

Town of West Stockbridge, Massachusetts

Master Plan

Adopted XXXX XX, 2022



Acknowledgements

Funding for the *Town of West Stockbridge, Massachusetts: Master Plan* was provided by the Community Compact Grant from the State of Massachusetts.

The cover photo: Sunset over Cranberry Pond Boat Launch, Fall 2021.

Photo Credit: Seth Jenkins, BRPC

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Ryan Beattie - Planning Board

Eric Shimelonis - Select Board

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Randy Thunfors - Zoning Board of Appeals

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Executive Summary

Background & Purpose

The development of the *Town of West Stockbridge: Master Plan* began in 2020 and was completed in 2022. This document expands upon West Stockbridge's existing Master Plan from 1959 and serves to guide the growth of the town over the next 10-20 years. It examines the town's historical context, current situation, and future needs and provides a comprehensive analysis of West Stockbridge's people, land, economy, culture, and infrastructure. The West Stockbridge Master Plan will work in conjunction with *The Town of West Stockbridge: Open Space & Recreation Plan* to direct the town's investments

and energy in a coordinated way, based upon community feedback. These two planning documents were developed concurrently.

Process

The West Stockbridge Master Plan was created through data collection and a public outreach process to gauge the needs of the town on the ground level. Community engagement initiatives and the West Stockbridge Master Plan Steering Committee have guided this grassroots process: a volunteer group comprised of local board and committee members, town staff, and engaged West Stockbridge residents. The opportunities and challenges facing the town were also identified using data sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the West Stockbridge's Assessors' Office, and interviews with individual Stakeholders.

How to Navigate this Document?

This plan contains a wealth of priority topics - ranging from land use to transportation - divided into individual chapters. Each chapter begins with brief background information followed by a vision statement that describes the desired future outcome for West Stockbridge regarding that topic. The background information and vision statement provide context that illuminate strengths and challenges faced by the town.

The vision statement is then followed with priority items to be covered in the chapter with supporting data to inform decision making. Each chapter concludes with detailed recommendations listed to direct the implementation. The process should be an iterative one so that previous plans inform future town planning.

Goals & Action Items

West Stockbridge's goals and action items define how that vision will be realized by the town. In every chapter there is a sequence of recommendations beginning with a broad vision, then a series of more specific goals towards the vision, and specific actions that need to be performed and by whom and when. The chapters included in the West Stockbridge Master Plan are as follows:

- Demographics
- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation
- Services & Facilities
- Historical & Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Implementation
- Appendix

Summary of Recommendations

[Section will be completed after the public engagement process]

Implementing the Plan

The West Stockbridge Master Plan calls for numerous actions. To make implementation easier, the concluding chapter lists each task and assigns a relative time priority and who is responsible for initiating the implementation of the action. Ideally, the town will use this as a tool to prioritize projects from year-to-year.

Preface

A Master Plan is a data-driven document. For this reason, it is important to explain the data sources that used in this report. Much of the information presented has been collected from the United States Census Bureau. The Census Bureau is the largest statistical agency in the country and provides data on America's people, places, and economy.

The Census Bureau conducts a host of surveys and programs, but this report relies heavily on the Decennial Census. Some information is only available via the American Community Survey and will be noted as such in the document.

The Decennial Census, mandated by the U.S. Constitution, counts each resident of the United States of America every ten years on the year ending in zero. The Decennial Census questions account for population, age, gender, race, and some basic questions about housing. Since the goal is to reach every resident and the questions asked are easily quantifiable, the information gathered comes with a high degree of accuracy. The results of the Decennial Census determine the number of seats for each state in the U.S. House of Representatives, used to draw congressional and state legislative districts, and to distribute more than \$675 billion in federal funds each year.

The American Community Survey is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis. This survey is sent to approximately 295,000 addresses monthly, which equates to about 3.5 million per year. Since the number of people surveyed is less than during the Decennial Census and much more extensive questions are included, the results come with less accuracy compared to the Decennial Census.

It should also be noted that this report was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic which began impacting the United States in the beginning of 2020 and continues to impact the country as the report is being finalized in 2022. COVID-19 has affected virtually every aspect of the socio-economic milieu on a global scale. Despite the widespread impacts, there are limited data sources which track short-term changes caused by the pandemic especially as relates to housing. This report accounts for fluctuations in unemployment and home sales. Aside from these topics, the data presented in this report treats COVID-19 as a statistical anomaly.

Introduction

Welcome to West Stockbridge!

West Stockbridge is in Berkshire County, the westernmost county in Massachusetts. It has Richmond on the northern border, Stockbridge to its east, Great Barrington and Alford to the south, NY State is the western boundary. The town has a total area of 18.7 square miles with 41 miles of road, with 12.5 miles unpaved. The natural topography has four mountains over 1,500 feet, four major ponds/lakes and three brooks which feed into the Williams River, a major feature of the town's history and settlement.

Located at a western gateway through the Taconic Range, the area was a transient fishing and hunting area for Mohican tribes and Dutch traders from the west. As the county became settled in the early 1700's, the Mohican/Stockbridge band settled in the area. During the 1750's farmers from the Connecticut Valley moved into the West Center area and the community grew. A meeting house and four taverns were built and by 1774, they petitioned the General Court to allow it to separate from the larger, more powerful Stockbridge Township. By March of 1774, the General Court granted West Stockbridge its charter and it became independent from the Stockbridge Township.

West Stockbridge has its populated village center along the Shaker Mill Pond and Williams River. There are also four outlying neighborhoods or areas that have featured in the town's history at various times and prominent at various times during the life of the town. West Center was the original farming settlement. Williamsville was an early industrial mill area, State Line a mining and rail center, and Freedleyville/Rockdale an important quarrying center.

The evolution of West Stockbridge is typical of many small New England communities. During the Colonial Period, farming was the main industry and water provided the primary source of power. Settlements along watercourses provided power for sawmills, wool carding, and grain mills. The Williams River was the main source of power with some 13 dams along its

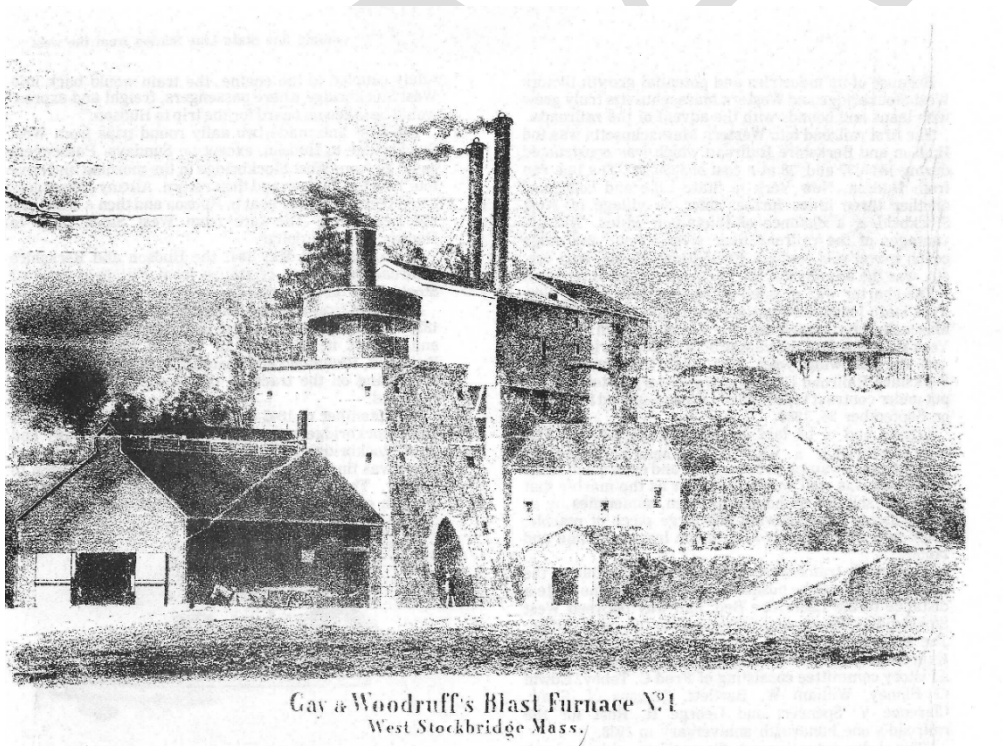


Figure 1.1- Woodruff's Blast Furnace; Photo credit: West Stockbridge Historical Society

banks in town. The population grew around the mills at the Village Center and south in Williamsville. West Stockbridge actively participated in and was impacted by early national and international events. One of the last conflicts in Shay's Rebellion was just south of town center. In the 1780's, the town would not approve the new U.S. Constitution until a Bill of Rights was adopted. Prominent 19th century citizens of West Stockbridge included an early leader of the Mormon Church (Daniel Spencer Jr.), a founder of Howard University (Charles Brandon Boynton), and an early inventor of daguerreotype photography (Anson Clarke). The local discovery of three key mined products would set the course for the town over the next 150 years. Iron, limestone, and marble drove the town's growth and changed it from a small farming community to an industrial center.

In the 1790's, field iron was discovered on a farm near State Line Road, which then led to the development of two major open pit iron mines. During this time, iron mines employed the most people as ore extracted from those mines fed the Woodruff and Richmond Iron Furnace until the 1920's.

In the early 1800's, numerous limestone deposits were found throughout town. Some of the deposits were large – as in the Village Center (now TurnPark Art Space) and Miller Lane. Others were smaller but more easily accessible (Swamp Road and Lenox Road). These deposits were near the surface and easily extracted which led to the town developing as a quarrying center. Many local quarries opened, and kilns were built to process the stone into lime. To support the industry, all the surrounding hills were deforested to produce charcoal to feed the kilns.



Figure 1.2- Former Marble Quarry, now site of Turnpark Artspace. Photo credit: Bob Salerno, West Stockbridge Historical Society.

Marble was the third industrial product that helped define West Stockbridge. The first marble quarry was opened in Freedleyville in the 1790's and others followed over the next few decades. West Stockbridge marble was used in civic buildings in New York City, Philadelphia, and Boston. The marble business lasted until the mid-1860's when it was closed due to competition from Vermont marble which was easier to work and more plentiful.

To move these products to the marketplace, West Stockbridge developed as a transportation hub during 1800's. The first railroad in Massachusetts was built in 1838 from West Stockbridge over to Hudson to move the ores out to growing national markets. Within a few years, the railroad had joined with the Western railroad; tying West Stockbridge east to Boston, west to Albany, and south to Connecticut and New York City. State Line (a neighborhood in the town) became a major railroad junction with two rail yards, storage facilities, a switch tower, passenger station, and hotel.



Figure 1.3: State Line Station on New York Border, circa 1890. Photo Credit: Bob Salerno, West Stockbridge Historical Society

The mineral industry also spurred the immigration waves that defined the town's character, even to the present day. Through the early 1800's, French-Canadians came to log the forests for charcoal to feed the lime kilns. Then Irish immigrants arrived after the 1850's to work in the mines, quarries, and farms. The Irish became the dominant group through the 19th and early 20th century. Then in the early 1900's, Italian immigrants started arriving to work as laborers in the lime and iron quarries, the railroads, and to work in the Richmond Furnace. West Stockbridge became a predominantly Italian town with the arrival of more Italian immigrants.

1.1 Town Character and Historical Context

During the mid-19th century, many of the iconic Greek revival buildings in the Village Center and Williamsville were constructed. There were twelve, single-room schoolhouses around the hamlets, and a large multi-story school in the town center. Worker housing was built along State Line Road, Baker Street, and in Williamsville. The town has 188 buildings listed on MACRIS – the state historic building inventory – and three National Register buildings from that era in the Village Center. By the 1880's, the population peaked around 1,900 with West Center farms, booming iron, marble, and limestone industries, and a busy rail hub.



Shaker Mills, West Stockbridge, Mass.

Figure 1.4: Shaker Mill on Mud Pond. Photo Credit: West Stockbridge Historical Society.

By the early 20th century West Stockbridge had a mix of long-time local families, new-comers, second homeowners, and visitors. West Stockbridge had become part of the Berkshire's "summer cottage culture," although in a lesser way than its more affluent and well-known neighbors like Lenox and Stockbridge. For many years, it was a vacation destination with visitors from New York City and Boston arriving by train. Two summer camps for children from the cities opened in the 1920's. Visitors commented on the tranquil country nature of the town with its beautiful mountains, clean ponds, and fresh air.

During the 1970's a musician/developer Gordon Rose helped to bring about a revitalization of the town, redeveloping many vacant properties and helping to foster a resurgence of the hospitality industry in the town center. He helped to bring Trai Thi Duong to the town to establish Truc's restaurant, a West Stockbridge institution. He also helped the town to create its first water treatment plant to enable more intense development in the downtown area. During the 1970's and 80's more city transplants were attracted by these amenities and relocated from Boston and New York City to the town. This influx of

newcomers to the town sometimes resulted in disagreements with long-term residents as the two groups did not always share a unified vision for the town.

While West Stockbridge did not build the affluent cottages or have big-name cultural attractions (e.g., Tanglewood), it still has a significant second home population (approximately 30% of tax bills are mailed outside of the area). Many musicians, actors, and artists involved with the nearby cultural venues have or rent homes in West Stockbridge.

Recently the town has seen an increase of former second homeowners becoming year-round residents. Amenities such as the many hiking trails, improvements in broadband connectivity, well respected schools, and easy access to Albany, Boston, and New York City have all made working remotely more practical in West Stockbridge. One resident reported that he felt that West Stockbridge has become the Switzerland of the Berkshires- centrally located, neutral, with great cultural amenities.

Since 2005, the town has had an arts revival. Concerts, theatre, art shows, lectures, and author talks sponsored by the Historical Society at the restored Old Town Hall bring in over 3,500 visitors every year. The town also has several active arts venues such as Turn Park Art Space, the Foundry, and Six Depot attract visitors from throughout the region. The town is also a destination for antique shoppers and gastronomes with French, Vietnamese, Italian restaurants. West Stockbridge has become a quiet destination and desirable place to live.

1.2 What Does this Plan Address?

This plan addresses a wide range of issues and priorities as expressed by the town through community engagement initiatives and the participation of the West Stockbridge Master Plan Steering Committee. When assessing a town's future, it is important to look at strengths that need to be maintained and/or expanded, deficiencies that need to be corrected, and prepare for future changes. These topics are analyzed through the lenses of social demography, land use, housing, transportation, and public services.

1.3 About Master Plans

A master plan is a document that sets a blueprint for municipal decision makers to use in their day-to-day roles of public service. *Master plans are advisory documents, not regulatory documents.* The plan makes realistic recommendations and provides detailed actions of how to achieve goals but does not impose any kind of regulation on the town as a whole or its people.

The purpose of this plan is to create an opportunity for West Stockbridge to reflect and determine what it wants for its future. With this vision in mind, clear actions can be determined based on empirical data and proposed to the town's elected and appointed officials. Using the actions described in the implementation chapter of this plan, municipal officials can make informed policy change and disperse municipal funds to priority projects.

1.4 How Does the Master Plan Relate to Existing Town Plans & Documents?

Master plans take precedence over existing community plans, such as transportation and open space plans. Master plans are required by state law to cover a host of topics and, consequently, tend to be more general than plans dedicated to a singular subject. The contents of these existing plans inform the master plan and can provide helpful recommendations. For this reason, master plans are not designed to replace existing plans but rather work in conjunction with them. Likewise, future plans can refer to the West Stockbridge Master Plan for overarching guidance to their specific topics.

1.5 Methodology of this Plan

All master plans generally begin by explaining how they work, how they are organized, and what they aim to achieve. This is because master plans tend to be lengthy documents, so it is crucial that the audience has a good grasp on what they are about to read. While master plans are used by municipal officials, they are ultimately public documents and need to be easily understood by anyone who chooses to read one.

The introductory chapters offer background information on West Stockbridge to provide context for the topics to come. Part of these early chapters is being clear about what the town's vision is, as this will guide the planning process. Early in the plan is a chapter on demographics which does not provide recommendations or any subjective information but has data that will support recommendations made later in the plan.

The succeeding chapters delve into specific topics that consist of recommendations and supporting data. Additionally, these chapters provide a tiered order of how West Stockbridge's vision can be achieved by its citizenry.

Vision

The vision is the "big picture" statement of where the town would like to be five, ten, or twenty years from now.

Goals

Goal statements go into detail on the different strategies West Stockbridge will need to pursue to make the vision a reality.

Objectives

Objectives are specific strategies the West Stockbridge will pursue to achieve the goal.

Actions

Actions are the specific tasks that individuals or groups will need to complete to achieve specific policy statements.

1.6 The Planning Process

The West Stockbridge Master Plan was developed through a planning process that included participation and feedback from the community:

- The West Stockbridge Master Plan Steering Committee
- Surveys / Questionnaires
 - Online survey completed XXXXX
 - Paper surveys completed as follow-up for Open Space Plan 2/16/2022
 - West Stockbridge Business surveys- E-mailed to local businesses on 2/14/2022
- Open Space and Recreation plan open forum, 4/13/2022
- Informal meetings
 - Attendance at Select Board, Planning Board, ZBA, OSRP, Vision Committee, Parks, and Recreation Committee meetings
- E-mail communication with:
 - Brian Duvall, Building Inspector
 - Jackie Moffatt, Charles H Baldwin, and Sons
 - Debby Shriber, Crane Lake Camp
 - Philip DeMartino, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
 - Harald Scheid, West Stockbridge Assessors Office
 - Matthew Sokop, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
 - Joy Duperault, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Resources
- Stakeholder interviews, either in person or via zoom

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Curt Wilton, Highway Superintendent ○ Dana Bixby, Planning Board Chair ○ Eric Shimelonis, Select Board ○ Peter Thorne, citizen ○ Earl Moffat, Health Commissioner ○ Karden Rabin, citizen ○ Bob Salerno, Historical Society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joe Roy, Jr., Vision Committee ○ Frank Landsberger, Finance Committee ○ Mass Fish and Game ○ Jared Gelormino, Turn Park ○ Marc Portieri, Police Chief ○ Berkshires Natural Resources Council
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¹ U.S. Census Bureau: [https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html#:~:text=If%20a%20family's%20total%20income,Index%20\(CPI%20DU\).](https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html#:~:text=If%20a%20family's%20total%20income,Index%20(CPI%20DU).)

2. Demographics

2.1 Population

According to population data published in the 2020 Decennial Census the population of West Stockbridge was 1,343 people. The town reached a population high during the 1870-1880 period, during which time approximately 1,900 people lived in West Stockbridge working in the steelmaking, railroad, and quarrying industries. The population declined to ~1,100 people by 1900 and remained close that number throughout the 20th century.

By 1990, the population grew to a peak of 1,483 people. From this recent peak to the present, West Stockbridge has experienced a 9% decline in population. This decline is not a trend specific to West Stockbridge and is seen in many individual municipalities throughout Berkshire County, as well as the County as a whole. Aside from the overall decline in population, it is important to examine the changes of age groups (cohorts). Figures 2.x depicts age cohorts in the town. (Source, 2020 ACS)

Comparing the population in West Stockbridge to Berkshire county and the United States as a whole is presented in Table 2-1. The population of children in West Stockbridge is greater than both Berkshire County and the United States (under 18). Residents of retirement age, (65+) are more prevalent in West Stockbridge than the national average but less than in the county. Both West Stockbridge and Berkshire county are older, ~10 years (median age) than the national average of 38.2 years.

When West Stockbridge is compared to surrounding communities, (Table 2-x) the population since 1960 has hovered between 1200-~1500 residents. Alford and Richmond have grown significantly, Great Barrington has grown modestly, while Berkshire County has shrunk. Since a population high of 1,481 in 1990, West Stockbridge has lost 138 residents in the past 30 years. It remains to be determined what the impact COVID-19 Pandemic had on West Stockbridge's population. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that the town has seen a recent influx of residents from nearby urban areas.

With a median age of 48.6 years of age, West Stockbridge is older than the national median age of 38.2. An aging population is not specific to West Stockbridge, a trend experienced in other neighboring municipalities, however West Stockbridge should prepare for housing a population of aging residents. The need for expanded housing options for senior residents has been a consistent topic throughout the master planning process.

The population of West Stockbridge is projected to decline further between 2018 and 2040. Population projections from the UMass Donahue Institute anticipate declines among every age cohort except the group age 65 and over. This group is projected to experience growth of 45% by the year 2040.

If the current trend of population aging continues and is not countered with an influx of new and younger residents, a continued decline in population is inevitable. As the older cohorts continue to age, it can be predicted that annual death rates will increase in the coming years. The influx of people moving to West Stockbridge tend to be in older age cohorts which may exacerbate pressures that an increasingly older population can place on a community and its resources.

2.2 Race

Like all Berkshire County municipalities, West Stockbridge is predominantly white, 92%. The remaining 8% of residents identified as African American Alone (1%), Asian alone (1%), Some other race alone (1%), and of two or more races, (5%). The demographics of the population is demonstrated in Figure 2-x. There are 46 residents that identified as Hispanic or Latino of any race. Resident ancestry in the town is primarily European, with large groups of the residents originating from Ireland, Italy, Germany, England, and France.

2.3 Workforce

According to the 2020 ACS, 64% of town residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher and the employment rate is 68.6% or 650 residents. The largest group of workers are employees of private companies- 53.5%, with the second largest employed in private not for profits- 20.2%, Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers and unpaid family workers constitute 13.2% of workers, Local, State, and Federal workers are 8.6% of the working population, while 4.5% were self-employed in their own incorporated businesses. This information is summarized in figure 2-x

ADD Language Describing Employment Clusters.

As of March 1, 2022, West Stockbridge's unemployment rate was 5.1%. This was higher than the rate for both Berkshire County (4.9%), Massachusetts (3.8%). During the past year, the town has followed the same trend as the state and county, decreasing, from 6.3% on 3/1/2021 to 5.9% on 2/1/2022. This information is presented in Figures 2-x, 2-x, and 2-x. Comparing the data from 3/1/2021, West Stockbridge had a lower unemployment rate than both the county and state. However, the town has not rebounded to lower unemployment as quickly as either the county, 4.9% or the state, 3.8%.

Due to COVID-19, unemployment rates significantly increased in 2020. West Stockbridge experienced its highest unemployment rates during the months of April, May, and June of 2020 where the unemployment rate was 12.7%. While all municipalities experienced unemployment rate increases, the peak rate of 12.7% was higher than all neighboring municipalities except Great Barrington that experienced a rate of 16.9% at its peak. By March 2021, the unemployment rate had declined to 6.3%.

2.4 Income

The changes in income from 2010 to 2020 are not adjusted for inflation by the Census Bureau. Increases in cost of living, inflation, higher paying jobs, and an influx of more affluent residents are national trends that are also experienced in West Stockbridge. It is problematic to compare 2010 dollars to 2020 due to this variety of factors, however data presented in table 2-x and figures 2-x, clearly demonstrates that incomes in West Stockbridge have increased in the higher income brackets, (above \$75K) and most significantly in those with incomes above \$200,000.

Of West Stockbridge residents, 10.6% of the population lived below the poverty level. This was higher than the countywide rate of 9.7%. The majority of residents living below the poverty level are under the age of 18, 13.9%. Those 18-64 years of age are 9.8% of the population and those 65 years and older are 6.6% of the population.

Poverty thresholds are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status. The Census Bureau assigns each person or family one out of 48 possible poverty thresholds.

- Thresholds vary by the size of the family and age of the members.
- The same thresholds are used throughout the United States (they do not vary geographically).
- Thresholds are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U)
- Although the thresholds in some sense reflect a family's needs, they are intended for use as a statistical yardstick, not as a complete description of what people and families need to live.¹

2.5 Educational Attainment

Figures XX and XX show the educational attainment for West Stockbridge Residents. As a community, West Stockbridge is highly educated with 64% of the population holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Conversely, among residents ages 18-24 there were no residents with less than a high school diploma.

2.6 Graphs and Tables

Table 2.1 – West Stockbridge Age Distribution, Source 2020 ACS Survey.

