

## Introduction

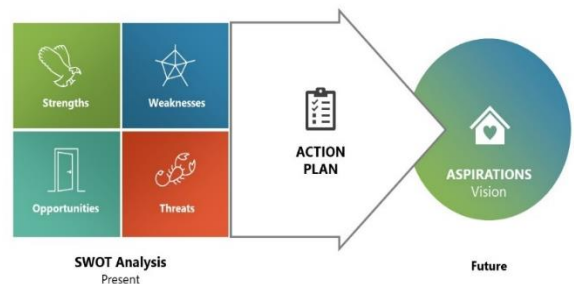
A well-formed master plan provides a collective summary or inventory of a town's resources while providing a strategic plan for the sustainable use and protection of those resources into the future. Such a plan recognizes the need for a balanced approach to land use and encourages smart growth and sustainable development principles so that important, if not critical, resources can be properly managed and maintained so that they will continue to be available as community assets for future generations. Without a sound master guide, unsustainable development through poorly planned or unwisely executed land use activities or initiatives, has the potential to pollute, degrade, reduce, and even eliminate a town's available resources.

Hubbardston's Master plan is to be used as a guide for land use and development decisions made within Town. Through this plan, Hubbardston will continue working cooperatively with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to provide guidance on a variety of issues such as: land use, environmental quality, transportation, public facilities and services, historic resources and open space, and community character.

The Hubbardston Select Board and Planning Board contracted with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission to update the town's Master Plan. M.G.L. Chapter 41, Section 81D, states that a Planning Board established in any town shall make a Master Plan to provide the basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality. To do this, a Master Plan asks the questions: Where are we? Where have we been? Where do we want to go, and how will we get there? To effectively serve as a roadmap to success, the Master Plan update includes the following chapters:

### 1. **Introduction, Vision & Goals**

This chapter introduces the community vision and outlines the process and identifies the goals and objectives of the municipality for its future growth and development. Each community conducts an interactive public process to determine the community's vision, values, and set goals to establish patterns of development that will be consistent with and enhance these goals.



### 2. **LU-Land Use:**

This chapter will identify present land uses, examine remaining opportunities for development, describe local land use regulations and assess their impact on land use development and effectiveness in managing growth. Additionally, this chapter will also identify revisions to the town's land use regulations, policies and procedures that may be needed to make the



town's zoning and land use policies and practices consistent with the Master Plan.

### **3. H-Housing:**

This chapter will identify and analyze existing and projected housing needs and provide recommendations for creating diverse housing choices for all levels of income and age groups within the community. This chapter will also identify policies and strategies to provide a balance of local housing opportunities for all citizens.



### **4. ED-Development**

This chapter will provide an overview of the town's existing economy, examine the strengths and weaknesses of individual economic sectors, and assess the potential of the town's current economic base in meeting goals related to employment, tax base and overall economic strength.



### **5. NC-Natural and Cultural Resources:**

This chapter will provide an inventory and assessment of the natural, cultural, and historic resources located within the community, and details policies and strategies for the protection and management of such areas. Topics covered include water resources; geology and landscape; soils; prime farmland; vegetation; fisheries and wildlife; priority and estimated habitat areas; environmental issues; and historic features, structures, and architecture.



**6. OSR-Open Space and Recreation:**

This chapter will provide an inventory of recreation and open space resources. Outlining policies and management strategies for managing, preserving, and protecting these resources are also included.<sup>1</sup>



**7. SF-Services and Facilities:**

This chapter includes an inventory of municipal services and town owned facilities and their ability to accommodate future growth and development. This chapter identifies the public infrastructure, facilities, and service needs for the next ten years.



**8. C-Circulation (Transportation):**

This chapter provides an inventory of the town’s transportation network. Information will be compiled from existing studies and sources, such as the Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan and other studies and reports dedicated to traffic and transportation in the area or town. Information is provided regarding the condition of the town’s transportation infrastructure, including the roadway network, information on bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and the structural condition of the town’s bridges.



<sup>1</sup> Hubbardston OSRP currently being updated and may require edits to this chapter in the coming months.

