



Hubbardston
Massachusetts

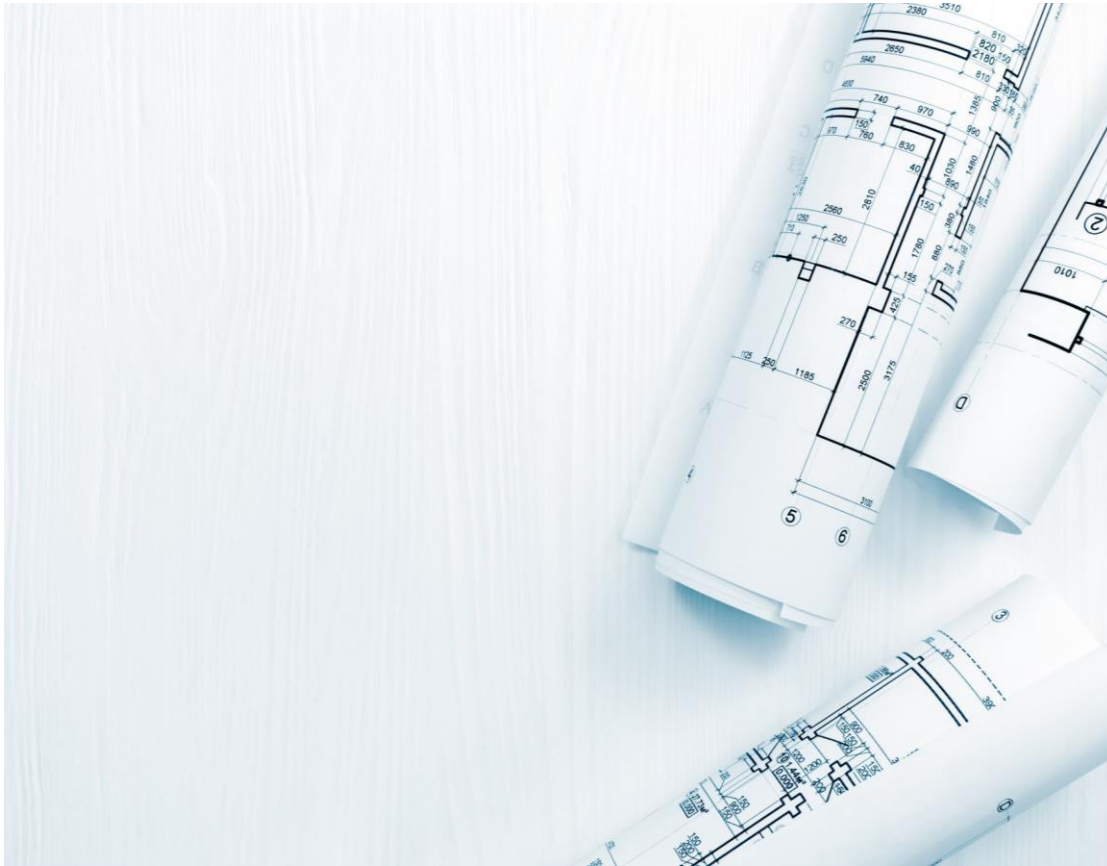
HUBBARDSTON TOWN CENTER ZONING PROJECT



MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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Presented September 7, 2022

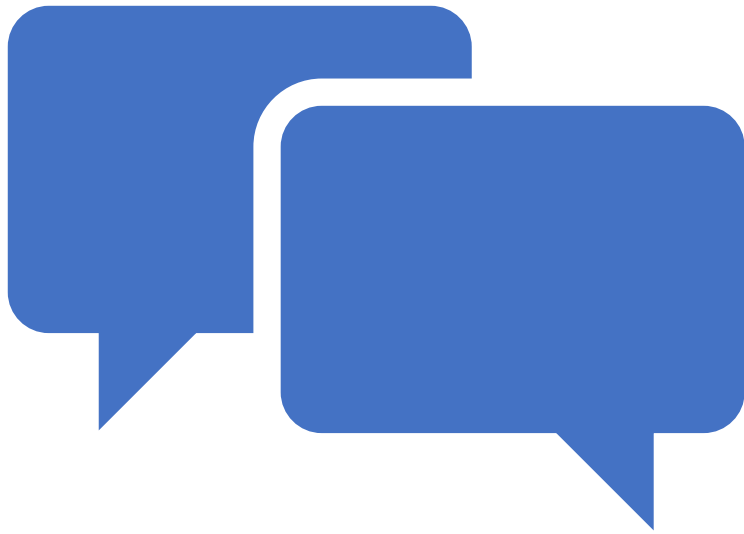


MRPC is assisting the Town of Hubbardston with creating an Overlay District Bylaw focused in the Town Center

