



HINSDALE VISION PLAN



Town of Hinsdale,
Massachusetts



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Hinsdale Mission & Vision Working Group
& Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Draft



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Town Boards, Committees, and Staff

Residents of Hinsdale

Draft



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Vision Plan for Hinsdale

The Hinsdale Vision Plan began development in early 2016 and was completed in 2017. A Vision Plan is an advisory document that sets a clear direction for the community. The Vision Plan is intended to guide policy decisions, investment, and decision-making for the next 10-15 years.

PROCESS

The Hinsdale Vision Plan was created through a broad public outreach process that included:

- A public opinion survey
- Public forums
- Listening sessions with different groups in town
- Stakeholder interviews with board and committee members, town staff, and others
- Vision Plan Committee meetings

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

The Vision Plan individual chapters are focused around a single aspect of life in town. Each chapter begins with a vision statement that describes the desired future condition related to the topic. After the vision statement is a section of narrative that describes the existing conditions for each topic area. Each chapter ends with a set of goals, objectives, and actions that when implemented will help achieve the vision. The goals, objectives, and actions are the heart of the plan. They are the specific items and projects the town will focus on as it implements the plan.

VISION

Hinsdale, a rural, tranquil, and family-friendly town, supports a strong local economy, provides a wide range of valuable public services and amenities, carefully stewards its treasured open spaces, and maintains rich cultural, recreational, and scenic resources that collectively foster a strong sense of place and community vitality that benefits its residents and visitors.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Population and Demographics

Hinsdale's 2014 year-round population of 2,161 has been slowly growing, unlike most other Berkshire

County communities, and it is projected to continue to grow slowly and steadily. Hinsdale's population is aging with 55% of the population projected to be age 55 or over by the year 2030 while the school-aged population is projected to decrease.

Economy

Small local businesses dominate the business activity in Hinsdale. The U.S. Census American Community Survey found that 64.3% of the population over the age of 16 was considered employed. Another 6.4% was considered unemployed, and 29.3% was considered "not in the labor force," meaning they are neither employed nor seeking work.

Hinsdale's vision for the economy is to create a culture that supports existing businesses and encourages new businesses to locate in Hinsdale, through supportive policies, practices, and regulations without sacrificing town's bucolic nature.

Economy Goals

- Goal 1: Strengthen the Local Economy
- Goal 2: Support Existing Businesses
- Goal 3: Attract New Businesses to Town
- Goal 4: Enhance Access to Local Businesses and Public Gathering Locations
- Goal 5: Enhance Community Attractiveness to Attract New Visitors, Residents, and Businesses

Infrastructure

The Town of Hinsdale maintains a variety of public buildings and facilities in order to administer services to town residents. Some of the buildings are over 100 years old, and each requires periodic maintenance. The building that currently serves as the Hinsdale Town Hall and Police Station is undergoing a series of upgrades to improve its technology infrastructure. The 1848 building known as the Community Center is currently vacant, and repairs are ongoing. A decision is needed about the building's future use.

Hinsdale's vision for infrastructure is to regularly assess and evaluate the town's assets, provide for consistent and adequately funded maintenance,

upgrade, and replacement to meet the current and anticipated needs of the town.

Infrastructure Goals

- Goal 1: Ensure that the Town's Infrastructure is Accessible to All
- Goal 2: Have Town Building and Facilities that are in Good Condition to Meet Current and Anticipated Town Needs
- Goal 3: Maintain and Upgrade the Town's Technology Infrastructure
- Goal 4: Improve Water and Sewer Infrastructure
- Goal 5: Understand the Relationship of the Library and the Town
- Goal 6: Have a Multi-Use Community Center that is an Asset for All Ages

Services

The Select Board is the chief governing body in Hinsdale, and the Chair of the Select Board is the Chief Executive Officer. The three member board is elected for staggered three-year terms. The Town Administrator answers to the Select Board and enforces its policies, while providing a professional, full-time presence in Town Hall.

Hinsdale's vision for services is to provide a high level of cost-effective services to promote the safety, well-being, and advancement of its residents that are customer-oriented and proactively managed to adapt to constantly evolving and changing needs and preferences.

Services Goals

- Goal 1: Provide Efficient and Fiscally Responsible Services
- Goal 2: Provide Effective Town Government
- Goal 3: Enhance Services to Address Changing Demographics
- Goal 4: Enhance Services for Hinsdale Families

Housing

As of the 2010 Census, 19% of Hinsdale's 1,133 housing units were classified as seasonal, while 77% were year-round, and the remaining 4% were vacant.

25% of all households are currently considered "housing cost burdened," meaning that housing costs are equal to or greater than 30% of household income. The median sales price of a home in Hinsdale increased by over \$114,000 between 2000 and 2014.

Hinsdale's vision for housing is to encourage attractive and well-maintained housing that meets the needs of its current residents of all ages and income levels, attracts new residents to town, respects the rural character of the town, and minimizes impact on the environment.

Housing Goals

- Goal 1: Provide a Range of Housing Options
- Goal 2: Enhance Community Attractiveness to Maintain or Increase Property Values
- Goal 3: Promote Environmentally Responsible Housing
- Goal 4: Enable More Residents (and Prospective Residents) to Afford Housing

Transportation

There are 50.72 miles of road in Hinsdale, of which 5.07 miles are under MassDOT's jurisdiction, 5.62 miles are privately owned, 0.94 miles are of unknown jurisdiction, and the remaining 39.09 miles are town accepted roads. The town has adopted a Complete Streets policy and is seeking funding to make improvements to bicycle and pedestrian conditions, and to increase safety for all users. For a rural town like Hinsdale, transportation is an important issue.

Hinsdale's vision for transportation is to proactively maintain and upgrade its transportation system annually, use a consistent level of local and state funding, employ the best practices to minimize impacts to the environment and rural character, and meet the needs of all ages and transportation modes, including transit, walking, and bicycling.

Transportation Goals

- Goal 1: Provide a Safe and Well-Maintained Transportation System that Accommodates Vehicles, Pedestrians, and Cyclists



- Goal 2: Increase Access to Public and Alternative Transportation
- Goal 3: Enhance Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation in Town
- Goal 4: Integrate Transportation Improvements with Other Important Town Items

Land Use

Hinsdale's residential areas form fairly distinct neighborhood communities, from the dense settlement of the town center, to the three lakeside communities that each have their own homeowner's association, to the two mobile home parks outside of the urban area. Of Hinsdale's 13,878 total acres, 76.3% are made up of forest land, including forested wetlands. Hinsdale has by-laws governing the permitting of both small wind energy systems and photovoltaic installations that address public safety and minimize impacts on scenic, natural and historic resources of the town, while allowing these alternative energy sources to be utilized.

Hinsdale's vision for land use is to maintain the rural nature of the town while encouraging residential and commercial expansion and development according to an orderly and efficient development review process that respects property rights and values and minimizes impact on the environment.

Land Use Goals

- Goal 1: Maintain the Town's Rural Character
- Goal 2: Use Land Use Planning and Zoning to Accomplish Recommendations in the Vision Plan

Natural and Cultural Resources

The Town of Hinsdale has an abundance of natural and cultural resources including extensive wildlife habitat, important wetland areas and water resources, as well as historic buildings. Hinsdale hosts water reservoirs and/or watershed lands which provide drinking water for Hinsdale and three neighboring towns, as well as the headwaters for the East Branch of the Housatonic River, several contributing tributaries, and more than 1,500 acres of wetlands. The Hinsdale Flats ACEC is approximately 14,500 acres in size and recognizes the

ecological significance of the area and heightens awareness and concern for this ecological treasure.

Hinsdale's vision for natural and cultural resources is to recognize the importance of its rural and natural heritage by responsibly stewarding its historic, cultural, natural, and scenic resources for the appropriate utilization and enjoyment of residents, visitors, and future generations while enhancing these resources through a combination of strategic land acquisition, adoption of forward-thinking by-laws and policies, utilization of best management practices, and working in partnership with the schools and all pertinent state and federal resource management agencies.

Natural and Cultural Resource Goals

- Goal 1: Protect, Maintain and Promote the Town's Historic and Cultural Assets
- Goal 2: Protect Important Water and Natural Resources
- Goal 3: Protect Soils, Forests, and Other Natural Environments

Open Space and Recreation

The Town of Hinsdale has thousands of acres of public and privately owned recreation lands, as well as opportunities for a range of activities including hiking, bicycling, boating, swimming, fishing, and hunting. Hinsdale has over 6,800 acres of protected open space, some of which is permanently protected. Hinsdale has a wide variety of outdoor recreation options, ranging from hiking on the Appalachian Trail, boating on one of Hinsdale's lakes, utilizing the town's playground, to recreational activities at one of the many private camps.

Hinsdale's vision for open space and recreational resources is to continue to preserve, protect and support open spaces and well-maintained publicly owned recreation areas enabling a diversity of passive and active recreational interests that recognize the important role that they play in the lives of residents and visitors as well as contributing to the vibrancy of the town.

Open Space and Recreation Goals

- Goal 1: Increase Capacity to Pursue Open Space and Recreational Opportunities
- Goal 2: Preserve Land for Open Space and Recreational Uses
- Goal 3: Increase and Improve Recreational Opportunities

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The plan calls for numerous actions. To make implementation easier, the final chapter lists each action and assigns a relative time, priority, and who is responsible for initiating the implementation of the action. Ideally, the town will use this tool as it plans annual priorities from year-to-year.



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This Vision Plan for the Town of Hinsdale was developed in 2016-2017 to guide growth, policy, and investment decisions for the next 10 to 20 years. This chapter provides background to the planning process and describes the content of different chapters of the plan for easy reference and use.

WELCOME TO HINSDALE!

Hinsdale is a rural hill town community in the beautiful Berkshires of Western Massachusetts. The Berkshires are renowned for their natural beauty, rich arts and culture, and small New England town charm. Hinsdale is bordered to the north by the Town of Windsor, to the east by the Town of Peru, to the south by the Town of Washington, and to the west by the Town of Dalton (see Map 1 at the back of this chapter).

Hinsdale was incorporated in 1804 and was named for Rev. Theodore Hinsdale, an early resident and leader in the movement for incorporation. Hinsdale former economies—built around stagecoach travel, then mills, sheep farming, and the railroad—have all disappeared and Hinsdale is now largely a bedroom community with a summer population based around local camps and lakeside cottages. Nevertheless, the year-round population of Hinsdale is at an all-time high of 2,161 in 2014.

WHAT DOES THIS PLAN ADDRESS?

This plan addresses a wide range of issues and priorities as expressed through public involvement and analysis of existing conditions. Some highlights, which illustrate recurring themes in the plan and its policies, include:

Aging Population and Workforce

The increased number of older residents may affect the range of services the town wishes to provide as well as the range of housing options available. Additionally, it makes issues such as the need for universal accessibility to town buildings or amenities more important due to potential mobility impairment issues. The town also faces a shortage of labor in the coming decades as older workers retire and fewer young workers are available to take their place. The



Welcome to Hinsdale Sign

Town of Hinsdale will need to find ways to help bring young adults to the town to sustain its businesses.

Reduction in Youth and Middle-Age Residents

The projected decreasing size of the under 55 age groups can also impact the town. Families with young children add vitality and energy to a community; a decrease in these age groups can affect the overall dynamic of the town. Also, Hinsdale businesses and the town government—including police, fire, and ambulatory services—rely on local employees and volunteers.

New Businesses and Economic Development

The public survey results show a demand for increased agriculture, professional services, and personal services. The Town of Hinsdale will need to explore ways to attract these types of enterprises to the town.

Community Center

The historic Community Center building has been vacant since the Hinsdale Youth Center closed. It is slowly getting repaired but does not currently have a planned use to be a strong asset to the town

Infrastructure Maintenance

Infrastructure is one of the primary assets of the town. Appropriate maintenance and repair is the best way to protect the town's, and hence the taxpayers', investments. A robust capital planning program and regular maintenance, repair, and upgrading is key to maintaining infrastructure.

Re-Establishing Trust in Government

The public survey indicated that residents are looking for improved local government after a few years of turmoil between residents and the Select Board. Many survey respondents did not feel informed about town government affairs. It is important for town officials to regain the trust of the residents and build consensus around a direction for the town.

Housing Affordability

One quarter of residents in Hinsdale are housing cost burdened, and the median sales price of a home in Hinsdale has skyrocketed since 2000. Affordable housing options will need to be considered to retain and attract people to live in Hinsdale.

Funding for Road Maintenance

The town currently relies on state funds through the Chapter 90 program for road maintenance activities. However, the public has complained about road conditions and some residents would like to see tax dollars spent on road maintenance in the future. The town will need to decide how best to fund road maintenance going forward.

Complete Streets

As a rural community, the predominant form of transportation is by automobiles or trucks. Hinsdale does, however, have a defined village area in the center of town that could benefit from improved bicycle and pedestrian conditions to encourage those uses.

Rural Character

The rural nature of the town is why most residents choose to live in Hinsdale. Hinsdale's local land use regulations, including zoning, could be improved to

better maintain the towns' rural character.

Desired Development

Hinsdale could influence future development in the town center, make land attractive for commercial or industrial development, protect open spaces and better utilize existing sewer through innovative zoning by-laws.

Water Quality

Hinsdale contains the headwaters to the east branch of the Housatonic River, as well as reservoirs that supply drinking water to four towns. Maintaining excellent water quality is critically important.

Rare Plant and Animal Species

Hinsdale is home to several state-listed species that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern. Special consideration should be given to any decisions that could adversely affect these species.

Historic Preservation

Hinsdale has many historic resources that do not currently have any official designation or formal protection.

Public Beach at Ashmere Lake

Despite being a state park, there is currently no public beach at Ashmere Lake; the only public access is a boat launch from a back road.

Need for More Trails/Paths

The public survey results indicate that there is some demand for more walking paths or hiking trails in the town's Open Space. Currently the only identified trails are the short and easy Old Mill Trail, and the longer and more strenuous Appalachian Trail.

ABOUT VISION PLANS

A Vision Plan is a document that sets a blueprint for town decision-makers to use in their day-to-day actions as part of managing the town. It is an advisory document not a regulatory document. The purpose of



this plan is to create an opportunity for the town to reflect and determine what it wants for its future and then chart out the preferred actions to achieve that vision. It is then the responsibility of the town's elected and appointed officials to pursue the actions identified in the implementation chapter of this plan to gradually make the regulatory changes and priority investments needed to achieve the vision statement.

How does the Vision Plan Relate to Other Town Plans and Documents?

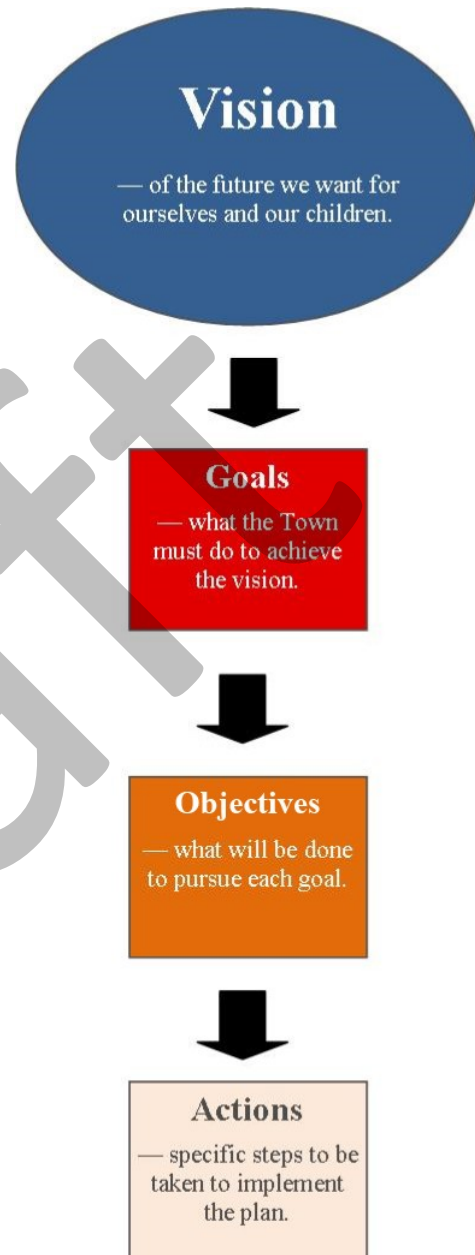
The Vision Plan takes precedence over other plans of the community such as transportation plans, open space and recreation plans, area plans, and other area-or topic-specific documents. The Vision Plan is typically more general than more focused plan documents but provides overarching guidance to the content of these plans in that they should be consistent with the policies established in the Vision Plan.

An important function of the Vision Plan is to ensure priorities and approaches in one area such as land use relate to another, such as transportation. Because all of the topics are addressed within a single document, the policies in these different areas are developed to be consistent and supportive, thus safeguarding the potential danger of conflicting policies that can occur in a more fragmented planning approach. Other town plans can then use this framework to reach a finer level of detail in a particular subject area.

While the Vision Plan is not a regulatory document, it does set the policy for the town to develop new by-laws to regulate land use decisions. For more on how the plan impacts land use and by-law decisions see Chapter 8: Land Use.

WHAT DOES THE PLAN CONTAIN?

Vision Plan guidance is provided in a number of ways, including maps of current and desired conditions, illustrations of concepts, and policy language. At the core of the plan is a vision statement of the overarching objectives the town wants to accomplish for its future. The Vision is the foundation for a



number of goals and more specific policy and action statements. Together these establish the blueprint for what the town will do to achieve its vision and will serve as a guide for town policy and decision-makers for the life of the plan.

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 greater detail on the different pieces that the town will need to pursue in order to make the vision a reality.

Objectives

These are the specific strategies that the town will pursue to achieve the goal.

Actions

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

THE PLANNING PROCESS

This plan was developed through a planning process that included a few key ways of participation and feedback from the community:

Hinsdale Vision & Mission Working Group

The driving force behind the plan was the Hinsdale Vision and Mission Working Group, which met 26 times between January 2016 and June 2017 to review draft work products and provide direction on the vision, goals, policies, and actions identified in this plan.

Public Survey

A survey was developed to gain feedback from Hinsdale residents regarding aspects of the Vision Plan. The survey was made open to the public on May 18, 2016 and was concluded on June 30, 2016. Over 240 year-round residents, seasonal residents, second homeowners, and business owners responded to the survey.

Listening Sessions

The Vision and Mission Working Group began holding listening sessions in November 2016. Over the course of 3 months, 3 listening sessions held, mostly through existing groups and gatherings, but also including one specially scheduled public forum.

PLAN OVERVIEW

This plan contains thirteen total chapters including this introduction that address the following aspects of the town:

Chapter 2: Population and Demographics

This chapter presents population and demographic trends in Hinsdale and outlines key issues.

Chapter 3: Economy

This chapter provides an overview of the key economic sectors present in the town and makes recommendations for how the town can support the retention and expansion of economic activity in the future.

Chapter 4: Infrastructure

This chapter contains an overview of town infrastructure including drinking water wells, public buildings and facilities, and town technology infrastructure, such as the town website and computers. This chapter makes recommendations for future infrastructure improvement and development.

Chapter 5: Services

This chapter provides an overview of the fire, police, and other services provided in the town; setting goals and policies for the town to pursue to maintain and enhance services in the future.

Chapter 6: Housing

This chapter provides an overview of housing supply and needs, both now and in the future. It then presents town goals and policies to address future housing in the town including options for young professionals, families, and seniors.

Chapter 7: Transportation

This chapter highlights key features and issues with the current transportation system in the town and then establishes goals and policies for the town to pursue to maintain and enhance this system in the future.



Chapter 8: Land Use

This chapter contains a description of the current land use patterns and constraints; identifying goals and policies for future land use.

Chapter 9: Natural and Cultural Resources

This chapter summarizes the natural environment, as well as cultural and historic attributes of the town and sets goals and objectives for the town to pursue.

Chapter 10: Open Space and Recreation

This chapter summarizes the open space and recreation elements of the town and sets goals and objectives for the town to pursue.

Chapter 11: Vision

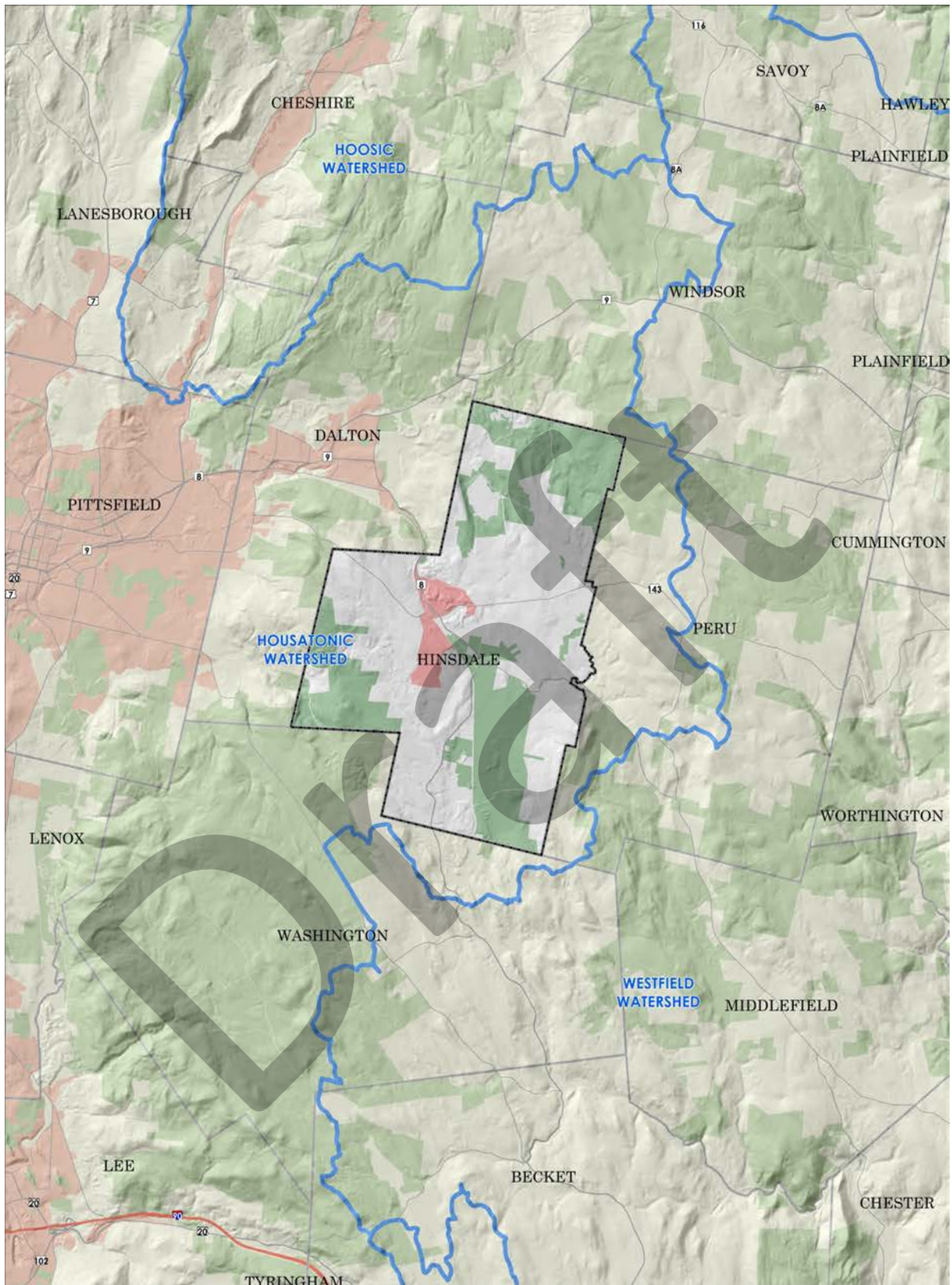
This chapter contains the vision statement for the town; the concise statement of what residents want their town to be like in the future.

Chapter 12: Process

This chapter outlines the public process that was used to develop the Vision Plan.

Chapter 13: Implementation Strategy

This chapter contains an overview of the different types of actions that will be needed to implement the plan and the range of entities that will be involved in that process. Additionally, it includes the Implementation Strategy, which details the actions, responsible parties, relative priority, and potential funding sources for each action called for in the plan.



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, BRPC or the municipality may have supplied portions of this data.



- Towns
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Major Watersheds
- Protected Land
- Urbanized Area



0 0.5 1
Miles

Town of Hinsdale

Vision Plan

Map 1
Regional Context



CHAPTER 2: POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

Historic and Projected Growth Rates

The estimated population in Hinsdale in 2014 was 2,161 residents, according to the American Community Survey. This is the peak population for the town, up from an all-time low of 780 in 1830, per U.S. Census data. There has been a generally increasing trend since 1920, with slight dips in population in 1960 and 2000.

Population projections from the Donahue Institute at UMass Amherst show that the population will likely continue to slowly yet steadily increase. Between 2015-2035, an increase of approximately 8% is anticipated, with a future population predicted to be 2,258 (see Table 2.1). Overall, the population of Berkshire County is projected to decrease.

Population Age

Comparing the American Community Survey's (ACS) 5-year average from 2010-2014 to the U.S. Census from 2000 shows that the population of Hinsdale is aging. The median age has increased from 38 to 46.6 years old. In the same 14-year period, the percentage of 55 and over residents has increased from 21% to 31%. This trend is projected to continue, with the 55+ age group estimated to comprise approximately 55% of the population in 2030 (see Figure 2.1). See Table 2.2 for more age data.

Over the same 20 year period from 2010 to 2030, the age 20-54 cohort, which represents the primary workforce population, is projected to decrease by 30% (from 914 to 642), and similarly the youngest members of the population, ages 0 to 19, are projected to decrease by 16% (from 434 to 365).



Town Playground

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS AT A GLANCE

Population Growth

Unlike most Berkshire County towns, the population of Hinsdale has been slowly growing and is projected to continue to grow.

Age

Hinsdale's population is aging, with 55% of the population projected to be age 55 or over by the year 2030. In addition, school enrollment dropped almost 35% between 2000 and 2014.

Diversity

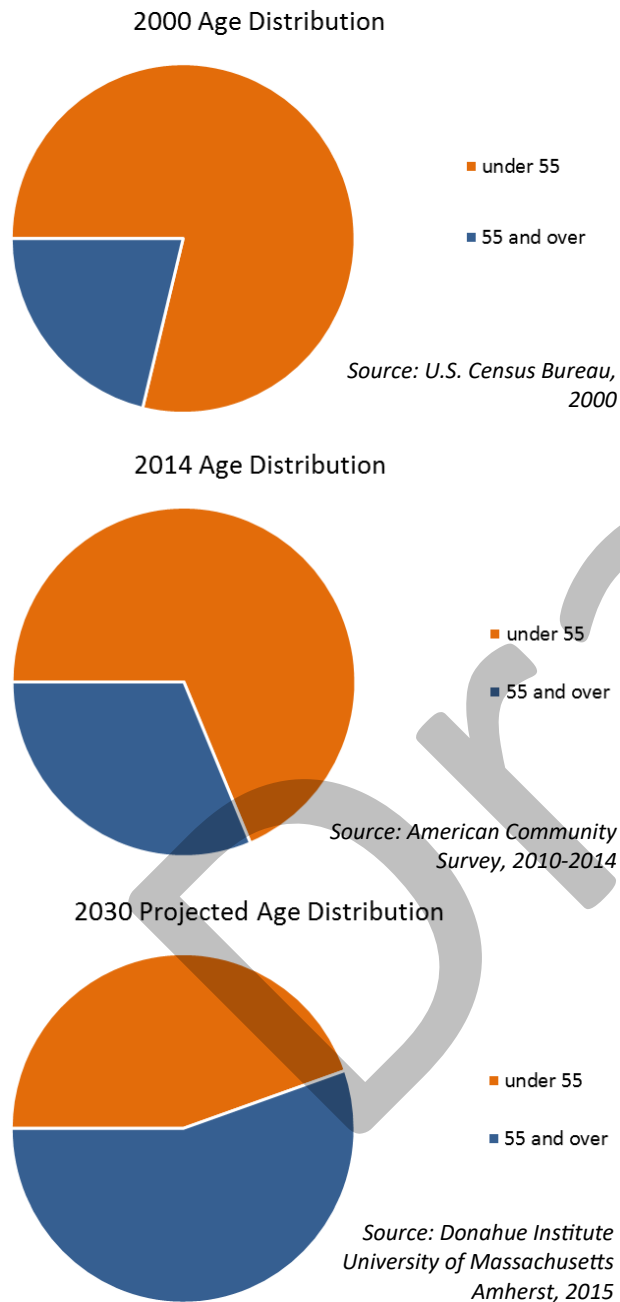
While the majority of town residents are white, data suggests that the population is beginning to diversify somewhat.

TABLE 2.1 - Projected Population Change in Hinsdale from 2010 to 2035

Source: Donahue Institute University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2015

Year	U.S. Census 2010	Projection 2015	Projection 2020	Projection 2025	Projection 2030	Projection 2035	Projected 2015-2035 Change
Population	2,032	2,095	2,177	2,240	2,257	2,258	+ 163 (8%)

Figure 2.1 - Age Distribution of Hinsdale Residents in 2000, 2014, and 2030



Some of this change may be attributable to the aging of existing town residents, as well as outward migration of young people who move away to pursue jobs or educational opportunities elsewhere.

The decreasing number of younger residents and increasing number of older residents is a trend that has been identified in county-wide planning.

This trend also reveals itself in school enrollment data. Between the 2000-2001 school year and the 2014-2015 school year, there has been a 34% decrease in overall school enrollment (378 and 248 students, respectively) and a 36% decrease in public school enrollment (357 and 228 students, respectively).

Hinsdale is part of the Central Berkshire Regional School District, which also includes the towns of Dalton, Windsor, Peru, Washington, Becket, and Cummington, and receives school choice students. Kittredge Elementary School in Hinsdale contains Kindergarten through 5th grades, and accepts students from both Hinsdale and Peru. All students in the district travel to Dalton to attend Nessacus Regional Middle School for 6th through 8th grades, and Wahconah Regional High School for 9th through 12th.

Enrollment of Hinsdale students in the Central Berkshire Regional School District has dropped from 90% in 2000-2001 to 83% in 2014-2015, although overall public school enrollment (including vocational technical regional schools and out-of-district public schools) remained high at 91.9% for the 2014-2015 school year. There has been an increase in school choice of Hinsdale students to out-of-district public schools (from 8 to 21) and an increase in home-schooled students (0 to 7). (See Table 2.3)

Figure 2.2 - Births and Deaths in Hinsdale 2000-2010

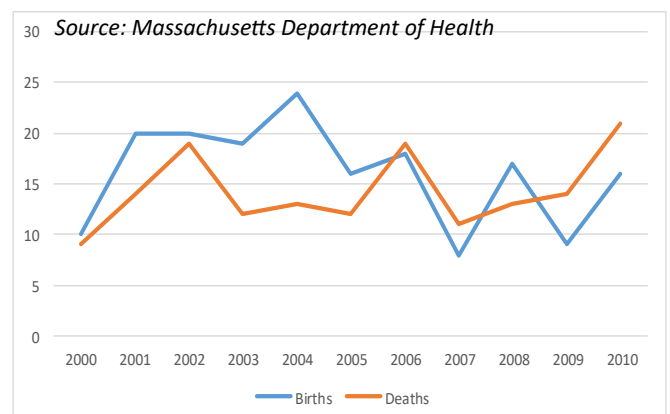




Table 2.2 - Hinsdale Population Characteristics 2000-2014

Sources: 2000 US Census, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

	2000		2014	
Total Population	1,872	100%	2,161	100%
Under 5 years	109	6%	54	2%
5 to 9 years	125	7%	156	7%
10 to 14 years	169	9%	169	8%
15 to 19 years	120	6%	156	7%
20 to 24 years	96	5%	64	3%
25 to 34 years	219	12%	96	4%
35 to 44 years	339	18%	345	16%
45 to 54 years	298	16%	444	21%
55 to 59 years	95	5%	198	9%
60 to 64 years	91	5%	145	7%
65 to 74 years	120	6%	179	8%
75 to 84 years	81	4%	67	3%
85 years and over	10	1%	88	4%
Median Age	38.0		46.6	
Number of Households	739.0		869.0	
Average Household Size	2.53		2.49	
Minority Population (%)	2.2%		3.0%	
Median Household Income	\$ 42,697.00		\$ 63,953.00	
Families Below Poverty Level (%)	6.0%		2.2%	
Mean Travel Time to Work (Minutes)	22.1		24.0	
Population Density (Residents/mi ²)	86.3		99.6	

TABLE 2.3 - School Enrollment of Hinsdale Students in 2000-2001 and 2014-2015

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

School Type	Regional Academic Schools	Regional Vocational Technical Schools	Charter Schools	Out-of-District Public Schools	Home Schooled	In State Private & Parochial Schools	Total Public School	Total Overall Enrollment
2000-2001	342	7	0	8	0	21	357	378
2014-2015	207	0	0	21	7	13	228	248

Births and Deaths

Births and deaths in Hinsdale between 2000 and 2010 both average about 16 and 14 per year, respectively, but can fluctuate greatly from year to year, as shown in Figure 2.2.

Race and Ethnicity

The vast majority of Hinsdale's population (97%) is white. Within the remaining percentage of the population, there were some changes between the 2000 Census and the 2014 ACS estimates. For instance, the number of African-Americans has doubled from 10 to 21, and American Indian and Alaska Natives have been estimated to have increased from 0 to 17.

KEY POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES

Aging Population

The increased number of older residents may affect the range of services the town wishes to provide as well as the range of housing options available. Additionally, it makes issues such as the need for universal accessibility to town buildings or amenities more important due to potential mobility impairment issues.

Reduction in Youth and Middle-Age Residents

The projected decreasing size of the under 55 age groups can also impact the town. Families with young children add vitality and energy to a community; a decrease in these age groups can affect the overall dynamic of the town. Also, Hinsdale businesses and the town government—including police, fire, and ambulatory services—rely on local employees and volunteers.



CHAPTER 3: ECONOMY

Hinsdale's vision for the town's economy:

Hinsdale creates a culture that supports existing businesses and encourages new businesses to locate in Hinsdale, through supportive policies, practices and regulations without sacrificing town's bucolic nature.

This chapter reviews the composition of economic activity in the town and then details the goals, objectives and actions for the town to take to achieve its vision for the Hinsdale economy.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

Brief History of Economic Development

Originally settled as an agricultural community, Hinsdale prospered during the 18th and early 19th centuries as a flourishing textile mill community. Residents of Pittsfield commuted by trolley to work in Hinsdale. The arrival of the railroad industry brought more jobs and wealth to the town which became an industrial and economic center. During these years a public water and sewer systems were constructed to serve the downtown area. By the mid-1900s, the mills had left and railroad activity had decreased. Many historic, unused buildings—including the mills and the depot—were razed in the late 20th century, changing the face of the town. The character of the town slowly changed as job opportunities disappeared and the town became a bedroom community to the city of Pittsfield.

Labor Force

As of the 2010-2014 American Community Survey, the total number of residents age 16 and older in Hinsdale was 1,735 persons, or approximately 80.3% of the total estimated population of the town (2,161 residents). Of this population, 70.7% (1,226 individuals) are considered "in the labor force." Of those individuals 64.3% are employed. The remaining 29.3% are considered "not in the labor force."

It is important to note how employment figures are calculated. Only persons over the age of 16 who are not members of the military, or institutionalized (such as in prison, in a nursing home, or mental health



Downtown Hinsdale

ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

Composition

Small local businesses dominate the business activity in Hinsdale, in particular businesses such as cleaning services, auto mechanics, and other repair services.

Employment

64.3% of the population over the age of 16 was considered employed according to data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey. Another 6.4% was considered unemployed, and 29.3% was considered "not in the labor force," meaning they are neither employed nor seeking work.

Survey Results

Half of survey respondents were in favor of encouraging business development in Hinsdale, and over 70% of respondents favored expanding farming/agriculture; professional services, such as architects, engineers, or accountants; and personal services, such as hairdressers or fitness trainers.

Table 3.1 - Employment Status by Age, Town of Hinsdale, MA*Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey*

AGE (Population 16 years and over only)	Estimated Number of Individuals	Employed	% of pop. age 16 and older	Unemployed (Laid off or looking for work)	% of pop. age 16 and older	Individuals Not in Labor Force (Not employed, laid off or looking for work)	% of pop. age 16 and older
16 to 19 years	109	53	3.1%	13	0.8%	43	2.5%
20 to 24 years	64	43	2.5%	15	0.9%	6	0.3%
25 to 44 years	441	313	18.0%	48	2.8%	80	4.6%
45 to 54 years	444	390	22.5%	9	0.5%	45	2.6%
55 to 64 years	343	252	14.5%	21	1.2%	70	4.0%
65 to 74 years	179	50	2.9%	4	0.2%	125	7.2%
75 years and over	155	15	0.9%	0	0.0%	140	8.1%
Total	1,735	1,116	64.3%	110	6.4%	509	29.3%

facility) are used to calculate employment figures. This population of individuals over the age of 16 is considered the population that is eligible to work. Employed and unemployed individuals are combined to estimate what is considered the “civilian labor force.” Individuals who have received any payment for work are considered employed. Individuals who are laid off from work or are actively seeking employment are considered unemployed. Individuals who are not employed, laid off, or actively seeking employment are considered not in the labor force. Individuals in this category might include retirees, homemakers, students, the independently wealthy, or a person without a job who has stopped looking for work (perhaps temporarily). A person in this last category is sometimes referred to as a “discouraged worker.”

The unemployment rate of Hinsdale was measured as 6.4% during the American Community Survey, and represents an estimated 110 out of 1,735 individuals. This value is lower than the value for the county (9.4% according to the American Community Survey).

The American Community Survey is able to provide a breakdown of employment status by age within the Town of Hinsdale (see Table 3.1). Only 3.8% of 16- to 19- year-olds are considered to be in the workforce, and 80% of that age cohort in the workforce is employed. Those from this group that are not in the

workforce might represent high school or college students who are attending school and do not have a job. It could also include recent graduates who have not yet begun to look for work.

The percentage of employed individuals is highest in the 45-54 age group with 87.8% of 444 people employed. Unemployment is highest for the 20-24 age group (25.9%).

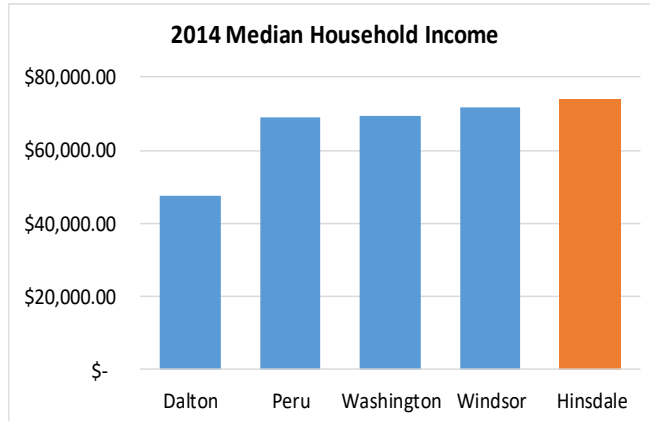
For individuals in the 55-64 year old age group, 20.4% were considered “not in the labor force” meaning they are neither employed, laid off, nor seeking employment. Beyond the age of 65, the percentage of individuals not in the labor force increases to over 79%; this likely includes retired individuals who are no longer working or seeking work. Only 15 of the 155 residents older than 75 were in the labor force.

Income

Per capita income, as measured by the 2010-2014 American Community Survey, was \$29,997, and median household income was \$63,953. Out of the 869 households in Hinsdale, an estimated 80 households (9.2%) had an income of less than \$25,000, and 29 households had received Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the last 12 months. The SNAP program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) provides



Figure 3.1 - 2014 Median Household Income of Hinsdale and Adjacent Towns



Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey

assistance to those with limited income and resources to buy food.) One hundred ninety (190) households included retirement income, and the mean retirement income was \$18,939. Hinsdale's median household income is higher than all adjacent towns (see Figure 3.1).

Occupation

Over half (51%) of the Hinsdale residents who were in the work force in 2014 worked in one of four industries: manufacturing (16%), health care and social assistance (13%), retail trade (13%), or educational services (10%).

Since 2000, the employment and occupation of Hinsdale workers has shifted. Between 2000 and 2014, industries that saw substantial gains included wholesale trade, which increased by 124% from 17 to 38 workers, and professional services, which increased by 86% from 69 to 128 workers. Large gains were also made in "other services," transportation, and education. There were modest to minimal gains in the industries of manufacturing, finance, and public administration. Declines in the percentage of Hinsdale workers were most substantial in agriculture, which declined by 14 workers (which was the total employed in that sector), and in information and arts/entertainment, which both decreased by 25%. Retail trade and construction both declined by less than 10% of

Table 3.2 - Occupation by Industry of Workers in Hinsdale, MA

Source: 2000 U.S. Census , 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Category	2000	2014	# Change	% Change
Employed civilian population 16 years +	955	1116	161	17%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	14	0	-14	-100%
Construction	99	92	-7	-7%
Manufacturing	154	178	24	16%
Wholesale trade	17	38	21	124%
Retail trade	144	140	-4	-3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	50	76	26	52%
Information	20	15	-5	-25%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	27	31	4	15%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	69	128	59	86%
Educational, health and social services	207	252	45	22%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	76	57	-19	-25%
Other services (except public administration)	55	85	30	55%
Public administration	23	24	1	4%

workers. Overall, there was a net gain of 161 workers (17%) between 2000 and 2014 (see Table 3.2).

The “other services” category is used to describe four broad occupation areas including repair and maintenance, personal and laundry services, religious, grantmaking, civic, professional and similar organizations, and private households (cooks, maids, housekeepers, gardeners, etc.).

Hinsdale is consistent with Berkshire County trends in the gain it has seen in the professional services and “other services” industries, but does not otherwise follow the regional patterns of projected job growth by industry for the county (Sustainable Berkshires 2013).

Regional Services

As noted previously in Table 2.2, the mean travel to work time is approximately 24 minutes. According to Google Maps, a drive from the geographic center of Hinsdale to Pittsfield and Lenox, as well as numerous other local towns, takes about that amount of time. Many Hinsdale people are employed in Pittsfield and other surrounding towns. Pittsfield also offers many retail and other services that are used by Hinsdale residents.

Local Business Resources

Hinsdale is served by two very active economic resource and business marketing groups: 1Berkshire and Berkshire Grown.

1Berkshire

1Berkshire is the single point of entry for business assistance and economic development support throughout the Berkshires. The entity provides access to important services every business needs: marketing, networking, professional development, and more. Through 1Berkshire, the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire Creative, and the Berkshire Visitors Bureau join as one, providing collaborative support that encourages growth and success.

Member Organizations Located in Hinsdale:

Bas Ridge Golf Club
Camp Danbee
Camp Romaca for Girls
Fernwood Forest Campground
IEEE Berkshire Section
Paris Home Remodeling, Inc.
Restorations, Inc.
Viner Building & Remodeling
Western Mass Penny Saver

Berkshire Grown

Berkshire Grown is a not-for-profit organization working to promote local farms and the local businesses that support them.

Member Organizations Located in Hinsdale:

Frederick Christmas Tree Farm

Town “Doing Business As” Licenses and Current Commercial Uses Map

Small local businesses dominate the business activity in Hinsdale. Town Clerk records show that 43 businesses registered or renewed their “Doing Business As” (DBA) in Hinsdale between 2011 and 2016 (Hinsdale Town Clerk Records, 2016). These are summarized in Table 3.3.

Individual DBA records were categorized by U.S. Census industry types in Table 3.4. Businesses that fell into the *Other services* category—which include cleaning services, auto mechanics, and other repair services—are the most numerous business type in Hinsdale, followed by *arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services*, including summer camps, and *construction*.

Map 2 shows the current commercial uses in Hinsdale, including DBA licenses, member organizations in the two regional organizations, and other local businesses.



Table 3.3 - Hinsdale “Doing Business As” Records 2011-2016

Source: Town of Hinsdale Town Clerk, 2016

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
New or Renewal	9	7	6	8	11	5	46

Note: Businesses were only tallied once to develop this table, meaning that yearly counts were adjusted to reflect the most recent DBA issued for each business. For example, a business that was issued a DBA in 2011 and renewed this DBA in 2016 was only counted for 2016.