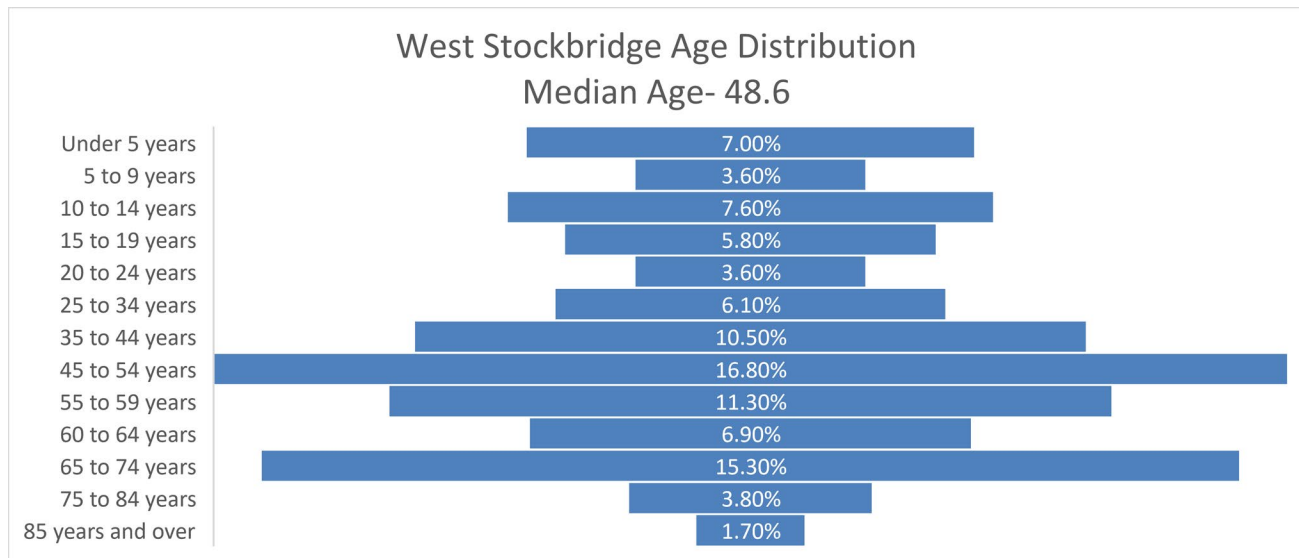


Table 2.2 - Population Groupings and Median Age: West Stockbridge, Berkshire County, United States (2020 ACS Survey)

Age cohorts	West Stockbridge	Berkshire County	United States
Under 18 years of age	23%	16.9%	22.4%
18 years and older	77%	83.1%	77.6%
Age 65 and older	21%	23.2%	16%
Median Age	48.6	47.2	38.2

Table 2.3 – Historical Populations of West Stockbridge and nearby towns, (1960-2020) Source: US Decennial Census.

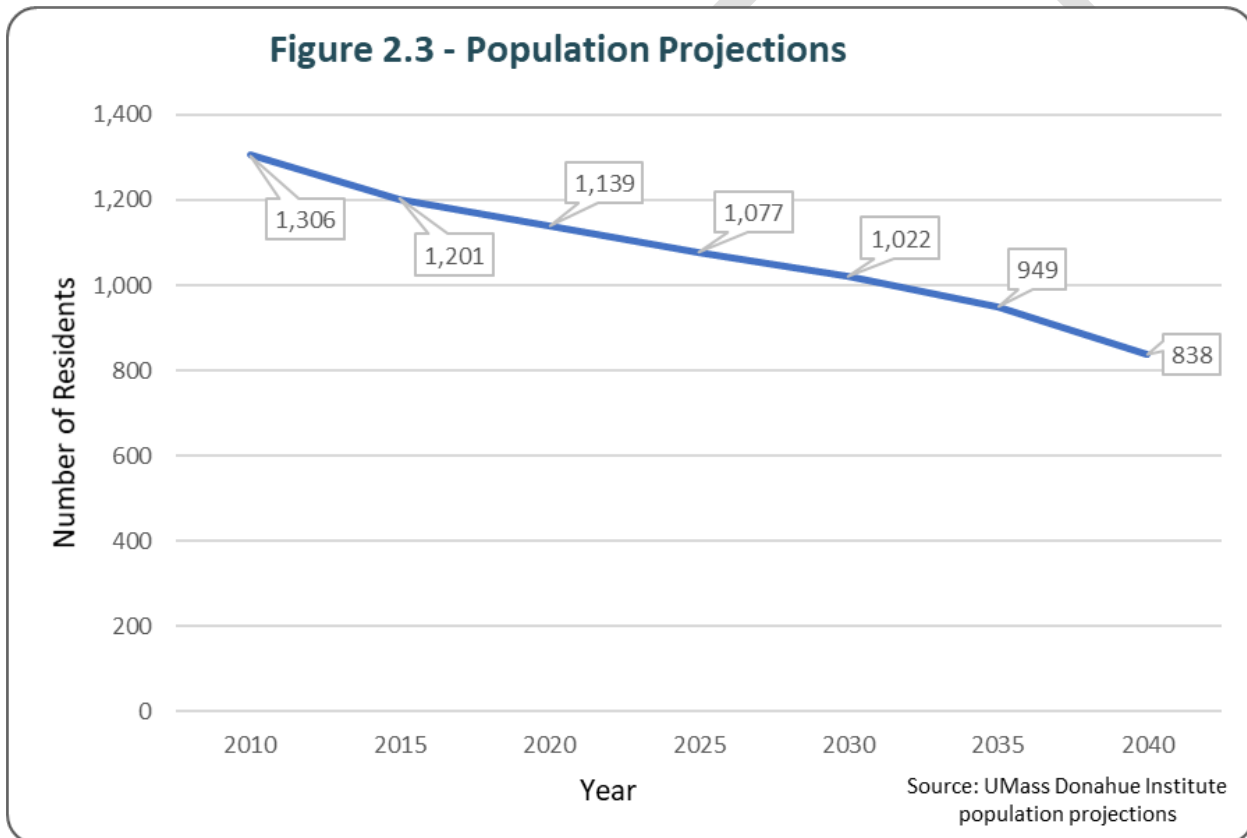
Municipality	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
West Stockbridge	1,244	1,354	1,280	1,481	1,426	1,306	1,343
Alford	256	302	394	413	399	494	486
Great Barrington	6,624	7,537	7,405	7,841	7,515	7,104	7,172
Richmond	890	1,461	1,659	1,677	1,604	1,475	1,407
Stockbridge	2,161	2,312	2,328	2,402	2,272	1,947	2018
Berkshire County	142,135	149,402	145,110	139,352	134,953	131,219	129,026

Table 2.4 - Population Projections-West Stockbridge (2018 - 2040)

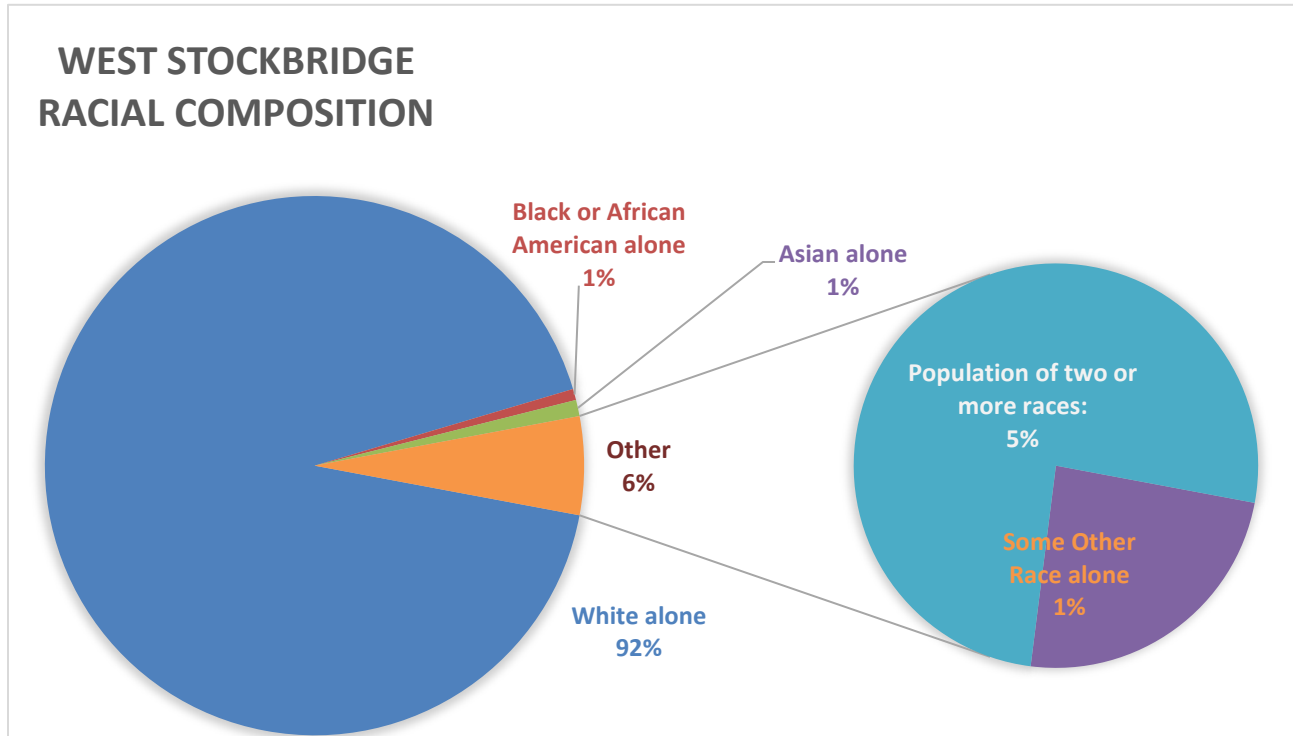
Age Cohorts	2018 ACS	2040 Population Projections	Percent of Total Population (2040)	Percent Change
0-19 years old	196	112	13%	-43%
20-34 years old	157	51	6%	-68%
35-54 years old	229	143	17%	-38%
55-64 years old	241	84	10%	-65%
65+ years old	310	448	53%	45%
Total Population	1,133	838	100%	-26%

Source: 2018 American Community Survey Table DP05; UMASS Donahue Institute Population Projections

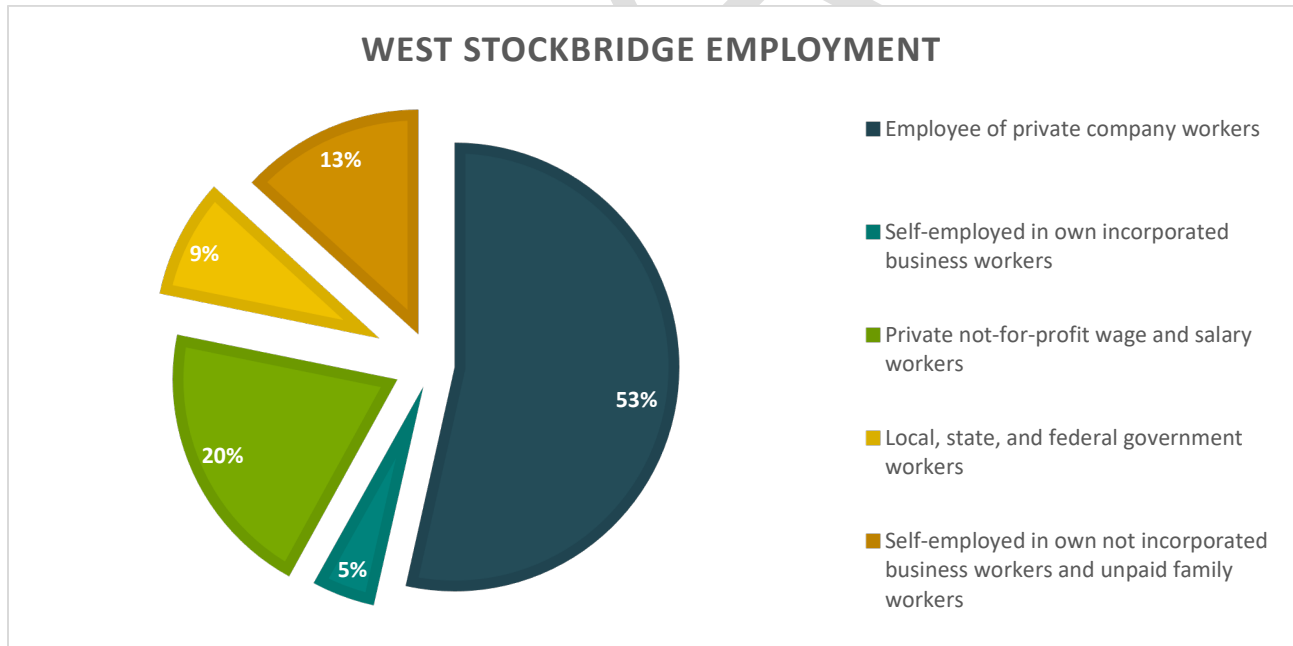
Graph 2.1 - Population Projections (2018 - 2040)



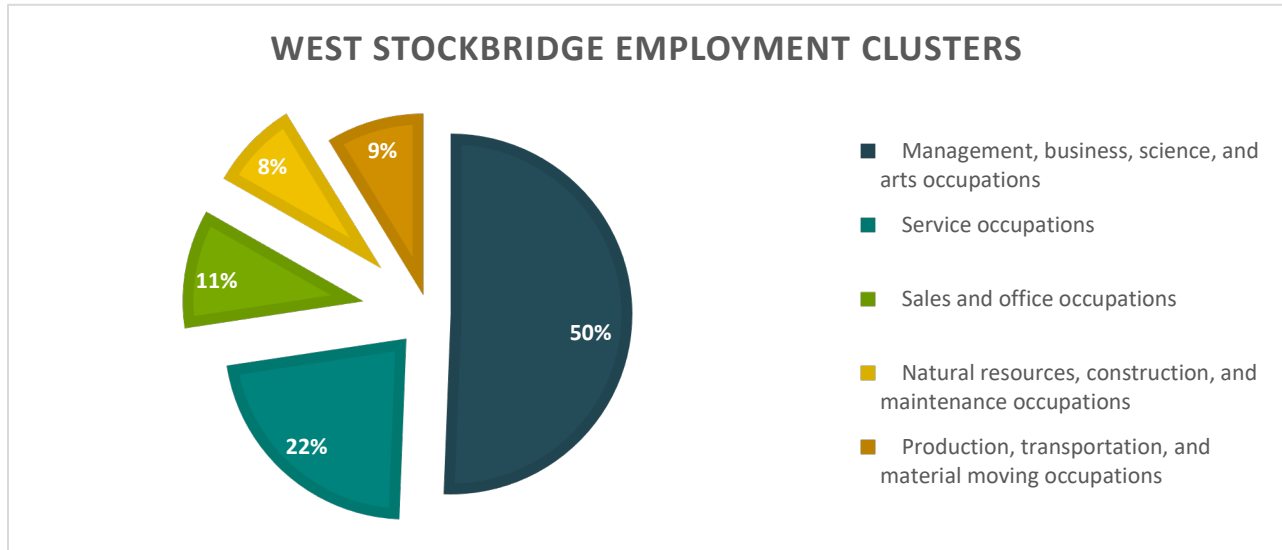
Graph 2.2 –West Stockbridge Racial Composition



Graph 2.3 –West Stockbridge Employment Composition



Graph 2.4 –West Stockbridge Employment Clusters



Graph 2.5-7 –West Stockbridge, Berkshire County and Massachusetts Unemployment 2021-2022

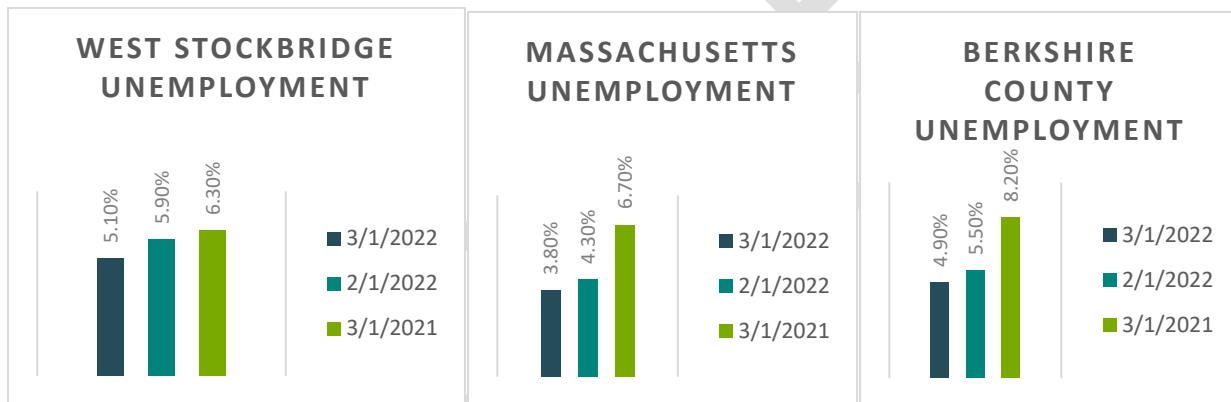
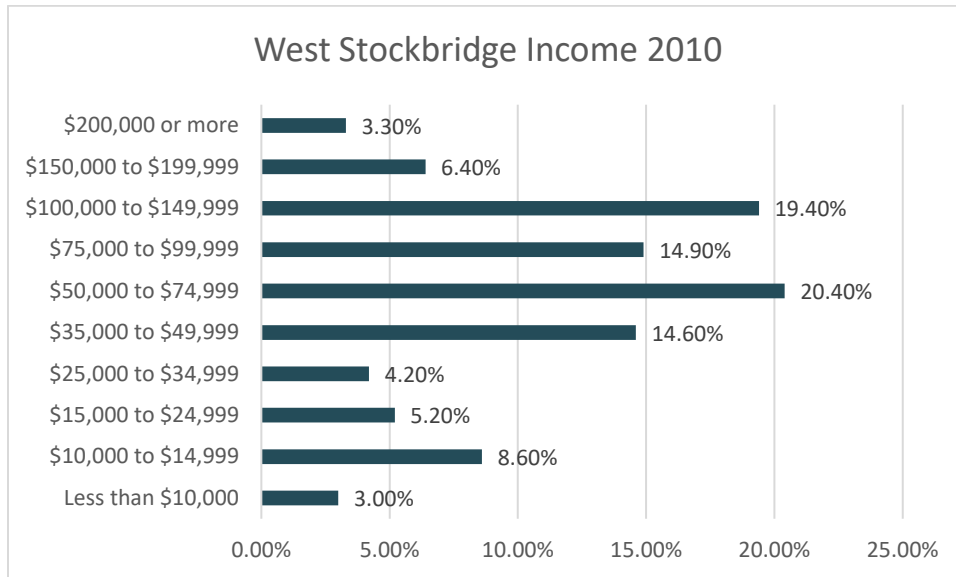


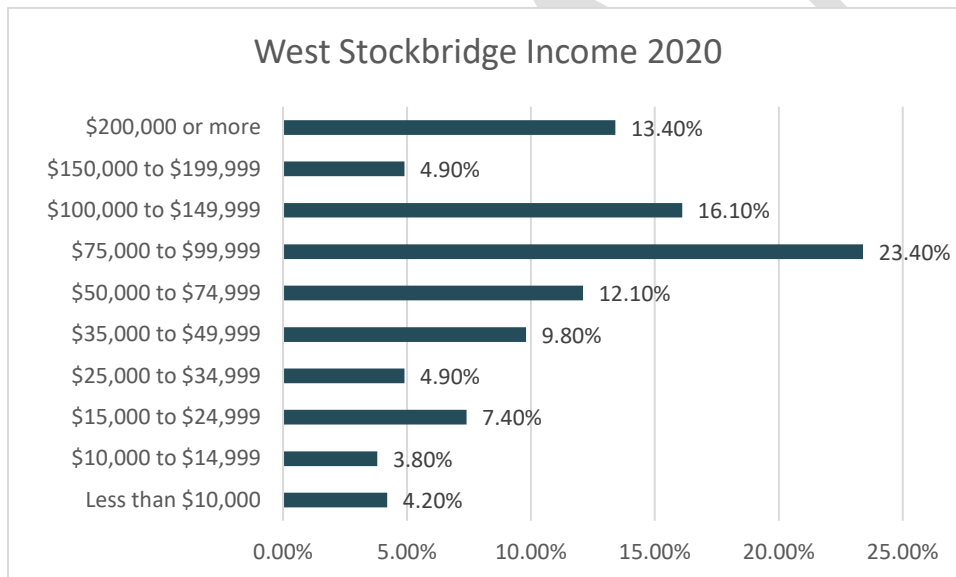
Table 2.5 –West Stockbridge Racial Composition

	2010	2020
Households	638	471
Median Income	\$68,750	\$81,696
Mean Income	\$82,103	\$107,863

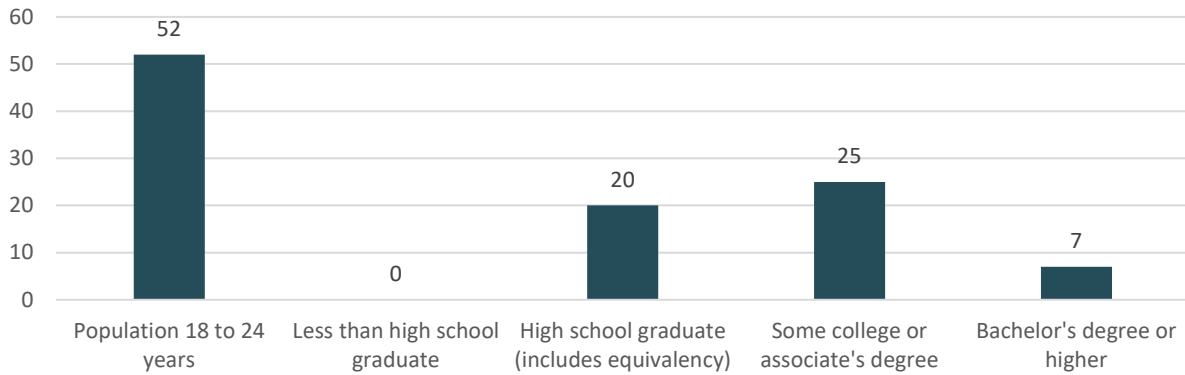
Graph 2.8 –West Stockbridge Income 2010



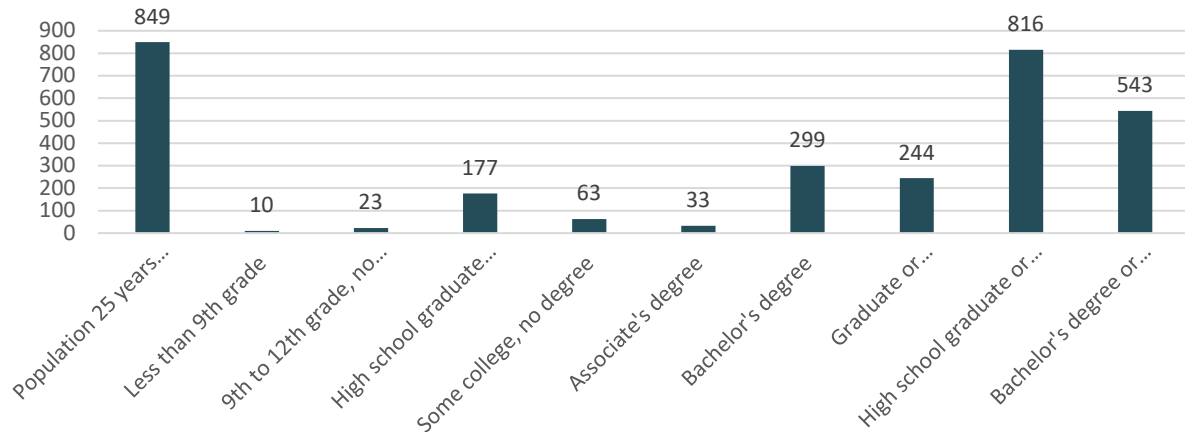
Graph 2.8 –West Stockbridge Income 2020



Educational Attainment-Ages 18-24



Educational Attainment-Ages 25 and Older



3. Land Use

3.1 Introduction

West Stockbridge has a total area of 18.4 square miles and is in the southwestern section of Central Berkshire County. The town is approximately 11 miles south of Pittsfield, 52 miles west of Springfield, 37 miles east of Albany, and about 140 miles north of New York City.

The town was established in 1774 and achieved early recognition, first, as an iron mining and smelting location and railroad terminus, and later as a mining/quarrying center. The marble in New York City's City Hall was mined in West Stockbridge. The quarrying industry in West Stockbridge declined in the late nineteenth century as naturally occurring limestone and marble became depleted and more difficult to mine.

