

Chapter 4 Economic Development

4.1 Purpose and Introduction:

Over time communities grow and managing that growth has always been a challenge for local government. Hubbardston recognizes the need for a community Master Plan to help local officials manage that growth and act in concert with a common agenda for the long-range goals of the Town. Without foresight, planning and structure, the chances of optimizing the best and highest value of human, natural and capital resources are greatly diminished.



The Economic Development (ED) chapter includes an inventory and analysis of the economic sector in Hubbardston, town vision, and goals and actions to achieve economic vitality in Town. The data and analysis in this chapter are based on information obtained from the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), the State, and the U.S. Census Bureau. Methodology for the US Census estimates can be found at: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/technical-documentation/methodology.html>

4.2 Assessment of Hubbardston's Economic Base

Hubbardston's Economic History

Like most communities in Massachusetts, farming was the mainstay of the economy when it was founded. The community has been described by some historians as a poor town in its early years, sparsely settled and almost solely agricultural. Over the course of the 18th century, industries such as sawmills and potash works, as well as cottage industries such as the making of palm leaf hats, chairs, cabinets, shoes, and horse blankets, developed to supplement the raising of crops.

By the 19th century, dairy and berry farming and market gardening were major enterprises. Immigrants from Ireland, French Canada, England, Sweden, and Finland moved to town to work on local farms. The town's early economy was based on agriculture and small-scale chair, boot, and shoe manufacturing. Dairy and berry farming and market gardening were major pursuits in the town. As agriculture shifted westward from New England, many farm fields were abandoned and slowly became reforested.

Hubbardston's Labor Force

Hubbardston's labor force includes more than 2,700 residents. With few exceptions, small towns and residential suburbs tend to have a relatively high labor force

participation rate, and this can be seen in the number of employed Hubbardston residents that has increased from 2,526 in 2010 (the bottom of the Recession) to 2,702 in the year 2021. Similarly, Hubbardston's local unemployment rate has held steady over the same period, reaching a low of just 2.57 % in 2018, the lowest it has been since 2010, when the rate was 8.04%. After a slight spike during the COVID emergency at 5.29%, unemployment in Hubbardston is returning to its previous rates.

Hubbardston's unemployment rate is closely tied to that of the state and the nation, both of which saw an extended period of job growth between 2009 and the COVID emergency of 2020; sharp job losses in 2020, and a reversion to the strong pre-emergency economy since 2021. One notable observation is that Hubbardston's unemployment rate had been consistently lower than or equal to that of the state from 2005-2018 except for 2008 & 2011, and consistently lower since 2013. This likely reflects a stronger regional economy in North Central Massachusetts, leading to greater job opportunity and security for town residents.

Table ED1: Hubbardston Labor Force

Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	State Unemployment Rate
2021	2,702	2,559	143	5.29%	5.50%
2020	2,566	2,458	108	4.21%	9.40%
2019	2,720	2,647	73	2.68%	3.00%
2018	2,724	2,654	70	2.57%	3.50%
2017	2,584	2,498	86	3.33%	3.70%
2016	2,559	2,467	92	3.60%	3.70%
2015	2,520	2,409	111	4.40%	4.90%
2014	2,496	2,356	140	5.61%	5.80%
2013	2,391	2,250	141	5.90%	6.70%
2012	2,404	2,252	152	6.32%	6.70%
2011	2,539	2,343	196	7.72%	7.30%
2010	2,526	2,323	203	8.04%	8.30%
2009	2,544	2,345	199	7.82%	8.10%
2008	2,479	2,300	179	7.22%	5.50%
2007	2,481	2,355	126	5.08%	4.60%
2006	2,413	2,295	118	4.89%	4.90%
2005	2,368	2,257	111	4.69%	4.80%

Source: MA Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Where Hubbardston Residents work

Tables ED2 & ED3 illustrate how far and where residents of Hubbardston travel to work. The highest percentage drive within 10 miles of Hubbardston with 9.6 % driving to Fitchburg, while 8% drive beyond 50 miles of town for employment.