Table 3.4 - Businesses by Category In Hinsdale, MA.

Source: Town of Hinsdale Town Clerk, 2016

Industry Category	# of businesses
Other services (except public administration)	16
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	9
Construction	5
Unknown	4
Retail trade	2
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	2
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	2
Educational, health and social services	1
Wholesale trade	1
Transportation and warehousing	1
Accommodation and food services	1

Public Survey Results

According to the public survey results, the most-used types of businesses in Hinsdale are *restaurants* (cited by 78.7% of the respondents), *trade services*—such as plumbers or electricians (56.1%), and *general services*—such as landscapers or handymen (55.1%). The least-used type of business is industrial (8.7%).

Survey respondents would most like to expand *farming/agriculture* (76.4%), *professional services*—such as architects, engineers, or accountants (73.3%), and *personal services*—such as hairdressers or fitness trainers (71.9%), and several others. The types of businesses that respondents would most like to reduce are *industrial* (62.1%) and *commercial* (40.8%).

No respondents felt that *There is too much business development in Hinsdale and we should discourage it*, and half of respondents (50.5%) felt that *Development of new businesses and services is good for the local economy; we should encourage it*.

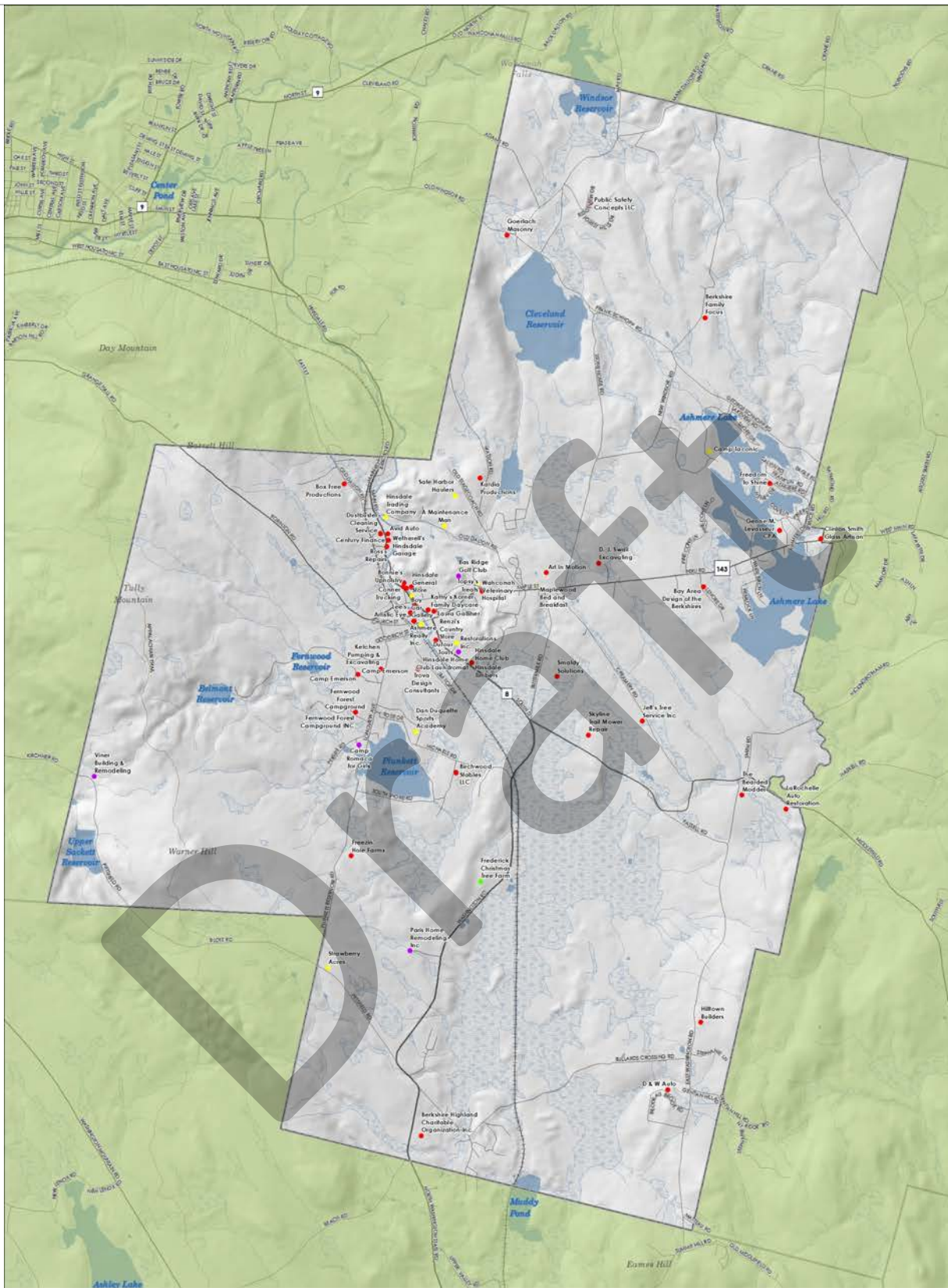
KEY ECONOMY ISSUES

Aging Workforce

A key economic issue facing the town is the aging of the population. The town faces a shortage of labor in the coming decades as older workers retire and fewer young workers are available to take their place. The Town of Hinsdale will need to find ways to help bring young adults to the town to sustain its businesses.

New Businesses and Economic Development

The public survey results show a demand for increased agriculture, professional services, and personal services. The Town of Hinsdale will need to explore ways to attract these types of enterprises to the town.



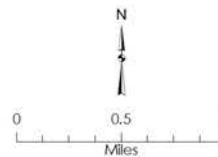
This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC or the municipality may have supplied portions of this data.

- DBA Listed Business
- Member of 1Berkshire
- Member of Berkshire Grown
- Non Affiliated Business
- Towns
- Railroad
- Appalachian Trail
- Stream
- Wetland
- Open Water
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road

Town of Hinsdale

Vision Plan

Map 2. Current Commercial Uses





ECONOMY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

Goal 1: Strengthen the Local Economy

The town will work to strengthen the local economy by supporting and promoting existing businesses and attracting new businesses.

Objective: Develop an Economic Development Plan for the town

An Economic Development Plan that highlights the strengths of the town and identifies needed improvements will bring focus to actions to strengthen the town's local economy.

ACTION: CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SHARED ECONOMIC PLANNER PROGRAM WITH OTHER TOWNS

ACTION: MAKE THE PREPARATION OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY WORK ITEM OF THE SHARED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNER, AND ENSURE THAT THIS PLAN IS COMPLETED WITHIN ONE CALENDAR YEAR OF THE ADOPTION OF THE VISION PLAN

Objective: Expand town-wide events and activities to stimulate local economic activity and promote community spirit

Bringing visitors to town through more town-wide events and activities can bring in more revenue to local businesses.

ACTION: RESTORE THE BLOCK PARTY AS AN ANNUAL EVENT

ACTION: EXPAND THE PROMOTION OF EXISTING EVENTS, SUCH AS THE FESTIVAL OF TREES

ACTION: EXPAND EXISTING EVENTS, FOR INSTANCE, THE FESTIVAL OF TREES, BY INCLUDING LONGER HOURS OR ASSOCIATED EVENTS

ACTION: WORK WITH THE CAMPS IN TOWN TO ESTABLISH NEW EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES

ACTION: WELCOME NEW SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Goal 2: Support Existing Businesses

The town will work to strengthen the local economy by supporting and promoting existing businesses, the backbone of the local economy.

Objective: Retain and encourage the growth of Hinsdale's existing businesses—including agricultural and forestry related businesses

The town will work with existing businesses to determine actions the town could take to enhance the likelihood those businesses would remain in town and grow.

ACTION: SURVEY EXISTING LOCAL BUSINESSES TO IDENTIFY ACTIONS THE TOWN CAN TAKE TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO REMAIN IN TOWN AND GROW

ACTION: PURSUE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM THE LOCAL BUSINESS SURVEY

ACTION: REVIEW EXISTING LAND USE REGULATIONS, FEES AND TAXES TO EVALUATE THEIR IMPACT ON EXISTING BUSINESSES

ACTION: CONTINUE EXPANDING BROADBAND/HIGH SPEED INTERNET TO SUPPORT HOME-BASED BUSINESSES AND THE ABILITY TO WORK REMOTELY

ACTION: PARTICIPATE IN STATE AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE HINSDALE BENEFITS FROM THOSE ACTIVITIES

Objective: Enhance a culture of entrepreneurship, especially for young adults

Many of Hinsdale's business owners are middle-aged or upper middle-aged. Young adults have a hard time finding jobs in Hinsdale. The town will explore a "mentoring" program to connect older business owners with young adults through a business succession effort.

ACTION: DETERMINE INTEREST IN A "MENTORING" PROGRAM BETWEEN BUSINESS OWNERS AND YOUNG ADULTS

ACTION: WITH SUFFICIENT INTEREST, SECURE RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT A HINSDALE BUSINESS MENTORING PROGRAM

Goal 3: Attract New Businesses to Town

The town will work to strengthen the local economy by taking actions to attract new businesses.

Objective: Attract retail businesses and professional services in the town center

Hinsdale's town center contains the potential to be a hub of economic and social activity for the town.

ACTION: PREPARE A SMALL AREA PLAN FOR THE TOWN CENTER THAT DOCUMENTS CURRENT USE AND CONDITIONS OF EXISTING STRUCTURES, EVALUATES INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND CONDITIONS, INCLUDING SUCH ITEMS AS SIDEWALKS, PARKING, AND SIGNAGE, AND RECOMMENDS ACTIONS TO ADDRESS NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

ACTION: REVIEW EXISTING ZONING AS IT IMPACTS THE TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT

ACTION: EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A LOCAL FARMER'S MARKET ON PROPERTY OWNED BY THE TOWN

Objective: Support business attraction through high quality telecommunication infrastructure

The town will work to provide the most current telecommunication services to support business and residents.

ACTION: CONTINUE TO PURSUE ADDITIONAL UPGRADES TO THE TOWN'S BROADBAND NETWORK

Objective: Promote Hinsdale's natural assets and the lakes to attract residents and visitors

The town's rural character and lakes are assets that could attract visitors and new residents.

ACTION: DEVELOP A PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE TOWN'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Objective: Evaluate the potential for expanding areas zoned for business use in town

New locations for business use could expand Hinsdale's business base.

ACTION: EVALUATE EXPANDING THE R-4 ZONING DISTRICT

ACTION: EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL FOR ESTABLISHING NEW LOCATIONS FOR BUSINESSES OR A PROFESSIONAL PARK CLOSE TO EXISTING BUSINESSES OR THE TOWN CENTER, SUCH AS THE GRAVEL PIT OFF OLD DALTON ROAD

ACTION: REVIEW HINSDALE'S ZONING TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE TOOLS ARE IN PLACE TO PREVENT UNDESIRE IMPACTS FROM EXPANDED BUSINESS USE

Goal 4: Enhance Access to Local Businesses and Public Gathering Locations

The town will work to provide a wide range of options for people to access business and gathering places.

Objective: Promote a built environment that allows access to businesses by different means of transportation including walking, biking, and public transit

Providing multiple options for people to access business would increase their use.

ACTION: IMPLEMENT SIDEWALK ENHANCEMENTS AND INTERSECTION REDESIGNS AS APPROPRIATE THROUGH "COMPLETE STREETS" FUNDING

ACTION: PURSUE IMPROVED SITING AND AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STOPS, ESPECIALLY AT THE INTERSECTION OF OLD DALTON ROAD AND MAPLE STREET

ACTION: ASSESS OPPORTUNITIES TOWNWIDE TO IMPROVE BIKING OPPORTUNITIES

ACTION: IN COORDINATION WITH MASSDOT, INSTALL NEW DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE TO INCREASE VISITOR AWARENESS OF EXISTING BUSINESS AND OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST



Goal 5: Enhance Community Attractiveness to Attract New Visitors, Residents and Businesses

The town will work to improve the overall attractiveness, signaling that the town is welcoming to newcomers—newcomers who could support local business.

Objective: Enhance the “gateways” to the town to portray Hinsdale as a desirable place for new visitors
Visitors to Hinsdale form their initial impressions of the town from the entrances, gateways, along existing highways.

ACTION: CONDUCT FOCUSED ASSESSMENTS OF THE MAJOR GATEWAYS TO DETERMINE IF THERE COULD BE IMPROVEMENTS TO SUCH ITEMS AS PLANTINGS, SIGNAGE, LIGHTING

ACTION: SEEK AND OBTAIN FUNDING TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO IMPORTANT TOWN GATEWAYS

Objective: Replace street trees that have been removed

Street trees provide numerous environmental, aesthetic and social benefits.

ACTION: RESEARCH EXISTING STREET TREE PROGRAM FOR SMALL TOWNS, INCLUDING THE TOWN OF DALTON

ACTION: DEVELOP A STREET TREE PROGRAM THAT REPLACES TREES IN NEED OF REMOVAL AND RESTORES THOSE PREVIOUSLY REMOVED

ACTION: RESEARCH AND SEEK GRANTS TO HELP IMPLEMENT A STREET TREE PROGRAM

Objective: Improve or remove poor quality properties
Derelict properties can devalue neighboring properties and serve as a deterrent for new businesses and residents.

ACTION: DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS POOR QUALITY PROPERTIES AND INCLUDE A COMPONENT OF “TOWN PRIDE” THAT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF THEIR PROPERTY AND RECOGNIZES THOSE WHO DO

ACTION: PURSUE STRONGER ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN REGARDS TO POOR QUALITY PROPERTIES

ACTION: SEEK AND PURSUE GRANT FUNDS TO ASSIST THOSE PROPERTY OWNERS OF LIMITED MEANS TO IMPROVE THEIR PROPERTIES

Draft



CHAPTER 4: INFRASTRUCTURE

Hinsdale's vision for its infrastructure:

Hinsdale's vision for infrastructure is to regularly assess and evaluate the town's assets, provide for consistent and adequately funded maintenance, upgrade, and replacement to meet the current and anticipated needs of the town.

The Town of Hinsdale maintains a variety of public buildings and facilities for services to town residents. Some of the buildings are over 100 years old, and everything requires maintenance at some time or another. This chapter reviews the town's existing infrastructure and lists the goals, objectives, and actions for the town to take to achieve its vision for these in Hinsdale.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

Town Buildings and Facilities

Hinsdale Town Hall and Police Station

The current Hinsdale Town Hall, located at 39 South Street, was built in 1998. The first floor contains the Police Department and a large community meeting room that can accommodate about 30—40 people. The second floor contains Town Hall offices, including the Select Board meeting room. In 2017 the building received extensive water damage. Some improvements were made to the building, such as carpeting in the hallway, to correct that damage. The Town Hall still has needs. It needs to be made fully handicap accessible and the front entry-way needs to be improved. The Police Department needs an emergency generator.

Highway Department/DPW Garage

Hinsdale's highway department/DPW garage is located at 156 Maple Street. The structure houses the DPW department and its equipment. The garage is a relatively current structure and generally meets the needs of the department. However, not all equipment, notably some of the smaller seasonal equipment is able to be stored under cover. There is a need for additional seasonal storage.

For information about the road network, see Chapter 7—Transportation.



Community Center

INFRASTRUCTURE AT A GLANCE

Town Hall Technology Upgrades

The building that currently serves as the Hinsdale Town Hall and Police Station is undergoing a series of upgrades to improve its technology infrastructure to improve town services.

Community Center

The 1848 building known as the Community Center is currently vacant, and repairs are ongoing. A decision is needed for the building's future use.

Wastewater Infrastructure

Much of the town is served by public sewer which flows through Dalton to the Pittsfield Wastewater Treatment Plant. The public sewer system helps the water quality around Hinsdale's lakes.

Hinsdale Public Library

The historic Hinsdale Public Library, founded in 1866, is located at 225 Maple Street. It serves as a library and historical archive for the town. In addition to the building's historic exterior, the Library features more current technologies and offers an extensive collection of classic and new-release DVD's, books, audiobooks, museum passes, computer access, free Wi-Fi, and research assistance. The library is operated by the Hinsdale Public Library Association with support provided by the town. A new carpet and front desk were installed in 2014.

Fire House

The Hinsdale Fire House, built in 1980, is located at 95 Maple Street. The structure is adequate to meet the needs of the department. Much of the equipment is over 20 years old. There is a need to continually upgrade equipment. There is a need for a new tanker truck.

Transfer Station

The Hinsdale Transfer Station is a user-based service. Residents are required to purchase transfer station permits. Beginning on July 1, 2017, the town implemented a bag sticker system in addition to an annual permit/tag to better enable the operating costs of the transfer station to be covered by the revenues generated by user fees and encourage residents to recycle.

The Transfer Station is located on Plunkett Reservoir Road. The facility sits on an uncapped landfill. The current compactor is about 20 years old. Due to the age of the compactor and the increased emphasis on recycling there is a need to upgrade the compactor and add another one for cardboard. If another compactor is added the site will need to be re-configured.

Kittredge Elementary School

The elementary school, located at 80 Maple Street, is part of Central Berkshire Regional School District. According to Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education statistics, the

total enrollment for 2016-2017 was 134 students. Since the 2000-2001 school year the enrollment has fluctuated between a high of 243 (2000-2001) and low of 127 (2014-2015). According to a study conducted the New England School Development Council (NESDEC)(2014), the current operating capacity of the school is 174 (not including pre-kindergarten.) There are currently two other elementary schools in the school district, Becket Washington Elementary School in Becket and Craneville Elementary School in Dalton. The NESDEC study also concluded that the enrollment in the district would continue to decline for the next several years. The town owns the school building, and according to the NESDEC study, the major school infrastructure and components are adequate or satisfactory with no major needs identified.

In the public survey administered as part of the Vision Plan process, respondents were asked how important is it for Kittredge Elementary School to remain open. The resounding consensus from respondents is that it is important for Kittredge Elementary School to remain open; of the 165 respondents for this specific question, 68.7% said it was *very important*, while 24.9% said it was *somewhat important*, leaving only 5.5% who said it was *not important*.

In a follow-up open response question that received 68 responses, many respondents (21.7%) explained that a local elementary school is an important community asset. Some responses in this category include "I believe the school closure will be the beginning of serious town decay" and "A school is an important community asset, and not just for the students. It's a focus for the community." On a related note, some respondents (8.7%) pointed out that having an elementary school in town attracts young families which are important to Hinsdale's social and economic structure.

A large percentage of respondents (20.3%) conceded that it's important to consider options. However, many expressed a desire to keep the school open provided that it is feasible/practical, saying things such as "It is nice to have a good elementary school in town but if better opportunities exist they should be examined."



Community Center

The Community Center, located at 81 Maple Street, was originally built in 1848 as Hinsdale Academy. The building has been underutilized since the Hinsdale Youth Center closed in the mid-1990's. It is used part-time for yoga and knitting sessions. There is the Community Center Conservation Committee which is dedicated to restoring the building and seeing it put to good use. The committee has been funding structural repairs to the building. The building has significant needs, including handicap accessibility and energy efficiency improvements.

In the public survey, respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for converting the Community Center into a Senior Center. Of the 213 respondents to that specific question, 64.8% supported the initiative, 13.6% were indifferent, 7.5% opposed the idea, and 14.1% were unaware of the proposal/did not have enough information to form an opinion.

As a follow-up, respondents were also asked if there are any other uses for the Community Center they would like to see. Of the relatively small number (68) of respondents who answered this open-response question, 41.2% would like to see the Community Center used as a youth center, and 22.1% would like it to be a community center with programming for all ages, including seniors and kids. Several respondents suggested turning it into a venue that could be used for meetings or events by community groups, possibly for a rental fee. Several others would like the building to be sold or demolished to reduce taxes, or at least left as is without spending further money on it while it is not being used. Some of the other suggestions were: "A museum of Hinsdale and Berkshire County History," "Library Programs," and "Food Pantry." One person commented that it should be a senior center.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Most of the Census-designated urban area is serviced by the municipal water and sewer system (see Map 3), although residences south of Michaels Road, at Plunkett Reservoir, do not receive municipal water.

The sewer system extends from the center of town eastward along Route 143 (Maple Street and Peru Road), including a short section of New Windsor Road to streets in both Ashmere Heights and Skyview Grove. The water system doesn't extend past New Windsor Road, although it does service the east end of Old Dalton Road and the Country Road Mobile Home Park.

Some roads in the northwest section of town are connected to Dalton's sewer system, including Old Windsor Road from the Dalton Town Line, Adams Road, Forest Hills Drive, and Ridgeview Drive.

Sewer system

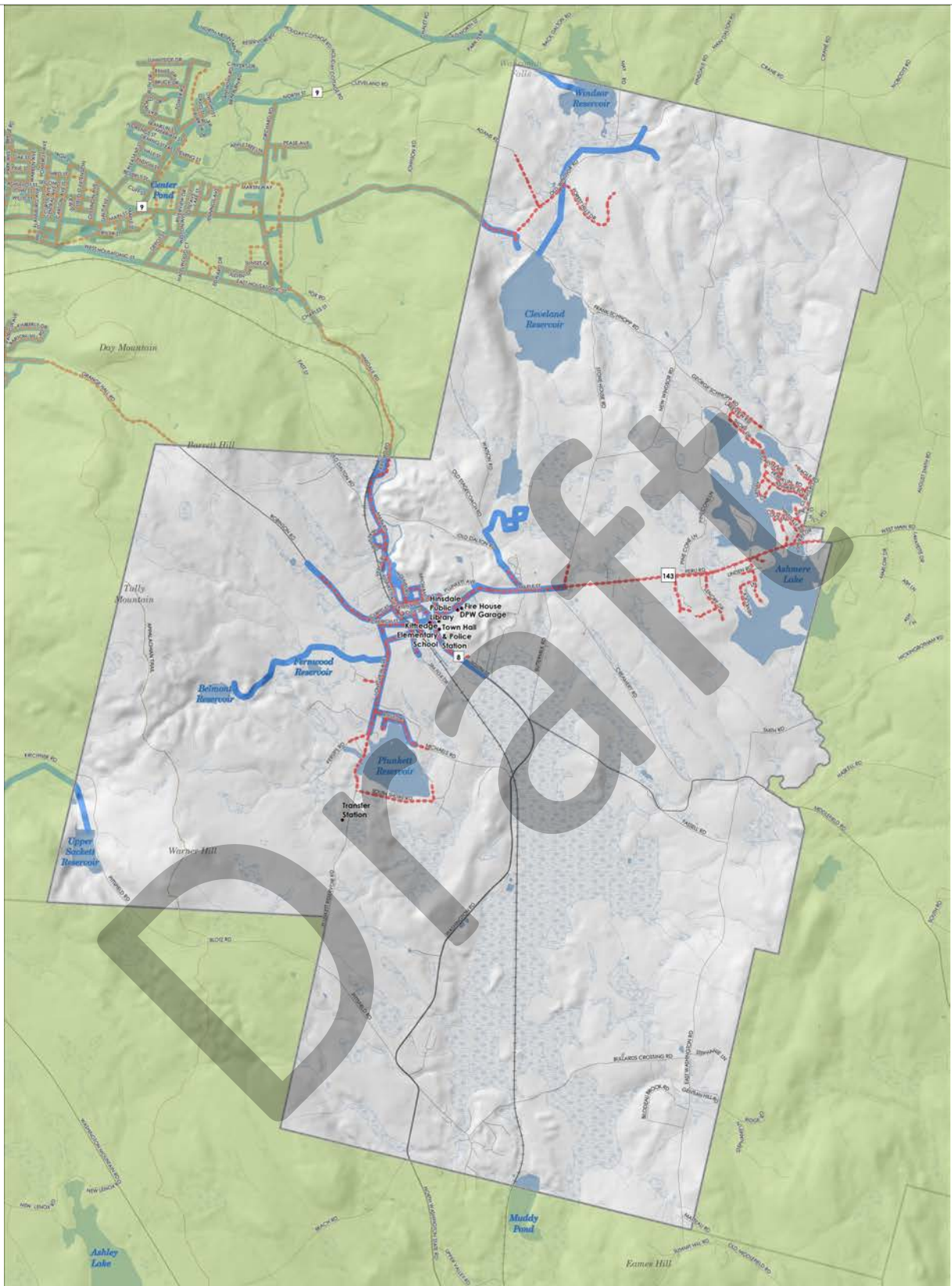
All sewage is treated at the Pittsfield Wastewater Treatment Plant. Sewage flows through Dalton to the Pittsfield Treatment Plant. There is a flow meter at the Dalton/Hinsdale line that measures the amount that Hinsdale is adding into Dalton sewer lines. Pittsfield annually bills Dalton for its share, which includes the Hinsdale percentage. Dalton then bills Hinsdale for that percentage. Pittsfield has been updating its treatment plant. A portion of those costs has been transferred to Hinsdale. Sewer rates had not been adjusted on a regular basis.

There are 3 phases of sewer and resulting costs to the users, depending on where the sewer is located and who administers the system.

Phase I (approx. 325 users): These users are on a gravity-feed system that doesn't require grinder pumps.

Phase II (approx. 25 users): Beechwood Forest (off Old Windsor Road) sewers are maintained by Dalton.

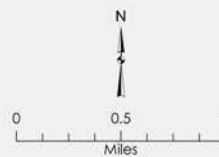
Phase III (approx. 336 users): Eighty percent of these users have grinder pumps. Originally installed about 19 years ago with a 5-year warranty, these pumps are breaking down. Each replacement pump costs \$2500 in parts and labor. As more of these pumps fail due to age, Hinsdale needs to determine how best to deal with these replacements.



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, BRPC or the municipality may have supplied portions of this data.

- Facilities
- Water Pipes
- Wastewater Pipes
- Towns
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Appalachian Trail
- Stream
- Wetland
- Open Water

Town of Hinsdale
Vision Plan
 Map 3. Infrastructure





Another issue that will be addressed is an increase in the sewer flow into the Dalton system that almost doubled in 2015. This increase may be caused by ground and storm water entering the sewer system. The department is in the process of preparing a plan to address inflow and infiltration requirements.

Water System

In 2014, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (Mass DEP) issued a list of findings that Hinsdale was mandated to correct. The largest of these mandates was to replace all existing water meters with new, easy-to-read units that would give a more accurate way to measure water consumption. The replacements were completed in 2016. In 2018 residents will be billed based on their actual water usage rather than a flat fee.

Another result of the MassDEP report was the hiring of a part-time superintendent and full-time maintenance person to perform the day-to-day maintenance on both systems. There is now a very aggressive preventative maintenance program on both systems to provide a proactive and more affordable approach, instead of waiting to repair failures as they happen.

Drinking Water Supply

Belmont Reservoir, in the west side of town, provides Hinsdale's drinking water. Plunkett Reservoir serves as a back-up. In the north end of town, Cleveland Reservoir serves as the water supply to the town of Dalton, and to the far west of town, Upper Sackett Reservoir serves Pittsfield.

Town Technology Infrastructure

Over the past several years, Hinsdale has made efforts to more effectively employ modern informational technology to serve the community. This includes vital upgrades to a large amount of the existing physical IT infrastructure at Town Hall and other town-owned buildings.

The town maintains a website, www.hinsdalemass.com, which contains a monthly

calendar of town meetings, contact information for town employees, transfer station permit info, town news, and information on town boards and committees. In October 2016, the town also initiated an opt-in monthly email newsletter with important updates about the town.

Also in October 2016, the town launched an online bill pay feature to allow residents to securely pay their taxes (real estate, personal property and motor vehicle excise taxes), water/sewer bills, and other municipal fees online via the town website. Beginning in November 2016, Hinsdale residents can file applications for building, electrical, and gas/plumbing permits online via the town's official website.

Broadband/High Speed Internet

One of the programs of the American Investment and Recovery act of 2009 included significant federal funding for broadband internet expansion. In Massachusetts, state legislation created the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI). This organization was tasked with installation of the "middle mile" which connects the internet network's core to local distribution hubs. In February 2014, MBI announced that it had completed work on the middle mile installation. However, significant work and funding is still required before many individual users see high speed internet in their homes or businesses.

In August 2016, Gov. Charlie Baker announced a \$1.6 million grant to Charter Communications to upgrade and extend broadband access in the unserved communities of Hinsdale, Lanesborough, and West Stockbridge. The state grant supports this upgrade of Charter's existing TV-only cable network to an all-digital network capable of delivering digital television and broadband to roughly 80-90% of existing households and businesses in the three communities, according to a release. The state grant will also support the extension of broadband and digital television service to an estimated 440 households in Hinsdale, Lanesborough, and West Stockbridge that are currently without any broadband or cable television service. The grant from MBI is being made under the agency's Last Mile Initiative, which has a

goal of bringing broadband access to unserved residents and communities in Western Massachusetts. In Hinsdale, 213 households will gain broadband access through the installation of 16.45 miles of cable to be installed by the end of 2017.

KEY INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

Community Center

The historic Community Center building has been vacant since the Hinsdale Youth Center closed. It is slowly getting repaired but does not currently have a planned use to make it a strong asset to the town

Maintenance

Infrastructure is one of the primary assets of the town. Appropriate maintenance and repair is the best way to protect the town's—and hence the taxpayers'—investment.

INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

Goal 1: Ensure That the Town's Infrastructure Is Accessible to All

The Town of Hinsdale will work to make its infrastructure accessible to all.

Objective: Comply with American with Disability Act (ADA) requirements

The town will engage experts and citizens to plan for and implement steps to comply with the American with Disability Act requirements.

ACTION: DEVELOP AN ADA TRANSITION PLAN

ACTION: CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT TOWNWIDE ADA COMPLIANCE MEASURES, USING A COMBINATION OF TOWN AND GRANT FUNDS

Goal 2: Have Town Building and Facilities That Are in Good Condition to Meet Current and Anticipated Town Needs

The Town of Hinsdale will examine needs for all town buildings and other facilities, integrating potential projects into a Capital Improvement Plan to strategically guide investment.

Objective: Ensure all town buildings and facilities are regularly maintained and improved

The town will provide regular funding for ongoing maintenance and improvements.

ACTION: DEVELOP AND ADEQUATELY FUND AND IMPLEMENT A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

ACTION: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT MAINTENANCE PLANS FOR ALL TOWN BUILDINGS THAT INCLUDE ANNUAL REPLACEMENT ITEMS, REGULAR AND CONSISTENT MAINTENANCE, AND A CONSISTENT FUNDING SOURCE

Objective: Reduce long-term costs to the town through energy efficiency measures in town buildings, consistent with the Green Communities Act, or installation of renewable energy systems

The town will use energy efficiency measures and renewable energy sources to reduce the town's energy costs.

ACTION: IDENTIFY NEEDED ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS IN TOWN BUILDINGS

ACTION: PURSUE GREEN COMMUNITIES DESIGNATION AND RELATED GRANTS FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN TOWN BUILDING

ACTION: EXPLORE A TOWN-OWNED LARGE-SCALE SOLAR FACILITY OR ON TOWN BUILDINGS

Objective: Continue to upgrade the Town Hall

The town has taken significant steps to improve Town Hall. The town will continue those improvements to protect the town's asset.

ACTION: EXPLORE UPGRADING THE HVAC SYSTEM IN TOWN HALL



ACTION: CONTINUE TO UPGRADE EQUIPMENT, SUCH AS FILE CABINETS, IN TOWN HALL AND IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM OF REGULAR UPGRADING

Objective: Ensure the DPW facility meets town needs

The DPW provides an important town service. The town will work providing a DPW facility to meet current and future needs.

ACTION: REVIEW AND EVALUATE THE SIZE OF THE DPW GARAGE TO DETERMINE IF IT MEETS CURRENT OR ANTICIPATED NEEDS

ACTION: ADD AN ADDITION TO THE DPW GARAGE TO STORE SMALLER EQUIPMENT

Goal 3: Maintain and Upgrade the Town's Technology Infrastructure

By having up-to-date technology, the Town of Hinsdale can utilize computer systems and current software to deliver services.

Objective: Provide for technology infrastructure that is current, efficient, secure, and allows users to work on the same software platform

Technology can improve convenience for town residents while reducing costs. The town will continually take steps to keep the software current and secure.

ACTION: DEVELOP, FUND, AND IMPLEMENT A REGULAR REPLACEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE TOWN'S TECHNOLOGY ASSETS, I.E., COMPUTERS AND SOFTWARE

ACTION: EXPLORE A SCANNING SYSTEM FOR TOWN DOCUMENTS TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE PAPER COPIES AND ADD CLEAR DIRECTIONS FOR ONLINE ACCESS

ACTION: EXPLORE OPTIONS AND EVALUATE COSTS FOR ADDITIONAL ONLINE PERMITS, SUCH AS FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

ACTION: OBTAIN A SYSTEM TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS AT TOWN MEETINGS

Goal 4: Improve Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The Town of Hinsdale will build on recent efforts and continue to improve its water and sewer infrastructure.

Objective: Ensure water services and lines meet community needs in a cost-efficient way

The town will continue investment and planning for its public water system to maintain a safe supply of drinking water.

ACTION: FINISH WATER LINE REPLACEMENT TO UPGRADE SUBSTANDARD WATER LINES

ACTION: CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT A USAGE-BASED PRICING STRUCTURE

Objective: Improve efficiency of the sewer system

The town will take steps to improve the overall efficiency of the sewer system by reducing inflow and infiltration and the regular maintenance and upgrading.

ACTION: CONDUCT A DIAGNOSTIC/FEASIBILITY STUDY TO DETERMINE THE LEVELS OF INFLOW AND INFILTRATION

ACTION: FUND AND IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO ELIMINATE OR MINIMIZE INFLOW/INFILTRATION

ACTION: INSURE THE LONG TERM VIABILITY OF THE SYSTEM THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LONG TERM MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Goal 5: Understand the Relationship of the Library and the Town

The Town of Hinsdale will work with the Library Trustees to have a high-quality library in town.

Objective: Clarify the relationship between the town and library

The town will clarify its relationship with the library.

ACTION: REVIEW EXISTING AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE TOWN AND THE LIBRARY

A SHARED PROGRAM WITH NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES

Goal 6: Have a Multi-Use Community Center That Is an Asset for All Ages

The Town of Hinsdale will transform the Community Center into a multi-use center.

Objective: Fully engage town residents to decide the future vision for the Community Center

The town will continue to conduct a broad-based community involvement effort to prepare a programming plan and physical improvement plan for the Community Center.

ACTION: EXPAND THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE TO INCLUDE A MORE DIVERSE SET OF INTERESTS

ACTION: DEFINE THE MISSION OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE

ACTION: CONDUCT A BROAD-BASED PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS THAT INCLUDES A PUBLIC SURVEY, INVITING COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE MEETINGS, INTERVIEWS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND TOWNWIDE PUBLIC MEETINGS

Objective: Develop a plan for future use of the Community Center

With input from the community engagement process, the town will prepare a plan for the self-sustaining future use of the Community Center that considers multiple user groups, including the town's seniors and youth.

ACTION: IDENTIFY ALL THE POTENTIAL USER GROUPS FOR THE CENTER

ACTION: IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE THE CURRENT PROGRAMMING AVAILABLE TO THE POTENTIAL USER GROUPS FOR THE CENTER INCLUDING PROGRAMMING OFFERED IN NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES

ACTION: DEVELOP A LIST OF PROGRAMMING OPTIONS FOR POTENTIAL USERS TO INCLUDE A PROJECTION OF FUTURE DEMAND AND AS

ACTION: PREPARE A STAFFING PLAN, SPACE NEEDS, SPACE CONFIGURATION AND COST ESTIMATE TO PROVIDE THE IDENTIFIED PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

ACTION: WITH INPUT THROUGH THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS FINALIZE A USE PROGRAM FOR THE COMMUNITY CENTER

Objective: Maintain and improve the Community Center physical structure and site

The town will continue to maintain the physical structure of the Community Center and improve the building and site to accommodate the desired programming identified by the public engagement process.

ACTION: CONDUCT NECESSARY MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES ON THE BUILDING

ACTION: IDENTIFY THE NECESSARY CHANGES TO THE BUILDING AND THE SITE TO IMPLEMENT THE DESIRED PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

ACTION: INTEGRATE THE PREVIOUSLY PREPARED NEEDS ASSESSMENT/COST ESTIMATE TO PREPARE A PROPOSED SCHEDULE AND UPDATED COST ESTIMATE TO IMPLEMENT THE IDENTIFIED CHANGES TO THE STRUCTURE AND SITE

ACTION: SECURE THE NECESSARY FUNDING THROUGH A COMBINATION OF TOWN FUNDS, GRANTS, AND USER FEES TO IMPLEMENT THE DESIRED PROGRAMMING OPTION

ACTION: ENSURE THAT ANTICIPATED NEEDED REPAIRS AND RENOVATIONS ARE FUNDED BY INCORPORATING THEM INTO THE TOWN'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN



CHAPTER 5: SERVICES

Hinsdale's vision for services:

Hinsdale provides a high level of cost-effective services that promote the safety, well-being and advancement of its residents and are customer-oriented and proactively managed to adapt to constantly evolving and changing needs and preferences.

This chapter provides an overview of the services offered through the town, including police, fire, library, road maintenance, and building inspection services, among others. This chapter also establishes the town's work plan for goals, objectives, and actions to achieve its vision for the services it provides.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

Select Board

The Select Board is the chief governing body in Hinsdale, and the Chair of the Select Board is the Chief Executive Officer. The three-member board is elected for staggered three-year terms. The basic functions consist of calling Town Meetings, proposing budgets to the Annual Town Meeting, setting public policy, licensing, setting certain fees, overseeing certain volunteer and appointed bodies, and creating basic regulations. An Administrative Assistant to the Select Board is employed by the town. The board meets second and fourth Wednesdays at 7pm at Town Hall.

In the past several years, there has been some turmoil related to the Select Board. In 2014, the town residents voted in favor of a measure allowing voters to recall elected officials; the following year they exercised that ability and recalled the Chair of the Select Board. After a several year trend of contentious Select Board meetings, there has been turnover on the board and conditions are improving.

Town Administrator

The creation of the position of Hinsdale Town Administrator was approved at the May 2015 Annual Town Meeting and the position was filled by the Select Board in November 2015. This position answers to the Select Board and enforces its policies, while providing a professional, full-time presence in Town Hall. The Town Administrator assists the Select Board in fact-



Hinsdale Fire Department

SERVICES AT A GLANCE

Select Board

The Select Board is the chief governing body in Hinsdale, and the Chair of the Select Board is the Chief Executive Officer. The three member board is elected for staggered three-year terms.

Town Administrator

The position of Town Administrator is relatively new in Hinsdale. The Town Administrator answers to the Select Board and enforces its policies, while providing a professional, full-time presence in Town Hall.

Fiscal Conditions

For Fiscal Year 2016, the property tax rate was \$13.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value, which was the 14th highest of the 32 Berkshire County municipalities. Property taxes in FY15 made up 85.2% of Hinsdale's revenue.

finding and navigating local, state, and federal regulations. The position also seeks grant funding on behalf of the town.

Police Department

The Hinsdale Police Department consists of a police chief, two full-time police officers, and four part-time police officers. The Police Department is responsible for patrol and incident response, traffic enforcement, investigations, arrests and evidence, and community relations.

The Hinsdale Police Department has experienced similar and related turmoil as the Select Board, which all began with the firing of the police chief in 2013. The position has turned over twice since then and the controversy has subsided.

Fire Department

The Fire Department consists of a fire chief, two assistant chiefs appointed by the fire chief, and volunteer fire fighters. The fire chief also appoints a six-person board of engineers. The Fire Department responds to emergencies involving fire, hazardous materials, and environmental causes, as well as to other calls for assistance.

Hinsdale Volunteer Fireman's Association

A 501(c)3 non-profit, the Hinsdale Volunteer Fireman's Association operates the ambulance squad in cooperation with the Fire Department. The association receives a small annual stipend from the town.

Hinsdale Emergency Management Agency

The Hinsdale Emergency Management Agency (HEMA) is the local branch of the Massachusetts and Federal agencies of the same name. Run by volunteers, HEMA does planning, organizing, and grant writing to prepare the town and its residents for potential emergencies.

Hinsdale Public Library

The Hinsdale Public Library provides a wide range of services, including books to borrow in genres such as

Young Adult Fiction, Children's Literature, Adult Fiction and Nonfiction, as well as audio books, DVDs, and museum passes. Library staff can assist residents and visitors in getting information for or about school assignments, personal research, senior services, local history, community news and events, and more. The library also provides free access to ancestry.com for genealogy research, regional and national newspapers and magazines, and free Wi-Fi that can be accessed from the parking area even when the library is closed.

Hinsdale Library Board of Trustees

The eight-member Library Board of Trustees oversees the governance of the library and provides direction to the Librarian.

Building Department

The Building Department provides permitting services, inspection and certification of existing buildings maintenance, and enforcement of the State Building Code 780 CMR, The Architectural Access Board (AAB) 521 CMR and any other state statutes, rules and regulations or ordinances and by-laws which empower the Building Official.

Highway Department

The Highway Department is responsible for maintaining all roads under local jurisdiction (see Transportation chapter). Prior to 2017, the Town of Hinsdale historically limited its road construction projects to those that can be funded through the Chapter 90 Program, a Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) funded reimbursement program. This was primarily done to help control municipal spending and subsequently keep the tax rate relatively low. The 2017 Annual Town Meeting has established a road stabilization fund to help finance significant road improvement projects, the Highway Department is staffed by a Superintendent and three highway crew members.

Complete Streets Committee

Complete Streets is the concept that streets are to be designed and operated to provide safety, comfort, and



accessibility for all the users of the streets. The committee is a multidisciplinary team and the members include representation from the Highway Department, Planning Board, Council on Aging, emergency services, Mission and Vision Working Group, and Town Administrator's office. The focus of this committee is ensuring the implementation of the Complete Streets policy and, where necessary, altering existing practices and overcoming barriers that may act as impediments to implementation.

Water and Sewer Department

The Water and Sewer Department is staffed by a part-time Superintendent who oversees all functions of the water and sewer departments, and a full-time maintenance person who performs the day-to-day maintenance on both systems. The town water and sewer system is a public utility, not an enterprise.

Water and Sewer Commission

The Select Board members are ex-officio members of the Water and Sewer Commission. This commission sets the policies for the department.

Water and Sewer Committee

The Water and Sewer Department is also supported by a seven-person committee that is responsible for personnel issues.

Transfer Station

The Hinsdale Transfer Station is a user-based service operated for the benefit of residents who have purchased permits for the disposal and/or recycling of household waste, furniture, electronics, metal appliances, etc. The Hinsdale Transfer Station is part of the Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk, an elected position, is the chief election official in town and the keeper of permanent and vital records, including birth certificates, marriage licenses, and death certificates. The Town Clerk also issues licenses such as dog licenses, liquor licenses, and business certificates.

Town Treasurer

The Treasurer is the cash manager of a town. The Treasurer is responsible for the deposit, investment and disbursement of town funds, and is authorized by town meeting to issue debt on behalf of the town with the approval of the Select Board. Most banking services of the town are selected, procured, and managed by the Treasurer.

Town Collector

The Town Collector is authorized to collect taxes and excises, as well as other amounts owed to the municipality, such as charges for permits, licenses and fees for municipal utilities and services.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee's primary function is to conduct a thorough review of all financial matters and questions on behalf of the citizens. Duties of the committee include, but are not limited to: advising and making recommendations at the Town Meeting on budgetary and other financial matters; making transfers from the town's reserve fund to departmental budgets for extraordinary and unforeseen occurrences/expenses; working with the Select Board to approve budget transfers during the last two months of the fiscal year and first fifteen days of the next year in conjunction with the closeout of the town's financial records; assisting in financial planning via development of long-range revenue/expense forecasts, scheduling of large capital purchases, and identifying major changes in the operating budget; participating in the annual budget development process by working with the Select Board/Town Administrator in budget review through working meetings with department heads and other budget collaborators. The Finance Committee consists of eight elected officials with staggered three-year terms.

Board of Assessors

The goal of the Board of Assessors is to obtain accurate and fair assessments of all taxable property located in town. The three-person board is elected on staggered three-year terms and the board appoints an

Assistant Assessor. The assessors are required to value all property in the community annually, January first of each year, at market value. This is done by reviewing the sale prices of land and residences and comparing them against the existing assessed values. The goal is to value real estate at 100% of the market value to ensure that all taxpayers are assessed fairly.

