Ground under a Preservation Restriction and transfer ownership to the Department of Conservation & Recreation.	High	1 Year	Historical Commission	Historical Commission, Historical Society, Department of Conservation & Recreation	
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.2.2. Assist the Historical Commission in its work to register the Prince Walker Burial Ground under National Register of Historic Places status.	High	1 Year	Historical Commission	Historical Commission, Select Board	Massachusetts Historical Commission
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.2.3. Create historical wayfinding signage throughout Barre, work with the Historical Society and Historical Commission to highlight Barre's past to contribute to a sense of town identity.	High	Ongoing	Historical Commission		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 2.1.1. Create open space prioritization criteria to identify and evaluate current land parcels with the Open Space Committee.	High	1 Year	OS Committee	Conservation Committee, Planning Board	
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 2.1.2. Assess whether conservation restrictions or Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) interventions are necessary for preservation purposes on identified priority areas.	High	1 Year	OS Committee		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 2.1.6: Find available funding to create a feasibility study on the impact of pollutants in the water at Powder Mill Pond.	High	1 Year	Board of Health		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.1.1. Conduct a town-wide invasives species survey to identify priority areas that need continued management and observation.	High	1 Year	Conservation Commission	DPW	
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.1.3. Work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England to manage invasive vegetation outbreaks at the Barre Falls Dam	High	1 Year	Conservation Commission		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.2.1. Encourage energy efficiency for town-owned buildings; work with CMRPC liaisons for the Green Communities program to apply for grant funding for retrofits and HVAC optimization if necessary.	High	Ongoing	Building Department	DPW, Town Administrator, Select Board	CMRPC Green Communities Liaisons, DOER
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.2.2. Conduct a feasibility assessment to evaluate energy impacts of installing rooftop and canopy solar panels on town buildings or over paved spaces, like parking lots.	High	1 Year	Building Department	DPW, Town Administrator, Select Board	Department of Energy Resources
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.2.3. Explore opportunities to advance Low Impact Development features, such as bioswales, permeable pavement, and rain gardens, to areas that have been identified as flood-prone.	High	1 Year	Planning Board	DPW	South Barre Common Committee
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.2.4. Keep informed about evolving policies and legislation related to Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and take timely, practical steps to minimize and mitigate any risks these developments may pose to the town.	High	Ongoing	Select Board		Department of Energy Resources
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.2.5. Revisit the 2019 Barre Hazard Mitigation Plan and assess the status of proposed projects to boost environmental resilience.	High	1 Year	Select Board		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.2.5. Adopt a scenic overlay district to protect the scenic vistas and stunning views on the identified scenic roads in town. See Strategy 2.3.7 in Economic Development.	Low	5-7 Years	Planning Board		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 2.1.3. Hire a town Conservation Agent. See strategy 2.3.5. in the Land Use chapter.	Low	5-7 Years	Conservation Commission		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.1.1. Work with the Historical Commission to produce a conditions report that will identify critical buildings and sites at risk of deterioration and in need of remediation	Medium	2-4 Years	Historical Commission	Historical Commission, Building Dept.	
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.1.2. Apply for a Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey & Planning Grant to create a community-wide historic preservation plan for Barre.	Medium	2-4 Years	Historical Commission	Historical Commission & Planning Board	Massachusetts Historical Commission

Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.1.3. Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act for creating funds for preservation of historic and cultural community assets.	Medium	2-4 Years	Select Board	Open Space Committee, Planning Board, Historical Commission, Housing Authority	
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 1.2.4. Identify funding sources to manage and care for veteran memorial sites in case of disrepair.	Medium	2-4 Years	Historical Commission	Historical Commission and Veteran's Agent	
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 2.1.4. Host information sessions in coordination with Barre's DCR Service Forestry District representative to discuss the process of enrolling in the Chapter 61 tax program.	Medium	2-4 Years	Conservation Commission	Open Space Committee	Department of Conservation and Recreation
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 2.1.5: Work with community partners to publish walking trail guides for public use and enjoyment of green space.	Medium	2-4 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	Open Space Committee	East Quabbin Alliance for a Healthy Community
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 2.1.7. If proven feasible, create and act on a plan for remediating Powder Mill Pond, and opening Miller's Beach for public use and water recreation, and create boat access for recreation and emergencies.	Medium	2-4 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	Board of Health, Department of Public Works, Planning Board	
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 2.1.8. If pollutant remediation at Powder Mill Pond is not feasible, create beach prioritization criteria to identify sites within Barre for future water recreation.	Medium	2-4 Years	Parks & Rec Commission		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.1.2. Develop a comprehensive invasive species management program, providing education and resources to landowners for invasives removal and management.	Medium	2-4 Years	Conservation Commission		Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Mass Audubon, and/or the East Quabbin Land Trust.
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.1.4: Explore creating a pollinator-friendly policy or bylaw that can limit or reduce dangerous pesticides that negatively impact bees or other pollinators.	Medium	2-4 Years	Select Board	Board of Health	
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.2.6. Revisit the 2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan to ensure high priority action items are completed.	High	1 Year	Select Board		
Natural & Cultural Resources	NCR 3.2.7. Revisit the 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Plan (MVP) to ensure high priority action items are completed.	High	1 Year	Select Board		
Housing	H 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.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator		
Housing	H 1.3.1. Update the Town website to connect residents with a list of assistance opportunities for household repairs, accessibility updates, and rental assistance.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator	Council On Aging	
Housing	H 1.3.2. Create a community outreach program to inform residents about available rehabilitation resources and incentives.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator		
Housing	H 2.2.4. Amend zoning bylaws to allow for cottage developments.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Housing	H 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	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Housing	H 2.2.6. Identify opportunities to adopt bylaws that incentivize senior and affordable housing development.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Housing	H 3.1.3. Explore the potential for a cluster development bylaw.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board		
Housing	H 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.	Medium	2-4 Years	Affordable Housing Trust*	Establish Affordable Housing Trust	
Housing	H 2.1.1. Seek Funding to complete a Housing Production Plan	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board	Community Preservation Act (CPA), Community OneStop for Growth	
Housing	H 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.	High	1 Year	Town Administrator		

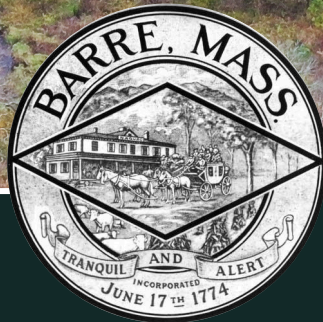
Housing	H 2.2.1. Amend zoning bylaws to limit the number of special permits required for housing-related development.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Housing	H 2.2.2. Amend zoning bylaws to align with state Accessory Dwelling Unit guidelines.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Housing	H 2.2.3. Amend zoning bylaws for allow for apartment housing and mixed-use development in Business and Commercial Districts.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Housing	H 3.1.2. Consider utilizing zoning incentives like density bonuses to encourage affordable housing in appropriate areas and enhance open space protection.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Housing	H 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.	Low	5-7 Years	Affordable Housing Trust*	Establish Affordable Housing Trust
Housing	H 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.	Low	5-7 Years	Affordable Housing Trust*	Establish Affordable Housing Trust
Housing	H 1.1.1. Seek funding to hire a Housing Coordinator or other specialized housing role.	Medium	2-4 Years	Select Board	Housing Authority Community Preservation Act (CPA)
Housing	H 1.1.2. Promote collaboration between the Barre Housing Authority and Planning Board to identify areas where new Housing Authority units could be built.	Medium	2-4 Years	Housing Authority	Planning Board
Housing	H 2.1.2. Utilize the Local Initiative Program (LIP) to collaborate with developers via comprehensive permits ("Friendly 40B").	Medium	2-4 Years	Town Administrator	
Housing	H 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.	Medium	2-4 Years	Town Administrator	Select Board
Housing	H 3.1.1. Explore the potential for a Transfer of Development Rights bylaw.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board	
Housing	H 3.2.1. Seek funding to develop Village Plans for the villages of Barre Center and Barre Plains.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board	Community One Stop for Growth
Open Space and Recreation	OS 1.2.1. Elevate Miller's Beach access.	High	1 Year	Parks & Rec Commission	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 2.1.1. Continue efforts to expand the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) through Barre.	High	Ongoing	Select Board	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 3.1.1. Strengthen partnerships with local and regional resources such as Land Trusts and State agencies for maintenance and funding for recreation improvements.	High	Ongoing	Parks & Rec Commission	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 3.1.2. Activate partners and recurring grant opportunities like the PARC grant.	High	Ongoing	Town Administrator	CMRPC
Open Space and Recreation	OS 3.2.1. Activate the Open Space Committee.	High	1 Year	Select Board	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 1.1.3. Explore additional amenities at Barre Plains Ballfield.	Low	5-7 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 2.1.2.. Formally explore options for canoe/kayak launches and paths through the Ware River.	Low	5-7 Years	OS Committee	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 3.2.2. Assess options for self-sufficient recreational programming, such as sports leagues.	Low	5-7 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 1.1.1. Renovate and expand Felton Field.	Medium	2-4 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 1.1.2. Overhaul Rice Park.	Medium	2-4 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 1.2.2. Explore additional amenities at Nornay Park. See 1.3.2. in Services and Facilities.	Medium	2-4 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 2.2.1. Connect trail expansions to historical connections, such as the Prince Walker Burial Ground.	Medium	2-4 Years	Historical Commission	
Open Space and Recreation	OS 2.2.2. Create a comprehensive trails map and market trails through paper and online resources. See 1.3.4 in Economic Development.	Medium	2-4 Years	OS Committee	
Transportation	TR 1.1.1: Develop and adopt a roadway improvement and maintenance prioritization framework.	High	Ongoing	DPW	Rural Town Development Fund