Scope of Work

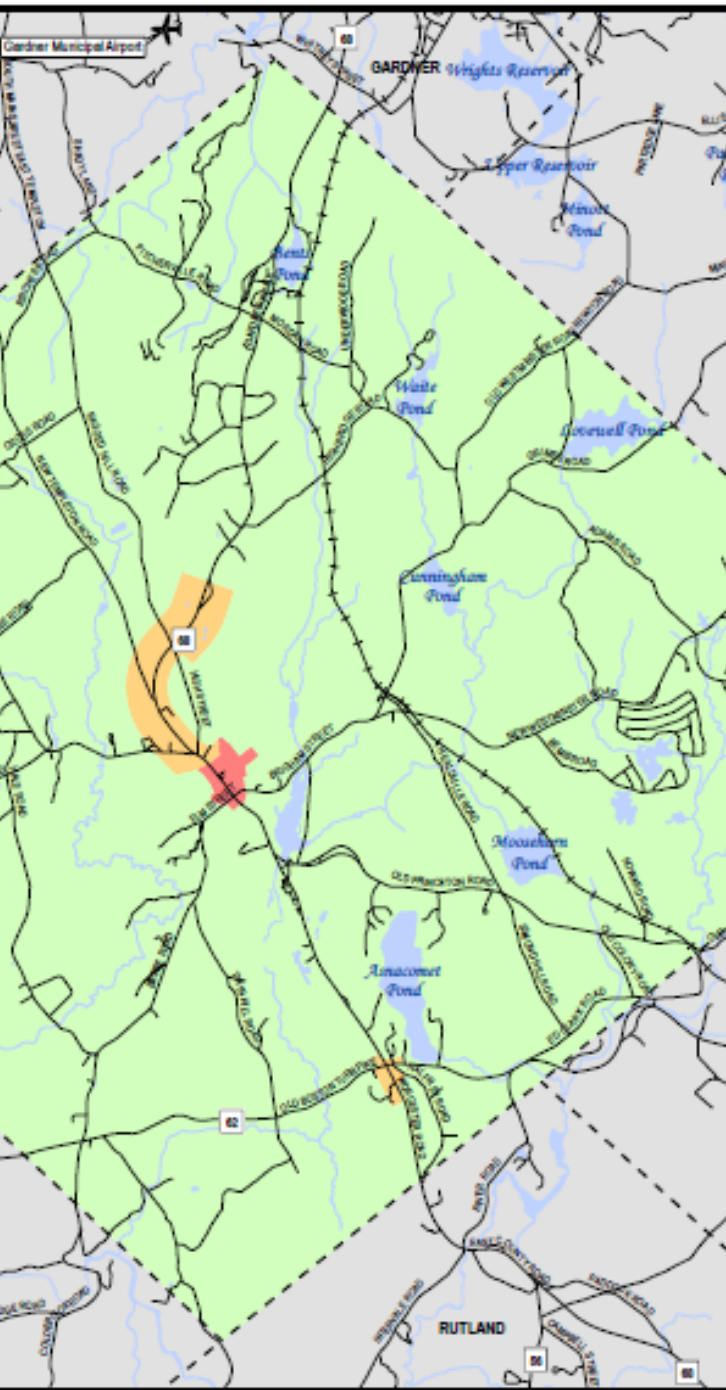
Task**Status**

Task #1: Meet with town officials	Discussion with EDC Chair August-September & attended EDC/PB Meeting 10/21/21, 12/21, 1/22	Completed
Task #2: Analysis of current studies, plans & surveys	Summer-Fall 2021 Review current bylaws, survey results, Master Plan & Goals, Affordable Housing Plan goals, MVP & Planning and Economic Development Planning goals & objectives with an eye towards business growth opportunities	Fall 2021 Presented document review to EDC Chair to share with EDC members Completed
Task #3: Develop visual preference survey	Shared with EDC/PB for comments received in Fall & Winter	Completed – need to conduct survey
Task #4: Site Walk	EDC/PB Feb 2022	Completed
Task #5: Zoning Review	Zoning Review of benchmark communities (provided by PB Chair) Feb-May	Shared with EDC committee May 2022 waiting for feedback from EDC
Task #6: Reviews & Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hubbardston Zoning Review • Historic District Review • Review of Assessor parcel data for town center & buildout analysis of Town Center • Analysis of existing uses to determine if they are appropriate for town center • Explore redevelopment & infill opportunities • Work with GIS department to develop maps (May-Present) 	Shared with EDC committee May 2022 waiting for feedback from EDC
Task #7	Attend September 7, 2022 PB/EDC to give update	