Planning Board

The Planning Board is responsible for various matters related to zoning by-laws and their content. The five-member board is elected to staggered five-year terms. The board meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm in the Town Hall. During this time the board is available to answer questions concerning the town's by-laws and reviews plans for approval of special permits, variance applications, or other actions. The Planning Board is also responsible for initiating changes to the zoning by-laws, and evaluation and approval of proposed partitioning of property along established thoroughfares.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is a quasi-judicial body charged under the provisions of Chapter 40A of the Massachusetts General Laws. The ZBA is the special permit granting authority for: variances, special permit applications, appeals by aggrieved parties of administrative or enforcement decisions, and comprehensive permit petitions.

Board of Health

Local Boards of Health in Massachusetts are required by state laws and regulations to perform many crucial and important duties relative to the protection of the public health, control of disease, promotion of sanitary living conditions, and the protection of the environment from pollution. The Hinsdale Board of Health consists of two appointed volunteer members, and the town employs a part-time Health Agent to act on behalf of the Board of Health. The employee is responsible for enforcing all state and local health regulations. Public meetings are held at 6 pm on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Town Hall.

Council on Aging

It is the mission of the Hinsdale Council on Aging to encourage participation, provide services available to seniors, and promote activities that will enhance the quality of life. The primary focus of the Hinsdale Council on Aging is to provide outreach services to the senior population. Programs offered by the Council on Aging include the Shine Program, which assists with insurance questions and concerns; blood pressure monitoring; a foot care clinic; Meals on Wheels; yoga; quarterly newsletter; knitting and crocheting group; quilting group; art lessons; bus trips; and several annual events. Council meetings are normally held on the third Monday of each month at 3:00 pm at the Hinsdale Town Hall.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission is appointed by the Select Board to uphold the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (GL. 131, section 40) and to protect the town's abundant natural and water resources. The law prohibits the filling, excavation, or other alteration of land surface, water levels, or vegetation in wetlands, flood plains, or riverfront areas, regardless of ownership, without a permit from the local Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission meets at 6 pm on the second Tuesday of each month at Town Hall.

Central Berkshire Regional School District

Hinsdale is part of the seven-town Central Berkshire Regional School District. Kittredge Elementary School in Hinsdale provides educational services from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade to Hinsdale and Peru residents. Beyond sixth grade, students can attend Nessacus Regional Middle School and Wahconah Regional High School, both in Dalton.

Hinsdale/Peru Cultural Council

The Hinsdale/Peru Local Cultural Council is part of a grassroots funding network supporting community-based projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences, annually through the administration of small grants. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation



to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which then allocates those funds to each of the local councils.

Historical Commission

The Historical Commission is responsible for community-wide historic preservation planning, including identifying and nominating historic properties. The commission also fields questions from people looking for genealogy.

Lake Management Committee

The mission of the Lake Management Committee is to improve the water quality, environmental and recreational aspects of two major lakes, Ashmere Lake and Plunkett Reservoir, and to protect these important water resources for the town and the residents surrounding the lakes.

War Memorial Committee

The Hinsdale War Memorial Committee achieved its goal of placing a plaque dedicated to the veterans of the Korean and Vietnam Wars on the War Memorial. The names of men and women from Hinsdale who served were engraved in bronze on the plaque.

Veterans' Services Officer

The Veterans' Service Officer provides counseling to veterans and/or their dependents; refers veterans to appropriate agencies or service providers; assists veterans by providing informational material and advice concerning assistance and benefit opportunities; assists veterans in completing necessary applications and other forms, and acquiring documentation needed to determine eligibility.

Community Center Conservation Committee

The Community Center Conservation Committee was formed to focus on a future use of the Community Center, which in the recent past served as a Youth Center. The committee is actively working to provide structural and aesthetic repairs to make the old building an attractive candidate for adaptive reuse.

Table 5.1 - Property Tax Rates by Municipality

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue

Municipality	FY2016 Property Tax Rate
Hancock	2.40
Alford	4.60
Mount Washington	6.04
Monterey	6.25
Tyringham	6.74
Otis	7.85
New Ashford	7.86
Egremont	9.19
Florida	9.32
Stockbridge	9.59
New Marlborough	9.60
Becket	10.46
Richmond	11.47
Lenox	12.16
Cheshire	12.26
West Stockbridge	12.33
Sandisfield	12.98
Windsor	13.39
Hinsdale	13.40
Washington	13.73
Great Barrington	14.29
Sheffield	14.34
Lee	14.56
Clarksburg	15.32
Williamstown	15.79
Savoy	16.20
North Adams	17.39
Pittsfield	18.76
Lanesborough	19.36
Dalton	19.63
Peru	20.15
Adams	21.39

Cemetery Committee

The Cemetery Committee is responsible for the day-to-day operations of maintaining the cemetery, including the hiring of groundskeepers and grave-diggers, and for setting policies for funerals.

Beautification Committee

The Beautification Committee plants flowers at municipal buildings to enhance the aesthetic of the town.

Tree Warden

The Tree Warden is an elected official responsible for the care, maintenance, or removal of all public shade trees.

Mission and Vision Working Group (MVWG)

The MVWG was formed by the Hinsdale Select Board on December 29, 2015 as a stand-alone committee whose charter is to articulate a clear and compelling mission and shared vision for Hinsdale; serve as a steering committee that guides a long-term/vision planning effort (including the finalization and integration of a previously developed Open Space and Recreation Plan) complete with inclusive public engagement processes; and help foster a greater sense of place, citizen buy-in, and enhanced community vitality.

Fiscal Conditions

Tax Rate

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, the property tax rate was \$13.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value (14th highest in Berkshire County—see Table 5.1). This rate has gone up since 2006, when it was \$11.11/\$1,000. In 2000, the average single family property was assessed at \$109,359 and had a tax bill of \$1,713. In 2016, the average single family home was assessed at \$234,771 (14th lowest in the county) and had a tax bill of \$3,146 (13th lowest in the county). The average single family tax bill has gone up 83.7% during that time, while assessed value has climbed 114.7%. Inflation has increased 39.8% during this time.

Revenue

Currently, all municipal functions are funded by property, excise, and other taxes; service fees; licenses; and state and federal transfer payments. Property taxes in FY15 made up 85.2% of Hinsdale's

Table 5.2 - Hinsdale Expenditures FY2005 vs. FY2015

Source: Massachusetts Department of Revenue

Expenditures	FY2005	FY2015
Education	\$1,875,994.00	\$2,745,029.00
Public Works	\$ 356,089.00	\$ 594,318.00
General Government	\$ 202,778.00	\$ 336,939.00
Fixed Costs	\$ 116,768.00	\$ 235,441.00
Police	\$ 98,097.00	\$ 199,980.00
Culture & Recreation	\$ 79,904.00	\$ 114,950.00
Fire	\$ 65,083.00	\$ 65,816.00
Human Services	\$ 14,010.00	\$ 35,271.00
Intergovernmental Assessments	\$ 14,164.00	\$ 21,259.00
Other Public Safety	\$ 67,818.00	\$ 19,334.00
Debt Service	\$ 37,951.00	\$ 18,402.00
Other Expenditures	\$ -	\$ 4,950.00
Total	\$2,928,656.00	\$4,391,689.00

revenue (the 12th highest percentage in the county). This is up slightly from 84.4% in 2003. Total property tax revenue has gone from \$2,257,246 in 2003 to \$3,861,607 in 2015, an increase of 71%. State revenue has dropped from 11.8% to 7.9% of the overall revenue, but the actual amount has gone up from \$316,684 to \$357,861. Overall, revenue has gone up 69.6% to \$4,534,236 in FY15.

A key component in raising revenue is the valuation of property. In 2016, the valuation of the town was just over \$197.9 million (12th lowest in the county). This has declined from 2015 when the valuation was over \$203 million. The loss of over \$6 million in valuation forces the tax rate to go up to raise the same amount of money. The tax rate has increased from \$11.82/\$1,000 assessed in 2015 to \$13.40/\$1,000 assessed in 2016 (14th highest).

Expenditures

In FY15, Hinsdale expended \$2,745,029, or 62.5% of its budget, on education, an increase of 46.3% since 2005. Public Works saw an increase of \$238,229 or 66.9%, to bring its total expenditures to \$594,318. General government increased by \$134,161, or 66.2%, to



\$336,939, while fixed costs saw an increase of 101.6% bringing its total to \$235,441. Human Services saw an increase of 151.8%, bringing its total to \$35,271. Police increased by 103.9%, Fire by 1.1%, and Other Public Safety decreased by 71.5%, bringing all public safety spending to \$285,130. Overall, expenditures have gone from \$2,928,656 in 2005 to \$4,391,689 in 2015 (15th highest in the county), an increase of 50.0%. (See Table 5.2)

Levy Limit

For Fiscal Year 2016, the town had a tax levy of approximately \$3,953,321 and excess levy capacity of \$351,073. Hinsdale's FY16 levy ceiling, which is the highest taxes can be raised without an override vote and is based on 2.5% of assessed value, is \$7,375,599. This results in a difference of \$3,422,278 between the current levy and the ceiling. Based on current trends, Hinsdale is not in danger of hitting the levy ceiling in the near future (20 years+) unless assessed values drop dramatically and numerous override votes are needed.

Public Survey Results

The public survey asked respondents to rate their level of satisfaction with conditions and services in the town. Most conditions or services received high ratings (60% or more) of *Satisfactory*. Of the conditions or services that received less than 60% *Satisfactory*, several received exceptionally high ratings of *Very Good*; they are *Fire department services* (59.7%); *Ambulance services* (47.2%); *Police department services* (38.7%); and *Library services and programs* (37.4%). Only two conditions or services received exceptionally high ratings of *Poor*, which were *Conditions of town roads* (66.82%) and *Municipal governance* (42.47%).

Respondents were also asked what town services they believe need to be kept the same, reduced, or improved. All conditions and services received very low response rates for *Reduce service*; however the ones with the highest rates in this category were *Police department services* (6.7%) and *Municipal governance* (5.0%). Respondents were most unsure (*Don't Know*)

about *Public transportation specifically for the elderly or disabled* (36.7%) and *Programs for seniors* (33%). *Conditions of town roads* received the highest percentage of *Improve Service*, with 85%, with *Municipal governance* receiving the second-highest percentage at 56.5%.

When asked if they *would favor an increase or decrease in property taxes or user fees to improve or reduce services*, 64.1% of respondents favored *increases in taxes and/or user fees to increase services*. Of the 83 comments on this question, half (42) were in reference of the need to improve town roads.

The public survey also asked respondents what information sources they use when learning about town issues and events. *The Berkshire Eagle* and *Friends and neighbors* were far and away the most used information sources for information about town issues and events, followed by *Postings around town* as a distant third. Half of the information sources are used by less than 10% of respondents.

Further analysis revealed that 81.8% of respondents listed one or more word-of-mouth sources: *Friends and neighbors*, *Local gathering place (for example a local diner)*, *Social media*, and *Gatherings at social organizations*, whereas only 53.3% of respondents listed one of the two sources most directly under the control of town officials: *Postings around town* and *town website*.

Lastly respondents were asked if they *feel adequately informed about town government affairs*. Only about one quarter (25.1%) of all respondents feel that they are *adequately informed*, and another quarter of the respondents (29.2%) said they were *unsure*, leaving almost half of respondents feeling *inadequately informed* about town government affairs.

KEY SERVICES ISSUES

Funding for Road Maintenance

Prior to 2017, the town relied on state funds through the Chapter 90 program for road maintenance activities. However, the public has complained about road conditions and some residents would like to see tax dollars spent on road maintenance in the future. In 2017, the town approved a road stabilization fund for road maintenance and improvement.

Re-Establishing Trust in Government

The public survey indicated that residents are looking for improved local government after a few years of turmoil between residents and the Select Board. Many survey respondents did not feel informed about town government affairs. It is important for town officials to regain the trust of the residents and build consensus around a direction for the town.

ACTION: EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE EQUIPMENT WITH SURROUNDING TOWNS

ACTION: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) THAT INCLUDES ALL TOWN DEPARTMENTS, INTEGRATES ONGOING AND PROPOSED WORK, IS OPEN TO PUBLIC COMMENT, AND IS APPROVED YEARLY AT TOWN MEETING

ACTION: CONTINUE TO USE THE REGIONAL GROUP PURCHASING PROGRAM OR OTHER COST SAVING PROGRAMS

ACTION: CONTINUE TO EXPAND UPON THE USE OF ONLINE SERVICES TO ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONVENIENCE FOR RESIDENTS BY REDUCING THE NEED FOR RESIDENTS TO PHYSICALLY TRAVEL TO TOWN HALL

Objective: Offset town costs through external funding sources

The town will explore options to increase external sources of funding, such as through the pursuit of grant opportunities.

ACTION: CONTINUE TO RESEARCH AND APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDING TO ADDRESS TOWN NEEDS

ACTION: IDENTIFY AND PURSUE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN MULTI-MUNICIPALITY/REGIONAL COMPETITIVE GRANT FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Objective: Increase tax revenue and other local receipts through new growth and development and other means

The town will seek to increase revenue through new growth and other revenue sources, thereby reducing the tax burden on existing taxpayers.

ACTION: EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL FOR ESTABLISHING NEW LOCATIONS FOR BUSINESSES OR A PROFESSIONAL PARK CLOSE TO EXISTING BUSINESSES OR THE TOWN CENTER, SUCH AS THE GRAVEL PIT OFF OLD DALTON ROAD

ACTION: DEVELOP A PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE TOWN'S NATURAL RESOURCES

SERVICES GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

Goal 1: Provide Efficient and Fiscally Responsible Services

The Town of Hinsdale will continue to provide efficient and fiscally responsible services to all its residents.

Objective: Streamline costs while maintaining or enhancing levels of service

The town will continue efforts to regionalize and reduce costs through additional planning and management of its human resources.

ACTION: PURSUE OPTIONS TO SHARE SERVICES WITH SURROUNDING TOWNS



ACTION: EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A LOCAL FARMER'S MARKET ON PROPERTY OWNED BY THE TOWN

ACTION: AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES/TAX TITLE ACCOUNTS

ACTION: DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR SELLING AND/OR DEVELOPING PROPERTIES HELD IN TAX POSSESSION

Objective: Pursue opportunities to reduce town education costs, while maintaining high levels of service

The town will pursue and implement strategies to reduce its education costs without sacrificing educational opportunities for its children.

ACTION: PARTICIPATE IN REGIONAL EFFORTS TO EXAMINE THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY

ACTION: PURSUE COST REDUCTION MEASURES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WHERE POSSIBLE, SUCH AS SHARED SERVICES, COOPERATIVE PURCHASING, AND SPECIALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Objective: Ensure that town-assessed user fees are in alignment with comparable communities in the region

The town will maintain and enhance its financial solvency by collecting reasonable fees from residents for services while ensuring that such fees are in no way a deterrent to future growth and development.

ACTION: ANNUALLY REVIEW EXISTING FEE LEVELS (INCLUDING COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE REGION) AND PROPOSE UPDATED MONETARY FEE LEVELS ACCORDINGLY

ACTION: ROUTINELY REVIEW EXISTING FEE TYPES/CATEGORIES (INCLUDING COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE REGION) AND PROPOSE UPDATED FEE TYPES/CATEGORIES ACCORDINGLY

Goal 2: Provide Effective Town Government

The town will strive to make town government transparent, welcoming and engaging for all residents.

Objective: Fully inform and engage residents, boards, and committees in town governance and decision-making

The town will continue to inform its residents and the community about town governance through active public participation, civic engagement, and overall transparency.

ACTION: CONTINUE TO ENHANCE THE TOWN WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, AND DIGITAL NEWSLETTER TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH RESIDENTS

ACTION: RECRUIT ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO SERVE ON TOWN BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS

ACTION: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE NEW RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN TOWN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIC LIFE, SUCH AS WELCOME BASKETS AND EVENT PROMOTION

ACTION: EXPLORE HAVING SELECT BOARD MEETINGS TELEVISED ON LOCAL ACCESS TV AND/OR LIVE STREAMED ONLINE

Goal 3: Enhance Services to Address Changing Demographics

The town will enhance services for its senior citizens.

Objective: Evaluate the needs of the senior population

The town will evaluate the needs of its senior population to identify what is needed for seniors to remain in town as they age and live full and safe lives.

ACTION: SURVEY THE TOWN'S POPULATION TO ASSESS NEEDS FOR AND INTEREST IN SUCH ITEMS AS AGING IN PLACE, ON-DEMAND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

ACTION: EITHER THROUGH THE PROCUREMENT OF A TOWN-OWNED VEHICLE, OR IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ANOTHER COMMUNITY, BEGIN PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO SENIORS

Objective: Pursue actions to improve the lives of Hinsdale's seniors

The town will immediately pursue actions to improve the lives of seniors.

ACTION: PARTICIPATE IN THE COUNTY-WIDE "AGE FRIENDLY BERKSHIRES" INITIATIVE

ACTION: EVALUATE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SENIOR HOUSING

ACTION: PURSUE ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT ROUTINE ACCESS TO MEDICAL PROVIDERS IS AVAILABLE

ACTION: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT ATTRACT AGING RESIDENTS AS WELL AS FACILITATE ACCESS TO THOSE ACTIVITIES

ACTION: PURSUE PARTNERSHIPS AND SHARED SENIOR PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES WITH NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES AS APPROPRIATE

Goal 4: Enhance Services for Hinsdale Families

The town will enhance services for its youth and families.

Objective: Pursue actions to engage families and children in the social fabric of the town

ACTION: EXPLORE PROVIDING GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO GATHER AND PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES, POSSIBLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COMMUNITY CENTER



CHAPTER 6: HOUSING

Hinsdale's vision for housing:

Hinsdale encourages attractive and well-maintained housing that meets the needs of its current residents of all ages and income levels, attracts new residents to town, respects the rural character of the town, and minimizes impact on the environment.

This chapter reviews existing conditions related to housing in the town and lists the goals, objectives, and actions for the town to take to achieve its vision for housing in Hinsdale.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

Development Trends

Much of the infrastructure development that shaped the town occurred during the mid- to late-1800s when the textile mills flourished. The period from 1960 to 1990 saw a significant spurt in residential development that resulted in the construction of 50% of the total number of housing units. Most of the residential development has been single-family homes on large lots along existing roadways.

The combination of zoning rules and market expectations in Hinsdale promotes new development that consists almost exclusively of large, single-family homes with average lot sizes significantly exceeding average lot sizes of older residences. Hinsdale continues to face pressure from developments under the Approval Not Required subdivision law, which allows for any new lot to be created on an approved road provided it meets minimum frontage requirements. This type of growth will continue to chop up frontage along major road networks and contribute to sprawl land patterns. Accessory apartments and two-family dwellings are allowed throughout the town by special permit. Multi-family housing is allowed by special permit in the town's commercial and manufacturing zones.

While areas served by town water and sewer are likely targets for growth, development is far from limited to these areas. In contrast to historic patterns, development along remote town-maintained roads has changed the face of the town. The obvious effects include loss of open space and rural scenery; while



Houses

HOUSING AT A GLANCE

Existing Conditions

As of the 2010 Census, 19% of Hinsdale's 1,133 housing units were classified as seasonal, while 77% were year-round, and the remaining 4% were vacant.

Affordability

25% of all households (including owner—and renter—occupied units) are currently considered "housing cost burdened," meaning that housing costs are equal to or greater than 30% of household income.

Home Value Trends

The median sales price of a home in Hinsdale increased by over \$114,000 between 2000 and 2014.

Table 6.1 - Housing Occupancy in Hinsdale 2000-2014*Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census*

	Number in 2000	% of total, 2000	Number in 2010	% of Total, 2010	% Change 2000-2010
Seasonal	195	20%	215	19%	+ 10%
Year Round	739	76%	868	77%	+ 17%
Vacant Units (includes unoccupied homes for sale or rent and other vacancies)	36	4%	50	4%	+ 39%
Rental (seasonal or year round)	154	16%	166	15%	+ 8%
Total Housing Stock:	970	100%	1,133	100%	+ 17%

Table 6.2 - Housing Issues in Hinsdale, MA*Source: HUD, 2016 based on the 2008-2012 Census American Survey*

Income Distribution Overview	Owner	Renter	Total	% of Total
Household Income <=30% HAMFI*	35	30	65	8%
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	115	20	135	16%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	155	15	170	20%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	80	15	95	11%
Household Income >100% HAMFI	370	20	390	45%
Total	755	105	860	100%
Housing Problems Overview	Owner	Renter	Total	% of Total
Household has 1 of 4 Housing Problems**	210	15	225	26%
Household has none of 4 Housing Problems	535	75	610	71%
Cost Burden not available	15	15	30	3%
Total	755	105	860	100%
Housing Cost Burden*** Overview	Owner	Renter	Total	% of Total
Cost Burden <=30%	529	74	603	70%
Cost Burden >30% to <=50%	129	10	139	16%
Cost Burden >50%	75	4	79	9%
Cost Burden not available	15	15	30	3%
Total	755	105	860	100%

*HAMFI stands for "HUD Area Median Family Income." For the year 2012, HAMFI in the Town of Hinsdale was equal to \$69,800. HUD calculates its own income values differently from those reported in Census information. Census data for income is adjusted based on the consumer price index and inflation trends. The value is rounded to the nearest \$100.

**The four housing problems are: incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than 1 person per room, and cost burden greater than 30%.

***Cost burden is the ratio of housing costs to household income. For renters, housing cost is gross rent (contract rent plus utilities). For owners, housing cost is "select monthly owner costs," which includes mortgage payment, utilities, association fees, insurance, and real estate taxes.

Note: All data is by household. HUD household totals have been rounded.



less apparent threats include degradation of water resources and fragmentation of wildlife habitats. Roads notably affected in the last 15 years include East Washington, Fassell, Robinson, and Creamery roads. Other recent subdivisions have consumed land off Old Windsor Road and at the old site of Camp Lenore off Route 143. If this trend continues it has the potential of reducing the overall quality of the community.

Existing Conditions

As of the 2010 Census, there were 1,133 housing units in Hinsdale. The 215 housing units listed for “seasonal, recreational, or occasional use” accounted for 19% of total units. Year-round housing units totaled 868 and made up 77% of the housing stock. The remaining 4% of housing units (50 units) were listed as vacant. This category includes unoccupied homes for sale or rent, sold or rented units pending occupation, and other vacancies such as “abandoned” or unused homes. Renter-occupied units comprised 15% of all housing stock, or 166 total units.

Between 2000 and 2010, there was a 17% increase in housing units, from 970 to 1,133 (see Table 6.1). All categories of housing units increased, with vacant units increasing by the greatest percentage (39%) from 36 to 50 units, and year-round units increasing by the highest number (129 or 17%) from 739 to 868.

The town has a predominantly single-family housing stock, with most being owner-occupied. As of the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS), 71% of housing units were built before 1980, and 35% of all units were built in 1939 or earlier. Most houses have 2 or 3 bedrooms (22% and 46%, respectively).

Housing Ownership and Occupancy

Also per 2014 ACS data, the average household size for owner-occupied units was 2.53 household members, compared to 2.15 for renter-occupied units. Of 869 occupied units in 2014, 48% of householders moved in since 2000, and only 4.3% have been in the same housing unit since 1969 or earlier. Of the 766 owner-occupied units in 2014, 70% (532 units) had a mortgage and 30% (234 units) did not.

Table 6.3 - Home Value and Housing Costs in Hinsdale

Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey

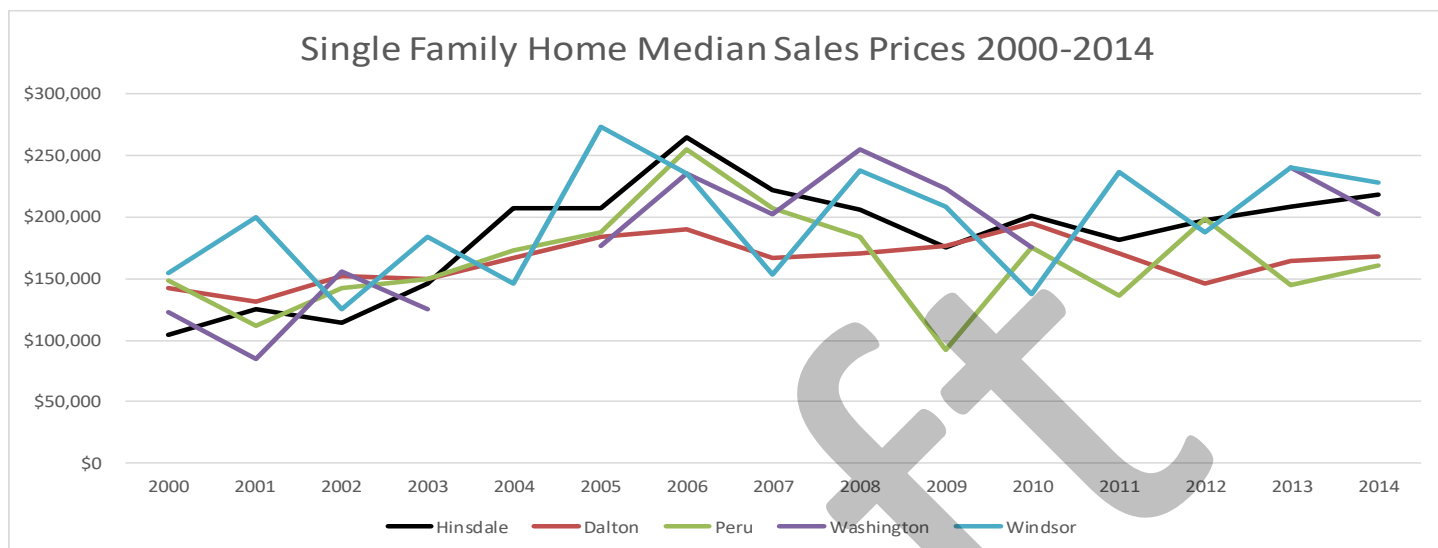
Value of Homes	Number	%
Less than \$50,000	49	6.4%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	34	4.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	123	16.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	174	22.7%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	248	32.4%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	112	14.6%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	26	3.4%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0%
Total (owner occupied units)	766	100.0%
Median value: \$201,300		
Median Monthly Housing Cost (with mortgage): \$1,439		
Median Monthly Housing Cost (with no mortgage): \$533		
Median Rent: \$855		

Housing Affordability

None of the town’s housing units are listed by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as Chapter 40B qualifying units (DHCD, 2014). “Chapter 40B Units” are units considered affordable by low- and moderate-income households with long-term restrictions that ensure it will continue to be affordable. Low income is defined as income equal to or less than 80% of the median income for the area. Moderate income is defined as income between 80 and 95% of the median income for the area. Chapter 40B authorizes a housing agency or developer to obtain a single comprehensive permit for the construction of subsidized low- or moderate-income housing. If a community, in which less than 10% of its total year-round housing stock is subsidized low- or moderate-income housing, denies a comprehensive permit, or imposes conditions that make the project economically unviable, the developer may appeal to the state Housing Appeals Committee for review of the local action.

Based on the Sustainable Berkshires plan, Hinsdale is a moderate regional priority for production of affordable housing. This is because Hinsdale is a secondary market, near jobs and with good schools, but less served by

Figure 6.1 - Single-Family Home Median Sales Prices 2000-2014



Source: Banker and Tradesman Online 2016

transit and municipal infrastructure. It is also adjacent to a high priority town (Dalton) and is a slightly smaller town in the region with less staff capacity.

Data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) indicates that based on income levels determined from the 2008-2012 ACS, approximately 55% of Hinsdale households, or 470 total households, earn less than or equal to 80% of the HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) (See Table 6.2). This means that approximately 55% of households would be eligible for affordable housing based on their status as low-income wage earners. HAMFI for Hinsdale in 2012 was \$69,800. This value is derived from the ACS median income value for the town and is adjusted for inflation and the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Moreover, 25% of all households (including owner and renter occupied units), or 218 households in total, are currently considered “housing-cost burdened.” Housing-cost burden is defined as the ratio of housing costs to household income. When housing costs are equal to or greater than 30% of income, a household is considered housing-cost burdened.

Home Value Trends

As of the 2014 ACS, 55% of owner-occupied homes in

Hinsdale had a value between \$150,000 to \$300,000. No homes were estimated to have a value of \$1,000,000 or more (see Table 6.3).

In 2000, the median housing value of a home in Hinsdale was \$116,900, and the median sales price of a single-family home was \$104,900. In the year 2014, the median home value was \$201,300 (increase of \$84,400) and the median sales price of a single-family home was \$219,000 (increase of \$114,100). In comparison, the median sales price for a single-family home in Berkshire County was \$182,625 in 2014, or \$36,375 less than the sales price of a home in Hinsdale.

The median sales price of a home in Hinsdale in 2014 was lower than that of Windsor (\$228,000), but higher than that of the surrounding towns of Peru (\$160,500), Dalton (\$168,500), and Washington (\$202,400). See Figure 6.1 for a comparison of regional single-family home sales data for 2000-2014.

Home Sales vs. New Construction

The number of sales of single-family homes in Hinsdale fell from a high of 42 homes in 2002 to a low of 12 homes in 2009. The number of sales has increased from this low point to an average of 18 homes per year between 2012-2016.



Between 2012 and 2016, there were 15 building permits issued for new homes compared to the 92 single-family home sales during that same time.

Public Survey Results

Almost half (43.4%) of respondents feel that *This community is growing at an appropriate rate, we should keep housing development at the same rate it has been*, and only 4.9% of respondents want to *discourage more development*. Families are the group that most of respondents (62%) felt were *in need of appropriate housing opportunities*, followed by *elderly/senior* (55.9%) community members. Only a small percentage of respondents (5.6%) felt there is a need for housing for *high-income* households.

Single-family housing was determined by 62.6% of respondents to be *important to increase*, followed by *senior housing* at 48.5% and *affordable housing* at 42.3%. Less than 10% of respondents thought that it was important to increase *low-income* housing (9.3%), *multi-family* housing (7.1%), *2-family* housing (5.5%), or *time shares* (2.2%).

KEY HOUSING ISSUES

Housing Affordability

One quarter of residents in Hinsdale are housing-cost burdened, and the median sales price of a home in Hinsdale has skyrocketed since 2000. Affordable housing options will need to be considered to retain present residents and to attract new people to live in Hinsdale.

Aging In Place

Hinsdale's population is increasingly aging. Regional studies conducted by BRPC show that the vast majority of older residents want to reside in their own homes and communities as they age. The town will need to work on supporting the aging in place of its older residents, as well as investigating long-term dedicated housing for seniors.

HOUSING GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

Goal 1: Provide a Range of Housing Options

The town will work towards providing a range of housing options for all ages to meet the needs of current residents and attract new residents to town.

Objective: Increase local capacity to address housing needs

The town will increase its capacity to address housing needs by forming a dedicated committee to advance housing actions.

ACTION: ESTABLISH A LOCAL HOUSING ENTITY, SUCH AS A TOWN COMMITTEE OR HOUSING TRUST, TO FOCUS ON HINSDALE'S HOUSING ISSUES

ACTION: PREPARE A HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN TO ADDRESS THE TOWN'S HOUSING NEEDS

Objective: Pursue actions to encourage "starter homes" or modestly priced housing

The town will examine and explore actions to encourage modestly priced housing that could serve as "starter" homes for new families wanting to live in Hinsdale.

ACTION: EVALUATE AND CHANGE, IF NECESSARY, THE TOWN'S ZONING AND OTHER TOWN LAWS TO IDENTIFY AND AMEND/REMOVE ITEMS THAT INCREASE THE COST OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

ACTION: EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, ZONING MEASURES, INCLUDING OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, TO MINIMIZE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COSTS

ACTION: TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE TO PROMOTE MODESTLY PRICED HOUSING THROUGH SUCH ITEMS AS EXPLORING TAX INCENTIVES, DEMONSTRATING DEMAND FOR HOUSING, AND ACTIVELY SOLICITING DEVELOPERS

Objective: Pursue actions to address the housing needs of seniors

The town will examine and explore actions to enable Hinsdale's seniors to remain in Hinsdale safely and comfortably as they age.

ACTION: PARTICIPATE IN AGE-FRIENDLY BERKSHIRE ACTIVITIES SPECIFIC TO AGING IN PLACE, SUCH AS A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM TO ASSESS ELDERS' HOMES FOR HAZARDS AND PROMOTING CERTIFIED AGING SPECIALIST CONTRACTORS

ACTION: EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, AN ACCESSORY APARTMENT (ALSO KNOWN AS MOTHER-IN-LAW) BY-LAW

ACTION: CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR A TOWN-OWNED ELDERLY HOUSING COMPLEX

ACTION: PROMOTE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRIVATELY-OWNED ELDERLY HOUSING COMPLEX THROUGH SUCH ITEMS AS EXPLORING TAX INCENTIVES, DEMONSTRATING DEMAND FOR, AND ACTIVELY SOLICITING DEVELOPERS

Objective: Promote Hinsdale as a preferred location for second homeowners

The town will promote Hinsdale's assets to attract more second homeowners to improve the town's tax base.

ACTION: DEVELOP A PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM TO ATTRACT SECOND HOMEOWNERS

Goal 2: Enhance Community Attractiveness to Maintain or Increase Property Values

Derelict properties can devalue neighboring properties and serve as a deterrent for new businesses and residents.

Objective: Improve or remove poor quality properties

The town will act to improve or remove poor quality properties.

ACTION: DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS POOR QUALITY PROPERTIES AND INCLUDE A COMPONENT OF "TOWN PRIDE" THAT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF THEIR PROPERTY AND RECOGNIZES THOSE WHO DO

ACTION: PURSUE STRONGER ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS RELATED TO POOR QUALITY PROPERTIES

ACTION: SEEK AND PURSUE GRANT FUNDS TO ASSIST THOSE PROPERTY OWNERS OF LIMITED MEANS TO IMPROVE THEIR PROPERTIES

Goal 3: Promote Environmentally Responsible Housing

Adopting programs and best practices that are good for the environment will result in positive health benefits and financial savings.

Objective: Promote environmental best practices in housing development and home ownership

The town will actively promote the most recent and best practices in existing and new development that benefit the environment.

ACTION: PROMOTE FULL ADHERENCE TO THE "STRETCH CODE" BEING PURSUED THROUGH THE GREEN COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

ACTION: PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICES, SUCH AS ALTERNATIVES TO LAWN PESTICIDES, WATER CONSERVATION, PROPER DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, AND PROMOTING RECYCLING

ACTION: PROMOTE RESIDENTIAL SOLAR AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

ACTION: PROMOTE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RETROFITTING EXISTING HOUSING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

ACTION: EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONING BY-LAW



Goal 4: Enable More Residents (and Prospective Residents) to Afford Housing

The high cost of housing can impose barriers to prospective homeowners or people seeking to relocate in Hinsdale.

Objective: Promote opportunities to reduce the barriers to homeownership through education and collaboration

The town will engage with those organizations and banks that can assist with reducing the high costs of homeownership.

ACTION: PROMOTE A FIRST-TIME HOMEOWNERS WORKSHOP

ACTION: WORK WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL AND STATE ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES, SUCH AS THE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, TO ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS

ACTION: CONDUCT OUTREACH TO AND FORM COLLABORATIONS WITH LOCAL REALTORS, BANKS, AND FUNDING AGENCIES TO ENSURE THE MOST RECENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO PROSPECTIVE HOME BUILDERS OR BUYERS

Objective: Pursue programs that can reduce homeownership costs or provide funds for housing development

The town will seek to increase available funds for housing or reduce costs to qualified homeowners through municipal programs.

ACTION: EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT TO HELP FUND HOUSING PROJECTS

Draft



CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION

Hinsdale's vision for transportation:

Hinsdale proactively maintains and upgrades its transportation system annually, using a consistent level of local and state funding, employing the best practices to minimize impacts to the environment and rural character, meeting the needs of all ages and transportation modes, including transit, walking, and bicycling.

For a rural town like Hinsdale, transportation is an important issue. This chapter reviews town services and lists the goals, objectives, and actions for the town to take to achieve its vision for transportation in Hinsdale.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

Road Jurisdiction

There are 50.72 miles of road in Hinsdale, of which 5.07 miles are the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), 5.62 miles are privately owned, 0.94 miles are of unknown jurisdiction, and the remaining 39.09 miles are town accepted roads (see Table 7.1 and Map 4).

Table 7.1 - Road Jurisdiction in Hinsdale		
Source: MassDOT Road Inventory File 2016		
Jurisdiction	Miles	% of Mileage
State	5.07	10%
Town	39.09	77%
Private	5.62	11%
Unresolved Jurisdiction	0.94	2%
Total	50.72	100%

State Roads

The 5 miles of MassDOT road consists entirely of Route 8, which is a designated truck route. Route 8 extends from Connecticut through the Berkshires into Vermont, and crosses through Hinsdale from the Town of Washington in the south to the Town of Dalton in the north.



View From Smith Road

TRANSPORTATION AT A GLANCE

Road Jurisdiction

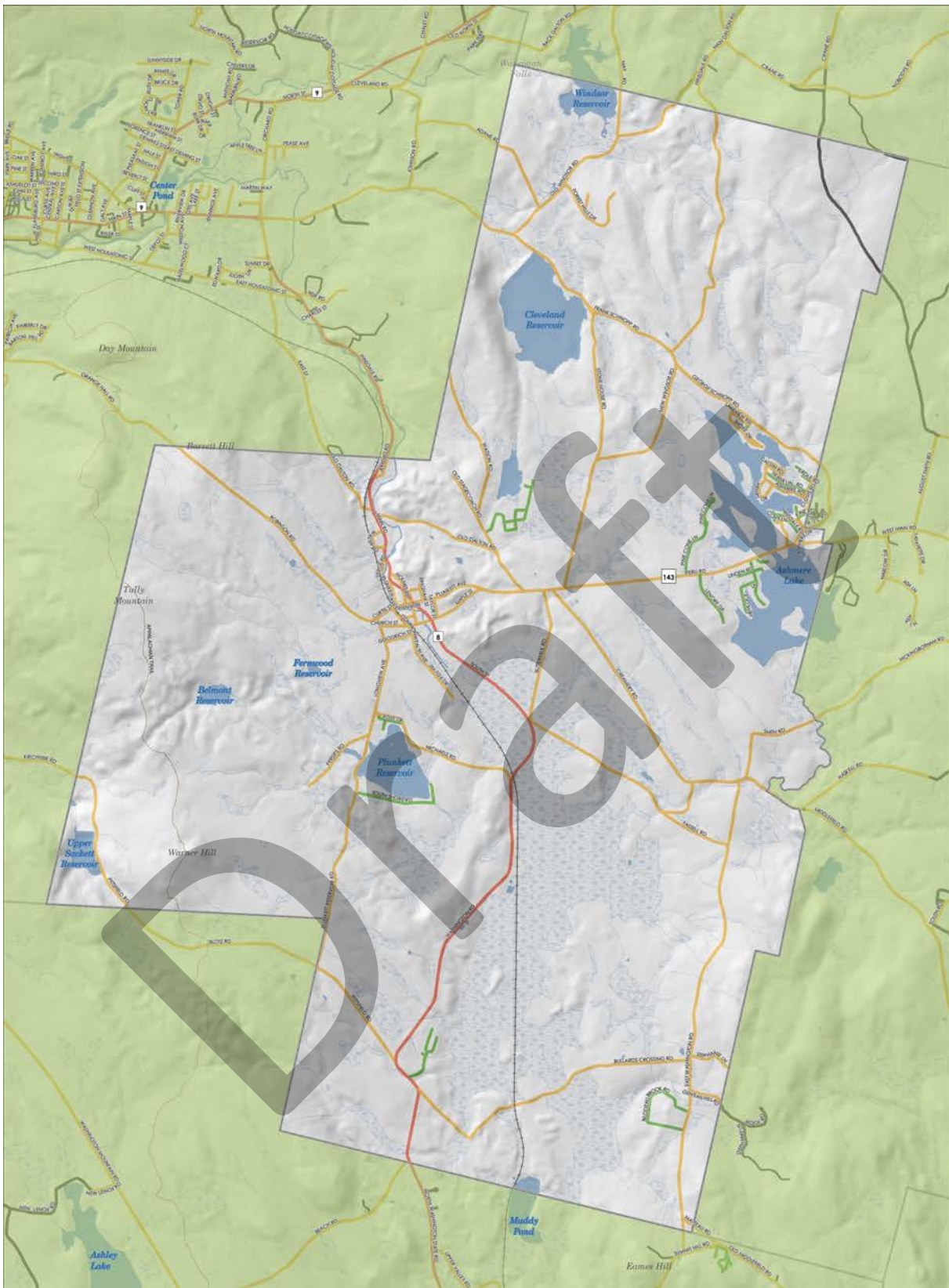
There are 50.72 miles of road in Hinsdale, of which 5.07 miles are under MassDOT's jurisdiction, 5.62 miles are privately owned, 0.94 miles are of unknown jurisdiction, and the remaining 39.09 miles are town accepted roads.

Road Maintenance

The condition of the town roads is a primary concern of residents, and funding for road repairs relies on state funds through the Chapter 90 program. The town has priority projects to address the worst roads in turn.

Complete Streets

The town has adopted a Complete Streets policy and is seeking funding to make improvements to bicycle and pedestrian conditions, and to increase safety for all users.



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, BRPC or the municipality may have supplied portions of this data.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Jurisdiction | Towns |
| MassDOT Ownership | Railroad |
| Town Ownership | Appalachian Trail |
| Private Ownership | Stream |
| Unknown Ownership | Wetland |
| | Open Water |

Town of Hinsdale
Vision Plan
Map 4. Road Jurisdiction





Route 8 is one of two major regional roadways that serve Hinsdale. The other is Route 143, which begins in the center of Hinsdale and runs to the east into the Town of Peru and on to Hampshire County. Although in Massachusetts most regional roadways and numbered routes are the jurisdiction of MassDOT, Route 143 is maintained by the towns it passes through, including Hinsdale.

Town Roads

Hinsdale is a rural community, and as such the predominant form of transportation is by automobiles or trucks. The majority of roadway miles in Hinsdale (77%) are town-accepted roads. Most of the main local roads are paved, but a fair number are gravel.

Private Roads

The private roads are largely grouped around Ashmere Lake, Plunkett Reservoir, and the two mobile home parks. These roads comprise 11% of all roadway miles in Hinsdale. Most are gravel roads; some are paved.

Unresolved Jurisdiction

Less than a mile of road in Hinsdale has unresolved jurisdiction. It is a paper road that crosses the northeast corner of the town and is not connected to the rest of the road network in Hinsdale.

Functional Classification

Functional classification is a way of grouping roadways into classes or systems based on character and type of traffic service they are intended to provide. All roadways are grouped into one of three classes (arterial, collector, or local), and provide for transportation based on a spectrum between overall mobility and land access.

Arterial Roads

Arterial roads provide the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control. Route 8 is a principal arterial road that comes from the northern Hinsdale/Dalton border, through the center of town, until the intersection with Michaels Road, at which point it becomes a minor arterial road.

Collector Roads

Collector roads provide a less highly developed level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials. The major collectors in Hinsdale are Robinson Road, which begins in the northwest at the border with the Town of Dalton and connects to the town center, and Peru Road (Route 143) from the east at the border with the Town of Peru to the intersection with Buttermilk Road, where it becomes Maple Street (still Route 143), a minor arterial road. Middlefield Road, which extends from South Street eastward to the Town of Middlefield, is classified as a minor collector.

Local Roads

Local roads consist of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors. These roads primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement. The majority of roads in Hinsdale are local roads.

Bridges

According to available state data, there are 11 bridges within Hinsdale (see Table 7.2). Of these 11 bridges, four are maintained by the state and the other seven are maintained by the town. The bridges mostly cross water, but two are over the CSX railroad.

Other Transportation Options

Bus Transit

Within Berkshire County, bus transit service is provided throughout the county by Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA). One line currently services Hinsdale (see Figure 7.1), connecting the Hinsdale Post Office to the center of Dalton, various shopping locations in Pittsfield, the intermodal transportation center in downtown Pittsfield, and Berkshire Community College.