Table ED2: How Far

Distance Driven to Work	Percent of Workers
<10 miles	33%
10-24 miles	27%
25-50 miles	32%
>50 miles	8%

Table ED3: Where

Percent of Workers	Where To...
9.6%	Fitchburg
9.0%	Hubbardston
8.1%	Leominster
7.7%	Gardner
5.5%	Worcester
4.0%	Boston

Source: American Community Survey 2017-2021 Estimates

The Number and Types of Jobs in Hubbardston

The Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is the State entity in charge of tracking the changes taking place in the various sectors of the State's economy at both the state and local levels. Employment and Wage data are derived from reports filed by all employers subject to unemployment compensation laws, both state and federal. Table ED4 presents the changes that took place in Hubbardston's local economy from 2010 to 2021. The number of establishments increased during this twelve-year period by 19 (or 27.54%).

Table ED4: Business Establishments and Wages

	Hubbardston	Ashby	Athol	Groton	Lancaster	Lunenburg	Sterling	Westminster	Winchendon
Establishments	141	92	422	313	216	288	285	260	225
Total Wages (Million \$)	\$53.3	\$19.4	\$161.7	\$201.6	\$127	\$137.9	\$151.4	\$122.9	\$78.6
Average Employment	956	408	3,803	3,299	2,230	2,537	2,612	2,144	1,814
Average Weekly Wage	\$1,073	\$912	\$818	\$1,175	\$1,095	\$1,045	\$1,115	\$1,102	\$834

Source: MA Department of Labor and Workforce Development (ES-202), Accessed 6/20/2023.

While total wages held steady, the average weekly wage increased by 20.8% during the period from 2010-2016. In contrast, the Consumer Price Index for the nation increased by about 9% during the period, indicating that wages in Hubbardston increased faster than inflation. As a result, employed consumers might have a little more disposable income to spend locally and spread more dollars throughout the local economy.

Table ED5 provides information on the types of jobs found in Hubbardston. The largest number of jobs is in the Health Care and Social Assistance category, with 115 jobs in Hubbardston. This is followed by Construction (50 jobs), Manufacturing (28 jobs), Professional and Technical Services (27 jobs), and Retail Trade (12 jobs). Construction jobs had the highest average weekly wage (\$1,058) and retail trade had the lowest (\$361).

Table ED6 that follows compares the number of jobs (average employment) in neighboring towns. The Table also provides 2021 employment and wages to compare Hubbardston with neighboring communities, illustrating that Hubbardston has more establishments, total wages, average employment, and average weekly wage than Oakham and Phillipston with less than Westminster, Ashburnham, and Templeton.

Table ED5: 2021 Workforce by Industry Within Hubbardston 2015-2021

INDUSTRY	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change
Construction	71	93	104	103	88	84	92	29.6%
Manufacturing	23	21	27	32	25	27	29	26.1%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	199	189	148	154	147	119	128	-35.7%
Financial Activities	11	12	9	9	8	9	9	-18.2%
Professional & Business Services	20	21	17	19	20	28	33	65.0%
Education & Health Services	573	567	571	585	574	515	525	-8.4%
Leisure & Hospitality	65	112	103	94	60	43	51	-21.5%
Other Services	18	18	12	10	11	17	20	11.1%
Total All Industries	1032	1096	1059	1080	1011	912	956	-7.4%

Source: MA Department of Economic Research; Accessed 2/10/2023

Table ED6: Employment and Wages

	Hubbardston	Ashby	Athol	Groton	Lancaster	Lunenburg	Sterling	Westminster	Winchendon
Population	6,315	3,193	11,945	11,315	8,441	11,782	7,985	8,213	10,364
Average Employment	956	408	3,803	3,299	2,230	2,537	2,612	2,144	1,814
Jobs per 1000 Residents	151.4	127.8	318.4	291.6	264.2	215.3	327.1	261.0	175.0

Source: Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance

Wealth in the Community

There are measures of wealth that reflect the health of the local economy by describing the incomes of residents: per capita, median household and median family incomes, as well as the percent of people for whom poverty status was determined. Per capita income is equal to the total income generated by a population divided by the number of people in that area. Communities with higher number of persons per household or smaller household incomes would likely have smaller per capita income figures. As depicted in Table ED7, the per capita income for the State of Massachusetts was \$48,617, while that of Hubbardston was \$41,663 below the State average. This could be explained in part by the size of households in Hubbardston (2.73), which is more than the state (2.48). Hubbardston's per capita income was also lower than that of Ashburnham, Princeton, Templeton, and Westminster, but higher than Barre, Oakham, and Phillipston.