Today West Stockbridge is primarily a residential town with a busy summer tourist season, small commercial center and is located at the western terminus of the Massachusetts Turnpike.

West Stockbridge is a hilly town with peaks ranging from 1,768 to 2,057 feet above sea level with many ponds, streams, wetlands, and open fields that make it a very desirable place to live. There are four major peaks in town: Tom Ball Mountain, Harvey Mountain, Center Mountain (Maple Hill), and West Stockbridge Mountain.

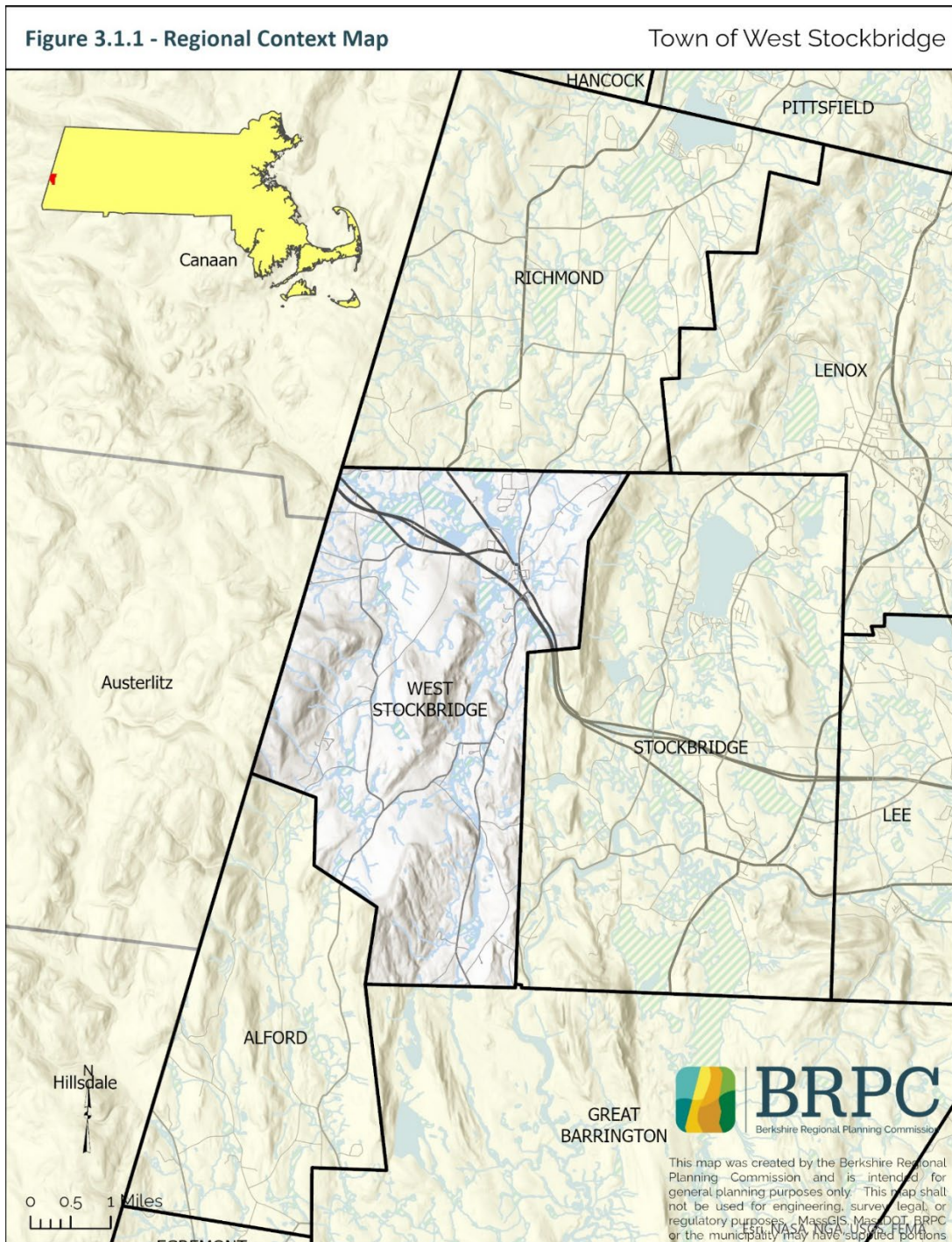
The Williams River is the main water body that flows through the Town providing residents and tourists with excellent opportunities for angling, canoeing, and swimming. West Stockbridge receives water from Richmond, Lenox, and Stockbridge in Massachusetts, and Austerlitz and Canaan in New York.

3.2 Current Conditions

The most concentrated area of development is located in the town center where West Stockbridge Road (102), Lenox Road, Swamp Road, State Line Road (102), Albany Road (41), and Great Barrington Road (41) converge. Housing development extends out from the center along the aforementioned roads and on several shorter local roads. The most recent housing development in town is approximately 1 mile north of the town center off Iron Ore Road and includes ~20 single family homes. The town's commercial area is in the middle of this residential area. The commercial uses located in the center occupy approximately 14 acres of land. The town is bisected from northwest to southeast by the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90) and from east to west by the Williams River.

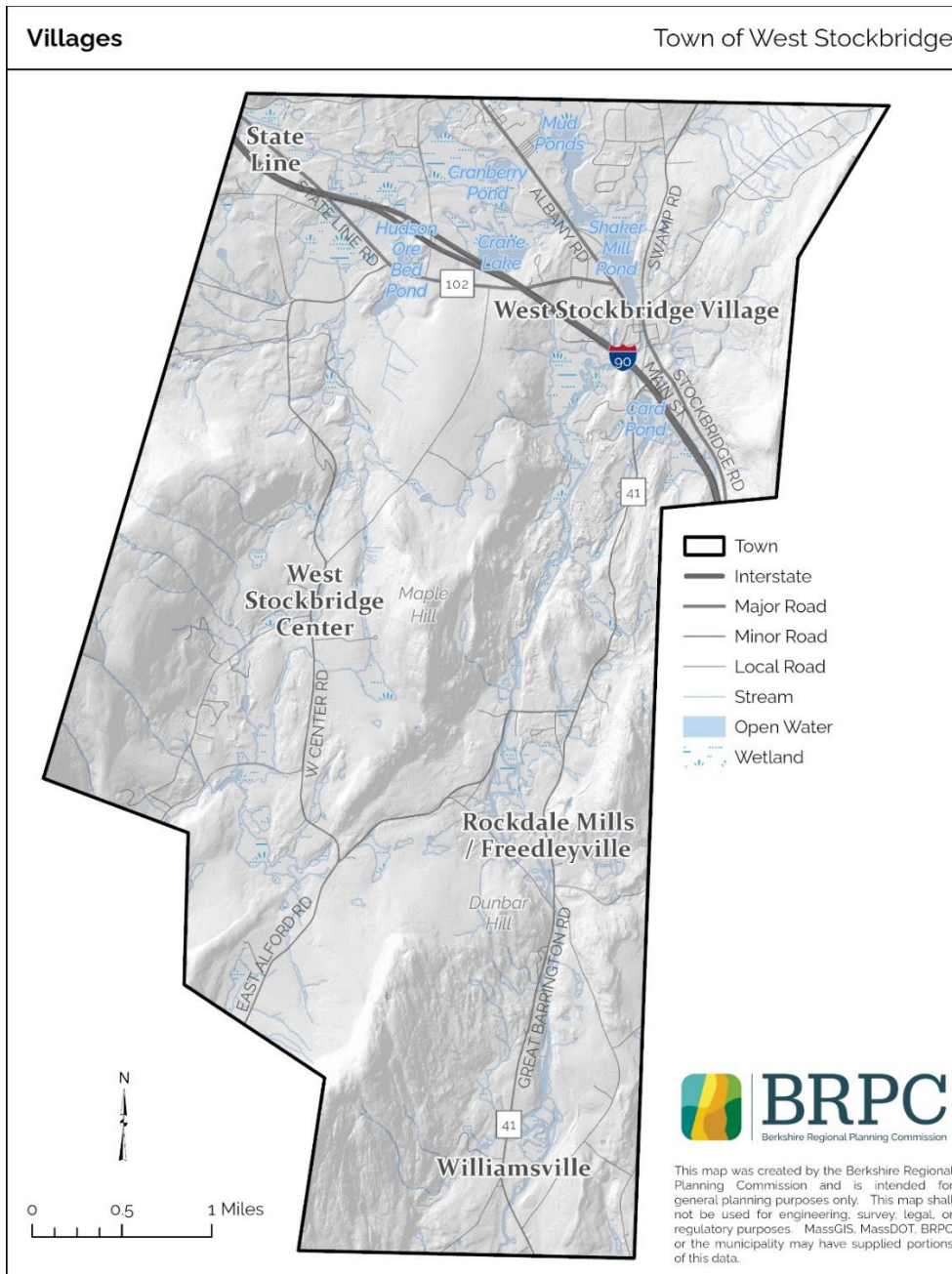
Surrounding communities include and are shown on Figure 3-x:

1. Richmond
2. Carey Corner
3. Stockbridge
4. Housatonic (Great Barrington)
5. Canaan Center, New York
6. Alford



Historical neighborhoods of West Stockbridge include:

1. Williamsville
2. West Stockbridge Center
3. Rockdale Mills/Freedleyville
4. State Line
5. West Stockbridge Village



West Stockbridge is a rural, residential community without much commercial or manufacturing development, yet has a well-defined village center with retail and restaurants. As can be seen in Table 3-x., the Town is largely forested, with deciduous and evergreen species covering 73% of West Stockbridge. Large open fields (approximately 8% of total acreage) still exist within the Town, with large open patches along Maple Hill, West Center, and East Alford Roads. This reflects the Town's agricultural past.

Table 3.x. Land Use 2016

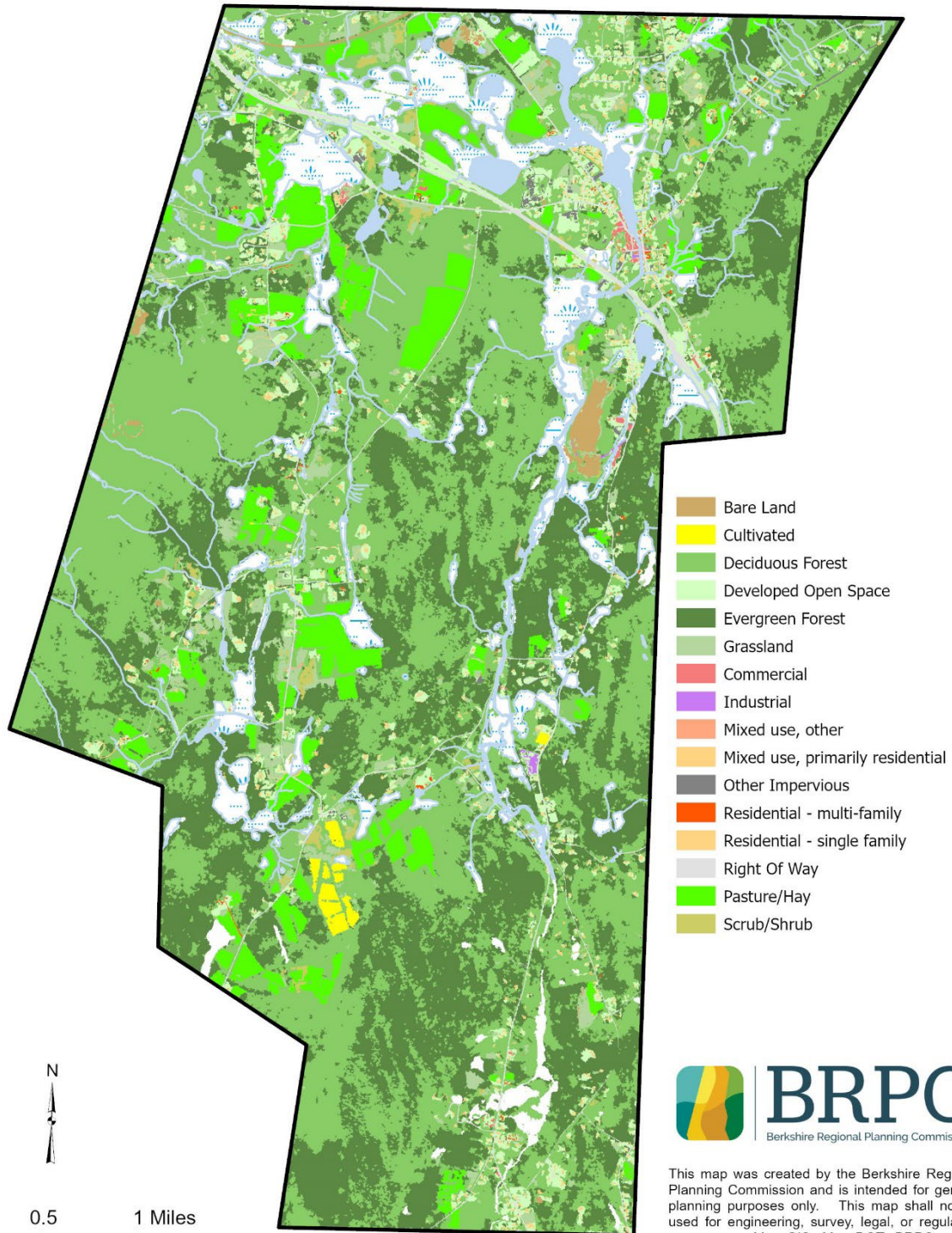
Land Use	Acres	Percent
Bare Land (includes quarries/gravel mines)	124.3	1%
Commercial	13.8	0%
Cultivated	37.2	0%
Deciduous Forest	5,402.8	44%
Developed Open Space	680.5	6%
Evergreen Forest	3,530.5	29%
Grassland	307.4	3%
Industrial	5.1	0%
Mixed use, other	2.8	0%
Mixed use, primarily residential	4.9	0%
Wetland	893.2	7%
Pasture/Hay	703.0	6%
Residential - multi-family	12.1	0%
Residential - single family	96.2	1%
Right-of-way	180.1	1%
Scrub/Shrub	71.5	1%
Water	151.4	1%
Total	12,216.7	100%

Source: MassGIS Land Use 2016

Lakes, ponds, and wetlands comprised another 8% of total land coverage. Residential, commercial, and industrial development covers approximately 1% of the total land in the Town. It should be noted that this calculation covers the footprint of structures, such as homes and businesses. The lawn areas that surround these footprints, including the Town Park and athletic fields and lawn at Crane Lake Camp, is not included in this calculation, and this land use covers another 6% of total land in the Town. So, if we were to consider the total footprint of development, it would be more accurate to say that it covers 7% of the total area of the Town. This calculation does not include the impervious surface areas like roads and highways.

Land Use

Town of West Stockbridge



This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, MassDOT, BRPC or the municipality may have supplied portions of this data.

The most concentrated area of development is located in the Town Center where Albany Road, State Line Road, Swamp Road, Lenox Road, Main Street, Great Barrington Road, and Stockbridge Road all converge. Housing development extends out from the center along the main roads and on several shorter local roads. The Town's commercial area is located in the middle of this residential area, although a few small businesses are scattered along the town's roadways. The John S. Lane quarry, located just south of the town center, is still an active business, producing aggregate stone products.

There are a few hamlet neighborhoods that have clusters of older homes, reflecting homes that sprung up around past mills, business centers, railroad hubs and mining operations. These include State Line, West Center, High Street and Williamsville, and are represented in green dot clusters on the Development Trends map.

The major community facilities include Town Hall (housing town government, the library, and police station), transfer station, firehouse, post office, and several churches are also located in or adjacent to the town center.

Development outside of the town center is mostly spread out along major roads. A number of homes are located on Albany Street with some concentration in the "State Line" area. Along West Center Road and roads leading from it, there is a mixture of year-round residences, seasonal residences, and farms. Recent development in the Camp Kingsmont section of town (along East Alford Road) feature a mix of year-round and seasonal homes in the southern section of the town. Scattered residential development is located along Great Barrington Road. A mixture of old homes (some built in the 1700 and 1800's) and new homes located in the area known as Williamsville. Another area of residences with denser development is located on High Street, close oriented to the Housatonic section of Great Barrington. In the wintertime, it can be necessary to pass through Great Barrington to get from one area of West Stockbridge to the High Street area.

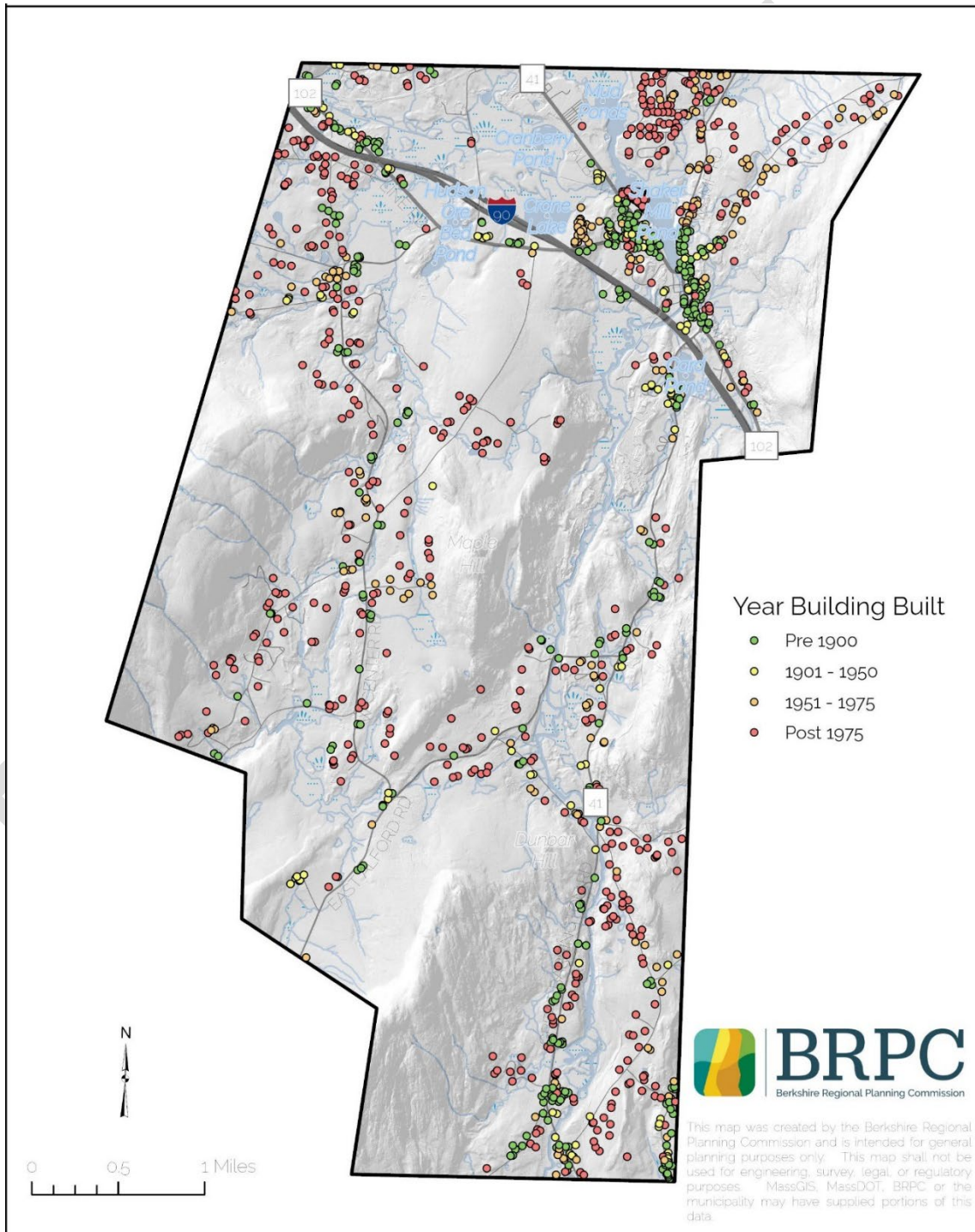
Commercial development outside of the town center is limited to primarily home-based businesses. Industrial development in West Stockbridge is limited. The John S. Lane Quarry and Balgen Machine Company are the town's most significant industries and are engaged in quarrying many sizes of stone and metal fabrication.

The vast majority of town is undeveloped (approximately 85%). Deciduous forests alone comprise approximately 5,400 acres, which is about 44% of the total area. The land developed for residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed uses only comprises 1.1% of the total area of West Stockbridge.

Land in West Stockbridge is protected in a variety of ways. Some residents have chosen to protect their properties with conservation restrictions, and several land trusts own land within the town. Additionally, many West Stockbridge landowners have chosen to enroll in Chapter 61, a state program that reduces property taxes in exchange for land conservation through forestry, agriculture, or recreation.

Moreover, the Town has many existing recreation opportunities, including hiking trails on the Yokun Ridge, water-based recreation on Shaker Mill Pond, and the outdoor sculpture park at TurnPark Art Space.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan, once fully adopted by the town and approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, will make the Town of West Stockbridge eligible to compete in three state grant programs: the LAND (Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity), the PARC (Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant programs. The LAND grant program provides communities with up to \$400,000 a year in matching grant funds for the acquisition of land for the purposes of passive recreation. The PARC grant program



provides up to \$50,000 a year in matching grant funds for land acquisition or recreation improvements for towns with populations below 35,000 and is designed mostly for projects related to parks and other active recreation areas.

Additionally, completion of an OSRP will make the town eligible to compete for funds through the Massachusetts Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program, which can provide funds for land acquisition, as well as the establishment and rehabilitation of existing recreation areas.

These three grant programs could help with the implementation of the many of the recommended items found in the implementation plan. These three grant programs should be distinguished from other possible conservation and recreation funding mechanisms, such as the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The CPA can provide both a funding pool generated by a 1-3% surcharge on local property taxes and access to matching funds from the state of Massachusetts.

Ball Mountain (both properties have limited access). Berkshire Natural Resources Council, a local land trust, owns and/or manages several properties in the town including Steven's Glen, portions of Tom Ball Mountain, and Seitz. Some private landowners have opted to place conservation restrictions on their landholdings, including Fadding APR, Murdock CR, and Baldwin Family Farm.

Figure XX shows a larger format map of open spaces in the downtown area. The town has chosen to purchase land surrounding local well heads supplying the town's drinking water. These properties are located to the north of the Village Center along Swamp Road. In order to further protect these important sites, the town should consider a well-head overlay district which would place further protections on development in the vicinity of the two town wellheads.

Figure XX Shows open space lands within the town. Currently, open spaces in West Stockbridge are a mix of public and private land. Massachusetts Fish and Game own several properties in the town including, Williams River Wildlife Management Area, Maple Hill Wildlife Management Area, and Flat Brook Wildlife Management Area. Town owned properties include Card Pond, Athletic Fields around the town hall, several cemeteries, and Harvey Mountain and Tom Ball Mountains.