Elderly and Disabled Transportation

BRTA Paratransit provides transportation services for elderly and disabled residents in Hinsdale. BRTA paratransit is a county-wide on-demand ride service. There is a small fee for rides and a reservation must be made

Table 7.2 - Bridges in Hinsdale, MA*Source: 2014 Mass DOT*

Over	Under	Owner	Year Built	Functional Class
Maple Street	East Branch, Housatonic River	Town of Hinsdale	1948	Urban Local
Main Street	East Branch, Housatonic River	Town of Hinsdale	2005	Urban Collector
Old Dalton Road	East Branch, Housatonic River	Town of Hinsdale	1978	Urban Local
Main Street (Rt. 8)	East Branch, Housatonic River	Mass DOT	1924	Urban Arterial
Washington Road (Rt. 8)	East Branch, Housatonic River	Mass DOT	2002	Urban Arterial
Middlefield Road	Bennett Brook	Town of Hinsdale	1933	Minor Collector
East Washington Road	Bennett Brook	Town of Hinsdale	1985	Rural Local
Middlefield Road	Bennett Brook	Town of Hinsdale	1932	Minor Collector
Bridge Street	CSX Railroad	Mass DOT	1901	Urban Collector
Washington Road (Rt. 8)	CSX Railroad	Mass DOT	1931	Urban Arterial
Old Windsor Road	Windsor Brook	Town of Hinsdale	1939	Rural Local

Figure 7.1 - BRTA Bus Stopped on Main Street

in advance. BRTA paratransit passengers must also fill out an application before being approved to use the service.

Rail

Although the railroad passes through Hinsdale, the closest passenger rail service is available from stations located in the cities of Pittsfield (20 minute drive) or Springfield, MA (one hour drive), and in the City of Windsor Locks, CT (one hour and 20 minute drive).

Airports

Airports are located in Albany, NY, at Albany International Airport and in Windsor Locks, CT, at Bradley International Airport. Both are approximately a one hour and 20 minute drive from Hinsdale.

Transportation and Roadway Funding

Federal Funding

In Massachusetts, towns may nominate potential road repairs and improvements to their Regional Planning Agencies as part of the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This program helps to allocate federal funding towards eligible roadway projects. In Hinsdale, the locally maintained roadways eligible for federal funding are Maple Street, Robinson Road, Peru Road, and Middlefield Road (Skyline Trail).



State Funding

In Massachusetts, the Chapter 90 highway funding program was enacted in 1973 entitling municipalities to reimbursement of documented expenditures on approved highway projects. Funds are provided through state Transportation Bond Issues, and can be used for a variety of project types and municipal uses including preservation and improvement projects that create or extend the life of capital facilities, garages, salt sheds, buildings for storage of equipment, and road building machinery, equipment and tools.

Chapter 90 apportionments fluctuate from year to year and are distributed based on a formula that factors in road miles (58.33%), population (20.83%) and employment (20.83%). In Hinsdale, Chapter 90 funding is generally between \$115,000 and \$160,000 each fiscal year (FY), with a significant increase in 2015 to over \$235,000 due to additional statewide funding that was allocated by the Governor Baker administration.

Town Funding

The Town of Hinsdale has historically limited its road construction projects to those that can be funded through the Chapter 90 Program. This was primarily done to help control municipal spending and subsequently keep the tax rate relatively low. In 2017, Hinsdale established a road stabilization fund specifically to help finance significant road improvement projects.

Road Maintenance and Upcoming Roadway Work

Roadway Needs

A Road Condition Report for Hinsdale was prepared in 2014 by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), using 2013 Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) data. In the PASER system a '10' is a new or newly reconstructed roadway. A '1' is a completely failed roadway. Ratings are assigned according to the type and amount of visual defects. At that time of the report, the majority of the roads (73.65%) were in fair condition, with a PASER rating between 4 and 7. Only 13.41% of roads were in good

Table 7.3 - Top 10 Priority Road Projects

Source: Hinsdale Department of Public Works, 9/14/16

Road Name	Miles	Total Score
Middlefield Road	1.82	49
East Washington Road	2.88	47
Peru Road	1.62	39
Old Windsor Road	1.37	38
Old Dalton Road	1.57	37
Main Road	1.15	37
George Schnopp Road	1.1	37
Main Street	0.07	34
Maple Street	1.01	34
New Windsor Road	3.39	33

condition, with a PASER rating between 8-10, and 12.94% were in poor condition, with a PASER rating between 1-3.

Current Priority Roads to be Repaired

The Department of Public Works Chief maintains a list of all priority road projects in town, based on factors such as volume of traffic and number of residents served by the road. The priority listing changes regularly as work is completed on various roads; the list is treated as a highly fluid document. A given road's aggregate priority score on this document does not factor in cost considerations, therefore work is not necessarily completed in priority order.

There are currently 56 roadway projects identified for repair, with aggregate scores ranging from 5 to 49. The median score is 17, and the average score is 21. The top 10 priority projects, not considering cost, are shown in Table 7.3.

Other Roadway Projects Recommended in the 2014 BRPC Road Condition Report:

- Rehabilitate 0.4 miles of East Old Dalton Road with drainage improvements
- Chip seal almost a mile of Michaels Road
- Chip seal almost a mile of Longview Avenue

- Mill and resurface almost two miles of George Schnopp Road with drainage improvements
- Rehabilitate Goodrich Street and Church Street
- Rehabilitate Fassell Road with potential culvert improvements
- Repair drainage problems in multiple locations along Frank Schnopp Road adjacent to spillway

Complete Streets

“Complete Streets” is a transportation concept that examines the design of roadways to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation (automobile, bicycle, or on foot). Complete Streets is not a “one size fits all” solution, but rather a kit of possible solutions that can be applied to any street or roadway. Complete Streets also connects with issues of public health, by improving safety for all and encouraging exercise through walking and cycling.

Within Hinsdale, small changes to the roadways, such as increased marking and signage, as well as restriping and recoloring crosswalks, could do much to enhance safety and increase travel by pedestrian and cyclists. These measures could also help to calm or slow traffic in desired areas.

Additionally, measures such as shoulder widening or roadside pathways (in addition to increased signage) could improve safety for walkers and cyclists. These changes to the roadway could be as simple as narrowing lanes for vehicle traffic during routine restriping work to increase the shoulder width available for pedestrians and cyclists.

Moreover, MassDOT has recently worked to integrate Complete Streets concepts into its design guidelines for roadway projects. MassDOT has also been developing a funding program that could provide additional funding for Complete Streets related projects in addition to town Chapter 90 funding. Hinsdale adopted a Complete Streets policy on April 13, 2016. A Complete Streets Committee was formed and worked with BRPC in the month of August to develop a prioritization plan and needs assessment report in time for the September 15, 2016 deadline to be eligible for FY2017 funding.

Sidewalks

There are currently only 2.56 miles of sidewalk in Hinsdale. When entering the town center on Route 8 from the south, the sidewalk picks up on the west side of the road, a little more than a quarter mile south of the Hinsdale Town Hall, and is continuous for 0.4 miles until there is a brief gap at the former gas station near the intersection with Plunkett Street and Main Street. The sidewalk then picks up again and continues to the north along Route 8 for about 0.7 miles before it ends at the eastern section of Old Dalton Road. There is a short spur onto the western section of Old Dalton Road to the Old Mill Trailhead.

Entering the town center on Maple Street from the east, the sidewalk begins on the north side of the street at the intersection with Old Dalton Road, and continues for the remaining length of the road, 0.7 miles (see Figure 7.2). The last 450 feet of Maple Street has sidewalk on both sides, where it passes the Hinsdale Public Library and local shops.

The sidewalk on Maple Street connects to Main Street, which has sidewalks on each side of the road. There is a short section of sidewalk on the north side of Plunkett Street from the intersection at Route 8, east to a terminus just before the intersection with Taylor Road. There is also a short section on Taylor Road that doesn't connect to Plunkett Street.

The west side of the Main Street sidewalk turns onto Bridge Street, and then a crosswalk connects the sidewalk on Bridge Street to the sidewalk on Commonwealth Ave. Only a short section exists on Commonwealth Ave., beginning abruptly just north of Bridge Street and extending only as far south as Church Street, which has sidewalk running its entire length but ending with no further connection. Goodrich Street runs roughly parallel to Church Street and only has sidewalk for less than half its length; the sidewalk it has does not connect to the roadways on either end.

Walking Loops

Several Berkshire towns have identified “walking loops” in town centers and on quiet rural roads. These



walking loops help to encourage pedestrian use and exercise, especially for elderly residents. Walking loops should be well marked and located on relatively flat terrain to enable use by residents of any age.

Within the Hinsdale Complete Streets Prioritization Plan are sidewalk installation and replacement projects that would close the gaps in two neighborhoods to create cohesive, fully functional walking loops.

Figure 7.2 - Sidewalk on Maple Street



Bicycle Conditions

Hinsdale does not currently have any roadways with bike lanes nor shared lane markings, and there are no officially sanctioned off-road bicycle trails. Currently there are no bike racks in town; however the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan includes the installation of bike racks at three locations on Maple Street, and a fourth location at the Old Mill Trailhead.

Intersection Reconstruction

Several intersections in Hinsdale were identified by the Complete Streets Committee as being unsafe for both drivers and pedestrians and in need of possible redesign and reconfiguration. Many of these intersections are currently in a “Y” configuration, where two roadways meet at an acute angle. Reconfiguring and redesigning these intersections to make the roadways meet at a 90° (right) angle could help to improve safety for drivers as well as reduce the distance needed to cross the intersection for pedestrians. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) states that:

“There is broad agreement that right-angle intersections are the preferred design. Decreasing the angle of the intersection makes detection of and judgments about potential conflicting vehicles on crossing roadways much more difficult. In addition, the amount of time required to maneuver through the intersection increases, for both vehicles and pedestrians, due to the increased pavement area.”

Right angle intersections can also provide a measure of traffic calming by preventing drivers from treating Y-intersections as a “merge lane” by requiring them to complete a full stop before proceeding through the intersection.

Some intersections in Hinsdale that could benefit from reconfiguration include:

- Maple Street (Route 143) and Old Dalton Road
- Main Street, Plunkett Street, and Route 8
- Maple Street (Route 143) and Plunkett Street
- Longview Ave, Robinson Road, and Curtis Street
- Middlefield Road (Skyline Trail) and Fassell Road
- Middlefield Road (Skyline Trail), Route 8, and Buttermilk Road
- East Washington Road and Fassell Road

Transportation and the Environment

Climate Change Adaptation

In Massachusetts and New England, climate change is expected to increase the frequency of storms and the amount of precipitation. Since 1970, annual temperatures in New England have increased by 2° Fahrenheit (F) and winter temperatures have increased 4°F. Regionally, most winter precipitation now falls as rain, not snow (U.S. EPA 2015). Existing roadway infrastructure, such as culverts and bridges, may be undersized and unable to accommodate the greater amount of water anticipated with climate change, leading to a higher likelihood of damage to the roadway requiring costly replacement. Simple climate adaptation measures could take the form of increasing the size of culverts and bridges during replacement. Additionally, the amount of gravel or stone armoring around these pieces of infrastructure could be increased to help reduce scour and erosion caused by larger and more frequent storms. Towns should consider their road infrastructure as one of the key ways to adapt to future climate change.

Wildlife Crossing Areas

The 2016 Regional Transportation Plan, prepared by BRPC, provides an analysis of wildlife crossing areas in Berkshire County and Hinsdale.

Berkshires' rural and undeveloped environment is ideal for a diverse ecosystem where some species of animals move significant distances. Unfortunately, our road system fragments these habitats and creates physical barriers to animal movement. There are two significant resources that are poised to help us better understand opportunities to minimize those barriers. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) each have undertaken valuable studies that can help with prioritizing projects and policies that enhance the safe passage of wildlife across the regions roads. TNC analyzed land cover and a TNC/UMass Amherst model called Critical Linkages to prioritize locations for ensuring connectivity. These priority locations will provide the greatest benefit to wildlife when barriers are removed or mitigated and are also critical for

maintaining a permeable landscape of habitat protection and management.

The Nature Conservancy "Critical Linkages"

The TNC analysis developed a system of nodes, linkages, and links to analyze wildlife crossing areas in Berkshire County. Nodes are defined as areas with a high conservation value for animal habitat. Examples of nodes include core forests and vernal pools. Links are paths or connections between habitat nodes. Linkages are portions of roadways that separate habitat nodes where links cross. Ideally wildlife passage structures would be constructed at priority linkages. Essentially, the researchers created a gravity model that ranked nodes, links, and linkages on their relative importance. The resulting outputs divided links and linkages into priority tiers with 1 being the highest.

Berkshire Environmental Action Team Stream Crossing Survey

BEAT's volunteers, interns, and partners are surveying Berkshire County stream crossings as part of a project organized by the University of Massachusetts, The Nature Conservancy, and the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (formerly Riverways). BEAT is a partner with The Housatonic Valley Association and the Hoosic River Watershed Association to survey stream crossings in Berkshire County. The information is entered into a UMass database that includes culvert details and photos of the inlet and outfall. The culvert evaluation specifically indicates whether the culvert is an impairment to aquatic or terrestrial animal movements. This detailed culvert information can help BRPC and local communities estimate financial needs and prioritize culvert replacements.

New standards ensure that culverts will not create artificial waterfalls that hinder aquatic migration. Also, they should be open-bottomed wherever possible so the substrate within the culvert matches the substrate of the streambed. Culverts must be 1.2 times the width of the streambed. This extra width, which will be dry except in times of very high water, provides a path for non-aquatic wildlife such as raccoons, mink, porcupines, and in some of the larger waterways, deer



Table 7.4 - Public Survey Results for Top 6 Roads Most in Need of Improvement

Source: Hinsdale Vision Plan Public Survey, 2016

Road Segment	Response Percent	Response Count
Old Dalton Road	23.4%	40
Route 143 (Maple Street and Peru Road)	22.2%	38
Middlefield Road/Skyline Trail Road	22.2%	38
Goodrich Street	18.1%	31
Church Street	17.0%	29

and bear. The idea is that a fish swimming upstream should not notice any difference in the stream when it swims under the road, other than a passing shadow. The additional culvert capacity also helps prevent washouts and associated disruption and expense.

Public Survey Results

Throughout the public survey, the condition of roads in town was consistently cited as a prevailing issue. When asked *what they liked least about living in Hinsdale*, 21% of survey respondents (42 individuals) cited the *poor condition of the roads and sidewalks* around town. When asked to *choose five things from a list options they might want for the Town of Hinsdale in the next 5 years*, *fix roads* was chosen by 73.8% of respondents (172 individuals).

Later in the survey, 66.4% of respondents (148 individuals) rated the condition of town roads as *poor*, and 85.5% of respondents (188 individuals) said that the condition *needed to be improved*.

When asked to *list up to three road segments that were most important to improve*, the six roads in Table 7.4 were cited the most. These roads all correspond with either the top 10 priority list or the roadway projects recommended in the 2014 BRPC Road Condition Report.

A substantial number of written comments and open-ended responses related to poor road condition were received on several other questions in the survey.

KEY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Road Maintenance

The condition of the roads is a primary area of concern for Hinsdale residents, and the most recent pavement data indicates that the majority of roads in Hinsdale are in only fair condition.

Complete Streets

As a rural community, the predominant form of transportation is by automobiles or trucks. Hinsdale does, however, have a defined village area in the center of town that could benefit from improved bicycle and pedestrian conditions to encourage those uses.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

Goal 1: Provide a Safe and Well-Maintained Transportation System that Accommodates Vehicles, Pedestrians, and Cyclists

The Town of Hinsdale will provide a safe and well-maintained transportation system accommodating multiple user types. The town will accomplish this by planning and providing funding for its roadway needs and collaborating at the regional level with local, state, and regional transportation officials.

Objective: Plan for and address existing and future roadway needs

The town will prepare and implement a road repair and maintenance plan that can be implemented with available resources, incorporates preventive measures with immediate repairs and accommodates changing future conditions.

ACTION: USING THE LATEST DIAGNOSTIC TECHNOLOGY, DEVELOP A REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR ALL ROADWAYS WITHIN HINSDALE THAT UTILIZES SUBSURFACE ANALYSIS ALONG WITH EVALUATION OF EXISTING SURFACE CONDITIONS AND INCORPORATES PREVENTIVE MEASURES AS WELL AS IMMEDIATE NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

ACTION: INSTITUTE A LONG-TERM FUNDING PLAN FOR ROAD REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH A COMBINATION OF GRANTS, THE ROAD STABILIZATION FUND AND STATE FUNDS

ACTION: IMPLEMENT THE ROAD REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE PLAN WITHIN FUNDING RESOURCES

ACTION: EMPLOY BEST PRACTICES FOR LONG-TERM ENVIRONMENTAL STABILIZATION WHEN CONDUCTING ROAD REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

ACTION: COMPLETE AN INVENTORY OF TOWN CULVERTS AND IDENTIFY MAINTENANCE NEEDS

ACTION: REPLACE OR REPAIR CULVERTS TO BETTER ACCOUNT FOR STORM EVENTS OF INCREASING FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY

ACTION: ACTIVELY WORK WITH OTHER LOCAL OFFICIALS AND LEGISLATORS FOR INCREASED CHAPTER 90 FUNDING AS WELL AS OTHER INCREASED FUNDING THROUGH OTHER SOURCES

Objective: Collaborate regionally to address existing and future transportation needs

The town will advocate for its transportation needs and collaborate with other communities as part of the regional transportation planning process.

ACTION: COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND STATEWIDE PARTNERS TO ASSESS NEEDS, EVALUATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES, AND CONSTRUCT PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION IN AND AROUND HINSDALE

ACTION: PARTICIPATE IN ALL TAC (TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE) AND MPO (METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION)

MEETINGS, AND ENGAGE IN THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

Goal 2: Increase Access to Public and Alternative Transportation

The Town of Hinsdale will increase access, including better access for seniors, to public and alternative modes of transportation to provide options for residents and address the needs of those who cannot afford or drive their own vehicles.

Objective: Work with the Berkshire Regional Transportation Agency (BRTA) and other towns to provide additional bus access

The town will pursue additional bus stops providing greater convenience for riders and increasing the likelihood of transit being used.

ACTION: PURSUE IMPROVED SITING AND AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STOPS, ESPECIALLY AT THE INTERSECTION OF OLD DALTON ROAD AND MAPLE STREET

Objective: Pursue options for alternative transportation in town

The town will promote alternative methods of transportation thereby providing a greater range of options and cost levels for Hinsdale residents.

ACTION: ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE CAR SHARING OR CARPOOLING RESOURCES. PROVIDE LINKS TO THESE RESOURCES ON THE TOWN WEBSITE

Objective: Work with the Council on Aging to better connect elderly and disabled residents with transportation services

The town will address the needs of those with limited ability to drive their own cars by participating in and promoting material about transportation services for those populations.

ACTION: IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO AVAILABLE ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSPORTATION BY PROMOTING OPTIONS THROUGH THE TOWN WEBSITE AND IN TOWN MAILINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS



ACTION: PARTICIPATE IN THE PILOT BERKSHIRE RIDES TO WELLNESS PROGRAM WHERE TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS FROM COUNCILS ON AGING AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES FROM SURROUNDING TOWNS ARE REIMBURSED FOR TRIPS ACROSS JURISDICTIONAL LINES FOR PRE-ARRANGED MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS OF HINSDALE'S RESIDENTS

ACTION: EXPLORE A COUNCIL ON AGING VAN OWNED BY THE TOWN OR COOPERATIVELY WITH OTHER TOWNS

Goal 3: Enhance Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation in Town

Recognizing that transportation includes more than motorized vehicles, the Town of Hinsdale will actively work to enhance bicycle and pedestrian transportation in town.

Objective: Implement a "Complete Streets" approach to future roadway projects

The town will continue its work to address non-motorized transportation through continued participation in the MassDOT Complete Streets program, a state program that can provide funding for transportation improvements.

ACTION: CONTINUE TO SEEK, SECURE AND UTILIZE MASSDOT "COMPLETE STREETS" FUNDING

ACTION: ENSURE ANNUAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS COMPLY WITH THE TOWN "COMPLETE STREETS" POLICY

ACTION: IMPLEMENT SIDEWALK ENHANCEMENTS AND INTERSECTION REDESIGNS AS APPROPRIATE THROUGH "COMPLETE STREETS" FUNDING

ACTION: COORDINATE WITH MASSDOT TO ENSURE THAT POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENTS ARE INCLUDED IN LARGER PROJECTS AND IN NEW CONSTRUCTION ALONG STATE-OWNED ROADWAYS

ACTION: ASSESS OPPORTUNITIES TOWN-WIDE TO SAFELY IMPROVE BIKING OPPORTUNITIES

Goal 4: Integrate Transportation Improvements with Other Important Town Items

Objective: Integrate environmental and recreational enhancements in transportation improvements

The natural environment and rural character were identified as important attributes by town residents. Wherever cost effective and feasible, the town will integrate environmental and recreational enhancements when transportation improvements are being made.

ACTION: INTEGRATE AND ADDRESS WILDLIFE CROSSINGS IN FUTURE ROADWAY PROJECTS

ACTION: COMMUNICATE WITH MASSDOT TO ENSURE THAT WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENT IS INCLUDED IN FUTURE STATE ROADWAY WORK

ACTION: INTEGRATE AND ADDRESS COST-EFFECTIVE MEASURES, INCLUDING THE USE OF GRANTS, TO ENHANCE WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY IN FUTURE ROADWAY PROJECTS, PARTICULARLY BRIDGE AND CULVERT WORK

ACTION: WHERE COST EFFECTIVE, UTILIZE ROAD TREATMENT MATERIAL WHICH MINIMIZES NEGATIVE IMPACTS TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

ACTION: WHERE APPROPRIATE, INTEGRATE RECREATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS WHEN CONDUCTING ROAD IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Objective: Integrate economic benefits in transportation improvements

The town will use transportation improvements to promote local businesses.

ACTION: IN COORDINATION WITH MASSDOT, INSTALL NEW DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE TO INCREASE VISITOR AWARENESS OF EXISTING BUSINESSES AND OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

ACTION: EXPLORE THE POTENTIAL FOR A RAIL SIDING FOR COMMERCIAL OR INDUSTRIAL USE

Objective: Enhance community attractiveness through transportation improvements

The town will work to improve the overall attractiveness through transportation improvements to attract newcomers and visitors to town.

ACTION: CONDUCT FOCUSED ASSESSMENTS OF THE MAJOR GATEWAYS TO DETERMINE IF THERE COULD BE IMPROVEMENTS TO SUCH ITEMS AS PLANTINGS, SIGNAGE, LIGHTING

ACTION: SEEK AND OBTAIN FUNDING TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO IMPORTANT TOWN GATEWAYS

ACTION: RESEARCH EXISTING STREET TREE PROGRAM FOR SMALL TOWNS, INCLUDING THE TOWN OF DALTON

ACTION: DEVELOP A STREET TREE PROGRAM THAT REPLACES TREES IN NEED OF REMOVAL AND RESTORES THOSE PREVIOUSLY REMOVED

ACTION: RESEARCH AND SEEK GRANTS TO HELP IMPLEMENT A STREET TREE PROGRAM



CHAPTER 8: LAND USE

Hinsdale's vision for land use

Hinsdale's vision for land use is to maintain the rural nature of the town while encouraging residential and commercial expansion and development according to an orderly and efficient development review process that respects property rights and values and minimizes impact on the environment.

This chapter describes key trends and issues in the area of land use. It also establishes the town's work plan for goals, objectives and actions to achieve its vision for land use.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

Location and Context

The Town of Hinsdale is approximately 21.7 square miles, or around 13,888 acres in size. It is situated in central Berkshire County, and is bordered to the north by Windsor, to the east by Peru, to the south by Washington, and to the west by Dalton.

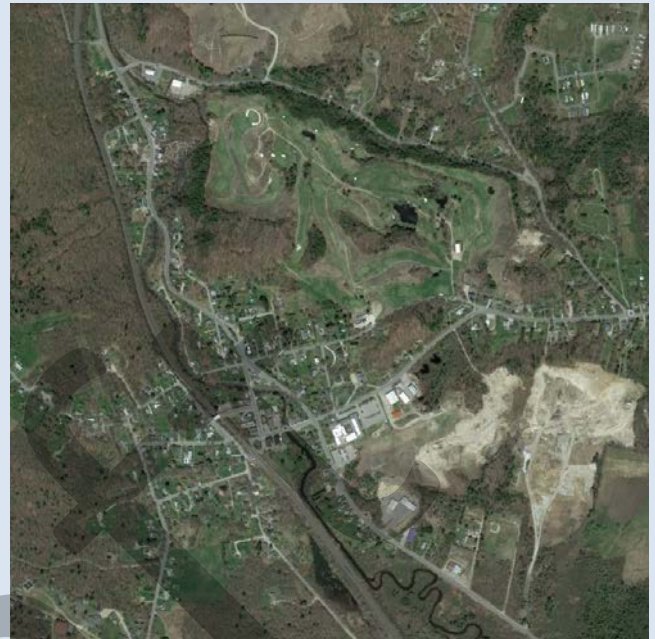
Town Center and Residential Villages

Town Center/Plunkett Reservoir Residential Village

The U.S. Census Bureau designated a portion of Hinsdale as an Urban Area. The Census Bureau's urban areas represent densely developed territory and encompass residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses. In Hinsdale, this includes the town center, with important town services and major businesses such as Town Hall, Kittredge Elementary School, Hinsdale Public Library, the U.S. Post Office, Ozzie's Steak and Eggs, Hinsdale General Store, and Dufour Tours. The urban area also covers a residential area north of the center to Old Dalton Road, including the Hinsdale Trading Post, and the residential area south of the center, including Plunkett Reservoir. For a map showing the designated urban area, please see Map 1 Regional Context.

Town Center Neighborhoods

Hinsdale's town center neighborhoods mostly have medium- to high-density residential land use, including multi-family housing. Streets include Longview Ave,



LAND USE AT A GLANCE

Distinct Residential Communities

Hinsdale's residential areas form fairly distinct neighborhood communities, from the dense settlement of the town center, to the three lakeside communities that each have their own homeowner's association, to the two mobile home parks outside of the urban area.

Forested Land

Of Hinsdale's 13,878 total acres, 76.3% are made up of forest land, including forested wetlands.

By-laws for Alternative Energy

Hinsdale has by-laws governing the permitting of both small wind energy systems and photovoltaic installations that address public safety and minimize impacts on scenic, natural and historic resources of the Town, while allowing these alternative energy sources to be utilized.

Church Street, Goodrich Street, Commonwealth Ave, Main Street, Taylor Street, Plunkett Street, Holmes Road, Bingham Road, Jordan Ave, and Circular Road. There are approximately 200 properties within these neighborhoods, with approximately 180 of them residential and about 2215 residential units. About 10 of these residential properties are second homes, with the rest full-time or rental units. Over half the properties were built prior to 1900, with the remaining half equally distributed since then. There are few lots within this area that could still be developed.

Plunkett Reservoir

From the early 1900s, Plunkett Reservoir had become a summer boating and camping site, as well as a winter source for ice cutting.

There are approximately 115 properties surrounding Plunkett Reservoir. These properties are dominated by approximately 75 single-family residences, of which 40 are second-homes. Twenty two of these single-family residences have been built since 2000. Between 1940 and 2000 44 houses were built over the 60 years. There are approximately 25 vacant lots in this area, which could be further developed.

The Plunkett Reservoir Association was formed by homeowners in 1950 in order to help resolve any problem regarding the lake, its maintenance, and the surrounding roads. The association meets annually for a picnic and business meetings.

Camp Romaca and Camp Emerson comprise large areas surrounding Plunkett Reservoir.

Ashmere Lake Residential Area

Ashmere Lake is divided by Route 143 (Peru Road), and there is a residential community on each side, Skyview Grove to the north and Ashmere Heights to the south.

Skyview Grove

In April of 1946, Edward Parker and Curtis Jones formed The Lakeshore Company and purchased a large tract of land on the northeasterly shores

Figure 8.1 - Aerial Image of Section of Skyview Grove



Ashmere Lake, known as Skyview Grove. By summer, they were marketing small building lots. Although roads were not yet available throughout much of the sub-division, several new property owners immediately began clearing their lots and constructing summer camps.

The final sub-division plan, showing a total of 679 building lots, was completed by Henry C. Neff in September of 1946. Electrical service was not extended into the sub-division until the fall of 1952. Today, there are a total of 133 dwellings on approximately 270 lots within the sub-division and the majority of the neighborhood is high-density. Approximately 46 of these dwellings are year-round residents with the remaining 87 (65%) second homes. Figure 8.1 shows an aerial image from Google Earth that shows a densely settled section of Skyview Grove.

Approximately 66% (88 units) of dwellings were built before 1960. Between 1960 and 2000 only 15% (21 units) of dwellings were built. Since 2000 another 24 dwellings have been built. Many of the dwellings built



since 2000 may have been rebuilds of previously existing units. Many of the 137 lots currently vacant within the area are too small for development based on current zoning. This requires perspective owners to buy several smaller adjacent parcels and combine them into larger parcels.

The Skyview Grove Association was formed as a not-for-profit homeowner's organization to preserve access to Ashmere Lake for all Skyview Grove subdivision resident members. The association has three business meetings each year, and members have access to the beach and picnic areas, pavilion, children's playground, multiple docks, a boat launch, and storage racks for canoes/kayaks.

Ashmere Heights

In 1963, Gaston Robert purchased the Camp Curtis property on the southwest side of Ashmere Lake and embarked on creating his “dream” community of summer lakeside cottages in Ashmere Heights. The original bunkhouses on the campsite were moved to individual lots on White Birch Lane and Linden Road. Porches were added and they were renovated for summer rentals, sharing a community beach on Ashmere Lake. Robert then sold the cabins in 1966, and they were operated as rentals until they were sold to individual owners in 1972.

Starting in 1964, Robert also started building chalet summer cottages on individual lots, each with a private waterfront. He continued to build summer homes on White Birch and Hemlock Lanes, and after 1970 he built winterized homes on Lakeview Circle. Year-round water was made available to all residents of the community in 1994 when the community system was expanded, and a sewer system was installed in 2000. Many of the original cottages have been renovated and enlarged to be year-round residences. There are currently 76 properties within Ashmere Heights with 67 of them having houses. The vast majority of these were built in the 1960s and 70s, with some additions in the 1980s, 90s and 2000s. About 11 of the houses are year-round, with the remaining 56 houses second-homes. There are few lots available for new construction.

The Ashmere Heights Association was formed in 1968 with a goal to be supportive of, and represent the interests of, the Ashmere Heights homeowners and to maintain key aspects of the community.

Mobile Home Parks

Both of Hinsdale’s mobile home parks are considered to be high-density residential areas.

Country Road Mobile Home Park

A mobile home park with over 40 residences is situated on privately-owned County Road, off of Old Stagecoach Road, just north of the urban area.

Bissellville Estates Mobile Home Park

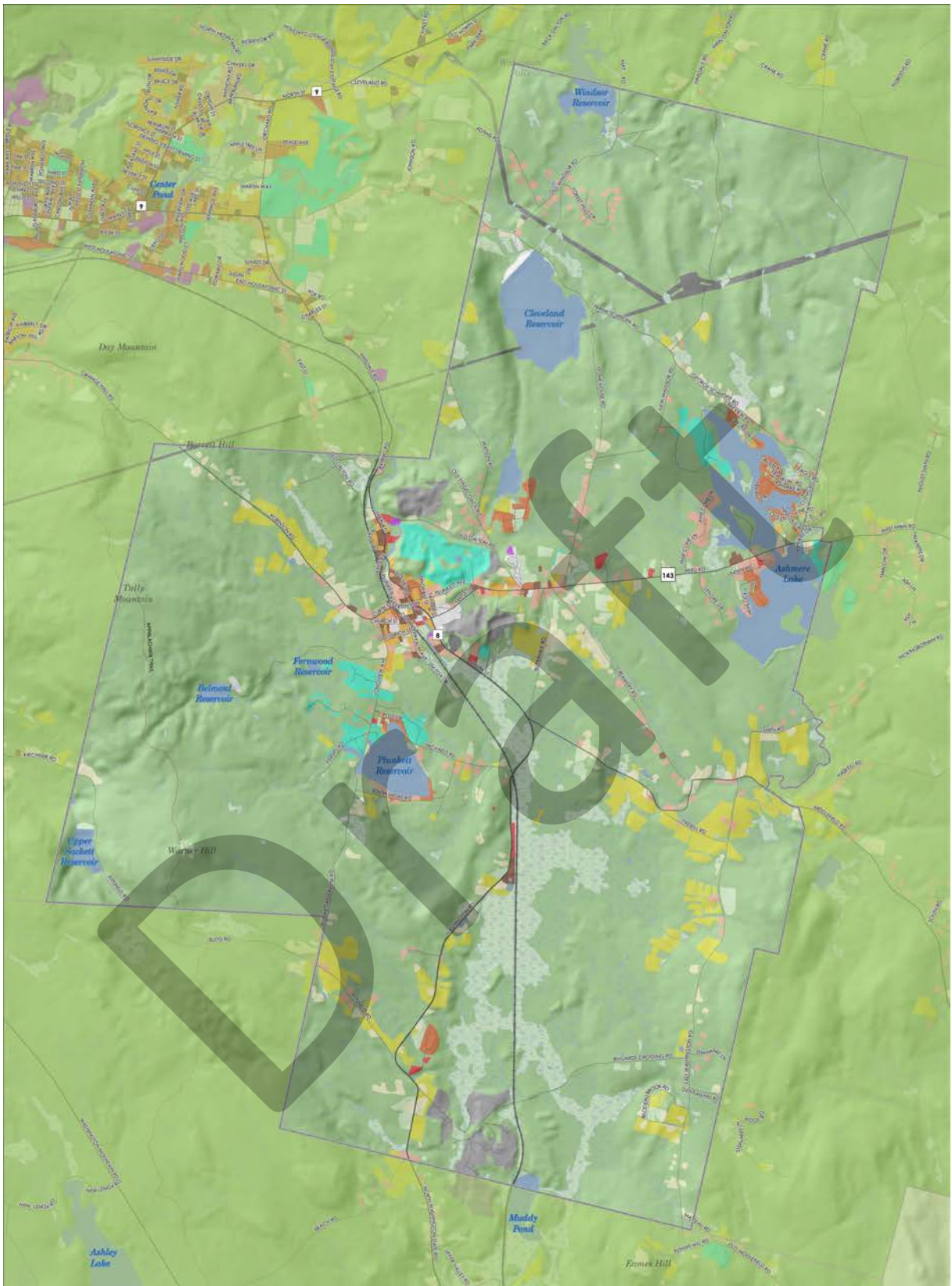
A second mobile home park with about 30 residences is situated on privately-owned Alice Drive and Anthony Drive, off of Pittsfield Road/Route 8 at the south end of Hinsdale.

Land Use

State Aerial Photography Analysis

The state, via the University of Massachusetts Amherst’s Resource Mapping-Land Information Systems Lab in the Department of Natural Resources Conservation, conducted an aerial photography analysis of land use in 1971, 1985, and 1999. While 1999 data is fairly dated at this point, this analysis still presents the best picture of the development footprint of Hinsdale and how it has changed over that 28 year period.

Additionally, it is important to note that a similar land use inventory was conducted by the state in 2005. However, a change in methodology makes comparison of the 2005 data with the 1971-1999 data statistically impossible. Prior to 2005, land use data was derived manually, from analysis of aerial photography. After 2005, these processes became automated. Additionally, the state began to integrate existing data sets into its analysis. Land use from 1971-1999 as well as the 2005 analysis have been included in this report.



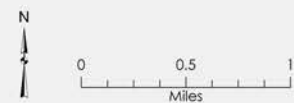
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- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Agriculture | Low Density Residential | Interstate |
| Forest | Very Low Density Residential | Major Road |
| Commercial | Recreation | Minor Road |
| Industrial | Open Land | Local Road |
| Mining | Urban Public/Institutional | Railroad |
| Multi-Family Residential | Utilities / Transportation | Appalachian Trail |
| High Density Residential | Water | Stream |
| Medium Density Residential | Towns | Wetland |
| | | Open Water |

Town of Hinsdale

Vision Plan

Map 5. Current Land Use (2005)





Land Use Change 1971-1999

Between 1971 and 1999, residential land use increased by the greatest percentage of 30% (266.28 acres) from 629.82 to 896.10 acres. Recreational land use also increased by 25% (50.18 acres) to a total of 202.36 acres. During this time, agricultural acreage decreased by 22% (166.18 acres) from 923.34 to 757.16 acres, and forests decreased by 3% (294.26 acres) given that the total forest acreage in 1999 was 10,298.76 acres. The land use that increased by the greatest percentage (67%) was mining/waste disposal, which grew from 43.43 to 133.00 acres. All other land uses saw modest gains in acreage, except for water and wetland, for which there was no change.

Land Use 2005

Land use data in 2005 (see Table 8.1 and Map 5) shows that 76.3% of Hinsdale is forested, for a total of 10,589.2 acres. Of that forested land, 1,227.4 acres are forested wetland, which when combined with 738.2 acres of non-forested wetland, means that 14% (1,965.55 acres) of Hinsdale is wetland (with an 8.8% overlap with forested land). Water accounted for an additional 610.1 acres.

Developed land accounts for only 5.8% (806.1 acres) of the land area of Hinsdale, and includes all residential land (high-, medium-, low-, and very low-density and multi-family), as well as urban public/institutional, transportation, commercial, industrial, and junkyard land uses.

Of agricultural-type uses, 368.6 acres were categorized as cropland, 120.0 acres were pasture, and 37.4 acres were nursery, for a total of 526.0 acres. Of recreational uses, 108.8 acres were categorized as participation recreation, 75.1 acres were golf course, for a total of 183.9 acres of recreational land use.

An additional 133.4 acres were categorized as open land, 30.5 acres were brushland/successional, and 12.8 acres were transitional, for a total of 259.3 vacant acres. Mining accounted for 156.5 acres and powerline/utility was 82.6 acres.

Existing Zoning

Hinsdale currently has six zoning districts, all of which are residential, two of which include a focus on agricultural uses, another that emphasizes recreational use, and a fourth that focuses on business uses (see Table 8.2 and Map 6). The zoning by-laws were originally approved at the 1979 Annual Town Meeting, and have been updated through 2016.

Zones

R-1 Residential Zone

The R-1 zone covers much of the Census-designated urban area, extending out from the R-4 Recreational and Residential center of town. R-1 covers the neighborhood of Curtis, Church, and Goodrich Streets,

Table 8.1 - Hinsdale Land Use 2005

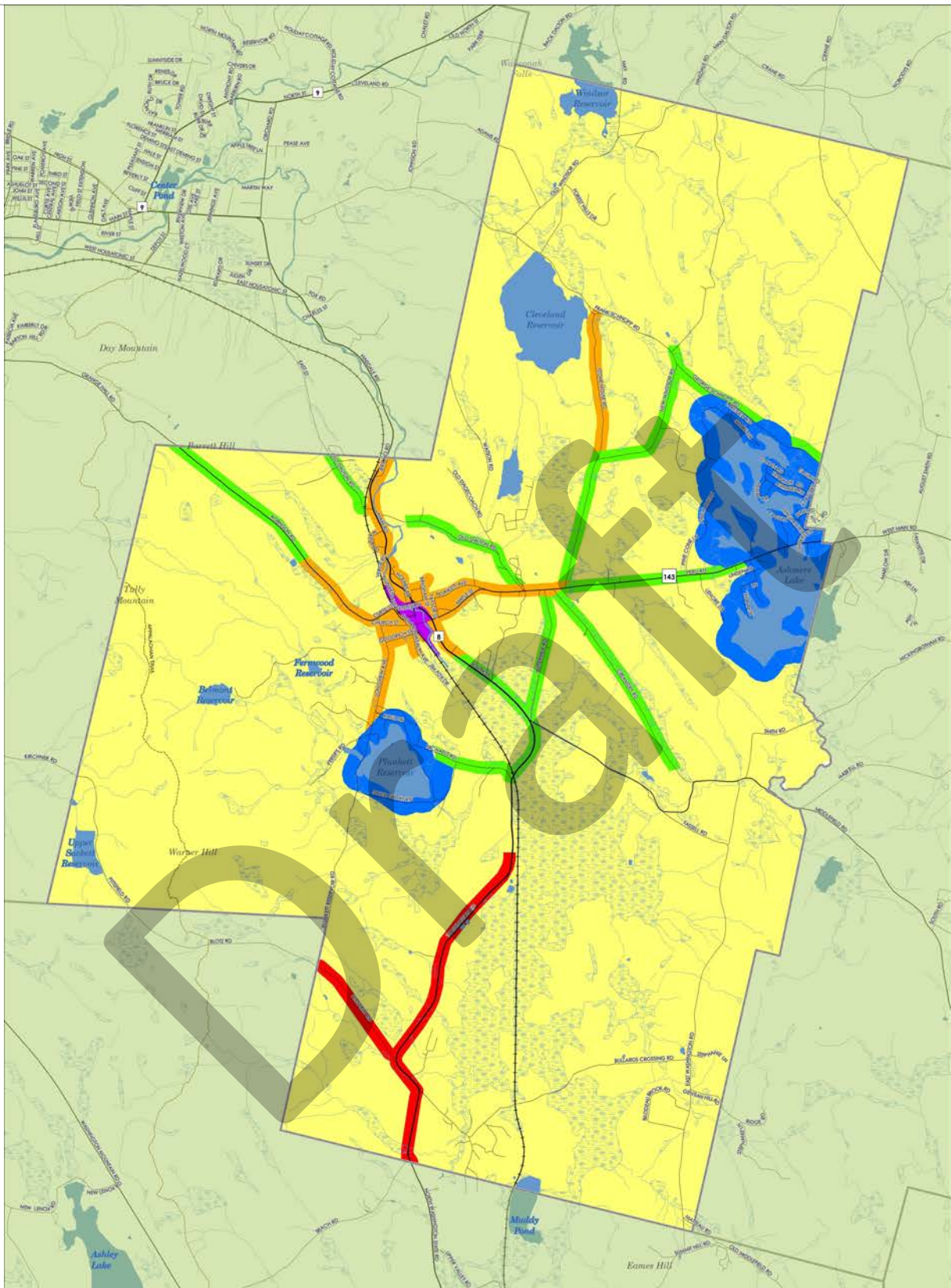
Source: Mass GIS Land Use, 2005

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total Land
Forest*	10,589.2	76.3%
Wetland*	1,965.6	14.2%
Residential	711.5	5.1%
Water	610.1	4.4%
Agriculture	526.0	3.8%
Vacant**	259.3	1.9%
Recreation	183.9	1.3%
Mining/Waste Disposal	157.6	1.1%
Institutional***	43.4	0.3%
Transportation	35.6	0.3%
Commercial	20.9	0.2%
Industrial	2.2	0.0%
Total	13,878.0	108.8%*

*Forest and Wetland categories both include forested wetlands, which account for 1,227.4 acres or 8.8%.

**Vacant category includes abandoned agriculture, areas like power lines and areas of no vegetation, as well as brushland and successional environments not dense enough to be classified as forest.