**9. Implementation:**

This chapter records specific actions and measures that must be taken to carry out the recommendations contained within the Master Plan. The implementation chapter will translate the generalized goals into implementing each action is identified, a priority and timeframe is established, and the cost range of each measure is estimated, if possible.



**1. Vision & Goals**

**1.1 Purpose**

Knowing a Town’s history and current make-up is necessary to tell its story, but such knowledge is also requisite in interpreting or modelling its future vision. The updated Master Plan will serve as an important roadmap for long-term land use and development in the town and create a vision for the community, identify current challenges, analyze trends, and engage community members in dialogue about the vision and goals of the community.

**Vision Statement**

*Hubbardston will be a town that continues to foster a strong and vibrant sense of community and place, embraces careful stewardship and enhancement of its natural, historic, and cultural resources, and understands and will employ best practices for achieving long-term, economic health and sustainability.*

**1.2 2021 Community Survey Results**

**Statistics:** The Community Survey conducted saw 529 respondents, equal to 11 percent of Hubbardston’s 2018 population or 15 percent of Hubbardston’s registered voters (2020).

**Methods:** The online survey ran from December 16, 2020, to January 11, 2021. The survey, hosted by Google Forms, was advertised on the town Web site, the town Facebook site, and the Town Twitter site. Town officials also mailed two reminders to all Hubbardston residents encouraging them to participate.

**Collaboration:** The Town Administrator sought input from all Town boards, committees and commissions when compiling the questions from the report. Many of the questions

also modeled questions from the Town's recently completed Master Plan (economic development chapter) for survey continuity.

The residents of Hubbardston clearly value the rural nature of the town and want to maintain the historic character. There are those that feel business development is appropriate along Route 68 if the Town Center character and the rural areas are preserved and the businesses that are allowed are scrutinized through careful consideration of zoning bylaw amendments.

According to survey responses, the five biggest problems the town is currently (2021) facing are;

- Limited Cellular Broad Band 75%
- Lack of Retail Business 51%
- Road Conditions 47%
- Aging Infrastructure 45%
- Poor Municipal Building Conditions 40%

According to survey responses, the five biggest problems facing the town in Five years are;

- Limited Cellular Broad Band 59%
- Road Conditions 50%
- Aging Infrastructure 46%
- Lack of Retail Business 43%
- Tax Increases 42%

The complete 2021 Community Survey Presentation can be found at: [https://www.hubbardstonma.us/sites/g/files/vyhlf3276/f/uploads/hubbardston\\_community\\_survey\\_2021.pdf](https://www.hubbardstonma.us/sites/g/files/vyhlf3276/f/uploads/hubbardston_community_survey_2021.pdf)

### **1.3 Focus Area Vision & Goals**

In the context of the Master Plan, a goal defines the result to expect after having taken/performed the actions outlined in the plan. Each chapter of the Master Plan expresses a vision for that focus area and lists goals and actions to help support the Town reach the collective vision of the community. Specific action items are listed in the Chapter 9 Implementation Matrix.

#### **Land Use**

##### **Vision:**

*Promote a sense of community and preserve natural and man-made features that contribute to Hubbardston's rural and historic character while ensuring that housing opportunities are available for a broad range of people and supporting commercial and industrial growth that will fit in Hubbardston and contribute to the community's quality of life and fiscal stability.*

## **Goals**

**Goal LU1:** Preserve Hubbardston's Current Land Uses: Open Space, Forestry, and Agricultural Goals.

**Goal LU2:** Explore Bylaws and Regulations to better protect Hubbardston's water and natural resources.

**Goal LU3:** Explore alternatives that enable higher density, mixed use, walkable and economic drivers near/within town center while preserving the rural qualities of outlying areas.

**Goal LU4:** Support expansion of commercial and industrial uses within existing zoned areas to improve viability and support for business, improve the Town's long term financial sustainability and expand the tax base to continue to provide quality services to residents.

**Goal LU5:** Increase affordable housing in Hubbardston that provides housing choices for low income, seniors, disabled, young professionals, empty-nesters, and young families.