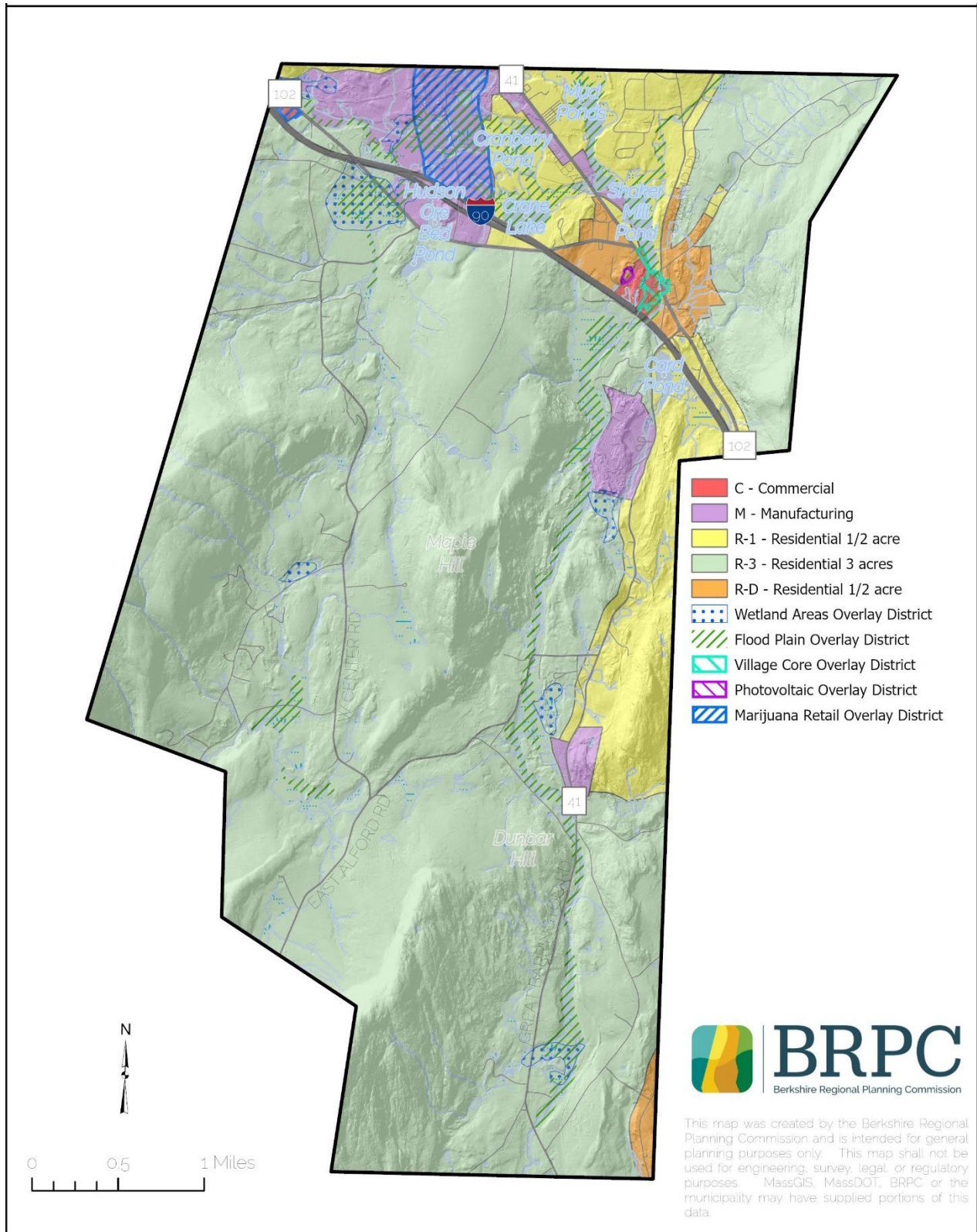
3.2.1 Zoning Regulations/Bylaws

West Stockbridge currently has ten zoning districts, including three overlay districts, which are shown in **Figure 3.x:**

- One Acre Residence,
- Three-Acre Residence
- ½ Acre Residence
- Commercial
- Manufacturing
- Floodplain Districts
- Wetland Resources.
- Village Core Overlay District,
- Marijuana Retail Overlay District
- Photovoltaic Overlay District.

The Town has adopted the Berkshire Scenic Mountains Act (SMA), which allows it to protect scenic views and watersheds. The SMA requires any construction over 1,500 feet in elevation not be visible above the ridge line and it controls run-off and erosion created by development. The Conservation Commission is the permitting authority for the Act. As of February 2022, the Act and proposed regulations are currently being reviewed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The Town of West Stockbridge consists of three residential zoning districts (R1, R3, RD), one commercial zoning district (C) the one manufacturing zoning district (M). The location of these zones can be seen on the Zoning Map. The R-1 District has a one-acre minimum lot size for single family and a two-acre minimum for two-family development. The R-3 district allows for a three-acre minimum lot size for singly family and a six-acre minimum for two-family. The RD district, located in and around the main village center, allows for more dense development with a ½ acre minimum lot size. Multi-family dwellings



are not allowed in any of the R districts. The minimum subdivision right-of-way width used to calculate additional roadways at buildout is 50 feet.

West Stockbridge has a Floodplain Overlay District with regulations that require a special permit for development in flood hazard areas. A Wetlands Area Overlay District requires a special permit for development within 100 feet of a few select wetlands. The Wetlands Protections Bylaw/Ordinance restates the authority of the Conservation Commission to prohibit, permit and/or condition work within wetland resources areas as defined in the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. The Town's Bylaw is slightly stricter than the state's regulations in that it is designed to better protect vernal pools, presuming that all vernal pools, including the adjacent areas around them, perform essential habitat functions, and are thus under the authority of the Conservation Commission. It further states that all vernal pools, even those not certified, are protected under the bylaw. The state's regulations protect only those vernal pools that are found to be within or adjacent to wetland resources, and those outside wetland areas that are certified by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. The Town's bylaw also clearly states that costs associated with review of wetland permits, including the cost of the Town hiring a consultant, will be borne by the project applicant.

West Stockbridge values its farming heritage and is a Right-to-Farm Community. The Farming Bylaw is a general bylaw that encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agriculture-based economic opportunities, and protects farmlands within the Town by allowing agricultural uses and related activities to function with minimal conflict with abutters and Town agencies. This bylaw applies to all jurisdictional areas within the Town of West Stockbridge.

The town has Site Plan Review regulations. The master plan process has demonstrated a need to update and formalize the Site Plan Review process. The need for a professional staff person to facilitate the process has become evident in the town's recent past.

Development in West Stockbridge over the past few decades has consisted mostly of single family second homes. These homes were constructed along the major roadways in town or along subdivision roads, such as the Iron Mine Road neighborhood. More recently large residential development has occurred on large lots along subdivision roads, such as the development on the former Camp Kingsmont property. A proposed development on Orchard Street has had limited success (need more history) The town currently allows shared driveways for lots that meet other zoning requirements, additional provisions for flexible development that might allow housing to be clustered in such a way that would encourage denser development while protecting open space is under review by the town's Planning

A buildout analysis was prepared for West Stockbridge in 2000 and updated in 2021. After taking into consideration current land use and absolute and partial constraints to development, the Town of West Stockbridge has approximately 5,007 acres of potentially developable land, which is 41% of the total area of the town. If this land were developed to the maximum allowed by zoning, it would result in 1,874 new housing units. At maximum buildout, the population of West Stockbridge would be 5,799, nearly four times what it is today.

Based on current and historic development trends within the town, it is highly unlikely that this maximum buildout scenario will happen within a short time span, if ever. The buildout methodology did not consider soils limitations for septic systems as a limiting factor for development and it assumed that new development would be either served by town water and sewer or innovative septic treatment systems that would allow for development to the density allowed by zoning. Additionally, subdivisions requiring approval under the Subdivision Control Law have not been a significant factor in the town. Residential development continues to be single-family homes on large lots along existing roadways. However, it would not require development anywhere near maximum buildout to have significant impacts on the community and the environment.

A more likely possibility is that continued Approval Not Required (ANR) development would eventually use up the existing buildable frontage in West Stockbridge and create "land-locked" areas of potentially developable land with no access. This could seriously limit access to the forests and streams for hunting, fishing, and recreation. The lack of permanently protected open space in town should be cause for concern.

VISION

Land Use in West Stockbridge is sustainable, contributing to the attractiveness of the community as a place to live and visit for people of all backgrounds, through the balanced protection and enhancement of existing assets and the place-based, sensitive development of suitable areas. Protection of both water and natural resources are important to town residents and should be prioritized in future plans.

- **GOAL LU 1: PROTECT, ENHANCE, AND CELEBRATE WEST STOCKBRIDGE'S ABUNDANCE OF NATURAL, HISTORIC, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.**

3.3 Priority Land Use Goals

West Stockbridge seeks to maintain its existing land use pattern. Protecting natural resources maintains scenic value and ecosystem services (flood control, habitat, and carbon sequestration). Protecting historical and cultural resources supports the local economy and ensures West Stockbridge is a unique place to live and visit. Protecting these resources does not mean West Stockbridge cannot grow or change. Guiding where change or growth happens is key to protect quality of life and place. Local zoning, other land use regulations and the physical landform do much to maintain the existing land use pattern, giving the town greater ability and flexibility to control what new development looks like.

- **GOAL LU 2: PROTECT WEST STOCKBRIDGE'S SMALL-TOWN WAY OF LIFE WHILE ENHANCING EQUITY.**

West Stockbridge is a small town with a strong sense of community and local pride. Within the town, distinct neighborhoods help create a sense of community. Maintaining this is an important goal when envisioning the long-term future. Land use practice can support this by encouraging infill development that fits in with existing neighborhoods and land use patterns; by supporting public spaces where community can come together; and strengthening physical connections to and from local services and public spaces.

- **GOAL LU 3: ENSURE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER PHYSICAL CHANGES TO WEST STOCKBRIDGE LANDSCAPES AND NEIGHBORHOODS.**

A resilient community can withstand the shock of a short-term disaster or a long-term stressor and recover. West Stockbridge seeks to be resilient to the long-term impacts of climate change to the natural and built environment. Maintaining its current land use pattern will support resilience to climate change as well as to other short-term and long-term physical changes in the community. West Stockbridge is well positioned to be a leader in climate resilience at the municipal level and through land use regulation governing how buildings and sites are designed to both mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts. Continuing to work with conservation partners to protect and manage large swaths of healthy forests and protecting against invasive species is equally important.

- **GOAL LU 4: DESIGN A COMMUNITY TO WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES OF ALL BACKGROUNDS.**

West Stockbridge wants to support diversity and attract young families. Regional and local business entities express need for diverse types of housing than what is currently available in the community for successful worker recruitment and retention. West Stockbridge offers much to the prospective resident, including high quality local services (particularly schools), a relatively low property tax, and ready access to both cultural and outdoor recreation activities throughout the year. New housing opportunities could better serve existing residents and would attract a greater diversity of future residents. More affordable housing options would create greater opportunity for younger people to remain in or move to West Stockbridge. By focusing new

housing in areas already served by public infrastructure and ensuring it fits in with the landscape and existing built environment, West Stockbridge can set the groundwork for potential builders. This strategy can also be applied to new commercial and business opportunity in West Stockbridge. Filling infrastructure gaps, particularly in communication technology, will help meet this goal.

3.4 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

GOAL LU 1: PROTECT, ENHANCE AND CELEBRATE WEST STOCKBRIDGE'S ABUNDANCE OF NATURAL, HISTORIC, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.

Objective LU 1.1: Protect unique and sensitive natural areas.

Action Item 1: Using town owned lands, create green space on the Williams River to bring both locals and visitors to the town center

Action Item 2: Use town funds to purchase priority conservation and recreation areas adjacent to existing public lands with permanent open space restrictions.

Action Item 3: Work with local residents and conservation partners to acquire or help acquire priority properties. Possible areas to acquire include: Shoreline of Mud Pond near the town center, creating access to Tom Ball Mountain, creation of a multi-purpose trail using the railroad right-of-way from the former Housatonic Railroad.

Action Item 4: Adopt specific performance standards in zoning bylaws that ensure new development near sensitive areas use low-impact design and construction methods. Adoption of cluster subdivisions to permit increased density while retaining open-spaces for residents and the community.

Action Item 5: Work with property owners to conserve priority properties through existing state programs and local resources (Conservation Restrictions and Chapter 61 enrollment).

Action Item 6: Continue to work with local conservation partners (e.g., Berkshire Natural Resources Council) to acquire and protect sensitive areas.

Objective LU 1.2: Use the Future Land Use Map to guide re-development and new development within West Stockbridge.

Action Item 1: Work with property owners to conduct market studies or feasibility analyses to identify best re-use scenarios (Senior housing, business incubation, shared workspaces, etc.) for priority parcels, examples of recently developed sites include the Werkshires Building, Turnpark Art Park, Town Hall, the Historical Society, etc.

Action Item 2: Update zoning to clarify bylaws, approving bodies, and allowed uses. Further clarify elements required for Site Plan Review and update which development projects will require this additional requirement.

Action Item 3: Continue to pursue enactment of Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act by submitting required changes per State requirements. Once enforceable, use the Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act to regulate development in the town above the predetermined elevation.

Action Item 4: Consider adopting Scenic Byway legislation to control development in key scenic corridors and prevent removal of shade trees and rock walls that provide town with its unique characteristics. (Candidates include West Center Road, East Alford Road, and Maple Hill Road)

GOAL LU 2: PROTECT WEST STOCKBRIDGE'S SMALL-TOWN WAY OF LIFE WHILE ENHANCING EQUITY.

Objective LU 2.1: Maintain year-round residential character and activity

Action Item 1: Promote year-round, workforce housing in all West Stockbridge neighborhoods

Action Item 2: Use Informational Signs to promote access to public lands and public spaces

Action Item 3: Ensure all residents can access and enjoy public lands and public spaces

GOAL LU 3: ENSURE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER PHYSICAL CHANGES TO WEST STOCKBRIDGE LANDSCAPES AND NEIGHBORHOODS.

Objective LU 3.1: Protect natural resources and areas from disruption.

Action Item 1: Promote biodiversity on public lands through habitat management and restoration.

Action Item 2: Encourage participation in federal and state land management programs.

Action Item 3: Continue to limit development in flood plains.

Action Item 4: Monitor presence of invasive species locally and regionally.

Action Item 5: Control and remove invasive species on public lands.

Action Item 6: Explore the viability of denser residential development to protect open space.

Objective LU 3.2: Mitigate climate change impacts locally through innovative energy and municipal service technologies.

Action Item 1: Consider adopting neighborhood or small-scale renewable energy bylaws.

Action Item 2: Consider expanding where large-scale solar installations may be installed. Ensure community acceptance through requiring site plan elements such as screening or buffers along roadways.

Action Item 3: Consider neighborhood scale wastewater treatment and/or storage as alternative to private septic in neighborhoods prone to flooding if municipal sewer is not feasible.

Action Item 4: Expand sewer lines to include additional residences and encourage growth in areas already served by Municipal water treatment facilities. Connect terminal water lines to create a “looped network” wherever feasible, in order to allow back feeding and to eliminate stagnant sections within network.

Objective LU 3.3: Support recommendations identified in 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Action Item 1: Upgrade bridges identified as deficient, e.g., Cone Hill Road Bridge and West Center Road bridge.

Action Item 2: Replace or upgrade culverts that are undersized and prone to flooding.

Action Item 3: Plan and enact a town Stormwater management bylaw. Consider use of permeable surfaces, reduced parking requirements, erosion and storm drainage mitigation, and green infrastructure tools in resource-sensitive areas and flood-prone districts.

Action Item 4: Continue to inspect at appropriate intervals and maintain dams.

Objective LU 3.4: Promote infill development in the village center to discourage sprawling development patterns.

Action Item 1: Consider allowing multi-family housing in some districts (VCOD) as a by-right usage.

Action Item 2: Create incentives to guide development in desirable areas such as a Tax Increment Financing District or other tax abatement program to increase the feasibility of adaptive re-use projects.

Objective LU 3.5: Support local agriculture and food systems to maintain agricultural lands and land use in West Stockbridge.

Action Item 1: Encourage existing farm(s) to enroll in chapter 61 program.

Action Item 2: Encourage existing farm(s) into APR program.

Action Item 3: Allow for diverse food production scale and activity within residential neighborhoods in the zoning bylaw.

Action Item 4: Reflect state protection of agricultural land use in local rules and regulations.

Objective LU 3.6: Encourage adaptive re-use of existing commercial and industrial sites and buildings.

Action Item 1: Reduce minimum lot size, maximum lot coverage and setback requirements for adaptive re-use projects.

Action Item 2: Allow by-right uses based on market potential (work with economic development specialist).

Action Item 3: Update Zoning classifications to decrease non-conforming parcels in the town to make redevelopment possible.

Objective LU 3.7: Make the built environment a tool to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Action Item 1: Create a conservation or cluster subdivision ordinance to preserve land while encouraging development.

Action Item 2: Integrate best building material, technologies and practices into municipal buildings and infrastructure.

Action Item 3: Consider innovative technologies and materials in public infrastructure projects.

GOAL LU 4: DESIGN A COMMUNITY TO WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES OF ALL BACKGROUNDS.

Objective LU 4.1: Remove zoning barriers to housing creation in areas identified in this plan as suitable for new housing.

Action Item 1: Work with local developers to identify regulatory impediments to work-force housing development within the zoning bylaw and subdivision rules.

Action Item 2: Identify town-owned properties suitable for small-scale, deed-restricted home ownership development.

Action Item 3: Identify potential properties in West Stockbridge to develop small-scale Senior housing projects. Partner with non-profit housing collaborative to facilitate project.

Action Item 4: Consider the creation of a housing trust overseen by a committee responsible for diversifying housing options in West Stockbridge.

Action Item 5: Support innovative solutions for small-scale, infill-development for new residential opportunity.

Objective LU 4.2: Increase and promote neighborhood access to open space, shared use paths, and recreational opportunities.

Action Item 1: Work with local conservation partners to acquire and preserve public access to public lands.

Action Item 2: Work with private landowners to create public access where suitable and desired.

Action Item 3: Create a shared-use path in West Stockbridge that connects the town center with the Williamsville/Housatonic area utilizing the abandoned rail corridor.

Action Item 4: Use results of town-wide surveys to direct future parks and recreation opportunities.

Objective LU 4.3: Ensure West Stockbridge possesses excellent infrastructure for existing and potential businesses.

Action Item 1: Create universal wireless coverage in West Stockbridge.

Action Item 2: Assess the feasibility of extending broadband infrastructure and providing municipal internet service.

Action Item 3: Improve or extend sewer lines to underserved neighborhoods.

Action Item 4: Increase public parking in West Stockbridge Village.

Action Item 5: Hire an economic development consultant to identify suitable re-use scenario and market specific, priority sites in commercial and industrial neighborhoods on the Future Land Use Map.

Objective LU 4.4: Provide existing and potential businesses with clear, concise use parameters and purpose.

Action Item 1: Ensure zoning allows for desired uses in specific neighborhoods and on specific properties.

Action Item 2: Adopt bylaws with clear, positive, affirmative language for the benefit of all users.

Action Item 3: Ensure conformity between local bylaws, state, and federal laws.

Action Item 4: Ease doing business in West Stockbridge through clear, easy-to-use bylaws and standard requirements.

Objective LU 4.5: Williamsville improvements.

Action Item 1: Work with the Williamsville neighborhood (residents, property owners, and prospective interests) to promote sustainable re-development and new development.

Action Item 2: Work with property owner of Williamsville Inn to identify and resolve re-development barriers.

Action Item 3: Work with Berkshire Natural Resources council and/or other recreation/conservation entities and private property owners to secure access to existing public lands, especially Tom Ball Mountain.

Action Item 4: Improve multimodal linkages, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, between Williamsville and West Stockbridge Center.

4. Housing

4.1 Introduction

In order to assess housing needs it is necessary to have a understanding of the patterns of housing that exist in relation to the history and structure of the town.

West Stockbridge has a form comprising a central main village and peripheral historic villages. This means that older and smaller house are concentrated in the Village Center and in the peripheral villages, Williamsville, High St, Freedlyville/Reedville, State Line, and West Center. West center is unique among the villages in that it was the first village in the town and is now an area of town comprised of the historic church grounds, with the church foundation remaining, a number of historic houses, and open field and farmland. It is currently a significant place of beauty and functions for the Congregational Church as an outdoor chapel, and for the public as a meditation area.

In the last 35-40 years there has been development through subdivision, though not with significant numbers of houses. One of the oldest the Cone Hill area, was one of the largest, the "Silver mine" subdivision with 10-12 lots was built in the Cone Hill area around 12-15 years ago. Samantha lane off of Rt 41 in Williamsville is around 30 years old. 3-4 3-lot subdivisions have been built in the last 5-10 yes

The Cone Hill area is one where the neighborhood is considered to be within walking distance of the Village Center. The extension of sidewalks to this area may be considered, see "Streets and Roadways."

Traditionally private subdivision roads have not been taken over as town roads, except for in the Cone Hill area. Recently (2021) the Silver Mine subdivision road was accepted as a town road after a petition by residents in . t area. The de facto policy has to not have the town take over subdivision roads.

Since 2008 the town has had a common driveway bylaw that allows up to 4 lots to share a common driveway. 6-7 common driveways have been permitted under these regulations.

Other development has occurred through the "Form A" subdivision process in which larger lots of land that already have frontage for zoning lots is divided into smaller lots along existing roads. The number of "Form As" has been numerous in the last 30 years, an average of 10 per year.

It is in the last 30 years that there has been the most development of single-family homes outside of the historic villages, along existing roads, on new subdivision roads, or with the use of common driveways.

According to the 2020 Decennial Census, West Stockbridge has a total 852 total housing units of which 618 are occupied and 234 are vacant. Homeownership in the town is 84.9%, much higher than the county average of 70%. Median rent is \$1,471 which is much higher than the median rent of \$894 Berkshire County. Rents between \$1,000-2,000 make up 88.7% of the rental mark, while rents less than \$500 or greater than \$3,000 each occupy 5.7% of the market.

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of homes in town are owner-occupied and the remaining 12% are renter-occupied. Ninety-three percent (93%) of all housing units are single-family detached dwellings and roughly half of all units contained three bedrooms.

Of the xx [provide number [building permits taken out in the past 10 years, the median value of new homes built has been \$xxxxx [get value here] Many of the new houses built are built as second homes. (See Addendum, table xxx)

There is consensus that housing costs in West Stockbridge continue to rise and that seniors, young people, and new families are, increasingly each year, priced out of the West Stockbridge housing market.

Housing cost burden is when 30% or more of a householder's income is paid towards housing costs. In West Stockbridge, almost half of all renters are cost burdened and almost a third of homeowners are cost burdened. A quick search on www.Zillow.com only yields seven listed homes for sale. Beyond the limited inventory, the listed prices average just under \$1.5 million. There are more homes listed for sale in excess of \$1 million than there are homes under \$500,000. Rental options in town are even more limited. A search for rentals only yields two results – one for \$2,800 per month and another for \$12,000. Although Zillow is not the only means for finding a home, it shows an overview of the current housing market in West Stockbridge for prospective buyer and renters.²

4.2 Current Conditions

More than half (53.1%) of West Stockbridge's housing stock was built prior to 1960 (60 years old or more). However, there was significant development from the 1960's through 2000 which comprises 36.5% of the entire housing stock. More recently housing construction has slowed down with more second home construction occurring in more remote parts of the town. The following table categorizes homes based on age as estimated by the American Community Survey..

Changes in Rental/vs owner occupied households.

A majority of West Stockbridge's housing units (85%) were owner-occupied. These homes tended to have a comparable household size (2.29) compared to renter-occupied units (2.20). In 2020, almost half (46%) of all renter-occupied households were cost burdened. This is a significant increase from the rate of 30% in 2010. From 2010 to 2018, cost burden experienced by owner-occupied households marginally decreased from 31% to 29%.

Table 4.8 denotes HUD income limits which are used to determine eligibility for public housing. HUD sets the lower income limits at 80% of area median income, very low-income limits at 50%, and extremely low income limits at 30%. Income limits vary from area to area so you may be eligible at one area but not at another. The income limit depends on the category and the family size. Most state and federal housing subsidy programs limit family income to 80% of AMI.

Forty-three percent (46%) of West Stockbridge renter households were cost burdened. Although this figure is lower than the county-wide rate (51%), it is still a significant figure and shows that many renters in West Stockbridge have financial challenges. West Stockbridge homeowner households, by contrast, were more cost burdened than those in Berkshire County. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of West Stockbridge homeowner households were cost burdened. This compares with the rate of 24% for Berkshire County.

VISION

West Stockbridge will increase the variety of "housing stock" to accommodate the needs of existing and future residents to ensure that young people, seniors, and workers have affordable housing options that enable them to live in the town. Creating a mixture of housing in the village center, including multifamily and live/work spaces, will support the vitality of the Town and the Village Center.

² Accessed on 12/28/20. Housing market information can fluctuate daily and only one source was used for this information.

4.3 Priority Housing Goals:

- **GOAL H 1:** INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING.
- GOAL H 2:** INCREASE THE VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS.
- GOAL H 3:** ESTABLISH WEST STOCKBRIDGE AS A DESTINATION FOR FAMILIES.

4.4 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

GOAL H 1: INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Objective H 1.1: Create a town-governed local housing authority ("Affordable Housing Trust") to oversee the development of housing resources with a mission to develop affordable housing in West Stockbridge, including partnering with non-profit affordable housing developers.

Objective H 1.2: Provide a professional staff position to assist with the development of affordable housing and the administration of an Affordable Housing Trust. This position to include a leadership role in making zoning updates, following the actions items below.

Action Item 1: Maximize the allocation of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for affordable housing.

Action Item 2: Detailed evaluation of the feasibility of using town-owned sites for the development affordable housing.

Action Item 3: Adopt town bylaw to create seasonal/weekend rentals excise tax with revenue allocated to the Affordable Housing Trust.