***Institutional category includes town owned facilities as well as cemeteries.



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Zoning	Towns	Stream
R-1	Interstate	Wetland
R-1B	Major Road	Open Water
R-2	Minor Road	
R-3	Local Road	
R-4	Railroad	
R-5	Appalachian Trail	

Town of Hinsdale Vision Plan Map 6. Zoning

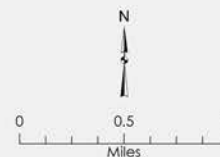


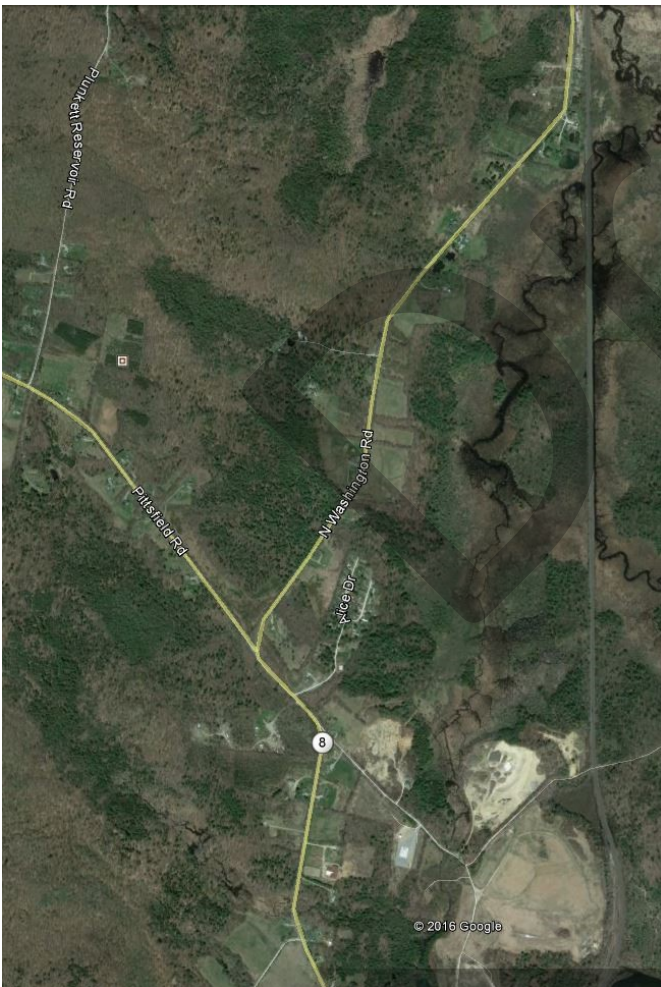


Table 8.2 - Hinsdale Zoning

Source: Town of Hinsdale Zoning By-laws, 2016

Zone	Description	Minimum		Minimum Setback Requirements		
		Area Sq. Ft.	Frontage in Ft. (a)	Front (b)	Side	Rear
R-1	Residential	15,000	75	30	15	12
R-1B	Residential and Agricultural	130,000	250	60	30	30
R-2	Residential	40,000	150	40	20	20
R-3	Recreational and Residential	40,000	150	40	20	20
R-4	Business and Residential	15,000	75	30	15	12
R-5	Agricultural and Residential	130,000	250	60	30	30

Figure 8.2 - Aerial Image of the R-1B Residential and Agricultural Zone



including Commonwealth Ave. and parts of Longview Ave. and Robinson Road a ways out from the center. R-1 also includes the central neighborhoods east of Route 8, including Taylor and Plunkett streets, a portion of Maple Street and Route 8 north to the town line with Dalton, including side streets except for Old Dalton Road. Stone House Road in the north part of town is also zoned R-1.

Permitted uses in the R-1 zone include single-family dwellings; religious or educational uses; agriculture, horticulture, or floriculture; renting of rooms and furnishing of meals in a dwelling occupied as a private residence; and accessory uses such as using a room(s) in a residence to practice a profession. With a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), the R-1 zone would permit conversion of a single-family dwelling into a two-, three-, or four-family dwelling; a hospital, sanatorium, convalescent home, or nursing home; non-profit recreational use; or any other use the ZBA determines to be in harmony with the intent of the zone.

R-1B Residential and Agricultural Zone

The R-1B zone covers Pittsfield Road and Washington Road (Route 8) in the south end of town. This zone permits any use permitted in the R-1 zone and any lawful agricultural use, and contains many open agricultural fields (see Figure 8.2). Special permits may be sought under the same criteria as the R-1 zone.

R-2 Residential Zone

The R-2 zone is located along most roads in Hinsdale that are not part of any of the residential villages, including the outer portion of Robinson Road, Old Dalton Road, the middle portion of Peru Road, New Windsor Road, George Schnopp Road, Creamery Road, Buttermilk Road, South Street, and the east portion of Michaels Road.

The R-2 zone permits any of the permitted uses under the R-1 zone. Special permits may be granted by the ZBA for any use the ZBA determines to be in harmony with the intent of the zone, and for the construction of multi-family dwellings not to exceed four-family units.

R-3 Recreational and Residential Zone

The R-3 zone covers the residential villages around Plunkett Reservoir and Ashmere Lake. In this zone, buildings, structures, and premises may be used only for single-family residential purposes. Special permits may be granted by the ZBA for public boat houses for rent or water vehicles; public bath houses; commercial recreational uses of buildings, structures, and land; and for any use the ZBA determines to be in harmony with the intent of the zone.

R-4 Business and Residential Zone

R-4 is the smallest zone and covers the very center of town—Bridge Street and the small sections of Main and Maple streets between Route 8 and the Housatonic River, with some off-street extensions along the river.

In this zone, buildings, structures, and premises may be used for any use permitted in R-1 zone or for any lawful business office, service shop, or utility. Special permits may be granted by the ZBA for places of amusement or assembly; clubs conducted for profit; transportation equipment sales and service; and light industry or manufacturing, including processing, fabricating, and assembly, provided that no such use shall be permitted which in the opinion of the ZBA would be detrimental, offensive, or tend to reduce property values in the same or adjoining districts by reason of dirt, odor, fumes, smoke, gas, sewage, refuse, noise, excessive vibration, danger of explosion or fire, excessive use of water, or water pollution.

R-5 Agricultural and Residential Zone

The R-5 zone takes up the majority of the acreage in town as shown in Map 6, everything that isn't covered by one of the other five zones.

The R-5 zone permits any lawful residential use including multi-family dwellings (with no more than four dwelling units), agricultural, educational, religious, commercial, or industrial uses. These uses shall be permitted right, provided they are permitted and as regulated in any other district, except uses which shall require a special permit from the ZBA. Uses which may be permitted with a special permit from the ZBA are Mobile Home Park (as regulated in Section 7 of the zoning by-laws); fur farms; commercial piggeries; heavy manufacturing; commercial summer camps; salvage yards (automobile dismantling or used parts yards); and gravel, loam, sand, and stone removal.

Uses described in this by-law may be subject to restrictions or requirements of the State Wetlands Protections Act and Regulations for Defined Resources including lands within 200 feet of perennial rivers and streams, and state legislation relating to the Hinsdale Flats Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for lands in Hinsdale shown on the official Department of Environmental Management boundary designation map dated January 31, 1992.

Overlay Districts

Floodplain Overlay District

The purposes of the Floodplain District are to ensure public safety through reducing the threats to life and personal injury; eliminate new hazards to emergency response officials; prevent the occurrence of public emergencies resulting from water quality, contamination, and pollution due to flooding; avoid the loss of utility services which if damaged by flooding would disrupt or shut down the utility network and impact regions of the community beyond the site of flooding; eliminate costs associated with the response and cleanup of flooding conditions; and reduce damage to public and private property resulting from flooding waters.



The District includes all special flood hazard areas designated on the Hinsdale Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the administration of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) dated July 2, 1981 as Zone A and the FEMA Flood Insurance Study (FIS) dated January 2, 1981, both of which indicate the 100-year regulatory floodplain. The exact boundaries of the District may be defined by the 100-year base flood elevations shown on the FIRM and further defined by the FIS.

Adult Entertainment Overlay District

The purpose and intent of this overlay district is to address and mitigate the secondary effect of the Adult Entertainment uses and businesses referenced herein. The provisions of this overlay district are not intended to impose a limitation or restriction on the content of any communicative matter or materials, including sexually oriented matter or materials. The provisions of this overlay district are not intended to restrict or deny access by adults to Adult Entertainment uses or to sexually oriented matter or material protected by the Constitution of the United States of America or by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, nor to restrict or deny rights that distributors or exhibitors of such matter or materials may have to sell, rent, distribute, or exhibit such matter or materials. Neither is it the purpose or intent of this overlay district to legalize the sale, rental, distribution, or exhibition of obscene or other illegal matter or materials.

Other Land Use By-laws

Telecommunication Towers

The purpose of this by-law is to outline the special permitting process to site a wireless communication facility anywhere in the town of Hinsdale while minimizing potential damage and adverse impacts of wireless communication facilities on adjacent properties, residential neighborhoods, and areas of historic or high scenic value; to allow the provision of necessary wireless communication services in an orderly way; and to promote shared use of existing facilities to reduce the need for new facilities.

Small Wind Energy Systems

The purpose of this by-law is to provide a permitting process for small wind energy systems (SWES) so that they may be utilized in a cost-effective, efficient and timely manner to increase the use of distributed generation, to integrate these systems into the community in a manner that minimizes their impact on the character of neighborhoods, property values, and on the scenic, historic, and environmental resources of the town; and to protect health and safety, while allowing wind energy technologies to be utilized.

Drinking Water Supply Protection

The purpose of this by-law is to protect public and environmental health by restricting certain activities in areas located on or near the Belmont Reservoir and its associated water source bodies.

Solar Photovoltaic Installations

The purpose of this by-law is to provide for the construction and operation of solar photovoltaic installations and to establish standards for the placement, design, construction, monitoring, modification/repair, and removal of solar photovoltaic installations that address public safety, minimize impacts on scenic, natural and historic resources of the town, and provide adequate financial assurance for decommissioning.

Right to Farm

This by-law encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agriculture-based economic development, and protects farmland in town by reducing potential conflict between agricultural activities and abutters and town agencies.

Development Trends and Future Development Capacity

Hinsdale's early development (pre-1900) was focused around the downtown neighborhoods and extended out along Peru Road to New Windsor Road (R-1 and R-4 zones). Outside of this area, there was only a scattering of development, mostly along Robinson,

New Windsor, Middlefield, Washington, and Pittsfield roads.

Between 1900 and 1950, development extended out from the previously developed areas around downtown (R-1 zone) as well as some development around Plunkett Reservoir and Ashmere Lake. From 1950 to 1975, further development occurred around Ashmere Lake, Middlefield, New Windsor, Michaels, and Washington roads (R-3 zone).

Since 1975, most development has occurred around the lakes, further expansion of existing neighborhoods, and as infill development along the town roads. This development along town roads, mostly through Approval Not Required (ANR) developments, has caused the community to sprawl and lose some of its character of higher density neighborhoods as this new development tends to be low density. Much of this development has occurred in the R-5 zone, although some development has occurred throughout all zones. Map 7 shows the development history in Hinsdale.

Future development in town can occur in several ways. Redevelopment can occur anywhere throughout town and should be focused on the higher density down-town and lake neighborhoods. ANR development can occur at any location provided the acreage and frontage on any new parcel meet zoning requirements. Subdivisions can occur on larger parcels where roads can be built, however this process requires more effort from the developer and the town also has more control over.

Currently there is a mostly undeveloped subdivision on Lenore Drive with 124 undeveloped lots. As well as an ANR on the south end of Creamery Road that has 20 undeveloped lots. Persips Road also has a cluster of undeveloped lots most likely created through ANR and could be developed for an additional eight houses. There are also a number of lots that may have previously been created through ANR scattered around town that could still be developed.

New ANR and subdivisions could occur on larger

vacant lots on East Washington, Pittsfield, Plunkett Reservoir, and Peru roads. Smaller ANRs could occur on most of the rural roads throughout town and would create one or two additional lots each.

The majority of land that is developable is the R-5 zone, and thus would allow most uses, including residential and some commercial and industrial. There are a scattering of parcels in the R-1, R-1B, R-2, and R-3 zones that are developable, however these tend to be small isolated parcels.

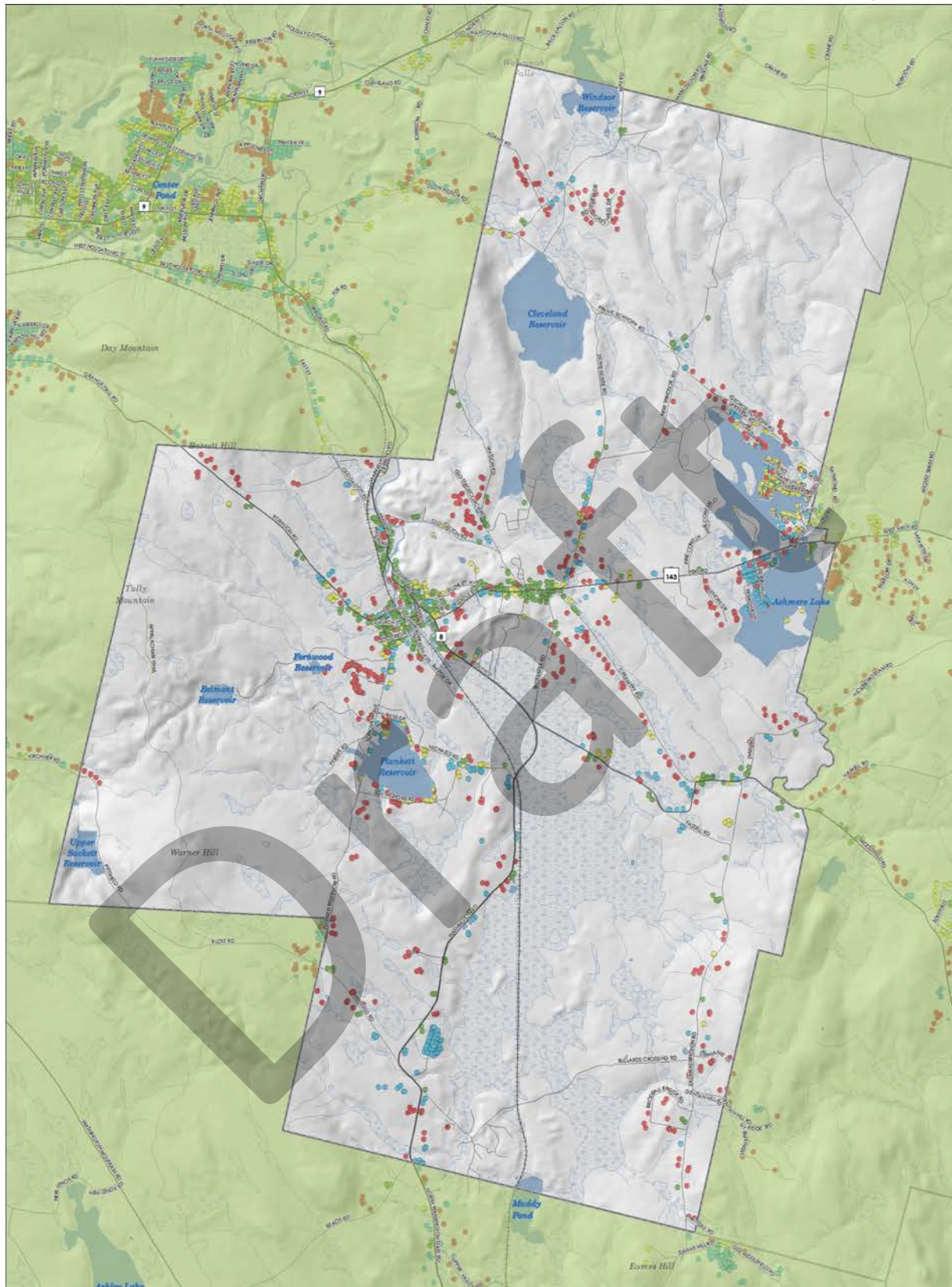
Landscape Character

Hinsdale is characterized by its scenic, rural, and historic qualities. Hills overlooking extensive wet-lands, farm fields, old homes, and mill ruins create unique landscapes throughout town. Future development should neither conflict with, nor jeopardize, this town's character. Residents indicated through a 2005 open space and recreation survey and public forum that unfettered development would greatly affect Hinsdale's wild and rural character. Houses on the hillsides would disrupt long views and visually dominate the valley below. Careful management of future development is critical to preserving Hinsdale's rural personality.

Public Survey Results

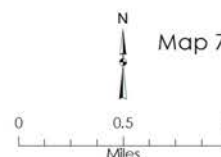
When asked how they felt about housing development in Hinsdale, almost half (43.4%) of respondents feel that *This community is growing at an appropriate rate, we should keep housing development at the same rate it has been at*, and only 4.9% of respondents want to *discourage more development*.

When asked to *rate the current level of control over residential and commercial development in Hinsdale*, the largest percentages of responses for both *Residential Development* and *Commercial Development* were *Don't know/Need more information* (47.1% and 55.7%, respectively). Another large percentage of respondents indicated that *Controls are at the right level* (38.2% and 30.1%, respectively), leaving a relatively small percentage of people indicating that a change was needed.



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Building Age	Towns	Railroad
● Pre 1900	Interstate	Appalachian Trail
● 1901 - 1950	Major Road	Stream
● 1951 - 1975	Minor Road	Wetland
● Post 1975	Local Road	Open Water



Town of Hinsdale
Vision Plan
Map 7. Development Trend

KEY LAND USE ISSUES

Rural Character

The rural nature of the town is why most residents chose to live in Hinsdale. Hinsdale's local land use regulations, including zoning, are very basic and could be improved to maintain the towns' rural character.

Desired Development

Towns are able to influence development patterns through zoning. Hinsdale could influence future development in the town center, make land attractive for commercial or industrial development, protect open spaces and better utilize existing sewer through innovative zoning by-laws.

ACTION: CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAM TO TOWN RESIDENTS PRIOR TO PRESENTING THE RECODIFIED BY-LAWS FOR A VOTE AT TOWN MEETING

ACTION: RECODIFY THE ZONING BY-LAWS

ACTION: INCLUDE A TABLE OF USE REGULATIONS AND TABLE OF DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN RECODIFIED BY-LAWS FOR EASE OF USE

Objective: Ensure the zoning by-laws reflect the desire by town residents to maintain the rural character

Many of the base decisions in the Zoning By-Laws, such as lot size, uses, dimensional requirement were made many years ago. An evaluation is warranted to determine if they are still appropriate given changing times.

ACTION: EVALUATE, AND MODIFY IF APPROPRIATE, THE PROVISIONS IN THE CURRENT BY-LAWS THAT ZONE ROAD FRONTAGE (R-1, R1B, AND R-2) AS A DIFFERENT DISTRICT FROM LAND BEHIND THOSE ZONES (R-5)

ACTION: EVALUATE, AND MODIFY IF APPROPRIATE, PROVISIONS IN THE R-3 DISTRICT TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE LAKES PROTECTS WATER QUALITY AND MAINTAINS THE CHARACTER SO THAT THESE AREAS CONTINUE TO BE STRONG ASSETS FOR THE TOWN

ACTION: EVALUATE THE AREA ADJACENT TO THOSE PROPERTIES SERVED BY SEWER TO DETERMINE IF ZONING OR CONNECTION REGULATIONS SHOULD BE CHANGED TO BETTER UTILIZE THOSE PROPERTIES TO MAINTAIN RURAL CHARACTER

Goal 2: Use Land Use Planning and Zoning to Accomplish Recommendations in the Vision Plan

Zoning is one of the key ways to achieve the desired future of the town.

Objective: Attract retail businesses and professional services in the town center

The town center is a key land use feature of the town.

LAND USE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

Goal 1: Maintain the Town's Rural Character

The rural character was cited as one of the main reasons residents chose to live in Hinsdale. Towns can take steps to maintain that character through appropriate land use controls.

Objective: Update the zoning by-laws to facilitate a clearly defined and efficient development review process

Zoning By-Laws are one of the most important tools that towns have manage land use development. Hinsdale's By-Laws are in need of a comprehensive review and recodification.

ACTION: CONDUCT A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF THE ZONING BY-LAWS FOR INTERNAL CONSISTENCY AND UPDATING FOR COMPLIANCE WITH RECENT CASE LAW AND CHANGES TO THE ZONING ENABLING ACT



Planning and follow-up changes to regulations can help stimulate revitalization of that area.

ACTION: PREPARE A SMALL AREA PLAN FOR THE TOWN CENTER THAT DOCUMENTS CURRENT USE AND CONDITIONS OF EXISTING STRUCTURES, EVALUATES INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND CONDITIONS, INCLUDING SUCH ITEMS AS SIDEWALKS, PARKING, AND SIGNAGE, AND RECOMMENDS ACTIONS TO ADDRESS NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

ACTION: REVIEW EXISTING ZONING AS IT IMPACTS THE TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT

Objective: Evaluate the potential for expanding areas zoned for business use in town

A key aspect to attracting new businesses is appropriately zoned developable land.

ACTION: EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL FOR ESTABLISHING NEW LOCATIONS FOR BUSINESSES OR A PROFESSIONAL PARK CLOSE TO EXISTING BUSINESSES OR THE TOWN CENTER, SUCH AS THE GRAVEL PIT OFF OLD DALTON ROAD

ACTION: EVALUATE EXPANDING THE R-4 ZONING DISTRICT

ACTION: REVIEW HINSDALE'S ZONING TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE TOOLS ARE IN PLACE TO PREVENT UNDESIRE IMPACTS FROM EXPANDED BUSINESS USE

ACTION: REVIEW EXISTING LAND USE REGULATIONS, FEES, AND TAXES TO EVALUATE THEIR IMPACT ON EXISTING BUSINESSES

Objective: Pursue actions to encourage “starter homes” or modestly priced housing

Moderately priced housing can attract new residents and families to town. Zoning requirements can influence the cost of housing.

ACTION: EVALUATE AND CHANGE, IF NECESSARY, THE TOWN'S ZONING AND OTHER TOWN LAWS TO IDENTIFY AND AMEND/REMOVE ITEMS THAT INCREASE THE COST OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

ACTION: EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, ZONING MEASURES, INCLUDING OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, TO MINIMIZE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COSTS

Objective: Pursue actions to address the housing needs of seniors

Providing housing options for senior is an important way to enable them to remain in their homes longer.

ACTION: EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, AN ACCESSORY APARTMENT (ALSO KNOWN AS MOTHER-IN-LAW) BY-LAW

Objective: Implement a “Complete Streets” approach to future roadway projects

Roadways that are available for other uses, such as pedestrians and bicycles, in addition to car and trucks, contribute to a more welcoming built environment.

ACTION: REVIEW ZONING BY-LAWS AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS AND ENSURE “COMPLETE STREETS” PRINCIPLES ARE INTEGRATED INTO DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Objective: Explore and pursue local regulatory tools, as appropriate, to protect valued open space resources

The natural environment and open spaces were identified as very important to Hinsdale residents. Zoning can help protect open spaces.

ACTION: PURSUE AN OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONING BY-LAW

ACTION: EVALUATE EXISTING TOWN STANDARDS OR REGULATIONS DEALING WITH RECLAMATION OF UNUSED SAND AND GRAVEL OPERATIONS, OR OTHER DECOMMISSIONED INDUSTRIAL SITES, FOR INSTANCE SOLAR, AND IMPROVE THOSE ITEMS AS WARRANTED

ACTION: EXPLORE THE BERKSHIRE SCENIC MOUNTAINS ACT OR OTHER REGULATORY MEANS TO PROTECT RIDGELINES FROM DEVELOPMENT

Draft



CHAPTER 9: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Hinsdale's vision for these resources includes:

Hinsdale recognizes the importance of its rural and natural heritage by responsibly stewarding its historic, cultural, natural, and scenic resources for the appropriate utilization and enjoyment of residents, visitors, and future generations while enhancing these resources through a combination of strategic land acquisition, adoption of forward-thinking by-laws and policies, utilization of best management practices, and working in partnership with the schools and all pertinent state and federal resource management agencies.

The Town of Hinsdale has an abundance of natural and cultural resources including extensive wildlife habitat, important wetland areas and water resources, as well as historic buildings. This chapter reviews the town's natural and cultural resources and lists the goals, objectives, and actions for the town to take in order to achieve its vision for Hinsdale.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

Landscape Character

A charming, quiet, and remote place, Hinsdale owes much of its character to the natural landscape it inhabits. The hills to its east and west protect the town from the world outside its borders. The Hinsdale Flats Wildlife Management Area (WMA), a 1,757-acre wetland complex in the center of the town, rewards the curious and the brave with abundant wildlife, unique vegetation, and rugged roads and trails for exploring. The back roads that wind over hills and through thick forests open up to farm fields and breathtaking views to the hills beyond. Settlement is clustered largely in the valley along the river, allowing Hinsdale's outer reaches to remain relatively wild and out of the way.

The primary slopes of Hinsdale occur in north-south patterns corresponding to the mountain ranges which border the town. Slopes of 15% and greater account for approximately 20% of the land area. The descent from mountain peaks to the valley center is as much as 700 feet and mostly occurs over a horizontal distance of less than 2 miles. The rate of descent



Hinsdale Flats

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AT A GLANCE

Water Resources

Hinsdale hosts water reservoirs and/or watershed lands which provide drinking water for Hinsdale and three neighboring towns, as well as the headwaters for the East Branch Housatonic River, several contributing tributaries, and more than 1,500 acres of wetlands.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern

The Hinsdale Flats ACEC is approximately 14,500 acres in size and recognizes the ecological significance of the area and heightens awareness and concern for this ecological treasure.

Israel Bissell

Hinsdale is the final resting place of Israel Bissell, who was a post rider on April 19, 1775, when British soldiers fired on the militia at Lexington. He rode from Watertown to Connecticut and eventually to Philadelphia in an unbelievable five days, carrying a letter warning of the latest developments. He later settled in Hinsdale and is buried in Maple Street Cemetery.

begins fast but decreases towards the valley bottom—as is reflected by steeper slopes concentrated around the higher elevations. Since mountain ranges border the town, many scenic hillsides extend outside the periphery of the town.

Due to the town's hilly terrain, there are numerous scenic vistas scattered throughout town. Many land features adorn the town, including forests, farm fields, hills, streams and waterways. The river bisects the town as it runs north from Muddy Pond. Meandering through level terrain, the river, and its surrounding floodplains and wetlands, create an open rambling landscape in which to view wildlife.

Many roads in Hinsdale showcase the town's rural and wild character. Robinson Road, entering Hinsdale from the west, offers a glorious view, with farm fields in the foreground and the eastern mountains in the background. On the eastern side of town, East Washington Road, which runs north/south, boasts the most spectacular view in the town, overlooking the Hinsdale Flats and set against the mountain to the west. Buttermilk and Creamery roads are both noted for their bucolic views of timeworn farms and colorful meadows. Peru Road (Rt. 143) bisects Ashmere Lake, offering views on both sides of the roadway.

Water Resources

Water is one of Hinsdale's greatest assets. As stated by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs in the *Designation Report of the Hinsdale Flats Watershed Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)*, "I find that the wetland resource areas included in the ACEC are significant to the protection of groundwater supply and public and private water supplies, the prevention of pollution, flood control, the prevention of storm damage, the protection of fisheries, and the protection of wildlife habitat."

Within this area lie the headwaters for the East Branch Housatonic River as well as several contributing tributaries, more than 1,700 acres of wetlands, and two large recreational lakes. In addition, the town hosts water reservoirs/watershed lands which provide drinking water for Hinsdale and three neighboring

towns. In the northeastern section of town a large watershed collects water which serves the needs of Dalton. In the northwest part of Hinsdale the Cleveland Brook Reservoir collects drinking water to supply the City of Pittsfield. Additionally, Pittsfield's Sackett Reservoir lies in the westernmost portion of Hinsdale near the Appalachian Trail. Hinsdale's own water supply is located at Belmont Reservoir, in the hills on the town's west side. Therefore, the care with which Hinsdale protects its water resources has significant regional consequences.

Watersheds

The Town of Hinsdale lies completely within the Housatonic River Watershed. In fact, the Hinsdale Flats wetland complex is the headwaters for the East Branch Housatonic River. There are several sub-watershed areas within the town for the several reservoirs and the two recreational lakes that are located throughout the town.

Surface Waters

Hinsdale hosts several water bodies, including two recreational lakes, five drinking water reservoirs, several small ponds, and a large wetland complex. Maintaining a clean and healthy watershed is critical to the development and growth of the town's rivers to becoming a positive resource for the community.

Lakes and Ponds

Plunkett Reservoir is located in the central portion of the town. It is a heavily used recreational lake lined with dense residential development, as well as summer camps. It is listed as Category 4C Water on the 2014 Massachusetts Integrated List of Waters.

Ashmere Lake is a 260-acre recreational lake that is owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The lake is comprised of two basins, the north and south, which are separated by Peru Road. Like Plunkett Reservoir, the shoreline of the lake, especially the north basin, is densely developed with a mix of seasonal cottages and year-round homes. A boat access site is owned and maintained on the south basin by DCR. There is no public swimming



area in the lake. Ashmere Lake straddles the Hinsdale-Peru border. Three camps are located on the shores of the lake. In Hinsdale, Camp Taconic is located on the north basin and Camp Ashmere is located on the south basin, while in neighboring Peru Camp Danbee is located on the south basin. Ashmere Lake is listed as Category 4C Water.

In addition to the recreational lakes, Hinsdale hosts drinking water reservoirs for its own residents as well as the residents of the surrounding towns. The Belmont Reservoir is the main source of water for Hinsdale's residents, and Plunkett Reservoir serves as a backup supply. The Upper Sackett and Cleveland Brook reservoirs provide drinking water to the City of Pittsfield, while Windsor Reservoir serves as a backup supply to Dalton; all are Category 3 Water. The vast majority of the watersheds for Upper Sackett and Belmont reservoirs are protected from development and other uses that could potentially degrade the quality of the water. Although much of Cleveland Reservoir is protected, the upper portions of its watershed, in the vicinity of New Windsor Road and Stone House Road, are not protected.

Rivers and Streams

Along the southern border of Hinsdale lies Muddy Pond, a 28-acre Great Pond shared with the town of Washington, of which 7.4 acres are in Hinsdale. The pond and adjacent wetlands are the headwaters of the East Branch Housatonic River, which flows north through Hinsdale into Dalton. Several tributaries feed the river from both east and west. From the uplands to the east flow the Bilodeau, Kilburn, Tracy, and Bennett brooks, and from the uplands to the west flow the Cady, Russo, Welch, and Frissell brooks. Several of the town's lakes and reservoirs are also considered part of the hydrology of the East Branch Housatonic River, including Ashmere Lake to the east, and Plunkett, Belmont, and Fernwood reservoirs to the west. The river is a prime recreation resource for fishing and canoeing, although access to it is limited.

Aquifer Recharge Areas

One area in Hinsdale is considered a medium-yield aquifer. It is located in the southern-most area of

town, on the Hinsdale-Washington border. The area for this aquifer is west of the railroad tracks and is illustrated on the Water Resources Map. Residents on the outlying rural areas of Hinsdale rely on groundwater to supply their private wells. For the most part, groundwater comes from the bedrock under the east and west slopes, as well as from sand and gravel deposits in the lowlands.

Flood Hazard Areas

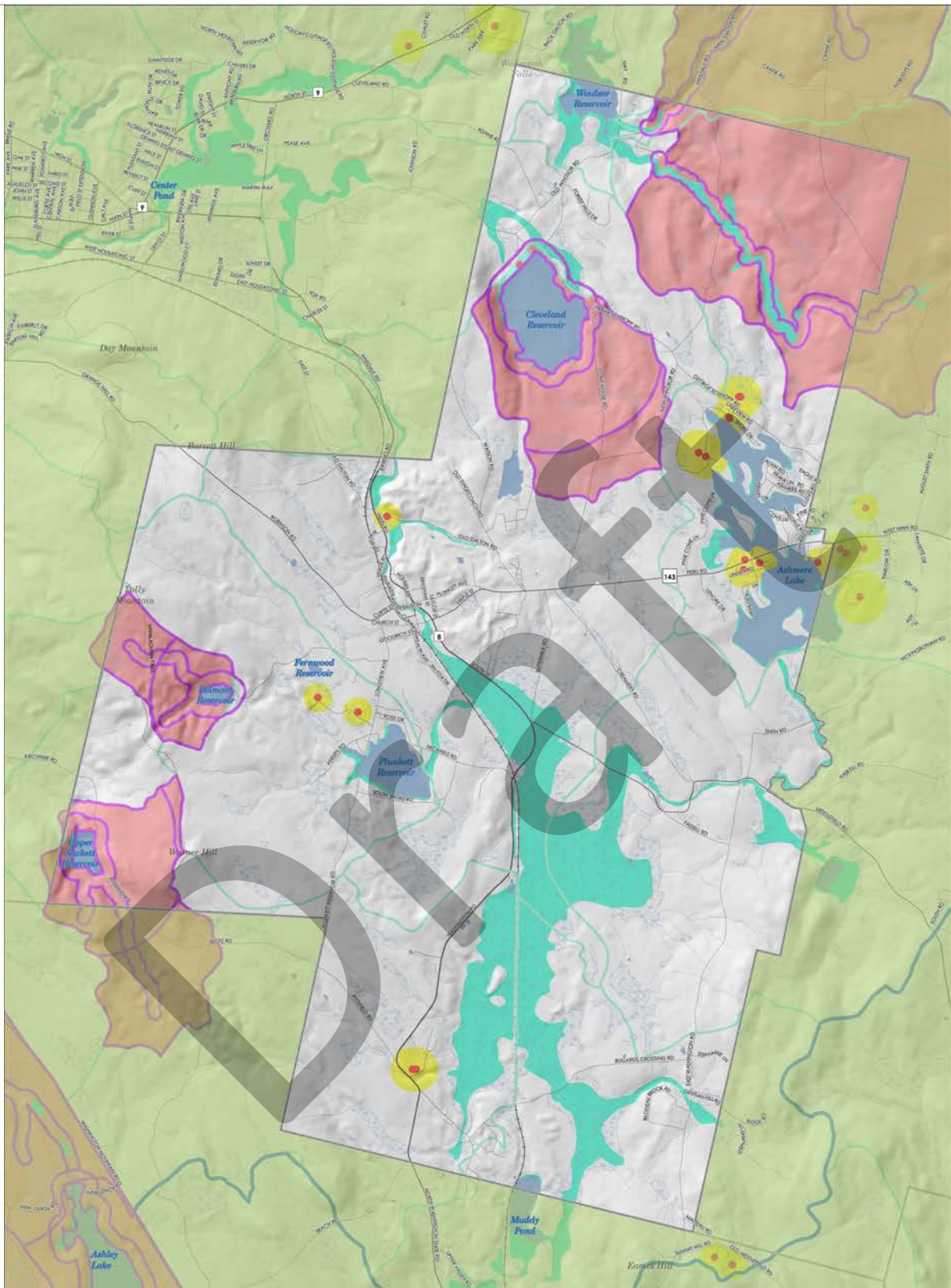
The central valley cut by the East Branch Housatonic River creates Hinsdale's lowest and most level areas. While floodplains border many of Hinsdale's other low-lying waterways, the most extensive are found along the East Branch Housatonic River, especially in the area of the aptly named Hinsdale Flats. Since most floodplains occur on relatively level terrain, they appear on the surface to be ideal building sites. Not only can structures built in floodplains risk water damage, they can interfere with natural storm water retention and possibly exacerbate flooding downstream.

Given their limitations for building, floodplains offer a logical opportunity for greenspace and recreation. Preservation of floodplains and natural vegetation along rivers would serve two important functions. From an ecological standpoint, it would maintain riparian corridor habitat for wildlife and allow the river and its accompanying floodplains to function properly during peak water flow. From a human standpoint, riverbank and floodplain preservation would enhance recreation through riverside pathways and rest areas, allowing people to appreciate both the beauty and history of Hinsdale's rivers.

There are approximately 1,868 acres (13%) of 100-year floodplain in Hinsdale and about 52 acres (3%) are developed (Hinsdale Hazard Mitigation Committee, 2005). The vast majority of the remaining floodplain, 1,482 acres, are located within the Hinsdale Flats WMA, while 962 acres are permanently protected.

Wetlands

According to the 2005 MassGIS land use data, approximately 14% of Hinsdale is wetland area. The



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- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| ● Public Water Supplies | ⬢ Towns | — Railroad |
| ● Interim Wellhead Protection Area | — Interstate | — Appalachian Trail |
| ● Surface Water Protection Zone | — Major Road | — Stream |
| ● Outstanding Resource Waters | — Minor Road | — Wetland |
| ● FEMA 100yr Floodplain | — Local Road | — Open Water |
| ● Watersheds | | |
| ● Subwatersheds | | |

Town of Hinsdale Vision Plan Map 8. Water Resources





excellent water quality of Hinsdale's reservoirs and the East Branch Housatonic River is linked to the water purification services that its wetlands provide. Wetlands are also valuable for their flood-storage capabilities, an important factor considering Hinsdale's vast surface water. In addition, two wetland areas provide habitat for Hinsdale's rare and endangered species. Wetlands also provide scenic open space. The Hinsdale Flats area in the south central part of town is Hinsdale's most extensive wetland complex, covering 1,757 acres and hosting at least nine wetland classes. The diversity of wetland types in this area leads to a diversity of wildlife, which makes Hinsdale's wetlands and the Flats in particular, of prime importance for the protection of its wildlife. Moreover, this area offers flood storage which directly benefits the riverside residents downstream.

The Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) and the Rivers Protection Act were passed to allow Massachusetts' wetlands and rivers to function as nature intended. Jurisdictional resource areas of 100 feet from wetlands and 200 feet from rivers allow the town to regulate development within these areas. Currently, Hinsdale does not have wetland or zoning by-laws that impose restrictions or extend the town's jurisdiction beyond that of the Massachusetts WPA.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

The entire Hinsdale Flats ACEC is nearly 14,500 acres in size, 9,687.65 (67%) of which are in Hinsdale, and the remaining acreage is in neighboring Peru, Dalton, and Washington (see Map 10). The excellent water quality of the East Branch and its tributaries, the wetlands and floodplains of the Hinsdale Flats wetland complex, and the surrounding uplands support an outstanding variety of natural communities and wildlife, including eight state-listed rare species. The ACEC encompasses nearly 70% of the town. The ACEC is a state designation that recognizes the ecological significance of the area and heightens awareness and concern for this ecological treasure. The Hinsdale Flats was officially designated an ACEC on January 31, 1992. An inland ACEC must contain at least four of nine

features of regional significance. The Hinsdale Flats watershed contains all nine features. These features include fisheries and other significant wildlife habitat, wetlands, surface water resources, water supply areas, natural hazard areas like floodplains or erosion areas, agricultural areas, historic or scenic areas, and resources for recreation. The need to protect these resources for the benefit of the entire Berkshire region was the basis for the ACEC designation.

Unique Natural Resources

To help communities conserve important habitat areas within these ecoregions, the Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has developed two complementary planning projects, BioMap and the Living Waters. The goal of these projects is:

To promote strategic land protection by producing a map showing areas that, if protected, would provide suitable habitat over the long term for the maximum number of Massachusetts' terrestrial and wetland plant and animal species and natural communities (NHESP, 2001).

Both BioMap and Living Waters delineate Core Habitats that identify the most critical sites for biodiversity conservation across the state. Each community was presented with a guide identifying Core Habitat areas and describing the rare ecosystems and rare species that exist within those areas. Core Habitat areas identified are based on documented observations of rare species, natural communities, and exemplary habitats needed to preserve biodiversity in the region. Supporting Natural Landscapes are designated as protective buffer areas surrounding or adjacent to Core Habitat. These areas are often unfragmented or minimally disturbed areas to allow the rare plants and animals within the Core Habitat to disperse, expand their habitat or travel to nearby habitats.

There are several Core Habitat areas in Hinsdale. The largest of these is the Hinsdale wetland complex in the southernmost portion of the town. The area encompasses riparian areas, upland forests, and scattered small fields along the East Branch of the

Housatonic River and several of its tributaries. This area provides habitat for rare plants and animals. The area supports a Spruce-fir Boreal Swamp, an unusual plant community type in southern New England, being typically found in areas of higher elevation or to the north. This community develops in cold, poorly drained conditions that allowed the build up of peat. The organic, peaty soils are seasonally saturated, and can function as vernal pool habitat, which supports rare amphibians. NHESP described the site as a “large and diverse spruce-fir boreal swamp with rare species and few exotics. It is a rich variant of a typical spruce-fir boreal forest swamp with a calcareous influence” (Swain, 2006). The rare butterfly, the Mustard White (*Pieris napioleracea*), is known to live in this area. This site is located along the western portion of Middlefield Road, where it intersects with Washington Road (Rt. 8).

The area also supports a good-quality Black Ash/Red Maple/Tamarack Calcareous Seepage Swamp. This plant community, also unusual in the state, is a mixed deciduous-coniferous forested wetland occurring in areas where there is calcium-rich groundwater seeping to the surface. This nutrient enrichment results in many rare calcium-loving plant species, such as an unusually large population of the rare Hemlock Parsley (*Conioselinum chinense*). This unfragmented wild area also connects two Priority Habitat areas for state-protected rare species. This forested wetland community type is categorized by NHESP as extremely rare, estimated to exist in 5-20 sites in Massachusetts, with few remaining acres intact.

The wetland located at the intersection of Peru Road (Rt. 143) and New Windsor Road is a fine example of a Shrub Swamp, a diverse type of natural community. This wetland is currently undergoing a change in its hydrologic regime due to beaver activity. The other Core Habitats harbor rare plants. This includes the one located just east of the Appalachian Trail, which supports several rare plants that are characteristic of calcareous fens, a rare type of wetland.

Forest Land

Unlike 100 years ago, forest now covers much of

Hinsdale. Northern hardwoods with some hemlock and white pine dominate the town’s hillsides.

In the western and northernmost parts of the town a continuous band of maturing northern hardwoods dominates the rocky slopes and summits. Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) and birches (*Betula spp.*) grow in varying proportions depending on soils and stage of succession from previous disturbances. Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) may be found in patches in ravines and on northerly slopes. Throughout the town are the larch forests. These tend to be young stands of American larch (*Larix laricina*) with some poplars (*Populus spp.*) growing on formerly disturbed moist sites, such as old peat bogs or side-slope fields with a perched water table.

Growing on other sloped areas of town is an evenly distributed mixture of northern hardwoods, white pine (*Pinus strobus*), and hemlock. Hemlock tends to be dispersed throughout the cooler pockets, while white pine tends to show up where heavy soil disturbances occurred. Striped maple, shadbush, hop hornbeam, and some witch hazel form a tall understory. Shrubs also include maple-leaved viburnum, hobblebush, and elderberry.

The maturing forests provide the best and most easily maintained hiking trails which would create opportunities for scenic, wildlife and wildflower viewing, mountain biking, and hunting. These maturing forests, approximately 21.5% of which are actively managed under the Chapter 61 Forestry Program, also contribute to Hinsdale’s forest products business. The immature forests provide the best wildlife habitat and possess innumerable shrub and ground cover types. These forests contain the greatest diversity of wildlife due to immense variation in food sources, cover from predators and the elements, and breeding and nesting habitats.

Agricultural Land

Fields play a vital role in the overall balance of life in the larger ecosystem. These open spaces mimic natural forest clearings resulting from fires or severe



conditions. Reversion to forest or conversion to home sites changes this balance. Fields, and more importantly their edges, attract a multitude of animals and are an extremely important ecosystem. The shrubs, forbs, and grasses growing along the edge play an important role as food and cover for rodents, birds, rabbits, raccoons, and woodchucks. The small animals found in fields are a critical food source for larger predators, like foxes, coyotes, and birds of prey.

Wetland Vegetation

Hinsdale has an uncommon assortment of wetland communities, such as rare calcareous fens, quaking bogs, sedge meadows, shrub swamps, and wooded swamps. The frequent, scattered wetlands succor a rich assortment of plants and animals, including wild orchids, osprey, mink, bog lemming, and ermine. Notably the Hinsdale Flats WMA contains the highest concentration of wetland types found in the town.

Water depth, flow, and pH are important determinants of wetland communities. Alkaline-dependent (pH 6.0 and above) plant communities, such as the circum-neutral hardwood swamp, typically occur along portions of the Housatonic River (providing a steady flow), especially at the headwaters, and are closely related to fens. Circumneutral water facilitates nutrient uptake and decomposition of organic matter. Black ash and red maple predominate, accompanied by the occasional larch. Ironwood and spicebush frequently share space in the understory. Along the margins of streams and in some poorly drained basins where low pH conditions are present, an acidic shrub swamp community will arise. Speckled alder often forms almost pure stands, but other shrubs, including buttonbush, winterberry, arrowwood, meadowsweet, or highbush blueberry, bring diversity and contrast.