## **Housing**

### **Vision**

*Ensure that housing opportunities are available for a broad range of income levels and household types including affordability, homeownership, and condition of the housing stock while maintaining Hubbardston's community character.*

### **Goals**

**Goal H1:** Adopt and expand Bylaws to improve housing throughout the Town.

**Goal H2:** Seek out opportunities to improve the Town's ability to meet its housing needs.

## **Economic Development**

### **Vision:**

*Promote economic development that is consistent with the Town's rural character.*

### **Goals**

**Goal ED1:** Support existing local businesses and economic development initiatives.

**Goal ED2:** Promote smart growth and sustainability by recommending strategical planning to improve infrastructure in appropriate commercial areas.

**Goal ED3:** Enhance the Town’s existing permitting process.

### **Natural & Cultural Resources**

#### **Vision**

*Preserve the Town’s historic fabric and protect the quality of natural & cultural resources, to ensure a vibrant, diverse, sustainable community.*

#### **Goals**

**Goal NC1:** Conserve land in sufficient quantity and quality to preserve the Town of Hubbardston’s natural, historical, and cultural character Land Protection, to protect water quality, carbon sequestration, and other ecosystem services, wildlife habitat, agricultural resources, priority parcels, and enhance the quality of life.

**Goal NC2:** Continue Resource Protection and Enhancement

**Goal NC3:** Town-Wide Improvements, to increase and enhance open space protection, protect water quality, and support balanced “green development.”

**Goal NC4:** Town Communication with State Agencies and Legislators

**Goal NC5:** Promote the preservation, appreciation, and sustainable use of historical and cultural resources for residents and visitors.

**Goal NC6:** Provide support for a rich variety of cultural opportunities, and activities for all groups and individuals in the community.

### **Open Space & Recreation**

#### **Vision:**

*To maintain and cultivate an outstanding environment for all residents and visitors to enjoy while engaging in recreational activities throughout Hubbardston while continuing to pursue foresightful conservation goals in line with the community principles.*

#### **Goals**

**Goal OSR1:** Continue to protect water quality, carbon sequestration, and other ecosystem services, wildlife habitat, agricultural resources, priority parcels, and enhance the quality of life.

**Goal OSR2:** Make town-wide improvements that increase and improve recreational opportunities, enhance open space protection, protect water quality, and support balanced “green development.”

**Goal OSR3:** Encourage community involvement to increase the general level of education and participation of residents.

**Goal OSR4:** Continue Trail and Open Space Land Improvement.

**Goal OSR5:** Continue Resource Protection and Enhancement initiatives.

**Goal OSR6:** Continue to communicate with State Agencies and. Legislators.

### **Circulation and Transportation**

#### **Vision:**

*Construct and maintain a safe road system and infrastructure that is consistent with the desired Town character.*

#### **Goals**

**Goal C1:** Develop, maintain, and continue to implement both new and existing transportation planning documents and procedures as needed to improve Hubbardston's infrastructure.

**Goal C2:** Continue to create a more walkable, pedestrian friendly downtown Hubbardston that is accessible and safe for all residents.

**Goal C3:** Improve intersections, roadways, and sidewalks throughout the community to increase the overall level of safety for both vehicular and non-vehicular circulation.

**Goal C4:** Continue to expand and improve trail and pathway networks throughout town and to regional connections.

### **Services & Facilities**

#### **Vision:**

*Provide excellent, cost effective, accessible facilities, services, and programs reflecting values respectful of all ages and diversity, which, through collaboration, contribute to a high quality, safe, civil, healthy, and sustainable community.*

#### **Goals**

**Goal SF1:** Identify ways to better utilize and improve municipal facilities and services.

**Goal SF2:** Maintain, enhance, and promote environmentally sound practices to provide high quality services and programs that serve the needs of all the residents of Hubbardston.

**Goal SF3:** Anticipate, plan and budget for any large projects in response to any projected growing demand on Town services.

**Goal SF4:** Improve inter- and intra-committee communication to promote more efficient public administration and to better serve residents of the town.