Another measure of wealth in a community is its median income, which is based on the type of household. Family incomes are differentiated from other household incomes. For example, a single student living alone is considered a household but not a family. According to the American Community Survey 2017-2021 Estimates, Hubbardston's median household income is less than that of Princeton and Westminster but more than Ashburnham Barre, Oakham, Phillipston, Templeton, and the state. Hubbardston's median family income is also less than Ashburnham and Westminster but more than Templeton, Phillipston, and the state. Also, on the positive side, there is relatively less poverty in Hubbardston; the percentage of individuals living below poverty in Hubbardston (5.7%) is lower than Ashburnham (7.0%), and substantially lower than Barre (14.4%) and the state (9.9%).

Table ED7: Measures of Wealth

Community	Per Capita	Median Household	Median Family	Below Poverty
Hubbardston	\$41,663	\$105,938	\$120,000	5.7%
Ashburnham	\$43,610	\$104,074	\$113,309	7.0%
Barre	\$38,041	\$92,206	\$108,832	14.4%
Oakham	\$39,893	\$85,078	\$89,167	4.9%
Phillipston	\$36,890	\$88,289	\$91,298	5.3%
Princeton	\$63,289	\$148,438	\$150,043	3.5%
Templeton	\$43,748	\$97,550	\$104,250	4.1%
Westminster	\$47,496	\$107,738	\$123,611	2.3%
Massachusetts	\$48,617	\$89,026	\$112,543	9.9%

Source: American Community Survey 2017-2021 Estimates

Education

As outlined in Table ED8 below, residents with a high school diploma but no higher education represent the largest segment of the Hubbardston population in terms of educational attainment (26.3%). This is higher than the neighboring communities of Ashburnham (23.0%), Princeton, and Templeton, but lower than Barre (31.2%), Oakham (26.5%), Phillipston (33%) and Westminster (26.7%). However, it is higher than the state percentage of 23.2%. The second largest group (23.5%) has some college education, followed by residents with a bachelor's degree (16.0%).

The state percentages reveal how the population in Hubbardston compares to the overall state population in terms of educational attainment. Overall, the state data contains higher numbers in the groups at both the upper and lower echelon of the educational attainment spectrum than the Hubbardston data since more than 10.2% of the state's population is reported to have less than a high school education – more than the rate of Hubbardston (5.7%) and the state has a considerable higher percentage of those with a Graduate/Professional Degree (17.7%) than Hubbardston (11.7%).

Table ED8: Educational Attainment, 25 Years and Over

Amount of School	Hubbardston	Ashburnham	Barre	Oakham	Phillipston	Princeton	Templeton	Westminster	State
No High School Diploma	3.60%	4.90%	3.10%	4.60%	9.70%	1.50%	9.20%	3.80%	8.80%
High School Diploma	26.30%	23.00%	31.20%	26.50%	33.00%	10.40%	25.20%	26.70%	23.20%
Some College, No Degree	23.50%	21.30%	21.10%	18.80%	19.70%	14.50%	23.60%	16.70%	15.10%
Associate degree	14.80%	8.50%	13.50%	11.90%	12.30%	9.70%	13.00%	10.90%	7.70%
Bachelor's Degree	24.00%	18.20%	21.80%	23.90%	16.50%	33.60%	20.00%	23.80%	24.80%
Graduate or Professional Degree	11.40%	12.00%	17.90%	14.30%	8.70%	30.40%	9.10%	18.20%	20.40%

Source: American Community Survey 2017-2021 Estimates

Business Districts

Commercial development in Hubbardston is concentrated in a small number of business, commercial and light industrial areas, with a smaller number of businesses scattered throughout town, mainly on the numbered routes and on farms. Table LU-1

in the Land Use Chapter of this document shows that .41% of land in Hubbardston is zoned Commercial or Industrial.

The Commercial Districts lie adjacent (north) to the Town Center Business District along Worcester Road (Route 68), and at the Intersection of Route 68 and Route 62. The types of businesses located in these areas vary in size, scale, and type. Along Route 68 north of the Town Center, you will find a diner, convenience store with a gas station, a banking institution, a storage facility, and a small plaza that is home to a veterinary clinic and other small scale retail businesses.

The Country Hen, a Certified Organic, Certified Humane commercial egg farm is located just to the west of Route 68 on Williamsville Road. A small, light industrial fabrication shop is located south of Town Center at the junction of routes 68 & 62.