Action Item 4: Develop real estate tax incentives for homeowners who develop accessory apartments and commit to rent them at affordable year-round rentals.

Action Item 5: Develop an Affordable Housing Trust's first-time homebuyer grant program.

GOAL H 2: INCREASE THE VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS.

Objective H 2.1: Encourage the development of the Village Center of West Stockbridge.

Action Item 1: In 2019 Zoning regulations for the village center were created that created a "Village Core Overlay District (VCOD)" that facilitates and supports mixed use development in the VCOD. Review the implementation of these regulations and make recommendations for upgrades if needed.

Action Item 2: Complete current work being done in 2022 to update and improve zoning regulations to provide greater opportunity for individual homeowners to create accessory apartments.

Action Item 3: Complete current work being done in 2022 to update and improve zoning regulations to provide short term rental regulations which allow this type of rental, but which do not also take units out of the regular rental market and reduce the availability of housing choices for residents.

Action Item 3: Review and update the current zoning regulations that limit multifamily housing to projects of 6 units or less. Change the regulations to allow larger numbers of units in multi-family developments based on recognized thresholds of minimum sized projects that are practical and financeable.

Action Item 4: Review and update zoning to consider adoption of "conservation subdivision" type zoning regulations that will allow projects with smaller houses on smaller lots, with reservation of open land that is fully open to the public, to enable alternative forms of development in areas of town with existing 3-acre zoning.

Action Item 5: A review and update of local West Stockbridge Subdivision Control Regulations was initiated in 2022. Extend this review and complete to make West Stockbridge Subdivision Control Regulations coordinated with and supportive of alternate conservation subdivision control regulations

Action Item 6: Review and consider updating of zoning regulations for historic village centers to enable smaller lots with smaller house, and other housing types, to be built in the peripheral village centers. Create zoning that respects and enables the reproduction of the nature and character of the historical peripheral village centers. This project would be similar to what the Town did for the Village Center with the VCOD overlay district regulations. It will provide a key opportunity for differentiation and development of housing patterns and types within the existing framework of zoning that relies of only 3-acre single family lots. Create zoning that takes account of the particular history of West Stockbridge.

➤ **GOAL H 3: INCREASE HOUSING IN THE VILLAGE CENTER, WITH A VARIETY OF TYPES, WHICH ARE AFFORDABLE.**

Objective H 3.1: Identify potential sites for developing housing.

Action Item 1: Detailed evaluation of town-owned sites for the development affordable housing, including:

- main Town Hall ("old school") property
- vacant lot on Main Street next to old town hall
- Moscow Road - former National Grid Land
- Land south of Turnpike - now State Fish and Game

Action Item 2: Build out and complete the street grid to create sites for small lots with small houses. See Section 5 "Streets and Roadways." See section 5 "Streets and Roadways" for related information.

Objective H 3.2: Encourage the development of Senior housing within walking distance of the village center.

Action Item 1 Create a town-governed local housing authority to oversee the development of housing resources.

Action Item 2: Leverage the development of Senior Housing through the use of or acquisition of town owned properties.

Objective H 3.3: Explore creative ways to develop new housing.

Action Item 1: Amend zoning to allow small affordable units on vacant non-conforming lots.

Action Item 2: Engage regional mission-based organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity and the Southern Berkshire CDC, to create infill development on lots identified as vacant, nonconforming, and potentially buildable.

Action Item 3: Identify areas throughout the town where pocket neighborhoods - a type of planned neighborhood comprising a grouping of smaller residences - would be a viable option for new housing.

Action Item 4: Engage mission-based organizations to develop viable plans for pocket neighborhoods in optimal locations.

Objective H 3.4: Create housing incentives that support West Stockbridge.

Action Item 1: Increase funding for the Affordable Housing Trust's first-time homebuyer program so that more grants can be issued.

Action Item 2: Work with local banking institutions to enable greater flexibility in financing to foster development of Accessory Units.

4.5 Graphs and Tables

West Stockbridge		
	2010	2020
Households	638	471
Average Household Size	2.39	2.48
Families	399	362
Average Family Size	3.03	2.83

Table 4.1 - Age of Housing Units

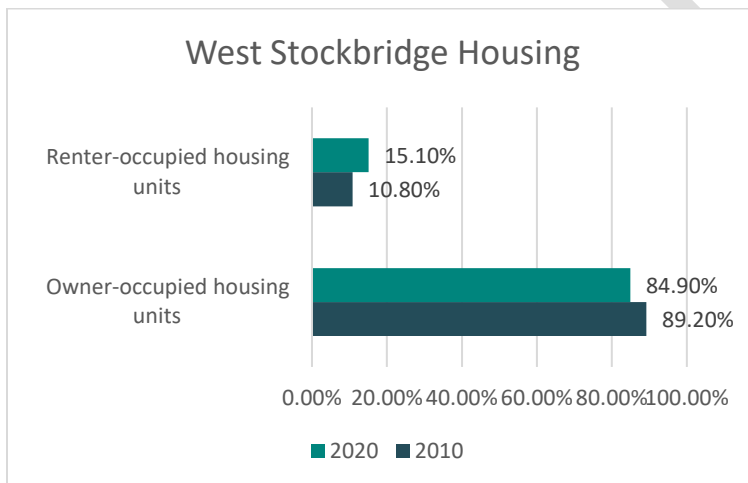


Table 4.9 - Housing Cost Burden

Year structure built	Number of housing units (2020)	Percent of total housing units
Built 2014 or later	5	1.1%
Built 2010 to 2013	6	1.3%
Built 2000 to 2009	38	8.1%
Built 1980 to 1999	115	24.4%
Built 1960 to 1979	57	12.1%
Built 1940 to 1959	41	8.7%
Built 1939 or earlier	209	44.4%
Total Units	471	100%

Table 4.8 Berkshire County: FY 2020 Income Limits

Median Family Income	FY 2020 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
\$80,900	Extremely Low (30%) Income Limits	\$17,950	\$20,500	\$23,050	\$26,200	\$30,680	\$35,160	\$39,640	\$44,120
	Very Low (50%) Income Limits	\$29,900	\$34,200	\$38,450	\$42,700	\$46,150	\$49,550	\$56,400	\$56,400
	Low (80%) Income Limits	\$47,850	\$54,650	\$61,500	\$68,300	\$73,800	\$79,250	\$84,700	\$90,200

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development FY 2020 Income Limits



Municipality	Number of Rental Households	Renters Burdened	Percent Renters Burdened	Number of Owner Households	Owners Burdened	Percent Owners Burdened
West Stockbridge	61	28	46%	434	127	29%

Town of West Stockbridge, Massachusetts: Master Plan

Alford	7	0	0%	184	44	24%
Great Barrington	954	406	43%	1,876	602	32%
Richmond	49	40	81%	695	162	24%
Stockbridge	335	162	48%	578	201	35%
Berkshire County	17,573	9,030	51%	37,639	9,082	24%

Source: 2018 American Community Survey Tables DP04, S2503

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5. Transportation

5.1 Introduction

This section contains an analysis of West Stockbridge's existing road system and recommends a plan to meet future needs. It also makes recommendations concerning increasing multi-modal transit options in the town including: bike and pedestrian transit and public transportation options. Currently, the town is not a member of the Berkshire Regional Transportation Authority.

5.2 Current Conditions

West Stockbridge has approximately 36 miles of town-maintained roads. About 12 miles of the town's roads have a dirt gravel surface and the remaining 24 miles are paved. The town has 16 water crossings (bridges or culverts) and approximately 2.5 miles of roadway that fall within the 100-year floodplain.

There are two State routes which pass through West Stockbridge. Albany Road and Great Barrington Road are also identified as sections of Route 41 which runs from Pittsfield to Great Barrington and points to the south. Albany Road and Stockbridge Road are sections of a major east-west highway, Route 102, which terminates in State Line where it meets N.Y. Route 22.

Finally, the Massachusetts Turnpike crosses the northern portion of the town and connects with the Berkshire Extension of the New York Thruway at State Line. The last Massachusetts exit for westbound traffic and the first Massachusetts entrance eastbound traffic is the turnpike's interchange with Great Barrington Road near Card Pond.

5.3 Street Alignment

Topography has been the dominating influence in the past development of the town's street system. Major obstacles to street construction have been West Stockbridge Mountain (1,823 feet), Tom Ball Mountain (1,938 feet), Maple Hill (1,766 feet), and Harvey Mountain (2,065 feet). These mountains and hills, having a north-south orientation, forced the majority of streets also to run in a north-south direction in the valleys between their peaks. Major north-south roads are Great Barrington Road and Richmond Road in the eastern side of town and West Center Road in the western side.

Albany Road and Stockbridge Road provide the only major east-west route through the northern portion of the town. The valley between Maple Hill and Tom Ball Mountain allows only one east-west roadway in the southerly section of West Stockbridge. The Main Alford Road and Cobb Road run through this valley and connect West Center Road with Great Barrington Road.

Pavement and Right-of-Way Width

There is considerable variation in both pavement and right-of-way widths throughout West Stockbridge. Paved roads maintained by the town have a right-of-way which varies from 24 feet to 56 feet in width. The pavement width on these streets also varies from 18 to 20 feet on a street with a 32-foot right-of-way and from 18 to 28 feet on streets with a 40-foot right-of-way. The town's unpaved roads have a right-of-way and travelled way of from 25 to 50 feet in width.

The State routes have a 40–60-foot right-of-way and a pavement width which varies from about 24 feet to 28 feet, in general, the present pavements are wide enough for present traffic flow. As a minimum, however, all streets should ultimately have a right-of-way of 40 feet and at least a 20-foot pavement. Certain streets will also require greater widths.

Drainage

Drainage along the town's roads is generally good. Working with the Housatonic Valley Association, the town completed a Road-Stream Crossing Inventory with the Housatonic Valley Association and the University of

Connecticut Civil and Environmental Engineering Department. The plan inventoried road-stream crossings managed by the: A. Town, B. State, and C. Federal Governments and then determined which sites were most likely to present a flooding hazard, required regular removal of sediments or debris, or were perched, meaning that aquatic organisms were unable to move either upstream or downstream. Culverts and ditches have been constructed where necessary to carry off storm water which otherwise might settle along the roads. Occasionally the State installed culverts on Albany Street overflow when ice clogs them in the winter. It is recommended that the State be requested to correct this condition.

Grade Crossings

There are seven grade crossings of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad's single line track through West Stockbridge. This line is now abandoned, and parts of the line are currently used as a pedestrian corridor. There is some interest in the town of converting the rail line into a multi-modal trail similar to the Ashuwillitcook Trail connecting Lanesborough to Adams. Not all residents support such a project with concerns raised by abutting property owners concerning trespassing and littering. The town has recently negotiated the purchase of a portion of the right of way from Eversource, the current owner, to increase parking and facilities in the town center.

The main line of the Boston and Albany Railroad cuts across the northwest corner of West Stockbridge. On the Richmond - West Stockbridge line, there is a narrow underpass for Deane Hill Road near its intersection with Baker Street. There is also a grade crossing of these tracks directly on the State line where a short street connects State Line Road and Cross Road. Improved protection at this crossing will be necessary if industrial development of the adjoining area causes any increased automobile traffic.

Traffic Volumes

The opening of the Massachusetts Turnpike in May 1957 had a marked effect on traffic flow through West Stockbridge. After the turnpike was opened, traffic volumes through town generally declined but because of increased reliance on automobiles, current traffic volumes now exceed what they were before and shortly after opening the turnpike. This increase was predicted in the 1959 Master Plan.

The turnpike's major affect has been to reduce the amount of east-west through traffic which formerly passed over Route 102. There has been a decline in the number of large vehicles (tractor trailers) which formerly had to pass through the town's most densely developed business and residential areas. Town residents remain concerned about commercial traffic driving through the town center and not yielding to pedestrians in the cross walk. Street calming measures would help to reduce speed through the town and create a safer environment for pedestrians looking to cross Route 102.

Traffic Studies:

- June 29, 2009. BRPC performed a Traffic count on Swamp Road and State Line Road (State rt.102). The reason was for obtaining a possible truck ban on Swamp Road and the count was to acknowledge that truck traffic was in fact even an issue. The conclusion was that the percentage of truck volume did not meet the criteria of "Heavy Truck Traffic".
- August 11-16, 2016. Foresight Land Services was hired to perform traffic count data along the areas of Center Street and Depot Street. Innovative Data LLC performed the count. This reason was a preliminary attempt to the possibility of making Center Street a One-Way street from Main Street. We had only 1 informational meeting on this idea and the idea was not well received.
- October 22-24, 2020. Precision Data LLC was hired to perform a Traffic Count on Main Street. The reason for this count was to collected data to see if vehicles were speeding through Main Street and to get an idea of traffic volume due to the numerous complaints of vehicles not yielding to pedestrians in the cross walks
- Currently the town working to complete a comprehensive traffic study on the entire 5-miles of our Great Barrington Road here in Town. This study was triggered from residential concerns of heavy volume of

trucks (flat bed trucks/ tractor trailers and gravel haulers). Truck volume is primarily generated by two nearby industries: Lane and Sons Quarry, which produces a variety of aggregate stone products and Formel's Auto Salvage, an auto recycling yard.

Table 5.1 - Traffic Volumes

Functional Class	On	Approach	At	Dir	Direct-ions	Average Daily Traffic
Minor Arterial	State Line Rd. / Route 102	East of	Baker St.	2-way	EB/WB	2,559
Minor Arterial	Stockbridge Rd. / Route 102	At	Stockbridge T.L.	2-way	EB/WB	2,584
Minor Arterial	Great Barrington Rd. / Route 41	At	Great Barrington T.L.	2-way	NB/SB	2,538
Interstate	Mass. Turnpike		Between N.Y.S.L. & Exit 1	2-way	EB/WB	24,835
Major Collector	Ramp-Rt. 41 WB to Rt. 90 EB		Route 41 & 102 On-ramp	RAMP		380
Major Collector	Ramp-Rt. 90 WB to Rt. 41		Exit 1 Routes 41 & 102 W. Stockbridge	RAMP		395
Local Road or Street	Depot St.	Between	Center St. and Rt. 102	2-way	NB/SB	919
Local Road or Street	Center St.	Between	Depot St. and Main St.	2-way	EB/WB	836

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and MassDOT, 2018 & 2019

Along West Center Road there has been an increase in traffic since the Berkshire Extension of the New York Thruway was opened. Presumably, this traffic seeks a by-pass of the center of town by cutting over Cobb Road to reach West Center Road and eventually Albany Road.

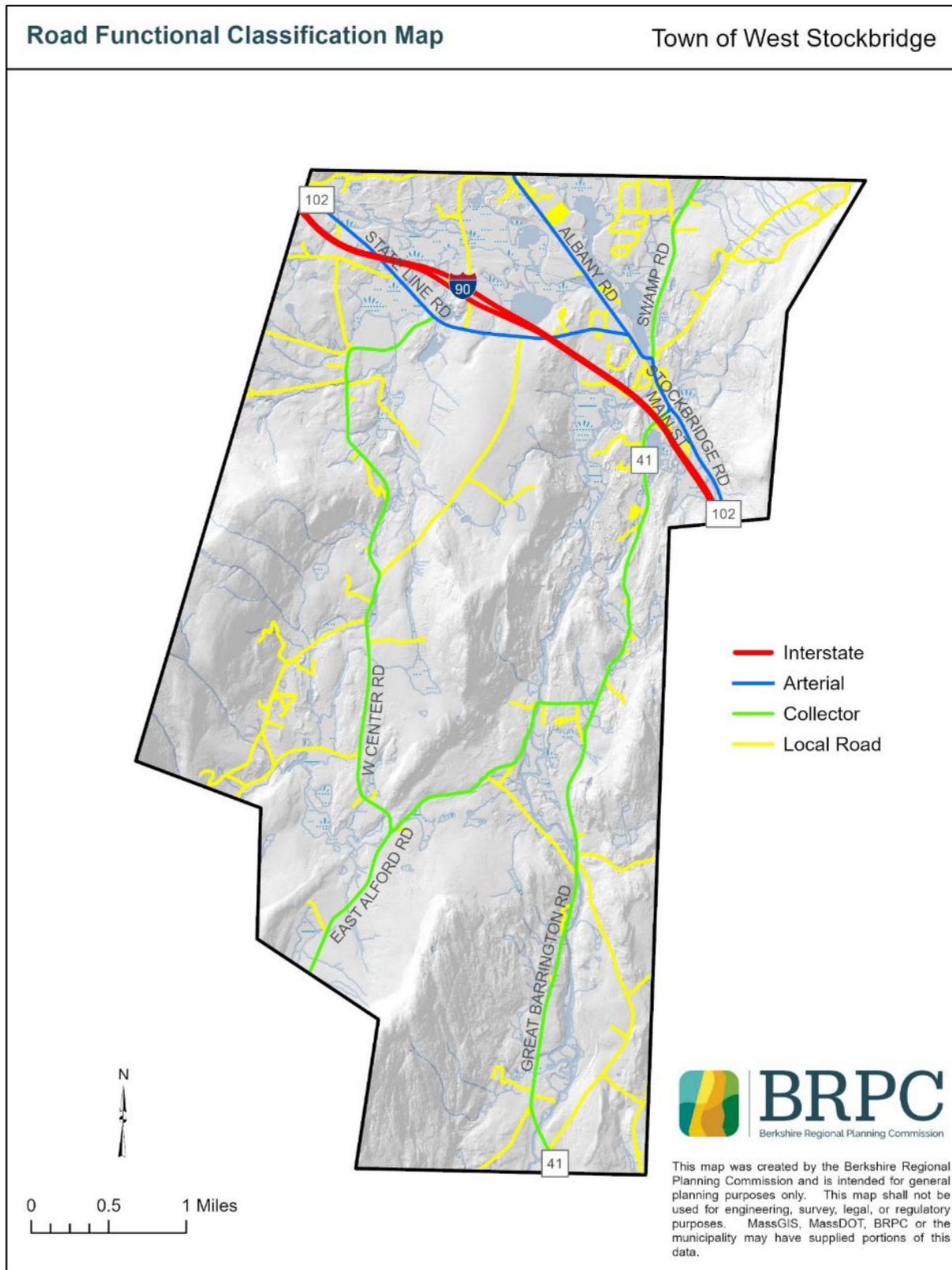
Access to Interstate 90- Massachusetts Turnpike/New York State Thruway

Access to Interstate 90 in the town is limited to two ramps. Westbound I-90 traffic can exit the turnpike at Route 41, the last Massachusetts exit. Eastbound traffic traveling toward Boston is unable to exit in West Stockbridge, however local vehicles are able to merge onto I-90 East, also off of Route 41. Traffic on Routes 41 and 102, which is westbound for the New York Thruway, can only gain access to the Thruway from an interchange on Route 22 in Canaan, NY 3.9 miles to the northwest.

5.4 Traffic Plan

West Stockbridge's streets, both existing and proposed, are divided into the following four major functional classifications:

1. **Local Streets** which serve the essential function of providing access to individual properties.
2. **Secondary Streets** which serve as traffic collectors for and links between major streets.
3. **Major Streets** which serve as major routes for traffic passing in, out and through the town, typically managed by the State Highway Department.
4. **Turnpikes** which serve as major routes connecting major regional traffic generators.



The Road Functional Classification Map shows the recommended classification of West Stockbridge's streets and the major proposed traffic improvements.

1. Turnpike

At present there are no plans for the improvement of the facilities of the Massachusetts Turnpike in West Stockbridge.

2. Major Streets

The recommended standard for major streets in West Stockbridge is a right-of-way of 66 feet and a pavement width ranging from 24 to 40 feet. All the proposals for major streets involve existing or proposed State routes.

- Stockbridge Road (Route 102, South/East)
- State Line Road (Route 102, West/North)
- Richmond Road (Route 41, North)

No proposals are made for these roads which are adequate for present and anticipated traffic volumes.

- Great Barrington Road (Route 41, South)

3. Secondary Streets

West Center Road, Main Alford Road, Cobb Road, and Pittsfield Road are designated as secondary roads. A right-of-way of 50 feet and a 24-foot pavement will eventually be necessary for all roads.

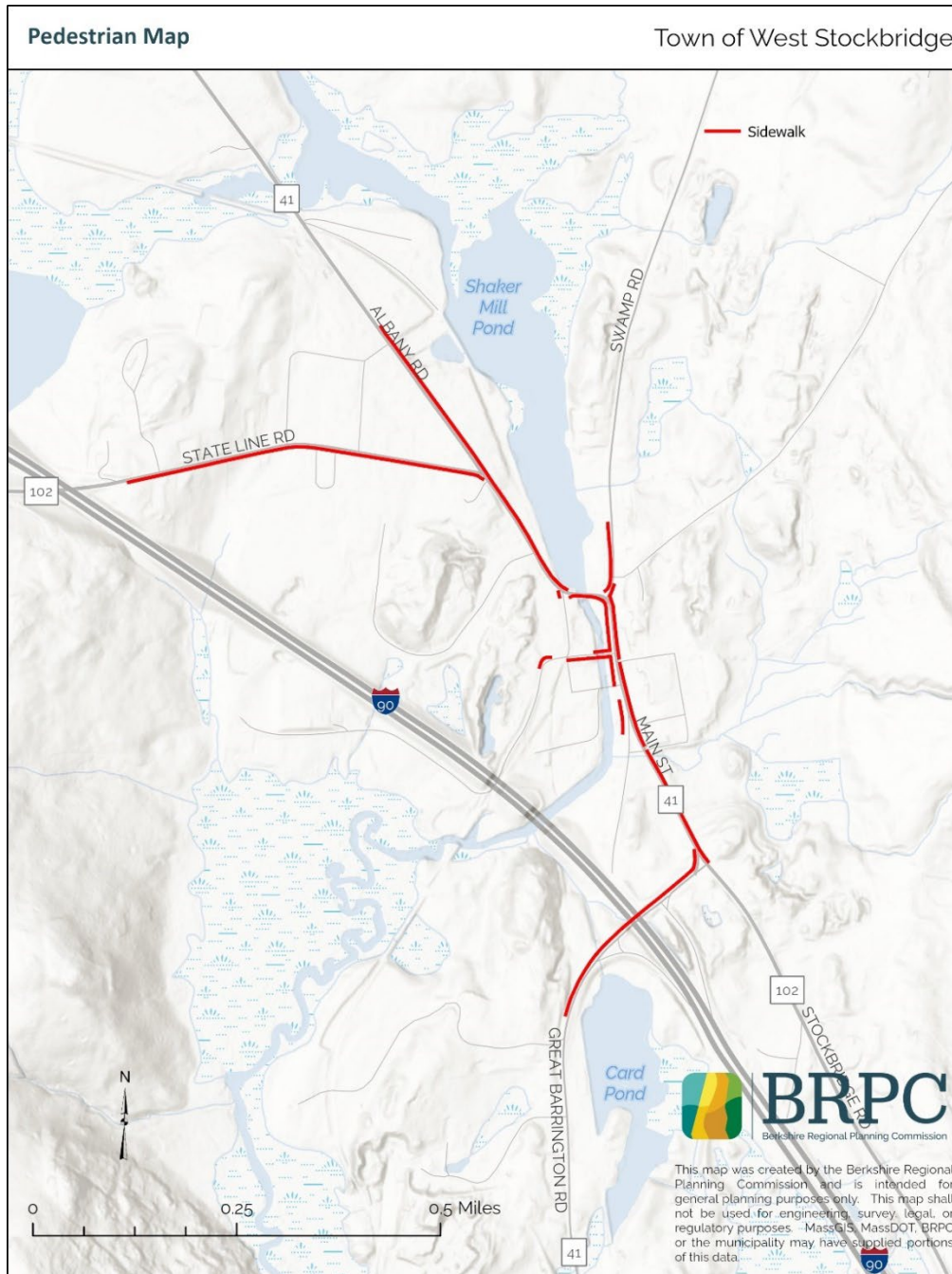
No major realignments are proposed for these streets.

4. Local Streets

The town's remaining roads are classified as local streets. A standard of a 40-foot right-of-way and a 20-foot pavement width is recommended for all existing or proposed local streets.

5.5 Trails/Pedestrian Ways

Current sidewalks in the town are shown in Figure XX. Recent improvements in the sidewalk network have connected the downtown area to Card Pond. The downtown area has a network of sidewalks and crosswalk improvements. Residents are concerned about pedestrians and vehicular traffic in the village center. The town will soon complete a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan to assist with traffic/pedestrian improvements.