If an area along a stream has moist or saturated soil which may flood at times, a graminoid (grass) marsh community establishes itself. Silted-up, abandoned beaver meadows create ideal conditions for this grass community. Sedges are also an important plant of this marsh type, with large clumps of tussock sedge being the most common. Many other sedges, rushes, and small forbs grow lushly under these conditions, such as

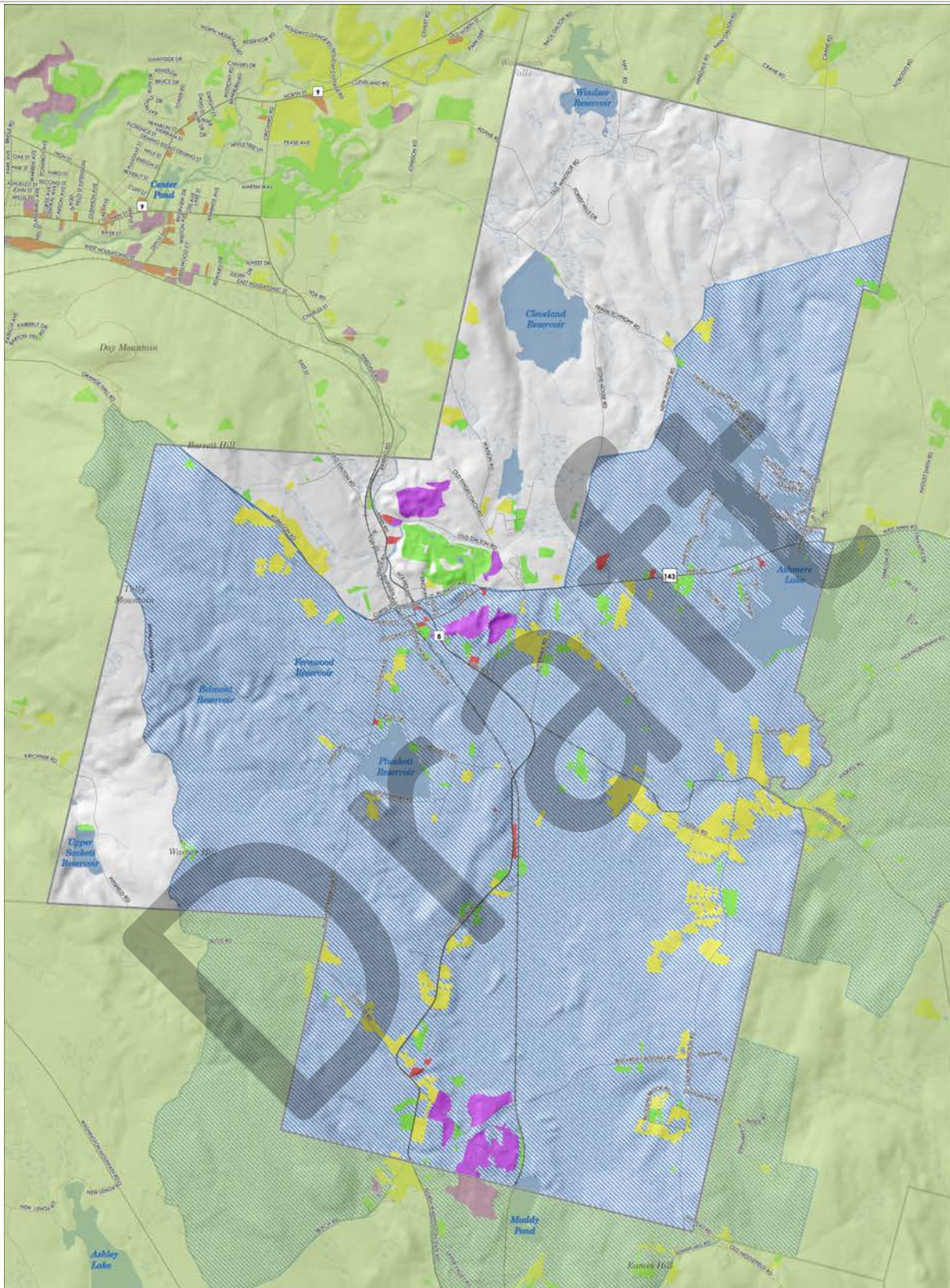
foxtail sedge, softstem rush, St. John's-wort, swamp candles, and sweet flag. The low topography encourages accumulation of organic matter and mineral soil, setting the stage for succession to a shrub swamp. Changing water levels could slow or reverse this vegetation change.

Calcareous fens are fed primarily from groundwater flowing through calcareous bedrock that is alkaline in nature. This water supplies high levels of minerals to plants as it slowly moves to join small streams. Sedges dominate this community. Types of calcareous fens include forested fens, shrub fens, graminoid fens, and calcareous seeps. Many plants grow within these communities that are rare in Massachusetts and uncommon in the Northeast. Numerous northern species live in these communities, perhaps due to the cold groundwater, elevation, and topographical positions at the base of slopes or in cold pockets.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plant Species

NHESP has identified four plant species in Hinsdale that are on the Massachusetts List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species list. "Endangered" species are defined by NHESP as native species which are in danger of extinction throughout all or part of their range, or which are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts, as documented by biological research and inventory. "Threatened" species are native species which are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future, or which are declining or rare as determined by biological research and inventory. "Special concern" species are native species which have been documented by biological research or inventory to have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked, or which occur in such small numbers or with such restricted distribution or specialized habitat requirements that they could easily become threatened within Massachusetts.

The four rare species known to exist most recently in Hinsdale are Chestnut-colored sedge (*Carex castanea*) of calcareous wetlands, Millet grass (*Milium effusum*)



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- | | | |
|---|------------|-------------------|
| Areas of Critical Environmental Concern | Towns | Railroad |
| Open Land | Interstate | Appalachian Trail |
| Agricultural Land | Major Road | Stream |
| Commercial Land | Minor Road | Wetland |
| Industrial Land | Local Road | Open Water |

Town of Hinsdale Vision Plan

Map 9. Unique Features





found in rich, mesic forest communities on steep slopes with calcareous soils, Hemlock parsley (*Conioselinum chinense*) which inhabits forest swamps, and Dwarf Scouring-rush (*Equisetum scirpoides*) found in low forested wetlands, moist shaded hillsides, peat bogs, watersides, and shallows. A fifth species, Hooded ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*) was known to exist in Hinsdale but has not been seen in decades. This plant is typically found in wetlands and nutrient-rich woodlands prone to wetness. The site where the plant was known to historically inhabit should be investigated for surviving populations.

Fisheries and Wildlife

General Inventory

Food, cover, and habitat for a wide range of fish and wildlife are provided by Hinsdale's great variety in the size, type, and communities of plants, coupled with numerous water bodies. Hinsdale's maturing deciduous forest with scattered shrubs in its interior and along its edges provides a great wildlife habitat. The town's many waterbodies attract wildlife and are valuable areas for viewing animals. Current residents take advantage of lands adjacent to their homes for watching wildlife. Public access into the heavily wooded uplands along the Appalachian Trail and the lowlands of Hinsdale Flats WMA also furnishes a chance to leisurely watch wildlife in its home territory.

Hunting in Hinsdale is a popular regional sport. Large game such as bear and deer are abundant, as are other animals. In addition, MassWildlife stocks pheasants in the Hinsdale Flats WMA. A high proportion of hunting occurs on private lands. Many landowners give oral or written permission to hunt, but often 'No Hunting' signs do hang along a property boundary. Citizens have expressed concern where hiking trails, such as the Appalachian Trail, are in proximity to historic hunting grounds.

Hinsdale boasts of several fishing resources with 571 acres of reservoirs and lakes, and 65 miles of rivers. Fishermen identified the East Branch Housatonic River, with its exceptional water quality, as a superior fishing spot. Two bridges, one at each end of the Hinsdale Flats, grant very limited access to the river for fishermen. MassWildlife stocks trout in the East Branch

Housatonic River, Bennett Brook, and Plunkett Reservoir. Ashmere Lake is known for its largemouth bass population.

Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are ephemeral wetlands which fill annually from snowmelt, rain, and the rising groundwaters of spring and early summer. Most years the pools completely dry out by mid- to late summer (Kenny & Burne, 2000). The wet-dry cycle prohibits fish from becoming established, but it can support an array of small creatures with a seasonal home.

There are 10 certified vernal pools in Hinsdale, and 27 more potential sites that have been identified as possible vernal pools. All 10 certified pools have been certified within the past 10 years. Although a few vernal pools are located on permanently protected lands, the majority are on private property. Those that are in clusters and in the most easily developed areas, such as long roadways, should be targeted for study. One such cluster could be the group of three potential pools to the south of Peru Road, just east of the downtown area.

Corridors

Hinsdale is fortunate in its current diversity of habitats and its large tracts of intact forest. Migratory corridors, however, are only permanently protected within federally- and state-owned lands and, to some extent, along the wetland resources protected by the WPA. Apart from the Appalachian Trail and the watershed lands to the west and to the north, the upland areas do not enjoy as much regulatory protection as the riparian systems.

Currently, the Hinsdale Flats WMA is the largest permanently protected area within the town. Large private lands are located in between the state and federal lands. If acquired or protected with conservation easements, these connecting lands would provide habitat and migratory corridors across the southern portion of the town. Likewise, a conservation corridor extending northward from the WMA to the watershed lands in the northern portion of the town, would connect the WMA to the Chalet WMA in Dalton and Cheshire.

Coordination of utility easements, protected lands, and important connection areas on private lands would create a network of upland and riparian corridors for the long-term requirements of a healthy wildlife population. This network, in turn, should be connected to the numerous state forests and wildlife management areas located in adjacent towns, for example, Middlefield State Forest near East Washington Road.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Animal Species

Hinsdale is fortunate that it has landscape that supports a wide diversity of habitats. The relatively wide open valley of the Hinsdale Flats supports wildlife that requires wetlands and slow-moving open waters, while the higher elevations include fast-flowing, cool mountain streams surrounded by forest. The Hinsdale Flats WMA is managed for both hunting and fishing. Its wide assortment of habitats creates an excellent community where fish, game, and rare species are plentiful (Table 9.1).

Cultural Resources

The following narrative was based largely on a timeline of Hinsdale's history by Leonard F. Swift, and includes narrative quoted or adapted from the book he edited, The Heritage of Hinsdale: An Anthology, and especially the introduction chapter, A Heritage of Land.

History of the Community

Early Settlement

The true first arrivals in the historical parade of Hinsdale's inhabitants were unknown Native Americans. Judging from arrowheads that farmers found in the river flats, these first occupants were probably seasonal hunters rather than villagers. The transient Native Americans, or more likely their predecessors further south, provided the name of the Housatonic River, a land form that has greatly influenced the character of Hinsdale.

Land survey and court records show the first land claims in present-day Hinsdale as having been drawn up in the 1740s, and the first primary travel route (Old

Dalton Road to outer Maple Street) was surveyed in 1753. The earliest form of present-day Hinsdale was known as Township No. 2, an approximately 36 square mile area purchased by Elisha Jones, Oliver Partridge, and Governor Bernard in 1762. The area began to be settled as early as 1763 by people migrating north from Connecticut and Rhode Island. The Town of Partridgefield—Hinsdale's predecessor town, so named for one of the earliest surveyors and proprietors, Oliver Partridge—was incorporated in 1771.

The hill and valley topography of the area greatly shaped the community heritage. The basin-and-slope pattern formed a significant water gathering network: a wide scatter of mountainside springs and brooks that fed the river. In the early 1770s, a man named Nathan Fisk dammed the Bennett Brook to power the area's first mills: a saw and a grist mill, vital facilities for early settlers who needed planks for their houses and flour from their grains. A schoolhouse soon followed in 1772, on School House Hill, the northwestern corner of Maple Street and New Windsor Road (later the site of the First Congregational Church building).

Settlement began increasing in the 1790s, including the arrival of Rev. Theodore Hinsdale and his family from Windsor, CT, who settled on a farm along the future Robinson Road.

Early Economy and Incorporation

Berkshire County and its shire town, Pittsfield, had been incorporated in 1761. Pittsfield was a convenient eight miles or so away, a distance that made the area a useful site for tavern stops by travelers on the turnpikes in stagecoach travel days. The late 1790s to early 1800s saw the development of two stagecoach roads, which overlapped for a quarter mile on the Maple Street Flats. One route was via the future Peru Road (Route 143) to Northampton, and the other was the Chester Turnpike via Creamery Road, to Springfield. Here early settlers built taverns, the nucleus for a convenient village center.

For horse-drawn freight wagons and stagecoaches, the half-day trip from Pittsfield made the Flats a tourist



Table 9.1 - Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Animal Species of Hinsdale

Scientific Name	Common Name	Description	Habitat	Status
<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	American Bittern	medium-sized brown, streaked, ground-dwelling heron	freshwater marshes, meadows, fens, and bogs dominated by emergent vegetation such as cattails, sedges, and grasses	E
<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	Least Bittern	small wading bird and member of the heron family with a long neck and bill and a dark crown	freshwater marshes with dense, tall vegetation, interspersed with clumps of woody vegetation and substantial areas of open water	E
<i>Euphyes dion</i>	Dion Skipper	butterfly distinguished by the presence of two yellow, radial rays on the hind wing, extending from the basal area to the wing margin	sedge wetlands, including calcareous fens, riparian marshes, wet meadows, and shrub swamps	T
<i>Pieris oleracea</i>	Mustard White Butterfly	white butterfly	deciduous forests and forest/field edge habitats where their primary food source, members of the mustard family, can be found	T
<i>Notropis bifrenatus</i>	Bridle Shiner	member of the minnow family	well-vegetated, quiet waters, like Muddy Pond	SC
<i>Clemmys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	medium-sized turtle	slower moving mid-sized streams, with sandy bottoms and heavily vegetated stream banks	SC
<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	Sharp-Shinned Hawk	rare small accipiter, slightly larger than a blue jay, closely resembles a Cooper's Hawk	conifer forest that includes a mix of spruce and open area, and is near water	SC
<i>Boyeria grafiana</i>	Ocellated Darner	semi-aquatic insect, among the largest of the dragonflies, one of only two spotted dragonflies in North America, and has two yellow spots on each side	found in cold, clear shaded streams within dense forests, preferring to stay out of sunlit areas	SC

E-Endangered T-Threatened SC-Special Concern

stop of the time, just far enough for the late starters from the city to make a midday stop to eat and drink at the taverns, or for slower travelers to stop for the night before tackling the Peru or Middlefield hill climbs the next day. This prime location led to the building of a general store, a blacksmith shop, two taverns, a church, and neighborhood houses, all providing a nucleus for incorporation.

On June 21, 1804, the Partridgefield West Parish was incorporated as the Town of Hinsdale, named after Theodore Hinsdale, a leader in the movement for

creation of a town centered on the Maple Street Flats, separate from Partridgefield centered on the future Peru Hill. Hinsdale was first included in the Census in 1810, and had a recorded population of 822.

Over the following decades, the town hosted many travelers, perhaps most notably troops who camped on their way to fight in the War of 1812, and Joseph Bonaparte (older brother of Napoleon), who stopped for a midday meal at Chester Moody's Maple Street tavern in 1818.

Another mill was built on the East Branch cascades by Charles H. Plunkett in 1831, and the Hinsdale Manufacturing Company was incorporated in 1836, further adding to Hinsdale's mill economy.

The Railroad and Village Development

In the late 1830s, the Western Railroad surveyors chose the valley as the route for a new railroad. Their route from Springfield first climbed the Westfield River West Branch valley, then leveled across the divide through a one-hundred-foot-deep rock cut in Washington to reach the Housatonic East Branch valley in Hinsdale. The first train ran through the village of Hinsdale on December 27, 1841.

The railroad surveyors' choice of that route over the rival South County option revolutionized Hinsdale's community patterns. Around this time, drawn by the magnet of the new railroad, many community activities were moved or established a mile west of the Maple Street Flats to the riverside area, including business structures, residences, a railroad station, a post office, and the current central village streets. As the highest point in the railroad between Boston and the plains of the Midwest, Hinsdale became a hilltown regional railroad center, with a watering and fueling stop for steam engines along the river flat south of the new town center. Carl Pierce, Sr. and his son, Carl, Jr. built a water tower, a coal elevator, a grain elevator, and a freight house. The railroad station became an active village gathering site, particularly at train arrival and departure times.

The river flats south of the station became a site for a rail track "Y" where the added locomotives, needed to assist long freight trains up the grade from Pittsfield, were detached and turned around for the downhill coast to the city.

In addition to the railroad structures, the new 1840s town center at the junction of Main and Maple streets included a hotel, several large houses, a row of buildings along each street including a drug store, a barber shop, and a new Baptist Church. Sites eastward across the river along Maple Street were chosen for the Library and the Hinsdale Academy. The

Congregational Church was moved a mile west from its original knoll location opposite Ichabod Emmons' brick house to its current site. New residence blocks were developed from Taylor Street westward up the hill to Longview Avenue and the original St. Patrick's church was built on the lower west slope so that Catholic parishioners no longer had to travel to Pittsfield.

Outside the town center, where farming expanded, the slopes were steadily cleared and stones laboriously hauled to create stone walls. The cut timber, piled high along the river flats, fueled the early steam engines. By the 1830s and '40s, sheep raising supplemented the earlier subsistence farming, and sheep by the thousands blanketed cleared fields. Censuses of the town's economy in the pre-Civil War decades recorded nearly 11,000 sheep on the Hinsdale hillsides. The sheep's wool supplied the series of mills built by Charles H. Plunkett, Charles Kittredge, and the Hinsdale Brothers, descendants of Rev. Theodore Hinsdale. In 1847, the Plunkett Reservoir Dam was built, creating Plunkett Reservoir as a source of water power for the village mills.

Late 19th Century Development

Development continued throughout the latter half of the 19th century, during which time the population of Hinsdale increased from 1,253 residents in 1850 to 1,739 in 1890. Among the new town center, several generations took up new occupations: station agent, telegraph operator, switchman, freight handler, hotel manager, mill workers, and more shopkeepers. Though the railroad buildings have disappeared, along the central junction of Main and Maple Street some of the original structures still stand, a heritage from the mid-1800s decades.

Ozzie's Steak and Eggs restaurant occupies the Raymond Block built by Samuel Raymond in 1871 as the first block business building in Hinsdale's active railroad era. The modern Hinsdale Hardware Store occupies the site of the three-generation Frissell's store. Ron Smith and Son's Electric restored Carl Pierce's coal and grain store that for a time became Bellinger Block, and that now houses a Web server business, Your-site.com. A parking lot and post office



now cover the site of the 1840s Railroad House that first provided housing for the Irish railroad builders and then, as the Belmont House, was occupied by several decades of travelers and stores until its demolition in 1968. Further north on Main Street, and opposite two three-story, long-standing residences are Ed Sanders' apartments, approximately where a long succession of pharmacists used to fill prescriptions and mix milk shakes at their soda fountain.

In 1876, another dam was built, creating a reservoir for more water power for the valley mills. The builders of the dam, the Tracey Brothers, also ran a freight business, which poet and editor William Cullen Bryant used to carry his luggage on his annual summer trip from New York City to his seasonal home in Cummingtown. As the freighters paused by the new lake forming behind the dam, they invited Bryant to suggest a name for the rising body of water. His Long Island home was named Cedarmere, using a favorite suffix "-mere," and when told of the ash trees along the shores, he proposed the name "Ashmere."

The years spanning 1885-1892 are known as Hinsdale's peak mill prosperity years, although they were soon followed by the Kittredge Mills in the lower valley going bankrupt in 1893 and closing.

Changes in the Early 20th Century

At the turn of the century, Hinsdale continued evolving and keeping up with the times. In the year 1900 alone: the first volunteer fire department was organized to protect the central village area; Bridge Street was constructed over the railroad; and John Naughton, Sr. opened Naughton's Market at the corner of Plunkett Avenue and Main Street. The first automobile was registered in Hinsdale in 1903, and electric lights replaced oil-lit streetlights in the central village in 1913.

Camps began opening, first Camp Ashmere in 1915 and then Camp Lenore in 1916, both on Ashmere Lake, followed by Camp Oesopus on Plunkett Reservoir in 1924. A predecessor camp to the future Camp Taconic was opened in 1928, and was renamed Camp Taconic in 1934. Camp Romaca, on Plunkett Reservoir, soon followed in 1929.

Interestingly, around this time the population was actually in decline. From a high of 1,739 residents in 1890, the population decreased by 14.6% to 1,485 in 1900, and then decreased another by 24.8% to 1,116 in 1910. The population reached an all-time recorded low of 1,065 residents in 1920 before the population began to rebound, but it would take almost a century to return to the 1890 population level.

In 1930, the last Hinsdale mill closed, ending the mill era in Hinsdale and creating a major unemployment problem. The same year, a Chamber of Commerce was organized, promoting ski trains to help the sagging economy. Unfortunately, seven years later the passenger service at the Hinsdale Railroad Station was terminated, ending a service that began almost 100 years earlier. The station remained open until 1952, but only for mail service.

Camps continued being formed, with Camp Wyoma on Michaels Road by Plunkett Reservoir being formed in 1932, and Camp Danbee opening on Ashmere Lake in 1948. The last of the camps, Camp Emerson, was opened on Plunkett Reservoir in 1968.

More Changes in the 20th Century

In 1954, Hinsdale's Sesquicentennial was celebrated with week-long festivities, and in the years that followed, community activities grew. The Hinsdale Lion's Club was chartered in 1955, and soon opened Plunkett Reservoir Beach in 1958, then restored the Community Center as a Youth Center in 1963. They later added an outdoor basketball court to the Youth Center in 1975, and provided new equipment for the Kiddie Park at the northeast corner of Taylor Avenue and Maple Street in 1984.

New businesses were established, including the Home Club on South Street (1955), the Christmas Tree Farm on Washington Road (1970), two apartment houses on Main Street (1988, 1989), and Partridgefield Trading Center in 1997. The new Firehouse on Maple Street was completed and dedicated in 1980, and muster grounds were built behind it in 1989. The new Town Hall was built on South Street in 1998.

The latter half of the 20th century also saw many things come to an end. In 1968, the Belmont Hotel (Railroad House, Hinsdale Hotel) and bordering buildings on Main Street were demolished, ending nearly a century and a half of hotel occupancy, and creating the current corner parking space at the junction of Main and Maple Streets. Bernie Collins, the last Hinsdale pharmacist, retired in 1978, ending pharmacy service in Hinsdale. His drugstore was razed in 1987, eliminating a structure that had lasted some 160 years and that contained an early meeting place—Merriman's, then Tuttle's Hall. In 1994, due to structural weakness, the old firehouse on the Maple Street Frissell block bordering the river was demolished.

Historic Residents and Their Residences and Landmarks

Throughout the course of its history, Hinsdale has been home to many notable individuals, some of whom have left physical legacies in the form of residences or landmarks that still stand to this day.

- **Israel Bissell and His Homestead**
Israel Bissell (1752-1823) was a post rider on April 19, 1775 when British soldiers fired on the militia at Lexington. He set out to warn citizens of the events of the day. Israel rode from Watertown to Connecticut and eventually to Philadelphia in an unbelievable five days, carrying a letter warning of the latest developments. The town maintains the Israel Bissell Homestead.
- **Ichabod Emmons, Shady Villa, and the Pillars**
Major Ichabod Emmons (1778-1839) had a blacksmith shop at the top of the hill on present-day Old Dalton Road opposite the cemetery. He built the first brick house in Hinsdale that was a family residence for two generations; It then became an inn known as Shady Villa. He also built a house called the Pillars; it served as a sanitarium for a few years in the early 1900s.
- **John Talcott Mack and Mack's Tavern**
Mack's Tavern was built in the late 1790s by Andrew Belcher, but around the War of 1812 was owned by John Talcott Mack (1781-1858). It was a

major stopover point for troops and freight from Springfield, the armory site, to the Lake Champlain war theater. Today Mack's Tavern is now known as Maplewood Bed and Breakfast.

- **Edward T. Nash and the General Store**
Edward was also the first postmaster of the post office known as the Hinsdale Depot when it was opened in 1852. He was also known as Deacon Nash from his position in the Congregational Church. He built the corner store and the two buildings to the immediate north, one of which later was joined to the store, the other being the Nash homestead, later the Plummer place and telephone exchange.
- **Francis E. Warren and the Hinsdale War Memorial**
Warren fought with the 49th Regiment at the siege at Port Hudson, where 75% of the detachment was killed or wounded. He and the other survivors were later awarded Medals of Honor from Congress. In 1923, he donated Hinsdale's War Memorial, with its veterans' names plaque and Civil War cannon, which sits on the lawn of the Hinsdale Public Library. The library preserves a red-bound volume with the details of the ceremony, and the records of every soldier who went into service from the town.
- **John Stritch and His Studio at Shady Villa**
Stritch, originally a medical doctor, found and purchased Shady Villa. It is here that he repurposed rusting old farm machinery. With the help of Dave Freshler of the Hinsdale Garage, Stritch learned to weld and began making large and small sculptures. He is remembered for his painted posters for local attractions and events. He turned his property into a studio and gallery, and became well-known in the Berkshires.

Other Historic Resources

Many municipal and community buildings still standing today also have a long history. None of these historic resources are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



- **First Congregational Church**

The First Congregational Church was built on Schoolhouse Hill and dedicated in 1799. The church's interior front wall holds a memorial plaque for Chauncey Goodrich who became a missionary to China and one of seven to translate the Bible to Chinese.

- **Hinsdale Academy/Community Center**

The Hinsdale Academy was built in 1848 as an educational institute. It was purchased by the town on January 14, 1867, and was used as both a public high school and Town Hall for several decades before the high school closed. In 1963, the Lions Club restored and converted it to a Youth Center.

- **Hinsdale Public Library**

The Hinsdale Public Library was built in 1866 (see Figure 9.1); the building still boasts most of the original woodwork. The library celebrated its sesquicentennial in 2016.

- **Maple Street Cemetery**

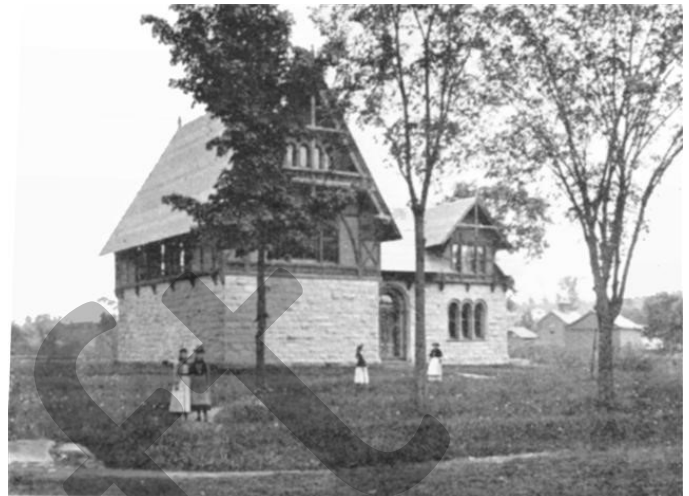
This cemetery is the final resting place of Israel Bissell, who died on October 24, 1823. On November 11, 1967, the DAR Peace Party Chapter of Pittsfield dedicated a plaque at Israel Bissell's gravesite with the inscription: "In Memory of ISRAEL BISSELL Post rider from Watertown to Philadelphia Alerting towns of British attack at Lexington, April 19, 1775. Placed by the Peace Party Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution."

Public Survey Results

The public survey asked residents *what aspects of life in Hinsdale they liked the most*, and the town's *Natural and scenic beauty*, and its location *Close to nature and wildlife* were among the most commonly selected answers.

An open-response question asked residents to state *what was the single greatest aspect about living in Hinsdale*, and references to the *Lake(s)* was second only to *Peace and Quiet*. Many answers were also categorized as either *Natural and Scenic Beauty* or *Nature/Wildlife*.

Figure 9.1 Historic Photo of Hinsdale Public Library



KEY NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ISSUES

Water Quality

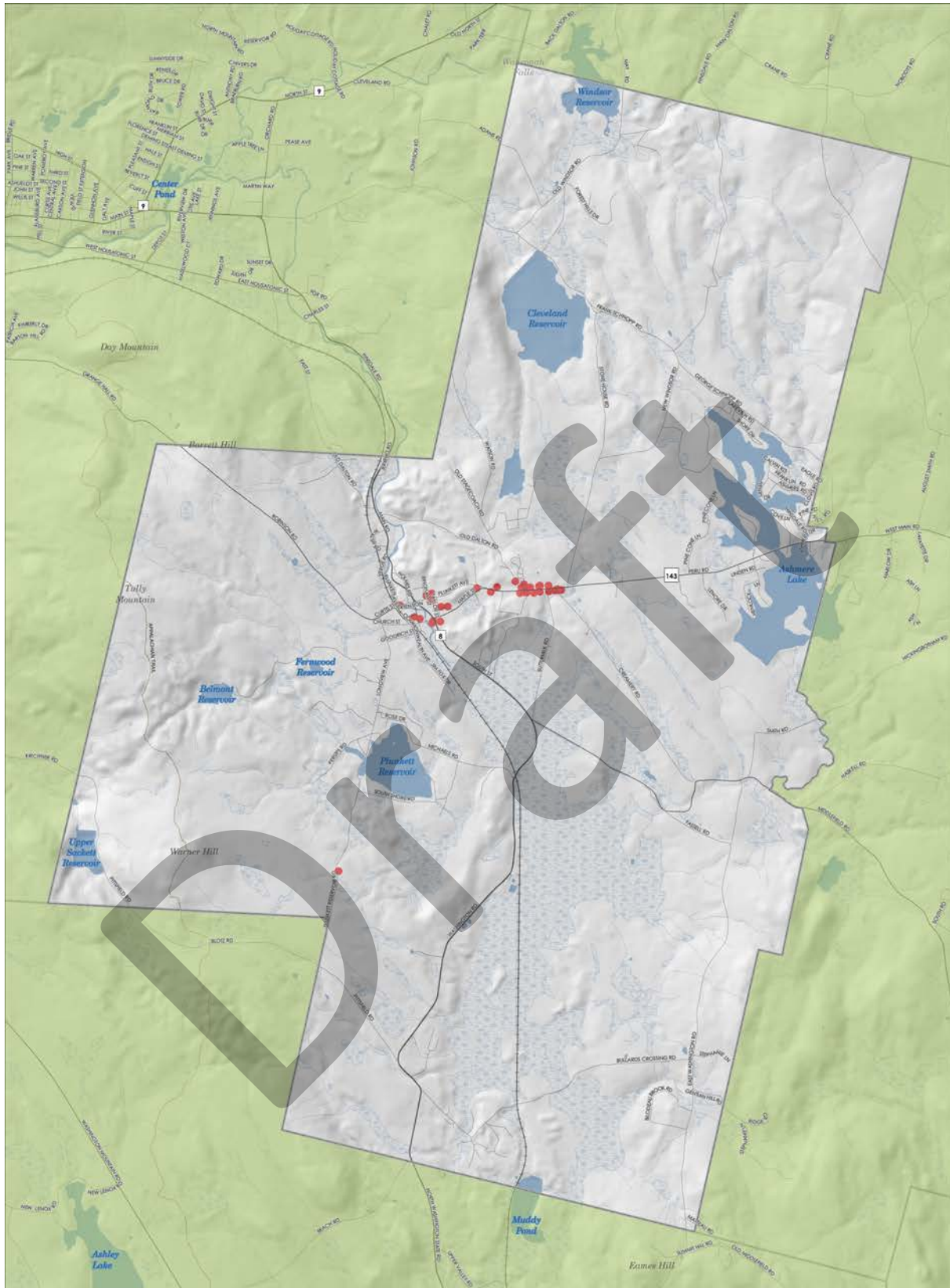
Hinsdale contains the headwaters to the east branch of the Housatonic River, as well as reservoirs that supply drinking water to four towns. Maintaining excellent water quality is critically important.

Rare Plant and Animal Species

Hinsdale is home to several state-listed species that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern. Special consideration should be given to any decisions that could adversely affect these species.

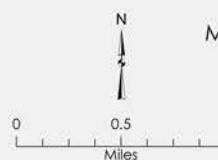
Historic Preservation

Hinsdale has many historic resources that do not currently have any official designation or formal protection.



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- Local Historic Sites
- Towns
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Appalachian Trail
- Stream
- Wetland
- Open Water



Town of Hinsdale
Vision Plan
 Map 10. Historic Resources



NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

Goal 1: Protect, Maintain and Promote the Town's Historic and Cultural Assets

The Town of Hinsdale values its cultural and historic heritage and will ensure that its historic resources are accurately identified and have access to technical and financial resources for its long-term maintenance and protection.

Objective: Build capacity for the town's Historic Commission

The town will build capacity for the town's Historic Commission to advance the protection and promotion of historic and cultural assets.

ACTION: ACTIVELY RECRUIT ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO THE HISTORIC COMMISSION

ACTION: INCREASE TOWN FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE HISTORIC COMMISSION

ACTION: ENCOURAGE HISTORIC COMMISSION MEMBERS TO ATTEND REGULAR TRAINING SUCH AS THOSE HELD BY THE WESTERN MASS. HISTORICAL COMMISSION COALITION (WMHCC) (ORGANIZED IN 2014, THE WMHCC MEETS 2-3 TIMES EACH YEAR AND OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS OF LOCAL HISTORICAL COMMISSIONS, AND OTHER HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVOCATES, TO NETWORK WITH COLLEAGUES AND EXPLORE CURRENT CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES IN THE FIELD)

Objective: Prepare current documentation of historic or potentially historic resources

The town will update current documentation of its historic resources to ensure properties are accurately documented and to enable eligible properties access to potential financial benefits for maintenance or restoration.

ACTION: UPDATE THE CURRENT LISTING OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE THEY ARE IDENTIFIED OR LISTED ACCURATELY TO ENABLE PROPERTY OWNERS TO QUALIFY FOR POTENTIAL GRANTS

ACTION: EVALUATE POTENTIAL SITES FOR DESIGNATION AS HISTORIC RESOURCES

Objective: Promote historic resources to facilitate their long-term maintenance

The town will promote its historic resources to try to bring in additional resources and funding that could be used to protect those resources.

ACTION: ENSURE THAT HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ARE INCLUDED IN THE TOWN'S PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS

Goal 2: Protect Important Water and Natural Resources

Hinsdale residents strongly identified natural and water resources as one of the aspects about living in Hinsdale they enjoyed the most. Not to be taken for granted, Hinsdale will take steps to protect those resources.

Objective: Continue to protect and maintain the town's lakes and water resources

Building on its strong legacy protecting its lakes and water resources, the town will continue a broad range of efforts to maintain those activities into the future.

ACTION: CONTINUE TO SUPPORT, INCLUDING THROUGH NEEDED FUNDING, THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LAKE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT DESIRED LAKE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS, SUCH AS HERBICIDE TREATMENT OR OTHER AQUATIC WEED TREATMENTS

ACTION: CONTINUE TO EXPLORE AND PURSUE OPTIONS, INCLUDING WORKING MORE CLOSELY WITH STATE OFFICIALS, TO STOP OR REMEDIATE SEDIMENTATION OF PLUNKETT RESERVOIR AND ASHMERE LAKE

ACTION: ENFORCE AND ADMINISTER EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS, SUCH AS THE WETLANDS PROTECTION ACT, WITH PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, TO SUPPLEMENT THE WORK OF VOLUNTEER CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

ACTION: USE THE SERVICES OF THE TOWN'S CONSERVATION AGENT TO CONDUCT OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY AND HALT POTENTIAL WETLANDS PROTECTION ACT VIOLATIONS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN

ACTION: BETTER UTILIZE THE TOWN'S GEOGRAPHIC

INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS (A GIS SYSTEM LINKS MAPPED INFORMATION WITH ATTRIBUTES ABOUT THE MAPPED AREA)

ACTION: CONTINUE TO BE AWARE OF AND IDENTIFY NEW THREATS TO LAKES AND PROMOTE AWARENESS AND TREATMENT TO MINIMIZE NEGATIVE IMPACTS FROM THOSE THREATS

Goal 3: Protect Soils, Forests, and Other Natural Environments

The town will protect soils, forests, and other natural environments by encouraging landowners to implement best management practices and seek grant funding and other technical resources to preserve biodiversity and address invasive species.

Objective: Encourage maximum use of best management practices to protect resources

Best management practices are effective means to protect environmental resources. The town will promote the use of best management practices.

ACTION: WORK WITH PROPERTY OWNERS TO ELIMINATE THE SPREAD OF THE INVASIVE HOGWEED SPECIES AND ERADICATE THE EXISTING PLANTS

ACTION: WORK WITH THE DPW AND PROPERTY OWNERS TO IDENTIFY, PREVENT THE SPREAD OF, AND ELIMINATE OTHER INVASIVE SPECIES

ACTION: WORK WITH PROPERTY OWNERS TO ENSURE TIMBER CUTS ARE COMPLIANT WITH FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS

ACTION: REQUIRE EMPLOYMENT OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT IN FLOODPLAINS

ACTION: REQUIRE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE IMPORTANT NATURAL RESOURCES IN THAT AREA



CHAPTER 10: OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Hinsdale's vision for the town's open space and recreational resources:

Hinsdale's vision for open space and recreational resources is to continue to preserve, protect and support open spaces and well-maintained, publicly owned recreation areas enabling a diversity of passive and active recreational interests that recognize the important role that they play in the lives of residents and visitors as well as contributing to the vibrancy of the town.

The Town of Hinsdale has thousands of acres of public and privately owned recreation lands, as well as opportunities for a range of activities including hiking, bicycling, boating, swimming, fishing, and hunting. This chapter reviews town open space and recreation assets and lists the goals, objectives and actions for the town to take to achieve its vision for Hinsdale.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

Open Space

Open space is defined as land that has not been developed for residential, commercial, or industrial uses and includes publicly and privately owned land. Open space often has particular interest to conservation or recreation and can include:

1. Land which contributes to the public water supply
2. Forests, fields, and agricultural lands
3. Wetlands
4. Rivers, streams, and lakes
5. Parks and other recreation lands
6. Wildlife corridors or animal habitats
7. Land which preserves scenic views or town character

Land in Hinsdale is protected in a variety of ways and with varying degrees of protection. Conservation and recreation lands in Hinsdale are protected by four entities: the town and other municipal organizations, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, local land trusts, and private landowners.

Land is considered under permanent protection if it is



Hinsdale Athletic Field

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION AT A GLANCE

Open Space

Hinsdale has over 6,800 acres of protected open space, some of which is permanently protected.

Public and Private Recreation Areas

Hinsdale has a wide variety of outdoor recreation options, ranging from hiking on the Appalachian Trail, boating on one of Hinsdale's lakes, utilizing the town's playground, to recreational activities at one of the many private camps.

owned by the state or a local land trust. It may also be permanently protected if the land is subject to a conservation restriction, such as those held by land trusts. Areas under limited protection include town-owned parcels such as the Town Playground.

Areas under Chapter 61 (A or B) tax reduction programs are considered to have temporary protections, as they are privately owned. All privately owned lands without conservation restrictions or not enrolled in Chapter 61 are considered to be unprotected.

Protected Open Space

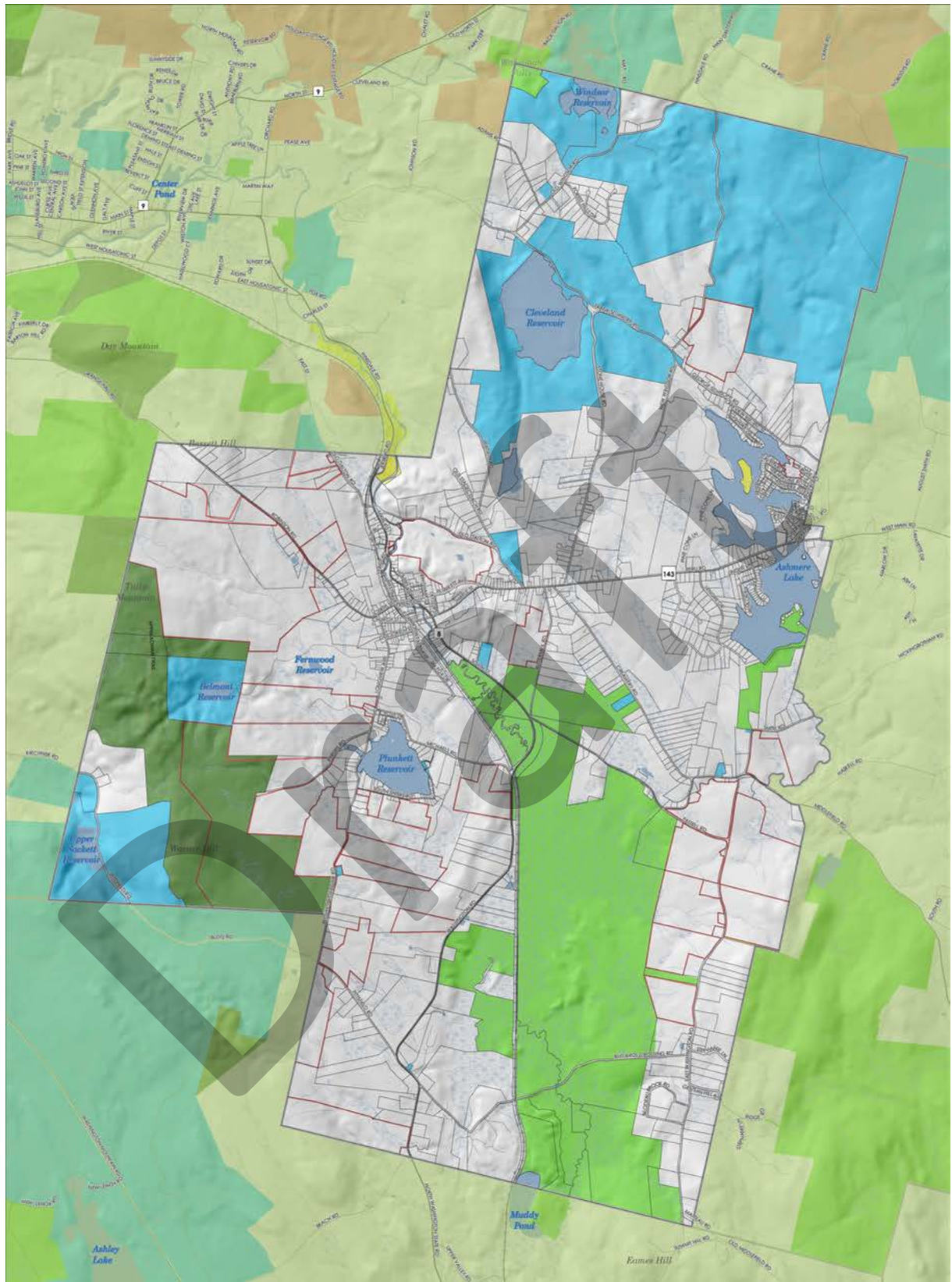
Hinsdale is fortunate that it contains large sections of land that is currently protected from development (see Map 13). These lands cover approximately 33% of the town. Of the more than 4,594 acres of protected open space, approximately half are owned by federal and state governments and can effectively be considered permanently protected. The other half of the lands are owned by various municipalities, most of which are drinking water protection lands. Those lands that are permanently protected for conservation purposes are the most valuable to the public when planning long-term conservation and recreation goals. (See Table 10.1)

There are differing levels of protection that are involved in open space and recreation lands. Most federal and state lands maintained for conservation and recreation can be regarded as permanently protected lands. The federally-owned lands along the Appalachian Trail corridor and the state-owned Hinsdale Flats WMA can be categorized as such. Most conservation lands owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are protected under Article 97, an amendment to the state constitution, and to remove protection status of these lands for development would require a 2/3 vote within the state legislature. Although such a scenario could occur, the action would undoubtedly be contentious and cause a public uproar.