In the center of Hubbardston along Worcester Road (Route 68) is the Town Center District. This district has a mix of commercial and civic uses. This area is intended to foster appropriate reuse of existing structures and new construction within the Town Center area. The core element of the town's vision for this area is development consistent with the traditional character and dense development pattern of the historic downtowns that help define the character of small New England towns like Hubbardston.

Residential-Agricultural District comprises 2,257 acres or 8.4% of the land in Hubbardston. Throughout Hubbardston's history, agriculture was the mainstay of the economy and there appears to be a resurgence in agriculture and agricultural related businesses. In recent years, many farms have expanded their businesses to include accessory uses and marketed their farm as venues for weddings, gatherings, and numerous other types of functions.

Economic Sector Contribution to Local Tax Base

In fiscal year 2023, Hubbardston levied a total of \$8,053,998 in taxes, based on a local tax rate of \$13.03 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Hubbardston homeowners accounted for roughly 94.04% of the total tax base while the business and industries accounted for 2.98%. The remainder (2.98%) was derived from taxes on personal property. It should be noted that Hubbardston's average FY20 single family tax is just \$4,135, lower than approximately 70% of all Massachusetts communities.

The next two tables look at how Hubbardston compares to some of its neighbors in terms of commercial and industrial tax base.

Table ED9: Commercial/Industrial Tax Base Comparison

Community	FY2023 Tax Rate	Commercial Taxes Levied	Assessed Valuation	% Total Tax Levy
Hubbardston	\$13.03	\$174,262	\$13,373,933	2.16%
Ashburnham	\$16.55	\$282,329	\$17,059,162	1.75%
Barre	\$15.86	\$422,857	\$26,661,879	4.43%

Oakham	\$11.57	\$67,709	\$5,852,140	1.99%
Phillipston	\$12.84	\$102,825	\$8,008,209	2.61%
Princeton	\$15.14	\$135,818	\$8,970,797	1.35%
Templeton	\$12.92	\$594,475	\$46,012,031	4.60%
Westminster	\$13.06	\$786,078	\$60,189,714	4.07%

Source: Department of Revenue

Table ED9 also indicates that Hubbardston's commercial sector raises a higher amount of tax dollars when compared to Oakham, Princeton, and Phillipston, but less than Ashburnham, Barre, Templeton, and Westminster. Hubbardston's Assessed Valuation is higher than the nearby communities of Oakham, Phillipston, and Princeton. Hubbardston has a larger percent (2.16%) of commercial taxes contributing the overall percentage of tax levy than Princeton (1.35%) and is like Ashburnham (1.75%), Oakham (1.99%), and Phillipston (2.61%), and less than Barre (4.43%), Templeton (4.6%) and Westminster (4.07%).

Table ED10 highlights the change in tax rate and change in total levied taxes for Hubbardston from 2013-2023. Since 2013, Hubbardston's total tax levy has increased each year, with a lone exception of 2018. From 2013-2023 the tax rate decreased from \$13.64 to \$13.03, while the Town was able to generate increases in overall levied taxes. Currently, Hubbardston's tax rate is \$13.03, a significant decrease from the 2016 tax rate of \$15.90.

Table ED10: Hubbardston's Tax Levy 2013-2023 (with rate)

Fiscal Year	Tax Rate	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Personal Property	Total
2013	\$13.64	\$5,314,758	\$203,284	\$75,975	\$100,402	\$5,694,419
2014	\$14.52	\$5,558,948	\$135,622	\$73,002	\$100,046	\$5,867,618
2015	\$14.92	\$5,747,712	\$137,564	\$78,314	\$159,953	\$6,123,543
2016	\$15.90	\$5,876,411	\$152,770	\$81,974	\$178,298	\$6,289,453
2017	\$15.23	\$6,398,282	\$148,944	\$83,820	\$156,052	\$6,787,098
2018	\$15.13	\$6,347,091	\$159,560	\$82,195	\$184,136	\$6,772,982
2019	\$15.22	\$6,669,994	\$180,143	\$82,684	\$196,315	\$7,129,136
2020	\$14.82	\$6,793,972	\$199,948	\$72,997	\$202,461	\$7,269,379
2021	\$14.81	\$6,991,959	\$202,832	\$74,198	\$203,739	\$7,472,728
2022	\$14.00	\$7,236,750	\$173,556	\$70,039	\$225,302	\$7,705,647
2023	\$13.03	\$7,574,025	\$174,262	\$65,713	\$239,998	\$8,053,998

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue

Section 4.3: Commercial and Industrial Development Potential

Agriculture, Business & Commercial Districts

Hubbardston has three zoning districts that allow for a variety of agricultural, commercial, and light industrial uses. They are the Residential-Agricultural District, Town Center District, and the Commercial District. It should be noted that there are several overlay Districts throughout town. At the time of publication, the Planning Board is in development of a Green Industry Overlay to propose to the townspeople at a Town Meeting in the near future.