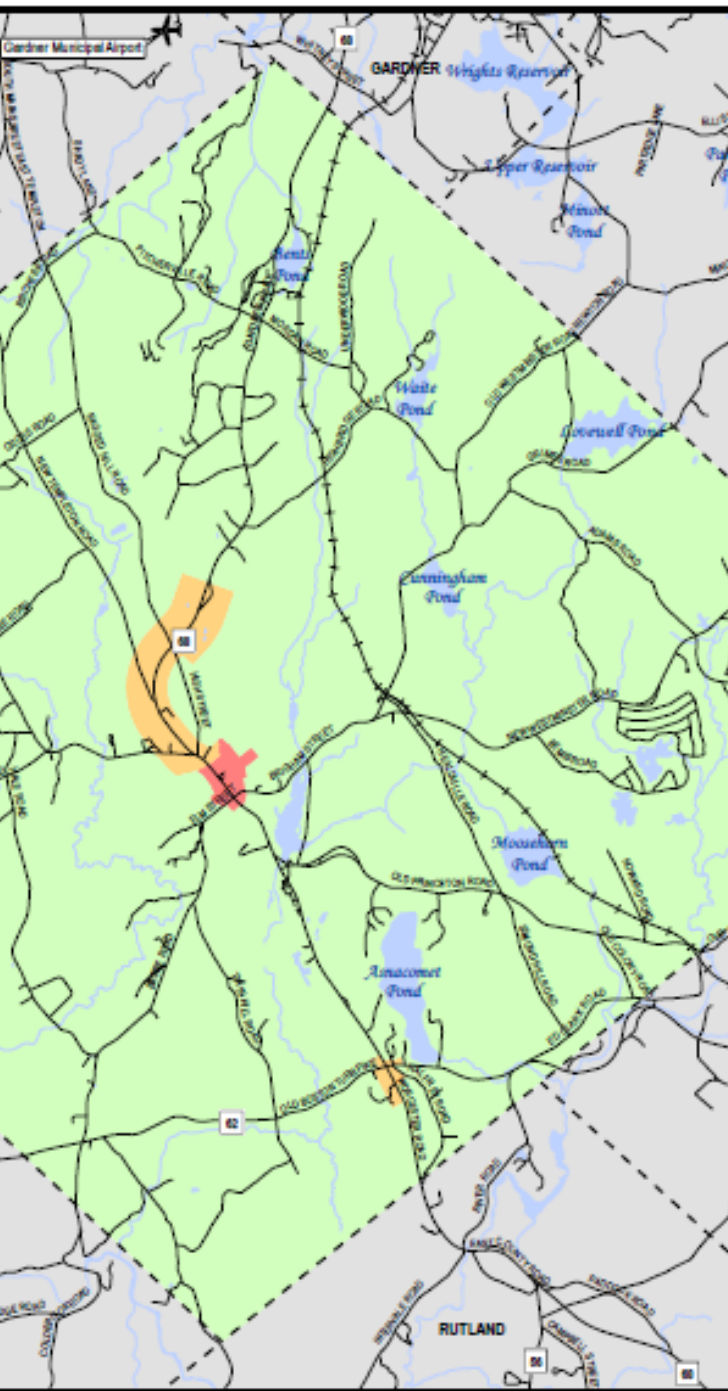
Town Surveys

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Hubbardston 2016 Town Center Survey

- Residents indicated desire for an active, walkable vibrant town center with improved parking and sidewalks
- Offers a range of services, more food choices, restaurants, pubs and shops, ice cream shops, & affordable housing options
- Beautification improvements that include flowers, greenery and trees
- While retaining historic character, small town charm & family friendly atmosphere