Other lands that can be considered permanently protected are private lands upon which a conservation restriction (CR) or easement has been placed. The CR

Table 10.1 - Summary of Protected Land in Hinsdale			
Source: Mass. GIS Open Space 2015, BNRC 2015			
Organization	Acres	% protected land (6,868 acres)	% all land (13,878 acres)
Federal	435.8	6.3%	3.1%
State	1,839.7	26.8%	13.3%
Land Trust	15.2	0.2%	0.1%
Municipal	2,303.3	33.5%	16.6%
<i>Town of Hinsdale</i>	157.3	2.3%	1.1%
<i>City of Pittsfield</i>	788.6	11.5%	5.7%
<i>Town of Dalton</i>	1,226.3	17.8%	8.8%
<i>Dalton Fire District</i>	131.1	1.9%	0.9%
Subtotal	4,594.0	66.8%	33.0%
Chapter 61 Properties	2,281.0	33.2%	16.4%
<i>61 (Forestry)</i>	983.1	14.3%	7.1%
<i>61A (Agricultural)</i>	1,034.5	15.1%	7.5%
<i>61B (Recreational)</i>	263.7	3.8%	1.9%
Subtotal	2,281.0	33.2%	16.4%
Total Protected Land	6,863.2	100.0%	49.5%

is a legal agreement between a landowner and another entity in which the owner agrees to restrict the use of the land. Activities such as farming, forest or wildlife management, recreation and other land uses that the property owner wishes to pursue continue to be allowed. The landowner continues to own the property, but if the land is sold, the new owners must comply with the provisions of the CR, which has been placed on the deed and is transferred. CRs are typically held by governmental agencies (Agricultural Preservation Restrictions and Forest Legacy Programs are examples), land trusts, environmental organizations and municipalities (Conservation Commissions often accept CRs). There are several deed-restricted conservation lands in Berkshire County. The land owned by



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- M132TaxPar
- Federal
- State
- Municipality
- Land Trust
- Private
- Chapter 61, 61A, 61B

- Towns
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Appalachian Trail
- Stream
- Wetland
- Open Water



0 0.5 1
Miles

Town of Hinsdale Vision Plan

Map 11. Inventory of
Land of Conservation
and Recreation Interest

the Dalton Fire District has CRs on them from the Department of Fish and Game. The only other parcel in Hinsdale that has a deed restriction is the Hinsdale Athletic Field, and this restriction dictates that the land must remain playing fields in perpetuity.

The protection status of municipally-owned lands varies widely, depending upon the circumstances under which the land was acquired. If the lands were acquired and accepted by town meeting vote that the lands are for conservation purposes, then it would take a special act of town meeting and state legislature to take the land out of conservation use. The watershed lands surrounding public drinking water reservoirs are currently protected from development. However, if the reservoirs were to be withdrawn as drinking water supplies for some reason, this protection status may be removed. In fact, some of these waterbodies may be attractive sites for residential development. Other municipally-owned conservation and recreation lands typically include parks, playing fields, playgrounds, and school properties. These kinds of lands are not typically deed restricted and thus could be vulnerable to change. Although it is unlikely that a municipality would sell public open space lands for development, there could arise a situation in which the public benefits of the land transfer would outweigh the cost of losing open land.

State and Private Lands and Stumpage Fees

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is required to donate a portion of revenue generated from timber harvests on its lands to the municipality in which the timber harvest occurs. In state lands purchased prior to June 1st, 1987, this value is 8%. However, for state land purchased after this date, the value increases significantly to 50%.

Private Parcels

Although approximately 33% of the town's open space lands are in some form of protection, the remaining majority of open space is privately owned and is without any form of protection. These parcels play an important role in Hinsdale's rural character, economy, and ecosystem. A combination of woodlots creates a

large tract of uninterrupted northern hardwood forest supporting the timber industry and rare wildlife habitat. Campgrounds add to the rural character while also contributing to the town's tax base and economy.

A small but extremely important privately-owned parcel of land is the Hinsdale Public Beach, which is owned by the Lion's Club. This club has been gracious enough to host the town beach for many years, but there is a concern that the land may be becoming a financial burden to the club. The loss of the beach would be unfortunate, as it is the only public beach in the town. The town is hoping to work with the DCR to create a second public beach at Ashmere Lake. It is expected that this could be done relatively simply as part of the overall land clearing that will be conducted as part of the extensive repair project for the dam.

Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B Lands

61 is a state program that allows private landowners to manage their properties for forestry (Chapter 61), agricultural (Chapter 61A), or recreational purposes (Chapter 61B) in exchange for reduced taxes. Parcels in the program for the purposes of forestry must be at least 10 acres in size and must have an approved 10-year management plan in place. Parcels enrolled in Chapter 61A or 61B must be at least five acres in size. Once enrolled in Chapter 61, the town where the property is located acquires a right of first refusal should the land be put up for sale. This right of first refusal can also be assigned by the town to a land trust or state agency. Chapter 61 lands are not considered permanently protected, as landowners can remove their property from the program at any time. However, there are monetary penalties associated with sale of properties enrolled in Chapter 61 for purposes other than forestry, agriculture, or recreation, as well as any changes in land use while enrolled.

Chapter 61 properties are privately owned and should be considered off limits to public access without the landowner's permission. There are a total of 2,281 acres of land currently enrolled in Chapter 61 in Hinsdale, or around 49.5% of all land within the town. The majority of these properties are enrolled for the



purposes of agriculture with some enrolled for forestry and for recreation (see Table 10.1). For more information on Chapter 61 programs, consult a local forester or the town assessor.

As can be seen on the Inventory of Land of Conservation and Recreation Interest Map, the majority of lands under the Chapter 61 programs are concentrated on the western portion of the town. Most of this area is forested, with the exception of agricultural fields along Robinson and Pittsfield roads. Another large area under the programs is on the eastern portion of town, south of Middlefield Road and east of the Hinsdale Flats WMA. This area is also largely forested, with some relatively large farm fields.

Hillside farms on East Washington Road result in a rustic back road, occasional panoramic views of Mt. Greylock, and important connections for wildlife corridors and future hiking trails. These parcels display the salient points of Hinsdale, yet are not considered protected because they can be developed at any time.

Agricultural Land

Much of Hinsdale's farmland is enrolled in the Chapter 61A tax abatement program. This annual program requires that a minimum of five acres be devoted to agricultural or horticultural uses with gross proceeds being not less than 500 dollars. Taxes are based on recommendations from a farmland valuation commission. Not only do typical agricultural products fall into this category, but also maple syrup, honey, timber, and Christmas trees.

A 540-acre farm located on Robinson Road in the northwest corner of town, hosting an impressive red barn, epitomizes the rural character of the town and makes an extraordinarily lovely entrance into Hinsdale. The farm's long field abutting the road slopes gently, creating breathtaking views into the valley below. This acreage abuts the Appalachian Trail, Belmont Reservoir, and a summer camp on Plunkett Reservoir Road.

An additional noteworthy grouping of Chapter 61A lands occurs on East Washington Road. These parcels form a cluster of hillside farms resulting in a rustic

back road with occasional panoramic views across the 'Flats.' Additionally, one farm connects the centrally located Hinsdale Flats WMA with the Middlefield State Forest in Peru. This connection is important for wildlife corridors and future hiking trails.

Forest Land

The vast majority of Hinsdale is forested, and a significant amount of this land is enrolled in the Chapter 61 program. A large contiguous area of Chapter 61 and 61A land area lies west of Plunkett Reservoir Road, joining the Appalachian Trail and Belmont Reservoir. The combination of these lots, together with the watershed and Appalachian Trail lands, creates a large tract of uninterrupted northern hardwood forest that serves as a wildlife corridor between the Hinsdale Flats WMA and the Appalachian Trail. A portion of these forests are Core Habitat that surrounds rare species habitat in the southeastern portion of town.

Areas for Water Resource Protection

Hinsdale is fortunate in that much of the wetland complex that is the headwaters of the East Branch Housatonic River is within the Hinsdale Flats WMA. In addition, the water quality of several of the small waterbodies in the town are protected to some degree because they are municipal drinking water sources. Since the lower portions of the watershed and all of the shoreline are protected from development, the waterbodies also provide intact natural habitat.

This is not to say that all water resources in the town are unimpacted. The shorelines of Plunkett Reservoir and Ashmere Lake are heavily developed, and their ability to provide habitat is limited. Stormwater runoff from roads, lawns, and other land use activities deliver sediment and other pollutants to the lakes and streams within the town.

Recreation

Hinsdale's open space areas create a wealth of opportunities for recreation.

Federally Owned Recreation Areas

Appalachian National Scenic Trail

The Appalachian Trail is a 2,100 mile foot path that extends from Maine to Georgia. The 2.43-mile stretch of trail that passes through Hinsdale is predominantly owned by the National Park Service, an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior.

State Owned Recreation Areas

Hinsdale Flats Wildlife Management Area

The Flats area is managed by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for a wide range of recreation and natural resource protection purposes. Recreational uses include hunting, fishing, and canoeing.

Ashmere Lake State Park

This Massachusetts State Park lies along the southernmost shore of Ashmere Lake and offers a public boat launch and acres of woods that can be accessed from Smith Road.

Wahconah Falls State Park

Although vehicle entrance to Wahconah Falls State Park is solely from Dalton, nearly 19 acres of the park lie within Hinsdale and are owned by the state. The focal point of the park is where Wahconah Falls Brook flows over several smaller tiered falls then cascades about 40 feet into a deep pool.

Hinsdale Owned Recreation Areas

Hinsdale Athletic Field

Hinsdale Athletic Field is a 7.2 acre parcel of land on South Street that is mainly comprised of a baseball diamond. The town owns and mows the field, but other maintenance of the baseball diamond is performed by a joint Hinsdale-Dalton recreation group that uses the field in their league.

Town Center Playground

Located at the Community Center/former Youth Center, the town center playground features a basketball court and other playground equipment.

Kittredge Elementary School Playground

The elementary school, which is part of Central Regional School District, has a small playground area that is open for public use.

Public Pavilions

The Main Street Pavilion, a gazebo in a small landscaped park at the ends of both Main and Maple Street in the center of town, is free to be used by all. It is maintained by the town on land leased from the railroad company.

The Wayne Walton Pavilion, located behind the fire station on Maple Street, can accommodate over 100 people and is free and open to the public, although its use should be coordinated with the Hinsdale Firemen's Association in advance.

Land Trust Owned Recreation Areas

Berkshire Natural Resources Council, a county-wide land trust, owns two parcels of protected recreational open space in Hinsdale.

Ashmere Island

Ashmere Island is a forested 7-acre island in the northern section of Ashmere Lake. The island is just over 100 feet from the closest dock in the Skyview Grove subdivision, and just over 200 feet from the access point from Camp Taconic. The island can be accessed by swimming or boating.

Jericho Woods and Old Mill Trail

Jericho Woods is a 126-acre parcel, of which only 8.3 acres is located within Hinsdale; the rest is located in Dalton. Jericho Woods was donated to Berkshire Natural Resources Council in August 2016 as a largely undeveloped piece of land, which includes the Old Mill Trail.

The Old Mill Trail starts at the trailhead on Old Dalton Road off Route 8 in Hinsdale. The trail provides access to approximately 1½ miles of scenic and historic riverfront along the East Branch of the Housatonic River and was developed by the Housatonic Valley



Association to provide increased recreational and educational opportunities to visitors. The trail traverses a wild river environment. Along the way, remnants of early mill operations remind us of the influence this industry had on the development of neighboring communities. The Massachusetts Department of Fish & Wildlife owns an easement on the property.

Privately Owned Recreation Areas

There are several privately-owned recreation areas in Hinsdale, primarily made up large camps. Many of these recreation areas are located around Plunkett Reservoir (see Figure 10.1), while there are two camps at Ashmere Lake.

Plunkett Reservoir Beach

The beach at Plunkett Reservoir is owned by the Lions Club, which is open to residents for swimming. Parking limits this activity, however. There is a small bathroom structure on the premises.

Camp Romaca

Originally known as **Rose Dale Manor Camp** for Girls in 1929 before being shortened to Camp Romaca three years later, this camp has over 150 acres of field and forest on the west side of Plunkett Reservoir. The camp includes tennis and basketball courts, a nature center, soccer and softball fields, a challenge course, an equestrian center, watersports, a yoga pavilion, and a dance studio. A green pedestrian bridge over Longview Ave. connects the waterfront area to the main camp.

Dan Duquette Sports Academy

Dan Duquette Sports Academy has a 22-acre campus located on over 100 acres of land adjacent to Plunkett Reservoir. The academy has one regulation size major league baseball field, one intermediate youth baseball field, two youth league baseball diamonds, and batting cages. The academy also has four outdoor basketball courts and two volleyball courts, one on sand and one on grass. The lakefront property allows access for swimming, boating, and fishing.

Fernwood Forest Campground

Fernwood Forest Campground has 44 campsites for tents and RVs on 115 acres. It is adjacent to the Appalachian Trail and within walking distance to Plunkett Reservoir.

Camp Emerson

Situated on 170 acres near Plunkett Reservoir and adjacent to Fernwood Reservoir, Camp Emerson was founded as a co-ed camp in 1968, replacing the earlier Camp Fernwood which was started in the 1930s. Facilities at the camp include tennis, basketball, volleyball, and fencing courts; a gymnastics center; baseball/softball and soccer fields; an archery range; a hockey arena, a golf driving range; ping pong and tetherball areas; a playground; watersports; an art center and ceramics studio; a theater and performance hall; an outdoor stage; dance and rock band studios; and a media studio for video and photography production.

Camp Taconic

The 326-acre Camp Taconic bounds Ashmere Lake at its northwest side. This recreational site forms a connection between a small sliver of land along the lakeshore owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Cleveland Brook Reservoir lands held by the City of Pittsfield to the west. These natural stretches of land form a sharp contrast to the opposite side of Ashmere Lake which is a densely packed mass of small houses lining the shore and hillside.

Camp Ashmere

Camp Ashmere, situated on the southeast side of Route 143 and Ashmere Lake, functions as a religious retreat and summer camp. Built in 1915, this 20-acre parcel includes several buildings overlooking the lake.

Camp Danbee

Situated on the southeastern shores of Ashmere Lake, Camp Danbee is a girls camp that is partially located in the Town of Peru. It first opened in 1950 and today offers watersports; tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts; soccer fields; an archery range; a lacrosse/field

Figure 10.1 - Privately-Owned Recreation Areas Around Plunkett Reservoir



hockey field; softball field; dance building; fine arts center; ropes course; and horseback riding.

Camp Lenore

All facilities and infrastructure have been removed from the former Camp Lenore, located on Peru Road just west of the still-existing Lenore Drive near

Ashmere Lake. The former camp served as a girls camp with an emphasis on classical music and dance. The land is currently unused open space.

Bas Ridge Golf Course

Bas Ridge Golf Course manages a 18-hole golf course on 80 acres of land. This course, a rehabilitated gravel mine, is the only golf course in the central Berkshire



highland region. Due to its hilly and undulating terrain, it is a favorite spot for sledding in the winter.

Public Survey Results

Overall residents feel that it is *important to conserve open space and historic resources in Hinsdale*. *Vernal pools* received the lowest percentage of *Important* ratings, at 63.7%, and the highest *Unimportant* rating, at 5.3%. *Shorelines along Ashmere Lake, Plunkett Reservoir, or other ponds* received the highest percentage of *Important* ratings, at 91.8%.

When asked *how often the respondent or his/her family members use open spaces, recreational areas, and historic resources* in Hinsdale, no respondents reported using the *Israel Bissell Homestead* site regularly, and it had the second-highest percentage of people who listed *Don't know about it* (20.1%), second only to *Cady Brook Forestland (New Windsor Road)*, at (33.5%). *Ashmere Lake* (39%) and *Plunkett Reservoir* (18.6%) are the most *frequently used* sites, and the *Hinsdale Athletic Field* (85.1%) and *Hinsdale Youth Center/Community Center* (78.8%) are the *least used* sites.

When respondents were asked to *set priorities for expanding access to recreational uses/facilities*, *Running/walking trails* (41.1%) and *Hiking* (40.1%) received the largest percentages of *High Priority* ratings, and also received large percentages of *Medium Priority*. *ATV/snowmobiling* received the smallest percentage of *High Priority* ratings (8.7%), and *Hunting areas* (36.9%) and *ATV/snowmobiling* (36.2%) received the largest percentage of *Not a Priority* ratings. Most recreational uses/facilities received *Medium Priority* percentages between 34%-41%.

Only a small portion (11.8%) of respondents are either *Somewhat* or *Very dissatisfied* with the existing recreation areas in Hinsdale. About a third (35.4%) feel *Neutral*, with the remainder feeling either *Somewhat satisfied* or *Very satisfied*.

KEY OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ISSUES

Public Beach at Ashmere Lake

Despite being a state park, there is currently no public beach at Ashmere Lake; the only public access is a boat launch from a back road.

Need for More Trails/Paths

The public survey results indicate that there is some demand for more walking paths or hiking trails in the town's Open Space. Currently the only identified trails are the short and easy Old Mill Trail, and the longer and more strenuous Appalachian Trail.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

Goal 1: Increase Capacity to Pursue Open Space and Recreational Opportunities

The Town of Hinsdale values its open spaces and recreational assets and will increase its capacity to maintain and expand those assets.

Objective: Pursue open space and recreational enhancements according to a comprehensive and inclusive planning process

The town will seek grant funds for desired improvements based on a comprehensive planning process that seeks to actively engage residents' opinions and desires.

ACTION: DEVELOP AND ADOPT AN OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN AS A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR HINSDALE'S EFFORTS AND TO ACCESS STATE FUNDING

ACTION: ONCE ADOPTED BY THE TOWN AND APPROVED BY THE STATE, APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDING FOR HIGH PRIORITY ITEMS FROM THE PLAN

Goal 2: Preserve Land for Open Space and Recreational Uses

The Town of Hinsdale will explore and pursue, as appropriate, a range of options to increase the town's open space and recreational assets.

Objective: Increase protected open space or recreational lands and resources

ACTION: EVALUATE AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR PERMANENT PROTECTION AND WORK WITH STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO PRESERVE HIGH PRIORITY PROPERTIES

ACTION: EVALUATE TAX POSSESSION PROPERTIES FOR THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL BEFORE THEY ARE DISPOSED OF AND RETAIN THEM IF APPROPRIATE

ACTION: EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT TO HELP FUND OPEN SPACE PROTECTION AND RECREATIONAL PROJECTS

ACTION: WORK WITH STATE AGENCIES TO SECURE INHOLDINGS OR IMPORTANT ADJACENT OR CONTRIBUTING PARCELS TO EXISTING STATE LANDS

Objective: Explore and pursue local regulatory tools, as appropriate, to protect valued open space resources

ACTION: PURSUE AN OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONING BY-LAW

ACTION: EVALUATE EXISTING TOWN STANDARDS OR REGULATIONS DEALING WITH RECLAMATION OF UNUSED SAND AND GRAVEL OPERATIONS, OR OTHER DECOMMISSIONED INDUSTRIAL SITES, FOR INSTANCE SOLAR, AND IMPROVE THOSE ITEMS AS WARRANTED

ACTION: EXPLORE THE BERKSHIRE SCENIC MOUNTAINS ACT OR OTHER REGULATORY MEANS TO PROTECT RIDGELINES FROM DEVELOPMENT

Goal 3: Increase and Improve Recreational Opportunities

The Town of Hinsdale will increase the recreational opportunities for its residents and improve other potential or existing ones.

Objective: Work to increase recreational opportunities

A town beach was identified in the survey as a desired need. The town will work to acquire and develop land for a beach and recreation area as well as work towards expanding other opportunities.

ACTION: ACQUIRE AND DEVELOP LAND FOR A TOWN BEACH AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES, SUCH AS A PAVILION

ACTION: APPROACH CITY OF PITTSFIELD OFFICIALS TO EXPLORE OPENING THE CITY'S WATERSHED LAND AND WATER FOR RECREATIONAL USE

ACTION: EVALUATE EXPANDING THE NETWORK OF TRAILS IN TOWN, POSSIBLY CREATING NEW TRAILS OR LINKAGES TO EXISTING TRAILS, OTHER OPEN SPACES, OR RECREATIONAL AREAS

ACTION: WORK WITH STATE AGENCIES TO CONTINUE FISH AND WILDLIFE STOCKING PROGRAMS

ACTION: WORK WITH STATE AGENCIES TO INCORPORATE HINSDALE INTERESTS AS THEY DEVELOP MANAGEMENT OR USE PLANS FOR THEIR PROPERTIES

ACTION: EXPLORE VOLUNTARILY PERMITTED ENHANCED ACCESS ON PRIVATELY-OWNED LAND FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES



Objective: Promote open space and recreational assets

The town will promote its open space and recreational assets to increase their use and support as well as to bring additional users into town.

ACTION: ENSURE THAT HINSDALE'S RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE INTEGRATED INTO TOWN PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS

ACTION: EXPLORE DESIGNATION AS AN APPALACHIAN TRAIL COMMUNITY

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CHAPTER 11: VISION

INTRODUCTION

This Vision Plan for the Town of Hinsdale was developed in 2016-2017 to guide growth, policy, and investment decisions for the next 10 to 20 years. Vision statements are concise descriptions of the town's desired future. This may include both those qualities of the town that residents would like to keep and attributes the town would like to see added or changed in the future. The vision serves as the basis for the creation of goals and objectives in the plan for the town to pursue in the future. A short vision statement was developed for each topic area of the master plan. Goals, Objective and Action were then identified for each topic area.

Hinsdale, a rural, tranquil, and family-friendly town, has a vision that supports a strong local economy, provides a wide range of valuable public services and amenities, carefully stewards its treasured open spaces, and maintains rich cultural, recreational, and scenic resources that collectively foster a strong sense of place and community vitality that benefits its residents and visitors.

Economy

Hinsdale's vision for the economy is to create a culture that supports existing businesses and encourages new businesses to locate in Hinsdale, through supportive policies, practices, and regulations without sacrificing town's bucolic nature.

Infrastructure

Hinsdale's vision for infrastructure is to regularly assess and evaluate the town's assets, provide for consistent and adequately funded maintenance, upgrade, and replacement to meet the current and anticipated needs of the town.

Services

Hinsdale's vision for services is to provide a high level of cost-effective services to promote the safety, well-being, and advancement of its residents that are customer-oriented and proactively managed to adapt to constantly evolving and changing needs and preferences.

Housing

Hinsdale's vision for housing is to encourage attractive and well-maintained housing that meets the needs of its current residents of all ages and income levels, attracts new residents to town, respects the rural character of the town, and minimizes impact on the environment.

Transportation

Hinsdale's vision for transportation is to proactively maintain and upgrade its transportation system annually, using a consistent level of local and state funding, employing the best practices to minimize impacts to the environment and rural character, meeting the needs of all ages and transportation modes, including transit, walking, and bicycling.

Land Use

Hinsdale's vision for land use is to maintain the rural nature of the town while encouraging residential and commercial expansion and development according to an orderly and efficient development review process that respects property rights and values and minimizes impact on the environment.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Hinsdale's vision for natural and cultural resources is to recognize the importance of its rural and natural heritage by responsibly stewarding its historic, cultural, natural, and scenic resources for the appropriate utilization and enjoyment of residents, visitors, and future generations while enhancing these resources through a combination of strategic land acquisition, adoption of forward-thinking by-laws and policies, utilization of best management practices, and working in partnership with the schools and all pertinent state and federal resource management agencies.

Open Space and Recreation

Hinsdale's vision for open space and recreational resources is to continue to preserve, protect and support open spaces and well-maintained, publicly owned recreation areas enabling a diversity of passive and active recreational interests that recognize the important role that they play in the lives of residents and visitors as well as contributing to the vibrancy of the town.

Draft



CHAPTER 12: PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The Hinsdale Vision Plan was developed by the Mission and Vision Working Group. This effort engaged members of the community in a robust public process, designed to ensure that diverse perspectives were considered in the formation of the plan, and that consensus was developed around the vision.

PLANNING PROCESS

Mission & Vision Working Group Meetings

The Mission & Vision Working Group (MVWG) was formed by the Select Board in late-2015 with the intent of: articulating a clear and compelling mission and shared vision for the Town of Hinsdale; serving as a steering committee that guides a long-term/master planning effort (including the finalization and integration of a previously developed Open Space and Recreation Plan) complete with inclusive public engagement processes; and helping foster a greater sense of place, cohesiveness, and enhanced community vitality.

The group began meeting every other Wednesday evening beginning in January 2016.

MVWG Members

Ryan Aylesworth - Town Administrator
Laurel Scialabba - Select Board Chair
Jim Manning - Council on Aging, Personnel Committee
Shaun Galliher - Emergency Management Agency, Personnel Committee
Vivan Mason - Finance Committee, Webmaster
Scott Rodman - Ashmere Lake Association
Dave Stewart - Local businessman

Vision Plan Survey

A Vision Plan Survey, which was open from May 18, 2016 to June 30, 2016, was the first opportunity for the public to have input into the Hinsdale Vision Plan. The survey sought input from year-round and seasonal residents, as well as non-resident business owners.



PLANNING PROCESS AT A GLANCE

Mission and Vision Working Group

The Mission and Vision Working Group generally met every other Wednesday evening beginning in January 2016 through September 2017.

Public Survey

A Vision Plan Survey, conducted in Spring 2016, was the first opportunity for the public to have input into the Hinsdale Vision Plan. It received a total of 241 responses from year-round and seasonal residents.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were conducted with those with first hand knowledge about town affairs, as well as town elders and young residents to gain perspective from important groups involved in the town.

Listening Sessions

Listening sessions were held to find out more about what residents of Hinsdale really value about their town. Members of the MVWG met with groups of different sizes to have these sessions.

The survey was promoted through the town website, the annual town meeting, a posting on the notice board at Town Hall, a flyer sent home with all Kittredge Elementary School children, an oversized postcard that was sent to every postal address in town, and a flyer that was mailed to all property owners who live out of town. In total, 1,913 mail pieces were sent; the oversized postcards were sent to all 1,508 residential addresses and P.O. Box customers in Hinsdale, and flyers were mailed to 405 out-of-town property owners.

A total of 241 residents responded to the survey, at least in part; respondents were not required to answer every question, so any question could be skipped or left blank. Of those 241 respondents, 219 respondents took the survey electronically, and 22 responses were received via paper copy and manually entered. The result is a 12.6% response rate.

The purpose of the survey was to get initial reactions and opinions from residents and second homeowners about the current state of the town. The results gave the Mission and Vision Working Group a sense of what people think is working now, and what they would like to change going forward.

Stakeholder Interviews

BRPC also conducted a number of stakeholder interviews to inform the development of the Vision Plan. The intent of this effort was to assess ongoing or in progress work by the town and question those with first hand knowledge about town affairs as to the direction and steps the town should take in the future. Additionally, through the interview process, the Mission and Vision Working Group hoped to gain perspective from important organizations involved in the town. Interviews were conducted in August and September of 2016, and were intended to gather information early in the Vision Plan process.

Potential stakeholders were identified as leaders or chairpersons of town boards and committees, other town officials and staff, as well as town elders and young residents who could offer unique perspectives. Interviews were conducted over the telephone. Some

individuals beyond the list below were contacted to participate in the stakeholder interviews; however, they were unable to be scheduled.

Interview Questions

Questions asked in the questionnaire were as follows:

1. What role or interactions, if any, have you had with the town?
2. What ongoing or in-progress activities, if any, are you engaged with in town?
3. What are some of Hinsdale's positive attributes?
4. What trends have you noticed in town? How have these trends changed from the past?
5. What are the most important challenges or opportunities facing the town?
6. What steps or actions should be taken to help address challenges or opportunities issues from Question 5?
7. Given everything we've discussed, what is your vision for Hinsdale?
8. Is there anything else you'd like to mention that we haven't covered?
9. Is there anyone else you think we should talk to?
10. Would you like your email address added to a distribution list for a town newsletter?

Individuals Participating in Stakeholder Interviews

- Peter Persoff, Board of Assessors
- Shaun Armacost, Central Berkshire Regional School Committee
- Scott Rodman, Ashmere Lake Association
- Tracey Lussier, Business Owner
- Jim Fox, Retired DPW Employee
- Walter Ulmer, Landowner of Large Holdings
- Eddie Richards, Town Elder
- Bill Basiliere, Business Owner
- Bonnie Conner, Former Select Board Member
- Dick Scialabba, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Planning Board
- Dawn Frissell, Town Clerk, Local Teacher
- Paul Trova, Former Select Board Member, Volunteer Fire Fighter
- Travis Derby, Police Officer



- Mary Rice, Historical Commission, Finance Committee, Community Center Committee, Library Trustee
- Ray Bolduc, Emergency Management Agency, Fire Department
- Jennifer Kimball, Pastor of the First Congregational Church
- John Genzabella, Former Select Board Member
- Bill Goddard, Former Select Board Member, Former Finance Committee, Former Assistant Building Inspector, Former Planning Board

Analysis of Trends and Existing Conditions

Using data from appropriate reputable sources, and with input from MVWG members, BRPC staff developed the *Trends and Existing Conditions* sections of each chapter of the Vision Plan. This data was used to paint a picture of where Hinsdale is now, so that MVWG members and the public alike could be well informed of the current state of affairs before brainstorming about an envisioned future. The analysis included a summary of the public survey results for each chapter and, where relevant, a comparison to surrounding towns and/or the county as a whole.

From the trends and existing conditions, public survey results, and stakeholder interviews, key issues emerged and were identified by MVWG members and BRPC staff. The key issues did not propose solutions, just merely summarized areas or issues needing improvement.

Listening Sessions

Listening sessions were held in November 2016 through January 2017 to find out more about what residents of Hinsdale really value about their town, and how they would like to see it change or stay the same in the future. Members of the MVWG met with 4 groups, ranging in size from 10 to 40 people.

Development of Draft Plan

The draft plan was put together through stakeholder interviews, surveys, working with the MVWG members, and using data from other sources BRPC

was able to identify issues that Hinsdale wanted to change. BRPC then produced the draft plan. The draft plan was distributed to numerous town staff members, and various boards and committees. The draft plan was posted on the town website. A notice was distributed to town residents informing them of the availability of the draft plan. An open meeting was then held to present the draft plan. BRPC then made final edits and produced the final plan.

Final Adoption

The Board of Selectmen approved the final plan on _____.

Draft



CHAPTER 13: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

This chapter describes the types of actions that will be needed to implement this plan, who will be responsible for taking action on each item, and the relative priority for timing of implementation. It also describes the procedure for amending and updating the plan over time.

Implementation Actions

This plan will be implemented primarily through five types of actions:

- 1) Day-to-Day Policy Decisions
- 2) Regulatory Changes
- 3) Plans and Programs
- 4) Regional Coordination
- 5) Collaborative Action

Each of these actions will likely involve more than one group or individual in the town and region. Specific responsibilities will be detailed for each action in the next sections of this chapter.

Day to Day Policy Decisions

The town administration, boards, commissions, and departments will be responsible for many of the day-to-day decisions that will cumulatively help implement this plan. Many of these decisions will be made by the Select Board in the form of policy creation and support and task delegation.

Regulatory Changes

A number of significant recommendations of this plan are directly or indirectly related to the development of new regulations to govern growth and land use in the town. The Planning Board will be responsible for the initiation of the efforts to draft new by-law language but it will take a united effort on the part of the town to conduct appropriate outreach to achieve a successful and appropriate by-law product that meets the needs of the town.

Plans and Programs

The goals, policies, and actions of this plan impact other plans and programs of the town in a few ways.

Future updates to other plans, such as the Open Space and Recreation Plan, will need to be in compliance with this plan. New programs called for in this plan will need to be systematically pursued and implemented by the responsible entity as resources allow—such as economic development activities and infrastructure planning and implementation.

Regional Governmental Coordination

In many cases, the implementation of this plan can and should involve other municipalities, the state, or the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. The town will need to take the first step of starting a dialogue on items where collaborative planning or action is needed or where technical assistance is needed or desired.

Collaborative Action

Successful implementation of this plan will require collaborative action outside of the realm of formal government. Residents, various lake and watershed associations, recreation groups, state agencies, local business owners, and others will need to actively engage in the implementation of this plan—through both direct action and through support and participation with town-led implementations actions. This plan is working to achieve a shared vision of the town's future; achieving that will take a whole-town effort.

Who Will Implement the Plan?

This plan will be implemented through the collaborative and individual effort of a number of organizations, agencies, and individuals. The action plan uses the abbreviations listed at the bottom of each page to identify the parties that will likely be involved in the achievement of the corresponding action. The town may wish to consider appointing an implementation committee that would help to organize efforts to implement the plan. This committee could be especially important in organizing and managing volunteers to help with implementation activities. The committee could also serve as an advocate for the plan and work with other town boards and committees on strategies for plan implementation.

The Action Plan has been developed to span a period of five years after the Vision Plan's initial adoption. Actions were categorized based on several likely periods for implementation. Items listed as "ongoing" in the schedule are actions that the town is already in the process of implementing and will likely continue to work on in the future. Actions are divided between three broad time periods; 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and 5+ years. Some actions, particularly those in the 1-3 year time period may reoccur regularly or continuously after initial implementation. It will be up to the town to evaluate its successes and determine if these actions occur once, or are implemented regularly.

Some items on the action plan can be completed within this five year period, while some others will not. It is recommended that the town reevaluate the action plan after this five year period to reflect on its successes and review its priorities. The town will likely choose not to pursue a full update of the Vision Plan at this point, but may revise the action plan to more effectively implement the plan.

Additionally, it should be noted that some items in the Action Plan are redundant. This was intentional, and attempts to make the plan actions supporting and reinforcing, and to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of many of the items to be acted on by the town.

UPDATING THE PLAN

A Vision Plan looks far into the future and establishes a roadmap of goals, policies, and actions for the town to implement over time. In order for the plan to remain a relevant document, however, periodic updates will be necessary. Updates can occur in two general ways: plan amendments or a full plan update.

Plan Amendments

The town may, from time to time, encounter changing conditions, new laws or programs, or other circumstances that it wishes to reflect or respond to through the Vision Plan document. The plan amendment process is fairly simple (see below) and allows the Select Board to make small but important

changes to the document over time to keep pace with changing circumstances.

Plan Update

Eventually, conditions will shift to a degree that a minor amendment is insufficient to achieve a document that provides meaningful and forward-thinking guidance to the town. At this time, typically 10-15 years from initial adoption of a new or fully updated plan, municipalities can go through a plan update process. At this time, the community initiates a full new planning process to rethink or reaffirm the vision and chart out new policy directions and carry forward any relevant directions from the prior document.

Action Plan

The action plan details each implementation action contained in the prior chapters of the Master Plan, the proposed timing for the action to be taken, potential leadership, and other interested parties responsible for implementing the action. The “schedule” portion of these tables will be completed as implementation activities are organized.

Economy		Suggested Leadership	Other Participants	Other Participants	Schedule
Goal 1: Strengthen the Local Economy					
Objective 1: Develop an economic development plan for the town					
E1.1.1	CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SHARED ECONOMIC PLANNER PROGRAM WITH OTHER TOWNS	Admin	SB	VPIC	Ongoing
E1.1.2	MAKE THE PREPARATION OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY WORK ITEM OF THE SHARED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNER, AND ENSURE THAT THIS PLAN IS COMPLETED WITHIN ONE CALENDAR YEAR OF THE ADOPTION OF THE VISION PLAN	Admin	SB	BRPC	1-3 Years
Objective 2: Expand town-wide events and activities to stimulate local economic activity and promote community spirit					
E1.2.1	RESTORE THE BLOCK PARTY AS AN ANNUAL EVENT	Vol.	HDZ	Admin	1-3 Years
E1.2.2	EXPAND THE PROMOTION OF EXISTING EVENTS, SUCH AS THE FESTIVAL OF TREES	HDZ	Vol.	Admin	1-3 Years
E1.2.3	EXPAND EXISTING EVENTS, FOR INSTANCE, THE FESTIVAL OF TREES, BY INCLUDING LONGER HOURS OR ASSOCIATED EVENTS	HDZ	Vol.	Admin	1-3 Years
E1.2.4	WORK WITH THE CAMPS IN TOWN TO ESTABLISH NEW EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES	Admin	HDZ	Vol.	1-3 Years
E1.2.5	WELCOME NEW SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES	Admin	HDZ	Vol.	1-3 Years

Parties Involved in Plan Implementation							
Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
All	All Boards, Committees, and Staff	DPW	Department of Public Works	OSRC	Proposed Open Space & Recreation Committee	VPIC	Proposed Vision Plan Implementation Committee
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Goal 2: Support Existing Businesses

Objective 1: Retain and encourage the growth of Hinsdale's existing businesses—including agricultural and forestry related businesses

E2.1.1	SURVEY EXISTING LOCAL BUSINESSES TO IDENTIFY ACTIONS THE TOWN CAN TAKE TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO REMAIN IN TOWN AND GROW	BRPC	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
E2.1.2	PURSUe RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM THE LOCAL BUSINESS SURVEY	Admin	VPIC	SB	1-3 Years
E2.1.3	REVIEW EXISTING LAND USE REGULATIONS, FEES AND TAXES TO EVALUATE THEIR IMPACT ON EXISTING BUSINESSES	PB	Admin	BRPC	1-3 Years
E2.1.4	CONTINUE EXPANDING BROADBAND/HIGH SPEED INTERNET TO SUPPORT HOME-BASED BUSINESSES AND THE ABILITY TO WORK REMOTELY	Admin	SB	VPIC	Ongoing
E2.1.5	PARTICIPATE IN STATE AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE HINSDALE BENEFITS FROM THOSE ACTIVITIES	Admin	SB	VPIC	5+ Years

Objective 2: Enhance a culture of entrepreneurship, especially for young adults

E2.2.1	DETERMINE INTEREST IN A "MENTORING" PROGRAM BETWEEN BUSINESS OWNERS AND YOUNG ADULTS	VPIC	BRPC	Admin	1-3 Years
E2.2.2	WITH SUFFICIENT INTEREST, SECURE RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT A HINSDALE BUSINESS MENTORING PROGRAM	Admin	BRPC	VPIC	3-5 Years

Goal 3: Attract New Businesses to Town

Objective 1: Attract retail businesses and professional services in the town center

E3.1.1	PREPARE A SMALL AREA PLAN FOR THE TOWN CENTER THAT DOCUMENTS CURRENT USE AND CONDITIONS OF EXISTING STRUCTURES, EVALUATES INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND CONDITIONS, INCLUDING SUCH ITEMS AS SIDEWALKS, PARKING, AND SIGNAGE, AND RECOMMENDS ACTIONS TO ADDRESS NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS	BRPC	Admin	BRPC	1-3 Years
E3.1.2	REVIEW EXISTING ZONING AS IT IMPACTS THE TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT	PB	Admin	BRPC	1-3 Years
E3.1.3	EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A LOCAL FARMER'S MARKET ON PROPERTY OWNED BY THE TOWN	Admin	SB	Vol.	1-3 Years

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Objective 2: Support business attraction through high quality telecommunication infrastructure

E3.2.1	CONTINUE TO PURSUE ADDITIONAL UPGRADES TO THE TOWN'S BROADBAND NETWORK	VPIC	Admin	SB	Ongoing
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Objective 3: Promote Hinsdale's natural assets and the lakes to attract residents and visitors

E3.3.1	DEVELOP A PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE TOWN'S NATURAL RESOURCES	Con.Com.	Admin	VPIC	1-3 Years
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Objective 4: Evaluate the potential for expanding areas zoned for business use in town

E3.4.1	EVALUATE EXPANDING THE R-4 ZONING DISTRICT	PB	SB	Admin	1-3 Years
E3.4.2	EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL FOR ESTABLISHING NEW LOCATIONS FOR BUSINESSES OR A PROFESSIONAL PARK CLOSE TO EXISTING BUSINESSES OR THE TOWN CENTER, SUCH AS THE GRAVEL PIT OFF OLD DALTON ROAD	Admin	SB	PB	3-5 Years
E3.4.3	REVIEW HINSDALE'S ZONING TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE TOOLS ARE IN PLACE TO PREVENT UNDESIRABLE IMPACTS FROM EXPANDED BUSINESS USE	PB	SB	Admin	1-3 Years

Goal 4: Enhance Access to Local Businesses and Public Gathering Locations
Objective 1: Promote a built environment that allows access to businesses by different means of transportation including walking, biking, and public transit

E4.1.1	IMPLEMENT SIDEWALK ENHANCEMENTS AND INTERSECTION REDESIGNS AS APPROPRIATE THROUGH COMPLETE STREETS FUNDING	DPW	Admin	VPIC	Ongoing
E4.1.2	PURSUE IMPROVED SITING AND AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STOPS, ESPECIALLY AT THE INTERSECTION OF OLD DALTON ROAD AND MAPLE STREET	Admin	DPW	VPIC	1-3 Years
E4.1.3	ASSESS OPPORTUNITIES TOWNWIDE TO IMPROVE BIKING OPPORTUNITIES	VPIC	DPW	Admin	1-3 Years
E4.1.4	IN COORDINATION WITH MASSDOT, INSTALL NEW DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE TO INCREASE VISITOR AWARENESS OF EXISTING BUSINESS AND OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST	DPW	Admin	VPIC	1-3 Years

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Goal 5: Enhance Community Attractiveness to Attract New Visitors, Residents and Businesses

Objective 1: Enhance the “gateways” to the town to portray Hinsdale as a desirable place for new visitors

E5.1.1	CONDUCT FOCUSED ASSESSMENTS OF THE MAJOR GATEWAYS TO DETERMINE IF THERE COULD BE IMPROVEMENTS TO SUCH ITEMS AS PLANTINGS, SIGNAGE, LIGHTING	VPIC	Admin	DPW	1-3 Years
E5.1.2	SEEK AND OBTAIN FUNDING TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO IMPORTANT TOWN GATEWAYS	Admin	VPIC	DPW	1-3 Years

Objective 2: Replace street trees that have been removed

E5.2.1	RESEARCH EXISTING STREET TREE PROGRAM FOR SMALL TOWNS, INCLUDING THE TOWN OF DALTON	Admin	DPW	VPIC	1-3 Years
E5.2.2	DEVELOP A STREET TREE PROGRAM THAT REPLACES TREES IN NEED OF REMOVAL AND RESTORES THOSE PREVIOUSLY REMOVED	Admin	DPW	VPIC	3-5 Years
E5.2.3	RESEARCH AND SEEK GRANTS TO HELP IMPLEMENT A STREET TREE PROGRAM	Admin	VPIC	DPW	Ongoing

Objective 3: Improve or remove poor quality properties

E5.3.1	DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS POOR QUALITY PROPERTIES AND INCLUDE A COMPONENT OF “TOWN PRIDE” THAT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF THEIR PROPERTY AND RECOGNIZES THOSE WHO DO	BOH	Building	VPIC	1-3 Years
E5.3.2	PURSUDE STRONGER ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN REGARDS TO POOR QUALITY PROPERTIES	BOH	Building	SB	1-3 Years
E5.3.3	SEEK AND PURSUDE GRANT FUNDS TO ASSIST THOSE PROPERTY OWNERS OF LIMITED MEANS TO IMPROVE THEIR PROPERTIES	Admin	SB	BRPC	1-3 Years

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INFRASTRUCTURE		Suggested Leadership	Other Participants	Other Participants	Schedule
Goal 1: Ensure that the Town's Infrastructure is Accessible to All					
Objective 1: Comply with American with Disability Act (ADA) requirements					
11.1.1	DEVELOP AN ADA TRANSITION PLAN	Admin	SB	Building	1-3 Years
11.1.2	CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT TOWN-WIDE ADA COMPLIANCE MEASURES, USING A COMBINATION OF TOWN AND GRANT FUNDS	Admin	SB	Building	1-3 Years
Goal 2: Have Town Building and Facilities That are in Good Condition to Meet Current and Anticipated Town Needs					
Objective 1: Ensure all town buildings and facilities are regularly maintained and improved					
12.1.1	DEVELOP AND ADEQUATELY FUND AND IMPLEMENT A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	Admin	SB	FinCom	1-3 Years
12.1.2	DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT MAINTENANCE PLANS FOR ALL TOWN BUILDINGS THAT INCLUDE ANNUAL REPLACEMENT ITEMS, REGULAR AND CONSISTENT MAINTENANCE, AND A CONSISTENT FUNDING SOURCE	Admin	SB	FinCom	1-3 Years
Objective 2: Reduce long-term costs to the town through energy efficiency measures in town buildings, consistent with the Green Communities Act, or installation of renewable energy systems					
12.2.1	IDENTIFY NEEDED ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS IN TOWN BUILDINGS	Admin	BRPC		1-3 Years
12.2.2	PURSUDE GREEN COMMUNITIES DESIGNATION AND RELATED GRANTS FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN TOWN BUILDING	Admin	SB	BRPC	1-3 Years
12.2.3	EXPLORE A TOWN-OWNED LARGE-SCALE SOLAR FACILITY OR ON TOWN BUILDINGS	Admin	SB	FinCom	1-3 Years
Objective 3: Continue to upgrade the Town Hall					
12.3.1	EXPLORE UPGRADING THE HVAC SYSTEM IN TOWN HALL	Admin	SB	Building	1-3 Years
12.3.2	CONTINUE TO UPGRADE EQUIPMENT, SUCH AS FILE CABINETS, IN TOWN HALL AND IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM OF REGULAR UPGRADING	Admin	SB	FinCom	Ongoing
Objective 4: Ensure the DPW facility meets town needs					
12.4.1	REVIEW AND EVALUATE THE SIZE OF THE DPW GARAGE TO DETERMINE IF IT MEETS CURRENT OR ANTICIPATED NEEDS	Admin	DPW	WS	1-3 Years
12.4.2	ADD AN ADDITION TO THE DPW GARAGE TO STORE SMALLER EQUIPMENT	Admin	DPW	WS	1-3 Years