The Hubbardston Town Center (Business District) allows uses such as, recreation, public and private non-profit educational museums, municipal uses, and home occupation are preferred in this area. Due to large lot and frontage requirements a small retail/social center exists with several businesses located away from the Town Center. Typical downtown development patterns promote a higher density, walkable area.

The Commercial Districts lie adjacent to the Town Center Business District along Worcester Road (Route 68) and the Intersection of Route 68 and Route 62. These districts allow all uses allowed in the residential district and retail or service establishments, (no automobile sales) markets, restaurants (no drive throughs) research labs, light manufacturing, or processing facilities. Hubbardston's commercial district is comprised of 67.27 acres zoned business (Town Center) and 341.60 acres zoned for commercial/industrial translating to .4% of the total land in Hubbardston.

The Residential-Agricultural District is the largest zoning district in town. This District comprises 2,257 acres or 8.4% of the land in Hubbardston. Along with residential use, there are many farms and outdoor recreational uses in this district.

Development Potential & Methodology

The Land Use chapter of this master plan contains an analysis of the development potential of Hubbardston's commercial and industrial districts. It concluded that the Commercial District and the Town Center District have no unconstrained land left to develop. (See figures LU4 and LU9 in the Land Use Chapter).

Increasing the area of town available for industrial and commercial development is one strategy for growing the economic sector. Another is to redevelop established industrial and commercial properties for more intensive use utilizing Smart Growth strategies. The efforts to promote economic development in the Town Center are based on this strategy. Smart Growth is not "no-growth", as growth is needed to keep a place economically and culturally vibrant. This means that some land will be needed to accommodate a place's growth needs.

Infrastructure

Water & Sewer Capacity

Hubbardston is part of the Nashua River watershed. The Nashua River watershed covers an area of 538 square miles within 31 communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Every neighboring town sits over the same high and medium-yield aquifers that run through Hubbardston. Hubbardston is served by private well water and septic.

Hubbardston has been working to develop more sustainable land use practices with a vision to promote more development in the town center while maintaining the rural scenic character of the town. To increase development in the town center, the town will need infrastructure to handle water demands and wastewater discharge. As support, the town's 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Plan (MVP) workshop process again highlighted this necessity and other infrastructure needs under the town's infrastructure vulnerabilities.

In 2011, the town conducted a [public water and sewer feasibility study](#) that provided four wastewater management alternatives for Town Center:

- 1) Title 5 repairs/upgrades
- 2) Shared Septic Systems
- 3) Decentralized wastewater collection treatment System
- 4) Connection to a centralized wastewater collection system

And three water supply alternatives:

- 1) Individual supply
- 2) Public water surface/groundwater
- 3) Interconnection to nearby community

5-year Road Maintenance Plan

The [Town Center Maintenance Plan](#) identifies town center improvements that include roadwork, sidewalks, multi-use lanes, and signage. The estimated work will cost 5.45 million dollars and may be done during FY2020-2023. While these improvements will provide substantial steps toward the economic vitality of the Town Center district, the town will still need to decide on the appropriate wastewater management and water supply systems and explore funding sources that would support existing and future expansion/growth for the Town Center.

Working at Home and Small-Scale Retail

Even prior to the COVID shutdowns, more Americans were establishing home businesses and/or working from their homes. The Internet and advances in home computers have created conditions where people can be quite productive working out of their homes. This trend received a substantial boost from the COVID emergency, and working from home for some or all the work week has now become a common feature of

professional life for many workers and has been recognized by zoning authorities throughout the country as an integral part of the ordinary use of a residential unit. According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 13.6% of Hubbardston residents worked at home in 2022, a sharp increase from 7.4% in 2019. This figure may even undercount the number of residents working from home on any given day, as people who split their time between the office and working from home will often report the office as their workplace. Despite the reopening of the economy, working from home for some or all the work has remained popular. This represents a significant shift in the economy, one which creates several opportunities for communities in the Montachusett region.