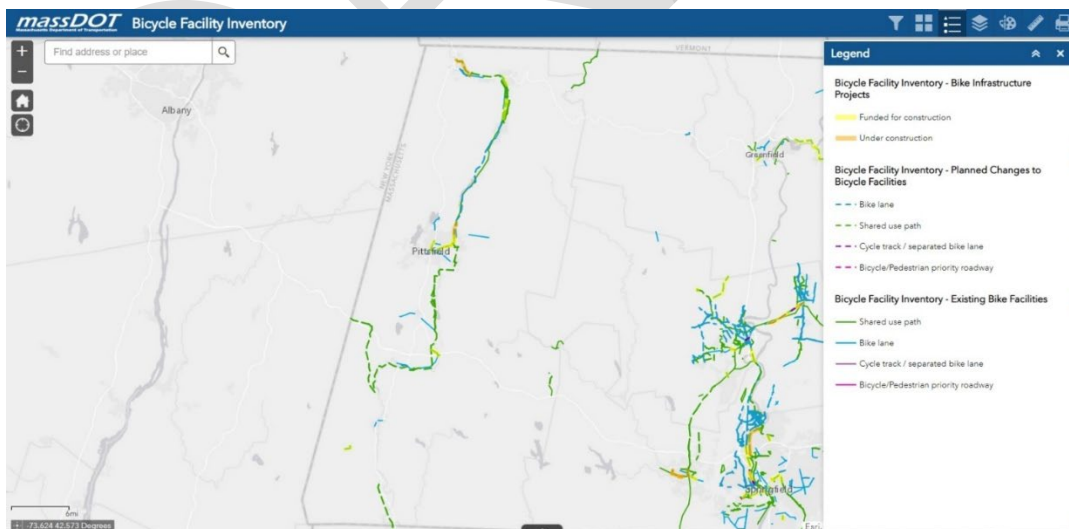


The conversion of the railroad right of way into a multi-use path is another area of discussion for the town and the complete streets process. Portions of this trail are currently maintained and used heavily by residents in the Housatonic area of Great Barrington. Usage has led to the installation of crosswalks, signage, and flashers

indicating pedestrians in the area. Figure XX shows existing trail signage and evidence of use in winter.



The state already recognizes the trail as evidenced by Figures XX and XX. Figure XX shows the regional trail network (including the Ashuwilltcook Trail) and other proposed trails. Figure XX shows a close up including a variety of proposed trails in the West Stockbridge area. These images are taken from the MASSDOT Bicycle Facility Inventory Website.



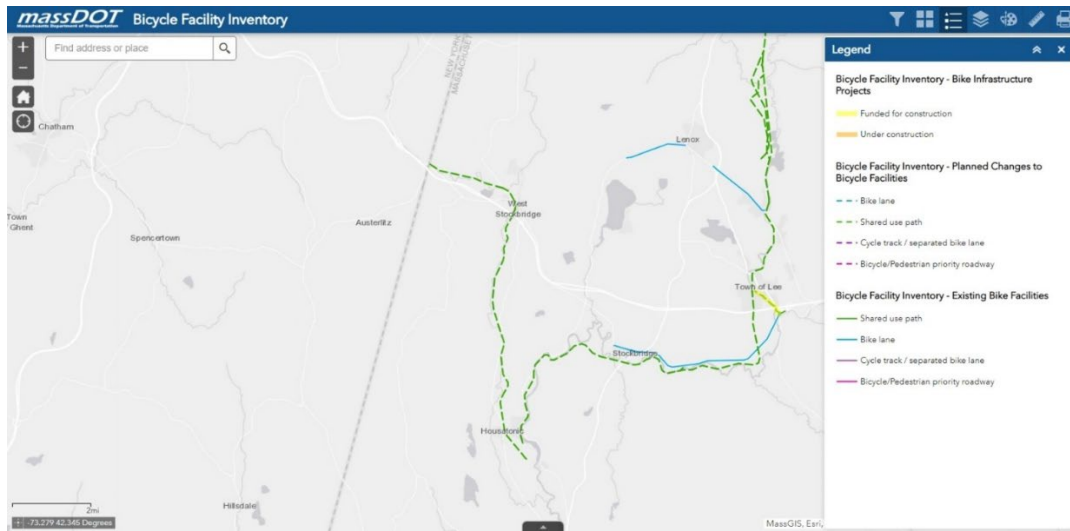


Figure XX shows former Railroad bridge abutment and trail looking south toward Lane Quarry. Repairing this section of the trail would require significant engineering and investment but could potential connect West Stockbridge to Great Barrington in much the same way that Cheshire and Adams are connected.



5.5.1 Rivers and Water Network

Do we want to include a discussion of this?

DRAFT

VISION

Transportation in West Stockbridge will provide multi-modal options which are sustainable and accessible for people of all backgrounds. Transit networks will ensure that all users are able to move throughout the local and regional environment, whether via pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, or public transport options. Safety enhancements in the town center will enable pedestrians to coexist with vehicular traffic on Routes 41 and 102 in town. The town will work to improve and expand on the pedestrian network within the town center and connecting to nearby communities to offer increased opportunities for non-motorized transit.

5.6 Priority Transportation Goals

GOAL TC 1: CONTINUE TO PROMOTE A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT EXPANDS MOBILITY FOR ALL AND INCREASES ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES.

GOAL TC 2: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIORS AND THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED.

GOAL TC 3: LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSIT.

5.7 Goals, Objectives, & Action Items

- **GOAL TC 1:** CONTINUE TO PROMOTE A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT EXPANDS MOBILITY FOR ALL AND INCREASES ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES.

Objective TC 1.1: Implement recommendations for multi-modal improvements from the town's Complete Streets Plan.

Action Item 1: Continue efforts to calm traffic in and around the West Stockbridge Village downtown area.

Action Item 2: Continue and expand efforts to develop multi-modal linkages between amenities such as shared use paths.

Action Item 3: Increase signage throughout the town to raise awareness of and to better direct residents to amenities.

Objective TC 1.2: Provide transportation choices by improving system connectivity within and between modes.

Action Item 1: Develop an attractive and easily understandable system of signs that guide visitors and residents throughout the town.

Action Item 2: Install more bike racks and strategically locate bike racks throughout the town, especially near trailheads, shared use paths, and in the Villages.

Objective TC 1.3: Prioritize safety for all users of the transportation system.

Action item 1: Continue to monitor crash cluster data to identify which intersections and roads need redesign.

Action Item 2: Add stationary speed feedback signs

Action Item 3: Add crosswalk bump outs, raised crosswalks, and other traffic calming measures in West Stockbridge to discourage excessive speeds through town.

Objective TC 1.4: Prioritize projects that enhance walkability and bikeability for visitors to West Stockbridge by ensuring adequate connections to town destinations.

Action Item 1: Add new sidewalks and bike lanes where needed and suitable throughout the town.

Action Item 2: Consider the closure of village street(s) to promote pedestrian activity and a higher density of activity and attractions.

Action Item 3: Study the feasibility of establishing long-distance bus service in West Stockbridge where large, long-distance commuter buses can park for visitor arrival and departure.

Objective TC 1.5: Increase the livability of West Stockbridge by improving access to active mode facilities and/or transit services.

Action Item 1: Add a warrant to town meeting to join the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority so that town residents can access on-demand and para-transit services.

Action item 2: Engage Berkshire Regional Transit authority and other regional agencies to develop solutions that increase access to and the frequency of transit services in West Stockbridge, such as adding a fixed bus route through the town center.

Objective TC 1.6: Develop a multimodal transportation system that is sensitive to the historic districts and rural scenic character of West Stockbridge.

Action Item 1: Establish a system of shared use paths connecting downtown to the town hall facilities.

Action Item 2: Work with West Stockbridge-based cultural institutions and landowners to connect amenities via shared use paths. Coordinate with Pittsfield, Stockbridge, Richmond, Great Barrington, and other communities to ensure interconnected pathways.

Action Item 3: : Adopt design guidelines that ensure the design of and materials used for shared use paths are in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and environments.

Objective TC 1.7: Ensure that improvements to the transportation system are equitably distributed throughout the town.

Action Item 1: Develop an implementation plan for improvements that equitably distributes projects town-wide.

Action Item 2: Maintain active engagement with residents from each of the town's neighborhoods to ensure that improvements are equitably distributed throughout the town.

Action Item 3: Consider adopting an "Official Map" of town streets, delineating which streets are town maintained and which are private and therefore the responsibility of the individual property owners.

➤ **GOAL TC 2: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIORS AND THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED.**

Objective TC.2.1: Ensure that seniors and the physically disabled are able to access commercial areas for shopping.

Action Item 1: Expand the Council on Aging's transportation services so as to provide shopping excursions two days per week.

Action Item 2: Study the feasibility of increasing handicapped, charter bus, and general parking stalls, in West Stockbridge Village.

Action Item 3: Study the feasibility of providing shuttle services to cultural venues and events.

➤ **GOAL TC 3: LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSIT.**

Objective TC 3.1: Implement a local shuttle service.

Action Item 1: Create parking areas near the periphery of the town. Residents and visitors can park there and use the shuttle to navigate the town without moving their cars or contributing to local traffic congestion.

➤ **GOAL TC.4: CONTINUE EXCELLENT MAINTENANCE OF THE TOWN'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.**

Objective TC 4.1: Ensure that roads and sidewalks continue to be maintained at the highest level through proactive strategic planning.

Action Item 1: Conduct annual updates on the condition of roads, sidewalks, bridges, culverts that can be used to identify and prioritize maintenance needs.

Action Item 2: Develop a Capital Improvement Plan that incorporates road and sidewalk projects.

Action Item 3: Develop annual strategic plans to prioritize and schedule regular maintenance and more urgent repairs and improvements.

Objective TC 4.2: Collaborate with regional transit and transportation agencies to expand service to, from, and within West Stockbridge.

Action Item 1: Increase West Stockbridge's representation with regional transportation organizations.

Action Item 2: Identify and advocate for local employer and workforce needs relative to transportation, such as potential creation of a regional Transportation Management Association (TMA).

Action Item 3: Promote broader use of transit among residents and visitors.

Objective TC 4.3: Explore innovative means to increase access to transportation.

Action Item 1: Form an ad hoc transportation committee whose primary task is to find innovative means to increase access to transportation.

Action Item 2: Identify how other, similar communities, deal with transportation issues.

Action Item 3: Study the feasibility of utilizing alternative vehicles (e.g., Council on Aging vans, school vehicles, etc.) to provide transit opportunities outside of BRTA hours of operation.

Objective TC 4.4: Support regional efforts to provide east-west and north-south rail access in the region.

Action Item 1: Work with local cultural institutions, hospitality companies, and regional organizations to effectively market and promote passenger rail as an option when visiting West Stockbridge.

Action Item 2: Support regional initiatives, such as the Train Campaign, East-West Rail study and the Berkshire Flyer, which aim to connect the Berkshires to New York City and Boston via passenger rail.

6. Services & Facilities

6.1 Introduction:

This chapter examines the services and facilities of the Town of West Stockbridge, as well as its infrastructure and public utilities. The town has a strong interest in continuing to provide reliable services including public works, police, fire & rescue, library, and social services, among others. The town's infrastructure priorities focus on issues of proper maintenance and growth through strategic planning, and on the integration of new environmentally sound approaches and technologies.

6.2 Current Conditions:

An assessment of the town's existing utilities and facilities condition has been documented through consultation with town Staff. This section summarizes the key points related to the existing condition of town services and facilities:

Public Safety: West Stockbridge Police Department has both full-time and part-time police staff, and coordinates with the dispatch center at the Berkshire County Sheriff's Office. West Stockbridge Fire/Rescue is all-volunteer, and currently works in partnership with the Richmond Volunteer Fire Department and Richmond Ambulance.

Public Works: The Department of Public Works has a full-time staff, and the equipment to maintain the town's roadways, buildings, grounds, parks, and utilities.

General Government: The town provides a wide variety of basic government services including policy and day-to-day management, voter registration and elections, construction and business permitting, and community fiscal management (assessment, taxation, collection, borrowing, etc.). Most general government services are housed in the 12,743 sq. ft. Town Hall.

Public Schools: West Stockbridge is part of the Berkshire Hills Regional School District. Though the town does not house any of the schools, the school district consistently requires more than half of the town's annual operating budget.

Community Services: West Stockbridge provides a range of community services including health services, parks and recreation, emergency assistance to low-income families, and support services for seniors and veterans. These services are housed in the Town Hall, and in several satellite locations.

Library: The West Stockbridge Library is housed in the Town Hall, and receives a combination of public and private funding, with strong public support. The library is part of the state's CW/MARS network of over 150 libraries and is able to circulate books from this entire network.

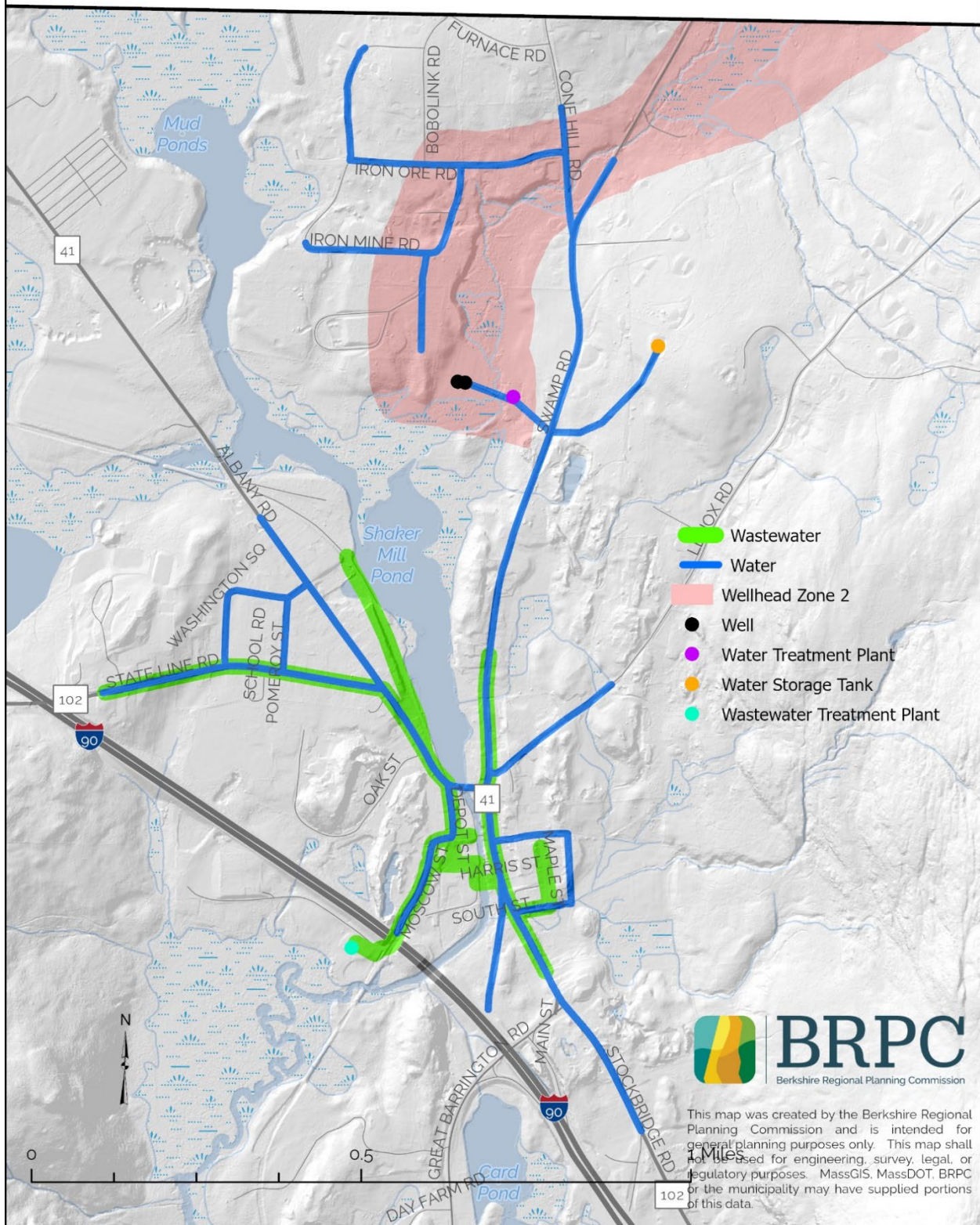
Solid Waste and Recycling: The town operates a Transfer Station for the conveyance of waste and recycling. The station is currently open three days per week, and accepts all manner of refuse, some items for an additional fee.

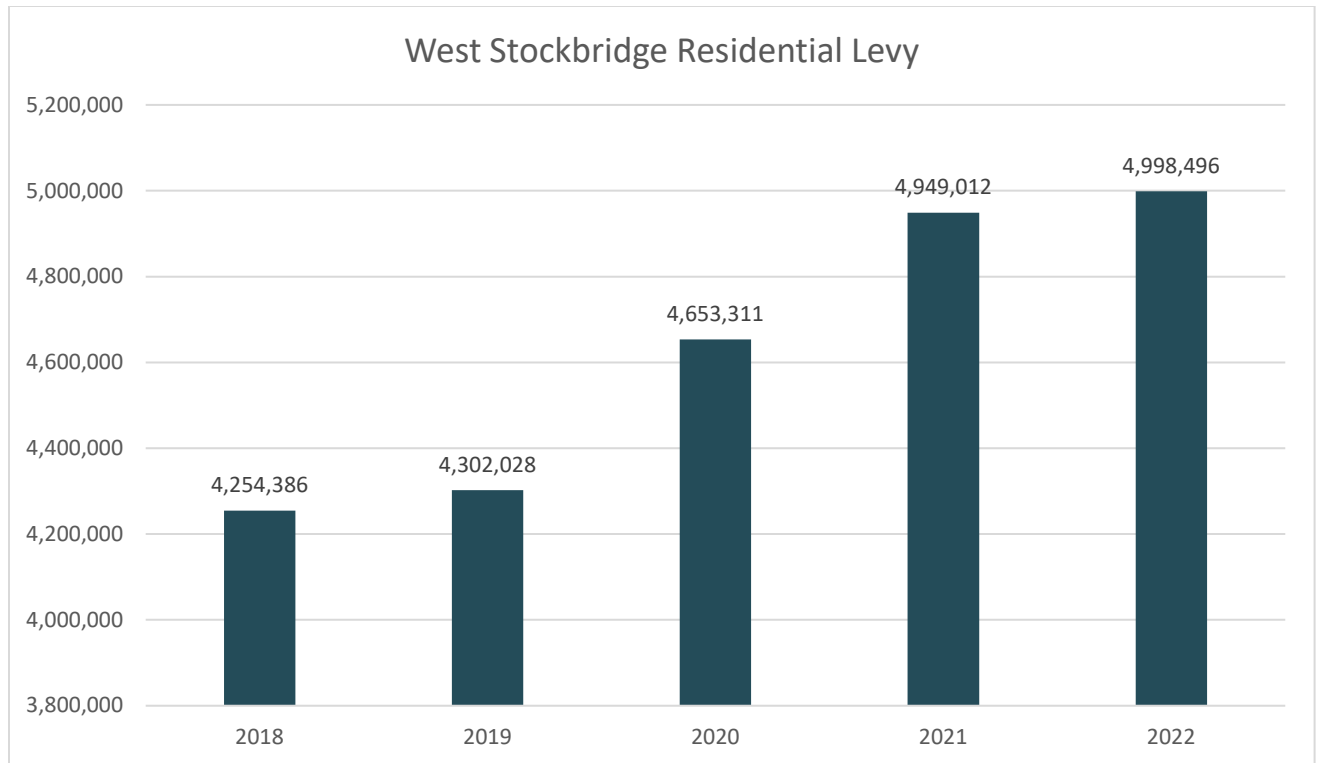
Water and Sewer: The town operates water and sewer service for a limited area around the center of town. It operates under an enterprise fund, and is supervised by the Department of Public Works, along with an elected commission, and a licensed operator. See Figure XX

Other Infrastructure and town Lands: The town owns and maintains XX miles of roadways, and is also responsible for several bridges, culverts, and a closed landfill. West Stockbridge also maintains the Card Pond Recreation Area.

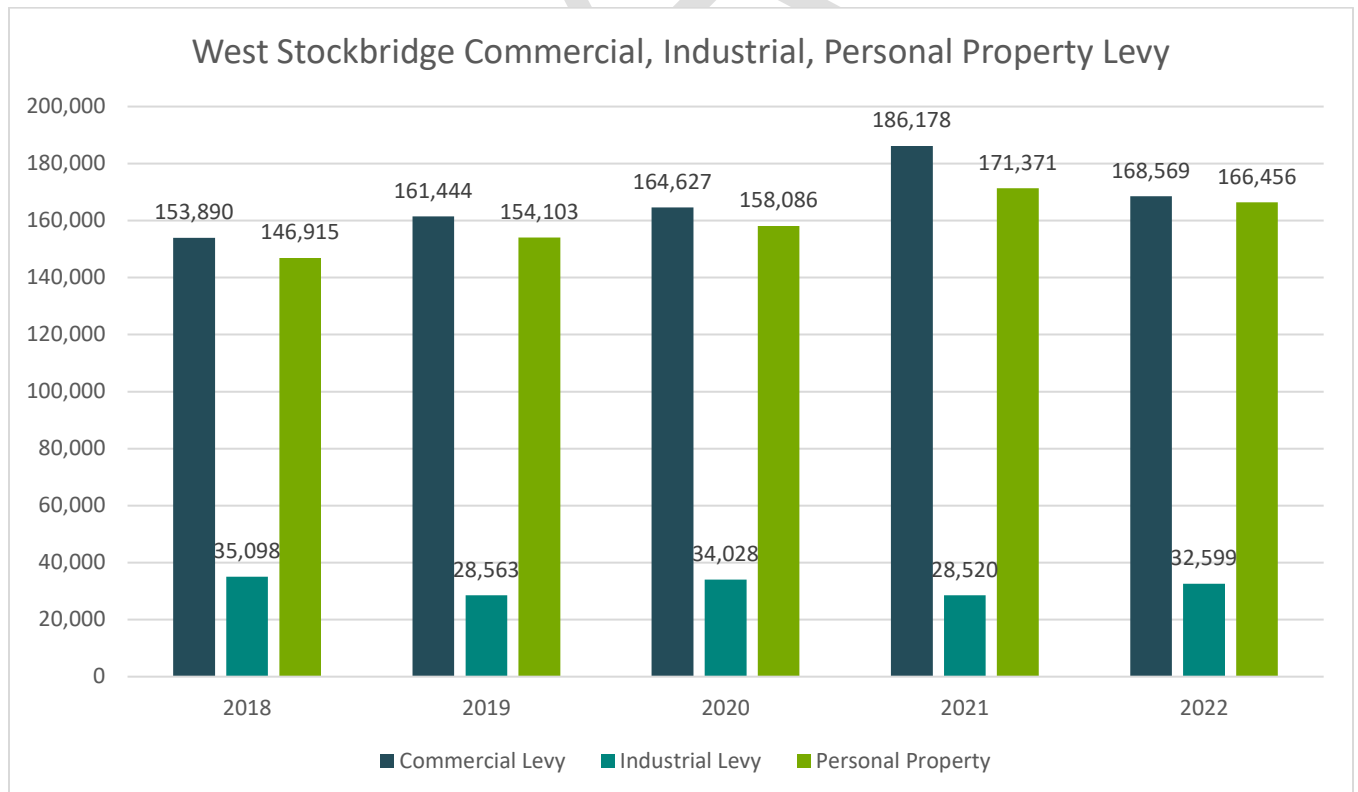
Figure 3.4.3 - Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

Town of West Stockbridge





Text description of Levy amounts



VISION

To provide excellent, cost-effective, accessible facilities, services, and programs that reflect the values and priorities of our town, and that contribute to a high-quality, safe, healthy, vibrant, and sustainable community.

6.3 Priority Services and Facilities Goals

➤ **GOAL S/F1: DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES.**

Maintaining safe and secure communities is important to residents, business, and local governments alike. These strategies suggest ways in which the town of West Stockbridge can enhance the provision of public safety services and improve overall perceptions of public safety.

➤ **GOAL S/F2: PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION FROM PRE-SCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 12.**

Though the town of West Stockbridge does not house or maintain any school facilities, our involvement and leadership in our regional school district (and beyond) can help to insure the best possible education for our residents.