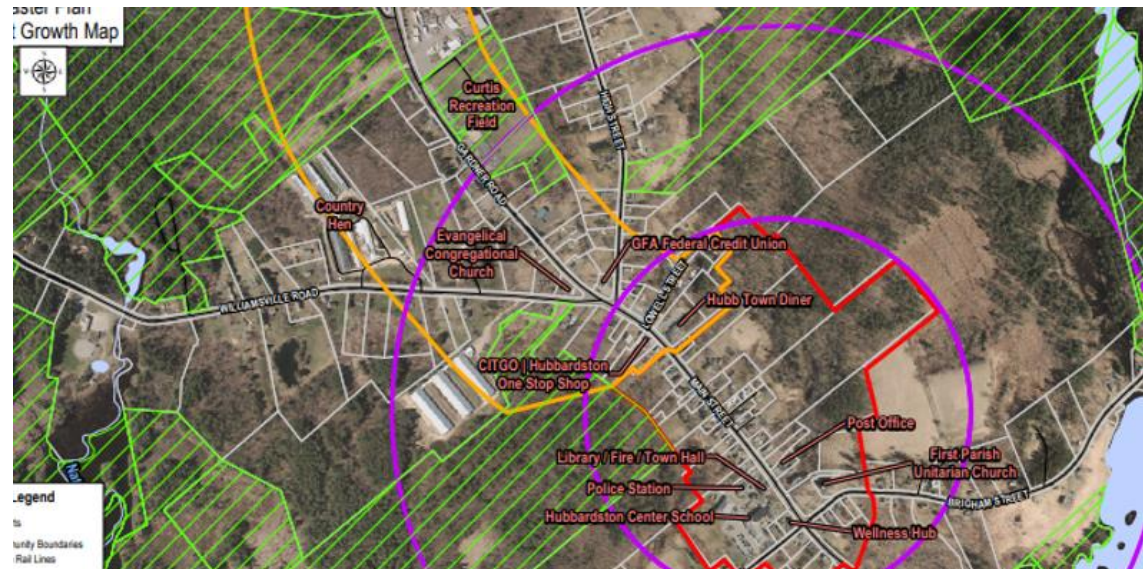


Hubbardston Master Plan Survey June 2021

- Identified the Town Center as a top priority for the town while also preserving its farms
- Preference for town center footprint to expand to accommodate commercial & job growth
- Tops uses identified:
 - more restaurants, coffee shops, retail stores and services
 - sidewalk and bike connections and streetscape improvements