First, more Hubbardston residents working in town means more customers for local retail businesses in town, providing the goods and services that office workers would have otherwise purchased in the community they commute to. Further, people working “from home” often spend some of their working time at so-called “third places” – that is, locations such as cafes, libraries, or other gathering spots where someone could sit with a laptop. This dynamic could be especially beneficial to the efforts to promote economic development downtown.

Second, working from home makes it possible for people employed at jobs located in Eastern Massachusetts, where most of the state’s jobs are located, to live in Hubbardston. The length of the commute from Hubbardston to Greater Boston is a significant hindrance when a worker commutes five days a week. The opportunity to work from home a few days a week, and make the commute much less often, opens the possibility of living in a community like Hubbardston.

Taken together, these factors can create a virtuous cycle in which more workers fuel a resurgence of business in town, particularly downtown, further enhancing the town’s quality of life and fiscal strength and attracting more residents to support business development. It is important to note that any benefits of increased working from home will be dependent on Hubbardston having sufficient internet services to meet the expectations of modern office workers. See the infrastructure section below for a discussion of IT services.

The phenomenon of working from home has yet another significant implication for economic development: the decline of the office market. Communities with large amounts of office space, especially urban downtowns, and suburban office parks, are experiencing high levels of vacancy, requiring them to reevaluate their economic development strategies. For Hubbardston, this means that the development of commercial office space is unlikely to play a significant role in the town’s economic development in the foreseeable future.

Section 4.4: Economic Resources

Local Economic Development Policy Makers and Advocates

The **Economic Development Committee** is made up of 7 members, who will be appointed by the Select Board for a term of three years. A member of the Select Board and a member of the Planning Board shall be ex-officio members. The mission

of the Committee is to “improve the community’s quality of life through an expanded local business base that respects and contributes to Hubbardston’s community character and improves the economic well-being of all its residents”. Economic development policies seek to create local servicing of resident’s needs, increased local employment opportunities, and other benefits that have been identified by the community.

The **Agricultural Commission** was established in 2006 to represent the Hubbardston farming community. The Commission consists of five members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Commission must include a minimum of three members who are actively engaged in agriculture in Hubbardston and another two who are "supporters" of agriculture. The Commission serves as facilitators for encouraging the pursuit of agriculture in town and promoting agricultural-based economic opportunities. The **Agricultural Advisory Committee** is a subcommittee of the Agricultural Commission.

The **Select Board** is comprised of five elected members that serve five-year terms and acts as the primary policy-making body for a wide variety of issues, which affect the Town's development and provision of services. The 2024 Goals and Objectives of the Hubbardston Select Board includes supporting measures that increase opportunity for economic development in the town.

The **Planning Board** is comprised of five elected members that serve five-year terms. There is one alternate member that is appointed by the Board of Selectmen for a one-year term. The Board’s operating guidelines are the Town of Hubbardston’s Zoning By-laws, the Hubbardston Subdivision Rules and Regulations, the Hubbardston Earth Removal Regulations, the Massachusetts State Zoning Act (Chapter 40A), and the Massachusetts State Subdivision Control Law (Chapter 41B Section 81A and 81GG). Amongst many things the Planning Board is responsible for updating and implementation of the Town of Hubbardston’s Master Plan.

Regional Economic Resources

In 1994, the communities within the Montachusett Region worked in cooperation with the **Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)** to create this region’s first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or CEDS. MRPC has a current contract with the federal Economic Development Administration to deliver economic development technical assistance to communities such as grant writing and economic study and analysis.

MRPC provides staff support to the **Montachusett Region CEDS committee** which meets jointly at least three times per year. Members have several roles and activities including but not limited to providing guidance on regional economic issues, periodical updates, and amendments of the CEDS document (input, draft reviews, and adoption), guidance, direction, and advice concerning grant opportunities.

The Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce¹ serves seven towns one of which is Hubbardston. The Chamber mission is to build a strong local economy and quality of

¹ <https://gardnerma.com/>

life by promoting economic, civic, and social development through informed and involved members from the seven communities the Chamber serves.