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Goal 3: Maintain and Upgrade the Town's Technology Infrastructure

Objective 1: Provide for technology infrastructure that is current, efficient, secure and allows users to work on the same software platform

I3.1.1	DEVELOP, FUND, AND IMPLEMENT A REGULAR REPLACEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE TOWN'S TECHNOLOGY ASSETS, I.E., COMPUTERS AND SOFTWARE	Admin	SB	FinCom	Ongoing
I3.1.2	EXPLORE A SCANNING SYSTEM FOR TOWN DOCUMENTS TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE PAPER COPIES AND ADD CLEAR DIRECTIONS FOR ONLINE ACCESS	Admin	SB		3-5 Years
I3.1.3	EXPLORE OPTIONS AND EVALUATE COSTS FOR ADDITIONAL ONLINE PERMITS, SUCH AS FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION	Admin	SB		1-3 Years
I3.1.4	OBTAIN A SYSTEM TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS AT TOWN MEETINGS	Admin	SB		1-3 Years

Goal 4: Improve Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Objective 1: Ensure water services and lines meet community needs in a cost-efficient way

I4.1.1	FINISH WATER LINE REPLACEMENT TO UPGRADE SUBSTANDARD WATER LINES	WS	Admin		Ongoing
I4.1.3	CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT A USAGE-BASED PRICING STRUCTURE	WS	Admin		Ongoing

Objective 2: Improve efficiency of the sewer system

I4.2.1	CONDUCT A DIAGNOSTIC/FEASIBILITY STUDY TO DETERMINE THE LEVELS OF INFLOW AND INFILTRATION	WS	Admin		Ongoing
I4.2.2	FUND AND IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO ELIMINATE OR MINIMIZE INFLOW/INFILTRATION	WS	SB	Admin	Ongoing
I4.2.3	INSURE THE LONG TERM VIABILITY OF THE SYSTEM THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LONG TERM MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	DPW	Admin	SB	1-3 Years

Goal 5: Understand the Relationship of the Library and the Town

Objective 1: Clarify the relationship between the town and library

I5.1.1	REVIEW EXISTING AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE TOWN AND THE LIBRARY	SB	Library		
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Goal 6: Have a Multi-Use Community Center that is an Asset for All Ages

Objective 1: Fully engage town residents to decide the future vision for the community center

I6.1.1	EXPAND THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE TO INCLUDE A MORE DIVERSE SET OF INTERESTS	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.1.2	CLEARLY DEFINE THE MISSION OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.1.3	CONDUCT A BROAD-BASED PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS THAT INCLUDES A PUBLIC SURVEY, INVITING COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE MEETINGS, INTERVIEWS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND TOWN-WIDE PUBLIC MEETINGS	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years

Objective 2: Develop a plan for future use of the Community Center

I6.2.1	IDENTIFY ALL THE POTENTIAL USER GROUPS FOR THE CENTER	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.2.2	IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE THE CURRENT PROGRAMMING AVAILABLE TO THE POTENTIAL USER GROUPS FOR THE CENTER INCLUDING PROGRAMMING OFFERED IN NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.2.3	DEVELOP A LIST OF PROGRAMMING OPTIONS FOR POTENTIAL USERS TO INCLUDE A PROJECTION OF FUTURE DEMAND AND AS A SHARED PROGRAM WITH NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.2.4	PREPARE A STAFFING PLAN, SPACE NEEDS, SPACE CONFIGURATION AND COST ESTIMATE TO PROVIDE THE IDENTIFIED PROGRAMMING OPTIONS	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.2.5	WITH INPUT THROUGH THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS FINALIZE A USE PROGRAM FOR THE COMMUNITY CENTER	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years

Objective 3: Maintain and improve the Community Center physical structure and site

I6.3.1	CONDUCT NECESSARY MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES ON THE BUILDING	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.3.2	IDENTIFY THE NECESSARY CHANGES TO THE BUILDING AND THE SITE TO IMPLEMENT THE DESIRED PROGRAMMING OPTIONS	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.3.3	INTEGRATE THE PREVIOUSLY PREPARED NEEDS ASSESSMENT/COST ESTIMATE TO PREPARE A PROPOSED SCHEDULE AND UPDATED COST ESTIMATE TO IMPLEMENT THE IDENTIFIED CHANGES TO THE STRUCTURE AND SITE	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.3.4	SECURE THE NECESSARY FUNDING THROUGH A COMBINATION OF TOWN FUNDS, GRANTS, AND USER FEES TO IMPLEMENT THE DESIRED PROGRAMMING OPTION	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years
I6.3.5	ENSURE THAT ANTICIPATED NEEDED REPAIRS AND RENOVATIONS ARE FUNDED BY INCORPORATING THEM INTO THE TOWN'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	Admin	SB	CC	1-3 Years

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SERVICES		Suggested Leadership	Other Participants	Other Participants	Schedule
Goal 1: Provide Efficient and Fiscally Responsible Services					
Objective 1: Streamline costs while maintaining or enhancing levels of service					
S1.1.1	PURSUe OPTIONS TO SHARE SERVICES WITH SURROUNDING TOWNS	Admin	SB	Staff	1-3 Years
S1.1.2	EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE EQUIPMENT WITH SURROUNDING TOWNS	Admin	SB	Staff	1-3 Years
S1.1.3	DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) THAT INCLUDES ALL TOWN DEPARTMENTS, INTEGRATES ONGOING AND PROPOSED WORK, IS OPEN TO PUBLIC COMMENT, AND IS APPROVED YEARLY AT TOWN MEETING	Admin	SB	FinCom	1-3 Years
S1.1.4	CONTINUE TO USE THE REGIONAL GROUP PURCHASING PROGRAM OR OTHER COST SAVING PROGRAMS	Admin	SB	DPW	Ongoing
S1.1.5	CONTINUE TO EXPAND UPON THE USE OF WEB-BASED SERVICES TO ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONVENIENCE FOR RESIDENCE BY REDUCING THE NEED FOR RESIDENTS TO PHYSICALLY TRAVEL TO TOWN HALL	Admin	Staff	SB	Ongoing
Objective 2: Offset town costs through external funding sources					
S1.2.1	CONTINUE TO RESEARCH AND APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDING TO ADDRESS TOWN NEEDS	Admin	SB	Staff	Ongoing
S1.2.2	IDENTIFY AND PURSUe OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN MULTI-MUNICIPALITY/REGIONAL COMPETITIVE GRANT FUNDING APPLICATIONS	Admin	SB	Staff	Ongoing
Objective 3: Increase tax revenue and other local receipts through new growth and development and other means					
S1.3.1	EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL FOR ESTABLISHING NEW LOCATIONS FOR BUSINESSES OR A PROFESSIONAL PARK CLOSE TO EXISTING BUSINESSES OR THE TOWN CENTER	Admin	SB	PB	3-5 Years
S1.3.2	DEVELOP A PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE TOWN'S NATURAL RESOURCES	Con.Com.	Admin	VPIC	1-3 Years
S1.3.3	EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A LOCAL FARMER'S MARKET ON PROPERTY OWNED BY THE TOWN	Admin	SB	Vol.	1-3 Years
S1.3.4	AGGRESSIVELY PURSUe DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES/TAX TITLE ACCOUNTS	Staff	Admin	SB	Ongoing
S1.3.5	DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR SELLING AND/OR DEVELOPING PROPERTIES HELD IN TAX POSSESSION	Admin	SB	Staff	1-3 Years

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Objective 4: Pursue opportunities to reduce town education costs, while maintaining high levels of service

S1.4.1	PARTICIPATE IN REGIONAL EFFORTS TO EXAMINE THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY	School	SB	Admin	1-3 Years
S1.4.2	PURSUCE COST REDUCTION MEASURES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WHERE POSSIBLE, SUCH AS SHARED SERVICES, COOPERATIVE PURCHASING, AND SPECIALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS	School	SB	Admin	1-3 Years

Objective 5: Ensure that town-assessed user fees are in alignment with comparable communities in the region

S1.5.1	ANNUALLY REVIEW EXISTING FEE LEVELS (INCLUDING COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE REGION) AND PROPOSE UPDATED MONETARY FEE LEVELS ACCORDINGLY	SB	Admin	Staff	Ongoing
S1.5.2	ROUTINELY REVIEW EXISTING FEE TYPES/CATEGORIES (INCLUDING COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE REGION) AND PROPOSE UPDATED FEE TYPES/CATEGORIES ACCORDINGLY	SB	Admin	Staff	Ongoing

Goal 2: Provide Effective Town Government
Objective 1: Fully inform and engage residents, boards, and committees in town governance and decision-making

S2.1.1	CONTINUE TO ENHANCE THE TOWN WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, AND DIGITAL NEWSLETTER TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH RESIDENTS	Admin	Vol.	Staff	Ongoing
S2.1.2	RECRUIT ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO SERVE ON TOWN BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS	SB	VPIC	Admin	Ongoing
S2.1.3	DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE NEW RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN TOWN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIC LIFE, SUCH AS WELCOME BASKETS AND EVENT PROMOTION	VPIC	SB	Admin	1-3 Years
S2.1.4	EXPLORE HAVING SELECT BOARD MEETINGS BE TELEVISED ON LOCAL ACCESS TV AND/OR LIVE STREAMED ONLINE	Admin	SB		Ongoing

Parties Involved in Plan Implementation

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Building	Building Inspector	FinCom	Finance Committee	RC	Recreation Committee		
COA	Council on Aging	HC	Historical Commission	School	School System / School Committee	Ongoing	Actions already in progress by the town
CC	Community Center Committee	HDZ	Hinsdale Dayz Committee	Staff	Town Staff	1-3 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 1-3 year time frame
Con. Com.	Conservation Commission	HousC	Housing Committee	SB	Select Board	3-5 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 3-5 year time frame
Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

Goal 3: Enhance Services to Address Changing Demographics

Objective 1: Evaluate the needs of the senior population

S3.1.1	SURVEY THE TOWN'S POPULATION TO ASSESS NEEDS FOR AND INTEREST IN SUCH ITEMS AS AGING IN PLACE, ON-DEMAND PUBLIC TRANSPORT	BRPC	Admin	COA	1-3 Years
S3.1.2	EITHER THROUGH THE PROCUREMENT OF A TOWN-OWNED VEHICLE, OR IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ANOTHER COMMUNITY, BEGIN PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO SENIORS	COA	Admin	Vol.	1-3 Years

Objective 2: Pursue actions to improve the lives of Hinsdale's seniors

S3.2.1	PARTICIPATE IN THE COUNTY-WIDE "AGE FRIENDLY BERKSHIRES" INITIATIVE	COA	Admin	SB	Ongoing
S3.2.2	EVALUATE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SENIOR HOUSING	PB	SB	Admin	1-3 Years
S3.2.3	PURSUE ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT ROUTINE ACCESS TO MEDICAL PROVIDERS IS AVAILABLE	COA	VPIC	Admin	1-3 Years
S3.2.4	DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT ATTRACT AGING RESIDENTS AS WELL AS FACILITATE ACCESS TO THOSE ACTIVITIES	COA	VPIC	Admin	1-3 Years
S3.2.5	PURSUE PARTNERSHIPS AND SHARED SENIOR PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES WITH NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES AS APPROPRIATE	Admin	SB	COA	1-3 Years

Goal 4: Enhance Services for Hinsdale Families

Objective 1: Pursue actions to engage families and children in the social fabric of the town

S4.1.1	EXPLORE PROVIDING GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO GATHER AND PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES, POSSIBLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COMMUNITY CENTER	Vol.	VPIC	CC	1-3 Years
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Parties Involved in Plan Implementation

Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
All	All Boards, Committees, and Staff	DPW	Department of Public Works	OSRC	Proposed Open Space & Recreation Committee	VPIC	Proposed Vision Plan Implementation Committee
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Con. Com.	Conservation Commission	HousC	Housing Committee	SB	Select Board	3-5 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 3-5 year time frame
Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

HOUSING		Suggested Leadership	Other Participants	Other Participants	Schedule
Goal 1: Provide a Range of Housing Options					
Objective 1: Increase local capacity to address housing needs					
H1.1.1	ESTABLISH A LOCAL HOUSING ENTITY, SUCH AS A TOWN COMMITTEE OR HOUSING TRUST, TO FOCUS ON HINSDALE'S HOUSING ISSUES	SB	Admin	BRPC	1-3 Years
H1.1.2	PREPARE A HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN TO ADDRESS THE TOWN'S HOUSING NEEDS	BRPC	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
Objective 2: Pursue actions to encourage "starter homes" or modestly priced housing					
H1.2.1	EVALUATE AND CHANGE, IF NECESSARY, THE TOWN'S ZONING AND OTHER TOWN LAWS TO IDENTIFY AND AMEND/REMOVE ITEMS THAT INCREASE THE COST OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT	PB	SB	Admin	3-5 Years
H1.2.2	EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, ZONING MEASURES, INCLUDING OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, TO MINIMIZE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COSTS	PB	SB	Admin	1-3 Years
H1.2.3	TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE TO PROMOTE MODESTLY PRICED HOUSING THROUGH SUCH ITEMS AS EXPLORING TAX INCENTIVES, DEMONSTRATING DEMAND FOR HOUSING, AND ACTIVELY SOLICITING DEVELOPERS	SB	Admin	BOA	3-5 Years
Objective 3: Pursue actions to address the housing needs of seniors					
H1.3.1	PARTICIPATE IN AGE-FRIENDLY BERKSHIRE ACTIVITIES SPECIFIC TO AGING IN PLACE, SUCH AS A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM TO ASSESS ELDERS' HOMES FOR HAZARDS AND PROMOTING CERTIFIED AGING SPECIALIST CONTRACTORS	COA	Admin	SB	Ongoing
H1.3.2	EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, AN ACCESSORY APARTMENT (ALSO KNOWN AS MOTHER-IN-LAW) BY-LAW	PB	SB	Building	1-3 Years
H1.3.3	CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR A TOWN-OWNED ELDERLY HOUSING COMPLEX	BRPC	Admin	SB	3-5 Years
H1.3.4	PROMOTE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRIVATELY OWNED ELDERLY HOUSING COMPLEX THROUGH SUCH ITEMS AS EXPLORING TAX INCENTIVES, DEMONSTRATING DEMAND FOR, AND ACTIVELY SOLICITING DEVELOPERS	SB	Admin	VPIC	3-5 Years

Parties Involved in Plan Implementation							
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						5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

Objective 4: Promote Hinsdale as a preferred location for second homeowners

H1.4.1	DEVELOP A PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM TO ATTRACT SECOND HOME-OWNERS	VPIC	Admin	SB	Ongoing
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Goal 2: Enhance Community Attractiveness to Maintain or Increase Property Values
Objective 1: Improve or remove poor quality properties

H2.1.1	DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS POOR QUALITY PROPERTIES AND INCLUDE A COMPONENT OF “TOWN PRIDE” THAT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF THEIR PROPERTY AND RECOGNIZES THOSE WHO DO	BOH	Building	VPIC	1-3 Years
H2.1.2	PURSUE STRONGER ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS RELATED TO POOR QUALITY PROPERTIES	BOH	Building	SB	Ongoing
H2.1.3	SEEK AND PURSUE GRANT FUNDS TO ASSIST THOSE PROPERTY OWNERS OF LIMITED MEANS TO IMPROVE THEIR PROPERTIES	Admin	SB	BRPC	1-3 Years

Goal 3: Promote Environmentally Responsible Housing
Objective 1: Promote environmental best practices in housing development and home ownership

H3.1.1	PROMOTE FULL ADHERENCE TO THE “STRETCH CODE” BEING PURSUED THROUGH THE GREEN COMMUNITIES PROGRAM	Building	Energy	Admin	Ongoing
H3.1.2	PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICES, SUCH AS ALTERNATIVES TO LAWN PESTICIDES, WATER CONSERVATION, PROPER DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, AND PROMOTING RECYCLING	Con.Com.	Building	Admin	1-3 Years
H3.1.3	PROMOTE RESIDENTIAL SOLAR AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES	Energy	Building	Admin	1-3 Years
H3.1.4	PROMOTE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RETROFIT EXISTING HOUSING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY	Energy	Building	Admin	1-3 Years
H3.1.5	EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONING BY-LAW	PB	SB	Con.Com.	1-3 Years

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Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

Goal 4: Enable More Residents (and Prospective Residents) to be Able to Afford Housing

Objective 1: Promote opportunities to reduce the barriers to homeownership through education and collaboration

H4.1.1	PROMOTE A FIRST-TIME HOMEOWNERS WORKSHOP	VPIC	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
H4.1.2	WORK WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL AND STATE ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES, SUCH AS THE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, TO ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS	Admin	VPIC	SB	1-3 Years
H4.1.3	CONDUCT OUTREACH TO AND FORM COLLABORATIONS WITH LOCAL REALTORS, BANKS, AND FUNDING AGENCIES TO ENSURE THE MOST RECENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO PROSPECTIVE HOME BUILDERS OR BUYERS	VPIC	Admin	SB	1-3 Years

Objective 2: Pursue programs that can reduce homeownership costs or provide funds for housing development

H4.2.1	EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT TO HELP FUND HOUSING PROJECTS	BOA	Admin	SB	3-5 Years
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Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

TRANSPORTATION		Suggested Leadership	Other Participants	Other Participants	Schedule
Goal 1: Provide a Safe and Well-Maintained Transportation System that Accommodates Vehicles, Pedestrians, and Cyclists					
Objective 1: Plan for and address existing and future roadway needs					
T1.1.1	USING THE LATEST DIAGNOSTIC TECHNOLOGY, DEVELOP A REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR ALL ROADWAYS WITHIN HINSDALE THAT UTILIZES SUBSURFACE ANALYSIS ALONG WITH EVALUATION OF EXISTING SURFACE CONDITIONS AND INCORPORATES PREVENTIVE MEASURES AS WELL AS IMMEDIATE NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS	Contractors	DPW	Admin	Ongoing
T1.1.2	INSTITUTE A LONG-TERM FUNDING PLAN FOR ROAD REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH A COMBINATION OF GRANTS, THE ROAD STABILIZATION FUND AND STATE FUNDS	DPW	Admin	SB	Ongoing
T1.1.3	IMPLEMENT THE ROAD REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE PLAN WITHIN FUNDING RESOURCES	DPW	Admin	SB	Ongoing
T1.1.4	EMPLOY BEST PRACTICES FOR LONG-TERM ENVIRONMENTAL STABILIZATION WHEN CONDUCTING ROAD REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE	DPW	Con.Com.	Admin	1-3 Years
T1.1.5	COMPLETE AN INVENTORY OF TOWN CULVERTS AND IDENTIFY MAINTENANCE NEEDS	DPW	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
T1.1.6	REPLACE OR REPAIR CULVERTS TO BETTER ACCOUNT FOR STORM EVENTS OF INCREASING FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY	Contractors	DPW	Admin	1-3 Years
T1.1.7	ACTIVELY WORK WITH OTHER LOCAL OFFICIALS AND LEGISLATORS FOR INCREASED CHAPTER 90 FUNDING AS WELL AS OTHER INCREASED FUNDING THROUGH OTHER SOURCES	Admin	SB	DPW	Ongoing
Objective 2: Collaborate regionally to address existing and future transportation needs					
T1.2.1	COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND STATEWIDE PARTNERS TO ASSESS NEEDS, EVALUATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES, AND CONSTRUCT PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION IN AND AROUND HINSDALE	Admin	DPW	BRPC	Ongoing
T1.2.2	PARTICIPATE IN ALL TAC (TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE) AND MPO (METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION) MEETINGS, AND ENGAGE IN THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS	SB	DPW	Admin	Ongoing

Parties Involved in Plan Implementation							
Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
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Con. Com.	Conservation Commission	HousC	Housing Committee	SB	Select Board	3-5 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 3-5 year time frame
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Goal 2: Increase Access to Public and Alternative Transportation

Objective 1: Work with the Berkshire Regional Transportation Agency (BRTA) and other towns to provide additional bus access

T2.1.1	PURSUE IMPROVED SITING AND AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STOPS, ESPECIALLY AT THE INTERSECTION OF OLD DALTON ROAD AND MAPLE STREET	Admin	DPW	VPIC	1-3 Years
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Objective 2: Pursue options for alternative transportation in town

T2.2.1	ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE CAR SHARING OR CARPOOLING RESOURCES. PROVIDE LINKS TO THESE RESOURCES ON THE TOWN WEBSITE	VPIC	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
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Objective 3: Work with the Council on Aging to better connect elderly and disabled residents with transportation services

T2.3.1	IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO AVAILABLE ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSPORTATION BY PROMOTING OPTIONS THROUGH THE TOWN WEBSITE AND IN TOWN MAILINGS AND COMMUNICATIONS	Admin	Vol.	COA	1-3 Years
T2.3.2	PARTICIPATE IN THE PILOT BERKSHIRE RIDES TO WELLNESS PROGRAM WHERE TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS FROM COUNCILS ON AGING AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES FROM SURROUNDING TOWNS ARE REIMBURSED FOR TRIPS ACROSS JURISDICTIONAL LINES FOR PRE-ARRANGED MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS OF HINSDALE'S RESIDENTS	COA	Admin	SB	Ongoing
T2.3.3	EXPLORE A COUNCIL ON AGING VAN OWNED BY THE TOWN OR COOPERATIVELY WITH OTHER TOWNS	Admin	COA	BRPC	1-3 Years

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Parties Involved in Plan Implementation

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Goal 3: Enhance Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation in Town

Objective 1: Implement a "Complete Streets" approach to future roadway projects

T3.1.1	CONTINUE TO SEEK, SECURE AND UTILIZE MASSDOT "COMPLETE STREETS" FUNDING	Admin	DPW	SB	Ongoing
T3.1.2	ENSURE ANNUAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS COMPLY WITH THE TOWN'S "COMPLETE STREETS" POLICY	DPW	Admin	SB	Ongoing
T3.1.3	IMPLEMENT SIDEWALK ENHANCEMENTS AND INTERSECTION REDESIGNS AS APPROPRIATE THROUGH "COMPLETE STREETS" FUNDING	DPW	Admin	VPIC	Ongoing
T3.1.4	COORDINATE WITH MASSDOT TO ENSURE THAT POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENTS ARE INCLUDED IN LARGER PROJECTS AND IN NEW CONSTRUCTION ALONG STATE-OWNED ROADWAYS	DPW	Admin	SB	Ongoing
T3.1.5	ASSESS OPPORTUNITIES TOWN-WIDE TO SAFELY IMPROVE BIKING OPPORTUNITIES	DPW	Admin	Police	1-3 Years

Goal 4: Integrate Transportation Improvements with Other Important Town Items

Objective 1: Integrate environmental and recreational enhancements in transportation improvements

T4.1.1	INTEGRATE AND ADDRESS WILDLIFE CROSSINGS IN FUTURE ROADWAY PROJECTS	DPW	Con.Com.	Admin	1-3 Years
T4.1.2	COMMUNICATE WITH MASSDOT TO ENSURE THAT WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENT IS INCLUDED IN FUTURE STATE ROADWAY WORK	DPW	Con.Com.	Admin	1-3 Years
T4.1.3	INTEGRATE AND ADDRESS COST-EFFECTIVE MEASURES, INCLUDING THE USE OF GRANTS, TO ENHANCE WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY IN FUTURE ROADWAY PROJECTS, PARTICULARLY BRIDGE AND CULVERT WORK	DPW	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
T4.1.4	WHERE COST EFFECTIVE, UTILIZE ROAD TREATMENT MATERIAL WHICH MINIMIZES NEGATIVE IMPACTS TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	DPW	Admin	Con.Com.	1-3 Years
T4.1.5	WHERE APPROPRIATE, INTEGRATE RECREATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS WHEN CONDUCTING ROAD IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES	RC	DPW	Admin	1-3 Years

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Objective 2: Integrate economic benefits in transportation improvements

T4.2.1	IN COORDINATION WITH MASSDOT, INSTALL NEW DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE TO INCREASE VISITOR AWARENESS OF EXISTING BUSINESSES AND OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST	VPIC	Admin	DPW	1-3 Years
T4.2.2	EXPLORE THE POTENTIAL FOR A RAIL SIDING FOR COMMERCIAL OR INDUSTRIAL USE	Admin	VPIC	DPW	3-5 Years

Objective 3: Enhance community attractiveness through transportation improvements

T4.3.1	CONDUCT FOCUSED ASSESSMENTS OF THE MAJOR GATEWAYS TO DETERMINE IF THERE COULD BE IMPROVEMENTS TO SUCH ITEMS AS PLANTINGS, SIGNAGE, LIGHTING	VPIC	Admin	DPW	1-3 Years
T4.3.2	SEEK AND OBTAIN FUNDING TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO IMPORTANT TOWN GATEWAYS	Admin	VPIC	DPW	1-3 Years
T4.3.3	RESEARCH EXISTING STREET TREE PROGRAM FOR SMALL TOWNS, INCLUDING THE TOWN OF DALTON	Admin	DPW	VPIC	1-3 Years
T4.3.4	DEVELOP A STREET TREE PROGRAM THAT REPLACES TREES IN NEED OF REMOVAL AND RESTORES THOSE PREVIOUSLY REMOVED	Admin	DPW	VPIC	3-5 Years
T4.3.5	RESEARCH AND SEEK GRANTS TO HELP IMPLEMENT A STREET TREE PROGRAM	Admin	VPIC	DPW	Ongoing

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LAND USE		Suggested Leadership	Other Participants	Other Participants	Schedule
Goal 1: Maintain the Town's Rural Character					
Objective 1: Update the zoning by-laws to facilitate an efficient development review process					
L1.1.1	CONDUCT A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF THE ZONING BY-LAWS FOR INTERNAL CONSISTENCY AND UPDATING FOR COMPLIANCE WITH RECENT CASE LAW AND CHANGES TO THE ZONING ENABLING ACT	PB	SB	BRPC	1-3 Years
L1.1.2	CONDUCT AN EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAM TO TOWN RESIDENTS PRIOR TO PRESENTING THE RECODIFIED BY-LAWS FOR A VOTE AT TOWN MEETING	PB	SB	BRPC	1-3 Years
L1.1.3	RECODIFY THE ZONING BY-LAWS	PB	SB	BRPC	1-3 Years
L1.1.4	INCLUDE A TABLE OF USE REGULATIONS AND TABLE OF DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN RECODIFIED BY-LAWS FOR EASE OF USE	PB	SB	BRPC	1-3 Years
Objective 2: Ensure the zoning by-laws reflect the desire by town residents to maintain the rural character					
L1.2.1	EVALUATE, AND MODIFY AS APPROPRIATE, THE PROVISIONS IN THE CURRENT BY-LAWS THAT ZONE ROAD FRONTAGE (R-1, R1B, AND R-2) AS A DIFFERENT DISTRICT FROM LAND BEHIND THOSE ZONES (R-5)	PB	SB	BRPC	3-5 Years
L1.2.2	EVALUATE, AND MODIFY AS APPROPRIATE, PROVISIONS IN THE R-3 DISTRICT TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE LAKES PROTECTS WATER QUALITY AND MAINTAINS THE CHARACTER SO THAT THESE AREAS CONTINUE TO BE STRONG ASSETS FOR THE TOWN	PB	Con. Com.	OSRC	1-3 Years
L1.2.3	EVALUATE THE AREA ADJACENT TO THOSE PROPERTIES SERVED BY SEWER TO DETERMINE IF ZONING SHOULD BE CHANGED TO BETTER UTILIZE THOSE PROPERTIES TO MAINTAIN RURAL CHARACTER	PB	WS	SB	3-5 Years

Parties Involved in Plan Implementation							
Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
All	All Boards, Committees, and Staff	DPW	Department of Public Works	OSRC	Proposed Open Space & Recreation Committee	VPIC	Proposed Vision Plan Implementation Committee
BOA	Board of Assessors	Fire	Fire Department	OTD	Other town departments	WS	Water/Sewer Dept.
BOH	Board of Health	Emer.	Emergency Management Director	PB	Planning Board	Schedule	
BRPC	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	Energy	Energy Committee	Police	Police Department		
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COA	Council on Aging	HC	Historical Commission	School	School System / School Committee	Ongoing	Actions already in progress by the town
CC	Community Center Committee	HDZ	Hinsdale Dayz Committee	Staff	Town Staff	1-3 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 1-3 year time frame
Con. Com.	Conservation Commission	HousC	Housing Committee	SB	Select Board	3-5 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 3-5 year time frame
Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

Goal 2: Use Land Use Planning and Zoning to Accomplish Recommendations in the Vision Plan

Objective 1: Attract retail businesses and professional services in the town center

L2.1.1	PREPARE A SMALL AREA PLAN FOR THE TOWN CENTER THAT DOCUMENTS CURRENT USE AND CONDITIONS OF EXISTING STRUCTURES, EVALUATES INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND CONDITIONS, INCLUDING SUCH ITEMS AS SIDEWALKS, PARKING, AND SIGNAGE, AND RECOMMENDS ACTIONS TO ADDRESS NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS	BRPC	Admin	BRPC	1-3 Years
L2.1.2	REVIEW EXISTING ZONING AS IT IMPACTS THE TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT	PB	Admin	BRPC	1-3 Years

Objective 2: Evaluate the potential for expanding areas zoned for business use in town

L2.2.1	EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL FOR ESTABLISHING NEW LOCATIONS FOR BUSINESSES OR A PROFESSIONAL PARK CLOSE TO EXISTING BUSINESSES OR THE TOWN CENTER, SUCH AS THE GRAVEL PIT OFF OLD DALTON ROAD	Admin	SB	PB	3-5 Years
L2.2.2	EVALUATE EXPANDING THE R-4 ZONING DISTRICT	PB	SB	Admin	1-3 Years
L2.2.3	REVIEW HINSDALE'S ZONING TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE TOOLS ARE IN PLACE TO PREVENT UNDESIRE IMPACTS FROM EXPANDED BUSINESS USE	PB	SB	Admin	1-3 Years
L2.2.4	REVIEW EXISTING LAND USE REGULATIONS, FEES, AND TAXES TO EVALUATE THEIR IMPACT ON EXISTING BUSINESSES	Admin	SB	PB	Ongoing

Objective 3: Pursue actions to encourage "starter homes" or modestly priced housing

L2.3.1	EVALUATE AND CHANGE, IF NECESSARY, THE TOWN'S ZONING AND OTHER TOWN LAWS TO IDENTIFY AND AMEND/REMOVE ITEMS THAT INCREASE THE COST OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT	PB	SB	Admin	1-3 Years
L2.3.2	EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, ZONING MEASURES, INCLUDING OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, TO MINIMIZE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COSTS	PB	SB	Admin	1-3 Years

Objective 4: Pursue actions to address the housing needs of seniors

L2.4.1	EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, AN ACCESSORY APARTMENT (ALSO KNOWN AS MOTHER-IN-LAW) BY-LAW	PB	SB	Building	1-3 Years
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Parties Involved in Plan Implementation

Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
All	All Boards, Committees, and Staff	DPW	Department of Public Works	OSRC	Proposed Open Space & Recreation Committee	VPIC	Proposed Vision Plan Implementation Committee
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Con. Com.	Conservation Commission	HousC	Housing Committee	SB	Select Board	3-5 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 3-5 year time frame
Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

Objective 5: Implement a “Complete Streets” approach to future roadway projects

L2.5.1	REVIEW ZONING BY-LAWS AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS AND ENSURE “COMPLETE STREETS” REQUIREMENTS ARE INTEGRATED INTO DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS	PB	Admin	DPW	1-3 Years
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Objective 6: Explore and pursue local regulatory tools, as appropriate, to protect valued open space resources

L2.6.1	PURSUE AN OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONING BY-LAW	PB	OSRC	SB	1-3 Years
L2.6.2	EVALUATE EXISTING TOWN STANDARDS OR REGULATIONS DEALING WITH RECLAMATION OF UNUSED SAND AND GRAVEL OPERATIONS, OR OTHER DECOMMISSIONED INDUSTRIAL SITES, FOR INSTANCE SOLAR, AND IMPROVE THOSE ITEMS AS WARRANTED	SB	OSRC	BP	3-5 Years
L2.6.3	EXPLORE THE BERKSHIRE SCENIC MOUNTAINS ACT OR OTHER REGULATORY MEANS TO PROTECT RIDGELINES FROM DEVELOPMENT	Con.Com.	OSRC	SB	1-3 Years

Parties Involved in Plan Implementation

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NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES		Suggested Leadership	Other Participants	Other Participants	Schedule
Goal 1: Protect, Maintain and Promote the Town's Historic and Cultural Assets					
Objective 1: Build capacity for the town's Historic Commission					
N1.1.1	ACTIVELY RECRUIT ADDITIONAL MEMBERS TO THE HISTORIC COMMISSION	HC	SB	Admin	1-3 Years
N1.1.2	INCREASE TOWN FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE HISTORIC COMMISSION	SB	Admin	FinCom	Ongoing
N1.1.3	ENCOURAGE HISTORIC COMMISSION MEMBERS TO ATTEND REGULAR TRAINING SUCH AS THOSE HELD BY THE WESTERN MASS. HISTORICAL COMMISSION COALITION (WMHCC) (ORGANIZED IN 2014, THE WMHCC MEETS 2-3 TIMES EACH YEAR AND OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS OF LOCAL HISTORICAL COMMISSIONS, AND OTHER HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVOCATES, TO NETWORK WITH COLLEAGUES AND EXPLORE CURRENT CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES IN THE FIELD)	HC	SB	Admin	Ongoing
Objective 2: Prepare current documentation of historic or potentially historic resources					
N1.2.1	UPDATE THE CURRENT LISTING OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES TO ENSURE THEY ARE IDENTIFIED OR LISTED ACCURATELY TO ENABLE PROPERTY OWNERS TO QUALIFY FOR POTENTIAL GRANTS	HC	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
N1.2.2	EVALUATE POTENTIAL SITES FOR DESIGNATION AS HISTORIC RESOURCES	HC	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
Objective 3: Promote historic resources to facilitate their long-term maintenance					
N1.3.1	ENSURE THAT HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ARE INCLUDED IN THE TOWN'S PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS	HC	Admin	SB	Ongoing

Parties Involved in Plan Implementation							
Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
All	All Boards, Committees, and Staff	DPW	Department of Public Works	OSRC	Proposed Open Space & Recreation Committee	VPIC	Proposed Vision Plan Implementation Committee
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Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

Goal 2: Protect Important Water and Natural Resources

Objective 1: Continue to protect and maintain the town's lakes and water resources

N2.1.1	CONTINUE TO SUPPORT, INCLUDING THROUGH NEEDED FUNDING, THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LAKE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT DESIRED LAKE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS, SUCH AS HERBICIDE TREATMENT OR OTHER AQUATIC WEED TREATMENTS	LMC	SB	Admin	Ongoing
N2.1.2	CONTINUE TO EXPLORE AND PURSUE OPTIONS, INCLUDING WORKING MORE CLOSELY WITH STATE OFFICIALS, TO STOP OR REMEDIATE SEDIMENTATION OF PLUNKETT RESERVOIR AND ASHMER LAKE	LMC	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
N2.1.3	ENFORCE AND ADMINISTER EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS, SUCH AS THE WETLANDS PROTECTION ACT, WITH PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, TO SUPPLEMENT THE WORK OF VOLUNTEER CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEMBERS	Con.Com.	Admin	SB	Ongoing
N2.1.4	USE THE SERVICES OF THE TOWN'S CONSERVATION AGENT TO CONDUCT OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO IDENTIFY AND HALT POTENTIAL WETLANDS PROTECTION ACT VIOLATIONS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN	Con.Com.	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
N2.1.5	BETTER UTILIZE THE TOWN'S GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS (A GIS SYSTEM LINKS MAPPED INFORMATION WITH ATTRIBUTES ABOUT THE MAPPED AREA)	Con.Com.	Admin	SB	Ongoing
N2.1.6	CONTINUE TO BE AWARE OF AND IDENTIFY NEW THREATS TO LAKES AND PROMOTE AWARENESS AND TREATMENT TO MINIMIZE NEGATIVE IMPACTS FROM THOSE THREATS	Con.Com.	LMC	SB	Ongoing

Parties Involved in Plan Implementation

Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
All	All Boards, Committees, and Staff	DPW	Department of Public Works	OSRC	Proposed Open Space & Recreation Committee	VPIC	Proposed Vision Plan Implementation Committee
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Con. Com.	Conservation Commission	HousC	Housing Committee	SB	Select Board	3-5 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 3-5 year time frame
Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

Goal 3: Protect Soils, Forests, and Other Natural Environments

Objective 1: Encourage maximum use of best management practices to protect resources

N.3.1.1	WORK WITH PROPERTY OWNERS TO ELIMINATE THE SPREAD OF THE INVASIVE HOGWEED SPECIES AND ERADICATE THE EXISTING PLANTS	BOH	Con.Com.	Vol.	1-3 Years
N3.1.2	WORK WITH THE DPW AND PROPERTY OWNERS TO IDENTIFY, PREVENT THE SPREAD OF, AND ELIMINATE OTHER INVASIVE SPECIES	DPW	BOH	Con.Com.	1-3 Years
N3.1.3	WORK WITH PROPERTY OWNERS TO ENSURE TIMBER CUTS ARE COMPLIANT WITH FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS	Con.Com.	Admin	DCR	Ongoing
N3.1.4	REQUIRE EMPLOYMENT OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT IN FLOODPLAINS	PB	Building	SB	Ongoing
N3.1.5	REQUIRE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE IMPORTANT NATURAL RESOURCES IN THAT AREA	PB	Building	Con.Com.	3-5 Years

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Parties Involved in Plan Implementation							
Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
All	All Boards, Committees, and Staff	DPW	Department of Public Works	OSRC	Proposed Open Space & Recreation Committee	VPIC	Proposed Vision Plan Implementation Committee
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CC	Community Center Committee	HDZ	Hinsdale Dayz Committee	Staff	Town Staff	1-3 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 1-3 year time frame
Con. Com.	Conservation Commission	HousC	Housing Committee	SB	Select Board	3-5 Years	Projects to be integrated within a 3-5 year time frame
Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION		Suggested Leadership	Other Participants	Other Participants	Schedule
Goal 1: Increase Capacity to Pursue Open Space and Recreational Opportunities					
Objective 1: Pursue open space and recreational enhancements according to a comprehensive and inclusive planning process					
O1.1.1	DEVELOP AND ADOPT AN OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN AS A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR HINSDALE'S EFFORTS AND TO ACCESS STATE FUNDING	OSRC	Con.Com.	Admin	Ongoing
O1.1.2	ONCE ADOPTED BY THE TOWN AND APPROVED BY THE STATE, APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDING FOR HIGH PRIORITY ITEMS FROM THE PLAN	Admin	OSRC	Con.Com.	1-3 Years
Goal 2: Preserve Land for Open Space and Recreational Uses					
Objective 1: Increase protected open space or recreational lands and resources					
O2.1.1	EVALUATE AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR PERMANENT PROTECTION AND WORK WITH STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO PRESERVE HIGH PRIORITY PROPERTIES	OSRC	Con.Com.	Admin	1-3 Years
O2.1.2	EVALUATE TAX POSSESSION PROPERTIES FOR THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL BEFORE THEY ARE DISPOSED OF AND RETAIN THEM IF APPROPRIATE	OSRC	Con.Com.	Staff	Ongoing
O2.1.3	EVALUATE AND PURSUE, IF APPROPRIATE, THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT TO HELP FUND OPEN SPACE PROTECTION AND RECREATIONAL PROJECTS	SB	Admin	BOA	3-5 Years
O2.1.4	WORK WITH STATE AGENCIES TO SECURE INHOLDINGS OR IMPORTANT ADJACENT OR CONTRIBUTING PARCELS TO EXISTING STATE LANDS	OSRC	Con.Com.	Vol.	1-3 Years
Objective 2: Explore and pursue local regulatory tools, as appropriate, to protect valued open space resources					
O2.2.1	PURSUE AN OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONING BY-LAW	PB	OSRC	SB	1-3 Years
O2.2.2	EVALUATE EXISTING TOWN STANDARDS OR REGULATIONS DEALING WITH RECLAMATION OF UNUSED SAND AND GRAVEL OPERATIONS, OR OTHER DECOMMISSIONED INDUSTRIAL SITES, FOR INSTANT SOLAR, AND IMPROVE THOSE ITEMS AS WARRANTED	SB	OSRC	PB	3-5 Years
O2.2.3	EXPLORE THE BERKSHIRE SCENIC MOUNTAINS ACT OR OTHER REGULATORY MEANS TO PROTECT RIDGELINES FROM DEVELOPMENT	Con.Com.	OSRC	SB	1-3 Years

Parties Involved in Plan Implementation							
Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
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Contractors	Private Contractors	Library	Library Assoc. and Staff	TW	Tree Warden	5+ Years	Projects likely requiring 5 or more years for implementation

Goal 3: Increase and Improve Recreational Opportunities

Objective 1: Work to increase recreational opportunities

O3.1.1	ACQUIRE LAND AND DEVELOP IT FOR A TOWN BEACH AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES, SUCH AS A PAVILION	Admin	OSRC	SB	1-3 Years
O3.1.2	APPROACH CITY OF PITTSFIELD OFFICIALS TO EXPLORE OPENING THE CITY'S WATERSHED LAND AND WATER FOR RECREATIONAL USE	OSRC	Admin	SB	1-3 Years
O3.1.3	EVALUATE EXPANDING THE NETWORK OF TRAILS IN TOWN, POSSIBLY CREATING NEW TRAILS OR LINKAGES TO EXISTING TRAILS, OTHER OPEN SPACES, OR RECREATIONAL AREAS	OSRC	Con.Com.	Vol.	1-3 Years
O3.1.4	WORK WITH STATE AGENCIES TO CONTINUE FISH AND WILDLIFE STOCKING PROGRAMS	Con.Com.	OSRC	Vol.	Ongoing
O3.1.5	WORK WITH STATE AGENCIES TO INCORPORATE HINSDALE INTERESTS AS THEY DEVELOP MANAGEMENT OR USE PLANS FOR THEIR PROPERTIES	Con.Com.	OSRC	Admin	1-3 Years
O3.1.6	EXPLORE VOLUNTARILY PERMITTED ENHANCED ACCESS ON PRIVATELY-OWNED LAND FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES	OSRC	Con.Com.	Admin	3-5 Years

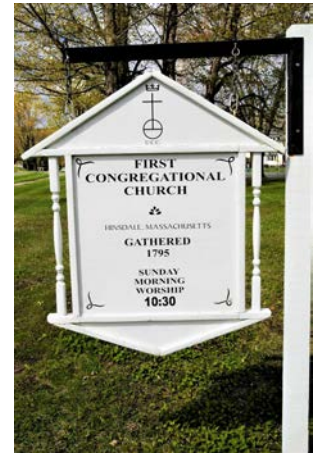
Objective 2: Promote open space and recreational assets

O3.2.1	ENSURE THAT HINSDALE'S RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE INTEGRATED INTO TOWN PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS	OSRC	Admin	BRPC	Ongoing
O3.2.2	EXPLORE DESIGNATION AS AN APPALACHIAN TRAIL COMMUNITY	Con.Com.	OSRC	Admin	1-3 Years

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Parties Involved in Plan Implementation

Admin	Town Administrator	DCR	MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	LMC	Lake Management Committee	Vol.	Volunteers (residents, local businesses, etc.)
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VISION PLAN FOR HINSDALE

2017
Town of Hinsdale,
Massachusetts