Transportation	TR 2.1.1: Create a centralized, easy-to-understand transportation information page on the town website that outlines available services, eligibility, booking procedures, and contact information.	High	1 Year	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping Hand Mini Grant • Community Transit Grant Program • Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant"
Transportation	TR 2.1.2: Develop printed and digital outreach materials on Council on Aging transportation services and MART on-demand options, distributed through town buildings, libraries, senior housing, and community events.	High	1 Year	Council On Aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping Hand Mini Grant • Community Transit Grant Program • Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant
Transportation	TR 2.2.1: Work with regional transit authorities and neighboring municipalities to explore shared or pilot expanded demand-responsive services.	High	Ongoing	Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping Hand Mini Grant • Community Transit Grant Program • Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant • Transportation Management Association Grant • Transit Connectivity Grant
Transportation	TR 2.2.2: Evaluate the feasibility of a town-owned or shared community van to supplement existing services and fill gaps for working-age residents and non-traditional trip needs.	High	2-4 Years	Select Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping Hand Mini Grant • Community Transit Grant Program • Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant
Transportation	TR 2.4.1: As outlined in the land use and housing chapters, update zoning and development regulations to support walkable, transit-supportive development patterns.	High	5-7 Years	Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Capital Program (One Stop) • Rural and Small Town Development Fund (One Stop) • Community Planning Grant (One Stop)
Transportation	TR 2.4.2: Identify village centers and corridors where modest increases in housing density and mixed-use development could improve the long-term feasibility of scheduled or fixed-route transit.	High	2-4 Years	Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Transit Grant Program • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Capital Program (One Stop) • Rural and Small Town Development Fund (One Stop) • Community Planning Grant (One Stop)
Transportation	TR 3.1.1: Regularly evaluate Highway Department funding needs relative to inflation, material costs, and infrastructure conditions.	High	Ongoing	DPW	
Transportation	TR 3.1.2: Consider maintenance priorities alongside land use and development decisions to support fiscally sustainable development patterns.	High	Ongoing	DPW	
Transportation	TR 3.1.3: Use data on roadway conditions and costs to clearly communicate funding needs to residents and in decision making situations such as town meeting.	High	Ongoing	DPW	

Transportation	TR 3.2.1: As outlined under Goal 1, pursue state and federal grants for equipment purchases, safety improvements, and multimodal projects that reduce long-term maintenance burdens.	High	Ongoing	Capital Planning Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Complete Streets Funding Program • Safe Routes to School
Transportation	TR 4.1.1: Implement priority sidewalk improvements identified through community input, focusing on South Barre and other areas with documented deficiencies and maintenance needs.	High	2-4 Years	Capital Planning Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Complete Streets Funding Program • Safe Routes to School
Transportation	TR 4.1.2: Upgrade existing sidewalks and curb ramps to improve ADA accessibility, drainage, and separation from vehicular traffic where feasible.	High	2-4 Years	Capital Planning Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Complete Streets Funding Program • Safe Routes to School
Transportation	TR 4.2.1: Work with regional partners and the Quabbin Regional School District to pursue Safe Routes to School funding for improvements, such as along South Street and routes serving Quabbin Regional High School, along with routes serving other schools.	High	2-4 Years	Capital Planning Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Complete Streets Funding Program • Safe Routes to School
Transportation	TR 4.2.2: Evaluate opportunities for shared-use paths, buffered shoulders, or other physical separation between vehicles and non-motorized users along corridors that could serve as prime opportunities for alternate modes of transportation.	High	5-7 Years	Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Complete Streets Funding Program • Safe Routes to School • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Capital Program (One Stop) • Rural and Small Town Development Fund (One Stop)
Transportation	TR 1.2.2: Coordinate with CMRPC and MassDOT to monitor upcoming state and federal transportation funding programs, application timelines, and eligibility criteria, and identify projects that are well positioned to advance.	Low	Ongoing		
Transportation	TR 2.2.3: Monitor regional transit planning efforts to advocate for Barre's inclusion in future service expansions or pilot programs.	Low	Ongoing	Planning Board	
Transportation	TR 3.2.2: Coordinate with partners, such as CMRPC, to identify and apply for planning and implementation grants that support early-stage project development.	Low	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Transit Grant Program • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Capital Program (One Stop) • Rural and Small Town Development Fund (One Stop) • Community Planning Grant (One Stop)