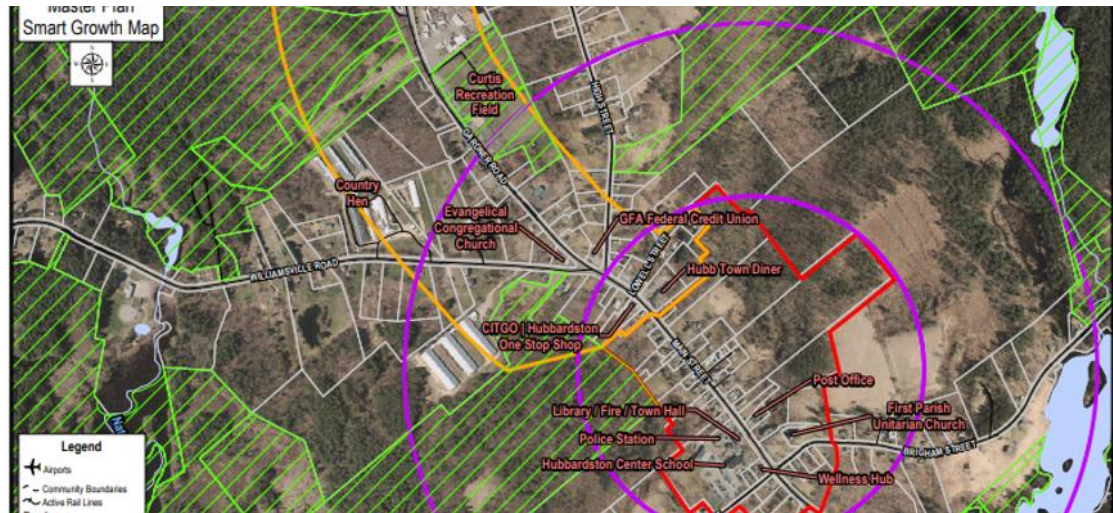
Zoning Concepts

Zoning Principals – Smart Growth



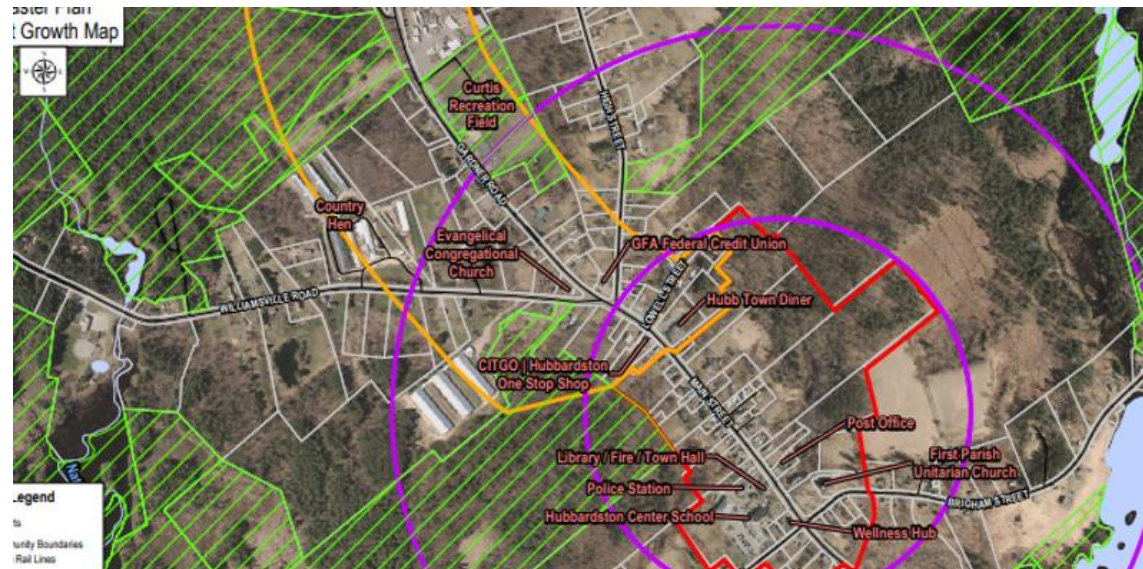
Intentional way to concentrate growth & development that is compact, walkable, bike friendly, offers housing choices, mixed use development while preserving open space, farmland & critical areas

Zoning Principals – Overlay District



- Regulatory Tool that creates a special zoning district over an existing base zone
- Can share common boundaries with base zone or cut across base zone boundaries
- Regulations or incentives are attached to the overlay district
- Can encourage development densities, target uses and/or control appearances

Zoning Principals – Design Guidelines & Standards



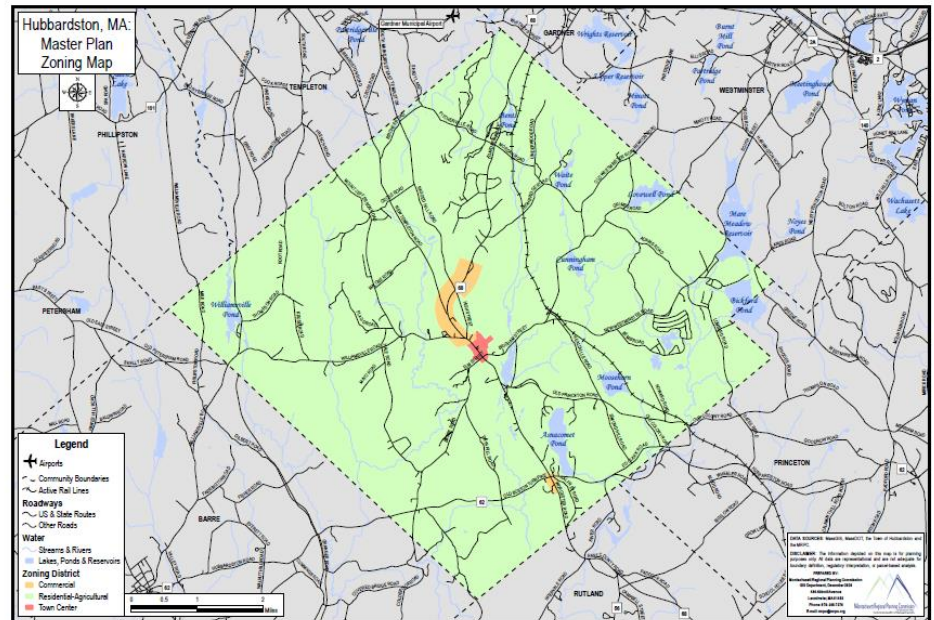
- Guidelines – Advisory set of design parameters to ensure projects are consistent with goals & objectives & improve design of project
- Design Standards – Mandatory design requirements