➤ **GOAL S/F3: PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND PROGRAMS THAT SERVE THE NEEDS OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF WEST STOCKBRIDGE.**

➤ For a town that relies heavily on part-time staff and volunteers, this becomes more of a challenge.

➤ **GOAL S/F4: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES CONSISTENT WITH BEST PRACTICES**

➤ To function effectively, the town needs well-maintained facilities. Infrastructure should be kept in good, environmentally sound condition to assure the safety, well-being, and quality of life of the community. The town should plan, budget, and act to maintain the quality and effectiveness of its buildings, facilities, and infrastructure.

➤ **GOAL S/F5: ANTICIPATE, PLAN, AND BUDGET FOR LARGE PROJECTS IN RESPONSE TO GROWING DEMAND ON TOWN SERVICES.**

➤ Maintenance of and expansion of Waste Water Treatment facilities based on increased demand.

➤ **GOAL S/F6: TAKE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND PRACTICES IN SERVICES AND FACILITIES.**

➤ The town's designation as a Massachusetts Green Community has given West Stockbridge a framework and funding to become more efficient in its municipal operations, but these efforts need to go beyond this one program.

➤ Ensure rivers and streams in West Stockbridge remain clean by ensuring resident septic systems are functioning properly.

➤ **GOAL S/F7: INCREASE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY TO REDUCE COSTS AND OVERALL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.**

➤ Continue to improve town facilities to improve efficiency and decrease emissions.

6.4 Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

GOAL S/F 1: Deliver high-quality public services.

Action Item 1: Support high-quality police, fire, ambulance, and dispatch services that are adequately staffed with trained and properly equipped personnel. As the community continues to change and grow, expansion of these services is necessary. Different avenues of funding, staffing, and service delivery should be investigated to ensure the desired reliability and quality level.

Action Item 2: Pursue grant funding to help expand emergency service capabilities. There are a number of federal and state grants that allow for expanded equipment purchases, as well as for educational programs and other initiatives. A concerted effort to remain alert to these opportunities is vital to attaining them, and even relatively small grants can be transformative to our small town.

GOAL S/F 2: Provide high-quality education from pre-school through grade 12.

Action Item 1: Increase town involvement in the Berkshire Hills Regional School District, with the goal of improving quality, innovation, and cost-effectiveness. Only by accurately representing West Stockbridge in district committees and planning boards can we ensure that our dollars are well spent, and that our residents are well served.

Action Item 2: Support efforts to study further school district consolidations. The Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB) is already underway with a study of consolidating the Berkshire Hills and Southern Berkshire Regional School Districts. The town should stay involved in this process and remain alert to other such opportunities to examine district consolidations.

Action Item 3: Invest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics facilities. Explore the possibility of establishing an Advanced Placement consortium with nearby districts to increase course offerings. Stay abreast of technological and teaching developments in STEM education. Work with neighboring districts to improve and increase the cost-effectiveness of STEM education via shared services, equipment, and technology.

Action Item 4: Work with West Stockbridge's cultural institutions to expand the school district's arts and humanities educational opportunities. Continue incorporating place-based learning strategies into history, art, music, and theater programs to integrate local cultural institutions into the classroom and the lives of students. Expand and promote existing internship programs whereby students can gain meaningful professional and academic experience.

GOAL S/F 3: Provide high quality facilities, services, and programs that serve the needs of all the people of West Stockbridge.

Action Item 1: Maintain basic government services at a high level of quality. Demand for quality government services has increased with growth and modernizing expectations of a small town. To sustain this, the town needs to further optimize its professional staff, and increase coordination and communication between its various volunteer boards, committees, and appointed or elected office holders. The town must also consider adding professional positions where a part-time or volunteer position is inadequate to provide the desired level of quality.

Action Item 2: Help support social service agencies by encouraging communication, coordination, collaboration, and accountability. Seek funding to support priority services for West Stockbridge residents

in need. Inter-agency collaboration can lead to more efficient and effective provision of social services in West Stockbridge. When allocating funding, priority should be placed on those programs that meet the needs of seniors and low-income residents, and other citizens in need.

Action Item 3: Expand senior services to meet the needs of a growing senior population. The demographic trends for West Stockbridge show a significant and growing senior population. The town should remain aware of this demographic in all planning decisions (including for ambulance services) and should look for ways to expand and improve senior services.

Action Item 4: Maintain high-quality library services. Though modest in scale, Town of West Stockbridge Library provides several critical services to a wide range of demographics in town. The town should ensure adequate hours, proper staffing, and should look for opportunities to expand its selection of books, technology, and other offerings.

Action Item 5: Improve the distribution of information about the town government to all town residents and support further participation. The town website and publications in the Local Yokel remain the primary means of communication with residents. The town should always be looking for new ways to communicate with and to further inform and involve residents in town government. The use of Zoom in town meetings has increased participation, and the town should optimize and maintain this system to ensure maximum media quality.

GOAL S/F 4: Maintain and enhance town infrastructure and facilities consistent with best practices.

Action Item 1: Maintain and repair roads, sidewalks, bike paths, and trails consistent with established plans. The DPW continues to improve and maintain roadways on an established schedule, and the town should perpetuate this process. As improvements happen, the town should look for opportunities to expand access through sidewalks, bike paths, and trails.

Action Item 2: Maintain water and sewer facilities, and upgrade as needed. The Finance Committee has helped to shape strategic planning in this arena, and their plans and budgets should be carefully considered.

Action Item 3: Study and plan for future utility extensions and additions. The town should coordinate utilities planning in alignment with land use, grow-out analysis, economic development, and environmental protection principles. Utility additions like public internet should be pursued in response to demand, and future water and sewer extensions should direct development to appropriate areas designated for growth near the town center.

Action Item 4: Adopt a capital improvement planning process that is vetted by the Permanent Buildings Committee and accounts for all municipal facilities in terms of inventory, needs, priorities, and scheduling.

Action Item 5: Regularly assess all user fees charged by the town and compare them with the actual cost of town services and projected cost increases. Adjust user fees accordingly.

Action Item 6: Continue exploring new opportunities for shared services and other means to reduce costs and increase quality of services. Evaluate, assess, and publicize shared services initiatives to date to determine feasibility and viability of expanding such efforts. Conduct studies to determine which

departments can create efficiency through shared services. Utilize shared services to lower purchasing, capital, and other costs as possible.

GOAL S/F 5: Anticipate, plan, and budget for large projects in response to growing demand on town services.

Action Item 1: Support and implement recommendations and priorities of the Finance Committee's strategic planning efforts.

Action Item 2: Improve Fire/EMS capabilities and response times to all areas of town consistent with national standards and careful consideration of the West Stockbridge Fire Services Report (2016), and the EMS Organizational Analysis for the Southern Berkshire Region (2019)

Action Item 3: Begin planning for a new Emergency Services Headquarters, purpose-built to house the town's police, fire, and EMS services. Both the police and fire departments need more and specialized spaces, and a new purpose-built facility that puts all of our emergency services under one roof and allows them to share training spaces and other facilities makes for a comprehensive solution and an efficient investment for the town. This addition to the town's facilities will also open up the current fire station for use by the Department of Public Works, giving them some much needed room to expand, and also provide more office space to other departments in the Town Hall.

Action Item 4: Support improved and expanded recreation and open space facilities for West Stockbridge residents. Recreation is a vital and necessary aspect of individual physical and mental health, and a vital component of community social life. This could include further developing current parks and green spaces for improved and expanded use, or establishing new parks, trails, and other outdoor recreational opportunities.

GOAL S/F 6: Take a leadership role in promoting environmentally sound practices in services and facilities

Action Item 1: Explore ways of reducing energy consumption and implementing environmentally sound practices in town buildings and facilities. In order to play a leadership role in promoting environmentally responsible development and reducing energy consumption, the town should undertake steps to incorporate green building technologies into new public buildings and facilities. Existing buildings should be adapted to incorporate more energy-efficient technologies. Where appropriate, adaptive reuse of existing buildings and facilities should be accorded preference over construction of new facilities.

Action Item 2: Support the principles of the town's Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy (2020), and make sure that new and replacement vehicles adhere to this policy.

Action Item 3: Pursue policies that support resident's use of alternative and renewable energy (i.e., wind, solar, geothermal, etc.) Local bylaws should be as permissive as are practical to promote the use of alternative energies in our residential zones.

Action Item 4: Establish a permanent standing town committee to oversee community energy policy. A West Stockbridge Energy Conservation Committee could work with staff and other town boards and committees to initiate, coordinate, and implement community energy policies and actions.

Action Item 5: Encourage good health practices including regular physical activity through sound infrastructure design, public policies, and education. West Stockbridge can encourage healthy lifestyles among its residents through appropriate design of community infrastructure, activities, and educational programming, and open space and recreation plans which encourage and facilitate walking, biking, hiking, team sports, and other outdoor recreation.

Action Item 6: Utilize a broad and collaborative approach to updating the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Coordinate with state and federal agencies on State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan development. Establish a process for information and data gathering. Find a suitable database or model database to monitor climate and potential hazard metrics, to improve planning and decision-making capacity.

Action Item 7: Identify and act upon low-cost/high-mitigation measures and initiatives. Incorporate temperature-reducing designs, such as shade-tree planting and green roofs into municipal facilities improvement plans. Develop a means at the town or neighborhood level, such as check-ins and phone trees, to reduce the vulnerability of more isolated populations, including seniors and disabled.

Goal S/F 7: Increase operational efficiency to reduce costs and overall environmental impact.

Action Item 1: Utilize innovative, energy-efficient technologies, and operational improvements to reduce costs and conserve water.

Action Item 2: Study the feasibility of utilizing anaerobic digestion as a means of reducing energy consumption.

Action Item 3: Find alternative ways to repurpose biosolids to reduce transportation costs, landfill deposits, and overall environmental impacts.

Action Item 4: Explore cost-effective measures to eliminate chemical treatment of sludge, so as to allow for reuse and decrease land fill deposits.

Action Item 5: Develop a community outreach strategy aimed at helping residents find ways to reduce water consumption.

Action Item 6: Consider using rainwater harvesting for non-potable purposes as a means of reducing demand and excess consumption of potable water. Rainwater harvesting can be employed and promoted at the municipal and residential levels.

Historical & Cultural Resources

7.1 INTRODUCTION:

Typical of many small towns in Berkshire County, West Stockbridge is rich in history and historic resources. However, unlike our neighboring towns with nationally known buildings and venues, we have no one prominent historic structure as a centerpiece. Instead, the totality of our historic buildings, industrial structures, and geography add to the unique nature and feeling of the town. We are a hidden gem without the bustle and popularity of other iconic Berkshire towns.

The town is comprised of five neighborhoods, each of historical significance.

- West Center – the original farming settlement, home of the first church and oldest cemetery, with scenic vistas and historic buildings,
- Village Center – built around the Shaker Mill Pond and Williams River, it developed as the commercial and residential center by 1830. Many of the structures date back to that era,
- Williamsville – the late 1700's "industrial park" that became a hamlet with its own school and post office. Also, many original houses remain unmodified.
- Freedleyville and Rockdale – the mid-19th century neighborhood with the earliest marble and lime quarries, and
- State Line – junction of two railroads and home of the major iron quarries, this neighborhood was almost as populated as the Village Center. It diminished with the decline of railroads in the 1950's and the advent of the Mass. Pike.

At various times over the town's history, each neighborhood played a significant role in the town's history and they each add to the nature and character of West Stockbridge.



7.2 Current Conditions

7.2.1 WEST STOCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL INVENTORY:

West Stockbridge has 188 entries on MACRIS, the Mass. Historical Commission's data base of historical properties. There are likely another 20 structures that have not been listed yet. Many of the buildings listed were built during the mid-1800's when the town was at its industrial and population peak. There are a few homes that are federal style designs, but most are some variations of Greek revival. Many have not modified the facades or significantly altered their features and retain their original appearance.

There are three properties in West Stockbridge listed on the 2021 National Register of Historic Places. National Register status is a recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community. Being listed on the National Register places no restrictions on the use or management of the property. Being listed does, however, make the property eligible for historic preservation grants. Receiving historic preservation funds typically require the placement of a preservation deed restriction, requiring the owner to adhere to the Secretary of the Interior design standards when conducting exterior repairs or remodeling.



Table 7.x - Properties on the National Register of Historic Places

Property Name	Address	Listed Date	External Link
Congregational Church of West Stockbridge	45 Main St.	7/30/1996	https://catalog.archives.gov/id/63794224
West Stockbridge Grange No. 246 / Methodist Episcopal Church	5 Swamp Rd.	2/5/1999	https://catalog.archives.gov/id/63794116
West Stockbridge Old Town Hall	9 Main St.	7/1/2009	https://catalog.archives.gov/id/63794204

Source: National Register of Historic Places, 2021

Three buildings in the village center are on the National Register: The Methodist Church/Grange Hall, West Stockbridge Congregational Church, and the Old Town Hall. While others could be candidates, there has been no movement for nomination to date.

Most of the historic structures inventoried on MACRIS are private residences or commercial buildings. Not included in the inventory are sixteen known iron, marble, and lime quarries, and others not yet identified. There is a railroad bed from State Line to Housatonic with stone trestles that date back to 1838, remnants of a 1900's era rail yard turntable and engine house. There are twelve early dams on the Williams River, some with visible millraces and water powered foundations from the early industry. All these features are all part of the town's industrial past and history. So far, none of these have been formally researched and documented.

Our streetscape is a mix of historic and contemporary structures. The town does not have an artificial Disneyworld feel, but instead, reflects its working-class, historic nature.

COMMUNITY INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT:

The community interest in local history and the historic character if the town has grown over the past fifteen years. The rebirth of the Historical Society and renovation of the Old Town Hall has been a catalyst for this increased interest and involvement of a wide mix of participants. It is not just limited to long-time residents but includes a wide range of the community. The Historical Society membership has grown to over 230 households. Membership consists of longtime residents, newcomers, second homeowners and summer visitors. In addition, there are another 200 donors to the Old Town Hall restoration from around the county, original West Stockbridge residents and people interested in historic renovation.

VISION

West Stockbridge will continue to preserve and promote its historical and cultural heritage to enrich the quality of life for visitors and residents alike.

7.3 Priority Historical and Cultural Resources Goals:

GOAL H1: THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF LOCAL RESOURCES TO RETAIN THE UNIQUE HISTORIC NATURE AND FEEL OF THE TOWN.

An inventory of Historic properties has been completed and documented XX properties. Continued inventorying of properties will help to protect community resources.

7.4 Goals, Objectives, and Action Items:

GOAL H1: THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF LOCAL RESOURCES TO RETAIN THE UNIQUE HISTORIC NATURE AND FEEL OF THE TOWN.

Objective H1: – Identification of Historic Structures: Many of the 19th century industrial features are not documented or even identified in some cases.

Action Item #1: We will identify, locate, research, and document our 19th century industrial features.

Action Item #2: We will also complete the inventory of State Line, West Center, and Freedleyville/Rockdale structures for the state data base.

Objective H2: Recreation of the Historic Commission

Action Item 1: The Historic Commission has been dormant for over the past few years. The Commission should be reconstituted, membership increased and diversified, assume a leadership role in with these objectives.

Objective H3: Planning and Zoning Regulation updates.

Action Item 1: Our Planning and Zoning regulations and the Special Permit process should take into consideration the historic resources and intrinsic character of the town.

Objective H4: Community Preservation Act funds dedicated to preserve town properties. T

Action Item 1: Use historic Preservation section of our Community Preservation Act to identify Historic Structures in need of repair.

Objective H5: Demolition Delay Bylaw

Action Item 1: The town should enact a Demolition delay Bylaw for any building over XX years old and listed on MACRIS. This will be essential to protect our existing historic structures.

Objective H6: Local/National Historic Districts

Action Item 1: The village center is an excellent candidate for a potential National Historic District. At this time, the management of a Local Historic District would be too complicated for the town at this time and there are not sufficient resources to manage it. If sufficient interest and involvement does become available, a Local Historic District should be considered.

Economic Development

8.1 Introduction

Economic development maximizes a community's human, capital, physical and natural resources to generate marketable goods and services and in the process create jobs, raise income levels, and protect the property tax base. Much of this master plan is aimed at aligning West Stockbridge resources in such a way as to set the stage for the town's continued economic revitalization.

West Stockbridge has transitioned from industrial and manufacturing industries to a more tourism and service-based economy that includes some businesses in the knowledge and creative sectors. An influx of second homeowners since the 1970's and which has increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and has changed the composition of the town.

According to the 2004 Community Development Survey, completed June 2004, 115 responses were received from 750 mailed to community members (15% return rate). At that time, residents overwhelmingly stated (87%) that the town's rural nature was the best advantage to living in the town, followed by cost of living, (33%) and availability of services (30%). Disadvantages included: local tax rate (44%) and lack of job opportunities (41%).

When asked about economic development, respondents stated that it was important for the town to maintain the downtown area as the commercial and community center (89%). Support for improvements in downtown uses constituted a majority (73%). Other areas of support included, streetscaping (45%), Façade improvements (37%), parking improvements (37%), a Farmer's Market (58%), additional Restaurants and Cultural Facilities (35% each).

A major focus of the 2004 plan was the redevelopment of the Berkshire Truck Plaza, an abandoned industrial site. This site has since been redeveloped as a solar field. [GRANTS ETC.? More information?](#) Other recommendations made in 2004 included the town's development of an Open Space and Recreation Plan, investments into lane widening for bike lanes on Route 41 and 102, the investigation of a multi-use path on the Williams River Railroad right of way, and the creation of affordable housing in the downtown area.

In the intervening years, other businesses or organizations have located in West Stockbridge and brought new vitality to the town.

8.2 Current Conditions

Workforce conditions, household incomes, and recent unemployment information were presented in the Demographics chapter and demonstrate an aging community that is shifting wealthier and more educated. Housing information is presented in the housing chapter, but demonstrate that homes in West Stockbridge, whether for sale or rent are becoming unaffordable to the average person.

[Responses](#) to the Master Plan survey indicate an interest in bringing more residents to the downtown area by increasing walkability, business variety, and opportunities to develop live-work spaces that provide both housing and commercial space. Such a shift would require attracting entrepreneurs and skilled workers that will create those businesses. The town, the village association, and residents would need to collaborate to encourage a diversity of business types and the facilities to house the employees of said businesses.

The Local Yokel, the town's monthly periodical, provides a variety of local history, community news, events, and advertising for local businesses. The journal provides a record of Select Board Minutes and other municipal committees, local interest stories, and a community calendar.

The West Stockbridge Historical Society has spent XX years rebuilding the former Town Offices on Main Street and now provides the community with a storied event space that provides local artists a venue to perform. Upgrades and investments in the building has preserved its historic character while bringing it into the 21st century with ADA accessible facilities.

The town has a well-attended Farmer's Market that meets on Thursday afternoons between May and October. This market has operated since xxxx and features a variety of local producers. The market is held on the grounds of the Foundry, a black-box theatre and nearby Truc Orient Express Restaurant provides parking for the market.

Agricultural production has long been a town industry. Though the dairies are mostly gone, local producers continue to create artisanal products that bring shoppers to the town. Local farmers continue to produce sustainable meat, produce, eggs, honey, and many fine value added products.

Turn Park, another recent addition to the town, is a nonprofit art space that has redeveloped a former quarry in the heart of downtown and created open space in the heart of the downtown. The attraction of Turn Park has helped to bring town visitors further into the heart of the town. The addition of more town parking and bathrooms across from the post office and in close proximity to Turn Park has shifted the center of gravity of the town.

Crane Lake Summer Camp attracts hundreds of campers every summer to enjoy the Berkshires fresh air, clean water, and sunshine. The camp has a long tradition in the town, with children coming from throughout the northeast to experience summer camp.

West Stockbridge has a long history as a culinary destination. The COVID Pandemic has been extremely difficult for restaurant operators and recently several storied local restaurants have closed or reduced their business. New operators have come to the town and brought new ideas and vitality. Creating a nexus of opportunities and experiences in the downtown area, whether culinary, shopping, music and performance, or just enjoying the Williams River will help to make all downtown businesses more successful.

Long established businesses continue to draw residents and tourists alike to West Stockbridge. Many of these businesses use the West Stockbridge Village Association to market their products and services. This group publishes both an informational brochure, available around town, and a website. West Stockbridge has a long history of innovative and diverse restaurants, antique and specialty shops, craft and artisan vendors, and necessities such as a market for a deli sandwich or some hardware from Baldwin's Hardware store.

Recent controversies in the town have pitted neighbors against one another. It is hoped that by visioning what the town can become for all its residents, the Master Plan process will serve to heal rifts. Reinstating old traditions such as the Zucchini Festival, Socials at the Grange Hall, Historical Society, or local churches will help neighbors to recognize common interests. As COVID fades and neighbors are able to meet at the Public Market or Farmer's Market, new opportunities to form community will replace enmity.

Lane quarry south of the town has operated since XX and is the only remaining operational quarry in the town. The quarry offers a variety of aggregate materials used in construction and by municipalities for road work. The process of blasting and crushing stone causes some vibration and dust which then impacts nearby property owners. The quarry has recently come under new ownership, Peckham Industries. A meeting with representatives from the quarry on 5/20/22 indicated that management is willing to discuss the town's concerns, future plans, and how to be a good neighbor. A positive outcome of the masterplan process could be renewed engagement between the quarry and the town.

Recently some residents have expressed an interest in exploring other mineral resources in the area. Currently, zoning precludes any new quarrying operations and to start such a business would require a zoning change. The possibility of valuable marble in the town is a discussion that those individuals will need to demonstrate is worth changing in the ordinance.

The town has an abundance of natural resources that provide residents with the outdoor recreation activities, such as hiking, biking, or kayaking. Now the town needs to focus on creating the vibrant downtown and quality neighborhoods that will offer the street life, dining, and entertainment opportunities these workers want.

Opportunities exist to attract anglers and hunters to the area. Local streams are stocked with trout by the DNR and Pheasants are stocked at Flat Brook WMA. Many hunters come to hunt deer on Tom Ball Mountain and Maple Hill WMA. Businesses that cater to these individuals could find a successful home in West Stockbridge and the town could increase marketing to hunters and anglers.

8.3 Master Plan Survey

A SurveyMonkey survey, open from XX to XX, sought feedback from the community to direct the Master Plan document. The survey had 121 respondents, of which 6 respondents listed themselves as non-residents. The survey respondents were older than the town's average resident (51% of respondents were over the age of 65 years.) The respondents were a mix of long-time residents (>30 years residency, 25%), new residents (<10 years, 40%) and those who have lived in the town 10-30 years (35%). When respondents were asked to identify the type of housing most needed in the town, a majority (51%) stated senior housing, followed by single family homes (29%), apartments (25%), and subsidized low-income housing (24%). In fact, when asked if West Stockbridge should pursue policies to create affordable housing, responses were 63% in favor, 37% opposed. One policy that the town supports to diversify housing types is the development of accessory dwelling units (85% support.) Residents appear open to short-term rentals such as AirBnB or VRBO, (20% in favor, 52% open to while 28% in opposition).

Similar to the survey conducted in 2004, Residents highly value the small-town character (89%), the low crime rate (60%), and local shops and arts and cultural institutions (both 50%) and the access to highways (52%.) that West Stockbridge provides. Again, the high tax rate (36%) was the most disliked characteristic, followed by excessive tourism (25% and loss of small-town character, 21%.) Residents consider access to trails and green spaces the most important cultural institution, followed by the Farmer's Market, Town Center, Library, and Historical Society. When asked what type of non-residential development to encourage, Restaurants were the favorite (60%) followed by Specialty Stores, (40%). As to the availability of parking in the downtown, 27% said they had had difficulty, while 73% had no issues. When asked about town services, Public Works was the most highly rated (37% excellent rating), Library, (35%), and Transfer Station (34%). Residents would like to see improvements made in Senior Services and Zoning and Code Enforcement, rated poorly by 14% and 5% respectively.

Because only 1 respondent to the original survey had identified as a business owner, an effort was made to reach out to the local business community.

8.4 Business Survey

An email survey, see appendix x, was sent to local West Stockbridge Business to create a focus-group of local business owners. The list was generated from the Village Associations membership, interviewing local businesses for contact information, and personal visits to local stores. The motivation for the focus group was a dearth of responses from the business community during the initial survey period. The email was sent to more than 25 local businesses, of which, 9 responses were received.