Transportation	TR 4.3.1: Improve trail access, signage, and connections between key trails, such as the Mass Central Rail Trail and Ware River Trail, and the Barre village centers.	Low	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MassTrails • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Complete Streets Funding Program • Safe Routes to School • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Capital Program (One Stop) • Rural and Small Town Development Fund (One Stop)
Transportation	TR 4.3.2: Pursue federal, state, and regional trail funding to close gaps in existing trail systems and enhance connectivity between the trails and communities	Low	5-7 Years	Parks & Rec Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass Trails Grants • Complete Streets Funding Program • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Safe Routes to School Program
Transportation	TR 1.1.2: Establish a standardized, publicly accessible system for residents to report roadway maintenance and safety concerns	Medium	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping Hand Mini Grant
Transportation	TR 1.1.3: Maintain a roadway capital improvement and deferred maintenance plan that outlines known roadway needs.	Medium	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAP Program • Rural and Small Town Development Fund (One Stop) • Community Planning Grant (One Stop)
Transportation	TR 1.2.1: Maintain a prioritized list of roadway, drainage, and safety projects with preliminary scopes, cost estimates, and readiness status	Medium	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAP Program
Transportation	TR 1.2.3: Actively pursue applicable MassDOT Grant Central funding opportunities, such as the Municipal Pavement Program, Complete Streets Funding Program, Shared Streets and Spaces Program, and Safe Routes to School.	Medium	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Pavement Program • Complete Streets Funding Program • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Safe Routes to School.
Transportation	TR 1.3.2: Implement low-cost safety improvements following RSAs, such as improved signage, pavement markings, curb extensions, visibility improvements, or traffic calming measures.	Medium	2-4 Years	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Safe Routes to School
Transportation	TR 1.3.3: Work with MassDOT to evaluate potential changes to traffic control, lane configuration, or speed management on state-owned roadways passing through village areas.	Medium	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Pavement Program • Transportation Improvement Program
Transportation	TR1.3.4: Maintain a list of safety priority locations. Regularly review MassDOT Impact Portal data to update and monitor the list.	Medium	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Streets Funding Program • Safe Routes to School

Transportation	TR 1.4.1: Assess townwide wayfinding needs, including signage for the town center/common, public parking, civic buildings, recreational areas, and trail access points.	Medium	2-4 Years	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Complete Streets Funding Program • Safe Routes to School • AARP Community Challenge
Transportation	TR 1.4.2: Ensure signage improvements consider pedestrians and cyclists, not only motorists, particularly in Barre Town Center and South Barre.	Medium	2-4 Years	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Complete Streets Funding Program • Safe Routes to School • AARP Community Challenge • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Capital Program (One Stop) • Rural and Small Town Development Fund (One Stop)
Transportation	TR 1.4.3: Coordinate wayfinding improvements with economic development efforts, including the Lost Villages Scenic Byway and Town Center revitalization initiatives.	Medium	2-4 Years	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Capital Program (One Stop) • Rural and Small Town Development Fund (One Stop)
Transportation	TR 2.3.1: Conduct a high-level feasibility and needs assessment of seasonal or special-event bus or shuttle service tied to eco-tourism, agriculture, and regional trail networks.	Medium	2-4 Years	Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Transit Grant Program • Microtransit and Last Mile Transit Grant
Transportation	TR 2.3.2: Work with state agencies and regional partners, such as CMRPC, to assess market demand, costs, and potential funding sources to pursue more detailed studies.	Medium	Ongoing	Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Local Technical Assistance
Transportation	TR 3.2.3: Explore opportunities for shared services or equipment with neighboring towns where feasible.	Medium	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookfield Equipment Sharing Co-Operative
Transportation	TR 4.2.3: Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle safety considerations into all roadway reconstruction and resurfacing projects.	Medium	Ongoing	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Streets and Spaces Program • Complete Streets Funding Program
Transportation	TR 1.3.1: Conduct Road Safety Audits (RSAs) for Barre Town Center and other priority locations identified by residents, including the Pleasant Street, South Street area, and routes 32, 122, and 62.	High	1 Year	DPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAP Program • Rural and Small Town Development Fund (One Stop) • Community Planning Grant (One Stop)



TOWN OF BARRE MASSACHUSETTS
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