Buildout Analysis

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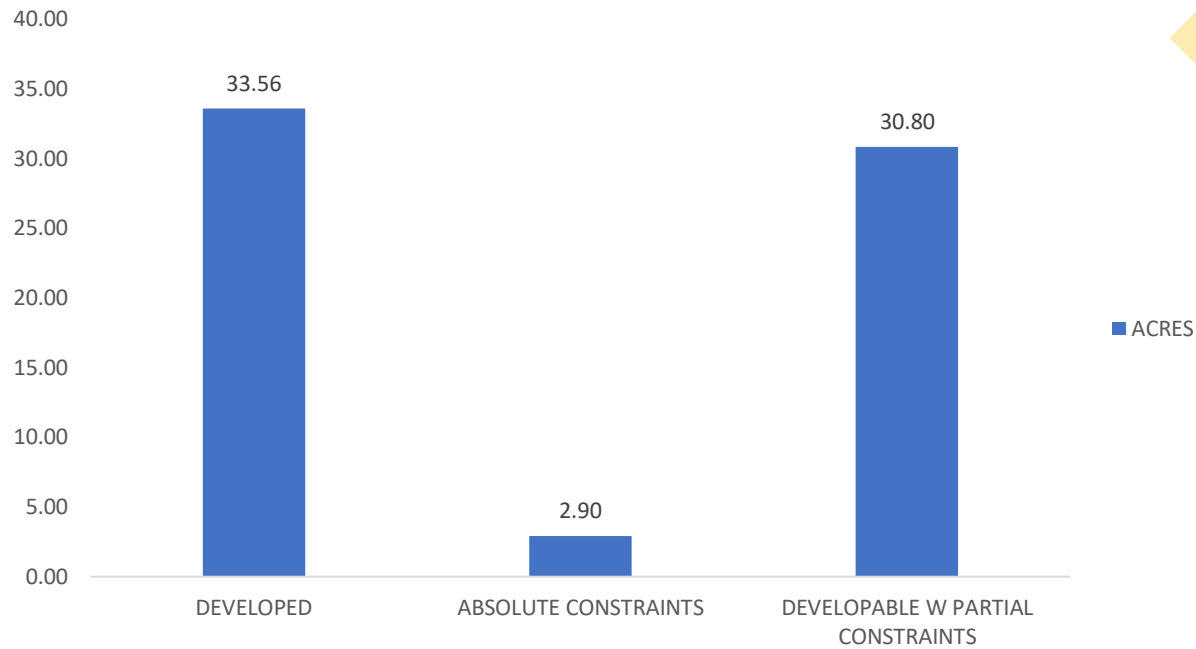
- LAND USE POLICIES

- Majority of the town is zoned residential & agricultural
- Due to large lot and frontage requirements a small retail/social center exists with several businesses located away from the center.



Town Center (Business District) located on Worcester Road (Route 68). Commercial Districts (Light Industrial) lies adjacent to the Town Center Business District along Worcester Road (Route 68) and the Intersection of Route 68 and Route 62.