The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce² is a business advocacy, economic development organization working to create and sustain relationships among businesses and between businesses and the community. Everything the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce does is to create an environment where businesses can grow and be successful. A thriving business community means a thriving economy, and a thriving economy means a thriving community.

The **Montachusett Agricultural Alliance (MAA)³** began in 2016 as Farming Beyond Borders. MAA is a group of interested community members – agricultural commissioners, vendors from local farmer's markets, farmers of all sizes, homesteaders, and the community at large – from across North Worcester County in Massachusetts. The Alliance is interested in agriculture in all its forms of food, fiber, fats, flowers, and fuel and how these working landscapes build and support communities.

Massachusetts State Economic Resources

Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) of Massachusetts⁴ promotes vibrant communities, growing businesses, and a strong middle class. The 2024 Massachusetts Economic Development Plan amongst other business development resources can be found here.

The Town of Hubbardston should proactively promote itself to the outside world by preparing marketing materials (both paper and web-based) that highlight Hubbardston's many resources that may be of interest to visitors and spur economic activity & growth. Recreation, history, arts, and culture should be considered vital economic development activities. Hubbardston has abundant, attractive open space resources which include trails, woodlands and conservation lands generating an opportunity for multi-season uses, including hiking, cross-country skiing, etc. with potential to draw visitors to Hubbardston from as far away as Nashua, Boston, and Worcester.

What is the multiplier effect?

This is an economic principle which states that every dollar you spend in an economy has a broader effect on the overall economic system. A more formal definition of the multiplier effect is that if there is a change in income or employment in a local economy which is caused by a new type of economic activity.

² <https://www.northcentralmass.com/>

³ <https://montachusettagriculturalalliance.com/>

⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/executive-office-of-economic-development>

Section ED4.5: Goals and Actions

Vision:

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

Goals and Actions

ED1: Maintain the Hubbardston Economic Development Committee and facilitate the Town's existing permitting process.

- **ED1.1:** The Economic Development Committee should continue to meet on a regular basis.
- **ED1.2:** Continue to ensure that current economic development information is listed on the Town's website.
- **ED1.3:** The EDC should consider requesting an annual needs-based budget from the Town to cover the cost of mailings, outreach, advertising, and training.
- **ED1.4:** Develop a comprehensive development permitting guidebook to assist all customers with projects of any type and scale or that need to obtain any permit and develop separate handouts for more substantive processes that require additional detail or guidance.
- **ED1.5:** The Town should consider identifying a development liaison in Town Offices to walk customers through the process and serve as a point of contact for questions and progress.
- **ED1.6:** The Town should consider forming a Pre-Application Review Committee, as other communities have, to help applicants and potential applicants through the development review and permit process.

Goal ED2: Support existing business operations – large and small – to make certain that local businesses can evolve and continue to provide jobs and revenue to the town in future years.

- **ED2.1:** Develop a survey instrument that can be used to solicit information from existing businesses as to their level of satisfaction with Hubbardston as the location for their operations.
- **ED2.2:** Host a meeting of business owners in town to hear from Hubbardston business owners and/or representatives of businesses.
- **ED2.3:** Create a list of all businesses located in Hubbardston that can be accessed on the town's website to let residents and businesses alike know what the community has to offer.

Goal ED3: Support the local economy and the sustainability of existing businesses and attract new ones that fit in with the community while protecting environmental values.

- **ED3.1:** Hubbardston should work to boost consumer demand and support for local businesses by instituting “buy local” initiatives.
- **ED3.2:** Identify and develop ways for residents to support local agricultural businesses.
- **ED3.3:** Research and consider applying for any grants that may provide opportunity to support local business such as the USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program.

Goal ED4: Promote smart growth and sustainability by strategically planning to improve infrastructure in appropriate areas.

- **ED4-1:** Continue to seek out federal and state funds for road improvements and participate in the transportation planning process at MRPC.
- **ED4-2:** Town officials should continue to ensure that key road projects are listed on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and actively press for regular funding of local projects.

Goal ED5: Promote Hubbardston’s many resources that may be of interest to visitors.

- **ED5.1:** Prepare and distribute a brochure (both paper and web-based) that highlights Hubbardston’s many resources that may be of interest to visitors.
- **ED5.2:** The Town of Hubbardston should continue to have frequent special events and fundraisers to help promote local businesses, organizations, and community.