Business owners rate the town favorably for:

- Small- town character-7
- Town-center activity-5
- Local shops and Restaurants-5
- Low crime-5
- Convenience to transportation and work-3
- Town services 2
- Historic Resources
- Art/cultural activities-2

They would like to see development encouraged in:

- Restaurants 3
- Industrial Development
- A more defined town common/public area

Individual responses included:

"I like the fact that it is centrally located in the county. I also like its size and that it does not get deluged with tourists like Great Barrington or Lenox."

"I like the small-town character (1) -- it is unaffected like Lenox or Great Barrington. As part of that, I like the local shops (3) and low crime rate (7). The distance to all neighboring towns (8) is super convenient, and the access to highways (13) is a big bonus. The school system is solid (9). And finally, the available recreational opportunities (10) are critical to local residents' family life and the current trend in outdoor tourism."

Business owners rate the town unfavorably for:

- Small-town mindset-5
- High Tax Rate
- Lack of Affordable Housing 2
- Excessive development 2
- Unclear or unfair regulations and bylaws 3
- Lack of retail shopping opportunities
- Loss of small-town character 2

Negatives that Business owners state:

"I would love to have the power lines buried. I also dislike that we do not have public access to the water features in the town"

"I do not like the small-town mid-set (2). We can make thoughtful changes and upgrades without it destroying the town's character. The available retail spaces (7) that are not being used in town is disappointing. A more unified tourism approach (10) would be beneficial to improving the amount of visitors. The WSVA is self-funded by its member businesses. Financial support by the town (of any amount) would be appreciated."

The charm of WS, is its quaintness as a small town. The other towns have all these, people can go there. How many restaurants and shops can be here without changing the landscape of the town? Not much, given what is available in the inventory.

"The Town needs to embrace the future and lessen its grip on "the way things used to be." Holding on to the simple small-town way of life and look of the Town is unique and charming and needs to co-exist with more progressive ideas and forward thinking that serves young and old and enriches the lives of those who live here and surrounding communities. W. Stockbridge is not GB or Lenox, but updates need to be made to special permitting and zoning by-laws with a vision of the future in mind. Administration needs to embrace the digital age so businesses can more easily access the legal requirements and permitting necessary. It seems that there has been in the recent past and for years and years, a casual and not so precise way of running Town government. Not particularly business friendly. But changes are starting to happen to remedy that situation. As a business owner, it has been an obstacle- filled start and one that had the administration been more informed, would have been way less financially detrimental to my business."

Development to encourage includes:

- Supermarket or larger market
- Marijuana Business (some were opposed)
- Outdoor seating/parks on the waterfront-3
- Additional Restaurants-all
- More parking-2

8.5 Berkshire County Tax Rates

At \$13.91/\$1,000 value, West Stockbridge's tax rate is comparable to many Berkshire County towns. Currently, Adams has the highest taxes in the county at \$22.62. West Stockbridge falls in the middle of the counties tax rates, 14 communities have a higher tax rate while 17 communities are lower than West Stockbridge. See Table XX.



2021 Property Tax Rates - Berkshire County Massachusetts -

2021 Rates Per \$1,000 assessed value.

Zip	City / Town	Assessor's Phone	Residential	Commercial	CPA	Fire District
01220	Adams	(413) 743-8300	\$22.62	\$26.89		
01230	Alford	(413) 528-4336	\$5.55	\$5.55		
01223	Becket	(413) 623-5724	\$11.62	\$11.62	1.5%	
01225	Cheshire	(413) 743-3929	\$13.37	\$13.37		
01247	Clarksburg	(413) 663-7940	\$15.82	\$15.82		
01226	Dalton	(413) 684-6111	\$21.51	\$21.51		\$0.91
01252	Egremont	(413) 528-0182	\$9.35	\$9.35		
01247	Florida	(413) 662-2448	\$8.51	\$19.53		
01230	Great Barrington	(413) 528-1619	\$15.99	\$15.99	3%	\$1.09
01237	Hancock	(413) 738-5225	\$2.98	\$2.98		
01235	Hinsdale	(413) 655-2245	\$14.33	\$14.33		
01237	Lanesborough	(413) 442-8622	\$20.28	\$20.28		
01238	Lee	(413) 243-5512	\$14.68	\$14.68	1.5%	
01240	Lenox	(413) 637-5500	\$11.65	\$14.06	3%	
01245	Monterey	(413) 528-6481	\$7.27	\$7.27		
01258	Mt. Washington	(413) 528-2839	\$6.55	\$6.55		
01237	New Ashford	(413) 458-5461	\$11.77	\$11.77		
01230	New Marlborough	(413) 229-8926	\$9.94	\$9.94		
01247	North Adams	(413) 662-3012	\$18.61	\$39.77		
01253	Otis	(413) 269-0100	\$8.47	\$8.47		
01235	Peru	(413) 655-8312	\$19.21	\$19.21		
01201	Pittsfield	(413) 499-9466	\$19.25	\$39.99	1%	
01254	Richmond	(413) 698-2525	\$12.72	\$12.72		
01255	Sandisfield	(413) 258-4711	\$13.35	\$13.35		
01256	Savoy	(413) 743-4290	\$14.17	\$14.17		
01257	Sheffield	(413) 229-2335	\$13.88	\$13.88		
01262	Stockbridge	(413) 298-4714	\$9.78	\$9.78	3%	
01264	Tyringham	(413) 243-1749	\$6.90	\$6.90		
01223	Washington	(413) 623-8878	\$16.69	\$16.69		
01266	West Stockbridge	(413) 232-0303	\$13.91	\$13.91	2%	
01267	Williamstown	(413) 458-3500	\$17.30	\$17.30	2%	\$0.52
01270	Windsor	(413) 684-3811	\$13.05	\$13.05		

*CPA is Community Preservation Act assessment from CommunityPreservation.org
Compiled 4/13/2021 from data obtained from Mass.gov <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/property-tax-related-data>



Vision

Need Vision Statement from Committee

Sample- West Stockbridge WILL STRENGTHEN ITS SUPPORT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY AND SEEK APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITIES TO DIVERSIFY ITS ECONOMY.

8.6 Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

Need Goals, Objectives, and Action Items from Committee

Sample Priority Economic Development Goals

☐ **GOAL ED 1:** SUPPORT AND REVIVE THE TOURISM INDUSTRY TO HELP RESTORE OVERALL ECONOMIC GROWTH.

West Stockbridge is a tourist destination which helps to drive the local economy. Tourists support local hotels, restaurants, cultural institutions, stores, and invest in West Stockbridge properties. Recognizing the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19, the Town should invest in strategic marketing to amplify the Town's appeal to key markets and revive growth during peak tourism season. This investment can also support efforts that enrich the visitor experience, benefit local businesses, and improve quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

☐ **GOAL ED 2:** MARKET WEST STOCKBRIDGE'S HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE TO ATTRACT YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AND FAMILIES.

West Stockbridge's economy has demonstrated resilience through market fluctuations. Especially now, given continued urban flight spurred by COVID-19, the Town's economic stability and high quality of life should be leveraged to attract new residents. Particular focus should be on attracting young families and professionals, as well as those who work remotely, in order to ensure the vitality of West Stockbridge's school system and generate well-paying, year-round jobs.

☐ **GOAL ED 3:** DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

A diverse economy is more insulated from market trends and fluctuations. Currently, employment in West Stockbridge is concentrated in the service-providing domain, which presents a risk in the event of economic recession. The Town should make efforts to appropriately diversify its economy without reducing investment in tourism. These efforts should include recruiting suitable goods-producing establishments to appropriate areas, developing thoughtful business incentives, and enhancing the Town's technological capacity so that it can attract new residents with jobs or businesses that can operate remotely in the fast-growing virtual economy.

9. Implementation

9.1 Introduction

According to M.G.L. Chapter 41, Section 41, a Master Plan should have an “implementation program element” which defines and schedules specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master plan. This chapter explains the content of the Implementation Table and recommends next steps.

This plan recommends that the Steering Committee (or another entity, including staff) revisit the Master Plan periodically and track success relative to the Implementation Table included in this chapter. It can revise as necessary, supplement as necessary, and remove no longer relevant or applicable items.

This plan recommends that the Steering Committee (or another entity, including staff) revisit the Master Plan periodically and track success relative to the Implementation Table included in this chapter. It can revise as necessary, supplement as necessary, and remove no longer relevant or applicable items.

This Implementation Table depicts every goal, objective, and action item in the Master Plan. It is categorized by priority, timeline, level of cost, municipal actions, and potential collaborations.

9.2 Timeline

The Implementation Table identifies goals, objectives, and actions as short-term, mid-term and long-term.

- ☐ Short-term: 1-3 years
- ☐ Mid-term: 5-years
- ☐ Long-term: 10-20 years

9.3 Cost

The cost involved in current stage of the project

- Low- using town budget or self-funded
- Mid-RFP process required
- High- Grant funding or capital project.

9.2 Priorities

High priorities were identified throughout the planning process – beginning with early Steering Committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, and concluding with the series of public workshops held through the spring and summer of 2022. Community members expressed preference and high interest in specific goals, objectives, and actions. These are identified in the plan and highlighted in the Implementation Table for ease of identification.

9.4 Municipal Actions

The town will take the lead on many of the items in the implementation section. There is a variety of municipal actions that can be taken, and the table identifies what they may be. These actions can be the development and adoption of a new policy; the appropriation of funds toward a project; seeking funds toward a project through grants and other means; incorporating objectives and actions into existing roles and responsibilities; commissioning further study or research to make effective, fully informed decisions, linking actions into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). In some cases, the town can lend support or be a partner.

9.5 Collaborations

Many hands make light work, and it is not feasible to have the Town take the lead on every single item in the Master Plan. The Town already collaborates with a number of local and regional organizations on items such as tourism promotion, the

Cultural District, open space, and recreation management. The Town can look to many of these as topic experts. In these cases, the Implementation Table identifies collaborators and partners who are already heavily engaged in the specific goal, objective, and actions or are potential partners.

Tables will be filled in after action language is finalized. See Sample table below.

DRAFT

Land Use					
Goal: PROTECT, ENHANCE, AND CELEBRATE WEST STOCKBRIDGE'S ABUNDANCE OF NATURAL, HISTORIC, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES					
Objective: Protect unique and sensitive natural areas.					
Action	Timeline	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners
Using town owned lands, create green space downtown to bring both locals and visitors to the town center	Short	Low	High	Design and install proposed park space and parking on recently acquired parcel.	WS Village Association, Abutting property owners, Conservation Commission
Use town funds to purchase priority conservation and recreation areas adjacent to existing public lands with permanent open space restrictions.	Long	high	mid	Prioritize list of properties Begin acquiring most important sites	Abutting property owners, local conservation organizations, conservation commission
Work with local residents and conservation partners to acquire or help acquire priority properties. Possible areas to acquire include: Shoreline of Mud Pond near the town center, creating access to Tom Ball Mountain, creation of a multi-purpose trail using the railroad right-of-way from the former Housatonic Railroad.	Long	High	Mid	Prioritize list of properties Begin acquiring most important sites	Abutting property owners, local conservation organizations, conservation commission
Adopt specific performance standards in zoning bylaws that ensure new development near sensitive areas use low-impact design and construction methods. Adoption of cluster subdivisions to permit increased density while retaining open-spaces for residents and the community.					

Work with property owners to conserve priority properties through existing state programs and local resources (Conservation Restrictions and Chapter 61 enrollment).					
Continue to work with local conservation partners (e.g., Berkshire Natural Resources Council) to acquire and protect sensitive areas.					

Housing					
Goal:.					
Objective: .					
Action	Time Frame	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners

Transportation					
Goal:					
Objective:					
Action	Time Frame	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners

Services and Facilities					
Goal:					
Objective:					
Action	Time Frame	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners

Historical and Cultural Resources					
Goal: ENSURE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER PHYSICAL CHANGES TO WEST STOCKBRIDGE LANDSCAPES AND NEIGHBORHOODS.					
Objective					
Action	Time Frame	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners

Economic Development					
Goal: DESIGN A COMMUNITY TO WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES OF ALL BACKGROUNDS.					
Objective					
Action	Time Frame	Cost	Priority	Municipal Action	Collaboration/Partners

Appendices

- A. West Stockbridge Master Plan Questionnaire
- B. West Stockbridge Open Space and Recreation Plan
- C. West Stockbridge Water System Master Plan
- D. West Stockbridge Annual Town Report 2022
- E. West Stockbridge Road and Stream Crossing Inventory
- F. West Stockbridge MACRIS Data
- G. West Stockbridge Complete Streets
- H. West Stockbridge Green Communities Award
- I. West Stockbridge Shared Streets Grants
- J. West Stockbridge Village Association Promotional Brochure
- K. 2004 West Stockbridge Community Development Plan
- L. Business Survey E-mail
- M. West Stockbridge Town Warrant 2022
- N. 2005 Letter to Mark Webber re: OSRP Plan

Appendix A: West Stockbridge Master Plan Questionnaire

1. Do you live in West Stockbridge? Yes – 115 (95.04%), No – 6 (4.96%)
2. If “yes” to question #1, how long have you lived in West Stockbridge?
 - Under 5 years – 24 (19.83%)
 - Between 5 and 10 years – 24 (19.83%)
 - Between 10 and 20 years – 28 (23.14%)
 - Between 20 and 30 years – 15 (12.40%)
 - Over 30 years – 30 (24.79%)
3. What is your age?
 - 18 and under – 0 (0%)
 - 19-34 – 6 (4.96%)
 - 35-49 – 21 (17.36%)
 - 50-64 – 32 (26.45%)
 - 65 or over – 62 (51.24%)
4. Which of the following best describes your status within West Stockbridge?
 - Homeowner (full-time resident) – 95 (78.51%)
 - Homeowner (part-time resident) – 16 (13.22%)
 - Renter – 5 (4.13%)
 - Business Owner – 1 (0.83%)
 - Property Owner (other than a house or dwelling) – 1 (0.83%)
 - Work or shop in West Stockbridge – 0 (0%)
 - Other (please specify) – 3 (2.48%)
5. What types of housing do you think West Stockbridge needs more of?
 - Single-family homes – 34 (28.57%)
 - Multi-family units – 19 (15.97%)
 - Apartments – 30 (25.21%)
 - Condominiums – 27 (22.69%)
 - Senior housing – 59 (49.58%)
 - Workforce housing – 20 (16.81%)

Live/work units – 15 (12.61%)

Subsidized housing for low-income residents – 28 (23.53%)

None of the above – 10 (8.40%)

Other (please specify*) – 8 (6.72%)

*Additional comments expressed interest in accessory dwelling units and trailer/mobile home housing.

6. Should West Stockbridge be pursuing policies to create more affordable housing opportunities? Yes – 75 (62.50%), No – 37.50%)
7. One method of providing more housing opportunity and flexibility is for the town to allow accessory dwelling units. These units can be either new construction or conversion of an existing building on an already established residential site. Do you think accessory dwelling units should be a part of the town's housing plan? Yes – 98 (84.48%), No – 18 (15.52%)
8. Where to you stand on houses in West Stockbridge becoming short-term rental properties like Airbnb and VRBO?
 - In favor of short-term rental properties in town – 24 (19.83%)
 - Against short-term rental properties in town – 34 (28.10%)
 - Open to short-term rental properties with regulations (i.e., homeowner on-site) – 63 (52.07%)
9. What do you like about living in West Stockbridge (choose all that apply)?
 - Small-town character – 108 (89.26%)
 - town center activity – 40 (33.06%)
 - Local shops – 61 (50.41%)
 - Local restaurants – 55 (45.45%)
 - Low tax rate – 29 (23.97%)
 - Open spaces – 63 (52.07%)
 - Low crime rate – 73 (60.33%)
 - Convenience to work – 14 (11.57%)
 - School system – 19 (15.70%)
 - Recreation opportunities – 33 (27.27%)
 - Historic resources – 25 (20.66%)
 - Community activities – 23 (19.01%)
 - Access to highways – 63 (52.07%)
 - Arts/culture attractions – 61 (50.41%)
 - town services – 31 (25.62%)
 - Family ties – 21 (17.36%)
 - Other (please specify*) – 6 (4.96%)

*Additional responses included the regional location of the town and the geography of the village center.
10. What do you dislike about living in West Stockbridge? (Choose all that apply)
 - Loss of small-town character – 23 (21.30%)
 - Small-town mindset – 15 (13.89%)
 - Busy town center – 21 (19.44%)
 - High tax rate – 39 (36.11%)
 - Lack of affordable housing – 23 (21.30%)
 - Lack of employment opportunities – 10 (9.26%)
 - Lack of retail shopping opportunities – 18 (16.67%)
 - Excessive development – 8 (7.41%)
 - Town services – 6 (5.56%)
 - Tourism – 27 (25.00%)
 - School system – 7 (6.48%)
 - Other (please specify*)

*Additional responses included noise and congestion from automotive traffic, improving town services such as school system and police, and implementing size restrictions on residential buildings.

11. What town assets/cultural institutions do you consider important? (Choose all that apply)

Town center – 75 (63.56%)
 Town Hall Park – 44 (37.29%)
 Historical Society – 56 (47.46%)
 Library – 68 (57.63%)
 Farmers Market – 83 (70.34%)
 Trails and green spaces – 93 (78.81%)
 Other (please specify*)

*Additional responses included No. 6 Depot, TurnPark, The Foundry, Troy's Garage, Truc Orient Express, wildlife conservation, and the Williams River.

12. What types of non-residential development would you like to see in West Stockbridge?

Restaurants – 66 (60.55%)
 Specialty stores – 44 (40.37%)
 Service-related businesses – 38 (34.86%)
 Supermarkets – 11 (10.09%)
 Hotels – 3 (2.75%)
 Industrial development – 4 (3.67%)
 Entertainment – 25 (22.94%)
 Marijuana establishments – 17 (15.60%)
 Other (please specify*)

*Additional responses included medical services, gas station, and small-scale industrial and/or commercial facilities.

13. How would you like to see the Town Center change? (Choose all that apply)

More defined town common – 44 (36.36%)
 More parks/outdoor seating areas – 45 (37.19%)
 More restaurants – 45 (37.19%)
 More shops – 35 (28.93%)
 More parking – 25 (20.66%)
 Fewer gathering places – 11 (9.09%)
 Fewer restaurants – 25 (20.66%)
 Fewer shops – 25 (20.66%)
 None of the above – 12 (9.92%)
 Other (please specify*) – 10 (8.26%)

*Additional responses included implementing a more consistent grid system, improving pedestrian walkways, and filling vacant storefronts.

14. With respect to trails and green spaces, which of these do you consider important? (Choose all that apply)

Bike trails – 51 (42.50%)
 Hiking trails – 91 (75.83%)
 Commuter trails from West Stockbridge to other towns – 48 (40.00%)
 Scenic parks – 61 (50.83%)
 Picnic areas – 47 (39.17%)
 Wildlife reserves – 57 (47.50%)
 Hunting areas – 14 (11.67%)
 None of the above – 3 (2.50%)
 Other (please specify*) – 4 (3.33%)

*Additional responses included increasing access to Mill Pond and having denser development in town.

15. What types of stores or establishments would you like to see open in West Stockbridge? This question was left open-ended and received 87 responses. The following is a brief summary of the results. The top answers were eating establishments, gas station, specialty stores.
16. Have you ever had parking challenges in downtown West Stockbridge? Yes – 32 (26.67%), No – 88 (73.33%)
17. If you answered “yes” to question #16, where exactly did you experience parking challenges? This question was left open-ended and received 48 responses. The following is a brief summary of the results. The top answers were near the Post Office, around No. 6 Depot, and along Main Street.
18. How satisfied are you with the Town’s access to internet services?
 - Very satisfied – 47 (40.17%)
 - Somewhat satisfied – 41 (35.04%)
 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – 16 (13.68%)
 - Dissatisfied – 13 (11.11%)
19. How satisfied are you with the Town’s cellphone coverage?
 - Very satisfied – 47 (39.83%)
 - Somewhat satisfied – 31 (26.27%)
 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – 15 (12.71%)
 - Dissatisfied – 25 (21.19%)

20. How do you rate the following town services?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion	Total	Weighted Average
Town Hall services	19.49% 23	44.07% 52	19.49% 23	1.69% 2	15.25% 18	118	2.51
Police protection	29.17% 35	41.67% 50	19.17% 23	0.00% 0	10.00% 12	120	2.80
Fire protection	24.17% 29	39.17% 47	15.83% 19	3.33% 4	17.50% 21	120	2.49
Ambulance services	17.50% 21	19.17% 23	14.17% 17	4.17% 5	45.00% 54	120	1.60
Health/ Human services	12.50% 15	24.17% 29	3.33% 4	6.67% 8	53.33% 64	120	1.36
Senior services	4.20% 5	8.40% 10	15.13% 18	14.29% 17	57.98% 69	119	0.87
Library services	35.34% 41	19.83% 23	8.62% 10	0.00% 0	36.21% 42	116	2.18
Public Works Department	37.29% 44	40.68% 48	5.08% 6	2.54% 3	14.41% 17	118	2.84
Transfer Station	34.45% 41	47.90% 57	6.72% 8	1.68% 2	9.24% 11	119	2.97
Parks and Recreation	12.82% 15	29.91% 35	22.22% 26	2.56% 3	32.48% 38	117	1.88
Zoning/ Code enforcement	5.13% 6	22.22% 26	16.24% 19	5.13% 6	51.28% 60	117	1.25

21. Please feel free to write any other additional comments related to planning for West Stockbridge's future. This question was left open-ended and received 37 responses. The following is a brief summary of the results. The overarching theme of the comments was to maintain West Stockbridge's small-town way of life. This needs to be balanced with utilizing tourism. Other suggestions included improving sidewalks, increasing the number of art-based institutions, reconstructing downtown area to create new business spaces and a town common, removing junk cars, developing affordable housing, and permitting accessory dwelling units.

4.3 Affordable Housing Supply Analysis

Using the income categories in Table 4.10a, Table 4.10b assesses the availability of housing, and gives a rough estimate of housing affordability in West Stockbridge for various income groups. The income ranges are based on HUD's FY 2020 area median income for Berkshire County. Only current households are included, and no projections are made. While the analysis does not account for differences in household size, it is useful in determining which income groups may be struggling to maintain affordable housing.

Table 4.10a. Definition of Income Categories

Income Category	% Of Area Median Income	Income Range
Middle Income	101% - 120%	\$68,334 - \$82,000
Moderate Income	81% - 100%	\$54,651 - \$68,333
Low Income	51% - 80%	\$34,201 - \$54,650
Very Low Income	30% - 50%	\$20,501 - \$34,200
Extremely Low Income	Under 30%	\$20,500 and below

Table 4.10b Affordable Housing Supply Analysis for West Stockbridge

Income Category	Number of Households	Affordable Monthly Housing Costs	Existing Affordable Rental Units	Existing Affordable Homeownership Units	Total Existing Affordable Units	Excess Affordable Units
Middle	44	\$2,050	38	362	400	356
Moderate	37	\$1,708	24	305	329	292
Low	71	\$1,366	12	220	232	161
Very Low	48	\$855	1	132	133	85
Extremely Low	67	\$513	0	47	47	-20 Deficit

Source: 2018 American Community Survey Tables B25063, B25087, DP03; US Department of Housing and Urban Development 2020 Income Limits

Note: Number of units for each income category includes those for lower income categories. For instance, the number of units in the *very low*-income category includes also those in the *extremely low* income category. This is because housing units affordable to lower income category households are also affordable to all higher income category households. The number of units distinct to any one income category may be calculated by subtracting from the value in question the value of the next lowest income category. For example, if there are x affordable units available to *very low*-income households and y affordable units available to *extremely low* income households, then there are x – y units which are affordable to *very low* income households, but not *extremely low* income households.

Note: Lack of congruence between the income categories provided in Table 4.10a and the income/housing cost categories used by the American Community Survey necessitated the use of the following methodology:

- Let x be an upper limit of an income range in Table 4.10a. Let y be the corresponding "Affording Monthly Housing Costs" value in Table 4.10b. Let a_1 and a_2 be lower and upper limits of an annual household income category in ACS Table DP03 and let b_1 and b_2 be the lower and upper limits of a monthly housing cost category in either ACS Table B25063 or ACS Table B25087.
- If x falls between a_1 and a_2 , then calculate the percentage of (a_1, a_2) that x comprises as follows: $(x - a_1) / (a_2 - a_1)$. Then, multiply the number of households in (a_1, a_2) by that percentage to find the number in (a_1, x) .
- Follow this same methodology for housing costs by replacing x with y and a with b.