Town Center



TOWN CENTER

Total 67.27 acres is zoned Town Center

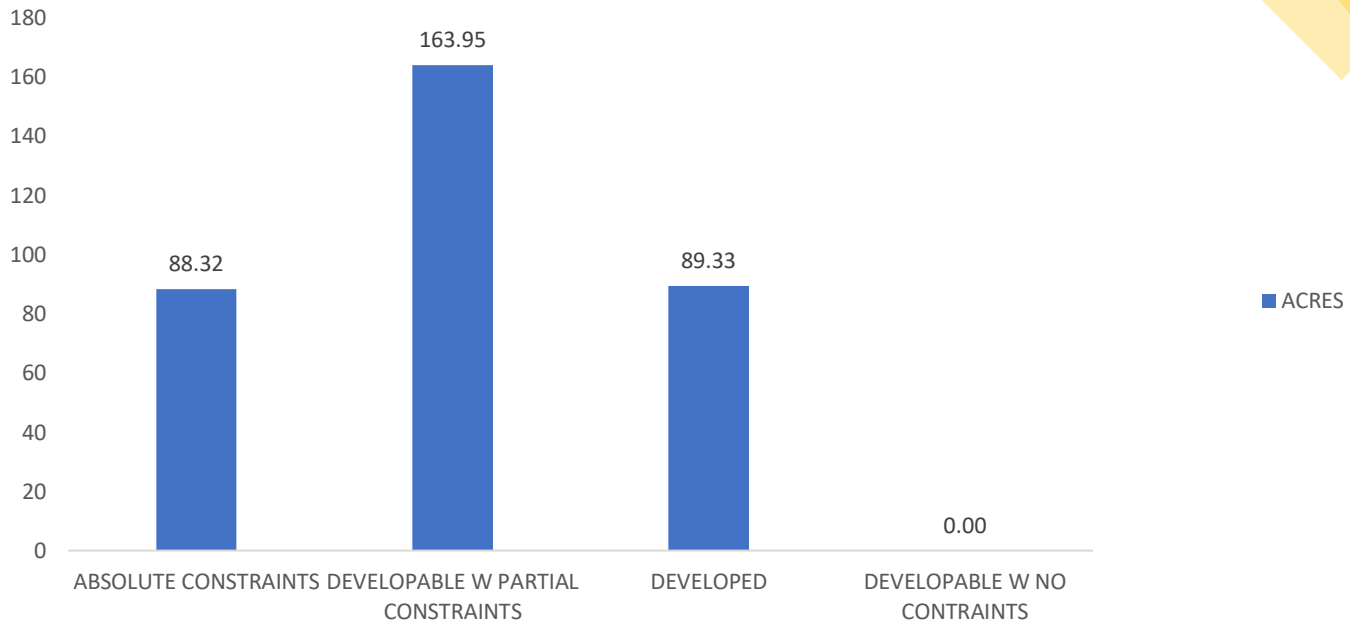
33.56 acres has been developed

2.90 acres is undevelopable

30.80 acres is developable with partial constraints

Town Center District has no available land to be developed without constraints

Commercial



COMMERICAL

A total of 341 acres is zoned commercial

89 acres has been developed

88 acres is undevelopable

164 acres is developable with partial constraints

No available land can be developed without constraints

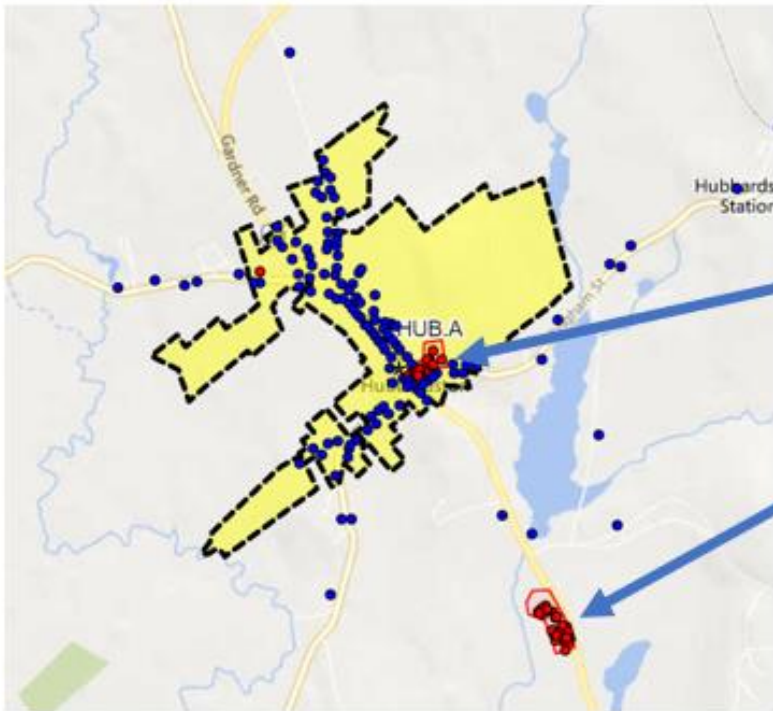


Hubbardston Town Center Historic Overview

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Hubbardston - Historic Designation

- Hubbardston does not have Local Historic District Designation



Hubbardston has 2 properties listed with National Historic District Designation.

The Town Center Historic Common was designated in 2000 consisting of the Town Common, First Parish Unitarian Church and Cemetery.

The Rural Glen Cemetery which was designated in 2020.

Hubbardston has a number of historic buildings located in the Town Center District.

- [The district was named as one of the 1,000 Places to Visit in Massachusetts by the Great Places in Massachusetts Commission](#)

Case Studies

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Case Studies



- Exploring other communities, allows:
- Discover desirable (and not so desirable) land use & land use patterns
- Explore creative zoning & other initiatives communities may have adopted
- Case Studies provided by PB (bonus case studies provided by presenter)

Hubbardston

- Intended to be used for traditional town center residential activities
- Current zoning requirements result in very low-density commercial development pattern in the town center, commercial and industrial districts
- Only single and 2 family housing is allowed in the town center prohibiting denser housing
- Zoning also does not allow for mixed use (residential and business e.g., housing above business).



Ashburnham

Lessons Learned:

- Based on Ashburnham, Hubbardston could create a Mixed-Use Village Overlay that has less restrictive dimensional requirements than current zoning
- Could overlay multiple zoning districts/properties
- Would keep the rural feel of Hubbardston while creating a denser and walkable village center.



Barre

Lessons Learned:

- Residential district allows single & 2 family
- Antique, gift shops, specialty business and retail sales related to home occupations and studios/galleries related to the visual arts such as ceramics, photography
- Hubbardston should look closely at the best uses for its town center that promote walkability
- Both Barre's Limited Business and Business/Commercial Dimensional requirements are less restrictive than Hubbardston's



Princeton

Lessons Learned:

- More restrictive than Hubbardston when it comes to lot area and frontage requirements but allows reduced setbacks



Rutland

Lessons Learned:

- Rutland has less restrictive dimensional requirements than Hubbardston
- Has a village district & town center district
- Allows for multi-family housing and mixed use



Sterling

Lessons Learned:

- Sterling has a compact walkable town center
- The zoning is not very clear on the lot area or frontage requirements and does not allow a mix of uses
- Sterling also does not have design standards/guidelines



Templeton

Lessons Learned:

- Templeton's village district allows for mixed uses
- Has less stringent requirements than Hubbardston



Westminster

Lessons Learned:

- Zoning requirements in Village Center have much less restrictive requirements than Hubbardston
- Site plan review standards address building placement and orientation, building entrances, landscaping, pedestrian facilities, parking, building facades and materials, massing, windows and door arrangements, utilities and mechanicals, signs, and illumination.
- Westminster has Site Plan Review Standards that Hubbardston should review



Bonus Case Studies



- We explored other communities that offer some creative zoning/initiatives

Bolton

Lessons Learned:

- Properties zoned Mixed Use Overlay are not contiguous but in general location where development is desired
- Overlays multiple zoning districts
- Has Design Standards & a Design Review Board
- Mixed-Use Overlay allows for increased & reduced dimensions as well as additional uses
- Hubbardston could consider creating a Mixed-Use Overlay District as well as Design Standards/Criteria (required) or Design Regulations (Advisory and not obligatory)
- Bolton also created a Barn Preservation Bylaw to preserve historic barns by allowing accessory uses such as artisan crafts with retail, B&B, antique stores, accessory apartments etc.



Bristol RI

Although a larger community it has done a great job balancing all the various uses while protecting the waterfront, open space, and historic character

- Town Center has multiple Zoning Districts to address various uses. Allows for denser housing as compared with other residential districts in the town
- Has a historic overlay zoning district intended to preserve the heritage of the town by placing additional design standards for buildings or other structures and lots
- Has sound standards that Hubbardston could consider adopting to address any uses such as wedding venues or in and outdoor music





Warner NH

Population was 2,937 at the 2020 census. The Town has done a great job at preserving its historic New England character.

Lessons Learned:

- If a commercial use abuts a residential or open space a 25' natural vegetative buffer is required.
- The Overlay District allows additional uses
- Has architectural requirements & Standard design requirements for any formula business or formula restaurant (chains).



HUBBARDSTON GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After a review of other communities and lessons learned recommendations have been identified to encourage the preservation of the Town's assets and focus on new development in the Town Center and commercial areas which supports the town's commitment to sustainability while retaining Hubbardston's New England rural town character.

The Town of Hubbardston can consider:

- Zoning amendments that would allow greater density in the Town Center and/or Commercial Districts.
- Allow mixed uses and other appropriate uses.
- Expand Town Center and Commercial Districts by identifying opportunities to rezone adjacent properties
- Analysis of existing uses to determine whether they are appropriate.
- Explore redevelopment and infill opportunities in these districts.
- Consider requiring inclusionary housing.
- Adoption of Design Standards
- Adoption of Sound Standards
- Require a natural Vegetated Buffer if commercial use abuts residential or open space

OBJECTIVES

- Promote a sense of community
- Preserve natural and man-made features that contribute to Hubbardston's character such as farms, open fields, woodlands, and ponds and streams that also help to enhance habitat protection protect the quality of the Town's water resources, and link large tracts of open space together
- Support commercial and industrial growth that will fit in Hubbardston and contribute to the community's quality of life and fiscal stability
- Ensure that housing opportunities are available for a broad range of income levels and household types
- Maintain Hubbardston's rural and historic character

Next Steps

